

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra



*Complete Works of*  
**Miguel de Cervantes**

DELPHI  CLASSICS

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*The Complete Works of*

**MIGUEL DE CERVANTES**

(1547-1616)



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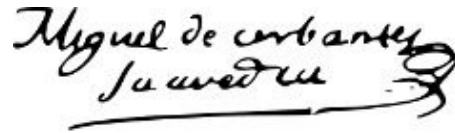
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A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra". The signature is written in a cursive style, with the first name "Miguel" and the last name "Saavedra" being more prominent. There is a horizontal line under the signature.

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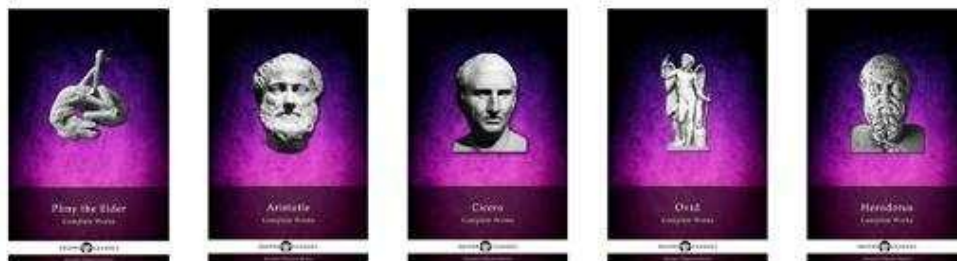
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*The Complete Works of*  
**MIGUEL DE CERVANTES**



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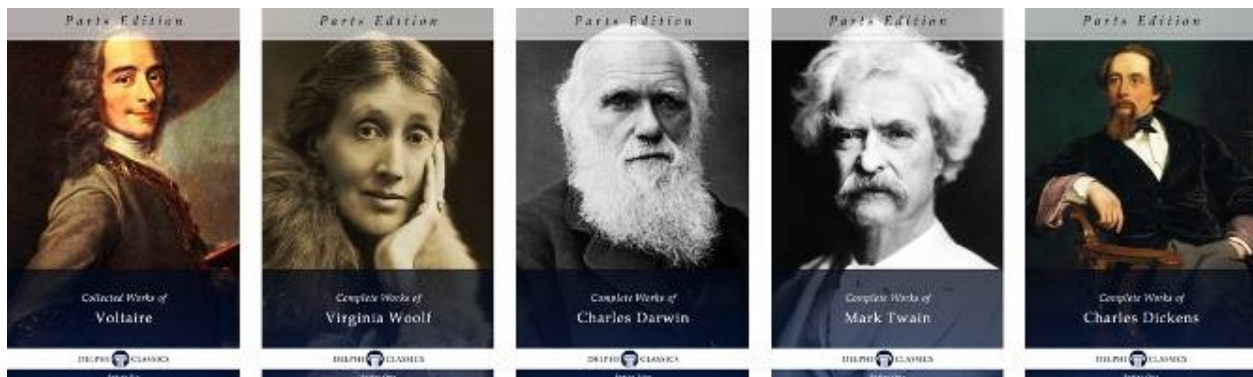
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## The Novels



*Alcalá de Henares, a suburb of Madrid — the birthplace Miguel de Cervantes*



*Tower of the Church of Santa María la Mayor de Alcalá de Henares, where Cervantes was baptised*

## LA GALATEA



*Translated by John Oelsner and A. B. Welford*

*La Galatea* is Miguel de Cervantes' first novel, which was initially published in 1585. Presenting an allegory of pastoral characters, the novel is an examination of love with veiled allusions to contemporary literary figures. Though the novel enjoyed some success, it was not reprinted in the author's lifetime and a promised sequel, referred to by Cervantes on more than one occasion, was never published and presumably never written.

Composed as an imitation of the *Diana* by the Portuguese novelist Jorge de Montemayor, *La Galatea* appears to have been intended as a structure to contain a rich collection of poems in the old Spanish and Italian styles. The *Diana* helped launch a vogue in the sixteenth century for stories about shepherds and shepherdesses and their experiences in love. As well as Cervantes, one of Montemayor's most famous readers was William Shakespeare, who borrowed the Proteus-Julia-Sylvia plot of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* from the *Diana*.

In *La Galatea*, the framing story is merely a thread that holds the many poems together and they establish Cervantes' claim to rank among the most eminent poets of his contemporary Spanish literature. Throughout the text Cervantes composes in all the various kinds of syllabic measure used in his time, whilst occasionally adopting the use of the old dactylic stanza. Among the vast range of verses, the song of Caliope, in the last book of the novel particularly stands out due to its metrical dexterity and imaginative use of imagery. Other beautiful poems in the *La Galatea* are a few in the *cancion* style, some of which are iambics, and some in trochaic or Old Spanish verse.

The main characters of *La Galatea* are Elicio and Erastro, who are best friends that both fall in love with the beautiful shepherdess Galatea. The friends reveal to each other their desire for Galatea, but agree not to let it come between their friendship. They then set off on a journey with Galatea and her friend Florisa to the wedding of Daranio and Silveria, along which, in the pastoral tradition, they encounter other characters that tell their own stories and often join the travelling group.

The vast majority of the characters in the novel are involved primarily in



minor story digressions. One such tale concerns Lisandro, who loses his love, Leonida, when Crisalvo mistakenly kills her instead of his former love Silvia. Lisandro avenges Leonida's death in the presence of the main party. Astor, under the pseudonym Silerio, feigns attraction for Nísida's sister Blanca in order to avoid the scorn of Nísida's lover Timbrio, who dies following the confusion present after a successful duel against his rival Pransiles. Astor's grief thrusts him into hermitage, waiting to hear from Nísida. Arsindo holds a poetry competition betwixt Francenio y Lauso, which is judged by Tirsi and Damón, lauded by many within the novel as some of the most famous poets of Spain, and is determined to have no single winner. The wedding has controversy as Mireno is deeply in love with Silveria, yet Daranio's wealth guaranteed him the hand of Silveria.

PRIMERA PARTE  
DE LA GALATEA,  
DIVIDIDA EN SEYS LIBROS.  
Cópuesta por Miguel de Cervantes.

*Dirigida al Illustrisísimor Afcanio Colona Abad de  
sancta Sofia.*



CON PRIVILEGIO.  
Impressa en Alcalá por Iuan Gracian.  
Año de 1585.  
*A costa de Blas de Robles mercader de libros.*

*Cover of the first edition of 'La Galatea'*

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*An engraving of Cervantes as a young man*

FIRST PART  
OF THE  
GALATEA  
DIVIDED INTO SIX BOOKS  
WRITTEN BY  
MIGUEL DE CERVANTES

## DEDICATION

TO THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS LORD, ASCANIO COLONNA,  
ABBOT OF SANTA SOFIA.

Your Lordship's worth has prevailed with me so much as to take away from me the fear I might rightly feel in venturing to offer you these first-fruits of my poor genius. Moreover, considering that your August Lordship came to Spain not only to illumine her best Universities, but also to be the pole-star by which those who profess any real science (especially those who practise that of poetry) may direct their course, I have not wished to lose the opportunity of following this guidance, since I know that in it and by it all find a safe haven and a favourable reception. May your Lordship be gracious to my desire, which I send in advance to give some kind of being to this my small service; and if I do not deserve it for this, I may at least deserve it for having followed for several years the conquering banners of that Sun of warfare whom but yesterday Heaven took from before our eyes, but not from the remembrance of those who strive to keep the remembrance of things worthy of it, I mean your Lordship's most excellent father. Adding to this the feeling of reverence produced in my mind by the things that I, as in prophecy, have often heard Cardinal de Acquaviva tell of your Lordship when I was his chamberlain at Rome; which now are seen fulfilled, not only by me, but by all the world that delights in your Lordship's virtue, Christian piety, munificence, and goodness, whereby you give proof every day of the noble and illustrious race from which you descend; which vies in antiquity with the early times and leaders of Rome's greatness, and in virtues and heroic works with equal virtue and more exalted deeds, as is proved to us by a thousand true histories, full of the renowned exploits of the trunk and branches of the royal house of Colonna, beneath whose power and position I now place myself to shield myself against the murmurers who forgive nothing; though, if your Lordship forgive this my boldness, I shall have naught to fear, nor more to desire, save that our Lord may keep your Lordship's most illustrious person with the increase of dignity and position that we your servants all desire.

Most Illustrious Lord,

Your humblest servant kisses your Lordship's hands, MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA.

## PROLOGUE.

### CURIOUS READERS,

The occupation of writing eclogues, at a time when poetry is generally regarded with such little favour, will not, I fancy, be counted as so praiseworthy a pursuit, but that it may be necessary especially to justify it to those who, following the varying tastes of their natural inclination, esteem every taste differing from it as time and labour lost. But since it concerns no man to justify himself to intellects that shut themselves up within bounds so narrow, I desire only to reply to those who, being free from passion, are moved, with greater reason, not to admit any varieties of popular poetry, believing that those who deal with it in this age are moved to publish their writings on slight consideration, carried away by the force which passion for their own compositions is wont to have on the authors. So far as this is concerned, I can urge for my part the inclination I have always had for poetry, and my years, which, having scarcely passed the bounds of youth, seem to permit pursuits of the kind.

Besides, it cannot be denied that studies in this art (in former times so highly esteemed and rightly) carry with them no inconsiderable advantages: such as enriching the poet (as regards his native tongue); and acquiring a mastery over the tricks of eloquence comprised in it, for enterprises that are loftier and of greater import; and opening a way so that the narrow souls that wish the copiousness of the Castilian tongue to be checked by the conciseness of the ancient speech, may, in imitation of him, understand that it offers a field open, easy, and spacious, which they can freely traverse with ease and sweetness, with gravity and eloquence, discovering the variety of acute, subtle, weighty, and elevated thoughts, which, such is the fertility of Spanish men of genius, Heaven's favourable influence has produced with such profit in different parts, and every hour is producing in this happy age of ours, whereof I can be a sure witness, for I know some men who, with justice and without the impediment I suffer, could safely cover so dangerous a course.

But so common and so diverse are men's difficulties, and so various their aims and actions, that some, in desire of glory, venture, others, in fear of disgrace, do not dare, to publish that which, once disclosed, must needs endure the uncertain, and well-nigh always mistaken, judgment of the people. I have given proof of boldness in publishing this book, not because I have any reason to

be confident, but because I could not determine which of these two difficulties was the greater: whether that of the man who, wishing to communicate too soon the talent he has received from Heaven, lightly ventures to offer the fruits of his genius to his country and friends, or that of him who, from pure scrupulousness, sloth, or dilatoriness, never quite contented with what he does and imagines, counting as perfect only that which he does not attain, never makes up his mind to disclose and communicate his writings. Hence, just as the daring and confidence of the one might be condemned, by reason of the excessive license which accompanies security; so, too, the mistrust and tardiness of the other is vicious, since late or never does he by the fruits of his intellect and study benefit those who expect and desire such aids and examples, to make progress in their pursuits. Shunning these two difficulties, I have not published this book before now, nor yet did I desire to keep it back longer for myself alone, seeing that my intellect composed it for more than for my pleasure alone, I know well that what is usually condemned is that no one excels in point of the style which ought to be maintained in it, for the prince of Latin poetry was blamed for having reached a higher, level in some of his eclogues more than in others; and so I shall not have much fear that any one may condemn me for having mingled philosophical discourses with some loving discourses of shepherds, who rarely rise beyond treating of things of the field, and that with their wonted simplicity. But when it is observed (as is done several times in the course of the work) that many of the disguised shepherds in it were shepherds only in dress, this objection falls to the ground. The remaining objections that might be raised as regards the invention and ordering may be palliated by the fixed intention of him who reads, if he will do so with discretion, and by the wish of the author, which was to please, doing in this what he could and actually did, achieve; for even though the work in this part do not correspond to his desire, he offers others, yet to come, of better taste and greater art.

BY LUIS GALVEZ DE MONTALVO.  
TO THE AUTHOR, SONNET.

What time thy neck and shoulders thou didst place, Submissive, 'neath the  
Saracenic yoke, And didst uphold, with constancy unbroke Amidst thy bonds,  
thy faith in God's own grace, Heaven rejoiced, but earth was for a space,  
Without thee, well-nigh widowed: desolate, Filled with lament and sadness for  
thy state, Was left the Muses' royal dwelling-place.

But since that, from amidst the heathen host, Which kept thee close, thy manly  
soul and tongue Thou didst unto thy native land restore, Heaven itself of thy  
bright worth makes boast, The world greets thy return with happy song, And the

lost Muses Spain receives once more.

BY DON LUIS DE VARGAS MANRIQUE.

SONNET.

In thee the sovran gods their mighty power, Mighty Cervantes, to the world declared.

Nature, the first of all, for thee prepared Of her immortal gifts a lavish store:  
Jove did his lightning on his servant pour, The living word that moves the rocky wall:  
That thou in purity of style mightst all With ease excel, Diana gave her dower:

Mercury taught thee histories to weave:

The strength Mars gave thee that doth nerve thine arm: Cupid and Venus all their loves bestowed:  
'Twas from Apollo that thou didst receive Concerted song: from the Nine Sisters charm  
And wisdom: shepherds from the woodland god.

BY LOPEZ MALDONADO.

SONNET.

Out from the sea they issue and return

Unto its bosom when their course is o'er, As to the All-Mother they return once more,  
The children who have left her long forlorn.

She is not lesser made whene'er they go, Nor prouder when their presence they restore;  
For she remaineth whole from shore to shore, And with her waters aye her pools o'erflow.

Thou art the sea, oh Galatea fair!

The rivers are thy praises, the reward Whereby thou winnest immortality.

The more thou givest to us, thou canst spare The more; though all before thy feet have poured  
Their tribute, yet thou canst not greater be.

## BOOK I.

What time unto my sad and mournful cry,  
Unto the ill-tuned music of my lyre,  
The hill and mead, the plain and stream reply  
In bitter echo of my vain desire,  
Then take thou, wind, that heedless hastenest by,  
The plaints which from my breast, chilled with love's fire,  
Issue in my despite, asking in vain  
Succour from stream and hill, from mead and plain.

The stream is swollen by the tears which flow  
Forth from my wearied eyes: the flowery mead  
Blooms with the brambles and the thorns that grow  
Into my soul: the lofty hill doth heed  
Nowise my sorrows; and the plain below  
Of hearing is aweared: in my need  
No solace, e'er so small, to assuage my ill  
I find in stream or plain, in mead or hill.

I thought the fire that sets the heart aflame,  
Lit by the wingèd boy, the cunning net,  
Within whose mesh he doth the gods entame,  
The strangling noose, the arrow he doth whet  
In frenzied wrath, would wound the peerless dame  
As me they wound, who am her slave; and yet  
No noose nor fire hath power against a heart  
That is of marble made, nor net nor dart.

But lo, 'tis I who burn within the blaze,  
I waste away: before the net unseen  
I tremble not: my neck I humbly place  
Within the noose; and of his arrow keen  
I have no fear: thus to this last disgrace  
Have I been brought — so great my fall has been  
That for my glory and my heart's desire



The dart and net I count, the noose and fire.

Thus on the banks of the Tagus sang Elicio, a shepherd on whom nature had lavished as many gifts as fortune and love had withheld; though the course of time, that consumes and renews man's handiwork, had brought him to such a pass, that he counted for happiness the endless misfortunes in which he had found himself, and in which his desire had placed him, for the incomparable beauty of the peerless Galatea, a shepherdess born on those same banks. Although brought up in pastoral and rustic exercises, yet was she of so lofty and excellent an understanding, that gentle ladies, nurtured in royal palaces, and accustomed to the refined manners of the Court, counted themselves happy to approach her in discretion as in beauty, by reason of the many noble gifts with which Heaven had adorned Galatea. She was loved and desired with earnest passion by many shepherds and herdsmen, who tended their herds by the banks of the Tagus; amongst whom the gay Elicio made bold to love her, with a love as pure and honest, as the virtue and modesty of Galatea allowed. It must not be thought of Galatea that she despised Elicio, still less that she loved him: for, at times, almost persuaded, as it were, and overcome by the many services of Elicio, she with some modest favour would raise him to heaven; and, at other times, without taking account of this, she would disdain him in such wise, that the love-sick shepherd scarce knew his lot. The excellencies and virtues of Elicio were not to be despised, nor were the beauty, grace, and goodness of Galatea not to be loved. On the one hand, Galatea did not wholly reject Elicio; on the other, Elicio could not, nor ought he to, nor did he wish to, forget Galatea. It seemed to Galatea, that since Elicio loved her with such regard to her honour, it would be too great an ingratitude not to reward his modest thoughts with some modest favour. Elicio fancied that since Galatea did not disdain his services, his desires would have a happy issue; and, whenever these fancies revived his hope, he found himself so happy and emboldened, that a thousand times he wished to discover to Galatea what he kept concealed with so much difficulty. But Galatea's discretion well knew from the movements of his face what Elicio had in his mind; and she gave such an expression to hers that the words of the love-sick shepherd froze in his mouth, and he rested content with the mere pleasure of that first step: for it seemed to him that he was wronging Galatea's modesty in treating of things that might in some way have the semblance of not being so modest, that modesty itself might take their form. With these up and downs the shepherd passed his life so miserably that, at times, he would have counted as gain the evil of losing her, if only he might not feel the pain which it caused him not to win her. And so one day, having set himself to consider his varied

thoughts, in the midst of a delightful meadow, invited by the solitude and by the murmur of a delightful streamlet that ran through the plain, he took from his wallet a polished rebeck (singing to the sound of which he was wont to communicate his complaints to Heaven), and with a voice of exceeding beauty sang the following verses: Amorous fancy, gently ride

On the breeze if thou wouldst show  
That I only am thy guide,  
Lest disdain should bring thee low,  
Or contentment fill with pride.  
Do thou choose a mean, if fate  
Grants thee choice amidst thy plight,

Neither seek to flee delight  
Nor yet strive to bar the gate  
'Gainst the woe of Love's dark night.

If it be thy wish that I  
Of my life the course should run,  
Take it not in wrath: on high  
Raise it not, where hope is none,  
Whence it can but fall to die.  
If presumption lead astray,  
And so lofty be thine aim,  
This at last thy course will stay: —  
Either thou wilt come to shame,  
Or my heart thy debts will pay.

Born therein, thy sinning lay  
In thy birth; the guilt was thine,  
Yet for thee the heart must pay.  
If to keep thee I design,  
'Tis in vain, thou fleest away.  
If thou stayest not thy flight,  
Wherewith thou dost mount the skies  
(Should but fate thy fortunes blight)  
Thou wilt plunge in deep abyss  
Thy repose and my delight.

Who to fate, thou mayst declare,  
Yields himself, does well: his spirit,  
Spurring on to do and dare,  
Not as folly but as merit  
Will be counted everywhere.  
To aspire so loftily,  
Yearning thus to reach the goal,  
Peerless glory 'tis to thee, —  
All the more when heart and soul  
Do with the design agree.

Thee to undeceive I seek,  
For I understand the meaning:

'Tis the humble and the meek,  
Rather than the overweening,  
Who of Love's delights can speak.

Greater beauty cannot be  
Than the beauty thou desirest;  
Thy excuse I fail to see,  
How it comes that thou aspirest  
Where is no equality.

Fancy, if it hath desire  
Something raised on high to view,  
Looks and straightway doth retire,  
So that none may deem it true  
That the gaze doth thus aspire.  
How much more doth Love arise

If with confidence united  
Whence it draws its destinies.  
But if once its hope be blighted,  
Fading like a cloud it dies.

Thou who lookest from afar  
On the goal for which thou sighest,  
Hopeless, yet unto thy star  
True, — if on the way thou diest,  
Diest knowing not thy care.  
Naught there is that thou canst gain,  
For, amidst this amorous strife,  
Where the cause none may attain,  
Dying is but honoured life,  
And its chiefest glory pain.

The enamoured Elicio would not so soon have ended his agreeable song, had there not sounded on his right hand the voice of Erastro, who with his herd of goats was coming towards the place where he was. Erastro was a rustic herdsman; yet his rustic lot, out in the woods, did not so far prevail with him as to forbid that Gentle Love should take entire possession of his manly breast, making him love more than his life the beauteous Galatea, to whom he did declare his complaints whenever occasion presented itself to him. And though rustic, he was, like a true lover, so discreet in things of love, that whenever he discoursed thereon, it seemed that Love himself revealed them to him, and by his tongue uttered them; yet withal (although they were heard by Galatea), they were held of such account as things of jest are held. To Elicio the rivalry of Erastro did not give pain, for he understood from the mind of Galatea that it inclined her to loftier things — rather did he have pity and envy for Erastro: pity in seeing that he did indeed love, and that in a quarter where it was impossible to gather the fruit of his desires; envy in that it seemed to him that perhaps his understanding was not such as to give room for his soul to feel the flouts or favours of Galatea in such a way that either the latter should overwhelm him, or the former drive him mad.

Erastro came accompanied by his mastiffs, the faithful guardians of the simple sheep, which under their protection were safe from the carnivorous teeth of the hungry wolves; he made sport with them, and called them by their names, giving to each the title that its disposition and spirit deserved. One he would call Lion, another Hawk, one Sturdy and another Spot; and they, as if they were endowed

with understanding, came up to him and, by the movement of their heads, expressed the pleasure which they felt at *his* pleasure. In such wise came Erastro to where he was amiably received by Elicio, and even asked, allowing that he had not determined to spend the warm season of the sultry noontide in any other place, since that place in which they were was so fitted for it, whether it would be irksome to him to spend it in his company.

‘With no one,’ replied Erastro, ‘could I pass it better than with you, Elicio, unless indeed it were with her who is as stubborn to my entreaties as she has proved herself a very oak to your unending complaints.’

Straightway the twain sat them down on the close-cropped grass, allowing the herd to wander at will, blunting, with teeth that chew the cud, the tender little shoots of the grassy plain.

And as Erastro by many plain tokens knew perfectly well that Elicio loved Galatea, and that the merit of Elicio was of greater carat than his own, in token that he recognised this truth, in the midst of his converse, among other discourses addressed to him the following: ‘I know not, gay and enamoured Elicio, if the love I have for Galatea has been the cause of giving you pain, and if it has, you must pardon me, for I never thought to offend you, nor of Galatea did I seek aught save to serve her. May evil madness or cruel rot consume and destroy my frisky kids and my tender lambkins! when they leave the teats of their dear mothers, may they not find in the green meadow aught to sustain them save bitter colocynth and poisonous oleander, if I have not striven a thousand times to put her from my memory, and if I have not gone as many times more to the leeches and priests of the place, that they might give me a cure for the anguish I suffer on her account! Some of them bid me take all kinds of love-potions, others tell me to commend myself to God, who cures everything, or that it is all madness. Suffer me, good Elicio, to love her, for you can be sure that if you, with your talents and admirable graces and discourses, do not soften her, I shall scarce be able, with my simple ways, to move her to pity.

This favour I beg of you, by what I am indebted to your deserving: for, even if you do not grant it me, it would be as impossible to cease loving her, as to cause these waters to cease from giving moisture, or the sun with his combed tresses from giving us light.’

Elicio could not refrain from laughing at Erastro’s discourse, and at the courtesy with which he begged of him permission to love Galatea; and thus he replied to him: ‘It does not pain me indeed, Erastro, that you love Galatea; it pains me much to know from her disposition, that your truthful discourses and sincere words will be of little avail with her. May God give you as fair success in your desires as the sincerity of your thoughts deserve! and henceforward cease



not on my account to love Galatea; for I am not of so mean a disposition that, if fortune fail me, I rejoice that others should not attain her. But I pray you, by what you owe to the good-will I show you, that you should not deny me your converse and friendship, since of mine you can be as sure as I have declared to you. Let our herds go united, since our thoughts go in unison. You to the sound of your pipe will declare the pleasure or the pain which Galatea's joyous or sorrowful countenance shall cause you, I to the sound of my rebeck, in the silence of the stilly night, or in the heat of the glowing noontide, in the cool shade of the green trees by which this bank of ours is made so fair, will help you to carry the heavy load of your trouble, proclaiming mine to Heaven.

And in token of our good intent and true friendship, while the shadows of these trees grow longer, and the sun is declining towards the west, let us tune our instruments and make a beginning of the practice which henceforth we are to follow.'

Erastro did not need asking, but with signs of supreme content at seeing himself in such friendship with Elicio, drew forth his pipe, and Elicio his rebeck: and, one beginning, and the other replying, they sang what follows: ELICIO.  
Ungrateful Love, thy servant thou didst place

In sweet, caressing, peaceful bonds the day  
When first I saw the golden hair and face  
Of that fair sun that dimmed the sun's own ray.  
Straightway I came to drink with eager gaze  
Love's cruel bliss, which, like a serpent, lay  
Within the ruddy tresses; for 'twas there  
I saw the sun, amid the clustered hair.

ERASTRO. I stood amazed, and filled with rapturous flame,  
Voiceless was I like to a flinty rock,  
When Galatea's grace and beauty came,  
In all their loveliness my sight to mock.  
On my left side stood Love (ah bitter shame!),  
My love-lorn breast sustained his arrow's shock,  
A gate was opened in me by his dart  
Whereby the maid might come and steal my heart.

ELICIO. His breast, who, wretched, follows in thy train,  
Love, by what miracle dost open wide?  
What glory from the wound doth he attain,  
The wound that thou didst deal him in his side?

Whence from the loss thou sendest, comes the gain?  
And whence the joyous life when thou hast died?  
The soul that hath endured these at thine hand  
The cause, but not the ways can understand.

ERASTRO. SO many faces in a broken glass  
Are seen not, nor in glass formed with such art,  
That if one looks therein, one sees to pass  
A multitude portrayed in every part,  
As are the cares on cares that spring, alas!  
From that cruel care, which from my shattered heart  
Goes not away, though conqueror in the strife,  
Until it doth depart along with life.

ELICIO. The white snow of her cheek, the crimson rose  
Which neither summer wastes nor winter's cold,  
The sun's twain morning-stars, wherein repose  
Soft Love doth find, the spot where time untold  
Shall guard the voice, strong to subdue our woes,  
As did hell's furies Orpheus' voice of old,  
The many charms I saw, though blind I ween,  
Have made me tinder for the fire unseen.

ERASTRO. Twain apples rosy-red no tree can bear  
As those in Galatea's cheeks displayed;  
Iris herself could boast no bow so fair  
As the twain archèd eye-brows of the maid,  
Two rays of light, two threads, beyond compare,  
Of pearls 'twixt scarlet: — and if more be said —  
The peerless graces which in her I find  
A cloud have made me to the amorous wind.

ELICIO. I burn nor am consumed, I live and die,  
Far from myself am I and yet so near,  
I sink to hell, I rise to Heaven on high,  
One thing alone I hope, and yet I fear.  
Gentle, yet fierce — for what I loathe I sigh,  
To love thee racks my soul with torment drear,  
Thus step by step already am I come,

Drawn in these different ways to my last doom.

ERASTRO. Elicio, mark! how gladly would I pour  
At Galatea's feet all that she hath left  
To me in life, if but she would restore  
The heart and soul whereof I am bereft.  
My herd I would bestow, and furthermore  
My Spot and Hawk, if she would but the theft  
Forego: but ah! the goddess on her throne  
More than aught else would have my soul alone.

ELICIO. Erastro, mark! if once the heart on high  
Be placed by fate, or chance, or what you will,  
To pluck it down 'twere foolishness to try  
By force, or art, or any human skill.  
Rejoice that she is blessed; though thou canst die  
In truth without her, 'tis my thought that still  
No life on earth can be more full of bliss  
Than death for such a noble cause as this.

Erastro was already setting himself to follow on in his song when they perceived, by a thickly wooded hillock which was at their back, no slight clamour and sound; and, both rising to their feet to see what it was, they saw a shepherd descending from the mountain, running at the greatest speed in the world, with a naked knife in his hand, and the hue of his countenance changed, and, coming after him, another shepherd swift of foot, who in a few strides overtook the first, and seizing him by the collar of his skin-coat, raised his arm in the air as high as he could, and a sharp dagger which he carried unsheathed, and buried it twice in his body, saying: 'Receive, oh ill-starred Leonida, the life of this traitor, which I offer up in vengeance of your death.'

This happened with such rapidity that Elicio and Erastro had not the opportunity to stop him; for they came up at the time when the stricken shepherd was already giving out his last breath, struggling to utter these few ill-formed words: 'Would that you had allowed me, Lisandro, to satisfy Heaven with a longer repentance for the wrong I did you, and had then taken from me the life which, for the reason I have said, now departs from this flesh ill-content.'

And without being able to say more he closed his eyes in everlasting night. By these words Elicio and Erastro fancied that for no small cause had the other shepherd inflicted on him so cruel and violent a death. And the better to inform

themselves of the whole occurrence, they would fain have inquired of the murderous shepherd; but he, with retreating step, leaving the shepherd dead and the two wondering, turned to go back into the hillock beyond. And when Elicio desired to follow him, and to learn from him what he' wished, they saw him come again out of the wood, and, being a good space distant from them, in a loud voice he said to them: 'Pardon me, gentle shepherds, if I have not been gentle in having wrought in your presence that which you have seen, for the just and mortal rage which I had conceived against that traitor did not permit a more moderate course on my part.

What I counsel you is, that, if you would not anger the Deity that dwells in high Heaven, you should not offer the last rites and accustomed prayers for the traitorous soul of that body which you have before you, nor give it burial, if here in your country it is not the custom to give it to traitors.'

And, saying this, he turned with all speed to go into the forest, with so much haste as to take away from Elicio the hope of overtaking him, even though he followed him. And so the twain with tender hearts turned to perform the pious office, and to give burial, as best they could, to the wretched body, which had so suddenly ended the course of its short days.

Erastro went to his hut which was not far away, and, bringing sufficient implements, made a grave at the very spot where the body was; and, bidding it the last farewell, they placed it therein.

Not without compassion for his hapless lot they returned to their herds, and, collecting them again with some haste (for the sun was already entering with all speed by the gates of the west), betook themselves to their accustomed shelters, where neither the comfort they felt therein, nor the little that his cares allowed him, could keep Elicio from wondering what causes had moved the two shepherds to come to so desperate a pass; and already he regretted that he had not followed the murderous shepherd, and learnt from him, if possible, what he wished.

With this thought, and with the many that his love caused in him, after leaving his herd in a place of safety, he went out from his hut, as was his wont at other times, and by the light of the beauteous Diana, who showed herself resplendent in the sky, he entered the denseness of a dense wood beyond, seeking some solitary spot where, in the silence of the night, with greater peace he might give rein to his amorous fancies: for it is an assured fact that, to sad, fanciful hearts, there is no greater joy than solitude, the awakener of sad or happy memories. And thus going little by little, enjoying a gentle breeze which blew against his face, full of most delicate scents, which from the scented flowers wherewith the green earth was heaped it gently stole, as it passed through them wrapped in the

delicate air, he heard a voice as of one who grievously complained, and checking for a while his breath within him, so that the sound might not hinder him from hearing what it was, he perceived that from some thickset bramble bushes, a little way off, the mournful voice proceeded, and though interrupted by endless sighs, he understood that it uttered these sad words: 'Cowardly and craven arm, mortal enemy of that which you owe to yourself, look, naught now remains on which to take vengeance, save yourself! What does it profit you to prolong the life I hold in so great abhorrence? If you think that our ill is of those that time is wont to heal, you live deceived, for there is nothing more remote from cure than our misfortune: seeing that she who might have made mine pleasant, had a life so short that, in the green years of her joyous youth, she offered it to the blood-thirsty knife, that it might take it from her, through the treason of the wicked Carino. He to-day, by losing his own, will have in part appeased that blessed soul of Leonida, if, in the heavenly region where she dwells, she can cherish desire for any vengeance. Ah, Carino, Carino! I beseech the high Heavens, if by them just prayers are heard, not to heed the plea, if any you offer, for the treachery you have done me, and to suffer that your body may lack burial, even as your soul lacked mercy. And you, fair and hapless Leonida, receive, in token of the love I bore you in life, the tears I shed at your death; and put it not down to lack of feeling that I do not end my life, with all I feel at your death: for a grief that should end so soon would be a scant return for what I ought and wish to feel. You will see, if you take account of things here, how this wretched body will one day be consumed by grief, little by little, for its greater grief and suffering: even as powder, moist and kindled, which, without making a noise, or raising a flame on high, is consumed in itself, without leaving of itself aught save the traces of consumed ashes. It grieves me as much as it can grieve me, oh soul of my soul, seeing that I could not enjoy you in life, that in death I cannot perform for you the last rites and honours which befitted your goodness and virtue; but I promise to you, and swear, for the short time — and it will be very short — that this impassioned soul of mine shall rule the heavy burden of this wretched body, and my weary voice have breath to form it, not to treat aught else in my sad and bitter songs save your praises and deserts.'

At this point the voice ceased, from the sound of which Elicio clearly perceived that it was the murderous shepherd; whereat he was much rejoiced, because it seemed to him that he was in a position to learn from him what he desired. And, wishing to approach more closely, he needs must stop again, for it seemed to him that the shepherd was tuning a rebeck, and he wished first to hear if he should say anything to its sound. And he did not wait long before he heard him, with gentle and tuneful voice, singing after this wise: Lisandro. Blest soul,

that from the veil

Of human life below  
Free to the realms above didst, deathless, wing,



Leaving as in a jail

Of misery and woe  
This life of mine which yet to thee did cling!  
The bright light of the spring,  
When thou art gone is dead,

And beaten to the ground  
The hope I thought to found  
On that firm seat where joy its radiance shed.  
Alas! when thou wert gone,  
My life died too: naught lived save grief alone.

Death claimed thee for his prey,  
He revelled in his prize,  
Thy loveliness beyond compare he marred;

He came to take away  
The light of these mine eyes  
Which gazed on thee and did their riches hoard.  
Swiftly beneath his sword,  
Like wax in summer's sun  
Or cloud before the wind,

The fancies of my mind  
Which sprang from glorious Love have been undone.

The stone above thy tomb  
Shuts in my fortune and declares my doom.

How could thy brother speed  
His cruel, ruthless hand  
In hot revengeful purpose 'gainst thy heart?



How came the wicked deed  
To tear thee from the land  
And set thee from thy mortal veil apart?  
Why sought he with his dart  
Two lovers thus to sever?  
Our love had had no end,

Our pathway would we wend  
In holy wedlock hand in hand for ever.  
Command why didst thou give,  
Cruel, scornful hand! that dying I should live?

My hapless soul shall spend  
The days, the months, the years,  
In sad laments that ne'er shall reach their close.  
'Midst joys that have no end  
Thy soul shall know no fears  
Of stubborn time — forgot for aye thy woes;  
Secure in thy repose,

The bliss thou shalt behold  
That thy good life hath won  
Which ne'er shall be undone:  
Him that so loved thee in remembrance hold,

If unto thee be given  
To keep remembrance of the earth in Heaven.

Blest, lovely soul above!

How foolish have I been  
To ask that thou shouldst mind thee of thy swain;  
Who gave thee all his love.  
Eternally, I ween,  
Shall I, if thou art kind, thus feel my pain.  
'Twere better for my gain  
That I should be forgot,

That woe should waste away  
The life that yet doth stay,  
That I should perish 'neath my cruel lot,

Since in my bitter grief  
Death's ill I count not ill, but sweet relief.

Amidst the holy choir,  
Amongst the sainted dead,  
Dear soul! enjoy the wealth of Heaven's delight,  
That fears nor time nor fire;



The mercies that are shed  
On all who flee not from the path of right.  
I hope to reach that height,  
To dwell with thee in bliss,  
Amidst eternal spring,  
If to thy steps I cling  
And know no dread nor yet the pathway miss.  
Oh lead me to this goal!  
For such a deed as this befits thy soul.

And then, blest souls that dwell in Heaven, behold  
The good that I desire,  
Enlarge the wings of this my good desire.

Here ceased the voice, but not the sighs of the hapless swain who had sung, and both served to increase in Elicio the desire to know who he was. And bursting through the thorny brambles so as to reach more quickly the spot whence the voice proceeded, he came to a little meadow which, in the fashion of a theatre, was girt all round with very dense and tangled shrubs; and there he saw a shepherd who was standing in an attitude of great vigour, with his right foot advanced and his left behind, his right arm raised in the manner of one hoping to make a mighty throw. And such was the truth, for at the noise which Elicio had made in bursting through the bushes, he, thinking it was some wild beast (against which the woodland shepherds were forced to defend themselves), had placed himself in a position to hurl at him a weighty stone he was holding in his hand. Elicio, perceiving his intent by his posture, before he could accomplish it, said to him: 'Calm your bosom, hapless shepherd, for he who comes hither, brings a bosom ready for all you might ask of it; desire to learn your fortune has made him break in upon your tears, and disturb the solace which might attend upon you in solitude.'

With these gentle and courteous words of Elicio the shepherd was calmed, and with no less gentleness replied to him, saying: 'I gratefully acknowledge your kind offer, whoever you be, courteous shepherd; but, as for fortune, if you desire to learn mine who never had any, you will scarce be able to have your wish.'

'You speak true,' answered Elicio, 'since from the words and complaints I this night have heard from you, you clearly show the little or none that you have. But you will no less satisfy my desire by telling me your troubles than by making known to me your joys. May fortune give you these in what you desire, so that you do not deny me what I beg of you, if indeed your not knowing me do not

prevent it; although I would have you know, so as to reassure and move you, that I have not a soul so happy as not to feel as much as it should the miseries you would recount to me. This I tell you, for I know that nothing is more wasted, nay thrown away, than for an unhappy man to recount his woes to one whose heart is brimful with joys.'

'Your kindly words,' answered the shepherd, 'compel me to satisfy you in what you ask me, not only that you may not fancy that from a mean and craven soul spring the complaints and lamentations you say you have heard from me, but also that you may realise that the feeling I show is but small as compared with the cause I have for showing it.'

Elicio thanked him heartily, and after some more courteous words had passed between the two, Elicio giving proof that he was a true friend of the woodland shepherd, the latter, recognising that they were not feigned promises, granted in the end what Elicio asked. The twain sate them down on the green grass, covered with the splendour of the fair Diana, who could that night rival her brother in brightness, and the woodland shepherd, with tokens of a tender grief, began to speak in this wise: 'On the banks of the Betis, a stream exceeding rich in waters, which enriches great Vandalia, was born Lisandro (for that is my luckless name), and of parents so noble that I would to Almighty God I had been begotten in a lowlier station; for oftentimes nobility of lineage lends wings and strength to the soul to raise the eyes to where a humble lot would never dare to raise them, and from such boldness calamities are often wont to spring such as you shall hear from me, if with attention you will listen to me. In my village was also born a shepherdess, whose name was Leonida, the sum of all the beauty which, as I fancy, could be found in a great part of the world, — born of parents no less noble and wealthy than her beauty and virtue deserved.

Whence it came to pass that, the parents of both being among the chief people of the place, and the rule and government of the village being vested in them, envy, the deadly enemy of a peaceful life, brought about strife and mortal discord between them over some differences concerning the administration of the village, in such a manner that the village was divided into two factions; the one followed that of my parents, the other that of Leonida's, with so deep-rooted a hatred and malice that no human effort has been able to bring about peace between them.

Fate then decreed, as though to shut out every prospect of friendship, that I should fall in love with the fair Leonida, daughter of Parmindro, the head of the opposite faction; and my love was, indeed, so great that, though I strove in countless ways to put it from my heart, they all ended in my remaining yet more vanquished and enslaved. Before me rose a mountain of difficulties, which

hindered me from gaining the end of my desire, such as Leonida's great worth, the inveterate enmity of our parents, the few or no occasions which presented themselves to me for disclosing my thoughts to her: and yet, whenever I turned the eyes of fancy towards the rare beauty of Leonida, every difficulty was made smooth, so that it seemed to me a little thing to break through sharp points of adamant, that I might reach the goal of my loving and honourable thoughts.

Having then for many days battled with myself, to see if I could turn my soul from a design so arduous, and seeing that it was impossible, I set all my skill on considering how I might give Leonida to understand the secret love in my breast. And even as, in any matter, the beginnings are always difficult, so in those that relate to love they are for the most exceedingly difficult, until Love himself, when he wishes to show himself favourable, opens the gates of the remedy, where they seem most closely barred. Thus it appeared in my case, for my thought being guided by his, I came to fancy that no better means presented themselves to my desire than to make friends with the parents of Silvia, a shepherdess who was a bosom friend of Leonida, and often they visited each other at their houses, in company with their parents. Silvia had a kinsman called Carino, a very close companion of Crisalvo, fair Leonida's brother, whose boldness and harshness of manner had gained him the nickname of cruel, and so, by all those who knew him, he was generally called cruel Crisalvo; and in the same way they called Carino, Silvia's kinsman and Crisalvo's companion, the, cunning Carino, from his being officious and sharp-witted.

With him and with Silvia (for it seemed to serve my purpose) by means of many presents and gifts I forged a friendship, to outward seeming; at least on Silvia's side it was stronger than I desired, for the presents and favours, which with pure heart she bestowed on me, constrained by my unceasing services, were by my fortune taken as instruments to place me in the misery where now I see myself. Silvia was passing fair, and adorned with graces so many that the hardness of Crisalvo's savage heart was moved to love her (but this I did not learn save to my hurt); and many days later, after that from long experience I was sure of Silvia's good-will, an opportunity offering itself one day, in the tenderest words I could, I disclosed to her the wound in my stricken breast, telling her that, though it was so deep and dangerous, I did not feel it so much, only because I thought that in her solicitude lay its cure. I informed her, too, of the honourable goal to which my thoughts were tending, which was to unite myself in lawful wedlock with the beauteous Leonida; and that, since it was a cause so just and good, she must not disdain to take it under her care. Finally, not to weary you, love furnished me with such words to say to her, that she, being overcome by them and more by the pain which she, like a clever woman,

recognised from the signs of my face as dwelling in my soul, determined to take charge of my cure, and to tell Leonida what I felt for her, promising to do for me all that her power and skill might achieve, even though such an undertaking was fraught with difficulties for her, by reason of the great enmity she knew to exist between our parents; though, on the other hand she thought that it might put an end to their differences, if Leonida were to marry me. Moved then by this good intention, and softened by the tears I shed, as I have said before, she dared to intercede on behalf of my happiness, and, discussing with herself how she would approach Leonida, she made me write her a letter, which she offered to give her at the moment she thought fitting. Her counsel seemed to be for my good, and that same day I sent her a letter, which I have always known by heart, as having been the beginning of the happiness I felt at the reply to it, though it would be better not to remember happy things at a time so sad as that in which I now find myself.

Silvia received the letter, and awaited the opportunity for placing it in Leonida's hands.'

'Nay,' said Elicio, interrupting Lisandro's discourse, 'it is not right that you should fail to repeat to me the letter you sent to Leonida, for, seeing that it was the first, and that you were so deeply in love at that time, it must undoubtedly be eloquent.

And since you have told me that you know it by heart, and of the pleasure you obtained from it, do not now withhold it from me by not repeating it.'

'You say well, my friend,' replied Lisandro, 'for I was then as deeply in love and timid as now I am unhappy and despairing; and, on that account, it seems to me that I did not succeed in uttering any eloquent words, though it was sufficient success that Leonida should believe those which were in the letter. Since you wish so much to hear them, it ran as follows: LISANDRO TO LEONIDA.

"So long as I have been able (though with very great grief to myself) to resist with my own strength the amorous flame which for you, fair Leonida, consumes me, fearful of the exalted worth which I recognise in you, I have never had the boldness to discover to you the love I bear you; but now that the virtue, which up till now has made me strong, is consumed, it has become necessary for me to disclose the wound in my breast, and thus, by writing to you, to make trial of the first and last remedy in your power. What the first may be you know, and to be the last is in your hand, from which I hope for the pity that your beauty promises, and my honourable desires merit. What they are, and the goal to which they tend, you shall learn from Silvia, who will give you this: and since she has been so bold, being who she is, as to bring it to you, know that they are as honourable as is due to your merit."

The words of this letter did not seem bad to Elicio, and Lisandro continuing the story of his love, said:

‘Many days did not pass before this letter came into the fair hands of Leonida by means of the kindly hands of Silvia, my true friend. In giving it, she told her such things that she largely assuaged the rage and emotion which Leonida had felt at my letter, such as telling her how good it would be if through our marriage the enmity of our parents were to cease, and that an object so well meant should lead her not to reject my desires; all the more as it should not be compatible with her beauty to allow one who loved her as much as I to die, without more consideration; adding to these other reasonings, which Leonida recognised as just. But, so as not to show herself vanquished in the first encounter, and won in the first advance, she did not give to Silvia as pleasant a reply as she wished.

But still, at the intercession of Silvia, who forced her to it, she replied with this letter which I shall now repeat to you: LEONIDA TO LISANDRO.

“If I had thought, Lisandro, that your great daring had sprung from my lack of modesty, I would have carried out on myself the punishment that your fault deserves; but as what I know of myself makes me sure on this point, I have come to the conclusion that your great boldness has proceeded more from idle thoughts, than from thoughts of love; and though they may be as you say, think not that you can move me to cure them, as you did Silvia to believe them. I complain more of her for having made me answer you, than of you who dared to write to me, for silence had been fit answer to your folly. If you draw back from your purpose, you will act wisely, for I would have you know that I deem my honour of more account than your empty thoughts.”

This was Leonida’s reply, which, together with the hopes that Silvia gave me, though it seemed somewhat harsh, made me count myself the happiest man on earth. Whilst these matters were passing between us, Crisalvo did not neglect to woo Silvia with countless messages, gifts and services; but so hard and severe was Crisalvo’s disposition that he could never move Silvia to grant him the smallest favour. Whereat he was as desperate and impatient as a bull when speared and vanquished.

For the sake of his love he had formed a friendship with the cunning Carino, Silvia’s kinsman, though these two had first been mortal enemies, for in a wrestling-bout, which on a great feast-day the deftest swains of the place held before all the village, Carino was vanquished by Crisalvo, and mauled: so that he conceived in his heart undying hatred for Crisalvo, and no less was the hatred he felt against another person, a brother of mine, for having thwarted him in a loveaffair, in which my brother carried off the fruit Carino hoped for. This rancour and ill-will Carino kept secret till time disclosed to him the opportunity

when he might avenge himself on both at once, in the cruellest way imaginable. I kept friends with him, so that admission to Silvia's house might not be denied me; Crisalvo adored him, so that he might further his designs with Silvia; and his friendship was such that whenever Leonida came to Silvia's house, Carino accompanied her: wherefore it seemed good to Silvia to tell him, since he was my friend, of my love affair with Leonida, which was by this time prospering with such ardour and good fortune, through Silvia's good offices, that we now awaited but the time and place to cull the honourable fruit of our pure desires. On hearing of this, Carino used me as an instrument to commit the greatest treason in the world. For one day (feigning to be true to Crisalvo, and giving him to understand that he rated his friendship higher than his kinswoman's honour), he told him that the chief reason why Silvia did not love or favour him, was that she was in love with me; he knew it unmistakably, and our loveaffair was going on so openly that if he had not been blinded by his amorous passion he would by now have perceived it from a thousand signs; and the more to assure himself of the truth he was telling him, he bade him look to it henceforward, for he would see clearly how Silvia without any restraint granted me exceptional favours. At this news Crisalvo must have been quite beside himself, as appeared from what followed therefrom. Henceforward he employed spies to watch my dealings with Silvia; and as on many occasions I sought to be alone with her, in order to speak not of the love he thought, but of things concerning mine, these were reported to Crisalvo, together with other favours prompted by pure friendship, which Silvia showed me at every step.

Whereat Crisalvo came to so desperate a pass, that many times he sought to kill me, though I did not think it was for such a cause, but on account of the long-standing enmity of our parents. But as he was Leonida's brother, I was more concerned to guard myself than to harm him, thinking it certain that if I married his sister our enmities would have an end. Of this he was quite ignorant, thinking rather that, because I was his enemy, I had sought to make love to Silvia, and not because I was really fond of her; and this increased his anger and resentment to such a degree that it robbed him of reason, though he had so little that little was needed to destroy it. And this evil thought wrought so strongly in him, that he came to loath Silvia as much as he had loved her, merely because she favoured me, not with the good-will he thought, but as Carino told him.

And so, in whatever circle or assembly he was, he spoke ill of Silvia, giving her dishonourable names and epithets. But as all knew his ugly character and Silvia's goodness, they lent little or no belief to his words. Meanwhile Silvia had arranged with Leonida that we two should be married, and, in order that it might be done with more safety to ourselves, that it would be well for Leonida, one day

when she came with Carino to her house, not to return that night to that of her parents, but to go thence in Carino's company to a village half a league distant from ours, where some rich kinsmen of mine lived, in whose house we could with greater peace effect our designs. For if Leonida's parents were not pleased at the issue, it would at least be easier, when she was away from them, to come to terms. This resolve having been taken, Carino was informed of it, and, displaying the greatest spirit, offered to Silvia to escort Leonida to the other village as she desired. The services I did to Carino for the good-will he showed, the promises I uttered to him, the embraces I gave him, would methinks have sufficed to extinguish in a heart of steel any evil purpose it might cherish against me. But that traitor of a Carino, casting behind him my words, deeds and promises, without regarding what he owed himself, planned the treason which now you shall hear. Having informed himself of Leonida's wish, and seeing that it agreed with what Silvia had told him, he planned that on the first night which from the appearance of the day promised to be dark, Leonida's departure should be effected, offering once more to maintain all possible secrecy and loyalty. After making this agreement which you have heard, he went off to Crisalvo, as I have since learnt, and told him that his kinswoman Silvia had gone so far in her loveaffair with me, that I had determined on a certain night to steal her from her parents' house, and take her to another village where my kinsmen dwelt. There an opportunity offered itself to avenge his feelings on both, on Silvia for the small account she had made of his services, on me for our long-standing enmity, and for the injury I had done him in robbing him of Silvia, since she was leaving him on my account alone. Carino knew how to exaggerate to him, and to say what he wanted, in such a way as, even with less effort, would have moved to any evil purpose a heart not so cruel as his. The day being now arrived which I thought was to be the day of my greatest bliss, after having told Carino not what he actually did do, but what he was to do, I went off to the other village to give orders how to receive Leonida. And to leave her entrusted to Carino was like leaving the innocent lamb in the power of the hungry wolves, or the gentle dove in the claws of the fierce hawk, who tears it to pieces. Ah, friend! when I come to this point with my imagination, I know not how I have strength to sustain life, nor thought to think of it, much more tongue to tell it! Ah, ill-advised Lisandro! How did you not know Carino's duplicity? Yet, who would not have trusted his words, since he risked so little in proving them true by deeds! Ah, ill-starred Leonida! how little did I know how to enjoy the favour you did me, in choosing me for your own! Finally, to end with the tragedy of my misfortune, you must know, discreet shepherd, that on the night Carino was to take Leonida with him to the village where I was expecting her, he summoned another shepherd, called

Libeo, who ought to have considered him an enemy, though Carino concealed it beneath his wonted false dissimulation, and asked him to accompany him that night, for he was resolved to carry off a shepherdess, his sweetheart, to the village I have told you, where he purposed to marry her. Libeo, a man of spirit and a lover himself, readily offered him his company.

Leonida bade farewell to Silvia with close embraces and loving tears, an omen, as it were, that it was to be the last farewell.

The hapless maid must needs have thought then of the treason she was committing against her parents; not of that Carino was planning against her, — and how bad a return she was making for the good opinion that was held about her in the village. But, passing over all these thoughts, constrained by the loving thought that vanquished her, she entrusted herself to the care of Carino, who was to conduct her to where I awaited her. How often do I call to mind when I reach this point, what I dreamed the day I would have counted fortunate, had the number of my days ended thereon! I remember that, leaving the village a little while before the sun withdrew his rays from our horizon, I sate me down at the foot of a tall ash tree on the very road by which Leonida was to come, waiting till night should close in a little more to further my purpose and to receive her, and without knowing how or wishing it, I fell asleep.

Scarce had I yielded my eyes to slumber when, methought, the tree against which I leaned, bending before the fury of a fierce wind that was blowing, tearing its deep roots out of the earth, fell upon my body, and attempting to get away from the heavy weight, I rolled from side to side. While in this plight methought I saw a white hind beside me, which I earnestly implored to lift, as well as it could, the heavy burden from my shoulders, and when moved with compassion, it was about to do it, at the same moment a fierce lion sprang from the thicket, and seizing it in his sharp claws, marched off with it through the forest. After I had escaped with great toil from the heavy burden, I went to look for it in the mountain, and found it torn and wounded in a thousand places. Whereat I felt so much grief that my soul was wrung from me merely by reason of the pity it had shown at my plight: and thus I began to weep in my dreams, so that the tears themselves awoke me, and finding my cheeks bathed with sorrow I was beside myself, pondering on what I had dreamed; but in the joy I hoped to have in seeing my Leonida, I failed to see then that fortune was showing me in dreams what was to happen in a short time to me awake.

At the moment when I awoke night had just closed in with such darkness, with such terrible thunder and lightning as furthered the perpetration of the cruel deed which that night was perpetrated. As Carino left Silvia's house with Leonida, he entrusted her to Libeo, telling him to go with her by the road to the



village I have mentioned, and though Leonida was perturbed at seeing Libeo, Carino assured her that Libeo was no less a friend of mine than he was, and that in security she could go with him slowly whilst he went forward to give me tidings of her approach. The guileless maid, being after all in love, believed the words of the treacherous Carino, and with less mistrust than was fitting, guided by the courteous Libeo, advanced her timid steps, which were to be the last of her life, thinking they led her to the height of her bliss. Carino went on before the two, as I have already told you, and gave information of what was happening to Crisalvo, who with four of his kinsmen was in ambush on the very road by which they were to pass, this being wholly shut in by forest on either side. He told them how Silvia was coming and I was the only one with her, and that they should rejoice at the good opportunity fate put in their hands to avenge the wrong we two had done him, and that he should be the first to prove the edge of his knife on Silvia, though she was a kinswoman of his. Immediately the five cruel butchers prepared to stain themselves in the innocent blood of the pair who came along the road all unsuspecting of such treason; when they reached the place where the ambush was, at once the traitorous murderers were on them, and surrounded them. Crisalvo came up to Leonida, thinking she was Silvia, and with insulting and excited words, in the hellish rage which mastered him, left her stretched on the ground with six mortal wounds, whilst Libeo weltered on the earth with countless stabs dealt by the other four, who thought they were inflicting them on me. When Carino saw how well his traitorous intent had turned out, without awaiting words, he went away, and the five traitors, fully satisfied as if they had done some notable exploit, returned to their village. Crisalvo went to Silvia's house himself to give her parents the news of what he had done, so as to increase their grief and pain, telling them to go and bury their daughter Silvia, whose life he had taken because she had set more store on the cold esteem of Lisandro his enemy, than on the unremitting attentions shown by him. Silvia, who heard what Crisalvo was saying, — her soul telling her what had happened, told him that she was alive, and free too from all that he had accused her of; and that he should be sure he had not killed one whose death would grieve him more than the loss of his own life. And with this she told him that his sister Leonida had that night left her house in unwonted apparel. Crisalvo was amazed to see Silvia alive, thinking for sure that he had left her dead, and being suddenly seized with great fear, immediately hastened to his house, and not finding his sister there, returned alone in the greatest consternation and frenzy to see who it was he had killed, since Silvia was alive.

Whilst all this was going on, I was awaiting Carino and Leonida with strange anxiety; and as it seemed to me that by this time they were later than they should

be, I wished to go and meet them, or learn if by any accident they had been detained that night. I had not gone far along the road when I heard a piteous voice saying: "Oh sovereign Maker of Heaven, withhold the hand of thy justice and open that of thy mercy in order to show mercy to this soul, which soon shall give account to thee of the offences it has committed against thee! Ah Lisandro, Lisandro! surely Carino's friendship will yet cost you your life, since it cannot be that grief for my having lost mine for your sake will put an end to it! Ah, cruel brother, can it be that without hearing my excuses you desired to inflict on me so soon the punishment of my error?" When I heard these words, I at once recognised from the voice and from them that it was Leonida who uttered them, and — an augury of my misfortune — with feelings in a turmoil, I set to groping where Leonida was weltering in her own blood; and, having at once recognised her, I let myself fall on her wounded body, and with the greatest grief possible, said to her: "What woe is this, my joy, my soul? what cruel hand was it that did not respect so much beauty?" At these words I was recognised by Leonida; and raising her weary arms with much effort, she threw them round my neck, and, pressing with all her strength, she joined her mouth to mine, and, with weak and broken utterance, spoke but these words to me: "My brother has killed me, Carino... betrayed, Libeo is without life, and may God give you yours, Lisandro mine, for long and happy years, and may he grant that I enjoy in another life the peace denied me here;" and, joining her mouth closer to mine, she pressed her lips together to give me her first and last kiss; and, as she opened them, her soul went from her, and she lay dead in my arms. When I perceived it, I abandoned myself to grief over her body, and remained senseless; and if, instead of being alive, I had been dead, whoever saw us in that plight had called to mind the hapless plight of Pyramus and Thisbe. But on coming to myself, I had opened my mouth to fill the air with cries and sobs, when I perceived some one coming with hurried steps to where I was; and, when he was near, though the night was dark, the eyes of my soul gave me assurance that he who came there was Crisalvo, as was the truth. He was coming back to convince himself whether perchance it was his sister Leonida he had killed. When I recognised him, before he could guard himself against me, I came upon him like a raging lion; and, giving him two blows, I brought him to the ground. Before he ceased to breathe, I dragged him to where Leonida was, and, placing in her dead hand the dagger her brother wore — the same with which she had been killed — I guided it and plunged it thrice through his heart. And mine being somewhat consoled by Crisalvo's death, without further delay I took upon my shoulders Leonida's body, and bore it to the village where my kinsmen lived. Telling them what had happened, I asked them to give it honourable burial, and immediately

determined to take on Carino the same vengeance as on Crisalvo; but, since he has kept away from our village, it has been delayed until to-day, when I found him on the skirts of this wood, after going about in search of him for six months. Now he has come to the end his treason deserved; and none now is left on whom to wreak vengeance, unless it be the life I endure so much against my will. This, shepherd, is the cause whence proceed the laments you have heard from me. If it seems to you sufficient to cause yet a deeper grief, I leave to your good judgment to determine!’

Therewith he ended his discourse, and set to weeping so copiously that Elicio could not refrain from keeping him company therein; but after they had for a long while eased with gentle sighs, the one the pain he suffered, the other the compassion he felt thereat, Elicio began to console Lisandro with the best arguments he knew, though his misfortune was as far beyond consolation as he had seen from its issue. Amongst other things he said to him, the one which gave Lisandro most solace was to tell him that in misfortunes beyond remedy, the best remedy was to hope for none; and, since one might believe from Leonida’s purity and noble disposition, according to his account, that she was enjoying a life of bliss, he should rather rejoice at the happiness she had gained, than grieve for that which she had lost. Whereto Lisandro replied: ‘I know full well, my friend, that your arguments have power to make me believe they are true; but not that they have — nor will all the arguments in the world have — power to give me any consolation. With Leonida’s death began my evil fortune, which will end when I behold her again; and since this cannot be without I die, the man who should help me to attain death will I count the greatest friend of my life!’

Elicio did not wish to give him more sorrow with his words of solace, since he did not regard them as such; only he asked him to come with him to his hut, where he might stay as long as it pleased him, offering him his friendship in all wherein he might be able to serve him. Lisandro thanked him as heartily as possible; and though he was unwilling to consent to go with Elicio, yet he had to do so, constrained by his repeated asking. And so the two arose, and came to Elicio’s cabin, where they rested for the little that remained of the night. Now when the white dawn was leaving the couch of her jealous husband, and beginning to give signs of the coming day, Erastro arose and began to put in order Elicio’s herd and his own to lead them to the accustomed pasture. Elicio invited Lisandro to come with him; and so, when the three shepherds came with their gentle flock of sheep through a ravine below, on ascending an incline, they heard the sound of a gentle pipe, which was straightway recognized by the two enamoured swains, Elicio and Erastro, for it was Galatea who was playing it. And it was not long before some sheep began to show themselves over the crest

of the hill, and immediately behind them Galatea, whose beauty was such that it were better to leave it to speak for itself, since words fail to enhance it. She came dressed like a girl of the mountains, with her long hair free to the wind, whereof the sun himself appeared to be envious, for, smiting it with his rays, he sought to rob it of lustre if he could; but that which came from the glimmer of it seemed another new sun.

Erastro was beside himself looking at her, and Elicio could not keep his eyes from gazing at her. When Galatea saw the flock of Elicio and Erastro join hers, she showed that she did not wish that day to keep them company, and called to the pet lamb of her flock, which the rest followed, and directed it to another spot, different from that for which the shepherds were making.

Elicio, seeing what Galatea was doing, and being unable to endure such open contempt, came to where the shepherdess was and said to her: 'Permit your flock, fair Galatea, to come with ours, and, if you do not like our company, choose that which will please you better, for your sheep will not, through your absence, lack good pasturage, since I, who was born to serve you, will take more care of them than of my own. Do not seek to disdain me so openly, for the pure affection I cherish towards you does not deserve it. According to the way you were taking, you were making for the spring of slates, but, now you have seen me, you wish to change your road; and, if this is as I think, tell me where you wish, to-day and always, to graze your herd, for I swear to you never to take mine there.'

'I assure you, Elicio,' replied Galatea, 'that it was not to shun your company or that of Erastro that I have changed the way you think I was taking, for my intention is to spend the noontide of to-day by the stream of palms, in the company of my friend Florisa, who is awaiting me there, for as early as yesterday we two agreed to graze our flocks there to-day. As I came along, heedlessly playing my pipe, the pet lamb took the road of slates, as more accustomed for it. For the affection you bear me and the offers you make me I thank you, and count it no small thing that I have justified myself against your suspicion.'

'Ah, Galatea!' replied Elicio, 'how well you invent what seems good to you, though you have so little need to use stratagem with me, for after all I do not seek to wish more than you wish! Now, whether you go to the stream of palms, to the wood of council, or to the spring of slates, be assured that you 'cannot go alone, for my soul accompanies you always; and, if you do not see it, it is because you do not wish to see it, so that you may not be obliged to heal it.'

'Until now,' said Galatea, 'I have yet to see my first soul, and so I am not to blame if I have healed none.'

‘I do not know how you can say that, fair Galatea,’ replied Elicio, ‘since you see them to wound them, and not to heal them.’

‘You accuse me falsely,’ replied Galatea, ‘in saying that I have wounded anyone without arms, seeing that these are not granted to women.’

‘Ah, discreet Galatea,’ said Elicio, ‘how you jest at what you perceive of my soul, which you have invisibly wounded, and with no other arms than those of your beauty! I do not so much complain of the wrong you have done me, as that you hold it in little account.’

‘I would hold myself in less account, if I held it in more, replied Galatea.

At this moment Erastro came up, and, seeing that Galatea was going off and leaving them, said to her:

‘Where are you going, whom do you flee, fair Galatea? If you part from us who adore you, who shall hope for your company? Ah fair foe! how heedlessly you go your way, triumphing over our affections! May Heaven destroy the warm affection I bear you, if I do not long to see you in love with some one who may value your complaints in the same degree as you value mine!

Do you laugh at what I say, Galatea? Then I weep at what you do.’

Galatea could not answer Erastro, for she was going away, guiding her flock towards the stream of palms; and bowing her head from afar in token of farewell, she left them. When she saw herself alone, whilst she was making for the spot where her friend Florisa thought she would be, with the exquisite voice Heaven had pleased to give her, she went along singing this sonnet: GALATEA.  
Away with noose and frost, with dart and fire,

Whereby to strangle, freeze, or wound or burn,  
Love doth essay. ’Tis vain: my soul doth yearn  
For no such knot, nor doth such flame desire.  
Let each bind, freeze, kill, press, consume in ire,  
’Gainst any other will its anger turn,  
But mine shall snow or net or arrow spurn,  
To hold me in its heat let none aspire.  
My chaste intent will chill the burning flame,  
The knot I shall break through by force or art,  
My glowing zeal will melt away the snows,  
The arrow shall fall blunted by my shame,  
And thus nor noose nor fire, nor frost nor dart,  
Shall make me fear, safe in secure repose.

With juster cause might beasts stand still, trees move and stones unite on hearing Galatea’s gentle song and sweet harmony than when to Orpheus’ lute,

Apollo's lyre, or Amphion's music the walls of Troy and Thebes of their own accord set themselves in the ground without any craftsman laying hand thereon, and the sisters, dark dwellers in deepest chaos, grew gentle at the exquisite voice of the unheeding lover. Galatea finished her song, and at the moment came to where Florisa was, by whom she was received with joyous mien, as being her true friend, and she to whom Galatea was wont to tell her thoughts. After the two had allowed their flocks to go at their will to graze on the green grass, they determined, invited by the clearness of the water of a stream flowing by, to wash their beauteous faces; for, to enhance their beauty, they had no need of the vain and irksome arts whereby those ladies in great cities who think themselves most beautiful, torture theirs. They remained as beautiful after washing as before, save that, through having rubbed their faces with their hands, their cheeks remained aflame and blushing-red, so that an indescribable beauty made them yet more fair, and especially Galatea. In her were seen united the three Graces whom the Greeks of old depicted naked to show (amongst other purposes) that they were mistresses of beauty. Straightway they began to gather divers flowers from the green meadow with intent to make each a garland wherewith to bind up the disordered tresses that flowed freely over their shoulders. In this task the two beauteous shepherdesses were engaged when of a sudden they saw, by the stream below, a shepherdess coming of gentle grace and bearing, whereat they wondered not a little, for it seemed to them that she was not a shepherdess of their village nor of the others near by: wherefore they looked at her with more attention and saw that she was coming gradually to where they were; and though they were quite near, she came so absorbed and lost in thought that she never saw them until they chose to show themselves. From time to time she stopped, and raising her eyes to Heaven, uttered sighs so piteous that they seemed to be torn from her innermost soul; at the same time she wrung her white hands, and tears like liquid pearls she let fall down her cheeks. From the extremes of grief the shepherdess displayed Galatea and Florisa perceived that her soul was filled with some inward grief, and to see on what her feelings were set, both hid themselves amongst some close-grown myrtles, and thence watched with curious gaze what the shepherdess was doing. She came to the brink of the stream, and with steadfast gaze stopped to watch the water running by; and letting herself fall on its bank, as one wearied, she hollowed one of her fair hands, and therein took up of the clear water, wherewith she bathed her moist eyes, saying with voice low and enfeebled: 'Ah water clear and cool, how little avails your coldness to temper the fire I feel in my soul! Vain will it be to hope from you — or indeed from all the waters the mighty ocean holds — the remedy I need; for if all were applied to the glowing passion that consumes me, you would produce

the same effect as do a few drops on the glowing forge which but increase the flame the more. Ah, sad eyes, cause of my ruin! to how lofty a height did I raise you for so great a fall! Ah fortune, enemy of my repose! with what haste didst thou hurl me from the pinnacle of my joy to the abyss of misery wherein I am! Ah cruel sister! how came it that Artidoro's meek and loving presence did not appease the anger of your breast devoid of love? What words could he say to you that you should give him so harsh and cruel a reply? It seems clear, sister, that you did not esteem him as much as I; for, if it were so, you would in truth have shown as much meekness as he obedience to you.'

All that the shepherdess said she mingled With such tears, that no heart could listen to her and not be moved to compassion; and after she had calmed her sorrowing breast for a while, to the sound of the water gently flowing by, she sang with sweet and dainty voice this gloss, adapting to her purpose an ancient verse: *Hope hath fled and will not stay*

*One thought only brings delight;  
Time that passes swift of flight  
Soon my life will take away.*

Two things, all the world among,

Help the lover to attain  
All that doth to Love belong:  
E'en desire the good to gain,  
Hope that makes the coward strong.  
Both within my bosom lay.  
No, 'twas in my stricken soul  
That they lurked to take away  
My desire to reach the goal.  
*Hope hath fled and will not stay.*

Though desire should cease to be,  
What time hope is on the wane,  
Yet 'tis not the same in me.  
My desire doth wax amain,  
Though my hope away doth flee.  
'Gainst the wounds my soul that blight  
I can take nor care nor thought,  
Martyr to my hapless plight,  
In the school where Love hath taught,  
*One thought only brings delight.*

Scarce the blessing from on high  
Had unto my fancy come,  
When, as gently they passed by,  
Heaven, fate, and bitter doom,  
With it from my soul did fly.  
Whoso for my grievous plight  
Fain would mourn, let him strike sail,



Into the haven of delight  
Glide more gently 'fore the gale  
*Than Time that passes swift of flight.*

Who that hath such woe as mine  
Would not faint beneath his fate?  
From such woes we may divine  
Joy to be a featherweight,  
Sorrow lead from deepest mine.  
Though my fortune be not gay,  
Though I falter to my knees,  
Yet this blessing is my stay:  
He who robbed me of my peace  
*Soon my life will take away.*

Soon the shepherdess ended her song, but not the tears which made it more sad. Moved to compassion thereby, Galatea and Florisa came out from where they lay concealed, and with loving and courteous words greeted the sad shepherdess, saying to her among other things: 'So may Heaven, fair shepherdess, show itself favourable to what you would ask of it, and so may you obtain from it what you desire, if you tell us (allowing that it be not displeasing to you), what fortune or what destiny has brought you to this region, for according to the experience we have of it, we have never seen you on these banks. Now that we have heard what you have just sung, gathering from it that your heart has not the calm it needs, and by reason of the tears you have shed, of which your lovely eyes gave witness, in the name of fair courtesy we are bound to give you all the solace in our power; and if your evil be of those that do not permit of consolation you will at least perceive in us a good will to serve you.'

'I know not, fair maidens,' replied the strange shepherdess, 'how I shall be able to repay you save by silence for the courteous offers you make me, unless by saying no more about it, and being grateful for it, and valuing them as much as they deserve it, and by not withholding from you what you wish to learn from me, although it would be better for me to pass by in silence the circumstances of my misfortunes, than to tell them and give you cause to count me immodest.'

'Your countenance and the gentle bearing that Heaven has given you,' replied Galatea, 'do not betoken an intellect so coarse as to make you do a thing in telling which afterwards you must needs lose reputation; and since your appearance and words have in so short a time made this impression on us, that we already count you discreet, prove to us, by telling us your life, whether your

misfortune comes up to your discretion.'

'As far as I believe,' replied the shepherdess, 'both are on a level, unless, indeed, fate has given me more judgment, the more to feel the griefs that present themselves; but I am quite sure that my woes exceed my discretion, in the same degree as all my craft is overcome by them, since I have none wherewith to cure them. And that experience may set you right, if you wish to hear me, fair maidens, I will tell you, in as few words! as possible, how, from the great understanding you judge I possess, has sprung the woe which surpasses it.'

'With nothing will you better satisfy our desires, discreet maiden,' replied Florisa, 'than with telling us what we have asked you.'

'Let us retire, then,' said the shepherdess, 'from this spot, and seek another, where, without being seen or disturbed, I may be able to tell you what it grieves me to have promised you, for I foresee that it will not cost more to lose the good opinion I have gained with you, than to reveal my thoughts to you, however late, if perhaps yours have not been touched by the affliction I am suffering.'

Desirous that the shepherdess should fulfil her promise, straightway the three arose, and betook themselves to a secret and retired place, known already to Galatea and Florisa, where, beneath the pleasant shade of some leafy myrtles, without being seen by anybody, all three could be seated. Forthwith, with exquisite grace and charm, the strange shepherdess began to speak in this wise: 'On the banks of the famous Henares, which ever yields fresh and pleasant tribute to your golden Tagus, most beauteous shepherdesses, was I born and nurtured in a station not so lowly, that I might count myself the meanest of the village. My parents are labourers and accustomed to field-labour, in which occupation I followed them, leading a flock of simple sheep over the common pastures of our village. So well did I adapt my thoughts to the condition in which my lot had placed me, that nothing gave me more joy than to see my flock multiply and increase, and I had no other thought save how to gain for them the richest and most fertile pastures, the clearest and freshest waters I could find. I had not, nor could I have, cares beyond those that might arise from the rustic duties on which I was engaged. The woods were my companions, in whose solitude, oftentimes invited by the sweet birds' gentle harmony, I sent forth my voice in a thousand simple songs, without mingling therein sighs or words that might give any token of a love-sick breast.

Ah! how often, merely to please myself and to allow the time to pass away, did I wander from bank to bank, from vale to vale, culling, here the white lily, there the purple iris, here the red rose, there the fragrant pink, making from every kind of sweet-smelling flowers a woven garland, wherewith I adorned and bound up my hair; and then, viewing myself in the clear and peaceful waters of

some spring, I remained so joyous at having seen myself, that I would not have changed my happiness for any other! And how often did I make sport of some maidens, who, thinking to find in my breast some manner of pity for the misery theirs felt, disclosed to me, with abundance of tears and sighs, the love-secrets of their soul! I remember now, fair shepherdesses, that one day there came to me a girl friend of mine: throwing her arms round my neck, and joining her face to mine, she said to me with streaming eyes: "Ah, sister Teolinda!" (for this is the name of the hapless being before you). "I truly believe the end of my days has come, since love has not dealt with me as my desires deserved."

Whereupon I, wondering at her display of grief, thinking that some great misfortune had befallen her, in the loss of her flock, or the death of her father or brother, wiped her eyes with the sleeve of my smock, and asked her to tell me what misfortune it was that caused her to lament so much. She, continuing her tears, nor giving truce to her sighs, said to me: "What greater misfortune, oh Teolinda, would you have happen to me, than that the son of the chief man in our village, whom I love more than the very eyes in my head, should have gone away without saying a word to me; and that I have this morning seen in possession of Leocadia, daughter of the head shepherd Lisalco, a crimson belt which I had given to that false Eugenio, whereby was confirmed the suspicion I had of the loveaffair the traitor was carrying on with her?" When I ceased hearing her complaints, I swear to you, friends and ladies mine, that I could not cease from laughing within myself, and saying to her: "By my faith, Lydia," (for so the unhappy girl was called) "I thought from your complaints that you came stricken with another and a greater wound. But now I know how void of sense are you who fancy yourselves in love, in making much ado about such childish things. Tell me on your life, dear Lydia, what is the worth of a crimson belt, that it should grieve you to see it in Leocadia's possession or to find that Eugenio has given it to her? You would do better to consider your honour and what concerns the pasturage of your sheep, and not to mix yourself up with these fooleries of love, since we draw nothing from them, so far as I see, but loss of honour and of peace."

When Lydia heard from me a reply so contrary to the one she hoped for from my lips and pitying disposition, she did nothing but bow her head, and adding tear to tear and sob to sob, went from me; and after a little while, turning her head, she said to me: "I pray God, Teolinda, that soon you may see yourself in a state, compared to which you would count mine happy, and that love may so treat you that you may tell your grief to one who will value it and feel it in such wise as you have done mine and therewith she went away, and I was left laughing at her madness. But ah! poor me! I perceive clearly at every moment

that her curse is working in me, since even now I fear that I am telling my grief to one who will sorrow but little at having learnt it!’

Thereto Galatea replied: ‘Would to God, discreet Teolinda, that you might find a remedy for your loss as easily as you will find in us pity for it, for you would soon lose the suspicion you cherish of our sympathy.’

‘Your lovely presence, sweet shepherdesses, and pleasant converse,’ replied Teolinda, ‘make me hope so; but my poor fortune compels me to fear the contrary. Yet, come what may, I must now tell you what I have promised you. With the freedom I have told you, and in the pursuits I have related to you, I passed my life so joyously and peacefully that desire knew not what to bid me do, until avenging love came to exact from me a strict account for the small account in which I held him, wherein he vanquished me in such a way that though I am his slave I fancy that he is not yet paid nor satisfied. It happened then, that one day (which would have been for me the happiest of the days of my life, had not time and season brought such a decrease to my joys), I went with other shepherdesses of our village to cut branches and gather rushes and flowers and green sword-lilies to adorn the temple and streets of our native place; for the following day was a most high festival, and the inhabitants of our hamlet were bound by vow and promise to keep it. We chanced to pass all together through a delightful wood which is situated between the village and the river, where we found a group of graceful shepherds, who were spending the heat of the glowing noontide in the shade of the green trees. When they saw us, we were at once recognised by them, for they were all cousins or brothers or kinsmen of ours, and coming to meet us and learning from us the purpose we had in view, they persuaded and constrained us with courteous words not to go farther, for that some of them would fetch the branches and flowers for which we were going.

And so, being overcome by their prayers — they were so earnest — we granted their desire, and forthwith six of the youngest, equipped with their bill-hooks, went off in great glee to bring us the green spoils we sought. We girls (there were six of us) went to where the other shepherds stood; and they received us with all courtesy, especially a strange shepherd who was there, known to none of us, who was of such noble grace and spirit that all stood wondering on seeing him, but I stood wondering and overcome. I know not what to tell you, shepherdesses, save that as soon as my eyes beheld him, I felt my heart grow tender and there began to course through all my veins a frost that set me aflame, and without knowing why, I felt my soul rejoice to have set eyes on the handsome face of the unknown shepherd; and, in a moment, though I was inexperienced in the ways of love, I recognised that it was love that had stricken me; straightway had I wished to make my plaint of him, if time and

circumstances had permitted. In short I then remained as now I am, overcome and filled with love, though with more hope of recovery than I now possess. Ah! how often in that hour did I long to go to Lydia, who was with us, and say to her: "Forgive me, Lydia dear, for the discourteous reply I gave you the other day, for I would have you know that now I have more experience of the woe you complained of than you yourself!" One thing fills me with wonder, how all the maidens there failed to see from the workings of my face the secrets of my heart, and the cause of this must have been that all the shepherds turned to the stranger and begged him to finish the singing of a song he had begun before we came up. He, without waiting to be pressed, continued the song he had begun, with so exquisite and marvellous a voice that all who listened to it were transported at hearing it. Then at last I yielded myself all in all to all that love demanded, without there being left in me more desire than if I had never had any for anything in my life. And, although I was more entranced than all on hearing the shepherd's sweet melody, yet I did not fail to lend the greatest attention to what he sang in his verses; for love had already brought me to such a pass that it would have touched me to the soul, had I heard him singing a lover's themes, since I would have fancied that his thoughts were already engaged, and perchance in a quarter where mine might have no share in what they desired. But what he then sang was nothing but praises of the shepherd's lot and the peaceful life of the fields, and some useful counsels for the preservation of the flock; whereat I was not a little pleased; for it seemed to me that if the shepherd had been in love, he would have treated of naught but his love, since it is the way of lovers to think time ill-spent which is spent on aught save extolling and praising the cause of their griefs or joys. Mark, friends, in how short a space I became mistress in the school of love. The end of the shepherd's song and the first sight of those who came with the branches occurred at the same moment; and the youths, to one who saw them from afar, looked for all the world like a little hillock moving along trees and all, as they came in staid procession covered with branches. As they came near us, the six all raised their voices, and, one beginning and all replying, with tokens of the greatest joy and with many merry shouts, began a graceful chant. Amidst this joy and happiness they came nearer than I wished, for they deprived me of the happiness I felt at the sight of the shepherd. When they had laid down their green burden, we saw that each had a lovely garland entwined round his arm, composed of various charming flowers, which with graceful words they presented, one to each of us, offering to carry the branches to the village; but we, full of joy, thanked them for their fair courtesy and wished to return to the village, when Eleuco, an old shepherd who was there, said to us: "It will be well, fair shepherdesses, that you should repay

us for what our youths have done for you by leaving us the garlands you are taking away over and above what you came to seek; but it must be on condition that you give them to whomsoever you think fit, with your own hands.”

“If you will be satisfied by so small a return from us,” replied one of the maidens, “I for my part am content,” and taking the garland with both hands placed it on the head of a gallant cousin of hers.

The others, guided by this example, gave theirs to different youths who were there, all of them their kinsmen. I who remained to the last, and had no kinsman there, affecting a certain indifference, went up to the strange shepherd and placed the garland on his head, saying to him: “For two reasons I give you this, fair youth, one, for the pleasure you have given us all by your charming song, the other, because in our village it is our custom to honour strangers.” All the bystanders were delighted with my action, but how can I tell you what my soul felt when I saw myself so near to him who had stolen it away? I can only say that I would have given any happiness I could have wished for at that moment (save that of loving him), to be able to encircle his neck with my arms as I encircled his brows with the garland.

The shepherd bowed to me and with well-chosen words thanked me for the favour I did him, and as he took his leave of me, stealing the opportunity from the many eyes that were there, with low voice said to me: “I have rewarded you, fair shepherdess, better than you think, for the garland you have given me; you take a pledge with you, and if you know how to value it, you will perceive that you remain my debtor.” I would gladly have answered him, but such was the haste my companions imposed on me that I had no chance of replying to him. In this wise I returned to the village with a heart so different from that wherewith I had set out that I myself marvelled at myself. Company was irksome to me, and every thought that came to me and did not tend to thinking of my shepherd, with much haste I strove forthwith to put away from my mind as unworthy to occupy the place that was full of loving cares. I know not how in so short a time I became changed into a being other than that of old; for I no longer lived in myself but in Artidoro (for such is the name of the half of my soul I go seeking). Wherever I turned my eyes, I seemed to see his face; whatever I heard, straightway his gentle music and melody sounded in my ears; nowhere did I move my feet but I had given my life, if he had desired it, to find him there; in food I did not find the wonted savour nor did my hands succeed in finding aught to give it. In a word, all my senses were changed from their former state, nor did my soul work through them as it was used to do. In the consideration of the new Teolinda who was born within me, and in the contemplation of the shepherd’s grace that remained imprinted on my soul, all that day passed away from me,

and the night preceding the solemn festival; and when this came, it was celebrated with the greatest rejoicing and enthusiasm by all the inhabitants of our village and of the neighbouring places. After the sacred offerings in the temple were ended and the ceremonies due performed, well-nigh most of the people of the hamlet came together in a broad square before the temple, beneath the shade of four ancient leafy poplars which were therein, and all forming a circle, left a space for the youths from near and far to disport themselves in honour of the festival in various pastoral games.

Straightway on the instant a goodly number of fit and lusty shepherds showed themselves in the square, and giving joyous tokens of their youth and skill, began a thousand graceful games.

Now they tossed the heavy caber, now they showed the lightness of their supple limbs in unwonted leaps, now they revealed their great strength and dexterous craft in complicated wrestling bouts, now they proved the swiftness of their feet in long races, each one striving so to acquit himself in all that he might win the first prize out of the many the chief men of the village had offered for the best who should excel in such sports; but in these I have mentioned, and in many others which I pass by so as not to be tedious, none of all the neighbours or men of the district present achieved as much as my Artidoro, who chose by his presence to honour and gladden our festival, and to carry off the highest honour and prize in all the games that were held. Such, shepherdesse, was his skill and spirit, so great the praises all gave him, that I grew proud, and an unwonted joy revelled in my breast at the mere reflection that I had known to fill my thoughts so well. But despite this it gave me very great grief that Artidoro, being a stranger, would have soon to depart from our village; and, if he went away without at least knowing what he took from me — that is, my soul — what a life would be mine in his absence, or how could I forget my sorrow, at least by lamenting, since I had no one to complain of save myself? Whilst I was occupied with these fancies, the festival and rejoicing ended; and when Artidoro would have taken leave of the shepherds, his friends, they all joined in asking him to spend with them the eight remaining days of the festival, if nothing more pleasing prevented it.

“Nothing can give me greater pleasure, kind shepherds,” replied Artidoro, “than to serve you in this and all else that your wish may be; for although it was my wish now to go and seek a brother of mine, who has for a few days been missing from our village, I will fulfil your desire, since it is I who gain thereby.”

All thanked him greatly, and were pleased at his remaining; but I was more so, thinking that in those eight days an opportunity could not fail to present itself to me, when I might reveal to him what I could no longer conceal. We spent nearly

all that night in dances and games, and in telling one another the feats we had seen the shepherds perform that day, saying: "Such a one danced better than such a one, though so and so knew more turns than so and so; Mingo threw Bras, but Bras ran better than Mingo:" and finally, all came to the conclusion that Artidoro, the strange shepherd, bore off the palm from all, each one praising in detail his graces one by one; and all these praises, I have already said, redounded to my delight. When the morning of the day after the festival came, before fresh dawn lost the pearly dew from her lovely locks, and the sun had fully displayed his rays on the peaks of the neighbouring mountains, some twelve of us shepherdesses, the most admired of the village, came together, and, linking hands, to the sound of a flageolet and a bagpipe, weaving and unweaving intricate turns and dance movements, we went from the village to a green meadow not far away, giving great pleasure to all who saw our mazy dance.

And fortune, which so far was guiding my affair from good to better, ordained that in that same meadow we should find all the shepherds of the place, and Artidoro with them. When they saw us, straightway attuning the sound of a tabor they had to that of our pipes, they came forth to meet us with the same measure and dance, mingling with us in bewildering but well ordered maze; and as the instruments changed their note, we changed the dance, so that we shepherdesses had to unlink and give our hands to the shepherds; and my good fortune willed that I should chance to give mine to Artidoro. I know not, my friends, how to describe fully to you what I felt at such a moment, unless by telling you that I was so perturbed, that I failed to keep fitting step in the dance; so much so that Artidoro was obliged to draw me violently after him, in order that the thread of the measured dance might not be broken if he let me go. Seizing the opportunity for it, I said to him: "Wherein has my hand offended you, Artidoro, that you press it so hard?" He replied in a voice that could be heard by none: "Nay, what has my soul done to you that you use it so ill?"

"My offence is clear," I replied gently; "but for yours, neither do I see it, nor will it be seen."

"This is just the mischief," replied Artidoro, "that you can see your way to do evil, but not to cure it." Herewith our discourse ended, for the dancing ended, and I remained happy and thoughtful at what Artidoro had said to me; and though I thought they were loving words, they did not convince me that they came from one in love. Straightway we all, shepherds and shepherdesses, sate down on the green grass; and when we had rested a while from the fatigue of the dances that were over, the aged Eleuco, attuning his instrument, which was a rebeck, to the pipe of another shepherd, asked Artidoro to sing something, for he should so rather than any other, since Heaven had bestowed such talent on him



that it were ingratitude to wish to conceal it.

Artidoro, thanking Eleuco for the praises he gave him, straightway began to sing some verses; and I fixed them in my memory, since the words he had spoken to me before had given me a suspicion, so that even now I have not forgotten them. Though it may be irksome to you to hear them, I shall have to repeat them to you, only because they are needful for you to understand, stage by stage, through what stages love has brought me to the pass in which I find myself. They are as follows: Wild, close-confined and gloomy be his night,

Never may he behold the longed-for day,  
Incessant and unending be his woe,  
Far, far away from bliss, and joy, and laughter,  
Ought he to be, wrapt in a living death,  
Whoso without sweet Love shall spend his life.

Full though it be of joyousness, yet life  
Naught save the shade can be of briefest night,  
The veritable counterfeit of death,  
If during all the hours that fill the day  
It doth not silence every pang of woe,  
And gladly, gladly welcome Love's sweet laughter.

Where liveth gentle Love, there liveth laughter,  
And where Love dieth, dieth too our life,  
Our choicest pleasure is transformed to woe,  
Into the darkness of eternal night  
Is changed the radiance of the peaceful day,  
Life without Love is naught but bitter death.

Dangers wherein the issue is but death  
The lover doth not flee: rather with laughter  
He seeks his chance and longeth for the day,  
When he may offer up his treasured life —  
Until he shall behold the last calm night —  
Unto Love's flame, and unto Love's sweet woe.

The woe that is of Love, we call not woe,  
Nor yet the death that Love bestoweth, death:  
Let none to Love's night give the name of night,  
Nor call Love's laughter by the name of laughter.

His life alone can be accounted life,  
Our only merriment his joyous day.

Oh blest, thrice-blest to me this happy day,  
Whereon I can restrain my bitter woe,  
Rejoicing that I have bestowed my life  
On her who can bestow or life or death!  
What will it be, what can I hope save laughter  
From that proud face that turns the sun to night?

Love hath my cloudy night to cloudless day  
Transformed, to laughter my increasing woe,  
And my approaching death to length of life.

These were the verses, fair shepherdesses, which my Artidoro sang that day with wondrous grace and no less pleasure on the part of those that heard him. From them, and from the words he had spoken to me before, I took occasion to consider if by chance the sight of me had caused some new sensation of love in Artidoro's breast; and my suspicion did not turn out so vain, but that he himself justified it to me on our return to the village.'

Teolinda had reached this point in the tale of her love, when the shepherdesses heard a great uproar of shepherds shouting and dogs barking. This caused them to end the discourse they had begun, and to stop and observe through the branches what it was; in this way they saw a pack of hounds crossing a green plain on their right hand, in pursuit of a timid hare, that was coming with all speed to take shelter in the dense underwood.

It was not long before the shepherdesses saw it coming to the same place where they were, and going straight to Galatea's side. There, overcome by the fatigue of its long course, and almost as it were safe from the peril nigh at hand, it sank down on the ground with such wearied breath, that it seemed on the point of breathing its last. The hounds pursued it by scent and track, until they came to where the shepherdesses were; but Galatea, taking the timid hare in her arms, checked the vengeful purpose of the eager hounds, for it seemed to her not to be right to fail to defend a creature that had sought her aid. Soon after there approached some shepherds, following the hounds and the hare; and amongst them came Galatea's father, out of respect for whom Florisa, Teolinda and she went out to meet him with due courtesy. He and the shepherds were filled with wonder at Teolinda's beauty, and desired to know who she was, for they saw clearly that she was a stranger. Galatea and Florisa were not a little annoyed at

their approach, seeing that it had robbed them of the pleasure of learning the issue of Teolinda's love; and they asked her to be good enough not to leave their company for some days, if the accomplishment of her desires were not by chance hindered thereby.

'Nay, rather,' replied Teolinda, 'it suits me to remain a day or two on this bank, to see if they can be accomplished; and on this account, as also not to leave unfinished the story I have begun, I must do what you bid me.'

Galatea and Florisa embraced her, and offered her their friendship anew, and to serve her to the best of their power.

Meanwhile Galatea's father and the other shepherds, having spread their cloaks on the margin of the clear stream, and drawn from their wallets some country fare, invited Galatea and her companions to eat with them. They accepted the invitation, and, sitting down forthwith, they sated their hunger, which was beginning to weary them as the day was already far spent. In the course of these doings, and of some stories the shepherds told to pass the time, the accustomed hour approached for returning to the village. Straightway Galatea and Florisa, returning to their flocks, collected them once more, and, in the company of fair Teolinda and the other shepherds, gradually made their way to the hamlet; and at the break of the hill where that morning they had happened on Elicio, they all heard the pipe of the unloving Lenio, a shepherd in whose breast love could never take up his abode; and thereat he lived in such joy and content, that in whatever converse or gathering of shepherds he found himself, his sole intent was to speak ill of love and lovers, and all his songs tended to this end. By reason of this strange disposition of his, he was known by all the shepherds in all those parts, and by some he was loathed, by others held in esteem. Galatea and those who came there stopped to listen, to see if Lenio was singing anything, as was his wont, and straightway they saw him give his pipe to a companion, and begin to sing what follows to its sound: LENIO. An idle careless thought that wanders free,

A foolish vaunting fancy of the mind,  
A something that no being hath nor kind,  
Nor yet foundation, nursed by memory,  
A grief that takes the name of jollity,  
An empty hope that passes on the wind,  
A tangled night where none the day may find,  
A straying of the soul that will not see.

These are the very roots wherefrom, I swear,  
This old chimera fabled hath its birth,

Which beareth o'er the world the name of Love.  
The soul that thus on Love doth set its care,  
Deserveth to be banished from the earth,  
And win no shelter in the heavens above.

At the time that. Lenio was singing what you have heard, Elicio and Erastro had already come up with their flocks in the company of the hapless Lisandro; and Elicio, thinking that Lenio's tongue in speaking ill of love went beyond what was right, wished clearly to show him his error, and, adopting the very theme of the verses he had sung, at the moment Galatea, Florisa, Teolinda and the other shepherds came up, to the sound of Erastro's pipe he began to sing in this wise:  
ELICIO. Whosoever keepeth Love,

In his breast a prisoner close,  
Hurl him down from heaven above,  
Give him not on earth repose.

Love a virtue is unending,  
Virtues many more attaining,  
Semblance after semblance gaining,  
To the primal cause ascending.  
Whosoever from such love,  
Shall be banished by his woes;  
Hurl him down from heaven above,  
Grant him not on earth repose.

A fair form, a lovely face,  
Though but mortal, doomed to fade,  
Are but copies, where portrayed  
We may see the heavenly grace.  
Grace on earth who doth not love,  
Nor to it allegiance owes,  
Shall be hurled from heaven above,  
Nor on earth shall find repose.

Love, when taken quite apart,  
And untainted with alloy,  
Filleth all the world with joy,  
Even as Apollo's dart,  
Whoso hath mistrust of Love,

Love that hides its blessing close,  
Shall not win to heaven above,  
But in deepest earth repose.

For a thousand joys a debtor,  
Each of us to Love is seen,  
For 'tis Love that turns, I ween,  
Bad to good, and good to better.  
He who lets his fancies rove,  
E'en a hair's breadth from Love's woes,  
Shall not win to heaven above,  
Nor on earth find sure repose.

Love indeed is infinite,  
If but honour be its stay;  
But the love that dies away  
Is not love, but appetite.  
Whoso shall the veil of love  
Raise not, but his heart shall close,  
Slay him, lightning from above!  
Earth, permit him not repose!

The shepherds given to love felt no small pleasure at seeing how well Elicio defended his view: but the loveless Lenio did not on this account cease to remain firm in his opinion; nay, rather, he sought anew to resume his song and to show in what he sang how ineffectual Elicio's reasonings were to darken the bright truth which, following his judgment, he upheld. But Galatea's father, who was called Aurelio the venerable, said to him!

'Don't weary yourself for the present, discreet Lenio, in seeking to show us in your song what you feel in your heart, for the road from here to the village is short, and it seems to me more time is needed than you think to defend yourself against the many who hold a view contrary to yours. Keep your reasonings for a more convenient spot, for some day you and Elicio with other shepherds will be together at the spring of slates or the stream of palms, where, with greater ease and comfort, you may be able to discuss and make clear your different opinions.'

'The opinion Elicio holds is mere opinion,' replied Lenio, 'but mine is absolute knowledge, and proved, which, sooner or later, forced me to uphold it, seeing that it carried truth with it; but, as you say, there will not fail a time more fitting for this end.'

‘This will I arrange,’ answered Elicio, ‘for it grieves me that so fine an intellect as yours, friend Lenio, should lack what might improve it and enhance it, like the pure and true love whose enemy you show yourself.’

‘You are deceived, Elicio,’ replied Lenio, ‘if you think by specious words and sophisms to make me change principles I would not hold it manly to change.’

‘It is as wrong,’ said Elicio, ‘to persist in wrong, as it is good to persevere in good, and I have always heard my elders say it is the part of the wise to take counsel.’

‘I do not deny that,’ answered Lenio, ‘whenever I see that my judgment is not correct; but so long as experience and reason do not show me the contrary to what they have shown me hitherto, I believe that my opinion is as true as yours is false.’

‘If the heretics of love were to be punished,’ said Erastro at this point, ‘I would begin from this moment, friend Lenio, to cut wood wherewith to burn you for the greatest heretic and enemy that love has.’

‘And even though I saw naught of love, save that you, Erastro, follow it, and are of the band of lovers,’ replied Lenio, ‘that alone would suffice to make me renounce it with a hundred thousand tongues, if a hundred thousand I had.’

‘Do you think then, Lenio,’ answered Erastro, ‘that I am not fit to be a lover?’

‘Nay,’ replied Lenio, ‘I think that men of your disposition and understanding are fitted to be among love’s servants; for he who is lame falls to the ground at the slightest stumble, and he who has little wisdom, wants but little time to lose it all; and as for those who follow the banner of this your valorous captain, I for my part hold that they are not the wisest in the world; and if they have been, they ceased to be it, the moment they fell in love.’

Great was the displeasure Erastro felt at what Lenio said, and thus he answered him:

‘I think, Lenio, your insane reasonings deserve another punishment than words; but I hope that some day you will pay for what you have just said, without being aided by what you might say in your defence.’

‘If I knew of you, Erastro,’ answered Lenio, ‘that you were as brave as you are fond, your threats would not fail to fill me with dread: but, as I know you are as backward in the one, as in the other you are to the fore, they cause laughter in me rather than terror.’

Here Erastro lost all patience, and if it had not been for Lisandro and Elicio, who placed themselves between, he had replied to Lenio with his fists; for by this time his tongue, confused with rage, could scarce perform its office. Great was the pleasure all felt at the sprightly quarrel of the shepherds, and more at the rage and displeasure Erastro displayed; for it was necessary that Galatea’s father

should make peace between Lenio and him, though Erastro, if it had not been for fear of losing the respect of his lady's father, would in no way have made it. As soon as the matter was ended, all with rejoicing went their way to the village, and whilst they were going, the fair Florisa, to the sound of Galatea's pipe, sang this sonnet: FLORISA. With increase may my tender lambs be crowned

Amidst the grassy mead or forest's fold: —  
Throughout the summer's heat or winter's cold  
May herbage green and cooling streams abound.  
May I through all my days and nights be found  
Wrapt but in dreamings of a shepherd's life;  
In no wise yielding to Love's petty strife,  
Nor may his childish acts have power to wound.  
Here one Love's countless blessings doth proclaim,  
Love's fruitless cares another maketh known.  
I cannot say if both be brought to shame,  
Nor yet to whom to give the victor's crown.  
This much I know: that many Love by name  
May call, yet few are chosen for his own.

Short indeed was the road to the shepherds, beguiled and entertained by the charming voice of Florisa, who ceased not her song till they were quite near the village and the huts of Elicio and Erastro, who stopped there with Lisandro, first taking leave of the venerable Aurelio, Galatea, and Florisa, who went with Teolinda to the village, the remaining shepherds going each to where he had his hut. That same night the hapless Lisandro asked leave of Elicio to return to his country or to where he might, in harmony with his desire, finish the little of life that, as he thought, remained to him. Elicio with all the arguments he could urge on him, and with the endless offers of true friendship he made him, could by no means prevail on him to remain in his company even for a few days; and so the luckless shepherd, embracing Elicio with many tears and sighs, took leave of him, promising to inform him of his condition wherever he might be. Elicio, having accompanied him half a league from his hut, again embraced him closely; and making again fresh offers, they parted, Elicio being in great grief for what Lisandro suffered. And so he returned to his hut to spend the greater part of the night in amorous fancies and to await the coming day that he might enjoy the happiness the sight of Galatea caused him. And she, when she reached her village, desiring to learn the issue of Teolinda's love, arranged so that Florisa, Teolinda and she might be alone that night; and finding the opportunity she desired, the love-sick shepherdess continued her story as will be seen in the

second book.



## BOOK II.

BEING now free and relieved from what they had to do that night with their flocks, they arranged to retire and withdraw with Teolinda to a spot where they might, without being hindered by anyone, hear what was lacking of the issue of her love. And so they betook themselves to a little garden by Galatea's house; and, the three seating themselves beneath a stately green vine which entwined itself in an intricate manner along some wooden network, Teolinda repeated once more some words of what she had said before and went on, saying: 'After our dance and Artidoro's song were ended, as I have already told you, fair shepherdesses, it seemed good to all of us to return to the village to perform in the temple the solemn rites, and because it likewise seemed to us that the solemnity of the feast in some way gave us liberty; but not being so punctilious as to seclusion, we enjoyed ourselves with more freedom.

Wherefore we all, shepherds and shepherdesses, in a confused mass, with gladness and rejoicing returned to the village, speaking each with the one who pleased him best. Fate, and my care, and Artidoro's solicitude also ordained that, without any display of artifice in the matter, we two kept apart from the rest in such a manner that on the way we might safely have said more than what we did say, if each of us had not respected what we owed to ourselves and to each other. At length I said to him, to draw him out, as the saying goes: "The days you have spent in our village, Artidoro, will be years to you, since in your own you must have things to occupy you which must give you greater pleasure."

"All that I can hope for in my life," replied Artidoro, "would I exchange, if only the days I have to spend here might be, not years, but centuries, since, when they come to an end, I do not hope to pass others that may give me greater joy."

"Is the joy you feel so great," I replied "at seeing our festivals?"

"It does not arise from this," he answered, "but from regarding the beauty of the shepherdesses of your village."

"In truth," I retorted, "pretty girls must be wanting in yours."

"The truth is that they are not wanting there," he replied, "but that here there is a superabundance, so that one single one I have seen is enough for those of yonder place to count themselves ugly compared to her."

"Your courtesy makes you say this, oh Artidoro," I replied, "for I know full well that in this hamlet there is no one who excels so much as you say."

"I know better that what I say is true," he answered, "since I have seen the one

and beheld the others.”

“Perhaps you beheld her from afar, and the distance between,” said I, “made you see a different thing from what it really was.”

“In the same way,” he replied, “as I see and am beholding you now, I beheld and saw her. Happy should I be to have been mistaken, if her disposition does not agree with her beauty.”

“It would not grieve me to be the one you say, for the pleasure she must feel who sees herself proclaimed and accounted beautiful.”

“I would much rather that you were not,” replied Artidoro. “Then what would you lose,” I answered, “if instead of not being the one you say, I were?”

“What I have gained, I know full well,” he replied, “as to what I have to lose, I am doubtful and in fear.”

“You know well how to play the lover, Artidoro,” said I. “You know better how to inspire love, Teolinda,” he replied. Thereon I said to him, “I do not know if I should tell you, Artidoro, that I wish neither of us to be deceived.” Whereto he replied, “I am quite sure that I am not deceived, and it is in your hands to seek to undeceive yourself as often as you seek to make trial of the pure desire I have to serve you.”

“I will reward you for that,” I answered, “with the same desire; for it seems to me that it would not be well to remain indebted to anybody where the cost is so small.” At this moment, without his having a chance to reply to me, the head-shepherd Eleuco came up, saying in a loud voice: “Ho, gay shepherds and fair shepherdesses, make them hear our approach in the village, you singing some chant, maidens, so that we can reply to you, in order that the people of the hamlet may see how much we who are on our way here, do to make our festival joyous.” And because in nothing that Eleuco commanded did he fail to be obeyed, straightway the shepherds beckoned to me to begin; and so, availing myself of the opportunity, and profiting by what had passed with Artidoro, I commenced this chant: Whosoever by much striving

Would the perfect lover be  
*Honour needs and secrecy.*

Wouldst thou seek with heart elate  
Love's sweet joy to reach aright,  
Take as key to thy delight  
Honour, secrecy as gate.  
Who thereby would enter straight,  
Wise and witty though he be  
*Honour needs and secrecy.*

Whoso loveth human beauty,  
With reproach is oft confounded,  
If his passion be not bounded  
By his honour and his duty:  
And such noble love as booty  
Winneth every man, if he  
*Honour have and secrecy.*

Everyone this truth hath known,  
And it cannot be denied,  
That speech oft will lose the bride  
Whom a silent tongue hath won,  
And he will all conflict shun  
Who a lover is, if he  
*Honour have and secrecy.*

Chattering tongues, audacious eyes,  
May have brought a thousand cares,  
May have set a thousand snares  
For the soul, and so it dies.

Whoso would his miseries  
Lessen, and from strife be free,  
*Honour needs and secrecy.*

‘I know not, fair shepherdesses, if in singing what you have heard I succeeded; but I know very well that Artidoro knew how to profit by it, since all the time he was in our village, though he often spoke to me, it was with so much reserve, secrecy, and modesty that idle eyes and chattering tongues neither had nor saw aught to say that might be prejudicial to our honour. But in the fear I had that, when the period Artidoro had promised to spend in our village was ended, he would have to go to his own, I sought, though at the cost of my modesty, that my heart should not remain with the regret of having kept silence on what it were useless to speak afterwards, when Artidoro had gone. And so, after my eyes gave leave for his most beauteous eyes to gaze on me lovingly, our tongues were not still, nor failed to show with words what up till then the eyes had so clearly declared by sign. Finally, you must know, friends, that one day when I found myself by chance alone with Artidoro, he disclosed to me, with tokens of an ardent love and courtesy, the true and honourable love he felt for me; and though I would have wished to play the reluctant prude, yet, because I was afraid, as I have already told you, that he would go, I did not wish to disdain him nor to dismiss him, and also because it seemed to me that the lack of sympathy, inspired or felt at the beginning of a love-affair, is the reason why those who are not very experienced in their passion, abandon and leave the enterprise they have begun. Wherefore I gave him answer such as I desired to give him. We agreed in the resolve that he should repair to his village, and a few days after should by some honourable mediation send to ask me in marriage from my parents; whereat he was so happy and content that he did not cease to call the day fortunate on which his eyes beheld me. As for me, I can tell you that I would not have changed my happiness for any other that could be imagined; for I was sure that Artidoro’s worth and good qualities were such that my father would be happy to receive him as a son-in-law. The happy climax you have heard, shepherdesses, was the climax of our love, for only two or three days remained before Artidoro’s departure, when fortune, as one who never set bounds to her designs, ordained that a sister of mine, a little younger than I, should return to our village from another where she had been for some days, in the house of an aunt of ours who was ill. And in order that you may see, ladies, what strange and unthought-of chances happen in the world, I would have you know a fact which I think will not fail to cause in you some strange feeling of wonder: it is that this sister of mine I have told you of, who up till then had been away, resembles me

so much in face, stature, grace, and spirit (if I have any), that not merely those of our hamlet, but our very parents have often mistaken us, and spoken to the one for the other, so that, not to fall into this error, they distinguished us by the differences of our dresses, which were different. In one thing only, as I believe, did Nature make us quite different, namely, in disposition, my sister's being harsher than my happiness required, since, because of her being less compassionate than sharp-witted, I shall have to weep as long as my life endures. It happened, then, that as soon as my sister came to the village desiring to resume the rustic duties that were pleasing to her, she rose next day earlier than I wished, and went off to the meadow with the very sheep I used to lead; and though I wished to follow her by reason of the happiness which followed to me from the sight of my Artidoro, for some reason or other my mother kept me at home the whole of that day, which was the last of my joys. For that night my sister, having brought back her flock, told me as in secret that she had to tell me something of great importance to me. I, who might have imagined anything rather than what she said to me, arranged that we should soon see each other alone, when with face somewhat moved, I hanging on her words, she began to say to me: "I know not, sister mine, what to think of your honour, nor yet whether I should be silent on what I cannot refrain from telling you, in order to see if you give me any excuse for the fault I imagine you are guilty of: and though, as a younger sister, I should have addressed you with more respect, you must forgive me; for in what I have seen to-day you will find the excuse for what I say to you." When I heard her speaking in this way I knew not what to answer her except to tell her to go on with her discourse. "You must know, sister," she proceeded, "that this morning when I went forth with our sheep to the meadow, and was going alone with them along the bank of our cool Henares, as I passed through the glade of counsel there came out towards me a shepherd whom I can truly swear I have never seen in our district; and with a strange freedom of manner he began to greet me so lovingly that I stood shamed and confused, not knowing what to answer him. Failing to take warning from the anger which I fancy I showed in my face, he came up to me, saying to me: 'What silence is this, fair Teolinda, last refuge of this soul that adores you?' And he was on the point of taking my hands to kiss them, adding to what I have said a whole list of endearments, which it seemed he brought ready prepared, At once I understood, seeing that he was falling into the error many others have fallen into, and thinking he was speaking with you; whence a suspicion arose in me that if you, sister, had never seen him, nor treated him with familiarity, it would not be possible for him to have the boldness to speak to you in that way. Whereat I felt so great a rage that I could scarcely form words to answer him, but at last I

replied to him in the way his boldness deserved, and as it seemed to me you, sister, would have had to answer anyone speaking to you so freely; and if it had not been that the shepherdess Licea came up at that moment, I had added such words that he would truly have repented addressing his to me. And the best of it is that I never chose to tell him of the error he was in, but that he believed I was Teolinda, as if he had been speaking with you yourself. At last he went off, calling me thankless, ungrateful, one who showed little return; and from what I can judge from the expression he bore, I assure you, sister, he will not dare speak to you again though he should meet you all alone. What I want to know is who is this shepherd, and what converse has been between you, whence it comes that he dare speak to you with such freedom?" To your great discretion, discreet shepherdesses, I leave it to imagine what my soul would feel on hearing what my sister told me: but at length, dissembling as best I could, I said to her: "You have done me the greatest favour in the world, sister Leonarda," (for so was called the disturber of my peace) "in having by your harsh words rid me of the disgust and turmoil caused me by the importunities you mention of this shepherd. He is a stranger who for eight days has been in our village, whose thoughts are full of arrogance and folly, so great that wherever he sees me he treats me as you have seen, giving himself up to the belief that he has won my good-will; and though I have undeceived him, perhaps with harsher words than you said to him, nevertheless he does not cease to persist in his vain purpose. I assure you, sister, that I wish the new day were here that I might go and tell him that if he does not desist from his vain hope, he may expect the end to it which my words have always indicated to him." And it was indeed true, sweet friends, that I would have given all that might have been asked of me, if it had but been dawn, only that I might go and see my Artidoro, and undeceive him of the error he had fallen into, fearing lest through the bitter and petulant reply my sister had given him he should be disdainful and do something to prejudice our agreement. The long nights of rough December were not more irksome to the lover hoping some happiness from the coming day than was that night distasteful to me, though it was one of the short nights of summer, since I longed for the new light to go and see the light whereby my eyes saw. And so, before the stars wholly lost their brightness, being even in doubt whether it were night or day, constrained by my longing, on the pretext of going to pasture my sheep, I went forth from the village, and hurrying the flock more than usual to urge it on, reached the spot where at other times I was wont to find Artidoro, which I found deserted and without anything to give me indication of him; whereat my heart throbbed violently within me, for it almost guessed the evil which was in store for it. How often, seeing that I did not find him, did I wish to beat the air with

my voice, calling out my Artidoro's beloved name, and to say, "Come, my joy, I am the true Teolinda, who longs for you and loves you more than herself!" But fear lest my words might be heard by another than him, made me keep more silent than I should have wished. And so, after I had traversed once and yet again all the bank and wood of the gentle Henares, I sat me down, wearied, at the foot of a green willow, waiting until the bright sun should with his rays spread over all the face of the earth, so that in his brightness there might not remain thicket, cave, copse, cottage, or hut where I might not go seeking my joy. But scarcely had the new light given opportunity to distinguish colours, when straightway a rough-barked poplar, which was before me, presented itself to my eyes: on it and on many others I saw some letters written, which I at once recognised to be from Artidoro's hand, set there; and rising in haste to see what they said, I saw, fair shepherdesses, that it was this: Shepherdess, alone in thee

Do I find that beauty rare  
Which to naught can I compare  
Save to thine own cruelty.  
Thou wert fickle, loyal I,  
Thus thou sowedst with open hand  
Promises upon the sand;  
Down the wind my hope did fly.

Never had I thought to know  
That thy sweet and joyous "yes."  
Would be followed — I confess —  
By a sad and bitter "no."  
Yet I had not been undone,  
Had the eyes that gazed on thee  
Kept in sight prosperity,  
Not thy loveliness alone.

But the more thy mystic grace  
Speaks of promise and of gladness,  
All the more I sink in sadness,  
All my wits are in a maze.  
Ah, those eyes! they proved untrue,  
Though compassionate in seeming.  
Tell me, eyes so falsely beaming,  
How they sinned that gaze on you.

Is there man, cruel shepherdess,  
But thou couldst beguile his fancies  
By thy staid and modest glances,  
By thy voice's sweet caress?  
This indeed have I believed,  
That thou couldst have, days ago,  
Held me, hadst thou wished it so,  
Captive, vanquished, and deceived.

Lo, the letters I shall write  
On the rough bark of this tree —  
Firmer than did faith with thee,  
Will they grow in time's despite.  
On thy lips thy faith was set,  
On thy promises so vain;  
Firmer 'gainst the wind-tossed main  
Is the rock the gale hath met.

Fearsome art thou, full of bane  
As the viper which we press  
Under foot — ah, shepherdess,  
False as fair, my charm and pain!  
Whatsoever thy cruelty  
Biddeth, I without delay  
Will perform; to disobey  
Thy command was ne'er in me.  
I shall far in exile die  
That contented thou mayst live,



But beware lest Love perceive  
How thou scorn'st my misery.  
In Love's dance, though Love may place  
Loyal heart in bondage strait,  
Yet it may not change its state,  
But must stay, to shun disgrace.

Thou in beauty dost excel  
Every maiden on this earth,  
And I thought that from thy worth  
Thou wert firm in love as well.  
Now my love the truth doth know  
'Twas that Nature wished to limn  
In thy face an angel, Time  
In thy mood that changes so.

Wouldst thou know where I have gone,  
Where my woeful life shall end,  
Mark my blood, thy footsteps bend  
By the path my blood hath shown.  
And though naught with thee doth well

Of our love and harmony  
Do not to the corse deny  
E'en the sad and last farewell.

Thou wilt be without remorse,  
Harder than the diamond stone,  
If thou makest not thy moan,  
When thou dost behold my corse.  
If in life thou hatedst me,

Then amidst my hapless plight  
I shall count my death delight  
To be dead and wept by thee.

‘What words will suffice, shepherdesses, to make you understand the extremity of grief that seized upon my heart, when I clearly understood that the verses I had read were my beloved Artidoro’s? But there is no reason why I should make too much of it to you, since it did not go as far as was needed to end my life, which thenceforward I have held in such loathing, that I would not feel, nor could there come to me, a greater pleasure than to lose it. So great and of such a kind were the sighs I then gave forth, the tears I shed, the piteous cries I uttered, that none who had heard me but would have taken me for mad.

In short, I remained in such a state, that, without considering what I owed to my honour, I determined to forsake my dear native land, beloved parents and cherished brothers, and to leave my simple flock to take care of itself; and, without heeding aught else save what I deemed to be necessary for my satisfaction, that very morning, embracing a thousand times the bark where my Artidoro’s hand had been, I departed from that place with the intent to come to these banks where I know Artidoro has and makes his abode, to see if he has been so inconsiderate and cruel to himself, as to put into practice what he left written in his last verses: for if it were so, henceforward I promise you, my friends, that the desire and haste with which I shall follow him in death, shall be no less than the willingness with which I have loved him in life. But, woe is me! I verily believe there is no foreboding which may be to my hurt but will turn out true, for it is now nine days since I came to these cool banks, and all this while I have learnt no tidings of what I desire; and may it please God that when I learn them, it may not be the worst I forebode. Here you see, discreet maidens, the mournful issue of my life of love. I have now told you who I am and what I seek; if you have any tidings of my happiness, may fortune grant you the greatest you desire, so that you do not withhold it from me.’

With such tears did the loving shepherdess accompany the words she uttered, that he would have had a heart of steel who had not grieved at them. Galatea and Florisa, who were naturally of a pitying disposition, could not hold theirs back, nor yet did they fail to comfort her with the most soothing and helpful words in their power, counselling her to remain some days in their company; that perhaps her fortune would in the meantime cause her to learn some tidings of Artidoro, since Heaven would not allow a shepherd so discreet as she depicted him by reason of so strange an error to end the course of his youthful years; that it might be that Artidoro, his thought having in course of time returned to better course

and purpose, might return to see the native land he longed for and his sweet friends; and that she might, therefore, hope to find him there better than elsewhere. The shepherdess, somewhat consoled by these and other reasonings, was pleased to remain with them, thanking them for the favour they did her, and for the desire they showed to secure her happiness. At this moment the serene night, urging on her starry car through the sky, gave token that the new day was approaching; and the shepherdesses, in desire and need of rest, arose and repaired from the cool garden to their dwellings. But scarce had the bright sun with his warm rays scattered and consumed the dense mist, which on cool mornings is wont to spread through the air, when the three shepherdesses, leaving their lazy couches, returned to the wonted pursuit of grazing their flock, Galatea and Florisa with thoughts far different from that cherished by the fair Teolinda, who went her way so sad and thoughtful that it was a marvel.

And for this reason, Galatea, to see if she might in some way distract her, begged her to lay aside her melancholy for a while, and be so good as to sing some verses to the sound of Florisa's pipe. To this Teolinda replied: 'If I thought that the great cause I have for weeping, despite the slight cause I have for singing, would be diminished in any way, you might well forgive me, fair Galatea, for not doing what you bid me; but as I already know by experience that what my tongue utters in song, my heart confirms with weeping, I will do what you wish, since thereby I shall satisfy your desire without going contrary to mine.'

And straightway the shepherdess Florisa played her pipe, to the sound of which Teolinda sang this sonnet:

TEOLINDA. Whither a flagrant cruel lie doth go,  
This have I learned from my grievous state,  
And how Love with my hurt doth meditate  
The life that fear denies me, to bestow.

To dwell within my flesh my soul doth cease,  
Following his soul that by some mystic fate  
In pain hath placed it, and in woe so great  
That happiness brings strife, and sorrow peace.

If I do live, 'tis hope that makes me live,  
Hope, that, though slight and weak, doth upward mount,  
Clinging unto the strength my love doth give.

Ah firm beginning, transformation frail,  
Bitterest total of a sweet account!  
Amidst your persecutions life must fail.

Teolinda had scarcely ceased singing the sonnet you have heard, when, on their right hand, on the slope of the cool vale, the three shepherdesses became aware of the sound of a pipe, whose sweetness was such that all halted and stood still, to enjoy the sweet harmony with more attention. And anon they heard the sound of a small rebeck, attuning itself to that of the pipe with grace and skill so great that the two shepherdesses Galatea and Florisa stood rapt, wondering what shepherds they might be who played with such harmony; for they clearly saw that none of those they knew was so skilled in music, unless it were Elicio.

‘At this moment,’ said Teolinda, ‘if my ears deceive me not, fair shepherdesses, I think you now have on your banks the two renowned and famous shepherds Thyrsis and Damon, natives of my country — at least Thyrsis is, who was born in famous Compluto, a town founded on our Henares’ banks; and Damon, his intimate and perfect friend, if I am not ill informed, draws his origin from the mountains of Leon, and was nurtured in Mantua Carpentanea, the renowned. Both are so excellent in every manner of discretion, learning and praiseworthy pursuits, that not only are they known within the boundaries of our district, but they are known and esteemed throughout all the boundaries of the land; and think not, shepherdesses, that the genius of these two shepherds extends merely to knowing what befits the shepherd’s lot, for it passes so far beyond that they teach and dispute of the hidden things of Heaven and the unknown things of earth, in terms and modes agreed upon. And I am perplexed to think what cause will have moved them to leave, Thyrsis his sweet and beloved Phyllis, Damon his fair and modest Amaryllis; Phyllis by Thyrsis, Amaryllis by Damon so beloved, that there is in our village or its environs no person, nor in the district a wood, meadow, spring or stream, that does not know full well their warm and modest love.’

‘Cease at present, Teolinda,’ said Florisa, ‘to praise these shepherds to us, for it profits us more to hear what they sing as they come, since it seems to me that they have no less charm in their voices than in the music of their instruments.’

‘What will you say,’ Teolinda then replied, ‘when you see all this surpassed by the excellence of their poetry, which is of such a kind that for the one it has already gained the epithet of divine, and for the other that of superhuman?’

The shepherdesses, whilst engaged in this discourse, saw, on the slope of the vale along which they themselves were going, two shepherds appear, of gallant bearing and abounding spirit, one a little older than the other; so well dressed, though in shepherd’s garb, that in their carriage and appearance they seemed more like brave courtiers than mountain herdsman.

Each wore a well-cut garment of finest white wool, trimmed with tawny red

and grey, colours which their shepherdesses fancied most. Each had hanging from his shoulder a wallet no less handsome and adorned than the garments. They came crowned with green laurel and cool ivy, with their twisted crooks placed under their arms. They brought no companion, and came so rapt in their music that they were for a long while without seeing the shepherdesses, who were wending their way along the same slope, wondering not a little at the gentle grace and charm of the shepherds, who, with voices attuned to the same chant, one beginning and the other replying, sang this which follows: DAMON. THYRSIS.

DAMON. Thyrsis, who dost in loneliness depart  
With steps emboldened, though against thy will,  
From yonder light wherewith remains thine heart,  
Why dost thou not the air with mourning fill?  
So great indeed thy cause is to complain  
Of the fierce troubler of thy life so still.

THYRSIS. Damon, once let the life be rent in twain,  
If the grief-stricken body go away,  
And yet the higher half behind remain,  
What virtue or what being will essay  
My tongue to move, already counted dead?  
For where my soul was, there my life doth stay.  
I see, I hear, I feel, 'tis truth indeed,  
And yet I am a phantom formed by love,  
My only stay is hope that hath not fled.

DAMON. Oh, happy Thyrsis, how thy lot doth move  
My soul to envy! rightly, for I know  
That it doth rise all lovers' lots above.  
Absence alone displeaseth thee, and so  
Firm and secure thou hast in Love a stay  
Wherewith thy soul rejoiceth 'midst its woe.  
Alas! where'er I go I fall a prey  
Beneath the chilly scornful hand of fear,  
Or with its cruel lance disdain doth slay!  
Count life as death; although it doth appear  
Living to thee, 'tis like a lamp that dies  
And as it dies, the flame burneth more clear.

My wearied soul doth not in time that flies,  
Nor in the means that absence offers, find  
Its consolation midst its miseries.

THYRSIS. Love that is firm and pure hath ne'er declined  
Through bitter absence; rather memory  
Fosters its growth by faith within the mind.  
The perfect lover sees no remedy  
Relief unto the loving load to give,  
However short or long the absence be.  
For memory, which only doth perceive  
What Love hath set within the soul, doth show  
The lovèd image to the mind alive.  
And then in soothing silence makes him know  
His fortune, good or ill, as from her eye  
A loving or a loveless glance doth go.  
And if thou markest that I do not sigh,  
'Tis that my Phyllis doth my singing guide,  
Here in my breast my Phyllis I descry.

DAMON. If in her lovely face thou hadst espied  
Signs of displeasure when thou didst depart  
Far from the joy that thee hath satisfied,  
Full well I know, my Thyrsis, that thine heart  
Would be as full as mine of bitter woe —  
Love's bliss was thine, but mine Love's cruel smart

THYRSIS. With words like these I pass the time, and so,  
Damon, I temper absence's extreme,  
And gladly do remain, or come, or go.  
For she who was from birth a living theme,  
Type of the deathless beauty in the skies,  
Worthy of marble, temple, diadem,  
Even my Phyllis, blinds th' covetous eyes,  
With her rare virtue and her modest zeal,  
So that I fear not; none will wrest the prize.  
The strait subjection that my soul doth feel  
Before hers, and the purpose raised on high,  
That in her worship doth its goal reveal,

And more, the fact that Phyllis knows that I  
Love her, and doth return my love — all these  
Banish my grief and bring felicity.

Damon. Blest Thyrsis, Thyrsis crowned with happiness!  
Mayst thou enjoy for ages yet to come  
Thy bliss 'midst Love's delight and certain peace.  
But I, whom brief and unrelenting doom  
To such a doubtful pass as this hath led,  
In merit poor, in cares rich, near the tomb.  
'Tis good that I should die, since, being dead,  
Nor cruel Amaryllis shall I fear  
Nor Love ungrateful whereby I am sped.  
Oh, fairer than the heavens, or sun's bright sphere,  
Yet harder far than adamant to me,  
Ready to hurt, but slow to bring me cheer,  
What wind from south or north or east on thee  
Harshness did blow, that thou didst thus ordain,  
That from thy presence I should ever flee?  
I, shepherdess, in lands across the main  
Far off shall die — thy will thou hast avowed —  
Doomed unto death, to fetter, yoke and chain.

Thyrsis. Since Heaven in its mercy hath endowed  
Thee, Damon, with such blessings, dearest friend,  
With intellect so sprightly and so proud,  
Yet it with thy lament and sorrow blend,  
Remember that the sun's all-scorching ray  
And ice's chill at last shall have an end.  
Destiny does not always choose one way  
Whereby with smooth, reposeful steps to bring  
Happiness to us — mark the words I say —  
For sometimes by unthought-of suffering,  
In seeming far from pleasure and from joy,  
It leads us to the blisses poets sing.  
But come, good friend, thy memory employ  
Upon the modest joys that Love once gave,  
Pledges of victory without alloy.  
And, if thou canst, a pastime seek, to save



Thy soul from brooding, whilst the time of scorn  
Goes by, and we attain the boon we crave.  
Unto the ice that by degrees doth burn,  
Unto the fire that chills beyond degree,  
What bard shall place degree thereto, or bourne?  
Vainly he wearies, vainly watcheth he  
Who, out of favour, yet Love's web doth seek  
To cut according to his fantasy;  
He is, though strong in Love, in fortune weak.

Here ceased the exquisite song of the graceful shepherds, but not as regards the pleasure the shepherdesses had felt at listening to it; rather they would have wished it not to end so soon, for it was one of those lays that are but rarely heard.

At this moment the two gallant shepherds bent their steps in the direction where the shepherdesses were, whereat Teolinda was grieved, for she feared to be recognised by them; and for this reason she asked Galatea that they might go away from that place. She did it, and the shepherds passed by, and as they passed Galatea heard Thyrsis saying to Damon: 'These banks, friend Damon, are those on which the fair Galatea grazes her flocks, and to which the loving Elicio brings his, your intimate and special friend, to whom may fortune give such issue in his love as his honourable and good desires deserve. For many days I have not known to what straits his lot has brought him; but from what I have heard tell of the coy disposition of discreet Galatea, for whom he is dying, I fear he must be full of woe long before he is content.'

'I would not be astonished at this,' replied Damon, 'for with all the graces and special gifts wherewith Heaven has enriched Galatea, it has after all made her a woman, in which frail object is not always the gratitude that is due, and which he needs whose smallest risk for them is life. What I have heard tell of Elicio's love is that he adores Galatea without passing beyond the bounds that are due to her modesty, and that Galatea's discretion is so great that she does not give proofs of loving or of loathing Elicio; and so the hapless swain must go on subject to a thousand contrary chances, waiting on time and fortune (means hopeless enough) to shorten or lengthen his life, but which are more likely to shorten it than to sustain it.'

So far Galatea could hear what the shepherds, as they went along, said of her and of Elicio, whereat she felt no small pleasure, understanding that what report published of her affairs was what was due to her pure intent; and from that moment she determined not to do for Elicio anything that might give report a chance of speaking false in what it published of her thoughts. At this moment the

two brave shepherds were gradually wending their way with loitering steps towards the village, desiring to be present at the nuptials of the happy shepherd Daranio, who was marrying Silveria of the green eyes, and this was one of the reasons why they had left their flocks, and were coming to Galatea's hamlet.

But, when but little of the way remained to be covered, they heard on its right side the sound of a rebeck which sounded harmoniously and sweetly; and Damon stopping caught Thyrsis by the arm, and said to him 'Stay, listen a while, Thyrsis, for if my ears do not deceive me, the sound that reaches them is that from the rebeck of my good friend Elicio, on whom Nature bestowed so much charm in many different arts, as you will hear if you listen to him, and learn if you speak with him.'

'Think not, Damon,' replied Thyrsis, 'that I have yet to learn Elicio's good qualities, for days ago fame clearly revealed them to me. But be silent now, and let us listen to see if he sings aught that may give us some sure token of his present fortune.'

'You say well,' answered Damon, 'but it will be necessary, the better to hear him, for us to go in among these branches so that we may listen to him more closely without being seen by him.'

They did so, and placed themselves in so good a position that no word that Elicio said or sang, failed to be heard by them and even noted. Elicio was in the company of his friend Erastro, from whom he was rarely separated by reason of the pleasure and enjoyment he received from his excellent converse, and all or most of the day was spent by them in singing and playing their instruments, and at this moment, Elicio playing his rebeck and Erastro his pipe, the former began these verses: ELICIO. I yield unto the thought within my breast

And in my grief find rest;  
Glory no more in view,  
I follow her whom fancy doth pursue,  
For her I ever in my fancy see,  
From all the bonds of Love exempt and free.

Unto the soul's eye Heaven grants not the grace

To see the peaceful face  
Of her who is my foe,  
Glory and pride of all that Heaven can show;  
When I behold her with my body's eye,  
The sun have I beheld, and blind am I.

Oh bitter bonds of Love, though fraught with pleasure!  
Oh, mighty beyond measure,  
Love's hand! that thus couldst steal  
The bliss which thou didst promise to reveal  
Unto mine eyes, when, in my freedom's hour,  
I mocked at thee, thy bow and quiver's power.

What loveliness! what hands as white as snow,  
Thou tyrant, didst thou show!  
How wearied wert thou grown,  
When first the noose upon my neck was thrown!  
And even thou hadst fallen in the fray  
Were Galatea not alive to-day.

She, she alone, on earth alone was found

To deal the cruel wound  
Within the heart of me,  
And make a vassal of the fancy free,  
That would as steel or marble be displayed,  
Did it not yield itself to love the maid.

What charter can protect, what monarch's grace  
Against the cruel face,  
More beauteous than the sun,  
Of her who hath my happiness undone?  
Ah face, that dost reveal  
On earth the bliss that Heaven doth conceal!

How comes it then that nature could unite

Such rigour and despite  
With so much loveliness,  
Such worth and yet a mood so pitiless?

Such opposites to join  
My happiness consents — the hurt is mine.

Easy it is that my brief lot should see

Sweet life in unity  
With bitter death, and find  
Its evil nestling where its good reclined.

Amidst these different ways  
I see that hope, but not desire decays.

The loving shepherd sang no more, nor did Thyrsis and Damon wish to stay longer, but showing themselves unexpectedly and with spirit, came to where Elicio was. When he saw them he recognised his friend Damon, and going forward with incredible joy to welcome him, said to him: 'What fortune, discreet Damon, has ordained that by your presence you should bestow so fair a fortune on these banks which have long wished for you?'

'It cannot be but fair,' answered Damon, 'since it has brought me to see you, oh Elicio, a thing on which I set a value as great as is the desire I had for it, and as long absence and the friendship I cherish for you forced me to do. But if you can for any reason say what you have said, it is because you have before you the famous Thyrsis, glory and honour of the Castilian soil.'

When Elicio heard him say that this was Thyrsis, to him only known by fame, he welcomed him with great courtesy, and said to him: 'Your pleasing countenance, renowned Thyrsis, agrees well with what loud fame in lands near and far proclaims of your worth and discretion; and so, seeing that your writings have filled me with wonder and led me to desire to know you and serve you, you can henceforward count and treat me as a true friend.'

'What I gain thereby,' replied Thyrsis, 'is so well known that in vain would fame proclaim what the affection you bear me makes you say that it proclaims of me, if I did not recognise the favour you do me in seeking to place me in the number of your friends; and since between those who are friends words of compliment must be superfluous, let ours cease at this point, and let deeds give witness of our good-will.'

'Mine will ever be to serve you,' replied Elicio, 'as you will see, oh Thyrsis, if time or fortune place me in a position in any way suitable for it; for that I now occupy, though I would not change it for another offering greater advantages, is such that it scarcely leaves me free to proffer what I desire.'

'Since you set your desire on so lofty a goal as you do,' said Damon, 'I would hold it madness to endeavour to lower it to an object that might be less; and so, friend Elicio, do not speak ill of the condition in which you find yourself, for I assure you that if it were compared with mine, I would find occasion to feel towards you more envy than pity.'

'It is quite clear, Damon,' said Elicio, 'that you have been away from these banks for many a day, since you do not know what love makes me feel here, and if it is not so, you cannot know or have experience of Galatea's disposition, for if you had noted it, you would change into pity the envy you might feel for me.'



‘What new thing can he expect from Galatea’s disposition,’ replied Damon, ‘who has experienced that of Amaryllis?’

‘If your stay on these banks,’ answered Elicio, ‘be as long as I wish, you, Damon, will learn and see on them, and on others will hear, how her cruelty and gentleness go in equal balance, extremes which end the life of him whose misfortune has brought him to the pass of ‘adoring her.’

‘On our Henares’s banks,’ said Thyrsis at this point, ‘Galatea had more fame for beauty than for cruelty; but above all, it is said that she is discreet; and if this be true, as it ought to be, from her discretion springs self-knowledge, and from self-knowledge self-esteem, and from self-esteem desire not to stray, and from desire not to stray comes desire not to gratify herself. And you, Elicio, seeing how ill she responds to your wishes, give the name of cruelty to that which you should have called honourable reticence; and I do not wonder, for it is, after all, the condition proper to lovers who find small favour.’

‘You would be right in what you have said, oh Thyrsis,’ replied Elicio, ‘if my desires were to wander from the path befitting her honour and modesty; but if they are so measured, as is due to her worth and reputation, what avails such disdain, such bitter and peevish replies, such open withdrawal of the face from him who has set all his glory on merely seeing it? Ah, Thyrsis, Thyrsis, how love must have placed you on the summit of its joys, since with so calm a spirit you speak of its effects!

I do not know that what you say now goes well with what you once said when you sang:

“Alas, from what a wealth of hope I come Unto a poor and faltering desire” — with the rest you added to it.’

Up to this point Erastro had been silent, watching what was passing between the shepherds, wondering to see their gentle grace and bearing, with the proofs each one gave of the great discretion he had. But seeing that from step to step they had been brought to reasoning on affairs of love, as one who was so experienced in them, he broke silence, and said: ‘I quite believe, discreet shepherds, that long experience will have shown you that one cannot reduce to a fixed term the disposition of loving hearts, which, being governed by another’s will, are exposed to a thousand contrary accidents.

And so, renowned Thyrsis, you have no reason to wonder at what Elicio has said, and he as little to wonder at what you say, or take for an example what he says you sang, still less what I know you sang when you said: “The pallor and the weakness I display,” wherein you clearly showed the woeful plight in which you then were; for a little later there came to our huts the news of your bliss celebrated in those verses of yours, which are so famous.

They began, if I remember rightly:

“The dawn comes up, and from her fertile hand.”

Whence we clearly see the difference there is between one moment and another, and how love like them is wont to change condition, making him laugh to-day who wept yesterday and him weep to-morrow who laughs to-day. And since I have known her disposition so well, Galatea’s harshness and haughty disdain cannot succeed in destroying my hopes, though I hope from her nothing save that she should be content that I should love her.’

‘He who should not hope a fair issue to so loving and measured a desire as you have shown, oh shepherd,’ replied Damon, ‘deserved renown beyond that of a despairing lover truly n is a great thing you seek of Galatea! But tell me’ shepherd — so may she grant it you — can it be that you have your desire so well in bounds that it does not advance in desire beyond what you have said.’

‘You may well believe him, friend Damon,’ said Elicio, ‘since Galatea’s worth gives no opportunity for aught else to be desired or hoped of her, and even this is so difficult to obtain that at times in Erastro hope is chilled, and in me grows cold, so that he counts as certain, and I as sure, that sooner must death come than hope’s fulfilment. But as it is not right to welcome such honoured guests with the bitter tales of our miseries, let them now cease, and let us betake ourselves to the village, where you may rest from the heavy toil of the road, and may with greater ease, if so you wish, learn our uneasiness.’

All were pleased to fall in with Elicio’s wish, and he and Erastro, collecting their flocks once more, though it was some hours before the wonted time, in company with the two shepherds, speaking on different matters, though all concerned with love, journeyed towards the village. But, as all Erastro’s pastime was in playing and singing, so for this reason, as also from the desire he had to learn if the two new shepherds were as skilful as was said of them, in order to induce them and invite them to do the same, he asked Elicio to play his rebeck, to the sound of which he began to sing as follows: ERASTRO. Before the light of yonder peaceful eyes,

Whereby the sun is lit the earth to light,  
My soul is so inflamed, that, in despite,  
I fear that death will soon secure the prize.

Yon clustered rays descending from the skies,  
Sent by the Lord of Delos, are thus bright:  
Such are the tresses of my heart’s delight,  
Whom, kneeling, I adore with litanies.

Oh radiant light, ray of the radiant sun,  
Nay sun in very truth, to thee I pray,  
That thou wouldst let me love, — this boon alone.  
If jealous Heaven this boon to me deny,  
Let me not die of grief though grief doth slay,  
But grant, oh rays, that of a ray I die.

The shepherds did not think ill of the sonnet, nor were they displeased with Erastro's voice, which, though not one of the most exquisite, was yet a tuneful one; and straightway Elicio, moved by Erastro's example, bade him play his pipe, to the sound of which he repeated this sonnet: ELICIO. Alas! that to the lofty purpose, born

Within the fastness of my loving mind,  
All are opposed, to wit, Heaven, fire and wind,  
Water and earth, and she that doth me scorn!

They are my foes; 'twere better I should mourn  
My rashness, and the enterprise begun  
Abandon. But the impulse who can shun  
Of ruthless fate, by Love's persistence torn?  
Though Heaven on high, though Love, though wind and fire,  
Water and earth, and even my fair foe,  
Each one, with might, and with my fate allied,  
Should stay my bliss and scatter my desire,  
My hope undoing, — yet, though hope should go,  
I cannot cease to do what I have tried.

As Elicio finished, straightway Damon, to the sound of the same pipe of Erastro, began to sing in this wise:

Damon. Softer than wax was I, when on my breast  
I did imprint the image of the face  
Of Amaryllis, cruel 'midst her grace,  
Like to hard marble, or to savage beast.  
'Twas then Love set me in the loftiest  
Sphere of his bliss, and bade sweet fortune come;  
But now I fear that in the silent tomb  
Alone shall my presumption find its rest.  
Of hope did Love, as vine of elm, take hold

Securely, and was climbing up with speed,  
When moisture failed, and its ascent was stayed.  
'Twas not the moisture of mine eyes: of old  
Their tribute ever — Fortune this doth heed —  
Unto face, breast and earth, mine eyes have paid.

Damon ceased, and Thyrsis, to the sound of the instruments of the three  
shepherds, began to sing this sonnet:

THYRSIS. My faith broke through the net that death had spread;  
To this pass have I come that I no more  
Envy the highest and the richest store  
Of happiness that man hath merited.

I saw thee, and this bliss was straightway born,  
Fair Phyllis, unto whom fate gave for dower  
To turn to good that which was bad before,  
And win to laughter him who once did mourn.  
E'en as the felon, when he doth espy  
The royal face, the rigour of the law  
Escapes — this ordinance is true indeed —  
E'en so doth death before thy presence fly,  
Oh fairest of the fair, harm doth withdraw,  
And leaveth life and fortune in its stead.

As Thyrsis finished, all the instruments of the shepherds made such pleasing  
music that it gave great joy to any who heard it, being further aided from among  
the dense branches by a thousand kinds of painted birds, which seemed as in  
chorus to give them back reply with divine harmony. In this way they had gone  
on a stretch, when they came to an ancient hermitage standing on the slope of a  
hillock, not so far from the road but that they could hear the sound of a harp  
which some one, it seemed, was playing within. Erastro, hearing this, said:  
'Stop, shepherds, for, as I think, we shall hear to-day what I have wished to hear  
for days, namely, the voice of a graceful youth, who, some twelve or fourteen  
days ago, came to spend within yon hermitage a life harder than it seems to me  
his few years can bear. Sometimes when I have passed this way, I have heard a  
harp being played and a voice sounding, so sweet that it has filled me with the  
keenest desire to listen to it; but I have always come at the moment he stayed his  
song; and though by speaking to him I have managed to become his friend,  
offering to his service all within my means and power, I have never been able to

prevail with him to disclose to me who he is, and the causes which have moved him to come so young and settle in such solitude and retirement.'

What Erastro said about the young hermit, newly come there, filled the shepherds with the same desire of knowing him as he had; and so they agreed to approach the hermitage in such a way that without being perceived they might be able to hear what he sang, before they came to speak to him, and on doing this, they succeeded so well that they placed themselves in a spot where, without being seen or perceived, they heard him who was within uttering to the sound of his harp, verses such as these: If Heaven, Love and Fortune have been pleased — The fault was not mine own —

To set me thus in such a parlous state,  
Vainly unto the air I make my moan,

Vainly on high was raised  
Unto the moon the thought that seemed so great.  
Oh cruel, cruel, fate!  
By what mysterious and unwonted ways

Have my sweet joyous days  
Been checked at such a pass in their career  
That I am dying and e'en life do fear!

Enraged against myself I burn and glow  
To see that I can bear  
Such pains, and yet my heart breaks not; the wind  
Receiveth not my soul, though vital air

Amidst my bitter woe  
At last withdraws, and leaveth naught behind.



And there anew I find  
That hope doth lend its aid to give me strength,  
And, though but feigned, doth strengthen life at length,  
'Tis not Heaven's pity, for it doth ordain  
That to long life be given longer pain.

The hapless bosom of a lovèd friend  
In turn made tender mine,  
At once I undertook the dread emprize.  
Oh sweet and bitter plight none can divine!  
Oh deed that ne'er shall end!  
Oh strategy that madness did devise!  
To win for him the prize  
How bounteous and how kind Love did appear,  
To me how full of fear  
And loyalty, and yet how covetous!  
To more than this a friend constraineth us.

An unjust guerdon for a wish as just

At every step we see  
By a distrustful fortune's hand bestowed,  
And, traitorous Love, by thine; we know of thee  
That 'tis thy joy and trust  
That lovers e'en in life should bear death's load.  
The living flame that glowed —  
Oh may it kindle in thy pinions light  
And may, in thy despite,  
To ashes sink each good and evil dart,  
Or turn, when thou dost loose it, 'gainst thine heart  
How comes it then, by what deceit or wile,  
By what strange wanderings,  
Didst thou possession take of me by storm?  
How 'midst my longings after higher things  
Within the heart, from guile  
Yet free, didst thou my healthy will transform,  
False traitor to my harm?  
Who is so wise as patiently to see  
How that I entered, free  
And safe, to sing thy glories and thy pains,  
And now upon my neck do feel thy chains?

'Twere right that I should of myself complain,  
Nor to thee give the blame,  
That 'gainst thy fire I did not strive to fight.  
I yielded, and the wind, amidst my shame,  
That slept, I roused amain  
Even the wind of chance with furious might.

A just decree and right  
Hath Heaven pronounced against me that I die;  
This only fear have I,  
Amidst my luckless fate and hapless doom,  
Misfortune will not end e'en in the tomb.

Thou, sweetest friend, and thou, my sweetest foe,  
Timbrio, Nisida fair,  
Happy and hapless both? What unjust power  
Of ruthless fate, what unrelenting star,  
Enemy of my woe,  
Hard and unkind, hath in this evil hour  
Parted us evermore?  
Oh wretched and unstable lot of man!

How soon to sudden pain  
Is changed our joy, that swiftly flies away,  
And cloudy night doth follow cloudless day!

What man will put his trust with might and main

In the instability  
And in the change, pervading human things?  
On hasty pinions time away doth flee

And draweth in its train  
The hope of him who weeps, and him who sings.

Whenever Heaven brings  
Its favour, 'tis to him, in holy love

Raising to Heaven above  
The soul dissolved in heavenly passion's fire,  
To him that doth nor loss nor gain desire.

Here, gracious Lord, with all my power I raise



To holy Heaven on high  
My hands, my eyes, my thoughts, in prayer always;

My soul doth hope thereby  
To see its ceaseless mourning turned to praise.

With a deep sigh, the secluded youth, who was within the hermitage, ended his mournful song, and the shepherds, perceiving that he was not going on, without more delay, went in all together, and saw there, at one end, sitting on a hard stone, a comely and graceful youth, apparently two and twenty years of age, clad in a rough kersey, his feet unshod and his body girt with a coarse rope, which served him as belt.

His head was drooping on one side, one hand clutched the portion of the tunic over his heart, the other arm fell limply on the other side. As they saw him in this plight, and as he had made no movement on the entry of the shepherds, they clearly recognised that he had fainted, as was the truth, for his deep brooding over his sorrows often brought him to such a pass. Erastro went up to him, and seizing him roughly by the arm, made him come to himself, though so dazed that he seemed to be waking from a heavy sleep; which tokens of grief caused no small grief in those who witnessed it, - and straightway Erastro said to him: 'What is it, sir, that your troubled breast feels? Do not fail to tell it, for you have before you those who will not refuse any trouble to give relief to yours.'

'These are not the first offers you have made me,' replied the young man with voice somewhat faint, 'nor yet would they be the last I would try to make use of, if I could; but fortune has brought me to such a pass, that neither can they avail me, nor can I do justice to them more than in will. This you can take in return for the good you offer me; and if you wish to learn aught else concerning me, time, which conceals nothing, will tell you more than I could wish.'

'If you leave it to time to satisfy me in what you tell me, replied Erastro. 'to such payment small gratitude is due, since time, in our despite, brings into the market-place the deepest secret of our hearts.'

Thereupon the rest of the shepherds all asked him to tell them the cause of his sorrow, especially Thyrsis, who, with powerful arguments, persuaded him and gave him to understand, that there is no evil in this life but brings with it its cure, unless death, that interrupts man's course, opposes it. Thereto he added other words, which moved the obstinate boy with his to satisfy them all on what they wished to learn from him: and so he said to them: 'Though for me it were better, my pleasant friends, to live the little that remains to me of life without friendship, and to retire to a greater solitude than that in which I am, yet, not to show myself irresponsive to the good-will you have shown me, I decide to tell you all that I think will be sufficient, and the passes through which fickle fortune has brought me to the strait in which I am. But as it seems to me that it is now

somewhat late, and that, as my misfortunes are many, it might be possible for night to come on before I have told you them, it will be well for us all to go to the village together, since it causes me no further inconvenience to make the journey to-night I had determined on to-morrow, which is compulsory for me, since from your village I am provided with what I need for my sustenance; and on the way, as best we can, I will inform you of my adversities.'

All approved of what the young hermit said, and setting him in their midst, they turned with loitering steps to follow the road to the village; and straightway the sorrowing hermit, with tokens of great grief, began in this wise the tale of his woes: 'In the ancient and famous city of Xeres, whose inhabitants are favoured of Minerva and Mars, was born Timbrio, a valiant knight, and if I had to relate his virtues and nobility of soul, I would set myself a difficult task. It is enough to know that, whether by his great goodness, or by the power of the stars which drew me to it, I sought in every possible way to be his particular friend; and in this Heaven was so kind to me, that those who knew us, almost forgetting the name of Timbrio and that of Silerio (which is mine) merely called us the two friends, and we, by our constant converse and friendly deeds caused this to be no idle opinion. In this wise we two passed our youthful years in incredible joy and happiness, engaging ourselves now in the field in the pastime of the chase, now in the city in that of honourable Mars, until, one day (of the many unlucky days that hostile time has made me see in the course of my life), there happened to my friend Timbrio a weighty quarrel with a powerful knight, an inhabitant of the same city. The dispute came to such a pass that the knight remained wounded in his honour and Timbrio was obliged to absent himself, to give an opportunity for the furious discord to cease, which was beginning to kindle between the two families. He left a letter written to his enemy, informing him that he would find him in Italy, in the city of Milan or in Naples, whenever, as a knight, he should wish to have satisfaction for the insult done him.

With this the factions between the kinsmen of both ceased: and it was ordained that the offended knight, who was called Pransiles, should challenge Timbrio to equal and mortal combat, and that, on finding a safe field for the combat, he should inform Timbrio. My luckless fate further ordained that, at the time this happened, I should find myself so failing in health, that I scarce could rise from my bed. And from this chance, I lost that of following my friend wherever he might be going, who, on parting, took his leave of me with no-small discontent, charging me, on recovering strength, to seek him, for that I would find him in the city of Naples; and he left me with greater pain than I can now express to you. But at the end of a few days (the desire I had to see him prevailing on me more than the weakness that wearied me), I set myself

straightway on the journey; and, in order that I might accomplish it with more speed and safety, fortune offered me the convenience of four galleys, which were lying ready equipped off the famous isle of Cadiz for departure to Italy. I embarked on one of them, and with a prosperous wind we soon discovered the Catalan shores; and when we had cast anchor in a harbour there, I, being somewhat weary of the sea, first making sure that the galleys were not leaving there that night, disembarked with only a friend and a servant of mine. I do not think it could have been midnight, when the sailors and those that had the galleys in charge, seeing that the serenity of the sky betokened a calm, or a prosperous wind, so as not to lose the good opportunity offered to them, at the second watch made the signal for departure; and weighing anchor, with much speed they set their oars to the smooth sea, and their sails to the gentle wind, and it was done as I say with such haste, that for all the haste I made to return to embark, I was not in time. And so I had to remain on the shore with the annoyance he can imagine, who has passed through ordinary occurrences of the kind, for I was badly supplied with everything that was necessary to continue my journey by land.

But, reflecting that little remedy was to be hoped from remaining there, I determined to return to Barcelona, where, as being a larger city, it might be possible to find someone to supply me with what I needed, writing to Xeres or Seville as regards the payment. The morning broke on me, whilst engaged in these thoughts, and, determined to put them into practice, I waited till the day should be more advanced: and when on the point of departing, I perceived a great sound on land, and all the people running to the principal street of the place. And when I asked some one what it was, he replied to me: "Go, sir, to that comer, where you will learn what you want from the voice of the crier." I did so, and the first object on which I set eyes was a lofty crucifix, and a great mob of people, signs that some one condemned to death was coming among them; and all this was proved to me by the voice of the crier, declaring that justice ordered a man to be hanged for having been a robber and a highwayman. When the man came to me, I straightway recognised that he was my good friend Timbrio, coming on foot with fetters on his hands, and a rope round his throat, his eyes riveted on the crucifix he carried before him. He was speaking and protesting to the priests who were going with him, that, by the account he thought, within a few short hours, to render to the true God, whose image he had before his eyes, he had never, in all the course of his life, committed aught for which he deserved to suffer publicly so shameful a death; and he asked all to ask the judges to give him some term, to prove how innocent he was of that which they accused him of. Let it here be imagined, if imagination could raise itself so high, how I would

remain at the terrible sight offered to my eyes. I know not what to say to you, gentlemen, save that I remained so amazed and beside myself, and so bereft of all my senses, that I must have seemed a marble statue to anyone who saw me at that moment. But now that the confused murmur of the people, the raised voices of the criers, the piteous words of Timbrio, and the consolatory words of the priests, and the undoubted recognition of my good friend, had brought me from my first amazement, and the seething blood came to give aid to my fainting heart, awakening in it the wrath befitting the crying vengeance for Timbrio's wrong, without regarding the danger I incurred, but only that of Timbrio, to see if I could set him free or follow him to the life beyond, fearing but little to lose mine, I laid hand on my sword; and, with more than ordinary fury, forced my way through the confused crowd, till I came to where Timbrio was. He, not knowing if so many swords had been unsheathed on his behalf, was watching what was going on with perplexed and anguished mind, until I said to him: "Where, Timbrio, is the strength of your valorous breast?

What do you hope, or what do you wait for? Why not avail yourself of the present opportunity? seek, true friend, to save your life whilst mine forms a shield against the injustice, which I think is being done you here." These words of mine and Timbrio's recognition of me caused him to forget all fear and to break the bonds or fetters from his hands; but all his ardour would have availed little, had not the priests, moved with compassion, aided his wish. These seized him bodily, and despite those who sought to hinder it, entered with him into a church hard by, leaving me in the midst of all the officers of justice, who with great persistence endeavoured to seize me, as at last they did, since my strength alone was not capable of resisting so many strengths combined; and with more violence than in my opinion my offence deserved, they took me to the public gaol, wounded with two wounds. My boldness and the fact that Timbrio had escaped increased my fault, and the judges' anger; they, weighing carefully the crime committed by me, deeming it just that I should die, straightway pronounced the cruel sentence and awaited another day to execute it. This sad news came to Timbrio there in the church where he was, and as I afterwards learned, my sentence caused him more emotion than his own death-sentence had done; and to free me from it, he again offered to surrender himself once more to the power of the law; but the priests advised him that that was of little avail, nay rather, was adding evil to evil and misfortune to misfortune, since his surrender would not bring about my release, for that it could not take place without my being punished for the fault committed. Not a few arguments were needed to persuade Timbrio not to give himself up to justice; but he calmed himself by deciding in his mind to do for me next day what I had done for him, in order to

pay me in the same coin or die in the attempt. I was informed of all his intentions by a priest who came to confess me, through whom I sent him word that the best remedy my calamity could have was that he should escape and seek with all speed to inform the viceroy of Barcelona of all that had happened, before the judges of that place should execute judgment on him. I also learned the reason why my friend Timbrio was consigned to bitter punishment, as the same priest I have mentioned to you told me; it was that, as Timbrio came journeying through the kingdom of Catalonia, on leaving Perpignan, he fell in with a number of brigands, who had as lord and chief a valiant Catalan gentleman, who by reason of certain enmities was in the band — as it is the time-honoured custom of that kingdom for those who have suffered from an enemy, whenever they are persons of mark, to join one, and to inflict all the evil they can, not only on lives, but on property, a practice opposed to all Christianity, and worthy of all commiseration. It happened then that while the brigands were busied in robbing Timbrio of what he had with him, that moment their lord and captain came up, and as after all he was a gentleman, he did not wish that any wrong should be done to Timbrio before his eyes; but rather, deeming him a man of worth and talents, he made him a thousand courteous offers, asking him to remain with him that night in a place near by, for that on the morrow he would give him a safe-conduct so that without any fear he might pursue his journey until he left that province. Timbrio could not but do what the courteous gentleman asked of him, constrained by the good offices received from him; they went off together and came to a little spot where they were joyously received by the people of the place. But fortune, which up till then had jested with Timbrio, ordained that that same night a company of soldiers, gathered together for this very purpose, should fall in with the brigands: and having surprised them, they easily routed them. And though they could not seize the captain, they seized and killed many others, and one of the prisoners was Timbrio, whom they took for a notorious robber in that band, and as you may imagine, he must undoubtedly have much resembled him, since, though the other prisoners testified that he was not the man they thought, telling the truth about all that had happened, yet malice had such power in the breasts of the judges that without further inquiry they sentenced him to death. And this would have been carried out, had not Heaven, that favours just purposes, ordained that the galleys should depart, and I remain on land to do what I have so far been telling you I did. Timbrio was in the church, and I in gaol, arranging that he should set out that night for Barcelona, and while I was waiting to see where the rage of the offended judges would end, Timbrio and I were freed from our misfortune amidst another yet greater that befell them. But would that Heaven had been kind and wreaked on me alone the fury of its wrath, if but it

had been averted from that poor unfortunate people who placed their wretched necks beneath the edges of a thousand barbarous swords. It would be a little more than midnight, an hour suited for wicked onslaughts, at which the wearied world is wont to yield its wearied limbs to the arms of sweet sleep, when suddenly there arose among all the people a confused hubbub of voices crying: "To arms, to arms, the Turks are in the land." The echoes of these sad cries — who but that they caused terror in the breasts of the women and even set consternation in the brave hearts of the men? I know not what to say to you, sirs, save that in an instant the wretched land began to burn so greedily that the very stones with which the houses were built seemed but to offer fitting fuel to the kindled fire that was consuming all. By the light of the raging flames the barbarous scimitars were seen flashing and the white turbans appearing of the Turks, who, all aflame, were breaking down the doors of the houses with axes or hatchets of hard steel, and entering therein, were coming out laden with Christian spoils. One carried the wearied mother, another the tender little son, who with faint and weak groans pleaded, the mother for her son, and the son for his mother; and one I know there was who with profane hand stayed the fulfilment of the rightful desire of the chaste maiden newly-wed and of the hapless husband, before whose weeping eyes mayhap he saw culled the fruit the ill-starred one was thinking in a short time to enjoy.

So great was the confusion, so many the cries and minglings of these different voices that they caused much terror. The savage and devilish rabble, seeing what little resistance was made them, dared to enter the hallowed temples, and lay infidel hands on the holy relics, placing in their bosoms the gold with which they were adorned, and dashing them to the ground with loathsome contempt. Little availed the priest his holiness, the friar his refuge, the old man his snowy hair, the boy his gallant youth, or the little child his simple innocence, for from all those unbelieving dogs carried off booty. They, after burning the houses, robbing the temple, deflowering the maidens; and slaying the defenders, at the time the dawn was coming, more wearied than sated with what they had done, returned without any hindrance to their vessels, having already loaded them with all the best the village contained, leaving it desolate and without inhabitant, for they were taking with them nearly all the people and the rest had taken refuge in the mountain. Who at so sad a sight could have kept his hands still and his eyes dry?

But, ah! our life is so full of woes that, for all the mournful disaster I have related to you, there were Christian hearts that rejoiced, even those of the men in the gaol who, amidst the general unhappiness, recovered their own happiness, for, pretending to go and defend the village, they broke the gates of the prison, and set themselves free, each one seeking not to attack the enemy, but to save

himself, and amongst them I enjoyed the freedom so dearly gained. And seeing there was no one to face the enemy, through fear of falling into their clutches, or returning to the clutches of the prison, forsaking the wasted village, with no small pain at what I had seen, and with that caused by my wounds, I followed a man who told me he would bring me safely to a monastery which was in those mountains, where I would be cured of my hurts and even defended, if they sought to seize me again. In a word I followed him, as I have told you, in the desire to learn what my friend Timbrio's fortune had wrought; he, as I afterwards learned, had escaped with some wounds, and followed over the mountain another road different from that I took; he stopped at the port of Rosas, where he remained some days, seeking to learn what fate had been mine, and at last, not learning any news, he went away in a ship and came with a favouring wind to the great city of Naples. I returned to Barcelona, and there furnished myself with what I needed; and then, being healed of my wounds, I resumed my journey, and, no misadventure happening to me, came to Naples, where I found Timbrio ill; and such was the joy we both felt at seeing each other, that I have not the power to describe it properly to you now. There we told each other of our lives, and of all that had happened to us up to that moment; but this my pleasure was all watered by seeing Timbrio not so well as I could wish, nay rather so ill, and with so strange a disease, that if I had not come at that moment, I might have come in time to perform the rites of his death, and not to celebrate the joys of seeing him. After he had learnt from me all he wanted, with tears in his eyes he said to me: "Ah, friend Silerio! I truly think that Heaven seeks to add to the load of my misfortunes, so that, by giving me health through your safety, I may remain every day under greater obligation to serve you." These words of Timbrio's moved me; but, as they seemed to me courtesies so little used between us, they filled me with wonder. And not to weary you in telling you word for word what I replied to him, and what he answered further, I shall only tell you that Timbrio, unhappy man, was in love with a notable lady of that city, whose parents were Spaniards, though she had been born in Naples. Her name was Nisida, and her beauty so great, that I make bold to say that nature summed up in her its highest perfections; and in her modesty and beauty were so united, that what the one enflamed the other chilled, and the desires her grace raised to the loftiest heaven, her modest propriety brought down to the lowest depths of earth. From this cause Timbrio was as poor in hope as rich in thoughts; and above all failing in health, and in the plight of ending his days without disclosing his state — such was the fear and reverence he had conceived for the fair Nisida. But after I had fully learnt his disease, and had seen Nisida, and considered the quality and nobility of her parents, I determined to waive for him property, life



and honour, and more, if more I had in my power to bestow. And so I employed an artifice, the strangest heard or read of up till now; which was, that I decided to dress up as a buffoon, and with a guitar to enter Nisida's house, which, as Kir parents were, as I have said, among the principal people of the city, was frequented by many other buffoons. This decision seemed good to Timbrio, and straightway he left to the hands of my skill all his happiness. Forthwith I had several elegant costumes made, of various kinds, and, putting them on, I began to rehearse my new character before Timbrio, who laughed not a little at seeing me thus clothed in buffoon's garb; and to see if my skill equalled the dress, he told me to say something to him, pretending that he was a great prince, and I newly come to visit him. And if memory does not fail me, and you, sirs, are not tired of listening to me, I will tell you what I sang to him then, as it was the first time.'

All said that nothing would give them greater pleasure, than to learn in detail all the issue of his affair, and so they bade him not to fail to tell them anything, however trivial it might be.

'Since you give me this permission,' said the hermit, 'I have no desire to fail to tell you how I began to give examples of my foolery, for it was with these verses that I sang to Timbrio, imagining him to be a great lord to whom I was saying them: SILERIO. From a prince whose path is true,

Levelled by a rule so right,  
*What, save deeds that Heaven delight,*  
*Can we hope from him to view?*

Neither in this present age,  
Nor in times of long ago,  
Hath a State been ruled, I know,  
By a prince who is so sage,  
One whose zeal is measured true  
By the Christian rule of right: —  
*What, save deeds that Heaven delight,*  
*Can we hope from him to view?*

For another's good he toils,  
Mercy ever in his eye,  
In his bosom equity,  
Seeking ne'er another's spoils:  
Unto him the most, 'tis true,  
In the world the least is, quite: —

*What, save deeds that Heaven delight, Can we hope from him to view?*

And thy name for kindly Love,  
Which doth raise itself to Heaven,  
That a holy soul hath given  
Unto thee, doth clearly prove  
That thy course thou keepest true,  
And art loyal to Heaven's right: —

*What, save deeds that Heaven delight, Can we hope from him to view?*

When a prince's Christian breast  
Shrinketh aye from cruelty,  
Righteousness and clemency  
Are his guardians trustiest:  
When a prince, where none pursue,  
Towards the sky, doth raise his flight: —

*What, save deeds that Heaven delight, Can we hope from him to view?*

'These and other things of more jest and laughter I then sang to Timbrio, seeking to adapt the spirit and bearing of my body, so that I might in every way show myself a practised buffoon: and so well did I get on in the part, that in a few days I was known by all the chief people in the city, and the fame of the Spanish buffoon flew through it all, until at last they desired to see me in the house of Nisida's father, which desire I would have fulfilled for them with much readiness, if I had not purposely waited to be asked. But at length I could not excuse myself from going there one day when they had a banquet, where I saw more closely the just cause Timbrio had for suffering, and that which Heaven gave me to rob me of happiness all the days I shall remain in this life. I saw Nisida, Nisida I saw, that I might see no more, nor is there more to see after having seen her. Oh mighty power of love, against which our mighty powers avail but little! can it be that in an instant, in a moment, thou shouldst bring the props and armaments of my loyalty to such a pass, as to level them all with the ground! Ah, if only the thought of who I was had stayed with me a little for aid, the friendship I owed to Timbrio, Nisida's great worth, and the ignominious costume in which I found myself, which all hindered the hope of winning her (the staff wherewith love, in the beginnings of love, advances or retires) from springing up together with the new and loving desire that had sprung up in me. In a word I saw the beauty I have told you, and since to see her was of such

moment to me, I sought ever to win the friendship of her parents, and of all her household; and this by playing the wit and the man of breeding, playing my part with the greatest discretion and grace in my power.

And when a gentleman who was at table that day asked me to sing something in praise of Nisida's beauty, fortune willed that I should call to mind some verses, which I had made, many days before, for another all but similar occasion; and adopting them for the present one, I repeated them to this effect: SILERIO.  
'Tis from thine own self we see,

Lady fair, how kind is Heaven,  
For it hath, in giving thee,  
Unto earth an image given,  
Of its veiled radiancy.  
Easily we come to know,  
If it could not more bestow  
And thou couldst no more desire,  
That he highly must aspire,  
Who aspires your praise to show.

All the sovereign, matchless grace  
Of that beauty from afar,  
Which to Heaven doth us raise,  
Tongue of man could not but mar, —  
Let the tongue of Heaven praise,  
Saying, — and 'tis not in vain —  
That the soul which doth contain  
Such a being for its pride,  
More than aught on earth beside  
Should the lovely veil attain.

From the sun she took her hair,  
From the peaceful Heaven her brow,  
Of her eyes the light so fair  
From a radiant star which now  
Shineth not when they are there;  
From the cochineal and the snow,  
Boldly and with might, I trow,  
Did she steal their lovely hue,  
For to thy fair cheek is due  
The perfections that they show.

Teeth and lips of ivory  
And of coral, whence a spring  
Issues, rich in fantasy,  
Full of wisest reasoning,  
And celestial harmony;

But of marble stubbornest  
She hath made her lovely breast,  
Yet in truth we see that earth  
Is made better by her worth,  
E'en as Heaven itself is blest.

'With these and other things that I then sang, all were so charmed with me, and especially Nisida's parents, that they offered me all I might need, and asked me to let no day go by without visiting them; and so, without my purpose being discovered or imagined, I came to achieve my first design, which was to expedite my entrance into the house of Nisida, who enjoyed extremely my bright ways. But now that the lapse of many days, and my frequent converse and the great friendship all that household showed me, had removed some shadows from the excessive fear I felt at disclosing my intent to Nisida, I determined to see how far went the fortune of Timbrio, whose only hope for it lay in my solicitude. But woe is me! I was then more ready to ask a salve for my wound than health for another's; for Nisida's grace, beauty, discretion, and modesty had so wrought in my soul that it was placed in no less an extreme of grief and love than that of hapless Timbrio. To your discreet imagination I leave it to picture what a heart could feel in which there fought, on the one hand, the laws of friendship, and, on the other, the inviolable laws of Cupid; for, if those obliged it not to go beyond what they and reason asked of it, these constrained it to set store by what was due to its happiness. These attacks and struggles afflicted me in such wise that, without procuring another's health I began to have fears for my own, and to grow so weak and pale that I caused general compassion in all that saw me, and those who showed it most were Nisida's parents; and even she herself, with pure and Christian sympathy, often asked me to tell her the cause of my disease, offering me all that was necessary for its cure.

"Ah!" would I say to myself whenever Nisida made me such offers, "with what ease, fair Nisida, could your hand cure the evil your beauty has wrought! but I boast myself so good a friend that, though I counted my cure as certain as I count it impossible and uncertain, it would be impossible for me to accept it." And since these thoughts at such moments disturbed my fancy, I did not succeed in making any reply to Nisida; whereat she and a sister of hers, who was called Blanca (less in years, though not less in discretion and beauty than Nisida), were amazed, and with increasing desire to know the origin of my sadness, with many importunities asked me to conceal from them nought of my grief. Seeing, then, that fortune offered me the opportunity of putting into practice what my cunning had brought so far, once, when by chance the fair Nisida and her sister found

themselves alone, and returned anew to ask what they had asked so often, I said to them: "Think not, ladies, that the silence I have up till now kept in not telling you the cause of the pain you imagine I feel has been caused by my small desire to obey you, since it is very clear that if my lowly state has any happiness in this life, it is to have thereby succeeded in coming to know you, and to serve you as retainer.

The only cause has been the thought that, though I reveal it, it will not serve for more than to give you grief, seeing how far away is its cure. But now that it is forced upon me to satisfy you in this, you must know, ladies, that in this city is a gentleman, a native of my own country, whom I hold as master, refuge, and friend, the most generous, discreet, and courtly man that may be found far and wide. He is here, away from his dear native land, by reason of certain quarrels which befell him there and forced him to come to this city, believing that, if there in his own land he left enemies, here in a foreign land friends would not fail him. But his belief has turned out so mistaken that one enemy alone, whom, without knowing how, he has made here for himself, has placed him in such a pass that if Heaven do not help him he will end his friendships and enmities by ending his life. And as I know the worth of Timbrio (for this is the name of the gentleman whose misfortune I am relating to you), and know what the world will lose in losing him and what I shall lose if I lose him, I give the tokens of feeling you have seen, and even they are small compared to what the danger in which Timbrio is placed ought to move me to. I know well that you will desire to know, ladies, who is the enemy who has placed so valorous a gentleman as he whom I have depicted to you in such a pass; but I also know that, in naming him to you, you will not wonder save that he has not yet destroyed him and slain him. His enemy is love, the universal destroyer of our peace and prosperity; this fierce enemy took possession of his heart. On entering this city Timbrio beheld a fair lady of singular worth and beauty, but so high placed and so modest that the hapless one has never dared to reveal to her his thought." To this point had I come when Nisida said to me: "Truly, Astor," for this was my name for the nonce, "I know not if I can believe that that gentleman is as valorous and discreet as you say, since he has allowed himself so easily to surrender to an evil desire so newly born, yielding himself so needlessly to the arms of despair; and though I understand but little these effects of love, yet it seems to me that it is folly and weakness for him who is cast down by them to fail to reveal his thoughts to her who inspires it in him, though she be of all the worth conceivable. For what shame can result to her from knowing that she is well loved, or to him what greater evil from her harsh and petulant reply than the death he himself brings on himself by being silent? It would not be right that

because a judge has a reputation for sternness, anyone should fail to allege proof of his claim. But let us suppose that the death take place of a lover as silent and timid as that friend of yours; tell me, would you call the lady with whom he was in love cruel? No indeed, for one can scarcely relieve the need which does not come to one's knowledge, nor does it fall within one's duty to seek to learn it so as to relieve it. So, forgive me, Astor, but the deeds of that friend of yours do not make very true the praises you give him." When I heard such words from Nisida, straightway I could have wished by mine to reveal to her all the secret of my breast, but, as I understood the goodness and simplicity with which she expressed them, I had to check myself, waiting for a better and more private opportunity, and thus I replied to her: "When the affairs of love, fair Nisida, are regarded with free eyes, follies so great are seen in them that they are no less worthy of laughter than of pity: but if the soul finds itself entangled in love's subtle net, then the feelings are so fettered and so beside their wonted selves, that memory merely serves as treasurer and guardian of the object the eyes have regarded, the understanding is of use only in searching into and learning the worth of her whom it loves well, and the will in consenting that the memory and understanding should not busy themselves with aught else: and so the eyes see like a silvered mirror, for they make everything larger. Now hope increases when they are favoured, now fear when they are cast down; and thus what has happened to Timbrio, happens to many, that deeming at first very high the object to which their eyes were raised, they lose the hope of attaining it, but not in such wise that love does not say to them there within the soul: Who knows? it might be; and thereat hope goes, as the saying is, between two waters, while if it should forsake them altogether, love would flee with it. And hence it arises that the heart of the afflicted lover walks between fearing and daring, and without venturing to tell it, he braces himself up, and presses together his wound, hoping, though he knows not from whom, for the remedy from which he sees himself so far away. In this very plight I have found Timbrio, though, in spite of all, he has, at my persuasion, written to the lady for whom he is dying, a letter which he gave to me that I might give it to her and see if there appeared in it anything in any way unseemly, so that I might correct it. He charged me also to seek the means of placing it in his lady's hands, which, I think, will be impossible, not because I will not hazard it, since the least I will hazard to serve him will be life, but because it seems to me that I shall not find an opportunity to give it."

"Let us see it," said Nisida, "for I wish to see how discreet lovers write." Straightway I drew from my bosom a letter which had been written some days before, in the hope of an opportunity for Nisida to see it, and fortune offering to me this one, I showed it to her.

As I had read it many times, it remained in my memory, and its words were these:

TIMBRIO TO NISIDA.

“I had determined, fair lady, that my ill-starred end might declare to you who I was, since it seemed to me better that you should praise my silence in death than blame my boldness in life; but as I think it befits my soul to leave this world in favour with you, so that in the next love may not deny it the reward for what it has suffered, I make you cognisant of the state in which your rare beauty has placed me. It is such that, though I could indicate it, I would not obtain its cure, since for small things no one should make bold to offend your exalted worth, whereby, and by your honourable generosity I hope to renew life to serve you, or to win death to offend you never more.”

‘Nisida was listening with much attention to this letter, and, when she had heard it all, said: “The lady to whom this letter is sent has naught to complain of, unless, from pure pride, she has become prudish, a failing from which the greater part of the ladies in this city are not free. But nevertheless, Astor, do not fail to give it to her, since, as I have already told you, more evil cannot be expected from her reply, than that the evil you say your friend suffers now should become worse. And to encourage you the more, I wish to assure you that there is no woman so coy and so on the alert to watch over her honour that it grieves her much to see and learn that she is loved, for then she knows that the opinion she holds of herself is not vain, while it would be the contrary if she saw she was wooed by none.”

“I know well, lady, that what you say is true,”

I replied, “but I am afraid that, if I make bold to give it, it must at least cost me the refusal of admittance henceforward into that house, whereat there would come to me no less hurt than to Timbrio.”

“Seek not, Astor,” replied Nisida, “to confirm the sentence which the judge has not yet given. Be of good courage, for this on which you venture is no fierce conflict.”

“Would to Heaven, fair Nisida,” I answered, “that I saw myself in that pass, for more readily would I offer my breast to the danger and fierceness of a thousand opposing arms than my hand to give this loving letter to her who, I fear, being offended by it, must hurl upon my shoulders the punishment another’s fault deserves. But, in spite of these objections, I intend to follow, lady, the counsel you have given me, though I shall wait for a time when fear shall not occupy my feelings as much as now. Meanwhile I entreat you to pretend that you are the one to whom this letter is sent, and give me some reply to take to Timbrio, in order that by this deceit he may be comforted a little, and



time and opportunities may reveal to me what I am to do.”

“A poor artifice you would employ,” answered Nisida, “for, granted that I were now to give, in another’s name, some soft or disdainful reply, do you not see that time, that discloses our ends, will clear up the deceit, and Timbrio will be more angry with yon than satisfied? Especially as since I have not hitherto replied to such letters, I would not wish to begin by giving replies in a feigned and lying manner; but, though I know I am going contrary to what I owe to myself, if you promise to tell me who the lady is, I will tell you what to say to your friend, and such words that he will be pleased for the nonce, and even though afterwards things turn out contrary to what he thinks, the lie will not be found out thereby.”

“Do not ask this of me, Nisida,” I answered, “for to tell you her name places me in confusion as great as I would be placed in if I gave her the letter. Suffice it to know that she is of high degree, and that, without doing you any detriment, she is not inferior to you in beauty, and saying this, it seems to me, I praise her more than all women born.”

“I am not surprised that you say this of me,” said Nisida, “since, with men of your condition and calling, to flatter is their business; but, leaving all this on one side, as I do not wish you to lose the comfort of so good a friend, I advise you to tell him that you went to give the letter to his lady, and that you have held with her all the discourses you have held with me, without omitting anything, and how she read your letter, and the encouragement she gave you to take it to his lady, thinking she was not the one to whom it came, and that, though you did not make bold to declare everything, you have come to this conclusion from her words that, when she learns she is the one for whom the letter came, the deceit and the undeceiving will not cause her much pain. In this way he will receive some solace in his trouble, and afterwards, on revealing your intention to his lady, you can reply to Timbrio what she replies to you, since, up to the moment she knows it, this lie remains in force, and the truth of what may follow, without to-day’s deceit interfering.” I was left marvelling at Nisida’s discreet project, and indeed not without mistrust of the honesty of my own artifice; and so, kissing her hands for the good counsel, and agreeing with her that I was to give her a particular account of whatever happened in this affair, I went and told Timbrio all that had happened to me with Nisida. Thence came it that hope came into his soul and turned anew to sustain him, banishing from his heart the clouds of chilly fear that up till then had kept him in gloom; and all this pleasure was increased by my promising him at every step that my steps should only be devoted to his service, and that when next I found myself with Nisida, he should win the game of skill with as fair a success as his thoughts deserved.

One thing I have forgotten to tell you, that all the time I was talking with Nisida and her sister, the younger sister never spoke a word, but with a strange silence ever hung on mine; and I can tell you, sirs, that, if she was silent, it was not because she could not speak with all discretion and grace, for in these two sisters nature showed all she has in her power to bestow. Nevertheless, I know not if I should tell you that I would that Heaven had denied me the happiness of having known them, especially Nisida, the beginning and end of all my misfortune; but what can I do, if that which the fates have ordained cannot be stayed by human means? I loved, love, and shall love Nisida well, yet without hurt to Timbrio, as my wearied tongue has well shown, for I never spoke to her, but it was on Timbrio's behalf, ever concealing, with more than ordinary discretion, my own pain, so as to cure another's.

It happened then, that as Nisida's beauty was so engraven on my soul from the first moment my eyes beheld her, being unable to keep so rich a treasure concealed in my breast, whenever I found myself at times alone or apart, I used to reveal it in some loving and mournful songs under the veil of a feigned name. And so one night, thinking that neither Timbrio nor anyone else was listening to me, to comfort somewhat my wearied spirit, in a retired apartment, to the accompaniment only of a lute, I sang some verses, which, as they placed me in the direst turmoil, I shall have to repeat to you. They were as follows: SILERIO. What labyrinth is this that doth contain

My foolish and exalted fantasy?  
Who hath my peace transformed to war and pain,  
And to such sadness all my jollity?  
Unto this land, where I can hope to gain  
A tomb alone, what fate hath guided me?  
Who, who, once more will guide my wandering thought  
Unto the bounds a healthy mind hath sought?

Could I but cleave this breast of mine in twain,  
Could I but rob myself of dearest life,  
That earth and Heaven, at last content, might deign  
To leave me loyal 'midst my passion's strife,  
Without my faltering when I feel the pain,  
With mine own hand would I direct the knife  
Against my breast, but if I die, there dies  
His hope of love; the fire doth higher rise.

Let the blind god his golden arrows shower

In torrents, straight against my mournful heart  
Aiming in maddened frenzy, let the power  
Of fiercest rage direct the cruel dart;  
For, lo, of happiness a plenteous store  
I gain, when I conceal the grievous smart;  
Ashes and dust though stricken breast become,  
Rich is the guerdon of my noble doom.

Eternal silence on my wearied tongue  
The law of loyal friendship will impose,  
By whose unequalled virtue grows less strong  
The pain that never hopes to find repose;  
But, though it never cease, and seek to wrong  
My health and honour, yet, amidst my woes,  
My faith, as ever, shall more steadfast be  
Than firmest rock amidst the angry sea.

The moisture that my weeping eyes distil,  
The duteous service that my tongue can do,  
The sacrifice I offer of my will,  
The happiness that to my toil is due,  
These gain sweet spoil and recompense; but still,  
'Tis he must take them, he my friend so true;  
May Heaven be gracious to my fond design  
Which seeks another's good and loses mine.

Help me, oh gentle Love, uplift and guide  
My feeble spirit in the doubtful hour,  
To soul and faltering tongue, what e'er betide,  
Send in the long-expected moment power,  
That shall be strong, with boldness at its side,  
To make that easy which was hard before,  
And bravely dash upon fate and misfortune,  
Until it shall attain to greatest fortune.

'It resulted from my being so transported in my endless imaginings that I did not take heed to sing these verses I have repeated, in a voice as low as I ought, nor was the place where I was so secret as to prevent their being listened to by Timbrio; and when he heard them, it came into his mind that mine was not free

from love, and that if I felt any, it was for Nisida, as could be gathered from my song; and though he discovered the true state of my thoughts, he did not discover that of my wishes, but rather understanding them to be contrary to what I did think, he decided to depart that very night and go to where he might be found by nobody, only to leave me the opportunity of alone serving Nisida. All this I learnt from a page of his, who was acquainted with all his secrets, who came to me in great distress and said to me: "Help, Senor Silerio, for Timbrio, my master and your friend, wishes to leave us and go away this night.

He has not told me where, but only that I should get for him I do not know how much money, and that I should tell no one he is going, especially telling me not to tell you: and this thought came to him after he had been listening to some verse or other you were singing just now. To judge from the excessive grief I have seen him display, I think he is on the verge of despair; and as it seems to me that I ought rather to assist in his cure than to obey his command, I come to tell it to you, as to one who can intervene to prevent him putting into practice so fatal a purpose." With strange dread I listened to what the page told me, and went straightway to see Timbrio in his apartment, and, before I went in, I stopped to see what he was doing. He was stretched on his bed, face downwards, shedding countless tears accompanied by deep sighs, and with a low voice and broken words, it seemed to me that he was saying this: "Seek, my true friend Silerio, to win the fruit your solicitude and toil has well deserved, and do not seek, by what you think you owe to friendship for me, to fail to gratify your desire, for I will restrain mine, though it be with the extreme means of death; for, since you freed me from it, when with such love and fortitude you offered yourself to the fierceness of a thousand swords, it is not much that I should now repay you in part for so good a deed by giving you the opportunity to enjoy her in whom Heaven summed up all its beauty, and love set all my happiness, without the hindrance my presence can cause you. One thing only grieves me, sweet friend, and it is that I cannot bid you farewell at this bitter parting, but accept for excuse that you are the cause of it. Oh, Nisida, Nisida! how true is it of your beauty, that he who dares to look upon it must needs atone for his fault by the penalty of dying for it! Silerio saw it, and if he had not been so struck with it as I believe he has been, he would have lost with me much of the reputation he had for discretion.

Hut since my fortune has so willed it, let Heaven know that I am no less Silerio's friend than he is mine; and, as tokens of this truth, let Timbrio part himself from his glory, exile himself from his bliss, and go wandering from land to land, away from Silerio and Nisida, the two true and better halves of his soul."

And straightway, with much passion, he rose from the bed, opened the door,

and finding me there said to me: "What do you want, friend, at such an hour? Is there perchance any news?"

"Such news there is," I answered him, "that I had not been sorry though it were less." In a word, not to weary you, I got so far with him, that I persuaded him and gave him to understand that his fancy was false, not as to the fact of my being in love, but as to the person with whom, for it was not with Nisida, but with her sister Blanca; and I knew how to tell him this in such a way that he counted it true. And that he might credit it the more, memory offered me some stanzas which I myself had made many days before, to another lady of the same name, which I told him I had composed for Nisida's sister. And they were so much to the purpose, that though it be outside the purpose to repeat them now, I cannot pass them by in silence. They were these: Silerio. Oh Blanca, whiter than the snow so white,

Whose heart is harder yet than frozen snow,  
My sorrow deem thou not to be so light  
That thou to heal it mayst neglect. For, lo,  
If thy soul is not softened by this plight —  
That soul that doth conspire to bring me woe —  
As black will turn my fortune to my shame  
As white thou art in beauty and in name.

Oh gentle Blanca, in whose snowy breast  
Nestleth the bliss of love for which I yearn,  
Before my breast, with woeful tears oppressed,  
Doth unto dust and wretched earth return,  
Show that thine own is in some way distressed  
With all the grief and pain wherein I burn,  
A guerdon this will be, so rich and sure  
As to repay the evil I endure.

Thou'rt white as silver; for thy loveliness  
I would exchange gold of the finest grain,  
I'd count it wealth, if thee I might possess,  
To lose the loftiest station I might gain:  
Since, Blanca, thou dost know what I confess,  
I pray thee, cease thy lover to disdain,  
And grant it may be Blanca I must thank  
That in love's lottery I draw no blank.

Though I were sunk in blankest poverty  
And but a farthing had to call my own,  
If that fair thing were thou, I would not be  
Changed for the richest man the world hath known.  
This would I count my chief felicity,  
Were Juan de Espéra en Dios and I but one,  
If, at the time the *Blancas* three I sought,  
Thou, Blanca, in the midst of them were caught.

Silerio would have gone further with his story, had he not been stopped by the sound of many pipes and attuned flageolets, which was heard at their backs; and, turning their heads, they saw coming towards them about a dozen gay shepherds, set in two lines, and in the midst came a comely herdsman, crowned with a garland of honeysuckle and other different flowers. He carried a staff in one hand; and with staid step advanced little by little, and the other shepherds, with the same success, all playing their instruments, gave pleasing and rare token of themselves. As soon as Elicio saw them, he recognised that Daranio was the shepherd they brought in the midst, and that the others were all neighbours, who wished to be present at his wedding, to which also Thyrsis and Damon had come; and to gladden the betrothal feast, and to honour the bridegroom, they were proceeding in that manner towards the village. But Thyrsis, seeing that their coming had imposed silence upon Silerio's story, asked him to spend that night together with them all in the village, where he would be waited upon with all the good-will possible, and might satisfy their wishes by finishing the incident he had begun. Silerio promised this, and at the same moment came up the band of joyous shepherds, who, recognising Elicio, and Daranio Thyrsis and Damon, his friends, welcomed one another with tokens of great joy; and renewing the music, and renewing their happiness, they turned to pursue the road they had begun. Now that they were coming nigh to the village, there came to their ears the sound of the pipe of the unloving Lenio, whereat they all received no little pleasure, for they already knew his extreme disposition, and so, when Lenio saw and knew them, without interrupting his sweet song, he came towards them singing as follows: LENIO. Ah happy, happy all

Brimful of gladness and of jollity,

Fortunate will I call  
So fair a company,  
If it yield not unto Love's tyranny!

Whoso his breast declined  
To yield unto this cruel maddening wound,

Within whose healthy mind  
Traitor Love is not found,  
Lo I will kiss beneath his feet the ground!

And happy everywhere  
The prudent herdsman will I call, the swain  
Who lives and sets his care  
On his poor flock, and fain  
Would turn to Love a face of cold disdain.

Ere the ripe season come,  
Such a one's ewe-lambs will be fit to bear,  
Bringing their lambkins home,  
And when the day is drear  
Pasturage will they find and waters clear.

If Love should for his sake  
Be angry and should turn his mind astray,  
Lo, his flock will I take  
With mine and lead the way  
To the clear stream, and to the meadow gay.

What time the sacred steam  
Of incense shall go flying to the sky,  
This is the prayer I deem  
To offer up on high,  
Kneeling on earth in zealous piety.

“Oh holy Heaven and just,  
Since thou protector art of those who seek  
To do thy will, whose trust  
Is in thee, help the weak,  
On whom for thy sake Love doth vengeance wreak.

“Let not this tyrant bear  
The spoils away that were thine own before,



But with thy bounteous care

And choice rewards once more  
Unto their senses do thou strength restore.”

As Lenio ceased singing, he was courteously received by all the shepherds, and when he heard them name Damon and Thyrsis, whom he only knew by repute, he was astonished at seeing their admirable bearing, and so he said to them: ‘What encomiums would suffice, though they were the best that could be found in eloquence, to have the power of exalting and applauding your worth, famous shepherds, if perchance love’s follies were not mingled with the truths of your renowned writings? But since you are in love’s decline, a disease to all appearance incurable, though my rude talents may pay you your due in valuing and praising your rare discretion, it will be impossible for me to avoid blaming your thoughts.’

‘If you had yours, discreet Lenio,’ replied Thyrsis, ‘without the shadows of the idle opinion which fills them, you would straightway see the brightness of ours, and that they deserve more glory and praise for being loving, than for any subtlety or discretion they might contain.’

‘No more, Thyrsis, no more,’ replied Lenio, ‘for I know well that with such great and such obstinate foes my reasonings will have little force.’

‘If they had force,’ answered Elicio, ‘those who are here are such friends of truth, that not even in jest would they contradict it, and herein you can see, Lenio, how far you go from it, since there is no one to approve your words, or even to hold your intentions good.’

‘Then in faith,’ said Lenio, ‘may your intentions not save you, oh Elicio, but let the air tell it, which you ever increase with sighs, and the grass of these meadows which grows with your tears, and the verses you sang the other day and wrote on the beeches of this wood, for in them will be seen what it is you praise in yourself and blame in me.’

Lenio would not have remained without a reply, had they not seen coming to where they were the fair Galatea, with the discreet shepherdesses Florisa and Teolinda, who, not to be recognised by Damon and Thyrsis, had placed a white veil before her fair face. They came and were received by the shepherds with joyous welcome, especially by the lovers Elicio and Erastro, who felt such strange content at the sight of Galatea, that Erastro, being unable to conceal it, in token thereof, without any one asking it of him, beckoned to Elicio to play his pipe, to the sound of which, with joyous and sweet accents, he sang the following verses: ERASTRO. — Let me but the fair eyes see

Of the sun I am beholding;  
If they go, their light withholding,

Soul, pursue them speedily.  
For without them naught is bright,  
Vainly may the soul aspire,

Which without them doth desire  
Neither freedom, health nor light.

Whoso can may see these eyes  
Yet he cannot fitly praise;  
But if he would on them gaze  
He must yield his life as prize.  
Them I see and saw before,  
And each time that I behold,  
To the soul I gave of old  
New desires I give once more.

Nothing more can I bestow,  
Nor can fancy tell me more,  
If I may not her adore  
For the faith in her I show.

Certain is my punishment  
If these eyes, so rich in bliss,  
Viewed but what I did amiss,  
Nor regarded my intent.

So much happiness I see  
That this day, though it endure  
For a thousand years and more,  
But a moment were to me.  
Time, that flies so swiftly by,  
Doth the flight of years withhold,

Whilst the beauty I behold  
Of the life for which I die.

Peace and shelter in this sight  
Doth my loving soul acclaim,

Living in the living flame  
Of its pure and lovely light,  
Wherewith Love doth prove its truth:  
In this flame it bids it win  
Sweetest life, and doth therein,  
Phoenix-like, renew its youth.

I go forth in eager quest  
Of sweet glory with my mind,

In my memory I find  
That my happiness doth rest.  
There it lies, there it doth hide,  
Not in pomp, nor lofty birth,  
Not in riches of the earth,  
Nor in sovereignty nor pride.

Here Erastro ended his song, and the way was ended of going to the village, where Thyrsis, Damon and Silerio repaired to Elicio's house, so that the opportunity might not be lost of learning the end of the story of Silerio, which he had begun.

The fair shepherdesses, Galatea and Florisa, offering to be present on the coming day at Daranio's wedding, left the shepherds, and all or most remained with the bridegroom, whilst the girls went to their houses. And that same night, Silerio, being urged by his friend Erastro, and by the desire which wearied him to return to his hermitage, ended the sequel of his story, as will be seen in the following book.



### BOOK III.

The joyful uproar there was that night in the village, on the occasion of Daranio's wedding, did not prevent Elicio, Thyrsis, Damon and Erastro from settling down together in a place where, without being disturbed by anyone, Silerio might continue the story he had begun, and he, when all together had given him pleasing silence, continued in this wise: 'From the feigned stanzas to Blanca, which I have told you I repeated to Timbrio, he was satisfied that my pain proceeded not from love of Nisida, but of her sister; and with this assurance, begging my forgiveness for the false idea he had had about me, he again entrusted me with his cure; and so I, forgetful of my own, did not neglect in the least what concerned his. Some days passed, during which fortune did not show me an opportunity as open as I could wish for disclosing to Nisida the truth of my thoughts, though she kept asking me how it was going with my friend in his love-affair, and if his lady as yet had any knowledge of it. In reply to this I said to her that the fear of offending her still kept me from venturing to tell her anything; whereat Nisida was very angry, calling me coward and of little sense, and adding to this that since I was playing the coward, either Timbrio did not feel the grief I reported of him, or I was not so true a friend of his as I said. All this induced me to make up my mind and reveal myself at the first opportunity, which I did one day when she was alone. She listened with strange silence to all I had to say to her, and I, as best I could, extolled to her Timbrio's worth, and the true love he had for her, which was so strong that it had brought me to take up so lowly a pursuit as that of a buffoon, merely to have an opportunity of telling her what I was telling her. To these I added other reasonings which Nisida must needs have thought were not without reason; but she would not show by words then what she could not afterwards keep concealed by deeds; rather with dignity and rare modesty she reproved my boldness, rebuked my daring, blamed my words and daunted my confidence, but not in such a way as to banish me from her presence, which was what I feared most; she merely ended by telling me to have henceforward more regard for what was due to her modesty, and to see to it that the artifice of my false dress should not be discovered — an ending this which closed and finished the tragedy of my life, since I understood thereby that Nisida would give ear to Timbrio's complaints. In what breast could or can be contained the extremity of grief that was then concealed in mine, since the end of its greatest desire was the finish and end of its happiness? I was gladdened by

the good beginning I had given to Timbrio's cure, and this gladness redounded to my hurt, for it seemed to me, as was the truth, that, on seeing Nisida in another's power, my own was ended. Oh mighty force of true friendship, how far dost thou extend! how far didst thou constrain me! since I myself, impelled by thy constraint, by my own contriving whetted the knife which was to cut short my hopes, which, dying in my soul, lived and revived in Timbrio's, when he learned from me all that had passed with Nisida. But her way with him and me was so coy that she never showed at all that she was pleased with my solicitude or Timbrio's love, nor yet was she disdainful in such a manner that her displeasure and aversion made us both abandon the enterprise. This went on till it came to Timbrio's knowledge that his enemy Pransiles, the gentleman he had wronged in Xeres, being desirous of satisfying his honour, was sending him a challenge, indicating to him a free and secure field on an estate in the Duke of Gravina's territory, and giving him a term of six months from that date to the day of the combat. The care induced by this news did not cause him to become careless in what concerned his love-affair, but rather, by fresh solicitude on my part and services on his, Nisida came to demean herself in such a way that she did not show herself disdainful though Timbrio looked at her and visited at the house of her parents, preserving in all a decorum as honourable as befitted her worth. The term of the challenge now drawing near, Timbrio, seeing that the journey was inevitable for him, determined to depart, and before doing so, he wrote to Nisida a letter, of such a kind that with it he ended in a moment what I during many months and with many words had not begun. I have the letter in my memory, and to render my story complete, I will not omit to tell you that it ran thus: TIMBRIO TO NISIDA

All hail to Nisida, from a loving swain  
Who is not hale nor ever hopes to be,  
Until his health from thine own hand he gain.  
These lines, I fear, will surely gain for me,  
Though they be written in my very blood,  
The abhorred reproach of importunity.  
And yet I may not, e'en although I would,  
Escape Love's torment, for my passions bear  
My soul along amidst their cruel flood.  
A fiery daring and a chilly fear  
Encompass me about, and I remain,  
Whilst thou dost read this letter, sad and drear;  
For when I write to thee, I do but gain  
Ruin if thou dost scorn my words, ah woe!

And spurn my awkward phrases with disdain.  
True Heaven is my witness and doth know  
If I have not adored thee from the hour  
I saw the lovely face that is my foe.  
I saw thee and adored — What wouldst thou more?  
The peerless semblance of an angel fair  
What man is there but straightway would adore?  
Upon thy beauty, in the world so rare,  
My soul so keenly gazed that on thy face  
It could not rest its piercing gaze, for there  
Within thy soul it was upon the trace  
Of mighty loveliness, a paradise  
Giving assurance of a greater grace.  
On these rich pinions thou to Heaven dost rise  
And on the earth thou sendest dread and pain  
Unto the simple, wonder to the wise.  
Happy the soul that doth such bliss contain,  
And no less happy he who to Love's war  
Yields up his own that blissful soul to gain!  
Debtor am I unto my fatal star,  
That bade me yield to one who doth possess  
Within so fair a frame a soul so fair.  
To me thy mood, oh lady, doth confess  
That I was wrong when I aspired so high,  
And covereth with fear my hopefulness.  
But on my honest purpose I rely,  
I turn a bold face to despondency,  
New breath I gain when I to death am nigh.  
They say that without hope Love cannot be.  
'Tis mere opinion: for I hope no more  
And yet the more Love's force doth master me.  
I love thee for thy goodness, and adore,  
Thy beauty draws me captive in its train,  
It was the net Love stretched in love's first hour  
That with rare subtlety it might constrain  
This soul of mine, careless and fancy-free,  
Unto the amorous knot, to know its strain.  
Love his dominion and his tyranny  
Within some breasts sustains by beauty's aid,

But not within the curious fantasy,  
Which looks not on Love's narrow noose displayed  
In ringlets of fine gold that satisfy  
The heart of him who views them undismayed,  
Nor on the breast that he who turns his eye  
On breast alone, doth alabaster call  
Nor on the wondrous neck of ivory;  
But it regards the hidden all in all  
And contemplates the thousand charms displayed  
Within the soul that succour and enthrall.  
The charms that are but mortal, doomed to fade,  
Unto the soul immortal bring not balm,  
Unless it leave the light and seek the shade.  
Thy peerless virtue carrieth off the palm,  
It maketh of my thoughts its spoil and prey,  
And all my lustful passions it doth calm.  
They are content and willingly obey,  
For by the worth thy merits ever show  
They seek their hard and bitter pain to weigh.  
I plough the sea and in the sand I sow  
When I am doomed by passion's mystic stress  
Beyond the viewing of thy face to go.  
I know how high thou art; my lowliness  
I see, and where the distance is so great,  
One may not hope, nor do I hope possess.  
Wherefore I find no cure to heal my state.  
Numerous my hardships as the stars of night,  
Or as the tribes the earth that populate.  
I understand what for my soul is right,  
I know the better, and the worse attain,  
Borne by the love wherein I take delight.  
But now, fair Nisida, the point I gain,  
Which I with mortal anguish do desire,  
Where I shall end the sorrow I sustain.  
Uplifted is the hostile arm in ire,  
The keen and ruthless sword awaiteth me,  
Each with thine anger 'gainst me doth conspire.  
Thy wrathful will soon, soon, avenged will be  
Upon the vain presumption of my will,

Which was without a reason spurned by thee.  
No other pangs nor agonies would fill  
With agitation dread my mournful thought,  
Though greater than death's agonizing chill,  
If I could in my short and bitter lot  
But see thee towards my heart-felt wishes kind,  
As the reverse I see, that thou art not.  
Narrow the path that leads to bliss, I find,  
But broad and spacious that which leads to pain;  
By my misfortune this hath been designed,  
And death, that buttressed is on thy disdain,  
By this in anger and in haste doth run,  
Eager its triumph o'er my life to gain.  
By yonder path my bliss, well-nigh undone,  
Departs, crushed by the sternness thou dost show,  
Which needs must end my brief life all too soon.  
My fate hath raised me to the height of woe  
Where I begin e'en now to dread the scorn  
And anger of my sore-offended foe.  
'Tis that I see the fire wherein I burn  
Is ice within thy breast, and this is why  
At the last moment I a coward turn.  
For if thou dost not show thee my ally,  
Of whom will my weak hand be not afraid,  
Though strength and skill the more accompany?  
What Roman warrior, if thou dost but aid,  
Or what Greek captain would oppose my might?  
Nay, from his purpose he would shrink dismayed.  
I would escape e'en from the direst plight,  
And from death's cruel hand away I'd bear  
The spoils of victory in his despite.  
Thou, thou, alone my lot aloft canst rear  
Above all human glory, or abase  
Unto the depths below — no bliss is there.  
For if, as pure Love had the power to raise,  
Fortune were minded to uphold my lot  
Safe 'midst the dangers of its lofty place,  
My hope which lieth where it hopeth naught,  
Itself would see exalted to a height

Above the heaven where reigns the moon, in thought.  
Such am I that I now account delight  
The evil that thine angry scorn doth give  
Unto my soul in such a wondrous plight,  
If in thy memory I might see I live,  
And that perchance thou dost remember, sweet,  
To deal the wound which I as bliss receive.  
'Twere easier far for me the tale complete  
To tell of the white sands beside the sea,  
Or of the stars that make the eighth heaven their seat, Than all the pain, the  
grief, the anxiety,  
Whereto the rigour of thy cruel disdain  
Condemns me, though I have not wounded thee.  
Seek not the measure of thy worth to gain  
From my humility; if we compare  
Loftiness with thee, 'twill on earth remain.  
Such as I am I love thee, and I dare  
To say that I advance in loving sure  
Unto the highest point in Love's career,  
Wherefore in merit I am not so poor  
That as an enemy thou shouldst me treat —  
Rather, methinks, my guerdon should endure.  
So great a cruelty doth ill befit  
Such loveliness, and where we do perceive  
Such worth, there doth ingratitude ill sit.  
On thee fain would I call account to give  
Of a soul yielded thee; where was it thrown?  
How, when my soul is gone, do I yet live?  
Didst thou not deign to make my heart thy throne?  
What can he give thee more who loves thee more?  
Herein how well was thy presumption shown!  
I have been soulless from the earliest hour  
I saw thee for my bliss and for my pain,  
For all were pain if I saw thee no more.  
There I of my free heart gave thee the rein,  
Thou rulest me, for thee alone I live,  
And yet thy power can more than this attain.  
Within the flame of pure Love I revive  
And am undone, since from the death of Love.

I, like a phoenix, straightway life receive.  
This would I have thee think all things above,  
In faith of this my faith, that it is sure  
That I live glowing in the fire of Love,  
And that thou canst e'en after death restore  
Me unto life, and in a moment guide  
From the wild ocean to the peaceful shore.  
For Love in thee and power dwell side by side,  
And are united, reigning over me.  
They waver not nor falter in their pride —  
And here I end lest I should weary thee.

'I know not whether it was the reasonings of this letter, or the many I had urged before on Nisida, assuring her of the true love Timbrio had for her, or Timbrio's ceaseless services, or Heaven that had so ordained it, that moved Nisida's heart to call me at the moment she finished reading it, and with tears in her eyes to say to me: "Ah, Silerio, Silerio! I verily believe that you have at the cost of my peace sought to gain your friend's! May the fates that have brought me to this pass make Timbrio's deeds accord with your words; and if both have deceived me, may Heaven take vengeance for my wrong, Heaven which I call to witness for the violence desire does me, making me keep it no longer concealed. But, alas, how light an acquittal is this for so weighty a fault! since I ought rather to die in silence so that my honour might live, than by saying what I now wish to say to you to bury it and end my life." These words of Nisida's made me confused, and yet more the agitation with which she uttered them; and desiring by mine to encourage her to declare herself without any fear, I had not to importune her much, for at last she told me that she not only loved, but adored Timbrio, and that she would always have concealed that feeling had not the compulsion of Timbrio's departure compelled her to disclose it. It is not possible to describe fitly the state I was in, shepherds, on hearing what Nisida said, and the feeling of love she showed she bore to Timbrio; and indeed it is well that a grief which extends so far should be beyond description.

Not that I was grieved to see Timbrio loved, but to see myself rendered incapable of ever having happiness, since it was, and is clear, that I neither could nor can live without Nisida; for to see her, as I have said at other times, placed in another's arms, was to sever myself from all pleasure, and if fate granted me any at this pass, it was to consider the welfare of my friend Timbrio, and this was the cause why my death and the declaration of Nisida's love did not occur at one and the same moment. I listened to her as well as I could, and assured her as well

as I knew how of the integrity of Timbrio's breast, whereat she replied to me that there was no need to assure her of that, for that she was of such a mind that she could not, nor ought she to, fail to believe me, only asking me, if it were possible, to manage to persuade Timbrio to seek some honourable means to avoid a combat with his foe: and when I replied that this was impossible without his being dishonoured, she was calmed, and taking from her neck some precious relics, she gave them to me that I might give them to Timbrio from her. As she knew her parents were to go and see Timbrio's fight, and would take her and her sister with them, but as she would not have the courage to be present at Timbrio's dire peril, it was also agreed between us that she should pretend to be indisposed, on which pretext she would remain in a pleasure-house where her parents were to lodge, which was half a league from the town where the combat was to take place, and that there she would await her bad or good fortune, according to Timbrio's. She bade me also, in order to shorten the anxiety she would feel to learn Timbrio's fortune, take with me a white kerchief which she gave me, and, if Timbrio conquered, bind it on my arm, and come back to give her the news; and, if he were vanquished, not to bind it, and so she would learn from afar by the token of the kerchief the beginning of her bliss or the end of her life. I promised her to do all she bade me, and taking the relics and the kerchief I took leave of her with the greatest sadness and the greatest joy I ever felt; my little fortune caused the sadness; Timbrio's great fortune the gladness. He learnt from me what I brought him from Nisida, whereat he was so joyous, happy, and proud, that the danger of the battle he awaited he counted as naught, for it seemed to him that in being favoured by his lady, not even death itself would be able to gainsay him. For the present I pass by in silence the exaggerated terms Timbrio used to show himself grateful for what he owed to my solicitude; for they were such that he seemed to be out of his senses while discoursing thereon. Being cheered, then, and encouraged by this good news, he began to make preparations for his departure, taking as seconds a Spanish gentleman, and another, a Neapolitan.

And at the tidings of this particular duel countless people of the kingdom were moved to see it, Nisida's parents also going there, taking her and her sister Blanca with them. As it fell to Timbrio to choose weapons, he wished to show that he based his right, not on the advantage they possessed, but on the justice that was his, and so those he chose were the sword and dagger, without any defensive weapon. But few days were wanting to the appointed term, when Nisida and her father, with many other gentlemen, set out from the city of Naples; she, having arrived first, reminded me many times not to forget our agreement; but my wearied memory, which never served save to remind me of



things alone that were displeasing to me, so as not to change its character, forgot as much of what Nisida had told me as it saw was needful to rob me of life, or at least to set me in the miserable state in which I now see myself.'

The shepherds were listening with great attention to what Silerio was relating, when the thread of his story was interrupted by the voice of a hapless shepherd, who was singing among some trees, nor yet so far from the windows of the dwelling where they were, but that all that he said could not fail to be heard. The voice was such that it imposed silence on Silerio, who in no wise wished to proceed, but rather asked the other shepherds to listen to it, since for the little there remained of his story, there would be time to finish it. This would have annoyed Thyrsis and Damon, had not Elicio said to them: 'Little will be lost, shepherds, in listening to the luckless Mireno, who is without doubt the shepherd that is singing, and whom fortune has brought to such a pass that I fancy he hopes for nothing in the way of his happiness.'

'How can he hope for it,' said Erastro, 'if to-morrow Daranio marries the shepherdess Silveria, whom he thought to wed?'

But in the end Daranio's wealth has had more power with Silveria's parents than the abilities of Mireno.'

'You speak truth,' replied Elicio: 'but with Silveria the love she knew Mireno had for her should have had more power than any treasure; the more so that Mireno is not so poor that his poverty would be remarked, though Silveria were to wed him.'

Through these remarks which Elicio and Erastro uttered, the desire to learn what Mireno was singing increased in the shepherds; and so Silerio begged that no more might be said, and all with attentive ears stopped to listen to him. He, distressed by Silveria's ingratitude, seeing that next day she was wedding Daranio, with the rage and grief this deed caused him, had gone forth from his house accompanied only by his rebeck: and invited by the solitude and silence of a tiny little meadow which was hard by the walls of the village, and trusting that on a night so peaceful no one would listen to him, he sat down at the foot of a tree, and tuning his rebeck was singing in this wise: MIRENO. Oh cloudless sky, that with so many eyes

O'er all the world the thefts of Love beholdest,  
And in thy course dost fill with joy or grief  
Him who to their sweet cause his agonies  
Tells 'midst thy stillness, or whom thou withholdest  
From such delight, nor offerest him relief,  
If yet with thee be chief  
Kindness for me perchance, since now indeed

In speech alone contentment must I find,  
Thou, knowing all my mind,  
My words — it is not much I ask — may'st heed;  
For, see, my voice of woe  
Shall with my sorrowing soul die 'neath the blow.

Ah now my wearied voice, my woeful cry,  
Scarce, scarce, will now offend the empty air;  
For I at last unto this pass am brought,  
That to the winds that angry hasten by,  
Love casts my hopes, and in another's care  
Hath placed the bliss that I deserving sought,

The fruit my loving thought  
Did sow, the fruit watered by wearied tears  
By his triumphant hands will gathered be,  
And his the victory,  
Who was in fortune rich beyond his peers,  
But in deserving poor —  
'Tis fortune smooths the rough and makes it sure.

Then he who sees his happiness depart  
By any way, who doth his glory see  
Transformed into such bitter grievous pain —  
Why ends he not his life with all its smart?  
Against the countless powers of destiny  
Why strives he not to break the vital chain?

Slowly I pass amain  
Unto the peril sweet of bitter death.  
Wherefore, mine arm, bold 'midst thy weariness,

Endure thou the distress  
Of living, since our lot it brighteneth  
To know that 'tis Love's will  
That grief should do the deed, as steel doth kill.

My death is certain, for it cannot be  
That he should live whose very hope is dead,  
And who from glory doth so far remain.  
Yet this I fear, that death, by Love's decree,  
May be impossible, that memory fed  
By a false confidence may live again  
In my despite. What then?  
For if the tale of my past happiness  
I call to mind, and see that all is gone,

That I am now undone  
By the sad cares I in its stead possess,  
'Twill serve the more to show  
That I from memory and from life should go.

Ah! chief and only good my soul hath known!  
Sun that didst calm the storm within my breast!  
Goal of the worth that is desired by me!  
Can it be that the day should ever dawn  
When I must know that thou rememberest  
No more, and Love that day doth let me see?  
Rather, ere this should be,  
Ere thy fair neck be by another's arms  
In all its loveliness encircled, ere  
Thy golden — nay thy hair  
Is gold, and ere its gold in all its charms  
Should make Daranio rich,  
Its end may the evil with my life's end reach.

None hath by faith better deserved than I  
To win thee; but I see that faith is dead,  
Unless it be by deeds made manifest.  
To certain grief and to uncertain joy  
I yield my life; and if I merited  
Thereby, I might hope for a gladsome feast.

But in this cruellest  
Law used by Love, hath good desire no place,  
This proverb lovers did of old discover:  
The deed declares the lover,  
And as for me, who to my hurt possess  
Naught but the will to do,  
Wherein must I not fail, whose deeds are few?

I thought the law would clearly broken be  
In thee, that avaricious Love doth use;  
I thought that thou thine eyes on high wouldst raise  
Unto a captive soul that serves but thee,  
So ready to perform what thou dost choose,  
That, if thou didst but know, I would earn thy praise.

For a faith that assays  
By the vain pomps of wealth so full of care  
All its desires, thou wouldst not change, I thought,  
A faith that was so fraught  
With tokens of good faith, Silveria fair.



Thyself thou didst to gold  
Yield that thou mightst yield me to grief untold.

Oh poverty, that creepest on the ground,  
Cause of the grief that doth my soul enrage,  
He praiseth thee, thy face who never saw.  
Thy visage did my shepherdess confound,  
At once thy harshness did her love assuage,  
She to escape thee doth her foot withdraw.  
This is thy cruel law,  
Vainly doth one aspire the goal to find  
Of amorous purpose; thou high hopes abasest

And countless changes placest  
Within the greedy breast of womankind,

But never dost thou bless  
The worth of lovers with complete success.

Gold is a sun, whose ray the keenest eyes  
Blindeth, if on the semblance they be fed  
Of interest, that doth beguile the sight.  
He that is liberal-handed wins the prize,  
Even her hand, who, by her avarice led,  
Fair though she be, declares her heart's delight.  
'Tis gold that turns the sight  
From the pure purpose and the faith sincere;  
More than a lover's firmness is undone  
By the diamond stone,  
Whose hardness turns to wax a bosom fair,  
However hard it be;  
Its fancy thus it winneth easily.

Oh sweet my foe I suffer grief untold  
For thee, because thy matchless charms thou hast  
Made ugly by a proof of avarice.  
So much didst thou reveal thy love of gold  
That thou my passion didst behind thee cast  
And to oblivion didst my care dismiss.  
Now thou art wed! Ah, this  
Ends all! Wed, shepherdess! I pray that Heaven  
Thy choice, as thou thyself wouldst wish, may bless,

That for my bitterness  
A just reward may not to thee be given. —  
But, alas! Heaven, our friend,  
Guerdon to virtue, stripes to ill doth send.

Here the hapless Mireno ended his song with tokens of grief so great that he inspired the same in all those who were listening to him, especially in those who knew him, and were acquainted with his virtues, gallant disposition and honourable bearing. And after there had passed between the shepherds some remarks upon the strange character of women, and chiefly upon the marriage of Silveria, who, forgetful of Mireno's love and goodness, had yielded herself to Daranio's wealth, they were desirous that Silerio should end his story, and, complete silence having been imposed, without needing to be asked, he began to continue, saying: 'The day of the dire peril, then, having come, Nisida remained half a league out of the village, in some gardens as she had agreed with me, with the pretext she gave to her parents that she was not well; and as I left her, she charged me to return quickly, with the token of the kerchief, for, according as I wore it or not, she would learn the good or ill fortune of Timbrio. I promised it to her once more, being aggrieved that she should charge me with it so often. Therewith I took leave of her and of her sister, who remained with her. And when I had come to the place of combat and the hour of beginning it had come, after the seconds of both had completed the ceremonies and warnings which are required in such a case, the two gentlemen, being set in the lists, at the dread sound of a hoarse trumpet engaged with such dexterity and skill that it caused admiration in all that saw them. But love or justice — and this is the more likely — which was favouring Timbrio, gave him such vigour that, though at the cost of some wounds, in a short space he put his adversary in such a plight, that, having him at his feet, wounded and covered with blood, he begged him to give in, if he wished to save his life. But the luckless Pransiles urged him to make an end of killing him, since it was easier for him and less hurtful to pass through a thousand deaths than to surrender; yet Timbrio's noble soul is such that he neither wished to kill his foe, nor yet that he should confess himself vanquished. He merely contented himself with his saying and acknowledging that Timbrio was as good as he; which Pransiles confessed gladly, since in this he did so little, that he might very well have said it without seeing himself in that pass. All the bystanders who heard how Timbrio had dealt with his foe, praised it and valued it highly. Scarcely had I seen my friend's happy fortune, when with incredible joy and swift speed I returned to give the news to Nisida. But woe is me! for my carelessness then has set me in my present care. Oh memory, memory mine!

why had you none for what concerned me so much? But I believe it was ordained in my fortune, that the beginning of that gladness should be the end and conclusion of all my joys. I returned to see Nisida with the speed I have said, but returned without placing the white kerchief on my arm. Nisida, who from some lofty galleries, with violent longing, was waiting and watching for my return, seeing me returning without the kerchief, thought that some sinister mishap had befallen Timbrio, and she believed it and felt it in such wise, that, without aught else contributing, all her spirits failed her, and she fell to the ground in so strange a swoon, that all counted her dead. By the time I came up, I found all her household in a turmoil, and her sister showing a thousand extremes of grief over the body of sad Nisida. When I saw her in such a state, firmly believing that she was dead, and seeing that the force of grief was drawing me out of my senses, and afraid that while bereft of them I might give or disclose some tokens of my thoughts, I went forth from the house, and slowly returned to give the luckless news to luckless Timbrio. But as the anxiety of my grief had robbed me of my strength of mind and body, my steps were not so swift but that others had been more so to carry the sad tidings to Nisida's parents, assuring them that she had been carried off by an acute paroxysm. Timbrio must needs have heard this and been in the same state as I was, if not in a worse; I can only say that when I came to where I thought to find him, the night was already somewhat advanced, and I learned from one of his seconds that he had departed for Naples with his other second by the post, with tokens of such great unhappiness as if he had issued from the combat vanquished and dishonoured. I at once fancied what it might be, and at once set myself on the way to follow him, and before I reached Naples, I had sure tidings that Nisida was not dead, but had been in a swoon which lasted four and twenty hours, at the end of which she had come to herself with many tears and sighs.

With the certainty of these tidings I was consoled, and with greater joy reached Naples, thinking to find Timbrio there; but it was not so, for the gentleman with whom he had come assured me that on reaching Naples, he departed without saying anything, and that he did not know whither; only he fancied that, as he saw him sad and melancholy after the fight, he could not but think he had gone to kill himself. This was news which sent me back to my first tears, and my fortune, not even content with this, ordained that at the end of a few days Nisida's parents should come to Naples without her and without her sister, who, as I learned, and as was the common report, had both absented themselves one night, whilst coming with their parents to Naples, without any news being known of them.

Thereat I was so confused that I knew not what to do with myself nor what to

say to myself, and being placed in this strange confusion, I came to learn, though not very surely, that Timbrio had embarked in the port of Gaeta on a large ship bound for Spain. Thinking it might be true, I came straightway to Spain, and have looked for him in Xeres and in every place I fancied he might be, without finding any trace of him. At last I came to the city of Toledo, where all the kinsmen of Nisida's parents are, and what I succeeded in learning is that they have returned to Toledo without having learned news of their daughters.

Seeing myself, then, absent from Timbrio and away from Nisida, and considering that as soon as I should find them, it must needs be to their joy and my ruin, being now wearied and disenchanted of the things of this deceitful world in which we live, I have resolved to turn my thoughts to a better pole-star, and to spend the little that remains to me of life, in the service of Him who values desires and works in the degree they deserve. And so I have chosen this garb you see, and the hermitage you have seen, where in sweet solitude I may repress my desires and direct my works to a better goal; though, as the course of the evil inclinations I have cherished till now, springs from so far back, they are not so easy to check but that they somewhat overrun the bounds, and memory returns to battle with me, representing to me the past. When I see myself in this pass, to the sound of yonder harp which I chose for companion in my solitude, I seek to lighten the heavy burden of my cares until Heaven shall take it and be minded to call me to a better life. This, shepherds, is the story of my misfortune; and if I have been long in telling it to you, it is because my misfortune has not been brief in afflicting me. What I pray you is to allow me to return to my hermitage, for, though your company is pleasing to me, I have come to the pass that nothing gives me more joy than solitude, and henceforward you will understand the life I lead and the woe I endure.'

Herewith Silerio ended his story, but not the tears with which he had oftentimes accompanied it. The shepherds consoled him for them as best they could, especially Damon and Thyrsis, who with many reasonings urged him not to lose the hope of seeing his friend Timbrio in greater happiness than he could imagine, since it was not possible but that after such evil fortune Heaven should become serene, wherefrom it might be hoped that it would not be willing for the false news of Nisida's death to come to Timbrio's knowledge save in a truer version before despair should end his days; and that, as regards Nisida it might be believed and conjectured that, on finding Timbrio absent, she had gone in search of him; and that, if fortune had then parted them by such strange accidents, it would know now how to unite them by others no less strange. All these reasonings and many others they addressed to him, consoled him somewhat, but not so as to awaken the hope of seeing himself in a life of greater happiness, nor

yet did he seek it, for it seemed to him that the life he had chosen, was the one most fitting for him. A great part of the night was already passed when the shepherds agreed to rest for the little time that remained until the day, whereon the wedding of Daranio and Silveria was to be celebrated. But scarce had the white dawn left the irksome couch of her jealous spouse, when most of the shepherds of the village all left theirs, and each as best he could, for his part, began to gladden the feast. One brought green boughs to adorn the doorway of the betrothed, another with tabor and flute gave them the morning greeting.

Here was heard the gladdening pipe, here sounded the tuneful rebeck, there the ancient psaltery, here the practised flageolet; one with red ribands adorned his castanets for the hoped-for dance, another polished and polished again his rustic finery to show himself gallant in the eyes of some little shepherdess his sweetheart, so that in whatever part of the village one went, all savoured of happiness, pleasure, and festivity. There was only the sad and hapless Mireno, to whom all these joys were the cause of greatest sadness. He, having gone out from the village, so as not to see performed the sacrifice of his glory, ascended a hillock which was near the village, and seating himself there at the foot of an old ash tree, placing his hand on his cheek, his bonnet pulled down to his eyes which he kept rivetted on the ground, he began to ponder the hapless plight in which he found himself, and how, without being able to prevent it, he had to see the fruit of his desires culled before his eyes; and this thought held him in such a way that he wept so tenderly and bitterly that no one could see him in such a pass without accompanying him with tears. At this moment Damon and Thyrsis, Elicio and Erastro arose, and appearing at a window which looked on to the plain, the first object on which they set eyes was the luckless Mireno, and on seeing him in the state in which he was, they knew full well the grief he was suffering; and, being moved to compassion, they determined all to go and console him, as they would have done, had not Elicio begged them to let him go alone, for he thought that, as Mireno was so great a friend of his, he would impart his grief to him more freely than to another.

The shepherds consented to it, and Elicio, going there, found Mireno so beside himself and so transported in his grief that he neither recognised him nor spoke to him a word. Elicio, seeing this, beckoned to the other shepherds to come, and they, fearing that some strange accident had befallen Mireno, since Elicio called them with haste, straightway went there, and saw Mireno with eyes so fixed on the ground, and so motionless that he seemed a statue, seeing that he did not awake from his strange trance with the coming of Elicio nor with that of Thyrsis, Damon and Erastro, except that after a long while he began to say as it were between his teeth: 'Are you Silveria, Silveria? if you are, I am not Mireno, and if

I am not Mireno, you are not Silveria, for it is not possible for Silveria to be without Mireno, or Mireno without Silveria. Then who am I, hapless one? or who are you, ungrateful one? Full well I know that I am not Mireno, for you have not wished to be Silveria, at least the Silveria you ought to have been and I thought you were.'

At this moment he raised his eyes, and as he saw the four shepherds round him and recognised Elicio among them, he arose and without ceasing his bitter plaint, threw his arms round his neck, saying to him: 'Ah, my true friend, now indeed you will have no cause to envy my state, as you envied it when you saw me favoured by Silveria; for, if you called me happy then, you can call me hapless now, and change all the glad names you gave me then, into the grievous ones you now can give me. I indeed will be able to call you happy, Elicio, since you are more consoled by the hope you have of being loved than afflicted by the real fear of being forgotten.'

'You make me perplexed, oh Mireno,' answered Elicio, 'to see the extreme grief you display at what Silveria has done, when you know that she has parents whom it was right to have obeyed.'

'If she felt love,' replied Mireno, 'duty to parents were small hindrance to keep her from fulfilling what she owed to love.'

Whence I come to think, oh Elicio, that if she loved me well, she did ill to marry, and if the love she used to show me was feigned, she did worse in deceiving me and in offering to undeceive me at a time when it cannot avail me save by leaving my life in her hands.'

'Your life, Mireno,' replied Elicio, 'is not in such a pass that for cure you have to end it, since it might be that the change in Silveria was not in her will, but in the constraint of obedience to her parents; and, if you loved her purely and honourably when a maid, you can also love her now that she is wed, she responding now as then to your good and honourable desires.'

'Little do you know Silveria, Elicio,' answered Mireno, 'since you imagine of her that she is likely to do aught that might make her notorious.'

'This very argument you have used, condemns you,' replied Elicio, 'since, if you, Mireno, know of Silveria that she will not do anything which may be hurtful to her, she cannot have erred in what she has done.'

'If she has not erred,' answered Mireno, 'she has succeeded in robbing me of all the fair issue I hoped from my fair thoughts; and only in this do I blame her that she never warned me of this blow, nay rather, when I had fears of it, she assured me with a firm oath that they were fancies of mine, and that it had never entered her fancy to think of marrying Daranio, nor, if she could not marry me, would she marry him nor anyone else, though she were thereby to risk remaining



in perpetual disgrace with her parents and kinsmen; and under this assurance and promise now to fail in and break her faith in the way you have seen — what reason is there that would consent to such a thing, or what heart that would suffer it?’

Here Mireno once more renewed his plaint and here again the shepherds had pity for him. At this moment two youths came up to where they were; one of them was Mireno’s kinsman, the other a servant of Daranio’s who came to summon Elicio, Thyrsis, Damon and Erastro, for the festivities of his marriage were about to begin. It grieved the shepherds to leave Mireno alone, but the shepherd his kinsman offered to remain with him, and indeed Mireno told Elicio that he wished to go away from that region, so as not to see every day before his eyes the cause of his misfortune. Elicio praised his resolve and charged him, wherever he might be, to inform him how it went with him.

Mireno so promised him; and drawing from his bosom a paper, he begged him to give it to Silveria on finding an opportunity.

Therewith he took leave of all the shepherds, not without token of much grief and sadness. He had not gone far from their presence, when Elicio, desirous of learning what was in the paper, seeing that, since it was open, it mattered but little if he read it, unfolded it, and inviting the other shepherds to listen to him, saw that in it were written these verses: MIRENO TO SILVERIA.

He who once gave unto thee  
Most of all he did possess,  
Unto thee now, shepherdess,  
Sends what remnant there may be;

Even this poor paper where

Clearly written he hath shown  
The faith that from thee hath gone,  
What remains with him, despair.

But perchance it doth avail  
Little that I tell thee this,  
If my faith bring me no bliss,  
And my woe to please thee fail;  
Think not that I seek to mourn,  
To complain that thou dost leave me;  
'Tis too late that I should grieve me  
For my early love forlorn.

Time was when thou fain wouldst hear  
All my tale of misery;  
If a tear were in my eye,  
Thou therewith wouldst shed a tear:

Then Mireno was in truth  
He on whom thine eyes were set,  
Changed thou art and dost forget,  
All the joyous time of youth!

Did that error but endure,  
Tempered were my bitter sadness;

Fancied joy brings greater gladness  
Than a loss well known and sure.  
But 'twas thou that didst ordain  
My misfortune and distress,

Making by thy fickleness  
False my bliss and sure my pain.

From thy words so full of lies  
And my ears that, weak, believed,  
Fancied joys have I received,  
And undoubted miseries.

Seeming pleasures once me crowned  
With the buoyancy of youth,  
But the evils in their truth  
To my sorrow do redound.

Hence I judge and know full well,  
And it cannot be denied.  
That its glory and its pride  
Love hath at the gates of hell;  
Whoso doth not set his gaze  
Upon Love, from joy to pain

By oblivion and disdain  
Is brought in a moment's space.

With such swiftness thou hast wrought  
This mysterious transformation,



That already desperation  
And not gain becomes my lot;  
For methinks 'twas yesterday  
Thou didst love me, or didst feign  
Love at least, for this is plain,  
What I must believe to-day.

Still thy pleasing voice I hear  
Uttering sweet and witty things,

Still thy loving reasonings  
Are resounding in my ear;  
But these memories at last,  
Though they please, yet torture more,

Since away the breezes bore  
Words and works adown the blast.

Wert thou she who in her pride  
Swore her days on earth should end,  
If she did not love her friend  
More than all she loved beside?  
Wert thou she who to me showed  
How she loved with such good-will,  
That, although I was her ill,  
She did hold me for her good?

Oh if but I could thee hate  
As thou hatest me, thy name  
Would I brand with fitting shame,  
Since thou'rt thankless and ingrate;  
Yet it useless is for me  
Thus to hate thee and disdain,  
Love to me is greater gain  
Than forgetfulness to thee.

To my singing sad lament,  
To my springtime winter's snow,

To my laughter bitter woe

Thy relentless hand hath sent

H

It has changed my joyous dress  
To the garb of those that mourn,  
Love's soft flower to poignant thorn,  
Love's sweet fruit to bitterness.

Thou wilt say — thereat I bleed —  
That thy marriage to this swain,  
Thy forgetfulness again,  
Is a noble honest deed;  
If it were not known to thee

That in thy betrothal hour  
My life ended evermore,  
Then I might admit thy plea.

But thy pleasure in a word  
Pleasure was; but 'twas not just,  
Since my faith and loyal trust  
Did but earn unjust reward;  
For my faith, since it doth see  
How to show its faithfulness,  
Wanes not through thy fickleness,  
Faints not through my misery.

None will wonder — surely no man,  
When he comes to know the truth,  
Seeing that I am a youth,  
And, Silveria, thou art woman;  
Ever in her, we believe,  
Hath its home inconstancy;  
Second nature 'tis to me  
Thus to suffer and to grieve.

Thee a wedded bride I view  
Now repentant, making moan,  
For it is a fact well known  
That thou wilt in naught be true;  
Gladly seek the yoke to bear  
That thou on thy neck didst cast,  
For thou may'st it hate at last,  
But for ever 'twill be there.

Yet so fickle is thy state,  
And thy mood is so severe,

That what yesterday was dear  
Thou must needs to-morrow hate;  
Hence in some mysterious way,  
'Lovely 'midst her fickleness,  
Fickle 'midst her loveliness,'  
He who speaks of thee will say.

The shepherds did not think ill of Mireno's verses, but of the occasion for which they had been made, considering with what rapidity Silveria's fickleness had brought him to the pass of abandoning his beloved country and dear friends, each one fearful lest, as the result of his suit, the same thing might happen to him. Then, after they had entered the village and come to where Daranio and Silveria were, the festivities began with as much joy and merriment as had been seen for a long time on the banks of the Tagus; for, as Daranio was one of the richest shepherds of all that district, and Silveria one of the fairest shepherdesses of all the river-side, all or most of the shepherds of those parts assisted at their wedding. And so there was a fine gathering of discreet shepherds and fair shepherdesses, and amongst those who excelled the rest in many different qualities were the sad Orompo, the jealous Orfenio, the absent Crisio, and the love-lorn Marsilio, all youths and all in love, though oppressed by different passions, for sad Orompo was tormented by the untimely death of his beloved Listea, jealous Orfenio by the unbearable rage of jealousy, being in love with the fair shepherdess Eandra, absent Crisio by seeing himself parted from Claraura, a fair and discreet shepherdess, whom he counted his only joy, and despairing Marsilio by the hatred against him existing in Belisa's breast.

They were all friends and from the same village; each was not ignorant of the other's love, but, on the contrary, in mournful rivalry they had oftentimes come together, each to extol the cause of his torment, seeking each one to show, as best he could, that his grief exceeded every other, counting it the highest glory to be superior in pain; and all had such wit, or, to express it better, suffered such grief, that, however they might indicate it, they showed it was the greatest that could be imagined. Through these disputes and rivalries they were famous and renowned on all the banks of the Tagus, and had caused in Thyrsis and Damon desire to know them; and, seeing them there together, they offered one another courteous and pleasing greetings, all especially regarding with admiration the two shepherds Thyrsis and Damon, up till then only known to them by repute. At this moment came the rich shepherd Daranio, dressed in mountain garb; he wore a high-necked smock with pleated collar, a frieze vest, a green coat cut low at the neck, breeches of fine linen, blue gaiters, round shoes, a studded belt, and a



quartered bonnet the colour of the coat. No less finely adorned came forth his bride Silveria, for she came with skirt and bodice of fawn, bordered with white satin, a tucker worked with blue and green, a neckerchief of yellow thread sprinkled with silver embroidery, the contrivance of Galatea and Florisa, who dressed her, a turquoise-coloured coif with fringes of red silk, gilded pattens of cork, dainty close-fitting shoes, rich corals, a ring of gold, and above all her beauty, which adorned her more than all. After her came the peerless Galatea, like the sun after the dawn, and her friend Florisa, with many other fair shepherdesses, who had come to the wedding to honour it; and amongst them, too, came Teolinda, taking care to conceal her face from the eyes of Damon and Thyrsis, so as not to be recognised by them. And straightway the shepherdesses, following the shepherds their guides, to the sound of many rustic instruments, made their way to the temple, during which time Elicio and Erastro found time to feast their eyes on Galatea's fair countenance, desiring that that way might last longer than the long wandering of Ulysses. And, at the joy of seeing her, Erastro was so beside himself, that addressing Elicio he said to him: 'What are you looking at, shepherd, if you are not looking at Galatea? But how will you be able to look at the sun of her locks, the heaven of her brow, the stars of her eyes, the snow of her countenance, the crimson of her cheeks, the colour of her lips, the ivory of her teeth, the crystal of her neck, and the marble of her breast?'

'All this have I been able to see, oh Erastro,' replied Elicio, 'and naught of all you have said is the cause of my torment, but it is the hardness of her disposition, for if it were not such as you know, all the graces and beauties you recognise in Galatea would be the occasion of our greater glory.'

'You say well,' said Erastro; 'but yet you will not be able to deny to me, that if Galatea were not so fair, she would not be so desired, and if she were not so desired, our pain would not be so great, since it all springs from desire.'

'I cannot deny to you, Erastro,' replied Elicio, 'that all grief and sorrow whatsoever springs from the want and lack of that which we desire; but at the same time I wish to tell you that the quality of the love with which I thought you loved Galatea has fallen greatly in my estimation, for if you merely love her because she is fair, she has very little to thank you for, since there will be no man, however rustic he be, who sees her but desires her, for beauty, wherever it be, carries with it the power of creating desire. Thus no reward is due to this simple desire, because it is so natural, for if it were due, by merely desiring Heaven, we would have deserved it. But you see already, Erastro, that the opposite is so much the case, as our true law has shown to us; and granted that beauty and loveliness are a principal factor in attracting us to desire them and to seek to enjoy them, he who would be a true lover must not count such enjoyment

his highest good; but rather, though beauty causes this desire in him, he must love the one only because the desire is honourable, without any other interest moving him, and this can be called, even in things of this life, perfect and true love, and is worthy of gratitude and reward. Just as we see that the Maker of all things openly and fittingly rewards those who, not being moved by any other interest, whether of fear, pain, or hope of glory, love Him, worship Him, and serve Him only because he is good and worthy of being worshipped; and this is the last and greatest perfection contained in divine love, and in human love, too, when one does not love except because what one loves is good, without there being an error of judgment, for oftentimes the bad seems to us good, and the good bad, and so we love the one and abhor the other, and such love as this does not deserve reward but punishment. I wish to imply from all I have said, oh Erastro, that if you love and worship Galatea's beauty with intent to enjoy it, and the goal of your desire stops at this point without passing on to love her virtue, her increase of fame, her welfare, her life and prosperity, know that you do not love as you ought, nor ought you to be rewarded as you wish.'

Erastro would fain have replied to Elicio, and given him to understand that he did not understand rightly concerning the love with which he loved Galatea; but this was prevented by the sound of the pipe of loveless Lenio, who also wished to be present at Daranio's wedding, and to gladden the festivities with his song; and so setting himself in front of the betrothed pair, whilst they were going to the temple, to the sound of Eugenio's rebeck he went singing these verses: LENIO.  
Unknown, ungrateful Love, that dost appal

At times the gallant hearts of all our race,  
And with vain shapes and shades fantastical  
In the free soul dost countless fetters place,  
If, proud of godhead, thou thyself dost call  
By such a lofty name, spurn in disgrace  
Him, who, surrendered to the marriage tie,  
To a new noose would yield his fantasy.

Strive thou that pure and spotless evermore  
The law of holy wedlock may remain,  
Turn thou thy mind thereto with all thy power,  
Unfurl thy banner on this fair champaign,  
See what sweet fruit he hopes, what lovely flower,  
For little toil, who doth himself constrain  
To bear this yoke, as duty bids and right;  
For, though a burden, 'tis a burden light.

Thou canst, if thou no more rememberest  
Thy misdeeds and thy peevish character,  
Make glad the marriage bed, the happy nest,  
Wherein the nuptial yoke unites the pair;  
Set thyself in their soul, and in their breast  
Until their life have ended its career,  
Then may they go (and to this hope we cling)  
To enjoy the pleasures of the eternal spring.

Do thou the shepherd's tiny cot pass by,  
To do his duty leave the shepherd free,  
Fly higher yet, since thou so high dost fly,  
Seek for a better pastime, nobler be:  
To make of souls a sacrifice on high  
Thou toilest and dost watch;— 'tis vanity,  
If thou dost bring them not with better mind  
To the sweet union Hymen hath designed.

The mighty hand of thy amazing might  
Thou canst herein to all the world display,  
Making the tender bride in love delight,  
And by her bridegroom be beloved alway;  
The infernal jealous madness that doth blight  
Their peace and comfort, thou canst drive away;  
Suffer not scornful harsh disdain to keep  
Far from their eyelids sweet refreshing sleep.

But if the prayers of him who was thy friend  
Have never, traitorous Love, been heard by thee,  
To these of mine thou wilt no hearing lend,  
For I thy foe am, and shall ever be;  
Thy character, thy works of evil end,  
Whereof is witness all humanity,  
Lead me to expect not from thy hand a wealth  
Of peace or fortune, happiness or health.

Already those who listened to the loveless Lenio as they went along were wondering at seeing with what meekness he was treating the things of Love,

calling him a god, and of a mighty hand — a thing they had never heard him say. But having heard the verse's with which he ended his song, they could not refrain from laughter, for it already seemed to them that he was getting angry as he went on, and that if he proceeded further in his song he would deal with love as he was wont at other times; but time failed him, for the way was at an end. And so, when they had come to the temple, and the usual ceremonies had been performed therein by the priests, Daranio and Silveria remained bound in a tight and perpetual knot, not without the envy of many who saw them, nor without the grief of some who coveted Silveria's beauty. But every grief would have been surpassed by that which the hapless Mireno would have felt, had he been present at this spectacle. The wedded pair having returned from the temple with the same company that had escorted them, came to the village square, where they found the tables set, and where Daranio wished publicly to make a demonstration of his wealth, offering to all the people a liberal and sumptuous feast. The square was so covered with branches, that it seemed a lovely green forest, the branches interwoven above in such wise that the sun's keen rays in all that compass found no entry to warm the cool ground, which was covered with many sword-lilies and a great diversity of flowers. There, then, to the general content of all was celebrated the liberal banquet, to the sound of many pastoral instruments, which gave no less pleasure than is wont to be given by the bands playing in harmony usual in royal palaces; but that which most exalted the feast was to see, that, on removing the tables, they made with much speed in the same place a stage, because the four discreet and hapless shepherds, Orompo, Marsilio, Crisio, and Orfenio, so as to honour their friend Daranio's wedding, and to satisfy the desire Thyrsis and Damon had to hear them, wished there in public to recite an eclogue, which they themselves had composed on the occasion of their own griefs. All the shepherds and shepherdesses who were there being then arranged in their seats, after that Erastro's pipe, and Lenio's lyre and the other instruments made those present keep peaceful and marvellous silence, the first who showed himself in the humble theatre was the sad Orompo, clad in black skincoat, and a crook of yellow box-wood in his hand, the end of which was an ugly figure of Death. He came crowned with leaves of mournful cypress, all emblems of grief which reigned in him by reason of the untimely death of his beloved Listea; and after he had, with sad look, turned his weeping eyes in all directions, with tokens of infinite grief and bitterness he broke the silence with words like these: OROMPO. Come from the depths of my grief-stricken breast, Oh words of blood, with death commingled come,

Break open the left side that keeps you dumb,  
If 'tis my sighs perchance that hold you fast.

The air impedes you, for 'tis fired at last  
By the fierce poison of your utterance;  
Come forth and let the breezes bear you hence,  
As they have borne my bliss adown the blast.

For ye will lose but little when ye see  
Yourselves lost, since your lofty theme has gone,  
For whom in weighty style and perfect tone  
Utterance ye gave to things of high degree.  
Famed were ye once, of high renown were ye,  
For sweetness, and for wittiness and gladness;  
But now for bitterness, for tears and sadness,  
Will ye by Heaven and earth appraisèd be.

Although ye issue trembling at my cry  
With what words can ye utter what I feel,  
If my fierce torment is incapable  
Of being as 'tis painted vividly?  
Alas, for neither means nor time have I  
To express the pain and sinking at my heart;  
But what my tongue doth lack to tell its smart,  
My eyes by constant weeping may supply.

Oh death, who cuttest short by cruel guile  
A thousand pleasant purposes of man,  
And in a moment turnest hill to plain,  
Making Henares equal unto Nile,  
Why didst thou temper not thy cruel style,  
Traitor, and why didst thou, in my despite,  
Make trial on a bosom fair and white  
Of thy fierce hanger's edge with fury vile?

How came it that the green and tender years  
Of that fair lamb did, false one, thee displease?  
Wherefore didst thou my woes by hers increase?  
Why didst thou show thyself to her so fierce?  
Enemy mine, friend of deceitful cares,  
Goest thou from me who seek thee, and concealest  
Thyself from me, while thou thyself revealest

To him who more than I thy evils fears?

On riper years thy law tyrannical  
Might well its giant vigour have displayed,  
Nor dealt its cruel blow against a maid,  
Who hath of living had enjoyment small;  
But yet thy sickle which arrangeth all —  
By no prayer turned aside nor word of power —  
Moweth with ruthless blade the tender flower  
E'en as the knotty reed, stalwart and tall.

When thou Listea from the world away  
Didst take, thy nature and thy strength, thy worth,  
Thy spirit, wrath and lordship to the earth  
Thou didst by that proud deed alone display.  
All that the earth possesseth fair and gay,  
Graceful and witty, thou didst likewise doom,  
When thou didst doom Listea; in her tomb  
Thou didst with her this wealth of blisses lay.

My painful life grows longer, and its weight  
I can no more upon my shoulders bear,  
For without her I am in darkness drear;  
His life is death who is not fortunate.  
I have no hope in fortune nor in fate,  
I have no hope in time, no hope in Heaven;  
I may not hope for solace to be given,  
Nor yet for good where evil is so great.

Oh ye who feel what sorrow is, come, find  
In mine your consolation, when ye see  
Its strength, its vigour and alacrity;  
Then ye will see how far yours falls behind.  
Where are ye now, shepherds graceful and kind,  
Crisio, Marsilio, and Orfenio? What  
Do ye? Why come ye not? Why count ye not  
Mine greater far than troubles of your mind?

But who is this who cometh into sight,

Emerging at the crossing of yon path?  
Marsilio 'tis, whom Love as prisoner hath,  
The cause Belisa, her praise his delight.  
The fierce snake of disdain with cruel bite  
His soul doth ever gnaw and eke his breast,  
He spends his life in torment without rest,  
And yet not his but mine the blacker plight.

He thinks the ill that makes his soul complain  
Is greater than the sorrow of my woe.  
Within this thicket 'twill be well to go,  
That I may see if he perchance complain.  
Alas! to think to match it with the pain  
That never leaves me is but vanity.  
The road mine opens that to ill draws nigh,  
Closing the pathway that doth bliss attain.

Marsilio. Oh steps that by steps bring  
Me to death's agonies  
I am constrained to blame your tardiness!  
Unto the sweet lot cling,

For in your swiftness lies  
My, bliss, and in such hour of bitterness.  
Behold, me to distress,



The hardness of my foe  
Within her angry breast,  
Hostile unto my rest,  
Doth ever do what it was wont to do,  
And therefore let us flee,  
If but we can, from her dread cruelty.

To what clime shall I go,  
Or to what land unknown  
To make my dwelling there, that I may be  
Safe from tormenting woe,  
From sad and certain moan,  
Which shall not end till it hath ended me?

Whether I stay or flee  
To Libya's sandy plains  
Or to the dwelling-place  
Of Scythia's savage race,  
One thing alone doth mitigate my pain;

That a contented mind  
I do not in a change of dwelling find.

It wins me everywhere,

The rigorous disdain  
Of her that hath no peer, my cruel foe,

And yet an issue fair  
'Tis not for me to gain  
From Love or hope amidst such cruel woe.  
Belisa, daylight's glow,  
Thou glory of our age,

If prayers of a friend  
Have power thy will to bend,  
Temper of thy right hand the ruthless rage!  
The fire my breast doth hold,  
May it have power in thine to melt the cold.

Yet deaf unto my cry,  
Ruthless and merciless,  
As to the wearied mariner's appeal

The tempest raging by  
That stirs the angry sea,  
Threatening to life the doom unspeakable,  
Adamant, marble, steel,  
And rugged Alpine brow,  
The sturdy holm-oak old,  
The oak that to the cold  
North wind its lofty crest doth never bow,

All gentle are and kind  
Compared unto the wrath in thee we find.

My hard and bitter fate,  
My unrelenting star,  
My will that bears it all and suffereth,  
This doom did promulgate,  
Thankless Belisa fair,  
That I should serve and love thee e'en in death



Though thy brow threateneth  
With ruthless, angry frown,  
And though thine eyes so clear  
A thousand woes declare,  
Yet mistress of this soul I shall thee crown,

Until a mortal veil  
Of flesh no more on earth my soul conceal.

Can there be good that vies  
With my tormenting ill,  
Can any earthly ill such anguish give?  
For each of them doth rise  
Far beyond human skill,  
And without her in living death I live,

In disdain I revive  
My faith, and there 'tis found  
Burnt with the chilly cold.  
What vanity behold,  
The unwonted sorrow that my soul doth wound!  
Can it be equal, see,  
Unto the ill that fain would greater be?

But who is he who stirs

The interwoven boughs  
Of this round-crested myrtle, thick and green?

OROMPO. A shepherd who avers,  
Reasoning from his woes,  
Founding his words upon the truth therein,  
That it must needs be seen

His sorrow doth surpass  
The sorrow thou dost feel,  
The higher thou mayst raise it,  
Exalt it, and appraise it.

MARS. Conquered wilt thou remain in such a deal,  
Orompo, friend so true.  
And thou thyself shalt witness be thereto.  
If of my agonies,  
If of my maddening ill,  
The very smallest part thou didst but know,  
Thy vanities would cease,  
For thou wouldst see that still  
My sufferings all are true, and thine but show.

Orompo. Deem thy mysterious woe  
A phantom of the mind,  
Than mine, that doth distress  
My life, reckon thine less,  
For I will save thee from thine error blind,  
And the dear truth reveal,  
That thy ill is a shadow, mine is real.  
But, lo! the voice I hear  
Of Crisio, sounding plain.  
A shepherd he, whose views with thine agree,  
To him let us give ear,

For his distressful pain  
Maketh him swell with pride, as thine doth thee.

MARS. To-day time offers me

Place and occasion where

I can display to both  
And prove to you the truth  
That only I misfortune know and care.

OROMPO. Marsilio, now attend  
Unto the voice and sad theme of thy friend.

Crisio. Ah! hard oppressive absence, sad and drear,  
How far must he have been from knowing thee,  
Who did thy force and violence compare  
To death's invincible supremacy!  
For when death doth pronounce his doom severe,  
What then can he do more, so weak is he,  
That to undo the knot and stoutest tether  
That holdeth soul and body firm together?

Thy cruel sword to greater ill extends,  
Since into two one spirit it doth part.  
Love's miracles, which no man understands,  
Nor are attained by learning or by art.  
Oh let my soul with one who understands,  
There leave its half, and bring the weaker part  
Hither, whereby more ill I on me lay,  
Than if from life I were far, far away!

Away am I from yonder eyes so fair,  
Which calmed my torment in my hour of need,  
Eyes, life of him who could behold them clear,  
If they the fancy did not further lead;  
For to behold and think of merit there  
Is but a foolish, daring, reckless deed,  
I see them not, I saw them to my wrong,  
And now I perish, for to see I long.

Longing have I, and rightly, to behold —  
The term of my distress to abbreviate —  
This friendship rent in twain which hath of old  
United soul to flesh with love so great,  
That from the frame set free which doth it hold,



With ready speed and wondrous flight elate,  
It will be able to behold again  
Those eyes, relief and glory to its pain.

Pain is the payment and the recompense  
That Love doth to the absent lover give;  
Herein is summed all suffering and offence,  
That in Love's sufferings we do perceive;  
Neither to use discretion for defence,  
Nor in the fire of loyal love to live  
With thoughts exalted, doth avail to assuage  
This torment's cruel pain and violent rage.

Raging and violent is this cruel distress,  
And yet withal so long doth it endure,  
That, ere it endeth, endeth steadfastness,  
And even life's career, wretched and poor;  
Death, jealousy, disdain, and fickleness,  
An unkind, angry heart, do not assure  
Such torment, nor inflict wounds so severe,  
As doth this ill, whose very name is fear.

Fearful it were, did not a grief, so fierce  
As this, produce in me such mortal grief;  
And yet it is not mortal, since my years  
End not, though I am absent from my life;  
But I'll no more my woeful song rehearse,  
For to such swains, in charm and wisdom chief,  
As those I see before me, 'twill be right  
That I should show to see them more delight.

OROMPO. Delight thy presence gives us, Crisio friend,  
And more, because thou comest at an hour,  
When we our ancient difference may end.

CRISIO. If it delights thee, come, let us once more  
Begin, for in Marsilio of our strife  
A righteous judge we have to plead before.

MARS. Clearly ye show and prove your error rife,  
Wherewith ye twain are so besotted, drawn  
By the vain fancy that rules o'er your life,  
Since ye wish that the sorrows ye bemoan,  
Although so small, should be to mine preferred,  
Bewailed enough, and yet so little known.

But that it may by earth and Heaven be heard,  
How far your sorrows fall below the pain  
That hath my soul beset and hope deferred,  
I will the least my bosom doth contain,  
Put forth, with all the feeble wit I have —  
Methinks the victory in your strife I'll gain —

And unto you I shall the verdict leave,  
To judge my ill whether it harroweth  
More than the absence which doth Crisio grieve,  
Or than the dread and bitter ill of death;  
For each of you doth heedless make his plaint,  
Bitter and brief he calls the lot he hath.

OROMPO. Thereat I feel, Marsilio, much content,  
Because the reason I have on my side,  
Hath to my anguish hope of triumph sent.

CRISIO. Although the skill is unto me denied  
To exaggerate, when I my grief proclaim,  
Ye will behold how yours are set aside.

MARS. Unto the deathless hardness of my dame  
What absence reaches? Though so hard is she,  
Mistress of beauty her the world acclaim.

OROMPO. At what a happy hour and juncture see,  
Orfenio comes in sight! Be ye intent,  
And ye will hear him weigh his misery.  
'Tis jealousy that doth his soul torment,  
A very knife is jealousy, the sure  
Disturber of Love's peace and Love's content.

CRISIO. Harken, he sings the griefs he doth endure.

ORFENIO. Oh gloomy shadow, thou that followest  
My sorrowing and confused fancy still,  
Thou darkness irksome, thou that, cold and chill,  
Hast ever my content and light oppressed.

When will it be that thou thy bitterest  
Wrath wilt assuage, cruel monster, harpy fell?  
What dost thou gain to make my joy a hell?  
What bliss, that thou my bliss dost from me wrest?

But if the mood thou dost upon thee take,  
Leadeth thee on to seek his life to steal,  
Who life and being unto thee did give,  
Methinks I should not wonder thou dost wreak  
Thy will upon me, and upon my weal,  
But that despite my woes, I yet do live.

OROMPO. If the delightful mead  
Is pleasant to thee as 'twas wont to be  
In times that now are dead,  
Come hither; thou art free  
To spend the day in our sad company.

He that is sad agrees  
Easily with the sad, as thou must know;  
Come hither, here one flees,  
Beside this clear spring's flow,  
The sun's bright rays that high in heaven glow.

Come and thyself defend,  
As is thy custom, raise thy wonted strain,  
Against each sorrowing friend,

For each doth strive amain  
To show that his alone is truly pain.

I only in the strife  
Must needs opponent be to each and all,

The sorrow of my life  
I can indeed extol,  
But cannot give expression to the whole.

ORFENIO. The luscious grassy sward  
Is not unto the hungry lamb so sweet,

Nor health once more restored

Doth he so gladly greet  
Who had already held its loss complete,

As pleasant 'tis for me  
In the contest that is at hand to show

That the cruel misery



My suffering heart doth know  
Is far above the greatest here below.

Orompo, speak no word  
Of thy great ill, Crisio, thy grief contain,  
Let naught from thee be heard,  
Marsilio; death, disdain,  
Absence, seek not to rival jealous pain.

But if Heaven so desires  
That we to-day should seek the battle-field,  
Begin, whoso aspires,

And of his sorrow yield  
Token with all the skill his tongue can wield.

A truthful history  
In the pure truth doth find its resting-place.  
For it can never be,

That elegance and grace  
Of speech can form its substance and its base.

CRISIO. Shepherd, in this great arrogance I feel  
Thou wilt reveal the folly of thy life  
When in this strife of passions we engage.

ORFEN. Thy pride assuage or show it in its hour,  
Thine anguish sore is but a pastime, friend,  
The souls that bend in grief, because they go  
Away, their woe must needs exaggerate.

CRISIO. So strange and great the torment is I moan,  
That thou full soon thyself, I trust, wilt say  
That nothing may with my fatigues compare.

MARS. An evil star shone on me from my birth.

OROMPO. Ere yet on earth I came, methinks e'en then  
Misfortune, pain, and misery, were mine.

ORFEN. In me divine the greatest of ill-fortune.

CRISIO. Thy ill is fortune, when to mine compared.

MARS. When it is paired with my mysterious ill,  
The wound that kills you is but glory plain.

OROMPO. This tangled skein will soon be very clear,  
When bright and clear my grief it doth reveal.  
Let none conceal the pain his breast within,  
For I the tale of mine do now begin.

In good ground my hopes were sown,  
Goodly fruit they promised then,  
But when their desire was known,  
And their willingness was shown,  
Heaven changed their fruit to pain.  
I beheld their wondrous flower,

Eager happiness to shower  
On me — thousand proofs it gave —  
Death that envious did it crave  
Plucked it in that very hour.

Like the labourer was I,

Who doth toil without relief  
And with lingering energy,

Winning from his destiny  
But the bitter fruit of grief:

Destiny doth take away  
All hope of a better day,  
For the Heaven that to him brings

Confidence of better things  
It beneath the earth did lay.

If to this pass I attain,  
That e'en now I live, despairing  
Whether I shall glory gain,  
Since I suffer beyond bearing,  
'Tis a certain truth and plain:



That amidst the darkest gloom  
Hope assures that there shall come  
Yet a happier, brighter dawn.  
Woe for him, whose hope is gone,  
Buried in the hopeless tomb.

MARS. — From mine eyes the tear-drops fall  
On a spot where many a thorn,  
Many a bramble, hath been born  
To my hurt, for, once and all,  
They my loving heart have torn:  
I am luckless, yes, 'tis I,  
Though my cheeks were never dry  
For a moment in my grief,  
Yet nor fruit, nor flower, nor leaf,  
Have I won, howe'er I try.

For my bosom would be stilled,  
If I might a token see  
Of some gain, small though it be;  
Though it never were fulfilled,  
I should win felicity:  
For the worth I should behold

Of my fond persistence bold  
Over her who doth so scorn,  
That she at my chill doth burn,  
At my fire is chilly cold.

But if all the toil is vain  
Of my mourning and my sigh,  
And I still cease not my cry,  
With my more than human pain  
What on earth can hope to vie?  
Dead the cause is of thy grief,  
This, Orompo, brings relief,  
And thy sorrow doth suppress;  
But when my grief most doth press  
On me, 'tis beyond belief.

CRISIO. — Once the fruit that was the dower

Of my ceaseless adoration  
I held in its ripest hour;  
Ere I tasted it, occasion  
Came and snatched it from my power:  
I above the rest the name  
Of unfortunate can claim,  
Since to suffering I shall come,  
For no longer lies my doom  
Where I left my soul aflame.

When death robs us of our bliss,  
We for ever from it part,  
And we find relief in this.  
Time can soften e'en the heart  
Hard and firm against Love's cries.  
But in absence we the pain  
Of death, jealousy, disdain,  
Feel with ne'er a glimpse of gladness, —  
Strange it is — hence fear and sadness  
With the absent one remain.

When the hope at hand is near,  
And the accomplishment delays,  
Harder is the pain we bear,

And affliction reacheth where  
Hope doth never lift its gaze;  
In the lesser pangs ye feel  
'Tis the remedy of your ill  
Not to hope for remedy,  
But this solace faileth me,  
For the pangs of absence kill.

ORFEN. Lo, the fruit that had been sown  
By my toil that had no end,  
When to sweetness it had grown,

Was by destiny my friend  
Given to me for my own.  
Scarce to this unheard of pass  
Could I come, when I, alas!  
Came the bitter truth to know,  
That I should but grief and woe  
From that happiness amass.

In my hand the fruit I hold,  
And to hold it wearies me,

For amidst my woes untold  
In the largest ear I see  
A worm gnawing, fierce and bold;  
I abhor what I adore,  
And that which doth life restore  
Brings death; for myself I shape  
Winding mazes, whence escape  
Is denied for evermore.

In my loss for death I sigh,  
For 'tis life unto my woe.  
In the truth I find a lie,

Greater doth the evil grow  
Whether I be far or nigh;  
No hope is there that is sure  
Such an ill as this to cure;  
Whether I remain or go,  
Of this living death the woe  
I must evermore endure.

OROMPO. 'Tis sure an error clear  
To argue that the loss which death hath sent  
Since it extends so far,  
Doth bring in part content,

Because it takes away  
The hope that fosters grief and makes it stay.

If of the glory dead  
The memory that doth disturb our peace  
Forever shall have fled,  
The sorrow doth decrease,  
Which at its loss we feel,  
Since we can hope no more to keep it still.

But if the memory stays,  
The memory of the bliss already fled  
Doth live the more and blaze  
Than when possessed indeed;



Who doubteth that this pain  
Doth more than others untold miseries gain?

Mars. If it should be the chance  
Of a poor traveller by some unknown way

To find at his advance

Fleeing at close of day  
The inn of his desire,  
The inn for which he doth in vain aspire,  
Doubtless he will remain  
Dazed by the fear the dark and silent night  
Inspires, and yet again  
Hapless will be his plight,  
If dawn comes not, for Heaven  
To him hath not its gladdening radiance given.  
The traveller am I,  
I journey on to reach a happy inn;  
Whene'er I think that nigh  
I come to enter in,  
Then, like a fleeting shadow,  
Bliss flees away, and grief doth overshadow.

CRISIO. E'en as the torrent deep  
Is wont the traveller's weary steps to hold,

And doth the traveller keep  
‘Midst wind and snow and cold,  
And, just a little space  
Beyond, the inn appears before his face,  
E’en so my happiness  
Is by this painful tedious absence stayed;

To comfort my distress  
'Tis ever sore afraid,

And yet before mine eyes  
I see the healer of my miseries.  
And thus to see so near  
The cure of my distress afflicts me sore,  
And makes it greater far,

Because my bliss before

My hand doth further flee  
For some strange cause, the nearer 'tis to me.

ORFEN. I saw before mine eyes  
A noble inn, that did in bliss abound,  
I triumphed in my prize,  
Too soon, alas, I found  
That vile it had become,  
Changed by my fate to darkness and to gloom.

There, where we ever see  
The bliss of those who love each other well,  
There is my misery;  
There where is wont to dwell  
All bliss, is evil plain,  
United in alliance with disdain.

In this abode I lie —  
And never do I strive to issue hence —  
Built by my agony,  
And with so strange a fence,



Methinks they to the ground  
Bring it, who love, see, and resist its wound.

OROMPO. Sooner the path that is his own, the sun  
Shall end, whereon he wanders through the sky  
After he hath through all the Zodiac run,  
Than we the least part of our agony  
According to our pain can well declare,  
However much we raise our speech on high.  
He who lives absent dies, says Crisio there,  
But I, that I am dead, since to the reign  
Of death fate handed o'er my life's career.  
And boldly thou, Marsilio, dost maintain  
That thou of joy and bliss hast lost all chance,  
Since that which slayeth thee is fierce disdain.  
Unto this thought thou givest utterance,  
Orfenio, that 'tis through thy soul doth pass,  
Not through thy breast alone, the jealous lance.  
As each the woes through which his fellows pass  
Feels not, he praiseth but the grief he knows,  
Thinking it doth his fellows' pangs surpass.  
Wherefore his bank rich Tagus overflows,  
Swollen by our strife of tears and mournfulness,  
Wherein with piteous words we moan our woes.  
Our pain doth not thereby become the less,  
Rather because we handle so the wound,  
It doth condemn us to the more distress.  
We must our complaints renew with all the sound  
Our tongues can utter, and with all the thought  
That can within our intellects be found.  
Then let us cease our disputation, taught  
That every ill doth anguish bring and pain,  
Nor is there good with sure contentment fraught.  
Sufficient ill he hath that doth constrain  
His life within the confines of a tomb,  
And doth in bitter loneliness remain,  
Unhappy he — and mournful is his doom —  
Who suffereth the pangs of jealousy,  
In whom nor strength nor judgment findeth room,

And he, who spends his days in misery,  
By the cruel power of absence long oppressed,  
Patience his only staff, weak though it be;  
Nor doth the eager lover suffer least  
Who feels, when most he burns, his lady's power,  
By her hard heart and coldness sore distressed.

CRISIO. His bidding let us do, for lo, the hour  
E'en now with rapid flight comes on apace,  
When we our herds must needs collect once more.  
And while unto the wonted sheltering-place  
We go, and whilst the radiant sun to rest  
Sinketh and from the meadow hides his face,  
With bitter voice and mourning manifest,  
Making the while harmonious melody,  
Sing we the grief that hath our souls oppressed.

Mars. Begin then, Crisio, may thine accents fly  
With speed unto Claraura's ears once more,  
Borne gently by the winds that hasten by,  
As unto one who doth their grief restore.

CRISIO. Whoso from the grievous cup  
Of dread absence comes to drink,  
Hath no ill from which to shrink, —  
Nor yet good for which to hope.

In this bitter misery  
Every evil is contained:  
Fear lest we should be disdained,  
Of our rivals' jealousy.

Whoso shall with absence cope,  
Straightway will he come to think  
That from no ill can he shrink,  
Nor for any good can hope.

OROMPO. True 'tis ill that makes me sigh  
More than any death I know,  
Since life findeth cause of woe  
In that death doth pass it by.

For when death did take away  
All my glory and content,  
That it might the more torment,  
It allowed my life to stay.  
Evil comes, and hastily  
With such swiftness good doth go,  
That life findeth cause of woe  
In that death doth pass it by.

MARS. In my dread and grievous woe  
Now are wanting to my eyes  
Tears, and breath unto my sighs,  
Should my troubles greater grow,  
For ingratitude, disdain,  
Hold me in their toils so fast  
That from death I hope at last  
Longer life and greater gain.  
Little can it linger now,  
Since are wanting to my eyes  
Tears, and breath unto my sighs,  
Should my troubles greater grow.

ORFEN. If it could, my joy should be  
Truly all things else above:  
If but jealousy were love,  
And if love were jealousy.

From this transformation I  
So much bliss and pride should gain  
That of love I would attain  
To the palm and victory.  
If 'twere so, then jealousy  
Would so much my champion prove,  
That, if jealousy were love,  
Nothing I save love should be.

With this last song of the jealous Orfenio, the discreet shepherds made an end of their eclogue, leaving all who had heard them satisfied with their discretion: especially Damon and Thyrsis, who felt great pleasure at hearing them, for it seemed to them that the reasonings and arguments which the four shepherds had propounded to carry through their proposition, seemed of more than shepherd wit. But a contest having arisen between many of the bystanders as to which of the four had pleaded his cause best, at last the opinion of all came to agree with that which discreet Damon gave, saying to them that he for his part held that, among all the distasteful and unpleasing things that love brings with it, nothing so much distresses the loving breast as the incurable plague of jealousy, and neither Orompo's loss, nor Crisio's absence, nor Marsilio's despair could be equalled to it.

'The cause is,' he said, 'that it is not in reason that things which have become impossible of attainment should be able for long to compel the will to love them, or weary the desire to attain them; for when a man has the will and desire to attain the impossible, it is clear that the more desire is excessive in him, the more he would lack understanding. And for this same reason I say that the pain Orompo suffers is but grief and pity for a lost happiness; and because he has lost it in such a way that it is not possible to recover it again, this impossibility must be the cause of his sorrow ending. For although human understanding cannot be always so united with reason as to cease feeling the loss of the happiness which cannot be recovered, and must in fact give tokens of its feeling by tender tears, ardent sighs, and piteous words, under pain, should one not do this, of being counted rather brute than rational man — in a word, the course of time cures this sorrowing, reason softens it, and new events have a great share in blotting it from memory.

All this is the contrary in absence, as Crisio well pointed out in his verses, for, as in the absent one, hope is so united to desire, the postponement of return gives him terrible distress; seeing that, as nothing hinders him from enjoying his happiness except some arm of the sea, or some stretch of land, it seems to him,

having the chief thing, which is the good-will of the beloved person, that flagrant wrong is done to his bliss, in that things so trivial as a little water or land should hinder his happiness and glory. To this pain are also joined the fear of being forgotten, and the changes of human hearts; and so long as absence endures, strange without a doubt is the harshness and rigour with which it treats the soul of the hapless absent one. But as it has the remedy so near, which consists in return, its torment can be borne with some ease; and if it should happen that the absence should be such that it is impossible to return to the desired presence, that impossibility comes to be the remedy, as in the case of death. As for the sorrow of which Marsilio complains, though it is, as it were, the same that I suffer, and on this account must needs have seemed to me greater than any other, I will not therefore fail to say what reason shows me, rather than that to which passion urges me. I confess that it is a terrible sorrow to love and not be loved; but 'twould be a greater to love and be loathed. And if we new lovers guided ourselves by what reason and experience teach us, we would see that every beginning in anything is difficult, and that this rule suffers no exception in the affairs of love, but rather in them is confirmed and strengthened the more; so that for the new lover to complain of the hardness of his lady's rebellious breast, goes beyond all bounds of reason. For as love is, and has to be, voluntary, and not constrained, I ought not to complain of not being loved by anyone I love, nor ought I to attach importance to the burden I impose on her, telling her that she is obliged to love me since I love her; seeing that, though the beloved person ought, in accordance with the law of nature and with fair courtesy, not to show herself ungrateful toward him who loves her well, it must not for this reason be a matter of constraint and obligation that she should respond, all in all, to her lover's desires. For if this were so, there would be a thousand importunate lovers who would gain by their solicitude what would perhaps not be due to them of right; and as love has the understanding for father, it may be that she who is well loved by me does not find in me qualities so good as to move her and incline her to love me. And so she is not obliged, as I have already said, to love me, in the same way that I shall be obliged to adore her, for I found in her what is lacking in me; and for this reason he who is disdained ought not to complain of his beloved, but of his fortune, which denied him the graces that might move his lady's understanding to love him well.

And so he ought to seek, with constant services, with loving words, with not unseasonable presence, and with practised virtues, to improve and amend in himself the fault that nature caused; for this is so essential a remedy that I am ready to affirm that it will be impossible for him to fail to be loved, who, by means so fitting, shall seek to win his lady's good-will. And since this evil of

disdain has with it the good of this cure, let Marsilio console himself, and pity the hapless and jealous Orfenio, in whose misfortune is enclosed the greatest that can be imagined in those of love. Oh jealousy, disturber of the tranquil peace of love! jealousy, knife of the firmest hopes!

I know not what he could know of lineage who made thee child of love, since thou art so much the contrary, that, for that very reason, love would have ceased to be love, had it begotten such children. Oh jealousy, hypocrite and false thief! seeing that, in order that account may be taken of thee in the world, as soon as thou seest any spark of love born in any breast, thou seekest to mingle with it, changing thyself to its colour, and even seekest to usurp from it the lordship and dominion it has. Hence it comes that as men see thee so united with love, though by thy results thou showest that thou art not love itself, yet thou seekest to give the ignorant man to understand that thou art love's son, though in truth thou art born from a low suspicion, begotten by a vile and ill-starred fear, nurtured at the breast of false imaginings, growing up amidst vilest envies, sustained by slanders and falsehoods. And that we may see the ruin caused in loving hearts by this cursed affliction of raging jealousy, when the lover is jealous, it behoves him, with the leave of jealous lovers be it said, it behoves him, I say, to be, as he is, traitorous, cunning, truculent, slanderous, capricious, and even ill-bred; and so far extends the jealous rage that masters him, that the person he loves most is the one to whom he wishes the most ill. The jealous lover would wish that his lady were fair for him alone, and ugly for all the world; he desires that she may not have eyes to see more than he might wish, nor ears to hear, nor tongue to speak; that she may be retiring, insipid, proud and ill-mannered; and at times he even desires, oppressed by this devilish passion, that his lady should die, and that all should end. All these passions jealousy begets in the minds of jealous lovers; the opposite to the virtues which pure and simple love multiplies in true and courteous lovers, for in the breast of a good lover are enclosed discretion, valour, generosity, courtesy, and all that can make him praiseworthy in the eyes of men. At the same time the force of this cruel poison contains yet more, for there is no antidote to preserve it, counsel to avail it, friend to aid it, nor excuse to fit it; all this is contained in the jealous lover, and more — every shadow terrifies him, every trifle disturbs him, and every suspicion, false or true, undoes him. And to all this misfortune another is added, namely, the excuses that deceive him. And since there is no other medicine than excuses for the disease of jealousy, and since the jealous man suffering from it does not wish to admit them, it follows that this disease is without remedy, and should be placed before all others. And thus it is my opinion that Orfenio is the most afflicted, but not the most in love; for jealousy is not the token of much love, but of much ill-advised curiosity. And

if it is a token of love, it is like fever in a sick man, for to have it is a sign of having life, but a life sick and diseased; and so the jealous lover has love, but it is love sick and ill-conditioned; and moreover to be jealous is a token of little confidence in one's own worth. And that this is true the discreet and firm lover teaches us, who, without reaching the darkness of jealousy, touches on the shadows of fear, but does not enter so far into them that they obscure the sun of his bliss; nor goes so far away from them that they relieve him from walking in solicitude and fear; for if this discreet fear should be wanting in the lover, I would count him proud and over-confident. For as a common proverb of ours says: "Who loves well, fears"; and indeed it is right that the lover should fear, lest, as the thing he loves is extremely good, or seemed to him to be so, it should seem the same to the eyes of anyone who beholds it; and for the same reason love is begotten in another who is able to disturb his love and succeeds in so doing. The good lover fears, and let him fear, the changes of time, of the new events which might offer themselves to his hurt, and lest the happy state he is enjoying may quickly end; and this fear must be so secret, that it does not come to his tongue to utter it, nor yet to his eyes to express it. And this fear produces effects so contrary to those which jealousy produces in loving breasts, that it fosters in them new desires to increase love more if they could, to strive with all solicitude that the eyes of their beloved should not see in them aught that is not worthy of praise, showing themselves generous, courteous, gallant, pure and well-bred; and as much as it is right that this virtuous fear should be praised, so much, and even more, is it fitting that jealousy should be blamed.'

The renowned Damon said this and was silent, and drew in the wake of his own opinion the opposite ones of some who had been listening to him, leaving all satisfied with the truth he had shown them with such plainness. But he would not have remained without reply, had the shepherds Orompo, Crisio, Marsilio, and Orfenio been present at his discourse; who, wearied by the eclogue they had recited, had gone to the house of their friend Daranio. All being thus occupied, at the moment the various dances were about to be renewed, they saw three comely shepherds entering on one side of the square, who were straightway recognised by all. They were the graceful Francenio, the frank Lauso, and the old Arsindo, who came between the two shepherds with a lovely garland of green laurel in his hands; and crossing through the square, they came to a stop where Thyrsis, Damon, Elicio, and Erastro, and all the chief shepherds were, whom they greeted with courteous words, and were received by them with no less courtesy, especially Lauso by Damon, whose old and true friend he was. Compliments having ceased, Arsindo, setting eyes on Damon and Thyrsis, began to speak in this wise: 'It is the renown of your wisdom, which extends near and far, discreet

and gallant shepherds, that brings these shepherds and myself to beg you to consent to be judges of a graceful contest that has arisen between these two shepherds; and it is that, the feast being over, Francenio and Lauso, who are here, found themselves in a company of fair shepherdesses, and in order to pass without tedium the leisure hours of the day amongst them, they set on foot, amongst many other games, the one which is called 'themes.' It happened then that, the turn to propose and begin coming to one of these shepherds, fate would have it that the shepherdess at his side and on his right hand was, as he says, the treasurer of his soul's secrets, and the one who was, in the opinion of all, accounted the most discreet and most in love. Approaching then her ear, he said to her: "Mope doth fly and will not stay."

The shepherdess, without being at a loss, went on, and, each one afterwards repeating in public what he had said to the other in secret, it was found that the shepherdess had capped the theme by saying: "With desire to check its flight."

The acuteness of this reply was praised by those who were present; but the one to extol it most was the shepherd Lauso, and it seemed no less good to Francenio, and so each one, seeing that the theme and the reply were verses of the same measure, offered to gloss them. After having done so, each one claims that his gloss excels the other's, and to have certainty in this, they wished to make me judge of it, but, as I knew that your presence was gladdening our banks, I counselled them to come to you, to whose consummate learning and wisdom questions of greater import might well be trusted. They have followed my opinion, and I have gladly taken the trouble to make this garland that it may be given as a prize to him whom you, shepherds, decide to have glossed the better.'

Arsindo was silent and awaited the shepherds' reply, which was to thank him for the good opinion he had of them and to offer themselves to be impartial judges in that honourable contest. With this assurance straightway Francenio once more repeated the verses and recited his gloss, which was as follows:

*Hope doth fly and will not stay,    With desire to check its flight*

#### GLOSS.

When to save myself I think,  
In the faith of love believing,  
Merit fails me on the brink,  
And the excesses of my grieving  
Straightway from my presence shrink;



Confidence doth die away,  
And life's pulse doth cease to beat,  
Since misfortune seems to say,  
That, when fear pursues in heat,  
*Hope doth fly and will not stay.*

Yes, it flies, and from my pain  
With it takes away content,  
And the keys of this my chain

For my greater punishment  
In my enemy's power remain;  
Far it rises to a height  
Where 'twill soon be seen no more,  
Far it flies, so swift and light  
That it is not in my power  
*With desire to check its flight.*

Francenio having recited his gloss, Lauso began his, which was as follows: In  
the hour I saw thee first,  
As I viewed thy beauty rare,  
Straightway did I fear and thirst;  
Yet at last I did so fear,  
That I was with fear accursed;  
Feeble confidence straightway,  
When I see thee, leads astray,  
With it comes a coward's fear.  
Lest they should remain so near,  
*Hope doth fly and will not stay.*

Though it leaves me and doth go  
With so wondrous a career,

Soon a miracle will show  
That the end of life is near,  
But with love it is not so.  
I am in a hopeless plight,  
Yet that I his trophy might  
Win, who loves but knows not why,  
Though I could, I would not try  
*With desire to check its flight.*

As Lauso ceased reciting his gloss, Arsindo said:

‘Here you see declared, famous Damon and Thyrsis, the cause of the contest between these shepherds; it only remains now that you should give the garland to him whom you should decide to deserve it with better right; for Lauso and Francenio are such friends, and your award will be so just that, what shall be decided by you, they will count as right.’

‘Do not think, Arsindo,’ replied Thyrsis, ‘that, though our intellects were of the quality you imagine them to be, the difference, if there be any, between these discreet glosses can or ought to be decided with such haste. What I can say of them, and what Damon will not seek to contradict, is that both are equally good, and that the garland should be given to the shepherdess who was the cause of so curious and praiseworthy a contest; and, if you are satisfied with this judgment, reward us for it by honouring the nuptials of our friend Daranio, gladdening them with your pleasing songs, and giving lustre to them by your honourable presence.’

The award of Thyrsis seemed good to all, the two shepherds approved it and offered to do what Thyrsis bade them. But the shepherdesses and shepherds, who knew Lauso, were astonished to see his unfettered mind entangled in the net of love, for straightway they saw, from the paleness of his countenance, the silence of his tongue, and the contest he had had with Francenio, that his will was not as free as it was wont to be, and they went wondering among themselves who the shepherdess might be who had triumphed over his free heart. One thought it was the discreet Belisa, another that it was the gay Leandra, and some that it was the peerless Arminda, being moved to think this by Lauso’s usual practice to visit the huts of these shepherdesses, and because each of them was likely by her grace, worth, and beauty, to subdue other hearts as free as that of Lauso, and it was many days ere they resolved this doubt, for the love-sick shepherd scarce trusted to himself the secret of his love. This being ended, straightway all the youth of the village renewed the dances, and the rustic instruments made pleasing music. But seeing that the sun was already hastening his course towards

the setting, the concerted voices ceased, and all who were there determined to escort the bridal pair to their house. And the aged Arsindo, in order to fulfil what he had promised to Thyrsis, in the space there was between the square and Daranio's house, to the sound of Erastro's pipe went singing these verses:  
Arsindo. Now let Heaven tokens show

Of rejoicing and of mirth  
On so fortunate a day,  
'Midst the joy of all below  
Let all peoples on the earth  
Celebrate this wedding gay.  
From to-day let all their mourning  
Into joyous song be turning,  
And in place of grief and pain  
Pleasures let the myriads gain,  
From their hearts all sorrow spurning.

Let prosperity abound  
With the happy bridal-pair,  
Who were for each other made,  
On their elms may pears be found,  
In their oak-groves cherries rare,  
Sloes amid the myrtle glade,  
Pearls upon the rocky steep.  
May they grapes from mastic reap,  
Apples from the carob-tree.  
May their sheepfolds larger be,  
And no wolves attack their sheep.

May their ewes that barren were,  
Fruitful prove, and may they double  
By their fruitfulness their flock.

May the busy bees prepare  
‘Midst the threshing floor and stubble,  
Of sweet honey plenteous stock.  
May they ever find their seed,  
In the town and in the mead,  
Plucked at fitting time and hour,  
May no grub their vines devour,  
And their wheat no blighting weed.

In good time with children twain,  
Perfect fruit of peace and love,  
May the happy pair be blest.  
And when manhood they attain,  
May the one a doctor prove,  
And the other a parish priest.  
May they ever take the lead  
In both wealth and goodly deed.  
Thus they gentlemen will be,

If they give security  
For no gauger full of greed.

May they live for longer years  
E'en than Sarah, hale and strong,  
And the sorrowing doctor shun.  
May they shed no bitter tears  
For a daughter wedded wrong,  
For a gambling spendthrift son.  
May their death be, when the twain  
Shall Methusaleh's years attain,  
Free from guilty fear; the date

May the people celebrate  
For ever and aye, Amen.

With the greatest pleasure Arsindo's rude verses were listened to, and he would have gone on further with them, had not their arrival at Daranio's house hindered it. The latter, inviting all who came with him, remained there, save that Galatea and Florisa, through fear lest Teolinda should be recognised by Thyrsis and Damon, would not remain at the wedding banquet. Elicio and Erastro would fain have accompanied Galatea to her house, but it was not possible for her to consent to it, and so they had to remain with their friends, and the shepherdesses, wearied with the dances of that day, departed. And Teolinda felt more pain than ever, seeing that at Daranio's solemn nuptials, where so many shepherds had assisted, only her Artidoro was wanting.

With this painful thought she passed that night in company with Galatea and Florisa, who passed it with hearts more free and more dispassionate, until on the new day to come there happened to them what will be told in the book which follows.



## BOOK IV.

With great desire the fair Teolinda awaited the coming day to take leave of Galatea and Florisa and to finish searching by all the banks of the Tagus for her dear Artidoro, intending to end her life in sad and bitter solitude, if she were so poor in fortune as to learn no news of her beloved shepherd. The wished-for hour, then, having come, when the sun was beginning to spread his rays over the earth, she arose, and, with tears in her eyes, asked leave of the two shepherdesses to prosecute her quest. They with many reasonings urged her to wait some days more in their company, Galatea offering to her to send one of her father's shepherds to search for Artidoro by all the banks of the Tagus, and wherever it might be thought he could be found. Teolinda thanked her for her offers, but would not do what they asked of her, nay rather, after having shown in the best words she could the obligation in which she lay to cherish all the days of her life the favours she had received from them, she embraced them with tender feeling and begged them not to detain her a single hour. Then Galatea and Florisa, seeing how vainly they wrought in thinking to detain her, charged her to try to inform them of any incident, good or bad, that might befall her in that loving quest, assuring her of the pleasure they would feel at her happiness, and of their pain at her misery.

Teolinda offered to be herself the one to bring the tidings of her good fortune, since, if they were bad, life would not have patience to endure them, and so it would be superfluous to learn them from her. With this promise of Teolinda Galatea and Florisa were content, and they determined to accompany her some distance from the place. And so, the two only taking their crooks, and having furnished Teolinda's wallet with some victuals for the toilsome journey, they went forth with her from the village at a time when the sun's rays were already beginning to strike the earth more directly and with greater force. And having accompanied her almost half a league from the place, at the moment they were intending to return and leave her, they saw four men on horseback and some on foot crossing by some broken ground which lay a little off their way. At once they recognised them to be hunters by their attire and by the hawks and dogs they had with them, and whilst they were looking at them with attention to see if they knew them, they saw two shepherdesses of gallant bearing and spirit come out from among some thick bushes which were near the broken ground; they had their faces muffled with two white linen kerchiefs, and one of them, raising her

voice, asked the hunters to stop, which they did; and both coming up to one of them, who from his bearing and figure seemed the chief of all, seized the reins of his horse and stood awhile talking with him without the three shepherdesses being able to hear a word of what they said, because of the distance from the spot which prevented it. They only saw that after they had talked with him a little while, the horseman dismounted, and having, as far as could be judged, bidden those who accompanied him to return, only a boy remaining with his horse, he took the two shepherdesses by the hands and gradually began to enter with them into a thick wood that was there. The three shepherdesses, Galatea, Florisa, and Teolinda, seeing this, determined to see, if they could, who the masked shepherdesses, and the horseman who escorted them were. And so they agreed to go round by a part of the wood, and see if they could place themselves in some part which might be such as to satisfy them in what they desired. And acting in the manner they had intended, they overtook the horseman and the shepherdesses, and Galatea, watching through the branches what they were doing, saw that they turned to the right and plunged into the thickest part of the wood; and straightway they followed them in their very footsteps until the horseman and the shepherdesses, thinking they were well within the wood, halted in the middle of a narrow little meadow which was surrounded by countless thickets of bramble. Galatea and her companions came so near that without being seen or perceived, they saw all the horseman and the shepherdesses did and said; and when the latter had looked on all sides to see if they could be seen by anyone, and were assured on this point, one removed her veil, and scarcely had she done so when she was recognised by Teolinda, who, approaching Galatea's ear, said to her in as low a voice as she could: 'This is a very strange adventure; for, unless it be that I have lost my understanding from the grief I suffer, without any doubt that shepherdess who has removed her veil, is the fair Rosaura, daughter of Roselio, lord of a village near ours, and I know not what can be the reason that has moved her to adopt so strange a garb and to leave her district, — things which speak so much to the detriment of her honour. But, alas, hapless one!' added Teolinda, 'for the horseman who is with her is Grisaldo, eldest son of rich Laurencio, who owns two villages close to this of yours.'

'You speak truth, Teolinda,' replied Galatea, 'for I know him; but be silent and keep quiet, for we shall soon see the purpose of his coming here.'

Thereat Teolinda was still, and set herself attentively to watch what Rosaura was doing. She, going up to the horseman, who seemed about twenty years old, began to say to him with troubled voice and angry countenance: 'We are in a spot, faithless man, where I may take the wished for vengeance for your lack of

love and your neglect. But though I took it on you in such a way that it would cost you your life, it were little recompense for the wrong you have done me. Here am I, unrecognised so as to recognise you, Grisaldo, who failed to recognise my love; here is one who changed her garb to seek for you, she who never changed her will to love you. Consider, ungrateful and loveless one, that she who in her own house and amongst her servants scarce could move a step, now for your sake goes from vale to vale, and from ridge to ridge, amidst such loneliness seeking your companionship.'

To all these words the fair Rosaura was uttering, the horseman listened with his eyes fixed on the ground, and making lines on the earth with the point of a hunting knife he held in his hand. But Rosaura, not content with what she had said, pursued her discourse with words such as these: 'Tell me, do you know peradventure, do you know, Grisaldo, that I am she who not long ago dried your tears, stayed your sighs, healed your pains, and above all, she who believed your words? or perchance do you understand that you are he who thought all the oaths that could be imagined feeble and of no strength to assure me of the truth with which you deceived me?

Are you by chance, Grisaldo, he whose countless tears softened the hardness of my pure heart? It is you, for indeed I see you, and it is I, for indeed I know myself. But if you are the Grisaldo of my belief, and I am Rosaura, as you think her to be, fulfil to me the word you gave me, and I will give you the promise I have never denied you. They have told me that you are marrying Leopersia, Marcelio's daughter, so gladly that it is actually you who are wooing her; if this news has caused me sorrow, can well be seen by what I have done in coming to prevent its fulfilment, and if you can confirm it, I leave the matter to your conscience.

What do you reply to this, mortal enemy of my peace? Do you admit perchance, by your silence, that which it were right should not pass even through your thought. Now raise your eyes and set them on those that beheld you to their hurt; lift them and behold her whom you are deceiving, whom you are abandoning and forgetting. You will see, if you ponder it well, that you are deceiving her who always spoke truth to you, you are abandoning her who has abandoned her honour and herself to follow you, you are forgetting her who never banished you from her memory. Consider, Grisaldo, that in birth I am your equal, that in wealth I am not your inferior, and that I excel you in goodness of heart and in firmness of faith. Fulfil to me, sir, the faith you gave me, if you are proud to be a gentleman, and are not ashamed to be a Christian. Behold, if you do not respond to what you owe me, I will pray Heaven to punish you, fire to burn you, air to fail you, water to drown you, earth not to endure you, and my

kinsmen to avenge me! Behold, if you fail in your duty towards me, you will have in me a perpetual disturber of your joys so long as my life shall last, and even after I am dead, if it may be, I shall with constant shadows affright your faithless spirit, and with frightful visions torment your deceiving eyes!

Mark that I but ask what is my own, and that by giving it you gain what you lose by refusing it! Now move your tongue to undeceive me for the many times you have moved it to wound me!’

Saying this, the fair lady was silent, and for a short while was waiting to see what Grisaldo replied. He, raising his face, which up till then he had kept down, crimsoned with the shame Rosaura’s words had caused in him, with calm voice replied to her in this wise: ‘If I sought to deny, oh Rosaura, that I am your debtor in more than what you say, I would likewise deny that the sunlight is bright, and would even say that fire is cold and air solid. So that herein I confess what I owe you, and am obliged to pay it; but for me to confess that I can pay you as you wish is impossible, for my father’s command has forbidden it, and your cruel disdain has rendered it impossible. Nor do I wish to call any other witness to this truth than yourself, as one who knows so well how many times and with what tears I begged you to accept me as your husband, and to deign to permit me to fulfil the word I had given you to be it. And you, for the reasons you fancied, or because you thought it was well to respond to Artandro’s vain promises, never wished matters to come to such an issue; but rather went on from day to day putting me off, and making trials of my firmness, though you could make sure of it in every way by accepting me for your own. You also know, Rosaura, the desire my father had to settle me in life, and the haste he showed in the matter, bringing forward the rich and honourable marriages you know of, and how I with a thousand excuses held aloof from his importunities, always telling you of them, so that you should no longer defer what suited you so well and what I desired; and that after all this I told you one day that my father’s wish was for me to marry Leopersia, and you, on hearing Leopersia’s name, in a desperate rage told me to speak to you no more, and that I might marry Leopersia with your blessing, or anyone I liked better. You know also that I urged you many times to cease those jealous frenzies, for I was yours and not Leopersia’s, and that you would never receive my excuses, nor yield to my prayers, but rather, persevering in your obstinacy and hardness, and in favouring Artandro, you sent to tell me that it would give you pleasure that I should never see you more. I did what you bade me, and, so as to have no opportunity to transgress your bidding, seeing also that I was fulfilling that of my father, I resolved to marry Leopersia, or at least I shall marry her to-morrow, for so it is agreed between her kinsmen and mine; wherefore you see, Rosaura, how guiltless I am of the charge you lay

against me, and how late you have come to know the injustice with which you treated me. But that you may not judge me henceforward to be as ungrateful as you have pictured me in your fancy, see if there is anything wherein I can satisfy your wish, for, so it be not to marry you, I will hazard, to serve you, property, life and honour.'

While Grisaldo was saying these words, the fair Rosaura kept her eyes riveted on his face, shedding through them so many tears that they showed full well the grief she felt in her soul.

But, seeing that Grisaldo was silent, heaving a deep and woful sigh, she said to him:

'As it cannot be, oh Grisaldo, that your green years should have a long and skilled experience of the countless accidents of love, I do not wonder that a little disdain of mine has placed you in the freedom you boast of; but if you knew that jealous fears are the spurs which make love quicken his pace, you would see clearly that those I had about Leopersia, redounded to make me love you more. But as you made such sport of my affairs, on the slightest pretext that you could conceive, you revealed the little love in your breast, and confirmed my true suspicions; and in such a way that tells me you are marrying Leopersia to-morrow.

But I assure you, before you bear her to the marriage-couch, you must bear me to the tomb, unless, indeed, you are so cruel as to refuse to give one to the dead body of her over whose soul you were always absolute lord. And, that you may know clearly and see that she who lost for you her modesty, and exposed her honour to harm, will count it little to lose her life, this sharp poniard which here I hold will accomplish my desperate and honourable purpose, and will be a witness of the cruelty you hold in that false breast of yours.'

And saying this she drew from her bosom a naked dagger, and with great haste was going to plunge it in her heart, had not Grisaldo with greater speed seized her arm, and had not the veiled shepherdess, her companion, hurried to close with her.

Grisaldo and the shepherdess were a long while before they took the dagger from the hands of Rosaura, who said to Grisaldo:

'Permit me, traitorous foe, to end at once the tragedy of my life, without your loveless disdain making me experience death so often.'

'You shall not taste of death on my account,' replied Grisaldo, 'since I would rather that my father should fail in the word he has given to Leopersia on my behalf, than that I should fail at all in what I know I owe you. Calm your breast, Rosaura, since I assure you that this breast of mine can desire naught save what may be to your happiness.'

At these loving words of Grisaldo, Rosaura awakened from the death of her sorrow to the life of her joy, and, without ceasing to weep, knelt down before Grisaldo, begging for his hands in token of the favour he did her. Grisaldo did the same, and threw his arms round her neck; for a long while they remained without power to say a word one to the other, both shedding many loving tears. The veiled shepherdess, seeing her companion's happy fortune, wearied by the fatigue she had sustained in helping to take the dagger from Rosaura, being unable to bear her veil any longer, took it off, disclosing a face so like Teolinda's, that Galatea and Florisa were amazed to see it. But Teolinda was more so, since, without being able to conceal it, she raised her voice, saying: 'Oh Heavens, and what is it that I see? Is not this by chance my sister Leonarda, the disturber of my repose? She it is without a doubt.'

And, without further delay, she came out from where she was, and with her Galatea and Florisa; and as the other shepherdess saw Teolinda, straightway she recognised her, and with open arms they ran one to the other, wondering to have found each other in such a place, and at such a time and juncture. Then Grisaldo and Rosaura, seeing what Leonarda was doing with Teolinda, and that they had been discovered by the shepherdesses Galatea and Florisa, arose, with no small shame that they had been found by them in that fashion, and, drying their tears, with reserve and courtesy received the shepherdesses, who were at once recognised by Grisaldo. But the discreet Galatea, in order to change into confidence the displeasure that perchance the two loving shepherds had felt at seeing her, said to them with that grace, with which she said everything: 'Be not troubled by our coming, happy Grisaldo and Rosaura, for it will merely serve to increase your joy, since it has been shared with one who will always have joy in serving you. Our fortune has ordained that we should see you, and in a part where no part of your thoughts has been concealed from us, and since Heaven has brought them to so happy a pass, in satisfaction thereof calm your breasts and pardon our boldness.'

'Never has your presence, fair Galatea,' replied Grisaldo, 'failed to give pleasure wherever it might be; and this truth being so well known, we are rather under an obligation at sight of you, than annoyed at your coming.'

With these there passed some other courteous words, far different from those that passed between Leonarda and Teolinda, who, after having embraced once and yet again, with tender words, mingled with loving tears, demanded the story of each other's adventures, filling all those that were there with amazement at seeing them, for they resembled each other so closely, that they could almost be called not alike, but one and the same; and had, it not been that Teolinda's dress was different from Leonarda's, without a doubt Galatea and Florisa could not

have distinguished them; and then they saw with what reason Artidoro had been deceived in thinking that Leonarda was Teolinda. But when Florisa saw that the sun was about midway in the sky, and that it would be well to seek some shade to protect them from its rays, or at least to return to the village, since, as the opportunity failed them to pasture their sheep, they ought not to be so long in the meadow, she said to Teolinda and Leonarda: 'There will be time, shepherdesses, when with greater ease you can satisfy our desires, and give us a longer account of your thoughts, and for the present let us seek where we may spend the rigour of the noontide heat that threatens us, either by a fresh spring that is at the outlet of the valley we are leaving behind, or in returning to the village, where Leonarda will be treated with the kindness which you, Teolinda, have experienced from Galatea and myself. And if I make this offer only to you, shepherdesses, it is not because I forget Grisaldo and Rosaura, but because it seems to me that I cannot offer to their worth and deserving more than goodwill.'

'This shall not be wanting in me as long as life shall last,' replied Grisaldo, 'the will to do, shepherdess, what may be to your service, since the kindness you show us cannot be paid with less; but since it appears to me that it will be well to do what you say, and because I have learnt that you are not ignorant of what has passed between me and Rosaura, I do not wish to waste your time or mine in referring to it, I only ask you to be kind enough to take Rosaura in your company to your village, whilst I prepare in mine some things which are necessary to fulfil what our hearts desire; and in order that Rosaura may be free from suspicion, and may never cherish suspicion of the good faith of my intentions, with deliberate will on my part, you being witnesses thereof, I give her my hand to be her true husband.'

And, saying this, he stretched out his hand, and took fair Rosaura's, and she was so beside herself to see what Grisaldo did, that she scarce could answer him a word, only she allowed him to take her hand, and a little while after said: 'Love had brought me, Grisaldo, my lord, to such a pass, that, with less than you have done for me, I would remain for ever your debtor; but since you have wished to have regard rather for what you yourself are, than for my deserving, I shall do what in me lies, which is to give you my soul anew in recompense for this favour, and may Heaven give you the reward for so welcome a kindness.'

'No more, no more, my friends,' said Galatea at this moment, 'for where deeds are so true, excessive compliments must find no place. What remains is to pray Heaven to lead to a happy issue these beginnings, and that you may enjoy your love in a long and beneficent peace. And as for what you say, Grisaldo, that Rosaura should come to our village, the favour you do us therein is so great, that

we ourselves beg it of you.'

'So gladly will I go in your company,' said Rosaura, 'that I know not how to enhance it more than by telling you that I will not much regret Grisaldo's absence, when I am in your company.'

'Then come,' said Florisa, 'for the village is faraway, and the sun strong, and our delay in returning there conspicuous. You, senor Grisaldo, can go and do what you wish, for in Galatea's house you will find Rosaura, and these, or rather this one shepherdess, for being so much alike, they ought not to be called two.'

'Be it as you wish,' said Grisaldo; and, he taking Rosaura by the hand, they all went from the wood, having agreed among themselves that Grisaldo should on the morrow send a shepherd, from the many his father had, to tell Rosaura what she was to do, and that this shepherd, when sent, might be able to speak to Galatea or to Florisa without being observed, and give the instructions that suited best. This agreement seemed good to all, and, having come out from the wood, Grisaldo saw that his servant was waiting for him with the horse, and embracing Rosaura anew, and taking leave of the shepherdesses, he went away accompanied with tears and by Rosaura's eyes, which never left him until they lost him from sight. As the shepherdesses were left alone, straightway Teolinda went away with Leonarda, in the desire to learn the cause of her coming. And Rosaura, too, as she went, related to Galatea and to Florisa the occasion that had moved her to take a shepherdess's dress, and to come to look for Grisaldo, saying: 'It would not cause you wonder, fair shepherdesses, to see me in this dress, if you knew how far love's mighty power extends, which makes those who love well change not only their garb, but will and soul, in the way that is most to its taste, and I had lost my love for ever, had I not availed myself of the artifice of this dress. For you must know, my friends, that, as I was in Leonarda's village, of which my father is the lord, Grisaldo came to it with the intention of being there some days, engaged in the pleasing pastime of the chase; and as my father was a great friend of his father, he arranged to receive him in the house, and to offer him all the hospitality that he could. This he did; and Grisaldo's coming to my house resulted in driving me from it; for indeed, though it be at the cost of my shame, I must tell you that the sight, the converse, and the worth of Grisaldo made such an impression on my soul, that, without knowing how, when he had been there a few days, I came to be quite beside myself, and neither wished nor was able to exist without making him master of my freedom. However, it was not so heedlessly but that I was first satisfied that Grisaldo's wish did not differ in any way from mine, as he gave me to understand with many very true tokens. I then, being convinced of this truth, and seeing how well it pleased me to have Grisaldo for husband, came to acquiesce in his desires, and



to put mine into effect; and so, by the mediation of a handmaiden of mine, Grisaldo and I saw each other many times in a secluded corridor, without our being alone extending further than for us to see each other, and for him to give me the word, which to-day he has given me again with more force in your presence. My sad fortune then decreed, that at the time I was enjoying so sweet a state, there came also to visit my father a valiant gentleman from Aragon, who was called Artandro; he being overcome, according to what he showed, by my beauty, if I have any, sought with the greatest solicitude that I should marry him without my father knowing it. Meanwhile Grisaldo had sought to carry out his purpose, and I, showing myself somewhat harsher than was necessary, kept putting him off with words, with the intention that my father should set about marrying me, and that then Grisaldo should seek me for his wife; but he did not wish to do this, since he was aware that his father's wish was to marry him to the rich and beautiful Leopersia for you must know her well by the report of her riches and beauty. This came to my knowledge, and I took the opportunity to try to make him jealous of me, though feignedly, merely to make trial of the sincerity of his faith; and I was so careless, or rather so simple, that thinking I gained something thereby, I began to show some favours to Artandro.

Grisaldo, seeing this, often declared to me the pain he felt at my dealings with Artandro, and he even informed me that if it was not my wish that he should fulfil to me the word he had given me, he could not fail to obey the wish of his parents. To all these words of warning and advice I replied unadvisedly, full of pride and arrogance, confident that the bonds which my beauty had cast over Grisaldo's soul could not be so easily broken, or even touched, by any other beauty. But my confidence turned out to be much mistaken, as Grisaldo soon showed me, who, wearied of my foolish and scornful disdain, saw fit to leave me and to obey his father's behest. But scarcely had he gone from my village and left my presence, when I recognised the error into which I had fallen, and with such force did Grisaldo's absence and jealousy of Leopersia begin to torment me that his absence overwhelmed me and jealousy of her consumed me.

Considering then, that, if my remedy were deferred, I must leave my life in the hands of grief, I resolved to risk losing the lesser, which in my opinion was reputation, in order to gain the greater, which is Grisaldo. And so, on the pretext I gave my father, of going to see an aunt of mine, the mistress of another village near ours, I left my home, accompanied by many of my father's servants, and when I reached my aunt's house, I disclosed to her all my secret thoughts, and asked her to be kind enough to allow me to put on this dress and come to speak to Grisaldo, assuring her that if I did not come myself, my affairs would have a poor issue. She consented to this on condition that I took with me Leonarda, as

one in whom she had much confidence. I sent for her to our village and procured this garb, and, bearing in mind some things which we two had to do, we took leave of her eight days ago; and, though we came to Grisaldo's village six days ago, we have never been able to find an opportunity of speaking to him alone, as I desired, until this morning, when I knew he was going to the chase. I awaited him in the same place where he took leave of us, and there has passed between us what you, friends, have seen, at which happy issue I am as happy as it is right she should be who desired it so much. This, shepherdesses, is the story of my life, and if I have wearied you in telling it you, throw the blame on the desire you had to know it, and on mine which could not do less than satisfy you.'

'Nay, rather,' replied Florisa, 'we are so grateful for the favour you have done us, that, though we may always busy ourselves in your service we shall not escape from the debt.'

'I am the one who remains in debt,' answered Rosaura, 'and who will seek to repay it as my powers may allow. But, leaving this aside, turn your eyes, shepherdesses, and you will see those of Teolinda and Leonarda so full of tears that they will move yours without fail to accompany them therein.'

. Galatea and Florisa turned to look at them, and saw that what Rosaura said was true. What caused the weeping of the two sisters was that after Leonarda had told her sister all that Rosaura had related to Galatea and Florisa, she said to her: 'You must know, sister, that, as you were missing from our village, it was thought that the shepherd Artidoro had taken you away, for that same day he too was missing without taking leave of anyone. I confirmed this opinion in my parents, because I told them what had passed with Artidoro in the forest. With this evidence the suspicion increased, and my father determined to go in search of you and of Artidoro, and in fact would have done so had not there come to our village two days afterwards a shepherd whom all took for Artidoro when they saw him. When the news reached my father that your ravisher was there, straightway he came with the constables to where the shepherd was, and they asked him if he knew you or where he had taken you to. The shepherd denied on oath that he had ever seen you in all his life, or that he knew what it was they were asking him about. All that were present wondered to see the shepherd denying that he knew you, since he had been ten days in the village and had spoken and danced with you many a time, and without any doubt all believed that Artidoro was guilty of what was imputed to him. Without wishing to admit his defence or to hear a word from him, they took him to prison, where he remained without anyone speaking to him for some days, at the end of which, when they came to take his confession, he swore again that he did not know you, nor in all his life had he been more than that once in that village, and that they

should consider — and this he had said at other times — whether the Artidoro they thought he was, was not by chance a brother of his, who resembled him so exactly as truth would reveal when it showed them that they had deceived themselves in taking him for Artidoro: for he was called Galercio, son of Briseno, a native of Grisaldo's village.

And, in fact, he gave such indications and showed such proofs that all clearly saw that he was not Artidoro, whereat they were more amazed, saying that such a marvel as that of my likeness to you, and Galercio's to Artidoro, had not been seen in the world. This announcement concerning Galercio moved me to go and see him many times where he was confined; and the sight of him was such that I was deprived of sight, at least for the purpose of seeing things to give me pleasure, so long as I did not see Galercio. But the worst of it is, sister, that he went from the village without knowing that he took with him my freedom, nor had I the opportunity of telling it him, and so I remained with such a grief as may be imagined, until Rosaura's aunt sent for me for a few days, all for the purpose of coming to accompany Rosaura; whereat I felt extreme joy, for I knew that we were going to Galercio's village, and that there I might make him acquainted with his debt to me. But I have been so poor in fortune that we have been four days in his village and I have never seen him, though I have asked for him, and they tell me that he is in the country with his flock. I have also asked for Artidoro, and they have told me that for some days he has not appeared in the village; and, in order not to leave Rosaura, I have not taken an opportunity of going to look for Galercio, from whom it might be possible to learn news of Artidoro. This is what has happened to me, besides what you have seen with Grisaldo, since you have been missing, sister, from the village.'

Teolinda was astonished at what her sister told her; but when she came to know that in Artidoro's village no news was known of him, she could not restrain her tears, though she consoled herself in part, believing that Galercio would have news of his brother; and so she resolved to go next day to look for Galercio wherever he might be. And having told her sister as briefly as she could all that had happened to her since she went in search of Artidoro, Teolinda embraced her again and returned to where the shepherdesses were. They were walking along a little distance from the road, in among some trees which protected them a little from the heat of the sun. Teolinda coming up to them told them all that her sister had said to her concerning the issue of her love, and the likeness of Galercio and Artidoro; whereat they wondered not a little, though Galatea said: 'Whoever sees the strange likeness there is between you, Teolinda, and your sister, cannot wonder though he sees others, since no likeness, as I believe, is equal to yours.'

‘There is no doubt,’ replied Leonarda, ‘but that the likeness there is between Artidoro and Galercio is so great that, if it does not surpass ours, at least it will be in no way behind it.’

‘May Heaven please,’ said Florisa, ‘that as you four resemble one another, so may you agree and be like one another in fortune, that which fate grants to your desires being so good that all the world may envy your joys, as it wonders at your likenesses.’

Teolinda would have replied to these words, had not a voice they heard issuing from among the trees prevented it; and all stopping to listen to it, they straightway recognised that it was the voice of the shepherd Lauso, whereat Galatea and Florisa felt great joy, for they wished very much to know of whom Lauso was enamoured, and believed that what the shepherd should sing would relieve them of this doubt, and for this reason, without moving from where they were, they listened to him in the greatest silence. The shepherd was seated at the foot of a green willow, accompanied by his thoughts alone, and by a little rebeck, to the sound of which he sang in this wise: Lauso. If I the good within my thought confessed,

What good I do possess would turn to ill.  
The good I feel is not to be expressed.  
Even from me let my desire conceal  
Itself, and herein let my tongue be dumb,  
And let its trophy be that it is still.  
Let artifice stop here, nor art presume  
To praise enow the pleasure and the balm  
Which to a soul from Love’s kind hand doth come.  
Suffice to say that I in peaceful calm  
Cross o’er the sea of Love, setting my trust  
In noble triumph and victorious palm.  
The cause unknown, let what the cause produced  
Be known, for ’tis a good so measureless  
That for the soul alone ’tis kept in trust.  
Now I new being have, now life possess,  
Now I in all the earth can win a name  
For lofty glory and renowned success.  
For the pure purpose and the loving flame,  
Which is enclosed within my loving side,  
Can unto loftiest Heaven exalt my fame.  
In thee I hope, Silena, and confide  
In thee, Silena, glory of my thought,

Pole-star that doth my roving fancy guide.  
I hope that, by thy peerless judgment taught,  
Thou wilt adjudge that I in truth do merit  
By faith what in deserving lieth not.  
And, shepherdess, I trust that soon thy spirit  
Will show, when thy experience makes thee sure,  
The liberty that noble breasts inherit.  
What wealth of bliss thy presence doth assure!  
What evils doth it banish! When 'tis gone,  
Who for a moment absence will endure?  
Oh thou that art more beauteous on thy throne  
Than beauty's self, and more than wisdom wise,  
Star to my sea, unto my eyes a sun!  
She who in famous Crete became the prize  
Of the false lovely bull, and bowed to Love,  
Did not unto thy perfect beauty rise:  
Nor she who felt descending from above  
The golden rain, that turned her heart aside  
(To guard her maidenhood no more she strove);  
Nor she whose angry ruthless hand, in pride  
Of purity, did her chaste bosom smite,  
And in her blood the piercing dagger dyed;  
Nor she who roused to madness and despite  
'Gainst Troy the hearts of the Achaean host,  
Who gave unto destruction I lion's height;  
Nor she the squadrons of the Latin coast  
Who launched irate against the Teucrian race,  
Whose bitter pangs were ever Juno's boast;  
And no less she who hath a different praise  
And trophy for the steadfast purity  
Wherewith she kept her honour from disgrace;  
Nor she who mourned her dead Sychaeus, she  
On whom Mantuan Tityrus did cast  
Reproach for fond desire and vanity;  
Neither 'mongst all the fair ones that the past  
Ages produced, nor at this present hour  
Nor in the days to come find we at last  
One who in wisdom, worth, or beauty's dower,  
Was or is equal to my shepherdess,

Or claimeth o'er the world a sovereign's power.  
Ah happy he, if but the bitterness  
Of jealousy he knew not, who by thee,  
Silena, should be loved with faithfulness!  
Thou who hast to this height exalted me,  
Oh Love, with heavy hand hurl me not down  
Unto oblivion's deep obscurity.  
Seek thou a prince's, not a tyrant's crown.

The enamoured shepherd sang no more, nor from what he had sung could the shepherdesses come to the knowledge of what they desired, for, though Lauso named Silena in his song, the shepherdess was not known by this name; and so they imagined that, as Lauso had gone through many parts of Spain, and even of all Asia and Europe, it would be some foreign shepherdess who had subdued his free will; but when they considered again that they had seen him a few days before triumphing in his freedom and making mock of lovers, they believed beyond a doubt, that under a feigned name he was celebrating some well-known shepherdess whom he had made mistress of his thoughts; and so, without being satisfied in their suspicion, they went towards the village, leaving the shepherd in the same place where he was. But they had not gone far when they saw coming from a distance some shepherds who were straightway recognised, for they were Thyrsis, Damon, Elicio, Erastro, Arsindo, Francenio, Crisio, Orompo, Daranio, Orfenio, and Marsilio, with all the chief shepherds of the village, and among them, the loveless Lenio with the hapless Silerio, who came to pass the noontide heat at the spring of slates, in the shade made in that place by the interwoven branches of the dense green trees. Before the shepherds approached, Teolinda, Leonarda and Rosaura took care each to veil herself with a white cloth that they might not be recognised by Thyrsis and Damon. The shepherds approached, offering courteous greetings to the shepherdesses, inviting them to consent to spend the noontide heat in their company; but Galatea excused herself by saying that the strange shepherdesses who came with her, must needs go to the village; therewith she took leave of them, drawing after her the souls of Elicio and Erastro, and the veiled shepherdesses likewise the desires of all who were there to know them. They betook themselves to the village, and the shepherds to the cool spring, but before they reached there, Silerio took leave of all, asking permission to return to his hermitage; and though Thyrsis, Damon, Elicio, and Erastro begged him to remain with them for that day, they could not prevail with him; nay rather he embraced them all and took his leave, charging and begging Erastro not to fail to visit him every time he passed by his

hermitage. Erastro promised it him, and therewith, he turned aside, and accompanied by his constant sorrow, returned to the solitude of his hermitage, leaving the shepherds not without grief to see the straitness of life he had chosen when his years were yet green; but it was felt most among those who knew him and were acquainted with the quality and worth of his person. When the shepherds came to the spring, they found there three gentlemen and two fair ladies who were journeying, and being wearied with fatigue and invited by the pleasing and cool spot, it seemed good to them to leave the road they were following, and spend there the sultry hours of the noontide heat. There came with them some servants, so that they showed by their appearance that they were persons of quality. The shepherds, when they saw them, would have left the spot free to them: but one of the gentlemen, who seemed the chief, seeing that the shepherds in their courtesy wished to go to another place, said to them: 'If it was by chance your pleasure, gallant shepherds, to spend the noontide heat in this delightful spot, let not our company hinder you from it, but rather do us the favour of increasing our pleasure with your company, since your noble disposition and manner promise no less; and, the place being, as it is, so adapted for a greater number of people, you will grieve me and these ladies, if you do not agree to what I ask you in their name and mine.'

'By doing, sir, what you bid us,' replied Elicio, 'we shall fulfil our desire, which did not for the moment extend beyond coming to this place to spend here in pleasant converse the tedious hours of the noontide heat; and, though our purpose were different, we would change it merely to do what you ask.'

'I am grateful,' replied the gentleman, 'for tokens of such good-will, and in order that I may be the more assured of it and gratified thereby, be seated, shepherds, around this cool spring, where with some things which these ladies have with them for refreshment by the way, you may awake your thirst and quench it in the cool waters this clear spring offers us.'

All did so, constrained by his fair courtesy. Up to this point the ladies had kept their faces covered with two rich veils; but, seeing that the shepherds were remaining, they revealed themselves, revealing a beauty so strange that it caused great astonishment in all who saw it, for it seemed to them that after Galatea's there could be on earth no other beauty to match it.

The two ladies were equally beautiful, though one of them, who seemed the older, excelled the smaller one in a certain grace and spirit. All being seated then, and at their ease, the second gentleman, who up till then had spoken nothing, said: 'When I stop to consider amiable shepherds the advantage your humble shepherds' ways have over the proud ways of the courtier, I cannot fail to have pity for myself, and honourable envy of you.'

‘Why do you say that, friend Darinto?’ said the other gentleman.

‘I say it, sir,’ replied the former, ‘because I see with what care you and I, and those who follow our ways, seek to adorn our persons, to nourish our bodies, and to increase our property, and how little it comes to profit us, since the purple, the gold, the brocade, and our ‘ faces are faded from badly digested victuals, eaten at odd hours, and as costly as they are wasteful, and since they adorn us in no way, nor beautify us, nor suffice to make us look better in the eyes of those who behold us. And all this you can see is different in those who follow the rustic pursuits of the field, proving it by those you have before you, who, it might be and even is the case, have been nourished and are nourished on simple victuals, in every way different from the wasteful composition of ours. And, besides, see the tan of their faces, which promises a state of health more perfect than the sickly pallor of ours, and how well a jerkin of white wool, a grey bonnet and some gaiters of whatsoever colour suit their robust and supple limbs; whereby they must appear more handsome in the eyes of their shepherdesses, than gay courtiers in those of modest ladies. What could I say to you, then, if I were minded, of the simplicity of their life, the sincerity of their character, and the purity of their love? I say no more to you, save that what I know of the shepherd’s life has such power with me, that gladly would I exchange mine for it.’

‘We shepherds are all indebted to you,’ said Elicio, ‘for the good opinion you have of us, but nevertheless I can tell you that in our country life there are as many slippery places and toils as are contained in your courtier’s life.’

‘I cannot but agree with what you say,’ replied Darinto, ‘for indeed it is well known that our life on earth is a war; but after all in the shepherd’s life there is less of it than in that of the town, for it is more free from causes that may move and disquiet the spirit.’

‘How well agrees with your opinion, Darinto,’ said Damon, ‘that of a shepherd friend of mine, called Lauso, who, after having spent some years in a courtier’s pursuits, and some others in the toilsome pursuits of cruel Mars, has at last been brought to the poverty of our country life, and before he came to it, he showed that he much desired it, as appears by a song he composed and sent to the famous Larsileo, who has a long and practised experience in affairs of the court; and, because I saw fit to do so, I committed it all to memory, and would even repeat it to you, if I thought that time would permit it, and that it would not weary you to listen to it.’

‘Nothing will give us greater pleasure than to listen to you, discreet Damon,’ replied Darinto, calling Damon by his name, for he already knew it from having heard the other shepherds, his friends, name him; ‘and so I for my part beg you



to repeat to us Lauso's song, for since it is composed, as you say, to suit my case, and you have committed it to memory, it will be impossible for it not to be good.'

Damon began to repent of what he had said, and sought to escape from his promise; but the gentlemen and ladies and all the shepherds begged it of him so much, that he could not escape repeating it. And so, having composed himself a little, with admirable grace and charm he spoke in this wise: DAMON. The idle fancies that our minds do weave,

Which hither and thither are buffeted  
In rapid flight by every wind that blows;  
Man's feeble heart, ever inclined to grieve,  
Set upon pleasures that are doomed to fade,  
Wherein it seeks, but findeth not, repose;

The world that never knows  
The truth, the promiser of joyous pleasures;  
Its siren voice, whose word  
Is scarcely overheard,  
When it transforms its pleasures to displeasures;  
Babylon, chaos, seen and read by me  
In everything I see;  
The mood the careful courtier doth command —  
Have set, in unity  
With my desire, the pen within my hand.

I would my rude ill-shapen quill might rise,  
My lord, though brief and feeble be its flight,  
Unto the realms that my desire doth gain,  
So that the task of raising to the skies  
Thy goodness rare and virtue ever bright  
It might essay, and thus its wish attain.  
But who is there that fain  
Would on his shoulders cast so great a burden,

Unless he is a new  
Atlas, in strength so true,  
That Heaven doth little weary him or burden?  
And even he the load will be compelled  
To shift, that he has held,  
On to the arms of a new Hercules,  
And yet such toil beheld,  
Although he bow and sweat, I count but ease.  
But since 'tis to my strength impossible,  
And but an empty wish I give to prove  
All that my loyal fancy doth conceal,  
Let us consider if 'tis possible  
My feeble ill-contented hand to move,  
And some vague sign of joy thereby reveal;

Herein my power I feel  
So powerless, that thou thine ears must lend,

And to the bitter groans

And agonising moans  
That issue from a breast despised, attend;  
Upon that breast fire, air, and earth, and sea  
Make war unceasingly,  
Conspiring all together for its pain,

Which its sad destiny  
Doth bound, and its small fortune doth contain.  
Were this not so in truth, an easy thing  
It were through pleasure's realm one's steps to bend,  
And countless pleasures to the mind restore,  
The mountain, strand, or river picturing.  
Not Love, but fortune, fate and chance did lend  
Their wealth of glory to a shepherd poor:  
Hut Time a triumph o'er  
This sweet tale claims, and of it doth remain  
Alone a feeble shadow,  
Which doth the thought o'ershadow  
That thinks on it the more, and fills with pain.  
Such is the fitting plight of all mankind!

The pleasure we designed  
In a few hours is changed to sore displeasure,  
And no one will e'er shall find  
In many years a firm and lasting pleasure.

Now let the idle thought revolve on high,  
Let it ascend or descend to the abyss,  
And in a moment run from east to west,  
'Twill say, however much it sweat and ply  
Its strength, escaping from its miseries,  
Set in dread hell, or Heaven loftiest:

"Oh thrice and four times blest  
And blest and blest again with happiness,  
The simple herdsman who,  
With his poor sheep and few,  
Liveth with more content and peacefulness  
Than Crassus rich or Midas in his greed,  
Since the life he doth lead,  
A shepherd's life, of healthy simple powers,  
Doth make him take no heed  
Of this false, wretched, courtly life of ours."

Beside the trunk that Vulcan's flame dissolves,  
Of sturdy oak, he seeks himself to warm,  
Amidst the might of winter's bristling cold,  
And there in peace a clear account resolves  
To give of life to Heaven, and how from harm  
To keep his flock, he doth discussion hold.



And when away hath rolled  
The hard and barren frost, when it doth shrink,  
When he who had his birth  
In Delos, doth the earth  
And air inflame, then, on some river's brink,  
Of willows green and elms its canopy,

In rustic harmony  
He sounds the shrilly fife, or lifts his voice;

Then truly one doth see  
The waters stop to listen and rejoice,  
He is not wearied by the solemn face  
Of one in favour, who doth bear the port  
Of governor, where he is not obeyed,  
Nor by the sweetly uttered lofty praise  
Of the false flatterer, who in absence short,  
Views, leaders, parties, changeth undismayed.

Of the disdain displayed  
By the wise secretary, of his pride  
Who bears the golden key,  
But little recketh he,  
Nor of the league of divers chiefs allied.  
Not for a moment from his flock he goes,

Because the angry blows  
Of frenzied Mars on either side may sound,

Who doth such skill disclose  
That e'en his followers scarce have profit found.  
Within a circle small his footsteps wend  
From the high mountain to the peaceful plain,  
To the clear river from the fountain cold.  
Nor doth he plough, in madness without end,  
The heaving meadows of the ocean main,  
Desiring distant countries to behold.  
It doth not make him bold  
To learn that close beside his village lives  
The great unconquered king,  
Whose weal is everything,  
Yet not to see him small displeasure gives.  
No ambitious busy-body he, beside  
Himself, who without pride  
Runs after favour, and a favourite's power,

Though never hath he dyed  
His sword or lance in blood of Turk or Moor.  
'Tis not for him to change or face or hue  
Because the lord he serveth changeth face  
Or hue, since he no lord hath to constrain  
Him with mute tongue to follow and pursue —  
As Clytie did her golden lover chase —  
The sweet or bitter pleasure he may gain.  
Nor doth he share the pain  
Of fearing that an idle, careless thought

Within the thankless breast  
Of his lord may at last  
The memory of his loyal service blot,  
And thus be his the doom of banishment;



His mien doth not present  
Other than what his healthy breast doth hold;  
Our ways, with falsehood blent,  
Do not compete with rustic knowledge old.  
Who such a life as this will hold in scorn?  
Who will not say that this is life alone,  
Which hath the comfort of the soul pursued?  
A courtier may in loathing from it turn.  
This makes its goodness unto him be known  
Who hath the good desired, the ill eschewed:  
Oh life of solitude,  
Wherein one doth his crowded joys refine!  
Oh pastoral lowliness,

Higher than loftiness  
Of the most lofty and exalted line!  
Oh shady woodland, flowers whose fragrance fills  
The air, pellucid rills!  
I for a moment brief could taste your bliss,

But that my constant ills  
Soon would disturb so fair a life as this!  
Song, thou dost go to where thy poverty,  
To where thy wealth will all too soon be seen,

Say thou with prayerful mien  
And humble, if but breath be given thee;  
“Lord, pardon! he who sends me to thy side,  
In thee and in his wishes doth confide.”

‘This, gentlemen, is Lauso’s song,’ said Damon on finishing it; ‘which was as much extolled by Larsileo as it was well received by those who saw it at the time.’

‘With reason you can say so,’ replied Darinto, ‘since its truth and workmanship are worthy of just praises.’

‘These are the songs to my taste,’ said the loveless Lenio at this moment, ‘and not those which every instant come to my ears, full of a thousand simple amorous conceits, so badly arranged and involved, that I will venture to swear that there are some, which neither the hearer, however discreet he be, can comprehend, nor the composer understand. But no less wearisome are others, which entangle themselves in giving praises to Cupid, and in exaggerating his powers, his worth, his wonders and miracles, making him lord of Heaven and earth, giving him a thousand other attributes of might, dominion and lordship; and what wearies me more than those who make them, is that, when they speak of love, they mean a someone undefined, whom they call Cupid, the very meaning of whose name declares to us what he is, namely a vain and sensual appetite, worthy of all reproof.’

The loveless Lenio spoke, and indeed he was certain to end in, speaking ill of love; but as nearly all who were there knew his disposition, they did not give much heed to his reasonings, except Erastro, who said to him: ‘Do you think, Lenio, by chance, that you are always speaking to a simple Erastro, who cannot contradict your opinions, or reply to your arguments? Then I wish to warn you that it will be wise for you to be silent for the present, or at least to discuss other matters than speaking ill of love, unless indeed you would have Thyrasis’s and Damon’s discretion and learning restoring your sight, from the blindness in which you are, and showing you clearly what they understand, and what you should understand, of love and of its affairs.’

‘What will they be able to tell me that I do not know?’ said Lenio, ‘or what shall I be able to reply to them but what they are ignorant of?’

‘This is pride, Lenio,’ replied Elicio, ‘and therein you show how far you go from the path of love’s truth, and that you guide yourself more by the pole-star of your opinion and fancy, than by that whereby you should be guided, namely that of truth and experience.’

‘Nay rather by reason of the great experience I have of its works,’ replied

Lenio, 'am I as opposed to it as I show, and shall show so long as my life shall last.'

'On what do you base your reasoning?' said Thyrsis.

'On what, shepherd?' answered Lenio; 'on this, that by the effects they have I know how evil is the cause that produces them.'

'What are the effects of love that you count so evil?' replied Thyrsis.

'I will tell you them, if you listen to me with attention,' said Lenio; 'but I would not have my discourse weary the ears of those who are present, since they can spend the time in different and more pleasurable converse.'

'There will be nothing that could be more so to us,' said Darinto, 'than to hear a discussion of this topic, especially between persons who will know so well how to defend their opinion: and so for my part, if these shepherds on theirs do not hinder it, I beg you, Lenio, to continue the discourse you have begun.'

'That will I do readily,' answered Lenio, 'for I think I shall show clearly therein what a strong reason compels me to follow the opinion I do follow, and to blame any other that may be opposed to mine.'

'Begin then, oh Lenio,' said Damon, 'for you will not hold it longer than my companion Thyrsis will take to explain his.'

At this moment, whilst Lenio was preparing to utter his reproofs against love, there came to the spring the venerable Aurelio, Galatea's father, with some shepherds, and with him came also Galatea and Florisa, with the three veiled shepherdesses, Rosaura, Teolinda, and Leonarda, whom he had met at the entrance of the village, and, learning from them of the gathering of shepherds there was at the spring of slates, caused to turn back at his request, the strange shepherdesses trusting that by reason of their veils they would not be recognised by anyone. All rose to receive Aurelio and the shepherdesses, these latter seating themselves by the ladies, Aurelio and the shepherds by the other shepherds. But when the ladies saw Galatea's remarkable beauty, they were so astonished that they could not keep their eyes from looking at her. Nor was Galatea less so at their beauty, especially at that of her who seemed the older. There passed between them some words of courtesy, but everything ceased when they learnt what was agreed between the discreet Thyrsis and the loveless Lenio; whereat the venerable Aurelio was infinitely rejoiced, for he desired very much to see that assembly, and to hear that discussion, and all the more when Lenio would have someone who could answer him so well; and so, without waiting further, Lenio, seating himself on the trunk of a felled elm-tree, in a voice at first low, and then full-sounding, began to speak in this wise: LENIO. 'Already I almost guess, worthy and discreet company, how even now in your understanding you are judging me as bold and rash, since with the little intellect and less experience

which the rustic life, in which I have been nurtured for some time, can promise, I am willing to hold a contest in a matter so difficult as this with the famous Thyrasis, whose nurture in famous academies, and whose profound studies, can assure naught to my pretensions save certain failure. But confident that at times the force of natural genius, adorned with some little experience, is wont to discover new paths with which one makes easy sciences acquired during long years, I wish to make bold to-day to show in public the reasons which have moved me to be such an enemy to love, that I had deserved thereby to gain the appellation of loveless; and though nothing else would have moved me to do this, save your behest, I would not excuse myself from doing it; all the more that the glory will not be slight which I have to gain hereby, though I should lose in the enterprise, since after all fame will say that I had the spirit to compete with the renowned Thyrasis. And so on this understanding, without wishing to be favoured except by the reason that I have on my side, it alone do I invoke and pray to give such strength to my words and arguments that there may appear in both of them the reason I have for being such an enemy to love as I proclaim. Love, then, as I have heard my elders say, is a desire for beauty; and this definition, amongst many others, those give it that have advanced farthest in this question. Then, if it be granted me, that love is desire for beauty, it must necessarily be granted me that such as is the beauty which is loved, will be the love with which it is loved.

And because beauty is of two kinds, corporeal and incorporeal, the love which loves corporeal beauty for its ultimate goal, such a love as this cannot be good, and this is the love whose enemy I am; but as corporeal beauty is divided likewise into two parts, namely into living bodies and dead bodies, there can also be a love of corporeal beauty which may be good. The one part of corporeal beauty is shown in living bodies of men and women, and this consists in all the parts of the body being good in themselves, and all together making one perfect whole, and forming a body proportioned in limbs and in pleasantness of hue. The other beauty of the corporeal part which is not alive, consists in pictures, statues and buildings; which beauty can be loved without the love with which it is loved being blameworthy.

Incorporeal beauty is divided also into two parts, the virtues and the sciences of the soul; and the love which cleaves to virtue must necessarily be good, and likewise that which cleaves to virtuous sciences and agreeable studies. Then, as these two kinds of beauty are the cause which begets love in our breasts, it follows that whether love be good or bad, depends upon loving the one or the other: but, as incorporeal beauty is viewed with the pure and clear eyes of the understanding, and corporeal beauty is regarded with the corporeal eyes, clouded

and blind, in comparison with the incorporeal, and as the eyes of the body are quicker to regard the present corporeal beauty which pleases, than those of the understanding to view the absent incorporeal beauty which glorifies, it follows that mortals more usually love the fading and mortal beauty which destroys them than the rare and divine beauty which makes them better. Then from this love, or from desiring corporeal beauty, have arisen, arise, and will arise in the world desolation of cities, ruin of states, destruction of empires, and deaths of friends; and when this, as is generally the case, does not happen, what greater woes, what more grievous torments, what fire, what jealousy, what pains, what deaths, can the human understanding imagine which can be compared to those the wretched lover suffers? And the cause of this is that, as the lover's whole happiness depends upon enjoying the beauty he desires, and this beauty cannot be possessed and enjoyed fully, that inability to reach the goal which is desired, begets in him sighs, tears, complaints, and dejection. It is manifest and clear then that it is true that the beauty of which I speak, cannot be enjoyed perfectly and fully, because it is not in the power of man to enjoy completely a thing which is outside of him and not wholly his; because external things, it is well known, are always under the control of that which we call fortune or chance, and not in the power of our free-will, and so it results that where there is love there is sorrow; and he who would deny this, would likewise deny that the sun is bright and that fire burns. But that we may come the more easily to the knowledge of the bitterness that love contains, the truth I follow will be clearly seen by running over the passions of the mind. The passions of the mind, as you know best, discreet gentlemen and shepherds, are four universal ones, and no more. Immoderate desire, much joy, great fear for future miseries, great sorrow for present calamities; these passions, being, as it were, contrary winds which disturb the tranquillity of the soul, are called by a more appropriate term disturbances; and of these disturbances the first is proper to love, since love is nothing else save desire; and so desire is the beginning and origin of all our passions, from which they issue as every stream from its source. Hence it comes that every time desire for something is kindled in our hearts, straightway it moves us to follow it and seek it, and in seeking it and following it, it leads us to a thousand disordered ends. This desire it is which incites the brother to seek his beloved sister's abominable embraces, the stepmother her step-son's, and what is worst, the very father his own daughter's; this desire it is that bears our thoughts to grievous perils. Nor does it avail that we oppose it with the reason, for, though we clearly recognise our hurt, we cannot, on that account, withdraw from it; and love does not content itself with keeping us intent on one wish, but rather, as from the desire of things all the passions arise, as has already been said, so from

the first desire that arises in us, a thousand others are derived; and these are in lovers no less various than infinite, and though they well-nigh always look to one goal only, yet, as the objects are various, and various the fortune of those in love with each, without any doubt desire takes various forms.

There are some who, to reach the attainment of what they desire, put all their strength on one course, in which, alas, what great hardships are encountered, how often they fall, what sharp thorns torture their feet, and how often strength and breath are lost before they attain what they seek! There are some others who are possessors of the thing beloved, and neither desire nor think of aught else save to remain in that state, and, having their thoughts busied about this alone, and on this alone spending all their toil and time, are wretched amidst happiness, poor amidst wealth, and unfortunate amidst good fortune. Others who are no longer in possession of their treasure, seek to return to it, employing for the purpose a thousand prayers, a thousand promises, a thousand conditions, countless tears, and at last, busying themselves with these woes, they bring themselves to the pass of losing their life. But these torments are not seen at the entry of the first desires, for then deceitful love shows us a path whereby we may enter, in appearance broad and spacious, which afterwards gradually closes in in such a manner that no way offers itself to return or go forward; and so the wretched lovers, deceived and betrayed by a sweet and false smile, by a mere turn of the eye, by two stammered words which beget in their breasts a false and feeble hope, dash straightway to go after it, goaded by desire, and afterwards, in a short space and in a few days, finding the path of their cure closed, and the way of their pleasure obstructed, turn to bedew their faces with tears, to disturb the air with sighs, to weary the ears with woeful complaints; and the worst is, that if perchance with their tears, their sighs, and their complaints they cannot come to the goal of their desire, straightway they change their manner and seek to attain by bad means what they cannot by good. Hence arise hatreds, angers, deaths as well of friends as of enemies. For this cause it has been seen and is seen at every moment that tender and delicate women set themselves to do things so strange and rash that even to imagine them inspires terror. Therefore the holy marriage-bed is seen bathed in crimson blood, now of the sad unheeding wife, now of the incautious and careless husband.

To come to the goal of this desire brother is traitor to brother, father to son, and friend to friend. It originates feuds, tramples on respect, transgresses laws, forgets duties, and seduces kinswomen. But in order that it may be clearly seen how great the misery of lovers is, it is already known that no appetite has such strength in us, nor carries us with such force to the object in view as that which is urged on by the spurs of love. Hence it comes that no happiness or



contentment passes so much beyond the due bounds as that of the lover when he comes to attain any one of the things he desires; and this is evident, for what person of judgment will there be, save the lover, who will reckon his highest joy a touch of his mistress's hand, a little ring of hers, a short loving glance, and other similar things of as small account as a dispassionate understanding holds them? And not by reason of these abundant pleasures which lovers in their judgment gain, must it be said that they are happy and fortunate; for there is no contentment of theirs that does not come accompanied by innumerable displeasures and disgusts, wherewith love dilutes them and disturbs them, and never did amorous glory reach the pitch reached and attained by pain. So evil is the happiness of lovers that it draws them out of themselves, making them careless and foolish; for, as they set their whole intent and strength to maintain themselves in that pleasant state they fancy themselves to be in, they neglect everything else, whereby no small harm overtakes them, as well of property, as of honour and life.

Then, in exchange for what I have said, they even make themselves slaves of a thousand pangs, and enemies of themselves.

What then, when it happens that, in the midst of the course of their pleasures, the cold steel of the heavy lance of jealousy touches them? Then the sky is darkened for them, the air is disturbed, and all the elements turn against them. Then they have nothing from which to hope for contentment, since the attainment of the end they desire cannot give it them. Then appear ceaseless dread, unfailing despair, sharp suspicions, varying thoughts, care without gain, false laughter and true sorrow, with a thousand other strange and terrible sensations which consume them and affright them. All the actions of the beloved object distress them, if she looks, if she laughs, if she turns away or comes back, if she is silent, if she speaks; and in a word all the graces that moved him to love well, are the very ones which torture the jealous lover. And who does not know that if fortune does not favour with full hands the beginnings of love and with speedy diligence lead them to a sweet end, how costly to the lover are any other means the luckless one employs to attain his purpose? What tears he sheds, what sighs he scatters, how many letters he writes, how many nights he does not sleep, how many and what contrary thoughts assail him, how many suspicions distress him and fears surprise him? Is there by chance a Tantalus who feels more distress, set between the waters and the apple-tree, than that which the wretched lover feels placed between fear and hope? The services of the lover out of favour are the pitchers of Danaus's daughters, drained so fruitlessly that they never come to attain the least part of their purpose. Is there eagle that so destroys the bowels of Tityus as jealousy destroys and gnaws those of the jealous lover?

Is there rock that weighs down so much the shoulders of Sisyphus as love unceasingly weighs down the thoughts of those in love? Is there wheel of Ixion that more quickly turns and torments than the quick varying fancies of irresolute lovers?

Is there a Minos or Rhadamanthus who so punishes and oppresses the luckless condemned souls as love punishes and oppresses the loving breast which is subject to his unendurable power? There is not a cruel Megæra, nor raging Tisiphone, nor avenging Alecto, who so illtreat the soul in which they enclose themselves, as this fury, this desire, illtreats those hapless ones who recognise it as lord, and bow before it as vassals, who, to give some excuse for the follies they commit, say — or at least the ancient heathens said — that that instinct which incites and moves the lover to love another's life more than his own, was a god, to whom they gave the name of Cupid, and so, being constrained by his godhead, they could not fail to follow and go after what he willed. They were moved to say this, and to give the name of god to this desire by seeing the supernatural effects it produces in lovers. Without doubt it seems a supernatural thing for a lover at the same moment to be timorous and confident, to burn away from his beloved and grow cold when nearer her, to be dumb when speaking much, and speaking much when dumb. It is likewise a strange thing to follow one who shuns me, to praise one who reproaches me, to utter words to one who does not listen to me, to serve an ungrateful one, and to hope in one who never promises nor can give aught that is good. Oh bitter sweetness, oh poisonous medicine of sick lovers, oh sad joy, oh flower of love, that dost indicate no fruit, save that of tardy repentance! These are the effects of this fancied god, these are his deeds and wondrous works; and indeed it can also be seen in the picture by which they represented this vain god of theirs, how vainly they acted; they painted him as a boy, naked, winged, his eyes bandaged, with bow and arrows in his hands, to give us to understand, amongst other things, that, when a man is in love, he assumes again the character of a simple and capricious boy, who is blind in his aims, light in his thoughts, cruel in his deeds, naked and poor in the riches of the understanding. They said likewise that amongst his arrows he had two, the one of lead and the other of gold, with which he produced different effects; for the leaden one begot hatred in the breasts it touched, and the golden one increase of love in those it wounded, merely to tell us that it is rich gold that causes love, and poor lead abhorrence. And for this reason poets do not sing in vain of Atalanta vanquished by three lovely golden apples; and of fair Danae, made pregnant by the golden rain; and of pious Æneas descending to hell with the golden branch in his hand; in a word, gold and gifts are one of the strongest arrows which love has; and the one with which he subdues most hearts; quite the

contrary to the one of lead, a metal low and despised, as poverty is, which rather begets hatred and abhorrence where it comes, than any kind of benevolence. But if the reasons spoken by me so far do not suffice to persuade you of the reason I have for being on bad terms with this treacherous love, which I am discussing to-day, observe its effects in some true examples from the past, and you will see, as I see, that he who does not attain to the truth I follow does not see nor has he eyes of understanding.

Let us see then — what but this love is it which made righteous Lot break his chaste purpose and violate his own daughters?

This it is without doubt that made the chosen David be an adulterer and a murderer; that forced the lustful Ammon to seek the infamous embraces of Tamar, his beloved sister; that placed the head of mighty Samson in the traitorous lap of Delilah, whereby he lost his strength, his people lost their protection, and at last he and many others their lives. This it was that moved Herod's tongue to promise to the dancing girl the head of the Fore-runner of Life; this makes one doubt of the salvation of the wisest and richest king of kings, and even of all mankind. This brought down the strong arms of famous Hercules, accustomed to wield the weighty club, to turn a tiny spindle and to busy themselves in feminine tasks. This made the raging and loving Medea scatter through the air the tender limbs of her little brother; this cut out the tongue of Procne, Arachne and Hippolytus, made Pasiphae infamous, destroyed Troy, and slew Ægisthus. This caused the works of new Carthage once begun to be stayed, and her first queen to pierce her chaste breast with a sharp sword. This placed in the hands of the fair and famous Sophonisba, the vial of deadly poison which ended her life. This robbed valiant Turnus of life, Tarquin of kingdom, Mark Antony of power, and his mistress of life and honour. This finally handed our Spain over to the barbarous fury of the children of Hagar, called to avenge the disordered love of the wretched Roderick. But, because I think that night will cover us with its shade before I finish bringing to your memory the examples that offer themselves to mine, of the exploits that love has performed, and is performing every day in the world, I do not wish to go on with them, nor yet with the discourse I have begun, in order to give an opportunity for the famous Thyrasis to reply to me, begging you first, gentlemen, not to be wearied by hearing a song which I composed some days ago in reproach of this my foe. If I remember rightly, it runs in this way: No fear have I before the frost and fire,

The bow and arrows of the tyrant Love,  
And so I needs must sing in his dispraise;  
For who shall fear a blind boy whose desire  
Varies, whose judgment doth inconstant rove,

Although he threaten wounds and sad decays?  
My pleasure doth increase, his worth decays,

When I employ my tongue

To utter the true song  
Which in reproach of Love himself I form,  
So rich in truth, in manner, and in form,  
That unto all Love's malice it reveals,

And clearly doth inform  
The world of the sure hurt that Love conceals.  
Love is a fire that burns the soul within,  
A frost that freezes; dart that opes the breast,  
Which heedeth not its cunning manifold;  
A troubled sea where calm hath ne'er been seen;  
Wrath's minister; enemy manifest,  
In guise of friend; father of dismay cold;  
Giver of scanty good and ill untold;  
Caressing; full of lies;  
Fierce in his tyrannies;  
A traitorous Circe that transforms us all

To divers monstrous shapes fantastical  
Wherefrom no power of man can us restore,



Though quickly at our call  
Comes reason's light, to what we were before,  
A yoke that doth the proudest neck abase;  
A mark to which desires of slothful ease,  
Born without reason, go as to their goal;  
A treacherous net, which men of highest place  
Amidst their foul and unclean sins doth seize  
And doth within its subtle mesh enthrall;  
A pleasing ill that tempts the senses all;  
Poison in guise of pill,  
Gilded, but poison still;  
A bolt that burns and cleaves where it descendeth;  
An angry arm that traitorously offendeth;  
Huntsman that dooms the thought which captive lies,

Or which itself defendeth  
From the sweet charm of his false fantasies;  
A hurt that doth in the beginning please,  
When on an object which doth seem as fair  
As the fair heavens above, the sight doth feast —  
And yet the more it looks with yearning gaze,  
The more the heart doth suffer everywhere,  
The heart that is with anguish sore distressed —  
Dumb speaker; chatterer with dumbness oppressed;  
A wise man babbling folly;  
Ruin that slayeth wholly;  
The life which joyous harmony doth fill;  
Shadow of good that is transformed to ill;  
A flight that raiseth us to Heaven on high,

Only that grief may still  
Live after we have fallen, and pleasure die;  
A thief unseen that doth destroy us quite,  
And robs us of our wealth with ruthless hand,  
Carrying our souls away at every hour;  
A speed that overtakes the quickest flight;  
A riddle none there is to understand;  
A life that always is in peril sore;  
A chosen, and, withal, a chance-born war;  
A truce that is but brief;  
Beloved, luckless grief;  
Promise that never doth to fruitage come;  
Illness that makes within the soul its home;  
Coward that upon evil rusheth bold;

Debtor that doth the sum  
He owes, which is our due, ever withhold;  
A labyrinth wherein is nestling found  
A fierce wild beast that doth itself sustain  
On the surrendered hearts of all mankind;  
A bond wherewith the lives of all are bound;  
A lord that from his steward seeks to gain  
Account of deed and word, and of his mind;  
Greed, unto countless varied aims inclined;  
A worm that builds a house,  
Wretched or beauteous,  
Where for a little while it dwells and dies;  
A sigh that never knows for what it sighs;  
A cloud that darkens all our faculties;  
A knife that wounds us — this  
Is Love, him follow, if ye think it wise.'

With this song the loveless Lenio ended his reasoning, leaving some of those that were present full of wonder at both, especially the gentlemen, for it seemed to them that what Lenio had said seemed of more worth than was usual with a shepherd's intellect. And with great desire and attention they were awaiting Thyrsis's reply, all promising themselves in fancy that it would without any doubt excel Lenio's, for Thyrsis exceeded him in age and experience, and in the studies most generally pursued, and this likewise reassured them, for they desired that Lenio's loveless opinion should not prevail. It is indeed true that the hapless Teolinda, the loving Leonarda, the fair Rosaura, and even the lady who came with Darinto and his companion, clearly saw depicted in Lenio's discourse a thousand points of the course of their loves; and this was when he came to treat of tears and sighs, and of how dearly the joys of love were bought. Only the fair Galatea and the discreet Florisa did not count in this, for up till then love had not taken count of their fair rebellious breasts, and so they were eager only to hear the acuteness with which the two famous shepherds disputed, without seeing in their free will any of the effects of love they were hearing of.

But Thyrsis's will being to reduce to better limits the loveless shepherd's opinion, without waiting to be asked, the minds of the bystanders hanging on his lips, he set himself in front of Lenio, and with agreeable and elevated tone began to speak in this wise: THYRSIS. 'If the acuteness of your fair intellect, loveless shepherd, did not assure me that with ease it can attain the truth, from which it finds itself so far at present, rather than put myself to the trouble of contradicting

your opinion, I would leave you in it, as a punishment for your unjust words. But because those you have uttered in blame of love show me the good germs you possess by which you may be brought to a better purpose, I do not wish by my silence to leave those who hear us scandalised, love despised, and you pertinacious and vainglorious; and so, being aided by Love on whom I call, I think in a few words to show how different are his works and effects from those you have declared about him, speaking only of the love you mean, which you defined when you said that it was a desire for beauty, and likewise declared what beauty was, and a little later you closely examined all the effects which the love of which you speak produced in loving breasts, finally strengthening your views with various unhappy events caused by love. And though the definition you made of love may be the one most generally given, yet it is not so much so but that it may be contradicted; for 'love and desire are two different things, since not everything that is loved is desired, nor everything that is desired loved. The reasoning is clear in the case of all things that are possessed, for then it cannot be said that they are desired, but that they are loved: thus, he who has health will not say that he desires health, but that he loves it; and he who has children cannot say that he desires children, but that he loves his children; nor yet can it be said of the things that are desired that they are loved, as of the death of enemies, which is desired and not loved. And so for this reason love and desire come to be different passions of the will. The truth is that love is the father of desire, and amongst other definitions which are given of love this is one. Love is that first change which we feel caused in our mind by the appetite which moves us and draws us to itself, delighting and pleasing us; and that pleasure begets motion in the soul, which motion is called desire, and, in short, desire is a motion of the appetite in regard to what is loved, and a wish for that which is possessed, and its object is happiness. And as there are found different species of desires, and love is a species of desire which looks to and regards the happiness which is called fair, yet for a clearer definition and division of love it must be understood that it is divided into three kinds, chaste love, useful love, and delectable love.

And to these three forms of love are reduced all the kinds of loving and desiring that can exist in our will: for the chaste love regards the things of Heaven, eternal and divine; the useful, the things of earth, full of joy and doomed to perish, such as wealth, powers, and lordships; the delectable, things giving delight and pleasure, as the living corporeal beauties of which you, Lenio, spoke. And each form of these loves of which I have spoken ought not to be blamed by any tongue, for the chaste love ever was, is and must be spotless, simple, pure and divine, finding rest and repose in God alone. Profitable love,

being, as it is, natural, ought not to be condemned, still less the delectable, for it is more natural than the profitable. That these two forms of love are natural in us, experience shows us, for as soon as our daring first parent transgressed the divine commandment, and from lord was made a servant, and from freeman a slave, straightway he knew the misery into which he had fallen, and the poverty in which he was. And so he at once took the leaves of trees to cover him, and sweated and toiled, breaking the earth to sustain himself, and to live with the least discomfort possible; and thereafter, obeying his God therein better than in aught else, he sought to have children, and in them to perpetuate and delight the human race. And as by his disobedience death entered into him, and through him into all his descendants, so we inherit at the same time all his affections and passions, as we inherit his very nature; and as he sought to remedy his necessity and poverty, so we cannot fail to seek and desire to remedy ours. And hence springs the love we have for things useful to human life; and the more we gain of them, the more it seems to us we remedy our want. And by the same reasoning we inherit the desire of perpetuating ourselves in our children; and from this desire follows that, which we have, to enjoy living corporeal beauty, as the only true means which lead such desires to a happy end. So that this delectable love, alone and without mixture of any other accident, is worthy rather of praise than of blame. And this is the love, which you, Lenio, hold for enemy; and the cause is that you do not understand it, nor know it, for you have never seen it alone, and in its own shape, but always accompanied by pernicious, lascivious and ill-placed desires. And this is not the fault of love, which is always good, but of the accidents which come to it; as we see happening in some copious stream, that has its birth from some clear and limpid spring, which is ever supplying to it clear cool waters, and a little while after it leaves its stainless mother, its sweet and crystalline waters are changed to bitter and turbid, by reason of the many stained brooks, which join it on either side.

Hence this first motion, love or desire as you would call it, cannot arise except from a good beginning; and truly among good beginnings is the knowledge of beauty, which, once recognised as such, it seems well-nigh impossible to avoid loving. And beauty has such power to move our minds, that it alone caused the ancient philosophers (blind and without the light of faith to guide them), led by natural reason, and attracted by the beauty they beheld in the starry heavens, and in the mechanism and roundness of the earth, marvelling at such harmony and beauty, to pursue investigations with the understanding, making a ladder by these second causes to reach the first cause of causes; and they recognised that there was one only beginning without beginning of all things. But that which made them wonder most and raise their thoughts, was to see the frame of man so

well-ordered, so perfect and so beautiful, that they came to call him a world in little; and so it is true that in all the works made by God's steward, Nature, nothing is of such excellence, nor reveals more the greatness and wisdom of its Maker. For in the form and frame of man is summed up and enclosed the beauty which is distributed in all the other parts of it: and hence it arises that this beauty, when recognised, is loved, and as all beauty displays itself most and is most resplendent in the face, as soon as a beautiful face is seen, it summons and draws the will to love it.

'Hence it follows that as the faces of women so much excel in beauty those of men, it is they who are the more loved, served and courted by us, as the object in which dwells the beauty that is naturally more pleasing to our sight. But our Maker and Creator, seeing that it is the proper nature of our soul to be for ever in perpetual motion and desire, for it cannot find rest save in God, as in its proper centre, willed, so that it might not rush with loosened rein to desire things empty and doomed to perish, and this without taking from it the liberty of free-will, to set over its three powers an alert sentinel, who should warn it against the dangers that opposed it and the enemies that persecuted it; this was reason, which corrects and curbs our inordinate desires. And seeing likewise that human beauty must needs draw after it our passions and inclinations, while it did not seem good to Him to take away from us this desire, at least He wished to temper it and correct it, ordaining the holy yoke of matrimony, beneath which most of the natural joys and pleasures of love are lawful and fitting for man and woman.

By these two remedies imposed by the divine hand comes to be tempered the excess there can be in the natural love which you, Lenio, blame, which love is of itself so good that if it were lacking in us, the world and we would end. In this very love of which I am speaking are summed up all the virtues, for love is moderation, since the lover, according to the chaste wish of the beloved object, tempers his own; it is fortitude, for the lover can endure any adversity for the love of the one who loves him; it is justice, for with it he serves her who loves well, reason itself forcing him to it; it is prudence, for love is adorned with all wisdom. But I ask you, oh Lenio, you who have said that love is the cause of the ruin of empires, of the destruction of cities, of the deaths of friends, of sacrileges committed, the deviser of treasons, the transgressor of laws — I ask you, I say, to tell me, what praiseworthy thing there is to-day in the world, however good it be, the use of which cannot be changed into evil. Let philosophy be condemned, for often it discovers our faults, and many philosophers have been wicked; let the works of the heroic poets be burned, for with their satires and verses they reprehend vices; let medicine be blamed, for men discover poisons; let eloquence be called useless, for at times it has been so arrogant that it has placed

in doubt the recognised truth; let not arms be forged, for robbers and murderers use them; let not houses be built, for they can fall upon the inhabitants; let variety of victuals be prohibited, for they are wont to be a cause of illness; let no one seek to have children, for Œdipus, driven by cruellest madness, slew his father, and Orestes smote the breast of his own mother; let fire be counted evil, for it is wont to burn houses and to consume cities: let water be despised, for with it all the earth was flooded; in a word, let all elements be condemned, for they can be perversely used by some perverse persons. And in this manner every good thing can be changed to evil, and from it can proceed evil effects, if placed in the hands of those who, as irrational beings, allow themselves to be governed by the appetite, without moderation.

The ancient Carthage, rival of the Roman Empire, warlike Numantia, Corinth made so fair, proud Thebes, and learned Athens, and God's city Jerusalem, which were conquered and laid desolate — are we to lay therefore that love was the cause of their destruction and ruin? Hence those who are accustomed to speak ill of love, ought to speak ill of their own selves for the sifs of love, if they are used with moderation, are worthy of perpetual praise; since in everything the mean was always praised, or the extreme was blamed, for if we embrace virtue beyond what suffices, the wise man will win the name of fool and the just of iniquitous. It was the opinion of the ancient tragedian Chremes, that, as wine mixed with water is good, so love, when moderate, is profitable, but it is the contrary when immoderate; the generation of rational animals and brutes would be naught if it did not proceed from love, and if it were wanting on earth, the latter would be deserted and empty. I he ancients believed that love was the work of the gods, given for the preservation and care of mankind. But, coming to what you, Lenio, said of the sad and strange effects which love produces in loving breasts, keeping them ever in ceaseless tears, deep sighs, despairing fancies, without ever panting them an hour of repose — let us see perchance what thing can be desired in this life the attainment of which does not cost fatigue and toil; and the more valuable a thing is, the more one must suffer and does suffer for it. For desire presupposes a lack of the desired object, and until it is gained there must needs be disturbance in our mind. If then all human desires without wholly attaining what they desire, can be rewarded and contented with a part of it being given them, and with all this it is compatible to follow them, how strange it is that to attain what cannot satisfy nor content the desire save with itself, one should surer, weep, fear and hope? He who desires lordships, commands honours, and riches, since he sees that he cannot reach the highest rank he would wish, when he succeeds in settling in some good position, is partly satisfied, for the hope which fails him of not being able to ascend



further, makes him stop where he can, and where best he can. All this is the contrary in love for love has no other reward nor satisfaction save love itself, and love itself is its own true reward; and for this reason it is impossible for the lover to be content till he clearly knows that he is truly loved, being assured of this by the loving tokens which they know. And so they value highly a pleasing glance, a pledge of any sort from their beloved, a trivial smile, or word, or jest they take for truth, as signs which are assuring them of the reward they desire; and so, whenever they see tokens contrary thereto, the lover is constrained to lament and grieve, without having moderation in his sorrows, since he cannot have it in his joys, when kind fortune and gentle love grant them to him. And, as it is a task of such difficulty to bring another's will to be one with mine, and to unite two souls in a knot and bond so indissoluble that the thoughts of the two may be one and all their deeds one, it is not strange that to achieve so lofty a purpose one should suffer more than for aught else, since, after it is achieved, it satisfies and gladdens beyond all things that are desired in this life. Not always are the tears of lovers shed with cause and reason, nor their sighs scattered, for if all their tears and sighs were caused by seeing that their wish is not responded to as is due, and with the reward that is sought for, it would be necessary to consider first whither they raised their fancy, and if they exalted it higher than their merit attains, it is no wonder that, like some new Icarus, they fall consumed into the river of miseries; and for these love will not incur the blame, but their folly. With all this I do not deny, but affirm that the desire of gaining what is loved, must needs cause affliction, by reason of the want it presupposes, as I have already said at other times; but I also say that to attain it gives the greatest pleasure and happiness, like rest to the weary and health to the sick. Together with this I acknowledge that if lovers marked, as in the ancient custom, with white and black stones their sad or happy days, without any doubt the unhappy would be more; but I also recognise that the quality of one white stone alone would excel the quantity of countless black ones. And for a proof of this truth we see that lovers never repent of being lovers, nay, rather, if anyone should promise them to deliver them from love's disease, they would repel him as an enemy; for even to suffer it is pleasant to them; and therefore, oh lovers, let no fear prevent you from offering and dedicating yourselves to love what should seem to you most difficult, nor complain, nor repent, if you have raised things lowly to your height, for love makes the little equal to the sublime, the lesser to the greater; and with just resolve it tempers the various dispositions of lovers, when with pure affection they receive its grace in their hearts. Yield not to dangers, that the glory may be so great as to take away the feeling of every sorrow; and, as for the captains and emperors of old, as a reward for their toils

and fatigues, triumphs were prepared according to the greatness of their victories, so for lovers are reserved a multitude of pleasures and joys; and as with the former their glorious reception made them forget all their past troubles and griefs, so with the lover, when beloved by the beloved, his dreadful dreams, his uncertain sleep, his waking nights, his restless days are turned to highest peace and happiness. Hence, Lenio, if you condemn them for their sad effects, you should acquit them for their pleasing and happy ones. And as for the interpretation you gave of Cupid's form, I am going to say that you are almost as wrong in it as in the other things you have said against love.

For to picture him a boy, blind, naked, with wings and arrows, means nothing but that the lover must be a boy in not having a double character, but one pure and simple; he must be blind to every other object that might offer itself to him, save that which he has already been able to see and yield to, naked because he must have naught save what belongs to her he loves, having wings of swiftness to be ready for all that may be commanded him on her part, while he is depicted with arrows, for the wound of the loving breast must needs be deep and hidden, and that scarce may be disclosed save to the very cause that is to cure it. That love should strike with two arrows which operate in different ways, is to show us that in perfect love there must be no mean between loving and not loving at the same moment, but that the lover must love whole-heartedly without any admixture of lukewarmness. Finally, Lenio, this love it is which, if it destroyed the Trojans, made the Greeks great; if it caused the works of Carthage to cease, it caused the buildings of Rome to grow; if it took away the kingdom from Tarquin, it brought back the republic to freedom. Though I might here adduce many examples opposed to those I have adduced of the *good* effects love causes, I do not wish to busy myself with them, since they are so well known of themselves.

I only wish to ask you to be disposed to believe what I have shown and to have patience to hear a song of mine which seems as if it was composed in rivalry of yours; and if by it and by what I have said to you, you should not be willing to be brought over to love's side, and it should seem to you that you are not satisfied of the truths I have declared concerning it, if the present time permits it, or at any other you might choose and indicate, I promise you to satisfy all the replies and arguments you might wish to express in opposition to mine; and, for the present, attend to me and listen: Come, issue from the pure and loving breast,

Sonorous voice, and let thy tones of pride  
Sing of the lofty marvels done by Love,  
So that the thought that freest is and best,

May be content thereby and satisfied,  
Though 'tis but hearsay that the thought doth move.  
Sweet Love, that canst thy lofty marvels prove,  
If thou wilt, by my tongue,  
Grant unto it such grace,  
That glory, joy and praise,  
For telling who thou art, reward my song;  
For, if thou aidest me, as I surmise,  
Thy worth, in rapid flight  
To Heaven's height, we see with mine arise.  
'Tis Love that is beginning of our bliss;  
The means whereby one winneth and attaineth  
The happiest end that anyone doth seek;  
Unequalled master of all sciences;  
A fire, that, though a breast ice cold remaineth,  
Into bright flames of virtue makes it break;  
A power that wounds the strong and helps the weak:  
A root from which is born

The lucky plant whereby  
We rise to Heaven on high.  
With fruitage, that doth unto pleasure turn  
The soul, of goodness, worth, and noble zeal,  
Of bliss without alloy,  
That earth with joy, and Heaven with love doth fill;  
Courteous and gallant, wise, discreet is he:  
Gay, liberal-handed, gentle, rich in might;  
Of piercing glance, although blind be his eyes;  
True guardian of respect and modesty;  
A captain who doth triumph in the fight,  
But honour only claimeth as his prize;  
A flower that doth 'midst thorns and brambles rise,  
Which life and soul adorns:  
An enemy of fear;  
Of hope a friend so near;  
A guest that gladdens most when he returns;  
An instrument of honoured wealth, I trow,

Whereby one seeth thrive  
The honoured ivy on the honoured brow;  
A natural instinct that doth move us all  
To raise the thoughts within our minds so high  
That scarce thereto doth human sight attain:  
A ladder which he that is bold doth scale  
To the sweet region of the hallowed sky;  
Ridge at its summit fair, smooth as a plain;  
An easiness that makes the intricate plain;  
Pole-star that in this sea

Of madness guides the thought  
That from sense strayeth not;  
A solace of the sorrowing fantasy;  
Godfather who doth never seek our harm;  
A beacon not concealed  
That hath revealed the haven 'midst the storm;  
A painter that doth in our souls portray,  
With shadows and with tints full of repose,  
Now mortal, now immortal, loveliness;  
A sun that driveth all the clouds away;  
A pleasure that brings sweetness in our woes;  
A glass wherein one sees the kindliness  
Of nature, that doth crown with high success  
True generosity;  
A fiery spirit bright,  
That even to the blindest bringeth light;  
Of hatred and of fear sole remedy;  
Argus that ne'er can tempted be to nod,

Although within his ear  
The words he hear of some deceiving god;  
An army of well-armed infantry  
That countless difficulties puts to flight,  
And ever wins the victory and the palm;  
A dwelling where abideth jollity;  
A face that never hides the truth from sight,  
But shows what is within the soul; a balm  
Whose power the tempest changeth to sweet calm,

Merely because some day  
We hope to have it sure;



A comfort that doth cure  
Him who is scorned, when life doth pass away;  
Finally Love is life, 'tis glory, gladness,  
'Tis joyful peace and sweet;  
Follow his feet; to follow him is gladness.

The end of the reasoning and song of Thyrsis was the beginning to confirm anew in all the reputation he had for discretion, save in the loveless Lenio, to whom his reply did not seem so good as to satisfy his understanding, and change him from his first purpose. This was clearly seen, for he was already giving signs of wishing to answer and reply to Thyrsis had not the praises Darinto and his companion, and all the shepherds and shepherdesses present were giving the two, prevented it; for Darinto's friend, taking his hand, said: 'I have just at this moment learnt how the power and wisdom of love extends over every part of the earth; and that the place where it is most refined and purified is in shepherds breasts, as has been shown to us by what we have heard from the loveless Lenio and the discreet Thyrsis, whose reasonings and arguments savour more of intellects nurtured amidst books and lecture-rooms, than of those that have grown up amidst thatched huts But I would not be so astonished thereat, if I were of the opinion of him who said that the knowledge of our souls was to remember what they already knew, *presupposing* that they are all born instructed. But when I see that I ought to follow the other and better view of him who affirmed that our soul was as it were a blank canvas, which had nothing painted on it, I cannot fail to wonder at seeing how it has been possible, in the company of sheep, in the solitude of the fields, for one to be able to acquire sciences, concerning which it is scarcely possible to hold disputes in renowned universities; if, indeed, I do not wish to be persuaded of what I said at first, that love extends through all, and communicates itself to all, raising the fallen, giving wisdom to the simple, and making perfect the wise.'

'If you knew, sir,' replied Elicio at this moment, 'how the upbringing of the renowned Thyrsis has not been amidst trees and forests, as you fancy, but in royal courts and well-known schools, you would not wonder at what he has said, but at what he has left unsaid; and although the loveless Lenio in his humility has confessed that the rusticity of his life can promise but slight pledges of intellect, nevertheless I assure you that he spent the choicest years of his life, not in the pursuit of tending goats on the hills, but on the banks of the clear Tormes in laudable studies and discreet converse. So that if the colloquy the two have held seems to you of more worth than one of shepherds, consider them as they were, and not as they now are; all the more so that you will find shepherds on

these banks of ours, who will not cause you less wonder if you hear them, than those you have heard now. For on them are grazing their flocks the famous and well-known Franio, Siralvo, Filardo, Silvano, Lisardo and the two Matuntos, father and son, excelling beyond all excellence, one on the lyre, the other in poetry; and, to crown all, turn your eyes and know the well-known Damon, whom you have before you, where your desire can rest if it wishes to know the extreme of discretion and wisdom.'

The gentleman was about to reply to Elicio, when one of those ladies who came with him said to the other:

'It seems to me, senora Nisida, that since the sun is now setting it would be well for us to go, if we are to reach to-morrow the spot where they say our father is.'

The lady had scarcely said this, when Darinto and his companion looked at her, showing that it had grieved them that she had called the other by her name. But when Elicio heard the name of Nisida, the thought struck him whether it was that Nisida of whom the hermit Silerio had related so many things, and the same idea came to Thyrsis, Damon and Erastro. And Elicio, to assure himself of what he suspected, said: 'A few days ago, senor Darinto, I and some of us who are here heard the name of Nisida mentioned, as has been done by that lady now, but accompanied by more tears and referred to with more alarm.'

'Is there perchance,' replied Darinto, 'any shepherdess on these banks of yours called Nisida?'

'No,' replied Elicio; 'but she whom I speak of was born on them, and was nurtured on the remote banks of the famous Sebeto.'

'What is it you say, shepherd?' rejoined the other gentleman.

'What you hear,' replied Elicio, 'and what you will hear at greater length, if you assure me of a suspicion I have.'

'Tell it me,' said the gentleman, 'for it might be that I shall satisfy you therein.'

To this Elicio replied: 'Is your own name, sir, perchance Timbrio?'

'I cannot deny that truth to you,' replied the other, 'for I am called Timbrio, which name I had fain concealed till another more fitting season; but the wish I have to know why you suspected that I was so called, constrains me to conceal naught from you of what you might wish to know of me.'

'Accordingly you will not deny to me either,' said Elicio, 'that this lady you have with you is called Nisida, and further, so far as I can guess, the other is called Blanca, and is her sister.'

'In all you have hit the mark,' replied Timbrio; 'but since I have denied to you nothing of what you have asked me, do not you deny me the reason that has

moved you to ask it me.'

'It is as good, and will be as much to your taste,' replied Elicio, 'as you will see before many hours.'

All those who did not know what the hermit Silerio had said to Elicio, Thyrsis, Damon and Erastro, were confounded, hearing what was passing between Timbrio and Elicio. But at this moment Damon said, turning to Elicio: 'Do not keep back, oh Elicio, the good tidings you can give to Timbrio.'

'And I, too,' said Erastro, 'shall not delay a moment in going to give to the hapless Silerio those of the finding of Timbrio.'

'Holy Heavens! O, what is it I hear!' said Timbrio; 'and what is it you say, shepherd? Is that Silerio you have named perchance he who is my true friend, he who is the half of my life, he whom I desire to see more than aught else that desire could ask of me? Free me from this doubt at once, so may your flocks increase and multiply, in such a manner that all the neighbouring herdsmen may bear you envy.'

'Do not distress yourself so much, Timbrio,' said Damon, 'for the Silerio that Erastro speaks of is the same that you speak of, and the one who desires more to know of your life than to sustain and lengthen his own; for after you departed from Naples, as he has told us, he has felt your absence so much, that the pain of it, with that which other losses he related to us caused him, has brought him to the pass that, in a small hermitage, a little less than a league distant from here, he leads the straitest life imaginable, with the determination of awaiting death there, since he could not be satisfied by learning how your life had prospered. This we know for sure, Thyrsis, Elicio, Erastro, and I; for he himself has told us of the friendship he had with you, with all the story of the events that happened to both, until fortune by such strange accidents parted you, to set him apart to live in a solitude so strange, that it will cause you wonder when you see him.'

'May I see him, and may straightway come the last end of my days,' said Timbrio; 'and so I pray you, famous shepherds, by that courtesy which dwells in your breasts, to satisfy this breast of mine, by telling me where is that hermitage where Silerio is living.'

'Where he is dying, you had better say,' said Erastro, 'but henceforward he will live with the news of your coming; and since you so much desire his pleasure and yours, arise and let us go, for before the sun sets I will set you with Silerio; but it must be on condition that on the way you tell us all that has happened to you since you departed from Naples, for with all the rest up to that point some of those present are acquainted.'

'Small payment you ask of me,' replied Timbrio, 'for so great a thing as you offer me; for I do not say that I will tell you this, but all that you might wish to

learn of me and more.' And, turning to the ladies who came with him, he said to them: 'Since with so good a cause, dear lady Nisida, the motive we had not to utter our own names has been destroyed, with the joy that the good news they have given us demands, I ask you that we should not delay, but that we should go forthwith to see Silerio, to whom you and I owe our lives and the happiness we possess.'

'It is needless, senor Timbrio,' replied Nisida, 'for you to ask me to do a thing I desire so much, and the doing of which suits me so well; let us go, and may good luck attend us, for now every moment that I delay in seeing him, will be to me an age.'

The same said the other lady, who was her sister Blanca, the same that Silerio had spoken of, and the one who gave the greatest signs of happiness. Darinto alone, at the news of Silerio, assumed such an attitude that he did not move his lips, but with a strange silence arose, and bade a servant of his bring him the horse on which he had come there; without taking leave of any one, he mounted it, and turning the reins went away from all at a gallop. When Timbrio saw this, he mounted another horse and with much haste followed Darinto until he overtook him; and seizing hold of the horse's reins, he made him stand still, and remained there talking with him a good while, at the end of which Timbrio returned to where the shepherds were, and Darinto pursued his journey, sending to excuse himself by Timbrio for having departed without taking leave of them.

In the meantime Galatea, Rosaura, Teolinda, Leonarda, and Florisa went up to the fair Nisida and Blanca; and the discreet Nisida told them in a few words of the great friendship there was between Timbrio and Silerio, with a great part of the events they had passed through. But with Timbrio's return all wished to set themselves on the road for Silerio's hermitage, had not at the same moment a fair young shepherdess, some fifteen years of age, come to the spring, with her wallet on her shoulder and her crook in her hand. And when she saw so pleasing a company, she said to them with tears in her eyes: 'If perchance there is among you, gentlemen, one who has any knowledge of the strange effects and accidents of love, and whose breast tears and loving sights are wont to make tender, let him who feels this hasten to see if it is possible to heal and check the most loving tears and deep sighs that ever issued from lovesick eyes and breasts; hasten then, shepherds, to do what I ask you and you will see how when you observe what I show you I prove my words true.'

And in saying this she turned her back, and all who were there followed her. The shepherdess, seeing then that they followed her, with hasty step entered in among some trees which were on one side of the spring; and she had not gone far, when turning to those who were coming after her, she said to them: 'You see

there, sirs, the cause of my tears, for that shepherd who appears there is a brother of mine, who for the sake of that shepherdess before whom he is bent on his knees, without any doubt will leave his life in the hands of her cruelty.'

All turned their eyes to the spot the shepherdess indicated, and saw that at the foot of a green willow a shepherdess was leaning, dressed like a huntress nymph, with a rich quiver hanging at her side, and a curved bow in her hands, her beauteous ruddy locks bound together with a green garland. The shepherd was before her on his knees, with a rope cast round his throat and an unsheathed knife in his right hand, and with his left he had seized the shepherdess by a white scarf, which she wore over her dress. The shepherdess showed a frown on her face, and that she was displeased that the shepherd should detain her there by force; but when she saw that they were looking at her, with great earnestness she sought to free herself from the hand of the hapless shepherd, who with abundance of tender tears and loving words was begging her at least to give him opportunity that he might be able to indicate to her the pain he suffered for her; but the scornful and angry shepherdess went away from him at the very moment all the shepherds came so near that they heard the lovesick youth addressing the shepherdess in such wise: 'Oh ungrateful and heedless Gelasia, with how just a title you have won the name you have of cruel! Turn your eyes, hardhearted one, to behold him who, from beholding you, is in the extremest grief imaginable. Why do you flee from him who follows you? Why do you not welcome him who serves you?

And why do you loathe him who adores you? You, who are without reason my foe, hard as a lofty cliff, angry as a wounded snake, deaf as a dumb forest, scornful as boorish, boorish as fierce, fierce as a tiger, a tiger that feeds on my entrails! Will it be possible for my tears not to soften you, for my sighs not to rouse your pity, for my services not to move you? Yes, it will be possible; since my brief and ill-starred lot wishes it, and yet it will also be possible for you not to wish to tighten this noose I have at my throat, nor to plunge this knife through this heart that adores you. Turn, shepherdess, turn, and end the tragedy of my wretched life, since with such ease you can make fast this rope at my throat, or make bloody this knife in my breast.'

These and other like words the hapless shepherd uttered, accompanied by sobs and tears so many that they moved to compassion as many as heard him. But the cruel and loveless shepherdess did not therefore cease to pursue her way, without wishing even to turn her eyes to behold the shepherd, who, for her sake, was in such a state; whereat all those who perceived her angry disdain were not a little astonished, and it was so great that even the loveless Lenio thought ill of the shepherdess's cruelty. And so he with the old Arsindo went up to ask her to

be so good as to turn and hear the complaints of the lovesick youth, even though she should have no intention of healing them. But it was not possible to change her from her purpose, rather she asked them not to count her discourteous in not doing what they bade her; for her intention was to be the mortal enemy of love and of all lovers, for many reasons which moved her to it, and one of them was that from her childhood she had dedicated herself to follow the pursuit of the chaste Diana, adding to these so many reasons for not doing the bidding of the shepherds that Arsindo held it for good to leave her and return. The loveless Lenio did not do this, and when he saw that the shepherdess was such an enemy of love as she seemed, and that she agreed so completely with his loveless disposition, he determined to know who she was, and to follow her company for some days; and so he told her how he was the greatest enemy love and lovers had, begging her that since they agreed so much in their opinions, she would be so kind as not to be wearied with his company which would not be hers longer than she pleased. The shepherdess rejoiced to learn Lenio's intention, and permitted him to come with her to her village, which was two leagues from Lenio's. Therewith Lenio took leave of Arsindo, begging him to excuse him to all his friends and to tell them the reason that had moved him to go with the shepherdess, and without waiting further, he and Gelasia went away quickly and in a short while disappeared. When Arsindo returned to tell what had passed with the shepherdess, he found that all the shepherds had gone up to console the lovesick shepherd, and that, as for the two of the three veiled shepherdesses, one had fainted in the fair Galatea's lap, and the other was in the embrace of the beauteous Rosaura, who likewise had her face covered. She who was with Galatea was Teolinda, and the other her sister Leonarda, whose hearts, as soon as they saw the despairing shepherd whom they found with Gelasia, were overwhelmed with a jealous and lovesick faintness, for Leonarda believed the shepherd was her beloved Galercio, and Teolinda counted it truth that he was her enamoured Artidoro; and when the two saw him so subdued and undone by the cruel Gelasia, they felt such grief in soul that all senseless they fell fainting, one into Galatea's lap, the other into Rosaura's arms. But a little while after Leonarda, coming to herself, said to Rosaura:

'Alas, my lady, I verily believe that fortune has occupied all the passes of my cure, since Galercio's will is so far from being mine, as can be seen by the words that shepherd has spoken to the loveless Gelasia; for I would have you know, lady, that that is he who has stolen my freedom, nay he who is to end my days.'

Rosaura was astonished at what Leonarda was saying; and was more so when, Teolinda also having come to herself, she and Galatea called her, and, all joining Florisa and Leonarda, Teolinda said that that shepherd was her longed-for

Artidoro; but scarcely had she named him, when her sister replied to her that she was deceived, for it was none but his brother Galercio: 'Ah, traitorous Leonarda,' replied Teolinda, 'does it not suffice you that you have once parted me from my bliss, without wishing, now that I find it, to say that it is yours? Then undeceive yourself, for in this I do not deem you a sister, but an open foe.'

'Without doubt you deceive yourself, sister,' replied Leonarda, 'and I do not wonder, for into this same error all the people of our village fell, believing that this shepherd was Artidoro, until they clearly came to understand that it was none but his brother Galercio, for they resemble each other as much as we do; and indeed, if there can be greater likeness, they have a greater likeness.'

'I will not believe it,' replied Teolinda, 'for, though we are so much alike, these miracles are not so easily found in nature; and so I would have you know that so long as experience does not make me more certain of the truth than your words make me, I do not think of ceasing to believe that that shepherd I see there, is Artidoro; and if anything could make me doubt it, it is that I do not think that from the disposition and constancy I have known in Artidoro, it can be hoped or feared that he has made a change so soon and forgets me.'

'Calm yourselves, shepherdesses,' then said Rosaura, 'for I will free you soon from that doubt in which you are.'

And leaving them she went to where the shepherd was giving to the shepherds account of Gelasia's strange disposition and of the wrongs she did him. At his side the shepherd had the fair little shepherdess who said he was her brother, whom Rosaura called, and, withdrawing with her to one side, she begged and prayed her to tell her what her brother was called, and if she had any other like him. To this the shepherdess replied that he was called Galercio, and that she had another called Artidoro, who was so like him that they could scarcely be distinguished save by some mark in their dress, or by the organ of the voice, which differed somewhat. She asked her also what Artidoro had been doing. The shepherdess answered her that he was on some mountains some distance from there, grazing part of Grisaldo's flock with another herd of goats of his own, and that he had never been willing to enter the village, or to hold converse with any one, since he had come from the banks of Henares; and together with these she gave her such other details that Rosaura was satisfied that the shepherd was not Artidoro, but Galercio, as Leonarda had said and that shepherdess said, whose name she learned was Maurisa. And taking her with her to where Galatea and the other shepherdesses were, she related again in the presence of Teolinda and Leonarda all she knew of Artidoro and Galercio, whereat Teolinda was soothed and Leonarda ill content, seeing how indisposed Galercio's mind was to think of her affairs. In the discourses the shepherdesses were holding, it chanced that

Leonarda called the veiled Rosaura by her name, and Maurisa, hearing it, said: 'If I do not deceive myself, lady, my coming here and my brother's has been on your account.'

'In what way?' said Rosaura.

'I will tell it you, if you give me leave to tell it you alone,' replied the shepherdess.

'Willingly,' answered Rosaura, and the shepherdess going aside with her, said to her:

'Without any doubt, fair lady, it is to you and to the shepherdess Galatea that my brother and I come with a message from our master Grisaldo.'

'That is the case,' replied Rosaura, and calling Galatea, both listened to what Maurisa said from Grisaldo, which was to inform them that he would come in two days with two friends of his, to take her to his aunt's house, where they would in secret celebrate their nuptials, and together with this she gave to Galatea on behalf of Grisaldo some rich golden trinkets, by way of thanks for the willingness she had shown to entertain Rosaura. Rosaura and Galatea thanked Maurisa for the good news, and in reward for it the discreet Galatea wished to share with her the present Grisaldo had sent her, but Maurisa would in no way accept it. Then Galatea began again to ask information about the strange likeness there was between Galercio and Artidoro. All the time Galatea and Rosaura spent in talking to Maurisa, Teolinda and Leonarda occupied in looking at Galercio, for, Teolinda's eyes feasting on Galercio's face which resembled Artidoro's so much, she could not withdraw them from looking; and as those of the lovesick Leonarda knew on what they were looking, it was also impossible for her to turn them elsewhere. By this time the shepherds had consoled Galercio, though, for the ill he suffered, he counted every counsel and consolation vain and needless, all of which redounded to Leonarda's hurt. Rosaura and Galatea, seeing that the shepherds were coming towards them, bade Maurisa farewell, telling her to tell Grisaldo that Rosaura would be in Galatea's house. Maurisa took leave of them, and calling her brother, told him in secret what had passed with Rosaura and Galatea; and so with fair courtesy he took leave of them and of the shepherds and with his sister returned to his village. But the lovesick sisters Teolinda and Leonarda, who saw that when Galercio went, the light of their eyes and the life of their life went from them, both together approached Galatea and Rosaura and asked them to give them leave to follow Galercio, Teolinda giving as excuse that Galercio would tell her where Artidoro was, and Leonarda that it might be that Galercio's will would change, seeing the obligation in which he was to her. The shepherdesses granted them leave on the condition that Galatea had before begged of Teolinda that she should inform her



of all her good or ill fortune. Teolinda repeated her promise again, and again taking her leave, followed the way Galercio and Maurisa were pursuing. The same was done forthwith, though in a different direction, by Timbrio, Thyrsis, Damon, Orompo, Crisio, Marsilio, and Orfenio, who went their way to the hermitage of Silerio with the fair sisters Nisida and Blanca, having first all taken leave of the venerable Aurelio and of Galatea, Rosaura and Florisa, and also of Elicio and Erastro, who did not wish to fail to go back with Galatea, Aurelio offering that on coming to his village, he would go straightway with Elicio and Erastro to seek them at Silerio's hermitage, and would bring something with which to make good the lack of means Silerio would have to entertain such guests. With this understanding they went away, some in one direction and some in another, and missing the old Arsindo at the leave-taking, they saw that, without taking leave of any one, he was going in the distance by the same way Galercio and Maurisa and the veiled shepherdesses were pursuing, whereat they wondered; and seeing that now the sun was hastening his course to enter by the gates of the west, they did not wish to delay there further, in order to come to the village before the shades of night. Elicio and Erastro then, seeing themselves before the lady of their thoughts, in order to show somewhat that which they could not conceal, and to lighten the fatigue of the way, and also to fulfil the bidding of Florisa, who bade them sing something whilst they were going to the village, to the sound of Florisa's pipe began, Elicio to sing and Erastro to reply in this wise: ELICIO. Whoso would fain the greatest beauty find

That was, or is, or shall be on the earth,  
The fire and crucible, where are refined  
White chastity and purest zeal, all worth,  
Being, and understanding of the mind,  
A Heaven that in the world had its new birth,  
Loftiness joined in one with courtesy,  
Let him approach my shepherdess to see.

ERASTRO. Let him approach my shepherdess to see,  
Whoso would tell the peoples of the sight  
That he hath seen, a sun whose radiancy  
The day illumined, than the sun more bright;  
How with her fire she chilleth, this can be  
Made known, and how the soul she sets alight  
Which touched by her fair flashing eyes has been,  
That naught is left to see when they are seen.

ELICIO. That naught is left to see when they are seen,  
This truth full well my wearied eyes do know,  
Eyes that unto my hurt so fair have been,  
The chief occasion of my bitter woe:  
I saw them, and I saw my soul therein  
Burning, the spoils of all its powers aglow,  
Yielding in sweet surrender to their flame,  
Which doth me summon, banish, freeze, inflame.

ERASTRO. She doth me summon, banish, freeze, inflame,  
She, the sweet enemy unto my glory,  
From whose illustrious life and being fame  
Can weave a strange, and yet a truthful story:  
Her eyes alone, wherein Love sets his claim  
To power, and all his winsomeness before ye,  
Present a theme to raise to Heaven's height  
A quill from any wing of lowly flight.

ELICIO. A quill from any wing of lowly flight,  
If it would wish unto the sky to rise,  
The courtesy must sing, the zeal for right,  
Of this rare phoenix, peerless 'neath the skies,  
Our age's glory, and the world's delight,  
Of the clear Tagus and its bank the prize,  
Unequalled wisdom hers, and beauty rare,  
Nature achieved her highest work in her.

ERASTRO. Nature achieved her highest work in her,  
In her the thought hath equal been to the art,  
In her both worth and grace united were,  
Which in all other maids are found apart,  
In her humility and greatness share  
Together side by side the selfsame part,  
In her Love hath his nest and dwelling made,  
And yet my foe hath been the thankless maid.

ELICIO. And yet my foe hath been the thankless maid,  
Who would, and could, and should at once my thought  
That wanders free, hold fast, if but the aid

Of one of her gossamer locks she sought;  
Though I within the narrow noose am laid,  
My capture is with so much pleasure fraught,  
That foot and neck I stretch out to the chain,  
Sweet is the name I call my bitter pain.

ERASTRO. Sweet is the name I call my bitter pain,  
Short is the life and full of misery  
Of the sad soul my frame doth scarce sustain,  
And sustenance doth scarce to it supply,  
To my brief hope that it the crown should gain  
Of faith, fortune once promised bounteously;  
What pleasure, good or glory doth he know,  
Where hope diminisheth and faith doth grow?

ELICIO. Where hope diminisheth and faith doth grow,  
There one can see and know the lofty aims  
That loyal love proclaims; for he whose thought  
Hath confidence but sought in love so pure,  
Of a reward secure and certain is,  
Which shall with truest bliss his soul delight.

ERASTRO. The wretched suffering wight, whom illness swayeth  
And with cruel anguish slayeth, is contented,  
When he is most tormented by his grief,  
With any small relief, though soon 'tis gone:  
But when more dull hath grown at last the pain,  
He calls on health, and fain would have it sound.  
Not otherwise is found the tender breast  
Of the lover oppressed with grievous sadness,  
Who says his pain doth gladness find herein,  
In that the light serene of the fair eyes  
To which as spoil and prize he gave his days,  
Should on him truly gaze or feignedly;  
Soon as love sets him free and makes him strong,  
He seeks with clamorous tongue more than before.

ELICIO. NOW the fair sun sinks o'er the hill to rest,  
The growing gloom doth, best of friends, invite

Us to repose, the night is drawing nigh.

ERASTRO. The village draweth nigh, for rest I long.

ELICIO. Let us put silence to our wonted song.

Those who were listening to Elicio and Erastro would have held it a good thing that the way should be prolonged in order to enjoy more the agreeable song of the lovesick shepherds; but the closing-in of night and their coming to the village caused them to cease from it, and Aurelio, Galatea, Rosaura, and Florisa to betake themselves to their house. Elicio and Erastro likewise went to theirs, with the intention of going forthwith to where Thyrsis and Damon and the other shepherds were, for so it was agreed between them and Galatea's father.

They were only waiting until the white moon should banish the darkness of the night; and as soon as she showed her fair face, they went to seek Aurelio, and all together made their way towards the hermitage, where there happened to them what will be seen in the following book.

## BOOK V.

So great was the desire the lovesick Timbrio and the two fair sisters Nisida and Blanca felt to reach Silerio's hermitage that the swiftness of their steps, though it was great, could not come up to that of their will; and, knowing this, Thyrsis and Damon would not press Timbrio to fulfil the word he had given to relate to them on the way all that had happened during his travels after he departed from Silerio. Nevertheless, carried away by the desire they had to learn it, they were just going to ask it of him, had there not at that moment smitten the ears of all the voice of a shepherd, who was singing amongst some green trees a little way off the road; from the somewhat untuneful sound of his voice, and from what he was singing, he was at once recognised by most of those who were coming along, especially by his friend Damon, for it was the shepherd Lauso who was repeating some verses to the sound of a small rebeck.

And because the shepherd was so well known, and all had learned of the change which had taken place in his inclination, they checked their steps of one accord, and stopped to listen to what Lauso was singing, which was this: Lauso.  
Who hath come a slave to make

Of my thought, with freedom filled?

Who, where fortune did forsake,

Lofty towers of wind could build

On foundations doomed to break?

Who my freedom took away,

What time I in safety lay,

And with life was satisfied?

Who my breast hath opened wide,

And hath made my will decay?

Whither hath the fancy flown

Of my scornful, loveless mind?

Whither the soul I called my own?

And the heart that none may find

Where it was — whither hath it gone

Where can my whole being be?

Whence come I and whither flee?

Know I aught of this my pass?

Am I he that once I was,  
Or have I been never he?

On myself I call to explain,  
Yet I cannot prove the truth,  
Since to this pass I attain  
That of what I was in youth  
But a shadow I remain;  
Knowledge how myself to know,  
Help to help myself — these go  
Far from me, and sure I find  
Woe 'midst such confusion blind,  
Yet I think not of my woe.

In this hapless state I lie,  
Captive to my sorrow's power,  
To the love that doth comply,  
Thus the present I adore,  
And bewail the days gone by;

In the present I perceive  
That I die, and that I live  
In the past; now death I hold  
Sweet, and in the days of old  
Fate, that bliss no more can give.

Blind am I, my woe is great  
In so strange an agony,  
For I see that Love doth prate,  
And that in the flames I lie,  
Yet 'tis water cold I hate;  
Save the water from mine eyes,  
Of the fire the fuel and prize,  
In the forge of Love I crave  
Water none, nor seek to have  
Other comfort to my sighs.

All my bliss would now begin,  
All my sorrow now would end,

If my fortune willed herein  
That my faith should from my friend  
For its truth assurance win;  
Come and tell Silena, sighs,  
Come, instruct Silena, eyes  
Filled with tears, that this is true;  
Come, confirm it, each of you,  
Pen and tongue and faculties.

The eager Timbrio neither could nor would wait for the shepherd Lauso to proceed further with his song, for, begging the shepherds to show him the way of the hermitage, if they wished to remain, he gave signs of going on, and so all followed him, and they passed so near to where the lovesick Lauso was, that he could not fail to perceive it, and to come forth to meet them, as he did; and all were delighted with his company, especially Damon, his true friend, whom he accompanied all the way there was from there to the hermitage, discoursing on the different events that had happened to the two since they ceased seeing each other, which was from the time the valorous and renowned shepherd Astraliano had left the Cisalpine pastures, to go and bring back those who had rebelled from his famous brother and from the true religion.

And at last they came to bring back their discourse to treat of Lauso's love, Damon asking him earnestly to tell him who the shepherdess was who with such ease had won him from free will; and when he could not learn this from Lauso he begged him with all earnestness at least to tell him in what state he was, whether of fear or of hope, whether ingratitude harassed him, or whether jealousy tormented him. To all this Lauso answered satisfactorily, telling him some things that had happened to him with his shepherdess; and among other things he told him, how, finding himself one day jealous and out of favour, he had come to the pass of putting an end to himself, or of giving some token that might redound to the hurt of his person and to the credit and honour of his shepherdess, but all was remedied when he had spoken to her, and she had assured him that the suspicion he had was false. All this being confirmed by her giving him a ring from her hand, which caused his understanding to return to a better course, and that favour to be celebrated by a sonnet, which was counted for good by some who saw it. Damon then asked Lauso to repeat it; and so, without being able to excuse himself, he had to repeat it, and it was this:

LAUSO. Love's rich and happy gage, that didst adorn

The precious ivory and the snow so pure!  
Love's gage that didst from death and gloom obscure



Unto new light and life bid me return!  
The hell of my misfortune thou didst turn  
To the heaven of thy bliss, and thou didst lure  
My hope to live in sweetest peace secure, —  
The hope that thou didst cause once more to burn.  
Dost know what thou dost cost me, gage of love?  
My soul, and yet I am not satisfied,  
Since less I give than what I do receive.  
But, that the world thy worth may know and prove,  
Lie thou my soul, be hidden in my side!  
All shall see how for thee I soulless live.

Lauso repeated the sonnet, and Damon again asked him, if he had written anything else to his shepherdess, to repeat it to him, since he knew how pleasant his verses were for him to hear.

To this Lauso replied:

‘This will be, Damon, because you have been my master therein, and the desire you have to see what improvement you have wrought in me makes you desire to hear them; but let this be as it may, for nothing that I could do must be denied you. And so I tell you that in these same days, when I was jealous and ill at ease, I sent these verses to my shepherdess.’

LAUSO TO SILENA.

In this great wholeheartedness  
From the healthy purpose sprung,  
’Tis Love guides the hand along  
And the thought thy loveliness;  
Love, Silena, in this hour,  
And thy loveliness so fair,

Will account discretion rare  
What thou wilt deem folly sure.

Love constrains, loveliness moveth  
Me to adore thee, and to write;  
Since my faith the twain upright  
Hold, my hand its courage proveth;  
And in this my fault so great,  
Though thy rigour threateneth,  
Love, thy loveliness, my faith,  
Will my error palliate.

Since with helpers such as these,  
Though they blame me, ne'ertheless,  
I can well the bliss express  
Sprung from mine own miseries;  
And this bliss, full well I know,  
Is naught else, Silena fair,  
Save that I amid my care  
Should a wondrous patience show.

No small pleasure makes me glad,  
For in patience lies my bliss;  
Were it not so, long ere this,  
Had my misery made me mad;  
But my senses all agree,  
All together join to cry,  
That I, though I needs must die,  
May die wise and patiently.

After all, the jealous one,  
Whom none loveth, scarce will be  
Able to bear patiently,  
When he makes his lovesick moan;  
Since, amid my agonies,  
All my bliss is banishèd,  
When I see that hope is dead,  
And the foe before my eyes.

Countless years, my shepherdess,  
Revel in thy blissful thought,  
For I seek no pleasure bought  
With thy sorrow or distress;  
Follow ever, lady fair,  
Thy desire, since 'tis thy pleasure,  
For I, for another's treasure,  
Think not e'er to shed a tear.

For it had been levity  
To the soul my soul to yield,  
Which hath as its glory held  
That it hath not liberty;  
But, ah me! fortune doth will —  
And Love also doth agree —  
That my neck is not to flee  
From the knife that doth me kill.

Now I go — I know too plain —  
After one that shall me doom,  
And when thoughts of parting come,  
I more firm and fixed remain;  
Ah, what bonds, what nets I find,  
Dearest! in thine eyes so bright,  
Which, the more I take to flight,  
Hold the more, the faster bind!

Eyes, alas! ye make me fear,  
That if ye but look on me,  
Lesser shall my solace be,  
And the greater grow my care;  
'Tis a truth none can gainsay,

That the glances ye bestow  
On me, are but feigned, for, lo!  
Cruelly they my love repay.

With what dread and fear oppressed  
Ever is my loving mind!

And what opposites I find  
In the love within my breast!  
Leave me, poignant memory,  
Forget, nor another's bliss  
Call to mind, for lost in this  
Thine own glory is to thee.

With such tokens thou affirmest  
The love that is in thy breast;  
By thy wrath I am oppressed,  
Ever thou my woes confirmest;  
By what laws of thine am I  
Doomed to yield, Love, traitor fell!  
Soul unto Silena's spell,  
While she doth a word deny?

On points rousing bitter strife  
I but for a moment dwell,  
For the least of them might well  
Leave me mad or without life;  
Let my pen no further go,  
Since thou mak'st it feel its doom,  
'Tis not in my power to sum  
In brief words so great a woe.

Whilst Lauso was occupied in repeating these verses, and in praising the unwonted beauty, discretion, grace, modesty, and worth of his shepherdess, the tedium of the way was lightened for him and Damon, and the time passed for them without being perceived, until they came near to Silerio's hermitage, which Timbrio, Nisida, and Blanca would not enter, so as not to alarm him by their unexpected arrival. But fate ordained it otherwise, for Thyrsis and Damon having approached to see what Silerio was doing, found the hermitage open, and without any one inside; and whilst they were filled with astonishment, without knowing where Silerio could be at such an hour, there came to their ears the sound of his harp, from which they understood that he could not be far away. And going to look for him, guided by the sound of the harp, they saw by the bright radiance of the moon, that he was seated on the trunk of an olive, alone and without other company than that of his harp, which he was playing so sweetly that to enjoy so gentle a harmony, the shepherds would not approach to

Speak to him, and the more so when they heard him beginning to sing with exquisite voice these verses: SILERIO. Swift fleeting hours of swiftly fleeting time,

That pass me by with wearied flight and slow,  
If ye are not conspired unto my woe,  
Be pleased to end me now, for 'tis full time.  
If now ye end me, 'twill be at a time  
When my misfortunes can no further go;  
See, if ye linger, they will lesser grow,  
For evil endeth if it bides its time.  
I do not ask that ye should come, with pleasure  
And sweetness filled, since ye no path will gain  
To the life I have lost to lead me back.  
Hours, to all others blissful beyond measure,  
Grant me but the sweet hour of mortal pain,  
Even death's hour — this boon alone I lack.

After the shepherds listened to what Silerio had sung without his seeing them, they turned to meet the others who were coming there, with the intent that Timbrio should do what you shall now hear. This was, that, having told him how they had found Silerio, and in the place where he was, Thyrsis asked him that, without any of them letting themselves be recognised by him, they should gradually go approaching towards him, whether he saw them or not — for though the night was bright, no one would be recognised on that account — and that he should likewise make Nisida or himself sing something; and all this he did to moderate the joy Silerio must needs feel from their arrival.

Timbrio was satisfied with this, and Nisida, being told it, came to be of his opinion too; and so, when it seemed to Thyrsis that they were now so near that they could be heard by Silerio, he caused the fair Nisida to begin; and she, to the sound of the jealous Orfenio's rebeck, began to sing in this wise: NISIDA. — Though my soul is satisfied

With the bliss which is my own,  
'Tis in part racked and undone  
By another's bliss denied;  
Fortune scant and Love bestow —  
Enemies unto my pleasure —  
On me bliss in niggard measure,  
And unmeasured endless woe.

In the state by Love befriended  
Although merit may abound,  
Pleasure is as lonely found,  
E'en as evil comes attended;

Evils aye in unity  
Walk, nor for a moment sever,



Blisses are divided ever  
That their end may sooner be.

What it costeth to attain  
Any joy of love so fair,  
Let our love and hope declare,  
And our patience make it plain:

One bliss untold agony  
Costeth, one joy untold sighs —  
Ah! they know it well, my sighs  
And my wearied memory.

Which forever hath in mind  
That which power to help it hath  
Yet to find it, road or path  
Nowhere doth the memory find;  
Ah! sweet friend of that fair youth  
Who did call thee friend, when he  
Claimed the name of friend from thee,  
E'en as I am his in truth!

Our unthought-of happiness  
Groweth better when thou'rt near,  
Let not thy cruel absence drear  
Turn it to unhappiness;

Anguish sore the memory  
Rouseth, that reminds me how  
I was wise, and foolish thou,  
Thou art wise, and foolish I.

More he lost in losing thee —  
He to whom, fortune thy guide,  
Thou didst give me as his bride —  
Than he won in winning me;  
Half his soul in thee he had,  
Thou wert he, by whom my soul

Could attain the happy goal  
That thine absence maketh sad.

If the exquisite grace with which the fair Nisida was singing, caused admiration in those who were with her, what would it cause in the breast of Silerio, who, without missing anything, noted and listened to all the details of her song?

And as he retained Nisida's voice so well in his soul, its accents scarce began to resound in his ears when he came to be perturbed, and amazed and to be beside himself, enraptured by what he heard. And though truly it seemed to him that it was Nisida's voice, he had so lost the hope of seeing her, and above all in such a place, that in no way could he make sure of his suspicion. In this manner all came to where he was; and Thyrsis, greeting him, said to him: 'You left us, friend Silerio, so attracted by your disposition and converse, that Damon and I, drawn by experience of them, and all this company by their fame, leaving the way we were taking, have come to seek you in your hermitage, and when we did not find you there, as we did not, our desire would have remained unfulfilled, had not the sound of your harp and of your admirable song guided us here.'

'Far better had it been, sirs,' replied Silerio, 'that you had not found me, since in me you will find naught save occasions to move you to sadness, for the sadness I endure in my soul time takes care each day to renew, not only with the memory of the past happiness, but with the shadows of the present, which at last will be so indeed, since from my fortune naught else can be hoped for, save feigned happiness and certain fear.'

Silerio's words caused pity in all who knew him, especially in Timbrio, Nisida, and Blanca, who loved him so much, and they would straightway have let themselves be known by him had it not been that it would be deviating from what Thyrsis had bidden them. He made them all sit down on the green grass, and in such a way that the rays of the bright moon should strike the faces of Nisida and Blanca from behind, in order that Silerio might not recognise them. Being then in this fashion, and after Damon had said some words of consolation to Silerio, in order that the time should not be spent wholly in discoursing on things of sadness, and to make a beginning, so that Silerio's sadness might end, he begged him to play his harp, to the sound of which Damon himself sang this sonnet: DAMON. If the wild fury of the angry main

Should long time in its ruthlessness endure,  
Whoso should to the storm his vessel, poor  
And frail, entrust, could little comfort gain.  
Bliss doth not always in one state remain,

Nor woe, but each of them doth fly away,  
For if bliss were to flee, and woe to stay,  
Ere this the world had been confusion plain.  
Night follows after day, heat after cold,  
After the fruit the flower, and thus we find  
Opposites reconciling everywhere.  
Meek slavery is changed to lordship bold,  
Pain into pleasure, glory into wind,  
'For nature is by such transformings fair.'

Damon ceased singing, and straightway beckoned to Timbrio to sing likewise. He, to the sound of Silerio's harp, began a sonnet which he had composed in the time of his love's fervour, which was as well known to Silerio as to Timbrio himself.

TIMBRIO. My hope is builded on so sure a base  
That, though the fiercer blow the ruthless wind,  
It cannot shake the bonds that firmly bind,  
Such faith, such strength, such fortune it displays.

Timbrio could not end the sonnet he had begun, for Silerio's hearing of his voice and recognition of him took place together, and, unable to do aught else, he arose from where he was seated, and went to embrace Timbrio's neck with tokens of such strange content and surprise, that without speaking a word he became faint and was for a while without consciousness, with such grief on the part of those present, who feared some mishap, that they already condemned as evil Thyrsis's artifice; but she who showed the most extremes of grief was the fair Blanca, as the one who tenderly loved him. Straightway Nisida and her sister came up to give remedy to the swoon of Silerio, who after a little while came to himself, saying: 'Oh, mighty Heaven! is it possible that he I have before me is my true friend Timbrio? Is it Timbrio I hear, is it Timbrio I see? Yes it is, if my fortune does not mock me, and my eyes deceive me not.'

'Neither does your fortune mock you, nor do your eyes deceive you, my sweet friend,' replied Timbrio, 'for I am he who without you was not, and he who would never have been, had Heaven not permitted him to find you. Let your tears now cease, friend Silerio, if for me you have shed them, since now you have me here, for I will check mine, since I have you before me, calling myself the happiest of all that live in the world, since my misfortunes and adversities have been so discounted that my soul enjoys the possession of Nisida, and my

eyes your presence.'

By these words of Timbrio's Silerio knew that she who had sung, and she who was there, was Nisida; but he was more sure of it, when, she herself said to him:

'What is this, Silerio mine? What solitude and what garb is this, which gives such tokens of your discontent? What false suspicions or what deceptions have brought you to such an extreme, in order that Timbrio and I might endure the extreme of grief all our life, being absent from you who gave it to us?'

'They were deceptions, fair Nisida,' replied Silerio, 'but because they have brought such ways of undeceiving they will be celebrated by my memory so long as it shall last in me.'

For the most of this time Blanca had been holding one of Silerio's hands, gazing intently on his face, shedding some tears, which gave manifest proof of the joy and pity of her heart. It would be long to relate the words of love and content that passed between Silerio, Timbrio, Nisida, and Blanca, which were so tender and of such a kind, that all the shepherds who heard them had their eyes bathed in tears of joy. Straightway Silerio related briefly the cause that had moved him to withdraw to that hermitage, with the thought of ending therein his life, since of theirs he had not been able to learn any news; and all that he said was the means of kindling yet more in Timbrio's breast the love and friendship he had for Silerio, and in Blanca's friendship for his misery. And so when Silerio finished relating what had happened to him after he left Naples, he asked Timbrio to do the same, for he desired it extremely; saying that he should not be afraid of the shepherds who were present, for all or most of them already knew his great friendship and part of his adventures. Timbrio was delighted to do what Silerio asked, and the shepherds, who likewise desired it, were more delighted; for seeing that Thyrsis had told it to them, all knew already the love-affair of Timbrio and Nisida, and all that which Thyrsis himself had heard from Silerio. All then being seated, as I have already said, on the green grass, they were awaiting with wondrous attention what Timbrio would say, and he said: 'After fortune was so favourable to me and so adverse, that it allowed me to conquer my enemy and conquered me by the consternation of the false news of Nisida's death, with such sorrow as can be imagined, at that very moment I left for Naples, and Nisida's unlucky fate being confirmed there, so as not to see her father's house, where I had seen her, and in order that the streets, windows, and other spots where I was wont to see her, might not continually renew in me the memory of my past happiness, without knowing what way to take, without my will following any course, I went from the city, and in two days came to strong Gaeta, where I found a ship which was just on the point of unfurling its sails to the wind to leave for Spain; I embarked on it, only to flee from the hateful land

where I was leaving my heaven. But scarcely had the busy sailors weighed anchor and spread their sails, and put out some distance to sea, when there arose a sudden and unthought-of tempest, and a squall of wind smote the ship's sails with such fury that it broke the foremast and split the mizzen sail from top to bottom. Straightway the ready sailors came to the rescue and with the greatest difficulty furled all the sails, for the tempest was increasing, and the sea was beginning to rise, and the sky was giving signs of a long and fearful storm. It was not possible to return to port, for the wind which blew was the mistral, and with such great violence that it was necessary to set the foresail on the mainmast, and to ease her, as they say, by the stern, letting her drive where the wind might will. And so the ship, driven by its fury, began to run with such speed over the stormy sea, that in the two days the mistral lasted, we ran by all the islands in that course, without being able to take shelter in any, passing always in sight of them, without Stromboli sheltering us, or Lipari receiving us, or Cimbalo, Lampadosa, or Pantanalea serving for our aid; and we passed so near to Barbary that the recently destroyed walls of the Goleta were revealed and the ancient ruins of Carthage showed themselves. Not small was the alarm of those on board the ship, who feared that if the wind became somewhat stronger, they must needs be driven on a hostile coast; but when they were most in fear of this, fate, which was keeping a better one in store for us, or Heaven which heard the vows and promises made there, ordained that the mistral should be changed into a south wind which was so strong — and which touched on the quarter of the sirocco, — that in another two days it brought us back to the very port of Gaeta from which we had started, with such relief to all that some set out to fulfil the pilgrimages and promises they had made in the past danger.

The ship remained there, being refitted with some things she required, for another four days, at the end of which she resumed her voyage in a calmer sea and with a favourable wind, keeping in sight the fair coast of Genoa, full of gay gardens, white houses, and gleaming pinnacles, which, being struck by the sun's rays, flash with such burning rays that they can scarcely be looked at. All these things which were being seen from the ship, might have caused content, as indeed they did to all those who were on board the ship, except to me, for to me they were the cause of greater sorrow. The only relief I had was to occupy myself in lamenting my woes, singing them, or, let me say rather, bewailing them to the sound of a lute belonging to one of the sailors; and one night I remember — and indeed it is well that I should remember, since then my day began to dawn, — that, the sea being calm, the winds still, the sails fixed to the mast, and the sailors without any care lying stretched in different parts of the ship, and the helmsman almost asleep by reason of the fair weather there was,

and that which the sky promised, in the midst of this silence and in the midst of my fancies, as my griefs did not suffer me to yield my eyes to sleep, seated on the poop, I took the lute, and began to sing some verses, which I must now repeat, in order that it may be noted from what extreme of sadness, and how without thinking it, fate led me to the greatest extreme of joy imaginable; this, if I remember right, was what I sang: TIMBRIO. NOW that silent is the wind

And the peaceful sea at rest,  
Let my pain no silence find,  
For my grieving from my breast  
Issue soul with voice conjoined;  
To recount wherefore I grieve,  
Showing that my grief in part  
Comes perforce, the soul must give  
Tokens, and likewise the heart,  
Of the deadly pangs that live.

Once Love bore me off in flight  
Through the ranks of bitter woe,  
Raising me to Heaven's height:  
Death and Love to earth below  
Now have hurled this hapless wight;  
Love and death it was ordained  
Such a love and death as this,  
O'er sweet Nisida they reigned,  
From her woe and from my bliss  
Fame unending they attained.

With new voice, more terrible  
Henceforth, and with awesome sound,



Fame will make it credible  
That Love is a champion found  
And death is invincible;

Satisfied the world will be  
At their might, whene'er it knows  
How the twain have wrought in me:  
Death her glorious life did close,  
Love my bosom holds in fee.

But I think, since I am brought  
Nor to madness nor to death  
By the anguish they have wrought,  
That death little power hath,  
Or that feeling I have not;  
For if I but feeling had,

So the increasing anguish strives  
Everywhere to drive me mad,  
Though I had a thousand lives,  
Countless times had I been dead.

My surpassing victory  
By the death was famous made  
Of THE life, which needs must be  
CHIEF OF all the past displayed  
Or THE PRESENT age can see;

Therefrom I achieved as prize  
Grief within my loving heart,  
Countless tears within my eyes,  
In my soul confusion's smart,  
In my true breast agonies.

Cruel hand of him my foe,  
Hadst thou but my doom fulfilled,  
I had held thee friend, for, lo!— ‘  
In the slaying thou hadst stilled  
All the anguish of my woe!

What a bitter reckoning  
Victory brought, for I shall pay —  
And I feel it as I sing —  
For the pleasure of a day  
With an age-long suffering!

Sea, that hearkenest to my cry,  
Heaven, that didst my woe ordain,  
Love, that causest me to sigh,  
Death, that hast my glory ta'en,  
End ye now my agony!  
Sea, my lifeless corse receive,  
Heaven, to my soul grant thy calm,  
Love, to fame the tidings give,  
That death carried off the palm  
From this life that doth not live!

Heaven, Love, and death and sea,  
Now to aid me linger not,  
Make an end of ending me,  
For 'twill be the happiest lot  
Ye can give and I foresee!  
If sea doth not drowning give,  
And Heaven welcome doth deny,  
If Love must for ever live,  
And I fear I shall not die,  
Where can I repose receive?

'I remember that I came to these last verses I have repeated, when, without being able to proceed further, interrupted by countless sighs and sobs which I sent forth from my hapless breast, afflicted by the memory of my misfortunes, from merely feeling them I came to lose my senses by such a paroxysm that for a good while it held me unconscious; but after the bitter attack had passed, I opened my wearied eyes and found my head lying in the lap of a woman, dressed in pilgrim's attire, and at my side was another, decked in the same garb, who was holding my hands whilst both wept tenderly. When I saw myself in that position, I was amazed and confused, and was doubting whether it was a vision I saw, for never had I seen such women in the ship since I had gone on board. But the fair Nisida here — for she was the pilgrim who was there — drew me from

this confusion, saying to me: “Ah, Timbrio, my true lord and friend, what false fancies or what luckless accidents have caused you to be placed where you now are, and my sister and me to take such little account of what we owed to our honour, and without heeding any difficulty to have washed to leave our beloved parents and our wonted garb, with the intention of looking for you and of undeceiving you about my so doubtful death which might have caused yours in reality?”

When I heard such words, I became quite convinced that I was dreaming, and that it was some vision I had before my eyes, and that my ceaseless thoughts that did not depart from Nisida were the cause that represented her there to my eyes alive. A thousand questions I asked them and in all they completely satisfied me, before I could calm my understanding and assure myself that they were Nisida and Blanca. But when I came to learn the truth, the joy I felt was such that it, too, wellnigh brought me to the pass of losing my life as the past grief had done. Then I learned from Nisida how your mistake and neglect, oh Silerio, in making the signal of the kerchief, was the cause why she, believing that some ill had befallen me, fell into such a swoon and faint, that all believed her to be dead, as I thought, and you, Silerio, believed. She also told me how, after coming to herself, she learned the truth of my victory together with my sudden and hasty departure, and your absence, the news of which brought her to the verge of making true that of her death; but as it did not bring her to the last extreme, it caused her and her sister, by the artifice of a nurse of theirs who came with them, to dress themselves in the attire of pilgrims, and in disguise to go away from their parents one night when they were approaching Gaeta on the return they were making to Naples. And it was at the time when the ship on which I had embarked, having been repaired after the storm which had passed, was on the point of departing; and telling the captain they wished to cross over to Spain to go to Santiago of Galicia, they agreed with him and embarked with the intention of coming to seek me at Xeres, where they thought to find me or to learn some news of me; and all the time they had been in the ship, which would be four days, they had not left a cabin which the captain had given them in the stern, until, hearing me sing the verses I have repeated to you, and recognising me by the voice, and by what I said in them, they came out at the moment I have told you, when, celebrating with joyous tears the happiness of having found one another, we were looking at one another, without knowing with what words to increase our new and unexpected joy, which would have grown the greater, and would have reached the point and pass it has now reached, if we had then known any news of you, friend Silerio. But, as there is no pleasure which comes so perfect as wholly to satisfy the heart, in that we then felt, there was wanting to

us, not only your presence, but even news of it. The brightness of the night, the cool and pleasing wind (which favouring and gentle at that moment began to strike the sails), the calm sea and the cloudless sky, it seems, all together, and each by itself, helped to celebrate the joy of our hearts. But fickle fortune, from whose disposition one can make sure of no stability, envious of our happiness, chose to disturb it by the greatest mishap that could have been imagined, had not time and favouring circumstances turned it to a better issue. It happened then that at the time the wind began to freshen, the busy sailors hoisted all the sails higher and assured themselves of a safe and prosperous voyage to the general joy of all. One of them, who was seated on one side of the bow, discovered by the brightness of the moon's low rays, that four rowing vessels with long-drawn-out stroke were approaching the ship with great speed and haste, and at the moment he knew that they were an enemy's, and with loud cries began to shout: "To arms, to arms, for Turkish vessels are in sight!" This cry and sudden alarm caused such panic in all the crew of the ship, that, without being able to take thought for the approaching danger, they looked at one another; but its captain (who had sometimes seen himself in similar circumstances), coming to the bow, sought to learn how large the vessels were and how many, and he discovered two more than the sailor, and recognised that they were galliots with slave crews, whereat he must needs have felt no small fear. But, dissembling as best he could, he straightway ordered the guns to be prepared and the sails to be trimmed as much as possible to meet the opposing vessels so as to see if he could go between them and let the guns play on every side. Straightway all rushed to arms, and, dispersed at their posts, as well as could be, awaited the coming of the enemy. Who will be able to express to you, sirs, the pain I felt at this moment, seeing my happiness disturbed with such quickness, and myself so near the chance of losing it, and the more when I saw Nisida and Blanca looking at each other without speaking a word, confused by the uproar and shouting there was in the ship, and seeing myself asking them to shut themselves up in their cabin and pray to God to deliver us from the enemy's hands? This was a situation which makes the imagination faint when the memory recalls it; their open tears, and the violence I did myself so as not to show mine, held me in such a way that I had almost forgotten what I ought to do, who I was, and what the danger required. But at last I made them withdraw almost fainting to their cabin, and shutting them in from outside, hastened to see what the captain was ordering.

He with prudent care was providing everything necessary for the emergency, and entrusting to Darinto, the gentleman who left us to-day, the guard of the forecastle, and handing over to me the poop, he with some sailors and

passengers hurried through all the waist of the ship from one part to another. The enemy did not delay much in approaching, and the wind delayed rather less in growing calm, which was the complete cause of our ruin. The enemy did not dare to board, for, seeing that the weather was growing calm, it seemed to them better to wait for the day in order to attack us. They did so, and, when the day came, though we had already counted them, we saw finally that it was fifteen big vessels that had surrounded us, and then the fear of being lost was at once confirmed in our breasts. Nevertheless, the valiant captain, not losing heart — nor did any of those who were with him, — waited to see what the enemy would do. They, as soon as morning came, lowered a boat from their flagship, and sent by a renegade to tell our captain to surrender, since he saw he could not defend himself against so many vessels, and the more so that they were all the best in Algiers, threatening him on behalf of Arnaut Mami, his general, that if the ship discharged a single piece, he would hang him from a yard-arm when he caught him, and the renegade, adding to these other threats, urged him to surrender. But the captain, not wishing to do so, told the renegade in reply to sheer off from the ship or he would send him to the bottom with the guns. Arnaut heard this reply, and straightway priming the guns of his ship everywhere, began to play them from a distance with such speed, fury, and din, that it was a marvel. Our ship began to do the same with such good fortune that she sent to the bottom one of the vessels that were attacking her at the stern, for she hit her with a ball close to the harpings, in such a manner that the sea swallowed her without receiving any succour.

The Turks, seeing this, hurried on the fight, and in four hours attacked us four times and as many times retired with great loss on their part, and no small loss on ours. But, not to weary you by relating to you in detail the things that happened in this fight, I will only say that after we had fought sixteen hours, and after our captain and nearly all the crew of the ship had perished, at the end of nine assaults they made upon us, at the last they furiously boarded the ship. Though I should wish, yet I cannot exaggerate the grief that came to my soul when I saw that my beloved darlings whom now I have before me, must needs then be handed over to, and come into the power of those cruel butchers; and so, carried away by the wrath this fear and thought caused in me, I rushed with unarmed breast through the midst of the barbarous swords, desirous of dying from the cruelty of their edge, rather than to see with my eyes what I expected.

But things came to pass differently from what I had feared, for, three stalwart Turks grappling with me, and I struggling with them, we all fell up confusedly against the door of the cabin where Nisida and Blanca were, and with the force of the blow the door was broken, open, displaying the treasure that was there



enclosed. The enemy lusting after it, one of them seized Nisida and the other Blanca; and I, seeing myself free from the two made the other who held me leave his life at my feet, and I thought to do the same with the two, had they not, warned of the danger, given up their hold of the two ladies and stretched me on the floor with two great wounds. Nisida, seeing this, threw herself upon my wounded body and with lamentable cries begged the two Turks to finish her. At this moment, drawn by the cries and laments of Nisida and Blanca, Arnaut, the general of the vessels, hurried up to the cabin, and, learning from the soldiers what was going on, had Nisida and Blanca carried to his galley, and at Nisida's prayer also gave orders for them to carry me thither, since I was not yet dead. In this manner, without my being conscious, they carried me to the enemy's flagship, where I was straightway tended with some diligence, for Nisida had told the captain that I was a man of rank and of great ransom, with the intention that, tempted by the bait of covetousness and of the money they might get from me, they should look after my health with somewhat more care. It happened then, that, as my wounds were being tended, I returned to consciousness with the pain of them, and turning my eyes in every direction, I knew I was in the power of my enemies, and in the enemy's vessel; but nothing touched my soul so much as to see at the stern of the galley Nisida and Blanca sitting at the feet of the dog of a general, shedding from their eyes countless tears, the tokens of the inward grief they were suffering. Neither the fear of the shameful death I was awaiting when you, good friend Silerio, in Catalonia freed me from it; neither the false tidings of Nisida's death, believed by me as true; neither the pain of my deadly wounds, nor any other affliction I might imagine, caused me, nor will cause more anguish than that which came to me at seeing Nisida and Blanca in the power of that barbarous unbeliever, where their honour was placed in such imminent and manifest peril. The pain of this anguish worked so much upon my soul that I once again lost my senses, and took away the hope of my health and life from the surgeon who was tending me, in such a manner that believing I was dead, he stopped in the midst of his tending of me, assuring all that I had already passed from this life. When this news was heard by the two hapless sisters, let them say what they felt, if they make so bold, for I can only say that I afterwards learned that the two, rising from where they were, tearing their ruddy locks, and scratching their fair faces, without anyone being able to hold them back, came to where I lay in a faint, and there began to make so piteous a lament, that they moved to compassion the very breasts of the cruel barbarians. By reason of Nisida's tears which were falling on my face, or through the wounds already cold and swollen which caused me great pain, I returned again to consciousness, to be conscious of my new misfortune. I will pass in silence now the piteous and

loving words that in that hapless moment passed between Nisida and myself, so as not to sadden so much the joyous moment in which we now find ourselves, nor do I wish to relate in detail the dire straits she told me she had passed through with the captain.

He, overcome by her beauty, made her a thousand promises, a thousand gifts, a thousand threats, that she might come to submit to his lawless will; but showing herself towards him as scornful as modest, and as modest as scornful, she was able all that day and the following night to defend herself from the hateful importunities of the corsair. But as Nisida's continued presence went on increasing in him every moment his lustful desire, without any doubt it might have been feared, as I did fear, that by his abandoning his prayers and using violence, Nisida might lose her honour or life, the latter being the likelier to be expected from her virtue. But fortune, being now weary of having placed us in the lowest stage of misery, chose to show us that what is published abroad of her instability is true, by a means which brought us to the pass of praying Heaven to keep us in that hapless lot, instead of losing our lives on the swollen billows of the angry sea: which (after two days that we were captives, and at the time we were taking the direct course to Barbary), moved by a furious sirocco, began to rise mountains high, and to lash the pirate fleet with such fury, that the wearied oarsmen, without being able to avail themselves of the oars, bridled them and had recourse to the wonted remedy of the foresail on the mast, and of letting themselves run wherever the wind and sea listed. And the tempest increased in such a manner that in less than half an hour it scattered and dispersed the vessels in different directions, without any of them being able to give heed to following their captain, but rather in a little while, all being separated as I have said, our vessel came to be left alone, and to be the one that danger threatened most; for she began to make so much water through her seams, that however much they bailed her in all the cabins at the stern, bow, and mizzen, the water in the bilge all the time reached the knee. And to all this misfortune was added the approach of night, which in such cases, more than in any others, increases dread fear; and it came with such darkness and renewed tempestuousness, that we all wholly despaired of help. Seek not to learn more, sirs, save that the very Turks begged the Christians, who were captives at the oar, to invoke and call on their saints and their Christ, to deliver them from such misfortune, and the prayers of the wretched Christians who were there were not so much in vain that high Heaven moved by them let the wind grow calm, nay rather it increased it with such force and fury, that at break of day, which could only be told by the hours of the sand-glass by which they are measured, the ill-steered vessel found herself off the coast of Catalonia, so near land, and so unable to get away from it, that it was

necessary to hoist the sail a little higher, in order that she might drive with more force upon a wide beach which offered itself to us in front; for the love of life made the slavery the Turks expected appear sweet to them. Scarcely had the galley driven ashore, when straightway there hurried down to the beach a number of people armed, whose dress and speech showed them to be Catalans, and the coast to be Catalonia, and even the very spot where at the risk of yours, friend Silerio, you saved my life. Who could exaggerate now the joy of the Christians, who saw their necks free and relieved from the unbearable and heavy yoke of bitter captivity; and the prayers and entreaties the Turks, free a little while before, made to their own slaves, begging them to see that they were not ill-treated by the angry Christians, who were already awaiting them on the beach, with the desire of avenging the wrong these very Turks had done them, in sacking their town, as you, Silerio, know? And the fear they had did not turn out vain for them, for the people of the place, entering the galley which lay stranded on the sand, wrought such cruel havoc on the corsairs that very few were left with life; and had it not been that the greedy desire of sacking the galley blinded them, all the Turks had been killed in this first onslaught. Finally the Turks who remained, and we captive Christians who came there, were all plundered; and if the clothes I wore had not been stained with blood, I believe they would not have left me even them. Darinto who was also there, helped straightway to look after Nisida and Blanca, and to see that I might be taken ashore to be tended there. When I came out and recognised the place where I was, and considered the danger in which I had seen myself there, it did not fail to give me some anxiety, caused by the fear of being known and punished for what I ought not to be; and so I begged Darinto to arrange for us to go to Barcelona without making any delay, telling him the cause that moved me to it. But it was not possible, for my wounds distressed me in such a way that they forced me to be there for some days, as I was, without being visited save by a surgeon. In the meantime Darinto went to Barcelona, whence he returned, providing himself with what we needed; and, as he found me better and stronger, we straightway took the road for the city of Toledo, to learn of Nisida's kinsmen if they knew of her parents,! to whom we have already written all the late events of our lives, asking forgiveness for our past errors. And all the happiness and grief from these good and evil events has been increased and diminished by your absence, Silerio. But since Heaven has now, with such great blessings, given a remedy to our calamities, there remains naught else save that you, friend Silerio, should render it fitting thanks therefor, and banish the past sadness by reason of the present joy, and endeavour to give it to one who for many days has for your sake lived without it, as you shall learn when we are more alone, and I acquaint you therewith.

There remain some other things for me to tell, which have happened to me in the course of this my journey; but I must leave them for the nonce, so as not, by reason of their tediousness, to displease these shepherds, who have been the instrument of all my delight and pleasure. This, then, friend Silerio and shepherd friends, is the issue of my life. Mark if, from the life I have gone through and from that I go through now, I can call myself the most illstarred and the happiest man of those that are living to-day.'

With these last words the joyful Timbrio ended his tale, and all those that were present rejoiced at the happy issue his toils had had, Silerio's content passing beyond all that can be said.

He, turning anew to embrace Timbrio, and constrained by the desire to learn who the person was that for his sake lived without content, begged leave of the shepherds, and went apart with Timbrio on one side, where he learned from him that the fair Blanca, Nisida's sister, was the one who loved him more than herself, from the very day and moment she learned who he was and the worth of his character, and that, so as not to go against what she owed to her honour, she had never wished to reveal this thought except to her sister, by whose agency she hoped to have honoured him in the fulfilment of her desires.

Timbrio likewise told him how the gentleman Darinto, who came with him and of whom he had made mention in his late discourse, knowing who Blanca was, and carried away by her beauty, had fallen in love with her so earnestly that he asked her from her sister Nisida as his wife, and she undeceived him saying that Blanca would by no means consent; and that Darinto being angry thereat, believing that they rejected him for his little worth, Nisida, in order to free him from this suspicion, had to tell him how Blanca had her thoughts busied with Silerio; but that Darinto had not turned faint-hearted on this account, nor abandoned his purpose— 'for as he knew that no news was known of you, Silerio, he fancied that the services he thought to render to Blanca, and the lapse of time, would make her desist from her first intention. And with this motive he would never leave us, until hearing yesterday from the shepherds sure tidings of your life, knowing the happiness that Blanca had felt thereat, and considering it to be impossible that Darinto could gain what he desired when Silerio appeared, he went away from all, without taking leave of anyone, with tokens of the greatest grief.'

Together with this Timbrio counselled his friend to be content that Blanca was to have him, choosing her and accepting her as wife, since he already knew her and was not ignorant of her worth and modesty; and he dwelt on the joy and pleasure they both would have seeing themselves wedded to two such sisters. Silerio asked him in reply to give him time to think about this action, though he

knew that in the end it was impossible not to do what he bade him. At this moment the white dawn was already beginning to give tokens of its new approach, and the stars were gradually hiding their brightness; and at this point there came to the ears of all the voice of the lovesick Lauso, who, as his friend Damon had known that they must needs spend that night in Silerio's hermitage, wished to be with him, and with the other shepherds. And as it was all his pleasure and pastime to sing to the sound of his rebeck the prosperous or adverse issue of his love, carried away by his mood, and invited by the solitude of the road and by the delicious harmony of the birds, who were already beginning to greet the coming day with their sweet concerted song, he came singing in a low voice verses such as these: Lauso. I lift my gaze unto the noblest part

That can be fancied by the loving thought,  
Where I behold the worth, admire the art  
That hath the loftiest mind to rapture brought;  
But if ye fain would learn what was the part  
That my free neck within its fierce yoke caught,  
That made me captive, claims me as its prize,  
Mine eyes it is, Silena, and thine eyes.

Thine eyes it is, from whose clear light I gain  
The light that unto Heaven guideth me,  
Of the celestial light a token plain,  
Light that abhorreth all obscurity;  
It makes the fire, the yoke, and e'en the chain,  
That burns me, burdens, and afflicts, to be  
Relief and comfort to the soul, a Heaven  
Unto the life the soul hath to thee given.

Oh eyes divine! my soul's joy and delight,  
The end and mark to which my wishes go,  
Eyes, that, if I see aught, have given me sight,  
Eyes that have made the murky day to glow;  
My anguish and my gladness in your light  
Love set; in you I contemplate and know  
The bitter, sweet, and yet the truthful story  
Of certain hell, of my uncertain glory.

In darkness blind I walked, when I no more  
Was guided by your light, oh eyes so fair!

No more I saw the heavens, but wandered o'er  
The world, 'midst thorns and brambles everywhere;  
But at the very moment when the power  
Of your bright clustered rays my soul laid bare,  
And touched it to the quick, I saw quite plain  
The path that leads to bliss, open and plain.

Ye, ye, it is, and shall be, cloudless eyes,  
That do and can uplift me thus to claim  
Amongst the little number of the wise,  
As best I can, a high renowned name;  
This ye can do, if ye my enemies  
Remain no longer, nor account it shame  
Sometimes a glance to cast me, for in this ——  
Glancing and glances — lies a lover's bliss.

If this be true, Silena, none hath been,  
Nor is, nor will be, who with constancy  
Can or will love thee, as I love my queen,  
However Love his aid, and fortune, be;  
I have deserved this glory — to be seen  
By thee — for my unbroken loyalty.  
'Tis folly, though, to think that one can win  
That which one scarce can contemplate therein.

The lovesick Lauso ended his song and his journey at the same moment, and he was lovingly received by all who were with Silerio, increasing by his presence the joy all had by reason of the fair issue Silerio's troubles had had; and, as Damon was telling them to him, there appeared close to the hermitage the venerable Aurelio, who, with some of his shepherds, was bringing some dainties wherewith to regale and satisfy those who were there, as he had promised the day before he left them. Thyrsis and Damon were astonished to see him come without Elicio and Erastro, and they were more so when they came to know the cause why they had stayed behind.

Aurelio approached, and his approach would have increased the more the happiness of all, if he had not said, directing his words to Timbrio:

'If you prize yourself, as it is right you should prize yourself, valiant Timbrio, as being a true friend of him who is yours, now is the time to show it, by hurrying to tend Darinto, who, no great distance from here, is so sad and

afflicted and so far from accepting any consolation in the grief he suffers that some words of consolation I gave him did not suffice for him to take them as such. Elicio, Erastro, and I found him, some two hours ago in the midst of yonder mountain which reveals itself on this our right hand, his horse tied by the reins to a pine tree, and himself stretched on the ground face downwards, uttering tender and mournful sighs, and from time to time he spoke some words which were directed to curse his fortune. And at the piteous sound of them we approached him, and by the moon's rays, though with difficulty, he was recognised by us and pressed to tell us the cause of his woe. He told it to us, and thereby we learned the little remedy he had. Nevertheless Elicio and Erastro have remained with him, and I have come to give you the news of the plight in which his thoughts hold him; and since they are so manifest to you, seek to remedy them with deeds, or hasten to console them with words.'

'Words, good Aurelio,' replied Timbrio, 'will be all I shall spend thereon, if indeed he is not willing to avail himself of the occasion to undeceive himself and to dispose his desires so that time and absence may work in him their wonted effects; but, that he may not think that I do not respond to what I owe to his friendship, tell me, Aurelio, where you left him, for I wish to go at once to see him.'

'I will go with you,' replied Aurelio, and straightway at the moment all the shepherds arose to accompany Timbrio and to learn the cause of Darinto's woe, leaving Silerio with Nisida and Blanca to the happiness of the three, which was so great that they did not succeed in uttering a word. On the way from there to where Aurelio had left Darinto, Timbrio told those who went with him the cause of Darinto's sorrow, and the little remedy that might be hoped for it, since the fair Blanca, for whom he was sorrowing, had her thoughts set on her good friend Silerio, saying to them likewise that he must needs strive with all his skill and powers that Silerio might grant what Blanca desired, and begging them all to help and favour his purpose, for, on leaving Darinto, he wished them all to ask Silerio to consent to receive Blanca as his lawful wife. The shepherds offered to do what he bade them; and during these discourses they came to where Aurelio believed Elicio, Darinto, and Erastro would be; but they did not find anyone, though they skirted and covered a great part of a small wood which was there, whereat they felt no little sorrow. But, while in it, they heard a sigh so mournful that it set them in confusion and in the desire to learn who had uttered it; but they were quickly drawn from this doubt by another which they heard no less sad than the former, and all hurrying to the spot whence the sigh came, saw not far from them at the foot of a tall walnut tree two shepherds, one seated on the green grass, and the other stretched on the ground, his head placed on the other's

knees. The one seated had his head bent down, shedding tears and gazing intently on him whom he had on his knees, and, for this reason, as also because the other had lost his colour and was of pallid countenance, they were not able at once to know who he was; but when they came nearer, they knew at once that the shepherds were Elicio and Erastro, Elicio the pallid one, and Erastro the one that wept. The sad appearance of the two hapless shepherds caused great wonder and sadness in all who came there, because they were great friends of theirs, and because they did not know the cause that held them in such wise; but he that wondered most was Aurelio, because he said that he had left them so recently in Darinto's company with tokens of all pleasure and happiness, so that apparently he had not been the cause of all their misery. Erastro then seeing that the shepherds were coming to him, shook Elicio saying to him: 'Come to yourself, hapless shepherd, arise, and seek a spot where you can by yourself bewail your misfortune, for I think to do the same until life ends.'

And saying this he took in his two hands Elicio's head and, putting it off his knees, set it on the ground, without the shepherd being able to return to consciousness; and Erastro, rising, was turning his back to go away, had not Thyrsis and Damon and the other shepherds, kept him from it. Damon went to where Elicio was, and taking him in his arms, made him come to himself. Elicio opened his eyes, and, because he knew all who were there, he took care that his tongue, moved and constrained by grief, should not say anything that might declare the cause of it: and, though this was asked of him by all the shepherds, he never gave any answer save that he knew naught of himself but that, as he was speaking with Erastro, a severe fainting fit had seized him. Erastro said the same, and for this reason the shepherds ceased to ask him further the reason of his affliction, but rather they asked him to return with them to Silerio's hermitage and to let them take him thence to the village or to his hut: but it was not possible for them to prevail with him in this beyond letting him return to the village. Seeing then that this was his desire, they did not wish to oppose it, but rather offered to go with him, but he wished no one's company, nor would he have accepted it, had not his friend Damon's persistence overcome him, and so he had to depart with him, Damon having agreed with Thyrsis to see each other that night in the village or Elicio's hut, in order to arrange to return to theirs.

Aurelio and Timbrio asked Erastro for Darinto, and he told them in reply that as soon as Aurelio had left them the fainting fit had seized Elicio, and whilst he was tending to him, Darinto had departed with all haste, and they had seen him no more.

Timbrio and those who came with him, seeing then that they did not find Darinto, determined to return to the hermitage and beg Silerio to accept the fair



Blanca as his wife; and with this intention they all returned except Erastro, who wished to follow his friend Elicio; and so, taking leave of them, accompanied only by his rebeck, he went away by the same road Elicio had gone. The latter, having gone some distance away with his friend Damon from the rest of the company, with tears in his eyes, and with tokens of the greatest sadness, began to speak to him thus: 'I know well, discreet Damon, that you have so much experience of love's effects that you will not wonder at what I now think to tell you, for they are such that in the reckoning of my judgment I count them and hold them among the most disastrous that are found in love.'

Damon who desired nothing else than to learn the cause of his fainting and sadness, assured him that nothing would be new to him, if it touched on the evils love is wont to cause.

And so Elicio with this assurance and with the assurance yet greater he had of his friendship, went on, saying:

'You already know, friend Damon, how my good fortune, for I will always give it this name of good, though it cost me life to have had it — I say then, that my good fortune willed, as all Heaven and all these banks know, that I should love — do I say love? — adore the peerless Galatea with a love as pure and true as befits her deserving. At the same time I confess to you, friend, that in all the time she has known my just desire, she has not responded to it with other tokens save those general ones which a chaste and grateful breast is wont and ought to give. And so for some years, my hope being sustained by intercourse both honourable and loving, I have lived so joyous and satisfied with my thoughts, that I judged myself the happiest shepherd that ever pastured flock, contenting myself merely with looking at Galatea and with seeing that if she did not love me, she did not loathe me, and that no other shepherd could boast that he was even looked at by her, for it was no small satisfaction of my desire to have set my thoughts on an object so secure that I had no fear of anyone else, being confirmed in this truth by the opinion which Galatea's worth inspires in me, which is such that it gives no opportunity for boldness itself to make bold with it. Against this good, which love gave me at so little a cost, against this glory enjoyed so much without harm to Galatea, against the pleasure so justly deserved by my desire, irrevocable sentence has to-day been passed, that the good should end, the glory finish, the pleasure be changed, and that finally the tragedy of my mournful life should be closed. For you must know, Damon, that this morning, as I came with Aurelio, Galatea's father, to seek you at Sileno's hermitage, he told me on the way how he had arranged to marry Galatea to a Lusitanian shepherd who pastures numerous herds on the banks of the gentle Lima. He asked me to tell him what I thought because, from the friendship he

had for me, and from my understanding, he hoped to be well counselled. What I said to him in reply was that it seemed to me a hard thing to be able to bring his will to deprive itself of the sight of so fair a daughter, banishing her to such distant regions, and that if he did so, carried away and tempted by the bait of the strange shepherd's wealth, he should consider that he did not lack it so much that he was not able to live in his village better than all in it who claimed to be rich, and that none of the best of those who dwell on the banks of the Tagus, would fail to count himself fortunate when he should win Galatea to wife. My words were not ill received by the venerable Aurelio, but at last he made up his mind, saying that the chief herdsman of all the flocks bade him do it, and he it was who had arranged and settled it, and that it was impossible to withdraw. I asked him with what countenance Galatea had received the news of her banishment. He told me that she had conformed to his will and was disposing hers to do all he wished, like an obedient daughter. This I learned from Aurelio, and this, Damon, is the cause of my fainting, and will be that of my death, since at seeing Galatea in a stranger's power and a stranger to my sight, naught else can be hoped for save the end of my days.'

The lovesick Elicio ended his words and his tears began, shed in such abundance that the breast of his friend Damon, moved to compassion, could not but accompany him in them.

But after a little while he began with the best reasons he could to console Elicio, but all his words stopped at being words without producing any effect. Nevertheless they agreed that Elicio should speak to Galatea and learn from her if she consented of her will to the marriage her father was arranging for her, and that, should it not be to her liking, an offer should be made to her to free her from that constraint, since help would not fail her in it. What Damon was saying seemed good to Elicio, and he determined to go to look for Galatea to declare to her his wish, and to learn the wish she held enclosed in her breast; and so, changing the road they were taking to his cabin, they journeyed towards the village, and coming to a cross way hard by where four roads divided, they saw some eight gallant shepherds approaching by one of them, all with javelins in their hands, except one of them who came mounted on a handsome mare, clad in a violet cloak, and the rest on foot, all having their faces muffled with kerchiefs. Damon and Elicio stopped till the shepherds should pass, and these passing close to them, bowed their heads and courteously saluted them, without any of them saying a word. The two were amazed to see the strange appearance of the eight, and stood still to see what road they were following; but straightway they saw they were taking the road to the village, although a different one to that by which they were going. Damon told Elicio to follow them, but he would not, saying

that on that way which he wished to follow, near a spring which was not far from it, Galatea was ofttime wont to be with some shepherdesses of the village, and that it would be well to see if fortune showed herself so kind to them that they might find her there. Damon was satisfied with what Elicio wished, and so he told him to lead wherever he chose. And his lot chanced as he himself had imagined, for they had not gone far when there came to their ears the pipe of Florisa, accompanied by the fair Galatea's voice, and when this was heard by the shepherds, they were beside themselves. Then Damon knew at last how true they spoke who celebrated the graces of Galatea, who was in the company of Rosaura and Florisa and of the fair Silveria newly wed, with two other shepherdesses of the same village.

And though Galatea saw the shepherds coming, she would not for that reason abandon the song she had begun, but rather seemed to give tokens that she felt pleasure at the shepherds listening to her, and they did so with all the attention possible; and what they succeeded in hearing of what the shepherdess was singing, was the following: Galatea. Whither shall I turn mine eyes

In the woe that is at hand,  
If my troubles nearer stand,  
As my bliss the further flies?  
I am doomed to grievous pain  
By the grief that bids me roam:  
If it slays me when at home,  
When abroad what shall I gain?

Just obedience, hard to bear!  
For I have the 'yes' to say  
In obedience, which some day  
My death-sentence shall declare;  
I am set such ills among,  
That as happiness 'twould be  
Counted, if life were to me  
Wanting, or at least a tongue.

Brief the hours, ah! brief and weary  
Have the hours been of my gladness  
Everlasting those of sadness,  
Full of dread and ever dreary;  
In my happy girlhood's hour  
I enjoyed my liberty,

But, alas! now slavery  
O'er my will asserts its power.

Lo! the battle cruel doth prove,  
Which they wage against my thought,  
If, when they have fiercely fought,  
I love not, yet needs must love;  
Oh displeasing power of place!  
For, in reverence of the old  
I my hands must meekly fold  
And my tender neck abase.

What! have I farewell to say,  
See no more the golden river,  
Leave behind my flock for ever,  
And in sadness go away?  
Shall these trees of leafy shade,  
Shall these meadows broad and green  
Never, nevermore, be seen  
By the eyes of this sad maid?

Ah! what doest thou, cruel sire?  
Lo! the truth is known full well,  
That thou from me life dost steal  
In fulfilling thy desire;  
If there is not in my sighs  
Power to tell thee my distress,  
What my tongue cannot express,  
Mayst thou learn it from my eyes.

Now I picture in its gloom  
The sad hour when we must sever,  
The sweet glory, lost for ever,  
And the mournful, bitter, tomb;  
Unknown husband's joyless face,  
Troubles of the toilsome road,  
And his aged mother's mood,  
Peevish, for I take her place.

Other troubles will begin,  
Countless heartaches will annoy,  
When I see what giveth joy  
To my husband and his kin;

Yet the fear I apprehend  
And my fortune pictureth,  
Will be ended soon by death,  
Which doth all our sorrows end.

Galatea sang no more, for the tears she was shedding hindered her voice, and even the satisfaction in all those who had been listening to her, for they straightway knew clearly what they were dimly imagining concerning Galatea's marriage with the Lusitanian shepherd, and how much it was being brought about against her will. But he whom her tears and sighs moved most to pity was Elicio, for he would have given his life to remedy them, had their remedy depended thereon; but making use of his discretion, his face dissembling the grief his soul was feeling, he and Damon went up to where the shepherdesses were, whom they courteously greeted, and with no less courtesy were received by them. Galatea straightway asked Damon for her father, and he replied to her that he was staying in Silerio's hermitage, in the company of Timbrio and Nisida, and of all the other shepherds who accompanied Timbrio, and he likewise gave her an account of the recognition of Silerio and Timbrio, and of the loves of Darinto and Blanca, Nisida's sister, with all the details Timbrio had related of what had happened to him in the course of his love, whereon Galatea said: 'Happy Timbrio and happy Nisida, since the unrest suffered until now has ended in such felicity, wherewith you will set in oblivion the past disasters! nay, it will serve to increase your glory, since it is a saying that the memory of past calamities adds to the happiness that comes from present joys. But woe for the hapless soul, that sees itself brought to the pass of recalling lost bliss, and with fear of the ill that is to come; without seeing nor finding remedy, nor any means to check the misfortune which is threatening it, since griefs distress the more the more they are feared!'

'You speak truth, fair Galatea,' said Damon, 'for there is no doubt that the sudden and unexpected grief that comes, does not distress so much, though it alarms, as that which threatens during long lapse of time, and closes up all the ways of remedy.'

But nevertheless I say, Galatea, that Heaven does not send evils so much without alloy, as to take away their remedy altogether, especially when it lets us see them coming first, for it seems that then it wishes to give an opportunity for the working of our reason, in order that it may exercise and busy itself in tempering or turning aside the misfortunes about to come, and often it contents itself with distressing us by merely keeping our minds busied with some specious fear without the accomplishment of the dreaded evil being reached; and

though it should be reached, so long as life does not end, no one should despair of the remedy for any evil he may suffer.'

'I do not doubt of this,' replied Galatea, 'if the evils which are dreaded or suffered were so slight, as to leave free and unimpeded the working of our intellect; but you know well, Damon, that when the evil is such that this name can be given to it, the first thing it does is to cloud our perception, and to destroy the powers of our free will, our vigour decaying in such a way that it can scarce lift itself, though hope urge it the more.'

'I do not know, Galatea,' answered Damon, 'how in your green years can be contained such experience of evils, if it is not that you wish us to understand that your great discretion extends to speaking from intuitive knowledge of things, for you have no information concerning them in any other way.'

'Would to Heaven, discreet Damon,' replied Galatea, 'that I were not able to contradict you in what you say, since thereby I would gain two things: to retain the good opinion you have of me, and not to feel the pain which causes me to speak with so much experience of it.'

Up to this point Elicio had kept silence; but being unable any longer to endure seeing Galatea give tokens of the bitter grief she was suffering, he said to her:

'If you think perchance, peerless Galatea, that the woe that threatens you can by any chance be remedied, by what you owe to the good-will to serve you which you have known in me, I beg you to declare it to me; and if you should not wish this so as to comply with what you owe to obedience to your father, give me at least leave to oppose anyone who should wish to carry away from us from these banks the treasure of your beauty, which has been nurtured thereon. And do not think, shepherdess, that I presume so much on myself, as alone to make bold to fulfil with deeds what I now offer you in words, for though the love I bear you gives me spirit for a greater enterprise, I distrust my fortune, and so I must needs place it in the hands of reason, and in those of all the shepherds that pasture their flocks on these banks of Tagus, who will not be willing to suffer that the sun that illumines them, the discretion that makes them marvel, the beauty that incites them and inspires them to a thousand honourable rivalries should be snatched and taken away from before their eyes. Wherefore, fair Galatea, on the faith of the reason I have expressed, and of that which I have for adoring you, I make you this offer, which must needs constrain you to disclose your wish to me, in order that I may not fall into the error of going against it in anything; but considering that your matchless goodness and modesty must needs move you to respond rather to your father's desire than to your own, I do not wish, shepherdess, that you should tell it me, but to undertake to do what shall seem good to me, with the purpose of looking after your honour, with the care

with which you yourself have always looked after it.'

Galatea was going to reply to Elicio and to thank him for his kind desire; but she was prevented by the sudden coming of the eight masked shepherds whom Damon and Elicio had seen passing toward the village a little while before. All came to where the shepherdesses were, and without speaking a word, six of them rushed with incredible speed to close with Damon and Elicio, holding them in so strong a clutch that they could in no way release themselves. In the meanwhile the other two (one of whom was the one who came on horseback) went to where Rosaura was, shrieking by reason of the violence that was being done to Damon and Elicio; but, without any defence availing her, one of the shepherds took her in his arms, and placed her on the mare, and in the arms of the one who was mounted. He, removing his mask, turned to the shepherds and shepherdesses, saying: 'Do not wonder, good friends, at the wrong which seemingly has here been done you, for the power of love and this lady's ingratitude have been the cause of it. I pray you to forgive me, since it is no longer in my control; and if the famous Grisaldo comes through these parts (as I believe he soon will come), you will tell him that Artandro is carrying off Rosaura, because he could not endure to be mocked by her, and that, if love and this wrong should move him to wish for vengeance, he already knows that Aragon is my country, and the place where I live.'

Rosaura was in a swoon on the saddle-bow, and the other shepherds would not let Elicio or Damon go, until Artandro bade them let them go; and when they saw themselves free, they drew their knives with valiant spirit and rushed upon the seven shepherds, who all together held the javelins they were carrying at their breasts, telling them to stop, since they saw how little they could achieve in the enterprise they were undertaking.

'Still less can Artandro achieve,' Elicio said in reply to them, 'in having wrought such treason.'

'Call it not treason,' answered one of the others, 'for this lady has given her word to be Artandro's wife, and now, to comply with the fickle mood of woman, she has withdrawn it, and yielded herself to Grisaldo, a wrong so manifest and such that it could not be dissembled from our master Artandro. Therefore calm yourselves, shepherds, and think better of us than hitherto, since to serve our master in so just a cause excuses us.'

And without saying more, they turned their backs, still mistrusting the evil looks Elicio and Damon wore, who were in such a rage at not being able to undo that violent act, and at finding themselves incapacitated from avenging what was being done to them, that they knew neither what to say nor what to do.

But the sufferings Galatea and Florisa endured at seeing Rosaura carried away



in that manner, were such that they moved Elicio to set his life in the manifest peril of losing it; for, drawing his sling — and Damon doing the same — he went at full speed in pursuit of Artandro, and with much spirit and skill they began from a distance to throw such large stones at them that they made them halt and turn to set themselves on the defensive.

But nevertheless it could not but have gone ill with the two bold shepherds, had not Artandro bidden his men to go forward and leave them, as they did, until they entered a dense little thicket which was on one side of the road, and, with the protection of the trees the slings and stones of the angry shepherds had little effect. Nevertheless they would have followed them, had they not seen Galatea and Florisa and the other two shepherdesses coming with all haste to where they were, and for this reason they stopped, violently restraining the rage that spurred them on, and the desired vengeance they meditated; and as they went forward to receive Galatea, she said to them: ‘Temper your wrath, gallant shepherds, since with the advantage of our enemies your diligence cannot vie, though it has been such as the valour of your souls has shown to us.’

‘The sight of your discontent, Galatea,’ said Elicio, ‘would, I believed, have given such violent energy to mine, that those discourteous shepherds would not have boasted of the violence they have done us; but in my fortune is involved not having any luck in anything I desire.’

‘The loving desire Artandro feels’ said Galatea, ‘it was which moved him to such discourtesy, and so he is in my eyes excused in part.’

And straightway she related to them in full detail the story of Rosaura, and how she was waiting for Grisaldo to receive him as husband, which might have come to Artandro’s knowledge, and that jealous rage might have moved him to do as they had seen.

‘If it is as you say, discreet Galatea,’ said Damon, ‘I fear that from Grisaldo’s neglect, and Artandro’s boldness, and Rosaura’s fickle mood, some grief and strife must needs arise.’

‘That might be,’ replied Galatea, ‘should Artandro dwell in Castile; but if he withdraws to Aragon, which is his country, Grisaldo will be left with only the desire for vengeance.’

‘Is there no one to inform him of this wrong?’ said Elicio.

‘Yes,’ replied Florisa, ‘for I pledge myself that before night approaches, he shall have knowledge of it.’

‘If that were so,’ replied Damon, ‘he would be able to recover his beloved before they reached Aragon; for a loving breast is not wont to be slothful.’

‘I do not think that Grisaldo’s will be so,’ said Florisa, ‘and, that time and opportunity to show it may not fail him, I pray you, Galatea, let us return to the

village, for I wish to send to inform Grisaldo of his misfortune.'

'Be it done as you bid, friend,' replied Galatea, 'for I shall give you a shepherd to take the news.'

And with this they were about to take leave of Damon and Elicio, had not these persisted in their wish to go with them.

And as they were journeying to the village, they heard on their right hand the pipe, straightway recognised by all, of Erastro, who was coming in pursuit of his friend Elicio. They stopped to listen to it, and heard him singing thus, as he came, with tokens of tender grief: ERASTRO. By rugged paths my fancy's doubtful end

I follow, to attain it ever trying,  
And in night's gloom and chilly darkness lying,  
The forces of my life I ever spend.

To leave the narrow way, I do not lend  
A thought, although I see that I am dying,  
For, on the faith of my true faith relying,  
'Gainst greater fear I would myself defend.

My faith the beacon is that doth declare  
Safe haven to my storm, and doth reveal  
Unto my voyage promise of success,  
Although the means uncertain may appear,  
Although my star's bright radiance Love conceal,  
Although the heavens assail me and distress.

With a deep sigh the hapless shepherd ended his loving song, and, believing that no one heard him, loosed his voice in words such as these:

'Oh Love, whose mighty power, though exercising no constraint upon my soul, brought it to pass that I should have power to keep my thoughts busied so well, seeing that thou hast done me so much good, seek not now to show thyself doing me the ill wherewith thou threatenest me! for thy mood is more changeable than that of fickle fortune. Behold, Lord, how obedient I have been to thy laws, how ready to follow thy behests, and how subservient I have kept my will to thine!

Reward me for this obedience by doing what is to thee of such import to do; suffer not these banks of ours to be bereft of that beauty which set beauty and bestowed beauty on their fresh and tiny grasses, on their lowly plants, and lofty trees; consent not, Lord, that from the clear Tagus be taken away the treasure that enriches it, and from which it has more fame than from the golden sands it nurtures in its bosom; take not away from the shepherds of these meadows the

light of their eyes, the glory of their thoughts, and the noble incentive that spurred them on to a thousand noble and virtuous enterprises; consider well that, if thou dost consent that Galatea should be taken from this to foreign lands, thou despoilest thyself of the dominion thou hast on these banks, since thou dost exercise it through Galatea alone; and if she is wanting, count it assured that thou wilt not be known in all these meadows; for all, as many as dwell therein, will refuse thee obedience and will not aid thee with the wonted tribute; mark that what I beg of thee is so conformable and near to reason, that thou wouldst wholly depart from it, if thou didst not grant me my request. For what law ordains, or what reason consents that the beauty we have nurtured, the discretion that had its beginning in these our woods and villages, the grace granted by Heaven's especial gift to our country, now that we were hoping to cull the honourable fruit of so much wealth and riches, must needs be taken to foreign realms to be possessed and dealt with by strange and unknown hands? May piteous Heaven seek not to work us a harm so noteworthy! Oh green meadows, that rejoiced at her sight, oh sweet-smelling flowers, that, touched by her feet, were full of a greater fragrance, oh plants, oh trees of this delightful wood! make all of you in the best form you can, though it be not granted to your nature, some kind of lamentation to move Heaven to grant me what I beg!

The lovesick shepherd said this, shedding the while such tears that Galatea could not dissemble hers, nor yet any of those who were with her, making all so noteworthy a lamentation, as if then weeping at the rites of his death. Erastro came up to them at this point and was received by them with pleasing courtesy. And, as he saw Galatea with tokens of having accompanied him in his tears, without taking his eyes from her, he stood looking intently on her for a space, at the end of which he said: 'Now I know of a truth, Galatea, that no one of mankind escapes the blows of fickle fortune, since I see that you who, I thought, were to be by special privilege free from them, are assailed and harassed by them with greater force. Hence I am sure that Heaven has sought by a single blow to grieve all who know you, and all who have any knowledge of your worth; but nevertheless I cherish the hope that its cruelty is not to extend so far as to carry further the affliction it has begun, coming as it does so much to the hurt of your happiness.'

'Nay for this same reason,' replied Galatea, 'I am less sure of my misfortune, since I was never unfortunate in what I desired; but, as it does not befit the modesty on which I pride myself, to reveal so clearly how the obedience I owe to my parents draws me after it by the hair, I pray you, Erastro, not to give me cause to renew my grief, and that naught may be treated of either by you or by anyone else that may awaken in me before the time the memory of the distress I

fear. And together with this I also pray you, shepherds, to suffer me to go on to the village in order that Grisaldo, being informed, may have time to take satisfaction for the wrong Artandro has done him.'

Erastro was ignorant of Artandro's affair; but the shepherdess Florisa in a few words told him it all; whereat Erastro wondered, thinking that Artandro's valour could scarce be small, since it was set on so difficult a task. The shepherds were on the very point of doing what Galatea bade them, had they not discovered at that moment all the company of gentlemen, shepherds and ladies who were the night before in Silerio's hermitage.

They were coming with tokens of the greatest joy to the village, bringing with them Silerio in a different garb and mind from that he had had hitherto, for he had already abandoned that of a hermit, changing it for that of a joyous bridegroom, as he already was the fair Blanca's to the equal joy and satisfaction of both, and of his good friends Timbrio and Nisida who persuaded him to it, giving an end by that marriage to all his miseries, and peace and quiet to the thoughts that distressed him for Nisida's sake. And so, with the rejoicing such an issue caused in them, they were all coming giving tokens thereof with agreeable music, and discreet and loving songs, which they ceased when they saw Galatea and the rest who were with her, receiving one another with much pleasure and courtesy, Galatea congratulating Silerio on what had happened to him, and Blanca on her betrothal, and the same was done by the shepherds, Damon, Elicio, and Erastro, who were warmly attached to Silerio. As soon as the congratulations and courtesies between them ceased, they agreed to pursue their way to the village, and to lighten it, Thyrsis asked Timbrio to finish the sonnet he had begun to repeat when he was recognised by Silerio. And Timbrio, not refusing to do so, to the sound of the jealous Orfenio's flute, with an exquisite and sweet voice sang it and finished it.

It was as follows:

TIMBRIO. My hope is builded on so sure a base  
That, though the fiercer blow the ruthless wind,  
It cannot shake the bonds that firmly bind,  
Such faith, such strength, such courage it displays.

Far, far am I from finding any place  
For change within my firm and loving mind,  
For sooner life doth in my anguish find  
Its end draw nigh, than confidence decays.

For, if amidst Love's conflict wavereth  
The lovesick breast, no sweet nor peaceful home

To win from the same Love it meriteth.

Though Scylla threaten and Charybdis foam,  
My breast the while, exultant in its faith,  
Braveth the sea, and claims from Love its doom.

Timbrio's sonnet seemed good to the shepherds, and no less the grace with which he had sung it; and it was such that they begged him to repeat something else. But he excused himself by telling his friend Silerio to answer for him in that affair, as he had always done in others more dangerous. Silerio could not fail to do what his friend bade him, and so, in the joy of seeing himself in such a happy state, he sang what follows to the sound of that same flute of Orfenio's:

SILERIO. TO Heaven I give my thanks, since I have passed

Safe through the perils of this doubtful sea,  
And to this haven of tranquillity,  
Although I knew not whither, I am cast.  
Now let the sails of care be furled at last,  
Let the poor gaping ship repaired be,  
Let each fulfil the vows which erstwhile he  
With stricken face made to the angry blast.  
I kiss the earth, and Heaven I adore,  
My fortune fair and joyous I embrace,  
Happy I call my fatal destiny.  
Now I my hapless neck rejoicing place  
In the new peerless gentle chain once more,  
With purpose, new and loving constancy.

Silerio ended, and begged Nisida to be kind enough to gladden those fields with her song, and she, looking at her beloved Timbrio, with her eyes asked leave of him to fulfil what Silerio was asking of her, and as he gave it her with a look too, she, without waiting further, with much charm and grace, when the sound of Orfenio's flute ceased, to that of Orompo's pipe sang this sonnet:

NISIDA. Against his view am I, whoso doth swear

That never did Love's happiness attain  
Unto the height attained by his cruel pain,  
Though fortune wait on bliss with tenderest care.  
I know what bliss is, what misfortune drear,  
And what they do I know full well; 'tis plain  
That bliss the more builds up the thought again,  
The more Love's sorrow doth its strength impair.

I saw myself by bitter death embraced,  
When I was ill-informed by tidings ill;  
To the rude corsairs I became a prey.  
Cruel was the anguish, bitter was the taste  
Of sorrow, yet I know and prove that still  
Greater the joy is of this glad to-day.

Galatea and Florisa were filled with wonder at the exquisite voice of the fair Nisida, who, as it seemed to her that Timbrio and those of his party had for the time taken the lead in singing, did not wish her sister to be without doing it; and so, without much pressing, with no less grace than Nisida, beckoning to Orfenio to play his flute, to its sound she sang in this wise: Blanca. Just as if I in sandy Libya were

Or in far frozen Scythia, I beheld  
Myself at times by glowing fire assailed  
That never cools, at times by chilly fear.  
But hope, that makes our sorrow disappear,  
Although such different semblances it bore,  
Kept my life safe, well-guarded by its power,  
When it was strong, when it was weak and drear,  
Spent was the fury of the winter's chill,  
And, though the fire of Love its power retained,  
Yet the spring came which I had longed to see.  
Now in one happy moment I have gained  
The sweet fruit long desired by my will  
With bounteous tokens of sincerity.

Blanca's voice and what she sang pleased the shepherds no less than all the others they had heard. And when they were about to give proof that all the skill was not contained in the gentlemen of the court, and when Orompo, Crisio, Orfenio, and Marsilio, moved almost by one and the same thought, began to tune their instruments, they were forced to turn their heads by a noise they perceived behind them, which was caused by a shepherd who was furiously rushing through the thickets of the green wood. He was recognised by all as the lovesick Lauso, whereat Thyrsis marvelled, for the night before he had taken leave of him, saying that he was going on a business, to finish which meant to finish his grief, and to begin his pleasure; and without saying more to him had gone away with another shepherd his friend, nor did he know what could have happened to him now that he was journeying with so much haste. What Thyrsis said moved

Damon to seek to call Lauso, and so he called to him to come; but seeing that he did not hear him, and that he was already with great haste disappearing behind a hill, he went forward with all speed, and from the top of another hill, called him again with louder cries. Lauso hearing them, and knowing who called him, could not but turn, and on coming up to Damon embraced him with tokens of strange content, and so great that the proof he gave of being happy made Damon marvel; and so he said to him: 'What is it, friend Lauso? Have you by chance attained the goal of your desires, or have they since yesterday conformed with it in such a way that you are finding with ease what you purpose?'

'Much greater is the good I have, Damon, true friend, replied Lauso; 'since the cause which to others is wont to be one of despair and death has proved to me hope and life, and this cause has been owing to a disdain and undeceiving, accompanied by a prudish grace, which I have seen in my shepherdess, for it has restored me to my first condition. Now, now, shepherd, my wearied neck does not feel the weighty yoke of love, now the lofty fabric of thought that made me giddy has vanished in my mind; now I shall return to the lost converse of my friends, now the green grass, and sweet-smelling flowers of these peaceful fields will seem to me what they are, now my sighs will have truce, my tears a ford, and my turmoils repose.

Consider, therefore, Damon, if this is sufficient cause for me to show myself happy and rejoicing.'

'Yes it is, Lauso,' replied Damon, 'but I fear that happiness so suddenly born cannot be lasting, and I have already experienced that every freedom that is begotten of disdain vanishes like smoke, and straightway the loving purpose turns again with greater haste to follow its purposings. Wherefore, friend Lauso, may it please Heaven that your content may be more secure than I fancy, and that you may enjoy for a long time the freedom you proclaim, for I would rejoice not only because of what I owe to our friendship, but also because I should see an unwonted miracle in the desires of love.'

'Howsoever this may be, Damon,' replied Lauso, 'I now feel myself free, and lord of my will, and that yours may satisfy itself that what I say is true, consider what you wish me to do in proof of it. Do you wish me to go away? Do you wish me to visit no more the hut where you think the cause of my past pains and present joys can be? I will do anything to satisfy you.'

'The important point is that you, Lauso, should be satisfied,' replied Damon, 'and I shall see that you are, if I see you six days hence in this same frame of mind; and for the nonce I seek naught else from you, save that you leave the road you were taking and come with me to where all those shepherds and ladies are waiting for us, and that you celebrate the joy you feel by entertaining us with

your song whilst we go to the village.'

Lauso was pleased to do what Damon bade him, and so he turned back with him at the time when Thyrsis was beckoning to Damon to return; and when it came to pass that he and Lauso came up, without wasting words of courtesy Lauso said: 'I do not come, sirs, for less than festivity and pleasure; therefore if you would have any in listening to me, let Marsilio sound his pipe, and prepare yourselves to hear what I never thought my tongue would have cause to utter, nor yet my thought to imagine.'

All the shepherds replied together that it would be a great joy to them to hear him. And straightway Marsilio, moved by the desire he had to listen to him, played his pipe, to the sound of which Lauso began to sing in this wise: LAUSO.  
Unto the ground I sink on bended knee,

My suppliant hands clasped humbly, and my breast  
Filled with a righteous and a loving zeal;  
Holy disdain, I worship thee; in thee  
Are summed the causes of the dainty feast  
Which I in calm and ease enjoy full well;  
For, of the rigour of the poison fell  
Which Love's ill doth contain,  
Thou wert the certain and the speedy cure,



Turning my ruin sure  
To good, my war to healthy peace again.  
Wherefore not once, but times beyond all measure,  
I do adore thee as my kindest treasure.

Through thee the light of these my wearied eyes,  
Which was so long troubled and even lost,  
Hath turned again to what it was before;  
Through thee again I glory in the prize  
Which from my will and life at bitter cost  
Love's ancient tyranny in triumph bore.  
'Twas thou that didst my error's night restore  
To bright unclouded day,  
'Twas thou that leddest the reason, which of old  
Foul slavery did hold,  
Into a peaceful and a wiser way;  
Reason, now mistress, guideth me to where  
Eternal bliss doth show and shine more clear.

From thee I learned, disdain, how treacherous,  
How false and feigned had been those signs of love,  
Which the fair maid did to my eyes display,  
And how those words and whispers amorous,  
That charmed the ear so much, and caused to rove  
The soul, leading it from itself astray,  
Were framed in falsehood and in mockery gay;  
How the glance of those eyes,  
So sweet and tender, did but seek my doom,  
That unto winter's gloom  
Might be transformed my springtime's sunny skies,  
What time I should be clearly undeceived;  
But, sweet disdain, thou hast the wound relieved.

Disdain, disdain, ever the sharpest goad  
That urges on the fancy to pursue  
After the loving, long-desired need,  
In me changed is thy practice and thy mood,  
For, by thee led, the purpose I eschew  
Which once I followed hard with unseen speed;

And, though Love, ill-contented with my deed,  
Doth never, never, rest,  
But spreads the noose to seize me as before,  
And, to wound me the more,  
Aimeth a thousand shafts against my breast,  
'Tis thou, disdain, alone that art my friend,  
Thou canst his arrows break, his meshes rend.

My love, though simple, yet is not so weak  
That one disdain could bring it to the ground,  
Countless disdains were needed for the blow,  
E'en as the pine is doomed at last to break  
And fall to earth — though on its trunk resound  
Full many a blow, the last 'tis brings it low.  
Weighty disdain, with countenance of woe,  
Who art on love's absence based,  
On poor opinion of another's lot,  
To see thee hath been fraught  
With joy to me, to hear thee and to taste,  
To know that thou hast deigned, with soul allied  
To beat down and to end my foolish pride.

Thou beatest down my folly, and dost aid  
The intellect to rise on lofty wing  
And shake off heavy slumber from the mind,  
So that with healthy purpose undismayed  
It may the power and praise of others sing,  
If it perchance a grateful mistress find.  
Thou hast the henbane, wherewith Love unkind  
Lullèd my sorrowing strength  
To slumber, robbed of vigour, thou, in pride  
Of glowing strength, dost guide  
Me back unto new life and ways at length,  
For now I know that I am one who may  
Fear within bounds and hope without dismay.

Lauso sang no more, though what he had sung sufficed to fill those present with wonder, for, as all knew that the day before he was so much in love and so content to be so, it made them marvel to see him in so short a space of time so

changed and so different from what he was wont to be. And having considered this well, his friend Thyrsis said to him: 'I know not, friend Lauso, if I should congratulate you on the bliss attained in such brief hours, for I fear that it cannot be as firm and sure as you imagine; but nevertheless I am glad that you enjoy, though it may be for a little while, the pleasure that freedom when attained causes in the soul, since it might be that knowing now how it should be valued, though you might turn again to the broken chains and bonds, you would use more force to break, them, drawn by the sweetness and delight a free understanding and an unimpassioned will enjoy.'

'Have no fear, discreet Thyrsis,' replied Lauso, 'that any other new artifice may suffice for me to place once more my feet in the stocks of love, nor count me so light and capricious but that it has cost me, to set me in the state in which I am, countless reflections, a thousand verified suspicions, a thousand fulfilled promises made to Heaven, that I might return to the light I had lost; and since in the light I now see how little I saw before, I will strive to preserve it in the best way I can.'

'There will be no other way so good,' said Thyrsis, 'as not to turn to look at what you leave behind, for you will lose, if you turn, the freedom that has cost you so much, and you will be left, as was left that heedless lover, with new causes for ceaseless lament; and be assured, friend Lauso, that there is not in the world a breast so loving, which disdain and needless arrogance do not cool, and even cause to withdraw from its illplaced thoughts. And I am made to believe this truth the more, knowing who Silena is, though you have never told it me, and knowing also her fickle mood, her hasty impulses, and the freedom, to give it no other name, of her inclinations, things which, if she did not temper them and cloak them with the peerless beauty wherewith Heaven has endowed her, would have made her abhorred by all the world.'

'You speak truth, Thyrsis,' replied Lauso, 'for without any doubt her remarkable beauty, and the appearances of incomparable modesty wherewith she arrays herself are reasons why she should be not only loved but adored by all that behold her.'

And so no one should marvel that my free will has submitted to enemies so strong and mighty; only it is right that one should marvel at the way I have been able to escape from them, for though I come from their hands so ill-treated, with will impaired, understanding disturbed, and memory decayed, yet it seems to me that I can conquer in the strife.'

The two shepherds did not proceed further in their discourse, for at this moment they saw a fair shepherdess coming by the very road they were going, and a little way from her a shepherd, who was straightway recognised, for he

was the old Arsindo, and the shepherdess was Galercio's sister, Maurisa. And when she was recognised by Galatea and Florisa, they understood that she was coming with some message from Grisaldo to Rosaura, and as the pair went forward to welcome her, Maurisa came to embrace Galatea, and the old Arsindo greeted all the shepherds, and embraced his friend Lauso, who had a great desire to know what Arsindo had done after they told him that he had gone off in pursuit of Maurisa. And when he was now seen coming back with her, he straightway began to lose with him and with all the character his white hairs had won for him, and he would even have lost it altogether, had not those who were there known so well from experience to what point and how far the force of love extended, and so in the very ones who blamed him he found excuses for his error. And it seems that Arsindo, guessing what the shepherds guessed of him, as though to satisfy and excuse his affection, said to them: 'Listen, shepherds, to one of the strangest love-affairs that for many years can have been seen on these our banks, or on others. I believe full well that you know, and we all know, the renowned shepherd Lenio, him whose loveless disposition won him the name of loveless, him who not many days ago, merely to speak ill of love, dared to enter into rivalry with the famous Thyrasis, who is present; him, I say, who never could move his tongue, were it not to speak ill of love; him who with such earnestness was wont to reprove those whom he saw distressed by the pangs of love. He, then, being so open an enemy of Love, has come to the pass that I am sure Love has no one who follows him more earnestly, nor yet has he a vassal whom he persecutes more, for he has made him fall in love with the loveless Gelasia, that cruel shepherdess, who the other day, as you saw, held the brother of this damsel' (pointing to Maurisa), 'who resembles her so closely in disposition, with the rope at his throat, to finish at the hands of her cruelty his short and illstarred days. I say in a word, shepherds, that Lenio the loveless is dying for the hard-hearted Gelasia, and for her he fills the air with sighs and the earth with tears; and what is worse in this is that it seems to me that Love has wished to avenge himself on Lenio's rebellious heart, handing him over to the hardest and most scornful shepherdess that has been seen; and he knowing it, now seeks in all he says and does to reconcile himself with Love; and in the same terms with which before he abused him, he now exalts and honours him. And nevertheless, neither is Love moved to favour him, nor Gelasia inclined to heal him, as I have seen with my eyes; since, not many hours ago, as I was coming in the company of this shepherdess, we found him at the spring of slates stretched on the ground, his face covered with a cold sweat, and his breast panting with strange rapidity. I went up to him and recognised him, and with the water of the spring sprinkled his face, whereat he recovered his lost senses; and drawing close to him I asked

him the cause of his grief, which he told me without missing a word, telling it me with such tender feeling, that he inspired it in this shepherdess, in whom I think there never was contained the sign of any compassion. He dwelt on Gelasia's cruelty, and the love he had for her, and the suspicion that reigned in him that Love had brought him to such a state to avenge himself at one blow for the many wrongs he had done him. I consoled him as best I could, and leaving him free from his past paroxysm, I come accompanying this shepherdess, and to seek you, Lauso, in order that, if you would be willing, we may return to our huts, for it is ten days since we left them, and it may be that our herds feel our absence more than we do theirs.'

'I know not if I should tell you in reply, Arsindo,' replied Lauso, 'that I believe you invite me rather out of compliment than for anything else to return to our huts, having as much to do in those of others, as your ten days' absence from me has shown. But leaving on one side most of what I could say to you thereon for a better time and opportunity, tell me again if it is true what you say of Lenio; for if it is, I may declare that Love has wrought in these days two of the greatest miracles he has wrought in all the days of his life, namely, to subdue and enslave Lenio's hard heart, and to set free mine which was so subjected.'

'Look to what you are saying, friend Lauso,' then said Orompo, 'for if Love held you subject, as you have indicated hitherto, how has the same Love now set you in the freedom you proclaim?'

'If you would understand me, Orompo,' replied Lauso, 'you will see that I in no wise contradict myself, for I say, or mean to say, that the love that reigned and reigns in the breast of her whom I loved so dearly, as it directs itself to a purpose different from mine, though it is all love, — the effect it has wrought in me is to place me in freedom and Lenio in slavery; and do not compel me, Orompo, to relate other miracles with these.'

And as he said this he turned his eyes to look at the old Arsindo, and with them uttered what with his tongue he kept back; for all understood that the third miracle he might have related would have been the sight of Arsindo's gray hairs in love with the few green years of Maurisa. She was talking apart all this time with Galatea and Florisa, telling them that on the morrow Grisaldo would be in the village in shepherd's garb, and that he thought there to wed Rosaura in secret, for publicly he could not, because the kinsmen of Leopersia, to whom his father had agreed to marry him, had learned that Grisaldo was about to fail in his plighted word, and they in no wise wished such a wrong to be done them; but nevertheless Grisaldo was determined to conform rather to what he owed to Rosaura than to the obligation in which he stood to his father.

'All that I have told you, shepherdesses,' went on Maurisa, 'my brother

Galercio told me to tell you. He was coming to you with this message, but the cruel Gelasia whose beauty ever draws after it the soul of my luckless brother, was the cause why he could not come to tell you what I have said, since, in order to follow her, he ceased to follow the way he was taking, trusting in me as a sister. You have now learned, shepherdesses, why I have come. Where is Rosaura to tell it her? or do you tell it her, for the anguish in which my brother lies does not permit me to remain here a moment longer.'

Whilst the shepherdess was saying this, Galatea was considering the grievous reply she intended to give her, and the sad tidings that must needs reach the ears of the luckless Grisaldo; but seeing that she could not escape giving them, and that it was worse to detain her, she straightway told her all that had happened to Rosaura, and how Artandro was carrying her off; whereat Maurisa was amazed, and at once would fain have returned to tell Grisaldo, had not Galatea detained her, asking her what had become of the two shepherdesses who had gone away with her and Galercio, to which Maurisa replied: 'I might tell you things about them, Galatea, which would set you in greater wonder than that in which Rosaura's fate has set me, but time does not give me opportunity for it. I only tell you that she who was called Leonarda has betrothed herself to my brother Artidoro by the subtlest trick that has ever been seen; and Teolinda, the other one, is in the pass of ending her life or of losing her wits, and she is only sustained by the sight of Galercio, for, as his appearance resembles so much that of my brother Artidoro, she does not depart from his company for a moment, a thing which is as irksome and vexatious to Galercio as the company of the cruel Gelasia is sweet and pleasing to him. The manner in which this took place I will tell you more in detail, when we see each other again; for it will not be right that by my delay the remedy should be hindered, that Grisaldo may have in his misfortune, using to remedy it all diligence possible. For, if it is only this morning that Artandro carried off Rosaura, he will not have been able to go so far from these banks as to take away from Grisaldo the hope of recovering her, and more so if I quicken my steps as I intend.'

Galatea approved of what Maurisa was saying, and so she did not wish to detain her longer; only she begged her to be kind enough to return to see her as soon as she could, to relate to her what had happened to Teolinda, and what had happened in Rosaura's affair. The shepherdess promised it her, and without staying longer, took leave of those who were there, and returned to her village, leaving all contented with her charm and beauty.

But he who felt her departure most was the old Arsindo, who, not to give clear tokens of his desire, had to remain as lonely without Maurisa as he was accompanied by his thoughts. The shepherdesses, too, were left amazed at what

they had heard about Teolinda, and desired exceedingly to learn her fate; and, whilst in this state, they heard the clear sound of a horn, which was sounding on their right hand, and turning their eyes to that side, they saw on the top of a hill of some height two old shepherds who had between them an aged priest, whom they straightway knew to be the old Telesio. And, one of the shepherds having blown the horn a second time, the three all descended from the hill and journeyed towards another which was hard by, and having ascended it, they again blew the horn, at the sound of which many shepherds began to move from different parts to come to see what Telesio desired; for by that signal he was wont to call together all the shepherds of that bank whenever he wished to address to them some useful discourse, or to tell them of the death of some renowned shepherd in those parts, or in order to bring to their minds the day of some solemn festival or of some sad funeral rites. Aurelio then, and almost all the shepherds who came there, having recognised Telesio's costume and calling, all came on, drawing nigh to where he was, and when they got there, they were already united in one group. But, as Telesio saw so many people coming, and recognised how important all were, descending from the hill, he went to receive them with much love and courtesy, and with the same courtesy was received by all. And Aurelio, going up to Telesio, said to him: 'Tell us, if you be so good, honourable and venerable Telesio, what new cause moves you to wish to assemble the shepherds of these meadows; is it by chance for joyous festival or sad funereal rite? Do you wish to point out to us something appertaining to the improvement of our lives? Tell us, Telesio, what your will ordains, since you know that ours will not depart from all that yours might wish.'

'May Heaven repay you, shepherds,' answered Telesio, 'for the sincerity of your purposes, since they conform so much to that of him who seeks only your good and profit. But to satisfy the desire you have to learn what I wish, I wish to bring to your memory the memory you ought ever to retain of the worth and fame of the famous and excellent shepherd Meliso, whose mournful obsequies are renewed and ever will be renewed from year to year on to-morrow's date so long as there be shepherds on our banks, and in our souls there be not wanting the knowledge of what is due to Meliso's goodness and worth. At least! for myself I can tell you that, as long as my life shall last, I shall not fail to remind you at the fitting time of the obligation under which you have been placed by the skill, courtesy, and virtue of the peerless Meliso. And so now I remind you of it j and make known to you that to-morrow is the day when the luckless day must be renewed on which we lost so much good, as it was to lose the agreeable presence of the prudent shepherd Meliso. By what you owe to his goodness, and by what you owe to the purpose I have to serve you, I pray you shepherds to be to-

morrow at break of day all in the valley of cypresses, where stands the tomb of Meliso's honoured ashes, in order that there with sad hymns and pious sacrifices we may seek to lighten the pain, if any it suffers, of that happy soul which has left us in such solitude.'

And as he said this, moved by the tender regret the memory of Meliso's death caused him, his venerable eyes filled with tears, most of the bystanders accompanying him therein. They all with one accord offered to be present on the morrow where Telesio bade them, and Timbrio and Silerio, Nisida and Blanca did the same, for it seemed to them that it would not be well to fail to attend at so solemn an occasion and in an assembly of shepherds so celebrated as they imagined would assemble there. Therewith they took leave of Telesio and resumed the journey to the village they had begun. But they had not gone far from that place when they saw coming towards them the loveless Lenio, with a countenance so sad and thoughtful that it set wonder in all; and he was coming so rapt in his fancies that he passed by the side of the shepherds without seeing them; nay, rather, turning his course to the left hand, he had not gone many steps when he flung himself down at the foot of a green willow; and giving forth a heavy and deep sigh, he raised his hand, and placing it on the collar of his skin-coat, pulled so strongly that he tore it all the way down, and straightway he took the wallet from his side, and drawing from it a polished rebeck, he set himself to tune it with great attention and calm; and after a little while he began in a mournful and harmonious voice to sing in such a manner that he constrained all who had seen him to stop to listen to him until the end of his song, which was as follows: LENIO. Sweet Love, I repent me now

Of my past presumptuous guilt,



I feel henceforth and avow  
That on scoffing it was built,  
Reared aloft on mocking show;  
Now my proud self I abase  
And my rebel neck I place  
‘Neath thy yoke of slavery,

Now I know the potency  
Of thy great far-spreading grace.

What thou wilt, thou canst do,  
And what none can do, thou wilt,  
Who thou art, well dost thou show  
In thy mood whereby thou killest,  
In thy pleasure and thy woe;  
I am he — the truth is plain —  
Who did count thy bliss as pain,  
Thy deceiving undeceiving,  
And thy verities as deceiving,  
As caresses thy disdain.

These have now made manifest —  
Though the truth I knew before —

To my poor submissive breast  
That thou only art the shore  
Where our wearied lives find rest;

For the tempest pitiless  
Which doth most the soul distress,  
Thou dost change to peaceful calm,  
Thou'rt the soul's delight and balm.  
And the food that doth it bless.

Since I this confession make —  
Late though my confession be —  
Love, seek not my strength to break,  
Temper thy severity,  
From my neck the burden take;  
When the foe hath made submission,  
None need punish his contrition,  
He doth not himself defend.  
Now I fain would be thy friend,  
Yet from thee comes my perdition.

From the stubbornness I turn  
Where my malice did me place  
And the presence of thy scorn,  
From thy justice to thy grace  
I appeal with heart forlorn;  
If the poor worth of my mind  
With thy grace no favour find, —  
With thy well-known grace divine —  
Soon shall I my life resign  
To the hands of grief unkind.

By Gelasia's hands am I  
Plunged into so strange a plight,

That if my grief stubbornly  
With her stubbornness shall fight,  
Soon methinks they both will die;  
Tell me, maiden pitiless,  
Filled with pride and scornfulness,  
Why thou wishest, I implore thee,  
That the heart which doth adore thee,  
Should thus suffer, shepherdess.

Little it was that Lenio sang, but his flood of tears was so copious that he would there have been consumed in them, had not the shepherds come up to console him. But when he saw them coming and recognised Thyrsis among them, he arose without further delay and went to fling himself at his feet, closely embracing his knees, and said to him without ceasing his tears: 'Now you can, famous shepherd, take just vengeance for the boldness I had to compete with you, defending the unjust cause my ignorance set before me; now, I say, you can raise your arm and with a sharp knife pierce this heart where was contained foolishness so notorious as it was not to count Love the universal lord of the world. But one thing I would have you know, that if you wish to take vengeance duly on my error, you should leave me with the life I sustain, which is such that there is no death to compare to it.'

Thyrsis had already raised the hapless Lenio from the ground, and having embraced him, sought to console him with discreet and loving words, saying to him:

'The greatest fault there is in faults, friend Lenio, is to persist in them, for it is the disposition of devils never to repent of errors committed, and likewise one of the chief causes which moves and constrains men to pardon offences is for the offended one to see repentance in the one who gives offence, and the more when the pardoning is in the hands of one who does nothing in doing this act, since his noble disposition draws and compels him to do it, he remaining richer and more satisfied with the pardon than with the vengeance; as we see it repeatedly in great lords and kings, who gain more glory in pardoning wrongs than in avenging them. And since you, Lenio, confess the error in which you have been and now know the mighty forces of Love, and understand of him that he is the universal lord of our hearts, by reason of this new knowledge and of the repentance you feel, you can be confident and live assured that gentle and kindly Love will soon restore you to a calm and loving life: for if he now punishes you by giving you the painful life you lead, he does it so that you may know him and may afterwards hold and esteem more highly the life of joy he surely thinks to

give you.'

To these words Elicio and the remaining shepherds who were there, added many others whereby it seemed that Lenio was somewhat more consoled. And straightway he related to them how he was dying for the cruel shepherdess Gelasia, emphasising to them the scornful and loveless disposition of hers, and how free and exempt she was from thinking on any goal in love, describing to them also the insufferable torment which for her sake the gentle shepherd Galercio was suffering, on whom she set so little store that a thousand times she had set him on the verge of suicide. But after they had for a while discoursed on these things, they resumed their journey, taking Lenio with them, and without anything else happening to them they reached the village, Elicio taking with him Thyrsis, Damon, Erastro, Lauso and Arsindo. With Daranio went Crisio, Orfenio, Marsilio, and Orompo. Florisa and the other shepherdesses went with Galatea and her father Aurelio, having first agreed that on the morrow at the coming of the dawn they should meet to go to the valley of cypresses as Telesio had bidden them, in order to celebrate Meliso's obsequies. At them, as has already been said, Timbrio, Silerio, Nisida and Blanca wished to be present, who went that night with the venerable Aurelio.

## BOOK VI.

Scarce had the rays of golden Phoebus begun to break through the lowest line of our horizon, when the aged and venerable Telesio made the piteous sound of his horn come to the ears of all that were in the village — a signal which moved those who heard it to leave the repose of their pastoral couches, and hasten to do what Telesio bade. But the first who led the way in this were Elicio, Aurelio, Daranio, and all the shepherds and shepherdesses who were with them, the fair Nisida and Blanca, and the happy Timbrio and Silerio not being absent, with a number of other gallant shepherds and beauteous shepherdesses, who joined them, and might reach the number of thirty.

Amongst them went the peerless Galatea, new miracle of beauty, and the lately-wed Silveria, who brought with her the fair and haughty Belisa, for whom the shepherd Marsilio suffered such loving and mortal pangs. Belisa had come to visit Silveria, and to congratulate her on her newly attained estate, and she wished likewise to be present at obsequies so celebrated as she hoped those would be that shepherds so great and so famous were celebrating. All then came out together, from the village, outside which they found Telesio, with many other shepherds accompanying him, all clad and adorned in such wise that they clearly showed that they had come together for a sad and mournful business. Straightway Telesio ordained, so that the solemn sacrifices might that day be performed with purer intent and thoughts more calm, that all the shepherds should come together on their side, and apart from the shepherdesses, and that the latter should do the same: whereat the smaller number were content, and the majority not very satisfied, especially the fond Marsilio, who had already seen the loveless Belisa, at sight of whom he was so beside himself and so rapt, as his friends Orompo, Crisio, and Orfenio clearly perceived, and when they saw him in such a state, they went up to him, and Orompo said to him: ‘Take courage, friend Marsilio, take courage, and do not by your faint-heartedness cause the small spirit of your breast to be revealed. What if Heaven, moved to compassion of your pain, has at such a time brought the shepherdess Belisa to these banks that you may heal it?’

‘Nay rather the better to end me, as I believe,’ replied Marsilio, ‘will she have come to this place, for this and more must needs be feared from my fortune; but I will do, Orompo, what you bid, if by chance in this hard plight reason has more power with me than my feelings.’

And therewith Marsilio became again somewhat more calm, and straightway the shepherds on one side, and the shepherdesses on another, as was ordained by Telesio, began to make their way to the valley of cypresses, all preserving a wondrous silence; until Timbrio, astonished to see the coolness and beauty of the clear Tagus by which he was going, turned to Elicio who was coming at his side, and said to him: 'The incomparable beauty of these cool banks, Elicio, causes me no small wonder; and not without reason, for when one has seen as I have the spacious banks of the renowned Betis, and those that deck and adorn the famous Ebro, and the well-known Pisuerga, and when one in foreign lands has walked by the banks of the holy Tiber, and the pleasing banks of the Po, made noted by the fall of the rash youth, and has not failed to go round the cool spots of the peaceful Sebeto, it must needs have been a great cause that should move me to wonder at seeing any others.'

'You do not go so far out of the way in what you say, as I believe, discreet Timbrio,' answered Elicio, 'as not to see with your eyes how right you are to say it; for without doubt you can believe that the pleasantness and coolness of the banks of this river excel, as is well known and recognised, all those you have named, though there should enter among them those of the distant Xanthus, and of the renowned Amphrysus, and of the loving Alpheus. For experience holds and has made certain, that almost in a straight line above the greater part of these banks appears a sky bright and shining, which with a wide sweep and with living splendour seems to invite to joy and gladness the heart that is most estranged from it; and if it is true that the stars and the sun are sustained, as some say, by the waters here below, I firmly believe that those of this river are in a large measure the cause that produces the beauty of the sky that covers it, or I shall believe that God, for the same reason that they say He dwells in Heaven, makes here His sojourn for the most part. The earth that embraces it, clad with a thousand green adornments, seems to make festival and to rejoice at possessing in itself a gift so rare and pleasing, and the golden river as though in exchange, sweetly interweaving itself in its embraces, fashions, as if with intent, a thousand windings in and out, which fill the soul of all who behold them with wondrous pleasure; whence it arises that, though the eyes turn again to behold it many a time, they do not therefore fail to find in it things to cause them new pleasure and new wonder. Turn your eyes then, valiant Timbrio, and see how much its banks are adorned by the many villages and wealthy farmhouses, which are seen built along them. Here in every season of the year is seen the smiling spring in company with fair Venus, her garments girded up and full of love, and Zephyrus accompanying her, with his mother Flora in front, scattering with bounteous hand divers fragrant flowers; and the skill of its inhabitants has wrought so much



that nature, incorporated with art, is become an artist and art's equal, and from both together has been formed a third nature to which I cannot give a name. Of its cultivated gardens, compared with which the gardens of the Hesperides and of Alcinous, may keep silence, of the dense woods, of the peaceful olives, green laurels, and rounded myrtles, of its abundant pastures, joyous valleys, and covered hills, streamlets and springs which are found on this bank, do not expect me to say more, save that, if in any part of the earth the Elysian fields have a place, it is without doubt here. What shall I say of the skilful working of the lofty wheels, by the ceaseless motion of which men draw the waters from the deep river, and copiously irrigate the fields which are distant a long way? Let there be added to this that on these banks are nurtured the fairest and most discreet shepherdesses that can be found in the circle of the earth; as a proof of which, leaving aside that which experience shows us, and what you, Timbrio, do, since you have been on them and have seen, it will suffice to take as an example that shepherdess whom you see there, oh Timbrio.'

And, saying this, he pointed with his crook to Galatea; and without saying more, left Timbrio wondering to see the discretion and words with which he had praised the banks of the Tagus and Galatea's beauty. And he replied to him that nothing of what was said could be gainsaid, and in these and other things they beguiled the tedium of the road, until, coming in sight of the valley of cypresses, they saw issuing from it almost as many shepherds and shepherdesses as those who were with them. All joined together and with peaceful steps began to enter the sacred valley, the situation of which was so strange and wondrous that even in the very ones who had seen it many a time, it caused new admiration and pleasure. On one portion of the bank of the famous Tagus there rise in four different and opposite quarters four green and peaceful hills, walls and defenders as it were of a fair valley which they contain in their midst, and entrance into it is granted by four other spots. These same hills close together in such a way that they come to form four broad and peaceful roads, walled in on all sides by countless lofty cypresses, set in such order and harmony that even the very branches of each seem to grow uniformly, and none dares in the slightest to exceed or go beyond another. The space there is between cypress and cypress is closed and occupied by a thousand fragrant rose-bushes and pleasing jessamine, so close and interwoven as thorny brambles and prickly briars are wont to be in the hedges of guarded vineyards. From point to point of these peaceful openings are seen running through the short green grass clear cool streamlets of pure sweet waters, which have their birth on the slopes of the same hills. The goal and end of these roads is a wide round space formed by the declivities and cypresses, in the midst of which is placed a fountain of cunning workmanship, built of

white and costly marble, made with such skill and cunning that the beauteous fountains of renowned Tibur, and the proud ones of ancient Trinacria cannot be compared to it. With the water of this wondrous fountain are moistened and sustained the cool grasses of the delightful spot, and what makes this pleasing situation the more worthy of esteem and reverence is that it is exempt from the greedy mouths of simple lambs and gentle sheep, and from any other kind of flock; for it serves alone as guardian and treasure-house of the honoured bones of any famous shepherds, who, by the general decree of all the survivors in the neighbourhood are determined and ordained to be worthy and deserving of receiving burial in this famous valley. Therefore there were seen between the many different trees that were behind the cypresses, in the space and expanse there was from them to the slopes of the hills, some tombs, made one of jasper and another of marble, on the white stones of which one read the names of those who were buried in them. But the tomb which shone most above all, and that which showed itself most to the eyes of all, was that of the famous shepherd Meliso, which, apart from the others, was seen on one side of the broad space, made of smooth black slates and of white and well-fashioned alabaster. And at the very moment the eyes of Telesio beheld it, he turned his face to all that pleasing company, and said to them with peaceful voice and piteous tones: 'There you see, gallant shepherds, discreet and fair shepherdesses, there you see, I say, the sad tomb wherein repose the honoured bones of the renowned Meliso, honour and glory of our banks. Begin then to raise to Heaven your humble hearts, and with pure purpose, copious tears and deep sighs, intone your holy hymns and devout prayers, and ask Heaven to consent to receive in its starry abode the blessed soul of the body that lies there.'

As he said this, he went up to one of the cypresses, and cutting some branches, he made from them a mournful garland wherewith he crowned his white and venerable brow, beckoning to the others to do the same. All, moved by his example, in one moment crowned themselves with the sad branches, and guided by Telesio, went up to the tomb, where the first thing Telesio did was to bend the knee and kiss the hard stone of the tomb. All did the same, and some there were who, made tender by the memory of Meliso, left the white marble they were kissing bedewed with tears. This being done, Telesio bade the sacred fire be kindled, and in a moment around the tomb were made many, though small, bonfires, in which only branches of cypress were burned; and the venerable Telesio began with solemn and peaceful steps to circle the pyre, and to cast into all the glowing fires a quantity of sacred sweet-smelling incense, uttering each time he scattered it, some short and devout prayer for the departed soul of Meliso, at the end of which he would raise his trembling voice, all the bystanders

with sad and piteous tone replying thrice 'Amen, amen,' to the mournful sound of which the neighbouring hills and distant valleys re-echoed, and the branches of the tall cypresses and of the many other trees of which the valley was full, stricken by a gentle breeze that blew, made and formed a dull and saddest whisper, almost as if in token that they for their part shared the sadness of the funereal sacrifice. Thrice Telesio circled the tomb, and thrice he uttered the piteous prayers, and nine times more were heard the mournful tones of the amen which the shepherds repeated.

This ceremony ended, the aged Telesio leaned against a lofty cypress which rose at the head of Meliso's tomb, and by turning his face on every side caused the bystanders to attend to what he wished to say, and straightway raising his voice as much as the great number of his years could allow, with marvellous eloquence he began to praise Meliso's virtues, the integrity of his blameless life, the loftiness of his intellect, the constancy of his soul, the graceful gravity of his discourse, and the excellence of his poetry, and above all the solicitude of his breast to keep and fulfil the holy religion he had professed, joining to these other virtues of Meliso of such a kind and so great that, though the shepherd had not been well known by all who were listening to Telesio, merely by what he was saying, they would have been inspired to love him, if he had been alive, and to reverence him after death. The old man then ended his discourse saying: 'If the lowliness of my dull understanding, famous shepherds, were to attain to where Meliso's excellences attained, and to where attains the desire I have to praise them, and if the weak and scanty strength begotten by many weary years did not cut short my voice and breath, sooner would you see this sun that illumines us bathing once and again in the mighty ocean, than I should cease from my discourse begun; but since in my withered age this is not allowed, do you supply what I lack, and show yourselves grateful to Meliso's cold ashes, praising them in death as the love constrains you that he had for you in life.

And though a part of this duty touches and concerns us all in general, those whom it concerns more particularly are the famous Thyrsis and Damon, as being so well acquainted with him, such friends, such intimates; and so I beg them, as urgently as I can, to respond to this obligation, supplying in song with voice more calm and resounding what I have failed to do by my tears with my faltering one.

Telesio said no more, nor indeed had there been need to say it in order that the shepherds might be moved to do what he bade them, for straightway, without making any reply, Thyrsis drew forth his rebeck, and beckoned to Damon to do the same.

They were accompanied straightway by Elicio and Lauso, and all the

shepherds who had instruments there; and in a little while they made music so sad and pleasing, that though it delighted the ears, it moved the hearts to give forth tokens of sadness with the tears the eyes were shedding. To this was joined the sweet harmony of the little painted birds, that were flitting through the air, and some sobs that the shepherdesses, already made tender and moved by Telesio's discourse, and by what the shepherds were doing, wrung from time to time from their lovely breasts; and it was of such a kind that the sound of the sad music and that of the sad harmony of the linnets, larks, and nightingales, and the bitter sound of the deep groans joining in unison, all formed together a concert so strange and mournful, that there is no tongue that could describe it. A little while after, the other instruments ceasing, only the four of Thyrsis, Damon, Elicio, and Lauso were heard. These going up to Meliso's tomb, placed themselves on its four sides, a token from which all present understood that they were about to sing something. And so they lent them silence marvellous and subdued, and straightway the famous Thyrsis, aided by Elicio, Damon, and Lauso, began, with voice loud, sad and resounding, to sing in this wise: THYRSIS. Such is the cause of our grief-stricken moan,

Not ours alone, but all the world's as well,  
Shepherds, your sad and mournful chant intone!

Damon. Let our sighs break the air, and let them swell  
E'en unto Heaven in wailings, fashionèd  
From righteous love and grief unspeakable!

ELICIO. Mine eyes the tender dew shall ever shed  
Of loving tears, until the memory,  
Meliso, of thine exploits shall be dead.

LAUSO. Meliso, worthy deathless history,  
Worthy to enjoy on holy Heaven's throne  
Glory and life through all eternity.

THYRSIS. What time I raise myself to heights unknown  
That I may sing his deeds as I think best,  
Shepherds, your sad and mournful chant intone!

Damon. With welling tears, Meliso, that ne'er rest,  
As best I can, thy friendship I reward,  
With pious prayers, and holy incense blest.

ELICIO. Thy death, alas! our happiness hath marred,  
And hath to mourning changed our past delight,  
Unto a tender grief that presseth hard.

LAUSO. Those fair and blissful days when all was bright,  
When the world revelled in thy presence sweet,  
Have been transformed to cold and wretched night.

Thyrsis. Oh Death, that with thy violence so fleet  
Didst such a life to lowly earth restore, —  
What man will not thy diligence defeat?

Damon. Since thou, oh Death, didst deal that blow with power,  
Which brought to earth our stay 'midst fortune's stress,  
Ne'er is the meadow clad with grass or flower.

ELICIO. Ever this woe remembering, I repress  
My bliss, if any bliss my feeling knows,  
Myself I harrow with new bitterness.

Lauso. When is lost bliss recovered? Do not woes,  
E'en though we seek them not, ever assail?  
When amidst mortal strife find we repose?

Thyrsis. When in the mortal fray did life prevail?  
And when was Time, that swiftly flies away,  
By harness stout withstood, or coat of mail?

DAMON. Our life is but a dream, an idle play,  
A vain enchantment that doth disappear,  
What time it seemed the firmest in its day.

ELICIO. A day that darkeneth in mid career,  
And on its track close follows gloomy night,  
Veiled in shadows born of chilly fear.

LAUSO. But thou, renowned shepherd, in a bright  
And happy hour didst from this raging sea

Pass to the wondrous regions of delight,

Thyrsis. After that thou hadst heard and judged the plea  
Of the great shepherd of the Spanish plain  
In the Venetian sheepfold righteously,

DAMON. And after thou hadst bravely borne the pain,  
E'en the untimely stroke of Fortune fell,  
Which made Italia sad, and even Spain,

ELICIO. After thou hadst withdrawn so long to dwell,  
With the nine maidens on Parnassus' crest,  
In solitude and calm unspeakable;

LAUSO. Despite the clang of weapons from the East  
And Gallic rage, thy lofty spirit lay  
Tranquil, naught moved it from its peaceful rest.

Thyrsis. 'Twas then Heaven willed, upon a mournful day,  
That the cold hand of wrathful death should come,  
And with thy life our bliss should snatch away.

DAMON. Thy bliss was better, thou didst seek thy home,  
But we were left to bitterness untold,  
Unending and eternal was our doom.

ELICIO. The sacred maiden choir we did behold  
Of those that dwell upon Parnassus' height  
Rending in agony their locks of gold.

LAUSO. The blind boy's mighty rival by thy plight  
Was moved to tears; then to the world below  
He showed himself a niggard of his light.

THYRSIS. Amidst the clash of arms, the fiery glow,  
By reason of the wily Greek's deceit,  
The Teucrians sad felt not so great a woe,  
As those who wept, as those who did repeat  
Meliso's name, the shepherds, in the hour

When of his death the tidings did them greet.

Damon. Their brows with fragrant varied flowers no more  
Did they adorn, with mellow voice no song  
Sang they of love as in the days of yore.  
Around their brows the mournful cypress clung,  
And in sad oft-repeated bitter moan  
They chanted lays of grief with sorrowing tongue.

ELICIO. Wherefore, since we to-day once more have shown  
That we are mindful of our cruel wound,  
Shepherds, your sad and mournful chant intone!  
The bitter plight that fills with grief profound  
Our souls, is such that adamant will be  
The breast wherein no place for tears is found.

Lauso. Let countless tongues the soul of constancy  
Extol in song, the loyal breast he showed,  
Undaunted ever in adversity.  
Against the cruel disdain that ever glowed  
Within the wrathful breast of Phyllis sweet,  
Firm as a rock against the sea, he stood.

THYRSIS. The verses he hath sung let all repeat,  
Let them, as tokens of his genius rare,  
In the world's memory find eternal seat.

Damon. Let Fame, that spreadeth tidings everywhere,  
Through lands that differ far from ours, his name  
With rapid steps and busy pinions bear.

ELICIO. From his most chaste and love-enraptured flame  
Let the most wanton breast example take,  
And that which fire less perfect doth inflame.

Lauso. Blessed art thou, though fortune did forsake  
Thee countless times, for thou dost joyous live,  
No shadow now doth thy contentment break.

THYRSIS. This mortal lowliness that thou didst leave  
Behind, more full of changes than the moon,  
Little doth weary thee, doth little grieve.

Damon. Humility thou changedst for the boon  
Of loftiness, evil for good, and death  
For life — thy fears and hopes were surely one.

ELICIO. He who lives well, though he in semblance hath  
Fallen, doth soar to Heaven on lofty wing,  
As thou, Meliso, by the flowery path.  
There, there, from throats immortal issuing,  
The voice resounds, that glory doth recite,  
Glory repeateth, glory sweet doth sing.  
There the serene fair countenance and bright  
We see, and in the sight thereof behold  
Glory's supreme perfection with delight.  
My feeble voice to praise thee waxeth bold,  
Yet, e'en as my desire doth greater grow,  
In check my fear, Meliso, doth it hold.  
For that which I, with mind uplifted, now  
View of that hallowed mind of thine, and see  
Exalted far above all human show,  
Hath made my mind a coward utterly;  
I may but press my lips together, may  
But raise my brows in wondering ecstasy.

LAUSO. When thou dost go, thou fillest with dismay  
All who their pleasure in thy presence sought;  
Evil draws nigh, for thou dost go away.

THYRSIS. In days gone by the rustic shepherds taught  
Themselves thy wisdom, in that self-same hour  
They gained new understanding, wiser thought.  
But, ah! there came the inevitable hour,  
When thou departedst, and we did remain,  
With hearts dead, and with minds bereft of power.  
We celebrate this memory of pain,  
We who our love for thee in life have shown,



E'en as in death we mourn thee once again.  
So to the sound of your confusèd moan,  
New breath the while receiving ceaselessly,  
Shepherds, your sad and mournful chant intone!  
Even as is the bitter agony,  
So be the welling tears, so be the sighs,  
Wherewith the wind is swollen that hastens by.  
Little I ask, little the boon I prize,  
But ye must feel all that my tongue to you  
Can now unfold with feeble, stammering cries.  
But Phoebus now departs, and robs of hue  
The earth that doth her sable mantle don.  
So till the longed-for dawn shall come anew,  
Shepherds, no more your mournful chant intone!

Thyrsis, who had begun the sad and mournful elegy, was the one who ended it, without any of those that had listened to the lamentable song ending their tears for a good while. But at this moment the venerable Telesio said to them: 'Since we have in part, gallant and courteous shepherds, complied with the debt we owe the blessed Meliso, impose silence for the nonce on your tender tears, and give some truce to your grievous sighs, since by neither can we make good the loss we bewail; and though human sorrow cannot fail to show sorrow when ill befalls, yet it is necessary to temper the excess of its attacks with the reason that attends on the discreet. And although tears and sighs are tokens of the love cherished for him who is bewailed, the souls for which they are shed gain more profit by the pious sacrifices and devout prayers which are offered for them, than if all the ocean main were to be made tears and distil through the eyes of all the world. And for this cause and because we must give some relief to our wearied bodies, it will be well to leave what remains for us to do till the coming day, and for the present to make a call on your wallets, and comply with what nature enjoins on you.'

And in saying this, he gave orders for all the shepherdesses to abide on one side of the valley near Meliso's tomb, leaving with them six of the oldest shepherds who were there, and the rest were in another part a little way from them. And straightway with what they carried in their wallets and with the water of the clear spring they satisfied the common necessity of hunger, ending at a time when already night was clothing with one same colour all things contained beneath our horizon, and the shining moon was showing her fair and radiant face in all the fulness she has when most her ruddy brother imparts to her his rays.

But a little while after, a troubled wind arising, there began to be seen some black clouds, which in a measure hid the light of the chaste goddess, making shadows on the earth; tokens from which some shepherds who were there, masters in rustic astrology, expected some coming hurricane and tempest. But all ended only in the night remaining grey and calm, and in their settling down to rest on the cool grass, yielding their eyes to sweet and peaceful slumber, as all did save some who shared as sentinels the guardianship of the shepherdesses, and save the guardian of some torches that were left blazing round Meliso's tomb. But now that calm silence prevailed through all that sacred valley, and now that slothful Morpheus had with his moist branch touched the brows and eyelids of all those present, at a time when the wandering stars had gone a good way round our pole, marking out the punctual courses of the night: at that moment from the very tomb of Meliso arose a great and wondrous fire, so bright and shining that in an instant all the dark valley was in such brightness, as if the very sun had illumined it. By which sudden marvel the shepherds who were awake near the tomb, fell astonished to the ground dazzled and blind with the light of the transparent fire, which produced a contrary effect in the others who were sleeping; for when they were stricken by its rays, heavy slumber fled from them, and they opened, though with some difficulty, their sleeping eyes, and seeing the strangeness of the light that revealed itself to them, remained confounded and amazed; and so, one standing, another reclining, another kneeling, each gazed on the bright fire with amazement and terror. Telesio seeing all this, arraying himself in a moment in the sacred vestments, accompanied by Elicio, Thyrsis, Damon, Lauso, and other spirited shepherds, gradually began to draw nigh to the fire, with the intention of seeking with some lawful and fitting exorcisms to extinguish, or TO understand whence came the strange vision which showed itself to them. But when they were drawing nigh to the glowing flames, they saw them dividing into two parts, and in their midst appearing a nymph so fair and graceful, that it set them in greater wonder than the sight of the blazing fire; she appeared clad in a rich and fine web of silver, gathered and drawn up at the waist in such wise that half of her legs revealed themselves arrayed in buskins or close-fitting foot-gear, gilded and full of countless knots of variegated ribbons. Over the silver web she wore another vestment of green and delicate silk, which, wafted from side to side by a light breeze that was gently blowing, seemed most exquisite. She wore scattered over her shoulders the longest and the ruddiest locks that human eyes ever saw, and upon them a garland made of green laurel only. Her right hand was occupied by a tall branch of the yellow palm of victory, and her left with another of the green olive of peace.

And with these adornments she showed herself so fair and wonderful, that all that beheld her she kept rapt by her appearance in such wise that, casting from them their first fear, they approached with sure steps the neighbourhood of the fire, persuading themselves that from so fair a vision no harm could happen to them. And all being, as has been said, ravished to see her, the beauteous nymph opened her arms on each side, and made the divided flames divide the more and part, to give an opportunity that she might the better be seen; and straightway raising her calm countenance, with grace and strange dignity she began words such as these: 'By the results that my unexpected appearance has caused in your hearts, discreet and pleasing company, you can gather that it is not by virtue of evil spirits that this form of mine has been fashioned which presents itself here to you; for one of the means by which we recognise whether a vision BE good or bad, is by the results it produces on the mind of him who BEHOLDS it.

For in the case of the good, though it cause in him wonder and alarm, such wonder and alarm comes mingled with a pleasant disturbance which in a little while calms and satisfies him, contrary to what is caused by the malignant vision, which brings alarm, discontent, terror, but never assurance. Experience will make clear to you this truth when you know me, and when I tell you who I am, and the cause that has moved me to come from my distant dwelling-place to visit you. And because I do not wish to KEEP you in suspense with the desire you have to know who! AM, know, discreet shepherds and beauteous shepherdesses, that I am one of the nine maidens, who on the lofty and sacred peaks of Parnassus have their own and famous abode. My name is Calliope, my duty and disposition it is to favour and aid the divine spirits, whose laudable practice it is to busy themselves in the marvellous and never duly lauded science of poetry. I am she who made the old blind man of Smyrna, famous only through him, win eternal fame; she who will make the Mantuan Tityrus live for all the ages to come, until time end; and she who makes the writings, as uncouth as learned, of the most ancient Ennius, to be esteemed from the past to the present age. In short, I am she who favoured Catullus, she who made Horace renowned, Propertius eternal, and I am she who with immortal fame has preserved the memory of the renowned Petrarch, and she who made the famous Dante descend to the dark circles of Hell, and ascend to the bright spheres of Heaven. I am she who aided the divine Ariosto to weave the varied and fair web he fashioned; she who in this country of yours had intimate friendship with the witty Boscan, and with the famous Garcilaso, with the learned and wise Castillejo, and the ingenious Torres Naharro, by whose intellects and by their fruits your country was enriched and I satisfied. I am she who moved the pen of the celebrated Aldana, and that which never left the side of Don Fernando de Acuna; and she

who prides herself on the close friendship and converse she always had with the blessed soul of the body that lies in this tomb. The funeral rites performed by you in his honour not only have gladdened his spirit, which now paces through the eternal realm, but have so satisfied me that I have come perforce to thank you for so laudable and pious a custom as this is, which is in use among you. Therefore I promise you, with the sincerity that can be expected from my virtue, in reward for the kindness you have shown to the ashes of my dear beloved Meliso, always to bring it to pass that on your banks there may never be wanting shepherds to excel all those of the other banks in the joyous science of poetry. I will likewise always favour your counsels, and guide your understanding so that you may never give an unjust vote, when you decide who is deserving of being buried in this sacred valley; for it will not be right that an honour, so special and distinguished, and one which is only deserved by white and tuneful swans, should come to be enjoyed by black and hoarse crows. And so it seems to me that it will be right to give you some information now about some distinguished men who live in this Spain of yours, and about some in the distant Indies subject to her; and if all or anyone of these should be brought by his good fortune to end the course of his days on these banks, without any doubt you can grant him burial in this famous spot. Together with this I wish to warn you not to think the first I shall name worthy of more honour than the last, for herein I do not intend to keep any order, because, though I understand the difference between the one and the other, and the others among themselves, I wish to leave the decision of it in doubt, in order that your intellects may have something to practise on in understanding the difference OF theirs, of which their works will give proof. I shall go through their names as they come to my memory, so that none may claim that it is a favour I have done him in having remembered him before another, for, as I tell you, discreet shepherds, I leave you to give them afterwards the place which seems to you to be due to them of right; and, in order that with less trouble and annoyance you may be attentive to my long narration, I will make it of such a kind that you may only feel displeasure at its brevity.'

The fair nymph, having said this, was silent and straightway took a harp she had beside her, which up till that time had been seen by no one, and, as she began to play it, it seemed that the sky began to brighten, and that the moon illumined the earth with new and unwonted splendour; the trees, despite a gentle breeze that was blowing, held their branches still; and the eyes of all who were there did not dare to lower their lids, IN order that for the little while they lingered in raising, they might not be robbed of the glory they enjoyed in beholding the beauty of the nymph, and indeed all would have wished all their five senses to be changed into that of hearing only; with such strangeness, with

such sweetness, with so great a charm did the fair muse play her harp. After she had sounded a few chords, with the most resounding voice that could be imagined, she began with verses such as these: CALLIOPE'S SONG.

To the sweet sound of my harmonious lyre,  
Shepherds, I pray you lend attentive ear,  
The hallowed breath of the Castalian choir  
Breathing therein and in my voice ye'll hear:  
Lo! it will make you wonder and admire  
With souls enraptured and with happy fear,  
What time I do recount to you on earth  
The geniuses that Heaven claims for their worth.

It is my purpose but of those to sing  
Of whose life Fate hath not yet cut the thread,  
Of those who rightly merit ye should bring  
Their ashes to this place when they are dead,  
Where, despite busy Time on hasty wing,

Through this praiseworthy duty rendered  
By you, for countless years may live their fame,  
Their radiant work, and their renowned name.

And he who doth with righteous title merit  
Of high renown to win a noble store,  
Is DON ALONSO; he 'tis doth inherit  
From holy Phoebus heavenly wisdom's flower,  
In whom shineth with lofty glow the spirit  
Of warlike Mars, and his unrivalled power,  
LEIVA his surname in whose glorious sound  
Italy, Spain herself, hath lustre found.

Arauco's wars and Spanish worth hath sung  
Another who the name ALONSO hath.  
Far hath he wandered all the realms among  
Where Glaucus dwells, and felt his furious wrath;  
His voice was not untuned, nor was his tongue,  
For full of strange and wondrous grace were BOTH,  
Wherefore ERCILLA doth deserve to gain  
Memorial everlasting in this plain.

Of JUAN DE SILVA I to you declare  
That he deserves all glory and all praise,  
Not only for that Phoebus holds him dear,  
But for the worth that is in him always;  
Thereto his works a testimony clear  
Will be, wherein his intellect doth blaze  
With brightness which illumineth the eyes  
Of fools, dazzling at times the keen and wise.

Be the rich number of my list increased  
By him to whom Heaven doth such favour show  
That by the breath of Phoebus is his breast  
Sustained, and by Mars' valour here below;  
Thou matchest Homer, if thou purposest  
To write, thy pen unto such heights doth go,  
DIEGO OSORIO, that to all mankind  
Truly is known thy loftiness of mind.

By all the ways whereby much-speaking fame  
A cavalier illustrious can praise,

By these it doth his glorious worth proclaim,  
His deeds the while setting his name ablaze;  
His lively wit, his virtue doth inflame  
More than one tongue from height to height to raise  
FRANCISCO DE MENDOZA'S high career,  
Nor doth the flight of time bring them to fear.

Happy DON DIEGO, DE SARMIENTO bright,  
CARVAJAL famous, nursling of our choir,  
Of Hippocrene the radiance and delight,  
Youthful in years, old in poetic fire;  
Thy name will go from age to age, despite  
The waters of oblivion, rising higher,  
Made famous by thy works, from grace to grace,  
From tongue to tongue, and from race unto race.

Now chief of all I would to you display  
Ripeness of intellect in tender years,  
Gallantry, skill that no man can gainsay,  
A bearing courteous, worth that knows no fears;  
One that in Tuscan, as in Spanish, may  
His talent show, as he who did rehearse  
The tale of Este's line and did enthrall,  
And he is DON GUTIERRE CARVAJAL.

LUIS DE VARGAS, thou in whom I see  
A genius ripe in thy few tender days,  
Strive thou to win the prize of victory,  
The guerdon of my sisters and their praise;  
So near are thou thereto, that thou to me  
Seemest triumphant, for in countless ways  
Virtuous and wise, thou strivest that thy fame  
May brightly shine with clear and living flame.

Honour doth Tagus' beauteous bank receive  
From countless heavenly spirits dwelling there,

Who make this present age wherein we live,  
Than that of Greeks and Romans happier;  
Concerning them this message do I give  
That they are worthy of sepulture here,  
And proof thereof their works have to us given,  
Which point us out the way that leads to Heaven.

Two famous doctors first themselves present,  
In Phoebus' sciences of foremost name,  
The twain in age alone are different,  
In character and wit they are the same;  
All near and far they fill with wonderment,  
They win amongst their fellows so much fame  
By their exalted wisdom and profound  
That soon they needs must all the world astound.

The name that cometh first into my song,  
Of the twain whom I now to praise make bold,  
Is CAMPUZANO, great the great among,  
Whom as a second Phoebus ye can hold;  
His lofty wit, his more than human tongue,  
Doth a new universe to us unfold  
Of Indies and of glories better far,  
As better than gold is wisdom's guiding star.

Doctor SUAREZ is the next I sing,  
And SOSA is the name he adds thereto —  
He who with skilful tongue doth everything  
That free from blemish is and best, pursue;  
Whoso should quench within the wondrous spring  
His thirst, as he did, will not need to view  
With eye of envy learnèd Homer's praise,  
Nor his who sang to us of Troy ablaze.

Of Doctor BAZA, if of him I might  
Say what I feel, I without doubt maintain,  
That I would fill all present with delight;  
His learning, virtue, and his charm are plain  
First have I been to raise him to the height



Where now he stands, and I am she who fain  
Would make his name eternal whilst the Lord  
Of Delos shall his radiant light afford.

If fame should bring the tidings to your ear  
Of the strange works a famous mind displays,  
Conceptions lofty, well-ordered, and clear,  
Learning that would the listener amaze;  
Things that the thought checketh in mid career,  
And tongue cannot express, but straightway stays —  
Whene'er ye are in trouble and in doubt  
'Tis the Licentiate DAZA leads you out.

Master GARAI'S melodious works incite  
Me to extol him more than all beside;  
Thou, fame, excelling time of hasty flight,  
His celebration deem a work of praise;  
Fame, thou wilt find the fame he gives more bright  
Than is thine own in spreading far and wide  
His praise, for thou must, speaking of his fame,  
From many-tongued to truthful change thy name.

That intellect, which, leaving far behind  
Man's greatest, doth to the divine aspire.  
Which in Castilian doth no pleasure find —  
The heroic verse of Rome doth him inspire:  
New Homer in Mantuan new combined  
Is Master CORDOVA. Worthy his lyre  
Of praise in happy Spain, in every land.  
Where shines the sun, where ocean laves the strand.

Doctor FRANCISCO DIAZ, I can well  
Assure my shepherds here concerning thee,  
That with glad heart and joy unspeakable  
They can thy praises sing unceasingly;  
And if I do not on thy praises dwell —  
The highest is thy due, and worthily —  
'Tis that our time is short, nor do I know  
How I can e'er repay thee what I owe.

LUJAN, who with thy toga merited  
Dost thine own Spain and foreign lands delight,  
Who with thy sweet and well-known muse dost spread  
Thy fame abroad to Heaven's loftiest height,  
Life shall I give thee after thou art dead,  
And I shall cause, in swift and rapid flight,  
The fame of thine unequalled mind to roll  
And spread from ours unto the opposing pole.

His lofty mind doth a Licentiate show,  
And worth,— 'tis a beloved friend of yours —  
I mean JUAN DE VERGARA, whom ye know,  
An honour to this happy land of ours;  
By a clear open pathway he doth go,  
'Tis I that guide aright his steps and powers.  
Unto his height to rise is my reward,  
His mind and virtue joy to me afford.

That my bold song may praise and glory gain,  
Another shall I name to you, from whom  
My song to-day shall greater force attain  
And to the height of my desire shall come;  
And this it is that maketh me refrain  
From more than naming him and finding room  
To sing how lofty genius hath been sung  
By DON ALONSO DE MORALES' tongue.

Over the rugged steep unto the fane  
Where dwelleth fame, there climbs and draweth near  
A noble youth, who breaks with might and main  
Though every hindrance, though 'tis fraught with fear,  
And needs must come so nigh that it is plain  
That fame doth in prophetic song declare  
The laurel which it hath prepared ere now,  
HERNANDO MALDONADO, is for thy brow.

Adorned with noble laurel here ye see  
His learned brow, who hath such glory found

In every science, every art, that he  
O'er all the globe is even now renowned;  
Oh golden age, oh happy century,  
With such a man as this worthily crowned!  
What century, what age doth with thee vie.  
When Marco Antonio de la Vega's nigh?

A DIEGO IS the next I call to mind,  
Who hath in truth MENDOZA for his name,  
Worthy that history should her maker find  
In him alone, and soar as soars his fame;  
His learning and his virtue, which, enshrined  
In every heart, the whole world doth acclaim,  
Absent and present both alike astound,  
Whether in near or distant nations found.

High Phoebus an acquaintance doth possess —  
Acquaintance say I? Nay, a trusty friend,  
In whom alone he findeth happiness,  
A treasurer of knowledge without end;  
'Tis he who of set purpose doth repress  
Himself, so that his all he may not spend,  
DIEGO DURAN, in whom we ever find,  
And shall find, wisdom, worth, and force of mind.

But who is he who sings his agonies  
With voice resounding, and with matchless taste?  
Phoebus, and sage Arion, Orpheus wise,  
Find ever their abode within his breast;  
E'en from the realms where first the dawn doth rise,  
Unto the distant regions of the west,  
Is he renowned and loved right loyally,  
For, LOPEZ MALDONADO, thou art he.

Who could the praises, shepherds mine, recite  
Of him ye love, a shepherd crowned by fame,  
Brightest of all the shepherds that are bright,  
Who is to all known by FILIDA'S name?  
The skill, the learning and the choice delight,

The rare intelligence, the heart aflame,  
Of Luis DE MONTALVO aye assure  
Glory and honour whilst the heavens endure.

His temples now let holy Ebro bind  
With ivy evergreen and olive white,  
And with acanthus golden, may he find  
In joyous song his fame forever bright:  
The fruitful Nile hath his renown resigned,  
For Ebro's ancient worth to such a height  
Pedro de Linan's subtle pen doth lift,  
Sum of the bliss which is Apollo's gift.

I think upon the lofty soul and rare  
By Don Alonso de VALDES possessed,  
And am spurred on to sing and to declare  
That he excels the rarest and the best;  
This hath he shown already, and more clear  
By the elegance and grace wherewith his breast  
He doth reveal, with bitter pangs distraught,  
Praising the ill that cruel Love hath wrought.  
Before an intellect in wonder bow,  
Wherein all that the wish can ask is found,  
An intellect, that though it liveth now  
On earth, is with the pomp of Heaven crowned;  
All that I see and hear and read and know  
Of Pedro de Padilla the renowned,  
Whether he treat of peace or war's alarm,  
Brings fresh delight and wonder by its charm.

Gaspar Alfonso, thou who wingst thy flight  
Unto the immortal realms, so orderest  
That I can scarce thy praises all recite,  
If I must praise thee as thou meritest;  
The pleasing, fruitful plants that on the height  
Of our renowned Parnassus find their nest,  
All offer wealthy laurels for a crown  
To circle and adorn thy brows alone.

Of Cristoval de Mesa I can say  
That to your vale he will an honour be;  
While he is living, nay, when life away  
Hath fled, still ye can praise him fittingly;  
His lofty weighty style can win to-day  
Renown and honour, and the melody  
Of his heroic verse, though silent fame  
Remain, and I remember not his name.

Don Pedro de Ribera doth, ye know,  
Wealth to your banks, and beauty, shepherds, bring,  
Wherefore give him the honour that ye owe,  
For I will be the first his praise to sing:  
His virtue, his sweet muse doth clearly show  
A noble subject, where, on noisy wing,  
Fame, hundred thousand fames, their powers might spend  
And strive his praises only to extend.

Thou, who didst bring the treasure manifold  
Of verse in a new form the shores unto  
Of the fair fruitful stream, whose bed of gold  
Maketh it famous wheresoe'er it flow,  
Thy glorious fame I promise to uphold  
With the applause and reverence that we owe  
To thee, Caldera, and thy peerless mind;  
With laurel, ivy, I thy brows shall bind.

Let fame, and let the memory I possess,  
For ever famous make the memory  
Of him who hath transformed to loveliness  
The glory of our Christian poesy;  
The knowledge and the charm let all confess,  
From the dayspring to where the day doth die,  
Of great Francisco de Guzman, whose are  
The arts of Phoebus as the arts of war.

Of the Captain Salcedo 'tis quite clear  
That his celestial genius doth attain  
Unto the point most lofty, keen and rare,

That can be fancied by the thought of man;  
If I compare him, him I do compare  
Unto himself — Comparisons, 'tis plain,  
Are useless, and to measure worth so true,  
All measures must be faulty, or askew.

By reason of the wit and curious grace  
Of Thomas de Gracian, I pray, permit  
That I should choose within this vale a place  
Which shall his virtue, knowledge, worth, befit;  
And if it run with his deserts apace,  
'Twill be so lofty and so exquisite  
That few, methinks, may hope with him to vie,  
His genius and his virtues soar so high.

Fain would BAPTISTA DE VIVAR you praise,  
Sisters, with unpremeditated lyre;  
Such grace, discretion, prudence, he displays,  
That, muses though ye be, ye can admire;  
He will not hymn Narcissus in his lays  
Nor the disdains that lonely Echo tire,  
But he will sing his cares which had their birth  
'Twixt sad forgetfulness and hope of mirth.

Now terror new, now new alarm and fear  
Cometh upon me and o'erpowereth the,  
Only because I would, yet cannot bear  
Unto the loftiest heights of dignity  
Grave BALTASAR, who doth as surname wear  
TOLEDO, though my fancy whispereth me  
That of his learned quill the lofty flight  
Must bear him soon to the empyrean height.

There is a mind wherein experience shows  
That knowledge findeth fitting dwelling-place,  
Not only in ripe age amidst the snows,  
But in green years, in early youthful days;  
With no man shall I argue, or oppose  
A truth so plain, the more because my praise,

If it perchance unto his ears be brought,  
Thine honour hath, LOPE DE VEGA, sought.

Now holy Betis to my fancy's eye  
Presents himself with peaceful olive crowned,  
Making his plaint that I have passed him by, —  
His angry words now in my ears resound —  
He asks that in this narrative, where I  
Speak of rare intellects, place should be found  
For those that dwell upon his banks, and so  
With voice sonorous I his will shall do.

But what am I to do? For when I seek  
To start, a thousand wonders I divine,  
Many a Pindus' or Parnassus' peak,  
And choirs of lovelier sisters than the nine,  
Whereat my lofty spirits faint and weak  
Become, and more when by some strange design  
I hear a sound repeated as in echo,  
Whene'er the name is namèd of PACHECO.

PACHECO 'tis whom Phoebus calls his friend,  
On whom he and my sisters so discreet  
Did from his feeble tender years attend  
With new affection and new converse sweet;  
I too his genius and his writings send  
By strange paths never trod by mortal feet,  
And ever have sent, till they rise on high  
Unto the loftiest place of dignity.

Unto this pass I come, that, though I sing  
With all my powers divine HERRERA'S praise,  
My wearied toil but little fruit will bring,  
Although to the fifth sphere my words him raise;  
But, should friendship's suspicions to me cling,  
Upon his works and his true glory gaze,  
HERNANDO doth by learning all enthrall  
From Ganges unto Nile, from pole to pole.

FERNANDO would I name to you again  
DE CANGAS surnamed, whom the world admires,  
Through whom the learning lives and doth sustain  
Itself that to the hallowed bays aspires;  
If there be any intellect that fain  
Would lift its gaze to the celestial fires,  
Let it but gaze on him, and it will find  
The loftiest and the most ingenious mind.

Concerning CRISTOVAL, who hath the name  
Of DE VILLAROEL, ye must believe  
That he full well deserveth that his name  
Ne'er should oblivion's gloomy waters cleave;  
His wit let all admire, his worth acclaim  
With awe, his wit and worth let all receive  
As the most exquisite we can discover,  
Where'er the sun doth shine, or earth doth cover.

The streams of eloquence which did of old  
Flow from the breast of stately Cicero,  
Which, gladdening the Athenian people bold,  
Did honour on Demosthenes bestow,  
The minds o'er whom Time hath already rolled —  
Who bore themselves so proudly long ago —  
Master FRANCISCO DE MEDINA, now  
Let them before thy lofty learning bow.

Rightly thou canst, renownèd Betis, now  
With Mincio, Arno, and with Tiber vie,  
Uplift in happiness thy hallowed brow,  
And spread thee in new bosoms spaciously:  
Since Heaven wished, that doth thy bliss allow,  
Such fame to give thee, honour, dignity,  
As he doth bring unto thy banks so fair,  
BALTASAR DEL ALCAZAR, who dwells there.

Another ye will see, summed up in whom  
Apollo's rarest learning will ye see,  
Which doth the semblance of itself assume,



When spread through countless others it may be;  
In him 'tis greater, in him it doth come  
To such a height of excellence that he,  
The Licentiate MOSQUERA well can claim  
To rival e'en Apollo's self in fame.

Behold! yon prudent man who doth adorn  
And deck with sciences his limpid breast,  
Shrinks not from gazing on the fountain born  
In wisdom's waters from our mountain's crest;  
In the clear peerless stream he doth not scorn  
To quench his thirst, and thus thou flourishest,  
DOMINGO DE BECERRA, here on earth,  
For all recount the mighty doctor's worth.

Words I might speak of famous ESPINEL  
That pass beyond the wit of human kind,  
Concerning all the sciences that dwell,  
Nurtured by Phoebus' breath, within his mind;  
But since my tongue the least part cannot tell  
Of the great things that in my soul I find,  
I say no more save that he doth aspire  
To Heaven, whether he take his pen or lyre.

If ruddy Phoebus ye would fain espy  
With blood-red Mars in equal balance weighed,  
On great CARRANZA seek to cast an eye,  
In whom each hath his constant dwelling made;  
With such discretion, art, dexterity,  
Hath he his power o'er pen and lance displayed  
That the dexterity once cleft apart  
He hath brought back to science and to art.

Of LAZARO LUIS IRANZO, lyre  
Than mine must needs be tuned with better art,  
To sing the good that Heaven doth inspire,  
The worth that Heaven fosters in his heart:  
By Mars' and Phoebus' path he doth inspire  
To climb unto the lofty heights apart

Where human thought scarce reacheth, yet, despite  
Fortune and fate, he will reach them aright.

BALTASAR DE ESCOBAR, who doth adorn  
The famèd shores of Tiber's stream to-day,  
Whom the broad banks of hallowed Betis mourn,  
Their beauty lost when he is far away,  
A fertile wit, if he perchance return  
To his beloved native land, T pay  
Unto his youthful and his honoured brow  
The laurel and the honour that I owe.

JUAN SANZ, called DE ZUMETA, with what power,  
What honour, palm, or laurel shall be crowned,  
If from the Indian to the ruddy Moor  
No muse as his so perfect can be found?  
Here I anew his fame to him restore  
By telling you, my shepherds, how profound  
Will be Apollo's joy at any praise  
Which ye may bring to swell ZUMETA'S praise.

Unto JUAN DE LAS CUEVAS fitting place  
Give, shepherds, whensoever in this spot  
He shall present himself. His muse's grace  
And his rare wit this prize for him have wrought;  
His works I know, though Time may flee apace,  
In Time's despite, shall never be forgot,  
From dread oblivion they shall free his name,  
Which shall abide with bright and lofty fame.

If him ye ever see, with honour greet  
The famous man, of whom I now shall tell,  
And celebrate his praise in verses sweet,  
As one who doth therein so much excel;  
Bibaldo he — to make my tale complete,  
Adam Bibaldo — who doth gild and swell  
The glory of this happy age of ours  
With the choice bloom of intellectual powers.

E'en as is wont to be with varied flowers  
Adorned and wealthy made the flowery May,  
With many varied sciences and powers  
DON JUAN AGUAYO'S intellect is gay;  
Though I in praising him might pass the hours,  
I say but this, that I now but essay,  
And at another time I shall unfold  
Things that your hearts with wonderment will hold.

Don Juan Gutierrez Rufo's famous name  
I wish in deathless memory to live,  
That wise and foolish may alike acclaim  
In wonderment his noble narrative;  
Let hallowed Betis give to him the fame  
His style doth merit, let them glory give  
To him, who know, may Heaven with renown  
Equal unto his towering flight him crown.

In DON LUIS DE GONGORA I show  
A rare and lively wit that hath no peer,  
His works delight me, their wealth I bestow  
Not on myself alone, but everywhere;  
And if I merit aught, because ye know  
My love for you, see that your praises bear  
To endless life his lofty love profound  
Despite the flight of time and death's cruel wound.

Let the green laurel, let the ivy green,  
Nay, let the sturdy holm-oak crown the brow  
Of GONZALO CERVANTES, for I ween  
Worthy of being crowned therewith art thou;  
More than Apollo's learning in thee seen,  
In thee doth Mars the burning ardour show  
Of his mad rage, yet with so just a measure  
That through thee he inspireth dread and pleasure.

Thou, who with thy sweet plectrum didst extol  
Celidon's name and glory everywhere,  
Whose wondrous and well-polished verses call

Thee unto laurels and to triumphs fair,  
GONZALO GOMEZ, take the coronal,  
Sceptre and throne from her who holds thee dear,  
In token that the bard of Celidon  
Deserveth to be Lord of Helicon.

Thou, Darro, far renownèd stream of gold,  
How well thou canst thyself exalt on high,  
And with new current and new strength, behold,  
Thou canst e'en with remote Hydaspes vie!

MATEO DE BERRIO maketh bold  
To honour thee with every faculty  
So that through him e'en now the voice of fame  
Doth spread abroad through all the world thy name.

Of laurel green a coronal entwine,  
That ye therewith the worthy brows may crown  
Of SOTO BARAHONA, shepherds mine,  
A man of wisdom, eloquence, renown;  
Although the holy flood, the fount divine  
Of Helicon, should BARAHONA drown,  
Mysterious chance! he yet would come to sight  
As if he were upon Parnassus' height.

Within the realms antarctic I might say  
That sovereign minds eternal fame attain,  
For if these realms abound in wealth to-day,  
Minds more than human also they contain;  
In many now I can this truth display,  
But I can give you plenteous store in twain,  
One from New Spain, he an Apollo new,  
The other, a sun unrivalled from Peru.

FRANCISCO DE TERRAZAS is the name  
Of one, renowned in Spain and in the West,  
New Hippocrene his noble heart aflame  
Hath given to his happy native nest;  
Unto the other cometh equal fame,  
Since by his heavenly genius he hath blest  
Far Arequipa with eternal spring —  
DIEGO MARTINEZ DE RIBERA I sing.

Beneath a happy star a radiance bright  
Here did flash forth, so rich in signal worth  
That his renown its tiniest spark of light  
From East to West hath spread o'er all the earth;  
And when this light was born, all valorous might  
Was born therewith, PICADO had his birth,  
Even my brother, Pallas' brother too,

Whose living semblance we in him did view.

IF I must give the glory due to thee,  
Great ALONSO DE ESTRADA, thou to-day  
Deservest that I should not hurriedly  
Thy wisdom and thy wondrous mind display;  
Thou dost enrich the land that ceaselessly  
To Betis doth a bounteous tribute pay,  
Unequal the exchange, for no reward  
Can payment for so fair a debt afford.

DON JUAN, Heaven gave thee as the rare delight  
Of this fair country with no grudging hand,  
AVALOS' glory, and RIBERA'S light,  
Honour of Spain, of every foreign land,  
Blest Spain, wherein with many a radiance bright  
Thy works shall teach the world to understand  
All that Nature can give us, rich and free,  
Of genius bright and rare nobility.

He who is happy in his native land,  
In Limar's limpid waters revelling,  
The cooling winds and the renowned strand  
With his divinest verses gladdening, —  
Let him come, straightway ye will understand  
From his spirit and discretion why I sing,

For SANCHE DE RIBERA everywhere  
Is Phoebus' self and Mars without a peer.

A Homer new this vale of high renown  
Did once upon a time from Betis wrest,  
On whom of wit and gallantry the crown  
We can bestow — his greatness is confessed;  
The Graces moulded him to be their own,  
Heaven sendeth him in every grace the best,  
Your Tagus' banks already know his fame,  
PEDRO DE MONTESDOCA is his name.

Wonder the illustrious DIEGO DE AGUILAR  
In everything the wish can ask inspires,  
A royal eagle he, who flieth far  
Unto a height whereto no man aspires;  
His pen 'mongst thousands wins the spoil of war,  
For before it the loftiest retires,  
Guanuco will his style, his valour tell  
Of such renown; Guanuco knows it well.

A GONZALO FERNANDEZ draweth near,  
A mighty captain in Apollo's host,  
In whose heroic name that hath no peer,  
SOTOMAYOR to-day doth make his boast;  
His verse is wondrous and his wisdom clear  
Where'er he is beheld from coast to coast,  
And if his pen doth so much joy afford,  
He is no less renowned by his sword.

HENRIQUE Garces the Peruvian land  
Enricheth. There with sweet melodious rhyme,  
With cunning, skilful, and with ready hand,  
In him the hardest task did highest climb;  
New speech, new praise he to the Tuscan grand  
Hath given in the sweet Spanish of our time;  
Who shall the greatest praises from him take,  
E'en though Petrarch himself again awake?

FERNANDEZ DE PINEDA'S talent rare  
And excellent, and his immortal vein  
Make him to be in no small part the heir  
Of Hippocrene's waters without stain;  
Since whatsoe'er he would therefrom, is ne'er  
Denied him, since such glory he doth gain  
In the far West, let him here claim the part  
He now deserveth for his mind and art.

And thou that hast thy native Betis made,  
With envy filled, to murmur righteously,  
That thy sweet tuneful song hath been displayed  
Unto another earth, another sky,  
Noble JUAN DE MESTANZA, undismayed  
Rejoice, for whilst the fourth Heaven shall supply  
Its light, thy name, resplendent in its worth,  
Shall be without a peer o'er all the earth.

All that can e'er in a sweet vein be found  
Of charm, ye will in one man only find,  
Who bridleth to his muse's gladsome sound  
The ocean's madness and the hurrying wind;  
For BALTASAR DE ORENA is renowned,  
From pole to pole his fame, swift as the wind,  
Doth run, and from the East unto the West,  
True honour he of our Parnassus' crest.

A fruitful and a precious plant I know  
That hath been to the highest mountain found  
In Thessaly transplanted thence, and, lo!  
A plant ere this with happy fruitage crowned;  
Shall I be still nor tell what fame doth show  
Of PEDRO DE ALVARADO the renowned?  
Renowned, yet no less brightly doth he shine,  
For rare on earth is such a mind divine.

Thou, who with thy new muse of wondrous grace  
Art of the moods of love, CAIRASCO, singing,  
And of that common varying fickleness,



Where cowards 'gainst the brave themselves are flinging;  
If from the Grand Canary to this place  
Thou art thy quick and noble ardour bringing,  
A thousand laurels, for thou hast deserved,  
My shepherds offer, praises well-deserved.

What man, time-honoured Tormes, would deny  
That thou canst e'en the Nile itself excel,  
If VEGA in thy praises can outvie  
E'en Tityrus who did of Mincio tell?  
DAMIAN, I know thy genius riseth high  
To where this honour doth thine honours swell,  
For my experience of many years  
Thy knowledge and thy virtue choice declares.

Although thy genius and thy winning grace,  
FRANCISCO SANCHEZ, were to give me leave,  
If I dared form the wish to hymn thy praise,  
Censure should I for lack of skill receive;  
None but a master-tongue, whose dwelling place  
Is in the heavens, can be the tongue to achieve  
The lengthy course and of thy praises speak,  
For human tongue is for this task too weak.

The things that an exalted spirit show,  
The things that are so rare, so new in style,  
Which fame, esteem, and knowledge bring to view  
By hundred thousand proofs of wit and toil,  
Cause me to give the praises that are due  
To DON FRANCISCO DE LAS CUEVAS, while  
Fame that proclaims the tidings everywhere,  
Seeks not to linger in her swift career.

At such a time as this I would have crowned  
My sweet song gladly, shepherds, with the praise  
Of one whose genius doth the world astound,  
And could your senses ravish and amaze;  
In him the union and the sum is found  
Of all I have praised and have yet to praise;

FRAY LUIS DE LEON it is I sing,  
Whom I love and adore, to whom I cling.

What means, what ways of praise shall I achieve,  
What pathways that yon great MATIAS' name  
May in the world for countless ages live,  
Who hath ZUNIGA for his other name?  
Unto him all my praises let me give,  
Though he is man and I immortal am,  
Because his genius truly is divine,  
Worthily praise and honour in him shine.

Turn ye the thought that passeth speedily  
Unto Pisuerga's lovely banks divine,  
Ye will see how the lofty minds whereby  
They are adorned, enrich this tale of mine;  
And not the banks alone, but e'en the sky,  
Wherein the stars resplendent ever shine,  
Itself assuredly can honour claim,  
When it receives the men whom now I name.

Thou, DAMASIO DE FRIAS, canst alone  
Thy praises utter, for, although our chief,  
Even Apollo's self should praise thee, none  
But could be in thy praises all too brief;  
Thou art the pole-star that hath ever shone  
Certain and sure, that sendeth sweet relief  
From storm, and favouring gales, and safe to shore  
Brings him who saileth wisdom's ocean o'er.

ANDRES SANZ DEL PORTILLO, send to me  
That breath, I pray, whereby Phoebus doth move  
Thy learned pen, and lofty fantasy,  
That I may praise thee as it doth behove;  
For my rough tongue will never able be,  
Whate'er the ways it here may try and prove,  
To find a way of praising as I would  
All that I feel and see in thee of good.

Happiest of minds, thou towerest in thy flight  
Above Apollo's highest, with thy ray  
So bright, thou givest to our darkness light,  
Thou guidest us, however far we stray;  
And though thou dost now blind me with thy light  
And hast my mind o'erwhelmèd with dismay,  
Glory beyond the rest I give to thee,  
For, SORIA, glory thou hast given to me.

If, famous Cantoral, SO rich a meed  
Of praise thy works achieve in every part,  
THOU of my praises wilt have little need,  
Unless I praise thee with new mode and art;  
With words significant of noble deed,  
With all THE skill that Heaven doth impart,  
I marvel, praise in silence, thus I reach  
A height I cannot hope to gain by speech.

IF I to sing thy praise have long delayed,  
THOU, VACA Y DE QUINONES, mayst forgive  
THE past forgetfulness I have displayed  
And the repentance I now show receive,  
For with loud cries and proclamation made  
O'er the broad world this task I shall achieve  
In open and in secret, that thy fame  
Shall spread abroad, and brightly gleam thy name.

Thy rich and verdant strand no juniper  
Enricheth, nor sad cypress; but a crown  
Of laurels and of myrtles it doth wear,  
Bright Ebro, rich in waters and renown,  
As best I can, I now thy praise declare,  
Praising that bliss which Heaven hath sent down  
Unto thy banks, for geniuses more bright  
Dwell on thy banks e'en than the stars of night.

Two brothers witnesses will be thereto,  
Two daysprings they, twin suns of poesy,  
On whom all that it could of art bestow

And genius, Heaven lavished bounteously;  
Thoughts of wise age, though still in youthful glow,  
Converse mature, and lovely fantasy,  
Fashion a worthy, deathless aureola  
For LUPERCIO LEONARDO DE ARGENSOLA.

With envy blest, in holy rivalry  
Methinks the younger brother doth aspire  
To match the elder, since he riseth high  
To where no human eye e'er riseth higher;  
Wherefore he writes and sings melodiously  
Histories countless with so sweet a lyre  
That young BARTOLOME hath well deserved  
Whatever for LUPERCIO is reserved.

If good beginning and a sequence fair  
Inspire the hope of an illustrious close  
In everything, my mind may now declare  
That thus thou shalt exalt o'er all its foes,  
COSME PARIENTE. Thus thou canst with rare  
Confidence to thy wise and noble brows  
Promise the crown that rightly hath been gained  
By thy bright intellect and life unstained.

MURILLO, thou dost dwell in solitude,  
Heaven thy companion, and dost there display  
That other muses, cleverer and more good,  
Ne'er leave thy Christian side and go away;  
Thou from my sisters didst receive thy food,  
And now thou dost, this kindness to repay,  
Guide us and teach us heavenly things to sing,  
Pleasing to Heaven, and this world profiting.

Turia, who loudly didst of old proclaim  
The excellence of the children born to thee,  
If thou shouldst hearken to the words I frame,  
Moved BY no envy, by no rivalry,  
Thou wilt hear how by those whom I shall name,  
Thy fame is bettered; their presence with thee,

Their valour, virtue, genius, are thy dower,  
And make thee o'er Indus and Ganges tower.

DON JUAN COLOMA, thou within whose breast  
Hath been enclosed so much of Heaven's grace,  
Who hast with bridle stern envy repressed,  
And given to fame a thousand tongues to blaze,  
From Tagus to the kingdom fruitfulest,  
Abroad thy name and worth in words of praise,  
COUNT DE ELDA, blest in all, thou dost bestow  
On Turia greater fame than that of Po.

He in whose breast a spring that is divine  
Through him, doth ever copiously abound,  
To whom his choir of flashing lights incline,  
And rightly — they their Lord in him have found —  
Who should by all, from Ethiop 'neath the Line  
To Eskimo, with name unique be crowned,  
DON LUIS GARCERAN is peerless, bright,  
Grand Master of Montesa, world's delight.

Within this famous vale he should receive  
A place illustrious, an abode renowned,  
HE to whom fame the name would gladly give  
Wherewith his intellect is fitly crowned;  
BE it the care of Heaven to achieve  
HIS praise — from Heaven comes his worth profound —  
And laud what is beyond my faculties  
In DON ALONSO REBOLLEDO wise.

DOCTOR FALCON, SO lofty is thy flight  
That thou beyond the lordly eagle high  
Dost rise; thy genius unto Heaven's height  
Ascends, leaving this vale of misery;  
Wherefore I fear, wherefore I dread aright  
That, though I praise thee, thou wilt yet espy  
Cause of complaint in that for nights and days  
My voice and tongue I use not in thy praise.

If e'en as fortune doth, sweet poesy  
Had but an ever-changing wheel possessed,  
Swifter in speed than Dian through the sky,  
Which was not, is not, ne'er shall be at rest,  
Thereon let MICER ARTIEDA lie —  
The wheel unchanged the while amid the test —  
And he would ever keep the topmost place  
For knowledge, intellect, and virtue's grace.

The goodly shower of praises thou didst pour  
Upon the rarest intellects and best,  
Alone thou meritest and dost secure,  
Alone thou dost secure and meritest;  
GIL POLO, let thy hopes be firm and sure,  
That in this vale thy ashes will find rest  
In a new tomb by these my shepherds reared,  
Wherein they will be guarded and revered.

CRISTOBAL DE VIRUES, since thou dost vaunt  
A knowledge and a worth like to thy years,  
Thyself the genius and the virtue chant  
Wherewith thou fleest the world's beguiling fears;  
A fruitful land and a well-nurtured plant —  
In Spain and foreign lands I shall rehearse  
And for the fruit of thy exalted mind  
Win fame and honour and affection kind.

If like unto the mind he cloth display  
SILVESTRE DE ESPINOSA'S praise must be,  
A voice more skilled were needed and more gay  
A longer time and greater faculty;  
But since my voice he guideth on the way,  
This guerdon true shall I bestow, that he  
May have the blessing Delos' god cloth bring  
To the choice flood of Hippocrene's spring.

The world adorning as he comes in view  
Amongst them an Apollo I behold,

GARCIA ROMERO, discreet, gallant too,  
Worthiest of being in this list enrolled;  
If dark Peneus' child, whose story true  
Hath been in Ovid's chronicles retold,  
Had found him in the plains of Thessaly,  
Not laurel, but ROMERO would she be.

It breaks the silence and the hallowed bound,  
Pierces the air, and riseth to the sky,  
The heavenly, hallowed, and heroic sound  
That speaks in FRAY PEDRO DE HUETE'S cry;

Of his exalted intellect profound  
Fame sang, sings and shall sing unceasingly,  
Taking his works as witness of her song  
To spread amazement all the world among.

Needs must I now to the last end draw near,  
And of the greatest deed I e'er designed  
Make a beginning now, which shall, I fear,  
Move unto bitter wrath Apollo kind;  
Since, although style be wanting, I prepare  
To praise with rustic and untutored mind  
Two suns that Spain, the country of their birth,  
Illumine, and moreover all the earth.

Apollo's hallowed, honourable lore,  
Discretion of a courtier mature,  
And years well-spent, experience, which a store  
Of countless prudent counsels doth assure,  
Acuteness of intellect, a ready power  
To mark and to resolve whate'er obscure  
Difficulty and doubt before them comes, —  
Each of these in these twin suns only blooms.

Now, shepherds, I in these two poets find  
An epilogue to this my lengthy lay;  
Though I for them the praises have designed  
Which ye have heard, I do not them repay;  
For unto them is debtor every mind,  
From them I win contentment every day,  
Contentment from them winneth all the earth  
E'en wonder, for 'tis Heaven gives them birth.

In them I wish to end my melody,  
Yet I begin an admiration new,  
And if ye think I go too far, when I  
Say who they are, behold, I vanquish you;  
By them I am exalted to the sky,  
And without them shame ever is my due;  
'Tis LAINEZ, FIGUEROA 'tis I name



Worthy eternal and unceasing fame.

Scarce had the fair nymph ended the last accents of her delightful song, when the flames which were divided, uniting once more, enclosed her in the midst, and straightway, as they were gradually consumed, the glowing fire in a little while vanished, and the discreet muse from before the eyes of all, at a time when already the bright dawn was beginning to reveal her cool and rosy cheeks over the spacious sky, giving glad tokens of the coming day. And straightway the venerable Telesio, setting himself on Meliso's tomb, and surrounded by ALL the pleasing company who were there, all lending him a pleasing attention and strange silence, began to speak to them in this wise: 'What you have seen this past night in this very spot and with your eyes, discreet and gallant shepherds, and fair shepherdesses, will have given you to understand how acceptable to Heaven is the laudable custom we have of performing these yearly sacrifices and honourable funeral rites, for the happy souls of the bodies which by your decree deserved to have burial in this famous valley. I say this to you, my friends, in order that henceforth with more fervour and diligence you may assist in carrying out so holy and famous a work, since you now see how rare and lofty are the spirits OF which the beauteous Calliope has told us, for all are worthy not only OF your, but of all possible praises. And think not that THE pleasure is small I have felt in learning from so true a narration how great is the number of the men of divine genius who live in our Spain to-day; for it always has been and is held by all foreign nations that the spirits are not many, but few, that in the science of poetry show that they are of lofty spirit, the real fact being as different as we see, since each of those the nymph has named excels the most subtle foreigner, and they would give clear tokens of it, if poetry were valued as highly in this Spain of ours as it is in other regions. And so for this reason the renowned and clear intellects that excel in it, because of the little esteem in which the princes and the common people hold them, by their minds alone communicate their lofty and strange conceptions, without daring to publish them to the world, and I hold for my part that Heaven must have ordained it in this way because the world does not deserve, nor does our heedless age, to enjoy food so pleasant to the soul. But, since it seems to me, shepherds, that the little sleep of the past night and our long ceremonies will have made you somewhat wearied and desirous of repose, it will be well, after doing the little that remains to us to fulfil our purpose, for each to return to his hut or to the village, carrying in his memory what the muse has enjoined on us.'

And, saying this, he descended from the tomb, and crowning himself once more with new funereal branches, he went again round the pyre three times, all

following him and accompanying him in some devout prayers he was uttering. This being done, all having him in their midst, he turned his grave face to EACH side, and, bowing his head, and showing a grateful countenance and eyes full of love, he took leave of all the company, who, going some by one and some by another side of the four outlets that PLACE had, in a little while all dispersed and divided, only those OF Aurelio's village remaining, and with them Timbrio, Silerio, Nisida, and Blanca, with the famous shepherds, Elicio, Thyrsis, Damon, Lauso, Erastro, Daranio, Arsindo, and the four hapless ones, Orompo, Marsilio, Crisio, and Orfenio, with the shepherdesses Galatea, Florisa, Silveria and her friend Belisa, for whom Marsilio was dying. All these then being together, the venerable Aurelio told them that it would be well to depart at once from that place in order to reach the stream of palms in time to spend the noontide heat there, since it was so suitable a spot for it. What Aurelio was saying seemed good to all, and straightway they went with peaceful steps towards where he said. But as the fair appearance of the shepherdess Belisa would not permit Marsilio's spirits to rest, he would fain, if he had been able, and it had been allowed him, have approached her and told her of the injustice she used towards him; but, not to break through the respect which was due to Belisa's modesty, the mournful swain was more silent than his desire required. Love produced the same effects and symptoms in the souls of the lovers Elicio and Erastro, who each for himself would fain have told Galatea what she well knew already. At this moment Aurelio said: 'It does not seem to me well, shepherds, that you should show yourselves so greedy as not to be willing to respond to and repay what you owe to the larks and nightingales and to THE other painted little birds that amongst these trees are delighting and gladdening you by their untaught wondrous harmony.

Play your instruments and uplift your sounding voices, and show them that your art and skill in music excel their native music, and with such a pastime we shall feel less the tedium of the journey and the rays of the sun which already seem TO be threatening the violence with which they must needs strike the earth during this noontide heat.'

But little was necessary for Aurelio to be obeyed, for straightway Erastro played his pipe and Arsindo his rebeck, to the sound of which instruments, all giving the lead to Elicio, he began to sing in this wise: ELICIO. For the impossible I fight,

And, should I wish to retreat,  
Step nor pathway is in sight,  
For, till victory or defeat,  
Desire draweth me with might;

Though I know that I must die,  
Ere the victory I achieve,  
When I most in peril lie,  
Then it is that I receive  
*More faith in adversity.*

Never may I hope to gain  
Fortune; this is Heaven's decree.  
Heaven the works of hope hath ta'en  
And doth lavish aye on me  
Countless certainties of pain;  
But my breast of constancy,  
Which amidst Love's living flame  
Gloweth and melteth ceaselessly,  
In exchange this boon doth claim:  
More faith in adversity.

Certain doubt and fickleness  
Traitorous faith and surest fear,  
Love's unbridled wilfulness,  
Trouble ne'er the loving care  
Which is crowned with steadfastness,  
Time on hasty wing may fly,  
Absence come, or disdain cold,  
Evil grow, tranquillity  
Fail, yet I as bliss will hold  
*More faith in adversity.*

Certain folly is it not,  
And a madness sure and great,  
That I set my heart on what  
Fortune doth deny, and Fate,  
Nor is promised by my lot?  
Dread of everything have I,  
There is naught can give me pleasure,

Yet amidst such agony  
Love bestows its chiefest treasure:  
More faith in adversity.

Victory o'er my grief I gain,  
Which to such a pass is brought  
That it doth Love's height attain,  
And I find that from this thought  
Comes some solace to my pain;  
Although poor and lowly I,  
Yet relief so rich in woe  
To the fancy I apply,  
That the heart may ever know  
*More faith in adversity.*

All the more that every ill  
Comes with every ill to-day,  
AND that they my life may fill  
With more pain, though deadly they,  
They do keep me living still;

But our life in dignity  
With a noble end is crowned,  
And in mine my fame shall lie,  
For in life, in death I found  
*More faith in adversity.*

It seemed to Marsilio that what Elicio had been singing accorded WITH his mood so well that he wished to FOLLOW HIM IN the same idea, and so, without waiting for anyone else to take THE lead in it, to the sound of the same instruments, he began to sing thus: MARSILIO. Ah! 'tis easy for the wind  
All the hopes to bear away

That could ever be designed

And could their foundations lay  
On vain fancies of the mind;  
For all hopes OF loving gain,  
All the ways Time doth uncover,  
Wholly are destroyed and slain;  
But the while in the true lover  
Faith, faith only, doth remain.

It achieves such potency  
That, despite disdain which never  
Offereth security,  
Bliss it promiseth me ever,  
Bliss that keeps the hope in me;  
And, though Love doth quickly wane  
In the angry breast and white  
That increaseth so my pain,  
Yet in mine, in its despite,  
Faith, faith only, doth remain.

Love, 'tis true thou dost receive  
Tribute for my loyalty,  
And so much dost thou achieve  
That my faith did never die,  
It doth with my works revive;  
My content— 'tis to thee plain —  
And my glory all decays,  
As thy fury grows amain;  
In my soul as dwelling-place  
*Faith, faith only, doth remain.*

But if it be truth declared  
And beyond all doubt have passed,  
That to faith glory is barred,  
I, who shall to faith hold fast,  
What hope I for my reward?  
Sense doth vanish with the pain  
That is pictured, all the bliss  
Flies and is not seen again,  
*And amidst such miseries*

Faith, faith only, doth remain.

With a profound sigh the hapless Marsilio ended his song, and straightway Erastro, handing over his pipe, without further delaying began to sing thus: ERASTRO. In my woe and suffering

‘Midst the pleasures of my care,  
My faith is so choice a thing,  
That it flieth not from fear  
Neither unto hope doth cling;  
’Tis not moved to agony,  
In its task of climbing high,  
To behold that joy hath fled,  
*Nor to see that life is sped*  
Where faith lives and hope is dead.

This is wondrous ‘midst my woe,  
Yet ’tis so that thus my bliss,  
If it comes, may come to show  
That amidst a thousand ’tis  
That to which the palm should go;  
Let not fame this truth deny



But unto the nations cry  
With loud tongue that Love doth rest  
Firm and loyal in my breast  
Where faith lives and hope doth die.

Ah! thy rigorous disdain  
And my merit, poor and low,  
So affright me that 'tis plain,  
Though I love thee, this I know,  
Yet I dare not tell my pain;

Ever open I espy  
The gate to my agony,  
And that life doth slow depart,  
*For thou heedest not the heart*  
Where faith lives and hope doth die.

Never doth my fancy frame  
Such a frenzied, foolish, thought  
As to think that I could claim  
Any bliss that I have sought  
By my faith and heart aflame;

Thou canst know with certainty  
My surrendered soul doth try,  
Shepherdess, to love thee true,  
*For 'tis there that thou wilt view*  
Where faith lives and hope doth die.

Erastro became silent, and straightway the absent Crisio, to the SOUND of  
THE same instruments, began to sing in THIS fashion: CRISIO. If the loyal  
heart despair

Of achieving happiness,

Whoso faints in the career  
Of THE loving passion's stress,  
What shall he as guerdon bear?  
I know not that any may

Win delight and pleasure gay  
In the sudden rush of Love,  
*If the greatest joys but prove*  
'Tis no faith that doth not stay.

This undoubted truth we know  
That in battle and in love  
He that proud and bold is, though  
Conqueror he at first may prove,  
Sinks at last beneath the blow;  
And the wise man knows to-day

That the victory ever lay  
'Midst the strife in constancy,  
*And he knows, whate'er it be*  
'Tis no faith that doth not stay.

Whoso seeks in love to gain  
Nothing save his happiness,  
In his fickle thought and vain,  
Faith that shall withstand all stress  
Cannot for one hour remain;  
I myself these words would say,  
If my faith should not display

Constancy amidst the storm  
Of ill, as when hope is warm:  
'Tis no faith that doth not stay.

Madness of a lover new,  
His impetuous hastening,  
Sighs and sadness, these, 'tis true,  
Are but fleeting clouds of spring,  
In a moment lost to view:  
'Tis not love he doth display,  
Greed and folly lead astray,  
For he loves, yet loveth not,  
No man loves who dieth not,  
'Tis no faith that doth not stay.

All approved of the order the shepherds were keeping in their songs, and with desire they were waiting for Thyrsis or Damon to begin; but at once Damon satisfied them, for, as Crisio finished, to the sound of his own rebeck, he sang thus: DAMON. Thankless Amaryllis fair,

Who shall make thee tender prove,  
If the faith of my true love  
And the anguish of my care  
Do thee but to hardness move?  
Maiden, 'tis to thee well known  
That the love which is in me  
Leads to this extremity:  
*Save my faith in God alone*  
Naught is faith but faith in thee.

But although I go so high  
In love for a mortal thing,  
Such bliss to my woe doth cling  
That the soul I raise thereby  
To the land whence it doth spring;  
Thus this truth I know full well  
That my love remains in me  
In life, in death, ceaselessly,  
And, if faith in love doth dwell,  
Naught is faith but faith in thee.

All the years that I have passed  
In my services of love,  
My soul's sacrifices prove  
All the cares that hold me fast  
And the faith that doth me move:  
Wherefore for the ill I bear  
I will ask no remedy,  
Should I ask it willingly,  
'Tis because, my lady fair,  
Naught is faith but faith in thee

In my soul's tempestuous ocean  
Peace and calm I ne'er have found,  
And my faith is never crowned  
With that hope and glad emotion  
Whereon faith itself doth ground;



Love and fortune I deplore  
Yet revenge is not for me,

For they bring felicity  
In that, though I hope no more,  
Naught is faith but faith in thee.

Damon's song fully confirmed in Timbrio and in Silerio the good opinion they had formed of the rare wit of the shepherds who were there; and the more when, at the persuasion of Thyrsis and of Elicio, the now free and disdainful Lauso, to the sound of Arsindo's flute, released his voice in verses such as THESE:

LAUSO. Fickle Love, disdain thy chains  
Broke, and to my memory

Hath restored the liberty  
Born from absence of thy pains;  
Let him, whoso would, accuse  
My faith as capricious, weak,  
And as best he thinketh, seek  
To convert me to his views.

I my love did soon forsake,  
He may say, my faith was hung  
By a hair so finely strung  
That it e'en a breath could break;  
All the complaints Love did provoke,  
All my sighs, did feignèd prove,  
Nay the very shafts of Love  
Did not pierce beneath my cloke.

For no torture 'tis for me  
To be callèd fickle, vain,

If I may behold again  
My neck from the mad yoke FREE;  
Who Silena is, I know,  
And how strange her mood hath been,

How her peaceful face serene  
Promise and deceit doth show.

To her wondrous dignity,  
To her fair and downcast eyes,  
Tis not much to yield the prize  
Of THE will, whose'er it be,  
For at first sight we adore;  
Now we know her, fain WOULD we  
Life and more, if more COULD BE,  
Give to see her nevermore.

Ofttimes to her have I given  
Heaven's Silena and my dear  
For her name — she was so fair  
That she seemed the child of Heaven;  
Better now her name shall BE —  
Now that I need fear no MORE —  
Not Silena, Heaven's flower,  
But false Siren of the sea.

Earnest words, FRIVOLITIES,

Gazing eyes and ardent pen  
Of the lover, blind and vain, —  
Take a countless sum of these,  
And the last is ever first;  
Whoso hath in love surpassed,  
As the first loved, e'en at last  
Is by her disdain accursed.

How much fairer would we deem  
Our Silena's beauteous grace,  
If her wisdom and her ways  
Did her fairness but beseeem!  
She discretion hath at will,  
But a halter 'tis to slay  
The presumption of her way,  
For she useth it so ill.

I speak not with shameless tongue,  
For it were but passion wild,  
But I speak as one beguiled,  
Who hath suffered grievous wrong;  
Passion doth no more me blind,  
Nor desire that she should wrong  
Suffer, for always my tongue  
Was in reason's bonds confined.

Her caprices manifold,  
And her moods that ever change,

From her every hour estrange  
Those who were her friends of old;

Since Silena foes hath made  
In the many ways we see,  
Wholly good she cannot be,  
Or they must be wholly bad.

Lauso ended his song, and though he thought that no one understood him, through ignorance of Silena's disguised name, more than three of those who were there knew her, and even marvelled that Lauso's modest behaviour should have gone so far as to attack anyone, especially the disguised shepherdess with whom they had seen him so much in love. But in THE opinion of his friend Damon he was fully excused, for he was acquainted with Silena's conduct, and knew how she had conducted herself towards Lauso, and wondered at what he left unsaid. Lauso finished, as has been said; and as Galatea had heard of the charm of Nisida's voice, she wished to sing first, so as to constrain her to do the same. And for this reason, before any other shepherd could begin, beckoning to Arsindo to continue sounding his flute, to its sound with her exquisite voice she sang in this wise: Galatea. E'en as Love ever seeks the soul to entame,

    Tempting it by the semblance of delight,  
E'en so she from Love's deadly pangs in flight  
Turneth, who knows its name bestowed by fame.  
The breast that doth oppose his amorous flame,  
The breast with honourable resistance armed,  
By Love's unkindness is but little harmed,  
Little his fire and rigour doth inflame.  
Secure is she who never was beloved,  
Nor could love, from that tongue which in dispraise  
Of her honour, with subtle glow doth gleam.

But if to love and not to love have proved  
Fruitful in harm, how shall she spend her days  
Who honour dearer e'en than life doth deem?

It could easily be seen in Galatea's song that she was replying to Lauso's malicious one, and that she was not against unfettered wills, but against the malicious tongues and wronged souls which, in not gaining what they desire, change the love they once showed to a malicious and detestable hatred, as she fancied in Lauso's case; but perhaps she would have escaped from this error, if she had known Lauso's good disposition, and had not been ignorant of Silena's evil one. As soon as Galatea ceased to sing, she begged Nisida with courteous



words to do the same. She, as she was as courteous as beautiful, without letting herself be pressed, to the sound of Florisa's pipe sang in this fashion: NISIDA.

Bravely I took my courage as defence

In the dread conflict and onslaught of Love,  
My boldness bravely raised to Heaven above  
Against the rigour of the clear offence.

But yet so overwhelming and intense  
The battery, and withal so weak my power  
That, though Love seized me not, IN one short hour  
Love brought me to confess his power immense.  
O'er worth, o'er honour, o'er a mind discreet,  
Shy modesty, a bosom of disdain,  
Love doth with ease achieve the victory;  
Wherefore, in order to escape defeat,  
Strength from no words of wisdom can we gain,  
Unto this truth an eye-witness am I.

When Nisida ceased to sing and to fill with admiration Galatea and those who had been listening to her, they were already quite near the spot where they had determined to pass the noontide hour. -But in that short time Belisa had time to fulfil Silveria's request, which was that she should sing something; and she, accompanied by the sound of Arsindo's flute, sang what follows: BELISA.  
Fancy, that is fancy-free,

Listen to the reason why  
Our fame groweth steadily,  
Pass the vain affection by,  
Mother of all injury;  
For whene'er the soul doth load  
Itself with some loving load,  
Bane that takes the life away,  
Mixed with juice of bitter bay,  
Is to it but pleasing food.

But our precious liberty  
Should not bartered be nor sold

For the greatest quantity  
Of the best refinèd gold,  
Best in worth and quality;  
Shall we bring ourselves to bear  
Such a loss and heed the prayer  
Of a lover whom we scorn,

If all blessings ever born  
Do not with such bliss compare?

IF the grief we cannot bear  
When the body, free from love,  
Is confined in prison drear,  
Shall the pain not greater prove,  
When the very soul is there?  
Pain 'twill be of such a kind

That no remedy we find  
For such ill in patience, time,  
Worth, or learning in its prime,  
Naught save death alone is kind.

Wherefore let my healthy MOOD  
From this madness flee away,  
Leave behind so false a good,  
Let my free will ever sway  
Every fancy as it would;  
Let my tender neck and free

Never yield itself to be  
Placed beneath the loving yoke,  
Whereby peace is, at a stroke,  
Slain, and banished liberty.

The shepherdess's verses of freedom reached the soul of the hapless Marsilio, by reason of the little hope her words held out that her deeds would grow better; but as the faith with which he loved her was so firm, the noteworthy proofs of freedom he had heard uttered, could not but keep him as much without it as he had been before. At this point the road leading to the stream of palms ended, and though they had not had the intention of spending the noontide heat there, when they reached it and saw the comfort of the beautiful spot, it would have of itself compelled them not to go further. When they had come to it then, straightway the venerable Aurelio commanded all to seat themselves beside the clear and glassy stream, which was flowing in amongst the short grass, and had its birth at the foot of a very tall and ancient palm (for there being on all the banks of the Tagus only that one, and another which was beside it, that place and stream was called "of the palms"), and after sitting down, they were served by Aurelio's shepherds with more good-will and simplicity than costly victuals, satisfying their thirst with the clear cool waters that the pure stream offered them. And on ending the short and pleasant repast, some of the shepherds separated and departed to seek some shady place apart, where they might make up for the unslept hours of the past night; and there remained alone only those of Aurelio's company and village with Timbrio, Silerio, Nisida and Blanca, Thyrsis and Damon, to whom it appeared to be better to enjoy the fair converse that was expected there, than any other enjoyment that sleep could offer them. Aurelio then, guessing and almost knowing this their purpose, said to them: 'It will be well, sirs, that we, who are here, since we have not wished to yield ourselves to sweet sleep, should not fail to make use of this time we steal from it in something that may be more to our pleasure, and what, it seems to me, will not fail to give it us, is that each, as best he can, should here show the sharpness of his wits, propounding some question, or riddle, to whom the companion who may be at his side may be forced to reply; since with this pastime two things will be gained — one to spend with less tedium the hours we shall BE here, THE OTHER, not to weary our ears so much with always hearing lamentations of love, and love-sick dirges.'

All straightway fell in with Aurelio's wish, and WITHOUT any of them leaving the place where they were, the first who began to question was Aurelio himself, speaking in this wise: AURELIO. Who is he, that mighty one,

That from East to farthest West  
Winneth fame and high renown?  
Sometimes strong and self-possessed,  
Sometimes weak with courage gone;  
Health he gives and takes away,

Strength on many every day  
He bestows or doth withhold,  
Stronger he when he is old  
Than when youth is bright and gay.

Changing where he changeth not  
By a strange preeminence,  
Strong men tremble, by him caught,



He hath rarest eloquence  
Unto sullen dumbness brought;  
He his being and his name  
Measureth in different ways,  
From a thousand lands of praise  
He is wont to take his fame.

He unarmed hath conquerèd  
Armèd men, as needs he must,  
Who hath dealt with him is sped,  
Who would bring him to the dust,  
To the dust is brought instead;  
'Tis a thing that doth astound  
That a champion should be found,  
In the field and in the town,  
'Gainst a chief of such renown,  
Though he soon shall bite the ground.

The answering of this question fell to the old shepherd Arsindo, who was beside Aurelio; and having for a little while considered what it could denote, at last he said to him: 'It seems to me, Aurelio, that our age compels us to be more enamoured of that which your question denotes than OF the most graceful shepherdess that might present herself to us, for, if I am not mistaken, the mighty and renowned one you mention is wine, and all the attributes you have given him tally with it.'

'You speak truth, Arsindo,' replied Aurelio, 'and I am inclined to say that I am sorry to have propounded a question which has been solved with much ease; but do you tell yours, for at your side you have one who will be able to unravel it for you, however knotty it may be.'

'I agree,' said Arsindo; and straightway he propounded the following:

ARSINDO. Who is he that loseth hue  
Where he most is wont to thrive,

In a moment doth revive  
And his colour takes anew?  
In THE birth hour he is grey,  
Afterwards black as a crow,  
Last, so ruddy is his glow  
That it maketh all men gay.

Laws nor charters doth he keep,  
To the flames a faithful friend,

Oftentimes he doth attend  
E'en where lords and princes sleep;  
Dead he manhood doth assume,  
Living takes a woman's name,  
He at heart is lurid flame  
But in semblance deepest gloom.

It was Damon who was at Arsindo's side, and scarcely had the latter finished his question, when he said to him: 'It seems to me, Arsindo, that your query is not so dark as the thing it denotes, for if I am not wrong in it, it is charcoal of which you say that when dead it is called masculine, and when glowing and alive brasa, which is a feminine noun, and all the other parts suit it in every respect, as this does; and if you are in the same plight as Aurelio, by reason of the ease with which your question has been understood, I am going to keep you company in it, since Thyrasis, to whom it falls to answer me, will make us equal.'

And straightway he spoke his:

DAMON. Who is she of courtly grace,  
Well-adorned, a dainty dame,  
Timorous, yet bold of face,  
Modest she, yet lacking shame,  
Pleasant, yet she doth displease?  
When in numbers, to astound,  
Masculine their name doth sound,  
And it is a certain thing  
That amongst them is the king,  
And with all men they are found.

'Verily, friend Damon,' said Thyrasis forthwith, 'your challenge comes true, and you pay the forfeit that Aurelio and Arsindo pay, if any there be; for I tell you I know that what your riddle conceals is a letter, and a pack of cards.'

Damon admitted that Thyrasis was right. And straightway  
Thyrasis propounded his riddle thus:

THYRSIS. Who is she that is all eyes,  
All eyes she from head to foot,  
And, although she seeks it not,  
Sometimes causeth lovers' sighs?  
Quarrels too she doth appease,

Though indeed she knows not why,  
And although she is all eye,  
Very few the things she sees.  
She doth call herself a grief  
Counted mortal, good and dire  
Evil worketh, and doth fire  
Love, and to love brings relief.

Thyrsis's riddle puzzled Elicio, for it was his turn to answer it, and he was on the point of 'giving up,' as the saying is; but in a little while he managed to say that it was jealousy, and, Thyrsis admitting it, Elicio straightway propounded the following: ELICIO. 'Tis obscure, and yet 'tis clear,

Thousand opposites containing,  
Truth to us at last explaining,  
Which it hides from far and near;  
Born at times from beauty rare  
Or from lofty fantasies,

Unto strife it giveth rise,  
Though it deals with things of air.  
Unto all its name is known,  
From the children to the old,  
'Tis in numbers manifold,  
Divers are the lords they own;

Every beldame doth possess  
One of them to make her gay,  
Things of pleasure for a day,  
Full of joy or weariness.

And to rob them of their sense  
Men of wisdom keep awake,  
Whatsoe'er the pains they take,  
Some are doomed to impotence;  
Sometimes foolish, sometimes witty;  
Easy, or with tangles fraught,  
Whether naught it be or not,  
Say, what is this thing so pretty?

Timbrio could not hit upon the thing which Elicio's question denoted, and HE almost began to be ashamed at seeing that he delayed longer in answering than any one else, but not even this consideration made him come to a better perception OF it; and HE delayed so long that Galatea, who was after Nisida, said: 'IF it is allowed to break the order which is given, and the ONE who should first know may reply, I say for my part that I know what the riddle propounded denotes, and I am ready to solve it, if senor Timbrio gives me leave.'

'Certainly, fair Galatea,' replied Timbrio, 'for I know that just as I lack, so you have a superabundance of, wit, to solve greater difficulties; but nevertheless I wish you to be patient until Elicio repeats it, and if this time I do not hit it, the opinion I have of my wit and yours, will be confirmed with more truth.'

Elicio repeated his question, and straightway Timbrio solved its meaning, saying: 'With the very thing by which I thought your query was obscured, Elicio, it appears to me to be solved, for the last line says, that they are to say what is this thing so pretty. And so I answer you in what you ask me, and say that your question means that which we mean by a pretty thing; and do not be surprised that I have been long in answering, for, if I had answered sooner, I would have been more surprised at my wit; which will show what it is in the small skill of my question, which is this: TIMBRIO. Who is he who to his pain

Placeth his feet in the eyes,  
And although no hurt arise,  
Makes them sing with might and main?  
And to pull them out is pleasure,  
Though at times, who doeth so,

Doth by no means ease his woe,  
But achieveth more displeasure.'

It fell to Nisida to reply to Timbrio's question, but neither she nor Galatea who followed her were able to guess it. And Orompo, seeing that the shepherdesses were wearying themselves in thinking what it denoted, said to them: 'Do not tire yourselves, ladies, nor weary your minds in solving this riddle, for it might well be that neither of you in all her life has seen the figure that the question conceals, and so it is no wonder that you should not hit upon it; for if it had been of a different kind, we were quite sure, as regards your minds, that in a shorter time you would have solved others more difficult. And therefore, with your leave, I am going to reply to Timbrio, and tell him that his query denotes a man in fetters, since when he draws his feet from those eyes he speaks of, it is either to set him free or to take him to execution; so that you may see, shepherdesses, if I was right in thinking that perhaps neither OF you had seen in all her life jails or PRISONS.'

'I for my PART CAN say,' said Galatea, 'that NEVER have! SEEN any one imprisoned.'

Nisida and Blanca said the same. And straightway Nisida propounded her question in this form: Nisida. Fire it biteth, and its bite

To its victim harm and good  
Bringeth; but it doth no blood  
Lose, although the blade doth smite;  
But if deep should be the wound,  
From a hand that is not sure,  
Death comes to the victim poor,  
In such death its life is found.

Galatea delayed little in answering Nisida, for straightway she said to her:

'I am quite sure that I am not mistaken, fair Nisida, if I say that your riddle can in no way be better applied than to candle-muffers and to the taper or candle they snuff; and if this is true, as it is, and you are satisfied with my reply, listen now to mine, which I hope will be solved by your sister with no less ease than I have done yours.'

And straightway she spoke it, and it ran thus:

GALATEA. Children three, who love inspire,  
And the children of one mother,  
One was grandson of his brother,

And another was his sire;

These three children did distress  
And o'erwhelm her with such woes,  
That they gave her countless blows,  
Showing thus their skilfulness.

Blanca was considering what Galatea's riddle could denote, when they saw two gallant shepherds crossing at a run near the place where they were, showing by the fury with which they were running that something important constrained them to move their steps with such speed, and straightway at the same moment they heard some mournful cries, as of persons seeking help; and on this alarm all arose and followed the direction whence the cries sounded; and in a few steps they issued from that delightful spot and came out on the bank of the cool Tagus, which, close at hand, was flowing gently by. And scarcely did they see the river, when the strangest thing they could imagine was presented to their gaze; for they saw two shepherdesses seemingly of noble grace, who were holding a shepherd fast by the lappets of his coat with all the strength in their power, IN order that the poor fellow might not drown himself, for he already had half his body in the river, and his head below THE water, struggling with his feet to release himself from THE shepherdesses, who were hindering his desperate purpose.

They were already almost on the point of letting him go, being unable to overcome his obstinate determination with their feeble strength. But at this point the two shepherds approached, who had been coming at a run, and seizing the desperate man, drew him out of the water just as all the others were already approaching, astounded at the strange sight, and they were more so, when they learned that the shepherd who wished to drown himself was Artidoro's brother, Galercio, while the shepherdesses were his sister Maurisa and the fair Teolinda; and when these saw Galatea and Florisa, Teolinda ran with tears in her eyes to embrace Galatea, saying: 'Ah, Galatea, sweet friend and lady mine, how has this luckless wretch fulfilled the word she gave you to return to see you and tell you the news of her happiness!'

'I shall be as glad for you to have it, Teolinda,' replied Galatea, 'as you are assured by the good-will you know I have to serve you; but it seems to me that your eyes do not bear out your words, nor indeed do these satisfy me so as to make me imagine a successful issue to your desires.'

Whilst Galatea was thus occupied with Teolinda, Elicio and Artidoro with the other shepherds had stripped Galercio, and as they loosened his coat, which with all his clothes had been wetted, a paper fell from his bosom, which Thyrsis picked up, and, opening it, saw that it was verse; and not being able to read it because it was wet, he placed it on a lofty branch in the sun's ray so that it might



dry. On Galercio they placed a cloak of Arsindo's, and the luckless youth was as it were astounded and amazed, without saying a word, though Elicio asked him what was the cause that had brought him to so strange a pass.

But his sister Maurisa answered for him, saying:

'Raise your eyes, shepherds, and you will see who is the cause that has set my unfortunate wretch of a brother in so strange and desperate a plight.'

The shepherds raised their eyes at what Maurisa said, AND saw a graceful and comely shepherdess on a beetling rock that overhung the river, seated on the same crag, and watching WITH smiling countenance all that the shepherds were doing. SHE was straightway recognised by all as the cruel Gelasia.

'That loveless, that thankless girl, sirs,' went on Maurisa, 'is the mortal enemy of this my unhappy brother, who, as all these banks already know and you are not unaware, loves her, worships her and adores her; and in return for the ceaseless services HE has always done her, and for the tears that he has shed FOR HER, she this morning, with the most scornful and loveless disdain that could ever be found in cruelty, bade him go from her presence, and never return to her now or henceforth. And my brother wished to obey her so earnestly, that he sought TO take away his life, to avoid the occasion of ever transgressing her bidding; and if these shepherds had not by chance come so quickly, the end of my happiness, and the end of my hapless brother's days would by now have come.'

What Maurisa said set all those who listened to her in amazement, and they were more amazed when they saw that the cruel Gelasia, without moving from the spot where she was, and without taking account of all that company who had their eyes set on her, with a strange grace and spirited disdain, DREW A small rebeck from her wallet, and stopping to TUNE IT VERY leisurely, after a little while with a voice of great BEAUTY BEGAN to sing in this wise: GELASIA.  
The pleasing herbs of the green shady mead,

The cooling fountains, who will e'er forsake,  
And strive no more the fleet hare to o'ertake  
Or bristling wild-boar, following on with speed?  
Who will no more the friendly warblings heed  
Of the dear, simple birds within the brake?  
Who in the glowing noontide hour will make  
No more his couch within the woods at need,  
That he the fires may follow, and the fears,  
Jealousies, angers, rages, deaths, and pains,  
Of traitorous Love, that doth the world torment?  
Upon the fields are set my loving cares

And have been, rose and jessamine my chains,  
Free was I born, on freedom am I bent.

Gelasia was singing, and showing in the motion and expression of her face her loveless disposition; but scarcely had she come to the last verse of her song, when she rose with a strange swiftness, and, as if she were fleeing from some terrible thing, she began to hurry down by the crag, leaving the shepherds amazed at her disposition and astounded at her swift course.

But straightway they saw what was the cause of it, on seeing the enamoured Lenio, who with dragging step was ascending the same crag, with the intention of coming to where Gelasia was; but she was not willing to wait for him, so as not to fail in a single instance to act in accordance with the cruelty of her purpose. The wearied Lenio came to the summit of the crag, when Gelasia was already at its foot, and seeing that she did not check her steps, but directed them with more haste through the spacious plain, with spent breath and tired spirit he sat down in the same spot where Gelasia had been, and there began with desperate words to curse his fortune, and the hour in which he raised his eyes to gaze on the cruel shepherdess Gelasia, and in that same moment, repenting as it were of what he was saying, he turned to bless his eyes, and to extol the cause that placed him in such a pass. And straightway goaded and urged by a fit of frenzy, he flung his crook far from him, and, stripping off his coat, cast it into the waters of the clear Tagus, which followed close by the foot of the crag. And when the shepherds who were watching him saw this, they believed without a doubt that the violence of his love-passion was depriving him of reason; and so Elicio and Erastro began to ascend the crag to prevent him from doing any other mad act, that might cost him more dear. And though Lenio saw them ascending, he made no other movement save to draw his rebeck from a wallet, and with a new and strange calm sat down again; and turning his face to where his shepherdess heard, he began with a voice mellow and accompanied with tears to sing in this fashion: LENIO. Who drives thee on, who leadeth thee aside,

Who makes thee leave all loving thought behind,  
Who on thy feet hath rapid pinions tied,  
Wherewith thou runnest swifter than the wind?  
Wherefore dost thou my lofty thought deride  
And think but little of my loyal mind?  
Why fleest thou from me, why leavest me?  
Harder than marble to my agony!

Am I perchance so lowly in estate

That I may not behold thy eyes so fair,  
Or poor or niggard? Have I proved ingrate  
Or false since I beheld their beauty rare?  
I am in naught changed from my former state,  
Does not my soul hang ever from thy hair?  
Then wherefore dost thou go so far from me?  
Harder than marble to my agony!

Let thy o'erweening pride a warning take,  
When it beholds my will, once free, subdued,  
My ancient daring, see, I now forsake,  
To loving purpose changed my former mood;  
Behold, the forest life, that doth not make  
A care of aught, 'gainst Love is nowise good,  
Now stay thy steps, why wearied should THEY be?  
Harder than marble to my agony!

Once I was as thou art, now I behold  
That I can ne'er be what I was before,  
The force of my desire doth wax so bold,  
So great my love, I love myself no more;  
Love can me now within his prison hold;  
This is thy palm, thy trophy in the war,  
Victorious o'er me, dost complain of me?  
Harder than marble to my agony!

While the hapless shepherd was intoning his piteous complaints, the other shepherds were reproving Galercio for his evil design, condemning the wicked purpose he had displayed. But THE despairing youth replied to nothing, whereat Maurisa was not a little distressed, believing that, if left alone, he must carry out his evil thought. In the meantime Galatea and Florisa, going aside with Teolinda, asked her what was the cause of her return, and if by chance she had already heard of her Artidoro. To which she replied weeping: 'I know not what to say to you, friends and ladies mine, save that Heaven wished that I should find Artidoro, to lose him utterly; for you must know that that same UNCONSIDERATE AND traitorous sister of mine, who was the beginning OF MY misfortune, has been the cause of the end and termination of my happiness.

For learning, as we came with Galercio and Maurisa to their village, that Artidoro was on a mountain not far from there with his dock, she went away to

look for him without telling me anything. She found him, and, pretending that she was I (since for this wrong alone Heaven ordained that we should be alike), with little difficulty gave him to understand that the shepherdess who had disdained him in our village was a sister of hers, who was exceedingly like her; in a word, she recounted to him, as though they were hers, all the actions I have done for his sake, and the extremes of grief I have suffered. And as the heart of the shepherd was so tender and loving, with far less than the traitress told him would she have been believed by him, as indeed he did believe her, so much to my hurt, that without waiting for fortune to mingle any new obstacle with his pleasure, straightway at the very moment he gave his hand to Leonarda, to be her lawful husband, believing he was giving it to Teolinda.

Here you see, shepherdesses, where the fruit of my tears and sighs has ended; here you see all my hope already torn up by the root; and what I feel most is that it has been by the hand that was most bound to sustain it. Leonarda enjoys Artidoro by means of the false deception I have told you, and although he already knows it, though he must have perceived the trick, he has kept it to himself like a wise man. The tidings of his marriage came straightway to the village, and with them those of the end of my happiness; the stratagem of my sister was also known, who gave as excuse that she saw Galercio, whom she loved so much, going to ruin through the shepherdess Gelasia, and that therefore it seemed to her easier to bring to her will the loving will of Artidoro than Galercio's despairing one, and that since the two were but one as regards outward appearance and nobility, she counted herself happy and fortunate, indeed, with Artidoro's companionship. With this the enemy of my bliss excuses herself, as I have said; and so I, not to see her enjoy that which was rightly due to me, left the village and Artidoro's presence, and accompanied by the saddest fancies that can be fancied, came to give you the news of my misery in the company of Maurisa, who likewise comes with the intention of telling you what Grisaldo has done since he learnt Rosaura's abduction. And this morning at sunrise we fell in with Galercio, who with tender and loving words was urging Gelasia to love him well; but she with the strongest disdain and scorn that can be told, bade him leave her presence, nor dare ever to speak to HER. And the hapless shepherd, crushed by so harsh a bidding, and BY cruelty so strange, wished to fulfil it, doing what you have SEEN. All this is what has happened to me, my friends, since I went from your presence. Think now whether I have more to weep for than before, and whether the cause has grown for you to busy yourselves in consoling me, if perchance my woe might admit of consolation.'

Teolinda said no more, for the countless tears that came to her eyes, and the sighs she wrung from her soul, hindered her tongue in its office; and though the

tongues of Galatea and Florisa wished to show themselves skilful and eloquent in consoling her, their toil was of little avail. And while this converse was passing between the shepherdesses, the paper which Thyrsis had taken from Galercio's bosom became dry, and being anxious to read it he took it and saw that it ran thus: GALERCIO TO GELASIA.

Angel in the guise of maid,  
Fury with a lady's face,  
Cold, and yet a glowing blaze,  
Wherein my soul is assayed;  
Hearken to the bitter wrong,  
By thy lack of passion wrought,  
Which hath from my soul been brought  
And set these sad lines among.

I write, not to move thine heart,  
Since against thy breast of mail  
Prayers nor cleverness avail,  
Loyal service hath no part;  
But that thou the wrong mayst see  
Which thou dost inflict, I write,  
And how ill thou dost requite  
All the worth there is in thee.

Just it is that liberty  
Thou shouldst praise, and thou art right.  
Yet, behold, 'tis held upright  
Only by thy cruelty;  
Just it is not to ordain  
That thou wouldst be free from strife,

And yet thine unfettered life  
On so many deaths sustain.

That all men should love thee well  
Do not fancy 'tis dishonour,  
Do not fancy that thine honour  
In the use of scorn doth dwell;  
Nay, the cruelty restrain  
Of the wrongs that thou dost do,  
And be pleased with lovers few,  
Thus a better name attain.

For thy rigour doth proclaim  
That wild beasts did give thee birth,  
That the mountains of the earth  
Formed thee, harsh, whom none may tame.  
For therein is thy delight,  
In the moorland and the mead,  
Where thou canst not find indeed  
One to set thy wish alight.

Once I saw thee all alone,  
Seated in a pleasant glade,  
And, as I beheld, I said:  
'Tis a statue of hard stone.'  
Thou didst move and thus my view  
Thou didst prove to be mistaken,  
'Yet in mood,' I said, unshaken,  
'She is more than statue, true.'

Would that thou a statue were,  
Made of stone, for then I might  
Hope that Heaven for my delight  
Would thee change to woman fair!

For Pygmalion could not be  
So devoted to his queen,  
As I am and aye have been  
And shall ever be to thee.

Thou repayest, as is due,  
Good and ill, I murmur not,  
Glory for the good I wrought,  
Suffering for the ill I do.  
And this truth is shown abroad  
In the way thou treatest me,  
Life it gives me thee to see,  
Thou dost slay me by thy mood.

Of that breast which maketh bold  
Love's encounters to despise,  
May the fire that in my sighs  
Gloweth, somewhat melt the cold,  
May my tears this boon obtain,  
Tears that never, never, rest,  
That for one short hour thy breast  
May be sweet and kind again.

Well I know thou wilt declare  
That I am too long; 'tis true,  
My desire make less, I too  
Then will lesser make my prayer;  
But according to the way  
Thou dost deal with my requests,

Thee it little interests  
Whether less or more I pray.

If I might in words essay,  
To reproach thy cruelty,  
And that sign point out to thee  
Which our weakness doth display,  
I would say, when I did learn  
What thou art, no longer blind:  
'Thou art rock, bear this in mind,  
And to rock thou must return.'

Whether rock or steel thou art,  
Adamant or marble hard,  
Steel, I am thy loving bard,  
Rock, I love with all my heart;  
Angel veiled, or fury, know  
That the truth is ALL too plain,  
I live, by the angel slain,  
By the fury brought to woe.

Galercio's verses seemed better to Thyrsis than Gelasia's disposition, and wishing to show them to Elicio, he saw him so changed in hue and countenance that he seemed the image of death. He went up to him, and when he wished to ask him if any grief were distressing him, there was no need to await his reply in order to learn the cause of his pain, for straightway he heard it announced amongst all those who were there. Now the two shepherds who helped Galercio, were friends of the Lusitanian shepherd to whom the venerable Aurelio had agreed to marry Galatea, and they were coming to tell him how the fortunate shepherd would come in three days' time to his village to conclude that most happy betrothal. And straightway Thyrsis saw that this news must needs cause in Elicio's soul newer and stranger symptoms than had been caused; BUT nevertheless he went up to him and said to him: 'Now it is necessary, good friend, that you should know how to make use of the discretion you have, since in the greatest peril hearts show themselves courageous, and I assure you that there is something assures me that this business must have a better end than you think. Dissemble and be silent, for if Galatea's will takes no pleasure in conforming wholly with her father's, you will satisfy yours, by availing yourself of ours, and also of all the favour that can be offered you by all the shepherds



there are on the banks of this river, and on those OF the gentle Henares. And this favour I offer you, for I feel quite sure that the desire all know I have to serve them, will constrain them to act so that what I promise you here may not turn out vain.

Elicio remained amazed, seeing the generous and true offer of Thyrsis, and could not nor did he know how to reply to him save by embracing him closely and saying to him: 'May Heaven reward you, discreet Thyrsis, for the consolation you have given me, by which and by Galatea's will, which, as I think, will not differ from ours, I understand without doubt that so notorious a wrong as is being done to all these banks IN banishing from them the rare beauty of Galatea, shall not go further.'

And, as he turned to embrace him, the lost colour returned to his face. But it did not return to Galatea's, to whom hearing of the shepherds' embassy was as if she heard her death-sentence. Elicio noted it all, and Erastro could not ignore IT, nor yet the discreet Florisa, nor indeed was the news pleasing to any of those who were there. At this hour the sun was already descending by his wonted course, and therefore for this reason, as well as because they saw that the love-sick Lenio had followed Gelasia, and there was nothing else left to do there, all that company, taking Galercio and Maurisa with them, bent their steps towards the village, and on coming close to it, Elicio and Erastro remained in their huts, and with them remained Thyrsis, Damon, Orompo, Crisio, Marsilio, Arsindo and Orfenio, with some other shepherds. The fortunate Timbrio, Silerio, Nisida, and Blanca took leave of them all with courteous words and offers, telling them that on the morrow they intended to set out for the city of Toledo, where the end of their journey was to be; and embracing all who were remaining with Elicio, they departed with Aurelio, with whom went Florisa, Teolinda and Maurisa, and the sad Galatea, so heartbroken and thoughtful that with all her discretion she could not fail to give tokens of strange unhappiness. With Daranio departed his wife Silveria and the fair Belisa. Thereon the night closed in, and it seemed to Elicio that all the roads to his pleasure were closed with it, and had it not been for welcoming with cheerful mien the guests he had in his hut that night, he would have spent it so badly that he would have despaired of seeing the day. The wretched Erastro was passing through THE same trouble, though with more relief, for, without regarding anyone, with loud cries and piteous words he cursed his fortune and Aurelio's hasty resolve. This being so, when the shepherds had satisfied their hunger with some rustic victuals, and some OF them had yielded themselves to the arms of peaceful sleep, the fair Maurisa came to Elicio's hut, and finding Elicio at the door of his hut, TOOK him aside and gave him a paper, telling him it was from Galatea, and that he should read it

at once, for, since she was bringing it at such an hour, he should understand that what it must contain was important. The shepherd, wondering at Maurisa's coming, and more at seeing in his hands a paper from his shepherdess, could not rest for a moment until he read it, and entering his hut, read it by the light of a splinter of resinous pine, and saw that it read thus: GALATEA TO ELICIO.

'In my father's hasty resolve lies the resolve I have taken to write to you, and in the violence he uses towards me lies the violence I have used towards myself to reach this extreme.

You well know in what an extreme pass I am, and I know well that I would gladly see myself in a better, that I might reward you somewhat for the much I know I owe you. But if Heaven wishes me to remain in this debt, complain of it, and not of my will. My father's I would gladly change, if it were possible, but I see that it is not, and so I do not try it. IF you think of any remedy in that quarter, so long as prayers have NO part in it, put it into effect with the consideration you owe to your reputation and hold due to my honour. He whom THEY are giving me as husband, he who shall give me burial, is coming the day after to-morrow; little time remains for you to take counsel, though sufficient remains to me for repentance. I say no more save that Maurisa is faithful and I unhappy.'

The words of Galatea's letter set Elicio in strange CONFUSION, as it seemed to him a new thing both that she should write to him, since up till then she had never done so, and that she should bid him seek a remedy for the wrong that was being done her. But, passing over all these things, he paused only to think how he should fulfil what was bidden him, though HE should hazard therein a thousand lives, if he had so many.

And as no other remedy offered itself to him save that which he was awaiting from his friends, he made bold, trusting in them, to reply to Galatea by a letter he gave TO Maurisa, which ran in this manner: ELICIO TO GALATEA.

'If the violence of my strength came up to the desire I have to serve you, fair Galatea, neither that which your father uses towards you, nor the greatest in the world, would have power to injure you. But, be that as it may, you will see now, if THE wrong goes further, that I do not lag behind in doing YOUR bidding in the best way the case may demand. Let the faithfulness you have known in me, assure you of this, and show a good face to present fortune, trusting in coming prosperity, for Heaven which has moved you to remember me and write to me, will give me strength to show that I merit in PART THE favour you have done me, for, if only it be obeying you, neither fear nor dread will have power to prevent me putting into effect what befits your happiness, and is of such import to mine. No more, for what more there is to be in this, you will learn from

Maurisa, to whom I have given account of it; and if your opinion does not agree with mine, let me be informed, in order that time may not pass by, and with it the season of our happiness, which may Heaven give you as it can and as your worth deserves.'

Having given this letter to Maurisa, as has been said, he told her also how he was intending to assemble as many shepherds as he could, and that all should go together to speak to Galatea's father, asking him as a signal favour to be so kind as not to banish from those meadows her peerless beauty; and, should this not suffice, he was intending to place such obstacles and terrors before the Lusitanian shepherd that he himself would say that he was not content with what had been agreed; and, should prayers and stratagems be of no avail, he was resolved to use violence and thereby set her at liberty, and that with the consideration for her reputation which could be expected from one who loved her so much. With this resolve Maurisa went away, and the same was taken straightway by all the shepherds that were with Elicio, for he gave to them account of his intentions, asking for favour and counsel in so difficult a plight. Straightway Thyrsis and Damon offered to be those who should speak to Galatea's father. Lauso, Arsindo, and Erastro, with the four friends, Orompo, Marsilio, Crisio and Orfenio, promised to look for their friends and assemble them for the following day, and to carry out with them whatsoever should be bidden them by Elicio. In discussing what was best suited to the case, and in taking this resolve, the greater part of that night passed away. And, the morning having come, all the shepherds departed to fulfil what they had promised, save Thyrsis and Damon, who remained with Elicio.

And that same day Maurisa came again to tell Elicio how Galatea was resolved to follow his opinion in everything; Elicio took leave of her with new promises and confidences; and with joyous countenance and strange gaiety he was awaiting the coming day to see the good or evil issue fortune was bestowing on his work. With this night came on, and, Elicio repairing with Damon and Thyrsis to his hut, they spent almost all of it in testing and taking note of all the difficulties that could arise in that affair, if perchance Aurelio was not moved by the arguments Thyrsis intended to bring before him. But Elicio, in order to give the shepherds opportunity for repose, went out of his hut, and ascended a green hill that rose before it; and there, girt round with solitude, he was revolving in his memory all that he had suffered for Galatea, and what he feared he would suffer, if Heaven did not favour his plans. And without leaving this train of thought, to the sound of a soft breeze that was gently blowing, with a voice sweet and low he began to sing in this wise: ELICIO. If 'midst this boiling sea

and gulf profound

Of madness, 'midst the tempest's threatening strife,  
I from so cruel a blow rescue my life,  
And reach the haven, fortunate and sound,  
Each hand uplifted to the air around,  
With humble soul and will contented, I  
Shall make Love know my thanks, and Heaven on high,  
For the choice bliss wherewith my life is crowned.'  
Then fortunate shall I my sighings call,  
My tears shall I account as full of pleasure,  
The flame wherein I burn, refreshing cold.  
Love's wounds, I shall declare, are to the soul  
Sweet, to the body wholesome, that no measure  
Can mete his bliss, which boundless I behold.

When Elicio ended his song, the cool dawn, with her fair cheeks of many hues, was beginning to reveal herself by the Eastern gates, gladdening the earth, sprinkling the grass with pearls, and painting the meadows; whose longed-for approach the chattering birds straightway began to greet with thousand kinds of harmonious songs. Thereon Elicio arose and, stretching his eyes over the spacious plain, discovered not far away two troops of shepherds, who, as it seemed to him, were making their way towards his hut, as was the truth, for he straightway recognised that they were his friends Lauso and Arsindo WITH others whom they were bringing with them. And the others were Orompo, Marsilio, Crisio and Orfenio, with as many of their friends as they could assemble. Elicio then recognising them, descended from the hill to go and welcome them; and when they came near to the hut, Thyrsis and Damon, who were going to look for Elicio, were already outside it. In the meantime all the shepherds came up and welcomed each other with joyous countenance. And straightway Lauso, turning to Elicio said to him: 'In the company we bring, you can see, friend Elicio, whether we are beginning to give tokens of our wish to fulfil the word we gave you; all whom you see here, come with the desire to serve you, though they should hazard their lives therein. What is wanting is that you should not be wanting in what may BE most essential.'

Elicio, with the best words he could, thanked Lauso and THE others for the favour they were doing him, and straightway told them all that it had been agreed with Thyrsis and Damon to do in order to succeed in that enterprise. What Elicio was saying seemed good to the shepherds; and so, without more delay, they made their way towards the village, Thyrsis and Damon going in

front, and all the others following them, who might be some twenty shepherds, the bravest and most graceful that could be found on all the banks of the Tagus, and all were minded, if the reasonings of Thyrsis did not move Aurelio TO act reasonably in what they asked him, to use force instead OF reason, nor to consent that Galatea should yield herself TO THE foreign shepherd; whereat Erastro was as happy, as if a fair issue to that demand were to redound to his happiness alone, for, rather than lose sight of Galatea, absent and unhappy, HE held it a good bargain that Elicio should win her, as he thought he would, since Galatea must needs be so much indebted TO him.

The end of this loving tale and history, with what happened to Galercio, Lenio and Gelasia, Arsindo, Maurisa, Grisaldo, Artandro and Rosaura, Marsilio and Belisa, with other things which happened to the shepherds mentioned hitherto, IS promised in the Second Part of this history. Which, if it sees this First received with favourable wishes, will have THE boldness shortly to come out in order to be seen and judged by the eyes and understanding of mankind.

*The End of Galatea.*

# THE INGENIOUS GENTLEMAN DON QUIXOTE OF LA MANCHA



*Translated by John Ormsby and Illustrated by Gustave Doré*

Considered the most influential work of the Spanish literary canon and as a founding work of modern Western literature, *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha* follows the adventures of Alonso Quijano, a member of the nobility who reads so many chivalric novels that he decides to set out to revive chivalry, under the name Don Quixote. He recruits a simple farmer, Sancho Panza, as his squire, who often employs a unique, earthly wit in dealing with Don Quixote's rhetorical orations on antiquated knighthood. The novel was followed ten years later with Part II, with most modern editions nowadays presenting both parts together as a single novel.

In July 1604, Cervantes sold the rights of *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*, now known as *Don Quixote, Part I* to the publisher and bookseller Francisco de Robles for an unknown sum. License to publish was granted in September, the printing was finished in December and the novel was released on 16 January 1605. It was an immediate success and a majority of the 400 copies of the first edition were sent to the New World, with the publisher hoping to fetch a better price in the Americas. Although most of the copies disappeared in a shipwreck near La Havana, approximately 70 copies reached Lima, from where they were sent to Cuzco in the heart of the defunct Inca Empire.

As soon as the novel was released to the general public, pirated editions of the novel were in preparation. *Don Quixote* quickly spread in popularity and its author's name was now known beyond the Pyrenees. By August 1605 there were two Madrid editions, two published in Lisbon and another in Valencia. A second edition was produced with additional copyrights for Aragon and Portugal, which the publisher Francisco de Robles secured. The sale of these publishing rights deprived Cervantes of further financial profit on the novel. In 1607, an edition was printed in Brussels. Robles, the Madrid publisher, found it necessary to meet demand with a third edition, a seventh publication in all, in 1608. Popularity of the book in Italy was such that a Milan bookseller issued an Italian edition in 1610. Yet another Brussels edition was called for in 1611. In total, the novel is

estimated now to have sold more than ten million copies worldwide.

The novel introduces Alonso Quijano as a retired country gentleman nearing fifty years of age, who lives in La Mancha, central Spain, with his niece and housekeeper. Though mostly a rational man of sound reason, his reading of books of chivalry in excess has had a profound effect on him, leading to the distortion of his perception and the wavering of his mental faculties. Therefore, he comes to believe every word of these books of chivalry to be true, though in fact they are clearly works of fiction. Due to this obsession, Quijano decides to go out as a knight-errant in search of adventure, emulating the heroes of his beloved books. Donning an old suit of armour, he renames himself “Don Quixote de la Mancha,” and names his emaciated horse “Rocinante”. Next, he designates Aldonza Lorenzo, a neighbouring farm girl as his lady love, renaming her Dulcinea del Toboso. He sets out in the early morning and ends up at an inn, which he believes to be a castle. Asking the innkeeper, whom he thinks to be the lord of the castle, to greet him as a knight, he spends the night holding vigil over his armour, where he becomes involved in a fight with muleteers, who try to remove his armour from the horse trough so that they can water their mules. The innkeeper then dubs him a knight to be rid of him and sends him on his way. Don Quixote next “frees” a young boy who is tied to a tree and beaten by his master by making his master swear on the chivalric code to treat the boy fairly. The boy’s beating is continued as soon as Quixote leaves. Don Quixote has a run-in with traders from Toledo, who “insult” the imaginary Dulcinea, one of whom severely beats Don Quixote and leaves him on the side of the road. At this point, the protagonist is found and returned to his home by a neighbouring peasant.

As Don Quixote is unconscious in his bed, his niece, the housekeeper, the parish curate and the local barber secretly burn most of the books of chivalry and seal up his library pretending that a magician has carried it off. For a short period Don Quixote pretends to be back to full health, when he approaches his neighbour, Sancho Panza, and asks him to be his squire, promising him governorship of an island. The uneducated Sancho agrees, and the pair sneak away in the early dawn. It is here that their series of famous adventures begin, starting with Don Quixote’s now famous attack on windmills that he believes to be ferocious giants and a whole host of other hilarious misadventures, fuelled by Don Quixote’s misinterpretation of perfectly ordinary situations. In the course of their travels, they meet innkeepers, prostitutes, goatherds, soldiers, priests, escaped convicts and scorned lovers. These encounters are magnified by Don Quixote’s imagination of chivalrous quests. His tendency to intervene violently in matters which do not concern him and his habit of not paying his debts, result

in many privations, injuries and humiliations, with Sancho often receiving the worst of it. Finally, Don Quixote is persuaded to return to his home village.

The novel's structure is episodic in form, written in the picaresque style of the late 16th century and featuring references to several other picaresque novels, including *Lazarillo de Tormes* and *The Golden Ass*. Although farcical on the surface, the novel, especially in its second part, is more serious and philosophical about the theme of delusion. Quixote has served as an important thematic source not only in literature, but in much of art and music, inspiring works by writers and artists across the world. The contrasts between the tall, thin, fancy-struck, and idealistic Quixote and the overweight, squat, world-weary Panza is a motif echoed in other works ever since the book's publication. The novel is considered a satire of orthodoxy, veracity, and even nationalism. In going beyond mere storytelling to exploring the individualism of his characters, Cervantes helped move beyond the narrow literary conventions of the chivalric romance literature that he satirised, which consists of straightforward retelling of a series of acts that redound to the knightly virtues of the hero. *Don Quixote* stands in a unique position between medieval chivalric romance and the modern novel. Previous 'novels' consisted of disconnected stories featuring the same characters and settings with little exploration of the inner life of even the main character, whilst works after *Don Quixote* are usually found to be more focused on the psychological evolution of their characters.



EL INGENIOSO  
HIDALGO DON QUI-  
XOTE DE LA MANCHA,

*Compuesto por Miguel de Ceruantes  
Saavedra.*

DIRIGIDO AL DVQUE DE BEJAR,  
Marques de Gibrleon, Conde de Benalcazar, y Bañar-  
res, Vizconde de la Puebla de Alcozer, Señor de  
las villas de Capilla, Curiel, y  
Burguillos.

Año,



1605.

CON PRIVILEGIO,  
EN MADRID Por Iuan de la Cuesta.

Voudele en casa de Francisco de Robles, librero del Rey nro señor

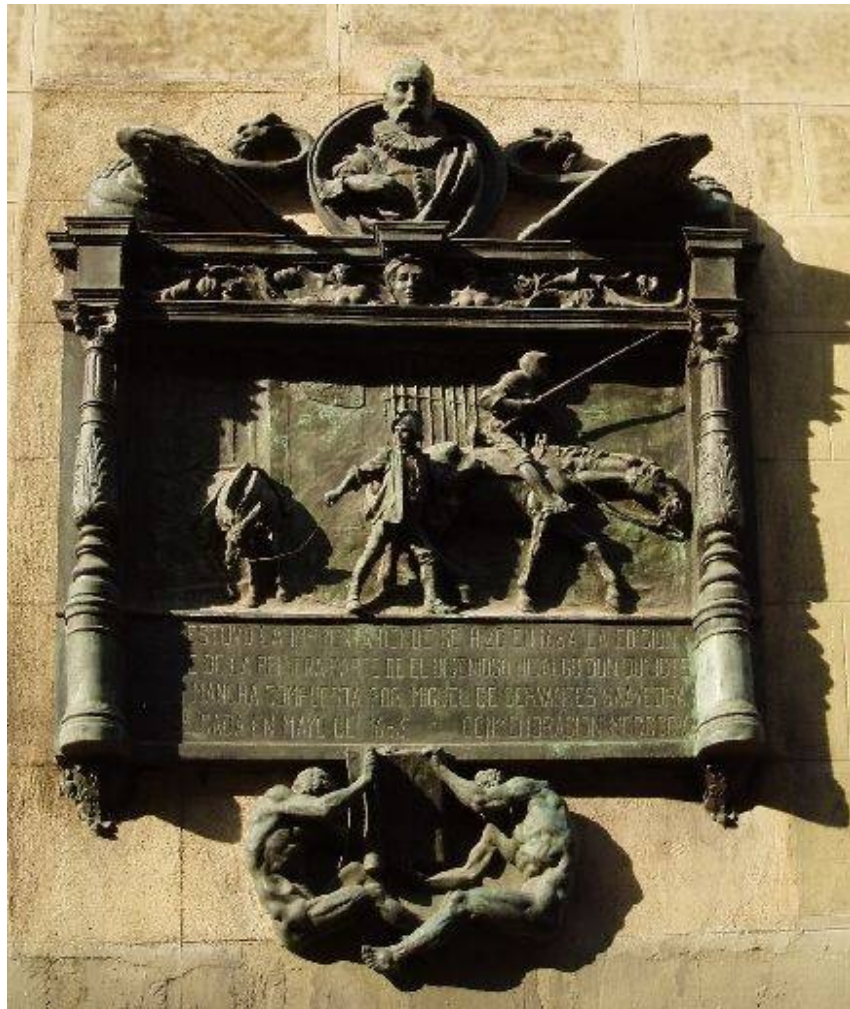
*The cover of the first edition of Part One*

## Prologo.

**D**ESOCVPADO Lector, sin juramento me podras creer, que quisiera que este libro como hijo del entendimiento, fuera el mas hermoso, el mas gallardo, y mas discreto, q̄ pudiera imaginarte. Pero no he podido yo contrauenir al orden de naturaleza, que en ella, cada cosa engendra su semejante. Y assi, que podra engendrar el esteril, y mal cultivado ingenio mio, sino la tistoria de vn hijo seco, auellanado, antojadizo, y lleno de p̄samiētos varios, y nunca imaginados de otro alguno, bien como quien se engendrò en vna carcel, donde toda incomodidad tiene su asiento, y dōde todo triste ruydo haze su habitacion. El fofiego, el lugar apazible, la amenidad de los cāpos, la serenidad de los cielos, el murmurar de las fuentes, la quietud del espiritu, son grande parte para que las mulas mas esteriles, se muēstrē fecundas, y ofrezcan partos al mundo, q̄ le colmen de marauilla, y de contento. Acontece tener vn padre vn hijo feo, y sin gracia alguna, y el amor que le tiene, le pone vna venda en los ojos, para q̄ no vea sus faltas, antes las juzga por discreciones, y lindezas, y las cuēta a sus amigos, por agudezas, y donayres. Pero yo, que aunque parezco padre, soy padreastro de don Quixote: no quiero yrmē con la corriente del vfo, ni suplicarte, casi con las lagrimas en los ojos, como otros hazen, Lector carissimo, que perdones, o disimules las faltas que en este mi hijo vieres, y ni eres su pariente, ni su amigo, y tienes tu alma en tu cuerpo, y tu libre aluedrio, como el mas pintado, y estas en tu casa, donde eres señor della, como el Rey de sus alcáualas, y sabes lo que comunmente se dize, que debaxo de mi manto, al

¶ Rey

*The beginning of the novel in the first edition*



*A plaque on the street in Madrid where 'Don Quixote' was first published, commemorating its third centenary. The text says: "Here was the printing press that first printed in 1604 the first part of the Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote of la Mancha composed by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, published in May, 1605."*





*La Mancha's windmills were immortalised in the novel, when the 'knight' charges them, believing them to be giants.*



*Landscape of the fields in La Mancha region*



*Bronze statues of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza in the Plaza of Spain in Madrid*

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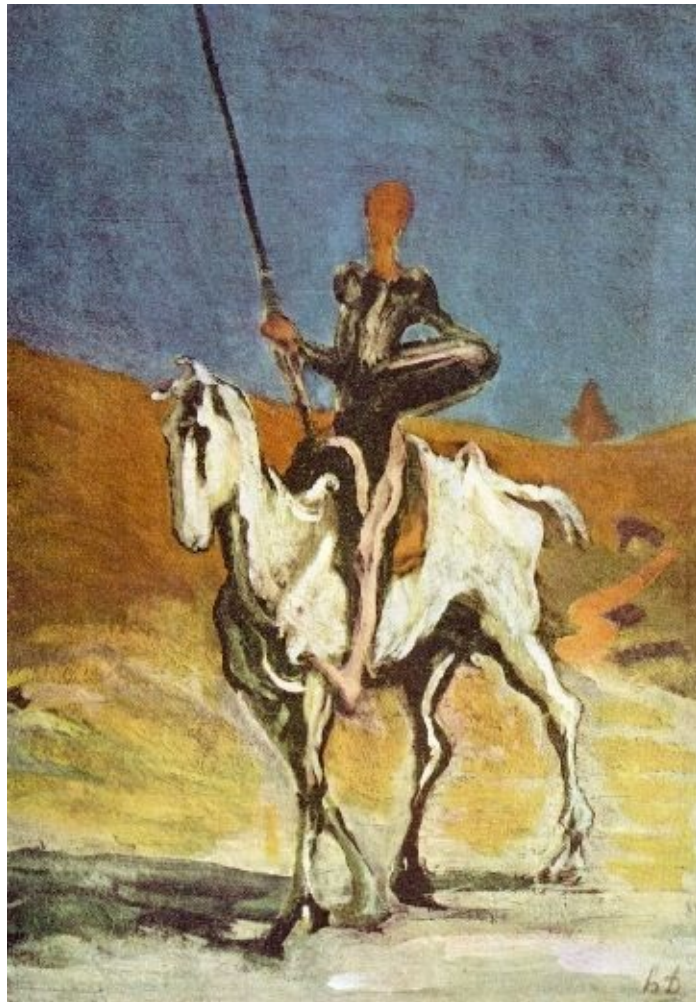
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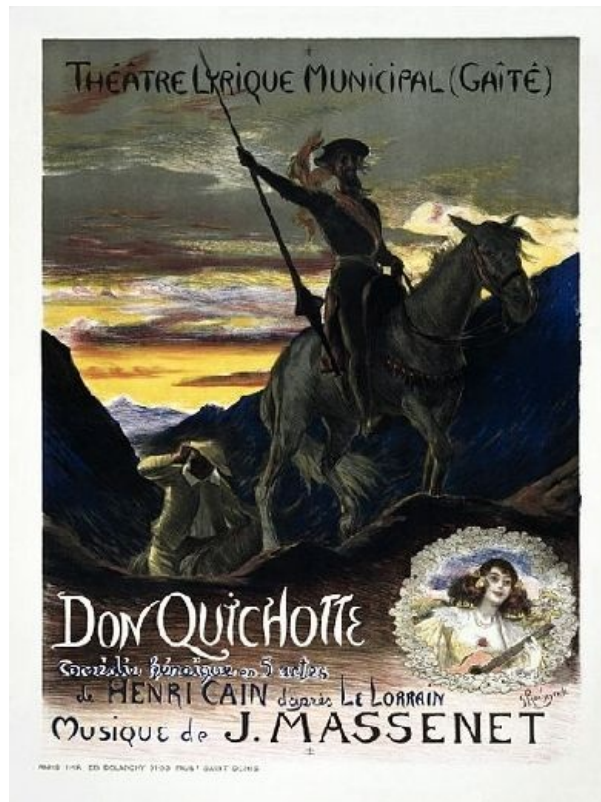




*Don Quijote by Honoré Daumier, c. 1868*



*The famous Don Quixote frontispiece by Gustave Doré*



Poster for the first production in Paris of Don Quichotte by Jules Massenet, at the Gaîté-Lyrique



*Leocadia Alba, as Alonso Quijano, Ricardo Puga and Maritormes, in a 1910 theatrical adaptation of the novel*



*Lucien Fugere representing Sancho Panza in Don Quichotte de Jules Massenet opera, 1910*



*A scene from the 1933 film adaptation, starring the famous operatic bass Feodor Chaliapin as the protagonist*



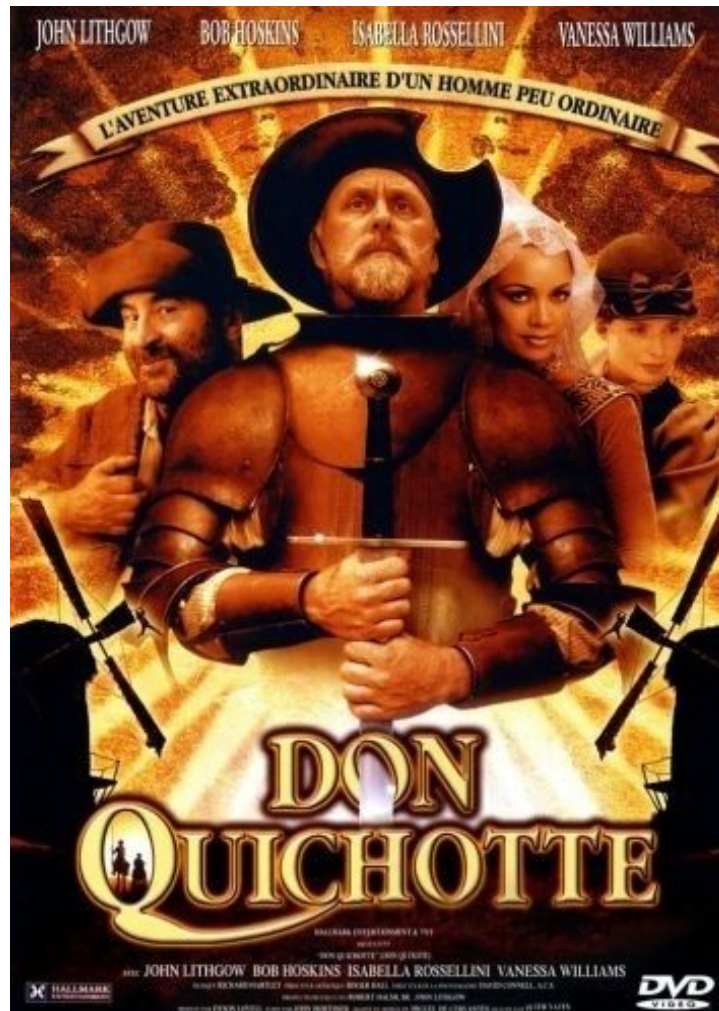


*In 1955 Orson Welles began working on an film adaptation of Don Quixote, which he had to abandon due to a lack of funds. In 1992, years after Wells' death, Jesús Franco presented a part of the original film at the Cannes Festival.*



*'The El Quijote de Miguel de Cervantes' – the 1992 television adaptation*





*The 2000 TV film adaption, with John Lithgow appearing as the famous knight errant*

## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

It was with considerable reluctance that I abandoned in favour of the present undertaking what had long been a favourite project: that of a new edition of Shelton's "Don Quixote," which has now become a somewhat scarce book. There are some — and I confess myself to be one — for whom Shelton's racy old version, with all its defects, has a charm that no modern translation, however skilful or correct, could possess. Shelton had the inestimable advantage of belonging to the same generation as Cervantes; "Don Quixote" had to him a vitality that only a contemporary could feel; it cost him no dramatic effort to see things as Cervantes saw them; there is no anachronism in his language; he put the Spanish of Cervantes into the English of Shakespeare. Shakespeare himself most likely knew the book; he may have carried it home with him in his saddlebags to Stratford on one of his last journeys, and under the mulberry tree at New Place joined hands with a kindred genius in its pages.

But it was soon made plain to me that to hope for even a moderate popularity for Shelton was vain. His fine old crusted English would, no doubt, be relished by a minority, but it would be only by a minority. His warmest admirers must admit that he is not a satisfactory representative of Cervantes. His translation of the First Part was very hastily made and was never revised by him. It has all the freshness and vigour, but also a full measure of the faults, of a hasty production. It is often very literal — barbarously literal frequently — but just as often very loose. He had evidently a good colloquial knowledge of Spanish, but apparently not much more. It never seems to occur to him that the same translation of a word will not suit in every case.

It is often said that we have no satisfactory translation of "Don Quixote." To those who are familiar with the original, it savours of truism or platitude to say so, for in truth there can be no thoroughly satisfactory translation of "Don Quixote" into English or any other language. It is not that the Spanish idioms are so utterly unmanageable, or that the untranslatable words, numerous enough no doubt, are so superabundant, but rather that the sententious terseness to which the humour of the book owes its flavour is peculiar to Spanish, and can at best be only distantly imitated in any other tongue.

The history of our English translations of "Don Quixote" is instructive. Shelton's, the first in any language, was made, apparently, about 1608, but not published till 1612. This of course was only the First Part. It has been asserted

that the Second, published in 1620, is not the work of Shelton, but there is nothing to support the assertion save the fact that it has less spirit, less of what we generally understand by “go,” about it than the first, which would be only natural if the first were the work of a young man writing *currente calamo*, and the second that of a middle-aged man writing for a bookseller. On the other hand, it is closer and more literal, the style is the same, the very same translations, or mistranslations, occur in it, and it is extremely unlikely that a new translator would, by suppressing his name, have allowed Shelton to carry off the credit.

In 1687 John Phillips, Milton’s nephew, produced a “Don Quixote” “made English,” he says, “according to the humour of our modern language.” His “Quixote” is not so much a translation as a travesty, and a travesty that for coarseness, vulgarity, and buffoonery is almost unexampled even in the literature of that day.

Ned Ward’s “Life and Notable Adventures of Don Quixote, merrily translated into Hudibrastic Verse” (1700), can scarcely be reckoned a translation, but it serves to show the light in which “Don Quixote” was regarded at the time.

A further illustration may be found in the version published in 1712 by Peter Motteux, who had then recently combined tea-dealing with literature. It is described as “translated from the original by several hands,” but if so all Spanish flavour has entirely evaporated under the manipulation of the several hands. The flavour that it has, on the other hand, is distinctly Franco-cockney. Anyone who compares it carefully with the original will have little doubt that it is a concoction from Shelton and the French of Filleau de Saint Martin, eked out by borrowings from Phillips, whose mode of treatment it adopts. It is, to be sure, more decent and decorous, but it treats “Don Quixote” in the same fashion as a comic book that cannot be made too comic.

To attempt to improve the humour of “Don Quixote” by an infusion of cockney flippancy and facetiousness, as Motteux’s operators did, is not merely an impertinence like larding a sirloin of prize beef, but an absolute falsification of the spirit of the book, and it is a proof of the uncritical way in which “Don Quixote” is generally read that this worse than worthless translation — worthless as failing to represent, worse than worthless as misrepresenting — should have been favoured as it has been.

It had the effect, however, of bringing out a translation undertaken and executed in a very different spirit, that of Charles Jervas, the portrait painter, and friend of Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot, and Gay. Jervas has been allowed little credit for his work, indeed it may be said none, for it is known to the world in general as Jarvis’s. It was not published until after his death, and the printers gave the

name according to the current pronunciation of the day. It has been the most freely used and the most freely abused of all the translations. It has seen far more editions than any other, it is admitted on all hands to be by far the most faithful, and yet nobody seems to have a good word to say for it or for its author. Jervas no doubt prejudiced readers against himself in his preface, where among many true words about Shelton, Stevens, and Motteux, he rashly and unjustly charges Shelton with having translated not from the Spanish, but from the Italian version of Franciosini, which did not appear until ten years after Shelton's first volume. A suspicion of incompetence, too, seems to have attached to him because he was by profession a painter and a mediocre one (though he has given us the best portrait we have of Swift), and this may have been strengthened by Pope's remark that he "translated 'Don Quixote' without understanding Spanish." He has been also charged with borrowing from Shelton, whom he disparaged. It is true that in a few difficult or obscure passages he has followed Shelton, and gone astray with him; but for one case of this sort, there are fifty where he is right and Shelton wrong. As for Pope's dictum, anyone who examines Jervas's version carefully, side by side with the original, will see that he was a sound Spanish scholar, incomparably a better one than Shelton, except perhaps in mere colloquial Spanish. He was, in fact, an honest, faithful, and painstaking translator, and he has left a version which, whatever its shortcomings may be, is singularly free from errors and mistranslations.

The charge against it is that it is stiff, dry— "wooden" in a word, — and no one can deny that there is a foundation for it. But it may be pleaded for Jervas that a good deal of this rigidity is due to his abhorrence of the light, flippant, jocose style of his predecessors. He was one of the few, very few, translators that have shown any apprehension of the unsmiling gravity which is the essence of Quixotic humour; it seemed to him a crime to bring Cervantes forward smirking and grinning at his own good things, and to this may be attributed in a great measure the ascetic abstinence from everything savouring of liveliness which is the characteristic of his translation. In most modern editions, it should be observed, his style has been smoothed and smartened, but without any reference to the original Spanish, so that if he has been made to read more agreeably he has also been robbed of his chief merit of fidelity.

Smollett's version, published in 1755, may be almost counted as one of these. At any rate it is plain that in its construction Jervas's translation was very freely drawn upon, and very little or probably no heed given to the original Spanish.

The later translations may be dismissed in a few words. George Kelly's, which appeared in 1769, "printed for the Translator," was an impudent imposture, being nothing more than Motteux's version with a few of the words,

here and there, artfully transposed; Charles Wilmot's (1774) was only an abridgment like Florian's, but not so skilfully executed; and the version published by Miss Smirke in 1818, to accompany her brother's plates, was merely a patchwork production made out of former translations. On the latest, Mr. A. J. Duffield's, it would be in every sense of the word impertinent in me to offer an opinion here. I had not even seen it when the present undertaking was proposed to me, and since then I may say *vidi tantum*, having for obvious reasons resisted the temptation which Mr. Duffield's reputation and comely volumes hold out to every lover of Cervantes.

From the foregoing history of our translations of "Don Quixote," it will be seen that there are a good many people who, provided they get the mere narrative with its full complement of facts, incidents, and adventures served up to them in a form that amuses them, care very little whether that form is the one in which Cervantes originally shaped his ideas. On the other hand, it is clear that there are many who desire to have not merely the story he tells, but the story as he tells it, so far at least as differences of idiom and circumstances permit, and who will give a preference to the conscientious translator, even though he may have acquitted himself somewhat awkwardly.

But after all there is no real antagonism between the two classes; there is no reason why what pleases the one should not please the other, or why a translator who makes it his aim to treat "Don Quixote" with the respect due to a great classic, should not be as acceptable even to the careless reader as the one who treats it as a famous old jest-book. It is not a question of *caviare* to the general, or, if it is, the fault rests with him who makes so. The method by which Cervantes won the ear of the Spanish people ought, *mutatis mutandis*, to be equally effective with the great majority of English readers. At any rate, even if there are readers to whom it is a matter of indifference, fidelity to the method is as much a part of the translator's duty as fidelity to the matter. If he can please all parties, so much the better; but his first duty is to those who look to him for as faithful a representation of his author as it is in his power to give them, faithful to the letter so long as fidelity is practicable, faithful to the spirit so far as he can make it.

My purpose here is not to dogmatise on the rules of translation, but to indicate those I have followed, or at least tried to the best of my ability to follow, in the present instance. One which, it seems to me, cannot be too rigidly followed in translating "Don Quixote," is to avoid everything that savours of affectation. The book itself is, indeed, in one sense a protest against it, and no man abhorred it more than Cervantes. For this reason, I think, any temptation to use antiquated or obsolete language should be resisted. It is after all an affectation, and one for

which there is no warrant or excuse. Spanish has probably undergone less change since the seventeenth century than any language in Europe, and by far the greater and certainly the best part of “Don Quixote” differs but little in language from the colloquial Spanish of the present day. Except in the tales and Don Quixote’s speeches, the translator who uses the simplest and plainest everyday language will almost always be the one who approaches nearest to the original.

Seeing that the story of “Don Quixote” and all its characters and incidents have now been for more than two centuries and a half familiar as household words in English mouths, it seems to me that the old familiar names and phrases should not be changed without good reason. Of course a translator who holds that “Don Quixote” should receive the treatment a great classic deserves, will feel himself bound by the injunction laid upon the Morisco in Chap. IX not to omit or add anything.

## SOME COMMENDATORY VERSES

### URGANDA THE UNKNOWN

To the book of Don Quixote of la Mancha If to be welcomed by the good,  
O Book! thou make thy steady aim,

No empty chatterer will dare  
To question or dispute thy claim.  
But if perchance thou hast a mind  
To win of idiots approbation,  
Lost labour will be thy reward,  
Though they'll pretend appreciation.

They say a goodly shade he finds  
Who shelters 'neath a goodly tree; And such a one thy kindly star  
In Bejar bath provided thee:  
A royal tree whose spreading boughs A show of princely fruit display; A tree  
that bears a noble Duke,  
The Alexander of his day.

Of a Manchegan gentleman  
Thy purpose is to tell the story, Relating how he lost his wits  
O'er idle tales of love and glory, Of "ladies, arms, and cavaliers:"  
A new Orlando Furioso —  
Innamorato, rather — who  
Won Dulcinea del Toboso.

Put no vain emblems on thy shield;  
All figures — that is bragging play.  
A modest dedication make,  
And give no scoffer room to say,  
"What! Alvaro de Luna here?  
Or is it Hannibal again?  
Or does King Francis at Madrid  
Once more of destiny complain?"

Since Heaven it hath not pleased on thee Deep erudition to bestow,

Or black Latino's gift of tongues,  
No Latin let thy pages show.  
Ape not philosophy or wit,  
Lest one who cannot comprehend,  
Make a wry face at thee and ask,  
"Why offer flowers to me, my friend?"

Be not a meddler; no affair  
Of thine the life thy neighbours lead: Be prudent; oft the random jest  
Recoils upon the jester's head.  
Thy constant labour let it be  
To earn thyself an honest name,  
For fooleries preserved in print  
Are perpetuity of shame.

A further counsel bear in mind:  
If that thy roof be made of glass, It shows small wit to pick up stones To pelt  
the people as they pass.  
Win the attention of the wise,  
And give the thinker food for thought; Whoso indites frivolities,  
Will but by simpletons be sought.

AMADIS OF GAUL  
To Don Quixote of la Mancha  
SONNET

Thou that didst imitate that life of mine When I in lonely sadness on the great  
Rock Pena Pobre sat disconsolate, In self-imposed penance there to pine; Thou,  
whose sole beverage was the bitter brine Of thine own tears, and who withouten  
plate Of silver, copper, tin, in lowly state Off the bare earth and on earth's fruits  
didst dine; Live thou, of thine eternal glory sure.

So long as on the round of the fourth sphere The bright Apollo shall his  
coursers steer, In thy renown thou shalt remain secure, Thy country's name in  
story shall endure, And thy sage author stand without a peer.

DON BELIANIS OF GREECE  
To Don Quixote of la Mancha  
SONNET

In slashing, hewing, cleaving, word and deed, I was the foremost knight of  
chivalry, Stout, bold, expert, as e'er the world did see; Thousands from the



oppressor's wrong I freed; Great were my feats, eternal fame their meed; In love I proved my truth and loyalty; The hugest giant was a dwarf for me; Ever to knighthood's laws gave I good heed.

My mastery the Fickle Goddess owned, And even Chance, submitting to control, Grasped by the forelock, yielded to my will.

Yet — though above yon horned moon enthroned My fortune seems to sit — great Quixote, still Envy of thy achievements fills my soul.

THE LADY OF ORIANA  
To Dulcinea del Toboso  
SONNET

Oh, fairest Dulcinea, could it be!

It were a pleasant fancy to suppose so — Could Miraflores change to El Toboso, And London's town to that which shelters thee!

Oh, could mine but acquire that livery Of countless charms thy mind and body show so!

Or him, now famous grown — thou mad'st him grow so — Thy knight, in some dread combat could I see!

Oh, could I be released from Amadis By exercise of such coy chastity As led thee gentle Quixote to dismiss!

Then would my heavy sorrow turn to joy; None would I envy, all would envy me, And happiness be mine without alloy.

GANDALIN, SQUIRE OF AMADIS OF GAUL,  
To Sancho Panza, squire of Don Quixote SONNET

All hail, illustrious man! Fortune, when she Bound thee apprentice to the esquire trade, Her care and tenderness of thee displayed, Shaping thy course from misadventure free.

No longer now doth proud knight-errantry Regard with scorn the sickle and the spade; Of towering arrogance less count is made Than of plain esquire-like simplicity.

I envy thee thy Dapple, and thy name, And those alforjas thou wast wont to stuff With comforts that thy providence proclaim.

Excellent Sancho! hail to thee again!

To thee alone the Ovid of our Spain Does homage with the rustic kiss and cuff.

FROM EL DONOSO, THE MOTLEY POET,  
On Sancho Panza and Rocinante

### ON SANCHE

I am the esquire Sancho Pan —  
Who served Don Quixote of La Man — ; But from his service I retreat — ,  
Resolved to pass my life discreet — ; For Villadiego, called the Si — ,  
Maintained that only in reti —  
Was found the secret of well-be — , According to the “Celesti — :”  
A book divine, except for sin —  
By speech too plain, in my opin —

### ON ROCINANTE

I am that Rocinante fa — ,  
Great-grandson of great Babie — ,  
Who, all for being lean and bon — , Had one Don Quixote for an own — ;  
But if I matched him well in weak — , I never took short commons meek — ,  
But kept myself in corn by steal — , A trick I learned from Lazaril — ,  
When with a piece of straw so neat — The blind man of his wine he cheat — .

### ORLANDO FURIOSO

To Don Quixote of La Mancha

#### SONNET

If thou art not a Peer, peer thou hast none; Among a thousand Peers thou art a peer;  
Nor is there room for one when thou art near, Unvanquished victor, great unconquered one!

Orlando, by Angelica undone,

Am I; o'er distant seas condemned to steer, And to Fame's altars as an offering bear  
Valour respected by Oblivion.

I cannot be thy rival, for thy fame And prowess rise above all rivalry, Albeit  
both bereft of wits we go.

But, though the Scythian or the Moor to tame Was not thy lot, still thou dost rival me:  
Love binds us in a fellowship of woe.

### THE KNIGHT OF PHOEBUS

To Don Quixote of La Mancha

My sword was not to be compared with thine Phoebus of Spain, marvel of courtesy,  
Nor with thy famous arm this hand of mine That smote from east to west as lightnings fly.

I scorned all empire, and that monarchy The rosy east held out did I resign  
For one glance of Claridiana's eye, The bright Aurora for whose love I pine.

A miracle of constancy my love;

And banished by her ruthless cruelty, This arm had might the rage of Hell to tame.

But, Gothic Quixote, happier thou dost prove, For thou dost live in Dulcinea's name, And famous, honoured, wise, she lives in thee.

FROM SOLISDAN  
To Don Quixote of La Mancha  
SONNET

Your fantasies, Sir Quixote, it is true, That crazy brain of yours have quite upset,  
But aught of base or mean hath never yet Been charged by any in reproach to you.

Your deeds are open proof in all men's view; For you went forth injustice to abate,  
And for your pains sore drubbings did you get From many a rascally and ruffian crew.

If the fair Dulcinea, your heart's queen, Be unrelenting in her cruelty,

If still your woe be powerless to move her, In such hard case your comfort let it be  
That Sancho was a sorry go-between: A booby he, hard-hearted she, and you no lover.

DIALOGUE  
Between Babieca and Rocinante  
SONNET

B. "How comes it, Rocinante, you're so lean?"

R. "I'm underfed, with overwork I'm worn."

B. "But what becomes of all the hay and corn?"

R. "My master gives me none; he's much too mean."

B. "Come, come, you show ill-breeding, sir, I ween; 'T is like an ass your master thus to scorn."

R. He is an ass, will die an ass, an ass was born; Why, he's in love; what's what's plainer to be seen?"

B. "To be in love is folly?" — R. "No great sense."

B. "You're metaphysical." — R. "From want of food."

B. "Rail at the squire, then." — R. "Why, what's the good?"

I might indeed complain of him, I grant ye, But, squire or master, where's the difference?

They're both as sorry hacks as Rocinante."



## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Idle reader: thou mayest believe me without any oath that I would this book, as it is the child of my brain, were the fairest, gayest, and cleverest that could be imagined. But I could not counteract Nature's law that everything shall beget its like; and what, then, could this sterile, illtilled wit of mine beget but the story of a dry, shrivelled, whimsical offspring, full of thoughts of all sorts and such as never came into any other imagination — just what might be begotten in a prison, where every misery is lodged and every doleful sound makes its dwelling? Tranquillity, a cheerful retreat, pleasant fields, bright skies, murmuring brooks, peace of mind, these are the things that go far to make even the most barren muses fertile, and bring into the world births that fill it with wonder and delight. Sometimes when a father has an ugly, loutish son, the love he bears him so blindfolds his eyes that he does not see his defects, or, rather, takes them for gifts and charms of mind and body, and talks of them to his friends as wit and grace. I, however — for though I pass for the father, I am but the stepfather to “Don Quixote” — have no desire to go with the current of custom, or to implore thee, dearest reader, almost with tears in my eyes, as others do, to pardon or excuse the defects thou wilt perceive in this child of mine. Thou art neither its kinsman nor its friend, thy soul is thine own and thy will as free as any man's, whate'er he be, thou art in thine own house and master of it as much as the king of his taxes and thou knowest the common saying, “Under my cloak I kill the king;” all which exempts and frees thee from every consideration and obligation, and thou canst say what thou wilt of the story without fear of being abused for any ill or rewarded for any good thou mayest say of it.

My wish would be simply to present it to thee plain and unadorned, without any embellishment of preface or uncountable muster of customary sonnets, epigrams, and eulogies, such as are commonly put at the beginning of books. For I can tell thee, though composing it cost me some labour, I found none greater than the making of this Preface thou art now reading. Many times did I take up my pen to write it, and many did I lay it down again, not knowing what to write. One of these times, as I was pondering with the paper before me, a pen in my ear, my elbow on the desk, and my cheek in my hand, thinking of what I should say, there came in unexpectedly a certain lively, clever friend of mine, who, seeing me so deep in thought, asked the reason; to which I, making no mystery

of it, answered that I was thinking of the Preface I had to make for the story of "Don Quixote," which so troubled me that I had a mind not to make any at all, nor even publish the achievements of so noble a knight.

"For, how could you expect me not to feel uneasy about what that ancient lawgiver they call the Public will say when it sees me, after slumbering so many years in the silence of oblivion, coming out now with all my years upon my back, and with a book as dry as a rush, devoid of invention, meagre in style, poor in thoughts, wholly wanting in learning and wisdom, without quotations in the margin or annotations at the end, after the fashion of other books I see, which, though all fables and profanity, are so full of maxims from Aristotle, and Plato, and the whole herd of philosophers, that they fill the readers with amazement and convince them that the authors are men of learning, erudition, and eloquence. And then, when they quote the Holy Scriptures! — anyone would say they are St. Thomases or other doctors of the Church, observing as they do a decorum so ingenious that in one sentence they describe a distracted lover and in the next deliver a devout little sermon that it is a pleasure and a treat to hear and read. Of all this there will be nothing in my book, for I have nothing to quote in the margin or to note at the end, and still less do I know what authors I follow in it, to place them at the beginning, as all do, under the letters A, B, C, beginning with Aristotle and ending with Xenophon, or Zoilus, or Zeuxis, though one was a slanderer and the other a painter. Also my book must do without sonnets at the beginning, at least sonnets whose authors are dukes, marquises, counts, bishops, ladies, or famous poets. Though if I were to ask two or three obliging friends, I know they would give me them, and such as the productions of those that have the highest reputation in our Spain could not equal.

"In short, my friend," I continued, "I am determined that Senor Don Quixote shall remain buried in the archives of his own La Mancha until Heaven provide some one to garnish him with all those things he stands in need of; because I find myself, through my shallowness and want of learning, unequal to supplying them, and because I am by nature shy and careless about hunting for authors to say what I myself can say without them. Hence the cogitation and abstraction you found me in, and reason enough, what you have heard from me."

Hearing this, my friend, giving himself a slap on the forehead and breaking into a hearty laugh, exclaimed, "Before God, Brother, now am I disabused of an error in which I have been living all this long time I have known you, all through which I have taken you to be shrewd and sensible in all you do; but now I see you are as far from that as the heaven is from the earth. It is possible that things of so little moment and so easy to set right can occupy and perplex a ripe wit like yours, fit to break through and crush far greater obstacles? By my faith, this

comes, not of any want of ability, but of too much indolence and too little knowledge of life. Do you want to know if I am telling the truth? Well, then, attend to me, and you will see how, in the opening and shutting of an eye, I sweep away all your difficulties, and supply all those deficiencies which you say check and discourage you from bringing before the world the story of your famous Don Quixote, the light and mirror of all knight-errantry.”

“Say on,” said I, listening to his talk; “how do you propose to make up for my diffidence, and reduce to order this chaos of perplexity I am in?”

To which he made answer, “Your first difficulty about the sonnets, epigrams, or complimentary verses which you want for the beginning, and which ought to be by persons of importance and rank, can be removed if you yourself take a little trouble to make them; you can afterwards baptise them, and put any name you like to them, fathering them on Prester John of the Indies or the Emperor of Trebizond, who, to my knowledge, were said to have been famous poets: and even if they were not, and any pedants or bachelors should attack you and question the fact, never care two maravedis for that, for even if they prove a lie against you they cannot cut off the hand you wrote it with.

“As to references in the margin to the books and authors from whom you take the aphorisms and sayings you put into your story, it is only contriving to fit in nicely any sentences or scraps of Latin you may happen to have by heart, or at any rate that will not give you much trouble to look up; so as, when you speak of freedom and captivity, to insert

*Non bene pro toto libertas venditur auro;*

and then refer in the margin to Horace, or whoever said it; or, if you allude to the power of death, to come in with —

*Pallida mors Aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas,  
Regumque turres.*

“If it be friendship and the love God bids us bear to our enemy, go at once to the Holy Scriptures, which you can do with a very small amount of research, and quote no less than the words of God himself: Ego autem dico vobis: diligite inimicos vestros. If you speak of evil thoughts, turn to the Gospel: De corde exeunt cogitationes malae. If of the fickleness of friends, there is Cato, who will give you his distich:

*Donec eris felix multos numerabis amicos,  
Tempora si fuerint nubila, solus eris.*

“With these and such like bits of Latin they will take you for a grammarian at all events, and that now-a-days is no small honour and profit.

“With regard to adding annotations at the end of the book, you may safely do it in this way. If you mention any giant in your book contrive that it shall be the giant Goliath, and with this alone, which will cost you almost nothing, you have a grand note, for you can put — The giant Golias or Goliath was a Philistine whom the shepherd David slew by a mighty stone-cast in the Terebinth valley, as is related in the Book of Kings — in the chapter where you find it written.

“Next, to prove yourself a man of erudition in polite literature and cosmography, manage that the river Tagus shall be named in your story, and there you are at once with another famous annotation, setting forth — The river Tagus was so called after a King of Spain: it has its source in such and such a place and falls into the ocean, kissing the walls of the famous city of Lisbon, and it is a common belief that it has golden sands, *etc.* If you should have anything to do with robbers, I will give you the story of Cacus, for I have it by heart; if with loose women, there is the Bishop of Mondonedo, who will give you the loan of Lamia, Laida, and Flora, any reference to whom will bring you great credit; if with hard-hearted ones, Ovid will furnish you with Medea; if with witches or enchantresses, Homer has Calypso, and Virgil Circe; if with valiant captains, Julius Caesar himself will lend you himself in his own ‘Commentaries,’ and Plutarch will give you a thousand Alexanders. If you should deal with love, with two ounces you may know of Tuscan you can go to Leon the Hebrew, who will supply you to your heart’s content; or if you should not care to go to foreign countries you have at home Fonseca’s ‘Of the Love of God,’ in which is condensed all that you or the most imaginative mind can want on the subject. In short, all you have to do is to manage to quote these names, or refer to these stories I have mentioned, and leave it to me to insert the annotations and quotations, and I swear by all that’s good to fill your margins and use up four sheets at the end of the book.

“Now let us come to those references to authors which other books have, and you want for yours. The remedy for this is very simple: You have only to look out for some book that quotes them all, from A to Z as you say yourself, and then insert the very same alphabet in your book, and though the imposition may be plain to see, because you have so little need to borrow from them, that is no matter; there will probably be some simple enough to believe that you have made use of them all in this plain, artless story of yours. At any rate, if it answers no other purpose, this long catalogue of authors will serve to give a surprising



look of authority to your book. Besides, no one will trouble himself to verify whether you have followed them or whether you have not, being no way concerned in it; especially as, if I mistake not, this book of yours has no need of any one of those things you say it wants, for it is, from beginning to end, an attack upon the books of chivalry, of which Aristotle never dreamt, nor St. Basil said a word, nor Cicero had any knowledge; nor do the niceties of truth nor the observations of astrology come within the range of its fanciful vagaries; nor have geometrical measurements or refutations of the arguments used in rhetoric anything to do with it; nor does it mean to preach to anybody, mixing up things human and divine, a sort of motley in which no Christian understanding should dress itself. It has only to avail itself of truth to nature in its composition, and the more perfect the imitation the better the work will be. And as this piece of yours aims at nothing more than to destroy the authority and influence which books of chivalry have in the world and with the public, there is no need for you to go a-begging for aphorisms from philosophers, precepts from Holy Scripture, fables from poets, speeches from orators, or miracles from saints; but merely to take care that your style and diction run musically, pleasantly, and plainly, with clear, proper, and well-placed words, setting forth your purpose to the best of your power, and putting your ideas intelligibly, without confusion or obscurity. Strive, too, that in reading your story the melancholy may be moved to laughter, and the merry made merrier still; that the simple shall not be wearied, that the judicious shall admire the invention, that the grave shall not despise it, nor the wise fail to praise it. Finally, keep your aim fixed on the destruction of that ill-founded edifice of the books of chivalry, hated by some and praised by many more; for if you succeed in this you will have achieved no small success.”

In profound silence I listened to what my friend said, and his observations made such an impression on me that, without attempting to question them, I admitted their soundness, and out of them I determined to make this Preface; wherein, gentle reader, thou wilt perceive my friend’s good sense, my good fortune in finding such an adviser in such a time of need, and what thou hast gained in receiving, without addition or alteration, the story of the famous Don Quixote of La Mancha, who is held by all the inhabitants of the district of the Campo de Montiel to have been the chastest lover and the bravest knight that has for many years been seen in that neighbourhood. I have no desire to magnify the service I render thee in making thee acquainted with so renowned and honoured a knight, but I do desire thy thanks for the acquaintance thou wilt make with the famous Sancho Panza, his squire, in whom, to my thinking, I have given thee condensed all the squirely drolleries that are scattered through the swarm of the vain books of chivalry. And so — may God give thee health, and not forget me.

Vale.

## DEDICATION OF PART I

TO THE DUKE OF BEJAR, MARQUIS OF GIBRALEON, COUNT OF  
BENALCAZAR AND BANARES, VICECOUNT OF THE PUEBLA DE  
ALCOCER, MASTER OF THE TOWNS OF CAPILLA, CURIEL AND  
BURGUILLOS

In belief of the good reception and honours that Your Excellency bestows on all sort of books, as prince so inclined to favor good arts, chiefly those who by their nobleness do not submit to the service and bribery of the vulgar, I have determined bringing to light The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of la Mancha, in shelter of Your Excellency's glamorous name, to whom, with the obeisance I owe to such grandeur, I pray to receive it agreeably under his protection, so that in this shadow, though deprived of that precious ornament of elegance and erudition that clothe the works composed in the houses of those who know, it dares appear with assurance in the judgment of some who, trespassing the bounds of their own ignorance, use to condemn with more rigour and less justice the writings of others. It is my earnest hope that Your Excellency's good counsel in regard to my honourable purpose, will not disdain the littleness of so humble a service.

Miguel de Cervantes



## CHAPTER I.

### WHICH TREATS OF THE CHARACTER AND PURSUITS OF THE FAMOUS GENTLEMAN DON QUIXOTE OF LA MANCHA



In a village of La Mancha, the name of which I have no desire to call to mind, there lived not long since one of those gentlemen that keep a lance in the lance-rack, an old buckler, a lean hack, and a greyhound for coursing. An olla of rather more beef than mutton, a salad on most nights, scraps on Saturdays, lentils on Fridays, and a pigeon or so extra on Sundays, made away with three-quarters of his income. The rest of it went in a doublet of fine cloth and velvet breeches and shoes to match for holidays, while on week-days he made a brave figure in his best homespun. He had in his house a housekeeper past forty, a niece under twenty, and a lad for the field and market-place, who used to saddle the hack as well as handle the bill-hook. The age of this gentleman of ours was bordering on fifty; he was of a hardy habit, spare, gaunt-featured, a very early riser and a great sportsman. They will have it his surname was Quixada or Quesada (for here there is some difference of opinion among the authors who write on the subject),

although from reasonable conjectures it seems plain that he was called Quexana. This, however, is of but little importance to our tale; it will be enough not to stray a hair's breadth from the truth in the telling of it.

You must know, then, that the above-named gentleman whenever he was at leisure (which was mostly all the year round) gave himself up to reading books of chivalry with such ardour and avidity that he almost entirely neglected the pursuit of his field-sports, and even the management of his property; and to such a pitch did his eagerness and infatuation go that he sold many an acre of tillageland to buy books of chivalry to read, and brought home as many of them as he could get. But of all there were none he liked so well as those of the famous Feliciano de Silva's composition, for their lucidity of style and complicated conceits were as pearls in his sight, particularly when in his reading he came upon courtships and cartels, where he often found passages like "the reason of the unreason with which my reason is afflicted so weakens my reason that with reason I murmur at your beauty;" or again, "the high heavens, that of your divinity divinely fortify you with the stars, render you deserving of the desert your greatness deserves." Over conceits of this sort the poor gentleman lost his wits, and used to lie awake striving to understand them and worm the meaning out of them; what Aristotle himself could not have made out or extracted had he come to life again for that special purpose. He was not at all easy about the wounds which Don Belianis gave and took, because it seemed to him that, great as were the surgeons who had cured him, he must have had his face and body covered all over with seams and scars. He commended, however, the author's way of ending his book with the promise of that interminable adventure, and many a time was he tempted to take up his pen and finish it properly as is there proposed, which no doubt he would have done, and made a successful piece of work of it too, had not greater and more absorbing thoughts prevented him.

Many an argument did he have with the curate of his village (a learned man, and a graduate of Siguenza) as to which had been the better knight, Palmerin of England or Amadis of Gaul. Master Nicholas, the village barber, however, used to say that neither of them came up to the Knight of Phoebus, and that if there was any that could compare with him it was Don Galaor, the brother of Amadis of Gaul, because he had a spirit that was equal to every occasion, and was no finikin knight, nor lachrymose like his brother, while in the matter of valour he was not a whit behind him. In short, he became so absorbed in his books that he spent his nights from sunset to sunrise, and his days from dawn to dark, poring over them; and what with little sleep and much reading his brains got so dry that he lost his wits. His fancy grew full of what he used to read about in his books,

enchantments, quarrels, battles, challenges, wounds, wooings, loves, agonies, and all sorts of impossible nonsense; and it so possessed his mind that the whole fabric of invention and fancy he read of was true, that to him no history in the world had more reality in it. He used to say the Cid Ruy Diaz was a very good knight, but that he was not to be compared with the Knight of the Burning Sword who with one back-stroke cut in half two fierce and monstrous giants. He thought more of Bernardo del Carpio because at Roncesvalles he slew Roland in spite of enchantments, availing himself of the artifice of Hercules when he strangled Antaeus the son of Terra in his arms. He approved highly of the giant Morgante, because, although of the giant breed which is always arrogant and ill-conditioned, he alone was affable and well-bred. But above all he admired Reinaldos of Montalban, especially when he saw him sallying forth from his castle and robbing everyone he met, and when beyond the seas he stole that image of Mahomet which, as his history says, was entirely of gold. To have a bout of kicking at that traitor of a Ganelon he would have given his housekeeper, and his niece into the bargain.

In short, his wits being quite gone, he hit upon the strangest notion that ever madman in this world hit upon, and that was that he fancied it was right and requisite, as well for the support of his own honour as for the service of his country, that he should make a knight-errant of himself, roaming the world over in full armour and on horseback in quest of adventures, and putting in practice himself all that he had read of as being the usual practices of knights-errant; righting every kind of wrong, and exposing himself to peril and danger from which, in the issue, he was to reap eternal renown and fame. Already the poor man saw himself crowned by the might of his arm Emperor of Trebizond at least; and so, led away by the intense enjoyment he found in these pleasant fancies, he set himself forthwith to put his scheme into execution.

The first thing he did was to clean up some armour that had belonged to his great-grandfather, and had been for ages lying forgotten in a corner eaten with rust and covered with mildew. He scoured and polished it as best he could, but he perceived one great defect in it, that it had no closed helmet, nothing but a simple morion. This deficiency, however, his ingenuity supplied, for he contrived a kind of half-helmet of pasteboard which, fitted on to the morion, looked like a whole one. It is true that, in order to see if it was strong and fit to stand a cut, he drew his sword and gave it a couple of slashes, the first of which undid in an instant what had taken him a week to do. The ease with which he had knocked it to pieces disconcerted him somewhat, and to guard against that danger he set to work again, fixing bars of iron on the inside until he was satisfied with its strength; and then, not caring to try any more experiments with

it, he passed it and adopted it as a helmet of the most perfect construction.

He next proceeded to inspect his hack, which, with more quartos than a real and more blemishes than the steed of Gonela, that "*tantum pellis et ossa fuit*," surpassed in his eyes the Bucephalus of Alexander or the Babieca of the Cid. Four days were spent in thinking what name to give him, because (as he said to himself) it was not right that a horse belonging to a knight so famous, and one with such merits of his own, should be without some distinctive name, and he strove to adapt it so as to indicate what he had been before belonging to a knight-errant, and what he then was; for it was only reasonable that, his master taking a new character, he should take a new name, and that it should be a distinguished and full-sounding one, befitting the new order and calling he was about to follow. And so, after having composed, struck out, rejected, added to, unmade, and remade a multitude of names out of his memory and fancy, he decided upon calling him Rocinante, a name, to his thinking, lofty, sonorous, and significant of his condition as a hack before he became what he now was, the first and foremost of all the hacks in the world.

Having got a name for his horse so much to his taste, he was anxious to get one for himself, and he was eight days more pondering over this point, till at last he made up his mind to call himself "Don Quixote," whence, as has been already said, the authors of this veracious history have inferred that his name must have been beyond a doubt Quixada, and not Quesada as others would have it. Recollecting, however, that the valiant Amadis was not content to call himself curtly Amadis and nothing more, but added the name of his kingdom and country to make it famous, and called himself Amadis of Gaul, he, like a good knight, resolved to add on the name of his, and to style himself Don Quixote of La Mancha, whereby, he considered, he described accurately his origin and country, and did honour to it in taking his surname from it.

So then, his armour being furbished, his morion turned into a helmet, his hack christened, and he himself confirmed, he came to the conclusion that nothing more was needed now but to look out for a lady to be in love with; for a knight-errant without love was like a tree without leaves or fruit, or a body without a soul. As he said to himself, "If, for my sins, or by my good fortune, I come across some giant hereabouts, a common occurrence with knights-errant, and overthrow him in one onslaught, or cleave him asunder to the waist, or, in short, vanquish and subdue him, will it not be well to have some one I may send him to as a present, that he may come in and fall on his knees before my sweet lady, and in a humble, submissive voice say, 'I am the giant Caraculiambro, lord of the island of Malindrania, vanquished in single combat by the never sufficiently extolled knight Don Quixote of La Mancha, who has commanded me to present



myself before your Grace, that your Highness dispose of me at your pleasure’?” Oh, how our good gentleman enjoyed the delivery of this speech, especially when he had thought of some one to call his Lady! There was, so the story goes, in a village near his own a very good-looking farm-girl with whom he had been at one time in love, though, so far as is known, she never knew it nor gave a thought to the matter. Her name was Aldonza Lorenzo, and upon her he thought fit to confer the title of Lady of his Thoughts; and after some search for a name which should not be out of harmony with her own, and should suggest and indicate that of a princess and great lady, he decided upon calling her Dulcinea del Toboso — she being of El Toboso — a name, to his mind, musical, uncommon, and significant, like all those he had already bestowed upon himself and the things belonging to him.



## CHAPTER II.

### WHICH TREATS OF THE FIRST SALLY THE INGENIOUS DON QUIXOTE MADE FROM HOME



These preliminaries settled, he did not care to put off any longer the execution of his design, urged on to it by the thought of all the world was losing by his delay, seeing what wrongs he intended to right, grievances to redress, injustices to repair, abuses to remove, and duties to discharge. So, without giving notice of his intention to anyone, and without anybody seeing him, one morning before the dawning of the day (which was one of the hottest of the month of July) he donned his suit of armour, mounted Rocinante with his patched-up helmet on, braced his buckler, took his lance, and by the back door of the yard sallied forth upon the plain in the highest contentment and satisfaction at seeing with what ease he had made a beginning with his grand purpose. But scarcely did he find himself upon the open plain, when a terrible thought struck him, one all but enough to make him abandon the enterprise at the very outset. It occurred to him that he had not been dubbed a knight, and that according to the law of chivalry he neither could nor ought to bear arms against any knight; and that even if he had been, still he ought, as a novice knight, to wear white armour, without a device upon the shield until by his prowess he had earned one. These reflections

made him waver in his purpose, but his craze being stronger than any reasoning, he made up his mind to have himself dubbed a knight by the first one he came across, following the example of others in the same case, as he had read in the books that brought him to this pass. As for white armour, he resolved, on the first opportunity, to scour his until it was whiter than an ermine; and so comforting himself he pursued his way, taking that which his horse chose, for in this he believed lay the essence of adventures.

Thus setting out, our new-fledged adventurer paced along, talking to himself and saying, "Who knows but that in time to come, when the veracious history of my famous deeds is made known, the sage who writes it, when he has to set forth my first sally in the early morning, will do it after this fashion? 'Scarce had the rubicund Apollo spread o'er the face of the broad spacious earth the golden threads of his bright hair, scarce had the little birds of painted plumage attuned their notes to hail with dulcet and mellifluous harmony the coming of the rosy Dawn, that, deserting the soft couch of her jealous spouse, was appearing to mortals at the gates and balconies of the Manchegan horizon, when the renowned knight Don Quixote of La Mancha, quitting the lazy down, mounted his celebrated steed Rocinante and began to traverse the ancient and famous Campo de Montiel;'" which in fact he was actually traversing. "Happy the age, happy the time," he continued, "in which shall be made known my deeds of fame, worthy to be moulded in brass, carved in marble, limned in pictures, for a memorial for ever. And thou, O sage magician, whoever thou art, to whom it shall fall to be the chronicler of this wondrous history, forget not, I entreat thee, my good Rocinante, the constant companion of my ways and wanderings." Presently he broke out again, as if he were love-stricken in earnest, "O Princess Dulcinea, lady of this captive heart, a grievous wrong hast thou done me to drive me forth with scorn, and with inexorable obduracy banish me from the presence of thy beauty. O lady, deign to hold in remembrance this heart, thy vassal, that thus in anguish pines for love of thee."

So he went on stringing together these and other absurdities, all in the style of those his books had taught him, imitating their language as well as he could; and all the while he rode so slowly and the sun mounted so rapidly and with such fervour that it was enough to melt his brains if he had any. Nearly all day he travelled without anything remarkable happening to him, at which he was in despair, for he was anxious to encounter some one at once upon whom to try the might of his strong arm.



Writers there are who say the first adventure he met with was that of Puerto Lapice; others say it was that of the windmills; but what I have ascertained on this point, and what I have found written in the annals of La Mancha, is that he was on the road all day, and towards nightfall his hack and he found themselves dead tired and hungry, when, looking all around to see if he could discover any castle or shepherd's shanty where he might refresh himself and relieve his sore wants, he perceived not far out of his road an inn, which was as welcome as a star guiding him to the portals, if not the palaces, of his redemption; and

quicken his pace he reached it just as night was setting in. At the door were standing two young women, girls of the district as they call them, on their way to Seville with some carriers who had chanced to halt that night at the inn; and as, happen what might to our adventurer, everything he saw or imaged seemed to him to be and to happen after the fashion of what he read of, the moment he saw the inn he pictured it to himself as a castle with its four turrets and pinnacles of shining silver, not forgetting the drawbridge and moat and all the belongings usually ascribed to castles of the sort. To this inn, which to him seemed a castle, he advanced, and at a short distance from it he checked Rocinante, hoping that some dwarf would show himself upon the battlements, and by sound of trumpet give notice that a knight was approaching the castle. But seeing that they were slow about it, and that Rocinante was in a hurry to reach the stable, he made for the inn door, and perceived the two gay damsels who were standing there, and who seemed to him to be two fair maidens or lovely ladies taking their ease at the castle gate.

At this moment it so happened that a swineherd who was going through the stubbles collecting a drove of pigs (for, without any apology, that is what they are called) gave a blast of his horn to bring them together, and forthwith it seemed to Don Quixote to be what he was expecting, the signal of some dwarf announcing his arrival; and so with prodigious satisfaction he rode up to the inn and to the ladies, who, seeing a man of this sort approaching in full armour and with lance and buckler, were turning in dismay into the inn, when Don Quixote, guessing their fear by their flight, raising his pasteboard visor, disclosed his dry dusty visage, and with courteous bearing and gentle voice addressed them, "Your ladyships need not fly or fear any rudeness, for that it belongs not to the order of knighthood which I profess to offer to anyone, much less to highborn maidens as your appearance proclaims you to be." The girls were looking at him and straining their eyes to make out the features which the clumsy visor obscured, but when they heard themselves called maidens, a thing so much out of their line, they could not restrain their laughter, which made Don Quixote wax indignant, and say, "Modesty becomes the fair, and moreover laughter that has little cause is great silliness; this, however, I say not to pain or anger you, for my desire is none other than to serve you."

The incomprehensible language and the unpromising looks of our cavalier only increased the ladies' laughter, and that increased his irritation, and matters might have gone farther if at that moment the landlord had not come out, who, being a very fat man, was a very peaceful one. He, seeing this grotesque figure clad in armour that did not match any more than his saddle, bridle, lance, buckler, or corselet, was not at all indisposed to join the damsels in their

manifestations of amusement; but, in truth, standing in awe of such a complicated armament, he thought it best to speak him fairly, so he said, "Senor Caballero, if your worship wants lodging, bating the bed (for there is not one in the inn) there is plenty of everything else here." Don Quixote, observing the respectful bearing of the Alcaide of the fortress (for so innkeeper and inn seemed in his eyes), made answer, "Sir Castellan, for me anything will suffice, for 'My armour is my only wear,

My only rest the fray.'"

The host fancied he called him Castellan because he took him for a "worthy of Castile," though he was in fact an Andalusian, and one from the strand of San Lucar, as crafty a thief as Cacus and as full of tricks as a student or a page. "In that case," said he, "'Your bed is on the flinty rock,

Your sleep to watch alway;'

and if so, you may dismount and safely reckon upon any quantity of sleeplessness under this roof for a twelvemonth, not to say for a single night." So saying, he advanced to hold the stirrup for Don Quixote, who got down with great difficulty and exertion (for he had not broken his fast all day), and then charged the host to take great care of his horse, as he was the best bit of flesh that ever ate bread in this world. The landlord eyed him over but did not find him as good as Don Quixote said, nor even half as good; and putting him up in the stable, he returned to see what might be wanted by his guest, whom the damsels, who had by this time made their peace with him, were now relieving of his armour. They had taken off his breastplate and backpiece, but they neither knew nor saw how to open his gorget or remove his make-shift helmet, for he had fastened it with green ribbons, which, as there was no untying the knots, required to be cut. This, however, he would not by any means consent to, so he remained all the evening with his helmet on, the drollest and oddest figure that can be imagined; and while they were removing his armour, taking the baggages who were about it for ladies of high degree belonging to the castle, he said to them with great sprightliness: "Oh, never, surely, was there knight

So served by hand of dame,

As served was he, Don Quixote hight,

When from his town he came;

With maidens waiting on himself,

Princesses on his hack —

— or Rocinante, for that, ladies mine, is my horse's name, and Don Quixote of La Mancha is my own; for though I had no intention of declaring myself until my achievements in your service and honour had made me known, the necessity of adapting that old ballad of Lancelot to the present occasion has given you the

knowledge of my name altogether prematurely. A time, however, will come for your ladyships to command and me to obey, and then the might of my arm will show my desire to serve you."

The girls, who were not used to hearing rhetoric of this sort, had nothing to say in reply; they only asked him if he wanted anything to eat. "I would gladly eat a bit of something," said Don Quixote, "for I feel it would come very seasonably." The day happened to be a Friday, and in the whole inn there was nothing but some pieces of the fish they call in Castile "abadejo," in Andalusia "bacallao," and in some places "curadillo," and in others "troutlet;" so they asked him if he thought he could eat troutlet, for there was no other fish to give him. "If there be troutlets enough," said Don Quixote, "they will be the same thing as a trout; for it is all one to me whether I am given eight reals in small change or a piece of eight; moreover, it may be that these troutlets are like veal, which is better than beef, or kid, which is better than goat. But whatever it be let it come quickly, for the burden and pressure of arms cannot be borne without support to the inside." They laid a table for him at the door of the inn for the sake of the air, and the host brought him a portion of ill-soaked and worse cooked stockfish, and a piece of bread as black and mouldy as his own armour; but a laughable sight it was to see him eating, for having his helmet on and the beaver up, he could not with his own hands put anything into his mouth unless some one else placed it there, and this service one of the ladies rendered him. But to give him anything to drink was impossible, or would have been so had not the landlord bored a reed, and putting one end in his mouth poured the wine into him through the other; all which he bore with patience rather than sever the ribbons of his helmet.

While this was going on there came up to the inn a sowgelder, who, as he approached, sounded his reed pipe four or five times, and thereby completely convinced Don Quixote that he was in some famous castle, and that they were regaling him with music, and that the stockfish was trout, the bread the whitest, the wenches ladies, and the landlord the castellan of the castle; and consequently he held that his enterprise and sally had been to some purpose. But still it distressed him to think he had not been dubbed a knight, for it was plain to him he could not lawfully engage in any adventure without receiving the order of knighthood.





## CHAPTER III.

WHEREIN IS RELATED THE DROLL WAY IN WHICH DON QUIXOTE  
HAD HIMSELF DUBBED A KNIGHT



Harassed by this reflection, he made haste with his scanty pothouse supper, and having finished it called the landlord, and shutting himself into the stable with him, fell on his knees before him, saying, "From this spot I rise not, valiant knight, until your courtesy grants me the boon I seek, one that will redound to your praise and the benefit of the human race." The landlord, seeing his guest at his feet and hearing a speech of this kind, stood staring at him in bewilderment, not knowing what to do or say, and entreating him to rise, but all to no purpose until he had agreed to grant the boon demanded of him. "I looked for no less, my lord, from your High Magnificence," replied Don Quixote, "and I have to tell

you that the boon I have asked and your liberality has granted is that you shall dub me knight tomorrow morning, and that to-night I shall watch my arms in the chapel of this your castle; thus tomorrow, as I have said, will be accomplished what I so much desire, enabling me lawfully to roam through all the four quarters of the world seeking adventures on behalf of those in distress, as is the duty of chivalry and of knights-errant like myself, whose ambition is directed to such deeds.”

The landlord, who, as has been mentioned, was something of a wag, and had already some suspicion of his guest’s want of wits, was quite convinced of it on hearing talk of this kind from him, and to make sport for the night he determined to fall in with his humour. So he told him he was quite right in pursuing the object he had in view, and that such a motive was natural and becoming in cavaliers as distinguished as he seemed and his gallant bearing showed him to be; and that he himself in his younger days had followed the same honourable calling, roaming in quest of adventures in various parts of the world, among others the Curing-grounds of Malaga, the Isles of Riaran, the Precinct of Seville, the Little Market of Segovia, the Olivera of Valencia, the Rondilla of Granada, the Strand of San Lucar, the Colt of Cordova, the Taverns of Toledo, and divers other quarters, where he had proved the nimbleness of his feet and the lightness of his fingers, doing many wrongs, cheating many widows, ruining maids and swindling minors, and, in short, bringing himself under the notice of almost every tribunal and court of justice in Spain; until at last he had retired to this castle of his, where he was living upon his property and upon that of others; and where he received all knights-errant of whatever rank or condition they might be, all for the great love he bore them and that they might share their substance with him in return for his benevolence. He told him, moreover, that in this castle of his there was no chapel in which he could watch his armour, as it had been pulled down in order to be rebuilt, but that in a case of necessity it might, he knew, be watched anywhere, and he might watch it that night in a courtyard of the castle, and in the morning, God willing, the requisite ceremonies might be performed so as to have him dubbed a knight, and so thoroughly dubbed that nobody could be more so. He asked if he had any money with him, to which Don Quixote replied that he had not a farthing, as in the histories of knights-errant he had never read of any of them carrying any. On this point the landlord told him he was mistaken; for, though not recorded in the histories, because in the author’s opinion there was no need to mention anything so obvious and necessary as money and clean shirts, it was not to be supposed therefore that they did not carry them, and he might regard it as certain and established that all knights-errant (about whom there were so many full and unimpeachable books)

carried well-furnished purses in case of emergency, and likewise carried shirts and a little box of ointment to cure the wounds they received. For in those plains and deserts where they engaged in combat and came out wounded, it was not always that there was some one to cure them, unless indeed they had for a friend some sage magician to succour them at once by fetching through the air upon a cloud some damsel or dwarf with a vial of water of such virtue that by tasting one drop of it they were cured of their hurts and wounds in an instant and left as sound as if they had not received any damage whatever. But in case this should not occur, the knights of old took care to see that their squires were provided with money and other requisites, such as lint and ointments for healing purposes; and when it happened that knights had no squires (which was rarely and seldom the case) they themselves carried everything in cunning saddle-bags that were hardly seen on the horse's croup, as if it were something else of more importance, because, unless for some such reason, carrying saddle-bags was not very favourably regarded among knights-errant. He therefore advised him (and, as his godson so soon to be, he might even command him) never from that time forth to travel without money and the usual requirements, and he would find the advantage of them when he least expected it.

Don Quixote promised to follow his advice scrupulously, and it was arranged forthwith that he should watch his armour in a large yard at one side of the inn; so, collecting it all together, Don Quixote placed it on a trough that stood by the side of a well, and bracing his buckler on his arm he grasped his lance and began with a stately air to march up and down in front of the trough, and as he began his march night began to fall.

The landlord told all the people who were in the inn about the craze of his guest, the watching of the armour, and the dubbing ceremony he contemplated. Full of wonder at so strange a form of madness, they flocked to see it from a distance, and observed with what composure he sometimes paced up and down, or sometimes, leaning on his lance, gazed on his armour without taking his eyes off it for ever so long; and as the night closed in with a light from the moon so brilliant that it might vie with his that lent it, everything the novice knight did was plainly seen by all.

Meanwhile one of the carriers who were in the inn thought fit to water his team, and it was necessary to remove Don Quixote's armour as it lay on the trough; but he seeing the other approach hailed him in a loud voice, "O thou, whoever thou art, rash knight that comest to lay hands on the armour of the most valorous errant that ever girt on sword, have a care what thou dost; touch it not unless thou wouldst lay down thy life as the penalty of thy rashness." The carrier gave no heed to these words (and he would have done better to heed them if he

had been heedful of his health), but seizing it by the straps flung the armour some distance from him. Seeing this, Don Quixote raised his eyes to heaven, and fixing his thoughts, apparently, upon his lady Dulcinea, exclaimed, "Aid me, lady mine, in this the first encounter that presents itself to this breast which thou holdest in subjection; let not thy favour and protection fail me in this first jeopardy;" and, with these words and others to the same purpose, dropping his buckler he lifted his lance with both hands and with it smote such a blow on the carrier's head that he stretched him on the ground, so stunned that had he followed it up with a second there would have been no need of a surgeon to cure him. This done, he picked up his armour and returned to his beat with the same serenity as before.



Shortly after this, another, not knowing what had happened (for the carrier still lay senseless), came with the same object of giving water to his mules, and was proceeding to remove the armour in order to clear the trough, when Don Quixote, without uttering a word or imploring aid from anyone, once more dropped his buckler and once more lifted his lance, and without actually breaking the second carrier's head into pieces, made more than three of it, for he laid it open in four. At the noise all the people of the inn ran to the spot, and among them the landlord. Seeing this, Don Quixote braced his buckler on his arm, and with his hand on his sword exclaimed, "O Lady of Beauty, strength and support of my faint heart, it is time for thee to turn the eyes of thy greatness on

this thy captive knight on the brink of so mighty an adventure." By this he felt himself so inspired that he would not have flinched if all the carriers in the world had assailed him. The comrades of the wounded perceiving the plight they were in began from a distance to shower stones on Don Quixote, who screened himself as best he could with his buckler, not daring to quit the trough and leave his armour unprotected. The landlord shouted to them to leave him alone, for he had already told them that he was mad, and as a madman he would not be accountable even if he killed them all. Still louder shouted Don Quixote, calling them knaves and traitors, and the lord of the castle, who allowed knights-errant to be treated in this fashion, a villain and a low-born knight whom, had he received the order of knighthood, he would call to account for his treachery. "But of you," he cried, "base and vile rabble, I make no account; fling, strike, come on, do all ye can against me, ye shall see what the reward of your folly and insolence will be." This he uttered with so much spirit and boldness that he filled his assailants with a terrible fear, and as much for this reason as at the persuasion of the landlord they left off stoning him, and he allowed them to carry off the wounded, and with the same calmness and composure as before resumed the watch over his armour.

But these freaks of his guest were not much to the liking of the landlord, so he determined to cut matters short and confer upon him at once the unlucky order of knighthood before any further misadventure could occur; so, going up to him, he apologised for the rudeness which, without his knowledge, had been offered to him by these low people, who, however, had been well punished for their audacity. As he had already told him, he said, there was no chapel in the castle, nor was it needed for what remained to be done, for, as he understood the ceremonial of the order, the whole point of being dubbed a knight lay in the accolade and in the slap on the shoulder, and that could be administered in the middle of a field; and that he had now done all that was needful as to watching the armour, for all requirements were satisfied by a watch of two hours only, while he had been more than four about it. Don Quixote believed it all, and told him he stood there ready to obey him, and to make an end of it with as much despatch as possible; for, if he were again attacked, and felt himself to be dubbed knight, he would not, he thought, leave a soul alive in the castle, except such as out of respect he might spare at his bidding.

Thus warned and menaced, the castellan forthwith brought out a book in which he used to enter the straw and barley he served out to the carriers, and, with a lad carrying a candle-end, and the two damsels already mentioned, he returned to where Don Quixote stood, and bade him kneel down. Then, reading from his account-book as if he were repeating some devout prayer, in the middle

of his delivery he raised his hand and gave him a sturdy blow on the neck, and then, with his own sword, a smart slap on the shoulder, all the while muttering between his teeth as if he was saying his prayers. Having done this, he directed one of the ladies to gird on his sword, which she did with great self-possession and gravity, and not a little was required to prevent a burst of laughter at each stage of the ceremony; but what they had already seen of the novice knight's prowess kept their laughter within bounds. On girding him with the sword the worthy lady said to him, "May God make your worship a very fortunate knight, and grant you success in battle." Don Quixote asked her name in order that he might from that time forward know to whom he was beholden for the favour he had received, as he meant to confer upon her some portion of the honour he acquired by the might of his arm. She answered with great humility that she was called La Tolosa, and that she was the daughter of a cobbler of Toledo who lived in the stalls of Sanchobienaya, and that wherever she might be she would serve and esteem him as her lord. Don Quixote said in reply that she would do him a favour if thenceforward she assumed the "Don" and called herself Dona Tolosa. She promised she would, and then the other buckled on his spur, and with her followed almost the same conversation as with the lady of the sword. He asked her name, and she said it was La Molinera, and that she was the daughter of a respectable miller of Antequera; and of her likewise Don Quixote requested that she would adopt the "Don" and call herself Dona Molinera, making offers to her further services and favours.

Having thus, with hot haste and speed, brought to a conclusion these never-till-now-seen ceremonies, Don Quixote was on thorns until he saw himself on horseback sallying forth in quest of adventures; and saddling Rocinante at once he mounted, and embracing his host, as he returned thanks for his kindness in knighting him, he addressed him in language so extraordinary that it is impossible to convey an idea of it or report it. The landlord, to get him out of the inn, replied with no less rhetoric though with shorter words, and without calling upon him to pay the reckoning let him go with a Godspeed.





## CHAPTER IV.

### OF WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR KNIGHT WHEN HE LEFT THE INN



Day was dawning when Don Quixote quitted the inn, so happy, so gay, so exhilarated at finding himself now dubbed a knight, that his joy was like to burst his horse-girths. However, recalling the advice of his host as to the requisites he ought to carry with him, especially that referring to money and shirts, he determined to go home and provide himself with all, and also with a squire, for he reckoned upon securing a farm-labourer, a neighbour of his, a poor man with a family, but very well qualified for the office of squire to a knight. With this object he turned his horse's head towards his village, and Rocinante, thus reminded of his old quarters, stepped out so briskly that he hardly seemed to tread the earth.

He had not gone far, when out of a thicket on his right there seemed to come feeble cries as of some one in distress, and the instant he heard them he exclaimed, "Thanks be to heaven for the favour it accords me, that it so soon offers me an opportunity of fulfilling the obligation I have undertaken, and gathering the fruit of my ambition. These cries, no doubt, come from some man or woman in want of help, and needing my aid and protection;" and wheeling, he turned Rocinante in the direction whence the cries seemed to proceed. He had

gone but a few paces into the wood, when he saw a mare tied to an oak, and tied to another, and stripped from the waist upwards, a youth of about fifteen years of age, from whom the cries came. Nor were they without cause, for a lusty farmer was flogging him with a belt and following up every blow with scoldings and commands, repeating, "Your mouth shut and your eyes open!" while the youth made answer, "I won't do it again, master mine; by God's passion I won't do it again, and I'll take more care of the flock another time."

Seeing what was going on, Don Quixote said in an angry voice, "Discourteous knight, it ill becomes you to assail one who cannot defend himself; mount your steed and take your lance" (for there was a lance leaning against the oak to which the mare was tied), "and I will make you know that you are behaving as a coward." The farmer, seeing before him this figure in full armour brandishing a lance over his head, gave himself up for dead, and made answer meekly, "Sir Knight, this youth that I am chastising is my servant, employed by me to watch a flock of sheep that I have hard by, and he is so careless that I lose one every day, and when I punish him for his carelessness and knavery he says I do it out of niggardliness, to escape paying him the wages I owe him, and before God, and on my soul, he lies."

"Lies before me, base clown!" said Don Quixote. "By the sun that shines on us I have a mind to run you through with this lance. Pay him at once without another word; if not, by the God that rules us I will make an end of you, and annihilate you on the spot; release him instantly."



The farmer hung his head, and without a word untied his servant, of whom Don Quixote asked how much his master owed him.

He replied, nine months at seven reals a month. Don Quixote added it up, found that it came to sixty-three reals, and told the farmer to pay it down immediately, if he did not want to die for it.

The trembling clown replied that as he lived and by the oath he had sworn (though he had not sworn any) it was not so much; for there were to be taken into account and deducted three pairs of shoes he had given him, and a real for two blood-lettings when he was sick.

“All that is very well,” said Don Quixote; “but let the shoes and the blood-

lettings stand as a setoff against the blows you have given him without any cause; for if he spoiled the leather of the shoes you paid for, you have damaged that of his body, and if the barber took blood from him when he was sick, you have drawn it when he was sound; so on that score he owes you nothing.”

“The difficulty is, Sir Knight, that I have no money here; let Andres come home with me, and I will pay him all, real by real.”

“I go with him!” said the youth. “Nay, God forbid! No, senor, not for the world; for once alone with me, he would ray me like a Saint Bartholomew.”

“He will do nothing of the kind,” said Don Quixote; “I have only to command, and he will obey me; and as he has sworn to me by the order of knighthood which he has received, I leave him free, and I guarantee the payment.”

“Consider what you are saying, senor,” said the youth; “this master of mine is not a knight, nor has he received any order of knighthood; for he is Juan Haldudo the Rich, of Quintanar.”

“That matters little,” replied Don Quixote; “there may be Haldudos knights; moreover, everyone is the son of his works.”

“That is true,” said Andres; “but this master of mine — of what works is he the son, when he refuses me the wages of my sweat and labour?”

“I do not refuse, brother Andres,” said the farmer, “be good enough to come along with me, and I swear by all the orders of knighthood there are in the world to pay you as I have agreed, real by real, and perfumed.”

“For the perfumery I excuse you,” said Don Quixote; “give it to him in reals, and I shall be satisfied; and see that you do as you have sworn; if not, by the same oath I swear to come back and hunt you out and punish you; and I shall find you though you should lie closer than a lizard. And if you desire to know who it is lays this command upon you, that you be more firmly bound to obey it, know that I am the valorous Don Quixote of La Mancha, the undoer of wrongs and injustices; and so, God be with you, and keep in mind what you have promised and sworn under those penalties that have been already declared to you.”

So saying, he gave Rocinante the spur and was soon out of reach. The farmer followed him with his eyes, and when he saw that he had cleared the wood and was no longer in sight, he turned to his boy Andres, and said, “Come here, my son, I want to pay you what I owe you, as that undoer of wrongs has commanded me.”

“My oath on it,” said Andres, “your worship will be well advised to obey the command of that good knight — may he live a thousand years — for, as he is a valiant and just judge, by Roque, if you do not pay me, he will come back and do as he said.”

“My oath on it, too,” said the farmer; “but as I have a strong affection for you, I want to add to the debt in order to add to the payment;” and seizing him by the arm, he tied him up again, and gave him such a flogging that he left him for dead.

“Now, Master Andres,” said the farmer, “call on the undoer of wrongs; you will find he won’t undo that, though I am not sure that I have quite done with you, for I have a good mind to flay you alive.” But at last he untied him, and gave him leave to go look for his judge in order to put the sentence pronounced into execution.

Andres went off rather down in the mouth, swearing he would go to look for the valiant Don Quixote of La Mancha and tell him exactly what had happened, and that all would have to be repaid him sevenfold; but for all that, he went off weeping, while his master stood laughing.

Thus did the valiant Don Quixote right that wrong, and, thoroughly satisfied with what had taken place, as he considered he had made a very happy and noble beginning with his knighthood, he took the road towards his village in perfect self-content, saying in a low voice, “Well mayest thou this day call thyself fortunate above all on earth, O Dulcinea del Toboso, fairest of the fair! since it has fallen to thy lot to hold subject and submissive to thy full will and pleasure a knight so renowned as is and will be Don Quixote of La Mancha, who, as all the world knows, yesterday received the order of knighthood, and hath to-day righted the greatest wrong and grievance that ever injustice conceived and cruelty perpetrated: who hath to-day plucked the rod from the hand of yonder ruthless oppressor so wantonly lashing that tender child.”

He now came to a road branching in four directions, and immediately he was reminded of those cross-roads where knights-errant used to stop to consider which road they should take. In imitation of them he halted for a while, and after having deeply considered it, he gave Rocinante his head, submitting his own will to that of his hack, who followed out his first intention, which was to make straight for his own stable. After he had gone about two miles Don Quixote perceived a large party of people, who, as afterwards appeared, were some Toledo traders, on their way to buy silk at Murcia. There were six of them coming along under their sunshades, with four servants mounted, and three muleteers on foot. Scarcely had Don Quixote descried them when the fancy possessed him that this must be some new adventure; and to help him to imitate as far as he could those passages he had read of in his books, here seemed to come one made on purpose, which he resolved to attempt. So with a lofty bearing and determination he fixed himself firmly in his stirrups, got his lance ready, brought his buckler before his breast, and planting himself in the middle

of the road, stood waiting the approach of these knights-errant, for such he now considered and held them to be; and when they had come near enough to see and hear, he exclaimed with a haughty gesture, "All the world stand, unless all the world confess that in all the world there is no maiden fairer than the Empress of La Mancha, the peerless Dulcinea del Toboso."

The traders halted at the sound of this language and the sight of the strange figure that uttered it, and from both figure and language at once guessed the craze of their owner; they wished, however, to learn quietly what was the object of this confession that was demanded of them, and one of them, who was rather fond of a joke and was very sharp-witted, said to him, "Sir Knight, we do not know who this good lady is that you speak of; show her to us, for, if she be of such beauty as you suggest, with all our hearts and without any pressure we will confess the truth that is on your part required of us."

"If I were to show her to you," replied Don Quixote, "what merit would you have in confessing a truth so manifest? The essential point is that without seeing her you must believe, confess, affirm, swear, and defend it; else ye have to do with me in battle, ill-conditioned, arrogant rabble that ye are; and come ye on, one by one as the order of knighthood requires, or all together as is the custom and vile usage of your breed, here do I bide and await you relying on the justice of the cause I maintain."

"Sir Knight," replied the trader, "I entreat your worship in the name of this present company of princes, that, to save us from charging our consciences with the confession of a thing we have never seen or heard of, and one moreover so much to the prejudice of the Empresses and Queens of the Alcarria and Estremadura, your worship will be pleased to show us some portrait of this lady, though it be no bigger than a grain of wheat; for by the thread one gets at the ball, and in this way we shall be satisfied and easy, and you will be content and pleased; nay, I believe we are already so far agreed with you that even though her portrait should show her blind of one eye, and distilling vermilion and sulphur from the other, we would nevertheless, to gratify your worship, say all in her favour that you desire."

"She distils nothing of the kind, vile rabble," said Don Quixote, burning with rage, "nothing of the kind, I say, only ambergris and civet in cotton; nor is she one-eyed or humpbacked, but straighter than a Guadarrama spindle: but ye must pay for the blasphemy ye have uttered against beauty like that of my lady."

And so saying, he charged with levelled lance against the one who had spoken, with such fury and fierceness that, if luck had not contrived that Rocinante should stumble midway and come down, it would have gone hard with the rash trader. Down went Rocinante, and over went his master, rolling

along the ground for some distance; and when he tried to rise he was unable, so encumbered was he with lance, buckler, spurs, helmet, and the weight of his old armour; and all the while he was struggling to get up he kept saying, "Fly not, cowards and caitiffs! stay, for not by my fault, but my horse's, am I stretched here."



One of the muleteers in attendance, who could not have had much good nature



in him, hearing the poor prostrate man blustering in this style, was unable to refrain from giving him an answer on his ribs; and coming up to him he seized his lance, and having broken it in pieces, with one of them he began so to belabour our Don Quixote that, notwithstanding and in spite of his armour, he milled him like a measure of wheat. His masters called out not to lay on so hard and to leave him alone, but the muleteers blood was up, and he did not care to drop the game until he had vented the rest of his wrath, and gathering up the remaining fragments of the lance he finished with a discharge upon the unhappy victim, who all through the storm of sticks that rained on him never ceased threatening heaven, and earth, and the brigands, for such they seemed to him. At last the muleteer was tired, and the traders continued their journey, taking with them matter for talk about the poor fellow who had been cudgelled. He when he found himself alone made another effort to rise; but if he was unable when whole and sound, how was he to rise after having been thrashed and well-nigh knocked to pieces? And yet he esteemed himself fortunate, as it seemed to him that this was a regular knight-errant's mishap, and entirely, he considered, the fault of his horse. However, battered in body as he was, to rise was beyond his power.



## CHAPTER V.

### IN WHICH THE NARRATIVE OF OUR KNIGHT'S MISHAP IS CONTINUED



Finding, then, that, in fact he could not move, he thought himself of having recourse to his usual remedy, which was to think of some passage in his books, and his craze brought to his mind that about Baldwin and the Marquis of Mantua, when Carloto left him wounded on the mountain side, a story known by heart by the children, not forgotten by the young men, and lauded and even believed by the old folk; and for all that not a whit truer than the miracles of Mahomet. This seemed to him to fit exactly the case in which he found himself, so, making a show of severe suffering, he began to roll on the ground and with feeble breath repeat the very words which the wounded knight of the wood is said to have uttered:

Where art thou, lady mine, that thou  
My sorrow dost not rue?  
Thou canst not know it, lady mine,  
Or else thou art untrue.  
And so he went on with the ballad as far as the lines:  
O noble Marquis of Mantua,  
My Uncle and liege lord!



As chance would have it, when he had got to this line there happened to come by a peasant from his own village, a neighbour of his, who had been with a load of wheat to the mill, and he, seeing the man stretched there, came up to him and asked him who he was and what was the matter with him that he complained so dolefully.

Don Quixote was firmly persuaded that this was the Marquis of Mantua, his uncle, so the only answer he made was to go on with his ballad, in which he told the tale of his misfortune, and of the loves of the Emperor's son and his wife all exactly as the ballad sings it.

The peasant stood amazed at hearing such nonsense, and relieving him of the visor, already battered to pieces by blows, he wiped his face, which was covered with dust, and as soon as he had done so he recognised him and said, "Senor Quixada" (for so he appears to have been called when he was in his senses and had not yet changed from a quiet country gentleman into a knight-errant), "who has brought your worship to this pass?" But to all questions the other only went on with his ballad.

Seeing this, the good man removed as well as he could his breastplate and backpiece to see if he had any wound, but he could perceive no blood nor any mark whatever. He then contrived to raise him from the ground, and with no little difficulty hoisted him upon his ass, which seemed to him to be the easiest mount for him; and collecting the arms, even to the splinters of the lance, he tied them on Rocinante, and leading him by the bridle and the ass by the halter he took the road for the village, very sad to hear what absurd stuff Don Quixote was talking.



Nor was Don Quixote less so, for what with blows and bruises he could not sit upright on the ass, and from time to time he sent up sighs to heaven, so that once more he drove the peasant to ask what ailed him. And it could have been only the devil himself that put into his head tales to match his own adventures, for now, forgetting Baldwin, he bethought himself of the Moor Abindarraez, when the Alcaide of Antequera, Rodrigo de Narvaez, took him prisoner and carried him away to his castle; so that when the peasant again asked him how he was and what ailed him, he gave him for reply the same words and phrases that the captive Abindarraez gave to Rodrigo de Narvaez, just as he had read the story in the “Diana” of Jorge de Montemayor where it is written, applying it to his own

case so aptly that the peasant went along cursing his fate that he had to listen to such a lot of nonsense; from which, however, he came to the conclusion that his neighbour was mad, and so made all haste to reach the village to escape the wearisomeness of this harangue of Don Quixote's; who, at the end of it, said, "Senor Don Rodrigo de Narvaez, your worship must know that this fair Xarifa I have mentioned is now the lovely Dulcinea del Toboso, for whom I have done, am doing, and will do the most famous deeds of chivalry that in this world have been seen, are to be seen, or ever shall be seen."

To this the peasant answered, "Senor — sinner that I am! — cannot your worship see that I am not Don Rodrigo de Narvaez nor the Marquis of Mantua, but Pedro Alonso your neighbour, and that your worship is neither Baldwin nor Abindarraez, but the worthy gentleman Senor Quixada?"

"I know who I am," replied Don Quixote, "and I know that I may be not only those I have named, but all the Twelve Peers of France and even all the Nine Worthies, since my achievements surpass all that they have done all together and each of them on his own account."

With this talk and more of the same kind they reached the village just as night was beginning to fall, but the peasant waited until it was a little later that the belaboured gentleman might not be seen riding in such a miserable trim. When it was what seemed to him the proper time he entered the village and went to Don Quixote's house, which he found all in confusion, and there were the curate and the village barber, who were great friends of Don Quixote, and his housekeeper was saying to them in a loud voice, "What does your worship think can have befallen my master, Senor Licentiate Pero Perez?" for so the curate was called; "it is three days now since anything has been seen of him, or the hack, or the buckler, lance, or armour. Miserable me! I am certain of it, and it is as true as that I was born to die, that these accursed books of chivalry he has, and has got into the way of reading so constantly, have upset his reason; for now I remember having often heard him saying to himself that he would turn knight-errant and go all over the world in quest of adventures. To the devil and Barabbas with such books, that have brought to ruin in this way the finest understanding there was in all La Mancha!"

The niece said the same, and, more: "You must know, Master Nicholas" — for that was the name of the barber— "it was often my uncle's way to stay two days and nights together poring over these unholy books of misventures, after which he would fling the book away and snatch up his sword and fall to slashing the walls; and when he was tired out he would say he had killed four giants like four towers; and the sweat that flowed from him when he was weary he said was the blood of the wounds he had received in battle; and then he would drink a

great jug of cold water and become calm and quiet, saying that this water was a most precious potion which the sage Esquife, a great magician and friend of his, had brought him. But I take all the blame upon myself for never having told your worships of my uncle's vagaries, that you might put a stop to them before things had come to this pass, and burn all these accursed books — for he has a great number — that richly deserve to be burned like heretics.”

“So say I too,” said the curate, “and by my faith to-morrow shall not pass without public judgment upon them, and may they be condemned to the flames lest they lead those that read to behave as my good friend seems to have behaved.”

All this the peasant heard, and from it he understood at last what was the matter with his neighbour, so he began calling aloud, “Open, your worships, to Senor Baldwin and to Senor the Marquis of Mantua, who comes badly wounded, and to Senor Abindarraez, the Moor, whom the valiant Rodrigo de Narvaez, the Alcaide of Antequera, brings captive.”

At these words they all hurried out, and when they recognised their friend, master, and uncle, who had not yet dismounted from the ass because he could not, they ran to embrace him.

“Hold!” said he, “for I am badly wounded through my horse's fault; carry me to bed, and if possible send for the wise Urganda to cure and see to my wounds.”

“See there! plague on it!” cried the housekeeper at this: “did not my heart tell the truth as to which foot my master went lame of? To bed with your worship at once, and we will contrive to cure you here without fetching that Hurgada. A curse I say once more, and a hundred times more, on those books of chivalry that have brought your worship to such a pass.”

They carried him to bed at once, and after searching for his wounds could find none, but he said they were all bruises from having had a severe fall with his horse Rocinante when in combat with ten giants, the biggest and the boldest to be found on earth.

“So, so!” said the curate, “are there giants in the dance? By the sign of the Cross I will burn them to-morrow before the day over.”

They put a host of questions to Don Quixote, but his only answer to all was — give him something to eat, and leave him to sleep, for that was what he needed most. They did so, and the curate questioned the peasant at great length as to how he had found Don Quixote. He told him, and the nonsense he had talked when found and on the way home, all which made the licentiate the more eager to do what he did the next day, which was to summon his friend the barber, Master Nicholas, and go with him to Don Quixote's house.





## CHAPTER VI.

### OF THE DIVERTING AND IMPORTANT SCRUTINY WHICH THE CURATE AND THE BARBER MADE IN THE LIBRARY OF OUR INGENIOUS GENTLEMAN



He was still sleeping; so the curate asked the niece for the keys of the room where the books, the authors of all the mischief, were, and right willingly she gave them. They all went in, the housekeeper with them, and found more than a hundred volumes of big books very well bound, and some other small ones. The moment the housekeeper saw them she turned about and ran out of the room, and came back immediately with a saucer of holy water and a sprinkler, saying, "Here, your worship, senor licentiate, sprinkle this room; don't leave any magician of the many there are in these books to bewitch us in revenge for our design of banishing them from the world."

The simplicity of the housekeeper made the licentiate laugh, and he directed the barber to give him the books one by one to see what they were about, as there might be some to be found among them that did not deserve the penalty of fire.

"No," said the niece, "there is no reason for showing mercy to any of them;

they have every one of them done mischief; better fling them out of the window into the court and make a pile of them and set fire to them; or else carry them into the yard, and there a bonfire can be made without the smoke giving any annoyance." The housekeeper said the same, so eager were they both for the slaughter of those innocents, but the curate would not agree to it without first reading at any rate the titles.

The first that Master Nicholas put into his hand was "The four books of Amadis of Gaul." "This seems a mysterious thing," said the curate, "for, as I have heard say, this was the first book of chivalry printed in Spain, and from this all the others derive their birth and origin; so it seems to me that we ought inexorably to condemn it to the flames as the founder of so vile a sect."

"Nay, sir," said the barber, "I too, have heard say that this is the best of all the books of this kind that have been written, and so, as something singular in its line, it ought to be pardoned."

"True," said the curate; "and for that reason let its life be spared for the present. Let us see that other which is next to it."

"It is," said the barber, "the 'Sergas de Esplandian,' the lawful son of Amadis of Gaul."

"Then verily," said the curate, "the merit of the father must not be put down to the account of the son. Take it, mistress housekeeper; open the window and fling it into the yard and lay the foundation of the pile for the bonfire we are to make."

The housekeeper obeyed with great satisfaction, and the worthy "Esplandian" went flying into the yard to await with all patience the fire that was in store for him.

"Proceed," said the curate.

"This that comes next," said the barber, "is 'Amadis of Greece,' and, indeed, I believe all those on this side are of the same Amadis lineage."

"Then to the yard with the whole of them," said the curate; "for to have the burning of Queen Pintiquiniestra, and the shepherd Darinel and his eclogues, and the bedevilled and involved discourses of his author, I would burn with them the father who begot me if he were going about in the guise of a knight-errant."

"I am of the same mind," said the barber.

"And so am I," added the niece.

"In that case," said the housekeeper, "here, into the yard with them!"

They were handed to her, and as there were many of them, she spared herself the staircase, and flung them down out of the window.

"Who is that tub there?" said the curate.

"This," said the barber, "is 'Don Olivante de Laura.'"

"The author of that book," said the curate, "was the same that wrote 'The

Garden of Flowers,' and truly there is no deciding which of the two books is the more truthful, or, to put it better, the less lying; all I can say is, send this one into the yard for a swaggering fool."

"This that follows is 'Florismarte of Hircania,'" said the barber.

"Senor Florismarte here?" said the curate; "then by my faith he must take up his quarters in the yard, in spite of his marvellous birth and visionary adventures, for the stiffness and dryness of his style deserve nothing else; into the yard with him and the other, mistress housekeeper."

"With all my heart, senor," said she, and executed the order with great delight.

"This," said the barber, "is The Knight Platir."

"An old book that," said the curate, "but I find no reason for clemency in it; send it after the others without appeal;" which was done.

Another book was opened, and they saw it was entitled, "The Knight of the Cross."

"For the sake of the holy name this book has," said the curate, "its ignorance might be excused; but then, they say, 'behind the cross there's the devil; to the fire with it.'"

Taking down another book, the barber said, "This is 'The Mirror of Chivalry.'"

"I know his worship," said the curate; "that is where Senor Reinaldos of Montalvan figures with his friends and comrades, greater thieves than Cacus, and the Twelve Peers of France with the veracious historian Turpin; however, I am not for condemning them to more than perpetual banishment, because, at any rate, they have some share in the invention of the famous Matteo Boiardo, whence too the Christian poet Ludovico Ariosto wove his web, to whom, if I find him here, and speaking any language but his own, I shall show no respect whatever; but if he speaks his own tongue I will put him upon my head."

"Well, I have him in Italian," said the barber, "but I do not understand him."

"Nor would it be well that you should understand him," said the curate, "and on that score we might have excused the Captain if he had not brought him into Spain and turned him into Castilian. He robbed him of a great deal of his natural force, and so do all those who try to turn books written in verse into another language, for, with all the pains they take and all the cleverness they show, they never can reach the level of the originals as they were first produced. In short, I say that this book, and all that may be found treating of those French affairs, should be thrown into or deposited in some dry well, until after more consideration it is settled what is to be done with them; excepting always one 'Bernardo del Carpio' that is going about, and another called 'Roncesvalles;' for these, if they come into my hands, shall pass at once into those of the

housekeeper, and from hers into the fire without any reprieve.”

To all this the barber gave his assent, and looked upon it as right and proper, being persuaded that the curate was so staunch to the Faith and loyal to the Truth that he would not for the world say anything opposed to them. Opening another book he saw it was “Palmerin de Oliva,” and beside it was another called “Palmerin of England,” seeing which the licentiate said, “Let the Olive be made firewood of at once and burned until no ashes even are left; and let that Palm of England be kept and preserved as a thing that stands alone, and let such another case be made for it as that which Alexander found among the spoils of Darius and set aside for the safe keeping of the works of the poet Homer. This book, gossip, is of authority for two reasons, first because it is very good, and secondly because it is said to have been written by a wise and witty king of Portugal. All the adventures at the Castle of Miraguarda are excellent and of admirable contrivance, and the language is polished and clear, studying and observing the style befitting the speaker with propriety and judgment. So then, provided it seems good to you, Master Nicholas, I say let this and ‘Amadis of Gaul’ be remitted the penalty of fire, and as for all the rest, let them perish without further question or query.”

“Nay, gossip,” said the barber, “for this that I have here is the famous ‘Don Belianis.’”

“Well,” said the curate, “that and the second, third, and fourth parts all stand in need of a little rhubarb to purge their excess of bile, and they must be cleared of all that stuff about the Castle of Fame and other greater affectations, to which end let them be allowed the over-seas term, and, according as they mend, so shall mercy or justice be meted out to them; and in the mean time, gossip, do you keep them in your house and let no one read them.”

“With all my heart,” said the barber; and not caring to tire himself with reading more books of chivalry, he told the housekeeper to take all the big ones and throw them into the yard. It was not said to one dull or deaf, but to one who enjoyed burning them more than weaving the broadest and finest web that could be; and seizing about eight at a time, she flung them out of the window.

In carrying so many together she let one fall at the feet of the barber, who took it up, curious to know whose it was, and found it said, “History of the Famous Knight, Tirante el Blanco.”

“God bless me!” said the curate with a shout, “‘Tirante el Blanco’ here! Hand it over, gossip, for in it I reckon I have found a treasury of enjoyment and a mine of recreation. Here is Don Kyrieleison of Montalvan, a valiant knight, and his brother Thomas of Montalvan, and the knight Fonseca, with the battle the bold Tirante fought with the mastiff, and the witticisms of the damsel Placerdemivida,

and the loves and wiles of the widow Reposada, and the empress in love with the squire Hipolito — in truth, gossip, by right of its style it is the best book in the world. Here knights eat and sleep, and die in their beds, and make their wills before dying, and a great deal more of which there is nothing in all the other books. Nevertheless, I say he who wrote it, for deliberately composing such fooleries, deserves to be sent to the galleys for life. Take it home with you and read it, and you will see that what I have said is true.”

“As you will,” said the barber; “but what are we to do with these little books that are left?”

“These must be, not chivalry, but poetry,” said the curate; and opening one he saw it was the “Diana” of Jorge de Montemayor, and, supposing all the others to be of the same sort, “these,” he said, “do not deserve to be burned like the others, for they neither do nor can do the mischief the books of chivalry have done, being books of entertainment that can hurt no one.”

“Ah, señor!” said the niece, “your worship had better order these to be burned as well as the others; for it would be no wonder if, after being cured of his chivalry disorder, my uncle, by reading these, took a fancy to turn shepherd and range the woods and fields singing and piping; or, what would be still worse, to turn poet, which they say is an incurable and infectious malady.”

“The damsel is right,” said the curate, “and it will be well to put this stumbling-block and temptation out of our friend’s way. To begin, then, with the ‘Diana’ of Montemayor. I am of opinion it should not be burned, but that it should be cleared of all that about the sage Felicia and the magic water, and of almost all the longer pieces of verse: let it keep, and welcome, its prose and the honour of being the first of books of the kind.”

“This that comes next,” said the barber, “is the ‘Diana,’ entitled the ‘Second Part, by the Salamancan,’ and this other has the same title, and its author is Gil Polo.”

“As for that of the Salamancan,” replied the curate, “let it go to swell the number of the condemned in the yard, and let Gil Polo’s be preserved as if it came from Apollo himself: but get on, gossip, and make haste, for it is growing late.”

“This book,” said the barber, opening another, “is the ten books of the ‘Fortune of Love,’ written by Antonio de Lofraso, a Sardinian poet.”

“By the orders I have received,” said the curate, “since Apollo has been Apollo, and the Muses have been Muses, and poets have been poets, so droll and absurd a book as this has never been written, and in its way it is the best and the most singular of all of this species that have as yet appeared, and he who has not read it may be sure he has never read what is delightful. Give it here, gossip, for

I make more account of having found it than if they had given me a cassock of Florence stuff."

He put it aside with extreme satisfaction, and the barber went on, "These that come next are 'The Shepherd of Iberia,' 'Nymphs of Henares,' and 'The Enlightenment of Jealousy.'"

"Then all we have to do," said the curate, "is to hand them over to the secular arm of the housekeeper, and ask me not why, or we shall never have done."

"This next is the 'Pastor de Filida.'"

"No Pastor that," said the curate, "but a highly polished courtier; let it be preserved as a precious jewel."

"This large one here," said the barber, "is called 'The Treasury of various Poems.'"

"If there were not so many of them," said the curate, "they would be more relished: this book must be weeded and cleansed of certain vulgarities which it has with its excellences; let it be preserved because the author is a friend of mine, and out of respect for other more heroic and loftier works that he has written."

"This," continued the barber, "is the 'Cancionero' of Lopez de Maldonado."

"The author of that book, too," said the curate, "is a great friend of mine, and his verses from his own mouth are the admiration of all who hear them, for such is the sweetness of his voice that he enchants when he chants them: it gives rather too much of its eclogues, but what is good was never yet plentiful: let it be kept with those that have been set apart. But what book is that next it?"

"The 'Galatea' of Miguel de Cervantes," said the barber.

"That Cervantes has been for many years a great friend of mine, and to my knowledge he has had more experience in reverses than in verses. His book has some good invention in it, it presents us with something but brings nothing to a conclusion: we must wait for the Second Part it promises: perhaps with amendment it may succeed in winning the full measure of grace that is now denied it; and in the mean time do you, senor gossip, keep it shut up in your own quarters."

"Very good," said the barber; "and here come three together, the 'Araucana' of Don Alonso de Ercilla, the 'Austriada' of Juan Rufo, Justice of Cordova, and the 'Montserrat' of Christobal de Virues, the Valencian poet."

"These three books," said the curate, "are the best that have been written in Castilian in heroic verse, and they may compare with the most famous of Italy; let them be preserved as the richest treasures of poetry that Spain possesses."

The curate was tired and would not look into any more books, and so he decided that, "contents uncertified," all the rest should be burned; but just then

the barber held open one, called “The Tears of Angelica.”

“I should have shed tears myself,” said the curate when he heard the title, “had I ordered that book to be burned, for its author was one of the famous poets of the world, not to say of Spain, and was very happy in the translation of some of Ovid’s fables.”







## CHAPTER VII.

### OF THE SECOND SALLY OF OUR WORTHY KNIGHT DON QUIXOTE OF LA MANCHA



At this instant Don Quixote began shouting out, "Here, here, valiant knights! here is need for you to put forth the might of your strong arms, for they of the Court are gaining the mastery in the tourney!" Called away by this noise and outcry, they proceeded no farther with the scrutiny of the remaining books, and so it is thought that "The Carolea," "The Lion of Spain," and "The Deeds of the Emperor," written by Don Luis de Avila, went to the fire unseen and unheard; for no doubt they were among those that remained, and perhaps if the curate had seen them they would not have undergone so severe a sentence.

When they reached Don Quixote he was already out of bed, and was still shouting and raving, and slashing and cutting all round, as wide awake as if he had never slept.

They closed with him and by force got him back to bed, and when he had become a little calm, addressing the curate, he said to him, "Of a truth, Senor Archbishop Turpin, it is a great disgrace for us who call ourselves the Twelve Peers, so carelessly to allow the knights of the Court to gain the victory in this tourney, we the adventurers having carried off the honour on the three former days."

"Hush, gossip," said the curate; "please God, the luck may turn, and what is lost to-day may be won to-morrow; for the present let your worship have a care of your health, for it seems to me that you are over-fatigued, if not badly wounded."

"Wounded no," said Don Quixote, "but bruised and battered no doubt, for that bastard Don Roland has cudgelled me with the trunk of an oak tree, and all for envy, because he sees that I alone rival him in his achievements. But I should not call myself Reinaldos of Montalvan did he not pay me for it in spite of all his enchantments as soon as I rise from this bed. For the present let them bring me something to eat, for that, I feel, is what will be more to my purpose, and leave it to me to avenge myself."

They did as he wished; they gave him something to eat, and once more he fell asleep, leaving them marvelling at his madness.

That night the housekeeper burned to ashes all the books that were in the yard and in the whole house; and some must have been consumed that deserved preservation in everlasting archives, but their fate and the laziness of the examiner did not permit it, and so in them was verified the proverb that the innocent suffer for the guilty.

One of the remedies which the curate and the barber immediately applied to their friend's disorder was to wall up and plaster the room where the books were, so that when he got up he should not find them (possibly the cause being removed the effect might cease), and they might say that a magician had carried them off, room and all; and this was done with all despatch. Two days later Don Quixote got up, and the first thing he did was to go and look at his books, and not finding the room where he had left it, he wandered from side to side looking for it. He came to the place where the door used to be, and tried it with his hands, and turned and twisted his eyes in every direction without saying a word; but after a good while he asked his housekeeper whereabouts was the room that held his books.

The housekeeper, who had been already well instructed in what she was to

answer, said, "What room or what nothing is it that your worship is looking for? There are neither room nor books in this house now, for the devil himself has carried all away."

"It was not the devil," said the niece, "but a magician who came on a cloud one night after the day your worship left this, and dismounting from a serpent that he rode he entered the room, and what he did there I know not, but after a little while he made off, flying through the roof, and left the house full of smoke; and when we went to see what he had done we saw neither book nor room: but we remember very well, the housekeeper and I, that on leaving, the old villain said in a loud voice that, for a private grudge he owed the owner of the books and the room, he had done mischief in that house that would be discovered by-and-by: he said too that his name was the Sage Munaton."

"He must have said Friston," said Don Quixote.

"I don't know whether he called himself Friston or Friton," said the housekeeper, "I only know that his name ended with 'ton.'"

"So it does," said Don Quixote, "and he is a sage magician, a great enemy of mine, who has a spite against me because he knows by his arts and lore that in process of time I am to engage in single combat with a knight whom he befriends and that I am to conquer, and he will be unable to prevent it; and for this reason he endeavours to do me all the ill turns that he can; but I promise him it will be hard for him to oppose or avoid what is decreed by Heaven."

"Who doubts that?" said the niece; "but, uncle, who mixes you up in these quarrels? Would it not be better to remain at peace in your own house instead of roaming the world looking for better bread than ever came of wheat, never reflecting that many go for wool and come back shorn?"

"Oh, niece of mine," replied Don Quixote, "how much astray art thou in thy reckoning: ere they shear me I shall have plucked away and stripped off the beards of all who dare to touch only the tip of a hair of mine."

The two were unwilling to make any further answer, as they saw that his anger was kindling.

In short, then, he remained at home fifteen days very quietly without showing any signs of a desire to take up with his former delusions, and during this time he held lively discussions with his two gossips, the curate and the barber, on the point he maintained, that knights-errant were what the world stood most in need of, and that in him was to be accomplished the revival of knight-errantry. The curate sometimes contradicted him, sometimes agreed with him, for if he had not observed this precaution he would have been unable to bring him to reason.

Meanwhile Don Quixote worked upon a farm labourer, a neighbour of his, an honest man (if indeed that title can be given to him who is poor), but with very

little wit in his pate. In a word, he so talked him over, and with such persuasions and promises, that the poor clown made up his mind to sally forth with him and serve him as esquire. Don Quixote, among other things, told him he ought to be ready to go with him gladly, because any moment an adventure might occur that might win an island in the twinkling of an eye and leave him governor of it. On these and the like promises Sancho Panza (for so the labourer was called) left wife and children, and engaged himself as esquire to his neighbour.



Don Quixote next set about getting some money; and selling one thing and pawning another, and making a bad bargain in every case, he got together a fair sum. He provided himself with a buckler, which he begged as a loan from a friend, and, restoring his battered helmet as best he could, he warned his squire Sancho of the day and hour he meant to set out, that he might provide himself with what he thought most needful. Above all, he charged him to take alforjas with him. The other said he would, and that he meant to take also a very good ass he had, as he was not much given to going on foot. About the ass, Don Quixote hesitated a little, trying whether he could call to mind any knight-errant taking with him an esquire mounted on ass-back, but no instance occurred to his memory. For all that, however, he determined to take him, intending to furnish him with a more honourable mount when a chance of it presented itself, by appropriating the horse of the first discourteous knight he encountered. Himself he provided with shirts and such other things as he could, according to the advice the host had given him; all which being done, without taking leave, Sancho Panza of his wife and children, or Don Quixote of his housekeeper and niece, they sallied forth unseen by anybody from the village one night, and made such good way in the course of it that by daylight they held themselves safe from discovery, even should search be made for them.

Sancho rode on his ass like a patriarch, with his alforjas and bota, and longing to see himself soon governor of the island his master had promised him. Don Quixote decided upon taking the same route and road he had taken on his first journey, that over the Campo de Montiel, which he travelled with less discomfort than on the last occasion, for, as it was early morning and the rays of the sun fell on them obliquely, the heat did not distress them.

And now said Sancho Panza to his master, "Your worship will take care, Senor Knight-errant, not to forget about the island you have promised me, for be it ever so big I'll be equal to governing it."

To which Don Quixote replied, "Thou must know, friend Sancho Panza, that it was a practice very much in vogue with the knights-errant of old to make their squires governors of the islands or kingdoms they won, and I am determined that there shall be no failure on my part in so liberal a custom; on the contrary, I mean to improve upon it, for they sometimes, and perhaps most frequently, waited until their squires were old, and then when they had had enough of

service and hard days and worse nights, they gave them some title or other, of count, or at the most marquis, of some valley or province more or less; but if thou livest and I live, it may well be that before six days are over, I may have won some kingdom that has others dependent upon it, which will be just the thing to enable thee to be crowned king of one of them. Nor needst thou count this wonderful, for things and chances fall to the lot of such knights in ways so unexampled and unexpected that I might easily give thee even more than I promise thee.”

“In that case,” said Sancho Panza, “if I should become a king by one of those miracles your worship speaks of, even Juana Gutierrez, my old woman, would come to be queen and my children infantes.”

“Well, who doubts it?” said Don Quixote.

“I doubt it,” replied Sancho Panza, “because for my part I am persuaded that though God should shower down kingdoms upon earth, not one of them would fit the head of Mari Gutierrez. Let me tell you, senor, she is not worth two maravedis for a queen; countess will fit her better, and that only with God’s help.”

“Leave it to God, Sancho,” returned Don Quixote, “for he will give her what suits her best; but do not undervalue thyself so much as to come to be content with anything less than being governor of a province.”

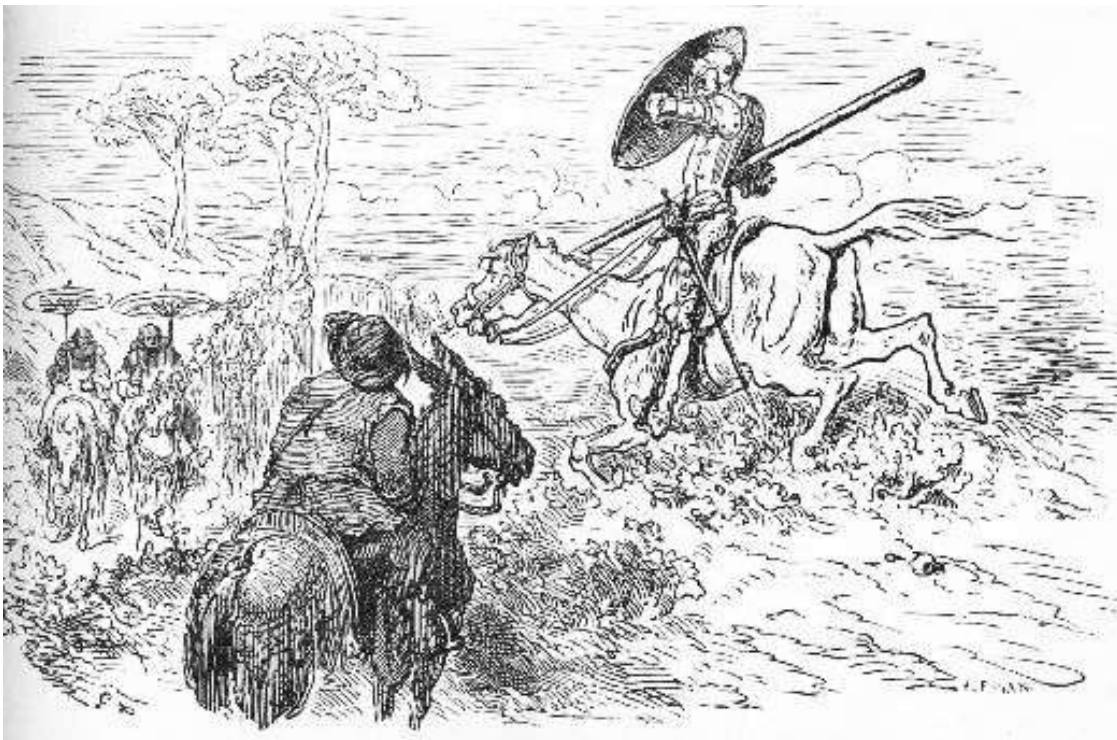
“I will not, senor,” answered Sancho, “specially as I have a man of such quality for a master in your worship, who will know how to give me all that will be suitable for me and that I can bear.”





## CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE GOOD FORTUNE WHICH THE VALIANT DON QUIXOTE HAD  
IN THE TERRIBLE AND UNDREAMT-OF ADVENTURE OF THE  
WINDMILLS, WITH OTHER OCCURRENCES WORTHY TO BE FITLY  
RECORDED



At this point they came in sight of thirty forty windmills that there are on plain, and as soon as Don Quixote saw them he said to his squire, "Fortune is arranging matters for us better than we could have shaped our desires ourselves, for look there, friend Sancho Panza, where thirty or more monstrous giants present themselves, all of whom I mean to engage in battle and slay, and with whose spoils we shall begin to make our fortunes; for this is righteous warfare,

and it is God's good service to sweep so evil a breed from off the face of the earth."

"What giants?" said Sancho Panza.

"Those thou seest there," answered his master, "with the long arms, and some have them nearly two leagues long."

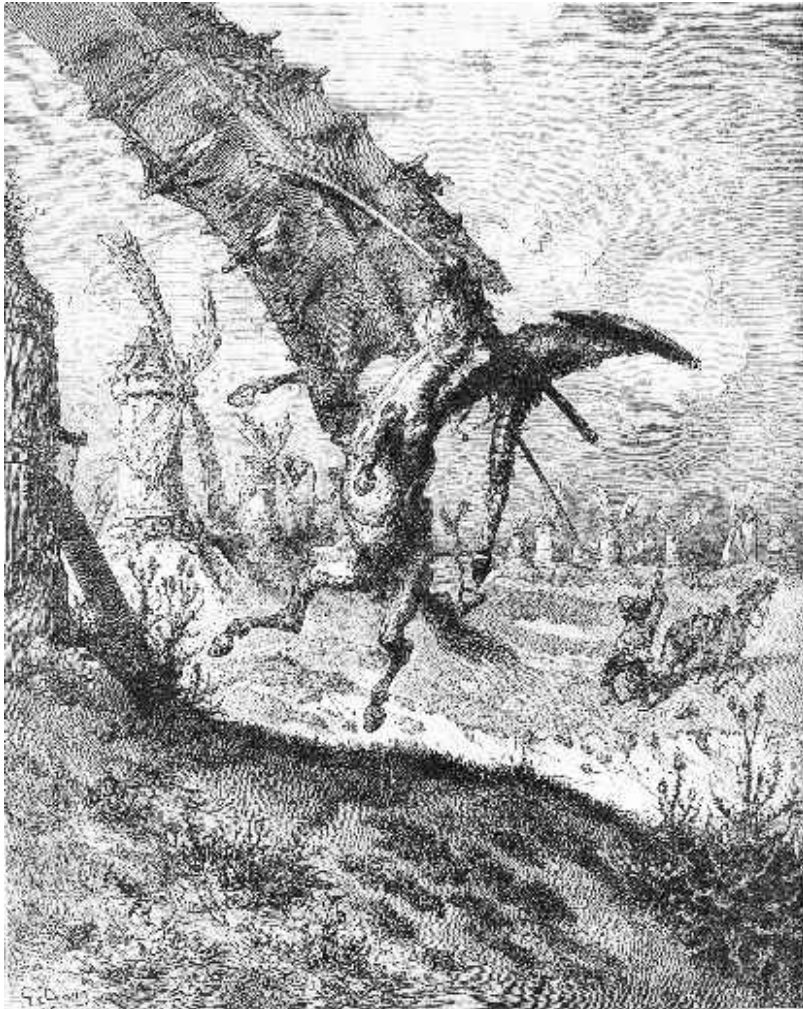
"Look, your worship," said Sancho; "what we see there are not giants but windmills, and what seem to be their arms are the sails that turned by the wind make the millstone go."

"It is easy to see," replied Don Quixote, "that thou art not used to this business of adventures; those are giants; and if thou art afraid, away with thee out of this and betake thyself to prayer while I engage them in fierce and unequal combat."

So saying, he gave the spur to his steed Rocinante, heedless of the cries his squire Sancho sent after him, warning him that most certainly they were windmills and not giants he was going to attack. He, however, was so positive they were giants that he neither heard the cries of Sancho, nor perceived, near as he was, what they were, but made at them shouting, "Fly not, cowards and vile beings, for a single knight attacks you."

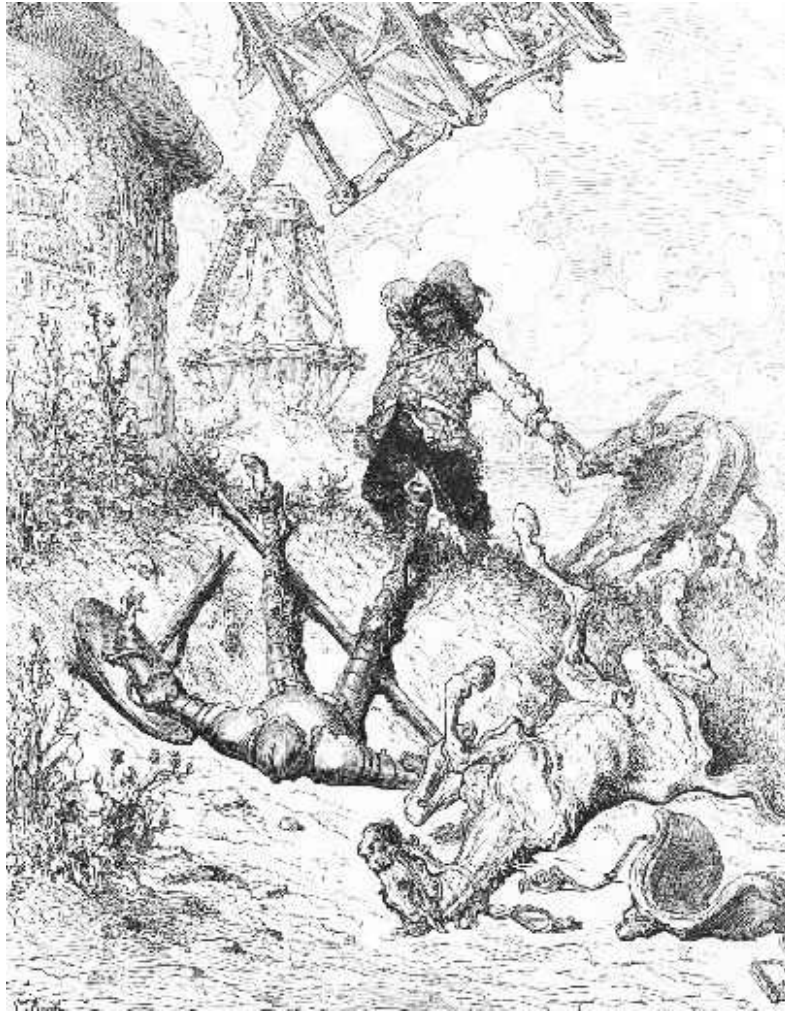
A slight breeze at this moment sprang up, and the great sails began to move, seeing which Don Quixote exclaimed, "Though ye flourish more arms than the giant Briareus, ye have to reckon with me."

So saying, and commending himself with all his heart to his lady Dulcinea, imploring her to support him in such a peril, with lance in rest and covered by his buckler, he charged at Rocinante's fullest gallop and fell upon the first mill that stood in front of him; but as he drove his lance-point into the sail the wind whirled it round with such force that it shattered the lance to pieces, sweeping with it horse and rider, who went rolling over on the plain, in a sorry condition. Sancho hastened to his assistance as fast as his ass could go, and when he came up found him unable to move, with such a shock had Rocinante fallen with him.



“God bless me!” said Sancho, “did I not tell your worship to mind what you were about, for they were only windmills? and no one could have made any mistake about it but one who had something of the same kind in his head.”

“Hush, friend Sancho,” replied Don Quixote, “the fortunes of war more than any other are liable to frequent fluctuations; and moreover I think, and it is the truth, that that same sage Friston who carried off my study and books, has turned these giants into mills in order to rob me of the glory of vanquishing them, such is the enmity he bears me; but in the end his wicked arts will avail but little against my good sword.”



“God order it as he may,” said Sancho Panza, and helping him to rise got him up again on Rocinante, whose shoulder was half out; and then, discussing the late adventure, they followed the road to Puerto Lapice, for there, said Don

Quixote, they could not fail to find adventures in abundance and variety, as it was a great thoroughfare. For all that, he was much grieved at the loss of his lance, and saying so to his squire, he added, "I remember having read how a Spanish knight, Diego Perez de Vargas by name, having broken his sword in battle, tore from an oak a ponderous bough or branch, and with it did such things that day, and pounded so many Moors, that he got the surname of Machuca, and he and his descendants from that day forth were called Vargas y Machuca. I mention this because from the first oak I see I mean to rend such another branch, large and stout like that, with which I am determined and resolved to do such deeds that thou mayest deem thyself very fortunate in being found worthy to come and see them, and be an eyewitness of things that will with difficulty be believed."

"Be that as God will," said Sancho, "I believe it all as your worship says it; but straighten yourself a little, for you seem all on one side, may be from the shaking of the fall."

"That is the truth," said Don Quixote, "and if I make no complaint of the pain it is because knights-errant are not permitted to complain of any wound, even though their bowels be coming out through it."

"If so," said Sancho, "I have nothing to say; but God knows I would rather your worship complained when anything ailed you. For my part, I confess I must complain however small the ache may be; unless this rule about not complaining extends to the squires of knights-errant also."

Don Quixote could not help laughing at his squire's simplicity, and he assured him he might complain whenever and however he chose, just as he liked, for, so far, he had never read of anything to the contrary in the order of knighthood.

Sancho bade him remember it was dinner-time, to which his master answered that he wanted nothing himself just then, but that he might eat when he had a mind. With this permission Sancho settled himself as comfortably as he could on his beast, and taking out of the alforjas what he had stowed away in them, he jogged along behind his master munching deliberately, and from time to time taking a pull at the bota with a relish that the thirstiest tapster in Malaga might have envied; and while he went on in this way, gulping down draught after draught, he never gave a thought to any of the promises his master had made him, nor did he rate it as hardship but rather as recreation going in quest of adventures, however dangerous they might be. Finally they passed the night among some trees, from one of which Don Quixote plucked a dry branch to serve him after a fashion as a lance, and fixed on it the head he had removed from the broken one. All that night Don Quixote lay awake thinking of his lady Dulcinea, in order to conform to what he had read in his books, how many a

night in the forests and deserts knights used to lie sleepless supported by the memory of their mistresses. Not so did Sancho Panza spend it, for having his stomach full of something stronger than chicory water he made but one sleep of it, and, if his master had not called him, neither the rays of the sun beating on his face nor all the cheery notes of the birds welcoming the approach of day would have had power to waken him. On getting up he tried the bota and found it somewhat less full than the night before, which grieved his heart because they did not seem to be on the way to remedy the deficiency readily. Don Quixote did not care to break his fast, for, as has been already said, he confined himself to savoury recollections for nourishment.

They returned to the road they had set out with, leading to Puerto Lapice, and at three in the afternoon they came in sight of it. "Here, brother Sancho Panza," said Don Quixote when he saw it, "we may plunge our hands up to the elbows in what they call adventures; but observe, even shouldst thou see me in the greatest danger in the world, thou must not put a hand to thy sword in my defence, unless indeed thou perceivest that those who assail me are rabble or base folk; for in that case thou mayest very properly aid me; but if they be knights it is on no account permitted or allowed thee by the laws of knighthood to help me until thou hast been dubbed a knight."

"Most certainly, senor," replied Sancho, "your worship shall be fully obeyed in this matter; all the more as of myself I am peaceful and no friend to mixing in strife and quarrels: it is true that as regards the defence of my own person I shall not give much heed to those laws, for laws human and divine allow each one to defend himself against any assailant whatever."

"That I grant," said Don Quixote, "but in this matter of aiding me against knights thou must put a restraint upon thy natural impetuosity."

"I will do so, I promise you," answered Sancho, "and will keep this precept as carefully as Sunday."

While they were thus talking there appeared on the road two friars of the order of St. Benedict, mounted on two dromedaries, for not less tall were the two mules they rode on. They wore travelling spectacles and carried sunshades; and behind them came a coach attended by four or five persons on horseback and two muleteers on foot. In the coach there was, as afterwards appeared, a Biscay lady on her way to Seville, where her husband was about to take passage for the Indies with an appointment of high honour. The friars, though going the same road, were not in her company; but the moment Don Quixote perceived them he said to his squire, "Either I am mistaken, or this is going to be the most famous adventure that has ever been seen, for those black bodies we see there must be, and doubtless are, magicians who are carrying off some stolen princess in that

coach, and with all my might I must undo this wrong.”

“This will be worse than the windmills,” said Sancho. “Look, senor; those are friars of St. Benedict, and the coach plainly belongs to some travellers: I tell you to mind well what you are about and don’t let the devil mislead you.”

“I have told thee already, Sancho,” replied Don Quixote, “that on the subject of adventures thou knowest little. What I say is the truth, as thou shalt see presently.”

So saying, he advanced and posted himself in the middle of the road along which the friars were coming, and as soon as he thought they had come near enough to hear what he said, he cried aloud, “Devilish and unnatural beings, release instantly the highborn princesses whom you are carrying off by force in this coach, else prepare to meet a speedy death as the just punishment of your evil deeds.”

The friars drew rein and stood wondering at the appearance of Don Quixote as well as at his words, to which they replied, “Senor Caballero, we are not devilish or unnatural, but two brothers of St. Benedict following our road, nor do we know whether or not there are any captive princesses coming in this coach.”

“No soft words with me, for I know you, lying rabble,” said Don Quixote, and without waiting for a reply he spurred Rocinante and with levelled lance charged the first friar with such fury and determination, that, if the friar had not flung himself off the mule, he would have brought him to the ground against his will, and sore wounded, if not killed outright. The second brother, seeing how his comrade was treated, drove his heels into his castle of a mule and made off across the country faster than the wind.

Sancho Panza, when he saw the friar on the ground, dismounting briskly from his ass, rushed towards him and began to strip off his gown. At that instant the friars muleteers came up and asked what he was stripping him for. Sancho answered them that this fell to him lawfully as spoil of the battle which his lord Don Quixote had won. The muleteers, who had no idea of a joke and did not understand all this about battles and spoils, seeing that Don Quixote was some distance off talking to the travellers in the coach, fell upon Sancho, knocked him down, and leaving hardly a hair in his beard, belaboured him with kicks and left him stretched breathless and senseless on the ground; and without any more delay helped the friar to mount, who, trembling, terrified, and pale, as soon as he found himself in the saddle, spurred after his companion, who was standing at a distance looking on, watching the result of the onslaught; then, not caring to wait for the end of the affair just begun, they pursued their journey making more crosses than if they had the devil after them.

Don Quixote was, as has been said, speaking to the lady in the coach: “Your

beauty, lady mine,” said he, “may now dispose of your person as may be most in accordance with your pleasure, for the pride of your ravishers lies prostrate on the ground through this strong arm of mine; and lest you should be pining to know the name of your deliverer, know that I am called Don Quixote of La Mancha, knight-errant and adventurer, and captive to the peerless and beautiful lady Dulcinea del Toboso: and in return for the service you have received of me I ask no more than that you should return to El Toboso, and on my behalf present yourself before that lady and tell her what I have done to set you free.”

One of the squires in attendance upon the coach, a Biscayan, was listening to all Don Quixote was saying, and, perceiving that he would not allow the coach to go on, but was saying it must return at once to El Toboso, he made at him, and seizing his lance addressed him in bad Castilian and worse Biscayan after his fashion, “Begone, caballero, and ill go with thee; by the God that made me, unless thou quittest coach, slayest thee as art here a Biscayan.”

Don Quixote understood him quite well, and answered him very quietly, “If thou wert a knight, as thou art none, I should have already chastised thy folly and rashness, miserable creature.” To which the Biscayan returned, “I no gentleman! — I swear to God thou liest as I am Christian: if thou droppest lance and drawest sword, soon shalt thou see thou art carrying water to the cat: Biscayan on land, hidalgo at sea, hidalgo at the devil, and look, if thou sayest otherwise thou liest.”

“““You will see presently,” said Agramotes,” replied Don Quixote; and throwing his lance on the ground he drew his sword, braced his buckler on his arm, and attacked the Biscayan, bent upon taking his life.

The Biscayan, when he saw him coming on, though he wished to dismount from his mule, in which, being one of those sorry ones let out for hire, he had no confidence, had no choice but to draw his sword; it was lucky for him, however, that he was near the coach, from which he was able to snatch a cushion that served him for a shield; and they went at one another as if they had been two mortal enemies. The others strove to make peace between them, but could not, for the Biscayan declared in his disjointed phrase that if they did not let him finish his battle he would kill his mistress and everyone that strove to prevent him. The lady in the coach, amazed and terrified at what she saw, ordered the coachman to draw aside a little, and set herself to watch this severe struggle, in the course of which the Biscayan smote Don Quixote a mighty stroke on the shoulder over the top of his buckler, which, given to one without armour, would have cleft him to the waist. Don Quixote, feeling the weight of this prodigious blow, cried aloud, saying, “O lady of my soul, Dulcinea, flower of beauty, come to the aid of this your knight, who, in fulfilling his obligations to your beauty,



finds himself in this extreme peril.” To say this, to lift his sword, to shelter himself well behind his buckler, and to assail the Biscayan was the work of an instant, determined as he was to venture all upon a single blow. The Biscayan, seeing him come on in this way, was convinced of his courage by his spirited bearing, and resolved to follow his example, so he waited for him keeping well under cover of his cushion, being unable to execute any sort of manoeuvre with his mule, which, dead tired and never meant for this kind of game, could not stir a step.

On, then, as aforesaid, came Don Quixote against the wary Biscayan, with uplifted sword and a firm intention of splitting him in half, while on his side the Biscayan waited for him sword in hand, and under the protection of his cushion; and all present stood trembling, waiting in suspense the result of blows such as threatened to fall, and the lady in the coach and the rest of her following were making a thousand vows and offerings to all the images and shrines of Spain, that God might deliver her squire and all of them from this great peril in which they found themselves. But it spoils all, that at this point and crisis the author of the history leaves this battle impending, giving as excuse that he could find nothing more written about these achievements of Don Quixote than what has been already set forth. It is true the second author of this work was unwilling to believe that a history so curious could have been allowed to fall under the sentence of oblivion, or that the wits of La Mancha could have been so undiscerning as not to preserve in their archives or registries some documents referring to this famous knight; and this being his persuasion, he did not despair of finding the conclusion of this pleasant history, which, heaven favouring him, he did find in a way that shall be related in the Second Part.



## CHAPTER IX.

### IN WHICH IS CONCLUDED AND FINISHED THE TERRIFIC BATTLE BETWEEN THE GALLANT BISCAYAN AND THE VALIANT MANCHEGAN



In the First Part of this history we left the valiant Biscayan and the renowned Don Quixote with drawn swords uplifted, ready to deliver two such furious slashing blows that if they had fallen full and fair they would at least have split and cleft them asunder from top to toe and laid them open like a pomegranate; and at this so critical point the delightful history came to a stop and stood cut short without any intimation from the author where what was missing was to be found.

This distressed me greatly, because the pleasure derived from having read such a small portion turned to vexation at the thought of the poor chance that presented itself of finding the large part that, so it seemed to me, was missing of such an interesting tale. It appeared to me to be a thing impossible and contrary to all precedent that so good a knight should have been without some sage to undertake the task of writing his marvellous achievements; a thing that was never wanting to any of those knights-errant who, they say, went after adventures; for every one of them had one or two sages as if made on purpose, who not only recorded their deeds but described their most trifling thoughts and follies, however secret they might be; and such a good knight could not have been so unfortunate as not to have what Platir and others like him had in abundance. And so I could not bring myself to believe that such a gallant tale had been left maimed and mutilated, and I laid the blame on Time, the devourer and destroyer of all things, that had either concealed or consumed it.

On the other hand, it struck me that, inasmuch as among his books there had been found such modern ones as “The Enlightenment of Jealousy” and the “Nymphs and Shepherds of Henares,” his story must likewise be modern, and that though it might not be written, it might exist in the memory of the people of his village and of those in the neighbourhood. This reflection kept me perplexed and longing to know really and truly the whole life and wondrous deeds of our famous Spaniard, Don Quixote of La Mancha, light and mirror of Manchegan chivalry, and the first that in our age and in these so evil days devoted himself to the labour and exercise of the arms of knight-errantry, righting wrongs, succouring widows, and protecting damsels of that sort that used to ride about, whip in hand, on their palfreys, with all their virginity about them, from mountain to mountain and valley to valley — for, if it were not for some ruffian, or boor with a hood and hatchet, or monstrous giant, that forced them, there were in days of yore damsels that at the end of eighty years, in all which time they had never slept a day under a roof, went to their graves as much maids as the mothers that bore them. I say, then, that in these and other respects our gallant Don Quixote is worthy of everlasting and notable praise, nor should it be withheld even from me for the labour and pains spent in searching for the conclusion of this delightful history; though I know well that if Heaven, chance and good fortune had not helped me, the world would have remained deprived of an entertainment and pleasure that for a couple of hours or so may well occupy him who shall read it attentively. The discovery of it occurred in this way.

One day, as I was in the Alcana of Toledo, a boy came up to sell some pamphlets and old papers to a silk mercer, and, as I am fond of reading even the very scraps of paper in the streets, led by this natural bent of mine I took up one

of the pamphlets the boy had for sale, and saw that it was in characters which I recognised as Arabic, and as I was unable to read them though I could recognise them, I looked about to see if there were any Spanish-speaking Morisco at hand to read them for me; nor was there any great difficulty in finding such an interpreter, for even had I sought one for an older and better language I should have found him. In short, chance provided me with one, who when I told him what I wanted and put the book into his hands, opened it in the middle and after reading a little in it began to laugh. I asked him what he was laughing at, and he replied that it was at something the book had written in the margin by way of a note. I bade him tell it to me; and he still laughing said, "In the margin, as I told you, this is written: 'This Dulcinea del Toboso so often mentioned in this history, had, they say, the best hand of any woman in all La Mancha for salting pigs.'"

When I heard Dulcinea del Toboso named, I was struck with surprise and amazement, for it occurred to me at once that these pamphlets contained the history of Don Quixote. With this idea I pressed him to read the beginning, and doing so, turning the Arabic offhand into Castilian, he told me it meant, "History of Don Quixote of La Mancha, written by Cid Hamete Benengeli, an Arab historian." It required great caution to hide the joy I felt when the title of the book reached my ears, and snatching it from the silk mercer, I bought all the papers and pamphlets from the boy for half a real; and if he had had his wits about him and had known how eager I was for them, he might have safely calculated on making more than six reals by the bargain. I withdrew at once with the Morisco into the cloister of the cathedral, and begged him to turn all these pamphlets that related to Don Quixote into the Castilian tongue, without omitting or adding anything to them, offering him whatever payment he pleased. He was satisfied with two arrobas of raisins and two bushels of wheat, and promised to translate them faithfully and with all despatch; but to make the matter easier, and not to let such a precious find out of my hands, I took him to my house, where in little more than a month and a half he translated the whole just as it is set down here.

In the first pamphlet the battle between Don Quixote and the Biscayan was drawn to the very life, they planted in the same attitude as the history describes, their swords raised, and the one protected by his buckler, the other by his cushion, and the Biscayan's mule so true to nature that it could be seen to be a hired one a bowshot off. The Biscayan had an inscription under his feet which said, "Don Sancho de Azpeitia," which no doubt must have been his name; and at the feet of Rocinante was another that said, "Don Quixote." Rocinante was marvellously portrayed, so long and thin, so lank and lean, with so much

backbone and so far gone in consumption, that he showed plainly with what judgment and propriety the name of Rocinante had been bestowed upon him. Near him was Sancho Panza holding the halter of his ass, at whose feet was another label that said, "Sancho Zancas," and according to the picture, he must have had a big belly, a short body, and long shanks, for which reason, no doubt, the names of Panza and Zancas were given him, for by these two surnames the history several times calls him. Some other trifling particulars might be mentioned, but they are all of slight importance and have nothing to do with the true relation of the history; and no history can be bad so long as it is true.

If against the present one any objection be raised on the score of its truth, it can only be that its author was an Arab, as lying is a very common propensity with those of that nation; though, as they are such enemies of ours, it is conceivable that there were omissions rather than additions made in the course of it. And this is my own opinion; for, where he could and should give freedom to his pen in praise of so worthy a knight, he seems to me deliberately to pass it over in silence; which is ill done and worse contrived, for it is the business and duty of historians to be exact, truthful, and wholly free from passion, and neither interest nor fear, hatred nor love, should make them swerve from the path of truth, whose mother is history, rival of time, storehouse of deeds, witness for the past, example and counsel for the present, and warning for the future. In this I know will be found all that can be desired in the pleasantest, and if it be wanting in any good quality, I maintain it is the fault of its hound of an author and not the fault of the subject. To be brief, its Second Part, according to the translation, began in this way:

With trenchant swords upraised and poised on high, it seemed as though the two valiant and wrathful combatants stood threatening heaven, and earth, and hell, with such resolution and determination did they bear themselves. The fiery Biscayan was the first to strike a blow, which was delivered with such force and fury that had not the sword turned in its course, that single stroke would have sufficed to put an end to the bitter struggle and to all the adventures of our knight; but that good fortune which reserved him for greater things, turned aside the sword of his adversary, so that although it smote him upon the left shoulder, it did him no more harm than to strip all that side of its armour, carrying away a great part of his helmet with half of his ear, all which with fearful ruin fell to the ground, leaving him in a sorry plight.

Good God! Who is there that could properly describe the rage that filled the heart of our Manchegan when he saw himself dealt with in this fashion? All that can be said is, it was such that he again raised himself in his stirrups, and, grasping his sword more firmly with both hands, he came down on the Biscayan

with such fury, smiting him full over the cushion and over the head, that — even so good a shield proving useless — as if a mountain had fallen on him, he began to bleed from nose, mouth, and ears, reeling as if about to fall backwards from his mule, as no doubt he would have done had he not flung his arms about its neck; at the same time, however, he slipped his feet out of the stirrups and then unclasped his arms, and the mule, taking fright at the terrible blow, made off across the plain, and with a few plunges flung its master to the ground. Don Quixote stood looking on very calmly, and, when he saw him fall, leaped from his horse and with great briskness ran to him, and, presenting the point of his sword to his eyes, bade him surrender, or he would cut his head off. The Biscayan was so bewildered that he was unable to answer a word, and it would have gone hard with him, so blind was Don Quixote, had not the ladies in the coach, who had hitherto been watching the combat in great terror, hastened to where he stood and implored him with earnest entreaties to grant them the great grace and favour of sparing their squire's life; to which Don Quixote replied with much gravity and dignity, "In truth, fair ladies, I am well content to do what ye ask of me; but it must be on one condition and understanding, which is that this knight promise me to go to the village of El Toboso, and on my behalf present himself before the peerless lady Dulcinea, that she deal with him as shall be most pleasing to her."

The terrified and disconsolate ladies, without discussing Don Quixote's demand or asking who Dulcinea might be, promised that their squire should do all that had been commanded.

"Then, on the faith of that promise," said Don Quixote, "I shall do him no further harm, though he well deserves it of me."





## CHAPTER X.

### OF THE PLEASANT DISCOURSE THAT PASSED BETWEEN DON QUIXOTE AND HIS SQUIRE SANCHO PANZA



Now by this time Sancho had risen, rather the worse for the handling of the friars' muleteers, and stood watching the battle of his master, Don Quixote, and praying to God in his heart that it might be his will to grant him the victory, and that he might thereby win some island to make him governor of, as he had promised. Seeing, therefore, that the struggle was now over, and that his master was returning to mount Rocinante, he approached to hold the stirrup for him, and, before he could mount, he went on his knees before him, and taking his hand, kissed it saying, "May it please your worship, Senor Don Quixote, to give me the government of that island which has been won in this hard fight, for be it ever so big I feel myself in sufficient force to be able to govern it as much and as

well as anyone in the world who has ever governed islands.”

To which Don Quixote replied, “Thou must take notice, brother Sancho, that this adventure and those like it are not adventures of islands, but of cross-roads, in which nothing is got except a broken head or an ear the less: have patience, for adventures will present themselves from which I may make you, not only a governor, but something more.”

Sancho gave him many thanks, and again kissing his hand and the skirt of his hauberk, helped him to mount Rocinante, and mounting his ass himself, proceeded to follow his master, who at a brisk pace, without taking leave, or saying anything further to the ladies belonging to the coach, turned into a wood that was hard by. Sancho followed him at his ass’s best trot, but Rocinante stepped out so that, seeing himself left behind, he was forced to call to his master to wait for him. Don Quixote did so, reining in Rocinante until his weary squire came up, who on reaching him said, “It seems to me, senor, it would be prudent in us to go and take refuge in some church, for, seeing how mauled he with whom you fought has been left, it will be no wonder if they give information of the affair to the Holy Brotherhood and arrest us, and, faith, if they do, before we come out of gaol we shall have to sweat for it.”

“Peace,” said Don Quixote; “where hast thou ever seen or heard that a knight-errant has been arraigned before a court of justice, however many homicides he may have committed?”

“I know nothing about omecils,” answered Sancho, “nor in my life have had anything to do with one; I only know that the Holy Brotherhood looks after those who fight in the fields, and in that other matter I do not meddle.”

“Then thou needst have no uneasiness, my friend,” said Don Quixote, “for I will deliver thee out of the hands of the Chaldeans, much more out of those of the Brotherhood. But tell me, as thou livest, hast thou seen a more valiant knight than I in all the known world; hast thou read in history of any who has or had higher mettle in attack, more spirit in maintaining it, more dexterity in wounding or skill in overthrowing?”

“The truth is,” answered Sancho, “that I have never read any history, for I can neither read nor write, but what I will venture to bet is that a more daring master than your worship I have never served in all the days of my life, and God grant that this daring be not paid for where I have said; what I beg of your worship is to dress your wound, for a great deal of blood flows from that ear, and I have here some lint and a little white ointment in the alforjas.”

“All that might be well dispensed with,” said Don Quixote, “if I had remembered to make a vial of the balsam of Fierabras, for time and medicine are saved by one single drop.”

“What vial and what balsam is that?” said Sancho Panza.

“It is a balsam,” answered Don Quixote, “the receipt of which I have in my memory, with which one need have no fear of death, or dread dying of any wound; and so when I make it and give it to thee thou hast nothing to do when in some battle thou seest they have cut me in half through the middle of the body — as is wont to happen frequently — but neatly and with great nicety, ere the blood congeal, to place that portion of the body which shall have fallen to the ground upon the other half which remains in the saddle, taking care to fit it on evenly and exactly. Then thou shalt give me to drink but two drops of the balsam I have mentioned, and thou shalt see me become sounder than an apple.”

“If that be so,” said Panza, “I renounce henceforth the government of the promised island, and desire nothing more in payment of my many and faithful services than that your worship give me the receipt of this supreme liquor, for I am persuaded it will be worth more than two reals an ounce anywhere, and I want no more to pass the rest of my life in ease and honour; but it remains to be told if it costs much to make it.”

“With less than three reals, six quarts of it may be made,” said Don Quixote.

“Sinner that I am!” said Sancho, “then why does your worship put off making it and teaching it to me?”

“Peace, friend,” answered Don Quixote; “greater secrets I mean to teach thee and greater favours to bestow upon thee; and for the present let us see to the dressing, for my ear pains me more than I could wish.”

Sancho took out some lint and ointment from the alforjas; but when Don Quixote came to see his helmet shattered, he was like to lose his senses, and clapping his hand upon his sword and raising his eyes to heaven, he said, “I swear by the Creator of all things and the four Gospels in their fullest extent, to do as the great Marquis of Mantua did when he swore to avenge the death of his nephew Baldwin (and that was not to eat bread from a table-cloth, nor embrace his wife, and other points which, though I cannot now call them to mind, I here grant as expressed) until I take complete vengeance upon him who has committed such an offence against me.”

Hearing this, Sancho said to him, “Your worship should bear in mind, Senor Don Quixote, that if the knight has done what was commanded him in going to present himself before my lady Dulcinea del Toboso, he will have done all that he was bound to do, and does not deserve further punishment unless he commits some new offence.”

“Thou hast said well and hit the point,” answered Don Quixote; and so I recall the oath in so far as relates to taking fresh vengeance on him, but I make and confirm it anew to lead the life I have said until such time as I take by force from

some knight another helmet such as this and as good; and think not, Sancho, that I am raising smoke with straw in doing so, for I have one to imitate in the matter, since the very same thing to a hair happened in the case of Mambrino's helmet, which cost Sacripante so dear."

"Senor," replied Sancho, "let your worship send all such oaths to the devil, for they are very pernicious to salvation and prejudicial to the conscience; just tell me now, if for several days to come we fall in with no man armed with a helmet, what are we to do? Is the oath to be observed in spite of all the inconvenience and discomfort it will be to sleep in your clothes, and not to sleep in a house, and a thousand other mortifications contained in the oath of that old fool the Marquis of Mantua, which your worship is now wanting to revive? Let your worship observe that there are no men in armour travelling on any of these roads, nothing but carriers and carters, who not only do not wear helmets, but perhaps never heard tell of them all their lives."

"Thou art wrong there," said Don Quixote, "for we shall not have been above two hours among these cross-roads before we see more men in armour than came to Albraca to win the fair Angelica."

"Enough," said Sancho; "so be it then, and God grant us success, and that the time for winning that island which is costing me so dear may soon come, and then let me die."

"I have already told thee, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "not to give thyself any uneasiness on that score; for if an island should fail, there is the kingdom of Denmark, or of Sobradisa, which will fit thee as a ring fits the finger, and all the more that, being on terra firma, thou wilt all the better enjoy thyself. But let us leave that to its own time; see if thou hast anything for us to eat in those alforjas, because we must presently go in quest of some castle where we may lodge to-night and make the balsam I told thee of, for I swear to thee by God, this ear is giving me great pain."

"I have here an onion and a little cheese and a few scraps of bread," said Sancho, "but they are not victuals fit for a valiant knight like your worship."

"How little thou knowest about it," answered Don Quixote; "I would have thee to know, Sancho, that it is the glory of knights-errant to go without eating for a month, and even when they do eat, that it should be of what comes first to hand; and this would have been clear to thee hadst thou read as many histories as I have, for, though they are very many, among them all I have found no mention made of knights-errant eating, unless by accident or at some sumptuous banquets prepared for them, and the rest of the time they passed in dalliance. And though it is plain they could not do without eating and performing all the other natural functions, because, in fact, they were men like ourselves, it is plain too that,

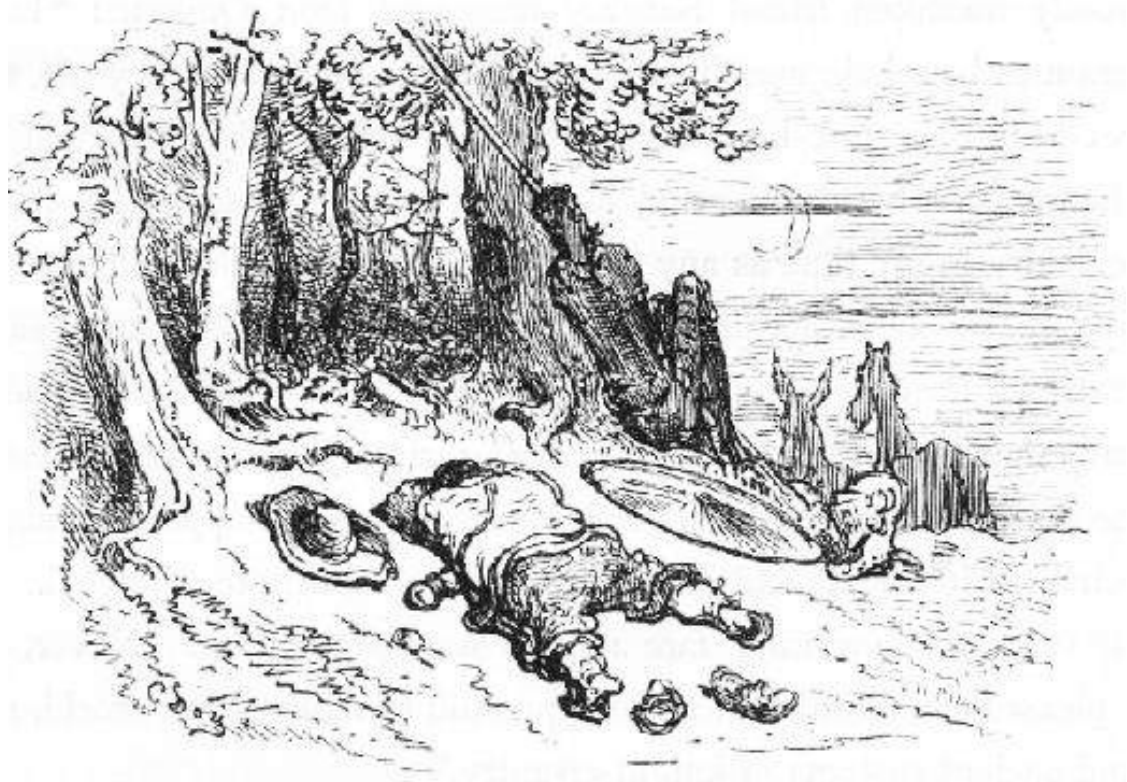
wandering as they did the most part of their lives through woods and wilds and without a cook, their most usual fare would be rustic viands such as those thou now offer me; so that, friend Sancho, let not that distress thee which pleases me, and do not seek to make a new world or pervert knight-errantry.”

“Pardon me, your worship,” said Sancho, “for, as I cannot read or write, as I said just now, I neither know nor comprehend the rules of the profession of chivalry: henceforward I will stock the alforjas with every kind of dry fruit for your worship, as you are a knight; and for myself, as I am not one, I will furnish them with poultry and other things more substantial.”

“I do not say, Sancho,” replied Don Quixote, “that it is imperative on knights-errant not to eat anything else but the fruits thou speakest of; only that their more usual diet must be those, and certain herbs they found in the fields which they knew and I know too.”

“A good thing it is,” answered Sancho, “to know those herbs, for to my thinking it will be needful some day to put that knowledge into practice.”

And here taking out what he said he had brought, the pair made their repast peaceably and sociably. But anxious to find quarters for the night, they with all despatch made an end of their poor dry fare, mounted at once, and made haste to reach some habitation before night set in; but daylight and the hope of succeeding in their object failed them close by the huts of some goatherds, so they determined to pass the night there, and it was as much to Sancho’s discontent not to have reached a house, as it was to his master’s satisfaction to sleep under the open heaven, for he fancied that each time this happened to him he performed an act of ownership that helped to prove his chivalry.



## CHAPTER XI.

### WHAT BEFELL DON QUIXOTE WITH CERTAIN GOATHERDS



He was cordially welcomed by the goatherds, and Sancho, having as best he could put up Rocinante and the ass, drew towards the fragrance that came from some pieces of salted goat simmering in a pot on the fire; and though he would have liked at once to try if they were ready to be transferred from the pot to the stomach, he refrained from doing so as the goatherds removed them from the fire, and laying sheepskins on the ground, quickly spread their rude table, and with signs of hearty good-will invited them both to share what they had. Round the skins six of the men belonging to the fold seated themselves, having first

with rough politeness pressed Don Quixote to take a seat upon a trough which they placed for him upside down. Don Quixote seated himself, and Sancho remained standing to serve the cup, which was made of horn. Seeing him standing, his master said to him: "That thou mayest see, Sancho, the good that knight-errantry contains in itself, and how those who fill any office in it are on the high road to be speedily honoured and esteemed by the world, I desire that thou seat thyself here at my side and in the company of these worthy people, and that thou be one with me who am thy master and natural lord, and that thou eat from my plate and drink from whatever I drink from; for the same may be said of knight-errantry as of love, that it levels all."

"Great thanks," said Sancho, "but I may tell your worship that provided I have enough to eat, I can eat it as well, or better, standing, and by myself, than seated alongside of an emperor. And indeed, if the truth is to be told, what I eat in my corner without form or fuss has much more relish for me, even though it be bread and onions, than the turkeys of those other tables where I am forced to chew slowly, drink little, wipe my mouth every minute, and cannot sneeze or cough if I want or do other things that are the privileges of liberty and solitude. So, senor, as for these honours which your worship would put upon me as a servant and follower of knight-errantry, exchange them for other things which may be of more use and advantage to me; for these, though I fully acknowledge them as received, I renounce from this moment to the end of the world."

"For all that," said Don Quixote, "thou must seat thyself, because him who humbleth himself God exalteth;" and seizing him by the arm he forced him to sit down beside himself.

The goatherds did not understand this jargon about squires and knights-errant, and all they did was to eat in silence and stare at their guests, who with great elegance and appetite were stowing away pieces as big as one's fist. The course of meat finished, they spread upon the sheepskins a great heap of parched acorns, and with them they put down a half cheese harder than if it had been made of mortar. All this while the horn was not idle, for it went round so constantly, now full, now empty, like the bucket of a water-wheel, that it soon drained one of the two wine-skins that were in sight. When Don Quixote had quite appeased his appetite he took up a handful of the acorns, and contemplating them attentively delivered himself somewhat in this fashion: "Happy the age, happy the time, to which the ancients gave the name of golden, not because in that fortunate age the gold so coveted in this our iron one was gained without toil, but because they that lived in it knew not the two words "mine" and "thine"! In that blessed age all things were in common; to win the daily food no labour was required of any save to stretch forth his hand and



gather it from the sturdy oaks that stood generously inviting him with their sweet ripe fruit. The clear streams and running brooks yielded their savoury limpid waters in noble abundance. The busy and sagacious bees fixed their republic in the clefts of the rocks and hollows of the trees, offering without usance the plenteous produce of their fragrant toil to every hand. The mighty cork trees, unenforced save of their own courtesy, shed the broad light bark that served at first to roof the houses supported by rude stakes, a protection against the inclemency of heaven alone. Then all was peace, all friendship, all concord; as yet the dull share of the crooked plough had not dared to rend and pierce the tender bowels of our first mother that without compulsion yielded from every portion of her broad fertile bosom all that could satisfy, sustain, and delight the children that then possessed her. Then was it that the innocent and fair young shepherdess roamed from vale to vale and hill to hill, with flowing locks, and no more garments than were needful modestly to cover what modesty seeks and ever sought to hide. Nor were their ornaments like those in use to-day, set off by Tyrian purple, and silk tortured in endless fashions, but the wreathed leaves of the green dock and ivy, wherewith they went as bravely and becomingly decked as our Court dames with all the rare and far-fetched artifices that idle curiosity has taught them. Then the love-thoughts of the heart clothed themselves simply and naturally as the heart conceived them, nor sought to commend themselves by forced and rambling verbiage. Fraud, deceit, or malice had then not yet mingled with truth and sincerity. Justice held her ground, undisturbed and unassailed by the efforts of favour and of interest, that now so much impair, pervert, and beset her. Arbitrary law had not yet established itself in the mind of the judge, for then there was no cause to judge and no one to be judged. Maidens and modesty, as I have said, wandered at will alone and unattended, without fear of insult from lawlessness or libertine assault, and if they were undone it was of their own will and pleasure. But now in this hateful age of ours not one is safe, not though some new labyrinth like that of Crete conceal and surround her; even there the pestilence of gallantry will make its way to them through chinks or on the air by the zeal of its accursed importunity, and, despite of all seclusion, lead them to ruin. In defence of these, as time advanced and wickedness increased, the order of knights-errant was instituted, to defend maidens, to protect widows and to succour the orphans and the needy. To this order I belong, brother goatherds, to whom I return thanks for the hospitality and kindly welcome ye offer me and my squire; for though by natural law all living are bound to show favour to knights-errant, yet, seeing that without knowing this obligation ye have welcomed and feasted me, it is right that with all the good-will in my power I should thank you for yours."



All this long harangue (which might very well have been spared) our knight delivered because the acorns they gave him reminded him of the golden age; and the whim seized him to address all this unnecessary argument to the goatherds,

who listened to him gaping in amazement without saying a word in reply. Sancho likewise held his peace and ate acorns, and paid repeated visits to the second wine-skin, which they had hung up on a cork tree to keep the wine cool.

Don Quixote was longer in talking than the supper in finishing, at the end of which one of the goatherds said, "That your worship, senor knight-errant, may say with more truth that we show you hospitality with ready good-will, we will give you amusement and pleasure by making one of our comrades sing: he will be here before long, and he is a very intelligent youth and deep in love, and what is more he can read and write and play on the rebeck to perfection."

The goatherd had hardly done speaking, when the notes of the rebeck reached their ears; and shortly after, the player came up, a very good-looking young man of about two-and-twenty. His comrades asked him if he had supped, and on his replying that he had, he who had already made the offer said to him: "In that case, Antonio, thou mayest as well do us the pleasure of singing a little, that the gentleman, our guest, may see that even in the mountains and woods there are musicians: we have told him of thy accomplishments, and we want thee to show them and prove that we say true; so, as thou livest, pray sit down and sing that ballad about thy love that thy uncle the prebendary made thee, and that was so much liked in the town."

"With all my heart," said the young man, and without waiting for more pressing he seated himself on the trunk of a felled oak, and tuning his rebeck, presently began to sing to these words.

#### ANTONIO'S BALLAD

Thou dost love me well, Olalla;  
Well I know it, even though  
Love's mute tongues, thine eyes, have never By their glances told me so.

For I know my love thou knowest,  
Therefore thine to claim I dare:  
Once it ceases to be secret,  
Love need never feel despair.

True it is, Olalla, sometimes  
Thou hast all too plainly shown  
That thy heart is brass in hardness,  
And thy snowy bosom stone.

Yet for all that, in thy coyness,  
And thy fickle fits between,

Hope is there — at least the border  
Of her garment may be seen.

Lures to faith are they, those glimpses, And to faith in thee I hold;  
Kindness cannot make it stronger,  
Coldness cannot make it cold.

If it be that love is gentle,  
In thy gentleness I see  
Something holding out assurance  
To the hope of winning thee.

If it be that in devotion  
Lies a power hearts to move,  
That which every day I show thee,  
Helpful to my suit should prove.

Many a time thou must have noticed —  
If to notice thou dost care —  
How I go about on Monday  
Dressed in all my Sunday wear.

Love's eyes love to look on brightness; Love loves what is gaily drest;  
Sunday, Monday, all I care is  
Thou shouldst see me in my best.

No account I make of dances,  
Or of strains that pleased thee so,  
Keeping thee awake from midnight  
Till the cocks began to crow;

Or of how I roundly swore it  
That there's none so fair as thou;  
True it is, but as I said it,  
By the girls I'm hated now.

For Teresa of the hillside  
At my praise of thee was sore;  
Said, "You think you love an angel;

It's a monkey you adore;

“Caught by all her glittering trinkets, And her borrowed braids of hair,  
And a host of made-up beauties  
That would Love himself ensnare.”

‘T was a lie, and so I told her,  
And her cousin at the word  
Gave me his defiance for it;  
And what followed thou hast heard.

Mine is no high-flown affection,  
Mine no passion par amours —  
As they call it — what I offer  
Is an honest love, and pure.

Cunning cords the holy Church has,  
Cords of softest silk they be;  
Put thy neck beneath the yoke, dear;  
Mine will follow, thou wilt see.

Else — and once for all I swear it  
By the saint of most renown —  
If I ever quit the mountains,  
‘T will be in a friar’s gown.

Here the goatherd brought his song to an end, and though Don Quixote entreated him to sing more, Sancho had no mind that way, being more inclined for sleep than for listening to songs; so said he to his master, “Your worship will do well to settle at once where you mean to pass the night, for the labour these good men are at all day does not allow them to spend the night in singing.”

“I understand thee, Sancho,” replied Don Quixote; “I perceive clearly that those visits to the wine-skin demand compensation in sleep rather than in music.”

“It’s sweet to us all, blessed be God,” said Sancho.

“I do not deny it,” replied Don Quixote; “but settle thyself where thou wilt; those of my calling are more becomingly employed in watching than in sleeping; still it would be as well if thou wert to dress this ear for me again, for it is giving me more pain than it need.”

Sancho did as he bade him, but one of the goatherds, seeing the wound, told

him not to be uneasy, as he would apply a remedy with which it would be soon healed; and gathering some leaves of rosemary, of which there was a great quantity there, he chewed them and mixed them with a little salt, and applying them to the ear he secured them firmly with a bandage, assuring him that no other treatment would be required, and so it proved.



## CHAPTER XII.

### OF WHAT A GOATHERD RELATED TO THOSE WITH DON QUIXOTE



Just then another young man, one of those who fetched their provisions from the village, came up and said, “Do you know what is going on in the village, comrades?”

“How could we know it?” replied one of them.

“Well, then, you must know,” continued the young man, “this morning that famous student-shepherd called Chrysostom died, and it is rumoured that he died of love for that devil of a village girl the daughter of Guillermo the Rich, she that wanders about the wolds here in the dress of a shepherdess.”

“You mean Marcela?” said one.

“Her I mean,” answered the goatherd; “and the best of it is, he has directed in

his will that he is to be buried in the fields like a Moor, and at the foot of the rock where the Cork-tree spring is, because, as the story goes (and they say he himself said so), that was the place where he first saw her. And he has also left other directions which the clergy of the village say should not and must not be obeyed because they savour of paganism. To all which his great friend Ambrosio the student, he who, like him, also went dressed as a shepherd, replies that everything must be done without any omission according to the directions left by Chrysostom, and about this the village is all in commotion; however, report says that, after all, what Ambrosio and all the shepherds his friends desire will be done, and tomorrow they are coming to bury him with great ceremony where I said. I am sure it will be something worth seeing; at least I will not fail to go and see it even if I knew I should not return to the village tomorrow.”

“We will do the same,” answered the goatherds, “and cast lots to see who must stay to mind the goats of all.”

“Thou sayest well, Pedro,” said one, “though there will be no need of taking that trouble, for I will stay behind for all; and don’t suppose it is virtue or want of curiosity in me; it is that the splinter that ran into my foot the other day will not let me walk.”

“For all that, we thank thee,” answered Pedro.

Don Quixote asked Pedro to tell him who the dead man was and who the shepherdess, to which Pedro replied that all he knew was that the dead man was a wealthy gentleman belonging to a village in those mountains, who had been a student at Salamanca for many years, at the end of which he returned to his village with the reputation of being very learned and deeply read. “Above all, they said, he was learned in the science of the stars and of what went on yonder in the heavens and the sun and the moon, for he told us of the rise of the sun and moon to exact time.”

“Eclipse it is called, friend, not rise, the darkening of those two luminaries,” said Don Quixote; but Pedro, not troubling himself with trifles, went on with his story, saying, “Also he foretold when the year was going to be one of abundance or sterility.”

“Sterility, you mean,” said Don Quixote.

“Sterility or sterility,” answered Pedro, “it is all the same in the end. And I can tell you that by this his father and friends who believed him grew very rich because they did as he advised them, bidding them ‘sow barley this year, not wheat; this year you may sow pulse and not barley; the next there will be a full oil crop, and the three following not a drop will be got.’”

“That science is called astrology,” said Don Quixote.

“I do not know what it is called,” replied Pedro, “but I know that he knew all



this and more besides. But, to make an end, not many months had passed after he returned from Salamanca, when one day he appeared dressed as a shepherd with his crook and sheepskin, having put off the long gown he wore as a scholar; and at the same time his great friend, Ambrosio by name, who had been his companion in his studies, took to the shepherd's dress with him. I forgot to say that Chrysostom, who is dead, was a great man for writing verses, so much so that he made carols for Christmas Eve, and plays for Corpus Christi, which the young men of our village acted, and all said they were excellent. When the villagers saw the two scholars so unexpectedly appearing in shepherd's dress, they were lost in wonder, and could not guess what had led them to make so extraordinary a change. About this time the father of our Chrysostom died, and he was left heir to a large amount of property in chattels as well as in land, no small number of cattle and sheep, and a large sum of money, of all of which the young man was left dissolute owner, and indeed he was deserving of it all, for he was a very good comrade, and kind-hearted, and a friend of worthy folk, and had a countenance like a benediction. Presently it came to be known that he had changed his dress with no other object than to wander about these wastes after that shepherdess Marcela our lad mentioned a while ago, with whom the deceased Chrysostom had fallen in love. And I must tell you now, for it is well you should know it, who this girl is; perhaps, and even without any perhaps, you will not have heard anything like it all the days of your life, though you should live more years than sarna."

"Say Sarra," said Don Quixote, unable to endure the goatherd's confusion of words.

"The sarna lives long enough," answered Pedro; "and if, senor, you must go finding fault with words at every step, we shall not make an end of it this twelvemonth."

"Pardon me, friend," said Don Quixote; "but, as there is such a difference between sarna and Sarra, I told you of it; however, you have answered very rightly, for sarna lives longer than Sarra: so continue your story, and I will not object any more to anything."

"I say then, my dear sir," said the goatherd, "that in our village there was a farmer even richer than the father of Chrysostom, who was named Guillermo, and upon whom God bestowed, over and above great wealth, a daughter at whose birth her mother died, the most respected woman there was in this neighbourhood; I fancy I can see her now with that countenance which had the sun on one side and the moon on the other; and moreover active, and kind to the poor, for which I trust that at the present moment her soul is in bliss with God in the other world. Her husband Guillermo died of grief at the death of so good a

wife, leaving his daughter Marcela, a child and rich, to the care of an uncle of hers, a priest and prebendary in our village. The girl grew up with such beauty that it reminded us of her mother's, which was very great, and yet it was thought that the daughter's would exceed it; and so when she reached the age of fourteen to fifteen years nobody beheld her but blessed God that had made her so beautiful, and the greater number were in love with her past redemption. Her uncle kept her in great seclusion and retirement, but for all that the fame of her great beauty spread so that, as well for it as for her great wealth, her uncle was asked, solicited, and importuned, to give her in marriage not only by those of our town but of those many leagues round, and by the persons of highest quality in them. But he, being a good Christian man, though he desired to give her in marriage at once, seeing her to be old enough, was unwilling to do so without her consent, not that he had any eye to the gain and profit which the custody of the girl's property brought him while he put off her marriage; and, faith, this was said in praise of the good priest in more than one set in the town. For I would have you know, Sir Errant, that in these little villages everything is talked about and everything is carped at, and rest assured, as I am, that the priest must be over and above good who forces his parishioners to speak well of him, especially in villages."

"That is the truth," said Don Quixote; "but go on, for the story is very good, and you, good Pedro, tell it with very good grace."

"May that of the Lord not be wanting to me," said Pedro; "that is the one to have. To proceed; you must know that though the uncle put before his niece and described to her the qualities of each one in particular of the many who had asked her in marriage, begging her to marry and make a choice according to her own taste, she never gave any other answer than that she had no desire to marry just yet, and that being so young she did not think herself fit to bear the burden of matrimony. At these, to all appearance, reasonable excuses that she made, her uncle ceased to urge her, and waited till she was somewhat more advanced in age and could mate herself to her own liking. For, said he — and he said quite right — parents are not to settle children in life against their will. But when one least looked for it, lo and behold! one day the demure Marcela makes her appearance turned shepherdess; and, in spite of her uncle and all those of the town that strove to dissuade her, took to going a-field with the other shepherdesses of the village, and tending her own flock. And so, since she appeared in public, and her beauty came to be seen openly, I could not well tell you how many rich youths, gentlemen and peasants, have adopted the costume of Chrysostom, and go about these fields making love to her. One of these, as has been already said, was our deceased friend, of whom they say that he did not

love but adore her. But you must not suppose, because Marcela chose a life of such liberty and independence, and of so little or rather no retirement, that she has given any occasion, or even the semblance of one, for disparagement of her purity and modesty; on the contrary, such and so great is the vigilance with which she watches over her honour, that of all those that court and woo her not one has boasted, or can with truth boast, that she has given him any hope however small of obtaining his desire. For although she does not avoid or shun the society and conversation of the shepherds, and treats them courteously and kindly, should any one of them come to declare his intention to her, though it be one as proper and holy as that of matrimony, she flings him from her like a catapult. And with this kind of disposition she does more harm in this country than if the plague had got into it, for her affability and her beauty draw on the hearts of those that associate with her to love her and to court her, but her scorn and her frankness bring them to the brink of despair; and so they know not what to say save to proclaim her aloud cruel and hard-hearted, and other names of the same sort which well describe the nature of her character; and if you should remain here any time, senor, you would hear these hills and valleys resounding with the laments of the rejected ones who pursue her. Not far from this there is a spot where there are a couple of dozen of tall beeches, and there is not one of them but has carved and written on its smooth bark the name of Marcela, and above some a crown carved on the same tree as though her lover would say more plainly that Marcela wore and deserved that of all human beauty. Here one shepherd is sighing, there another is lamenting; there love songs are heard, here despairing elegies. One will pass all the hours of the night seated at the foot of some oak or rock, and there, without having closed his weeping eyes, the sun finds him in the morning bemused and bereft of sense; and another without relief or respite to his sighs, stretched on the burning sand in the full heat of the sultry summer noontide, makes his appeal to the compassionate heavens, and over one and the other, over these and all, the beautiful Marcela triumphs free and careless. And all of us that know her are waiting to see what her pride will come to, and who is to be the happy man that will succeed in taming a nature so formidable and gaining possession of a beauty so supreme. All that I have told you being such well-established truth, I am persuaded that what they say of the cause of Chrysostom's death, as our lad told us, is the same. And so I advise you, senor, fail not to be present tomorrow at his burial, which will be well worth seeing, for Chrysostom had many friends, and it is not half a league from this place to where he directed he should be buried."

"I will make a point of it," said Don Quixote, "and I thank you for the pleasure you have given me by relating so interesting a tale."

“Oh,” said the goatherd, “I do not know even the half of what has happened to the lovers of Marcela, but perhaps tomorrow we may fall in with some shepherd on the road who can tell us; and now it will be well for you to go and sleep under cover, for the night air may hurt your wound, though with the remedy I have applied to you there is no fear of an untoward result.”

Sancho Panza, who was wishing the goatherd’s loquacity at the devil, on his part begged his master to go into Pedro’s hut to sleep. He did so, and passed all the rest of the night in thinking of his lady Dulcinea, in imitation of the lovers of Marcela. Sancho Panza settled himself between Rocinante and his ass, and slept, not like a lover who had been discarded, but like a man who had been soundly kicked.





## CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHICH IS ENDED THE STORY OF THE SHEPHERDESS MARCELA,  
WITH OTHER INCIDENTS



But hardly had day begun to show itself through the balconies of the east, when five of the six goatherds came to rouse Don Quixote and tell him that if he was still of a mind to go and see the famous burial of Chrysostom they would bear him company. Don Quixote, who desired nothing better, rose and ordered Sancho to saddle and pannel at once, which he did with all despatch, and with the same they all set out forthwith. They had not gone a quarter of a league when at the meeting of two paths they saw coming towards them some six shepherds dressed in black sheepskins and with their heads crowned with garlands of

cypress and bitter oleander. Each of them carried a stout holly staff in his hand, and along with them there came two men of quality on horseback in handsome travelling dress, with three servants on foot accompanying them. Courteous salutations were exchanged on meeting, and inquiring one of the other which way each party was going, they learned that all were bound for the scene of the burial, so they went on all together.

One of those on horseback addressing his companion said to him, "It seems to me, Senor Vivaldo, that we may reckon as well spent the delay we shall incur in seeing this remarkable funeral, for remarkable it cannot but be judging by the strange things these shepherds have told us, of both the dead shepherd and homicide shepherdess."

"So I think too," replied Vivaldo, "and I would delay not to say a day, but four, for the sake of seeing it."

Don Quixote asked them what it was they had heard of Marcela and Chrysostom. The traveller answered that the same morning they had met these shepherds, and seeing them dressed in this mournful fashion they had asked them the reason of their appearing in such a guise; which one of them gave, describing the strange behaviour and beauty of a shepherdess called Marcela, and the loves of many who courted her, together with the death of that Chrysostom to whose burial they were going. In short, he repeated all that Pedro had related to Don Quixote.

This conversation dropped, and another was commenced by him who was called Vivaldo asking Don Quixote what was the reason that led him to go armed in that fashion in a country so peaceful. To which Don Quixote replied, "The pursuit of my calling does not allow or permit me to go in any other fashion; easy life, enjoyment, and repose were invented for soft courtiers, but toil, unrest, and arms were invented and made for those alone whom the world calls knights-errant, of whom I, though unworthy, am the least of all."

The instant they heard this all set him down as mad, and the better to settle the point and discover what kind of madness his was, Vivaldo proceeded to ask him what knights-errant meant.

"Have not your worships," replied Don Quixote, "read the annals and histories of England, in which are recorded the famous deeds of King Arthur, whom we in our popular Castilian invariably call King Artus, with regard to whom it is an ancient tradition, and commonly received all over that kingdom of Great Britain, that this king did not die, but was changed by magic art into a raven, and that in process of time he is to return to reign and recover his kingdom and sceptre; for which reason it cannot be proved that from that time to this any Englishman ever killed a raven? Well, then, in the time of this good king that famous order of

chivalry of the Knights of the Round Table was instituted, and the amour of Don Lancelot of the Lake with the Queen Guinevere occurred, precisely as is there related, the go-between and confidante therein being the highly honourable dame Quintanona, whence came that ballad so well known and widely spread in our Spain —

O never surely was there knight  
So served by hand of dame,  
As served was he Sir Lancelot hight  
When he from Britain came —

with all the sweet and delectable course of his achievements in love and war. Handed down from that time, then, this order of chivalry went on extending and spreading itself over many and various parts of the world; and in it, famous and renowned for their deeds, were the mighty Amadis of Gaul with all his sons and descendants to the fifth generation, and the valiant Felixmarte of Hircania, and the never sufficiently praised Tirante el Blanco, and in our own days almost we have seen and heard and talked with the invincible knight Don Belianis of Greece. This, then, sirs, is to be a knight-errant, and what I have spoken of is the order of his chivalry, of which, as I have already said, I, though a sinner, have made profession, and what the aforesaid knights professed that same do I profess, and so I go through these solitudes and wilds seeking adventures, resolved in soul to oppose my arm and person to the most perilous that fortune may offer me in aid of the weak and needy.”

By these words of his the travellers were able to satisfy themselves of Don Quixote’s being out of his senses and of the form of madness that overmastered him, at which they felt the same astonishment that all felt on first becoming acquainted with it; and Vivaldo, who was a person of great shrewdness and of a lively temperament, in order to beguile the short journey which they said was required to reach the mountain, the scene of the burial, sought to give him an opportunity of going on with his absurdities. So he said to him, “It seems to me, Senor Knight-errant, that your worship has made choice of one of the most austere professions in the world, and I imagine even that of the Carthusian monks is not so austere.”

“As austere it may perhaps be,” replied our Don Quixote, “but so necessary for the world I am very much inclined to doubt. For, if the truth is to be told, the soldier who executes what his captain orders does no less than the captain himself who gives the order. My meaning, is, that churchmen in peace and quiet pray to Heaven for the welfare of the world, but we soldiers and knights carry into effect what they pray for, defending it with the might of our arms and the edge of our swords, not under shelter but in the open air, a target for the



intolerable rays of the sun in summer and the piercing frosts of winter. Thus are we God's ministers on earth and the arms by which his justice is done therein. And as the business of war and all that relates and belongs to it cannot be conducted without exceeding great sweat, toil, and exertion, it follows that those who make it their profession have undoubtedly more labour than those who in tranquil peace and quiet are engaged in praying to God to help the weak. I do not mean to say, nor does it enter into my thoughts, that the knight-errant's calling is as good as that of the monk in his cell; I would merely infer from what I endure myself that it is beyond a doubt a more laborious and a more belaboured one, a hungrier and thirstier, a wretcher, raggeder, and lousier; for there is no reason to doubt that the knights-errant of yore endured much hardship in the course of their lives. And if some of them by the might of their arms did rise to be emperors, in faith it cost them dear in the matter of blood and sweat; and if those who attained to that rank had not had magicians and sages to help them they would have been completely baulked in their ambition and disappointed in their hopes."

"That is my own opinion," replied the traveller; "but one thing among many others seems to me very wrong in knights-errant, and that is that when they find themselves about to engage in some mighty and perilous adventure in which there is manifest danger of losing their lives, they never at the moment of engaging in it think of commending themselves to God, as is the duty of every good Christian in like peril; instead of which they commend themselves to their ladies with as much devotion as if these were their gods, a thing which seems to me to savour somewhat of heathenism."

"Sir," answered Don Quixote, "that cannot be on any account omitted, and the knight-errant would be disgraced who acted otherwise: for it is usual and customary in knight-errantry that the knight-errant, who on engaging in any great feat of arms has his lady before him, should turn his eyes towards her softly and lovingly, as though with them entreating her to favour and protect him in the hazardous venture he is about to undertake, and even though no one hear him, he is bound to say certain words between his teeth, commending himself to her with all his heart, and of this we have innumerable instances in the histories. Nor is it to be supposed from this that they are to omit commending themselves to God, for there will be time and opportunity for doing so while they are engaged in their task."

"For all that," answered the traveller, "I feel some doubt still, because often I have read how words will arise between two knights-errant, and from one thing to another it comes about that their anger kindles and they wheel their horses round and take a good stretch of field, and then without any more ado at the top

of their speed they come to the charge, and in mid-career they are wont to commend themselves to their ladies; and what commonly comes of the encounter is that one falls over the haunches of his horse pierced through and through by his antagonist's lance, and as for the other, it is only by holding on to the mane of his horse that he can help falling to the ground; but I know not how the dead man had time to commend himself to God in the course of such rapid work as this; it would have been better if those words which he spent in commending himself to his lady in the midst of his career had been devoted to his duty and obligation as a Christian. Moreover, it is my belief that all knights-errant have not ladies to commend themselves to, for they are not all in love."

"That is impossible," said Don Quixote: "I say it is impossible that there could be a knight-errant without a lady, because to such it is as natural and proper to be in love as to the heavens to have stars: most certainly no history has been seen in which there is to be found a knight-errant without an amour, and for the simple reason that without one he would be held no legitimate knight but a bastard, and one who had gained entrance into the stronghold of the said knighthood, not by the door, but over the wall like a thief and a robber."

"Nevertheless," said the traveller, "if I remember rightly, I think I have read that Don Galaor, the brother of the valiant Amadis of Gaul, never had any special lady to whom he might commend himself, and yet he was not the less esteemed, and was a very stout and famous knight."

To which our Don Quixote made answer, "Sir, one solitary swallow does not make summer; moreover, I know that knight was in secret very deeply in love; besides which, that way of falling in love with all that took his fancy was a natural propensity which he could not control. But, in short, it is very manifest that he had one alone whom he made mistress of his will, to whom he commended himself very frequently and very secretly, for he prided himself on being a reticent knight."

"Then if it be essential that every knight-errant should be in love," said the traveller, "it may be fairly supposed that your worship is so, as you are of the order; and if you do not pride yourself on being as reticent as Don Galaor, I entreat you as earnestly as I can, in the name of all this company and in my own, to inform us of the name, country, rank, and beauty of your lady, for she will esteem herself fortunate if all the world knows that she is loved and served by such a knight as your worship seems to be."

At this Don Quixote heaved a deep sigh and said, "I cannot say positively whether my sweet enemy is pleased or not that the world should know I serve her; I can only say in answer to what has been so courteously asked of me, that her name is Dulcinea, her country El Toboso, a village of La Mancha, her rank

must be at least that of a princess, since she is my queen and lady, and her beauty superhuman, since all the impossible and fanciful attributes of beauty which the poets apply to their ladies are verified in her; for her hairs are gold, her forehead Elysian fields, her eyebrows rainbows, her eyes suns, her cheeks roses, her lips coral, her teeth pearls, her neck alabaster, her bosom marble, her hands ivory, her fairness snow, and what modesty conceals from sight such, I think and imagine, as rational reflection can only extol, not compare.”

“We should like to know her lineage, race, and ancestry,” said Vivaldo.

To which Don Quixote replied, “She is not of the ancient Roman Curtii, Caii, or Scipios, nor of the modern Colonnas or Orsini, nor of the Moncadas or Requesenes of Catalonia, nor yet of the Rebellas or Villanovas of Valencia; Palafoxes, Nuzas, Rocabertis, Corellas, Lunas, Alagones, Urreas, Foces, or Gurreas of Aragon; Cerdas, Manriques, Mendozas, or Guzmans of Castile; Alencastros, Pallas, or Meneses of Portugal; but she is of those of El Toboso of La Mancha, a lineage that though modern, may furnish a source of gentle blood for the most illustrious families of the ages that are to come, and this let none dispute with me save on the condition that Zerbino placed at the foot of the trophy of Orlando’s arms, saying,

‘These let none move Who dareth not his might with Roland prove.’”

“Although mine is of the Cachopins of Laredo,” said the traveller, “I will not venture to compare it with that of El Toboso of La Mancha, though, to tell the truth, no such surname has until now ever reached my ears.”

“What!” said Don Quixote, “has that never reached them?”

The rest of the party went along listening with great attention to the conversation of the pair, and even the very goatherds and shepherds perceived how exceedingly out of his wits our Don Quixote was. Sancho Panza alone thought that what his master said was the truth, knowing who he was and having known him from his birth; and all that he felt any difficulty in believing was that about the fair Dulcinea del Toboso, because neither any such name nor any such princess had ever come to his knowledge though he lived so close to El Toboso. They were going along conversing in this way, when they saw descending a gap between two high mountains some twenty shepherds, all clad in sheepskins of black wool, and crowned with garlands which, as afterwards appeared, were, some of them of yew, some of cypress. Six of the number were carrying a bier covered with a great variety of flowers and branches, on seeing which one of the goatherds said, “Those who come there are the bearers of Chrysostom’s body, and the foot of that mountain is the place where he ordered them to bury him.” They therefore made haste to reach the spot, and did so by the time those who came had laid the bier upon the ground, and four of them with sharp pickaxes

were digging a grave by the side of a hard rock. They greeted each other courteously, and then Don Quixote and those who accompanied him turned to examine the bier, and on it, covered with flowers, they saw a dead body in the dress of a shepherd, to all appearance of one thirty years of age, and showing even in death that in life he had been of comely features and gallant bearing. Around him on the bier itself were laid some books, and several papers open and folded; and those who were looking on as well as those who were opening the grave and all the others who were there preserved a strange silence, until one of those who had borne the body said to another, "Observe carefully, Ambrosia if this is the place Chrysostom spoke of, since you are anxious that what he directed in his will should be so strictly complied with."

"This is the place," answered Ambrosia "for in it many a time did my poor friend tell me the story of his hard fortune. Here it was, he told me, that he saw for the first time that mortal enemy of the human race, and here, too, for the first time he declared to her his passion, as honourable as it was devoted, and here it was that at last Marcela ended by scorning and rejecting him so as to bring the tragedy of his wretched life to a close; here, in memory of misfortunes so great, he desired to be laid in the bowels of eternal oblivion." Then turning to Don Quixote and the travellers he went on to say, "That body, sirs, on which you are looking with compassionate eyes, was the abode of a soul on which Heaven bestowed a vast share of its riches. That is the body of Chrysostom, who was unrivalled in wit, unequalled in courtesy, unapproached in gentle bearing, a phoenix in friendship, generous without limit, grave without arrogance, gay without vulgarity, and, in short, first in all that constitutes goodness and second to none in all that makes up misfortune. He loved deeply, he was hated; he adored, he was scorned; he wooed a wild beast, he pleaded with marble, he pursued the wind, he cried to the wilderness, he served ingratitude, and for reward was made the prey of death in the mid-course of life, cut short by a shepherdess whom he sought to immortalise in the memory of man, as these papers which you see could fully prove, had he not commanded me to consign them to the fire after having consigned his body to the earth."

"You would deal with them more harshly and cruelly than their owner himself," said Vivaldo, "for it is neither right nor proper to do the will of one who enjoins what is wholly unreasonable; it would not have been reasonable in Augustus Caesar had he permitted the directions left by the divine Mantuan in his will to be carried into effect. So that, Senor Ambrosia while you consign your friend's body to the earth, you should not consign his writings to oblivion, for if he gave the order in bitterness of heart, it is not right that you should irrationally obey it. On the contrary, by granting life to those papers, let the

cruelty of Marcela live for ever, to serve as a warning in ages to come to all men to shun and avoid falling into like danger; or I and all of us who have come here know already the story of this your love-stricken and heart-broken friend, and we know, too, your friendship, and the cause of his death, and the directions he gave at the close of his life; from which sad story may be gathered how great was the cruelty of Marcela, the love of Chrysostom, and the loyalty of your friendship, together with the end awaiting those who pursue rashly the path that insane passion opens to their eyes. Last night we learned the death of Chrysostom and that he was to be buried here, and out of curiosity and pity we left our direct road and resolved to come and see with our eyes that which when heard of had so moved our compassion, and in consideration of that compassion and our desire to prove it if we might by condolence, we beg of you, excellent Ambrosia, or at least I on my own account entreat you, that instead of burning those papers you allow me to carry away some of them.”

And without waiting for the shepherd’s answer, he stretched out his hand and took up some of those that were nearest to him; seeing which Ambrosio said, “Out of courtesy, senor, I will grant your request as to those you have taken, but it is idle to expect me to abstain from burning the remainder.”

Vivaldo, who was eager to see what the papers contained, opened one of them at once, and saw that its title was “Lay of Despair.”

Ambrosio hearing it said, “That is the last paper the unhappy man wrote; and that you may see, senor, to what an end his misfortunes brought him, read it so that you may be heard, for you will have time enough for that while we are waiting for the grave to be dug.”

“I will do so very willingly,” said Vivaldo; and as all the bystanders were equally eager they gathered round him, and he, reading in a loud voice, found that it ran as follows.



## CHAPTER XIV.

WHEREIN ARE INSERTED THE DESPAIRING VERSES OF THE DEAD SHEPHERD, TOGETHER WITH OTHER INCIDENTS NOT LOOKED FOR



### THE LAY OF CHRYSOSTOM

Since thou dost in thy cruelty desire  
The ruthless rigour of thy tyranny  
From tongue to tongue, from land to land proclaimed, The very Hell will I  
constrain to lend  
This stricken breast of mine deep notes of woe To serve my need of fitting  
utterance.  
And as I strive to body forth the tale

Of all I suffer, all that thou hast done,  
Forth shall the dread voice roll, and bear along Shreds from my vitals torn for  
greater pain.

Then listen, not to dulcet harmony,  
But to a discord wrung by mad despair  
Out of this bosom's depths of bitterness,  
To ease my heart and plant a sting in thine.

The lion's roar, the fierce wolf's savage howl, The horrid hissing of the scaly  
snake,  
The awesome cries of monsters yet unnamed,  
The crow's ill-boding croak, the hollow moan  
Of wild winds wrestling with the restless sea, The wrathful bellow of the  
vanquished bull,

The plaintive sobbing of the widowed dove,  
The envied owl's sad note, the wail of woe  
That rises from the dreary choir of Hell,  
Commingled in one sound, confusing sense,  
Let all these come to aid my soul's complaint, For pain like mine demands  
new modes of song.

No echoes of that discord shall be heard  
Where Father Tagus rolls, or on the banks  
Of olive-bordered Betis; to the rocks  
Or in deep caverns shall my plaint be told,  
And by a lifeless tongue in living words;  
Or in dark valleys or on lonely shores,  
Where neither foot of man nor sunbeam falls;  
Or in among the poison-breathing swarms  
Of monsters nourished by the sluggish Nile.  
For, though it be to solitudes remote  
The hoarse vague echoes of my sorrows sound  
Thy matchless cruelty, my dismal fate  
Shall carry them to all the spacious world.

Disdain hath power to kill, and patience dies Slain by suspicion, be it false or  
true;

And deadly is the force of jealousy;  
Long absence makes of life a dreary void;



No hope of happiness can give repose  
To him that ever fears to be forgot;  
And death, inevitable, waits in hall.  
But I, by some strange miracle, live on  
A prey to absence, jealousy, disdain;  
Racked by suspicion as by certainty;  
Forgotten, left to feed my flame alone.  
And while I suffer thus, there comes no ray  
Of hope to gladden me athwart the gloom;  
Nor do I look for it in my despair;  
But rather clinging to a cureless woe,  
All hope do I abjure for evermore.

Can there be hope where fear is? Were it well, When far more certain are the  
grounds of fear?

Ought I to shut mine eyes to jealousy,  
If through a thousand heart-wounds it appears?  
Who would not give free access to distrust,  
Seeing disdain unveiled, and — bitter change! — All his suspicions turned to  
certainties,

And the fair truth transformed into a lie?

Oh, thou fierce tyrant of the realms of love, Oh, Jealousy! put chains upon  
these hands,

And bind me with thy strongest cord, Disdain.

But, woe is me! triumphant over all,

My sufferings drown the memory of you.

And now I die, and since there is no hope

Of happiness for me in life or death,

Still to my fantasy I'll fondly cling.

I'll say that he is wise who loveth well,

And that the soul most free is that most bound In thralldom to the ancient  
tyrant Love.

I'll say that she who is mine enemy

In that fair body hath as fair a mind,

And that her coldness is but my desert,

And that by virtue of the pain he sends

Love rules his kingdom with a gentle sway.

Thus, self-deluding, and in bondage sore,

And wearing out the wretched shred of life  
To which I am reduced by her disdain,  
I'll give this soul and body to the winds,  
All hopeless of a crown of bliss in store.

Thou whose injustice hath supplied the cause That makes me quit the weary  
life I loathe,  
As by this wounded bosom thou canst see  
How willingly thy victim I become,  
Let not my death, if haply worth a tear,  
Cloud the clear heaven that dwells in thy bright eyes; I would not have thee  
expiate in aught  
The crime of having made my heart thy prey;  
But rather let thy laughter gaily ring  
And prove my death to be thy festival.  
Fool that I am to bid thee! well I know  
Thy glory gains by my untimely end.

And now it is the time; from Hell's abyss  
Come thirsting Tantalus, come Sisyphus  
Heaving the cruel stone, come Tityus  
With vulture, and with wheel Ixion come,  
And come the sisters of the ceaseless toil;  
And all into this breast transfer their pains, And (if such tribute to despair be  
due)  
Chant in their deepest tones a doleful dirge  
Over a corse unworthy of a shroud.  
Let the three-headed guardian of the gate,  
And all the monstrous progeny of hell,  
The doleful concert join: a lover dead  
Methinks can have no fitter obsequies.

Lay of despair, grieve not when thou art gone Forth from this sorrowing  
heart: my misery  
Brings fortune to the cause that gave thee birth; Then banish sadness even in  
the tomb.

The "Lay of Chrysostom" met with the approbation of the listeners, though  
the reader said it did not seem to him to agree with what he had heard of

Marcela's reserve and propriety, for Chrysostom complained in it of jealousy, suspicion, and absence, all to the prejudice of the good name and fame of Marcela; to which Ambrosio replied as one who knew well his friend's most secret thoughts, "Senor, to remove that doubt I should tell you that when the unhappy man wrote this lay he was away from Marcela, from whom he had voluntarily separated himself, to try if absence would act with him as it is wont; and as everything distresses and every fear haunts the banished lover, so imaginary jealousies and suspicions, dreaded as if they were true, tormented Chrysostom; and thus the truth of what report declares of the virtue of Marcela remains unshaken, and with her envy itself should not and cannot find any fault save that of being cruel, somewhat haughty, and very scornful."

"That is true," said Vivaldo; and as he was about to read another paper of those he had preserved from the fire, he was stopped by a marvellous vision (for such it seemed) that unexpectedly presented itself to their eyes; for on the summit of the rock where they were digging the grave there appeared the shepherdess Marcela, so beautiful that her beauty exceeded its reputation. Those who had never till then beheld her gazed upon her in wonder and silence, and those who were accustomed to see her were not less amazed than those who had never seen her before. But the instant Ambrosio saw her he addressed her, with manifest indignation: "Art thou come, by chance, cruel basilisk of these mountains, to see if in thy presence blood will flow from the wounds of this wretched being thy cruelty has robbed of life; or is it to exult over the cruel work of thy humours that thou art come; or like another pitiless Nero to look down from that height upon the ruin of his Rome in embers; or in thy arrogance to trample on this ill-fated corpse, as the ungrateful daughter trampled on her father Tarquin's? Tell us quickly for what thou art come, or what it is thou wouldst have, for, as I know the thoughts of Chrysostom never failed to obey thee in life, I will make all these who call themselves his friends obey thee, though he be dead."

"I come not, Ambrosia for any of the purposes thou hast named," replied Marcela, "but to defend myself and to prove how unreasonable are all those who blame me for their sorrow and for Chrysostom's death; and therefore I ask all of you that are here to give me your attention, for will not take much time or many words to bring the truth home to persons of sense. Heaven has made me, so you say, beautiful, and so much so that in spite of yourselves my beauty leads you to love me; and for the love you show me you say, and even urge, that I am bound to love you. By that natural understanding which God has given me I know that everything beautiful attracts love, but I cannot see how, by reason of being loved, that which is loved for its beauty is bound to love that which loves it;

besides, it may happen that the lover of that which is beautiful may be ugly, and ugliness being detestable, it is very absurd to say, "I love thee because thou art beautiful, thou must love me though I be ugly." But supposing the beauty equal on both sides, it does not follow that the inclinations must be therefore alike, for it is not every beauty that excites love, some but pleasing the eye without winning the affection; and if every sort of beauty excited love and won the heart, the will would wander vaguely to and fro unable to make choice of any; for as there is an infinity of beautiful objects there must be an infinity of inclinations, and true love, I have heard it said, is indivisible, and must be voluntary and not compelled. If this be so, as I believe it to be, why do you desire me to bend my will by force, for no other reason but that you say you love me? Nay — tell me — had Heaven made me ugly, as it has made me beautiful, could I with justice complain of you for not loving me? Moreover, you must remember that the beauty I possess was no choice of mine, for, be it what it may, Heaven of its bounty gave it me without my asking or choosing it; and as the viper, though it kills with it, does not deserve to be blamed for the poison it carries, as it is a gift of nature, neither do I deserve reproach for being beautiful; for beauty in a modest woman is like fire at a distance or a sharp sword; the one does not burn, the other does not cut, those who do not come too near. Honour and virtue are the ornaments of the mind, without which the body, though it be so, has no right to pass for beautiful; but if modesty is one of the virtues that specially lend a grace and charm to mind and body, why should she who is loved for her beauty part with it to gratify one who for his pleasure alone strives with all his might and energy to rob her of it? I was born free, and that I might live in freedom I chose the solitude of the fields; in the trees of the mountains I find society, the clear waters of the brooks are my mirrors, and to the trees and waters I make known my thoughts and charms. I am a fire afar off, a sword laid aside. Those whom I have inspired with love by letting them see me, I have by words undeceived, and if their longings live on hope — and I have given none to Chrysostom or to any other — it cannot justly be said that the death of any is my doing, for it was rather his own obstinacy than my cruelty that killed him; and if it be made a charge against me that his wishes were honourable, and that therefore I was bound to yield to them, I answer that when on this very spot where now his grave is made he declared to me his purity of purpose, I told him that mine was to live in perpetual solitude, and that the earth alone should enjoy the fruits of my retirement and the spoils of my beauty; and if, after this open avowal, he chose to persist against hope and steer against the wind, what wonder is it that he should sink in the depths of his infatuation? If I had encouraged him, I should be false; if I had gratified him, I should have acted against my own

better resolution and purpose. He was persistent in spite of warning, he despaired without being hated. Bethink you now if it be reasonable that his suffering should be laid to my charge. Let him who has been deceived complain, let him give way to despair whose encouraged hopes have proved vain, let him flatter himself whom I shall entice, let him boast whom I shall receive; but let not him call me cruel or homicide to whom I make no promise, upon whom I practise no deception, whom I neither entice nor receive. It has not been so far the will of Heaven that I should love by fate, and to expect me to love by choice is idle. Let this general declaration serve for each of my suitors on his own account, and let it be understood from this time forth that if anyone dies for me it is not of jealousy or misery he dies, for she who loves no one can give no cause for jealousy to any, and candour is not to be confounded with scorn. Let him who calls me wild beast and basilisk, leave me alone as something noxious and evil; let him who calls me ungrateful, withhold his service; who calls me wayward, seek not my acquaintance; who calls me cruel, pursue me not; for this wild beast, this basilisk, this ungrateful, cruel, wayward being has no kind of desire to seek, serve, know, or follow them. If Chrysostom's impatience and violent passion killed him, why should my modest behaviour and circumspection be blamed? If I preserve my purity in the society of the trees, why should he who would have me preserve it among men, seek to rob me of it? I have, as you know, wealth of my own, and I covet not that of others; my taste is for freedom, and I have no relish for constraint; I neither love nor hate anyone; I do not deceive this one or court that, or trifle with one or play with another. The modest converse of the shepherd girls of these hamlets and the care of my goats are my recreations; my desires are bounded by these mountains, and if they ever wander hence it is to contemplate the beauty of the heavens, steps by which the soul travels to its primeval abode."

With these words, and not waiting to hear a reply, she turned and passed into the thickest part of a wood that was hard by, leaving all who were there lost in admiration as much of her good sense as of her beauty. Some — those wounded by the irresistible shafts launched by her bright eyes — made as though they would follow her, heedless of the frank declaration they had heard; seeing which, and deeming this a fitting occasion for the exercise of his chivalry in aid of distressed damsels, Don Quixote, laying his hand on the hilt of his sword, exclaimed in a loud and distinct voice: "Let no one, whatever his rank or condition, dare to follow the beautiful Marcela, under pain of incurring my fierce indignation. She has shown by clear and satisfactory arguments that little or no fault is to be found with her for the death of Chrysostom, and also how far she is from yielding to the wishes of any of her lovers, for which reason, instead of

being followed and persecuted, she should in justice be honoured and esteemed by all the good people of the world, for she shows that she is the only woman in it that holds to such a virtuous resolution.”

Whether it was because of the threats of Don Quixote, or because Ambrosio told them to fulfil their duty to their good friend, none of the shepherds moved or stirred from the spot until, having finished the grave and burned Chrysostom’s papers, they laid his body in it, not without many tears from those who stood by. They closed the grave with a heavy stone until a slab was ready which Ambrosio said he meant to have prepared, with an epitaph which was to be to this effect: Beneath the stone before your eyes

The body of a lover lies;  
In life he was a shepherd swain,  
In death a victim to disdain.  
Ungrateful, cruel, coy, and fair,  
Was she that drove him to despair,  
And Love hath made her his ally  
For spreading wide his tyranny.

They then strewed upon the grave a profusion of flowers and branches, and all expressing their condolence with his friend Ambrosio, took their Vivaldo and his companion did the same; and Don Quixote bade farewell to his hosts and to the travellers, who pressed him to come with them to Seville, as being such a convenient place for finding adventures, for they presented themselves in every street and round every corner oftener than anywhere else. Don Quixote thanked them for their advice and for the disposition they showed to do him a favour, and said that for the present he would not, and must not go to Seville until he had cleared all these mountains of highwaymen and robbers, of whom report said they were full. Seeing his good intention, the travellers were unwilling to press him further, and once more bidding him farewell, they left him and pursued their journey, in the course of which they did not fail to discuss the story of Marcela and Chrysostom as well as the madness of Don Quixote. He, on his part, resolved to go in quest of the shepherdess Marcela, and make offer to her of all the service he could render her; but things did not fall out with him as he expected, according to what is related in the course of this veracious history, of which the Second Part ends here.



## CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH IS RELATED THE UNFORTUNATE ADVENTURE THAT DON  
QUIXOTE FELL IN WITH WHEN HE FELL OUT WITH CERTAIN  
HEARTLESS YANGUESANS



The sage Cid Hamete Benengeli relates that as soon as Don Quixote took leave of his hosts and all who had been present at the burial of Chrysostom, he and his squire passed into the same wood which they had seen the shepherdess Marcela enter, and after having wandered for more than two hours in all directions in search of her without finding her, they came to a halt in a glade covered with tender grass, beside which ran a pleasant cool stream that invited and compelled them to pass there the hours of the noontide heat, which by this time was beginning to come on oppressively. Don Quixote and Sancho dismounted, and turning Rocinante and the ass loose to feed on the grass that was there in abundance, they ransacked the alforjas, and without any ceremony very peacefully and sociably master and man made their repast on what they found in them.





Sancho had not thought it worth while to hobble Rocinante, feeling sure, from what he knew of his staidness and freedom from incontinence, that all the mares in the Cordova pastures would not lead him into an impropriety. Chance, however, and the devil, who is not always asleep, so ordained it that feeding in this valley there was a drove of Galician ponies belonging to certain Yanguesan carriers, whose way it is to take their midday rest with their teams in places and spots where grass and water abound; and that where Don Quixote chanced to be suited the Yanguesans' purpose very well. It so happened, then, that Rocinante

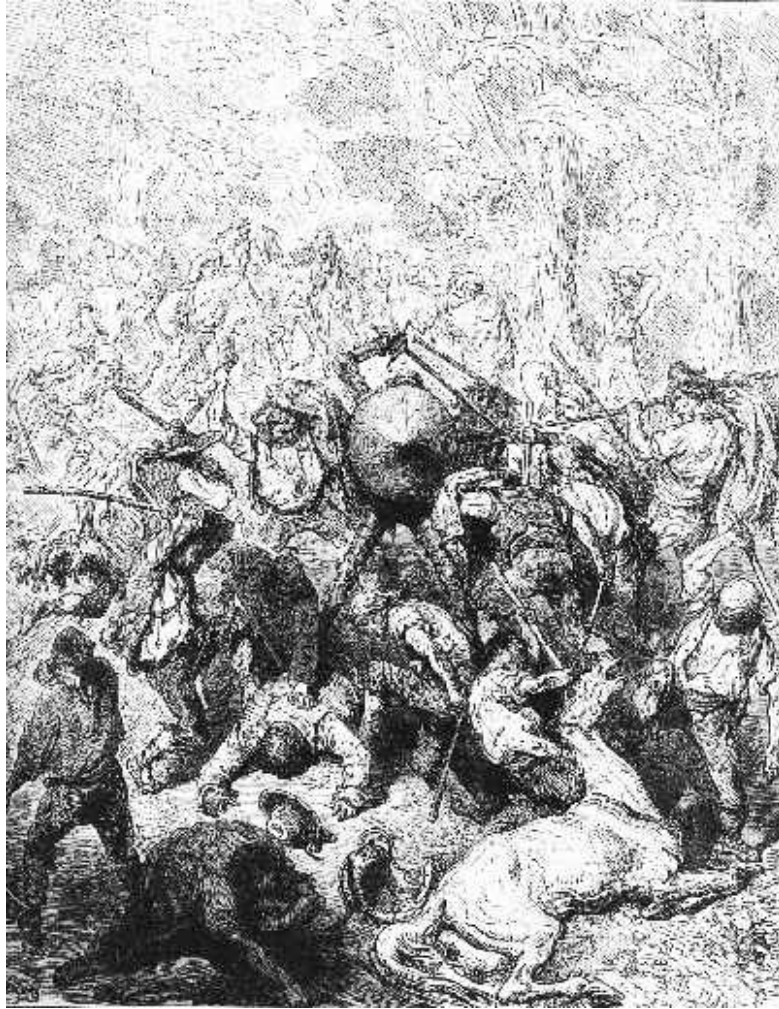
took a fancy to disport himself with their ladyships the ponies, and abandoning his usual gait and demeanour as he scented them, he, without asking leave of his master, got up a briskish little trot and hastened to make known his wishes to them; they, however, it seemed, preferred their pasture to him, and received him with their heels and teeth to such effect that they soon broke his girths and left him naked without a saddle to cover him; but what must have been worse to him was that the carriers, seeing the violence he was offering to their mares, came running up armed with stakes, and so belaboured him that they brought him sorely battered to the ground.

By this time Don Quixote and Sancho, who had witnessed the drubbing of Rocinante, came up panting, and said Don Quixote to Sancho:

“So far as I can see, friend Sancho, these are not knights but base folk of low birth: I mention it because thou canst lawfully aid me in taking due vengeance for the insult offered to Rocinante before our eyes.”

“What the devil vengeance can we take,” answered Sancho, “if they are more than twenty, and we no more than two, or, indeed, perhaps not more than one and a half?”

“I count for a hundred,” replied Don Quixote, and without more words he drew his sword and attacked the Yanguesans and excited and impelled by the example of his master, Sancho did the same; and to begin with, Don Quixote delivered a slash at one of them that laid open the leather jerkin he wore, together with a great portion of his shoulder. The Yanguesans, seeing themselves assaulted by only two men while they were so many, betook themselves to their stakes, and driving the two into the middle they began to lay on with great zeal and energy; in fact, at the second blow they brought Sancho to the ground, and Don Quixote fared the same way, all his skill and high mettle availing him nothing, and fate willed it that he should fall at the feet of Rocinante, who had not yet risen; whereby it may be seen how furiously stakes can pound in angry boorish hands.



Then, seeing the mischief they had done, the Yanguesans with all the haste they could loaded their team and pursued their journey, leaving the two adventurers a sorry sight and in sorrier mood.

Sancho was the first to come to, and finding himself close to his master he called to him in a weak and doleful voice, "Senor Don Quixote, ah, Senor Don Quixote!"

"What wouldst thou, brother Sancho?" answered Don Quixote in the same feeble suffering tone as Sancho.

"I would like, if it were possible," answered Sancho Panza, "your worship to give me a couple of sups of that potion of the fiery Blas, if it be that you have

any to hand there; perhaps it will serve for broken bones as well as for wounds.”

“If I only had it here, wretch that I am, what more should we want?” said Don Quixote; “but I swear to thee, Sancho Panza, on the faith of a knight-errant, ere two days are over, unless fortune orders otherwise, I mean to have it in my possession, or my hand will have lost its cunning.”

“But in how many does your worship think we shall have the use of our feet?” answered Sancho Panza.

“For myself I must say I cannot guess how many,” said the battered knight Don Quixote; “but I take all the blame upon myself, for I had no business to put hand to sword against men who were not dubbed knights like myself, and so I believe that in punishment for having transgressed the laws of chivalry the God of battles has permitted this chastisement to be administered to me; for which reason, brother Sancho, it is well thou shouldst receive a hint on the matter which I am now about to mention to thee, for it is of much importance to the welfare of both of us. It is at when thou shalt see rabble of this sort offering us insult thou art not to wait till I draw sword against them, for I shall not do so at all; but do thou draw sword and chastise them to thy heart’s content, and if any knights come to their aid and defence I will take care to defend thee and assail them with all my might; and thou hast already seen by a thousand signs and proofs what the might of this strong arm of mine is equal to” — so uplifted had the poor gentleman become through the victory over the stout Biscayan.

But Sancho did not so fully approve of his master’s admonition as to let it pass without saying in reply, “Senor, I am a man of peace, meek and quiet, and I can put up with any affront because I have a wife and children to support and bring up; so let it be likewise a hint to your worship, as it cannot be a mandate, that on no account will I draw sword either against clown or against knight, and that here before God I forgive the insults that have been offered me, whether they have been, are, or shall be offered me by high or low, rich or poor, noble or commoner, not excepting any rank or condition whatsoever.”

To all which his master said in reply, “I wish I had breath enough to speak somewhat easily, and that the pain I feel on this side would abate so as to let me explain to thee, Panza, the mistake thou makest. Come now, sinner, suppose the wind of fortune, hitherto so adverse, should turn in our favour, filling the sails of our desires so that safely and without impediment we put into port in some one of those islands I have promised thee, how would it be with thee if on winning it I made thee lord of it? Why, thou wilt make it well-nigh impossible through not being a knight nor having any desire to be one, nor possessing the courage nor the will to avenge insults or defend thy lordship; for thou must know that in newly conquered kingdoms and provinces the minds of the inhabitants are never

so quiet nor so well disposed to the new lord that there is no fear of their making some move to change matters once more, and try, as they say, what chance may do for them; so it is essential that the new possessor should have good sense to enable him to govern, and valour to attack and defend himself, whatever may befall him.”

“In what has now befallen us,” answered Sancho, “I’d have been well pleased to have that good sense and that valour your worship speaks of, but I swear on the faith of a poor man I am more fit for plasters than for arguments. See if your worship can get up, and let us help Rocinante, though he does not deserve it, for he was the main cause of all this thrashing. I never thought it of Rocinante, for I took him to be a virtuous person and as quiet as myself. After all, they say right that it takes a long time to come to know people, and that there is nothing sure in this life. Who would have said that, after such mighty slashes as your worship gave that unlucky knight-errant, there was coming, travelling post and at the very heels of them, such a great storm of sticks as has fallen upon our shoulders?”

“And yet thine, Sancho,” replied Don Quixote, “ought to be used to such squalls; but mine, reared in soft cloth and fine linen, it is plain they must feel more keenly the pain of this mishap, and if it were not that I imagine — why do I say imagine? — know of a certainty that all these annoyances are very necessary accompaniments of the calling of arms, I would lay me down here to die of pure vexation.”

To this the squire replied, “Senor, as these mishaps are what one reaps of chivalry, tell me if they happen very often, or if they have their own fixed times for coming to pass; because it seems to me that after two harvests we shall be no good for the third, unless God in his infinite mercy helps us.”

“Know, friend Sancho,” answered Don Quixote, “that the life of knights-errant is subject to a thousand dangers and reverses, and neither more nor less is it within immediate possibility for knights-errant to become kings and emperors, as experience has shown in the case of many different knights with whose histories I am thoroughly acquainted; and I could tell thee now, if the pain would let me, of some who simply by might of arm have risen to the high stations I have mentioned; and those same, both before and after, experienced divers misfortunes and miseries; for the valiant Amadis of Gaul found himself in the power of his mortal enemy Arcalaus the magician, who, it is positively asserted, holding him captive, gave him more than two hundred lashes with the reins of his horse while tied to one of the pillars of a court; and moreover there is a certain recondite author of no small authority who says that the Knight of Phoebus, being caught in a certain pitfall, which opened under his feet in a

certain castle, on falling found himself bound hand and foot in a deep pit underground, where they administered to him one of those things they call clysters, of sand and snow-water, that well-nigh finished him; and if he had not been succoured in that sore extremity by a sage, a great friend of his, it would have gone very hard with the poor knight; so I may well suffer in company with such worthy folk, for greater were the indignities which they had to suffer than those which we suffer. For I would have thee know, Sancho, that wounds caused by any instruments which happen by chance to be in hand inflict no indignity, and this is laid down in the law of the duel in express words: if, for instance, the cobbler strikes another with the last which he has in his hand, though it be in fact a piece of wood, it cannot be said for that reason that he whom he struck with it has been cudgelled. I say this lest thou shouldst imagine that because we have been drubbed in this affray we have therefore suffered any indignity; for the arms those men carried, with which they pounded us, were nothing more than their stakes, and not one of them, so far as I remember, carried rapier, sword, or dagger.”

“They gave me no time to see that much,” answered Sancho, “for hardly had I laid hand on my tizona when they signed the cross on my shoulders with their sticks in such style that they took the sight out of my eyes and the strength out of my feet, stretching me where I now lie, and where thinking of whether all those stake-strokes were an indignity or not gives me no uneasiness, which the pain of the blows does, for they will remain as deeply impressed on my memory as on my shoulders.”

“For all that let me tell thee, brother Panza,” said Don Quixote, “that there is no recollection which time does not put an end to, and no pain which death does not remove.”

“And what greater misfortune can there be,” replied Panza, “than the one that waits for time to put an end to it and death to remove it? If our mishap were one of those that are cured with a couple of plasters, it would not be so bad; but I am beginning to think that all the plasters in a hospital almost won’t be enough to put us right.”

“No more of that: pluck strength out of weakness, Sancho, as I mean to do,” returned Don Quixote, “and let us see how Rocinante is, for it seems to me that not the least share of this mishap has fallen to the lot of the poor beast.”

“There is nothing wonderful in that,” replied Sancho, “since he is a knight-errant too; what I wonder at is that my beast should have come off scot-free where we come out scotched.”

“Fortune always leaves a door open in adversity in order to bring relief to it,” said Don Quixote; “I say so because this little beast may now supply the want of

Rocinante, carrying me hence to some castle where I may be cured of my wounds. And moreover I shall not hold it any dishonour to be so mounted, for I remember having read how the good old Silenus, the tutor and instructor of the gay god of laughter, when he entered the city of the hundred gates, went very contentedly mounted on a handsome ass."

"It may be true that he went mounted as your worship says," answered Sancho, "but there is a great difference between going mounted and going slung like a sack of manure."

To which Don Quixote replied, "Wounds received in battle confer honour instead of taking it away; and so, friend Panza, say no more, but, as I told thee before, get up as well as thou canst and put me on top of thy beast in whatever fashion pleases thee best, and let us go hence ere night come on and surprise us in these wilds."

"And yet I have heard your worship say," observed Panza, "that it is very meet for knights-errant to sleep in wastes and deserts, and that they esteem it very good fortune."

"That is," said Don Quixote, "when they cannot help it, or when they are in love; and so true is this that there have been knights who have remained two years on rocks, in sunshine and shade and all the inclemencies of heaven, without their ladies knowing anything of it; and one of these was Amadis, when, under the name of Beltenebros, he took up his abode on the Pena Pobre for — I know not if it was eight years or eight months, for I am not very sure of the reckoning; at any rate he stayed there doing penance for I know not what pique the Princess Oriana had against him; but no more of this now, Sancho, and make haste before a mishap like Rocinante's befalls the ass."

"The very devil would be in it in that case," said Sancho; and letting off thirty "ohs," and sixty sighs, and a hundred and twenty maledictions and execrations on whomsoever it was that had brought him there, he raised himself, stopping half-way bent like a Turkish bow without power to bring himself upright, but with all his pains he saddled his ass, who too had gone astray somewhat, yielding to the excessive licence of the day; he next raised up Rocinante, and as for him, had he possessed a tongue to complain with, most assuredly neither Sancho nor his master would have been behind him.



To be brief, Sancho fixed Don Quixote on the ass and secured Rocinante with a leading rein, and taking the ass by the halter, he proceeded more or less in the direction in which it seemed to him the high road might be; and, as chance was conducting their affairs for them from good to better, he had not gone a short league when the road came in sight, and on it he perceived an inn, which to his annoyance and to the delight of Don Quixote must needs be a castle. Sancho insisted that it was an inn, and his master that it was not one, but a castle, and the dispute lasted so long that before the point was settled they had time to reach it, and into it Sancho entered with all his team without any further controversy.





## CHAPTER XVI.

### OF WHAT HAPPENED TO THE INGENIOUS GENTLEMAN IN THE INN WHICH HE TOOK TO BE A CASTLE



The innkeeper, seeing Don Quixote slung across the ass, asked Sancho what was amiss with him. Sancho answered that it was nothing, only that he had fallen down from a rock and had his ribs a little bruised. The innkeeper had a wife whose disposition was not such as those of her calling commonly have, for she was by nature kind-hearted and felt for the sufferings of her neighbours, so she at once set about tending Don Quixote, and made her young daughter, a very comely girl, help her in taking care of her guest. There was besides in the inn, as servant, an Asturian lass with a broad face, flat poll, and snub nose, blind of one eye and not very sound in the other. The elegance of her shape, to be sure, made up for all her defects; she did not measure seven palms from head to foot, and her shoulders, which overweighted her somewhat, made her contemplate the ground more than she liked. This graceful lass, then, helped the young girl, and

the two made up a very bad bed for Don Quixote in a garret that showed evident signs of having formerly served for many years as a straw-loft, in which there was also quartered a carrier whose bed was placed a little beyond our Don Quixote's, and, though only made of the pack-saddles and cloths of his mules, had much the advantage of it, as Don Quixote's consisted simply of four rough boards on two not very even trestles, a mattress, that for thinness might have passed for a quilt, full of pellets which, were they not seen through the rents to be wool, would to the touch have seemed pebbles in hardness, two sheets made of buckler leather, and a coverlet the threads of which anyone that chose might have counted without missing one in the reckoning.

On this accursed bed Don Quixote stretched himself, and the hostess and her daughter soon covered him with plasters from top to toe, while Maritornes — for that was the name of the Asturian — held the light for them, and while plastering him, the hostess, observing how full of wheals Don Quixote was in some places, remarked that this had more the look of blows than of a fall.

It was not blows, Sancho said, but that the rock had many points and projections, and that each of them had left its mark. "Pray, senora," he added, "manage to save some tow, as there will be no want of some one to use it, for my loins too are rather sore."

"Then you must have fallen too," said the hostess.

"I did not fall," said Sancho Panza, "but from the shock I got at seeing my master fall, my body aches so that I feel as if I had had a thousand thwacks."

"That may well be," said the young girl, "for it has many a time happened to me to dream that I was falling down from a tower and never coming to the ground, and when I awoke from the dream to find myself as weak and shaken as if I had really fallen."

"There is the point, senora," replied Sancho Panza, "that I without dreaming at all, but being more awake than I am now, find myself with scarcely less wheals than my master, Don Quixote."

"How is the gentleman called?" asked Maritornes the Asturian.

"Don Quixote of La Mancha," answered Sancho Panza, "and he is a knight-adventurer, and one of the best and stoutest that have been seen in the world this long time past."

"What is a knight-adventurer?" said the lass.

"Are you so new in the world as not to know?" answered Sancho Panza. "Well, then, you must know, sister, that a knight-adventurer is a thing that in two words is seen drubbed and emperor, that is to-day the most miserable and needy being in the world, and to-morrow will have two or three crowns of kingdoms to give his squire."

“Then how is it,” said the hostess, “that belonging to so good a master as this, you have not, to judge by appearances, even so much as a county?”

“It is too soon yet,” answered Sancho, “for we have only been a month going in quest of adventures, and so far we have met with nothing that can be called one, for it will happen that when one thing is looked for another thing is found; however, if my master Don Quixote gets well of this wound, or fall, and I am left none the worse of it, I would not change my hopes for the best title in Spain.”

To all this conversation Don Quixote was listening very attentively, and sitting up in bed as well as he could, and taking the hostess by the hand he said to her, “Believe me, fair lady, you may call yourself fortunate in having in this castle of yours sheltered my person, which is such that if I do not myself praise it, it is because of what is commonly said, that self-praise debaseth; but my squire will inform you who I am. I only tell you that I shall preserve for ever inscribed on my memory the service you have rendered me in order to tender you my gratitude while life shall last me; and would to Heaven love held me not so enthralled and subject to its laws and to the eyes of that fair ingrate whom I name between my teeth, but that those of this lovely damsel might be the masters of my liberty.”

The hostess, her daughter, and the worthy Maritornes listened in bewilderment to the words of the knight-errant; for they understood about as much of them as if he had been talking Greek, though they could perceive they were all meant for expressions of good-will and blandishments; and not being accustomed to this kind of language, they stared at him and wondered to themselves, for he seemed to them a man of a different sort from those they were used to, and thanking him in pothouse phrase for his civility they left him, while the Asturian gave her attention to Sancho, who needed it no less than his master.

The carrier had made an arrangement with her for recreation that night, and she had given him her word that when the guests were quiet and the family asleep she would come in search of him and meet his wishes unreservedly. And it is said of this good lass that she never made promises of the kind without fulfilling them, even though she made them in a forest and without any witness present, for she plumed herself greatly on being a lady and held it no disgrace to be in such an employment as servant in an inn, because, she said, misfortunes and ill-luck had brought her to that position. The hard, narrow, wretched, rickety bed of Don Quixote stood first in the middle of this star-lit stable, and close beside it Sancho made his, which merely consisted of a rush mat and a blanket that looked as if it was of threadbare canvas rather than of wool. Next to these two beds was that of the carrier, made up, as has been said, of the pack-saddles

and all the trappings of the two best mules he had, though there were twelve of them, sleek, plump, and in prime condition, for he was one of the rich carriers of Arevalo, according to the author of this history, who particularly mentions this carrier because he knew him very well, and they even say was in some degree a relation of his; besides which Cid Hamete Benengeli was a historian of great research and accuracy in all things, as is very evident since he would not pass over in silence those that have been already mentioned, however trifling and insignificant they might be, an example that might be followed by those grave historians who relate transactions so curtly and briefly that we hardly get a taste of them, all the substance of the work being left in the inkstand from carelessness, perverseness, or ignorance. A thousand blessings on the author of “Tablante de Ricamonte” and that of the other book in which the deeds of the Conde Tomillas are recounted; with what minuteness they describe everything!

To proceed, then: after having paid a visit to his team and given them their second feed, the carrier stretched himself on his pack-saddles and lay waiting for his conscientious Maritornes. Sancho was by this time plastered and had lain down, and though he strove to sleep the pain of his ribs would not let him, while Don Quixote with the pain of his head his eyes as wide open as a hare’s.



The inn was all in silence, and in the whole of it there was no light except that given by a lantern that hung burning in the middle of the gateway. This strange stillness, and the thoughts, always present to our knight's mind, of the incidents described at every turn in the books that were the cause of his misfortune, conjured up to his imagination as extraordinary a delusion as can well be conceived, which was that he fancied himself to have reached a famous castle (for, as has been said, all the inns he lodged in were castles to his eyes), and that the daughter of the innkeeper was daughter of the lord of the castle, and that she, won by his high-bred bearing, had fallen in love with him, and had promised to come to his bed for a while that night without the knowledge of her parents; and

holding all this fantasy that he had constructed as solid fact, he began to feel uneasy and to consider the perilous risk which his virtue was about to encounter, and he resolved in his heart to commit no treason to his lady Dulcinea del Toboso, even though the queen Guinevere herself and the dame Quintanona should present themselves before him.

While he was taken up with these vagaries, then, the time and the hour — an unlucky one for him — arrived for the Asturian to come, who in her smock, with bare feet and her hair gathered into a fustian coif, with noiseless and cautious steps entered the chamber where the three were quartered, in quest of the carrier; but scarcely had she gained the door when Don Quixote perceived her, and sitting up in his bed in spite of his plasters and the pain of his ribs, he stretched out his arms to receive his beauteous damsel. The Asturian, who went all doubled up and in silence with her hands before her feeling for her lover, encountered the arms of Don Quixote, who grasped her tightly by the wrist, and drawing her towards him, while she dared not utter a word, made her sit down on the bed. He then felt her smock, and although it was of sackcloth it appeared to him to be of the finest and softest silk: on her wrists she wore some glass beads, but to him they had the sheen of precious Orient pearls: her hair, which in some measure resembled a horse's mane, he rated as threads of the brightest gold of Araby, whose refulgence dimmed the sun himself: her breath, which no doubt smelt of yesterday's stale salad, seemed to him to diffuse a sweet aromatic fragrance from her mouth; and, in short, he drew her portrait in his imagination with the same features and in the same style as that which he had seen in his books of the other princesses who, smitten by love, came with all the adornments that are here set down, to see the sorely wounded knight; and so great was the poor gentleman's blindness that neither touch, nor smell, nor anything else about the good lass that would have made any but a carrier vomit, were enough to undeceive him; on the contrary, he was persuaded he had the goddess of beauty in his arms, and holding her firmly in his grasp he went on to say in low, tender voice:

“Would that found myself, lovely and exalted lady, in a position to repay such a favour as that which you, by the sight of your great beauty, have granted me; but fortune, which is never weary of persecuting the good, has chosen to place me upon this bed, where I lie so bruised and broken that though my inclination would gladly comply with yours it is impossible; besides, to this impossibility another yet greater is to be added, which is the faith that I have pledged to the peerless Dulcinea del Toboso, sole lady of my most secret thoughts; and were it not that this stood in the way I should not be so insensible a knight as to miss the happy opportunity which your great goodness has offered me.”

Maritornes was fretting and sweating at finding herself held so fast by Don Quixote, and not understanding or heeding the words he addressed to her, she strove without speaking to free herself. The worthy carrier, whose unholy thoughts kept him awake, was aware of his doxy the moment she entered the door, and was listening attentively to all Don Quixote said; and jealous that the Asturian should have broken her word with him for another, drew nearer to Don Quixote's bed and stood still to see what would come of this talk which he could not understand; but when he perceived the wench struggling to get free and Don Quixote striving to hold her, not relishing the joke he raised his arm and delivered such a terrible cuff on the lank jaws of the amorous knight that he bathed all his mouth in blood, and not content with this he mounted on his ribs and with his feet tramped all over them at a pace rather smarter than a trot. The bed which was somewhat crazy and not very firm on its feet, unable to support the additional weight of the carrier, came to the ground, and at the mighty crash of this the innkeeper awoke and at once concluded that it must be some brawl of Maritornes', because after calling loudly to her he got no answer. With this suspicion he got up, and lighting a lamp hastened to the quarter where he had heard the disturbance. The wench, seeing that her master was coming and knowing that his temper was terrible, frightened and panic-stricken made for the bed of Sancho Panza, who still slept, and crouching upon it made a ball of herself.

The innkeeper came in exclaiming, "Where art thou, strumpet? Of course this is some of thy work." At this Sancho awoke, and feeling this mass almost on top of him fancied he had the nightmare and began to distribute fisticuffs all round, of which a certain share fell upon Maritornes, who, irritated by the pain and flinging modesty aside, paid back so many in return to Sancho that she woke him up in spite of himself. He then, finding himself so handled, by whom he knew not, raising himself up as well as he could, grappled with Maritornes, and he and she between them began the bitterest and drollest scrimmage in the world. The carrier, however, perceiving by the light of the innkeeper candle how it fared with his ladylove, quitting Don Quixote, ran to bring her the help she needed; and the innkeeper did the same but with a different intention, for his was to chastise the lass, as he believed that beyond a doubt she alone was the cause of all the harmony. And so, as the saying is, cat to rat, rat to rope, rope to stick, the carrier pounded Sancho, Sancho the lass, she him, and the innkeeper her, and all worked away so briskly that they did not give themselves a moment's rest; and the best of it was that the innkeeper's lamp went out, and as they were left in the dark they all laid on one upon the other in a mass so unmercifully that there was not a sound spot left where a hand could light.



It so happened that there was lodging that night in the inn a caudrillero of what they call the Old Holy Brotherhood of Toledo, who, also hearing the extraordinary noise of the conflict, seized his staff and the tin case with his warrants, and made his way in the dark into the room crying: "Hold! in the name of the Jurisdiction! Hold! in the name of the Holy Brotherhood!"

The first that he came upon was the pummelled Don Quixote, who lay stretched senseless on his back upon his broken-down bed, and, his hand falling on the beard as he felt about, he continued to cry, "Help for the Jurisdiction!" but perceiving that he whom he had laid hold of did not move or stir, he concluded that he was dead and that those in the room were his murderers, and with this suspicion he raised his voice still higher, calling out, "Shut the inn gate; see that no one goes out; they have killed a man here!" This cry startled them all, and each dropped the contest at the point at which the voice reached him. The innkeeper retreated to his room, the carrier to his pack-saddles, the lass to her crib; the unlucky Don Quixote and Sancho alone were unable to move from where they were. The cuadrillero on this let go Don Quixote's beard, and went out to look for a light to search for and apprehend the culprits; but not finding one, as the innkeeper had purposely extinguished the lantern on retreating to his room, he was compelled to have recourse to the hearth, where after much time and trouble he lit another lamp.



## CHAPTER XVII.

IN WHICH ARE CONTAINED THE INNUMERABLE TROUBLES WHICH  
THE BRAVE DON QUIXOTE AND HIS GOOD SQUIRE SANCHO PANZA  
ENDURED IN THE INN, WHICH TO HIS MISFORTUNE HE TOOK TO BE  
A CASTLE



By this time Don Quixote had recovered from his swoon; and in the same tone of voice in which he had called to his squire the day before when he lay stretched “in the vale of the stakes,” he began calling to him now, “Sancho, my friend, art thou asleep? sleepest thou, friend Sancho?”

“How can I sleep, curses on it!” returned Sancho discontentedly and bitterly, “when it is plain that all the devils have been at me this night?”

“Thou mayest well believe that,” answered Don Quixote, “because, either I know little, or this castle is enchanted, for thou must know — but this that I am now about to tell thee thou must swear to keep secret until after my death.”

“I swear it,” answered Sancho.

“I say so,” continued Don Quixote, “because I hate taking away anyone’s good name.”

“I say,” replied Sancho, “that I swear to hold my tongue about it till the end of your worship’s days, and God grant I may be able to let it out tomorrow.”

“Do I do thee such injuries, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “that thou wouldst see me dead so soon?”

“It is not for that,” replied Sancho, “but because I hate keeping things long, and I don’t want them to grow rotten with me from over-keeping.”

“At any rate,” said Don Quixote, “I have more confidence in thy affection and good nature; and so I would have thee know that this night there befell me one of the strangest adventures that I could describe, and to relate it to thee briefly thou must know that a little while ago the daughter of the lord of this castle came to me, and that she is the most elegant and beautiful damsel that could be found in the wide world. What I could tell thee of the charms of her person! of her lively wit! of other secret matters which, to preserve the fealty I owe to my lady Dulcinea del Toboso, I shall pass over unnoticed and in silence! I will only tell thee that, either fate being envious of so great a boon placed in my hands by good fortune, or perhaps (and this is more probable) this castle being, as I have already said, enchanted, at the time when I was engaged in the sweetest and most amorous discourse with her, there came, without my seeing or knowing whence it came, a hand attached to some arm of some huge giant, that planted such a cuff on my jaws that I have them all bathed in blood, and then pummelled me in such a way that I am in a worse plight than yesterday when the carriers, on account of Rocinante’s misbehaviour, inflicted on us the injury thou knowest of; whence conjecture that there must be some enchanted Moor guarding the treasure of this damsel’s beauty, and that it is not for me.”

“Not for me either,” said Sancho, “for more than four hundred Moors have so thrashed me that the drubbing of the stakes was cakes and fancy-bread to it. But tell me, senor, what do you call this excellent and rare adventure that has left us as we are left now? Though your worship was not so badly off, having in your arms that incomparable beauty you spoke of; but I, what did I have, except the heaviest whacks I think I had in all my life? Unlucky me and the mother that bore me! for I am not a knight-errant and never expect to be one, and of all the mishaps, the greater part falls to my share.”

“Then thou hast been thrashed too?” said Don Quixote.

“Didn’t I say so? worse luck to my line!” said Sancho.

“Be not distressed, friend,” said Don Quixote, “for I will now make the precious balsam with which we shall cure ourselves in the twinkling of an eye.”

By this time the cuadrillero had succeeded in lighting the lamp, and came in to see the man that he thought had been killed; and as Sancho caught sight of him at the door, seeing him coming in his shirt, with a cloth on his head, and a lamp in his hand, and a very forbidding countenance, he said to his master, “Senor, can it be that this is the enchanted Moor coming back to give us more castigation if there be anything still left in the ink-bottle?”

“It cannot be the Moor,” answered Don Quixote, “for those under

enchantment do not let themselves be seen by anyone.”

“If they don’t let themselves be seen, they let themselves be felt,” said Sancho; “if not, let my shoulders speak to the point.”

“Mine could speak too,” said Don Quixote, “but that is not a sufficient reason for believing that what we see is the enchanted Moor.”

The officer came up, and finding them engaged in such a peaceful conversation, stood amazed; though Don Quixote, to be sure, still lay on his back unable to move from pure pummelling and plasters. The officer turned to him and said, “Well, how goes it, good man?”

“I would speak more politely if I were you,” replied Don Quixote; “is it the way of this country to address knights-errant in that style, you booby?”

The cuadrillero finding himself so disrespectfully treated by such a sorry-looking individual, lost his temper, and raising the lamp full of oil, smote Don Quixote such a blow with it on the head that he gave him a badly broken pate; then, all being in darkness, he went out, and Sancho Panza said, “That is certainly the enchanted Moor, Senor, and he keeps the treasure for others, and for us only the cuffs and lamp-whacks.”

“That is the truth,” answered Don Quixote, “and there is no use in troubling oneself about these matters of enchantment or being angry or vexed at them, for as they are invisible and visionary we shall find no one on whom to avenge ourselves, do what we may; rise, Sancho, if thou canst, and call the alcaide of this fortress, and get him to give me a little oil, wine, salt, and rosemary to make the salutiferous balsam, for indeed I believe I have great need of it now, because I am losing much blood from the wound that phantom gave me.”

Sancho got up with pain enough in his bones, and went after the innkeeper in the dark, and meeting the officer, who was looking to see what had become of his enemy, he said to him, “Senor, whoever you are, do us the favour and kindness to give us a little rosemary, oil, salt, and wine, for it is wanted to cure one of the best knights-errant on earth, who lies on yonder bed wounded by the hands of the enchanted Moor that is in this inn.”

When the officer heard him talk in this way, he took him for a man out of his senses, and as day was now beginning to break, he opened the inn gate, and calling the host, he told him what this good man wanted. The host furnished him with what he required, and Sancho brought it to Don Quixote, who, with his hand to his head, was bewailing the pain of the blow of the lamp, which had done him no more harm than raising a couple of rather large lumps, and what he fancied blood was only the sweat that flowed from him in his sufferings during the late storm. To be brief, he took the materials, of which he made a compound, mixing them all and boiling them a good while until it seemed to him they had

come to perfection. He then asked for some vial to pour it into, and as there was not one in the inn, he decided on putting it into a tin oil-bottle or flask of which the host made him a free gift; and over the flask he repeated more than eighty paternosters and as many more ave-marias, salves, and credos, accompanying each word with a cross by way of benediction, at all which there were present Sancho, the innkeeper, and the cuadrillero; for the carrier was now peacefully engaged in attending to the comfort of his mules.

This being accomplished, he felt anxious to make trial himself, on the spot, of the virtue of this precious balsam, as he considered it, and so he drank near a quart of what could not be put into the flask and remained in the pigskin in which it had been boiled; but scarcely had he done drinking when he began to vomit in such a way that nothing was left in his stomach, and with the pangs and spasms of vomiting he broke into a profuse sweat, on account of which he bade them cover him up and leave him alone. They did so, and he lay sleeping more than three hours, at the end of which he awoke and felt very great bodily relief and so much ease from his bruises that he thought himself quite cured, and verily believed he had hit upon the balsam of Fierabras; and that with this remedy he might thenceforward, without any fear, face any kind of destruction, battle, or combat, however perilous it might be.

Sancho Panza, who also regarded the amendment of his master as miraculous, begged him to give him what was left in the pigskin, which was no small quantity. Don Quixote consented, and he, taking it with both hands, in good faith and with a better will, gulped down and drained off very little less than his master. But the fact is, that the stomach of poor Sancho was of necessity not so delicate as that of his master, and so, before vomiting, he was seized with such gripings and retchings, and such sweats and faintness, that verily and truly he believed his last hour had come, and finding himself so racked and tormented he cursed the balsam and the thief that had given it to him.

Don Quixote seeing him in this state said, "It is my belief, Sancho, that this mischief comes of thy not being dubbed a knight, for I am persuaded this liquor cannot be good for those who are not so."

"If your worship knew that," returned Sancho— "woe betide me and all my kindred! — why did you let me taste it?"

At this moment the draught took effect, and the poor squire began to discharge both ways at such a rate that the rush mat on which he had thrown himself and the canvas blanket he had covering him were fit for nothing afterwards. He sweated and perspired with such paroxysms and convulsions that not only he himself but all present thought his end had come. This tempest and tribulation lasted about two hours, at the end of which he was left, not like his master, but

so weak and exhausted that he could not stand. Don Quixote, however, who, as has been said, felt himself relieved and well, was eager to take his departure at once in quest of adventures, as it seemed to him that all the time he loitered there was a fraud upon the world and those in it who stood in need of his help and protection, all the more when he had the security and confidence his balsam afforded him; and so, urged by this impulse, he saddled Rocinante himself and put the pack-saddle on his squire's beast, whom likewise he helped to dress and mount the ass; after which he mounted his horse and turning to a corner of the inn he laid hold of a pike that stood there, to serve him by way of a lance. All that were in the inn, who were more than twenty persons, stood watching him; the innkeeper's daughter was likewise observing him, and he too never took his eyes off her, and from time to time fetched a sigh that he seemed to pluck up from the depths of his bowels; but they all thought it must be from the pain he felt in his ribs; at any rate they who had seen him plastered the night before thought so.

As soon as they were both mounted, at the gate of the inn, he called to the host and said in a very grave and measured voice, "Many and great are the favours, Senor Alcaide, that I have received in this castle of yours, and I remain under the deepest obligation to be grateful to you for them all the days of my life; if I can repay them in avenging you of any arrogant foe who may have wronged you, know that my calling is no other than to aid the weak, to avenge those who suffer wrong, and to chastise perfidy. Search your memory, and if you find anything of this kind you need only tell me of it, and I promise you by the order of knighthood which I have received to procure you satisfaction and reparation to the utmost of your desire."

The innkeeper replied to him with equal calmness, "Sir Knight, I do not want your worship to avenge me of any wrong, because when any is done me I can take what vengeance seems good to me; the only thing I want is that you pay me the score that you have run up in the inn last night, as well for the straw and barley for your two beasts, as for supper and beds."



“Then this is an inn?” said Don Quixote.

“And a very respectable one,” said the innkeeper.

“I have been under a mistake all this time,” answered Don Quixote, “for in truth I thought it was a castle, and not a bad one; but since it appears that it is not a castle but an inn, all that can be done now is that you should excuse the payment, for I cannot contravene the rule of knights-errant, of whom I know as a fact (and up to the present I have read nothing to the contrary) that they never paid for lodging or anything else in the inn where they might be; for any hospitality that might be offered them is their due by law and right in return for the insufferable toil they endure in seeking adventures by night and by day, in



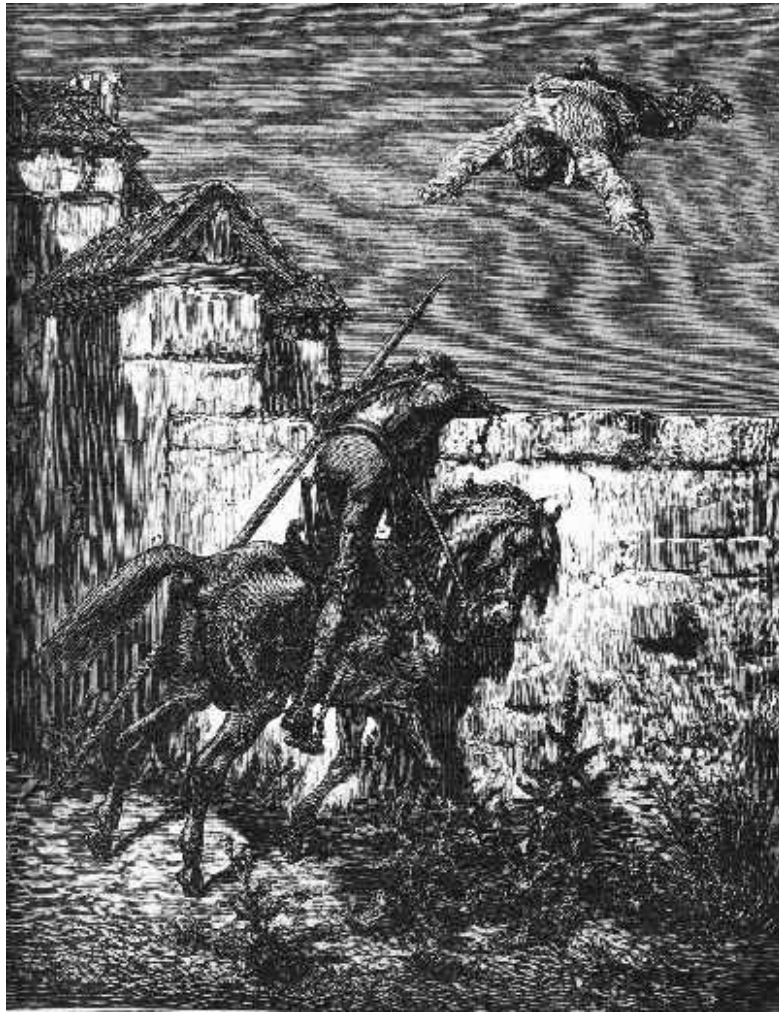
summer and in winter, on foot and on horseback, in hunger and thirst, cold and heat, exposed to all the inclemencies of heaven and all the hardships of earth.”

“I have little to do with that,” replied the innkeeper; “pay me what you owe me, and let us have no more talk of chivalry, for all I care about is to get my money.”

“You are a stupid, scurvy innkeeper,” said Don Quixote, and putting spurs to Rocinante and bringing his pike to the slope he rode out of the inn before anyone could stop him, and pushed on some distance without looking to see if his squire was following him.

The innkeeper when he saw him go without paying him ran to get payment of Sancho, who said that as his master would not pay neither would he, because, being as he was squire to a knight-errant, the same rule and reason held good for him as for his master with regard to not paying anything in inns and hostelries. At this the innkeeper waxed very wroth, and threatened if he did not pay to compel him in a way that he would not like. To which Sancho made answer that by the law of chivalry his master had received he would not pay a rap, though it cost him his life; for the excellent and ancient usage of knights-errant was not going to be violated by him, nor should the squires of such as were yet to come into the world ever complain of him or reproach him with breaking so just a privilege.

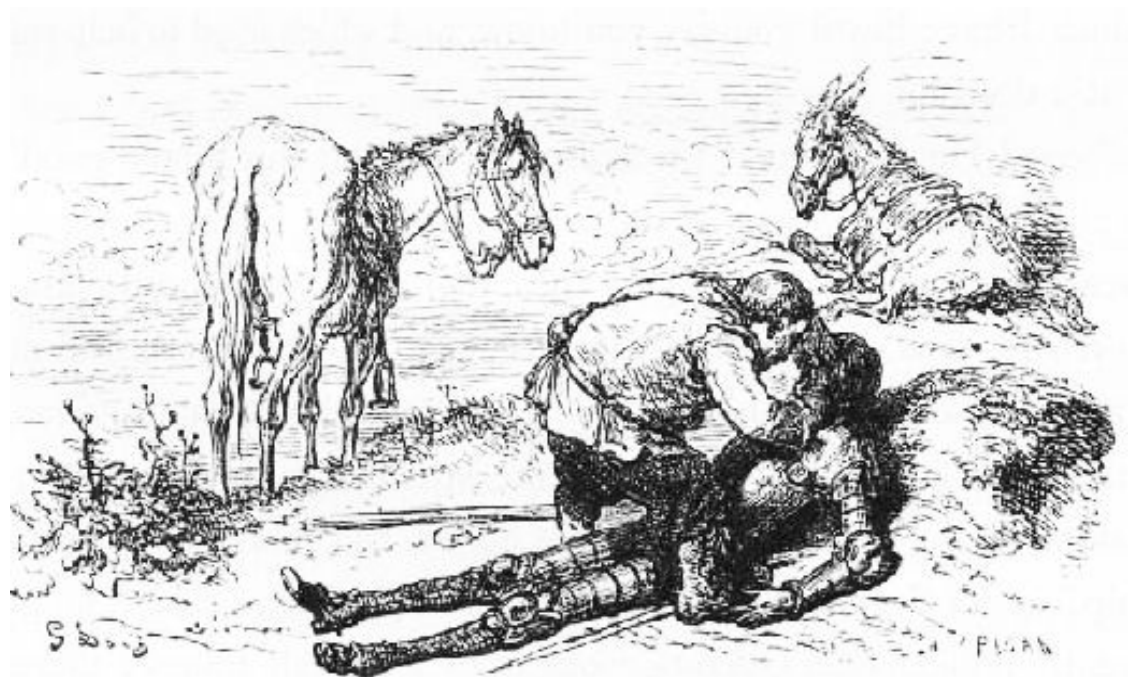
The ill-luck of the unfortunate Sancho so ordered it that among the company in the inn there were four woolcarders from Segovia, three needle-makers from the Colt of Cordova, and two lodgers from the Fair of Seville, lively fellows, tender-hearted, fond of a joke, and playful, who, almost as if instigated and moved by a common impulse, made up to Sancho and dismounted him from his ass, while one of them went in for the blanket of the host’s bed; but on flinging him into it they looked up, and seeing that the ceiling was somewhat lower what they required for their work, they decided upon going out into the yard, which was bounded by the sky, and there, putting Sancho in the middle of the blanket, they began to raise him high, making sport with him as they would with a dog at Shrovetide.



The cries of the poor blanketed wretch were so loud that they reached the ears of his master, who, halting to listen attentively, was persuaded that some new adventure was coming, until he clearly perceived that it was his squire who uttered them. Wheeling about he came up to the inn with a laborious gallop, and finding it shut went round it to see if he could find some way of getting in; but as soon as he came to the wall of the yard, which was not very high, he discovered the game that was being played with his squire. He saw him rising and falling in the air with such grace and nimbleness that, had his rage allowed him, it is my belief he would have laughed. He tried to climb from his horse on to the top of

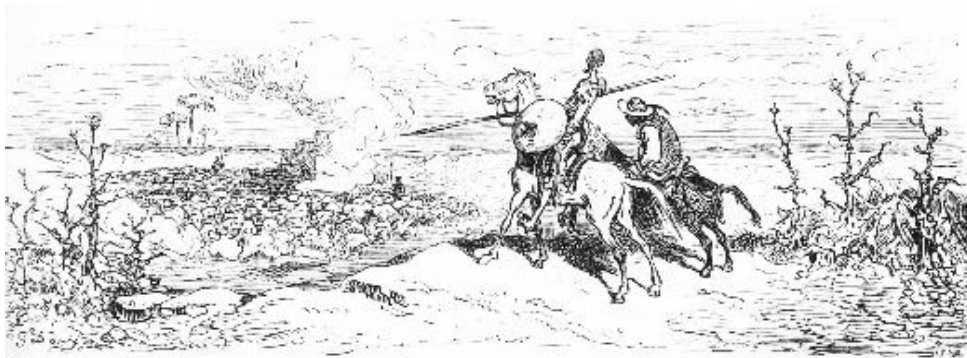
the wall, but he was so bruised and battered that he could not even dismount; and so from the back of his horse he began to utter such maledictions and objurgations against those who were blanketing Sancho as it would be impossible to write down accurately: they, however, did not stay their laughter or their work for this, nor did the flying Sancho cease his lamentations, mingled now with threats, now with entreaties but all to little purpose, or none at all, until from pure weariness they left off. They then brought him his ass, and mounting him on top of it they put his jacket round him; and the compassionate Maritornes, seeing him so exhausted, thought fit to refresh him with a jug of water, and that it might be all the cooler she fetched it from the well. Sancho took it, and as he was raising it to his mouth he was stopped by the cries of his master exclaiming, "Sancho, my son, drink not water; drink it not, my son, for it will kill thee; see, here I have the blessed balsam (and he held up the flask of liquor), and with drinking two drops of it thou wilt certainly be restored."

At these words Sancho turned his eyes askint, and in a still louder voice said, "Can it be your worship has forgotten that I am not a knight, or do you want me to end by vomiting up what bowels I have left after last night? Keep your liquor in the name of all the devils, and leave me to myself!" and at one and the same instant he left off talking and began drinking; but as at the first sup he perceived it was water he did not care to go on with it, and begged Maritornes to fetch him some wine, which she did with right good will, and paid for it with her own money; for indeed they say of her that, though she was in that line of life, there was some faint and distant resemblance to a Christian about her. When Sancho had done drinking he dug his heels into his ass, and the gate of the inn being thrown open he passed out very well pleased at having paid nothing and carried his point, though it had been at the expense of his usual sureties, his shoulders. It is true that the innkeeper detained his alforjas in payment of what was owing to him, but Sancho took his departure in such a flurry that he never missed them. The innkeeper, as soon as he saw him off, wanted to bar the gate close, but the blanketers would not agree to it, for they were fellows who would not have cared two farthings for Don Quixote, even had he been really one of the knights-errant of the Round Table.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

IN WHICH IS RELATED THE DISCOURSE SANCHEO PANZA HELD WITH HIS MASTER, DON QUIXOTE, AND OTHER ADVENTURES WORTH RELATING



Sancho reached his master so limp and faint that he could not urge on his beast. When Don Quixote saw the state he was in he said, “I have now come to the conclusion, good Sancho, that this castle or inn is beyond a doubt enchanted, because those who have so atrociously diverted themselves with thee, what can they be but phantoms or beings of another world? and I hold this confirmed by having noticed that when I was by the wall of the yard witnessing the acts of thy sad tragedy, it was out of my power to mount upon it, nor could I even dismount from Rocinante, because they no doubt had me enchanted; for I swear to thee by the faith of what I am that if I had been able to climb up or dismount, I would have avenged thee in such a way that those braggart thieves would have remembered their freak for ever, even though in so doing I knew that I contravened the laws of chivalry, which, as I have often told thee, do not permit a knight to lay hands on him who is not one, save in case of urgent and great necessity in defence of his own life and person.”

“I would have avenged myself too if I could,” said Sancho, “whether I had been dubbed knight or not, but I could not; though for my part I am persuaded

those who amused themselves with me were not phantoms or enchanted men, as your worship says, but men of flesh and bone like ourselves; and they all had their names, for I heard them name them when they were tossing me, and one was called Pedro Martinez, and another Tenorio Hernandez, and the innkeeper, I heard, was called Juan Palomeque the Left-handed; so that, senor, your not being able to leap over the wall of the yard or dismount from your horse came of something else besides enchantments; and what I make out clearly from all this is, that these adventures we go seeking will in the end lead us into such misadventures that we shall not know which is our right foot; and that the best and wisest thing, according to my small wits, would be for us to return home, now that it is harvest-time, and attend to our business, and give over wandering from Zeca to Mecca and from pail to bucket, as the saying is."

"How little thou knowest about chivalry, Sancho," replied Don Quixote; "hold thy peace and have patience; the day will come when thou shalt see with thine own eyes what an honourable thing it is to wander in the pursuit of this calling; nay, tell me, what greater pleasure can there be in the world, or what delight can equal that of winning a battle, and triumphing over one's enemy? None, beyond all doubt."

"Very likely," answered Sancho, "though I do not know it; all I know is that since we have been knights-errant, or since your worship has been one (for I have no right to reckon myself one of so honourable a number) we have never won any battle except the one with the Biscayan, and even out of that your worship came with half an ear and half a helmet the less; and from that till now it has been all cudgellings and more cudgellings, cuffs and more cuffs, I getting the blanketing over and above, and falling in with enchanted persons on whom I cannot avenge myself so as to know what the delight, as your worship calls it, of conquering an enemy is like."

"That is what vexes me, and what ought to vex thee, Sancho," replied Don Quixote; "but henceforward I will endeavour to have at hand some sword made by such craft that no kind of enchantments can take effect upon him who carries it, and it is even possible that fortune may procure for me that which belonged to Amadis when he was called 'The Knight of the Burning Sword,' which was one of the best swords that ever knight in the world possessed, for, besides having the said virtue, it cut like a razor, and there was no armour, however strong and enchanted it might be, that could resist it."

"Such is my luck," said Sancho, "that even if that happened and your worship found some such sword, it would, like the balsam, turn out serviceable and good for dubbed knights only, and as for the squires, they might sup sorrow."

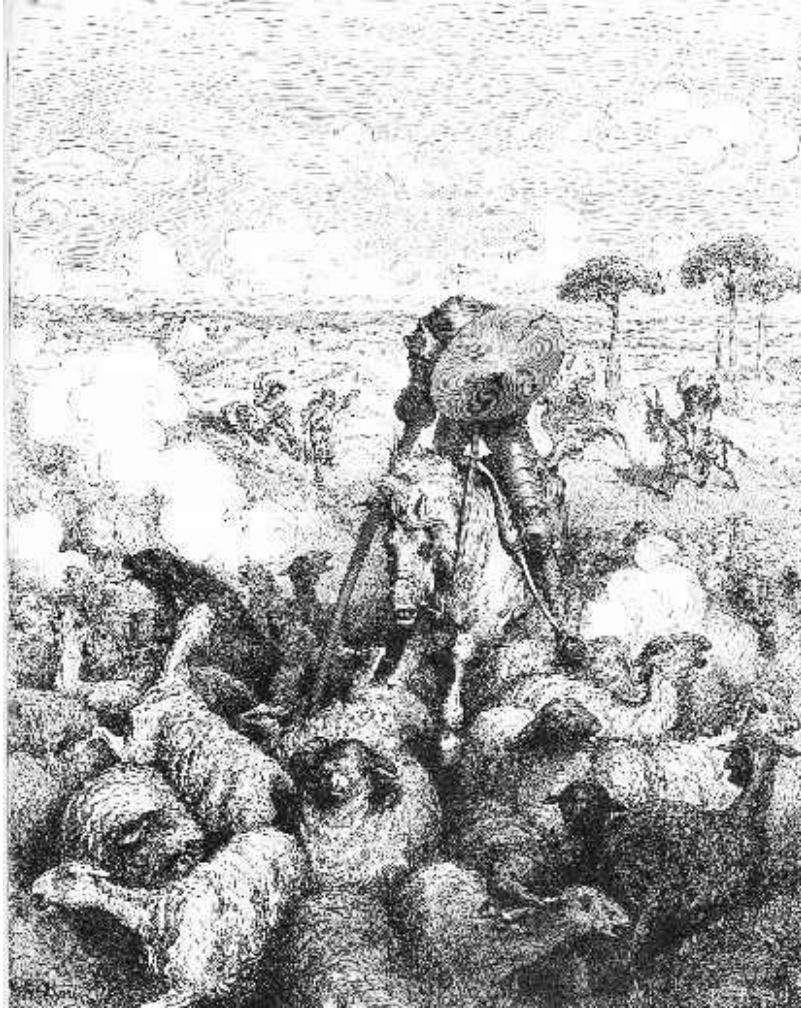
"Fear not that, Sancho," said Don Quixote: "Heaven will deal better by thee."

Thus talking, Don Quixote and his squire were going along, when, on the road they were following, Don Quixote perceived approaching them a large and thick cloud of dust, on seeing which he turned to Sancho and said:

“This is the day, Sancho, on which will be seen the boon my fortune is reserving for me; this, I say, is the day on which as much as on any other shall be displayed the might of my arm, and on which I shall do deeds that shall remain written in the book of fame for all ages to come. Seest thou that cloud of dust which rises yonder? Well, then, all that is churned up by a vast army composed of various and countless nations that comes marching there.”

“According to that there must be two,” said Sancho, “for on this opposite side also there rises just such another cloud of dust.”

Don Quixote turned to look and found that it was true, and rejoicing exceedingly, he concluded that they were two armies about to engage and encounter in the midst of that broad plain; for at all times and seasons his fancy was full of the battles, enchantments, adventures, crazy feats, loves, and defiances that are recorded in the books of chivalry, and everything he said, thought, or did had reference to such things. Now the cloud of dust he had seen was raised by two great droves of sheep coming along the same road in opposite directions, which, because of the dust, did not become visible until they drew near, but Don Quixote asserted so positively that they were armies that Sancho was led to believe it and say, “Well, and what are we to do, señor?”



“What?” said Don Quixote: “give aid and assistance to the weak and those who need it; and thou must know, Sancho, that this which comes opposite to us is conducted and led by the mighty emperor Alifanfaron, lord of the great isle of Trapobana; this other that marches behind me is that of his enemy the king of the Garamantas, Pentapolin of the Bare Arm, for he always goes into battle with his right arm bare.”

“But why are these two lords such enemies?”

“They are at enmity,” replied Don Quixote, “because this Alifanfaron is a furious pagan and is in love with the daughter of Pentapolin, who is a very beautiful and moreover gracious lady, and a Christian, and her father is



unwilling to bestow her upon the pagan king unless he first abandons the religion of his false prophet Mahomet, and adopts his own."

"By my beard," said Sancho, "but Pentapolin does quite right, and I will help him as much as I can."

"In that thou wilt do what is thy duty, Sancho," said Don Quixote; "for to engage in battles of this sort it is not requisite to be a dubbed knight."

"That I can well understand," answered Sancho; "but where shall we put this ass where we may be sure to find him after the fray is over? for I believe it has not been the custom so far to go into battle on a beast of this kind."

"That is true," said Don Quixote, "and what you had best do with him is to leave him to take his chance whether he be lost or not, for the horses we shall have when we come out victors will be so many that even Rocinante will run a risk of being changed for another. But attend to me and observe, for I wish to give thee some account of the chief knights who accompany these two armies; and that thou mayest the better see and mark, let us withdraw to that hillock which rises yonder, whence both armies may be seen."

They did so, and placed themselves on a rising ground from which the two droves that Don Quixote made armies of might have been plainly seen if the clouds of dust they raised had not obscured them and blinded the sight; nevertheless, seeing in his imagination what he did not see and what did not exist, he began thus in a loud voice:

"That knight whom thou seest yonder in yellow armour, who bears upon his shield a lion crowned crouching at the feet of a damsel, is the valiant Laurcalco, lord of the Silver Bridge; that one in armour with flowers of gold, who bears on his shield three crowns argent on an azure field, is the dreaded Micocolemba, grand duke of Quirocia; that other of gigantic frame, on his right hand, is the ever dauntless Brandabarbaran de Boliche, lord of the three Arabias, who for armour wears that serpent skin, and has for shield a gate which, according to tradition, is one of those of the temple that Samson brought to the ground when by his death he revenged himself upon his enemies. But turn thine eyes to the other side, and thou shalt see in front and in the van of this other army the ever victorious and never vanquished Timonel of Carcajona, prince of New Biscay, who comes in armour with arms quartered azure, vert, white, and yellow, and bears on his shield a cat or on a field tawny with a motto which says Miau, which is the beginning of the name of his lady, who according to report is the peerless Miaulina, daughter of the duke Alfeniquen of the Algarve; the other, who burdens and presses the loins of that powerful charger and bears arms white as snow and a shield blank and without any device, is a novice knight, a Frenchman by birth, Pierres Papin by name, lord of the baronies of Utrique; that

other, who with iron-shod heels strikes the flanks of that nimble parti-coloured zebra, and for arms bears azure vair, is the mighty duke of Nerbia, Espartafilardo del Bosque, who bears for device on his shield an asparagus plant with a motto in Castilian that says, *Rastrea mi suerte.*” And so he went on naming a number of knights of one squadron or the other out of his imagination, and to all he assigned off-hand their arms, colours, devices, and mottoes, carried away by the illusions of his unheard-of craze; and without a pause, he continued, “People of divers nations compose this squadron in front; here are those that drink of the sweet waters of the famous Xanthus, those that scour the woody Massilian plains, those that sift the pure fine gold of Arabia Felix, those that enjoy the famed cool banks of the crystal Thermodon, those that in many and various ways divert the streams of the golden Pactolus, the Numidians, faithless in their promises, the Persians renowned in archery, the Parthians and the Medes that fight as they fly, the Arabs that ever shift their dwellings, the Scythians as cruel as they are fair, the Ethiopians with pierced lips, and an infinity of other nations whose features I recognise and descry, though I cannot recall their names. In this other squadron there come those that drink of the crystal streams of the olive-bearing Betis, those that make smooth their countenances with the water of the ever rich and golden Tagus, those that rejoice in the fertilising flow of the divine Genil, those that roam the Tartesian plains abounding in pasture, those that take their pleasure in the Elysian meadows of Jerez, the rich Manchegans crowned with ruddy ears of corn, the wearers of iron, old relics of the Gothic race, those that bathe in the Pisuerga renowned for its gentle current, those that feed their herds along the spreading pastures of the winding Guadiana famed for its hidden course, those that tremble with the cold of the pineclad Pyrenees or the dazzling snows of the lofty Apennine; in a word, as many as all Europe includes and contains.”

Good God! what a number of countries and nations he named! giving to each its proper attributes with marvellous readiness; brimful and saturated with what he had read in his lying books! Sancho Panza hung upon his words without speaking, and from time to time turned to try if he could see the knights and giants his master was describing, and as he could not make out one of them he said to him:

“Senor, devil take it if there’s a sign of any man you talk of, knight or giant, in the whole thing; maybe it’s all enchantment, like the phantoms last night.”

“How canst thou say that!” answered Don Quixote; “dost thou not hear the neighing of the steeds, the braying of the trumpets, the roll of the drums?”

“I hear nothing but a great bleating of ewes and sheep,” said Sancho; which was true, for by this time the two flocks had come close.

“The fear thou art in, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “prevents thee from seeing or hearing correctly, for one of the effects of fear is to derange the senses and make things appear different from what they are; if thou art in such fear, withdraw to one side and leave me to myself, for alone I suffice to bring victory to that side to which I shall give my aid;” and so saying he gave Rocinante the spur, and putting the lance in rest, shot down the slope like a thunderbolt. Sancho shouted after him, crying, “Come back, Senor Don Quixote; I vow to God they are sheep and ewes you are charging! Come back! Unlucky the father that begot me! what madness is this! Look, there is no giant, nor knight, nor cats, nor arms, nor shields quartered or whole, nor vair azure or bedevilled. What are you about? Sinner that I am before God!” But not for all these entreaties did Don Quixote turn back; on the contrary he went on shouting out, “Ho, knights, ye who follow and fight under the banners of the valiant emperor Pentapolin of the Bare Arm, follow me all; ye shall see how easily I shall give him his revenge over his enemy Alifanfaron of the Trapobana.”

So saying, he dashed into the midst of the squadron of ewes, and began spearing them with as much spirit and intrepidity as if he were transfixing mortal enemies in earnest. The shepherds and drovers accompanying the flock shouted to him to desist; seeing it was no use, they ungirt their slings and began to salute his ears with stones as big as one’s fist. Don Quixote gave no heed to the stones, but, letting drive right and left kept saying:

“Where art thou, proud Alifanfaron? Come before me; I am a single knight who would fain prove thy prowess hand to hand, and make thee yield thy life a penalty for the wrong thou dost to the valiant Pentapolin Garamanta.” Here came a sugar-plum from the brook that struck him on the side and buried a couple of ribs in his body. Feeling himself so smitten, he imagined himself slain or badly wounded for certain, and recollecting his liquor he drew out his flask, and putting it to his mouth began to pour the contents into his stomach; but ere he had succeeded in swallowing what seemed to him enough, there came another almond which struck him on the hand and on the flask so fairly that it smashed it to pieces, knocking three or four teeth and grinders out of his mouth in its course, and sorely crushing two fingers of his hand. Such was the force of the first blow and of the second, that the poor knight in spite of himself came down backwards off his horse. The shepherds came up, and felt sure they had killed him; so in all haste they collected their flock together, took up the dead beasts, of which there were more than seven, and made off without waiting to ascertain anything further.

All this time Sancho stood on the hill watching the crazy feats his master was performing, and tearing his beard and cursing the hour and the occasion when

fortune had made him acquainted with him. Seeing him, then, brought to the ground, and that the shepherds had taken themselves off, he ran to him and found him in very bad case, though not unconscious; and said he:

“Did I not tell you to come back, Senor Don Quixote; and that what you were going to attack were not armies but droves of sheep?”

“That’s how that thief of a sage, my enemy, can alter and falsify things,” answered Don Quixote; “thou must know, Sancho, that it is a very easy matter for those of his sort to make us believe what they choose; and this malignant being who persecutes me, envious of the glory he knew I was to win in this battle, has turned the squadrons of the enemy into droves of sheep. At any rate, do this much, I beg of thee, Sancho, to undeceive thyself, and see that what I say is true; mount thy ass and follow them quietly, and thou shalt see that when they have gone some little distance from this they will return to their original shape and, ceasing to be sheep, become men in all respects as I described them to thee at first. But go not just yet, for I want thy help and assistance; come hither, and see how many of my teeth and grinders are missing, for I feel as if there was not one left in my mouth.”

Sancho came so close that he almost put his eyes into his mouth; now just at that moment the balsam had acted on the stomach of Don Quixote, so, at the very instant when Sancho came to examine his mouth, he discharged all its contents with more force than a musket, and full into the beard of the compassionate squire.

“Holy Mary!” cried Sancho, “what is this that has happened me? Clearly this sinner is mortally wounded, as he vomits blood from the mouth;” but considering the matter a little more closely he perceived by the colour, taste, and smell, that it was not blood but the balsam from the flask which he had seen him drink; and he was taken with such a loathing that his stomach turned, and he vomited up his inside over his very master, and both were left in a precious state. Sancho ran to his ass to get something wherewith to clean himself, and relieve his master, out of his alforjas; but not finding them, he well-nigh took leave of his senses, and cursed himself anew, and in his heart resolved to quit his master and return home, even though he forfeited the wages of his service and all hopes of the promised island.

Don Quixote now rose, and putting his left hand to his mouth to keep his teeth from falling out altogether, with the other he laid hold of the bridle of Rocinante, who had never stirred from his master’s side — so loyal and well-behaved was he — and betook himself to where the squire stood leaning over his ass with his hand to his cheek, like one in deep dejection. Seeing him in this mood, looking so sad, Don Quixote said to him:

“Bear in mind, Sancho, that one man is no more than another, unless he does more than another; all these tempests that fall upon us are signs that fair weather is coming shortly, and that things will go well with us, for it is impossible for good or evil to last for ever; and hence it follows that the evil having lasted long, the good must be now nigh at hand; so thou must not distress thyself at the misfortunes which happen to me, since thou hast no share in them.”

“How have I not?” replied Sancho; “was he whom they blanketed yesterday perchance any other than my father’s son? and the alforjas that are missing to-day with all my treasures, did they belong to any other but myself?”

“What! are the alforjas missing, Sancho?” said Don Quixote.

“Yes, they are missing,” answered Sancho.

“In that case we have nothing to eat to-day,” replied Don Quixote.

“It would be so,” answered Sancho, “if there were none of the herbs your worship says you know in these meadows, those with which knights-errant as unlucky as your worship are wont to supply such-like shortcomings.”

“For all that,” answered Don Quixote, “I would rather have just now a quarter of bread, or a loaf and a couple of pilchards’ heads, than all the herbs described by Dioscorides, even with Doctor Laguna’s notes. Nevertheless, Sancho the Good, mount thy beast and come along with me, for God, who provides for all things, will not fail us (more especially when we are so active in his service as we are), since he fails not the midges of the air, nor the grubs of the earth, nor the tadpoles of the water, and is so merciful that he maketh his sun to rise on the good and on the evil, and sendeth rain on the unjust and on the just.”

“Your worship would make a better preacher than knight-errant,” said Sancho.

“Knights-errant knew and ought to know everything, Sancho,” said Don Quixote; “for there were knights-errant in former times as well qualified to deliver a sermon or discourse in the middle of an encampment, as if they had graduated in the University of Paris; whereby we may see that the lance has never blunted the pen, nor the pen the lance.”

“Well, be it as your worship says,” replied Sancho; “let us be off now and find some place of shelter for the night, and God grant it may be somewhere where there are no blankets, nor blanketeers, nor phantoms, nor enchanted Moors; for if there are, may the devil take the whole concern.”

“Ask that of God, my son,” said Don Quixote; and do thou lead on where thou wilt, for this time I leave our lodging to thy choice; but reach me here thy hand, and feel with thy finger, and find out how many of my teeth and grinders are missing from this right side of the upper jaw, for it is there I feel the pain.”

Sancho put in his fingers, and feeling about asked him, “How many grinders used your worship have on this side?”

“Four,” replied Don Quixote, “besides the back-tooth, all whole and quite sound.”

“Mind what you are saying, senor.”

“I say four, if not five,” answered Don Quixote, “for never in my life have I had tooth or grinder drawn, nor has any fallen out or been destroyed by any decay or rheum.”

“Well, then,” said Sancho, “in this lower side your worship has no more than two grinders and a half, and in the upper neither a half nor any at all, for it is all as smooth as the palm of my hand.”

“Luckless that I am!” said Don Quixote, hearing the sad news his squire gave him; “I had rather they despoiled me of an arm, so it were not the sword-arm; for I tell thee, Sancho, a mouth without teeth is like a mill without a millstone, and a tooth is much more to be prized than a diamond; but we who profess the austere order of chivalry are liable to all this. Mount, friend, and lead the way, and I will follow thee at whatever pace thou wilt.”

Sancho did as he bade him, and proceeded in the direction in which he thought he might find refuge without quitting the high road, which was there very much frequented. As they went along, then, at a slow pace — for the pain in Don Quixote’s jaws kept him uneasy and ill-disposed for speed — Sancho thought it well to amuse and divert him by talk of some kind, and among the things he said to him was that which will be told in the following chapter.



## CHAPTER XIX.

### OF THE SHREWD DISCOURSE WHICH SANCCHO HELD WITH HIS MASTER, AND OF THE ADVENTURE THAT BEFELL HIM WITH A DEAD BODY, TOGETHER WITH OTHER NOTABLE OCCURRENCES

“It seems to me, senor, that all these mishaps that have befallen us of late have been without any doubt a punishment for the offence committed by your worship against the order of chivalry in not keeping the oath you made not to eat bread off a tablecloth or embrace the queen, and all the rest of it that your worship swore to observe until you had taken that helmet of Malandrino’s, or whatever the Moor is called, for I do not very well remember.”

“Thou art very right, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “but to tell the truth, it had escaped my memory; and likewise thou mayest rely upon it that the affair of the blanket happened to thee because of thy fault in not reminding me of it in time; but I will make amends, for there are ways of compounding for everything in the order of chivalry.”

“Why! have I taken an oath of some sort, then?” said Sancho.

“It makes no matter that thou hast not taken an oath,” said Don Quixote; “suffice it that I see thou art not quite clear of complicity; and whether or no, it will not be ill done to provide ourselves with a remedy.”

“In that case,” said Sancho, “mind that your worship does not forget this as you did the oath; perhaps the phantoms may take it into their heads to amuse themselves once more with me; or even with your worship if they see you so obstinate.”

While engaged in this and other talk, night overtook them on the road before they had reached or discovered any place of shelter; and what made it still worse was that they were dying of hunger, for with the loss of the alforjas they had lost their entire larder and commissariat; and to complete the misfortune they met with an adventure which without any invention had really the appearance of one. It so happened that the night closed in somewhat darkly, but for all that they pushed on, Sancho feeling sure that as the road was the king’s highway they might reasonably expect to find some inn within a league or two. Going along, then, in this way, the night dark, the squire hungry, the master sharp-set, they saw coming towards them on the road they were travelling a great number of lights which looked exactly like stars in motion. Sancho was taken aback at the



sight of them, nor did Don Quixote altogether relish them: the one pulled up his ass by the halter, the other his hack by the bridle, and they stood still, watching anxiously to see what all this would turn out to be, and found that the lights were approaching them, and the nearer they came the greater they seemed, at which spectacle Sancho began to shake like a man dosed with mercury, and Don Quixote's hair stood on end; he, however, plucking up spirit a little, said:

"This, no doubt, Sancho, will be a most mighty and perilous adventure, in which it will be needful for me to put forth all my valour and resolution."

"Unlucky me!" answered Sancho; "if this adventure happens to be one of phantoms, as I am beginning to think it is, where shall I find the ribs to bear it?"

"Be they phantoms ever so much," said Don Quixote, "I will not permit them to touch a thread of thy garments; for if they played tricks with thee the time before, it was because I was unable to leap the walls of the yard; but now we are on a wide plain, where I shall be able to wield my sword as I please."

"And if they enchant and cripple you as they did the last time," said Sancho, "what difference will it make being on the open plain or not?"

"For all that," replied Don Quixote, "I entreat thee, Sancho, to keep a good heart, for experience will tell thee what mine is."

"I will, please God," answered Sancho, and the two retiring to one side of the road set themselves to observe closely what all these moving lights might be; and very soon afterwards they made out some twenty encamisados, all on horseback, with lighted torches in their hands, the awe-inspiring aspect of whom completely extinguished the courage of Sancho, who began to chatter with his teeth like one in the cold fit of an ague; and his heart sank and his teeth chattered still more when they perceived distinctly that behind them there came a litter covered over with black and followed by six more mounted figures in mourning down to the very feet of their mules — for they could perceive plainly they were not horses by the easy pace at which they went. And as the encamisados came along they muttered to themselves in a low plaintive tone. This strange spectacle at such an hour and in such a solitary place was quite enough to strike terror into Sancho's heart, and even into his master's; and (save in Don Quixote's case) did so, for all Sancho's resolution had now broken down. It was just the opposite with his master, whose imagination immediately conjured up all this to him vividly as one of the adventures of his books.

He took it into his head that the litter was a bier on which was borne some sorely wounded or slain knight, to avenge whom was a task reserved for him alone; and without any further reasoning he laid his lance in rest, fixed himself firmly in his saddle, and with gallant spirit and bearing took up his position in the middle of the road where the encamisados must of necessity pass; and as

soon as he saw them near at hand he raised his voice and said:

“Halt, knights, or whosoever ye may be, and render me account of who ye are, whence ye come, where ye go, what it is ye carry upon that bier, for, to judge by appearances, either ye have done some wrong or some wrong has been done to you, and it is fitting and necessary that I should know, either that I may chastise you for the evil ye have done, or else that I may avenge you for the injury that has been inflicted upon you.”

“We are in haste,” answered one of the encamisados, “and the inn is far off, and we cannot stop to render you such an account as you demand;” and spurring his mule he moved on.

Don Quixote was mightily provoked by this answer, and seizing the mule by the bridle he said, “Halt, and be more mannerly, and render an account of what I have asked of you; else, take my defiance to combat, all of you.”

The mule was shy, and was so frightened at her bridle being seized that rearing up she flung her rider to the ground over her haunches. An attendant who was on foot, seeing the encamisado fall, began to abuse Don Quixote, who now moved to anger, without any more ado, laying his lance in rest charged one of the men in mourning and brought him badly wounded to the ground, and as he wheeled round upon the others the agility with which he attacked and routed them was a sight to see, for it seemed just as if wings had that instant grown upon Rocinante, so lightly and proudly did he bear himself. The encamisados were all timid folk and unarmed, so they speedily made their escape from the fray and set off at a run across the plain with their lighted torches, looking exactly like maskers running on some gala or festival night. The mourners, too, enveloped and swathed in their skirts and gowns, were unable to bestir themselves, and so with entire safety to himself Don Quixote belaboured them all and drove them off against their will, for they all thought it was no man but a devil from hell come to carry away the dead body they had in the litter.

Sancho beheld all this in astonishment at the intrepidity of his lord, and said to himself, “Clearly this master of mine is as bold and valiant as he says he is.”

A burning torch lay on the ground near the first man whom the mule had thrown, by the light of which Don Quixote perceived him, and coming up to him he presented the point of the lance to his face, calling on him to yield himself prisoner, or else he would kill him; to which the prostrate man replied, “I am prisoner enough as it is; I cannot stir, for one of my legs is broken: I entreat you, if you be a Christian gentleman, not to kill me, which will be committing grave sacrilege, for I am a licentiate and I hold first orders.”

“Then what the devil brought you here, being a churchman?” said Don Quixote.

“What, senor?” said the other. “My bad luck.”

“Then still worse awaits you,” said Don Quixote, “if you do not satisfy me as to all I asked you at first.”

“You shall be soon satisfied,” said the licentiate; “you must know, then, that though just now I said I was a licentiate, I am only a bachelor, and my name is Alonzo Lopez; I am a native of Alcobendas, I come from the city of Baeza with eleven others, priests, the same who fled with the torches, and we are going to the city of Segovia accompanying a dead body which is in that litter, and is that of a gentleman who died in Baeza, where he was interred; and now, as I said, we are taking his bones to their burial-place, which is in Segovia, where he was born.”

“And who killed him?” asked Don Quixote.

“God, by means of a malignant fever that took him,” answered the bachelor.

“In that case,” said Don Quixote, “the Lord has relieved me of the task of avenging his death had any other slain him; but, he who slew him having slain him, there is nothing for it but to be silent, and shrug one’s shoulders; I should do the same were he to slay myself; and I would have your reverence know that I am a knight of La Mancha, Don Quixote by name, and it is my business and calling to roam the world righting wrongs and redressing injuries.”

“I do not know how that about righting wrongs can be,” said the bachelor, “for from straight you have made me crooked, leaving me with a broken leg that will never see itself straight again all the days of its life; and the injury you have redressed in my case has been to leave me injured in such a way that I shall remain injured for ever; and the height of misadventure it was to fall in with you who go in search of adventures.”

“Things do not all happen in the same way,” answered Don Quixote; “it all came, Sir Bachelor Alonzo Lopez, of your going, as you did, by night, dressed in those surplices, with lighted torches, praying, covered with mourning, so that naturally you looked like something evil and of the other world; and so I could not avoid doing my duty in attacking you, and I should have attacked you even had I known positively that you were the very devils of hell, for such I certainly believed and took you to be.”

“As my fate has so willed it,” said the bachelor, “I entreat you, sir knight-errant, whose errand has been such an evil one for me, to help me to get from under this mule that holds one of my legs caught between the stirrup and the saddle.”

“I would have talked on till to-morrow,” said Don Quixote; “how long were you going to wait before telling me of your distress?”

He at once called to Sancho, who, however, had no mind to come, as he was

just then engaged in unloading a sumpter mule, well laden with provender, which these worthy gentlemen had brought with them. Sancho made a bag of his coat, and, getting together as much as he could, and as the bag would hold, he loaded his beast, and then hastened to obey his master's call, and helped him to remove the bachelor from under the mule; then putting him on her back he gave him the torch, and Don Quixote bade him follow the track of his companions, and beg pardon of them on his part for the wrong which he could not help doing them.

And said Sancho, "If by chance these gentlemen should want to know who was the hero that served them so, your worship may tell them that he is the famous Don Quixote of La Mancha, otherwise called the Knight of the Rueful Countenance."

The bachelor then took his departure.

I forgot to mention that before he did so he said to Don Quixote, "Remember that you stand excommunicated for having laid violent hands on a holy thing, *juxta illud, si quis, suadente diabolo.*"

"I do not understand that Latin," answered Don Quixote, "but I know well I did not lay hands, only this pike; besides, I did not think I was committing an assault upon priests or things of the Church, which, like a Catholic and faithful Christian as I am, I respect and revere, but upon phantoms and spectres of the other world; but even so, I remember how it fared with Cid Ruy Diaz when he broke the chair of the ambassador of that king before his Holiness the Pope, who excommunicated him for the same; and yet the good Roderick of Vivar bore himself that day like a very noble and valiant knight."

On hearing this the bachelor took his departure, as has been said, without making any reply; and Don Quixote asked Sancho what had induced him to call him the "Knight of the Rueful Countenance" more then than at any other time.

"I will tell you," answered Sancho; "it was because I have been looking at you for some time by the light of the torch held by that unfortunate, and verily your worship has got of late the most ill-favoured countenance I ever saw: it must be either owing to the fatigue of this combat, or else to the want of teeth and grinders."

"It is not that," replied Don Quixote, "but because the sage whose duty it will be to write the history of my achievements must have thought it proper that I should take some distinctive name as all knights of yore did; one being 'He of the Burning Sword,' another 'He of the Unicorn,' this one 'He of the Damsels,' that 'He of the Phoenix,' another 'The Knight of the Griffin,' and another 'He of the Death,' and by these names and designations they were known all the world round; and so I say that the sage aforesaid must have put it into your mouth and

mind just now to call me 'The Knight of the Rueful Countenance,' as I intend to call myself from this day forward; and that the said name may fit me better, I mean, when the opportunity offers, to have a very rueful countenance painted on my shield."

"There is no occasion, senor, for wasting time or money on making that countenance," said Sancho; "for all that need be done is for your worship to show your own, face to face, to those who look at you, and without anything more, either image or shield, they will call you 'Him of the Rueful Countenance' and believe me I am telling you the truth, for I assure you, senor (and in good part be it said), hunger and the loss of your grinders have given you such an ill-favoured face that, as I say, the rueful picture may be very well spared."

Don Quixote laughed at Sancho's pleasantry; nevertheless he resolved to call himself by that name, and have his shield or buckler painted as he had devised.

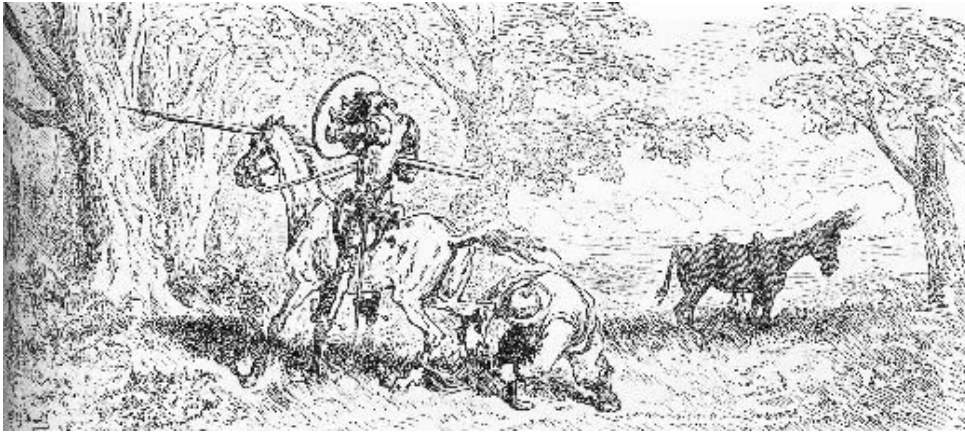
Don Quixote would have looked to see whether the body in the litter were bones or not, but Sancho would not have it, saying:

"Senor, you have ended this perilous adventure more safely for yourself than any of those I have seen: perhaps these people, though beaten and routed, may bethink themselves that it is a single man that has beaten them, and feeling sore and ashamed of it may take heart and come in search of us and give us trouble enough. The ass is in proper trim, the mountains are near at hand, hunger presses, we have nothing more to do but make good our retreat, and, as the saying is, the dead to the grave and the living to the loaf."

And driving his ass before him he begged his master to follow, who, feeling that Sancho was right, did so without replying; and after proceeding some little distance between two hills they found themselves in a wide and retired valley, where they alighted, and Sancho unloaded his beast, and stretched upon the green grass, with hunger for sauce, they breakfasted, dined, lunched, and supped all at once, satisfying their appetites with more than one store of cold meat which the dead man's clerical gentlemen (who seldom put themselves on short allowance) had brought with them on their sumpter mule. But another piece of ill-luck befell them, which Sancho held the worst of all, and that was that they had no wine to drink, nor even water to moisten their lips; and as thirst tormented them, Sancho, observing that the meadow where they were was full of green and tender grass, said what will be told in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER XX.

OF THE UNEXAMPLED AND UNHEARD-OF ADVENTURE WHICH WAS  
ACHIEVED BY THE VALIANT DON QUIXOTE OF LA MANCHA WITH  
LESS PERIL THAN ANY EVER ACHIEVED BY ANY FAMOUS KNIGHT  
IN THE WORLD



“It cannot be, senor, but that this grass is a proof that there must be hard by some spring or brook to give it moisture, so it would be well to move a little farther on, that we may find some place where we may quench this terrible thirst that plagues us, which beyond a doubt is more distressing than hunger.”

The advice seemed good to Don Quixote, and, he leading Rocinante by the bridle and Sancho the ass by the halter, after he had packed away upon him the remains of the supper, they advanced the meadow feeling their way, for the darkness of the night made it impossible to see anything; but they had not gone two hundred paces when a loud noise of water, as if falling from great rocks, struck their ears. The sound cheered them greatly; but halting to make out by listening from what quarter it came they heard unseasonably another noise which spoiled the satisfaction the sound of the water gave them, especially for Sancho, who was by nature timid and faint-hearted. They heard, I say, strokes falling

with a measured beat, and a certain rattling of iron and chains that, together with the furious din of the water, would have struck terror into any heart but Don Quixote's. The night was, as has been said, dark, and they had happened to reach a spot in among some tall trees, whose leaves stirred by a gentle breeze made a low ominous sound; so that, what with the solitude, the place, the darkness, the noise of the water, and the rustling of the leaves, everything inspired awe and dread; more especially as they perceived that the strokes did not cease, nor the wind lull, nor morning approach; to all which might be added their ignorance as to where they were.



But Don Quixote, supported by his intrepid heart, leaped on Rocinante, and bracing his buckler on his arm, brought his pike to the slope, and said, "Friend Sancho, know that I by Heaven's will have been born in this our iron age to revive in it the age of gold, or the golden as it is called; I am he for whom perils, mighty achievements, and valiant deeds are reserved; I am, I say again, he who is to revive the Knights of the Round Table, the Twelve of France and the Nine Worthies; and he who is to consign to oblivion the Platirs, the Tablantes, the Olivantes and Tirantes, the Phoebuses and Belianises, with the whole herd of famous knights-errant of days gone by, performing in these in which I live such exploits, marvels, and feats of arms as shall obscure their brightest deeds. Thou dost mark well, faithful and trusty squire, the gloom of this night, its strange silence, the dull confused murmur of those trees, the awful sound of that water in quest of which we came, that seems as though it were precipitating and dashing itself down from the lofty mountains of the Moon, and that incessant hammering that wounds and pains our ears; which things all together and each of itself are enough to instil fear, dread, and dismay into the breast of Mars himself, much more into one not used to hazards and adventures of the kind. Well, then, all this that I put before thee is but an incentive and stimulant to my spirit, making my heart burst in my bosom through eagerness to engage in this adventure, arduous as it promises to be; therefore tighten Rocinante's girths a little, and God be with thee; wait for me here three days and no more, and if in that time I come not back, thou canst return to our village, and thence, to do me a favour and a service, thou wilt go to El Toboso, where thou shalt say to my incomparable lady Dulcinea that her captive knight hath died in attempting things that might make him worthy of being called hers."

When Sancho heard his master's words he began to weep in the most pathetic way, saying:

"Senor, I know not why your worship wants to attempt this so dreadful adventure; it is night now, no one sees us here, we can easily turn about and take ourselves out of danger, even if we don't drink for three days to come; and as there is no one to see us, all the less will there be anyone to set us down as cowards; besides, I have many a time heard the curate of our village, whom your worship knows well, preach that he who seeks danger perishes in it; so it is not right to tempt God by trying so tremendous a feat from which there can be no



escape save by a miracle, and Heaven has performed enough of them for your worship in delivering you from being blanketed as I was, and bringing you out victorious and safe and sound from among all those enemies that were with the dead man; and if all this does not move or soften that hard heart, let this thought and reflection move it, that you will have hardly quitted this spot when from pure fear I shall yield my soul up to anyone that will take it. I left home and wife and children to come and serve your worship, trusting to do better and not worse; but as covetousness bursts the bag, it has rent my hopes asunder, for just as I had them highest about getting that wretched unlucky island your worship has so often promised me, I see that instead and in lieu of it you mean to desert me now in a place so far from human reach: for God's sake, master mine, deal not so unjustly by me, and if your worship will not entirely give up attempting this feat, at least put it off till morning, for by what the lore I learned when I was a shepherd tells me it cannot want three hours of dawn now, because the mouth of the Horn is overhead and makes midnight in the line of the left arm."

"How canst thou see, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "where it makes that line, or where this mouth or this occiput is that thou talkest of, when the night is so dark that there is not a star to be seen in the whole heaven?"

"That's true," said Sancho, "but fear has sharp eyes, and sees things underground, much more above in heavens; besides, there is good reason to show that it now wants but little of day."

"Let it want what it may," replied Don Quixote, "it shall not be said of me now or at any time that tears or entreaties turned me aside from doing what was in accordance with knightly usage; and so I beg of thee, Sancho, to hold thy peace, for God, who has put it into my heart to undertake now this so unexampled and terrible adventure, will take care to watch over my safety and console thy sorrow; what thou hast to do is to tighten Rocinante's girths well, and wait here, for I shall come back shortly, alive or dead."

Sancho perceiving it his master's final resolve, and how little his tears, counsels, and entreaties prevailed with him, determined to have recourse to his own ingenuity and compel him, if he could, to wait till daylight; and so, while tightening the girths of the horse, he quietly and without being felt, with his ass' halter tied both Rocinante's legs, so that when Don Quixote strove to go he was unable as the horse could only move by jumps. Seeing the success of his trick, Sancho Panza said:

"See there, senor! Heaven, moved by my tears and prayers, has so ordered it that Rocinante cannot stir; and if you will be obstinate, and spur and strike him, you will only provoke fortune, and kick, as they say, against the pricks."

Don Quixote at this grew desperate, but the more he drove his heels into the

horse, the less he stirred him; and not having any suspicion of the tying, he was fain to resign himself and wait till daybreak or until Rocinante could move, firmly persuaded that all this came of something other than Sancho's ingenuity. So he said to him, "As it is so, Sancho, and as Rocinante cannot move, I am content to wait till dawn smiles upon us, even though I weep while it delays its coming."

"There is no need to weep," answered Sancho, "for I will amuse your worship by telling stories from this till daylight, unless indeed you like to dismount and lie down to sleep a little on the green grass after the fashion of knights-errant, so as to be fresher when day comes and the moment arrives for attempting this extraordinary adventure you are looking forward to."

"What art thou talking about dismounting or sleeping for?" said Don Quixote. "Am I, thinkest thou, one of those knights that take their rest in the presence of danger? Sleep thou who art born to sleep, or do as thou wilt, for I will act as I think most consistent with my character."

"Be not angry, master mine," replied Sancho, "I did not mean to say that;" and coming close to him he laid one hand on the pommel of the saddle and the other on the cantle so that he held his master's left thigh in his embrace, not daring to separate a finger's width from him; so much afraid was he of the strokes which still resounded with a regular beat. Don Quixote bade him tell some story to amuse him as he had proposed, to which Sancho replied that he would if his dread of what he heard would let him; "Still," said he, "I will strive to tell a story which, if I can manage to relate it, and nobody interferes with the telling, is the best of stories, and let your worship give me your attention, for here I begin. What was, was; and may the good that is to come be for all, and the evil for him who goes to look for it — your worship must know that the beginning the old folk used to put to their tales was not just as each one pleased; it was a maxim of Cato Zonzorino the Roman, that says 'the evil for him that goes to look for it,' and it comes as pat to the purpose now as ring to finger, to show that your worship should keep quiet and not go looking for evil in any quarter, and that we should go back by some other road, since nobody forces us to follow this in which so many terrors affright us."

"Go on with thy story, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "and leave the choice of our road to my care."

"I say then," continued Sancho, "that in a village of Estremadura there was a goat-shepherd — that is to say, one who tended goats — which shepherd or goatherd, as my story goes, was called Lope Ruiz, and this Lope Ruiz was in love with a shepherdess called Torralva, which shepherdess called Torralva was the daughter of a rich grazier, and this rich grazier—"

“If that is the way thou tellest thy tale, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “repeating twice all thou hast to say, thou wilt not have done these two days; go straight on with it, and tell it like a reasonable man, or else say nothing.”

“Tales are always told in my country in the very way I am telling this,” answered Sancho, “and I cannot tell it in any other, nor is it right of your worship to ask me to make new customs.”

“Tell it as thou wilt,” replied Don Quixote; “and as fate will have it that I cannot help listening to thee, go on.”

“And so, lord of my soul,” continued Sancho, as I have said, this shepherd was in love with Torralva the shepherdess, who was a wild buxom lass with something of the look of a man about her, for she had little moustaches; I fancy I see her now.”

“Then you knew her?” said Don Quixote.

“I did not know her,” said Sancho, “but he who told me the story said it was so true and certain that when I told it to another I might safely declare and swear I had seen it all myself. And so in course of time, the devil, who never sleeps and puts everything in confusion, contrived that the love the shepherd bore the shepherdess turned into hatred and ill-will, and the reason, according to evil tongues, was some little jealousy she caused him that crossed the line and trespassed on forbidden ground; and so much did the shepherd hate her from that time forward that, in order to escape from her, he determined to quit the country and go where he should never set eyes on her again. Torralva, when she found herself spurned by Lope, was immediately smitten with love for him, though she had never loved him before.”

“That is the natural way of women,” said Don Quixote, “to scorn the one that loves them, and love the one that hates them: go on, Sancho.”

“It came to pass,” said Sancho, “that the shepherd carried out his intention, and driving his goats before him took his way across the plains of Estremadura to pass over into the Kingdom of Portugal. Torralva, who knew of it, went after him, and on foot and barefoot followed him at a distance, with a pilgrim’s staff in her hand and a scrip round her neck, in which she carried, it is said, a bit of looking-glass and a piece of a comb and some little pot or other of paint for her face; but let her carry what she did, I am not going to trouble myself to prove it; all I say is, that the shepherd, they say, came with his flock to cross over the river Guadiana, which was at that time swollen and almost overflowing its banks, and at the spot he came to there was neither ferry nor boat nor anyone to carry him or his flock to the other side, at which he was much vexed, for he perceived that Torralva was approaching and would give him great annoyance with her tears and entreaties; however, he went looking about so closely that he

discovered a fisherman who had alongside of him a boat so small that it could only hold one person and one goat; but for all that he spoke to him and agreed with him to carry himself and his three hundred goats across. The fisherman got into the boat and carried one goat over; he came back and carried another over; he came back again, and again brought over another — let your worship keep count of the goats the fisherman is taking across, for if one escapes the memory there will be an end of the story, and it will be impossible to tell another word of it. To proceed, I must tell you the landing place on the other side was miry and slippery, and the fisherman lost a great deal of time in going and coming; still he returned for another goat, and another, and another.”

“Take it for granted he brought them all across,” said Don Quixote, “and don’t keep going and coming in this way, or thou wilt not make an end of bringing them over this twelvemonth.”

“How many have gone across so far?” said Sancho.

“How the devil do I know?” replied Don Quixote.

“There it is,” said Sancho, “what I told you, that you must keep a good count; well then, by God, there is an end of the story, for there is no going any farther.”

“How can that be?” said Don Quixote; “is it so essential to the story to know to a nicety the goats that have crossed over, that if there be a mistake of one in the reckoning, thou canst not go on with it?”

“No, senor, not a bit,” replied Sancho; “for when I asked your worship to tell me how many goats had crossed, and you answered you did not know, at that very instant all I had to say passed away out of my memory, and, faith, there was much virtue in it, and entertainment.”

“So, then,” said Don Quixote, “the story has come to an end?”

“As much as my mother has,” said Sancho.

“In truth,” said Don Quixote, “thou hast told one of the rarest stories, tales, or histories, that anyone in the world could have imagined, and such a way of telling it and ending it was never seen nor will be in a lifetime; though I expected nothing else from thy excellent understanding. But I do not wonder, for perhaps those ceaseless strokes may have confused thy wits.”

“All that may be,” replied Sancho, “but I know that as to my story, all that can be said is that it ends there where the mistake in the count of the passage of the goats begins.”

“Let it end where it will, well and good,” said Don Quixote, “and let us see if Rocinante can go;” and again he spurred him, and again Rocinante made jumps and remained where he was, so well tied was he.

Just then, whether it was the cold of the morning that was now approaching, or that he had eaten something laxative at supper, or that it was only natural (as

is most likely), Sancho felt a desire to do what no one could do for him; but so great was the fear that had penetrated his heart, he dared not separate himself from his master by as much as the black of his nail; to escape doing what he wanted was, however, also impossible; so what he did for peace's sake was to remove his right hand, which held the back of the saddle, and with it to untie gently and silently the running string which alone held up his breeches, so that on loosening it they at once fell down round his feet like fetters; he then raised his shirt as well as he could and bared his hind quarters, no slim ones. But, this accomplished, which he fancied was all he had to do to get out of this terrible strait and embarrassment, another still greater difficulty presented itself, for it seemed to him impossible to relieve himself without making some noise, and he ground his teeth and squeezed his shoulders together, holding his breath as much as he could; but in spite of his precautions he was unlucky enough after all to make a little noise, very different from that which was causing him so much fear.



Don Quixote, hearing it, said, "What noise is that, Sancho?"

"I don't know, senor," said he; "it must be something new, for adventures and misadventures never begin with a trifle." Once more he tried his luck, and succeeded so well, that without any further noise or disturbance he found himself relieved of the burden that had given him so much discomfort. But as Don Quixote's sense of smell was as acute as his hearing, and as Sancho was so closely linked with him that the fumes rose almost in a straight line, it could not be but that some should reach his nose, and as soon as they did he came to its relief by compressing it between his fingers, saying in a rather snuffing tone, "Sancho, it strikes me thou art in great fear."

“I am,” answered Sancho; “but how does your worship perceive it now more than ever?”

“Because just now thou smellest stronger than ever, and not of ambergris,” answered Don Quixote.

“Very likely,” said Sancho, “but that’s not my fault, but your worship’s, for leading me about at unseasonable hours and at such unwonted paces.”

“Then go back three or four, my friend,” said Don Quixote, all the time with his fingers to his nose; “and for the future pay more attention to thy person and to what thou owest to mine; for it is my great familiarity with thee that has bred this contempt.”

“I’ll bet,” replied Sancho, “that your worship thinks I have done something I ought not with my person.”

“It makes it worse to stir it, friend Sancho,” returned Don Quixote.

With this and other talk of the same sort master and man passed the night, till Sancho, perceiving that daybreak was coming on apace, very cautiously untied Rocinante and tied up his breeches. As soon as Rocinante found himself free, though by nature he was not at all mettlesome, he seemed to feel lively and began pawing — for as to capering, begging his pardon, he knew not what it meant. Don Quixote, then, observing that Rocinante could move, took it as a good sign and a signal that he should attempt the dread adventure. By this time day had fully broken and everything showed distinctly, and Don Quixote saw that he was among some tall trees, chestnuts, which cast a very deep shade; he perceived likewise that the sound of the strokes did not cease, but could not discover what caused it, and so without any further delay he let Rocinante feel the spur, and once more taking leave of Sancho, he told him to wait for him there three days at most, as he had said before, and if he should not have returned by that time, he might feel sure it had been God’s will that he should end his days in that perilous adventure. He again repeated the message and commission with which he was to go on his behalf to his lady Dulcinea, and said he was not to be uneasy as to the payment of his services, for before leaving home he had made his will, in which he would find himself fully recompensed in the matter of wages in due proportion to the time he had served; but if God delivered him safe, sound, and unhurt out of that danger, he might look upon the promised island as much more than certain. Sancho began to weep afresh on again hearing the affecting words of his good master, and resolved to stay with him until the final issue and end of the business. From these tears and this honourable resolve of Sancho Panza’s the author of this history infers that he must have been of good birth and at least an old Christian; and the feeling he displayed touched his but not so much as to make him show any weakness; on the contrary, hiding what he

felt as well as he could, he began to move towards that quarter whence the sound of the water and of the strokes seemed to come.

Sancho followed him on foot, leading by the halter, as his custom was, his ass, his constant comrade in prosperity or adversity; and advancing some distance through the shady chestnut trees they came upon a little meadow at the foot of some high rocks, down which a mighty rush of water flung itself. At the foot of the rocks were some rudely constructed houses looking more like ruins than houses, from among which came, they perceived, the din and clatter of blows, which still continued without intermission. Rocinante took fright at the noise of the water and of the blows, but quieting him Don Quixote advanced step by step towards the houses, commending himself with all his heart to his lady, imploring her support in that dread pass and enterprise, and on the way commending himself to God, too, not to forget him. Sancho who never quitted his side, stretched his neck as far as he could and peered between the legs of Rocinante to see if he could now discover what it was that caused him such fear and apprehension. They went it might be a hundred paces farther, when on turning a corner the true cause, beyond the possibility of any mistake, of that dread-sounding and to them awe-inspiring noise that had kept them all the night in such fear and perplexity, appeared plain and obvious; and it was (if, reader, thou art not disgusted and disappointed) six fulling hammers which by their alternate strokes made all the din.

When Don Quixote perceived what it was, he was struck dumb and rigid from head to foot. Sancho glanced at him and saw him with his head bent down upon his breast in manifest mortification; and Don Quixote glanced at Sancho and saw him with his cheeks puffed out and his mouth full of laughter, and evidently ready to explode with it, and in spite of his vexation he could not help laughing at the sight of him; and when Sancho saw his master begin he let go so heartily that he had to hold his sides with both hands to keep himself from bursting with laughter. Four times he stopped, and as many times did his laughter break out afresh with the same violence as at first, whereat Don Quixote grew furious, above all when he heard him say mockingly, "Thou must know, friend Sancho, that of Heaven's will I was born in this our iron age to revive in it the golden or age of gold; I am he for whom are reserved perils, mighty achievements, valiant deeds;" and here he went on repeating the words that Don Quixote uttered the first time they heard the awful strokes.

Don Quixote, then, seeing that Sancho was turning him into ridicule, was so mortified and vexed that he lifted up his pike and smote him two such blows that if, instead of catching them on his shoulders, he had caught them on his head there would have been no wages to pay, unless indeed to his heirs. Sancho



seeing that he was getting an awkward return in earnest for his jest, and fearing his master might carry it still further, said to him very humbly, "Calm yourself, sir, for by God I am only joking."

"Well, then, if you are joking I am not," replied Don Quixote. "Look here, my lively gentleman, if these, instead of being fulling hammers, had been some perilous adventure, have I not, think you, shown the courage required for the attempt and achievement? Am I, perchance, being, as I am, a gentleman, bound to know and distinguish sounds and tell whether they come from fulling mills or not; and that, when perhaps, as is the case, I have never in my life seen any as you have, low boor as you are, that have been born and bred among them? But turn me these six hammers into six giants, and bring them to beard me, one by one or all together, and if I do not knock them head over heels, then make what mockery you like of me."

"No more of that, senor," returned Sancho; "I own I went a little too far with the joke. But tell me, your worship, now that peace is made between us (and may God bring you out of all the adventures that may befall you as safe and sound as he has brought you out of this one), was it not a thing to laugh at, and is it not a good story, the great fear we were in? — at least that I was in; for as to your worship I see now that you neither know nor understand what either fear or dismay is."

"I do not deny," said Don Quixote, "that what happened to us may be worth laughing at, but it is not worth making a story about, for it is not everyone that is shrewd enough to hit the right point of a thing."

"At any rate," said Sancho, "your worship knew how to hit the right point with your pike, aiming at my head and hitting me on the shoulders, thanks be to God and my own smartness in dodging it. But let that pass; all will come out in the scouring; for I have heard say 'he loves thee well that makes thee weep;' and moreover that it is the way with great lords after any hard words they give a servant to give him a pair of breeches; though I do not know what they give after blows, unless it be that knights-errant after blows give islands, or kingdoms on the mainland."

"It may be on the dice," said Don Quixote, "that all thou sayest will come true; overlook the past, for thou art shrewd enough to know that our first movements are not in our own control; and one thing for the future bear in mind, that thou curb and restrain thy loquacity in my company; for in all the books of chivalry that I have read, and they are innumerable, I never met with a squire who talked so much to his lord as thou dost to thine; and in fact I feel it to be a great fault of thine and of mine: of thine, that thou hast so little respect for me; of mine, that I do not make myself more respected. There was Gandalin, the squire

of Amadis of Gaul, that was Count of the Insula Firme, and we read of him that he always addressed his lord with his cap in his hand, his head bowed down and his body bent double, more turquesco. And then, what shall we say of Gasabal, the squire of Galaor, who was so silent that in order to indicate to us the greatness of his marvellous taciturnity his name is only once mentioned in the whole of that history, as long as it is truthful? From all I have said thou wilt gather, Sancho, that there must be a difference between master and man, between lord and lackey, between knight and squire: so that from this day forward in our intercourse we must observe more respect and take less liberties, for in whatever way I may be provoked with you it will be bad for the pitcher. The favours and benefits that I have promised you will come in due time, and if they do not your wages at least will not be lost, as I have already told you.”

“All that your worship says is very well,” said Sancho, “but I should like to know (in case the time of favours should not come, and it might be necessary to fall back upon wages) how much did the squire of a knight-errant get in those days, and did they agree by the month, or by the day like bricklayers?”

“I do not believe,” replied Don Quixote, “that such squires were ever on wages, but were dependent on favour; and if I have now mentioned thine in the sealed will I have left at home, it was with a view to what may happen; for as yet I know not how chivalry will turn out in these wretched times of ours, and I do not wish my soul to suffer for trifles in the other world; for I would have thee know, Sancho, that in this there is no condition more hazardous than that of adventurers.”

“That is true,” said Sancho, “since the mere noise of the hammers of a fulling mill can disturb and disquiet the heart of such a valiant errant adventurer as your worship; but you may be sure I will not open my lips henceforward to make light of anything of your worship’s, but only to honour you as my master and natural lord.”

“By so doing,” replied Don Quixote, “shalt thou live long on the face of the earth; for next to parents, masters are to be respected as though they were parents.”



## CHAPTER XXI.

WHICH TREATS OF THE EXALTED ADVENTURE AND RICH PRIZE OF  
MAMBRINO'S HELMET, TOGETHER WITH OTHER THINGS THAT  
HAPPENED TO OUR INVINCIBLE KNIGHT



It now began to rain a little, and Sancho was for going into the fulling mills, but Don Quixote had taken such an abhorrence to them on account of the late joke that he would not enter them on any account; so turning aside to right they came upon another road, different from that which they had taken the night before. Shortly afterwards Don Quixote perceived a man on horseback who wore on his head something that shone like gold, and the moment he saw him he turned to Sancho and said:

“I think, Sancho, there is no proverb that is not true, all being maxims drawn from experience itself, the mother of all the sciences, especially that one that says, ‘Where one door shuts, another opens.’ I say so because if last night fortune shut the door of the adventure we were looking for against us, cheating us with the fulling mills, it now opens wide another one for another better and more certain adventure, and if I do not contrive to enter it, it will be my own fault, and I cannot lay it to my ignorance of fulling mills, or the darkness of the night. I say this because, if I mistake not, there comes towards us one who wears on his head the helmet of Mambrino, concerning which I took the oath thou rememberest.”

“Mind what you say, your worship, and still more what you do,” said Sancho, “for I don’t want any more fulling mills to finish off fulling and knocking our senses out.”

“The devil take thee, man,” said Don Quixote; “what has a helmet to do with fulling mills?”

“I don’t know,” replied Sancho, “but, faith, if I might speak as I used, perhaps I could give such reasons that your worship would see you were mistaken in what you say.”

“How can I be mistaken in what I say, unbelieving traitor?” returned Don Quixote; “tell me, seest thou not yonder knight coming towards us on a dappled grey steed, who has upon his head a helmet of gold?”

“What I see and make out,” answered Sancho, “is only a man on a grey ass like my own, who has something that shines on his head.”

“Well, that is the helmet of Mambrino,” said Don Quixote; “stand to one side and leave me alone with him; thou shalt see how, without saying a word, to save time, I shall bring this adventure to an issue and possess myself of the helmet I have so longed for.”

“I will take care to stand aside,” said Sancho; “but God grant, I say once more, that it may be marjoram and not fulling mills.”

“I have told thee, brother, on no account to mention those fulling mills to me again,” said Don Quixote, “or I vow — and I say no more — I’ll full the soul out of you.”

Sancho held his peace in dread lest his master should carry out the vow he had hurled like a bowl at him.

The fact of the matter as regards the helmet, steed, and knight that Don Quixote saw, was this. In that neighbourhood there were two villages, one of them so small that it had neither apothecary’s shop nor barber, which the other that was close to it had, so the barber of the larger served the smaller, and in it there was a sick man who required to be bled and another man who wanted to be shaved, and on this errand the barber was going, carrying with him a brass basin; but as luck would have it, as he was on the way it began to rain, and not to spoil his hat, which probably was a new one, he put the basin on his head, and being clean it glittered at half a league’s distance. He rode upon a grey ass, as Sancho said, and this was what made it seem to Don Quixote to be a dapple-grey steed and a knight and a golden helmet; for everything he saw he made to fall in with his crazy chivalry and ill-errant notions; and when he saw the poor knight draw near, without entering into any parley with him, at Rocinante’s top speed he bore down upon him with the pike pointed low, fully determined to run him through and through, and as he reached him, without checking the fury of his charge, he

cried to him:

“Defend thyself, miserable being, or yield me of thine own accord that which is so reasonably my due.”

The barber, who without any expectation or apprehension of it saw this apparition coming down upon him, had no other way of saving himself from the stroke of the lance but to let himself fall off his ass; and no sooner had he touched the ground than he sprang up more nimbly than a deer and sped away across the plain faster than the wind.

He left the basin on the ground, with which Don Quixote contented himself, saying that the pagan had shown his discretion and imitated the beaver, which finding itself pressed by the hunters bites and cuts off with its teeth that for which, by its natural instinct, it knows it is pursued.

He told Sancho to pick up the helmet, and he taking it in his hands said:

“By God the basin is a good one, and worth a real of eight if it is worth a maravedis,” and handed it to his master, who immediately put it on his head, turning it round, now this way, now that, in search of fitment, and not finding it he said, “Clearly the pagan to whose measure this famous headpiece was first forged must have had a very large head; but the worst of it is half of it is wanting.”

When Sancho heard him call the basin a headpiece he was unable to restrain his laughter, but remembering his master’s wrath he checked himself in the midst of it.

“What art thou laughing at, Sancho?” said Don Quixote.

“I am laughing,” said he, “to think of the great head the pagan must have had who owned this helmet, for it looks exactly like a regular barber’s basin.”

“Dost thou know what I suspect, Sancho?” said Don Quixote; “that this wonderful piece of this enchanted helmet must by some strange accident have come into the hands of some one who was unable to recognise or realise its value, and who, not knowing what he did, and seeing it to be of the purest gold, must have melted down one half for the sake of what it might be worth, and of the other made this which is like a barber’s basin as thou sayest; but be it as it may, to me who recognise it, its transformation makes no difference, for I will set it to rights at the first village where there is a blacksmith, and in such style that that helmet the god of smithies forged for the god of battles shall not surpass it or even come up to it; and in the meantime I will wear it as well as I can, for something is better than nothing; all the more as it will be quite enough to protect me from any chance blow of a stone.”

“That is,” said Sancho, “if it is not shot with a sling as they were in the battle of the two armies, when they signed the cross on your worship’s grinders and

smashed the flask with that blessed draught that made me vomit my bowels up.”

“It does not grieve me much to have lost it,” said Don Quixote, “for thou knowest, Sancho, that I have the receipt in my memory.”

“So have I,” answered Sancho, “but if ever I make it, or try it again as long as I live, may this be my last hour; moreover, I have no intention of putting myself in the way of wanting it, for I mean, with all my five senses, to keep myself from being wounded or from wounding anyone: as to being blanketed again I say nothing, for it is hard to prevent mishaps of that sort, and if they come there is nothing for it but to squeeze our shoulders together, hold our breath, shut our eyes, and let ourselves go where luck and the blanket may send us.”

“Thou art a bad Christian, Sancho,” said Don Quixote on hearing this, “for once an injury has been done thee thou never forgettest it: but know that it is the part of noble and generous hearts not to attach importance to trifles. What lame leg hast thou got by it, what broken rib, what cracked head, that thou canst not forget that jest? For jest and sport it was, properly regarded, and had I not seen it in that light I would have returned and done more mischief in revenging thee than the Greeks did for the rape of Helen, who, if she were alive now, or if my Dulcinea had lived then, might depend upon it she would not be so famous for her beauty as she is;” and here he heaved a sigh and sent it aloft; and said Sancho, “Let it pass for a jest as it cannot be revenged in earnest, but I know what sort of jest and earnest it was, and I know it will never be rubbed out of my memory any more than off my shoulders. But putting that aside, will your worship tell me what are we to do with this dapple-grey steed that looks like a grey ass, which that Martino that your worship overthrew has left deserted here? for, from the way he took to his heels and bolted, he is not likely ever to come back for it; and by my beard but the grey is a good one.”

“I have never been in the habit,” said Don Quixote, “of taking spoil of those whom I vanquish, nor is it the practice of chivalry to take away their horses and leave them to go on foot, unless indeed it be that the victor have lost his own in the combat, in which case it is lawful to take that of the vanquished as a thing won in lawful war; therefore, Sancho, leave this horse, or ass, or whatever thou wilt have it to be; for when its owner sees us gone hence he will come back for it.”

“God knows I should like to take it,” returned Sancho, “or at least to change it for my own, which does not seem to me as good a one: verily the laws of chivalry are strict, since they cannot be stretched to let one ass be changed for another; I should like to know if I might at least change trappings.”

“On that head I am not quite certain,” answered Don Quixote, “and the matter being doubtful, pending better information, I say thou mayest change them, if so

be thou hast urgent need of them.”

“So urgent is it,” answered Sancho, “that if they were for my own person I could not want them more;” and forthwith, fortified by this licence, he effected the *mutatio capparum*, rigging out his beast to the ninety-nines and making quite another thing of it. This done, they broke their fast on the remains of the spoils of war plundered from the sumpter mule, and drank of the brook that flowed from the fulling mills, without casting a look in that direction, in such loathing did they hold them for the alarm they had caused them; and, all anger and gloom removed, they mounted and, without taking any fixed road (not to fix upon any being the proper thing for true knights-errant), they set out, guided by Rocinante’s will, which carried along with it that of his master, not to say that of the ass, which always followed him wherever he led, lovingly and sociably; nevertheless they returned to the high road, and pursued it at a venture without any other aim.

As they went along, then, in this way Sancho said to his master, “Senor, would your worship give me leave to speak a little to you? For since you laid that hard injunction of silence on me several things have gone to rot in my stomach, and I have now just one on the tip of my tongue that I don’t want to be spoiled.”

“Say, on, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “and be brief in thy discourse, for there is no pleasure in one that is long.”

“Well then, senor,” returned Sancho, “I say that for some days past I have been considering how little is got or gained by going in search of these adventures that your worship seeks in these wilds and cross-roads, where, even if the most perilous are victoriously achieved, there is no one to see or know of them, and so they must be left untold for ever, to the loss of your worship’s object and the credit they deserve; therefore it seems to me it would be better (saving your worship’s better judgment) if we were to go and serve some emperor or other great prince who may have some war on hand, in whose service your worship may prove the worth of your person, your great might, and greater understanding, on perceiving which the lord in whose service we may be will perforce have to reward us, each according to his merits; and there you will not be at a loss for some one to set down your achievements in writing so as to preserve their memory for ever. Of my own I say nothing, as they will not go beyond squirely limits, though I make bold to say that, if it be the practice in chivalry to write the achievements of squires, I think mine must not be left out.”

“Thou speakest not amiss, Sancho,” answered Don Quixote, “but before that point is reached it is requisite to roam the world, as it were on probation, seeking adventures, in order that, by achieving some, name and fame may be acquired,



such that when he betakes himself to the court of some great monarch the knight may be already known by his deeds, and that the boys, the instant they see him enter the gate of the city, may all follow him and surround him, crying, 'This is the Knight of the Sun'-or the Serpent, or any other title under which he may have achieved great deeds. 'This,' they will say, 'is he who vanquished in single combat the gigantic Brocabruno of mighty strength; he who delivered the great Mameluke of Persia out of the long enchantment under which he had been for almost nine hundred years.' So from one to another they will go proclaiming his achievements; and presently at the tumult of the boys and the others the king of that kingdom will appear at the windows of his royal palace, and as soon as he beholds the knight, recognising him by his arms and the device on his shield, he will as a matter of course say, 'What ho! Forth all ye, the knights of my court, to receive the flower of chivalry who cometh hither!' At which command all will issue forth, and he himself, advancing half-way down the stairs, will embrace him closely, and salute him, kissing him on the cheek, and will then lead him to the queen's chamber, where the knight will find her with the princess her daughter, who will be one of the most beautiful and accomplished damsels that could with the utmost pains be discovered anywhere in the known world. Straightway it will come to pass that she will fix her eyes upon the knight and he his upon her, and each will seem to the other something more divine than human, and, without knowing how or why they will be taken and entangled in the inextricable toils of love, and sorely distressed in their hearts not to see any way of making their pains and sufferings known by speech. Thence they will lead him, no doubt, to some richly adorned chamber of the palace, where, having removed his armour, they will bring him a rich mantle of scarlet wherewith to robe himself, and if he looked noble in his armour he will look still more so in a doublet. When night comes he will sup with the king, queen, and princess; and all the time he will never take his eyes off her, stealing stealthy glances, unnoticed by those present, and she will do the same, and with equal cautiousness, being, as I have said, a damsel of great discretion. The tables being removed, suddenly through the door of the hall there will enter a hideous and diminutive dwarf followed by a fair dame, between two giants, who comes with a certain adventure, the work of an ancient sage; and he who shall achieve it shall be deemed the best knight in the world.

"The king will then command all those present to essay it, and none will bring it to an end and conclusion save the stranger knight, to the great enhancement of his fame, whereat the princess will be overjoyed and will esteem herself happy and fortunate in having fixed and placed her thoughts so high. And the best of it is that this king, or prince, or whatever he is, is engaged in a very bitter war with

another as powerful as himself, and the stranger knight, after having been some days at his court, requests leave from him to go and serve him in the said war. The king will grant it very readily, and the knight will courteously kiss his hands for the favour done to him; and that night he will take leave of his lady the princess at the grating of the chamber where she sleeps, which looks upon a garden, and at which he has already many times conversed with her, the go-between and confidante in the matter being a damsel much trusted by the princess. He will sigh, she will swoon, the damsel will fetch water, much distressed because morning approaches, and for the honour of her lady he would not that they were discovered; at last the princess will come to herself and will present her white hands through the grating to the knight, who will kiss them a thousand and a thousand times, bathing them with his tears. It will be arranged between them how they are to inform each other of their good or evil fortunes, and the princess will entreat him to make his absence as short as possible, which he will promise to do with many oaths; once more he kisses her hands, and takes his leave in such grief that he is well-nigh ready to die. He betakes him thence to his chamber, flings himself on his bed, cannot sleep for sorrow at parting, rises early in the morning, goes to take leave of the king, queen, and princess, and, as he takes his leave of the pair, it is told him that the princess is indisposed and cannot receive a visit; the knight thinks it is from grief at his departure, his heart is pierced, and he is hardly able to keep from showing his pain. The confidante is present, observes all, goes to tell her mistress, who listens with tears and says that one of her greatest distresses is not knowing who this knight is, and whether he is of kingly lineage or not; the damsel assures her that so much courtesy, gentleness, and gallantry of bearing as her knight possesses could not exist in any save one who was royal and illustrious; her anxiety is thus relieved, and she strives to be of good cheer lest she should excite suspicion in her parents, and at the end of two days she appears in public. Meanwhile the knight has taken his departure; he fights in the war, conquers the king's enemy, wins many cities, triumphs in many battles, returns to the court, sees his lady where he was wont to see her, and it is agreed that he shall demand her in marriage of her parents as the reward of his services; the king is unwilling to give her, as he knows not who he is, but nevertheless, whether carried off or in whatever other way it may be, the princess comes to be his bride, and her father comes to regard it as very good fortune; for it so happens that this knight is proved to be the son of a valiant king of some kingdom, I know not what, for I fancy it is not likely to be on the map. The father dies, the princess inherits, and in two words the knight becomes king. And here comes in at once the bestowal of rewards upon his squire and all who have aided him in rising to so exalted a rank. He marries his squire to a damsel

of the princess's, who will be, no doubt, the one who was confidante in their amour, and is daughter of a very great duke."

"That's what I want, and no mistake about it!" said Sancho. "That's what I'm waiting for; for all this, word for word, is in store for your worship under the title of the Knight of the Rueful Countenance."

"Thou needst not doubt it, Sancho," replied Don Quixote, "for in the same manner, and by the same steps as I have described here, knights-errant rise and have risen to be kings and emperors; all we want now is to find out what king, Christian or pagan, is at war and has a beautiful daughter; but there will be time enough to think of that, for, as I have told thee, fame must be won in other quarters before repairing to the court. There is another thing, too, that is wanting; for supposing we find a king who is at war and has a beautiful daughter, and that I have won incredible fame throughout the universe, I know not how it can be made out that I am of royal lineage, or even second cousin to an emperor; for the king will not be willing to give me his daughter in marriage unless he is first thoroughly satisfied on this point, however much my famous deeds may deserve it; so that by this deficiency I fear I shall lose what my arm has fairly earned. True it is I am a gentleman of known house, of estate and property, and entitled to the five hundred sueldos mulct; and it may be that the sage who shall write my history will so clear up my ancestry and pedigree that I may find myself fifth or sixth in descent from a king; for I would have thee know, Sancho, that there are two kinds of lineages in the world; some there be tracing and deriving their descent from kings and princes, whom time has reduced little by little until they end in a point like a pyramid upside down; and others who spring from the common herd and go on rising step by step until they come to be great lords; so that the difference is that the one were what they no longer are, and the others are what they formerly were not. And I may be of such that after investigation my origin may prove great and famous, with which the king, my father-in-law that is to be, ought to be satisfied; and should he not be, the princess will so love me that even though she well knew me to be the son of a water-carrier, she will take me for her lord and husband in spite of her father; if not, then it comes to seizing her and carrying her off where I please; for time or death will put an end to the wrath of her parents."

"It comes to this, too," said Sancho, "what some naughty people say, 'Never ask as a favour what thou canst take by force;' though it would fit better to say, 'A clear escape is better than good men's prayers.' I say so because if my lord the king, your worship's father-in-law, will not condescend to give you my lady the princess, there is nothing for it but, as your worship says, to seize her and transport her. But the mischief is that until peace is made and you come into the

peaceful enjoyment of your kingdom, the poor squire is famishing as far as rewards go, unless it be that the confidante damsel that is to be his wife comes with the princess, and that with her he tides over his bad luck until Heaven otherwise orders things; for his master, I suppose, may as well give her to him at once for a lawful wife."

"Nobody can object to that," said Don Quixote.

"Then since that may be," said Sancho, "there is nothing for it but to commend ourselves to God, and let fortune take what course it will."

"God guide it according to my wishes and thy wants," said Don Quixote, "and mean be he who thinks himself mean."

"In God's name let him be so," said Sancho: "I am an old Christian, and to fit me for a count that's enough."

"And more than enough for thee," said Don Quixote; "and even wert thou not, it would make no difference, because I being the king can easily give thee nobility without purchase or service rendered by thee, for when I make thee a count, then thou art at once a gentleman; and they may say what they will, but by my faith they will have to call thee 'your lordship,' whether they like it or not."

"Not a doubt of it; and I'll know how to support the title," said Sancho.

"Title thou shouldst say, not tittle," said his master.

"So be it," answered Sancho. "I say I will know how to behave, for once in my life I was beadle of a brotherhood, and the beadle's gown sat so well on me that all said I looked as if I was to be steward of the same brotherhood. What will it be, then, when I put a duke's robe on my back, or dress myself in gold and pearls like a count? I believe they'll come a hundred leagues to see me."

"Thou wilt look well," said Don Quixote, "but thou must shave thy beard often, for thou hast it so thick and rough and unkempt, that if thou dost not shave it every second day at least, they will see what thou art at the distance of a musket shot."

"What more will it be," said Sancho, "than having a barber, and keeping him at wages in the house? and even if it be necessary, I will make him go behind me like a nobleman's equerry."

"Why, how dost thou know that noblemen have equeries behind them?" asked Don Quixote.

"I will tell you," answered Sancho. "Years ago I was for a month at the capital and there I saw taking the air a very small gentleman who they said was a very great man, and a man following him on horseback in every turn he took, just as if he was his tail. I asked why this man did not join the other man, instead of always going behind him; they answered me that he was his equerry, and that it was the custom with nobles to have such persons behind them, and ever since

then I know it, for I have never forgotten it.”

“Thou art right,” said Don Quixote, “and in the same way thou mayest carry thy barber with thee, for customs did not come into use all together, nor were they all invented at once, and thou mayest be the first count to have a barber to follow him; and, indeed, shaving one’s beard is a greater trust than saddling one’s horse.”

“Let the barber business be my look-out,” said Sancho; “and your worship’s be it to strive to become a king, and make me a count.”

“So it shall be,” answered Don Quixote, and raising his eyes he saw what will be told in the following chapter.



## CHAPTER XXII.

OF THE FREEDOM DON QUIXOTE CONFERRED ON SEVERAL UNFORTUNATES WHO AGAINST THEIR WILL WERE BEING CARRIED WHERE THEY HAD NO WISH TO GO



Cid Hamete Benengeli, the Arab and Manchegan author, relates in this most grave, high-sounding, minute, delightful, and original history that after the discussion between the famous Don Quixote of La Mancha and his squire Sancho Panza which is set down at the end of chapter twenty-one, Don Quixote raised his eyes and saw coming along the road he was following some dozen men on foot strung together by the neck, like beads, on a great iron chain, and all

with manacles on their hands. With them there came also two men on horseback and two on foot; those on horseback with wheel-lock muskets, those on foot with javelins and swords, and as soon as Sancho saw them he said:

“That is a chain of galley slaves, on the way to the galleys by force of the king’s orders.”

“How by force?” asked Don Quixote; “is it possible that the king uses force against anyone?”

“I do not say that,” answered Sancho, “but that these are people condemned for their crimes to serve by force in the king’s galleys.”

“In fact,” replied Don Quixote, “however it may be, these people are going where they are taking them by force, and not of their own will.”

“Just so,” said Sancho.

“Then if so,” said Don Quixote, “here is a case for the exercise of my office, to put down force and to succour and help the wretched.”

“Recollect, your worship,” said Sancho, “Justice, which is the king himself, is not using force or doing wrong to such persons, but punishing them for their crimes.”

The chain of galley slaves had by this time come up, and Don Quixote in very courteous language asked those who were in custody of it to be good enough to tell him the reason or reasons for which they were conducting these people in this manner. One of the guards on horseback answered that they were galley slaves belonging to his majesty, that they were going to the galleys, and that was all that was to be said and all he had any business to know.





“Nevertheless,” replied Don Quixote, “I should like to know from each of them separately the reason of his misfortune;” to this he added more to the same effect to induce them to tell him what he wanted so civilly that the other mounted guard said to him:

“Though we have here the register and certificate of the sentence of every one of these wretches, this is no time to take them out or read them; come and ask themselves; they can tell if they choose, and they will, for these fellows take a pleasure in doing and talking about rascalities.”

With this permission, which Don Quixote would have taken even had they not granted it, he approached the chain and asked the first for what offences he was

now in such a sorry case.

He made answer that it was for being a lover.

“For that only?” replied Don Quixote; “why, if for being lovers they send people to the galleys I might have been rowing in them long ago.”

“The love is not the sort your worship is thinking of,” said the galley slave; “mine was that I loved a washerwoman’s basket of clean linen so well, and held it so close in my embrace, that if the arm of the law had not forced it from me, I should never have let it go of my own will to this moment; I was caught in the act, there was no occasion for torture, the case was settled, they treated me to a hundred lashes on the back, and three years of *gurapas* besides, and that was the end of it.”

“What are *gurapas*?” asked Don Quixote.

“*Gurapas* are galleys,” answered the galley slave, who was a young man of about four-and-twenty, and said he was a native of *Piedrahita*.

Don Quixote asked the same question of the second, who made no reply, so downcast and melancholy was he; but the first answered for him, and said, “He, sir, goes as a canary, I mean as a musician and a singer.”

“What!” said Don Quixote, “for being musicians and singers are people sent to the galleys too?”

“Yes, sir,” answered the galley slave, “for there is nothing worse than singing under suffering.”

“On the contrary, I have heard say,” said Don Quixote, “that he who sings scares away his woes.”

“Here it is the reverse,” said the galley slave; “for he who sings once weeps all his life.”

“I do not understand it,” said Don Quixote; but one of the guards said to him, “Sir, to sing under suffering means with the *non sancta* fraternity to confess under torture; they put this sinner to the torture and he confessed his crime, which was being a *cuatrero*, that is a cattle-stealer, and on his confession they sentenced him to six years in the galleys, besides two hundred lashes that he has already had on the back; and he is always dejected and downcast because the other thieves that were left behind and that march here ill-treat, and snub, and jeer, and despise him for confessing and not having spirit enough to say nay; for, say they, ‘nay’ has no more letters in it than ‘yea,’ and a culprit is well off when life or death with him depends on his own tongue and not on that of witnesses or evidence; and to my thinking they are not very far out.”

“And I think so too,” answered Don Quixote; then passing on to the third he asked him what he had asked the others, and the man answered very readily and unconcernedly, “I am going for five years to their ladyships the *gurapas* for the

want of ten ducats.”

“I will give twenty with pleasure to get you out of that trouble,” said Don Quixote.

“That,” said the galley slave, “is like a man having money at sea when he is dying of hunger and has no way of buying what he wants; I say so because if at the right time I had had those twenty ducats that your worship now offers me, I would have greased the notary’s pen and freshened up the attorney’s wit with them, so that to-day I should be in the middle of the plaza of the Zocodover at Toledo, and not on this road coupled like a greyhound. But God is great; patience — there, that’s enough of it.”

Don Quixote passed on to the fourth, a man of venerable aspect with a white beard falling below his breast, who on hearing himself asked the reason of his being there began to weep without answering a word, but the fifth acted as his tongue and said, “This worthy man is going to the galleys for four years, after having gone the rounds in ceremony and on horseback.”

“That means,” said Sancho Panza, “as I take it, to have been exposed to shame in public.”

“Just so,” replied the galley slave, “and the offence for which they gave him that punishment was having been an ear-broker, nay body-broker; I mean, in short, that this gentleman goes as a pimp, and for having besides a certain touch of the sorcerer about him.”

“If that touch had not been thrown in,” said Don Quixote, “he would not deserve, for mere pimping, to row in the galleys, but rather to command and be admiral of them; for the office of pimp is no ordinary one, being the office of persons of discretion, one very necessary in a well-ordered state, and only to be exercised by persons of good birth; nay, there ought to be an inspector and overseer of them, as in other offices, and recognised number, as with the brokers on change; in this way many of the evils would be avoided which are caused by this office and calling being in the hands of stupid and ignorant people, such as women more or less silly, and pages and jesters of little standing and experience, who on the most urgent occasions, and when ingenuity of contrivance is needed, let the crumbs freeze on the way to their mouths, and know not which is their right hand. I should like to go farther, and give reasons to show that it is advisable to choose those who are to hold so necessary an office in the state, but this is not the fit place for it; some day I will expound the matter to some one able to see to and rectify it; all I say now is, that the additional fact of his being a sorcerer has removed the sorrow it gave me to see these white hairs and this venerable countenance in so painful a position on account of his being a pimp; though I know well there are no sorceries in the world that can move or compel

the will as some simple folk fancy, for our will is free, nor is there herb or charm that can force it. All that certain silly women and quacks do is to turn men mad with potions and poisons, pretending that they have power to cause love, for, as I say, it is an impossibility to compel the will."

"It is true," said the good old man, "and indeed, sir, as far as the charge of sorcery goes I was not guilty; as to that of being a pimp I cannot deny it; but I never thought I was doing any harm by it, for my only object was that all the world should enjoy itself and live in peace and quiet, without quarrels or troubles; but my good intentions were unavailing to save me from going where I never expect to come back from, with this weight of years upon me and a urinary ailment that never gives me a moment's ease;" and again he fell to weeping as before, and such compassion did Sancho feel for him that he took out a real of four from his bosom and gave it to him in alms.

Don Quixote went on and asked another what his crime was, and the man answered with no less but rather much more sprightliness than the last one.

"I am here because I carried the joke too far with a couple of cousins of mine, and with a couple of other cousins who were none of mine; in short, I carried the joke so far with them all that it ended in such a complicated increase of kindred that no accountant could make it clear: it was all proved against me, I got no favour, I had no money, I was near having my neck stretched, they sentenced me to the galleys for six years, I accepted my fate, it is the punishment of my fault; I am a young man; let life only last, and with that all will come right. If you, sir, have anything wherewith to help the poor, God will repay it to you in heaven, and we on earth will take care in our petitions to him to pray for the life and health of your worship, that they may be as long and as good as your amiable appearance deserves."

This one was in the dress of a student, and one of the guards said he was a great talker and a very elegant Latin scholar.

Behind all these there came a man of thirty, a very personable fellow, except that when he looked, his eyes turned in a little one towards the other. He was bound differently from the rest, for he had to his leg a chain so long that it was wound all round his body, and two rings on his neck, one attached to the chain, the other to what they call a "keep-friend" or "friend's foot," from which hung two irons reaching to his waist with two manacles fixed to them in which his hands were secured by a big padlock, so that he could neither raise his hands to his mouth nor lower his head to his hands. Don Quixote asked why this man carried so many more chains than the others. The guard replied that it was because he alone had committed more crimes than all the rest put together, and was so daring and such a villain, that though they marched him in that fashion

they did not feel sure of him, but were in dread of his making his escape.

“What crimes can he have committed,” said Don Quixote, “if they have not deserved a heavier punishment than being sent to the galleys?”

“He goes for ten years,” replied the guard, “which is the same thing as civil death, and all that need be said is that this good fellow is the famous Gines de Pasamonte, otherwise called Ginesillo de Parapilla.”

“Gently, senior commissary,” said the galley slave at this, “let us have no fixing of names or surnames; my name is Gines, not Ginesillo, and my family name is Pasamonte, not Parapilla as you say; let each one mind his own business, and he will be doing enough.”

“Speak with less impertinence, master thief of extra measure,” replied the commissary, “if you don’t want me to make you hold your tongue in spite of your teeth.”

“It is easy to see,” returned the galley slave, “that man goes as God pleases, but some one shall know some day whether I am called Ginesillo de Parapilla or not.”

“Don’t they call you so, you liar?” said the guard.

“They do,” returned Gines, “but I will make them give over calling me so, or I will be shaved, where, I only say behind my teeth. If you, sir, have anything to give us, give it to us at once, and God speed you, for you are becoming tiresome with all this inquisitiveness about the lives of others; if you want to know about mine, let me tell you I am Gines de Pasamonte, whose life is written by these fingers.”

“He says true,” said the commissary, “for he has himself written his story as grand as you please, and has left the book in the prison in pawn for two hundred reals.”

“And I mean to take it out of pawn,” said Gines, “though it were in for two hundred ducats.”

“Is it so good?” said Don Quixote.

“So good is it,” replied Gines, “that a fig for ‘Lazarillo de Tormes,’ and all of that kind that have been written, or shall be written compared with it: all I will say about it is that it deals with facts, and facts so neat and diverting that no lies could match them.”

“And how is the book entitled?” asked Don Quixote.

“The ‘Life of Gines de Pasamonte,’” replied the subject of it.

“And is it finished?” asked Don Quixote.

“How can it be finished,” said the other, “when my life is not yet finished? All that is written is from my birth down to the point when they sent me to the galleys this last time.”

“Then you have been there before?” said Don Quixote.

“In the service of God and the king I have been there for four years before now, and I know by this time what the biscuit and courbash are like,” replied Gines; “and it is no great grievance to me to go back to them, for there I shall have time to finish my book; I have still many things left to say, and in the galleys of Spain there is more than enough leisure; though I do not want much for what I have to write, for I have it by heart.”

“You seem a clever fellow,” said Don Quixote.

“And an unfortunate one,” replied Gines, “for misfortune always persecutes good wit.”

“It persecutes rogues,” said the commissary.

“I told you already to go gently, master commissary,” said Pasamonte; “their lordships yonder never gave you that staff to ill-treat us wretches here, but to conduct and take us where his majesty orders you; if not, by the life of-never mind-; it may be that some day the stains made in the inn will come out in the scouring; let everyone hold his tongue and behave well and speak better; and now let us march on, for we have had quite enough of this entertainment.”

The commissary lifted his staff to strike Pasamonte in return for his threats, but Don Quixote came between them, and begged him not to ill-use him, as it was not too much to allow one who had his hands tied to have his tongue a trifle free; and turning to the whole chain of them he said:

“From all you have told me, dear brethren, make out clearly that though they have punished you for your faults, the punishments you are about to endure do not give you much pleasure, and that you go to them very much against the grain and against your will, and that perhaps this one’s want of courage under torture, that one’s want of money, the other’s want of advocacy, and lastly the perverted judgment of the judge may have been the cause of your ruin and of your failure to obtain the justice you had on your side. All which presents itself now to my mind, urging, persuading, and even compelling me to demonstrate in your case the purpose for which Heaven sent me into the world and caused me to make profession of the order of chivalry to which I belong, and the vow I took therein to give aid to those in need and under the oppression of the strong. But as I know that it is a mark of prudence not to do by foul means what may be done by fair, I will ask these gentlemen, the guards and commissary, to be so good as to release you and let you go in peace, as there will be no lack of others to serve the king under more favourable circumstances; for it seems to me a hard case to make slaves of those whom God and nature have made free. Moreover, sirs of the guard,” added Don Quixote, “these poor fellows have done nothing to you; let each answer for his own sins yonder; there is a God in Heaven who will not

forget to punish the wicked or reward the good; and it is not fitting that honest men should be the instruments of punishment to others, they being therein no way concerned. This request I make thus gently and quietly, that, if you comply with it, I may have reason for thanking you; and, if you will not voluntarily, this lance and sword together with the might of my arm shall compel you to comply with it by force.”

“Nice nonsense!” said the commissary; “a fine piece of pleasantry he has come out with at last! He wants us to let the king’s prisoners go, as if we had any authority to release them, or he to order us to do so! Go your way, sir, and good luck to you; put that basin straight that you’ve got on your head, and don’t go looking for three feet on a cat.”

“’Tis you that are the cat, rat, and rascal,” replied Don Quixote, and acting on the word he fell upon him so suddenly that without giving him time to defend himself he brought him to the ground sorely wounded with a lance-thrust; and lucky it was for him that it was the one that had the musket. The other guards stood thunderstruck and amazed at this unexpected event, but recovering presence of mind, those on horseback seized their swords, and those on foot their javelins, and attacked Don Quixote, who was waiting for them with great calmness; and no doubt it would have gone badly with him if the galley slaves, seeing the chance before them of liberating themselves, had not effected it by contriving to break the chain on which they were strung. Such was the confusion, that the guards, now rushing at the galley slaves who were breaking loose, now to attack Don Quixote who was waiting for them, did nothing at all that was of any use. Sancho, on his part, gave a helping hand to release Gines de Pasamonte, who was the first to leap forth upon the plain free and unfettered, and who, attacking the prostrate commissary, took from him his sword and the musket, with which, aiming at one and levelling at another, he, without ever discharging it, drove every one of the guards off the field, for they took to flight, as well to escape Pasamonte’s musket, as the showers of stones the now released galley slaves were raining upon them. Sancho was greatly grieved at the affair, because he anticipated that those who had fled would report the matter to the Holy Brotherhood, who at the summons of the alarm-bell would at once sally forth in quest of the offenders; and he said so to his master, and entreated him to leave the place at once, and go into hiding in the sierra that was close by.

“That is all very well,” said Don Quixote, “but I know what must be done now;” and calling together all the galley slaves, who were now running riot, and had stripped the commissary to the skin, he collected them round him to hear what he had to say, and addressed them as follows: “To be grateful for benefits received is the part of persons of good birth, and one of the sins most offensive

to God is ingratitude; I say so because, sirs, ye have already seen by manifest proof the benefit ye have received of me; in return for which I desire, and it is my good pleasure that, laden with that chain which I have taken off your necks, ye at once set out and proceed to the city of El Toboso, and there present yourselves before the lady Dulcinea del Toboso, and say to her that her knight, he of the Rueful Countenance, sends to commend himself to her; and that ye recount to her in full detail all the particulars of this notable adventure, up to the recovery of your longed-for liberty; and this done ye may go where ye will, and good fortune attend you."

Gines de Pasamonte made answer for all, saying, "That which you, sir, our deliverer, demand of us, is of all impossibilities the most impossible to comply with, because we cannot go together along the roads, but only singly and separate, and each one his own way, endeavouring to hide ourselves in the bowels of the earth to escape the Holy Brotherhood, which, no doubt, will come out in search of us. What your worship may do, and fairly do, is to change this service and tribute as regards the lady Dulcinea del Toboso for a certain quantity of ave-marias and credos which we will say for your worship's intention, and this is a condition that can be complied with by night as by day, running or resting, in peace or in war; but to imagine that we are going now to return to the flesh-pots of Egypt, I mean to take up our chain and set out for El Toboso, is to imagine that it is now night, though it is not yet ten in the morning, and to ask this of us is like asking pears of the elm tree."

"Then by all that's good," said Don Quixote (now stirred to wrath), "Don son of a bitch, Don Ginesillo de Paropillo, or whatever your name is, you will have to go yourself alone, with your tail between your legs and the whole chain on your back."

Pasamonte, who was anything but meek (being by this time thoroughly convinced that Don Quixote was not quite right in his head as he had committed such a vagary as to set them free), finding himself abused in this fashion, gave the wink to his companions, and falling back they began to shower stones on Don Quixote at such a rate that he was quite unable to protect himself with his buckler, and poor Rocinante no more heeded the spur than if he had been made of brass. Sancho planted himself behind his ass, and with him sheltered himself from the hailstorm that poured on both of them. Don Quixote was unable to shield himself so well but that more pebbles than I could count struck him full on the body with such force that they brought him to the ground; and the instant he fell the student pounced upon him, snatched the basin from his head, and with it struck three or four blows on his shoulders, and as many more on the ground, knocking it almost to pieces. They then stripped him of a jacket that he wore



over his armour, and they would have stripped off his stockings if his greaves had not prevented them. From Sancho they took his coat, leaving him in his shirt-sleeves; and dividing among themselves the remaining spoils of the battle, they went each one his own way, more solicitous about keeping clear of the Holy Brotherhood they dreaded, than about burdening themselves with the chain, or going to present themselves before the lady Dulcinea del Toboso. The ass and Rocinante, Sancho and Don Quixote, were all that were left upon the spot; the ass with drooping head, serious, shaking his ears from time to time as if he thought the storm of stones that assailed them was not yet over; Rocinante stretched beside his master, for he too had been brought to the ground by a stone; Sancho stripped, and trembling with fear of the Holy Brotherhood; and Don Quixote fuming to find himself so served by the very persons for whom he had done so much.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

OF WHAT BEFELL DON QUIXOTE IN THE SIERRA MORENA, WHICH  
WAS ONE OF THE RAREST ADVENTURES RELATED IN THIS  
VERACIOUS HISTORY



Seeing himself served in this way, Don Quixote said to his squire, “I have always heard it said, Sancho, that to do good to boors is to throw water into the sea. If I had believed thy words, I should have avoided this trouble; but it is done now, it is only to have patience and take warning for the future.”



“Your worship will take warning as much as I am a Turk,” returned Sancho; “but, as you say this mischief might have been avoided if you had believed me, believe me now, and a still greater one will be avoided; for I tell you chivalry is of no account with the Holy Brotherhood, and they don’t care two maravedis for all the knights-errant in the world; and I can tell you I fancy I hear their arrows whistling past my ears this minute.”

“Thou art a coward by nature, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “but lest thou shouldst say I am obstinate, and that I never do as thou dost advise, this once I will take thy advice, and withdraw out of reach of that fury thou so darest; but it must be on one condition, that never, in life or in death, thou art to say to

anyone that I retired or withdrew from this danger out of fear, but only in compliance with thy entreaties; for if thou sayest otherwise thou wilt lie therein, and from this time to that, and from that to this, I give thee lie, and say thou liest and wilt lie every time thou thinkest or sayest it; and answer me not again; for at the mere thought that I am withdrawing or retiring from any danger, above all from this, which does seem to carry some little shadow of fear with it, I am ready to take my stand here and await alone, not only that Holy Brotherhood you talk of and dread, but the brothers of the twelve tribes of Israel, and the Seven Maccabees, and Castor and Pollux, and all the brothers and brotherhoods in the world.”

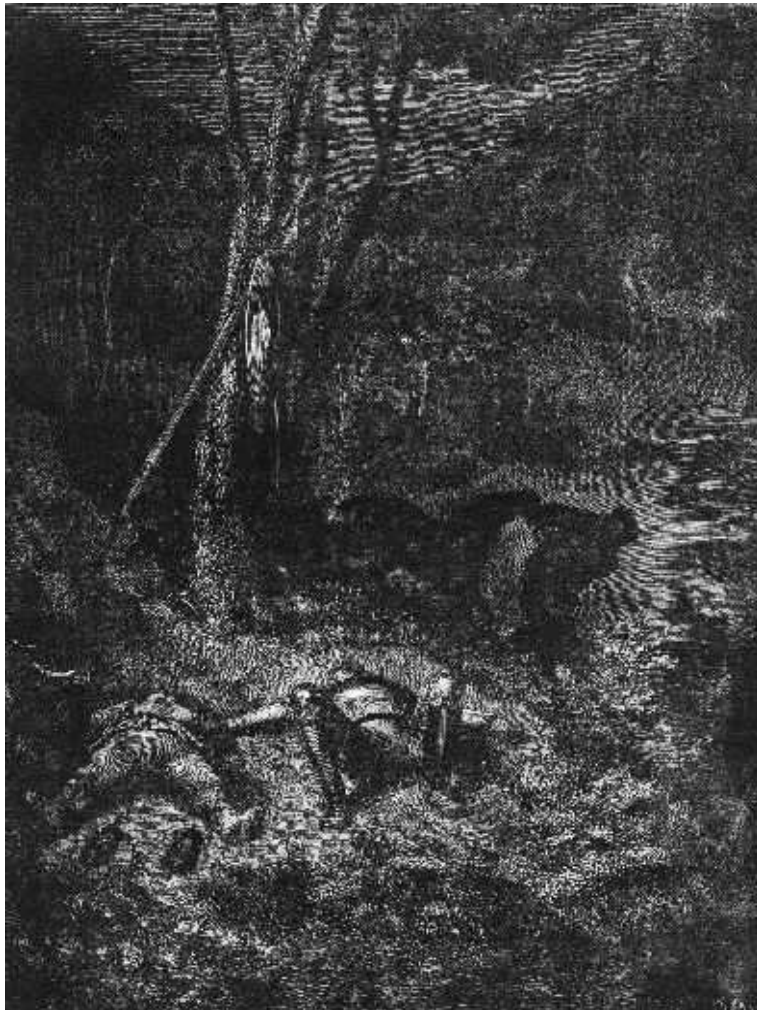
“Senor,” replied Sancho, “to retire is not to flee, and there is no wisdom in waiting when danger outweighs hope, and it is the part of wise men to preserve themselves to-day for to-morrow, and not risk all in one day; and let me tell you, though I am a clown and a boor, I have got some notion of what they call safe conduct; so repent not of having taken my advice, but mount Rocinante if you can, and if not I will help you; and follow me, for my mother-wit tells me we have more need of legs than hands just now.”

Don Quixote mounted without replying, and, Sancho leading the way on his ass, they entered the side of the Sierra Morena, which was close by, as it was Sancho’s design to cross it entirely and come out again at El Viso or Almodovar del Campo, and hide for some days among its crags so as to escape the search of the Brotherhood should they come to look for them. He was encouraged in this by perceiving that the stock of provisions carried by the ass had come safe out of the fray with the galley slaves, a circumstance that he regarded as a miracle, seeing how they pillaged and ransacked.



That night they reached the very heart of the Sierra Morena, where it seemed prudent to Sancho to pass the night and even some days, at least as many as the stores he carried might last, and so they encamped between two rocks and among some cork trees; but fatal destiny, which, according to the opinion of those who have not the light of the true faith, directs, arranges, and settles everything in its own way, so ordered it that Gines de Pasamonte, the famous knave and thief who by the virtue and madness of Don Quixote had been released from the chain, driven by fear of the Holy Brotherhood, which he had good reason to dread, resolved to take hiding in the mountains; and his fate and fear led him to the same spot to which Don Quixote and Sancho Panza had been led by theirs, just in time to recognise them and leave them to fall asleep: and as the wicked are always ungrateful, and necessity leads to evil-doing, and immediate advantage overcomes all considerations of the future, Gines, who was

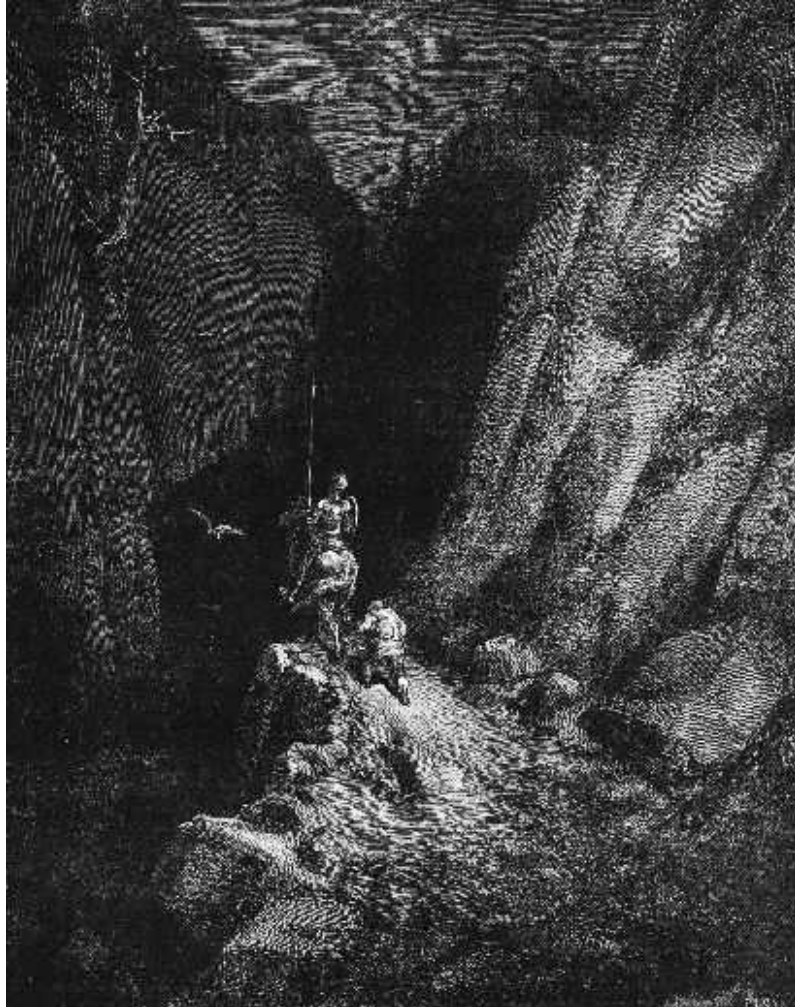
neither grateful nor well-principled, made up his mind to steal Sancho Panza's ass, not troubling himself about Rocinante, as being a prize that was no good either to pledge or sell. While Sancho slept he stole his ass, and before day dawned he was far out of reach.



Aurora made her appearance bringing gladness to the earth but sadness to Sancho Panza, for he found that his Dapple was missing, and seeing himself bereft of him he began the saddest and most doleful lament in the world, so loud that Don Quixote awoke at his exclamations and heard him saying, "O son of my bowels, born in my very house, my children's plaything, my wife's joy, the envy of my neighbours, relief of my burdens, and lastly, half supporter of myself, for with the six-and-twenty maravedis thou didst earn me daily I met half my charges."

Don Quixote, when he heard the lament and learned the cause, consoled Sancho with the best arguments he could, entreating him to be patient, and promising to give him a letter of exchange ordering three out of five ass-colts that he had at home to be given to him. Sancho took comfort at this, dried his tears, suppressed his sobs, and returned thanks for the kindness shown him by Don Quixote. He on his part was rejoiced to the heart on entering the mountains, as they seemed to him to be just the place for the adventures he was in quest of. They brought back to his memory the marvellous adventures that had befallen knights-errant in like solitudes and wilds, and he went along reflecting on these things, so absorbed and carried away by them that he had no thought for anything else.





Nor had Sancho any other care (now that he fancied he was travelling in a safe quarter) than to satisfy his appetite with such remains as were left of the clerical spoils, and so he marched behind his master laden with what Dapple used to carry, emptying the sack and packing his paunch, and so long as he could go that way, he would not have given a farthing to meet with another adventure.

While so engaged he raised his eyes and saw that his master had halted, and was trying with the point of his pike to lift some bulky object that lay upon the ground, on which he hastened to join him and help him if it were needful, and reached him just as with the point of the pike he was raising a saddle-pad with a valise attached to it, half or rather wholly rotten and torn; but so heavy were they

that Sancho had to help to take them up, and his master directed him to see what the valise contained. Sancho did so with great alacrity, and though the valise was secured by a chain and padlock, from its torn and rotten condition he was able to see its contents, which were four shirts of fine holland, and other articles of linen no less curious than clean; and in a handkerchief he found a good lot of gold crowns, and as soon as he saw them he exclaimed: "Blessed be all Heaven for sending us an adventure that is good for something!"

Searching further he found a little memorandum book richly bound; this Don Quixote asked of him, telling him to take the money and keep it for himself. Sancho kissed his hands for the favour, and cleared the valise of its linen, which he stowed away in the provision sack. Considering the whole matter, Don Quixote observed: "It seems to me, Sancho — and it is impossible it can be otherwise — that some strayed traveller must have crossed this sierra and been attacked and slain by footpads, who brought him to this remote spot to bury him."

"That cannot be," answered Sancho, "because if they had been robbers they would not have left this money."

"Thou art right," said Don Quixote, "and I cannot guess or explain what this may mean; but stay; let us see if in this memorandum book there is anything written by which we may be able to trace out or discover what we want to know."

He opened it, and the first thing he found in it, written roughly but in a very good hand, was a sonnet, and reading it aloud that Sancho might hear it, he found that it ran as follows: SONNET

Or Love is lacking in intelligence,

Or to the height of cruelty attains,

Or else it is my doom to suffer pains

Beyond the measure due to my offence.

But if Love be a God, it follows thence

That he knows all, and certain it remains

No God loves cruelty; then who ordains

This penance that enthrals while it torments?

It were a falsehood, Chloe, thee to name;

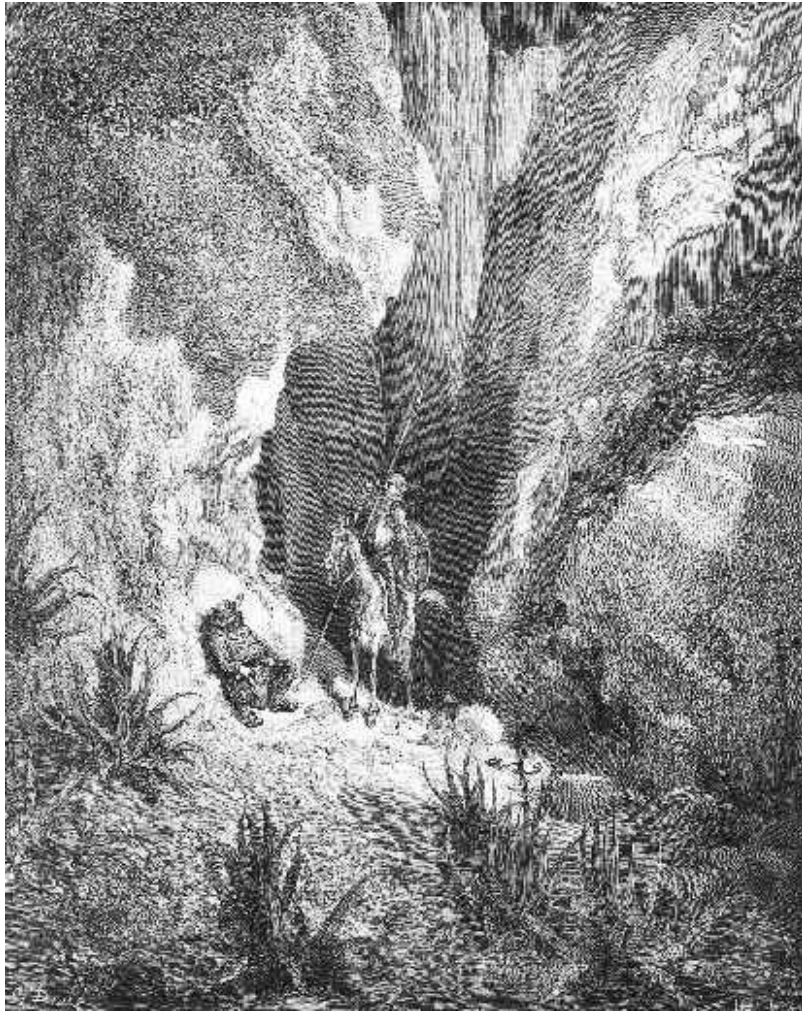
Such evil with such goodness cannot live;

And against Heaven I dare not charge the blame,

I only know it is my fate to die.

To him who knows not whence his malady

A miracle alone a cure can give.



“There is nothing to be learned from that rhyme,” said Sancho, “unless by that clue there’s in it, one may draw out the ball of the whole matter.”

“What clue is there?” said Don Quixote.

“I thought your worship spoke of a clue in it,” said Sancho.

“I only said Chloe,” replied Don Quixote; “and that no doubt, is the name of the lady of whom the author of the sonnet complains; and, faith, he must be a tolerable poet, or I know little of the craft.”

“Then your worship understands rhyming too?”

“And better than thou thinkest,” replied Don Quixote, “as thou shalt see when thou carriest a letter written in verse from beginning to end to my lady Dulcinea del Toboso, for I would have thee know, Sancho, that all or most of the knights-errant in days of yore were great troubadours and great musicians, for both of these accomplishments, or more properly speaking gifts, are the peculiar property of lovers-errant: true it is that the verses of the knights of old have more spirit than neatness in them.”

“Read more, your worship,” said Sancho, “and you will find something that will enlighten us.”

Don Quixote turned the page and said, “This is prose and seems to be a letter.”

“A correspondence letter, senor?”

“From the beginning it seems to be a love letter,” replied Don Quixote.

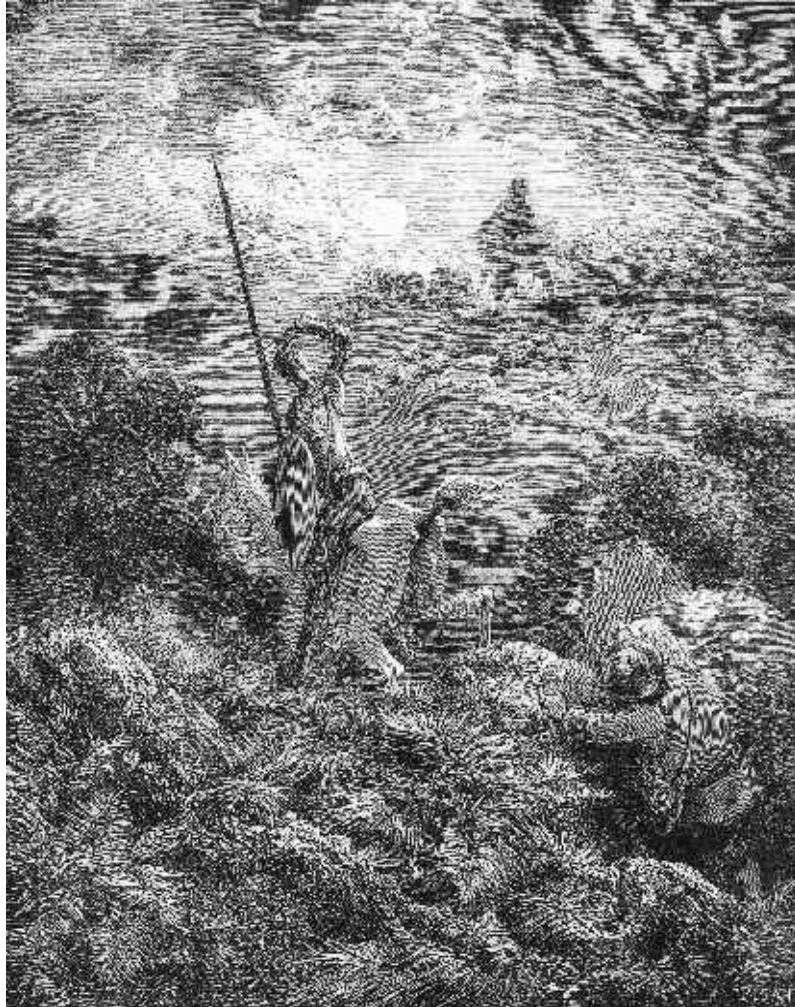
“Then let your worship read it aloud,” said Sancho, “for I am very fond of love matters.”

“With all my heart,” said Don Quixote, and reading it aloud as Sancho had requested him, he found it ran thus: Thy false promise and my sure misfortune carry me to a place whence the news of my death will reach thy ears before the words of my complaint. Ungrateful one, thou hast rejected me for one more wealthy, but not more worthy; but if virtue were esteemed wealth I should neither envy the fortunes of others nor weep for misfortunes of my own. What thy beauty raised up thy deeds have laid low; by it I believed thee to be an angel, by them I know thou art a woman. Peace be with thee who hast sent war to me, and Heaven grant that the deceit of thy husband be ever hidden from thee, so that thou repent not of what thou hast done, and I reap not a revenge I would not have.

When he had finished the letter, Don Quixote said, “There is less to be gathered from this than from the verses, except that he who wrote it is some rejected lover;” and turning over nearly all the pages of the book he found more verses and letters, some of which he could read, while others he could not; but they were all made up of complaints, laments, misgivings, desires and aversions, favours and rejections, some rapturous, some doleful. While Don Quixote examined the book, Sancho examined the valise, not leaving a corner in the whole of it or in the pad that he did not search, peer into, and explore, or seam

that he did not rip, or tuft of wool that he did not pick to pieces, lest anything should escape for want of care and pains; so keen was the covetousness excited in him by the discovery of the crowns, which amounted to near a hundred; and though he found no more booty, he held the blanket flights, balsam vomits, stake benedictions, carriers' fisticuffs, missing alforjas, stolen coat, and all the hunger, thirst, and weariness he had endured in the service of his good master, cheap at the price; as he considered himself more than fully indemnified for all by the payment he received in the gift of the treasure-trove.

The Knight of the Rueful Countenance was still very anxious to find out who the owner of the valise could be, conjecturing from the sonnet and letter, from the money in gold, and from the fineness of the shirts, that he must be some lover of distinction whom the scorn and cruelty of his lady had driven to some desperate course; but as in that uninhabited and rugged spot there was no one to be seen of whom he could inquire, he saw nothing else for it but to push on, taking whatever road Rocinante chose — which was where he could make his way — firmly persuaded that among these wilds he could not fail to meet some rare adventure. As he went along, then, occupied with these thoughts, he perceived on the summit of a height that rose before their eyes a man who went springing from rock to rock and from tussock to tussock with marvellous agility. As well as he could make out he was unclad, with a thick black beard, long tangled hair, and bare legs and feet, his thighs were covered by breeches apparently of tawny velvet but so ragged that they showed his skin in several places.



He was bareheaded, and notwithstanding the swiftness with which he passed as has been described, the Knight of the Rueful Countenance observed and noted all these trifles, and though he made the attempt, he was unable to follow him, for it was not granted to the feebleness of Rocinante to make way over such rough ground, he being, moreover, slow-paced and sluggish by nature. Don Quixote at once came to the conclusion that this was the owner of the saddle-pad and of the valise, and made up his mind to go in search of him, even though he should have to wander a year in those mountains before he found him, and so he directed Sancho to take a short cut over one side of the mountain, while he himself went by the other, and perhaps by this means they might light upon this

man who had passed so quickly out of their sight.

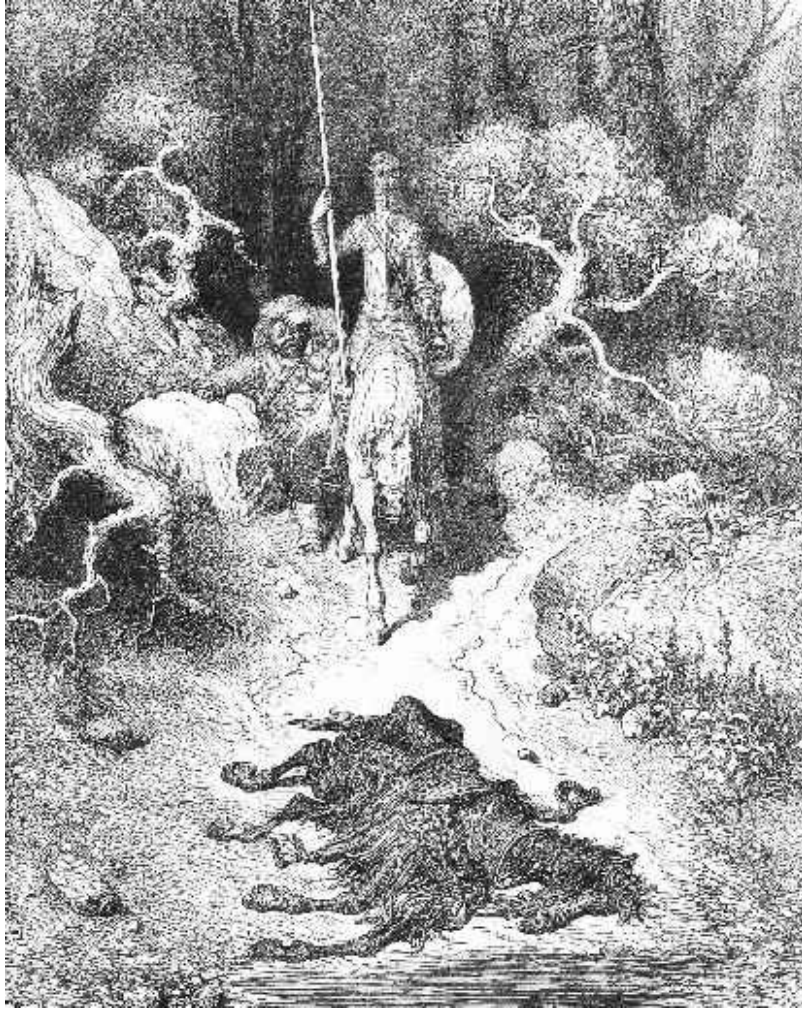
“I could not do that,” said Sancho, “for when I separate from your worship fear at once lays hold of me, and assails me with all sorts of panics and fancies; and let what I now say be a notice that from this time forth I am not going to stir a finger’s width from your presence.”

“It shall be so,” said he of the Rueful Countenance, “and I am very glad that thou art willing to rely on my courage, which will never fail thee, even though the soul in thy body fail thee; so come on now behind me slowly as well as thou canst, and make lanterns of thine eyes; let us make the circuit of this ridge; perhaps we shall light upon this man that we saw, who no doubt is no other than the owner of what we found.”

To which Sancho made answer, “Far better would it be not to look for him, for, if we find him, and he happens to be the owner of the money, it is plain I must restore it; it would be better, therefore, that without taking this needless trouble, I should keep possession of it until in some other less meddlesome and officious way the real owner may be discovered; and perhaps that will be when I shall have spent it, and then the king will hold me harmless.”

“Thou art wrong there, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “for now that we have a suspicion who the owner is, and have him almost before us, we are bound to seek him and make restitution; and if we do not see him, the strong suspicion we have as to his being the owner makes us as guilty as if he were so; and so, friend Sancho, let not our search for him give thee any uneasiness, for if we find him it will relieve mine.”

And so saying he gave Rocinante the spur, and Sancho followed him on foot and loaded, and after having partly made the circuit of the mountain they found lying in a ravine, dead and half devoured by dogs and pecked by jackdaws, a mule saddled and bridled, all which still further strengthened their suspicion that he who had fled was the owner of the mule and the saddle-pad.



As they stood looking at it they heard a whistle like that of a shepherd watching his flock, and suddenly on their left there appeared a great number of goats and behind them on the summit of the mountain the goatherd in charge of them, a man advanced in years. Don Quixote called aloud to him and begged him to come down to where they stood. He shouted in return, asking what had brought them to that spot, seldom or never trodden except by the feet of goats, or of the wolves and other wild beasts that roamed around. Sancho in return bade him come down, and they would explain all to him.

The goatherd descended, and reaching the place where Don Quixote stood, he said, "I will wager you are looking at that hack mule that lies dead in the hollow



there, and, faith, it has been lying there now these six months; tell me, have you come upon its master about here?"

"We have come upon nobody," answered Don Quixote, "nor on anything except a saddle-pad and a little valise that we found not far from this."

"I found it too," said the goatherd, "but I would not lift it nor go near it for fear of some ill-luck or being charged with theft, for the devil is crafty, and things rise up under one's feet to make one fall without knowing why or wherefore."

"That's exactly what I say," said Sancho; "I found it too, and I would not go within a stone's throw of it; there I left it, and there it lies just as it was, for I don't want a dog with a bell."

"Tell me, good man," said Don Quixote, "do you know who is the owner of this property?"

"All I can tell you," said the goatherd, "is that about six months ago, more or less, there arrived at a shepherd's hut three leagues, perhaps, away from this, a youth of well-bred appearance and manners, mounted on that same mule which lies dead here, and with the same saddle-pad and valise which you say you found and did not touch. He asked us what part of this sierra was the most rugged and retired; we told him that it was where we now are; and so in truth it is, for if you push on half a league farther, perhaps you will not be able to find your way out; and I am wondering how you have managed to come here, for there is no road or path that leads to this spot. I say, then, that on hearing our answer the youth turned about and made for the place we pointed out to him, leaving us all charmed with his good looks, and wondering at his question and the haste with which we saw him depart in the direction of the sierra; and after that we saw him no more, until some days afterwards he crossed the path of one of our shepherds, and without saying a word to him, came up to him and gave him several cuffs and kicks, and then turned to the ass with our provisions and took all the bread and cheese it carried, and having done this made off back again into the sierra with extraordinary swiftness. When some of us goatherds learned this we went in search of him for about two days through the most remote portion of this sierra, at the end of which we found him lodged in the hollow of a large thick cork tree. He came out to meet us with great gentleness, with his dress now torn and his face so disfigured and burned by the sun, that we hardly recognised him but that his clothes, though torn, convinced us, from the recollection we had of them, that he was the person we were looking for. He saluted us courteously, and in a few well-spoken words he told us not to wonder at seeing him going about in this guise, as it was binding upon him in order that he might work out a penance which for his many sins had been imposed upon him. We asked him to

tell us who he was, but we were never able to find out from him: we begged of him too, when he was in want of food, which he could not do without, to tell us where we should find him, as we would bring it to him with all good-will and readiness; or if this were not to his taste, at least to come and ask it of us and not take it by force from the shepherds. He thanked us for the offer, begged pardon for the late assault, and promised for the future to ask it in God's name without offering violence to anybody. As for fixed abode, he said he had no other than that which chance offered wherever night might overtake him; and his words ended in an outburst of weeping so bitter that we who listened to him must have been very stones had we not joined him in it, comparing what we saw of him the first time with what we saw now; for, as I said, he was a graceful and gracious youth, and in his courteous and polished language showed himself to be of good birth and courtly breeding, and rustics as we were that listened to him, even to our rusticity his gentle bearing sufficed to make it plain.

"But in the midst of his conversation he stopped and became silent, keeping his eyes fixed upon the ground for some time, during which we stood still waiting anxiously to see what would come of this abstraction; and with no little pity, for from his behaviour, now staring at the ground with fixed gaze and eyes wide open without moving an eyelid, again closing them, compressing his lips and raising his eyebrows, we could perceive plainly that a fit of madness of some kind had come upon him; and before long he showed that what we imagined was the truth, for he arose in a fury from the ground where he had thrown himself, and attacked the first he found near him with such rage and fierceness that if we had not dragged him off him, he would have beaten or bitten him to death, all the while exclaiming, 'Oh faithless Fernando, here, here shalt thou pay the penalty of the wrong thou hast done me; these hands shall tear out that heart of thine, abode and dwelling of all iniquity, but of deceit and fraud above all; and to these he added other words all in effect upbraiding this Fernando and charging him with treachery and faithlessness.

"We forced him to release his hold with no little difficulty, and without another word he left us, and rushing off plunged in among these brakes and brambles, so as to make it impossible for us to follow him; from this we suppose that madness comes upon him from time to time, and that some one called Fernando must have done him a wrong of a grievous nature such as the condition to which it had brought him seemed to show. All this has been since then confirmed on those occasions, and they have been many, on which he has crossed our path, at one time to beg the shepherds to give him some of the food they carry, at another to take it from them by force; for when there is a fit of madness upon him, even though the shepherds offer it freely, he will not accept

it but snatches it from them by dint of blows; but when he is in his senses he begs it for the love of God, courteously and civilly, and receives it with many thanks and not a few tears. And to tell you the truth, sirs," continued the goatherd, "it was yesterday that we resolved, I and four of the lads, two of them our servants, and the other two friends of mine, to go in search of him until we find him, and when we do to take him, whether by force or of his own consent, to the town of Almodovar, which is eight leagues from this, and there strive to cure him (if indeed his malady admits of a cure), or learn when he is in his senses who he is, and if he has relatives to whom we may give notice of his misfortune. This, sirs, is all I can say in answer to what you have asked me; and be sure that the owner of the articles you found is he whom you saw pass by with such nimbleness and so naked."

For Don Quixote had already described how he had seen the man go bounding along the mountain side, and he was now filled with amazement at what he heard from the goatherd, and more eager than ever to discover who the unhappy madman was; and in his heart he resolved, as he had done before, to search for him all over the mountain, not leaving a corner or cave unexamined until he had found him. But chance arranged matters better than he expected or hoped, for at that very moment, in a gorge on the mountain that opened where they stood, the youth he wished to find made his appearance, coming along talking to himself in a way that would have been unintelligible near at hand, much more at a distance. His garb was what has been described, save that as he drew near, Don Quixote perceived that a tattered doublet which he wore was amber-tanned, from which he concluded that one who wore such garments could not be of very low rank.

Approaching them, the youth greeted them in a harsh and hoarse voice but with great courtesy. Don Quixote returned his salutation with equal politeness, and dismounting from Rocinante advanced with well-bred bearing and grace to embrace him, and held him for some time close in his arms as if he had known him for a long time. The other, whom we may call the Ragged One of the Sorry Countenance, as Don Quixote was of the Rueful, after submitting to the embrace pushed him back a little and, placing his hands on Don Quixote's shoulders, stood gazing at him as if seeking to see whether he knew him, not less amazed, perhaps, at the sight of the face, figure, and armour of Don Quixote than Don Quixote was at the sight of him. To be brief, the first to speak after embracing was the Ragged One, and he said what will be told farther on.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

### IN WHICH IS CONTINUED THE ADVENTURE OF THE SIERRA MORENA



The history relates that it was with the greatest attention Don Quixote listened to the ragged knight of the Sierra, who began by saying:

“Of a surety, senor, whoever you are, for I know you not, I thank you for the proofs of kindness and courtesy you have shown me, and would I were in a condition to requite with something more than goodwill that which you have displayed towards me in the cordial reception you have given me; but my fate does not afford me any other means of returning kindnesses done me save the hearty desire to repay them.”

“Mine,” replied Don Quixote, “is to be of service to you, so much so that I

had resolved not to quit these mountains until I had found you, and learned of you whether there is any kind of relief to be found for that sorrow under which from the strangeness of your life you seem to labour; and to search for you with all possible diligence, if search had been necessary. And if your misfortune should prove to be one of those that refuse admission to any sort of consolation, it was my purpose to join you in lamenting and mourning over it, so far as I could; for it is still some comfort in misfortune to find one who can feel for it. And if my good intentions deserve to be acknowledged with any kind of courtesy, I entreat you, senor, by that which I perceive you possess in so high a degree, and likewise conjure you by whatever you love or have loved best in life, to tell me who you are and the cause that has brought you to live or die in these solitudes like a brute beast, dwelling among them in a manner so foreign to your condition as your garb and appearance show. And I swear," added Don Quixote, "by the order of knighthood which I have received, and by my vocation of knight-errant, if you gratify me in this, to serve you with all the zeal my calling demands of me, either in relieving your misfortune if it admits of relief, or in joining you in lamenting it as I promised to do."

The Knight of the Thicket, hearing him of the Rueful Countenance talk in this strain, did nothing but stare at him, and stare at him again, and again survey him from head to foot; and when he had thoroughly examined him, he said to him:

"If you have anything to give me to eat, for God's sake give it me, and after I have eaten I will do all you ask in acknowledgment of the goodwill you have displayed towards me."

Sancho from his sack, and the goatherd from his pouch, furnished the Ragged One with the means of appeasing his hunger, and what they gave him he ate like a half-witted being, so hastily that he took no time between mouthfuls, gorging rather than swallowing; and while he ate neither he nor they who observed him uttered a word. As soon as he had done he made signs to them to follow him, which they did, and he led them to a green plot which lay a little farther off round the corner of a rock. On reaching it he stretched himself upon the grass, and the others did the same, all keeping silence, until the Ragged One, settling himself in his place, said:

"If it is your wish, sirs, that I should disclose in a few words the surpassing extent of my misfortunes, you must promise not to break the thread of my sad story with any question or other interruption, for the instant you do so the tale I tell will come to an end."

These words of the Ragged One reminded Don Quixote of the tale his squire had told him, when he failed to keep count of the goats that had crossed the river and the story remained unfinished; but to return to the Ragged One, he went on

to say:

“I give you this warning because I wish to pass briefly over the story of my misfortunes, for recalling them to memory only serves to add fresh ones, and the less you question me the sooner shall I make an end of the recital, though I shall not omit to relate anything of importance in order fully to satisfy your curiosity.”

Don Quixote gave the promise for himself and the others, and with this assurance he began as follows:

“My name is Cardenio, my birthplace one of the best cities of this Andalusia, my family noble, my parents rich, my misfortune so great that my parents must have wept and my family grieved over it without being able by their wealth to lighten it; for the gifts of fortune can do little to relieve reverses sent by Heaven. In that same country there was a heaven in which love had placed all the glory I could desire; such was the beauty of Luscinda, a damsel as noble and as rich as I, but of happier fortunes, and of less firmness than was due to so worthy a passion as mine. This Luscinda I loved, worshipped, and adored from my earliest and tenderest years, and she loved me in all the innocence and sincerity of childhood. Our parents were aware of our feelings, and were not sorry to perceive them, for they saw clearly that as they ripened they must lead at last to a marriage between us, a thing that seemed almost prearranged by the equality of our families and wealth. We grew up, and with our growth grew the love between us, so that the father of Luscinda felt bound for propriety’s sake to refuse me admission to his house, in this perhaps imitating the parents of that Thisbe so celebrated by the poets, and this refusal but added love to love and flame to flame; for though they enforced silence upon our tongues they could not impose it upon our pens, which can make known the heart’s secrets to a loved one more freely than tongues; for many a time the presence of the object of love shakes the firmest will and strikes dumb the boldest tongue. Ah heavens! how many letters did I write her, and how many dainty modest replies did I receive! how many ditties and love-songs did I compose in which my heart declared and made known its feelings, described its ardent longings, revelled in its recollections and dallied with its desires! At length growing impatient and feeling my heart languishing with longing to see her, I resolved to put into execution and carry out what seemed to me the best mode of winning my desired and merited reward, to ask her of her father for my lawful wife, which I did. To this his answer was that he thanked me for the disposition I showed to do honour to him and to regard myself as honoured by the bestowal of his treasure; but that as my father was alive it was his by right to make this demand, for if it were not in accordance with his full will and pleasure, Luscinda was not to be taken or given by stealth. I thanked him for his kindness, reflecting that there was reason in what he said, and that my father

would assent to it as soon as I should tell him, and with that view I went the very same instant to let him know what my desires were. When I entered the room where he was I found him with an open letter in his hand, which, before I could utter a word, he gave me, saying, 'By this letter thou wilt see, Cardenio, the disposition the Duke Ricardo has to serve thee.' This Duke Ricardo, as you, sirs, probably know already, is a grandee of Spain who has his seat in the best part of this Andalusia. I took and read the letter, which was couched in terms so flattering that even I myself felt it would be wrong in my father not to comply with the request the duke made in it, which was that he would send me immediately to him, as he wished me to become the companion, not servant, of his eldest son, and would take upon himself the charge of placing me in a position corresponding to the esteem in which he held me. On reading the letter my voice failed me, and still more when I heard my father say, 'Two days hence thou wilt depart, Cardenio, in accordance with the duke's wish, and give thanks to God who is opening a road to thee by which thou mayest attain what I know thou dost deserve; and to these words he added others of fatherly counsel. The time for my departure arrived; I spoke one night to Luscinda, I told her all that had occurred, as I did also to her father, entreating him to allow some delay, and to defer the disposal of her hand until I should see what the Duke Ricardo sought of me: he gave me the promise, and she confirmed it with vows and swoonings unnumbered. Finally, I presented myself to the duke, and was received and treated by him so kindly that very soon envy began to do its work, the old servants growing envious of me, and regarding the duke's inclination to show me favour as an injury to themselves. But the one to whom my arrival gave the greatest pleasure was the duke's second son, Fernando by name, a gallant youth, of noble, generous, and amorous disposition, who very soon made so intimate a friend of me that it was remarked by everybody; for though the elder was attached to me, and showed me kindness, he did not carry his affectionate treatment to the same length as Don Fernando. It so happened, then, that as between friends no secret remains unshared, and as the favour I enjoyed with Don Fernando had grown into friendship, he made all his thoughts known to me, and in particular a love affair which troubled his mind a little. He was deeply in love with a peasant girl, a vassal of his father's, the daughter of wealthy parents, and herself so beautiful, modest, discreet, and virtuous, that no one who knew her was able to decide in which of these respects she was most highly gifted or most excelled. The attractions of the fair peasant raised the passion of Don Fernando to such a point that, in order to gain his object and overcome her virtuous resolutions, he determined to pledge his word to her to become her husband, for to attempt it in any other way was to attempt an impossibility.



Bound to him as I was by friendship, I strove by the best arguments and the most forcible examples I could think of to restrain and dissuade him from such a course; but perceiving I produced no effect I resolved to make the Duke Ricardo, his father, acquainted with the matter; but Don Fernando, being sharp-witted and shrewd, foresaw and apprehended this, perceiving that by my duty as a good servant I was bound not to keep concealed a thing so much opposed to the honour of my lord the duke; and so, to mislead and deceive me, he told me he could find no better way of effacing from his mind the beauty that so enslaved him than by absenting himself for some months, and that he wished the absence to be effected by our going, both of us, to my father's house under the pretence, which he would make to the duke, of going to see and buy some fine horses that there were in my city, which produces the best in the world. When I heard him say so, even if his resolution had not been so good a one I should have hailed it as one of the happiest that could be imagined, prompted by my affection, seeing what a favourable chance and opportunity it offered me of returning to see my Luscinda. With this thought and wish I commended his idea and encouraged his design, advising him to put it into execution as quickly as possible, as, in truth, absence produced its effect in spite of the most deeply rooted feelings. But, as afterwards appeared, when he said this to me he had already enjoyed the peasant girl under the title of husband, and was waiting for an opportunity of making it known with safety to himself, being in dread of what his father the duke would do when he came to know of his folly. It happened, then, that as with young men love is for the most part nothing more than appetite, which, as its final object is enjoyment, comes to an end on obtaining it, and that which seemed to be love takes to flight, as it cannot pass the limit fixed by nature, which fixes no limit to true love — what I mean is that after Don Fernando had enjoyed this peasant girl his passion subsided and his eagerness cooled, and if at first he feigned a wish to absent himself in order to cure his love, he was now in reality anxious to go to avoid keeping his promise.

“The duke gave him permission, and ordered me to accompany him; we arrived at my city, and my father gave him the reception due to his rank; I saw Luscinda without delay, and, though it had not been dead or deadened, my love gathered fresh life. To my sorrow I told the story of it to Don Fernando, for I thought that in virtue of the great friendship he bore me I was bound to conceal nothing from him. I extolled her beauty, her gaiety, her wit, so warmly, that my praises excited in him a desire to see a damsel adorned by such attractions. To my misfortune I yielded to it, showing her to him one night by the light of a taper at a window where we used to talk to one another. As she appeared to him in her dressing-gown, she drove all the beauties he had seen until then out of his

recollection; speech failed him, his head turned, he was spell-bound, and in the end love-smitten, as you will see in the course of the story of my misfortune; and to inflame still further his passion, which he hid from me and revealed to Heaven alone, it so happened that one day he found a note of hers entreating me to demand her of her father in marriage, so delicate, so modest, and so tender, that on reading it he told me that in Luscinda alone were combined all the charms of beauty and understanding that were distributed among all the other women in the world. It is true, and I own it now, that though I knew what good cause Don Fernando had to praise Luscinda, it gave me uneasiness to hear these praises from his mouth, and I began to fear, and with reason to feel distrust of him, for there was no moment when he was not ready to talk of Luscinda, and he would start the subject himself even though he dragged it in unseasonably, a circumstance that aroused in me a certain amount of jealousy; not that I feared any change in the constancy or faith of Luscinda; but still my fate led me to forebode what she assured me against. Don Fernando contrived always to read the letters I sent to Luscinda and her answers to me, under the pretence that he enjoyed the wit and sense of both. It so happened, then, that Luscinda having begged of me a book of chivalry to read, one that she was very fond of, *Amadis of Gaul*—

Don Quixote no sooner heard a book of chivalry mentioned, than he said:

“Had your worship told me at the beginning of your story that the Lady Luscinda was fond of books of chivalry, no other laudation would have been requisite to impress upon me the superiority of her understanding, for it could not have been of the excellence you describe had a taste for such delightful reading been wanting; so, as far as I am concerned, you need waste no more words in describing her beauty, worth, and intelligence; for, on merely hearing what her taste was, I declare her to be the most beautiful and the most intelligent woman in the world; and I wish your worship had, along with *Amadis of Gaul*, sent her the worthy *Don Rugel of Greece*, for I know the Lady Luscinda would greatly relish *Daraida and Garaya*, and the shrewd sayings of the shepherd *Darinel*, and the admirable verses of his *bucolics*, sung and delivered by him with such sprightliness, wit, and ease; but a time may come when this omission can be remedied, and to rectify it nothing more is needed than for your worship to be so good as to come with me to my village, for there I can give you more than three hundred books which are the delight of my soul and the entertainment of my life; — though it occurs to me that I have not got one of them now, thanks to the spite of wicked and envious enchanters; — but pardon me for having broken the promise we made not to interrupt your discourse; for when I hear chivalry or knights-errant mentioned, I can no more help talking about them than

the rays of the sun can help giving heat, or those of the moon moisture; pardon me, therefore, and proceed, for that is more to the purpose now.”

While Don Quixote was saying this, Cardenio allowed his head to fall upon his breast, and seemed plunged in deep thought; and though twice Don Quixote bade him go on with his story, he neither looked up nor uttered a word in reply; but after some time he raised his head and said, “I cannot get rid of the idea, nor will anyone in the world remove it, or make me think otherwise — and he would be a blockhead who would hold or believe anything else than that that arrant knave Master Elisabad made free with Queen Madasima.”

“That is not true, by all that’s good,” said Don Quixote in high wrath, turning upon him angrily, as his way was; “and it is a very great slander, or rather villainy. Queen Madasima was a very illustrious lady, and it is not to be supposed that so exalted a princess would have made free with a quack; and whoever maintains the contrary lies like a great scoundrel, and I will give him to know it, on foot or on horseback, armed or unarmed, by night or by day, or as he likes best.”

Cardenio was looking at him steadily, and his mad fit having now come upon him, he had no disposition to go on with his story, nor would Don Quixote have listened to it, so much had what he had heard about Madasima disgusted him. Strange to say, he stood up for her as if she were in earnest his veritable born lady; to such a pass had his unholy books brought him. Cardenio, then, being, as I said, now mad, when he heard himself given the lie, and called a scoundrel and other insulting names, not relishing the jest, snatched up a stone that he found near him, and with it delivered such a blow on Don Quixote’s breast that he laid him on his back. Sancho Panza, seeing his master treated in this fashion, attacked the madman with his closed fist; but the Ragged One received him in such a way that with a blow of his fist he stretched him at his feet, and then mounting upon him crushed his ribs to his own satisfaction; the goatherd, who came to the rescue, shared the same fate; and having beaten and pummelled them all he left them and quietly withdrew to his hiding-place on the mountain. Sancho rose, and with the rage he felt at finding himself so belaboured without deserving it, ran to take vengeance on the goatherd, accusing him of not giving them warning that this man was at times taken with a mad fit, for if they had known it they would have been on their guard to protect themselves. The goatherd replied that he had said so, and that if he had not heard him, that was no fault of his. Sancho retorted, and the goatherd rejoined, and the altercation ended in their seizing each other by the beard, and exchanging such fisticuffs that if Don Quixote had not made peace between them, they would have knocked one another to pieces.

“Leave me alone, Sir Knight of the Rueful Countenance,” said Sancho, grappling with the goatherd, “for of this fellow, who is a clown like myself, and no dubbed knight, I can safely take satisfaction for the affront he has offered me, fighting with him hand to hand like an honest man.”

“That is true,” said Don Quixote, “but I know that he is not to blame for what has happened.”

With this he pacified them, and again asked the goatherd if it would be possible to find Cardenio, as he felt the greatest anxiety to know the end of his story. The goatherd told him, as he had told him before, that there was no knowing of a certainty where his lair was; but that if he wandered about much in that neighbourhood he could not fail to fall in with him either in or out of his senses.





## CHAPTER XXV.

WHICH TREATS OF THE STRANGE THINGS THAT HAPPENED TO THE  
STOUT KNIGHT OF LA MANCHA IN THE SIERRA MORENA, AND OF  
HIS IMITATION OF THE PENANCE OF BELTENEUBROS



Don Quixote took leave of the goatherd, and once more mounting Rocinante bade Sancho follow him, which he having no ass, did very discontentedly. They proceeded slowly, making their way into the most rugged part of the mountain, Sancho all the while dying to have a talk with his master, and longing for him to begin, so that there should be no breach of the injunction laid upon him; but unable to keep silence so long he said to him:

“Senor Don Quixote, give me your worship’s blessing and dismissal, for I’d

like to go home at once to my wife and children with whom I can at any rate talk and converse as much as I like; for to want me to go through these solitudes day and night and not speak to you when I have a mind is burying me alive. If luck would have it that animals spoke as they did in the days of Guisopete, it would not be so bad, because I could talk to Rocinante about whatever came into my head, and so put up with my ill-fortune; but it is a hard case, and not to be borne with patience, to go seeking adventures all one's life and get nothing but kicks and blanketings, brickbats and punches, and with all this to have to sew up one's mouth without daring to say what is in one's heart, just as if one were dumb."

"I understand thee, Sancho," replied Don Quixote; "thou art dying to have the interdict I placed upon thy tongue removed; consider it removed, and say what thou wilt while we are wandering in these mountains."

"So be it," said Sancho; "let me speak now, for God knows what will happen by-and-by; and to take advantage of the permit at once, I ask, what made your worship stand up so for that Queen Majimasa, or whatever her name is, or what did it matter whether that abbot was a friend of hers or not? for if your worship had let that pass — and you were not a judge in the matter — it is my belief the madman would have gone on with his story, and the blow of the stone, and the kicks, and more than half a dozen cuffs would have been escaped."

"In faith, Sancho," answered Don Quixote, "if thou knewest as I do what an honourable and illustrious lady Queen Madasima was, I know thou wouldst say I had great patience that I did not break in pieces the mouth that uttered such blasphemies, for a very great blasphemy it is to say or imagine that a queen has made free with a surgeon. The truth of the story is that that Master Elisabad whom the madman mentioned was a man of great prudence and sound judgment, and served as governor and physician to the queen, but to suppose that she was his mistress is nonsense deserving very severe punishment; and as a proof that Cardenio did not know what he was saying, remember when he said it he was out of his wits."

"That is what I say," said Sancho; "there was no occasion for minding the words of a madman; for if good luck had not helped your worship, and he had sent that stone at your head instead of at your breast, a fine way we should have been in for standing up for my lady yonder, God confound her! And then, would not Cardenio have gone free as a madman?"

"Against men in their senses or against madmen," said Don Quixote, "every knight-errant is bound to stand up for the honour of women, whoever they may be, much more for queens of such high degree and dignity as Queen Madasima, for whom I have a particular regard on account of her amiable qualities; for, besides being extremely beautiful, she was very wise, and very patient under her

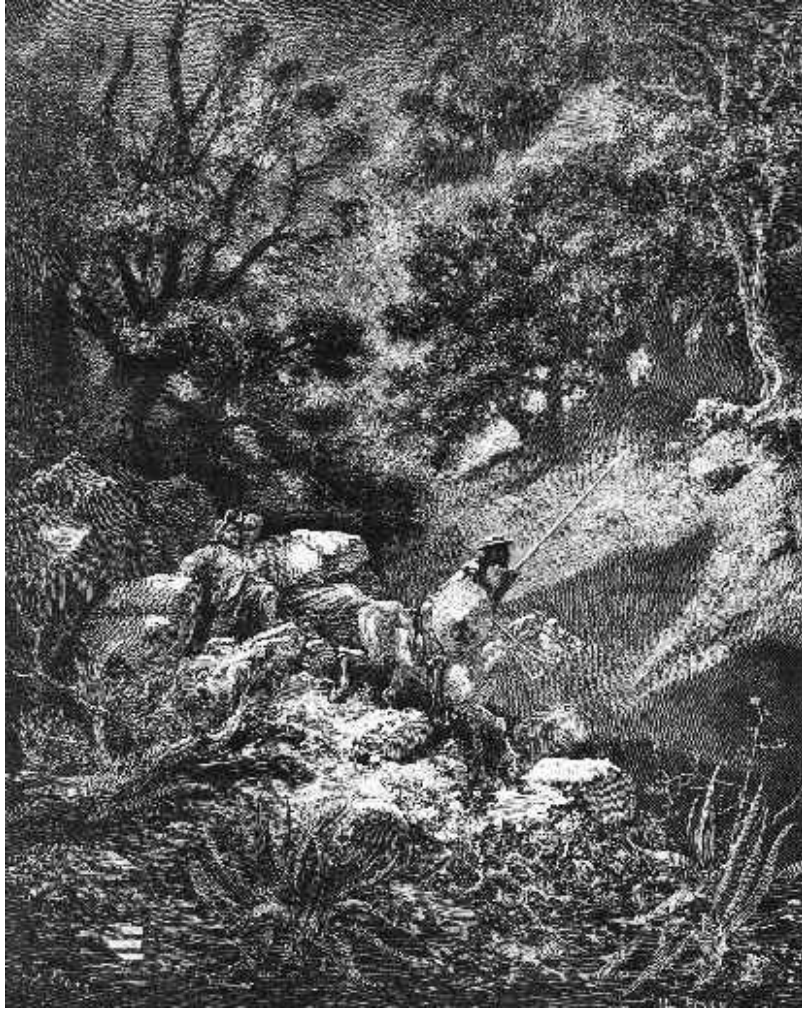
misfortunes, of which she had many; and the counsel and society of the Master Elisabad were a great help and support to her in enduring her afflictions with wisdom and resignation; hence the ignorant and ill-disposed vulgar took occasion to say and think that she was his mistress; and they lie, I say it once more, and will lie two hundred times more, all who think and say so.”

“I neither say nor think so,” said Sancho; “let them look to it; with their bread let them eat it; they have rendered account to God whether they misbehaved or not; I come from my vineyard, I know nothing; I am not fond of prying into other men’s lives; he who buys and lies feels it in his purse; moreover, naked was I born, naked I find myself, I neither lose nor gain; but if they did, what is that to me? many think there are flitches where there are no hooks; but who can put gates to the open plain? moreover they said of God-”

“God bless me,” said Don Quixote, “what a set of absurdities thou art stringing together! What has what we are talking about got to do with the proverbs thou art threading one after the other? for God’s sake hold thy tongue, Sancho, and henceforward keep to prodding thy ass and don’t meddle in what does not concern thee; and understand with all thy five senses that everything I have done, am doing, or shall do, is well founded on reason and in conformity with the rules of chivalry, for I understand them better than all the world that profess them.”

“Senor,” replied Sancho, “is it a good rule of chivalry that we should go astray through these mountains without path or road, looking for a madman who when he is found will perhaps take a fancy to finish what he began, not his story, but your worship’s head and my ribs, and end by breaking them altogether for us?”





“Peace, I say again, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “for let me tell thee it is not so much the desire of finding that madman that leads me into these regions as that which I have of performing among them an achievement wherewith I shall win eternal name and fame throughout the known world; and it shall be such that I shall thereby set the seal on all that can make a knight-errant perfect and famous.”

“And is it very perilous, this achievement?”

“No,” replied he of the Rueful Countenance; “though it may be in the dice that we may throw deuce-ace instead of sixes; but all will depend on thy diligence.”

“On my diligence!” said Sancho.

“Yes,” said Don Quixote, “for if thou dost return soon from the place where I mean to send thee, my penance will be soon over, and my glory will soon begin. But as it is not right to keep thee any longer in suspense, waiting to see what comes of my words, I would have thee know, Sancho, that the famous Amadis of Gaul was one of the most perfect knights-errant — I am wrong to say he was one; he stood alone, the first, the only one, the lord of all that were in the world in his time. A fig for Don Belianis, and for all who say he equalled him in any respect, for, my oath upon it, they are deceiving themselves! I say, too, that when a painter desires to become famous in his art he endeavours to copy the originals of the rarest painters that he knows; and the same rule holds good for all the most important crafts and callings that serve to adorn a state; thus must he who would be esteemed prudent and patient imitate Ulysses, in whose person and labours Homer presents to us a lively picture of prudence and patience; as Virgil, too, shows us in the person of Aeneas the virtue of a pious son and the sagacity of a brave and skilful captain; not representing or describing them as they were, but as they ought to be, so as to leave the example of their virtues to posterity. In the same way Amadis was the polestar, day-star, sun of valiant and devoted knights, whom all we who fight under the banner of love and chivalry are bound to imitate. This, then, being so, I consider, friend Sancho, that the knight-errant who shall imitate him most closely will come nearest to reaching the perfection of chivalry. Now one of the instances in which this knight most conspicuously showed his prudence, worth, valour, endurance, fortitude, and love, was when he withdrew, rejected by the Lady Oriana, to do penance upon the Pena Pobre, changing his name into that of Beltenebros, a name assuredly significant and appropriate to the life which he had voluntarily adopted. So, as it is easier for me to imitate him in this than in cleaving giants asunder, cutting off serpents’ heads, slaying dragons, routing armies, destroying fleets, and breaking enchantments, and as this place is so well suited for a similar purpose, I must not allow the opportunity to escape which now so conveniently offers me its forelock.”

“What is it in reality,” said Sancho, “that your worship means to do in such an out-of-the-way place as this?”

“Have I not told thee,” answered Don Quixote, “that I mean to imitate Amadis here, playing the victim of despair, the madman, the maniac, so as at the same time to imitate the valiant Don Roland, when at the fountain he had evidence of the fair Angelica having disgraced herself with Medoro and through grief thereat went mad, and plucked up trees, troubled the waters of the clear springs, slew destroyed flocks, burned down huts, levelled houses, dragged mares after him, and perpetrated a hundred thousand other outrages worthy of everlasting renown

and record? And though I have no intention of imitating Roland, or Orlando, or Rotolando (for he went by all these names), step by step in all the mad things he did, said, and thought, I will make a rough copy to the best of my power of all that seems to me most essential; but perhaps I shall content myself with the simple imitation of Amadis, who without giving way to any mischievous madness but merely to tears and sorrow, gained as much fame as the most famous.”

“It seems to me,” said Sancho, “that the knights who behaved in this way had provocation and cause for those follies and penances; but what cause has your worship for going mad? What lady has rejected you, or what evidence have you found to prove that the lady Dulcinea del Toboso has been trifling with Moor or Christian?”

“There is the point,” replied Don Quixote, “and that is the beauty of this business of mine; no thanks to a knight-errant for going mad when he has cause; the thing is to turn crazy without any provocation, and let my lady know, if I do this in the dry, what I would do in the moist; moreover I have abundant cause in the long separation I have endured from my lady till death, Dulcinea del Toboso; for as thou didst hear that shepherd Ambrosio say the other day, in absence all ills are felt and feared; and so, friend Sancho, waste no time in advising me against so rare, so happy, and so unheard-of an imitation; mad I am, and mad I must be until thou returnest with the answer to a letter that I mean to send by thee to my lady Dulcinea; and if it be such as my constancy deserves, my insanity and penance will come to an end; and if it be to the opposite effect, I shall become mad in earnest, and, being so, I shall suffer no more; thus in whatever way she may answer I shall escape from the struggle and affliction in which thou wilt leave me, enjoying in my senses the boon thou bearest me, or as a madman not feeling the evil thou bringest me. But tell me, Sancho, hast thou got Mambrino’s helmet safe? for I saw thee take it up from the ground when that ungrateful wretch tried to break it in pieces but could not, by which the fineness of its temper may be seen.”

To which Sancho made answer, “By the living God, Sir Knight of the Rueful Countenance, I cannot endure or bear with patience some of the things that your worship says; and from them I begin to suspect that all you tell me about chivalry, and winning kingdoms and empires, and giving islands, and bestowing other rewards and dignities after the custom of knights-errant, must be all made up of wind and lies, and all pigments or figments, or whatever we may call them; for what would anyone think that heard your worship calling a barber’s basin Mambrino’s helmet without ever seeing the mistake all this time, but that one who says and maintains such things must have his brains addled? I have the

basin in my sack all dinted, and I am taking it home to have it mended, to trim my beard in it, if, by God's grace, I am allowed to see my wife and children some day or other."

"Look here, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "by him thou didst swear by just now I swear thou hast the most limited understanding that any squire in the world has or ever had. Is it possible that all this time thou hast been going about with me thou hast never found out that all things belonging to knights-errant seem to be illusions and nonsense and ravings, and to go always by contraries? And not because it really is so, but because there is always a swarm of enchanter's in attendance upon us that change and alter everything with us, and turn things as they please, and according as they are disposed to aid or destroy us; thus what seems to thee a barber's basin seems to me Mambrino's helmet, and to another it will seem something else; and rare foresight it was in the sage who is on my side to make what is really and truly Mambrino's helmet seem a basin to everybody, for, being held in such estimation as it is, all the world would pursue me to rob me of it; but when they see it is only a barber's basin they do not take the trouble to obtain it; as was plainly shown by him who tried to break it, and left it on the ground without taking it, for, by my faith, had he known it he would never have left it behind. Keep it safe, my friend, for just now I have no need of it; indeed, I shall have to take off all this armour and remain as naked as I was born, if I have a mind to follow Roland rather than Amadis in my penance."

Thus talking they reached the foot of a high mountain which stood like an isolated peak among the others that surrounded it. Past its base there flowed a gentle brook, all around it spread a meadow so green and luxuriant that it was a delight to the eyes to look upon it, and forest trees in abundance, and shrubs and flowers, added to the charms of the spot. Upon this place the Knight of the Rueful Countenance fixed his choice for the performance of his penance, and as he beheld it exclaimed in a loud voice as though he were out of his senses:

"This is the place, oh, ye heavens, that I select and choose for bewailing the misfortune in which ye yourselves have plunged me: this is the spot where the overflowings of mine eyes shall swell the waters of yon little brook, and my deep and endless sighs shall stir unceasingly the leaves of these mountain trees, in testimony and token of the pain my persecuted heart is suffering. Oh, ye rural deities, whoever ye be that haunt this lone spot, give ear to the complaint of a wretched lover whom long absence and brooding jealousy have driven to bewail his fate among these wilds and complain of the hard heart of that fair and ungrateful one, the end and limit of all human beauty! Oh, ye wood nymphs and dryads, that dwell in the thickets of the forest, so may the nimble wanton satyrs by whom ye are vainly wooed never disturb your sweet repose, help me to

lament my hard fate or at least weary not at listening to it! Oh, Dulcinea del Toboso, day of my night, glory of my pain, guide of my path, star of my fortune, so may Heaven grant thee in full all thou seekest of it, bethink thee of the place and condition to which absence from thee has brought me, and make that return in kindness that is due to my fidelity! Oh, lonely trees, that from this day forward shall bear me company in my solitude, give me some sign by the gentle movement of your boughs that my presence is not distasteful to you! Oh, thou, my squire, pleasant companion in my prosperous and adverse fortunes, fix well in thy memory what thou shalt see me do here, so that thou mayest relate and report it to the sole cause of all,” and so saying he dismounted from Rocinante, and in an instant relieved him of saddle and bridle, and giving him a slap on the croup, said, “He gives thee freedom who is bereft of it himself, oh steed as excellent in deed as thou art unfortunate in thy lot; begone where thou wilt, for thou bearest written on thy forehead that neither Astolfo’s hippogriff, nor the famed Frontino that cost Bradamante so dear, could equal thee in speed.”

Seeing this Sancho said, “Good luck to him who has saved us the trouble of stripping the pack-saddle off Dapple! By my faith he would not have gone without a slap on the croup and something said in his praise; though if he were here I would not let anyone strip him, for there would be no occasion, as he had nothing of the lover or victim of despair about him, inasmuch as his master, which I was while it was God’s pleasure, was nothing of the sort; and indeed, Sir Knight of the Rueful Countenance, if my departure and your worship’s madness are to come off in earnest, it will be as well to saddle Rocinante again in order that he may supply the want of Dapple, because it will save me time in going and returning: for if I go on foot I don’t know when I shall get there or when I shall get back, as I am, in truth, a bad walker.”

“I declare, Sancho,” returned Don Quixote, “it shall be as thou wilt, for thy plan does not seem to me a bad one, and three days hence thou wilt depart, for I wish thee to observe in the meantime what I do and say for her sake, that thou mayest be able to tell it.”

“But what more have I to see besides what I have seen?” said Sancho.

“Much thou knowest about it!” said Don Quixote. “I have now got to tear up my garments, to scatter about my armour, knock my head against these rocks, and more of the same sort of thing, which thou must witness.”

“For the love of God,” said Sancho, “be careful, your worship, how you give yourself those knocks on the head, for you may come across such a rock, and in such a way, that the very first may put an end to the whole contrivance of this penance; and I should think, if indeed knocks on the head seem necessary to you, and this business cannot be done without them, you might be content — as the

whole thing is feigned, and counterfeit, and in joke — you might be content, I say, with giving them to yourself in the water, or against something soft, like cotton; and leave it all to me; for I'll tell my lady that your worship knocked your head against a point of rock harder than a diamond."

"I thank thee for thy good intentions, friend Sancho," answered Don Quixote, "but I would have thee know that all these things I am doing are not in joke, but very much in earnest, for anything else would be a transgression of the ordinances of chivalry, which forbid us to tell any lie whatever under the penalties due to apostasy; and to do one thing instead of another is just the same as lying; so my knocks on the head must be real, solid, and valid, without anything sophisticated or fanciful about them, and it will be needful to leave me some lint to dress my wounds, since fortune has compelled us to do without the balsam we lost."

"It was worse losing the ass," replied Sancho, "for with him lint and all were lost; but I beg of your worship not to remind me again of that accursed liquor, for my soul, not to say my stomach, turns at hearing the very name of it; and I beg of you, too, to reckon as past the three days you allowed me for seeing the mad things you do, for I take them as seen already and pronounced upon, and I will tell wonderful stories to my lady; so write the letter and send me off at once, for I long to return and take your worship out of this purgatory where I am leaving you."

"Purgatory dost thou call it, Sancho?" said Don Quixote, "rather call it hell, or even worse if there be anything worse."

"For one who is in hell," said Sancho, "nulla est retentio, as I have heard say."

"I do not understand what retentio means," said Don Quixote.

"Retentio," answered Sancho, "means that whoever is in hell never comes nor can come out of it, which will be the opposite case with your worship or my legs will be idle, that is if I have spurs to enliven Rocinante: let me once get to El Toboso and into the presence of my lady Dulcinea, and I will tell her such things of the follies and madnesses (for it is all one) that your worship has done and is still doing, that I will manage to make her softer than a glove though I find her harder than a cork tree; and with her sweet and honeyed answer I will come back through the air like a witch, and take your worship out of this purgatory that seems to be hell but is not, as there is hope of getting out of it; which, as I have said, those in hell have not, and I believe your worship will not say anything to the contrary."

"That is true," said he of the Rueful Countenance, "but how shall we manage to write the letter?"

"And the ass-colt order too," added Sancho.

“All shall be included,” said Don Quixote; “and as there is no paper, it would be well done to write it on the leaves of trees, as the ancients did, or on tablets of wax; though that would be as hard to find just now as paper. But it has just occurred to me how it may be conveniently and even more than conveniently written, and that is in the note-book that belonged to Cardenio, and thou wilt take care to have it copied on paper, in a good hand, at the first village thou comest to where there is a schoolmaster, or if not, any sacristan will copy it; but see thou give it not to any notary to copy, for they write a law hand that Satan could not make out.”

“But what is to be done about the signature?” said Sancho.

“The letters of Amadis were never signed,” said Don Quixote.

“That is all very well,” said Sancho, “but the order must needs be signed, and if it is copied they will say the signature is false, and I shall be left without asscolts.”

“The order shall go signed in the same book,” said Don Quixote, “and on seeing it my niece will make no difficulty about obeying it; as to the loveletter thou canst put by way of signature, ‘Yours till death, the Knight of the Rueful Countenance.’ And it will be no great matter if it is in some other person’s hand, for as well as I recollect Dulcinea can neither read nor write, nor in the whole course of her life has she seen handwriting or letter of mine, for my love and hers have been always platonic, not going beyond a modest look, and even that so seldom that I can safely swear I have not seen her four times in all these twelve years I have been loving her more than the light of these eyes that the earth will one day devour; and perhaps even of those four times she has not once perceived that I was looking at her: such is the retirement and seclusion in which her father Lorenzo Corchuelo and her mother Aldonza Nogales have brought her up.”

“So, so!” said Sancho; “Lorenzo Corchuelo’s daughter is the lady Dulcinea del Toboso, otherwise called Aldonza Lorenzo?”

“She it is,” said Don Quixote, “and she it is that is worthy to be lady of the whole universe.”

“I know her well,” said Sancho, “and let me tell you she can fling a crowbar as well as the lustiest lad in all the town. Giver of all good! but she is a brave lass, and a right and stout one, and fit to be helpmate to any knight-errant that is or is to be, who may make her his lady: the whoreson wench, what sting she has and what a voice! I can tell you one day she posted herself on the top of the belfry of the village to call some labourers of theirs that were in a ploughed field of her father’s, and though they were better than half a league off they heard her as well as if they were at the foot of the tower; and the best of her is that she is

not a bit prudish, for she has plenty of affability, and jokes with everybody, and has a grin and a jest for everything. So, Sir Knight of the Rueful Countenance, I say you not only may and ought to do mad freaks for her sake, but you have a good right to give way to despair and hang yourself; and no one who knows of it but will say you did well, though the devil should take you; and I wish I were on my road already, simply to see her, for it is many a day since I saw her, and she must be altered by this time, for going about the fields always, and the sun and the air spoil women's looks greatly. But I must own the truth to your worship, Senor Don Quixote; until now I have been under a great mistake, for I believed truly and honestly that the lady Dulcinea must be some princess your worship was in love with, or some person great enough to deserve the rich presents you have sent her, such as the Biscayan and the galley slaves, and many more no doubt, for your worship must have won many victories in the time when I was not yet your squire. But all things considered, what good can it do the lady Aldonza Lorenzo, I mean the lady Dulcinea del Toboso, to have the vanquished your worship sends or will send coming to her and going down on their knees before her? Because may be when they came she'd be hackling flax or threshing on the threshing floor, and they'd be ashamed to see her, and she'd laugh, or resent the present."

"I have before now told thee many times, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "that thou art a mighty great chatterer, and that with a blunt wit thou art always striving at sharpness; but to show thee what a fool thou art and how rational I am, I would have thee listen to a short story. Thou must know that a certain widow, fair, young, independent, and rich, and above all free and easy, fell in love with a sturdy strapping young lay-brother; his superior came to know of it, and one day said to the worthy widow by way of brotherly remonstrance, 'I am surprised, senora, and not without good reason, that a woman of such high standing, so fair, and so rich as you are, should have fallen in love with such a mean, low, stupid fellow as So-and-so, when in this house there are so many masters, graduates, and divinity students from among whom you might choose as if they were a lot of pears, saying this one I'll take, that I won't take;' but she replied to him with great sprightliness and candour, 'My dear sir, you are very much mistaken, and your ideas are very old-fashioned, if you think that I have made a bad choice in So-and-so, fool as he seems; because for all I want with him he knows as much and more philosophy than Aristotle.' In the same way, Sancho, for all I want with Dulcinea del Toboso she is just as good as the most exalted princess on earth. It is not to be supposed that all those poets who sang the praises of ladies under the fancy names they give them, had any such mistresses. Thinkest thou that the Amarillises, the Phillises, the Sylvias, the



Dianas, the Galateas, the Filidas, and all the rest of them, that the books, the ballads, the barber's shops, the theatres are full of, were really and truly ladies of flesh and blood, and mistresses of those that glorify and have glorified them? Nothing of the kind; they only invent them for the most part to furnish a subject for their verses, and that they may pass for lovers, or for men valiant enough to be so; and so it suffices me to think and believe that the good Aldonza Lorenzo is fair and virtuous; and as to her pedigree it is very little matter, for no one will examine into it for the purpose of conferring any order upon her, and I, for my part, reckon her the most exalted princess in the world. For thou shouldst know, Sancho, if thou dost not know, that two things alone beyond all others are incentives to love, and these are great beauty and a good name, and these two things are to be found in Dulcinea in the highest degree, for in beauty no one equals her and in good name few approach her; and to put the whole thing in a nutshell, I persuade myself that all I say is as I say, neither more nor less, and I picture her in my imagination as I would have her to be, as well in beauty as in condition; Helen approaches her not nor does Lucretia come up to her, nor any other of the famous women of times past, Greek, Barbarian, or Latin; and let each say what he will, for if in this I am taken to task by the ignorant, I shall not be censured by the critical."

"I say that your worship is entirely right," said Sancho, "and that I am an ass. But I know not how the name of ass came into my mouth, for a rope is not to be mentioned in the house of him who has been hanged; but now for the letter, and then, God be with you, I am off."

Don Quixote took out the note-book, and, retiring to one side, very deliberately began to write the letter, and when he had finished it he called to Sancho, saying he wished to read it to him, so that he might commit it to memory, in case of losing it on the road; for with evil fortune like his anything might be apprehended. To which Sancho replied, "Write it two or three times there in the book and give it to me, and I will carry it very carefully, because to expect me to keep it in my memory is all nonsense, for I have such a bad one that I often forget my own name; but for all that repeat it to me, as I shall like to hear it, for surely it will run as if it was in print."

"Listen," said Don Quixote, "this is what it says:

#### "DON QUIXOTE'S LETTER TO DULCINEA DEL TOBOSO

"Sovereign and exalted Lady, — The pierced by the point of absence, the wounded to the heart's core, sends thee, sweetest Dulcinea del Toboso, the health that he himself enjoys not. If thy beauty despises me, if thy worth is not for me, if thy scorn is my affliction, though I be sufficiently long-suffering, hardly shall I

endure this anxiety, which, besides being oppressive, is protracted. My good squire Sancho will relate to thee in full, fair ingrate, dear enemy, the condition to which I am reduced on thy account: if it be thy pleasure to give me relief, I am thine; if not, do as may be pleasing to thee; for by ending my life I shall satisfy thy cruelty and my desire.

“Thine till death,

“The Knight of the Rueful Countenance.”

“By the life of my father,” said Sancho, when he heard the letter, “it is the loftiest thing I ever heard. Body of me! how your worship says everything as you like in it! And how well you fit in ‘The Knight of the Rueful Countenance’ into the signature. I declare your worship is indeed the very devil, and there is nothing you don’t know.”

“Everything is needed for the calling I follow,” said Don Quixote.

“Now then,” said Sancho, “let your worship put the order for the three ass-colts on the other side, and sign it very plainly, that they may recognise it at first sight.”

“With all my heart,” said Don Quixote, and as he had written it he read it to this effect:

“Mistress Niece, — By this first of ass-colts please pay to Sancho Panza, my squire, three of the five I left at home in your charge: said three ass-colts to be paid and delivered for the same number received here in hand, which upon this and upon his receipt shall be duly paid. Done in the heart of the Sierra Morena, the twenty-seventh of August of this present year.”

“That will do,” said Sancho; “now let your worship sign it.”

“There is no need to sign it,” said Don Quixote, “but merely to put my flourish, which is the same as a signature, and enough for three asses, or even three hundred.”

“I can trust your worship,” returned Sancho; “let me go and saddle Rocinante, and be ready to give me your blessing, for I mean to go at once without seeing the fooleries your worship is going to do; I’ll say I saw you do so many that she will not want any more.”

“At any rate, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “I should like — and there is reason for it — I should like thee, I say, to see me stripped to the skin and performing a dozen or two of insanities, which I can get done in less than half an hour; for having seen them with thine own eyes, thou canst then safely swear to the rest that thou wouldst add; and I promise thee thou wilt not tell of as many as I mean

to perform.”

“For the love of God, master mine,” said Sancho, “let me not see your worship stripped, for it will sorely grieve me, and I shall not be able to keep from tears, and my head aches so with all I shed last night for Dapple, that I am not fit to begin any fresh weeping; but if it is your worship’s pleasure that I should see some insanities, do them in your clothes, short ones, and such as come readiest to hand; for I myself want nothing of the sort, and, as I have said, it will be a saving of time for my return, which will be with the news your worship desires and deserves. If not, let the lady Dulcinea look to it; if she does not answer reasonably, I swear as solemnly as I can that I will fetch a fair answer out of her stomach with kicks and cuffs; for why should it be borne that a knight-errant as famous as your worship should go mad without rhyme or reason for a — ? Her ladyship had best not drive me to say it, for by God I will speak out and let off everything cheap, even if it doesn’t sell: I am pretty good at that! she little knows me; faith, if she knew me she’d be in awe of me.”

“In faith, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “to all appearance thou art no sounder in thy wits than I.”

“I am not so mad,” answered Sancho, “but I am more peppery; but apart from all this, what has your worship to eat until I come back? Will you sally out on the road like Cardenio to force it from the shepherds?”

“Let not that anxiety trouble thee,” replied Don Quixote, “for even if I had it I should not eat anything but the herbs and the fruits which this meadow and these trees may yield me; the beauty of this business of mine lies in not eating, and in performing other mortifications.”

“Do you know what I am afraid of?” said Sancho upon this; “that I shall not be able to find my way back to this spot where I am leaving you, it is such an out-of-the-way place.”

“Observe the landmarks well,” said Don Quixote, “for I will try not to go far from this neighbourhood, and I will even take care to mount the highest of these rocks to see if I can discover thee returning; however, not to miss me and lose thyself, the best plan will be to cut some branches of the broom that is so abundant about here, and as thou goest to lay them at intervals until thou hast come out upon the plain; these will serve thee, after the fashion of the clue in the labyrinth of Theseus, as marks and signs for finding me on thy return.”

“So I will,” said Sancho Panza, and having cut some, he asked his master’s blessing, and not without many tears on both sides, took his leave of him, and mounting Rocinante, of whom Don Quixote charged him earnestly to have as much care as of his own person, he set out for the plain, strewing at intervals the branches of broom as his master had recommended him; and so he went his way,

though Don Quixote still entreated him to see him do were it only a couple of mad acts. He had not gone a hundred paces, however, when he returned and said:

“I must say, senor, your worship said quite right, that in order to be able to swear without a weight on my conscience that I had seen you do mad things, it would be well for me to see if it were only one; though in your worship’s remaining here I have seen a very great one.”

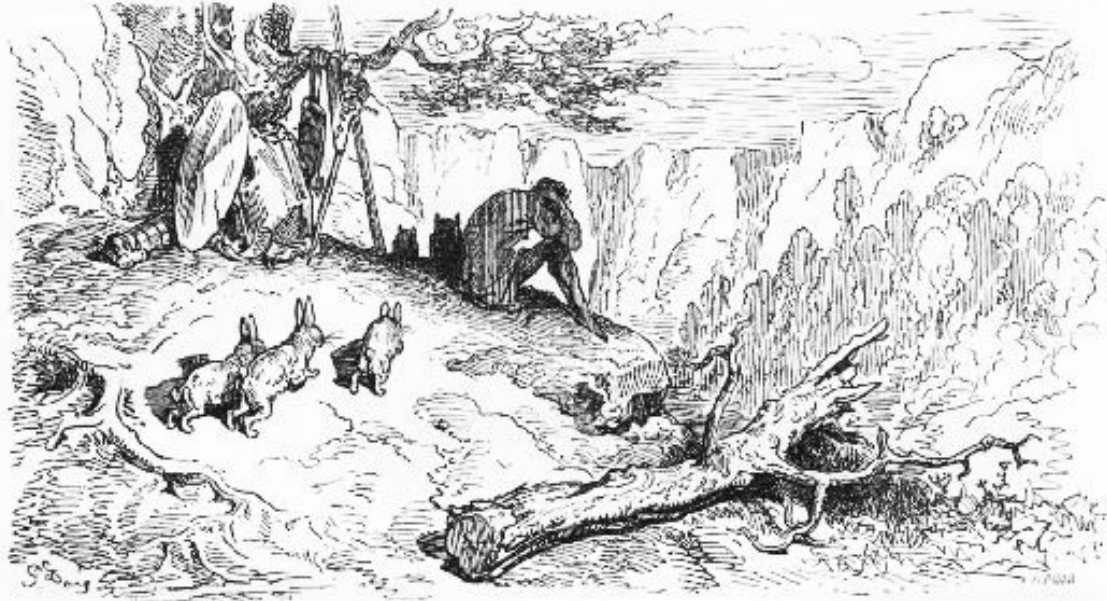


“Did I not tell thee so?” said Don Quixote. “Wait, Sancho, and I will do them in the saying of a credo,” and pulling off his breeches in all haste he stripped himself to his skin and his shirt, and then, without more ado, he cut a couple of gambados in the air, and a couple of somersaults, heels over head, making such a display that, not to see it a second time, Sancho wheeled Rocinante round, and felt easy, and satisfied in his mind that he could swear he had left his master mad; and so we will leave him to follow his road until his return, which was a quick one.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

IN WHICH ARE CONTINUED THE REFINEMENTS WHEREWITH DON QUIXOTE PLAYED THE PART OF A LOVER IN THE SIERRA MORENA



Returning to the proceedings of him of the Rueful Countenance when he found himself alone, the history says that when Don Quixote had completed the performance of the somersaults or capers, naked from the waist down and clothed from the waist up, and saw that Sancho had gone off without waiting to see any more crazy feats, he climbed up to the top of a high rock, and there set himself to consider what he had several times before considered without ever coming to any conclusion on the point, namely whether it would be better and more to his purpose to imitate the outrageous madness of Roland, or the melancholy madness of Amadis; and communing with himself he said: "What wonder is it if Roland was so good a knight and so valiant as everyone says he was, when, after all, he was enchanted, and nobody could kill him save by thrusting a corking pin into the sole of his foot, and he always wore shoes with

seven iron soles? Though cunning devices did not avail him against Bernardo del Carpio, who knew all about them, and strangled him in his arms at Roncesvalles. But putting the question of his valour aside, let us come to his losing his wits, for certain it is that he did lose them in consequence of the proofs he discovered at the fountain, and the intelligence the shepherd gave him of Angelica having slept more than two siestas with Medoro, a little curly-headed Moor, and page to Agramante. If he was persuaded that this was true, and that his lady had wronged him, it is no wonder that he should have gone mad; but I, how am I to imitate him in his madness, unless I can imitate him in the cause of it? For my Dulcinea, I will venture to swear, never saw a Moor in her life, as he is, in his proper costume, and she is this day as the mother that bore her, and I should plainly be doing her a wrong if, fancying anything else, I were to go mad with the same kind of madness as Roland the Furious. On the other hand, I see that Amadis of Gaul, without losing his senses and without doing anything mad, acquired as a lover as much fame as the most famous; for, according to his history, on finding himself rejected by his lady Oriana, who had ordered him not to appear in her presence until it should be her pleasure, all he did was to retire to the Pena Pobre in company with a hermit, and there he took his fill of weeping until Heaven sent him relief in the midst of his great grief and need. And if this be true, as it is, why should I now take the trouble to strip stark naked, or do mischief to these trees which have done me no harm, or why am I to disturb the clear waters of these brooks which will give me to drink whenever I have a mind? Long live the memory of Amadis and let him be imitated so far as is possible by Don Quixote of La Mancha, of whom it will be said, as was said of the other, that if he did not achieve great things, he died in attempting them; and if I am not repulsed or rejected by my Dulcinea, it is enough for me, as I have said, to be absent from her. And so, now to business; come to my memory ye deeds of Amadis, and show me how I am to begin to imitate you. I know already that what he chiefly did was to pray and commend himself to God; but what am I to do for a rosary, for I have not got one?"

And then it occurred to him how he might make one, and that was by tearing a great strip off the tail of his shirt which hung down, and making eleven knots on it, one bigger than the rest, and this served him for a rosary all the time he was there, during which he repeated countless ave-marias. But what distressed him greatly was not having another hermit there to confess him and receive consolation from; and so he solaced himself with pacing up and down the little meadow, and writing and carving on the bark of the trees and on the fine sand a multitude of verses all in harmony with his sadness, and some in praise of Dulcinea; but, when he was found there afterwards, the only ones completely



legible that could be discovered were those that follow here: Ye on the mountain side that grow,

Ye green things all, trees, shrubs, and bushes,  
Are ye aweary of the woe  
That this poor aching bosom crushes?  
If it disturb you, and I owe  
Some reparation, it may be a  
Defence for me to let you know  
Don Quixote's tears are on the flow,  
And all for distant Dulcinea  
Del Toboso.

The lealest lover time can show,  
Doomed for a lady-love to languish,  
Among these solitudes doth go,  
A prey to every kind of anguish.  
Why Love should like a spiteful foe  
Thus use him, he hath no idea,  
But hogsheads full — this doth he know —  
Don Quixote's tears are on the flow,  
And all for distant Dulcinea  
Del Toboso.

Adventure-seeking doth he go  
Up rugged heights, down rocky valleys,  
But hill or dale, or high or low,  
Mishap attendeth all his sallies:  
Love still pursues him to and fro,  
And plies his cruel scourge — ah me! a  
Relentless fate, an endless woe;  
Don Quixote's tears are on the flow,  
And all for distant Dulcinea  
Del Toboso.

The addition of “Del Toboso” to Dulcinea's name gave rise to no little laughter among those who found the above lines, for they suspected Don Quixote must have fancied that unless he added “del Toboso” when he introduced the name of Dulcinea the verse would be unintelligible; which was indeed the fact, as he himself afterwards admitted. He wrote many more, but, as has been said, these three verses were all that could be plainly and perfectly

deciphered. In this way, and in sighing and calling on the fauns and satyrs of the woods and the nymphs of the streams, and Echo, moist and mournful, to answer, console, and hear him, as well as in looking for herbs to sustain him, he passed his time until Sancho's return; and had that been delayed three weeks, as it was three days, the Knight of the Rueful Countenance would have worn such an altered countenance that the mother that bore him would not have known him: and here it will be well to leave him, wrapped up in sighs and verses, to relate how Sancho Panza fared on his mission.

As for him, coming out upon the high road, he made for El Toboso, and the next day reached the inn where the mishap of the blanket had befallen him. As soon as he recognised it he felt as if he were once more living through the air, and he could not bring himself to enter it though it was an hour when he might well have done so, for it was dinner-time, and he longed to taste something hot as it had been all cold fare with him for many days past. This craving drove him to draw near to the inn, still undecided whether to go in or not, and as he was hesitating there came out two persons who at once recognised him, and said one to the other: "Senor licentiate, is not he on the horse there Sancho Panza who, our adventurer's housekeeper told us, went off with her master as esquire?"

"So it is," said the licentiate, "and that is our friend Don Quixote's horse;" and if they knew him so well it was because they were the curate and the barber of his own village, the same who had carried out the scrutiny and sentence upon the books; and as soon as they recognised Sancho Panza and Rocinante, being anxious to hear of Don Quixote, they approached, and calling him by his name the curate said, "Friend Sancho Panza, where is your master?"

Sancho recognised them at once, and determined to keep secret the place and circumstances where and under which he had left his master, so he replied that his master was engaged in a certain quarter on a certain matter of great importance to him which he could not disclose for the eyes in his head.

"Nay, nay," said the barber, "if you don't tell us where he is, Sancho Panza, we will suspect as we suspect already, that you have murdered and robbed him, for here you are mounted on his horse; in fact, you must produce the master of the hack, or else take the consequences."

"There is no need of threats with me," said Sancho, "for I am not a man to rob or murder anybody; let his own fate, or God who made him, kill each one; my master is engaged very much to his taste doing penance in the midst of these mountains;" and then, offhand and without stopping, he told them how he had left him, what adventures had befallen him, and how he was carrying a letter to the lady Dulcinea del Toboso, the daughter of Lorenzo Corchuelo, with whom he was over head and ears in love. They were both amazed at what Sancho

Panza told them; for though they were aware of Don Quixote's madness and the nature of it, each time they heard of it they were filled with fresh wonder. They then asked Sancho Panza to show them the letter he was carrying to the lady Dulcinea del Toboso. He said it was written in a notebook, and that his master's directions were that he should have it copied on paper at the first village he came to. On this the curate said if he showed it to him, he himself would make a fair copy of it. Sancho put his hand into his bosom in search of the notebook but could not find it, nor, if he had been searching until now, could he have found it, for Don Quixote had kept it, and had never given it to him, nor had he himself thought of asking for it. When Sancho discovered he could not find the book his face grew deadly pale, and in great haste he again felt his body all over, and seeing plainly it was not to be found, without more ado he seized his beard with both hands and plucked away half of it, and then, as quick as he could and without stopping, gave himself half a dozen cuffs on the face and nose till they were bathed in blood.

Seeing this, the curate and the barber asked him what had happened him that he gave himself such rough treatment.

"What should happen me?" replied Sancho, "but to have lost from one hand to the other, in a moment, three ass-colts, each of them like a castle?"

"How is that?" said the barber.

"I have lost the notebook," said Sancho, "that contained the letter to Dulcinea, and an order signed by my master in which he directed his niece to give me three ass-colts out of four or five he had at home;" and he then told them about the loss of Dapple.

The curate consoled him, telling him that when his master was found he would get him to renew the order, and make a fresh draft on paper, as was usual and customary; for those made in notebooks were never accepted or honoured.

Sancho comforted himself with this, and said if that were so the loss of Dulcinea's letter did not trouble him much, for he had it almost by heart, and it could be taken down from him wherever and whenever they liked.

"Repeat it then, Sancho," said the barber, "and we will write it down afterwards."

Sancho Panza stopped to scratch his head to bring back the letter to his memory, and balanced himself now on one foot, now the other, one moment staring at the ground, the next at the sky, and after having half gnawed off the end of a finger and kept them in suspense waiting for him to begin, he said, after a long pause, "By God, senor licentiate, devil a thing can I recollect of the letter; but it said at the beginning, 'Exalted and scrubbing Lady.'"

"It cannot have said 'scrubbing,'" said the barber, "but 'superhuman' or

‘sovereign.’”

“That is it,” said Sancho; “then, as well as I remember, it went on, ‘The wounded, and wanting of sleep, and the pierced, kisses your worship’s hands, ungrateful and very unrecognised fair one; and it said something or other about health and sickness that he was sending her; and from that it went tailing off until it ended with ‘Yours till death, the Knight of the Rueful Countenance.’”

It gave them no little amusement, both of them, to see what a good memory Sancho had, and they complimented him greatly upon it, and begged him to repeat the letter a couple of times more, so that they too might get it by heart to write it out by-and-by. Sancho repeated it three times, and as he did, uttered three thousand more absurdities; then he told them more about his master but he never said a word about the blanketing that had befallen himself in that inn, into which he refused to enter. He told them, moreover, how his lord, if he brought him a favourable answer from the lady Dulcinea del Toboso, was to put himself in the way of endeavouring to become an emperor, or at least a monarch; for it had been so settled between them, and with his personal worth and the might of his arm it was an easy matter to come to be one: and how on becoming one his lord was to make a marriage for him (for he would be a widower by that time, as a matter of course) and was to give him as a wife one of the damsels of the empress, the heiress of some rich and grand state on the mainland, having nothing to do with islands of any sort, for he did not care for them now. All this Sancho delivered with so much composure — wiping his nose from time to time — and with so little common-sense that his two hearers were again filled with wonder at the force of Don Quixote’s madness that could run away with this poor man’s reason. They did not care to take the trouble of disabusing him of his error, as they considered that since it did not in any way hurt his conscience it would be better to leave him in it, and they would have all the more amusement in listening to his simplicities; and so they bade him pray to God for his lord’s health, as it was a very likely and a very feasible thing for him in course of time to come to be an emperor, as he said, or at least an archbishop or some other dignitary of equal rank.

To which Sancho made answer, “If fortune, sirs, should bring things about in such a way that my master should have a mind, instead of being an emperor, to be an archbishop, I should like to know what archbishops-errant commonly give their squires?”

“They commonly give them,” said the curate, some simple benefice or cure, or some place as sacristan which brings them a good fixed income, not counting the altar fees, which may be reckoned at as much more.”

“But for that,” said Sancho, “the squire must be unmarried, and must know, at

any rate, how to help at mass, and if that be so, woe is me, for I am married already and I don't know the first letter of the A B C. What will become of me if my master takes a fancy to be an archbishop and not an emperor, as is usual and customary with knights-errant?"

"Be not uneasy, friend Sancho," said the barber, "for we will entreat your master, and advise him, even urging it upon him as a case of conscience, to become an emperor and not an archbishop, because it will be easier for him as he is more valiant than lettered."

"So I have thought," said Sancho; "though I can tell you he is fit for anything: what I mean to do for my part is to pray to our Lord to place him where it may be best for him, and where he may be able to bestow most favours upon me."

"You speak like a man of sense," said the curate, "and you will be acting like a good Christian; but what must now be done is to take steps to coax your master out of that useless penance you say he is performing; and we had best turn into this inn to consider what plan to adopt, and also to dine, for it is now time."

Sancho said they might go in, but that he would wait there outside, and that he would tell them afterwards the reason why he was unwilling, and why it did not suit him to enter it; but he begged them to bring him out something to eat, and to let it be hot, and also to bring barley for Rocinante. They left him and went in, and presently the barber brought him out something to eat. By-and-by, after they had between them carefully thought over what they should do to carry out their object, the curate hit upon an idea very well adapted to humour Don Quixote, and effect their purpose; and his notion, which he explained to the barber, was that he himself should assume the disguise of a wandering damsel, while the other should try as best he could to pass for a squire, and that they should thus proceed to where Don Quixote was, and he, pretending to be an aggrieved and distressed damsel, should ask a favour of him, which as a valiant knight-errant he could not refuse to grant; and the favour he meant to ask him was that he should accompany her whither she would conduct him, in order to redress a wrong which a wicked knight had done her, while at the same time she should entreat him not to require her to remove her mask, nor ask her any question touching her circumstances until he had righted her with the wicked knight. And he had no doubt that Don Quixote would comply with any request made in these terms, and that in this way they might remove him and take him to his own village, where they would endeavour to find out if his extraordinary madness admitted of any kind of remedy.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

OF HOW THE CURATE AND THE BARBER PROCEEDED WITH THEIR SCHEME; TOGETHER WITH OTHER MATTERS WORTHY OF RECORD IN THIS GREAT HISTORY



The curate's plan did not seem a bad one to the barber, but on the contrary so good that they immediately set about putting it in execution. They begged a petticoat and hood of the landlady, leaving her in pledge a new cassock of the curate's; and the barber made a beard out of a grey-brown or red ox-tail in which the landlord used to stick his comb. The landlady asked them what they wanted these things for, and the curate told her in a few words about the madness of Don Quixote, and how this disguise was intended to get him away from the mountain

where he then was. The landlord and landlady immediately came to the conclusion that the madman was their guest, the balsam man and master of the blanketed squire, and they told the curate all that had passed between him and them, not omitting what Sancho had been so silent about. Finally the landlady dressed up the curate in a style that left nothing to be desired; she put on him a cloth petticoat with black velvet stripes a palm broad, all slashed, and a bodice of green velvet set off by a binding of white satin, which as well as the petticoat must have been made in the time of king Wamba. The curate would not let them hood him, but put on his head a little quilted linen cap which he used for a night-cap, and bound his forehead with a strip of black silk, while with another he made a mask with which he concealed his beard and face very well. He then put on his hat, which was broad enough to serve him for an umbrella, and enveloping himself in his cloak seated himself woman-fashion on his mule, while the barber mounted his with a beard down to the waist of mingled red and white, for it was, as has been said, the tail of a clay-red ox.

They took leave of all, and of the good Maritornes, who, sinner as she was, promised to pray a rosary of prayers that God might grant them success in such an arduous and Christian undertaking as that they had in hand. But hardly had he sallied forth from the inn when it struck the curate that he was doing wrong in rigging himself out in that fashion, as it was an indecorous thing for a priest to dress himself that way even though much might depend upon it; and saying so to the barber he begged him to change dresses, as it was fitter he should be the distressed damsel, while he himself would play the squire's part, which would be less derogatory to his dignity; otherwise he was resolved to have nothing more to do with the matter, and let the devil take Don Quixote. Just at this moment Sancho came up, and on seeing the pair in such a costume he was unable to restrain his laughter; the barber, however, agreed to do as the curate wished, and, altering their plan, the curate went on to instruct him how to play his part and what to say to Don Quixote to induce and compel him to come with them and give up his fancy for the place he had chosen for his idle penance. The barber told him he could manage it properly without any instruction, and as he did not care to dress himself up until they were near where Don Quixote was, he folded up the garments, and the curate adjusted his beard, and they set out under the guidance of Sancho Panza, who went along telling them of the encounter with the madman they met in the Sierra, saying nothing, however, about the finding of the valise and its contents; for with all his simplicity the lad was a trifle covetous.

The next day they reached the place where Sancho had laid the broom-branches as marks to direct him to where he had left his master, and recognising



it he told them that here was the entrance, and that they would do well to dress themselves, if that was required to deliver his master; for they had already told him that going in this guise and dressing in this way were of the highest importance in order to rescue his master from the pernicious life he had adopted; and they charged him strictly not to tell his master who they were, or that he knew them, and should he ask, as ask he would, if he had given the letter to Dulcinea, to say that he had, and that, as she did not know how to read, she had given an answer by word of mouth, saying that she commanded him, on pain of her displeasure, to come and see her at once; and it was a very important matter for himself, because in this way and with what they meant to say to him they felt sure of bringing him back to a better mode of life and inducing him to take immediate steps to become an emperor or monarch, for there was no fear of his becoming an archbishop. All this Sancho listened to and fixed it well in his memory, and thanked them heartily for intending to recommend his master to be an emperor instead of an archbishop, for he felt sure that in the way of bestowing rewards on their squires emperors could do more than archbishops-errant. He said, too, that it would be as well for him to go on before them to find him, and give him his lady's answer; for that perhaps might be enough to bring him away from the place without putting them to all this trouble. They approved of what Sancho proposed, and resolved to wait for him until he brought back word of having found his master.

Sancho pushed on into the glens of the Sierra, leaving them in one through which there flowed a little gentle rivulet, and where the rocks and trees afforded a cool and grateful shade. It was an August day with all the heat of one, and the heat in those parts is intense, and the hour was three in the afternoon, all which made the spot the more inviting and tempted them to wait there for Sancho's return, which they did. They were reposing, then, in the shade, when a voice unaccompanied by the notes of any instrument, but sweet and pleasing in its tone, reached their ears, at which they were not a little astonished, as the place did not seem to them likely quarters for one who sang so well; for though it is often said that shepherds of rare voice are to be found in the woods and fields, this is rather a flight of the poet's fancy than the truth. And still more surprised were they when they perceived that what they heard sung were the verses not of rustic shepherds, but of the polished wits of the city; and so it proved, for the verses they heard were these: What makes my quest of happiness seem vain?

Disdain.

What bids me to abandon hope of ease?

Jealousies.

What holds my heart in anguish of suspense?

Absence.

If that be so, then for my grief  
Where shall I turn to seek relief,  
When hope on every side lies slain  
By Absence, Jealousies, Disdain?

What the prime cause of all my woe doth prove?

Love.

What at my glory ever looks askance?

Chance.

Whence is permission to afflict me given?

Heaven.

If that be so, I but await  
The stroke of a resistless fate,  
Since, working for my woe, these three,  
Love, Chance and Heaven, in league I see.

What must I do to find a remedy?

Die.

What is the lure for love when coy and strange?

Change.

What, if all fail, will cure the heart of sadness?

Madness.

If that be so, it is but folly  
To seek a cure for melancholy:  
Ask where it lies; the answer saith  
In Change, in Madness, or in Death.

The hour, the summer season, the solitary place, the voice and skill of the singer, all contributed to the wonder and delight of the two listeners, who remained still waiting to hear something more; finding, however, that the silence continued some little time, they resolved to go in search of the musician who sang with so fine a voice; but just as they were about to do so they were checked by the same voice, which once more fell upon their ears, singing this SONNET  
When heavenward, holy Friendship, thou didst go Soaring to seek thy home beyond the sky,

And take thy seat among the saints on high, It was thy will to leave on earth below

Thy semblance, and upon it to bestow  
Thy veil, wherewith at times hypocrisy,

Parading in thy shape, deceives the eye,  
And makes its vileness bright as virtue show.  
Friendship, return to us, or force the cheat That wears it now, thy livery to  
restore,  
By aid whereof sincerity is slain.  
If thou wilt not unmask thy counterfeit,  
This earth will be the prey of strife once more, As when primaeval discord  
held its reign.

The song ended with a deep sigh, and again the listeners remained waiting attentively for the singer to resume; but perceiving that the music had now turned to sobs and heart-rending moans they determined to find out who the unhappy being could be whose voice was as rare as his sighs were piteous, and they had not proceeded far when on turning the corner of a rock they discovered a man of the same aspect and appearance as Sancho had described to them when he told them the story of Cardenio. He, showing no astonishment when he saw them, stood still with his head bent down upon his breast like one in deep thought, without raising his eyes to look at them after the first glance when they suddenly came upon him. The curate, who was aware of his misfortune and recognised him by the description, being a man of good address, approached him and in a few sensible words entreated and urged him to quit a life of such misery, lest he should end it there, which would be the greatest of all misfortunes. Cardenio was then in his right mind, free from any attack of that madness which so frequently carried him away, and seeing them dressed in a fashion so unusual among the frequenters of those wilds, could not help showing some surprise, especially when he heard them speak of his case as if it were a well-known matter (for the curate's words gave him to understand as much) so he replied to them thus: "I see plainly, sirs, whoever you may be, that Heaven, whose care it is to succour the good, and even the wicked very often, here, in this remote spot, cut off from human intercourse, sends me, though I deserve it not, those who seek to draw me away from this to some better retreat, showing me by many and forcible arguments how unreasonably I act in leading the life I do; but as they know, that if I escape from this evil I shall fall into another still greater, perhaps they will set me down as a weak-minded man, or, what is worse, one devoid of reason; nor would it be any wonder, for I myself can perceive that the effect of the recollection of my misfortunes is so great and works so powerfully to my ruin, that in spite of myself I become at times like a stone, without feeling or consciousness; and I come to feel the truth of it when they tell me and show me proofs of the things I have done when the terrible fit

overmasters me; and all I can do is bewail my lot in vain, and idly curse my destiny, and plead for my madness by telling how it was caused, to any that care to hear it; for no reasonable beings on learning the cause will wonder at the effects; and if they cannot help me at least they will not blame me, and the repugnance they feel at my wild ways will turn into pity for my woes. If it be, sirs, that you are here with the same design as others have come wah, before you proceed with your wise arguments, I entreat you to hear the story of my countless misfortunes, for perhaps when you have heard it you will spare yourselves the trouble you would take in offering consolation to grief that is beyond the reach of it."

As they, both of them, desired nothing more than to hear from his own lips the cause of his suffering, they entreated him to tell it, promising not to do anything for his relief or comfort that he did not wish; and thereupon the unhappy gentleman began his sad story in nearly the same words and manner in which he had related it to Don Quixote and the goatherd a few days before, when, through Master Elisabad, and Don Quixote's scrupulous observance of what was due to chivalry, the tale was left unfinished, as this history has already recorded; but now fortunately the mad fit kept off, allowed him to tell it to the end; and so, coming to the incident of the note which Don Fernando had found in the volume of "Amadis of Gaul," Cardenio said that he remembered it perfectly and that it was in these words: "Luscinda to Cardenio.

"Every day I discover merits in you that oblige and compel me to hold you in higher estimation; so if you desire to relieve me of this obligation without cost to my honour, you may easily do so. I have a father who knows you and loves me dearly, who without putting any constraint on my inclination will grant what will be reasonable for you to have, if it be that you value me as you say and as I believe you do."

"By this letter I was induced, as I told you, to demand Luscinda for my wife, and it was through it that Luscinda came to be regarded by Don Fernando as one of the most discreet and prudent women of the day, and this letter it was that suggested his design of ruining me before mine could be carried into effect. I told Don Fernando that all Luscinda's father was waiting for was that mine should ask her of him, which I did not dare to suggest to him, fearing that he would not consent to do so; not because he did not know perfectly well the rank, goodness, virtue, and beauty of Luscinda, and that she had qualities that would do honour to any family in Spain, but because I was aware that he did not wish me to marry so soon, before seeing what the Duke Ricardo would do for me. In short, I told him I did not venture to mention it to my father, as well on account of that difficulty, as of many others that discouraged me though I knew not well

what they were, only that it seemed to me that what I desired was never to come to pass. To all this Don Fernando answered that he would take it upon himself to speak to my father, and persuade him to speak to Luscinda's father. O, ambitious Marius! O, cruel Catiline! O, wicked Sylla! O, perfidious Ganelon! O, treacherous Vellido! O, vindictive Julian! O, covetous Judas! Traitor, cruel, vindictive, and perfidious, wherein had this poor wretch failed in his fidelity, who with such frankness showed thee the secrets and the joys of his heart? What offence did I commit? What words did I utter, or what counsels did I give that had not the furtherance of thy honour and welfare for their aim? But, woe is me, wherefore do I complain? for sure it is that when misfortunes spring from the stars, descending from on high they fall upon us with such fury and violence that no power on earth can check their course nor human device stay their coming. Who could have thought that Don Fernando, a highborn gentleman, intelligent, bound to me by gratitude for my services, one that could win the object of his love wherever he might set his affections, could have become so obdurate, as they say, as to rob me of my one ewe lamb that was not even yet in my possession? But laying aside these useless and unavailing reflections, let us take up the broken thread of my unhappy story.

“To proceed, then: Don Fernando finding my presence an obstacle to the execution of his treacherous and wicked design, resolved to send me to his elder brother under the pretext of asking money from him to pay for six horses which, purposely, and with the sole object of sending me away that he might the better carry out his infernal scheme, he had purchased the very day he offered to speak to my father, and the price of which he now desired me to fetch. Could I have anticipated this treachery? Could I by any chance have suspected it? Nay; so far from that, I offered with the greatest pleasure to go at once, in my satisfaction at the good bargain that had been made. That night I spoke with Luscinda, and told her what had been agreed upon with Don Fernando, and how I had strong hopes of our fair and reasonable wishes being realised. She, as unsuspecting as I was of the treachery of Don Fernando, bade me try to return speedily, as she believed the fulfilment of our desires would be delayed only so long as my father put off speaking to hers. I know not why it was that on saying this to me her eyes filled with tears, and there came a lump in her throat that prevented her from uttering a word of many more that it seemed to me she was striving to say to me. I was astonished at this unusual turn, which I never before observed in her. for we always conversed, whenever good fortune and my ingenuity gave us the chance, with the greatest gaiety and cheerfulness, mingling tears, sighs, jealousies, doubts, or fears with our words; it was all on my part a eulogy of my good fortune that Heaven should have given her to me for my mistress; I glorified her

beauty, I extolled her worth and her understanding; and she paid me back by praising in me what in her love for me she thought worthy of praise; and besides we had a hundred thousand trifles and doings of our neighbours and acquaintances to talk about, and the utmost extent of my boldness was to take, almost by force, one of her fair white hands and carry it to my lips, as well as the closeness of the low grating that separated us allowed me. But the night before the unhappy day of my departure she wept, she moaned, she sighed, and she withdrew leaving me filled with perplexity and amazement, overwhelmed at the sight of such strange and affecting signs of grief and sorrow in Luscinda; but not to dash my hopes I ascribed it all to the depth of her love for me and the pain that separation gives those who love tenderly. At last I took my departure, sad and dejected, my heart filled with fancies and suspicions, but not knowing well what it was I suspected or fancied; plain omens pointing to the sad event and misfortune that was awaiting me.

“I reached the place whither I had been sent, gave the letter to Don Fernando’s brother, and was kindly received but not promptly dismissed, for he desired me to wait, very much against my will, eight days in some place where the duke his father was not likely to see me, as his brother wrote that the money was to be sent without his knowledge; all of which was a scheme of the treacherous Don Fernando, for his brother had no want of money to enable him to despatch me at once.

“The command was one that exposed me to the temptation of disobeying it, as it seemed to me impossible to endure life for so many days separated from Luscinda, especially after leaving her in the sorrowful mood I have described to you; nevertheless as a dutiful servant I obeyed, though I felt it would be at the cost of my well-being. But four days later there came a man in quest of me with a letter which he gave me, and which by the address I perceived to be from Luscinda, as the writing was hers. I opened it with fear and trepidation, persuaded that it must be something serious that had impelled her to write to me when at a distance, as she seldom did so when I was near. Before reading it I asked the man who it was that had given it to him, and how long he had been upon the road; he told me that as he happened to be passing through one of the streets of the city at the hour of noon, a very beautiful lady called to him from a window, and with tears in her eyes said to him hurriedly, ‘Brother, if you are, as you seem to be, a Christian, for the love of God I entreat you to have this letter despatched without a moment’s delay to the place and person named in the address, all which is well known, and by this you will render a great service to our Lord; and that you may be at no inconvenience in doing so take what is in this handkerchief;’ and said he, ‘with this she threw me a handkerchief out of the

window in which were tied up a hundred reals and this gold ring which I bring here together with the letter I have given you. And then without waiting for any answer she left the window, though not before she saw me take the letter and the handkerchief, and I had by signs let her know that I would do as she bade me; and so, seeing myself so well paid for the trouble I would have in bringing it to you, and knowing by the address that it was to you it was sent (for, senor, I know you very well), and also unable to resist that beautiful lady's tears, I resolved to trust no one else, but to come myself and give it to you, and in sixteen hours from the time when it was given me I have made the journey, which, as you know, is eighteen leagues.'

"All the while the good-natured improvised courier was telling me this, I hung upon his words, my legs trembling under me so that I could scarcely stand. However, I opened the letter and read these words: "'The promise Don Fernando gave you to urge your father to speak to mine, he has fulfilled much more to his own satisfaction than to your advantage. I have to tell you, senor, that he has demanded me for a wife, and my father, led away by what he considers Don Fernando's superiority over you, has favoured his suit so cordially, that in two days hence the betrothal is to take place with such secrecy and so privately that the only witnesses are to be the Heavens above and a few of the household. Picture to yourself the state I am in; judge if it be urgent for you to come; the issue of the affair will show you whether I love you or not. God grant this may come to your hand before mine shall be forced to link itself with his who keeps so ill the faith that he has pledged.'

"Such, in brief, were the words of the letter, words that made me set out at once without waiting any longer for reply or money; for I now saw clearly that it was not the purchase of horses but of his own pleasure that had made Don Fernando send me to his brother. The exasperation I felt against Don Fernando, joined with the fear of losing the prize I had won by so many years of love and devotion, lent me wings; so that almost flying I reached home the same day, by the hour which served for speaking with Luscinda. I arrived unobserved, and left the mule on which I had come at the house of the worthy man who had brought me the letter, and fortune was pleased to be for once so kind that I found Luscinda at the grating that was the witness of our loves. She recognised me at once, and I her, but not as she ought to have recognised me, or I her. But who is there in the world that can boast of having fathomed or understood the wavering mind and unstable nature of a woman? Of a truth no one. To proceed: as soon as Luscinda saw me she said, 'Cardenio, I am in my bridal dress, and the treacherous Don Fernando and my covetous father are waiting for me in the hall with the other witnesses, who shall be the witnesses of my death before they

witness my betrothal. Be not distressed, my friend, but contrive to be present at this sacrifice, and if that cannot be prevented by my words, I have a dagger concealed which will prevent more deliberate violence, putting an end to my life and giving thee a first proof of the love I have borne and bear thee.' I replied to her distractedly and hastily, in fear lest I should not have time to reply, 'May thy words be verified by thy deeds, lady; and if thou hast a dagger to save thy honour, I have a sword to defend thee or kill myself if fortune be against us.'

"I think she could not have heard all these words, for I perceived that they called her away in haste, as the bridegroom was waiting. Now the night of my sorrow set in, the sun of my happiness went down, I felt my eyes bereft of sight, my mind of reason. I could not enter the house, nor was I capable of any movement; but reflecting how important it was that I should be present at what might take place on the occasion, I nerved myself as best I could and went in, for I well knew all the entrances and outlets; and besides, with the confusion that in secret pervaded the house no one took notice of me, so, without being seen, I found an opportunity of placing myself in the recess formed by a window of the hall itself, and concealed by the ends and borders of two tapestries, from between which I could, without being seen, see all that took place in the room. Who could describe the agitation of heart I suffered as I stood there — the thoughts that came to me — the reflections that passed through my mind? They were such as cannot be, nor were it well they should be, told. Suffice it to say that the bridegroom entered the hall in his usual dress, without ornament of any kind; as groomsman he had with him a cousin of Luscinda's and except the servants of the house there was no one else in the chamber. Soon afterwards Luscinda came out from an antechamber, attended by her mother and two of her damsels, arrayed and adorned as became her rank and beauty, and in full festival and ceremonial attire. My anxiety and distraction did not allow me to observe or notice particularly what she wore; I could only perceive the colours, which were crimson and white, and the glitter of the gems and jewels on her head dress and apparel, surpassed by the rare beauty of her lovely auburn hair that vying with the precious stones and the light of the four torches that stood in the hall shone with a brighter gleam than all. Oh memory, mortal foe of my peace! why bring before me now the incomparable beauty of that adored enemy of mine? Were it not better, cruel memory, to remind me and recall what she then did, that stirred by a wrong so glaring I may seek, if not vengeance now, at least to rid myself of life? Be not weary, sirs, of listening to these digressions; my sorrow is not one of those that can or should be told tersely and briefly, for to me each incident seems to call for many words."

To this the curate replied that not only were they not weary of listening to



him, but that the details he mentioned interested them greatly, being of a kind by no means to be omitted and deserving of the same attention as the main story.

“To proceed, then,” continued Cardenio: “all being assembled in the hall, the priest of the parish came in and as he took the pair by the hand to perform the requisite ceremony, at the words, ‘Will you, Senora Luscinda, take Senor Don Fernando, here present, for your lawful husband, as the holy Mother Church ordains?’ I thrust my head and neck out from between the tapestries, and with eager ears and throbbing heart set myself to listen to Luscinda’s answer, awaiting in her reply the sentence of death or the grant of life. Oh, that I had but dared at that moment to rush forward crying aloud, ‘Luscinda, Luscinda! have a care what thou dost; remember what thou owest me; bethink thee thou art mine and canst not be another’s; reflect that thy utterance of “Yes” and the end of my life will come at the same instant. O, treacherous Don Fernando! robber of my glory, death of my life! What seekest thou? Remember that thou canst not as a Christian attain the object of thy wishes, for Luscinda is my bride, and I am her husband!’ Fool that I am! now that I am far away, and out of danger, I say I should have done what I did not do: now that I have allowed my precious treasure to be robbed from me, I curse the robber, on whom I might have taken vengeance had I as much heart for it as I have for bewailing my fate; in short, as I was then a coward and a fool, little wonder is it if I am now dying shame-stricken, remorseful, and mad.

“The priest stood waiting for the answer of Luscinda, who for a long time withheld it; and just as I thought she was taking out the dagger to save her honour, or struggling for words to make some declaration of the truth on my behalf, I heard her say in a faint and feeble voice, ‘I will:’ Don Fernando said the same, and giving her the ring they stood linked by a knot that could never be loosed. The bridegroom then approached to embrace his bride; and she, pressing her hand upon her heart, fell fainting in her mother’s arms. It only remains now for me to tell you the state I was in when in that consent that I heard I saw all my hopes mocked, the words and promises of Luscinda proved falsehoods, and the recovery of the prize I had that instant lost rendered impossible for ever. I stood stupefied, wholly abandoned, it seemed, by Heaven, declared the enemy of the earth that bore me, the air refusing me breath for my sighs, the water moisture for my tears; it was only the fire that gathered strength so that my whole frame glowed with rage and jealousy. They were all thrown into confusion by Luscinda’s fainting, and as her mother was unlacing her to give her air a sealed paper was discovered in her bosom which Don Fernando seized at once and began to read by the light of one of the torches. As soon as he had read it he seated himself in a chair, leaning his cheek on his hand in the attitude of one

deep in thought, without taking any part in the efforts that were being made to recover his bride from her fainting fit.

“Seeing all the household in confusion, I ventured to come out regardless whether I were seen or not, and determined, if I were, to do some frenzied deed that would prove to all the world the righteous indignation of my breast in the punishment of the treacherous Don Fernando, and even in that of the fickle fainting traitress. But my fate, doubtless reserving me for greater sorrows, if such there be, so ordered it that just then I had enough and to spare of that reason which has since been wanting to me; and so, without seeking to take vengeance on my greatest enemies (which might have been easily taken, as all thought of me was so far from their minds), I resolved to take it upon myself, and on myself to inflict the pain they deserved, perhaps with even greater severity than I should have dealt out to them had I then slain them; for sudden pain is soon over, but that which is protracted by tortures is ever slaying without ending life. In a word, I quitted the house and reached that of the man with whom I had left my mule; I made him saddle it for me, mounted without bidding him farewell, and rode out of the city, like another Lot, not daring to turn my head to look back upon it; and when I found myself alone in the open country, screened by the darkness of the night, and tempted by the stillness to give vent to my grief without apprehension or fear of being heard or seen, then I broke silence and lifted up my voice in maledictions upon Luscinda and Don Fernando, as if I could thus avenge the wrong they had done me. I called her cruel, ungrateful, false, thankless, but above all covetous, since the wealth of my enemy had blinded the eyes of her affection, and turned it from me to transfer it to one to whom fortune had been more generous and liberal. And yet, in the midst of this outburst of execration and upbraiding, I found excuses for her, saying it was no wonder that a young girl in the seclusion of her parents’ house, trained and schooled to obey them always, should have been ready to yield to their wishes when they offered her for a husband a gentleman of such distinction, wealth, and noble birth, that if she had refused to accept him she would have been thought out of her senses, or to have set her affection elsewhere, a suspicion injurious to her fair name and fame. But then again, I said, had she declared I was her husband, they would have seen that in choosing me she had not chosen so ill but that they might excuse her, for before Don Fernando had made his offer, they themselves could not have desired, if their desires had been ruled by reason, a more eligible husband for their daughter than I was; and she, before taking the last fatal step of giving her hand, might easily have said that I had already given her mine, for I should have come forward to support any assertion of hers to that effect. In short, I came to the conclusion that feeble love, little reflection, great ambition, and a craving for

rank, had made her forget the words with which she had deceived me, encouraged and supported by my firm hopes and honourable passion.

“Thus soliloquising and agitated, I journeyed onward for the remainder of the night, and by daybreak I reached one of the passes of these mountains, among which I wandered for three days more without taking any path or road, until I came to some meadows lying on I know not which side of the mountains, and there I inquired of some herdsmen in what direction the most rugged part of the range lay. They told me that it was in this quarter, and I at once directed my course hither, intending to end my life here; but as I was making my way among these crags, my mule dropped dead through fatigue and hunger, or, as I think more likely, in order to have done with such a worthless burden as it bore in me. I was left on foot, worn out, famishing, without anyone to help me or any thought of seeking help: and so thus I lay stretched on the ground, how long I know not, after which I rose up free from hunger, and found beside me some goatherds, who no doubt were the persons who had relieved me in my need, for they told me how they had found me, and how I had been uttering ravings that showed plainly I had lost my reason; and since then I am conscious that I am not always in full possession of it, but at times so deranged and crazed that I do a thousand mad things, tearing my clothes, crying aloud in these solitudes, cursing my fate, and idly calling on the dear name of her who is my enemy, and only seeking to end my life in lamentation; and when I recover my senses I find myself so exhausted and weary that I can scarcely move. Most commonly my dwelling is the hollow of a cork tree large enough to shelter this miserable body; the herdsmen and goatherds who frequent these mountains, moved by compassion, furnish me with food, leaving it by the wayside or on the rocks, where they think I may perhaps pass and find it; and so, even though I may be then out of my senses, the wants of nature teach me what is required to sustain me, and make me crave it and eager to take it. At other times, so they tell me when they find me in a rational mood, I sally out upon the road, and though they would gladly give it me, I snatch food by force from the shepherds bringing it from the village to their huts. Thus do pass the wretched life that remains to me, until it be Heaven’s will to bring it to a close, or so to order my memory that I no longer recollect the beauty and treachery of Luscinda, or the wrong done me by Don Fernando; for if it will do this without depriving me of life, I will turn my thoughts into some better channel; if not, I can only implore it to have full mercy on my soul, for in myself I feel no power or strength to release my body from this strait in which I have of my own accord chosen to place it.

“Such, sirs, is the dismal story of my misfortune: say if it be one that can be told with less emotion than you have seen in me; and do not trouble yourselves

with urging or pressing upon me what reason suggests as likely to serve for my relief, for it will avail me as much as the medicine prescribed by a wise physician avails the sick man who will not take it. I have no wish for health without Luscinda; and since it is her pleasure to be another's, when she is or should be mine, let it be mine to be a prey to misery when I might have enjoyed happiness. She by her fickleness strove to make my ruin irretrievable; I will strive to gratify her wishes by seeking destruction; and it will show generations to come that I alone was deprived of that of which all others in misfortune have a superabundance, for to them the impossibility of being consoled is itself a consolation, while to me it is the cause of greater sorrows and sufferings, for I think that even in death there will not be an end of them."

Here Cardenio brought to a close his long discourse and story, as full of misfortune as it was of love; but just as the curate was going to address some words of comfort to him, he was stopped by a voice that reached his ear, saying in melancholy tones what will be told in the Fourth Part of this narrative; for at this point the sage and sagacious historian, Cid Hamete Benengeli, brought the Third to a conclusion.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

WHICH TREATS OF THE STRANGE AND DELIGHTFUL ADVENTURE  
THAT BEFELL THE CURATE AND THE BARBER IN THE SAME SIERRA



Happy and fortunate were the times when that most daring knight Don Quixote of La Mancha was sent into the world; for by reason of his having formed a resolution so honourable as that of seeking to revive and restore to the world the long-lost and almost defunct order of knight-errantry, we now enjoy in this age of ours, so poor in light entertainment, not only the charm of his veracious history, but also of the tales and episodes contained in it which are, in a measure, no less pleasing, ingenious, and truthful, than the history itself; which, resuming its thread, carded, spun, and wound, relates that just as the

curate was going to offer consolation to Cardenio, he was interrupted by a voice that fell upon his ear saying in plaintive tones:

“O God! is it possible I have found a place that may serve as a secret grave for the weary load of this body that I support so unwillingly? If the solitude these mountains promise deceives me not, it is so; ah! woe is me! how much more grateful to my mind will be the society of these rocks and brakes that permit me to complain of my misfortune to Heaven, than that of any human being, for there is none on earth to look to for counsel in doubt, comfort in sorrow, or relief in distress!”

All this was heard distinctly by the curate and those with him, and as it seemed to them to be uttered close by, as indeed it was, they got up to look for the speaker, and before they had gone twenty paces they discovered behind a rock, seated at the foot of an ash tree, a youth in the dress of a peasant, whose face they were unable at the moment to see as he was leaning forward, bathing his feet in the brook that flowed past. They approached so silently that he did not perceive them, being fully occupied in bathing his feet, which were so fair that they looked like two pieces of shining crystal brought forth among the other stones of the brook. The whiteness and beauty of these feet struck them with surprise, for they did not seem to have been made to crush clods or to follow the plough and the oxen as their owner's dress suggested; and so, finding they had not been noticed, the curate, who was in front, made a sign to the other two to conceal themselves behind some fragments of rock that lay there; which they did, observing closely what the youth was about. He had on a loose double-skirted dark brown jacket bound tight to his body with a white cloth; he wore besides breeches and gaiters of brown cloth, and on his head a brown montera; and he had the gaiters turned up as far as the middle of the leg, which verily seemed to be of pure alabaster.



As soon as he had done bathing his beautiful feet, he wiped them with a towel he took from under the montera, on taking off which he raised his face, and those who were watching him had an opportunity of seeing a beauty so exquisite that Cardenio said to the curate in a whisper:

“As this is not Luscinda, it is no human creature but a divine being.”

The youth then took off the montera, and shaking his head from side to side there broke loose and spread out a mass of hair that the beams of the sun might have envied; by this they knew that what had seemed a peasant was a lovely woman, nay the most beautiful the eyes of two of them had ever beheld, or even Cardenio’s if they had not seen and known Luscinda, for he afterwards declared



that only the beauty of Luscinda could compare with this. The long auburn tresses not only covered her shoulders, but such was their length and abundance, concealed her all round beneath their masses, so that except the feet nothing of her form was visible. She now used her hands as a comb, and if her feet had seemed like bits of crystal in the water, her hands looked like pieces of driven snow among her locks; all which increased not only the admiration of the three beholders, but their anxiety to learn who she was. With this object they resolved to show themselves, and at the stir they made in getting upon their feet the fair damsel raised her head, and parting her hair from before her eyes with both hands, she looked to see who had made the noise, and the instant she perceived them she started to her feet, and without waiting to put on her shoes or gather up her hair, hastily snatched up a bundle as though of clothes that she had beside her, and, scared and alarmed, endeavoured to take flight; but before she had gone six paces she fell to the ground, her delicate feet being unable to bear the roughness of the stones; seeing which, the three hastened towards her, and the curate addressing her first said:

“Stay, senora, whoever you may be, for those whom you see here only desire to be of service to you; you have no need to attempt a flight so heedless, for neither can your feet bear it, nor we allow it.”

Taken by surprise and bewildered, she made no reply to these words. They, however, came towards her, and the curate taking her hand went on to say:

“What your dress would hide, senora, is made known to us by your hair; a clear proof that it can be no trifling cause that has disguised your beauty in a garb so unworthy of it, and sent it into solitudes like these where we have had the good fortune to find you, if not to relieve your distress, at least to offer you comfort; for no distress, so long as life lasts, can be so oppressive or reach such a height as to make the sufferer refuse to listen to comfort offered with good intention. And so, senora, or senor, or whatever you prefer to be, dismiss the fears that our appearance has caused you and make us acquainted with your good or evil fortunes, for from all of us together, or from each one of us, you will receive sympathy in your trouble.”

While the curate was speaking, the disguised damsel stood as if spell-bound, looking at them without opening her lips or uttering a word, just like a village rustic to whom something strange that he has never seen before has been suddenly shown; but on the curate addressing some further words to the same effect to her, sighing deeply she broke silence and said:

“Since the solitude of these mountains has been unable to conceal me, and the escape of my dishevelled tresses will not allow my tongue to deal in falsehoods, it would be idle for me now to make any further pretence of what, if you were to

believe me, you would believe more out of courtesy than for any other reason. This being so, I say I thank you, sirs, for the offer you have made me, which places me under the obligation of complying with the request you have made of me; though I fear the account I shall give you of my misfortunes will excite in you as much concern as compassion, for you will be unable to suggest anything to remedy them or any consolation to alleviate them. However, that my honour may not be left a matter of doubt in your minds, now that you have discovered me to be a woman, and see that I am young, alone, and in this dress, things that taken together or separately would be enough to destroy any good name, I feel bound to tell what I would willingly keep secret if I could.”

All this she who was now seen to be a lovely woman delivered without any hesitation, with so much ease and in so sweet a voice that they were not less charmed by her intelligence than by her beauty, and as they again repeated their offers and entreaties to her to fulfil her promise, she without further pressing, first modestly covering her feet and gathering up her hair, seated herself on a stone with the three placed around her, and, after an effort to restrain some tears that came to her eyes, in a clear and steady voice began her story thus:

“In this Andalusia there is a town from which a duke takes a title which makes him one of those that are called *Grandeos* of Spain. This nobleman has two sons, the elder heir to his dignity and apparently to his good qualities; the younger heir to I know not what, unless it be the treachery of Vellido and the falsehood of Ganelon. My parents are this lord’s vassals, lowly in origin, but so wealthy that if birth had conferred as much on them as fortune, they would have had nothing left to desire, nor should I have had reason to fear trouble like that in which I find myself now; for it may be that my ill fortune came of theirs in not having been nobly born. It is true they are not so low that they have any reason to be ashamed of their condition, but neither are they so high as to remove from my mind the impression that my mishap comes of their humble birth. They are, in short, peasants, plain homely people, without any taint of disreputable blood, and, as the saying is, old rusty Christians, but so rich that by their wealth and free-handed way of life they are coming by degrees to be considered gentlefolk by birth, and even by position; though the wealth and nobility they thought most of was having me for their daughter; and as they have no other child to make their heir, and are affectionate parents, I was one of the most indulged daughters that ever parents indulged.

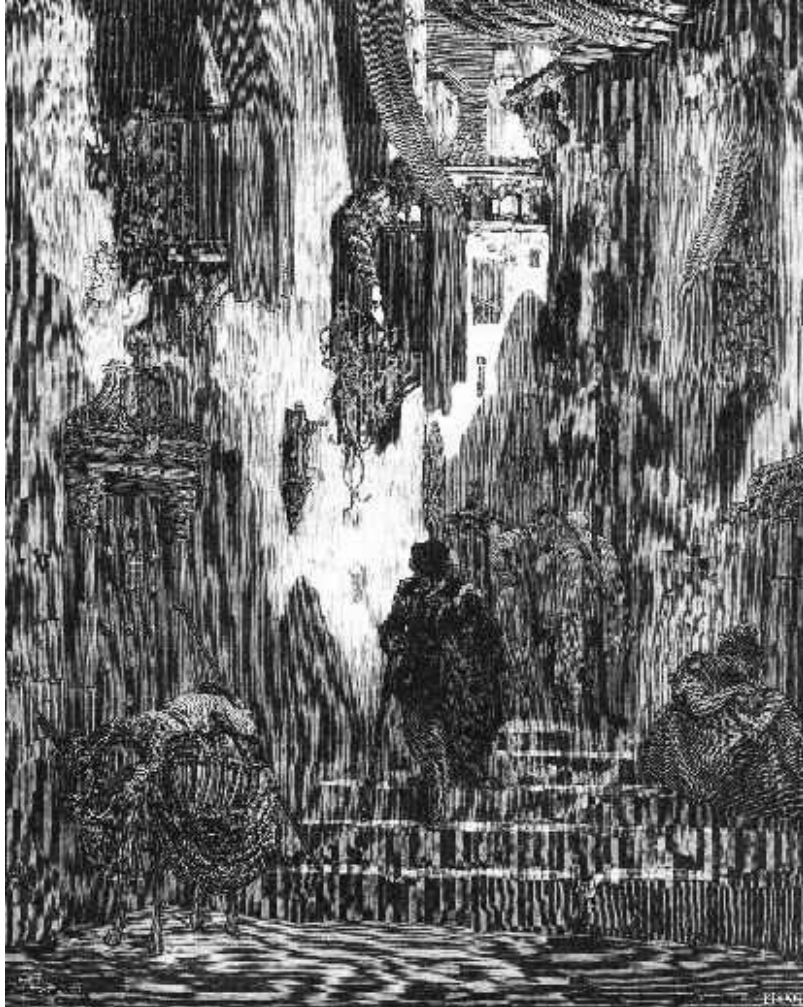
“I was the mirror in which they beheld themselves, the staff of their old age, and the object in which, with submission to Heaven, all their wishes centred, and mine were in accordance with theirs, for I knew their worth; and as I was mistress of their hearts, so was I also of their possessions. Through me they

engaged or dismissed their servants; through my hands passed the accounts and returns of what was sown and reaped; the oil-mills, the wine-presses, the count of the flocks and herds, the beehives, all in short that a rich farmer like my father has or can have, I had under my care, and I acted as steward and mistress with an assiduity on my part and satisfaction on theirs that I cannot well describe to you. The leisure hours left to me after I had given the requisite orders to the head-shepherds, overseers, and other labourers, I passed in such employments as are not only allowable but necessary for young girls, those that the needle, embroidery cushion, and spinning wheel usually afford, and if to refresh my mind I quitted them for a while, I found recreation in reading some devotional book or playing the harp, for experience taught me that music soothes the troubled mind and relieves weariness of spirit. Such was the life I led in my parents' house and if I have depicted it thus minutely, it is not out of ostentation, or to let you know that I am rich, but that you may see how, without any fault of mine, I have fallen from the happy condition I have described, to the misery I am in at present. The truth is, that while I was leading this busy life, in a retirement that might compare with that of a monastery, and unseen as I thought by any except the servants of the house (for when I went to Mass it was so early in the morning, and I was so closely attended by my mother and the women of the household, and so thickly veiled and so shy, that my eyes scarcely saw more ground than I trod on), in spite of all this, the eyes of love, or idleness, more properly speaking, that the lynx's cannot rival, discovered me, with the help of the assiduity of Don Fernando; for that is the name of the younger son of the duke I told of."

The moment the speaker mentioned the name of Don Fernando, Cardenio changed colour and broke into a sweat, with such signs of emotion that the curate and the barber, who observed it, feared that one of the mad fits which they heard attacked him sometimes was coming upon him; but Cardenio showed no further agitation and remained quiet, regarding the peasant girl with fixed attention, for he began to suspect who she was. She, however, without noticing the excitement of Cardenio, continuing her story, went on to say:

"And they had hardly discovered me, when, as he owned afterwards, he was smitten with a violent love for me, as the manner in which it displayed itself plainly showed. But to shorten the long recital of my woes, I will pass over in silence all the artifices employed by Don Fernando for declaring his passion for me. He bribed all the household, he gave and offered gifts and presents to my parents; every day was like a holiday or a merry-making in our street; by night no one could sleep for the music; the love letters that used to come to my hand, no one knew how, were innumerable, full of tender pleadings and pledges,

containing more promises and oaths than there were letters in them; all which not only did not soften me, but hardened my heart against him, as if he had been my mortal enemy, and as if everything he did to make me yield were done with the opposite intention. Not that the high-bred bearing of Don Fernando was disagreeable to me, or that I found his importunities wearisome; for it gave me a certain sort of satisfaction to find myself so sought and prized by a gentleman of such distinction, and I was not displeased at seeing my praises in his letters (for however ugly we women may be, it seems to me it always pleases us to hear ourselves called beautiful) but that my own sense of right was opposed to all this, as well as the repeated advice of my parents, who now very plainly perceived Don Fernando's purpose, for he cared very little if all the world knew it. They told me they trusted and confided their honour and good name to my virtue and rectitude alone, and bade me consider the disparity between Don Fernando and myself, from which I might conclude that his intentions, whatever he might say to the contrary, had for their aim his own pleasure rather than my advantage; and if I were at all desirous of opposing an obstacle to his unreasonable suit, they were ready, they said, to marry me at once to anyone I preferred, either among the leading people of our own town, or of any of those in the neighbourhood; for with their wealth and my good name, a match might be looked for in any quarter. This offer, and their sound advice strengthened my resolution, and I never gave Don Fernando a word in reply that could hold out to him any hope of success, however remote.



“All this caution of mine, which he must have taken for coyness, had apparently the effect of increasing his wanton appetite — for that is the name I give to his passion for me; had it been what he declared it to be, you would not know of it now, because there would have been no occasion to tell you of it. At length he learned that my parents were contemplating marriage for me in order to put an end to his hopes of obtaining possession of me, or at least to secure additional protectors to watch over me, and this intelligence or suspicion made him act as you shall hear. One night, as I was in my chamber with no other companion than a damsel who waited on me, with the doors carefully locked lest my honour should be imperilled through any carelessness, I know not nor can

conceive how it happened, but, with all this seclusion and these precautions, and in the solitude and silence of my retirement, I found him standing before me, a vision that so astounded me that it deprived my eyes of sight, and my tongue of speech. I had no power to utter a cry, nor, I think, did he give me time to utter one, as he immediately approached me, and taking me in his arms (for, overwhelmed as I was, I was powerless, I say, to help myself), he began to make such professions to me that I know not how falsehood could have had the power of dressing them up to seem so like truth; and the traitor contrived that his tears should vouch for his words, and his sighs for his sincerity.

“I, a poor young creature alone, ill versed among my people in cases such as this, began, I know not how, to think all these lying protestations true, though without being moved by his sighs and tears to anything more than pure compassion; and so, as the first feeling of bewilderment passed away, and I began in some degree to recover myself, I said to him with more courage than I thought I could have possessed, ‘If, as I am now in your arms, senor, I were in the claws of a fierce lion, and my deliverance could be procured by doing or saying anything to the prejudice of my honour, it would no more be in my power to do it or say it, than it would be possible that what was should not have been; so then, if you hold my body clasped in your arms, I hold my soul secured by virtuous intentions, very different from yours, as you will see if you attempt to carry them into effect by force. I am your vassal, but I am not your slave; your nobility neither has nor should have any right to dishonour or degrade my humble birth; and low-born peasant as I am, I have my self-respect as much as you, a lord and gentleman: with me your violence will be to no purpose, your wealth will have no weight, your words will have no power to deceive me, nor your sighs or tears to soften me: were I to see any of the things I speak of in him whom my parents gave me as a husband, his will should be mine, and mine should be bounded by his; and my honour being preserved even though my inclinations were not would willingly yield him what you, senor, would now obtain by force; and this I say lest you should suppose that any but my lawful husband shall ever win anything of me.’ ‘If that,’ said this disloyal gentleman, ‘be the only scruple you feel, fairest Dorothea’ (for that is the name of this unhappy being), ‘see here I give you my hand to be yours, and let Heaven, from which nothing is hid, and this image of Our Lady you have here, be witnesses of this pledge.’”



When Cardenio heard her say she was called Dorothea, he showed fresh agitation and felt convinced of the truth of his former suspicion, but he was unwilling to interrupt the story, and wished to hear the end of what he already all but knew, so he merely said:

“What! is Dorothea your name, senora? I have heard of another of the same name who can perhaps match your misfortunes. But proceed; by-and-by I may

tell you something that will astonish you as much as it will excite your compassion.”

Dorothea was struck by Cardenio’s words as well as by his strange and miserable attire, and begged him if he knew anything concerning her to tell it to her at once, for if fortune had left her any blessing it was courage to bear whatever calamity might fall upon her, as she felt sure that none could reach her capable of increasing in any degree what she endured already.

“I would not let the occasion pass, senora,” replied Cardenio, “of telling you what I think, if what I suspect were the truth, but so far there has been no opportunity, nor is it of any importance to you to know it.”

“Be it as it may,” replied Dorothea, “what happened in my story was that Don Fernando, taking an image that stood in the chamber, placed it as a witness of our betrothal, and with the most binding words and extravagant oaths gave me his promise to become my husband; though before he had made an end of pledging himself I bade him consider well what he was doing, and think of the anger his father would feel at seeing him married to a peasant girl and one of his vassals; I told him not to let my beauty, such as it was, blind him, for that was not enough to furnish an excuse for his transgression; and if in the love he bore me he wished to do me any kindness, it would be to leave my lot to follow its course at the level my condition required; for marriages so unequal never brought happiness, nor did they continue long to afford the enjoyment they began with.

“All this that I have now repeated I said to him, and much more which I cannot recollect; but it had no effect in inducing him to forego his purpose; he who has no intention of paying does not trouble himself about difficulties when he is striking the bargain. At the same time I argued the matter briefly in my own mind, saying to myself, ‘I shall not be the first who has risen through marriage from a lowly to a lofty station, nor will Don Fernando be the first whom beauty or, as is more likely, a blind attachment, has led to mate himself below his rank. Then, since I am introducing no new usage or practice, I may as well avail myself of the honour that chance offers me, for even though his inclination for me should not outlast the attainment of his wishes, I shall be, after all, his wife before God. And if I strive to repel him by scorn, I can see that, fair means failing, he is in a mood to use force, and I shall be left dishonoured and without any means of proving my innocence to those who cannot know how innocently I have come to be in this position; for what arguments would persuade my parents that this gentleman entered my chamber without my consent?’

“All these questions and answers passed through my mind in a moment; but the oaths of Don Fernando, the witnesses he appealed to, the tears he shed, and



lastly the charms of his person and his high-bred grace, which, accompanied by such signs of genuine love, might well have conquered a heart even more free and coy than mine — these were the things that more than all began to influence me and lead me unawares to my ruin. I called my waiting-maid to me, that there might be a witness on earth besides those in Heaven, and again Don Fernando renewed and repeated his oaths, invoked as witnesses fresh saints in addition to the former ones, called down upon himself a thousand curses hereafter should he fail to keep his promise, shed more tears, redoubled his sighs and pressed me closer in his arms, from which he had never allowed me to escape; and so I was left by my maid, and ceased to be one, and he became a traitor and a perjured man.

“The day which followed the night of my misfortune did not come so quickly, I imagine, as Don Fernando wished, for when desire has attained its object, the greatest pleasure is to fly from the scene of pleasure. I say so because Don Fernando made all haste to leave me, and by the adroitness of my maid, who was indeed the one who had admitted him, gained the street before daybreak; but on taking leave of me he told me, though not with as much earnestness and fervour as when he came, that I might rest assured of his faith and of the sanctity and sincerity of his oaths; and to confirm his words he drew a rich ring off his finger and placed it upon mine. He then took his departure and I was left, I know not whether sorrowful or happy; all I can say is, I was left agitated and troubled in mind and almost bewildered by what had taken place, and I had not the spirit, or else it did not occur to me, to chide my maid for the treachery she had been guilty of in concealing Don Fernando in my chamber; for as yet I was unable to make up my mind whether what had befallen me was for good or evil. I told Don Fernando at parting, that as I was now his, he might see me on other nights in the same way, until it should be his pleasure to let the matter become known; but, except the following night, he came no more, nor for more than a month could I catch a glimpse of him in the street or in church, while I wearied myself with watching for one; although I knew he was in the town, and almost every day went out hunting, a pastime he was very fond of. I remember well how sad and dreary those days and hours were to me; I remember well how I began to doubt as they went by, and even to lose confidence in the faith of Don Fernando; and I remember, too, how my maid heard those words in reproof of her audacity that she had not heard before, and how I was forced to put a constraint on my tears and on the expression of my countenance, not to give my parents cause to ask me why I was so melancholy, and drive me to invent falsehoods in reply. But all this was suddenly brought to an end, for the time came when all such considerations were disregarded, and there was no further question of honour,

when my patience gave way and the secret of my heart became known abroad. The reason was, that a few days later it was reported in the town that Don Fernando had been married in a neighbouring city to a maiden of rare beauty, the daughter of parents of distinguished position, though not so rich that her portion would entitle her to look for so brilliant a match; it was said, too, that her name was Luscinda, and that at the betrothal some strange things had happened.”

Cardenio heard the name of Luscinda, but he only shrugged his shoulders, bit his lips, bent his brows, and before long two streams of tears escaped from his eyes. Dorothea, however, did not interrupt her story, but went on in these words:

“This sad intelligence reached my ears, and, instead of being struck with a chill, with such wrath and fury did my heart burn that I scarcely restrained myself from rushing out into the streets, crying aloud and proclaiming openly the perfidy and treachery of which I was the victim; but this transport of rage was for the time checked by a resolution I formed, to be carried out the same night, and that was to assume this dress, which I got from a servant of my father’s, one of the zagals, as they are called in farmhouses, to whom I confided the whole of my misfortune, and whom I entreated to accompany me to the city where I heard my enemy was. He, though he remonstrated with me for my boldness, and condemned my resolution, when he saw me bent upon my purpose, offered to bear me company, as he said, to the end of the world. I at once packed up in a linen pillow-case a woman’s dress, and some jewels and money to provide for emergencies, and in the silence of the night, without letting my treacherous maid know, I sallied forth from the house, accompanied by my servant and abundant anxieties, and on foot set out for the city, but borne as it were on wings by my eagerness to reach it, if not to prevent what I presumed to be already done, at least to call upon Don Fernando to tell me with what conscience he had done it. I reached my destination in two days and a half, and on entering the city inquired for the house of Luscinda’s parents. The first person I asked gave me more in reply than I sought to know; he showed me the house, and told me all that had occurred at the betrothal of the daughter of the family, an affair of such notoriety in the city that it was the talk of every knot of idlers in the street. He said that on the night of Don Fernando’s betrothal with Luscinda, as soon as she had consented to be his bride by saying ‘Yes,’ she was taken with a sudden fainting fit, and that on the bridegroom approaching to unlace the bosom of her dress to give her air, he found a paper in her own handwriting, in which she said and declared that she could not be Don Fernando’s bride, because she was already Cardenio’s, who, according to the man’s account, was a gentleman of distinction of the same city; and that if she had accepted Don Fernando, it was only in obedience to her parents. In short, he said, the words of

the paper made it clear she meant to kill herself on the completion of the betrothal, and gave her reasons for putting an end to herself all which was confirmed, it was said, by a dagger they found somewhere in her clothes. On seeing this, Don Fernando, persuaded that Luscinda had befooled, slighted, and trifled with him, assailed her before she had recovered from her swoon, and tried to stab her with the dagger that had been found, and would have succeeded had not her parents and those who were present prevented him. It was said, moreover, that Don Fernando went away at once, and that Luscinda did not recover from her prostration until the next day, when she told her parents how she was really the bride of that Cardenio I have mentioned. I learned besides that Cardenio, according to report, had been present at the betrothal; and that upon seeing her betrothed contrary to his expectation, he had quitted the city in despair, leaving behind him a letter declaring the wrong Luscinda had done him, and his intention of going where no one should ever see him again. All this was a matter of notoriety in the city, and everyone spoke of it; especially when it became known that Luscinda was missing from her father's house and from the city, for she was not to be found anywhere, to the distraction of her parents, who knew not what steps to take to recover her. What I learned revived my hopes, and I was better pleased not to have found Don Fernando than to find him married, for it seemed to me that the door was not yet entirely shut upon relief in my case, and I thought that perhaps Heaven had put this impediment in the way of the second marriage, to lead him to recognise his obligations under the former one, and reflect that as a Christian he was bound to consider his soul above all human objects. All this passed through my mind, and I strove to comfort myself without comfort, indulging in faint and distant hopes of cherishing that life that I now abhor.

“But while I was in the city, uncertain what to do, as I could not find Don Fernando, I heard notice given by the public crier offering a great reward to anyone who should find me, and giving the particulars of my age and of the very dress I wore; and I heard it said that the lad who came with me had taken me away from my father's house; a thing that cut me to the heart, showing how low my good name had fallen, since it was not enough that I should lose it by my flight, but they must add with whom I had fled, and that one so much beneath me and so unworthy of my consideration. The instant I heard the notice I quitted the city with my servant, who now began to show signs of wavering in his fidelity to me, and the same night, for fear of discovery, we entered the most thickly wooded part of these mountains. But, as is commonly said, one evil calls up another and the end of one misfortune is apt to be the beginning of one still greater, and so it proved in my case; for my worthy servant, until then so faithful

and trusty when he found me in this lonely spot, moved more by his own villainy than by my beauty, sought to take advantage of the opportunity which these solitudes seemed to present him, and with little shame and less fear of God and respect for me, began to make overtures to me; and finding that I replied to the effrontery of his proposals with justly severe language, he laid aside the entreaties which he had employed at first, and began to use violence.



“But just Heaven, that seldom fails to watch over and aid good intentions, so aided mine that with my slight strength and with little exertion I pushed him over a precipice, where I left him, whether dead or alive I know not; and then, with greater speed than seemed possible in my terror and fatigue, I made my way into the mountains, without any other thought or purpose save that of hiding myself among them, and escaping my father and those despatched in search of me by his orders. It is now I know not how many months since with this object I came here, where I met a herdsman who engaged me as his servant at a place in the heart of this Sierra, and all this time I have been serving him as herd, striving to keep always afield to hide these locks which have now unexpectedly betrayed me. But all my care and pains were unavailing, for my master made the discovery that I was not a man, and harboured the same base designs as my servant; and as fortune does not always supply a remedy in cases of difficulty, and I had no precipice or ravine at hand down which to fling the master and cure his passion, as I had in the servant’s case, I thought it a lesser evil to leave him and again conceal myself among these crags, than make trial of my strength and argument with him. So, as I say, once more I went into hiding to seek for some place where I might with sighs and tears implore Heaven to have pity on my misery, and grant me help and strength to escape from it, or let me die among the solitudes, leaving no trace of an unhappy being who, by no fault of hers, has furnished matter for talk and scandal at home and abroad.”



## CHAPTER XXIX.

WHICH TREATS OF THE DROLL DEVICE AND METHOD ADOPTED TO  
EXTRICATE OUR LOVE-STRICKEN KNIGHT FROM THE SEVERE  
PENANCE HE HAD IMPOSED UPON HIMSELF



“Such, sirs, is the true story of my sad adventures; judge for yourselves now whether the sighs and lamentations you heard, and the tears that flowed from my eyes, had not sufficient cause even if I had indulged in them more freely; and if you consider the nature of my misfortune you will see that consolation is idle, as there is no possible remedy for it. All I ask of you is, what you may easily and reasonably do, to show me where I may pass my life unharassed by the fear and dread of discovery by those who are in search of me; for though the great love my parents bear me makes me feel sure of being kindly received by them, so great is my feeling of shame at the mere thought that I cannot present myself before them as they expect, that I had rather banish myself from their sight for ever than look them in the face with the reflection that they beheld mine stripped of that purity they had a right to expect in me.”

With these words she became silent, and the colour that overspread her face showed plainly the pain and shame she was suffering at heart. In theirs the listeners felt as much pity as wonder at her misfortunes; but as the curate was

just about to offer her some consolation and advice Cardenio forestalled him, saying, "So then, senora, you are the fair Dorothea, the only daughter of the rich Clenardo?" Dorothea was astonished at hearing her father's name, and at the miserable appearance of him who mentioned it, for it has been already said how wretchedly clad Cardenio was; so she said to him:

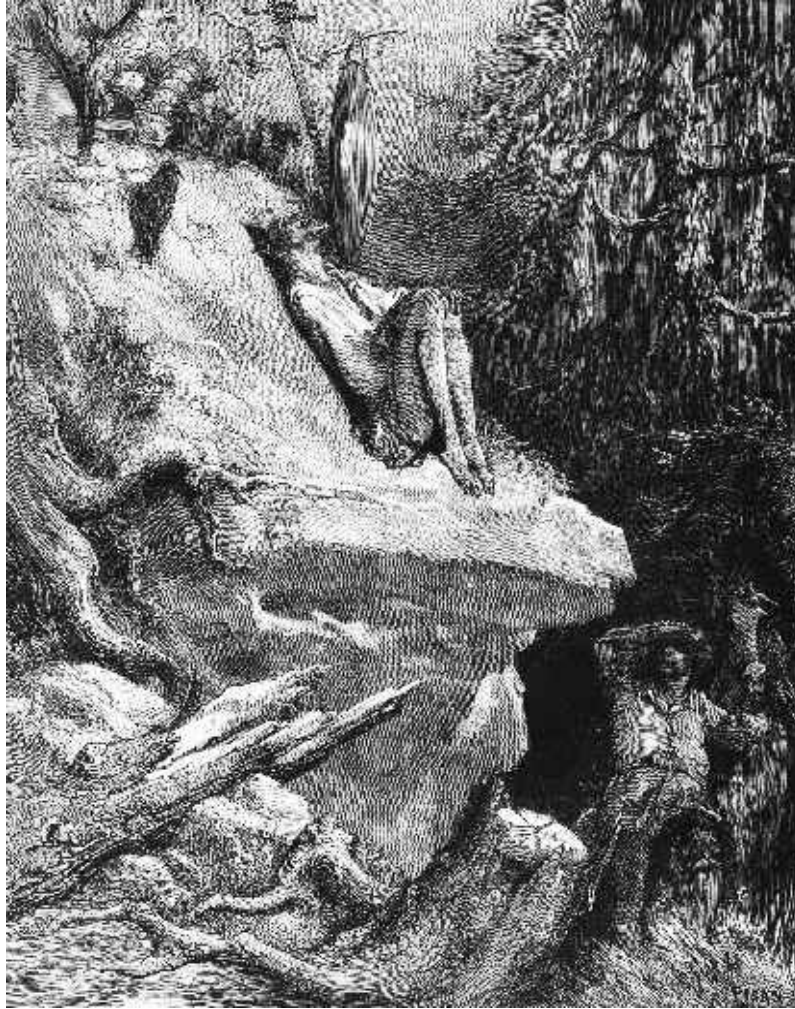
"And who may you be, brother, who seem to know my father's name so well? For so far, if I remember rightly, I have not mentioned it in the whole story of my misfortunes."

"I am that unhappy being, senora," replied Cardenio, "whom, as you have said, Luscinda declared to be her husband; I am the unfortunate Cardenio, whom the wrong-doing of him who has brought you to your present condition has reduced to the state you see me in, bare, ragged, bereft of all human comfort, and what is worse, of reason, for I only possess it when Heaven is pleased for some short space to restore it to me. I, Dorothea, am he who witnessed the wrong done by Don Fernando, and waited to hear the 'Yes' uttered by which Luscinda owned herself his betrothed: I am he who had not courage enough to see how her fainting fit ended, or what came of the paper that was found in her bosom, because my heart had not the fortitude to endure so many strokes of ill-fortune at once; and so losing patience I quitted the house, and leaving a letter with my host, which I entreated him to place in Luscinda's hands, I betook myself to these solitudes, resolved to end here the life I hated as if it were my mortal enemy. But fate would not rid me of it, contenting itself with robbing me of my reason, perhaps to preserve me for the good fortune I have had in meeting you; for if that which you have just told us be true, as I believe it to be, it may be that Heaven has yet in store for both of us a happier termination to our misfortunes than we look for; because seeing that Luscinda cannot marry Don Fernando, being mine, as she has herself so openly declared, and that Don Fernando cannot marry her as he is yours, we may reasonably hope that Heaven will restore to us what is ours, as it is still in existence and not yet alienated or destroyed. And as we have this consolation springing from no very visionary hope or wild fancy, I entreat you, senora, to form new resolutions in your better mind, as I mean to do in mine, preparing yourself to look forward to happier fortunes; for I swear to you by the faith of a gentleman and a Christian not to desert you until I see you in possession of Don Fernando, and if I cannot by words induce him to recognise his obligation to you, in that case to avail myself of the right which my rank as a gentleman gives me, and with just cause challenge him on account of the injury he has done you, not regarding my own wrongs, which I shall leave to Heaven to avenge, while I on earth devote myself to yours."

Cardenio's words completed the astonishment of Dorothea, and not knowing



how to return thanks for such an offer, she attempted to kiss his feet; but Cardenio would not permit it, and the licentiate replied for both, commended the sound reasoning of Cardenio, and lastly, begged, advised, and urged them to come with him to his village, where they might furnish themselves with what they needed, and take measures to discover Don Fernando, or restore Dorothea to her parents, or do what seemed to them most advisable. Cardenio and Dorothea thanked him, and accepted the kind offer he made them; and the barber, who had been listening to all attentively and in silence, on his part some kindly words also, and with no less good-will than the curate offered his services in any way that might be of use to them. He also explained to them in a few words the object that had brought them there, and the strange nature of Don Quixote's madness, and how they were waiting for his squire, who had gone in search of him. Like the recollection of a dream, the quarrel he had had with Don Quixote came back to Cardenio's memory, and he described it to the others; but he was unable to say what the dispute was about.



At this moment they heard a shout, and recognised it as coming from Sancho Panza, who, not finding them where he had left them, was calling aloud to them. They went to meet him, and in answer to their inquiries about Don Quixote, he told them how he had found him stripped to his shirt, lank, yellow, half dead with hunger, and sighing for his lady Dulcinea; and although he had told him that she commanded him to quit that place and come to El Toboso, where she was expecting him, he had answered that he was determined not to appear in the presence of her beauty until he had done deeds to make him worthy of her favour; and if this went on, Sancho said, he ran the risk of not becoming an emperor as in duty bound, or even an archbishop, which was the least he could

be; for which reason they ought to consider what was to be done to get him away from there. The licentiate in reply told him not to be uneasy, for they would fetch him away in spite of himself. He then told Cardenio and Dorothea what they had proposed to do to cure Don Quixote, or at any rate take him home; upon which Dorothea said that she could play the distressed damsel better than the barber; especially as she had there the dress in which to do it to the life, and that they might trust to her acting the part in every particular requisite for carrying out their scheme, for she had read a great many books of chivalry, and knew exactly the style in which afflicted damsels begged boons of knights-errant.

“In that case,” said the curate, “there is nothing more required than to set about it at once, for beyond a doubt fortune is declaring itself in our favour, since it has so unexpectedly begun to open a door for your relief, and smoothed the way for us to our object.”

Dorothea then took out of her pillow-case a complete petticoat of some rich stuff, and a green mantle of some other fine material, and a necklace and other ornaments out of a little box, and with these in an instant she so arrayed herself that she looked like a great and rich lady. All this, and more, she said, she had taken from home in case of need, but that until then she had had no occasion to make use of it. They were all highly delighted with her grace, air, and beauty, and declared Don Fernando to be a man of very little taste when he rejected such charms. But the one who admired her most was Sancho Panza, for it seemed to him (what indeed was true) that in all the days of his life he had never seen such a lovely creature; and he asked the curate with great eagerness who this beautiful lady was, and what she wanted in these out-of-the-way quarters.

“This fair lady, brother Sancho,” replied the curate, “is no less a personage than the heiress in the direct male line of the great kingdom of Micomicon, who has come in search of your master to beg a boon of him, which is that he redress a wrong or injury that a wicked giant has done her; and from the fame as a good knight which your master has acquired far and wide, this princess has come from Guinea to seek him.”

“A lucky seeking and a lucky finding!” said Sancho Panza at this; “especially if my master has the good fortune to redress that injury, and right that wrong, and kill that son of a bitch of a giant your worship speaks of; as kill him he will if he meets him, unless, indeed, he happens to be a phantom; for my master has no power at all against phantoms. But one thing among others I would beg of you, senor licentiate, which is, that, to prevent my master taking a fancy to be an archbishop, for that is what I’m afraid of, your worship would recommend him to marry this princess at once; for in this way he will be disabled from taking

archbishop's orders, and will easily come into his empire, and I to the end of my desires; I have been thinking over the matter carefully, and by what I can make out I find it will not do for me that my master should become an archbishop, because I am no good for the Church, as I am married; and for me now, having as I have a wife and children, to set about obtaining dispensations to enable me to hold a place of profit under the Church, would be endless work; so that, senor, it all turns on my master marrying this lady at once — for as yet I do not know her grace, and so I cannot call her by her name."

"She is called the Princess Micomicona," said the curate; "for as her kingdom is Micomicon, it is clear that must be her name."

"There's no doubt of that," replied Sancho, "for I have known many to take their name and title from the place where they were born and call themselves Pedro of Alcala, Juan of Ubeda, and Diego of Valladolid; and it may be that over there in Guinea queens have the same way of taking the names of their kingdoms."

"So it may," said the curate; "and as for your master's marrying, I will do all in my power towards it:" with which Sancho was as much pleased as the curate was amazed at his simplicity and at seeing what a hold the absurdities of his master had taken of his fancy, for he had evidently persuaded himself that he was going to be an emperor.

By this time Dorothea had seated herself upon the curate's mule, and the barber had fitted the ox-tail beard to his face, and they now told Sancho to conduct them to where Don Quixote was, warning him not to say that he knew either the licentiate or the barber, as his master's becoming an emperor entirely depended on his not recognising them; neither the curate nor Cardenio, however, thought fit to go with them; Cardenio lest he should remind Don Quixote of the quarrel he had with him, and the curate as there was no necessity for his presence just yet, so they allowed the others to go on before them, while they themselves followed slowly on foot. The curate did not forget to instruct Dorothea how to act, but she said they might make their minds easy, as everything would be done exactly as the books of chivalry required and described.



They had gone about three-quarters of a league when they discovered Don Quixote in a wilderness of rocks, by this time clothed, but without his armour; and as soon as Dorothea saw him and was told by Sancho that that was Don Quixote, she whipped her palfrey, the well-bearded barber following her, and on coming up to him her squire sprang from his mule and came forward to receive her in his arms, and she dismounting with great ease of manner advanced to kneel before the feet of Don Quixote; and though he strove to raise her up, she without rising addressed him in this fashion:

“From this spot I will not rise, valiant and doughty knight, until your goodness and courtesy grant me a boon, which will redound to the honour and renown of your person and render a service to the most disconsolate and afflicted damsel the sun has seen; and if the might of your strong arm corresponds to the repute of your immortal fame, you are bound to aid the helpless being who, led by the savour of your renowned name, hath come from far distant lands to seek your aid in her misfortunes.”

“I will not answer a word, beauteous lady,” replied Don Quixote, “nor will I listen to anything further concerning you, until you rise from the earth.”

“I will not rise, senor,” answered the afflicted damsel, “unless of your courtesy the boon I ask is first granted me.”

“I grant and accord it,” said Don Quixote, “provided without detriment or prejudice to my king, my country, or her who holds the key of my heart and freedom, it may be complied with.”

“It will not be to the detriment or prejudice of any of them, my worthy lord,” said the afflicted damsel; and here Sancho Panza drew close to his master’s ear and said to him very softly, “Your worship may very safely grant the boon she asks; it’s nothing at all; only to kill a big giant; and she who asks it is the exalted Princess Micomicona, queen of the great kingdom of Micomicon of Ethiopia.”

“Let her be who she may,” replied Don Quixote, “I will do what is my bounden duty, and what my conscience bids me, in conformity with what I have professed;” and turning to the damsel he said, “Let your great beauty rise, for I grant the boon which you would ask of me.”

“Then what I ask,” said the damsel, “is that your magnanimous person accompany me at once whither I will conduct you, and that you promise not to engage in any other adventure or quest until you have avenged me of a traitor who against all human and divine law, has usurped my kingdom.”

“I repeat that I grant it,” replied Don Quixote; “and so, lady, you may from this day forth lay aside the melancholy that distresses you, and let your failing hopes gather new life and strength, for with the help of God and of my arm you will soon see yourself restored to your kingdom, and seated upon the throne of your ancient and mighty realm, notwithstanding and despite of the felons who would gainsay it; and now hands to the work, for in delay there is apt to be danger.”

The distressed damsel strove with much pertinacity to kiss his hands; but Don Quixote, who was in all things a polished and courteous knight, would by no means allow it, but made her rise and embraced her with great courtesy and politeness, and ordered Sancho to look to Rocinante’s girths, and to arm him without a moment’s delay. Sancho took down the armour, which was hung up on

a tree like a trophy, and having seen to the girths armed his master in a trice, who as soon as he found himself in his armour exclaimed:

“Let us be gone in the name of God to bring aid to this great lady.”

The barber was all this time on his knees at great pains to hide his laughter and not let his beard fall, for had it fallen maybe their fine scheme would have come to nothing; but now seeing the boon granted, and the promptitude with which Don Quixote prepared to set out in compliance with it, he rose and took his lady's hand, and between them they placed her upon the mule. Don Quixote then mounted Rocinante, and the barber settled himself on his beast, Sancho being left to go on foot, which made him feel anew the loss of his Dapple, finding the want of him now. But he bore all with cheerfulness, being persuaded that his master had now fairly started and was just on the point of becoming an emperor; for he felt no doubt at all that he would marry this princess, and be king of Micomicon at least. The only thing that troubled him was the reflection that this kingdom was in the land of the blacks, and that the people they would give him for vassals would be all black; but for this he soon found a remedy in his fancy, and said he to himself, “What is it to me if my vassals are blacks? What more have I to do than make a cargo of them and carry them to Spain, where I can sell them and get ready money for them, and with it buy some title or some office in which to live at ease all the days of my life? Not unless you go to sleep and haven't the wit or skill to turn things to account and sell three, six, or ten thousand vassals while you would be talking about it! By God I will stir them up, big and little, or as best I can, and let them be ever so black I'll turn them into white or yellow. Come, come, what a fool I am!” And so he jogged on, so occupied with his thoughts and easy in his mind that he forgot all about the hardship of travelling on foot.

Cardenio and the curate were watching all this from among some bushes, not knowing how to join company with the others; but the curate, who was very fertile in devices, soon hit upon a way of effecting their purpose, and with a pair of scissors he had in a case he quickly cut off Cardenio's beard, and putting on him a grey jerkin of his own he gave him a black cloak, leaving himself in his breeches and doublet, while Cardenio's appearance was so different from what it had been that he would not have known himself had he seen himself in a mirror. Having effected this, although the others had gone on ahead while they were disguising themselves, they easily came out on the high road before them, for the brambles and awkward places they encountered did not allow those on horseback to go as fast as those on foot. They then posted themselves on the level ground at the outlet of the Sierra, and as soon as Don Quixote and his companions emerged from it the curate began to examine him very deliberately,

as though he were striving to recognise him, and after having stared at him for some time he hastened towards him with open arms exclaiming, "A happy meeting with the mirror of chivalry, my worthy compatriot Don Quixote of La Mancha, the flower and cream of high breeding, the protection and relief of the distressed, the quintessence of knights-errant!" And so saying he clasped in his arms the knee of Don Quixote's left leg. He, astonished at the stranger's words and behaviour, looked at him attentively, and at length recognised him, very much surprised to see him there, and made great efforts to dismount. This, however, the curate would not allow, on which Don Quixote said, "Permit me, senior licentiate, for it is not fitting that I should be on horseback and so reverend a person as your worship on foot."

"On no account will I allow it," said the curate; "your mightiness must remain on horseback, for it is on horseback you achieve the greatest deeds and adventures that have been beheld in our age; as for me, an unworthy priest, it will serve me well enough to mount on the haunches of one of the mules of these gentlefolk who accompany your worship, if they have no objection, and I will fancy I am mounted on the steed Pegasus, or on the zebra or charger that bore the famous Moor, Muzaraque, who to this day lies enchanted in the great hill of Zulema, a little distance from the great Complutum."

"Nor even that will I consent to, senior licentiate," answered Don Quixote, "and I know it will be the good pleasure of my lady the princess, out of love for me, to order her squire to give up the saddle of his mule to your worship, and he can sit behind if the beast will bear it."

"It will, I am sure," said the princess, "and I am sure, too, that I need not order my squire, for he is too courteous and considerate to allow a Churchman to go on foot when he might be mounted."

"That he is," said the barber, and at once alighting, he offered his saddle to the curate, who accepted it without much entreaty; but unfortunately as the barber was mounting behind, the mule, being as it happened a hired one, which is the same thing as saying ill-conditioned, lifted its hind hoofs and let fly a couple of kicks in the air, which would have made Master Nicholas wish his expedition in quest of Don Quixote at the devil had they caught him on the breast or head. As it was, they so took him by surprise that he came to the ground, giving so little heed to his beard that it fell off, and all he could do when he found himself without it was to cover his face hastily with both his hands and moan that his teeth were knocked out. Don Quixote when he saw all that bundle of beard detached, without jaws or blood, from the face of the fallen squire, exclaimed:

"By the living God, but this is a great miracle! it has knocked off and plucked away the beard from his face as if it had been shaved off designedly."



The curate, seeing the danger of discovery that threatened his scheme, at once pounced upon the beard and hastened with it to where Master Nicholas lay, still uttering moans, and drawing his head to his breast had it on in an instant, muttering over him some words which he said were a certain special charm for sticking on beards, as they would see; and as soon as he had it fixed he left him, and the squire appeared well bearded and whole as before, whereat Don Quixote was beyond measure astonished, and begged the curate to teach him that charm when he had an opportunity, as he was persuaded its virtue must extend beyond the sticking on of beards, for it was clear that where the beard had been stripped off the flesh must have remained torn and lacerated, and when it could heal all that it must be good for more than beards.

“And so it is,” said the curate, and he promised to teach it to him on the first opportunity. They then agreed that for the present the curate should mount, and that the three should ride by turns until they reached the inn, which might be about six leagues from where they were.

Three then being mounted, that is to say, Don Quixote, the princess, and the curate, and three on foot, Cardenio, the barber, and Sancho Panza, Don Quixote said to the damsel:

“Let your highness, lady, lead on whithersoever is most pleasing to you;” but before she could answer the licentiate said:



“Towards what kingdom would your ladyship direct our course? Is it perchance towards that of Micomicon? It must be, or else I know little about kingdoms.”

She, being ready on all points, understood that she was to answer “Yes,” so she said “Yes, senor, my way lies towards that kingdom.”

“In that case,” said the curate, “we must pass right through my village, and there your worship will take the road to Cartagena, where you will be able to embark, fortune favouring; and if the wind be fair and the sea smooth and tranquil, in somewhat less than nine years you may come in sight of the great lake Meona, I mean Meotides, which is little more than a hundred days’ journey

this side of your highness's kingdom.”



“Your worship is mistaken, senor,” said she; “for it is not two years since I set

out from it, and though I never had good weather, nevertheless I am here to behold what I so longed for, and that is my lord Don Quixote of La Mancha, whose fame came to my ears as soon as I set foot in Spain and impelled me to go in search of him, to commend myself to his courtesy, and entrust the justice of my cause to the might of his invincible arm.”

“Enough; no more praise,” said Don Quixote at this, “for I hate all flattery; and though this may not be so, still language of the kind is offensive to my chaste ears. I will only say, senora, that whether it has might or not, that which it may or may not have shall be devoted to your service even to death; and now, leaving this to its proper season, I would ask the senor licentiate to tell me what it is that has brought him into these parts, alone, unattended, and so lightly clad that I am filled with amazement.”

“I will answer that briefly,” replied the curate; “you must know then, Senor Don Quixote, that Master Nicholas, our friend and barber, and I were going to Seville to receive some money that a relative of mine who went to the Indies many years ago had sent me, and not such a small sum but that it was over sixty thousand pieces of eight, full weight, which is something; and passing by this place yesterday we were attacked by four footpads, who stripped us even to our beards, and then they stripped off so that the barber found it necessary to put on a false one, and even this young man here” — pointing to Cardenio— “they completely transformed. But the best of it is, the story goes in the neighbourhood that those who attacked us belong to a number of galley slaves who, they say, were set free almost on the very same spot by a man of such valour that, in spite of the commissary and of the guards, he released the whole of them; and beyond all doubt he must have been out of his senses, or he must be as great a scoundrel as they, or some man without heart or conscience to let the wolf loose among the sheep, the fox among the hens, the fly among the honey. He has defrauded justice, and opposed his king and lawful master, for he opposed his just commands; he has, I say, robbed the galleys of their feet, stirred up the Holy Brotherhood which for many years past has been quiet, and, lastly, has done a deed by which his soul may be lost without any gain to his body.” Sancho had told the curate and the barber of the adventure of the galley slaves, which, so much to his glory, his master had achieved, and hence the curate in alluding to it made the most of it to see what would be said or done by Don Quixote; who changed colour at every word, not daring to say that it was he who had been the liberator of those worthy people. “These, then,” said the curate, “were they who robbed us; and God in his mercy pardon him who would not let them go to the punishment they deserved.”



## CHAPTER XXX.

WHICH TREATS OF ADDRESS DISPLAYED BY THE FAIR DOROTHEA,  
WITH OTHER MATTERS PLEASANT AND AMUSING



The curate had hardly ceased speaking, when Sancho said, “In faith, then, senior licentiate, he who did that deed was my master; and it was not for want of my telling him beforehand and warning him to mind what he was about, and that it was a sin to set them at liberty, as they were all on the march there because they were special scoundrels.”

“Blockhead!” said Don Quixote at this, “it is no business or concern of knights-errant to inquire whether any persons in affliction, in chains, or oppressed that they may meet on the high roads go that way and suffer as they do because of their faults or because of their misfortunes. It only concerns them

to aid them as persons in need of help, having regard to their sufferings and not to their rascalities. I encountered a chaplet or string of miserable and unfortunate people, and did for them what my sense of duty demands of me, and as for the rest be that as it may; and whoever takes objection to it, saving the sacred dignity of the senor licentiate and his honoured person, I say he knows little about chivalry and lies like a whoreson villain, and this I will give him to know to the fullest extent with my sword;" and so saying he settled himself in his stirrups and pressed down his morion; for the barber's basin, which according to him was Mambrino's helmet, he carried hanging at the saddle-bow until he could repair the damage done to it by the galley slaves.

Dorothea, who was shrewd and sprightly, and by this time thoroughly understood Don Quixote's crazy turn, and that all except Sancho Panza were making game of him, not to be behind the rest said to him, on observing his irritation, "Sir Knight, remember the boon you have promised me, and that in accordance with it you must not engage in any other adventure, be it ever so pressing; calm yourself, for if the licentiate had known that the galley slaves had been set free by that unconquered arm he would have stopped his mouth thrice over, or even bitten his tongue three times before he would have said a word that tended towards disrespect of your worship."

"That I swear heartily," said the curate, "and I would have even plucked off a moustache."

"I will hold my peace, senora," said Don Quixote, "and I will curb the natural anger that had arisen in my breast, and will proceed in peace and quietness until I have fulfilled my promise; but in return for this consideration I entreat you to tell me, if you have no objection to do so, what is the nature of your trouble, and how many, who, and what are the persons of whom I am to require due satisfaction, and on whom I am to take vengeance on your behalf?"

"That I will do with all my heart," replied Dorothea, "if it will not be wearisome to you to hear of miseries and misfortunes."

"It will not be wearisome, senora," said Don Quixote; to which Dorothea replied, "Well, if that be so, give me your attention." As soon as she said this, Cardenio and the barber drew close to her side, eager to hear what sort of story the quick-witted Dorothea would invent for herself; and Sancho did the same, for he was as much taken in by her as his master; and she having settled herself comfortably in the saddle, and with the help of coughing and other preliminaries taken time to think, began with great sprightliness of manner in this fashion.

"First of all, I would have you know, sirs, that my name is-" and here she stopped for a moment, for she forgot the name the curate had given her; but he came to her relief, seeing what her difficulty was, and said, "It is no wonder,

senora, that your highness should be confused and embarrassed in telling the tale of your misfortunes; for such afflictions often have the effect of depriving the sufferers of memory, so that they do not even remember their own names, as is the case now with your ladyship, who has forgotten that she is called the Princess Micomicona, lawful heiress of the great kingdom of Micomicon; and with this cue your highness may now recall to your sorrowful recollection all you may wish to tell us.”

“That is the truth,” said the damsel; “but I think from this on I shall have no need of any prompting, and I shall bring my true story safe into port, and here it is. The king my father, who was called Tinacrio the Sapient, was very learned in what they call magic arts, and became aware by his craft that my mother, who was called Queen Jaramilla, was to die before he did, and that soon after he too was to depart this life, and I was to be left an orphan without father or mother. But all this, he declared, did not so much grieve or distress him as his certain knowledge that a prodigious giant, the lord of a great island close to our kingdom, Pandafilando of the Scowl by name — for it is averred that, though his eyes are properly placed and straight, he always looks askew as if he squinted, and this he does out of malignity, to strike fear and terror into those he looks at — that he knew, I say, that this giant on becoming aware of my orphan condition would overrun my kingdom with a mighty force and strip me of all, not leaving me even a small village to shelter me; but that I could avoid all this ruin and misfortune if I were willing to marry him; however, as far as he could see, he never expected that I would consent to a marriage so unequal; and he said no more than the truth in this, for it has never entered my mind to marry that giant, or any other, let him be ever so great or enormous. My father said, too, that when he was dead, and I saw Pandafilando about to invade my kingdom, I was not to wait and attempt to defend myself, for that would be destructive to me, but that I should leave the kingdom entirely open to him if I wished to avoid the death and total destruction of my good and loyal vassals, for there would be no possibility of defending myself against the giant’s devilish power; and that I should at once with some of my followers set out for Spain, where I should obtain relief in my distress on finding a certain knight-errant whose fame by that time would extend over the whole kingdom, and who would be called, if I remember rightly, Don Azote or Don Gigote.”

“‘Don Quixote,’ he must have said, senora,” observed Sancho at this, “otherwise called the Knight of the Rueful Countenance.”

“That is it,” said Dorothea; “he said, moreover, that he would be tall of stature and lank featured; and that on his right side under the left shoulder, or thereabouts, he would have a grey mole with hairs like bristles.”



On hearing this, Don Quixote said to his squire, "Here, Sancho my son, bear a hand and help me to strip, for I want to see if I am the knight that sage king foretold."

"What does your worship want to strip for?" said Dorothea.

"To see if I have that mole your father spoke of," answered Don Quixote.

"There is no occasion to strip," said Sancho; "for I know your worship has just such a mole on the middle of your backbone, which is the mark of a strong man."

"That is enough," said Dorothea, "for with friends we must not look too closely into trifles; and whether it be on the shoulder or on the backbone matters little; it is enough if there is a mole, be it where it may, for it is all the same flesh; no doubt my good father hit the truth in every particular, and I have made a lucky hit in commending myself to Don Quixote; for he is the one my father spoke of, as the features of his countenance correspond with those assigned to this knight by that wide fame he has acquired not only in Spain but in all La Mancha; for I had scarcely landed at Osuna when I heard such accounts of his achievements, that at once my heart told me he was the very one I had come in search of."

"But how did you land at Osuna, senora," asked Don Quixote, "when it is not a seaport?"

But before Dorothea could reply the curate anticipated her, saying, "The princess meant to say that after she had landed at Malaga the first place where she heard of your worship was Osuna."

"That is what I meant to say," said Dorothea.

"And that would be only natural," said the curate. "Will your majesty please proceed?"

"There is no more to add," said Dorothea, "save that in finding Don Quixote I have had such good fortune, that I already reckon and regard myself queen and mistress of my entire dominions, since of his courtesy and magnanimity he has granted me the boon of accompanying me whithersoever I may conduct him, which will be only to bring him face to face with Pandafilando of the Scowl, that he may slay him and restore to me what has been unjustly usurped by him: for all this must come to pass satisfactorily since my good father Tinacrio the Sapient foretold it, who likewise left it declared in writing in Chaldee or Greek characters (for I cannot read them), that if this predicted knight, after having cut the giant's throat, should be disposed to marry me I was to offer myself at once without demur as his lawful wife, and yield him possession of my kingdom together with my person."

"What thinkest thou now, friend Sancho?" said Don Quixote at this. "Hearest

thou that? Did I not tell thee so? See how we have already got a kingdom to govern and a queen to marry!”

“On my oath it is so,” said Sancho; “and foul fortune to him who won’t marry after slitting Senor Pandahilado’s windpipe! And then, how illfavoured the queen is! I wish the fleas in my bed were that sort!”

And so saying he cut a couple of capers in the air with every sign of extreme satisfaction, and then ran to seize the bridle of Dorothea’s mule, and checking it fell on his knees before her, begging her to give him her hand to kiss in token of his acknowledgment of her as his queen and mistress. Which of the bystanders could have helped laughing to see the madness of the master and the simplicity of the servant? Dorothea therefore gave her hand, and promised to make him a great lord in her kingdom, when Heaven should be so good as to permit her to recover and enjoy it, for which Sancho returned thanks in words that set them all laughing again.

“This, sirs,” continued Dorothea, “is my story; it only remains to tell you that of all the attendants I took with me from my kingdom I have none left except this well-bearded squire, for all were drowned in a great tempest we encountered when in sight of port; and he and I came to land on a couple of planks as if by a miracle; and indeed the whole course of my life is a miracle and a mystery as you may have observed; and if I have been over minute in any respect or not as precise as I ought, let it be accounted for by what the licentiate said at the beginning of my tale, that constant and excessive troubles deprive the sufferers of their memory.”

“They shall not deprive me of mine, exalted and worthy princess,” said Don Quixote, “however great and unexampled those which I shall endure in your service may be; and here I confirm anew the boon I have promised you, and I swear to go with you to the end of the world until I find myself in the presence of your fierce enemy, whose haughty head I trust by the aid of my arm to cut off with the edge of this — I will not say good sword, thanks to Gines de Pasamonte who carried away mine” — (this he said between his teeth, and then continued), “and when it has been cut off and you have been put in peaceful possession of your realm it shall be left to your own decision to dispose of your person as may be most pleasing to you; for so long as my memory is occupied, my will enslaved, and my understanding enthralled by her — I say no more — it is impossible for me for a moment to contemplate marriage, even with a Phoenix.”

The last words of his master about not wanting to marry were so disagreeable to Sancho that raising his voice he exclaimed with great irritation:

“By my oath, Senor Don Quixote, you are not in your right senses; for how can your worship possibly object to marrying such an exalted princess as this?

Do you think Fortune will offer you behind every stone such a piece of luck as is offered you now? Is my lady Dulcinea fairer, perchance? Not she; nor half as fair; and I will even go so far as to say she does not come up to the shoe of this one here. A poor chance I have of getting that county I am waiting for if your worship goes looking for dainties in the bottom of the sea. In the devil's name, marry, marry, and take this kingdom that comes to hand without any trouble, and when you are king make me a marquis or governor of a province, and for the rest let the devil take it all."

Don Quixote, when he heard such blasphemies uttered against his lady Dulcinea, could not endure it, and lifting his pike, without saying anything to Sancho or uttering a word, he gave him two such thwacks that he brought him to the ground; and had it not been that Dorothea cried out to him to spare him he would have no doubt taken his life on the spot.

"Do you think," he said to him after a pause, "you scurvy clown, that you are to be always interfering with me, and that you are to be always offending and I always pardoning? Don't fancy it, impious scoundrel, for that beyond a doubt thou art, since thou hast set thy tongue going against the peerless Dulcinea. Know you not, lout, vagabond, beggar, that were it not for the might that she infuses into my arm I should not have strength enough to kill a flea? Say, scoffer with a viper's tongue, what think you has won this kingdom and cut off this giant's head and made you a marquis (for all this I count as already accomplished and decided), but the might of Dulcinea, employing my arm as the instrument of her achievements? She fights in me and conquers in me, and I live and breathe in her, and owe my life and being to her. O whoreson scoundrel, how ungrateful you are, you see yourself raised from the dust of the earth to be a titled lord, and the return you make for so great a benefit is to speak evil of her who has conferred it upon you!"

Sancho was not so stunned but that he heard all his master said, and rising with some degree of nimbleness he ran to place himself behind Dorothea's palfrey, and from that position he said to his master:

"Tell me, senor; if your worship is resolved not to marry this great princess, it is plain the kingdom will not be yours; and not being so, how can you bestow favours upon me? That is what I complain of. Let your worship at any rate marry this queen, now that we have got her here as if showered down from heaven, and afterwards you may go back to my lady Dulcinea; for there must have been kings in the world who kept mistresses. As to beauty, I have nothing to do with it; and if the truth is to be told, I like them both; though I have never seen the lady Dulcinea."

"How! never seen her, blasphemous traitor!" exclaimed Don Quixote; "hast

thou not just now brought me a message from her?"

"I mean," said Sancho, "that I did not see her so much at my leisure that I could take particular notice of her beauty, or of her charms piecemeal; but taken in the lump I like her."

"Now I forgive thee," said Don Quixote; "and do thou forgive me the injury I have done thee; for our first impulses are not in our control."

"That I see," replied Sancho, "and with me the wish to speak is always the first impulse, and I cannot help saying, once at any rate, what I have on the tip of my tongue."

"For all that, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "take heed of what thou sayest, for the pitcher goes so often to the well — I need say no more to thee."

"Well, well," said Sancho, "God is in heaven, and sees all tricks, and will judge who does most harm, I in not speaking right, or your worship in not doing it."

"That is enough," said Dorothea; "run, Sancho, and kiss your lord's hand and beg his pardon, and henceforward be more circumspect with your praise and abuse; and say nothing in disparagement of that lady Toboso, of whom I know nothing save that I am her servant; and put your trust in God, for you will not fail to obtain some dignity so as to live like a prince."

Sancho advanced hanging his head and begged his master's hand, which Don Quixote with dignity presented to him, giving him his blessing as soon as he had kissed it; he then bade him go on ahead a little, as he had questions to ask him and matters of great importance to discuss with him. Sancho obeyed, and when the two had gone some distance in advance Don Quixote said to him, "Since thy return I have had no opportunity or time to ask thee many particulars touching thy mission and the answer thou hast brought back, and now that chance has granted us the time and opportunity, deny me not the happiness thou canst give me by such good news."

"Let your worship ask what you will," answered Sancho, "for I shall find a way out of all as I found a way in; but I implore you, senor, not to be so revengeful in future."

"Why dost thou say that, Sancho?" said Don Quixote.

"I say it," he returned, "because those blows just now were more because of the quarrel the devil stirred up between us both the other night, than for what I said against my lady Dulcinea, whom I love and reverence as I would a relic — though there is nothing of that about her — merely as something belonging to your worship."

"Say no more on that subject for thy life, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "for it is displeasing to me; I have already pardoned thee for that, and thou knowest the

common saying, 'for a fresh sin a fresh penance.'"

While this was going on they saw coming along the road they were following a man mounted on an ass, who when he came close seemed to be a gipsy; but Sancho Panza, whose eyes and heart were there wherever he saw asses, no sooner beheld the man than he knew him to be Gines de Pasamonte; and by the thread of the gipsy he got at the ball, his ass, for it was, in fact, Dapple that carried Pasamonte, who to escape recognition and to sell the ass had disguised himself as a gipsy, being able to speak the gipsy language, and many more, as well as if they were his own. Sancho saw him and recognised him, and the instant he did so he shouted to him, "Ginesillo, you thief, give up my treasure, release my life, embarrass thyself not with my repose, quit my ass, leave my delight, be off, rip, get thee gone, thief, and give up what is not thine."

There was no necessity for so many words or objurgations, for at the first one Gines jumped down, and at a like racing speed made off and got clear of them all. Sancho hastened to his Dapple, and embracing him he said, "How hast thou fared, my blessing, Dapple of my eyes, my comrade?" all the while kissing him and caressing him as if he were a human being. The ass held his peace, and let himself be kissed and caressed by Sancho without answering a single word. They all came up and congratulated him on having found Dapple, Don Quixote especially, who told him that notwithstanding this he would not cancel the order for the three ass-colts, for which Sancho thanked him.

While the two had been going along conversing in this fashion, the curate observed to Dorothea that she had shown great cleverness, as well in the story itself as in its conciseness, and the resemblance it bore to those of the books of chivalry. She said that she had many times amused herself reading them; but that she did not know the situation of the provinces or seaports, and so she had said at haphazard that she had landed at Osuna.

"So I saw," said the curate, "and for that reason I made haste to say what I did, by which it was all set right. But is it not a strange thing to see how readily this unhappy gentleman believes all these figments and lies, simply because they are in the style and manner of the absurdities of his books?"

"So it is," said Cardenio; "and so uncommon and unexampled, that were one to attempt to invent and concoct it in fiction, I doubt if there be any wit keen enough to imagine it."

"But another strange thing about it," said the curate, "is that, apart from the silly things which this worthy gentleman says in connection with his craze, when other subjects are dealt with, he can discuss them in a perfectly rational manner, showing that his mind is quite clear and composed; so that, provided his chivalry is not touched upon, no one would take him to be anything but a man of

thoroughly sound understanding.”

While they were holding this conversation Don Quixote continued his with Sancho, saying:

“Friend Panza, let us forgive and forget as to our quarrels, and tell me now, dismissing anger and irritation, where, how, and when didst thou find Dulcinea? What was she doing? What didst thou say to her? What did she answer? How did she look when she was reading my letter? Who copied it out for thee? and everything in the matter that seems to thee worth knowing, asking, and learning; neither adding nor falsifying to give me pleasure, nor yet curtailing lest you should deprive me of it.”

“Senor,” replied Sancho, “if the truth is to be told, nobody copied out the letter for me, for I carried no letter at all.”

“It is as thou sayest,” said Don Quixote, “for the note-book in which I wrote it I found in my own possession two days after thy departure, which gave me very great vexation, as I knew not what thou wouldst do on finding thyself without any letter; and I made sure thou wouldst return from the place where thou didst first miss it.”

“So I should have done,” said Sancho, “if I had not got it by heart when your worship read it to me, so that I repeated it to a sacristan, who copied it out for me from hearing it, so exactly that he said in all the days of his life, though he had read many a letter of excommunication, he had never seen or read so pretty a letter as that.”

“And hast thou got it still in thy memory, Sancho?” said Don Quixote.

“No, senor,” replied Sancho, “for as soon as I had repeated it, seeing there was no further use for it, I set about forgetting it; and if I recollect any of it, it is that about ‘Scrubbing,’ I mean to say ‘Sovereign Lady,’ and the end ‘Yours till death, the Knight of the Rueful Countenance;’ and between these two I put into it more than three hundred ‘my souls’ and ‘my life’s’ and ‘my eyes.’”



## CHAPTER XXXI.

OF THE DELECTABLE DISCUSSION BETWEEN DON QUIXOTE AND  
SANCHO PANZA, HIS SQUIRE, TOGETHER WITH OTHER INCIDENTS



“All that is not unsatisfactory to me,” said Don Quixote. “Go on; thou didst reach her; and what was that queen of beauty doing? Surely thou didst find her stringing pearls, or embroidering some device in gold thread for this her enslaved knight.”

“I did not,” said Sancho, “but I found her winnowing two bushels of wheat in the yard of her house.”

“Then depend upon it,” said Don Quixote, “the grains of that wheat were pearls when touched by her hands; and didst thou look, friend? was it white



wheat or brown?"

"It was neither, but red," said Sancho.

"Then I promise thee," said Don Quixote, "that, winnowed by her hands, beyond a doubt the bread it made was of the whitest; but go on; when thou gavest her my letter, did she kiss it? Did she place it on her head? Did she perform any ceremony befitting it, or what did she do?"

"When I went to give it to her," replied Sancho, "she was hard at it swaying from side to side with a lot of wheat she had in the sieve, and she said to me, 'Lay the letter, friend, on the top of that sack, for I cannot read it until I have done sifting all this.'"

"Discreet lady!" said Don Quixote; "that was in order to read it at her leisure and enjoy it; proceed, Sancho; while she was engaged in her occupation what converse did she hold with thee? What did she ask about me, and what answer didst thou give? Make haste; tell me all, and let not an atom be left behind in the ink-bottle."

"She asked me nothing," said Sancho; "but I told her how your worship was left doing penance in her service, naked from the waist up, in among these mountains like a savage, sleeping on the ground, not eating bread off a tablecloth nor combing your beard, weeping and cursing your fortune."

"In saying I cursed my fortune thou saidst wrong," said Don Quixote; "for rather do I bless it and shall bless it all the days of my life for having made me worthy of aspiring to love so lofty a lady as Dulcinea del Toboso."

"And so lofty she is," said Sancho, "that she overtops me by more than a hand's-breadth."

"What! Sancho," said Don Quixote, "didst thou measure with her?"

"I measured in this way," said Sancho; "going to help her to put a sack of wheat on the back of an ass, we came so close together that I could see she stood more than a good palm over me."

"Well!" said Don Quixote, "and doth she not of a truth accompany and adorn this greatness with a thousand million charms of mind! But one thing thou wilt not deny, Sancho; when thou camest close to her didst thou not perceive a Sabaeon odour, an aromatic fragrance, a, I know not what, delicious, that I cannot find a name for; I mean a redolence, an exhalation, as if thou wert in the shop of some dainty glover?"

"All I can say is," said Sancho, "that I did perceive a little odour, something goaty; it must have been that she was all in a sweat with hard work."

"It could not be that," said Don Quixote, "but thou must have been suffering from cold in the head, or must have smelt thyself; for I know well what would be the scent of that rose among thorns, that lily of the field, that dissolved amber."

“Maybe so,” replied Sancho; “there often comes from myself that same odour which then seemed to me to come from her grace the lady Dulcinea; but that’s no wonder, for one devil is like another.”

“Well then,” continued Don Quixote, “now she has done sifting the corn and sent it to the mill; what did she do when she read the letter?”

“As for the letter,” said Sancho, “she did not read it, for she said she could neither read nor write; instead of that she tore it up into small pieces, saying that she did not want to let anyone read it lest her secrets should become known in the village, and that what I had told her by word of mouth about the love your worship bore her, and the extraordinary penance you were doing for her sake, was enough; and, to make an end of it, she told me to tell your worship that she kissed your hands, and that she had a greater desire to see you than to write to you; and that therefore she entreated and commanded you, on sight of this present, to come out of these thickets, and to have done with carrying on absurdities, and to set out at once for El Toboso, unless something else of greater importance should happen, for she had a great desire to see your worship. She laughed greatly when I told her how your worship was called The Knight of the Rueful Countenance; I asked her if that Biscayan the other day had been there; and she told me he had, and that he was an honest fellow; I asked her too about the galley slaves, but she said she had not seen any as yet.”

“So far all goes well,” said Don Quixote; “but tell me what jewel was it that she gave thee on taking thy leave, in return for thy tidings of me? For it is a usual and ancient custom with knights and ladies errant to give the squires, damsels, or dwarfs who bring tidings of their ladies to the knights, or of their knights to the ladies, some rich jewel as a guerdon for good news,’ and acknowledgment of the message.”

“That is very likely,” said Sancho, “and a good custom it was, to my mind; but that must have been in days gone by, for now it would seem to be the custom only to give a piece of bread and cheese; because that was what my lady Dulcinea gave me over the top of the yard-wall when I took leave of her; and more by token it was sheep’s-milk cheese.”

“She is generous in the extreme,” said Don Quixote, “and if she did not give thee a jewel of gold, no doubt it must have been because she had not one to hand there to give thee; but sleeves are good after Easter; I shall see her and all shall be made right. But knowest thou what amazes me, Sancho? It seems to me thou must have gone and come through the air, for thou hast taken but little more than three days to go to El Toboso and return, though it is more than thirty leagues from here to there. From which I am inclined to think that the sage magician who is my friend, and watches over my interests (for of necessity there is and

must be one, or else I should not be a right knight-errant), that this same, I say, must have helped thee to travel without thy knowledge; for some of these sages will catch up a knight-errant sleeping in his bed, and without his knowing how or in what way it happened, he wakes up the next day more than a thousand leagues away from the place where he went to sleep. And if it were not for this, knights-errant would not be able to give aid to one another in peril, as they do at every turn. For a knight, maybe, is fighting in the mountains of Armenia with some dragon, or fierce serpent, or another knight, and gets the worst of the battle, and is at the point of death; but when he least looks for it, there appears over against him on a cloud, or chariot of fire, another knight, a friend of his, who just before had been in England, and who takes his part, and delivers him from death; and at night he finds himself in his own quarters supping very much to his satisfaction; and yet from one place to the other will have been two or three thousand leagues. And all this is done by the craft and skill of the sage enchanters who take care of those valiant knights; so that, friend Sancho, I find no difficulty in believing that thou mayest have gone from this place to El Toboso and returned in such a short time, since, as I have said, some friendly sage must have carried thee through the air without thee perceiving it."

"That must have been it," said Sancho, "for indeed Rocinante went like a gipsy's ass with quicksilver in his ears."

"Quicksilver!" said Don Quixote, "aye and what is more, a legion of devils, folk that can travel and make others travel without being weary, exactly as the whim seizes them. But putting this aside, what thinkest thou I ought to do about my lady's command to go and see her? For though I feel that I am bound to obey her mandate, I feel too that I am debarred by the boon I have accorded to the princess that accompanies us, and the law of chivalry compels me to have regard for my word in preference to my inclination; on the one hand the desire to see my lady pursues and harasses me, on the other my solemn promise and the glory I shall win in this enterprise urge and call me; but what I think I shall do is to travel with all speed and reach quickly the place where this giant is, and on my arrival I shall cut off his head, and establish the princess peacefully in her realm, and forthwith I shall return to behold the light that lightens my senses, to whom I shall make such excuses that she will be led to approve of my delay, for she will see that it entirely tends to increase her glory and fame; for all that I have won, am winning, or shall win by arms in this life, comes to me of the favour she extends to me, and because I am hers."

"Ah! what a sad state your worship's brains are in!" said Sancho. "Tell me, senor, do you mean to travel all that way for nothing, and to let slip and lose so rich and great a match as this where they give as a portion a kingdom that in

sober truth I have heard say is more than twenty thousand leagues round about, and abounds with all things necessary to support human life, and is bigger than Portugal and Castile put together? Peace, for the love of God! Blush for what you have said, and take my advice, and forgive me, and marry at once in the first village where there is a curate; if not, here is our licentiate who will do the business beautifully; remember, I am old enough to give advice, and this I am giving comes pat to the purpose; for a sparrow in the hand is better than a vulture on the wing, and he who has the good to his hand and chooses the bad, that the good he complains of may not come to him.”

“Look here, Sancho,” said Don Quixote. “If thou art advising me to marry, in order that immediately on slaying the giant I may become king, and be able to confer favours on thee, and give thee what I have promised, let me tell thee I shall be able very easily to satisfy thy desires without marrying; for before going into battle I will make it a stipulation that, if I come out of it victorious, even I do not marry, they shall give me a portion of the kingdom, that I may bestow it upon whomsoever I choose, and when they give it to me upon whom wouldst thou have me bestow it but upon thee?”

“That is plain speaking,” said Sancho; “but let your worship take care to choose it on the seacoast, so that if I don’t like the life, I may be able to ship off my black vassals and deal with them as I have said; don’t mind going to see my lady Dulcinea now, but go and kill this giant and let us finish off this business; for by God it strikes me it will be one of great honour and great profit.”

“I hold thou art in the right of it, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “and I will take thy advice as to accompanying the princess before going to see Dulcinea; but I counsel thee not to say anything to any one, or to those who are with us, about what we have considered and discussed, for as Dulcinea is so decorous that she does not wish her thoughts to be known it is not right that I or anyone for me should disclose them.”

“Well then, if that be so,” said Sancho, “how is it that your worship makes all those you overcome by your arm go to present themselves before my lady Dulcinea, this being the same thing as signing your name to it that you love her and are her lover? And as those who go must perforce kneel before her and say they come from your worship to submit themselves to her, how can the thoughts of both of you be hid?”

“O, how silly and simple thou art!” said Don Quixote; “seest thou not, Sancho, that this tends to her greater exaltation? For thou must know that according to our way of thinking in chivalry, it is a high honour to a lady to have many knights-errant in her service, whose thoughts never go beyond serving her for her own sake, and who look for no other reward for their great and true

devotion than that she should be willing to accept them as her knights.”

“It is with that kind of love,” said Sancho, “I have heard preachers say we ought to love our Lord, for himself alone, without being moved by the hope of glory or the fear of punishment; though for my part, I would rather love and serve him for what he could do.”

“The devil take thee for a clown!” said Don Quixote, “and what shrewd things thou sayest at times! One would think thou hadst studied.”

“In faith, then, I cannot even read.”

Master Nicholas here called out to them to wait a while, as they wanted to halt and drink at a little spring there was there. Don Quixote drew up, not a little to the satisfaction of Sancho, for he was by this time weary of telling so many lies, and in dread of his master catching him tripping, for though he knew that Dulcinea was a peasant girl of El Toboso, he had never seen her in all his life. Cardenio had now put on the clothes which Dorothea was wearing when they found her, and though they were not very good, they were far better than those he put off. They dismounted together by the side of the spring, and with what the curate had provided himself with at the inn they appeased, though not very well, the keen appetite they all of them brought with them.

While they were so employed there happened to come by a youth passing on his way, who stopping to examine the party at the spring, the next moment ran to Don Quixote and clasping him round the legs, began to weep freely, saying, “O, senor, do you not know me? Look at me well; I am that lad Andres that your worship released from the oak-tree where I was tied.”

Don Quixote recognised him, and taking his hand he turned to those present and said: “That your worships may see how important it is to have knights-errant to redress the wrongs and injuries done by tyrannical and wicked men in this world, I may tell you that some days ago passing through a wood, I heard cries and piteous complaints as of a person in pain and distress; I immediately hastened, impelled by my bounden duty, to the quarter whence the plaintive accents seemed to me to proceed, and I found tied to an oak this lad who now stands before you, which in my heart I rejoice at, for his testimony will not permit me to depart from the truth in any particular. He was, I say, tied to an oak, naked from the waist up, and a clown, whom I afterwards found to be his master, was scarifying him by lashes with the reins of his mare. As soon as I saw him I asked the reason of so cruel a flagellation. The boor replied that he was flogging him because he was his servant and because of carelessness that proceeded rather from dishonesty than stupidity; on which this boy said, ‘Senor, he flogs me only because I ask for my wages.’ The master made I know not what speeches and explanations, which, though I listened to them, I did not accept. In

short, I compelled the clown to unbind him, and to swear he would take him with him, and pay him real by real, and perfumed into the bargain. Is not all this true, Andres my son? Didst thou not mark with what authority I commanded him, and with what humility he promised to do all I enjoined, specified, and required of him? Answer without hesitation; tell these gentlemen what took place, that they may see that it is as great an advantage as I say to have knights-errant abroad."

"All that your worship has said is quite true," answered the lad; "but the end of the business turned out just the opposite of what your worship supposes."

"How! the opposite?" said Don Quixote; "did not the clown pay thee then?"

"Not only did he not pay me," replied the lad, "but as soon as your worship had passed out of the wood and we were alone, he tied me up again to the same oak and gave me a fresh flogging, that left me like a flayed Saint Bartholomew; and every stroke he gave me he followed up with some jest or gibe about having made a fool of your worship, and but for the pain I was suffering I should have laughed at the things he said. In short he left me in such a condition that I have been until now in a hospital getting cured of the injuries which that rascally clown inflicted on me then; for all which your worship is to blame; for if you had gone your own way and not come where there was no call for you, nor meddled in other people's affairs, my master would have been content with giving me one or two dozen lashes, and would have then loosed me and paid me what he owed me; but when your worship abused him so out of measure, and gave him so many hard words, his anger was kindled; and as he could not revenge himself on you, as soon as he saw you had left him the storm burst upon me in such a way, that I feel as if I should never be a man again."

"The mischief," said Don Quixote, "lay in my going away; for I should not have gone until I had seen thee paid; because I ought to have known well by long experience that there is no clown who will keep his word if he finds it will not suit him to keep it; but thou rememberest, Andres, that I swore if he did not pay thee I would go and seek him, and find him though he were to hide himself in the whale's belly."

"That is true," said Andres; "but it was of no use."

"Thou shalt see now whether it is of use or not," said Don Quixote; and so saying, he got up hastily and bade Sancho bridle Rocinante, who was browsing while they were eating. Dorothea asked him what he meant to do. He replied that he meant to go in search of this clown and chastise him for such iniquitous conduct, and see Andres paid to the last maravedi, despite and in the teeth of all the clowns in the world. To which she replied that he must remember that in accordance with his promise he could not engage in any enterprise until he had

concluded hers; and that as he knew this better than anyone, he should restrain his ardour until his return from her kingdom.

“That is true,” said Don Quixote, “and Andres must have patience until my return as you say, senora; but I once more swear and promise not to stop until I have seen him avenged and paid.”

“I have no faith in those oaths,” said Andres; “I would rather have now something to help me to get to Seville than all the revenges in the world; if you have here anything to eat that I can take with me, give it me, and God be with your worship and all knights-errant; and may their errands turn out as well for themselves as they have for me.”

Sancho took out from his store a piece of bread and another of cheese, and giving them to the lad he said, “Here, take this, brother Andres, for we have all of us a share in your misfortune.”

“Why, what share have you got?”

“This share of bread and cheese I am giving you,” answered Sancho; “and God knows whether I shall feel the want of it myself or not; for I would have you know, friend, that we squires to knights-errant have to bear a great deal of hunger and hard fortune, and even other things more easily felt than told.”

Andres seized his bread and cheese, and seeing that nobody gave him anything more, bent his head, and took hold of the road, as the saying is. However, before leaving he said, “For the love of God, sir knight-errant, if you ever meet me again, though you may see them cutting me to pieces, give me no aid or succour, but leave me to my misfortune, which will not be so great but that a greater will come to me by being helped by your worship, on whom and all the knights-errant that have ever been born God send his curse.”

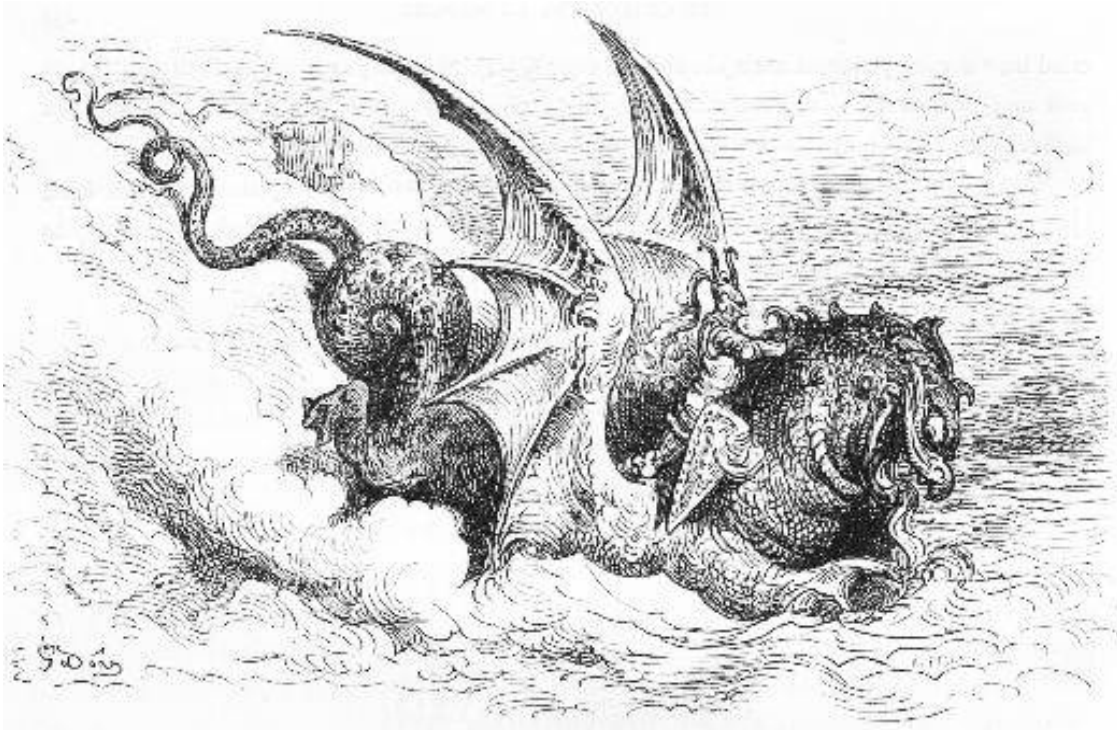
Don Quixote was getting up to chastise him, but he took to his heels at such a pace that no one attempted to follow him; and mightily chapfallen was Don Quixote at Andres’ story, and the others had to take great care to restrain their laughter so as not to put him entirely out of countenance.





## CHAPTER XXXII.

WHICH TREATS OF WHAT BEFELL DON QUIXOTE'S PARTY AT THE  
INN



Their dainty repast being finished, they saddled at once, and without any adventure worth mentioning they reached next day the inn, the object of Sancho Panza's fear and dread; but though he would have rather not entered it, there was no help for it. The landlady, the landlord, their daughter, and Maritornes, when they saw Don Quixote and Sancho coming, went out to welcome them with signs of hearty satisfaction, which Don Quixote received with dignity and gravity, and bade them make up a better bed for him than the last time: to which the landlady replied that if he paid better than he did the last time she would give him one fit for a prince. Don Quixote said he would, so they made up a tolerable

one for him in the same garret as before; and he lay down at once, being sorely shaken and in want of sleep.

No sooner was the door shut upon him than the landlady made at the barber, and seizing him by the beard, said:

“By my faith you are not going to make a beard of my tail any longer; you must give me back tail, for it is a shame the way that thing of my husband’s goes tossing about on the floor; I mean the comb that I used to stick in my good tail.”

But for all she tugged at it the barber would not give it up until the licentiate told him to let her have it, as there was now no further occasion for that stratagem, because he might declare himself and appear in his own character, and tell Don Quixote that he had fled to this inn when those thieves the galley slaves robbed him; and should he ask for the princess’s squire, they could tell him that she had sent him on before her to give notice to the people of her kingdom that she was coming, and bringing with her the deliverer of them all. On this the barber cheerfully restored the tail to the landlady, and at the same time they returned all the accessories they had borrowed to effect Don Quixote’s deliverance. All the people of the inn were struck with astonishment at the beauty of Dorothea, and even at the comely figure of the shepherd Cardenio. The curate made them get ready such fare as there was in the inn, and the landlord, in hope of better payment, served them up a tolerably good dinner. All this time Don Quixote was asleep, and they thought it best not to waken him, as sleeping would now do him more good than eating.

While at dinner, the company consisting of the landlord, his wife, their daughter, Maritornes, and all the travellers, they discussed the strange craze of Don Quixote and the manner in which he had been found; and the landlady told them what had taken place between him and the carrier; and then, looking round to see if Sancho was there, when she saw he was not, she gave them the whole story of his blanketing, which they received with no little amusement. But on the curate observing that it was the books of chivalry which Don Quixote had read that had turned his brain, the landlord said:

“I cannot understand how that can be, for in truth to my mind there is no better reading in the world, and I have here two or three of them, with other writings that are the very life, not only of myself but of plenty more; for when it is harvest-time, the reapers flock here on holidays, and there is always one among them who can read and who takes up one of these books, and we gather round him, thirty or more of us, and stay listening to him with a delight that makes our grey hairs grow young again. At least I can say for myself that when I hear of what furious and terrible blows the knights deliver, I am seized with the longing to do the same, and I would like to be hearing about them night and

day.”

“And I just as much,” said the landlady, “because I never have a quiet moment in my house except when you are listening to some one reading; for then you are so taken up that for the time being you forget to scold.”

“That is true,” said Maritornes; “and, faith, I relish hearing these things greatly too, for they are very pretty; especially when they describe some lady or another in the arms of her knight under the orange trees, and the duenna who is keeping watch for them half dead with envy and fright; all this I say is as good as honey.”

“And you, what do you think, young lady?” said the curate turning to the landlord’s daughter.

“I don’t know indeed, senor,” said she; “I listen too, and to tell the truth, though I do not understand it, I like hearing it; but it is not the blows that my father likes that I like, but the laments the knights utter when they are separated from their ladies; and indeed they sometimes make me weep with the pity I feel for them.”

“Then you would console them if it was for you they wept, young lady?” said Dorothea.

“I don’t know what I should do,” said the girl; “I only know that there are some of those ladies so cruel that they call their knights tigers and lions and a thousand other foul names: and Jesus! I don’t know what sort of folk they can be, so unfeeling and heartless, that rather than bestow a glance upon a worthy man they leave him to die or go mad. I don’t know what is the good of such prudery; if it is for honour’s sake, why not marry them? That’s all they want.”

“Hush, child,” said the landlady; “it seems to me thou knowest a great deal about these things, and it is not fit for girls to know or talk so much.”

“As the gentleman asked me, I could not help answering him,” said the girl.

“Well then,” said the curate, “bring me these books, senor landlord, for I should like to see them.”

“With all my heart,” said he, and going into his own room he brought out an old valise secured with a little chain, on opening which the curate found in it three large books and some manuscripts written in a very good hand. The first that he opened he found to be “Don Cirongilio of Thrace,” and the second “Don Felixmarte of Hircania,” and the other the “History of the Great Captain Gonzalo Hernandez de Cordova, with the Life of Diego Garcia de Paredes.”

When the curate read the two first titles he looked over at the barber and said, “We want my friend’s housekeeper and niece here now.”

“Nay,” said the barber, “I can do just as well to carry them to the yard or to the hearth, and there is a very good fire there.”

“What! your worship would burn my books!” said the landlord.

“Only these two,” said the curate, “Don Cirongilio, and Felixmarte.”

“Are my books, then, heretics or phlegmatics that you want to burn them?” said the landlord.

“Schismatics you mean, friend,” said the barber, “not phlegmatics.”

“That’s it,” said the landlord; “but if you want to burn any, let it be that about the Great Captain and that Diego Garcia; for I would rather have a child of mine burnt than either of the others.”

“Brother,” said the curate, “those two books are made up of lies, and are full of folly and nonsense; but this of the Great Captain is a true history, and contains the deeds of Gonzalo Hernandez of Cordova, who by his many and great achievements earned the title all over the world of the Great Captain, a famous and illustrious name, and deserved by him alone; and this Diego Garcia de Paredes was a distinguished knight of the city of Trujillo in Estremadura, a most gallant soldier, and of such bodily strength that with one finger he stopped a mill-wheel in full motion; and posted with a two-handed sword at the foot of a bridge he kept the whole of an immense army from passing over it, and achieved such other exploits that if, instead of his relating them himself with the modesty of a knight and of one writing his own history, some free and unbiased writer had recorded them, they would have thrown into the shade all the deeds of the Hectors, Achilleuses, and Rolands.”



“Tell that to my father,” said the landlord. “There’s a thing to be astonished at! Stopping a mill-wheel! By God your worship should read what I have read of Felixmarte of Hircania, how with one single backstroke he cleft five giants asunder through the middle as if they had been made of bean-pods like the little friars the children make; and another time he attacked a very great and powerful army, in which there were more than a million six hundred thousand soldiers, all armed from head to foot, and he routed them all as if they had been flocks of sheep.”



“And then, what do you say to the good Cirongilio of Thrace, that was so stout and bold; as may be seen in the book, where it is related that as he was sailing along a river there came up out of the midst of the water against him a fiery serpent, and he, as soon as he saw it, flung himself upon it and got astride

of its scaly shoulders, and squeezed its throat with both hands with such force that the serpent, finding he was throttling it, had nothing for it but to let itself sink to the bottom of the river, carrying with it the knight who would not let go his hold; and when they got down there he found himself among palaces and gardens so pretty that it was a wonder to see; and then the serpent changed itself into an old ancient man, who told him such things as were never heard. Hold your peace, senor; for if you were to hear this you would go mad with delight. A couple of figs for your Great Captain and your Diego Garcia!”

Hearing this Dorothea said in a whisper to Cardenio, “Our landlord is almost fit to play a second part to Don Quixote.”

“I think so,” said Cardenio, “for, as he shows, he accepts it as a certainty that everything those books relate took place exactly as it is written down; and the barefooted friars themselves would not persuade him to the contrary.”

“But consider, brother,” said the curate once more, “there never was any Felixmarte of Hircania in the world, nor any Cirongilio of Thrace, or any of the other knights of the same sort, that the books of chivalry talk of; the whole thing is the fabrication and invention of idle wits, devised by them for the purpose you describe of beguiling the time, as your reapers do when they read; for I swear to you in all seriousness there never were any such knights in the world, and no such exploits or nonsense ever happened anywhere.”

“Try that bone on another dog,” said the landlord; “as if I did not know how many make five, and where my shoe pinches me; don’t think to feed me with pap, for by God I am no fool. It is a good joke for your worship to try and persuade me that everything these good books say is nonsense and lies, and they printed by the license of the Lords of the Royal Council, as if they were people who would allow such a lot of lies to be printed all together, and so many battles and enchantments that they take away one’s senses.”

“I have told you, friend,” said the curate, “that this is done to divert our idle thoughts; and as in well-ordered states games of chess, fives, and billiards are allowed for the diversion of those who do not care, or are not obliged, or are unable to work, so books of this kind are allowed to be printed, on the supposition that, what indeed is the truth, there can be nobody so ignorant as to take any of them for true stories; and if it were permitted me now, and the present company desired it, I could say something about the qualities books of chivalry should possess to be good ones, that would be to the advantage and even to the taste of some; but I hope the time will come when I can communicate my ideas to some one who may be able to mend matters; and in the meantime, senor landlord, believe what I have said, and take your books, and make up your mind about their truth or falsehood, and much good may they do you; and God

grant you may not fall lame of the same foot your guest Don Quixote halts on.”

“No fear of that,” returned the landlord; “I shall not be so mad as to make a knight-errant of myself; for I see well enough that things are not now as they used to be in those days, when they say those famous knights roamed about the world.”

Sancho had made his appearance in the middle of this conversation, and he was very much troubled and cast down by what he heard said about knights-errant being now no longer in vogue, and all books of chivalry being folly and lies; and he resolved in his heart to wait and see what came of this journey of his master’s, and if it did not turn out as happily as his master expected, he determined to leave him and go back to his wife and children and his ordinary labour.

The landlord was carrying away the valise and the books, but the curate said to him, “Wait; I want to see what those papers are that are written in such a good hand.” The landlord taking them out handed them to him to read, and he perceived they were a work of about eight sheets of manuscript, with, in large letters at the beginning, the title of “Novel of the Ill-advised Curiosity.” The curate read three or four lines to himself, and said, “I must say the title of this novel does not seem to me a bad one, and I feel an inclination to read it all.” To which the landlord replied, “Then your reverence will do well to read it, for I can tell you that some guests who have read it here have been much pleased with it, and have begged it of me very earnestly; but I would not give it, meaning to return it to the person who forgot the valise, books, and papers here, for maybe he will return here some time or other; and though I know I shall miss the books, faith I mean to return them; for though I am an innkeeper, still I am a Christian.”

“You are very right, friend,” said the curate; “but for all that, if the novel pleases me you must let me copy it.”

“With all my heart,” replied the host.

While they were talking Cardenio had taken up the novel and begun to read it, and forming the same opinion of it as the curate, he begged him to read it so that they might all hear it.

“I would read it,” said the curate, “if the time would not be better spent in sleeping.”

“It will be rest enough for me,” said Dorothea, “to while away the time by listening to some tale, for my spirits are not yet tranquil enough to let me sleep when it would be seasonable.”

“Well then, in that case,” said the curate, “I will read it, if it were only out of curiosity; perhaps it may contain something pleasant.”

Master Nicholas added his entreaties to the same effect, and Sancho too;



seeing which, and considering that he would give pleasure to all, and receive it himself, the curate said, “Well then, attend to me everyone, for the novel begins thus.”



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### IN WHICH IS RELATED THE NOVEL OF "THE ILL-ADVISED CURIOSITY"

In Florence, a rich and famous city of Italy in the province called Tuscany, there lived two gentlemen of wealth and quality, Anselmo and Lothario, such great friends that by way of distinction they were called by all that knew them "The Two Friends." They were unmarried, young, of the same age and of the same tastes, which was enough to account for the reciprocal friendship between them. Anselmo, it is true, was somewhat more inclined to seek pleasure in love than Lothario, for whom the pleasures of the chase had more attraction; but on occasion Anselmo would forego his own tastes to yield to those of Lothario, and Lothario would surrender his to fall in with those of Anselmo, and in this way their inclinations kept pace one with the other with a concord so perfect that the best regulated clock could not surpass it.

Anselmo was deep in love with a high-born and beautiful maiden of the same city, the daughter of parents so estimable, and so estimable herself, that he resolved, with the approval of his friend Lothario, without whom he did nothing, to ask her of them in marriage, and did so, Lothario being the bearer of the demand, and conducting the negotiation so much to the satisfaction of his friend that in a short time he was in possession of the object of his desires, and Camilla so happy in having won Anselmo for her husband, that she gave thanks unceasingly to heaven and to Lothario, by whose means such good fortune had fallen to her. The first few days, those of a wedding being usually days of merry-making, Lothario frequented his friend Anselmo's house as he had been wont, striving to do honour to him and to the occasion, and to gratify him in every way he could; but when the wedding days were over and the succession of visits and congratulations had slackened, he began purposely to leave off going to the house of Anselmo, for it seemed to him, as it naturally would to all men of sense, that friends' houses ought not to be visited after marriage with the same frequency as in their masters' bachelor days: because, though true and genuine friendship cannot and should not be in any way suspicious, still a married man's honour is a thing of such delicacy that it is held liable to injury from brothers, much more from friends. Anselmo remarked the cessation of Lothario's visits, and complained of it to him, saying that if he had known that marriage was to

keep him from enjoying his society as he used, he would have never married; and that, if by the thorough harmony that subsisted between them while he was a bachelor they had earned such a sweet name as that of "The Two Friends," he should not allow a title so rare and so delightful to be lost through a needless anxiety to act circumspectly; and so he entreated him, if such a phrase was allowable between them, to be once more master of his house and to come in and go out as formerly, assuring him that his wife Camilla had no other desire or inclination than that which he would wish her to have, and that knowing how sincerely they loved one another she was grieved to see such coldness in him.

To all this and much more that Anselmo said to Lothario to persuade him to come to his house as he had been in the habit of doing, Lothario replied with so much prudence, sense, and judgment, that Anselmo was satisfied of his friend's good intentions, and it was agreed that on two days in the week, and on holidays, Lothario should come to dine with him; but though this arrangement was made between them Lothario resolved to observe it no further than he considered to be in accordance with the honour of his friend, whose good name was more to him than his own. He said, and justly, that a married man upon whom heaven had bestowed a beautiful wife should consider as carefully what friends he brought to his house as what female friends his wife associated with, for what cannot be done or arranged in the market-place, in church, at public festivals or at stations (opportunities that husbands cannot always deny their wives), may be easily managed in the house of the female friend or relative in whom most confidence is reposed. Lothario said, too, that every married man should have some friend who would point out to him any negligence he might be guilty of in his conduct, for it will sometimes happen that owing to the deep affection the husband bears his wife either he does not caution her, or, not to vex her, refrains from telling her to do or not to do certain things, doing or avoiding which may be a matter of honour or reproach to him; and errors of this kind he could easily correct if warned by a friend. But where is such a friend to be found as Lothario would have, so judicious, so loyal, and so true?

Of a truth I know not; Lothario alone was such a one, for with the utmost care and vigilance he watched over the honour of his friend, and strove to diminish, cut down, and reduce the number of days for going to his house according to their agreement, lest the visits of a young man, wealthy, high-born, and with the attractions he was conscious of possessing, at the house of a woman so beautiful as Camilla, should be regarded with suspicion by the inquisitive and malicious eyes of the idle public. For though his integrity and reputation might bridle slanderous tongues, still he was unwilling to hazard either his own good name or that of his friend; and for this reason most of the days agreed upon he devoted to

some other business which he pretended was unavoidable; so that a great portion of the day was taken up with complaints on one side and excuses on the other. It happened, however, that on one occasion when the two were strolling together outside the city, Anselmo addressed the following words to Lothario.

“Thou mayest suppose, Lothario my friend, that I am unable to give sufficient thanks for the favours God has rendered me in making me the son of such parents as mine were, and bestowing upon me with no niggard hand what are called the gifts of nature as well as those of fortune, and above all for what he has done in giving me thee for a friend and Camilla for a wife — two treasures that I value, if not as highly as I ought, at least as highly as I am able. And yet, with all these good things, which are commonly all that men need to enable them to live happily, I am the most discontented and dissatisfied man in the whole world; for, I know not how long since, I have been harassed and oppressed by a desire so strange and so unusual, that I wonder at myself and blame and chide myself when I am alone, and strive to stifle it and hide it from my own thoughts, and with no better success than if I were endeavouring deliberately to publish it to all the world; and as, in short, it must come out, I would confide it to thy safe keeping, feeling sure that by this means, and by thy readiness as a true friend to afford me relief, I shall soon find myself freed from the distress it causes me, and that thy care will give me happiness in the same degree as my own folly has caused me misery.”

The words of Anselmo struck Lothario with astonishment, unable as he was to conjecture the purport of such a lengthy preamble; and though he strove to imagine what desire it could be that so troubled his friend, his conjectures were all far from the truth, and to relieve the anxiety which this perplexity was causing him, he told him he was doing a flagrant injustice to their great friendship in seeking circuitous methods of confiding to him his most hidden thoughts, for he well knew he might reckon upon his counsel in diverting them, or his help in carrying them into effect.

“That is the truth,” replied Anselmo, “and relying upon that I will tell thee, friend Lothario, that the desire which harasses me is that of knowing whether my wife Camilla is as good and as perfect as I think her to be; and I cannot satisfy myself of the truth on this point except by testing her in such a way that the trial may prove the purity of her virtue as the fire proves that of gold; because I am persuaded, my friend, that a woman is virtuous only in proportion as she is or is not tempted; and that she alone is strong who does not yield to the promises, gifts, tears, and importunities of earnest lovers; for what thanks does a woman deserve for being good if no one urges her to be bad, and what wonder is it that she is reserved and circumspect to whom no opportunity is given of going wrong

and who knows she has a husband that will take her life the first time he detects her in an impropriety? I do not therefore hold her who is virtuous through fear or want of opportunity in the same estimation as her who comes out of temptation and trial with a crown of victory; and so, for these reasons and many others that I could give thee to justify and support the opinion I hold, I am desirous that my wife Camilla should pass this crisis, and be refined and tested by the fire of finding herself wooed and by one worthy to set his affections upon her; and if she comes out, as I know she will, victorious from this struggle, I shall look upon my good fortune as unequalled, I shall be able to say that the cup of my desire is full, and that the virtuous woman of whom the sage says 'Who shall find her?' has fallen to my lot. And if the result be the contrary of what I expect, in the satisfaction of knowing that I have been right in my opinion, I shall bear without complaint the pain which my so dearly bought experience will naturally cause me. And, as nothing of all thou wilt urge in opposition to my wish will avail to keep me from carrying it into effect, it is my desire, friend Lothario, that thou shouldst consent to become the instrument for effecting this purpose that I am bent upon, for I will afford thee opportunities to that end, and nothing shall be wanting that I may think necessary for the pursuit of a virtuous, honourable, modest and high-minded woman. And among other reasons, I am induced to entrust this arduous task to thee by the consideration that if Camilla be conquered by thee the conquest will not be pushed to extremes, but only far enough to account that accomplished which from a sense of honour will be left undone; thus I shall not be wronged in anything more than intention, and my wrong will remain buried in the integrity of thy silence, which I know well will be as lasting as that of death in what concerns me. If, therefore, thou wouldst have me enjoy what can be called life, thou wilt at once engage in this love struggle, not lukewarmly nor slothfully, but with the energy and zeal that my desire demands, and with the loyalty our friendship assures me of."

Such were the words Anselmo addressed to Lothario, who listened to them with such attention that, except to say what has been already mentioned, he did not open his lips until the other had finished. Then perceiving that he had no more to say, after regarding him for awhile, as one would regard something never before seen that excited wonder and amazement, he said to him, "I cannot persuade myself, Anselmo my friend, that what thou hast said to me is not in jest; if I thought that thou wert speaking seriously I would not have allowed thee to go so far; so as to put a stop to thy long harangue by not listening to thee I verily suspect that either thou dost not know me, or I do not know thee; but no, I know well thou art Anselmo, and thou knowest that I am Lothario; the misfortune is, it seems to me, that thou art not the Anselmo thou wert, and must

have thought that I am not the Lothario I should be; for the things that thou hast said to me are not those of that Anselmo who was my friend, nor are those that thou demandest of me what should be asked of the Lothario thou knowest. True friends will prove their friends and make use of them, as a poet has said, *usque ad aras*; whereby he meant that they will not make use of their friendship in things that are contrary to God's will. If this, then, was a heathen's feeling about friendship, how much more should it be a Christian's, who knows that the divine must not be forfeited for the sake of any human friendship? And if a friend should go so far as to put aside his duty to Heaven to fulfil his duty to his friend, it should not be in matters that are trifling or of little moment, but in such as affect the friend's life and honour. Now tell me, Anselmo, in which of these two art thou imperilled, that I should hazard myself to gratify thee, and do a thing so detestable as that thou seekest of me? Neither forsooth; on the contrary, thou dost ask of me, so far as I understand, to strive and labour to rob thee of honour and life, and to rob myself of them at the same time; for if I take away thy honour it is plain I take away thy life, as a man without honour is worse than dead; and being the instrument, as thou wilt have it so, of so much wrong to thee, shall not I, too, be left without honour, and consequently without life? Listen to me, Anselmo my friend, and be not impatient to answer me until I have said what occurs to me touching the object of thy desire, for there will be time enough left for thee to reply and for me to hear."

"Be it so," said Anselmo, "say what thou wilt."

Lothario then went on to say, "It seems to me, Anselmo, that thine is just now the temper of mind which is always that of the Moors, who can never be brought to see the error of their creed by quotations from the Holy Scriptures, or by reasons which depend upon the examination of the understanding or are founded upon the articles of faith, but must have examples that are palpable, easy, intelligible, capable of proof, not admitting of doubt, with mathematical demonstrations that cannot be denied, like, 'If equals be taken from equals, the remainders are equal:' and if they do not understand this in words, and indeed they do not, it has to be shown to them with the hands, and put before their eyes, and even with all this no one succeeds in convincing them of the truth of our holy religion. This same mode of proceeding I shall have to adopt with thee, for the desire which has sprung up in thee is so absurd and remote from everything that has a semblance of reason, that I feel it would be a waste of time to employ it in reasoning with thy simplicity, for at present I will call it by no other name; and I am even tempted to leave thee in thy folly as a punishment for thy pernicious desire; but the friendship I bear thee, which will not allow me to desert thee in such manifest danger of destruction, keeps me from dealing so

harshly by thee. And that thou mayest clearly see this, say, Anselmo, hast thou not told me that I must force my suit upon a modest woman, decoy one that is virtuous, make overtures to one that is pure-minded, pay court to one that is prudent? Yes, thou hast told me so. Then, if thou knowest that thou hast a wife, modest, virtuous, pure-minded and prudent, what is it that thou seekest? And if thou believest that she will come forth victorious from all my attacks — as doubtless she would — what higher titles than those she possesses now dost thou think thou canst upon her then, or in what will she be better than she is now? Either thou dost not hold her to be what thou sayest, or thou knowest not what thou dost demand. If thou dost not hold her to be what thou sayest, why dost thou seek to prove her instead of treating her as guilty in the way that may seem best to thee? but if she be as virtuous as thou believest, it is an uncalled-for proceeding to make trial of truth itself, for, after trial, it will but be in the same estimation as before. Thus, then, it is conclusive that to attempt things from which harm rather than advantage may come to us is the part of unreasoning and reckless minds, more especially when they are things which we are not forced or compelled to attempt, and which show from afar that it is plainly madness to attempt them.

“Difficulties are attempted either for the sake of God or for the sake of the world, or for both; those undertaken for God’s sake are those which the saints undertake when they attempt to live the lives of angels in human bodies; those undertaken for the sake of the world are those of the men who traverse such a vast expanse of water, such a variety of climates, so many strange countries, to acquire what are called the blessings of fortune; and those undertaken for the sake of God and the world together are those of brave soldiers, who no sooner do they see in the enemy’s wall a breach as wide as a cannon ball could make, than, casting aside all fear, without hesitating, or heeding the manifest peril that threatens them, borne onward by the desire of defending their faith, their country, and their king, they fling themselves dauntlessly into the midst of the thousand opposing deaths that await them. Such are the things that men are wont to attempt, and there is honour, glory, gain, in attempting them, however full of difficulty and peril they may be; but that which thou sayest it is thy wish to attempt and carry out will not win thee the glory of God nor the blessings of fortune nor fame among men; for even if the issue be as thou wouldst have it, thou wilt be no happier, richer, or more honoured than thou art this moment; and if it be otherwise thou wilt be reduced to misery greater than can be imagined, for then it will avail thee nothing to reflect that no one is aware of the misfortune that has befallen thee; it will suffice to torture and crush thee that thou knowest it thyself. And in confirmation of the truth of what I say, let me repeat to thee a

stanza made by the famous poet Luigi Tansillo at the end of the first part of his 'Tears of Saint Peter,' which says thus:

The anguish and the shame but greater grew In Peter's heart as morning slowly came; No eye was there to see him, well he knew, Yet he himself was to himself a shame; Exposed to all men's gaze, or screened from view, A noble heart will feel the pang the same; A prey to shame the sinning soul will be, Though none but heaven and earth its shame can see.

Thus by keeping it secret thou wilt not escape thy sorrow, but rather thou wilt shed tears unceasingly, if not tears of the eyes, tears of blood from the heart, like those shed by that simple doctor our poet tells us of, that tried the test of the cup, which the wise Rinaldo, better advised, refused to do; for though this may be a poetic fiction it contains a moral lesson worthy of attention and study and imitation. Moreover by what I am about to say to thee thou wilt be led to see the great error thou wouldst commit.

"Tell me, Anselmo, if Heaven or good fortune had made thee master and lawful owner of a diamond of the finest quality, with the excellence and purity of which all the lapidaries that had seen it had been satisfied, saying with one voice and common consent that in purity, quality, and fineness, it was all that a stone of the kind could possibly be, thou thyself too being of the same belief, as knowing nothing to the contrary, would it be reasonable in thee to desire to take that diamond and place it between an anvil and a hammer, and by mere force of blows and strength of arm try if it were as hard and as fine as they said? And if thou didst, and if the stone should resist so silly a test, that would add nothing to its value or reputation; and if it were broken, as it might be, would not all be lost? Undoubtedly it would, leaving its owner to be rated as a fool in the opinion of all. Consider, then, Anselmo my friend, that Camilla is a diamond of the finest quality as well in thy estimation as in that of others, and that it is contrary to reason to expose her to the risk of being broken; for if she remains intact she cannot rise to a higher value than she now possesses; and if she give way and be unable to resist, bethink thee now how thou wilt be deprived of her, and with what good reason thou wilt complain of thyself for having been the cause of her ruin and thine own. Remember there is no jewel in the world so precious as a chaste and virtuous woman, and that the whole honour of women consists in reputation; and since thy wife's is of that high excellence that thou knowest, wherefore shouldst thou seek to call that truth in question? Remember, my friend, that woman is an imperfect animal, and that impediments are not to be placed in her way to make her trip and fall, but that they should be removed, and her path left clear of all obstacles, so that without hindrance she may run her course freely to attain the desired perfection, which consists in being virtuous.



Naturalists tell us that the ermine is a little animal which has a fur of purest white, and that when the hunters wish to take it, they make use of this artifice. Having ascertained the places which it frequents and passes, they stop the way to them with mud, and then rousing it, drive it towards the spot, and as soon as the ermine comes to the mud it halts, and allows itself to be taken captive rather than pass through the mire, and spoil and sully its whiteness, which it values more than life and liberty. The virtuous and chaste woman is an ermine, and whiter and purer than snow is the virtue of modesty; and he who wishes her not to lose it, but to keep and preserve it, must adopt a course different from that employed with the ermine; he must not put before her the mire of the gifts and attentions of persevering lovers, because perhaps — and even without a perhaps — she may not have sufficient virtue and natural strength in herself to pass through and tread under foot these impediments; they must be removed, and the brightness of virtue and the beauty of a fair fame must be put before her. A virtuous woman, too, is like a mirror, of clear shining crystal, liable to be tarnished and dimmed by every breath that touches it. She must be treated as relics are; adored, not touched. She must be protected and prized as one protects and prizes a fair garden full of roses and flowers, the owner of which allows no one to trespass or pluck a blossom; enough for others that from afar and through the iron grating they may enjoy its fragrance and its beauty. Finally let me repeat to thee some verses that come to my mind; I heard them in a modern comedy, and it seems to me they bear upon the point we are discussing. A prudent old man was giving advice to another, the father of a young girl, to lock her up, watch over her and keep her in seclusion, and among other arguments he used these:

Woman is a thing of glass;  
But her brittleness 'tis best  
Not too curiously to test:  
Who knows what may come to pass?

Breaking is an easy matter,  
And it's folly to expose  
What you cannot mend to blows;  
What you can't make whole to shatter.

This, then, all may hold as true,  
And the reason's plain to see;  
For if Danaes there be,  
There are golden showers too."

"All that I have said to thee so far, Anselmo, has had reference to what

concerns thee; now it is right that I should say something of what regards myself; and if I be prolix, pardon me, for the labyrinth into which thou hast entered and from which thou wouldst have me extricate thee makes it necessary.

“Thou dost reckon me thy friend, and thou wouldst rob me of honour, a thing wholly inconsistent with friendship; and not only dost thou aim at this, but thou wouldst have me rob thee of it also. That thou wouldst rob me of it is clear, for when Camilla sees that I pay court to her as thou requirest, she will certainly regard me as a man without honour or right feeling, since I attempt and do a thing so much opposed to what I owe to my own position and thy friendship. That thou wouldst have me rob thee of it is beyond a doubt, for Camilla, seeing that I press my suit upon her, will suppose that I have perceived in her something light that has encouraged me to make known to her my base desire; and if she holds herself dishonoured, her dishonour touches thee as belonging to her; and hence arises what so commonly takes place, that the husband of the adulterous woman, though he may not be aware of or have given any cause for his wife’s failure in her duty, or (being careless or negligent) have had it in his power to prevent his dishonour, nevertheless is stigmatised by a vile and reproachful name, and in a manner regarded with eyes of contempt instead of pity by all who know of his wife’s guilt, though they see that he is unfortunate not by his own fault, but by the lust of a vicious consort. But I will tell thee why with good reason dishonour attaches to the husband of the unchaste wife, though he know not that she is so, nor be to blame, nor have done anything, or given any provocation to make her so; and be not weary with listening to me, for it will be for thy good.

“When God created our first parent in the earthly paradise, the Holy Scripture says that he infused sleep into Adam and while he slept took a rib from his left side of which he formed our mother Eve, and when Adam awoke and beheld her he said, ‘This is flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bone.’ And God said ‘For this shall a man leave his father and his mother, and they shall be two in one flesh; and then was instituted the divine sacrament of marriage, with such ties that death alone can loose them. And such is the force and virtue of this miraculous sacrament that it makes two different persons one and the same flesh; and even more than this when the virtuous are married; for though they have two souls they have but one will. And hence it follows that as the flesh of the wife is one and the same with that of her husband the stains that may come upon it, or the injuries it incurs fall upon the husband’s flesh, though he, as has been said, may have given no cause for them; for as the pain of the foot or any member of the body is felt by the whole body, because all is one flesh, as the head feels the hurt to the ankle without having caused it, so the husband, being one with her, shares

the dishonour of the wife; and as all worldly honour or dishonour comes of flesh and blood, and the erring wife's is of that kind, the husband must needs bear his part of it and be held dishonoured without knowing it. See, then, Anselmo, the peril thou art encountering in seeking to disturb the peace of thy virtuous consort; see for what an empty and ill-advised curiosity thou wouldst rouse up passions that now repose in quiet in the breast of thy chaste wife; reflect that what thou art staking all to win is little, and what thou wilt lose so much that I leave it undescribed, not having the words to express it. But if all I have said be not enough to turn thee from thy vile purpose, thou must seek some other instrument for thy dishonour and misfortune; for such I will not consent to be, though I lose thy friendship, the greatest loss that I can conceive."

Having said this, the wise and virtuous Lothario was silent, and Anselmo, troubled in mind and deep in thought, was unable for a while to utter a word in reply; but at length he said, "I have listened, Lothario my friend, attentively, as thou hast seen, to what thou hast chosen to say to me, and in thy arguments, examples, and comparisons I have seen that high intelligence thou dost possess, and the perfection of true friendship thou hast reached; and likewise I see and confess that if I am not guided by thy opinion, but follow my own, I am flying from the good and pursuing the evil. This being so, thou must remember that I am now labouring under that infirmity which women sometimes suffer from, when the craving seizes them to eat clay, plaster, charcoal, and things even worse, disgusting to look at, much more to eat; so that it will be necessary to have recourse to some artifice to cure me; and this can be easily effected if only thou wilt make a beginning, even though it be in a lukewarm and make-believe fashion, to pay court to Camilla, who will not be so yielding that her virtue will give way at the first attack: with this mere attempt I shall rest satisfied, and thou wilt have done what our friendship binds thee to do, not only in giving me life, but in persuading me not to discard my honour. And this thou art bound to do for one reason alone, that, being, as I am, resolved to apply this test, it is not for thee to permit me to reveal my weakness to another, and so imperil that honour thou art striving to keep me from losing; and if thine may not stand as high as it ought in the estimation of Camilla while thou art paying court to her, that is of little or no importance, because ere long, on finding in her that constancy which we expect, thou canst tell her the plain truth as regards our stratagem, and so regain thy place in her esteem; and as thou art venturing so little, and by the venture canst afford me so much satisfaction, refuse not to undertake it, even if further difficulties present themselves to thee; for, as I have said, if thou wilt only make a beginning I will acknowledge the issue decided."

Lothario seeing the fixed determination of Anselmo, and not knowing what

further examples to offer or arguments to urge in order to dissuade him from it, and perceiving that he threatened to confide his pernicious scheme to some one else, to avoid a greater evil resolved to gratify him and do what he asked, intending to manage the business so as to satisfy Anselmo without corrupting the mind of Camilla; so in reply he told him not to communicate his purpose to any other, for he would undertake the task himself, and would begin it as soon as he pleased. Anselmo embraced him warmly and affectionately, and thanked him for his offer as if he had bestowed some great favour upon him; and it was agreed between them to set about it the next day, Anselmo affording opportunity and time to Lothario to converse alone with Camilla, and furnishing him with money and jewels to offer and present to her. He suggested, too, that he should treat her to music, and write verses in her praise, and if he was unwilling to take the trouble of composing them, he offered to do it himself. Lothario agreed to all with an intention very different from what Anselmo supposed, and with this understanding they returned to Anselmo's house, where they found Camilla awaiting her husband anxiously and uneasily, for he was later than usual in returning that day. Lothario repaired to his own house, and Anselmo remained in his, as well satisfied as Lothario was troubled in mind; for he could see no satisfactory way out of this ill-advised business. That night, however, he thought of a plan by which he might deceive Anselmo without any injury to Camilla. The next day he went to dine with his friend, and was welcomed by Camilla, who received and treated him with great cordiality, knowing the affection her husband felt for him. When dinner was over and the cloth removed, Anselmo told Lothario to stay there with Camilla while he attended to some pressing business, as he would return in an hour and a half. Camilla begged him not to go, and Lothario offered to accompany him, but nothing could persuade Anselmo, who on the contrary pressed Lothario to remain waiting for him as he had a matter of great importance to discuss with him. At the same time he bade Camilla not to leave Lothario alone until he came back. In short he contrived to put so good a face on the reason, or the folly, of his absence that no one could have suspected it was a pretence.

Anselmo took his departure, and Camilla and Lothario were left alone at the table, for the rest of the household had gone to dinner. Lothario saw himself in the lists according to his friend's wish, and facing an enemy that could by her beauty alone vanquish a squadron of armed knights; judge whether he had good reason to fear; but what he did was to lean his elbow on the arm of the chair, and his cheek upon his hand, and, asking Camilla's pardon for his ill manners, he said he wished to take a little sleep until Anselmo returned. Camilla in reply said he could repose more at his ease in the reception-room than in his chair, and

begged of him to go in and sleep there; but Lothario declined, and there he remained asleep until the return of Anselmo, who finding Camilla in her own room, and Lothario asleep, imagined that he had stayed away so long as to have afforded them time enough for conversation and even for sleep, and was all impatience until Lothario should wake up, that he might go out with him and question him as to his success. Everything fell out as he wished; Lothario awoke, and the two at once left the house, and Anselmo asked what he was anxious to know, and Lothario in answer told him that he had not thought it advisable to declare himself entirely the first time, and therefore had only extolled the charms of Camilla, telling her that all the city spoke of nothing else but her beauty and wit, for this seemed to him an excellent way of beginning to gain her good-will and render her disposed to listen to him with pleasure the next time, thus availing himself of the device the devil has recourse to when he would deceive one who is on the watch; for he being the angel of darkness transforms himself into an angel of light, and, under cover of a fair seeming, discloses himself at length, and effects his purpose if at the beginning his wiles are not discovered. All this gave great satisfaction to Anselmo, and he said he would afford the same opportunity every day, but without leaving the house, for he would find things to do at home so that Camilla should not detect the plot.

Thus, then, several days went by, and Lothario, without uttering a word to Camilla, reported to Anselmo that he had talked with her and that he had never been able to draw from her the slightest indication of consent to anything dishonourable, nor even a sign or shadow of hope; on the contrary, he said she would inform her husband of it.

“So far well,” said Anselmo; “Camilla has thus far resisted words; we must now see how she will resist deeds. I will give you to-morrow two thousand crowns in gold for you to offer or even present, and as many more to buy jewels to lure her, for women are fond of being becomingly attired and going gaily dressed, and all the more so if they are beautiful, however chaste they may be; and if she resists this temptation, I will rest satisfied and will give you no more trouble.”

Lothario replied that now he had begun he would carry on the undertaking to the end, though he perceived he was to come out of it wearied and vanquished. The next day he received the four thousand crowns, and with them four thousand perplexities, for he knew not what to say by way of a new falsehood; but in the end he made up his mind to tell him that Camilla stood as firm against gifts and promises as against words, and that there was no use in taking any further trouble, for the time was all spent to no purpose.

But chance, directing things in a different manner, so ordered it that Anselmo,

having left Lothario and Camilla alone as on other occasions, shut himself into a chamber and posted himself to watch and listen through the keyhole to what passed between them, and perceived that for more than half an hour Lothario did not utter a word to Camilla, nor would utter a word though he were to be there for an age; and he came to the conclusion that what his friend had told him about the replies of Camilla was all invention and falsehood, and to ascertain if it were so, he came out, and calling Lothario aside asked him what news he had and in what humour Camilla was. Lothario replied that he was not disposed to go on with the business, for she had answered him so angrily and harshly that he had no heart to say anything more to her.

“Ah, Lothario, Lothario,” said Anselmo, “how ill dost thou meet thy obligations to me, and the great confidence I repose in thee! I have been just now watching through this keyhole, and I have seen that thou hast not said a word to Camilla, whence I conclude that on the former occasions thou hast not spoken to her either, and if this be so, as no doubt it is, why dost thou deceive me, or wherefore seekest thou by craft to deprive me of the means I might find of attaining my desire?”

Anselmo said no more, but he had said enough to cover Lothario with shame and confusion, and he, feeling as it were his honour touched by having been detected in a lie, swore to Anselmo that he would from that moment devote himself to satisfying him without any deception, as he would see if he had the curiosity to watch; though he need not take the trouble, for the pains he would take to satisfy him would remove all suspicions from his mind. Anselmo believed him, and to afford him an opportunity more free and less liable to surprise, he resolved to absent himself from his house for eight days, betaking himself to that of a friend of his who lived in a village not far from the city; and, the better to account for his departure to Camilla, he so arranged it that the friend should send him a very pressing invitation.

Unhappy, shortsighted Anselmo, what art thou doing, what art thou plotting, what art thou devising? Bethink thee thou art working against thyself, plotting thine own dishonour, devising thine own ruin. Thy wife Camilla is virtuous, thou dost possess her in peace and quietness, no one assails thy happiness, her thoughts wander not beyond the walls of thy house, thou art her heaven on earth, the object of her wishes, the fulfilment of her desires, the measure wherewith she measures her will, making it conform in all things to thine and Heaven's. If, then, the mine of her honour, beauty, virtue, and modesty yields thee without labour all the wealth it contains and thou canst wish for, why wilt thou dig the earth in search of fresh veins, of new unknown treasure, risking the collapse of all, since it but rests on the feeble props of her weak nature? Bethink thee that

from him who seeks impossibilities that which is possible may with justice be withheld, as was better expressed by a poet who said:

'Tis mine to seek for life in death,  
Health in disease seek I,  
I seek in prison freedom's breath,  
In traitors loyalty.  
So Fate that ever scorns to grant  
Or grace or boon to me,  
Since what can never be I want,  
Denies me what might be.

The next day Anselmo took his departure for the village, leaving instructions with Camilla that during his absence Lothario would come to look after his house and to dine with her, and that she was to treat him as she would himself. Camilla was distressed, as a discreet and right-minded woman would be, at the orders her husband left her, and bade him remember that it was not becoming that anyone should occupy his seat at the table during his absence, and if he acted thus from not feeling confidence that she would be able to manage his house, let him try her this time, and he would find by experience that she was equal to greater responsibilities. Anselmo replied that it was his pleasure to have it so, and that she had only to submit and obey. Camilla said she would do so, though against her will.

Anselmo went, and the next day Lothario came to his house, where he was received by Camilla with a friendly and modest welcome; but she never suffered Lothario to see her alone, for she was always attended by her men and women servants, especially by a handmaid of hers, Leonela by name, to whom she was much attached (for they had been brought up together from childhood in her father's house), and whom she had kept with her after her marriage with Anselmo. The first three days Lothario did not speak to her, though he might have done so when they removed the cloth and the servants retired to dine hastily; for such were Camilla's orders; nay more, Leonela had directions to dine earlier than Camilla and never to leave her side. She, however, having her thoughts fixed upon other things more to her taste, and wanting that time and opportunity for her own pleasures, did not always obey her mistress's commands, but on the contrary left them alone, as if they had ordered her to do so; but the modest bearing of Camilla, the calmness of her countenance, the composure of her aspect were enough to bridle the tongue of Lothario. But the influence which the many virtues of Camilla exerted in imposing silence on Lothario's tongue proved mischievous for both of them, for if his tongue was silent his thoughts were busy, and could dwell at leisure upon the perfections of

Camilla's goodness and beauty one by one, charms enough to warm with love a marble statue, not to say a heart of flesh. Lothario gazed upon her when he might have been speaking to her, and thought how worthy of being loved she was; and thus reflection began little by little to assail his allegiance to Anselmo, and a thousand times he thought of withdrawing from the city and going where Anselmo should never see him nor he see Camilla. But already the delight he found in gazing on her interposed and held him fast. He put a constraint upon himself, and struggled to repel and repress the pleasure he found in contemplating Camilla; when alone he blamed himself for his weakness, called himself a bad friend, nay a bad Christian; then he argued the matter and compared himself with Anselmo; always coming to the conclusion that the folly and rashness of Anselmo had been worse than his faithlessness, and that if he could excuse his intentions as easily before God as with man, he had no reason to fear any punishment for his offence.

In short the beauty and goodness of Camilla, joined with the opportunity which the blind husband had placed in his hands, overthrew the loyalty of Lothario; and giving heed to nothing save the object towards which his inclinations led him, after Anselmo had been three days absent, during which he had been carrying on a continual struggle with his passion, he began to make love to Camilla with so much vehemence and warmth of language that she was overwhelmed with amazement, and could only rise from her place and retire to her room without answering him a word. But the hope which always springs up with love was not weakened in Lothario by this repelling demeanour; on the contrary his passion for Camilla increased, and she discovering in him what she had never expected, knew not what to do; and considering it neither safe nor right to give him the chance or opportunity of speaking to her again, she resolved to send, as she did that very night, one of her servants with a letter to Anselmo, in which she addressed the following words to him.



## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### IN WHICH IS CONTINUED THE NOVEL OF "THE ILL-ADVISED CURIOSITY"

"It is commonly said that an army looks ill without its general and a castle without its castellan, and I say that a young married woman looks still worse without her husband unless there are very good reasons for it. I find myself so ill at ease without you, and so incapable of enduring this separation, that unless you return quickly I shall have to go for relief to my parents' house, even if I leave yours without a protector; for the one you left me, if indeed he deserved that title, has, I think, more regard to his own pleasure than to what concerns you: as you are possessed of discernment I need say no more to you, nor indeed is it fitting I should say more."

Anselmo received this letter, and from it he gathered that Lothario had already begun his task and that Camilla must have replied to him as he would have wished; and delighted beyond measure at such intelligence he sent word to her not to leave his house on any account, as he would very shortly return. Camilla was astonished at Anselmo's reply, which placed her in greater perplexity than before, for she neither dared to remain in her own house, nor yet to go to her parents'; for in remaining her virtue was imperilled, and in going she was opposing her husband's commands. Finally she decided upon what was the worse course for her, to remain, resolving not to fly from the presence of Lothario, that she might not give food for gossip to her servants; and she now began to regret having written as she had to her husband, fearing he might imagine that Lothario had perceived in her some lightness which had impelled him to lay aside the respect he owed her; but confident of her rectitude she put her trust in God and in her own virtuous intentions, with which she hoped to resist in silence all the solicitations of Lothario, without saying anything to her husband so as not to involve him in any quarrel or trouble; and she even began to consider how to excuse Lothario to Anselmo when he should ask her what it was that induced her to write that letter. With these resolutions, more honourable than judicious or effectual, she remained the next day listening to Lothario, who pressed his suit so strenuously that Camilla's firmness began to waver, and her virtue had enough to do to come to the rescue of her eyes and keep them from showing signs of a certain tender compassion which the tears and appeals of

Lothario had awakened in her bosom. Lothario observed all this, and it inflamed him all the more. In short he felt that while Anselmo's absence afforded time and opportunity he must press the siege of the fortress, and so he assailed her self-esteem with praises of her beauty, for there is nothing that more quickly reduces and levels the castle towers of fair women's vanity than vanity itself upon the tongue of flattery. In fact with the utmost assiduity he undermined the rock of her purity with such engines that had Camilla been of brass she must have fallen. He wept, he entreated, he promised, he flattered, he importuned, he pretended with so much feeling and apparent sincerity, that he overthrew the virtuous resolves of Camilla and won the triumph he least expected and most longed for. Camilla yielded, Camilla fell; but what wonder if the friendship of Lothario could not stand firm? A clear proof to us that the passion of love is to be conquered only by flying from it, and that no one should engage in a struggle with an enemy so mighty; for divine strength is needed to overcome his human power. Leonela alone knew of her mistress's weakness, for the two false friends and new lovers were unable to conceal it. Lothario did not care to tell Camilla the object Anselmo had in view, nor that he had afforded him the opportunity of attaining such a result, lest she should undervalue his love and think that it was by chance and without intending it and not of his own accord that he had made love to her.

A few days later Anselmo returned to his house and did not perceive what it had lost, that which he so lightly treated and so highly prized. He went at once to see Lothario, and found him at home; they embraced each other, and Anselmo asked for the tidings of his life or his death.

"The tidings I have to give thee, Anselmo my friend," said Lothario, "are that thou dost possess a wife that is worthy to be the pattern and crown of all good wives. The words that I have addressed to her were borne away on the wind, my promises have been despised, my presents have been refused, such feigned tears as I shed have been turned into open ridicule. In short, as Camilla is the essence of all beauty, so is she the treasure-house where purity dwells, and gentleness and modesty abide with all the virtues that can confer praise, honour, and happiness upon a woman. Take back thy money, my friend; here it is, and I have had no need to touch it, for the chastity of Camilla yields not to things so base as gifts or promises. Be content, Anselmo, and refrain from making further proof; and as thou hast passed dryshod through the sea of those doubts and suspicions that are and may be entertained of women, seek not to plunge again into the deep ocean of new embarrassments, or with another pilot make trial of the goodness and strength of the bark that Heaven has granted thee for thy passage across the sea of this world; but reckon thyself now safe in port, moor thyself with the

anchor of sound reflection, and rest in peace until thou art called upon to pay that debt which no nobility on earth can escape paying.”

Anselmo was completely satisfied by the words of Lothario, and believed them as fully as if they had been spoken by an oracle; nevertheless he begged of him not to relinquish the undertaking, were it but for the sake of curiosity and amusement; though thenceforward he need not make use of the same earnest endeavours as before; all he wished him to do was to write some verses to her, praising her under the name of Chloris, for he himself would give her to understand that he was in love with a lady to whom he had given that name to enable him to sing her praises with the decorum due to her modesty; and if Lothario were unwilling to take the trouble of writing the verses he would compose them himself.

“That will not be necessary,” said Lothario, “for the muses are not such enemies of mine but that they visit me now and then in the course of the year. Do thou tell Camilla what thou hast proposed about a pretended amour of mine; as for the verses I will make them, and if not as good as the subject deserves, they shall be at least the best I can produce.” An agreement to this effect was made between the friends, the ill-advised one and the treacherous, and Anselmo returning to his house asked Camilla the question she already wondered he had not asked before — what it was that had caused her to write the letter she had sent him. Camilla replied that it had seemed to her that Lothario looked at her somewhat more freely than when he had been at home; but that now she was undeceived and believed it to have been only her own imagination, for Lothario now avoided seeing her, or being alone with her. Anselmo told her she might be quite easy on the score of that suspicion, for he knew that Lothario was in love with a damsel of rank in the city whom he celebrated under the name of Chloris, and that even if he were not, his fidelity and their great friendship left no room for fear. Had not Camilla, however, been informed beforehand by Lothario that this love for Chloris was a pretence, and that he himself had told Anselmo of it in order to be able sometimes to give utterance to the praises of Camilla herself, no doubt she would have fallen into the despairing toils of jealousy; but being forewarned she received the startling news without uneasiness.

The next day as the three were at table Anselmo asked Lothario to recite something of what he had composed for his mistress Chloris; for as Camilla did not know her, he might safely say what he liked.

“Even did she know her,” returned Lothario, “I would hide nothing, for when a lover praises his lady’s beauty, and charges her with cruelty, he casts no imputation upon her fair name; at any rate, all I can say is that yesterday I made a sonnet on the ingratitude of this Chloris, which goes thus:

## SONNET

At midnight, in the silence, when the eyes  
Of happier mortals balmy slumbers close,  
The weary tale of my unnumbered woes  
To Chloris and to Heaven is wont to rise.  
And when the light of day returning dyes  
The portals of the east with tints of rose,  
With undiminished force my sorrow flows  
In broken accents and in burning sighs.  
And when the sun ascends his star-girt throne,  
And on the earth pours down his midday beams,  
Noon but renews my wailing and my tears;  
And with the night again goes up my moan.  
Yet ever in my agony it seems  
To me that neither Heaven nor Chloris hears.”

The sonnet pleased Camilla, and still more Anselmo, for he praised it and said the lady was excessively cruel who made no return for sincerity so manifest. On which Camilla said, “Then all that love-smitten poets say is true?”

“As poets they do not tell the truth,” replied Lothario; “but as lovers they are not more defective in expression than they are truthful.”

“There is no doubt of that,” observed Anselmo, anxious to support and uphold Lothario’s ideas with Camilla, who was as regardless of his design as she was deep in love with Lothario; and so taking delight in anything that was his, and knowing that his thoughts and writings had her for their object, and that she herself was the real Chloris, she asked him to repeat some other sonnet or verses if he recollected any.

“I do,” replied Lothario, “but I do not think it as good as the first one, or, more correctly speaking, less bad; but you can easily judge, for it is this.

## SONNET

I know that I am doomed; death is to me  
As certain as that thou, ungrateful fair,  
Dead at thy feet shouldst see me lying, ere  
My heart repented of its love for thee.  
If buried in oblivion I should be,  
Bereft of life, fame, favour, even there

It would be found that I thy image bear  
Deep graven in my breast for all to see.  
This like some holy relic do I prize  
To save me from the fate my truth entails,  
Truth that to thy hard heart its vigour owes.  
Alas for him that under lowering skies,  
In peril o'er a trackless ocean sails,  
Where neither friendly port nor pole-star shows."

Anselmo praised this second sonnet too, as he had praised the first; and so he went on adding link after link to the chain with which he was binding himself and making his dishonour secure; for when Lothario was doing most to dishonour him he told him he was most honoured; and thus each step that Camilla descended towards the depths of her abasement, she mounted, in his opinion, towards the summit of virtue and fair fame.

It so happened that finding herself on one occasion alone with her maid, Camilla said to her, "I am ashamed to think, my dear Leonela, how lightly I have valued myself that I did not compel Lothario to purchase by at least some expenditure of time that full possession of me that I so quickly yielded him of my own free will. I fear that he will think ill of my pliancy or lightness, not considering the irresistible influence he brought to bear upon me."

"Let not that trouble you, my lady," said Leonela, "for it does not take away the value of the thing given or make it the less precious to give it quickly if it be really valuable and worthy of being prized; nay, they are wont to say that he who gives quickly gives twice."

"They say also," said Camilla, "that what costs little is valued less."

"That saying does not hold good in your case," replied Leonela, "for love, as I have heard say, sometimes flies and sometimes walks; with this one it runs, with that it moves slowly; some it cools, others it burns; some it wounds, others it slays; it begins the course of its desires, and at the same moment completes and ends it; in the morning it will lay siege to a fortress and by night will have taken it, for there is no power that can resist it; so what are you in dread of, what do you fear, when the same must have befallen Lothario, love having chosen the absence of my lord as the instrument for subduing you? and it was absolutely necessary to complete then what love had resolved upon, without affording the time to let Anselmo return and by his presence compel the work to be left unfinished; for love has no better agent for carrying out his designs than opportunity; and of opportunity he avails himself in all his feats, especially at the outset. All this I know well myself, more by experience than by hearsay, and some day, senora, I will enlighten you on the subject, for I am of your flesh and

blood too. Moreover, lady Camilla, you did not surrender yourself or yield so quickly but that first you saw Lothario's whole soul in his eyes, in his sighs, in his words, his promises and his gifts, and by it and his good qualities perceived how worthy he was of your love. This, then, being the case, let not these scrupulous and prudish ideas trouble your imagination, but be assured that Lothario prizes you as you do him, and rest content and satisfied that as you are caught in the noose of love it is one of worth and merit that has taken you, and one that has not only the four S's that they say true lovers ought to have, but a complete alphabet; only listen to me and you will see how I can repeat it by rote.

He is to my eyes and thinking, Amiable, Brave, Courteous, Distinguished, Elegant, Fond, Gay, Honourable, Illustrious, Loyal, Manly, Noble, Open, Polite, Quickwitted, Rich, and the S's according to the saying, and then Tender, Veracious: X does not suit him, for it is a rough letter; Y has been given already; and Z Zealous for your honour."

Camilla laughed at her maid's alphabet, and perceived her to be more experienced in love affairs than she said, which she admitted, confessing to Camilla that she had love passages with a young man of good birth of the same city. Camilla was uneasy at this, dreading lest it might prove the means of endangering her honour, and asked whether her intrigue had gone beyond words, and she with little shame and much effrontery said it had; for certain it is that ladies' imprudences make servants shameless, who, when they see their mistresses make a false step, think nothing of going astray themselves, or of its being known. All that Camilla could do was to entreat Leonela to say nothing about her doings to him whom she called her lover, and to conduct her own affairs secretly lest they should come to the knowledge of Anselmo or of Lothario. Leonela said she would, but kept her word in such a way that she confirmed Camilla's apprehension of losing her reputation through her means; for this abandoned and bold Leonela, as soon as she perceived that her mistress's demeanour was not what it was wont to be, had the audacity to introduce her lover into the house, confident that even if her mistress saw him she would not dare to expose him; for the sins of mistresses entail this mischief among others; they make themselves the slaves of their own servants, and are obliged to hide their laxities and depravities; as was the case with Camilla, who though she perceived, not once but many times, that Leonela was with her lover in some room of the house, not only did not dare to chide her, but afforded her opportunities for concealing him and removed all difficulties, lest he should be seen by her husband. She was unable, however, to prevent him from being seen on one occasion, as he sallied forth at daybreak, by Lothario, who, not knowing who he was, at first took him for a spectre; but, as soon as he saw him hasten

away, muffling his face with his cloak and concealing himself carefully and cautiously, he rejected this foolish idea, and adopted another, which would have been the ruin of all had not Camilla found a remedy. It did not occur to Lothario that this man he had seen issuing at such an untimely hour from Anselmo's house could have entered it on Leonela's account, nor did he even remember there was such a person as Leonela; all he thought was that as Camilla had been light and yielding with him, so she had been with another; for this further penalty the erring woman's sin brings with it, that her honour is distrusted even by him to whose overtures and persuasions she has yielded; and he believes her to have surrendered more easily to others, and gives implicit credence to every suspicion that comes into his mind. All Lothario's good sense seems to have failed him at this juncture; all his prudent maxims escaped his memory; for without once reflecting rationally, and without more ado, in his impatience and in the blindness of the jealous rage that gnawed his heart, and dying to revenge himself upon Camilla, who had done him no wrong, before Anselmo had risen he hastened to him and said to him, "Know, Anselmo, that for several days past I have been struggling with myself, striving to withhold from thee what it is no longer possible or right that I should conceal from thee. Know that Camilla's fortress has surrendered and is ready to submit to my will; and if I have been slow to reveal this fact to thee, it was in order to see if it were some light caprice of hers, or if she sought to try me and ascertain if the love I began to make to her with thy permission was made with a serious intention. I thought, too, that she, if she were what she ought to be, and what we both believed her, would have ere this given thee information of my addresses; but seeing that she delays, I believe the truth of the promise she has given me that the next time thou art absent from the house she will grant me an interview in the closet where thy jewels are kept (and it was true that Camilla used to meet him there); but I do not wish thee to rush precipitately to take vengeance, for the sin is as yet only committed in intention, and Camilla's may change perhaps between this and the appointed time, and repentance spring up in its place. As hitherto thou hast always followed my advice wholly or in part, follow and observe this that I will give thee now, so that, without mistake, and with mature deliberation, thou mayest satisfy thyself as to what may seem the best course; pretend to absent thyself for two or three days as thou hast been wont to do on other occasions, and contrive to hide thyself in the closet; for the tapestries and other things there afford great facilities for thy concealment, and then thou wilt see with thine own eyes and I with mine what Camilla's purpose may be. And if it be a guilty one, which may be feared rather than expected, with silence, prudence, and discretion thou canst thyself become the instrument of punishment for the wrong done thee."

Anselmo was amazed, overwhelmed, and astounded at the words of Lothario, which came upon him at a time when he least expected to hear them, for he now looked upon Camilla as having triumphed over the pretended attacks of Lothario, and was beginning to enjoy the glory of her victory. He remained silent for a considerable time, looking on the ground with fixed gaze, and at length said, "Thou hast behaved, Lothario, as I expected of thy friendship: I will follow thy advice in everything; do as thou wilt, and keep this secret as thou seest it should be kept in circumstances so unlooked for."

Lothario gave him his word, but after leaving him he repented altogether of what he had said to him, perceiving how foolishly he had acted, as he might have revenged himself upon Camilla in some less cruel and degrading way. He cursed his want of sense, condemned his hasty resolution, and knew not what course to take to undo the mischief or find some ready escape from it. At last he decided upon revealing all to Camilla, and, as there was no want of opportunity for doing so, he found her alone the same day; but she, as soon as she had the chance of speaking to him, said, "Lothario my friend, I must tell thee I have a sorrow in my heart which fills it so that it seems ready to burst; and it will be a wonder if it does not; for the audacity of Leonela has now reached such a pitch that every night she conceals a gallant of hers in this house and remains with him till morning, at the expense of my reputation; inasmuch as it is open to anyone to question it who may see him quitting my house at such unseasonable hours; but what distresses me is that I cannot punish or chide her, for her privacy to our intrigue bridles my mouth and keeps me silent about hers, while I am dreading that some catastrophe will come of it."

As Camilla said this Lothario at first imagined it was some device to delude him into the idea that the man he had seen going out was Leonela's lover and not hers; but when he saw how she wept and suffered, and begged him to help her, he became convinced of the truth, and the conviction completed his confusion and remorse; however, he told Camilla not to distress herself, as he would take measures to put a stop to the insolence of Leonela. At the same time he told her what, driven by the fierce rage of jealousy, he had said to Anselmo, and how he had arranged to hide himself in the closet that he might there see plainly how little she preserved her fidelity to him; and he entreated her pardon for this madness, and her advice as to how to repair it, and escape safely from the intricate labyrinth in which his imprudence had involved him. Camilla was struck with alarm at hearing what Lothario said, and with much anger, and great good sense, she reproved him and rebuked his base design and the foolish and mischievous resolution he had made; but as woman has by nature a nimbler wit than man for good and for evil, though it is apt to fail when she sets herself



deliberately to reason, Camilla on the spur of the moment thought of a way to remedy what was to all appearance irremediable, and told Lothario to contrive that the next day Anselmo should conceal himself in the place he mentioned, for she hoped from his concealment to obtain the means of their enjoying themselves for the future without any apprehension; and without revealing her purpose to him entirely she charged him to be careful, as soon as Anselmo was concealed, to come to her when Leonela should call him, and to all she said to him to answer as he would have answered had he not known that Anselmo was listening. Lothario pressed her to explain her intention fully, so that he might with more certainty and precaution take care to do what he saw to be needful.

“I tell you,” said Camilla, “there is nothing to take care of except to answer me what I shall ask you;” for she did not wish to explain to him beforehand what she meant to do, fearing lest he should be unwilling to follow out an idea which seemed to her such a good one, and should try or devise some other less practicable plan.

Lothario then retired, and the next day Anselmo, under pretence of going to his friend’s country house, took his departure, and then returned to conceal himself, which he was able to do easily, as Camilla and Leonela took care to give him the opportunity; and so he placed himself in hiding in the state of agitation that it may be imagined he would feel who expected to see the vitals of his honour laid bare before his eyes, and found himself on the point of losing the supreme blessing he thought he possessed in his beloved Camilla. Having made sure of Anselmo’s being in his hiding-place, Camilla and Leonela entered the closet, and the instant she set foot within it Camilla said, with a deep sigh, “Ah! dear Leonela, would it not be better, before I do what I am unwilling you should know lest you should seek to prevent it, that you should take Anselmo’s dagger that I have asked of you and with it pierce this vile heart of mine? But no; there is no reason why I should suffer the punishment of another’s fault. I will first know what it is that the bold licentious eyes of Lothario have seen in me that could have encouraged him to reveal to me a design so base as that which he has disclosed regardless of his friend and of my honour. Go to the window, Leonela, and call him, for no doubt he is in the street waiting to carry out his vile project; but mine, cruel it may be, but honourable, shall be carried out first.”

“Ah, senora,” said the crafty Leonela, who knew her part, “what is it you want to do with this dagger? Can it be that you mean to take your own life, or Lothario’s? for whichever you mean to do, it will lead to the loss of your reputation and good name. It is better to dissemble your wrong and not give this wicked man the chance of entering the house now and finding us alone; consider, senora, we are weak women and he is a man, and determined, and as

he comes with such a base purpose, blind and urged by passion, perhaps before you can put yours into execution he may do what will be worse for you than taking your life. Ill betide my master, Anselmo, for giving such authority in his house to this shameless fellow! And supposing you kill him, senora, as I suspect you mean to do, what shall we do with him when he is dead?"

"What, my friend?" replied Camilla, "we shall leave him for Anselmo to bury him; for in reason it will be to him a light labour to hide his own infamy underground. Summon him, make haste, for all the time I delay in taking vengeance for my wrong seems to me an offence against the loyalty I owe my husband."

Anselmo was listening to all this, and every word that Camilla uttered made him change his mind; but when he heard that it was resolved to kill Lothario his first impulse was to come out and show himself to avert such a disaster; but in his anxiety to see the issue of a resolution so bold and virtuous he restrained himself, intending to come forth in time to prevent the deed. At this moment Camilla, throwing herself upon a bed that was close by, swooned away, and Leonela began to weep bitterly, exclaiming, "Woe is me! that I should be fated to have dying here in my arms the flower of virtue upon earth, the crown of true wives, the pattern of chastity!" with more to the same effect, so that anyone who heard her would have taken her for the most tender-hearted and faithful handmaid in the world, and her mistress for another persecuted Penelope.

Camilla was not long in recovering from her fainting fit and on coming to herself she said, "Why do you not go, Leonela, to call hither that friend, the falsest to his friend the sun ever shone upon or night concealed? Away, run, haste, speed! lest the fire of my wrath burn itself out with delay, and the righteous vengeance that I hope for melt away in menaces and maledictions."

"I am just going to call him, senora," said Leonela; "but you must first give me that dagger, lest while I am gone you should by means of it give cause to all who love you to weep all their lives."

"Go in peace, dear Leonela, I will not do so," said Camilla, "for rash and foolish as I may be, to your mind, in defending my honour, I am not going to be so much so as that Lucretia who they say killed herself without having done anything wrong, and without having first killed him on whom the guilt of her misfortune lay. I shall die, if I am to die; but it must be after full vengeance upon him who has brought me here to weep over audacity that no fault of mine gave birth to."

Leonela required much pressing before she would go to summon Lothario, but at last she went, and while awaiting her return Camilla continued, as if speaking to herself, "Good God! would it not have been more prudent to have repulsed Lothario, as I have done many a time before, than to allow him, as I am now

doing, to think me unchaste and vile, even for the short time I must wait until I undeceive him? No doubt it would have been better; but I should not be avenged, nor the honour of my husband vindicated, should he find so clear and easy an escape from the strait into which his depravity has led him. Let the traitor pay with his life for the temerity of his wanton wishes, and let the world know (if haply it shall ever come to know) that Camilla not only preserved her allegiance to her husband, but avenged him of the man who dared to wrong him. Still, I think it might be better to disclose this to Anselmo. But then I have called his attention to it in the letter I wrote to him in the country, and, if he did nothing to prevent the mischief I there pointed out to him, I suppose it was that from pure goodness of heart and trustfulness he would not and could not believe that any thought against his honour could harbour in the breast of so staunch a friend; nor indeed did I myself believe it for many days, nor should I have ever believed it if his insolence had not gone so far as to make it manifest by open presents, lavish promises, and ceaseless tears. But why do I argue thus? Does a bold determination stand in need of arguments? Surely not. Then traitors avaunt! Vengeance to my aid! Let the false one come, approach, advance, die, yield up his life, and then befall what may. Pure I came to him whom Heaven bestowed upon me, pure I shall leave him; and at the worst bathed in my own chaste blood and in the foul blood of the falsest friend that friendship ever saw in the world;" and as she uttered these words she paced the room holding the unsheathed dagger, with such irregular and disordered steps, and such gestures that one would have supposed her to have lost her senses, and taken her for some violent desperado instead of a delicate woman.

Anselmo, hidden behind some tapestries where he had concealed himself, beheld and was amazed at all, and already felt that what he had seen and heard was a sufficient answer to even greater suspicions; and he would have been now well pleased if the proof afforded by Lothario's coming were dispensed with, as he feared some sudden mishap; but as he was on the point of showing himself and coming forth to embrace and undeceive his wife he paused as he saw Leonela returning, leading Lothario. Camilla when she saw him, drawing a long line in front of her on the floor with the dagger, said to him, "Lothario, pay attention to what I say to thee: if by any chance thou darest to cross this line thou seest, or even approach it, the instant I see thee attempt it that same instant will I pierce my bosom with this dagger that I hold in my hand; and before thou answerest me a word desire thee to listen to a few from me, and afterwards thou shalt reply as may please thee. First, I desire thee to tell me, Lothario, if thou knowest my husband Anselmo, and in what light thou regardest him; and secondly I desire to know if thou knowest me too. Answer me this, without

embarrassment or reflecting deeply what thou wilt answer, for they are no riddles I put to thee.”

Lothario was not so dull but that from the first moment when Camilla directed him to make Anselmo hide himself he understood what she intended to do, and therefore he fell in with her idea so readily and promptly that between them they made the imposture look more true than truth; so he answered her thus: “I did not think, fair Camilla, that thou wert calling me to ask questions so remote from the object with which I come; but if it is to defer the promised reward thou art doing so, thou mightst have put it off still longer, for the longing for happiness gives the more distress the nearer comes the hope of gaining it; but lest thou shouldst say that I do not answer thy questions, I say that I know thy husband Anselmo, and that we have known each other from our earliest years; I will not speak of what thou too knowest, of our friendship, that I may not compel myself to testify against the wrong that love, the mighty excuse for greater errors, makes me inflict upon him. Thee I know and hold in the same estimation as he does, for were it not so I had not for a lesser prize acted in opposition to what I owe to my station and the holy laws of true friendship, now broken and violated by me through that powerful enemy, love.”

“If thou dost confess that,” returned Camilla, “mortal enemy of all that rightly deserves to be loved, with what face dost thou dare to come before one whom thou knowest to be the mirror wherein he is reflected on whom thou shouldst look to see how unworthily thou wrongest him? But, woe is me, I now comprehend what has made thee give so little heed to what thou owest to thyself; it must have been some freedom of mine, for I will not call it immodesty, as it did not proceed from any deliberate intention, but from some heedlessness such as women are guilty of through inadvertence when they think they have no occasion for reserve. But tell me, traitor, when did I by word or sign give a reply to thy prayers that could awaken in thee a shadow of hope of attaining thy base wishes? When were not thy professions of love sternly and scornfully rejected and rebuked? When were thy frequent pledges and still more frequent gifts believed or accepted? But as I am persuaded that no one can long persevere in the attempt to win love unsustained by some hope, I am willing to attribute to myself the blame of thy assurance, for no doubt some thoughtlessness of mine has all this time fostered thy hopes; and therefore will I punish myself and inflict upon myself the penalty thy guilt deserves. And that thou mayest see that being so relentless to myself I cannot possibly be otherwise to thee, I have summoned thee to be a witness of the sacrifice I mean to offer to the injured honour of my honoured husband, wronged by thee with all the assiduity thou wert capable of, and by me too through want of caution in avoiding every occasion, if I have

given any, of encouraging and sanctioning thy base designs. Once more I say the suspicion in my mind that some imprudence of mine has engendered these lawless thoughts in thee, is what causes me most distress and what I desire most to punish with my own hands, for were any other instrument of punishment employed my error might become perhaps more widely known; but before I do so, in my death I mean to inflict death, and take with me one that will fully satisfy my longing for the revenge I hope for and have; for I shall see, wheresoever it may be that I go, the penalty awarded by inflexible, unswerving justice on him who has placed me in a position so desperate.”

As she uttered these words, with incredible energy and swiftness she flew upon Lothario with the naked dagger, so manifestly bent on burying it in his breast that he was almost uncertain whether these demonstrations were real or feigned, for he was obliged to have recourse to all his skill and strength to prevent her from striking him; and with such reality did she act this strange farce and mystification that, to give it a colour of truth, she determined to stain it with her own blood; for perceiving, or pretending, that she could not wound Lothario, she said, “Fate, it seems, will not grant my just desire complete satisfaction, but it will not be able to keep me from satisfying it partially at least;” and making an effort to free the hand with the dagger which Lothario held in his grasp, she released it, and directing the point to a place where it could not inflict a deep wound, she plunged it into her left side high up close to the shoulder, and then allowed herself to fall to the ground as if in a faint.

Leonela and Lothario stood amazed and astounded at the catastrophe, and seeing Camilla stretched on the ground and bathed in her blood they were still uncertain as to the true nature of the act. Lothario, terrified and breathless, ran in haste to pluck out the dagger; but when he saw how slight the wound was he was relieved of his fears and once more admired the subtlety, coolness, and ready wit of the fair Camilla; and the better to support the part he had to play he began to utter profuse and doleful lamentations over her body as if she were dead, invoking maledictions not only on himself but also on him who had been the means of placing him in such a position: and knowing that his friend Anselmo heard him he spoke in such a way as to make a listener feel much more pity for him than for Camilla, even though he supposed her dead. Leonela took her up in her arms and laid her on the bed, entreating Lothario to go in quest of some one to attend to her wound in secret, and at the same time asking his advice and opinion as to what they should say to Anselmo about his lady’s wound if he should chance to return before it was healed. He replied they might say what they liked, for he was not in a state to give advice that would be of any use; all he could tell her was to try and stanch the blood, as he was going where he

should never more be seen; and with every appearance of deep grief and sorrow he left the house; but when he found himself alone, and where there was nobody to see him, he crossed himself unceasingly, lost in wonder at the adroitness of Camilla and the consistent acting of Leonela. He reflected how convinced Anselmo would be that he had a second Portia for a wife, and he looked forward anxiously to meeting him in order to rejoice together over falsehood and truth the most craftily veiled that could be imagined.

Leonela, as he told her, stanchd her lady's blood, which was no more than sufficed to support her deception; and washing the wound with a little wine she bound it up to the best of her skill, talking all the time she was tending her in a strain that, even if nothing else had been said before, would have been enough to assure Anselmo that he had in Camilla a model of purity. To Leonela's words Camilla added her own, calling herself cowardly and wanting in spirit, since she had not enough at the time she had most need of it to rid herself of the life she so much loathed. She asked her attendant's advice as to whether or not she ought to inform her beloved husband of all that had happened, but the other bade her say nothing about it, as she would lay upon him the obligation of taking vengeance on Lothario, which he could not do but at great risk to himself; and it was the duty of a true wife not to give her husband provocation to quarrel, but, on the contrary, to remove it as far as possible from him.

Camilla replied that she believed she was right and that she would follow her advice, but at any rate it would be well to consider how she was to explain the wound to Anselmo, for he could not help seeing it; to which Leonela answered that she did not know how to tell a lie even in jest.

"How then can I know, my dear?" said Camilla, "for I should not dare to forge or keep up a falsehood if my life depended on it. If we can think of no escape from this difficulty, it will be better to tell him the plain truth than that he should find us out in an untrue story."

"Be not uneasy, senora," said Leonela; "between this and to-morrow I will think of what we must say to him, and perhaps the wound being where it is it can be hidden from his sight, and Heaven will be pleased to aid us in a purpose so good and honourable. Compose yourself, senora, and endeavour to calm your excitement lest my lord find you agitated; and leave the rest to my care and God's, who always supports good intentions."

Anselmo had with the deepest attention listened to and seen played out the tragedy of the death of his honour, which the performers acted with such wonderfully effective truth that it seemed as if they had become the realities of the parts they played. He longed for night and an opportunity of escaping from the house to go and see his good friend Lothario, and with him give vent to his

joy over the precious pearl he had gained in having established his wife's purity. Both mistress and maid took care to give him time and opportunity to get away, and taking advantage of it he made his escape, and at once went in quest of Lothario, and it would be impossible to describe how he embraced him when he found him, and the things he said to him in the joy of his heart, and the praises he bestowed upon Camilla; all which Lothario listened to without being able to show any pleasure, for he could not forget how deceived his friend was, and how dishonourably he had wronged him; and though Anselmo could see that Lothario was not glad, still he imagined it was only because he had left Camilla wounded and had been himself the cause of it; and so among other things he told him not to be distressed about Camilla's accident, for, as they had agreed to hide it from him, the wound was evidently trifling; and that being so, he had no cause for fear, but should henceforward be of good cheer and rejoice with him, seeing that by his means and adroitness he found himself raised to the greatest height of happiness that he could have ventured to hope for, and desired no better pastime than making verses in praise of Camilla that would preserve her name for all time to come. Lothario commended his purpose, and promised on his own part to aid him in raising a monument so glorious.

And so Anselmo was left the most charmingly hoodwinked man there could be in the world. He himself, persuaded he was conducting the instrument of his glory, led home by the hand him who had been the utter destruction of his good name; whom Camilla received with averted countenance, though with smiles in her heart. The deception was carried on for some time, until at the end of a few months Fortune turned her wheel and the guilt which had been until then so skilfully concealed was published abroad, and Anselmo paid with his life the penalty of his ill-advised curiosity.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

WHICH TREATS OF THE HEROIC AND PRODIGIOUS BATTLE DON QUIXOTE HAD WITH CERTAIN SKINS OF RED WINE, AND BRINGS THE NOVEL OF "THE ILL-ADVISED CURIOSITY" TO A CLOSE

There remained but little more of the novel to be read, when Sancho Panza burst forth in wild excitement from the garret where Don Quixote was lying, shouting, "Run, sirs! quick; and help my master, who is in the thick of the toughest and stiffest battle I ever laid eyes on. By the living God he has given the giant, the enemy of my lady the Princess Micomicona, such a slash that he has sliced his head clean off as if it were a turnip."

"What are you talking about, brother?" said the curate, pausing as he was about to read the remainder of the novel. "Are you in your senses, Sancho? How the devil can it be as you say, when the giant is two thousand leagues away?"

Here they heard a loud noise in the chamber, and Don Quixote shouting out, "Stand, thief, brigand, villain; now I have got thee, and thy scimitar shall not avail thee!" And then it seemed as though he were slashing vigorously at the wall.

"Don't stop to listen," said Sancho, "but go in and part them or help my master: though there is no need of that now, for no doubt the giant is dead by this time and giving account to God of his past wicked life; for I saw the blood flowing on the ground, and the head cut off and fallen on one side, and it is as big as a large wine-skin."

"May I die," said the landlord at this, "if Don Quixote or Don Devil has not been slashing some of the skins of red wine that stand full at his bed's head, and the spilt wine must be what this good fellow takes for blood;" and so saying he went into the room and the rest after him, and there they found Don Quixote in the strangest costume in the world. He was in his shirt, which was not long enough in front to cover his thighs completely and was six fingers shorter behind; his legs were very long and lean, covered with hair, and anything but clean; on his head he had a little greasy red cap that belonged to the host, round his left arm he had rolled the blanket of the bed, to which Sancho, for reasons best known to himself, owed a grudge, and in his right hand he held his unsheathed sword, with which he was slashing about on all sides, uttering exclamations as if he were actually fighting some giant: and the best of it was his



eyes were not open, for he was fast asleep, and dreaming that he was doing battle with the giant. For his imagination was so wrought upon by the adventure he was going to accomplish, that it made him dream he had already reached the kingdom of Micomicon, and was engaged in combat with his enemy; and believing he was laying on the giant, he had given so many sword cuts to the skins that the whole room was full of wine. On seeing this the landlord was so enraged that he fell on Don Quixote, and with his clenched fist began to pummel him in such a way, that if Cardenio and the curate had not dragged him off, he would have brought the war of the giant to an end. But in spite of all the poor gentleman never woke until the barber brought a great pot of cold water from the well and flung it with one dash all over his body, on which Don Quixote woke up, but not so completely as to understand what was the matter. Dorothea, seeing how short and slight his attire was, would not go in to witness the battle between her champion and her opponent. As for Sancho, he went searching all over the floor for the head of the giant, and not finding it he said, "I see now that it's all enchantment in this house; for the last time, on this very spot where I am now, I got ever so many thumps without knowing who gave them to me, or being able to see anybody; and now this head is not to be seen anywhere about, though I saw it cut off with my own eyes and the blood running from the body as if from a fountain."

"What blood and fountains are you talking about, enemy of God and his saints?" said the landlord. "Don't you see, you thief, that the blood and the fountain are only these skins here that have been stabbed and the red wine swimming all over the room? — and I wish I saw the soul of him that stabbed them swimming in hell."

"I know nothing about that," said Sancho; "all I know is it will be my bad luck that through not finding this head my county will melt away like salt in water;" — for Sancho awake was worse than his master asleep, so much had his master's promises addled his wits.

The landlord was beside himself at the coolness of the squire and the mischievous doings of the master, and swore it should not be like the last time when they went without paying; and that their privileges of chivalry should not hold good this time to let one or other of them off without paying, even to the cost of the plugs that would have to be put to the damaged wine-skins. The curate was holding Don Quixote's hands, who, fancying he had now ended the adventure and was in the presence of the Princess Micomicona, knelt before the curate and said, "Exalted and beauteous lady, your highness may live from this day forth fearless of any harm this base being could do you; and I too from this day forth am released from the promise I gave you, since by the help of God on

high and by the favour of her by whom I live and breathe, I have fulfilled it so successfully.”

“Did not I say so?” said Sancho on hearing this. “You see I wasn’t drunk; there you see my master has already salted the giant; there’s no doubt about the bulls; my county is all right!”

Who could have helped laughing at the absurdities of the pair, master and man? And laugh they did, all except the landlord, who cursed himself; but at length the barber, Cardenio, and the curate contrived with no small trouble to get Don Quixote on the bed, and he fell asleep with every appearance of excessive weariness. They left him to sleep, and came out to the gate of the inn to console Sancho Panza on not having found the head of the giant; but much more work had they to appease the landlord, who was furious at the sudden death of his wine-skins; and said the landlady half scolding, half crying, “At an evil moment and in an unlucky hour he came into my house, this knight-errant — would that I had never set eyes on him, for dear he has cost me; the last time he went off with the overnight score against him for supper, bed, straw, and barley, for himself and his squire and a hack and an ass, saying he was a knight adventurer — God send unlucky adventures to him and all the adventurers in the world — and therefore not bound to pay anything, for it was so settled by the knight-errantry tariff: and then, all because of him, came the other gentleman and carried off my tail, and gives it back more than two cuartillos the worse, all stripped of its hair, so that it is no use for my husband’s purpose; and then, for a finishing touch to all, to burst my wine-skins and spill my wine! I wish I saw his own blood spilt! But let him not deceive himself, for, by the bones of my father and the shade of my mother, they shall pay me down every quarts; or my name is not what it is, and I am not my father’s daughter.” All this and more to the same effect the landlady delivered with great irritation, and her good maid Maritornes backed her up, while the daughter held her peace and smiled from time to time. The curate smoothed matters by promising to make good all losses to the best of his power, not only as regarded the wine-skins but also the wine, and above all the depreciation of the tail which they set such store by. Dorothea comforted Sancho, telling him that she pledged herself, as soon as it should appear certain that his master had decapitated the giant, and she found herself peacefully established in her kingdom, to bestow upon him the best county there was in it. With this Sancho consoled himself, and assured the princess she might rely upon it that he had seen the head of the giant, and more by token it had a beard that reached to the girdle, and that if it was not to be seen now it was because everything that happened in that house went by enchantment, as he himself had proved the last time he had lodged there. Dorothea said she fully believed it, and

that he need not be uneasy, for all would go well and turn out as he wished. All therefore being appeased, the curate was anxious to go on with the novel, as he saw there was but little more left to read. Dorothea and the others begged him to finish it, and he, as he was willing to please them, and enjoyed reading it himself, continued the tale in these words:

The result was, that from the confidence Anselmo felt in Camilla's virtue, he lived happy and free from anxiety, and Camilla purposely looked coldly on Lothario, that Anselmo might suppose her feelings towards him to be the opposite of what they were; and the better to support the position, Lothario begged to be excused from coming to the house, as the displeasure with which Camilla regarded his presence was plain to be seen. But the befooled Anselmo said he would on no account allow such a thing, and so in a thousand ways he became the author of his own dishonour, while he believed he was insuring his happiness. Meanwhile the satisfaction with which Leonela saw herself empowered to carry on her amour reached such a height that, regardless of everything else, she followed her inclinations unrestrainedly, feeling confident that her mistress would screen her, and even show her how to manage it safely. At last one night Anselmo heard footsteps in Leonela's room, and on trying to enter to see who it was, he found that the door was held against him, which made him all the more determined to open it; and exerting his strength he forced it open, and entered the room in time to see a man leaping through the window into the street. He ran quickly to seize him or discover who he was, but he was unable to effect either purpose, for Leonela flung her arms round him crying, "Be calm, senor; do not give way to passion or follow him who has escaped from this; he belongs to me, and in fact he is my husband."

Anselmo would not believe it, but blind with rage drew a dagger and threatened to stab Leonela, bidding her tell the truth or he would kill her. She, in her fear, not knowing what she was saying, exclaimed, "Do not kill me, senor, for I can tell you things more important than any you can imagine."

"Tell me then at once or thou diest," said Anselmo.

"It would be impossible for me now," said Leonela, "I am so agitated: leave me till to-morrow, and then you shall hear from me what will fill you with astonishment; but rest assured that he who leaped through the window is a young man of this city, who has given me his promise to become my husband."

Anselmo was appeased with this, and was content to wait the time she asked of him, for he never expected to hear anything against Camilla, so satisfied and sure of her virtue was he; and so he quitted the room, and left Leonela locked in, telling her she should not come out until she had told him all she had to make known to him. He went at once to see Camilla, and tell her, as he did, all that had

passed between him and her handmaid, and the promise she had given him to inform him matters of serious importance.

There is no need of saying whether Camilla was agitated or not, for so great was her fear and dismay, that, making sure, as she had good reason to do, that Leonela would tell Anselmo all she knew of her faithlessness, she had not the courage to wait and see if her suspicions were confirmed; and that same night, as soon as she thought that Anselmo was asleep, she packed up the most valuable jewels she had and some money, and without being observed by anybody escaped from the house and betook herself to Lothario's, to whom she related what had occurred, imploring him to convey her to some place of safety or fly with her where they might be safe from Anselmo. The state of perplexity to which Camilla reduced Lothario was such that he was unable to utter a word in reply, still less to decide upon what he should do. At length he resolved to conduct her to a convent of which a sister of his was prioress; Camilla agreed to this, and with the speed which the circumstances demanded, Lothario took her to the convent and left her there, and then himself quitted the city without letting anyone know of his departure.

As soon as daylight came Anselmo, without missing Camilla from his side, rose eager to learn what Leonela had to tell him, and hastened to the room where he had locked her in. He opened the door, entered, but found no Leonela; all he found was some sheets knotted to the window, a plain proof that she had let herself down from it and escaped. He returned, uneasy, to tell Camilla, but not finding her in bed or anywhere in the house he was lost in amazement. He asked the servants of the house about her, but none of them could give him any explanation. As he was going in search of Camilla it happened by chance that he observed her boxes were lying open, and that the greater part of her jewels were gone; and now he became fully aware of his disgrace, and that Leonela was not the cause of his misfortune; and, just as he was, without delaying to dress himself completely, he repaired, sad at heart and dejected, to his friend Lothario to make known his sorrow to him; but when he failed to find him and the servants reported that he had been absent from his house all night and had taken with him all the money he had, he felt as though he were losing his senses; and to make all complete on returning to his own house he found it deserted and empty, not one of all his servants, male or female, remaining in it. He knew not what to think, or say, or do, and his reason seemed to be deserting him little by little. He reviewed his position, and saw himself in a moment left without wife, friend, or servants, abandoned, he felt, by the heaven above him, and more than all robbed of his honour, for in Camilla's disappearance he saw his own ruin. After long reflection he resolved at last to go to his friend's village, where he

had been staying when he afforded opportunities for the contrivance of this complication of misfortune. He locked the doors of his house, mounted his horse, and with a broken spirit set out on his journey; but he had hardly gone half-way when, harassed by his reflections, he had to dismount and tie his horse to a tree, at the foot of which he threw himself, giving vent to piteous heartrending sighs; and there he remained till nearly nightfall, when he observed a man approaching on horseback from the city, of whom, after saluting him, he asked what was the news in Florence.

The citizen replied, "The strangest that have been heard for many a day; for it is reported abroad that Lothario, the great friend of the wealthy Anselmo, who lived at San Giovanni, carried off last night Camilla, the wife of Anselmo, who also has disappeared. All this has been told by a maid-servant of Camilla's, whom the governor found last night lowering herself by a sheet from the windows of Anselmo's house. I know not indeed, precisely, how the affair came to pass; all I know is that the whole city is wondering at the occurrence, for no one could have expected a thing of the kind, seeing the great and intimate friendship that existed between them, so great, they say, that they were called 'The Two Friends.'"

"Is it known at all," said Anselmo, "what road Lothario and Camilla took?"

"Not in the least," said the citizen, "though the governor has been very active in searching for them."

"God speed you, senor," said Anselmo.

"God be with you," said the citizen and went his way.

This disastrous intelligence almost robbed Anselmo not only of his senses but of his life. He got up as well as he was able and reached the house of his friend, who as yet knew nothing of his misfortune, but seeing him come pale, worn, and haggard, perceived that he was suffering some heavy affliction. Anselmo at once begged to be allowed to retire to rest, and to be given writing materials. His wish was complied with and he was left lying down and alone, for he desired this, and even that the door should be locked. Finding himself alone he so took to heart the thought of his misfortune that by the signs of death he felt within him he knew well his life was drawing to a close, and therefore he resolved to leave behind him a declaration of the cause of his strange end. He began to write, but before he had put down all he meant to say, his breath failed him and he yielded up his life, a victim to the suffering which his ill-advised curiosity had entailed upon him. The master of the house observing that it was now late and that Anselmo did not call, determined to go in and ascertain if his indisposition was increasing, and found him lying on his face, his body partly in the bed, partly on the writing-table, on which he lay with the written paper open and the pen still in

his hand. Having first called to him without receiving any answer, his host approached him, and taking him by the hand, found that it was cold, and saw that he was dead. Greatly surprised and distressed he summoned the household to witness the sad fate which had befallen Anselmo; and then he read the paper, the handwriting of which he recognised as his, and which contained these words:

“A foolish and ill-advised desire has robbed me of life. If the news of my death should reach the ears of Camilla, let her know that I forgive her, for she was not bound to perform miracles, nor ought I to have required her to perform them; and since I have been the author of my own dishonour, there is no reason why-”

So far Anselmo had written, and thus it was plain that at this point, before he could finish what he had to say, his life came to an end. The next day his friend sent intelligence of his death to his relatives, who had already ascertained his misfortune, as well as the convent where Camilla lay almost on the point of accompanying her husband on that inevitable journey, not on account of the tidings of his death, but because of those she received of her lover’s departure. Although she saw herself a widow, it is said she refused either to quit the convent or take the veil, until, not long afterwards, intelligence reached her that Lothario had been killed in a battle in which M. de Lautrec had been recently engaged with the Great Captain Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova in the kingdom of Naples, whither her too late repentant lover had repaired. On learning this Camilla took the veil, and shortly afterwards died, worn out by grief and melancholy. This was the end of all three, an end that came of a thoughtless beginning.

“I like this novel,” said the curate; “but I cannot persuade myself of its truth; and if it has been invented, the author’s invention is faulty, for it is impossible to imagine any husband so foolish as to try such a costly experiment as Anselmo’s. If it had been represented as occurring between a gallant and his mistress it might pass; but between husband and wife there is something of an impossibility about it. As to the way in which the story is told, however, I have no fault to find.”

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### WHICH TREATS OF MORE CURIOUS INCIDENTS THAT OCCURRED AT THE INN



Just at that instant the landlord, who was standing at the gate of the inn, exclaimed, "Here comes a fine troop of guests; if they stop here we may say *gaudeamus*."

"What are they?" said Cardenio.

"Four men," said the landlord, "riding a la jineta, with lances and bucklers, and all with black veils, and with them there is a woman in white on a side-saddle, whose face is also veiled, and two attendants on foot."

"Are they very near?" said the curate.

"So near," answered the landlord, "that here they come."

Hearing this Dorothea covered her face, and Cardenio retreated into Don

Quixote's room, and they hardly had time to do so before the whole party the host had described entered the inn, and the four that were on horseback, who were of highbred appearance and bearing, dismounted, and came forward to take down the woman who rode on the side-saddle, and one of them taking her in his arms placed her in a chair that stood at the entrance of the room where Cardenio had hidden himself. All this time neither she nor they had removed their veils or spoken a word, only on sitting down on the chair the woman gave a deep sigh and let her arms fall like one that was ill and weak. The attendants on foot then led the horses away to the stable. Observing this the curate, curious to know who these people in such a dress and preserving such silence were, went to where the servants were standing and put the question to one of them, who answered him.

"Faith, sir, I cannot tell you who they are, I only know they seem to be people of distinction, particularly he who advanced to take the lady you saw in his arms; and I say so because all the rest show him respect, and nothing is done except what he directs and orders."

"And the lady, who is she?" asked the curate.

"That I cannot tell you either," said the servant, "for I have not seen her face all the way: I have indeed heard her sigh many times and utter such groans that she seems to be giving up the ghost every time; but it is no wonder if we do not know more than we have told you, as my comrade and I have only been in their company two days, for having met us on the road they begged and persuaded us to accompany them to Andalusia, promising to pay us well."

"And have you heard any of them called by his name?" asked the curate.

"No, indeed," replied the servant; "they all preserve a marvellous silence on the road, for not a sound is to be heard among them except the poor lady's sighs and sobs, which make us pity her; and we feel sure that wherever it is she is going, it is against her will, and as far as one can judge from her dress she is a nun or, what is more likely, about to become one; and perhaps it is because taking the vows is not of her own free will, that she is so unhappy as she seems to be."

"That may well be," said the curate, and leaving them he returned to where Dorothea was, who, hearing the veiled lady sigh, moved by natural compassion drew near to her and said, "What are you suffering from, senora? If it be anything that women are accustomed and know how to relieve, I offer you my services with all my heart."

To this the unhappy lady made no reply; and though Dorothea repeated her offers more earnestly she still kept silence, until the gentleman with the veil, who, the servant said, was obeyed by the rest, approached and said to Dorothea, "Do not give yourself the trouble, senora, of making any offers to that woman,



for it is her way to give no thanks for anything that is done for her; and do not try to make her answer unless you want to hear some lie from her lips.”

“I have never told a lie,” was the immediate reply of her who had been silent until now; “on the contrary, it is because I am so truthful and so ignorant of lying devices that I am now in this miserable condition; and this I call you yourself to witness, for it is my unstained truth that has made you false and a liar.”

Cardenio heard these words clearly and distinctly, being quite close to the speaker, for there was only the door of Don Quixote’s room between them, and the instant he did so, uttering a loud exclamation he cried, “Good God! what is this I hear? What voice is this that has reached my ears?” Startled at the voice the lady turned her head; and not seeing the speaker she stood up and attempted to enter the room; observing which the gentleman held her back, preventing her from moving a step. In her agitation and sudden movement the silk with which she had covered her face fell off and disclosed a countenance of incomparable and marvellous beauty, but pale and terrified; for she kept turning her eyes, everywhere she could direct her gaze, with an eagerness that made her look as if she had lost her senses, and so marked that it excited the pity of Dorothea and all who beheld her, though they knew not what caused it. The gentleman grasped her firmly by the shoulders, and being so fully occupied with holding her back, he was unable to put a hand to his veil which was falling off, as it did at length entirely, and Dorothea, who was holding the lady in her arms, raising her eyes saw that he who likewise held her was her husband, Don Fernando. The instant she recognised him, with a prolonged plaintive cry drawn from the depths of her heart, she fell backwards fainting, and but for the barber being close by to catch her in his arms, she would have fallen completely to the ground. The curate at once hastened to uncover her face and throw water on it, and as he did so Don Fernando, for he it was who held the other in his arms, recognised her and stood as if death-stricken by the sight; not, however, relaxing his grasp of Luscinda, for it was she that was struggling to release herself from his hold, having recognised Cardenio by his voice, as he had recognised her. Cardenio also heard Dorothea’s cry as she fell fainting, and imagining that it came from his Luscinda burst forth in terror from the room, and the first thing he saw was Don Fernando with Luscinda in his arms. Don Fernando, too, knew Cardenio at once; and all three, Luscinda, Cardenio, and Dorothea, stood in silent amazement scarcely knowing what had happened to them.

They gazed at one another without speaking, Dorothea at Don Fernando, Don Fernando at Cardenio, Cardenio at Luscinda, and Luscinda at Cardenio. The first to break silence was Luscinda, who thus addressed Don Fernando: “Leave me, Senor Don Fernando, for the sake of what you owe to yourself; if no other

reason will induce you, leave me to cling to the wall of which I am the ivy, to the support from which neither your importunities, nor your threats, nor your promises, nor your gifts have been able to detach me. See how Heaven, by ways strange and hidden from our sight, has brought me face to face with my true husband; and well you know by dear-bought experience that death alone will be able to efface him from my memory. May this plain declaration, then, lead you, as you can do nothing else, to turn your love into rage, your affection into resentment, and so to take my life; for if I yield it up in the presence of my beloved husband I count it well bestowed; it may be by my death he will be convinced that I kept my faith to him to the last moment of life.”

Meanwhile Dorothea had come to herself, and had heard Luscinda’s words, by means of which she divined who she was; but seeing that Don Fernando did not yet release her or reply to her, summoning up her resolution as well as she could she rose and knelt at his feet, and with a flood of bright and touching tears addressed him thus:

“If, my lord, the beams of that sun that thou holdest eclipsed in thine arms did not dazzle and rob thine eyes of sight thou wouldst have seen by this time that she who kneels at thy feet is, so long as thou wilt have it so, the unhappy and unfortunate Dorothea. I am that lowly peasant girl whom thou in thy goodness or for thy pleasure wouldst raise high enough to call herself thine; I am she who in the seclusion of innocence led a contented life until at the voice of thy importunity, and thy true and tender passion, as it seemed, she opened the gates of her modesty and surrendered to thee the keys of her liberty; a gift received by thee but thanklessly, as is clearly shown by my forced retreat to the place where thou dost find me, and by thy appearance under the circumstances in which I see thee. Nevertheless, I would not have thee suppose that I have come here driven by my shame; it is only grief and sorrow at seeing myself forgotten by thee that have led me. It was thy will to make me thine, and thou didst so follow thy will, that now, even though thou repentest, thou canst not help being mine. Bethink thee, my lord, the unsurpassable affection I bear thee may compensate for the beauty and noble birth for which thou wouldst desert me. Thou canst not be the fair Luscinda’s because thou art mine, nor can she be thine because she is Cardenio’s; and it will be easier, remember, to bend thy will to love one who adores thee, than to lead one to love thee who abhors thee now. Thou didst address thyself to my simplicity, thou didst lay siege to my virtue, thou wert not ignorant of my station, well dost thou know how I yielded wholly to thy will; there is no ground or reason for thee to plead deception, and if it be so, as it is, and if thou art a Christian as thou art a gentleman, why dost thou by such subterfuges put off making me as happy at last as thou didst at first? And if thou

wilt not have me for what I am, thy true and lawful wife, at least take and accept me as thy slave, for so long as I am thine I will count myself happy and fortunate. Do not by deserting me let my shame become the talk of the gossips in the streets; make not the old age of my parents miserable; for the loyal services they as faithful vassals have ever rendered thine are not deserving of such a return; and if thou thinkest it will debase thy blood to mingle it with mine, reflect that there is little or no nobility in the world that has not travelled the same road, and that in illustrious lineages it is not the woman's blood that is of account; and, moreover, that true nobility consists in virtue, and if thou art wanting in that, refusing me what in justice thou owest me, then even I have higher claims to nobility than thine. To make an end, senor, these are my last words to thee: whether thou wilt, or wilt not, I am thy wife; witness thy words, which must not and ought not to be false, if thou dost pride thyself on that for want of which thou scornest me; witness the pledge which thou didst give me, and witness Heaven, which thou thyself didst call to witness the promise thou hadst made me; and if all this fail, thy own conscience will not fail to lift up its silent voice in the midst of all thy gaiety, and vindicate the truth of what I say and mar thy highest pleasure and enjoyment."

All this and more the injured Dorothea delivered with such earnest feeling and such tears that all present, even those who came with Don Fernando, were constrained to join her in them. Don Fernando listened to her without replying, until, ceasing to speak, she gave way to such sobs and sighs that it must have been a heart of brass that was not softened by the sight of so great sorrow. Luscinda stood regarding her with no less compassion for her sufferings than admiration for her intelligence and beauty, and would have gone to her to say some words of comfort to her, but was prevented by Don Fernando's grasp which held her fast. He, overwhelmed with confusion and astonishment, after regarding Dorothea for some moments with a fixed gaze, opened his arms, and, releasing Luscinda, exclaimed:

"Thou hast conquered, fair Dorothea, thou hast conquered, for it is impossible to have the heart to deny the united force of so many truths."

Luscinda in her feebleness was on the point of falling to the ground when Don Fernando released her, but Cardenio, who stood near, having retreated behind Don Fernando to escape recognition, casting fear aside and regardless of what might happen, ran forward to support her, and said as he clasped her in his arms, "If Heaven in its compassion is willing to let thee rest at last, mistress of my heart, true, constant, and fair, nowhere canst thou rest more safely than in these arms that now receive thee, and received thee before when fortune permitted me to call thee mine."

At these words Luscinda looked up at Cardenio, at first beginning to recognise him by his voice and then satisfying herself by her eyes that it was he, and hardly knowing what she did, and heedless of all considerations of decorum, she flung her arms around his neck and pressing her face close to his, said, "Yes, my dear lord, you are the true master of this your slave, even though adverse fate interpose again, and fresh dangers threaten this life that hangs on yours."

A strange sight was this for Don Fernando and those that stood around, filled with surprise at an incident so unlooked for. Dorothea fancied that Don Fernando changed colour and looked as though he meant to take vengeance on Cardenio, for she observed him put his hand to his sword; and the instant the idea struck her, with wonderful quickness she clasped him round the knees, and kissing them and holding him so as to prevent his moving, she said, while her tears continued to flow, "What is it thou wouldst do, my only refuge, in this unforeseen event? Thou hast thy wife at thy feet, and she whom thou wouldst have for thy wife is in the arms of her husband: reflect whether it will be right for thee, whether it will be possible for thee to undo what Heaven has done, or whether it will be becoming in thee to seek to raise her to be thy mate who in spite of every obstacle, and strong in her truth and constancy, is before thine eyes, bathing with the tears of love the face and bosom of her lawful husband. For God's sake I entreat of thee, for thine own I implore thee, let not this open manifestation rouse thy anger; but rather so calm it as to allow these two lovers to live in peace and quiet without any interference from thee so long as Heaven permits them; and in so doing thou wilt prove the generosity of thy lofty noble spirit, and the world shall see that with thee reason has more influence than passion."

All the time Dorothea was speaking, Cardenio, though he held Luscinda in his arms, never took his eyes off Don Fernando, determined, if he saw him make any hostile movement, to try and defend himself and resist as best he could all who might assail him, though it should cost him his life. But now Don Fernando's friends, as well as the curate and the barber, who had been present all the while, not forgetting the worthy Sancho Panza, ran forward and gathered round Don Fernando, entreating him to have regard for the tears of Dorothea, and not suffer her reasonable hopes to be disappointed, since, as they firmly believed, what she said was but the truth; and bidding him observe that it was not, as it might seem, by accident, but by a special disposition of Providence that they had all met in a place where no one could have expected a meeting. And the curate bade him remember that only death could part Luscinda from Cardenio; that even if some sword were to separate them they would think their death most happy; and that in a case that admitted of no remedy his wisest course was, by

conquering and putting a constraint upon himself, to show a generous mind, and of his own accord suffer these two to enjoy the happiness Heaven had granted them. He bade him, too, turn his eyes upon the beauty of Dorothea and he would see that few if any could equal much less excel her; while to that beauty should be added her modesty and the surpassing love she bore him. But besides all this, he reminded him that if he prided himself on being a gentleman and a Christian, he could not do otherwise than keep his plighted word; and that in doing so he would obey God and meet the approval of all sensible people, who know and recognised it to be the privilege of beauty, even in one of humble birth, provided virtue accompany it, to be able to raise itself to the level of any rank, without any slur upon him who places it upon an equality with himself; and furthermore that when the potent sway of passion asserts itself, so long as there be no mixture of sin in it, he is not to be blamed who gives way to it.

To be brief, they added to these such other forcible arguments that Don Fernando's manly heart, being after all nourished by noble blood, was touched, and yielded to the truth which, even had he wished it, he could not gainsay; and he showed his submission, and acceptance of the good advice that had been offered to him, by stooping down and embracing Dorothea, saying to her, "Rise, dear lady, it is not right that what I hold in my heart should be kneeling at my feet; and if until now I have shown no sign of what I own, it may have been by Heaven's decree in order that, seeing the constancy with which you love me, I may learn to value you as you deserve. What I entreat of you is that you reproach me not with my transgression and grievous wrong-doing; for the same cause and force that drove me to make you mine impelled me to struggle against being yours; and to prove this, turn and look at the eyes of the now happy Luscinda, and you will see in them an excuse for all my errors: and as she has found and gained the object of her desires, and I have found in you what satisfies all my wishes, may she live in peace and contentment as many happy years with her Cardenio, as on my knees I pray Heaven to allow me to live with my Dorothea;" and with these words he once more embraced her and pressed his face to hers with so much tenderness that he had to take great heed to keep his tears from completing the proof of his love and repentance in the sight of all. Not so Luscinda, and Cardenio, and almost all the others, for they shed so many tears, some in their own happiness, some at that of the others, that one would have supposed a heavy calamity had fallen upon them all. Even Sancho Panza was weeping; though afterwards he said he only wept because he saw that Dorothea was not as he fancied the queen Micomicona, of whom he expected such great favours. Their wonder as well as their weeping lasted some time, and then Cardenio and Luscinda went and fell on their knees before Don Fernando,

returning him thanks for the favour he had rendered them in language so grateful that he knew not how to answer them, and raising them up embraced them with every mark of affection and courtesy.

He then asked Dorothea how she had managed to reach a place so far removed from her own home, and she in a few fitting words told all that she had previously related to Cardenio, with which Don Fernando and his companions were so delighted that they wished the story had been longer; so charmingly did Dorothea describe her misadventures. When she had finished Don Fernando recounted what had befallen him in the city after he had found in Luscinda's bosom the paper in which she declared that she was Cardenio's wife, and never could be his. He said he meant to kill her, and would have done so had he not been prevented by her parents, and that he quitted the house full of rage and shame, and resolved to avenge himself when a more convenient opportunity should offer. The next day he learned that Luscinda had disappeared from her father's house, and that no one could tell whither she had gone. Finally, at the end of some months he ascertained that she was in a convent and meant to remain there all the rest of her life, if she were not to share it with Cardenio; and as soon as he had learned this, taking these three gentlemen as his companions, he arrived at the place where she was, but avoided speaking to her, fearing that if it were known he was there stricter precautions would be taken in the convent; and watching a time when the porter's lodge was open he left two to guard the gate, and he and the other entered the convent in quest of Luscinda, whom they found in the cloisters in conversation with one of the nuns, and carrying her off without giving her time to resist, they reached a place with her where they provided themselves with what they required for taking her away; all which they were able to do in complete safety, as the convent was in the country at a considerable distance from the city. He added that when Luscinda found herself in his power she lost all consciousness, and after returning to herself did nothing but weep and sigh without speaking a word; and thus in silence and tears they reached that inn, which for him was reaching heaven where all the mischances of earth are over and at an end.







## CHAPTER XXXVII.

IN WHICH IS CONTINUED THE STORY OF THE FAMOUS PRINCESS  
MICOMICONA, WITH OTHER DROLL ADVENTURES



To all this Sancho listened with no little sorrow at heart to see how his hopes of dignity were fading away and vanishing in smoke, and how the fair Princess Micomicona had turned into Dorothea, and the giant into Don Fernando, while his master was sleeping tranquilly, totally unconscious of all that had come to pass. Dorothea was unable to persuade herself that her present happiness was not all a dream; Cardenio was in a similar state of mind, and Luscinda's thoughts ran in the same direction. Don Fernando gave thanks to Heaven for the favour shown to him and for having been rescued from the intricate labyrinth in which

he had been brought so near the destruction of his good name and of his soul; and in short everybody in the inn was full of contentment and satisfaction at the happy issue of such a complicated and hopeless business. The curate as a sensible man made sound reflections upon the whole affair, and congratulated each upon his good fortune; but the one that was in the highest spirits and good humour was the landlady, because of the promise Cardenio and the curate had given her to pay for all the losses and damage she had sustained through Don Quixote's means. Sancho, as has been already said, was the only one who was distressed, unhappy, and dejected; and so with a long face he went in to his master, who had just awoke, and said to him:

"Sir Rueful Countenance, your worship may as well sleep on as much as you like, without troubling yourself about killing any giant or restoring her kingdom to the princess; for that is all over and settled now."

"I should think it was," replied Don Quixote, "for I have had the most prodigious and stupendous battle with the giant that I ever remember having had all the days of my life; and with one back-stroke — swish! — I brought his head tumbling to the ground, and so much blood gushed forth from him that it ran in rivulets over the earth like water."

"Like red wine, your worship had better say," replied Sancho; "for I would have you know, if you don't know it, that the dead giant is a hacked wine-skin, and the blood four-and-twenty gallons of red wine that it had in its belly, and the cut-off head is the bitch that bore me; and the devil take it all."

"What art thou talking about, fool?" said Don Quixote; "art thou in thy senses?"

"Let your worship get up," said Sancho, "and you will see the nice business you have made of it, and what we have to pay; and you will see the queen turned into a private lady called Dorothea, and other things that will astonish you, if you understand them."

"I shall not be surprised at anything of the kind," returned Don Quixote; "for if thou dost remember the last time we were here I told thee that everything that happened here was a matter of enchantment, and it would be no wonder if it were the same now."

"I could believe all that," replied Sancho, "if my blanketing was the same sort of thing also; only it wasn't, but real and genuine; for I saw the landlord, Who is here to-day, holding one end of the blanket and jerking me up to the skies very neatly and smartly, and with as much laughter as strength; and when it comes to be a case of knowing people, I hold for my part, simple and sinner as I am, that there is no enchantment about it at all, but a great deal of bruising and bad luck."

"Well, well, God will give a remedy," said Don Quixote; "hand me my

clothes and let me go out, for I want to see these transformations and things thou speakest of.”

Sancho fetched him his clothes; and while he was dressing, the curate gave Don Fernando and the others present an account of Don Quixote’s madness and of the stratagem they had made use of to withdraw him from that Pena Pobre where he fancied himself stationed because of his lady’s scorn. He described to them also nearly all the adventures that Sancho had mentioned, at which they marvelled and laughed not a little, thinking it, as all did, the strangest form of madness a crazy intellect could be capable of. But now, the curate said, that the lady Dorothea’s good fortune prevented her from proceeding with their purpose, it would be necessary to devise or discover some other way of getting him home.

Cardenio proposed to carry out the scheme they had begun, and suggested that Luscinda would act and support Dorothea’s part sufficiently well.

“No,” said Don Fernando, “that must not be, for I want Dorothea to follow out this idea of hers; and if the worthy gentleman’s village is not very far off, I shall be happy if I can do anything for his relief.”

“It is not more than two days’ journey from this,” said the curate.

“Even if it were more,” said Don Fernando, “I would gladly travel so far for the sake of doing so good a work.

“At this moment Don Quixote came out in full panoply, with Mambrino’s helmet, all dented as it was, on his head, his buckler on his arm, and leaning on his staff or pike. The strange figure he presented filled Don Fernando and the rest with amazement as they contemplated his lean yellow face half a league long, his armour of all sorts, and the solemnity of his deportment. They stood silent waiting to see what he would say, and he, fixing his eyes on the fair Dorothea, addressed her with great gravity and composure:

“I am informed, fair lady, by my squire here that your greatness has been annihilated and your being abolished, since, from a queen and lady of high degree as you used to be, you have been turned into a private maiden. If this has been done by the command of the magician king your father, through fear that I should not afford you the aid you need and are entitled to, I may tell you he did not know and does not know half the mass, and was little versed in the annals of chivalry; for, if he had read and gone through them as attentively and deliberately as I have, he would have found at every turn that knights of less renown than mine have accomplished things more difficult: it is no great matter to kill a whelp of a giant, however arrogant he may be; for it is not many hours since I myself was engaged with one, and — I will not speak of it, that they may not say I am lying; time, however, that reveals all, will tell the tale when we least expect it.”

“You were engaged with a couple of wine-skins, and not a giant,” said the landlord at this; but Don Fernando told him to hold his tongue and on no account interrupt Don Quixote, who continued, “I say in conclusion, high and disinherited lady, that if your father has brought about this metamorphosis in your person for the reason I have mentioned, you ought not to attach any importance to it; for there is no peril on earth through which my sword will not force a way, and with it, before many days are over, I will bring your enemy’s head to the ground and place on yours the crown of your kingdom.”

Don Quixote said no more, and waited for the reply of the princess, who aware of Don Fernando’s determination to carry on the deception until Don Quixote had been conveyed to his home, with great ease of manner and gravity made answer, “Whoever told you, valiant Knight of the Rueful Countenance, that I had undergone any change or transformation did not tell you the truth, for I am the same as I was yesterday. It is true that certain strokes of good fortune, that have given me more than I could have hoped for, have made some alteration in me; but I have not therefore ceased to be what I was before, or to entertain the same desire I have had all through of availing myself of the might of your valiant and invincible arm. And so, senor, let your goodness reinstate the father that begot me in your good opinion, and be assured that he was a wise and prudent man, since by his craft he found out such a sure and easy way of remedying my misfortune; for I believe, senor, that had it not been for you I should never have lit upon the good fortune I now possess; and in this I am saying what is perfectly true; as most of these gentlemen who are present can fully testify. All that remains is to set out on our journey to-morrow, for to-day we could not make much way; and for the rest of the happy result I am looking forward to, I trust to God and the valour of your heart.”

So said the sprightly Dorothea, and on hearing her Don Quixote turned to Sancho, and said to him, with an angry air, “I declare now, little Sancho, thou art the greatest little villain in Spain. Say, thief and vagabond, hast thou not just now told me that this princess had been turned into a maiden called Dorothea, and that the head which I am persuaded I cut off from a giant was the bitch that bore thee, and other nonsense that put me in the greatest perplexity I have ever been in all my life? I vow” (and here he looked to heaven and ground his teeth) “I have a mind to play the mischief with thee, in a way that will teach sense for the future to all lying squires of knights-errant in the world.”

“Let your worship be calm, senor,” returned Sancho, “for it may well be that I have been mistaken as to the change of the lady princess Micomicona; but as to the giant’s head, or at least as to the piercing of the wine-skins, and the blood being red wine, I make no mistake, as sure as there is a God; because the

wounded skins are there at the head of your worship's bed, and the wine has made a lake of the room; if not you will see when the eggs come to be fried; I mean when his worship the landlord calls for all the damages: for the rest, I am heartily glad that her ladyship the queen is as she was, for it concerns me as much as anyone."

"I tell thee again, Sancho, thou art a fool," said Don Quixote; "forgive me, and that will do."

"That will do," said Don Fernando; "let us say no more about it; and as her ladyship the princess proposes to set out to-morrow because it is too late to-day, so be it, and we will pass the night in pleasant conversation, and to-morrow we will all accompany Senor Don Quixote; for we wish to witness the valiant and unparalleled achievements he is about to perform in the course of this mighty enterprise which he has undertaken."

"It is I who shall wait upon and accompany you," said Don Quixote; "and I am much gratified by the favour that is bestowed upon me, and the good opinion entertained of me, which I shall strive to justify or it shall cost me my life, or even more, if it can possibly cost me more."

Many were the compliments and expressions of politeness that passed between Don Quixote and Don Fernando; but they were brought to an end by a traveller who at this moment entered the inn, and who seemed from his attire to be a Christian lately come from the country of the Moors, for he was dressed in a short-skirted coat of blue cloth with half-sleeves and without a collar; his breeches were also of blue cloth, and his cap of the same colour, and he wore yellow buskins and had a Moorish cutlass slung from a baldric across his breast. Behind him, mounted upon an ass, there came a woman dressed in Moorish fashion, with her face veiled and a scarf on her head, and wearing a little brocaded cap, and a mantle that covered her from her shoulders to her feet. The man was of a robust and well-proportioned frame, in age a little over forty, rather swarthy in complexion, with long moustaches and a full beard, and, in short, his appearance was such that if he had been well dressed he would have been taken for a person of quality and good birth. On entering he asked for a room, and when they told him there was none in the inn he seemed distressed, and approaching her who by her dress seemed to be a Moor he took her down from the saddle in his arms. Luscinda, Dorothea, the landlady, her daughter and Maritornes, attracted by the strange, and to them entirely new costume, gathered round her; and Dorothea, who was always kindly, courteous, and quick-witted, perceiving that both she and the man who had brought her were annoyed at not finding a room, said to her, "Do not be put out, senora, by the discomfort and want of luxuries here, for it is the way of road-side inns to be without them; still,

if you will be pleased to share our lodging with us (pointing to Luscinda) perhaps you will have found worse accommodation in the course of your journey.”

To this the veiled lady made no reply; all she did was to rise from her seat, crossing her hands upon her bosom, bowing her head and bending her body as a sign that she returned thanks. From her silence they concluded that she must be a Moor and unable to speak a Christian tongue.

At this moment the captive came up, having been until now otherwise engaged, and seeing that they all stood round his companion and that she made no reply to what they addressed to her, he said, “Ladies, this damsel hardly understands my language and can speak none but that of her own country, for which reason she does not and cannot answer what has been asked of her.”

“Nothing has been asked of her,” returned Luscinda; “she has only been offered our company for this evening and a share of the quarters we occupy, where she shall be made as comfortable as the circumstances allow, with the good-will we are bound to show all strangers that stand in need of it, especially if it be a woman to whom the service is rendered.”

“On her part and my own, senora,” replied the captive, “I kiss your hands, and I esteem highly, as I ought, the favour you have offered, which, on such an occasion and coming from persons of your appearance, is, it is plain to see, a very great one.”

“Tell me, senor,” said Dorothea, “is this lady a Christian or a Moor? for her dress and her silence lead us to imagine that she is what we could wish she was not.”

“In dress and outwardly,” said he, “she is a Moor, but at heart she is a thoroughly good Christian, for she has the greatest desire to become one.”

“Then she has not been baptised?” returned Luscinda.

“There has been no opportunity for that,” replied the captive, “since she left Algiers, her native country and home; and up to the present she has not found herself in any such imminent danger of death as to make it necessary to baptise her before she has been instructed in all the ceremonies our holy mother Church ordains; but, please God, ere long she shall be baptised with the solemnity befitting her which is higher than her dress or mine indicates.”

By these words he excited a desire in all who heard him, to know who the Moorish lady and the captive were, but no one liked to ask just then, seeing that it was a fitter moment for helping them to rest themselves than for questioning them about their lives. Dorothea took the Moorish lady by the hand and leading her to a seat beside herself, requested her to remove her veil. She looked at the captive as if to ask him what they meant and what she was to do. He said to her

in Arabic that they asked her to take off her veil, and thereupon she removed it and disclosed a countenance so lovely, that to Dorothea she seemed more beautiful than Luscinda, and to Luscinda more beautiful than Dorothea, and all the bystanders felt that if any beauty could compare with theirs it was the Moorish lady's, and there were even those who were inclined to give it somewhat the preference. And as it is the privilege and charm of beauty to win the heart and secure good-will, all forthwith became eager to show kindness and attention to the lovely Moor.

Don Fernando asked the captive what her name was, and he replied that it was Lela Zoraida; but the instant she heard him, she guessed what the Christian had asked, and said hastily, with some displeasure and energy, "No, not Zoraida; Maria, Maria!" giving them to understand that she was called "Maria" and not "Zoraida." These words, and the touching earnestness with which she uttered them, drew more than one tear from some of the listeners, particularly the women, who are by nature tender-hearted and compassionate. Luscinda embraced her affectionately, saying, "Yes, yes, Maria, Maria," to which the Moor replied, "Yes, yes, Maria; Zoraida macange," which means "not Zoraida."

Night was now approaching, and by the orders of those who accompanied Don Fernando the landlord had taken care and pains to prepare for them the best supper that was in his power. The hour therefore having arrived they all took their seats at a long table like a refectory one, for round or square table there was none in the inn, and the seat of honour at the head of it, though he was for refusing it, they assigned to Don Quixote, who desired the lady Micomicona to place herself by his side, as he was her protector. Luscinda and Zoraida took their places next her, opposite to them were Don Fernando and Cardenio, and next the captive and the other gentlemen, and by the side of the ladies, the curate and the barber. And so they supped in high enjoyment, which was increased when they observed Don Quixote leave off eating, and, moved by an impulse like that which made him deliver himself at such length when he supped with the goatherds, begin to address them:

"Verily, gentlemen, if we reflect upon it, great and marvellous are the things they see, who make profession of the order of knight-errantry. Say, what being is there in this world, who entering the gate of this castle at this moment, and seeing us as we are here, would suppose or imagine us to be what we are? Who would say that this lady who is beside me was the great queen that we all know her to be, or that I am that Knight of the Rueful Countenance, trumpeted far and wide by the mouth of Fame? Now, there can be no doubt that this art and calling surpasses all those that mankind has invented, and is the more deserving of being held in honour in proportion as it is the more exposed to peril. Away with those

who assert that letters have the preeminence over arms; I will tell them, whosoever they may be, that they know not what they say. For the reason which such persons commonly assign, and upon which they chiefly rest, is, that the labours of the mind are greater than those of the body, and that arms give employment to the body alone; as if the calling were a porter's trade, for which nothing more is required than sturdy strength; or as if, in what we who profess them call arms, there were not included acts of vigour for the execution of which high intelligence is requisite; or as if the soul of the warrior, when he has an army, or the defence of a city under his care, did not exert itself as much by mind as by body. Nay; see whether by bodily strength it be possible to learn or divine the intentions of the enemy, his plans, stratagems, or obstacles, or to ward off impending mischief; for all these are the work of the mind, and in them the body has no share whatever. Since, therefore, arms have need of the mind, as much as letters, let us see now which of the two minds, that of the man of letters or that of the warrior, has most to do; and this will be seen by the end and goal that each seeks to attain; for that purpose is the more estimable which has for its aim the nobler object. The end and goal of letters — I am not speaking now of divine letters, the aim of which is to raise and direct the soul to Heaven; for with an end so infinite no other can be compared — I speak of human letters, the end of which is to establish distributive justice, give to every man that which is his, and see and take care that good laws are observed: an end undoubtedly noble, lofty, and deserving of high praise, but not such as should be given to that sought by arms, which have for their end and object peace, the greatest boon that men can desire in this life. The first good news the world and mankind received was that which the angels announced on the night that was our day, when they sang in the air, 'Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men of good-will;' and the salutation which the great Master of heaven and earth taught his disciples and chosen followers when they entered any house, was to say, 'Peace be on this house;' and many other times he said to them, 'My peace I give unto you, my peace I leave you, peace be with you;' a jewel and a precious gift given and left by such a hand: a jewel without which there can be no happiness either on earth or in heaven. This peace is the true end of war; and war is only another name for arms. This, then, being admitted, that the end of war is peace, and that so far it has the advantage of the end of letters, let us turn to the bodily labours of the man of letters, and those of him who follows the profession of arms, and see which are the greater."

Don Quixote delivered his discourse in such a manner and in such correct language, that for the time being he made it impossible for any of his hearers to consider him a madman; on the contrary, as they were mostly gentlemen, to



whom arms are an appurtenance by birth, they listened to him with great pleasure as he continued: "Here, then, I say is what the student has to undergo; first of all poverty: not that all are poor, but to put the case as strongly as possible: and when I have said that he endures poverty, I think nothing more need be said about his hard fortune, for he who is poor has no share of the good things of life. This poverty he suffers from in various ways, hunger, or cold, or nakedness, or all together; but for all that it is not so extreme but that he gets something to eat, though it may be at somewhat unseasonable hours and from the leavings of the rich; for the greatest misery of the student is what they themselves call 'going out for soup,' and there is always some neighbour's brazier or hearth for them, which, if it does not warm, at least tempers the cold to them, and lastly, they sleep comfortably at night under a roof. I will not go into other particulars, as for example want of shirts, and no superabundance of shoes, thin and threadbare garments, and gorging themselves to surfeit in their voracity when good luck has treated them to a banquet of some sort. By this road that I have described, rough and hard, stumbling here, falling there, getting up again to fall again, they reach the rank they desire, and that once attained, we have seen many who have passed these Syrtes and Scyllas and Charybdises, as if borne flying on the wings of favouring fortune; we have seen them, I say, ruling and governing the world from a chair, their hunger turned into satiety, their cold into comfort, their nakedness into fine raiment, their sleep on a mat into repose in holland and damask, the justly earned reward of their virtue; but, contrasted and compared with what the warrior undergoes, all they have undergone falls far short of it, as I am now about to show."



## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### WHICH TREATS OF THE CURIOUS DISCOURSE DON QUIXOTE DELIVERED ON ARMS AND LETTERS



Continuing his discourse Don Quixote said: “As we began in the student’s case with poverty and its accompaniments, let us see now if the soldier is richer, and we shall find that in poverty itself there is no one poorer; for he is dependent on his miserable pay, which comes late or never, or else on what he can plunder, seriously imperilling his life and conscience; and sometimes his nakedness will be so great that a slashed doublet serves him for uniform and shirt, and in the depth of winter he has to defend himself against the inclemency of the weather in the open field with nothing better than the breath of his mouth, which I need not say, coming from an empty place, must come out cold, contrary to the laws

of nature. To be sure he looks forward to the approach of night to make up for all these discomforts on the bed that awaits him, which, unless by some fault of his, never sins by being over narrow, for he can easily measure out on the ground as he likes, and roll himself about in it to his heart's content without any fear of the sheets slipping away from him. Then, after all this, suppose the day and hour for taking his degree in his calling to have come; suppose the day of battle to have arrived, when they invest him with the doctor's cap made of lint, to mend some bullet-hole, perhaps, that has gone through his temples, or left him with a crippled arm or leg. Or if this does not happen, and merciful Heaven watches over him and keeps him safe and sound, it may be he will be in the same poverty he was in before, and he must go through more engagements and more battles, and come victorious out of all before he betters himself; but miracles of that sort are seldom seen. For tell me, sirs, if you have ever reflected upon it, by how much do those who have gained by war fall short of the number of those who have perished in it? No doubt you will reply that there can be no comparison, that the dead cannot be numbered, while the living who have been rewarded may be summed up with three figures. All which is the reverse in the case of men of letters; for by skirts, to say nothing of sleeves, they all find means of support; so that though the soldier has more to endure, his reward is much less. But against all this it may be urged that it is easier to reward two thousand soldiers, for the former may be remunerated by giving them places, which must perforce be conferred upon men of their calling, while the latter can only be recompensed out of the very property of the master they serve; but this impossibility only strengthens my argument.

“Putting this, however, aside, for it is a puzzling question for which it is difficult to find a solution, let us return to the superiority of arms over letters, a matter still undecided, so many are the arguments put forward on each side; for besides those I have mentioned, letters say that without them arms cannot maintain themselves, for war, too, has its laws and is governed by them, and laws belong to the domain of letters and men of letters. To this arms make answer that without them laws cannot be maintained, for by arms states are defended, kingdoms preserved, cities protected, roads made safe, seas cleared of pirates; and, in short, if it were not for them, states, kingdoms, monarchies, cities, ways by sea and land would be exposed to the violence and confusion which war brings with it, so long as it lasts and is free to make use of its privileges and powers. And then it is plain that whatever costs most is valued and deserves to be valued most. To attain to eminence in letters costs a man time, watching, hunger, nakedness, headaches, indigestions, and other things of the sort, some of which I have already referred to. But for a man to come in the

ordinary course of things to be a good soldier costs him all the student suffers, and in an incomparably higher degree, for at every step he runs the risk of losing his life. For what dread of want or poverty that can reach or harass the student can compare with what the soldier feels, who finds himself beleaguered in some stronghold mounting guard in some ravelin or cavalier, knows that the enemy is pushing a mine towards the post where he is stationed, and cannot under any circumstances retire or fly from the imminent danger that threatens him? All he can do is to inform his captain of what is going on so that he may try to remedy it by a counter-mine, and then stand his ground in fear and expectation of the moment when he will fly up to the clouds without wings and descend into the deep against his will. And if this seems a trifling risk, let us see whether it is equalled or surpassed by the encounter of two galleys stem to stem, in the midst of the open sea, locked and entangled one with the other, when the soldier has no more standing room than two feet of the plank of the spur; and yet, though he sees before him threatening him as many ministers of death as there are cannon of the foe pointed at him, not a lance length from his body, and sees too that with the first heedless step he will go down to visit the profundities of Neptune's bosom, still with dauntless heart, urged on by honour that nerves him, he makes himself a target for all that musketry, and struggles to cross that narrow path to the enemy's ship. And what is still more marvellous, no sooner has one gone down into the depths he will never rise from till the end of the world, than another takes his place; and if he too falls into the sea that waits for him like an enemy, another and another will succeed him without a moment's pause between their deaths: courage and daring the greatest that all the chances of war can show. Happy the blest ages that knew not the dread fury of those devilish engines of artillery, whose inventor I am persuaded is in hell receiving the reward of his diabolical invention, by which he made it easy for a base and cowardly arm to take the life of a gallant gentleman; and that, when he knows not how or whence, in the height of the ardour and enthusiasm that fire and animate brave hearts, there should come some random bullet, discharged perhaps by one who fled in terror at the flash when he fired off his accursed machine, which in an instant puts an end to the projects and cuts off the life of one who deserved to live for ages to come. And thus when I reflect on this, I am almost tempted to say that in my heart I repent of having adopted this profession of knight-errant in so detestable an age as we live in now; for though no peril can make me fear, still it gives me some uneasiness to think that powder and lead may rob me of the opportunity of making myself famous and renowned throughout the known earth by the might of my arm and the edge of my sword. But Heaven's will be done; if I succeed in my attempt I shall be all the more

honoured, as I have faced greater dangers than the knights-errant of yore exposed themselves to.”

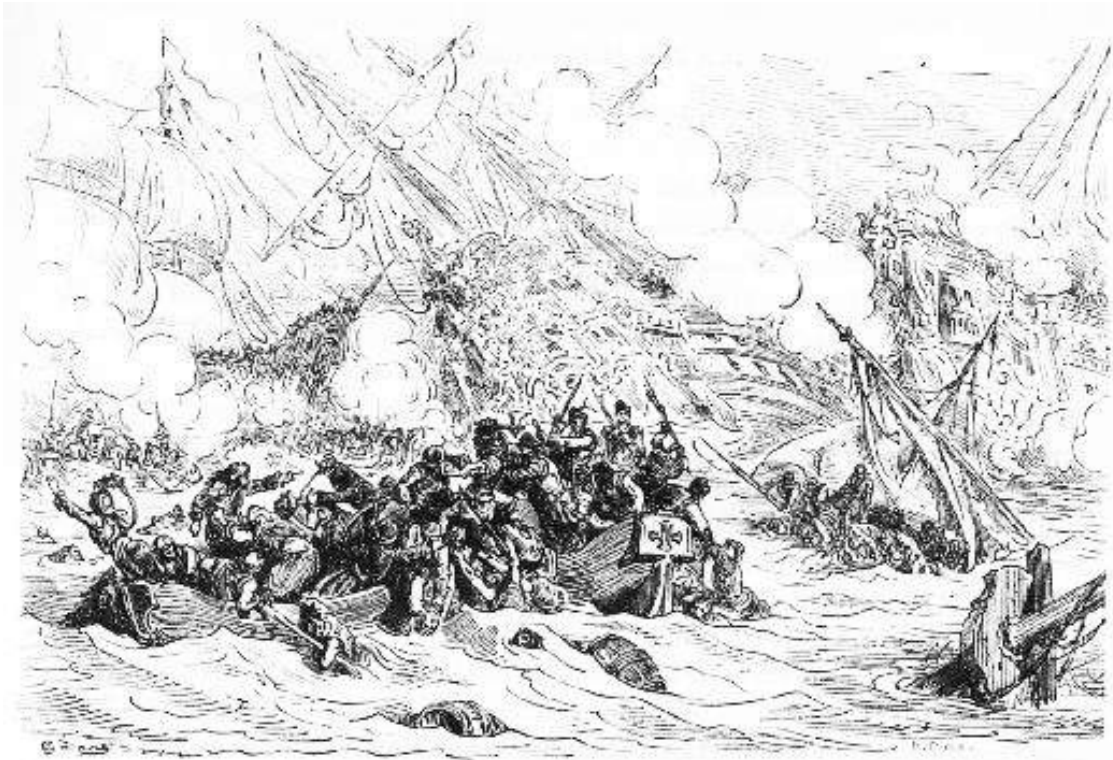
All this lengthy discourse Don Quixote delivered while the others supped, forgetting to raise a morsel to his lips, though Sancho more than once told him to eat his supper, as he would have time enough afterwards to say all he wanted. It excited fresh pity in those who had heard him to see a man of apparently sound sense, and with rational views on every subject he discussed, so hopelessly wanting in all, when his wretched unlucky chivalry was in question. The curate told him he was quite right in all he had said in favour of arms, and that he himself, though a man of letters and a graduate, was of the same opinion.

They finished their supper, the cloth was removed, and while the hostess, her daughter, and Maritornes were getting Don Quixote of La Mancha's garret ready, in which it was arranged that the women were to be quartered by themselves for the night, Don Fernando begged the captive to tell them the story of his life, for it could not fail to be strange and interesting, to judge by the hints he had let fall on his arrival in company with Zoraida. To this the captive replied that he would very willingly yield to his request, only he feared his tale would not give them as much pleasure as he wished; nevertheless, not to be wanting in compliance, he would tell it. The curate and the others thanked him and added their entreaties, and he finding himself so pressed said there was no occasion ask, where a command had such weight, and added, “If your worships will give me your attention you will hear a true story which, perhaps, fictitious ones constructed with ingenious and studied art cannot come up to.” These words made them settle themselves in their places and preserve a deep silence, and he seeing them waiting on his words in mute expectation, began thus in a pleasant quiet voice.



## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### WHEREIN THE CAPTIVE RELATES HIS LIFE AND ADVENTURES



My family had its origin in a village in the mountains of Leon, and nature had been kinder and more generous to it than fortune; though in the general poverty of those communities my father passed for being even a rich man; and he would have been so in reality had he been as clever in preserving his property as he was in spending it. This tendency of his to be liberal and profuse he had acquired from having been a soldier in his youth, for the soldier's life is a school in which the niggard becomes free-handed and the free-handed prodigal; and if any soldiers are to be found who are misers, they are monsters of rare occurrence. My father went beyond liberality and bordered on prodigality, a disposition by



no means advantageous to a married man who has children to succeed to his name and position. My father had three, all sons, and all of sufficient age to make choice of a profession. Finding, then, that he was unable to resist his propensity, he resolved to divest himself of the instrument and cause of his prodigality and lavishness, to divest himself of wealth, without which Alexander himself would have seemed parsimonious; and so calling us all three aside one day into a room, he addressed us in words somewhat to the following effect:

“My sons, to assure you that I love you, no more need be known or said than that you are my sons; and to encourage a suspicion that I do not love you, no more is needed than the knowledge that I have no self-control as far as preservation of your patrimony is concerned; therefore, that you may for the future feel sure that I love you like a father, and have no wish to ruin you like a stepfather, I propose to do with you what I have for some time back meditated, and after mature deliberation decided upon. You are now of an age to choose your line of life or at least make choice of a calling that will bring you honour and profit when you are older; and what I have resolved to do is to divide my property into four parts; three I will give to you, to each his portion without making any difference, and the other I will retain to live upon and support myself for whatever remainder of life Heaven may be pleased to grant me. But I wish each of you on taking possession of the share that falls to him to follow one of the paths I shall indicate. In this Spain of ours there is a proverb, to my mind very true — as they all are, being short aphorisms drawn from long practical experience — and the one I refer to says, ‘The church, or the sea, or the king’s house;’ as much as to say, in plainer language, whoever wants to flourish and become rich, let him follow the church, or go to sea, adopting commerce as his calling, or go into the king’s service in his household, for they say, ‘Better a king’s crumb than a lord’s favour.’ I say so because it is my will and pleasure that one of you should follow letters, another trade, and the third serve the king in the wars, for it is a difficult matter to gain admission to his service in his household, and if war does not bring much wealth it confers great distinction and fame. Eight days hence I will give you your full shares in money, without defrauding you of a farthing, as you will see in the end. Now tell me if you are willing to follow out my idea and advice as I have laid it before you.”

Having called upon me as the eldest to answer, I, after urging him not to strip himself of his property but to spend it all as he pleased, for we were young men able to gain our living, consented to comply with his wishes, and said that mine were to follow the profession of arms and thereby serve God and my king. My second brother having made the same proposal, decided upon going to the Indies, embarking the portion that fell to him in trade. The youngest, and in my

opinion the wisest, said he would rather follow the church, or go to complete his studies at Salamanca. As soon as we had come to an understanding, and made choice of our professions, my father embraced us all, and in the short time he mentioned carried into effect all he had promised; and when he had given to each his share, which as well as I remember was three thousand ducats apiece in cash (for an uncle of ours bought the estate and paid for it down, not to let it go out of the family), we all three on the same day took leave of our good father; and at the same time, as it seemed to me inhuman to leave my father with such scanty means in his old age, I induced him to take two of my three thousand ducats, as the remainder would be enough to provide me with all a soldier needed. My two brothers, moved by my example, gave him each a thousand ducats, so that there was left for my father four thousand ducats in money, besides three thousand, the value of the portion that fell to him which he preferred to retain in land instead of selling it. Finally, as I said, we took leave of him, and of our uncle whom I have mentioned, not without sorrow and tears on both sides, they charging us to let them know whenever an opportunity offered how we fared, whether well or ill. We promised to do so, and when he had embraced us and given us his blessing, one set out for Salamanca, the other for Seville, and I for Alicante, where I had heard there was a Genoese vessel taking in a cargo of wool for Genoa.

It is now some twenty-two years since I left my father's house, and all that time, though I have written several letters, I have had no news whatever of him or of my brothers; my own adventures during that period I will now relate briefly. I embarked at Alicante, reached Genoa after a prosperous voyage, and proceeded thence to Milan, where I provided myself with arms and a few soldier's accoutrements; thence it was my intention to go and take service in Piedmont, but as I was already on the road to Alessandria della Paglia, I learned that the great Duke of Alva was on his way to Flanders. I changed my plans, joined him, served under him in the campaigns he made, was present at the deaths of the Counts Egmont and Horn, and was promoted to be ensign under a famous captain of Guadalajara, Diego de Urbina by name. Some time after my arrival in Flanders news came of the league that his Holiness Pope Pius V of happy memory, had made with Venice and Spain against the common enemy, the Turk, who had just then with his fleet taken the famous island of Cyprus, which belonged to the Venetians, a loss deplorable and disastrous. It was known as a fact that the Most Serene Don John of Austria, natural brother of our good king Don Philip, was coming as commander-in-chief of the allied forces, and rumours were abroad of the vast warlike preparations which were being made, all which stirred my heart and filled me with a longing to take part in the

campaign which was expected; and though I had reason to believe, and almost certain promises, that on the first opportunity that presented itself I should be promoted to be captain, I preferred to leave all and betake myself, as I did, to Italy; and it was my good fortune that Don John had just arrived at Genoa, and was going on to Naples to join the Venetian fleet, as he afterwards did at Messina. I may say, in short, that I took part in that glorious expedition, promoted by this time to be a captain of infantry, to which honourable charge my good luck rather than my merits raised me; and that day — so fortunate for Christendom, because then all the nations of the earth were disabused of the error under which they lay in imagining the Turks to be invincible on sea — on that day, I say, on which the Ottoman pride and arrogance were broken, among all that were there made happy (for the Christians who died that day were happier than those who remained alive and victorious) I alone was miserable; for, instead of some naval crown that I might have expected had it been in Roman times, on the night that followed that famous day I found myself with fetters on my feet and manacles on my hands.

It happened in this way: El Uchali, the king of Algiers, a daring and successful corsair, having attacked and taken the leading Maltese galley (only three knights being left alive in it, and they badly wounded), the chief galley of John Andrea, on board of which I and my company were placed, came to its relief, and doing as was bound to do in such a case, I leaped on board the enemy's galley, which, sheering off from that which had attacked it, prevented my men from following me, and so I found myself alone in the midst of my enemies, who were in such numbers that I was unable to resist; in short I was taken, covered with wounds; El Uchali, as you know, sirs, made his escape with his entire squadron, and I was left a prisoner in his power, the only sad being among so many filled with joy, and the only captive among so many free; for there were fifteen thousand Christians, all at the oar in the Turkish fleet, that regained their longed-for liberty that day.

They carried me to Constantinople, where the Grand Turk, Selim, made my master general at sea for having done his duty in the battle and carried off as evidence of his bravery the standard of the Order of Malta. The following year, which was the year seventy-two, I found myself at Navarino rowing in the leading galley with the three lanterns. There I saw and observed how the opportunity of capturing the whole Turkish fleet in harbour was lost; for all the marines and janizzaries that belonged to it made sure that they were about to be attacked inside the very harbour, and had their kits and pasamaques, or shoes, ready to flee at once on shore without waiting to be assailed, in so great fear did they stand of our fleet. But Heaven ordered it otherwise, not for any fault or

neglect of the general who commanded on our side, but for the sins of Christendom, and because it was God's will and pleasure that we should always have instruments of punishment to chastise us. As it was, El Uchali took refuge at Modon, which is an island near Navarino, and landing forces fortified the mouth of the harbour and waited quietly until Don John retired. On this expedition was taken the galley called the Prize, whose captain was a son of the famous corsair Barbarossa. It was taken by the chief Neapolitan galley called the She-wolf, commanded by that thunderbolt of war, that father of his men, that successful and unconquered captain Don Alvaro de Bazan, Marquis of Santa Cruz; and I cannot help telling you what took place at the capture of the Prize.

The son of Barbarossa was so cruel, and treated his slaves so badly, that, when those who were at the oars saw that the She-wolf galley was bearing down upon them and gaining upon them, they all at once dropped their oars and seized their captain who stood on the stage at the end of the gangway shouting to them to row lustily; and passing him on from bench to bench, from the poop to the prow, they so bit him that before he had got much past the mast his soul had already got to hell; so great, as I said, was the cruelty with which he treated them, and the hatred with which they hated him.

We returned to Constantinople, and the following year, seventy-three, it became known that Don John had seized Tunis and taken the kingdom from the Turks, and placed Muley Hamet in possession, putting an end to the hopes which Muley Hamida, the cruelest and bravest Moor in the world, entertained of returning to reign there. The Grand Turk took the loss greatly to heart, and with the cunning which all his race possess, he made peace with the Venetians (who were much more eager for it than he was), and the following year, seventy-four, he attacked the Goletta and the fort which Don John had left half built near Tunis. While all these events were occurring, I was labouring at the oar without any hope of freedom; at least I had no hope of obtaining it by ransom, for I was firmly resolved not to write to my father telling him of my misfortunes. At length the Goletta fell, and the fort fell, before which places there were seventy-five thousand regular Turkish soldiers, and more than four hundred thousand Moors and Arabs from all parts of Africa, and in the train of all this great host such munitions and engines of war, and so many pioneers that with their hands they might have covered the Goletta and the fort with handfuls of earth. The first to fall was the Goletta, until then reckoned impregnable, and it fell, not by any fault of its defenders, who did all that they could and should have done, but because experiment proved how easily entrenchments could be made in the desert sand there; for water used to be found at two palms depth, while the Turks found none at two yards; and so by means of a quantity of sandbags they raised

their works so high that they commanded the walls of the fort, sweeping them as if from a cavalier, so that no one was able to make a stand or maintain the defence.

It was a common opinion that our men should not have shut themselves up in the Goletta, but should have waited in the open at the landing-place; but those who say so talk at random and with little knowledge of such matters; for if in the Goletta and in the fort there were barely seven thousand soldiers, how could such a small number, however resolute, sally out and hold their own against numbers like those of the enemy? And how is it possible to help losing a stronghold that is not relieved, above all when surrounded by a host of determined enemies in their own country? But many thought, and I thought so too, that it was special favour and mercy which Heaven showed to Spain in permitting the destruction of that source and hiding place of mischief, that devourer, sponge, and moth of countless money, fruitlessly wasted there to no other purpose save preserving the memory of its capture by the invincible Charles V; as if to make that eternal, as it is and will be, these stones were needed to support it. The fort also fell; but the Turks had to win it inch by inch, for the soldiers who defended it fought so gallantly and stoutly that the number of the enemy killed in twenty-two general assaults exceeded twenty-five thousand. Of three hundred that remained alive not one was taken unwounded, a clear and manifest proof of their gallantry and resolution, and how sturdily they had defended themselves and held their post. A small fort or tower which was in the middle of the lagoon under the command of Don Juan Zanoguera, a Valencian gentleman and a famous soldier, capitulated upon terms. They took prisoner Don Pedro Puertocarrero, commandant of the Goletta, who had done all in his power to defend his fortress, and took the loss of it so much to heart that he died of grief on the way to Constantinople, where they were carrying him a prisoner. They also took the commandant of the fort, Gabrio Cerbellon by name, a Milanese gentleman, a great engineer and a very brave soldier. In these two fortresses perished many persons of note, among whom was Pagano Doria, knight of the Order of St. John, a man of generous disposition, as was shown by his extreme liberality to his brother, the famous John Andrea Doria; and what made his death the more sad was that he was slain by some Arabs to whom, seeing that the fort was now lost, he entrusted himself, and who offered to conduct him in the disguise of a Moor to Tabarca, a small fort or station on the coast held by the Genoese employed in the coral fishery. These Arabs cut off his head and carried it to the commander of the Turkish fleet, who proved on them the truth of our Castilian proverb, that "though the treason may please, the traitor is hated;" for they say he ordered those who brought him the present to be

hanged for not having brought him alive.



Among the Christians who were taken in the fort was one named Don Pedro

de Aguilar, a native of some place, I know not what, in Andalusia, who had been ensign in the fort, a soldier of great repute and rare intelligence, who had in particular a special gift for what they call poetry. I say so because his fate brought him to my galley and to my bench, and made him a slave to the same master; and before we left the port this gentleman composed two sonnets by way of epitaphs, one on the Goletta and the other on the fort; indeed, I may as well repeat them, for I have them by heart, and I think they will be liked rather than disliked.

The instant the captive mentioned the name of Don Pedro de Aguilar, Don Fernando looked at his companions and they all three smiled; and when he came to speak of the sonnets one of them said, "Before your worship proceeds any further I entreat you to tell me what became of that Don Pedro de Aguilar you have spoken of."

"All I know is," replied the captive, "that after having been in Constantinople two years, he escaped in the disguise of an Arnaut, in company with a Greek spy; but whether he regained his liberty or not I cannot tell, though I fancy he did, because a year afterwards I saw the Greek at Constantinople, though I was unable to ask him what the result of the journey was."

"Well then, you are right," returned the gentleman, "for that Don Pedro is my brother, and he is now in our village in good health, rich, married, and with three children."

"Thanks be to God for all the mercies he has shown him," said the captive; "for to my mind there is no happiness on earth to compare with recovering lost liberty."

"And what is more," said the gentleman, "I know the sonnets my brother made."

"Then let your worship repeat them," said the captive, "for you will recite them better than I can."

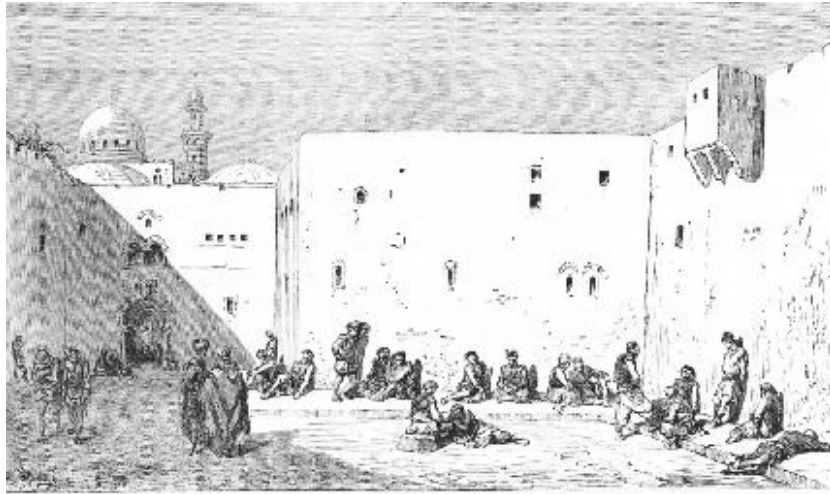
"With all my heart," said the gentleman; "that on the Goletta runs thus."





## CHAPTER XL.

IN WHICH THE STORY OF THE CAPTIVE IS CONTINUED.



## CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE STORY OF THE CAPTIVE CONTINUED.

### SONNET.

**B**LEST souls, dischain'd of life's oppressive weight,  
Whose virtue power'd your pas-port to the skies;  
You there procured a more propitious fate,  
When for your faith you bravely fell to rise.

When pious rage, diffus'd through every vein,  
On this ungrateful shore inflamed your blood,  
Each drop you lost was bought with crowds of sin,  
Whose vital purple swell'd the neighbouring flood.

Though crush'd by rains, and by odds, you claim  
That perfect glory, that immortal fame,  
Which, like true heroes, valdly you pursued;  
On these you scord, even when of life deprived,  
For still you courage even your lives survived;  
And now 'tis conquest thus to be subdued.

### SONNET

“Blest souls, that, from this mortal husk set free, In guerdon of brave deeds  
beatified,

Above this lowly orb of ours abide  
Made heirs of heaven and immortality,  
With noble rage and ardour glowing ye  
Your strength, while strength was yours, in battle plied, And with your own  
blood and the foeman's dyed  
The sandy soil and the encircling sea.  
It was the ebbing life-blood first that failed  
The weary arms; the stout hearts never quailed.  
Though vanquished, yet ye earned the victor's crown: Though mourned, yet  
still triumphant was your fall  
For there ye won, between the sword and wall,  
In Heaven glory and on earth renown."

"That is it exactly, according to my recollection," said the captive.

"Well then, that on the fort," said the gentleman, "if my memory serves me,  
goes thus: SONNET

"Up from this wasted soil, this shattered shell,  
Whose walls and towers here in ruin lie,  
Three thousand soldier souls took wing on high,  
In the bright mansions of the blest to dwell.  
The onslaught of the foeman to repel  
By might of arm all vainly did they try,  
And when at length 'twas left them but to die,  
Wearied and few the last defenders fell.  
And this same arid soil hath ever been  
A haunt of countless mournful memories,  
As well in our day as in days of yore.  
But never yet to Heaven it sent, I ween,  
From its hard bosom purer souls than these,  
Or braver bodies on its surface bore."

The sonnets were not disliked, and the captive was rejoiced at the tidings they gave him of his comrade, and continuing his tale, he went on to say: The Goletta and the fort being thus in their hands, the Turks gave orders to dismantle the Goletta — for the fort was reduced to such a state that there was nothing left to level — and to do the work more quickly and easily they mined it in three places; but nowhere were they able to blow up the part which seemed to be the least strong, that is to say, the old walls, while all that remained standing of the new fortifications that the Fratin had made came to the ground with the greatest ease. Finally the fleet returned victorious and triumphant to Constantinople, and a few months later died my master, El Uchali, otherwise Uchali Fartax, which

means in Turkish “the scabby renegade;” for that he was; it is the practice with the Turks to name people from some defect or virtue they may possess; the reason being that there are among them only four surnames belonging to families tracing their descent from the Ottoman house, and the others, as I have said, take their names and surnames either from bodily blemishes or moral qualities. This “scabby one” rowed at the oar as a slave of the Grand Signor’s for fourteen years, and when over thirty-four years of age, in resentment at having been struck by a Turk while at the oar, turned renegade and renounced his faith in order to be able to revenge himself; and such was his valour that, without owing his advancement to the base ways and means by which most favourites of the Grand Signor rise to power, he came to be king of Algiers, and afterwards general-on-sea, which is the third place of trust in the realm. He was a Calabrian by birth, and a worthy man morally, and he treated his slaves with great humanity. He had three thousand of them, and after his death they were divided, as he directed by his will, between the Grand Signor (who is heir of all who die and shares with the children of the deceased) and his renegades. I fell to the lot of a Venetian renegade who, when a cabin boy on board a ship, had been taken by Uchali and was so much beloved by him that he became one of his most favoured youths. He came to be the most cruel renegade I ever saw: his name was Hassan Aga, and he grew very rich and became king of Algiers. With him I went there from Constantinople, rather glad to be so near Spain, not that I intended to write to anyone about my unhappy lot, but to try if fortune would be kinder to me in Algiers than in Constantinople, where I had attempted in a thousand ways to escape without ever finding a favourable time or chance; but in Algiers I resolved to seek for other means of effecting the purpose I cherished so dearly; for the hope of obtaining my liberty never deserted me; and when in my plots and schemes and attempts the result did not answer my expectations, without giving way to despair I immediately began to look out for or conjure up some new hope to support me, however faint or feeble it might be.

In this way I lived on immured in a building or prison called by the Turks a bano in which they confine the Christian captives, as well those that are the king’s as those belonging to private individuals, and also what they call those of the Almacen, which is as much as to say the slaves of the municipality, who serve the city in the public works and other employments; but captives of this kind recover their liberty with great difficulty, for, as they are public property and have no particular master, there is no one with whom to treat for their ransom, even though they may have the means. To these banos, as I have said, some private individuals of the town are in the habit of bringing their captives, especially when they are to be ransomed; because there they can keep them in

safety and comfort until their ransom arrives. The king's captives also, that are on ransom, do not go out to work with the rest of the crew, unless when their ransom is delayed; for then, to make them write for it more pressingly, they compel them to work and go for wood, which is no light labour.

I, however, was one of those on ransom, for when it was discovered that I was a captain, although I declared my scanty means and want of fortune, nothing could dissuade them from including me among the gentlemen and those waiting to be ransomed. They put a chain on me, more as a mark of this than to keep me safe, and so I passed my life in that bano with several other gentlemen and persons of quality marked out as held to ransom; but though at times, or rather almost always, we suffered from hunger and scanty clothing, nothing distressed us so much as hearing and seeing at every turn the unexampled and unheard-of cruelties my master inflicted upon the Christians. Every day he hanged a man, impaled one, cut off the ears of another; and all with so little provocation, or so entirely without any, that the Turks acknowledged he did it merely for the sake of doing it, and because he was by nature murderously disposed towards the whole human race. The only one that fared at all well with him was a Spanish soldier, something de Saavedra by name, to whom he never gave a blow himself, or ordered a blow to be given, or addressed a hard word, although he had done things that will dwell in the memory of the people there for many a year, and all to recover his liberty; and for the least of the many things he did we all dreaded that he would be impaled, and he himself was in fear of it more than once; and only that time does not allow, I could tell you now something of what that soldier did, that would interest and astonish you much more than the narration of my own tale.

To go on with my story; the courtyard of our prison was overlooked by the windows of the house belonging to a wealthy Moor of high position; and these, as is usual in Moorish houses, were rather loopholes than windows, and besides were covered with thick and close lattice-work. It so happened, then, that as I was one day on the terrace of our prison with three other comrades, trying, to pass away the time, how far we could leap with our chains, we being alone, for all the other Christians had gone out to work, I chanced to raise my eyes, and from one of these little closed windows I saw a reed appear with a cloth attached to the end of it, and it kept waving to and fro, and moving as if making signs to us to come and take it. We watched it, and one of those who were with me went and stood under the reed to see whether they would let it drop, or what they would do, but as he did so the reed was raised and moved from side to side, as if they meant to say "no" by a shake of the head. The Christian came back, and it was again lowered, making the same movements as before. Another of my

comrades went, and with him the same happened as with the first, and then the third went forward, but with the same result as the first and second. Seeing this I did not like not to try my luck, and as soon as I came under the reed it was dropped and fell inside the bano at my feet. I hastened to untie the cloth, in which I perceived a knot, and in this were ten cianis, which are coins of base gold, current among the Moors, and each worth ten reals of our money.

It is needless to say I rejoiced over this godsend, and my joy was not less than my wonder as I strove to imagine how this good fortune could have come to us, but to me specially; for the evident unwillingness to drop the reed for any but me showed that it was for me the favour was intended. I took my welcome money, broke the reed, and returned to the terrace, and looking up at the window, I saw a very white hand put out that opened and shut very quickly. From this we gathered or fancied that it must be some woman living in that house that had done us this kindness, and to show that we were grateful for it, we made salaams after the fashion of the Moors, bowing the head, bending the body, and crossing the arms on the breast. Shortly afterwards at the same window a small cross made of reeds was put out and immediately withdrawn. This sign led us to believe that some Christian woman was a captive in the house, and that it was she who had been so good to us; but the whiteness of the hand and the bracelets we had perceived made us dismiss that idea, though we thought it might be one of the Christian renegades whom their masters very often take as lawful wives, and gladly, for they prefer them to the women of their own nation. In all our conjectures we were wide of the truth; so from that time forward our sole occupation was watching and gazing at the window where the cross had appeared to us, as if it were our pole-star; but at least fifteen days passed without our seeing either it or the hand, or any other sign and though meanwhile we endeavoured with the utmost pains to ascertain who it was that lived in the house, and whether there were any Christian renegade in it, nobody could ever tell us anything more than that he who lived there was a rich Moor of high position, Hadji Morato by name, formerly alcaide of La Pata, an office of high dignity among them. But when we least thought it was going to rain any more cianis from that quarter, we saw the reed suddenly appear with another cloth tied in a larger knot attached to it, and this at a time when, as on the former occasion, the bano was deserted and unoccupied.



We made trial as before, each of the same three going forward before I did; but the reed was delivered to none but me, and on my approach it was let drop. I untied the knot and I found forty Spanish gold crowns with a paper written in Arabic, and at the end of the writing there was a large cross drawn. I kissed the cross, took the crowns and returned to the terrace, and we all made our salaams; again the hand appeared, I made signs that I would read the paper, and then the window was closed. We were all puzzled, though filled with joy at what had

taken place; and as none of us understood Arabic, great was our curiosity to know what the paper contained, and still greater the difficulty of finding some one to read it. At last I resolved to confide in a renegade, a native of Murcia, who professed a very great friendship for me, and had given pledges that bound him to keep any secret I might entrust to him; for it is the custom with some renegades, when they intend to return to Christian territory, to carry about them certificates from captives of mark testifying, in whatever form they can, that such and such a renegade is a worthy man who has always shown kindness to Christians, and is anxious to escape on the first opportunity that may present itself. Some obtain these testimonials with good intentions, others put them to a cunning use; for when they go to pillage on Christian territory, if they chance to be cast away, or taken prisoners, they produce their certificates and say that from these papers may be seen the object they came for, which was to remain on Christian ground, and that it was to this end they joined the Turks in their foray. In this way they escape the consequences of the first outburst and make their peace with the Church before it does them any harm, and then when they have the chance they return to Barbary to become what they were before. Others, however, there are who procure these papers and make use of them honestly, and remain on Christian soil. This friend of mine, then, was one of these renegades that I have described; he had certificates from all our comrades, in which we testified in his favour as strongly as we could; and if the Moors had found the papers they would have burned him alive.

I knew that he understood Arabic very well, and could not only speak but also write it; but before I disclosed the whole matter to him, I asked him to read for me this paper which I had found by accident in a hole in my cell. He opened it and remained some time examining it and muttering to himself as he translated it. I asked him if he understood it, and he told me he did perfectly well, and that if I wished him to tell me its meaning word for word, I must give him pen and ink that he might do it more satisfactorily. We at once gave him what he required, and he set about translating it bit by bit, and when he had done he said: "All that is here in Spanish is what the Moorish paper contains, and you must bear in mind that when it says 'Lela Marien' it means 'Our Lady the Virgin Mary.'"

We read the paper and it ran thus:

"When I was a child my father had a slave who taught me to pray the Christian prayer in my own language, and told me many things about Lela Marien. The Christian died, and I know that she did not go to the fire, but to Allah, because since then I have seen her twice, and she told me to go to the land of the Christians to see Lela Marien, who had great love for me. I know not how

to go. I have seen many Christians, but except thyself none has seemed to me to be a gentleman. I am young and beautiful, and have plenty of money to take with me. See if thou canst contrive how we may go, and if thou wilt thou shalt be my husband there, and if thou wilt not it will not distress me, for Lela Marien will find me some one to marry me. I myself have written this: have a care to whom thou givest it to read: trust no Moor, for they are all perfidious. I am greatly troubled on this account, for I would not have thee confide in anyone, because if my father knew it he would at once fling me down a well and cover me with stones. I will put a thread to the reed; tie the answer to it, and if thou hast no one to write for thee in Arabic, tell it to me by signs, for Lela Marien will make me understand thee. She and Allah and this cross, which I often kiss as the captive bade me, protect thee.”

Judge, sirs, whether we had reason for surprise and joy at the words of this paper; and both one and the other were so great, that the renegade perceived that the paper had not been found by chance, but had been in reality addressed to some one of us, and he begged us, if what he suspected were the truth, to trust him and tell him all, for he would risk his life for our freedom; and so saying he took out from his breast a metal crucifix, and with many tears swore by the God the image represented, in whom, sinful and wicked as he was, he truly and faithfully believed, to be loyal to us and keep secret whatever we chose to reveal to him; for he thought and almost foresaw that by means of her who had written that paper, he and all of us would obtain our liberty, and he himself obtain the object he so much desired, his restoration to the bosom of the Holy Mother Church, from which by his own sin and ignorance he was now severed like a corrupt limb. The renegade said this with so many tears and such signs of repentance, that with one consent we all agreed to tell him the whole truth of the matter, and so we gave him a full account of all, without hiding anything from him. We pointed out to him the window at which the reed appeared, and he by that means took note of the house, and resolved to ascertain with particular care who lived in it. We agreed also that it would be advisable to answer the Moorish lady’s letter, and the renegade without a moment’s delay took down the words I dictated to him, which were exactly what I shall tell you, for nothing of importance that took place in this affair has escaped my memory, or ever will while life lasts. This, then, was the answer returned to the Moorish lady: “The true Allah protect thee, Lady, and that blessed Marien who is the true mother of God, and who has put it into thy heart to go to the land of the Christians, because she loves thee. Entreat her that she be pleased to show thee how thou canst execute the command she gives thee, for she will, such is her goodness. On my own part, and on that of all these Christians who are with me, I promise to do all



that we can for thee, even to death. Fail not to write to me and inform me what thou dost mean to do, and I will always answer thee; for the great Allah has given us a Christian captive who can speak and write thy language well, as thou mayest see by this paper; without fear, therefore, thou canst inform us of all thou wouldst. As to what thou sayest, that if thou dost reach the land of the Christians thou wilt be my wife, I give thee my promise upon it as a good Christian; and know that the Christians keep their promises better than the Moors. Allah and Marien his mother watch over thee, my Lady.”

The paper being written and folded I waited two days until the bano was empty as before, and immediately repaired to the usual walk on the terrace to see if there were any sign of the reed, which was not long in making its appearance. As soon as I saw it, although I could not distinguish who put it out, I showed the paper as a sign to attach the thread, but it was already fixed to the reed, and to it I tied the paper; and shortly afterwards our star once more made its appearance with the white flag of peace, the little bundle. It was dropped, and I picked it up, and found in the cloth, in gold and silver coins of all sorts, more than fifty crowns, which fifty times more strengthened our joy and doubled our hope of gaining our liberty. That very night our renegade returned and said he had learned that the Moor we had been told of lived in that house, that his name was Hadji Morato, that he was enormously rich, that he had one only daughter the heiress of all his wealth, and that it was the general opinion throughout the city that she was the most beautiful woman in Barbary, and that several of the viceroys who came there had sought her for a wife, but that she had been always unwilling to marry; and he had learned, moreover, that she had a Christian slave who was now dead; all which agreed with the contents of the paper. We immediately took counsel with the renegade as to what means would have to be adopted in order to carry off the Moorish lady and bring us all to Christian territory; and in the end it was agreed that for the present we should wait for a second communication from Zoraida (for that was the name of her who now desires to be called Maria), because we saw clearly that she and no one else could find a way out of all these difficulties. When we had decided upon this the renegade told us not to be uneasy, for he would lose his life or restore us to liberty. For four days the bano was filled with people, for which reason the reed delayed its appearance for four days, but at the end of that time, when the bano was, as it generally was, empty, it appeared with the cloth so bulky that it promised a happy birth. Reed and cloth came down to me, and I found another paper and a hundred crowns in gold, without any other coin. The renegade was present, and in our cell we gave him the paper to read, which was to this effect: “I cannot think of a plan, senor, for our going to Spain, nor has Lela Marien

shown me one, though I have asked her. All that can be done is for me to give you plenty of money in gold from this window. With it ransom yourself and your friends, and let one of you go to the land of the Christians, and there buy a vessel and come back for the others; and he will find me in my father's garden, which is at the Babazon gate near the seashore, where I shall be all this summer with my father and my servants. You can carry me away from there by night without any danger, and bring me to the vessel. And remember thou art to be my husband, else I will pray to Marien to punish thee. If thou canst not trust anyone to go for the vessel, ransom thyself and do thou go, for I know thou wilt return more surely than any other, as thou art a gentleman and a Christian. Endeavour to make thyself acquainted with the garden; and when I see thee walking yonder I shall know that the bano is empty and I will give thee abundance of money. Allah protect thee, senor."

These were the words and contents of the second paper, and on hearing them, each declared himself willing to be the ransomed one, and promised to go and return with scrupulous good faith; and I too made the same offer; but to all this the renegade objected, saying that he would not on any account consent to one being set free before all went together, as experience had taught him how ill those who have been set free keep promises which they made in captivity; for captives of distinction frequently had recourse to this plan, paying the ransom of one who was to go to Valencia or Majorca with money to enable him to arm a bark and return for the others who had ransomed him, but who never came back; for recovered liberty and the dread of losing it again efface from the memory all the obligations in the world. And to prove the truth of what he said, he told us briefly what had happened to a certain Christian gentleman almost at that very time, the strangest case that had ever occurred even there, where astonishing and marvellous things are happening every instant. In short, he ended by saying that what could and ought to be done was to give the money intended for the ransom of one of us Christians to him, so that he might with it buy a vessel there in Algiers under the pretence of becoming a merchant and trader at Tetuan and along the coast; and when master of the vessel, it would be easy for him to hit on some way of getting us all out of the bano and putting us on board; especially if the Moorish lady gave, as she said, money enough to ransom all, because once free it would be the easiest thing in the world for us to embark even in open day; but the greatest difficulty was that the Moors do not allow any renegade to buy or own any craft, unless it be a large vessel for going on roving expeditions, because they are afraid that anyone who buys a small vessel, especially if he be a Spaniard, only wants it for the purpose of escaping to Christian territory. This however he could get over by arranging with a Tagarin Moor to go shares with

him in the purchase of the vessel, and in the profit on the cargo; and under cover of this he could become master of the vessel, in which case he looked upon all the rest as accomplished. But though to me and my comrades it had seemed a better plan to send to Majorca for the vessel, as the Moorish lady suggested, we did not dare to oppose him, fearing that if we did not do as he said he would denounce us, and place us in danger of losing all our lives if he were to disclose our dealings with Zoraida, for whose life we would have all given our own. We therefore resolved to put ourselves in the hands of God and in the renegade's; and at the same time an answer was given to Zoraida, telling her that we would do all she recommended, for she had given as good advice as if Lela Marien had delivered it, and that it depended on her alone whether we were to defer the business or put it in execution at once. I renewed my promise to be her husband; and thus the next day that the bano chanced to be empty she at different times gave us by means of the reed and cloth two thousand gold crowns and a paper in which she said that the next Juma, that is to say Friday, she was going to her father's garden, but that before she went she would give us more money; and if it were not enough we were to let her know, as she would give us as much as we asked, for her father had so much he would not miss it, and besides she kept all the keys.

We at once gave the renegade five hundred crowns to buy the vessel, and with eight hundred I ransomed myself, giving the money to a Valencian merchant who happened to be in Algiers at the time, and who had me released on his word, pledging it that on the arrival of the first ship from Valencia he would pay my ransom; for if he had given the money at once it would have made the king suspect that my ransom money had been for a long time in Algiers, and that the merchant had for his own advantage kept it secret. In fact my master was so difficult to deal with that I dared not on any account pay down the money at once. The Thursday before the Friday on which the fair Zoraida was to go to the garden she gave us a thousand crowns more, and warned us of her departure, begging me, if I were ransomed, to find out her father's garden at once, and by all means to seek an opportunity of going there to see her. I answered in a few words that I would do so, and that she must remember to commend us to Lela Marien with all the prayers the captive had taught her. This having been done, steps were taken to ransom our three comrades, so as to enable them to quit the bano, and lest, seeing me ransomed and themselves not, though the money was forthcoming, they should make a disturbance about it and the devil should prompt them to do something that might injure Zoraida; for though their position might be sufficient to relieve me from this apprehension, nevertheless I was unwilling to run any risk in the matter; and so I had them ransomed in the same

way as I was, handing over all the money to the merchant so that he might with safety and confidence give security; without, however, confiding our arrangement and secret to him, which might have been dangerous.



## CHAPTER XLI.

### IN WHICH THE CAPTIVE STILL CONTINUES HIS ADVENTURES



Before fifteen days were over our renegade had already purchased an excellent vessel with room for more than thirty persons; and to make the transaction safe and lend a colour to it, he thought it well to make, as he did, a voyage to a place called Shershel, twenty leagues from Algiers on the Oran side, where there is an extensive trade in dried figs. Two or three times he made this voyage in company with the Tagarin already mentioned. The Moors of Aragon are called Tagarins in Barbary, and those of Granada Mudejars; but in the Kingdom of Fez they call the Mudejars Elches, and they are the people the king chiefly employs in war. To proceed: every time he passed with his vessel he anchored in a cove that was not two crossbow shots from the garden where Zoraida was waiting; and there the renegade, together with the two Moorish lads that rowed, used purposely to station himself, either going through his prayers,

or else practising as a part what he meant to perform in earnest. And thus he would go to Zoraida's garden and ask for fruit, which her father gave him, not knowing him; but though, as he afterwards told me, he sought to speak to Zoraida, and tell her who he was, and that by my orders he was to take her to the land of the Christians, so that she might feel satisfied and easy, he had never been able to do so; for the Moorish women do not allow themselves to be seen by any Moor or Turk, unless their husband or father bid them: with Christian captives they permit freedom of intercourse and communication, even more than might be considered proper. But for my part I should have been sorry if he had spoken to her, for perhaps it might have alarmed her to find her affairs talked of by renegades. But God, who ordered it otherwise, afforded no opportunity for our renegade's well-meant purpose; and he, seeing how safely he could go to Shershel and return, and anchor when and how and where he liked, and that the Tagarin his partner had no will but his, and that, now I was ransomed, all we wanted was to find some Christians to row, told me to look out for any I should be willing to take with me, over and above those who had been ransomed, and to engage them for the next Friday, which he fixed upon for our departure. On this I spoke to twelve Spaniards, all stout rowers, and such as could most easily leave the city; but it was no easy matter to find so many just then, because there were twenty ships out on a cruise and they had taken all the rowers with them; and these would not have been found were it not that their master remained at home that summer without going to sea in order to finish a galliot that he had upon the stocks. To these men I said nothing more than that the next Friday in the evening they were to come out stealthily one by one and hang about Hadji Morato's garden, waiting for me there until I came. These directions I gave each one separately, with orders that if they saw any other Christians there they were not to say anything to them except that I had directed them to wait at that spot.

This preliminary having been settled, another still more necessary step had to be taken, which was to let Zoraida know how matters stood that she might be prepared and forewarned, so as not to be taken by surprise if we were suddenly to seize upon her before she thought the Christians' vessel could have returned. I determined, therefore, to go to the garden and try if I could speak to her; and the day before my departure I went there under the pretence of gathering herbs. The first person I met was her father, who addressed me in the language that all over Barbary and even in Constantinople is the medium between captives and Moors, and is neither Morisco nor Castilian, nor of any other nation, but a mixture of all languages, by means of which we can all understand one another. In this sort of language, I say, he asked me what I wanted in his garden, and to whom I belonged. I replied that I was a slave of the Arnaut Mami (for I knew as a

certainty that he was a very great friend of his), and that I wanted some herbs to make a salad. He asked me then whether I were on ransom or not, and what my master demanded for me. While these questions and answers were proceeding, the fair Zoraida, who had already perceived me some time before, came out of the house in the garden, and as Moorish women are by no means particular about letting themselves be seen by Christians, or, as I have said before, at all coy, she had no hesitation in coming to where her father stood with me; moreover her father, seeing her approaching slowly, called to her to come. It would be beyond my power now to describe to you the great beauty, the high-bred air, the brilliant attire of my beloved Zoraida as she presented herself before my eyes. I will content myself with saying that more pearls hung from her fair neck, her ears, and her hair than she had hairs on her head. On her ankles, which as is customary were bare, she had carcajes (for so bracelets or anklets are called in Morisco) of the purest gold, set with so many diamonds that she told me afterwards her father valued them at ten thousand doubloons, and those she had on her wrists were worth as much more. The pearls were in profusion and very fine, for the highest display and adornment of the Moorish women is decking themselves with rich pearls and seed-pearls; and of these there are therefore more among the Moors than among any other people. Zoraida's father had to the reputation of possessing a great number, and the purest in all Algiers, and of possessing also more than two hundred thousand Spanish crowns; and she, who is now mistress of me only, was mistress of all this. Whether thus adorned she would have been beautiful or not, and what she must have been in her prosperity, may be imagined from the beauty remaining to her after so many hardships; for, as everyone knows, the beauty of some women has its times and its seasons, and is increased or diminished by chance causes; and naturally the emotions of the mind will heighten or impair it, though indeed more frequently they totally destroy it. In a word she presented herself before me that day attired with the utmost splendour, and supremely beautiful; at any rate, she seemed to me the most beautiful object I had ever seen; and when, besides, I thought of all I owed to her I felt as though I had before me some heavenly being come to earth to bring me relief and happiness.

As she approached her father told her in his own language that I was a captive belonging to his friend the Arnaut Mami, and that I had come for salad.

She took up the conversation, and in that mixture of tongues I have spoken of she asked me if I was a gentleman, and why I was not ransomed.

I answered that I was already ransomed, and that by the price it might be seen what value my master set on me, as they had given one thousand five hundred zoltanis for me; to which she replied, "Hadst thou been my father's, I can tell

thee, I would not have let him part with thee for twice as much, for you Christians always tell lies about yourselves and make yourselves out poor to cheat the Moors.”

“That may be, lady,” said I; “but indeed I dealt truthfully with my master, as I do and mean to do with everybody in the world.”

“And when dost thou go?” said Zoraida.

“To-morrow, I think,” said I, “for there is a vessel here from France which sails to-morrow, and I think I shall go in her.”

“Would it not be better,” said Zoraida, “to wait for the arrival of ships from Spain and go with them and not with the French who are not your friends?”

“No,” said I; “though if there were intelligence that a vessel were now coming from Spain it is true I might, perhaps, wait for it; however, it is more likely I shall depart to-morrow, for the longing I feel to return to my country and to those I love is so great that it will not allow me to wait for another opportunity, however more convenient, if it be delayed.”

“No doubt thou art married in thine own country,” said Zoraida, “and for that reason thou art anxious to go and see thy wife.”

“I am not married,” I replied, “but I have given my promise to marry on my arrival there.”

“And is the lady beautiful to whom thou hast given it?” said Zoraida.

“So beautiful,” said I, “that, to describe her worthily and tell thee the truth, she is very like thee.”

At this her father laughed very heartily and said, “By Allah, Christian, she must be very beautiful if she is like my daughter, who is the most beautiful woman in all this kingdom: only look at her well and thou wilt see I am telling the truth.”

Zoraida’s father as the better linguist helped to interpret most of these words and phrases, for though she spoke the bastard language, that, as I have said, is employed there, she expressed her meaning more by signs than by words.

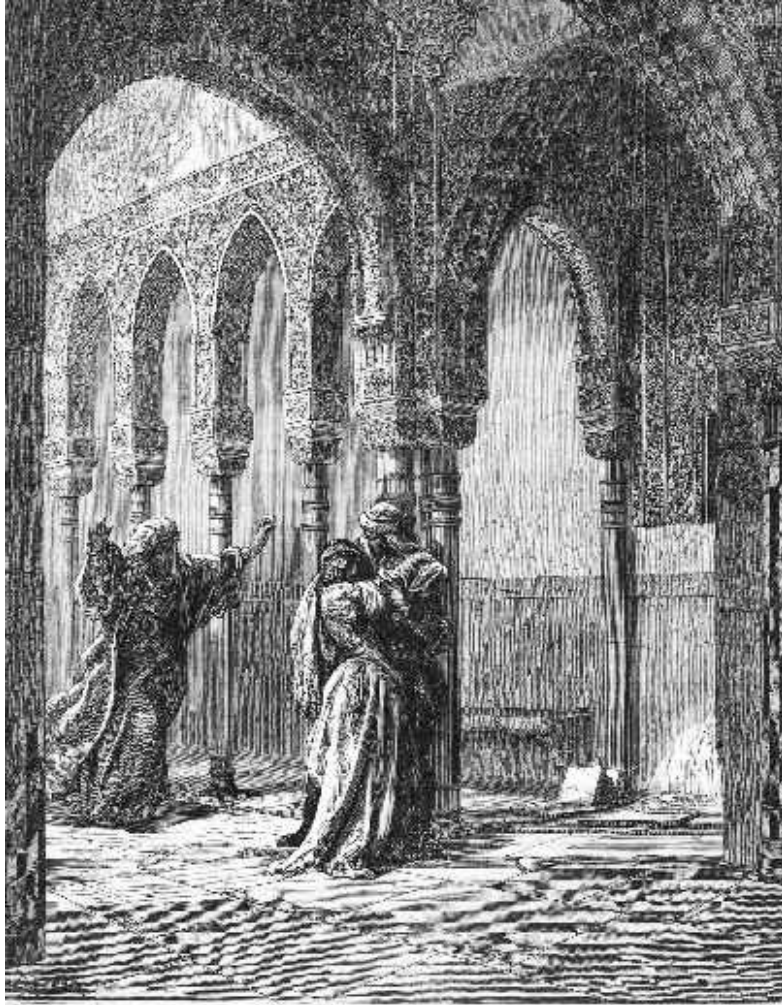
While we were still engaged in this conversation, a Moor came running up, exclaiming that four Turks had leaped over the fence or wall of the garden, and were gathering the fruit though it was not yet ripe. The old man was alarmed and Zoraida too, for the Moors commonly, and, so to speak, instinctively have a dread of the Turks, but particularly of the soldiers, who are so insolent and domineering to the Moors who are under their power that they treat them worse than if they were their slaves. Her father said to Zoraida, “Daughter, retire into the house and shut thyself in while I go and speak to these dogs; and thou, Christian, pick thy herbs, and go in peace, and Allah bring thee safe to thy own country.”



I bowed, and he went away to look for the Turks, leaving me alone with Zoraida, who made as if she were about to retire as her father bade her; but the moment he was concealed by the trees of the garden, turning to me with her eyes full of tears she said, "Tameji, cristiano, tameji?" that is to say, "Art thou going, Christian, art thou going?"

I made answer, "Yes, lady, but not without thee, come what may: be on the watch for me on the next Juma, and be not alarmed when thou seest us; for most surely we shall go to the land of the Christians."

This I said in such a way that she understood perfectly all that passed between us, and throwing her arm round my neck she began with feeble steps to move towards the house; but as fate would have it (and it might have been very unfortunate if Heaven had not otherwise ordered it), just as we were moving on in the manner and position I have described, with her arm round my neck, her father, as he returned after having sent away the Turks, saw how we were walking and we perceived that he saw us; but Zoraida, ready and quickwitted, took care not to remove her arm from my neck, but on the contrary drew closer to me and laid her head on my breast, bending her knees a little and showing all the signs and tokens of fainting, while I at the same time made it seem as though I were supporting her against my will. Her father came running up to where we were, and seeing his daughter in this state asked what was the matter with her; she, however, giving no answer, he said, "No doubt she has fainted in alarm at the entrance of those dogs," and taking her from mine he drew her to his own breast, while she sighing, her eyes still wet with tears, said again, "Ameji, cristiano, ameji"— "Go, Christian, go." To this her father replied, "There is no need, daughter, for the Christian to go, for he has done thee no harm, and the Turks have now gone; feel no alarm, there is nothing to hurt thee, for as I say, the Turks at my request have gone back the way they came."

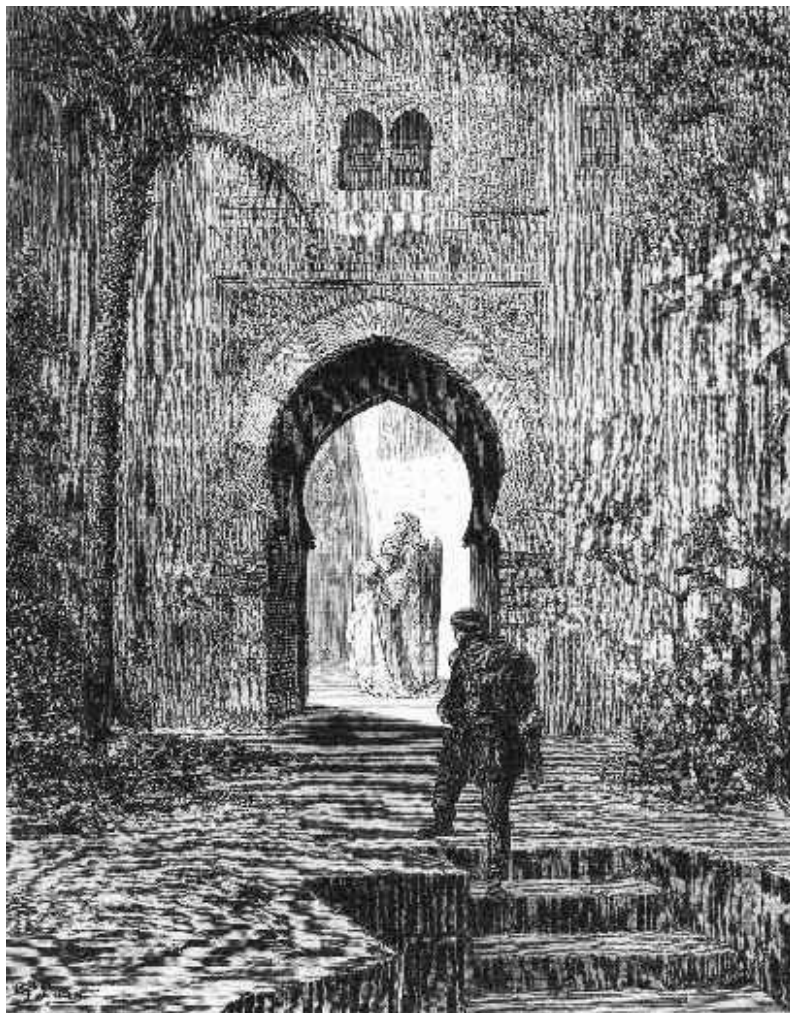


“It was they who terrified her, as thou hast said, senor,” said I to her father; “but since she tells me to go, I have no wish to displease her: peace be with thee, and with thy leave I will come back to this garden for herbs if need be, for my master says there are nowhere better herbs for salad than here.”

“Come back for any thou hast need of,” replied Hadji Morato; “for my daughter does not speak thus because she is displeased with thee or any Christian: she only meant that the Turks should go, not thou; or that it was time for thee to look for thy herbs.”

With this I at once took my leave of both; and she, looking as though her heart were breaking, retired with her father. While pretending to look for herbs I made

the round of the garden at my ease, and studied carefully all the approaches and outlets, and the fastenings of the house and everything that could be taken advantage of to make our task easy.



Having done so I went and gave an account of all that had taken place to the renegade and my comrades, and looked forward with impatience to the hour when, all fear at an end, I should find myself in possession of the prize which fortune held out to me in the fair and lovely Zoraida. The time passed at length, and the appointed day we so longed for arrived; and, all following out the arrangement and plan which, after careful consideration and many a long discussion, we had decided upon, we succeeded as fully as we could have wished; for on the Friday following the day upon which I spoke to Zoraida in the garden, the renegade anchored his vessel at nightfall almost opposite the spot where she was. The Christians who were to row were ready and in hiding in different places round about, all waiting for me, anxious and elated, and eager to attack the vessel they had before their eyes; for they did not know the renegade's plan, but expected that they were to gain their liberty by force of arms and by killing the Moors who were on board the vessel. As soon, then, as I and my comrades made our appearance, all those that were in hiding seeing us came and joined us. It was now the time when the city gates are shut, and there was no one to be seen in all the space outside. When we were collected together we debated whether it would be better first to go for Zoraida, or to make prisoners of the Moorish rowers who rowed in the vessel; but while we were still uncertain our renegade came up asking us what kept us, as it was now the time, and all the Moors were off their guard and most of them asleep. We told him why we hesitated, but he said it was of more importance first to secure the vessel, which could be done with the greatest ease and without any danger, and then we could go for Zoraida. We all approved of what he said, and so without further delay, guided by him we made for the vessel, and he leaping on board first, drew his cutlass and said in Morisco, "Let no one stir from this if he does not want it to cost him his life." By this almost all the Christians were on board, and the Moors, who were fainthearted, hearing their captain speak in this way, were cowed, and without any one of them taking to his arms (and indeed they had few or hardly any) they submitted without saying a word to be bound by the Christians, who quickly secured them, threatening them that if they raised any kind of outcry they would be all put to the sword. This having been accomplished, and half of our party being left to keep guard over them, the rest of us, again taking the renegade as our guide, hastened towards Hadji Morato's garden, and as good luck would have it, on trying the gate it opened as easily as if it had not been locked; and so, quite quietly and in silence, we reached the house without being perceived by anybody. The lovely Zoraida was watching for us at a window, and as soon as she perceived that there were people there, she

asked in a low voice if we were "Nizarani," as much as to say or ask if we were Christians. I answered that we were, and begged her to come down. As soon as she recognised me she did not delay an instant, but without answering a word came down immediately, opened the door and presented herself before us all, so beautiful and so richly attired that I cannot attempt to describe her. The moment I saw her I took her hand and kissed it, and the renegade and my two comrades did the same; and the rest, who knew nothing of the circumstances, did as they saw us do, for it only seemed as if we were returning thanks to her, and recognising her as the giver of our liberty. The renegade asked her in the Morisco language if her father was in the house. She replied that he was and that he was asleep.

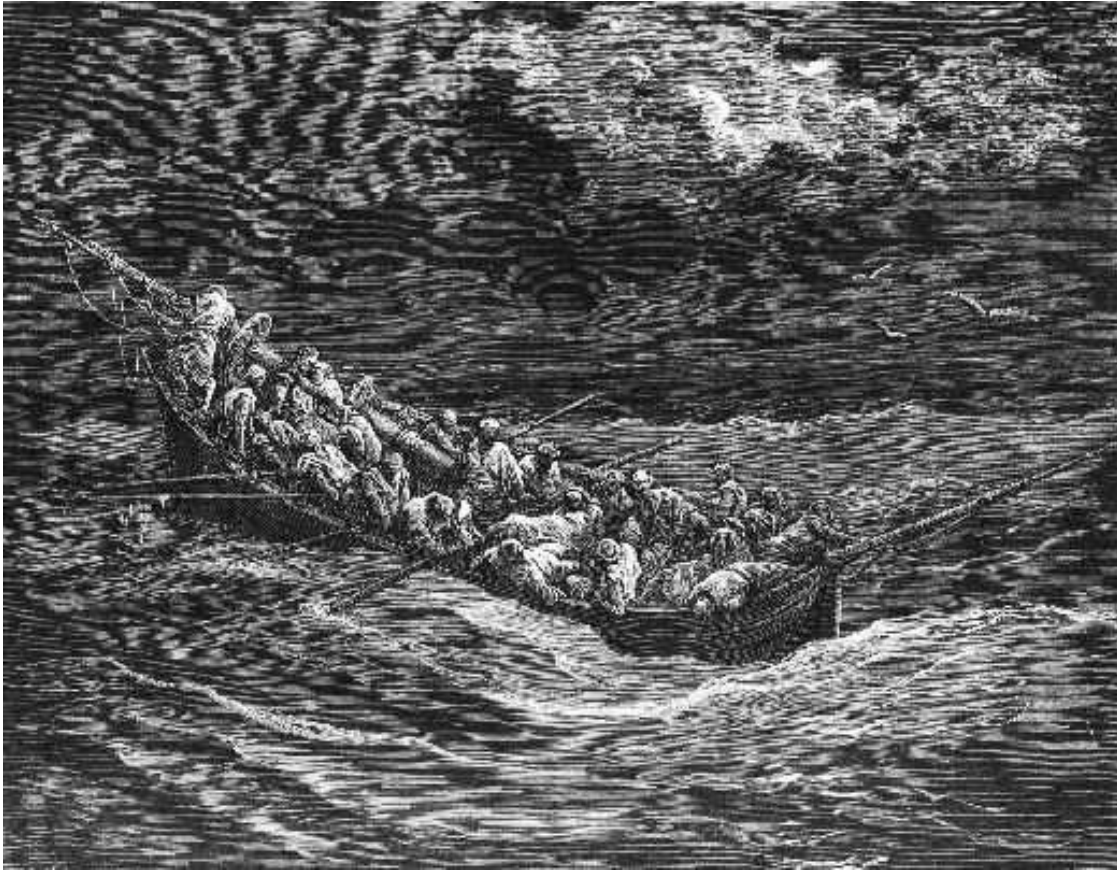
"Then it will be necessary to waken him and take him with us," said the renegade, "and everything of value in this fair mansion."

"Nay," said she, "my father must not on any account be touched, and there is nothing in the house except what I shall take, and that will be quite enough to enrich and satisfy all of you; wait a little and you shall see," and so saying she went in, telling us she would return immediately and bidding us keep quiet without making any noise.

I asked the renegade what had passed between them, and when he told me, I declared that nothing should be done except in accordance with the wishes of Zoraida, who now came back with a little trunk so full of gold crowns that she could scarcely carry it. Unfortunately her father awoke while this was going on, and hearing a noise in the garden, came to the window, and at once perceiving that all those who were there were Christians, raising a prodigiously loud outcry, he began to call out in Arabic, "Christians, Christians! thieves, thieves!" by which cries we were all thrown into the greatest fear and embarrassment; but the renegade seeing the danger we were in and how important it was for him to effect his purpose before we were heard, mounted with the utmost quickness to where Hadji Morato was, and with him went some of our party; I, however, did not dare to leave Zoraida, who had fallen almost fainting in my arms. To be brief, those who had gone upstairs acted so promptly that in an instant they came down, carrying Hadji Morato with his hands bound and a napkin tied over his mouth, which prevented him from uttering a word, warning him at the same time that to attempt to speak would cost him his life. When his daughter caught sight of him she covered her eyes so as not to see him, and her father was horror-stricken, not knowing how willingly she had placed herself in our hands. But it was now most essential for us to be on the move, and carefully and quickly we regained the vessel, where those who had remained on board were waiting for us in apprehension of some mishap having befallen us. It was barely two hours after

night set in when we were all on board the vessel, where the cords were removed from the hands of Zoraida's father, and the napkin from his mouth; but the renegade once more told him not to utter a word, or they would take his life. He, when he saw his daughter there, began to sigh piteously, and still more when he perceived that I held her closely embraced and that she lay quiet without resisting or complaining, or showing any reluctance; nevertheless he remained silent lest they should carry into effect the repeated threats the renegade had addressed to him.

Finding herself now on board, and that we were about to give way with the oars, Zoraida, seeing her father there, and the other Moors bound, bade the renegade ask me to do her the favour of releasing the Moors and setting her father at liberty, for she would rather drown herself in the sea than suffer a father that had loved her so dearly to be carried away captive before her eyes and on her account. The renegade repeated this to me, and I replied that I was very willing to do so; but he replied that it was not advisable, because if they were left there they would at once raise the country and stir up the city, and lead to the despatch of swift cruisers in pursuit, and our being taken, by sea or land, without any possibility of escape; and that all that could be done was to set them free on the first Christian ground we reached. On this point we all agreed; and Zoraida, to whom it was explained, together with the reasons that prevented us from doing at once what she desired, was satisfied likewise; and then in glad silence and with cheerful alacrity each of our stout rowers took his oar, and commending ourselves to God with all our hearts, we began to shape our course for the island of Majorca, the nearest Christian land. Owing, however, to the Tramontana rising a little, and the sea growing somewhat rough, it was impossible for us to keep a straight course for Majorca, and we were compelled to coast in the direction of Oran, not without great uneasiness on our part lest we should be observed from the town of Shershel, which lies on that coast, not more than sixty miles from Algiers. Moreover we were afraid of meeting on that course one of the galliots that usually come with goods from Tetuan; although each of us for himself and all of us together felt confident that, if we were to meet a merchant galliot, so that it were not a cruiser, not only should we not be lost, but that we should take a vessel in which we could more safely accomplish our voyage. As we pursued our course Zoraida kept her head between my hands so as not to see her father, and I felt that she was praying to Lela Marien to help us.



We might have made about thirty miles when daybreak found us some three musket-shots off the land, which seemed to us deserted, and without anyone to see us. For all that, however, by hard rowing we put out a little to sea, for it was now somewhat calmer, and having gained about two leagues the word was given to row by batches, while we ate something, for the vessel was well provided; but the rowers said it was not a time to take any rest; let food be served out to those who were not rowing, but they would not leave their oars on any account. This was done, but now a stiff breeze began to blow, which obliged us to leave off rowing and make sail at once and steer for Oran, as it was impossible to make

any other course. All this was done very promptly, and under sail we ran more than eight miles an hour without any fear, except that of coming across some vessel out on a roving expedition. We gave the Moorish rowers some food, and the renegade comforted them by telling them that they were not held as captives, as we should set them free on the first opportunity.

The same was said to Zoraida's father, who replied, "Anything else, Christian, I might hope for or think likely from your generosity and good behaviour, but do not think me so simple as to imagine you will give me my liberty; for you would have never exposed yourselves to the danger of depriving me of it only to restore it to me so generously, especially as you know who I am and the sum you may expect to receive on restoring it; and if you will only name that, I here offer you all you require for myself and for my unhappy daughter there; or else for her alone, for she is the greatest and most precious part of my soul."

As he said this he began to weep so bitterly that he filled us all with compassion and forced Zoraida to look at him, and when she saw him weeping she was so moved that she rose from my feet and ran to throw her arms round him, and pressing her face to his, they both gave way to such an outburst of tears that several of us were constrained to keep them company.

But when her father saw her in full dress and with all her jewels about her, he said to her in his own language, "What means this, my daughter? Last night, before this terrible misfortune in which we are plunged befell us, I saw thee in thy everyday and indoor garments; and now, without having had time to attire thyself, and without my bringing thee any joyful tidings to furnish an occasion for adorning and bedecking thyself, I see thee arrayed in the finest attire it would be in my power to give thee when fortune was most kind to us. Answer me this; for it causes me greater anxiety and surprise than even this misfortune itself."

The renegade interpreted to us what the Moor said to his daughter; she, however, returned him no answer. But when he observed in one corner of the vessel the little trunk in which she used to keep her jewels, which he well knew he had left in Algiers and had not brought to the garden, he was still more amazed, and asked her how that trunk had come into our hands, and what there was in it. To which the renegade, without waiting for Zoraida to reply, made answer, "Do not trouble thyself by asking thy daughter Zoraida so many questions, senor, for the one answer I will give thee will serve for all; I would have thee know that she is a Christian, and that it is she who has been the file for our chains and our deliverer from captivity. She is here of her own free will, as glad, I imagine, to find herself in this position as he who escapes from darkness into the light, from death to life, and from suffering to glory."

"Daughter, is this true, what he says?" cried the Moor.



“It is,” replied Zoraida.

“That thou art in truth a Christian,” said the old man, “and that thou hast given thy father into the power of his enemies?”

To which Zoraida made answer, “A Christian I am, but it is not I who have placed thee in this position, for it never was my wish to leave thee or do thee harm, but only to do good to myself.”

“And what good hast thou done thyself, daughter?” said he.

“Ask thou that,” said she, “of Lela Marien, for she can tell thee better than I.”

The Moor had hardly heard these words when with marvellous quickness he flung himself headforemost into the sea, where no doubt he would have been drowned had not the long and full dress he wore held him up for a little on the surface of the water. Zoraida cried aloud to us to save him, and we all hastened to help, and seizing him by his robe we drew him in half drowned and insensible, at which Zoraida was in such distress that she wept over him as piteously and bitterly as though he were already dead. We turned him upon his face and he voided a great quantity of water, and at the end of two hours came to himself. Meanwhile, the wind having changed we were compelled to head for the land, and ply our oars to avoid being driven on shore; but it was our good fortune to reach a creek that lies on one side of a small promontory or cape, called by the Moors that of the “Cava rumia,” which in our language means “the wicked Christian woman;” for it is a tradition among them that La Cava, through whom Spain was lost, lies buried at that spot; “cava” in their language meaning “wicked woman,” and “rumia” “Christian;” moreover, they count it unlucky to anchor there when necessity compels them, and they never do so otherwise. For us, however, it was not the resting-place of the wicked woman but a haven of safety for our relief, so much had the sea now got up. We posted a look-out on shore, and never let the oars out of our hands, and ate of the stores the renegade had laid in, imploring God and Our Lady with all our hearts to help and protect us, that we might give a happy ending to a beginning so prosperous. At the entreaty of Zoraida orders were given to set on shore her father and the other Moors who were still bound, for she could not endure, nor could her tender heart bear to see her father in bonds and her fellow-countrymen prisoners before her eyes. We promised her to do this at the moment of departure, for as it was uninhabited we ran no risk in releasing them at that place.

Our prayers were not so far in vain as to be unheard by Heaven, for after a while the wind changed in our favour, and made the sea calm, inviting us once more to resume our voyage with a good heart. Seeing this we unbound the Moors, and one by one put them on shore, at which they were filled with amazement; but when we came to land Zoraida’s father, who had now

completely recovered his senses, he said:

“Why is it, think ye, Christians, that this wicked woman is rejoiced at your giving me my liberty? Think ye it is because of the affection she bears me? Nay verily, it is only because of the hindrance my presence offers to the execution of her base designs. And think not that it is her belief that yours is better than ours that has led her to change her religion; it is only because she knows that immodesty is more freely practised in your country than in ours.” Then turning to Zoraida, while I and another of the Christians held him fast by both arms, lest he should do some mad act, he said to her, “Infamous girl, misguided maiden, whither in thy blindness and madness art thou going in the hands of these dogs, our natural enemies? Cursed be the hour when I begot thee! Cursed the luxury and indulgence in which I reared thee!”

But seeing that he was not likely soon to cease I made haste to put him on shore, and thence he continued his maledictions and lamentations aloud; calling on Mohammed to pray to Allah to destroy us, to confound us, to make an end of us; and when, in consequence of having made sail, we could no longer hear what he said we could see what he did; how he plucked out his beard and tore his hair and lay writhing on the ground. But once he raised his voice to such a pitch that we were able to hear what he said. “Come back, dear daughter, come back to shore; I forgive thee all; let those men have the money, for it is theirs now, and come back to comfort thy sorrowing father, who will yield up his life on this barren strand if thou dost leave him.”



All this Zoraida heard, and heard with sorrow and tears, and all she could say in answer was, “Allah grant that Lela Marien, who has made me become a Christian, give thee comfort in thy sorrow, my father. Allah knows that I could not do otherwise than I have done, and that these Christians owe nothing to my will; for even had I wished not to accompany them, but remain at home, it would have been impossible for me, so eagerly did my soul urge me on to the accomplishment of this purpose, which I feel to be as righteous as to thee, dear father, it seems wicked.”

But neither could her father hear her nor we see him when she said this; and so, while I consoled Zoraida, we turned our attention to our voyage, in which a breeze from the right point so favoured us that we made sure of finding ourselves off the coast of Spain on the morrow by daybreak. But, as good seldom or never comes pure and unmixed, without being attended or followed

by some disturbing evil that gives a shock to it, our fortune, or perhaps the curses which the Moor had hurled at his daughter (for whatever kind of father they may come from these are always to be dreaded), brought it about that when we were now in mid-sea, and the night about three hours spent, as we were running with all sail set and oars lashed, for the favouring breeze saved us the trouble of using them, we saw by the light of the moon, which shone brilliantly, a square-rigged vessel in full sail close to us, luffing up and standing across our course, and so close that we had to strike sail to avoid running foul of her, while they too put the helm hard up to let us pass. They came to the side of the ship to ask who we were, whither we were bound, and whence we came, but as they asked this in French our renegade said, "Let no one answer, for no doubt these are French corsairs who plunder all comers."



Acting on this warning no one answered a word, but after we had gone a little ahead, and the vessel was now lying to leeward, suddenly they fired two guns, and apparently both loaded with chain-shot, for with one they cut our mast in half and brought down both it and the sail into the sea, and the other, discharged at the same moment, sent a ball into our vessel amidships, staving her in completely, but without doing any further damage. We, however, finding ourselves sinking began to shout for help and call upon those in the ship to pick us up as we were beginning to fill. They then lay to, and lowering a skiff or boat, as many as a dozen Frenchmen, well armed with match-locks, and their matches burning, got into it and came alongside; and seeing how few we were, and that our vessel was going down, they took us in, telling us that this had come to us through our incivility in not giving them an answer. Our renegade took the trunk containing Zoraida's wealth and dropped it into the sea without anyone

perceiving what he did. In short we went on board with the Frenchmen, who, after having ascertained all they wanted to know about us, rifled us of everything we had, as if they had been our bitterest enemies, and from Zoraida they took even the anklets she wore on her feet; but the distress they caused her did not distress me so much as the fear I was in that from robbing her of her rich and precious jewels they would proceed to rob her of the most precious jewel that she valued more than all. The desires, however, of those people do not go beyond money, but of that their covetousness is insatiable, and on this occasion it was carried to such a pitch that they would have taken even the clothes we wore as captives if they had been worth anything to them. It was the advice of some of them to throw us all into the sea wrapped up in a sail; for their purpose was to trade at some of the ports of Spain, giving themselves out as Bretons, and if they brought us alive they would be punished as soon as the robbery was discovered; but the captain (who was the one who had plundered my beloved Zoraida) said he was satisfied with the prize he had got, and that he would not touch at any Spanish port, but pass the Straits of Gibraltar by night, or as best he could, and make for La Rochelle, from which he had sailed. So they agreed by common consent to give us the skiff belonging to their ship and all we required for the short voyage that remained to us, and this they did the next day on coming in sight of the Spanish coast, with which, and the joy we felt, all our sufferings and miseries were as completely forgotten as if they had never been endured by us, such is the delight of recovering lost liberty.

It may have been about mid-day when they placed us in the boat, giving us two kegs of water and some biscuit; and the captain, moved by I know not what compassion, as the lovely Zoraida was about to embark, gave her some forty gold crowns, and would not permit his men to take from her those same garments which she has on now. We got into the boat, returning them thanks for their kindness to us, and showing ourselves grateful rather than indignant. They stood out to sea, steering for the straits; we, without looking to any compass save the land we had before us, set ourselves to row with such energy that by sunset we were so near that we might easily, we thought, land before the night was far advanced. But as the moon did not show that night, and the sky was clouded, and as we knew not whereabouts we were, it did not seem to us a prudent thing to make for the shore, as several of us advised, saying we ought to run ourselves ashore even if it were on rocks and far from any habitation, for in this way we should be relieved from the apprehensions we naturally felt of the prowling vessels of the Tetuan corsairs, who leave Barbary at nightfall and are on the Spanish coast by daybreak, where they commonly take some prize, and then go home to sleep in their own houses. But of the conflicting counsels the one which

was adopted was that we should approach gradually, and land where we could if the sea were calm enough to permit us. This was done, and a little before midnight we drew near to the foot of a huge and lofty mountain, not so close to the sea but that it left a narrow space on which to land conveniently. We ran our boat up on the sand, and all sprang out and kissed the ground, and with tears of joyful satisfaction returned thanks to God our Lord for all his incomparable goodness to us on our voyage. We took out of the boat the provisions it contained, and drew it up on the shore, and then climbed a long way up the mountain, for even there we could not feel easy in our hearts, or persuade ourselves that it was Christian soil that was now under our feet.

The dawn came, more slowly, I think, than we could have wished; we completed the ascent in order to see if from the summit any habitation or any shepherds' huts could be discovered, but strain our eyes as we might, neither dwelling, nor human being, nor path nor road could we perceive. However, we determined to push on farther, as it could not but be that ere long we must see some one who could tell us where we were. But what distressed me most was to see Zoraida going on foot over that rough ground; for though I once carried her on my shoulders, she was more wearied by my weariness than rested by the rest; and so she would never again allow me to undergo the exertion, and went on very patiently and cheerfully, while I led her by the hand. We had gone rather less than a quarter of a league when the sound of a little bell fell on our ears, a clear proof that there were flocks hard by, and looking about carefully to see if any were within view, we observed a young shepherd tranquilly and unsuspectingly trimming a stick with his knife at the foot of a cork tree. We called to him, and he, raising his head, sprang nimbly to his feet, for, as we afterwards learned, the first who presented themselves to his sight were the renegade and Zoraida, and seeing them in Moorish dress he imagined that all the Moors of Barbary were upon him; and plunging with marvellous swiftness into the thicket in front of him, he began to raise a prodigious outcry, exclaiming, "The Moors — the Moors have landed! To arms, to arms!" We were all thrown into perplexity by these cries, not knowing what to do; but reflecting that the shouts of the shepherd would raise the country and that the mounted coast-guard would come at once to see what was the matter, we agreed that the renegade must strip off his Turkish garments and put on a captive's jacket or coat which one of our party gave him at once, though he himself was reduced to his shirt; and so commending ourselves to God, we followed the same road which we saw the shepherd take, expecting every moment that the coast-guard would be down upon us. Nor did our expectation deceive us, for two hours had not passed when, coming out of the brushwood into the open ground, we perceived some fifty

mounted men swiftly approaching us at a hand-gallop. As soon as we saw them we stood still, waiting for them; but as they came close and, instead of the Moors they were in quest of, saw a set of poor Christians, they were taken aback, and one of them asked if it could be we who were the cause of the shepherd having raised the call to arms. I said "Yes," and as I was about to explain to him what had occurred, and whence we came and who we were, one of the Christians of our party recognised the horseman who had put the question to us, and before I could say anything more he exclaimed:

"Thanks be to God, sirs, for bringing us to such good quarters; for, if I do not deceive myself, the ground we stand on is that of Velez Malaga unless, indeed, all my years of captivity have made me unable to recollect that you, senor, who ask who we are, are Pedro de Bustamante, my uncle."

The Christian captive had hardly uttered these words, when the horseman threw himself off his horse, and ran to embrace the young man, crying:

"Nephew of my soul and life! I recognise thee now; and long have I mourned thee as dead, I, and my sister, thy mother, and all thy kin that are still alive, and whom God has been pleased to preserve that they may enjoy the happiness of seeing thee. We knew long since that thou wert in Algiers, and from the appearance of thy garments and those of all this company, I conclude that ye have had a miraculous restoration to liberty."

"It is true," replied the young man, "and by-and-by we will tell you all."

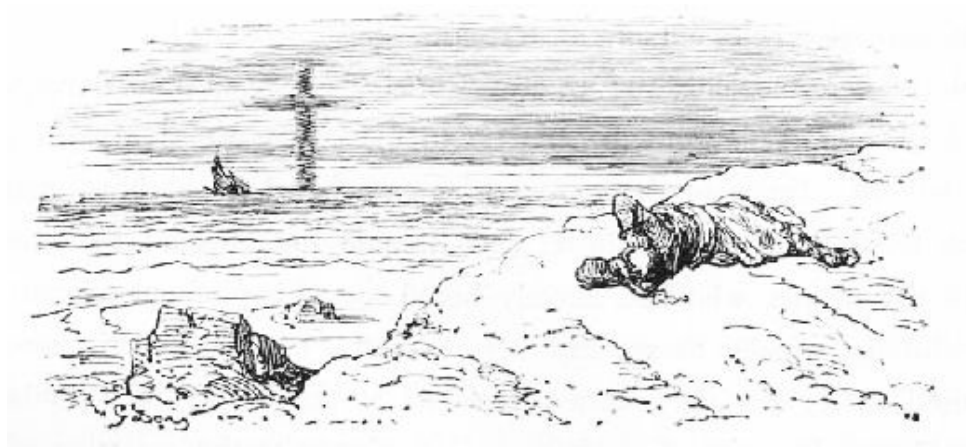
As soon as the horsemen understood that we were Christian captives, they dismounted from their horses, and each offered his to carry us to the city of Velez Malaga, which was a league and a half distant. Some of them went to bring the boat to the city, we having told them where we had left it; others took us up behind them, and Zoraida was placed on the horse of the young man's uncle. The whole town came out to meet us, for they had by this time heard of our arrival from one who had gone on in advance. They were not astonished to see liberated captives or captive Moors, for people on that coast are well used to see both one and the other; but they were astonished at the beauty of Zoraida, which was just then heightened, as well by the exertion of travelling as by joy at finding herself on Christian soil, and relieved of all fear of being lost; for this had brought such a glow upon her face, that unless my affection for her were deceiving me, I would venture to say that there was not a more beautiful creature in the world — at least, that I had ever seen. We went straight to the church to return thanks to God for the mercies we had received, and when Zoraida entered it she said there were faces there like Lela Marien's. We told her they were her images; and as well as he could the renegade explained to her what they meant, that she might adore them as if each of them were the very same Lela Marien



that had spoken to her; and she, having great intelligence and a quick and clear instinct, understood at once all he said to her about them. Thence they took us away and distributed us all in different houses in the town; but as for the renegade, Zoraida, and myself, the Christian who came with us brought us to the house of his parents, who had a fair share of the gifts of fortune, and treated us with as much kindness as they did their own son.

We remained six days in Velez, at the end of which the renegade, having informed himself of all that was requisite for him to do, set out for the city of Granada to restore himself to the sacred bosom of the Church through the medium of the Holy Inquisition. The other released captives took their departures, each the way that seemed best to him, and Zoraida and I were left alone, with nothing more than the crowns which the courtesy of the Frenchman had bestowed upon Zoraida, out of which I bought the beast on which she rides; and, I for the present attending her as her father and squire and not as her husband, we are now going to ascertain if my father is living, or if any of my brothers has had better fortune than mine has been; though, as Heaven has made me the companion of Zoraida, I think no other lot could be assigned to me, however happy, that I would rather have. The patience with which she endures the hardships that poverty brings with it, and the eagerness she shows to become a Christian, are such that they fill me with admiration, and bind me to serve her all my life; though the happiness I feel in seeing myself hers, and her mine, is disturbed and marred by not knowing whether I shall find any corner to shelter her in my own country, or whether time and death may not have made such changes in the fortunes and lives of my father and brothers, that I shall hardly find anyone who knows me, if they are not alive.

I have no more of my story to tell you, gentlemen; whether it be an interesting or a curious one let your better judgments decide; all I can say is I would gladly have told it to you more briefly; although my fear of wearying you has made me leave out more than one circumstance.



## CHAPTER XLII.

WHICH TREATS OF WHAT FURTHER TOOK PLACE IN THE INN, AND  
OF SEVERAL OTHER THINGS WORTH KNOWING



With these words the captive held his peace, and Don Fernando said to him, “In truth, captain, the manner in which you have related this remarkable adventure has been such as befitted the novelty and strangeness of the matter. The whole story is curious and uncommon, and abounds with incidents that fill the hearers with wonder and astonishment; and so great is the pleasure we have found in listening to it that we should be glad if it were to begin again, even though to-morrow were to find us still occupied with the same tale.” And while he said this Cardenio and the rest of them offered to be of service to him in any way that lay in their power, and in words and language so kindly and sincere that

the captain was much gratified by their good-will. In particular Don Fernando offered, if he would go back with him, to get his brother the marquis to become godfather at the baptism of Zoraida, and on his own part to provide him with the means of making his appearance in his own country with the credit and comfort he was entitled to. For all this the captive returned thanks very courteously, although he would not accept any of their generous offers.

By this time night closed in, and as it did, there came up to the inn a coach attended by some men on horseback, who demanded accommodation; to which the landlady replied that there was not a hand's breadth of the whole inn unoccupied.

"Still, for all that," said one of those who had entered on horseback, "room must be found for his lordship the Judge here."

At this name the landlady was taken aback, and said, "Senor, the fact is I have no beds; but if his lordship the Judge carries one with him, as no doubt he does, let him come in and welcome; for my husband and I will give up our room to accommodate his worship."

"Very good, so be it," said the squire; but in the meantime a man had got out of the coach whose dress indicated at a glance the office and post he held, for the long robe with ruffled sleeves that he wore showed that he was, as his servant said, a Judge of appeal. He led by the hand a young girl in a travelling dress, apparently about sixteen years of age, and of such a high-bred air, so beautiful and so graceful, that all were filled with admiration when she made her appearance, and but for having seen Dorothea, Luscinda, and Zoraida, who were there in the inn, they would have fancied that a beauty like that of this maiden's would have been hard to find. Don Quixote was present at the entrance of the Judge with the young lady, and as soon as he saw him he said, "Your worship may with confidence enter and take your ease in this castle; for though the accommodation be scanty and poor, there are no quarters so cramped or inconvenient that they cannot make room for arms and letters; above all if arms and letters have beauty for a guide and leader, as letters represented by your worship have in this fair maiden, to whom not only ought castles to throw themselves open and yield themselves up, but rocks should rend themselves asunder and mountains divide and bow themselves down to give her a reception. Enter, your worship, I say, into this paradise, for here you will find stars and suns to accompany the heaven your worship brings with you, here you will find arms in their supreme excellence, and beauty in its highest perfection."

The Judge was struck with amazement at the language of Don Quixote, whom he scrutinized very carefully, no less astonished by his figure than by his talk; and before he could find words to answer him he had a fresh surprise, when he

saw opposite to him Luscinda, Dorothea, and Zoraida, who, having heard of the new guests and of the beauty of the young lady, had come to see her and welcome her; Don Fernando, Cardenio, and the curate, however, greeted him in a more intelligible and polished style. In short, the Judge made his entrance in a state of bewilderment, as well with what he saw as what he heard, and the fair ladies of the inn gave the fair damsel a cordial welcome. On the whole he could perceive that all who were there were people of quality; but with the figure, countenance, and bearing of Don Quixote he was at his wits' end; and all civilities having been exchanged, and the accommodation of the inn inquired into, it was settled, as it had been before settled, that all the women should retire to the garret that has been already mentioned, and that the men should remain outside as if to guard them; the Judge, therefore, was very well pleased to allow his daughter, for such the damsel was, to go with the ladies, which she did very willingly; and with part of the host's narrow bed and half of what the Judge had brought with him, they made a more comfortable arrangement for the night than they had expected.

The captive, whose heart had leaped within him the instant he saw the Judge, telling him somehow that this was his brother, asked one of the servants who accompanied him what his name was, and whether he knew from what part of the country he came. The servant replied that he was called the Licentiate Juan Perez de Viedma, and that he had heard it said he came from a village in the mountains of Leon. From this statement, and what he himself had seen, he felt convinced that this was his brother who had adopted letters by his father's advice; and excited and rejoiced, he called Don Fernando and Cardenio and the curate aside, and told them how the matter stood, assuring them that the judge was his brother. The servant had further informed him that he was now going to the Indies with the appointment of Judge of the Supreme Court of Mexico; and he had learned, likewise, that the young lady was his daughter, whose mother had died in giving birth to her, and that he was very rich in consequence of the dowry left to him with the daughter. He asked their advice as to what means he should adopt to make himself known, or to ascertain beforehand whether, when he had made himself known, his brother, seeing him so poor, would be ashamed of him, or would receive him with a warm heart.

"Leave it to me to find out that," said the curate; "though there is no reason for supposing, senor captain, that you will not be kindly received, because the worth and wisdom that your brother's bearing shows him to possess do not make it likely that he will prove haughty or insensible, or that he will not know how to estimate the accidents of fortune at their proper value."

"Still," said the captain, "I would not make myself known abruptly, but in

some indirect way.”

“I have told you already,” said the curate, “that I will manage it in a way to satisfy us all.”

By this time supper was ready, and they all took their seats at the table, except the captive, and the ladies, who supped by themselves in their own room. In the middle of supper the curate said:

“I had a comrade of your worship’s name, Senor Judge, in Constantinople, where I was a captive for several years, and that same comrade was one of the stoutest soldiers and captains in the whole Spanish infantry; but he had as large a share of misfortune as he had of gallantry and courage.”

“And how was the captain called, senor?” asked the Judge.

“He was called Ruy Perez de Viedma,” replied the curate, “and he was born in a village in the mountains of Leon; and he mentioned a circumstance connected with his father and his brothers which, had it not been told me by so truthful a man as he was, I should have set down as one of those fables the old women tell over the fire in winter; for he said his father had divided his property among his three sons and had addressed words of advice to them sounder than any of Cato’s. But I can say this much, that the choice he made of going to the wars was attended with such success, that by his gallant conduct and courage, and without any help save his own merit, he rose in a few years to be captain of infantry, and to see himself on the high-road and in position to be given the command of a corps before long; but Fortune was against him, for where he might have expected her favour he lost it, and with it his liberty, on that glorious day when so many recovered theirs, at the battle of Lepanto. I lost mine at the Goletta, and after a variety of adventures we found ourselves comrades at Constantinople. Thence he went to Algiers, where he met with one of the most extraordinary adventures that ever befell anyone in the world.”

Here the curate went on to relate briefly his brother’s adventure with Zoraida; to all which the Judge gave such an attentive hearing that he never before had been so much of a hearer. The curate, however, only went so far as to describe how the Frenchmen plundered those who were in the boat, and the poverty and distress in which his comrade and the fair Moor were left, of whom he said he had not been able to learn what became of them, or whether they had reached Spain, or been carried to France by the Frenchmen.

The captain, standing a little to one side, was listening to all the curate said, and watching every movement of his brother, who, as soon as he perceived the curate had made an end of his story, gave a deep sigh and said with his eyes full of tears, “Oh, senor, if you only knew what news you have given me and how it comes home to me, making me show how I feel it with these tears that spring

from my eyes in spite of all my worldly wisdom and self-restraint! That brave captain that you speak of is my eldest brother, who, being of a bolder and loftier mind than my other brother or myself, chose the honourable and worthy calling of arms, which was one of the three careers our father proposed to us, as your comrade mentioned in that fable you thought he was telling you. I followed that of letters, in which God and my own exertions have raised me to the position in which you see me. My second brother is in Peru, so wealthy that with what he has sent to my father and to me he has fully repaid the portion he took with him, and has even furnished my father's hands with the means of gratifying his natural generosity, while I too have been enabled to pursue my studies in a more becoming and creditable fashion, and so to attain my present standing. My father is still alive, though dying with anxiety to hear of his eldest son, and he prays God unceasingly that death may not close his eyes until he has looked upon those of his son; but with regard to him what surprises me is, that having so much common sense as he had, he should have neglected to give any intelligence about himself, either in his troubles and sufferings, or in his prosperity, for if his father or any of us had known of his condition he need not have waited for that miracle of the reed to obtain his ransom; but what now disquiets me is the uncertainty whether those Frenchmen may have restored him to liberty, or murdered him to hide the robbery. All this will make me continue my journey, not with the satisfaction in which I began it, but in the deepest melancholy and sadness. Oh dear brother! that I only knew where thou art now, and I would hasten to seek thee out and deliver thee from thy sufferings, though it were to cost me suffering myself! Oh that I could bring news to our old father that thou art alive, even wert thou in the deepest dungeon of Barbary; for his wealth and my brother's and mine would rescue thee thence! Oh beautiful and generous Zoraida, that I could repay thy goodness to a brother! That I could be present at the new birth of thy soul, and at thy bridal that would give us all such happiness!"

All this and more the Judge uttered with such deep emotion at the news he had received of his brother that all who heard him shared in it, showing their sympathy with his sorrow. The curate, seeing, then, how well he had succeeded in carrying out his purpose and the captain's wishes, had no desire to keep them unhappy any longer, so he rose from the table and going into the room where Zoraida was he took her by the hand, Luscinda, Dorothea, and the Judge's daughter following her. The captain was waiting to see what the curate would do, when the latter, taking him with the other hand, advanced with both of them to where the Judge and the other gentlemen were and said, "Let your tears cease to flow, Senor Judge, and the wish of your heart be gratified as fully as you

could desire, for you have before you your worthy brother and your good sister-in-law. He whom you see here is the Captain Viedma, and this is the fair Moor who has been so good to him. The Frenchmen I told you of have reduced them to the state of poverty you see that you may show the generosity of your kind heart.”

The captain ran to embrace his brother, who placed both hands on his breast so as to have a good look at him, holding him a little way off but as soon as he had fully recognised him he clasped him in his arms so closely, shedding such tears of heartfelt joy, that most of those present could not but join in them. The words the brothers exchanged, the emotion they showed can scarcely be imagined, I fancy, much less put down in writing. They told each other in a few words the events of their lives; they showed the true affection of brothers in all its strength; then the judge embraced Zoraida, putting all he possessed at her disposal; then he made his daughter embrace her, and the fair Christian and the lovely Moor drew fresh tears from every eye. And there was Don Quixote observing all these strange proceedings attentively without uttering a word, and attributing the whole to chimeras of knight-errantry. Then they agreed that the captain and Zoraida should return with his brother to Seville, and send news to his father of his having been delivered and found, so as to enable him to come and be present at the marriage and baptism of Zoraida, for it was impossible for the Judge to put off his journey, as he was informed that in a month from that time the fleet was to sail from Seville for New Spain, and to miss the passage would have been a great inconvenience to him. In short, everybody was well pleased and glad at the captive’s good fortune; and as now almost two-thirds of the night were past, they resolved to retire to rest for the remainder of it. Don Quixote offered to mount guard over the castle lest they should be attacked by some giant or other malevolent scoundrel, covetous of the great treasure of beauty the castle contained. Those who understood him returned him thanks for this service, and they gave the Judge an account of his extraordinary humour, with which he was not a little amused. Sancho Panza alone was fuming at the lateness of the hour for retiring to rest; and he of all was the one that made himself most comfortable, as he stretched himself on the trappings of his ass, which, as will be told farther on, cost him so dear.

The ladies, then, having retired to their chamber, and the others having disposed themselves with as little discomfort as they could, Don Quixote sallied out of the inn to act as sentinel of the castle as he had promised. It happened, however, that a little before the approach of dawn a voice so musical and sweet reached the ears of the ladies that it forced them all to listen attentively, but especially Dorothea, who had been awake, and by whose side Dona Clara de



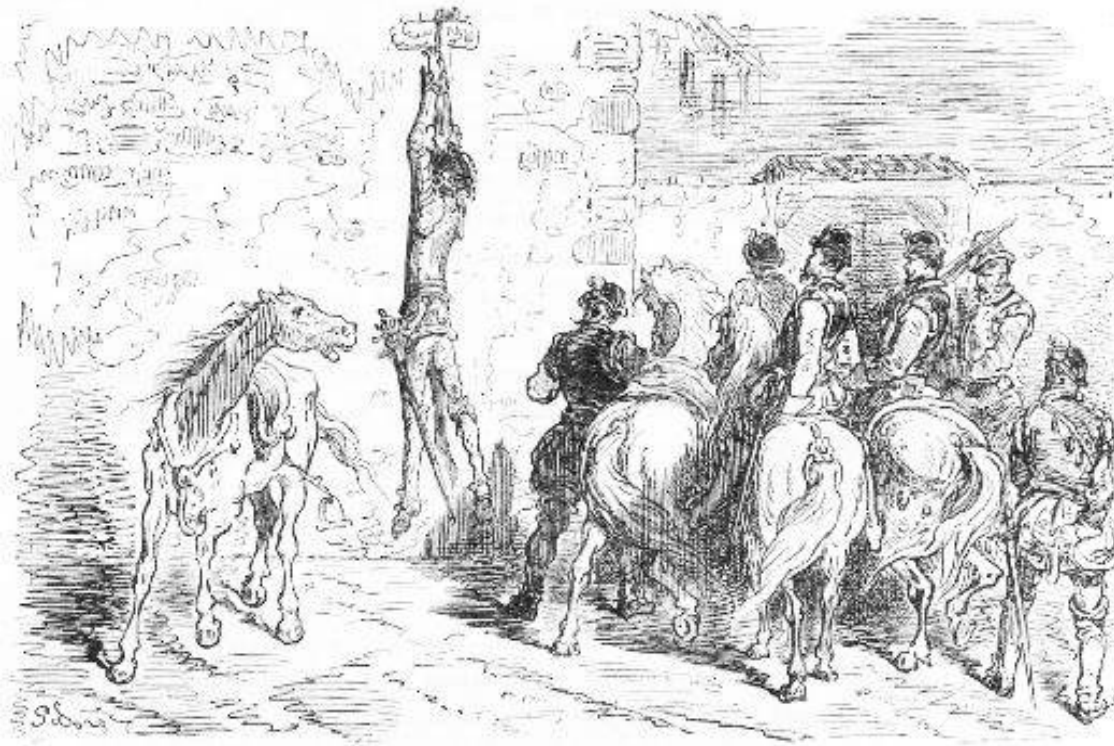
Viedma, for so the Judge's daughter was called, lay sleeping. No one could imagine who it was that sang so sweetly, and the voice was unaccompanied by any instrument. At one moment it seemed to them as if the singer were in the courtyard, at another in the stable; and as they were all attention, wondering, Cardenio came to the door and said, "Listen, whoever is not asleep, and you will hear a muleteer's voice that enchants as it chants."

"We are listening to it already, senor," said Dorothea; on which Cardenio went away; and Dorothea, giving all her attention to it, made out the words of the song to be these:



## CHAPTER XLIII.

WHEREIN IS RELATED THE PLEASANT STORY OF THE MULETEER,  
TOGETHER WITH OTHER STRANGE THINGS THAT CAME TO PASS IN  
THE INN



Ah me, Love's mariner am I  
On Love's deep ocean sailing;  
I know not where the haven lies,  
I dare not hope to gain it.

One solitary distant star  
Is all I have to guide me,

A brighter orb than those of old  
That Palinurus lighted.

And vaguely drifting am I borne,  
I know not where it leads me;  
I fix my gaze on it alone,  
Of all beside it heedless.

But over-cautious prudery,  
And coyness cold and cruel,  
When most I need it, these, like clouds,  
Its longed-for light refuse me.

Bright star, goal of my yearning eyes  
As thou above me beamest,  
When thou shalt hide thee from my sight  
I'll know that death is near me.

The singer had got so far when it struck Dorothea that it was not fair to let Clara miss hearing such a sweet voice, so, shaking her from side to side, she woke her, saying: "Forgive me, child, for waking thee, but I do so that thou mayest have the pleasure of hearing the best voice thou hast ever heard, perhaps, in all thy life."

Clara awoke quite drowsy, and not understanding at the moment what Dorothea said, asked her what it was; she repeated what she had said, and Clara became attentive at once; but she had hardly heard two lines, as the singer continued, when a strange trembling seized her, as if she were suffering from a severe attack of quartan ague, and throwing her arms round Dorothea she said: "Ah, dear lady of my soul and life! why did you wake me? The greatest kindness fortune could do me now would be to close my eyes and ears so as neither to see or hear that unhappy musician."

"What art thou talking about, child?" said Dorothea. "Why, they say this singer is a muleteer!"

"Nay, he is the lord of many places," replied Clara, "and that one in my heart which he holds so firmly shall never be taken from him, unless he be willing to surrender it."

Dorothea was amazed at the ardent language of the girl, for it seemed to be far beyond such experience of life as her tender years gave any promise of, so she said to her: "You speak in such a way that I cannot understand you, Senora Clara; explain yourself more clearly, and tell me what is this you are saying

about hearts and places and this musician whose voice has so moved you? But do not tell me anything now; I do not want to lose the pleasure I get from listening to the singer by giving my attention to your transports, for I perceive he is beginning to sing a new strain and a new air.”

“Let him, in Heaven’s name,” returned Clara; and not to hear him she stopped both ears with her hands, at which Dorothea was again surprised; but turning her attention to the song she found that it ran in this fashion: Sweet Hope, my stay,

That onward to the goal of thy intent  
Dost make thy way,  
Heedless of hindrance or impediment,  
Have thou no fear  
If at each step thou findest death is near.

No victory,  
No joy of triumph doth the faint heart know;  
Unblest is he  
That a bold front to Fortune dares not show,  
But soul and sense  
In bondage yieldeth up to indolence.

If Love his wares  
Do dearly sell, his right must be contest;  
What gold compares  
With that whereon his stamp he hath imprest?  
And all men know  
What costeth little that we rate but low.

Love resolute  
Knows not the word “impossibility;”  
And though my suit  
Beset by endless obstacles I see,  
Yet no despair  
Shall hold me bound to earth while heaven is there.

Here the voice ceased and Clara’s sobs began afresh, all which excited Dorothea’s curiosity to know what could be the cause of singing so sweet and weeping so bitter, so she again asked her what it was she was going to say before. On this Clara, afraid that Luscinda might overhear her, winding her arms tightly round Dorothea put her mouth so close to her ear that she could speak without fear of being heard by anyone else, and said: “This singer, dear senora,

is the son of a gentleman of Aragon, lord of two villages, who lives opposite my father's house at Madrid; and though my father had curtains to the windows of his house in winter, and lattice-work in summer, in some way — I know not how — this gentleman, who was pursuing his studies, saw me, whether in church or elsewhere, I cannot tell, and, in fact, fell in love with me, and gave me to know it from the windows of his house, with so many signs and tears that I was forced to believe him, and even to love him, without knowing what it was he wanted of me. One of the signs he used to make me was to link one hand in the other, to show me he wished to marry me; and though I should have been glad if that could be, being alone and motherless I knew not whom to open my mind to, and so I left it as it was, showing him no favour, except when my father, and his too, were from home, to raise the curtain or the lattice a little and let him see me plainly, at which he would show such delight that he seemed as if he were going mad. Meanwhile the time for my father's departure arrived, which he became aware of, but not from me, for I had never been able to tell him of it. He fell sick, of grief I believe, and so the day we were going away I could not see him to take farewell of him, were it only with the eyes. But after we had been two days on the road, on entering the posada of a village a day's journey from this, I saw him at the inn door in the dress of a muleteer, and so well disguised, that if I did not carry his image graven on my heart it would have been impossible for me to recognise him. But I knew him, and I was surprised, and glad; he watched me, unsuspected by my father, from whom he always hides himself when he crosses my path on the road, or in the posadas where we halt; and, as I know what he is, and reflect that for love of me he makes this journey on foot in all this hardship, I am ready to die of sorrow; and where he sets foot there I set my eyes. I know not with what object he has come; or how he could have got away from his father, who loves him beyond measure, having no other heir, and because he deserves it, as you will perceive when you see him. And moreover, I can tell you, all that he sings is out of his own head; for I have heard them say he is a great scholar and poet; and what is more, every time I see him or hear him sing I tremble all over, and am terrified lest my father should recognise him and come to know of our loves. I have never spoken a word to him in my life; and for all that I love him so that I could not live without him. This, dear senora, is all I have to tell you about the musician whose voice has delighted you so much; and from it alone you might easily perceive he is no muleteer, but a lord of hearts and towns, as I told you already."

"Say no more, Dona Clara," said Dorothea at this, at the same time kissing her a thousand times over, "say no more, I tell you, but wait till day comes; when I trust in God to arrange this affair of yours so that it may have the happy ending

such an innocent beginning deserves.”

“Ah, senora,” said Dona Clara, “what end can be hoped for when his father is of such lofty position, and so wealthy, that he would think I was not fit to be even a servant to his son, much less wife? And as to marrying without the knowledge of my father, I would not do it for all the world. I would not ask anything more than that this youth should go back and leave me; perhaps with not seeing him, and the long distance we shall have to travel, the pain I suffer now may become easier; though I daresay the remedy I propose will do me very little good. I don’t know how the devil this has come about, or how this love I have for him got in; I such a young girl, and he such a mere boy; for I verily believe we are both of an age, and I am not sixteen yet; for I will be sixteen Michaelmas Day, next, my father says.”

Dorothea could not help laughing to hear how like a child Dona Clara spoke. “Let us go to sleep now, senora,” said she, “for the little of the night that I fancy is left to us: God will soon send us daylight, and we will set all to rights, or it will go hard with me.”

With this they fell asleep, and deep silence reigned all through the inn. The only persons not asleep were the landlady’s daughter and her servant Maritornes, who, knowing the weak point of Don Quixote’s humour, and that he was outside the inn mounting guard in armour and on horseback, resolved, the pair of them, to play some trick upon him, or at any rate to amuse themselves for a while by listening to his nonsense. As it so happened there was not a window in the whole inn that looked outwards except a hole in the wall of a straw-loft through which they used to throw out the straw. At this hole the two demi-damsels posted themselves, and observed Don Quixote on his horse, leaning on his pike and from time to time sending forth such deep and doleful sighs, that he seemed to pluck up his soul by the roots with each of them; and they could hear him, too, saying in a soft, tender, loving tone, “Oh my lady Dulcinea del Toboso, perfection of all beauty, summit and crown of discretion, treasure house of grace, depositary of virtue, and finally, ideal of all that is good, honourable, and delectable in this world! What is thy grace doing now? Art thou, perchance, mindful of thy enslaved knight who of his own free will hath exposed himself to so great perils, and all to serve thee? Give me tidings of her, oh luminary of the three faces! Perhaps at this moment, envious of hers, thou art regarding her, either as she paces to and fro some gallery of her sumptuous palaces, or leans over some balcony, meditating how, whilst preserving her purity and greatness, she may mitigate the tortures this wretched heart of mine endures for her sake, what glory should recompense my sufferings, what repose my toil, and lastly what death my life, and what reward my services? And thou, oh sun, that art now

doubtless harnessing thy steeds in haste to rise betimes and come forth to see my lady; when thou seest her I entreat of thee to salute her on my behalf: but have a care, when thou shalt see her and salute her, that thou kiss not her face; for I shall be more jealous of thee than thou wert of that light-footed ingrate that made thee sweat and run so on the plains of Thessaly, or on the banks of the Peneus (for I do not exactly recollect where it was thou didst run on that occasion) in thy jealousy and love.”

Don Quixote had got so far in his pathetic speech when the landlady’s daughter began to signal to him, saying, “Senor, come over here, please.”

At these signals and voice Don Quixote turned his head and saw by the light of the moon, which then was in its full splendour, that some one was calling to him from the hole in the wall, which seemed to him to be a window, and what is more, with a gilt grating, as rich castles, such as he believed the inn to be, ought to have; and it immediately suggested itself to his imagination that, as on the former occasion, the fair damsel, the daughter of the lady of the castle, overcome by love for him, was once more endeavouring to win his affections; and with this idea, not to show himself discourteous, or ungrateful, he turned Rocinante’s head and approached the hole, and as he perceived the two wenches he said: “I pity you, beauteous lady, that you should have directed your thoughts of love to a quarter from whence it is impossible that such a return can be made to you as is due to your great merit and gentle birth, for which you must not blame this unhappy knight-errant whom love renders incapable of submission to any other than her whom, the first moment his eyes beheld her, he made absolute mistress of his soul. Forgive me, noble lady, and retire to your apartment, and do not, by any further declaration of your passion, compel me to show myself more ungrateful; and if, of the love you bear me, you should find that there is anything else in my power wherein I can gratify you, provided it be not love itself, demand it of me; for I swear to you by that sweet absent enemy of mine to grant it this instant, though it be that you require of me a lock of Medusa’s hair, which was all snakes, or even the very beams of the sun shut up in a vial.”

“My mistress wants nothing of that sort, sir knight,” said Maritornes at this.

“What then, discreet dame, is it that your mistress wants?” replied Don Quixote.

“Only one of your fair hands,” said Maritornes, “to enable her to vent over it the great passion, passion which has brought her to this loophole, so much to the risk of her honour; for if the lord her father had heard her, the least slice he would cut off her would be her ear.”

“I should like to see that tried,” said Don Quixote; “but he had better beware of that, if he does not want to meet the most disastrous end that ever father in the



world met for having laid hands on the tender limbs of a love-stricken daughter.”

Maritornes felt sure that Don Quixote would present the hand she had asked, and making up her mind what to do, she got down from the hole and went into the stable, where she took the halter of Sancho Panza’s ass, and in all haste returned to the hole, just as Don Quixote had planted himself standing on Rocinante’s saddle in order to reach the grated window where he supposed the lovelorn damsel to be; and giving her his hand, he said, “Lady, take this hand, or rather this scourge of the evil-doers of the earth; take, I say, this hand which no other hand of woman has ever touched, not even hers who has complete possession of my entire body. I present it to you, not that you may kiss it, but that you may observe the contexture of the sinews, the close network of the muscles, the breadth and capacity of the veins, whence you may infer what must be the strength of the arm that has such a hand.”

“That we shall see presently,” said Maritornes, and making a running knot on the halter, she passed it over his wrist and coming down from the hole tied the other end very firmly to the bolt of the door of the straw-loft.

Don Quixote, feeling the roughness of the rope on his wrist, exclaimed, “Your grace seems to be grating rather than caressing my hand; treat it not so harshly, for it is not to blame for the offence my resolution has given you, nor is it just to wreak all your vengeance on so small a part; remember that one who loves so well should not revenge herself so cruelly.”

But there was nobody now to listen to these words of Don Quixote’s, for as soon as Maritornes had tied him she and the other made off, ready to die with laughing, leaving him fastened in such a way that it was impossible for him to release himself.

He was, as has been said, standing on Rocinante, with his arm passed through the hole and his wrist tied to the bolt of the door, and in mighty fear and dread of being left hanging by the arm if Rocinante were to stir one side or the other; so he did not dare to make the least movement, although from the patience and imperturbable disposition of Rocinante, he had good reason to expect that he would stand without budging for a whole century. Finding himself fast, then, and that the ladies had retired, he began to fancy that all this was done by enchantment, as on the former occasion when in that same castle that enchanted Moor of a carrier had belaboured him; and he cursed in his heart his own want of sense and judgment in venturing to enter the castle again, after having come off so badly the first time; it being a settled point with knights-errant that when they have tried an adventure, and have not succeeded in it, it is a sign that it is not reserved for them but for others, and that therefore they need not try it again. Nevertheless he pulled his arm to see if he could release himself, but it had been

made so fast that all his efforts were in vain. It is true he pulled it gently lest Rocinante should move, but try as he might to seat himself in the saddle, he had nothing for it but to stand upright or pull his hand off. Then it was he wished for the sword of Amadis, against which no enchantment whatever had any power; then he cursed his ill fortune; then he magnified the loss the world would sustain by his absence while he remained there enchanted, for that he believed he was beyond all doubt; then he once more took to thinking of his beloved Dulcinea del Toboso; then he called to his worthy squire Sancho Panza, who, buried in sleep and stretched upon the pack-saddle of his ass, was oblivious, at that moment, of the mother that bore him; then he called upon the sages Lirgandeo and Alquife to come to his aid; then he invoked his good friend Urganda to succour him; and then, at last, morning found him in such a state of desperation and perplexity that he was bellowing like a bull, for he had no hope that day would bring any relief to his suffering, which he believed would last for ever, inasmuch as he was enchanted; and of this he was convinced by seeing that Rocinante never stirred, much or little, and he felt persuaded that he and his horse were to remain in this state, without eating or drinking or sleeping, until the malign influence of the stars was overpast, or until some other more sage enchanter should disenchant him.

But he was very much deceived in this conclusion, for daylight had hardly begun to appear when there came up to the inn four men on horseback, well equipped and accoutred, with firelocks across their saddle-bows. They called out and knocked loudly at the gate of the inn, which was still shut; on seeing which, Don Quixote, even there where he was, did not forget to act as sentinel, and said in a loud and imperious tone, "Knights, or squires, or whatever ye be, ye have no right to knock at the gates of this castle; for it is plain enough that they who are within are either asleep, or else are not in the habit of throwing open the fortress until the sun's rays are spread over the whole surface of the earth. Withdraw to a distance, and wait till it is broad daylight, and then we shall see whether it will be proper or not to open to you."

"What the devil fortress or castle is this," said one, "to make us stand on such ceremony? If you are the innkeeper bid them open to us; we are travellers who only want to feed our horses and go on, for we are in haste."

"Do you think, gentlemen, that I look like an innkeeper?" said Don Quixote.

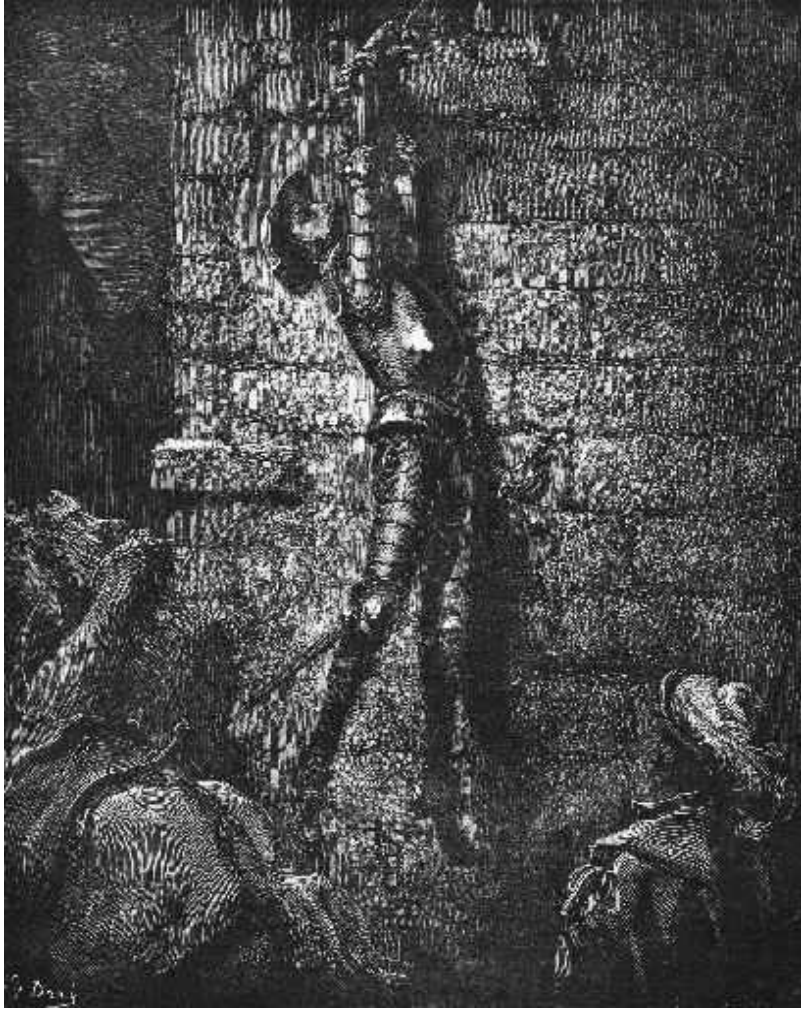
"I don't know what you look like," replied the other; "but I know that you are talking nonsense when you call this inn a castle."

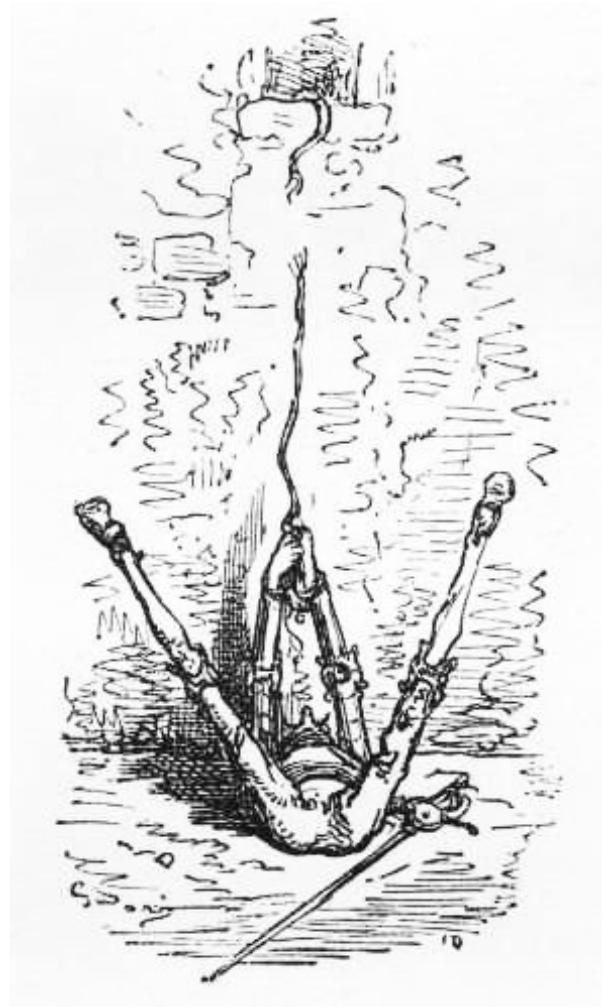
"A castle it is," returned Don Quixote, "nay, more, one of the best in this whole province, and it has within it people who have had the sceptre in the hand and the crown on the head."

“It would be better if it were the other way,” said the traveller, “the sceptre on the head and the crown in the hand; but if so, may be there is within some company of players, with whom it is a common thing to have those crowns and sceptres you speak of; for in such a small inn as this, and where such silence is kept, I do not believe any people entitled to crowns and sceptres can have taken up their quarters.”

“You know but little of the world,” returned Don Quixote, “since you are ignorant of what commonly occurs in knight-errantry.”

But the comrades of the spokesman, growing weary of the dialogue with Don Quixote, renewed their knocks with great vehemence, so much so that the host, and not only he but everybody in the inn, awoke, and he got up to ask who knocked. It happened at this moment that one of the horses of the four who were seeking admittance went to smell Rocinante, who melancholy, dejected, and with drooping ears stood motionless, supporting his sorely stretched master; and as he was, after all, flesh, though he looked as if he were made of wood, he could not help giving way and in return smelling the one who had come to offer him attentions. But he had hardly moved at all when Don Quixote lost his footing; and slipping off the saddle, he would have come to the ground, but for being suspended by the arm, which caused him such agony that he believed either his wrist would be cut through or his arm torn off; and he hung so near the ground that he could just touch it with his feet, which was all the worse for him; for, finding how little was wanted to enable him to plant his feet firmly, he struggled and stretched himself as much as he could to gain a footing; just like those undergoing the torture of the strappado, when they are fixed at “touch and no touch,” who aggravate their own sufferings by their violent efforts to stretch themselves, deceived by the hope which makes them fancy that with a very little more they will reach the ground.





## CHAPTER XLIV.

### IN WHICH ARE CONTINUED THE UNHEARD-OF ADVENTURES OF THE INN



So loud, in fact, were the shouts of Don Quixote, that the landlord opening the gate of the inn in all haste, came out in dismay, and ran to see who was uttering such cries, and those who were outside joined him. Maritornes, who had been by this time roused up by the same outcry, suspecting what it was, ran to the loft and, without anyone seeing her, untied the halter by which Don Quixote was suspended, and down he came to the ground in the sight of the landlord and the travellers, who approaching asked him what was the matter with him that he shouted so. He without replying a word took the rope off his wrist, and rising to his feet leaped upon Rocinante, braced his buckler on his arm, put his lance in

rest, and making a considerable circuit of the plain came back at a half-gallop exclaiming:

“Whoever shall say that I have been enchanted with just cause, provided my lady the Princess Micomicona grants me permission to do so, I give him the lie, challenge him and defy him to single combat.”

The newly arrived travellers were amazed at the words of Don Quixote; but the landlord removed their surprise by telling them who he was, and not to mind him as he was out of his senses. They then asked the landlord if by any chance a youth of about fifteen years of age had come to that inn, one dressed like a muleteer, and of such and such an appearance, describing that of Dona Clara’s lover. The landlord replied that there were so many people in the inn he had not noticed the person they were inquiring for; but one of them observing the coach in which the Judge had come, said, “He is here no doubt, for this is the coach he is following: let one of us stay at the gate, and the rest go in to look for him; or indeed it would be as well if one of us went round the inn, lest he should escape over the wall of the yard.” “So be it,” said another; and while two of them went in, one remained at the gate and the other made the circuit of the inn; observing all which, the landlord was unable to conjecture for what reason they were taking all these precautions, though he understood they were looking for the youth whose description they had given him.

It was by this time broad daylight; and for that reason, as well as in consequence of the noise Don Quixote had made, everybody was awake and up, but particularly Dona Clara and Dorothea; for they had been able to sleep but badly that night, the one from agitation at having her lover so near her, the other from curiosity to see him. Don Quixote, when he saw that not one of the four travellers took any notice of him or replied to his challenge, was furious and ready to die with indignation and wrath; and if he could have found in the ordinances of chivalry that it was lawful for a knight-errant to undertake or engage in another enterprise, when he had plighted his word and faith not to involve himself in any until he had made an end of the one to which he was pledged, he would have attacked the whole of them, and would have made them return an answer in spite of themselves. But considering that it would not become him, nor be right, to begin any new enterprise until he had established Micomicona in her kingdom, he was constrained to hold his peace and wait quietly to see what would be the upshot of the proceedings of those same travellers; one of whom found the youth they were seeking lying asleep by the side of a muleteer, without a thought of anyone coming in search of him, much less finding him.

The man laid hold of him by the arm, saying, “It becomes you well indeed,

Senor Don Luis, to be in the dress you wear, and well the bed in which I find you agrees with the luxury in which your mother reared you.”

The youth rubbed his sleepy eyes and stared for a while at him who held him, but presently recognised him as one of his father’s servants, at which he was so taken aback that for some time he could not find or utter a word; while the servant went on to say, “There is nothing for it now, Senor Don Luis, but to submit quietly and return home, unless it is your wish that my lord, your father, should take his departure for the other world, for nothing else can be the consequence of the grief he is in at your absence.”

“But how did my father know that I had gone this road and in this dress?” said Don Luis.

“It was a student to whom you confided your intentions,” answered the servant, “that disclosed them, touched with pity at the distress he saw your father suffer on missing you; he therefore despatched four of his servants in quest of you, and here we all are at your service, better pleased than you can imagine that we shall return so soon and be able to restore you to those eyes that so yearn for you.”

“That shall be as I please, or as heaven orders,” returned Don Luis.

“What can you please or heaven order,” said the other, “except to agree to go back? Anything else is impossible.”

All this conversation between the two was overheard by the muleteer at whose side Don Luis lay, and rising, he went to report what had taken place to Don Fernando, Cardenio, and the others, who had by this time dressed themselves; and told them how the man had addressed the youth as “Don,” and what words had passed, and how he wanted him to return to his father, which the youth was unwilling to do. With this, and what they already knew of the rare voice that heaven had bestowed upon him, they all felt very anxious to know more particularly who he was, and even to help him if it was attempted to employ force against him; so they hastened to where he was still talking and arguing with his servant. Dorothea at this instant came out of her room, followed by Dona Clara all in a tremor; and calling Cardenio aside, she told him in a few words the story of the musician and Dona Clara, and he at the same time told her what had happened, how his father’s servants had come in search of him; but in telling her so, he did not speak low enough but that Dona Clara heard what he said, at which she was so much agitated that had not Dorothea hastened to support her she would have fallen to the ground. Cardenio then bade Dorothea return to her room, as he would endeavour to make the whole matter right, and they did as he desired. All the four who had come in quest of Don Luis had now come into the inn and surrounded him, urging him to return and console his



father at once and without a moment's delay. He replied that he could not do so on any account until he had concluded some business in which his life, honour, and heart were at stake. The servants pressed him, saying that most certainly they would not return without him, and that they would take him away whether he liked it or not.

"You shall not do that," replied Don Luis, "unless you take me dead; though however you take me, it will be without life."

By this time most of those in the inn had been attracted by the dispute, but particularly Cardenio, Don Fernando, his companions, the Judge, the curate, the barber, and Don Quixote; for he now considered there was no necessity for mounting guard over the castle any longer. Cardenio being already acquainted with the young man's story, asked the men who wanted to take him away, what object they had in seeking to carry off this youth against his will.

"Our object," said one of the four, "is to save the life of his father, who is in danger of losing it through this gentleman's disappearance."

Upon this Don Luis exclaimed, "There is no need to make my affairs public here; I am free, and I will return if I please; and if not, none of you shall compel me."

"Reason will compel your worship," said the man, "and if it has no power over you, it has power over us, to make us do what we came for, and what it is our duty to do."

"Let us hear what the whole affair is about," said the Judge at this; but the man, who knew him as a neighbour of theirs, replied, "Do you not know this gentleman, Senor Judge? He is the son of your neighbour, who has run away from his father's house in a dress so unbecoming his rank, as your worship may perceive."

The judge on this looked at him more carefully and recognised him, and embracing him said, "What folly is this, Senor Don Luis, or what can have been the cause that could have induced you to come here in this way, and in this dress, which so ill becomes your condition?"

Tears came into the eyes of the young man, and he was unable to utter a word in reply to the Judge, who told the four servants not to be uneasy, for all would be satisfactorily settled; and then taking Don Luis by the hand, he drew him aside and asked the reason of his having come there.

But while he was questioning him they heard a loud outcry at the gate of the inn, the cause of which was that two of the guests who had passed the night there, seeing everybody busy about finding out what it was the four men wanted, had conceived the idea of going off without paying what they owed; but the landlord, who minded his own affairs more than other people's, caught them

going out of the gate and demanded his reckoning, abusing them for their dishonesty with such language that he drove them to reply with their fists, and so they began to lay on him in such a style that the poor man was forced to cry out, and call for help. The landlady and her daughter could see no one more free to give aid than Don Quixote, and to him the daughter said, "Sir knight, by the virtue God has given you, help my poor father, for two wicked men are beating him to a mummy."

To which Don Quixote very deliberately and phlegmatically replied, "Fair damsel, at the present moment your request is inopportune, for I am debarred from involving myself in any adventure until I have brought to a happy conclusion one to which my word has pledged me; but that which I can do for you is what I will now mention: run and tell your father to stand his ground as well as he can in this battle, and on no account to allow himself to be vanquished, while I go and request permission of the Princess Micomicona to enable me to succour him in his distress; and if she grants it, rest assured I will relieve him from it."

"Sinner that I am," exclaimed Maritornes, who stood by; "before you have got your permission my master will be in the other world."

"Give me leave, senora, to obtain the permission I speak of," returned Don Quixote; "and if I get it, it will matter very little if he is in the other world; for I will rescue him thence in spite of all the same world can do; or at any rate I will give you such a revenge over those who shall have sent him there that you will be more than moderately satisfied;" and without saying anything more he went and knelt before Dorothea, requesting her Highness in knightly and errant phrase to be pleased to grant him permission to aid and succour the castellan of that castle, who now stood in grievous jeopardy. The princess granted it graciously, and he at once, bracing his buckler on his arm and drawing his sword, hastened to the inn-gate, where the two guests were still handling the landlord roughly; but as soon as he reached the spot he stopped short and stood still, though Maritornes and the landlady asked him why he hesitated to help their master and husband.

"I hesitate," said Don Quixote, "because it is not lawful for me to draw sword against persons of squirely condition; but call my squire Sancho to me; for this defence and vengeance are his affair and business."

Thus matters stood at the inn-gate, where there was a very lively exchange of fisticuffs and punches, to the sore damage of the landlord and to the wrath of Maritornes, the landlady, and her daughter, who were furious when they saw the pusillanimity of Don Quixote, and the hard treatment their master, husband and father was undergoing. But let us leave him there; for he will surely find some

one to help him, and if not, let him suffer and hold his tongue who attempts more than his strength allows him to do; and let us go back fifty paces to see what Don Luis said in reply to the Judge whom we left questioning him privately as to his reasons for coming on foot and so meanly dressed.

To which the youth, pressing his hand in a way that showed his heart was troubled by some great sorrow, and shedding a flood of tears, made answer:

“Senor, I have no more to tell you than that from the moment when, through heaven’s will and our being near neighbours, I first saw Dona Clara, your daughter and my lady, from that instant I made her the mistress of my will, and if yours, my true lord and father, offers no impediment, this very day she shall become my wife. For her I left my father’s house, and for her I assumed this disguise, to follow her whithersoever she may go, as the arrow seeks its mark or the sailor the pole-star. She knows nothing more of my passion than what she may have learned from having sometimes seen from a distance that my eyes were filled with tears. You know already, senor, the wealth and noble birth of my parents, and that I am their sole heir; if this be a sufficient inducement for you to venture to make me completely happy, accept me at once as your son; for if my father, influenced by other objects of his own, should disapprove of this happiness I have sought for myself, time has more power to alter and change things, than human will.”

With this the love-smitten youth was silent, while the Judge, after hearing him, was astonished, perplexed, and surprised, as well at the manner and intelligence with which Don Luis had confessed the secret of his heart, as at the position in which he found himself, not knowing what course to take in a matter so sudden and unexpected. All the answer, therefore, he gave him was to bid him to make his mind easy for the present, and arrange with his servants not to take him back that day, so that there might be time to consider what was best for all parties. Don Luis kissed his hands by force, nay, bathed them with his tears, in a way that would have touched a heart of marble, not to say that of the Judge, who, as a shrewd man, had already perceived how advantageous the marriage would be to his daughter; though, were it possible, he would have preferred that it should be brought about with the consent of the father of Don Luis, who he knew looked for a title for his son.

The guests had by this time made peace with the landlord, for, by persuasion and Don Quixote’s fair words more than by threats, they had paid him what he demanded, and the servants of Don Luis were waiting for the end of the conversation with the Judge and their master’s decision, when the devil, who never sleeps, contrived that the barber, from whom Don Quixote had taken Mambrino’s helmet, and Sancho Panza the trappings of his ass in exchange for

those of his own, should at this instant enter the inn; which said barber, as he led his ass to the stable, observed Sancho Panza engaged in repairing something or other belonging to the pack-saddle; and the moment he saw it he knew it, and made bold to attack Sancho, exclaiming, "Ho, sir thief, I have caught you! hand over my basin and my pack-saddle, and all my trappings that you robbed me of."

Sancho, finding himself so unexpectedly assailed, and hearing the abuse poured upon him, seized the pack-saddle with one hand, and with the other gave the barber a cuff that bathed his teeth in blood. The barber, however, was not so ready to relinquish the prize he had made in the pack-saddle; on the contrary, he raised such an outcry that everyone in the inn came running to know what the noise and quarrel meant. "Here, in the name of the king and justice!" he cried, "this thief and highwayman wants to kill me for trying to recover my property."

"You lie," said Sancho, "I am no highwayman; it was in fair war my master Don Quixote won these spoils."

Don Quixote was standing by at the time, highly pleased to see his squire's stoutness, both offensive and defensive, and from that time forth he reckoned him a man of mettle, and in his heart resolved to dub him a knight on the first opportunity that presented itself, feeling sure that the order of chivalry would be fittingly bestowed upon him.

In the course of the altercation, among other things the barber said, "Gentlemen, this pack-saddle is mine as surely as I owe God a death, and I know it as well as if I had given birth to it, and here is my ass in the stable who will not let me lie; only try it, and if it does not fit him like a glove, call me a rascal; and what is more, the same day I was robbed of this, they robbed me likewise of a new brass basin, never yet handselled, that would fetch a crown any day."

At this Don Quixote could not keep himself from answering; and interposing between the two, and separating them, he placed the pack-saddle on the ground, to lie there in sight until the truth was established, and said, "Your worships may perceive clearly and plainly the error under which this worthy squire lies when he calls a basin which was, is, and shall be the helmet of Mambrino which I won from him in fair war, and made myself master of by legitimate and lawful possession. With the pack-saddle I do not concern myself; but I may tell you on that head that my squire Sancho asked my permission to strip off the caparison of this vanquished poltroon's steed, and with it adorn his own; I allowed him, and he took it; and as to its having been changed from a caparison into a pack-saddle, I can give no explanation except the usual one, that such transformations will take place in adventures of chivalry. To confirm all which, run, Sancho my son, and fetch hither the helmet which this good fellow calls a basin."

"Egad, master," said Sancho, "if we have no other proof of our case than what

your worship puts forward, Mambrino's helmet is just as much a basin as this good fellow's caparison is a pack-saddle."

"Do as I bid thee," said Don Quixote; "it cannot be that everything in this castle goes by enchantment."

Sancho hastened to where the basin was, and brought it back with him, and when Don Quixote saw it, he took hold of it and said:

"Your worships may see with what a face this squire can assert that this is a basin and not the helmet I told you of; and I swear by the order of chivalry I profess, that this helmet is the identical one I took from him, without anything added to or taken from it."

"There is no doubt of that," said Sancho, "for from the time my master won it until now he has only fought one battle in it, when he let loose those unlucky men in chains; and if had not been for this basin-helmet he would not have come off over well that time, for there was plenty of stone-throwing in that affair."



## CHAPTER XLV.

IN WHICH THE DOUBTFUL QUESTION OF MAMBRINO'S HELMET  
AND THE PACK-SADDLE IS FINALLY SETTLED, WITH OTHER  
ADVENTURES THAT OCCURRED IN TRUTH AND EARNEST



“What do you think now, gentlemen,” said the barber, “of what these gentles say, when they want to make out that this is a helmet?”

“And whoever says the contrary,” said Don Quixote, “I will let him know he lies if he is a knight, and if he is a squire that he lies again a thousand times.”

Our own barber, who was present at all this, and understood Don Quixote’s humour so thoroughly, took it into his head to back up his delusion and carry on the joke for the general amusement; so addressing the other barber he said:

“Senor barber, or whatever you are, you must know that I belong to your profession too, and have had a licence to practise for more than twenty years, and I know the implements of the barber craft, every one of them, perfectly well; and I was likewise a soldier for some time in the days of my youth, and I know also what a helmet is, and a morion, and a headpiece with a visor, and other things pertaining to soldiering, I meant to say to soldiers’ arms; and I say — saving better opinions and always with submission to sounder judgments — that this piece we have now before us, which this worthy gentleman has in his hands, not only is no barber’s basin, but is as far from being one as white is from black, and truth from falsehood; I say, moreover, that this, although it is a helmet, is not a complete helmet.”

“Certainly not,” said Don Quixote, “for half of it is wanting, that is to say the beaver.”

“It is quite true,” said the curate, who saw the object of his friend the barber; and Cardenio, Don Fernando and his companions agreed with him, and even the Judge, if his thoughts had not been so full of Don Luis’s affair, would have helped to carry on the joke; but he was so taken up with the serious matters he had on his mind that he paid little or no attention to these facetious proceedings.

“God bless me!” exclaimed their butt the barber at this; “is it possible that such an honourable company can say that this is not a basin but a helmet? Why, this is a thing that would astonish a whole university, however wise it might be! That will do; if this basin is a helmet, why, then the pack-saddle must be a horse’s caparison, as this gentleman has said.”

“To me it looks like a pack-saddle,” said Don Quixote; “but I have already said that with that question I do not concern myself.”

“As to whether it be pack-saddle or caparison,” said the curate, “it is only for Senor Don Quixote to say; for in these matters of chivalry all these gentlemen and I bow to his authority.”

“By God, gentlemen,” said Don Quixote, “so many strange things have happened to me in this castle on the two occasions on which I have sojourned in it, that I will not venture to assert anything positively in reply to any question touching anything it contains; for it is my belief that everything that goes on within it goes by enchantment. The first time, an enchanted Moor that there is in it gave me sore trouble, nor did Sancho fare well among certain followers of his; and last night I was kept hanging by this arm for nearly two hours, without knowing how or why I came by such a mishap. So that now, for me to come forward to give an opinion in such a puzzling matter, would be to risk a rash decision. As regards the assertion that this is a basin and not a helmet I have already given an answer; but as to the question whether this is a pack-saddle or a



caparison I will not venture to give a positive opinion, but will leave it to your worships' better judgment. Perhaps as you are not dubbed knights like myself, the enchantments of this place have nothing to do with you, and your faculties are unfettered, and you can see things in this castle as they really and truly are, and not as they appear to me."

"There can be no question," said Don Fernando on this, "but that Senor Don Quixote has spoken very wisely, and that with us rests the decision of this matter; and that we may have surer ground to go on, I will take the votes of the gentlemen in secret, and declare the result clearly and fully."

To those who were in the secret of Don Quixote's humour all this afforded great amusement; but to those who knew nothing about it, it seemed the greatest nonsense in the world, in particular to the four servants of Don Luis, as well as to Don Luis himself, and to three other travellers who had by chance come to the inn, and had the appearance of officers of the Holy Brotherhood, as indeed they were; but the one who above all was at his wits' end was the barber whose basin, there before his very eyes, had been turned into Mambrino's helmet, and whose pack-saddle he had no doubt whatever was about to become a rich caparison for a horse. All laughed to see Don Fernando going from one to another collecting the votes, and whispering to them to give him their private opinion whether the treasure over which there had been so much fighting was a pack-saddle or a caparison; but after he had taken the votes of those who knew Don Quixote, he said aloud, "The fact is, my good fellow, that I am tired collecting such a number of opinions, for I find that there is not one of whom I ask what I desire to know, who does not tell me that it is absurd to say that this is the pack-saddle of an ass, and not the caparison of a horse, nay, of a thoroughbred horse; so you must submit, for, in spite of you and your ass, this is a caparison and no pack-saddle, and you have stated and proved your case very badly."

"May I never share heaven," said the poor barber, "if your worships are not all mistaken; and may my soul appear before God as that appears to me a pack-saddle and not a caparison; but, 'laws go,' — I say no more; and indeed I am not drunk, for I am fasting, except it be from sin."

The simple talk of the barber did not afford less amusement than the absurdities of Don Quixote, who now observed:

"There is no more to be done now than for each to take what belongs to him, and to whom God has given it, may St. Peter add his blessing."

But said one of the four servants, "Unless, indeed, this is a deliberate joke, I cannot bring myself to believe that men so intelligent as those present are, or seem to be, can venture to declare and assert that this is not a basin, and that not a pack-saddle; but as I perceive that they do assert and declare it, I can only

come to the conclusion that there is some mystery in this persistence in what is so opposed to the evidence of experience and truth itself; for I swear by” — and here he rapped out a round oath— “all the people in the world will not make me believe that this is not a barber’s basin and that a jackass’s pack-saddle.”

“It might easily be a she-ass’s,” observed the curate.

“It is all the same,” said the servant; “that is not the point; but whether it is or is not a pack-saddle, as your worships say.”

On hearing this one of the newly arrived officers of the Brotherhood, who had been listening to the dispute and controversy, unable to restrain his anger and impatience, exclaimed, “It is a pack-saddle as sure as my father is my father, and whoever has said or will say anything else must be drunk.”

“You lie like a rascally clown,” returned Don Quixote; and lifting his pike, which he had never let out of his hand, he delivered such a blow at his head that, had not the officer dodged it, it would have stretched him at full length. The pike was shivered in pieces against the ground, and the rest of the officers, seeing their comrade assaulted, raised a shout, calling for help for the Holy Brotherhood. The landlord, who was of the fraternity, ran at once to fetch his staff of office and his sword, and ranged himself on the side of his comrades; the servants of Don Luis clustered round him, lest he should escape from them in the confusion; the barber, seeing the house turned upside down, once more laid hold of his pack-saddle and Sancho did the same; Don Quixote drew his sword and charged the officers; Don Luis cried out to his servants to leave him alone and go and help Don Quixote, and Cardenio and Don Fernando, who were supporting him; the curate was shouting at the top of his voice, the landlady was screaming, her daughter was wailing, Maritornes was weeping, Dorothea was aghast, Luscinda terror-stricken, and Dona Clara in a faint. The barber cudgelled Sancho, and Sancho pommelled the barber; Don Luis gave one of his servants, who ventured to catch him by the arm to keep him from escaping, a cuff that bathed his teeth in blood; the Judge took his part; Don Fernando had got one of the officers down and was belabouring him heartily; the landlord raised his voice again calling for help for the Holy Brotherhood; so that the whole inn was nothing but cries, shouts, shrieks, confusion, terror, dismay, mishaps, sword-cuts, fisticuffs, cudgellings, kicks, and bloodshed; and in the midst of all this chaos, complication, and general entanglement, Don Quixote took it into his head that he had been plunged into the thick of the discord of Agramante’s camp; and, in a voice that shook the inn like thunder, he cried out:

“Hold all, let all sheathe their swords, let all be calm and attend to me as they value their lives!”

All paused at his mighty voice, and he went on to say, “Did I not tell you, sirs,

that this castle was enchanted, and that a legion or so of devils dwelt in it? In proof whereof I call upon you to behold with your own eyes how the discord of Agramante's camp has come hither, and been transferred into the midst of us. See how they fight, there for the sword, here for the horse, on that side for the eagle, on this for the helmet; we are all fighting, and all at cross purposes. Come then, you, Senor Judge, and you, senor curate; let the one represent King Agramante and the other King Sobrino, and make peace among us; for by God Almighty it is a sorry business that so many persons of quality as we are should slay one another for such trifling cause." The officers, who did not understand Don Quixote's mode of speaking, and found themselves roughly handled by Don Fernando, Cardenio, and their companions, were not to be appeased; the barber was, however, for both his beard and his pack-saddle were the worse for the struggle; Sancho like a good servant obeyed the slightest word of his master; while the four servants of Don Luis kept quiet when they saw how little they gained by not being so. The landlord alone insisted upon it that they must punish the insolence of this madman, who at every turn raised a disturbance in the inn; but at length the uproar was stilled for the present; the pack-saddle remained a caparison till the day of judgment, and the basin a helmet and the inn a castle in Don Quixote's imagination.

All having been now pacified and made friends by the persuasion of the Judge and the curate, the servants of Don Luis began again to urge him to return with them at once; and while he was discussing the matter with them, the Judge took counsel with Don Fernando, Cardenio, and the curate as to what he ought to do in the case, telling them how it stood, and what Don Luis had said to him. It was agreed at length that Don Fernando should tell the servants of Don Luis who he was, and that it was his desire that Don Luis should accompany him to Andalusia, where he would receive from the marquis his brother the welcome his quality entitled him to; for, otherwise, it was easy to see from the determination of Don Luis that he would not return to his father at present, though they tore him to pieces. On learning the rank of Don Fernando and the resolution of Don Luis the four then settled it between themselves that three of them should return to tell his father how matters stood, and that the other should remain to wait upon Don Luis, and not leave him until they came back for him, or his father's orders were known. Thus by the authority of Agramante and the wisdom of King Sobrino all this complication of disputes was arranged; but the enemy of concord and hater of peace, feeling himself slighted and made a fool of, and seeing how little he had gained after having involved them all in such an elaborate entanglement, resolved to try his hand once more by stirring up fresh quarrels and disturbances.

It came about in this wise: the officers were pacified on learning the rank of those with whom they had been engaged, and withdrew from the contest, considering that whatever the result might be they were likely to get the worst of the battle; but one of them, the one who had been thrashed and kicked by Don Fernando, recollected that among some warrants he carried for the arrest of certain delinquents, he had one against Don Quixote, whom the Holy Brotherhood had ordered to be arrested for setting the galley slaves free, as Sancho had, with very good reason, apprehended. Suspecting how it was, then, he wished to satisfy himself as to whether Don Quixote's features corresponded; and taking a parchment out of his bosom he lit upon what he was in search of, and setting himself to read it deliberately, for he was not a quick reader, as he made out each word he fixed his eyes on Don Quixote, and went on comparing the description in the warrant with his face, and discovered that beyond all doubt he was the person described in it. As soon as he had satisfied himself, folding up the parchment, he took the warrant in his left hand and with his right seized Don Quixote by the collar so tightly that he did not allow him to breathe, and shouted aloud, "Help for the Holy Brotherhood! and that you may see I demand it in earnest, read this warrant which says this highwayman is to be arrested."

The curate took the warrant and saw that what the officer said was true, and that it agreed with Don Quixote's appearance, who, on his part, when he found himself roughly handled by this rascally clown, worked up to the highest pitch of wrath, and all his joints cracking with rage, with both hands seized the officer by the throat with all his might, so that had he not been helped by his comrades he would have yielded up his life ere Don Quixote released his hold. The landlord, who had perforce to support his brother officers, ran at once to aid them. The landlady, when she saw her husband engaged in a fresh quarrel, lifted up her voice afresh, and its note was immediately caught up by Maritornes and her daughter, calling upon heaven and all present for help; and Sancho, seeing what was going on, exclaimed, "By the Lord, it is quite true what my master says about the enchantments of this castle, for it is impossible to live an hour in peace in it!"

Don Fernando parted the officer and Don Quixote, and to their mutual contentment made them relax the grip by which they held, the one the coat collar, the other the throat of his adversary; for all this, however, the officers did not cease to demand their prisoner and call on them to help, and deliver him over bound into their power, as was required for the service of the King and of the Holy Brotherhood, on whose behalf they again demanded aid and assistance to effect the capture of this robber and footpad of the highways.

Don Quixote smiled when he heard these words, and said very calmly, "Come

now, base, ill-born brood; call ye it highway robbery to give freedom to those in bondage, to release the captives, to succour the miserable, to raise up the fallen, to relieve the needy? Infamous beings, who by your vile grovelling intellects deserve that heaven should not make known to you the virtue that lies in knight-errantry, or show you the sin and ignorance in which ye lie when ye refuse to respect the shadow, not to say the presence, of any knight-errant! Come now; band, not of officers, but of thieves; footpads with the licence of the Holy Brotherhood; tell me who was the ignoramus who signed a warrant of arrest against such a knight as I am? Who was he that did not know that knights-errant are independent of all jurisdictions, that their law is their sword, their charter their prowess, and their edicts their will? Who, I say again, was the fool that knows not that there are no letters patent of nobility that confer such privileges or exemptions as a knight-errant acquires the day he is dubbed a knight, and devotes himself to the arduous calling of chivalry? What knight-errant ever paid poll-tax, duty, queen's pin-money, king's dues, toll or ferry? What tailor ever took payment of him for making his clothes? What castellan that received him in his castle ever made him pay his shot? What king did not seat him at his table? What damsel was not enamoured of him and did not yield herself up wholly to his will and pleasure? And, lastly, what knight-errant has there been, is there, or will there ever be in the world, not bold enough to give, single-handed, four hundred cudgellings to four hundred officers of the Holy Brotherhood if they come in his way?"

## CHAPTER XLVI.

OF THE END OF THE NOTABLE ADVENTURE OF THE OFFICERS OF  
THE HOLY BROTHERHOOD; AND OF THE GREAT FEROCITY OF OUR  
WORTHY KNIGHT, DON QUIXOTE



While Don Quixote was talking in this strain, the curate was endeavouring to persuade the officers that he was out of his senses, as they might perceive by his deeds and his words, and that they need not press the matter any further, for even if they arrested him and carried him off, they would have to release him by-and-by as a madman; to which the holder of the warrant replied that he had nothing to do with inquiring into Don Quixote's madness, but only to execute his superior's orders, and that once taken they might let him go three hundred times

if they liked.

“For all that,” said the curate, “you must not take him away this time, nor will he, it is my opinion, let himself be taken away.”

In short, the curate used such arguments, and Don Quixote did such mad things, that the officers would have been more mad than he was if they had not perceived his want of wits, and so they thought it best to allow themselves to be pacified, and even to act as peacemakers between the barber and Sancho Panza, who still continued their altercation with much bitterness. In the end they, as officers of justice, settled the question by arbitration in such a manner that both sides were, if not perfectly contented, at least to some extent satisfied; for they changed the pack-saddles, but not the girths or head-stalls; and as to Mambrino’s helmet, the curate, under the rose and without Don Quixote’s knowing it, paid eight reals for the basin, and the barber executed a full receipt and engagement to make no further demand then or thenceforth for evermore, amen. These two disputes, which were the most important and gravest, being settled, it only remained for the servants of Don Luis to consent that three of them should return while one was left to accompany him whither Don Fernando desired to take him; and good luck and better fortune, having already begun to solve difficulties and remove obstructions in favour of the lovers and warriors of the inn, were pleased to persevere and bring everything to a happy issue; for the servants agreed to do as Don Luis wished; which gave Dona Clara such happiness that no one could have looked into her face just then without seeing the joy of her heart. Zoraida, though she did not fully comprehend all she saw, was grave or gay without knowing why, as she watched and studied the various countenances, but particularly her Spaniard’s, whom she followed with her eyes and clung to with her soul. The gift and compensation which the curate gave the barber had not escaped the landlord’s notice, and he demanded Don Quixote’s reckoning, together with the amount of the damage to his wine-skins, and the loss of his wine, swearing that neither Rocinante nor Sancho’s ass should leave the inn until he had been paid to the very last farthing. The curate settled all amicably, and Don Fernando paid; though the Judge had also very readily offered to pay the score; and all became so peaceful and quiet that the inn no longer reminded one of the discord of Agramante’s camp, as Don Quixote said, but of the peace and tranquillity of the days of Octavianus: for all which it was the universal opinion that their thanks were due to the great zeal and eloquence of the curate, and to the unexampled generosity of Don Fernando.

Finding himself now clear and quit of all quarrels, his squire’s as well as his own, Don Quixote considered that it would be advisable to continue the journey he had begun, and bring to a close that great adventure for which he had been

called and chosen; and with this high resolve he went and knelt before Dorothea, who, however, would not allow him to utter a word until he had risen; so to obey her he rose, and said, "It is a common proverb, fair lady, that 'diligence is the mother of good fortune,' and experience has often shown in important affairs that the earnestness of the negotiator brings the doubtful case to a successful termination; but in nothing does this truth show itself more plainly than in war, where quickness and activity forestall the devices of the enemy, and win the victory before the foe has time to defend himself. All this I say, exalted and esteemed lady, because it seems to me that for us to remain any longer in this castle now is useless, and may be injurious to us in a way that we shall find out some day; for who knows but that your enemy the giant may have learned by means of secret and diligent spies that I am going to destroy him, and if the opportunity be given him he may seize it to fortify himself in some impregnable castle or stronghold, against which all my efforts and the might of my indefatigable arm may avail but little? Therefore, lady, let us, as I say, forestall his schemes by our activity, and let us depart at once in quest of fair fortune; for your highness is only kept from enjoying it as fully as you could desire by my delay in encountering your adversary."

Don Quixote held his peace and said no more, calmly awaiting the reply of the beautiful princess, who, with commanding dignity and in a style adapted to Don Quixote's own, replied to him in these words, "I give you thanks, sir knight, for the eagerness you, like a good knight to whom it is a natural obligation to succour the orphan and the needy, display to afford me aid in my sore trouble; and heaven grant that your wishes and mine may be realised, so that you may see that there are women in this world capable of gratitude; as to my departure, let it be forthwith, for I have no will but yours; dispose of me entirely in accordance with your good pleasure; for she who has once entrusted to you the defence of her person, and placed in your hands the recovery of her dominions, must not think of offering opposition to that which your wisdom may ordain."

"On, then, in God's name," said Don Quixote; "for, when a lady humbles herself to me, I will not lose the opportunity of raising her up and placing her on the throne of her ancestors. Let us depart at once, for the common saying that in delay there is danger, lends spurs to my eagerness to take the road; and as neither heaven has created nor hell seen any that can daunt or intimidate me, saddle Rocinante, Sancho, and get ready thy ass and the queen's palfrey, and let us take leave of the castellan and these gentlemen, and go hence this very instant."

Sancho, who was standing by all the time, said, shaking his head, "Ah! master, master, there is more mischief in the village than one hears of, begging all good bodies' pardon."



“What mischief can there be in any village, or in all the cities of the world, you booby, that can hurt my reputation?” said Don Quixote.

“If your worship is angry,” replied Sancho, “I will hold my tongue and leave unsaid what as a good squire I am bound to say, and what a good servant should tell his master.”

“Say what thou wilt,” returned Don Quixote, “provided thy words be not meant to work upon my fears; for thou, if thou fearest, art behaving like thyself; but I like myself, in not fearing.”

“It is nothing of the sort, as I am a sinner before God,” said Sancho, “but that I take it to be sure and certain that this lady, who calls herself queen of the great kingdom of Micomicon, is no more so than my mother; for, if she was what she says, she would not go rubbing noses with one that is here every instant and behind every door.”

Dorothea turned red at Sancho’s words, for the truth was that her husband Don Fernando had now and then, when the others were not looking, gathered from her lips some of the reward his love had earned, and Sancho seeing this had considered that such freedom was more like a courtesan than a queen of a great kingdom; she, however, being unable or not caring to answer him, allowed him to proceed, and he continued, “This I say, senor, because, if after we have travelled roads and highways, and passed bad nights and worse days, one who is now enjoying himself in this inn is to reap the fruit of our labours, there is no need for me to be in a hurry to saddle Rocinante, put the pad on the ass, or get ready the palfrey; for it will be better for us to stay quiet, and let every jade mind her spinning, and let us go to dinner.”

Good God, what was the indignation of Don Quixote when he heard the audacious words of his squire! So great was it, that in a voice inarticulate with rage, with a stammering tongue, and eyes that flashed living fire, he exclaimed, “Rascally clown, boorish, insolent, and ignorant, ill-spoken, foul-mouthed, impudent backbiter and slanderer! Hast thou dared to utter such words in my presence and in that of these illustrious ladies? Hast thou dared to harbour such gross and shameless thoughts in thy muddled imagination? Begone from my presence, thou born monster, storehouse of lies, hoard of untruths, garner of knaveries, inventor of scandals, publisher of absurdities, enemy of the respect due to royal personages! Begone, show thyself no more before me under pain of my wrath;” and so saying he knitted his brows, puffed out his cheeks, gazed around him, and stamped on the ground violently with his right foot, showing in every way the rage that was pent up in his heart; and at his words and furious gestures Sancho was so scared and terrified that he would have been glad if the earth had opened that instant and swallowed him, and his only thought was to

turn round and make his escape from the angry presence of his master.

But the ready-witted Dorothea, who by this time so well understood Don Quixote's humour, said, to mollify his wrath, "Be not irritated at the absurdities your good squire has uttered, Sir Knight of the Rueful Countenance, for perhaps he did not utter them without cause, and from his good sense and Christian conscience it is not likely that he would bear false witness against anyone. We may therefore believe, without any hesitation, that since, as you say, sir knight, everything in this castle goes and is brought about by means of enchantment, Sancho, I say, may possibly have seen, through this diabolical medium, what he says he saw so much to the detriment of my modesty."

"I swear by God Omnipotent," exclaimed Don Quixote at this, "your highness has hit the point; and that some vile illusion must have come before this sinner of a Sancho, that made him see what it would have been impossible to see by any other means than enchantments; for I know well enough, from the poor fellow's goodness and harmlessness, that he is incapable of bearing false witness against anybody."

"True, no doubt," said Don Fernando, "for which reason, Senor Don Quixote, you ought to forgive him and restore him to the bosom of your favour, sicut erat in principio, before illusions of this sort had taken away his senses."

Don Quixote said he was ready to pardon him, and the curate went for Sancho, who came in very humbly, and falling on his knees begged for the hand of his master, who having presented it to him and allowed him to kiss it, gave him his blessing and said, "Now, Sancho my son, thou wilt be convinced of the truth of what I have many a time told thee, that everything in this castle is done by means of enchantment."

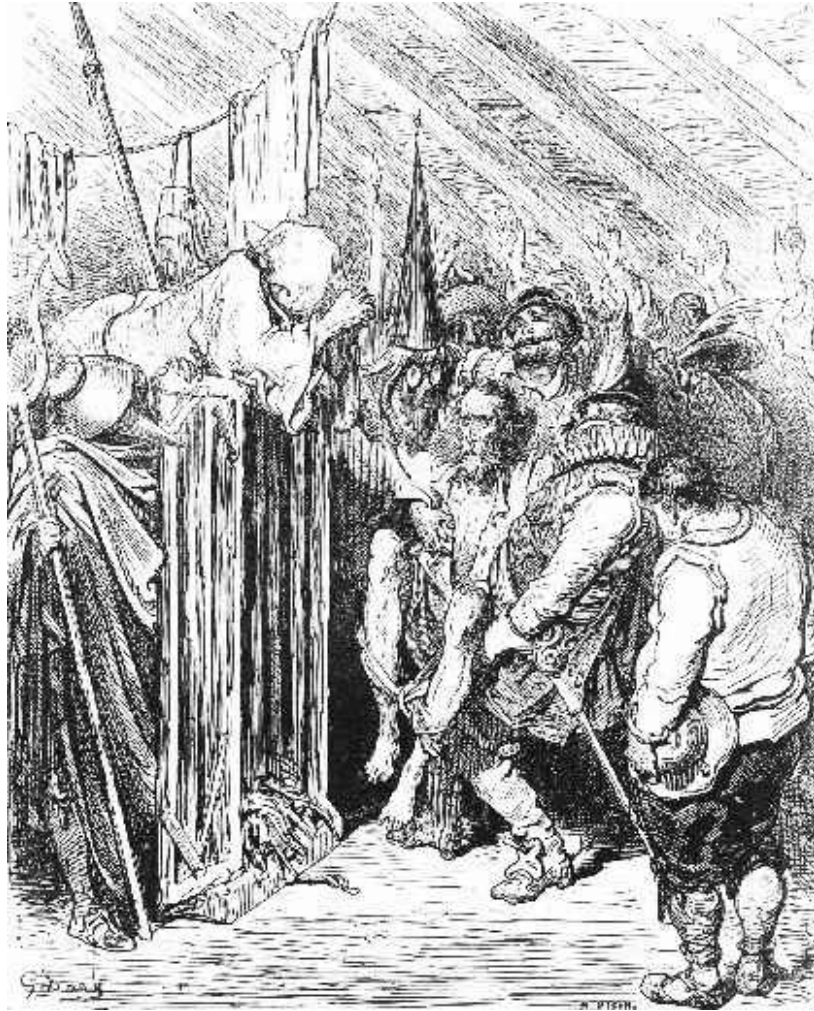
"So it is, I believe," said Sancho, "except the affair of the blanket, which came to pass in reality by ordinary means."

"Believe it not," said Don Quixote, "for had it been so, I would have avenged thee that instant, or even now; but neither then nor now could I, nor have I seen anyone upon whom to avenge thy wrong."

They were all eager to know what the affair of the blanket was, and the landlord gave them a minute account of Sancho's flights, at which they laughed not a little, and at which Sancho would have been no less out of countenance had not his master once more assured him it was all enchantment. For all that his simplicity never reached so high a pitch that he could persuade himself it was not the plain and simple truth, without any deception whatever about it, that he had been blanketed by beings of flesh and blood, and not by visionary and imaginary phantoms, as his master believed and protested.

The illustrious company had now been two days in the inn; and as it seemed

to them time to depart, they devised a plan so that, without giving Dorothea and Don Fernando the trouble of going back with Don Quixote to his village under pretence of restoring Queen Micomicona, the curate and the barber might carry him away with them as they proposed, and the curate be able to take his madness in hand at home; and in pursuance of their plan they arranged with the owner of an oxcart who happened to be passing that way to carry him after this fashion. They constructed a kind of cage with wooden bars, large enough to hold Don Quixote comfortably; and then Don Fernando and his companions, the servants of Don Luis, and the officers of the Brotherhood, together with the landlord, by the directions and advice of the curate, covered their faces and disguised themselves, some in one way, some in another, so as to appear to Don Quixote quite different from the persons he had seen in the castle. This done, in profound silence they entered the room where he was asleep, taking his rest after the past frays, and advancing to where he was sleeping tranquilly, not dreaming of anything of the kind happening, they seized him firmly and bound him fast hand and foot, so that, when he awoke startled, he was unable to move, and could only marvel and wonder at the strange figures he saw before him; upon which he at once gave way to the idea which his crazed fancy invariably conjured up before him, and took it into his head that all these shapes were phantoms of the enchanted castle, and that he himself was unquestionably enchanted as he could neither move nor help himself; precisely what the curate, the concoctor of the scheme, expected would happen. Of all that were there Sancho was the only one who was at once in his senses and in his own proper character, and he, though he was within very little of sharing his master's infirmity, did not fail to perceive who all these disguised figures were; but he did not dare to open his lips until he saw what came of this assault and capture of his master; nor did the latter utter a word, waiting to the upshot of his mishap; which was that bringing in the cage, they shut him up in it and nailed the bars so firmly that they could not be easily burst open.



They then took him on their shoulders, and as they passed out of the room an awful voice — as much so as the barber, not he of the pack-saddle but the other, was able to make it — was heard to say, “O Knight of the Rueful Countenance, let not this captivity in which thou art placed afflict thee, for this must needs be, for the more speedy accomplishment of the adventure in which thy great heart has engaged thee; the which shall be accomplished when the raging Manchegan lion and the white Tobosan dove shall be linked together, having first humbled their haughty necks to the gentle yoke of matrimony. And from this marvellous union shall come forth to the light of the world brave whelps that shall rival the ravening claws of their valiant father; and this shall come to pass ere the pursuer

of the flying nymph shall in his swift natural course have twice visited the starry signs. And thou, O most noble and obedient squire that ever bore sword at side, beard on face, or nose to smell with, be not dismayed or grieved to see the flower of knight-errantry carried away thus before thy very eyes; for soon, if it so please the Framer of the universe, thou shalt see thyself exalted to such a height that thou shalt not know thyself, and the promises which thy good master has made thee shall not prove false; and I assure thee, on the authority of the sage Mentironiana, that thy wages shall be paid thee, as thou shalt see in due season. Follow then the footsteps of the valiant enchanted knight, for it is expedient that thou shouldst go to the destination assigned to both of you; and as it is not permitted to me to say more, God be with thee; for I return to that place I wot of;" and as he brought the prophecy to a close he raised his voice to a high pitch, and then lowered it to such a soft tone, that even those who knew it was all a joke were almost inclined to take what they heard seriously.

Don Quixote was comforted by the prophecy he heard, for he at once comprehended its meaning perfectly, and perceived it was promised to him that he should see himself united in holy and lawful matrimony with his beloved Dulcinea del Toboso, from whose blessed womb should proceed the whelps, his sons, to the eternal glory of La Mancha; and being thoroughly and firmly persuaded of this, he lifted up his voice, and with a deep sigh exclaimed, "Oh thou, whoever thou art, who hast foretold me so much good, I implore of thee that on my part thou entreat that sage enchanter who takes charge of my interests, that he leave me not to perish in this captivity in which they are now carrying me away, ere I see fulfilled promises so joyful and incomparable as those which have been now made me; for, let this but come to pass, and I shall glory in the pains of my prison, find comfort in these chains wherewith they bind me, and regard this bed whereon they stretch me, not as a hard battle-field, but as a soft and happy nuptial couch; and touching the consolation of Sancho Panza, my squire, I rely upon his goodness and rectitude that he will not desert me in good or evil fortune; for if, by his ill luck or mine, it may not happen to be in my power to give him the island I have promised, or any equivalent for it, at least his wages shall not be lost; for in my will, which is already made, I have declared the sum that shall be paid to him, measured, not by his many faithful services, but by the means at my disposal."

Sancho bowed his head very respectfully and kissed both his hands, for, being tied together, he could not kiss one; and then the apparitions lifted the cage upon their shoulders and fixed it upon the ox-cart.



## CHAPTER XLVII.

### OF THE STRANGE MANNER IN WHICH DON QUIXOTE OF LA MANCHA WAS CARRIED AWAY ENCHANTED, TOGETHER WITH OTHER REMARKABLE INCIDENTS



When Don Quixote saw himself caged and hoisted on the cart in this way, he said, "Many grave histories of knights-errant have I read; but never yet have I read, seen, or heard of their carrying off enchanted knights-errant in this fashion, or at the slow pace that these lazy, sluggish animals promise; for they always take them away through the air with marvellous swiftness, enveloped in a dark thick cloud, or on a chariot of fire, or it may be on some hippogriff or other beast of the kind; but to carry me off like this on an ox-cart! By God, it puzzles me!

But perhaps the chivalry and enchantments of our day take a different course from that of those in days gone by; and it may be, too, that as I am a new knight in the world, and the first to revive the already forgotten calling of knight-adventurers, they may have newly invented other kinds of enchantments and other modes of carrying off the enchanted. What thinkest thou of the matter, Sancho my son?"





“I don’t know what to think,” answered Sancho, “not being as well read as your worship in errant writings; but for all that I venture to say and swear that these apparitions that are about us are not quite catholic.”

“Catholic!” said Don Quixote. “Father of me! how can they be Catholic when they are all devils that have taken fantastic shapes to come and do this, and bring me to this condition? And if thou wouldst prove it, touch them, and feel them, and thou wilt find they have only bodies of air, and no consistency except in appearance.”

“By God, master,” returned Sancho, “I have touched them already; and that devil, that goes about there so busily, has firm flesh, and another property very different from what I have heard say devils have, for by all accounts they all smell of brimstone and other bad smells; but this one smells of amber half a league off.” Sancho was here speaking of Don Fernando, who, like a gentleman of his rank, was very likely perfumed as Sancho said.

“Marvel not at that, Sancho my friend,” said Don Quixote; “for let me tell thee devils are crafty; and even if they do carry odours about with them, they themselves have no smell, because they are spirits; or, if they have any smell, they cannot smell of anything sweet, but of something foul and fetid; and the reason is that as they carry hell with them wherever they go, and can get no ease whatever from their torments, and as a sweet smell is a thing that gives pleasure and enjoyment, it is impossible that they can smell sweet; if, then, this devil thou speakest of seems to thee to smell of amber, either thou art deceiving thyself, or he wants to deceive thee by making thee fancy he is not a devil.”

Such was the conversation that passed between master and man; and Don Fernando and Cardenio, apprehensive of Sancho’s making a complete discovery of their scheme, towards which he had already gone some way, resolved to hasten their departure, and calling the landlord aside, they directed him to saddle Rocinante and put the pack-saddle on Sancho’s ass, which he did with great alacrity. In the meantime the curate had made an arrangement with the officers that they should bear them company as far as his village, he paying them so much a day. Cardenio hung the buckler on one side of the bow of Rocinante’s saddle and the basin on the other, and by signs commanded Sancho to mount his ass and take Rocinante’s bridle, and at each side of the cart he placed two officers with their muskets; but before the cart was put in motion, out came the landlady and her daughter and Maritornes to bid Don Quixote farewell,

pretending to weep with grief at his misfortune; and to them Don Quixote said:

“Weep not, good ladies, for all these mishaps are the lot of those who follow the profession I profess; and if these reverses did not befall me I should not esteem myself a famous knight-errant; for such things never happen to knights of little renown and fame, because nobody in the world thinks about them; to valiant knights they do, for these are envied for their virtue and valour by many princes and other knights who compass the destruction of the worthy by base means. Nevertheless, virtue is of herself so mighty, that, in spite of all the magic that Zoroaster its first inventor knew, she will come victorious out of every trial, and shed her light upon the earth as the sun does upon the heavens. Forgive me, fair ladies, if, through inadvertence, I have in aught offended you; for intentionally and wittingly I have never done so to any; and pray to God that he deliver me from this captivity to which some malevolent enchanter has consigned me; and should I find myself released therefrom, the favours that ye have bestowed upon me in this castle shall be held in memory by me, that I may acknowledge, recognise, and requite them as they deserve.”

While this was passing between the ladies of the castle and Don Quixote, the curate and the barber bade farewell to Don Fernando and his companions, to the captain, his brother, and the ladies, now all made happy, and in particular to Dorothea and Luscinda. They all embraced one another, and promised to let each other know how things went with them, and Don Fernando directed the curate where to write to him, to tell him what became of Don Quixote, assuring him that there was nothing that could give him more pleasure than to hear of it, and that he too, on his part, would send him word of everything he thought he would like to know, about his marriage, Zoraida’s baptism, Don Luis’s affair, and Luscinda’s return to her home. The curate promised to comply with his request carefully, and they embraced once more, and renewed their promises.

The landlord approached the curate and handed him some papers, saying he had discovered them in the lining of the valise in which the novel of “The Ill-advised Curiosity” had been found, and that he might take them all away with him as their owner had not since returned; for, as he could not read, he did not want them himself. The curate thanked him, and opening them he saw at the beginning of the manuscript the words, “Novel of Rinconete and Cortadillo,” by which he perceived that it was a novel, and as that of “The Ill-advised Curiosity” had been good he concluded this would be so too, as they were both probably by the same author; so he kept it, intending to read it when he had an opportunity. He then mounted and his friend the barber did the same, both masked, so as not to be recognised by Don Quixote, and set out following in the rear of the cart. The order of march was this: first went the cart with the owner leading it; at each

side of it marched the officers of the Brotherhood, as has been said, with their muskets; then followed Sancho Panza on his ass, leading Rocinante by the bridle; and behind all came the curate and the barber on their mighty mules, with faces covered, as aforesaid, and a grave and serious air, measuring their pace to suit the slow steps of the oxen. Don Quixote was seated in the cage, with his hands tied and his feet stretched out, leaning against the bars as silent and as patient as if he were a stone statue and not a man of flesh. Thus slowly and silently they made, it might be, two leagues, until they reached a valley which the carter thought a convenient place for resting and feeding his oxen, and he said so to the curate, but the barber was of opinion that they ought to push on a little farther, as at the other side of a hill which appeared close by he knew there was a valley that had more grass and much better than the one where they proposed to halt; and his advice was taken and they continued their journey.

Just at that moment the curate, looking back, saw coming on behind them six or seven mounted men, well found and equipped, who soon overtook them, for they were travelling, not at the sluggish, deliberate pace of oxen, but like men who rode canons' mules, and in haste to take their noontide rest as soon as possible at the inn which was in sight not a league off. The quick travellers came up with the slow, and courteous salutations were exchanged; and one of the new comers, who was, in fact, a canon of Toledo and master of the others who accompanied him, observing the regular order of the procession, the cart, the officers, Sancho, Rocinante, the curate and the barber, and above all Don Quixote caged and confined, could not help asking what was the meaning of carrying the man in that fashion; though, from the badges of the officers, he already concluded that he must be some desperate highwayman or other malefactor whose punishment fell within the jurisdiction of the Holy Brotherhood. One of the officers to whom he had put the question, replied, "Let the gentleman himself tell you the meaning of his going this way, senor, for we do not know."

Don Quixote overheard the conversation and said, "Haply, gentlemen, you are versed and learned in matters of errant chivalry? Because if you are I will tell you my misfortunes; if not, there is no good in my giving myself the trouble of relating them;" but here the curate and the barber, seeing that the travellers were engaged in conversation with Don Quixote, came forward, in order to answer in such a way as to save their stratagem from being discovered.

The canon, replying to Don Quixote, said, "In truth, brother, I know more about books of chivalry than I do about Villalpando's elements of logic; so if that be all, you may safely tell me what you please."

"In God's name, then, senor," replied Don Quixote; "if that be so, I would

have you know that I am held enchanted in this cage by the envy and fraud of wicked enchanters; for virtue is more persecuted by the wicked than loved by the good. I am a knight-errant, and not one of those whose names Fame has never thought of immortalising in her record, but of those who, in defiance and in spite of envy itself, and all the magicians that Persia, or Brahmans that India, or Gymnosophists that Ethiopia ever produced, will place their names in the temple of immortality, to serve as examples and patterns for ages to come, whereby knights-errant may see the footsteps in which they must tread if they would attain the summit and crowning point of honour in arms."

"What Senor Don Quixote of La Mancha says," observed the curate, "is the truth; for he goes enchanted in this cart, not from any fault or sins of his, but because of the malevolence of those to whom virtue is odious and valour hateful. This, senor, is the Knight of the Rueful Countenance, if you have ever heard him named, whose valiant achievements and mighty deeds shall be written on lasting brass and imperishable marble, notwithstanding all the efforts of envy to obscure them and malice to hide them."

When the canon heard both the prisoner and the man who was at liberty talk in such a strain he was ready to cross himself in his astonishment, and could not make out what had befallen him; and all his attendants were in the same state of amazement.

At this point Sancho Panza, who had drawn near to hear the conversation, said, in order to make everything plain, "Well, sirs, you may like or dislike what I am going to say, but the fact of the matter is, my master, Don Quixote, is just as much enchanted as my mother. He is in his full senses, he eats and he drinks, and he has his calls like other men and as he had yesterday, before they caged him. And if that's the case, what do they mean by wanting me to believe that he is enchanted? For I have heard many a one say that enchanted people neither eat, nor sleep, nor talk; and my master, if you don't stop him, will talk more than thirty lawyers." Then turning to the curate he exclaimed, "Ah, senor curate, senor curate! do you think I don't know you? Do you think I don't guess and see the drift of these new enchantments? Well then, I can tell you I know you, for all your face is covered, and I can tell you I am up to you, however you may hide your tricks. After all, where envy reigns virtue cannot live, and where there is niggardliness there can be no liberality. Ill betide the devil! if it had not been for your worship my master would be married to the Princess Micomicona this minute, and I should be a count at least; for no less was to be expected, as well from the goodness of my master, him of the Rueful Countenance, as from the greatness of my services. But I see now how true it is what they say in these parts, that the wheel of fortune turns faster than a mill-wheel, and that those who

were up yesterday are down to-day. I am sorry for my wife and children, for when they might fairly and reasonably expect to see their father return to them a governor or viceroy of some island or kingdom, they will see him come back a horse-boy. I have said all this, senor curate, only to urge your paternity to lay to your conscience your ill-treatment of my master; and have a care that God does not call you to account in another life for making a prisoner of him in this way, and charge against you all the succours and good deeds that my lord Don Quixote leaves undone while he is shut up.

“Trim those lamps there!” exclaimed the barber at this; “so you are of the same fraternity as your master, too, Sancho? By God, I begin to see that you will have to keep him company in the cage, and be enchanted like him for having caught some of his humour and chivalry. It was an evil hour when you let yourself be got with child by his promises, and that island you long so much for found its way into your head.”

“I am not with child by anyone,” returned Sancho, “nor am I a man to let myself be got with child, if it was by the King himself. Though I am poor I am an old Christian, and I owe nothing to nobody, and if I long for an island, other people long for worse. Each of us is the son of his own works; and being a man I may come to be pope, not to say governor of an island, especially as my master may win so many that he will not know whom to give them to. Mind how you talk, master barber; for shaving is not everything, and there is some difference between Peter and Peter. I say this because we all know one another, and it will not do to throw false dice with me; and as to the enchantment of my master, God knows the truth; leave it as it is; it only makes it worse to stir it.”

The barber did not care to answer Sancho lest by his plain speaking he should disclose what the curate and he himself were trying so hard to conceal; and under the same apprehension the curate had asked the canon to ride on a little in advance, so that he might tell him the mystery of this man in the cage, and other things that would amuse him. The canon agreed, and going on ahead with his servants, listened with attention to the account of the character, life, madness, and ways of Don Quixote, given him by the curate, who described to him briefly the beginning and origin of his craze, and told him the whole story of his adventures up to his being confined in the cage, together with the plan they had of taking him home to try if by any means they could discover a cure for his madness. The canon and his servants were surprised anew when they heard Don Quixote’s strange story, and when it was finished he said, “To tell the truth, senor curate, I for my part consider what they call books of chivalry to be mischievous to the State; and though, led by idle and false taste, I have read the beginnings of almost all that have been printed, I never could manage to read

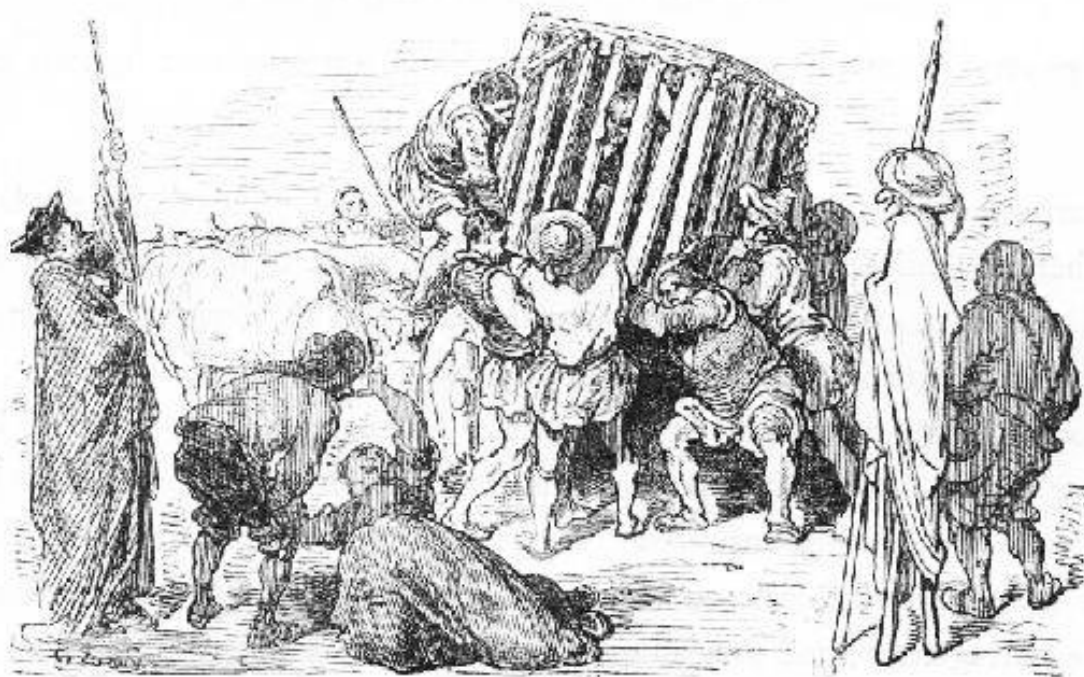
any one of them from beginning to end; for it seems to me they are all more or less the same thing; and one has nothing more in it than another; this no more than that. And in my opinion this sort of writing and composition is of the same species as the fables they call the Milesian, nonsensical tales that aim solely at giving amusement and not instruction, exactly the opposite of the apologue fables which amuse and instruct at the same time. And though it may be the chief object of such books to amuse, I do not know how they can succeed, when they are so full of such monstrous nonsense. For the enjoyment the mind feels must come from the beauty and harmony which it perceives or contemplates in the things that the eye or the imagination brings before it; and nothing that has any ugliness or disproportion about it can give any pleasure. What beauty, then, or what proportion of the parts to the whole, or of the whole to the parts, can there be in a book or fable where a lad of sixteen cuts down a giant as tall as a tower and makes two halves of him as if he was an almond cake? And when they want to give us a picture of a battle, after having told us that there are a million of combatants on the side of the enemy, let the hero of the book be opposed to them, and we have perforce to believe, whether we like it or not, that the said knight wins the victory by the single might of his strong arm. And then, what shall we say of the facility with which a born queen or empress will give herself over into the arms of some unknown wandering knight? What mind, that is not wholly barbarous and uncultured, can find pleasure in reading of how a great tower full of knights sails away across the sea like a ship with a fair wind, and will be to-night in Lombardy and to-morrow morning in the land of Prester John of the Indies, or some other that Ptolemy never described nor Marco Polo saw? And if, in answer to this, I am told that the authors of books of the kind write them as fiction, and therefore are not bound to regard niceties of truth, I would reply that fiction is all the better the more it looks like truth, and gives the more pleasure the more probability and possibility there is about it. Plots in fiction should be wedded to the understanding of the reader, and be constructed in such a way that, reconciling impossibilities, smoothing over difficulties, keeping the mind on the alert, they may surprise, interest, divert, and entertain, so that wonder and delight joined may keep pace one with the other; all which he will fail to effect who shuns verisimilitude and truth to nature, wherein lies the perfection of writing. I have never yet seen any book of chivalry that puts together a connected plot complete in all its numbers, so that the middle agrees with the beginning, and the end with the beginning and middle; on the contrary, they construct them with such a multitude of members that it seems as though they meant to produce a chimera or monster rather than a well-proportioned figure. And besides all this they are harsh in their style, incredible in their

achievements, licentious in their amours, uncouth in their courtly speeches, prolix in their battles, silly in their arguments, absurd in their travels, and, in short, wanting in everything like intelligent art; for which reason they deserve to be banished from the Christian commonwealth as a worthless breed.”



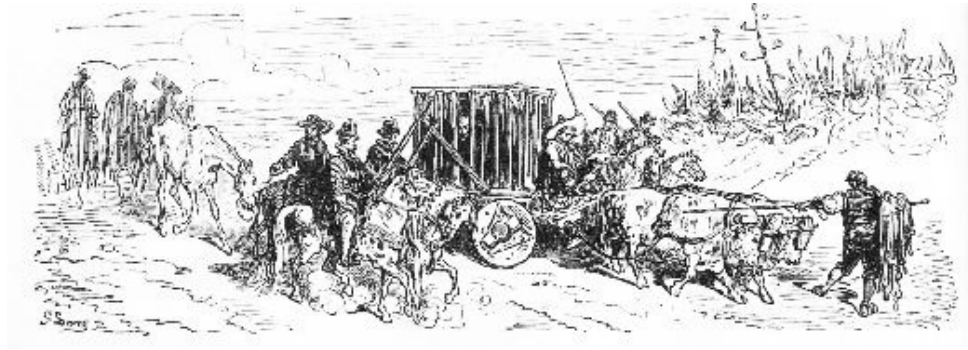
The curate listened to him attentively and felt that he was a man of sound understanding, and that there was good reason in what he said; so he told him that, being of the same opinion himself, and bearing a grudge to books of chivalry, he had burned all Don Quixote's, which were many; and gave him an account of the scrutiny he had made of them, and of those he had condemned to the flames and those he had spared, with which the canon was not a little amused, adding that though he had said so much in condemnation of these books, still he found one good thing in them, and that was the opportunity they afforded to a gifted intellect for displaying itself; for they presented a wide and spacious field over which the pen might range freely, describing shipwrecks, tempests, combats, battles, portraying a valiant captain with all the qualifications requisite to make one, showing him sagacious in foreseeing the wiles of the enemy, eloquent in speech to encourage or restrain his soldiers, ripe in counsel, rapid in resolve, as bold in biding his time as in pressing the attack; now picturing some sad tragic incident, now some joyful and unexpected event; here a beauteous lady, virtuous, wise, and modest; there a Christian knight, brave and gentle; here a lawless, barbarous braggart; there a courteous prince, gallant and gracious; setting forth the devotion and loyalty of vassals, the greatness and generosity of nobles. "Or again," said he, "the author may show himself to be an astronomer, or a skilled cosmographer, or musician, or one versed in affairs of state, and sometimes he will have a chance of coming forward as a magician if he likes. He can set forth the craftiness of Ulysses, the piety of Aeneas, the valour of Achilles, the misfortunes of Hector, the treachery of Sinon, the friendship of Euryalus, the generosity of Alexander, the boldness of Caesar, the clemency and truth of Trajan, the fidelity of Zopyrus, the wisdom of Cato, and in short all the faculties that serve to make an illustrious man perfect, now uniting them in one individual, again distributing them among many; and if this be done with charm of style and ingenious invention, aiming at the truth as much as possible, he will assuredly weave a web of bright and varied threads that, when finished, will display such perfection and beauty that it will attain the worthiest object any writing can seek, which, as I said before, is to give instruction and pleasure combined; for the unrestricted range of these books enables the author to show his powers, epic, lyric, tragic, or comic, and all the moods the sweet and winning arts of poesy and oratory are capable of; for the epic may be written in prose just as well as in verse."





## CHAPTER XLVIII.

IN WHICH THE CANON PURSUES THE SUBJECT OF THE BOOKS OF CHIVALRY, WITH OTHER MATTERS WORTHY OF HIS WIT



“It is as you say, senor canon,” said the curate; “and for that reason those who have hitherto written books of the sort deserve all the more censure for writing without paying any attention to good taste or the rules of art, by which they might guide themselves and become as famous in prose as the two princes of Greek and Latin poetry are in verse.”

“I myself, at any rate,” said the canon, “was once tempted to write a book of chivalry in which all the points I have mentioned were to be observed; and if I must own the truth I have more than a hundred sheets written; and to try if it came up to my own opinion of it, I showed them to persons who were fond of this kind of reading, to learned and intelligent men as well as to ignorant people who cared for nothing but the pleasure of listening to nonsense, and from all I obtained flattering approval; nevertheless I proceeded no farther with it, as well because it seemed to me an occupation inconsistent with my profession, as because I perceived that the fools are more numerous than the wise; and, though it is better to be praised by the wise few than applauded by the foolish many, I have no mind to submit myself to the stupid judgment of the silly public, to whom the reading of such books falls for the most part.

“But what most of all made me hold my hand and even abandon all idea of finishing it was an argument I put to myself taken from the plays that are acted now-a-days, which was in this wise: if those that are now in vogue, as well those that are pure invention as those founded on history, are, all or most of them, downright nonsense and things that have neither head nor tail, and yet the public listens to them with delight, and regards and cries them up as perfection when they are so far from it; and if the authors who write them, and the players who act them, say that this is what they must be, for the public wants this and will have nothing else; and that those that go by rule and work out a plot according to the laws of art will only find some half-dozen intelligent people to understand them, while all the rest remain blind to the merit of their composition; and that for themselves it is better to get bread from the many than praise from the few; then my book will fare the same way, after I have burnt off my eyebrows in trying to observe the principles I have spoken of, and I shall be ‘the tailor of the corner.’ And though I have sometimes endeavoured to convince actors that they are mistaken in this notion they have adopted, and that they would attract more people, and get more credit, by producing plays in accordance with the rules of art, than by absurd ones, they are so thoroughly wedded to their own opinion that no argument or evidence can wean them from it.

“I remember saying one day to one of these obstinate fellows, ‘Tell me, do you not recollect that a few years ago, there were three tragedies acted in Spain, written by a famous poet of these kingdoms, which were such that they filled all who heard them with admiration, delight, and interest, the ignorant as well as the wise, the masses as well as the higher orders, and brought in more money to the performers, these three alone, than thirty of the best that have been since produced?’

“‘No doubt,’ replied the actor in question, ‘you mean the “Isabella,” the “Phyllis,” and the “Alexandra.”’

“‘Those are the ones I mean,’ said I; ‘and see if they did not observe the principles of art, and if, by observing them, they failed to show their superiority and please all the world; so that the fault does not lie with the public that insists upon nonsense, but with those who don’t know how to produce something else. “The Ingratitude Revenged” was not nonsense, nor was there any in “The Numantia,” nor any to be found in “The Merchant Lover,” nor yet in “The Friendly Fair Foe,” nor in some others that have been written by certain gifted poets, to their own fame and renown, and to the profit of those that brought them out;’ some further remarks I added to these, with which, I think, I left him rather dumbfounded, but not so satisfied or convinced that I could disabuse him of his error.”

“You have touched upon a subject, senor canon,” observed the curate here, “that has awakened an old enmity I have against the plays in vogue at the present day, quite as strong as that which I bear to the books of chivalry; for while the drama, according to Tully, should be the mirror of human life, the model of manners, and the image of the truth, those which are presented now-a-days are mirrors of nonsense, models of folly, and images of lewdness. For what greater nonsense can there be in connection with what we are now discussing than for an infant to appear in swaddling clothes in the first scene of the first act, and in the second a grown-up bearded man? Or what greater absurdity can there be than putting before us an old man as a swashbuckler, a young man as a poltroon, a lackey using fine language, a page giving sage advice, a king plying as a porter, a princess who is a kitchen-maid? And then what shall I say of their attention to the time in which the action they represent may or can take place, save that I have seen a play where the first act began in Europe, the second in Asia, the third finished in Africa, and no doubt, had it been in four acts, the fourth would have ended in America, and so it would have been laid in all four quarters of the globe? And if truth to life is the main thing the drama should keep in view, how is it possible for any average understanding to be satisfied when the action is supposed to pass in the time of King Pepin or Charlemagne, and the principal personage in it they represent to be the Emperor Heraclius who entered Jerusalem with the cross and won the Holy Sepulchre, like Godfrey of Bouillon, there being years innumerable between the one and the other? or, if the play is based on fiction and historical facts are introduced, or bits of what occurred to different people and at different times mixed up with it, all, not only without any semblance of probability, but with obvious errors that from every point of view are inexcusable? And the worst of it is, there are ignorant people who say that this is perfection, and that anything beyond this is affected refinement. And then if we turn to sacred dramas — what miracles they invent in them! What apocryphal, ill-devised incidents, attributing to one saint the miracles of another! And even in secular plays they venture to introduce miracles without any reason or object except that they think some such miracle, or transformation as they call it, will come in well to astonish stupid people and draw them to the play. All this tends to the prejudice of the truth and the corruption of history, nay more, to the reproach of the wits of Spain; for foreigners who scrupulously observe the laws of the drama look upon us as barbarous and ignorant, when they see the absurdity and nonsense of the plays we produce. Nor will it be a sufficient excuse to say that the chief object well-ordered governments have in view when they permit plays to be performed in public is to entertain the people with some harmless amusement occasionally, and keep it from those evil humours which

idleness is apt to engender; and that, as this may be attained by any sort of play, good or bad, there is no need to lay down laws, or bind those who write or act them to make them as they ought to be made, since, as I say, the object sought for may be secured by any sort. To this I would reply that the same end would be, beyond all comparison, better attained by means of good plays than by those that are not so; for after listening to an artistic and properly constructed play, the hearer will come away enlivened by the jests, instructed by the serious parts, full of admiration at the incidents, his wits sharpened by the arguments, warned by the tricks, all the wiser for the examples, inflamed against vice, and in love with virtue; for in all these ways a good play will stimulate the mind of the hearer be he ever so boorish or dull; and of all impossibilities the greatest is that a play endowed with all these qualities will not entertain, satisfy, and please much more than one wanting in them, like the greater number of those which are commonly acted now-a-days. Nor are the poets who write them to be blamed for this; for some there are among them who are perfectly well aware of their faults, and know what they ought to do; but as plays have become a salable commodity, they say, and with truth, that the actors will not buy them unless they are after this fashion; and so the poet tries to adapt himself to the requirements of the actor who is to pay him for his work. And that this is the truth may be seen by the countless plays that a most fertile wit of these kingdoms has written, with so much brilliancy, so much grace and gaiety, such polished versification, such choice language, such profound reflections, and in a word, so rich in eloquence and elevation of style, that he has filled the world with his fame; and yet, in consequence of his desire to suit the taste of the actors, they have not all, as some of them have, come as near perfection as they ought. Others write plays with such heedlessness that, after they have been acted, the actors have to fly and abscond, afraid of being punished, as they often have been, for having acted something offensive to some king or other, or insulting to some noble family. All which evils, and many more that I say nothing of, would be removed if there were some intelligent and sensible person at the capital to examine all plays before they were acted, not only those produced in the capital itself, but all that were intended to be acted in Spain; without whose approval, seal, and signature, no local magistracy should allow any play to be acted. In that case actors would take care to send their plays to the capital, and could act them in safety, and those who write them would be more careful and take more pains with their work, standing in awe of having to submit it to the strict examination of one who understood the matter; and so good plays would be produced and the objects they aim at happily attained; as well the amusement of the people, as the credit of the wits of Spain, the interest and safety of the actors, and the saving of

trouble in inflicting punishment on them. And if the same or some other person were authorised to examine the newly written books of chivalry, no doubt some would appear with all the perfections you have described, enriching our language with the gracious and precious treasure of eloquence, and driving the old books into obscurity before the light of the new ones that would come out for the harmless entertainment, not merely of the idle but of the very busiest; for the bow cannot be always bent, nor can weak human nature exist without some lawful amusement.”

The canon and the curate had proceeded thus far with their conversation, when the barber, coming forward, joined them, and said to the curate, “This is the spot, senor licentiate, that I said was a good one for fresh and plentiful pasture for the oxen, while we take our noontide rest.”

“And so it seems,” returned the curate, and he told the canon what he proposed to do, on which he too made up his mind to halt with them, attracted by the aspect of the fair valley that lay before their eyes; and to enjoy it as well as the conversation of the curate, to whom he had begun to take a fancy, and also to learn more particulars about the doings of Don Quixote, he desired some of his servants to go on to the inn, which was not far distant, and fetch from it what eatables there might be for the whole party, as he meant to rest for the afternoon where he was; to which one of his servants replied that the sumpter mule, which by this time ought to have reached the inn, carried provisions enough to make it unnecessary to get anything from the inn except barley.

“In that case,” said the canon, “take all the beasts there, and bring the sumpter mule back.”

While this was going on, Sancho, perceiving that he could speak to his master without having the curate and the barber, of whom he had his suspicions, present all the time, approached the cage in which Don Quixote was placed, and said, “Senor, to ease my conscience I want to tell you the state of the case as to your enchantment, and that is that these two here, with their faces covered, are the curate of our village and the barber; and I suspect they have hit upon this plan of carrying you off in this fashion, out of pure envy because your worship surpasses them in doing famous deeds; and if this be the truth it follows that you are not enchanted, but hoodwinked and made a fool of. And to prove this I want to ask you one thing; and if you answer me as I believe you will answer, you will be able to lay your finger on the trick, and you will see that you are not enchanted but gone wrong in your wits.”

“Ask what thou wilt, Sancho my son,” returned Don Quixote, “for I will satisfy thee and answer all thou requirest. As to what thou sayest, that these who accompany us yonder are the curate and the barber, our neighbours and

acquaintances, it is very possible that they may seem to be those same persons; but that they are so in reality and in fact, believe it not on any account; what thou art to believe and think is that, if they look like them, as thou sayest, it must be that those who have enchanted me have taken this shape and likeness; for it is easy for enchanters to take any form they please, and they may have taken those of our friends in order to make thee think as thou dost, and lead thee into a labyrinth of fancies from which thou wilt find no escape though thou hadst the cord of Theseus; and they may also have done it to make me uncertain in my mind, and unable to conjecture whence this evil comes to me; for if on the one hand thou dost tell me that the barber and curate of our village are here in company with us, and on the other I find myself shut up in a cage, and know in my heart that no power on earth that was not supernatural would have been able to shut me in, what wouldst thou have me say or think, but that my enchantment is of a sort that transcends all I have ever read of in all the histories that deal with knights-errant that have been enchanted? So thou mayest set thy mind at rest as to the idea that they are what thou sayest, for they are as much so as I am a Turk. But touching thy desire to ask me something, say on, and I will answer thee, though thou shouldst ask questions from this till to-morrow morning."

"May Our Lady be good to me!" said Sancho, lifting up his voice; "and is it possible that your worship is so thick of skull and so short of brains that you cannot see that what I say is the simple truth, and that malice has more to do with your imprisonment and misfortune than enchantment? But as it is so, I will prove plainly to you that you are not enchanted. Now tell me, so may God deliver you from this affliction, and so may you find yourself when you least expect it in the arms of my lady Dulcinea-"

"Leave off conjuring me," said Don Quixote, "and ask what thou wouldst know; I have already told thee I will answer with all possible precision."

"That is what I want," said Sancho; "and what I would know, and have you tell me, without adding or leaving out anything, but telling the whole truth as one expects it to be told, and as it is told, by all who profess arms, as your worship professes them, under the title of knights-errant-"

"I tell thee I will not lie in any particular," said Don Quixote; "finish thy question; for in truth thou weariest me with all these asseverations, requirements, and precautions, Sancho."

"Well, I rely on the goodness and truth of my master," said Sancho; "and so, because it bears upon what we are talking about, I would ask, speaking with all reverence, whether since your worship has been shut up and, as you think, enchanted in this cage, you have felt any desire or inclination to go anywhere, as the saying is?"

“I do not understand ‘going anywhere,’” said Don Quixote; “explain thyself more clearly, Sancho, if thou wouldst have me give an answer to the point.”

“Is it possible,” said Sancho, “that your worship does not understand ‘going anywhere’? Why, the schoolboys know that from the time they were babes. Well then, you must know I mean have you had any desire to do what cannot be avoided?”

“Ah! now I understand thee, Sancho,” said Don Quixote; “yes, often, and even this minute; get me out of this strait, or all will not go right.”







## CHAPTER XLIX.

WHICH TREATS OF THE SHREWD CONVERSATION WHICH SANCHEO PANZA HELD WITH HIS MASTER DON QUIXOTE



“Aha, I have caught you,” said Sancho; “this is what in my heart and soul I was longing to know. Come now, senor, can you deny what is commonly said around us, when a person is out of humour, ‘I don’t know what ails so-and-so, that he neither eats, nor drinks, nor sleeps, nor gives a proper answer to any question; one would think he was enchanted’? From which it is to be gathered that those who do not eat, or drink, or sleep, or do any of the natural acts I am speaking of — that such persons are enchanted; but not those that have the desire your worship has, and drink when drink is given them, and eat when there is

anything to eat, and answer every question that is asked them.”

“What thou sayest is true, Sancho,” replied Don Quixote; “but I have already told thee there are many sorts of enchantments, and it may be that in the course of time they have been changed one for another, and that now it may be the way with enchanted people to do all that I do, though they did not do so before; so it is vain to argue or draw inferences against the usage of the time. I know and feel that I am enchanted, and that is enough to ease my conscience; for it would weigh heavily on it if I thought that I was not enchanted, and that in a faint-hearted and cowardly way I allowed myself to lie in this cage, defrauding multitudes of the succour I might afford to those in need and distress, who at this very moment may be in sore want of my aid and protection.”

“Still for all that,” replied Sancho, “I say that, for your greater and fuller satisfaction, it would be well if your worship were to try to get out of this prison (and I promise to do all in my power to help, and even to take you out of it), and see if you could once more mount your good Rocinante, who seems to be enchanted too, he is so melancholy and dejected; and then we might try our chance in looking for adventures again; and if we have no luck there will be time enough to go back to the cage; in which, on the faith of a good and loyal squire, I promise to shut myself up along with your worship, if so be you are so unfortunate, or I so stupid, as not to be able to carry out my plan.”

“I am content to do as thou sayest, brother Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “and when thou seest an opportunity for effecting my release I will obey thee absolutely; but thou wilt see, Sancho, how mistaken thou art in thy conception of my misfortune.”

The knight-errant and the ill-errant squire kept up their conversation till they reached the place where the curate, the canon, and the barber, who had already dismounted, were waiting for them. The carter at once unyoked the oxen and left them to roam at large about the pleasant green spot, the freshness of which seemed to invite, not enchanted people like Don Quixote, but wide-awake, sensible folk like his squire, who begged the curate to allow his master to leave the cage for a little; for if they did not let him out, the prison might not be as clean as the propriety of such a gentleman as his master required. The curate understood him, and said he would very gladly comply with his request, only that he feared his master, finding himself at liberty, would take to his old courses and make off where nobody could ever find him again.

“I will answer for his not running away,” said Sancho.

“And I also,” said the canon, “especially if he gives me his word as a knight not to leave us without our consent.”

Don Quixote, who was listening to all this, said, “I give it; — moreover one

who is enchanted as I am cannot do as he likes with himself; for he who had enchanted him could prevent his moving from one place for three ages, and if he attempted to escape would bring him back flying.” — And that being so, they might as well release him, particularly as it would be to the advantage of all; for, if they did not let him out, he protested he would be unable to avoid offending their nostrils unless they kept their distance.

The canon took his hand, tied together as they both were, and on his word and promise they unbound him, and rejoiced beyond measure he was to find himself out of the cage. The first thing he did was to stretch himself all over, and then he went to where Rocinante was standing and giving him a couple of slaps on the haunches said, “I still trust in God and in his blessed mother, O flower and mirror of steeds, that we shall soon see ourselves, both of us, as we wish to be, thou with thy master on thy back, and I mounted upon thee, following the calling for which God sent me into the world.” And so saying, accompanied by Sancho, he withdrew to a retired spot, from which he came back much relieved and more eager than ever to put his squire’s scheme into execution.

The canon gazed at him, wondering at the extraordinary nature of his madness, and that in all his remarks and replies he should show such excellent sense, and only lose his stirrups, as has been already said, when the subject of chivalry was broached. And so, moved by compassion, he said to him, as they all sat on the green grass awaiting the arrival of the provisions:

“Is it possible, gentle sir, that the nauseous and idle reading of books of chivalry can have had such an effect on your worship as to upset your reason so that you fancy yourself enchanted, and the like, all as far from the truth as falsehood itself is? How can there be any human understanding that can persuade itself there ever was all that infinity of Amadis in the world, or all that multitude of famous knights, all those emperors of Trebizond, all those Felixmarte of Hircania, all those palfreys, and damsels-errant, and serpents, and monsters, and giants, and marvellous adventures, and enchantments of every kind, and battles, and prodigious encounters, splendid costumes, love-sick princesses, squires made counts, droll dwarfs, love letters, billings and cooings, swashbuckler women, and, in a word, all that nonsense the books of chivalry contain? For myself, I can only say that when I read them, so long as I do not stop to think that they are all lies and frivolity, they give me a certain amount of pleasure; but when I come to consider what they are, I fling the very best of them at the wall, and would fling it into the fire if there were one at hand, as richly deserving such punishment as cheats and impostors out of the range of ordinary toleration, and as founders of new sects and modes of life, and teachers that lead the ignorant public to believe and accept as truth all the folly they

contain. And such is their audacity, they even dare to unsettle the wits of gentlemen of birth and intelligence, as is shown plainly by the way they have served your worship, when they have brought you to such a pass that you have to be shut up in a cage and carried on an ox-cart as one would carry a lion or a tiger from place to place to make money by showing it. Come, Senor Don Quixote, have some compassion for yourself, return to the bosom of common sense, and make use of the liberal share of it that heaven has been pleased to bestow upon you, employing your abundant gifts of mind in some other reading that may serve to benefit your conscience and add to your honour. And if, still led away by your natural bent, you desire to read books of achievements and of chivalry, read the Book of Judges in the Holy Scriptures, for there you will find grand reality, and deeds as true as they are heroic. Lusitania had a Viriatus, Rome a Caesar, Carthage a Hannibal, Greece an Alexander, Castile a Count Fernan Gonzalez, Valencia a Cid, Andalusia a Gonzalo Fernandez, Estremadura a Diego Garcia de Paredes, Jerez a Garci Perez de Vargas, Toledo a Garcilaso, Seville a Don Manuel de Leon, to read of whose valiant deeds will entertain and instruct the loftiest minds and fill them with delight and wonder. Here, Senor Don Quixote, will be reading worthy of your sound understanding; from which you will rise learned in history, in love with virtue, strengthened in goodness, improved in manners, brave without rashness, prudent without cowardice; and all to the honour of God, your own advantage and the glory of La Mancha, whence, I am informed, your worship derives your birth."

Don Quixote listened with the greatest attention to the canon's words, and when he found he had finished, after regarding him for some time, he replied to him:

"It appears to me, gentle sir, that your worship's discourse is intended to persuade me that there never were any knights-errant in the world, and that all the books of chivalry are false, lying, mischievous and useless to the State, and that I have done wrong in reading them, and worse in believing them, and still worse in imitating them, when I undertook to follow the arduous calling of knight-errantry which they set forth; for you deny that there ever were Amadis of Gaul or of Greece, or any other of the knights of whom the books are full."

"It is all exactly as you state it," said the canon; to which Don Quixote returned, "You also went on to say that books of this kind had done me much harm, inasmuch as they had upset my senses, and shut me up in a cage, and that it would be better for me to reform and change my studies, and read other truer books which would afford more pleasure and instruction."

"Just so," said the canon.

"Well then," returned Don Quixote, "to my mind it is you who are the one that

is out of his wits and enchanted, as you have ventured to utter such blasphemies against a thing so universally acknowledged and accepted as true that whoever denies it, as you do, deserves the same punishment which you say you inflict on the books that irritate you when you read them. For to try to persuade anybody that Amadis, and all the other knights-adventurers with whom the books are filled, never existed, would be like trying to persuade him that the sun does not yield light, or ice cold, or earth nourishment. What wit in the world can persuade another that the story of the Princess Floripes and Guy of Burgundy is not true, or that of Fierabras and the bridge of Mantible, which happened in the time of Charlemagne? For by all that is good it is as true as that it is daylight now; and if it be a lie, it must be a lie too that there was a Hector, or Achilles, or Trojan war, or Twelve Peers of France, or Arthur of England, who still lives changed into a raven, and is unceasingly looked for in his kingdom. One might just as well try to make out that the history of Guarino Mezquino, or of the quest of the Holy Grail, is false, or that the loves of Tristram and the Queen Yseult are apocryphal, as well as those of Guinevere and Lancelot, when there are persons who can almost remember having seen the Dame Quintanona, who was the best cupbearer in Great Britain. And so true is this, that I recollect a grandmother of mine on the father's side, whenever she saw any dame in a venerable hood, used to say to me, 'Grandson, that one is like Dame Quintanona,' from which I conclude that she must have known her, or at least had managed to see some portrait of her. Then who can deny that the story of Pierres and the fair Magalona is true, when even to this day may be seen in the king's armoury the pin with which the valiant Pierres guided the wooden horse he rode through the air, and it is a trifle bigger than the pole of a cart? And alongside of the pin is Babieca's saddle, and at Roncesvalles there is Roland's horn, as large as a large beam; whence we may infer that there were Twelve Peers, and a Pierres, and a Cid, and other knights like them, of the sort people commonly call adventurers. Or perhaps I shall be told, too, that there was no such knight-errant as the valiant Lusitanian Juan de Merlo, who went to Burgundy and in the city of Arras fought with the famous lord of Charny, Mosen Pierres by name, and afterwards in the city of Basle with Mosen Enrique de Remesten, coming out of both encounters covered with fame and honour; or adventures and challenges achieved and delivered, also in Burgundy, by the valiant Spaniards Pedro Barba and Gutierre Quixada (of whose family I come in the direct male line), when they vanquished the sons of the Count of San Polo. I shall be told, too, that Don Fernando de Guevara did not go in quest of adventures to Germany, where he engaged in combat with Micer George, a knight of the house of the Duke of Austria. I shall be told that the jousts of Suero de Quinones, him of the 'Paso,' and the emprise

of Mosen Luis de Falces against the Castilian knight, Don Gonzalo de Guzman, were mere mockeries; as well as many other achievements of Christian knights of these and foreign realms, which are so authentic and true, that, I repeat, he who denies them must be totally wanting in reason and good sense.”

The canon was amazed to hear the medley of truth and fiction Don Quixote uttered, and to see how well acquainted he was with everything relating or belonging to the achievements of his knight-errantry; so he said in reply:

“I cannot deny, Senor Don Quixote, that there is some truth in what you say, especially as regards the Spanish knights-errant; and I am willing to grant too that the Twelve Peers of France existed, but I am not disposed to believe that they did all the things that the Archbishop Turpin relates of them. For the truth of the matter is they were knights chosen by the kings of France, and called ‘Peers’ because they were all equal in worth, rank and prowess (at least if they were not they ought to have been), and it was a kind of religious order like those of Santiago and Calatrava in the present day, in which it is assumed that those who take it are valiant knights of distinction and good birth; and just as we say now a Knight of St. John, or of Alcantara, they used to say then a Knight of the Twelve Peers, because twelve equals were chosen for that military order. That there was a Cid, as well as a Bernardo del Carpio, there can be no doubt; but that they did the deeds people say they did, I hold to be very doubtful. In that other matter of the pin of Count Pierres that you speak of, and say is near Babieca’s saddle in the Armoury, I confess my sin; for I am either so stupid or so short-sighted, that, though I have seen the saddle, I have never been able to see the pin, in spite of it being as big as your worship says it is.”

“For all that it is there, without any manner of doubt,” said Don Quixote; “and more by token they say it is inclosed in a sheath of cowhide to keep it from rusting.”

“All that may be,” replied the canon; “but, by the orders I have received, I do not remember seeing it. However, granting it is there, that is no reason why I am bound to believe the stories of all those Amadis and of all that multitude of knights they tell us about, nor is it reasonable that a man like your worship, so worthy, and with so many good qualities, and endowed with such a good understanding, should allow himself to be persuaded that such wild crazy things as are written in those absurd books of chivalry are really true.”





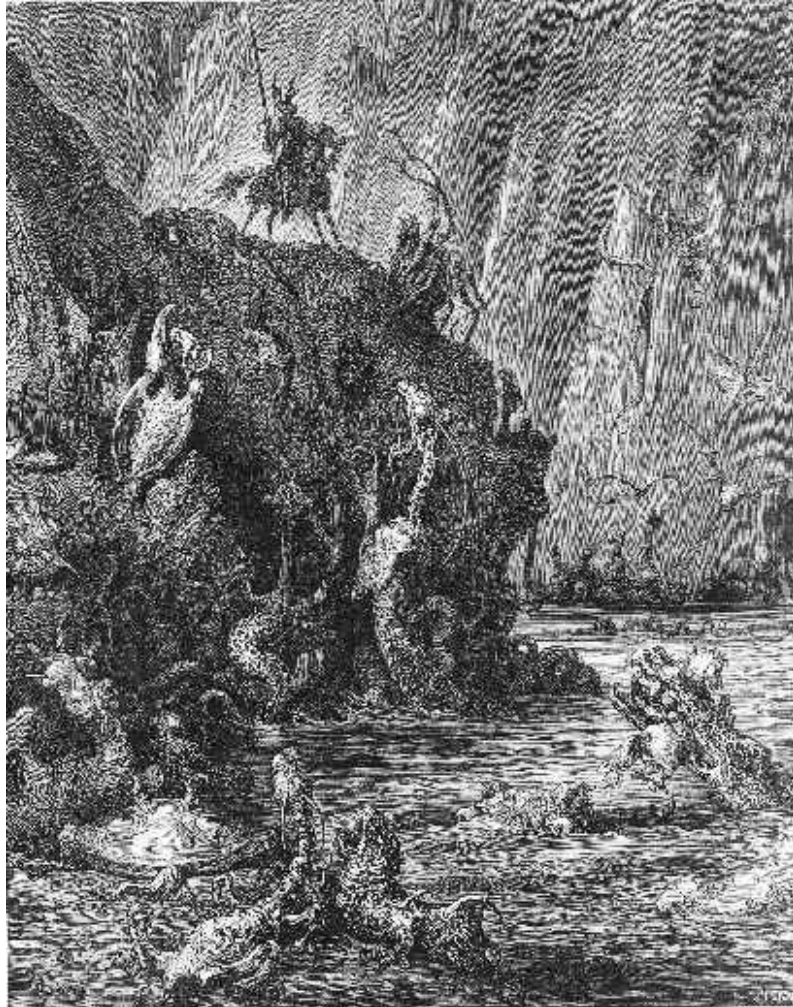
## CHAPTER L.

### OF THE SHREWD CONTROVERSY WHICH DON QUIXOTE AND THE CANON HELD, TOGETHER WITH OTHER INCIDENTS



“A good joke, that!” returned Don Quixote. “Books that have been printed with the king’s licence, and with the approbation of those to whom they have been submitted, and read with universal delight, and extolled by great and small, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, gentle and simple, in a word by people of every sort, of whatever rank or condition they may be — that these should be lies! And above all when they carry such an appearance of truth with them; for they tell us the father, mother, country, kindred, age, place, and the achievements, step by step, and day by day, performed by such a knight or

knights! Hush, sir; utter not such blasphemy; trust me I am advising you now to act as a sensible man should; only read them, and you will see the pleasure you will derive from them. For, come, tell me, can there be anything more delightful than to see, as it were, here now displayed before us a vast lake of bubbling pitch with a host of snakes and serpents and lizards, and ferocious and terrible creatures of all sorts swimming about in it, while from the middle of the lake there comes a plaintive voice saying: 'Knight, whosoever thou art who beholdest this dread lake, if thou wouldst win the prize that lies hidden beneath these dusky waves, prove the valour of thy stout heart and cast thyself into the midst of its dark burning waters, else thou shalt not be worthy to see the mighty wonders contained in the seven castles of the seven Fays that lie beneath this black expanse;' and then the knight, almost ere the awful voice has ceased, without stopping to consider, without pausing to reflect upon the danger to which he is exposing himself, without even relieving himself of the weight of his massive armour, commending himself to God and to his lady, plunges into the midst of the boiling lake, and when he little looks for it, or knows what his fate is to be, he finds himself among flowery meadows, with which the Elysian fields are not to be compared.

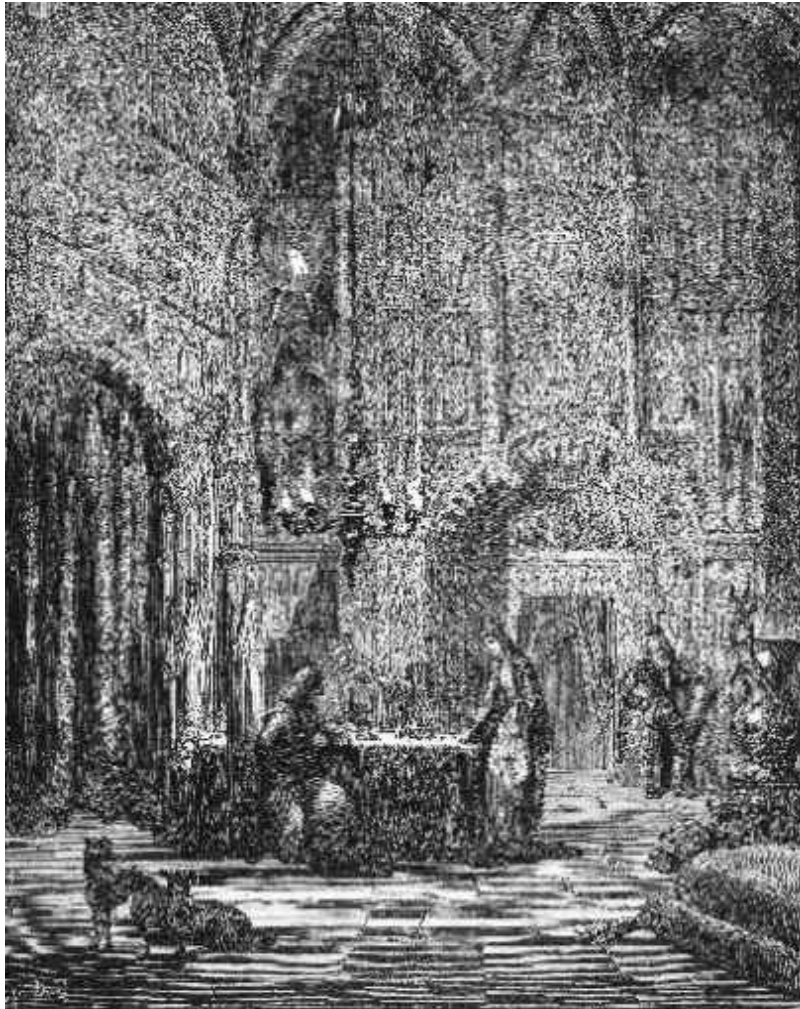


“The sky seems more transparent there, and the sun shines with a strange brilliancy, and a delightful grove of green leafy trees presents itself to the eyes and charms the sight with its verdure, while the ear is soothed by the sweet untutored melody of the countless birds of gay plumage that flit to and fro among the interlacing branches. Here he sees a brook whose limpid waters, like liquid crystal, ripple over fine sands and white pebbles that look like sifted gold and purest pearls. There he perceives a cunningly wrought fountain of many-coloured jasper and polished marble; here another of rustic fashion where the little mussel-shells and the spiral white and yellow mansions of the snail disposed in studious disorder, mingled with fragments of glittering crystal and

mock emeralds, make up a work of varied aspect, where art, imitating nature, seems to have outdone it.



“Suddenly there is presented to his sight a strong castle or gorgeous palace with walls of massy gold, turrets of diamond and gates of jacinth; in short, so marvellous is its structure that though the materials of which it is built are nothing less than diamonds, carbuncles, rubies, pearls, gold, and emeralds, the workmanship is still more rare. And after having seen all this, what can be more charming than to see how a bevy of damsels comes forth from the gate of the castle in gay and gorgeous attire, such that, were I to set myself now to depict it as the histories describe it to us, I should never have done; and then how she who seems to be the first among them all takes the bold knight who plunged into the boiling lake by the hand, and without addressing a word to him leads him into the rich palace or castle, and strips him as naked as when his mother bore him, and bathes him in lukewarm water, and anoints him all over with sweet-smelling unguents, and clothes him in a shirt of the softest sendal, all scented and perfumed, while another damsel comes and throws over his shoulders a mantle which is said to be worth at the very least a city, and even more? How charming it is, then, when they tell us how, after all this, they lead him to another chamber where he finds the tables set out in such style that he is filled with amazement and wonder; to see how they pour out water for his hands distilled from amber and sweet-scented flowers; how they seat him on an ivory chair; to see how the damsels wait on him all in profound silence; how they bring him such a variety of dainties so temptingly prepared that the appetite is at a loss which to select; to hear the music that resounds while he is at table, by whom or whence produced he knows not. And then when the repast is over and the tables removed, for the knight to recline in the chair, picking his teeth perhaps as usual, and a damsel, much lovelier than any of the others, to enter unexpectedly by the chamber door, and herself by his side, and begin to tell him what the castle is, and how she is held enchanted there, and other things that amaze the knight and astonish the readers who are perusing his history.



“But I will not expatiate any further upon this, as it may be gathered from it that whatever part of whatever history of a knight-errant one reads, it will fill the reader, whoever he be, with delight and wonder; and take my advice, sir, and, as I said before, read these books and you will see how they will banish any melancholy you may feel and raise your spirits should they be depressed. For myself I can say that since I have been a knight-errant I have become valiant, polite, generous, well-bred, magnanimous, courteous, dauntless, gentle, patient, and have learned to bear hardships, imprisonments, and enchantments; and though it be such a short time since I have seen myself shut up in a cage like a madman, I hope by the might of my arm, if heaven aid me and fortune thwart me not, to see myself king of some kingdom where I may be able to show the gratitude and generosity that dwell in my heart; for by my faith, senor, the poor man is incapacitated from showing the virtue of generosity to anyone, though he

may possess it in the highest degree; and gratitude that consists of disposition only is a dead thing, just as faith without works is dead. For this reason I should be glad were fortune soon to offer me some opportunity of making myself an emperor, so as to show my heart in doing good to my friends, particularly to this poor Sancho Panza, my squire, who is the best fellow in the world; and I would gladly give him a county I have promised him this ever so long, only that I am afraid he has not the capacity to govern his realm.”

Sancho partly heard these last words of his master, and said to him, “Strive hard you, Senor Don Quixote, to give me that county so often promised by you and so long looked for by me, for I promise you there will be no want of capacity in me to govern it; and even if there is, I have heard say there are men in the world who farm seigniories, paying so much a year, and they themselves taking charge of the government, while the lord, with his legs stretched out, enjoys the revenue they pay him, without troubling himself about anything else. That’s what I’ll do, and not stand haggling over trifles, but wash my hands at once of the whole business, and enjoy my rents like a duke, and let things go their own way.”

“That, brother Sancho,” said the canon, “only holds good as far as the enjoyment of the revenue goes; but the lord of the seigniorie must attend to the administration of justice, and here capacity and sound judgment come in, and above all a firm determination to find out the truth; for if this be wanting in the beginning, the middle and the end will always go wrong; and God as commonly aids the honest intentions of the simple as he frustrates the evil designs of the crafty.”

“I don’t understand those philosophies,” returned Sancho Panza; “all I know is I would I had the county as soon as I shall know how to govern it; for I have as much soul as another, and as much body as anyone, and I shall be as much king of my realm as any other of his; and being so I should do as I liked, and doing as I liked I should please myself, and pleasing myself I should be content, and when one is content he has nothing more to desire, and when one has nothing more to desire there is an end of it; so let the county come, and God be with you, and let us see one another, as one blind man said to the other.”

“That is not bad philosophy thou art talking, Sancho,” said the canon; “but for all that there is a good deal to be said on this matter of counties.”

To which Don Quixote returned, “I know not what more there is to be said; I only guide myself by the example set me by the great Amadis of Gaul, when he made his squire count of the Insula Firme; and so, without any scruples of conscience, I can make a count of Sancho Panza, for he is one of the best squires that ever knight-errant had.”

The canon was astonished at the methodical nonsense (if nonsense be capable of method) that Don Quixote uttered, at the way in which he had described the adventure of the knight of the lake, at the impression that the deliberate lies of the books he read had made upon him, and lastly he marvelled at the simplicity of Sancho, who desired so eagerly to obtain the county his master had promised him.

By this time the canon's servants, who had gone to the inn to fetch the sumpter mule, had returned, and making a carpet and the green grass of the meadow serve as a table, they seated themselves in the shade of some trees and made their repast there, that the carter might not be deprived of the advantage of the spot, as has been already said. As they were eating they suddenly heard a loud noise and the sound of a bell that seemed to come from among some brambles and thick bushes that were close by, and the same instant they observed a beautiful goat, spotted all over black, white, and brown, spring out of the thicket with a goatherd after it, calling to it and uttering the usual cries to make it stop or turn back to the fold. The fugitive goat, scared and frightened, ran towards the company as if seeking their protection and then stood still, and the goatherd coming up seized it by the horns and began to talk to it as if it were possessed of reason and understanding: "Ah wanderer, wanderer, Spotty, Spotty; how have you gone limping all this time? What wolves have frightened you, my daughter? Won't you tell me what is the matter, my beauty? But what else can it be except that you are a she, and cannot keep quiet? A plague on your humours and the humours of those you take after! Come back, come back, my darling; and if you will not be so happy, at any rate you will be safe in the fold or with your companions; for if you who ought to keep and lead them, go wandering astray, what will become of them?"

The goatherd's talk amused all who heard it, but especially the canon, who said to him, "As you live, brother, take it easy, and be not in such a hurry to drive this goat back to the fold; for, being a female, as you say, she will follow her natural instinct in spite of all you can do to prevent it. Take this morsel and drink a sup, and that will soothe your irritation, and in the meantime the goat will rest herself," and so saying, he handed him the loins of a cold rabbit on a fork.

The goatherd took it with thanks, and drank and calmed himself, and then said, "I should be sorry if your worships were to take me for a simpleton for having spoken so seriously as I did to this animal; but the truth is there is a certain mystery in the words I used. I am a clown, but not so much of one but that I know how to behave to men and to beasts."

"That I can well believe," said the curate, "for I know already by experience



that the woods breed men of learning, and shepherds' huts harbour philosophers."

"At all events, senor," returned the goatherd, "they shelter men of experience; and that you may see the truth of this and grasp it, though I may seem to put myself forward without being asked, I will, if it will not tire you, gentlemen, and you will give me your attention for a little, tell you a true story which will confirm this gentleman's word (and he pointed to the curate) as well as my own."

To this Don Quixote replied, "Seeing that this affair has a certain colour of chivalry about it, I for my part, brother, will hear you most gladly, and so will all these gentlemen, from the high intelligence they possess and their love of curious novelties that interest, charm, and entertain the mind, as I feel quite sure your story will do. So begin, friend, for we are all prepared to listen."

"I draw my stakes," said Sancho, "and will retreat with this pasty to the brook there, where I mean to victual myself for three days; for I have heard my lord, Don Quixote, say that a knight-errant's squire should eat until he can hold no more, whenever he has the chance, because it often happens them to get by accident into a wood so thick that they cannot find a way out of it for six days; and if the man is not well filled or his alforjas well stored, there he may stay, as very often he does, turned into a dried mummy."

"Thou art in the right of it, Sancho," said Don Quixote; "go where thou wilt and eat all thou canst, for I have had enough, and only want to give my mind its refreshment, as I shall by listening to this good fellow's story."

"It is what we shall all do," said the canon; and then begged the goatherd to begin the promised tale.

The goatherd gave the goat which he held by the horns a couple of slaps on the back, saying, "Lie down here beside me, Spotty, for we have time enough to return to our fold." The goat seemed to understand him, for as her master seated himself, she stretched herself quietly beside him and looked up in his face to show him she was all attention to what he was going to say, and then in these words he began his story.



## CHAPTER LI.

WHICH DEALS WITH WHAT THE GOATHERD TOLD THOSE WHO  
WERE CARRYING OFF DON QUIXOTE



Three leagues from this valley there is a village which, though small, is one of the richest in all this neighbourhood, and in it there lived a farmer, a very worthy man, and so much respected that, although to be so is the natural consequence of being rich, he was even more respected for his virtue than for the wealth he had acquired. But what made him still more fortunate, as he said himself, was having a daughter of such exceeding beauty, rare intelligence, gracefulness, and virtue, that everyone who knew her and beheld her marvelled at the extraordinary gifts with which heaven and nature had endowed her. As a child she was beautiful, she continued to grow in beauty, and at the age of sixteen she was most lovely.

The fame of her beauty began to spread abroad through all the villages around — but why do I say the villages around, merely, when it spread to distant cities, and even made its way into the halls of royalty and reached the ears of people of every class, who came from all sides to see her as if to see something rare and curious, or some wonder-working image?

Her father watched over her and she watched over herself; for there are no locks, or guards, or bolts that can protect a young girl better than her own modesty. The wealth of the father and the beauty of the daughter led many neighbours as well as strangers to seek her for a wife; but he, as one might well be who had the disposal of so rich a jewel, was perplexed and unable to make up his mind to which of her countless suitors he should entrust her. I was one among the many who felt a desire so natural, and, as her father knew who I was, and I was of the same town, of pure blood, in the bloom of life, and very rich in possessions, I had great hopes of success. There was another of the same place and qualifications who also sought her, and this made her father's choice hang in the balance, for he felt that on either of us his daughter would be well bestowed; so to escape from this state of perplexity he resolved to refer the matter to Leandra (for that is the name of the rich damsel who has reduced me to misery), reflecting that as we were both equal it would be best to leave it to his dear daughter to choose according to her inclination — a course that is worthy of imitation by all fathers who wish to settle their children in life. I do not mean that they ought to leave them to make a choice of what is contemptible and bad, but that they should place before them what is good and then allow them to make a good choice as they please. I do not know which Leandra chose; I only know her father put us both off with the tender age of his daughter and vague words that neither bound him nor dismissed us. My rival is called Anselmo and I myself Eugenio — that you may know the names of the personages that figure in this tragedy, the end of which is still in suspense, though it is plain to see it must be disastrous.

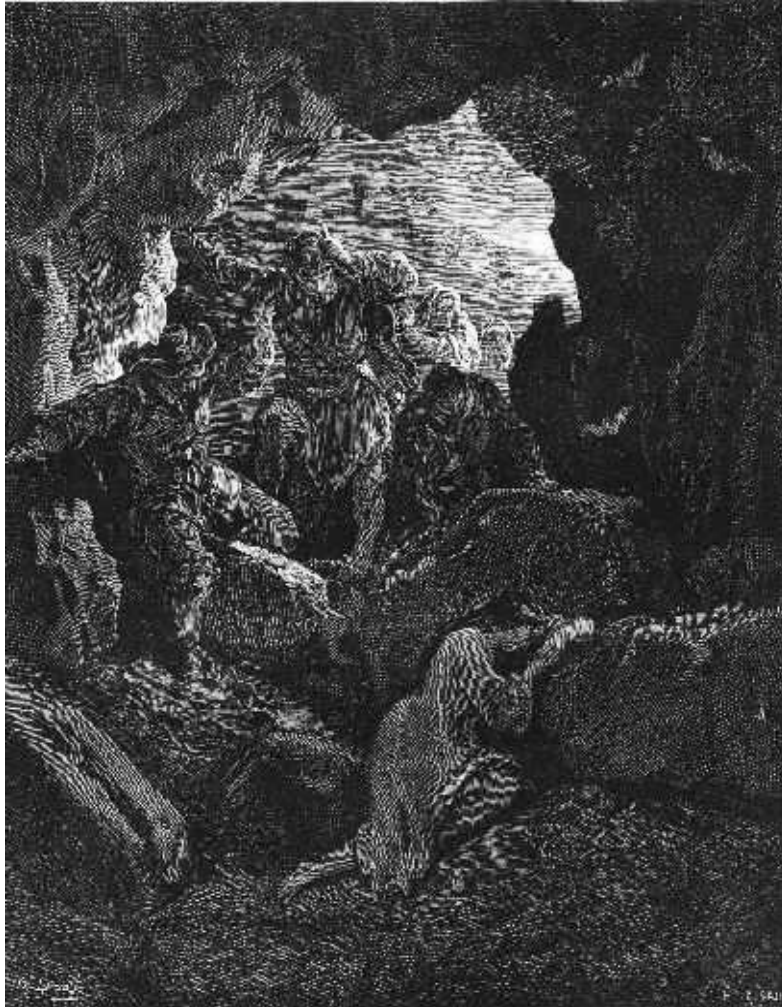
About this time there arrived in our town one Vicente de la Roca, the son of a poor peasant of the same town, the said Vicente having returned from service as a soldier in Italy and divers other parts. A captain who chanced to pass that way with his company had carried him off from our village when he was a boy of about twelve years, and now twelve years later the young man came back in a soldier's uniform, arrayed in a thousand colours, and all over glass trinkets and fine steel chains. To-day he would appear in one gay dress, to-morrow in another; but all flimsy and gaudy, of little substance and less worth. The peasant folk, who are naturally malicious, and when they have nothing to do can be malice itself, remarked all this, and took note of his finery and jewellery, piece

by piece, and discovered that he had three suits of different colours, with garters and stockings to match; but he made so many arrangements and combinations out of them, that if they had not counted them, anyone would have sworn that he had made a display of more than ten suits of clothes and twenty plumes. Do not look upon all this that I am telling you about the clothes as uncalled for or spun out, for they have a great deal to do with the story. He used to seat himself on a bench under the great poplar in our plaza, and there he would keep us all hanging open-mouthed on the stories he told us of his exploits. There was no country on the face of the globe he had not seen, nor battle he had not been engaged in; he had killed more Moors than there are in Morocco and Tunis, and fought more single combats, according to his own account, than Garcilaso, Diego Garcia de Paredes and a thousand others he named, and out of all he had come victorious without losing a drop of blood. On the other hand he showed marks of wounds, which, though they could not be made out, he said were gunshot wounds received in divers encounters and actions. Lastly, with monstrous impudence he used to say “you” to his equals and even those who knew what he was, and declare that his arm was his father and his deeds his pedigree, and that being a soldier he was as good as the king himself. And to add to these swaggering ways he was a trifle of a musician, and played the guitar with such a flourish that some said he made it speak; nor did his accomplishments end here, for he was something of a poet too, and on every trifle that happened in the town he made a ballad a league long.



This soldier, then, that I have described, this Vicente de la Roca, this bravo, gallant, musician, poet, was often seen and watched by Leandra from a window of her house which looked out on the plaza. The glitter of his showy attire took her fancy, his ballads bewitched her (for he gave away twenty copies of every one he made), the tales of his exploits which he told about himself came to her ears; and in short, as the devil no doubt had arranged it, she fell in love with him before the presumption of making love to her had suggested itself to him; and as in love-affairs none are more easily brought to an issue than those which have the inclination of the lady for an ally, Leandra and Vicente came to an understanding without any difficulty; and before any of her numerous suitors

had any suspicion of her design, she had already carried it into effect, having left the house of her dearly beloved father (for mother she had none), and disappeared from the village with the soldier, who came more triumphantly out of this enterprise than out of any of the large number he laid claim to. All the village and all who heard of it were amazed at the affair; I was aghast, Anselmo thunderstruck, her father full of grief, her relations indignant, the authorities all in a ferment, the officers of the Brotherhood in arms. They scoured the roads, they searched the woods and all quarters, and at the end of three days they found the flighty Leandra in a mountain cave, stript to her shift, and robbed of all the money and precious jewels she had carried away from home with her.



They brought her back to her unhappy father, and questioned her as to her misfortune, and she confessed without pressure that Vicente de la Roca had deceived her, and under promise of marrying her had induced her to leave her father's house, as he meant to take her to the richest and most delightful city in the whole world, which was Naples; and that she, ill-advised and deluded, had believed him, and robbed her father, and handed over all to him the night she disappeared; and that he had carried her away to a rugged mountain and shut her up in the cave where they had found her. She said, moreover, that the soldier, without robbing her of her honour, had taken from her everything she had, and made off, leaving her in the cave, a thing that still further surprised everybody. It



was not easy for us to credit the young man's continence, but she asserted it with such earnestness that it helped to console her distressed father, who thought nothing of what had been taken since the jewel that once lost can never be recovered had been left to his daughter. The same day that Leandra made her appearance her father removed her from our sight and took her away to shut her up in a convent in a town near this, in the hope that time may wear away some of the disgrace she has incurred. Leandra's youth furnished an excuse for her fault, at least with those to whom it was of no consequence whether she was good or bad; but those who knew her shrewdness and intelligence did not attribute her misdemeanour to ignorance but to wantonness and the natural disposition of women, which is for the most part flighty and ill-regulated.

Leandra withdrawn from sight, Anselmo's eyes grew blind, or at any rate found nothing to look at that gave them any pleasure, and mine were in darkness without a ray of light to direct them to anything enjoyable while Leandra was away. Our melancholy grew greater, our patience grew less; we cursed the soldier's finery and railed at the carelessness of Leandra's father. At last Anselmo and I agreed to leave the village and come to this valley; and, he feeding a great flock of sheep of his own, and I a large herd of goats of mine, we pass our life among the trees, giving vent to our sorrows, together singing the fair Leandra's praises, or upbraiding her, or else sighing alone, and to heaven pouring forth our complaints in solitude. Following our example, many more of Leandra's lovers have come to these rude mountains and adopted our mode of life, and they are so numerous that one would fancy the place had been turned into the pastoral Arcadia, so full is it of shepherds and sheep-folds; nor is there a spot in it where the name of the fair Leandra is not heard. Here one curses her and calls her capricious, fickle, and immodest, there another condemns her as frail and frivolous; this pardons and absolves her, that spurns and reviles her; one extols her beauty, another assails her character, and in short all abuse her, and all adore her, and to such a pitch has this general infatuation gone that there are some who complain of her scorn without ever having exchanged a word with her, and even some that bewail and mourn the raging fever of jealousy, for which she never gave anyone cause, for, as I have already said, her misconduct was known before her passion. There is no nook among the rocks, no brookside, no shade beneath the trees that is not haunted by some shepherd telling his woes to the breezes; wherever there is an echo it repeats the name of Leandra; the mountains ring with "Leandra," "Leandra" murmur the brooks, and Leandra keeps us all bewildered and bewitched, hoping without hope and fearing without knowing what we fear. Of all this silly set the one that shows the least and also the most sense is my rival Anselmo, for having so many other things to complain

of, he only complains of separation, and to the accompaniment of a rebeck, which he plays admirably, he sings his complaints in verses that show his ingenuity. I follow another, easier, and to my mind wiser course, and that is to rail at the frivolity of women, at their inconstancy, their double dealing, their broken promises, their unkept pledges, and in short the want of reflection they show in fixing their affections and inclinations. This, sirs, was the reason of words and expressions I made use of to this goat when I came up just now; for as she is a female I have a contempt for her, though she is the best in all my fold. This is the story I promised to tell you, and if I have been tedious in telling it, I will not be slow to serve you; my hut is close by, and I have fresh milk and dainty cheese there, as well as a variety of toothsome fruit, no less pleasing to the eye than to the palate.



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## CHAPTER LII.

OF THE QUARREL THAT DON QUIXOTE HAD WITH THE GOATHERD,  
TOGETHER WITH THE RARE ADVENTURE OF THE PENITENTS,  
WHICH WITH AN EXPENDITURE OF SWEAT HE BROUGHT TO A  
HAPPY CONCLUSION



The goatherd's tale gave great satisfaction to all the hearers, and the canon especially enjoyed it, for he had remarked with particular attention the manner in which it had been told, which was as unlike the manner of a clownish goatherd as it was like that of a polished city wit; and he observed that the curate had been quite right in saying that the woods bred men of learning. They all offered their services to Eugenio but he who showed himself most liberal in this way was Don Quixote, who said to him, "Most assuredly, brother goatherd, if I found myself in a position to attempt any adventure, I would, this very instant, set out on your behalf, and would rescue Leandra from that convent (where no doubt she is kept against her will), in spite of the abbess and all who might try to prevent me, and would place her in your hands to deal with her according to your will and pleasure, observing, however, the laws of chivalry which lay down that no violence of any kind is to be offered to any damsel. But I trust in God our Lord that the might of one malignant enchanter may not prove so great but that the power of another better disposed may prove superior to it, and then I promise

you my support and assistance, as I am bound to do by my profession, which is none other than to give aid to the weak and needy.”

The goatherd eyed him, and noticing Don Quixote’s sorry appearance and looks, he was filled with wonder, and asked the barber, who was next him, “Senor, who is this man who makes such a figure and talks in such a strain?”

“Who should it be,” said the barber, “but the famous Don Quixote of La Mancha, the undoer of injustice, the righter of wrongs, the protector of damsels, the terror of giants, and the winner of battles?”

“That,” said the goatherd, “sounds like what one reads in the books of the knights-errant, who did all that you say this man does; though it is my belief that either you are joking, or else this gentleman has empty lodgings in his head.”

“You are a great scoundrel,” said Don Quixote, “and it is you who are empty and a fool. I am fuller than ever was the whoreson bitch that bore you;” and passing from words to deeds, he caught up a loaf that was near him and sent it full in the goatherd’s face, with such force that he flattened his nose; but the goatherd, who did not understand jokes, and found himself roughly handled in such good earnest, paying no respect to carpet, tablecloth, or diners, sprang upon Don Quixote, and seizing him by the throat with both hands would no doubt have throttled him, had not Sancho Panza that instant come to the rescue, and grasping him by the shoulders flung him down on the table, smashing plates, breaking glasses, and upsetting and scattering everything on it. Don Quixote, finding himself free, strove to get on top of the goatherd, who, with his face covered with blood, and soundly kicked by Sancho, was on all fours feeling about for one of the table-knives to take a bloody revenge with. The canon and the curate, however, prevented him, but the barber so contrived it that he got Don Quixote under him, and rained down upon him such a shower of fisticuffs that the poor knight’s face streamed with blood as freely as his own. The canon and the curate were bursting with laughter, the officers were capering with delight, and both the one and the other hissed them on as they do dogs that are worrying one another in a fight. Sancho alone was frantic, for he could not free himself from the grasp of one of the canon’s servants, who kept him from going to his master’s assistance.



At last, while they were all, with the exception of the two bruisers who were mauling each other, in high glee and enjoyment, they heard a trumpet sound a note so doleful that it made them all look in the direction whence the sound seemed to come. But the one that was most excited by hearing it was Don Quixote, who though sorely against his will he was under the goatherd, and something more than pretty well pummelled, said to him, "Brother devil (for it is impossible but that thou must be one since thou hast had might and strength enough to overcome mine), I ask thee to agree to a truce for but one hour for the solemn note of yonder trumpet that falls on our ears seems to me to summon me to some new adventure." The goatherd, who was by this time tired of pummelling and being pummelled, released him at once, and Don Quixote rising

to his feet and turning his eyes to the quarter where the sound had been heard, suddenly saw coming down the slope of a hill several men clad in white like penitents.

The fact was that the clouds had that year withheld their moisture from the earth, and in all the villages of the district they were organising processions, rogations, and penances, imploring God to open the hands of his mercy and send the rain; and to this end the people of a village that was hard by were going in procession to a holy hermitage there was on one side of that valley. Don Quixote when he saw the strange garb of the penitents, without reflecting how often he had seen it before, took it into his head that this was a case of adventure, and that it fell to him alone as a knight-errant to engage in it; and he was all the more confirmed in this notion, by the idea that an image draped in black they had with them was some illustrious lady that these villains and discourteous thieves were carrying off by force. As soon as this occurred to him he ran with all speed to Rocinante who was grazing at large, and taking the bridle and the buckler from the saddle-bow, he had him bridled in an instant, and calling to Sancho for his sword he mounted Rocinante, braced his buckler on his arm, and in a loud voice exclaimed to those who stood by, "Now, noble company, ye shall see how important it is that there should be knights in the world professing the order of knight-errantry; now, I say, ye shall see, by the deliverance of that worthy lady who is borne captive there, whether knights-errant deserve to be held in estimation," and so saying he brought his legs to bear on Rocinante — for he had no spurs — and at a full canter (for in all this veracious history we never read of Rocinante fairly galloping) set off to encounter the penitents, though the curate, the canon, and the barber ran to prevent him. But it was out of their power, nor did he even stop for the shouts of Sancho calling after him, "Where are you going, Senor Don Quixote? What devils have possessed you to set you on against our Catholic faith? Plague take me! mind, that is a procession of penitents, and the lady they are carrying on that stand there is the blessed image of the immaculate Virgin. Take care what you are doing, senor, for this time it may be safely said you don't know what you are about." Sancho laboured in vain, for his master was so bent on coming to quarters with these sheeted figures and releasing the lady in black that he did not hear a word; and even had he heard, he would not have turned back if the king had ordered him. He came up with the procession and reined in Rocinante, who was already anxious enough to slacken speed a little, and in a hoarse, excited voice he exclaimed, "You who hide your faces, perhaps because you are not good subjects, pay attention and listen to what I am about to say to you." The first to halt were those who were carrying the image, and one of the four ecclesiastics who were chanting the

Litany, struck by the strange figure of Don Quixote, the leanness of Rocinante, and the other ludicrous peculiarities he observed, said in reply to him, "Brother, if you have anything to say to us say it quickly, for these brethren are whipping themselves, and we cannot stop, nor is it reasonable we should stop to hear anything, unless indeed it is short enough to be said in two words."

"I will say it in one," replied Don Quixote, "and it is this; that at once, this very instant, ye release that fair lady whose tears and sad aspect show plainly that ye are carrying her off against her will, and that ye have committed some scandalous outrage against her; and I, who was born into the world to redress all such like wrongs, will not permit you to advance another step until you have restored to her the liberty she pines for and deserves."

From these words all the hearers concluded that he must be a madman, and began to laugh heartily, and their laughter acted like gunpowder on Don Quixote's fury, for drawing his sword without another word he made a rush at the stand. One of those who supported it, leaving the burden to his comrades, advanced to meet him, flourishing a forked stick that he had for propping up the stand when resting, and with this he caught a mighty cut Don Quixote made at him that severed it in two; but with the portion that remained in his hand he dealt such a thwack on the shoulder of Don Quixote's sword arm (which the buckler could not protect against the clownish assault) that poor Don Quixote came to the ground in a sad plight.

Sancho Panza, who was coming on close behind puffing and blowing, seeing him fall, cried out to his assailant not to strike him again, for he was a poor enchanted knight, who had never harmed anyone all the days of his life; but what checked the clown was, not Sancho's shouting, but seeing that Don Quixote did not stir hand or foot; and so, fancying he had killed him, he hastily hitched up his tunic under his girdle and took to his heels across the country like a deer.

By this time all Don Quixote's companions had come up to where he lay; but the processionists seeing them come running, and with them the officers of the Brotherhood with their crossbows, apprehended mischief, and clustering round the image, raised their hoods, and grasped their scourges, as the priests did their tapers, and awaited the attack, resolved to defend themselves and even to take the offensive against their assailants if they could. Fortune, however, arranged the matter better than they expected, for all Sancho did was to fling himself on his master's body, raising over him the most doleful and laughable lamentation that ever was heard, for he believed he was dead. The curate was known to another curate who walked in the procession, and their recognition of one another set at rest the apprehensions of both parties; the first then told the other



in two words who Don Quixote was, and he and the whole troop of penitents went to see if the poor gentleman was dead, and heard Sancho Panza saying, with tears in his eyes, “Oh flower of chivalry, that with one blow of a stick hast ended the course of thy well-spent life! Oh pride of thy race, honour and glory of all La Mancha, nay, of all the world, that for want of thee will be full of evil-doers, no longer in fear of punishment for their misdeeds! Oh thou, generous above all the Alexanders, since for only eight months of service thou hast given me the best island the sea girds or surrounds! Humble with the proud, haughty with the humble, encounterer of dangers, endurer of outrages, enamoured without reason, imitator of the good, scourge of the wicked, enemy of the mean, in short, knight-errant, which is all that can be said!”



At the cries and moans of Sancho, Don Quixote came to himself, and the first word he said was, "He who lives separated from you, sweetest Dulcinea, has greater miseries to endure than these. Aid me, friend Sancho, to mount the enchanted cart, for I am not in a condition to press the saddle of Rocinante, as this shoulder is all knocked to pieces."

"That I will do with all my heart, senor," said Sancho; "and let us return to our village with these gentlemen, who seek your good, and there we will prepare for making another sally, which may turn out more profitable and creditable to us."

"Thou art right, Sancho," returned Don Quixote; "It will be wise to let the malign influence of the stars which now prevails pass off."

The canon, the curate, and the barber told him he would act very wisely in doing as he said; and so, highly amused at Sancho Panza's simplicities, they placed Don Quixote in the cart as before. The procession once more formed itself in order and proceeded on its road; the goatherd took his leave of the party; the officers of the Brotherhood declined to go any farther, and the curate paid them what was due to them; the canon begged the curate to let him know how

Don Quixote did, whether he was cured of his madness or still suffered from it, and then begged leave to continue his journey; in short, they all separated and went their ways, leaving to themselves the curate and the barber, Don Quixote, Sancho Panza, and the good Rocinante, who regarded everything with as great resignation as his master. The carter yoked his oxen and made Don Quixote comfortable on a truss of hay, and at his usual deliberate pace took the road the curate directed, and at the end of six days they reached Don Quixote's village, and entered it about the middle of the day, which it so happened was a Sunday, and the people were all in the plaza, through which Don Quixote's cart passed. They all flocked to see what was in the cart, and when they recognised their townsman they were filled with amazement, and a boy ran off to bring the news to his housekeeper and his niece that their master and uncle had come back all lean and yellow and stretched on a truss of hay on an ox-cart. It was piteous to hear the cries the two good ladies raised, how they beat their breasts and poured out fresh maledictions on those accursed books of chivalry; all which was renewed when they saw Don Quixote coming in at the gate.

At the news of Don Quixote's arrival Sancho Panza's wife came running, for she by this time knew that her husband had gone away with him as his squire, and on seeing Sancho, the first thing she asked him was if the ass was well. Sancho replied that he was, better than his master was.

"Thanks be to God," said she, "for being so good to me; but now tell me, my friend, what have you made by your squirings? What gown have you brought me back? What shoes for your children?"

"I bring nothing of that sort, wife," said Sancho; "though I bring other things of more consequence and value."

"I am very glad of that," returned his wife; "show me these things of more value and consequence, my friend; for I want to see them to cheer my heart that has been so sad and heavy all these ages that you have been away."

"I will show them to you at home, wife," said Sancho; "be content for the present; for if it please God that we should again go on our travels in search of adventures, you will soon see me a count, or governor of an island, and that not one of those everyday ones, but the best that is to be had."

"Heaven grant it, husband," said she, "for indeed we have need of it. But tell me, what's this about islands, for I don't understand it?"

"Honey is not for the mouth of the ass," returned Sancho; "all in good time thou shalt see, wife — nay, thou wilt be surprised to hear thyself called 'your ladyship' by all thy vassals."

"What are you talking about, Sancho, with your ladyships, islands, and vassals?" returned Teresa Panza — for so Sancho's wife was called, though they

were not relations, for in La Mancha it is customary for wives to take their husbands' surnames.

"Don't be in such a hurry to know all this, Teresa," said Sancho; "it is enough that I am telling you the truth, so shut your mouth. But I may tell you this much by the way, that there is nothing in the world more delightful than to be a person of consideration, squire to a knight-errant, and a seeker of adventures. To be sure most of those one finds do not end as pleasantly as one could wish, for out of a hundred, ninety-nine will turn out cross and contrary. I know it by experience, for out of some I came blanketed, and out of others belaboured. Still, for all that, it is a fine thing to be on the look-out for what may happen, crossing mountains, searching woods, climbing rocks, visiting castles, putting up at inns, all at free quarters, and devil take the maravedi to pay."

While this conversation passed between Sancho Panza and his wife, Don Quixote's housekeeper and niece took him in and undressed him and laid him in his old bed. He eyed them askance, and could not make out where he was. The curate charged his niece to be very careful to make her uncle comfortable and to keep a watch over him lest he should make his escape from them again, telling her what they had been obliged to do to bring him home. On this the pair once more lifted up their voices and renewed their maledictions upon the books of chivalry, and implored heaven to plunge the authors of such lies and nonsense into the midst of the bottomless pit. They were, in short, kept in anxiety and dread lest their uncle and master should give them the slip the moment he found himself somewhat better, and as they feared so it fell out.

But the author of this history, though he has devoted research and industry to the discovery of the deeds achieved by Don Quixote in his third sally, has been unable to obtain any information respecting them, at any rate derived from authentic documents; tradition has merely preserved in the memory of La Mancha the fact that Don Quixote, the third time he sallied forth from his home, betook himself to Saragossa, where he was present at some famous jousts which came off in that city, and that he had adventures there worthy of his valour and high intelligence. Of his end and death he could learn no particulars, nor would he have ascertained it or known of it, if good fortune had not produced an old physician for him who had in his possession a leaden box, which, according to his account, had been discovered among the crumbling foundations of an ancient hermitage that was being rebuilt; in which box were found certain parchment manuscripts in Gothic character, but in Castilian verse, containing many of his achievements, and setting forth the beauty of Dulcinea, the form of Rocinante, the fidelity of Sancho Panza, and the burial of Don Quixote himself, together with sundry epitaphs and eulogies on his life and character; but all that could be

read and deciphered were those which the trustworthy author of this new and unparalleled history here presents. And the said author asks of those that shall read it nothing in return for the vast toil which it has cost him in examining and searching the Manchegan archives in order to bring it to light, save that they give him the same credit that people of sense give to the books of chivalry that pervade the world and are so popular; for with this he will consider himself amply paid and fully satisfied, and will be encouraged to seek out and produce other histories, if not as truthful, at least equal in invention and not less entertaining. The first words written on the parchment found in the leaden box were these: THE ACADEMICIANS OF  
ARGAMASILLA, A VILLAGE OF  
LA MANCHA,  
ON THE LIFE AND DEATH  
OF DON QUIXOTE OF LA MANCHA,  
HOC SCRIPSERUNT  
MONICONGO, ACADEMICIAN OF ARGAMASILLA,

ON THE TOMB OF DON QUIXOTE  
EPITAPH

The scatterbrain that gave La Mancha more

Rich spoils than Jason's; who a point so keen Had to his wit, and happier far  
had been

If his wit's weathercock a blunter bore;

The arm renowned far as Gaeta's shore,

Cathay, and all the lands that lie between; The muse discreet and terrible in  
mien

As ever wrote on brass in days of yore;

He who surpassed the Amadisese all,

And who as naught the Galaors accounted,

Supported by his love and gallantry:

Who made the Belianises sing small,

And sought renown on Rocinante mounted;

Here, underneath this cold stone, doth he lie.

PANIAGUADO,  
ACADEMICIAN OF ARGAMASILLA,  
IN LAUDEM DULCINEAE DEL TOBOSO

### SONNET

She, whose full features may be here descried, High-bosomed, with a bearing of disdain,

Is Dulcinea, she for whom in vain

The great Don Quixote of La Mancha sighed.

For her, Toboso's queen, from side to side

He traversed the grim sierra, the champaign Of Aranjuez, and Montiel's famous plain:

On Rocinante oft a weary ride.

Malignant planets, cruel destiny,

Pursued them both, the fair Manchegan dame, And the unconquered star of chivalry.

Nor youth nor beauty saved her from the claim Of death; he paid love's bitter penalty,

And left the marble to preserve his name.

### CAPRICHOSO, A MOST ACUTE ACADEMICIAN OF ARGAMASILLA, IN PRAISE OF ROCINANTE, STEED OF DON QUIXOTE OF LA MANCHA

### SONNET

On that proud throne of diamantine sheen,

Which the blood-reeking feet of Mars degrade, The mad Manchegan's banner now hath been

By him in all its bravery displayed.

There hath he hung his arms and trenchant blade Wherewith, achieving deeds till now unseen, He slays, lays low, cleaves, hews; but art hath made A novel style for our new paladin.

If Amadis be the proud boast of Gaul,

If by his progeny the fame of Greece

Through all the regions of the earth be spread, Great Quixote crowned in grim Bellona's hall To-day exalts La Mancha over these,

And above Greece or Gaul she holds her head.

Nor ends his glory here, for his good steed Doth Brillador and Bayard far exceed;

As mettled steeds compared with Rocinante,

The reputation they have won is scanty.

### BURLADOR, ACADEMICIAN OF ARGAMASILLA, ON SANCHE PANZA

## SONNET

The worthy Sancho Panza here you see;  
A great soul once was in that body small, Nor was there squire upon this  
earthly ball So plain and simple, or of guile so free.  
Within an ace of being Count was he,  
And would have been but for the spite and gall Of this vile age, mean and  
illiberal,  
That cannot even let a donkey be.  
For mounted on an ass (excuse the word),  
By Rocinante's side this gentle squire  
Was wont his wandering master to attend.  
Delusive hopes that lure the common herd  
With promises of ease, the heart's desire, In shadows, dreams, and smoke ye  
always end.

## CACHIDIABLO, ACADEMICIAN OF ARGAMASILLA, ON THE TOMB OF DON QUIXOTE EPITAPH

The knight lies here below,  
Ill-errant and bruised sore,  
Whom Rocinante bore  
In his wanderings to and fro.  
By the side of the knight is laid  
Stolid man Sancho too,  
Than whom a squire more true  
Was not in the esquire trade.

## TIQUITOC, ACADEMICIAN OF ARGAMASILLA, ON THE TOMB OF DULCINEA DEL TOBOSO EPITAPH

Here Dulcinea lies.  
Plump was she and robust:  
Now she is ashes and dust:  
The end of all flesh that dies.  
A lady of high degree,  
With the port of a lofty dame,  
And the great Don Quixote's flame,

And the pride of her village was she.

These were all the verses that could be deciphered; the rest, the writing being worm-eaten, were handed over to one of the Academicians to make out their meaning conjecturally. We have been informed that at the cost of many sleepless nights and much toil he has succeeded, and that he means to publish them in hopes of Don Quixote's third sally.

*“Forse altro cantera con miglior plettro.”*





## THE SECOND PART OF THE INGENIOUS GENTLEMAN DON QUIXOTE OF LA MANCHA



*Translated by John Ormsby and Illustrated by Gustave Doré*

Part Two of *Don Quixote* was published by the same press as its predecessor and the novel appeared late in 1615, ten years after the publication of the first part. Although Part One was mostly farcical, the second part is decidedly more serious and philosophical in tone. In the sequel, Cervantes uses the meta-fictional device of characters referring to the real-life publication of Part One and they also discuss a fraudulent Part Two. Therefore, Don Quixote and Sancho meet strangers that are already familiar with their famous history. For example, a Duke and Duchess deceive Don Quixote for entertainment, setting forth a string of imagined adventures resulting in a series of practical jokes, sadistically putting Don Quixote's sense of chivalry and his devotion to Dulcinea through many tests.

Even Sancho deceives his master at one point. Pressured into finding Dulcinea, the servant brings back three dirty and ragged peasant girls, telling Don Quixote that they are Dulcinea and her ladies-in-waiting. When Don Quixote only sees the peasant girls, Sancho pretends that their derelict appearance results from an enchantment. Sancho is later punished for this when the mischievous Duke and Duchess devise a prank, where the only method to release Dulcinea from her spell is for Sancho to give himself a surplus of three thousand lashes. Sancho naturally resists this course of action, leading to conflict with Don Quixote.

Nevertheless, under the Duke's patronage, Sancho eventually receives his promised governorship and proves to be a wise and practical ruler, though this also ends in humiliation as well. However, it is in the main protagonist that we can discern the greatest change of character in Part Two. Near the end of the novel, Don Quixote reluctantly sways towards sanity. From now on an inn is simply an inn, not a castle, as reason returns and his flighty imagination seems to weaken.

The lengthy untold "history" of Don Quixote's adventures in knight-errantry comes to a close after his battle with the Knight of the White Moon, actually a

young man from Don Quixote's hometown, on the beach in Barcelona, in which he is conquered. Bound by the rules of chivalry, Don Quixote submits to prearranged terms in which the vanquished must obey the will of the conqueror: in this case, laying down his arms and ceasing his acts of chivalry for the period of one year, a duration in which he may be cured of his madness. Defeated and dejected, he and Sancho commence their journey home. Upon returning to his village, Don Quixote announces his plan to retire to the countryside and live the pastoral existence of shepherd, although his housekeeper, who has a more realistic view of the hard life of a shepherd, urges him to stay at home and tend to his own affairs. Soon after, he retires to his bed with a deathly illness, possibly brought on by melancholy over his defeats and humiliations. One day, he awakes from a dream having fully recovered his sanity. Sancho tries to restore his faith, but Alonso Quixano, his true name, can only renounce his previous existence and apologise for the harm he has caused. He dictates his will, which includes a provision that his niece will be disinherited if she marries a man who reads books of chivalry. After Alonso Quixano dies, the author emphasises that there are no more adventures to relate and that any further books about Don Quixote would be spurious.

Part Two of *Don Quixote* is often regarded as the birth of modern literature, as it explores the concept of a character understanding that he is being written about — a theme that would not be explored in greater depth until the modern works of the twentieth century.

SEGUNDA PARTE  
DEL INGENIOSO  
CAVALLERO DON  
QVIXOTE DE LA  
MANCHA.

*Por Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, autor de la primera parte.*

Dirigida a don Pedro Fernandez de Castro, Conde de Lemos, de Andrade, y de Villalva, Marques de Sarria, Gentilhombre de la Camara de su Magestad, Comendador de la Encomienda de Peñafiel, y la Zarga de la Orden de Alcantara, Virrey, Gobernador, y Capitan General del Reyno de Napoles, y Presidente del supremo Consejo de Italia.

Año



1615

CON PRIVILEGIO.

En Madrid, por Juan de la Cuesta.

*vende se en casa de Francisco de Robles, librero del Rey M. S.*

Cover of the first edition of Part Two



*A plaque in Madrid celebrating the location of the 1615 first publication of the Second Part*



CAPITVLO PRIME-  
ro de lo que el Cura, y el Barbe-  
ro passaron con don Qui-  
xote cerca de su en-  
fermedad.

**C**AVENTA Zide Hamete Benengeli  
en la segunda parte desta Historia, y ter-  
cera salida de don Quixote, que el Cu-  
ra, y el Barbero se estunieron casi vn mes  
sin verle, por no renouarle, y traerle á  
la memoria las cosas passadas. Pero no  
por esto dexaron de visitar á su sobrina  
y á su ama, encargandolas, inuiessen cuenta con regalarle,  
dandole a comer cosas confortatiuas, y apropiadas para  
el coracon, y el cerebro, de donde procedia (segun buen dis-  
curso) toda su mala ventura. Las quales dixeron, que así  
lo hazian, y lo harian cō la voluntad, y enyadado possible:  
porque echauan de ver, que su señor, por momentos yua  
dando muestras de estar en su enacero juyzio, de lo qual re-  
cibieron

*The first page of Chapter One in the first edition*

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*Illustration of Don Quixote, 1848*



*'Don Quixote and Sancho Panza' by Honoré Daumier, 1849*

## DEDICATION OF VOLUME II.

### TO THE COUNT OF LEMOS:

These days past, when sending Your Excellency my plays, that had appeared in print before being shown on the stage, I said, if I remember well, that Don Quixote was putting on his spurs to go and render homage to Your Excellency. Now I say that “with his spurs, he is on his way.” Should he reach destination methinks I shall have rendered some service to Your Excellency, as from many parts I am urged to send him off, so as to dispel the loathing and disgust caused by another Don Quixote who, under the name of Second Part, has run masquerading through the whole world. And he who has shown the greatest longing for him has been the great Emperor of China, who wrote me a letter in Chinese a month ago and sent it by a special courier. He asked me, or to be truthful, he begged me to send him Don Quixote, for he intended to found a college where the Spanish tongue would be taught, and it was his wish that the book to be read should be the History of Don Quixote. He also added that I should go and be the rector of this college. I asked the bearer if His Majesty had afforded a sum in aid of my travel expenses. He answered, “No, not even in thought.”

“Then, brother,” I replied, “you can return to your China, post haste or at whatever haste you are bound to go, as I am not fit for so long a travel and, besides being ill, I am very much without money, while Emperor for Emperor and Monarch for Monarch, I have at Naples the great Count of Lemos, who, without so many petty titles of colleges and rectorships, sustains me, protects me and does me more favour than I can wish for.”

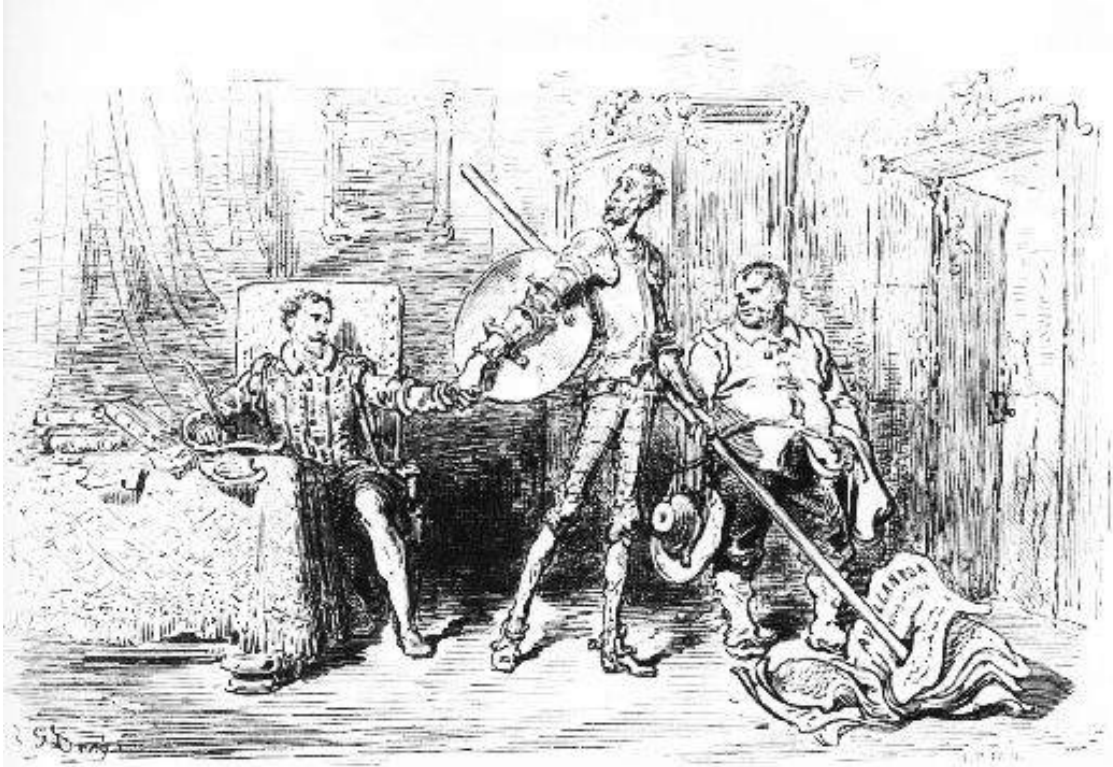
Thus I gave him his leave and I beg mine from you, offering Your Excellency the “*Trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*,” a book I shall finish within four months, Deo volente, and which will be either the worst or the best that has been composed in our language, I mean of those intended for entertainment; at which I repent of having called it the worst, for, in the opinion of friends, it is bound to attain the summit of possible quality. May Your Excellency return in such health that is wished you; Persiles will be ready to kiss your hand and I your feet, being as I am, Your Excellency’s most humble servant.

From Madrid, this last day of October of the year one thousand six hundred and fifteen.

At the service of Your Excellency:

MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA

## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE



God bless me, gentle (or it may be plebeian) reader, how eagerly must thou be looking forward to this preface, expecting to find there retaliation, scolding, and abuse against the author of the second Don Quixote — I mean him who was, they say, begotten at Tordesillas and born at Tarragona! Well then, the truth is, I am not going to give thee that satisfaction; for, though injuries stir up anger in humbler breasts, in mine the rule must admit of an exception. Thou wouldst have me call him ass, fool, and malapert, but I have no such intention; let his offence be his punishment, with his bread let him eat it, and there's an end of it. What I cannot help taking amiss is that he charges me with being old and one-handed, as if it had been in my power to keep time from passing over me, or as if the loss of my hand had been brought about in some tavern, and not on the grandest

occasion the past or present has seen, or the future can hope to see. If my wounds have no beauty to the beholder's eye, they are, at least, honourable in the estimation of those who know where they were received; for the soldier shows to greater advantage dead in battle than alive in flight; and so strongly is this my feeling, that if now it were proposed to perform an impossibility for me, I would rather have had my share in that mighty action, than be free from my wounds this minute without having been present at it. Those the soldier shows on his face and breast are stars that direct others to the heaven of honour and ambition of merited praise; and moreover it is to be observed that it is not with grey hairs that one writes, but with the understanding, and that commonly improves with years. I take it amiss, too, that he calls me envious, and explains to me, as if I were ignorant, what envy is; for really and truly, of the two kinds there are, I only know that which is holy, noble, and high-minded; and if that be so, as it is, I am not likely to attack a priest, above all if, in addition, he holds the rank of familiar of the Holy Office. And if he said what he did on account of him on whose behalf it seems he spoke, he is entirely mistaken; for I worship the genius of that person, and admire his works and his unceasing and strenuous industry. After all, I am grateful to this gentleman, the author, for saying that my novels are more satirical than exemplary, but that they are good; for they could not be that unless there was a little of everything in them.

I suspect thou wilt say that I am taking a very humble line, and keeping myself too much within the bounds of my moderation, from a feeling that additional suffering should not be inflicted upon a sufferer, and that what this gentleman has to endure must doubtless be very great, as he does not dare to come out into the open field and broad daylight, but hides his name and disguises his country as if he had been guilty of some lese majesty. If perchance thou shouldst come to know him, tell him from me that I do not hold myself aggrieved; for I know well what the temptations of the devil are, and that one of the greatest is putting it into a man's head that he can write and print a book by which he will get as much fame as money, and as much money as fame; and to prove it I will beg of you, in your own sprightly, pleasant way, to tell him this story.

There was a madman in Seville who took to one of the drollest absurdities and vagaries that ever madman in the world gave way to. It was this: he made a tube of reed sharp at one end, and catching a dog in the street, or wherever it might be, he with his foot held one of its legs fast, and with his hand lifted up the other, and as best he could fixed the tube where, by blowing, he made the dog as round as a ball; then holding it in this position, he gave it a couple of slaps on the belly, and let it go, saying to the bystanders (and there were always plenty of them):

“Do your worships think, now, that it is an easy thing to blow up a dog?” — Does your worship think now, that it is an easy thing to write a book?

And if this story does not suit him, you may, dear reader, tell him this one, which is likewise of a madman and a dog.

In Cordova there was another madman, whose way it was to carry a piece of marble slab or a stone, not of the lightest, on his head, and when he came upon any unwary dog he used to draw close to him and let the weight fall right on top of him; on which the dog in a rage, barking and howling, would run three streets without stopping. It so happened, however, that one of the dogs he discharged his load upon was a cap-maker's dog, of which his master was very fond. The stone came down hitting it on the head, the dog raised a yell at the blow, the master saw the affair and was wroth, and snatching up a measuring-yard rushed out at the madman and did not leave a sound bone in his body, and at every stroke he gave him he said, “You dog, you thief! my lurcher! Don't you see, you brute, that my dog is a lurcher?” and so, repeating the word “lurcher” again and again, he sent the madman away beaten to a jelly. The madman took the lesson to heart, and vanished, and for more than a month never once showed himself in public; but after that he came out again with his old trick and a heavier load than ever. He came up to where there was a dog, and examining it very carefully without venturing to let the stone fall, he said: “This is a lurcher; ware!” In short, all the dogs he came across, be they mastiffs or terriers, he said were lurchers; and he discharged no more stones. Maybe it will be the same with this historian; that he will not venture another time to discharge the weight of his wit in books, which, being bad, are harder than stones. Tell him, too, that I do not care a farthing for the threat he holds out to me of depriving me of my profit by means of his book; for, to borrow from the famous interlude of “The Perendenga,” I say in answer to him, “Long life to my lord the Veintiquatro, and Christ be with us all.” Long life to the great Conde de Lemos, whose Christian charity and well-known generosity support me against all the strokes of my curst fortune; and long life to the supreme benevolence of His Eminence of Toledo, Don Bernardo de Sandoval y Rojas; and what matter if there be no printing-presses in the world, or if they print more books against me than there are letters in the verses of Mingo Revulgo! These two princes, unsought by any adulation or flattery of mine, of their own goodness alone, have taken it upon them to show me kindness and protect me, and in this I consider myself happier and richer than if Fortune had raised me to her greatest height in the ordinary way. The poor man may retain honour, but not the vicious; poverty may cast a cloud over nobility, but cannot hide it altogether; and as virtue of itself sheds a certain light, even though it be through the straits and chinks of penury, it wins the esteem of lofty and

noble spirits, and in consequence their protection. Thou needst say no more to him, nor will I say anything more to thee, save to tell thee to bear in mind that this Second Part of "Don Quixote" which I offer thee is cut by the same craftsman and from the same cloth as the First, and that in it I present thee Don Quixote continued, and at length dead and buried, so that no one may dare to bring forward any further evidence against him, for that already produced is sufficient; and suffice it, too, that some reputable person should have given an account of all these shrewd lunacies of his without going into the matter again; for abundance, even of good things, prevents them from being valued; and scarcity, even in the case of what is bad, confers a certain value. I was forgetting to tell thee that thou mayest expect the "Persiles," which I am now finishing, and also the Second Part of "Galatea."







## CHAPTER I.

### OF THE INTERVIEW THE CURATE AND THE BARBER HAD WITH DON QUIXOTE ABOUT HIS MALADY



Cide Hamete Benengeli, in the Second Part of this history, and third sally of Don Quixote, says that the curate and the barber remained nearly a month without seeing him, lest they should recall or bring back to his recollection what had taken place. They did not, however, omit to visit his niece and housekeeper, and charge them to be careful to treat him with attention, and give him comforting things to eat, and such as were good for the heart and the brain, whence, it was plain to see, all his misfortune proceeded. The niece and

housekeeper replied that they did so, and meant to do so with all possible care and assiduity, for they could perceive that their master was now and then beginning to show signs of being in his right mind. This gave great satisfaction to the curate and the barber, for they concluded they had taken the right course in carrying him off enchanted on the ox-cart, as has been described in the First Part of this great as well as accurate history, in the last chapter thereof. So they resolved to pay him a visit and test the improvement in his condition, although they thought it almost impossible that there could be any; and they agreed not to touch upon any point connected with knight-errantry so as not to run the risk of reopening wounds which were still so tender.

They came to see him consequently, and found him sitting up in bed in a green baize waistcoat and a red Toledo cap, and so withered and dried up that he looked as if he had been turned into a mummy. They were very cordially received by him; they asked him after his health, and he talked to them about himself very naturally and in very well-chosen language. In the course of their conversation they fell to discussing what they call State-craft and systems of government, correcting this abuse and condemning that, reforming one practice and abolishing another, each of the three setting up for a new legislator, a modern Lycurgus, or a brand-new Solon; and so completely did they remodel the State, that they seemed to have thrust it into a furnace and taken out something quite different from what they had put in; and on all the subjects they dealt with, Don Quixote spoke with such good sense that the pair of examiners were fully convinced that he was quite recovered and in his full senses.

The niece and housekeeper were present at the conversation and could not find words enough to express their thanks to God at seeing their master so clear in his mind; the curate, however, changing his original plan, which was to avoid touching upon matters of chivalry, resolved to test Don Quixote's recovery thoroughly, and see whether it were genuine or not; and so, from one subject to another, he came at last to talk of the news that had come from the capital, and, among other things, he said it was considered certain that the Turk was coming down with a powerful fleet, and that no one knew what his purpose was, or when the great storm would burst; and that all Christendom was in apprehension of this, which almost every year calls us to arms, and that his Majesty had made provision for the security of the coasts of Naples and Sicily and the island of Malta.

To this Don Quixote replied, "His Majesty has acted like a prudent warrior in providing for the safety of his realms in time, so that the enemy may not find him unprepared; but if my advice were taken I would recommend him to adopt a measure which at present, no doubt, his Majesty is very far from thinking of."

The moment the curate heard this he said to himself, "God keep thee in his hand, poor Don Quixote, for it seems to me thou art precipitating thyself from the height of thy madness into the profound abyss of thy simplicity."

But the barber, who had the same suspicion as the curate, asked Don Quixote what would be his advice as to the measures that he said ought to be adopted; for perhaps it might prove to be one that would have to be added to the list of the many impertinent suggestions that people were in the habit of offering to princes.

"Mine, master shaver," said Don Quixote, "will not be impertinent, but, on the contrary, pertinent."

"I don't mean that," said the barber, "but that experience has shown that all or most of the expedients which are proposed to his Majesty are either impossible, or absurd, or injurious to the King and to the kingdom."

"Mine, however," replied Don Quixote, "is neither impossible nor absurd, but the easiest, the most reasonable, the readiest and most expeditious that could suggest itself to any projector's mind."

"You take a long time to tell it, Senor Don Quixote," said the curate.

"I don't choose to tell it here, now," said Don Quixote, "and have it reach the ears of the lords of the council to-morrow morning, and some other carry off the thanks and rewards of my trouble."

"For my part," said the barber, "I give my word here and before God that I will not repeat what your worship says, to King, Rook or earthly man — an oath I learned from the ballad of the curate, who, in the prelude, told the king of the thief who had robbed him of the hundred gold crowns and his pacing mule."

"I am not versed in stories," said Don Quixote; "but I know the oath is a good one, because I know the barber to be an honest fellow."

"Even if he were not," said the curate, "I will go bail and answer for him that in this matter he will be as silent as a dummy, under pain of paying any penalty that may be pronounced."

"And who will be security for you, senor curate?" said Don Quixote.

"My profession," replied the curate, "which is to keep secrets."

"Ods body!" said Don Quixote at this, "what more has his Majesty to do but to command, by public proclamation, all the knights-errant that are scattered over Spain to assemble on a fixed day in the capital, for even if no more than half a dozen come, there may be one among them who alone will suffice to destroy the entire might of the Turk. Give me your attention and follow me. Is it, pray, any new thing for a single knight-errant to demolish an army of two hundred thousand men, as if they all had but one throat or were made of sugar paste? Nay, tell me, how many histories are there filled with these marvels? If

only (in an evil hour for me: I don't speak for anyone else) the famous Don Belianis were alive now, or any one of the innumerable progeny of Amadis of Gaul! If any these were alive today, and were to come face to face with the Turk, by my faith, I would not give much for the Turk's chance. But God will have regard for his people, and will provide some one, who, if not so valiant as the knights-errant of yore, at least will not be inferior to them in spirit; but God knows what I mean, and I say no more."

"Alas!" exclaimed the niece at this, "may I die if my master does not want to turn knight-errant again;" to which Don Quixote replied, "A knight-errant I shall die, and let the Turk come down or go up when he likes, and in as strong force as he can, once more I say, God knows what I mean." But here the barber said, "I ask your worships to give me leave to tell a short story of something that happened in Seville, which comes so pat to the purpose just now that I should like greatly to tell it." Don Quixote gave him leave, and the rest prepared to listen, and he began thus:

"In the madhouse at Seville there was a man whom his relations had placed there as being out of his mind. He was a graduate of Osuna in canon law; but even if he had been of Salamanca, it was the opinion of most people that he would have been mad all the same. This graduate, after some years of confinement, took it into his head that he was sane and in his full senses, and under this impression wrote to the Archbishop, entreating him earnestly, and in very correct language, to have him released from the misery in which he was living; for by God's mercy he had now recovered his lost reason, though his relations, in order to enjoy his property, kept him there, and, in spite of the truth, would make him out to be mad until his dying day. The Archbishop, moved by repeated sensible, well-written letters, directed one of his chaplains to make inquiry of the madhouse as to the truth of the licentiate's statements, and to have an interview with the madman himself, and, if it should appear that he was in his senses, to take him out and restore him to liberty. The chaplain did so, and the governor assured him that the man was still mad, and that though he often spoke like a highly intelligent person, he would in the end break out into nonsense that in quantity and quality counterbalanced all the sensible things he had said before, as might be easily tested by talking to him. The chaplain resolved to try the experiment, and obtaining access to the madman conversed with him for an hour or more, during the whole of which time he never uttered a word that was incoherent or absurd, but, on the contrary, spoke so rationally that the chaplain was compelled to believe him to be sane. Among other things, he said the governor was against him, not to lose the presents his relations made him for reporting him still mad but with lucid intervals; and that the worst foe he had in

his misfortune was his large property; for in order to enjoy it his enemies disparaged and threw doubts upon the mercy our Lord had shown him in turning him from a brute beast into a man. In short, he spoke in such a way that he cast suspicion on the governor, and made his relations appear covetous and heartless, and himself so rational that the chaplain determined to take him away with him that the Archbishop might see him, and ascertain for himself the truth of the matter. Yielding to this conviction, the worthy chaplain begged the governor to have the clothes in which the licentiate had entered the house given to him. The governor again bade him beware of what he was doing, as the licentiate was beyond a doubt still mad; but all his cautions and warnings were unavailing to dissuade the chaplain from taking him away. The governor, seeing that it was the order of the Archbishop, obeyed, and they dressed the licentiate in his own clothes, which were new and decent. He, as soon as he saw himself clothed like one in his senses, and divested of the appearance of a madman, entreated the chaplain to permit him in charity to go and take leave of his comrades the madmen. The chaplain said he would go with him to see what madmen there were in the house; so they went upstairs, and with them some of those who were present. Approaching a cage in which there was a furious madman, though just at that moment calm and quiet, the licentiate said to him, 'Brother, think if you have any commands for me, for I am going home, as God has been pleased, in his infinite goodness and mercy, without any merit of mine, to restore me my reason. I am now cured and in my senses, for with God's power nothing is impossible. Have strong hope and trust in him, for as he has restored me to my original condition, so likewise he will restore you if you trust in him. I will take care to send you some good things to eat; and be sure you eat them; for I would have you know I am convinced, as one who has gone through it, that all this madness of ours comes of having the stomach empty and the brains full of wind. Take courage! take courage! for despondency in misfortune breaks down health and brings on death.'

"To all these words of the licentiate another madman in a cage opposite that of the furious one was listening; and raising himself up from an old mat on which he lay stark naked, he asked in a loud voice who it was that was going away cured and in his senses. The licentiate answered, 'It is I, brother, who am going; I have now no need to remain here any longer, for which I return infinite thanks to Heaven that has had so great mercy upon me.'

"Mind what you are saying, licentiate; don't let the devil deceive you,' replied the madman. 'Keep quiet, stay where you are, and you will save yourself the trouble of coming back.'

"I know I am cured,' returned the licentiate, 'and that I shall not have to go

stations again.'

"'You cured!' said the madman; 'well, we shall see; God be with you; but I swear to you by Jupiter, whose majesty I represent on earth, that for this crime alone, which Seville is committing to-day in releasing you from this house, and treating you as if you were in your senses, I shall have to inflict such a punishment on it as will be remembered for ages and ages, amen. Dost thou not know, thou miserable little licentiate, that I can do it, being, as I say, Jupiter the Thunderer, who hold in my hands the fiery bolts with which I am able and am wont to threaten and lay waste the world? But in one way only will I punish this ignorant town, and that is by not raining upon it, nor on any part of its district or territory, for three whole years, to be reckoned from the day and moment when this threat is pronounced. Thou free, thou cured, thou in thy senses! and I mad, I disordered, I bound! I will as soon think of sending rain as of hanging myself.

"Those present stood listening to the words and exclamations of the madman; but our licentiate, turning to the chaplain and seizing him by the hands, said to him, 'Be not uneasy, senor; attach no importance to what this madman has said; for if he is Jupiter and will not send rain, I, who am Neptune, the father and god of the waters, will rain as often as it pleases me and may be needful.'

"The governor and the bystanders laughed, and at their laughter the chaplain was half ashamed, and he replied, 'For all that, Senor Neptune, it will not do to vex Senor Jupiter; remain where you are, and some other day, when there is a better opportunity and more time, we will come back for you.' So they stripped the licentiate, and he was left where he was; and that's the end of the story."

"So that's the story, master barber," said Don Quixote, "which came in so pat to the purpose that you could not help telling it? Master shaver, master shaver! how blind is he who cannot see through a sieve. Is it possible that you do not know that comparisons of wit with wit, valour with valour, beauty with beauty, birth with birth, are always odious and unwelcome? I, master barber, am not Neptune, the god of the waters, nor do I try to make anyone take me for an astute man, for I am not one. My only endeavour is to convince the world of the mistake it makes in not reviving in itself the happy time when the order of knight-errantry was in the field. But our depraved age does not deserve to enjoy such a blessing as those ages enjoyed when knights-errant took upon their shoulders the defence of kingdoms, the protection of damsels, the succour of orphans and minors, the chastisement of the proud, and the recompense of the humble. With the knights of these days, for the most part, it is the damask, brocade, and rich stuffs they wear, that rustle as they go, not the chain mail of their armour; no knight now-a-days sleeps in the open field exposed to the inclemency of heaven, and in full panoply from head to foot; no one now takes a

nap, as they call it, without drawing his feet out of the stirrups, and leaning upon his lance, as the knights-errant used to do; no one now, issuing from the wood, penetrates yonder mountains, and then treads the barren, lonely shore of the sea — mostly a tempestuous and stormy one — and finding on the beach a little bark without oars, sail, mast, or tackling of any kind, in the intrepidity of his heart flings himself into it and commits himself to the wrathful billows of the deep sea, that one moment lift him up to heaven and the next plunge him into the depths; and opposing his breast to the irresistible gale, finds himself, when he least expects it, three thousand leagues and more away from the place where he embarked; and leaping ashore in a remote and unknown land has adventures that deserve to be written, not on parchment, but on brass. But now sloth triumphs over energy, indolence over exertion, vice over virtue, arrogance over courage, and theory over practice in arms, which flourished and shone only in the golden ages and in knights-errant. For tell me, who was more virtuous and more valiant than the famous Amadis of Gaul? Who more discreet than Palmerin of England? Who more gracious and easy than Tirante el Blanco? Who more courtly than Lisuarte of Greece? Who more slashed or slashing than Don Belianis? Who more intrepid than Perion of Gaul? Who more ready to face danger than Felixmarte of Hircania? Who more sincere than Esplandian? Who more impetuous than Don Cirongilio of Thrace? Who more bold than Rodamonte? Who more prudent than King Sobrino? Who more daring than Reinaldos? Who more invincible than Roland? and who more gallant and courteous than Ruggiero, from whom the dukes of Ferrara of the present day are descended, according to Turpin in his ‘Cosmography.’ All these knights, and many more that I could name, senior curate, were knights-errant, the light and glory of chivalry. These, or such as these, I would have to carry out my plan, and in that case his Majesty would find himself well served and would save great expense, and the Turk would be left tearing his beard. And so I will stay where I am, as the chaplain does not take me away; and if Jupiter, as the barber has told us, will not send rain, here am I, and I will rain when I please. I say this that Master Basin may know that I understand him.”

“Indeed, Senior Don Quixote,” said the barber, “I did not mean it in that way, and, so help me God, my intention was good, and your worship ought not to be vexed.”

“As to whether I ought to be vexed or not,” returned Don Quixote, “I myself am the best judge.”

Hereupon the curate observed, “I have hardly said a word as yet; and I would gladly be relieved of a doubt, arising from what Don Quixote has said, that worries and works my conscience.”



“The senor curate has leave for more than that,” returned Don Quixote, “so he may declare his doubt, for it is not pleasant to have a doubt on one’s conscience.”

“Well then, with that permission,” said the curate, “I say my doubt is that, all I can do, I cannot persuade myself that the whole pack of knights-errant you, Senor Don Quixote, have mentioned, were really and truly persons of flesh and blood, that ever lived in the world; on the contrary, I suspect it to be all fiction, fable, and falsehood, and dreams told by men awakened from sleep, or rather still half asleep.”

“That is another mistake,” replied Don Quixote, “into which many have fallen who do not believe that there ever were such knights in the world, and I have often, with divers people and on divers occasions, tried to expose this almost universal error to the light of truth. Sometimes I have not been successful in my purpose, sometimes I have, supporting it upon the shoulders of the truth; which truth is so clear that I can almost say I have with my own eyes seen Amadis of Gaul, who was a man of lofty stature, fair complexion, with a handsome though black beard, of a countenance between gentle and stern in expression, sparing of words, slow to anger, and quick to put it away from him; and as I have depicted Amadis, so I could, I think, portray and describe all the knights-errant that are in all the histories in the world; for by the perception I have that they were what their histories describe, and by the deeds they did and the dispositions they displayed, it is possible, with the aid of sound philosophy, to deduce their features, complexion, and stature.”

“How big, in your worship’s opinion, may the giant Morgante have been, Senor Don Quixote?” asked the barber.

“With regard to giants,” replied Don Quixote, “opinions differ as to whether there ever were any or not in the world; but the Holy Scripture, which cannot err by a jot from the truth, shows us that there were, when it gives us the history of that big Philistine, Goliath, who was seven cubits and a half in height, which is a huge size. Likewise, in the island of Sicily, there have been found leg-bones and arm-bones so large that their size makes it plain that their owners were giants, and as tall as great towers; geometry puts this fact beyond a doubt. But, for all that, I cannot speak with certainty as to the size of Morgante, though I suspect he cannot have been very tall; and I am inclined to be of this opinion because I find in the history in which his deeds are particularly mentioned, that he frequently slept under a roof and as he found houses to contain him, it is clear that his bulk could not have been anything excessive.”

“That is true,” said the curate, and yielding to the enjoyment of hearing such nonsense, he asked him what was his notion of the features of Reinaldos of

Montalban, and Don Roland and the rest of the Twelve Peers of France, for they were all knights-errant.

“As for Reinaldos,” replied Don Quixote, “I venture to say that he was broad-faced, of ruddy complexion, with roguish and somewhat prominent eyes, excessively punctilious and touchy, and given to the society of thieves and scapegraces. With regard to Roland, or Rotolando, or Orlando (for the histories call him by all these names), I am of opinion, and hold, that he was of middle height, broad-shouldered, rather bow-legged, swarthy-complexioned, red-bearded, with a hairy body and a severe expression of countenance, a man of few words, but very polite and well-bred.”

“If Roland was not a more graceful person than your worship has described,” said the curate, “it is no wonder that the fair Lady Angelica rejected him and left him for the gaiety, liveliness, and grace of that budding-bearded little Moor to whom she surrendered herself; and she showed her sense in falling in love with the gentle softness of Medoro rather than the roughness of Roland.”

“That Angelica, senor curate,” returned Don Quixote, “was a giddy damsel, flighty and somewhat wanton, and she left the world as full of her vagaries as of the fame of her beauty. She treated with scorn a thousand gentlemen, men of valour and wisdom, and took up with a smooth-faced sprig of a page, without fortune or fame, except such reputation for gratitude as the affection he bore his friend got for him. The great poet who sang her beauty, the famous Ariosto, not caring to sing her adventures after her contemptible surrender (which probably were not over and above creditable), dropped her where he says:

How she received the sceptre of Cathay, Some bard of defter quill may sing some day;

and this was no doubt a kind of prophecy, for poets are also called vates, that is to say diviners; and its truth was made plain; for since then a famous Andalusian poet has lamented and sung her tears, and another famous and rare poet, a Castilian, has sung her beauty.”

“Tell me, Senor Don Quixote,” said the barber here, “among all those who praised her, has there been no poet to write a satire on this Lady Angelica?”

“I can well believe,” replied Don Quixote, “that if Sacripante or Roland had been poets they would have given the damsel a trimming; for it is naturally the way with poets who have been scorned and rejected by their ladies, whether fictitious or not, in short by those whom they select as the ladies of their thoughts, to avenge themselves in satires and libels — a vengeance, to be sure, unworthy of generous hearts; but up to the present I have not heard of any defamatory verse against the Lady Angelica, who turned the world upside down.”

“Strange,” said the curate; but at this moment they heard the housekeeper and the niece, who had previously withdrawn from the conversation, exclaiming aloud in the courtyard, and at the noise they all ran out.



## CHAPTER II.

WHICH TREATS OF THE NOTABLE ALTERCATION WHICH SANCHO PANZA HAD WITH DON QUIXOTE'S NIECE, AND HOUSEKEEPER, TOGETHER WITH OTHER DROLL MATTERS



The history relates that the outcry Don Quixote, the curate, and the barber heard came from the niece and the housekeeper exclaiming to Sancho, who was striving to force his way in to see Don Quixote while they held the door against him, "What does the vagabond want in this house? Be off to your own, brother, for it is you, and no one else, that delude my master, and lead him astray, and take him tramping about the country."

To which Sancho replied, "Devil's own housekeeper! it is I who am deluded,

and led astray, and taken tramping about the country, and not thy master! He has carried me all over the world, and you are mightily mistaken. He enticed me away from home by a trick, promising me an island, which I am still waiting for."

"May evil islands choke thee, thou detestable Sancho," said the niece; "What are islands? Is it something to eat, glutton and gormandiser that thou art?"

"It is not something to eat," replied Sancho, "but something to govern and rule, and better than four cities or four judgeships at court."

"For all that," said the housekeeper, "you don't enter here, you bag of mischief and sack of knavery; go govern your house and dig your seed-patch, and give over looking for islands or shylands."

The curate and the barber listened with great amusement to the words of the three; but Don Quixote, uneasy lest Sancho should blab and blurt out a whole heap of mischievous stupidities, and touch upon points that might not be altogether to his credit, called to him and made the other two hold their tongues and let him come in. Sancho entered, and the curate and the barber took their leave of Don Quixote, of whose recovery they despaired when they saw how wedded he was to his crazy ideas, and how saturated with the nonsense of his unlucky chivalry; and said the curate to the barber, "You will see, gossip, that when we are least thinking of it, our gentleman will be off once more for another flight."

"I have no doubt of it," returned the barber; "but I do not wonder so much at the madness of the knight as at the simplicity of the squire, who has such a firm belief in all that about the island, that I suppose all the exposures that could be imagined would not get it out of his head."

"God help them," said the curate; "and let us be on the look-out to see what comes of all these absurdities of the knight and squire, for it seems as if they had both been cast in the same mould, and the madness of the master without the simplicity of the man would not be worth a farthing."

"That is true," said the barber, "and I should like very much to know what the pair are talking about at this moment."

"I promise you," said the curate, "the niece or the housekeeper will tell us by-and-by, for they are not the ones to forget to listen."

Meanwhile Don Quixote shut himself up in his room with Sancho, and when they were alone he said to him, "It grieves me greatly, Sancho, that thou shouldst have said, and sayest, that I took thee out of thy cottage, when thou knowest I did not remain in my house. We sallied forth together, we took the road together, we wandered abroad together; we have had the same fortune and the same luck; if they blanketed thee once, they belaboured me a hundred times, and that is the

only advantage I have of thee.”

“That was only reasonable,” replied Sancho, “for, by what your worship says, misfortunes belong more properly to knights-errant than to their squires.”

“Thou art mistaken, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “according to the maxim *quando caput dolet*, etc.”

“I don’t understand any language but my own,” said Sancho.

“I mean to say,” said Don Quixote, “that when the head suffers all the members suffer; and so, being thy lord and master, I am thy head, and thou a part of me as thou art my servant; and therefore any evil that affects or shall affect me should give thee pain, and what affects thee give pain to me.”

“It should be so,” said Sancho; “but when I was blanketed as a member, my head was on the other side of the wall, looking on while I was flying through the air, and did not feel any pain whatever; and if the members are obliged to feel the suffering of the head, it should be obliged to feel their sufferings.”

“Dost thou mean to say now, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “that I did not feel when they were blanketing thee? If thou dost, thou must not say so or think so, for I felt more pain then in spirit than thou didst in body. But let us put that aside for the present, for we shall have opportunities enough for considering and settling the point; tell me, Sancho my friend, what do they say about me in the village here? What do the common people think of me? What do the *hidalgos*? What do the *caballeros*? What do they say of my valour; of my achievements; of my courtesy? How do they treat the task I have undertaken in reviving and restoring to the world the now forgotten order of chivalry? In short, Sancho, I would have thee tell me all that has come to thine ears on this subject; and thou art to tell me, without adding anything to the good or taking away anything from the bad; for it is the duty of loyal vassals to tell the truth to their lords just as it is and in its proper shape, not allowing flattery to add to it or any idle deference to lessen it. And I would have thee know, Sancho, that if the naked truth, undisguised by flattery, came to the ears of princes, times would be different, and other ages would be reckoned iron ages more than ours, which I hold to be the golden of these latter days. Profit by this advice, Sancho, and report to me clearly and faithfully the truth of what thou knowest touching what I have demanded of thee.”

“That I will do with all my heart, master,” replied Sancho, “provided your worship will not be vexed at what I say, as you wish me to say it out in all its nakedness, without putting any more clothes on it than it came to my knowledge in.”

“I will not be vexed at all,” returned Don Quixote; “thou mayest speak freely, Sancho, and without any beating about the bush.”

“Well then,” said he, “first of all, I have to tell you that the common people consider your worship a mighty great madman, and me no less a fool. The hidalgos say that, not keeping within the bounds of your quality of gentleman, you have assumed the ‘Don,’ and made a knight of yourself at a jump, with four vine-stocks and a couple of acres of land, and never a shirt to your back. The caballeros say they do not want to have hidalgos setting up in opposition to them, particularly squire hidalgos who polish their own shoes and darn their black stockings with green silk.”

“That,” said Don Quixote, “does not apply to me, for I always go well dressed and never patched; ragged I may be, but ragged more from the wear and tear of arms than of time.”

“As to your worship’s valour, courtesy, accomplishments, and task, there is a variety of opinions. Some say, ‘mad but droll;’ others, ‘valiant but unlucky;’ others, ‘courteous but meddling,’ and then they go into such a number of things that they don’t leave a whole bone either in your worship or in myself.”

“Recollect, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “that wherever virtue exists in an eminent degree it is persecuted. Few or none of the famous men that have lived escaped being calumniated by malice. Julius Caesar, the boldest, wisest, and bravest of captains, was charged with being ambitious, and not particularly cleanly in his dress, or pure in his morals. Of Alexander, whose deeds won him the name of Great, they say that he was somewhat of a drunkard. Of Hercules, him of the many labours, it is said that he was lewd and luxurious. Of Don Galaor, the brother of Amadis of Gaul, it was whispered that he was over quarrelsome, and of his brother that he was lachrymose. So that, O Sancho, amongst all these calumnies against good men, mine may be let pass, since they are no more than thou hast said.”

“That’s just where it is, body of my father!”

“Is there more, then?” asked Don Quixote.

“There’s the tail to be skinned yet,” said Sancho; “all so far is cakes and fancy bread; but if your worship wants to know all about the calumnies they bring against you, I will fetch you one this instant who can tell you the whole of them without missing an atom; for last night the son of Bartholomew Carrasco, who has been studying at Salamanca, came home after having been made a bachelor, and when I went to welcome him, he told me that your worship’s history is already abroad in books, with the title of THE INGENIOUS GENTLEMAN DON QUIXOTE OF LA MANCHA; and he says they mention me in it by my own name of Sancho Panza, and the lady Dulcinea del Toboso too, and divers things that happened to us when we were alone; so that I crossed myself in my wonder how the historian who wrote them down could have known them.”

“I promise thee, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “the author of our history will be some sage enchanter; for to such nothing that they choose to write about is hidden.”

“What!” said Sancho, “a sage and an enchanter! Why, the bachelor Samson Carrasco (that is the name of him I spoke of) says the author of the history is called Cide Hamete Berengena.”

“That is a Moorish name,” said Don Quixote.

“May be so,” replied Sancho; “for I have heard say that the Moors are mostly great lovers of berengenas.”

“Thou must have mistaken the surname of this ‘Cide’ — which means in Arabic ‘Lord’ — Sancho,” observed Don Quixote.

“Very likely,” replied Sancho, “but if your worship wishes me to fetch the bachelor I will go for him in a twinkling.”

“Thou wilt do me a great pleasure, my friend,” said Don Quixote, “for what thou hast told me has amazed me, and I shall not eat a morsel that will agree with me until I have heard all about it.”

“Then I am off for him,” said Sancho; and leaving his master he went in quest of the bachelor, with whom he returned in a short time, and, all three together, they had a very droll colloquy.





## CHAPTER III.

### OF THE LAUGHABLE CONVERSATION THAT PASSED BETWEEN DON QUIXOTE, SANCHO PANZA, AND THE BACHELOR SAMSON CARRASCO



Don Quixote remained very deep in thought, waiting for the bachelor Carrasco, from whom he was to hear how he himself had been put into a book as Sancho said; and he could not persuade himself that any such history could be in existence, for the blood of the enemies he had slain was not yet dry on the blade of his sword, and now they wanted to make out that his mighty achievements were going about in print. For all that, he fancied some sage, either a friend or an enemy, might, by the aid of magic, have given them to the press; if a friend, in

order to magnify and exalt them above the most famous ever achieved by any knight-errant; if an enemy, to bring them to naught and degrade them below the meanest ever recorded of any low squire, though as he said to himself, the achievements of squires never were recorded. If, however, it were the fact that such a history were in existence, it must necessarily, being the story of a knight-errant, be grandiloquent, lofty, imposing, grand and true. With this he comforted himself somewhat, though it made him uncomfortable to think that the author was a Moor, judging by the title of "Cide;" and that no truth was to be looked for from Moors, as they are all impostors, cheats, and schemers. He was afraid he might have dealt with his love affairs in some indecorous fashion, that might tend to the discredit and prejudice of the purity of his lady Dulcinea del Toboso; he would have had him set forth the fidelity and respect he had always observed towards her, spurning queens, empresses, and damsels of all sorts, and keeping in check the impetuosity of his natural impulses. Absorbed and wrapped up in these and divers other cogitations, he was found by Sancho and Carrasco, whom Don Quixote received with great courtesy.

The bachelor, though he was called Samson, was of no great bodily size, but he was a very great wag; he was of a sallow complexion, but very sharp-witted, somewhere about four-and-twenty years of age, with a round face, a flat nose, and a large mouth, all indications of a mischievous disposition and a love of fun and jokes; and of this he gave a sample as soon as he saw Don Quixote, by falling on his knees before him and saying, "Let me kiss your mightiness's hand, Senor Don Quixote of La Mancha, for, by the habit of St. Peter that I wear, though I have no more than the first four orders, your worship is one of the most famous knights-errant that have ever been, or will be, all the world over. A blessing on Cide Hamete Benengeli, who has written the history of your great deeds, and a double blessing on that connoisseur who took the trouble of having it translated out of the Arabic into our Castilian vulgar tongue for the universal entertainment of the people!"

Don Quixote made him rise, and said, "So, then, it is true that there is a history of me, and that it was a Moor and a sage who wrote it?"

"So true is it, senor," said Samson, "that my belief is there are more than twelve thousand volumes of the said history in print this very day. Only ask Portugal, Barcelona, and Valencia, where they have been printed, and moreover there is a report that it is being printed at Antwerp, and I am persuaded there will not be a country or language in which there will not be a translation of it."

"One of the things," here observed Don Quixote, "that ought to give most pleasure to a virtuous and eminent man is to find himself in his lifetime in print and in type, familiar in people's mouths with a good name; I say with a good

name, for if it be the opposite, then there is no death to be compared to it.”

“If it goes by good name and fame,” said the bachelor, “your worship alone bears away the palm from all the knights-errant; for the Moor in his own language, and the Christian in his, have taken care to set before us your gallantry, your high courage in encountering dangers, your fortitude in adversity, your patience under misfortunes as well as wounds, the purity and continence of the platonic loves of your worship and my lady Dona Dulcinea del Toboso-”

“I never heard my lady Dulcinea called Dona,” observed Sancho here; “nothing more than the lady Dulcinea del Toboso; so here already the history is wrong.”

“That is not an objection of any importance,” replied Carrasco.

“Certainly not,” said Don Quixote; “but tell me, senior bachelor, what deeds of mine are they that are made most of in this history?”

“On that point,” replied the bachelor, “opinions differ, as tastes do; some swear by the adventure of the windmills that your worship took to be Briareuses and giants; others by that of the fulling mills; one cries up the description of the two armies that afterwards took the appearance of two droves of sheep; another that of the dead body on its way to be buried at Segovia; a third says the liberation of the galley slaves is the best of all, and a fourth that nothing comes up to the affair with the Benedictine giants, and the battle with the valiant Biscayan.”

“Tell me, senior bachelor,” said Sancho at this point, “does the adventure with the Yanguesans come in, when our good Rocinante went hankering after dainties?”

“The sage has left nothing in the ink-bottle,” replied Samson; “he tells all and sets down everything, even to the capers that worthy Sancho cut in the blanket.”

“I cut no capers in the blanket,” returned Sancho; “in the air I did, and more of them than I liked.”

“There is no human history in the world, I suppose,” said Don Quixote, “that has not its ups and downs, but more than others such as deal with chivalry, for they can never be entirely made up of prosperous adventures.”

“For all that,” replied the bachelor, “there are those who have read the history who say they would have been glad if the author had left out some of the countless cudgellings that were inflicted on Senor Don Quixote in various encounters.”

“That’s where the truth of the history comes in,” said Sancho.

“At the same time they might fairly have passed them over in silence,” observed Don Quixote; “for there is no need of recording events which do not change or affect the truth of a history, if they tend to bring the hero of it into

contempt. Aeneas was not in truth and earnest so pious as Virgil represents him, nor Ulysses so wise as Homer describes him."

"That is true," said Samson; "but it is one thing to write as a poet, another to write as a historian; the poet may describe or sing things, not as they were, but as they ought to have been; but the historian has to write them down, not as they ought to have been, but as they were, without adding anything to the truth or taking anything from it."

"Well then," said Sancho, "if this senor Moor goes in for telling the truth, no doubt among my master's drubbings mine are to be found; for they never took the measure of his worship's shoulders without doing the same for my whole body; but I have no right to wonder at that, for, as my master himself says, the members must share the pain of the head."

"You are a sly dog, Sancho," said Don Quixote; "i' faith, you have no want of memory when you choose to remember."

"If I were to try to forget the thwacks they gave me," said Sancho, "my weals would not let me, for they are still fresh on my ribs."

"Hush, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "and don't interrupt the bachelor, whom I entreat to go on and tell all that is said about me in this history."

"And about me," said Sancho, "for they say, too, that I am one of the principal presonages in it."

"Personages, not presonages, friend Sancho," said Samson.

"What! Another word-catcher!" said Sancho; "if that's to be the way we shall not make an end in a lifetime."

"May God shorten mine, Sancho," returned the bachelor, "if you are not the second person in the history, and there are even some who would rather hear you talk than the cleverest in the whole book; though there are some, too, who say you showed yourself over-credulous in believing there was any possibility in the government of that island offered you by Senor Don Quixote."

"There is still sunshine on the wall," said Don Quixote; "and when Sancho is somewhat more advanced in life, with the experience that years bring, he will be fitter and better qualified for being a governor than he is at present."

"By God, master," said Sancho, "the island that I cannot govern with the years I have, I'll not be able to govern with the years of Methuselah; the difficulty is that the said island keeps its distance somewhere, I know not where; and not that there is any want of head in me to govern it."

"Leave it to God, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "for all will be and perhaps better than you think; no leaf on the tree stirs but by God's will."

"That is true," said Samson; "and if it be God's will, there will not be any want of a thousand islands, much less one, for Sancho to govern."

“I have seen governors in these parts,” said Sancho, “that are not to be compared to my shoe-sole; and for all that they are called ‘your lordship’ and served on silver.”

“Those are not governors of islands,” observed Samson, “but of other governments of an easier kind: those that govern islands must at least know grammar.”

“I could manage the gram well enough,” said Sancho; “but for the mar I have neither leaning nor liking, for I don’t know what it is; but leaving this matter of the government in God’s hands, to send me wherever it may be most to his service, I may tell you, senor bachelor Samson Carrasco, it has pleased me beyond measure that the author of this history should have spoken of me in such a way that what is said of me gives no offence; for, on the faith of a true squire, if he had said anything about me that was at all unbecoming an old Christian, such as I am, the deaf would have heard of it.”

“That would be working miracles,” said Samson.

“Miracles or no miracles,” said Sancho, “let everyone mind how he speaks or writes about people, and not set down at random the first thing that comes into his head.”

“One of the faults they find with this history,” said the bachelor, “is that its author inserted in it a novel called ‘The Ill-advised Curiosity;’ not that it is bad or ill-told, but that it is out of place and has nothing to do with the history of his worship Senor Don Quixote.”

“I will bet the son of a dog has mixed the cabbages and the baskets,” said Sancho.

“Then, I say,” said Don Quixote, “the author of my history was no sage, but some ignorant chatterer, who, in a haphazard and heedless way, set about writing it, let it turn out as it might, just as Orbaneja, the painter of Ubeda, used to do, who, when they asked him what he was painting, answered, ‘What it may turn out.’ Sometimes he would paint a cock in such a fashion, and so unlike, that he had to write alongside of it in Gothic letters, ‘This is a cock; and so it will be with my history, which will require a commentary to make it intelligible.’”

“No fear of that,” returned Samson, “for it is so plain that there is nothing in it to puzzle over; the children turn its leaves, the young people read it, the grown men understand it, the old folk praise it; in a word, it is so thumbled, and read, and got by heart by people of all sorts, that the instant they see any lean hack, they say, ‘There goes Rocinante.’ And those that are most given to reading it are the pages, for there is not a lord’s ante-chamber where there is not a ‘Don Quixote’ to be found; one takes it up if another lays it down; this one pounces upon it, and that begs for it. In short, the said history is the most delightful and

least injurious entertainment that has been hitherto seen, for there is not to be found in the whole of it even the semblance of an immodest word, or a thought that is other than Catholic.”

“To write in any other way,” said Don Quixote, “would not be to write truth, but falsehood, and historians who have recourse to falsehood ought to be burned, like those who coin false money; and I know not what could have led the author to have recourse to novels and irrelevant stories, when he had so much to write about in mine; no doubt he must have gone by the proverb ‘with straw or with hay, etc,’ for by merely setting forth my thoughts, my sighs, my tears, my lofty purposes, my enterprises, he might have made a volume as large, or larger than all the works of El Tostado would make up. In fact, the conclusion I arrive at, senior bachelor, is, that to write histories, or books of any kind, there is need of great judgment and a ripe understanding. To give expression to humour, and write in a strain of graceful pleasantry, is the gift of great geniuses. The cleverest character in comedy is the clown, for he who would make people take him for a fool, must not be one. History is in a measure a sacred thing, for it should be true, and where the truth is, there God is; but notwithstanding this, there are some who write and fling books broadcast on the world as if they were fritters.”

“There is no book so bad but it has something good in it,” said the bachelor.

“No doubt of that,” replied Don Quixote; “but it often happens that those who have acquired and attained a well-deserved reputation by their writings, lose it entirely, or damage it in some degree, when they give them to the press.”

“The reason of that,” said Samson, “is, that as printed works are examined leisurely, their faults are easily seen; and the greater the fame of the writer, the more closely are they scrutinised. Men famous for their genius, great poets, illustrious historians, are always, or most commonly, envied by those who take a particular delight and pleasure in criticising the writings of others, without having produced any of their own.”

“That is no wonder,” said Don Quixote; “for there are many divines who are no good for the pulpit, but excellent in detecting the defects or excesses of those who preach.”

“All that is true, Senior Don Quixote,” said Carrasco; “but I wish such fault-finders were more lenient and less exacting, and did not pay so much attention to the spots on the bright sun of the work they grumble at; for if aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus, they should remember how long he remained awake to shed the light of his work with as little shade as possible; and perhaps it may be that what they find fault with may be moles, that sometimes heighten the beauty of the face that bears them; and so I say very great is the risk to which he who prints a book exposes himself, for of all impossibilities the greatest is to write

one that will satisfy and please all readers.”

“That which treats of me must have pleased few,” said Don Quixote.

“Quite the contrary,” said the bachelor; “for, as *stultorum infinitum est numerus*, innumerable are those who have relished the said history; but some have brought a charge against the author’s memory, inasmuch as he forgot to say who the thief was who stole Sancho’s Dapple; for it is not stated there, but only to be inferred from what is set down, that he was stolen, and a little farther on we see Sancho mounted on the same ass, without any reappearance of it. They say, too, that he forgot to state what Sancho did with those hundred crowns that he found in the valise in the Sierra Morena, as he never alludes to them again, and there are many who would be glad to know what he did with them, or what he spent them on, for it is one of the serious omissions of the work.”

“Senor Samson, I am not in a humour now for going into accounts or explanations,” said Sancho; “for there’s a sinking of the stomach come over me, and unless I doctor it with a couple of sups of the old stuff it will put me on the thorn of Santa Lucia. I have it at home, and my old woman is waiting for me; after dinner I’ll come back, and will answer you and all the world every question you may choose to ask, as well about the loss of the ass as about the spending of the hundred crowns;” and without another word or waiting for a reply he made off home.

Don Quixote begged and entreated the bachelor to stay and do penance with him. The bachelor accepted the invitation and remained, a couple of young pigeons were added to the ordinary fare, at dinner they talked chivalry, Carrasco fell in with his host’s humour, the banquet came to an end, they took their afternoon sleep, Sancho returned, and their conversation was resumed.





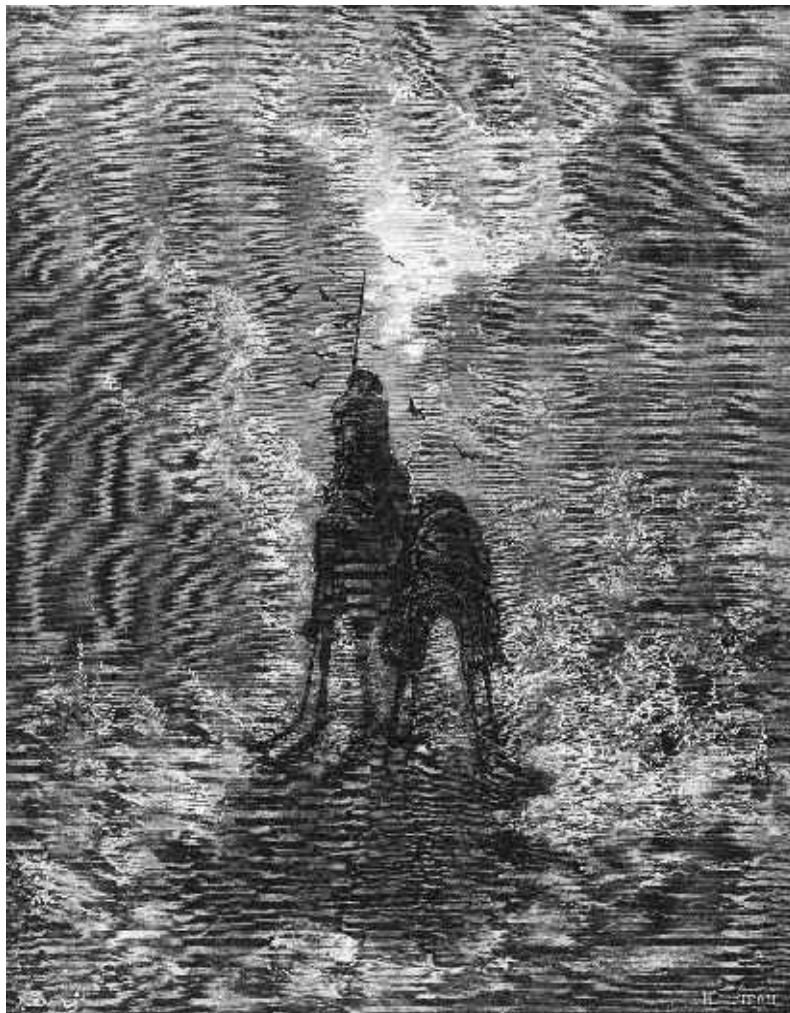
## CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH SANCHO PANZA GIVES A SATISFACTORY REPLY TO THE DOUBTS AND QUESTIONS OF THE BACHELOR SAMSON CARRASCO, TOGETHER WITH OTHER MATTERS WORTH KNOWING AND TELLING



Sancho came back to Don Quixote's house, and returning to the late subject of conversation, he said, "As to what Senor Samson said, that he would like to know by whom, or how, or when my ass was stolen, I say in reply that the same night we went into the Sierra Morena, flying from the Holy Brotherhood after that unlucky adventure of the galley slaves, and the other of the corpse that was going to Segovia, my master and I ensconced ourselves in a thicket, and there, my master leaning on his lance, and I seated on my Dapple, battered and weary

with the late frays we fell asleep as if it had been on four feather mattresses; and I in particular slept so sound, that, whoever he was, he was able to come and prop me up on four stakes, which he put under the four corners of the pack-saddle in such a way that he left me mounted on it, and took away Dapple from under me without my feeling it.”



“That is an easy matter,” said Don Quixote, “and it is no new occurrence, for the same thing happened to Sacripante at the siege of Albracca; the famous thief, Brunello, by the same contrivance, took his horse from between his legs.”

“Day came,” continued Sancho, “and the moment I stirred the stakes gave way and I fell to the ground with a mighty come down; I looked about for the ass, but could not see him; the tears rushed to my eyes and I raised such a lamentation that, if the author of our history has not put it in, he may depend upon it he has left out a good thing. Some days after, I know not how many, travelling with her ladyship the Princess Micomicona, I saw my ass, and mounted upon him, in the dress of a gipsy, was that Gines de Pasamonte, the great rogue and rascal that my master and I freed from the chain.”

“That is not where the mistake is,” replied Samson; “it is, that before the ass has turned up, the author speaks of Sancho as being mounted on it.”

“I don’t know what to say to that,” said Sancho, “unless that the historian made a mistake, or perhaps it might be a blunder of the printer’s.”

“No doubt that’s it,” said Samson; “but what became of the hundred crowns? Did they vanish?”

To which Sancho answered, “I spent them for my own good, and my wife’s, and my children’s, and it is they that have made my wife bear so patiently all my wanderings on highways and byways, in the service of my master, Don Quixote; for if after all this time I had come back to the house without a rap and without the ass, it would have been a poor look-out for me; and if anyone wants to know anything more about me, here I am, ready to answer the king himself in person; and it is no affair of anyone’s whether I took or did not take, whether I spent or did not spend; for the whacks that were given me in these journeys were to be paid for in money, even if they were valued at no more than four maravedis apiece, another hundred crowns would not pay me for half of them. Let each look to himself and not try to make out white black, and black white; for each of us is as God made him, aye, and often worse.”

“I will take care,” said Carrasco, “to impress upon the author of the history that, if he prints it again, he must not forget what worthy Sancho has said, for it will raise it a good span higher.”

“Is there anything else to correct in the history, senor bachelor?” asked Don Quixote.

“No doubt there is,” replied he; “but not anything that will be of the same importance as those I have mentioned.”

“Does the author promise a second part at all?” said Don Quixote.

“He does promise one,” replied Samson; “but he says he has not found it, nor does he know who has got it; and we cannot say whether it will appear or not; and so, on that head, as some say that no second part has ever been good, and others that enough has been already written about Don Quixote, it is thought there will be no second part; though some, who are jovial rather than saturnine, say, ‘Let us have more Quixotades, let Don Quixote charge and Sancho chatter, and no matter what it may turn out, we shall be satisfied with that.’”

“And what does the author mean to do?” said Don Quixote.

“What?” replied Samson; “why, as soon as he has found the history which he is now searching for with extraordinary diligence, he will at once give it to the press, moved more by the profit that may accrue to him from doing so than by any thought of praise.”

Whereat Sancho observed, “The author looks for money and profit, does he? It will be a wonder if he succeeds, for it will be only hurry, hurry, with him, like the tailor on Easter Eve; and works done in a hurry are never finished as perfectly as they ought to be. Let master Moor, or whatever he is, pay attention to what he is doing, and I and my master will give him as much grouting ready to his hand, in the way of adventures and accidents of all sorts, as would make up not only one second part, but a hundred. The good man fancies, no doubt, that we are fast asleep in the straw here, but let him hold up our feet to be shod and he will see which foot it is we go lame on. All I say is, that if my master would take my advice, we would be now afield, redressing outrages and righting wrongs, as is the use and custom of good knights-errant.”

Sancho had hardly uttered these words when the neighing of Rocinante fell upon their ears, which neighing Don Quixote accepted as a happy omen, and he resolved to make another sally in three or four days from that time. Announcing his intention to the bachelor, he asked his advice as to the quarter in which he ought to commence his expedition, and the bachelor replied that in his opinion he ought to go to the kingdom of Aragon, and the city of Saragossa, where there were to be certain solemn joustings at the festival of St. George, at which he might win renown above all the knights of Aragon, which would be winning it above all the knights of the world. He commended his very praiseworthy and gallant resolution, but admonished him to proceed with greater caution in encountering dangers, because his life did not belong to him, but to all those who had need of him to protect and aid them in their misfortunes.

“There’s where it is, what I abominate, Senor Samson,” said Sancho here; “my master will attack a hundred armed men as a greedy boy would half a dozen melons. Body of the world, senor bachelor! there is a time to attack and a time to retreat, and it is not to be always ‘Santiago, and close Spain!’ Moreover, I have

heard it said (and I think by my master himself, if I remember rightly) that the mean of valour lies between the extremes of cowardice and rashness; and if that be so, I don't want him to fly without having good reason, or to attack when the odds make it better not. But, above all things, I warn my master that if he is to take me with him it must be on the condition that he is to do all the fighting, and that I am not to be called upon to do anything except what concerns keeping him clean and comfortable; in this I will dance attendance on him readily; but to expect me to draw sword, even against rascally churls of the hatchet and hood, is idle. I don't set up to be a fighting man, Senor Samson, but only the best and most loyal squire that ever served knight-errant; and if my master Don Quixote, in consideration of my many faithful services, is pleased to give me some island of the many his worship says one may stumble on in these parts, I will take it as a great favour; and if he does not give it to me, I was born like everyone else, and a man must not live in dependence on anyone except God; and what is more, my bread will taste as well, and perhaps even better, without a government than if I were a governor; and how do I know but that in these governments the devil may have prepared some trip for me, to make me lose my footing and fall and knock my grinders out? Sancho I was born and Sancho I mean to die. But for all that, if heaven were to make me a fair offer of an island or something else of the kind, without much trouble and without much risk, I am not such a fool as to refuse it; for they say, too, 'when they offer thee a heifer, run with a halter; and 'when good luck comes to thee, take it in.'"

"Brother Sancho," said Carrasco, "you have spoken like a professor; but, for all that, put your trust in God and in Senor Don Quixote, for he will give you a kingdom, not to say an island."

"It is all the same, be it more or be it less," replied Sancho; "though I can tell Senor Carrasco that my master would not throw the kingdom he might give me into a sack all in holes; for I have felt my own pulse and I find myself sound enough to rule kingdoms and govern islands; and I have before now told my master as much."

"Take care, Sancho," said Samson; "honours change manners, and perhaps when you find yourself a governor you won't know the mother that bore you."

"That may hold good of those that are born in the ditches," said Sancho, "not of those who have the fat of an old Christian four fingers deep on their souls, as I have. Nay, only look at my disposition, is that likely to show ingratitude to anyone?"

"God grant it," said Don Quixote; "we shall see when the government comes; and I seem to see it already."

He then begged the bachelor, if he were a poet, to do him the favour of

composing some verses for him conveying the farewell he meant to take of his lady Dulcinea del Toboso, and to see that a letter of her name was placed at the beginning of each line, so that, at the end of the verses, "Dulcinea del Toboso" might be read by putting together the first letters. The bachelor replied that although he was not one of the famous poets of Spain, who were, they said, only three and a half, he would not fail to compose the required verses; though he saw a great difficulty in the task, as the letters which made up the name were seventeen; so, if he made four ballad stanzas of four lines each, there would be a letter over, and if he made them of five, what they called decimas or redondillas, there were three letters short; nevertheless he would try to drop a letter as well as he could, so that the name "Dulcinea del Toboso" might be got into four ballad stanzas.

"It must be, by some means or other," said Don Quixote, "for unless the name stands there plain and manifest, no woman would believe the verses were made for her."

They agreed upon this, and that the departure should take place in three days from that time. Don Quixote charged the bachelor to keep it a secret, especially from the curate and Master Nicholas, and from his niece and the housekeeper, lest they should prevent the execution of his praiseworthy and valiant purpose. Carrasco promised all, and then took his leave, charging Don Quixote to inform him of his good or evil fortunes whenever he had an opportunity; and thus they bade each other farewell, and Sancho went away to make the necessary preparations for their expedition.





## CHAPTER V.

OF THE SHREWD AND DROLL CONVERSATION THAT PASSED  
BETWEEN SANCHO PANZA AND HIS WIFE TERESA PANZA, AND  
OTHER MATTERS WORTHY OF BEING DULY RECORDED



The translator of this history, when he comes to write this fifth chapter, says that he considers it apocryphal, because in it Sancho Panza speaks in a style unlike that which might have been expected from his limited intelligence, and says things so subtle that he does not think it possible he could have conceived them; however, desirous of doing what his task imposed upon him, he was unwilling to leave it untranslated, and therefore he went on to say:

Sancho came home in such glee and spirits that his wife noticed his happiness a bowshot off, so much so that it made her ask him, "What have you got, Sancho friend, that you are so glad?"

To which he replied, "Wife, if it were God's will, I should be very glad not to be so well pleased as I show myself."

"I don't understand you, husband," said she, "and I don't know what you mean by saying you would be glad, if it were God's will, not to be well pleased; for, fool as I am, I don't know how one can find pleasure in not having it."

"Hark ye, Teresa," replied Sancho, "I am glad because I have made up my mind to go back to the service of my master Don Quixote, who means to go out a third time to seek for adventures; and I am going with him again, for my necessities will have it so, and also the hope that cheers me with the thought that I may find another hundred crowns like those we have spent; though it makes me sad to have to leave thee and the children; and if God would be pleased to let me have my daily bread, dry-shod and at home, without taking me out into the byways and cross-roads — and he could do it at small cost by merely willing it — it is clear my happiness would be more solid and lasting, for the happiness I have is mingled with sorrow at leaving thee; so that I was right in saying I would be glad, if it were God's will, not to be well pleased."

"Look here, Sancho," said Teresa; "ever since you joined on to a knight-errant you talk in such a roundabout way that there is no understanding you."

"It is enough that God understands me, wife," replied Sancho; "for he is the understander of all things; that will do; but mind, sister, you must look to Dapple carefully for the next three days, so that he may be fit to take arms; double his feed, and see to the pack-saddle and other harness, for it is not to a wedding we are bound, but to go round the world, and play at give and take with giants and dragons and monsters, and hear hissings and roarings and bellowings and howlings; and even all this would be lavender, if we had not to reckon with Yanguesans and enchanted Moors."

"I know well enough, husband," said Teresa, "that squires-errant don't eat their bread for nothing, and so I will be always praying to our Lord to deliver you speedily from all that hard fortune."

"I can tell you, wife," said Sancho, "if I did not expect to see myself governor of an island before long, I would drop down dead on the spot."

"Nay, then, husband," said Teresa; "let the hen live, though it be with her pip, live, and let the devil take all the governments in the world; you came out of your mother's womb without a government, you have lived until now without a government, and when it is God's will you will go, or be carried, to your grave without a government. How many there are in the world who live without a

government, and continue to live all the same, and are reckoned in the number of the people. The best sauce in the world is hunger, and as the poor are never without that, they always eat with a relish. But mind, Sancho, if by good luck you should find yourself with some government, don't forget me and your children. Remember that Sanchico is now full fifteen, and it is right he should go to school, if his uncle the abbot has a mind to have him trained for the Church. Consider, too, that your daughter Mari-Sancha will not die of grief if we marry her; for I have my suspicions that she is as eager to get a husband as you to get a government; and, after all, a daughter looks better ill married than well whored."

"By my faith," replied Sancho, "if God brings me to get any sort of a government, I intend, wife, to make such a high match for Mari-Sancha that there will be no approaching her without calling her 'my lady.'"

"Nay, Sancho," returned Teresa; "marry her to her equal, that is the safest plan; for if you put her out of wooden clogs into high-heeled shoes, out of her grey flannel petticoat into hoops and silk gowns, out of the plain 'Marica' and 'thou,' into 'Dona So-and-so' and 'my lady,' the girl won't know where she is, and at every turn she will fall into a thousand blunders that will show the thread of her coarse homespun stuff."

"Tut, you fool," said Sancho; "it will be only to practise it for two or three years; and then dignity and decorum will fit her as easily as a glove; and if not, what matter? Let her be 'my lady,' and never mind what happens."

"Keep to your own station, Sancho," replied Teresa; "don't try to raise yourself higher, and bear in mind the proverb that says, 'wipe the nose of your neighbour's son, and take him into your house.' A fine thing it would be, indeed, to marry our Maria to some great count or grand gentleman, who, when the humour took him, would abuse her and call her clown-bred and clodhopper's daughter and spinning wench. I have not been bringing up my daughter for that all this time, I can tell you, husband. Do you bring home money, Sancho, and leave marrying her to my care; there is Lope Tocho, Juan Tocho's son, a stout, sturdy young fellow that we know, and I can see he does not look sour at the girl; and with him, one of our own sort, she will be well married, and we shall have her always under our eyes, and be all one family, parents and children, grandchildren and sons-in-law, and the peace and blessing of God will dwell among us; so don't you go marrying her in those courts and grand palaces where they won't know what to make of her, or she what to make of herself."

"Why, you idiot and wife for Barabbas," said Sancho, "what do you mean by trying, without why or wherefore, to keep me from marrying my daughter to one who will give me grandchildren that will be called 'your lordship'? Look ye, Teresa, I have always heard my elders say that he who does not know how to

take advantage of luck when it comes to him, has no right to complain if it gives him the go-by; and now that it is knocking at our door, it will not do to shut it out; let us go with the favouring breeze that blows upon us.”

It is this sort of talk, and what Sancho says lower down, that made the translator of the history say he considered this chapter apocryphal.

“Don’t you see, you animal,” continued Sancho, “that it will be well for me to drop into some profitable government that will lift us out of the mire, and marry Mari-Sancha to whom I like; and you yourself will find yourself called ‘Dona Teresa Panza,’ and sitting in church on a fine carpet and cushions and draperies, in spite and in defiance of all the born ladies of the town? No, stay as you are, growing neither greater nor less, like a tapestry figure — Let us say no more about it, for Sanchica shall be a countess, say what you will.”

“Are you sure of all you say, husband?” replied Teresa. “Well, for all that, I am afraid this rank of countess for my daughter will be her ruin. You do as you like, make a duchess or a princess of her, but I can tell you it will not be with my will and consent. I was always a lover of equality, brother, and I can’t bear to see people give themselves airs without any right. They called me Teresa at my baptism, a plain, simple name, without any additions or tags or fringes of Dons or Donas; Cascajo was my father’s name, and as I am your wife, I am called Teresa Panza, though by right I ought to be called Teresa Cascajo; but ‘kings go where laws like,’ and I am content with this name without having the ‘Don’ put on top of it to make it so heavy that I cannot carry it; and I don’t want to make people talk about me when they see me go dressed like a countess or governor’s wife; for they will say at once, ‘See what airs the slut gives herself! Only yesterday she was always spinning flax, and used to go to mass with the tail of her petticoat over her head instead of a mantle, and there she goes to-day in a hooped gown with her broaches and airs, as if we didn’t know her!’ If God keeps me in my seven senses, or five, or whatever number I have, I am not going to bring myself to such a pass; go you, brother, and be a government or an island man, and swagger as much as you like; for by the soul of my mother, neither my daughter nor I are going to stir a step from our village; a respectable woman should have a broken leg and keep at home; and to be busy at something is a virtuous damsel’s holiday; be off to your adventures along with your Don Quixote, and leave us to our misadventures, for God will mend them for us according as we deserve it. I don’t know, I’m sure, who fixed the ‘Don’ to him, what neither his father nor grandfather ever had.”

“I declare thou hast a devil of some sort in thy body!” said Sancho. “God help thee, what a lot of things thou hast strung together, one after the other, without head or tail! What have Cascajo, and the broaches and the proverbs and the airs,

to do with what I say? Look here, fool and dolt (for so I may call you, when you don't understand my words, and run away from good fortune), if I had said that my daughter was to throw herself down from a tower, or go roaming the world, as the Infanta Dona Urraca wanted to do, you would be right in not giving way to my will; but if in an instant, in less than the twinkling of an eye, I put the 'Don' and 'my lady' on her back, and take her out of the stubble, and place her under a canopy, on a dais, and on a couch, with more velvet cushions than all the Almohades of Morocco ever had in their family, why won't you consent and fall in with my wishes?"

"Do you know why, husband?" replied Teresa; "because of the proverb that says 'who covers thee, discovers thee.' At the poor man people only throw a hasty glance; on the rich man they fix their eyes; and if the said rich man was once on a time poor, it is then there is the sneering and the tattle and spite of backbiters; and in the streets here they swarm as thick as bees."

"Look here, Teresa," said Sancho, "and listen to what I am now going to say to you; maybe you never heard it in all your life; and I do not give my own notions, for what I am about to say are the opinions of his reverence the preacher, who preached in this town last Lent, and who said, if I remember rightly, that all things present that our eyes behold, bring themselves before us, and remain and fix themselves on our memory much better and more forcibly than things past."

These observations which Sancho makes here are the other ones on account of which the translator says he regards this chapter as apocryphal, inasmuch as they are beyond Sancho's capacity.

"Whence it arises," he continued, "that when we see any person well dressed and making a figure with rich garments and retinue of servants, it seems to lead and impel us perforce to respect him, though memory may at the same moment recall to us some lowly condition in which we have seen him, but which, whether it may have been poverty or low birth, being now a thing of the past, has no existence; while the only thing that has any existence is what we see before us; and if this person whom fortune has raised from his original lowly state (these were the very words the padre used) to his present height of prosperity, be well bred, generous, courteous to all, without seeking to vie with those whose nobility is of ancient date, depend upon it, Teresa, no one will remember what he was, and everyone will respect what he is, except indeed the envious, from whom no fair fortune is safe."

"I do not understand you, husband," replied Teresa; "do as you like, and don't break my head with any more speechifying and rethoric; and if you have revolved to do what you say--"

“Resolved, you should say, woman,” said Sancho, “not revolved.”

“Don’t set yourself to wrangle with me, husband,” said Teresa; “I speak as God pleases, and don’t deal in out-of-the-way phrases; and I say if you are bent upon having a government, take your son Sancho with you, and teach him from this time on how to hold a government; for sons ought to inherit and learn the trades of their fathers.”

“As soon as I have the government,” said Sancho, “I will send for him by post, and I will send thee money, of which I shall have no lack, for there is never any want of people to lend it to governors when they have not got it; and do thou dress him so as to hide what he is and make him look what he is to be.”

“You send the money,” said Teresa, “and I’ll dress him up for you as fine as you please.”

“Then we are agreed that our daughter is to be a countess,” said Sancho.

“The day that I see her a countess,” replied Teresa, “it will be the same to me as if I was burying her; but once more I say do as you please, for we women are born to this burden of being obedient to our husbands, though they be dogs;” and with this she began to weep in earnest, as if she already saw Sanchica dead and buried.

Sancho consoled her by saying that though he must make her a countess, he would put it off as long as possible. Here their conversation came to an end, and Sancho went back to see Don Quixote, and make arrangements for their departure.



## CHAPTER VI.

OF WHAT TOOK PLACE BETWEEN DON QUIXOTE AND HIS NIECE  
AND HOUSEKEEPER; ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CHAPTERS IN  
THE WHOLE HISTORY



While Sancho Panza and his wife, Teresa Cascajo, held the above irrelevant conversation, Don Quixote's niece and housekeeper were not idle, for by a thousand signs they began to perceive that their uncle and master meant to give them the slip the third time, and once more betake himself to his, for them, ill-errant chivalry. They strove by all the means in their power to divert him from such an unlucky scheme; but it was all preaching in the desert and hammering cold iron. Nevertheless, among many other representations made to him, the housekeeper said to him, "In truth, master, if you do not keep still and stay quiet at home, and give over roaming mountains and valleys like a troubled spirit, looking for what they say are called adventures, but what I call misfortunes, I shall have to make complaint to God and the king with loud supplication to send



some remedy.”

To which Don Quixote replied, “What answer God will give to your complaints, housekeeper, I know not, nor what his Majesty will answer either; I only know that if I were king I should decline to answer the numberless silly petitions they present every day; for one of the greatest among the many troubles kings have is being obliged to listen to all and answer all, and therefore I should be sorry that any affairs of mine should worry him.”

Whereupon the housekeeper said, “Tell us, senor, at his Majesty’s court are there no knights?”

“There are,” replied Don Quixote, “and plenty of them; and it is right there should be, to set off the dignity of the prince, and for the greater glory of the king’s majesty.”

“Then might not your worship,” said she, “be one of those that, without stirring a step, serve their king and lord in his court?”

“Recollect, my friend,” said Don Quixote, “all knights cannot be courtiers, nor can all courtiers be knights-errant, nor need they be. There must be all sorts in the world; and though we may be all knights, there is a great difference between one and another; for the courtiers, without quitting their chambers, or the threshold of the court, range the world over by looking at a map, without its costing them a farthing, and without suffering heat or cold, hunger or thirst; but we, the true knights-errant, measure the whole earth with our own feet, exposed to the sun, to the cold, to the air, to the inclemencies of heaven, by day and night, on foot and on horseback; nor do we only know enemies in pictures, but in their own real shapes; and at all risks and on all occasions we attack them, without any regard to childish points or rules of single combat, whether one has or has not a shorter lance or sword, whether one carries relics or any secret contrivance about him, whether or not the sun is to be divided and portioned out, and other niceties of the sort that are observed in set combats of man to man, that you know nothing about, but I do. And you must know besides, that the true knight-errant, though he may see ten giants, that not only touch the clouds with their heads but pierce them, and that go, each of them, on two tall towers by way of legs, and whose arms are like the masts of mighty ships, and each eye like a great mill-wheel, and glowing brighter than a glass furnace, must not on any account be dismayed by them. On the contrary, he must attack and fall upon them with a gallant bearing and a fearless heart, and, if possible, vanquish and destroy them, even though they have for armour the shells of a certain fish, that they say are harder than diamonds, and in place of swords wield trenchant blades of Damascus steel, or clubs studded with spikes also of steel, such as I have more than once seen. All this I say, housekeeper, that you may see the difference

there is between the one sort of knight and the other; and it would be well if there were no prince who did not set a higher value on this second, or more properly speaking first, kind of knights-errant; for, as we read in their histories, there have been some among them who have been the salvation, not merely of one kingdom, but of many.”

“Ah, senor,” here exclaimed the niece, “remember that all this you are saying about knights-errant is fable and fiction; and their histories, if indeed they were not burned, would deserve, each of them, to have a sambenito put on it, or some mark by which it might be known as infamous and a corrupter of good manners.”

“By the God that gives me life,” said Don Quixote, “if thou wert not my full niece, being daughter of my own sister, I would inflict a chastisement upon thee for the blasphemy thou hast uttered that all the world should ring with. What! can it be that a young hussy that hardly knows how to handle a dozen lace-bobbins dares to wag her tongue and criticise the histories of knights-errant? What would Senor Amadis say if he heard of such a thing? He, however, no doubt would forgive thee, for he was the most humble-minded and courteous knight of his time, and moreover a great protector of damsels; but some there are that might have heard thee, and it would not have been well for thee in that case; for they are not all courteous or mannerly; some are ill-conditioned scoundrels; nor is it everyone that calls himself a gentleman, that is so in all respects; some are gold, others pinchbeck, and all look like gentlemen, but not all can stand the touchstone of truth. There are men of low rank who strain themselves to bursting to pass for gentlemen, and high gentlemen who, one would fancy, were dying to pass for men of low rank; the former raise themselves by their ambition or by their virtues, the latter debase themselves by their lack of spirit or by their vices; and one has need of experience and discernment to distinguish these two kinds of gentlemen, so much alike in name and so different in conduct.”

“God bless me!” said the niece, “that you should know so much, uncle — enough, if need be, to get up into a pulpit and go preach in the streets — and yet that you should fall into a delusion so great and a folly so manifest as to try to make yourself out vigorous when you are old, strong when you are sickly, able to put straight what is crooked when you yourself are bent by age, and, above all, a caballero when you are not one; for though gentlefolk may be so, poor men are nothing of the kind!”

“There is a great deal of truth in what you say, niece,” returned Don Quixote, “and I could tell you somewhat about birth that would astonish you; but, not to mix up things human and divine, I refrain. Look you, my dears, all the lineages in the world (attend to what I am saying) can be reduced to four sorts, which are

these: those that had humble beginnings, and went on spreading and extending themselves until they attained surpassing greatness; those that had great beginnings and maintained them, and still maintain and uphold the greatness of their origin; those, again, that from a great beginning have ended in a point like a pyramid, having reduced and lessened their original greatness till it has come to nought, like the point of a pyramid, which, relatively to its base or foundation, is nothing; and then there are those — and it is they that are the most numerous — that have had neither an illustrious beginning nor a remarkable mid-course, and so will have an end without a name, like an ordinary plebeian line. Of the first, those that had an humble origin and rose to the greatness they still preserve, the Ottoman house may serve as an example, which from an humble and lowly shepherd, its founder, has reached the height at which we now see it. For examples of the second sort of lineage, that began with greatness and maintains it still without adding to it, there are the many princes who have inherited the dignity, and maintain themselves in their inheritance, without increasing or diminishing it, keeping peacefully within the limits of their states. Of those that began great and ended in a point, there are thousands of examples, for all the Pharaohs and Ptolemies of Egypt, the Caesars of Rome, and the whole herd (if I may such a word to them) of countless princes, monarchs, lords, Medes, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and barbarians, all these lineages and lordships have ended in a point and come to nothing, they themselves as well as their founders, for it would be impossible now to find one of their descendants, and, even should we find one, it would be in some lowly and humble condition. Of plebeian lineages I have nothing to say, save that they merely serve to swell the number of those that live, without any eminence to entitle them to any fame or praise beyond this. From all I have said I would have you gather, my poor innocents, that great is the confusion among lineages, and that only those are seen to be great and illustrious that show themselves so by the virtue, wealth, and generosity of their possessors. I have said virtue, wealth, and generosity, because a great man who is vicious will be a great example of vice, and a rich man who is not generous will be merely a miserly beggar; for the possessor of wealth is not made happy by possessing it, but by spending it, and not by spending as he pleases, but by knowing how to spend it well. The poor gentleman has no way of showing that he is a gentleman but by virtue, by being affable, well-bred, courteous, gentle-mannered, and kindly, not haughty, arrogant, or censorious, but above all by being charitable; for by two maravedis given with a cheerful heart to the poor, he will show himself as generous as he who distributes alms with bell-ringing, and no one that perceives him to be endowed with the virtues I have named, even though he know him not, will fail

to recognise and set him down as one of good blood; and it would be strange were it not so; praise has ever been the reward of virtue, and those who are virtuous cannot fail to receive commendation. There are two roads, my daughters, by which men may reach wealth and honours; one is that of letters, the other that of arms. I have more of arms than of letters in my composition, and, judging by my inclination to arms, was born under the influence of the planet Mars. I am, therefore, in a measure constrained to follow that road, and by it I must travel in spite of all the world, and it will be labour in vain for you to urge me to resist what heaven wills, fate ordains, reason requires, and, above all, my own inclination favours; for knowing as I do the countless toils that are the accompaniments of knight-errantry, I know, too, the infinite blessings that are attained by it; I know that the path of virtue is very narrow, and the road of vice broad and spacious; I know their ends and goals are different, for the broad and easy road of vice ends in death, and the narrow and toilsome one of virtue in life, and not transitory life, but in that which has no end; I know, as our great Castilian poet says, that—

It is by rugged paths like these they go  
That scale the heights of immortality,  
Unreached by those that falter here below.”

“Woe is me!” exclaimed the niece, “my lord is a poet, too! He knows everything, and he can do everything; I will bet, if he chose to turn mason, he could make a house as easily as a cage.”

“I can tell you, niece,” replied Don Quixote, “if these chivalrous thoughts did not engage all my faculties, there would be nothing that I could not do, nor any sort of knickknack that would not come from my hands, particularly cages and tooth-picks.”

At this moment there came a knocking at the door, and when they asked who was there, Sancho Panza made answer that it was he. The instant the housekeeper knew who it was, she ran to hide herself so as not to see him; in such abhorrence did she hold him. The niece let him in, and his master Don Quixote came forward to receive him with open arms, and the pair shut themselves up in his room, where they had another conversation not inferior to the previous one.



## CHAPTER VII.

OF WHAT PASSED BETWEEN DON QUIXOTE AND HIS SQUIRE,  
TOGETHER WITH OTHER VERY NOTABLE INCIDENTS



The instant the housekeeper saw Sancho Panza shut himself in with her master, she guessed what they were about; and suspecting that the result of the consultation would be a resolve to undertake a third sally, she seized her mantle, and in deep anxiety and distress, ran to find the bachelor Samson Carrasco, as she thought that, being a well-spoken man, and a new friend of her master's, he might be able to persuade him to give up any such crazy notion. She found him pacing the patio of his house, and, perspiring and flurried, she fell at his feet the moment she saw him.

Carrasco, seeing how distressed and overcome she was, said to her, "What is this, mistress housekeeper? What has happened to you? One would think you heart-broken."

"Nothing, Senor Samson," said she, "only that my master is breaking out, plainly breaking out."

"Whereabouts is he breaking out, senora?" asked Samson; "has any part of his body burst?"

"He is only breaking out at the door of his madness," she replied; "I mean, dear senor bachelor, that he is going to break out again (and this will be the third time) to hunt all over the world for what he calls ventures, though I can't make out why he gives them that name. The first time he was brought back to us slung across the back of an ass, and belaboured all over; and the second time he came in an ox-cart, shut up in a cage, in which he persuaded himself he was enchanted, and the poor creature was in such a state that the mother that bore him would not have known him; lean, yellow, with his eyes sunk deep in the cells of his skull; so that to bring him round again, ever so little, cost me more than six hundred eggs, as God knows, and all the world, and my hens too, that won't let me tell a lie."

"That I can well believe," replied the bachelor, "for they are so good and so fat, and so well-bred, that they would not say one thing for another, though they were to burst for it. In short then, mistress housekeeper, that is all, and there is nothing the matter, except what it is feared Don Quixote may do?"

"No, senor," said she.

"Well then," returned the bachelor, "don't be uneasy, but go home in peace; get me ready something hot for breakfast, and while you are on the way say the prayer of Santa Apollonia, that is if you know it; for I will come presently and you will see miracles."

"Woe is me," cried the housekeeper, "is it the prayer of Santa Apollonia you would have me say? That would do if it was the toothache my master had; but it is in the brains, what he has got."

"I know what I am saying, mistress housekeeper; go, and don't set yourself to argue with me, for you know I am a bachelor of Salamanca, and one can't be more of a bachelor than that," replied Carrasco; and with this the housekeeper retired, and the bachelor went to look for the curate, and arrange with him what will be told in its proper place.

While Don Quixote and Sancho were shut up together, they had a discussion which the history records with great precision and scrupulous exactness. Sancho said to his master, "Senor, I have educed my wife to let me go with your worship wherever you choose to take me."

“Induced, you should say, Sancho,” said Don Quixote; “not educed.”

“Once or twice, as well as I remember,” replied Sancho, “I have begged of your worship not to mend my words, if so be as you understand what I mean by them; and if you don’t understand them to say ‘Sancho,’ or ‘devil,’ ‘I don’t understand thee; and if I don’t make my meaning plain, then you may correct me, for I am so focile-”

“I don’t understand thee, Sancho,” said Don Quixote at once; “for I know not what ‘I am so focile’ means.”

“‘So focile’ means I am so much that way,” replied Sancho.

“I understand thee still less now,” said Don Quixote.

“Well, if you can’t understand me,” said Sancho, “I don’t know how to put it; I know no more, God help me.”

“Oh, now I have hit it,” said Don Quixote; “thou wouldst say thou art so docile, tractable, and gentle that thou wilt take what I say to thee, and submit to what I teach thee.”

“I would bet,” said Sancho, “that from the very first you understood me, and knew what I meant, but you wanted to put me out that you might hear me make another couple of dozen blunders.”

“May be so,” replied Don Quixote; “but to come to the point, what does Teresa say?”

“Teresa says,” replied Sancho, “that I should make sure with your worship, and ‘let papers speak and beards be still,’ for ‘he who binds does not wrangle,’ since one ‘take’ is better than two ‘I’ll give thee’s;’ and I say a woman’s advice is no great thing, and he who won’t take it is a fool.”

“And so say I,” said Don Quixote; “continue, Sancho my friend; go on; you talk pearls to-day.”

“The fact is,” continued Sancho, “that, as your worship knows better than I do, we are all of us liable to death, and to-day we are, and to-morrow we are not, and the lamb goes as soon as the sheep, and nobody can promise himself more hours of life in this world than God may be pleased to give him; for death is deaf, and when it comes to knock at our life’s door, it is always urgent, and neither prayers, nor struggles, nor sceptres, nor mitres, can keep it back, as common talk and report say, and as they tell us from the pulpits every day.”

“All that is very true,” said Don Quixote; “but I cannot make out what thou art driving at.”

“What I am driving at,” said Sancho, “is that your worship settle some fixed wages for me, to be paid monthly while I am in your service, and that the same he paid me out of your estate; for I don’t care to stand on rewards which either come late, or ill, or never at all; God help me with my own. In short, I would like



to know what I am to get, be it much or little; for the hen will lay on one egg, and many littles make a much, and so long as one gains something there is nothing lost. To be sure, if it should happen (what I neither believe nor expect) that your worship were to give me that island you have promised me, I am not so ungrateful nor so grasping but that I would be willing to have the revenue of such island valued and stopped out of my wages in due promotion."

"Sancho, my friend," replied Don Quixote, "sometimes proportion may be as good as promotion."

"I see," said Sancho; "I'll bet I ought to have said proportion, and not promotion; but it is no matter, as your worship has understood me."

"And so well understood," returned Don Quixote, "that I have seen into the depths of thy thoughts, and know the mark thou art shooting at with the countless shafts of thy proverbs. Look here, Sancho, I would readily fix thy wages if I had ever found any instance in the histories of the knights-errant to show or indicate, by the slightest hint, what their squires used to get monthly or yearly; but I have read all or the best part of their histories, and I cannot remember reading of any knight-errant having assigned fixed wages to his squire; I only know that they all served on reward, and that when they least expected it, if good luck attended their masters, they found themselves recompensed with an island or something equivalent to it, or at the least they were left with a title and lordship. If with these hopes and additional inducements you, Sancho, please to return to my service, well and good; but to suppose that I am going to disturb or unhinge the ancient usage of knight-errantry, is all nonsense. And so, my Sancho, get you back to your house and explain my intentions to your Teresa, and if she likes and you like to be on reward with me, bene quidem; if not, we remain friends; for if the pigeon-house does not lack food, it will not lack pigeons; and bear in mind, my son, that a good hope is better than a bad holding, and a good grievance better than a bad compensation. I speak in this way, Sancho, to show you that I can shower down proverbs just as well as yourself; and in short, I mean to say, and I do say, that if you don't like to come on reward with me, and run the same chance that I run, God be with you and make a saint of you; for I shall find plenty of squires more obedient and painstaking, and not so thickheaded or talkative as you are."

When Sancho heard his master's firm, resolute language, a cloud came over the sky with him and the wings of his heart drooped, for he had made sure that his master would not go without him for all the wealth of the world; and as he stood there dumbfounded and moody, Samson Carrasco came in with the housekeeper and niece, who were anxious to hear by what arguments he was about to dissuade their master from going to seek adventures. The arch wag

Samson came forward, and embracing him as he had done before, said with a loud voice, "O flower of knight-errantry! O shining light of arms! O honour and mirror of the Spanish nation! may God Almighty in his infinite power grant that any person or persons, who would impede or hinder thy third sally, may find no way out of the labyrinth of their schemes, nor ever accomplish what they most desire!" And then, turning to the housekeeper, he said, "Mistress housekeeper may just as well give over saying the prayer of Santa Apollonia, for I know it is the positive determination of the spheres that Senor Don Quixote shall proceed to put into execution his new and lofty designs; and I should lay a heavy burden on my conscience did I not urge and persuade this knight not to keep the might of his strong arm and the virtue of his valiant spirit any longer curbed and checked, for by his inactivity he is defrauding the world of the redress of wrongs, of the protection of orphans, of the honour of virgins, of the aid of widows, and of the support of wives, and other matters of this kind appertaining, belonging, proper and peculiar to the order of knight-errantry. On, then, my lord Don Quixote, beautiful and brave, let your worship and highness set out to-day rather than to-morrow; and if anything be needed for the execution of your purpose, here am I ready in person and purse to supply the want; and were it requisite to attend your magnificence as squire, I should esteem it the happiest good fortune."

At this, Don Quixote, turning to Sancho, said, "Did I not tell thee, Sancho, there would be squires enough and to spare for me? See now who offers to become one; no less than the illustrious bachelor Samson Carrasco, the perpetual joy and delight of the courts of the Salamancan schools, sound in body, discreet, patient under heat or cold, hunger or thirst, with all the qualifications requisite to make a knight-errant's squire! But heaven forbid that, to gratify my own inclination, I should shake or shatter this pillar of letters and vessel of the sciences, and cut down this towering palm of the fair and liberal arts. Let this new Samson remain in his own country, and, bringing honour to it, bring honour at the same time on the grey heads of his venerable parents; for I will be content with any squire that comes to hand, as Sancho does not deign to accompany me."

"I do deign," said Sancho, deeply moved and with tears in his eyes; "it shall not be said of me, master mine," he continued, "'the bread eaten and the company dispersed.' Nay, I come of no ungrateful stock, for all the world knows, but particularly my own town, who the Panzas from whom I am descended were; and, what is more, I know and have learned, by many good words and deeds, your worship's desire to show me favour; and if I have been bargaining more or less about my wages, it was only to please my wife, who,

when she sets herself to press a point, no hammer drives the hoops of a cask as she drives one to do what she wants; but, after all, a man must be a man, and a woman a woman; and as I am a man anyhow, which I can't deny, I will be one in my own house too, let who will take it amiss; and so there's nothing more to do but for your worship to make your will with its codicil in such a way that it can't be provoked, and let us set out at once, to save Senor Samson's soul from suffering, as he says his conscience obliges him to persuade your worship to sally out upon the world a third time; so I offer again to serve your worship faithfully and loyally, as well and better than all the squires that served knights-errant in times past or present."

The bachelor was filled with amazement when he heard Sancho's phraseology and style of talk, for though he had read the first part of his master's history he never thought that he could be so droll as he was there described; but now, hearing him talk of a "will and codicil that could not be provoked," instead of "will and codicil that could not be revoked," he believed all he had read of him, and set him down as one of the greatest simpletons of modern times; and he said to himself that two such lunatics as master and man the world had never seen. In fine, Don Quixote and Sancho embraced one another and made friends, and by the advice and with the approval of the great Carrasco, who was now their oracle, it was arranged that their departure should take place three days thence, by which time they could have all that was requisite for the journey ready, and procure a closed helmet, which Don Quixote said he must by all means take. Samson offered him one, as he knew a friend of his who had it would not refuse it to him, though it was more dingy with rust and mildew than bright and clean like burnished steel.

The curses which both housekeeper and niece poured out on the bachelor were past counting; they tore their hair, they clawed their faces, and in the style of the hired mourners that were once in fashion, they raised a lamentation over the departure of their master and uncle, as if it had been his death. Samson's intention in persuading him to sally forth once more was to do what the history relates farther on; all by the advice of the curate and barber, with whom he had previously discussed the subject. Finally, then, during those three days, Don Quixote and Sancho provided themselves with what they considered necessary, and Sancho having pacified his wife, and Don Quixote his niece and housekeeper, at nightfall, unseen by anyone except the bachelor, who thought fit to accompany them half a league out of the village, they set out for El Toboso, Don Quixote on his good Rocinante and Sancho on his old Dapple, his alforjas furnished with certain matters in the way of victuals, and his purse with money that Don Quixote gave him to meet emergencies. Samson embraced him, and

entreated him to let him hear of his good or evil fortunes, so that he might rejoice over the former or condole with him over the latter, as the laws of friendship required. Don Quixote promised him he would do so, and Samson returned to the village, and the other two took the road for the great city of El Toboso.



## CHAPTER VIII.

WHEREIN IS RELATED WHAT BEFELL DON QUIXOTE ON HIS WAY  
TO SEE HIS LADY DULCINEA DEL TOBOSO



“Blessed be Allah the all-powerful!” says Hamete Benengeli on beginning this eighth chapter; “blessed be Allah!” he repeats three times; and he says he utters these thanksgivings at seeing that he has now got Don Quixote and Sancho fairly afield, and that the readers of his delightful history may reckon that the achievements and humours of Don Quixote and his squire are now about to begin; and he urges them to forget the former chivalries of the ingenious gentleman and to fix their eyes on those that are to come, which now begin on the road to El Toboso, as the others began on the plains of Montiel; nor is it much that he asks in consideration of all he promises, and so he goes on to say:

Don Quixote and Sancho were left alone, and the moment Samson took his departure, Rocinante began to neigh, and Dapple to sigh, which, by both knight and squire, was accepted as a good sign and a very happy omen; though, if the truth is to be told, the sighs and brays of Dapple were louder than the neighings of the hack, from which Sancho inferred that his good fortune was to exceed and overtop that of his master, building, perhaps, upon some judicial astrology that he may have known, though the history says nothing about it; all that can be said

is, that when he stumbled or fell, he was heard to say he wished he had not come out, for by stumbling or falling there was nothing to be got but a damaged shoe or a broken rib; and, fool as he was, he was not much astray in this.

Said Don Quixote, "Sancho, my friend, night is drawing on upon us as we go, and more darkly than will allow us to reach El Toboso by daylight; for there I am resolved to go before I engage in another adventure, and there I shall obtain the blessing and generous permission of the peerless Dulcinea, with which permission I expect and feel assured that I shall conclude and bring to a happy termination every perilous adventure; for nothing in life makes knights-errant more valorous than finding themselves favoured by their ladies."



“So I believe,” replied Sancho; “but I think it will be difficult for your worship to speak with her or see her, at any rate where you will be able to receive her blessing; unless, indeed, she throws it over the wall of the yard where I saw her the time before, when I took her the letter that told of the follies and mad things your worship was doing in the heart of Sierra Morena.”

“Didst thou take that for a yard wall, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “where or at which thou sawest that never sufficiently extolled grace and beauty? It must have been the gallery, corridor, or portico of some rich and royal palace.”

“It might have been all that,” returned Sancho, “but to me it looked like a wall, unless I am short of memory.”

“At all events, let us go there, Sancho,” said Don Quixote; “for, so that I see her, it is the same to me whether it be over a wall, or at a window, or through the chink of a door, or the grate of a garden; for any beam of the sun of her beauty that reaches my eyes will give light to my reason and strength to my heart, so that I shall be unmatched and unequalled in wisdom and valour.”

“Well, to tell the truth, senor,” said Sancho, “when I saw that sun of the lady Dulcinea del Toboso, it was not bright enough to throw out beams at all; it must have been, that as her grace was sifting that wheat I told you of, the thick dust she raised came before her face like a cloud and dimmed it.”

“What! dost thou still persist, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “in saying, thinking, believing, and maintaining that my lady Dulcinea was sifting wheat, that being an occupation and task entirely at variance with what is and should be the employment of persons of distinction, who are constituted and reserved for other avocations and pursuits that show their rank a bowshot off? Thou hast forgotten, O Sancho, those lines of our poet wherein he paints for us how, in their crystal abodes, those four nymphs employed themselves who rose from their loved Tagus and seated themselves in a verdant meadow to embroider those tissues which the ingenious poet there describes to us, how they were worked and woven with gold and silk and pearls; and something of this sort must have been the employment of my lady when thou sawest her, only that the spite which some wicked enchanter seems to have against everything of mine changes all those things that give me pleasure, and turns them into shapes unlike their own; and so I fear that in that history of my achievements which they say is now in print, if haply its author was some sage who is an enemy of mine, he will have

put one thing for another, mingling a thousand lies with one truth, and amusing himself by relating transactions which have nothing to do with the sequence of a true history. O envy, root of all countless evils, and cankerworm of the virtues!

All the vices, Sancho, bring some kind of pleasure with them; but envy brings nothing but irritation, bitterness, and rage.”

“So I say too,” replied Sancho; “and I suspect in that legend or history of us that the bachelor Samson Carrasco told us he saw, my honour goes dragged in the dirt, knocked about, up and down, sweeping the streets, as they say. And yet, on the faith of an honest man, I never spoke ill of any enchanter, and I am not so well off that I am to be envied; to be sure, I am rather sly, and I have a certain spice of the rogue in me; but all is covered by the great cloak of my simplicity, always natural and never acted; and if I had no other merit save that I believe, as I always do, firmly and truly in God, and all the holy Roman Catholic Church holds and believes, and that I am a mortal enemy of the Jews, the historians ought to have mercy on me and treat me well in their writings. But let them say what they like; naked was I born, naked I find myself, I neither lose nor gain; nay, while I see myself put into a book and passed on from hand to hand over the world, I don’t care a fig, let them say what they like of me.”

“That, Sancho,” returned Don Quixote, “reminds me of what happened to a famous poet of our own day, who, having written a bitter satire against all the courtesan ladies, did not insert or name in it a certain lady of whom it was questionable whether she was one or not. She, seeing she was not in the list of the poet, asked him what he had seen in her that he did not include her in the number of the others, telling him he must add to his satire and put her in the new part, or else look out for the consequences. The poet did as she bade him, and left her without a shred of reputation, and she was satisfied by getting fame though it was infamy. In keeping with this is what they relate of that shepherd who set fire to the famous temple of Diana, by repute one of the seven wonders of the world, and burned it with the sole object of making his name live in after ages; and, though it was forbidden to name him, or mention his name by word of mouth or in writing, lest the object of his ambition should be attained, nevertheless it became known that he was called Erostratus. And something of the same sort is what happened in the case of the great emperor Charles V and a gentleman in Rome. The emperor was anxious to see that famous temple of the Rotunda, called in ancient times the temple ‘of all the gods,’ but now-a-days, by a better nomenclature, ‘of all the saints,’ which is the best preserved building of all those of pagan construction in Rome, and the one which best sustains the reputation of mighty works and magnificence of its founders. It is in the form of a half orange, of enormous dimensions, and well lighted, though no light



penetrates it save that which is admitted by a window, or rather round skylight, at the top; and it was from this that the emperor examined the building. A Roman gentleman stood by his side and explained to him the skilful construction and ingenuity of the vast fabric and its wonderful architecture, and when they had left the skylight he said to the emperor, 'A thousand times, your Sacred Majesty, the impulse came upon me to seize your Majesty in my arms and fling myself down from yonder skylight, so as to leave behind me in the world a name that would last for ever.' 'I am thankful to you for not carrying such an evil thought into effect,' said the emperor, 'and I shall give you no opportunity in future of again putting your loyalty to the test; and I therefore forbid you ever to speak to me or to be where I am; and he followed up these words by bestowing a liberal bounty upon him. My meaning is, Sancho, that the desire of acquiring fame is a very powerful motive. What, thinkest thou, was it that flung Horatius in full armour down from the bridge into the depths of the Tiber? What burned the hand and arm of Mutius? What impelled Curtius to plunge into the deep burning gulf that opened in the midst of Rome? What, in opposition to all the omens that declared against him, made Julius Caesar cross the Rubicon? And to come to more modern examples, what scuttled the ships, and left stranded and cut off the gallant Spaniards under the command of the most courteous Cortes in the New World? All these and a variety of other great exploits are, were and will be, the work of fame that mortals desire as a reward and a portion of the immortality their famous deeds deserve; though we Catholic Christians and knights-errant look more to that future glory that is everlasting in the ethereal regions of heaven than to the vanity of the fame that is to be acquired in this present transitory life; a fame that, however long it may last, must after all end with the world itself, which has its own appointed end. So that, O Sancho, in what we do we must not overpass the bounds which the Christian religion we profess has assigned to us. We have to slay pride in giants, envy by generosity and nobleness of heart, anger by calmness of demeanour and equanimity, gluttony and sloth by the sparseness of our diet and the length of our vigils, lust and lewdness by the loyalty we preserve to those whom we have made the mistresses of our thoughts, indolence by traversing the world in all directions seeking opportunities of making ourselves, besides Christians, famous knights. Such, Sancho, are the means by which we reach those extremes of praise that fair fame carries with it."

"All that your worship has said so far," said Sancho, "I have understood quite well; but still I would be glad if your worship would dissolve a doubt for me, which has just this minute come into my mind."

"Solve, thou meanest, Sancho," said Don Quixote; "say on, in God's name,

and I will answer as well as I can.”

“Tell me, senor,” Sancho went on to say, “those Julys or Augusts, and all those venturous knights that you say are now dead — where are they now?”

“The heathens,” replied Don Quixote, “are, no doubt, in hell; the Christians, if they were good Christians, are either in purgatory or in heaven.”

“Very good,” said Sancho; “but now I want to know — the tombs where the bodies of those great lords are, have they silver lamps before them, or are the walls of their chapels ornamented with crutches, winding-sheets, tresses of hair, legs and eyes in wax? Or what are they ornamented with?”

To which Don Quixote made answer: “The tombs of the heathens were generally sumptuous temples; the ashes of Julius Caesar’s body were placed on the top of a stone pyramid of vast size, which they now call in Rome Saint Peter’s needle. The emperor Hadrian had for a tomb a castle as large as a good-sized village, which they called the Moles Adriani, and is now the castle of St. Angelo in Rome. The queen Artemisia buried her husband Mausolus in a tomb which was reckoned one of the seven wonders of the world; but none of these tombs, or of the many others of the heathens, were ornamented with winding-sheets or any of those other offerings and tokens that show that they who are buried there are saints.”

“That’s the point I’m coming to,” said Sancho; “and now tell me, which is the greater work, to bring a dead man to life or to kill a giant?”

“The answer is easy,” replied Don Quixote; “it is a greater work to bring to life a dead man.”

“Now I have got you,” said Sancho; “in that case the fame of them who bring the dead to life, who give sight to the blind, cure cripples, restore health to the sick, and before whose tombs there are lamps burning, and whose chapels are filled with devout folk on their knees adoring their relics be a better fame in this life and in the other than that which all the heathen emperors and knights-errant that have ever been in the world have left or may leave behind them?”

“That I grant, too,” said Don Quixote.

“Then this fame, these favours, these privileges, or whatever you call it,” said Sancho, “belong to the bodies and relics of the saints who, with the approbation and permission of our holy mother Church, have lamps, tapers, winding-sheets, crutches, pictures, eyes and legs, by means of which they increase devotion and add to their own Christian reputation. Kings carry the bodies or relics of saints on their shoulders, and kiss bits of their bones, and enrich and adorn their oratories and favourite altars with them.”

“What wouldst thou have me infer from all thou hast said, Sancho?” asked Don Quixote.

“My meaning is,” said Sancho, “let us set about becoming saints, and we shall obtain more quickly the fair fame we are striving after; for you know, senor, yesterday or the day before yesterday (for it is so lately one may say so) they canonised and beatified two little barefoot friars, and it is now reckoned the greatest good luck to kiss or touch the iron chains with which they girt and tortured their bodies, and they are held in greater veneration, so it is said, than the sword of Roland in the armoury of our lord the King, whom God preserve. So that, senor, it is better to be an humble little friar of no matter what order, than a valiant knight-errant; with God a couple of dozen of penance lashings are of more avail than two thousand lance-thrusts, be they given to giants, or monsters, or dragons.”

“All that is true,” returned Don Quixote, “but we cannot all be friars, and many are the ways by which God takes his own to heaven; chivalry is a religion, there are sainted knights in glory.”

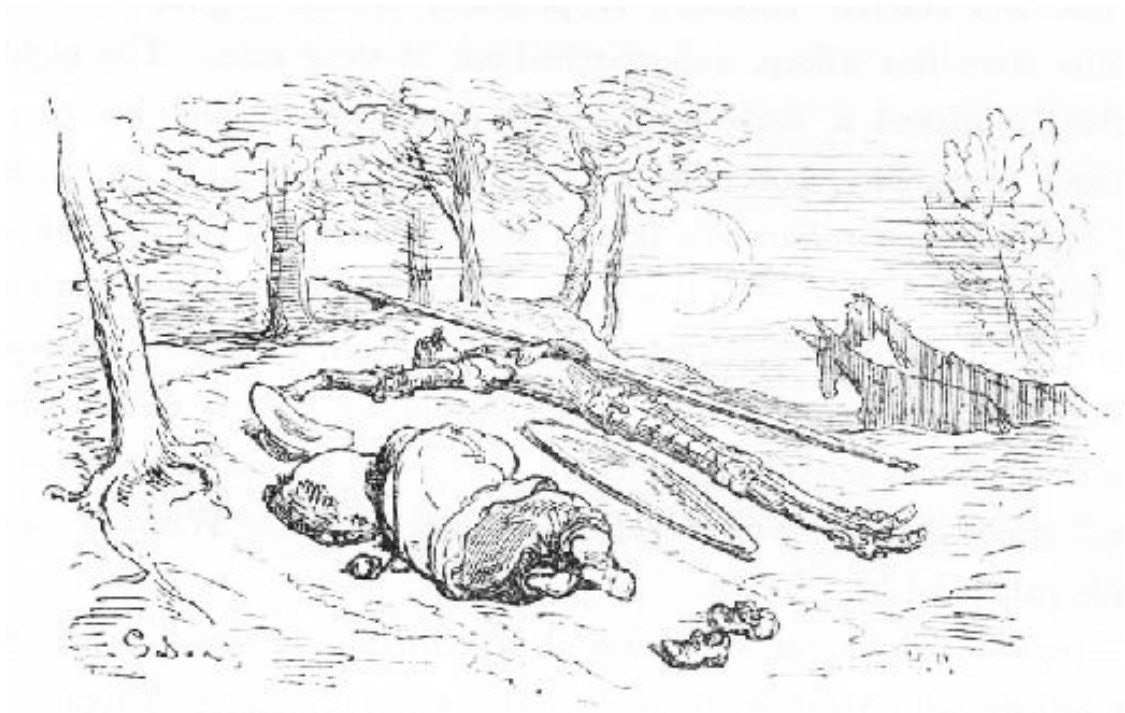
“Yes,” said Sancho, “but I have heard say that there are more friars in heaven than knights-errant.”

“That,” said Don Quixote, “is because those in religious orders are more numerous than knights.”

“The errants are many,” said Sancho.

“Many,” replied Don Quixote, “but few they who deserve the name of knights.”

With these, and other discussions of the same sort, they passed that night and the following day, without anything worth mention happening to them, whereat Don Quixote was not a little dejected; but at length the next day, at daybreak, they descried the great city of El Toboso, at the sight of which Don Quixote’s spirits rose and Sancho’s fell, for he did not know Dulcinea’s house, nor in all his life had he ever seen her, any more than his master; so that they were both uneasy, the one to see her, the other at not having seen her, and Sancho was at a loss to know what he was to do when his master sent him to El Toboso. In the end, Don Quixote made up his mind to enter the city at nightfall, and they waited until the time came among some oak trees that were near El Toboso; and when the moment they had agreed upon arrived, they made their entrance into the city, where something happened them that may fairly be called something.



## CHAPTER IX.

WHEREIN IS RELATED WHAT WILL BE SEEN THERE



'Twas at the very midnight hour — more or less — when Don Quixote and Sancho quitted the wood and entered El Toboso. The town was in deep silence, for all the inhabitants were asleep, and stretched on the broad of their backs, as the saying is. The night was darkish, though Sancho would have been glad had it been quite dark, so as to find in the darkness an excuse for his blundering. All over the place nothing was to be heard except the barking of dogs, which deafened the ears of Don Quixote and troubled the heart of Sancho. Now and then an ass brayed, pigs grunted, cats mewed, and the various noises they made seemed louder in the silence of the night; all which the enamoured knight took to be of evil omen; nevertheless he said to Sancho, “Sancho, my son, lead on to the palace of Dulcinea, it may be that we shall find her awake.”

“Body of the sun! what palace am I to lead to,” said Sancho, “when what I saw her highness in was only a very little house?”

“Most likely she had then withdrawn into some small apartment of her palace,” said Don Quixote, “to amuse herself with damsels, as great ladies and princesses are accustomed to do.”

“Senor,” said Sancho, “if your worship will have it in spite of me that the house of my lady Dulcinea is a palace, is this an hour, think you, to find the door

open; and will it be right for us to go knocking till they hear us and open the door; making a disturbance and confusion all through the household? Are we going, do you fancy, to the house of our wenches, like gallants who come and knock and go in at any hour, however late it may be?"

"Let us first of all find out the palace for certain," replied Don Quixote, "and then I will tell thee, Sancho, what we had best do; but look, Sancho, for either I see badly, or that dark mass that one sees from here should be Dulcinea's palace."

"Then let your worship lead the way," said Sancho, "perhaps it may be so; though I see it with my eyes and touch it with my hands, I'll believe it as much as I believe it is daylight now."

Don Quixote took the lead, and having gone a matter of two hundred paces he came upon the mass that produced the shade, and found it was a great tower, and then he perceived that the building in question was no palace, but the chief church of the town, and said he, "It's the church we have lit upon, Sancho."

"So I see," said Sancho, "and God grant we may not light upon our graves; it is no good sign to find oneself wandering in a graveyard at this time of night; and that, after my telling your worship, if I don't mistake, that the house of this lady will be in an alley without an outlet."

"The curse of God on thee for a blockhead!" said Don Quixote; "where hast thou ever heard of castles and royal palaces being built in alleys without an outlet?"

"Senor," replied Sancho, "every country has a way of its own; perhaps here in El Toboso it is the way to build palaces and grand buildings in alleys; so I entreat your worship to let me search about among these streets or alleys before me, and perhaps, in some corner or other, I may stumble on this palace — and I wish I saw the dogs eating it for leading us such a dance."

"Speak respectfully of what belongs to my lady, Sancho," said Don Quixote; "let us keep the feast in peace, and not throw the rope after the bucket."

"I'll hold my tongue," said Sancho, "but how am I to take it patiently when your worship wants me, with only once seeing the house of our mistress, to know always, and find it in the middle of the night, when your worship can't find it, who must have seen it thousands of times?"

"Thou wilt drive me to desperation, Sancho," said Don Quixote. "Look here, heretic, have I not told thee a thousand times that I have never once in my life seen the peerless Dulcinea or crossed the threshold of her palace, and that I am enamoured solely by hearsay and by the great reputation she bears for beauty and discretion?"

"I hear it now," returned Sancho; "and I may tell you that if you have not seen

her, no more have I.”

“That cannot be,” said Don Quixote, “for, at any rate, thou saidst, on bringing back the answer to the letter I sent by thee, that thou sawest her sifting wheat.”

“Don’t mind that, senor,” said Sancho; “I must tell you that my seeing her and the answer I brought you back were by hearsay too, for I can no more tell who the lady Dulcinea is than I can hit the sky.”

“Sancho, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “there are times for jests and times when jests are out of place; if I tell thee that I have neither seen nor spoken to the lady of my heart, it is no reason why thou shouldst say thou hast not spoken to her or seen her, when the contrary is the case, as thou well knowest.”

While the two were engaged in this conversation, they perceived some one with a pair of mules approaching the spot where they stood, and from the noise the plough made, as it dragged along the ground, they guessed him to be some labourer who had got up before daybreak to go to his work, and so it proved to be. He came along singing the ballad that says—

Ill did ye fare, ye men of France, In Roncesvalles chase-

“May I die, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, when he heard him, “if any good will come to us tonight! Dost thou not hear what that clown is singing?”

“I do,” said Sancho, “but what has Roncesvalles chase to do with what we have in hand? He might just as well be singing the ballad of Calainos, for any good or ill that can come to us in our business.”

By this time the labourer had come up, and Don Quixote asked him, “Can you tell me, worthy friend, and God speed you, whereabouts here is the palace of the peerless princess Dona Dulcinea del Toboso?”

“Senor,” replied the lad, “I am a stranger, and I have been only a few days in the town, doing farm work for a rich farmer. In that house opposite there live the curate of the village and the sacristan, and both or either of them will be able to give your worship some account of this lady princess, for they have a list of all the people of El Toboso; though it is my belief there is not a princess living in the whole of it; many ladies there are, of quality, and in her own house each of them may be a princess.”

“Well, then, she I am inquiring for will be one of these, my friend,” said Don Quixote.

“May be so,” replied the lad; “God be with you, for here comes the daylight;” and without waiting for any more of his questions, he whipped on his mules.

Sancho, seeing his master downcast and somewhat dissatisfied, said to him, “Senor, daylight will be here before long, and it will not do for us to let the sun find us in the street; it will be better for us to quit the city, and for your worship to hide in some forest in the neighbourhood, and I will come back in the

daytime, and I won't leave a nook or corner of the whole village that I won't search for the house, castle, or palace, of my lady, and it will be hard luck for me if I don't find it; and as soon as I have found it I will speak to her grace, and tell her where and how your worship is waiting for her to arrange some plan for you to see her without any damage to her honour and reputation."

"Sancho," said Don Quixote, "thou hast delivered a thousand sentences condensed in the compass of a few words; I thank thee for the advice thou hast given me, and take it most gladly. Come, my son, let us go look for some place where I may hide, while thou dost return, as thou sayest, to seek, and speak with my lady, from whose discretion and courtesy I look for favours more than miraculous."

Sancho was in a fever to get his master out of the town, lest he should discover the falsehood of the reply he had brought to him in the Sierra Morena on behalf of Dulcinea; so he hastened their departure, which they took at once, and two miles out of the village they found a forest or thicket wherein Don Quixote ensconced himself, while Sancho returned to the city to speak to Dulcinea, in which embassy things befell him which demand fresh attention and a new chapter.





## CHAPTER X.

WHEREIN IS RELATED THE CRAFTY DEVICE SANCHEO ADOPTED TO  
ENCHANT THE LADY DULCINEA, AND OTHER INCIDENTS AS  
LUDICROUS AS THEY ARE TRUE



When the author of this great history comes to relate what is set down in this chapter he says he would have preferred to pass it over in silence, fearing it would not be believed, because here Don Quixote's madness reaches the confines of the greatest that can be conceived, and even goes a couple of bowshots beyond the greatest. But after all, though still under the same fear and apprehension, he has recorded it without adding to the story or leaving out a particle of the truth, and entirely disregarding the charges of falsehood that might be brought against him; and he was right, for the truth may run fine but

will not break, and always rises above falsehood as oil above water; and so, going on with his story, he says that as soon as Don Quixote had ensconced himself in the forest, oak grove, or wood near El Toboso, he bade Sancho return to the city, and not come into his presence again without having first spoken on his behalf to his lady, and begged of her that it might be her good pleasure to permit herself to be seen by her enslaved knight, and deign to bestow her blessing upon him, so that he might thereby hope for a happy issue in all his encounters and difficult enterprises. Sancho undertook to execute the task according to the instructions, and to bring back an answer as good as the one he brought back before.

“Go, my son,” said Don Quixote, “and be not dazed when thou findest thyself exposed to the light of that sun of beauty thou art going to seek. Happy thou, above all the squires in the world! Bear in mind, and let it not escape thy memory, how she receives thee; if she changes colour while thou art giving her my message; if she is agitated and disturbed at hearing my name; if she cannot rest upon her cushion, shouldst thou haply find her seated in the sumptuous state chamber proper to her rank; and should she be standing, observe if she poises herself now on one foot, now on the other; if she repeats two or three times the reply she gives thee; if she passes from gentleness to austerity, from asperity to tenderness; if she raises her hand to smooth her hair though it be not disarranged. In short, my son, observe all her actions and motions, for if thou wilt report them to me as they were, I will gather what she hides in the recesses of her heart as regards my love; for I would have thee know, Sancho, if thou knowest it not, that with lovers the outward actions and motions they give way to when their loves are in question are the faithful messengers that carry the news of what is going on in the depths of their hearts. Go, my friend, may better fortune than mine attend thee, and bring thee a happier issue than that which I await in dread in this dreary solitude.”

“I will go and return quickly,” said Sancho; “cheer up that little heart of yours, master mine, for at the present moment you seem to have got one no bigger than a hazel nut; remember what they say, that a stout heart breaks bad luck, and that where there are no fletches there are no pegs; and moreover they say, the hare jumps up where it’s not looked for. I say this because, if we could not find my lady’s palaces or castles to-night, now that it is daylight I count upon finding them when I least expect it, and once found, leave it to me to manage her.”

“Verily, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “thou dost always bring in thy proverbs happily, whatever we deal with; may God give me better luck in what I am anxious about.”

With this, Sancho wheeled about and gave Dapple the stick, and Don Quixote

remained behind, seated on his horse, resting in his stirrups and leaning on the end of his lance, filled with sad and troubled forebodings; and there we will leave him, and accompany Sancho, who went off no less serious and troubled than he left his master; so much so, that as soon as he had got out of the thicket, and looking round saw that Don Quixote was not within sight, he dismounted from his ass, and seating himself at the foot of a tree began to commune with himself, saying, "Now, brother Sancho, let us know where your worship is going. Are you going to look for some ass that has been lost? Not at all. Then what are you going to look for? I am going to look for a princess, that's all; and in her for the sun of beauty and the whole heaven at once. And where do you expect to find all this, Sancho? Where? Why, in the great city of El Toboso. Well, and for whom are you going to look for her? For the famous knight Don Quixote of La Mancha, who rights wrongs, gives food to those who thirst and drink to the hungry. That's all very well, but do you know her house, Sancho? My master says it will be some royal palace or grand castle. And have you ever seen her by any chance? Neither I nor my master ever saw her. And does it strike you that it would be just and right if the El Toboso people, finding out that you were here with the intention of going to tamper with their princesses and trouble their ladies, were to come and cudgel your ribs, and not leave a whole bone in you? They would, indeed, have very good reason, if they did not see that I am under orders, and that 'you are a messenger, my friend, no blame belongs to you.' Don't you trust to that, Sancho, for the Manchegan folk are as hot-tempered as they are honest, and won't put up with liberties from anybody. By the Lord, if they get scent of you, it will be worse for you, I promise you. Be off, you scoundrel! Let the bolt fall. Why should I go looking for three feet on a cat, to please another man; and what is more, when looking for Dulcinea will be looking for Marica in Ravena, or the bachelor in Salamanca? The devil, the devil and nobody else, has mixed me up in this business!"

Such was the soliloquy Sancho held with himself, and all the conclusion he could come to was to say to himself again, "Well, there's remedy for everything except death, under whose yoke we have all to pass, whether we like it or not, when life's finished. I have seen by a thousand signs that this master of mine is a madman fit to be tied, and for that matter, I too, am not behind him; for I'm a greater fool than he is when I follow him and serve him, if there's any truth in the proverb that says, 'Tell me what company thou keepest, and I'll tell thee what thou art,' or in that other, 'Not with whom thou art bred, but with whom thou art fed.' Well then, if he be mad, as he is, and with a madness that mostly takes one thing for another, and white for black, and black for white, as was seen when he said the windmills were giants, and the monks' mules dromedaries,

flocks of sheep armies of enemies, and much more to the same tune, it will not be very hard to make him believe that some country girl, the first I come across here, is the lady Dulcinea; and if he does not believe it, I'll swear it; and if he should swear, I'll swear again; and if he persists I'll persist still more, so as, come what may, to have my quoit always over the peg. Maybe, by holding out in this way, I may put a stop to his sending me on messages of this kind another time; or maybe he will think, as I suspect he will, that one of those wicked enchanters, who he says have a spite against him, has changed her form for the sake of doing him an ill turn and injuring him."

With this reflection Sancho made his mind easy, counting the business as good as settled, and stayed there till the afternoon so as to make Don Quixote think he had time enough to go to El Toboso and return; and things turned out so luckily for him that as he got up to mount Dapple, he spied, coming from El Toboso towards the spot where he stood, three peasant girls on three colts, or fillies — for the author does not make the point clear, though it is more likely they were she-asses, the usual mount with village girls; but as it is of no great consequence, we need not stop to prove it.

To be brief, the instant Sancho saw the peasant girls, he returned full speed to seek his master, and found him sighing and uttering a thousand passionate lamentations. When Don Quixote saw him he exclaimed, "What news, Sancho, my friend? Am I to mark this day with a white stone or a black?"

"Your worship," replied Sancho, "had better mark it with ruddle, like the inscriptions on the walls of class rooms, that those who see it may see it plain."

"Then thou bringest good news," said Don Quixote.

"So good," replied Sancho, "that your worship has only to spur Rocinante and get out into the open field to see the lady Dulcinea del Toboso, who, with two others, damsels of hers, is coming to see your worship."

"Holy God! what art thou saying, Sancho, my friend?" exclaimed Don Quixote. "Take care thou art not deceiving me, or seeking by false joy to cheer my real sadness."

"What could I get by deceiving your worship," returned Sancho, "especially when it will so soon be shown whether I tell the truth or not? Come, senor, push on, and you will see the princess our mistress coming, robed and adorned — in fact, like what she is. Her damsels and she are all one glow of gold, all bunches of pearls, all diamonds, all rubies, all cloth of brocade of more than ten borders; with their hair loose on their shoulders like so many sunbeams playing with the wind; and moreover, they come mounted on three piebald cackneys, the finest sight ever you saw."

"Hackneys, you mean, Sancho," said Don Quixote.

“There is not much difference between cackneys and hackneys,” said Sancho; “but no matter what they come on, there they are, the finest ladies one could wish for, especially my lady the princess Dulcinea, who staggers one’s senses.”

“Let us go, Sancho, my son,” said Don Quixote, “and in guerdon of this news, as unexpected as it is good, I bestow upon thee the best spoil I shall win in the first adventure I may have; or if that does not satisfy thee, I promise thee the foals I shall have this year from my three mares that thou knowest are in foal on our village common.”

“I’ll take the foals,” said Sancho; “for it is not quite certain that the spoils of the first adventure will be good ones.”

By this time they had cleared the wood, and saw the three village lasses close at hand. Don Quixote looked all along the road to El Toboso, and as he could see nobody except the three peasant girls, he was completely puzzled, and asked Sancho if it was outside the city he had left them.

“How outside the city?” returned Sancho. “Are your worship’s eyes in the back of your head, that you can’t see that they are these who are coming here, shining like the very sun at noonday?”

“I see nothing, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “but three country girls on three jackasses.”

“Now, may God deliver me from the devil!” said Sancho, “and can it be that your worship takes three hackneys — or whatever they’re called — as white as the driven snow, for jackasses? By the Lord, I could tear my beard if that was the case!”

“Well, I can only say, Sancho, my friend,” said Don Quixote, “that it is as plain they are jackasses — or jennyasses — as that I am Don Quixote, and thou Sancho Panza: at any rate, they seem to me to be so.”

“Hush, senor,” said Sancho, “don’t talk that way, but open your eyes, and come and pay your respects to the lady of your thoughts, who is close upon us now;” and with these words he advanced to receive the three village lasses, and dismounting from Dapple, caught hold of one of the asses of the three country girls by the halter, and dropping on both knees on the ground, he said, “Queen and princess and duchess of beauty, may it please your haughtiness and greatness to receive into your favour and good-will your captive knight who stands there turned into marble stone, and quite stupefied and benumbed at finding himself in your magnificent presence. I am Sancho Panza, his squire, and he the vagabond knight Don Quixote of La Mancha, otherwise called ‘The Knight of the Rueful Countenance.’”

Don Quixote had by this time placed himself on his knees beside Sancho, and, with eyes starting out of his head and a puzzled gaze, was regarding her whom

Sancho called queen and lady; and as he could see nothing in her except a village lass, and not a very well-favoured one, for she was platter-faced and snub-nosed, he was perplexed and bewildered, and did not venture to open his lips. The country girls, at the same time, were astonished to see these two men, so different in appearance, on their knees, preventing their companion from going on. She, however, who had been stopped, breaking silence, said angrily and testily, "Get out of the way, bad luck to you, and let us pass, for we are in a hurry."



To which Sancho returned, "Oh, princess and universal lady of El Toboso, is not your magnanimous heart softened by seeing the pillar and prop of knight-errantry on his knees before your sublimated presence?"

On hearing this, one of the others exclaimed, "Woa then! why, I'm rubbing thee down, she-ass of my father-in-law! See how the lordlings come to make game of the village girls now, as if we here could not chaff as well as themselves. Go your own way, and let us go ours, and it will be better for you."

"Get up, Sancho," said Don Quixote at this; "I see that fortune, 'with evil done to me unsated still,' has taken possession of all the roads by which any comfort may reach 'this wretched soul' that I carry in my flesh. And thou, highest perfection of excellence that can be desired, utmost limit of grace in human shape, sole relief of this afflicted heart that adores thee, though the malign enchanter that persecutes me has brought clouds and cataracts on my eyes, and to them, and them only, transformed thy unparagoned beauty and changed thy features into those of a poor peasant girl, if so be he has not at the same time changed mine into those of some monster to render them loathsome in thy sight, refuse not to look upon me with tenderness and love; seeing in this submission that I make on my knees to thy transformed beauty the humility with which my soul adores thee."

"Hey-day! My grandfather!" cried the girl, "much I care for your love-making! Get out of the way and let us pass, and we'll thank you."

Sancho stood aside and let her go, very well pleased to have got so well out of the hobble he was in. The instant the village lass who had done duty for Dulcinea found herself free, prodding her "cackney" with a spike she had at the end of a stick, she set off at full speed across the field. The she-ass, however, feeling the point more acutely than usual, began cutting such capers, that it flung the lady Dulcinea to the ground; seeing which, Don Quixote ran to raise her up, and Sancho to fix and girth the pack-saddle, which also had slipped under the ass's belly. The pack-saddle being secured, as Don Quixote was about to lift up his enchanted mistress in his arms and put her upon her beast, the lady, getting up from the ground, saved him the trouble, for, going back a little, she took a short run, and putting both hands on the croup of the ass she dropped into the saddle more lightly than a falcon, and sat astride like a man, whereat Sancho said, "Rogue! but our lady is lighter than a lanner, and might teach the cleverest Cordovan or Mexican how to mount; she cleared the back of the saddle in one



jump, and without spurs she is making the hackney go like a zebra; and her damsels are no way behind her, for they all fly like the wind;" which was the truth, for as soon as they saw Dulcinea mounted, they pushed on after her, and sped away without looking back, for more than half a league.

Don Quixote followed them with his eyes, and when they were no longer in sight, he turned to Sancho and said, "How now, Sancho? thou seest how I am hated by enchanterers! And see to what a length the malice and spite they bear me go, when they seek to deprive me of the happiness it would give me to see my lady in her own proper form. The fact is I was born to be an example of misfortune, and the target and mark at which the arrows of adversity are aimed and directed. Observe too, Sancho, that these traitors were not content with changing and transforming my Dulcinea, but they transformed and changed her into a shape as mean and ill-favoured as that of the village girl yonder; and at the same time they robbed her of that which is such a peculiar property of ladies of distinction, that is to say, the sweet fragrance that comes of being always among perfumes and flowers. For I must tell thee, Sancho, that when I approached to put Dulcinea upon her hackney (as thou sayest it was, though to me it appeared a she-ass), she gave me a whiff of raw garlic that made my head reel, and poisoned my very heart."

"O scum of the earth!" cried Sancho at this, "O miserable, spiteful enchanterers! O that I could see you all strung by the gills, like sardines on a twig! Ye know a great deal, ye can do a great deal, and ye do a great deal more. It ought to have been enough for you, ye scoundrels, to have changed the pearls of my lady's eyes into oak galls, and her hair of purest gold into the bristles of a red ox's tail, and in short, all her features from fair to foul, without meddling with her smell; for by that we might somehow have found out what was hidden underneath that ugly rind; though, to tell the truth, I never perceived her ugliness, but only her beauty, which was raised to the highest pitch of perfection by a mole she had on her right lip, like a moustache, with seven or eight red hairs like threads of gold, and more than a palm long."

"From the correspondence which exists between those of the face and those of the body," said Don Quixote, "Dulcinea must have another mole resembling that on the thick of the thigh on that side on which she has the one on her ace; but hairs of the length thou hast mentioned are very long for moles."

"Well, all I can say is there they were as plain as could be," replied Sancho.

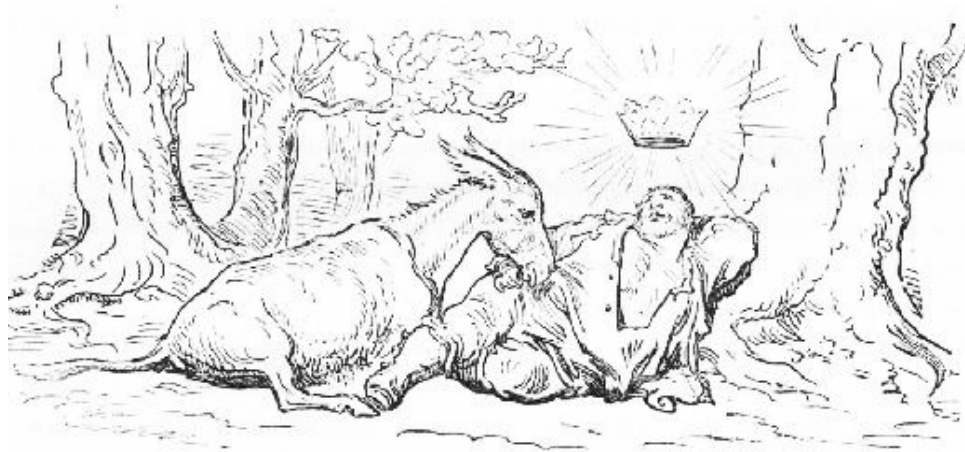
"I believe it, my friend," returned Don Quixote; "for nature bestowed nothing on Dulcinea that was not perfect and well-finished; and so, if she had a hundred moles like the one thou hast described, in her they would not be moles, but moons and shining stars. But tell me, Sancho, that which seemed to me to be a

pack-saddle as thou wert fixing it, was it a flat-saddle or a side-saddle?"

"It was neither," replied Sancho, "but a jineta saddle, with a field covering worth half a kingdom, so rich is it."

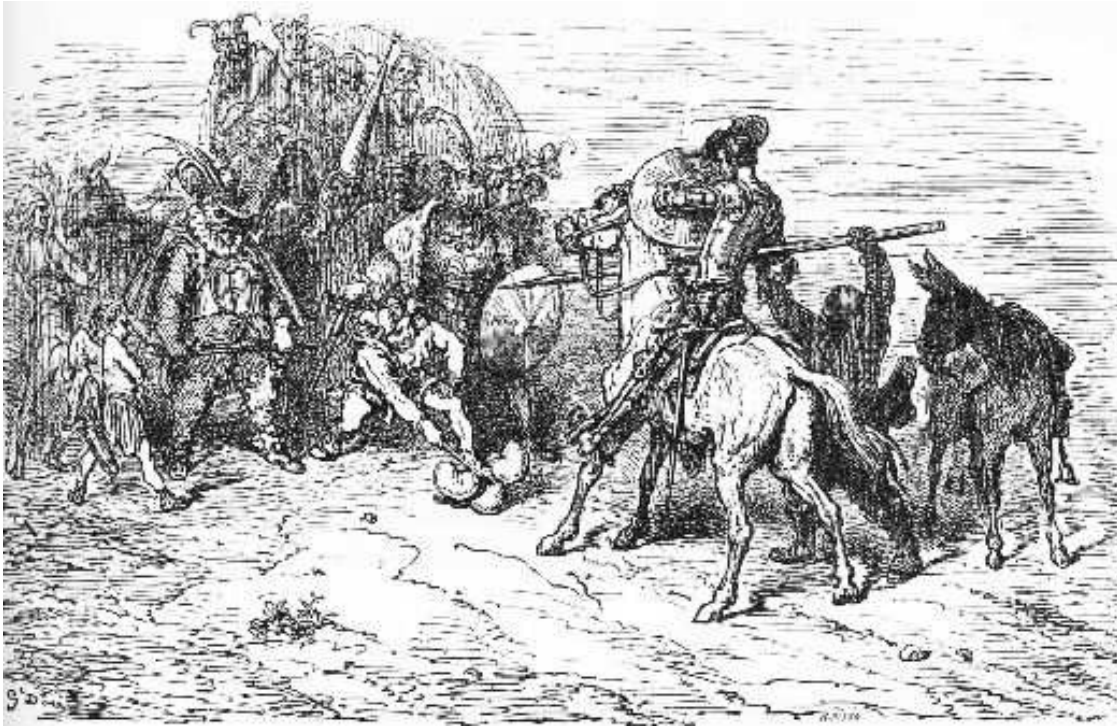
"And that I could not see all this, Sancho!" said Don Quixote; "once more I say, and will say a thousand times, I am the most unfortunate of men."

Sancho, the rogue, had enough to do to hide his laughter, at hearing the simplicity of the master he had so nicely befooled. At length, after a good deal more conversation had passed between them, they remounted their beasts, and followed the road to Saragossa, which they expected to reach in time to take part in a certain grand festival which is held every year in that illustrious city; but before they got there things happened to them, so many, so important, and so strange, that they deserve to be recorded and read, as will be seen farther on.



## CHAPTER XI.

### OF THE STRANGE ADVENTURE WHICH THE VALIANT DON QUIXOTE HAD WITH THE CAR OR CART OF “THE CORTES OF DEATH”



Dejected beyond measure did Don Quixote pursue his journey, turning over in his mind the cruel trick the enchanters had played him in changing his lady Dulcinea into the vile shape of the village lass, nor could he think of any way of restoring her to her original form; and these reflections so absorbed him, that without being aware of it he let go Rocinante's bridle, and he, perceiving the liberty that was granted him, stopped at every step to crop the fresh grass with which the plain abounded.

Sancho recalled him from his reverie. "Melancholy, senor," said he, "was made, not for beasts, but for men; but if men give way to it overmuch they turn

to beasts; control yourself, your worship; be yourself again; gather up Rocinante's reins; cheer up, rouse yourself and show that gallant spirit that knights-errant ought to have. What the devil is this? What weakness is this? Are we here or in France? The devil fly away with all the Dulcineas in the world; for the well-being of a single knight-errant is of more consequence than all the enchantments and transformations on earth."

"Hush, Sancho," said Don Quixote in a weak and faint voice, "hush and utter no blasphemies against that enchanted lady; for I alone am to blame for her misfortune and hard fate; her calamity has come of the hatred the wicked bear me."

"So say I," returned Sancho; "his heart rend in twain, I trow, who saw her once, to see her now."

"Thou mayest well say that, Sancho," replied Don Quixote, "as thou sawest her in the full perfection of her beauty; for the enchantment does not go so far as to pervert thy vision or hide her loveliness from thee; against me alone and against my eyes is the strength of its venom directed. Nevertheless, there is one thing which has occurred to me, and that is that thou didst ill describe her beauty to me, for, as well as I recollect, thou saidst that her eyes were pearls; but eyes that are like pearls are rather the eyes of a sea-bream than of a lady, and I am persuaded that Dulcinea's must be green emeralds, full and soft, with two rainbows for eyebrows; take away those pearls from her eyes and transfer them to her teeth; for beyond a doubt, Sancho, thou hast taken the one for the other, the eyes for the teeth."

"Very likely," said Sancho; "for her beauty bewildered me as much as her ugliness did your worship; but let us leave it all to God, who alone knows what is to happen in this vale of tears, in this evil world of ours, where there is hardly a thing to be found without some mixture of wickedness, roguery, and rascality. But one thing, senor, troubles me more than all the rest, and that is thinking what is to be done when your worship conquers some giant, or some other knight, and orders him to go and present himself before the beauty of the lady Dulcinea. Where is this poor giant, or this poor wretch of a vanquished knight, to find her? I think I can see them wandering all over El Toboso, looking like noddies, and asking for my lady Dulcinea; and even if they meet her in the middle of the street they won't know her any more than they would my father."

"Perhaps, Sancho," returned Don Quixote, "the enchantment does not go so far as to deprive conquered and presented giants and knights of the power of recognising Dulcinea; we will try by experiment with one or two of the first I vanquish and send to her, whether they see her or not, by commanding them to return and give me an account of what happened to them in this respect."

“I declare, I think what your worship has proposed is excellent,” said Sancho; “and that by this plan we shall find out what we want to know; and if it be that it is only from your worship she is hidden, the misfortune will be more yours than hers; but so long as the lady Dulcinea is well and happy, we on our part will make the best of it, and get on as well as we can, seeking our adventures, and leaving Time to take his own course; for he is the best physician for these and greater ailments.”

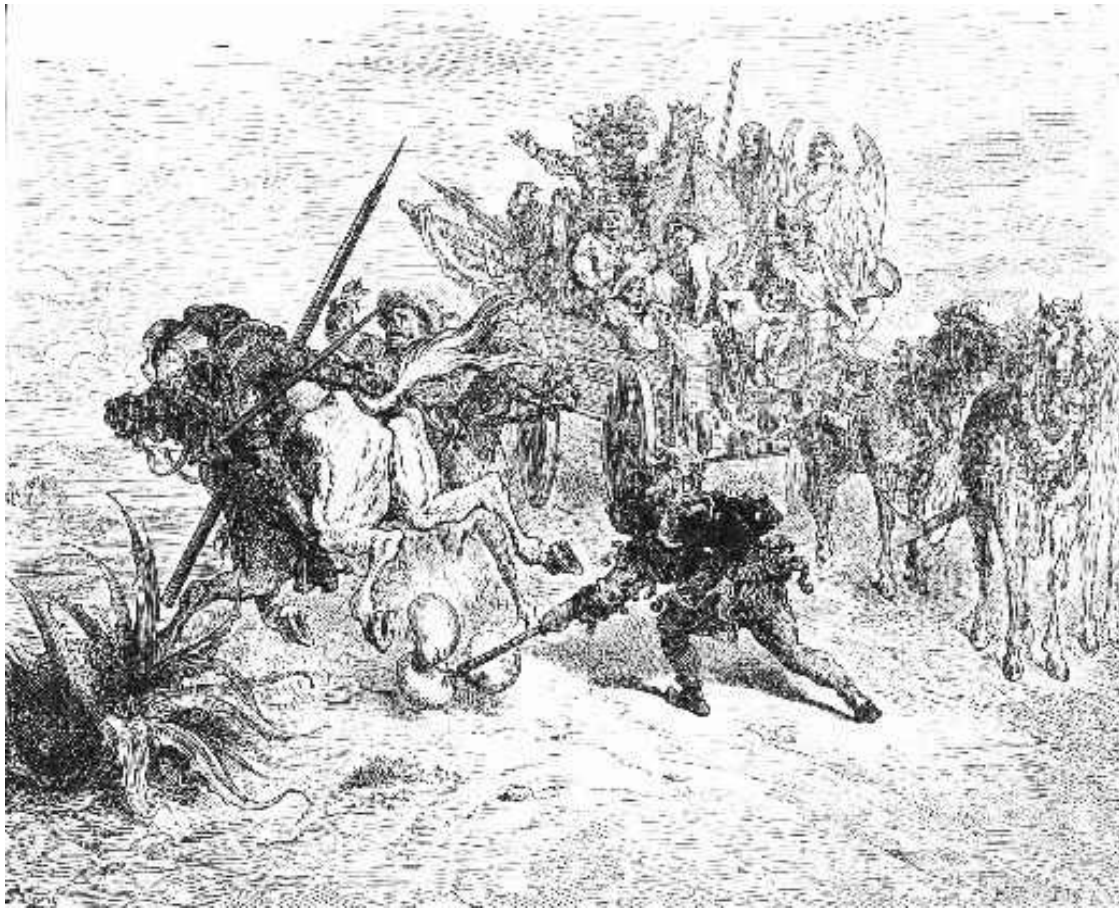
Don Quixote was about to reply to Sancho Panza, but he was prevented by a cart crossing the road full of the most diverse and strange personages and figures that could be imagined. He who led the mules and acted as carter was a hideous demon; the cart was open to the sky, without a tilt or cane roof, and the first figure that presented itself to Don Quixote’s eyes was that of Death itself with a human face; next to it was an angel with large painted wings, and at one side an emperor, with a crown, to all appearance of gold, on his head. At the feet of Death was the god called Cupid, without his bandage, but with his bow, quiver, and arrows; there was also a knight in full armour, except that he had no morion or helmet, but only a hat decked with plumes of divers colours; and along with these there were others with a variety of costumes and faces. All this, unexpectedly encountered, took Don Quixote somewhat aback, and struck terror into the heart of Sancho; but the next instant Don Quixote was glad of it, believing that some new perilous adventure was presenting itself to him, and under this impression, and with a spirit prepared to face any danger, he planted himself in front of the cart, and in a loud and menacing tone, exclaimed, “Carter, or coachman, or devil, or whatever thou art, tell me at once who thou art, whither thou art going, and who these folk are thou carriest in thy wagon, which looks more like Charon’s boat than an ordinary cart.”

To which the devil, stopping the cart, answered quietly, “Senor, we are players of Angulo el Malo’s company; we have been acting the play of ‘The Cortes of Death’ this morning, which is the octave of Corpus Christi, in a village behind that hill, and we have to act it this afternoon in that village which you can see from this; and as it is so near, and to save the trouble of undressing and dressing again, we go in the costumes in which we perform. That lad there appears as Death, that other as an angel, that woman, the manager’s wife, plays the queen, this one the soldier, that the emperor, and I the devil; and I am one of the principal characters of the play, for in this company I take the leading parts. If you want to know anything more about us, ask me and I will answer with the utmost exactitude, for as I am a devil I am up to everything.”

“By the faith of a knight-errant,” replied Don Quixote, “when I saw this cart I fancied some great adventure was presenting itself to me; but I declare one must

touch with the hand what appears to the eye, if illusions are to be avoided. God speed you, good people; keep your festival, and remember, if you demand of me ought wherein I can render you a service, I will do it gladly and willingly, for from a child I was fond of the play, and in my youth a keen lover of the actor's art."

While they were talking, fate so willed it that one of the company in a mummers' dress with a great number of bells, and armed with three blown ox-bladders at the end of a stick, joined them, and this merry-andrew approaching Don Quixote, began flourishing his stick and banging the ground with the bladders and cutting capers with great jingling of the bells, which untoward apparition so startled Rocinante that, in spite of Don Quixote's efforts to hold him in, taking the bit between his teeth he set off across the plain with greater speed than the bones of his anatomy ever gave any promise of.



Sancho, who thought his master was in danger of being thrown, jumped off Dapple, and ran in all haste to help him; but by the time he reached him he was already on the ground, and beside him was Rocinante, who had come down with his master, the usual end and upshot of Rocinante's vivacity and high spirits. But the moment Sancho quitted his beast to go and help Don Quixote, the dancing devil with the bladders jumped up on Dapple, and beating him with them, more by the fright and the noise than by the pain of the blows, made him fly across the fields towards the village where they were going to hold their festival. Sancho witnessed Dapple's career and his master's fall, and did not know which of the two cases of need he should attend to first; but in the end, like a good squire and good servant, he let his love for his master prevail over his affection for his ass; though every time he saw the bladders rise in the air and come down on the hind quarters of his Dapple he felt the pains and terrors of death, and he would have

rather had the blows fall on the apples of his own eyes than on the least hair of his ass's tail. In this trouble and perplexity he came to where Don Quixote lay in a far sorrier plight than he liked, and having helped him to mount Rocinante, he said to him, "Senor, the devil has carried off my Dapple."

"What devil?" asked Don Quixote.

"The one with the bladders," said Sancho.

"Then I will recover him," said Don Quixote, "even if he be shut up with him in the deepest and darkest dungeons of hell. Follow me, Sancho, for the cart goes slowly, and with the mules of it I will make good the loss of Dapple."

"You need not take the trouble, senor," said Sancho; "keep cool, for as I now see, the devil has let Dapple go and he is coming back to his old quarters;" and so it turned out, for, having come down with Dapple, in imitation of Don Quixote and Rocinante, the devil made off on foot to the town, and the ass came back to his master.

"For all that," said Don Quixote, "it will be well to visit the discourtesy of that devil upon some of those in the cart, even if it were the emperor himself."

"Don't think of it, your worship," returned Sancho; "take my advice and never meddle with actors, for they are a favoured class; I myself have known an actor taken up for two murders, and yet come off scot-free; remember that, as they are merry folk who give pleasure, everyone favours and protects them, and helps and makes much of them, above all when they are those of the royal companies and under patent, all or most of whom in dress and appearance look like princes."

"Still, for all that," said Don Quixote, "the player devil must not go off boasting, even if the whole human race favours him."

So saying, he made for the cart, which was now very near the town, shouting out as he went, "Stay! halt! ye merry, jovial crew! I want to teach you how to treat asses and animals that serve the squires of knights-errant for steeds."

So loud were the shouts of Don Quixote, that those in the cart heard and understood them, and, guessing by the words what the speaker's intention was, Death in an instant jumped out of the cart, and the emperor, the devil carter and the angel after him, nor did the queen or the god Cupid stay behind; and all armed themselves with stones and formed in line, prepared to receive Don Quixote on the points of their pebbles. Don Quixote, when he saw them drawn up in such a gallant array with uplifted arms ready for a mighty discharge of stones, checked Rocinante and began to consider in what way he could attack them with the least danger to himself. As he halted Sancho came up, and seeing him disposed to attack this well-ordered squadron, said to him, "It would be the height of madness to attempt such an enterprise; remember, senor, that against



sops from the brook, and plenty of them, there is no defensive armour in the world, except to stow oneself away under a brass bell; and besides, one should remember that it is rashness, and not valour, for a single man to attack an army that has Death in it, and where emperors fight in person, with angels, good and bad, to help them; and if this reflection will not make you keep quiet, perhaps it will to know for certain that among all these, though they look like kings, princes, and emperors, there is not a single knight-errant.”

“Now indeed thou hast hit the point, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “which may and should turn me from the resolution I had already formed. I cannot and must not draw sword, as I have many a time before told thee, against anyone who is not a dubbed knight; it is for thee, Sancho, if thou wilt, to take vengeance for the wrong done to thy Dapple; and I will help thee from here by shouts and salutary counsels.”

“There is no occasion to take vengeance on anyone, senor,” replied Sancho; “for it is not the part of good Christians to revenge wrongs; and besides, I will arrange it with my ass to leave his grievance to my good-will and pleasure, and that is to live in peace as long as heaven grants me life.”

“Well,” said Don Quixote, “if that be thy determination, good Sancho, sensible Sancho, Christian Sancho, honest Sancho, let us leave these phantoms alone and turn to the pursuit of better and worthier adventures; for, from what I see of this country, we cannot fail to find plenty of marvellous ones in it.”

He at once wheeled about, Sancho ran to take possession of his Dapple, Death and his flying squadron returned to their cart and pursued their journey, and thus the dread adventure of the cart of Death ended happily, thanks to the advice Sancho gave his master; who had, the following day, a fresh adventure, of no less thrilling interest than the last, with an enamoured knight-errant.



## CHAPTER XII.

### OF THE STRANGE ADVENTURE WHICH BEFELL THE VALIANT DON QUIXOTE WITH THE BOLD KNIGHT OF THE MIRRORS



The night succeeding the day of the encounter with Death, Don Quixote and his squire passed under some tall shady trees, and Don Quixote at Sancho's persuasion ate a little from the store carried by Dapple, and over their supper Sancho said to his master, "Senor, what a fool I should have looked if I had chosen for my reward the spoils of the first adventure your worship achieved, instead of the foals of the three mares. After all, 'a sparrow in the hand is better than a vulture on the wing.'"

"At the same time, Sancho," replied Don Quixote, "if thou hadst let me attack them as I wanted, at the very least the emperor's gold crown and Cupid's painted wings would have fallen to thee as spoils, for I should have taken them by force and given them into thy hands."

"The sceptres and crowns of those play-actor emperors," said Sancho, "were never yet pure gold, but only brass foil or tin."

"That is true," said Don Quixote, "for it would not be right that the accessories of the drama should be real, instead of being mere fictions and semblances, like

the drama itself; towards which, Sancho — and, as a necessary consequence, towards those who represent and produce it — I would that thou wert favourably disposed, for they are all instruments of great good to the State, placing before us at every step a mirror in which we may see vividly displayed what goes on in human life; nor is there any similitude that shows us more faithfully what we are and ought to be than the play and the players. Come, tell me, hast thou not seen a play acted in which kings, emperors, pontiffs, knights, ladies, and divers other personages were introduced? One plays the villain, another the knave, this one the merchant, that the soldier, one the sharp-witted fool, another the foolish lover; and when the play is over, and they have put off the dresses they wore in it, all the actors become equal.”

“Yes, I have seen that,” said Sancho.

“Well then,” said Don Quixote, “the same thing happens in the comedy and life of this world, where some play emperors, others popes, and, in short, all the characters that can be brought into a play; but when it is over, that is to say when life ends, death strips them all of the garments that distinguish one from the other, and all are equal in the grave.”

“A fine comparison!” said Sancho; “though not so new but that I have heard it many and many a time, as well as that other one of the game of chess; how, so long as the game lasts, each piece has its own particular office, and when the game is finished they are all mixed, jumbled up and shaken together, and stowed away in the bag, which is much like ending life in the grave.”

“Thou art growing less doltish and more shrewd every day, Sancho,” said Don Quixote.

“Ay,” said Sancho; “it must be that some of your worship’s shrewdness sticks to me; land that, of itself, is barren and dry, will come to yield good fruit if you dung it and till it; what I mean is that your worship’s conversation has been the dung that has fallen on the barren soil of my dry wit, and the time I have been in your service and society has been the tillage; and with the help of this I hope to yield fruit in abundance that will not fall away or slide from those paths of good breeding that your worship has made in my parched understanding.”

Don Quixote laughed at Sancho’s affected phraseology, and perceived that what he said about his improvement was true, for now and then he spoke in a way that surprised him; though always, or mostly, when Sancho tried to talk fine and attempted polite language, he wound up by toppling over from the summit of his simplicity into the abyss of his ignorance; and where he showed his culture and his memory to the greatest advantage was in dragging in proverbs, no matter whether they had any bearing or not upon the subject in hand, as may have been seen already and will be noticed in the course of this history.



In conversation of this kind they passed a good part of the night, but Sancho felt a desire to let down the curtains of his eyes, as he used to say when he wanted to go to sleep; and stripping Dapple he left him at liberty to graze his fill.

He did not remove Rocinante's saddle, as his master's express orders were, that so long as they were in the field or not sleeping under a roof Rocinante was not to be stripped — the ancient usage established and observed by knights-errant being to take off the bridle and hang it on the saddle-bow, but to remove the saddle from the horse — never! Sancho acted accordingly, and gave him the same liberty he had given Dapple, between whom and Rocinante there was a friendship so unequalled and so strong, that it is handed down by tradition from father to son, that the author of this veracious history devoted some special chapters to it, which, in order to preserve the propriety and decorum due to a history so heroic, he did not insert therein; although at times he forgets this resolution of his and describes how eagerly the two beasts would scratch one another when they were together and how, when they were tired or full, Rocinante would lay his neck across Dapple's, stretching half a yard or more on the other side, and the pair would stand thus, gazing thoughtfully on the ground, for three days, or at least so long as they were left alone, or hunger did not drive them to go and look for food. I may add that they say the author left it on record that he likened their friendship to that of Nisus and Euryalus, and Pylades and Orestes; and if that be so, it may be perceived, to the admiration of mankind, how firm the friendship must have been between these two peaceful animals, shaming men, who preserve friendships with one another so badly. This was why it was said—

For friend no longer is there friend; The reeds turn lances now.

And some one else has sung —

Friend to friend the bug, *etc.*

And let no one fancy that the author was at all astray when he compared the friendship of these animals to that of men; for men have received many lessons from beasts, and learned many important things, as, for example, the clyster from the stork, vomit and gratitude from the dog, watchfulness from the crane, foresight from the ant, modesty from the elephant, and loyalty from the horse.

Sancho at last fell asleep at the foot of a cork tree, while Don Quixote dozed at that of a sturdy oak; but a short time only had elapsed when a noise he heard behind him awoke him, and rising up startled, he listened and looked in the direction the noise came from, and perceived two men on horseback, one of whom, letting himself drop from the saddle, said to the other, "Dismount, my friend, and take the bridles off the horses, for, so far as I can see, this place will furnish grass for them, and the solitude and silence my love-sick thoughts need of." As he said this he stretched himself upon the ground, and as he flung himself down, the armour in which he was clad rattled, whereby Don Quixote perceived that he must be a knight-errant; and going over to Sancho, who was

asleep, he shook him by the arm and with no small difficulty brought him back to his senses, and said in a low voice to him, "Brother Sancho, we have got an adventure."

"God send us a good one," said Sancho; "and where may her ladyship the adventure be?"

"Where, Sancho?" replied Don Quixote; "turn thine eyes and look, and thou wilt see stretched there a knight-errant, who, it strikes me, is not over and above happy, for I saw him fling himself off his horse and throw himself on the ground with a certain air of dejection, and his armour rattled as he fell."

"Well," said Sancho, "how does your worship make out that to be an adventure?"

"I do not mean to say," returned Don Quixote, "that it is a complete adventure, but that it is the beginning of one, for it is in this way adventures begin. But listen, for it seems he is tuning a lute or guitar, and from the way he is spitting and clearing his chest he must be getting ready to sing something."

"Faith, you are right," said Sancho, "and no doubt he is some enamoured knight."

"There is no knight-errant that is not," said Don Quixote; "but let us listen to him, for, if he sings, by that thread we shall extract the ball of his thoughts; because out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

Sancho was about to reply to his master, but the Knight of the Grove's voice, which was neither very bad nor very good, stopped him, and listening attentively the pair heard him sing this

#### SONNET

Your pleasure, prithee, lady mine, unfold;  
Declare the terms that I am to obey;  
My will to yours submissively I mould,  
And from your law my feet shall never stray.  
Would you I die, to silent grief a prey?  
Then count me even now as dead and cold;  
Would you I tell my woes in some new way?  
Then shall my tale by Love itself be told.  
The unison of opposites to prove,  
Of the soft wax and diamond hard am I;  
But still, obedient to the laws of love,  
Here, hard or soft, I offer you my breast,  
Whate'er you grave or stamp thereon shall rest  
Indelible for all eternity.

With an “Ah me!” that seemed to be drawn from the inmost recesses of his heart, the Knight of the Grove brought his lay to an end, and shortly afterwards exclaimed in a melancholy and piteous voice, “O fairest and most ungrateful woman on earth! What! can it be, most serene Casildea de Vandalia, that thou wilt suffer this thy captive knight to waste away and perish in ceaseless wanderings and rude and arduous toils? It is not enough that I have compelled all the knights of Navarre, all the Leonese, all the Tartesians, all the Castilians, and finally all the knights of La Mancha, to confess thee the most beautiful in the world?”

“Not so,” said Don Quixote at this, “for I am of La Mancha, and I have never confessed anything of the sort, nor could I nor should I confess a thing so much to the prejudice of my lady’s beauty; thou seest how this knight is raving, Sancho. But let us listen, perhaps he will tell us more about himself.”

“That he will,” returned Sancho, “for he seems in a mood to bewail himself for a month at a stretch.”

But this was not the case, for the Knight of the Grove, hearing voices near him, instead of continuing his lamentation, stood up and exclaimed in a distinct but courteous tone, “Who goes there? What are you? Do you belong to the number of the happy or of the miserable?”

“Of the miserable,” answered Don Quixote.

“Then come to me,” said he of the Grove, “and rest assured that it is to woe itself and affliction itself you come.”

Don Quixote, finding himself answered in such a soft and courteous manner, went over to him, and so did Sancho.

The doleful knight took Don Quixote by the arm, saying, “Sit down here, sir knight; for, that you are one, and of those that profess knight-errantry, it is to me a sufficient proof to have found you in this place, where solitude and night, the natural couch and proper retreat of knights-errant, keep you company.” To which Don made answer, “A knight I am of the profession you mention, and though sorrows, misfortunes, and calamities have made my heart their abode, the compassion I feel for the misfortunes of others has not been thereby banished from it. From what you have just now sung I gather that yours spring from love, I mean from the love you bear that fair ingrate you named in your lament.”

In the meantime, they had seated themselves together on the hard ground peaceably and sociably, just as if, as soon as day broke, they were not going to break one another’s heads.

“Are you, sir knight, in love perchance?” asked he of the Grove of Don Quixote.



“By mischance I am,” replied Don Quixote; “though the ills arising from well-bestowed affections should be esteemed favours rather than misfortunes.”

“That is true,” returned he of the Grove, “if scorn did not unsettle our reason and understanding, for if it be excessive it looks like revenge.”

“I was never scorned by my lady,” said Don Quixote.

“Certainly not,” said Sancho, who stood close by, “for my lady is as a lamb, and softer than a roll of butter.”

“Is this your squire?” asked he of the Grove.

“He is,” said Don Quixote.

“I never yet saw a squire,” said he of the Grove, “who ventured to speak when his master was speaking; at least, there is mine, who is as big as his father, and it cannot be proved that he has ever opened his lips when I am speaking.”

“By my faith then,” said Sancho, “I have spoken, and am fit to speak, in the presence of one as much, or even — but never mind — it only makes it worse to stir it.”

The squire of the Grove took Sancho by the arm, saying to him, “Let us two go where we can talk in squire style as much as we please, and leave these gentlemen our masters to fight it out over the story of their loves; and, depend upon it, daybreak will find them at it without having made an end of it.”

“So be it by all means,” said Sancho; “and I will tell your worship who I am, that you may see whether I am to be reckoned among the number of the most talkative squires.”

With this the two squires withdrew to one side, and between them there passed a conversation as droll as that which passed between their masters was serious.



## CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHICH IS CONTINUED THE ADVENTURE OF THE KNIGHT OF THE GROVE, TOGETHER WITH THE SENSIBLE, ORIGINAL, AND TRANQUIL COLLOQUY THAT PASSED BETWEEN THE TWO SQUIRES



The knights and the squires made two parties, these telling the story of their lives, the others the story of their loves; but the history relates first of all the conversation of the servants, and afterwards takes up that of the masters; and it says that, withdrawing a little from the others, he of the Grove said to Sancho, “A hard life it is we lead and live, senor, we that are squires to knights-errant; verily, we eat our bread in the sweat of our faces, which is one of the curses God laid on our first parents.”

“It may be said, too,” added Sancho, “that we eat it in the chill of our bodies; for who gets more heat and cold than the miserable squires of knight-errantry?

Even so it would not be so bad if we had something to eat, for woes are lighter if there's bread; but sometimes we go a day or two without breaking our fast, except with the wind that blows."

"All that," said he of the Grove, "may be endured and put up with when we have hopes of reward; for, unless the knight-errant he serves is excessively unlucky, after a few turns the squire will at least find himself rewarded with a fine government of some island or some fair county."

"I," said Sancho, "have already told my master that I shall be content with the government of some island, and he is so noble and generous that he has promised it to me ever so many times."

"I," said he of the Grove, "shall be satisfied with a canonry for my services, and my master has already assigned me one."

"Your master," said Sancho, "no doubt is a knight in the Church line, and can bestow rewards of that sort on his good squire; but mine is only a layman; though I remember some clever, but, to my mind, designing people, strove to persuade him to try and become an archbishop. He, however, would not be anything but an emperor; but I was trembling all the time lest he should take a fancy to go into the Church, not finding myself fit to hold office in it; for I may tell you, though I seem a man, I am no better than a beast for the Church."

"Well, then, you are wrong there," said he of the Grove; "for those island governments are not all satisfactory; some are awkward, some are poor, some are dull, and, in short, the highest and choicest brings with it a heavy burden of cares and troubles which the unhappy wight to whose lot it has fallen bears upon his shoulders. Far better would it be for us who have adopted this accursed service to go back to our own houses, and there employ ourselves in pleasanter occupations — in hunting or fishing, for instance; for what squire in the world is there so poor as not to have a hack and a couple of greyhounds and a fishingrod to amuse himself with in his own village?"

"I am not in want of any of those things," said Sancho; "to be sure I have no hack, but I have an ass that is worth my master's horse twice over; God send me a bad Easter, and that the next one I am to see, if I would swap, even if I got four bushels of barley to boot. You will laugh at the value I put on my Dapple — for dapple is the colour of my beast. As to greyhounds, I can't want for them, for there are enough and to spare in my town; and, moreover, there is more pleasure in sport when it is at other people's expense."

"In truth and earnest, sir squire," said he of the Grove, "I have made up my mind and determined to have done with these drunken vagaries of these knights, and go back to my village, and bring up my children; for I have three, like three Oriental pearls."

“I have two,” said Sancho, “that might be presented before the Pope himself, especially a girl whom I am breeding up for a countess, please God, though in spite of her mother.”

“And how old is this lady that is being bred up for a countess?” asked he of the Grove.

“Fifteen, a couple of years more or less,” answered Sancho; “but she is as tall as a lance, and as fresh as an April morning, and as strong as a porter.”

“Those are gifts to fit her to be not only a countess but a nymph of the greenwood,” said he of the Grove; “whoreson strumpet! what pith the rogue must have!”

To which Sancho made answer, somewhat sulkily, “She’s no strumpet, nor was her mother, nor will either of them be, please God, while I live; speak more civilly; for one bred up among knights-errant, who are courtesy itself, your words don’t seem to me to be very becoming.”

“O how little you know about compliments, sir squire,” returned he of the Grove. “What! don’t you know that when a horseman delivers a good lance thrust at the bull in the plaza, or when anyone does anything very well, the people are wont to say, ‘Ha, whoreson rip! how well he has done it!’ and that what seems to be abuse in the expression is high praise? Disown sons and daughters, senor, who don’t do what deserves that compliments of this sort should be paid to their parents.”

“I do disown them,” replied Sancho, “and in this way, and by the same reasoning, you might call me and my children and my wife all the strumpets in the world, for all they do and say is of a kind that in the highest degree deserves the same praise; and to see them again I pray God to deliver me from mortal sin, or, what comes to the same thing, to deliver me from this perilous calling of squire into which I have fallen a second time, decayed and beguiled by a purse with a hundred ducats that I found one day in the heart of the Sierra Morena; and the devil is always putting a bag full of doubloons before my eyes, here, there, everywhere, until I fancy at every stop I am putting my hand on it, and hugging it, and carrying it home with me, and making investments, and getting interest, and living like a prince; and so long as I think of this I make light of all the hardships I endure with this simpleton of a master of mine, who, I well know, is more of a madman than a knight.”

“There’s why they say that ‘covetousness bursts the bag,’” said he of the Grove; “but if you come to talk of that sort, there is not a greater one in the world than my master, for he is one of those of whom they say, ‘the cares of others kill the ass;’ for, in order that another knight may recover the senses he has lost, he makes a madman of himself and goes looking for what, when found,

may, for all I know, fly in his own face.” “And is he in love perchance?” asked Sancho.

“He is,” said of the Grove, “with one Casildea de Vandalia, the rawest and best roasted lady the whole world could produce; but that rawness is not the only foot he limps on, for he has greater schemes rumbling in his bowels, as will be seen before many hours are over.”

“There’s no road so smooth but it has some hole or hindrance in it,” said Sancho; “in other houses they cook beans, but in mine it’s by the potful; madness will have more followers and hangers-on than sound sense; but if there be any truth in the common saying, that to have companions in trouble gives some relief, I may take consolation from you, inasmuch as you serve a master as crazy as my own.”

“Crazy but valiant,” replied he of the Grove, “and more roguish than crazy or valiant.”

“Mine is not that,” said Sancho; “I mean he has nothing of the rogue in him; on the contrary, he has the soul of a pitcher; he has no thought of doing harm to anyone, only good to all, nor has he any malice whatever in him; a child might persuade him that it is night at noonday; and for this simplicity I love him as the core of my heart, and I can’t bring myself to leave him, let him do ever such foolish things.”

“For all that, brother and senor,” said he of the Grove, “if the blind lead the blind, both are in danger of falling into the pit. It is better for us to beat a quiet retreat and get back to our own quarters; for those who seek adventures don’t always find good ones.”

Sancho kept spitting from time to time, and his spittle seemed somewhat ropy and dry, observing which the compassionate squire of the Grove said, “It seems to me that with all this talk of ours our tongues are sticking to the roofs of our mouths; but I have a pretty good loosener hanging from the saddle-bow of my horse,” and getting up he came back the next minute with a large bota of wine and a pasty half a yard across; and this is no exaggeration, for it was made of a house rabbit so big that Sancho, as he handled it, took it to be made of a goat, not to say a kid, and looking at it he said, “And do you carry this with you, senor?”

“Why, what are you thinking about?” said the other; “do you take me for some paltry squire? I carry a better larder on my horse’s croup than a general takes with him when he goes on a march.”

Sancho ate without requiring to be pressed, and in the dark bolted mouthfuls like the knots on a tether, and said he, “You are a proper trusty squire, one of the right sort, sumptuous and grand, as this banquet shows, which, if it has not come

here by magic art, at any rate has the look of it; not like me, unlucky beggar, that have nothing more in my alforjas than a scrap of cheese, so hard that one might brain a giant with it, and, to keep it company, a few dozen carobs and as many more filberts and walnuts; thanks to the austerity of my master, and the idea he has and the rule he follows, that knights-errant must not live or sustain themselves on anything except dried fruits and the herbs of the field."

"By my faith, brother," said he of the Grove, "my stomach is not made for thistles, or wild pears, or roots of the woods; let our masters do as they like, with their chivalry notions and laws, and eat what those enjoin; I carry my prog-basket and this bota hanging to the saddle-bow, whatever they may say; and it is such an object of worship with me, and I love it so, that there is hardly a moment but I am kissing and embracing it over and over again;" and so saying he thrust it into Sancho's hands, who raising it aloft pointed to his mouth, gazed at the stars for a quarter of an hour; and when he had done drinking let his head fall on one side, and giving a deep sigh, exclaimed, "Ah, whoreson rogue, how catholic it is!"

"There, you see," said he of the Grove, hearing Sancho's exclamation, "how you have called this wine whoreson by way of praise."

"Well," said Sancho, "I own it, and I grant it is no dishonour to call anyone whoreson when it is to be understood as praise. But tell me, senor, by what you love best, is this Ciudad Real wine?"

"O rare wine-taster!" said he of the Grove; "nowhere else indeed does it come from, and it has some years' age too."

"Leave me alone for that," said Sancho; "never fear but I'll hit upon the place it came from somehow. What would you say, sir squire, to my having such a great natural instinct in judging wines that you have only to let me smell one and I can tell positively its country, its kind, its flavour and soundness, the changes it will undergo, and everything that appertains to a wine? But it is no wonder, for I have had in my family, on my father's side, the two best wine-tasters that have been known in La Mancha for many a long year, and to prove it I'll tell you now a thing that happened them. They gave the two of them some wine out of a cask, to try, asking their opinion as to the condition, quality, goodness or badness of the wine. One of them tried it with the tip of his tongue, the other did no more than bring it to his nose. The first said the wine had a flavour of iron, the second said it had a stronger flavour of cordovan. The owner said the cask was clean, and that nothing had been added to the wine from which it could have got a flavour of either iron or leather. Nevertheless, these two great wine-tasters held to what they had said. Time went by, the wine was sold, and when they came to clean out the cask, they found in it a small key hanging to a thong of cordovan;

see now if one who comes of the same stock has not a right to give his opinion in such like cases.”

“Therefore, I say,” said he of the Grove, “let us give up going in quest of adventures, and as we have loaves let us not go looking for cakes, but return to our cribs, for God will find us there if it be his will.”

“Until my master reaches Saragossa,” said Sancho, “I’ll remain in his service; after that we’ll see.”

The end of it was that the two squires talked so much and drank so much that sleep had to tie their tongues and moderate their thirst, for to quench it was impossible; and so the pair of them fell asleep clinging to the now nearly empty bota and with half-chewed morsels in their mouths; and there we will leave them for the present, to relate what passed between the Knight of the Grove and him of the Rueful Countenance.







## CHAPTER XIV.

### WHEREIN IS CONTINUED THE ADVENTURE OF THE KNIGHT OF THE GROVE



Among the things that passed between Don Quixote and the Knight of the Wood, the history tells us he of the Grove said to Don Quixote, “In fine, sir knight, I would have you know that my destiny, or, more properly speaking, my choice led me to fall in love with the peerless Casildea de Vandalia. I call her peerless because she has no peer, whether it be in bodily stature or in the supremacy of rank and beauty. This same Casildea, then, that I speak of, requited my honourable passion and gentle aspirations by compelling me, as his stepmother did Hercules, to engage in many perils of various sorts, at the end of each promising me that, with the end of the next, the object of my hopes should be attained; but my labours have gone on increasing link by link until they are

past counting, nor do I know what will be the last one that is to be the beginning of the accomplishment of my chaste desires. On one occasion she bade me go and challenge the famous giantess of Seville, La Giralda by name, who is as mighty and strong as if made of brass, and though never stirring from one spot, is the most restless and changeable woman in the world. I came, I saw, I conquered, and I made her stay quiet and behave herself, for nothing but north winds blew for more than a week. Another time I was ordered to lift those ancient stones, the mighty bulls of Guisando, an enterprise that might more fitly be entrusted to porters than to knights. Again, she bade me fling myself into the cavern of Cabra — an unparalleled and awful peril — and bring her a minute account of all that is concealed in those gloomy depths. I stopped the motion of the Giralda, I lifted the bulls of Guisando, I flung myself into the cavern and brought to light the secrets of its abyss; and my hopes are as dead as dead can be, and her scorn and her commands as lively as ever. To be brief, last of all she has commanded me to go through all the provinces of Spain and compel all the knights-errant wandering therein to confess that she surpasses all women alive to-day in beauty, and that I am the most valiant and the most deeply enamoured knight on earth; in support of which claim I have already travelled over the greater part of Spain, and have there vanquished several knights who have dared to contradict me; but what I most plume and pride myself upon is having vanquished in single combat that so famous knight Don Quixote of La Mancha, and made him confess that my Casildea is more beautiful than his Dulcinea; and in this one victory I hold myself to have conquered all the knights in the world; for this Don Quixote that I speak of has vanquished them all, and I having vanquished him, his glory, his fame, and his honour have passed and are transferred to my person; for

The more the vanquished hath of fair renown,

The greater glory gilds the victor's crown.

Thus the innumerable achievements of the said Don Quixote are now set down to my account and have become mine."

Don Quixote was amazed when he heard the Knight of the Grove, and was a thousand times on the point of telling him he lied, and had the lie direct already on the tip of his tongue; but he restrained himself as well as he could, in order to force him to confess the lie with his own lips; so he said to him quietly, "As to what you say, sir knight, about having vanquished most of the knights of Spain, or even of the whole world, I say nothing; but that you have vanquished Don Quixote of La Mancha I consider doubtful; it may have been some other that resembled him, although there are few like him."

"How! not vanquished?" said he of the Grove; "by the heaven that is above us

I fought Don Quixote and overcame him and made him yield; and he is a man of tall stature, gaunt features, long, lank limbs, with hair turning grey, an aquiline nose rather hooked, and large black drooping moustaches; he does battle under the name of 'The Countenance,' and he has for squire a peasant called Sancho Panza; he presses the loins and rules the reins of a famous steed called Rocinante; and lastly, he has for the mistress of his will a certain Dulcinea del Toboso, once upon a time called Aldonza Lorenzo, just as I call mine Casildea de Vandalia because her name is Casilda and she is of Andalusia. If all these tokens are not enough to vindicate the truth of what I say, here is my sword, that will compel incredulity itself to give credence to it."

"Calm yourself, sir knight," said Don Quixote, "and give ear to what I am about to say to you. I would have you know that this Don Quixote you speak of is the greatest friend I have in the world; so much so that I may say I regard him in the same light as my own person; and from the precise and clear indications you have given I cannot but think that he must be the very one you have vanquished. On the other hand, I see with my eyes and feel with my hands that it is impossible it can have been the same; unless indeed it be that, as he has many enemies who are enchanters, and one in particular who is always persecuting him, some one of these may have taken his shape in order to allow himself to be vanquished, so as to defraud him of the fame that his exalted achievements as a knight have earned and acquired for him throughout the known world. And in confirmation of this, I must tell you, too, that it is but ten hours since these said enchanters his enemies transformed the shape and person of the fair Dulcinea del Toboso into a foul and mean village lass, and in the same way they must have transformed Don Quixote; and if all this does not suffice to convince you of the truth of what I say, here is Don Quixote himself, who will maintain it by arms, on foot or on horseback or in any way you please."

And so saying he stood up and laid his hand on his sword, waiting to see what the Knight of the Grove would do, who in an equally calm voice said in reply, "Pledges don't distress a good payer; he who has succeeded in vanquishing you once when transformed, Sir Don Quixote, may fairly hope to subdue you in your own proper shape; but as it is not becoming for knights to perform their feats of arms in the dark, like highwaymen and bullies, let us wait till daylight, that the sun may behold our deeds; and the conditions of our combat shall be that the vanquished shall be at the victor's disposal, to do all that he may enjoin, provided the injunction be such as shall be becoming a knight."

"I am more than satisfied with these conditions and terms," replied Don Quixote; and so saying, they betook themselves to where their squires lay, and found them snoring, and in the same posture they were in when sleep fell upon

them. They roused them up, and bade them get the horses ready, as at sunrise they were to engage in a bloody and arduous single combat; at which intelligence Sancho was aghast and thunderstruck, trembling for the safety of his master because of the mighty deeds he had heard the squire of the Grove ascribe to his; but without a word the two squires went in quest of their cattle; for by this time the three horses and the ass had smelt one another out, and were all together.

On the way, he of the Grove said to Sancho, "You must know, brother, that it is the custom with the fighting men of Andalusia, when they are godfathers in any quarrel, not to stand idle with folded arms while their godsons fight; I say so to remind you that while our masters are fighting, we, too, have to fight, and knock one another to shivers."

"That custom, sir squire," replied Sancho, "may hold good among those bullies and fighting men you talk of, but certainly not among the squires of knights-errant; at least, I have never heard my master speak of any custom of the sort, and he knows all the laws of knight-errantry by heart; but granting it true that there is an express law that squires are to fight while their masters are fighting, I don't mean to obey it, but to pay the penalty that may be laid on peacefully minded squires like myself; for I am sure it cannot be more than two pounds of wax, and I would rather pay that, for I know it will cost me less than the lint I shall be at the expense of to mend my head, which I look upon as broken and split already; there's another thing that makes it impossible for me to fight, that I have no sword, for I never carried one in my life."

"I know a good remedy for that," said he of the Grove; "I have here two linen bags of the same size; you shall take one, and I the other, and we will fight at bag blows with equal arms."

"If that's the way, so be it with all my heart," said Sancho, "for that sort of battle will serve to knock the dust out of us instead of hurting us."

"That will not do," said the other, "for we must put into the bags, to keep the wind from blowing them away, half a dozen nice smooth pebbles, all of the same weight; and in this way we shall be able to baste one another without doing ourselves any harm or mischief."

"Body of my father!" said Sancho, "see what marten and sable, and pads of carded cotton he is putting into the bags, that our heads may not be broken and our bones beaten to jelly! But even if they are filled with toss silk, I can tell you, senior, I am not going to fight; let our masters fight, that's their lookout, and let us drink and live; for time will take care to ease us of our lives, without our going to look for fillips so that they may be finished off before their proper time comes and they drop from ripeness."

“Still,” returned he of the Grove, “we must fight, if it be only for half an hour.”

“By no means,” said Sancho; “I am not going to be so discourteous or so ungrateful as to have any quarrel, be it ever so small, with one I have eaten and drunk with; besides, who the devil could bring himself to fight in cold blood, without anger or provocation?”

“I can remedy that entirely,” said he of the Grove, “and in this way: before we begin the battle, I will come up to your worship fair and softly, and give you three or four buffets, with which I shall stretch you at my feet and rouse your anger, though it were sleeping sounder than a dormouse.”

“To match that plan,” said Sancho, “I have another that is not a whit behind it; I will take a cudgel, and before your worship comes near enough to waken my anger I will send yours so sound to sleep with whacks, that it won’t waken unless it be in the other world, where it is known that I am not a man to let my face be handled by anyone; let each look out for the arrow — though the surer way would be to let everyone’s anger sleep, for nobody knows the heart of anyone, and a man may come for wool and go back shorn; God gave his blessing to peace and his curse to quarrels; if a hunted cat, surrounded and hard pressed, turns into a lion, God knows what I, who am a man, may turn into; and so from this time forth I warn you, sir squire, that all the harm and mischief that may come of our quarrel will be put down to your account.”

“Very good,” said he of the Grove; “God will send the dawn and we shall be all right.”

And now gay-plumaged birds of all sorts began to warble in the trees, and with their varied and gladsome notes seemed to welcome and salute the fresh morn that was beginning to show the beauty of her countenance at the gates and balconies of the east, shaking from her locks a profusion of liquid pearls; in which dulcet moisture bathed, the plants, too, seemed to shed and shower down a pearly spray, the willows distilled sweet manna, the fountains laughed, the brooks babbled, the woods rejoiced, and the meadows arrayed themselves in all their glory at her coming. But hardly had the light of day made it possible to see and distinguish things, when the first object that presented itself to the eyes of Sancho Panza was the squire of the Grove’s nose, which was so big that it almost overshadowed his whole body. It is, in fact, stated, that it was of enormous size, hooked in the middle, covered with warts, and of a mulberry colour like an egg-plant; it hung down two fingers’ length below his mouth, and the size, the colour, the warts, and the bend of it, made his face so hideous, that Sancho, as he looked at him, began to tremble hand and foot like a child in convulsions, and he vowed in his heart to let himself be given two hundred

buffets, sooner than be provoked to fight that monster. Don Quixote examined his adversary, and found that he already had his helmet on and visor lowered, so that he could not see his face; he observed, however, that he was a sturdily built man, but not very tall in stature. Over his armour he wore a surcoat or cassock of what seemed to be the finest cloth of gold, all bespangled with glittering mirrors like little moons, which gave him an extremely gallant and splendid appearance; above his helmet fluttered a great quantity of plumes, green, yellow, and white, and his lance, which was leaning against a tree, was very long and stout, and had a steel point more than a palm in length.

Don Quixote observed all, and took note of all, and from what he saw and observed he concluded that the said knight must be a man of great strength, but he did not for all that give way to fear, like Sancho Panza; on the contrary, with a composed and dauntless air, he said to the Knight of the Mirrors, "If, sir knight, your great eagerness to fight has not banished your courtesy, by it I would entreat you to raise your visor a little, in order that I may see if the comeliness of your countenance corresponds with that of your equipment."

"Whether you come victorious or vanquished out of this emprise, sir knight," replied he of the Mirrors, "you will have more than enough time and leisure to see me; and if now I do not comply with your request, it is because it seems to me I should do a serious wrong to the fair Casildea de Vandalia in wasting time while I stopped to raise my visor before compelling you to confess what you are already aware I maintain."

"Well then," said Don Quixote, "while we are mounting you can at least tell me if I am that Don Quixote whom you said you vanquished."

"To that we answer you," said he of the Mirrors, "that you are as like the very knight I vanquished as one egg is like another, but as you say enchanters persecute you, I will not venture to say positively whether you are the said person or not."

"That," said Don Quixote, "is enough to convince me that you are under a deception; however, entirely to relieve you of it, let our horses be brought, and in less time than it would take you to raise your visor, if God, my lady, and my arm stand me in good stead, I shall see your face, and you shall see that I am not the vanquished Don Quixote you take me to be."

With this, cutting short the colloquy, they mounted, and Don Quixote wheeled Rocinante round in order to take a proper distance to charge back upon his adversary, and he of the Mirrors did the same; but Don Quixote had not moved away twenty paces when he heard himself called by the other, and, each returning half-way, he of the Mirrors said to him, "Remember, sir knight, that the terms of our combat are, that the vanquished, as I said before, shall be at the

victor's disposal."

"I am aware of it already," said Don Quixote; "provided what is commanded and imposed upon the vanquished be things that do not transgress the limits of chivalry."

"That is understood," replied he of the Mirrors.

At this moment the extraordinary nose of the squire presented itself to Don Quixote's view, and he was no less amazed than Sancho at the sight; insomuch that he set him down as a monster of some kind, or a human being of some new species or unearthly breed. Sancho, seeing his master retiring to run his course, did not like to be left alone with the nosy man, fearing that with one flap of that nose on his own the battle would be all over for him and he would be left stretched on the ground, either by the blow or with fright; so he ran after his master, holding on to Rocinante's stirrup-leather, and when it seemed to him time to turn about, he said, "I implore of your worship, senor, before you turn to charge, to help me up into this cork tree, from which I will be able to witness the gallant encounter your worship is going to have with this knight, more to my taste and better than from the ground."

"It seems to me rather, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "that thou wouldst mount a scaffold in order to see the bulls without danger."

"To tell the truth," returned Sancho, "the monstrous nose of that squire has filled me with fear and terror, and I dare not stay near him."

"It is," said Don Quixote, "such a one that were I not what I am it would terrify me too; so, come, I will help thee up where thou wilt."

While Don Quixote waited for Sancho to mount into the cork tree he of the Mirrors took as much ground as he considered requisite, and, supposing Don Quixote to have done the same, without waiting for any sound of trumpet or other signal to direct them, he wheeled his horse, which was not more agile or better-looking than Rocinante, and at his top speed, which was an easy trot, he proceeded to charge his enemy; seeing him, however, engaged in putting Sancho up, he drew rein, and halted in mid career, for which his horse was very grateful, as he was already unable to go. Don Quixote, fancying that his foe was coming down upon him flying, drove his spurs vigorously into Rocinante's lean flanks and made him scud along in such style that the history tells us that on this occasion only was he known to make something like running, for on all others it was a simple trot with him; and with this unparalleled fury he bore down where he of the Mirrors stood digging his spurs into his horse up to buttons, without being able to make him stir a finger's length from the spot where he had come to a standstill in his course. At this lucky moment and crisis, Don Quixote came upon his adversary, in trouble with his horse, and embarrassed with his lance,



which he either could not manage, or had no time to lay in rest. Don Quixote, however, paid no attention to these difficulties, and in perfect safety to himself and without any risk encountered him of the Mirrors with such force that he brought him to the ground in spite of himself over the haunches of his horse, and with so heavy a fall that he lay to all appearance dead, not stirring hand or foot. The instant Sancho saw him fall he slid down from the cork tree, and made all haste to where his master was, who, dismounting from Rocinante, went and stood over him of the Mirrors, and unlacing his helmet to see if he was dead, and to give him air if he should happen to be alive, he saw — who can say what he saw, without filling all who hear it with astonishment, wonder, and awe? He saw, the history says, the very countenance, the very face, the very look, the very physiognomy, the very effigy, the very image of the bachelor Samson Carrasco! As soon as he saw it he called out in a loud voice, “Make haste here, Sancho, and behold what thou art to see but not to believe; quick, my son, and learn what magic can do, and wizards and enchanters are capable of.”

Sancho came up, and when he saw the countenance of the bachelor Carrasco, he fell to crossing himself a thousand times, and blessing himself as many more. All this time the prostrate knight showed no signs of life, and Sancho said to Don Quixote, “It is my opinion, senor, that in any case your worship should take and thrust your sword into the mouth of this one here that looks like the bachelor Samson Carrasco; perhaps in him you will kill one of your enemies, the enchanters.”

“Thy advice is not bad,” said Don Quixote, “for of enemies the fewer the better;” and he was drawing his sword to carry into effect Sancho’s counsel and suggestion, when the squire of the Mirrors came up, now without the nose which had made him so hideous, and cried out in a loud voice, “Mind what you are about, Senor Don Quixote; that is your friend, the bachelor Samson Carrasco, you have at your feet, and I am his squire.”

“And the nose?” said Sancho, seeing him without the hideous feature he had before; to which he replied, “I have it here in my pocket,” and putting his hand into his right pocket, he pulled out a masquerade nose of varnished pasteboard of the make already described; and Sancho, examining him more and more closely, exclaimed aloud in a voice of amazement, “Holy Mary be good to me! Isn’t it Tom Cecial, my neighbour and gossip?”

“Why, to be sure I am!” returned the now unnosed squire; “Tom Cecial I am, gossip and friend Sancho Panza; and I’ll tell you presently the means and tricks and falsehoods by which I have been brought here; but in the meantime, beg and entreat of your master not to touch, maltreat, wound, or slay the Knight of the Mirrors whom he has at his feet; because, beyond all dispute, it is the rash and

ill-advised bachelor Samson Carrasco, our fellow townsman.”

At this moment he of the Mirrors came to himself, and Don Quixote perceiving it, held the naked point of his sword over his face, and said to him, “You are a dead man, knight, unless you confess that the peerless Dulcinea del Toboso excels your Casildea de Vandalia in beauty; and in addition to this you must promise, if you should survive this encounter and fall, to go to the city of El Toboso and present yourself before her on my behalf, that she deal with you according to her good pleasure; and if she leaves you free to do yours, you are in like manner to return and seek me out (for the trail of my mighty deeds will serve you as a guide to lead you to where I may be), and tell me what may have passed between you and her — conditions which, in accordance with what we stipulated before our combat, do not transgress the just limits of knight-errantry.”

“I confess,” said the fallen knight, “that the dirty tattered shoe of the lady Dulcinea del Toboso is better than the ill-combed though clean beard of Casildea; and I promise to go and to return from her presence to yours, and to give you a full and particular account of all you demand of me.”

“You must also confess and believe,” added Don Quixote, “that the knight you vanquished was not and could not be Don Quixote of La Mancha, but some one else in his likeness, just as I confess and believe that you, though you seem to be the bachelor Samson Carrasco, are not so, but some other resembling him, whom my enemies have here put before me in his shape, in order that I may restrain and moderate the vehemence of my wrath, and make a gentle use of the glory of my victory.”

“I confess, hold, and think everything to be as you believe, hold, and think it,” the crippled knight; “let me rise, I entreat you; if, indeed, the shock of my fall will allow me, for it has left me in a sorry plight enough.”

Don Quixote helped him to rise, with the assistance of his squire Tom Cecial; from whom Sancho never took his eyes, and to whom he put questions, the replies to which furnished clear proof that he was really and truly the Tom Cecial he said; but the impression made on Sancho’s mind by what his master said about the enchanters having changed the face of the Knight of the Mirrors into that of the bachelor Samson Carrasco, would not permit him to believe what he saw with his eyes. In fine, both master and man remained under the delusion; and, down in the mouth, and out of luck, he of the Mirrors and his squire parted from Don Quixote and Sancho, he meaning to go look for some village where he could plaster and strap his ribs. Don Quixote and Sancho resumed their journey to Saragossa, and on it the history leaves them in order that it may tell who the Knight of the Mirrors and his long-nosed squire were.



## CHAPTER XV.

WHEREIN IT IS TOLD AND KNOWN WHO THE KNIGHT OF THE  
MIRRORS AND HIS SQUIRE WERE



Don Quixote went off satisfied, elated, and vain-glorious in the highest degree at having won a victory over such a valiant knight as he fancied him of the Mirrors to be, and one from whose knightly word he expected to learn whether the enchantment of his lady still continued; inasmuch as the said vanquished knight was bound, under the penalty of ceasing to be one, to return and render him an account of what took place between him and her. But Don Quixote was of one mind, he of the Mirrors of another, for he just then had no thought of anything but finding some village where he could plaster himself, as has been said already. The history goes on to say, then, that when the bachelor Samson Carrasco recommended Don Quixote to resume his knight-errantry which he had

laid aside, it was in consequence of having been previously in conclave with the curate and the barber on the means to be adopted to induce Don Quixote to stay at home in peace and quiet without worrying himself with his ill-starred adventures; at which consultation it was decided by the unanimous vote of all, and on the special advice of Carrasco, that Don Quixote should be allowed to go, as it seemed impossible to restrain him, and that Samson should sally forth to meet him as a knight-errant, and do battle with him, for there would be no difficulty about a cause, and vanquish him, that being looked upon as an easy matter; and that it should be agreed and settled that the vanquished was to be at the mercy of the victor. Then, Don Quixote being vanquished, the bachelor knight was to command him to return to his village and his house, and not quit it for two years, or until he received further orders from him; all which it was clear Don Quixote would unhesitatingly obey, rather than contravene or fail to observe the laws of chivalry; and during the period of his seclusion he might perhaps forget his folly, or there might be an opportunity of discovering some ready remedy for his madness. Carrasco undertook the task, and Tom Cecial, a gossip and neighbour of Sancho Panza's, a lively, feather-headed fellow, offered himself as his squire. Carrasco armed himself in the fashion described, and Tom Cecial, that he might not be known by his gossip when they met, fitted on over his own natural nose the false masquerade one that has been mentioned; and so they followed the same route Don Quixote took, and almost came up with him in time to be present at the adventure of the cart of Death and finally encountered them in the grove, where all that the sagacious reader has been reading about took place; and had it not been for the extraordinary fancies of Don Quixote, and his conviction that the bachelor was not the bachelor, senior bachelor would have been incapacitated for ever from taking his degree of licentiate, all through not finding nests where he thought to find birds.

Tom Cecial, seeing how ill they had succeeded, and what a sorry end their expedition had come to, said to the bachelor, "Sure enough, Senior Samson Carrasco, we are served right; it is easy enough to plan and set about an enterprise, but it is often a difficult matter to come well out of it. Don Quixote a madman, and we sane; he goes off laughing, safe, and sound, and you are left sore and sorry! I'd like to know now which is the madder, he who is so because he cannot help it, or he who is so of his own choice?"

To which Samson replied, "The difference between the two sorts of madmen is, that he who is so will he nil he, will be one always, while he who is so of his own accord can leave off being one whenever he likes."

"In that case," said Tom Cecial, "I was a madman of my own accord when I volunteered to become your squire, and, of my own accord, I'll leave off being

one and go home.”

“That’s your affair,” returned Samson, “but to suppose that I am going home until I have given Don Quixote a thrashing is absurd; and it is not any wish that he may recover his senses that will make me hunt him out now, but a wish for the sore pain I am in with my ribs won’t let me entertain more charitable thoughts.”

Thus discoursing, the pair proceeded until they reached a town where it was their good luck to find a bone-setter, with whose help the unfortunate Samson was cured. Tom Cecial left him and went home, while he stayed behind meditating vengeance; and the history will return to him again at the proper time, so as not to omit making merry with Don Quixote now.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### OF WHAT BEFELL DON QUIXOTE WITH A DISCREET GENTLEMAN OF LA MANCHA



Don Quixote pursued his journey in the high spirits, satisfaction, and self-complacency already described, fancying himself the most valorous knight-errant of the age in the world because of his late victory. All the adventures that could befall him from that time forth he regarded as already done and brought to a happy issue; he made light of enchantments and enchanter; he thought no more of the countless drubbings that had been administered to him in the course of his knight-errantry, nor of the volley of stones that had levelled half his teeth, nor of the ingratitude of the galley slaves, nor of the audacity of the Yanguesans and the shower of stakes that fell upon him; in short, he said to himself that could he discover any means, mode, or way of disenchanting his lady Dulcinea, he would not envy the highest fortune that the most fortunate knight-errant of yore ever reached or could reach.

He was going along entirely absorbed in these fancies, when Sancho said to him, "Isn't it odd, senor, that I have still before my eyes that monstrous enormous nose of my gossip, Tom Cecial?"



“And dost thou, then, believe, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “that the Knight of the Mirrors was the bachelor Carrasco, and his squire Tom Cecial thy gossip?”

“I don’t know what to say to that,” replied Sancho; “all I know is that the tokens he gave me about my own house, wife and children, nobody else but himself could have given me; and the face, once the nose was off, was the very face of Tom Cecial, as I have seen it many a time in my town and next door to my own house; and the sound of the voice was just the same.”

“Let us reason the matter, Sancho,” said Don Quixote. “Come now, by what process of thinking can it be supposed that the bachelor Samson Carrasco would come as a knight-errant, in arms offensive and defensive, to fight with me? Have I ever been by any chance his enemy? Have I ever given him any occasion to owe me a grudge? Am I his rival, or does he profess arms, that he should envy the fame I have acquired in them?”

“Well, but what are we to say, senor,” returned Sancho, “about that knight, whoever he is, being so like the bachelor Carrasco, and his squire so like my gossip, Tom Cecial? And if that be enchantment, as your worship says, was there no other pair in the world for them to take the likeness of?”

“It is all,” said Don Quixote, “a scheme and plot of the malignant magicians that persecute me, who, foreseeing that I was to be victorious in the conflict, arranged that the vanquished knight should display the countenance of my friend the bachelor, in order that the friendship I bear him should interpose to stay the edge of my sword and might of my arm, and temper the just wrath of my heart; so that he who sought to take my life by fraud and falsehood should save his own. And to prove it, thou knowest already, Sancho, by experience which cannot lie or deceive, how easy it is for enchanterers to change one countenance into another, turning fair into foul, and foul into fair; for it is not two days since thou sawest with thine own eyes the beauty and elegance of the peerless Dulcinea in all its perfection and natural harmony, while I saw her in the repulsive and mean form of a coarse country wench, with cataracts in her eyes and a foul smell in her mouth; and when the perverse enchanter ventured to effect so wicked a transformation, it is no wonder if he effected that of Samson Carrasco and thy gossip in order to snatch the glory of victory out of my grasp. For all that, however, I console myself, because, after all, in whatever shape he may have been, I have victorious over my enemy.”

“God knows what’s the truth of it all,” said Sancho; and knowing as he did that the transformation of Dulcinea had been a device and imposition of his own, his master’s illusions were not satisfactory to him; but he did not like to reply lest he should say something that might disclose his trickery.

As they were engaged in this conversation they were overtaken by a man who

was following the same road behind them, mounted on a very handsome flea-bitten mare, and dressed in a gaban of fine green cloth, with tawny velvet facings, and a montera of the same velvet. The trappings of the mare were of the field and jineta fashion, and of mulberry colour and green. He carried a Moorish cutlass hanging from a broad green and gold baldric; the buskins were of the same make as the baldric; the spurs were not gilt, but lacquered green, and so brightly polished that, matching as they did the rest of his apparel, they looked better than if they had been of pure gold.

When the traveller came up with them he saluted them courteously, and spurring his mare was passing them without stopping, but Don Quixote called out to him, "Gallant sir, if so be your worship is going our road, and has no occasion for speed, it would be a pleasure to me if we were to join company."

"In truth," replied he on the mare, "I would not pass you so hastily but for fear that horse might turn restive in the company of my mare."

"You may safely hold in your mare, senor," said Sancho in reply to this, "for our horse is the most virtuous and well-behaved horse in the world; he never does anything wrong on such occasions, and the only time he misbehaved, my master and I suffered for it sevenfold; I say again your worship may pull up if you like; for if she was offered to him between two plates the horse would not hanker after her."

The traveller drew rein, amazed at the trim and features of Don Quixote, who rode without his helmet, which Sancho carried like a valise in front of Dapple's pack-saddle; and if the man in green examined Don Quixote closely, still more closely did Don Quixote examine the man in green, who struck him as being a man of intelligence. In appearance he was about fifty years of age, with but few grey hairs, an aquiline cast of features, and an expression between grave and gay; and his dress and accoutrements showed him to be a man of good condition. What he in green thought of Don Quixote of La Mancha was that a man of that sort and shape he had never yet seen; he marvelled at the length of his hair, his lofty stature, the lankness and sallowness of his countenance, his armour, his bearing and his gravity — a figure and picture such as had not been seen in those regions for many a long day.

Don Quixote saw very plainly the attention with which the traveller was regarding him, and read his curiosity in his astonishment; and courteous as he was and ready to please everybody, before the other could ask him any question he anticipated him by saying, "The appearance I present to your worship being so strange and so out of the common, I should not be surprised if it filled you with wonder; but you will cease to wonder when I tell you, as I do, that I am one of those knights who, as people say, go seeking adventures. I have left my home,

I have mortgaged my estate, I have given up my comforts, and committed myself to the arms of Fortune, to bear me whithersoever she may please. My desire was to bring to life again knight-errantry, now dead, and for some time past, stumbling here, falling there, now coming down headlong, now raising myself up again, I have carried out a great portion of my design, succouring widows, protecting maidens, and giving aid to wives, orphans, and minors, the proper and natural duty of knights-errant; and, therefore, because of my many valiant and Christian achievements, I have been already found worthy to make my way in print to well-nigh all, or most, of the nations of the earth. Thirty thousand volumes of my history have been printed, and it is on the high-road to be printed thirty thousand thousands of times, if heaven does not put a stop to it. In short, to sum up all in a few words, or in a single one, I may tell you I am Don Quixote of La Mancha, otherwise called 'The Knight of the Rueful Countenance;' for though self-praise is degrading, I must perforce sound my own sometimes, that is to say, when there is no one at hand to do it for me. So that, gentle sir, neither this horse, nor this lance, nor this shield, nor this squire, nor all these arms put together, nor the sallowness of my countenance, nor my gaunt leanness, will henceforth astonish you, now that you know who I am and what profession I follow."

With these words Don Quixote held his peace, and, from the time he took to answer, the man in green seemed to be at a loss for a reply; after a long pause, however, he said to him, "You were right when you saw curiosity in my amazement, sir knight; but you have not succeeded in removing the astonishment I feel at seeing you; for although you say, senor, that knowing who you are ought to remove it, it has not done so; on the contrary, now that I know, I am left more amazed and astonished than before. What! is it possible that there are knights-errant in the world in these days, and histories of real chivalry printed? I cannot realise the fact that there can be anyone on earth now-a-days who aids widows, or protects maidens, or defends wives, or succours orphans; nor should I believe it had I not seen it in your worship with my own eyes. Blessed be heaven! for by means of this history of your noble and genuine chivalrous deeds, which you say has been printed, the countless stories of fictitious knights-errant with which the world is filled, so much to the injury of morality and the prejudice and discredit of good histories, will have been driven into oblivion."

"There is a good deal to be said on that point," said Don Quixote, "as to whether the histories of the knights-errant are fiction or not."

"Why, is there anyone who doubts that those histories are false?" said the man in green.

“I doubt it,” said Don Quixote, “but never mind that just now; if our journey lasts long enough, I trust in God I shall show your worship that you do wrong in going with the stream of those who regard it as a matter of certainty that they are not true.”

From this last observation of Don Quixote’s, the traveller began to have a suspicion that he was some crazy being, and was waiting him to confirm it by something further; but before they could turn to any new subject Don Quixote begged him to tell him who he was, since he himself had rendered account of his station and life. To this, he in the green gaban replied “I, Sir Knight of the Rueful Countenance, am a gentleman by birth, native of the village where, please God, we are going to dine today; I am more than fairly well off, and my name is Don Diego de Miranda. I pass my life with my wife, children, and friends; my pursuits are hunting and fishing, but I keep neither hawks nor greyhounds, nothing but a tame partridge or a bold ferret or two; I have six dozen or so of books, some in our mother tongue, some Latin, some of them history, others devotional; those of chivalry have not as yet crossed the threshold of my door; I am more given to turning over the profane than the devotional, so long as they are books of honest entertainment that charm by their style and attract and interest by the invention they display, though of these there are very few in Spain. Sometimes I dine with my neighbours and friends, and often invite them; my entertainments are neat and well served without stint of anything. I have no taste for tattle, nor do I allow tattling in my presence; I pry not into my neighbours’ lives, nor have I lynx-eyes for what others do. I hear mass every day; I share my substance with the poor, making no display of good works, lest I let hypocrisy and vainglory, those enemies that subtly take possession of the most watchful heart, find an entrance into mine. I strive to make peace between those whom I know to be at variance; I am the devoted servant of Our Lady, and my trust is ever in the infinite mercy of God our Lord.”

Sancho listened with the greatest attention to the account of the gentleman’s life and occupation; and thinking it a good and a holy life, and that he who led it ought to work miracles, he threw himself off Dapple, and running in haste seized his right stirrup and kissed his foot again and again with a devout heart and almost with tears.

Seeing this the gentleman asked him, “What are you about, brother? What are these kisses for?”

“Let me kiss,” said Sancho, “for I think your worship is the first saint in the saddle I ever saw all the days of my life.”

“I am no saint,” replied the gentleman, “but a great sinner; but you are, brother, for you must be a good fellow, as your simplicity shows.”

Sancho went back and regained his pack-saddle, having extracted a laugh from his master's profound melancholy, and excited fresh amazement in Don Diego. Don Quixote then asked him how many children he had, and observed that one of the things wherein the ancient philosophers, who were without the true knowledge of God, placed the summum bonum was in the gifts of nature, in those of fortune, in having many friends, and many and good children.

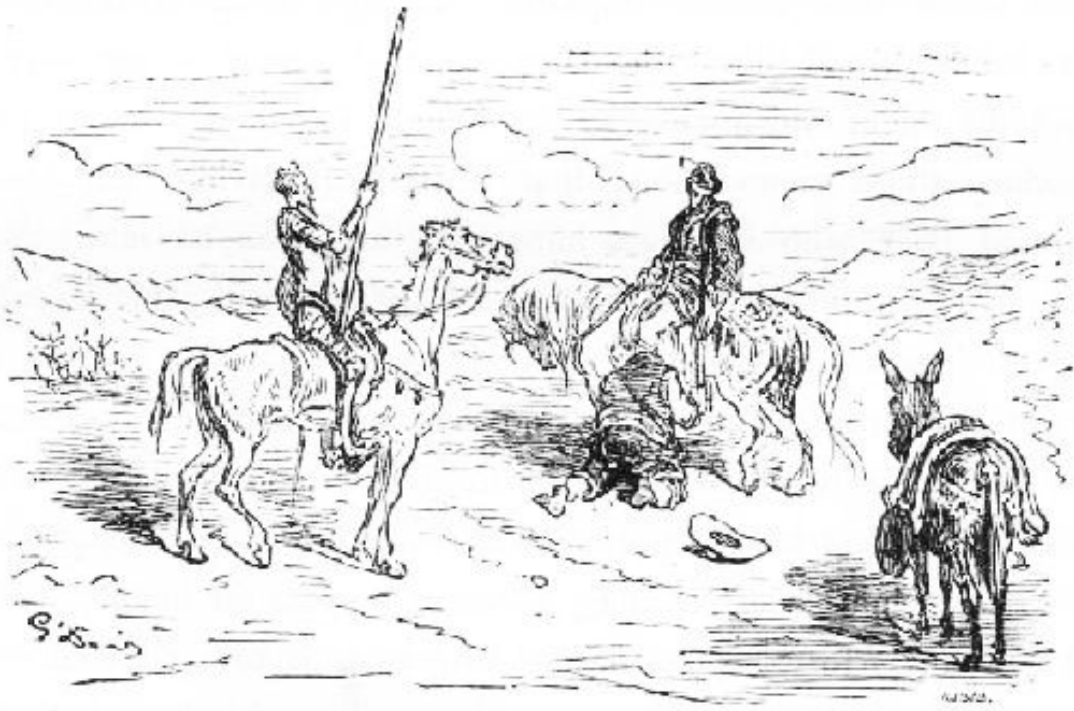
"I, Senor Don Quixote," answered the gentleman, "have one son, without whom, perhaps, I should count myself happier than I am, not because he is a bad son, but because he is not so good as I could wish. He is eighteen years of age; he has been for six at Salamanca studying Latin and Greek, and when I wished him to turn to the study of other sciences I found him so wrapped up in that of poetry (if that can be called a science) that there is no getting him to take kindly to the law, which I wished him to study, or to theology, the queen of them all. I would like him to be an honour to his family, as we live in days when our kings liberally reward learning that is virtuous and worthy; for learning without virtue is a pearl on a dunghill. He spends the whole day in settling whether Homer expressed himself correctly or not in such and such a line of the Iliad, whether Martial was indecent or not in such and such an epigram, whether such and such lines of Virgil are to be understood in this way or in that; in short, all his talk is of the works of these poets, and those of Horace, Perseus, Juvenal, and Tibullus; for of the moderns in our own language he makes no great account; but with all his seeming indifference to Spanish poetry, just now his thoughts are absorbed in making a gloss on four lines that have been sent him from Salamanca, which I suspect are for some poetical tournament."

To all this Don Quixote said in reply, "Children, senor, are portions of their parents' bowels, and therefore, be they good or bad, are to be loved as we love the souls that give us life; it is for the parents to guide them from infancy in the ways of virtue, propriety, and worthy Christian conduct, so that when grown up they may be the staff of their parents' old age, and the glory of their posterity; and to force them to study this or that science I do not think wise, though it may be no harm to persuade them; and when there is no need to study for the sake of pane lucrando, and it is the student's good fortune that heaven has given him parents who provide him with it, it would be my advice to them to let him pursue whatever science they may see him most inclined to; and though that of poetry is less useful than pleasurable, it is not one of those that bring discredit upon the possessor. Poetry, gentle sir, is, as I take it, like a tender young maiden of supreme beauty, to array, bedeck, and adorn whom is the task of several other maidens, who are all the rest of the sciences; and she must avail herself of the help of all, and all derive their lustre from her. But this maiden will not bear to

be handled, nor dragged through the streets, nor exposed either at the corners of the market-places, or in the closets of palaces. She is the product of an Alchemy of such virtue that he who is able to practise it, will turn her into pure gold of inestimable worth. He that possesses her must keep her within bounds, not permitting her to break out in ribald satires or soulless sonnets. She must on no account be offered for sale, unless, indeed, it be in heroic poems, moving tragedies, or sprightly and ingenious comedies. She must not be touched by the buffoons, nor by the ignorant vulgar, incapable of comprehending or appreciating her hidden treasures. And do not suppose, *senor*, that I apply the term vulgar here merely to plebeians and the lower orders; for everyone who is ignorant, be he lord or prince, may and should be included among the vulgar. He, then, who shall embrace and cultivate poetry under the conditions I have named, shall become famous, and his name honoured throughout all the civilised nations of the earth. And with regard to what you say, *senor*, of your son having no great opinion of Spanish poetry, I am inclined to think that he is not quite right there, and for this reason: the great poet Homer did not write in Latin, because he was a Greek, nor did Virgil write in Greek, because he was a Latin; in short, all the ancient poets wrote in the language they imbibed with their mother's milk, and never went in quest of foreign ones to express their sublime conceptions; and that being so, the usage should in justice extend to all nations, and the German poet should not be undervalued because he writes in his own language, nor the Castilian, nor even the Biscayan, for writing in his. But your son, *senor*, I suspect, is not prejudiced against Spanish poetry, but against those poets who are mere Spanish verse writers, without any knowledge of other languages or sciences to adorn and give life and vigour to their natural inspiration; and yet even in this he may be wrong; for, according to a true belief, a poet is born one; that is to say, the poet by nature comes forth a poet from his mother's womb; and following the bent that heaven has bestowed upon him, without the aid of study or art, he produces things that show how truly he spoke who said, '*Est Deus in nobis,*' etc. At the same time, I say that the poet by nature who calls in art to his aid will be a far better poet, and will surpass him who tries to be one relying upon his knowledge of art alone. The reason is, that art does not surpass nature, but only brings it to perfection; and thus, nature combined with art, and art with nature, will produce a perfect poet. To bring my argument to a close, I would say then, gentle sir, let your son go on as his star leads him, for being so studious as he seems to be, and having already successfully surmounted the first step of the sciences, which is that of the languages, with their help he will by his own exertions reach the summit of polite literature, which so well becomes an independent gentleman, and adorns, honours, and

distinguishes him, as much as the mitre does the bishop, or the gown the learned counsellor. If your son write satires reflecting on the honour of others, chide and correct him, and tear them up; but if he compose discourses in which he rebukes vice in general, in the style of Horace, and with elegance like his, commend him; for it is legitimate for a poet to write against envy and lash the envious in his verse, and the other vices too, provided he does not single out individuals; there are, however, poets who, for the sake of saying something spiteful, would run the risk of being banished to the coast of Pontus. If the poet be pure in his morals, he will be pure in his verses too; the pen is the tongue of the mind, and as the thought engendered there, so will be the things that it writes down. And when kings and princes observe this marvellous science of poetry in wise, virtuous, and thoughtful subjects, they honour, value, exalt them, and even crown them with the leaves of that tree which the thunderbolt strikes not, as if to show that they whose brows are honoured and adorned with such a crown are not to be assailed by anyone.”

He of the green gaban was filled with astonishment at Don Quixote’s argument, so much so that he began to abandon the notion he had taken up about his being crazy. But in the middle of the discourse, it being not very much to his taste, Sancho had turned aside out of the road to beg a little milk from some shepherds, who were milking their ewes hard by; and just as the gentleman, highly pleased, was about to renew the conversation, Don Quixote, raising his head, perceived a cart covered with royal flags coming along the road they were travelling; and persuaded that this must be some new adventure, he called aloud to Sancho to come and bring him his helmet. Sancho, hearing himself called, quitted the shepherds, and, prodding Dapple vigorously, came up to his master, to whom there fell a terrific and desperate adventure.





## CHAPTER XVII.

WHEREIN IS SHOWN THE FURTHEST AND HIGHEST POINT WHICH  
THE UNEXAMPLED COURAGE OF DON QUIXOTE REACHED OR  
COULD REACH; TOGETHER WITH THE HAPPILY ACHIEVED  
ADVENTURE OF THE LIONS



The history tells that when Don Quixote called out to Sancho to bring him his helmet, Sancho was buying some curds the shepherds agreed to sell him, and flurried by the great haste his master was in did not know what to do with them or what to carry them in; so, not to lose them, for he had already paid for them, he thought it best to throw them into his master's helmet, and acting on this bright idea he went to see what his master wanted with him. He, as he approached, exclaimed to him:

“Give me that helmet, my friend, for either I know little of adventures, or what I observe yonder is one that will, and does, call upon me to arm myself.”

He of the green gaban, on hearing this, looked in all directions, but could perceive nothing, except a cart coming towards them with two or three small flags, which led him to conclude it must be carrying treasure of the King's, and he said so to Don Quixote. He, however, would not believe him, being always persuaded and convinced that all that happened to him must be adventures and still more adventures; so he replied to the gentleman, “He who is prepared has his battle half fought; nothing is lost by my preparing myself, for I know by experience that I have enemies, visible and invisible, and I know not when, or where, or at what moment, or in what shapes they will attack me;” and turning to Sancho he called for his helmet; and Sancho, as he had no time to take out the curds, had to give it just as it was. Don Quixote took it, and without perceiving what was in it thrust it down in hot haste upon his head; but as the curds were pressed and squeezed the whey began to run all over his face and beard, whereat he was so startled that he cried out to Sancho:

“Sancho, what's this? I think my head is softening, or my brains are melting, or I am sweating from head to foot! If I am sweating it is not indeed from fear. I am convinced beyond a doubt that the adventure which is about to befall me is a terrible one. Give me something to wipe myself with, if thou hast it, for this profuse sweat is blinding me.”

Sancho held his tongue, and gave him a cloth, and gave thanks to God at the same time that his master had not found out what was the matter. Don Quixote then wiped himself, and took off his helmet to see what it was that made his head feel so cool, and seeing all that white mash inside his helmet he put it to his nose, and as soon as he had smelt it he exclaimed:

“By the life of my lady Dulcinea del Toboso, but it is curds thou hast put here, thou treacherous, impudent, ill-mannered squire!”

To which, with great composure and pretended innocence, Sancho replied, “If they are curds let me have them, your worship, and I'll eat them; but let the devil eat them, for it must have been he who put them there. I dare to dirty your helmet! You have guessed the offender finely! Faith, sir, by the light God gives me, it seems I must have enchanters too, that persecute me as a creature and limb of your worship, and they must have put that nastiness there in order to provoke your patience to anger, and make you baste my ribs as you are wont to do. Well, this time, indeed, they have missed their aim, for I trust to my master's good sense to see that I have got no curds or milk, or anything of the sort; and that if I had it is in my stomach I would put it and not in the helmet.”

“May be so,” said Don Quixote. All this the gentleman was observing, and

with astonishment, more especially when, after having wiped himself clean, his head, face, beard, and helmet, Don Quixote put it on, and settling himself firmly in his stirrups, easing his sword in the scabbard, and grasping his lance, he cried, "Now, come who will, here am I, ready to try conclusions with Satan himself in person!"

By this time the cart with the flags had come up, unattended by anyone except the carter on a mule, and a man sitting in front. Don Quixote planted himself before it and said, "Whither are you going, brothers? What cart is this? What have you got in it? What flags are those?"

To this the carter replied, "The cart is mine; what is in it is a pair of wild caged lions, which the governor of Oran is sending to court as a present to his Majesty; and the flags are our lord the King's, to show that what is here is his property."

"And are the lions large?" asked Don Quixote.

"So large," replied the man who sat at the door of the cart, "that larger, or as large, have never crossed from Africa to Spain; I am the keeper, and I have brought over others, but never any like these. They are male and female; the male is in that first cage and the female in the one behind, and they are hungry now, for they have eaten nothing to-day, so let your worship stand aside, for we must make haste to the place where we are to feed them."

Hereupon, smiling slightly, Don Quixote exclaimed, "Lion-whelps to me! to me whelps of lions, and at such a time! Then, by God! those gentlemen who send them here shall see if I am a man to be frightened by lions. Get down, my good fellow, and as you are the keeper open the cages, and turn me out those beasts, and in the midst of this plain I will let them know who Don Quixote of La Mancha is, in spite and in the teeth of the enchanters who send them to me."

"So, so," said the gentleman to himself at this; "our worthy knight has shown of what sort he is; the curds, no doubt, have softened his skull and brought his brains to a head."

At this instant Sancho came up to him, saying, "Senor, for God's sake do something to keep my master, Don Quixote, from tackling these lions; for if he does they'll tear us all to pieces here."

"Is your master then so mad," asked the gentleman, "that you believe and are afraid he will engage such fierce animals?"

"He is not mad," said Sancho, "but he is venturesome."

"I will prevent it," said the gentleman; and going over to Don Quixote, who was insisting upon the keeper's opening the cages, he said to him, "Sir knight, knights-errant should attempt adventures which encourage the hope of a successful issue, not those which entirely withhold it; for valour that trenches

upon temerity savours rather of madness than of courage; moreover, these lions do not come to oppose you, nor do they dream of such a thing; they are going as presents to his Majesty, and it will not be right to stop them or delay their journey.”

“Gentle sir,” replied Don Quixote, “you go and mind your tame partridge and your bold ferret, and leave everyone to manage his own business; this is mine, and I know whether these gentlemen the lions come to me or not;” and then turning to the keeper he exclaimed, “By all that’s good, sir scoundrel, if you don’t open the cages this very instant, I’ll pin you to the cart with this lance.”

The carter, seeing the determination of this apparition in armour, said to him, “Please your worship, for charity’s sake, senor, let me unyoke the mules and place myself in safety along with them before the lions are turned out; for if they kill them on me I am ruined for life, for all I possess is this cart and mules.”

“O man of little faith,” replied Don Quixote, “get down and unyoke; you will soon see that you are exerting yourself for nothing, and that you might have spared yourself the trouble.”

The carter got down and with all speed unyoked the mules, and the keeper called out at the top of his voice, “I call all here to witness that against my will and under compulsion I open the cages and let the lions loose, and that I warn this gentleman that he will be accountable for all the harm and mischief which these beasts may do, and for my salary and dues as well. You, gentlemen, place yourselves in safety before I open, for I know they will do me no harm.”

Once more the gentleman strove to persuade Don Quixote not to do such a mad thing, as it was tempting God to engage in such a piece of folly. To this, Don Quixote replied that he knew what he was about. The gentleman in return entreated him to reflect, for he knew he was under a delusion.

“Well, senor,” answered Don Quixote, “if you do not like to be a spectator of this tragedy, as in your opinion it will be, spur your flea-bitten mare, and place yourself in safety.”

Hearing this, Sancho with tears in his eyes entreated him to give up an enterprise compared with which the one of the windmills, and the awful one of the fulling mills, and, in fact, all the feats he had attempted in the whole course of his life, were cakes and fancy bread. “Look ye, senor,” said Sancho, “there’s no enchantment here, nor anything of the sort, for between the bars and chinks of the cage I have seen the paw of a real lion, and judging by that I reckon the lion such a paw could belong to must be bigger than a mountain.”

“Fear at any rate,” replied Don Quixote, “will make him look bigger to thee than half the world. Retire, Sancho, and leave me; and if I die here thou knowest our old compact; thou wilt repair to Dulcinea — I say no more.” To these he

added some further words that banished all hope of his giving up his insane project. He of the green gaban would have offered resistance, but he found himself ill-matched as to arms, and did not think it prudent to come to blows with a madman, for such Don Quixote now showed himself to be in every respect; and the latter, renewing his commands to the keeper and repeating his threats, gave warning to the gentleman to spur his mare, Sancho his Dapple, and the carter his mules, all striving to get away from the cart as far as they could before the lions broke loose. Sancho was weeping over his master's death, for this time he firmly believed it was in store for him from the claws of the lions; and he cursed his fate and called it an unlucky hour when he thought of taking service with him again; but with all his tears and lamentations he did not forget to thrash Dapple so as to put a good space between himself and the cart. The keeper, seeing that the fugitives were now some distance off, once more entreated and warned him as before; but he replied that he heard him, and that he need not trouble himself with any further warnings or entreaties, as they would be fruitless, and bade him make haste.

During the delay that occurred while the keeper was opening the first cage, Don Quixote was considering whether it would not be well to do battle on foot, instead of on horseback, and finally resolved to fight on foot, fearing that Rocinante might take fright at the sight of the lions; he therefore sprang off his horse, flung his lance aside, braced his buckler on his arm, and drawing his sword, advanced slowly with marvellous intrepidity and resolute courage, to plant himself in front of the cart, commending himself with all his heart to God and to his lady Dulcinea.

It is to be observed, that on coming to this passage, the author of this veracious history breaks out into exclamations. "O doughty Don Quixote! high-mettled past extolling! Mirror, wherein all the heroes of the world may see themselves! Second modern Don Manuel de Leon, once the glory and honour of Spanish knighthood! In what words shall I describe this dread exploit, by what language shall I make it credible to ages to come, what eulogies are there unmeet for thee, though they be hyperboles piled on hyperboles! On foot, alone, undaunted, high-souled, with but a simple sword, and that no trenchant blade of the Perrillo brand, a shield, but no bright polished steel one, there stoodst thou, biding and awaiting the two fiercest lions that Africa's forests ever bred! Thy own deeds be thy praise, valiant Manchegan, and here I leave them as they stand, wanting the words wherewith to glorify them!"



Here the author's outburst came to an end, and he proceeded to take up the thread of his story, saying that the keeper, seeing that Don Quixote had taken up his position, and that it was impossible for him to avoid letting out the male without incurring the enmity of the fiery and daring knight, flung open the doors of the first cage, containing, as has been said, the lion, which was now seen to be of enormous size, and grim and hideous mien. The first thing he did was to turn

round in the cage in which he lay, and protrude his claws, and stretch himself thoroughly; he next opened his mouth, and yawned very leisurely, and with near two palms' length of tongue that he had thrust forth, he licked the dust out of his eyes and washed his face; having done this, he put his head out of the cage and looked all round with eyes like glowing coals, a spectacle and demeanour to strike terror into temerity itself. Don Quixote merely observed him steadily, longing for him to leap from the cart and come to close quarters with him, when he hoped to hew him in pieces.

So far did his unparalleled madness go; but the noble lion, more courteous than arrogant, not troubling himself about silly bravado, after having looked all round, as has been said, turned about and presented his hind-quarters to Don Quixote, and very coolly and tranquilly lay down again in the cage. Seeing this, Don Quixote ordered the keeper to take a stick to him and provoke him to make him come out.

"That I won't," said the keeper; "for if I anger him, the first he'll tear in pieces will be myself. Be satisfied, sir knight, with what you have done, which leaves nothing more to be said on the score of courage, and do not seek to tempt fortune a second time. The lion has the door open; he is free to come out or not to come out; but as he has not come out so far, he will not come out to-day. Your worship's great courage has been fully manifested already; no brave champion, so it strikes me, is bound to do more than challenge his enemy and wait for him on the field; if his adversary does not come, on him lies the disgrace, and he who waits for him carries off the crown of victory."

"That is true," said Don Quixote; "close the door, my friend, and let me have, in the best form thou canst, what thou hast seen me do, by way of certificate; to wit, that thou didst open for the lion, that I waited for him, that he did not come out, that I still waited for him, and that still he did not come out, and lay down again. I am not bound to do more; enchantments avaunt, and God uphold the right, the truth, and true chivalry! Close the door as I bade thee, while I make signals to the fugitives that have left us, that they may learn this exploit from thy lips."

The keeper obeyed, and Don Quixote, fixing on the point of his lance the cloth he had wiped his face with after the deluge of curds, proceeded to recall the others, who still continued to fly, looking back at every step, all in a body, the gentleman bringing up the rear. Sancho, however, happening to observe the signal of the white cloth, exclaimed, "May I die, if my master has not overcome the wild beasts, for he is calling to us."

They all stopped, and perceived that it was Don Quixote who was making signals, and shaking off their fears to some extent, they approached slowly until

they were near enough to hear distinctly Don Quixote's voice calling to them. They returned at length to the cart, and as they came up, Don Quixote said to the carter, "Put your mules to once more, brother, and continue your journey; and do thou, Sancho, give him two gold crowns for himself and the keeper, to compensate for the delay they have incurred through me."

"That will I give with all my heart," said Sancho; "but what has become of the lions? Are they dead or alive?"

The keeper, then, in full detail, and bit by bit, described the end of the contest, exalting to the best of his power and ability the valour of Don Quixote, at the sight of whom the lion quailed, and would not and dared not come out of the cage, although he had held the door open ever so long; and showing how, in consequence of his having represented to the knight that it was tempting God to provoke the lion in order to force him out, which he wished to have done, he very reluctantly, and altogether against his will, had allowed the door to be closed.

"What dost thou think of this, Sancho?" said Don Quixote. "Are there any enchantments that can prevail against true valour? The enchanters may be able to rob me of good fortune, but of fortitude and courage they cannot."

Sancho paid the crowns, the carter put to, the keeper kissed Don Quixote's hands for the bounty bestowed upon him, and promised to give an account of the valiant exploit to the King himself, as soon as he saw him at court.

"Then," said Don Quixote, "if his Majesty should happen to ask who performed it, you must say THE KNIGHT OF THE LIONS; for it is my desire that into this the name I have hitherto borne of Knight of the Rueful Countenance be from this time forward changed, altered, transformed, and turned; and in this I follow the ancient usage of knights-errant, who changed their names when they pleased, or when it suited their purpose."

The cart went its way, and Don Quixote, Sancho, and he of the green gaban went theirs. All this time, Don Diego de Miranda had not spoken a word, being entirely taken up with observing and noting all that Don Quixote did and said, and the opinion he formed was that he was a man of brains gone mad, and a madman on the verge of rationality. The first part of his history had not yet reached him, for, had he read it, the amazement with which his words and deeds filled him would have vanished, as he would then have understood the nature of his madness; but knowing nothing of it, he took him to be rational one moment, and crazy the next, for what he said was sensible, elegant, and well expressed, and what he did, absurd, rash, and foolish; and said he to himself, "What could be madder than putting on a helmet full of curds, and then persuading oneself that enchanters are softening one's skull; or what could be greater rashness and



folly than wanting to fight lions tooth and nail?”

Don Quixote roused him from these reflections and this soliloquy by saying, “No doubt, Senor Don Diego de Miranda, you set me down in your mind as a fool and a madman, and it would be no wonder if you did, for my deeds do not argue anything else. But for all that, I would have you take notice that I am neither so mad nor so foolish as I must have seemed to you. A gallant knight shows to advantage bringing his lance to bear adroitly upon a fierce bull under the eyes of his sovereign, in the midst of a spacious plaza; a knight shows to advantage arrayed in glittering armour, pacing the lists before the ladies in some joyous tournament, and all those knights show to advantage that entertain, divert, and, if we may say so, honour the courts of their princes by warlike exercises, or what resemble them; but to greater advantage than all these does a knight-errant show when he traverses deserts, solitudes, cross-roads, forests, and mountains, in quest of perilous adventures, bent on bringing them to a happy and successful issue, all to win a glorious and lasting renown. To greater advantage, I maintain, does the knight-errant show bringing aid to some widow in some lonely waste, than the court knight dallying with some city damsel. All knights have their own special parts to play; let the courtier devote himself to the ladies, let him add lustre to his sovereign’s court by his liveries, let him entertain poor gentlemen with the sumptuous fare of his table, let him arrange joustings, marshal tournaments, and prove himself noble, generous, and magnificent, and above all a good Christian, and so doing he will fulfil the duties that are especially his; but let the knight-errant explore the corners of the earth and penetrate the most intricate labyrinths, at each step let him attempt impossibilities, on desolate heaths let him endure the burning rays of the midsummer sun, and the bitter inclemency of the winter winds and frosts; let no lions daunt him, no monsters terrify him, no dragons make him quail; for to seek these, to attack those, and to vanquish all, are in truth his main duties. I, then, as it has fallen to my lot to be a member of knight-errantry, cannot avoid attempting all that to me seems to come within the sphere of my duties; thus it was my bounden duty to attack those lions that I just now attacked, although I knew it to be the height of rashness; for I know well what valour is, that it is a virtue that occupies a place between two vicious extremes, cowardice and temerity; but it will be a lesser evil for him who is valiant to rise till he reaches the point of rashness, than to sink until he reaches the point of cowardice; for, as it is easier for the prodigal than for the miser to become generous, so it is easier for a rash man to prove truly valiant than for a coward to rise to true valour; and believe me, Senor Don Diego, in attempting adventures it is better to lose by a card too many than by a card too few; for to hear it said, ‘such a knight is rash and daring,’ sounds better than ‘such a knight

is timid and cowardly.’”

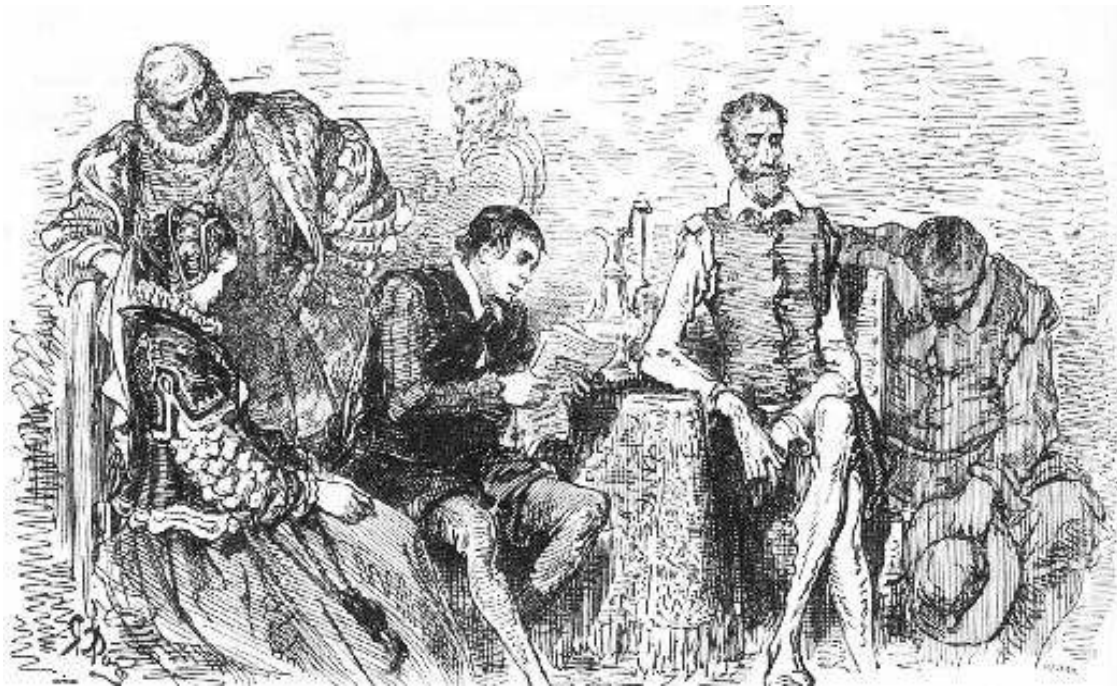
“I protest, Senor Don Quixote,” said Don Diego, “everything you have said and done is proved correct by the test of reason itself; and I believe, if the laws and ordinances of knight-errantry should be lost, they might be found in your worship’s breast as in their own proper depository and muniment-house; but let us make haste, and reach my village, where you shall take rest after your late exertions; for if they have not been of the body they have been of the spirit, and these sometimes tend to produce bodily fatigue.”

“I take the invitation as a great favour and honour, Senor Don Diego,” replied Don Quixote; and pressing forward at a better pace than before, at about two in the afternoon they reached the village and house of Don Diego, or, as Don Quixote called him, “The Knight of the Green Gaban.”



## CHAPTER XVIII.

OF WHAT HAPPENED DON QUIXOTE IN THE CASTLE OR HOUSE OF  
THE KNIGHT OF THE GREEN GABAN, TOGETHER WITH OTHER  
MATTERS OUT OF THE COMMON



Don Quixote found Don Diego de Miranda's house built in village style, with his arms in rough stone over the street door; in the patio was the store-room, and at the entrance the cellar, with plenty of wine-jars standing round, which, coming from El Toboso, brought back to his memory his enchanted and transformed Dulcinea; and with a sigh, and not thinking of what he was saying, or in whose presence he was, he exclaimed-

“O ye sweet treasures, to my sorrow found!

Once sweet and welcome when 'twas heaven's good-will.

“O ye Tobosan jars, how ye bring back to my memory the sweet object of my bitter regrets!”



The student poet, Don Diego's son, who had come out with his mother to receive him, heard this exclamation, and both mother and son were filled with amazement at the extraordinary figure he presented; he, however, dismounting from Rocinante, advanced with great politeness to ask permission to kiss the lady's hand, while Don Diego said, "Senora, pray receive with your wonted kindness Senor Don Quixote of La Mancha, whom you see before you, a knight-errant, and the bravest and wisest in the world."

The lady, whose name was Dona Christina, received him with every sign of good-will and great courtesy, and Don Quixote placed himself at her service with an abundance of well-chosen and polished phrases. Almost the same civilities were exchanged between him and the student, who listening to Don Quixote, took him to be a sensible, clear-headed person.

Here the author describes minutely everything belonging to Don Diego's mansion, putting before us in his picture the whole contents of a rich gentleman-farmer's house; but the translator of the history thought it best to pass over these and other details of the same sort in silence, as they are not in harmony with the main purpose of the story, the strong point of which is truth rather than dull digressions.

They led Don Quixote into a room, and Sancho removed his armour, leaving him in loose Walloon breeches and chamois-leather doublet, all stained with the rust of his armour; his collar was a falling one of scholastic cut, without starch or lace, his buskins buff-coloured, and his shoes polished. He wore his good sword, which hung in a baldric of sea-wolf's skin, for he had suffered for many years, they say, from an ailment of the kidneys; and over all he threw a long cloak of good grey cloth. But first of all, with five or six buckets of water (for as regard the number of buckets there is some dispute), he washed his head and face, and still the water remained whey-coloured, thanks to Sancho's greediness and purchase of those unlucky curds that turned his master so white. Thus arrayed, and with an easy, sprightly, and gallant air, Don Quixote passed out into another room, where the student was waiting to entertain him while the table was being laid; for on the arrival of so distinguished a guest, Dona Christina was anxious to show that she knew how and was able to give a becoming reception to those who came to her house.

While Don Quixote was taking off his armour, Don Lorenzo (for so Don Diego's son was called) took the opportunity to say to his father, "What are we to make of this gentleman you have brought home to us, sir? For his name, his appearance, and your describing him as a knight-errant have completely puzzled my mother and me."

"I don't know what to say, my son," replied. Don Diego; "all I can tell thee is

that I have seen him act the acts of the greatest madman in the world, and heard him make observations so sensible that they efface and undo all he does; do thou talk to him and feel the pulse of his wits, and as thou art shrewd, form the most reasonable conclusion thou canst as to his wisdom or folly; though, to tell the truth, I am more inclined to take him to be mad than sane.”

With this Don Lorenzo went away to entertain Don Quixote as has been said, and in the course of the conversation that passed between them Don Quixote said to Don Lorenzo, “Your father, Senor Don Diego de Miranda, has told me of the rare abilities and subtle intellect you possess, and, above all, that you are a great poet.”

“A poet, it may be,” replied Don Lorenzo, “but a great one, by no means. It is true that I am somewhat given to poetry and to reading good poets, but not so much so as to justify the title of ‘great’ which my father gives me.”

“I do not dislike that modesty,” said Don Quixote; “for there is no poet who is not conceited and does not think he is the best poet in the world.”

“There is no rule without an exception,” said Don Lorenzo; “there may be some who are poets and yet do not think they are.”

“Very few,” said Don Quixote; “but tell me, what verses are those which you have now in hand, and which your father tells me keep you somewhat restless and absorbed? If it be some gloss, I know something about glosses, and I should like to hear them; and if they are for a poetical tournament, contrive to carry off the second prize; for the first always goes by favour or personal standing, the second by simple justice; and so the third comes to be the second, and the first, reckoning in this way, will be third, in the same way as licentiate degrees are conferred at the universities; but, for all that, the title of first is a great distinction.”

“So far,” said Don Lorenzo to himself, “I should not take you to be a madman; but let us go on.” So he said to him, “Your worship has apparently attended the schools; what sciences have you studied?”

“That of knight-errantry,” said Don Quixote, “which is as good as that of poetry, and even a finger or two above it.”

“I do not know what science that is,” said Don Lorenzo, “and until now I have never heard of it.”

“It is a science,” said Don Quixote, “that comprehends in itself all or most of the sciences in the world, for he who professes it must be a jurist, and must know the rules of justice, distributive and equitable, so as to give to each one what belongs to him and is due to him. He must be a theologian, so as to be able to give a clear and distinctive reason for the Christian faith he professes, wherever it may be asked of him. He must be a physician, and above all a herbalist, so as

in wastes and solitudes to know the herbs that have the property of healing wounds, for a knight-errant must not go looking for some one to cure him at every step. He must be an astronomer, so as to know by the stars how many hours of the night have passed, and what clime and quarter of the world he is in. He must know mathematics, for at every turn some occasion for them will present itself to him; and, putting it aside that he must be adorned with all the virtues, cardinal and theological, to come down to minor particulars, he must, I say, be able to swim as well as Nicholas or Nicolao the Fish could, as the story goes; he must know how to shoe a horse, and repair his saddle and bridle; and, to return to higher matters, he must be faithful to God and to his lady; he must be pure in thought, decorous in words, generous in works, valiant in deeds, patient in suffering, compassionate towards the needy, and, lastly, an upholder of the truth though its defence should cost him his life. Of all these qualities, great and small, is a true knight-errant made up; judge then, Senor Don Lorenzo, whether it be a contemptible science which the knight who studies and professes it has to learn, and whether it may not compare with the very loftiest that are taught in the schools."

"If that be so," replied Don Lorenzo, "this science, I protest, surpasses all."

"How, if that be so?" said Don Quixote.

"What I mean to say," said Don Lorenzo, "is, that I doubt whether there are now, or ever were, any knights-errant, and adorned with such virtues."

"Many a time," replied Don Quixote, "have I said what I now say once more, that the majority of the world are of opinion that there never were any knights-errant in it; and as it is my opinion that, unless heaven by some miracle brings home to them the truth that there were and are, all the pains one takes will be in vain (as experience has often proved to me), I will not now stop to disabuse you of the error you share with the multitude. All I shall do is to pray to heaven to deliver you from it, and show you how beneficial and necessary knights-errant were in days of yore, and how useful they would be in these days were they but in vogue; but now, for the sins of the people, sloth and indolence, gluttony and luxury are triumphant."

"Our guest has broken out on our hands," said Don Lorenzo to himself at this point; "but, for all that, he is a glorious madman, and I should be a dull blockhead to doubt it."

Here, being summoned to dinner, they brought their colloquy to a close. Don Diego asked his son what he had been able to make out as to the wits of their guest. To which he replied, "All the doctors and clever scribes in the world will not make sense of the scrawl of his madness; he is a madman full of streaks, full of lucid intervals."



They went in to dinner, and the repast was such as Don Diego said on the road he was in the habit of giving to his guests, neat, plentiful, and tasty; but what pleased Don Quixote most was the marvellous silence that reigned throughout the house, for it was like a Carthusian monastery.

When the cloth had been removed, grace said and their hands washed, Don Quixote earnestly pressed Don Lorenzo to repeat to him his verses for the poetical tournament, to which he replied, "Not to be like those poets who, when they are asked to recite their verses, refuse, and when they are not asked for them vomit them up, I will repeat my gloss, for which I do not expect any prize, having composed it merely as an exercise of ingenuity."

"A discerning friend of mine," said Don Quixote, "was of opinion that no one ought to waste labour in glossing verses; and the reason he gave was that the gloss can never come up to the text, and that often or most frequently it wanders away from the meaning and purpose aimed at in the glossed lines; and besides, that the laws of the gloss were too strict, as they did not allow interrogations, nor 'said he,' nor 'I say,' nor turning verbs into nouns, or altering the construction, not to speak of other restrictions and limitations that fetter gloss-writers, as you no doubt know."

"Verily, Senor Don Quixote," said Don Lorenzo, "I wish I could catch your worship tripping at a stretch, but I cannot, for you slip through my fingers like an eel."

"I don't understand what you say, or mean by slipping," said Don Quixote.

"I will explain myself another time," said Don Lorenzo; "for the present pray attend to the glossed verses and the gloss, which run thus: Could 'was' become an 'is' for me,

Then would I ask no more than this;  
Or could, for me, the time that is  
Become the time that is to be! —

## GLOSS

Dame Fortune once upon a day  
To me was bountiful and kind;  
But all things change; she changed her mind,  
And what she gave she took away.

O Fortune, long I've sued to thee;  
The gifts thou gavest me restore,  
For, trust me, I would ask no more,  
Could 'was' become an 'is' for me.

No other prize I seek to gain,  
No triumph, glory, or success,  
Only the long-lost happiness,  
The memory whereof is pain.  
One taste, methinks, of bygone bliss  
The heart-consuming fire might stay;  
And, so it come without delay,  
Then would I ask no more than this.

I ask what cannot be, alas!  
That time should ever be, and then  
Come back to us, and be again,  
No power on earth can bring to pass;  
For fleet of foot is he, I wis,  
And idly, therefore, do we pray  
That what for aye hath left us may  
Become for us the time that is.

Perplexed, uncertain, to remain  
‘Twixt hope and fear, is death, not life;  
‘Twere better, sure, to end the strife,  
And dying, seek release from pain.  
And yet, thought were the best for me.  
Anon the thought aside I fling,  
And to the present fondly cling,  
And dread the time that is to be.”

When Don Lorenzo had finished reciting his gloss, Don Quixote stood up, and in a loud voice, almost a shout, exclaimed as he grasped Don Lorenzo’s right hand in his, “By the highest heavens, noble youth, but you are the best poet on earth, and deserve to be crowned with laurel, not by Cyprus or by Gaeta — as a certain poet, God forgive him, said — but by the Academies of Athens, if they still flourished, and by those that flourish now, Paris, Bologna, Salamanca. Heaven grant that the judges who rob you of the first prize — that Phoebus may pierce them with his arrows, and the Muses never cross the thresholds of their doors. Repeat me some of your long-measure verses, senor, if you will be so good, for I want thoroughly to feel the pulse of your rare genius.”

Is there any need to say that Don Lorenzo enjoyed hearing himself praised by Don Quixote, albeit he looked upon him as a madman? power of flattery, how

far-reaching art thou, and how wide are the bounds of thy pleasant jurisdiction! Don Lorenzo gave a proof of it, for he complied with Don Quixote's request and entreaty, and repeated to him this sonnet on the fable or story of Pyramus and Thisbe.

#### SONNET

The lovely maid, she pierces now the wall;  
Heart-pierced by her young Pyramus doth lie;  
And Love spreads wing from Cyprus isle to fly,  
A chink to view so wondrous great and small.  
There silence speaketh, for no voice at all  
Can pass so strait a strait; but love will ply  
Where to all other power 'twere vain to try;  
For love will find a way whate'er befall.  
Impatient of delay, with reckless pace  
The rash maid wins the fatal spot where she  
Sinks not in lover's arms but death's embrace.  
So runs the strange tale, how the lovers twain  
One sword, one sepulchre, one memory,  
Slays, and entombs, and brings to life again.

"Blessed be God," said Don Quixote when he had heard Don Lorenzo's sonnet, "that among the hosts there are of irritable poets I have found one consummate one, which, senor, the art of this sonnet proves to me that you are!"

For four days was Don Quixote most sumptuously entertained in Don Diego's house, at the end of which time he asked his permission to depart, telling him he thanked him for the kindness and hospitality he had received in his house, but that, as it did not become knights-errant to give themselves up for long to idleness and luxury, he was anxious to fulfill the duties of his calling in seeking adventures, of which he was informed there was an abundance in that neighbourhood, where he hoped to employ his time until the day came round for the jousts at Saragossa, for that was his proper destination; and that, first of all, he meant to enter the cave of Montesinos, of which so many marvellous things were reported all through the country, and at the same time to investigate and explore the origin and true source of the seven lakes commonly called the lakes of Ruidera.

Don Diego and his son commended his laudable resolution, and bade him furnish himself with all he wanted from their house and belongings, as they would most gladly be of service to him; which, indeed, his personal worth and

his honourable profession made incumbent upon them.

The day of his departure came at length, as welcome to Don Quixote as it was sad and sorrowful to Sancho Panza, who was very well satisfied with the abundance of Don Diego's house, and objected to return to the starvation of the woods and wilds and the short-commons of his ill-stocked alforjas; these, however, he filled and packed with what he considered needful. On taking leave, Don Quixote said to Don Lorenzo, "I know not whether I have told you already, but if I have I tell you once more, that if you wish to spare yourself fatigue and toil in reaching the inaccessible summit of the temple of fame, you have nothing to do but to turn aside out of the somewhat narrow path of poetry and take the still narrower one of knight-errantry, wide enough, however, to make you an emperor in the twinkling of an eye."

In this speech Don Quixote wound up the evidence of his madness, but still better in what he added when he said, "God knows, I would gladly take Don Lorenzo with me to teach him how to spare the humble, and trample the proud under foot, virtues that are part and parcel of the profession I belong to; but since his tender age does not allow of it, nor his praiseworthy pursuits permit it, I will simply content myself with impressing it upon your worship that you will become famous as a poet if you are guided by the opinion of others rather than by your own; because no fathers or mothers ever think their own children ill-favoured, and this sort of deception prevails still more strongly in the case of the children of the brain."

Both father and son were amazed afresh at the strange medley Don Quixote talked, at one moment sense, at another nonsense, and at the pertinacity and persistence he displayed in going through thick and thin in quest of his unlucky adventures, which he made the end and aim of his desires. There was a renewal of offers of service and civilities, and then, with the gracious permission of the lady of the castle, they took their departure, Don Quixote on Rocinante, and Sancho on Dapple.



## CHAPTER XIX.

IN WHICH IS RELATED THE ADVENTURE OF THE ENAMOURED SHEPHERD, TOGETHER WITH OTHER TRULY DROLL INCIDENTS



Don Quixote had gone but a short distance beyond Don Diego's village, when he fell in with a couple of either priests or students, and a couple of peasants, mounted on four beasts of the ass kind. One of the students carried, wrapped up in a piece of green buckram by way of a portmanteau, what seemed to be a little linen and a couple of pairs of-ribbed stockings; the other carried nothing but a pair of new fencing-foils with buttons. The peasants carried divers articles that showed they were on their way from some large town where they had bought them, and were taking them home to their village; and both students and peasants were struck with the same amazement that everybody felt who saw Don

Quixote for the first time, and were dying to know who this man, so different from ordinary men, could be. Don Quixote saluted them, and after ascertaining that their road was the same as his, made them an offer of his company, and begged them to slacken their pace, as their young asses travelled faster than his horse; and then, to gratify them, he told them in a few words who he was and the calling and profession he followed, which was that of a knight-errant seeking adventures in all parts of the world. He informed them that his own name was Don Quixote of La Mancha, and that he was called, by way of surname, the Knight of the Lions.

All this was Greek or gibberish to the peasants, but not so to the students, who very soon perceived the crack in Don Quixote's pate; for all that, however, they regarded him with admiration and respect, and one of them said to him, "If you, sir knight, have no fixed road, as it is the way with those who seek adventures not to have any, let your worship come with us; you will see one of the finest and richest weddings that up to this day have ever been celebrated in La Mancha, or for many a league round."

Don Quixote asked him if it was some prince's, that he spoke of it in this way. "Not at all," said the student; "it is the wedding of a farmer and a farmer's daughter, he the richest in all this country, and she the fairest mortal ever set eyes on. The display with which it is to be attended will be something rare and out of the common, for it will be celebrated in a meadow adjoining the town of the bride, who is called, par excellence, Quiteria the fair, as the bridegroom is called Camacho the rich. She is eighteen, and he twenty-two, and they are fairly matched, though some knowing ones, who have all the pedigrees in the world by heart, will have it that the family of the fair Quiteria is better than Camacho's; but no one minds that now-a-days, for wealth can solder a great many flaws. At any rate, Camacho is free-handed, and it is his fancy to screen the whole meadow with boughs and cover it in overhead, so that the sun will have hard work if he tries to get in to reach the grass that covers the soil. He has provided dancers too, not only sword but also bell-dancers, for in his own town there are those who ring the changes and jingle the bells to perfection; of shoe-dancers I say nothing, for of them he has engaged a host. But none of these things, nor of the many others I have omitted to mention, will do more to make this a memorable wedding than the part which I suspect the despairing Basilio will play in it. This Basilio is a youth of the same village as Quiteria, and he lived in the house next door to that of her parents, of which circumstance Love took advantage to reproduce to the world the long-forgotten loves of Pyramus and Thisbe; for Basilio loved Quiteria from his earliest years, and she responded to his passion with countless modest proofs of affection, so that the loves of the

two children, Basilio and Quiteria, were the talk and the amusement of the town. As they grew up, the father of Quiteria made up his mind to refuse Basilio his wonted freedom of access to the house, and to relieve himself of constant doubts and suspicions, he arranged a match for his daughter with the rich Camacho, as he did not approve of marrying her to Basilio, who had not so large a share of the gifts of fortune as of nature; for if the truth be told ungrudgingly, he is the most agile youth we know, a mighty thrower of the bar, a first-rate wrestler, and a great ball-player; he runs like a deer, and leaps better than a goat, bowls over the nine-pins as if by magic, sings like a lark, plays the guitar so as to make it speak, and, above all, handles a sword as well as the best."

"For that excellence alone," said Don Quixote at this, "the youth deserves to marry, not merely the fair Quiteria, but Queen Guinevere herself, were she alive now, in spite of Launcelot and all who would try to prevent it."

"Say that to my wife," said Sancho, who had until now listened in silence, "for she won't hear of anything but each one marrying his equal, holding with the proverb 'each ewe to her like.' What I would like is that this good Basilio (for I am beginning to take a fancy to him already) should marry this lady Quiteria; and a blessing and good luck — I meant to say the opposite — on people who would prevent those who love one another from marrying."

"If all those who love one another were to marry," said Don Quixote, "it would deprive parents of the right to choose, and marry their children to the proper person and at the proper time; and if it was left to daughters to choose husbands as they pleased, one would be for choosing her father's servant, and another, some one she has seen passing in the street and fancies gallant and dashing, though he may be a drunken bully; for love and fancy easily blind the eyes of the judgment, so much wanted in choosing one's way of life; and the matrimonial choice is very liable to error, and it needs great caution and the special favour of heaven to make it a good one. He who has to make a long journey, will, if he is wise, look out for some trusty and pleasant companion to accompany him before he sets out. Why, then, should not he do the same who has to make the whole journey of life down to the final halting-place of death, more especially when the companion has to be his companion in bed, at board, and everywhere, as the wife is to her husband? The companionship of one's wife is no article of merchandise, that, after it has been bought, may be returned, or bartered, or changed; for it is an inseparable accident that lasts as long as life lasts; it is a noose that, once you put it round your neck, turns into a Gordian knot, which, if the scythe of Death does not cut it, there is no untying. I could say a great deal more on this subject, were I not prevented by the anxiety I feel to know if the senior licentiate has anything more to tell about the story of



Basilio.”

To this the student, bachelor, or, as Don Quixote called him, licentiate, replied, “I have nothing whatever to say further, but that from the moment Basilio learned that the fair Quiteria was to be married to Camacho the rich, he has never been seen to smile, or heard to utter rational word, and he always goes about moody and dejected, talking to himself in a way that shows plainly he is out of his senses. He eats little and sleeps little, and all he eats is fruit, and when he sleeps, if he sleeps at all, it is in the field on the hard earth like a brute beast. Sometimes he gazes at the sky, at other times he fixes his eyes on the earth in such an abstracted way that he might be taken for a clothed statue, with its drapery stirred by the wind. In short, he shows such signs of a heart crushed by suffering, that all we who know him believe that when to-morrow the fair Quiteria says ‘yes,’ it will be his sentence of death.”

“God will guide it better,” said Sancho, “for God who gives the wound gives the salve; nobody knows what will happen; there are a good many hours between this and to-morrow, and any one of them, or any moment, the house may fall; I have seen the rain coming down and the sun shining all at one time; many a one goes to bed in good health who can’t stir the next day. And tell me, is there anyone who can boast of having driven a nail into the wheel of fortune? No, faith; and between a woman’s ‘yes’ and ‘no’ I wouldn’t venture to put the point of a pin, for there would not be room for it; if you tell me Quiteria loves Basilio heart and soul, then I’ll give him a bag of good luck; for love, I have heard say, looks through spectacles that make copper seem gold, poverty wealth, and blear eyes pearls.”

“What art thou driving at, Sancho? curses on thee!” said Don Quixote; “for when thou takest to stringing proverbs and sayings together, no one can understand thee but Judas himself, and I wish he had thee. Tell me, thou animal, what dost thou know about nails or wheels, or anything else?”

“Oh, if you don’t understand me,” replied Sancho, “it is no wonder my words are taken for nonsense; but no matter; I understand myself, and I know I have not said anything very foolish in what I have said; only your worship, senor, is always gravelling at everything I say, nay, everything I do.”

“Cavilling, not gravelling,” said Don Quixote, “thou prevaricator of honest language, God confound thee!”

“Don’t find fault with me, your worship,” returned Sancho, “for you know I have not been bred up at court or trained at Salamanca, to know whether I am adding or dropping a letter or so in my words. Why! God bless me, it’s not fair to force a Sayago-man to speak like a Toledan; maybe there are Toledans who do not hit it off when it comes to polished talk.”

“That is true,” said the licentiate, “for those who have been bred up in the Tanneries and the Zocodover cannot talk like those who are almost all day pacing the cathedral cloisters, and yet they are all Toledans. Pure, correct, elegant and lucid language will be met with in men of courtly breeding and discrimination, though they may have been born in Majalahonda; I say of discrimination, because there are many who are not so, and discrimination is the grammar of good language, if it be accompanied by practice. I, sirs, for my sins have studied canon law at Salamanca, and I rather pique myself on expressing my meaning in clear, plain, and intelligible language.”

“If you did not pique yourself more on your dexterity with those foils you carry than on dexterity of tongue,” said the other student, “you would have been head of the degrees, where you are now tail.”

“Look here, bachelor Corchuelo,” returned the licentiate, “you have the most mistaken idea in the world about skill with the sword, if you think it useless.”

“It is no idea on my part, but an established truth,” replied Corchuelo; “and if you wish me to prove it to you by experiment, you have swords there, and it is a good opportunity; I have a steady hand and a strong arm, and these joined with my resolution, which is not small, will make you confess that I am not mistaken. Dismount and put in practice your positions and circles and angles and science, for I hope to make you see stars at noonday with my rude raw swordsmanship, in which, next to God, I place my trust that the man is yet to be born who will make me turn my back, and that there is not one in the world I will not compel to give ground.”

“As to whether you turn your back or not, I do not concern myself,” replied the master of fence; “though it might be that your grave would be dug on the spot where you planted your foot the first time; I mean that you would be stretched dead there for despising skill with the sword.”

“We shall soon see,” replied Corchuelo, and getting off his ass briskly, he drew out furiously one of the swords the licentiate carried on his beast.

“It must not be that way,” said Don Quixote at this point; “I will be the director of this fencing match, and judge of this often disputed question;” and dismounting from Rocinante and grasping his lance, he planted himself in the middle of the road, just as the licentiate, with an easy, graceful bearing and step, advanced towards Corchuelo, who came on against him, darting fire from his eyes, as the saying is. The other two of the company, the peasants, without dismounting from their asses, served as spectators of the mortal tragedy. The cuts, thrusts, down strokes, back strokes and doubles, that Corchuelo delivered were past counting, and came thicker than hops or hail. He attacked like an angry lion, but he was met by a tap on the mouth from the button of the

licentiate's sword that checked him in the midst of his furious onset, and made him kiss it as if it were a relic, though not as devoutly as relics are and ought to be kissed. The end of it was that the licentiate reckoned up for him by thrusts every one of the buttons of the short cassock he wore, tore the skirts into strips, like the tails of a cuttlefish, knocked off his hat twice, and so completely tired him out, that in vexation, anger, and rage, he took the sword by the hilt and flung it away with such force, that one of the peasants that were there, who was a notary, and who went for it, made an affidavit afterwards that he sent it nearly three-quarters of a league, which testimony will serve, and has served, to show and establish with all certainty that strength is overcome by skill.

Corchuelo sat down wearied, and Sancho approaching him said, "By my faith, senior bachelor, if your worship takes my advice, you will never challenge anyone to fence again, only to wrestle and throw the bar, for you have the youth and strength for that; but as for these fencers as they call them, I have heard say they can put the point of a sword through the eye of a needle."

"I am satisfied with having tumbled off my donkey," said Corchuelo, "and with having had the truth I was so ignorant of proved to me by experience;" and getting up he embraced the licentiate, and they were better friends than ever; and not caring to wait for the notary who had gone for the sword, as they saw he would be a long time about it, they resolved to push on so as to reach the village of Quiteria, to which they all belonged, in good time.

During the remainder of the journey the licentiate held forth to them on the excellences of the sword, with such conclusive arguments, and such figures and mathematical proofs, that all were convinced of the value of the science, and Corchuelo cured of his dogmatism.

It grew dark; but before they reached the town it seemed to them all as if there was a heaven full of countless glittering stars in front of it. They heard, too, the pleasant mingled notes of a variety of instruments, flutes, drums, psalteries, pipes, tabors, and timbrels, and as they drew near they perceived that the trees of a leafy arcade that had been constructed at the entrance of the town were filled with lights unaffected by the wind, for the breeze at the time was so gentle that it had not power to stir the leaves on the trees. The musicians were the life of the wedding, wandering through the pleasant grounds in separate bands, some dancing, others singing, others playing the various instruments already mentioned. In short, it seemed as though mirth and gaiety were frisking and gambolling all over the meadow. Several other persons were engaged in erecting raised benches from which people might conveniently see the plays and dances that were to be performed the next day on the spot dedicated to the celebration of the marriage of Camacho the rich and the obsequies of Basilio. Don Quixote

would not enter the village, although the peasant as well as the bachelor pressed him; he excused himself, however, on the grounds, amply sufficient in his opinion, that it was the custom of knights-errant to sleep in the fields and woods in preference to towns, even were it under gilded ceilings; and so turned aside a little out of the road, very much against Sancho's will, as the good quarters he had enjoyed in the castle or house of Don Diego came back to his mind.





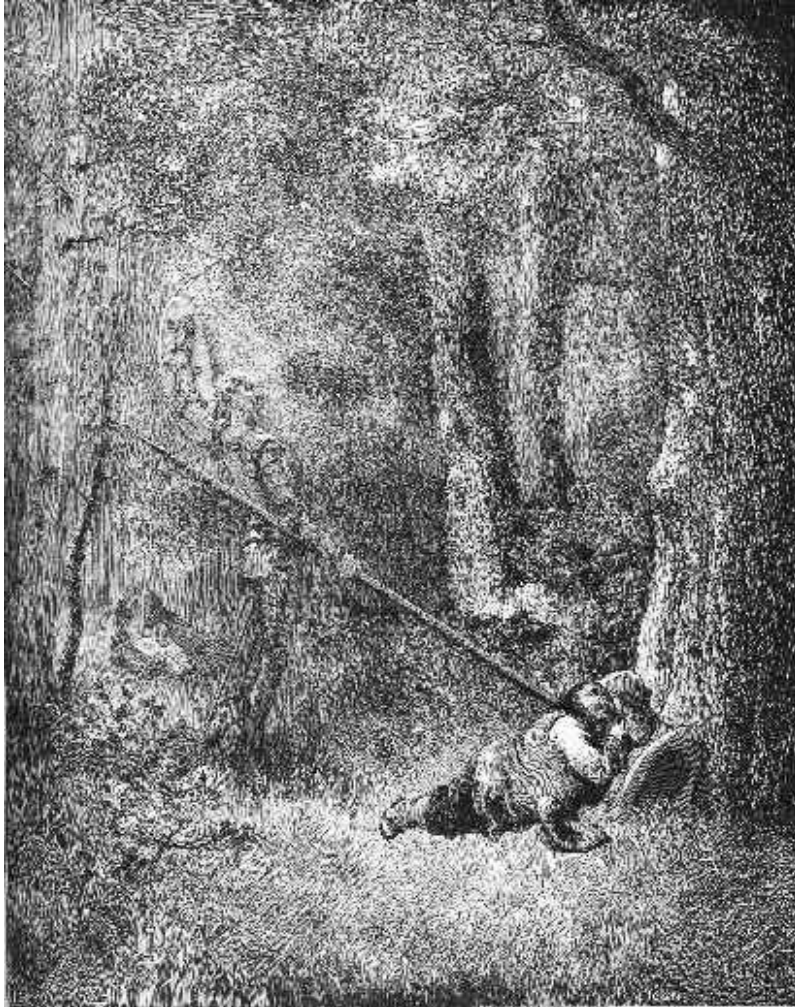
## CHAPTER XX.

WHEREIN AN ACCOUNT IS GIVEN OF THE WEDDING OF CAMACHO THE RICH, TOGETHER WITH THE INCIDENT OF BASILIO THE POOR



Scarce had the fair Aurora given bright Phoebus time to dry the liquid pearls upon her golden locks with the heat of his fervent rays, when Don Quixote, shaking off sloth from his limbs, sprang to his feet and called to his squire Sancho, who was still snoring; seeing which Don Quixote ere he roused him thus addressed him: "Happy thou, above all the dwellers on the face of the earth, that, without envying or being envied, sleepest with tranquil mind, and that neither enchanters persecute nor enchantments affright. Sleep, I say, and will say a

hundred times, without any jealous thoughts of thy mistress to make thee keep ceaseless vigils, or any cares as to how thou art to pay the debts thou owest, or find to-morrow's food for thyself and thy needy little family, to interfere with thy repose. Ambition breaks not thy rest, nor doth this world's empty pomp disturb thee, for the utmost reach of thy anxiety is to provide for thy ass, since upon my shoulders thou hast laid the support of thyself, the counterpoise and burden that nature and custom have imposed upon masters. The servant sleeps and the master lies awake thinking how he is to feed him, advance him, and reward him. The distress of seeing the sky turn brazen, and withhold its needful moisture from the earth, is not felt by the servant but by the master, who in time of scarcity and famine must support him who has served him in times of plenty and abundance."



To all this Sancho made no reply because he was asleep, nor would he have wakened up so soon as he did had not Don Quixote brought him to his senses with the butt of his lance. He awoke at last, drowsy and lazy, and casting his eyes about in every direction, observed, "There comes, if I don't mistake, from the quarter of that arcade a steam and a smell a great deal more like fried rashers than galingale or thyme; a wedding that begins with smells like that, by my faith, ought to be plentiful and unstinting."

"Have done, thou glutton," said Don Quixote; "come, let us go and witness this bridal, and see what the rejected Basilio does."

"Let him do what he likes," returned Sancho; "be he not poor, he would marry



Quiteria. To make a grand match for himself, and he without a farthing; is there nothing else? Faith, senor, it's my opinion the poor man should be content with what he can get, and not go looking for dainties in the bottom of the sea. I will bet my arm that Camacho could bury Basilio in reals; and if that be so, as no doubt it is, what a fool Quiteria would be to refuse the fine dresses and jewels Camacho must have given her and will give her, and take Basilio's bar-throwing and sword-play. They won't give a pint of wine at the tavern for a good cast of the bar or a neat thrust of the sword. Talents and accomplishments that can't be turned into money, let Count Dirlos have them; but when such gifts fall to one that has hard cash, I wish my condition of life was as becoming as they are. On a good foundation you can raise a good building, and the best foundation in the world is money."

"For God's sake, Sancho," said Don Quixote here, "stop that harangue; it is my belief, if thou wert allowed to continue all thou beginnest every instant, thou wouldst have no time left for eating or sleeping; for thou wouldst spend it all in talking."

"If your worship had a good memory," replied Sancho, "you would remember the articles of our agreement before we started from home this last time; one of them was that I was to be let say all I liked, so long as it was not against my neighbour or your worship's authority; and so far, it seems to me, I have not broken the said article."

"I remember no such article, Sancho," said Don Quixote; "and even if it were so, I desire you to hold your tongue and come along; for the instruments we heard last night are already beginning to enliven the valleys again, and no doubt the marriage will take place in the cool of the morning, and not in the heat of the afternoon."

Sancho did as his master bade him, and putting the saddle on Rocinante and the pack-saddle on Dapple, they both mounted and at a leisurely pace entered the arcade. The first thing that presented itself to Sancho's eyes was a whole ox spitted on a whole elm tree, and in the fire at which it was to be roasted there was burning a middling-sized mountain of faggots, and six stewpots that stood round the blaze had not been made in the ordinary mould of common pots, for they were six half wine-jars, each fit to hold the contents of a slaughter-house; they swallowed up whole sheep and hid them away in their insides without showing any more sign of them than if they were pigeons. Countless were the hares ready skinned and the plucked fowls that hung on the trees for burial in the pots, numberless the wildfowl and game of various sorts suspended from the branches that the air might keep them cool. Sancho counted more than sixty wine skins of over six gallons each, and all filled, as it proved afterwards, with

generous wines. There were, besides, piles of the whitest bread, like the heaps of corn one sees on the threshing-floors. There was a wall made of cheeses arranged like open brick-work, and two cauldrons full of oil, bigger than those of a dyer's shop, served for cooking fritters, which when fried were taken out with two mighty shovels, and plunged into another cauldron of prepared honey that stood close by. Of cooks and cook-maids there were over fifty, all clean, brisk, and blithe. In the capacious belly of the ox were a dozen soft little sucking-pigs, which, sewn up there, served to give it tenderness and flavour. The spices of different kinds did not seem to have been bought by the pound but by the quarter, and all lay open to view in a great chest. In short, all the preparations made for the wedding were in rustic style, but abundant enough to feed an army.



Sancho observed all, contemplated all, and everything won his heart. The first to captivate and take his fancy were the pots, out of which he would have very gladly helped himself to a moderate pipkinful; then the wine skins secured his affections; and lastly, the produce of the frying-pans, if, indeed, such imposing cauldrons may be called frying-pans; and unable to control himself or bear it any longer, he approached one of the busy cooks and civilly but hungrily begged permission to soak a scrap of bread in one of the pots; to which the cook made answer, "Brother, this is not a day on which hunger is to have any sway, thanks to the rich Camacho; get down and look about for a ladle and skim off a hen or two, and much good may they do you."

"I don't see one," said Sancho.

"Wait a bit," said the cook; "sinner that I am! how particular and bashful you are!" and so saying, he seized a bucket and plunging it into one of the half jars

took up three hens and a couple of geese, and said to Sancho, “Fall to, friend, and take the edge off your appetite with these skimmings until dinner-time comes.”



“I have nothing to put them in,” said Sancho.

“Well then,” said the cook, “take spoon and all; for Camacho’s wealth and happiness furnish everything.”

While Sancho fared thus, Don Quixote was watching the entrance, at one end of the arcade, of some twelve peasants, all in holiday and gala dress, mounted on twelve beautiful mares with rich handsome field trappings and a number of little bells attached to their petrels, who, marshalled in regular order, ran not one but several courses over the meadow, with jubilant shouts and cries of “Long live Camacho and Quiteria! he as rich as she is fair; and she the fairest on earth!”

Hearing this, Don Quixote said to himself, “It is easy to see these folk have never seen my Dulcinea del Toboso; for if they had they would be more moderate in their praises of this Quiteria of theirs.”

Shortly after this, several bands of dancers of various sorts began to enter the arcade at different points, and among them one of sword-dancers composed of some four-and-twenty lads of gallant and high-spirited mien, clad in the finest and whitest of linen, and with handkerchiefs embroidered in various colours with fine silk; and one of those on the mares asked an active youth who led them if any of the dancers had been wounded. “As yet, thank God, no one has been wounded,” said he, “we are all safe and sound;” and he at once began to execute complicated figures with the rest of his comrades, with so many turns and so great dexterity, that although Don Quixote was well used to see dances of the same kind, he thought he had never seen any so good as this. He also admired another that came in composed of fair young maidens, none of whom seemed to be under fourteen or over eighteen years of age, all clad in green stuff, with their locks partly braided, partly flowing loose, but all of such bright gold as to vie with the sunbeams, and over them they wore garlands of jessamine, roses, amaranth, and honeysuckle. At their head were a venerable old man and an ancient dame, more brisk and active, however, than might have been expected from their years. The notes of a Zamora bagpipe accompanied them, and with modesty in their countenances and in their eyes, and lightness in their feet, they looked the best dancers in the world.



Following these there came an artistic dance of the sort they call “speaking dances.” It was composed of eight nymphs in two files, with the god Cupid leading one and Interest the other, the former furnished with wings, bow, quiver and arrows, the latter in a rich dress of gold and silk of divers colours. The nymphs that followed Love bore their names written on white parchment in large letters on their backs. “Poetry” was the name of the first, “Wit” of the second, “Birth” of the third, and “Valour” of the fourth. Those that followed Interest were distinguished in the same way; the badge of the first announced “Liberality,” that of the second “Largess,” the third “Treasure,” and the fourth “Peaceful Possession.” In front of them all came a wooden castle drawn by four wild men, all clad in ivy and hemp stained green, and looking so natural that

they nearly terrified Sancho. On the front of the castle and on each of the four sides of its frame it bore the inscription "Castle of Caution." Four skillful tabor and flute players accompanied them, and the dance having been opened, Cupid, after executing two figures, raised his eyes and bent his bow against a damsel who stood between the turrets of the castle, and thus addressed her: I am the mighty God whose sway

Is potent over land and sea.  
The heavens above us own me; nay,  
The shades below acknowledge me.  
I know not fear, I have my will,  
Whate'er my whim or fancy be;  
For me there's no impossible,  
I order, bind, forbid, set free.

Having concluded the stanza he discharged an arrow at the top of the castle, and went back to his place. Interest then came forward and went through two more figures, and as soon as the tabors ceased, he said: But mightier than Love am I,

Though Love it be that leads me on,  
Than mine no lineage is more high,  
Or older, underneath the sun.  
To use me rightly few know how,  
To act without me fewer still,  
For I am Interest, and I vow  
For evermore to do thy will.

Interest retired, and Poetry came forward, and when she had gone through her figures like the others, fixing her eyes on the damsel of the castle, she said: With many a fanciful conceit,

Fair Lady, winsome Poesy  
Her soul, an offering at thy feet,  
Presents in sonnets unto thee.  
If thou my homage wilt not scorn,  
Thy fortune, watched by envious eyes,  
On wings of poesy upborne  
Shall be exalted to the skies.

Poetry withdrew, and on the side of Interest Liberality advanced, and after having gone through her figures, said: To give, while shunning each extreme,

The sparing hand, the over-free,  
Therein consists, so wise men deem,  
The virtue Liberality.  
But thee, fair lady, to enrich,  
Myself a prodigal I'll prove,  
A vice not wholly shameful, which  
May find its fair excuse in love.

In the same manner all the characters of the two bands advanced and retired, and each executed its figures, and delivered its verses, some of them graceful, some burlesque, but Don Quixote's memory (though he had an excellent one) only carried away those that have been just quoted. All then mingled together, forming chains and breaking off again with graceful, unconstrained gaiety; and whenever Love passed in front of the castle he shot his arrows up at it, while Interest broke gilded pellets against it. At length, after they had danced a good while, Interest drew out a great purse, made of the skin of a large brindled cat and to all appearance full of money, and flung it at the castle, and with the force of the blow the boards fell asunder and tumbled down, leaving the damsel exposed and unprotected. Interest and the characters of his band advanced, and throwing a great chain of gold over her neck pretended to take her and lead her away captive, on seeing which, Love and his supporters made as though they would release her, the whole action being to the accompaniment of the tabors and in the form of a regular dance. The wild men made peace between them, and with great dexterity readjusted and fixed the boards of the castle, and the damsel once more ensconced herself within; and with this the dance wound up, to the great enjoyment of the beholders.

Don Quixote asked one of the nymphs who it was that had composed and arranged it. She replied that it was a beneficiary of the town who had a nice taste in devising things of the sort. "I will lay a wager," said Don Quixote, "that the same bachelor or beneficiary is a greater friend of Camacho's than of Basilio's, and that he is better at satire than at vespers; he has introduced the accomplishments of Basilio and the riches of Camacho very neatly into the dance." Sancho Panza, who was listening to all this, exclaimed, "The king is my cock; I stick to Camacho." "It is easy to see thou art a clown, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "and one of that sort that cry 'Long life to the conqueror.'"

"I don't know of what sort I am," returned Sancho, "but I know very well I'll never get such elegant skimmings off Basilio's pots as these I have got off Camacho's;" and he showed him the bucketful of geese and hens, and seizing one began to eat with great gaiety and appetite, saying, "A fig for the



accomplishments of Basilio! As much as thou hast so much art thou worth, and as much as thou art worth so much hast thou. As a grandmother of mine used to say, there are only two families in the world, the Haves and the Haven'ts; and she stuck to the Haves; and to this day, Senor Don Quixote, people would sooner feel the pulse of 'Have,' than of 'Know;' an ass covered with gold looks better than a horse with a pack-saddle. So once more I say I stick to Camacho, the bountiful skimmings of whose pots are geese and hens, hares and rabbits; but of Basilio's, if any ever come to hand, or even to foot, they'll be only rinsings."

"Hast thou finished thy harangue, Sancho?" said Don Quixote. "Of course I have finished it," replied Sancho, "because I see your worship takes offence at it; but if it was not for that, there was work enough cut out for three days."

"God grant I may see thee dumb before I die, Sancho," said Don Quixote.

"At the rate we are going," said Sancho, "I'll be chewing clay before your worship dies; and then, maybe, I'll be so dumb that I'll not say a word until the end of the world, or, at least, till the day of judgment."

"Even should that happen, O Sancho," said Don Quixote, "thy silence will never come up to all thou hast talked, art talking, and wilt talk all thy life; moreover, it naturally stands to reason, that my death will come before thine; so I never expect to see thee dumb, not even when thou art drinking or sleeping, and that is the utmost I can say."

"In good faith, senor," replied Sancho, "there's no trusting that fleshless one, I mean Death, who devours the lamb as soon as the sheep, and, as I have heard our curate say, treads with equal foot upon the lofty towers of kings and the lowly huts of the poor. That lady is more mighty than dainty, she is no way squeamish, she devours all and is ready for all, and fills her alforjas with people of all sorts, ages, and ranks. She is no reaper that sleeps out the noontide; at all times she is reaping and cutting down, as well the dry grass as the green; she never seems to chew, but bolts and swallows all that is put before her, for she has a canine appetite that is never satisfied; and though she has no belly, she shows she has a dropsy and is athirst to drink the lives of all that live, as one would drink a jug of cold water."

"Say no more, Sancho," said Don Quixote at this; "don't try to better it, and risk a fall; for in truth what thou hast said about death in thy rustic phrase is what a good preacher might have said. I tell thee, Sancho, if thou hadst discretion equal to thy mother wit, thou mightst take a pulpit in hand, and go about the world preaching fine sermons." "He preaches well who lives well," said Sancho, "and I know no more theology than that."

"Nor needst thou," said Don Quixote, "but I cannot conceive or make out how it is that, the fear of God being the beginning of wisdom, thou, who art more

afraid of a lizard than of him, knowest so much.”

“Pass judgment on your chivalries, senor,” returned Sancho, “and don’t set yourself up to judge of other men’s fears or braveries, for I am as good a fearer of God as my neighbours; but leave me to despatch these skimmings, for all the rest is only idle talk that we shall be called to account for in the other world;” and so saying, he began a fresh attack on the bucket, with such a hearty appetite that he aroused Don Quixote’s, who no doubt would have helped him had he not been prevented by what must be told farther on.





## CHAPTER XXI.

### IN WHICH CAMACHO'S WEDDING IS CONTINUED, WITH OTHER DELIGHTFUL INCIDENTS



While Don Quixote and Sancho were engaged in the discussion set forth the last chapter, they heard loud shouts and a great noise, which were uttered and made by the men on the mares as they went at full gallop, shouting, to receive the bride and bridegroom, who were approaching with musical instruments and pageantry of all sorts around them, and accompanied by the priest and the relatives of both, and all the most distinguished people of the surrounding villages. When Sancho saw the bride, he exclaimed, "By my faith, she is not dressed like a country girl, but like some fine court lady; egad, as well as I can make out, the patena she wears rich coral, and her green Cuenca stuff is thirty-

pile velvet; and then the white linen trimming — by my oath, but it's satin! Look at her hands — jet rings on them! May I never have luck if they're not gold rings, and real gold, and set with pearls as white as a curdled milk, and every one of them worth an eye of one's head! Whoreson baggage, what hair she has! if it's not a wig, I never saw longer or fairer all the days of my life. See how bravely she bears herself — and her shape! Wouldn't you say she was like a walking palm tree loaded with clusters of dates? for the trinkets she has hanging from her hair and neck look just like them. I swear in my heart she is a brave lass, and fit 'to pass over the banks of Flanders.'”

Don Quixote laughed at Sancho's boorish eulogies and thought that, saving his lady Dulcinea del Toboso, he had never seen a more beautiful woman. The fair Quiteria appeared somewhat pale, which was, no doubt, because of the bad night brides always pass dressing themselves out for their wedding on the morrow. They advanced towards a theatre that stood on one side of the meadow decked with carpets and boughs, where they were to plight their troth, and from which they were to behold the dances and plays; but at the moment of their arrival at the spot they heard a loud outcry behind them, and a voice exclaiming, “Wait a little, ye, as inconsiderate as ye are hasty!” At these words all turned round, and perceived that the speaker was a man clad in what seemed to be a loose black coat garnished with crimson patches like flames. He was crowned (as was presently seen) with a crown of gloomy cypress, and in his hand he held a long staff. As he approached he was recognised by everyone as the gay Basilio, and all waited anxiously to see what would come of his words, in dread of some catastrophe in consequence of his appearance at such a moment. He came up at last weary and breathless, and planting himself in front of the bridal pair, drove his staff, which had a steel spike at the end, into the ground, and, with a pale face and eyes fixed on Quiteria, he thus addressed her in a hoarse, trembling voice:

“Well dost thou know, ungrateful Quiteria, that according to the holy law we acknowledge, so long as live thou canst take no husband; nor art thou ignorant either that, in my hopes that time and my own exertions would improve my fortunes, I have never failed to observe the respect due to thy honour; but thou, casting behind thee all thou owest to my true love, wouldst surrender what is mine to another whose wealth serves to bring him not only good fortune but supreme happiness; and now to complete it (not that I think he deserves it, but inasmuch as heaven is pleased to bestow it upon him), I will, with my own hands, do away with the obstacle that may interfere with it, and remove myself from between you. Long live the rich Camacho! many a happy year may he live with the ungrateful Quiteria! and let the poor Basilio die, Basilio whose poverty clipped the wings of his happiness, and brought him to the grave!”

And so saying, he seized the staff he had driven into the ground, and leaving one half of it fixed there, showed it to be a sheath that concealed a tolerably long rapier; and, what may be called its hilt being planted in the ground, he swiftly, coolly, and deliberately threw himself upon it, and in an instant the bloody point and half the steel blade appeared at his back, the unhappy man falling to the earth bathed in his blood, and transfixed by his own weapon.

His friends at once ran to his aid, filled with grief at his misery and sad fate, and Don Quixote, dismounting from Rocinante, hastened to support him, and took him in his arms, and found he had not yet ceased to breathe. They were about to draw out the rapier, but the priest who was standing by objected to its being withdrawn before he had confessed him, as the instant of its withdrawal would be that of this death. Basilio, however, reviving slightly, said in a weak voice, as though in pain, "If thou wouldst consent, cruel Quiteria, to give me thy hand as my bride in this last fatal moment, I might still hope that my rashness would find pardon, as by its means I attained the bliss of being thine."

Hearing this the priest bade him think of the welfare of his soul rather than of the cravings of the body, and in all earnestness implore God's pardon for his sins and for his rash resolve; to which Basilio replied that he was determined not to confess unless Quiteria first gave him her hand in marriage, for that happiness would compose his mind and give him courage to make his confession.

Don Quixote hearing the wounded man's entreaty, exclaimed aloud that what Basilio asked was just and reasonable, and moreover a request that might be easily complied with; and that it would be as much to Senor Camacho's honour to receive the lady Quiteria as the widow of the brave Basilio as if he received her direct from her father.

"In this case," said he, "it will be only to say 'yes,' and no consequences can follow the utterance of the word, for the nuptial couch of this marriage must be the grave."

Camacho was listening to all this, perplexed and bewildered and not knowing what to say or do; but so urgent were the entreaties of Basilio's friends, imploring him to allow Quiteria to give him her hand, so that his soul, quitting this life in despair, should not be lost, that they moved, nay, forced him, to say that if Quiteria were willing to give it he was satisfied, as it was only putting off the fulfillment of his wishes for a moment. At once all assailed Quiteria and pressed her, some with prayers, and others with tears, and others with persuasive arguments, to give her hand to poor Basilio; but she, harder than marble and more unmoved than any statue, seemed unable or unwilling to utter a word, nor would she have given any reply had not the priest bade her decide quickly what she meant to do, as Basilio now had his soul at his teeth, and there was no time

for hesitation.



On this the fair Quiteria, to all appearance distressed, grieved, and repentant, advanced without a word to where Basilio lay, his eyes already turned in his head, his breathing short and painful, murmuring the name of Quiteria between his teeth, and apparently about to die like a heathen and not like a Christian.

Quiteria approached him, and kneeling, demanded his hand by signs without speaking. Basilio opened his eyes and gazing fixedly at her, said, "O Quiteria, why hast thou turned compassionate at a moment when thy compassion will serve as a dagger to rob me of life, for I have not now the strength left either to bear the happiness thou givest me in accepting me as thine, or to suppress the pain that is rapidly drawing the dread shadow of death over my eyes? What I entreat of thee, O thou fatal star to me, is that the hand thou demandest of me and wouldst give me, be not given out of complaisance or to deceive me afresh, but that thou confess and declare that without any constraint upon thy will thou givest it to me as to thy lawful husband; for it is not meet that thou shouldst trifle with me at such a moment as this, or have recourse to falsehoods with one who has dealt so truly by thee."

While uttering these words he showed such weakness that the bystanders expected each return of faintness would take his life with it. Then Quiteria, overcome with modesty and shame, holding in her right hand the hand of Basilio, said, "No force would bend my will; as freely, therefore, as it is possible for me to do so, I give thee the hand of a lawful wife, and take thine if thou givest it to me of thine own free will, untroubled and unaffected by the calamity thy hasty act has brought upon thee."

"Yes, I give it," said Basilio, "not agitated or distracted, but with unclouded reason that heaven is pleased to grant me, thus do I give myself to be thy husband."

"And I give myself to be thy wife," said Quiteria, "whether thou livest many years, or they carry thee from my arms to the grave."

"For one so badly wounded," observed Sancho at this point, "this young man has a great deal to say; they should make him leave off billing and cooing, and attend to his soul; for to my thinking he has it more on his tongue than at his teeth."

Basilio and Quiteria having thus joined hands, the priest, deeply moved and with tears in his eyes, pronounced the blessing upon them, and implored heaven to grant an easy passage to the soul of the newly wedded man, who, the instant he received the blessing, started nimbly to his feet and with unparalleled effrontery pulled out the rapier that had been sheathed in his body. All the bystanders were astounded, and some, more simple than inquiring, began shouting, "A miracle, a miracle!" But Basilio replied, "No miracle, no miracle; only a trick, a trick!" The priest, perplexed and amazed, made haste to examine the wound with both hands, and found that the blade had passed, not through Basilio's flesh and ribs, but through a hollow iron tube full of blood, which he had adroitly fixed at the place, the blood, as was afterwards ascertained, having



been so prepared as not to congeal. In short, the priest and Camacho and most of those present saw they were tricked and made fools of. The bride showed no signs of displeasure at the deception; on the contrary, hearing them say that the marriage, being fraudulent, would not be valid, she said that she confirmed it afresh, whence they all concluded that the affair had been planned by agreement and understanding between the pair, whereat Camacho and his supporters were so mortified that they proceeded to revenge themselves by violence, and a great number of them drawing their swords attacked Basilio, in whose protection as many more swords were in an instant unsheathed, while Don Quixote taking the lead on horseback, with his lance over his arm and well covered with his shield, made all give way before him. Sancho, who never found any pleasure or enjoyment in such doings, retreated to the wine-jars from which he had taken his delectable skimmings, considering that, as a holy place, that spot would be respected.

“Hold, sirs, hold!” cried Don Quixote in a loud voice; “we have no right to take vengeance for wrongs that love may do to us: remember love and war are the same thing, and as in war it is allowable and common to make use of wiles and stratagems to overcome the enemy, so in the contests and rivalries of love the tricks and devices employed to attain the desired end are justifiable, provided they be not to the discredit or dishonour of the loved object. Quiteria belonged to Basilio and Basilio to Quiteria by the just and beneficent disposal of heaven. Camacho is rich, and can purchase his pleasure when, where, and as it pleases him. Basilio has but this ewe-lamb, and no one, however powerful he may be, shall take her from him; these two whom God hath joined man cannot separate; and he who attempts it must first pass the point of this lance;” and so saying he brandished it so stoutly and dexterously that he overawed all who did not know him.

But so deep an impression had the rejection of Quiteria made on Camacho’s mind that it banished her at once from his thoughts; and so the counsels of the priest, who was a wise and kindly disposed man, prevailed with him, and by their means he and his partisans were pacified and tranquillised, and to prove it put up their swords again, inveighing against the pliancy of Quiteria rather than the craftiness of Basilio; Camacho maintaining that, if Quiteria as a maiden had such a love for Basilio, she would have loved him too as a married woman, and that he ought to thank heaven more for having taken her than for having given her.

Camacho and those of his following, therefore, being consoled and pacified, those on Basilio’s side were appeased; and the rich Camacho, to show that he felt no resentment for the trick, and did not care about it, desired the festival to

go on just as if he were married in reality. Neither Basilio, however, nor his bride, nor their followers would take any part in it, and they withdrew to Basilio's village; for the poor, if they are persons of virtue and good sense, have those who follow, honour, and uphold them, just as the rich have those who flatter and dance attendance on them. With them they carried Don Quixote, regarding him as a man of worth and a stout one. Sancho alone had a cloud on his soul, for he found himself debarred from waiting for Camacho's splendid feast and festival, which lasted until night; and thus dragged away, he moodily followed his master, who accompanied Basilio's party, and left behind him the flesh-pots of Egypt; though in his heart he took them with him, and their now nearly finished skimmings that he carried in the bucket conjured up visions before his eyes of the glory and abundance of the good cheer he was losing. And so, vexed and dejected though not hungry, without dismounting from Dapple he followed in the footsteps of Rocinante.





## CHAPTER XXII.

WHEREIN IS RELATED THE GRAND ADVENTURE OF THE CAVE OF MONTESINOS IN THE HEART OF LA MANCHA, WHICH THE VALIANT DON QUIXOTE BROUGHT TO A HAPPY TERMINATION



Many and great were the attentions shown to Don Quixote by the newly married couple, who felt themselves under an obligation to him for coming forward in defence of their cause; and they exalted his wisdom to the same level with his courage, rating him as a Cid in arms, and a Cicero in eloquence. Worthy Sancho enjoyed himself for three days at the expense of the pair, from whom they learned that the sham wound was not a scheme arranged with the fair Quiteria, but a device of Basilio's, who counted on exactly the result they had seen; he confessed, it is true, that he had confided his idea to some of his friends, so that at the proper time they might aid him in his purpose and insure the success of the deception.



“That,” said Don Quixote, “is not and ought not to be called deception which aims at virtuous ends;” and the marriage of lovers he maintained to be a most excellent end, reminding them, however, that love has no greater enemy than

hunger and constant want; for love is all gaiety, enjoyment, and happiness, especially when the lover is in the possession of the object of his love, and poverty and want are the declared enemies of all these; which he said to urge Senor Basilio to abandon the practice of those accomplishments he was skilled in, for though they brought him fame, they brought him no money, and apply himself to the acquisition of wealth by legitimate industry, which will never fail those who are prudent and persevering. The poor man who is a man of honour (if indeed a poor man can be a man of honour) has a jewel when he has a fair wife, and if she is taken from him, his honour is taken from him and slain. The fair woman who is a woman of honour, and whose husband is poor, deserves to be crowned with the laurels and crowns of victory and triumph. Beauty by itself attracts the desires of all who behold it, and the royal eagles and birds of towering flight stoop on it as on a dainty lure; but if beauty be accompanied by want and penury, then the ravens and the kites and other birds of prey assail it, and she who stands firm against such attacks well deserves to be called the crown of her husband. "Remember, O prudent Basilio," added Don Quixote, "it was the opinion of a certain sage, I know not whom, that there was not more than one good woman in the whole world; and his advice was that each one should think and believe that this one good woman was his own wife, and in this way he would live happy. I myself am not married, nor, so far, has it ever entered my thoughts to be so; nevertheless I would venture to give advice to anyone who might ask it, as to the mode in which he should seek a wife such as he would be content to marry. The first thing I would recommend him, would be to look to good name rather than to wealth, for a good woman does not win a good name merely by being good, but by letting it be seen that she is so, and open looseness and freedom do much more damage to a woman's honour than secret depravity. If you take a good woman into your house it will be an easy matter to keep her good, and even to make her still better; but if you take a bad one you will find it hard work to mend her, for it is no very easy matter to pass from one extreme to another. I do not say it is impossible, but I look upon it as difficult."

Sancho, listening to all this, said to himself, "This master of mine, when I say anything that has weight and substance, says I might take a pulpit in hand, and go about the world preaching fine sermons; but I say of him that, when he begins stringing maxims together and giving advice not only might he take a pulpit in hand, but two on each finger, and go into the market-places to his heart's content. Devil take you for a knight-errant, what a lot of things you know! I used to think in my heart that the only thing he knew was what belonged to his chivalry; but there is nothing he won't have a finger in."

Sancho muttered this somewhat aloud, and his master overheard him, and asked, "What art thou muttering there, Sancho?"

"I'm not saying anything or muttering anything," said Sancho; "I was only saying to myself that I wish I had heard what your worship has said just now before I married; perhaps I'd say now, 'The ox that's loose licks himself well.'"

"Is thy Teresa so bad then, Sancho?"

"She is not very bad," replied Sancho; "but she is not very good; at least she is not as good as I could wish."

"Thou dost wrong, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "to speak ill of thy wife; for after all she is the mother of thy children." "We are quits," returned Sancho; "for she speaks ill of me whenever she takes it into her head, especially when she is jealous; and Satan himself could not put up with her then."

In fine, they remained three days with the newly married couple, by whom they were entertained and treated like kings. Don Quixote begged the fencing licentiate to find him a guide to show him the way to the cave of Montesinos, as he had a great desire to enter it and see with his own eyes if the wonderful tales that were told of it all over the country were true. The licentiate said he would get him a cousin of his own, a famous scholar, and one very much given to reading books of chivalry, who would have great pleasure in conducting him to the mouth of the very cave, and would show him the lakes of Ruidera, which were likewise famous all over La Mancha, and even all over Spain; and he assured him he would find him entertaining, for he was a youth who could write books good enough to be printed and dedicated to princes. The cousin arrived at last, leading an ass in foal, with a pack-saddle covered with a parti-coloured carpet or sackcloth; Sancho saddled Rocinante, got Dapple ready, and stocked his alforjas, along with which went those of the cousin, likewise well filled; and so, commending themselves to God and bidding farewell to all, they set out, taking the road for the famous cave of Montesinos.

On the way Don Quixote asked the cousin of what sort and character his pursuits, avocations, and studies were, to which he replied that he was by profession a humanist, and that his pursuits and studies were making books for the press, all of great utility and no less entertainment to the nation. One was called "The Book of Liveries," in which he described seven hundred and three liveries, with their colours, mottoes, and ciphers, from which gentlemen of the court might pick and choose any they fancied for festivals and revels, without having to go a-begging for them from anyone, or puzzling their brains, as the saying is, to have them appropriate to their objects and purposes; "for," said he, "I give the jealous, the rejected, the forgotten, the absent, what will suit them, and fit them without fail. I have another book, too, which I shall call



‘Metamorphoses, or the Spanish Ovid,’ one of rare and original invention, for imitating Ovid in burlesque style, I show in it who the Giralda of Seville and the Angel of the Magdalena were, what the sewer of Vecinguerra at Cordova was, what the bulls of Guisando, the Sierra Morena, the Leganitos and Lavapies fountains at Madrid, not forgetting those of the Piojo, of the Cano Dorado, and of the Priora; and all with their allegories, metaphors, and changes, so that they are amusing, interesting, and instructive, all at once. Another book I have which I call ‘The Supplement to Polydore Vergil,’ which treats of the invention of things, and is a work of great erudition and research, for I establish and elucidate elegantly some things of great importance which Polydore omitted to mention. He forgot to tell us who was the first man in the world that had a cold in his head, and who was the first to try salivation for the French disease, but I give it accurately set forth, and quote more than five-and-twenty authors in proof of it, so you may perceive I have laboured to good purpose and that the book will be of service to the whole world.”

Sancho, who had been very attentive to the cousin’s words, said to him, “Tell me, senor — and God give you luck in printing your books — can you tell me (for of course you know, as you know everything) who was the first man that scratched his head? For to my thinking it must have been our father Adam.”

“So it must,” replied the cousin; “for there is no doubt but Adam had a head and hair; and being the first man in the world he would have scratched himself sometimes.”

“So I think,” said Sancho; “but now tell me, who was the first tumbler in the world?”

“Really, brother,” answered the cousin, “I could not at this moment say positively without having investigated it; I will look it up when I go back to where I have my books, and will satisfy you the next time we meet, for this will not be the last time.”

“Look here, senor,” said Sancho, “don’t give yourself any trouble about it, for I have just this minute hit upon what I asked you. The first tumbler in the world, you must know, was Lucifer, when they cast or pitched him out of heaven; for he came tumbling into the bottomless pit.”

“You are right, friend,” said the cousin; and said Don Quixote, “Sancho, that question and answer are not thine own; thou hast heard them from some one else.”

“Hold your peace, senor,” said Sancho; “faith, if I take to asking questions and answering, I’ll go on from this till to-morrow morning. Nay! to ask foolish things and answer nonsense I needn’t go looking for help from my neighbours.”

“Thou hast said more than thou art aware of, Sancho,” said Don Quixote; “for

there are some who weary themselves out in learning and proving things that, after they are known and proved, are not worth a farthing to the understanding or memory.”

In this and other pleasant conversation the day went by, and that night they put up at a small hamlet whence it was not more than two leagues to the cave of Montesinos, so the cousin told Don Quixote, adding, that if he was bent upon entering it, it would be requisite for him to provide himself with ropes, so that he might be tied and lowered into its depths. Don Quixote said that even if it reached to the bottomless pit he meant to see where it went to; so they bought about a hundred fathoms of rope, and next day at two in the afternoon they arrived at the cave, the mouth of which is spacious and wide, but full of thorn and wild-fig bushes and brambles and briars, so thick and matted that they completely close it up and cover it over.

On coming within sight of it the cousin, Sancho, and Don Quixote dismounted, and the first two immediately tied the latter very firmly with the ropes, and as they were girding and swathing him Sancho said to him, “Mind what you are about, master mine; don’t go burying yourself alive, or putting yourself where you’ll be like a bottle put to cool in a well; it’s no affair or business of your worship’s to become the explorer of this, which must be worse than a Moorish dungeon.”

“Tie me and hold thy peace,” said Don Quixote, “for an emprise like this, friend Sancho, was reserved for me;” and said the guide, “I beg of you, Senor Don Quixote, to observe carefully and examine with a hundred eyes everything that is within there; perhaps there may be some things for me to put into my book of ‘Transformations.’”

“The drum is in hands that will know how to beat it well enough,” said Sancho Panza.

When he had said this and finished the tying (which was not over the armour but only over the doublet) Don Quixote observed, “It was careless of us not to have provided ourselves with a small cattle-bell to be tied on the rope close to me, the sound of which would show that I was still descending and alive; but as that is out of the question now, in God’s hand be it to guide me;” and forthwith he fell on his knees and in a low voice offered up a prayer to heaven, imploring God to aid him and grant him success in this to all appearance perilous and untried adventure, and then exclaimed aloud, “O mistress of my actions and movements, illustrious and peerless Dulcinea del Toboso, if so be the prayers and supplications of this fortunate lover can reach thy ears, by thy incomparable beauty I entreat thee to listen to them, for they but ask thee not to refuse me thy favour and protection now that I stand in such need of them. I am about to

precipitate, to sink, to plunge myself into the abyss that is here before me, only to let the world know that while thou dost favour me there is no impossibility I will not attempt and accomplish.” With these words he approached the cavern, and perceived that it was impossible to let himself down or effect an entrance except by sheer force or cleaving a passage; so drawing his sword he began to demolish and cut away the brambles at the mouth of the cave, at the noise of which a vast multitude of crows and choughs flew out of it so thick and so fast that they knocked Don Quixote down; and if he had been as much of a believer in augury as he was a Catholic Christian he would have taken it as a bad omen and declined to bury himself in such a place. He got up, however, and as there came no more crows, or night-birds like the bats that flew out at the same time with the crows, the cousin and Sancho giving him rope, he lowered himself into the depths of the dread cavern; and as he entered it Sancho sent his blessing after him, making a thousand crosses over him and saying, “God, and the Pena de Francia, and the Trinity of Gaeta guide thee, flower and cream of knights-errant. There thou goest, thou dare-devil of the earth, heart of steel, arm of brass; once more, God guide thee and send thee back safe, sound, and unhurt to the light of this world thou art leaving to bury thyself in the darkness thou art seeking there;” and the cousin offered up almost the same prayers and supplications.



Don Quixote kept calling to them to give him rope and more rope, and they gave it out little by little, and by the time the calls, which came out of the cave as out of a pipe, ceased to be heard they had let down the hundred fathoms of rope. They were inclined to pull Don Quixote up again, as they could give him no more rope; however, they waited about half an hour, at the end of which time they began to gather in the rope again with great ease and without feeling any weight, which made them fancy Don Quixote was remaining below; and persuaded that it was so, Sancho wept bitterly, and hauled away in great haste in order to settle the question. When, however, they had come to, as it seemed, rather more than eighty fathoms they felt a weight, at which they were greatly

delighted; and at last, at ten fathoms more, they saw Don Quixote distinctly, and Sancho called out to him, saying, "Welcome back, senor, for we had begun to think you were going to stop there to found a family." But Don Quixote answered not a word, and drawing him out entirely they perceived he had his eyes shut and every appearance of being fast asleep.

They stretched him on the ground and untied him, but still he did not awake; however, they rolled him back and forwards and shook and pulled him about, so that after some time he came to himself, stretching himself just as if he were waking up from a deep and sound sleep, and looking about him he said, "God forgive you, friends; ye have taken me away from the sweetest and most delightful existence and spectacle that ever human being enjoyed or beheld. Now indeed do I know that all the pleasures of this life pass away like a shadow and a dream, or fade like the flower of the field. O ill-fated Montesinos! O sore-wounded Durandarte! O unhappy Belerma! O tearful Guadiana, and ye O hapless daughters of Ruidera who show in your waves the tears that flowed from your beauteous eyes!"



The cousin and Sancho Panza listened with deep attention to the words of Don Quixote, who uttered them as though with immense pain he drew them up from his very bowels. They begged of him to explain himself, and tell them what he had seen in that hell down there.

“Hell do you call it?” said Don Quixote; “call it by no such name, for it does not deserve it, as ye shall soon see.”

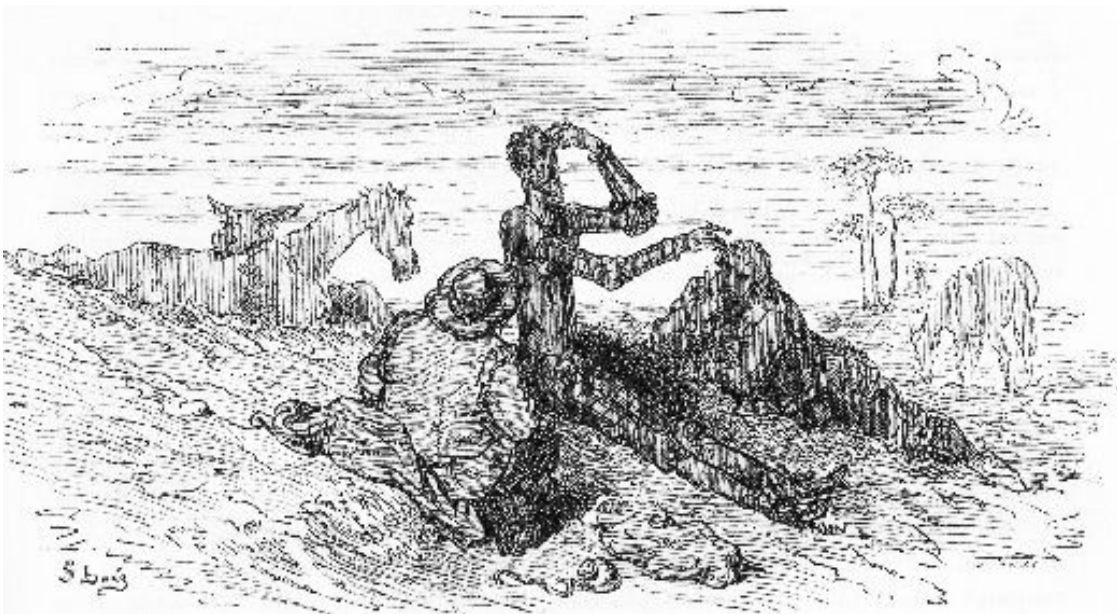
He then begged them to give him something to eat, as he was very hungry. They spread the cousin’s sackcloth on the grass, and put the stores of the alforjas into requisition, and all three sitting down lovingly and sociably, they made a luncheon and a supper of it all in one; and when the sackcloth was removed, Don

Quixote of La Mancha said, “Let no one rise, and attend to me, my sons, both of you.”



## CHAPTER XXIII.

OF THE WONDERFUL THINGS THE INCOMPARABLE DON QUIXOTE  
SAID HE SAW IN THE PROFOUND CAVE OF MONTESINOS, THE  
IMPOSSIBILITY AND MAGNITUDE OF WHICH CAUSE THIS  
ADVENTURE TO BE DEEMED APOCRYPHAL



It was about four in the afternoon when the sun, veiled in clouds, with subdued light and tempered beams, enabled Don Quixote to relate, without heat or inconvenience, what he had seen in the cave of Montesinos to his two illustrious hearers, and he began as follows:

“A matter of some twelve or fourteen times a man’s height down in this pit, on the right-hand side, there is a recess or space, roomy enough to contain a large cart with its mules. A little light reaches it through some chinks or crevices, communicating with it and open to the surface of the earth. This recess or space I perceived when I was already growing weary and disgusted at finding myself



hanging suspended by the rope, travelling downwards into that dark region without any certainty or knowledge of where I was going, so I resolved to enter it and rest myself for a while. I called out, telling you not to let out more rope until I bade you, but you cannot have heard me. I then gathered in the rope you were sending me, and making a coil or pile of it I seated myself upon it, ruminating and considering what I was to do to lower myself to the bottom, having no one to hold me up; and as I was thus deep in thought and perplexity, suddenly and without provocation a profound sleep fell upon me, and when I least expected it, I know not how, I awoke and found myself in the midst of the most beautiful, delightful meadow that nature could produce or the most lively human imagination conceive. I opened my eyes, I rubbed them, and found I was not asleep but thoroughly awake. Nevertheless, I felt my head and breast to satisfy myself whether it was I myself who was there or some empty delusive phantom; but touch, feeling, the collected thoughts that passed through my mind, all convinced me that I was the same then and there that I am this moment. Next there presented itself to my sight a stately royal palace or castle, with walls that seemed built of clear transparent crystal; and through two great doors that opened wide therein, I saw coming forth and advancing towards me a venerable old man, clad in a long gown of mulberry-coloured serge that trailed upon the ground. On his shoulders and breast he had a green satin collegiate hood, and covering his head a black Milanese bonnet, and his snow-white beard fell below his girdle. He carried no arms whatever, nothing but a rosary of beads bigger than fair-sized filberts, each tenth bead being like a moderate ostrich egg; his bearing, his gait, his dignity and imposing presence held me spellbound and wondering. He approached me, and the first thing he did was to embrace me closely, and then he said to me, 'For a long time now, O valiant knight Don Quixote of La Mancha, we who are here enchanted in these solitudes have been hoping to see thee, that thou mayest make known to the world what is shut up and concealed in this deep cave, called the cave of Montesinos, which thou hast entered, an achievement reserved for thy invincible heart and stupendous courage alone to attempt. Come with me, illustrious sir, and I will show thee the marvels hidden within this transparent castle, whereof I am the alcaide and perpetual warden; for I am Montesinos himself, from whom the cave takes its name.'

"The instant he told me he was Montesinos, I asked him if the story they told in the world above here was true, that he had taken out the heart of his great friend Durandarte from his breast with a little dagger, and carried it to the lady Belerma, as his friend when at the point of death had commanded him. He said in reply that they spoke the truth in every respect except as to the dagger, for it

was not a dagger, nor little, but a burnished poniard sharper than an awl.”

“That poniard must have been made by Ramon de Hoces the Sevillian,” said Sancho.

“I do not know,” said Don Quixote; “it could not have been by that poniard maker, however, because Ramon de Hoces was a man of yesterday, and the affair of Roncesvalles, where this mishap occurred, was long ago; but the question is of no great importance, nor does it affect or make any alteration in the truth or substance of the story.”

“That is true,” said the cousin; “continue, Senor Don Quixote, for I am listening to you with the greatest pleasure in the world.”

“And with no less do I tell the tale,” said Don Quixote; “and so, to proceed — the venerable Montesinos led me into the palace of crystal, where, in a lower chamber, strangely cool and entirely of alabaster, was an elaborately wrought marble tomb, upon which I beheld, stretched at full length, a knight, not of bronze, or marble, or jasper, as are seen on other tombs, but of actual flesh and bone. His right hand (which seemed to me somewhat hairy and sinewy, a sign of great strength in its owner) lay on the side of his heart; but before I could put any question to Montesinos, he, seeing me gazing at the tomb in amazement, said to me, ‘This is my friend Durandarte, flower and mirror of the true lovers and valiant knights of his time. He is held enchanted here, as I myself and many others are, by that French enchanter Merlin, who, they say, was the devil’s son; but my belief is, not that he was the devil’s son, but that he knew, as the saying is, a point more than the devil. How or why he enchanted us, no one knows, but time will tell, and I suspect that time is not far off. What I marvel at is, that I know it to be as sure as that it is now day, that Durandarte ended his life in my arms, and that, after his death, I took out his heart with my own hands; and indeed it must have weighed more than two pounds, for, according to naturalists, he who has a large heart is more largely endowed with valour than he who has a small one. Then, as this is the case, and as the knight did really die, how comes it that he now moans and sighs from time to time, as if he were still alive?’

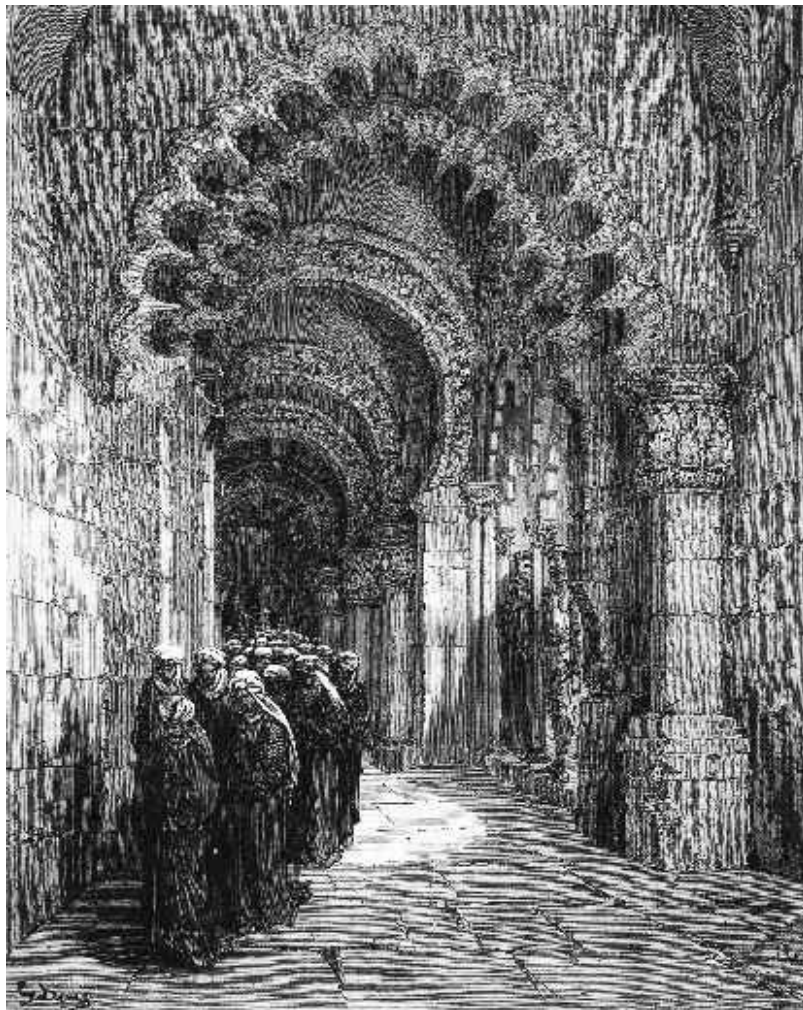


“As he said this, the wretched Durandarte cried out in a loud voice:  
O cousin Montesinos!

‘T was my last request of thee,  
When my soul hath left the body,  
And that lying dead I be,  
With thy poniard or thy dagger  
Cut the heart from out my breast,  
And bear it to Belerma.  
This was my last request.”

“On hearing which, the venerable Montesinos fell on his knees before the unhappy knight, and with tearful eyes exclaimed, ‘Long since, Senor Durandarte, my beloved cousin, long since have I done what you bade me on that sad day when I lost you; I took out your heart as well as I could, not leaving an atom of it in your breast, I wiped it with a lace handkerchief, and I took the road to France with it, having first laid you in the bosom of the earth with tears enough to wash and cleanse my hands of the blood that covered them after wandering among your bowels; and more by token, O cousin of my soul, at the first village I came to after leaving Roncesvalles, I sprinkled a little salt upon your heart to keep it sweet, and bring it, if not fresh, at least pickled, into the presence of the lady Belerma, whom, together with you, myself, Guadiana your squire, the duenna Ruidera and her seven daughters and two nieces, and many more of your friends and acquaintances, the sage Merlin has been keeping enchanted here these many years; and although more than five hundred have gone by, not one of us has died; Ruidera and her daughters and nieces alone are missing, and these, because of the tears they shed, Merlin, out of the compassion he seems to have felt for them, changed into so many lakes, which to this day in the world of the living, and in the province of La Mancha, are called the Lakes of Ruidera. The seven daughters belong to the kings of Spain and the two nieces to the knights of a very holy order called the Order of St. John. Guadiana your squire, likewise bewailing your fate, was changed into a river of his own name, but when he came to the surface and beheld the sun of another heaven, so great was his grief at finding he was leaving you, that he plunged into the bowels of the earth; however, as he cannot help following his natural course, he from time to time comes forth and shows himself to the sun and the world. The lakes aforesaid send him their waters, and with these, and others that come to him, he makes a grand and imposing entrance into Portugal; but for all that, go where he may, he shows his melancholy and sadness, and takes no pride in breeding dainty choice fish, only coarse and tasteless sorts, very different from those of the golden Tagus. All this that I tell you now, O cousin mine, I have told you many times before, and as you make no answer, I fear that either you believe me not, or do not hear me, whereat I feel God knows what grief. I have now news to give you, which, if it serves not to alleviate your sufferings, will not in any wise increase them. Know that you have here before you (open your eyes and you will see) that great knight of whom the sage Merlin has prophesied such great things; that Don Quixote of La Mancha I mean, who has again, and to better purpose than in past times, revived in these days knight-errantry, long since forgotten, and by whose intervention and aid it may be we shall be disenchanted; for great deeds are reserved for great men.’

“‘And if that may not be,’ said the wretched Durandarte in a low and feeble voice, ‘if that may not be, then, my cousin, I say “patience and shuffle;”’ and turning over on his side, he relapsed into his former silence without uttering another word.



“And now there was heard a great outcry and lamentation, accompanied by deep sighs and bitter sobs. I looked round, and through the crystal wall I saw passing through another chamber a procession of two lines of fair damsels all clad in mourning, and with white turbans of Turkish fashion on their heads. Behind, in the rear of these, there came a lady, for so from her dignity she seemed to be, also clad in black, with a white veil so long and ample that it swept the ground. Her turban was twice as large as the largest of any of the others; her eyebrows met, her nose was rather flat, her mouth was large but with ruddy lips, and her teeth, of which at times she allowed a glimpse, were seen to be sparse and ill-set, though as white as peeled almonds. She carried in her hands a fine cloth, and in it, as well as I could make out, a heart that had been mummied, so parched and dried was it. Montesinos told me that all those forming the procession were the attendants of Durandarte and Belerma, who were enchanted there with their master and mistress, and that the last, she who carried the heart in the cloth, was the lady Belerma, who, with her damsels, four days in the week went in procession singing, or rather weeping, dirges over the body and miserable heart of his cousin; and that if she appeared to me somewhat ill-favoured or not so beautiful as fame reported her, it was because of the bad nights and worse days that she passed in that enchantment, as I could see by the great dark circles round her eyes, and her sickly complexion; ‘her sallowness, and the rings round her eyes,’ said he, ‘are not caused by the periodical ailment usual with women, for it is many months and even years since she has had any, but by the grief her own heart suffers because of that which she holds in her hand perpetually, and which recalls and brings back to her memory the sad fate of her lost lover; were it not for this, hardly would the great Dulcinea del Toboso, so celebrated in all these parts, and even in the world, come up to her for beauty, grace, and gaiety.’

“‘Hold hard!’ said I at this, ‘tell your story as you ought, Senor Don Montesinos, for you know very well that all comparisons are odious, and there is no occasion to compare one person with another; the peerless Dulcinea del Toboso is what she is, and the lady Dona Belerma is what she is and has been, and that’s enough.’ To which he made answer, ‘Forgive me, Senor Don Quixote; I own I was wrong and spoke unadvisedly in saying that the lady Dulcinea could scarcely come up to the lady Belerma; for it were enough for me to have learned, by what means I know not, that you are her knight, to make me bite my tongue out before I compared her to anything save heaven itself.’ After this apology which the great Montesinos made me, my heart recovered itself from the shock I

had received in hearing my lady compared with Belerma.”

“Still I wonder,” said Sancho, “that your worship did not get upon the old fellow and bruise every bone of him with kicks, and pluck his beard until you didn’t leave a hair in it.”

“Nay, Sancho, my friend,” said Don Quixote, “it would not have been right in me to do that, for we are all bound to pay respect to the aged, even though they be not knights, but especially to those who are, and who are enchanted; I only know I gave him as good as he brought in the many other questions and answers we exchanged.”

“I cannot understand, Senor Don Quixote,” remarked the cousin here, “how it is that your worship, in such a short space of time as you have been below there, could have seen so many things, and said and answered so much.”

“How long is it since I went down?” asked Don Quixote.

“Little better than an hour,” replied Sancho.

“That cannot be,” returned Don Quixote, “because night overtook me while I was there, and day came, and it was night again and day again three times; so that, by my reckoning, I have been three days in those remote regions beyond our ken.”

“My master must be right,” replied Sancho; “for as everything that has happened to him is by enchantment, maybe what seems to us an hour would seem three days and nights there.”

“That’s it,” said Don Quixote.

“And did your worship eat anything all that time, senor?” asked the cousin.

“I never touched a morsel,” answered Don Quixote, “nor did I feel hunger, or think of it.”

“And do the enchanted eat?” said the cousin.

“They neither eat,” said Don Quixote; “nor are they subject to the greater excrements, though it is thought that their nails, beards, and hair grow.”

“And do the enchanted sleep, now, senor?” asked Sancho.

“Certainly not,” replied Don Quixote; “at least, during those three days I was with them not one of them closed an eye, nor did I either.”

“The proverb, ‘Tell me what company thou keepest and I’ll tell thee what thou art,’ is to the point here,” said Sancho; “your worship keeps company with enchanted people that are always fasting and watching; what wonder is it, then, that you neither eat nor sleep while you are with them? But forgive me, senor, if I say that of all this you have told us now, may God take me — I was just going to say the devil — if I believe a single particle.”

“What!” said the cousin, “has Senor Don Quixote, then, been lying? Why, even if he wished it he has not had time to imagine and put together such a host

of lies.”

“I don’t believe my master lies,” said Sancho.

“If not, what dost thou believe?” asked Don Quixote.

“I believe,” replied Sancho, “that this Merlin, or those enchanters who enchanted the whole crew your worship says you saw and discoursed with down there, stuffed your imagination or your mind with all this rigmarole you have been treating us to, and all that is still to come.”

“All that might be, Sancho,” replied Don Quixote; “but it is not so, for everything that I have told you I saw with my own eyes, and touched with my own hands. But what will you say when I tell you now how, among the countless other marvellous things Montesinos showed me (of which at leisure and at the proper time I will give thee an account in the course of our journey, for they would not be all in place here), he showed me three country girls who went skipping and capering like goats over the pleasant fields there, and the instant I beheld them I knew one to be the peerless Dulcinea del Toboso, and the other two those same country girls that were with her and that we spoke to on the road from El Toboso! I asked Montesinos if he knew them, and he told me he did not, but he thought they must be some enchanted ladies of distinction, for it was only a few days before that they had made their appearance in those meadows; but I was not to be surprised at that, because there were a great many other ladies there of times past and present, enchanted in various strange shapes, and among them he had recognised Queen Guinevere and her dame Quintanona, she who poured out the wine for Lancelot when he came from Britain.”

When Sancho Panza heard his master say this he was ready to take leave of his senses, or die with laughter; for, as he knew the real truth about the pretended enchantment of Dulcinea, in which he himself had been the enchanter and concocter of all the evidence, he made up his mind at last that, beyond all doubt, his master was out of his wits and stark mad, so he said to him, “It was an evil hour, a worse season, and a sorrowful day, when your worship, dear master mine, went down to the other world, and an unlucky moment when you met with Senor Montesinos, who has sent you back to us like this. You were well enough here above in your full senses, such as God had given you, delivering maxims and giving advice at every turn, and not as you are now, talking the greatest nonsense that can be imagined.”

“As I know thee, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “I heed not thy words.”

“Nor I your worship’s,” said Sancho, “whether you beat me or kill me for those I have spoken, and will speak if you don’t correct and mend your own. But tell me, while we are still at peace, how or by what did you recognise the lady our mistress; and if you spoke to her, what did you say, and what did she



answer?”

“I recognised her,” said Don Quixote, “by her wearing the same garments she wore when thou didst point her out to me. I spoke to her, but she did not utter a word in reply; on the contrary, she turned her back on me and took to flight, at such a pace that crossbow bolt could not have overtaken her. I wished to follow her, and would have done so had not Montesinos recommended me not to take the trouble as it would be useless, particularly as the time was drawing near when it would be necessary for me to quit the cavern. He told me, moreover, that in course of time he would let me know how he and Belerma, and Durandarte, and all who were there, were to be disenchanted. But of all I saw and observed down there, what gave me most pain was, that while Montesinos was speaking to me, one of the two companions of the hapless Dulcinea approached me on one without my having seen her coming, and with tears in her eyes said to me, in a low, agitated voice, ‘My lady Dulcinea del Toboso kisses your worship’s hands, and entreats you to do her the favour of letting her know how you are; and, being in great need, she also entreats your worship as earnestly as she can to be so good as to lend her half a dozen reals, or as much as you may have about you, on this new dimity petticoat that I have here; and she promises to repay them very speedily.’ I was amazed and taken aback by such a message, and turning to Senor Montesinos I asked him, ‘Is it possible, Senor Montesinos, that persons of distinction under enchantment can be in need?’ To which he replied, ‘Believe me, Senor Don Quixote, that which is called need is to be met with everywhere, and penetrates all quarters and reaches everyone, and does not spare even the enchanted; and as the lady Dulcinea del Toboso sends to beg those six reals, and the pledge is to all appearance a good one, there is nothing for it but to give them to her, for no doubt she must be in some great strait.’ ‘I will take no pledge of her,’ I replied, ‘nor yet can I give her what she asks, for all I have is four reals; which I gave (they were those which thou, Sancho, gavest me the other day to bestow in alms upon the poor I met along the road), and I said, ‘Tell your mistress, my dear, that I am grieved to the heart because of her distresses, and wish I was a Fucar to remedy them, and that I would have her know that I cannot be, and ought not be, in health while deprived of the happiness of seeing her and enjoying her discreet conversation, and that I implore her as earnestly as I can, to allow herself to be seen and addressed by this her captive servant and forlorn knight. Tell her, too, that when she least expects it she will hear it announced that I have made an oath and vow after the fashion of that which the Marquis of Mantua made to avenge his nephew Baldwin, when he found him at the point of death in the heart of the mountains, which was, not to eat bread off a tablecloth, and other trifling matters which he added, until he had avenged him; and I will

make the same to take no rest, and to roam the seven regions of the earth more thoroughly than the Infante Don Pedro of Portugal ever roamed them, until I have disenchanted her.' 'All that and more, you owe my lady,' the damsel's answer to me, and taking the four reals, instead of making me a curtsy she cut a caper, springing two full yards into the air."

"O blessed God!" exclaimed Sancho aloud at this, "is it possible that such things can be in the world, and that enchanter's and enchantments can have such power in it as to have changed my master's right senses into a craze so full of absurdity! O señor, señor, for God's sake, consider yourself, have a care for your honour, and give no credit to this silly stuff that has left you scant and short of wits."

"Thou talkest in this way because thou lovest me, Sancho," said Don Quixote; "and not being experienced in the things of the world, everything that has some difficulty about it seems to thee impossible; but time will pass, as I said before, and I will tell thee some of the things I saw down there which will make thee believe what I have related now, the truth of which admits of neither reply nor question."



## CHAPTER XXIV.

WHEREIN ARE RELATED A THOUSAND TRIFLING MATTERS, AS  
TRIVIAL AS THEY ARE NECESSARY TO THE RIGHT  
UNDERSTANDING OF THIS GREAT HISTORY



He who translated this great history from the original written by its first author, Cide Hamete Benengeli, says that on coming to the chapter giving the adventures of the cave of Montesinos he found written on the margin of it, in Hamete's own hand, these exact words:

"I cannot convince or persuade myself that everything that is written in the preceding chapter could have precisely happened to the valiant Don Quixote; and for this reason, that all the adventures that have occurred up to the present have been possible and probable; but as for this one of the cave, I see no way of

accepting it as true, as it passes all reasonable bounds. For me to believe that Don Quixote could lie, he being the most truthful gentleman and the noblest knight of his time, is impossible; he would not have told a lie though he were shot to death with arrows. On the other hand, I reflect that he related and told the story with all the circumstances detailed, and that he could not in so short a space have fabricated such a vast complication of absurdities; if, then, this adventure seems apocryphal, it is no fault of mine; and so, without affirming its falsehood or its truth, I write it down. Decide for thyself in thy wisdom, reader; for I am not bound, nor is it in my power, to do more; though certain it is they say that at the time of his death he retracted, and said he had invented it, thinking it matched and tallied with the adventures he had read of in his histories.” And then he goes on to say:

The cousin was amazed as well at Sancho’s boldness as at the patience of his master, and concluded that the good temper the latter displayed arose from the happiness he felt at having seen his lady Dulcinea, even enchanted as she was; because otherwise the words and language Sancho had addressed to him deserved a thrashing; for indeed he seemed to him to have been rather impudent to his master, to whom he now observed, “I, Senor Don Quixote of La Mancha, look upon the time I have spent in travelling with your worship as very well employed, for I have gained four things in the course of it; the first is that I have made your acquaintance, which I consider great good fortune; the second, that I have learned what the cave of Montesinos contains, together with the transformations of Guadiana and of the lakes of Ruidera; which will be of use to me for the Spanish Ovid that I have in hand; the third, to have discovered the antiquity of cards, that they were in use at least in the time of Charlemagne, as may be inferred from the words you say Durandarte uttered when, at the end of that long spell while Montesinos was talking to him, he woke up and said, ‘Patience and shuffle.’ This phrase and expression he could not have learned while he was enchanted, but only before he had become so, in France, and in the time of the aforesaid emperor Charlemagne. And this demonstration is just the thing for me for that other book I am writing, the ‘Supplement to Polydore Vergil on the Invention of Antiquities;’ for I believe he never thought of inserting that of cards in his book, as I mean to do in mine, and it will be a matter of great importance, particularly when I can cite so grave and veracious an authority as Senor Durandarte. And the fourth thing is, that I have ascertained the source of the river Guadiana, heretofore unknown to mankind.”

“You are right,” said Don Quixote; “but I should like to know, if by God’s favour they grant you a licence to print those books of yours — which I doubt — to whom do you mean dedicate them?”

“There are lords and grandees in Spain to whom they can be dedicated,” said the cousin.

“Not many,” said Don Quixote; “not that they are unworthy of it, but because they do not care to accept books and incur the obligation of making the return that seems due to the author’s labour and courtesy. One prince I know who makes up for all the rest, and more — how much more, if I ventured to say, perhaps I should stir up envy in many a noble breast; but let this stand over for some more convenient time, and let us go and look for some place to shelter ourselves in to-night.”

“Not far from this,” said the cousin, “there is a hermitage, where there lives a hermit, who they say was a soldier, and who has the reputation of being a good Christian and a very intelligent and charitable man. Close to the hermitage he has a small house which he built at his own cost, but though small it is large enough for the reception of guests.”

“Has this hermit any hens, do you think?” asked Sancho.

“Few hermits are without them,” said Don Quixote; “for those we see now-a-days are not like the hermits of the Egyptian deserts who were clad in palm-leaves, and lived on the roots of the earth. But do not think that by praising these I am disparaging the others; all I mean to say is that the penances of those of the present day do not come up to the asceticism and austerity of former times; but it does not follow from this that they are not all worthy; at least I think them so; and at the worst the hypocrite who pretends to be good does less harm than the open sinner.”

At this point they saw approaching the spot where they stood a man on foot, proceeding at a rapid pace, and beating a mule loaded with lances and halberds. When he came up to them, he saluted them and passed on without stopping. Don Quixote called to him, “Stay, good fellow; you seem to be making more haste than suits that mule.”

“I cannot stop, senor,” answered the man; “for the arms you see I carry here are to be used tomorrow, so I must not delay; God be with you. But if you want to know what I am carrying them for, I mean to lodge to-night at the inn that is beyond the hermitage, and if you be going the same road you will find me there, and I will tell you some curious things; once more God be with you;” and he urged on his mule at such a pace that Don Quixote had no time to ask him what these curious things were that he meant to tell them; and as he was somewhat inquisitive, and always tortured by his anxiety to learn something new, he decided to set out at once, and go and pass the night at the inn instead of stopping at the hermitage, where the cousin would have had them halt. Accordingly they mounted and all three took the direct road for the inn, which

they reached a little before nightfall. On the road the cousin proposed they should go up to the hermitage to drink a sup. The instant Sancho heard this he steered his Dapple towards it, and Don Quixote and the cousin did the same; but it seems Sancho's bad luck so ordered it that the hermit was not at home, for so a sub-hermit they found in the hermitage told them. They called for some of the best. She replied that her master had none, but that if they liked cheap water she would give it with great pleasure.

"If I found any in water," said Sancho, "there are wells along the road where I could have had enough of it. Ah, Camacho's wedding, and plentiful house of Don Diego, how often do I miss you!"

Leaving the hermitage, they pushed on towards the inn, and a little farther they came upon a youth who was pacing along in front of them at no great speed, so that they overtook him. He carried a sword over his shoulder, and slung on it a budget or bundle of his clothes apparently, probably his breeches or pantaloons, and his cloak and a shirt or two; for he had on a short jacket of velvet with a gloss like satin on it in places, and had his shirt out; his stockings were of silk, and his shoes square-toed as they wear them at court. His age might have been eighteen or nineteen; he was of a merry countenance, and to all appearance of an active habit, and he went along singing seguidillas to beguile the wearisomeness of the road. As they came up with him he was just finishing one, which the cousin got by heart and they say ran thus —

I'm off to the wars  
For the want of pence,  
Oh, had I but money  
I'd show more sense.

The first to address him was Don Quixote, who said, "You travel very airily, sir gallant; whither bound, may we ask, if it is your pleasure to tell us?"

To which the youth replied, "The heat and my poverty are the reason of my travelling so airily, and it is to the wars that I am bound."

"How poverty?" asked Don Quixote; "the heat one can understand."

"Senor," replied the youth, "in this bundle I carry velvet pantaloons to match this jacket; if I wear them out on the road, I shall not be able to make a decent appearance in them in the city, and I have not the wherewithal to buy others; and so for this reason, as well as to keep myself cool, I am making my way in this fashion to overtake some companies of infantry that are not twelve leagues off, in which I shall enlist, and there will be no want of baggage trains to travel with after that to the place of embarkation, which they say will be Carthage; I would rather have the King for a master, and serve him in the wars, than serve a court pauper."

“And did you get any bounty, now?” asked the cousin.

“If I had been in the service of some grandee of Spain or personage of distinction,” replied the youth, “I should have been safe to get it; for that is the advantage of serving good masters, that out of the servants’ hall men come to be ancients or captains, or get a good pension. But I, to my misfortune, always served place-hunters and adventurers, whose keep and wages were so miserable and scanty that half went in paying for the starching of one’s collars; it would be a miracle indeed if a page volunteer ever got anything like a reasonable bounty.”

“And tell me, for heaven’s sake,” asked Don Quixote, “is it possible, my friend, that all the time you served you never got any livery?”

“They gave me two,” replied the page; “but just as when one quits a religious community before making profession, they strip him of the dress of the order and give him back his own clothes, so did my masters return me mine; for as soon as the business on which they came to court was finished, they went home and took back the liveries they had given merely for show.”

“What spilorceria! — as an Italian would say,” said Don Quixote; “but for all that, consider yourself happy in having left court with as worthy an object as you have, for there is nothing on earth more honourable or profitable than serving, first of all God, and then one’s king and natural lord, particularly in the profession of arms, by which, if not more wealth, at least more honour is to be won than by letters, as I have said many a time; for though letters may have founded more great houses than arms, still those founded by arms have I know not what superiority over those founded by letters, and a certain splendour belonging to them that distinguishes them above all. And bear in mind what I am now about to say to you, for it will be of great use and comfort to you in time of trouble; it is, not to let your mind dwell on the adverse chances that may befall you; for the worst of all is death, and if it be a good death, the best of all is to die. They asked Julius Caesar, the valiant Roman emperor, what was the best death. He answered, that which is unexpected, which comes suddenly and unforeseen; and though he answered like a pagan, and one without the knowledge of the true God, yet, as far as sparing our feelings is concerned, he was right; for suppose you are killed in the first engagement or skirmish, whether by a cannon ball or blown up by mine, what matters it? It is only dying, and all is over; and according to Terence, a soldier shows better dead in battle, than alive and safe in flight; and the good soldier wins fame in proportion as he is obedient to his captains and those in command over him. And remember, my son, that it is better for the soldier to smell of gunpowder than of civet, and that if old age should come upon you in this honourable calling, though you may be covered with wounds and crippled and lame, it will not come upon you without



honour, and that such as poverty cannot lessen; especially now that provisions are being made for supporting and relieving old and disabled soldiers; for it is not right to deal with them after the fashion of those who set free and get rid of their black slaves when they are old and useless, and, turning them out of their houses under the pretence of making them free, make them slaves to hunger, from which they cannot expect to be released except by death. But for the present I won't say more than get ye up behind me on my horse as far as the inn, and sup with me there, and tomorrow you shall pursue your journey, and God give you as good speed as your intentions deserve."

The page did not accept the invitation to mount, though he did that to supper at the inn; and here they say Sancho said to himself, "God be with you for a master; is it possible that a man who can say things so many and so good as he has said just now, can say that he saw the impossible absurdities he reports about the cave of Montesinos? Well, well, we shall see."

And now, just as night was falling, they reached the inn, and it was not without satisfaction that Sancho perceived his master took it for a real inn, and not for a castle as usual. The instant they entered Don Quixote asked the landlord after the man with the lances and halberds, and was told that he was in the stable seeing to his mule; which was what Sancho and the cousin proceeded to do for their beasts, giving the best manger and the best place in the stable to Rocinante.



## CHAPTER XXV.

WHEREIN IS SET DOWN THE BRAYING ADVENTURE, AND THE DROLL ONE OF THE PUPPET-SHOWMAN, TOGETHER WITH THE MEMORABLE DIVINATIONS OF THE DIVINING APE



Don Quixote's bread would not bake, as the common saying is, until he had heard and learned the curious things promised by the man who carried the arms. He went to seek him where the innkeeper said he was and having found him, bade him say now at any rate what he had to say in answer to the question he had asked him on the road. "The tale of my wonders must be taken more leisurely and not standing," said the man; "let me finish foddering my beast, good sir; and then I'll tell you things that will astonish you."

"Don't wait for that," said Don Quixote; "I'll help you in everything," and so

he did, sifting the barley for him and cleaning out the manger; a degree of humility which made the other feel bound to tell him with a good grace what he had asked; so seating himself on a bench, with Don Quixote beside him, and the cousin, the page, Sancho Panza, and the landlord, for a senate and an audience, he began his story in this way:

“You must know that in a village four leagues and a half from this inn, it so happened that one of the regidors, by the tricks and roguery of a servant girl of his (it’s too long a tale to tell), lost an ass; and though he did all he possibly could to find it, it was all to no purpose. A fortnight might have gone by, so the story goes, since the ass had been missing, when, as the regidor who had lost it was standing in the plaza, another regidor of the same town said to him, ‘Pay me for good news, gossip; your ass has turned up.’ ‘That I will, and well, gossip,’ said the other; ‘but tell us, where has he turned up?’ ‘In the forest,’ said the finder; ‘I saw him this morning without pack-saddle or harness of any sort, and so lean that it went to one’s heart to see him. I tried to drive him before me and bring him to you, but he is already so wild and shy that when I went near him he made off into the thickest part of the forest. If you have a mind that we two should go back and look for him, let me put up this she-ass at my house and I’ll be back at once.’ ‘You will be doing me a great kindness,’ said the owner of the ass, ‘and I’ll try to pay it back in the same coin.’ It is with all these circumstances, and in the very same way I am telling it now, that those who know all about the matter tell the story. Well then, the two regidors set off on foot, arm in arm, for the forest, and coming to the place where they hoped to find the ass they could not find him, nor was he to be seen anywhere about, search as they might. Seeing, then, that there was no sign of him, the regidor who had seen him said to the other, ‘Look here, gossip; a plan has occurred to me, by which, beyond a doubt, we shall manage to discover the animal, even if he is stowed away in the bowels of the earth, not to say the forest. Here it is. I can bray to perfection, and if you can ever so little, the thing’s as good as done.’ ‘Ever so little did you say, gossip?’ said the other; ‘by God, I’ll not give in to anybody, not even to the asses themselves.’ ‘We’ll soon see,’ said the second regidor, ‘for my plan is that you should go one side of the forest, and I the other, so as to go all round about it; and every now and then you will bray and I will bray; and it cannot be but that the ass will hear us, and answer us if he is in the forest.’ To which the owner of the ass replied, ‘It’s an excellent plan, I declare, gossip, and worthy of your great genius;’ and the two separating as agreed, it so fell out that they brayed almost at the same moment, and each, deceived by the braying of the other, ran to look, fancying the ass had turned up at last. When they came in sight of one another, said the loser, ‘Is it possible, gossip, that it was not my ass

that brayed?’ ‘No, it was I,’ said the other. ‘Well then, I can tell you, gossip,’ said the ass’s owner, ‘that between you and an ass there is not an atom of difference as far as braying goes, for I never in all my life saw or heard anything more natural.’ ‘Those praises and compliments belong to you more justly than to me, gossip,’ said the inventor of the plan; ‘for, by the God that made me, you might give a couple of brays odds to the best and most finished brayer in the world; the tone you have got is deep, your voice is well kept up as to time and pitch, and your finishing notes come thick and fast; in fact, I own myself beaten, and yield the palm to you, and give in to you in this rare accomplishment.’ ‘Well then,’ said the owner, ‘I’ll set a higher value on myself for the future, and consider that I know something, as I have an excellence of some sort; for though I always thought I brayed well, I never supposed I came up to the pitch of perfection you say.’ ‘And I say too,’ said the second, ‘that there are rare gifts going to loss in the world, and that they are ill bestowed upon those who don’t know how to make use of them.’ ‘Ours,’ said the owner of the ass, ‘unless it is in cases like this we have now in hand, cannot be of any service to us, and even in this God grant they may be of some use.’ So saying they separated, and took to their braying once more, but every instant they were deceiving one another, and coming to meet one another again, until they arranged by way of countersign, so as to know that it was they and not the ass, to give two brays, one after the other. In this way, doubling the brays at every step, they made the complete circuit of the forest, but the lost ass never gave them an answer or even the sign of one. How could the poor ill-starred brute have answered, when, in the thickest part of the forest, they found him devoured by wolves? As soon as he saw him his owner said, ‘I was wondering he did not answer, for if he wasn’t dead he’d have brayed when he heard us, or he’d have been no ass; but for the sake of having heard you bray to such perfection, gossip, I count the trouble I have taken to look for him well bestowed, even though I have found him dead.’ ‘It’s in a good hand, gossip,’ said the other; ‘if the abbot sings well, the acolyte is not much behind him.’ So they returned disconsolate and hoarse to their village, where they told their friends, neighbours, and acquaintances what had befallen them in their search for the ass, each crying up the other’s perfection in braying. The whole story came to be known and spread abroad through the villages of the neighbourhood; and the devil, who never sleeps, with his love for sowing dissensions and scattering discord everywhere, blowing mischief about and making quarrels out of nothing, contrived to make the people of the other towns fall to braying whenever they saw anyone from our village, as if to throw the braying of our regidors in our teeth. Then the boys took to it, which was the same thing for it as getting into the hands and mouths of all the devils of hell;

and braying spread from one town to another in such a way that the men of the braying town are as easy to be known as blacks are to be known from whites, and the unlucky joke has gone so far that several times the scoffed have come out in arms and in a body to do battle with the scoffers, and neither king nor rook, fear nor shame, can mend matters. To-morrow or the day after, I believe, the men of my town, that is, of the braying town, are going to take the field against another village two leagues away from ours, one of those that persecute us most; and that we may turn out well prepared I have bought these lances and halberds you have seen. These are the curious things I told you I had to tell, and if you don't think them so, I have got no others;" and with this the worthy fellow brought his story to a close.

Just at this moment there came in at the gate of the inn a man entirely clad in chamois leather, hose, breeches, and doublet, who said in a loud voice, "Senor host, have you room? Here's the divining ape and the show of the Release of Melisendra just coming."

"Ods body!" said the landlord, "why, it's Master Pedro! We're in for a grand night!" I forgot to mention that the said Master Pedro had his left eye and nearly half his cheek covered with a patch of green taffety, showing that something ailed all that side. "Your worship is welcome, Master Pedro," continued the landlord; "but where are the ape and the show, for I don't see them?" "They are close at hand," said he in the chamois leather, "but I came on first to know if there was any room." "I'd make the Duke of Alva himself clear out to make room for Master Pedro," said the landlord; "bring in the ape and the show; there's company in the inn to-night that will pay to see that and the cleverness of the ape." "So be it by all means," said the man with the patch; "I'll lower the price, and be well satisfied if I only pay my expenses; and now I'll go back and hurry on the cart with the ape and the show;" and with this he went out of the inn.

Don Quixote at once asked the landlord what this Master Pedro was, and what was the show and what was the ape he had with him; which the landlord replied, "This is a famous puppet-showman, who for some time past has been going about this Mancha de Aragon, exhibiting a show of the release of Melisendra by the famous Don Gaiferos, one of the best and best-represented stories that have been seen in this part of the kingdom for many a year; he has also with him an ape with the most extraordinary gift ever seen in an ape or imagined in a human being; for if you ask him anything, he listens attentively to the question, and then jumps on his master's shoulder, and pressing close to his ear tells him the answer which Master Pedro then delivers. He says a great deal more about things past than about things to come; and though he does not always hit the truth in every

case, most times he is not far wrong, so that he makes us fancy he has got the devil in him. He gets two reals for every question if the ape answers; I mean if his master answers for him after he has whispered into his ear; and so it is believed that this same Master Pedro is very rich. He is a 'gallant man' as they say in Italy, and good company, and leads the finest life in the world; talks more than six, drinks more than a dozen, and all by his tongue, and his ape, and his show."

Master Pedro now came back, and in a cart followed the show and the ape — a big one, without a tail and with buttocks as bare as felt, but not vicious-looking. As soon as Don Quixote saw him, he asked him, "Can you tell me, sir fortune-teller, what fish do we catch, and how will it be with us? See, here are my two reals," and he bade Sancho give them to Master Pedro; but he answered for the ape and said, "Senor, this animal does not give any answer or information touching things that are to come; of things past he knows something, and more or less of things present."

"Gad," said Sancho, "I would not give a farthing to be told what's past with me, for who knows that better than I do myself? And to pay for being told what I know would be mighty foolish. But as you know things present, here are my two reals, and tell me, most excellent sir ape, what is my wife Teresa Panza doing now, and what is she diverting herself with?"

Master Pedro refused to take the money, saying, "I will not receive payment in advance or until the service has been first rendered;" and then with his right hand he gave a couple of slaps on his left shoulder, and with one spring the ape perched himself upon it, and putting his mouth to his master's ear began chattering his teeth rapidly; and having kept this up as long as one would be saying a credo, with another spring he brought himself to the ground, and the same instant Master Pedro ran in great haste and fell upon his knees before Don Quixote, and embracing his legs exclaimed, "These legs do I embrace as I would embrace the two pillars of Hercules, O illustrious reviver of knight-errantry, so long consigned to oblivion! O never yet duly extolled knight, Don Quixote of La Mancha, courage of the faint-hearted, prop of the tottering, arm of the fallen, staff and counsel of all who are unfortunate!"



Don Quixote was thunderstruck, Sancho astounded, the cousin staggered, the page astonished, the man from the braying town agape, the landlord in perplexity, and, in short, everyone amazed at the words of the puppet-showman, who went on to say, “And thou, worthy Sancho Panza, the best squire and squire to the best knight in the world! Be of good cheer, for thy good wife Teresa is well, and she is at this moment hackling a pound of flax; and more by token she has at her left hand a jug with a broken spout that holds a good drop of wine, with which she solaces herself at her work.”



“That I can well believe,” said Sancho. “She is a lucky one, and if it was not for her jealousy I would not change her for the giantess Andandona, who by my master’s account was a very clever and worthy woman; my Teresa is one of those that won’t let themselves want for anything, though their heirs may have to pay for it.”

“Now I declare,” said Don Quixote, “he who reads much and travels much sees and knows a great deal. I say so because what amount of persuasion could have persuaded me that there are apes in the world that can divine as I have seen now with my own eyes? For I am that very Don Quixote of La Mancha this worthy animal refers to, though he has gone rather too far in my praise; but whatever I may be, I thank heaven that it has endowed me with a tender and compassionate heart, always disposed to do good to all and harm to none.”

“If I had money,” said the page, “I would ask senor ape what will happen me in the peregrination I am making.”

To this Master Pedro, who had by this time risen from Don Quixote’s feet, replied, “I have already said that this little beast gives no answer as to the future; but if he did, not having money would be of no consequence, for to oblige Senor Don Quixote, here present, I would give up all the profits in the world. And now, because I have promised it, and to afford him pleasure, I will set up my show and offer entertainment to all who are in the inn, without any charge whatever.” As soon as he heard this, the landlord, delighted beyond measure, pointed out a place where the show might be fixed, which was done at once.

Don Quixote was not very well satisfied with the divinations of the ape, as he did not think it proper that an ape should divine anything, either past or future; so while Master Pedro was arranging the show, he retired with Sancho into a corner of the stable, where, without being overheard by anyone, he said to him, “Look here, Sancho, I have been seriously thinking over this ape’s extraordinary gift, and have come to the conclusion that beyond doubt this Master Pedro, his master, has a pact, tacit or express, with the devil.”

“If the packet is express from the devil,” said Sancho, “it must be a very dirty packet no doubt; but what good can it do Master Pedro to have such packets?”

“Thou dost not understand me, Sancho,” said Don Quixote; “I only mean he must have made some compact with the devil to infuse this power into the ape, that he may get his living, and after he has grown rich he will give him his soul, which is what the enemy of mankind wants; this I am led to believe by observing that the ape only answers about things past or present, and the devil’s knowledge extends no further; for the future he knows only by guesswork, and that not always; for it is reserved for God alone to know the times and the seasons, and for him there is neither past nor future; all is present. This being as it is, it is

clear that this ape speaks by the spirit of the devil; and I am astonished they have not denounced him to the Holy Office, and put him to the question, and forced it out of him by whose virtue it is that he divines; because it is certain this ape is not an astrologer; neither his master nor he sets up, or knows how to set up, those figures they call judiciary, which are now so common in Spain that there is not a jade, or page, or old cobbler, that will not undertake to set up a figure as readily as pick up a knave of cards from the ground, bringing to nought the marvellous truth of the science by their lies and ignorance. I know of a lady who asked one of these figure schemers whether her little lap-dog would be in pup and would breed, and how many and of what colour the little pups would be. To which senior astrologer, after having set up his figure, made answer that the bitch would be in pup, and would drop three pups, one green, another bright red, and the third parti-coloured, provided she conceived between eleven and twelve either of the day or night, and on a Monday or Saturday; but as things turned out, two days after this the bitch died of a surfeit, and senior planet-ruler had the credit all over the place of being a most profound astrologer, as most of these planet-rulers have.”

“Still,” said Sancho, “I would be glad if your worship would make Master Pedro ask his ape whether what happened your worship in the cave of Montesinos is true; for, begging your worship’s pardon, I, for my part, take it to have been all flam and lies, or at any rate something you dreamt.”

“That may be,” replied Don Quixote; “however, I will do what you suggest; though I have my own scruples about it.”

At this point Master Pedro came up in quest of Don Quixote, to tell him the show was now ready and to come and see it, for it was worth seeing. Don Quixote explained his wish, and begged him to ask his ape at once to tell him whether certain things which had happened to him in the cave of Montesinos were dreams or realities, for to him they appeared to partake of both. Upon this Master Pedro, without answering, went back to fetch the ape, and, having placed it in front of Don Quixote and Sancho, said: “See here, senior ape, this gentleman wishes to know whether certain things which happened to him in the cave called the cave of Montesinos were false or true.” On his making the usual sign the ape mounted on his left shoulder and seemed to whisper in his ear, and Master Pedro said at once, “The ape says that the things you saw or that happened to you in that cave are, part of them false, part true; and that he only knows this and no more as regards this question; but if your worship wishes to know more, on Friday next he will answer all that may be asked him, for his virtue is at present exhausted, and will not return to him till Friday, as he has said.”

“Did I not say, senior,” said Sancho, “that I could not bring myself to believe

that all your worship said about the adventures in the cave was true, or even the half of it?"

"The course of events will tell, Sancho," replied Don Quixote; "time, that discloses all things, leaves nothing that it does not drag into the light of day, though it be buried in the bosom of the earth. But enough of that for the present; let us go and see Master Pedro's show, for I am sure there must be something novel in it."

"Something!" said Master Pedro; "this show of mine has sixty thousand novel things in it; let me tell you, Senor Don Quixote, it is one of the best-worth-seeing things in the world this day; but *operibus credite et non verbis*, and now let's get to work, for it is growing late, and we have a great deal to do and to say and show."

Don Quixote and Sancho obeyed him and went to where the show was already put up and uncovered, set all around with lighted wax tapers which made it look splendid and bright. When they came to it Master Pedro ensconced himself inside it, for it was he who had to work the puppets, and a boy, a servant of his, posted himself outside to act as showman and explain the mysteries of the exhibition, having a wand in his hand to point to the figures as they came out. And so, all who were in the inn being arranged in front of the show, some of them standing, and Don Quixote, Sancho, the page, and cousin, accommodated with the best places, the interpreter began to say what he will hear or see who reads or hears the next chapter.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

WHEREIN IS CONTINUED THE DROLL ADVENTURE OF THE PUPPET-SHOWMAN, TOGETHER WITH OTHER THINGS IN TRUTH RIGHT GOOD



All were silent, Tyrians and Trojans; I mean all who were watching the show were hanging on the lips of the interpreter of its wonders, when drums and trumpets were heard to sound inside it and cannon to go off. The noise was soon over, and then the boy lifted up his voice and said, "This true story which is here represented to your worships is taken word for word from the French chronicles and from the Spanish ballads that are in everybody's mouth, and in the mouth of the boys about the streets. Its subject is the release by Senor Don Gaiferos of his wife Melisendra, when a captive in Spain at the hands of the Moors in the city of

Sansuena, for so they called then what is now called Saragossa; and there you may see how Don Gaiferos is playing at the tables, just as they sing it At tables playing Don Gaiferos sits,

For Melisendra is forgotten now.

And that personage who appears there with a crown on his head and a sceptre in his hand is the Emperor Charlemagne, the supposed father of Melisendra, who, angered to see his son-in-law's inaction and unconcern, comes in to chide him; and observe with what vehemence and energy he chides him, so that you would fancy he was going to give him half a dozen raps with his sceptre; and indeed there are authors who say he did give them, and sound ones too; and after having said a great deal to him about imperilling his honour by not effecting the release of his wife, he said, so the tale runs,

Enough I've said, see to it now.

Observe, too, how the emperor turns away, and leaves Don Gaiferos fuming; and you see now how in a burst of anger, he flings the table and the board far from him and calls in haste for his armour, and asks his cousin Don Roland for the loan of his sword, Durindana, and how Don Roland refuses to lend it, offering him his company in the difficult enterprise he is undertaking; but he, in his valour and anger, will not accept it, and says that he alone will suffice to rescue his wife, even though she were imprisoned deep in the centre of the earth, and with this he retires to arm himself and set out on his journey at once. Now let your worships turn your eyes to that tower that appears there, which is supposed to be one of the towers of the alcazar of Saragossa, now called the Aljaferia; that lady who appears on that balcony dressed in Moorish fashion is the peerless Melisendra, for many a time she used to gaze from thence upon the road to France, and seek consolation in her captivity by thinking of Paris and her husband. Observe, too, a new incident which now occurs, such as, perhaps, never was seen. Do you not see that Moor, who silently and stealthily, with his finger on his lip, approaches Melisendra from behind? Observe now how he prints a kiss upon her lips, and what a hurry she is in to spit, and wipe them with the white sleeve of her smock, and how she bewails herself, and tears her fair hair as though it were to blame for the wrong. Observe, too, that the stately Moor who is in that corridor is King Marsilio of Sansuena, who, having seen the Moor's insolence, at once orders him (though his kinsman and a great favourite of his) to be seized and given two hundred lashes, while carried through the streets of the city according to custom, with criers going before him and officers of justice behind; and here you see them come out to execute the sentence, although the offence has been scarcely committed; for among the Moors there

are no indictments nor remands as with us.”

Here Don Quixote called out, “Child, child, go straight on with your story, and don’t run into curves and slants, for to establish a fact clearly there is need of a great deal of proof and confirmation;” and said Master Pedro from within, “Boy, stick to your text and do as the gentleman bids you; it’s the best plan; keep to your plain song, and don’t attempt harmonies, for they are apt to break down from being over fine.”

“I will,” said the boy, and he went on to say, “This figure that you see here on horseback, covered with a Gascon cloak, is Don Gaiferos himself, whom his wife, now avenged of the insult of the amorous Moor, and taking her stand on the balcony of the tower with a calmer and more tranquil countenance, has perceived without recognising him; and she addresses her husband, supposing him to be some traveller, and holds with him all that conversation and colloquy in the ballad that runs —

If you, sir knight, to France are bound,  
Oh! for Gaiferos ask —

which I do not repeat here because prolixity begets disgust; suffice it to observe how Don Gaiferos discovers himself, and that by her joyful gestures Melisendra shows us she has recognised him; and what is more, we now see she lowers herself from the balcony to place herself on the haunches of her good husband’s horse. But ah! unhappy lady, the edge of her petticoat has caught on one of the bars of the balcony and she is left hanging in the air, unable to reach the ground. But you see how compassionate heaven sends aid in our sorest need; Don Gaiferos advances, and without minding whether the rich petticoat is torn or not, he seizes her and by force brings her to the ground, and then with one jerk places her on the haunches of his horse, astraddle like a man, and bids her hold on tight and clasp her arms round his neck, crossing them on his breast so as not to fall, for the lady Melisendra was not used to that style of riding. You see, too, how the neighing of the horse shows his satisfaction with the gallant and beautiful burden he bears in his lord and lady. You see how they wheel round and quit the city, and in joy and gladness take the road to Paris. Go in peace, O peerless pair of true lovers! May you reach your longed-for fatherland in safety, and may fortune interpose no impediment to your prosperous journey; may the eyes of your friends and kinsmen behold you enjoying in peace and tranquillity the remaining days of your life — and that they may be as many as those of Nestor!”

Here Master Pedro called out again and said, “Simplicity, boy! None of your high flights; all affectation is bad.”

The interpreter made no answer, but went on to say, "There was no want of idle eyes, that see everything, to see Melisendra come down and mount, and word was brought to King Marsilio, who at once gave orders to sound the alarm; and see what a stir there is, and how the city is drowned with the sound of the bells pealing in the towers of all the mosques."

"Nay, nay," said Don Quixote at this; "on that point of the bells Master Pedro is very inaccurate, for bells are not in use among the Moors; only kettledrums, and a kind of small trumpet somewhat like our clarion; to ring bells this way in Sansuena is unquestionably a great absurdity."

On hearing this, Master Pedro stopped ringing, and said, "Don't look into trifles, Senor Don Quixote, or want to have things up to a pitch of perfection that is out of reach. Are there not almost every day a thousand comedies represented all round us full of thousands of inaccuracies and absurdities, and, for all that, they have a successful run, and are listened to not only with applause, but with admiration and all the rest of it? Go on, boy, and don't mind; for so long as I fill my pouch, no matter if I show as many inaccuracies as there are motes in a sunbeam."

"True enough," said Don Quixote; and the boy went on: "See what a numerous and glittering crowd of horsemen issues from the city in pursuit of the two faithful lovers, what a blowing of trumpets there is, what sounding of horns, what beating of drums and tabors; I fear me they will overtake them and bring them back tied to the tail of their own horse, which would be a dreadful sight."





Don Quixote, however, seeing such a swarm of Moors and hearing such a din, thought it would be right to aid the fugitives, and standing up he exclaimed in a loud voice, "Never, while I live, will I permit foul play to be practised in my presence on such a famous knight and fearless lover as Don Gaiferos. Halt! ill-born rabble, follow him not nor pursue him, or ye will have to reckon with me in battle!" and suiting the action to the word, he drew his sword, and with one bound placed himself close to the show, and with unexampled rapidity and fury began to shower down blows on the puppet troop of Moors, knocking over some, decapitating others, maiming this one and demolishing that; and among many more he delivered one down stroke which, if Master Pedro had not

ducked, made himself small, and got out of the way, would have sliced off his head as easily as if it had been made of almond-paste. Master Pedro kept shouting, "Hold hard! Senor Don Quixote! can't you see they're not real Moors you're knocking down and killing and destroying, but only little pasteboard figures! Look — sinner that I am! — how you're wrecking and ruining all that I'm worth!" But in spite of this, Don Quixote did not leave off discharging a continuous rain of cuts, slashes, downstrokes, and backstrokes, and at length, in less than the space of two credos, he brought the whole show to the ground, with all its fittings and figures shivered and knocked to pieces, King Marsilio badly wounded, and the Emperor Charlemagne with his crown and head split in two. The whole audience was thrown into confusion, the ape fled to the roof of the inn, the cousin was frightened, and even Sancho Panza himself was in mighty fear, for, as he swore after the storm was over, he had never seen his master in such a furious passion.

The complete destruction of the show being thus accomplished, Don Quixote became a little calmer, said, "I wish I had here before me now all those who do not or will not believe how useful knights-errant are in the world; just think, if I had not been here present, what would have become of the brave Don Gaiferos and the fair Melisendra! Depend upon it, by this time those dogs would have overtaken them and inflicted some outrage upon them. So, then, long live knight-errantry beyond everything living on earth this day!"

"Let it live, and welcome," said Master Pedro at this in a feeble voice, "and let me die, for I am so unfortunate that I can say with King Don Rodrigo —

Yesterday was I lord of Spain  
To-day I've not a turret left  
That I may call mine own.

Not half an hour, nay, barely a minute ago, I saw myself lord of kings and emperors, with my stables filled with countless horses, and my trunks and bags with gay dresses unnumbered; and now I find myself ruined and laid low, destitute and a beggar, and above all without my ape, for, by my faith, my teeth will have to sweat for it before I have him caught; and all through the reckless fury of sir knight here, who, they say, protects the fatherless, and rights wrongs, and does other charitable deeds; but whose generous intentions have been found wanting in my case only, blessed and praised be the highest heavens! Verily, knight of the rueful figure he must be to have disfigured mine."

Sancho Panza was touched by Master Pedro's words, and said to him, "Don't weep and lament, Master Pedro; you break my heart; let me tell you my master, Don Quixote, is so catholic and scrupulous a Christian that, if he can make out

that he has done you any wrong, he will own it, and be willing to pay for it and make it good, and something over and above.”

“Only let Senor Don Quixote pay me for some part of the work he has destroyed,” said Master Pedro, “and I would be content, and his worship would ease his conscience, for he cannot be saved who keeps what is another’s against the owner’s will, and makes no restitution.”

“That is true,” said Don Quixote; “but at present I am not aware that I have got anything of yours, Master Pedro.”

“What!” returned Master Pedro; “and these relics lying here on the bare hard ground — what scattered and shattered them but the invincible strength of that mighty arm? And whose were the bodies they belonged to but mine? And what did I get my living by but by them?”

“Now am I fully convinced,” said Don Quixote, “of what I had many a time before believed; that the enchanters who persecute me do nothing more than put figures like these before my eyes, and then change and turn them into what they please. In truth and earnest, I assure you gentlemen who now hear me, that to me everything that has taken place here seemed to take place literally, that Melisendra was Melisendra, Don Gaiferos Don Gaiferos, Marsilio Marsilio, and Charlemagne Charlemagne. That was why my anger was roused; and to be faithful to my calling as a knight-errant I sought to give aid and protection to those who fled, and with this good intention I did what you have seen. If the result has been the opposite of what I intended, it is no fault of mine, but of those wicked beings that persecute me; but, for all that, I am willing to condemn myself in costs for this error of mine, though it did not proceed from malice; let Master Pedro see what he wants for the spoiled figures, for I agree to pay it at once in good and current money of Castile.”

Master Pedro made him a bow, saying, “I expected no less of the rare Christianity of the valiant Don Quixote of La Mancha, true helper and protector of all destitute and needy vagabonds; master landlord here and the great Sancho Panza shall be the arbitrators and appraisers between your worship and me of what these dilapidated figures are worth or may be worth.”

The landlord and Sancho consented, and then Master Pedro picked up from the ground King Marsilio of Saragossa with his head off, and said, “Here you see how impossible it is to restore this king to his former state, so I think, saving your better judgments, that for his death, decease, and demise, four reals and a half may be given me.”

“Proceed,” said Don Quixote.

“Well then, for this cleavage from top to bottom,” continued Master Pedro, taking up the split Emperor Charlemagne, “it would not be much if I were to ask

five reals and a quarter.”

“It’s not little,” said Sancho.

“Nor is it much,” said the landlord; “make it even, and say five reals.”

“Let him have the whole five and a quarter,” said Don Quixote; “for the sum total of this notable disaster does not stand on a quarter more or less; and make an end of it quickly, Master Pedro, for it’s getting on to supper-time, and I have some hints of hunger.”

“For this figure,” said Master Pedro, “that is without a nose, and wants an eye, and is the fair Melisendra, I ask, and I am reasonable in my charge, two reals and twelve maravedis.”

“The very devil must be in it,” said Don Quixote, “if Melisendra and her husband are not by this time at least on the French border, for the horse they rode on seemed to me to fly rather than gallop; so you needn’t try to sell me the cat for the hare, showing me here a noseless Melisendra when she is now, may be, enjoying herself at her ease with her husband in France. God help every one to his own, Master Pedro, and let us all proceed fairly and honestly; and now go on.”

Master Pedro, perceiving that Don Quixote was beginning to wander, and return to his original fancy, was not disposed to let him escape, so he said to him, “This cannot be Melisendra, but must be one of the damsels that waited on her; so if I’m given sixty maravedis for her, I’ll be content and sufficiently paid.”

And so he went on, putting values on ever so many more smashed figures, which, after the two arbitrators had adjusted them to the satisfaction of both parties, came to forty reals and three-quarters; and over and above this sum, which Sancho at once disbursed, Master Pedro asked for two reals for his trouble in catching the ape.

“Let him have them, Sancho,” said Don Quixote; “not to catch the ape, but to get drunk; and two hundred would I give this minute for the good news, to anyone who could tell me positively, that the lady Dona Melisandra and Senor Don Gaiferos were now in France and with their own people.”

“No one could tell us that better than my ape,” said Master Pedro; “but there’s no devil that could catch him now; I suspect, however, that affection and hunger will drive him to come looking for me to-night; but to-morrow will soon be here and we shall see.”

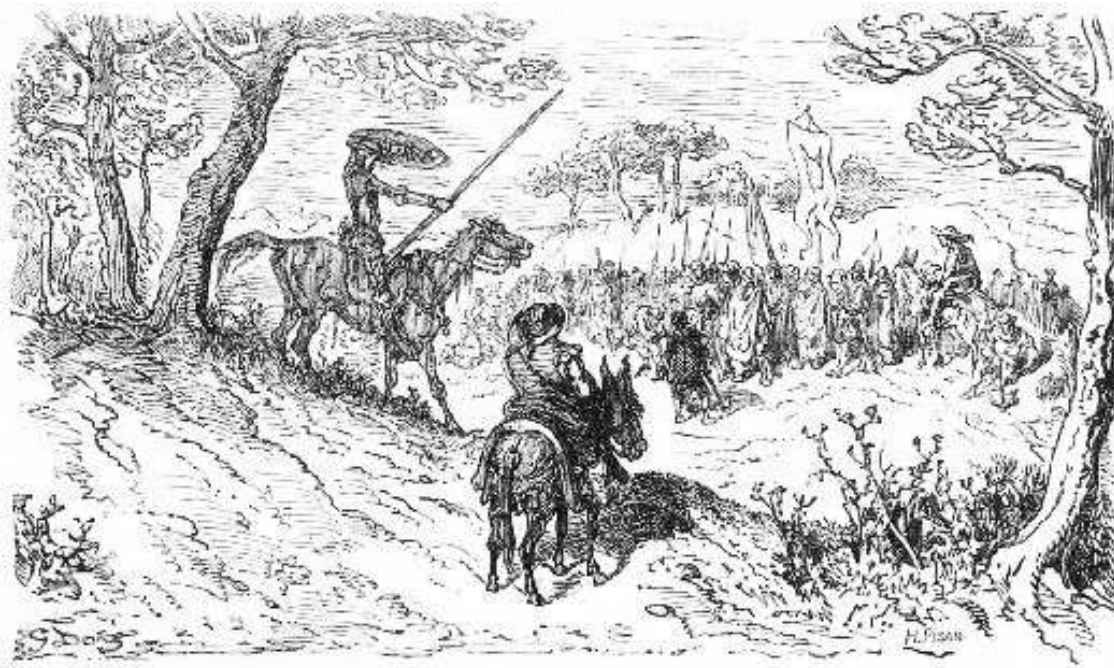
In short, the puppet-show storm passed off, and all supped in peace and good fellowship at Don Quixote’s expense, for he was the height of generosity. Before it was daylight the man with the lances and halberds took his departure, and soon after daybreak the cousin and the page came to bid Don Quixote farewell, the former returning home, the latter resuming his journey, towards which, to help

him, Don Quixote gave him twelve reals. Master Pedro did not care to engage in any more palaver with Don Quixote, whom he knew right well; so he rose before the sun, and having got together the remains of his show and caught his ape, he too went off to seek his adventures. The landlord, who did not know Don Quixote, was as much astonished at his mad freaks as at his generosity. To conclude, Sancho, by his master's orders, paid him very liberally, and taking leave of him they quitted the inn at about eight in the morning and took to the road, where we will leave them to pursue their journey, for this is necessary in order to allow certain other matters to be set forth, which are required to clear up this famous history.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

WHEREIN IT IS SHOWN WHO MASTER PEDRO AND HIS APE WERE,  
TOGETHER WITH THE MISHAP DON QUIXOTE HAD IN THE BRAYING  
ADVENTURE, WHICH HE DID NOT CONCLUDE AS HE WOULD HAVE  
LIKED OR AS HE HAD EXPECTED



Cide Hamete, the chronicler of this great history, begins this chapter with these words, “I swear as a Catholic Christian;” with regard to which his translator says that Cide Hamete’s swearing as a Catholic Christian, he being — as no doubt he was — a Moor, only meant that, just as a Catholic Christian taking an oath swears, or ought to swear, what is true, and tell the truth in what he avers, so he was telling the truth, as much as if he swore as a Catholic Christian, in all he chose to write about Quixote, especially in declaring who Master Pedro was and what was the divining ape that astonished all the villages

with his divinations. He says, then, that he who has read the First Part of this history will remember well enough the Gines de Pasamonte whom, with other galley slaves, Don Quixote set free in the Sierra Morena: a kindness for which he afterwards got poor thanks and worse payment from that evil-minded, ill-conditioned set. This Gines de Pasamonte — Don Ginesillo de Parapilla, Don Quixote called him — it was that stole Dapple from Sancho Panza; which, because by the fault of the printers neither the how nor the when was stated in the First Part, has been a puzzle to a good many people, who attribute to the bad memory of the author what was the error of the press. In fact, however, Gines stole him while Sancho Panza was asleep on his back, adopting the plan and device that Brunello had recourse to when he stole Sacripante's horse from between his legs at the siege of Albracca; and, as has been told, Sancho afterwards recovered him. This Gines, then, afraid of being caught by the officers of justice, who were looking for him to punish him for his numberless rascalities and offences (which were so many and so great that he himself wrote a big book giving an account of them), resolved to shift his quarters into the kingdom of Aragon, and cover up his left eye, and take up the trade of a puppet-showman; for this, as well as juggling, he knew how to practise to perfection. From some released Christians returning from Barbary, it so happened, he bought the ape, which he taught to mount upon his shoulder on his making a certain sign, and to whisper, or seem to do so, in his ear. Thus prepared, before entering any village whither he was bound with his show and his ape, he used to inform himself at the nearest village, or from the most likely person he could find, as to what particular things had happened there, and to whom; and bearing them well in mind, the first thing he did was to exhibit his show, sometimes one story, sometimes another, but all lively, amusing, and familiar. As soon as the exhibition was over he brought forward the accomplishments of his ape, assuring the public that he divined all the past and the present, but as to the future he had no skill. For each question answered he asked two reals, and for some he made a reduction, just as he happened to feel the pulse of the questioners; and when now and then he came to houses where things that he knew of had happened to the people living there, even if they did not ask him a question, not caring to pay for it, he would make the sign to the ape and then declare that it had said so and so, which fitted the case exactly. In this way he acquired a prodigious name and all ran after him; on other occasions, being very crafty, he would answer in such a way that the answers suited the questions; and as no one cross-questioned him or pressed him to tell how his ape divined, he made fools of them all and filled his pouch. The instant he entered the inn he knew Don Quixote and Sancho, and with that knowledge it was easy for him to astonish them and all who were there;



but it would have cost him dear had Don Quixote brought down his hand a little lower when he cut off King Marsilio's head and destroyed all his horsemen, as related in the preceeding chapter.

So much for Master Pedro and his ape; and now to return to Don Quixote of La Mancha. After he had left the inn he determined to visit, first of all, the banks of the Ebro and that neighbourhood, before entering the city of Saragossa, for the ample time there was still to spare before the jousts left him enough for all. With this object in view he followed the road and travelled along it for two days, without meeting any adventure worth committing to writing until on the third day, as he was ascending a hill, he heard a great noise of drums, trumpets, and musket-shots. At first he imagined some regiment of soldiers was passing that way, and to see them he spurred Rocinante and mounted the hill. On reaching the top he saw at the foot of it over two hundred men, as it seemed to him, armed with weapons of various sorts, lances, crossbows, partisans, halberds, and pikes, and a few muskets and a great many bucklers. He descended the slope and approached the band near enough to see distinctly the flags, make out the colours and distinguish the devices they bore, especially one on a standard or ensign of white satin, on which there was painted in a very life-like style an ass like a little sard, with its head up, its mouth open and its tongue out, as if it were in the act and attitude of braying; and round it were inscribed in large characters these two lines — They did not bray in vain,

Our alcaldes twain.

From this device Don Quixote concluded that these people must be from the braying town, and he said so to Sancho, explaining to him what was written on the standard. At the same time he observed that the man who had told them about the matter was wrong in saying that the two who brayed were regidores, for according to the lines of the standard they were alcaldes. To which Sancho replied, "Senor, there's nothing to stick at in that, for maybe the regidores who brayed then came to be alcaldes of their town afterwards, and so they may go by both titles; moreover, it has nothing to do with the truth of the story whether the brayers were alcaldes or regidores, provided at any rate they did bray; for an alcalde is just as likely to bray as a regidor." They perceived, in short, clearly that the town which had been twitted had turned out to do battle with some other that had jeered it more than was fair or neighbourly.

Don Quixote proceeded to join them, not a little to Sancho's uneasiness, for he never relished mixing himself up in expeditions of that sort. The members of the troop received him into the midst of them, taking him to be some one who was on their side. Don Quixote, putting up his visor, advanced with an easy

bearing and demeanour to the standard with the ass, and all the chief men of the army gathered round him to look at him, staring at him with the usual amazement that everybody felt on seeing him for the first time. Don Quixote, seeing them examining him so attentively, and that none of them spoke to him or put any question to him, determined to take advantage of their silence; so, breaking his own, he lifted up his voice and said, "Worthy sirs, I entreat you as earnestly as I can not to interrupt an argument I wish to address to you, until you find it displeases or wearies you; and if that come to pass, on the slightest hint you give me I will put a seal upon my lips and a gag upon my tongue."

They all bade him say what he liked, for they would listen to him willingly.



With this permission Don Quixote went on to say, “I, sirs, am a knight-errant whose calling is that of arms, and whose profession is to protect those who require protection, and give help to such as stand in need of it. Some days ago I became acquainted with your misfortune and the cause which impels you to take up arms again and again to revenge yourselves upon your enemies; and having many times thought over your business in my mind, I find that, according to the laws of combat, you are mistaken in holding yourselves insulted; for a private individual cannot insult an entire community; unless it be by defying it collectively as a traitor, because he cannot tell who in particular is guilty of the treason for which he defies it. Of this we have an example in Don Diego

Ordenez de Lara, who defied the whole town of Zamora, because he did not know that Vellido Dolfos alone had committed the treachery of slaying his king; and therefore he defied them all, and the vengeance and the reply concerned all; though, to be sure, Senor Don Diego went rather too far, indeed very much beyond the limits of a defiance; for he had no occasion to defy the dead, or the waters, or the fishes, or those yet unborn, and all the rest of it as set forth; but let that pass, for when anger breaks out there's no father, governor, or bridle to check the tongue. The case being, then, that no one person can insult a kingdom, province, city, state, or entire community, it is clear there is no reason for going out to avenge the defiance of such an insult, inasmuch as it is not one. A fine thing it would be if the people of the clock town were to be at loggerheads every moment with everyone who called them by that name, — or the Cazoleros, Berengeneros, Ballenatos, Jaboneros, or the bearers of all the other names and titles that are always in the mouth of the boys and common people! It would be a nice business indeed if all these illustrious cities were to take huff and revenge themselves and go about perpetually making trombones of their swords in every petty quarrel! No, no; God forbid! There are four things for which sensible men and well-ordered States ought to take up arms, draw their swords, and risk their persons, lives, and properties. The first is to defend the Catholic faith; the second, to defend one's life, which is in accordance with natural and divine law; the third, in defence of one's honour, family, and property; the fourth, in the service of one's king in a just war; and if to these we choose to add a fifth (which may be included in the second), in defence of one's country. To these five, as it were capital causes, there may be added some others that may be just and reasonable, and make it a duty to take up arms; but to take them up for trifles and things to laugh at and be amused by rather than offended, looks as though he who did so was altogether wanting in common sense. Moreover, to take an unjust revenge (and there cannot be any just one) is directly opposed to the sacred law that we acknowledge, wherein we are commanded to do good to our enemies and to love them that hate us; a command which, though it seems somewhat difficult to obey, is only so to those who have in them less of God than of the world, and more of the flesh than of the spirit; for Jesus Christ, God and true man, who never lied, and could not and cannot lie, said, as our law-giver, that his yoke was easy and his burden light; he would not, therefore, have laid any command upon us that it was impossible to obey. Thus, sirs, you are bound to keep quiet by human and divine law."

"The devil take me," said Sancho to himself at this, "but this master of mine is a tologian; or, if not, faith, he's as like one as one egg is like another."

Don Quixote stopped to take breath, and, observing that silence was still

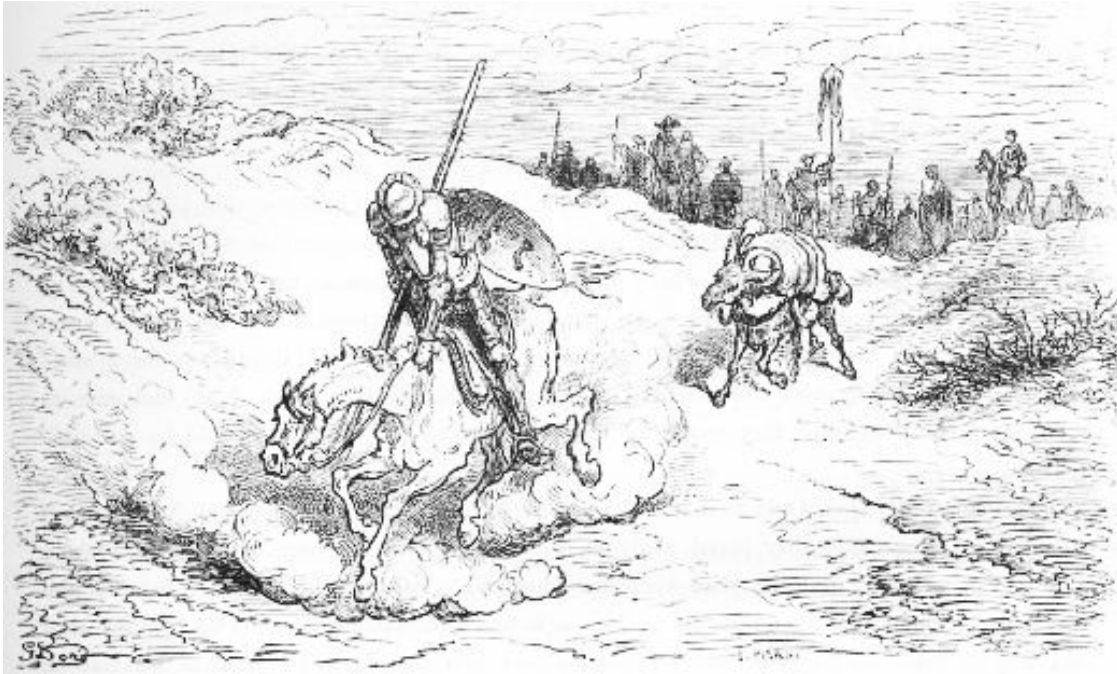
preserved, had a mind to continue his discourse, and would have done so had not Sancho interposed with his smartness; for he, seeing his master pause, took the lead, saying, "My lord Don Quixote of La Mancha, who once was called the Knight of the Rueful Countenance, but now is called the Knight of the Lions, is a gentleman of great discretion who knows Latin and his mother tongue like a bachelor, and in everything that he deals with or advises proceeds like a good soldier, and has all the laws and ordinances of what they call combat at his fingers' ends; so you have nothing to do but to let yourselves be guided by what he says, and on my head be it if it is wrong. Besides which, you have been told that it is folly to take offence at merely hearing a bray. I remember when I was a boy I brayed as often as I had a fancy, without anyone hindering me, and so elegantly and naturally that when I brayed all the asses in the town would bray; but I was none the less for that the son of my parents who were greatly respected; and though I was envied because of the gift by more than one of the high and mighty ones of the town, I did not care two farthings for it; and that you may see I am telling the truth, wait a bit and listen, for this art, like swimming, once learnt is never forgotten;" and then, taking hold of his nose, he began to bray so vigorously that all the valleys around rang again.

One of those, however, that stood near him, fancying he was mocking them, lifted up a long staff he had in his hand and smote him such a blow with it that Sancho dropped helpless to the ground. Don Quixote, seeing him so roughly handled, attacked the man who had struck him lance in hand, but so many thrust themselves between them that he could not avenge him. Far from it, finding a shower of stones rained upon him, and crossbows and muskets unnumbered levelled at him, he wheeled Rocinante round and, as fast as his best gallop could take him, fled from the midst of them, commending himself to God with all his heart to deliver him out of this peril, in dread every step of some ball coming in at his back and coming out at his breast, and every minute drawing his breath to see whether it had gone from him. The members of the band, however, were satisfied with seeing him take to flight, and did not fire on him. They put up Sancho, scarcely restored to his senses, on his ass, and let him go after his master; not that he was sufficiently in his wits to guide the beast, but Dapple followed the footsteps of Rocinante, from whom he could not remain a moment separated. Don Quixote having got some way off looked back, and seeing Sancho coming, waited for him, as he perceived that no one followed him. The men of the troop stood their ground till night, and as the enemy did not come out to battle, they returned to their town exulting; and had they been aware of the ancient custom of the Greeks, they would have erected a trophy on the spot.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

OF MATTERS THAT BENENGELI SAYS HE WHO READS THEM WILL  
KNOW, IF HE READS THEM WITH ATTENTION



When the brave man flees, treachery is manifest and it is for wise men to reserve themselves for better occasions. This proved to be the case with Don Quixote, who, giving way before the fury of the townsfolk and the hostile intentions of the angry troop, took to flight and, without a thought of Sancho or the danger in which he was leaving him, retreated to such a distance as he thought made him safe. Sancho, lying across his ass, followed him, as has been said, and at length came up, having by this time recovered his senses, and on joining him let himself drop off Dapple at Rocinante's feet, sore, bruised, and belaboured. Don Quixote dismounted to examine his wounds, but finding him whole from head to foot, he said to him, angrily enough, "In an evil hour didst

thou take to braying, Sancho! Where hast thou learned that it is well done to mention the rope in the house of the man that has been hanged? To the music of brays what harmonies couldst thou expect to get but cudgels? Give thanks to God, Sancho, that they signed the cross on thee just now with a stick, and did not mark thee per signum crucis with a cutlass."

"I'm not equal to answering," said Sancho, "for I feel as if I was speaking through my shoulders; let us mount and get away from this; I'll keep from braying, but not from saying that knights-errant fly and leave their good squires to be pounded like privet, or made meal of at the hands of their enemies."

"He does not fly who retires," returned Don Quixote; "for I would have thee know, Sancho, that the valour which is not based upon a foundation of prudence is called rashness, and the exploits of the rash man are to be attributed rather to good fortune than to courage; and so I own that I retired, but not that I fled; and therein I have followed the example of many valiant men who have reserved themselves for better times; the histories are full of instances of this, but as it would not be any good to thee or pleasure to me, I will not recount them to thee now."

Sancho was by this time mounted with the help of Don Quixote, who then himself mounted Rocinante, and at a leisurely pace they proceeded to take shelter in a grove which was in sight about a quarter of a league off. Every now and then Sancho gave vent to deep sighs and dismal groans, and on Don Quixote asking him what caused such acute suffering, he replied that, from the end of his back-bone up to the nape of his neck, he was so sore that it nearly drove him out of his senses.

"The cause of that soreness," said Don Quixote, "will be, no doubt, that the staff wherewith they smote thee being a very long one, it caught thee all down the back, where all the parts that are sore are situated, and had it reached any further thou wouldst be sorer still."

"By God," said Sancho, "your worship has relieved me of a great doubt, and cleared up the point for me in elegant style! Body o' me! is the cause of my soreness such a mystery that there's any need to tell me I am sore everywhere the staff hit me? If it was my ankles that pained me there might be something in going divining why they did, but it is not much to divine that I'm sore where they thrashed me. By my faith, master mine, the ills of others hang by a hair; every day I am discovering more and more how little I have to hope for from keeping company with your worship; for if this time you have allowed me to be drubbed, the next time, or a hundred times more, we'll have the blanketings of the other day over again, and all the other pranks which, if they have fallen on my shoulders now, will be thrown in my teeth by-and-by. I would do a great deal



better (if I was not an ignorant brute that will never do any good all my life), I would do a great deal better, I say, to go home to my wife and children and support them and bring them up on what God may please to give me, instead of following your worship along roads that lead nowhere and paths that are none at all, with little to drink and less to eat. And then when it comes to sleeping! Measure out seven feet on the earth, brother squire, and if that's not enough for you, take as many more, for you may have it all your own way and stretch yourself to your heart's content. Oh that I could see burnt and turned to ashes the first man that meddled with knight-errantry or at any rate the first who chose to be squire to such fools as all the knights-errant of past times must have been! Of those of the present day I say nothing, because, as your worship is one of them, I respect them, and because I know your worship knows a point more than the devil in all you say and think."

"I would lay a good wager with you, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "that now that you are talking on without anyone to stop you, you don't feel a pain in your whole body. Talk away, my son, say whatever comes into your head or mouth, for so long as you feel no pain, the irritation your impertinences give me will be a pleasure to me; and if you are so anxious to go home to your wife and children, God forbid that I should prevent you; you have money of mine; see how long it is since we left our village this third time, and how much you can and ought to earn every month, and pay yourself out of your own hand."

"When I worked for Tom Carrasco, the father of the bachelor Samson Carrasco that your worship knows," replied Sancho, "I used to earn two ducats a month besides my food; I can't tell what I can earn with your worship, though I know a knight-errant's squire has harder times of it than he who works for a farmer; for after all, we who work for farmers, however much we toil all day, at the worst, at night, we have our olla supper and sleep in a bed, which I have not slept in since I have been in your worship's service, if it wasn't the short time we were in Don Diego de Miranda's house, and the feast I had with the skimmings I took off Camacho's pots, and what I ate, drank, and slept in Basilio's house; all the rest of the time I have been sleeping on the hard ground under the open sky, exposed to what they call the inclemencies of heaven, keeping life in me with scraps of cheese and crusts of bread, and drinking water either from the brooks or from the springs we come to on these by-paths we travel."

"I own, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "that all thou sayest is true; how much, thinkest thou, ought I to give thee over and above what Tom Carrasco gave thee?"

"I think," said Sancho, "that if your worship was to add on two reals a month I'd consider myself well paid; that is, as far as the wages of my labour go; but to

make up to me for your worship's pledge and promise to me to give me the government of an island, it would be fair to add six reals more, making thirty in all."

"Very good," said Don Quixote; "it is twenty-five days since we left our village, so reckon up, Sancho, according to the wages you have made out for yourself, and see how much I owe you in proportion, and pay yourself, as I said before, out of your own hand."

"O body o' me!" said Sancho, "but your worship is very much out in that reckoning; for when it comes to the promise of the island we must count from the day your worship promised it to me to this present hour we are at now."

"Well, how long is it, Sancho, since I promised it to you?" said Don Quixote.

"If I remember rightly," said Sancho, "it must be over twenty years, three days more or less."

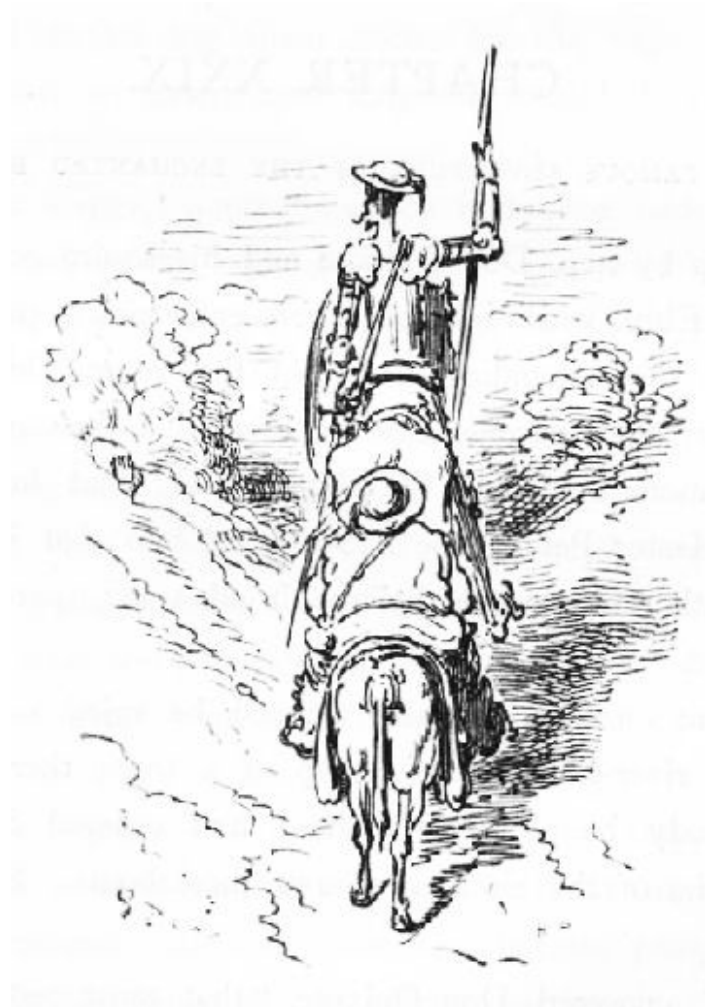
Don Quixote gave himself a great slap on the forehead and began to laugh heartily, and said he, "Why, I have not been wandering, either in the Sierra Morena or in the whole course of our sallies, but barely two months, and thou sayest, Sancho, that it is twenty years since I promised thee the island. I believe now thou wouldst have all the money thou hast of mine go in thy wages. If so, and if that be thy pleasure, I give it to thee now, once and for all, and much good may it do thee, for so long as I see myself rid of such a good-for-nothing squire I'll be glad to be left a pauper without a rap. But tell me, thou perverter of the squirely rules of knight-errantry, where hast thou ever seen or read that any knight-errant's squire made terms with his lord, 'you must give me so much a month for serving you'? Plunge, scoundrel, rogue, monster — for such I take thee to be — plunge, I say, into the mare magnum of their histories; and if thou shalt find that any squire ever said or thought what thou hast said now, I will let thee nail it on my forehead, and give me, over and above, four sound slaps in the face. Turn the rein, or the halter, of thy Dapple, and begone home; for one single step further thou shalt not make in my company. O bread thanklessly received! O promises ill-bestowed! O man more beast than human being! Now, when I was about to raise thee to such a position, that, in spite of thy wife, they would call thee 'my lord,' thou art leaving me? Thou art going now when I had a firm and fixed intention of making thee lord of the best island in the world? Well, as thou thyself hast said before now, honey is not for the mouth of the ass. Ass thou art, ass thou wilt be, and ass thou wilt end when the course of thy life is run; for I know it will come to its close before thou dost perceive or discern that thou art a beast."

Sancho regarded Don Quixote earnestly while he was giving him this rating, and was so touched by remorse that the tears came to his eyes, and in a piteous

and broken voice he said to him, “Master mine, I confess that, to be a complete ass, all I want is a tail; if your worship will only fix one on to me, I’ll look on it as rightly placed, and I’ll serve you as an ass all the remaining days of my life. Forgive me and have pity on my folly, and remember I know but little, and, if I talk much, it’s more from infirmity than malice; but he who sins and mends commends himself to God.”

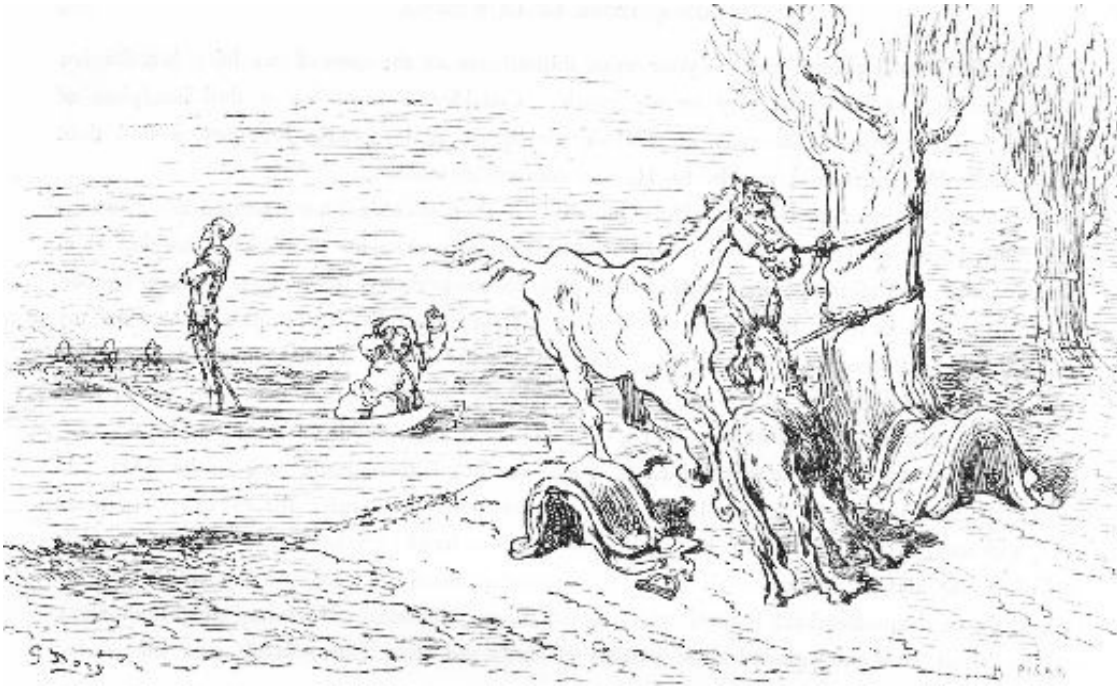
“I should have been surprised, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “if thou hadst not introduced some bit of a proverb into thy speech. Well, well, I forgive thee, provided thou dost mend and not show thyself in future so fond of thine own interest, but try to be of good cheer and take heart, and encourage thyself to look forward to the fulfillment of my promises, which, by being delayed, does not become impossible.”

Sancho said he would do so, and keep up his heart as best he could. They then entered the grove, and Don Quixote settled himself at the foot of an elm, and Sancho at that of a beech, for trees of this kind and others like them always have feet but no hands. Sancho passed the night in pain, for with the evening dews the blow of the staff made itself felt all the more. Don Quixote passed it in his never-failing meditations; but, for all that, they had some winks of sleep, and with the appearance of daylight they pursued their journey in quest of the banks of the famous Ebro, where that befell them which will be told in the following chapter.



## CHAPTER XXIX.

### OF THE FAMOUS ADVENTURE OF THE ENCHANTED BARK



By stages as already described or left undescribed, two days after quitting the grove Don Quixote and Sancho reached the river Ebro, and the sight of it was a great delight to Don Quixote as he contemplated and gazed upon the charms of its banks, the clearness of its stream, the gentleness of its current and the abundance of its crystal waters; and the pleasant view revived a thousand tender thoughts in his mind. Above all, he dwelt upon what he had seen in the cave of Montesinos; for though Master Pedro's ape had told him that of those things part was true, part false, he clung more to their truth than to their falsehood, the very reverse of Sancho, who held them all to be downright lies.

As they were thus proceeding, then, they discovered a small boat, without oars or any other gear, that lay at the water's edge tied to the stem of a tree growing

on the bank. Don Quixote looked all round, and seeing nobody, at once, without more ado, dismounted from Rocinante and bade Sancho get down from Dapple and tie both beasts securely to the trunk of a poplar or willow that stood there. Sancho asked him the reason of this sudden dismounting and tying. Don Quixote made answer, "Thou must know, Sancho, that this bark is plainly, and without the possibility of any alternative, calling and inviting me to enter it, and in it go to give aid to some knight or other person of distinction in need of it, who is no doubt in some sore strait; for this is the way of the books of chivalry and of the enchanters who figure and speak in them. When a knight is involved in some difficulty from which he cannot be delivered save by the hand of another knight, though they may be at a distance of two or three thousand leagues or more one from the other, they either take him up on a cloud, or they provide a bark for him to get into, and in less than the twinkling of an eye they carry him where they will and where his help is required; and so, Sancho, this bark is placed here for the same purpose; this is as true as that it is now day, and ere this one passes tie Dapple and Rocinante together, and then in God's hand be it to guide us; for I would not hold back from embarking, though barefooted friars were to beg me."

"As that's the case," said Sancho, "and your worship chooses to give in to these — I don't know if I may call them absurdities — at every turn, there's nothing for it but to obey and bow the head, bearing in mind the proverb, 'Do as thy master bids thee, and sit down to table with him;' but for all that, for the sake of easing my conscience, I warn your worship that it is my opinion this bark is no enchanted one, but belongs to some of the fishermen of the river, for they catch the best shad in the world here."

As Sancho said this, he tied the beasts, leaving them to the care and protection of the enchanters with sorrow enough in his heart. Don Quixote bade him not be uneasy about deserting the animals, "for he who would carry themselves over such longinuous roads and regions would take care to feed them."

"I don't understand that logiquous," said Sancho, "nor have I ever heard the word all the days of my life."

"Longinuous," replied Don Quixote, "means far off; but it is no wonder thou dost not understand it, for thou art not bound to know Latin, like some who pretend to know it and don't."

"Now they are tied," said Sancho; "what are we to do next?"

"What?" said Don Quixote, "cross ourselves and weigh anchor; I mean, embark and cut the moorings by which the bark is held;" and the bark began to drift away slowly from the bank. But when Sancho saw himself somewhere about two yards out in the river, he began to tremble and give himself up for lost; but nothing distressed him more than hearing Dapple bray and seeing

Rocinante struggling to get loose, and said he to his master, "Dapple is braying in grief at our leaving him, and Rocinante is trying to escape and plunge in after us. O dear friends, peace be with you, and may this madness that is taking us away from you, turned into sober sense, bring us back to you." And with this he fell weeping so bitterly, that Don Quixote said to him, sharply and angrily, "What art thou afraid of, cowardly creature? What art thou weeping at, heart of butter-paste? Who pursues or molests thee, thou soul of a tame mouse? What dost thou want, unsatisfied in the very heart of abundance? Art thou, perchance, tramping barefoot over the Rhiphaean mountains, instead of being seated on a bench like an archduke on the tranquil stream of this pleasant river, from which in a short space we shall come out upon the broad sea? But we must have already emerged and gone seven hundred or eight hundred leagues; and if I had here an astrolabe to take the altitude of the pole, I could tell thee how many we have travelled, though either I know little, or we have already crossed or shall shortly cross the equinoctial line which parts the two opposite poles midway."

"And when we come to that line your worship speaks of," said Sancho, "how far shall we have gone?"

"Very far," said Don Quixote, "for of the three hundred and sixty degrees that this terraqueous globe contains, as computed by Ptolemy, the greatest cosmographer known, we shall have travelled one-half when we come to the line I spoke of."

"By God," said Sancho, "your worship gives me a nice authority for what you say, putrid Dolly something transmogrified, or whatever it is."

Don Quixote laughed at the interpretation Sancho put upon "computed," and the name of the cosmographer Ptolemy, and said he, "Thou must know, Sancho, that with the Spaniards and those who embark at Cadiz for the East Indies, one of the signs they have to show them when they have passed the equinoctial line I told thee of, is, that the lice die upon everybody on board the ship, and not a single one is left, or to be found in the whole vessel if they gave its weight in gold for it; so, Sancho, thou mayest as well pass thy hand down thy thigh, and if thou comest upon anything alive we shall be no longer in doubt; if not, then we have crossed."

"I don't believe a bit of it," said Sancho; "still, I'll do as your worship bids me; though I don't know what need there is for trying these experiments, for I can see with my own eyes that we have not moved five yards away from the bank, or shifted two yards from where the animals stand, for there are Rocinante and Dapple in the very same place where we left them; and watching a point, as I do now, I swear by all that's good, we are not stirring or moving at the pace of an ant."

“Try the test I told thee of, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “and don’t mind any other, for thou knowest nothing about colures, lines, parallels, zodiacs, ecliptics, poles, solstices, equinoxes, planets, signs, bearings, the measures of which the celestial and terrestrial spheres are composed; if thou wert acquainted with all these things, or any portion of them, thou wouldst see clearly how many parallels we have cut, what signs we have seen, and what constellations we have left behind and are now leaving behind. But again I tell thee, feel and hunt, for I am certain thou art cleaner than a sheet of smooth white paper.”

Sancho felt, and passing his hand gently and carefully down to the hollow of his left knee, he looked up at his master and said, “Either the test is a false one, or we have not come to where your worship says, nor within many leagues of it.”

“Why, how so?” asked Don Quixote; “hast thou come upon aught?”

“Ay, and aughts,” replied Sancho; and shaking his fingers he washed his whole hand in the river along which the boat was quietly gliding in midstream, not moved by any occult intelligence or invisible enchanter, but simply by the current, just there smooth and gentle.

They now came in sight of some large water mills that stood in the middle of the river, and the instant Don Quixote saw them he cried out, “Seest thou there, my friend? there stands the castle or fortress, where there is, no doubt, some knight in durance, or ill-used queen, or infanta, or princess, in whose aid I am brought hither.”

“What the devil city, fortress, or castle is your worship talking about, senor?” said Sancho; “don’t you see that those are mills that stand in the river to grind corn?”

“Hold thy peace, Sancho,” said Don Quixote; “though they look like mills they are not so; I have already told thee that enchantments transform things and change their proper shapes; I do not mean to say they really change them from one form into another, but that it seems as though they did, as experience proved in the transformation of Dulcinea, sole refuge of my hopes.”

By this time, the boat, having reached the middle of the stream, began to move less slowly than hitherto. The millers belonging to the mills, when they saw the boat coming down the river, and on the point of being sucked in by the draught of the wheels, ran out in haste, several of them, with long poles to stop it, and being all mealy, with faces and garments covered with flour, they presented a sinister appearance. They raised loud shouts, crying, “Devils of men, where are you going to? Are you mad? Do you want to drown yourselves, or dash yourselves to pieces among these wheels?”

“Did I not tell thee, Sancho,” said Don Quixote at this, “that we had reached



the place where I am to show what the might of my arm can do? See what ruffians and villains come out against me; see what monsters oppose me; see what hideous countenances come to frighten us! You shall soon see, scoundrels!" And then standing up in the boat he began in a loud voice to hurl threats at the millers, exclaiming, "Ill-conditioned and worse-counselled rabble, restore to liberty and freedom the person ye hold in durance in this your fortress or prison, high or low or of whatever rank or quality he be, for I am Don Quixote of La Mancha, otherwise called the Knight of the Lions, for whom, by the disposition of heaven above, it is reserved to give a happy issue to this adventure;" and so saying he drew his sword and began making passes in the air at the millers, who, hearing but not understanding all this nonsense, strove to stop the boat, which was now getting into the rushing channel of the wheels. Sancho fell upon his knees devoutly appealing to heaven to deliver him from such imminent peril; which it did by the activity and quickness of the millers, who, pushing against the boat with their poles, stopped it, not, however, without upsetting and throwing Don Quixote and Sancho into the water; and lucky it was for Don Quixote that he could swim like a goose, though the weight of his armour carried him twice to the bottom; and had it not been for the millers, who plunged in and hoisted them both out, it would have been Troy town with the pair of them. As soon as, more drenched than thirsty, they were landed, Sancho went down on his knees and with clasped hands and eyes raised to heaven, prayed a long and fervent prayer to God to deliver him evermore from the rash projects and attempts of his master. The fishermen, the owners of the boat, which the mill-wheels had knocked to pieces, now came up, and seeing it smashed they proceeded to strip Sancho and to demand payment for it from Don Quixote; but he with great calmness, just as if nothing had happened him, told the millers and fishermen that he would pay for the bark most cheerfully, on condition that they delivered up to him, free and unhurt, the person or persons that were in durance in that castle of theirs.



“What persons or what castle art thou talking of, madman? Art thou for carrying off the people who come to grind corn in these mills?”

“That’s enough,” said Don Quixote to himself, “it would be preaching in the desert to attempt by entreaties to induce this rabble to do any virtuous action. In this adventure two mighty enchanters must have encountered one another, and one frustrates what the other attempts; one provided the bark for me, and the other upset me; God help us, this world is all machinations and schemes at cross purposes one with the other. I can do no more.” And then turning towards the mills he said aloud, “Friends, whoe’er ye be that are immured in that prison, forgive me that, to my misfortune and yours, I cannot deliver you from your

misery; this adventure is doubtless reserved and destined for some other knight.”

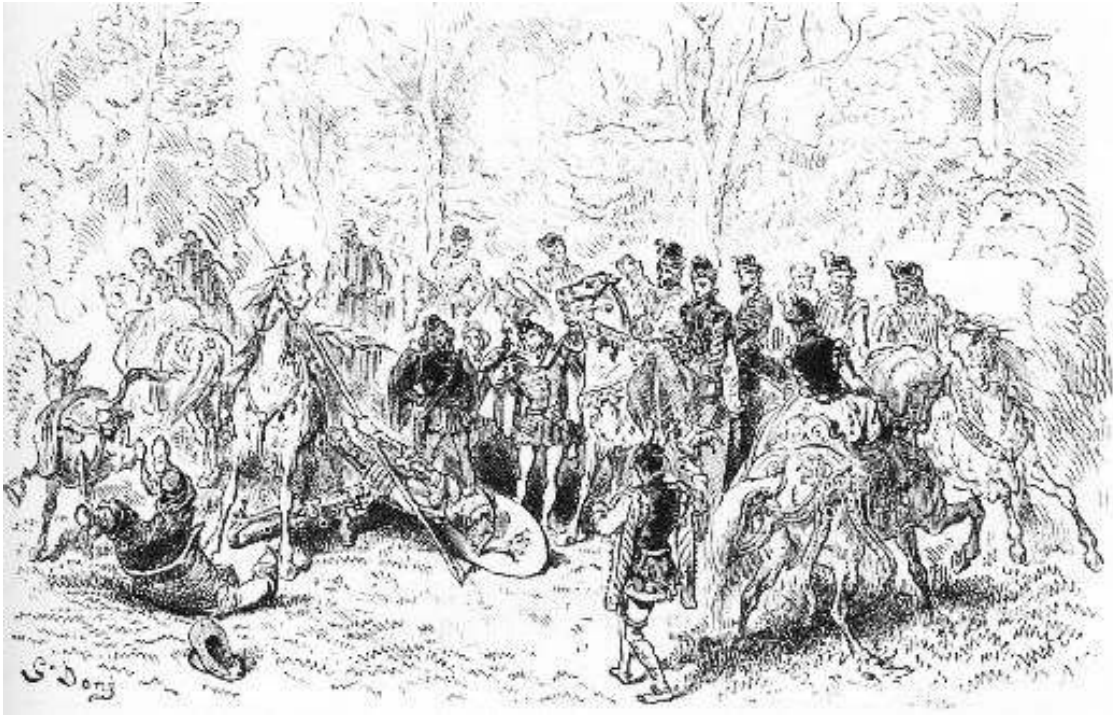
So saying he settled with the fishermen, and paid fifty reals for the boat, which Sancho handed to them very much against the grain, saying, “With a couple more bark businesses like this we shall have sunk our whole capital.”

The fishermen and the millers stood staring in amazement at the two figures, so very different to all appearance from ordinary men, and were wholly unable to make out the drift of the observations and questions Don Quixote addressed to them; and coming to the conclusion that they were madmen, they left them and betook themselves, the millers to their mills, and the fishermen to their huts. Don Quixote and Sancho returned to their beasts, and to their life of beasts, and so ended the adventure of the enchanted bark.



## CHAPTER XXX.

### OF DON QUIXOTE'S ADVENTURE WITH A FAIR HUNTRESS



They reached their beasts in low spirits and bad humour enough, knight and squire, Sancho particularly, for with him what touched the stock of money touched his heart, and when any was taken from him he felt as if he was robbed of the apples of his eyes. In fine, without exchanging a word, they mounted and quitted the famous river, Don Quixote absorbed in thoughts of his love, Sancho in thinking of his advancement, which just then, it seemed to him, he was very far from securing; for, fool as he was, he saw clearly enough that his master's acts were all or most of them utterly senseless; and he began to cast about for an opportunity of retiring from his service and going home some day, without entering into any explanations or taking any farewell of him. Fortune, however,

ordered matters after a fashion very much the opposite of what he contemplated.

It so happened that the next day towards sunset, on coming out of a wood, Don Quixote cast his eyes over a green meadow, and at the far end of it observed some people, and as he drew nearer saw that it was a hawking party. Coming closer, he distinguished among them a lady of graceful mien, on a pure white palfrey or hackney caparisoned with green trappings and a silver-mounted side-saddle. The lady was also in green, and so richly and splendidly dressed that splendour itself seemed personified in her. On her left hand she bore a hawk, a proof to Don Quixote's mind that she must be some great lady and the mistress of the whole hunting party, which was the fact; so he said to Sancho, "Run Sancho, my son, and say to that lady on the palfrey with the hawk that I, the Knight of the Lions, kiss the hands of her exalted beauty, and if her excellence will grant me leave I will go and kiss them in person and place myself at her service for aught that may be in my power and her highness may command; and mind, Sancho, how thou speakest, and take care not to thrust in any of thy proverbs into thy message."



“You’ve got a likely one here to thrust any in!” said Sancho; “leave me alone for that! Why, this is not the first time in my life I have carried messages to high and exalted ladies.”

“Except that thou didst carry to the lady Dulcinea,” said Don Quixote, “I know not that thou hast carried any other, at least in my service.”

“That is true,” replied Sancho; “but pledges don’t distress a good payer, and in a house where there’s plenty supper is soon cooked; I mean there’s no need of telling or warning me about anything; for I’m ready for everything and know a little of everything.”

“That I believe, Sancho,” said Don Quixote; “go and good luck to thee, and

God speed thee.”

Sancho went off at top speed, forcing Dapple out of his regular pace, and came to where the fair huntress was standing, and dismounting knelt before her and said, “Fair lady, that knight that you see there, the Knight of the Lions by name, is my master, and I am a squire of his, and at home they call me Sancho Panza. This same Knight of the Lions, who was called not long since the Knight of the Rueful Countenance, sends by me to say may it please your highness to give him leave that, with your permission, approbation, and consent, he may come and carry out his wishes, which are, as he says and I believe, to serve your exalted loftiness and beauty; and if you give it, your ladyship will do a thing which will redound to your honour, and he will receive a most distinguished favour and happiness.”

“You have indeed, squire,” said the lady, “delivered your message with all the formalities such messages require; rise up, for it is not right that the squire of a knight so great as he of the Rueful Countenance, of whom we have heard a great deal here, should remain on his knees; rise, my friend, and bid your master welcome to the services of myself and the duke my husband, in a country house we have here.”

Sancho got up, charmed as much by the beauty of the good lady as by her high-bred air and her courtesy, but, above all, by what she had said about having heard of his master, the Knight of the Rueful Countenance; for if she did not call him Knight of the Lions it was no doubt because he had so lately taken the name. “Tell me, brother squire,” asked the duchess (whose title, however, is not known), “this master of yours, is he not one of whom there is a history extant in print, called ‘The Ingenious Gentleman, Don Quixote of La Mancha,’ who has for the lady of his heart a certain Dulcinea del Toboso?”

“He is the same, senora,” replied Sancho; “and that squire of his who figures, or ought to figure, in the said history under the name of Sancho Panza, is myself, unless they have changed me in the cradle, I mean in the press.”

“I am rejoiced at all this,” said the duchess; “go, brother Panza, and tell your master that he is welcome to my estate, and that nothing could happen me that could give me greater pleasure.”

Sancho returned to his master mightily pleased with this gratifying answer, and told him all the great lady had said to him, lauding to the skies, in his rustic phrase, her rare beauty, her graceful gaiety, and her courtesy. Don Quixote drew himself up briskly in his saddle, fixed himself in his stirrups, settled his visor, gave Rocinante the spur, and with an easy bearing advanced to kiss the hands of the duchess, who, having sent to summon the duke her husband, told him while Don Quixote was approaching all about the message; and as both of them had



read the First Part of this history, and from it were aware of Don Quixote's crazy turn, they awaited him with the greatest delight and anxiety to make his acquaintance, meaning to fall in with his humour and agree with everything he said, and, so long as he stayed with them, to treat him as a knight-errant, with all the ceremonies usual in the books of chivalry they had read, for they themselves were very fond of them.

Don Quixote now came up with his visor raised, and as he seemed about to dismount Sancho made haste to go and hold his stirrup for him; but in getting down off Dapple he was so unlucky as to hitch his foot in one of the ropes of the pack-saddle in such a way that he was unable to free it, and was left hanging by it with his face and breast on the ground. Don Quixote, who was not used to dismount without having the stirrup held, fancying that Sancho had by this time come to hold it for him, threw himself off with a lurch and brought Rocinante's saddle after him, which was no doubt badly girthed, and saddle and he both came to the ground; not without discomfiture to him and abundant curses muttered between his teeth against the unlucky Sancho, who had his foot still in the shackles. The duke ordered his huntsmen to go to the help of knight and squire, and they raised Don Quixote, sorely shaken by his fall; and he, limping, advanced as best he could to kneel before the noble pair. This, however, the duke would by no means permit; on the contrary, dismounting from his horse, he went and embraced Don Quixote, saying, "I am grieved, Sir Knight of the Rueful Countenance, that your first experience on my ground should have been such an unfortunate one as we have seen; but the carelessness of squires is often the cause of worse accidents."

"That which has happened me in meeting you, mighty prince," replied Don Quixote, "cannot be unfortunate, even if my fall had not stopped short of the depths of the bottomless pit, for the glory of having seen you would have lifted me up and delivered me from it. My squire, God's curse upon him, is better at unloosing his tongue in talking impertinence than in tightening the girths of a saddle to keep it steady; but however I may be, afoot or raised up, on foot or on horseback, I shall always be at your service and that of my lady the duchess, your worthy consort, worthy queen of beauty and paramount princess of courtesy."

"Gently, Senor Don Quixote of La Mancha," said the duke; "where my lady Dona Dulcinea del Toboso is, it is not right that other beauties should be praised."

Sancho, by this time released from his entanglement, was standing by, and before his master could answer he said, "There is no denying, and it must be maintained, that my lady Dulcinea del Toboso is very beautiful; but the hare

jumps up where one least expects it; and I have heard say that what we call nature is like a potter that makes vessels of clay, and he who makes one fair vessel can as well make two, or three, or a hundred; I say so because, by my faith, my lady the duchess is in no way behind my mistress the lady Dulcinea del Toboso.”

Don Quixote turned to the duchess and said, “Your highness may conceive that never had knight-errant in this world a more talkative or a droller squire than I have, and he will prove the truth of what I say, if your highness is pleased to accept of my services for a few days.”

To which the duchess made answer, “that worthy Sancho is droll I consider a very good thing, because it is a sign that he is shrewd; for drollery and sprightliness, Senor Don Quixote, as you very well know, do not take up their abode with dull wits; and as good Sancho is droll and sprightly I here set him down as shrewd.”

“And talkative,” added Don Quixote.

“So much the better,” said the duke, “for many droll things cannot be said in few words; but not to lose time in talking, come, great Knight of the Rueful Countenance-”

“Of the Lions, your highness must say,” said Sancho, “for there is no Rueful Countenance nor any such character now.”

“He of the Lions be it,” continued the duke; “I say, let Sir Knight of the Lions come to a castle of mine close by, where he shall be given that reception which is due to so exalted a personage, and which the duchess and I are wont to give to all knights-errant who come there.”

By this time Sancho had fixed and girthed Rocinante’s saddle, and Don Quixote having got on his back and the duke mounted a fine horse, they placed the duchess in the middle and set out for the castle. The duchess desired Sancho to come to her side, for she found infinite enjoyment in listening to his shrewd remarks. Sancho required no pressing, but pushed himself in between them and the duke, who thought it rare good fortune to receive such a knight-errant and such a homely squire in their castle.



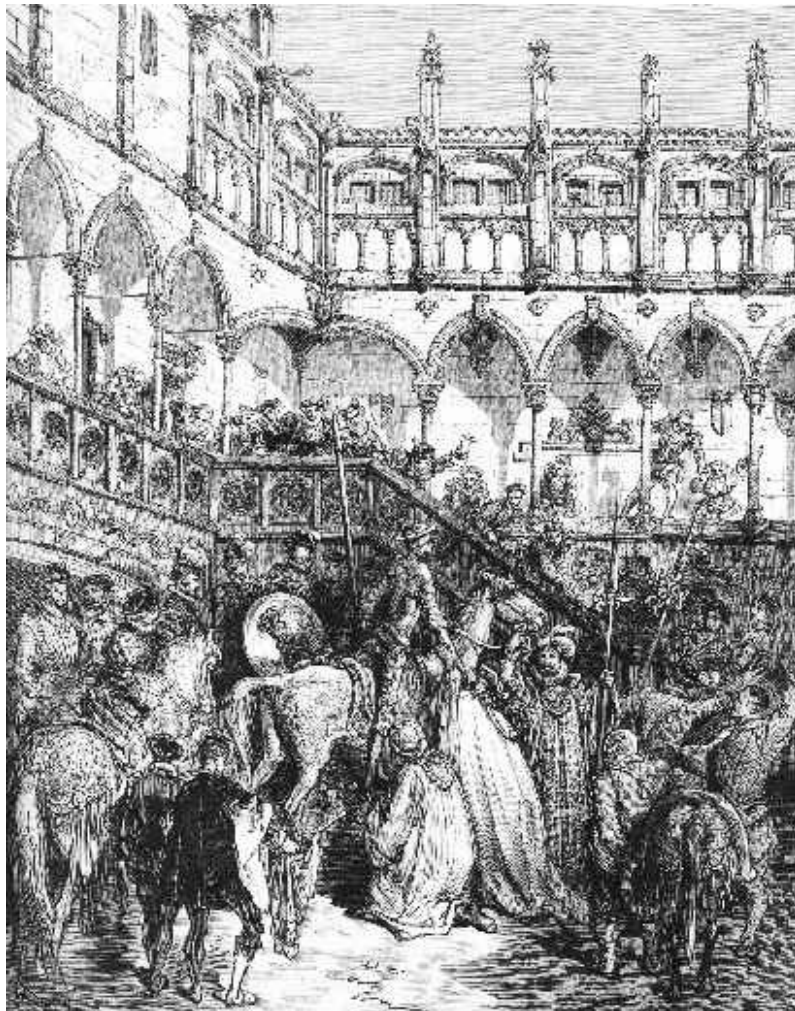
## CHAPTER XXXI.

### WHICH TREATS OF MANY AND GREAT MATTERS



Supreme was the satisfaction that Sancho felt at seeing himself, as it seemed, an established favourite with the duchess, for he looked forward to finding in her castle what he had found in Don Diego's house and in Basilio's; he was always fond of good living, and always seized by the forelock any opportunity of feasting himself whenever it presented itself. The history informs us, then, that before they reached the country house or castle, the duke went on in advance and instructed all his servants how they were to treat Don Quixote; and so the instant he came up to the castle gates with the duchess, two lackeys or equerries, clad in what they call morning gowns of fine crimson satin reaching to their feet,

hastened out, and catching Don Quixote in their arms before he saw or heard them, said to him, “Your highness should go and take my lady the duchess off her horse.”



Don Quixote obeyed, and great bandying of compliments followed between the two over the matter; but in the end the duchess's determination carried the day, and she refused to get down or dismount from her palfrey except in the arms of the duke, saying she did not consider herself worthy to impose so unnecessary a burden on so great a knight. At length the duke came out to take her down, and as they entered a spacious court two fair damsels came forward and threw over Don Quixote's shoulders a large mantle of the finest scarlet cloth, and at the same instant all the galleries of the court were lined with the men-servants and women-servants of the household, crying, "Welcome, flower and cream of knight-errantry!" while all or most of them flung pellets filled with scented water over Don Quixote and the duke and duchess; at all which Don Quixote was greatly astonished, and this was the first time that he thoroughly felt and believed himself to be a knight-errant in reality and not merely in fancy, now that he saw himself treated in the same way as he had read of such knights being treated in days of yore.

Sancho, deserting Dapple, hung on to the duchess and entered the castle, but feeling some twinges of conscience at having left the ass alone, he approached a respectable duenna who had come out with the rest to receive the duchess, and in a low voice he said to her, "Senora Gonzalez, or however your grace may be called-

"I am called Dona Rodriguez de Grijalba," replied the duenna; "what is your will, brother?" To which Sancho made answer, "I should be glad if your worship would do me the favour to go out to the castle gate, where you will find a grey ass of mine; make them, if you please, put him in the stable, or put him there yourself, for the poor little beast is rather easily frightened, and cannot bear being alone at all."

"If the master is as wise as the man," said the duenna, "we have got a fine bargain. Be off with you, brother, and bad luck to you and him who brought you here; go, look after your ass, for we, the duennas of this house, are not used to work of that sort."

"Well then, in troth," returned Sancho, "I have heard my master, who is the very treasure-finder of stories, telling the story of Lancelot when he came from Britain, say that ladies waited upon him and duennas upon his hack; and, if it comes to my ass, I wouldn't change him for Senor Lancelot's hack."

"If you are a jester, brother," said the duenna, "keep your drolleries for some place where they'll pass muster and be paid for; for you'll get nothing from me but a fig."

"At any rate, it will be a very ripe one," said Sancho, "for you won't lose the

trick in years by a point too little.”

“Son of a bitch,” said the duenna, all aglow with anger, “whether I’m old or not, it’s with God I have to reckon, not with you, you garlic-stuffed scoundrel!” and she said it so loud, that the duchess heard it, and turning round and seeing the duenna in such a state of excitement, and her eyes flaming so, asked whom she was wrangling with.

“With this good fellow here,” said the duenna, “who has particularly requested me to go and put an ass of his that is at the castle gate into the stable, holding it up to me as an example that they did the same I don’t know where — that some ladies waited on one Lancelot, and duennas on his hack; and what is more, to wind up with, he called me old.”

“That,” said the duchess, “I should have considered the greatest affront that could be offered me;” and addressing Sancho, she said to him, “You must know, friend Sancho, that Dona Rodriguez is very youthful, and that she wears that hood more for authority and custom sake than because of her years.”

“May all the rest of mine be unlucky,” said Sancho, “if I meant it that way; I only spoke because the affection I have for my ass is so great, and I thought I could not commend him to a more kind-hearted person than the lady Dona Rodriguez.”

Don Quixote, who was listening, said to him, “Is this proper conversation for the place, Sancho?”

“Senor,” replied Sancho, “every one must mention what he wants wherever he may be; I thought of Dapple here, and I spoke of him here; if I had thought of him in the stable I would have spoken there.”

On which the duke observed, “Sancho is quite right, and there is no reason at all to find fault with him; Dapple shall be fed to his heart’s content, and Sancho may rest easy, for he shall be treated like himself.”

While this conversation, amusing to all except Don Quixote, was proceeding, they ascended the staircase and ushered Don Quixote into a chamber hung with rich cloth of gold and brocade; six damsels relieved him of his armour and waited on him like pages, all of them prepared and instructed by the duke and duchess as to what they were to do, and how they were to treat Don Quixote, so that he might see and believe they were treating him like a knight-errant. When his armour was removed, there stood Don Quixote in his tight-fitting breeches and chamois doublet, lean, lanky, and long, with cheeks that seemed to be kissing each other inside; such a figure, that if the damsels waiting on him had not taken care to check their merriment (which was one of the particular directions their master and mistress had given them), they would have burst with laughter. They asked him to let himself be stripped that they might put a shirt on

him, but he would not on any account, saying that modesty became knights-errant just as much as valour. However, he said they might give the shirt to Sancho; and shutting himself in with him in a room where there was a sumptuous bed, he undressed and put on the shirt; and then, finding himself alone with Sancho, he said to him, "Tell me, thou new-fledged buffoon and old booby, dost thou think it right to offend and insult a duenna so deserving of reverence and respect as that one just now? Was that a time to bethink thee of thy Dapple, or are these noble personages likely to let the beasts fare badly when they treat their owners in such elegant style? For God's sake, Sancho, restrain thyself, and don't show the thread so as to let them see what a coarse, boorish texture thou art of. Remember, sinner that thou art, the master is the more esteemed the more respectable and well-bred his servants are; and that one of the greatest advantages that princes have over other men is that they have servants as good as themselves to wait on them. Dost thou not see — shortsighted being that thou art, and unlucky mortal that I am! — that if they perceive thee to be a coarse clown or a dull blockhead, they will suspect me to be some impostor or swindler? Nay, nay, Sancho friend, keep clear, oh, keep clear of these stumbling-blocks; for he who falls into the way of being a chatterbox and droll, drops into a wretched buffoon the first time he trips; bridle thy tongue, consider and weigh thy words before they escape thy mouth, and bear in mind we are now in quarters whence, by God's help, and the strength of my arm, we shall come forth mightily advanced in fame and fortune."

Sancho promised him with much earnestness to keep his mouth shut, and to bite off his tongue before he uttered a word that was not altogether to the purpose and well considered, and told him he might make his mind easy on that point, for it should never be discovered through him what they were.

Don Quixote dressed himself, put on his baldric with his sword, threw the scarlet mantle over his shoulders, placed on his head a montera of green satin that the damsels had given him, and thus arrayed passed out into the large room, where he found the damsels drawn up in double file, the same number on each side, all with the appliances for washing the hands, which they presented to him with profuse obeisances and ceremonies. Then came twelve pages, together with the seneschal, to lead him to dinner, as his hosts were already waiting for him. They placed him in the midst of them, and with much pomp and stateliness they conducted him into another room, where there was a sumptuous table laid with but four covers. The duchess and the duke came out to the door of the room to receive him, and with them a grave ecclesiastic, one of those who rule noblemen's houses; one of those who, not being born magnates themselves, never know how to teach those who are how to behave as such; one of those who



would have the greatness of great folk measured by their own narrowness of mind; one of those who, when they try to introduce economy into the household they rule, lead it into meanness. One of this sort, I say, must have been the grave churchman who came out with the duke and duchess to receive Don Quixote.

A vast number of polite speeches were exchanged, and at length, taking Don Quixote between them, they proceeded to sit down to table. The duke pressed Don Quixote to take the head of the table, and, though he refused, the entreaties of the duke were so urgent that he had to accept it.

The ecclesiastic took his seat opposite to him, and the duke and duchess those at the sides. All this time Sancho stood by, gaping with amazement at the honour he saw shown to his master by these illustrious persons; and observing all the ceremonious pressing that had passed between the duke and Don Quixote to induce him to take his seat at the head of the table, he said, "If your worship will give me leave I will tell you a story of what happened in my village about this matter of seats."

The moment Sancho said this Don Quixote trembled, making sure that he was about to say something foolish. Sancho glanced at him, and guessing his thoughts, said, "Don't be afraid of my going astray, senor, or saying anything that won't be pat to the purpose; I haven't forgotten the advice your worship gave me just now about talking much or little, well or ill."

"I have no recollection of anything, Sancho," said Don Quixote; "say what thou wilt, only say it quickly."

"Well then," said Sancho, "what I am going to say is so true that my master Don Quixote, who is here present, will keep me from lying."

"Lie as much as thou wilt for all I care, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "for I am not going to stop thee, but consider what thou art going to say."

"I have so considered and reconsidered," said Sancho, "that the bell-ringer's in a safe berth; as will be seen by what follows."

"It would be well," said Don Quixote, "if your highnesses would order them to turn out this idiot, for he will talk a heap of nonsense."

"By the life of the duke, Sancho shall not be taken away from me for a moment," said the duchess; "I am very fond of him, for I know he is very discreet."

"Discreet be the days of your holiness," said Sancho, "for the good opinion you have of my wit, though there's none in me; but the story I want to tell is this. There was an invitation given by a gentleman of my town, a very rich one, and one of quality, for he was one of the Alamos of Medina del Campo, and married to Dona Mencia de Quinones, the daughter of Don Alonso de Maranon, Knight of the Order of Santiago, that was drowned at the Herradura — him there was

that quarrel about years ago in our village, that my master Don Quixote was mixed up in, to the best of my belief, that Tomasillo the scapegrace, the son of Balbastro the smith, was wounded in. — Isn't all this true, master mine? As you live, say so, that these gentlefolk may not take me for some lying chatterer."

"So far," said the ecclesiastic, "I take you to be more a chatterer than a liar; but I don't know what I shall take you for by-and-by."

"Thou citest so many witnesses and proofs, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "that I have no choice but to say thou must be telling the truth; go on, and cut the story short, for thou art taking the way not to make an end for two days to come."

"He is not to cut it short," said the duchess; "on the contrary, for my gratification, he is to tell it as he knows it, though he should not finish it these six days; and if he took so many they would be to me the pleasantest I ever spent."

"Well then, sirs, I say," continued Sancho, "that this same gentleman, whom I know as well as I do my own hands, for it's not a bowshot from my house to his, invited a poor but respectable labourer—"

"Get on, brother," said the churchman; "at the rate you are going you will not stop with your story short of the next world."

"I'll stop less than half-way, please God," said Sancho; "and so I say this labourer, coming to the house of the gentleman I spoke of that invited him — rest his soul, he is now dead; and more by token he died the death of an angel, so they say; for I was not there, for just at that time I had gone to reap at Tembleque—"

"As you live, my son," said the churchman, "make haste back from Tembleque, and finish your story without burying the gentleman, unless you want to make more funerals."

"Well then, it so happened," said Sancho, "that as the pair of them were going to sit down to table — and I think I can see them now plainer than ever—"

Great was the enjoyment the duke and duchess derived from the irritation the worthy churchman showed at the long-winded, halting way Sancho had of telling his story, while Don Quixote was chafing with rage and vexation.

"So, as I was saying," continued Sancho, "as the pair of them were going to sit down to table, as I said, the labourer insisted upon the gentleman's taking the head of the table, and the gentleman insisted upon the labourer's taking it, as his orders should be obeyed in his house; but the labourer, who plumed himself on his politeness and good breeding, would not on any account, until the gentleman, out of patience, putting his hands on his shoulders, compelled him by force to sit down, saying, 'Sit down, you stupid lout, for wherever I sit will be the head to you; and that's the story, and, troth, I think it hasn't been brought in amiss here.'"

Don Quixote turned all colours, which, on his sunburnt face, mottled it till it looked like jasper. The duke and duchess suppressed their laughter so as not altogether to mortify Don Quixote, for they saw through Sancho's impertinence; and to change the conversation, and keep Sancho from uttering more absurdities, the duchess asked Don Quixote what news he had of the lady Dulcinea, and if he had sent her any presents of giants or miscreants lately, for he could not but have vanquished a good many.

To which Don Quixote replied, "Senora, my misfortunes, though they had a beginning, will never have an end. I have vanquished giants and I have sent her caitiffs and miscreants; but where are they to find her if she is enchanted and turned into the most ill-favoured peasant wench that can be imagined?"

"I don't know," said Sancho Panza; "to me she seems the fairest creature in the world; at any rate, in nimbleness and jumping she won't give in to a tumbler; by my faith, senora duchess, she leaps from the ground on to the back of an ass like a cat."

"Have you seen her enchanted, Sancho?" asked the duke.

"What, seen her!" said Sancho; "why, who the devil was it but myself that first thought of the enchantment business? She is as much enchanted as my father."

The ecclesiastic, when he heard them talking of giants and caitiffs and enchantments, began to suspect that this must be Don Quixote of La Mancha, whose story the duke was always reading; and he had himself often reproved him for it, telling him it was foolish to read such fooleries; and becoming convinced that his suspicion was correct, addressing the duke, he said very angrily to him, "Senor, your excellence will have to give account to God for what this good man does. This Don Quixote, or Don Simpleton, or whatever his name is, cannot, I imagine, be such a blockhead as your excellence would have him, holding out encouragement to him to go on with his vagaries and follies." Then turning to address Don Quixote he said, "And you, num-skull, who put it into your head that you are a knight-errant, and vanquish giants and capture miscreants? Go your ways in a good hour, and in a good hour be it said to you. Go home and bring up your children if you have any, and attend to your business, and give over going wandering about the world, gaping and making a laughing-stock of yourself to all who know you and all who don't. Where, in heaven's name, have you discovered that there are or ever were knights-errant? Where are there giants in Spain or miscreants in La Mancha, or enchanted Dulcineas, or all the rest of the silly things they tell about you?"

Don Quixote listened attentively to the reverend gentleman's words, and as soon as he perceived he had done speaking, regardless of the presence of the

duke and duchess, he sprang to his feet with angry looks and an agitated countenance, and said — But the reply deserves a chapter to itself.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

### OF THE REPLY DON QUIXOTE GAVE HIS CENSURER, WITH OTHER INCIDENTS, GRAVE AND DROLL



Don Quixote, then, having risen to his feet, trembling from head to foot like a man dosed with mercury, said in a hurried, agitated voice, "The place I am in, the presence in which I stand, and the respect I have and always have had for the profession to which your worship belongs, hold and bind the hands of my just indignation; and as well for these reasons as because I know, as everyone knows, that a gowmsman's weapon is the same as a woman's, the tongue, I will with mine engage in equal combat with your worship, from whom one might have expected good advice instead of foul abuse. Pious, well-meant reproof requires a

different demeanour and arguments of another sort; at any rate, to have reproved me in public, and so roughly, exceeds the bounds of proper reproof, for that comes better with gentleness than with rudeness; and it is not seemly to call the sinner roundly blockhead and booby, without knowing anything of the sin that is reproved. Come, tell me, for which of the stupidities you have observed in me do you condemn and abuse me, and bid me go home and look after my house and wife and children, without knowing whether I have any? Is nothing more needed than to get a footing, by hook or by crook, in other people's houses to rule over the masters (and that, perhaps, after having been brought up in all the straitness of some seminary, and without having ever seen more of the world than may lie within twenty or thirty leagues round), to fit one to lay down the law rashly for chivalry, and pass judgment on knights-errant? Is it, haply, an idle occupation, or is the time ill-spent that is spent in roaming the world in quest, not of its enjoyments, but of those arduous toils whereby the good mount upwards to the abodes of everlasting life? If gentlemen, great lords, nobles, men of high birth, were to rate me as a fool I should take it as an irreparable insult; but I care not a farthing if clerks who have never entered upon or trod the paths of chivalry should think me foolish. Knight I am, and knight I will die, if such be the pleasure of the Most High. Some take the broad road of overweening ambition; others that of mean and servile flattery; others that of deceitful hypocrisy, and some that of true religion; but I, led by my star, follow the narrow path of knight-errantry, and in pursuit of that calling I despise wealth, but not honour. I have redressed injuries, righted wrongs, punished insolences, vanquished giants, and crushed monsters; I am in love, for no other reason than that it is incumbent on knights-errant to be so; but though I am, I am no carnal-minded lover, but one of the chaste, platonic sort. My intentions are always directed to worthy ends, to do good to all and evil to none; and if he who means this, does this, and makes this his practice deserves to be called a fool, it is for your highnesses to say, O most excellent duke and duchess."

"Good, by God!" cried Sancho; "say no more in your own defence, master mine, for there's nothing more in the world to be said, thought, or insisted on; and besides, when this gentleman denies, as he has, that there are or ever have been any knights-errant in the world, is it any wonder if he knows nothing of what he has been talking about?"

"Perhaps, brother," said the ecclesiastic, "you are that Sancho Panza that is mentioned, to whom your master has promised an island?"

"Yes, I am," said Sancho, "and what's more, I am one who deserves it as much as anyone; I am one of the sort— 'Attach thyself to the good, and thou wilt be one of them,' and of those, 'Not with whom thou art bred, but with

whom thou art fed,' and of those, 'Who leans against a good tree, a good shade covers him;' I have leant upon a good master, and I have been for months going about with him, and please God I shall be just such another; long life to him and long life to me, for neither will he be in any want of empires to rule, or I of islands to govern."

"No, Sancho my friend, certainly not," said the duke, "for in the name of Senor Don Quixote I confer upon you the government of one of no small importance that I have at my disposal."

"Go down on thy knees, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "and kiss the feet of his excellence for the favour he has bestowed upon thee."

Sancho obeyed, and on seeing this the ecclesiastic stood up from table completely out of temper, exclaiming, "By the gown I wear, I am almost inclined to say that your excellence is as great a fool as these sinners. No wonder they are mad, when people who are in their senses sanction their madness! I leave your excellence with them, for so long as they are in the house, I will remain in my own, and spare myself the trouble of reproving what I cannot remedy;" and without uttering another word, or eating another morsel, he went off, the entreaties of the duke and duchess being entirely unavailing to stop him; not that the duke said much to him, for he could not, because of the laughter his uncalled-for anger provoked.

When he had done laughing, he said to Don Quixote, "You have replied on your own behalf so stoutly, Sir Knight of the Lions, that there is no occasion to seek further satisfaction for this, which, though it may look like an offence, is not so at all, for, as women can give no offence, no more can ecclesiastics, as you very well know."

"That is true," said Don Quixote, "and the reason is, that he who is not liable to offence cannot give offence to anyone. Women, children, and ecclesiastics, as they cannot defend themselves, though they may receive offence cannot be insulted, because between the offence and the insult there is, as your excellence very well knows, this difference: the insult comes from one who is capable of offering it, and does so, and maintains it; the offence may come from any quarter without carrying insult. To take an example: a man is standing unsuspectingly in the street and ten others come up armed and beat him; he draws his sword and quits himself like a man, but the number of his antagonists makes it impossible for him to effect his purpose and avenge himself; this man suffers an offence but not an insult. Another example will make the same thing plain: a man is standing with his back turned, another comes up and strikes him, and after striking him takes to flight, without waiting an instant, and the other pursues him but does not overtake him; he who received the blow received an offence, but not an insult,

because an insult must be maintained. If he who struck him, though he did so sneakingly and treacherously, had drawn his sword and stood and faced him, then he who had been struck would have received offence and insult at the same time; offence because he was struck treacherously, insult because he who struck him maintained what he had done, standing his ground without taking to flight. And so, according to the laws of the accursed duel, I may have received offence, but not insult, for neither women nor children can maintain it, nor can they wound, nor have they any way of standing their ground, and it is just the same with those connected with religion; for these three sorts of persons are without arms offensive or defensive, and so, though naturally they are bound to defend themselves, they have no right to offend anybody; and though I said just now I might have received offence, I say now certainly not, for he who cannot receive an insult can still less give one; for which reasons I ought not to feel, nor do I feel, aggrieved at what that good man said to me; I only wish he had stayed a little longer, that I might have shown him the mistake he makes in supposing and maintaining that there are not and never have been any knights-errant in the world; had Amadis or any of his countless descendants heard him say as much, I am sure it would not have gone well with his worship.”

“I will take my oath of that,” said Sancho; “they would have given him a slash that would have slit him down from top to toe like a pomegranate or a ripe melon; they were likely fellows to put up with jokes of that sort! By my faith, I’m certain if Reinaldos of Montalvan had heard the little man’s words he would have given him such a spank on the mouth that he wouldn’t have spoken for the next three years; ay, let him tackle them, and he’ll see how he’ll get out of their hands!”

The duchess, as she listened to Sancho, was ready to die with laughter, and in her own mind she set him down as droller and madder than his master; and there were a good many just then who were of the same opinion.

Don Quixote finally grew calm, and dinner came to an end, and as the cloth was removed four damsels came in, one of them with a silver basin, another with a jug also of silver, a third with two fine white towels on her shoulder, and the fourth with her arms bared to the elbows, and in her white hands (for white they certainly were) a round ball of Naples soap. The one with the basin approached, and with arch composure and impudence, thrust it under Don Quixote’s chin, who, wondering at such a ceremony, said never a word, supposing it to be the custom of that country to wash beards instead of hands; he therefore stretched his out as far as he could, and at the same instant the jug began to pour and the damsel with the soap rubbed his beard briskly, raising snow-flakes, for the soap lather was no less white, not only over the beard, but all over the face, and over



the eyes of the submissive knight, so that they were perforce obliged to keep shut. The duke and duchess, who had not known anything about this, waited to see what came of this strange washing. The barber damsel, when she had him a hand's breadth deep in lather, pretended that there was no more water, and bade the one with the jug go and fetch some, while Senor Don Quixote waited. She did so, and Don Quixote was left the strangest and most ludicrous figure that could be imagined. All those present, and there were a good many, were watching him, and as they saw him there with half a yard of neck, and that uncommonly brown, his eyes shut, and his beard full of soap, it was a great wonder, and only by great discretion, that they were able to restrain their laughter. The damsels, the concoctors of the joke, kept their eyes down, not daring to look at their master and mistress; and as for them, laughter and anger struggled within them, and they knew not what to do, whether to punish the audacity of the girls, or to reward them for the amusement they had received from seeing Don Quixote in such a plight.

At length the damsel with the jug returned and they made an end of washing Don Quixote, and the one who carried the towels very deliberately wiped him and dried him; and all four together making him a profound obeisance and curtsy, they were about to go, when the duke, lest Don Quixote should see through the joke, called out to the one with the basin saying, "Come and wash me, and take care that there is water enough." The girl, sharp-witted and prompt, came and placed the basin for the duke as she had done for Don Quixote, and they soon had him well soaped and washed, and having wiped him dry they made their obeisance and retired. It appeared afterwards that the duke had sworn that if they had not washed him as they had Don Quixote he would have punished them for their impudence, which they adroitly atoned for by soaping him as well.

Sancho observed the ceremony of the washing very attentively, and said to himself, "God bless me, if it were only the custom in this country to wash squires' beards too as well as knights'. For by God and upon my soul I want it badly; and if they gave me a scrape of the razor besides I'd take it as a still greater kindness."

"What are you saying to yourself, Sancho?" asked the duchess.

"I was saying, senora," he replied, "that in the courts of other princes, when the cloth is taken away, I have always heard say they give water for the hands, but not lye for the beard; and that shows it is good to live long that you may see much; to be sure, they say too that he who lives a long life must undergo much evil, though to undergo a washing of that sort is pleasure rather than pain."

"Don't be uneasy, friend Sancho," said the duchess; "I will take care that my

damsels wash you, and even put you in the tub if necessary.”

“I’ll be content with the beard,” said Sancho, “at any rate for the present; and as for the future, God has decreed what is to be.”

“Attend to worthy Sancho’s request, seneschal,” said the duchess, “and do exactly what he wishes.”

The seneschal replied that Senor Sancho should be obeyed in everything; and with that he went away to dinner and took Sancho along with him, while the duke and duchess and Don Quixote remained at table discussing a great variety of things, but all bearing on the calling of arms and knight-errantry.

The duchess begged Don Quixote, as he seemed to have a retentive memory, to describe and portray to her the beauty and features of the lady Dulcinea del Toboso, for, judging by what fame trumpeted abroad of her beauty, she felt sure she must be the fairest creature in the world, nay, in all La Mancha.

Don Quixote sighed on hearing the duchess’s request, and said, “If I could pluck out my heart, and lay it on a plate on this table here before your highness’s eyes, it would spare my tongue the pain of telling what can hardly be thought of, for in it your excellence would see her portrayed in full. But why should I attempt to depict and describe in detail, and feature by feature, the beauty of the peerless Dulcinea, the burden being one worthy of other shoulders than mine, an enterprise wherein the pencils of Parrhasius, Timantes, and Apelles, and the graver of Lysippus ought to be employed, to paint it in pictures and carve it in marble and bronze, and Ciceronian and Demosthenian eloquence to sound its praises?”

“What does Demosthenian mean, Senor Don Quixote?” said the duchess; “it is a word I never heard in all my life.”

“Demosthenian eloquence,” said Don Quixote, “means the eloquence of Demosthenes, as Ciceronian means that of Cicero, who were the two most eloquent orators in the world.”

“True,” said the duke; “you must have lost your wits to ask such a question. Nevertheless, Senor Don Quixote would greatly gratify us if he would depict her to us; for never fear, even in an outline or sketch she will be something to make the fairest envious.”

“I would do so certainly,” said Don Quixote, “had she not been blurred to my mind’s eye by the misfortune that fell upon her a short time since, one of such a nature that I am more ready to weep over it than to describe it. For your highnesses must know that, going a few days back to kiss her hands and receive her benediction, approbation, and permission for this third sally, I found her altogether a different being from the one I sought; I found her enchanted and changed from a princess into a peasant, from fair to foul, from an angel into a

devil, from fragrant to pestiferous, from refined to clownish, from a dignified lady into a jumping tomboy, and, in a word, from Dulcinea del Toboso into a coarse Sayago wench.”

“God bless me!” said the duke aloud at this, “who can have done the world such an injury? Who can have robbed it of the beauty that gladdened it, of the grace and gaiety that charmed it, of the modesty that shed a lustre upon it?”

“Who?” replied Don Quixote; “who could it be but some malignant enchanter of the many that persecute me out of envy — that accursed race born into the world to obscure and bring to naught the achievements of the good, and glorify and exalt the deeds of the wicked? Enchanters have persecuted me, enchanters persecute me still, and enchanters will continue to persecute me until they have sunk me and my lofty chivalry in the deep abyss of oblivion; and they injure and wound me where they know I feel it most. For to deprive a knight-errant of his lady is to deprive him of the eyes he sees with, of the sun that gives him light, of the food whereby he lives. Many a time before have I said it, and I say it now once more, a knight-errant without a lady is like a tree without leaves, a building without a foundation, or a shadow without the body that causes it.”

“There is no denying it,” said the duchess; “but still, if we are to believe the history of Don Quixote that has come out here lately with general applause, it is to be inferred from it, if I mistake not, that you never saw the lady Dulcinea, and that the said lady is nothing in the world but an imaginary lady, one that you yourself begot and gave birth to in your brain, and adorned with whatever charms and perfections you chose.”

“There is a good deal to be said on that point,” said Don Quixote; “God knows whether there be any Dulcinea or not in the world, or whether she is imaginary or not imaginary; these are things the proof of which must not be pushed to extreme lengths. I have not begotten nor given birth to my lady, though I behold her as she needs must be, a lady who contains in herself all the qualities to make her famous throughout the world, beautiful without blemish, dignified without haughtiness, tender and yet modest, gracious from courtesy and courteous from good breeding, and lastly, of exalted lineage, because beauty shines forth and excels with a higher degree of perfection upon good blood than in the fair of lowly birth.”

“That is true,” said the duke; “but Senor Don Quixote will give me leave to say what I am constrained to say by the story of his exploits that I have read, from which it is to be inferred that, granting there is a Dulcinea in El Toboso, or out of it, and that she is in the highest degree beautiful as you have described her to us, as regards the loftiness of her lineage she is not on a par with the Orianas, Alastrajareas, Madasimas, or others of that sort, with whom, as you well know,

the histories abound.”

“To that I may reply,” said Don Quixote, “that Dulcinea is the daughter of her own works, and that virtues rectify blood, and that lowly virtue is more to be regarded and esteemed than exalted vice. Dulcinea, besides, has that within her that may raise her to be a crowned and sceptred queen; for the merit of a fair and virtuous woman is capable of performing greater miracles; and virtually, though not formally, she has in herself higher fortunes.”

“I protest, Senor Don Quixote,” said the duchess, “that in all you say, you go most cautiously and lead in hand, as the saying is; henceforth I will believe myself, and I will take care that everyone in my house believes, even my lord the duke if needs be, that there is a Dulcinea in El Toboso, and that she is living to-day, and that she is beautiful and nobly born and deserves to have such a knight as Senor Don Quixote in her service, and that is the highest praise that it is in my power to give her or that I can think of. But I cannot help entertaining a doubt, and having a certain grudge against Sancho Panza; the doubt is this, that the aforesaid history declares that the said Sancho Panza, when he carried a letter on your worship’s behalf to the said lady Dulcinea, found her sifting a sack of wheat; and more by token it says it was red wheat; a thing which makes me doubt the loftiness of her lineage.”

To this Don Quixote made answer, “Senora, your highness must know that everything or almost everything that happens me transcends the ordinary limits of what happens to other knights-errant; whether it be that it is directed by the inscrutable will of destiny, or by the malice of some jealous enchanter. Now it is an established fact that all or most famous knights-errant have some special gift, one that of being proof against enchantment, another that of being made of such invulnerable flesh that he cannot be wounded, as was the famous Roland, one of the twelve peers of France, of whom it is related that he could not be wounded except in the sole of his left foot, and that it must be with the point of a stout pin and not with any other sort of weapon whatever; and so, when Bernardo del Carpio slew him at Roncesvalles, finding that he could not wound him with steel, he lifted him up from the ground in his arms and strangled him, calling to mind seasonably the death which Hercules inflicted on Antaeus, the fierce giant that they say was the son of Terra. I would infer from what I have mentioned that perhaps I may have some gift of this kind, not that of being invulnerable, because experience has many times proved to me that I am of tender flesh and not at all impenetrable; nor that of being proof against enchantment, for I have already seen myself thrust into a cage, in which all the world would not have been able to confine me except by force of enchantments. But as I delivered myself from that one, I am inclined to believe that there is no other that can hurt

me; and so, these enchanters, seeing that they cannot exert their vile craft against my person, revenge themselves on what I love most, and seek to rob me of life by maltreating that of Dulcinea in whom I live; and therefore I am convinced that when my squire carried my message to her, they changed her into a common peasant girl, engaged in such a mean occupation as sifting wheat; I have already said, however, that that wheat was not red wheat, nor wheat at all, but grains of orient pearl. And as a proof of all this, I must tell your highnesses that, coming to El Toboso a short time back, I was altogether unable to discover the palace of Dulcinea; and that the next day, though Sancho, my squire, saw her in her own proper shape, which is the fairest in the world, to me she appeared to be a coarse, ill-favoured farm-wench, and by no means a well-spoken one, she who is propriety itself. And so, as I am not and, so far as one can judge, cannot be enchanted, she it is that is enchanted, that is smitten, that is altered, changed, and transformed; in her have my enemies revenged themselves upon me, and for her shall I live in ceaseless tears, until I see her in her pristine state. I have mentioned this lest anybody should mind what Sancho said about Dulcinea's winnowing or sifting; for, as they changed her to me, it is no wonder if they changed her to him. Dulcinea is illustrious and well-born, and of one of the gentle families of El Toboso, which are many, ancient, and good. Therein, most assuredly, not small is the share of the peerless Dulcinea, through whom her town will be famous and celebrated in ages to come, as Troy was through Helen, and Spain through La Cava, though with a better title and tradition. For another thing; I would have your graces understand that Sancho Panza is one of the drollest squires that ever served knight-errant; sometimes there is a simplicity about him so acute that it is an amusement to try and make out whether he is simple or sharp; he has mischievous tricks that stamp him rogue, and blundering ways that prove him a booby; he doubts everything and believes everything; when I fancy he is on the point of coming down headlong from sheer stupidity, he comes out with something shrewd that sends him up to the skies. After all, I would not exchange him for another squire, though I were given a city to boot, and therefore I am in doubt whether it will be well to send him to the government your highness has bestowed upon him; though I perceive in him a certain aptitude for the work of governing, so that, with a little trimming of his understanding, he would manage any government as easily as the king does his taxes; and moreover, we know already ample experience that it does not require much cleverness or much learning to be a governor, for there are a hundred round about us that scarcely know how to read, and govern like gerfalcons. The main point is that they should have good intentions and be desirous of doing right in all things, for they will never be at a loss for persons to advise and direct

them in what they have to do, like those knight-governors who, being no lawyers, pronounce sentences with the aid of an assessor. My advice to him will be to take no bribe and surrender no right, and I have some other little matters in reserve, that shall be produced in due season for Sancho's benefit and the advantage of the island he is to govern."

The duke, duchess, and Don Quixote had reached this point in their conversation, when they heard voices and a great hubbub in the palace, and Sancho burst abruptly into the room all glowing with anger, with a straining-cloth by way of a bib, and followed by several servants, or, more properly speaking, kitchen-boys and other underlings, one of whom carried a small trough full of water, that from its colour and impurity was plainly dishwater. The one with the trough pursued him and followed him everywhere he went, endeavouring with the utmost persistence to thrust it under his chin, while another kitchen-boy seemed anxious to wash his beard.

"What is all this, brothers?" asked the duchess. "What is it? What do you want to do to this good man? Do you forget he is a governor-elect?"

To which the barber kitchen-boy replied, "The gentleman will not let himself be washed as is customary, and as my lord and the senor his master have been."

"Yes, I will," said Sancho, in a great rage; "but I'd like it to be with cleaner towels, clearer lye, and not such dirty hands; for there's not so much difference between me and my master that he should be washed with angels' water and I with devil's lye. The customs of countries and princes' palaces are only good so long as they give no annoyance; but the way of washing they have here is worse than doing penance. I have a clean beard, and I don't require to be refreshed in that fashion, and whoever comes to wash me or touch a hair of my head, I mean to say my beard, with all due respect be it said, I'll give him a punch that will leave my fist sunk in his skull; for cirimonies and soapings of this sort are more like jokes than the polite attentions of one's host."

The duchess was ready to die with laughter when she saw Sancho's rage and heard his words; but it was no pleasure to Don Quixote to see him in such a sorry trim, with the dingy towel about him, and the hangers-on of the kitchen all round him; so making a low bow to the duke and duchess, as if to ask their permission to speak, he addressed the rout in a dignified tone: "Holloa, gentlemen! you let that youth alone, and go back to where you came from, or anywhere else if you like; my squire is as clean as any other person, and those troughs are as bad as narrow thin-necked jars to him; take my advice and leave him alone, for neither he nor I understand joking."

Sancho took the word out of his mouth and went on, "Nay, let them come and try their jokes on the country bumpkin, for it's about as likely I'll stand them as

that it's now midnight! Let them bring me a comb here, or what they please, and curry this beard of mine, and if they get anything out of it that offends against cleanliness, let them clip me to the skin."

Upon this, the duchess, laughing all the while, said, "Sancho Panza is right, and always will be in all he says; he is clean, and, as he says himself, he does not require to be washed; and if our ways do not please him, he is free to choose. Besides, you promoters of cleanliness have been excessively careless and thoughtless, I don't know if I ought not to say audacious, to bring troughs and wooden utensils and kitchen dishcloths, instead of basins and jugs of pure gold and towels of holland, to such a person and such a beard; but, after all, you are ill-conditioned and ill-bred, and spiteful as you are, you cannot help showing the grudge you have against the squires of knights-errant."

The impudent servitors, and even the seneschal who came with them, took the duchess to be speaking in earnest, so they removed the straining-cloth from Sancho's neck, and with something like shame and confusion of face went off all of them and left him; whereupon he, seeing himself safe out of that extreme danger, as it seemed to him, ran and fell on his knees before the duchess, saying, "From great ladies great favours may be looked for; this which your grace has done me today cannot be requited with less than wishing I was dubbed a knight-errant, to devote myself all the days of my life to the service of so exalted a lady. I am a labouring man, my name is Sancho Panza, I am married, I have children, and I am serving as a squire; if in any one of these ways I can serve your highness, I will not be longer in obeying than your grace in commanding."

"It is easy to see, Sancho," replied the duchess, "that you have learned to be polite in the school of politeness itself; I mean to say it is easy to see that you have been nursed in the bosom of Senor Don Quixote, who is, of course, the cream of good breeding and flower of ceremony — or cirimony, as you would say yourself. Fair be the fortunes of such a master and such a servant, the one the cynosure of knight-errantry, the other the star of squirely fidelity! Rise, Sancho, my friend; I will repay your courtesy by taking care that my lord the duke makes good to you the promised gift of the government as soon as possible."

With this, the conversation came to an end, and Don Quixote retired to take his midday sleep; but the duchess begged Sancho, unless he had a very great desire to go to sleep, to come and spend the afternoon with her and her damsels in a very cool chamber. Sancho replied that, though he certainly had the habit of sleeping four or five hours in the heat of the day in summer, to serve her excellence he would try with all his might not to sleep even one that day, and that he would come in obedience to her command, and with that he went off. The duke gave fresh orders with respect to treating Don Quixote as a knight-

errant, without departing even in smallest particular from the style in which, as the stories tell us, they used to treat the knights of old.





## CHAPTER XXXIII.

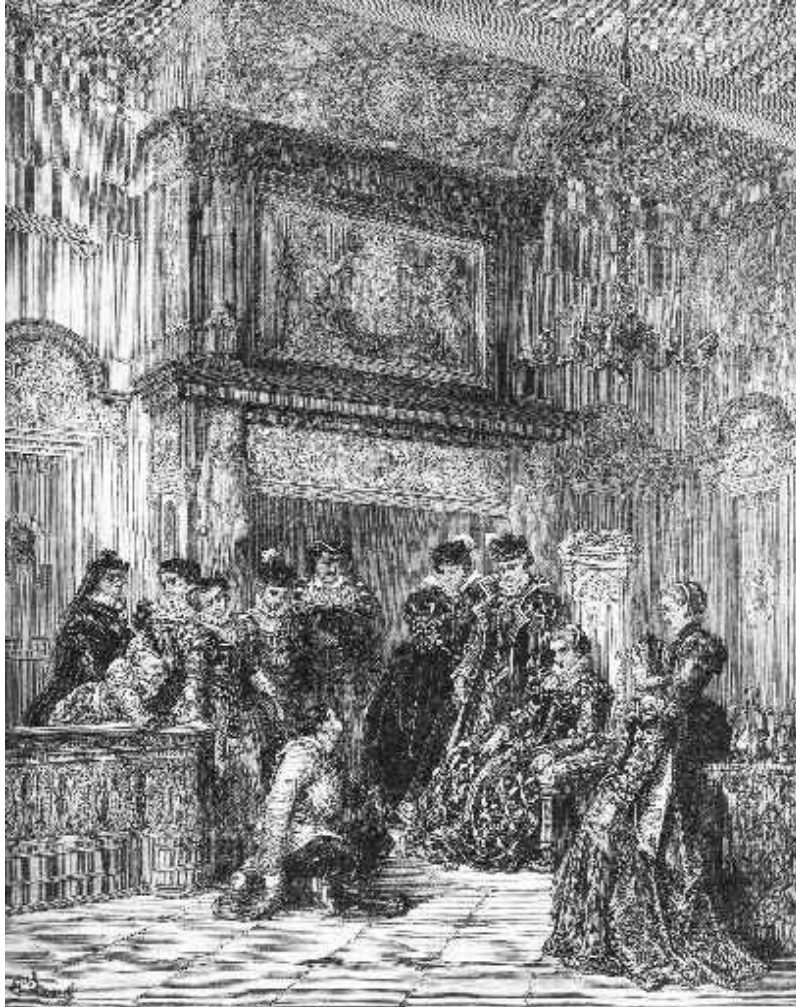
OF THE DELECTABLE DISCOURSE WHICH THE DUCHESS AND HER  
DAMSELS HELD WITH SANCHO PANZA, WELL WORTH READING  
AND NOTING



The history records that Sancho did not sleep that afternoon, but in order to keep his word came, before he had well done dinner, to visit the duchess, who, finding enjoyment in listening to him, made him sit down beside her on a low seat, though Sancho, out of pure good breeding, wanted not to sit down; the duchess, however, told him he was to sit down as governor and talk as squire, as in both respects he was worthy of even the chair of the Cid Ruy Diaz the Campeador. Sancho shrugged his shoulders, obeyed, and sat down, and all the

duchess's damsels and duennas gathered round him, waiting in profound silence to hear what he would say. It was the duchess, however, who spoke first, saying:

“Now that we are alone, and that there is nobody here to overhear us, I should be glad if the senor governor would relieve me of certain doubts I have, rising out of the history of the great Don Quixote that is now in print. One is: inasmuch as worthy Sancho never saw Dulcinea, I mean the lady Dulcinea del Toboso, nor took Don Quixote's letter to her, for it was left in the memorandum book in the Sierra Morena, how did he dare to invent the answer and all that about finding her sifting wheat, the whole story being a deception and falsehood, and so much to the prejudice of the peerless Dulcinea's good name, a thing that is not at all becoming the character and fidelity of a good squire?”



At these words, Sancho, without uttering one in reply, got up from his chair, and with noiseless steps, with his body bent and his finger on his lips, went all round the room lifting up the hangings; and this done, he came back to his seat and said, “Now, senora, that I have seen that there is no one except the bystanders listening to us on the sly, I will answer what you have asked me, and all you may ask me, without fear or dread. And the first thing I have got to say is, that for my own part I hold my master Don Quixote to be stark mad, though sometimes he says things that, to my mind, and indeed everybody’s that listens to him, are so wise, and run in such a straight furrow, that Satan himself could not have said them better; but for all that, really, and beyond all question, it’s my

firm belief he is cracked. Well, then, as this is clear to my mind, I can venture to make him believe things that have neither head nor tail, like that affair of the answer to the letter, and that other of six or eight days ago, which is not yet in history, that is to say, the affair of the enchantment of my lady Dulcinea; for I made him believe she is enchanted, though there's no more truth in it than over the hills of Ubeda."

The duchess begged him to tell her about the enchantment or deception, so Sancho told the whole story exactly as it had happened, and his hearers were not a little amused by it; and then resuming, the duchess said, "In consequence of what worthy Sancho has told me, a doubt starts up in my mind, and there comes a kind of whisper to my ear that says, 'If Don Quixote be mad, crazy, and cracked, and Sancho Panza his squire knows it, and, notwithstanding, serves and follows him, and goes trusting to his empty promises, there can be no doubt he must be still madder and sillier than his master; and that being so, it will be cast in your teeth, senora duchess, if you give the said Sancho an island to govern; for how will he who does not know how to govern himself know how to govern others?'"

"By God, senora," said Sancho, "but that doubt comes timely; but your grace may say it out, and speak plainly, or as you like; for I know what you say is true, and if I were wise I should have left my master long ago; but this was my fate, this was my bad luck; I can't help it, I must follow him; we're from the same village, I've eaten his bread, I'm fond of him, I'm grateful, he gave me his asscolts, and above all I'm faithful; so it's quite impossible for anything to separate us, except the pickaxe and shovel. And if your highness does not like to give me the government you promised, God made me without it, and maybe your not giving it to me will be all the better for my conscience, for fool as I am I know the proverb 'to her hurt the ant got wings,' and it may be that Sancho the squire will get to heaven sooner than Sancho the governor. 'They make as good bread here as in France,' and 'by night all cats are grey,' and 'a hard case enough his, who hasn't broken his fast at two in the afternoon,' and 'there's no stomach a hand's breadth bigger than another,' and the same can be filled 'with straw or hay,' as the saying is, and 'the little birds of the field have God for their purveyor and caterer,' and 'four yards of Cuenca frieze keep one warmer than four of Segovia broad-cloth,' and 'when we quit this world and are put underground the prince travels by as narrow a path as the journeyman,' and 'the Pope's body does not take up more feet of earth than the sacristan's,' for all that the one is higher than the other; for when we go to our graves we all pack ourselves up and make ourselves small, or rather they pack us up and make us small in spite of us, and then — good night to us. And I say once more, if your

ladyship does not like to give me the island because I'm a fool, like a wise man I will take care to give myself no trouble about it; I have heard say that 'behind the cross there's the devil,' and that 'all that glitters is not gold,' and that from among the oxen, and the ploughs, and the yokes, Wamba the husbandman was taken to be made King of Spain, and from among brocades, and pleasures, and riches, Roderick was taken to be devoured by adders, if the verses of the old ballads don't lie."

"To be sure they don't lie!" exclaimed Dona Rodriguez, the duenna, who was one of the listeners. "Why, there's a ballad that says they put King Rodrigo alive into a tomb full of toads, and adders, and lizards, and that two days afterwards the king, in a plaintive, feeble voice, cried out from within the tomb—

They gnaw me now, they gnaw me now,  
There where I most did sin.

And according to that the gentleman has good reason to say he would rather be a labouring man than a king, if vermin are to eat him."

The duchess could not help laughing at the simplicity of her duenna, or wondering at the language and proverbs of Sancho, to whom she said, "Worthy Sancho knows very well that when once a knight has made a promise he strives to keep it, though it should cost him his life. My lord and husband the duke, though not one of the errant sort, is none the less a knight for that reason, and will keep his word about the promised island, in spite of the envy and malice of the world. Let Sancho be of good cheer; for when he least expects it he will find himself seated on the throne of his island and seat of dignity, and will take possession of his government that he may discard it for another of three-bordered brocade. The charge I give him is to be careful how he governs his vassals, bearing in mind that they are all loyal and well-born."

"As to governing them well," said Sancho, "there's no need of charging me to do that, for I'm kind-hearted by nature, and full of compassion for the poor; there's no stealing the loaf from him who kneads and bakes;' and by my faith it won't do to throw false dice with me; I am an old dog, and I know all about 'tus, tus;' I can be wide-awake if need be, and I don't let clouds come before my eyes, for I know where the shoe pinches me; I say so, because with me the good will have support and protection, and the bad neither footing nor access. And it seems to me that, in governments, to make a beginning is everything; and maybe, after having been governor a fortnight, I'll take kindly to the work and know more about it than the field labour I have been brought up to."

"You are right, Sancho," said the duchess, "for no one is born ready taught, and the bishops are made out of men and not out of stones. But to return to the

subject we were discussing just now, the enchantment of the lady Dulcinea, I look upon it as certain, and something more than evident, that Sancho's idea of practising a deception upon his master, making him believe that the peasant girl was Dulcinea and that if he did not recognise her it must be because she was enchanted, was all a device of one of the enchanters that persecute Don Quixote. For in truth and earnest, I know from good authority that the coarse country wench who jumped up on the ass was and is Dulcinea del Toboso, and that worthy Sancho, though he fancies himself the deceiver, is the one that is deceived; and that there is no more reason to doubt the truth of this, than of anything else we never saw. Senor Sancho Panza must know that we too have enchanters here that are well disposed to us, and tell us what goes on in the world, plainly and distinctly, without subterfuge or deception; and believe me, Sancho, that agile country lass was and is Dulcinea del Toboso, who is as much enchanted as the mother that bore her; and when we least expect it, we shall see her in her own proper form, and then Sancho will be disabused of the error he is under at present."

"All that's very possible," said Sancho Panza; "and now I'm willing to believe what my master says about what he saw in the cave of Montesinos, where he says he saw the lady Dulcinea del Toboso in the very same dress and apparel that I said I had seen her in when I enchanted her all to please myself. It must be all exactly the other way, as your ladyship says; because it is impossible to suppose that out of my poor wit such a cunning trick could be concocted in a moment, nor do I think my master is so mad that by my weak and feeble persuasion he could be made to believe a thing so out of all reason. But, senora, your excellence must not therefore think me ill-disposed, for a dolt like me is not bound to see into the thoughts and plots of those vile enchanters. I invented all that to escape my master's scolding, and not with any intention of hurting him; and if it has turned out differently, there is a God in heaven who judges our hearts."

"That is true," said the duchess; "but tell me, Sancho, what is this you say about the cave of Montesinos, for I should like to know."

Sancho upon this related to her, word for word, what has been said already touching that adventure, and having heard it the duchess said, "From this occurrence it may be inferred that, as the great Don Quixote says he saw there the same country wench Sancho saw on the way from El Toboso, it is, no doubt, Dulcinea, and that there are some very active and exceedingly busy enchanters about."

"So I say," said Sancho, "and if my lady Dulcinea is enchanted, so much the worse for her, and I'm not going to pick a quarrel with my master's enemies,

who seem to be many and spiteful. The truth is that the one I saw was a country wench, and I set her down to be a country wench; and if that was Dulcinea it must not be laid at my door, nor should I be called to answer for it or take the consequences. But they must go nagging at me at every step— ‘Sancho said it, Sancho did it, Sancho here, Sancho there,’ as if Sancho was nobody at all, and not that same Sancho Panza that’s now going all over the world in books, so Samson Carrasco told me, and he’s at any rate one that’s a bachelor of Salamanca; and people of that sort can’t lie, except when the whim seizes them or they have some very good reason for it. So there’s no occasion for anybody to quarrel with me; and then I have a good character, and, as I have heard my master say, ‘a good name is better than great riches,’ let them only stick me into this government and they’ll see wonders, for one who has been a good squire will be a good governor.”

“All worthy Sancho’s observations,” said the duchess, “are Catonian sentences, or at any rate out of the very heart of Michael Verino himself, who *florentibus occidit annis*. In fact, to speak in his own style, ‘under a bad cloak there’s often a good drinker.’”

“Indeed, senora,” said Sancho, “I never yet drank out of wickedness; from thirst I have very likely, for I have nothing of the hypocrite in me; I drink when I’m inclined, or, if I’m not inclined, when they offer it to me, so as not to look either strait-laced or ill-bred; for when a friend drinks one’s health what heart can be so hard as not to return it? But if I put on my shoes I don’t dirty them; besides, squires to knights-errant mostly drink water, for they are always wandering among woods, forests and meadows, mountains and crags, without a drop of wine to be had if they gave their eyes for it.”

“So I believe,” said the duchess; “and now let Sancho go and take his sleep, and we will talk by-and-by at greater length, and settle how he may soon go and stick himself into the government, as he says.”

Sancho once more kissed the duchess’s hand, and entreated her to let good care be taken of his Dapple, for he was the light of his eyes.

“What is Dapple?” said the duchess.

“My ass,” said Sancho, “which, not to mention him by that name, I’m accustomed to call Dapple; I begged this lady duenna here to take care of him when I came into the castle, and she got as angry as if I had said she was ugly or old, though it ought to be more natural and proper for duennas to feed asses than to ornament chambers. God bless me! what a spite a gentleman of my village had against these ladies!”

“He must have been some clown,” said Dona Rodriguez the duenna; “for if he had been a gentleman and well-born he would have exalted them higher than the

horns of the moon.”

“That will do,” said the duchess; “no more of this; hush, Dona Rodriguez, and let Senor Panza rest easy and leave the treatment of Dapple in my charge, for as he is a treasure of Sancho’s, I’ll put him on the apple of my eye.”

“It will be enough for him to be in the stable,” said Sancho, “for neither he nor I are worthy to rest a moment in the apple of your highness’s eye, and I’d as soon stab myself as consent to it; for though my master says that in civilities it is better to lose by a card too many than a card too few, when it comes to civilities to asses we must mind what we are about and keep within due bounds.”

“Take him to your government, Sancho,” said the duchess, “and there you will be able to make as much of him as you like, and even release him from work and pension him off.”

“Don’t think, senora duchess, that you have said anything absurd,” said Sancho; “I have seen more than two asses go to governments, and for me to take mine with me would be nothing new.”

Sancho’s words made the duchess laugh again and gave her fresh amusement, and dismissing him to sleep she went away to tell the duke the conversation she had had with him, and between them they plotted and arranged to play a joke upon Don Quixote that was to be a rare one and entirely in knight-errantry style, and in that same style they practised several upon him, so much in keeping and so clever that they form the best adventures this great history contains.





## CHAPTER XXXIV.

WHICH RELATES HOW THEY LEARNED THE WAY IN WHICH THEY WERE TO DISENCHANT THE PEERLESS DULCINEA DEL TOBOSO, WHICH IS ONE OF THE RAREST ADVENTURES IN THIS BOOK



Great was the pleasure the duke and duchess took in the conversation of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza; and, more bent than ever upon the plan they had of practising some jokes upon them that should have the look and appearance of adventures, they took as their basis of action what Don Quixote had already told them about the cave of Montesinos, in order to play him a famous one. But what the duchess marvelled at above all was that Sancho's simplicity could be so great as to make him believe as absolute truth that Dulcinea had been enchanted, when it was he himself who had been the enchanter and trickster in the business.

Having, therefore, instructed their servants in everything they were to do, six days afterwards they took him out to hunt, with as great a retinue of huntsmen and beaters as a crowned king.

They presented Don Quixote with a hunting suit, and Sancho with another of the finest green cloth; but Don Quixote declined to put his on, saying that he must soon return to the hard pursuit of arms, and could not carry wardrobes or stores with him. Sancho, however, took what they gave him, meaning to sell it the first opportunity.

The appointed day having arrived, Don Quixote armed himself, and Sancho arrayed himself, and mounted on his Dapple (for he would not give him up though they offered him a horse), he placed himself in the midst of the troop of huntsmen. The duchess came out splendidly attired, and Don Quixote, in pure courtesy and politeness, held the rein of her palfrey, though the duke wanted not to allow him; and at last they reached a wood that lay between two high mountains, where, after occupying various posts, ambushes, and paths, and distributing the party in different positions, the hunt began with great noise, shouting, and hallooing, so that, between the baying of the hounds and the blowing of the horns, they could not hear one another. The duchess dismounted, and with a sharp boar-spear in her hand posted herself where she knew the wild boars were in the habit of passing. The duke and Don Quixote likewise dismounted and placed themselves one at each side of her. Sancho took up a position in the rear of all without dismounting from Dapple, whom he dared not desert lest some mischief should befall him. Scarcely had they taken their stand in a line with several of their servants, when they saw a huge boar, closely pressed by the hounds and followed by the huntsmen, making towards them, grinding his teeth and tusks, and scattering foam from his mouth. As soon as he saw him Don Quixote, bracing his shield on his arm, and drawing his sword, advanced to meet him; the duke with boar-spear did the same; but the duchess would have gone in front of them all had not the duke prevented her. Sancho alone, deserting Dapple at the sight of the mighty beast, took to his heels as hard as he could and strove in vain to mount a tall oak. As he was clinging to a branch, however, half-way up in his struggle to reach the top, the bough, such was his ill-luck and hard fate, gave way, and caught in his fall by a broken limb of the oak, he hung suspended in the air unable to reach the ground. Finding himself in this position, and that the green coat was beginning to tear, and reflecting that if the fierce animal came that way he might be able to get at him, he began to utter such cries, and call for help so earnestly, that all who heard him and did not see him felt sure he must be in the teeth of some wild beast. In the end the tusked boar fell pierced by the blades of the many spears they held in

front of him; and Don Quixote, turning round at the cries of Sancho, for he knew by them that it was he, saw him hanging from the oak head downwards, with Dapple, who did not forsake him in his distress, close beside him; and Cide Hamete observes that he seldom saw Sancho Panza without seeing Dapple, or Dapple without seeing Sancho Panza; such was their attachment and loyalty one to the other. Don Quixote went over and unhooked Sancho, who, as soon as he found himself on the ground, looked at the rent in his huntingcoat and was grieved to the heart, for he thought he had got a patrimonial estate in that suit.

Meanwhile they had slung the mighty boar across the back of a mule, and having covered it with sprigs of rosemary and branches of myrtle, they bore it away as the spoils of victory to some large field-tents which had been pitched in the middle of the wood, where they found the tables laid and dinner served, in such grand and sumptuous style that it was easy to see the rank and magnificence of those who had provided it. Sancho, as he showed the rents in his torn suit to the duchess, observed, "If we had been hunting hares, or after small birds, my coat would have been safe from being in the plight it's in; I don't know what pleasure one can find in lying in wait for an animal that may take your life with his tusk if he gets at you. I recollect having heard an old ballad sung that says,

By bears be thou devoured, as erst  
Was famous Favila."

"That," said Don Quixote, "was a Gothic king, who, going a-hunting, was devoured by a bear."

"Just so," said Sancho; "and I would not have kings and princes expose themselves to such dangers for the sake of a pleasure which, to my mind, ought not to be one, as it consists in killing an animal that has done no harm whatever."

"Quite the contrary, Sancho; you are wrong there," said the duke; "for hunting is more suitable and requisite for kings and princes than for anybody else. The chase is the emblem of war; it has stratagems, wiles, and crafty devices for overcoming the enemy in safety; in it extreme cold and intolerable heat have to be borne, indolence and sleep are despised, the bodily powers are invigorated, the limbs of him who engages in it are made supple, and, in a word, it is a pursuit which may be followed without injury to anyone and with enjoyment to many; and the best of it is, it is not for everybody, as field-sports of other sorts are, except hawking, which also is only for kings and great lords. Reconsider your opinion therefore, Sancho, and when you are governor take to hunting, and you will find the good of it."

"Nay," said Sancho, "the good governor should have a broken leg and keep at

home;" it would be a nice thing if, after people had been at the trouble of coming to look for him on business, the governor were to be away in the forest enjoying himself; the government would go on badly in that fashion. By my faith, senor, hunting and amusements are more fit for idlers than for governors; what I intend to amuse myself with is playing all fours at Eastertime, and bowls on Sundays and holidays; for these huntings don't suit my condition or agree with my conscience."

"God grant it may turn out so," said the duke; "because it's a long step from saying to doing."

"Be that as it may," said Sancho, "'pledges don't distress a good payer,' and 'he whom God helps does better than he who gets up early,' and 'it's the tripes that carry the feet and not the feet the tripes;' I mean to say that if God gives me help and I do my duty honestly, no doubt I'll govern better than a gerfalcon. Nay, let them only put a finger in my mouth, and they'll see whether I can bite or not."

"The curse of God and all his saints upon thee, thou accursed Sancho!" exclaimed Don Quixote; "when will the day come — as I have often said to thee — when I shall hear thee make one single coherent, rational remark without proverbs? Pray, your highnesses, leave this fool alone, for he will grind your souls between, not to say two, but two thousand proverbs, dragged in as much in season, and as much to the purpose as — may God grant as much health to him, or to me if I want to listen to them!"

"Sancho Panza's proverbs," said the duchess, "though more in number than the Greek Commander's, are not therefore less to be esteemed for the conciseness of the maxims. For my own part, I can say they give me more pleasure than others that may be better brought in and more seasonably introduced."

In pleasant conversation of this sort they passed out of the tent into the wood, and the day was spent in visiting some of the posts and hiding-places, and then night closed in, not, however, as brilliantly or tranquilly as might have been expected at the season, for it was then midsummer; but bringing with it a kind of haze that greatly aided the project of the duke and duchess; and thus, as night began to fall, and a little after twilight set in, suddenly the whole wood on all four sides seemed to be on fire, and shortly after, here, there, on all sides, a vast number of trumpets and other military instruments were heard, as if several troops of cavalry were passing through the wood. The blaze of the fire and the noise of the warlike instruments almost blinded the eyes and deafened the ears of those that stood by, and indeed of all who were in the wood. Then there were heard repeated leilies after the fashion of the Moors when they rush to battle;

trumpets and clarions brayed, drums beat, fifes played, so unceasingly and so fast that he could not have had any senses who did not lose them with the confused din of so many instruments. The duke was astounded, the duchess amazed, Don Quixote wondering, Sancho Panza trembling, and indeed, even they who were aware of the cause were frightened. In their fear, silence fell upon them, and a postillion, in the guise of a demon, passed in front of them, blowing, in lieu of a bugle, a huge hollow horn that gave out a horrible hoarse note.

“Ho there! brother courier,” cried the duke, “who are you? Where are you going? What troops are these that seem to be passing through the wood?”

To which the courier replied in a harsh, discordant voice, “I am the devil; I am in search of Don Quixote of La Mancha; those who are coming this way are six troops of enchanters, who are bringing on a triumphal car the peerless Dulcinea del Toboso; she comes under enchantment, together with the gallant Frenchman Montesinos, to give instructions to Don Quixote as to how, she the said lady, may be disenchanting.”

“If you were the devil, as you say and as your appearance indicates,” said the duke, “you would have known the said knight Don Quixote of La Mancha, for you have him here before you.”

“By God and upon my conscience,” said the devil, “I never observed it, for my mind is occupied with so many different things that I was forgetting the main thing I came about.”

“This demon must be an honest fellow and a good Christian,” said Sancho; “for if he wasn’t he wouldn’t swear by God and his conscience; I feel sure now there must be good souls even in hell itself.”

Without dismounting, the demon then turned to Don Quixote and said, “The unfortunate but valiant knight Montesinos sends me to thee, the Knight of the Lions (would that I saw thee in their claws), bidding me tell thee to wait for him wherever I may find thee, as he brings with him her whom they call Dulcinea del Toboso, that he may show thee what is needful in order to disenchant her; and as I came for no more I need stay no longer; demons of my sort be with thee, and good angels with these gentles;” and so saying he blew his huge horn, turned about and went off without waiting for a reply from anyone.

They all felt fresh wonder, but particularly Sancho and Don Quixote; Sancho to see how, in defiance of the truth, they would have it that Dulcinea was enchanted; Don Quixote because he could not feel sure whether what had happened to him in the cave of Montesinos was true or not; and as he was deep in these cogitations the duke said to him, “Do you mean to wait, Senor Don Quixote?”

“Why not?” replied he; “here will I wait, fearless and firm, though all hell

should come to attack me.”

“Well then, if I see another devil or hear another horn like the last, I’ll wait here as much as in Flanders,” said Sancho.

Night now closed in more completely, and many lights began to flit through the wood, just as those fiery exhalations from the earth, that look like shooting-stars to our eyes, flit through the heavens; a frightful noise, too, was heard, like that made by the solid wheels the ox-carts usually have, by the harsh, ceaseless creaking of which, they say, the bears and wolves are put to flight, if there happen to be any where they are passing. In addition to all this commotion, there came a further disturbance to increase the tumult, for now it seemed as if in truth, on all four sides of the wood, four encounters or battles were going on at the same time; in one quarter resounded the dull noise of a terrible cannonade, in another numberless muskets were being discharged, the shouts of the combatants sounded almost close at hand, and farther away the Moorish lilies were raised again and again. In a word, the bugles, the horns, the clarions, the trumpets, the drums, the cannon, the musketry, and above all the tremendous noise of the carts, all made up together a din so confused and terrific that Don Quixote had need to summon up all his courage to brave it; but Sancho’s gave way, and he fell fainting on the skirt of the duchess’s robe, who let him lie there and promptly bade them throw water in his face. This was done, and he came to himself by the time that one of the carts with the creaking wheels reached the spot. It was drawn by four plodding oxen all covered with black housings; on each horn they had fixed a large lighted wax taper, and on the top of the cart was constructed a raised seat, on which sat a venerable old man with a beard whiter than the very snow, and so long that it fell below his waist; he was dressed in a long robe of black buckram; for as the cart was thickly set with a multitude of candles it was easy to make out everything that was on it. Leading it were two hideous demons, also clad in buckram, with countenances so frightful that Sancho, having once seen them, shut his eyes so as not to see them again. As soon as the cart came opposite the spot the old man rose from his lofty seat, and standing up said in a loud voice, “I am the sage Lirgandeo,” and without another word the cart then passed on. Behind it came another of the same form, with another aged man enthroned, who, stopping the cart, said in a voice no less solemn than that of the first, “I am the sage Alquife, the great friend of Urganda the Unknown,” and passed on. Then another cart came by at the same pace, but the occupant of the throne was not old like the others, but a man stalwart and robust, and of a forbidding countenance, who as he came up said in a voice far hoarser and more devilish, “I am the enchanter Archelaus, the mortal enemy of Amadis of Gaul and all his kindred,” and then passed on. Having gone a short

distance the three carts halted and the monotonous noise of their wheels ceased, and soon after they heard another, not noise, but sound of sweet, harmonious music, of which Sancho was very glad, taking it to be a good sign; and said he to the duchess, from whom he did not stir a step, or for a single instant, "Senora, where there's music there can't be mischief."

"Nor where there are lights and it is bright," said the duchess; to which Sancho replied, "Fire gives light, and it's bright where there are bonfires, as we see by those that are all round us and perhaps may burn us; but music is a sign of mirth and merrymaking."

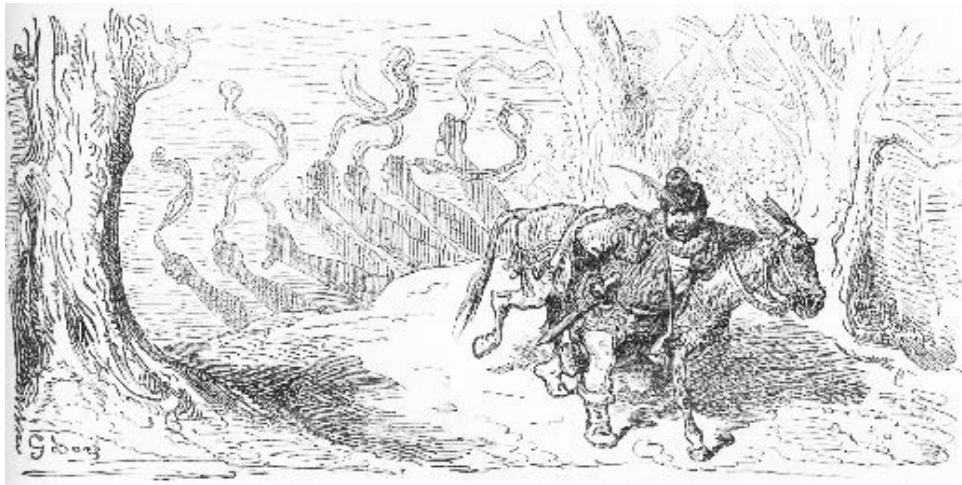
"That remains to be seen," said Don Quixote, who was listening to all that passed; and he was right, as is shown in the following chapter.





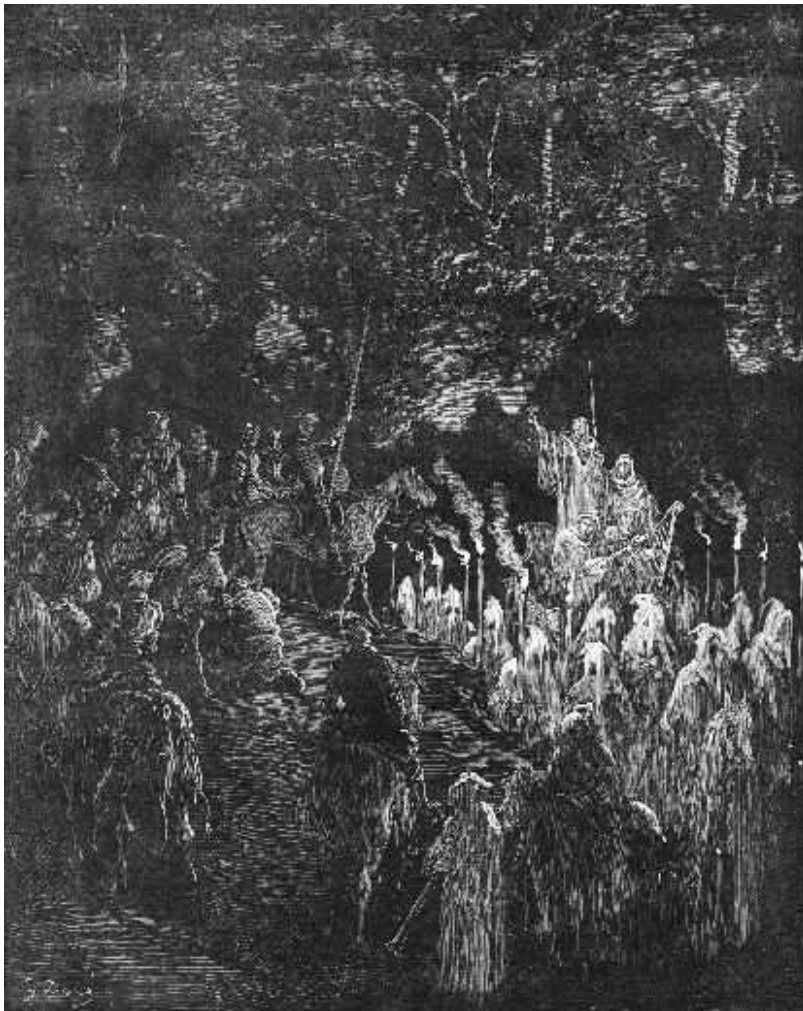
## CHAPTER XXXV.

WHEREIN IS CONTINUED THE INSTRUCTION GIVEN TO DON QUIXOTE TOUCHING THE DISENCHANTMENT OF DULCINEA, TOGETHER WITH OTHER MARVELLOUS INCIDENTS



They saw advancing towards them, to the sound of this pleasing music, what they call a triumphal car, drawn by six grey mules with white linen housings, on each of which was mounted a penitent, robed also in white, with a large lighted wax taper in his hand. The car was twice or, perhaps, three times as large as the former ones, and in front and on the sides stood twelve more penitents, all as white as snow and all with lighted tapers, a spectacle to excite fear as well as wonder; and on a raised throne was seated a nymph draped in a multitude of silver-tissue veils with an embroidery of countless gold spangles glittering all over them, that made her appear, if not richly, at least brilliantly, apparelled. She had her face covered with thin transparent sendal, the texture of which did not prevent the fair features of a maiden from being distinguished, while the numerous lights made it possible to judge of her beauty and of her years, which seemed to be not less than seventeen but not to have yet reached twenty. Beside

her was a figure in a robe of state, as they call it, reaching to the feet, while the head was covered with a black veil. But the instant the car was opposite the duke and duchess and Don Quixote the music of the clarions ceased, and then that of the lutes and harps on the car, and the figure in the robe rose up, and flinging it apart and removing the veil from its face, disclosed to their eyes the shape of Death itself, fleshless and hideous, at which sight Don Quixote felt uneasy, Sancho frightened, and the duke and duchess displayed a certain trepidation. Having risen to its feet, this living death, in a sleepy voice and with a tongue hardly awake, held forth as follows:



I am that Merlin who the legends say  
The devil had for father, and the lie  
Hath gathered credence with the lapse of time.  
Of magic prince, of Zoroastric lore  
Monarch and treasurer, with jealous eye  
I view the efforts of the age to hide  
The gallant deeds of doughty errant knights,  
Who are, and ever have been, dear to me.  
Enchanters and magicians and their kind

Are mostly hard of heart; not so am I;  
For mine is tender, soft, compassionate,  
And its delight is doing good to all.  
In the dim caverns of the gloomy Dis,  
Where, tracing mystic lines and characters,  
My soul abideth now, there came to me  
The sorrow-laden plaint of her, the fair,  
The peerless Dulcinea del Toboso.  
I knew of her enchantment and her fate,  
From high-born dame to peasant wench transformed  
And touched with pity, first I turned the leaves  
Of countless volumes of my devilish craft,  
And then, in this grim grisly skeleton  
Myself encasing, hither have I come  
To show where lies the fitting remedy  
To give relief in such a piteous case.  
O thou, the pride and pink of all that wear

The adamantine steel! O shining light,  
O beacon, polestar, path and guide of all  
Who, scorning slumber and the lazy down,  
Adopt the toilsome life of bloodstained arms!  
To thee, great hero who all praise transcends,  
La Mancha's lustre and Iberia's star,

Don Quixote, wise as brave, to thee I say —  
For peerless Dulcinea del Toboso  
Her pristine form and beauty to regain,  
'T is needful that thy esquire Sancho shall,  
On his own sturdy buttocks bared to heaven,  
Three thousand and three hundred lashes lay,  
And that they smart and sting and hurt him well.  
Thus have the authors of her woe resolved.  
And this is, gentles, wherefore I have come.

“By all that’s good,” exclaimed Sancho at this, “I’ll just as soon give myself three stabs with a dagger as three, not to say three thousand, lashes. The devil take such a way of disenchanting! I don’t see what my backside has got to do with enchantments. By God, if Senor Merlin has not found out some other way of disenchanting the lady Dulcinea del Toboso, she may go to her grave enchanted.”

“But I’ll take you, Don Clown stuffed with garlic,” said Don Quixote, “and tie you to a tree as naked as when your mother brought you forth, and give you, not to say three thousand three hundred, but six thousand six hundred lashes, and so well laid on that they won’t be got rid of if you try three thousand three hundred times; don’t answer me a word or I’ll tear your soul out.”

On hearing this Merlin said, “That will not do, for the lashes worthy Sancho has to receive must be given of his own free will and not by force, and at whatever time he pleases, for there is no fixed limit assigned to him; but it is permitted him, if he likes to commute by half the pain of this whipping, to let them be given by the hand of another, though it may be somewhat weighty.”

“Not a hand, my own or anybody else’s, weighty or weighable, shall touch me,” said Sancho. “Was it I that gave birth to the lady Dulcinea del Toboso, that my backside is to pay for the sins of her eyes? My master, indeed, that’s a part of her — for, he’s always calling her ‘my life’ and ‘my soul,’ and his stay and prop — may and ought to whip himself for her and take all the trouble required for her disenchantment. But for me to whip myself! Abernuncio!”

As soon as Sancho had done speaking the nymph in silver that was at the side of Merlin’s ghost stood up, and removing the thin veil from her face disclosed one that seemed to all something more than exceedingly beautiful; and with a masculine freedom from embarrassment and in a voice not very like a lady’s, addressing Sancho directly, said, “Thou wretched squire, soul of a pitcher, heart of a cork tree, with bowels of flint and pebbles; if, thou impudent thief, they bade thee throw thyself down from some lofty tower; if, enemy of mankind, they

asked thee to swallow a dozen of toads, two of lizards, and three of adders; if they wanted thee to slay thy wife and children with a sharp murderous scimitar, it would be no wonder for thee to show thyself stubborn and squeamish. But to make a piece of work about three thousand three hundred lashes, what every poor little charity-boy gets every month — it is enough to amaze, astonish, astound the compassionate bowels of all who hear it, nay, all who come to hear it in the course of time. Turn, O miserable, hard-hearted animal, turn, I say, those timorous owl's eyes upon these of mine that are compared to radiant stars, and thou wilt see them weeping trickling streams and rills, and tracing furrows, tracks, and paths over the fair fields of my cheeks. Let it move thee, crafty, ill-conditioned monster, to see my blooming youth — still in its teens, for I am not yet twenty — wasting and withering away beneath the husk of a rude peasant wench; and if I do not appear in that shape now, it is a special favour Senor Merlin here has granted me, to the sole end that my beauty may soften thee; for the tears of beauty in distress turn rocks into cotton and tigers into ewes. Lay on to that hide of thine, thou great untamed brute, rouse up thy lusty vigour that only urges thee to eat and eat, and set free the softness of my flesh, the gentleness of my nature, and the fairness of my face. And if thou wilt not relent or come to reason for me, do so for the sake of that poor knight thou hast beside thee; thy master I mean, whose soul I can this moment see, how he has it stuck in his throat not ten fingers from his lips, and only waiting for thy inflexible or yielding reply to make its escape by his mouth or go back again into his stomach."

Don Quixote on hearing this felt his throat, and turning to the duke he said, "By God, senor, Dulcinea says true, I have my soul stuck here in my throat like the nut of a crossbow."

"What say you to this, Sancho?" said the duchess.

"I say, senora," returned Sancho, "what I said before; as for the lashes, abrenuncio!"

"Abrenuncio, you should say, Sancho, and not as you do," said the duke.

"Let me alone, your highness," said Sancho. "I'm not in a humour now to look into niceties or a letter more or less, for these lashes that are to be given me, or I'm to give myself, have so upset me, that I don't know what I'm saying or doing. But I'd like to know of this lady, my lady Dulcinea del Toboso, where she learned this way she has of asking favours. She comes to ask me to score my flesh with lashes, and she calls me soul of a pitcher, and great untamed brute, and a string of foul names that the devil is welcome to. Is my flesh brass? or is it anything to me whether she is enchanted or not? Does she bring with her a basket of fair linen, shirts, kerchiefs, socks — not that wear any — to coax me?"

No, nothing but one piece of abuse after another, though she knows the proverb they have here that ‘an ass loaded with gold goes lightly up a mountain,’ and that ‘gifts break rocks,’ and ‘praying to God and plying the hammer,’ and that ‘one “take” is better than two “I’ll give thee’s.”’ Then there’s my master, who ought to stroke me down and pet me to make me turn wool and carded cotton; he says if he gets hold of me he’ll tie me naked to a tree and double the tale of lashes on me. These tender-hearted gentry should consider that it’s not merely a squire, but a governor they are asking to whip himself; just as if it was ‘drink with cherries.’ Let them learn, plague take them, the right way to ask, and beg, and behave themselves; for all times are not alike, nor are people always in good humour. I’m now ready to burst with grief at seeing my green coat torn, and they come to ask me to whip myself of my own free will, I having as little fancy for it as for turning cacique.”

“Well then, the fact is, friend Sancho,” said the duke, “that unless you become softer than a ripe fig, you shall not get hold of the government. It would be a nice thing for me to send my islanders a cruel governor with flinty bowels, who won’t yield to the tears of afflicted damsels or to the prayers of wise, magisterial, ancient enchanters and sages. In short, Sancho, either you must be whipped by yourself, or they must whip you, or you shan’t be governor.”

“Senor,” said Sancho, “won’t two days’ grace be given me in which to consider what is best for me?”

“No, certainly not,” said Merlin; “here, this minute, and on the spot, the matter must be settled; either Dulcinea will return to the cave of Montesinos and to her former condition of peasant wench, or else in her present form shall be carried to the Elysian fields, where she will remain waiting until the number of stripes is completed.”

“Now then, Sancho!” said the duchess, “show courage, and gratitude for your master Don Quixote’s bread that you have eaten; we are all bound to oblige and please him for his benevolent disposition and lofty chivalry. Consent to this whipping, my son; to the devil with the devil, and leave fear to milksops, for ‘a stout heart breaks bad luck,’ as you very well know.”

To this Sancho replied with an irrelevant remark, which, addressing Merlin, he made to him, “Will your worship tell me, Senor Merlin — when that courier devil came up he gave my master a message from Senor Montesinos, charging him to wait for him here, as he was coming to arrange how the lady Dona Dulcinea del Toboso was to be disenchanted; but up to the present we have not seen Montesinos, nor anything like him.”

To which Merlin made answer, “The devil, Sancho, is a blockhead and a great scoundrel; I sent him to look for your master, but not with a message from

Montesinos but from myself; for Montesinos is in his cave expecting, or more properly speaking, waiting for his disenchantment; for there's the tail to be skinned yet for him; if he owes you anything, or you have any business to transact with him, I'll bring him to you and put him where you choose; but for the present make up your mind to consent to this penance, and believe me it will be very good for you, for soul as well for body — for your soul because of the charity with which you perform it, for your body because I know that you are of a sanguine habit and it will do you no harm to draw a little blood.”

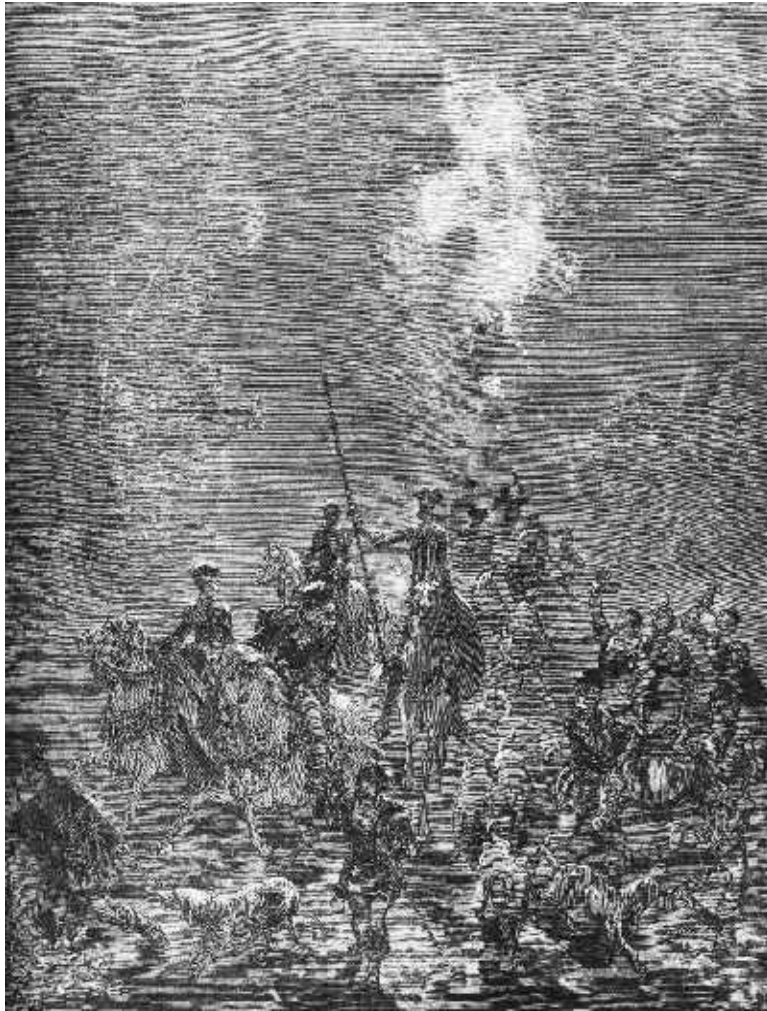
“There are a great many doctors in the world; even the enchanters are doctors,” said Sancho; “however, as everybody tells me the same thing — though I can't see it myself — I say I am willing to give myself the three thousand three hundred lashes, provided I am to lay them on whenever I like, without any fixing of days or times; and I'll try and get out of debt as quickly as I can, that the world may enjoy the beauty of the lady Dulcinea del Toboso; as it seems, contrary to what I thought, that she is beautiful after all. It must be a condition, too, that I am not to be bound to draw blood with the scourge, and that if any of the lashes happen to be fly-flappers they are to count. Item, that, in case I should make any mistake in the reckoning, Senor Merlin, as he knows everything, is to keep count, and let me know how many are still wanting or over the number.”

“There will be no need to let you know of any over,” said Merlin, “because, when you reach the full number, the lady Dulcinea will at once, and that very instant, be disenchanted, and will come in her gratitude to seek out the worthy Sancho, and thank him, and even reward him for the good work. So you have no cause to be uneasy about stripes too many or too few; heaven forbid I should cheat anyone of even a hair of his head.”

“Well then, in God's hands be it,” said Sancho; “in the hard case I'm in I give in; I say I accept the penance on the conditions laid down.”

The instant Sancho uttered these last words the music of the clarions struck up once more, and again a host of muskets were discharged, and Don Quixote hung on Sancho's neck kissing him again and again on the forehead and cheeks. The duchess and the duke expressed the greatest satisfaction, the car began to move on, and as it passed the fair Dulcinea bowed to the duke and duchess and made a low curtsy to Sancho.





And now bright smiling dawn came on apace; the flowers of the field, revived, raised up their heads, and the crystal waters of the brooks, murmuring over the grey and white pebbles, hastened to pay their tribute to the expectant rivers; the glad earth, the unclouded sky, the fresh breeze, the clear light, each and all showed that the day that came treading on the skirts of morning would be calm and bright. The duke and duchess, pleased with their hunt and at having carried out their plans so cleverly and successfully, returned to their castle

resolved to follow up their joke; for to them there was no reality that could afford them more amusement.



## CHAPTER XXXVI.

WHEREIN IS RELATED THE STRANGE AND UNDREAMT-OF  
ADVENTURE OF THE DISTRESSED DUENNA, ALIAS THE COUNTESS  
TRIFALDI, TOGETHER WITH A LETTER WHICH SANCHE PANZA  
WROTE TO HIS WIFE, TERESA PANZA



The duke had a majordomo of a very facetious and sportive turn, and he it was that played the part of Merlin, made all the arrangements for the late adventure, composed the verses, and got a page to represent Dulcinea; and now, with the assistance of his master and mistress, he got up another of the drollest and strangest contrivances that can be imagined.

The duchess asked Sancho the next day if he had made a beginning with his

penance task which he had to perform for the disenchantment of Dulcinea. He said he had, and had given himself five lashes overnight.

The duchess asked him what he had given them with.

He said with his hand.

“That,” said the duchess, “is more like giving oneself slaps than lashes; I am sure the sage Merlin will not be satisfied with such tenderness; worthy Sancho must make a scourge with claws, or a cat-o’-nine tails, that will make itself felt; for it’s with blood that letters enter, and the release of so great a lady as Dulcinea will not be granted so cheaply, or at such a paltry price; and remember, Sancho, that works of charity done in a lukewarm and half-hearted way are without merit and of no avail.”

To which Sancho replied, “If your ladyship will give me a proper scourge or cord, I’ll lay on with it, provided it does not hurt too much; for you must know, boor as I am, my flesh is more cotton than hemp, and it won’t do for me to destroy myself for the good of anybody else.”

“So be it by all means,” said the duchess; “tomorrow I’ll give you a scourge that will be just the thing for you, and will accommodate itself to the tenderness of your flesh, as if it was its own sister.”

Then said Sancho, “Your highness must know, dear lady of my soul, that I have a letter written to my wife, Teresa Panza, giving her an account of all that has happened me since I left her; I have it here in my bosom, and there’s nothing wanting but to put the address to it; I’d be glad if your discretion would read it, for I think it runs in the governor style; I mean the way governors ought to write.”

“And who dictated it?” asked the duchess.

“Who should have dictated but myself, sinner as I am?” said Sancho.

“And did you write it yourself?” said the duchess.

“That I didn’t,” said Sancho; “for I can neither read nor write, though I can sign my name.”

“Let us see it,” said the duchess, “for never fear but you display in it the quality and quantity of your wit.”

Sancho drew out an open letter from his bosom, and the duchess, taking it, found it ran in this fashion:

#### SANCHO PANZA’S LETTER TO HIS WIFE, TERESA PANZA

If I was well whipped I went mounted like a gentleman; if I have got a good government it is at the cost of a good whipping. Thou wilt not understand this just now, my Teresa; by-and-by thou wilt know what it means. I may tell thee, Teresa, I mean thee to go in a coach, for that is a matter of importance, because every other way of going is going on all-fours. Thou art a governor’s wife; take

care that nobody speaks evil of thee behind thy back. I send thee here a green hunting suit that my lady the duchess gave me; alter it so as to make a petticoat and bodice for our daughter. Don Quixote, my master, if I am to believe what I hear in these parts, is a madman of some sense, and a droll blockhead, and I am no way behind him. We have been in the cave of Montesinos, and the sage Merlin has laid hold of me for the disenchantment of Dulcinea del Toboso, her that is called Aldonza Lorenzo over there. With three thousand three hundred lashes, less five, that I'm to give myself, she will be left as entirely disenchanted as the mother that bore her. Say nothing of this to anyone; for, make thy affairs public, and some will say they are white and others will say they are black. I shall leave this in a few days for my government, to which I am going with a mighty great desire to make money, for they tell me all new governors set out with the same desire; I will feel the pulse of it and will let thee know if thou art to come and live with me or not. Dapple is well and sends many remembrances to thee; I am not going to leave him behind though they took me away to be Grand Turk. My lady the duchess kisses thy hands a thousand times; do thou make a return with two thousand, for as my master says, nothing costs less or is cheaper than civility. God has not been pleased to provide another valise for me with another hundred crowns, like the one the other day; but never mind, my Teresa, the bell-ringer is in safe quarters, and all will come out in the scouring of the government; only it troubles me greatly what they tell me — that once I have tasted it I will eat my hands off after it; and if that is so it will not come very cheap to me; though to be sure the maimed have a benefice of their own in the alms they beg for; so that one way or another thou wilt be rich and in luck. God give it to thee as he can, and keep me to serve thee. From this castle, the 20th of July, 1614.

Thy husband, the governor.

#### SANCHO PANZA

When she had done reading the letter the duchess said to Sancho, "On two points the worthy governor goes rather astray; one is in saying or hinting that this government has been bestowed upon him for the lashes that he is to give himself, when he knows (and he cannot deny it) that when my lord the duke promised it to him nobody ever dreamt of such a thing as lashes; the other is that he shows himself here to be very covetous; and I would not have him a money-seeker, for 'covetousness bursts the bag,' and the covetous governor does ungoverned justice."

"I don't mean it that way, senora," said Sancho; "and if you think the letter doesn't run as it ought to do, it's only to tear it up and make another; and maybe it will be a worse one if it is left to my gumption."

“No, no,” said the duchess, “this one will do, and I wish the duke to see it.”

With this they betook themselves to a garden where they were to dine, and the duchess showed Sancho’s letter to the duke, who was highly delighted with it. They dined, and after the cloth had been removed and they had amused themselves for a while with Sancho’s rich conversation, the melancholy sound of a fife and harsh discordant drum made itself heard. All seemed somewhat put out by this dull, confused, martial harmony, especially Don Quixote, who could not keep his seat from pure disquietude; as to Sancho, it is needless to say that fear drove him to his usual refuge, the side or the skirts of the duchess; and indeed and in truth the sound they heard was a most doleful and melancholy one. While they were still in uncertainty they saw advancing towards them through the garden two men clad in mourning robes so long and flowing that they trailed upon the ground. As they marched they beat two great drums which were likewise draped in black, and beside them came the fife player, black and sombre like the others. Following these came a personage of gigantic stature enveloped rather than clad in a gown of the deepest black, the skirt of which was of prodigious dimensions. Over the gown, girdling or crossing his figure, he had a broad baldric which was also black, and from which hung a huge scimitar with a black scabbard and furniture. He had his face covered with a transparent black veil, through which might be descried a very long beard as white as snow. He came on keeping step to the sound of the drums with great gravity and dignity; and, in short, his stature, his gait, the sombreness of his appearance and his following might well have struck with astonishment, as they did, all who beheld him without knowing who he was. With this measured pace and in this guise he advanced to kneel before the duke, who, with the others, awaited him standing. The duke, however, would not on any account allow him to speak until he had risen. The prodigious scarecrow obeyed, and standing up, removed the veil from his face and disclosed the most enormous, the longest, the whitest and the thickest beard that human eyes had ever beheld until that moment, and then fetching up a grave, sonorous voice from the depths of his broad, capacious chest, and fixing his eyes on the duke, he said:

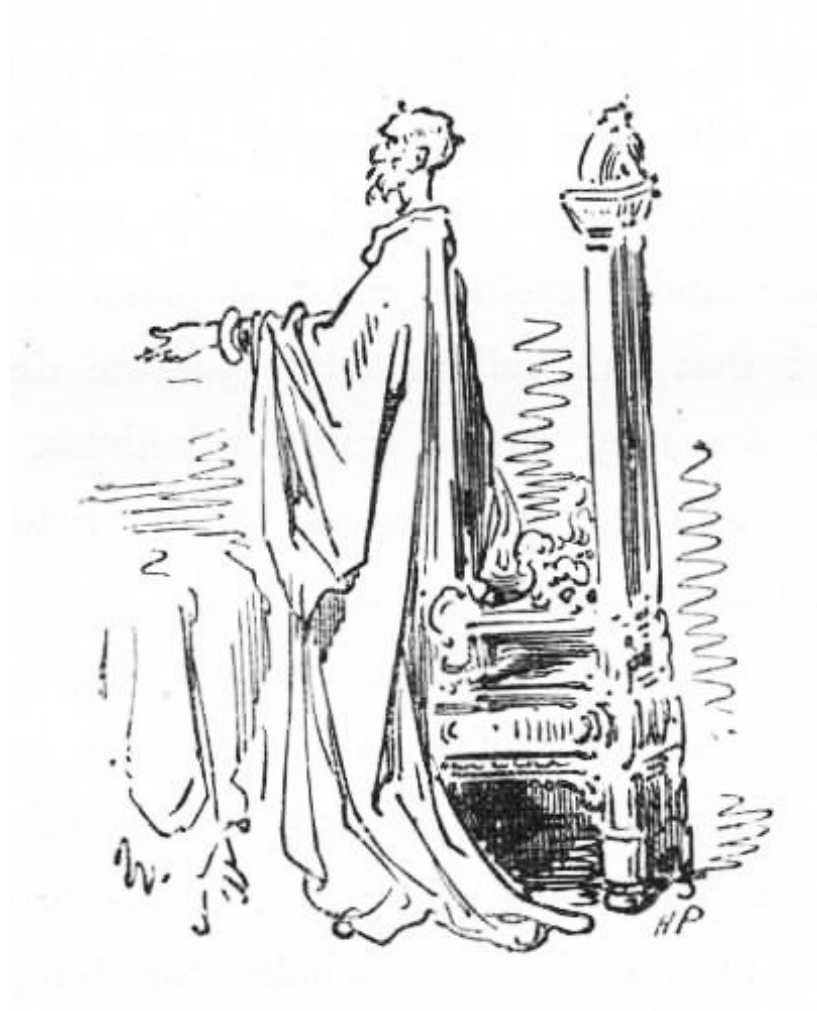
“Most high and mighty senor, my name is Trifaldin of the White Beard; I am squire to the Countess Trifaldi, otherwise called the Distressed Duenna, on whose behalf I bear a message to your highness, which is that your magnificence will be pleased to grant her leave and permission to come and tell you her trouble, which is one of the strangest and most wonderful that the mind most familiar with trouble in the world could have imagined; but first she desires to know if the valiant and never vanquished knight, Don Quixote of La Mancha, is in this your castle, for she has come in quest of him on foot and without breaking

her fast from the kingdom of Kandy to your realms here; a thing which may and ought to be regarded as a miracle or set down to enchantment; she is even now at the gate of this fortress or plaisance, and only waits for your permission to enter. I have spoken.” And with that he coughed, and stroked down his beard with both his hands, and stood very tranquilly waiting for the response of the duke, which was to this effect: “Many days ago, worthy squire Trifaldin of the White Beard, we heard of the misfortune of my lady the Countess Trifaldi, whom the enchanters have caused to be called the Distressed Duenna. Bid her enter, O stupendous squire, and tell her that the valiant knight Don Quixote of La Mancha is here, and from his generous disposition she may safely promise herself every protection and assistance; and you may tell her, too, that if my aid be necessary it will not be withheld, for I am bound to give it to her by my quality of knight, which involves the protection of women of all sorts, especially widowed, wronged, and distressed dames, such as her ladyship seems to be.”

On hearing this Trifaldin bent the knee to the ground, and making a sign to the fifer and drummers to strike up, he turned and marched out of the garden to the same notes and at the same pace as when he entered, leaving them all amazed at his bearing and solemnity. Turning to Don Quixote, the duke said, “After all, renowned knight, the mists of malice and ignorance are unable to hide or obscure the light of valour and virtue. I say so, because your excellence has been barely six days in this castle, and already the unhappy and the afflicted come in quest of you from lands far distant and remote, and not in coaches or on dromedaries, but on foot and fasting, confident that in that mighty arm they will find a cure for their sorrows and troubles; thanks to your great achievements, which are circulated all over the known earth.”

“I wish, senor duke,” replied Don Quixote, “that blessed ecclesiastic, who at table the other day showed such ill-will and bitter spite against knights-errant, were here now to see with his own eyes whether knights of the sort are needed in the world; he would at any rate learn by experience that those suffering any extraordinary affliction or sorrow, in extreme cases and unusual misfortunes do not go to look for a remedy to the houses of jurists or village sacristans, or to the knight who has never attempted to pass the bounds of his own town, or to the indolent courtier who only seeks for news to repeat and talk of, instead of striving to do deeds and exploits for others to relate and record. Relief in distress, help in need, protection for damsels, consolation for widows, are to be found in no sort of persons better than in knights-errant; and I give unceasing thanks to heaven that I am one, and regard any misfortune or suffering that may befall me in the pursuit of so honourable a calling as endured to good purpose. Let this duenna come and ask what she will, for I will effect her relief by the

might of my arm and the dauntless resolution of my bold heart.”





## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### WHEREIN IS CONTINUED THE NOTABLE ADVENTURE OF THE DISTRESSED DUENNA



The duke and duchess were extremely glad to see how readily Don Quixote fell in with their scheme; but at this moment Sancho observed, “I hope this senora duenna won’t be putting any difficulties in the way of the promise of my government; for I have heard a Toledo apothecary, who talked like a goldfinch, say that where duennas were mixed up nothing good could happen. God bless me, how he hated them, that same apothecary! And so what I’m thinking is, if all duennas, of whatever sort or condition they may be, are plagues and busybodies, what must they be that are distressed, like this Countess Three-skirts or Three-tails! — for in my country skirts or tails, tails or skirts, it’s all one.”

“Hush, friend Sancho,” said Don Quixote; “since this lady duenna comes in quest of me from such a distant land she cannot be one of those the apothecary meant; moreover this is a countess, and when countesses serve as duennas it is in the service of queens and empresses, for in their own houses they are mistresses paramount and have other duennas to wait on them.”

To this Dona Rodriguez, who was present, made answer, “My lady the

duchess has duennas in her service that might be countesses if it was the will of fortune; 'but laws go as kings like;' let nobody speak ill of duennas, above all of ancient maiden ones; for though I am not one myself, I know and am aware of the advantage a maiden duenna has over one that is a widow; but 'he who clipped us has kept the scissors.'"

"For all that," said Sancho, "there's so much to be clipped about duennas, so my barber said, that 'it will be better not to stir the rice even though it sticks.'"

"These squires," returned Dona Rodriguez, "are always our enemies; and as they are the haunting spirits of the antechambers and watch us at every step, whenever they are not saying their prayers (and that's often enough) they spend their time in tattling about us, digging up our bones and burying our good name. But I can tell these walking blocks that we will live in spite of them, and in great houses too, though we die of hunger and cover our flesh, be it delicate or not, with widow's weeds, as one covers or hides a dunghill on a procession day. By my faith, if it were permitted me and time allowed, I could prove, not only to those here present, but to all the world, that there is no virtue that is not to be found in a duenna."

"I have no doubt," said the duchess, "that my good Dona Rodriguez is right, and very much so; but she had better bide her time for fighting her own battle and that of the rest of the duennas, so as to crush the calumny of that vile apothecary, and root out the prejudice in the great Sancho Panza's mind."

To which Sancho replied, "Ever since I have sniffed the governorship I have got rid of the humours of a squire, and I don't care a wild fig for all the duennas in the world."

They would have carried on this duenna dispute further had they not heard the notes of the fife and drums once more, from which they concluded that the Distressed Duenna was making her entrance. The duchess asked the duke if it would be proper to go out to receive her, as she was a countess and a person of rank.

"In respect of her being a countess," said Sancho, before the duke could reply, "I am for your highnesses going out to receive her; but in respect of her being a duenna, it is my opinion you should not stir a step."

"Who bade thee meddle in this, Sancho?" said Don Quixote.

"Who, senor?" said Sancho; "I meddle for I have a right to meddle, as a squire who has learned the rules of courtesy in the school of your worship, the most courteous and best-bred knight in the whole world of courtliness; and in these things, as I have heard your worship say, as much is lost by a card too many as by a card too few, and to one who has his ears open, few words."

"Sancho is right," said the duke; "we'll see what the countess is like, and by

that measure the courtesy that is due to her.”

And now the drums and fife made their entrance as before; and here the author brought this short chapter to an end and began the next, following up the same adventure, which is one of the most notable in the history.



## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### WHEREIN IS TOLD THE DISTRESSED DUENNA'S TALE OF HER MISFORTUNES



Following the melancholy musicians there filed into the garden as many as twelve duennas, in two lines, all dressed in ample mourning robes apparently of milled serge, with hoods of fine white gauze so long that they allowed only the border of the robe to be seen. Behind them came the Countess Trifaldi, the squire Trifaldin of the White Beard leading her by the hand, clad in the finest unnapped black baize, such that, had it a nap, every tuft would have shown as big as a Martos chickpea; the tail, or skirt, or whatever it might be called, ended in three points which were borne up by the hands of three pages, likewise dressed in mourning, forming an elegant geometrical figure with the three acute angles made by the three points, from which all who saw the peaked skirt concluded that it must be because of it the countess was called Trifaldi, as though it were Countess of the Three Skirts; and Benengeli says it was so, and that by her right name she was called the Countess Lobuna, because wolves bred in great numbers in her country; and if, instead of wolves, they had been foxes, she would have been called the Countess Zorruna, as it was the custom in those parts for lords to take distinctive titles from the thing or things most abundant in their dominions; this countess, however, in honour of the new fashion of her skirt, dropped Lobuna and took up Trifaldi.

The twelve duennas and the lady came on at procession pace, their faces being

covered with black veils, not transparent ones like Trifaldin's, but so close that they allowed nothing to be seen through them. As soon as the band of duennas was fully in sight, the duke, the duchess, and Don Quixote stood up, as well as all who were watching the slow-moving procession. The twelve duennas halted and formed a lane, along which the Distressed One advanced, Trifaldin still holding her hand. On seeing this the duke, the duchess, and Don Quixote went some twelve paces forward to meet her. She then, kneeling on the ground, said in a voice hoarse and rough, rather than fine and delicate, "May it please your highnesses not to offer such courtesies to this your servant, I should say to this your handmaid, for I am in such distress that I shall never be able to make a proper return, because my strange and unparalleled misfortune has carried off my wits, and I know not whither; but it must be a long way off, for the more I look for them the less I find them."

"He would be wanting in wits, senora countess," said the duke, "who did not perceive your worth by your person, for at a glance it may be seen it deserves all the cream of courtesy and flower of polite usage;" and raising her up by the hand he led her to a seat beside the duchess, who likewise received her with great urbanity. Don Quixote remained silent, while Sancho was dying to see the features of Trifaldi and one or two of her many duennas; but there was no possibility of it until they themselves displayed them of their own accord and free will.

All kept still, waiting to see who would break silence, which the Distressed Duenna did in these words: "I am confident, most mighty lord, most fair lady, and most discreet company, that my most miserable misery will be accorded a reception no less dispassionate than generous and condolent in your most valiant bosoms, for it is one that is enough to melt marble, soften diamonds, and mollify the steel of the most hardened hearts in the world; but ere it is proclaimed to your hearing, not to say your ears, I would fain be enlightened whether there be present in this society, circle, or company, that knight immaculatissimus, Don Quixote de la Manchissima, and his squirissimus Panza."

"The Panza is here," said Sancho, before anyone could reply, "and Don Quixotissimus too; and so, most distressedest Duenissima, you may say what you willissimus, for we are all readissimus to do you any servissimus."

On this Don Quixote rose, and addressing the Distressed Duenna, said, "If your sorrows, afflicted lady, can indulge in any hope of relief from the valour or might of any knight-errant, here are mine, which, feeble and limited though they be, shall be entirely devoted to your service. I am Don Quixote of La Mancha, whose calling it is to give aid to the needy of all sorts; and that being so, it is not necessary for you, senora, to make any appeal to benevolence, or deal in

preambles, only to tell your woes plainly and straightforwardly: for you have hearers that will know how, if not to remedy them, to sympathise with them.”

On hearing this, the Distressed Duenna made as though she would throw herself at Don Quixote’s feet, and actually did fall before them and said, as she strove to embrace them, “Before these feet and legs I cast myself, O unconquered knight, as before, what they are, the foundations and pillars of knight-errantry; these feet I desire to kiss, for upon their steps hangs and depends the sole remedy for my misfortune, O valorous errant, whose veritable achievements leave behind and eclipse the fabulous ones of the Amadis, Esplandians, and Belianises!” Then turning from Don Quixote to Sancho Panza, and grasping his hands, she said, “O thou, most loyal squire that ever served knight-errant in this present age or ages past, whose goodness is more extensive than the beard of Trifaldin my companion here of present, well mayest thou boast thyself that, in serving the great Don Quixote, thou art serving, summed up in one, the whole host of knights that have ever borne arms in the world. I conjure thee, by what thou owest to thy most loyal goodness, that thou wilt become my kind intercessor with thy master, that he speedily give aid to this most humble and most unfortunate countess.”

To this Sancho made answer, “As to my goodness, senora, being as long and as great as your squire’s beard, it matters very little to me; may I have my soul well bearded and moustached when it comes to quit this life, that’s the point; about beards here below I care little or nothing; but without all these blandishments and prayers, I will beg my master (for I know he loves me, and, besides, he has need of me just now for a certain business) to help and aid your worship as far as he can; unpack your woes and lay them before us, and leave us to deal with them, for we’ll be all of one mind.”

The duke and duchess, as it was they who had made the experiment of this adventure, were ready to burst with laughter at all this, and between themselves they commended the clever acting of the Trifaldi, who, returning to her seat, said, “Queen Dona Maguncia reigned over the famous kingdom of Kandy, which lies between the great Trapobana and the Southern Sea, two leagues beyond Cape Comorin. She was the widow of King Archipiela, her lord and husband, and of their marriage they had issue the Princess Antonomasia, heiress of the kingdom; which Princess Antonomasia was reared and brought up under my care and direction, I being the oldest and highest in rank of her mother’s duennas. Time passed, and the young Antonomasia reached the age of fourteen, and such a perfection of beauty, that nature could not raise it higher. Then, it must not be supposed her intelligence was childish; she was as intelligent as she was fair, and she was fairer than all the world; and is so still, unless the envious

fates and hard-hearted sisters three have cut for her the thread of life. But that they have not, for Heaven will not suffer so great a wrong to Earth, as it would be to pluck unripe the grapes of the fairest vineyard on its surface. Of this beauty, to which my poor feeble tongue has failed to do justice, countless princes, not only of that country, but of others, were enamoured, and among them a private gentleman, who was at the court, dared to raise his thoughts to the heaven of so great beauty, trusting to his youth, his gallant bearing, his numerous accomplishments and graces, and his quickness and readiness of wit; for I may tell your highnesses, if I am not wearying you, that he played the guitar so as to make it speak, and he was, besides, a poet and a great dancer, and he could make birdcages so well, that by making them alone he might have gained a livelihood, had he found himself reduced to utter poverty; and gifts and graces of this kind are enough to bring down a mountain, not to say a tender young girl. But all his gallantry, wit, and gaiety, all his graces and accomplishments, would have been of little or no avail towards gaining the fortress of my pupil, had not the impudent thief taken the precaution of gaining me over first. First, the villain and heartless vagabond sought to win my good-will and purchase my compliance, so as to get me, like a treacherous warder, to deliver up to him the keys of the fortress I had in charge. In a word, he gained an influence over my mind, and overcame my resolutions with I know not what trinkets and jewels he gave me; but it was some verses I heard him singing one night from a grating that opened on the street where he lived, that, more than anything else, made me give way and led to my fall; and if I remember rightly they ran thus: From that sweet enemy of mine

My bleeding heart hath had its wound;  
And to increase the pain I'm bound  
To suffer and to make no sign.

The lines seemed pearls to me and his voice sweet as syrup; and afterwards, I may say ever since then, looking at the misfortune into which I have fallen, I have thought that poets, as Plato advised, ought to be banished from all well-ordered States; at least the amatory ones, for they write verses, not like those of 'The Marquis of Mantua,' that delight and draw tears from the women and children, but sharp-pointed conceits that pierce the heart like soft thorns, and like the lightning strike it, leaving the raiment uninjured. Another time he sang: Come Death, so subtly veiled that I

Thy coming know not, how or when,  
Lest it should give me life again  
To find how sweet it is to die.

-and other verses and burdens of the same sort, such as enchant when sung and fascinate when written. And then, when they condescend to compose a sort of verse that was at that time in vogue in Kandy, which they call seguidillas! Then it is that hearts leap and laughter breaks forth, and the body grows restless and all the senses turn quicksilver. And so I say, sirs, that these troubadours richly deserve to be banished to the isles of the lizards. Though it is not they that are in fault, but the simpletons that extol them, and the fools that believe in them; and had I been the faithful duenna I should have been, his stale conceits would have never moved me, nor should I have been taken in by such phrases as 'in death I live,' 'in ice I burn,' 'in flames I shiver,' 'hopeless I hope,' 'I go and stay,' and paradoxes of that sort which their writings are full of. And then when they promise the Phoenix of Arabia, the crown of Ariadne, the horses of the Sun, the pearls of the South, the gold of Tiber, and the balsam of Panchaia! Then it is they give a loose to their pens, for it costs them little to make promises they have no intention or power of fulfilling. But where am I wandering to? Woe is me, unfortunate being! What madness or folly leads me to speak of the faults of others, when there is so much to be said about my own? Again, woe is me, hapless that I am! it was not verses that conquered me, but my own simplicity; it was not music made me yield, but my own imprudence; my own great ignorance and little caution opened the way and cleared the path for Don Clavijo's advances, for that was the name of the gentleman I have referred to; and so, with my help as go-between, he found his way many a time into the chamber of the deceived Antonomasia (deceived not by him but by me) under the title of a lawful husband; for, sinner though I was, would not have allowed him to approach the edge of her shoe-sole without being her husband. No, no, not that; marriage must come first in any business of this sort that I take in hand. But there was one hitch in this case, which was that of inequality of rank, Don Clavijo being a private gentleman, and the Princess Antonomasia, as I said, heiress to the kingdom. The entanglement remained for some time a secret, kept hidden by my cunning precautions, until I perceived that a certain expansion of waist in Antonomasia must before long disclose it, the dread of which made us all there take counsel together, and it was agreed that before the mischief came to light, Don Clavijo should demand Antonomasia as his wife before the Vicar, in virtue of an agreement to marry him made by the princess, and drafted by my wit in such binding terms that the might of Samson could not have broken it. The necessary steps were taken; the Vicar saw the agreement, and took the lady's confession; she confessed everything in full, and he ordered her into the custody of a very worthy alguacil of the court."



“Are there alguacils of the court in Kandy, too,” said Sancho at this, “and poets, and seguidillas? I swear I think the world is the same all over! But make haste, Senora Trifaldi; for it is late, and I am dying to know the end of this long story.”

“I will,” replied the countess.



## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### IN WHICH THE TRIFALDI CONTINUES HER MARVELLOUS AND MEMORABLE STORY



By every word that Sancho uttered, the duchess was as much delighted as Don Quixote was driven to desperation. He bade him hold his tongue, and the Distressed One went on to say: "At length, after much questioning and answering, as the princess held to her story, without changing or varying her previous declaration, the Vicar gave his decision in favour of Don Clavijo, and she was delivered over to him as his lawful wife; which the Queen Dona Maguncia, the Princess Antonomasia's mother, so took to heart, that within the space of three days we buried her."

"She died, no doubt," said Sancho.

"Of course," said Trifaldin; "they don't bury living people in Kandy, only the

dead.”

“Senor Squire,” said Sancho, “a man in a swoon has been known to be buried before now, in the belief that he was dead; and it struck me that Queen Maguncia ought to have swooned rather than died; because with life a great many things come right, and the princess’s folly was not so great that she need feel it so keenly. If the lady had married some page of hers, or some other servant of the house, as many another has done, so I have heard say, then the mischief would have been past curing. But to marry such an elegant accomplished gentleman as has been just now described to us — indeed, indeed, though it was a folly, it was not such a great one as you think; for according to the rules of my master here — and he won’t allow me to lie — as of men of letters bishops are made, so of gentlemen knights, specially if they be errant, kings and emperors may be made.”

“Thou art right, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “for with a knight-errant, if he has but two fingers’ breadth of good fortune, it is on the cards to become the mightiest lord on earth. But let senora the Distressed One proceed; for I suspect she has got yet to tell us the bitter part of this so far sweet story.”

“The bitter is indeed to come,” said the countess; “and such bitter that colocynth is sweet and oleander toothsome in comparison. The queen, then, being dead, and not in a swoon, we buried her; and hardly had we covered her with earth, hardly had we said our last farewells, when, *quis talia fando temperet a lachrymis?* over the queen’s grave there appeared, mounted upon a wooden horse, the giant Malambruno, Maguncia’s first cousin, who besides being cruel is an enchanter; and he, to revenge the death of his cousin, punish the audacity of Don Clavijo, and in wrath at the contumacy of Antonomasia, left them both enchanted by his art on the grave itself; she being changed into an ape of brass, and he into a horrible crocodile of some unknown metal; while between the two there stands a pillar, also of metal, with certain characters in the Syriac language inscribed upon it, which, being translated into Kandian, and now into Castilian, contain the following sentence: ‘These two rash lovers shall not recover their former shape until the valiant Manchegan comes to do battle with me in single combat; for the Fates reserve this unexampled adventure for his mighty valour alone.’ This done, he drew from its sheath a huge broad scimitar, and seizing me by the hair he made as though he meant to cut my throat and shear my head clean off. I was terror-stricken, my voice stuck in my throat, and I was in the deepest distress; nevertheless I summoned up my strength as well as I could, and in a trembling and piteous voice I addressed such words to him as induced him to stay the infliction of a punishment so severe. He then caused all the duennas of the palace, those that are here present, to be brought before him; and after

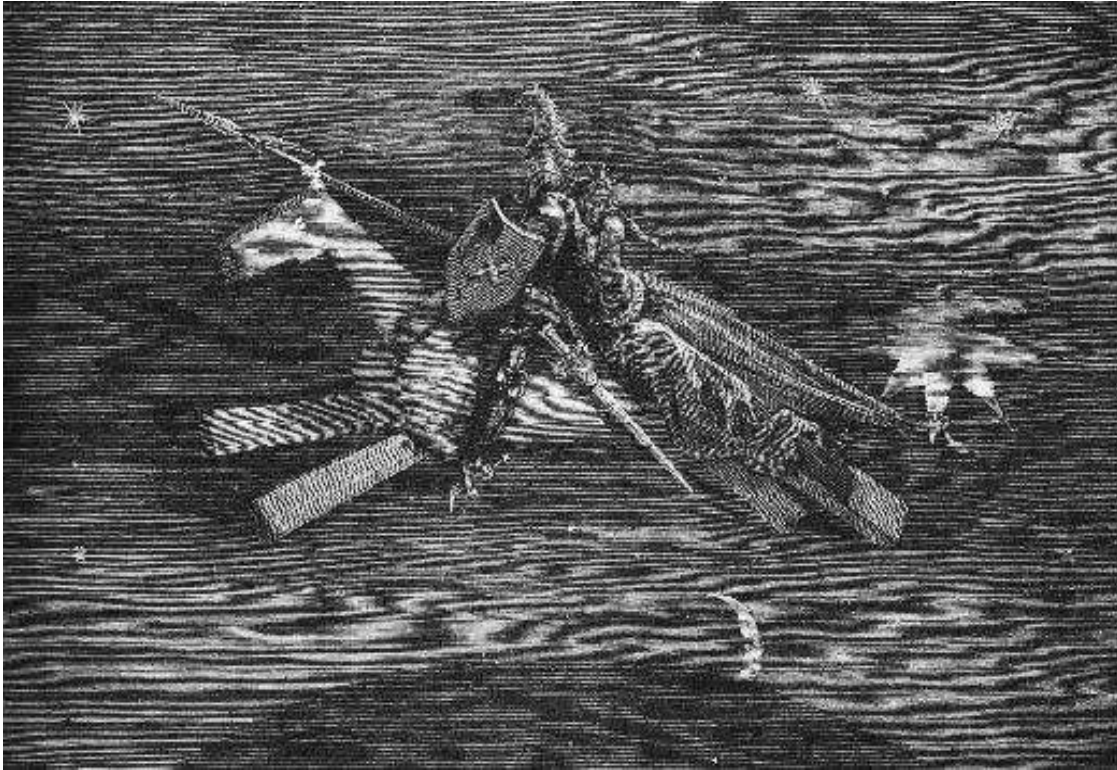
having dwelt upon the enormity of our offence, and denounced duennas, their characters, their evil ways and worse intrigues, laying to the charge of all what I alone was guilty of, he said he would not visit us with capital punishment, but with others of a slow nature which would be in effect civil death for ever; and the very instant he ceased speaking we all felt the pores of our faces opening, and pricking us, as if with the points of needles. We at once put our hands up to our faces and found ourselves in the state you now see.”

Here the Distressed One and the other duennas raised the veils with which they were covered, and disclosed countenances all bristling with beards, some red, some black, some white, and some grizzled, at which spectacle the duke and duchess made a show of being filled with wonder. Don Quixote and Sancho were overwhelmed with amazement, and the bystanders lost in astonishment, while the Trifaldi went on to say: “Thus did that malevolent villain Malambruno punish us, covering the tenderness and softness of our faces with these rough bristles! Would to heaven that he had swept off our heads with his enormous scimitar instead of obscuring the light of our countenances with these wool-combings that cover us! For if we look into the matter, sirs (and what I am now going to say I would say with eyes flowing like fountains, only that the thought of our misfortune and the oceans they have already wept, keep them as dry as barley spears, and so I say it without tears), where, I ask, can a duenna with a beard to to? What father or mother will feel pity for her? Who will help her? For, if even when she has a smooth skin, and a face tortured by a thousand kinds of washes and cosmetics, she can hardly get anybody to love her, what will she do when she shows a countenance turned into a thicket? Oh duennas, companions mine! it was an unlucky moment when we were born and an ill-starred hour when our fathers begot us!” And as she said this she showed signs of being about to faint.



## CHAPTER XL.

OF MATTERS RELATING AND BELONGING TO THIS ADVENTURE  
AND TO THIS MEMORABLE HISTORY



Verily and truly all those who find pleasure in histories like this ought show their gratitude to Cide Hamete, its original author, for the scrupulous care he has taken to set before us all its minute particulars, not leaving anything, however trifling it may be, that he does not make clear and plain. He portrays the thoughts, he reveals the fancies, he answers implied questions, clears up doubts, sets objections at rest, and, in a word, makes plain the smallest points the most inquisitive can desire to know. O renowned author! O happy Don Quixote! O famous famous droll Sancho! All and each, may ye live countless ages for the

delight and amusement of the dwellers on earth!

The history goes on to say that when Sancho saw the Distressed One faint he exclaimed: "I swear by the faith of an honest man and the shades of all my ancestors the Panzas, that never I did see or hear of, nor has my master related or conceived in his mind, such an adventure as this. A thousand devils — not to curse thee — take thee, Malambruno, for an enchanter and a giant! Couldst thou find no other sort of punishment for these sinners but bearding them? Would it not have been better — it would have been better for them — to have taken off half their noses from the middle upwards, even though they'd have snuffled when they spoke, than to have put beards on them? I'll bet they have not the means of paying anybody to shave them."

"That is the truth, senor," said one of the twelve; "we have not the money to get ourselves shaved, and so we have, some of us, taken to using sticking-plasters by way of an economical remedy, for by applying them to our faces and plucking them off with a jerk we are left as bare and smooth as the bottom of a stone mortar. There are, to be sure, women in Kandy that go about from house to house to remove down, and trim eyebrows, and make cosmetics for the use of the women, but we, the duennas of my lady, would never let them in, for most of them have a flavour of agents that have ceased to be principals; and if we are not relieved by Senor Don Quixote we shall be carried to our graves with beards."

"I will pluck out my own in the land of the Moors," said Don Quixote, "if I don't cure yours."

At this instant the Trifaldi recovered from her swoon and said, "The chink of that promise, valiant knight, reached my ears in the midst of my swoon, and has been the means of reviving me and bringing back my senses; and so once more I implore you, illustrious errant, indomitable sir, to let your gracious promises be turned into deeds."

"There shall be no delay on my part," said Don Quixote. "Bethink you, senora, of what I must do, for my heart is most eager to serve you."

"The fact is," replied the Distressed One, "it is five thousand leagues, a couple more or less, from this to the kingdom of Kandy, if you go by land; but if you go through the air and in a straight line, it is three thousand two hundred and twenty-seven. You must know, too, that Malambruno told me that, whenever fate provided the knight our deliverer, he himself would send him a steed far better and with less tricks than a post-horse; for he will be that same wooden horse on which the valiant Pierres carried off the fair Magalona; which said horse is guided by a peg he has in his forehead that serves for a bridle, and flies through the air with such rapidity that you would fancy the very devils were carrying him. This horse, according to ancient tradition, was made by Merlin. He

lent him to Pierres, who was a friend of his, and who made long journeys with him, and, as has been said, carried off the fair Magalona, bearing her through the air on its haunches and making all who beheld them from the earth gape with astonishment; and he never lent him save to those whom he loved or those who paid him well; and since the great Pierres we know of no one having mounted him until now. From him Malambruno stole him by his magic art, and he has him now in his possession, and makes use of him in his journeys which he constantly makes through different parts of the world; he is here to-day, to-morrow in France, and the next day in Potosi; and the best of it is the said horse neither eats nor sleeps nor wears out shoes, and goes at an ambling pace through the air without wings, so that he whom he has mounted upon him can carry a cup full of water in his hand without spilling a drop, so smoothly and easily does he go, for which reason the fair Magalona enjoyed riding him greatly.”

“For going smoothly and easily,” said Sancho at this, “give me my Dapple, though he can’t go through the air; but on the ground I’ll back him against all the amblers in the world.”

They all laughed, and the Distressed One continued: “And this same horse, if so be that Malambruno is disposed to put an end to our sufferings, will be here before us ere the night shall have advanced half an hour; for he announced to me that the sign he would give me whereby I might know that I had found the knight I was in quest of, would be to send me the horse wherever he might be, speedily and promptly.”

“And how many is there room for on this horse?” asked Sancho.

“Two,” said the Distressed One, “one in the saddle, and the other on the croup; and generally these two are knight and squire, when there is no damsel that’s being carried off.”

“I’d like to know, Senora Distressed One,” said Sancho, “what is the name of this horse?”

“His name,” said the Distressed One, “is not the same as Bellerophon’s horse that was called Pegasus, or Alexander the Great’s, called Bucephalus, or Orlando Furioso’s, the name of which was Brigliador, nor yet Bayard, the horse of Reinaldos of Montalvan, nor Frontino like Ruggiero’s, nor Bootes or Peritoa, as they say the horses of the sun were called, nor is he called Orelia, like the horse on which the unfortunate Rodrigo, the last king of the Goths, rode to the battle where he lost his life and his kingdom.”

“I’ll bet,” said Sancho, “that as they have given him none of these famous names of well-known horses, no more have they given him the name of my master’s Rocinante, which for being apt surpasses all that have been mentioned.”

“That is true,” said the bearded countess, “still it fits him very well, for he is



called Clavileno the Swift, which name is in accordance with his being made of wood, with the peg he has in his forehead, and with the swift pace at which he travels; and so, as far as name goes, he may compare with the famous Rocinante.”

“I have nothing to say against his name,” said Sancho; “but with what sort of bridle or halter is he managed?”

“I have said already,” said the Trifaldi, “that it is with a peg, by turning which to one side or the other the knight who rides him makes him go as he pleases, either through the upper air, or skimming and almost sweeping the earth, or else in that middle course that is sought and followed in all well-regulated proceedings.”

“I’d like to see him,” said Sancho; “but to fancy I’m going to mount him, either in the saddle or on the croup, is to ask pears of the elm tree. A good joke indeed! I can hardly keep my seat upon Dapple, and on a pack-saddle softer than silk itself, and here they’d have me hold on upon haunches of plank without pad or cushion of any sort! Gad, I have no notion of bruising myself to get rid of anyone’s beard; let each one shave himself as best he can; I’m not going to accompany my master on any such long journey; besides, I can’t give any help to the shaving of these beards as I can to the disenchantment of my lady Dulcinea.”

“Yes, you can, my friend,” replied the Trifaldi; “and so much, that without you, so I understand, we shall be able to do nothing.”

“In the king’s name!” exclaimed Sancho, “what have squires got to do with the adventures of their masters? Are they to have the fame of such as they go through, and we the labour? Body o’ me! if the historians would only say, ‘Such and such a knight finished such and such an adventure, but with the help of so and so, his squire, without which it would have been impossible for him to accomplish it;’ but they write curtly, ‘Don Paralipomenon of the Three Stars accomplished the adventure of the six monsters;’ without mentioning such a person as his squire, who was there all the time, just as if there was no such being. Once more, sirs, I say my master may go alone, and much good may it do him; and I’ll stay here in the company of my lady the duchess; and maybe when he comes back, he will find the lady Dulcinea’s affair ever so much advanced; for I mean in leisure hours, and at idle moments, to give myself a spell of whipping without so much as a hair to cover me.”

“For all that you must go if it be necessary, my good Sancho,” said the duchess, “for they are worthy folk who ask you; and the faces of these ladies must not remain overgrown in this way because of your idle fears; that would be a hard case indeed.”

“In the king’s name, once more!” said Sancho; “If this charitable work were to be done for the sake of damsels in confinement or charity-girls, a man might expose himself to some hardships; but to bear it for the sake of stripping beards off duennas! Devil take it! I’d sooner see them all bearded, from the highest to the lowest, and from the most prudish to the most affected.”

“You are very hard on duennas, Sancho my friend,” said the duchess; “you incline very much to the opinion of the Toledo apothecary. But indeed you are wrong; there are duennas in my house that may serve as patterns of duennas; and here is my Dona Rodriguez, who will not allow me to say otherwise.”

“Your excellence may say it if you like,” said the Rodriguez; “for God knows the truth of everything; and whether we duennas are good or bad, bearded or smooth, we are our mothers’ daughters like other women; and as God sent us into the world, he knows why he did, and on his mercy I rely, and not on anybody’s beard.”

“Well, Senora Rodriguez, Senora Trifaldi, and present company,” said Don Quixote, “I trust in Heaven that it will look with kindly eyes upon your troubles, for Sancho will do as I bid him. Only let Clavileno come and let me find myself face to face with Malambruno, and I am certain no razor will shave you more easily than my sword shall shave Malambruno’s head off his shoulders; for ‘God bears with the wicked, but not for ever.’”

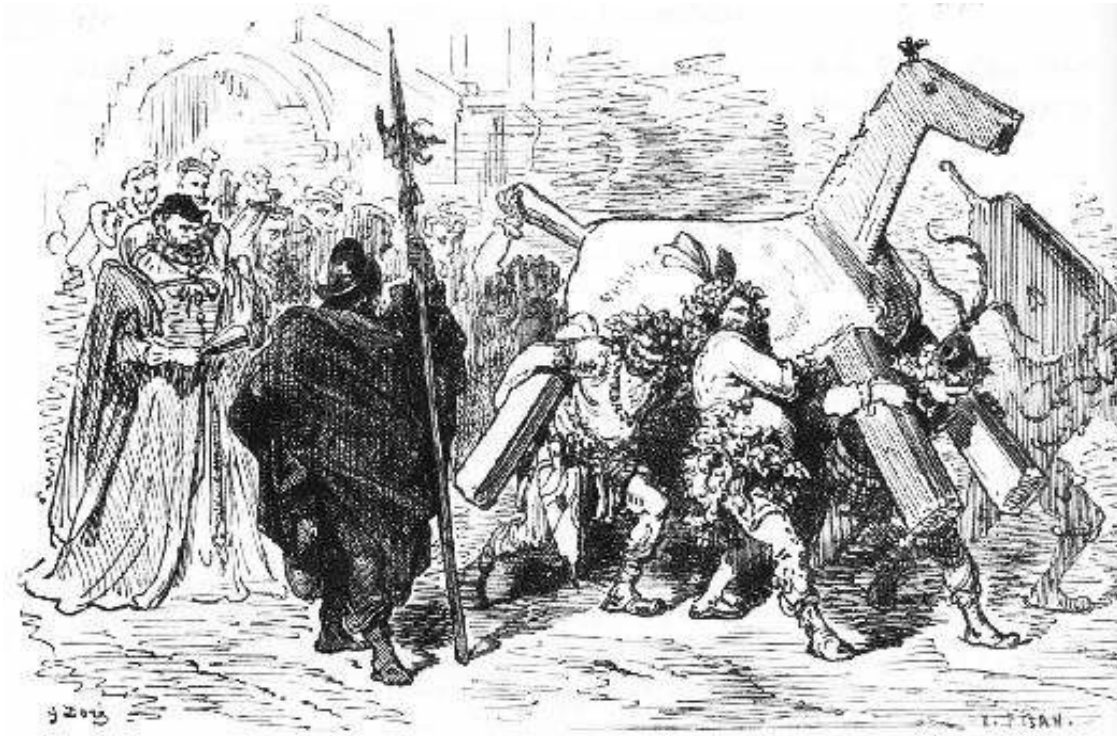
“Ah!” exclaimed the Distressed One at this, “may all the stars of the celestial regions look down upon your greatness with benign eyes, valiant knight, and shed every prosperity and valour upon your heart, that it may be the shield and safeguard of the abused and downtrodden race of duennas, detested by apothecaries, sneered at by squires, and made game of by pages. Ill betide the jade that in the flower of her youth would not sooner become a nun than a duenna! Unfortunate beings that we are, we duennas! Though we may be descended in the direct male line from Hector of Troy himself, our mistresses never fail to address us as ‘you’ if they think it makes queens of them. O giant Malambruno, though thou art an enchanter, thou art true to thy promises. Send us now the peerless Clavileno, that our misfortune may be brought to an end; for if the hot weather sets in and these beards of ours are still there, alas for our lot!”

The Trifaldi said this in such a pathetic way that she drew tears from the eyes of all and even Sancho’s filled up; and he resolved in his heart to accompany his master to the uttermost ends of the earth, if so be the removal of the wool from those venerable countenances depended upon it.



## CHAPTER XLI.

### OF THE ARRIVAL OF CLAVILENO AND THE END OF THIS PROTRACTED ADVENTURE



And now night came, and with it the appointed time for the arrival of the famous horse Clavileno, the non-appearance of which was already beginning to make Don Quixote uneasy, for it struck him that, as Malambruno was so long about sending it, either he himself was not the knight for whom the adventure was reserved, or else Malambruno did not dare to meet him in single combat. But lo! suddenly there came into the garden four wild-men all clad in green ivy bearing on their shoulders a great wooden horse. They placed it on its feet on the ground, and one of the wild-men said, "Let the knight who has heart for it mount

this machine.”

Here Sancho exclaimed, “I don’t mount, for neither have I the heart nor am I a knight.”

“And let the squire, if he has one,” continued the wild-man, “take his seat on the croup, and let him trust the valiant Malambruno; for by no sword save his, nor by the malice of any other, shall he be assailed. It is but to turn this peg the horse has in his neck, and he will bear them through the air to where Malambruno awaits them; but lest the vast elevation of their course should make them giddy, their eyes must be covered until the horse neighs, which will be the sign of their having completed their journey.”

With these words, leaving Clavileno behind them, they retired with easy dignity the way they came. As soon as the Distressed One saw the horse, almost in tears she exclaimed to Don Quixote, “Valiant knight, the promise of Malambruno has proved trustworthy; the horse has come, our beards are growing, and by every hair in them all of us implore thee to shave and shear us, as it is only mounting him with thy squire and making a happy beginning with your new journey.”

“That I will, Senora Countess Trifaldi,” said Don Quixote, “most gladly and with right goodwill, without stopping to take a cushion or put on my spurs, so as not to lose time, such is my desire to see you and all these duennas shaved clean.”

“That I won’t,” said Sancho, “with goodwill or bad-will, or any way at all; and if this shaving can’t be done without my mounting on the croup, my master had better look out for another squire to go with him, and these ladies for some other way of making their faces smooth; I’m no witch to have a taste for travelling through the air. What would my islanders say when they heard their governor was going, strolling about on the winds? And another thing, as it is three thousand and odd leagues from this to Kandy, if the horse tires, or the giant takes huff, we’ll be half a dozen years getting back, and there won’t be isle or island in the world that will know me: and so, as it is a common saying ‘in delay there’s danger,’ and ‘when they offer thee a heifer run with a halter,’ these ladies’ beards must excuse me; ‘Saint Peter is very well in Rome;’ I mean I am very well in this house where so much is made of me, and I hope for such a good thing from the master as to see myself a governor.”

“Friend Sancho,” said the duke at this, “the island that I have promised you is not a moving one, or one that will run away; it has roots so deeply buried in the bowels of the earth that it will be no easy matter to pluck it up or shift it from where it is; you know as well as I do that there is no sort of office of any importance that is not obtained by a bribe of some kind, great or small; well

then, that which I look to receive for this government is that you go with your master Don Quixote, and bring this memorable adventure to a conclusion; and whether you return on Clavileno as quickly as his speed seems to promise, or adverse fortune brings you back on foot travelling as a pilgrim from hostel to hostel and from inn to inn, you will always find your island on your return where you left it, and your islanders with the same eagerness they have always had to receive you as their governor, and my goodwill will remain the same; doubt not the truth of this, Senor Sancho, for that would be grievously wronging my disposition to serve you."

"Say no more, senor," said Sancho; "I am a poor squire and not equal to carrying so much courtesy; let my master mount; bandage my eyes and commit me to God's care, and tell me if I may commend myself to our Lord or call upon the angels to protect me when we go towering up there."

To this the Trifaldi made answer, "Sancho, you may freely commend yourself to God or whom you will; for Malambruno though an enchanter is a Christian, and works his enchantments with great circumspection, taking very good care not to fall out with anyone."

"Well then," said Sancho, "God and the most holy Trinity of Gaeta give me help!"

"Since the memorable adventure of the fulling mills," said Don Quixote, "I have never seen Sancho in such a fright as now; were I as superstitious as others his abject fear would cause me some little trepidation of spirit. But come here, Sancho, for with the leave of these gentles I would say a word or two to thee in private;" and drawing Sancho aside among the trees of the garden and seizing both his hands he said, "Thou seest, brother Sancho, the long journey we have before us, and God knows when we shall return, or what leisure or opportunities this business will allow us; I wish thee therefore to retire now to thy chamber, as though thou wert going to fetch something required for the road, and in a trice give thyself if it be only five hundred lashes on account of the three thousand three hundred to which thou art bound; it will be all to the good, and to make a beginning with a thing is to have it half finished."

"By God," said Sancho, "but your worship must be out of your senses! This is like the common saying, 'You see me with child, and you want me a virgin.' Just as I'm about to go sitting on a bare board, your worship would have me score my backside! Indeed, your worship is not reasonable. Let us be off to shave these duennas; and on our return I promise on my word to make such haste to wipe off all that's due as will satisfy your worship; I can't say more."

"Well, I will comfort myself with that promise, my good Sancho," replied Don Quixote, "and I believe thou wilt keep it; for indeed though stupid thou art

veracious.”

“I’m not voracious,” said Sancho, “only peckish; but even if I was a little, still I’d keep my word.”

With this they went back to mount Clavileno, and as they were about to do so Don Quixote said, “Cover thine eyes, Sancho, and mount; for one who sends for us from lands so far distant cannot mean to deceive us for the sake of the paltry glory to be derived from deceiving persons who trust in him; though all should turn out the contrary of what I hope, no malice will be able to dim the glory of having undertaken this exploit.”

“Let us be off, senor,” said Sancho, “for I have taken the beards and tears of these ladies deeply to heart, and I shan’t eat a bit to relish it until I have seen them restored to their former smoothness. Mount, your worship, and blindfold yourself, for if I am to go on the croup, it is plain the rider in the saddle must mount first.”

“That is true,” said Don Quixote, and, taking a handkerchief out of his pocket, he begged the Distressed One to bandage his eyes very carefully; but after having them bandaged he uncovered them again, saying, “If my memory does not deceive me, I have read in Virgil of the Palladium of Troy, a wooden horse the Greeks offered to the goddess Pallas, which was big with armed knights, who were afterwards the destruction of Troy; so it would be as well to see, first of all, what Clavileno has in his stomach.”

“There is no occasion,” said the Distressed One; “I will be bail for him, and I know that Malambruno has nothing tricky or treacherous about him; you may mount without any fear, Senor Don Quixote; on my head be it if any harm befalls you.”

Don Quixote thought that to say anything further with regard to his safety would be putting his courage in an unfavourable light; and so, without more words, he mounted Clavileno, and tried the peg, which turned easily; and as he had no stirrups and his legs hung down, he looked like nothing so much as a figure in some Roman triumph painted or embroidered on a Flemish tapestry.

Much against the grain, and very slowly, Sancho proceeded to mount, and, after settling himself as well as he could on the croup, found it rather hard, and not at all soft, and asked the duke if it would be possible to oblige him with a pad of some kind, or a cushion; even if it were off the couch of his lady the duchess, or the bed of one of the pages; as the haunches of that horse were more like marble than wood. On this the Trifaldi observed that Clavileno would not bear any kind of harness or trappings, and that his best plan would be to sit sideways like a woman, as in that way he would not feel the hardness so much.

Sancho did so, and, bidding them farewell, allowed his eyes to be bandaged,

but immediately afterwards uncovered them again, and looking tenderly and tearfully on those in the garden, bade them help him in his present strait with plenty of Paternosters and Ave Marias, that God might provide some one to say as many for them, whenever they found themselves in a similar emergency.

At this Don Quixote exclaimed, "Art thou on the gallows, thief, or at thy last moment, to use pitiful entreaties of that sort? Cowardly, spiritless creature, art thou not in the very place the fair Magalona occupied, and from which she descended, not into the grave, but to become Queen of France; unless the histories lie? And I who am here beside thee, may I not put myself on a par with the valiant Pierres, who pressed this very spot that I now press? Cover thine eyes, cover thine eyes, abject animal, and let not thy fear escape thy lips, at least in my presence."

"Blindfold me," said Sancho; "as you won't let me commend myself or be commended to God, is it any wonder if I am afraid there is a region of devils about here that will carry us off to Peralvillo?"

They were then blindfolded, and Don Quixote, finding himself settled to his satisfaction, felt for the peg, and the instant he placed his fingers on it, all the duennas and all who stood by lifted up their voices exclaiming, "God guide thee, valiant knight! God be with thee, intrepid squire! Now, now ye go cleaving the air more swiftly than an arrow! Now ye begin to amaze and astonish all who are gazing at you from the earth! Take care not to wobble about, valiant Sancho! Mind thou fall not, for thy fall will be worse than that rash youth's who tried to steer the chariot of his father the Sun!"

As Sancho heard the voices, clinging tightly to his master and winding his arms round him, he said, "Senor, how do they make out we are going up so high, if their voices reach us here and they seem to be speaking quite close to us?"

"Don't mind that, Sancho," said Don Quixote; "for as affairs of this sort, and flights like this are out of the common course of things, you can see and hear as much as you like a thousand leagues off; but don't squeeze me so tight or thou wilt upset me; and really I know not what thou hast to be uneasy or frightened at, for I can safely swear I never mounted a smoother-going steed all the days of my life; one would fancy we never stirred from one place. Banish fear, my friend, for indeed everything is going as it ought, and we have the wind astern."

"That's true," said Sancho, "for such a strong wind comes against me on this side, that it seems as if people were blowing on me with a thousand pair of bellows;" which was the case; they were puffing at him with a great pair of bellows; for the whole adventure was so well planned by the duke, the duchess, and their majordomo, that nothing was omitted to make it perfectly successful.

Don Quixote now, feeling the blast, said, "Beyond a doubt, Sancho, we must



have already reached the second region of the air, where the hail and snow are generated; the thunder, the lightning, and the thunderbolts are engendered in the third region, and if we go on ascending at this rate, we shall shortly plunge into the region of fire, and I know not how to regulate this peg, so as not to mount up where we shall be burned.”

And now they began to warm their faces, from a distance, with tow that could be easily set on fire and extinguished again, fixed on the end of a cane. On feeling the heat Sancho said, “May I die if we are not already in that fire place, or very near it, for a good part of my beard has been singed, and I have a mind, señor, to uncover and see whereabouts we are.”

“Do nothing of the kind,” said Don Quixote; “remember the true story of the licentiate Torralva that the devils carried flying through the air riding on a stick with his eyes shut; who in twelve hours reached Rome and dismounted at Torre di Nona, which is a street of the city, and saw the whole sack and storming and the death of Bourbon, and was back in Madrid the next morning, where he gave an account of all he had seen; and he said moreover that as he was going through the air, the devil bade him open his eyes, and he did so, and saw himself so near the body of the moon, so it seemed to him, that he could have laid hold of it with his hand, and that he did not dare to look at the earth lest he should be seized with giddiness. So that, Sancho, it will not do for us to uncover ourselves, for he who has us in charge will be responsible for us; and perhaps we are gaining an altitude and mounting up to enable us to descend at one swoop on the kingdom of Kandy, as the saker or falcon does on the heron, so as to seize it however high it may soar; and though it seems to us not half an hour since we left the garden, believe me we must have travelled a great distance.”

“I don’t know how that may be,” said Sancho; “all I know is that if the Senora Magallanes or Magalona was satisfied with this croup, she could not have been very tender of flesh.”

The duke, the duchess, and all in the garden were listening to the conversation of the two heroes, and were beyond measure amused by it; and now, desirous of putting a finishing touch to this rare and well-contrived adventure, they applied a light to Clavileno’s tail with some tow, and the horse, being full of squibs and crackers, immediately blew up with a prodigious noise, and brought Don Quixote and Sancho Panza to the ground half singed. By this time the bearded band of duennas, the Trifaldi and all, had vanished from the garden, and those that remained lay stretched on the ground as if in a swoon. Don Quixote and Sancho got up rather shaken, and, looking about them, were filled with amazement at finding themselves in the same garden from which they had started, and seeing such a number of people stretched on the ground; and their

astonishment was increased when at one side of the garden they perceived a tall lance planted in the ground, and hanging from it by two cords of green silk a smooth white parchment on which there was the following inscription in large gold letters: "The illustrious knight Don Quixote of La Mancha has, by merely attempting it, finished and concluded the adventure of the Countess Trifaldi, otherwise called the Distressed Duenna; Malambruno is now satisfied on every point, the chins of the duennas are now smooth and clean, and King Don Clavijo and Queen Antonomasia in their original form; and when the squirely flagellation shall have been completed, the white dove shall find herself delivered from the pestiferous gersfalcons that persecute her, and in the arms of her beloved mate; for such is the decree of the sage Merlin, arch-enchanter of enchanters."

As soon as Don Quixote had read the inscription on the parchment he perceived clearly that it referred to the disenchantment of Dulcinea, and returning hearty thanks to heaven that he had with so little danger achieved so grand an exploit as to restore to their former complexion the countenances of those venerable duennas, he advanced towards the duke and duchess, who had not yet come to themselves, and taking the duke by the hand he said, "Be of good cheer, worthy sir, be of good cheer; it's nothing at all; the adventure is now over and without any harm done, as the inscription fixed on this post shows plainly."

The duke came to himself slowly and like one recovering consciousness after a heavy sleep, and the duchess and all who had fallen prostrate about the garden did the same, with such demonstrations of wonder and amazement that they would have almost persuaded one that what they pretended so adroitly in jest had happened to them in reality. The duke read the placard with half-shut eyes, and then ran to embrace Don Quixote with open arms, declaring him to be the best knight that had ever been seen in any age. Sancho kept looking about for the Distressed One, to see what her face was like without the beard, and if she was as fair as her elegant person promised; but they told him that, the instant Clavileno descended flaming through the air and came to the ground, the whole band of duennas with the Trifaldi vanished, and that they were already shaved and without a stump left.

The duchess asked Sancho how he had fared on that long journey, to which Sancho replied, "I felt, senora, that we were flying through the region of fire, as my master told me, and I wanted to uncover my eyes for a bit; but my master, when I asked leave to uncover myself, would not let me; but as I have a little bit of curiosity about me, and a desire to know what is forbidden and kept from me, quietly and without anyone seeing me I drew aside the handkerchief covering

my eyes ever so little, close to my nose, and from underneath looked towards the earth, and it seemed to me that it was altogether no bigger than a grain of mustard seed, and that the men walking on it were little bigger than hazel nuts; so you may see how high we must have got to then."

To this the duchess said, "Sancho, my friend, mind what you are saying; it seems you could not have seen the earth, but only the men walking on it; for if the earth looked to you like a grain of mustard seed, and each man like a hazel nut, one man alone would have covered the whole earth."

"That is true," said Sancho, "but for all that I got a glimpse of a bit of one side of it, and saw it all."

"Take care, Sancho," said the duchess, "with a bit of one side one does not see the whole of what one looks at."

"I don't understand that way of looking at things," said Sancho; "I only know that your ladyship will do well to bear in mind that as we were flying by enchantment so I might have seen the whole earth and all the men by enchantment whatever way I looked; and if you won't believe this, no more will you believe that, uncovering myself nearly to the eyebrows, I saw myself so close to the sky that there was not a palm and a half between me and it; and by everything that I can swear by, senora, it is mighty great! And it so happened we came by where the seven goats are, and by God and upon my soul, as in my youth I was a goatherd in my own country, as soon as I saw them I felt a longing to be among them for a little, and if I had not given way to it I think I'd have burst. So I come and take, and what do I do? without saying anything to anybody, not even to my master, softly and quietly I got down from Clavileno and amused myself with the goats — which are like violets, like flowers — for nigh three-quarters of an hour; and Clavileno never stirred or moved from one spot."

"And while the good Sancho was amusing himself with the goats," said the duke, "how did Senor Don Quixote amuse himself?"

To which Don Quixote replied, "As all these things and such like occurrences are out of the ordinary course of nature, it is no wonder that Sancho says what he does; for my own part I can only say that I did not uncover my eyes either above or below, nor did I see sky or earth or sea or shore. It is true I felt that I was passing through the region of the air, and even that I touched that of fire; but that we passed farther I cannot believe; for the region of fire being between the heaven of the moon and the last region of the air, we could not have reached that heaven where the seven goats Sancho speaks of are without being burned; and as we were not burned, either Sancho is lying or Sancho is dreaming."

"I am neither lying nor dreaming," said Sancho; "only ask me the tokens of

those same goats, and you'll see by that whether I'm telling the truth or not."

"Tell us them then, Sancho," said the duchess.

"Two of them," said Sancho, "are green, two blood-red, two blue, and one a mixture of all colours."

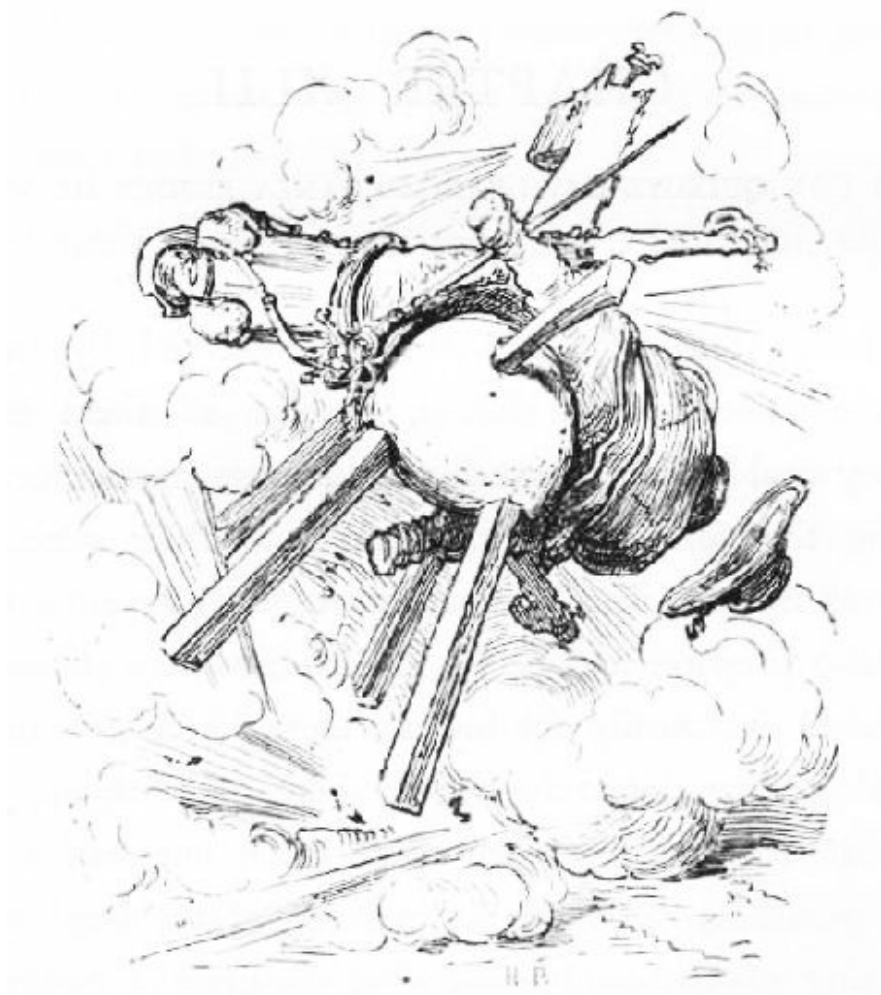
"An odd sort of goat, that," said the duke; "in this earthly region of ours we have no such colours; I mean goats of such colours."

"That's very plain," said Sancho; "of course there must be a difference between the goats of heaven and the goats of the earth."

"Tell me, Sancho," said the duke, "did you see any he-goat among those goats?"

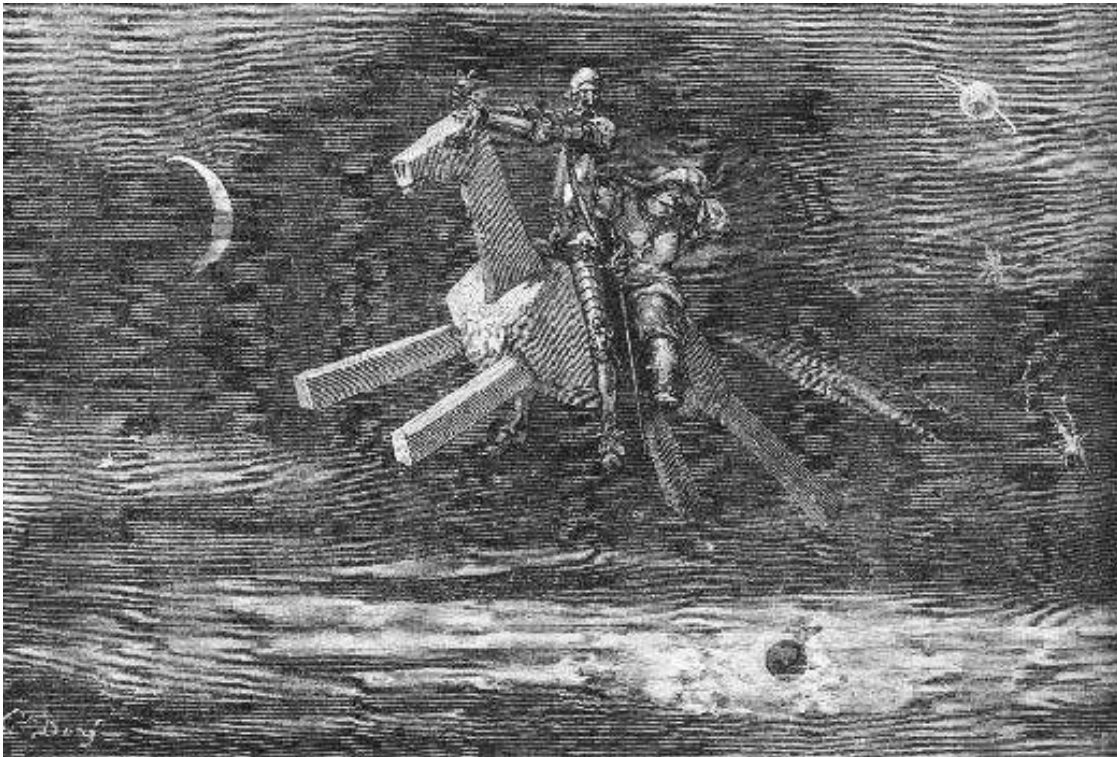
"No, senor," said Sancho; "but I have heard say that none ever passed the horns of the moon."

They did not care to ask him anything more about his journey, for they saw he was in the vein to go rambling all over the heavens giving an account of everything that went on there, without having ever stirred from the garden. Such, in short, was the end of the adventure of the Distressed Duenna, which gave the duke and duchess laughing matter not only for the time being, but for all their lives, and Sancho something to talk about for ages, if he lived so long; but Don Quixote, coming close to his ear, said to him, "Sancho, as you would have us believe what you saw in heaven, I require you to believe me as to what I saw in the cave of Montesinos; I say no more."



## CHAPTER XLII.

OF THE COUNSELS WHICH DON QUIXOTE GAVE SANCHO PANZA  
BEFORE HE SET OUT TO GOVERN THE ISLAND, TOGETHER WITH  
OTHER WELL-CONSIDERED MATTERS



The duke and duchess were so well pleased with the successful and droll result of the adventure of the Distressed One, that they resolved to carry on the joke, seeing what a fit subject they had to deal with for making it all pass for reality. So having laid their plans and given instructions to their servants and vassals how to behave to Sancho in his government of the promised island, the next day, that following Clavileno's flight, the duke told Sancho to prepare and get ready to go and be governor, for his islanders were already looking out for

him as for the showers of May.

Sancho made him an obeisance, and said, "Ever since I came down from heaven, and from the top of it beheld the earth, and saw how little it is, the great desire I had to be a governor has been partly cooled in me; for what is there grand in being ruler on a grain of mustard seed, or what dignity or authority in governing half a dozen men about as big as hazel nuts; for, so far as I could see, there were no more on the whole earth? If your lordship would be so good as to give me ever so small a bit of heaven, were it no more than half a league, I'd rather have it than the best island in the world."

"Recollect, Sancho," said the duke, "I cannot give a bit of heaven, no not so much as the breadth of my nail, to anyone; rewards and favours of that sort are reserved for God alone. What I can give I give you, and that is a real, genuine island, compact, well proportioned, and uncommonly fertile and fruitful, where, if you know how to use your opportunities, you may, with the help of the world's riches, gain those of heaven."

"Well then," said Sancho, "let the island come; and I'll try and be such a governor, that in spite of scoundrels I'll go to heaven; and it's not from any craving to quit my own humble condition or better myself, but from the desire I have to try what it tastes like to be a governor."

"If you once make trial of it, Sancho," said the duke, "you'll eat your fingers off after the government, so sweet a thing is it to command and be obeyed. Depend upon it when your master comes to be emperor (as he will beyond a doubt from the course his affairs are taking), it will be no easy matter to wrest the dignity from him, and he will be sore and sorry at heart to have been so long without becoming one."

"Senor," said Sancho, "it is my belief it's a good thing to be in command, if it's only over a drove of cattle."

"May I be buried with you, Sancho," said the duke, "but you know everything; I hope you will make as good a governor as your sagacity promises; and that is all I have to say; and now remember to-morrow is the day you must set out for the government of the island, and this evening they will provide you with the proper attire for you to wear, and all things requisite for your departure."

"Let them dress me as they like," said Sancho; "however I'm dressed I'll be Sancho Panza."

"That's true," said the duke; "but one's dress must be suited to the office or rank one holds; for it would not do for a jurist to dress like a soldier, or a soldier like a priest. You, Sancho, shall go partly as a lawyer, partly as a captain, for, in the island I am giving you, arms are needed as much as letters, and letters as

much as arms.”

“Of letters I know but little,” said Sancho, “for I don’t even know the A B C; but it is enough for me to have the Christus in my memory to be a good governor. As for arms, I’ll handle those they give me till I drop, and then, God be my help!”

“With so good a memory,” said the duke, “Sancho cannot go wrong in anything.”

Here Don Quixote joined them; and learning what passed, and how soon Sancho was to go to his government, he with the duke’s permission took him by the hand, and retired to his room with him for the purpose of giving him advice as to how he was to demean himself in his office. As soon as they had entered the chamber he closed the door after him, and almost by force made Sancho sit down beside him, and in a quiet tone thus addressed him: “I give infinite thanks to heaven, friend Sancho, that, before I have met with any good luck, fortune has come forward to meet thee. I who counted upon my good fortune to discharge the recompense of thy services, find myself still waiting for advancement, while thou, before the time, and contrary to all reasonable expectation, seest thyself blessed in the fulfillment of thy desires. Some will bribe, beg, solicit, rise early, entreat, persist, without attaining the object of their suit; while another comes, and without knowing why or wherefore, finds himself invested with the place or office so many have sued for; and here it is that the common saying, ‘There is good luck as well as bad luck in suits,’ applies. Thou, who, to my thinking, art beyond all doubt a dullard, without early rising or night watching or taking any trouble, with the mere breath of knight-errantry that has breathed upon thee, seest thyself without more ado governor of an island, as though it were a mere matter of course. This I say, Sancho, that thou attribute not the favour thou hast received to thine own merits, but give thanks to heaven that disposes matters beneficently, and secondly thanks to the great power the profession of knight-errantry contains in itself. With a heart, then, inclined to believe what I have said to thee, attend, my son, to thy Cato here who would counsel thee and be thy polestar and guide to direct and pilot thee to a safe haven out of this stormy sea wherein thou art about to ingulf thyself; for offices and great trusts are nothing else but a mighty gulf of troubles.

“First of all, my son, thou must fear God, for in the fear of him is wisdom, and being wise thou canst not err in aught.

“Secondly, thou must keep in view what thou art, striving to know thyself, the most difficult thing to know that the mind can imagine. If thou knowest thyself, it will follow thou wilt not puff thyself up like the frog that strove to make himself as large as the ox; if thou dost, the recollection of having kept pigs in



thine own country will serve as the ugly feet for the wheel of thy folly.”

“That’s the truth,” said Sancho; “but that was when I was a boy; afterwards when I was something more of a man it was geese I kept, not pigs. But to my thinking that has nothing to do with it; for all who are governors don’t come of a kingly stock.”

“True,” said Don Quixote, “and for that reason those who are not of noble origin should take care that the dignity of the office they hold be accompanied by a gentle suavity, which wisely managed will save them from the sneers of malice that no station escapes.

“Glory in thy humble birth, Sancho, and be not ashamed of saying thou art peasant-born; for when it is seen thou art not ashamed no one will set himself to put thee to the blush; and pride thyself rather upon being one of lowly virtue than a lofty sinner. Countless are they who, born of mean parentage, have risen to the highest dignities, pontifical and imperial, and of the truth of this I could give thee instances enough to weary thee.

“Remember, Sancho, if thou make virtue thy aim, and take a pride in doing virtuous actions, thou wilt have no cause to envy those who have princely and lordly ones, for blood is an inheritance, but virtue an acquisition, and virtue has in itself alone a worth that blood does not possess.

“This being so, if perchance anyone of thy kinsfolk should come to see thee when thou art in thine island, thou art not to repel or slight him, but on the contrary to welcome him, entertain him, and make much of him; for in so doing thou wilt be approved of heaven (which is not pleased that any should despise what it hath made), and wilt comply with the laws of well-ordered nature.

“If thou carriest thy wife with thee (and it is not well for those that administer governments to be long without their wives), teach and instruct her, and strive to smooth down her natural roughness; for all that may be gained by a wise governor may be lost and wasted by a boorish stupid wife.

“If perchance thou art left a widower — a thing which may happen — and in virtue of thy office seekest a consort of higher degree, choose not one to serve thee for a hook, or for a fishing-rod, or for the hood of thy ‘won’t have it;’ for verily, I tell thee, for all the judge’s wife receives, the husband will be held accountable at the general calling to account; where he will have repay in death fourfold, items that in life he regarded as naught.

“Never go by arbitrary law, which is so much favoured by ignorant men who plume themselves on cleverness.

“Let the tears of the poor man find with thee more compassion, but not more justice, than the pleadings of the rich.

“Strive to lay bare the truth, as well amid the promises and presents of the rich

man, as amid the sobs and entreaties of the poor.

“When equity may and should be brought into play, press not the utmost rigour of the law against the guilty; for the reputation of the stern judge stands not higher than that of the compassionate.

“If perchance thou permittest the staff of justice to swerve, let it be not by the weight of a gift, but by that of mercy.

“If it should happen thee to give judgment in the cause of one who is thine enemy, turn thy thoughts away from thy injury and fix them on the justice of the case.

“Let not thine own passion blind thee in another man’s cause; for the errors thou wilt thus commit will be most frequently irremediable; or if not, only to be remedied at the expense of thy good name and even of thy fortune.

“If any handsome woman come to seek justice of thee, turn away thine eyes from her tears and thine ears from her lamentations, and consider deliberately the merits of her demand, if thou wouldst not have thy reason swept away by her weeping, and thy rectitude by her sighs.

“Abuse not by word him whom thou hast to punish in deed, for the pain of punishment is enough for the unfortunate without the addition of thine objurgations.

“Bear in mind that the culprit who comes under thy jurisdiction is but a miserable man subject to all the propensities of our depraved nature, and so far as may be in thy power show thyself lenient and forbearing; for though the attributes of God are all equal, to our eyes that of mercy is brighter and loftier than that of justice.

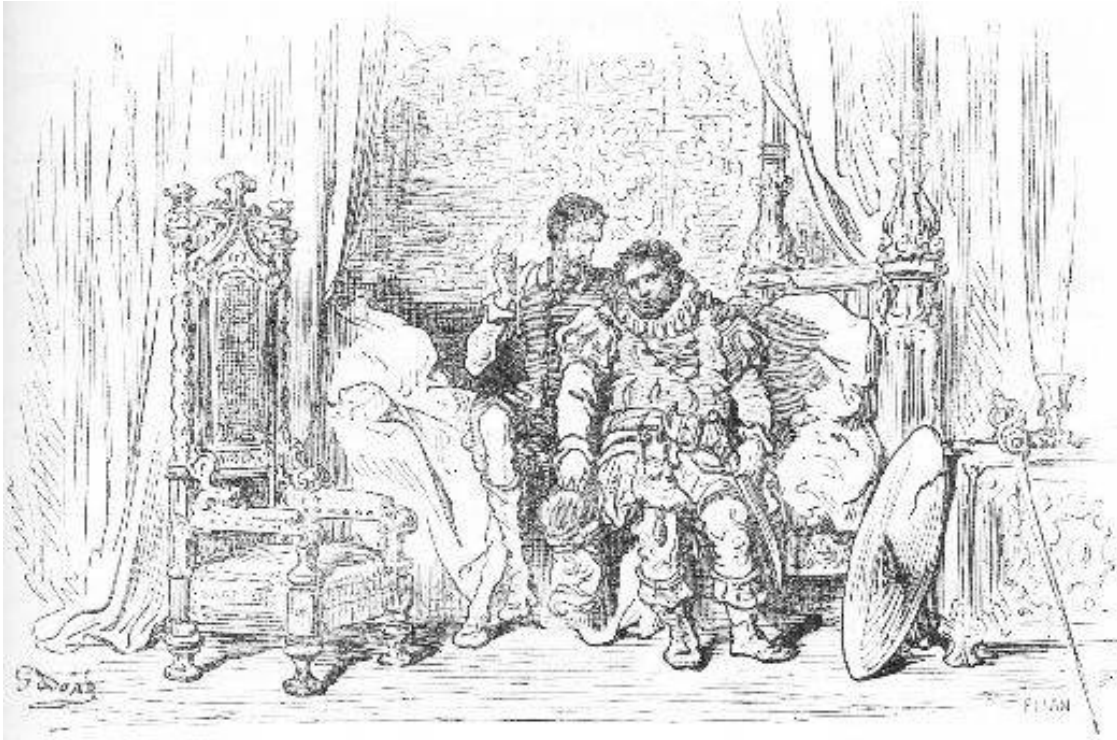
“If thou followest these precepts and rules, Sancho, thy days will be long, thy fame eternal, thy reward abundant, thy felicity unutterable; thou wilt marry thy children as thou wouldst; they and thy grandchildren will bear titles; thou wilt live in peace and concord with all men; and, when life draws to a close, death will come to thee in calm and ripe old age, and the light and loving hands of thy great-grandchildren will close thine eyes.

“What I have thus far addressed to thee are instructions for the adornment of thy mind; listen now to those which tend to that of the body.”



## CHAPTER XLIII.

### OF THE SECOND SET OF COUNSELS DON QUIXOTE GAVE SANCHO PANZA



Who, hearing the foregoing discourse of Don Quixote, would not have set him down for a person of great good sense and greater rectitude of purpose? But, as has been frequently observed in the course of this great history, he only talked nonsense when he touched on chivalry, and in discussing all other subjects showed that he had a clear and unbiassed understanding; so that at every turn his acts gave the lie to his intellect, and his intellect to his acts; but in the case of these second counsels that he gave Sancho he showed himself to have a lively turn of humour, and displayed conspicuously his wisdom, and also his folly.

Sancho listened to him with the deepest attention, and endeavoured to fix his counsels in his memory, like one who meant to follow them and by their means bring the full promise of his government to a happy issue. Don Quixote, then, went on to say:

“With regard to the mode in which thou shouldst govern thy person and thy house, Sancho, the first charge I have to give thee is to be clean, and to cut thy nails, not letting them grow as some do, whose ignorance makes them fancy that long nails are an ornament to their hands, as if those excrescences they neglect to cut were nails, and not the talons of a lizard-catching kestrel — a filthy and unnatural abuse.

“Go not ungirt and loose, Sancho; for disordered attire is a sign of an unstable mind, unless indeed the slovenliness and slackness is to be set down to craft, as was the common opinion in the case of Julius Caesar.

“Ascertain cautiously what thy office may be worth; and if it will allow thee to give liveries to thy servants, give them respectable and serviceable, rather than showy and gay ones, and divide them between thy servants and the poor; that is to say, if thou canst clothe six pages, clothe three and three poor men, and thus thou wilt have pages for heaven and pages for earth; the vainglorious never think of this new mode of giving liveries.

“Eat not garlic nor onions, lest they find out thy boorish origin by the smell; walk slowly and speak deliberately, but not in such a way as to make it seem thou art listening to thyself, for all affectation is bad.

“Dine sparingly and sup more sparingly still; for the health of the whole body is forged in the workshop of the stomach.

“Be temperate in drinking, bearing in mind that wine in excess keeps neither secrets nor promises.

“Take care, Sancho, not to chew on both sides, and not to eruct in anybody’s presence.”

“Eruct!” said Sancho; “I don’t know what that means.”

“To eruct, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “means to belch, and that is one of the filthiest words in the Spanish language, though a very expressive one; and therefore nice folk have had recourse to the Latin, and instead of belch say eruct, and instead of belches say eructations; and if some do not understand these terms it matters little, for custom will bring them into use in the course of time, so that they will be readily understood; this is the way a language is enriched; custom and the public are all-powerful there.”

“In truth, senor,” said Sancho, “one of the counsels and cautions I mean to bear in mind shall be this, not to belch, for I’m constantly doing it.”

“Eruct, Sancho, not belch,” said Don Quixote.

“Eruct, I shall say henceforth, and I swear not to forget it,” said Sancho.

“Likewise, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “thou must not mingle such a quantity of proverbs in thy discourse as thou dost; for though proverbs are short maxims, thou dost drag them in so often by the head and shoulders that they savour more of nonsense than of maxims.”

“God alone can cure that,” said Sancho; “for I have more proverbs in me than a book, and when I speak they come so thick together into my mouth that they fall to fighting among themselves to get out; that’s why my tongue lets fly the first that come, though they may not be pat to the purpose. But I’ll take care henceforward to use such as befit the dignity of my office; for ‘in a house where there’s plenty, supper is soon cooked,’ and ‘he who binds does not wrangle,’ and ‘the bell-ringer’s in a safe berth,’ and ‘giving and keeping require brains.’”

“That’s it, Sancho!” said Don Quixote; “pack, tack, string proverbs together; nobody is hindering thee! ‘My mother beats me, and I go on with my tricks.’ I am bidding thee avoid proverbs, and here in a second thou hast shot out a whole litany of them, which have as much to do with what we are talking about as ‘over the hills of Ubeda.’ Mind, Sancho, I do not say that a proverb aptly brought in is objectionable; but to pile up and string together proverbs at random makes conversation dull and vulgar.

“When thou ridest on horseback, do not go lolling with thy body on the back of the saddle, nor carry thy legs stiff or sticking out from the horse’s belly, nor yet sit so loosely that one would suppose thou wert on Dapple; for the seat on a horse makes gentlemen of some and grooms of others.

“Be moderate in thy sleep; for he who does not rise early does not get the benefit of the day; and remember, Sancho, diligence is the mother of good fortune, and indolence, its opposite, never yet attained the object of an honest ambition.

“The last counsel I will give thee now, though it does not tend to bodily improvement, I would have thee carry carefully in thy memory, for I believe it will be no less useful to thee than those I have given thee already, and it is this — never engage in a dispute about families, at least in the way of comparing them one with another; for necessarily one of those compared will be better than the other, and thou wilt be hated by the one thou hast disparaged, and get nothing in any shape from the one thou hast exalted.

“Thy attire shall be hose of full length, a long jerkin, and a cloak a trifle longer; loose breeches by no means, for they are becoming neither for gentlemen nor for governors.

“For the present, Sancho, this is all that has occurred to me to advise thee; as time goes by and occasions arise my instructions shall follow, if thou take care

to let me know how thou art circumstanced.”

“Senor,” said Sancho, “I see well enough that all these things your worship has said to me are good, holy, and profitable; but what use will they be to me if I don’t remember one of them? To be sure that about not letting my nails grow, and marrying again if I have the chance, will not slip out of my head; but all that other hash, muddle, and jumble — I don’t and can’t recollect any more of it than of last year’s clouds; so it must be given me in writing; for though I can’t either read or write, I’ll give it to my confessor, to drive it into me and remind me of it whenever it is necessary.”

“Ah, sinner that I am!” said Don Quixote, “how bad it looks in governors not to know how to read or write; for let me tell thee, Sancho, when a man knows not how to read, or is left-handed, it argues one of two things; either that he was the son of exceedingly mean and lowly parents, or that he himself was so incorrigible and ill-conditioned that neither good company nor good teaching could make any impression on him. It is a great defect that thou labourest under, and therefore I would have thee learn at any rate to sign thy name.” “I can sign my name well enough,” said Sancho, “for when I was steward of the brotherhood in my village I learned to make certain letters, like the marks on bales of goods, which they told me made out my name. Besides I can pretend my right hand is disabled and make some one else sign for me, for ‘there’s a remedy for everything except death;’ and as I shall be in command and hold the staff, I can do as I like; moreover, ‘he who has the alcalde for his father-,’ and I’ll be governor, and that’s higher than alcalde. Only come and see! Let them make light of me and abuse me; ‘they’ll come for wool and go back shorn;’ ‘whom God loves, his house is known to Him;’ ‘the silly sayings of the rich pass for saws in the world;’ and as I’ll be rich, being a governor, and at the same time generous, as I mean to be, no fault will be seen in me. ‘Only make yourself honey and the flies will suck you;’ ‘as much as thou hast so much art thou worth,’ as my grandmother used to say; and ‘thou canst have no revenge of a man of substance.’”

“Oh, God’s curse upon thee, Sancho!” here exclaimed Don Quixote; “sixty thousand devils fly away with thee and thy proverbs! For the last hour thou hast been stringing them together and inflicting the pangs of torture on me with every one of them. Those proverbs will bring thee to the gallows one day, I promise thee; thy subjects will take the government from thee, or there will be revolts among them. Tell me, where dost thou pick them up, thou booby? How dost thou apply them, thou blockhead? For with me, to utter one and make it apply properly, I have to sweat and labour as if I were digging.”

“By God, master mine,” said Sancho, “your worship is making a fuss about

very little. Why the devil should you be vexed if I make use of what is my own? And I have got nothing else, nor any other stock in trade except proverbs and more proverbs; and here are three just this instant come into my head, pat to the purpose and like pears in a basket; but I won't repeat them, for 'sage silence is called Sancho.'"

"That, Sancho, thou art not," said Don Quixote; "for not only art thou not sage silence, but thou art pestilent prate and perversity; still I would like to know what three proverbs have just now come into thy memory, for I have been turning over mine own — and it is a good one — and none occurs to me."

"What can be better," said Sancho, "than 'never put thy thumbs between two back teeth;' and 'to 'get out of my house' and 'what do you want with my wife?' there is no answer;' and 'whether the pitcher hits the stove, or the stove the pitcher, it's a bad business for the pitcher;' all which fit to a hair? For no one should quarrel with his governor, or him in authority over him, because he will come off the worst, as he does who puts his finger between two back and if they are not back teeth it makes no difference, so long as they are teeth; and to whatever the governor may say there's no answer, any more than to 'get out of my house' and 'what do you want with my wife?' and then, as for that about the stone and the pitcher, a blind man could see that. So that he 'who sees the mote in another's eye had need to see the beam in his own,' that it be not said of himself, 'the dead woman was frightened at the one with her throat cut;' and your worship knows well that 'the fool knows more in his own house than the wise man in another's.'"

"Nay, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "the fool knows nothing, either in his own house or in anybody else's, for no wise structure of any sort can stand on a foundation of folly; but let us say no more about it, Sancho, for if thou governest badly, thine will be the fault and mine the shame; but I comfort myself with having done my duty in advising thee as earnestly and as wisely as I could; and thus I am released from my obligations and my promise. God guide thee, Sancho, and govern thee in thy government, and deliver me from the misgiving I have that thou wilt turn the whole island upside down, a thing I might easily prevent by explaining to the duke what thou art and telling him that all that fat little person of thine is nothing else but a sack full of proverbs and sauciness."

"Senor," said Sancho, "if your worship thinks I'm not fit for this government, I give it up on the spot; for the mere black of the nail of my soul is dearer to me than my whole body; and I can live just as well, simple Sancho, on bread and onions, as governor, on partridges and capons; and what's more, while we're asleep we're all equal, great and small, rich and poor. But if your worship looks into it, you will see it was your worship alone that put me on to this business of



governing; for I know no more about the government of islands than a buzzard; and if there's any reason to think that because of my being a governor the devil will get hold of me, I'd rather go Sancho to heaven than governor to hell."

"By God, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "for those last words thou hast uttered alone, I consider thou deservest to be governor of a thousand islands. Thou hast good natural instincts, without which no knowledge is worth anything; commend thyself to God, and try not to swerve in the pursuit of thy main object; I mean, always make it thy aim and fixed purpose to do right in all matters that come before thee, for heaven always helps good intentions; and now let us go to dinner, for I think my lord and lady are waiting for us."



## CHAPTER XLIV.

### HOW SANCHE PANZA WAS CONDUCTED TO HIS GOVERNMENT, AND OF THE STRANGE ADVENTURE THAT BEFELL DON QUIXOTE IN THE CASTLE



It is stated, they say, in the true original of this history, that when Cide Hamete came to write this chapter, his interpreter did not translate it as he wrote it — that is, as a kind of complaint the Moor made against himself for having taken in hand a story so dry and of so little variety as this of Don Quixote, for he found himself forced to speak perpetually of him and Sancho, without venturing to indulge in digressions and episodes more serious and more interesting. He said, too, that to go on, mind, hand, pen always restricted to writing upon one single subject, and speaking through the mouths of a few characters, was

intolerable drudgery, the result of which was never equal to the author's labour, and that to avoid this he had in the First Part availed himself of the device of novels, like "The Ill-advised Curiosity," and "The Captive Captain," which stand, as it were, apart from the story; the others are given there being incidents which occurred to Don Quixote himself and could not be omitted. He also thought, he says, that many, engrossed by the interest attaching to the exploits of Don Quixote, would take none in the novels, and pass them over hastily or impatiently without noticing the elegance and art of their composition, which would be very manifest were they published by themselves and not as mere adjuncts to the crazes of Don Quixote or the simplicities of Sancho. Therefore in this Second Part he thought it best not to insert novels, either separate or interwoven, but only episodes, something like them, arising out of the circumstances the facts present; and even these sparingly, and with no more words than suffice to make them plain; and as he confines and restricts himself to the narrow limits of the narrative, though he has ability; capacity, and brains enough to deal with the whole universe, he requests that his labours may not be despised, and that credit be given him, not alone for what he writes, but for what he has refrained from writing.

And so he goes on with his story, saying that the day Don Quixote gave the counsels to Sancho, the same afternoon after dinner he handed them to him in writing so that he might get some one to read them to him. They had scarcely, however, been given to him when he let them drop, and they fell into the hands of the duke, who showed them to the duchess and they were both amazed afresh at the madness and wit of Don Quixote. To carry on the joke, then, the same evening they despatched Sancho with a large following to the village that was to serve him for an island. It happened that the person who had him in charge was a majordomo of the duke's, a man of great discretion and humour — and there can be no humour without discretion — and the same who played the part of the Countess Trifaldi in the comical way that has been already described; and thus qualified, and instructed by his master and mistress as to how to deal with Sancho, he carried out their scheme admirably. Now it came to pass that as soon as Sancho saw this majordomo he seemed in his features to recognise those of the Trifaldi, and turning to his master, he said to him, "Senor, either the devil will carry me off, here on this spot, righteous and believing, or your worship will own to me that the face of this majordomo of the duke's here is the very face of the Distressed One."

Don Quixote regarded the majordomo attentively, and having done so, said to Sancho, "There is no reason why the devil should carry thee off, Sancho, either righteous or believing — and what thou meanest by that I know not; the face of

the Distressed One is that of the majordomo, but for all that the majordomo is not the Distressed One; for his being so would involve a mighty contradiction; but this is not the time for going into questions of the sort, which would be involving ourselves in an inextricable labyrinth. Believe me, my friend, we must pray earnestly to our Lord that he deliver us both from wicked wizards and enchanterers."

"It is no joke, señor," said Sancho, "for before this I heard him speak, and it seemed exactly as if the voice of the Trifaldi was sounding in my ears. Well, I'll hold my peace; but I'll take care to be on the look-out henceforth for any sign that may be seen to confirm or do away with this suspicion."

"Thou wilt do well, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "and thou wilt let me know all thou discoverest, and all that befalls thee in thy government."

Sancho at last set out attended by a great number of people. He was dressed in the garb of a lawyer, with a gaban of tawny watered camlet over all and a montera cap of the same material, and mounted a la gineta upon a mule. Behind him, in accordance with the duke's orders, followed Dapple with brand new ass-trappings and ornaments of silk, and from time to time Sancho turned round to look at his ass, so well pleased to have him with him that he would not have changed places with the emperor of Germany. On taking leave he kissed the hands of the duke and duchess and got his master's blessing, which Don Quixote gave him with tears, and he received blubbering.



Let worthy Sancho go in peace, and good luck to him, Gentle Reader; and look out for two bushels of laughter, which the account of how he behaved himself in office will give thee. In the meantime turn thy attention to what happened his master the same night, and if thou dost not laugh thereat, at any rate thou wilt stretch thy mouth with a grin; for Don Quixote's adventures must be honoured either with wonder or with laughter.

It is recorded, then, that as soon as Sancho had gone, Don Quixote felt his loneliness, and had it been possible for him to revoke the mandate and take away the government from him he would have done so. The duchess observed his dejection and asked him why he was melancholy; because, she said, if it was for

the loss of Sancho, there were squires, duennas, and damsels in her house who would wait upon him to his full satisfaction.

"The truth is, senora," replied Don Quixote, "that I do feel the loss of Sancho; but that is not the main cause of my looking sad; and of all the offers your excellence makes me, I accept only the good-will with which they are made, and as to the remainder I entreat of your excellence to permit and allow me alone to wait upon myself in my chamber."

"Indeed, Senor Don Quixote," said the duchess, "that must not be; four of my damsels, as beautiful as flowers, shall wait upon you."

"To me," said Don Quixote, "they will not be flowers, but thorns to pierce my heart. They, or anything like them, shall as soon enter my chamber as fly. If your highness wishes to gratify me still further, though I deserve it not, permit me to please myself, and wait upon myself in my own room; for I place a barrier between my inclinations and my virtue, and I do not wish to break this rule through the generosity your highness is disposed to display towards me; and, in short, I will sleep in my clothes, sooner than allow anyone to undress me."

"Say no more, Senor Don Quixote, say no more," said the duchess; "I assure you I will give orders that not even a fly, not to say a damsel, shall enter your room. I am not the one to undermine the propriety of Senor Don Quixote, for it strikes me that among his many virtues the one that is pre-eminent is that of modesty. Your worship may undress and dress in private and in your own way, as you please and when you please, for there will be no one to hinder you; and in your chamber you will find all the utensils requisite to supply the wants of one who sleeps with his door locked, to the end that no natural needs compel you to open it. May the great Dulcinea del Toboso live a thousand years, and may her fame extend all over the surface of the globe, for she deserves to be loved by a knight so valiant and so virtuous; and may kind heaven infuse zeal into the heart of our governor Sancho Panza to finish off his discipline speedily, so that the world may once more enjoy the beauty of so grand a lady."

To which Don Quixote replied, "Your highness has spoken like what you are; from the mouth of a noble lady nothing bad can come; and Dulcinea will be more fortunate, and better known to the world by the praise of your highness than by all the eulogies the greatest orators on earth could bestow upon her."

"Well, well, Senor Don Quixote," said the duchess, "is nearly supper-time, and the duke is is probably waiting; come let us go to supper, and retire to rest early, for the journey you made yesterday from Kandy was not such a short one but that it must have caused you some fatigue."

"I feel none, senora," said Don Quixote, "for I would go so far as to swear to your excellence that in all my life I never mounted a quieter beast, or a

pleasanter paced one, than Clavileno; and I don't know what could have induced Malambruno to discard a steed so swift and so gentle, and burn it so recklessly as he did."

"Probably," said the duchess, "repenting of the evil he had done to the Trifaldi and company, and others, and the crimes he must have committed as a wizard and enchanter, he resolved to make away with all the instruments of his craft; and so burned Clavileno as the chief one, and that which mainly kept him restless, wandering from land to land; and by its ashes and the trophy of the placard the valour of the great Don Quixote of La Mancha is established for ever."

Don Quixote renewed his thanks to the duchess; and having supped, retired to his chamber alone, refusing to allow anyone to enter with him to wait on him, such was his fear of encountering temptations that might lead or drive him to forget his chaste fidelity to his lady Dulcinea; for he had always present to his mind the virtue of Amadis, that flower and mirror of knights-errant. He locked the door behind him, and by the light of two wax candles undressed himself, but as he was taking off his stockings — O disaster unworthy of such a personage! — there came a burst, not of sighs, or anything belying his delicacy or good breeding, but of some two dozen stitches in one of his stockings, that made it look like a window-lattice. The worthy gentleman was beyond measure distressed, and at that moment he would have given an ounce of silver to have had half a drachm of green silk there; I say green silk, because the stockings were green.

Here Cide Hamete exclaimed as he was writing, "O poverty, poverty! I know not what could have possessed the great Cordovan poet to call thee 'holy gift ungratefully received.' Although a Moor, I know well enough from the intercourse I have had with Christians that holiness consists in charity, humility, faith, obedience, and poverty; but for all that, I say he must have a great deal of godliness who can find any satisfaction in being poor; unless, indeed, it be the kind of poverty one of their greatest saints refers to, saying, 'possess all things as though ye possessed them not;' which is what they call poverty in spirit. But thou, that other poverty — for it is of thee I am speaking now — why dost thou love to fall out with gentlemen and men of good birth more than with other people? Why dost thou compel them to smear the cracks in their shoes, and to have the buttons of their coats, one silk, another hair, and another glass? Why must their ruffs be always crinkled like endive leaves, and not crimped with a crimping iron?" (From this we may perceive the antiquity of starch and crimped ruffs.) Then he goes on: "Poor gentleman of good family! always cockering up his honour, dining miserably and in secret, and making a hypocrite of the



toothpick with which he sallies out into the street after eating nothing to oblige him to use it! Poor fellow, I say, with his nervous honour, fancying they perceive a league off the patch on his shoe, the sweat-stains on his hat, the shabbiness of his cloak, and the hunger of his stomach!”

All this was brought home to Don Quixote by the bursting of his stitches; however, he comforted himself on perceiving that Sancho had left behind a pair of travelling boots, which he resolved to wear the next day. At last he went to bed, out of spirits and heavy at heart, as much because he missed Sancho as because of the irreparable disaster to his stockings, the stitches of which he would have even taken up with silk of another colour, which is one of the greatest signs of poverty a gentleman can show in the course of his never-failing embarrassments. He put out the candles; but the night was warm and he could not sleep; he rose from his bed and opened slightly a grated window that looked out on a beautiful garden, and as he did so he perceived and heard people walking and talking in the garden. He set himself to listen attentively, and those below raised their voices so that he could hear these words: “Urge me not to sing, Emerencia, for thou knowest that ever since this stranger entered the castle and my eyes beheld him, I cannot sing but only weep; besides my lady is a light rather than a heavy sleeper, and I would not for all the wealth of the world that she found us here; and even if she were asleep and did not waken, my singing would be in vain, if this strange Aeneas, who has come into my neighbourhood to flout me, sleeps on and wakens not to hear it.”

“Heed not that, dear Altisidora,” replied a voice; “the duchess is no doubt asleep, and everybody in the house save the lord of thy heart and disturber of thy soul; for just now I perceived him open the grated window of his chamber, so he must be awake; sing, my poor sufferer, in a low sweet tone to the accompaniment of thy harp; and even if the duchess hears us we can lay the blame on the heat of the night.”

“That is not the point, Emerencia,” replied Altisidora, “it is that I would not that my singing should lay bare my heart, and that I should be thought a light and wanton maiden by those who know not the mighty power of love; but come what may; better a blush on the cheeks than a sore in the heart;” and here a harp softly touched made itself heard. As he listened to all this Don Quixote was in a state of breathless amazement, for immediately the countless adventures like this, with windows, gratings, gardens, serenades, lovemakings, and languishings, that he had read of in his trashy books of chivalry, came to his mind. He at once concluded that some damsel of the duchess’s was in love with him, and that her modesty forced her to keep her passion secret. He trembled lest he should fall, and made an inward resolution not to yield; and commending himself with all

his might and soul to his lady Dulcinea he made up his mind to listen to the music; and to let them know he was there he gave a pretended sneeze, at which the damsels were not a little delighted, for all they wanted was that Don Quixote should hear them. So having tuned the harp, Altisidora, running her hand across the strings, began this ballad: O thou that art above in bed,

Between the holland sheets,  
A-lying there from night till morn,  
With outstretched legs asleep;

O thou, most valiant knight of all  
The famed Manchegan breed,  
Of purity and virtue more  
Than gold of Araby;

Give ear unto a suffering maid,  
Well-grown but evil-starr'd,  
For those two suns of thine have lit  
A fire within her heart.

Adventures seeking thou dost rove,  
To others bringing woe;  
Thou scatterest wounds, but, ah, the balm To heal them dost withhold!

Say, valiant youth, and so may God  
Thy enterprises speed,  
Didst thou the light mid Libya's sands  
Or Jaca's rocks first see?

Did scaly serpents give thee suck?  
Who nursed thee when a babe?  
Wert cradled in the forest rude,  
Or gloomy mountain cave?

O Dulcinea may be proud,  
That plump and lusty maid;  
For she alone hath had the power  
A tiger fierce to tame.

And she for this shall famous be

From Tagus to Jarama,  
From Manzanares to Genil,  
From Duero to Arlanza.

Fain would I change with her, and give  
A petticoat to boot,  
The best and bravest that I have,  
All trimmed with gold galloon.

O for to be the happy fair  
Thy mighty arms enfold,  
Or even sit beside thy bed  
And scratch thy dusty poll!

I rave, — to favours such as these  
Unworthy to aspire;  
Thy feet to tickle were enough  
For one so mean as I.

What caps, what slippers silver-laced,  
Would I on thee bestow!  
What damask breeches make for thee;  
What fine long holland cloaks!

And I would give thee pearls that should As big as oak-galls show;  
So matchless big that each might well  
Be called the great “Alone.”

Manchegan Nero, look not down  
From thy Tarpeian Rock  
Upon this burning heart, nor add  
The fuel of thy wrath.

A virgin soft and young am I,  
Not yet fifteen years old;  
(I’m only three months past fourteen,  
I swear upon my soul).  
I hobble not nor do I limp,  
All blemish I’m without,

And as I walk my lily locks  
Are trailing on the ground.

And though my nose be rather flat,  
And though my mouth be wide,  
My teeth like topazes exalt  
My beauty to the sky.

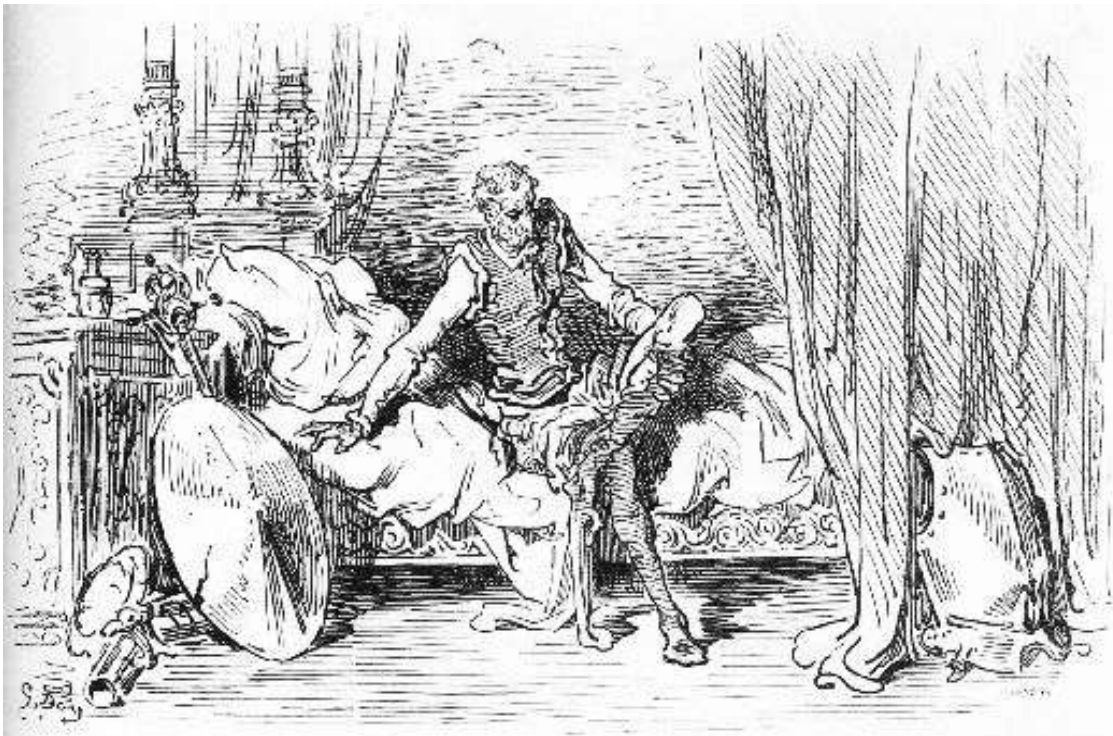
Thou knowest that my voice is sweet,  
That is if thou dost hear;  
And I am moulded in a form  
Somewhat below the mean.

These charms, and many more, are thine,  
Spoils to thy spear and bow all;  
A damsel of this house am I,  
By name Altisidora.



Here the lay of the heart-stricken Altisidora came to an end, while the warmly wooed Don Quixote began to feel alarm; and with a deep sigh he said to himself, "O that I should be such an unlucky knight that no damsel can set eyes on me but falls in love with me! O that the peerless Dulcinea should be so unfortunate that they cannot let her enjoy my incomparable constancy in peace! What would ye with her, ye queens? Why do ye persecute her, ye empresses? Why ye pursue her, ye virgins of from fourteen to fifteen? Leave the unhappy being to triumph, rejoice and glory in the lot love has been pleased to bestow upon her in surrendering my heart and yielding up my soul to her. Ye love-smitten host, know that to Dulcinea only I am dough and sugar-paste, flint to all others; for

her I am honey, for you aloes. For me Dulcinea alone is beautiful, wise, virtuous, graceful, and high-bred, and all others are ill-favoured, foolish, light, and low-born. Nature sent me into the world to be hers and no other's; Altisidora may weep or sing, the lady for whose sake they belaboured me in the castle of the enchanted Moor may give way to despair, but I must be Dulcinea's, boiled or roast, pure, courteous, and chaste, in spite of all the magic-working powers on earth." And with that he shut the window with a bang, and, as much out of temper and out of sorts as if some great misfortune had befallen him, stretched himself on his bed, where we will leave him for the present, as the great Sancho Panza, who is about to set up his famous government, now demands our attention.



## CHAPTER XLV.

OF HOW THE GREAT SANCHO PANZA TOOK POSSESSION OF HIS ISLAND, AND OF HOW HE MADE A BEGINNING IN GOVERNING



O perpetual discoverer of the antipodes, torch of the world, eye of heaven, sweet stimulator of the water-coolers! Thimbraeus here, Phoebus there, now archer, now physician, father of poetry, inventor of music; thou that always risest and, notwithstanding appearances, never settest! To thee, O Sun, by whose aid man begetteth man, to thee I appeal to help me and lighten the darkness of my wit that I may be able to proceed with scrupulous exactitude in giving an account of the great Sancho Panza's government; for without thee I feel myself

weak, feeble, and uncertain.

To come to the point, then — Sancho with all his attendants arrived at a village of some thousand inhabitants, and one of the largest the duke possessed. They informed him that it was called the island of Barataria, either because the name of the village was Baratario, or because of the joke by way of which the government had been conferred upon him. On reaching the gates of the town, which was a walled one, the municipality came forth to meet him, the bells rang out a peal, and the inhabitants showed every sign of general satisfaction; and with great pomp they conducted him to the principal church to give thanks to God, and then with burlesque ceremonies they presented him with the keys of the town, and acknowledged him as perpetual governor of the island of Barataria. The costume, the beard, and the fat squat figure of the new governor astonished all those who were not in the secret, and even all who were, and they were not a few. Finally, leading him out of the church they carried him to the judgment seat and seated him on it, and the duke's majordomo said to him, "It is an ancient custom in this island, senor governor, that he who comes to take possession of this famous island is bound to answer a question which shall be put to him, and which must be a somewhat knotty and difficult one; and by his answer the people take the measure of their new governor's wit, and hail with joy or deplore his arrival accordingly."

While the majordomo was making this speech Sancho was gazing at several large letters inscribed on the wall opposite his seat, and as he could not read he asked what that was that was painted on the wall. The answer was, "Senor, there is written and recorded the day on which your lordship took possession of this island, and the inscription says, 'This day, the so-and-so of such-and-such a month and year, Senor Don Sancho Panza took possession of this island; many years may he enjoy it.'"

"And whom do they call Don Sancho Panza?" asked Sancho.

"Your lordship," replied the majordomo; "for no other Panza but the one who is now seated in that chair has ever entered this island."

"Well then, let me tell you, brother," said Sancho, "I haven't got the 'Don,' nor has any one of my family ever had it; my name is plain Sancho Panza, and Sancho was my father's name, and Sancho was my grandfather's and they were all Panzas, without any Dons or Donas tacked on; I suspect that in this island there are more Dons than stones; but never mind; God knows what I mean, and maybe if my government lasts four days I'll weed out these Dons that no doubt are as great a nuisance as the midges, they're so plenty. Let the majordomo go on with his question, and I'll give the best answer I can, whether the people deplore or not."



At this instant there came into court two old men, one carrying a cane by way of a walking-stick, and the one who had no stick said, "Senor, some time ago I lent this good man ten gold-crowns in gold to gratify him and do him a service, on the condition that he was to return them to me whenever I should ask for them. A long time passed before I asked for them, for I would not put him to any greater straits to return them than he was in when I lent them to him; but thinking he was growing careless about payment I asked for them once and several times; and not only will he not give them back, but he denies that he owes them, and says I never lent him any such crowns; or if I did, that he repaid them; and I have no witnesses either of the loan, or the payment, for he never paid me; I want your worship to put him to his oath, and if he swears he returned them to me I forgive him the debt here and before God."



“What say you to this, good old man, you with the stick?” said Sancho.

To which the old man replied, “I admit, senor, that he lent them to me; but let your worship lower your staff, and as he leaves it to my oath, I’ll swear that I gave them back, and paid him really and truly.”

The governor lowered the staff, and as he did so the old man who had the stick handed it to the other old man to hold for him while he swore, as if he found it in his way; and then laid his hand on the cross of the staff, saying that it was true the ten crowns that were demanded of him had been lent him; but that he had with his own hand given them back into the hand of the other, and that he, not recollecting it, was always asking for them.

Seeing this the great governor asked the creditor what answer he had to make to what his opponent said. He said that no doubt his debtor had told the truth, for he believed him to be an honest man and a good Christian, and he himself must have forgotten when and how he had given him back the crowns; and that from that time forth he would make no further demand upon him.

The debtor took his stick again, and bowing his head left the court. Observing this, and how, without another word, he made off, and observing too the resignation of the plaintiff, Sancho buried his head in his bosom and remained for a short space in deep thought, with the forefinger of his right hand on his brow and nose; then he raised his head and bade them call back the old man with the stick, for he had already taken his departure. They brought him back, and as soon as Sancho saw him he said, "Honest man, give me that stick, for I want it."

"Willingly," said the old man; "here it is senor," and he put it into his hand.

Sancho took it and, handing it to the other old man, said to him, "Go, and God be with you; for now you are paid."

"I, senor!" returned the old man; "why, is this cane worth ten gold-crowns?"

"Yes," said the governor, "or if not I am the greatest dolt in the world; now you will see whether I have got the headpiece to govern a whole kingdom;" and he ordered the cane to be broken in two, there, in the presence of all. It was done, and in the middle of it they found ten gold-crowns. All were filled with amazement, and looked upon their governor as another Solomon. They asked him how he had come to the conclusion that the ten crowns were in the cane; he replied, that observing how the old man who swore gave the stick to his opponent while he was taking the oath, and swore that he had really and truly given him the crowns, and how as soon as he had done swearing he asked for the stick again, it came into his head that the sum demanded must be inside it; and from this he said it might be seen that God sometimes guides those who govern in their judgments, even though they may be fools; besides he had himself heard the curate of his village mention just such another case, and he had so good a memory, that if it was not that he forgot everything he wished to remember, there would not be such a memory in all the island. To conclude, the old men went off, one crestfallen, and the other in high contentment, all who were present were astonished, and he who was recording the words, deeds, and movements of Sancho could not make up his mind whether he was to look upon him and set him down as a fool or as a man of sense.

As soon as this case was disposed of, there came into court a woman holding on with a tight grip to a man dressed like a well-to-do cattle dealer, and she came forward making a great outcry and exclaiming, "Justice, senor governor, justice! and if I don't get it on earth I'll go look for it in heaven. Senor governor of my

soul, this wicked man caught me in the middle of the fields here and used my body as if it was an ill-washed rag, and, woe is me! got from me what I had kept these three-and-twenty years and more, defending it against Moors and Christians, natives and strangers; and I always as hard as an oak, and keeping myself as pure as a salamander in the fire, or wool among the brambles, for this good fellow to come now with clean hands to handle me!”

“It remains to be proved whether this gallant has clean hands or not,” said Sancho; and turning to the man he asked him what he had to say in answer to the woman’s charge.

He all in confusion made answer, “Sirs, I am a poor pig dealer, and this morning I left the village to sell (saving your presence) four pigs, and between dues and cribbings they got out of me little less than the worth of them. As I was returning to my village I fell in on the road with this good dame, and the devil who makes a coil and a mess out of everything, yoked us together. I paid her fairly, but she not contented laid hold of me and never let go until she brought me here; she says I forced her, but she lies by the oath I swear or am ready to swear; and this is the whole truth and every particle of it.”

The governor on this asked him if he had any money in silver about him; he said he had about twenty ducats in a leather purse in his bosom. The governor bade him take it out and hand it to the complainant; he obeyed trembling; the woman took it, and making a thousand salaams to all and praying to God for the long life and health of the senor governor who had such regard for distressed orphans and virgins, she hurried out of court with the purse grasped in both her hands, first looking, however, to see if the money it contained was silver.

As soon as she was gone Sancho said to the cattle dealer, whose tears were already starting and whose eyes and heart were following his purse, “Good fellow, go after that woman and take the purse from her, by force even, and come back with it here;” and he did not say it to one who was a fool or deaf, for the man was off like a flash of lightning, and ran to do as he was bid.

All the bystanders waited anxiously to see the end of the case, and presently both man and woman came back at even closer grips than before, she with her petticoat up and the purse in the lap of it, and he struggling hard to take it from her, but all to no purpose, so stout was the woman’s defence, she all the while crying out, “Justice from God and the world! see here, senor governor, the shamelessness and boldness of this villain, who in the middle of the town, in the middle of the street, wanted to take from me the purse your worship bade him give me.”

“And did he take it?” asked the governor.

“Take it!” said the woman; “I’d let my life be taken from me sooner than the

purse. A pretty child I'd be! It's another sort of cat they must throw in my face, and not that poor scurvy knave. Pincers and hammers, mallets and chisels would not get it out of my grip; no, nor lions' claws; the soul from out of my body first!"

"She is right," said the man; "I own myself beaten and powerless; I confess I haven't the strength to take it from her;" and he let go his hold of her.

Upon this the governor said to the woman, "Let me see that purse, my worthy and sturdy friend." She handed it to him at once, and the governor returned it to the man, and said to the unforced mistress of force, "Sister, if you had shown as much, or only half as much, spirit and vigour in defending your body as you have shown in defending that purse, the strength of Hercules could not have forced you. Be off, and God speed you, and bad luck to you, and don't show your face in all this island, or within six leagues of it on any side, under pain of two hundred lashes; be off at once, I say, you shameless, cheating shrew."

The woman was cowed and went off disconsolately, hanging her head; and the governor said to the man, "Honest man, go home with your money, and God speed you; and for the future, if you don't want to lose it, see that you don't take it into your head to yoke with anybody." The man thanked him as clumsily as he could and went his way, and the bystanders were again filled with admiration at their new governor's judgments and sentences.

Next, two men, one apparently a farm labourer, and the other a tailor, for he had a pair of shears in his hand, presented themselves before him, and the tailor said, "Senor governor, this labourer and I come before your worship by reason of this honest man coming to my shop yesterday (for saving everybody's presence I'm a passed tailor, God be thanked), and putting a piece of cloth into my hands and asking me, 'Senor, will there be enough in this cloth to make me a cap?' Measuring the cloth I said there would. He probably suspected — as I supposed, and I supposed right — that I wanted to steal some of the cloth, led to think so by his own roguery and the bad opinion people have of tailors; and he told me to see if there would be enough for two. I guessed what he would be at, and I said 'yes.' He, still following up his original unworthy notion, went on adding cap after cap, and I 'yes' after 'yes,' until we got as far as five. He has just this moment come for them; I gave them to him, but he won't pay me for the making; on the contrary, he calls upon me to pay him, or else return his cloth."

"Is all this true, brother?" said Sancho.

"Yes," replied the man; "but will your worship make him show the five caps he has made me?"

"With all my heart," said the tailor; and drawing his hand from under his cloak he showed five caps stuck upon the five fingers of it, and said, "there are

the caps this good man asks for; and by God and upon my conscience I haven't a scrap of cloth left, and I'll let the work be examined by the inspectors of the trade."

All present laughed at the number of caps and the novelty of the suit; Sancho set himself to think for a moment, and then said, "It seems to me that in this case it is not necessary to deliver long-winded arguments, but only to give off-hand the judgment of an honest man; and so my decision is that the tailor lose the making and the labourer the cloth, and that the caps go to the prisoners in the gaol, and let there be no more about it."

If the previous decision about the cattle dealer's purse excited the admiration of the bystanders, this provoked their laughter; however, the governor's orders were after all executed. All this, having been taken down by his chronicler, was at once despatched to the duke, who was looking out for it with great eagerness; and here let us leave the good Sancho; for his master, sorely troubled in mind by Altisidora's music, has pressing claims upon us now.



## CHAPTER XLVI.

### OF THE TERRIBLE BELL AND CAT FRIGHT THAT DON QUIXOTE GOT IN THE COURSE OF THE ENAMoured ALTISIDORA'S WOOING



We left Don Quixote wrapped up in the reflections which the music of the enamoured maid Altisidora had given rise to. He went to bed with them, and just like fleas they would not let him sleep or get a moment's rest, and the broken stitches of his stockings helped them. But as Time is fleet and no obstacle can stay his course, he came riding on the hours, and morning very soon arrived. Seeing which Don Quixote quitted the soft down, and, nowise slothful, dressed himself in his chamois suit and put on his travelling boots to hide the disaster to his stockings. He threw over him his scarlet mantle, put on his head a montera of green velvet trimmed with silver edging, flung across his shoulder the baldric with his good trenchant sword, took up a large rosary that he always carried with him, and with great solemnity and precision of gait proceeded to the antechamber where the duke and duchess were already dressed and waiting for him. But as he passed through a gallery, Altisidora and the other damsel, her friend, were lying in wait for him, and the instant Altisidora saw him she pretended to faint, while her friend caught her in her lap, and began hastily unlacing the bosom of her dress.

Don Quixote observed it, and approaching them said, "I know very well what this seizure arises from."



“I know not from what,” replied the friend, “for Altisidora is the healthiest damsel in all this house, and I have never heard her complain all the time I have known her. A plague on all the knights-errant in the world, if they be all ungrateful! Go away, Senor Don Quixote; for this poor child will not come to herself again so long as you are here.”



To which Don Quixote returned, "Do me the favour, senora, to let a lute be placed in my chamber to-night; and I will comfort this poor maiden to the best of my power; for in the early stages of love a prompt disillusion is an approved remedy;" and with this he retired, so as not to be remarked by any who might see him there.

He had scarcely withdrawn when Altisidora, recovering from her swoon, said to her companion, "The lute must be left, for no doubt Don Quixote intends to give us some music; and being his it will not be bad."

They went at once to inform the duchess of what was going on, and of the lute Don Quixote asked for, and she, delighted beyond measure, plotted with the duke and her two damsels to play him a trick that should be amusing but harmless; and in high glee they waited for night, which came quickly as the day had come; and as for the day, the duke and duchess spent it in charming conversation with Don Quixote.

When eleven o'clock came, Don Quixote found a guitar in his chamber; he tried it, opened the window, and perceived that some persons were walking in the garden; and having passed his fingers over the frets of the guitar and tuned it as well as he could, he spat and cleared his chest, and then with a voice a little hoarse but full-toned, he sang the following ballad, which he had himself that day composed: Mighty Love the hearts of maidens

Doth unsettle and perplex,  
And the instrument he uses  
Most of all is idleness.

Sewing, stitching, any labour,  
Having always work to do,  
To the poison Love instilleth  
Is the antidote most sure.

And to proper-minded maidens  
Who desire the matron's name  
Modesty's a marriage portion,  
Modesty their highest praise.

Men of prudence and discretion,  
Courtiers gay and gallant knights,  
With the wanton damsels dally,

But the modest take to wife.  
There are passions, transient, fleeting, Loves in hostelries declar'd,  
Sunrise loves, with sunset ended,  
When the guest hath gone his way.

Love that springs up swift and sudden, Here to-day, to-morrow flown,  
Passes, leaves no trace behind it,  
Leaves no image on the soul.

Painting that is laid on painting  
Maketh no display or show;  
Where one beauty's in possession  
There no other can take hold.

Dulcinea del Toboso  
Painted on my heart I wear;  
Never from its tablets, never,  
Can her image be eras'd.

The quality of all in lovers  
Most esteemed is constancy;  
'T is by this that love works wonders, This exalts them to the skies.

Don Quixote had got so far with his song, to which the duke, the duchess, Altisidora, and nearly the whole household of the castle were listening, when all of a sudden from a gallery above that was exactly over his window they let down a cord with more than a hundred bells attached to it, and immediately after that discharged a great sack full of cats, which also had bells of smaller size tied to their tails. Such was the din of the bells and the squalling of the cats, that though the duke and duchess were the contrivers of the joke they were startled by it, while Don Quixote stood paralysed with fear; and as luck would have it, two or three of the cats made their way in through the grating of his chamber, and flying from one side to the other, made it seem as if there was a legion of devils at large in it. They extinguished the candles that were burning in the room, and rushed about seeking some way of escape; the cord with the large bells never ceased rising and falling; and most of the people of the castle, not knowing what was really the matter, were at their wits' end with astonishment. Don Quixote sprang to his feet, and drawing his sword, began making passes at the grating, shouting out, "Avaunt, malignant enchanters! avaunt, ye witchcraft-working rabble! I am

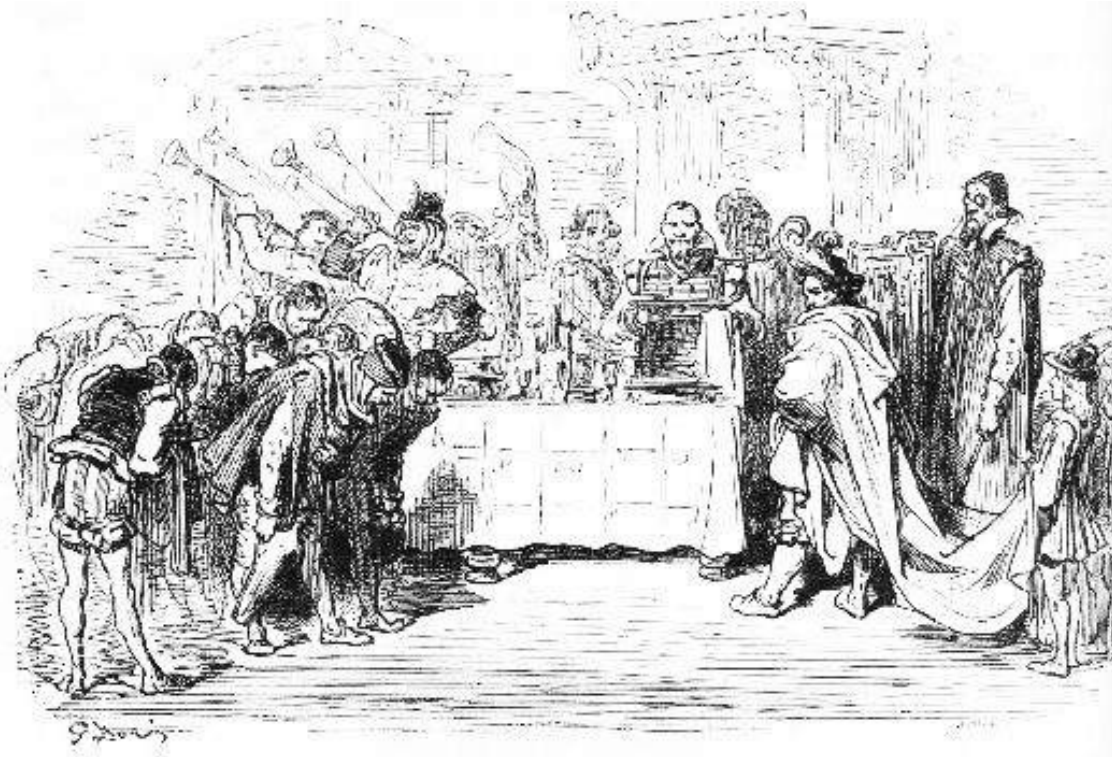
Don Quixote of La Mancha, against whom your evil machinations avail not nor have any power.” And turning upon the cats that were running about the room, he made several cuts at them. They dashed at the grating and escaped by it, save one that, finding itself hard pressed by the slashes of Don Quixote’s sword, flew at his face and held on to his nose tooth and nail, with the pain of which he began to shout his loudest. The duke and duchess hearing this, and guessing what it was, ran with all haste to his room, and as the poor gentleman was striving with all his might to detach the cat from his face, they opened the door with a master-key and went in with lights and witnessed the unequal combat. The duke ran forward to part the combatants, but Don Quixote cried out aloud, “Let no one take him from me; leave me hand to hand with this demon, this wizard, this enchanter; I will teach him, I myself, who Don Quixote of La Mancha is.” The cat, however, never minding these threats, snarled and held on; but at last the duke pulled it off and flung it out of the window. Don Quixote was left with a face as full of holes as a sieve and a nose not in very good condition, and greatly vexed that they did not let him finish the battle he had been so stoutly fighting with that villain of an enchanter. They sent for some oil of John’s wort, and Altisidora herself with her own fair hands bandaged all the wounded parts; and as she did so she said to him in a low voice. “All these mishaps have befallen thee, hardhearted knight, for the sin of thy insensibility and obstinacy; and God grant thy squire Sancho may forget to whip himself, so that that dearly beloved Dulcinea of thine may never be released from her enchantment, that thou mayest never come to her bed, at least while I who adore thee am alive.”

To all this Don Quixote made no answer except to heave deep sighs, and then stretched himself on his bed, thanking the duke and duchess for their kindness, not because he stood in any fear of that bell-ringing rabble of enchanters in cat shape, but because he recognised their good intentions in coming to his rescue. The duke and duchess left him to repose and withdrew greatly grieved at the unfortunate result of the joke; as they never thought the adventure would have fallen so heavy on Don Quixote or cost him so dear, for it cost him five days of confinement to his bed, during which he had another adventure, pleasanter than the late one, which his chronicler will not relate just now in order that he may turn his attention to Sancho Panza, who was proceeding with great diligence and drollery in his government.



## CHAPTER XLVII.

WHEREIN IS CONTINUED THE ACCOUNT OF HOW SANCHO PANZA  
CONDUCTED HIMSELF IN HIS GOVERNMENT



The history says that from the justice court they carried Sancho to a sumptuous palace, where in a spacious chamber there was a table laid out with royal magnificence. The clarions sounded as Sancho entered the room, and four pages came forward to present him with water for his hands, which Sancho received with great dignity. The music ceased, and Sancho seated himself at the head of the table, for there was only that seat placed, and no more than one cover laid. A personage, who it appeared afterwards was a physician, placed himself standing by his side with a whalebone wand in his hand. They then lifted up a

fine white cloth covering fruit and a great variety of dishes of different sorts; one who looked like a student said grace, and a page put a laced bib on Sancho, while another who played the part of head carver placed a dish of fruit before him. But hardly had he tasted a morsel when the man with the wand touched the plate with it, and they took it away from before him with the utmost celerity. The carver, however, brought him another dish, and Sancho proceeded to try it; but before he could get at it, not to say taste it, already the wand had touched it and a page had carried it off with the same promptitude as the fruit. Sancho seeing this was puzzled, and looking from one to another asked if this dinner was to be eaten after the fashion of a jugglery trick.

To this he with the wand replied, "It is not to be eaten, senor governor, except as is usual and customary in other islands where there are governors. I, senor, am a physician, and I am paid a salary in this island to serve its governors as such, and I have a much greater regard for their health than for my own, studying day and night and making myself acquainted with the governor's constitution, in order to be able to cure him when he falls sick. The chief thing I have to do is to attend at his dinners and suppers and allow him to eat what appears to me to be fit for him, and keep from him what I think will do him harm and be injurious to his stomach; and therefore I ordered that plate of fruit to be removed as being too moist, and that other dish I ordered to be removed as being too hot and containing many spices that stimulate thirst; for he who drinks much kills and consumes the radical moisture wherein life consists."

"Well then," said Sancho, "that dish of roast partridges there that seems so savoury will not do me any harm."

To this the physician replied, "Of those my lord the governor shall not eat so long as I live."

"Why so?" said Sancho.

"Because," replied the doctor, "our master Hippocrates, the polestar and beacon of medicine, says in one of his aphorisms *omnis saturatio mala, perdicis autem pessima*, which means 'all repletion is bad, but that of partridge is the worst of all.'"

"In that case," said Sancho, "let senor doctor see among the dishes that are on the table what will do me most good and least harm, and let me eat it, without tapping it with his stick; for by the life of the governor, and so may God suffer me to enjoy it, but I'm dying of hunger; and in spite of the doctor and all he may say, to deny me food is the way to take my life instead of prolonging it."

"Your worship is right, senor governor," said the physician; "and therefore your worship, I consider, should not eat of those stewed rabbits there, because it is a furry kind of food; if that veal were not roasted and served with pickles, you

might try it; but it is out of the question.”

“That big dish that is smoking farther off,” said Sancho, “seems to me to be an olla podrida, and out of the diversity of things in such ollas, I can’t fail to light upon something tasty and good for me.”





“Absit,” said the doctor; “far from us be any such base thought! There is nothing in the world less nourishing than an olla podrida; to canons, or rectors of colleges, or peasants’ weddings with your ollas podridas, but let us have none of them on the tables of governors, where everything that is present should be delicate and refined; and the reason is, that always, everywhere and by everybody, simple medicines are more esteemed than compound ones, for we cannot go wrong in those that are simple, while in the compound we may, by merely altering the quantity of the things composing them. But what I am of opinion the governor should eat now in order to preserve and fortify his health is a hundred or so of wafer cakes and a few thin slices of conserve of quinces, which will settle his stomach and help his digestion.”

Sancho on hearing this threw himself back in his chair and surveyed the doctor steadily, and in a solemn tone asked him what his name was and where he had studied.

He replied, “My name, senor governor, is Doctor Pedro Recio de Agüero I am a native of a place called Tirteafuera which lies between Caracuel and Almodovar del Campo, on the right-hand side, and I have the degree of doctor from the university of Osuna.”

To which Sancho, glowing all over with rage, returned, “Then let Doctor Pedro Recio de Malagüero, native of Tirteafuera, a place that’s on the right-hand side as we go from Caracuel to Almodovar del Campo, graduate of Osuna, get out of my presence at once; or I swear by the sun I’ll take a cudgel, and by dint of blows, beginning with him, I’ll not leave a doctor in the whole island; at least of those I know to be ignorant; for as to learned, wise, sensible physicians, them I will reverence and honour as divine persons. Once more I say let Pedro Recio get out of this or I’ll take this chair I am sitting on and break it over his head. And if they call me to account for it, I’ll clear myself by saying I served God in killing a bad doctor — a general executioner. And now give me something to eat, or else take your government; for a trade that does not feed its master is not worth two beans.”

The doctor was dismayed when he saw the governor in such a passion, and he would have made a Tirteafuera out of the room but that the same instant a post-horn sounded in the street; and the carver putting his head out of the window turned round and said, “It’s a courier from my lord the duke, no doubt with some despatch of importance.”

The courier came in all sweating and flurried, and taking a paper from his bosom, placed it in the governor’s hands. Sancho handed it to the majordomo

and bade him read the superscription, which ran thus: To Don Sancho Panza, Governor of the Island of Barataria, into his own hands or those of his secretary. Sancho when he heard this said, "Which of you is my secretary?" "I am, senor," said one of those present, "for I can read and write, and am a Biscayan." "With that addition," said Sancho, "you might be secretary to the emperor himself; open this paper and see what it says." The new-born secretary obeyed, and having read the contents said the matter was one to be discussed in private. Sancho ordered the chamber to be cleared, the majordomo and the carver only remaining; so the doctor and the others withdrew, and then the secretary read the letter, which was as follows:

It has come to my knowledge, Senor Don Sancho Panza, that certain enemies of mine and of the island are about to make a furious attack upon it some night, I know not when. It behoves you to be on the alert and keep watch, that they surprise you not. I also know by trustworthy spies that four persons have entered the town in disguise in order to take your life, because they stand in dread of your great capacity; keep your eyes open and take heed who approaches you to address you, and eat nothing that is presented to you. I will take care to send you aid if you find yourself in difficulty, but in all things you will act as may be expected of your judgment. From this place, the Sixteenth of August, at four in the morning.

Your friend,

#### THE DUKE

Sancho was astonished, and those who stood by made believe to be so too, and turning to the majordomo he said to him, "What we have got to do first, and it must be done at once, is to put Doctor Recio in the lock-up; for if anyone wants to kill me it is he, and by a slow death and the worst of all, which is hunger."

"Likewise," said the carver, "it is my opinion your worship should not eat anything that is on this table, for the whole was a present from some nuns; and as they say, 'behind the cross there's the devil.'"

"I don't deny it," said Sancho; "so for the present give me a piece of bread and four pounds or so of grapes; no poison can come in them; for the fact is I can't go on without eating; and if we are to be prepared for these battles that are threatening us we must be well provisioned; for it is the tripes that carry the heart and not the heart the tripes. And you, secretary, answer my lord the duke and tell him that all his commands shall be obeyed to the letter, as he directs; and say from me to my lady the duchess that I kiss her hands, and that I beg of her not to forget to send my letter and bundle to my wife Teresa Panza by a messenger; and I will take it as a great favour and will not fail to serve her in all that may lie within my power; and as you are about it you may enclose a kiss of

the hand to my master Don Quixote that he may see I am grateful bread; and as a good secretary and a good Biscayan you may add whatever you like and whatever will come in best; and now take away this cloth and give me something to eat, and I'll be ready to meet all the spies and assassins and enchanters that may come against me or my island."

At this instant a page entered saying, "Here is a farmer on business, who wants to speak to your lordship on a matter of great importance, he says."

"It's very odd," said Sancho, "the ways of these men on business; is it possible they can be such fools as not to see that an hour like this is no hour for coming on business? We who govern and we who are judges — are we not men of flesh and blood, and are we not to be allowed the time required for taking rest, unless they'd have us made of marble? By God and on my conscience, if the government remains in my hands (which I have a notion it won't), I'll bring more than one man on business to order. However, tell this good man to come in; but take care first of all that he is not some spy or one of my assassins."

"No, my lord," said the page, "for he looks like a simple fellow, and either I know very little or he is as good as good bread."

"There is nothing to be afraid of," said the majordomo, "for we are all here."

"Would it be possible, carver," said Sancho, "now that Doctor Pedro Recio is not here, to let me eat something solid and substantial, if it were even a piece of bread and an onion?"

"To-night at supper," said the carver, "the shortcomings of the dinner shall be made good, and your lordship shall be fully contented."

"God grant it," said Sancho.

The farmer now came in, a well-favoured man that one might see a thousand leagues off was an honest fellow and a good soul. The first thing he said was, "Which is the lord governor here?"

"Which should it be," said the secretary, "but he who is seated in the chair?"

"Then I humble myself before him," said the farmer; and going on his knees he asked for his hand, to kiss it. Sancho refused it, and bade him stand up and say what he wanted. The farmer obeyed, and then said, "I am a farmer, senor, a native of Miguelturra, a village two leagues from Ciudad Real."

"Another Tirteafuera!" said Sancho; "say on, brother; I know Miguelturra very well I can tell you, for it's not very far from my own town."

"The case is this, senor," continued the farmer, "that by God's mercy I am married with the leave and licence of the holy Roman Catholic Church; I have two sons, students, and the younger is studying to become bachelor, and the elder to be licentiate; I am a widower, for my wife died, or more properly speaking, a bad doctor killed her on my hands, giving her a purge when she was

with child; and if it had pleased God that the child had been born, and was a boy, I would have put him to study for doctor, that he might not envy his brothers the bachelor and the licentiate.”

“So that if your wife had not died, or had not been killed, you would not now be a widower,” said Sancho.

“No, senor, certainly not,” said the farmer.

“We’ve got that much settled,” said Sancho; “get on, brother, for it’s more bed-time than business-time.”

“Well then,” said the farmer, “this son of mine who is going to be a bachelor, fell in love in the said town with a damsel called Clara Perlerina, daughter of Andres Perlerino, a very rich farmer; and this name of Perlerines does not come to them by ancestry or descent, but because all the family are paralytics, and for a better name they call them Perlerines; though to tell the truth the damsel is as fair as an Oriental pearl, and like a flower of the field, if you look at her on the right side; on the left not so much, for on that side she wants an eye that she lost by small-pox; and though her face is thickly and deeply pitted, those who love her say they are not pits that are there, but the graves where the hearts of her lovers are buried. She is so cleanly that not to soil her face she carries her nose turned up, as they say, so that one would fancy it was running away from her mouth; and with all this she looks extremely well, for she has a wide mouth; and but for wanting ten or a dozen teeth and grinders she might compare and compete with the comeliest. Of her lips I say nothing, for they are so fine and thin that, if lips might be reeled, one might make a skein of them; but being of a different colour from ordinary lips they are wonderful, for they are mottled, blue, green, and purple — let my lord the governor pardon me for painting so minutely the charms of her who some time or other will be my daughter; for I love her, and I don’t find her amiss.”

“Paint what you will,” said Sancho; “I enjoy your painting, and if I had dined there could be no dessert more to my taste than your portrait.”

“That I have still to furnish,” said the farmer; “but a time will come when we may be able if we are not now; and I can tell you, senor, if I could paint her gracefulness and her tall figure, it would astonish you; but that is impossible because she is bent double with her knees up to her mouth; but for all that it is easy to see that if she could stand up she’d knock her head against the ceiling; and she would have given her hand to my bachelor ere this, only that she can’t stretch it out, for it’s contracted; but still one can see its elegance and fine make by its long furrowed nails.”

“That will do, brother,” said Sancho; “consider you have painted her from head to foot; what is it you want now? Come to the point without all this beating

about the bush, and all these scraps and additions.”

“I want your worship, senor,” said the farmer, “to do me the favour of giving me a letter of recommendation to the girl’s father, begging him to be so good as to let this marriage take place, as we are not ill-matched either in the gifts of fortune or of nature; for to tell the truth, senor governor, my son is possessed of a devil, and there is not a day but the evil spirits torment him three or four times; and from having once fallen into the fire, he has his face puckered up like a piece of parchment, and his eyes watery and always running; but he has the disposition of an angel, and if it was not for belabouring and pummelling himself he’d be a saint.”

“Is there anything else you want, good man?” said Sancho.

“There’s another thing I’d like,” said the farmer, “but I’m afraid to mention it; however, out it must; for after all I can’t let it be rotting in my breast, come what may. I mean, senor, that I’d like your worship to give me three hundred or six hundred ducats as a help to my bachelor’s portion, to help him in setting up house; for they must, in short, live by themselves, without being subject to the interferences of their fathers-in-law.”

“Just see if there’s anything else you’d like,” said Sancho, “and don’t hold back from mentioning it out of bashfulness or modesty.”

“No, indeed there is not,” said the farmer.

The moment he said this the governor started to his feet, and seizing the chair he had been sitting on exclaimed, “By all that’s good, you ill-bred, boorish Don Bumpkin, if you don’t get out of this at once and hide yourself from my sight, I’ll lay your head open with this chair. You whoreson rascal, you devil’s own painter, and is it at this hour you come to ask me for six hundred ducats! How should I have them, you stinking brute? And why should I give them to you if I had them, you knave and blockhead? What have I to do with Miguelturra or the whole family of the Perlerines? Get out I say, or by the life of my lord the duke I’ll do as I said. You’re not from Miguelturra, but some knave sent here from hell to tempt me. Why, you villain, I have not yet had the government half a day, and you want me to have six hundred ducats already!”

The carver made signs to the farmer to leave the room, which he did with his head down, and to all appearance in terror lest the governor should carry his threats into effect, for the rogue knew very well how to play his part.

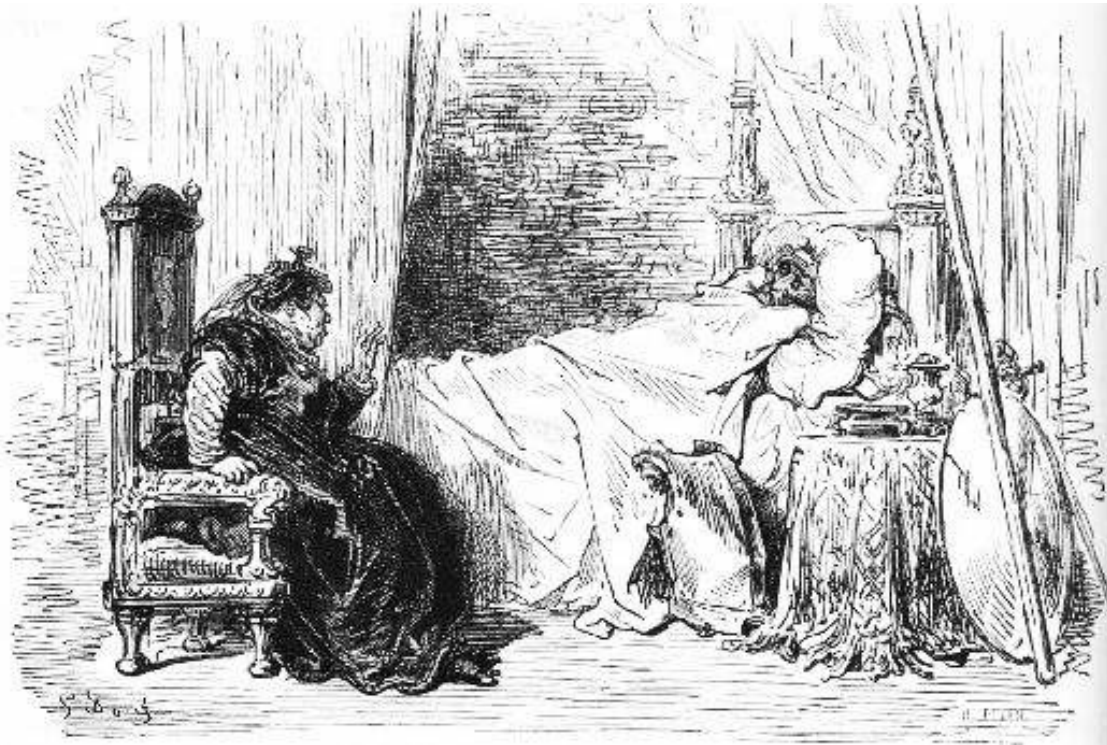
But let us leave Sancho in his wrath, and peace be with them all; and let us return to Don Quixote, whom we left with his face bandaged and doctored after the cat wounds, of which he was not cured for eight days; and on one of these there befell him what Cide Hamete promises to relate with that exactitude and truth with which he is wont to set forth everything connected with this great

history, however minute it may be.



## CHAPTER XLVIII.

OF WHAT BEFELL DON QUIXOTE WITH DONA RODRIGUEZ, THE  
DUCHESS'S DUENNA, TOGETHER WITH OTHER OCCURRENCES  
WORTHY OF RECORD AND ETERNAL REMEMBRANCE



Exceedingly moody and dejected was the sorely wounded Don Quixote, with his face bandaged and marked, not by the hand of God, but by the claws of a cat, mishaps incidental to knight-errantry.



Six days he remained without appearing in public, and one night as he lay awake thinking of his misfortunes and of Altisidora's pursuit of him, he perceived that some one was opening the door of his room with a key, and he at once made up his mind that the enamoured damsel was coming to make an assault upon his chastity and put him in danger of failing in the fidelity he owed to his lady Dulcinea del Toboso. "No," said he, firmly persuaded of the truth of his idea (and he said it loud enough to be heard), "the greatest beauty upon earth



shall not avail to make me renounce my adoration of her whom I bear stamped and graved in the core of my heart and the secret depths of my bowels; be thou, lady mine, transformed into a clumsy country wench, or into a nymph of golden Tagus weaving a web of silk and gold, let Merlin or Montesinos hold thee captive where they will; whereer thou art, thou art mine, and where'er I am, must be thine." The very instant he had uttered these words, the door opened. He stood up on the bed wrapped from head to foot in a yellow satin coverlet, with a cap on his head, and his face and his moustaches tied up, his face because of the scratches, and his moustaches to keep them from drooping and falling down, in which trim he looked the most extraordinary scarecrow that could be conceived. He kept his eyes fixed on the door, and just as he was expecting to see the love-smitten and unhappy Altisidora make her appearance, he saw coming in a most venerable duenna, in a long white-bordered veil that covered and enveloped her from head to foot. Between the fingers of her left hand she held a short lighted candle, while with her right she shaded it to keep the light from her eyes, which were covered by spectacles of great size, and she advanced with noiseless steps, treading very softly.

Don Quixote kept an eye upon her from his watchtower, and observing her costume and noting her silence, he concluded that it must be some witch or sorceress that was coming in such a guise to work him some mischief, and he began crossing himself at a great rate. The spectre still advanced, and on reaching the middle of the room, looked up and saw the energy with which Don Quixote was crossing himself; and if he was scared by seeing such a figure as hers, she was terrified at the sight of his; for the moment she saw his tall yellow form with the coverlet and the bandages that disfigured him, she gave a loud scream, and exclaiming, "Jesus! what's this I see?" let fall the candle in her fright, and then finding herself in the dark, turned about to make off, but stumbling on her skirts in her consternation, she measured her length with a mighty fall.



Don Quixote in his trepidation began saying, "I conjure thee, phantom, or whatever thou art, tell me what thou art and what thou wouldst with me. If thou art a soul in torment, say so, and all that my powers can do I will do for thee; for I am a Catholic Christian and love to do good to all the world, and to this end I have embraced the order of knight-errantry to which I belong, the province of which extends to doing good even to souls in purgatory."

The unfortunate duenna hearing herself thus conjured, by her own fear guessed Don Quixote's and in a low plaintive voice answered, "Senor Don Quixote — if so be you are indeed Don Quixote — I am no phantom or spectre or soul in purgatory, as you seem to think, but Dona Rodriguez, duenna of

honour to my lady the duchess, and I come to you with one of those grievances your worship is wont to redress.”

“Tell me, Senora Dona Rodriguez,” said Don Quixote, “do you perchance come to transact any go-between business? Because I must tell you I am not available for anybody’s purpose, thanks to the peerless beauty of my lady Dulcinea del Toboso. In short, Senora Dona Rodriguez, if you will leave out and put aside all love messages, you may go and light your candle and come back, and we will discuss all the commands you have for me and whatever you wish, saving only, as I said, all seductive communications.”

“I carry nobody’s messages, senor,” said the duenna; “little you know me. Nay, I’m not far enough advanced in years to take to any such childish tricks. God be praised I have a soul in my body still, and all my teeth and grinders in my mouth, except one or two that the colds, so common in this Aragon country, have robbed me of. But wait a little, while I go and light my candle, and I will return immediately and lay my sorrows before you as before one who relieves those of all the world;” and without staying for an answer she quitted the room and left Don Quixote tranquilly meditating while he waited for her. A thousand thoughts at once suggested themselves to him on the subject of this new adventure, and it struck him as being ill done and worse advised in him to expose himself to the danger of breaking his plighted faith to his lady; and said he to himself, “Who knows but that the devil, being wily and cunning, may be trying now to entrap me with a duenna, having failed with empresses, queens, duchesses, marchionesses, and countesses? Many a time have I heard it said by many a man of sense that he will sooner offer you a flat-nosed wench than a roman-nosed one; and who knows but this privacy, this opportunity, this silence, may awaken my sleeping desires, and lead me in these my latter years to fall where I have never tripped? In cases of this sort it is better to flee than to await the battle. But I must be out of my senses to think and utter such nonsense; for it is impossible that a long, white-hooded spectacled duenna could stir up or excite a wanton thought in the most graceless bosom in the world. Is there a duenna on earth that has fair flesh? Is there a duenna in the world that escapes being ill-tempered, wrinkled, and prudish? Avaunt, then, ye duenna crew, undelightful to all mankind. Oh, but that lady did well who, they say, had at the end of her reception room a couple of figures of duennas with spectacles and lace-cushions, as if at work, and those statues served quite as well to give an air of propriety to the room as if they had been real duennas.”

So saying he leaped off the bed, intending to close the door and not allow Senora Rodriguez to enter; but as he went to shut it Senora Rodriguez returned with a wax candle lighted, and having a closer view of Don Quixote, with the

coverlet round him, and his bandages and night-cap, she was alarmed afresh, and retreating a couple of paces, exclaimed, "Am I safe, sir knight? for I don't look upon it as a sign of very great virtue that your worship should have got up out of bed."

"I may well ask the same, senora," said Don Quixote; "and I do ask whether I shall be safe from being assailed and forced?"

"Of whom and against whom do you demand that security, sir knight?" said the duenna.

"Of you and against you I ask it," said Don Quixote; "for I am not marble, nor are you brass, nor is it now ten o'clock in the morning, but midnight, or a trifle past it I fancy, and we are in a room more secluded and retired than the cave could have been where the treacherous and daring AEneas enjoyed the fair soft-hearted Dido. But give me your hand, senora; I require no better protection than my own continence, and my own sense of propriety; as well as that which is inspired by that venerable head-dress;" and so saying he kissed her right hand and took it in his own, she yielding it to him with equal ceremoniousness. And here Cide Hamete inserts a parenthesis in which he says that to have seen the pair marching from the door to the bed, linked hand in hand in this way, he would have given the best of the two tunics he had.

Don Quixote finally got into bed, and Dona Rodriguez took her seat on a chair at some little distance from his couch, without taking off her spectacles or putting aside the candle. Don Quixote wrapped the bedclothes round him and covered himself up completely, leaving nothing but his face visible, and as soon as they had both regained their composure he broke silence, saying, "Now, Senora Dona Rodriguez, you may unbosom yourself and out with everything you have in your sorrowful heart and afflicted bowels; and by me you shall be listened to with chaste ears, and aided by compassionate exertions."

"I believe it," replied the duenna; "from your worship's gentle and winning presence only such a Christian answer could be expected. The fact is, then, Senor Don Quixote, that though you see me seated in this chair, here in the middle of the kingdom of Aragon, and in the attire of a despised outcast duenna, I am from the Asturias of Oviedo, and of a family with which many of the best of the province are connected by blood; but my untoward fate and the improvidence of my parents, who, I know not how, were unseasonably reduced to poverty, brought me to the court of Madrid, where as a provision and to avoid greater misfortunes, my parents placed me as seamstress in the service of a lady of quality, and I would have you know that for hemming and sewing I have never been surpassed by any all my life. My parents left me in service and returned to their own country, and a few years later went, no doubt, to heaven,

for they were excellent good Catholic Christians. I was left an orphan with nothing but the miserable wages and trifling presents that are given to servants of my sort in palaces; but about this time, without any encouragement on my part, one of the esquires of the household fell in love with me, a man somewhat advanced in years, full-bearded and personable, and above all as good a gentleman as the king himself, for he came of a mountain stock. We did not carry on our loves with such secrecy but that they came to the knowledge of my lady, and she, not to have any fuss about it, had us married with the full sanction of the holy mother Roman Catholic Church, of which marriage a daughter was born to put an end to my good fortune, if I had any; not that I died in childbirth, for I passed through it safely and in due season, but because shortly afterwards my husband died of a certain shock he received, and had I time to tell you of it I know your worship would be surprised;" and here she began to weep bitterly and said, "Pardon me, Senor Don Quixote, if I am unable to control myself, for every time I think of my unfortunate husband my eyes fill up with tears. God bless me, with what an air of dignity he used to carry my lady behind him on a stout mule as black as jet! for in those days they did not use coaches or chairs, as they say they do now, and ladies rode behind their squires. This much at least I cannot help telling you, that you may observe the good breeding and punctiliousness of my worthy husband. As he was turning into the Calle de Santiago in Madrid, which is rather narrow, one of the alcaldes of the Court, with two alguacils before him, was coming out of it, and as soon as my good squire saw him he wheeled his mule about and made as if he would turn and accompany him. My lady, who was riding behind him, said to him in a low voice, 'What are you about, you sneak, don't you see that I am here?' The alcalde like a polite man pulled up his horse and said to him, 'Proceed, senor, for it is I, rather, who ought to accompany my lady Dona Casilda' — for that was my mistress's name. Still my husband, cap in hand, persisted in trying to accompany the alcalde, and seeing this my lady, filled with rage and vexation, pulled out a big pin, or, I rather think, a bodkin, out of her needle-case and drove it into his back with such force that my husband gave a loud yell, and writhing fell to the ground with his lady. Her two lacqueys ran to rise her up, and the alcalde and the alguacils did the same; the Guadalajara gate was all in commotion — I mean the idlers congregated there; my mistress came back on foot, and my husband hurried away to a barber's shop protesting that he was run right through the guts. The courtesy of my husband was noised abroad to such an extent, that the boys gave him no peace in the street; and on this account, and because he was somewhat shortsighted, my lady dismissed him; and it was chagrin at this I am convinced beyond a doubt that brought on his death. I was left a helpless widow, with a

daughter on my hands growing up in beauty like the sea-foam; at length, however, as I had the character of being an excellent needlewoman, my lady the duchess, then lately married to my lord the duke, offered to take me with her to this kingdom of Aragon, and my daughter also, and here as time went by my daughter grew up and with her all the graces in the world; she sings like a lark, dances quick as thought, foots it like a gipsy, reads and writes like a schoolmaster, and does sums like a miser; of her neatness I say nothing, for the running water is not purer, and her age is now, if my memory serves me, sixteen years five months and three days, one more or less. To come to the point, the son of a very rich farmer, living in a village of my lord the duke's not very far from here, fell in love with this girl of mine; and in short, how I know not, they came together, and under the promise of marrying her he made a fool of my daughter, and will not keep his word. And though my lord the duke is aware of it (for I have complained to him, not once but many and many a time, and entreated him to order the farmer to marry my daughter), he turns a deaf ear and will scarcely listen to me; the reason being that as the deceiver's father is so rich, and lends him money, and is constantly going security for his debts, he does not like to offend or annoy him in any way. Now, senor, I want your worship to take it upon yourself to redress this wrong either by entreaty or by arms; for by what all the world says you came into it to redress grievances and right wrongs and help the unfortunate. Let your worship put before you the unprotected condition of my daughter, her youth, and all the perfections I have said she possesses; and before God and on my conscience, out of all the damsels my lady has, there is not one that comes up to the sole of her shoe, and the one they call Altisidora, and look upon as the boldest and gayest of them, put in comparison with my daughter, does not come within two leagues of her. For I would have you know, senor, all is not gold that glitters, and that same little Altisidora has more forwardness than good looks, and more impudence than modesty; besides being not very sound, for she has such a disagreeable breath that one cannot bear to be near her for a moment; and even my lady the duchess — but I'll hold my tongue, for they say that walls have ears."

"For heaven's sake, Dona Rodriguez, what ails my lady the duchess?" asked Don Quixote.

"Adjured in that way," replied the duenna, "I cannot help answering the question and telling the whole truth. Senor Don Quixote, have you observed the comeliness of my lady the duchess, that smooth complexion of hers like a burnished polished sword, those two cheeks of milk and carmine, that gay lively step with which she treads or rather seems to spurn the earth, so that one would fancy she went radiating health wherever she passed? Well then, let me tell you

she may thank, first of all God, for this, and next, two issues that she has, one in each leg, by which all the evil humours, of which the doctors say she is full, are discharged.”

“Blessed Virgin!” exclaimed Don Quixote; “and is it possible that my lady the duchess has drains of that sort? I would not have believed it if the barefoot friars had told it me; but as the lady Dona Rodriguez says so, it must be so. But surely such issues, and in such places, do not discharge humours, but liquid amber. Verily, I do believe now that this practice of opening issues is a very important matter for the health.”

Don Quixote had hardly said this, when the chamber door flew open with a loud bang, and with the start the noise gave her Dona Rodriguez let the candle fall from her hand, and the room was left as dark as a wolf’s mouth, as the saying is. Suddenly the poor duenna felt two hands seize her by the throat, so tightly that she could not croak, while some one else, without uttering a word, very briskly hoisted up her petticoats, and with what seemed to be a slipper began to lay on so heartily that anyone would have felt pity for her; but although Don Quixote felt it he never stirred from his bed, but lay quiet and silent, nay apprehensive that his turn for a drubbing might be coming. Nor was the apprehension an idle one; one; for leaving the duenna (who did not dare to cry out) well basted, the silent executioners fell upon Don Quixote, and stripping him of the sheet and the coverlet, they pinched him so fast and so hard that he was driven to defend himself with his fists, and all this in marvellous silence. The battle lasted nearly half an hour, and then the phantoms fled; Dona Rodriguez gathered up her skirts, and bemoaning her fate went out without saying a word to Don Quixote, and he, sorely pinched, puzzled, and dejected, remained alone, and there we will leave him, wondering who could have been the perverse enchanter who had reduced him to such a state; but that shall be told in due season, for Sancho claims our attention, and the methodical arrangement of the story demands it.





## CHAPTER XLIX.

### OF WHAT HAPPENED SANCHO IN MAKING THE ROUND OF HIS ISLAND



We left the great governor angered and irritated by that portrait-painting rogue of a farmer who, instructed the majordomo, as the majordomo was by the duke, tried to practise upon him; he however, fool, boor, and clown as he was, held his own against them all, saying to those round him and to Doctor Pedro Recio, who as soon as the private business of the duke's letter was disposed of had returned to the room, "Now I see plainly enough that judges and governors ought to be and must be made of brass not to feel the importunities of the applicants that at

all times and all seasons insist on being heard, and having their business despatched, and their own affairs and no others attended to, come what may; and if the poor judge does not hear them and settle the matter — either because he cannot or because that is not the time set apart for hearing them — forthwith they abuse him, and run him down, and gnaw at his bones, and even pick holes in his pedigree. You silly, stupid applicant, don't be in a hurry; wait for the proper time and season for doing business; don't come at dinner-hour, or at bed-time; for judges are only flesh and blood, and must give to Nature what she naturally demands of them; all except myself, for in my case I give her nothing to eat, thanks to Senor Doctor Pedro Recio Tirteafuera here, who would have me die of hunger, and declares that death to be life; and the same sort of life may God give him and all his kind — I mean the bad doctors; for the good ones deserve palms and laurels."

All who knew Sancho Panza were astonished to hear him speak so elegantly, and did not know what to attribute it to unless it were that office and grave responsibility either smarten or stupefy men's wits. At last Doctor Pedro Recio Agilers of Tirteafuera promised to let him have supper that night though it might be in contravention of all the aphorisms of Hippocrates. With this the governor was satisfied and looked forward to the approach of night and supper-time with great anxiety; and though time, to his mind, stood still and made no progress, nevertheless the hour he so longed for came, and they gave him a beef salad with onions and some boiled calves' feet rather far gone. At this he fell to with greater relish than if they had given him francolins from Milan, pheasants from Rome, veal from Sorrento, partridges from Moron, or geese from Lavajos, and turning to the doctor at supper he said to him, "Look here, senor doctor, for the future don't trouble yourself about giving me dainty things or choice dishes to eat, for it will be only taking my stomach off its hinges; it is accustomed to goat, cow, bacon, hung beef, turnips and onions; and if by any chance it is given these palace dishes, it receives them squeamishly, and sometimes with loathing. What the head-carver had best do is to serve me with what they call ollas podridas (and the rottener they are the better they smell); and he can put whatever he likes into them, so long as it is good to eat, and I'll be obliged to him, and will requite him some day. But let nobody play pranks on me, for either we are or we are not; let us live and eat in peace and good-fellowship, for when God sends the dawn, he sends it for all. I mean to govern this island without giving up a right or taking a bribe; let everyone keep his eye open, and look out for the arrow; for I can tell them 'the devil's in Cantillana,' and if they drive me to it they'll see something that will astonish them. Nay! make yourself honey and the flies eat you."

“Of a truth, senor governor,” said the carver, “your worship is in the right of it in everything you have said; and I promise you in the name of all the inhabitants of this island that they will serve your worship with all zeal, affection, and goodwill, for the mild kind of government you have given a sample of to begin with, leaves them no ground for doing or thinking anything to your worship’s disadvantage.”

“That I believe,” said Sancho; “and they would be great fools if they did or thought otherwise; once more I say, see to my feeding and my Dapple’s for that is the great point and what is most to the purpose; and when the hour comes let us go the rounds, for it is my intention to purge this island of all manner of uncleanness and of all idle good-for-nothing vagabonds; for I would have you know that lazy idlers are the same thing in a State as the drones in a hive, that eat up the honey the industrious bees make. I mean to protect the husbandman, to preserve to the gentleman his privileges, to reward the virtuous, and above all to respect religion and honour its ministers. What say you to that, my friends? Is there anything in what I say, or am I talking to no purpose?”

“There is so much in what your worship says, senor governor,” said the majordomo, “that I am filled with wonder when I see a man like your worship, entirely without learning (for I believe you have none at all), say such things, and so full of sound maxims and sage remarks, very different from what was expected of your worship’s intelligence by those who sent us or by us who came here. Every day we see something new in this world; jokes become realities, and the jokers find the tables turned upon them.”

Night came, and with the permission of Doctor Pedro Recio, the governor had supper. They then got ready to go the rounds, and he started with the majordomo, the secretary, the head-carver, the chronicler charged with recording his deeds, and alguacils and notaries enough to form a fair-sized squadron. In the midst marched Sancho with his staff, as fine a sight as one could wish to see, and but a few streets of the town had been traversed when they heard a noise as of a clashing of swords. They hastened to the spot, and found that the combatants were but two, who seeing the authorities approaching stood still, and one of them exclaimed, “Help, in the name of God and the king! Are men to be allowed to rob in the middle of this town, and rush out and attack people in the very streets?”

“Be calm, my good man,” said Sancho, “and tell me what the cause of this quarrel is; for I am the governor.”

Said the other combatant, “Senor governor, I will tell you in a very few words. Your worship must know that this gentleman has just now won more than a thousand reals in that gambling house opposite, and God knows how. I was

there, and gave more than one doubtful point in his favour, very much against what my conscience told me. He made off with his winnings, and when I made sure he was going to give me a crown or so at least by way of a present, as it is usual and customary to give men of quality of my sort who stand by to see fair or foul play, and back up swindles, and prevent quarrels, he pocketed his money and left the house. Indignant at this I followed him, and speaking him fairly and civilly asked him to give me if it were only eight reals, for he knows I am an honest man and that I have neither profession nor property, for my parents never brought me up to any or left me any; but the rogue, who is a greater thief than Cacus and a greater sharper than Andradilla, would not give me more than four reals; so your worship may see how little shame and conscience he has. But by my faith if you had not come up I'd have made him disgorge his winnings, and he'd have learned what the range of the steel-yard was."

"What say you to this?" asked Sancho. The other replied that all his antagonist said was true, and that he did not choose to give him more than four reals because he very often gave him money; and that those who expected presents ought to be civil and take what is given them with a cheerful countenance, and not make any claim against winners unless they know them for certain to be sharpers and their winnings to be unfairly won; and that there could be no better proof that he himself was an honest man than his having refused to give anything; for sharpers always pay tribute to lookers-on who know them.

"That is true," said the majordomo; "let your worship consider what is to be done with these men."

"What is to be done," said Sancho, "is this; you, the winner, be you good, bad, or indifferent, give this assailant of yours a hundred reals at once, and you must disburse thirty more for the poor prisoners; and you who have neither profession nor property, and hang about the island in idleness, take these hundred reals now, and some time of the day to-morrow quit the island under sentence of banishment for ten years, and under pain of completing it in another life if you violate the sentence, for I'll hang you on a gibbet, or at least the hangman will by my orders; not a word from either of you, or I'll make him feel my hand."

The one paid down the money and the other took it, and the latter quitted the island, while the other went home; and then the governor said, "Either I am not good for much, or I'll get rid of these gambling houses, for it strikes me they are very mischievous."

"This one at least," said one of the notaries, "your worship will not be able to get rid of, for a great man owns it, and what he loses every year is beyond all comparison more than what he makes by the cards. On the minor gambling houses your worship may exercise your power, and it is they that do most harm

and shelter the most barefaced practices; for in the houses of lords and gentlemen of quality the notorious sharpers dare not attempt to play their tricks; and as the vice of gambling has become common, it is better that men should play in houses of repute than in some tradesman's, where they catch an unlucky fellow in the small hours of the morning and skin him alive."

"I know already, notary, that there is a good deal to be said on that point," said Sancho.

And now a tipstaff came up with a young man in his grasp, and said, "Senor governor, this youth was coming towards us, and as soon as he saw the officers of justice he turned about and ran like a deer, a sure proof that he must be some evildoer; I ran after him, and had it not been that he stumbled and fell, I should never have caught him."

"What did you run for, fellow?" said Sancho.

To which the young man replied, "Senor, it was to avoid answering all the questions officers of justice put."

"What are you by trade?"

"A weaver."

"And what do you weave?"

"Lance heads, with your worship's good leave."

"You're facetious with me! You plume yourself on being a wag? Very good; and where were you going just now?"

"To take the air, senor."

"And where does one take the air in this island?"

"Where it blows."

"Good! your answers are very much to the point; you are a smart youth; but take notice that I am the air, and that I blow upon you a-stern, and send you to gaol. Ho there! lay hold of him and take him off; I'll make him sleep there to-night without air."

"By God," said the young man, "your worship will make me sleep in gaol just as soon as make me king."

"Why shan't I make thee sleep in gaol?" said Sancho. "Have I not the power to arrest thee and release thee whenever I like?"

"All the power your worship has," said the young man, "won't be able to make me sleep in gaol."

"How? not able!" said Sancho; "take him away at once where he'll see his mistake with his own eyes, even if the gaoler is willing to exert his interested generosity on his behalf; for I'll lay a penalty of two thousand ducats on him if he allows him to stir a step from the prison."

"That's ridiculous," said the young man; "the fact is, all the men on earth will

not make me sleep in prison.”

“Tell me, you devil,” said Sancho, “have you got any angel that will deliver you, and take off the irons I am going to order them to put upon you?”

“Now, senor governor,” said the young man in a sprightly manner, “let us be reasonable and come to the point. Granted your worship may order me to be taken to prison, and to have irons and chains put on me, and to be shut up in a cell, and may lay heavy penalties on the gaoler if he lets me out, and that he obeys your orders; still, if I don’t choose to sleep, and choose to remain awake all night without closing an eye, will your worship with all your power be able to make me sleep if I don’t choose?”

“No, truly,” said the secretary, “and the fellow has made his point.”

“So then,” said Sancho, “it would be entirely of your own choice you would keep from sleeping; not in opposition to my will?”

“No, senor,” said the youth, “certainly not.”

“Well then, go, and God be with you,” said Sancho; “be off home to sleep, and God give you sound sleep, for I don’t want to rob you of it; but for the future, let me advise you don’t joke with the authorities, because you may come across some one who will bring down the joke on your own skull.”

The young man went his way, and the governor continued his round, and shortly afterwards two tipstaffs came up with a man in custody, and said, “Senor governor, this person, who seems to be a man, is not so, but a woman, and not an ill-favoured one, in man’s clothes.” They raised two or three lanterns to her face, and by their light they distinguished the features of a woman to all appearance of the age of sixteen or a little more, with her hair gathered into a gold and green silk net, and fair as a thousand pearls. They scanned her from head to foot, and observed that she had on red silk stockings with garters of white taffety bordered with gold and pearl; her breeches were of green and gold stuff, and under an open jacket or jerkin of the same she wore a doublet of the finest white and gold cloth; her shoes were white and such as men wear; she carried no sword at her belt, but only a richly ornamented dagger, and on her fingers she had several handsome rings. In short, the girl seemed fair to look at in the eyes of all, and none of those who beheld her knew her, the people of the town said they could not imagine who she was, and those who were in the secret of the jokes that were to be practised upon Sancho were the ones who were most surprised, for this incident or discovery had not been arranged by them; and they watched anxiously to see how the affair would end.

Sancho was fascinated by the girl’s beauty, and he asked her who she was, where she was going, and what had induced her to dress herself in that garb. She with her eyes fixed on the ground answered in modest confusion, “I cannot tell

you, senor, before so many people what it is of such consequence to me to have kept secret; one thing I wish to be known, that I am no thief or evildoer, but only an unhappy maiden whom the power of jealousy has led to break through the respect that is due to modesty.”

Hearing this the majordomo said to Sancho, “Make the people stand back, senor governor, that this lady may say what she wishes with less embarrassment.”

Sancho gave the order, and all except the majordomo, the head-carver, and the secretary fell back. Finding herself then in the presence of no more, the damsel went on to say, “I am the daughter, sirs, of Pedro Perez Mazorca, the wool-farmer of this town, who is in the habit of coming very often to my father’s house.”

“That won’t do, senora,” said the majordomo; “for I know Pedro Perez very well, and I know he has no child at all, either son or daughter; and besides, though you say he is your father, you add then that he comes very often to your father’s house.”

“I had already noticed that,” said Sancho.

“I am confused just now, sirs,” said the damsel, “and I don’t know what I am saying; but the truth is that I am the daughter of Diego de la Llana, whom you must all know.”

“Ay, that will do,” said the majordomo; “for I know Diego de la Llana, and know that he is a gentleman of position and a rich man, and that he has a son and a daughter, and that since he was left a widower nobody in all this town can speak of having seen his daughter’s face; for he keeps her so closely shut up that he does not give even the sun a chance of seeing her; and for all that report says she is extremely beautiful.”

“It is true,” said the damsel, “and I am that daughter; whether report lies or not as to my beauty, you, sirs, will have decided by this time, as you have seen me;” and with this she began to weep bitterly.

On seeing this the secretary leant over to the head-carver’s ear, and said to him in a low voice, “Something serious has no doubt happened this poor maiden, that she goes wandering from home in such a dress and at such an hour, and one of her rank too.” “There can be no doubt about it,” returned the carver, “and moreover her tears confirm your suspicion.” Sancho gave her the best comfort he could, and entreated her to tell them without any fear what had happened her, as they would all earnestly and by every means in their power endeavour to relieve her.

“The fact is, sirs,” said she, “that my father has kept me shut up these ten years, for so long is it since the earth received my mother. Mass is said at home

in a sumptuous chapel, and all this time I have seen but the sun in the heaven by day, and the moon and the stars by night; nor do I know what streets are like, or plazas, or churches, or even men, except my father and a brother I have, and Pedro Perez the wool-farmer; whom, because he came frequently to our house, I took it into my head to call my father, to avoid naming my own. This seclusion and the restrictions laid upon my going out, were it only to church, have been keeping me unhappy for many a day and month past; I longed to see the world, or at least the town where I was born, and it did not seem to me that this wish was inconsistent with the respect maidens of good quality should have for themselves. When I heard them talking of bull-fights taking place, and of javelin games, and of acting plays, I asked my brother, who is a year younger than myself, to tell me what sort of things these were, and many more that I had never seen; he explained them to me as well as he could, but the only effect was to kindle in me a still stronger desire to see them. At last, to cut short the story of my ruin, I begged and entreated my brother — O that I had never made such an entreaty-” And once more she gave way to a burst of weeping.

“Proceed, senora,” said the majordomo, “and finish your story of what has happened to you, for your words and tears are keeping us all in suspense.”

“I have but little more to say, though many a tear to shed,” said the damsel; “for ill-placed desires can only be paid for in some such way.”

The maiden’s beauty had made a deep impression on the head-carver’s heart, and he again raised his lantern for another look at her, and thought they were not tears she was shedding, but seed-pearl or dew of the meadow, nay, he exalted them still higher, and made Oriental pearls of them, and fervently hoped her misfortune might not be so great a one as her tears and sobs seemed to indicate. The governor was losing patience at the length of time the girl was taking to tell her story, and told her not to keep them waiting any longer; for it was late, and there still remained a good deal of the town to be gone over.

She, with broken sobs and half-suppressed sighs, went on to say, “My misfortune, my misadventure, is simply this, that I entreated my brother to dress me up as a man in a suit of his clothes, and take me some night, when our father was asleep, to see the whole town; he, overcome by my entreaties, consented, and dressing me in this suit and himself in clothes of mine that fitted him as if made for him (for he has not a hair on his chin, and might pass for a very beautiful young girl), to-night, about an hour ago, more or less, we left the house, and guided by our youthful and foolish impulse we made the circuit of the whole town, and then, as we were about to return home, we saw a great troop of people coming, and my brother said to me, ‘Sister, this must be the round, stir your feet and put wings to them, and follow me as fast as you can, lest they



recognise us, for that would be a bad business for us;’ and so saying he turned about and began, I cannot say to run but to fly; in less than six paces I fell from fright, and then the officer of justice came up and carried me before your worships, where I find myself put to shame before all these people as whimsical and vicious.”

“So then, senora,” said Sancho, “no other mishap has befallen you, nor was it jealousy that made you leave home, as you said at the beginning of your story?”

“Nothing has happened me,” said she, “nor was it jealousy that brought me out, but merely a longing to see the world, which did not go beyond seeing the streets of this town.”

The appearance of the tipstaffs with her brother in custody, whom one of them had overtaken as he ran away from his sister, now fully confirmed the truth of what the damsel said. He had nothing on but a rich petticoat and a short blue damask cloak with fine gold lace, and his head was uncovered and adorned only with its own hair, which looked like rings of gold, so bright and curly was it. The governor, the majordomo, and the carver went aside with him, and, unheard by his sister, asked him how he came to be in that dress, and he with no less shame and embarrassment told exactly the same story as his sister, to the great delight of the enamoured carver; the governor, however, said to them, “In truth, young lady and gentleman, this has been a very childish affair, and to explain your folly and rashness there was no necessity for all this delay and all these tears and sighs; for if you had said we are so-and-so, and we escaped from our father’s house in this way in order to ramble about, out of mere curiosity and with no other object, there would have been an end of the matter, and none of these little sobs and tears and all the rest of it.”

“That is true,” said the damsel, “but you see the confusion I was in was so great it did not let me behave as I ought.”

“No harm has been done,” said Sancho; “come, we will leave you at your father’s house; perhaps they will not have missed you; and another time don’t be so childish or eager to see the world; for a respectable damsel should have a broken leg and keep at home; and the woman and the hen by gadding about are soon lost; and she who is eager to see is also eager to be seen; I say no more.”

The youth thanked the governor for his kind offer to take them home, and they directed their steps towards the house, which was not far off. On reaching it the youth threw a pebble up at a grating, and immediately a woman-servant who was waiting for them came down and opened the door to them, and they went in, leaving the party marvelling as much at their grace and beauty as at the fancy they had for seeing the world by night and without quitting the village; which, however, they set down to their youth.

The head-carver was left with a heart pierced through and through, and he made up his mind on the spot to demand the damsel in marriage of her father on the morrow, making sure she would not be refused him as he was a servant of the duke's; and even to Sancho ideas and schemes of marrying the youth to his daughter Sanchica suggested themselves, and he resolved to open the negotiation at the proper season, persuading himself that no husband could be refused to a governor's daughter. And so the night's round came to an end, and a couple of days later the government, whereby all his plans were overthrown and swept away, as will be seen farther on.



## CHAPTER L.

WHEREIN IS SET FORTH WHO THE ENCHANTERS AND  
EXECUTIONERS WERE WHO FLOGGED THE DUENNA AND PINCHED  
DON QUIXOTE, AND ALSO WHAT BEFELL THE PAGE WHO CARRIED  
THE LETTER TO TERESA PANZA, SANCHE PANZA'S WIFE



Cide Hamete, the painstaking investigator of the minute points of this veracious history, says that when Dona Rodriguez left her own room to go to Don Quixote's, another duenna who slept with her observed her, and as all duennas are fond of prying, listening, and sniffing, she followed her so silently that the good Rodriguez never perceived it; and as soon as the duenna saw her enter Don Quixote's room, not to fail in a duenna's invariable practice of tattling, she hurried off that instant to report to the duchess how Dona Rodriguez was closeted with Don Quixote. The duchess told the duke, and asked him to let

her and Altisidora go and see what the said duenna wanted with Don Quixote. The duke gave them leave, and the pair cautiously and quietly crept to the door of the room and posted themselves so close to it that they could hear all that was said inside. But when the duchess heard how the Rodriguez had made public the Aranjuez of her issues she could not restrain herself, nor Altisidora either; and so, filled with rage and thirsting for vengeance, they burst into the room and tormented Don Quixote and flogged the duenna in the manner already described; for indignities offered to their charms and self-esteem mightily provoke the anger of women and make them eager for revenge. The duchess told the duke what had happened, and he was much amused by it; and she, in pursuance of her design of making merry and diverting herself with Don Quixote, despatched the page who had played the part of Dulcinea in the negotiations for her disenchantment (which Sancho Panza in the cares of government had forgotten all about) to Teresa Panza his wife with her husband's letter and another from herself, and also a great string of fine coral beads as a present.

Now the history says this page was very sharp and quick-witted; and eager to serve his lord and lady he set off very willingly for Sancho's village. Before he entered it he observed a number of women washing in a brook, and asked them if they could tell him whether there lived there a woman of the name of Teresa Panza, wife of one Sancho Panza, squire to a knight called Don Quixote of La Mancha. At the question a young girl who was washing stood up and said, "Teresa Panza is my mother, and that Sancho is my father, and that knight is our master."

"Well then, miss," said the page, "come and show me where your mother is, for I bring her a letter and a present from your father."

"That I will with all my heart, senor," said the girl, who seemed to be about fourteen, more or less; and leaving the clothes she was washing to one of her companions, and without putting anything on her head or feet, for she was bare-legged and had her hair hanging about her, away she skipped in front of the page's horse, saying, "Come, your worship, our house is at the entrance of the town, and my mother is there, sorrowful enough at not having had any news of my father this ever so long."

"Well," said the page, "I am bringing her such good news that she will have reason to thank God."

And then, skipping, running, and capering, the girl reached the town, but before going into the house she called out at the door, "Come out, mother Teresa, come out, come out; here's a gentleman with letters and other things from my good father." At these words her mother Teresa Panza came out spinning a bundle of flax, in a grey petticoat (so short was it one would have

fancied “they to her shame had cut it short”), a grey bodice of the same stuff, and a smock. She was not very old, though plainly past forty, strong, healthy, vigorous, and sun-dried; and seeing her daughter and the page on horseback, she exclaimed, “What’s this, child? What gentleman is this?”

“A servant of my lady, Dona Teresa Panza,” replied the page; and suiting the action to the word he flung himself off his horse, and with great humility advanced to kneel before the lady Teresa, saying, “Let me kiss your hand, Senora Dona Teresa, as the lawful and only wife of Senor Don Sancho Panza, rightful governor of the island of Barataria.”

“Ah, senor, get up, do that,” said Teresa; “for I’m not a bit of a court lady, but only a poor country woman, the daughter of a clodcrusher, and the wife of a squire-errant and not of any governor at all.”

“You are,” said the page, “the most worthy wife of a most arch-worthy governor; and as a proof of what I say accept this letter and this present;” and at the same time he took out of his pocket a string of coral beads with gold clasps, and placed it on her neck, and said, “This letter is from his lordship the governor, and the other as well as these coral beads from my lady the duchess, who sends me to your worship.”

Teresa stood lost in astonishment, and her daughter just as much, and the girl said, “May I die but our master Don Quixote’s at the bottom of this; he must have given father the government or county he so often promised him.”

“That is the truth,” said the page; “for it is through Senor Don Quixote that Senor Sancho is now governor of the island of Barataria, as will be seen by this letter.”

“Will your worship read it to me, noble sir?” said Teresa; “for though I can spin I can’t read, not a scrap.”

“Nor I either,” said Sanchica; “but wait a bit, and I’ll go and fetch some one who can read it, either the curate himself or the bachelor Samson Carrasco, and they’ll come gladly to hear any news of my father.”

“There is no need to fetch anybody,” said the page; “for though I can’t spin I can read, and I’ll read it;” and so he read it through, but as it has been already given it is not inserted here; and then he took out the other one from the duchess, which ran as follows:

Friend Teresa, — Your husband Sancho’s good qualities, of heart as well as of head, induced and compelled me to request my husband the duke to give him the government of one of his many islands. I am told he governs like a gerfalcon, of which I am very glad, and my lord the duke, of course, also; and I am very thankful to heaven that I have not made a mistake in choosing him for that same government; for I would have Senora Teresa know that a good governor is hard

to find in this world and may God make me as good as Sancho's way of governing. Herewith I send you, my dear, a string of coral beads with gold clasps; I wish they were Oriental pearls; but "he who gives thee a bone does not wish to see thee dead;" a time will come when we shall become acquainted and meet one another, but God knows the future. Commend me to your daughter Sanchica, and tell her from me to hold herself in readiness, for I mean to make a high match for her when she least expects it. They tell me there are big acorns in your village; send me a couple of dozen or so, and I shall value them greatly as coming from your hand; and write to me at length to assure me of your health and well-being; and if there be anything you stand in need of, it is but to open your mouth, and that shall be the measure; and so God keep you.

From this place. Your loving friend, THE DUCHESS.

"Ah, what a good, plain, lowly lady!" said Teresa when she heard the letter; "that I may be buried with ladies of that sort, and not the gentlewomen we have in this town, that fancy because they are gentlewomen the wind must not touch them, and go to church with as much airs as if they were queens, no less, and seem to think they are disgraced if they look at a farmer's wife! And see here how this good lady, for all she's a duchess, calls me 'friend,' and treats me as if I was her equal — and equal may I see her with the tallest church-tower in La Mancha! And as for the acorns, senor, I'll send her ladyship a peck and such big ones that one might come to see them as a show and a wonder. And now, Sanchica, see that the gentleman is comfortable; put up his horse, and get some eggs out of the stable, and cut plenty of bacon, and let's give him his dinner like a prince; for the good news he has brought, and his own bonny face deserve it all; and meanwhile I'll run out and give the neighbours the news of our good luck, and father curate, and Master Nicholas the barber, who are and always have been such friends of thy father's."

"That I will, mother," said Sanchica; "but mind, you must give me half of that string; for I don't think my lady the duchess could have been so stupid as to send it all to you."

"It is all for thee, my child," said Teresa; "but let me wear it round my neck for a few days; for verily it seems to make my heart glad."

"You will be glad too," said the page, "when you see the bundle there is in this portmanteau, for it is a suit of the finest cloth, that the governor only wore one day out hunting and now sends, all for Senora Sanchica."

"May he live a thousand years," said Sanchica, "and the bearer as many, nay two thousand, if needful."

With this Teresa hurried out of the house with the letters, and with the string of beads round her neck, and went along thrumming the letters as if they were a

tambourine, and by chance coming across the curate and Samson Carrasco she began capering and saying, "None of us poor now, faith! We've got a little government! Ay, let the finest fine lady tackle me, and I'll give her a setting down!"

"What's all this, Teresa Panza," said they; "what madness is this, and what papers are those?"

"The madness is only this," said she, "that these are the letters of duchesses and governors, and these I have on my neck are fine coral beads, with avemarias and paternosters of beaten gold, and I am a governess."

"God help us," said the curate, "we don't understand you, Teresa, or know what you are talking about."

"There, you may see it yourselves," said Teresa, and she handed them the letters.

The curate read them out for Samson Carrasco to hear, and Samson and he regarded one another with looks of astonishment at what they had read, and the bachelor asked who had brought the letters. Teresa in reply bade them come with her to her house and they would see the messenger, a most elegant youth, who had brought another present which was worth as much more. The curate took the coral beads from her neck and examined them again and again, and having satisfied himself as to their fineness he fell to wondering afresh, and said, "By the gown I wear I don't know what to say or think of these letters and presents; on the one hand I can see and feel the fineness of these coral beads, and on the other I read how a duchess sends to beg for a couple of dozen of acorns."

"Square that if you can," said Carrasco; "well, let's go and see the messenger, and from him we'll learn something about this mystery that has turned up."

They did so, and Teresa returned with them. They found the page sifting a little barley for his horse, and Sanchica cutting a rasher of bacon to be paved with eggs for his dinner. His looks and his handsome apparel pleased them both greatly; and after they had saluted him courteously, and he them, Samson begged him to give them his news, as well of Don Quixote as of Sancho Panza, for, he said, though they had read the letters from Sancho and her ladyship the duchess, they were still puzzled and could not make out what was meant by Sancho's government, and above all of an island, when all or most of those in the Mediterranean belonged to his Majesty.

To this the page replied, "As to Senor Sancho Panza's being a governor there is no doubt whatever; but whether it is an island or not that he governs, with that I have nothing to do; suffice it that it is a town of more than a thousand inhabitants; with regard to the acorns I may tell you my lady the duchess is so unpretending and unassuming that, not to speak of sending to beg for acorns



from a peasant woman, she has been known to send to ask for the loan of a comb from one of her neighbours; for I would have your worships know that the ladies of Aragon, though they are just as illustrious, are not so punctilious and haughty as the Castilian ladies; they treat people with greater familiarity.”

In the middle of this conversation Sanchica came in with her skirt full of eggs, and said she to the page, “Tell me, senor, does my father wear trunk-hose since he has been governor?”

“I have not noticed,” said the page; “but no doubt he wears them.”

“Ah! my God!” said Sanchica, “what a sight it must be to see my father in tights! Isn’t it odd that ever since I was born I have had a longing to see my father in trunk-hose?”

“As things go you will see that if you live,” said the page; “by God he is in the way to take the road with a sunshade if the government only lasts him two months more.”

The curate and the bachelor could see plainly enough that the page spoke in a waggish vein; but the fineness of the coral beads, and the hunting suit that Sancho sent (for Teresa had already shown it to them) did away with the impression; and they could not help laughing at Sanchica’s wish, and still more when Teresa said, “Senor curate, look about if there’s anybody here going to Madrid or Toledo, to buy me a hooped petticoat, a proper fashionable one of the best quality; for indeed and indeed I must do honour to my husband’s government as well as I can; nay, if I am put to it and have to, I’ll go to Court and set a coach like all the world; for she who has a governor for her husband may very well have one and keep one.”

“And why not, mother!” said Sanchica; “would to God it were to-day instead of to-morrow, even though they were to say when they saw me seated in the coach with my mother, ‘See that rubbish, that garlic-stuffed fellow’s daughter, how she goes stretched at her ease in a coach as if she was a she-pope!’ But let them tramp through the mud, and let me go in my coach with my feet off the ground. Bad luck to backbiters all over the world; ‘let me go warm and the people may laugh.’ Do I say right, mother?”

“To be sure you do, my child,” said Teresa; “and all this good luck, and even more, my good Sancho foretold me; and thou wilt see, my daughter, he won’t stop till he has made me a countess; for to make a beginning is everything in luck; and as I have heard thy good father say many a time (for besides being thy father he’s the father of proverbs too), ‘When they offer thee a heifer, run with a halter; when they offer thee a government, take it; when they would give thee a county, seize it; when they say, “Here, here!” to thee with something good, swallow it.’ Oh no! go to sleep, and don’t answer the strokes of good fortune and

the lucky chances that are knocking at the door of your house!”

“And what do I care,” added Sanchica, “whether anybody says when he sees me holding my head up, ‘The dog saw himself in hempen breeches,’ and the rest of it?”

Hearing this the curate said, “I do believe that all this family of the Panzas are born with a sackful of proverbs in their insides, every one of them; I never saw one of them that does not pour them out at all times and on all occasions.”

“That is true,” said the page, “for Senor Governor Sancho utters them at every turn; and though a great many of them are not to the purpose, still they amuse one, and my lady the duchess and the duke praise them highly.”

“Then you still maintain that all this about Sancho’s government is true, senor,” said the bachelor, “and that there actually is a duchess who sends him presents and writes to him? Because we, although we have handled the present and read the letters, don’t believe it and suspect it to be something in the line of our fellow-townsmen Don Quixote, who fancies that everything is done by enchantment; and for this reason I am almost ready to say that I’d like to touch and feel your worship to see whether you are a mere ambassador of the imagination or a man of flesh and blood.”

“All I know, sirs,” replied the page, “is that I am a real ambassador, and that Senor Sancho Panza is governor as a matter of fact, and that my lord and lady the duke and duchess can give, and have given him this same government, and that I have heard the said Sancho Panza bears himself very stoutly therein; whether there be any enchantment in all this or not, it is for your worships to settle between you; for that’s all I know by the oath I swear, and that is by the life of my parents whom I have still alive, and love dearly.”

“It may be so,” said the bachelor; “but dubitat Augustinus.”

“Doubt who will,” said the page; “what I have told you is the truth, and that will always rise above falsehood as oil above water; if not operibus credite, et non verbis. Let one of you come with me, and he will see with his eyes what he does not believe with his ears.”

“It’s for me to make that trip,” said Sanchica; “take me with you, senor, behind you on your horse; for I’ll go with all my heart to see my father.”

“Governors’ daughters,” said the page, “must not travel along the roads alone, but accompanied by coaches and litters and a great number of attendants.”

“By God,” said Sanchica, “I can go just as well mounted on a she-ass as in a coach; what a dainty lass you must take me for!”

“Hush, girl,” said Teresa; “you don’t know what you’re talking about; the gentleman is quite right, for ‘as the time so the behaviour,’ when it was Sancho it was ‘Sancha;’ when it is governor it’s ‘senora;’ I don’t know if I’m right.”

“Senora Teresa says more than she is aware of,” said the page; “and now give me something to eat and let me go at once, for I mean to return this evening.”

“Come and do penance with me,” said the curate at this; “for Senora Teresa has more will than means to serve so worthy a guest.”

The page refused, but had to consent at last for his own sake; and the curate took him home with him very gladly, in order to have an opportunity of questioning him at leisure about Don Quixote and his doings. The bachelor offered to write the letters in reply for Teresa; but she did not care to let him mix himself up in her affairs, for she thought him somewhat given to joking; and so she gave a cake and a couple of eggs to a young acolyte who was a penman, and he wrote for her two letters, one for her husband and the other for the duchess, dictated out of her own head, which are not the worst inserted in this great history, as will be seen farther on.



## CHAPTER LI.

### OF THE PROGRESS OF SANCHO'S GOVERNMENT, AND OTHER SUCH ENTERTAINING MATTERS



Day came after the night of the governor's round; a night which the head-carver passed without sleeping, so were his thoughts of the face and air and beauty of the disguised damsel, while the majordomo spent what was left of it in writing an account to his lord and lady of all Sancho said and did, being as much amazed at his sayings as at his doings, for there was a mixture of shrewdness and simplicity in all his words and deeds. The senor governor got up, and by Doctor Pedro Recio's directions they made him break his fast on a little conserve and four sups of cold water, which Sancho would have readily exchanged for a piece

of bread and a bunch of grapes; but seeing there was no help for it, he submitted with no little sorrow of heart and discomfort of stomach; Pedro Recio having persuaded him that light and delicate diet enlivened the wits, and that was what was most essential for persons placed in command and in responsible situations, where they have to employ not only the bodily powers but those of the mind also.

By means of this sophistry Sancho was made to endure hunger, and hunger so keen that in his heart he cursed the government, and even him who had given it to him; however, with his hunger and his conserve he undertook to deliver judgments that day, and the first thing that came before him was a question that was submitted to him by a stranger, in the presence of the majordomo and the other attendants, and it was in these words: "Senor, a large river separated two districts of one and the same lordship — will your worship please to pay attention, for the case is an important and a rather knotty one? Well then, on this river there was a bridge, and at one end of it a gallows, and a sort of tribunal, where four judges commonly sat to administer the law which the lord of river, bridge and the lordship had enacted, and which was to this effect, 'If anyone crosses by this bridge from one side to the other he shall declare on oath where he is going to and with what object; and if he swears truly, he shall be allowed to pass, but if falsely, he shall be put to death for it by hanging on the gallows erected there, without any remission.' Though the law and its severe penalty were known, many persons crossed, but in their declarations it was easy to see at once they were telling the truth, and the judges let them pass free. It happened, however, that one man, when they came to take his declaration, swore and said that by the oath he took he was going to die upon that gallows that stood there, and nothing else. The judges held a consultation over the oath, and they said, 'If we let this man pass free he has sworn falsely, and by the law he ought to die; but if we hang him, as he swore he was going to die on that gallows, and therefore swore the truth, by the same law he ought to go free.' It is asked of your worship, senor governor, what are the judges to do with this man? For they are still in doubt and perplexity; and having heard of your worship's acute and exalted intellect, they have sent me to entreat your worship on their behalf to give your opinion on this very intricate and puzzling case."

To this Sancho made answer, "Indeed those gentlemen the judges that send you to me might have spared themselves the trouble, for I have more of the obtuse than the acute in me; but repeat the case over again, so that I may understand it, and then perhaps I may be able to hit the point."

The querist repeated again and again what he had said before, and then Sancho said, "It seems to me I can set the matter right in a moment, and in this

way; the man swears that he is going to die upon the gallows; but if he dies upon it, he has sworn the truth, and by the law enacted deserves to go free and pass over the bridge; but if they don't hang him, then he has sworn falsely, and by the same law deserves to be hanged."

"It is as the senor governor says," said the messenger; "and as regards a complete comprehension of the case, there is nothing left to desire or hesitate about."

"Well then I say," said Sancho, "that of this man they should let pass the part that has sworn truly, and hang the part that has lied; and in this way the conditions of the passage will be fully complied with."

"But then, senor governor," replied the querist, "the man will have to be divided into two parts; and if he is divided of course he will die; and so none of the requirements of the law will be carried out, and it is absolutely necessary to comply with it."

"Look here, my good sir," said Sancho; "either I'm a numskull or else there is the same reason for this passenger dying as for his living and passing over the bridge; for if the truth saves him the falsehood equally condemns him; and that being the case it is my opinion you should say to the gentlemen who sent you to me that as the arguments for condemning him and for absolving him are exactly balanced, they should let him pass freely, as it is always more praiseworthy to do good than to do evil; this I would give signed with my name if I knew how to sign; and what I have said in this case is not out of my own head, but one of the many precepts my master Don Quixote gave me the night before I left to become governor of this island, that came into my mind, and it was this, that when there was any doubt about the justice of a case I should lean to mercy; and it is God's will that I should recollect it now, for it fits this case as if it was made for it."

"That is true," said the majordomo; "and I maintain that Lycurgus himself, who gave laws to the Lacedemonians, could not have pronounced a better decision than the great Panza has given; let the morning's audience close with this, and I will see that the senor governor has dinner entirely to his liking."

"That's all I ask for — fair play," said Sancho; "give me my dinner, and then let it rain cases and questions on me, and I'll despatch them in a twinkling."

The majordomo kept his word, for he felt it against his conscience to kill so wise a governor by hunger; particularly as he intended to have done with him that same night, playing off the last joke he was commissioned to practise upon him.

It came to pass, then, that after he had dined that day, in opposition to the rules and aphorisms of Doctor Tirteafuera, as they were taking away the cloth there came a courier with a letter from Don Quixote for the governor. Sancho

ordered the secretary to read it to himself, and if there was nothing in it that demanded secrecy to read it aloud. The secretary did so, and after he had skimmed the contents he said, "It may well be read aloud, for what Senor Don Quixote writes to your worship deserves to be printed or written in letters of gold, and it is as follows."

DON QUIXOTE OF LA MANCHA'S LETTER TO SANCHE PANZA,  
GOVERNOR OF THE ISLAND OF BARATARIA.

When I was expecting to hear of thy stupidities and blunders, friend Sancho, I have received intelligence of thy displays of good sense, for which I give special thanks to heaven that can raise the poor from the dunghill and of fools to make wise men. They tell me thou dost govern as if thou wert a man, and art a man as if thou wert a beast, so great is the humility wherewith thou dost comport thyself. But I would have thee bear in mind, Sancho, that very often it is fitting and necessary for the authority of office to resist the humility of the heart; for the seemly array of one who is invested with grave duties should be such as they require and not measured by what his own humble tastes may lead him to prefer. Dress well; a stick dressed up does not look like a stick; I do not say thou shouldst wear trinkets or fine raiment, or that being a judge thou shouldst dress like a soldier, but that thou shouldst array thyself in the apparel thy office requires, and that at the same time it be neat and handsome. To win the goodwill of the people thou governest there are two things, among others, that thou must do; one is to be civil to all (this, however, I told thee before), and the other to take care that food be abundant, for there is nothing that vexes the heart of the poor more than hunger and high prices. Make not many proclamations; but those thou makest take care that they be good ones, and above all that they be observed and carried out; for proclamations that are not observed are the same as if they did not exist; nay, they encourage the idea that the prince who had the wisdom and authority to make them had not the power to enforce them; and laws that threaten and are not enforced come to be like the log, the king of the frogs, that frightened them at first, but that in time they despised and mounted upon. Be a father to virtue and a stepfather to vice. Be not always strict, nor yet always lenient, but observe a mean between these two extremes, for in that is the aim of wisdom. Visit the gaols, the slaughter-houses, and the market-places; for the presence of the governor is of great importance in such places; it comforts the prisoners who are in hopes of a speedy release, it is the bugbear of the butchers who have then to give just weight, and it is the terror of the market-women for the same reason. Let it not be seen that thou art (even if perchance thou art, which I do not believe) covetous, a follower of women, or a glutton; for when the people and those that have dealings with thee become aware of thy special



weakness they will bring their batteries to bear upon thee in that quarter, till they have brought thee down to the depths of perdition. Consider and reconsider, con and con over again the advices and the instructions I gave thee before thy departure hence to thy government, and thou wilt see that in them, if thou dost follow them, thou hast a help at hand that will lighten for thee the troubles and difficulties that beset governors at every step. Write to thy lord and lady and show thyself grateful to them, for ingratitude is the daughter of pride, and one of the greatest sins we know of; and he who is grateful to those who have been good to him shows that he will be so to God also who has bestowed and still bestows so many blessings upon him.

My lady the duchess sent off a messenger with thy suit and another present to thy wife Teresa Panza; we expect the answer every moment. I have been a little indisposed through a certain scratching I came in for, not very much to the benefit of my nose; but it was nothing; for if there are enchanters who maltreat me, there are also some who defend me. Let me know if the majordomo who is with thee had any share in the Trifaldi performance, as thou didst suspect; and keep me informed of everything that happens thee, as the distance is so short; all the more as I am thinking of giving over very shortly this idle life I am now leading, for I was not born for it. A thing has occurred to me which I am inclined to think will put me out of favour with the duke and duchess; but though I am sorry for it I do not care, for after all I must obey my calling rather than their pleasure, in accordance with the common saying, *amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas*. I quote this Latin to thee because I conclude that since thou hast been a governor thou wilt have learned it. Adieu; God keep thee from being an object of pity to anyone.

Thy friend, DON QUIXOTE OF LA MANCHA.

Sancho listened to the letter with great attention, and it was praised and considered wise by all who heard it; he then rose up from table, and calling his secretary shut himself in with him in his own room, and without putting it off any longer set about answering his master Don Quixote at once; and he bade the secretary write down what he told him without adding or suppressing anything, which he did, and the answer was to the following effect.

SANCHO PANZA'S LETTER TO DON QUIXOTE OF LA MANCHA.

The pressure of business is so great upon me that I have no time to scratch my head or even to cut my nails; and I have them so long — God send a remedy for it. I say this, master of my soul, that you may not be surprised if I have not until now sent you word of how I fare, well or ill, in this government, in which I am suffering more hunger than when we two were wandering through the woods and wastes.

My lord the duke wrote to me the other day to warn me that certain spies had got into this island to kill me; but up to the present I have not found out any except a certain doctor who receives a salary in this town for killing all the governors that come here; he is called Doctor Pedro Recio, and is from Tirteafuera; so you see what a name he has to make me dread dying under his hands. This doctor says of himself that he does not cure diseases when there are any, but prevents them coming, and the medicines he uses are diet and more diet until he brings one down to bare bones; as if leanness was not worse than fever.

In short he is killing me with hunger, and I am dying myself of vexation; for when I thought I was coming to this government to get my meat hot and my drink cool, and take my ease between holland sheets on feather beds, I find I have come to do penance as if I was a hermit; and as I don't do it willingly I suspect that in the end the devil will carry me off.

So far I have not handled any dues or taken any bribes, and I don't know what to think of it; for here they tell me that the governors that come to this island, before entering it have plenty of money either given to them or lent to them by the people of the town, and that this is the usual custom not only here but with all who enter upon governments.

Last night going the rounds I came upon a fair damsel in man's clothes, and a brother of hers dressed as a woman; my head-carver has fallen in love with the girl, and has in his own mind chosen her for a wife, so he says, and I have chosen youth for a son-in-law; to-day we are going to explain our intentions to the father of the pair, who is one Diego de la Llana, a gentleman and an old Christian as much as you please.

I have visited the market-places, as your worship advises me, and yesterday I found a stall-keeper selling new hazel nuts and proved her to have mixed a bushel of old empty rotten nuts with a bushel of new; I confiscated the whole for the children of the charity-school, who will know how to distinguish them well enough, and I sentenced her not to come into the market-place for a fortnight; they told me I did bravely. I can tell your worship it is commonly said in this town that there are no people worse than the market-women, for they are all barefaced, unconscionable, and impudent, and I can well believe it from what I have seen of them in other towns.

I am very glad my lady the duchess has written to my wife Teresa Panza and sent her the present your worship speaks of; and I will strive to show myself grateful when the time comes; kiss her hands for me, and tell her I say she has not thrown it into a sack with a hole in it, as she will see in the end. I should not like your worship to have any difference with my lord and lady; for if you fall out with them it is plain it must do me harm; and as you give me advice to be

grateful it will not do for your worship not to be so yourself to those who have shown you such kindness, and by whom you have been treated so hospitably in their castle.

That about the scratching I don't understand; but I suppose it must be one of the ill-turns the wicked enchanters are always doing your worship; when we meet I shall know all about it. I wish I could send your worship something; but I don't know what to send, unless it be some very curious clyster pipes, to work with bladders, that they make in this island; but if the office remains with me I'll find out something to send, one way or another. If my wife Teresa Panza writes to me, pay the postage and send me the letter, for I have a very great desire to hear how my house and wife and children are going on. And so, may God deliver your worship from evil-minded enchanters, and bring me well and peacefully out of this government, which I doubt, for I expect to take leave of it and my life together, from the way Doctor Pedro Recio treats me.

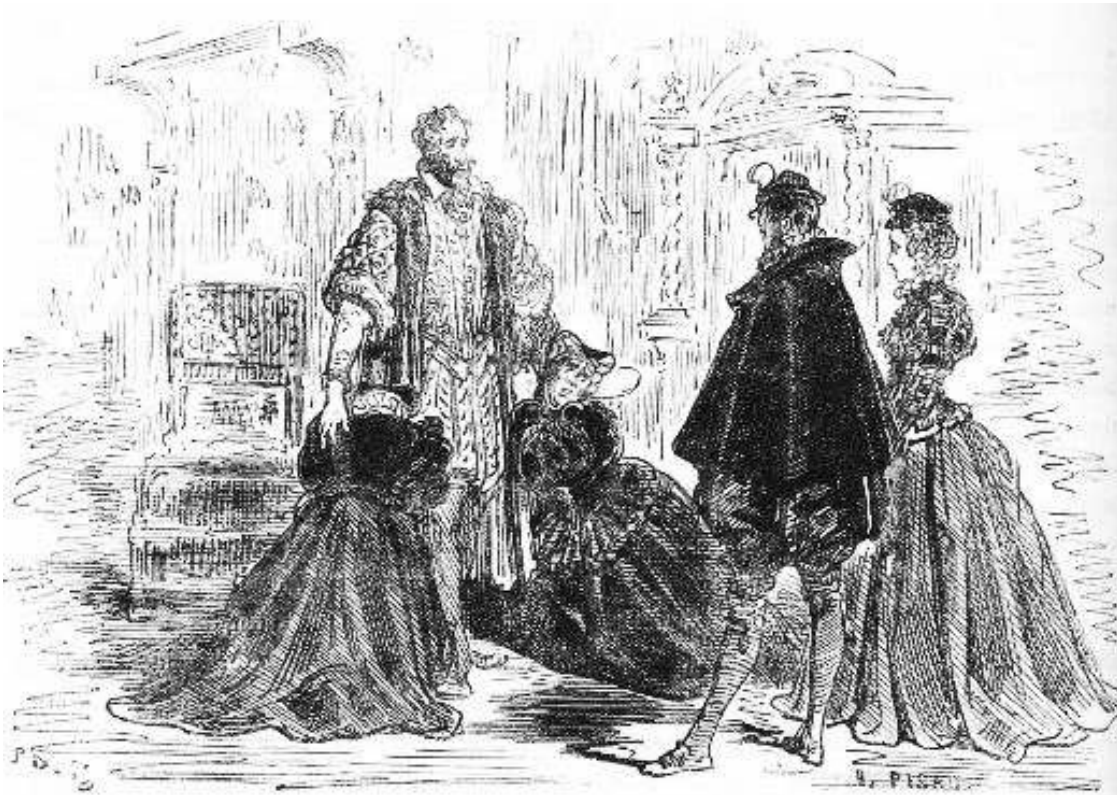
Your worship's servant SANCHE PANZA THE GOVERNOR.

The secretary sealed the letter, and immediately dismissed the courier; and those who were carrying on the joke against Sancho putting their heads together arranged how he was to be dismissed from the government. Sancho spent the afternoon in drawing up certain ordinances relating to the good government of what he fancied the island; and he ordained that there were to be no provision hucksters in the State, and that men might import wine into it from any place they pleased, provided they declared the quarter it came from, so that a price might be put upon it according to its quality, reputation, and the estimation it was held in; and he that watered his wine, or changed the name, was to forfeit his life for it. He reduced the prices of all manner of shoes, boots, and stockings, but of shoes in particular, as they seemed to him to run extravagantly high. He established a fixed rate for servants' wages, which were becoming recklessly exorbitant. He laid extremely heavy penalties upon those who sang lewd or loose songs either by day or night. He decreed that no blind man should sing of any miracle in verse, unless he could produce authentic evidence that it was true, for it was his opinion that most of those the blind men sing are trumped up, to the detriment of the true ones. He established and created an alguacil of the poor, not to harass them, but to examine them and see whether they really were so; for many a sturdy thief or drunkard goes about under cover of a make-believe crippled limb or a sham sore. In a word, he made so many good rules that to this day they are preserved there, and are called The constitutions of the great governor Sancho Panza.



## CHAPTER LII.

WHEREIN IS RELATED THE ADVENTURE OF THE SECOND  
DISTRESSED OR AFFLICTED DUENNA, OTHERWISE CALLED DONA  
RODRIGUEZ



Cide Hamete relates that Don Quixote being now cured of his scratches felt that the life he was leading in the castle was entirely inconsistent with the order of chivalry he professed, so he determined to ask the duke and duchess to permit him to take his departure for Saragossa, as the time of the festival was now drawing near, and he hoped to win there the suit of armour which is the prize at festivals of the sort. But one day at table with the duke and duchess, just as he

was about to carry his resolution into effect and ask for their permission, lo and behold suddenly there came in through the door of the great hall two women, as they afterwards proved to be, draped in mourning from head to foot, one of whom approaching Don Quixote flung herself at full length at his feet, pressing her lips to them, and uttering moans so sad, so deep, and so doleful that she put all who heard and saw her into a state of perplexity; and though the duke and duchess supposed it must be some joke their servants were playing off upon Don Quixote, still the earnest way the woman sighed and moaned and wept puzzled them and made them feel uncertain, until Don Quixote, touched with compassion, raised her up and made her unveil herself and remove the mantle from her tearful face. She complied and disclosed what no one could have ever anticipated, for she disclosed the countenance of Dona Rodriguez, the duenna of the house; the other female in mourning being her daughter, who had been made a fool of by the rich farmer's son. All who knew her were filled with astonishment, and the duke and duchess more than any; for though they thought her a simpleton and a weak creature, they did not think her capable of crazy pranks. Dona Rodriguez, at length, turning to her master and mistress said to them, "Will your excellences be pleased to permit me to speak to this gentleman for a moment, for it is requisite I should do so in order to get successfully out of the business in which the boldness of an evil-minded clown has involved me?"

The duke said that for his part he gave her leave, and that she might speak with Senor Don Quixote as much as she liked.

She then, turning to Don Quixote and addressing herself to him said, "Some days since, valiant knight, I gave you an account of the injustice and treachery of a wicked farmer to my dearly beloved daughter, the unhappy damsel here before you, and you promised me to take her part and right the wrong that has been done her; but now it has come to my hearing that you are about to depart from this castle in quest of such fair adventures as God may vouchsafe to you; therefore, before you take the road, I would that you challenge this froward rustic, and compel him to marry my daughter in fulfillment of the promise he gave her to become her husband before he seduced her; for to expect that my lord the duke will do me justice is to ask pears from the elm tree, for the reason I stated privately to your worship; and so may our Lord grant you good health and forsake us not."

To these words Don Quixote replied very gravely and solemnly, "Worthy duenna, check your tears, or rather dry them, and spare your sighs, for I take it upon myself to obtain redress for your daughter, for whom it would have been better not to have been so ready to believe lovers' promises, which are for the most part quickly made and very slowly performed; and so, with my lord the

duke's leave, I will at once go in quest of this inhuman youth, and will find him out and challenge him and slay him, if so be he refuses to keep his promised word; for the chief object of my profession is to spare the humble and chastise the proud; I mean, to help the distressed and destroy the oppressors."

"There is no necessity," said the duke, "for your worship to take the trouble of seeking out the rustic of whom this worthy duenna complains, nor is there any necessity, either, for asking my leave to challenge him; for I admit him duly challenged, and will take care that he is informed of the challenge, and accepts it, and comes to answer it in person to this castle of mine, where I shall afford to both a fair field, observing all the conditions which are usually and properly observed in such trials, and observing too justice to both sides, as all princes who offer a free field to combatants within the limits of their lordships are bound to do."

"Then with that assurance and your highness's good leave," said Don Quixote, "I hereby for this once waive my privilege of gentle blood, and come down and put myself on a level with the lowly birth of the wrong-doer, making myself equal with him and enabling him to enter into combat with me; and so, I challenge and defy him, though absent, on the plea of his malfeasance in breaking faith with this poor damsel, who was a maiden and now by his misdeed is none; and say that he shall fulfill the promise he gave her to become her lawful husband, or else stake his life upon the question."

And then plucking off a glove he threw it down in the middle of the hall, and the duke picked it up, saying, as he had said before, that he accepted the challenge in the name of his vassal, and fixed six days thence as the time, the courtyard of the castle as the place, and for arms the customary ones of knights, lance and shield and full armour, with all the other accessories, without trickery, guile, or charms of any sort, and examined and passed by the judges of the field. "But first of all," he said, "it is requisite that this worthy duenna and unworthy damsel should place their claim for justice in the hands of Don Quixote; for otherwise nothing can be done, nor can the said challenge be brought to a lawful issue."

"I do so place it," replied the duenna.

"And I too," added her daughter, all in tears and covered with shame and confusion.

This declaration having been made, and the duke having settled in his own mind what he would do in the matter, the ladies in black withdrew, and the duchess gave orders that for the future they were not to be treated as servants of hers, but as lady adventurers who came to her house to demand justice; so they gave them a room to themselves and waited on them as they would on strangers,

to the consternation of the other women-servants, who did not know where the folly and imprudence of Dona Rodriguez and her unlucky daughter would stop.

And now, to complete the enjoyment of the feast and bring the dinner to a satisfactory end, lo and behold the page who had carried the letters and presents to Teresa Panza, the wife of the governor Sancho, entered the hall; and the duke and duchess were very well pleased to see him, being anxious to know the result of his journey; but when they asked him the page said in reply that he could not give it before so many people or in a few words, and begged their excellences to be pleased to let it wait for a private opportunity, and in the meantime amuse themselves with these letters; and taking out the letters he placed them in the duchess's hand. One bore by way of address, Letter for my lady the Duchess So-and-so, of I don't know where; and the other To my husband Sancho Panza, governor of the island of Barataria, whom God prosper longer than me. The duchess's bread would not bake, as the saying is, until she had read her letter; and having looked over it herself and seen that it might be read aloud for the duke and all present to hear, she read out as follows.

#### TERESA PANZA'S LETTER TO THE DUCHESS.

The letter your highness wrote me, my lady, gave me great pleasure, for indeed I found it very welcome. The string of coral beads is very fine, and my husband's hunting suit does not fall short of it. All this village is very much pleased that your ladyship has made a governor of my good man Sancho; though nobody will believe it, particularly the curate, and Master Nicholas the barber, and the bachelor Samson Carrasco; but I don't care for that, for so long as it is true, as it is, they may all say what they like; though, to tell the truth, if the coral beads and the suit had not come I would not have believed it either; for in this village everybody thinks my husband a numskull, and except for governing a flock of goats, they cannot fancy what sort of government he can be fit for. God grant it, and direct him according as he sees his children stand in need of it. I am resolved with your worship's leave, lady of my soul, to make the most of this fair day, and go to Court to stretch myself at ease in a coach, and make all those I have envying me already burst their eyes out; so I beg your excellence to order my husband to send me a small trifle of money, and to let it be something to speak of, because one's expenses are heavy at the Court; for a loaf costs a real, and meat thirty maravedis a pound, which is beyond everything; and if he does not want me to go let him tell me in time, for my feet are on the fidgets to be off; and my friends and neighbours tell me that if my daughter and I make a figure and a brave show at Court, my husband will come to be known far more by me than I by him, for of course plenty of people will ask, "Who are those ladies in that coach?" and some servant of mine will answer, "The wife and daughter of



Sancho Panza, governor of the island of Barataria;" and in this way Sancho will become known, and I'll be thought well of, and "to Rome for everything." I am as vexed as vexed can be that they have gathered no acorns this year in our village; for all that I send your highness about half a peck that I went to the wood to gather and pick out one by one myself, and I could find no bigger ones; I wish they were as big as ostrich eggs.

Let not your high mightiness forget to write to me; and I will take care to answer, and let you know how I am, and whatever news there may be in this place, where I remain, praying our Lord to have your highness in his keeping and not to forget me.

Sancha my daughter, and my son, kiss your worship's hands.

She who would rather see your ladyship than write to you,

Your servant,  
TERESA PANZA.

All were greatly amused by Teresa Panza's letter, but particularly the duke and duchess; and the duchess asked Don Quixote's opinion whether they might open the letter that had come for the governor, which she suspected must be very good. Don Quixote said that to gratify them he would open it, and did so, and found that it ran as follows.

#### TERESA PANZA'S LETTER TO HER HUSBAND SANCHE PANZA.

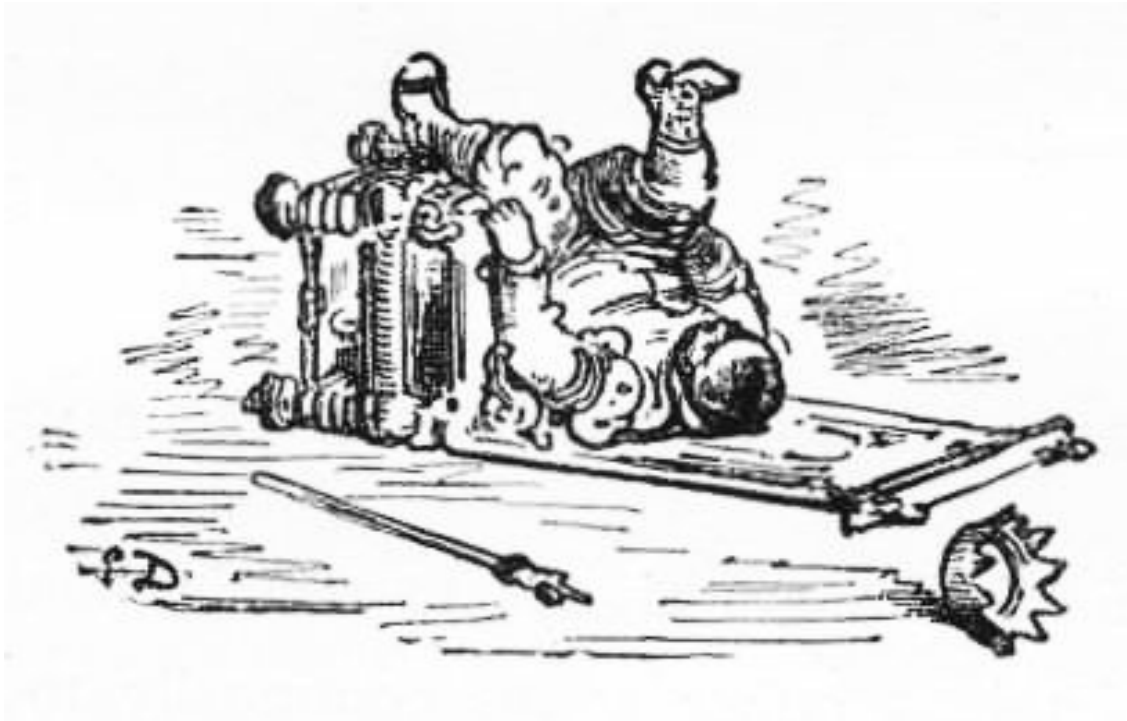
I got thy letter, Sancho of my soul, and I promise thee and swear as a Catholic Christian that I was within two fingers' breadth of going mad I was so happy. I can tell thee, brother, when I came to hear that thou wert a governor I thought I should have dropped dead with pure joy; and thou knowest they say sudden joy kills as well as great sorrow; and as for Sanchica thy daughter, she leaked from sheer happiness. I had before me the suit thou didst send me, and the coral beads my lady the duchess sent me round my neck, and the letters in my hands, and there was the bearer of them standing by, and in spite of all this I verily believed and thought that what I saw and handled was all a dream; for who could have thought that a goatherd would come to be a governor of islands? Thou knowest, my friend, what my mother used to say, that one must live long to see much; I say it because I expect to see more if I live longer; for I don't expect to stop until I see thee a farmer of taxes or a collector of revenue, which are offices where, though the devil carries off those who make a bad use of them, still they make and handle money. My lady the duchess will tell thee the desire I have to go to

the Court; consider the matter and let me know thy pleasure; I will try to do honour to thee by going in a coach.

Neither the curate, nor the barber, nor the bachelor, nor even the sacristan, can believe that thou art a governor, and they say the whole thing is a delusion or an enchantment affair, like everything belonging to thy master Don Quixote; and Samson says he must go in search of thee and drive the government out of thy head and the madness out of Don Quixote's skull; I only laugh, and look at my string of beads, and plan out the dress I am going to make for our daughter out of thy suit. I sent some acorns to my lady the duchess; I wish they had been gold. Send me some strings of pearls if they are in fashion in that island. Here is the news of the village; La Berrueca has married her daughter to a good-for-nothing painter, who came here to paint anything that might turn up. The council gave him an order to paint his Majesty's arms over the door of the town-hall; he asked two ducats, which they paid him in advance; he worked for eight days, and at the end of them had nothing painted, and then said he had no turn for painting such trifling things; he returned the money, and for all that has married on the pretence of being a good workman; to be sure he has now laid aside his paint-brush and taken a spade in hand, and goes to the field like a gentleman. Pedro Lobo's son has received the first orders and tonsure, with the intention of becoming a priest. Minguilla, Mingo Silvato's granddaughter, found it out, and has gone to law with him on the score of having given her promise of marriage. Evil tongues say she is with child by him, but he denies it stoutly. There are no olives this year, and there is not a drop of vinegar to be had in the whole village. A company of soldiers passed through here; when they left they took away with them three of the girls of the village; I will not tell thee who they are; perhaps they will come back, and they will be sure to find those who will take them for wives with all their blemishes, good or bad. Sanchica is making bonelace; she earns eight maravedis a day clear, which she puts into a moneybox as a help towards house furnishing; but now that she is a governor's daughter thou wilt give her a portion without her working for it. The fountain in the plaza has run dry. A flash of lightning struck the gibbet, and I wish they all lit there. I look for an answer to this, and to know thy mind about my going to the Court; and so, God keep thee longer than me, or as long, for I would not leave thee in this world without me.

Thy wife,  
TERESA PANZA.

The letters were applauded, laughed over, relished, and admired; and then, as if to put the seal to the business, the courier arrived, bringing the one Sancho sent to Don Quixote, and this, too, was read out, and it raised some doubts as to the governor's simplicity. The duchess withdrew to hear from the page about his adventures in Sancho's village, which he narrated at full length without leaving a single circumstance unmentioned. He gave her the acorns, and also a cheese which Teresa had given him as being particularly good and superior to those of Tronchon. The duchess received it with greatest delight, in which we will leave her, to describe the end of the government of the great Sancho Panza, flower and mirror of all governors of islands.



## CHAPTER LIII.

### OF THE TROUBLOUS END AND TERMINATION SANCHO PANZA'S GOVERNMENT CAME TO



To fancy that in this life anything belonging to it will remain for ever in the same state is an idle fancy; on the contrary, in it everything seems to go in a circle, I mean round and round. The spring succeeds the summer, the summer the fall, the fall the autumn, the autumn the winter, and the winter the spring, and so time rolls with never-ceasing wheel. Man's life alone, swifter than time, speeds onward to its end without any hope of renewal, save it be in that other life which is endless and boundless. Thus saith Cide Hamete the Mahometan philosopher; for there are many that by the light of nature alone, without the light of faith, have a comprehension of the fleeting nature and instability of this present life and the endless duration of that eternal life we hope for; but our author is here speaking of the rapidity with which Sancho's government came to

an end, melted away, disappeared, vanished as it were in smoke and shadow. For as he lay in bed on the night of the seventh day of his government, sated, not with bread and wine, but with delivering judgments and giving opinions and making laws and proclamations, just as sleep, in spite of hunger, was beginning to close his eyelids, he heard such a noise of bell-ringing and shouting that one would have fancied the whole island was going to the bottom. He sat up in bed and remained listening intently to try if he could make out what could be the cause of so great an uproar; not only, however, was he unable to discover what it was, but as countless drums and trumpets now helped to swell the din of the bells and shouts, he was more puzzled than ever, and filled with fear and terror; and getting up he put on a pair of slippers because of the dampness of the floor, and without throwing a dressing gown or anything of the kind over him he rushed out of the door of his room, just in time to see approaching along a corridor a band of more than twenty persons with lighted torches and naked swords in their hands, all shouting out, "To arms, to arms, senor governor, to arms! The enemy is in the island in countless numbers, and we are lost unless your skill and valour come to our support."

Keeping up this noise, tumult, and uproar, they came to where Sancho stood dazed and bewildered by what he saw and heard, and as they approached one of them called out to him, "Arm at once, your lordship, if you would not have yourself destroyed and the whole island lost."

"What have I to do with arming?" said Sancho. "What do I know about arms or supports? Better leave all that to my master Don Quixote, who will settle it and make all safe in a trice; for I, sinner that I am, God help me, don't understand these scuffles."

"Ah, senor governor," said another, "what slackness of mettle this is! Arm yourself; here are arms for you, offensive and defensive; come out to the plaza and be our leader and captain; it falls upon you by right, for you are our governor."

"Arm me then, in God's name," said Sancho, and they at once produced two large shields they had come provided with, and placed them upon him over his shirt, without letting him put on anything else, one shield in front and the other behind, and passing his arms through openings they had made, they bound him tight with ropes, so that there he was walled and boarded up as straight as a spindle and unable to bend his knees or stir a single step. In his hand they placed a lance, on which he leant to keep himself from falling, and as soon as they had him thus fixed they bade him march forward and lead them on and give them all courage; for with him for their guide and lamp and morning star, they were sure to bring their business to a successful issue.



“How am I to march, unlucky being that I am?” said Sancho, “when I can’t stir my knee-caps, for these boards I have bound so tight to my body won’t let me. What you must do is carry me in your arms, and lay me across or set me

upright in some postern, and I'll hold it either with this lance or with my body."

"On, senor governor!" cried another, "it is fear more than the boards that keeps you from moving; make haste, stir yourself, for there is no time to lose; the enemy is increasing in numbers, the shouts grow louder, and the danger is pressing."

Urged by these exhortations and reproaches the poor governor made an attempt to advance, but fell to the ground with such a crash that he fancied he had broken himself all to pieces. There he lay like a tortoise enclosed in its shell, or a side of bacon between two kneading-troughs, or a boat bottom up on the beach; nor did the gang of jokers feel any compassion for him when they saw him down; so far from that, extinguishing their torches they began to shout afresh and to renew the calls to arms with such energy, trampling on poor Sancho, and slashing at him over the shield with their swords in such a way that, if he had not gathered himself together and made himself small and drawn in his head between the shields, it would have fared badly with the poor governor, as, squeezed into that narrow compass, he lay, sweating and sweating again, and commending himself with all his heart to God to deliver him from his present peril. Some stumbled over him, others fell upon him, and one there was who took up a position on top of him for some time, and from thence as if from a watchtower issued orders to the troops, shouting out, "Here, our side! Here the enemy is thickest! Hold the breach there! Shut that gate! Barricade those ladders! Here with your stink-pots of pitch and resin, and kettles of boiling oil! Block the streets with feather beds!" In short, in his ardour he mentioned every little thing, and every implement and engine of war by means of which an assault upon a city is warded off, while the bruised and battered Sancho, who heard and suffered all, was saying to himself, "O if it would only please the Lord to let the island be lost at once, and I could see myself either dead or out of this torture!" Heaven heard his prayer, and when he least expected it he heard voices exclaiming, "Victory, victory! The enemy retreats beaten! Come, senor governor, get up, and come and enjoy the victory, and divide the spoils that have been won from the foe by the might of that invincible arm."

"Lift me up," said the wretched Sancho in a woebegone voice. They helped him to rise, and as soon as he was on his feet said, "The enemy I have beaten you may nail to my forehead; I don't want to divide the spoils of the foe, I only beg and entreat some friend, if I have one, to give me a sup of wine, for I'm parched with thirst, and wipe me dry, for I'm turning to water."

They rubbed him down, fetched him wine and unbound the shields, and he seated himself upon his bed, and with fear, agitation, and fatigue he fainted away. Those who had been concerned in the joke were now sorry they had

pushed it so far; however, the anxiety his fainting away had caused them was relieved by his returning to himself. He asked what o'clock it was; they told him it was just daybreak. He said no more, and in silence began to dress himself, while all watched him, waiting to see what the haste with which he was putting on his clothes meant.





He got himself dressed at last, and then, slowly, for he was sorely bruised and could not go fast, he proceeded to the stable, followed by all who were present, and going up to Dapple embraced him and gave him a loving kiss on the forehead, and said to him, not without tears in his eyes, "Come along, comrade and friend and partner of my toils and sorrows; when I was with you and had no cares to trouble me except mending your harness and feeding your little carcass, happy were my hours, my days, and my years; but since I left you, and mounted the towers of ambition and pride, a thousand miseries, a thousand troubles, and four thousand anxieties have entered into my soul;" and all the while he was speaking in this strain he was fixing the pack-saddle on the ass, without a word from anyone. Then having Dapple saddled, he, with great pain and difficulty, got up on him, and addressing himself to the majordomo, the secretary, the head-carver, and Pedro Recio the doctor and several others who stood by, he said, "Make way, gentlemen, and let me go back to my old freedom; let me go look for my past life, and raise myself up from this present death. I was not born to be a governor or protect islands or cities from the enemies that choose to attack them. Ploughing and digging, vinedressing and pruning, are more in my way than defending provinces or kingdoms. 'Saint Peter is very well at Rome; I mean each of us is best following the trade he was born to. A reaping-hook fits my hand better than a governor's sceptre; I'd rather have my fill of gazpacho' than be subject to the misery of a meddling doctor who me with hunger, and I'd rather lie in summer under the shade of an oak, and in winter wrap myself in a double sheepskin jacket in freedom, than go to bed between holland sheets and dress in sables under the restraint of a government. God be with your worships, and tell my lord the duke that 'naked I was born, naked I find myself, I neither lose nor gain;' I mean that without a farthing I came into this government, and without a farthing I go out of it, very different from the way governors commonly leave other islands. Stand aside and let me go; I have to plaster myself, for I believe every one of my ribs is crushed, thanks to the enemies that have been trampling over me to-night."

"That is unnecessary, senor governor," said Doctor Recio, "for I will give your worship a draught against falls and bruises that will soon make you as sound and strong as ever; and as for your diet I promise your worship to behave better, and let you eat plentifully of whatever you like."

"You spoke late," said Sancho. "I'd as soon turn Turk as stay any longer. Those jokes won't pass a second time. By God I'd as soon remain in this government, or take another, even if it was offered me between two plates, as fly

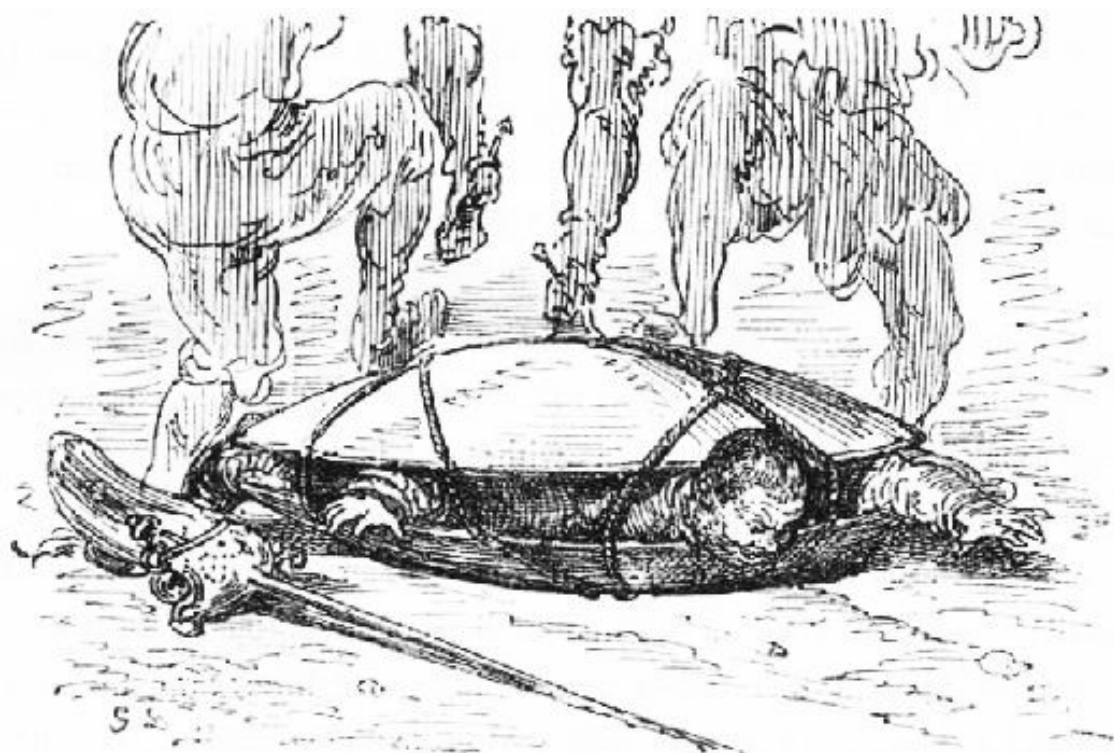
to heaven without wings. I am of the breed of the Panzas, and they are every one of them obstinate, and if they once say 'odds,' odds it must be, no matter if it is evens, in spite of all the world. Here in this stable I leave the ant's wings that lifted me up into the air for the swifts and other birds to eat me, and let's take to level ground and our feet once more; and if they're not shod in pinked shoes of cordovan, they won't want for rough sandals of hemp; 'every ewe to her like,' 'and let no one stretch his leg beyond the length of the sheet;' and now let me pass, for it's growing late with me."

To this the majordomo said, "Senor governor, we would let your worship go with all our hearts, though it sorely grieves us to lose you, for your wit and Christian conduct naturally make us regret you; but it is well known that every governor, before he leaves the place where he has been governing, is bound first of all to render an account. Let your worship do so for the ten days you have held the government, and then you may go and the peace of God go with you."

"No one can demand it of me," said Sancho, "but he whom my lord the duke shall appoint; I am going to meet him, and to him I will render an exact one; besides, when I go forth naked as I do, there is no other proof needed to show that I have governed like an angel."

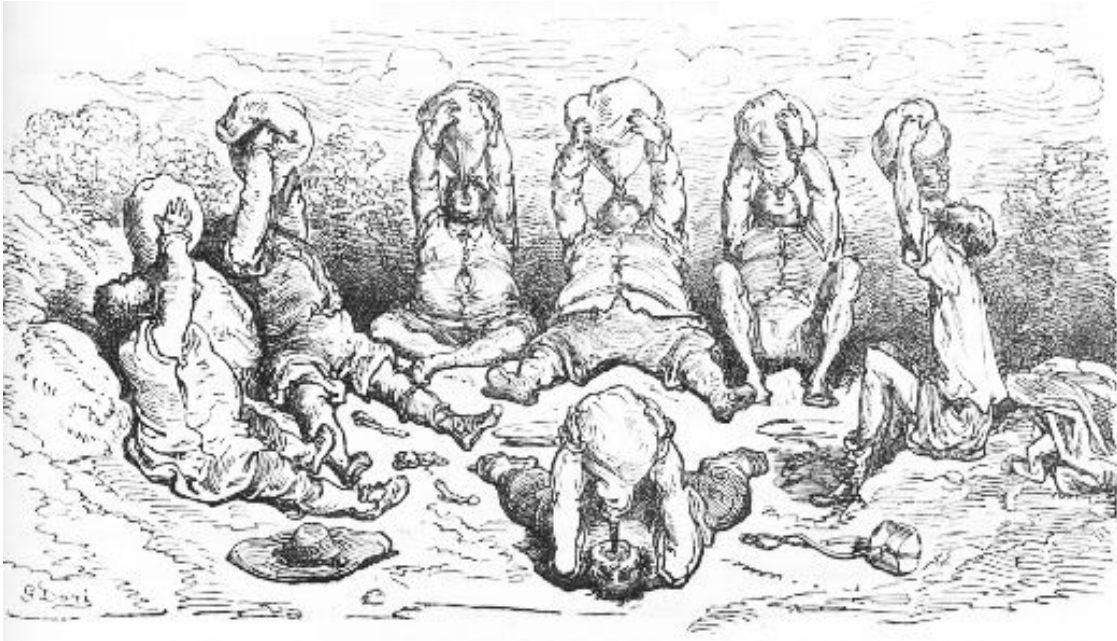
"By God the great Sancho is right," said Doctor Recio, "and we should let him go, for the duke will be beyond measure glad to see him."

They all agreed to this, and allowed him to go, first offering to bear him company and furnish him with all he wanted for his own comfort or for the journey. Sancho said he did not want anything more than a little barley for Dapple, and half a cheese and half a loaf for himself; for the distance being so short there was no occasion for any better or bulkier provant. They all embraced him, and he with tears embraced all of them, and left them filled with admiration not only at his remarks but at his firm and sensible resolution.



## CHAPTER LIV.

WHICH DEALS WITH MATTERS RELATING TO THIS HISTORY AND  
NO OTHER



The duke and duchess resolved that the challenge Don Quixote had, for the reason already mentioned, given their vassal, should be proceeded with; and as the young man was in Flanders, whither he had fled to escape having Dona Rodriguez for a mother-in-law, they arranged to substitute for him a Gascon lacquey, named Tosilos, first of all carefully instructing him in all he had to do. Two days later the duke told Don Quixote that in four days from that time his opponent would present himself on the field of battle armed as a knight, and would maintain that the damsel lied by half a beard, nay a whole beard, if she affirmed that he had given her a promise of marriage. Don Quixote was greatly pleased at the news, and promised himself to do wonders in the lists, and reckoned it rare good fortune that an opportunity should have offered for letting

his noble hosts see what the might of his strong arm was capable of; and so in high spirits and satisfaction he awaited the expiration of the four days, which measured by his impatience seemed spinning themselves out into four hundred ages. Let us leave them to pass as we do other things, and go and bear Sancho company, as mounted on Dapple, half glad, half sad, he paced along on his road to join his master, in whose society he was happier than in being governor of all the islands in the world. Well then, it so happened that before he had gone a great way from the island of his government (and whether it was island, city, town, or village that he governed he never troubled himself to inquire) he saw coming along the road he was travelling six pilgrims with staves, foreigners of that sort that beg for alms singing; who as they drew near arranged themselves in a line and lifting up their voices all together began to sing in their own language something that Sancho could not with the exception of one word which sounded plainly "alms," from which he gathered that it was alms they asked for in their song; and being, as Cide Hamete says, remarkably charitable, he took out of his alforias the half loaf and half cheese he had been provided with, and gave them to them, explaining to them by signs that he had nothing else to give them. They received them very gladly, but exclaimed, "Geld! Geld!"

"I don't understand what you want of me, good people," said Sancho.

On this one of them took a purse out of his bosom and showed it to Sancho, by which he comprehended they were asking for money, and putting his thumb to his throat and spreading his hand upwards he gave them to understand that he had not the sign of a coin about him, and urging Dapple forward he broke through them. But as he was passing, one of them who had been examining him very closely rushed towards him, and flinging his arms round him exclaimed in a loud voice and good Spanish, "God bless me! What's this I see? Is it possible that I hold in my arms my dear friend, my good neighbour Sancho Panza? But there's no doubt about it, for I'm not asleep, nor am I drunk just now."

Sancho was surprised to hear himself called by his name and find himself embraced by a foreign pilgrim, and after regarding him steadily without speaking he was still unable to recognise him; but the pilgrim perceiving his perplexity cried, "What! and is it possible, Sancho Panza, that thou dost not know thy neighbour Ricote, the Morisco shopkeeper of thy village?"

Sancho upon this looking at him more carefully began to recall his features, and at last recognised him perfectly, and without getting off the ass threw his arms round his neck saying, "Who the devil could have known thee, Ricote, in this mummer's dress thou art in? Tell me, who has frenchified thee, and how dost thou dare to return to Spain, where if they catch thee and recognise thee it will go hard enough with thee?"

“If thou dost not betray me, Sancho,” said the pilgrim, “I am safe; for in this dress no one will recognise me; but let us turn aside out of the road into that grove there where my comrades are going to eat and rest, and thou shalt eat with them there, for they are very good fellows; I’ll have time enough to tell thee then all that has happened me since I left our village in obedience to his Majesty’s edict that threatened such severities against the unfortunate people of my nation, as thou hast heard.”

Sancho complied, and Ricote having spoken to the other pilgrims they withdrew to the grove they saw, turning a considerable distance out of the road. They threw down their staves, took off their pilgrim’s cloaks and remained in their under-clothing; they were all good-looking young fellows, except Ricote, who was a man somewhat advanced in years. They carried alforjas all of them, and all apparently well filled, at least with things provocative of thirst, such as would summon it from two leagues off. They stretched themselves on the ground, and making a tablecloth of the grass they spread upon it bread, salt, knives, walnut, scraps of cheese, and well-picked ham-bones which if they were past gnawing were not past sucking. They also put down a black dainty called, they say, caviar, and made of the eggs of fish, a great thirst-wakener. Nor was there any lack of olives, dry, it is true, and without any seasoning, but for all that toothsome and pleasant. But what made the best show in the field of the banquet was half a dozen botas of wine, for each of them produced his own from his alforjas; even the good Ricote, who from a Morisco had transformed himself into a German or Dutchman, took out his, which in size might have vied with the five others. They then began to eat with very great relish and very leisurely, making the most of each morsel — very small ones of everything — they took up on the point of the knife; and then all at the same moment raised their arms and botas aloft, the mouths placed in their mouths, and all eyes fixed on heaven just as if they were taking aim at it; and in this attitude they remained ever so long, wagging their heads from side to side as if in acknowledgment of the pleasure they were enjoying while they decanted the bowels of the bottles into their own stomachs.

Sancho beheld all, “and nothing gave him pain;” so far from that, acting on the proverb he knew so well, “when thou art at Rome do as thou seest,” he asked Ricote for his bota and took aim like the rest of them, and with not less enjoyment. Four times did the botas bear being uplifted, but the fifth it was all in vain, for they were drier and more sapless than a rush by that time, which made the jollity that had been kept up so far begin to flag.

Every now and then some one of them would grasp Sancho’s right hand in his own saying, “Espanoli y Tudesqui tuto uno: bon compano;” and Sancho would

answer, “Bon compano, jur a Di!” and then go off into a fit of laughter that lasted an hour, without a thought for the moment of anything that had befallen him in his government; for cares have very little sway over us while we are eating and drinking. At length, the wine having come to an end with them, drowsiness began to come over them, and they dropped asleep on their very table and tablecloth. Ricote and Sancho alone remained awake, for they had eaten more and drunk less, and Ricote drawing Sancho aside, they seated themselves at the foot of a beech, leaving the pilgrims buried in sweet sleep; and without once falling into his own Morisco tongue Ricote spoke as follows in pure Castilian:

“Thou knowest well, neighbour and friend Sancho Panza, how the proclamation or edict his Majesty commanded to be issued against those of my nation filled us all with terror and dismay; me at least it did, insomuch that I think before the time granted us for quitting Spain was out, the full force of the penalty had already fallen upon me and upon my children. I decided, then, and I think wisely (just like one who knows that at a certain date the house he lives in will be taken from him, and looks out beforehand for another to change into), I decided, I say, to leave the town myself, alone and without my family, and go to seek out some place to remove them to comfortably and not in the hurried way in which the others took their departure; for I saw very plainly, and so did all the older men among us, that the proclamations were not mere threats, as some said, but positive enactments which would be enforced at the appointed time; and what made me believe this was what I knew of the base and extravagant designs which our people harboured, designs of such a nature that I think it was a divine inspiration that moved his Majesty to carry out a resolution so spirited; not that we were all guilty, for some there were true and steadfast Christians; but they were so few that they could make no head against those who were not; and it was not prudent to cherish a viper in the bosom by having enemies in the house. In short it was with just cause that we were visited with the penalty of banishment, a mild and lenient one in the eyes of some, but to us the most terrible that could be inflicted upon us. Wherever we are we weep for Spain; for after all we were born there and it is our natural fatherland. Nowhere do we find the reception our unhappy condition needs; and in Barbary and all the parts of Africa where we counted upon being received, succoured, and welcomed, it is there they insult and ill-treat us most. We knew not our good fortune until we lost it; and such is the longing we almost all of us have to return to Spain, that most of those who like myself know the language, and there are many who do, come back to it and leave their wives and children forsaken yonder, so great is their love for it; and now I know by experience the meaning of the saying, sweet

is the love of one's country.

"I left our village, as I said, and went to France, but though they gave us a kind reception there I was anxious to see all I could. I crossed into Italy, and reached Germany, and there it seemed to me we might live with more freedom, as the inhabitants do not pay any attention to trifling points; everyone lives as he likes, for in most parts they enjoy liberty of conscience. I took a house in a town near Augsburg, and then joined these pilgrims, who are in the habit of coming to Spain in great numbers every year to visit the shrines there, which they look upon as their Indies and a sure and certain source of gain. They travel nearly all over it, and there is no town out of which they do not go full up of meat and drink, as the saying is, and with a real, at least, in money, and they come off at the end of their travels with more than a hundred crowns saved, which, changed into gold, they smuggle out of the kingdom either in the hollow of their staves or in the patches of their pilgrim's cloaks or by some device of their own, and carry to their own country in spite of the guards at the posts and passes where they are searched. Now my purpose is, Sancho, to carry away the treasure that I left buried, which, as it is outside the town, I shall be able to do without risk, and to write, or cross over from Valencia, to my daughter and wife, who I know are at Algiers, and find some means of bringing them to some French port and thence to Germany, there to await what it may be God's will to do with us; for, after all, Sancho, I know well that Ricota my daughter and Francisca Ricota my wife are Catholic Christians, and though I am not so much so, still I am more of a Christian than a Moor, and it is always my prayer to God that he will open the eyes of my understanding and show me how I am to serve him; but what amazes me and I cannot understand is why my wife and daughter should have gone to Barbary rather than to France, where they could live as Christians."

To this Sancho replied, "Remember, Ricote, that may not have been open to them, for Juan Tiopieyo thy wife's brother took them, and being a true Moor he went where he could go most easily; and another thing I can tell thee, it is my belief thou art going in vain to look for what thou hast left buried, for we heard they took from thy brother-in-law and thy wife a great quantity of pearls and money in gold which they brought to be passed."

"That may be," said Ricote; "but I know they did not touch my hoard, for I did not tell them where it was, for fear of accidents; and so, if thou wilt come with me, Sancho, and help me to take it away and conceal it, I will give thee two hundred crowns wherewith thou mayest relieve thy necessities, and, as thou knowest, I know they are many."

"I would do it," said Sancho; "but I am not at all covetous, for I gave up an office this morning in which, if I was, I might have made the walls of my house



of gold and dined off silver plates before six months were over; and so for this reason, and because I feel I would be guilty of treason to my king if I helped his enemies, I would not go with thee if instead of promising me two hundred crowns thou wert to give me four hundred here in hand."

"And what office is this thou hast given up, Sancho?" asked Ricote.

"I have given up being governor of an island," said Sancho, "and such a one, faith, as you won't find the like of easily."

"And where is this island?" said Ricote.

"Where?" said Sancho; "two leagues from here, and it is called the island of Barataria."

"Nonsense! Sancho," said Ricote; "islands are away out in the sea; there are no islands on the mainland."

"What? No islands!" said Sancho; "I tell thee, friend Ricote, I left it this morning, and yesterday I was governing there as I pleased like a sagittarius; but for all that I gave it up, for it seemed to me a dangerous office, a governor's."

"And what hast thou gained by the government?" asked Ricote.

"I have gained," said Sancho, "the knowledge that I am no good for governing, unless it is a drove of cattle, and that the riches that are to be got by these governments are got at the cost of one's rest and sleep, ay and even one's food; for in islands the governors must eat little, especially if they have doctors to look after their health."

"I don't understand thee, Sancho," said Ricote; "but it seems to me all nonsense thou art talking. Who would give thee islands to govern? Is there any scarcity in the world of cleverer men than thou art for governors? Hold thy peace, Sancho, and come back to thy senses, and consider whether thou wilt come with me as I said to help me to take away treasure I left buried (for indeed it may be called a treasure, it is so large), and I will give thee wherewithal to keep thee, as I told thee."

"And I have told thee already, Ricote, that I will not," said Sancho; "let it content thee that by me thou shalt not be betrayed, and go thy way in God's name and let me go mine; for I know that well-gotten gain may be lost, but ill-gotten gain is lost, itself and its owner likewise."

"I will not press thee, Sancho," said Ricote; "but tell me, wert thou in our village when my wife and daughter and brother-in-law left it?"

"I was so," said Sancho; "and I can tell thee thy daughter left it looking so lovely that all the village turned out to see her, and everybody said she was the fairest creature in the world. She wept as she went, and embraced all her friends and acquaintances and those who came out to see her, and she begged them all to commend her to God and Our Lady his mother, and this in such a touching way

that it made me weep myself, though I'm not much given to tears commonly; and, faith, many a one would have liked to hide her, or go out and carry her off on the road; but the fear of going against the king's command kept them back. The one who showed himself most moved was Don Pedro Gregorio, the rich young heir thou knowest of, and they say he was deep in love with her; and since she left he has not been seen in our village again, and we all suspect he has gone after her to steal her away, but so far nothing has been heard of it."

"I always had a suspicion that gentleman had a passion for my daughter," said Ricote; "but as I felt sure of my Ricota's virtue it gave me no uneasiness to know that he loved her; for thou must have heard it said, Sancho, that the Morisco women seldom or never engage in amours with the old Christians; and my daughter, who I fancy thought more of being a Christian than of lovemaking, would not trouble herself about the attentions of this heir."

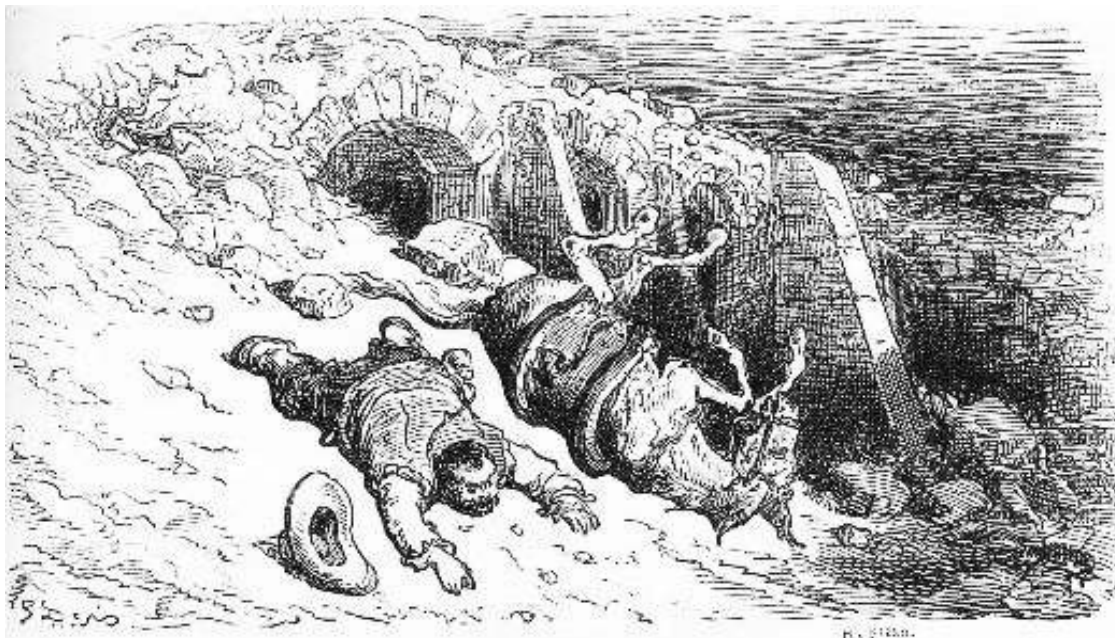
"God grant it," said Sancho, "for it would be a bad business for both of them; but now let me be off, friend Ricote, for I want to reach where my master Don Quixote is to-night."

"God be with thee, brother Sancho," said Ricote; "my comrades are beginning to stir, and it is time, too, for us to continue our journey;" and then they both embraced, and Sancho mounted Dapple, and Ricote leant upon his staff, and so they parted.



## CHAPTER LV.

### OF WHAT BEFELL SANCHO ON THE ROAD, AND OTHER THINGS THAT CANNOT BE SURPASSED



The length of time he delayed with Ricote prevented Sancho from reaching the duke's castle that day, though he was within half a league of it when night, somewhat dark and cloudy, overtook him. This, however, as it was summer time, did not give him much uneasiness, and he turned aside out of the road intending to wait for morning; but his ill luck and hard fate so willed it that as he was searching about for a place to make himself as comfortable as possible, he and Dapple fell into a deep dark hole that lay among some very old buildings. As he fell he commended himself with all his heart to God, fancying he was not going to stop until he reached the depths of the bottomless pit; but it did not turn out so, for at little more than thrice a man's height Dapple touched bottom, and he found himself sitting on him without having received any hurt or damage

whatever. He felt himself all over and held his breath to try whether he was quite sound or had a hole made in him anywhere, and finding himself all right and whole and in perfect health he was profuse in his thanks to God our Lord for the mercy that had been shown him, for he made sure he had been broken into a thousand pieces. He also felt along the sides of the pit with his hands to see if it were possible to get out of it without help, but he found they were quite smooth and afforded no hold anywhere, at which he was greatly distressed, especially when he heard how pathetically and dolefully Dapple was bemoaning himself, and no wonder he complained, nor was it from ill-temper, for in truth he was not in a very good case. "Alas," said Sancho, "what unexpected accidents happen at every step to those who live in this miserable world! Who would have said that one who saw himself yesterday sitting on a throne, governor of an island, giving orders to his servants and his vassals, would see himself to-day buried in a pit without a soul to help him, or servant or vassal to come to his relief? Here must we perish with hunger, my ass and myself, if indeed we don't die first, he of his bruises and injuries, and I of grief and sorrow. At any rate I'll not be as lucky as my master Don Quixote of La Mancha, when he went down into the cave of that enchanted Montesinos, where he found people to make more of him than if he had been in his own house; for it seems he came in for a table laid out and a bed ready made. There he saw fair and pleasant visions, but here I'll see, I imagine, toads and adders. Unlucky wretch that I am, what an end my follies and fancies have come to! They'll take up my bones out of this, when it is heaven's will that I'm found, picked clean, white and polished, and my good Dapple's with them, and by that, perhaps, it will be found out who we are, at least by such as have heard that Sancho Panza never separated from his ass, nor his ass from Sancho Panza. Unlucky wretches, I say again, that our hard fate should not let us die in our own country and among our own people, where if there was no help for our misfortune, at any rate there would be some one to grieve for it and to close our eyes as we passed away! O comrade and friend, how ill have I repaid thy faithful services! Forgive me, and entreat Fortune, as well as thou canst, to deliver us out of this miserable strait we are both in; and I promise to put a crown of laurel on thy head, and make thee look like a poet laureate, and give thee double feeds."



In this strain did Sancho bewail himself, and his ass listened to him, but answered him never a word, such was the distress and anguish the poor beast found himself in. At length, after a night spent in bitter moanings and lamentations, day came, and by its light Sancho perceived that it was wholly impossible to escape out of that pit without help, and he fell to bemoaning his fate and uttering loud shouts to find out if there was anyone within hearing; but all his shouting was only crying in the wilderness, for there was not a soul anywhere in the neighbourhood to hear him, and then at last he gave himself up for dead. Dapple was lying on his back, and Sancho helped him to his feet, which he was scarcely able to keep; and then taking a piece of bread out of his

alforjas which had shared their fortunes in the fall, he gave it to the ass, to whom it was not unwelcome, saying to him as if he understood him, "With bread all sorrows are less."

And now he perceived on one side of the pit a hole large enough to admit a person if he stooped and squeezed himself into a small compass. Sancho made for it, and entered it by creeping, and found it wide and spacious on the inside, which he was able to see as a ray of sunlight that penetrated what might be called the roof showed it all plainly. He observed too that it opened and widened out into another spacious cavity; seeing which he made his way back to where the ass was, and with a stone began to pick away the clay from the hole until in a short time he had made room for the beast to pass easily, and this accomplished, taking him by the halter, he proceeded to traverse the cavern to see if there was any outlet at the other end. He advanced, sometimes in the dark, sometimes without light, but never without fear; "God Almighty help me!" said he to himself; "this that is a misadventure to me would make a good adventure for my master Don Quixote. He would have been sure to take these depths and dungeons for flowery gardens or the palaces of Galiana, and would have counted upon issuing out of this darkness and imprisonment into some blooming meadow; but I, unlucky that I am, hopeless and spiritless, expect at every step another pit deeper than the first to open under my feet and swallow me up for good; 'welcome evil, if thou comest alone.'"

In this way and with these reflections he seemed to himself to have travelled rather more than half a league, when at last he perceived a dim light that looked like daylight and found its way in on one side, showing that this road, which appeared to him the road to the other world, led to some opening.

Here Cide Hamete leaves him, and returns to Don Quixote, who in high spirits and satisfaction was looking forward to the day fixed for the battle he was to fight with him who had robbed Dona Rodriguez's daughter of her honour, for whom he hoped to obtain satisfaction for the wrong and injury shamefully done to her. It came to pass, then, that having sallied forth one morning to practise and exercise himself in what he would have to do in the encounter he expected to find himself engaged in the next day, as he was putting Rocinante through his paces or pressing him to the charge, he brought his feet so close to a pit that but for reining him in tightly it would have been impossible for him to avoid falling into it. He pulled him up, however, without a fall, and coming a little closer examined the hole without dismounting; but as he was looking at it he heard loud cries proceeding from it, and by listening attentively was able to make out that he who uttered them was saying, "Ho, above there! is there any Christian that hears me, or any charitable gentleman that will take pity on a sinner buried

alive, on an unfortunate disgoverned governor?”

It struck Don Quixote that it was the voice of Sancho Panza he heard, whereat he was taken aback and amazed, and raising his own voice as much as he could, he cried out, “Who is below there? Who is that complaining?”

“Who should be here, or who should complain,” was the answer, “but the forlorn Sancho Panza, for his sins and for his ill-luck governor of the island of Barataria, squire that was to the famous knight Don Quixote of La Mancha?”

When Don Quixote heard this his amazement was redoubled and his perturbation grew greater than ever, for it suggested itself to his mind that Sancho must be dead, and that his soul was in torment down there; and carried away by this idea he exclaimed, “I conjure thee by everything that as a Catholic Christian I can conjure thee by, tell me who thou art; and if thou art a soul in torment, tell me what thou wouldst have me do for thee; for as my profession is to give aid and succour to those that need it in this world, it will also extend to aiding and succouring the distressed of the other, who cannot help themselves.”

“In that case,” answered the voice, “your worship who speaks to me must be my master Don Quixote of La Mancha; nay, from the tone of the voice it is plain it can be nobody else.”

“Don Quixote I am,” replied Don Quixote, “he whose profession it is to aid and succour the living and the dead in their necessities; wherefore tell me who thou art, for thou art keeping me in suspense; because, if thou art my squire Sancho Panza, and art dead, since the devils have not carried thee off, and thou art by God’s mercy in purgatory, our holy mother the Roman Catholic Church has intercessory means sufficient to release thee from the pains thou art in; and I for my part will plead with her to that end, so far as my substance will go; without further delay, therefore, declare thyself, and tell me who thou art.”

“By all that’s good,” was the answer, “and by the birth of whomsoever your worship chooses, I swear, Senor Don Quixote of La Mancha, that I am your squire Sancho Panza, and that I have never died all my life; but that, having given up my government for reasons that would require more time to explain, I fell last night into this pit where I am now, and Dapple is witness and won’t let me lie, for more by token he is here with me.”

Nor was this all; one would have fancied the ass understood what Sancho said, because that moment he began to bray so loudly that the whole cave rang again.

“Famous testimony!” exclaimed Don Quixote; “I know that bray as well as if I was its mother, and thy voice too, my Sancho. Wait while I go to the duke’s castle, which is close by, and I will bring some one to take thee out of this pit into which thy sins no doubt have brought thee.”

“Go, your worship,” said Sancho, “and come back quick for God’s sake; for I



cannot bear being buried alive any longer, and I'm dying of fear."

Don Quixote left him, and hastened to the castle to tell the duke and duchess what had happened Sancho, and they were not a little astonished at it; they could easily understand his having fallen, from the confirmatory circumstance of the cave which had been in existence there from time immemorial; but they could not imagine how he had quitted the government without their receiving any intimation of his coming. To be brief, they fetched ropes and tackle, as the saying is, and by dint of many hands and much labour they drew up Dapple and Sancho Panza out of the darkness into the light of day. A student who saw him remarked, "That's the way all bad governors should come out of their governments, as this sinner comes out of the depths of the pit, dead with hunger, pale, and I suppose without a farthing."

Sancho overheard him and said, "It is eight or ten days, brother growler, since I entered upon the government of the island they gave me, and all that time I never had a bellyful of victuals, no not for an hour; doctors persecuted me and enemies crushed my bones; nor had I any opportunity of taking bribes or levying taxes; and if that be the case, as it is, I don't deserve, I think, to come out in this fashion; but 'man proposes and God disposes;' and God knows what is best, and what suits each one best; and 'as the occasion, so the behaviour;' and 'let nobody say "I won't drink of this water;"' and 'where one thinks there are flitches, there are no pegs;' God knows my meaning and that's enough; I say no more, though I could."

"Be not angry or annoyed at what thou hearest, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "or there will never be an end of it; keep a safe conscience and let them say what they like; for trying to stop slanderers' tongues is like trying to put gates to the open plain. If a governor comes out of his government rich, they say he has been a thief; and if he comes out poor, that he has been a noodle and a blockhead."

"They'll be pretty sure this time," said Sancho, "to set me down for a fool rather than a thief."

Thus talking, and surrounded by boys and a crowd of people, they reached the castle, where in one of the corridors the duke and duchess stood waiting for them; but Sancho would not go up to see the duke until he had first put up Dapple in the stable, for he said he had passed a very bad night in his last quarters; then he went upstairs to see his lord and lady, and kneeling before them he said, "Because it was your highnesses' pleasure, not because of any desert of my own, I went to govern your island of Baratania, which 'I entered naked, and naked I find myself; I neither lose nor gain.' Whether I have governed well or ill, I have had witnesses who will say what they think fit. I have answered questions, I have decided causes, and always dying of hunger, for Doctor Pedro Recio of

Tirteafuera, the island and governor doctor, would have it so. Enemies attacked us by night and put us in a great quandary, but the people of the island say they came off safe and victorious by the might of my arm; and may God give them as much health as there's truth in what they say. In short, during that time I have weighed the cares and responsibilities governing brings with it, and by my reckoning I find my shoulders can't bear them, nor are they a load for my loins or arrows for my quiver; and so, before the government threw me over I preferred to throw the government over; and yesterday morning I left the island as I found it, with the same streets, houses, and roofs it had when I entered it. I asked no loan of anybody, nor did I try to fill my pocket; and though I meant to make some useful laws, I made hardly any, as I was afraid they would not be kept; for in that case it comes to the same thing to make them or not to make them. I quitted the island, as I said, without any escort except my ass; I fell into a pit, I pushed on through it, until this morning by the light of the sun I saw an outlet, but not so easy a one but that, had not heaven sent me my master Don Quixote, I'd have stayed there till the end of the world. So now my lord and lady duke and duchess, here is your governor Sancho Panza, who in the bare ten days he has held the government has come by the knowledge that he would not give anything to be governor, not to say of an island, but of the whole world; and that point being settled, kissing your worships' feet, and imitating the game of the boys when they say, 'leap thou, and give me one,' I take a leap out of the government and pass into the service of my master Don Quixote; for after all, though in it I eat my bread in fear and trembling, at any rate I take my fill; and for my part, so long as I'm full, it's all alike to me whether it's with carrots or with partridges."

Here Sancho brought his long speech to an end, Don Quixote having been the whole time in dread of his uttering a host of absurdities; and when he found him leave off with so few, he thanked heaven in his heart. The duke embraced Sancho and told him he was heartily sorry he had given up the government so soon, but that he would see that he was provided with some other post on his estate less onerous and more profitable. The duchess also embraced him, and gave orders that he should be taken good care of, as it was plain to see he had been badly treated and worse bruised.



## CHAPTER LVI.

OF THE PRODIGIOUS AND UNPARALLELED BATTLE THAT TOOK  
PLACE BETWEEN DON QUIXOTE OF LA MANCHA AND THE  
LACQUEY TOSILOS IN DEFENCE OF THE DAUGHTER OF DONA  
RODRIGUEZ



The duke and duchess had no reason to regret the joke that had been played upon Sancho Panza in giving him the government; especially as their majordomo returned the same day, and gave them a minute account of almost every word and deed that Sancho uttered or did during the time; and to wind up with, eloquently described to them the attack upon the island and Sancho's fright and departure, with which they were not a little amused. After this the history

goes on to say that the day fixed for the battle arrived, and that the duke, after having repeatedly instructed his lacquey Tosilos how to deal with Don Quixote so as to vanquish him without killing or wounding him, gave orders to have the heads removed from the lances, telling Don Quixote that Christian charity, on which he plumed himself, could not suffer the battle to be fought with so much risk and danger to life; and that he must be content with the offer of a battlefield on his territory (though that was against the decree of the holy Council, which prohibits all challenges of the sort) and not push such an arduous venture to its extreme limits. Don Quixote bade his excellence arrange all matters connected with the affair as he pleased, as on his part he would obey him in everything. The dread day, then, having arrived, and the duke having ordered a spacious stand to be erected facing the court of the castle for the judges of the field and the appellant duennas, mother and daughter, vast crowds flocked from all the villages and hamlets of the neighbourhood to see the novel spectacle of the battle; nobody, dead or alive, in those parts having ever seen or heard of such a one.

The first person to enter the field and the lists was the master of the ceremonies, who surveyed and paced the whole ground to see that there was nothing unfair and nothing concealed to make the combatants stumble or fall; then the duennas entered and seated themselves, enveloped in mantles covering their eyes, nay even their bosoms, and displaying no slight emotion as Don Quixote appeared in the lists. Shortly afterwards, accompanied by several trumpets and mounted on a powerful steed that threatened to crush the whole place, the great lacquey Tosilos made his appearance on one side of the courtyard with his visor down and stiffly cased in a suit of stout shining armour. The horse was a manifest Frieslander, broad-backed and flea-bitten, and with half a hundred of wool hanging to each of his fetlocks. The gallant combatant came well primed by his master the duke as to how he was to bear himself against the valiant Don Quixote of La Mancha; being warned that he must on no account slay him, but strive to shirk the first encounter so as to avoid the risk of killing him, as he was sure to do if he met him full tilt. He crossed the courtyard at a walk, and coming to where the duennas were placed stopped to look at her who demanded him for a husband; the marshal of the field summoned Don Quixote, who had already presented himself in the courtyard, and standing by the side of Tosilos he addressed the duennas, and asked them if they consented that Don Quixote of La Mancha should do battle for their right. They said they did, and that whatever he should do in that behalf they declared rightly done, final and valid. By this time the duke and duchess had taken their places in a gallery commanding the enclosure, which was filled to overflowing with a

multitude of people eager to see this perilous and unparalleled encounter. The conditions of the combat were that if Don Quixote proved the victor his antagonist was to marry the daughter of Dona Rodriguez; but if he should be vanquished his opponent was released from the promise that was claimed against him and from all obligations to give satisfaction. The master of the ceremonies apportioned the sun to them, and stationed them, each on the spot where he was to stand. The drums beat, the sound of the trumpets filled the air, the earth trembled under foot, the hearts of the gazing crowd were full of anxiety, some hoping for a happy issue, some apprehensive of an untoward ending to the affair, and lastly, Don Quixote, commending himself with all his heart to God our Lord and to the lady Dulcinea del Toboso, stood waiting for them to give the necessary signal for the onset. Our lacquey, however, was thinking of something very different; he only thought of what I am now going to mention.

It seems that as he stood contemplating his enemy she struck him as the most beautiful woman he had ever seen all his life; and the little blind boy whom in our streets they commonly call Love had no mind to let slip the chance of triumphing over a lacquey heart, and adding it to the list of his trophies; and so, stealing gently upon him unseen, he drove a dart two yards long into the poor lacquey's left side and pierced his heart through and through; which he was able to do quite at his ease, for Love is invisible, and comes in and goes out as he likes, without anyone calling him to account for what he does. Well then, when they gave the signal for the onset our lacquey was in an ecstasy, musing upon the beauty of her whom he had already made mistress of his liberty, and so he paid no attention to the sound of the trumpet, unlike Don Quixote, who was off the instant he heard it, and, at the highest speed Rocinante was capable of, set out to meet his enemy, his good squire Sancho shouting lustily as he saw him start, "God guide thee, cream and flower of knights-errant! God give thee the victory, for thou hast the right on thy side!" But though Tosilos saw Don Quixote coming at him he never stirred a step from the spot where he was posted; and instead of doing so called loudly to the marshal of the field, to whom when he came up to see what he wanted he said, "Senor, is not this battle to decide whether I marry or do not marry that lady?" "Just so," was the answer. "Well then," said the lacquey, "I feel qualms of conscience, and I should lay a heavy burden upon it if I were to proceed any further with the combat; I therefore declare that I yield myself vanquished, and that I am willing to marry the lady at once."

The marshal of the field was lost in astonishment at the words of Tosilos; and as he was one of those who were privy to the arrangement of the affair he knew not what to say in reply. Don Quixote pulled up in mid career when he saw that his enemy was not coming on to the attack. The duke could not make out the

reason why the battle did not go on; but the marshal of the field hastened to him to let him know what Tosilos said, and he was amazed and extremely angry at it. In the meantime Tosilos advanced to where Dona Rodriguez sat and said in a loud voice, "Senora, I am willing to marry your daughter, and I have no wish to obtain by strife and fighting what I can obtain in peace and without any risk to my life."

The valiant Don Quixote heard him, and said, "As that is the case I am released and absolved from my promise; let them marry by all means, and as 'God our Lord has given her, may Saint Peter add his blessing.'"

The duke had now descended to the courtyard of the castle, and going up to Tosilos he said to him, "Is it true, sir knight, that you yield yourself vanquished, and that moved by scruples of conscience you wish to marry this damsel?"

"It is, senor," replied Tosilos.

"And he does well," said Sancho, "for what thou hast to give to the mouse, give to the cat, and it will save thee all trouble."

Tosilos meanwhile was trying to unlace his helmet, and he begged them to come to his help at once, as his power of breathing was failing him, and he could not remain so long shut up in that confined space. They removed it in all haste, and his lacquey features were revealed to public gaze. At this sight Dona Rodriguez and her daughter raised a mighty outcry, exclaiming, "This is a trick! This is a trick! They have put Tosilos, my lord the duke's lacquey, upon us in place of the real husband. The justice of God and the king against such trickery, not to say roguery!"

"Do not distress yourselves, ladies," said Don Quixote; "for this is no trickery or roguery; or if it is, it is not the duke who is at the bottom of it, but those wicked enchanters who persecute me, and who, jealous of my reaping the glory of this victory, have turned your husband's features into those of this person, who you say is a lacquey of the duke's; take my advice, and notwithstanding the malice of my enemies marry him, for beyond a doubt he is the one you wish for a husband."

When the duke heard this all his anger was near vanishing in a fit of laughter, and he said, "The things that happen to Senor Don Quixote are so extraordinary that I am ready to believe this lacquey of mine is not one; but let us adopt this plan and device; let us put off the marriage for, say, a fortnight, and let us keep this person about whom we are uncertain in close confinement, and perhaps in the course of that time he may return to his original shape; for the spite which the enchanters entertain against Senor Don Quixote cannot last so long, especially as it is of so little advantage to them to practise these deceptions and transformations."

“Oh, señor,” said Sancho, “those scoundrels are well used to changing whatever concerns my master from one thing into another. A knight that he overcame some time back, called the Knight of the Mirrors, they turned into the shape of the bachelor Samson Carrasco of our town and a great friend of ours; and my lady Dulcinea del Toboso they have turned into a common country wench; so I suspect this lacquey will have to live and die a lacquey all the days of his life.”

Here the Rodriguez’s daughter exclaimed, “Let him be who he may, this man that claims me for a wife; I am thankful to him for the same, for I had rather be the lawful wife of a lacquey than the cheated mistress of a gentleman; though he who played me false is nothing of the kind.”

To be brief, all the talk and all that had happened ended in Tosilos being shut up until it was seen how his transformation turned out. All hailed Don Quixote as victor, but the greater number were vexed and disappointed at finding that the combatants they had been so anxiously waiting for had not battered one another to pieces, just as the boys are disappointed when the man they are waiting to see hanged does not come out, because the prosecution or the court has pardoned him. The people dispersed, the duke and Don Quixote returned to the castle, they locked up Tosilos, Dona Rodriguez and her daughter remained perfectly contented when they saw that any way the affair must end in marriage, and Tosilos wanted nothing else.





## CHAPTER LVII.

WHICH TREATS OF HOW DON QUIXOTE TOOK LEAVE OF THE DUKE,  
AND OF WHAT FOLLOWED WITH THE WITTY AND IMPUDENT  
ALTISIDORA, ONE OF THE DUCHESS'S DAMSELS



Don Quixote now felt it right to quit a life of such idleness as he was leading in the castle; for he fancied that he was making himself sorely missed by suffering himself to remain shut up and inactive amid the countless luxuries and enjoyments his hosts lavished upon him as a knight, and he felt too that he would have to render a strict account to heaven of that indolence and seclusion; and so one day he asked the duke and duchess to grant him permission to take his departure. They gave it, showing at the same time that they were very sorry he

was leaving them.



The duchess gave his wife's letters to Sancho Panza, who shed tears over

them, saying, “Who would have thought that such grand hopes as the news of my government bred in my wife Teresa Panza’s breast would end in my going back now to the vagabond adventures of my master Don Quixote of La Mancha? Still I’m glad to see my Teresa behaved as she ought in sending the acorns, for if she had not sent them I’d have been sorry, and she’d have shown herself ungrateful. It is a comfort to me that they can’t call that present a bribe; for I had got the government already when she sent them, and it’s but reasonable that those who have had a good turn done them should show their gratitude, if it’s only with a trifle. After all I went into the government naked, and I come out of it naked; so I can say with a safe conscience — and that’s no small matter — ‘naked I was born, naked I find myself, I neither lose nor gain.’”

Thus did Sancho soliloquise on the day of their departure, as Don Quixote, who had the night before taken leave of the duke and duchess, coming out made his appearance at an early hour in full armour in the courtyard of the castle. The whole household of the castle were watching him from the corridors, and the duke and duchess, too, came out to see him. Sancho was mounted on his Dapple, with his alforjas, valise, and proven supremely happy because the duke’s majordomo, the same that had acted the part of the Trifaldi, had given him a little purse with two hundred gold crowns to meet the necessary expenses of the road, but of this Don Quixote knew nothing as yet. While all were, as has been said, observing him, suddenly from among the duennas and handmaidens the impudent and witty Altisidora lifted up her voice and said in pathetic tones: Give ear, cruel knight;

Draw rein; where’s the need  
Of spurring the flanks  
Of that ill-broken steed?  
From what art thou flying?  
No dragon I am,  
Not even a sheep,  
But a tender young lamb.  
Thou hast jilted a maiden  
As fair to behold  
As nymph of Diana  
Or Venus of old.

Bireno, AEneas, what worse shall I call thee?

Barabbas go with thee! All evil befall thee!

In thy claws, ruthless robber, Thou bearest away  
The heart of a meek  
Loving maid for thy prey,  
Three kerchiefs thou stealest, And garters a pair,  
From legs than the whitest  
Of marble more fair;  
And the sighs that pursue thee Would burn to the ground  
Two thousand Troy Towns,  
If so many were found.

Bireno, AEneas, what worse shall I call thee?

Barabbas go with thee! All evil befall thee!

May no bowels of mercy  
To Sancho be granted,  
And thy Dulcinea  
Be left still enchanted,  
May thy falsehood to me  
Find its punishment in her,  
For in my land the just  
Often pays for the sinner.  
May thy grandest adventures  
Discomfitures prove,  
May thy joys be all dreams,  
And forgotten thy love.

Bireno, AEneas, what worse shall I call thee?

Barabbas go with thee! All evil befall thee!

May thy name be abhorred  
For thy conduct to ladies,  
From London to England,  
From Seville to Cadiz;  
May thy cards be unlucky,  
Thy hands contain ne'er a  
King, seven, or ace  
When thou playest primera;

When thy corns are cut  
May it be to the quick;  
When thy grinders are drawn  
May the roots of them stick.

Bireno, AEneas, what worse shall I call thee?

Barabbas go with thee! All evil befall thee!

All the while the unhappy Altisidora was bewailing herself in the above strain Don Quixote stood staring at her; and without uttering a word in reply to her he turned round to Sancho and said, "Sancho my friend, I conjure thee by the life of thy forefathers tell me the truth; say, hast thou by any chance taken the three kerchiefs and the garters this love-sick maid speaks of?"

To this Sancho made answer, "The three kerchiefs I have; but the garters, as much as 'over the hills of Ubeda.'"

The duchess was amazed at Altisidora's assurance; she knew that she was bold, lively, and impudent, but not so much so as to venture to make free in this fashion; and not being prepared for the joke, her astonishment was all the greater. The duke had a mind to keep up the sport, so he said, "It does not seem to me well done in you, sir knight, that after having received the hospitality that has been offered you in this very castle, you should have ventured to carry off even three kerchiefs, not to say my handmaid's garters. It shows a bad heart and does not tally with your reputation. Restore her garters, or else I defy you to mortal combat, for I am not afraid of rascally enchanters changing or altering my features as they changed his who encountered you into those of my lacquey, Tosilos."

"God forbid," said Don Quixote, "that I should draw my sword against your illustrious person from which I have received such great favours. The kerchiefs I will restore, as Sancho says he has them; as to the garters that is impossible, for I have not got them, neither has he; and if your handmaiden here will look in her hiding-places, depend upon it she will find them. I have never been a thief, my lord duke, nor do I mean to be so long as I live, if God cease not to have me in his keeping. This damsel by her own confession speaks as one in love, for which I am not to blame, and therefore need not ask pardon, either of her or of your excellence, whom I entreat to have a better opinion of me, and once more to give me leave to pursue my journey."

"And may God so prosper it, Senor Don Quixote," said the duchess, "that we may always hear good news of your exploits; God speed you; for the longer you

stay, the more you inflame the hearts of the damsels who behold you; and as for this one of mine, I will so chastise her that she will not transgress again, either with her eyes or with her words.”

“One word and no more, O valiant Don Quixote, I ask you to hear,” said Altisidora, “and that is that I beg your pardon about the theft of the garters; for by God and upon my soul I have got them on, and I have fallen into the same blunder as he did who went looking for his ass being all the while mounted on it.”

“Didn’t I say so?” said Sancho. “I’m a likely one to hide thefts! Why if I wanted to deal in them, opportunities came ready enough to me in my government.”

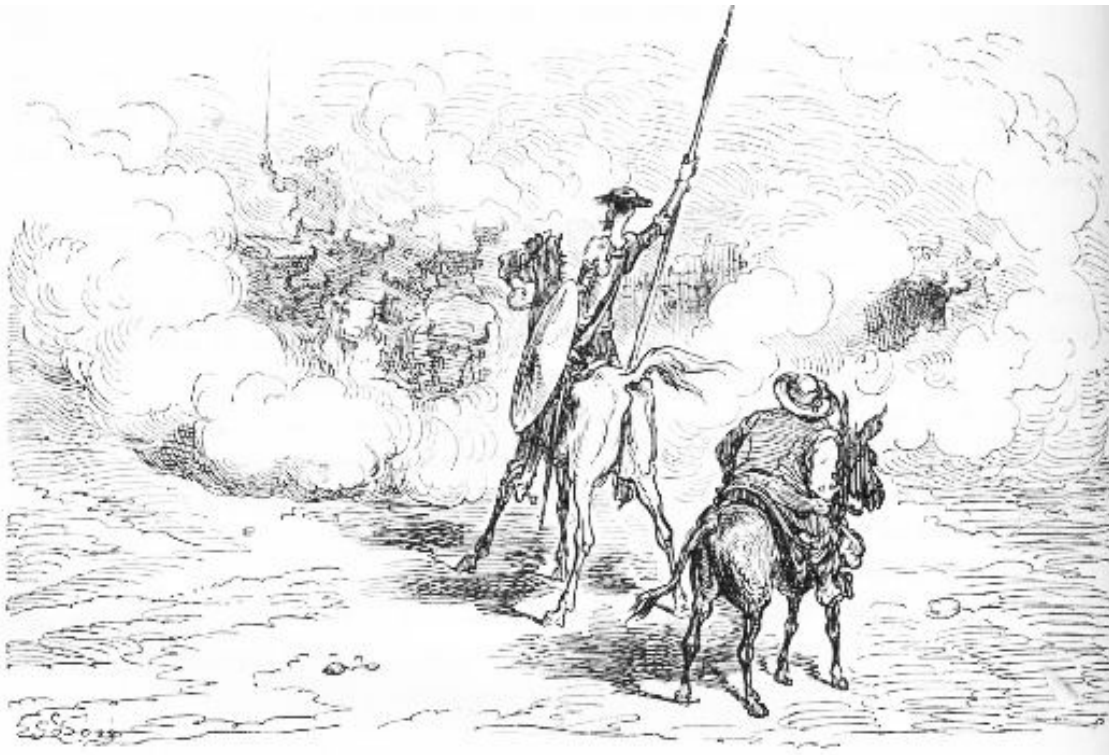
Don Quixote bowed his head, and saluted the duke and duchess and all the bystanders, and wheeling Rocinante round, Sancho following him on Dapple, he rode out of the castle, shaping his course for Saragossa.





## CHAPTER LVIII.

WHICH TELLS HOW ADVENTURES CAME CROWDING ON DON QUIXOTE IN SUCH NUMBERS THAT THEY GAVE ONE ANOTHER NO BREATHING-TIME



When Don Quixote saw himself in open country, free, and relieved from the attentions of Altisidora, he felt at his ease, and in fresh spirits to take up the pursuit of chivalry once more; and turning to Sancho he said, “Freedom, Sancho, is one of the most precious gifts that heaven has bestowed upon men; no treasures that the earth holds buried or the sea conceals can compare with it; for freedom, as for honour, life may and should be ventured; and on the other hand, captivity is the greatest evil that can fall to the lot of man. I say this, Sancho,

because thou hast seen the good cheer, the abundance we have enjoyed in this castle we are leaving; well then, amid those dainty banquets and snow-cooled beverages I felt as though I were undergoing the straits of hunger, because I did not enjoy them with the same freedom as if they had been mine own; for the sense of being under an obligation to return benefits and favours received is a restraint that checks the independence of the spirit. Happy he, to whom heaven has given a piece of bread for which he is not bound to give thanks to any but heaven itself!”

“For all your worship says,” said Sancho, “it is not becoming that there should be no thanks on our part for two hundred gold crowns that the duke’s majordomo has given me in a little purse which I carry next my heart, like a warming plaster or comforter, to meet any chance calls; for we shan’t always find castles where they’ll entertain us; now and then we may light upon roadside inns where they’ll cudgel us.”

In conversation of this sort the knight and squire errant were pursuing their journey, when, after they had gone a little more than half a league, they perceived some dozen men dressed like labourers stretched upon their cloaks on the grass of a green meadow eating their dinner. They had beside them what seemed to be white sheets concealing some objects under them, standing upright or lying flat, and arranged at intervals. Don Quixote approached the diners, and, saluting them courteously first, he asked them what it was those cloths covered. “Senor,” answered one of the party, “under these cloths are some images carved in relief intended for a retablo we are putting up in our village; we carry them covered up that they may not be soiled, and on our shoulders that they may not be broken.”

“With your good leave,” said Don Quixote, “I should like to see them; for images that are carried so carefully no doubt must be fine ones.”

“I should think they were!” said the other; “let the money they cost speak for that; for as a matter of fact there is not one of them that does not stand us in more than fifty ducats; and that your worship may judge; wait a moment, and you shall see with your own eyes;” and getting up from his dinner he went and uncovered the first image, which proved to be one of Saint George on horseback with a serpent writhing at his feet and the lance thrust down its throat with all that fierceness that is usually depicted. The whole group was one blaze of gold, as the saying is. On seeing it Don Quixote said, “That knight was one of the best knights-errant the army of heaven ever owned; he was called Don Saint George, and he was moreover a defender of maidens. Let us see this next one.”

The man uncovered it, and it was seen to be that of Saint Martin on his horse, dividing his cloak with the beggar. The instant Don Quixote saw it he said, “This

knight too was one of the Christian adventurers, but I believe he was generous rather than valiant, as thou mayest perceive, Sancho, by his dividing his cloak with the beggar and giving him half of it; no doubt it was winter at the time, for otherwise he would have given him the whole of it, so charitable was he.”

“It was not that, most likely,” said Sancho, “but that he held with the proverb that says, ‘For giving and keeping there’s need of brains.’”

Don Quixote laughed, and asked them to take off the next cloth, underneath which was seen the image of the patron saint of the Spains seated on horseback, his sword stained with blood, trampling on Moors and treading heads underfoot; and on seeing it Don Quixote exclaimed, “Ay, this is a knight, and of the squadrons of Christ! This one is called Don Saint James the Moorslayer, one of the bravest saints and knights the world ever had or heaven has now.”

They then raised another cloth which it appeared covered Saint Paul falling from his horse, with all the details that are usually given in representations of his conversion. When Don Quixote saw it, rendered in such lifelike style that one would have said Christ was speaking and Paul answering, “This,” he said, “was in his time the greatest enemy that the Church of God our Lord had, and the greatest champion it will ever have; a knight-errant in life, a steadfast saint in death, an untiring labourer in the Lord’s vineyard, a teacher of the Gentiles, whose school was heaven, and whose instructor and master was Jesus Christ himself.”

There were no more images, so Don Quixote bade them cover them up again, and said to those who had brought them, “I take it as a happy omen, brothers, to have seen what I have; for these saints and knights were of the same profession as myself, which is the calling of arms; only there is this difference between them and me, that they were saints, and fought with divine weapons, and I am a sinner and fight with human ones. They won heaven by force of arms, for heaven suffereth violence; and I, so far, know not what I have won by dint of my sufferings; but if my Dulcinea del Toboso were to be released from hers, perhaps with mended fortunes and a mind restored to itself I might direct my steps in a better path than I am following at present.”

“May God hear and sin be deaf,” said Sancho to this.

The men were filled with wonder, as well at the figure as at the words of Don Quixote, though they did not understand one half of what he meant by them. They finished their dinner, took their images on their backs, and bidding farewell to Don Quixote resumed their journey.

Sancho was amazed afresh at the extent of his master’s knowledge, as much as if he had never known him, for it seemed to him that there was no story or event in the world that he had not at his fingers’ ends and fixed in his memory,

and he said to him, "In truth, master mine, if this that has happened to us to-day is to be called an adventure, it has been one of the sweetest and pleasantest that have befallen us in the whole course of our travels; we have come out of it unbelaboured and undismayed, neither have we drawn sword nor have we smitten the earth with our bodies, nor have we been left famishing; blessed be God that he has let me see such a thing with my own eyes!"

"Thou sayest well, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "but remember all times are not alike nor do they always run the same way; and these things the vulgar commonly call omens, which are not based upon any natural reason, will by him who is wise be esteemed and reckoned happy accidents merely. One of these believers in omens will get up of a morning, leave his house, and meet a friar of the order of the blessed Saint Francis, and, as if he had met a griffin, he will turn about and go home. With another Mendoza the salt is spilt on his table, and gloom is spilt over his heart, as if nature was obliged to give warning of coming misfortunes by means of such trivial things as these. The wise man and the Christian should not trifle with what it may please heaven to do. Scipio on coming to Africa stumbled as he leaped on shore; his soldiers took it as a bad omen; but he, clasping the soil with his arms, exclaimed, 'Thou canst not escape me, Africa, for I hold thee tight between my arms.' Thus, Sancho, meeting those images has been to me a most happy occurrence."

"I can well believe it," said Sancho; "but I wish your worship would tell me what is the reason that the Spaniards, when they are about to give battle, in calling on that Saint James the Moorslayer, say 'Santiago and close Spain!' Is Spain, then, open, so that it is needful to close it; or what is the meaning of this form?"

"Thou art very simple, Sancho," said Don Quixote; "God, look you, gave that great knight of the Red Cross to Spain as her patron saint and protector, especially in those hard struggles the Spaniards had with the Moors; and therefore they invoke and call upon him as their defender in all their battles; and in these he has been many a time seen beating down, trampling under foot, destroying and slaughtering the Hagarene squadrons in the sight of all; of which fact I could give thee many examples recorded in truthful Spanish histories."

Sancho changed the subject, and said to his master, "I marvel, senor, at the boldness of Altisidora, the duchess's handmaid; he whom they call Love must have cruelly pierced and wounded her; they say he is a little blind urchin who, though blear-eyed, or more properly speaking sightless, if he aims at a heart, be it ever so small, hits it and pierces it through and through with his arrows. I have heard it said too that the arrows of Love are blunted and robbed of their points by maidenly modesty and reserve; but with this Altisidora it seems they are

sharpened rather than blunted.”

“Bear in mind, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “that love is influenced by no consideration, recognises no restraints of reason, and is of the same nature as death, that assails alike the lofty palaces of kings and the humble cabins of shepherds; and when it takes entire possession of a heart, the first thing it does is to banish fear and shame from it; and so without shame Altisidora declared her passion, which excited in my mind embarrassment rather than commiseration.”

“Notable cruelty!” exclaimed Sancho; “unheard-of ingratitude! I can only say for myself that the very smallest loving word of hers would have subdued me and made a slave of me. The devil! What a heart of marble, what bowels of brass, what a soul of mortar! But I can’t imagine what it is that this damsel saw in your worship that could have conquered and captivated her so. What gallant figure was it, what bold bearing, what sprightly grace, what comeliness of feature, which of these things by itself, or what all together, could have made her fall in love with you? For indeed and in truth many a time I stop to look at your worship from the sole of your foot to the topmost hair of your head, and I see more to frighten one than to make one fall in love; moreover I have heard say that beauty is the first and main thing that excites love, and as your worship has none at all, I don’t know what the poor creature fell in love with.”

“Recollect, Sancho,” replied Don Quixote, “there are two sorts of beauty, one of the mind, the other of the body; that of the mind displays and exhibits itself in intelligence, in modesty, in honourable conduct, in generosity, in good breeding; and all these qualities are possible and may exist in an ugly man; and when it is this sort of beauty and not that of the body that is the attraction, love is apt to spring up suddenly and violently. I, Sancho, perceive clearly enough that I am not beautiful, but at the same time I know I am not hideous; and it is enough for an honest man not to be a monster to be an object of love, if only he possesses the endowments of mind I have mentioned.”

While engaged in this discourse they were making their way through a wood that lay beyond the road, when suddenly, without expecting anything of the kind, Don Quixote found himself caught in some nets of green cord stretched from one tree to another; and unable to conceive what it could be, he said to Sancho, “Sancho, it strikes me this affair of these nets will prove one of the strangest adventures imaginable. May I die if the enchanters that persecute me are not trying to entangle me in them and delay my journey, by way of revenge for my obduracy towards Altisidora. Well then let me tell them that if these nets, instead of being green cord, were made of the hardest diamonds, or stronger than that wherewith the jealous god of blacksmiths enmeshed Venus and Mars, I would break them as easily as if they were made of rushes or cotton threads.” But just

as he was about to press forward and break through all, suddenly from among some trees two shepherdesses of surpassing beauty presented themselves to his sight — or at least damsels dressed like shepherdesses, save that their jerkins and sayas were of fine brocade; that is to say, the sayas were rich farthingales of gold embroidered tabby. Their hair, that in its golden brightness vied with the beams of the sun itself, fell loose upon their shoulders and was crowned with garlands twined with green laurel and red everlasting; and their years to all appearance were not under fifteen nor above eighteen.



Such was the spectacle that filled Sancho with amazement, fascinated Don Quixote, made the sun halt in his course to behold them, and held all four in a strange silence. One of the shepherdesses, at length, was the first to speak and said to Don Quixote, "Hold, sir knight, and do not break these nets; for they are not spread here to do you any harm, but only for our amusement; and as I know you will ask why they have been put up, and who we are, I will tell you in a few words. In a village some two leagues from this, where there are many people of quality and rich gentlefolk, it was agreed upon by a number of friends and relations to come with their wives, sons and daughters, neighbours, friends and kinsmen, and make holiday in this spot, which is one of the pleasantest in the whole neighbourhood, setting up a new pastoral Arcadia among ourselves, we maidens dressing ourselves as shepherdesses and the youths as shepherds. We have prepared two eclogues, one by the famous poet Garcilasso, the other by the most excellent Camoens, in its own Portuguese tongue, but we have not as yet acted them. Yesterday was the first day of our coming here; we have a few of what they say are called field-tents pitched among the trees on the bank of an ample brook that fertilises all these meadows; last night we spread these nets in the trees here to snare the silly little birds that startled by the noise we make may fly into them. If you please to be our guest, senor, you will be welcomed heartily and courteously, for here just now neither care nor sorrow shall enter."

She held her peace and said no more, and Don Quixote made answer, "Of a truth, fairest lady, Actaeon when he unexpectedly beheld Diana bathing in the stream could not have been more fascinated and wonderstruck than I at the sight of your beauty. I commend your mode of entertainment, and thank you for the kindness of your invitation; and if I can serve you, you may command me with full confidence of being obeyed, for my profession is none other than to show myself grateful, and ready to serve persons of all conditions, but especially persons of quality such as your appearance indicates; and if, instead of taking up, as they probably do, but a small space, these nets took up the whole surface of the globe, I would seek out new worlds through which to pass, so as not to break them; and that ye may give some degree of credence to this exaggerated language of mine, know that it is no less than Don Quixote of La Mancha that makes this declaration to you, if indeed it be that such a name has reached your ears."

“Ah! friend of my soul,” instantly exclaimed the other shepherdess, “what great good fortune has befallen us! Seest thou this gentleman we have before us? Well then let me tell thee he is the most valiant and the most devoted and the most courteous gentleman in all the world, unless a history of his achievements that has been printed and I have read is telling lies and deceiving us. I will lay a wager that this good fellow who is with him is one Sancho Panza his squire, whose drolleries none can equal.”

“That’s true,” said Sancho; “I am that same droll and squire you speak of, and this gentleman is my master Don Quixote of La Mancha, the same that’s in the history and that they talk about.”

“Oh, my friend,” said the other, “let us entreat him to stay; for it will give our fathers and brothers infinite pleasure; I too have heard just what thou hast told me of the valour of the one and the drolleries of the other; and what is more, of him they say that he is the most constant and loyal lover that was ever heard of, and that his lady is one Dulcinea del Toboso, to whom all over Spain the palm of beauty is awarded.”

“And justly awarded,” said Don Quixote, “unless, indeed, your unequalled beauty makes it a matter of doubt. But spare yourselves the trouble, ladies, of pressing me to stay, for the urgent calls of my profession do not allow me to take rest under any circumstances.”

At this instant there came up to the spot where the four stood a brother of one of the two shepherdesses, like them in shepherd costume, and as richly and gaily dressed as they were. They told him that their companion was the valiant Don Quixote of La Mancha, and the other Sancho his squire, of whom he knew already from having read their history. The gay shepherd offered him his services and begged that he would accompany him to their tents, and Don Quixote had to give way and comply. And now the game was started, and the nets were filled with a variety of birds that deceived by the colour fell into the danger they were flying from. Upwards of thirty persons, all gaily attired as shepherds and shepherdesses, assembled on the spot, and were at once informed who Don Quixote and his squire were, whereat they were not a little delighted, as they knew of him already through his history. They repaired to the tents, where they found tables laid out, and choicely, plentifully, and neatly furnished. They treated Don Quixote as a person of distinction, giving him the place of honour, and all observed him, and were full of astonishment at the spectacle. At last the cloth being removed, Don Quixote with great composure lifted up his voice and said:

“One of the greatest sins that men are guilty of is — some will say pride — but I say ingratitude, going by the common saying that hell is full of ingrates.



This sin, so far as it has lain in my power, I have endeavoured to avoid ever since I have enjoyed the faculty of reason; and if I am unable to requite good deeds that have been done me by other deeds, I substitute the desire to do so; and if that be not enough I make them known publicly; for he who declares and makes known the good deeds done to him would repay them by others if it were in his power, and for the most part those who receive are the inferiors of those who give. Thus, God is superior to all because he is the supreme giver, and the offerings of man fall short by an infinite distance of being a full return for the gifts of God; but gratitude in some degree makes up for this deficiency and shortcoming. I therefore, grateful for the favour that has been extended to me here, and unable to make a return in the same measure, restricted as I am by the narrow limits of my power, offer what I can and what I have to offer in my own way; and so I declare that for two full days I will maintain in the middle of this highway leading to Saragossa, that these ladies disguised as shepherdesses, who are here present, are the fairest and most courteous maidens in the world, excepting only the peerless Dulcinea del Toboso, sole mistress of my thoughts, be it said without offence to those who hear me, ladies and gentlemen.”

On hearing this Sancho, who had been listening with great attention, cried out in a loud voice, “Is it possible there is anyone in the world who will dare to say and swear that this master of mine is a madman? Say, gentlemen shepherds, is there a village priest, be he ever so wise or learned, who could say what my master has said; or is there knight-errant, whatever renown he may have as a man of valour, that could offer what my master has offered now?”

Don Quixote turned upon Sancho, and with a countenance glowing with anger said to him, “Is it possible, Sancho, there is anyone in the whole world who will say thou art not a fool, with a lining to match, and I know not what trimmings of impertinence and roguery? Who asked thee to meddle in my affairs, or to inquire whether I am a wise man or a blockhead? Hold thy peace; answer me not a word; saddle Rocinante if he be unsaddled; and let us go to put my offer into execution; for with the right that I have on my side thou mayest reckon as vanquished all who shall venture to question it;” and in a great rage, and showing his anger plainly, he rose from his seat, leaving the company lost in wonder, and making them feel doubtful whether they ought to regard him as a madman or a rational being. In the end, though they sought to dissuade him from involving himself in such a challenge, assuring him they admitted his gratitude as fully established, and needed no fresh proofs to be convinced of his valiant spirit, as those related in the history of his exploits were sufficient, still Don Quixote persisted in his resolve; and mounted on Rocinante, bracing his buckler on his arm and grasping his lance, he posted himself in the middle of a high road

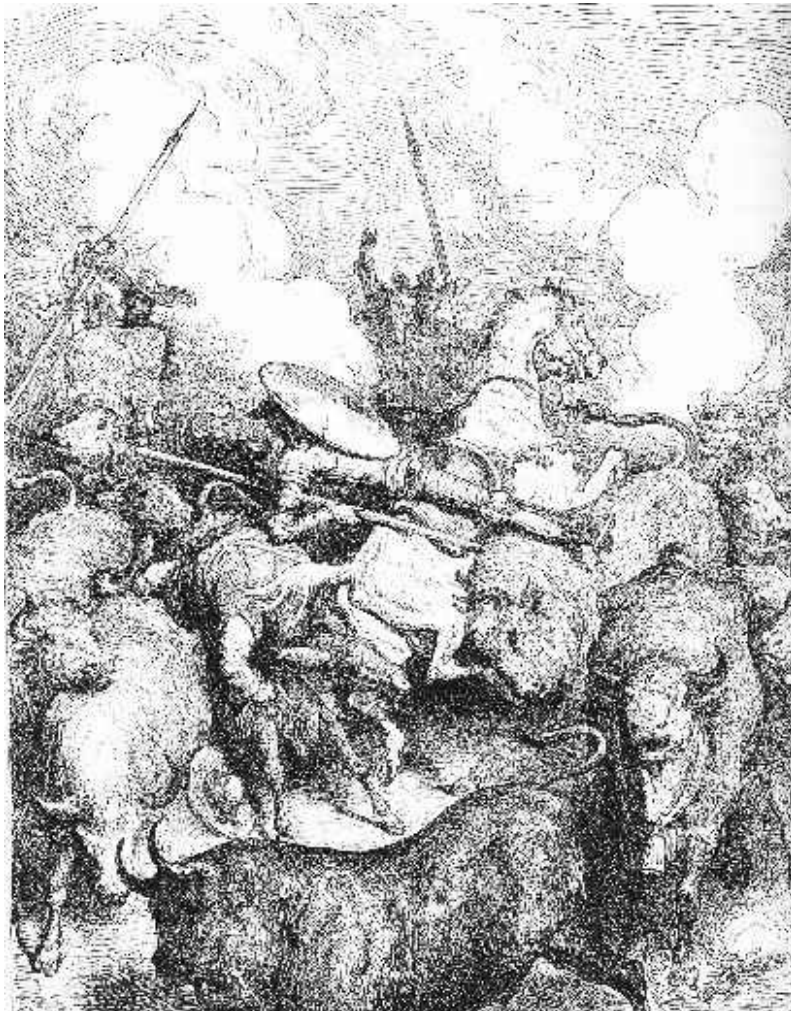
that was not far from the green meadow. Sancho followed on Dapple, together with all the members of the pastoral gathering, eager to see what would be the upshot of his vainglorious and extraordinary proposal.

Don Quixote, then, having, as has been said, planted himself in the middle of the road, made the welkin ring with words to this effect: "Ho ye travellers and wayfarers, knights, squires, folk on foot or on horseback, who pass this way or shall pass in the course of the next two days! Know that Don Quixote of La Mancha, knight-errant, is posted here to maintain by arms that the beauty and courtesy enshrined in the nymphs that dwell in these meadows and groves surpass all upon earth, putting aside the lady of my heart, Dulcinea del Toboso. Wherefore, let him who is of the opposite opinion come on, for here I await him."

Twice he repeated the same words, and twice they fell unheard by any adventurer; but fate, that was guiding affairs for him from better to better, so ordered it that shortly afterwards there appeared on the road a crowd of men on horseback, many of them with lances in their hands, all riding in a compact body and in great haste. No sooner had those who were with Don Quixote seen them than they turned about and withdrew to some distance from the road, for they knew that if they stayed some harm might come to them; but Don Quixote with intrepid heart stood his ground, and Sancho Panza shielded himself with Rocinante's hind-quarters. The troop of lancers came up, and one of them who was in advance began shouting to Don Quixote, "Get out of the way, you son of the devil, or these bulls will knock you to pieces!"

"Rabble!" returned Don Quixote, "I care nothing for bulls, be they the fiercest Jarama breeds on its banks. Confess at once, scoundrels, that what I have declared is true; else ye have to deal with me in combat."

The herdsman had no time to reply, nor Don Quixote to get out of the way even if he wished; and so the drove of fierce bulls and tame bullocks, together with the crowd of herdsmen and others who were taking them to be penned up in a village where they were to be run the next day, passed over Don Quixote and over Sancho, Rocinante and Dapple, hurling them all to the earth and rolling them over on the ground. Sancho was left crushed, Don Quixote scared, Dapple belaboured and Rocinante in no very sound condition.



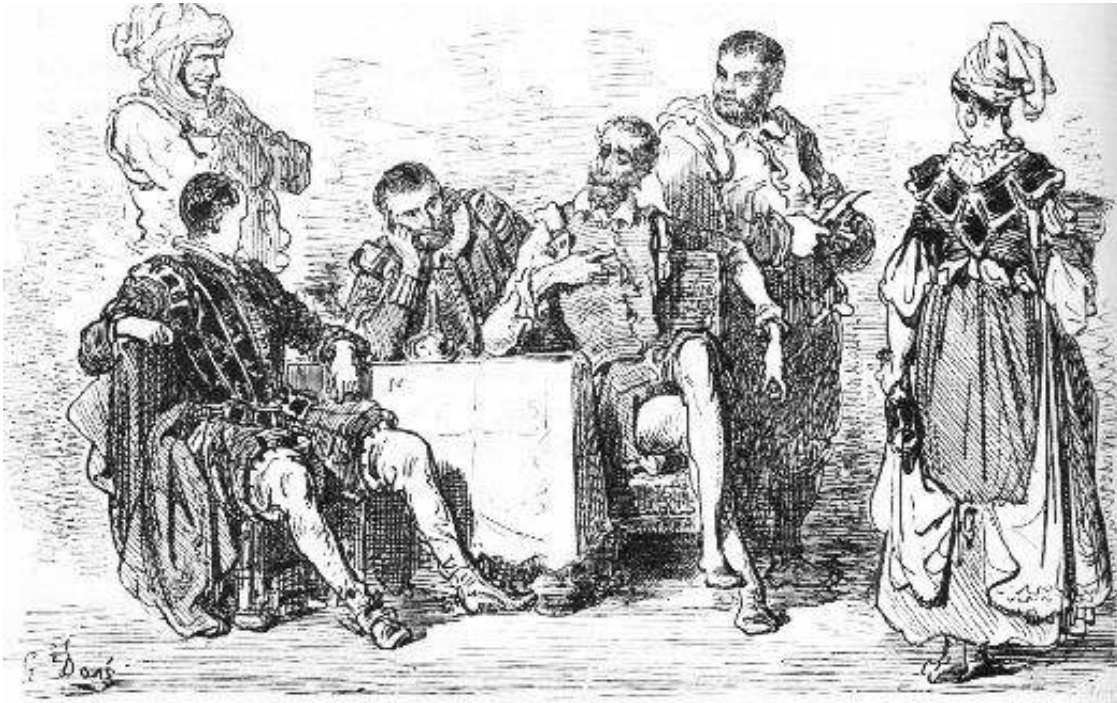
They all got up, however, at length, and Don Quixote in great haste, stumbling here and falling there, started off running after the drove, shouting out, "Hold! stay! ye rascally rabble, a single knight awaits you, and he is not of the temper or opinion of those who say, 'For a flying enemy make a bridge of silver.'" The retreating party in their haste, however, did not stop for that, or heed his menaces any more than last year's clouds. Weariness brought Don Quixote to a halt, and more enraged than avenged he sat down on the road to wait until Sancho, Rocinante and Dapple came up. When they reached him master and man

mounted once more, and without going back to bid farewell to the mock or imitation Arcadia, and more in humiliation than contentment, they continued their journey.



## CHAPTER LIX.

WHEREIN IS RELATED THE STRANGE THING, WHICH MAY BE REGARDED AS AN ADVENTURE, THAT HAPPENED DON QUIXOTE



A clear limpid spring which they discovered in a cool grove relieved Don Quixote and Sancho of the dust and fatigue due to the unpolite behaviour of the bulls, and by the side of this, having turned Dapple and Rocinante loose without headstall or bridle, the forlorn pair, master and man, seated themselves. Sancho had recourse to the larder of his alforjas and took out of them what he called the prog; Don Quixote rinsed his mouth and bathed his face, by which cooling process his flagging energies were revived. Out of pure vexation he remained without eating, and out of pure politeness Sancho did not venture to touch a morsel of what was before him, but waited for his master to act as taster. Seeing,

however, that, absorbed in thought, he was forgetting to carry the bread to his mouth, he said never a word, and trampling every sort of good breeding under foot, began to stow away in his paunch the bread and cheese that came to his hand.



“Eat, Sancho my friend,” said Don Quixote; “support life, which is of more consequence to thee than to me, and leave me to die under the pain of my thoughts and pressure of my misfortunes. I was born, Sancho, to live dying, and thou to die eating; and to prove the truth of what I say, look at me, printed in histories, famed in arms, courteous in behaviour, honoured by princes, courted by maidens; and after all, when I looked forward to palms, triumphs, and crowns, won and earned by my valiant deeds, I have this morning seen myself trampled on, kicked, and crushed by the feet of unclean and filthy animals. This thought blunts my teeth, paralyses my jaws, cramps my hands, and robs me of all appetite for food; so much so that I have a mind to let myself die of hunger, the cruelest death of all deaths.”

“So then,” said Sancho, munching hard all the time, “your worship does not agree with the proverb that says, ‘Let Martha die, but let her die with a full belly.’ I, at any rate, have no mind to kill myself; so far from that, I mean to do as the cobbler does, who stretches the leather with his teeth until he makes it reach as far as he wants. I’ll stretch out my life by eating until it reaches the end heaven has fixed for it; and let me tell you, senor, there’s no greater folly than to think of dying of despair as your worship does; take my advice, and after eating lie down and sleep a bit on this green grass-mattress, and you will see that when you awake you’ll feel something better.”

Don Quixote did as he recommended, for it struck him that Sancho’s reasoning was more like a philosopher’s than a blockhead’s, and said he, “Sancho, if thou wilt do for me what I am going to tell thee my ease of mind would be more assured and my heaviness of heart not so great; and it is this; to go aside a little while I am sleeping in accordance with thy advice, and, making bare thy carcase to the air, to give thyself three or four hundred lashes with Rocinante’s reins, on account of the three thousand and odd thou art to give thyself for the disenchantment of Dulcinea; for it is a great pity that the poor lady should be left enchanted through thy carelessness and negligence.”

“There is a good deal to be said on that point,” said Sancho; “let us both go to sleep now, and after that, God has decreed what will happen. Let me tell your worship that for a man to whip himself in cold blood is a hard thing, especially if the stripes fall upon an ill-nourished and worse-fed body. Let my lady Dulcinea have patience, and when she is least expecting it, she will see me made a riddle of with whipping, and ‘until death it’s all life;’ I mean that I have still life in me, and the desire to make good what I have promised.”

Don Quixote thanked him, and ate a little, and Sancho a good deal, and then

they both lay down to sleep, leaving those two inseparable friends and comrades, Rocinante and Dapple, to their own devices and to feed unrestrained upon the abundant grass with which the meadow was furnished. They woke up rather late, mounted once more and resumed their journey, pushing on to reach an inn which was in sight, apparently a league off. I say an inn, because Don Quixote called it so, contrary to his usual practice of calling all inns castles. They reached it, and asked the landlord if they could put up there. He said yes, with as much comfort and as good fare as they could find in Saragossa. They dismounted, and Sancho stowed away his larder in a room of which the landlord gave him the key. He took the beasts to the stable, fed them, and came back to see what orders Don Quixote, who was seated on a bench at the door, had for him, giving special thanks to heaven that this inn had not been taken for a castle by his master. Supper-time came, and they repaired to their room, and Sancho asked the landlord what he had to give them for supper. To this the landlord replied that his mouth should be the measure; he had only to ask what he would; for that inn was provided with the birds of the air and the fowls of the earth and the fish of the sea.

“There’s no need of all that,” said Sancho; “if they’ll roast us a couple of chickens we’ll be satisfied, for my master is delicate and eats little, and I’m not over and above gluttonous.”

The landlord replied he had no chickens, for the kites had stolen them.

“Well then,” said Sancho, “let senor landlord tell them to roast a pullet, so that it is a tender one.”

“Pullet! My father!” said the landlord; “indeed and in truth it’s only yesterday I sent over fifty to the city to sell; but saving pullets ask what you will.”

“In that case,” said Sancho, “you will not be without veal or kid.”

“Just now,” said the landlord, “there’s none in the house, for it’s all finished; but next week there will be enough and to spare.”

“Much good that does us,” said Sancho; “I’ll lay a bet that all these shortcomings are going to wind up in plenty of bacon and eggs.”

“By God,” said the landlord, “my guest’s wits must be precious dull; I tell him I have neither pullets nor hens, and he wants me to have eggs! Talk of other dainties, if you please, and don’t ask for hens again.”

“Body o’ me!” said Sancho, “let’s settle the matter; say at once what you have got, and let us have no more words about it.”

“In truth and earnest, senor guest,” said the landlord, “all I have is a couple of cowheels like calves’ feet, or a couple of calves’ feet like cowheels; they are boiled with chick-peas, onions, and bacon, and at this moment they are crying ‘Come eat me, come eat me.’”



“I mark them for mine on the spot,” said Sancho; “let nobody touch them; I’ll pay better for them than anyone else, for I could not wish for anything more to my taste; and I don’t care a pin whether they are feet or heels.”

“Nobody shall touch them,” said the landlord; “for the other guests I have, being persons of high quality, bring their own cook and caterer and larder with them.”

“If you come to people of quality,” said Sancho, “there’s nobody more so than my master; but the calling he follows does not allow of larders or store-rooms; we lay ourselves down in the middle of a meadow, and fill ourselves with acorns or medlars.”

Here ended Sancho’s conversation with the landlord, Sancho not caring to carry it any farther by answering him; for he had already asked him what calling or what profession it was his master was of.

Supper-time having come, then, Don Quixote betook himself to his room, the landlord brought in the stew-pan just as it was, and he sat himself down to sup very resolutely. It seems that in another room, which was next to Don Quixote’s, with nothing but a thin partition to separate it, he overheard these words, “As you live, Senor Don Jeronimo, while they are bringing supper, let us read another chapter of the Second Part of ‘Don Quixote of La Mancha.’”

The instant Don Quixote heard his own name he started to his feet and listened with open ears to catch what they said about him, and heard the Don Jeronimo who had been addressed say in reply, “Why would you have us read that absurd stuff, Don Juan, when it is impossible for anyone who has read the First Part of the history of ‘Don Quixote of La Mancha’ to take any pleasure in reading this Second Part?”

“For all that,” said he who was addressed as Don Juan, “we shall do well to read it, for there is no book so bad but it has something good in it. What displeases me most in it is that it represents Don Quixote as now cured of his love for Dulcinea del Toboso.”

On hearing this Don Quixote, full of wrath and indignation, lifted up his voice and said, “Whoever he may be who says that Don Quixote of La Mancha has forgotten or can forget Dulcinea del Toboso, I will teach him with equal arms that what he says is very far from the truth; for neither can the peerless Dulcinea del Toboso be forgotten, nor can forgetfulness have a place in Don Quixote; his motto is constancy, and his profession to maintain the same with his life and never wrong it.”

“Who is this that answers us?” said they in the next room.

“Who should it be,” said Sancho, “but Don Quixote of La Mancha himself, who will make good all he has said and all he will say; for pledges don’t trouble

a good payer.”

Sancho had hardly uttered these words when two gentlemen, for such they seemed to be, entered the room, and one of them, throwing his arms round Don Quixote’s neck, said to him, “Your appearance cannot leave any question as to your name, nor can your name fail to identify your appearance; unquestionably, senor, you are the real Don Quixote of La Mancha, cynosure and morning star of knight-errantry, despite and in defiance of him who has sought to usurp your name and bring to naught your achievements, as the author of this book which I here present to you has done;” and with this he put a book which his companion carried into the hands of Don Quixote, who took it, and without replying began to run his eye over it; but he presently returned it saying, “In the little I have seen I have discovered three things in this author that deserve to be censured. The first is some words that I have read in the preface; the next that the language is Aragonese, for sometimes he writes without articles; and the third, which above all stamps him as ignorant, is that he goes wrong and departs from the truth in the most important part of the history, for here he says that my squire Sancho Panza’s wife is called Mari Gutierrez, when she is called nothing of the sort, but Teresa Panza; and when a man errs on such an important point as this there is good reason to fear that he is in error on every other point in the history.”

“A nice sort of historian, indeed!” exclaimed Sancho at this; “he must know a deal about our affairs when he calls my wife Teresa Panza, Mari Gutierrez; take the book again, senor, and see if I am in it and if he has changed my name.”

“From your talk, friend,” said Don Jeronimo, “no doubt you are Sancho Panza, Senor Don Quixote’s squire.”

“Yes, I am,” said Sancho; “and I’m proud of it.”

“Faith, then,” said the gentleman, “this new author does not handle you with the decency that displays itself in your person; he makes you out a heavy feeder and a fool, and not in the least droll, and a very different being from the Sancho described in the First Part of your master’s history.”

“God forgive him,” said Sancho; “he might have left me in my corner without troubling his head about me; ‘let him who knows how ring the bells; ‘Saint Peter is very well in Rome.’”

The two gentlemen pressed Don Quixote to come into their room and have supper with them, as they knew very well there was nothing in that inn fit for one of his sort. Don Quixote, who was always polite, yielded to their request and supped with them. Sancho stayed behind with the stew. and invested with plenary delegated authority seated himself at the head of the table, and the landlord sat down with him, for he was no less fond of cowheel and calves’ feet than Sancho was.

While at supper Don Juan asked Don Quixote what news he had of the lady Dulcinea del Toboso, was she married, had she been brought to bed, or was she with child, or did she in maidenhood, still preserving her modesty and delicacy, cherish the remembrance of the tender passion of Senor Don Quixote?

To this he replied, "Dulcinea is a maiden still, and my passion more firmly rooted than ever, our intercourse unsatisfactory as before, and her beauty transformed into that of a foul country wench;" and then he proceeded to give them a full and particular account of the enchantment of Dulcinea, and of what had happened him in the cave of Montesinos, together with what the sage Merlin had prescribed for her disenchantment, namely the scourging of Sancho.

Exceedingly great was the amusement the two gentlemen derived from hearing Don Quixote recount the strange incidents of his history; and if they were amazed by his absurdities they were equally amazed by the elegant style in which he delivered them. On the one hand they regarded him as a man of wit and sense, and on the other he seemed to them a maundering blockhead, and they could not make up their minds whereabouts between wisdom and folly they ought to place him.

Sancho having finished his supper, and left the landlord in the X condition, repaired to the room where his master was, and as he came in said, "May I die, sirs, if the author of this book your worships have got has any mind that we should agree; as he calls me glutton (according to what your worships say) I wish he may not call me drunkard too."

"But he does," said Don Jeronimo; "I cannot remember, however, in what way, though I know his words are offensive, and what is more, lying, as I can see plainly by the physiognomy of the worthy Sancho before me."

"Believe me," said Sancho, "the Sancho and the Don Quixote of this history must be different persons from those that appear in the one Cide Hamete Benengeli wrote, who are ourselves; my master valiant, wise, and true in love, and I simple, droll, and neither glutton nor drunkard."

"I believe it," said Don Juan; "and were it possible, an order should be issued that no one should have the presumption to deal with anything relating to Don Quixote, save his original author Cide Hamete; just as Alexander commanded that no one should presume to paint his portrait save Apelles."



“Let him who will paint me,” said Don Quixote; “but let him not abuse me; for patience will often break down when they heap insults upon it.”

“None can be offered to Senor Don Quixote,” said Don Juan, “that he himself will not be able to avenge, if he does not ward it off with the shield of his patience, which, I take it, is great and strong.”

A considerable portion of the night passed in conversation of this sort, and though Don Juan wished Don Quixote to read more of the book to see what it was all about, he was not to be prevailed upon, saying that he treated it as read

and pronounced it utterly silly; and, if by any chance it should come to its author's ears that he had it in his hand, he did not want him to flatter himself with the idea that he had read it; for our thoughts, and still more our eyes, should keep themselves aloof from what is obscene and filthy.

They asked him whither he meant to direct his steps. He replied, to Saragossa, to take part in the harness jousts which were held in that city every year. Don Juan told him that the new history described how Don Quixote, let him be who he might, took part there in a tilting at the ring, utterly devoid of invention, poor in mottoes, very poor in costume, though rich in sillinesses.

"For that very reason," said Don Quixote, "I will not set foot in Saragossa; and by that means I shall expose to the world the lie of this new history writer, and people will see that I am not the Don Quixote he speaks of."

"You will do quite right," said Don Jeronimo; "and there are other jousts at Barcelona in which Senor Don Quixote may display his prowess."

"That is what I mean to do," said Don Quixote; "and as it is now time, I pray your worships to give me leave to retire to bed, and to place and retain me among the number of your greatest friends and servants."

"And me too," said Sancho; "maybe I'll be good for something."

With this they exchanged farewells, and Don Quixote and Sancho retired to their room, leaving Don Juan and Don Jeronimo amazed to see the medley he made of his good sense and his craziness; and they felt thoroughly convinced that these, and not those their Aragonese author described, were the genuine Don Quixote and Sancho. Don Quixote rose betimes, and bade adieu to his hosts by knocking at the partition of the other room. Sancho paid the landlord magnificently, and recommended him either to say less about the providing of his inn or to keep it better provided.



## CHAPTER LX.

### OF WHAT HAPPENED DON QUIXOTE ON HIS WAY TO BARCELONA



It was a fresh morning giving promise of a cool day as Don Quixote quitted the inn, first of all taking care to ascertain the most direct road to Barcelona without touching upon Saragossa; so anxious was he to make out this new historian, who they said abused him so, to be a liar. Well, as it fell out, nothing worthy of being recorded happened him for six days, at the end of which, having turned aside out of the road, he was overtaken by night in a thicket of oak or cork trees; for on this point Cide Hamete is not as precise as he usually is on other matters.

Master and man dismounted from their beasts, and as soon as they had settled themselves at the foot of the trees, Sancho, who had had a good noontide meal

that day, let himself, without more ado, pass the gates of sleep. But Don Quixote, whom his thoughts, far more than hunger, kept awake, could not close an eye, and roamed in fancy to and fro through all sorts of places. At one moment it seemed to him that he was in the cave of Montesinos and saw Dulcinea, transformed into a country wench, skipping and mounting upon her she-ass; again that the words of the sage Merlin were sounding in his ears, setting forth the conditions to be observed and the exertions to be made for the disenchantment of Dulcinea. He lost all patience when he considered the laziness and want of charity of his squire Sancho; for to the best of his belief he had only given himself five lashes, a number paltry and disproportioned to the vast number required. At this thought he felt such vexation and anger that he reasoned the matter thus: "If Alexander the Great cut the Gordian knot, saying, 'To cut comes to the same thing as to untie,' and yet did not fail to become lord paramount of all Asia, neither more nor less could happen now in Dulcinea's disenchantment if I scourge Sancho against his will; for, if it is the condition of the remedy that Sancho shall receive three thousand and odd lashes, what does it matter to me whether he inflicts them himself, or some one else inflicts them, when the essential point is that he receives them, let them come from whatever quarter they may?"

With this idea he went over to Sancho, having first taken Rocinante's reins and arranged them so as to be able to flog him with them, and began to untie the points (the common belief is he had but one in front) by which his breeches were held up; but the instant he approached him Sancho woke up in his full senses and cried out, "What is this? Who is touching me and untrussing me?"

"It is I," said Don Quixote, "and I come to make good thy shortcomings and relieve my own distresses; I come to whip thee, Sancho, and wipe off some portion of the debt thou hast undertaken. Dulcinea is perishing, thou art living on regardless, I am dying of hope deferred; therefore untruss thyself with a good will, for mine it is, here, in this retired spot, to give thee at least two thousand lashes."

"Not a bit of it," said Sancho; "let your worship keep quiet, or else by the living God the deaf shall hear us; the lashes I pledged myself to must be voluntary and not forced upon me, and just now I have no fancy to whip myself; it is enough if I give you my word to flog and flap myself when I have a mind."

"It will not do to leave it to thy courtesy, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "for thou art hard of heart and, though a clown, tender of flesh;" and at the same time he strove and struggled to untie him.

Seeing this Sancho got up, and grappling with his master he gripped him with all his might in his arms, giving him a trip with the heel stretched him on the



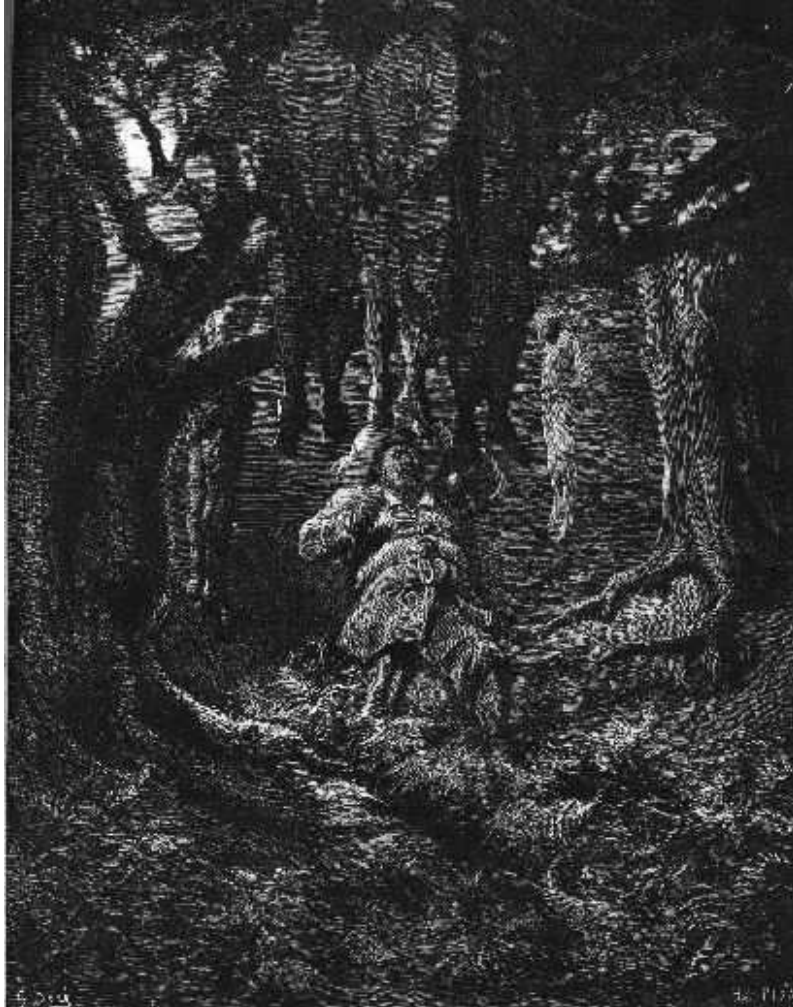
ground on his back, and pressing his right knee on his chest held his hands in his own so that he could neither move nor breathe.

“How now, traitor!” exclaimed Don Quixote. “Dost thou revolt against thy master and natural lord? Dost thou rise against him who gives thee his bread?”

“I neither put down king, nor set up king,” said Sancho; “I only stand up for myself who am my own lord; if your worship promises me to be quiet, and not to offer to whip me now, I’ll let you go free and unhindered; if not —

Traitor and Dona Sancha’s foe,  
Thou diest on the spot.”

Don Quixote gave his promise, and swore by the life of his thoughts not to touch so much as a hair of his garments, and to leave him entirely free and to his own discretion to whip himself whenever he pleased.



Sancho rose and removed some distance from the spot, but as he was about to place himself leaning against another tree he felt something touch his head, and putting up his hands encountered somebody's two feet with shoes and stockings on them. He trembled with fear and made for another tree, where the very same thing happened to him, and he fell a-shouting, calling upon Don Quixote to come and protect him. Don Quixote did so, and asked him what had happened to him, and what he was afraid of. Sancho replied that all the trees were full of men's feet and legs. Don Quixote felt them, and guessed at once what it was, and said to Sancho, "Thou hast nothing to be afraid of, for these feet and legs that thou feelest but canst not see belong no doubt to some outlaws and freebooters

that have been hanged on these trees; for the authorities in these parts are wont to hang them up by twenties and thirties when they catch them; whereby I conjecture that I must be near Barcelona;" and it was, in fact, as he supposed; with the first light they looked up and saw that the fruit hanging on those trees were freebooters' bodies.

And now day dawned; and if the dead freebooters had scared them, their hearts were no less troubled by upwards of forty living ones, who all of a sudden surrounded them, and in the Catalan tongue bade them stand and wait until their captain came up. Don Quixote was on foot with his horse unbridled and his lance leaning against a tree, and in short completely defenceless; he thought it best therefore to fold his arms and bow his head and reserve himself for a more favourable occasion and opportunity. The robbers made haste to search Dapple, and did not leave him a single thing of all he carried in the alforjas and in the valise; and lucky it was for Sancho that the duke's crowns and those he brought from home were in a girdle that he wore round him; but for all that these good folk would have stripped him, and even looked to see what he had hidden between the skin and flesh, but for the arrival at that moment of their captain, who was about thirty-four years of age apparently, strongly built, above the middle height, of stern aspect and swarthy complexion. He was mounted upon a powerful horse, and had on a coat of mail, with four of the pistols they call petronels in that country at his waist. He saw that his squires (for so they call those who follow that trade) were about to rifle Sancho Panza, but he ordered them to desist and was at once obeyed, so the girdle escaped. He wondered to see the lance leaning against the tree, the shield on the ground, and Don Quixote in armour and dejected, with the saddest and most melancholy face that sadness itself could produce; and going up to him he said, "Be not so cast down, good man, for you have not fallen into the hands of any inhuman Busiris, but into Roque Guinart's, which are more merciful than cruel."

"The cause of my dejection," returned Don Quixote, "is not that I have fallen into thy hands, O valiant Roque, whose fame is bounded by no limits on earth, but that my carelessness should have been so great that thy soldiers should have caught me unbridled, when it is my duty, according to the rule of knight-errantry which I profess, to be always on the alert and at all times my own sentinel; for let me tell thee, great Roque, had they found me on my horse, with my lance and shield, it would not have been very easy for them to reduce me to submission, for I am Don Quixote of La Mancha, he who hath filled the whole world with his achievements."

Roque Guinart at once perceived that Don Quixote's weakness was more akin to madness than to swagger; and though he had sometimes heard him spoken of,

he never regarded the things attributed to him as true, nor could he persuade himself that such a humour could become dominant in the heart of man; he was extremely glad, therefore, to meet him and test at close quarters what he had heard of him at a distance; so he said to him, "Despair not, valiant knight, nor regard as an untoward fate the position in which thou findest thyself; it may be that by these slips thy crooked fortune will make itself straight; for heaven by strange circuitous ways, mysterious and incomprehensible to man, raises up the fallen and makes rich the poor."

Don Quixote was about to thank him, when they heard behind them a noise as of a troop of horses; there was, however, but one, riding on which at a furious pace came a youth, apparently about twenty years of age, clad in green damask edged with gold and breeches and a loose frock, with a hat looped up in the Walloon fashion, tight-fitting polished boots, gilt spurs, dagger and sword, and in his hand a musketoon, and a pair of pistols at his waist.

Roque turned round at the noise and perceived this comely figure, which drawing near thus addressed him, "I came in quest of thee, valiant Roque, to find in thee if not a remedy at least relief in my misfortune; and not to keep thee in suspense, for I see thou dost not recognise me, I will tell thee who I am; I am Claudia Jeronima, the daughter of Simon Forte, thy good friend, and special enemy of Clauquel Torrellas, who is thine also as being of the faction opposed to thee. Thou knowest that this Torrellas has a son who is called, or at least was not two hours since, Don Vicente Torrellas. Well, to cut short the tale of my misfortune, I will tell thee in a few words what this youth has brought upon me. He saw me, he paid court to me, I listened to him, and, unknown to my father, I loved him; for there is no woman, however secluded she may live or close she may be kept, who will not have opportunities and to spare for following her headlong impulses. In a word, he pledged himself to be mine, and I promised to be his, without carrying matters any further. Yesterday I learned that, forgetful of his pledge to me, he was about to marry another, and that he was to go this morning to plight his troth, intelligence which overwhelmed and exasperated me; my father not being at home I was able to adopt this costume you see, and urging my horse to speed I overtook Don Vicente about a league from this, and without waiting to utter reproaches or hear excuses I fired this musket at him, and these two pistols besides, and to the best of my belief I must have lodged more than two bullets in his body, opening doors to let my honour go free, enveloped in his blood. I left him there in the hands of his servants, who did not dare and were not able to interfere in his defence, and I come to seek from thee a safe-conduct into France, where I have relatives with whom I can live; and also to implore thee to protect my father, so that Don Vicente's numerous kinsmen

may not venture to wreak their lawless vengeance upon him.”

Roque, filled with admiration at the gallant bearing, high spirit, comely figure, and adventure of the fair Claudia, said to her, “Come, senora, let us go and see if thy enemy is dead; and then we will consider what will be best for thee.” Don Quixote, who had been listening to what Claudia said and Roque Guinart said in reply to her, exclaimed, “Nobody need trouble himself with the defence of this lady, for I take it upon myself. Give me my horse and arms, and wait for me here; I will go in quest of this knight, and dead or alive I will make him keep his word plighted to so great beauty.”

“Nobody need have any doubt about that,” said Sancho, “for my master has a very happy knack of matchmaking; it’s not many days since he forced another man to marry, who in the same way backed out of his promise to another maiden; and if it had not been for his persecutors the enchanters changing the man’s proper shape into a lacquey’s the said maiden would not be one this minute.”

Roque, who was paying more attention to the fair Claudia’s adventure than to the words of master or man, did not hear them; and ordering his squires to restore to Sancho everything they had stripped Dapple of, he directed them to return to the place where they had been quartered during the night, and then set off with Claudia at full speed in search of the wounded or slain Don Vicente. They reached the spot where Claudia met him, but found nothing there save freshly spilt blood; looking all round, however, they descried some people on the slope of a hill above them, and concluded, as indeed it proved to be, that it was Don Vicente, whom either dead or alive his servants were removing to attend to his wounds or to bury him. They made haste to overtake them, which, as the party moved slowly, they were able to do with ease. They found Don Vicente in the arms of his servants, whom he was entreating in a broken feeble voice to leave him there to die, as the pain of his wounds would not suffer him to go any farther. Claudia and Roque threw themselves off their horses and advanced towards him; the servants were overawed by the appearance of Roque, and Claudia was moved by the sight of Don Vicente, and going up to him half tenderly half sternly, she seized his hand and said to him, “Hadst thou given me this according to our compact thou hadst never come to this pass.”

The wounded gentleman opened his all but closed eyes, and recognising Claudia said, “I see clearly, fair and mistaken lady, that it is thou that hast slain me, a punishment not merited or deserved by my feelings towards thee, for never did I mean to, nor could I, wrong thee in thought or deed.”

“It is not true, then,” said Claudia, “that thou wert going this morning to marry Leonora the daughter of the rich Balvastro?”

“Assuredly not,” replied Don Vicente; “my cruel fortune must have carried those tidings to thee to drive thee in thy jealousy to take my life; and to assure thyself of this, press my hands and take me for thy husband if thou wilt; I have no better satisfaction to offer thee for the wrong thou fanciest thou hast received from me.”

Claudia wrung his hands, and her own heart was so wrung that she lay fainting on the bleeding breast of Don Vicente, whom a death spasm seized the same instant. Roque was in perplexity and knew not what to do; the servants ran to fetch water to sprinkle their faces, and brought some and bathed them with it. Claudia recovered from her fainting fit, but not so Don Vicente from the paroxysm that had overtaken him, for his life had come to an end. On perceiving this, Claudia, when she had convinced herself that her beloved husband was no more, rent the air with her sighs and made the heavens ring with her lamentations; she tore her hair and scattered it to the winds, she beat her face with her hands and showed all the signs of grief and sorrow that could be conceived to come from an afflicted heart. “Cruel, reckless woman!” she cried, “how easily wert thou moved to carry out a thought so wicked! O furious force of jealousy, to what desperate lengths dost thou lead those that give thee lodging in their bosoms! O husband, whose unhappy fate in being mine hath borne thee from the marriage bed to the grave!”

So vehement and so piteous were the lamentations of Claudia that they drew tears from Roque’s eyes, unused as they were to shed them on any occasion. The servants wept, Claudia swooned away again and again, and the whole place seemed a field of sorrow and an abode of misfortune. In the end Roque Guinart directed Don Vicente’s servants to carry his body to his father’s village, which was close by, for burial. Claudia told him she meant to go to a monastery of which an aunt of hers was abbess, where she intended to pass her life with a better and everlasting spouse. He applauded her pious resolution, and offered to accompany her whithersoever she wished, and to protect her father against the kinsmen of Don Vicente and all the world, should they seek to injure him. Claudia would not on any account allow him to accompany her; and thanking him for his offers as well as she could, took leave of him in tears. The servants of Don Vicente carried away his body, and Roque returned to his comrades, and so ended the love of Claudia Jeronima; but what wonder, when it was the insuperable and cruel might of jealousy that wove the web of her sad story?



Roque Guinart found his squires at the place to which he had ordered them, and Don Quixote on Rocinante in the midst of them delivering a harangue to them in which he urged them to give up a mode of life so full of peril, as well to the soul as to the body; but as most of them were Gascons, rough lawless fellows, his speech did not make much impression on them. Roque on coming up asked Sancho if his men had returned and restored to him the treasures and

jewels they had stripped off Dapple. Sancho said they had, but that three kerchiefs that were worth three cities were missing.

“What are you talking about, man?” said one of the bystanders; “I have got them, and they are not worth three reals.”

“That is true,” said Don Quixote; “but my squire values them at the rate he says, as having been given me by the person who gave them.”

Roque Guinart ordered them to be restored at once; and making his men fall in in line he directed all the clothing, jewellery, and money that they had taken since the last distribution to be produced; and making a hasty valuation, and reducing what could not be divided into money, he made shares for the whole band so equitably and carefully, that in no case did he exceed or fall short of strict distributive justice.

When this had been done, and all left satisfied, Roque observed to Don Quixote, “If this scrupulous exactness were not observed with these fellows there would be no living with them.”

Upon this Sancho remarked, “From what I have seen here, justice is such a good thing that there is no doing without it, even among the thieves themselves.”

One of the squires heard this, and raising the butt-end of his harquebuss would no doubt have broken Sancho’s head with it had not Roque Guinart called out to him to hold his hand. Sancho was frightened out of his wits, and vowed not to open his lips so long as he was in the company of these people.

At this instant one or two of those squires who were posted as sentinels on the roads, to watch who came along them and report what passed to their chief, came up and said, “Senor, there is a great troop of people not far off coming along the road to Barcelona.”

To which Roque replied, “Hast thou made out whether they are of the sort that are after us, or of the sort we are after?”

“The sort we are after,” said the squire.

“Well then, away with you all,” said Roque, “and bring them here to me at once without letting one of them escape.”





They obeyed, and Don Quixote, Sancho, and Roque, left by themselves, waited to see what the squires brought, and while they were waiting Roque said to Don Quixote, "It must seem a strange sort of life to Senor Don Quixote, this of ours, strange adventures, strange incidents, and all full of danger; and I do not wonder that it should seem so, for in truth I must own there is no mode of life more restless or anxious than ours. What led me into it was a certain thirst for vengeance, which is strong enough to disturb the quietest hearts. I am by nature tender-hearted and kindly, but, as I said, the desire to revenge myself for a wrong that was done me so overturns all my better impulses that I keep on in this way of life in spite of what conscience tells me; and as one depth calls to

another, and one sin to another sin, revenges have linked themselves together, and I have taken upon myself not only my own but those of others: it pleases God, however, that, though I see myself in this maze of entanglements, I do not lose all hope of escaping from it and reaching a safe port.”

Don Quixote was amazed to hear Roque utter such excellent and just sentiments, for he did not think that among those who followed such trades as robbing, murdering, and waylaying, there could be anyone capable of a virtuous thought, and he said in reply, “Senor Roque, the beginning of health lies in knowing the disease and in the sick man’s willingness to take the medicines which the physician prescribes; you are sick, you know what ails you, and heaven, or more properly speaking God, who is our physician, will administer medicines that will cure you, and cure gradually, and not of a sudden or by a miracle; besides, sinners of discernment are nearer amendment than those who are fools; and as your worship has shown good sense in your remarks, all you have to do is to keep up a good heart and trust that the weakness of your conscience will be strengthened. And if you have any desire to shorten the journey and put yourself easily in the way of salvation, come with me, and I will show you how to become a knight-errant, a calling wherein so many hardships and mishaps are encountered that if they be taken as penances they will lodge you in heaven in a trice.”

Roque laughed at Don Quixote’s exhortation, and changing the conversation he related the tragic affair of Claudia Jeronima, at which Sancho was extremely grieved; for he had not found the young woman’s beauty, boldness, and spirit at all amiss.

And now the squires despatched to make the prize came up, bringing with them two gentlemen on horseback, two pilgrims on foot, and a coach full of women with some six servants on foot and on horseback in attendance on them, and a couple of muleteers whom the gentlemen had with them. The squires made a ring round them, both victors and vanquished maintaining profound silence, waiting for the great Roque Guinart to speak. He asked the gentlemen who they were, whither they were going, and what money they carried with them; “Senor,” replied one of them, “we are two captains of Spanish infantry; our companies are at Naples, and we are on our way to embark in four galleys which they say are at Barcelona under orders for Sicily; and we have about two or three hundred crowns, with which we are, according to our notions, rich and contented, for a soldier’s poverty does not allow a more extensive hoard.”

Roque asked the pilgrims the same questions he had put to the captains, and was answered that they were going to take ship for Rome, and that between them they might have about sixty reals. He asked also who was in the coach, whither

they were bound and what money they had, and one of the men on horseback replied, "The persons in the coach are my lady Dona Guiomar de Quinones, wife of the regent of the Vicaria at Naples, her little daughter, a handmaid and a duenna; we six servants are in attendance upon her, and the money amounts to six hundred crowns."

"So then," said Roque Guinart, "we have got here nine hundred crowns and sixty reals; my soldiers must number some sixty; see how much there falls to each, for I am a bad arithmetician." As soon as the robbers heard this they raised a shout of "Long life to Roque Guinart, in spite of the lladres that seek his ruin!"

The captains showed plainly the concern they felt, the regent's lady was downcast, and the pilgrims did not at all enjoy seeing their property confiscated. Roque kept them in suspense in this way for a while; but he had no desire to prolong their distress, which might be seen a bowshot off, and turning to the captains he said, "Sirs, will your worships be pleased of your courtesy to lend me sixty crowns, and her ladyship the regent's wife eighty, to satisfy this band that follows me, for 'it is by his singing the abbot gets his dinner;' and then you may at once proceed on your journey, free and unhindered, with a safe-conduct which I shall give you, so that if you come across any other bands of mine that I have scattered in these parts, they may do you no harm; for I have no intention of doing injury to soldiers, or to any woman, especially one of quality."

Profuse and hearty were the expressions of gratitude with which the captains thanked Roque for his courtesy and generosity; for such they regarded his leaving them their own money. Senora Dona Guiomar de Quinones wanted to throw herself out of the coach to kiss the feet and hands of the great Roque, but he would not suffer it on any account; so far from that, he begged her pardon for the wrong he had done her under pressure of the inexorable necessities of his unfortunate calling. The regent's lady ordered one of her servants to give the eighty crowns that had been assessed as her share at once, for the captains had already paid down their sixty. The pilgrims were about to give up the whole of their little hoard, but Roque bade them keep quiet, and turning to his men he said, "Of these crowns two fall to each man and twenty remain over; let ten be given to these pilgrims, and the other ten to this worthy squire that he may be able to speak favourably of this adventure;" and then having writing materials, with which he always went provided, brought to him, he gave them in writing a safe-conduct to the leaders of his bands; and bidding them farewell let them go free and filled with admiration at his magnanimity, his generous disposition, and his unusual conduct, and inclined to regard him as an Alexander the Great rather than a notorious robber.

One of the squires observed in his mixture of Gascon and Catalan, "This

captain of ours would make a better friar than highwayman; if he wants to be so generous another time, let it be with his own property and not ours.”



The unlucky wight did not speak so low but that Roque overheard him, and drawing his sword almost split his head in two, saying, "That is the way I punish impudent saucy fellows." They were all taken aback, and not one of them dared to utter a word, such deference did they pay him. Roque then withdrew to one side and wrote a letter to a friend of his at Barcelona, telling him that the famous Don Quixote of La Mancha, the knight-errant of whom there was so much talk, was with him, and was, he assured him, the drollest and wisest man in the world; and that in four days from that date, that is to say, on Saint John the Baptist's Day, he was going to deposit him in full armour mounted on his horse Rocinante, together with his squire Sancho on an ass, in the middle of the strand of the city; and bidding him give notice of this to his friends the Niarros, that they might divert themselves with him. He wished, he said, his enemies the Cadells could be deprived of this pleasure; but that was impossible, because the crazes and shrewd sayings of Don Quixote and the humours of his squire Sancho Panza could not help giving general pleasure to all the world. He despatched the letter by one of his squires, who, exchanging the costume of a highwayman for that of a peasant, made his way into Barcelona and gave it to the person to whom it was directed.



## CHAPTER LXI.

OF WHAT HAPPENED DON QUIXOTE ON ENTERING BARCELONA,  
TOGETHER WITH OTHER MATTERS THAT PARTAKE OF THE TRUE  
RATHER THAN OF THE INGENIOUS



Don Quixote passed three days and three nights with Roque, and had he passed three hundred years he would have found enough to observe and wonder at in his mode of life. At daybreak they were in one spot, at dinner-time in another; sometimes they fled without knowing from whom, at other times they lay in wait, not knowing for what. They slept standing, breaking their slumbers to shift from place to place. There was nothing but sending out spies and scouts, posting sentinels and blowing the matches of harquebusses, though they carried

but few, for almost all used flintlocks. Roque passed his nights in some place or other apart from his men, that they might not know where he was, for the many proclamations the viceroy of Barcelona had issued against his life kept him in fear and uneasiness, and he did not venture to trust anyone, afraid that even his own men would kill him or deliver him up to the authorities; of a truth, a weary miserable life! At length, by unfrequented roads, short cuts, and secret paths, Roque, Don Quixote, and Sancho, together with six squires, set out for Barcelona. They reached the strand on Saint John's Eve during the night; and Roque, after embracing Don Quixote and Sancho (to whom he presented the ten crowns he had promised but had not until then given), left them with many expressions of good-will on both sides.

Roque went back, while Don Quixote remained on horseback, just as he was, waiting for day, and it was not long before the countenance of the fair Aurora began to show itself at the balconies of the east, gladdening the grass and flowers, if not the ear, though to gladden that too there came at the same moment a sound of clarions and drums, and a din of bells, and a tramp, tramp, and cries of "Clear the way there!" of some runners, that seemed to issue from the city.





The dawn made way for the sun that with a face broader than a buckler began to rise slowly above the low line of the horizon; Don Quixote and Sancho gazed all round them; they beheld the sea, a sight until then unseen by them; it struck them as exceedingly spacious and broad, much more so than the lakes of Ruidera which they had seen in La Mancha. They saw the galleys along the beach, which, lowering their awnings, displayed themselves decked with streamers and pennons that trembled in the breeze and kissed and swept the water, while on board the bugles, trumpets, and clarions were sounding and filling the air far and near with melodious warlike notes. Then they began to move and execute a kind of skirmish upon the calm water, while a vast number of horsemen on fine

horses and in showy liveries, issuing from the city, engaged on their side in a somewhat similar movement. The soldiers on board the galleys kept up a ceaseless fire, which they on the walls and forts of the city returned, and the heavy cannon rent the air with the tremendous noise they made, to which the gangway guns of the galleys replied. The bright sea, the smiling earth, the clear air — though at times darkened by the smoke of the guns — all seemed to fill the whole multitude with unexpected delight. Sancho could not make out how it was that those great masses that moved over the sea had so many feet.

And now the horsemen in livery came galloping up with shouts and outlandish cries and cheers to where Don Quixote stood amazed and wondering; and one of them, he to whom Roque had sent word, addressing him exclaimed, “Welcome to our city, mirror, beacon, star and cynosure of all knight-errantry in its widest extent! Welcome, I say, valiant Don Quixote of La Mancha; not the false, the fictitious, the apocryphal, that these latter days have offered us in lying histories, but the true, the legitimate, the real one that Cide Hamete Benengeli, flower of historians, has described to us!”

Don Quixote made no answer, nor did the horsemen wait for one, but wheeling again with all their followers, they began curvetting round Don Quixote, who, turning to Sancho, said, “These gentlemen have plainly recognised us; I will wager they have read our history, and even that newly printed one by the Aragonese.”

The cavalier who had addressed Don Quixote again approached him and said, “Come with us, Senor Don Quixote, for we are all of us your servants and great friends of Roque Guinart’s;” to which Don Quixote returned, “If courtesy breeds courtesy, yours, sir knight, is daughter or very nearly akin to the great Roque’s; carry me where you please; I will have no will but yours, especially if you deign to employ it in your service.”



The cavalier replied with words no less polite, and then, all closing in around him, they set out with him for the city, to the music of the clarions and the drums. As they were entering it, the wicked one, who is the author of all mischief, and the boys who are wickedder than the wicked one, contrived that a couple of these audacious irrepressible urchins should force their way through the crowd, and lifting up, one of them Dapple's tail and the other Rocinante's, insert a bunch of furze under each. The poor beasts felt the strange spurs and added to their anguish by pressing their tails tight, so much so that, cutting a multitude of capers, they flung their masters to the ground. Don Quixote, covered with shame and out of countenance, ran to pluck the plume from his

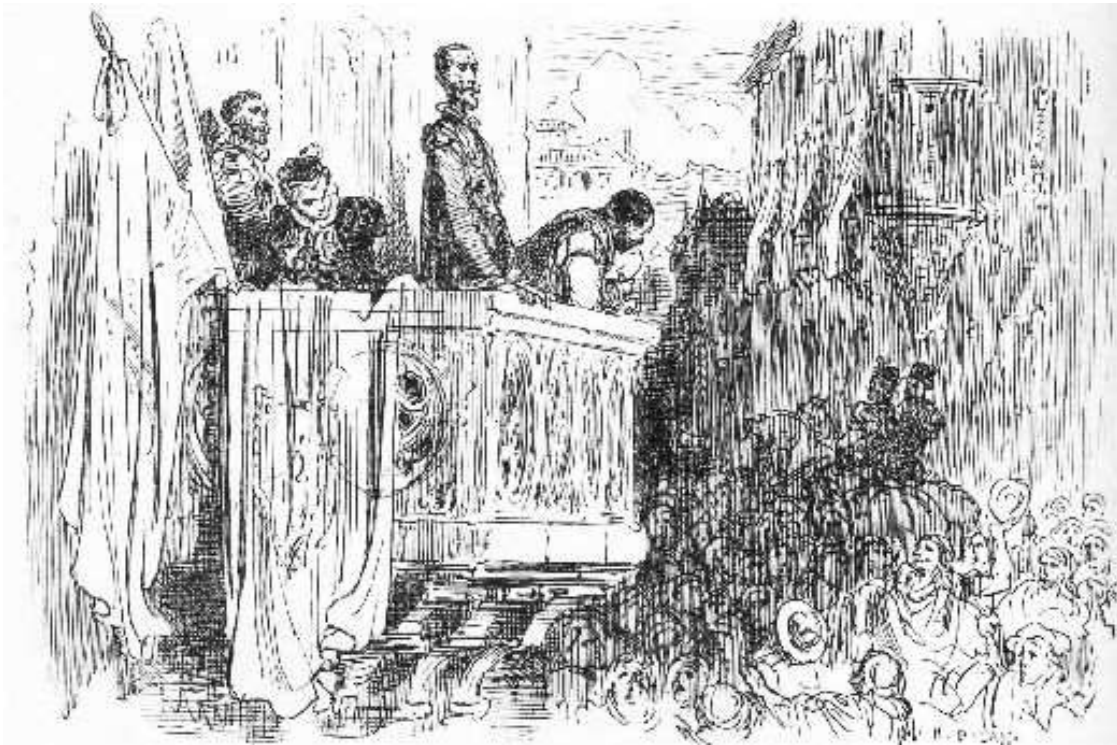
poor jade's tail, while Sancho did the same for Dapple. His conductors tried to punish the audacity of the boys, but there was no possibility of doing so, for they hid themselves among the hundreds of others that were following them. Don Quixote and Sancho mounted once more, and with the same music and acclamations reached their conductor's house, which was large and stately, that of a rich gentleman, in short; and there for the present we will leave them, for such is Cide Hamete's pleasure.





## CHAPTER LXII.

WHICH DEALS WITH THE ADVENTURE OF THE ENCHANTED HEAD,  
TOGETHER WITH OTHER TRIVIAL MATTERS WHICH CANNOT BE  
LEFT UNTOLD



Don Quixote's host was one Don Antonio Moreno by name, a gentleman of wealth and intelligence, and very fond of diverting himself in any fair and good-natured way; and having Don Quixote in his house he set about devising modes of making him exhibit his mad points in some harmless fashion; for jests that give pain are no jests, and no sport is worth anything if it hurts another. The first thing he did was to make Don Quixote take off his armour, and lead him, in that tight chamois suit we have already described and depicted more than once, out

on a balcony overhanging one of the chief streets of the city, in full view of the crowd and of the boys, who gazed at him as they would at a monkey. The cavaliers in livery careered before him again as though it were for him alone, and not to enliven the festival of the day, that they wore it, and Sancho was in high delight, for it seemed to him that, how he knew not, he had fallen upon another Camacho's wedding, another house like Don Diego de Miranda's, another castle like the duke's. Some of Don Antonio's friends dined with him that day, and all showed honour to Don Quixote and treated him as a knight-errant, and he becoming puffed up and exalted in consequence could not contain himself for satisfaction. Such were the drolleries of Sancho that all the servants of the house, and all who heard him, were kept hanging upon his lips. While at table Don Antonio said to him, "We hear, worthy Sancho, that you are so fond of manjar blanco and forced-meat balls, that if you have any left, you keep them in your bosom for the next day."

"No, senor, that's not true," said Sancho, "for I am more cleanly than greedy, and my master Don Quixote here knows well that we two are used to live for a week on a handful of acorns or nuts. To be sure, if it so happens that they offer me a heifer, I run with a halter; I mean, I eat what I'm given, and make use of opportunities as I find them; but whoever says that I'm an out-of-the-way eater or not cleanly, let me tell him that he is wrong; and I'd put it in a different way if I did not respect the honourable beards that are at the table."

"Indeed," said Don Quixote, "Sancho's moderation and cleanliness in eating might be inscribed and graved on plates of brass, to be kept in eternal remembrance in ages to come. It is true that when he is hungry there is a certain appearance of voracity about him, for he eats at a great pace and chews with both jaws; but cleanliness he is always mindful of; and when he was governor he learned how to eat daintily, so much so that he eats grapes, and even pomegranate pips, with a fork."

"What!" said Don Antonio, "has Sancho been a governor?"

"Ay," said Sancho, "and of an island called Barataria. I governed it to perfection for ten days; and lost my rest all the time; and learned to look down upon all the governments in the world; I got out of it by taking to flight, and fell into a pit where I gave myself up for dead, and out of which I escaped alive by a miracle."

Don Quixote then gave them a minute account of the whole affair of Sancho's government, with which he greatly amused his hearers.

On the cloth being removed Don Antonio, taking Don Quixote by the hand, passed with him into a distant room in which there was nothing in the way of furniture except a table, apparently of jasper, resting on a pedestal of the same,

upon which was set up, after the fashion of the busts of the Roman emperors, a head which seemed to be of bronze. Don Antonio traversed the whole apartment with Don Quixote and walked round the table several times, and then said, "Now, Senor Don Quixote, that I am satisfied that no one is listening to us, and that the door is shut, I will tell you of one of the rarest adventures, or more properly speaking strange things, that can be imagined, on condition that you will keep what I say to you in the remotest recesses of secrecy."

"I swear it," said Don Quixote, "and for greater security I will put a flag-stone over it; for I would have you know, Senor Don Antonio" (he had by this time learned his name), "that you are addressing one who, though he has ears to hear, has no tongue to speak; so that you may safely transfer whatever you have in your bosom into mine, and rely upon it that you have consigned it to the depths of silence."

"In reliance upon that promise," said Don Antonio, "I will astonish you with what you shall see and hear, and relieve myself of some of the vexation it gives me to have no one to whom I can confide my secrets, for they are not of a sort to be entrusted to everybody."

Don Quixote was puzzled, wondering what could be the object of such precautions; whereupon Don Antonio taking his hand passed it over the bronze head and the whole table and the pedestal of jasper on which it stood, and then said, "This head, Senor Don Quixote, has been made and fabricated by one of the greatest magicians and wizards the world ever saw, a Pole, I believe, by birth, and a pupil of the famous Escotillo of whom such marvellous stories are told. He was here in my house, and for a consideration of a thousand crowns that I gave him he constructed this head, which has the property and virtue of answering whatever questions are put to its ear. He observed the points of the compass, he traced figures, he studied the stars, he watched favourable moments, and at length brought it to the perfection we shall see to-morrow, for on Fridays it is mute, and this being Friday we must wait till the next day. In the interval your worship may consider what you would like to ask it; and I know by experience that in all its answers it tells the truth."

Don Quixote was amazed at the virtue and property of the head, and was inclined to disbelieve Don Antonio; but seeing what a short time he had to wait to test the matter, he did not choose to say anything except that he thanked him for having revealed to him so mighty a secret. They then quitted the room, Don Antonio locked the door, and they repaired to the chamber where the rest of the gentlemen were assembled. In the meantime Sancho had recounted to them several of the adventures and accidents that had happened his master.

That afternoon they took Don Quixote out for a stroll, not in his armour but in



street costume, with a surcoat of tawny cloth upon him, that at that season would have made ice itself sweat. Orders were left with the servants to entertain Sancho so as not to let him leave the house. Don Quixote was mounted, not on Rocinante, but upon a tall mule of easy pace and handsomely caparisoned. They put the surcoat on him, and on the back, without his perceiving it, they stitched a parchment on which they wrote in large letters, "This is Don Quixote of La Mancha." As they set out upon their excursion the placard attracted the eyes of all who chanced to see him, and as they read out, "This is Don Quixote of La Mancha," Don Quixote was amazed to see how many people gazed at him, called him by his name, and recognised him, and turning to Don Antonio, who rode at his side, he observed to him, "Great are the privileges knight-errantry involves, for it makes him who professes it known and famous in every region of the earth; see, Don Antonio, even the very boys of this city know me without ever having seen me."

"True, Senor Don Quixote," returned Don Antonio; "for as fire cannot be hidden or kept secret, virtue cannot escape being recognised; and that which is attained by the profession of arms shines distinguished above all others."

It came to pass, however, that as Don Quixote was proceeding amid the acclamations that have been described, a Castilian, reading the inscription on his back, cried out in a loud voice, "The devil take thee for a Don Quixote of La Mancha! What! art thou here, and not dead of the countless drubbings that have fallen on thy ribs? Thou art mad; and if thou wert so by thyself, and kept thyself within thy madness, it would not be so bad; but thou hast the gift of making fools and blockheads of all who have anything to do with thee or say to thee. Why, look at these gentlemen bearing thee company! Get thee home, blockhead, and see after thy affairs, and thy wife and children, and give over these fooleries that are sapping thy brains and skimming away thy wits."

"Go your own way, brother," said Don Antonio, "and don't offer advice to those who don't ask you for it. Senor Don Quixote is in his full senses, and we who bear him company are not fools; virtue is to be honoured wherever it may be found; go, and bad luck to you, and don't meddle where you are not wanted."

"By God, your worship is right," replied the Castilian; "for to advise this good man is to kick against the pricks; still for all that it fills me with pity that the sound wit they say the blockhead has in everything should dribble away by the channel of his knight-errantry; but may the bad luck your worship talks of follow me and all my descendants, if, from this day forth, though I should live longer than Methuselah, I ever give advice to anybody even if he asks me for it."

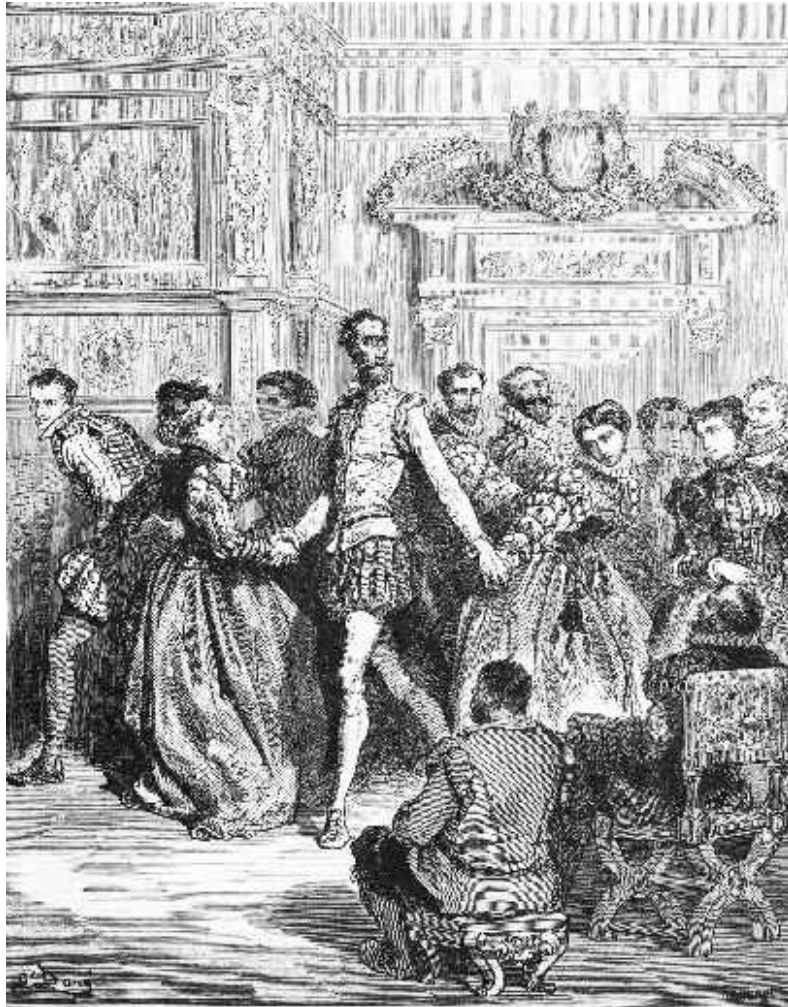
The advice-giver took himself off, and they continued their stroll; but so great was the press of the boys and people to read the placard, that Don Antonio was

forced to remove it as if he were taking off something else.



Night came and they went home, and there was a ladies' dancing party, for

Don Antonio's wife, a lady of rank and gaiety, beauty and wit, had invited some friends of hers to come and do honour to her guest and amuse themselves with his strange delusions. Several of them came, they supped sumptuously, the dance began at about ten o'clock. Among the ladies were two of a mischievous and frolicsome turn, and, though perfectly modest, somewhat free in playing tricks for harmless diversion sake. These two were so indefatigable in taking Don Quixote out to dance that they tired him down, not only in body but in spirit. It was a sight to see the figure Don Quixote made, long, lank, lean, and yellow, his garments clinging tight to him, ungainly, and above all anything but agile.



The gay ladies made secret love to him, and he on his part secretly repelled them, but finding himself hard pressed by their blandishments he lifted up his voice and exclaimed, “Fugite, partes adversae! Leave me in peace, unwelcome overtures; avaunt, with your desires, ladies, for she who is queen of mine, the peerless Dulcinea del Toboso, suffers none but hers to lead me captive and subdue me;” and so saying he sat down on the floor in the middle of the room, tired out and broken down by all this exertion in the dance.

Don Antonio directed him to be taken up bodily and carried to bed, and the first that laid hold of him was Sancho, saying as he did so, “In an evil hour you took to dancing, master mine; do you fancy all mighty men of valour are

dancers, and all knights-errant given to capering? If you do, I can tell you you are mistaken; there's many a man would rather undertake to kill a giant than cut a caper. If it had been the shoe-fling you were at I could take your place, for I can do the shoe-fling like a gerfalcon; but I'm no good at dancing."

With these and other observations Sancho set the whole ball-room laughing, and then put his master to bed, covering him up well so that he might sweat out any chill caught after his dancing.

The next day Don Antonio thought he might as well make trial of the enchanted head, and with Don Quixote, Sancho, and two others, friends of his, besides the two ladies that had tired out Don Quixote at the ball, who had remained for the night with Don Antonio's wife, he locked himself up in the chamber where the head was. He explained to them the property it possessed and entrusted the secret to them, telling them that now for the first time he was going to try the virtue of the enchanted head; but except Don Antonio's two friends no one else was privy to the mystery of the enchantment, and if Don Antonio had not first revealed it to them they would have been inevitably reduced to the same state of amazement as the rest, so artfully and skilfully was it contrived.

The first to approach the ear of the head was Don Antonio himself, and in a low voice but not so low as not to be audible to all, he said to it, "Head, tell me by the virtue that lies in thee what am I at this moment thinking of?"

The head, without any movement of the lips, answered in a clear and distinct voice, so as to be heard by all, "I cannot judge of thoughts."

All were thunderstruck at this, and all the more so as they saw that there was nobody anywhere near the table or in the whole room that could have answered. "How many of us are here?" asked Don Antonio once more; and it was answered him in the same way softly, "Thou and thy wife, with two friends of thine and two of hers, and a famous knight called Don Quixote of La Mancha, and a squire of his, Sancho Panza by name."

Now there was fresh astonishment; now everyone's hair was standing on end with awe; and Don Antonio retiring from the head exclaimed, "This suffices to show me that I have not been deceived by him who sold thee to me, O sage head, talking head, answering head, wonderful head! Let some one else go and put what question he likes to it."

And as women are commonly impulsive and inquisitive, the first to come forward was one of the two friends of Don Antonio's wife, and her question was, "Tell me, Head, what shall I do to be very beautiful?" and the answer she got was, "Be very modest."

"I question thee no further," said the fair querist.

Her companion then came up and said, "I should like to know, Head, whether

my husband loves me or not;" the answer given to her was, "Think how he uses thee, and thou mayest guess;" and the married lady went off saying, "That answer did not need a question; for of course the treatment one receives shows the disposition of him from whom it is received."

Then one of Don Antonio's two friends advanced and asked it, "Who am I?" "Thou knowest," was the answer. "That is not what I ask thee," said the gentleman, "but to tell me if thou knowest me." "Yes, I know thee, thou art Don Pedro Noriz," was the reply.

"I do not seek to know more," said the gentleman, "for this is enough to convince me, O Head, that thou knowest everything;" and as he retired the other friend came forward and asked it, "Tell me, Head, what are the wishes of my eldest son?"

"I have said already," was the answer, "that I cannot judge of wishes; however, I can tell thee the wish of thy son is to bury thee."

"That's 'what I see with my eyes I point out with my finger,'" said the gentleman, "so I ask no more."

Don Antonio's wife came up and said, "I know not what to ask thee, Head; I would only seek to know of thee if I shall have many years of enjoyment of my good husband;" and the answer she received was, "Thou shalt, for his vigour and his temperate habits promise many years of life, which by their intemperance others so often cut short."

Then Don Quixote came forward and said, "Tell me, thou that answerest, was that which I describe as having happened to me in the cave of Montesinos the truth or a dream? Will Sancho's whipping be accomplished without fail? Will the disenchantment of Dulcinea be brought about?"



“As to the question of the cave,” was the reply, “there is much to be said; there is something of both in it. Sancho’s whipping will proceed leisurely. The disenchantment of Dulcinea will attain its due consummation.”

“I seek to know no more,” said Don Quixote; “let me but see Dulcinea disenchanting, and I will consider that all the good fortune I could wish for has come upon me all at once.”

The last questioner was Sancho, and his questions were, “Head, shall I by any chance have another government? Shall I ever escape from the hard life of a squire? Shall I get back to see my wife and children?” To which the answer came, “Thou shalt govern in thy house; and if thou returnest to it thou shalt see

thy wife and children; and on ceasing to serve thou shalt cease to be a squire.”

“Good, by God!” said Sancho Panza; “I could have told myself that; the prophet Perogrullo could have said no more.”

“What answer wouldst thou have, beast?” said Don Quixote; “is it not enough that the replies this head has given suit the questions put to it?”

“Yes, it is enough,” said Sancho; “but I should have liked it to have made itself plainer and told me more.”

The questions and answers came to an end here, but not the wonder with which all were filled, except Don Antonio’s two friends who were in the secret. This Cide Hamete Benengeli thought fit to reveal at once, not to keep the world in suspense, fancying that the head had some strange magical mystery in it. He says, therefore, that on the model of another head, the work of an image maker, which he had seen at Madrid, Don Antonio made this one at home for his own amusement and to astonish ignorant people; and its mechanism was as follows. The table was of wood painted and varnished to imitate jasper, and the pedestal on which it stood was of the same material, with four eagles’ claws projecting from it to support the weight more steadily. The head, which resembled a bust or figure of a Roman emperor, and was coloured like bronze, was hollow throughout, as was the table, into which it was fitted so exactly that no trace of the joining was visible. The pedestal of the table was also hollow and communicated with the throat and neck of the head, and the whole was in communication with another room underneath the chamber in which the head stood. Through the entire cavity in the pedestal, table, throat and neck of the bust or figure, there passed a tube of tin carefully adjusted and concealed from sight. In the room below corresponding to the one above was placed the person who was to answer, with his mouth to the tube, and the voice, as in an ear-trumpet, passed from above downwards, and from below upwards, the words coming clearly and distinctly; it was impossible, thus, to detect the trick. A nephew of Don Antonio’s, a smart sharp-witted student, was the answerer, and as he had been told beforehand by his uncle who the persons were that would come with him that day into the chamber where the head was, it was an easy matter for him to answer the first question at once and correctly; the others he answered by guess-work, and, being clever, cleverly. Cide Hamete adds that this marvellous contrivance stood for some ten or twelve days; but that, as it became noised abroad through the city that he had in his house an enchanted head that answered all who asked questions of it, Don Antonio, fearing it might come to the ears of the watchful sentinels of our faith, explained the matter to the inquisitors, who commanded him to break it up and have done with it, lest the ignorant vulgar should be scandalised. By Don Quixote, however, and by Sancho the head was



still held to be an enchanted one, and capable of answering questions, though more to Don Quixote's satisfaction than Sancho's.

The gentlemen of the city, to gratify Don Antonio and also to do the honours to Don Quixote, and give him an opportunity of displaying his folly, made arrangements for a tilting at the ring in six days from that time, which, however, for reason that will be mentioned hereafter, did not take place.

Don Quixote took a fancy to stroll about the city quietly and on foot, for he feared that if he went on horseback the boys would follow him; so he and Sancho and two servants that Don Antonio gave him set out for a walk. Thus it came to pass that going along one of the streets Don Quixote lifted up his eyes and saw written in very large letters over a door, "Books printed here," at which he was vastly pleased, for until then he had never seen a printing office, and he was curious to know what it was like. He entered with all his following, and saw them drawing sheets in one place, correcting in another, setting up type here, revising there; in short all the work that is to be seen in great printing offices. He went up to one case and asked what they were about there; the workmen told him, he watched them with wonder, and passed on. He approached one man, among others, and asked him what he was doing. The workman replied, "Senor, this gentleman here" (pointing to a man of prepossessing appearance and a certain gravity of look) "has translated an Italian book into our Spanish tongue, and I am setting it up in type for the press."

"What is the title of the book?" asked Don Quixote; to which the author replied, "Senor, in Italian the book is called *Le Bagatelle*."

"And what does *Le Bagatelle* import in our Spanish?" asked Don Quixote.

"*Le Bagatelle*," said the author, "is as though we should say in Spanish *Los Juguetes*; but though the book is humble in name it has good solid matter in it."

"I," said Don Quixote, "have some little smattering of Italian, and I plume myself on singing some of Ariosto's stanzas; but tell me, senor — I do not say this to test your ability, but merely out of curiosity — have you ever met with the word *pignatta* in your book?"

"Yes, often," said the author.

"And how do you render that in Spanish?"

"How should I render it," returned the author, "but by *olla*?"

"Body o' me," exclaimed Don Quixote, "what a proficient you are in the Italian language! I would lay a good wager that where they say in Italian *piace* you say in Spanish *place*, and where they say *piu* you say *mas*, and you translate *su* by *arriba* and *giu* by *abajo*."

"I translate them so of course," said the author, "for those are their proper equivalents."

“I would venture to swear,” said Don Quixote, “that your worship is not known in the world, which always begrudges their reward to rare wits and praiseworthy labours. What talents lie wasted there! What genius thrust away into corners! What worth left neglected! Still it seems to me that translation from one language into another, if it be not from the queens of languages, the Greek and the Latin, is like looking at Flemish tapestries on the wrong side; for though the figures are visible, they are full of threads that make them indistinct, and they do not show with the smoothness and brightness of the right side; and translation from easy languages argues neither ingenuity nor command of words, any more than transcribing or copying out one document from another. But I do not mean by this to draw the inference that no credit is to be allowed for the work of translating, for a man may employ himself in ways worse and less profitable to himself. This estimate does not include two famous translators, Doctor Cristobal de Figueroa, in his *Pastor Fido*, and Don Juan de Jauregui, in his *Aminta*, wherein by their felicity they leave it in doubt which is the translation and which the original. But tell me, are you printing this book at your own risk, or have you sold the copyright to some bookseller?”

“I print at my own risk,” said the author, “and I expect to make a thousand ducats at least by this first edition, which is to be of two thousand copies that will go off in a twinkling at six reals apiece.”

“A fine calculation you are making!” said Don Quixote; “it is plain you don’t know the ins and outs of the printers, and how they play into one another’s hands. I promise you when you find yourself saddled with two thousand copies you will feel so sore that it will astonish you, particularly if the book is a little out of the common and not in any way highly spiced.”

“What!” said the author, “would your worship, then, have me give it to a bookseller who will give three maravedis for the copyright and think he is doing me a favour? I do not print my books to win fame in the world, for I am known in it already by my works; I want to make money, without which reputation is not worth a rap.”

“God send your worship good luck,” said Don Quixote; and he moved on to another case, where he saw them correcting a sheet of a book with the title of “*Light of the Soul*,” noticing it he observed, “Books like this, though there are many of the kind, are the ones that deserve to be printed, for many are the sinners in these days, and lights unnumbered are needed for all that are in darkness.”

He passed on, and saw they were also correcting another book, and when he asked its title they told him it was called, “*The Second Part of the Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha*,” by one of Tordesillas.

“I have heard of this book already,” said Don Quixote, “and verily and on my conscience I thought it had been by this time burned to ashes as a meddlesome intruder; but its Martinmas will come to it as it does to every pig; for fictions have the more merit and charm about them the more nearly they approach the truth or what looks like it; and true stories, the truer they are the better they are;” and so saying he walked out of the printing office with a certain amount of displeasure in his looks. That same day Don Antonio arranged to take him to see the galleys that lay at the beach, whereat Sancho was in high delight, as he had never seen any all his life. Don Antonio sent word to the commandant of the galleys that he intended to bring his guest, the famous Don Quixote of La Mancha, of whom the commandant and all the citizens had already heard, that afternoon to see them; and what happened on board of them will be told in the next chapter.





## CHAPTER LXIII.

### OF THE MISHAP THAT BEFELL SANCHO PANZA THROUGH THE VISIT TO THE GALLEYS, AND THE STRANGE ADVENTURE OF THE FAIR MORISCO



Profound were Don Quixote's reflections on the reply of the enchanted head, not one of them, however, hitting on the secret of the trick, but all concentrated on the promise, which he regarded as a certainty, of Dulcinea's disenchantment. This he turned over in his mind again and again with great satisfaction, fully persuaded that he would shortly see its fulfillment; and as for Sancho, though, as has been said, he hated being a governor, still he had a longing to be giving orders and finding himself obeyed once more; this is the misfortune that being in

authority, even in jest, brings with it.

To resume; that afternoon their host Don Antonio Moreno and his two friends, with Don Quixote and Sancho, went to the galleys. The commandant had been already made aware of his good fortune in seeing two such famous persons as Don Quixote and Sancho, and the instant they came to the shore all the galleys struck their awnings and the clarions rang out. A skiff covered with rich carpets and cushions of crimson velvet was immediately lowered into the water, and as Don Quixote stepped on board of it, the leading galley fired her gangway gun, and the other galleys did the same; and as he mounted the starboard ladder the whole crew saluted him (as is the custom when a personage of distinction comes on board a galley) by exclaiming “Hu, hu, hu,” three times. The general, for so we shall call him, a Valencian gentleman of rank, gave him his hand and embraced him, saying, “I shall mark this day with a white stone as one of the happiest I can expect to enjoy in my lifetime, since I have seen Senor Don Quixote of La Mancha, pattern and image wherein we see contained and condensed all that is worthy in knight-errantry.”

Don Quixote delighted beyond measure with such a lordly reception, replied to him in words no less courteous. All then proceeded to the poop, which was very handsomely decorated, and seated themselves on the bulwark benches; the boatswain passed along the gangway and piped all hands to strip, which they did in an instant. Sancho, seeing such a number of men stripped to the skin, was taken aback, and still more when he saw them spread the awning so briskly that it seemed to him as if all the devils were at work at it; but all this was cakes and fancy bread to what I am going to tell now. Sancho was seated on the captain’s stage, close to the aftermost rower on the right-hand side. He, previously instructed in what he was to do, laid hold of Sancho, hoisting him up in his arms, and the whole crew, who were standing ready, beginning on the right, proceeded to pass him on, whirling him along from hand to hand and from bench to bench with such rapidity that it took the sight out of poor Sancho’s eyes, and he made quite sure that the devils themselves were flying away with him; nor did they leave off with him until they had sent him back along the left side and deposited him on the poop; and the poor fellow was left bruised and breathless and all in a sweat, and unable to comprehend what it was that had happened to him.

Don Quixote when he saw Sancho’s flight without wings asked the general if this was a usual ceremony with those who came on board the galleys for the first time; for, if so, as he had no intention of adopting them as a profession, he had no mind to perform such feats of agility, and if anyone offered to lay hold of him to whirl him about, he vowed to God he would kick his soul out; and as he said this he stood up and clapped his hand upon his sword. At this instant they struck

the awning and lowered the yard with a prodigious rattle. Sancho thought heaven was coming off its hinges and going to fall on his head, and full of terror he ducked it and buried it between his knees; nor were Don Quixote's knees altogether under control, for he too shook a little, squeezed his shoulders together and lost colour. The crew then hoisted the yard with the same rapidity and clatter as when they lowered it, all the while keeping silence as though they had neither voice nor breath. The boatswain gave the signal to weigh anchor, and leaping upon the middle of the gangway began to lay on to the shoulders of the crew with his courbash or whip, and to haul out gradually to sea.

When Sancho saw so many red feet (for such he took the oars to be) moving all together, he said to himself, "It's these that are the real chanted things, and not the ones my master talks of. What can those wretches have done to be so whipped; and how does that one man who goes along there whistling dare to whip so many? I declare this is hell, or at least purgatory!"

Don Quixote, observing how attentively Sancho regarded what was going on, said to him, "Ah, Sancho my friend, how quickly and cheaply might you finish off the disenchantment of Dulcinea, if you would strip to the waist and take your place among those gentlemen! Amid the pain and sufferings of so many you would not feel your own much; and moreover perhaps the sage Merlin would allow each of these lashes, being laid on with a good hand, to count for ten of those which you must give yourself at last."

The general was about to ask what these lashes were, and what was Dulcinea's disenchantment, when a sailor exclaimed, "Monjui signals that there is an oared vessel off the coast to the west."

On hearing this the general sprang upon the gangway crying, "Now then, my sons, don't let her give us the slip! It must be some Algerine corsair brigantine that the watchtower signals to us." The three others immediately came alongside the chief galley to receive their orders. The general ordered two to put out to sea while he with the other kept in shore, so that in this way the vessel could not escape them. The crews plied the oars driving the galleys so furiously that they seemed to fly. The two that had put out to sea, after a couple of miles sighted a vessel which, so far as they could make out, they judged to be one of fourteen or fifteen banks, and so she proved. As soon as the vessel discovered the galleys she went about with the object and in the hope of making her escape by her speed; but the attempt failed, for the chief galley was one of the fastest vessels afloat, and overhauled her so rapidly that they on board the brigantine saw clearly there was no possibility of escaping, and the rais therefore would have had them drop their oars and give themselves up so as not to provoke the captain in command of our galleys to anger. But chance, directing things otherwise, so

ordered it that just as the chief galley came close enough for those on board the vessel to hear the shouts from her calling on them to surrender, two Toraquis, that is to say two Turks, both drunken, that with a dozen more were on board the brigantine, discharged their muskets, killing two of the soldiers that lined the sides of our vessel. Seeing this the general swore he would not leave one of those he found on board the vessel alive, but as he bore down furiously upon her she slipped away from him underneath the oars. The galley shot a good way ahead; those on board the vessel saw their case was desperate, and while the galley was coming about they made sail, and by sailing and rowing once more tried to sheer off; but their activity did not do them as much good as their rashness did them harm, for the galley coming up with them in a little more than half a mile threw her oars over them and took the whole of them alive. The other two galleys now joined company and all four returned with the prize to the beach, where a vast multitude stood waiting for them, eager to see what they brought back. The general anchored close in, and perceived that the viceroy of the city was on the shore. He ordered the skiff to push off to fetch him, and the yard to be lowered for the purpose of hanging forthwith the rais and the rest of the men taken on board the vessel, about six-and-thirty in number, all smart fellows and most of them Turkish musketeers. He asked which was the rais of the brigantine, and was answered in Spanish by one of the prisoners (who afterwards proved to be a Spanish renegade), "This young man, senor that you see here is our rais," and he pointed to one of the handsomest and most gallant-looking youths that could be imagined. He did not seem to be twenty years of age.

"Tell me, dog," said the general, "what led thee to kill my soldiers, when thou sawest it was impossible for thee to escape? Is that the way to behave to chief galleys? Knowest thou not that rashness is not valour? Faint prospects of success should make men bold, but not rash."

The rais was about to reply, but the general could not at that moment listen to him, as he had to hasten to receive the viceroy, who was now coming on board the galley, and with him certain of his attendants and some of the people.

"You have had a good chase, senor general," said the viceroy.

"Your excellency shall soon see how good, by the game strung up to this yard," replied the general.

"How so?" returned the viceroy.

"Because," said the general, "against all law, reason, and usages of war they have killed on my hands two of the best soldiers on board these galleys, and I have sworn to hang every man that I have taken, but above all this youth who is the rais of the brigantine," and he pointed to him as he stood with his hands



already bound and the rope round his neck, ready for death.

The viceroy looked at him, and seeing him so well-favoured, so graceful, and so submissive, he felt a desire to spare his life, the comeliness of the youth furnishing him at once with a letter of recommendation. He therefore questioned him, saying, "Tell me, rais, art thou Turk, Moor, or renegade?"

To which the youth replied, also in Spanish, "I am neither Turk, nor Moor, nor renegade."

"What art thou, then?" said the viceroy.

"A Christian woman," replied the youth.

"A woman and a Christian, in such a dress and in such circumstances! It is more marvellous than credible," said the viceroy.

"Suspend the execution of the sentence," said the youth; "your vengeance will not lose much by waiting while I tell you the story of my life."

What heart could be so hard as not to be softened by these words, at any rate so far as to listen to what the unhappy youth had to say? The general bade him say what he pleased, but not to expect pardon for his flagrant offence. With this permission the youth began in these words.

"Born of Morisco parents, I am of that nation, more unhappy than wise, upon which of late a sea of woes has poured down. In the course of our misfortune I was carried to Barbary by two uncles of mine, for it was in vain that I declared I was a Christian, as in fact I am, and not a mere pretended one, or outwardly, but a true Catholic Christian. It availed me nothing with those charged with our sad expatriation to protest this, nor would my uncles believe it; on the contrary, they treated it as an untruth and a subterfuge set up to enable me to remain behind in the land of my birth; and so, more by force than of my own will, they took me with them. I had a Christian mother, and a father who was a man of sound sense and a Christian too; I imbibed the Catholic faith with my mother's milk, I was well brought up, and neither in word nor in deed did I, I think, show any sign of being a Morisco. To accompany these virtues, for such I hold them, my beauty, if I possess any, grew with my growth; and great as was the seclusion in which I lived it was not so great but that a young gentleman, Don Gaspar Gregorio by name, eldest son of a gentleman who is lord of a village near ours, contrived to find opportunities of seeing me. How he saw me, how we met, how his heart was lost to me, and mine not kept from him, would take too long to tell, especially at a moment when I am in dread of the cruel cord that threatens me interposing between tongue and throat; I will only say, therefore, that Don Gregorio chose to accompany me in our banishment. He joined company with the Moriscoes who were going forth from other villages, for he knew their language very well, and on the voyage he struck up a friendship with my two uncles who were carrying

me with them; for my father, like a wise and far-sighted man, as soon as he heard the first edict for our expulsion, quitted the village and departed in quest of some refuge for us abroad. He left hidden and buried, at a spot of which I alone have knowledge, a large quantity of pearls and precious stones of great value, together with a sum of money in gold cruzadoes and doubloons. He charged me on no account to touch the treasure, if by any chance they expelled us before his return. I obeyed him, and with my uncles, as I have said, and others of our kindred and neighbours, passed over to Barbary, and the place where we took up our abode was Algiers, much the same as if we had taken it up in hell itself. The king heard of my beauty, and report told him of my wealth, which was in some degree fortunate for me. He summoned me before him, and asked me what part of Spain I came from, and what money and jewels I had. I mentioned the place, and told him the jewels and money were buried there; but that they might easily be recovered if I myself went back for them. All this I told him, in dread lest my beauty and not his own covetousness should influence him. While he was engaged in conversation with me, they brought him word that in company with me was one of the handsomest and most graceful youths that could be imagined. I knew at once that they were speaking of Don Gaspar Gregorio, whose comeliness surpasses the most highly vaunted beauty. I was troubled when I thought of the danger he was in, for among those barbarous Turks a fair youth is more esteemed than a woman, be she ever so beautiful. The king immediately ordered him to be brought before him that he might see him, and asked me if what they said about the youth was true. I then, almost as if inspired by heaven, told him it was, but that I would have him to know it was not a man, but a woman like myself, and I entreated him to allow me to go and dress her in the attire proper to her, so that her beauty might be seen to perfection, and that she might present herself before him with less embarrassment. He bade me go by all means, and said that the next day we should discuss the plan to be adopted for my return to Spain to carry away the hidden treasure. I saw Don Gaspar, I told him the danger he was in if he let it be seen he was a man, I dressed him as a Moorish woman, and that same afternoon I brought him before the king, who was charmed when he saw him, and resolved to keep the damsel and make a present of her to the Grand Signor; and to avoid the risk she might run among the women of his seraglio, and distrustful of himself, he commanded her to be placed in the house of some Moorish ladies of rank who would protect and attend to her; and thither he was taken at once. What we both suffered (for I cannot deny that I love him) may be left to the imagination of those who are separated if they love one another dearly. The king then arranged that I should return to Spain in this brigantine, and that two Turks, those who killed your

soldiers, should accompany me. There also came with me this Spanish renegade” — and here she pointed to him who had first spoken— “whom I know to be secretly a Christian, and to be more desirous of being left in Spain than of returning to Barbary. The rest of the crew of the brigantine are Moors and Turks, who merely serve as rowers. The two Turks, greedy and insolent, instead of obeying the orders we had to land me and this renegade in Christian dress (with which we came provided) on the first Spanish ground we came to, chose to run along the coast and make some prize if they could, fearing that if they put us ashore first, we might, in case of some accident befalling us, make it known that the brigantine was at sea, and thus, if there happened to be any galleys on the coast, they might be taken. We sighted this shore last night, and knowing nothing of these galleys, we were discovered, and the result was what you have seen. To sum up, there is Don Gregorio in woman’s dress, among women, in imminent danger of his life; and here am I, with hands bound, in expectation, or rather in dread, of losing my life, of which I am already weary. Here, sirs, ends my sad story, as true as it is unhappy; all I ask of you is to allow me to die like a Christian, for, as I have already said, I am not to be charged with the offence of which those of my nation are guilty;” and she stood silent, her eyes filled with moving tears, accompanied by plenty from the bystanders. The viceroy, touched with compassion, went up to her without speaking and untied the cord that bound the hands of the Moorish girl.

But all the while the Morisco Christian was telling her strange story, an elderly pilgrim, who had come on board of the galley at the same time as the viceroy, kept his eyes fixed upon her; and the instant she ceased speaking he threw himself at her feet, and embracing them said in a voice broken by sobs and sighs, “O Ana Felix, my unhappy daughter, I am thy father Ricote, come back to look for thee, unable to live without thee, my soul that thou art!”

At these words of his, Sancho opened his eyes and raised his head, which he had been holding down, brooding over his unlucky excursion; and looking at the pilgrim he recognised in him that same Ricote he met the day he quitted his government, and felt satisfied that this was his daughter. She being now unbound embraced her father, mingling her tears with his, while he addressing the general and the viceroy said, “This, sirs, is my daughter, more unhappy in her adventures than in her name. She is Ana Felix, surnamed Ricote, celebrated as much for her own beauty as for my wealth. I quitted my native land in search of some shelter or refuge for us abroad, and having found one in Germany I returned in this pilgrim’s dress, in the company of some other German pilgrims, to seek my daughter and take up a large quantity of treasure I had left buried. My daughter I did not find, the treasure I found and have with me; and now, in this strange

roundabout way you have seen, I find the treasure that more than all makes me rich, my beloved daughter. If our innocence and her tears and mine can with strict justice open the door to clemency, extend it to us, for we never had any intention of injuring you, nor do we sympathise with the aims of our people, who have been justly banished.”

“I know Ricote well,” said Sancho at this, “and I know too that what he says about Ana Felix being his daughter is true; but as to those other particulars about going and coming, and having good or bad intentions, I say nothing.”

While all present stood amazed at this strange occurrence the general said, “At any rate your tears will not allow me to keep my oath; live, fair Ana Felix, all the years that heaven has allotted you; but these rash insolent fellows must pay the penalty of the crime they have committed;” and with that he gave orders to have the two Turks who had killed his two soldiers hanged at once at the yard-arm. The viceroy, however, begged him earnestly not to hang them, as their behaviour savoured rather of madness than of bravado. The general yielded to the viceroy’s request, for revenge is not easily taken in cold blood. They then tried to devise some scheme for rescuing Don Gaspar Gregorio from the danger in which he had been left. Ricote offered for that object more than two thousand ducats that he had in pearls and gems; they proposed several plans, but none so good as that suggested by the renegade already mentioned, who offered to return to Algiers in a small vessel of about six banks, manned by Christian rowers, as he knew where, how, and when he could and should land, nor was he ignorant of the house in which Don Gaspar was staying. The general and the viceroy had some hesitation about placing confidence in the renegade and entrusting him with the Christians who were to row, but Ana Felix said she could answer for him, and her father offered to go and pay the ransom of the Christians if by any chance they should not be forthcoming. This, then, being agreed upon, the viceroy landed, and Don Antonio Moreno took the fair Morisco and her father home with him, the viceroy charging him to give them the best reception and welcome in his power, while on his own part he offered all that house contained for their entertainment; so great was the good-will and kindness the beauty of Ana Felix had infused into his heart.



## CHAPTER LXIV.

### TREATING OF THE ADVENTURE WHICH GAVE DON QUIXOTE MORE UNHAPPINESS THAN ALL THAT HAD HITHERTO BEFALLEN HIM



The wife of Don Antonio Moreno, so the history says, was extremely happy to see Ana Felix in her house. She welcomed her with great kindness, charmed as well by her beauty as by her intelligence; for in both respects the fair Morisco was richly endowed, and all the people of the city flocked to see her as though they had been summoned by the ringing of the bells.

Don Quixote told Don Antonio that the plan adopted for releasing Don Gregorio was not a good one, for its risks were greater than its advantages, and that it would be better to land himself with his arms and horse in Barbary; for he would carry him off in spite of the whole Moorish host, as Don Gaiferos carried off his wife Melisendra.

“Remember, your worship,” observed Sancho on hearing him say so, “Senor Don Gaiferos carried off his wife from the mainland, and took her to France by land; but in this case, if by chance we carry off Don Gregorio, we have no way of bringing him to Spain, for there’s the sea between.”

“There’s a remedy for everything except death,” said Don Quixote; “if they bring the vessel close to the shore we shall be able to get on board though all the world strive to prevent us.”

“Your worship hits it off mighty well and mighty easy,” said Sancho; “but

‘it’s a long step from saying to doing;’ and I hold to the renegade, for he seems to me an honest good-hearted fellow.”

Don Antonio then said that if the renegade did not prove successful, the expedient of the great Don Quixote’s expedition to Barbary should be adopted. Two days afterwards the renegade put to sea in a light vessel of six oars a-side manned by a stout crew, and two days later the galleys made sail eastward, the general having begged the viceroy to let him know all about the release of Don Gregorio and about Ana Felix, and the viceroy promised to do as he requested.

One morning as Don Quixote went out for a stroll along the beach, arrayed in full armour (for, as he often said, that was “his only gear, his only rest the fray,” and he never was without it for a moment), he saw coming towards him a knight, also in full armour, with a shining moon painted on his shield, who, on approaching sufficiently near to be heard, said in a loud voice, addressing himself to Don Quixote, “Illustrious knight, and never sufficiently extolled Don Quixote of La Mancha, I am the Knight of the White Moon, whose unheard-of achievements will perhaps have recalled him to thy memory. I come to do battle with thee and prove the might of thy arm, to the end that I make thee acknowledge and confess that my lady, let her be who she may, is incomparably fairer than thy Dulcinea del Toboso. If thou dost acknowledge this fairly and openly, thou shalt escape death and save me the trouble of inflicting it upon thee; if thou fightest and I vanquish thee, I demand no other satisfaction than that, laying aside arms and abstaining from going in quest of adventures, thou withdraw and betake thyself to thine own village for the space of a year, and live there without putting hand to sword, in peace and quiet and beneficial repose, the same being needful for the increase of thy substance and the salvation of thy soul; and if thou dost vanquish me, my head shall be at thy disposal, my arms and horse thy spoils, and the renown of my deeds transferred and added to thine. Consider which will be thy best course, and give me thy answer speedily, for this day is all the time I have for the despatch of this business.”

Don Quixote was amazed and astonished, as well at the Knight of the White Moon’s arrogance, as at his reason for delivering the defiance, and with calm dignity he answered him, “Knight of the White Moon, of whose achievements I have never heard until now, I will venture to swear you have never seen the illustrious Dulcinea; for had you seen her I know you would have taken care not to venture yourself upon this issue, because the sight would have removed all doubt from your mind that there ever has been or can be a beauty to be compared with hers; and so, not saying you lie, but merely that you are not correct in what you state, I accept your challenge, with the conditions you have proposed, and at once, that the day you have fixed may not expire; and from your conditions I

except only that of the renown of your achievements being transferred to me, for I know not of what sort they are nor what they may amount to; I am satisfied with my own, such as they be. Take, therefore, the side of the field you choose, and I will do the same; and to whom God shall give it may Saint Peter add his blessing.”

The Knight of the White Moon had been seen from the city, and it was told the viceroy how he was in conversation with Don Quixote. The viceroy, fancying it must be some fresh adventure got up by Don Antonio Moreno or some other gentleman of the city, hurried out at once to the beach accompanied by Don Antonio and several other gentlemen, just as Don Quixote was wheeling Rocinante round in order to take up the necessary distance. The viceroy upon this, seeing that the pair of them were evidently preparing to come to the charge, put himself between them, asking them what it was that led them to engage in combat all of a sudden in this way. The Knight of the White Moon replied that it was a question of precedence of beauty; and briefly told him what he had said to Don Quixote, and how the conditions of the defiance agreed upon on both sides had been accepted. The viceroy went over to Don Antonio, and asked in a low voice did he know who the Knight of the White Moon was, or was it some joke they were playing on Don Quixote. Don Antonio replied that he neither knew who he was nor whether the defiance was in joke or in earnest. This answer left the viceroy in a state of perplexity, not knowing whether he ought to let the combat go on or not; but unable to persuade himself that it was anything but a joke he fell back, saying, “If there be no other way out of it, gallant knights, except to confess or die, and Don Quixote is inflexible, and your worship of the White Moon still more so, in God’s hand be it, and fall on.”

He of the White Moon thanked the viceroy in courteous and well-chosen words for the permission he gave them, and so did Don Quixote, who then, commending himself with all his heart to heaven and to his Dulcinea, as was his custom on the eve of any combat that awaited him, proceeded to take a little more distance, as he saw his antagonist was doing the same; then, without blast of trumpet or other warlike instrument to give them the signal to charge, both at the same instant wheeled their horses; and he of the White Moon, being the swifter, met Don Quixote after having traversed two-thirds of the course, and there encountered him with such violence that, without touching him with his lance (for he held it high, to all appearance purposely), he hurled Don Quixote and Rocinante to the earth, a perilous fall. He sprang upon him at once, and placing the lance over his visor said to him, “You are vanquished, sir knight, nay dead unless you admit the conditions of our defiance.”

Don Quixote, bruised and stupefied, without raising his visor said in a weak



feeble voice as if he were speaking out of a tomb, “Dulcinea del Toboso is the fairest woman in the world, and I the most unfortunate knight on earth; it is not fitting that this truth should suffer by my feebleness; drive your lance home, sir knight, and take my life, since you have taken away my honour.”

“That will I not, in sooth,” said he of the White Moon; “live the fame of the lady Dulcinea’s beauty undimmed as ever; all I require is that the great Don Quixote retire to his own home for a year, or for so long a time as shall by me be enjoined upon him, as we agreed before engaging in this combat.”

The viceroy, Don Antonio, and several others who were present heard all this, and heard too how Don Quixote replied that so long as nothing in prejudice of Dulcinea was demanded of him, he would observe all the rest like a true and loyal knight. The engagement given, he of the White Moon wheeled about, and making obeisance to the viceroy with a movement of the head, rode away into the city at a half gallop. The viceroy bade Don Antonio hasten after him, and by some means or other find out who he was. They raised Don Quixote up and uncovered his face, and found him pale and bathed with sweat.



Rocinante from the mere hard measure he had received lay unable to stir for the present. Sancho, wholly dejected and woebegone, knew not what to say or do. He fancied that all was a dream, that the whole business was a piece of enchantment. Here was his master defeated, and bound not to take up arms for a year. He saw the light of the glory of his achievements obscured; the hopes of the promises lately made him swept away like smoke before the wind; Rocinante, he feared, was crippled for life, and his master's bones out of joint; for if he were only shaken out of his madness it would be no small luck. In the end they carried him into the city in a hand-chair which the viceroy sent for, and thither the viceroy himself returned, eager to ascertain who this Knight of the

White Moon was who had left Don Quixote in such a sad plight.



## CHAPTER LXV.

WHEREIN IS MADE KNOWN WHO THE KNIGHT OF THE WHITE MOON WAS; LIKEWISE DON GREGORIO'S RELEASE, AND OTHER EVENTS



Don Antonio Moreno followed the Knight of the White Moon, and a number of boys followed him too, nay pursued him, until they had him fairly housed in a hostel in the heart of the city. Don Antonio, eager to make his acquaintance, entered also; a squire came out to meet him and remove his armour, and he shut himself into a lower room, still attended by Don Antonio, whose bread would not bake until he had found out who he was. He of the White Moon, seeing then that the gentleman would not leave him, said, "I know very well, senor, what you have come for; it is to find out who I am; and as there is no reason why I should conceal it from you, while my servant here is taking off my armour I will

tell you the true state of the case, without leaving out anything. You must know, senor, that I am called the bachelor Samson Carrasco. I am of the same village as Don Quixote of La Mancha, whose craze and folly make all of us who know him feel pity for him, and I am one of those who have felt it most; and persuaded that his chance of recovery lay in quiet and keeping at home and in his own house, I hit upon a device for keeping him there. Three months ago, therefore, I went out to meet him as a knight-errant, under the assumed name of the Knight of the Mirrors, intending to engage him in combat and overcome him without hurting him, making it the condition of our combat that the vanquished should be at the disposal of the victor. What I meant to demand of him (for I regarded him as vanquished already) was that he should return to his own village, and not leave it for a whole year, by which time he might be cured. But fate ordered it otherwise, for he vanquished me and unhorsed me, and so my plan failed. He went his way, and I came back conquered, covered with shame, and sorely bruised by my fall, which was a particularly dangerous one. But this did not quench my desire to meet him again and overcome him, as you have seen to-day. And as he is so scrupulous in his observance of the laws of knight-errantry, he will, no doubt, in order to keep his word, obey the injunction I have laid upon him. This, senor, is how the matter stands, and I have nothing more to tell you. I implore of you not to betray me, or tell Don Quixote who I am; so that my honest endeavours may be successful, and that a man of excellent wits — were he only rid of the fooleries of chivalry — may get them back again.”

“O senor,” said Don Antonio, “may God forgive you the wrong you have done the whole world in trying to bring the most amusing madman in it back to his senses. Do you not see, senor, that the gain by Don Quixote’s sanity can never equal the enjoyment his crazes give? But my belief is that all the senor bachelor’s pains will be of no avail to bring a man so hopelessly cracked to his senses again; and if it were not uncharitable, I would say may Don Quixote never be cured, for by his recovery we lose not only his own drolleries, but his squire Sancho Panza’s too, any one of which is enough to turn melancholy itself into merriment. However, I’ll hold my peace and say nothing to him, and we’ll see whether I am right in my suspicion that Senor Carrasco’s efforts will be fruitless.”

The bachelor replied that at all events the affair promised well, and he hoped for a happy result from it; and putting his services at Don Antonio’s commands he took his leave of him; and having had his armour packed at once upon a mule, he rode away from the city the same day on the horse he rode to battle, and returned to his own country without meeting any adventure calling for record in this veracious history.

Don Antonio reported to the viceroy what Carrasco told him, and the viceroy was not very well pleased to hear it, for with Don Quixote's retirement there was an end to the amusement of all who knew anything of his mad doings.

Six days did Don Quixote keep his bed, dejected, melancholy, moody and out of sorts, brooding over the unhappy event of his defeat. Sancho strove to comfort him, and among other things he said to him, "Hold up your head, senor, and be of good cheer if you can, and give thanks to heaven that if you have had a tumble to the ground you have not come off with a broken rib; and, as you know that 'where they give they take,' and that 'there are not always fletches where there are pegs,' a fig for the doctor, for there's no need of him to cure this ailment. Let us go home, and give over going about in search of adventures in strange lands and places; rightly looked at, it is I that am the greater loser, though it is your worship that has had the worse usage. With the government I gave up all wish to be a governor again, but I did not give up all longing to be a count; and that will never come to pass if your worship gives up becoming a king by renouncing the calling of chivalry; and so my hopes are going to turn into smoke."

"Peace, Sancho," said Don Quixote; "thou seest my suspension and retirement is not to exceed a year; I shall soon return to my honoured calling, and I shall not be at a loss for a kingdom to win and a county to bestow on thee."

"May God hear it and sin be deaf," said Sancho; "I have always heard say that 'a good hope is better than a bad holding.'"

As they were talking Don Antonio came in looking extremely pleased and exclaiming, "Reward me for my good news, Senor Don Quixote! Don Gregorio and the renegade who went for him have come ashore — ashore do I say? They are by this time in the viceroy's house, and will be here immediately."

Don Quixote cheered up a little and said, "Of a truth I am almost ready to say I should have been glad had it turned out just the other way, for it would have obliged me to cross over to Barbary, where by the might of my arm I should have restored to liberty, not only Don Gregorio, but all the Christian captives there are in Barbary. But what am I saying, miserable being that I am? Am I not he that has been conquered? Am I not he that has been overthrown? Am I not he who must not take up arms for a year? Then what am I making professions for; what am I bragging about; when it is fitter for me to handle the distaff than the sword?"

"No more of that, senor," said Sancho; "'let the hen live, even though it be with her pip; 'today for thee and to-morrow for me;' in these affairs of encounters and whacks one must not mind them, for he that falls to-day may get up to-morrow; unless indeed he chooses to lie in bed, I mean gives way to

weakness and does not pluck up fresh spirit for fresh battles; let your worship get up now to receive Don Gregorio; for the household seems to be in a bustle, and no doubt he has come by this time;" and so it proved, for as soon as Don Gregorio and the renegade had given the viceroy an account of the voyage out and home, Don Gregorio, eager to see Ana Felix, came with the renegade to Don Antonio's house. When they carried him away from Algiers he was in woman's dress; on board the vessel, however, he exchanged it for that of a captive who escaped with him; but in whatever dress he might be he looked like one to be loved and served and esteemed, for he was surpassingly well-favoured, and to judge by appearances some seventeen or eighteen years of age. Ricote and his daughter came out to welcome him, the father with tears, the daughter with bashfulness. They did not embrace each other, for where there is deep love there will never be overmuch boldness. Seen side by side, the comeliness of Don Gregorio and the beauty of Ana Felix were the admiration of all who were present. It was silence that spoke for the lovers at that moment, and their eyes were the tongues that declared their pure and happy feelings. The renegade explained the measures and means he had adopted to rescue Don Gregorio, and Don Gregorio at no great length, but in a few words, in which he showed that his intelligence was in advance of his years, described the peril and embarrassment he found himself in among the women with whom he had sojourned. To conclude, Ricote liberally recompensed and rewarded as well the renegade as the men who had rowed; and the renegade effected his readmission into the body of the Church and was reconciled with it, and from a rotten limb became by penance and repentance a clean and sound one.

Two days later the viceroy discussed with Don Antonio the steps they should take to enable Ana Felix and her father to stay in Spain, for it seemed to them there could be no objection to a daughter who was so good a Christian and a father to all appearance so well disposed remaining there. Don Antonio offered to arrange the matter at the capital, whither he was compelled to go on some other business, hinting that many a difficult affair was settled there with the help of favour and bribes.

"Nay," said Ricote, who was present during the conversation, "it will not do to rely upon favour or bribes, because with the great Don Bernardino de Velasco, Conde de Salazar, to whom his Majesty has entrusted our expulsion, neither entreaties nor promises, bribes nor appeals to compassion, are of any use; for though it is true he mingles mercy with justice, still, seeing that the whole body of our nation is tainted and corrupt, he applies to it the cautery that burns rather than the salve that soothes; and thus, by prudence, sagacity, care and the fear he inspires, he has borne on his mighty shoulders the weight of this great policy and

carried it into effect, all our schemes and plots, importunities and wiles, being ineffectual to blind his Argus eyes, ever on the watch lest one of us should remain behind in concealment, and like a hidden root come in course of time to sprout and bear poisonous fruit in Spain, now cleansed, and relieved of the fear in which our vast numbers kept it. Heroic resolve of the great Philip the Third, and unparalleled wisdom to have entrusted it to the said Don Bernardino de Velasco!”

“At any rate,” said Don Antonio, “when I am there I will make all possible efforts, and let heaven do as pleases it best; Don Gregorio will come with me to relieve the anxiety which his parents must be suffering on account of his absence; Ana Felix will remain in my house with my wife, or in a monastery; and I know the viceroy will be glad that the worthy Ricote should stay with him until we see what terms I can make.”

The viceroy agreed to all that was proposed; but Don Gregorio on learning what had passed declared he could not and would not on any account leave Ana Felix; however, as it was his purpose to go and see his parents and devise some way of returning for her, he fell in with the proposed arrangement. Ana Felix remained with Don Antonio’s wife, and Ricote in the viceroy’s house.

The day for Don Antonio’s departure came; and two days later that for Don Quixote’s and Sancho’s, for Don Quixote’s fall did not suffer him to take the road sooner. There were tears and sighs, swoonings and sobs, at the parting between Don Gregorio and Ana Felix. Ricote offered Don Gregorio a thousand crowns if he would have them, but he would not take any save five which Don Antonio lent him and he promised to repay at the capital. So the two of them took their departure, and Don Quixote and Sancho afterwards, as has been already said, Don Quixote without his armour and in travelling gear, and Sancho on foot, Dapple being loaded with the armour.





## CHAPTER LXVI.

WHICH TREATS OF WHAT HE WHO READS WILL SEE, OR WHAT HE  
WHO HAS IT READ TO HIM WILL HEAR



As he left Barcelona, Don Quixote turned gaze upon the spot where he had fallen. "Here Troy was," said he; "here my ill-luck, not my cowardice, robbed me of all the glory I had won; here Fortune made me the victim of her caprices; here the lustre of my achievements was dimmed; here, in a word, fell my happiness never to rise again."



“Senor,” said Sancho on hearing this, “it is the part of brave hearts to be patient in adversity just as much as to be glad in prosperity; I judge by myself, for, if when I was a governor I was glad, now that I am a squire and on foot I am not sad; and I have heard say that she whom commonly they call Fortune is a drunken whimsical jade, and, what is more, blind, and therefore neither sees what she does, nor knows whom she casts down or whom she sets up.”

“Thou art a great philosopher, Sancho,” said Don Quixote; “thou speakest very sensibly; I know not who taught thee. But I can tell thee there is no such thing as Fortune in the world, nor does anything which takes place there, be it

good or bad, come about by chance, but by the special preordination of heaven; and hence the common saying that ‘each of us is the maker of his own Fortune.’ I have been that of mine; but not with the proper amount of prudence, and my self-confidence has therefore made me pay dearly; for I ought to have reflected that Rocinante’s feeble strength could not resist the mighty bulk of the Knight of the White Moon’s horse. In a word, I ventured it, I did my best, I was overthrown, but though I lost my honour I did not lose nor can I lose the virtue of keeping my word. When I was a knight-errant, daring and valiant, I supported my achievements by hand and deed, and now that I am a humble squire I will support my words by keeping the promise I have given. Forward then, Sancho my friend, let us go to keep the year of the novitiate in our own country, and in that seclusion we shall pick up fresh strength to return to the by me never-forgotten calling of arms.”

“Senor,” returned Sancho, “travelling on foot is not such a pleasant thing that it makes me feel disposed or tempted to make long marches. Let us leave this armour hung up on some tree, instead of some one that has been hanged; and then with me on Dapple’s back and my feet off the ground we will arrange the stages as your worship pleases to measure them out; but to suppose that I am going to travel on foot, and make long ones, is to suppose nonsense.”

“Thou sayest well, Sancho,” said Don Quixote; “let my armour be hung up for a trophy, and under it or round it we will carve on the trees what was inscribed on the trophy of Roland’s armour—

These let none move  
Who dareth not his might with Roland prove.”

“That’s the very thing,” said Sancho; “and if it was not that we should feel the want of Rocinante on the road, it would be as well to leave him hung up too.”

“And yet, I had rather not have either him or the armour hung up,” said Don Quixote, “that it may not be said, ‘for good service a bad return.’”

“Your worship is right,” said Sancho; “for, as sensible people hold, ‘the fault of the ass must not be laid on the pack-saddle;’ and, as in this affair the fault is your worship’s, punish yourself and don’t let your anger break out against the already battered and bloody armour, or the meekness of Rocinante, or the tenderness of my feet, trying to make them travel more than is reasonable.”



In converse of this sort the whole of that day went by, as did the four succeeding ones, without anything occurring to interrupt their journey, but on the fifth as they entered a village they found a great number of people at the door of an inn enjoying themselves, as it was a holiday. Upon Don Quixote's approach a peasant called out, "One of these two gentlemen who come here, and who don't know the parties, will tell us what we ought to do about our wager."

“That I will, certainly,” said Don Quixote, “and according to the rights of the case, if I can manage to understand it.”

“Well, here it is, worthy sir,” said the peasant; “a man of this village who is so fat that he weighs twenty stone challenged another, a neighbour of his, who does not weigh more than nine, to run a race. The agreement was that they were to run a distance of a hundred paces with equal weights; and when the challenger was asked how the weights were to be equalised he said that the other, as he weighed nine stone, should put eleven in iron on his back, and that in this way the twenty stone of the thin man would equal the twenty stone of the fat one.”

“Not at all,” exclaimed Sancho at once, before Don Quixote could answer; “it’s for me, that only a few days ago left off being a governor and a judge, as all the world knows, to settle these doubtful questions and give an opinion in disputes of all sorts.”

“Answer in God’s name, Sancho my friend,” said Don Quixote, “for I am not fit to give crumbs to a cat, my wits are so confused and upset.”

With this permission Sancho said to the peasants who stood clustered round him, waiting with open mouths for the decision to come from his, “Brothers, what the fat man requires is not in reason, nor has it a shadow of justice in it; because, if it be true, as they say, that the challenged may choose the weapons, the other has no right to choose such as will prevent and keep him from winning. My decision, therefore, is that the fat challenger prune, peel, thin, trim and correct himself, and take eleven stone of his flesh off his body, here or there, as he pleases, and as suits him best; and being in this way reduced to nine stone weight, he will make himself equal and even with nine stone of his opponent, and they will be able to run on equal terms.”

“By all that’s good,” said one of the peasants as he heard Sancho’s decision, “but the gentleman has spoken like a saint, and given judgment like a canon! But I’ll be bound the fat man won’t part with an ounce of his flesh, not to say eleven stone.”

“The best plan will be for them not to run,” said another, “so that neither the thin man break down under the weight, nor the fat one strip himself of his flesh; let half the wager be spent in wine, and let’s take these gentlemen to the tavern where there’s the best, and ‘over me be the cloak when it rains.’”

“I thank you, sirs,” said Don Quixote; “but I cannot stop for an instant, for sad thoughts and unhappy circumstances force me to seem discourteous and to travel apace;” and spurring Rocinante he pushed on, leaving them wondering at what they had seen and heard, at his own strange figure and at the shrewdness of his servant, for such they took Sancho to be; and another of them observed, “If the servant is so clever, what must the master be? I’ll bet, if they are going to

Salamanca to study, they'll come to be alcaldes of the Court in a trice; for it's a mere joke — only to read and read, and have interest and good luck; and before a man knows where he is he finds himself with a staff in his hand or a mitre on his head."

That night master and man passed out in the fields in the open air, and the next day as they were pursuing their journey they saw coming towards them a man on foot with alforjas at the neck and a javelin or spiked staff in his hand, the very cut of a foot courier; who, as soon as he came close to Don Quixote, increased his pace and half running came up to him, and embracing his right thigh, for he could reach no higher, exclaimed with evident pleasure, "O Senor Don Quixote of La Mancha, what happiness it will be to the heart of my lord the duke when he knows your worship is coming back to his castle, for he is still there with my lady the duchess!"

"I do not recognise you, friend," said Don Quixote, "nor do I know who you are, unless you tell me."

"I am Tosilos, my lord the duke's lacquey, Senor Don Quixote," replied the courier; "he who refused to fight your worship about marrying the daughter of Dona Rodriguez."

"God bless me!" exclaimed Don Quixote; "is it possible that you are the one whom mine enemies the enchanters changed into the lacquey you speak of in order to rob me of the honour of that battle?"

"Nonsense, good sir!" said the messenger; "there was no enchantment or transformation at all; I entered the lists just as much lacquey Tosilos as I came out of them lacquey Tosilos. I thought to marry without fighting, for the girl had taken my fancy; but my scheme had a very different result, for as soon as your worship had left the castle my lord the duke had a hundred strokes of the stick given me for having acted contrary to the orders he gave me before engaging in the combat; and the end of the whole affair is that the girl has become a nun, and Dona Rodriguez has gone back to Castile, and I am now on my way to Barcelona with a packet of letters for the viceroy which my master is sending him. If your worship would like a drop, sound though warm, I have a gourd here full of the best, and some scraps of Tronchon cheese that will serve as a provocative and wakener of your thirst if so be it is asleep."

"I take the offer," said Sancho; "no more compliments about it; pour out, good Tosilos, in spite of all the enchanters in the Indies."

"Thou art indeed the greatest glutton in the world, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "and the greatest booby on earth, not to be able to see that this courier is enchanted and this Tosilos a sham one; stop with him and take thy fill; I will go on slowly and wait for thee to come up with me."

The lacquey laughed, unsheathed his gourd, unwalletted his scraps, and taking out a small loaf of bread he and Sancho seated themselves on the green grass, and in peace and good fellowship finished off the contents of the alforjas down to the bottom, so resolutely that they licked the wrapper of the letters, merely because it smelt of cheese.

Said Tosilos to Sancho, "Beyond a doubt, Sancho my friend, this master of thine ought to be a madman."

"Ought!" said Sancho; "he owes no man anything; he pays for everything, particularly when the coin is madness. I see it plain enough, and I tell him so plain enough; but what's the use? especially now that it is all over with him, for here he is beaten by the Knight of the White Moon."

Tosilos begged him to explain what had happened him, but Sancho replied that it would not be good manners to leave his master waiting for him; and that some other day if they met there would be time enough for that; and then getting up, after shaking his doublet and brushing the crumbs out of his beard, he drove Dapple on before him, and bidding adieu to Tosilos left him and rejoined his master, who was waiting for him under the shade of a tree.





## CHAPTER LXVII.

OF THE RESOLUTION DON QUIXOTE FORMED TO TURN SHEPHERD AND TAKE TO A LIFE IN THE FIELDS WHILE THE YEAR FOR WHICH HE HAD GIVEN HIS WORD WAS RUNNING ITS COURSE; WITH OTHER EVENTS TRULY DELECTABLE AND HAPPY



If a multitude of reflections used to harass Don Quixote before he had been overthrown, a great many more harassed him since his fall. He was under the shade of a tree, as has been said, and there, like flies on honey, thoughts came crowding upon him and stinging him. Some of them turned upon the disenchantment of Dulcinea, others upon the life he was about to lead in his enforced retirement. Sancho came up and spoke in high praise of the generous

disposition of the lacquey Tosilos.

“Is it possible, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “that thou dost still think that he yonder is a real lacquey? Apparently it has escaped thy memory that thou hast seen Dulcinea turned and transformed into a peasant wench, and the Knight of the Mirrors into the bachelor Carrasco; all the work of the enchanters that persecute me. But tell me now, didst thou ask this Tosilos, as thou callest him, what has become of Altisidora, did she weep over my absence, or has she already consigned to oblivion the love thoughts that used to afflict her when I was present?”

“The thoughts that I had,” said Sancho, “were not such as to leave time for asking fool’s questions. Body o’ me, senor! is your worship in a condition now to inquire into other people’s thoughts, above all love thoughts?”

“Look ye, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “there is a great difference between what is done out of love and what is done out of gratitude. A knight may very possibly be proof against love; but it is impossible, strictly speaking, for him to be ungrateful. Altisidora, to all appearance, loved me truly; she gave me the three kerchiefs thou knowest of; she wept at my departure, she cursed me, she abused me, casting shame to the winds she bewailed herself in public; all signs that she adored me; for the wrath of lovers always ends in curses. I had no hopes to give her, nor treasures to offer her, for mine are given to Dulcinea, and the treasures of knights-errant are like those of the fairies,’ illusory and deceptive; all I can give her is the place in my memory I keep for her, without prejudice, however, to that which I hold devoted to Dulcinea, whom thou art wronging by thy remissness in whipping thyself and scourging that flesh — would that I saw it eaten by wolves — which would rather keep itself for the worms than for the relief of that poor lady.”

“Senor,” replied Sancho, “if the truth is to be told, I cannot persuade myself that the whipping of my backside has anything to do with the disenchantment of the enchanted; it is like saying, ‘If your head aches rub ointment on your knees;’ at any rate I’ll make bold to swear that in all the histories dealing with knight-errantry that your worship has read you have never come across anybody disenchanted by whipping; but whether or no I’ll whip myself when I have a fancy for it, and the opportunity serves for scourging myself comfortably.”

“God grant it,” said Don Quixote; “and heaven give thee grace to take it to heart and own the obligation thou art under to help my lady, who is thine also, inasmuch as thou art mine.”

As they pursued their journey talking in this way they came to the very same spot where they had been trampled on by the bulls. Don Quixote recognised it, and said he to Sancho, “This is the meadow where we came upon those gay

shepherdesses and gallant shepherds who were trying to revive and imitate the pastoral Arcadia there, an idea as novel as it was happy, in emulation whereof, if so be thou dost approve of it, Sancho, I would have ourselves turn shepherds, at any rate for the time I have to live in retirement. I will buy some ewes and everything else requisite for the pastoral calling; and, I under the name of the shepherd Quixotize and thou as the shepherd Panzino, we will roam the woods and groves and meadows singing songs here, lamenting in elegies there, drinking of the crystal waters of the springs or limpid brooks or flowing rivers. The oaks will yield us their sweet fruit with bountiful hand, the trunks of the hard cork trees a seat, the willows shade, the roses perfume, the widespread meadows carpets tinted with a thousand dyes; the clear pure air will give us breath, the moon and stars lighten the darkness of the night for us, song shall be our delight, lamenting our joy, Apollo will supply us with verses, and love with conceits whereby we shall make ourselves famed for ever, not only in this but in ages to come."

"Egad," said Sancho, "but that sort of life squares, nay corners, with my notions; and what is more the bachelor Samson Carrasco and Master Nicholas the barber won't have well seen it before they'll want to follow it and turn shepherds along with us; and God grant it may not come into the curate's head to join the sheepfold too, he's so jovial and fond of enjoying himself."

"Thou art in the right of it, Sancho," said Don Quixote; "and the bachelor Samson Carrasco, if he enters the pastoral fraternity, as no doubt he will, may call himself the shepherd Samsonino, or perhaps the shepherd Carrascon; Nicholas the barber may call himself Niculoso, as old Boscan formerly was called Nemoroso; as for the curate I don't know what name we can fit to him unless it be something derived from his title, and we call him the shepherd Curiambro. For the shepherdesses whose lovers we shall be, we can pick names as we would pears; and as my lady's name does just as well for a shepherdess's as for a princess's, I need not trouble myself to look for one that will suit her better; to thine, Sancho, thou canst give what name thou wilt."

"I don't mean to give her any but Teresona," said Sancho, "which will go well with her stoutness and with her own right name, as she is called Teresa; and then when I sing her praises in my verses I'll show how chaste my passion is, for I'm not going to look 'for better bread than ever came from wheat' in other men's houses. It won't do for the curate to have a shepherdess, for the sake of good example; and if the bachelor chooses to have one, that is his look-out."

"God bless me, Sancho my friend!" said Don Quixote, "what a life we shall lead! What hautboys and Zamora bagpipes we shall hear, what tabors, timbrels, and rebecks! And then if among all these different sorts of music that of the

albogues is heard, almost all the pastoral instruments will be there.”

“What are albogues?” asked Sancho, “for I never in my life heard tell of them or saw them.”

“Albogues,” said Don Quixote, “are brass plates like candlesticks that struck against one another on the hollow side make a noise which, if not very pleasing or harmonious, is not disagreeable and accords very well with the rude notes of the bagpipe and tabor. The word albogue is Morisco, as are all those in our Spanish tongue that begin with al; for example, almohaza, almorzar, alhombra, alguacil, alhucema, almacén, alcancia, and others of the same sort, of which there are not many more; our language has only three that are Morisco and end in i, which are borcegui, zaquizami, and maravedi. Alheli and alfaqui are seen to be Arabic, as well by the “al” at the beginning as by the “i” they end with. I mention this incidentally, the chance allusion to albogues having reminded me of it; and it will be of great assistance to us in the perfect practice of this calling that I am something of a poet, as thou knowest, and that besides the bachelor Samson Carrasco is an accomplished one. Of the curate I say nothing; but I will wager he has some spice of the poet in him, and no doubt Master Nicholas too, for all barbers, or most of them, are guitar players and stringers of verses. I will bewail my separation; thou shalt glorify thyself as a constant lover; the shepherd Carrascon will figure as a rejected one, and the curate Curiambro as whatever may please him best; and so all will go as gaily as heart could wish.”

To this Sancho made answer, “I am so unlucky, señor, that I’m afraid the day will never come when I’ll see myself at such a calling. O what neat spoons I’ll make when I’m a shepherd! What messes, creams, garlands, pastoral odds and ends! And if they don’t get me a name for wisdom, they’ll not fail to get me one for ingenuity. My daughter Sanchica will bring us our dinner to the pasture. But stay — she’s good-looking, and shepherds there are with more mischief than simplicity in them; I would not have her ‘come for wool and go back shorn;’ love-making and lawless desires are just as common in the fields as in the cities, and in shepherds’ shanties as in royal palaces; ‘do away with the cause, you do away with the sin;’ ‘if eyes don’t see hearts don’t break’ and ‘better a clear escape than good men’s prayers.’”

“A truce to thy proverbs, Sancho,” exclaimed Don Quixote; “any one of those thou hast uttered would suffice to explain thy meaning; many a time have I recommended thee not to be so lavish with proverbs and to exercise some moderation in delivering them; but it seems to me it is only ‘preaching in the desert;’ ‘my mother beats me and I go on with my tricks.’”

“It seems to me,” said Sancho, “that your worship is like the common saying, ‘Said the frying-pan to the kettle, Get away, blackbreech.’ You chide me for

uttering proverbs, and you string them in couples yourself.”

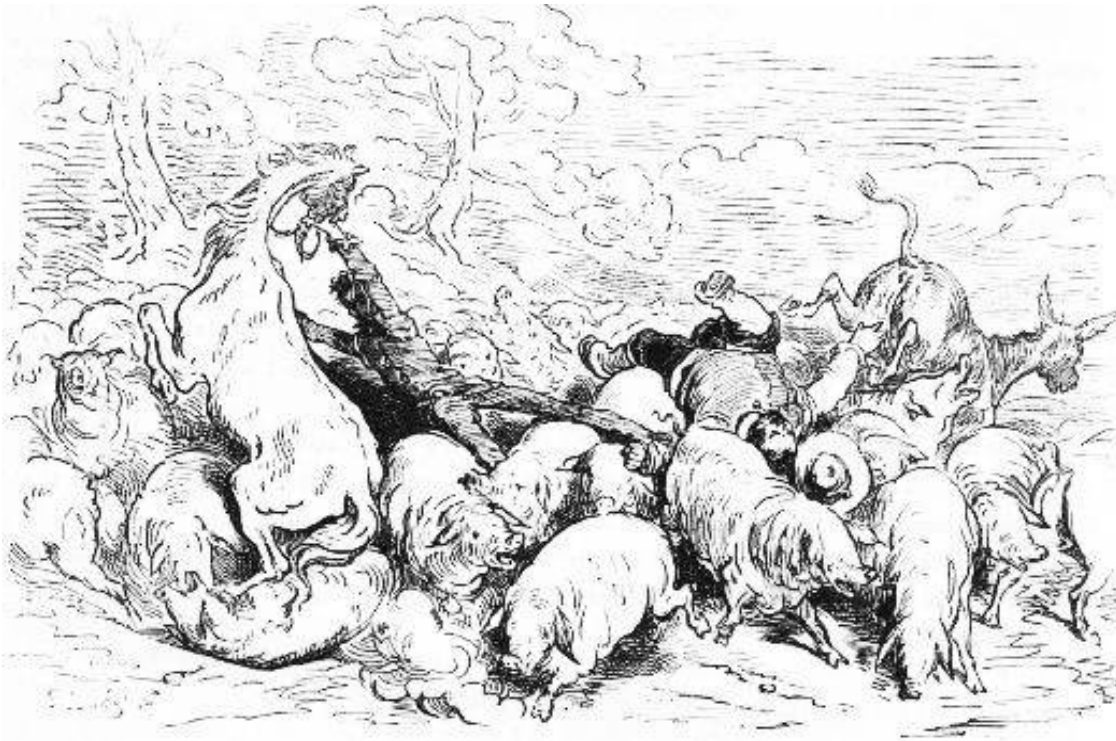
“Observe, Sancho,” replied Don Quixote, “I bring in proverbs to the purpose, and when I quote them they fit like a ring to the finger; thou bringest them in by the head and shoulders, in such a way that thou dost drag them in, rather than introduce them; if I am not mistaken, I have told thee already that proverbs are short maxims drawn from the experience and observation of our wise men of old; but the proverb that is not to the purpose is a piece of nonsense and not a maxim. But enough of this; as nightfall is drawing on let us retire some little distance from the high road to pass the night; what is in store for us to-morrow God knoweth.”

They turned aside, and supped late and poorly, very much against Sancho’s will, who turned over in his mind the hardships attendant upon knight-errantry in woods and forests, even though at times plenty presented itself in castles and houses, as at Don Diego de Miranda’s, at the wedding of Camacho the Rich, and at Don Antonio Moreno’s; he reflected, however, that it could not be always day, nor always night; and so that night he passed in sleeping, and his master in waking.



## CHAPTER LXVIII.

### OF THE BRISTLY ADVENTURE THAT BEFELL DON QUIXOTE



The night was somewhat dark, for though there was a moon in the sky it was not in a quarter where she could be seen; for sometimes the lady Diana goes on a stroll to the antipodes, and leaves the mountains all black and the valleys in darkness. Don Quixote obeyed nature so far as to sleep his first sleep, but did not give way to the second, very different from Sancho, who never had any second, because with him sleep lasted from night till morning, wherein he showed what a sound constitution and few cares he had. Don Quixote's cares kept him restless, so much so that he awoke Sancho and said to him, "I am amazed, Sancho, at the unconcern of thy temperament. I believe thou art made of marble or hard brass,



incapable of any emotion or feeling whatever. I lie awake while thou sleepest, I weep while thou singest, I am faint with fasting while thou art sluggish and torpid from pure repletion. It is the duty of good servants to share the sufferings and feel the sorrows of their masters, if it be only for the sake of appearances. See the calmness of the night, the solitude of the spot, inviting us to break our slumbers by a vigil of some sort. Rise as thou livest, and retire a little distance, and with a good heart and cheerful courage give thyself three or four hundred lashes on account of Dulcinea's disenchantment score; and this I entreat of thee, making it a request, for I have no desire to come to grips with thee a second time, as I know thou hast a heavy hand. As soon as thou hast laid them on we will pass the rest of the night, I singing my separation, thou thy constancy, making a beginning at once with the pastoral life we are to follow at our village."

"Senor," replied Sancho, "I'm no monk to get up out of the middle of my sleep and scourge myself, nor does it seem to me that one can pass from one extreme of the pain of whipping to the other of music. Will your worship let me sleep, and not worry me about whipping myself? or you'll make me swear never to touch a hair of my doublet, not to say my flesh."

"O hard heart!" said Don Quixote, "O pitiless squire! O bread ill-bestowed and favours ill-acknowledged, both those I have done thee and those I mean to do thee! Through me hast thou seen thyself a governor, and through me thou seest thyself in immediate expectation of being a count, or obtaining some other equivalent title, for I — *post tenebras spero lucem*."

"I don't know what that is," said Sancho; "all I know is that so long as I am asleep I have neither fear nor hope, trouble nor glory; and good luck betide him that invented sleep, the cloak that covers over all a man's thoughts, the food that removes hunger, the drink that drives away thirst, the fire that warms the cold, the cold that tempers the heat, and, to wind up with, the universal coin wherewith everything is bought, the weight and balance that makes the shepherd equal with the king and the fool with the wise man. Sleep, I have heard say, has only one fault, that it is like death; for between a sleeping man and a dead man there is very little difference."

"Never have I heard thee speak so elegantly as now, Sancho," said Don Quixote; "and here I begin to see the truth of the proverb thou dost sometimes quote, 'Not with whom thou art bred, but with whom thou art fed.'"

"Ha, by my life, master mine," said Sancho, "it's not I that am stringing proverbs now, for they drop in pairs from your worship's mouth faster than from mine; only there is this difference between mine and yours, that yours are well-timed and mine are untimely; but anyhow, they are all proverbs."

At this point they became aware of a harsh indistinct noise that seemed to spread through all the valleys around. Don Quixote stood up and laid his hand upon his sword, and Sancho ensconced himself under Dapple and put the bundle of armour on one side of him and the ass's pack-saddle on the other, in fear and trembling as great as Don Quixote's perturbation. Each instant the noise increased and came nearer to the two terrified men, or at least to one, for as to the other, his courage is known to all. The fact of the matter was that some men were taking above six hundred pigs to sell at a fair, and were on their way with them at that hour, and so great was the noise they made and their grunting and blowing, that they deafened the ears of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, and they could not make out what it was. The wide-spread grunting drove came on in a surging mass, and without showing any respect for Don Quixote's dignity or Sancho's, passed right over the pair of them, demolishing Sancho's entrenchments, and not only upsetting Don Quixote but sweeping Rocinante off his feet into the bargain; and what with the trampling and the grunting, and the pace at which the unclean beasts went, pack-saddle, armour, Dapple and Rocinante were left scattered on the ground and Sancho and Don Quixote at their wits' end.

Sancho got up as well as he could and begged his master to give him his sword, saying he wanted to kill half a dozen of those dirty unmannerly pigs, for he had by this time found out that that was what they were.

"Let them be, my friend," said Don Quixote; "this insult is the penalty of my sin; and it is the righteous chastisement of heaven that jackals should devour a vanquished knight, and wasps sting him and pigs trample him under foot."

"I suppose it is the chastisement of heaven, too," said Sancho, "that flies should prick the squires of vanquished knights, and lice eat them, and hunger assail them. If we squires were the sons of the knights we serve, or their very near relations, it would be no wonder if the penalty of their misdeeds overtook us, even to the fourth generation. But what have the Panzas to do with the Quixotes? Well, well, let's lie down again and sleep out what little of the night there's left, and God will send us dawn and we shall be all right."



“Sleep thou, Sancho,” returned Don Quixote, “for thou wast born to sleep as I was born to watch; and during the time it now wants of dawn I will give a loose rein to my thoughts, and seek a vent for them in a little madrigal which, unknown to thee, I composed in my head last night.”

“I should think,” said Sancho, “that the thoughts that allow one to make verses cannot be of great consequence; let your worship string verses as much as you like and I’ll sleep as much as I can;” and forthwith, taking the space of ground he required, he muffled himself up and fell into a sound sleep, undisturbed by bond, debt, or trouble of any sort. Don Quixote, propped up against the trunk of

a beech or a cork tree — for Cide Hamete does not specify what kind of tree it was — sang in this strain to the accompaniment of his own sighs: When in my mind

I muse, O Love, upon thy cruelty,  
To death I flee,  
In hope therein the end of all to find.

But drawing near  
That welcome haven in my sea of woe,  
Such joy I know,  
That life revives, and still I linger here.

Thus life doth slay,  
And death again to life restoreth me;  
Strange destiny,  
That deals with life and death as with a play!

He accompanied each verse with many sighs and not a few tears, just like one whose heart was pierced with grief at his defeat and his separation from Dulcinea.

And now daylight came, and the sun smote Sancho on the eyes with his beams. He awoke, roused himself up, shook himself and stretched his lazy limbs, and seeing the havoc the pigs had made with his stores he cursed the drove, and more besides. Then the pair resumed their journey, and as evening closed in they saw coming towards them some ten men on horseback and four or five on foot. Don Quixote's heart beat quick and Sancho's quailed with fear, for the persons approaching them carried lances and bucklers, and were in very warlike guise. Don Quixote turned to Sancho and said, "If I could make use of my weapons, and my promise had not tied my hands, I would count this host that comes against us but cakes and fancy bread; but perhaps it may prove something different from what we apprehend." The men on horseback now came up, and raising their lances surrounded Don Quixote in silence, and pointed them at his back and breast, menacing him with death. One of those on foot, putting his finger to his lips as a sign to him to be silent, seized Rocinante's bridle and drew him out of the road, and the others driving Sancho and Dapple before them, and all maintaining a strange silence, followed in the steps of the one who led Don Quixote. The latter two or three times attempted to ask where they were taking him to and what they wanted, but the instant he began to open his lips they threatened to close them with the points of their lances; and Sancho fared the

same way, for the moment he seemed about to speak one of those on foot punched him with a goad, and Dapple likewise, as if he too wanted to talk. Night set in, they quickened their pace, and the fears of the two prisoners grew greater, especially as they heard themselves assailed with— “Get on, ye Troglodytes;” “Silence, ye barbarians;” “March, ye cannibals;” “No murmuring, ye Scythians;” “Don’t open your eyes, ye murderous Polyphemes, ye blood-thirsty lions,” and suchlike names with which their captors harassed the ears of the wretched master and man. Sancho went along saying to himself, “We, tortolites, barbers, animals! I don’t like those names at all; ‘it’s in a bad wind our corn is being winnowed;’ ‘misfortune comes upon us all at once like sticks on a dog,’ and God grant it may be no worse than them that this unlucky adventure has in store for us.”

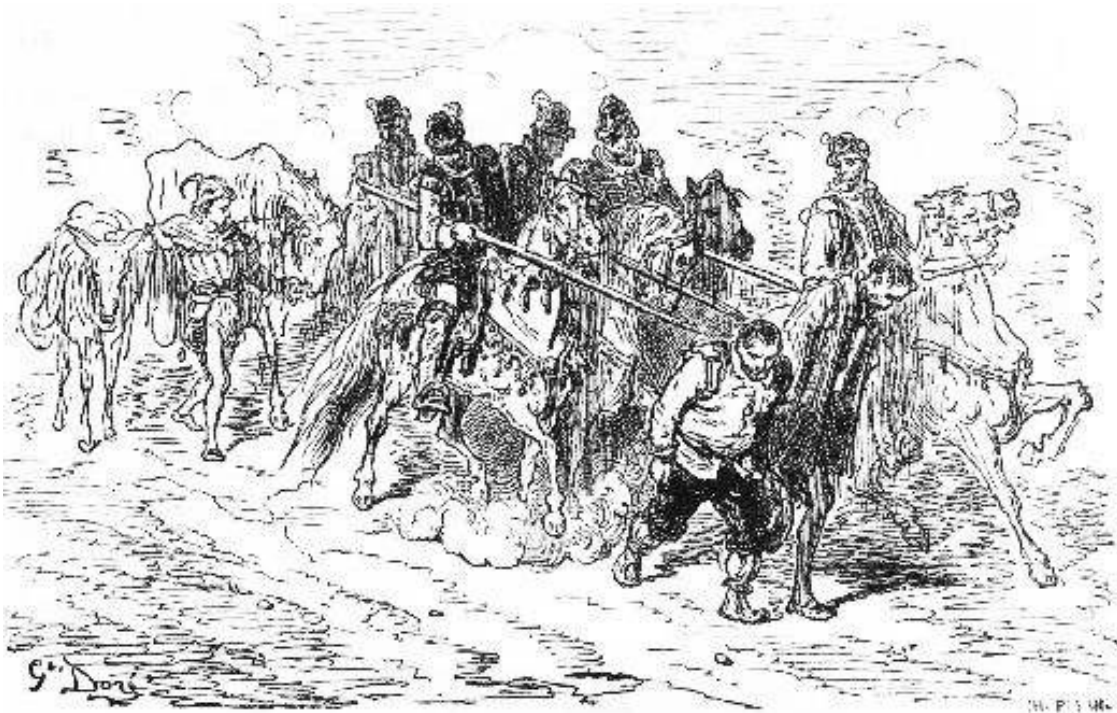
Don Quixote rode completely dazed, unable with the aid of all his wits to make out what could be the meaning of these abusive names they called them, and the only conclusion he could arrive at was that there was no good to be hoped for and much evil to be feared. And now, about an hour after midnight, they reached a castle which Don Quixote saw at once was the duke’s, where they had been but a short time before. “God bless me!” said he, as he recognised the mansion, “what does this mean? It is all courtesy and politeness in this house; but with the vanquished good turns into evil, and evil into worse.”

They entered the chief court of the castle and found it prepared and fitted up in a style that added to their amazement and doubled their fears, as will be seen in the following chapter.



## CHAPTER LXIX.

OF THE STRANGEST AND MOST EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURE  
THAT BEFELL DON QUIXOTE IN THE WHOLE COURSE OF THIS  
GREAT HISTORY



The horsemen dismounted, and, together with the men on foot, without a moment's delay taking up Sancho and Don Quixote bodily, they carried them into the court, all round which near a hundred torches fixed in sockets were burning, besides above five hundred lamps in the corridors, so that in spite of the night, which was somewhat dark, the want of daylight could not be perceived. In the middle of the court was a catafalque, raised about two yards above the ground and covered completely by an immense canopy of black velvet, and on the steps all round it white wax tapers burned in more than a hundred silver

candlesticks. Upon the catafalque was seen the dead body of a damsel so lovely that by her beauty she made death itself look beautiful. She lay with her head resting upon a cushion of brocade and crowned with a garland of sweet-smelling flowers of divers sorts, her hands crossed upon her bosom, and between them a branch of yellow palm of victory. On one side of the court was erected a stage, where upon two chairs were seated two persons who from having crowns on their heads and sceptres in their hands appeared to be kings of some sort, whether real or mock ones. By the side of this stage, which was reached by steps, were two other chairs on which the men carrying the prisoners seated Don Quixote and Sancho, all in silence, and by signs giving them to understand that they too were to be silent; which, however, they would have been without any signs, for their amazement at all they saw held them tongue-tied. And now two persons of distinction, who were at once recognised by Don Quixote as his hosts the duke and duchess, ascended the stage attended by a numerous suite, and seated themselves on two gorgeous chairs close to the two kings, as they seemed to be. Who would not have been amazed at this? Nor was this all, for Don Quixote had perceived that the dead body on the catafalque was that of the fair Altisidora. As the duke and duchess mounted the stage Don Quixote and Sancho rose and made them a profound obeisance, which they returned by bowing their heads slightly. At this moment an official crossed over, and approaching Sancho threw over him a robe of black buckram painted all over with flames of fire, and taking off his cap put upon his head a mitre such as those undergoing the sentence of the Holy Office wear; and whispered in his ear that he must not open his lips, or they would put a gag upon him, or take his life. Sancho surveyed himself from head to foot and saw himself all ablaze with flames; but as they did not burn him, he did not care two farthings for them. He took off the mitre and seeing painted with devils he put it on again, saying to himself, "Well, so far those don't burn me nor do these carry me off." Don Quixote surveyed him too, and though fear had got the better of his faculties, he could not help smiling to see the figure Sancho presented. And now from underneath the catafalque, so it seemed, there rose a low sweet sound of flutes, which, coming unbroken by human voice (for there silence itself kept silence), had a soft and languishing effect. Then, beside the pillow of what seemed to be the dead body, suddenly appeared a fair youth in a Roman habit, who, to the accompaniment of a harp which he himself played, sang in a sweet and clear voice these two stanzas: While fair Altisidora, who the sport

Of cold Don Quixote's cruelty hath been,  
Returns to life, and in this magic court  
The dames in sables come to grace the scene,



And while her matrons all in seemly sort  
My lady robes in baize and bombazine,  
Her beauty and her sorrows will I sing  
With defter quill than touched the Thracian string.

But not in life alone, methinks, to me  
Belongs the office; Lady, when my tongue  
Is cold in death, believe me, unto thee  
My voice shall raise its tributary song.  
My soul, from this strait prison-house set free,  
As o'er the Stygian lake it floats along,  
Thy praises singing still shall hold its way,  
And make the waters of oblivion stay.

At this point one of the two that looked like kings exclaimed, "Enough, enough, divine singer! It would be an endless task to put before us now the death and the charms of the peerless Altisidora, not dead as the ignorant world imagines, but living in the voice of fame and in the penance which Sancho Panza, here present, has to undergo to restore her to the long-lost light. Do thou, therefore, O Rhadamanthus, who sittest in judgment with me in the murky caverns of Dis, as thou knowest all that the inscrutable fates have decreed touching the resuscitation of this damsel, announce and declare it at once, that the happiness we look forward to from her restoration be no longer deferred." No sooner had Minos the fellow judge of Rhadamanthus said this, than Rhadamanthus rising up said: "Ho, officials of this house, high and low, great and small, make haste hither one and all, and print on Sancho's face four-and-twenty smacks, and give him twelve pinches and six pin thrusts in the back and arms; for upon this ceremony depends the restoration of Altisidora."

On hearing this Sancho broke silence and cried out, "By all that's good, I'll as soon let my face be smacked or handled as turn Moor. Body o' me! What has handling my face got to do with the resurrection of this damsel? 'The old woman took kindly to the blits; they enchant Dulcinea, and whip me in order to disenchant her; Altisidora dies of ailments God was pleased to send her, and to bring her to life again they must give me four-and-twenty smacks, and prick holes in my body with pins, and raise weals on my arms with pinches! Try those jokes on a brother-in-law; 'I'm an old dog, and "tus, tus" is no use with me.'"

"Thou shalt die," said Rhadamanthus in a loud voice; "relent, thou tiger; humble thyself, proud Nimrod; suffer and be silent, for no impossibilities are asked of thee; it is not for thee to inquire into the difficulties in this matter;

smacked thou must be, pricked thou shalt see thyself, and with pinches thou must be made to howl. Ho, I say, officials, obey my orders; or by the word of an honest man, ye shall see what ye were born for.”

At this some six duennas, advancing across the court, made their appearance in procession, one after the other, four of them with spectacles, and all with their right hands uplifted, showing four fingers of wrist to make their hands look longer, as is the fashion now-a-days. No sooner had Sancho caught sight of them than, bellowing like a bull, he exclaimed, “I might let myself be handled by all the world; but allow duennas to touch me — not a bit of it! Scratch my face, as my master was served in this very castle; run me through the body with burnished daggers; pinch my arms with red-hot pincers; I’ll bear all in patience to serve these gentlefolk; but I won’t let duennas touch me, though the devil should carry me off!”

Here Don Quixote, too, broke silence, saying to Sancho, “Have patience, my son, and gratify these noble persons, and give all thanks to heaven that it has infused such virtue into thy person, that by its sufferings thou canst disenchant the enchanted and restore to life the dead.”

The duennas were now close to Sancho, and he, having become more tractable and reasonable, settling himself well in his chair presented his face and beard to the first, who delivered him a smack very stoutly laid on, and then made him a low curtsy.

“Less politeness and less paint, senora duenna,” said Sancho; “by God your hands smell of vinegar-wash.”

In line, all the duennas smacked him and several others of the household pinched him; but what he could not stand was being pricked by the pins; and so, apparently out of patience, he started up out of his chair, and seizing a lighted torch that stood near him fell upon the duennas and the whole set of his tormentors, exclaiming, “Begone, ye ministers of hell; I’m not made of brass not to feel such out-of-the-way tortures.”

At this instant Altisidora, who probably was tired of having been so long lying on her back, turned on her side; seeing which the bystanders cried out almost with one voice, “Altisidora is alive! Altisidora lives!”

Rhadamanthus bade Sancho put away his wrath, as the object they had in view was now attained. When Don Quixote saw Altisidora move, he went on his knees to Sancho saying to him, “Now is the time, son of my bowels, not to call thee my squire, for thee to give thyself some of those lashes thou art bound to lay on for the disenchantment of Dulcinea. Now, I say, is the time when the virtue that is in thee is ripe, and endowed with efficacy to work the good that is looked for from thee.”

To which Sancho made answer, "That's trick upon trick, I think, and not honey upon pancakes; a nice thing it would be for a whipping to come now, on the top of pinches, smacks, and pin-proddings! You had better take a big stone and tie it round my neck, and pitch me into a well; I should not mind it much, if I'm to be always made the cow of the wedding for the cure of other people's ailments. Leave me alone; or else by God I'll fling the whole thing to the dogs, let come what may."

Altisidora had by this time sat up on the catafalque, and as she did so the clarions sounded, accompanied by the flutes, and the voices of all present exclaiming, "Long life to Altisidora! long life to Altisidora!" The duke and duchess and the kings Minos and Rhadamanthus stood up, and all, together with Don Quixote and Sancho, advanced to receive her and take her down from the catafalque; and she, making as though she were recovering from a swoon, bowed her head to the duke and duchess and to the kings, and looking sideways at Don Quixote, said to him, "God forgive thee, insensible knight, for through thy cruelty I have been, to me it seems, more than a thousand years in the other world; and to thee, the most compassionate upon earth, I render thanks for the life I am now in possession of. From this day forth, friend Sancho, count as thine six smocks of mine which I bestow upon thee, to make as many shirts for thyself, and if they are not all quite whole, at any rate they are all clean."

Sancho kissed her hands in gratitude, kneeling, and with the mitre in his hand. The duke bade them take it from him, and give him back his cap and doublet and remove the flaming robe. Sancho begged the duke to let them leave him the robe and mitre; as he wanted to take them home for a token and memento of that unexampled adventure. The duchess said they must leave them with him; for he knew already what a great friend of his she was. The duke then gave orders that the court should be cleared, and that all should retire to their chambers, and that Don Quixote and Sancho should be conducted to their old quarters.



## CHAPTER LXX.

WHICH FOLLOWS SIXTY-NINE AND DEALS WITH MATTERS  
INDISPENSABLE FOR THE CLEAR COMPREHENSION OF THIS  
HISTORY



Sancho slept that night in a cot in the same chamber with Don Quixote, a thing he would have gladly excused if he could for he knew very well that with questions and answers his master would not let him sleep, and he was in no humour for talking much, as he still felt the pain of his late martyrdom, which interfered with his freedom of speech; and it would have been more to his taste to sleep in a hovel alone, than in that luxurious chamber in company. And so well founded did his apprehension prove, and so correct was his anticipation, that scarcely had his master got into bed when he said, "What dost thou think of tonight's adventure, Sancho? Great and mighty is the power of cold-hearted

scorn, for thou with thine own eyes hast seen Altisidora slain, not by arrows, nor by the sword, nor by any warlike weapon, nor by deadly poisons, but by the thought of the sternness and scorn with which I have always treated her.”

“She might have died and welcome,” said Sancho, “when she pleased and how she pleased; and she might have left me alone, for I never made her fall in love or scorned her. I don’t know nor can I imagine how the recovery of Altisidora, a damsel more fanciful than wise, can have, as I have said before, anything to do with the sufferings of Sancho Panza. Now I begin to see plainly and clearly that there are enchanters and enchanted people in the world; and may God deliver me from them, since I can’t deliver myself; and so I beg of your worship to let me sleep and not ask me any more questions, unless you want me to throw myself out of the window.”

“Sleep, Sancho my friend,” said Don Quixote, “if the pinprodding and pinches thou hast received and the smacks administered to thee will let thee.”

“No pain came up to the insult of the smacks,” said Sancho, “for the simple reason that it was duennas, confound them, that gave them to me; but once more I entreat your worship to let me sleep, for sleep is relief from misery to those who are miserable when awake.”

“Be it so, and God be with thee,” said Don Quixote.

They fell asleep, both of them, and Cide Hamete, the author of this great history, took this opportunity to record and relate what it was that induced the duke and duchess to get up the elaborate plot that has been described. The bachelor Samson Carrasco, he says, not forgetting how he as the Knight of the Mirrors had been vanquished and overthrown by Don Quixote, which defeat and overthrow upset all his plans, resolved to try his hand again, hoping for better luck than he had before; and so, having learned where Don Quixote was from the page who brought the letter and present to Sancho’s wife, Teresa Panza, he got himself new armour and another horse, and put a white moon upon his shield, and to carry his arms he had a mule led by a peasant, not by Tom Cecial his former squire for fear he should be recognised by Sancho or Don Quixote. He came to the duke’s castle, and the duke informed him of the road and route Don Quixote had taken with the intention of being present at the jousts at Saragossa. He told him, too, of the jokes he had practised upon him, and of the device for the disenchantment of Dulcinea at the expense of Sancho’s backside; and finally he gave him an account of the trick Sancho had played upon his master, making him believe that Dulcinea was enchanted and turned into a country wench; and of how the duchess, his wife, had persuaded Sancho that it was he himself who was deceived, inasmuch as Dulcinea was really enchanted; at which the bachelor laughed not a little, and marvelled as well at the sharpness

and simplicity of Sancho as at the length to which Don Quixote's madness went. The duke begged of him if he found him (whether he overcame him or not) to return that way and let him know the result. This the bachelor did; he set out in quest of Don Quixote, and not finding him at Saragossa, he went on, and how he fared has been already told. He returned to the duke's castle and told him all, what the conditions of the combat were, and how Don Quixote was now, like a loyal knight-errant, returning to keep his promise of retiring to his village for a year, by which time, said the bachelor, he might perhaps be cured of his madness; for that was the object that had led him to adopt these disguises, as it was a sad thing for a gentleman of such good parts as Don Quixote to be a madman. And so he took his leave of the duke, and went home to his village to wait there for Don Quixote, who was coming after him. Thereupon the duke seized the opportunity of practising this mystification upon him; so much did he enjoy everything connected with Sancho and Don Quixote. He had the roads about the castle far and near, everywhere he thought Don Quixote was likely to pass on his return, occupied by large numbers of his servants on foot and on horseback, who were to bring him to the castle, by fair means or foul, if they met him. They did meet him, and sent word to the duke, who, having already settled what was to be done, as soon as he heard of his arrival, ordered the torches and lamps in the court to be lit and Altisidora to be placed on the catafalque with all the pomp and ceremony that has been described, the whole affair being so well arranged and acted that it differed but little from reality. And Cide Hamete says, moreover, that for his part he considers the concocters of the joke as crazy as the victims of it, and that the duke and duchess were not two fingers' breadth removed from being something like fools themselves when they took such pains to make game of a pair of fools.

As for the latter, one was sleeping soundly and the other lying awake occupied with his desultory thoughts, when daylight came to them bringing with it the desire to rise; for the lazy down was never a delight to Don Quixote, victor or vanquished. Altisidora, come back from death to life as Don Quixote fancied, following up the freak of her lord and lady, entered the chamber, crowned with the garland she had worn on the catafalque and in a robe of white taffeta embroidered with gold flowers, her hair flowing loose over her shoulders, and leaning upon a staff of fine black ebony. Don Quixote, disconcerted and in confusion at her appearance, huddled himself up and well-nigh covered himself altogether with the sheets and counterpane of the bed, tongue-tied, and unable to offer her any civility. Altisidora seated herself on a chair at the head of the bed, and, after a deep sigh, said to him in a feeble, soft voice, "When women of rank and modest maidens trample honour under foot, and give a loose to the tongue

that breaks through every impediment, publishing abroad the inmost secrets of their hearts, they are reduced to sore extremities. Such a one am I, Senor Don Quixote of La Mancha, crushed, conquered, love-smitten, but yet patient under suffering and virtuous, and so much so that my heart broke with grief and I lost my life. For the last two days I have been dead, slain by the thought of the cruelty with which thou hast treated me, obdurate knight,

O harder thou than marble to my plaint;

or at least believed to be dead by all who saw me; and had it not been that Love, taking pity on me, let my recovery rest upon the sufferings of this good squire, there I should have remained in the other world."

"Love might very well have let it rest upon the sufferings of my ass, and I should have been obliged to him," said Sancho. "But tell me, senora — and may heaven send you a tenderer lover than my master — what did you see in the other world? What goes on in hell? For of course that's where one who dies in despair is bound for."

"To tell you the truth," said Altisidora, "I cannot have died outright, for I did not go into hell; had I gone in, it is very certain I should never have come out again, do what I might. The truth is, I came to the gate, where some dozen or so of devils were playing tennis, all in breeches and doublets, with falling collars trimmed with Flemish bonelace, and ruffles of the same that served them for wristbands, with four fingers' breadth of the arms exposed to make their hands look longer; in their hands they held rackets of fire; but what amazed me still more was that books, apparently full of wind and rubbish, served them for tennis balls, a strange and marvellous thing; this, however, did not astonish me so much as to observe that, although with players it is usual for the winners to be glad and the losers sorry, there in that game all were growling, all were snarling, and all were cursing one another." "That's no wonder," said Sancho; "for devils, whether playing or not, can never be content, win or lose."

"Very likely," said Altisidora; "but there is another thing that surprises me too, I mean surprised me then, and that was that no ball outlasted the first throw or was of any use a second time; and it was wonderful the constant succession there was of books, new and old. To one of them, a brand-new, well-bound one, they gave such a stroke that they knocked the guts out of it and scattered the leaves about. 'Look what book that is,' said one devil to another, and the other replied, 'It is the "Second Part of the History of Don Quixote of La Mancha," not by Cide Hamete, the original author, but by an Aragonese who by his own account is of Tordesillas.' 'Out of this with it,' said the first, 'and into the depths of hell with it out of my sight.' 'Is it so bad?' said the other. 'So bad is it,' said the first, 'that if I had set myself deliberately to make a worse, I could not have



done it.' They then went on with their game, knocking other books about; and I, having heard them mention the name of Don Quixote whom I love and adore so, took care to retain this vision in my memory."

"A vision it must have been, no doubt," said Don Quixote, "for there is no other I in the world; this history has been going about here for some time from hand to hand, but it does not stay long in any, for everybody gives it a taste of his foot. I am not disturbed by hearing that I am wandering in a fantastic shape in the darkness of the pit or in the daylight above, for I am not the one that history treats of. If it should be good, faithful, and true, it will have ages of life; but if it should be bad, from its birth to its burial will not be a very long journey."

Altisidora was about to proceed with her complaint against Don Quixote, when he said to her, "I have several times told you, senora that it grieves me you should have set your affections upon me, as from mine they can only receive gratitude, but no return. I was born to belong to Dulcinea del Toboso, and the fates, if there are any, dedicated me to her; and to suppose that any other beauty can take the place she occupies in my heart is to suppose an impossibility. This frank declaration should suffice to make you retire within the bounds of your modesty, for no one can bind himself to do impossibilities."

Hearing this, Altisidora, with a show of anger and agitation, exclaimed, "God's life! Don Stockfish, soul of a mortar, stone of a date, more obstinate and obdurate than a clown asked a favour when he has his mind made up, if I fall upon you I'll tear your eyes out! Do you fancy, Don Vanquished, Don Cudgelled, that I died for your sake? All that you have seen tonight has been make-believe; I'm not the woman to let the black of my nail suffer for such a camel, much less die!"

"That I can well believe," said Sancho; "for all that about lovers pining to death is absurd; they may talk of it, but as for doing it — Judas may believe that!"

While they were talking, the musician, singer, and poet, who had sung the two stanzas given above came in, and making a profound obeisance to Don Quixote said, "Will your worship, sir knight, reckon and retain me in the number of your most faithful servants, for I have long been a great admirer of yours, as well because of your fame as because of your achievements?" "Will your worship tell me who you are," replied Don Quixote, "so that my courtesy may be answerable to your deserts?" The young man replied that he was the musician and songster of the night before. "Of a truth," said Don Quixote, "your worship has a most excellent voice; but what you sang did not seem to me very much to the purpose; for what have Garcilasso's stanzas to do with the death of this lady?"

“Don’t be surprised at that,” returned the musician; “for with the callow poets of our day the way is for every one to write as he pleases and pilfer where he chooses, whether it be germane to the matter or not, and now-a-days there is no piece of silliness they can sing or write that is not set down to poetic licence.”

Don Quixote was about to reply, but was prevented by the duke and duchess, who came in to see him, and with them there followed a long and delightful conversation, in the course of which Sancho said so many droll and saucy things that he left the duke and duchess wondering not only at his simplicity but at his sharpness. Don Quixote begged their permission to take his departure that same day, inasmuch as for a vanquished knight like himself it was fitter he should live in a pig-sty than in a royal palace. They gave it very readily, and the duchess asked him if Altisidora was in his good graces.

He replied, “Senora, let me tell your ladyship that this damsel’s ailment comes entirely of idleness, and the cure for it is honest and constant employment. She herself has told me that lace is worn in hell; and as she must know how to make it, let it never be out of her hands; for when she is occupied in shifting the bobbins to and fro, the image or images of what she loves will not shift to and fro in her thoughts; this is the truth, this is my opinion, and this is my advice.”

“And mine,” added Sancho; “for I never in all my life saw a lace-maker that died for love; when damsels are at work their minds are more set on finishing their tasks than on thinking of their loves. I speak from my own experience; for when I’m digging I never think of my old woman; I mean my Teresa Panza, whom I love better than my own eyelids.” “You say well, Sancho,” said the duchess, “and I will take care that my Altisidora employs herself henceforward in needlework of some sort; for she is extremely expert at it.” “There is no occasion to have recourse to that remedy, senora,” said Altisidora; “for the mere thought of the cruelty with which this vagabond villain has treated me will suffice to blot him out of my memory without any other device; with your highness’s leave I will retire, not to have before my eyes, I won’t say his rueful countenance, but his abominable, ugly looks.” “That reminds me of the common saying, that ‘he that rails is ready to forgive,’” said the duke.

Altisidora then, pretending to wipe away her tears with a handkerchief, made an obeisance to her master and mistress and quitted the room.

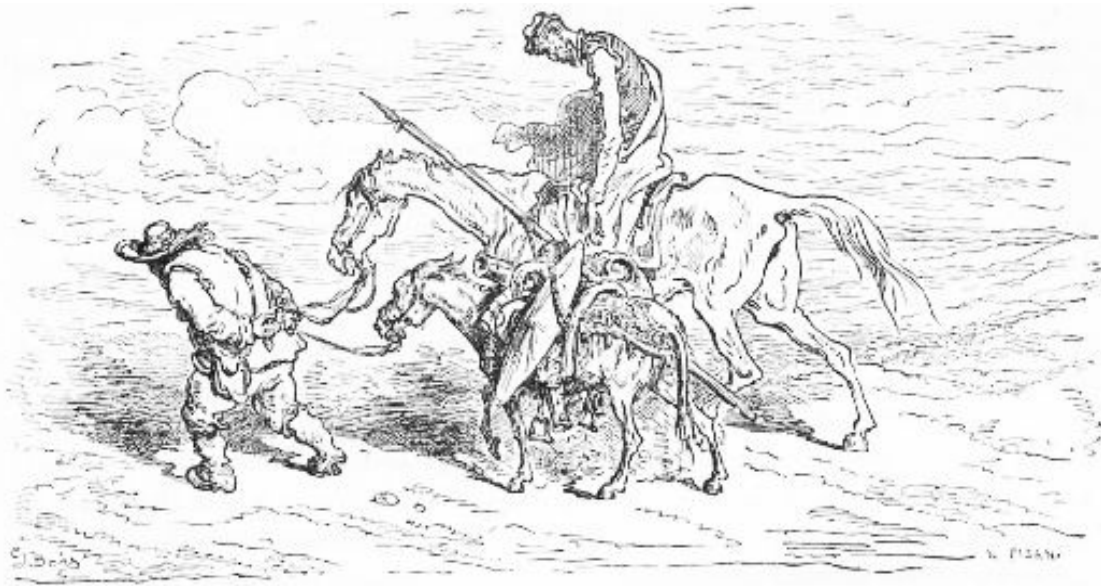
“Ill luck betide thee, poor damsel,” said Sancho, “ill luck betide thee! Thou hast fallen in with a soul as dry as a rush and a heart as hard as oak; had it been me, i’faith ‘another cock would have crowed to thee.’”

So the conversation came to an end, and Don Quixote dressed himself and dined with the duke and duchess, and set out the same evening.



## CHAPTER LXXI.

### OF WHAT PASSED BETWEEN DON QUIXOTE AND HIS SQUIRE SANCHO ON THE WAY TO THEIR VILLAGE



The vanquished and afflicted Don Quixote went along very downcast in one respect and very happy in another. His sadness arose from his defeat, and his satisfaction from the thought of the virtue that lay in Sancho, as had been proved by the resurrection of Altisidora; though it was with difficulty he could persuade himself that the love-smitten damsel had been really dead. Sancho went along anything but cheerful, for it grieved him that Altisidora had not kept her promise of giving him the smocks; and turning this over in his mind he said to his master, “Surely, señor, I’m the most unlucky doctor in the world; there’s many a physician that, after killing the sick man he had to cure, requires to be paid for his work, though it is only signing a bit of a list of medicines, that the apothecary and not he makes up, and, there, his labour is over; but with me though to cure somebody else costs me drops of blood, smacks, pinches, pinproddings, and

whippings, nobody gives me a farthing. Well, I swear by all that's good if they put another patient into my hands, they'll have to grease them for me before I cure him; for, as they say, 'it's by his singing the abbot gets his dinner,' and I'm not going to believe that heaven has bestowed upon me the virtue I have, that I should be dealing it out to others all for nothing."

"Thou art right, Sancho my friend," said Don Quixote, "and Altisidora has behaved very badly in not giving thee the smocks she promised; and although that virtue of thine is gratis data — as it has cost thee no study whatever, any more than such study as thy personal sufferings may be — I can say for myself that if thou wouldst have payment for the lashes on account of the disenchant of Dulcinea, I would have given it to thee freely ere this. I am not sure, however, whether payment will comport with the cure, and I would not have the reward interfere with the medicine. I think there will be nothing lost by trying it; consider how much thou wouldst have, Sancho, and whip thyself at once, and pay thyself down with thine own hand, as thou hast money of mine."

At this proposal Sancho opened his eyes and his ears a palm's breadth wide, and in his heart very readily acquiesced in whipping himself, and said he to his master, "Very well then, senor, I'll hold myself in readiness to gratify your worship's wishes if I'm to profit by it; for the love of my wife and children forces me to seem grasping. Let your worship say how much you will pay me for each lash I give myself."

"If Sancho," replied Don Quixote, "I were to requite thee as the importance and nature of the cure deserves, the treasures of Venice, the mines of Potosi, would be insufficient to pay thee. See what thou hast of mine, and put a price on each lash."

"Of them," said Sancho, "there are three thousand three hundred and odd; of these I have given myself five, the rest remain; let the five go for the odd ones, and let us take the three thousand three hundred, which at a quarter real apiece (for I will not take less though the whole world should bid me) make three thousand three hundred quarter reals; the three thousand are one thousand five hundred half reals, which make seven hundred and fifty reals; and the three hundred make a hundred and fifty half reals, which come to seventy-five reals, which added to the seven hundred and fifty make eight hundred and twenty-five reals in all. These I will stop out of what I have belonging to your worship, and I'll return home rich and content, though well whipped, for 'there's no taking trout' — but I say no more."

"O blessed Sancho! O dear Sancho!" said Don Quixote; "how we shall be bound to serve thee, Dulcinea and I, all the days of our lives that heaven may grant us! If she returns to her lost shape (and it cannot be but that she will) her

misfortune will have been good fortune, and my defeat a most happy triumph. But look here, Sancho; when wilt thou begin the scourging? For if thou wilt make short work of it, I will give thee a hundred reals over and above.”

“When?” said Sancho; “this night without fail. Let your worship order it so that we pass it out of doors and in the open air, and I’ll scarify myself.”

Night, longed for by Don Quixote with the greatest anxiety in the world, came at last, though it seemed to him that the wheels of Apollo’s car had broken down, and that the day was drawing itself out longer than usual, just as is the case with lovers, who never make the reckoning of their desires agree with time. They made their way at length in among some pleasant trees that stood a little distance from the road, and there vacating Rocinante’s saddle and Dapple’s pack-saddle, they stretched themselves on the green grass and made their supper off Sancho’s stores, and he making a powerful and flexible whip out of Dapple’s halter and headstall retreated about twenty paces from his master among some beech trees. Don Quixote seeing him march off with such resolution and spirit, said to him, “Take care, my friend, not to cut thyself to pieces; allow the lashes to wait for one another, and do not be in so great a hurry as to run thyself out of breath midway; I mean, do not lay on so strenuously as to make thy life fail thee before thou hast reached the desired number; and that thou mayest not lose by a card too much or too little, I will station myself apart and count on my rosary here the lashes thou givest thyself. May heaven help thee as thy good intention deserves.”

“Pledges don’t distress a good payer,” said Sancho; “I mean to lay on in such a way as without killing myself to hurt myself, for in that, no doubt, lies the essence of this miracle.”

He then stripped himself from the waist upwards, and snatching up the rope he began to lay on and Don Quixote to count the lashes. He might have given himself six or eight when he began to think the joke no trifle, and its price very low; and holding his hand for a moment, he told his master that he cried off on the score of a blind bargain, for each of those lashes ought to be paid for at the rate of half a real instead of a quarter.

“Go on, Sancho my friend, and be not disheartened,” said Don Quixote; “for I double the stakes as to price.”

“In that case,” said Sancho, “in God’s hand be it, and let it rain lashes.” But the rogue no longer laid them on his shoulders, but laid on to the trees, with such groans every now and then, that one would have thought at each of them his soul was being plucked up by the roots. Don Quixote, touched to the heart, and fearing he might make an end of himself, and that through Sancho’s imprudence he might miss his own object, said to him, “As thou livest, my friend, let the

matter rest where it is, for the remedy seems to me a very rough one, and it will be well to have patience; 'Zamora was not won in an hour.' If I have not reckoned wrong thou hast given thyself over a thousand lashes; that is enough for the present; 'for the ass,' to put it in homely phrase, 'bears the load, but not the overload.'"

"No, no, senor," replied Sancho; "it shall never be said of me, 'The money paid, the arms broken;' go back a little further, your worship, and let me give myself at any rate a thousand lashes more; for in a couple of bouts like this we shall have finished off the lot, and there will be even cloth to spare."

"As thou art in such a willing mood," said Don Quixote, "may heaven aid thee; lay on and I'll retire."

Sancho returned to his task with so much resolution that he soon had the bark stripped off several trees, such was the severity with which he whipped himself; and one time, raising his voice, and giving a beech a tremendous lash, he cried out, "Here dies Samson, and all with him!"



At the sound of his piteous cry and of the stroke of the cruel lash, Don Quixote ran to him at once, and seizing the twisted halter that served him for a courbash, said to him, "Heaven forbid, Sancho my friend, that to please me thou shouldst lose thy life, which is needed for the support of thy wife and children; let Dulcinea wait for a better opportunity, and I will content myself with a hope soon to be realised, and have patience until thou hast gained fresh strength so as to finish off this business to the satisfaction of everybody."

"As your worship will have it so, senor," said Sancho, "so be it; but throw your cloak over my shoulders, for I'm sweating and I don't want to take cold; it's a risk that novice disciplinants run."



Don Quixote obeyed, and stripping himself covered Sancho, who slept until the sun woke him; they then resumed their journey, which for the time being they brought to an end at a village that lay three leagues farther on. They dismounted at a hostelry which Don Quixote recognised as such and did not take to be a castle with moat, turrets, portcullis, and drawbridge; for ever since he had been vanquished he talked more rationally about everything, as will be shown presently. They quartered him in a room on the ground floor, where in place of leather hangings there were pieces of painted serge such as they commonly use in villages. On one of them was painted by some very poor hand the Rape of Helen, when the bold guest carried her off from Menelaus, and on the other was the story of Dido and Aeneas, she on a high tower, as though she were making signals with a half sheet to her fugitive guest who was out at sea flying in a frigate or brigantine. He noticed in the two stories that Helen did not go very reluctantly, for she was laughing slyly and roguishly; but the fair Dido was shown dropping tears the size of walnuts from her eyes. Don Quixote as he looked at them observed, "Those two ladies were very unfortunate not to have been born in this age, and I unfortunate above all men not to have been born in theirs. Had I fallen in with those gentlemen, Troy would not have been burned or Carthage destroyed, for it would have been only for me to slay Paris, and all these misfortunes would have been avoided."

"I'll lay a bet," said Sancho, "that before long there won't be a tavern, roadside inn, hostelry, or barber's shop where the story of our doings won't be painted up; but I'd like it painted by the hand of a better painter than painted these."

"Thou art right, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "for this painter is like Orbaneja, a painter there was at Ubeda, who when they asked him what he was painting, used to say, 'Whatever it may turn out; and if he chanced to paint a cock he would write under it, 'This is a cock,' for fear they might think it was a fox. The painter or writer, for it's all the same, who published the history of this new Don Quixote that has come out, must have been one of this sort I think, Sancho, for he painted or wrote 'whatever it might turn out;' or perhaps he is like a poet called Mauleon that was about the Court some years ago, who used to answer at haphazard whatever he was asked, and on one asking him what Deum de Deo meant, he replied De donde diere. But, putting this aside, tell me, Sancho, hast thou a mind to have another turn at thyself to-night, and wouldst thou rather have it indoors or in the open air?"

"Egad, senior," said Sancho, "for what I'm going to give myself, it comes all the same to me whether it is in a house or in the fields; still I'd like it to be among trees; for I think they are company for me and help me to bear my pain

wonderfully.”

“And yet it must not be, Sancho my friend,” said Don Quixote; “but, to enable thee to recover strength, we must keep it for our own village; for at the latest we shall get there the day after tomorrow.”

Sancho said he might do as he pleased; but that for his own part he would like to finish off the business quickly before his blood cooled and while he had an appetite, because “in delay there is apt to be danger” very often, and “praying to God and plying the hammer,” and “one take was better than two I’ll give thee’s,” and “a sparrow in the hand than a vulture on the wing.”

“For God’s sake, Sancho, no more proverbs!” exclaimed Don Quixote; “it seems to me thou art becoming sicut erat again; speak in a plain, simple, straight-forward way, as I have often told thee, and thou wilt find the good of it.”

“I don’t know what bad luck it is of mine,” said Sancho, “but I can’t utter a word without a proverb that is not as good as an argument to my mind; however, I mean to mend if I can;” and so for the present the conversation ended.



## CHAPTER LXXII.

### OF HOW DON QUIXOTE AND SANCHO REACHED THEIR VILLAGE



All that day Don Quixote and Sancho remained in the village and inn waiting for night, the one to finish off his task of scourging in the open country, the other to see it accomplished, for therein lay the accomplishment of his wishes. Meanwhile there arrived at the hostelry a traveller on horseback with three or four servants, one of whom said to him who appeared to be the master, "Here, Senor Don Alvaro Tarfe, your worship may take your siesta to-day; the quarters seem clean and cool."

When he heard this Don Quixote said to Sancho, "Look here, Sancho; on turning over the leaves of that book of the Second Part of my history I think I came casually upon this name of Don Alvaro Tarfe."

"Very likely," said Sancho; "we had better let him dismount, and by-and-by

we can ask about it.”

The gentleman dismounted, and the landlady gave him a room on the ground floor opposite Don Quixote’s and adorned with painted serge hangings of the same sort. The newly arrived gentleman put on a summer coat, and coming out to the gateway of the hostelry, which was wide and cool, addressing Don Quixote, who was pacing up and down there, he asked, “In what direction your worship bound, gentle sir?”

“To a village near this which is my own village,” replied Don Quixote; “and your worship, where are you bound for?”

“I am going to Granada, senor,” said the gentleman, “to my own country.”

“And a goodly country,” said Don Quixote; “but will your worship do me the favour of telling me your name, for it strikes me it is of more importance to me to know it than I can tell you.”

“My name is Don Alvaro Tarfe,” replied the traveller.

To which Don Quixote returned, “I have no doubt whatever that your worship is that Don Alvaro Tarfe who appears in print in the Second Part of the history of Don Quixote of La Mancha, lately printed and published by a new author.”

“I am the same,” replied the gentleman; “and that same Don Quixote, the principal personage in the said history, was a very great friend of mine, and it was I who took him away from home, or at least induced him to come to some jousts that were to be held at Saragossa, whither I was going myself; indeed, I showed him many kindnesses, and saved him from having his shoulders touched up by the executioner because of his extreme rashness.”

“Tell me, Senor Don Alvaro,” said Don Quixote, “am I at all like that Don Quixote you talk of?”

“No indeed,” replied the traveller, “not a bit.”

“And that Don Quixote-” said our one, “had he with him a squire called Sancho Panza?”

“He had,” said Don Alvaro; “but though he had the name of being very droll, I never heard him say anything that had any drollery in it.”

“That I can well believe,” said Sancho at this, “for to come out with drolleries is not in everybody’s line; and that Sancho your worship speaks of, gentle sir, must be some great scoundrel, dunderhead, and thief, all in one; for I am the real Sancho Panza, and I have more drolleries than if it rained them; let your worship only try; come along with me for a year or so, and you will find they fall from me at every turn, and so rich and so plentiful that though mostly I don’t know what I am saying I make everybody that hears me laugh. And the real Don Quixote of La Mancha, the famous, the valiant, the wise, the lover, the righter of wrongs, the guardian of minors and orphans, the protector of widows, the killer

of damsels, he who has for his sole mistress the peerless Dulcinea del Toboso, is this gentleman before you, my master; all other Don Quixotes and all other Sancho Panzas are dreams and mockeries.”

“By God I believe it,” said Don Alvaro; “for you have uttered more drolleries, my friend, in the few words you have spoken than the other Sancho Panza in all I ever heard from him, and they were not a few. He was more greedy than well-spoken, and more dull than droll; and I am convinced that the enchanters who persecute Don Quixote the Good have been trying to persecute me with Don Quixote the Bad. But I don’t know what to say, for I am ready to swear I left him shut up in the Casa del Nuncio at Toledo, and here another Don Quixote turns up, though a very different one from mine.”

“I don’t know whether I am good,” said Don Quixote, “but I can safely say I am not ‘the Bad;’ and to prove it, let me tell you, Senor Don Alvaro Tarfe, I have never in my life been in Saragossa; so far from that, when it was told me that this imaginary Don Quixote had been present at the jousts in that city, I declined to enter it, in order to drag his falsehood before the face of the world; and so I went on straight to Barcelona, the treasure-house of courtesy, haven of strangers, asylum of the poor, home of the valiant, champion of the wronged, pleasant exchange of firm friendships, and city unrivalled in site and beauty. And though the adventures that befell me there are not by any means matters of enjoyment, but rather of regret, I do not regret them, simply because I have seen it. In a word, Senor Don Alvaro Tarfe, I am Don Quixote of La Mancha, the one that fame speaks of, and not the unlucky one that has attempted to usurp my name and deck himself out in my ideas. I entreat your worship by your devoir as a gentleman to be so good as to make a declaration before the alcalde of this village that you never in all your life saw me until now, and that neither am I the Don Quixote in print in the Second Part, nor this Sancho Panza, my squire, the one your worship knew.”

“That I will do most willingly,” replied Don Alvaro; “though it amazes me to find two Don Quixotes and two Sancho Panzas at once, as much alike in name as they differ in demeanour; and again I say and declare that what I saw I cannot have seen, and that what happened me cannot have happened.”

“No doubt your worship is enchanted, like my lady Dulcinea del Toboso,” said Sancho; “and would to heaven your disenchantment rested on my giving myself another three thousand and odd lashes like what I’m giving myself for her, for I’d lay them on without looking for anything.”

“I don’t understand that about the lashes,” said Don Alvaro. Sancho replied that it was a long story to tell, but he would tell him if they happened to be going the same road.

By this dinner-time arrived, and Don Quixote and Don Alvaro dined together. The alcalde of the village came by chance into the inn together with a notary, and Don Quixote laid a petition before him, showing that it was requisite for his rights that Don Alvaro Tarfe, the gentleman there present, should make a declaration before him that he did not know Don Quixote of La Mancha, also there present, and that he was not the one that was in print in a history entitled "Second Part of Don Quixote of La Mancha, by one Avellaneda of Tordesillas." The alcalde finally put it in legal form, and the declaration was made with all the formalities required in such cases, at which Don Quixote and Sancho were in high delight, as if a declaration of the sort was of any great importance to them, and as if their words and deeds did not plainly show the difference between the two Don Quixotes and the two Sanchos. Many civilities and offers of service were exchanged by Don Alvaro and Don Quixote, in the course of which the great Manchegan displayed such good taste that he disabused Don Alvaro of the error he was under; and he, on his part, felt convinced he must have been enchanted, now that he had been brought in contact with two such opposite Don Quixotes.

Evening came, they set out from the village, and after about half a league two roads branched off, one leading to Don Quixote's village, the other the road Don Alvaro was to follow. In this short interval Don Quixote told him of his unfortunate defeat, and of Dulcinea's enchantment and the remedy, all which threw Don Alvaro into fresh amazement, and embracing Don Quixote and Sancho he went his way, and Don Quixote went his. That night he passed among trees again in order to give Sancho an opportunity of working out his penance, which he did in the same fashion as the night before, at the expense of the bark of the beech trees much more than of his back, of which he took such good care that the lashes would not have knocked off a fly had there been one there. The duped Don Quixote did not miss a single stroke of the count, and he found that together with those of the night before they made up three thousand and twenty-nine. The sun apparently had got up early to witness the sacrifice, and with his light they resumed their journey, discussing the deception practised on Don Alvaro, and saying how well done it was to have taken his declaration before a magistrate in such an unimpeachable form. That day and night they travelled on, nor did anything worth mention happen them, unless it was that in the course of the night Sancho finished off his task, whereat Don Quixote was beyond measure joyful. He watched for daylight, to see if along the road he should fall in with his already disenchanted lady Dulcinea; and as he pursued his journey there was no woman he met that he did not go up to, to see if she was Dulcinea del Toboso, as he held it absolutely certain that Merlin's promises could not lie.

Full of these thoughts and anxieties, they ascended a rising ground wherefrom they descried their own village, at the sight of which Sancho fell on his knees exclaiming, “Open thine eyes, longed-for home, and see how thy son Sancho Panza comes back to thee, if not very rich, very well whipped! Open thine arms and receive, too, thy son Don Quixote, who, if he comes vanquished by the arm of another, comes victor over himself, which, as he himself has told me, is the greatest victory anyone can desire. I’m bringing back money, for if I was well whipped, I went mounted like a gentleman.”





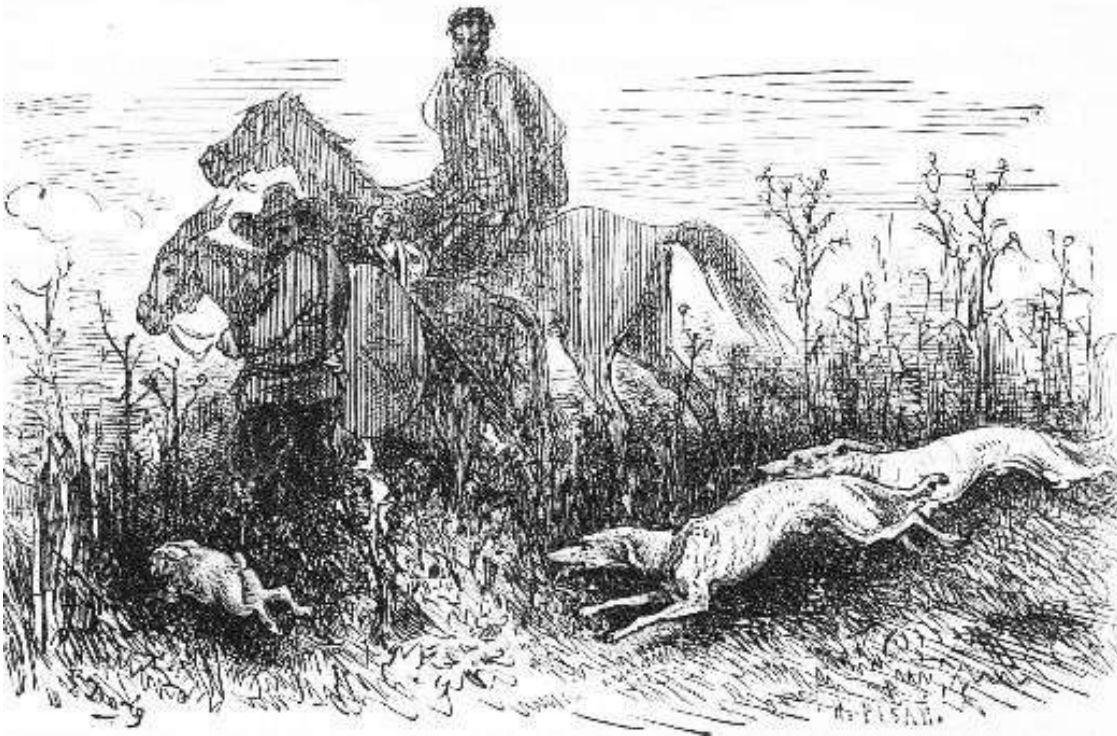
“Have done with these fooleries,” said Don Quixote; “let us push on straight and get to our own place, where we will give free range to our fancies, and settle our plans for our future pastoral life.”

With this they descended the slope and directed their steps to their village.



## CHAPTER LXXIII.

OF THE OMENS DON QUIXOTE HAD AS HE ENTERED HIS OWN VILLAGE, AND OTHER INCIDENTS THAT EMBELLISH AND GIVE A COLOUR TO THIS GREAT HISTORY



At the entrance of the village, so says Cide Hamete, Don Quixote saw two boys quarrelling on the village threshing-floor one of whom said to the other, "Take it easy, Periquillo; thou shalt never see it again as long as thou livest."

Don Quixote heard this, and said he to Sancho, "Dost thou not mark, friend, what that boy said, 'Thou shalt never see it again as long as thou livest'?"

"Well," said Sancho, "what does it matter if the boy said so?"

"What!" said Don Quixote, "dost thou not see that, applied to the object of my

desires, the words mean that I am never to see Dulcinea more?"

Sancho was about to answer, when his attention was diverted by seeing a hare come flying across the plain pursued by several greyhounds and sportsmen. In its terror it ran to take shelter and hide itself under Dapple. Sancho caught it alive and presented it to Don Quixote, who was saying, "Malum signum, malum signum! a hare flies, greyhounds chase it, Dulcinea appears not."

"Your worship's a strange man," said Sancho; "let's take it for granted that this hare is Dulcinea, and these greyhounds chasing it the malignant enchanters who turned her into a country wench; she flies, and I catch her and put her into your worship's hands, and you hold her in your arms and cherish her; what bad sign is that, or what ill omen is there to be found here?"

The two boys who had been quarrelling came over to look at the hare, and Sancho asked one of them what their quarrel was about. He was answered by the one who had said, "Thou shalt never see it again as long as thou livest," that he had taken a cage full of crickets from the other boy, and did not mean to give it back to him as long as he lived. Sancho took out four cuartos from his pocket and gave them to the boy for the cage, which he placed in Don Quixote's hands, saying, "There, senor! there are the omens broken and destroyed, and they have no more to do with our affairs, to my thinking, fool as I am, than with last year's clouds; and if I remember rightly I have heard the curate of our village say that it does not become Christians or sensible people to give any heed to these silly things; and even you yourself said the same to me some time ago, telling me that all Christians who minded omens were fools; but there's no need of making words about it; let us push on and go into our village."

The sportsmen came up and asked for their hare, which Don Quixote gave them. They then went on, and upon the green at the entrance of the town they came upon the curate and the bachelor Samson Carrasco busy with their breviaries. It should be mentioned that Sancho had thrown, by way of a sumpter-cloth, over Dapple and over the bundle of armour, the buckram robe painted with flames which they had put upon him at the duke's castle the night Altisidora came back to life. He had also fixed the mitre on Dapple's head, the oddest transformation and decoration that ever ass in the world underwent. They were at once recognised by both the curate and the bachelor, who came towards them with open arms. Don Quixote dismounted and received them with a close embrace; and the boys, who are lynxes that nothing escapes, spied out the ass's mitre and came running to see it, calling out to one another, "Come here, boys, and see Sancho Panza's ass figged out finer than Mingo, and Don Quixote's beast leaner than ever."

So at length, with the boys capering round them, and accompanied by the

curate and the bachelor, they made their entrance into the town, and proceeded to Don Quixote's house, at the door of which they found his housekeeper and niece, whom the news of his arrival had already reached. It had been brought to Teresa Panza, Sancho's wife, as well, and she with her hair all loose and half naked, dragging Sanchica her daughter by the hand, ran out to meet her husband; but seeing him coming in by no means as good case as she thought a governor ought to be, she said to him, "How is it you come this way, husband? It seems to me you come tramping and footsore, and looking more like a disorderly vagabond than a governor."

"Hold your tongue, Teresa," said Sancho; "often 'where there are pegs there are no flitches;' let's go into the house and there you'll hear strange things. I bring money, and that's the main thing, got by my own industry without wronging anybody."

"You bring the money, my good husband," said Teresa, "and no matter whether it was got this way or that; for, however you may have got it, you'll not have brought any new practice into the world."

Sanchica embraced her father and asked him if he brought her anything, for she had been looking out for him as for the showers of May; and she taking hold of him by the girdle on one side, and his wife by the hand, while the daughter led Dapple, they made for their house, leaving Don Quixote in his, in the hands of his niece and housekeeper, and in the company of the curate and the bachelor.

Don Quixote at once, without any regard to time or season, withdrew in private with the bachelor and the curate, and in a few words told them of his defeat, and of the engagement he was under not to quit his village for a year, which he meant to keep to the letter without departing a hair's breadth from it, as became a knight-errant bound by scrupulous good faith and the laws of knight-errantry; and of how he thought of turning shepherd for that year, and taking his diversion in the solitude of the fields, where he could with perfect freedom give range to his thoughts of love while he followed the virtuous pastoral calling; and he besought them, if they had not a great deal to do and were not prevented by more important business, to consent to be his companions, for he would buy sheep enough to qualify them for shepherds; and the most important point of the whole affair, he could tell them, was settled, for he had given them names that would fit them to a T. The curate asked what they were. Don Quixote replied that he himself was to be called the shepherd Quixotize and the bachelor the shepherd Carrascon, and the curate the shepherd Curambro, and Sancho Panza the shepherd Pancino.

Both were astounded at Don Quixote's new craze; however, lest he should once more make off out of the village from them in pursuit of his chivalry, they

trusting that in the course of the year he might be cured, fell in with his new project, applauded his crazy idea as a bright one, and offered to share the life with him. "And what's more," said Samson Carrasco, "I am, as all the world knows, a very famous poet, and I'll be always making verses, pastoral, or courtly, or as it may come into my head, to pass away our time in those secluded regions where we shall be roaming. But what is most needful, sirs, is that each of us should choose the name of the shepherdess he means to glorify in his verses, and that we should not leave a tree, be it ever so hard, without writing up and carving her name on it, as is the habit and custom of love-smitten shepherds."

"That's the very thing," said Don Quixote; "though I am relieved from looking for the name of an imaginary shepherdess, for there's the peerless Dulcinea del Toboso, the glory of these brooksides, the ornament of these meadows, the mainstay of beauty, the cream of all the graces, and, in a word, the being to whom all praise is appropriate, be it ever so hyperbolical."

"Very true," said the curate; "but we the others must look about for accommodating shepherdesses that will answer our purpose one way or another."

"And," added Samson Carrasco, "if they fail us, we can call them by the names of the ones in print that the world is filled with, Filidas, Amarilises, Dianas, Fleridas, Galateas, Belisardas; for as they sell them in the market-places we may fairly buy them and make them our own. If my lady, or I should say my shepherdess, happens to be called Ana, I'll sing her praises under the name of Anarda, and if Francisca, I'll call her Francenia, and if Lucia, Lucinda, for it all comes to the same thing; and Sancho Panza, if he joins this fraternity, may glorify his wife Teresa Panza as Teresaina."

Don Quixote laughed at the adaptation of the name, and the curate bestowed vast praise upon the worthy and honourable resolution he had made, and again offered to bear him company all the time that he could spare from his imperative duties. And so they took their leave of him, recommending and beseeching him to take care of his health and treat himself to a suitable diet.

It so happened his niece and the housekeeper overheard all the three of them said; and as soon as they were gone they both of them came in to Don Quixote, and said the niece, "What's this, uncle? Now that we were thinking you had come back to stay at home and lead a quiet respectable life there, are you going to get into fresh entanglements, and turn 'young shepherd, thou that comest here, young shepherd going there?' Nay! indeed 'the straw is too hard now to make pipes of.'"

"And," added the housekeeper, "will your worship be able to bear, out in the fields, the heats of summer, and the chills of winter, and the howling of the

wolves? Not you; for that's a life and a business for hardy men, bred and seasoned to such work almost from the time they were in swaddling-clothes. Why, to make choice of evils, it's better to be a knight-errant than a shepherd! Look here, senor; take my advice — and I'm not giving it to you full of bread and wine, but fasting, and with fifty years upon my head — stay at home, look after your affairs, go often to confession, be good to the poor, and upon my soul be it if any evil comes to you."

"Hold your peace, my daughters," said Don Quixote; "I know very well what my duty is; help me to bed, for I don't feel very well; and rest assured that, knight-errant now or wandering shepherd to be, I shall never fail to have a care for your interests, as you will see in the end." And the good wenches (for that they undoubtedly were), the housekeeper and niece, helped him to bed, where they gave him something to eat and made him as comfortable as possible.

## CHAPTER LXXIV.

### OF HOW DON QUIXOTE FELL SICK, AND OF THE WILL HE MADE, AND HOW HE DIED



As nothing that is man's can last for ever, but all tends ever downwards from its beginning to its end, and above all man's life, and as Don Quixote's enjoyed no special dispensation from heaven to stay its course, its end and close came when he least looked for it. For — whether it was of the dejection the thought of his defeat produced, or of heaven's will that so ordered it — a fever settled upon him and kept him in his bed for six days, during which he was often visited by his friends the curate, the bachelor, and the barber, while his good squire Sancho Panza never quitted his bedside. They, persuaded that it was grief at finding himself vanquished, and the object of his heart, the liberation and disenchantment of Dulcinea, unattained, that kept him in this state, strove by all the means in their power to cheer him up; the bachelor bidding him take heart and get up to begin his pastoral life, for which he himself, he said, had already



composed an eclogue that would take the shine out of all Sannazaro had ever written, and had bought with his own money two famous dogs to guard the flock, one called Barcino and the other Butron, which a herdsman of Quintanar had sold him.

But for all this Don Quixote could not shake off his sadness. His friends called in the doctor, who felt his pulse and was not very well satisfied with it, and said that in any case it would be well for him to attend to the health of his soul, as that of his body was in a bad way. Don Quixote heard this calmly; but not so his housekeeper, his niece, and his squire, who fell weeping bitterly, as if they had him lying dead before them. The doctor's opinion was that melancholy and depression were bringing him to his end. Don Quixote begged them to leave him to himself, as he had a wish to sleep a little. They obeyed, and he slept at one stretch, as the saying is, more than six hours, so that the housekeeper and niece thought he was going to sleep for ever. But at the end of that time he woke up, and in a loud voice exclaimed, "Blessed be Almighty God, who has shown me such goodness. In truth his mercies are boundless, and the sins of men can neither limit them nor keep them back!"

The niece listened with attention to her uncle's words, and they struck her as more coherent than what usually fell from him, at least during his illness, so she asked, "What are you saying, senor? Has anything strange occurred? What mercies or what sins of men are you talking of?"

"The mercies, niece," said Don Quixote, "are those that God has this moment shown me, and with him, as I said, my sins are no impediment to them. My reason is now free and clear, rid of the dark shadows of ignorance that my unhappy constant study of those detestable books of chivalry cast over it. Now I see through their absurdities and deceptions, and it only grieves me that this destruction of my illusions has come so late that it leaves me no time to make some amends by reading other books that might be a light to my soul. Niece, I feel myself at the point of death, and I would fain meet it in such a way as to show that my life has not been so ill that I should leave behind me the name of a madman; for though I have been one, I would not that the fact should be made plainer at my death. Call in to me, my dear, my good friends the curate, the bachelor Samson Carrasco, and Master Nicholas the barber, for I wish to confess and make my will." But his niece was saved the trouble by the entrance of the three. The instant Don Quixote saw them he exclaimed, "Good news for you, good sirs, that I am no longer Don Quixote of La Mancha, but Alonso Quixano, whose way of life won for him the name of Good. Now am I the enemy of Amadis of Gaul and of the whole countless troop of his descendants; odious to me now are all the profane stories of knight-errantry; now I perceive my folly,

and the peril into which reading them brought me; now, by God's mercy schooled into my right senses, I loathe them."

When the three heard him speak in this way, they had no doubt whatever that some new craze had taken possession of him; and said Samson, "What? Senor Don Quixote! Now that we have intelligence of the lady Dulcinea being disenchanted, are you taking this line; now, just as we are on the point of becoming shepherds, to pass our lives singing, like princes, are you thinking of turning hermit? Hush, for heaven's sake, be rational and let's have no more nonsense."

"All that nonsense," said Don Quixote, "that until now has been a reality to my hurt, my death will, with heaven's help, turn to my good. I feel, sirs, that I am rapidly drawing near death; a truce to jesting; let me have a confessor to confess me, and a notary to make my will; for in extremities like this, man must not trifle with his soul; and while the curate is confessing me let some one, I beg, go for the notary."

They looked at one another, wondering at Don Quixote's words; but, though uncertain, they were inclined to believe him, and one of the signs by which they came to the conclusion he was dying was this so sudden and complete return to his senses after having been mad; for to the words already quoted he added much more, so well expressed, so devout, and so rational, as to banish all doubt and convince them that he was sound of mind. The curate turned them all out, and left alone with him confessed him. The bachelor went for the notary and returned shortly afterwards with him and with Sancho, who, having already learned from the bachelor the condition his master was in, and finding the housekeeper and niece weeping, began to blubber and shed tears.

The confession over, the curate came out saying, "Alonso Quixano the Good is indeed dying, and is indeed in his right mind; we may now go in to him while he makes his will."

This news gave a tremendous impulse to the brimming eyes of the housekeeper, niece, and Sancho Panza his good squire, making the tears burst from their eyes and a host of sighs from their hearts; for of a truth, as has been said more than once, whether as plain Alonso Quixano the Good, or as Don Quixote of La Mancha, Don Quixote was always of a gentle disposition and kindly in all his ways, and hence he was beloved, not only by those of his own house, but by all who knew him.

The notary came in with the rest, and as soon as the preamble of the will had been set out and Don Quixote had commended his soul to God with all the devout formalities that are usual, coming to the bequests, he said, "Item, it is my will that, touching certain moneys in the hands of Sancho Panza (whom in my

madness I made my squire), inasmuch as between him and me there have been certain accounts and debits and credits, no claim be made against him, nor any account demanded of him in respect of them; but that if anything remain over and above, after he has paid himself what I owe him, the balance, which will be but little, shall be his, and much good may it do him; and if, as when I was mad I had a share in giving him the government of an island, so, now that I am in my senses, I could give him that of a kingdom, it should be his, for the simplicity of his character and the fidelity of his conduct deserve it.” And then, turning to Sancho, he said, “Forgive me, my friend, that I led thee to seem as mad as myself, making thee fall into the same error I myself fell into, that there were and still are knights-errant in the world.”

“Ah!” said Sancho weeping, “don’t die, master, but take my advice and live many years; for the foolishlest thing a man can do in this life is to let himself die without rhyme or reason, without anybody killing him, or any hands but melancholy’s making an end of him. Come, don’t be lazy, but get up from your bed and let us take to the fields in shepherd’s trim as we agreed. Perhaps behind some bush we shall find the lady Dulcinea disenchanted, as fine as fine can be. If it be that you are dying of vexation at having been vanquished, lay the blame on me, and say you were overthrown because I had girthed Rocinante badly; besides you must have seen in your books of chivalry that it is a common thing for knights to upset one another, and for him who is conquered to-day to be conqueror tomorrow.”

“Very true,” said Samson, “and good Sancho Panza’s view of these cases is quite right.”

“Sirs, not so fast,” said Don Quixote, “‘in last year’s nests there are no birds this year.’ I was mad, now I am in my senses; I was Don Quixote of La Mancha, I am now, as I said, Alonso Quixano the Good; and may my repentance and sincerity restore me to the esteem you used to have for me; and now let Master Notary proceed.

“Item, I leave all my property absolutely to Antonia Quixana my niece, here present, after all has been deducted from the most available portion of it that may be required to satisfy the bequests I have made. And the first disbursement I desire to be made is the payment of the wages I owe for the time my housekeeper has served me, with twenty ducats, over and above, for a gown. The curate and the bachelor Samson Carrasco, now present, I appoint my executors.

“Item, it is my wish that if Antonia Quixana, my niece, desires to marry, she shall marry a man of whom it shall be first of all ascertained by information taken that he does not know what books of chivalry are; and if it should be proved that he does, and if, in spite of this, my niece insists upon marrying him,

and does marry him, then that she shall forfeit the whole of what I have left her, which my executors shall devote to works of charity as they please.

“Item, I entreat the aforesaid gentlemen my executors, that, if any happy chance should lead them to discover the author who is said to have written a history now going about under the title of ‘Second Part of the Achievements of Don Quixote of La Mancha,’ they beg of him on my behalf as earnestly as they can to forgive me for having been, without intending it, the cause of his writing so many and such monstrous absurdities as he has written in it; for I am leaving the world with a feeling of compunction at having provoked him to write them.”

With this he closed his will, and a faintness coming over him he stretched himself out at full length on the bed. All were in a flutter and made haste to relieve him, and during the three days he lived after that on which he made his will he fainted away very often. The house was all in confusion; but still the niece ate and the housekeeper drank and Sancho Panza enjoyed himself; for inheriting property wipes out or softens down in the heir the feeling of grief the dead man might be expected to leave behind him.



At last Don Quixote's end came, after he had received all the sacraments, and had in full and forcible terms expressed his detestation of books of chivalry. The notary was there at the time, and he said that in no book of chivalry had he ever read of any knight-errant dying in his bed so calmly and so like a Christian as Don Quixote, who amid the tears and lamentations of all present yielded up his spirit, that is to say died. On perceiving it the curate begged the notary to bear witness that Alonso Quixano the Good, commonly called Don Quixote of La Mancha, had passed away from this present life, and died naturally; and said he desired this testimony in order to remove the possibility of any other author save Cide Hamete Benengeli bringing him to life again falsely and making

interminable stories out of his achievements.

Such was the end of the Ingenious Gentleman of La Mancha, whose village Cide Hamete would not indicate precisely, in order to leave all the towns and villages of La Mancha to contend among themselves for the right to adopt him and claim him as a son, as the seven cities of Greece contended for Homer. The lamentations of Sancho and the niece and housekeeper are omitted here, as well as the new epitaphs upon his tomb; Samson Carrasco, however, put the following lines:

A doughty gentleman lies here;  
A stranger all his life to fear;  
Nor in his death could Death prevail,  
In that last hour, to make him quail.  
He for the world but little cared;  
And at his feats the world was scared;  
A crazy man his life he passed,  
But in his senses died at last.

And said most sage Cide Hamete to his pen, “Rest here, hung up by this brass wire, upon this shelf, O my pen, whether of skilful make or clumsy cut I know not; here shalt thou remain long ages hence, unless presumptuous or malignant story-tellers take thee down to profane thee. But ere they touch thee warn them, and, as best thou canst, say to them:

Hold off! ye weaklings; hold your hands!  
Adventure it let none,  
For this emprise, my lord the king,  
Was meant for me alone.

For me alone was Don Quixote born, and I for him; it was his to act, mine to write; we two together make but one, notwithstanding and in spite of that pretended Tordesillesque writer who has ventured or would venture with his great, coarse, ill-trimmed ostrich quill to write the achievements of my valiant knight; — no burden for his shoulders, nor subject for his frozen wit: whom, if perchance thou shouldst come to know him, thou shalt warn to leave at rest where they lie the weary mouldering bones of Don Quixote, and not to attempt to carry him off, in opposition to all the privileges of death, to Old Castile, making him rise from the grave where in reality and truth he lies stretched at full length, powerless to make any third expedition or new sally; for the two that he has already made, so much to the enjoyment and approval of everybody to

whom they have become known, in this as well as in foreign countries, are quite sufficient for the purpose of turning into ridicule the whole of those made by the whole set of the knights-errant; and so doing shalt thou discharge thy Christian calling, giving good counsel to one that bears ill-will to thee. And I shall remain satisfied, and proud to have been the first who has ever enjoyed the fruit of his writings as fully as he could desire; for my desire has been no other than to deliver over to the detestation of mankind the false and foolish tales of the books of chivalry, which, thanks to that of my true Don Quixote, are even now tottering, and doubtless doomed to fall for ever. Farewell.”



**THE END**

# THE WANDERINGS OF PERSILES AND SIGISMUNDA



*Translated by Louisa Dorothea Stanley*

Cervantes' last published novel belongs to the genre of the Byzantine novel. The author dedicated *Los Trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda* to Pedro Fernández de Castro y Andrade, VII Conde de Lemos, on 19 April of 1616, four days before Cervantes' death. He was inspired to write a novel in the vein of the works of Heliodorus of Emesa, Syria, a Greek writer generally dated to the third century AD who is now known chiefly for the ancient Greek romance called the *Aethiopica*.

Cervantes' novel is a romantic tale of travels by sea and land, featuring both real and fantastical geography and history mixed together, with the scene of the second half of the novel being transferred to Spain and Italy. Interestingly, though Cervantes is known primarily for *Don Quixote*, which is now widely regarded as one of the foremost classic novels ever written, the author himself considered *Los Trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda* to be his crowning achievement in literature.





*Pedro Fernández de Castro Andrade and Portugal (1576-1622) was Cervantes' close friend, to whom he dedicated his last novel.*

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LOS TRABAIOS  
DE PERSILES, Y  
SIGISMVNDIA, HISTO-  
ria Setentrional.

POR MIGVEL DE CERVANTES  
Saavedra.

DIRIGIDO A DON PEDRO FERNANDEZ DE  
Castro Conde de Lemos, de Andrade, de Villalva, Marques de  
Sarría, Gentilhombre de la Camara de su Magestad, Presiden-  
te del Consejo Supremo de Italia, Comendador de la  
Encomienda de la Zarza, de la Orden  
de Alcantara.



Con privilegio. En Madrid. Por Iuan de la Cuesta.

A costa de Iuan de Villarroel mercader de libros en la Placeris.

*The original title page*



LIBRO  
PRIMERO  
DE LA HISTORIA  
DE LOS TRABAIOS  
de Persiles, y Sigismunda.

CAPITVLO PRIMERO.



VOZES daua el barbaro Corfi-  
curbo a la estrecha boca de vna  
profunda mazmorra, antes se-  
pultura que prision de muchos  
cuerpos viuos que en ella esta-  
uan sepultados; y aunque su te-  
rrible y espãtoso estruendo cerca  
y lexos se escuchaua, de nadie  
eran entendidas articuladamen-  
te las razones que pronunciava, sino de la infelible  
Cloelia, a quien sus desuenturas en aquella profundi-  
dad tenian encerrada. Haz, ò Cloelia (dezia el barba-  
A ro)

*The beginning of the novel in the first edition*

TO THE HON. EDWARD LYULPH STANLEY, IN MEMORY OF THOSE  
DAYS WHEN HE AND HIS BROTHER FIRST MADE ACQUAINTANCE  
WITH THE WONDERFUL ADVENTURES AND TROUBLES OF THE  
BEAUTIFUL PILGRIMS, THIS WORK IS INSCRIBED BY THE  
TRANSLATOR.

## PREFACE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

This Romance was the last work of Cervantes, the dedication to the Count de Lemos was written the day after he had received extreme unction; he died four days after, on the 23rd of April 1616, aged 67. On that same day in that same year England lost her Shakespeare.

In the Preface to this edition, the Editor says, "Not a few are there among the wise and learned, who, notwithstanding the well known merit of all the works of the famous Spaniard, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, and in spite of the oft repeated praises lavished especially upon the Life and Deeds of Don Quixote de la Mancha, which has ever held the foremost place in the estimation of the public, yet give the preference above all to The Troubles of Persiles and Sigismunda, which I am about to present to the public anew in this edition."

It seems, too, that this was the opinion of Cervantes himself; for in his dedication to the Count de Lemos, which is affixed to the second part of Don Quixote, he says, "offering to your Excellency the Troubles of Persiles and Sigismunda, a book I hope to finish in about four months (*Deo volente*), which is to be either the very best or the very worst hitherto composed in our language, I speak of books of entertainment, and indeed I repent of having said, the very worst, because, according to the opinion of my friends, it will reach the extreme of goodness."

Sismondi also says the same in speaking of this work, and of its estimation in Spain; but he goes on to observe, "a foreigner will not, I should imagine, concede to it so much merit: it is the offspring of a rich, but at the same time of a wandering imagination, which confines itself within no bounds of the possible or the probable, and which is not sufficiently founded on reality. He has entitled this Romance 'A Northern Story,' and his complete ignorance of the North, in which his scene is laid, and which he imagines to be a land of Barbarians, Anthropophagi Pagans, and Enchanters, is sufficiently singular."

The truth of this cannot be denied; but I believe that it has never yet been translated into English, and, as it certainly possesses great merits in spite of the absurdities, and a good deal of imagination as well as beauty (though I fear much of the latter will be lost in a translation) as a work of Cervantes it appears to me worthy of being introduced to English readers.

The plan of the story is plainly imitated from Heliodorus, Bishop of Tricca, in Thessaly, who in his youth wrote a Romance in the Greek language, called The



Æthiopian History; or, the Adventures of two Lovers, Chariclea, the daughter of the King of Ethiopia, and Theagenes, a noble Thessalian. He lived in the reigns of Theodosius and Arcadius, about the end of the fourth century.

Few modern readers, I imagine, would have patience to read this very heavy Romance; but in 1590, when Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* was published, "stories of amusement and interest were not as plentiful as in the present day, and it was a short time before that Romance appeared, that a translation of Heliodorus's *Æthiopic History* was published in England. The edition which I have seen is translated by N.

Tate, the first five books by "a Person of Quality." The date is 1753. The other editions are 1587, 1622, 1686.

But though the *plan* of *Persiles and Sigismunda* is taken from Heliodorus, I do not think they have *any* resemblance in style, and there is far more vivacity and humour in the narrative and characters, and more nature too, in spite of the high flown romance that surrounds them.

I fear the modern reader will find the numerous episodes tedious; and story after story, which every additional personage we meet, thinks it necessary to relate, will perhaps try his patience; yet there is great beauty in many of these, at least in the original language.

The remarkable ignorance which Cervantes displays on geographical points has a parallel in our own Shakespeare, who makes Bohemia a country with a sea coast.

Cervantes has evidently formed his ideas of the North only by the voyages and travels that were published at the time he lived. It is more surprising that he should know so little of England, considering how much his own country had been connected with her, and also from the knowledge and information he displays on other subjects.

The chief fault in the work is the remarkable want of keeping; for whereas he at once determines the period and date by bringing in the expulsion of the Moors; and Soldiers who served under Charles the 5th, also speaking of Lisbon as belonging to Spain, at the same time he throws his personages into a perfect land of Romance, and speaks of all the northern countries, as if themselves, their manners and customs, were utterly unknown and barbarous; yet Elizabeth or James the 1st was reigning in England; the queen of James the 1st was a Danish princess, and Denmark and Sweden were assuredly not unknown to fame.

In fixing upon Iceland and Friezland as the dominions of his hero and heroine, he gets upon safer ground, though by the way in which he speaks of them, he evidently considers this a sort of mysterious and only half understood land, which might serve a wandering prince or princess of romance, for a home, for

want of a better.

The first and second part differ considerably, when Cervantes gets home to his own bright clime and sunny skies, you feel the truth of his descriptions, which form a striking contrast to the icy seas and snowy islands among which his pilgrims are voyaging throughout the whole first volume.

I have taken some few liberties, omitted some pages, and occasionally shortened a sentence, but I do not think the English reader will feel inclined to quarrel with these abbreviations, and the Spanish student can refer to the original.

To those who feel for Cervantes as he deserves, — to those who have enjoyed the rich fund of amusement that Don Quixote affords, I need not apologise further for making them also acquainted with these wondrously beautiful and almost angelic pilgrims, who were the last productions of his lively imagination, for assuredly those blue eyes and golden ringlets must have been most unlike the visions of beauty that dwelt around him, in his own land of Spain.

*Postscript.* — For the Portrait of Cervantes, which enriches the title page, I have to thank the great kindness and friendly aid of one, who has gained a distinguished name as an author, in the service of both Spanish Art and Spanish History, Mr. Stirling of Keir. I have also to acknowledge the courtesy of Sir Arthur Aston, to whom the original picture belongs, from which I have been permitted to take my engraving; it was brought by him from Madrid, and he found it in the possession of a family where it was highly prized, and considered as an undoubted Portrait of Cervantes.

*July, 1853. — L. D. S.*

## DEDICATION

TO DON PEDRO FERNANDEZ DE CASTRO, COUNT OF LEMOS,  
ANDRADE AND VILLALVA, MARQUIS OF SARRIA, ETC.

THERE is an old couplet which was famous in its day, that began “With one foot in the stirrup already.” I could have wished in this epistle of mine, that this was not so much to the purpose as it is, for I may begin nearly in the same words, saying — “With my foot in the stirrup already, And the terrors of death before my eyes, I write, noble Marquis, to thee.”

Yesterday I received extreme unction, and to-day I write this. Time is short, fears increase, hopes diminish; yet, nevertheless, I could wish my life prolonged enough to be able once more to kiss your feet, so great would be my delight in seeing your Excellency once again in Spain, that it would almost be new life to me; but if it be decreed that I am to lose it the will of Heaven be done; and at least you shall know this wish of mine, and you shall know that in me you had a truly loving servant, who would have gladly done more than die for your service; and I rejoice in the prospect of your Lordship’s arrival, I rejoice in seeing it even afar off, and again I rejoice to think that the hopes I have entertained of your Lordship’s goodness will prove true.

There still remain unfinished in my head certain reliques and fancies, “The weeks in a Garden,” and of the famous Bernardo, if I were so happy (but it could not be without a miracle) that Heaven would prolong my life, you should see them, and also the end of the *Galatea* which I know your Lordship much admires.

May God preserve your Lordship, as he alone can.

Your Excellency’s Servant, MIGUEL DE CERVANTES.

*Madrid*, 19th of April, 1616.

## PROLOGUE.

IT happened then, dear Reader, that as I and two of my friends were coming from Esquivias, — a place famous for a thousand reasons, first on account of its many illustrious families, and secondly for its equally illustrious wines, — I heard some one behind me pricking along in great haste as if desirous of overtaking us, and even proving it by calling out to desire we would not go so fast. We waited, and a gray student mounted upon an ass came up to us, gray — because his whole dress was gray. He wore gaiters, round-toed shoes and a sword in a good scabbard (*contera*). He wore a starched band, with equal braids; it is true he had but two, so that the band got every minute awry, and he took infinite pains and trouble to set it right. Coming up to us, he said, “To judge by the haste with which you travel, gentlemen, you must be going to court to look after some place or Prebendal stall; My Lord of Toledo, or the King must be there at least, for truly my ass has been famed for his paces more than once, and yet could not overtake you?”

To which one of my companions replied, “It is the horse of Senor Miguel de Cervantes that is in fault, for he is a fast goer.” Scarce had the student heard the name of Cervantes, than alighting from his ass, his portmanteau falling on one side, and the cushion whereon he sat, on the other (for he was travelling with all his comforts about him), he hurried to me and seizing me by the left arm, cried, “Yes, yes, this is the crippled sound one, the famous man, the merry author, the delight of the Muses.”

I, when I heard so much praise poured forth in so short a space, thought it would be a lack of courtesy not to answer it, so embracing him round the neck (by which he lost his bands altogether,) I said, “This, sir, is an error into which many of my ignorant admirers have fallen, I am indeed Cervantes, but no favourite of the Muses, nor deserving of any of the encomiums with which you have been pleased to honour me. Go and remount your ass, and let us travel on together in pleasant conversation for the short distance that remains of our journey.

The polite student did as I desired, we reined in our steeds a little and pursued our way more leisurely. As we travelled we spoke on the subject of my ailments, and the good student immediately pronounced my doom, saying, “This malady is the dropsy, which all the water in the ocean would not cure, even if it were not salt, you must drink by rule, sir, and eat more, and this will cure you better than

any medicine.”

“Many have told me so,” I answered, “but I should find it as impossible to leave off drinking as if I had been born for no other purpose. My life is well nigh ended and, by the beatings of my pulse, I think next Sunday at latest will see the close of my career, you have therefore, sir, made acquaintance with me just at the right moment, though I shall not have time to show myself grateful for the kindness you have shown to me.”

Here we reached the bridge of Toledo, over which my road lay, and he separated from me to go by that of Segovia. As to what will be said of my adventure, Fame will take care of that, my friends will have pleasure in telling it, and I greater pleasure in hearing it. He again embraced me, I returned the compliment. He spurred on his ass, and left me as sorrowfully disposed as he was sorrowfully mounted. He had however furnished me with abundant materials for pleasant writing, but all times are not alike. Perhaps a time may come when, taking up this broken thread again, I may add what is now wanting and what I am aware is needed. Adieu to gaiety, adieu to wit, adieu, my pleasant friends, for I am dying, yet hoping to see you all again happy in another world.

## BOOK I.

## CHAPTER I.

*Periander is drawn up out of the Dungeon: he goes out to Sea on a raft: a Tempest comes on, and he is saved by a Ship.*

NEAR the mouth of a deep and narrow dungeon, which was more like a tomb than a prison to its wretched inmates, stood Corsiairbo the barbarian. He shouted with a terrible voice, but, although the fearful clamour was heard far and near, none could hear his words distinctly, except the miserable Clelia, an unhappy captive, buried in this abyss. "Clelia," he said, "see that the boy who was committed to your custody two days ago, be bound fast to the cord I am about to let down; see that his hands are tied behind him, and make him ready to be drawn up here: also look well if among the women of the last prize there are any beautiful enough to deserve being brought amongst us, and to enjoy the light of the clear sky that is above us." So saying, he let down a strong hempen cord, and for some brief space he and four other barbarians pulled it, until, with his hands tied strongly behind him, they drew up a boy, seemingly about nineteen or twenty years of age, drest in linen like a mariner, but beautiful, exceedingly.

The first thing the barbarians did was to investigate the manacles and cords with which his hands were tied behind his back; then they shook the locks of hair, which, like an infinity of rings of pure gold, covered his head. They cleaned his face, which had been obscured by dust, and revealed a beauty, so marvellous, that it softened and touched even the hearts of those who were carrying him to execution.

The gallant boy showed no sort of affliction in his bearing, but with beaming eyes he uplifted his countenance, and looking round on every side, with a clear voice and firm accent, he cried, "I give thanks, O vast and pitying Heavens, that I have been brought out to die where your light will shine upon my death, and not where those dark dungeons, from which I have just arisen, would have covered me with their gloomy horrors; I would wish, because I am a Christian, not to die in despair at least, although my misfortunes are such as to make me almost desire it."

None of this speech was understood by the barbarians, being spoken in a different language from theirs; so, closing the mouth of the cavern with a large stone, and carrying the boy, still bound, among the four, they arrived at the sea-

shore, where they had a raft of timber fastened together with strong filaments of bark and flexible osiers. This contrivance served them, as soon appeared, for a boat, in which they crossed to another island, about two or three miles distant. They leaped upon the raft, and put their prisoner seated in the midst of them. Immediately one of the barbarians took a great bow that was in the raft, and fitting into it an enormous arrow, the point of which was made of flint, he quickly bent it, and looking the boy in the face, made him his mark, giving signs as if he would shoot him through the heart. The other barbarians took three heavy poles, cut like oars, and whilst one used his as a rudder, the other two impelled the raft in the direction of the island before mentioned. The beautiful boy, who alternately hoped and feared the blow of the threat'ning dart, rounded his shoulders, compressed his lips, arched his brows, and in deep silence asked in his heart of Heaven, not to be delivered from this death, as near as it was cruel, but that he might have strength given him to suffer. The savage archer, seeing this, and knowing that it was not by this manner of death he was to die; finding even in his hard heart some pity for the boy, and not desiring to give him a protracted suffering, still kept the arrow pointed at his breast, but put the bow aside, and let him know by signs, as well as he could, that he did not wish to kill him.

Thus it befell, when the raft reached the middle of the strait, formed by the two islands, that there arose a sudden hurricane, which the inexperienced mariners had no power to withstand; the timbers that formed the raft, came asunder, and divided into parts, leaving in one (which might be composed of about six planks) the boy, who feared that the waves would speedily overwhelm him, and that by this death he was to die. Wild whirlwinds tossed the waters, contrary blasts contended together. The barbarians were all overwhelmed, and the planks, with the fast-bound captive, went out into the open sea, passing over the crests of the waves; not only impelling him towards heaven, but denying him the power of asking compassion from it in his distress: yet had Providence cared for him; the furious waves that every moment washed over him did not separate him from his raft, and he was carried by them into the abyss. As he was bound fast, with his hands behind his back, he could not assist himself, or make the smallest effort to preserve his life.

In this way, as I have said, he went out into the open sea, which appeared more peaceful on turning a point of land into a bay, where the planks floated wonderfully, defended from the raging and angry sea.

The weary youth felt this, and he looked around on every side, till he discovered near him a ship, which was lying at anchor in this quiet place as in a secure haven.



Those in the ship also perceived the raft and the figure that was upon it. To satisfy themselves what this might be, they let down their boat, and came to look at him, when they found the disfigured yet still beautiful boy: with speed and pity they took him to the ship, where the sight filled every one with wonder and admiration. He was lifted in by the sailors, and not being able to stand from weakness (for it was three days since he had tasted food), and moreover, being wetted and maltreated by the waves, he sunk down all at once on the deck. Touched with natural compassion, the captain kindly ordered that he should have instant assistance to restore him.

Immediately some hastened to take off the ligatures that bound him, others to bring odoriferous wines, with which remedies the fainting boy returned as if out of death to life, and raising his eyes to the captain, whose noble mien and rich attire declared his rank, as did his speech also, he said to him: "May the pitying Heavens reward thee, O compassionate sir, for the good deed thou hast done. For all the benefits bestowed on me I can make no return, such are my misfortunes, unless it be with my gratitude; and if it be allowed to a poor afflicted creature to say good of himself, I know this, that in being grateful no one on earth can excel me." And here he attempted to rise and kiss the captain's hand, but his weak condition would not permit this, for thrice he tried and thrice fell back on the deck.

The captain seeing this, ordered him to be raised up and carried below, his wet garments taken off, and that he should be dressed in others, clean and good, and then left to rest and sleep. They did as he commanded; the boy obeyed in silence, and the captain's admiration increased when he saw him thus attired: his desire to learn as quickly as possible who he was, and what had brought him into such a strait, was strong, but his courtesy exceeded his curiosity, and he desired him to repose and recover from his fatigues before satisfying his wish.

## CHAPTER II.

*He discovers who the Captain of the Ship is. Taurisa relates to him the story of how Auristella was carried off: he offers to go in search of her, and to be sold to the Barbarians.*

THE boy was left by the seamen to repose, as their commander had desired; but as thoughts, sad and various, crossed his mind, sleep refused to come near him. Another cause, however, helped to banish it. This was, certain grievous sighs and bitter lamentations, that proceeded, as it appeared to him, from an apartment near that where he was, and applying himself to listen, he heard that some one said, "Sad and luckless was the hour in which I was begotten, and under an evil star did my mother cast me forth into the world, and well may I say cast me forth, for a birth like mine may be more fitly termed to be cast out than born; at least I thought myself free to enjoy the light of heaven in this life, but thought deceived me, since I am about to be sold as a slave, and what misfortune can compare to this."

"O thou, whoever thou art," said the boy, "if it is true, as people say, that sorrows and troubles when communicated to others are alleviated, come hither, and through the open chinks of these boards relate thine to me; and if thou dost not find relief, thou shalt at least meet with sympathy."

"Listen then," was the reply, "and in a few words I will relate the injustice that fortune has done to me, but first I would fain know to whom I am speaking. Tell me if thou art by chance a boy who has a short time since been found, tied upon some planks, which they say served for boats to the savages that dwell in the island near which we have anchored, sheltering from the storm that has arisen?"

"That same am I," answered the boy.

"Then who art thou?" again asked the invisible speaker.

"I would tell thee," he replied, "if it were not that I first wish thee to oblige me by relating thy history, which, from the words thou hast uttered, I imagine is not as happy as thou could'st desire it to be."

"Then listen," was the reply, "and I will briefly relate the history of my misfortunes. The commander of this ship is called Arnolfo, and he is the son and heir of the King of Denmark, into whose power there fell (owing to many extraordinary accidents) an illustrious lady, who was my mistress, and according

to my idea, she is of such exceeding beauty that, from all who now live upon the earth, and all which the most lively imagination or the sharpest wits can conceive, she would bear away the prize. Her prudence equals her beauty, and her misfortunes surpass both. Her name is Auristella; she is of kingly race, and is born of rich parents. She then, whom to describe all praise must fall short, was sold as a slave, and bought by Arnoldo; and with so much earnestness and devotion he did, and does still, love her, that a thousand times he wished, instead of making *her* a slave, to be himself her's, and to acknowledge her as his lawful wife, and this too with the full consent of the King, his father, who thought the rare beauty and merits of Auristella deserved even more than to become a queen; but she refused, saying, 'I cannot possibly break a vow that I have made to continue a virgin all my life, nor can I be made to violate this vow either by entreaties or by threats.'

"But nevertheless Arnoldo did not cease to hope, trusting much to the effect of time, and the variable nature of woman; until it happened that my mistress, the Lady Auristella, going to the sea-shore as she was accustomed for her amusement, (she being treated more as a queen than a slave,) some corsairs came in a vessel, and seized and carried her off, we know not where. The Prince Arnoldo imagines that these corsairs are the same who sold her the first time, which same corsairs infest all these seas, islands, and shores, stealing or buying the most beautiful maidens that they can find in order to make a profit by selling them to this Island where it is said we now are, and which is inhabited by some barbarians, a savage and cruel race, who hold among themselves as a thing certain and inviolable (persuaded it may be by a demon, or as some say by an ancient sorcerer whom they consider the wisest of men), that there shall spring from among them a King, who will conquer and gain a great part of the world. They know not who this hoped for king will be, and in order to know it, the sorcerer commands them to sacrifice all the men who come to the Island, and to make their hearts into powder, which is then given in some drink to all the principal savages in the island, with an express order, that he who should take it without a wry face or appearing to dislike it, should be elected King, but it is not he who is to conquer the world, but his son. Also, he commands them to bring into the island all the maidens they can procure, either by theft or purchase, and that the most beautiful shall be delivered immediately to the barbarian, whose succession has been determined by the drinking of the powder. These maidens purchased, or stolen, are well treated by them; in this alone they are not barbarous; and they buy them at the highest prices, which they pay in pieces of uncoined gold and in precious pearls, with which the sea around these islands, abounds. For this cause, and impelled by this interest and desire of gain, many

have become pirates and merchants. Arnaldo then, as I have before said, fancies that Auristella may be in this island; — she, who is the other half of his soul, and without whom he cannot live: and in order to ascertain this fact, he has determined to sell me to the barbarians, so that I, remaining among them, may serve as a spy to discover what he wishes to know, and he is now hoping for nothing more than that the sea should be calm enough for him to land and conclude the sale. See then whether I have not reason to complain, since the lot that remains for me is to go and live among savages, where I shall not be beautiful enough to hope to become their Queen, especially if her cruel fate should have brought to this land the peerless Auristella. This, then, is the cause of the sighs thou hast heard, and from this fear arise the lamentations I have uttered.”

She ceased speaking, and the boy felt a something rise in his throat, and pressed his mouth to the boards, which he watered with copious tears; and after a short space, he asked if by chance she had any conjecture whether Arnaldo had obtained the love of Auristella, or whether it was possible that she, having elsewhere pledged her faith, had disdained his offers, and refused the splendid gift of a Throne; for it seemed to him, he said, that sometimes the laws of human affection were even stronger than those of religion. She answered, that though she had fancied there was a time, when Auristella seemed to like one Periander, who had taken her from her own country, a noble gentleman endowed with all the qualities that could make him beloved, yet she never heard her mention his name in the continual complaints that she made to Heaven of her misfortunes, nor in any other way whatsoever.

He asked if she knew this Periander, of whom she spoke. She said she did not, but that by what she had heard, she knew it was he who had carried off her lady, into whose service she had entered after Periander left her, owing to a very extraordinary incident.

They were discoursing thus, when Taurisa was called from above (this was the name of her who had related the story of her misfortunes). Hearing herself called, she said, “Without a doubt the sea is now calm and the tempest is over, and this is the summons for me, and I must be delivered up to my hard fate. May Heaven protect thee, who ever thou art, and mayest thou be preserved from having thy heart burnt to ashes in order to accomplish this vain and foolish prophecy, for the inhabitants of this island seek hearts to burn as well as maidens to keep, in hopes of its fulfilment.”

They parted here; Taurisa went on deck; the boy remained in deep meditation for a while, and presently he asked for some clothes, that he might rise and dress himself. They brought him a vestment of green damask cut in the same fashion

as the linen one he had on. He then went on deck, where he was received by Arnolfo with kind courtesy, who seated him by his side. Taurisa was there, dressed in rich and graceful attire, after the fashion of a water nymph, or a Hamadryad of the woods. So much was Arnolfo filled with admiration for the youth, that he told him the whole history of his love for Auristella and his intentions, and even asked his advice as to what he should do; and inquired if he thought the plan he had devised to gain intelligence of Auristella, appeared to him well conceived.

The youth, whose mind was full of fancies and suspicions, in consequence of the conversation he had held with Taurisa, and also from what Arnolfo had told him, now rapidly revolving in his imagination all that might possibly happen if by chance Auristella should have fallen into the hands of the barbarians, answered thus:

“My Lord, I am not of an age to give you advice, but I feel a wish to be of use to you, and to employ in your service the life you have preserved and for which I have to thank you. My name is Periander, I am of noble birth, from whence springs my misfortunes and calamities, which it would take too much time to relate to you at present. This Auristella, whom you seek, is my sister, and I also am in search of her. It is more than a year since I lost her. By the name, and by the beauty, which you describe her as possessing in such a high degree, I know without a doubt, that this must be my lost sister, whom to find I would give not only my life but the happiness I hope to enjoy in finding her, and that is the very greatest degree imaginable. Thus, I, being so deeply interested in this search, am devising certain other means in my mind, which, though it would be more dangerous as far as my safety is concerned, would be more sure and speedy. You, my Lord Arnolfo, have determined to sell this damsel to the barbarians, in order that she, being in their power, may discover whether Auristella is there likewise, of which she is to inform you, returning again to sell another damsel to these same barbarians, and if means do not fail her, Taurisa is to find out whether or no Auristella is among the number of those who are kept by the barbarians for the purpose you are acquainted with, and who are purchased by them with so much eagerness.”

“It is even so,” replied Arnolfo, “and I have chosen Taurisa rather than any other of the four maidens who are in the ship for the same purpose, because Taurisa knows her, having been her waiting-woman.”

“All this is well imagined,” said Periander, “but I am of opinion that no one will do this business so well as I myself will do it, since my age, my appearance, the interest I take in it, joined to the knowledge I have of Auristella, are all inciting me to advise that I should undertake this enterprise. Now see whether

you agree with me in this and delay not a moment, for in cases of danger or difficulty, the advice and the undertaking should be settled together at once.”

The advice of Periander pleased Arnoldo, and without weighing the difficulties that might arise, put it into operation at once. And from many rich dresses which he had provided in the hope of finding Auristella, they attired Periander, who, in this disguise, came forth the most graceful and beautiful creature that mortal eyes had ever seen; since, unless we except Auristella, no other could possibly equal the beauty of the boy. The mariners stood in silent admiration; Taurisa, astonished; the Prince confused, with a notion that he might possibly *not* be the brother of Auristella, the consideration that he was a man, troubled his soul with the sharp pang of jealousy which can pierce even through adamant; that is to say, jealousy breaks through all security and prudence, although the enamoured heart be armed with both.

Finally, the metamorphosis of Periander being completed, they put out a little to sea in order to be seen by the barbarians. The hurry Arnoldo was in to hear something of Auristella had prevented him from first ascertaining from Periander who he and his sister were, and by what accidents he had been brought into the miserable condition in which he was found. All this, according to the natural order of things should have preceded the confidence reposed in him; but, as is common with lovers (occupied solely by the thought of seeking means to arrive at the desired end of their wishes, rather than in curiosity concerning other people’s affairs), he never found time to enquire concerning that, which it would have been well for him to have known, and which he came to know afterwards when the knowledge did him no good.

They sailed off a little way from the island as I said before; the ship decked out with flags and streamers, which floated in the air, making a gay and beautiful spectacle.

The calm sea, the clear sky, the sound of the clarions and other instruments of music, both warlike and joyous, filled all hearts with admiration, and the barbarians who looked on at no great distance, remained, as it seemed, doubtful what part to take, and then all at once they crowded to the shore, armed with the enormous bows and arrows I have already described. A little less than a mile brought the ship to the island, when after a discharge of artillery, which she had both heavy and numerous, the boat was lowered, and Arnoldo, Taurisa and Periander, with six sailors, got into it, putting a piece of white linen at the point of a lance as a signal of peace, this being customary among all nations. What befell them, is related in the following chapter.

### CHAPTER III.

*Arnoldo sells Periander to the inhabitants of the barbarous isle, dressed as a woman.*

As the boat approached the shore, the barbarians crowded together, each one eager to be the first to know who it could be that was coming in it; and as a sign that they would receive them peaceably, and not as foes, they brought many bits of white linen, and waved them in the air, discharging a number of arrows at random, and jumping about with incredible agility.

The boat was not able to touch the land, because the sea was low, for the tide in these countries rises and falls like ours; but the barbarians, to the number of twenty, came down through the wet sand near enough to touch the boat with their hands. Among the men was a woman, seemingly a barbarian, but of great beauty, and before any one else spoke she said in the Polish tongue, "O ye, whoever ye are, our Prince, or rather our Governor, desires to know your names, whence ye come, and what it is ye seek: if by chance ye bring any damsel to sell, ye shall be well repaid for her; but if ye deal in any other merchandise, we need it not; for in this island, we have, thanks be to Heaven, everything that is necessary to human life without needing to go elsewhere to seek it."

Arnoldo understood perfectly all she said, and asked her if she was of the barbarian race, or whether she had perchance been brought thither among those women bought in other countries?

To which she replied, "Answer me what I have asked of you, for my masters do not approve that I should speak any other words than those which are necessary for the negotiation."

Arnoldo hearing this, said, "We are natives of Denmark, and our business is that of merchants and corsairs; we barter what we can, we sell again what we buy, and we dispose quickly of what we steal; among other prizes that have lately fallen into our hands, is this damsel, (here he pointed to Periander,) who being one of the most beautiful, or rather I should say *the* most beautiful in the world, we bring her here to sell, as the purpose for which you buy them in this island has reached our ears: and if the prediction of your wise men is true, you may well expect from this unparalleled beauty and noble character, that she will give you sons both beautiful and brave."

The barbarians hearing him speak, asked the woman what it was he said. She told them, and four men instantly set off, as it soon appeared, to inform the governor. Whilst they were gone, Arnolfo asked if there were many women who had been bought, now in the island, and if any one amongst them was as beautiful as her whom he had brought for sale. "No," answered she, "for though there are many, not one is equal to me in beauty; I am in truth one of those unhappy beings intended to be queen of the barbarians, which would be the greatest misfortune that could befall me."

The men who had gone now returned, and with them a great many more, and their prince or chief, who might be distinguished by the rich apparel he wore.

They had thrown a light and transparent veil over Periander, that the brightness of his beauty might shine forth more suddenly and dazzle the eyes of the barbarians, who were surveying him very attentively. The governor spoke to the woman, and the result was, that she made known to Arnolfo his wish that the veil should be withdrawn. They complied, and Periander standing up, displayed his lovely countenance; his eyes were raised to heaven, as if in grief for his sad fate, then the beams of those two bright suns fell on the bystanders, and met the gaze of the barbarian chief, who fell on his knees and made signs that he was worshipping after his fashion, the beautiful image before him. By the help of the female interpreter, in a few words the sale was completed, and they paid Arnolfo all he demanded without the smallest hesitation. All the barbarians departed, but speedily returned, laden with a quantity of large wedges of gold and long bags of fine pearls, which, without counting, they delivered to Arnolfo; who, taking Periander by the hand, gave him to the barbarian, and bade the interpretest tell her master that in a few days he would return, and bring them another damsel, if not quite as beautiful as this one, yet deserving of being purchased.

Periander embraced his companions with eyes full of tears, which sprung not from any feminine weakness, but from the recollection of the severe perils he had just escaped; Arnolfo made the signal for his ship to fire her guns, and the barbarian chief commanded his musical instruments to sound, and in a moment or two the whole place resounded with the noise of the artillery and the savage music filling the air with confused and mingled din.

In the midst of all this clamour, Periander was lifted out of the boat by the barbarians, and placed on dry land; Arnolfo returned to his ship with those who had accompanied him. It was arranged between him and Periander, that, unless compelled by the wind, he should not go far away from the island, but remain just so distant, as not to be seen by the inhabitants, and return if it should seem necessary, to sell Taurisa, if Periander made the signal agreed upon as to



whether he met with Auristella or not. And in case she should not be in the island, no means were to be lost to endeavour to liberate Periander, even though it might be necessary to proceed to open war with the barbarians, in which he would exert all his power and that of his friends.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Auristella is taken from her prison in the disguise of a man, in order to be sacrificed; a battle ensues among the barbarians, and the island is set on fire. A Spanish barbarian takes Periander, Auristella, Clelia and the Interpretess, to his father's cave.*

AMONG those who came to settle the purchase of the maiden, was one named Bradamiro; he was one of the most valiant and illustrious men in the island, a despiser of all laws, arrogant beyond all arrogance, and daring as himself alone, for none other could compare with him. He, believing, as every one else did, that Periander was a woman, from the moment he first beheld her, determined to have the beautiful prize for himself, without caring to prove or accomplish the laws of the prophecy. As soon as Periander had set his foot on the island, the barbarians strove with one another for the honour of bearing him on their shoulders, and with great joy and rejoicing they carried him into a large tent, which stood in the midst of many smaller ones, in a delicious and peaceful meadow, all covered with the skins of animals both wild and tame. The woman who had served as interpretess for the bargain and sale of the fair captive, never quitted his side, and in a language which he did not the least comprehend, tried to console him. The governor then gave orders that a message should be sent to the prison island, and to bring forth a man, if they happened to have one, in order to make a trial of their deluding hope. He was immediately obeyed, and at the same time the ground was spread with skins of animals, dressed, perfumed, cleaned, and soft in texture, to serve as table-cloths; and on these, without order or neatness, were placed various kinds of dried fruits. At the sight and odour of this repast, several of the barbarians began to eat, and by signs invited Periander to do likewise. Bradamiro alone remained standing, leaning upon his bow, with his eyes fixed on the supposed woman. The governor bade him seat himself, but he refused to obey; and after heaving a deep sigh, he suddenly turned his back upon the party and quitted the tent. At this moment one of the barbarians entered, and told the governor that just as he and four of his companions had reached the shore in order to pass over to the prison where the captives were kept, a raft came in bringing a man and the woman who was the guardian of the dungeon; which news put an end speedily to the dinner, and the governor, rising with all the company, hurried to inspect the raft. Periander desired that he might

accompany them, with which they were well pleased.

By the time they reached the shore, the prisoner and his keeper had landed. Periander looked at them to ascertain whether by chance he knew the unfortunate creature, whose hard fate had placed him in the very situation he himself had so lately been in: but he was not able to catch a full view of the face because he kept it hung down, and seemed to wish it should remain concealed; but the woman he knew full well, the woman whom they called the guardian of the prison. He felt as if his senses failed him when he looked at her, for clearly and without any doubt he knew that she was Clelia, the nurse of his beloved Auristella. Fain would he have spoken but he durst not, for he knew not what to conjecture about her; and so restrained his feelings and his tongue, and waited to see what would happen.

The governor, impatient to hasten the trial which was to give a happy and fitting mate to Periander, gave orders immediately to sacrifice the boy, (for he seemed no more,) that his heart might furnish powder for the absurd and lying experiment which the sorcerer had ordained.

He was instantly seized by several of the barbarians, and without any further ceremony than that of tying a piece of linen over his eyes, they made him kneel down to have his hands tied behind him, which he submitted to at once without uttering a word, like a tame lamb expecting the stroke that was to deprive him of life. But old Clelia, at the sight, upraised her voice and cried out with more vigour than might have been expected at her years— “Hold! O great and powerful governor, and know what you are about to do; for this youth, whom you are going to slay, can in no way be of any use for the purpose you require, seeing that he is the most beautiful woman imaginable, and no man. Speak, most lovely Auristella, and do not allow yourself to be deprived of life, overwhelmed as you are by the torrent of your misfortunes, but put your trust in that providence of Heaven, which has even now the power to save and preserve you, and enable you to enjoy it once more.”

At hearing these words, the cruel barbarians stopped the blow that was about to fall, for already had the knife touched the throat of the victim. The governor instantly ordered them to set her hands at liberty, and to unbind her eyes, when looking upon her more attentively, they saw that it was indeed the most beautiful face that ever was seen; and each man present, felt, that except it were Periander, no other living being could be compared to her. But how can tongue express or pen describe what were the feelings of Periander, when he saw that the now free, but lately condemned victim, was his own Auristella? A mist came over his eyes, his heart ceased to beat, and with weak and faltering steps he hastened to embrace her, saying, as he held her closely in his arms, “O beloved half of my

soul, O — my pillar of hope, O prize, whether found for good or ill to me, I know not, but good methinks it must be since no evil can proceed from the sight of thee! Behold here thy brother, Periander.” And these last words he spoke in a tone so low, that they could be heard by none. He then went on, “Live, my lady, and my sister; there is no cruelty in this island towards women. Trust in Heaven, who since it has delivered you from the many perils and dangers you must have undergone, will surely also preserve you from those you have to dread henceforward.”

“Alas! my brother,” answered Auristella, (for she it was who had been so nearly sacrificed as a man,) “alas! my brother, how can I believe that this misfortune is the last we have to fear! A joyful thing, indeed, it has been to meet with thee, but in a most unhappy place and circumstances we meet.”

They wept together in speaking thus, which Bradamiro seeing, and thinking that Periander wept with grief for fear the newly-discovered friend or relation he seemed to have found should be sacrificed, determined to set the captive free, and at once break through every obstacle; so stepping up to them, he seized Auristella with one hand, and Periander with the other, and with a threatening air and proud bearing, he cried with a loud voice, “Let no man if he values his life at all, dare to touch even so much as a hair of the head of either of these two persons. This maiden is mine because I love her, and this man shall be free because he is a friend of the maiden.”

He had hardly spoken when the governor of the barbarous isle, in mighty wrath and indignation, fitted a long sharp arrow to his bow, and drawing himself back and extending his left arm, he drew the cord to his ear with his right. The arrow flew with so good an aim and with such fury that it entered the mouth of Bradamiro, — stopped at once his utterance, and separated his soul from his body. Whereat all present remained astonished, surprised and as it were in suspense — but the deed, bold as it was sure, was not done with such impunity but that the perpetrator received in the same manner the reward of his daring act; for a son of Corsicurbo, the barbarian who was overwhelmed in the storm when Periander escaped, more light of foot than the arrow from the bow, in two bounds reached the governor, and with his uplifted arm plunged into his breast a dagger, which, although of stone, was more sharp and piercing than if it had been of steel. The governor closed his eyes in everlasting night, and thus by his death Bradamiro was avenged. The greatest tumult ensued among the friends and relations of both; all flew to arms, and soon, incited by vengeance and rage, the arrows flew on all sides, dealing death far and wide. When the arrows were spent, as hands and poignards did not fail, they fell upon each other without respect of kindred. The son respected not the father nor the brother his brother,

and as among them were many enemies who owed one another grudges for former injuries, they fell to work tearing to pieces with their nails, and cutting with their knives, without any one attempting to restore peace.

Now whilst arrows and blows, and wounds and death, were busy all around, the aged Clelia, the interpretest damsel, Periander and Auristella, all remained huddled close together full of terror and dismay. In the midst of the confusion a number of barbarians who belonged to the party of Bradamiro, separated themselves from the combat and flew to set fire to a wood not far off, where stood the dwelling of the governor. The trees began to burn, and the wind favoured the flames, till the smoke and fire increased to such a height, that it seemed as if every one would soon be first blinded and then burnt. The night came on — very dark and dismal, the groans of the dying, the cries of the fierce combatants, the cracking sound of the fire, carried no terror into the hearts of the barbarians, which were still breathing nothing but rage and vengeance, but it filled with awe and fear those of the miserable little cluster of persons, who knew not what to do or how to find a refuge. But in this hour of alarm and peril, Heaven forgot not to send succour of so new and remarkable a kind, that it appeared to them a miracle.

Night had closed in, and as I said before, dark and cloudy; only the flames of the blazing wood gave light enough to distinguish objects, when a young barbarian came up to Periander, and in the Castilian tongue, which he well understood, said, “Follow me, beautiful maiden, and tell the others who are with you to do the same, and I will place you in safety, Heaven helping me.” Periander did not reply, but he rose up, signed to Auristella, Clelia, and the interpretest, that they should pluck up courage and go with him, and so, treading over dead corpses, and trampling upon weapons at every step, they followed the young barbarian who was their guide. The flames of the burning wood reached very near to them, and lighted them on their way. The advanced age of Clelia, and the great youth of Auristella, made it difficult for them to keep up with the rapid steps of the guide. Perceiving which, the barbarian, who was young and strong, caught up Clelia, and seated her on his shoulder; Periander did the same by Auristella; the interpretest less delicate, and more active, followed with manly vigour: and in this way, sometimes mounting, sometimes descending, they reached the sea-shore, and after coasting along for about a mile in a northerly direction, the guide stopped before the mouth of a spacious cavern, into which the tide came and went. They waded through the water a little way, turning first to the right and then to the left; and now narrowing, now widening, sometimes bending almost double and crawling on the ground, sometimes walking upright; they moved on till they came out into what seemed to them an

open plain, where they might walk freely, at least so their guide told them, for they could discern nothing through the darkness, as the light of the burning forest, which still blazed fiercely, did not reach them here.

“Blessed be God,” exclaimed the barbarian, in the same Castilian tongue, “who hast brought us here in safety, for although there is still some danger to fear, it is not that of death.”

Then they saw that there approached rapidly a great light like a comet, or rather a meteor, which seemed to move through the darkness. They expected its coming with some alarm, but the barbarian said, “This is my father coming to receive me.”

Periander, who could speak the Castilian language, though not very fluently, said to him, “May Heaven reward thee, O — human angel, or whoever thou mayest be, for the kind deed thou hast done; and even though our death should only be delayed, we still gratefully acknowledge the benefit received.”

The light now came near, carried by a person seemingly a barbarian, whose age appeared to be about fifty years. On approaching them he put down the light, which was a thick pine-branch, and embraced his son with open arms; asking, in Castilian, what had happened that he had brought so large a company. “Father,” he replied, “let us go to our den, for I have much to say and more to consider. The island is in a blaze; all the inhabitants are now either ashes or half-burnt corpses. These few persons that you see I have stolen from the fire and the knife of the barbarians: let us go, sir, as I said to our retreat, that my mother and sister may exercise their charity in behalf of these poor weary and frightened guests.”

The father acted as guide, and they all followed. Clelia, now somewhat revived, was able to walk, but Periander would not part with the lovely burden he had carried. It was not possible that he should find *that* heavy, Auristella being the sole joy he had on earth.

They had not gone very far when they arrived in front of a high and steep rock, at the foot of which they perceived a very narrow opening or cave, the walls and roof of which were this same rock. Two women drest in the barbarian costume, came forth with lighted pine-branches in their hands. One was a girl about fifteen years of age; the other, who seemed approaching to thirty, was beautiful, but the younger one was surpassingly fair. One of them cried, “Ah my father and my brother;” the elder only said, “Welcome, beloved son of my affections.” The interpretest was amazed to hear any one speak in this country (especially women who looked like the native islanders) any language but the customary dialect, but when she was about to ask them by what mystery they spoke the Castilian tongue, she was prevented by the father bidding his wife and daughter spread the hard floor of the cave with woolly fleeces. They obeyed,

placing their torches against the walls. They then hastened to bring from an inner cave the fleeces of sheep and goats, and other animals, with which they adorned the place, and shielded their guests from the cold they were beginning to feel severely.

## CHAPTER V.

*The account that the Spanish barbarian gives of himself to his new guests.*

SHORT and quickly finished was the supper, but to sup without fear made it savoury. They replaced the torches with fresh ones, and although there was a good deal of smoke in the apartment, it was warm. The dishes on which the supper was served were neither of silver nor china; the hands of the young host and hostess were the plates, and the drinking cups were made from the bark of some tree more suited to the purpose than cork would have been. The young girl kept at a distance, and supplied them with water, fresh, clear and cool. Clelia soon fell asleep, for sleep is more welcome to age than any conversation however pleasant it may be. The elder hostess made her a couch in the inner apartment, of which the mattress and blankets were skins. She then returned to sit with the others, to whom the Spaniard now spoke as follows: “Although by rights I should hear your story first, yet will I tell you who and what I am, that you may conceal nothing from me after having heard my history of myself.

“As my good fortune would have it I was born in Spain, in one of her best provinces. My family is respectable though not noble, I was brought up in affluence; I learned grammar, which is the step that leads to the other sciences, but my star inclined me rather to that of arms, than of letters. In my youth I had no friendship for either Bacchus or Ceres, nor had Venus any charms for me either. Impelled then by my inclinations, I left my country, and went to the wars, which at that time his Majesty the Emperor Charles V. was waging in Germany with some of its potentates? Mars befriended me; I acquired the name of a good soldier. The emperor distinguished me, I made friends, and above all, I learned liberality and good breeding — one learns this in the school of a Christian soldier. I returned home with riches and honours, intending to remain some days there in order to enjoy the society of my parents, who were both living, and of the friends who expected me. But that which men call fortune, — for my part I know not what she is, — envious of my tranquillity, turning the wheel she is said to hold, threw me down from the summit on which I had been placed into the depths of misery-wherein you see me now, using, as her instrument wherewith to effect this, a gentleman, the second son of a nobleman who had an estate near



my home. He came to our village on a festival-day. In the square there was a circle of gentlemen of whom I was one. Coming up to me, with an arrogant air and manner, he said, smiling, 'So you are a valiant soldier, Senor Antonio, and the public talk of all Flanders and Italy has declared you to be truly a most gallant and generous gentleman.'

'And my good Antonio must know how glad I am to hear this,' I answered (being myself this Antonio). 'I thank you a thousand times, my lord, for the praise you bestow on me, your lordship does well to honour your countrymen and servants; but with all this, I would wish your lordship to know that I gained my honours and rewards in Flanders, but good breeding I inherited at my birth, and therefore I deserve for that neither praise nor blame. But, nevertheless, good or bad, I am your lordship's very humble servant, and I beseech you to honour me according to my desert.'

"A gentleman who stood by me, and one of my particular friends, said to me in not so low a voice but that the young nobleman could hear, 'Antonio, my friend, how you talk, one does not call Don Such a one, — My lord.' Before I could reply the young nobleman answered, 'The good Antonio speaks well, for he treats me after the Italian fashion, which is to say — your lordship, instead of your worship.'

"' I am perfectly well acquainted,' said I, ' with the customs and usages of well-bred people, and in addressing your lordship as my lord, it is not after the fashion of Italy, but that I desire to give you your full title according to the rank you bear in Spain; and I, being only a simple gentleman and raised by my own deeds, am at least deserving of the common forms of politeness from any nobleman in the land, and he who fails in this (here I clapped my hand to my sword) is not worthy to be called a gentleman.' So saying, I gave him two cuts on the head, bestowed with very good will, which took him so by surprise that he hardly knew what had happened to him, nor stirred a step in his own defence, and I awaited his attack, sword in hand. His first surprise over, he drew his sword and prepared to avenge himself with great spirit; but this was prevented, partly by the blood that flowed from his wounds and that the bystanders interfered, laid hold of me and made me retire to my father's house, where the story was soon told; my friends represented to me strongly the danger I was in, and providing me with money and a good horse, advised me to put myself in safety, since I had made myself such great and powerful enemies. Accordingly I did so, and in two days had passed the boundary of Arragon, where I breathed awhile. In short, I determined to return to Germany, where I intended again to enter the service of the emperor, but there I was warned that my enemy and many more were seeking me, with the purpose of taking my life by any means

they could. This, as was not unnatural, rather alarmed me, and I returned again to Spain, for I thought there could not be a safer asylum than the home of my enemy. I saw my parents in the night time, provided myself with money and jewels; with these I came to Lisbon, and embarked on board a vessel which was on the point of sailing for England, in which were several English gentlemen, who had come out of curiosity to visit Spain, and having seen all, or at least the best part of her principal cities, were returning home to their own country.

“It so happened that I was disputing a point of small importance with one of the English sailors, in the course of which, growing angry, I was obliged to give him a blow. This excited the wrath of the other sailors, and in fact of the whole crew, who seized every missile weapon that came to hand, wherewith to assail me. I retreated to the forecastle, and took one of the English gentlemen as my shield, putting myself behind him, which mode of defence so far availed me, that I was not instantly slain.

“The other gentlemen quieted the tumult; but on condition that I should be thrown into the sea, or at least, that I should be cast adrift in a small boat in which I might return to Spain, or wherever Providence might send me.

“This was done accordingly; they put me into the boat with two barrels of water, one of butter, and some biscuit. I thanked my protectors for the favour shown me, and set out on my voyage with only two oars. The ship was soon far away. Night came on, and I was alone in the middle of the wide ocean, at the mercy of the wind and waves. I raised my eyes to heaven, and recommended my soul to God, with as much devotion as I could; then I looked northward, by which I hoped to distinguish whither I was going, but I knew not the place where I was. Six days and six nights I went on thus, trusting more to the mercy of Heaven than to my own exertions, for my arms were quite tired with the continued work they had to do. I abandoned the oars, unshipped them, and laid them in the boat, to assist me again, when the sea permitted and my strength returned. I laid myself down at full length on my back, shut my eyes, and there was not a saint in heaven I did not invoke in my inmost heart to aid me. It may perhaps be hard to be believed, that in the midst of this my greatest need, there came upon me a very heavy sleep, so heavy that I lost all sense and feeling; but in my dreams imagination pictured all kinds of horrible deaths, — all were in the water, and in one it seemed to me that I was devoured by wolves and torn in pieces by wild beasts, so that waking or sleeping, my life was a prolonged death. From this not very pleasant dream, I was roughly awakened by a tremendous wave, which washed over the boat and filled it with water. I saw my danger, and hastened, as well as I was able, to restore the wave to its parent sea. My oars availed me nothing, though I again attempted to use them. The sea was growing

boisterous, scourged and fretted by a south-west wind, which seems to prevail more powerfully in these seas than in any others. I saw that it was folly to oppose my little boat to its fury, my weak and fainting strength to its fierceness; so once more I laid down my oars, and let the boat run where it pleased the wind and waves to carry it.

“I had again recourse to prayer, I renewed my promises, I increased the waters of the ocean with the streams that poured from my eyes, not from the fear of death that seemed fast approaching, but from a dread of the punishment my sins deserved. I do not know how many days and nights I was thus a wanderer on the wide sea, which became wilder and fiercer each day. At length I came to an island which seemed to be inhabited by human beings, although full of wolves which ran about it in flocks. I got shelter under a rock near the shore, not daring to set foot on land, for fear of the animals I had perceived. I ate some of my biscuit, which was mouldy, but necessity and hunger stop at nothing. Night came on less obscure than had lately been the case, the sea seemed calmer and promised better things for the coming day; I looked in the heavens, the stars were shining, and all seemed to speak of fair weather at sea, and tranquillity in the sky. I was thus situated, when it seemed to me, by the doubtful light, that the rock which served me as a harbour, was crowned with wolves, such as I had seen before in my dreams, and one of them (as was indeed the fact) spoke in a clear distinct voice, and in my native tongue— ‘Spaniard,’ it said, ‘go away, and seek thy fortune elsewhere, unless it is thy wish to die here, torn into pieces by our teeth and claws; and ask not who it is that tells thee this, but give thanks to Heaven, who has permitted thee to find pity even among savage beasts.’

“I leave it to you to guess whether I was alarmed or no; but my terror was not so great as to prevent me from instantly profiting by the advice I had received: I shipped the oars, took them in hand, and rowed with great vigour till I was fairly out at sea once more.

“But, as it is a common saying, that misfortunes and’ afflictions disturb the memory of those who suffer, I cannot tell how long it was that I was moving about in those seas, finding not one, but a thousand deaths at every moment staring me in the face; but at length a tremendous tempest flung my boat and me upon this island, in the same spot where is the mouth of the cave by which you entered. The boat had got into the cave on dry land, but the surf would return, and might carry it out again to sea, which I perceiving, threw myself upon the sand, and digging my nails firmly in, I managed to place myself out of reach of the returning wave; and although with the boat the sea would take away the means of saving my life, yet I remained on the ground, well pleased at any rate to change the manner of my death, and seeing life prolonged, hope did not desert

me utterly.”

The Spaniard had reached this part of his story, when from the inner apartment, where they had left Clelia, were heard groans and lamentations. Periander, Auristella, and the rest, hastened with lights to see what was the cause. They found Clelia seated on the skins, her back supported by the rock, her eyes turned up to heaven, and almost in her last moments.

Auristella flew to her, and in tender and mournful accents she exclaimed, “What ails you, my beloved nurse? Is it possible that you are wishing to leave me thus alone, at the very moment when I stand most in need of your counsels.” Clelia turned herself a little round, and taking Auristella’s hand in her’s,— “Yes, child of my love, it is even so,” she said, “I could have wished to live till I had seen you placed in the condition that you deserve to be in, but Heaven will not permit this, and I am resigned to its will. All I ask of you, my own beloved mistress, is, that if ever a happier fate should be yours, and any of my relations should be living, you will let them know that I died in the Christian faith, and in that of the holy Roman Catholic Church. I would say more, but I cannot.” She then pronounced the name of Jesus several times, and closed her eyes for ever; at sight of which Auristella also closed hers, and sunk to the earth in a deep swoon; those of Periander were as fountains — and as rivers, all the rest. Periander flew to assist his Auristella, who returned to life only to utter such lamentations, to shed so many tears, and heave such sighs, as might have moved even hearts of stone to pity. It was determined that the funeral should be on the following day, and the young barbarian and his sister remained to watch the corpse. The others retired to rest during the short remainder of the night.

## CHAPTER VI.

*In which the Spaniard continues his Story.*

DAYLIGHT was long in appearing, even to the eyes of those accustomed to the gloomy region, because the smoke and ashes of the fire, which still continued burning, impeded the sun's rays from shining on the earth. The elder Spaniard ordered his son to go forth, as he was accustomed to do, and learn what was doing in the island.

The others had passed the night in disturbed dreams; Auristella could not sleep from grief for the loss of her nurse Clelia, and her wakefulness kept Periander also on the watch. They both went forth into the open space before the cave, and saw how Nature had made and fashioned it, as if Art and Industry had been at work to create it. It was a circular space, surrounded by high and rugged rocks, and, as well as they could judge, it appeared that for the distance of a league in length, the place was full of trees, which bore fruit, though sour, yet eatable. Grass grew luxuriantly, for the water that issued from the rocks kept up a perpetual verdure. They were admiring this with some wonder, when the Spaniard, their host, approached and said, "Come, my guests, and let us bury the dead body — then we will continue the history which I left unfinished." They followed him, and the remains of poor Clelia were laid in a hollow of the rock, and covered over with earth and large stones. Auristella begged that a cross might be put to mark the spot, as a sign that the person there buried had been a Christian. The Spaniard said that he had a large cross in his dwelling, which should be put above the grave-. The last farewell was given, and Auristella's grief burst out afresh, whose tears instantly caused answering drops in Periander's eyes. To wait the young barbarian's return, they all hastened to shut themselves up in the cavern where they had slept, to escape the cold, which threatened to be severe; and seated upon the soft skins, the Spaniard claimed their attention, and pursued his narrative as follows: —

"When I lost the boat which brought me to the sands, by the returning waves which carried it away, as I before said, with its departure fled my hopes of escape; nevertheless I did not lose courage; I came to this spot, and it seemed to me as if Nature had made and fashioned it for a theatre, where might be

represented the tragedy of my misfortunes. I wondered that I saw no people, but only some mountain goats and small animals of various kinds. I surveyed the whole place, and found this cave in the rocks, which I pitched upon at once as my dwelling. Finally, having surveyed it all, I returned to the entrance by which I had come, to try if I could hear any human sounds, or find some person who might tell me where I was. My good fortune, and pitying Heaven, which had not quite forgotten me, sent a girl, a native of the island, not more than fifteen years of age, who was searching for shells and other marine treasures, among the rocks and stones of the sea-shore. At sight of me she stopped, her feet seemed as if nailed to the spot, the collection of shells and sea-weeds fell to the ground. Taking her in my arms, without saying a word to her, or she to me, I carried her to my cave, and set her down in the place where we now are. I kissed her hands, put my cheek to hers, and by every means I could imagine, tried to show that I only meant kindness to her. She, after her first alarm was over, looked at me attentively with wondering eyes, then touched me with her hands, and felt me all over. By degrees she lost all fear, laughed and embraced me, and taking out of her bosom a bit of bread, not made of wheat, but after her own country fashion, she put it in my mouth, and said something in her own language: I knew afterwards that she was asking me to eat, and I did so, for in truth I was in great need of some food. She then took me by the hand, and led me to the stream, which runs not far off, making signs that I should drink. I was never weary of looking at her. To me she seemed an angel from heaven, rather than a savage islander. We returned to the entrance of the cavern, and there I tried by signs and words (which she understood not) to persuade her to return to me again. I embraced her tenderly, and she in an innocent manner kissed me on the forehead, telling me by signs she would come and visit me soon again. I went back to this place and employed myself in finding out whether the fruit, with which the trees were loaded, was good for food. I found walnuts, filberts, and some wild pears, for which I returned thanks to God.

“I spent the night in the same place, and longed for the day, hoping again to see the beautiful islander, although I was not without some fear that she would relate what she had seen, and perhaps give me up to the barbarians, with whom I imagined the island was inhabited; but this fear left me, when I saw her at the opening of the cave the following morning, beautiful as the sun, gentle as a lamb, not accompanied by savages to seize me and take my life, but laden with food to support it.”

The Spaniard had reached this part of his story, when the youth who had been sent out to gain intelligence, arrived, and brought word that the island was almost entirely destroyed by the fire, and nearly the whole of the inhabitants

dead, some by fire, and some by the knife. That if any survived they had put out to sea in their rafts, to escape the flames on land; that they might safely leave their concealment, and go through the island, where they were not prevented by the fire, and that each one must consider what steps would be best to take in order to escape from this accursed land; for all around were other islands, inhabited by savages, but of less cruel and barbarous natures; and, possibly, in a change of place, they might change also their fortune.

“Be composed, my son, and stay quiet for a few minutes, for I am relating the story of my adventures; and I am nearly come to the end of these, though not, I fear, to the end of my misfortunes.”

“Do not weary yourself, my dear husband,” said the elder of the women, “by giving all the minute details which very possibly may fatigue the hearers as well as the narrator; leave it to me to tell all that remains to be told up to the present moment.”

“I am content to let it be so,” replied the Spaniard, “for I shall have great pleasure in hearing how you will relate the story.”

“Well then,” said she, “the end of all these visits that I made to this place was this, I agreed to call this man my husband and to become his wife, according to the fashion amongst Christians, which he promised he would observe, and in this cave were born the son and daughter whom you have seen. He taught me his language, and I in return taught him mine; he also instructed me in the holy Catholic faith, and he baptized me in the rivulet, although he told me he could not do it with all the customary ceremonies of his native land. He explained to me as well as he could his own religion, and I received all he said in my inmost heart, and gave it my full and entire belief. I believe in the Holy Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, three distinct persons, and yet one God. He also taught me how the Holy Roman Catholic Church is ruled by the Holy Spirit, and governed by the Pope, who is priest, vicar, and viceroy of God on earth, and the legitimate successor of St. Peter, the first Pastor of the Church, after Jesus Christ. Great things he told me about the blessed Virgin Mary, the Queen of Heaven, and the shelter and refuge of all sinners. Many other things besides he taught me; but I think I have told you enough, to show that I am a true Catholic Christian. I, simply, in pity gave to him a soul rude and unpolished; he has informed and Christianized it. I gave myself to him, thinking that in so doing I committed no wrong, and the result of our union has been the two children you see here, who will increase the number of true believers, In return for all he has done for me, I gave him a quantity of the gold with which this island abounds, and some pearls which I keep by me, in the hope that the day would come when we may be delivered from this prison, and go where we can dwell in safety and

freedom. — Now it seems to me I have told you all that my husband Antonio, who is also called, The Spanish barbarian, wished you to know.” —

“That is true, my Ricla,” he replied, for such was her name; and all the company then expressed their great interest in the eventful history they had heard, bestowing upon them a thousand compliments and good wishes for the future, especially Auristella, who had contracted a warm affection for the mother and daughter.

The boy (who as well as his father was called Antonio) now observed that it would not do for them to remain idly here, without taking into consideration how they might escape from their present hiding-place; for if the fire which still continued burning, should extend over the hills, or if the wind was to bring some sparks into their retreat, all would speedily be consumed.

“That is true, my son,” said the father; and Ricla advised them to wait two days, for that there was one island so near you could distinctly see it when the sun shone and the sea was calm, and its inhabitants come occasionally to sell and barter what they have and make bargains with the islanders. “I will go forth,” said she, “for none will hear or impede me, since the dead cannot do either of these things. I will contrive to buy a boat at whatever price they ask, telling them that I need it in order to escape with my husband and children who are shut up in a cave, to shelter from the fire; but you must know that these boats are made of the trunks of trees, covered with the hides of animals, to prevent the water entering by the sides, and according to what I have observed they can only be used in calm weather, and they carry none of those bits of linen cloth that I have seen in the boats which come sometimes to our coasts, bringing men and maidens for sale, to feed the superstitious follies that have long been the practice in this island. Now, I believe, such boats as I have described are not fit to trust to in the open sea, and encounter the storms and tempests that are so frequent.”

Periander enquired “whether the Senor Antonio had never tried this experiment during all the years he had been shut up here?”

“No answered Ricla, “because too many eyes were upon me, and it would have been quite impossible for me to find an opportunity for agreeing with the owners of the boats, and making a purchase or finding an excuse for so doing.”

“That was the cause truly,” said Antonio, “and not the insecurity of the boats; but now that Heaven has sent me this counsel I mean to follow it, and my good Ricla will be on the watch for the merchants of the other isle, and without haggling as to the price, will purchase a boat, with all the requisite sea stores, saying that she wants it for the purpose she has mentioned.”

By degrees all came to be of the same opinion, and when they left the cave and emerged into the country, they were amazed to see what slaughter had been



done by the flames and by the fight; they saw death in a thousand different shapes, of which senseless fury and angry passions had been the inventors. They also observed that the barbarians who had survived the slaughter, collected in their boats, were at a distance, looking on at the conflagration of their homes; and some they thought had passed over to the island which served as a prison for their captives. Auristella was desirous of going there also to see if perchance any wretched creatures remained in the dark dungeon, but this was rendered unnecessary by the arrival of a raft containing about twenty persons, whose garb and appearance plainly showed that they were the unfortunate prisoners who had been in the dungeon. When they reached the shore they kissed the ground, and even appeared inclined to worship the fire, because they understood from the barbarian who had set them free from their horrible place of confinement, that the island was all in flames, and they had no longer anything to fear from the inhabitants. They were kindly welcomed by the little company, so lately themselves rescued, and consoled in the best manner they were able. Some told the story of their misfortunes; others were silent, unable to find words to express what they felt.

Ricla was somewhat surprised that there should have been a barbarian compassionate enough to have released them, and that none of them who had taken to the raft had (as they supposed) gone over to the prison island. One of the captives said that the person who came to release them spoke in the Italian tongue, and that he told them all the miserable history of the burning island, advising them to come over and to make themselves some compensation for their sufferings, by taking possession of the gold and pearls they would find in abundance; that he himself would follow them on another raft which was left there to keep them company, and devise a plan for getting free.

The various stories told by the captives were so different, some so remarkable and extraordinary, and some so melancholy, that they drew alternate tears and laughter from the hearers.

Six boats were now seen approaching the island, — they were those of which Ricla had spoken. They came to the shore, but did not produce any merchandise, because none of the islanders appeared to buy it. Ricla went to bargain with these merchants for their boats, as she had arranged she would. They would only part with four, keeping two for themselves to return home in. Ricla was liberal, and paid the price they demanded, at once, in pieces of uncoined gold.

Two boats were given to the prisoners just freed from the dungeon, and in the other two the party embarked. All the provisions they could collect were put in one, and four of the newly released captives. In the other went Auristella, Periander, Antonio and his son, with the fair Ricla, the wise Transila, and the

graceful Constance, daughter of Antonio and Ricla.

Auristella, however, before she quitted the island, wished to take a last farewell of the grave, where her beloved Clelia was buried. She was accompanied thither by all her friends, and shed many tears over the tomb. Then, returning to the shore, amid tears of mingled joy and sorrow, they embarked, having first knelt down on the sands and offered up sincere and fervent prayers to Heaven for a prosperous voyage, and to be guided where to go.

Periander took the command of his boat, the others followed; but just as the oars touched the water, for sails they had none, a light and active figure, in appearance one of the barbarian islanders, cried aloud in the Tuscan tongue, and said, "If any of ye in these boats are Christians, I implore ye for the love of the true God, to take a fellow Christian along with you." One of the men in the other boat then said, "This is the person, gentlemen, who delivered us from our horrible captivity, and if you are as good as you appear to be, (he directed his speech to the party in the first boat,) it would be well to repay him for the kindness he showed to us, by receiving him into our company." On hearing this, Periander ordered the boat which held the provisions to return and take in the suppliant; this done, they raised their voices in joyful chorus, took up their oars, and with glad hearts, they began their voyage. —

## CHAPTER VII.

*They embark and quit the barbarous Isle, and discover another Island.*

FOUR miles or thereabouts, the four boats had gone, when they discovered a large ship, which going before the wind, with all her sails set, seemed coming on to attack them. Periander on seeing her said, “Without a doubt this must be Arnolfo’s ship returning to know what has happened to me, and now what is there I would not give to avoid seeing him!” Periander had told Auristella the whole of what had passed between him and Arnolfo, and what had been agreed upon by them to do.

Auristella was alarmed, for she did not wish to fall into the power of Arnolfo. We have already related, though briefly, all that had happened in the year during which she had been in his hands. The lovers did not desire that he should see them together, as, supposing even that he should be satisfied with the story of their feigned relationship as brother and sister, there was still always a fear that the true history of their parentage might be discovered; and more than this, how could she be certain that Periander would not be jealous with such strong excitement before his eyes? For what prudence will avail, what confidence has the lover, when, by mischance, jealous suspicions find a place in his breast?

However, all this was settled at once by the wind suddenly changing, which gave the sails of the advancing vessel a contrary direction, so that, in one short moment, they were lowered and again set in another, even to the topsails, and the ship began to run before the wind, in exactly the opposite course to that she had just come, quickly leaving the boats far behind. Auristella breathed again, Periander recovered his spirits, but the other passengers in the boats would have rejoiced to change their situation, and to have been taken on board the ship whose size promised them greater security and a better voyage. In less than two hours she was out of sight; they might follow if they could, but it was impossible. All they were able to do was to make for another island, whose high snow-covered mountains, gave it the appearance of being near, but in reality it was more than six leagues distant.

Night closed in very darkly; the wind rose and was in their favour, which was a great relief to the rowers, who made all possible haste to reach the island.

According to Antonio's calculation it was midnight when they arrived. In order to bring their boats in, the surf not being high, they ran them ashore, and pushed them in with their arms. The night was so cold it forced them to seek a shelter from the frost, but they found none. Periander gave orders that all the women should get into the largest boat, and keep close together, to preserve themselves as much as possible from the cold. They did so, and the men made a bodyguard round the boat, walking up and down, waiting for the day to dawn, that they might discover where they were, for at present they could not tell whether the island was inhabited or not. As it is natural that anxiety should banish sleep, not one of all this company could close their eyes, which Antonio perceiving, he told the Italian barbarian that, in order to pass away the time and beguile the long hours of this weary night, it would be as well if he was to amuse them by relating the events of his life, as, in all likelihood, they must be wonderful and varied, since they had placed him in the situation and circumstances where they had found him.

"I will do this willingly," replied the Italian, "although I fear that none will give their belief to them, so many, so new, and so extraordinary are they."

"Our own adventures and the strange things we have seen, have taught and disposed us to believe anything we may be told, even if it should lean more to the improbable than the probable," answered Periander.

"Let us then," said the Italian, "come here alongside of the boat where the ladies are; perhaps the sound of my voice may lull some of them to sleep, and perchance some one from whose eyelids sleep is banished, may show compassion. It is a consolation to feel in relating a history of misfortunes, that others can weep with one."

"At least for my part," cried Ricla from the boat, "in spite of sleep, I have tears to offer, and sympathy to give, to your hard fate and the long period of your sorrows." Auristella said the same; so all the party assembled round the boat, and lent an attentive ear to what the seeming barbarian was about to say. He commenced his narrative in the following words.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*In which Rutilio gives an account of his Life.*

MY name is Rutilio, my native place Sienna, one of the most famous of Italian cities, my profession that of a dancing master: I excelled in this, and if I had pleased I might have been fortunate in it. There lived in Sienna a rich gentleman, to whom Heaven had given a daughter, more beautiful than discreet. Her father intended her to marry a Florentine gentleman, and that she might be adorned with every accomplishment that could be acquired, since the gifts of the understanding were wanting, he wished that I should teach her to dance, as grace and elegance of motion is more displayed in modest dances than in anything, and is indispensable for all ladies of quality. I began by teaching her how to move the body, but ended in also moving her heart. She having, as I said before, but little discretion, gave hers to me, and destiny, which then began the long current of my misfortunes, so willed it that I carried her off from her father's house, and we set out intending to go to Rome, that we might enjoy one another's company. But as love does not bestow his favours cheaply, and crimes ever bring punishment in their train (which should always be kept in mind), we were overtaken on the road by her father, so great was the diligence he made to seek for us. Her defence and mine, which was simply that I was carrying off my wife, and her's, that she was going with her husband, was only an aggravation of my crime, which moved and disposed the judge to sentence me to death. I was thrown into prison with those condemned for other crimes more dishonourable than mine. In the prison I was visited by a woman who was accused of "fatucherie," which would in the Castilian tongue be called witchcraft. She had been taken out of her confinement by the jailor's wife, in order that she might cure her daughter of a complaint which the doctors failed in comprehending, by her herbs and spells. Finally, to make my story short, since there is no reason why being good it should also be long; seeing me thus fast bound, the cord at my throat, sentenced to death, without a hope, or chance of mercy, the witch said that if I would consent to marry her and take her for my wife, she would release me from this peril. She told me not to fear, for that on the very same night of the day when we held our conversation, she would break the chains and manacles,

and in spite of all other obstacles, would set me at liberty, and in a place where I should be quite safe from the pursuit of my enemies, however great and powerful they might be.

“To me she seemed no witch, but an angel sent from Heaven, to rescue and save me. I waited for night, and in the depth of its silence she came; she bade me grasp the end of a cane, which she put into my hand, telling me to follow her. I felt somewhat alarmed, but as the case was urgent, I rose to comply, and followed her, finding myself free from chains, and bolts and bars removed, everywhere the prison doors were open, and prisoners and jailors, all alike, wrapt in profound sleep. When we reached the street, my guide spread upon the ground a cloak, and desired me to stand upon it, bidding me be of good heart, but that for a time I must suspend my devotions. I instantly perceived that this was a bad sign; instantly I knew that she was going to carry me through the air; and although as a well-educated Christian, I had been taught that there was no truth in all the stories of witchcraft, and considered them as mere fictions, which was very natural, still the danger I had been in, and the fear of speedy death, hurried me so much, that I set my foot upon the mantle, and she, murmuring some words I did not hear, the cloak, with us upon it, began to rise into the air, and I began to be horribly afraid, and in my heart there was not a saint in the Litany I did not call to my aid: she seemed aware of my fear, and suspected my invocations, for again she bade me leave them off. Miserable as I am, said I, what good can I expect, if I refuse to ask it of God, from whom all good comes? However, I shut my eyes, and resigned myself to be carried away by demons, for such are the post horses of witches; it seemed to me about four hours or more that we had travelled, when at the dawn of day, I found myself in an unknown country.

“The cloak touched the ground, and my guide said, ‘You are now safe, friend Rutilio, and in a place, where none of human race can harm you;’ and saying this, she clasped me in her arms, to embrace me in a very shameless manner.

I repulsed her, when, as it appeared to me, she, who had just embraced me, bore the shape of a wolf, which sight made my blood freeze within me, and disturbed my senses; but, as it often happens that in the worst perils, the very absence of hope makes one gain strength from despair, so mine impelled me to seize a knife I had with me by chance, which I plunged into the heart of what seemed to me a wolf, with such fury, that she fell on the earth, and in falling she lost her enchanted form, and I saw the miserable sorceress lying before me a bleeding corpse.

“Conceive, sirs, what a condition for me, alone, in an unknown land, without any one to guide me. I remained expecting that day would dawn at last, but it

came not, nor could I discern the faintest sign in the horizon that the sun was rising. I removed to a distance from the corpse of the sorceress, for it caused me a feeling of horror to be near it. Frequently I raised my eyes to heaven, contemplating the motions of the stars, and it seemed to me by the course they had made that it ought to be day. I was in this dilemma, when I suddenly heard voices, and hastening towards the place whence these sounds proceeded, I called out in the Italian tongue, and asked, what country I was in. I was answered in the same language, 'This land is Norway; but who art thou that askest this question, and in a language few here understand?'

"'I am,' I replied, 'a miserable wretch, who, to escape death, have come here to meet it in another shape;' and then I briefly related the history of my journey, and also the death of the witch. He to whom I spoke seemed to compassionate me, and said, 'Then, good man, return infinite thanks to Heaven for having saved thee from the power of these accursed witches, of whom there is an abundance in these northern parts. It is said of them, that they change themselves into wolves, male and female, for there are both sorcerers and sorceresses. How this can be I know not, and, as a good Catholic Christian, I do not believe it; but nevertheless, experience proves the contrary, and all I can make out of it is, that such transformations are illusions of the evil one, and by God's permission as a punishment for the abominable sins of this accursed sort of persons.'

"I asked him what hour it might be, for it appeared to me the night was long, and the day slow in coming. He told me, that the year in these countries was divided into four parts; three months of total night, when the sun never shone upon the earth at all; and three months of twilight, neither night nor day; there were also three months of perpetual day, when the sun was never hid, and three more of a night twilight; that the present season was the day twilight, and it was a vain hope to look for the light of the sun; and that it would be equally hopeless to look for a return to my own country, except during the season when it was always day, at which time ships sailed from these parts to England, France, and Spain, with various sorts of merchandise. He asked me if I knew of any way of gaining my bread, till the time should arrive when I could hope to return home to my own land. I told him I was a dancer, and a wonderful man for cutting capers, and that I knew a good many sleight of hand tricks. The man laughed aloud, and told me that these exercises, or employments, or whatever I was pleased to call them, would not avail me much, in Norway, or in any of these parts. He asked me if I knew what a goldsmith's business was. I told him I had skill to learn anything he could teach me.

"'Then come along brother,' said he, 'but first, let us go and bury this miserable creature.'

“We did so, and then he took me to a city where all the inhabitants walked about the streets, carrying lighted pine-branches in their hands, and so transacting the business of daily life. As we went along I enquired how and when he had come to this country, and if he really was Italian. He replied that one of his ancestors had married and settled here, having come to transact some important business, and that he had taught all his children his native language, and so it had descended to all his posterity until it had reached him, who was one of his cousins four times removed....

I could tell you much of the house where I was received, of the wife and children I found there, and servants of whom he had many, of his immense possessions, of the kind and hospitable reception I met with, but it would be to go on for ever; enough to tell you briefly that I learned his business, and in the space of a few months, could gain my own livelihood.

“At last there came a day when my master and patron, for so I might call him, gave orders that a quantity of his merchandise should be got ready to carry to some of the neighbouring islands, and to some which were very far distant. I accompanied him as much out of curiosity as a desire to sell what I had of my own property, in which voyage I saw many wonderful and fearful things, and others amusing and pleasant. I took note of manners, and customs, and ceremonies, unknown elsewhere. In fine, at the end of two months, we were overtaken by a tempest that lasted nearly forty days, at the end of which we were cast upon the island, from whence we have just escaped, among some rocks whereon our vessel went to pieces, and not one of its crew escaped alive but myself.



## CHAPTER IX.

*Wherein Rutilio continues his Story.*

THE first thing that offered itself to my sight was the body of a barbarian hanging to a tree, by which I knew that I was in a country of savages, and immediately fear placed before my eyes a thousand different modes of death. Not knowing precisely which to dread, I expected and feared them all by turns. At last, since necessity is said to be the mother of invention, I bethought myself of an experiment, extraordinary enough; this was, to pull the dead barbarian off his bough, and having taken off all my own clothes, which I buried in the sand, to dress myself in his, which easily fitted, seeing they were made only of the skins of animals, not cut or fashioned in any way, but fastened round the waist, as you have seen. To conceal my foreign tongue, and that I might not be known to be a stranger, I pretended to be deaf and dumb, and in this guise I proceeded further into the island, jumping and making fantastic capers in the air.

“At a short distance I perceived a great number of the barbarians who flocked round me, and one and all asked (as I have since known) who I was, and whence I came, and whither I was going. I answered by keeping silence and making all the signs I could devise, again beginning to jump and cut capers in the air. I was followed by all the boys, let me go where I would, and thus I passed for a dumb barbarian, and the boys gave me food in return for my capers and merry-andrew tricks. In this way I have lived three years among them, and might pass all my life without being discovered. I paid great attention to their language, and learned to speak it very tolerably. I heard the prophecy about the duration of their kingdom, which had been pronounced by a very ancient and wise man, in whom they placed implicit credit. Many men have I seen sacrificed in order to accomplish it, many maidens I have seen purchased for the same purpose, until the conflagration of the island which you, sirs, have witnessed with your own eyes.

“I escaped from the flames and hastened to warn the prisoners in the dungeon, where you all no doubt have been. I saw these boats and flew to the shore, where in your generous bosoms I found an answer to my entreaties, and was received on board by you, for which I thank you with ray whole heart; and now I put my

trust in Heaven, since we have been delivered from so many and such great dangers, that we may be favoured with a happy and prosperous voyage.”

Here Rutilio ceased speaking, leaving his hearers wondering and much interested by all he had told.

Day came on, sharp and cold, stormy, and threatening a snow-storm. Auristella now gave Periander something that Clelia had delivered into her hands the night on which she died. It was two waxen balls, one *of* which enclosed a magnificent diamond cross of inestimable value; the other contained two pearls, also of immense price. These jewels showed that Periander and Auristella were persons of great! consequence, although this was more plainly proved by their noble bearing and good manners. As the day advanced, Antonio made a little excursion inland, but could discover nothing but high mountains covered with snow, and returning to the boats, he said, the island seemed uninhabited, and he thought it would be better for them to seek elsewhere some land where they might be sheltered from the extreme cold that threatened them, and to provide themselves with food of which they should shortly stand in need. The boats were accordingly launched into the sea, and they all embarked and directed their course towards another island they discovered not very far off. As they were making way with all the speed two oars could accomplish, for each boat had no more, a voice, low and melodious, was heard to proceed from one of the two other boats, so sweet that they all listened to it with attention. It was remarked, especially by the elder Antonio, that the song was in the Portuguese tongue, which he understood perfectly. The voice ceased, but shortly after began again to sing in Castilian, in time to the motion of the oars, which impelled the boats gently through a tranquil sea; the words he sang were as follows.

Upon a tranquil sea  
With fav’ring winds  
And starry sky,  
And by a pleasant way,  
Unknown, yet sure,  
Thy strange and wondrous bark,  
Her course shall ply, Borne onwards to a port, Safe and secure.

Onwards direct and straight  
Her course she steers,  
Nor upon Scylla, nor Charybdis driven, Nor hidden rocks,  
Nor secret perils, fears,  
Honour, the end and aim, for which she thus hath striv’n.

Let not thine efforts fail,  
Even though hopeless seem,  
The distant haven;  
Nor once remit thy toil,  
Nor ever slacken sail.

True love can never change,  
And only he,  
Will prosp'rous be,  
Who firm and true remains,  
Nor ever seeks to range.

Ricla, as the voice ceased, said, "This songster must needs be an idle soft creature, who at such a time as this fills the air with his voice," but Periander and Auristella judged otherwise. *They* thought the singer was more of a lover than an idle fellow. Those who love quickly recognize the passion in another, and seek fellowship with them who know how to pity and sympathize with their own weaknesses. So with the leave of the rest of the party in the boat, although it was hardly necessary to ask it, they requested the singer to step into their boat, as much to enjoy hearing his voice better as to learn his history, for it was evident that a person who could sing at such a time must either feel a great deal, or not at all.

The boats joined, and the singer stepped from his into that where Periander and his party were, who all received him very courteously. As he entered, the new corner said, half in Portuguese and half in Castilian, "I owe to Heaven and to you, and to my voice, this agreeable change for the better into your boat; albeit I believe I shall not long encumber it with the load of my body, for the heavy sorrows I have in my heart are such that I feel my life holds by a single thread."

"Heaven may help thee yet," said Periander, "for I am a living proof that there are no sorrows or miseries that can kill any one."

Here Auristella joined in the conversation and said, "*That* is not hope which merely puts away and resists misfortune, but as the light shines brightest in darkness so is hope most firm in time of trouble, and despair is the feeling of only coward souls. There is no cowardice or meanness greater than to give oneself up to despair."

"I believe this truly," answered the singer, "notwithstanding, and in spite of, the sad experience I have known in the course of my life."

They continued rowing as they discoursed, so that before night they reached another island also uninhabited, but there were trees upon it, and many of them, and full of fruit, though dried, and past the season, yet fit to eat. They leaped ashore, drew up their boats, and began with great speed to despoil the trees, and make a hut to keep themselves from the cold that night; they also kindled a fire by rubbing dry sticks together, a common and well-known practice, and as all worked, it was not long before they had built up this poor shelter, where they all assembled, supplying the inconveniences of the place by a good fire, this appearing to all the first thing necessary to their comfort. After satisfying their hunger they would have prepared themselves to sleep, if it had not been that the desire Periander felt to learn the adventures of the musician prevented him, and he entreated that he would, if it were possible, let them hear the story of his misfortunes, for misfortunes they must have been, to have brought him into such a situation.

The singer was courteous and without more entreaty, began thus.

## CHAPTER X.

*The Story of the enamoured Portuguese.*

IN the briefest possible words with which a tale can be told, I will give you the history of my life, which will itself be brief also, if I am to give any credit to a certain dream which disturbed my repose last night.

“I am, sirs, a Portuguese, of noble blood, rich in fortune’s gifts, and not poor in those of nature. My name is Manuel de Sosa Coutino; Lisbon my native place; and my profession that of a soldier. Near my father’s house, with only a wall between, was that of another gentleman, of the ancient family of the Pereiras, who had an only daughter, sole heiress of his wealth, which was great, the hope and prop of her family, who, for her high birth, riches, and beauty, was sought in marriage by all the best and greatest of the land; and I, who as a near neighbour, had many opportunities of seeing her, saw her, knew her, and adored her, with but a faint hope of ever obtaining her as my wife. To save time, and knowing that neither words nor gifts would avail, I determined that one of my relations should ask her of her father for me, since neither in birth, nor condition, nor yet in age, was there any difference between us. The answer I obtained was, that his daughter Leonora was as yet too young to marry; that two years should pass, and that he would give his promise not to dispose of his daughter during that time without letting me know of it. This was the first blow upon the shoulders of my patience, and on the shield of my hopes; but not for this did I cease to declare publicly my open suit, which was soon known throughout the city; but she, retired into the citadel of her prudence and the recesses of her discretion, modestly and with her father’s permission, accepted my service, and gave me to understand, that, if she did not return my attentions, they were at least not displeasing to her.

“It happened that at this moment I was sent by the king to command one of his armies in Barbary, a post of great importance and trust. The hour for parting arrived; and since that of my death came not also, it is clear that absence cannot kill nor grief destroy. I spoke to her father, and entreated him to renew the promise he had given of the two years during which I might hope. He took compassion upon me, and consented that I should take leave of his wife and his

daughter Leonora, who, accompanied by her mother, came forth to receive me in a parlour, and with her came modesty, grace, and silence. I was stupified when I saw so much beauty so near me; fain would I have spoken, but the words stuck in my throat, and my tongue cleaved to the roof of my mouth. I neither knew how nor was able to utter a syllable, and my silence proved the tumult of my soul so plainly that it was evident to the father of my beloved, who was as courteous as he was prudent. He embraced me, and said: 'Farewells, Don Manuel, were never the time for many words, and perhaps this silence may speak more in your favour than any eloquence. Go and perform your duty, and return as speedily as you can. I will not fail in the promise I have made to you. My daughter Leonora is an obedient child, and her mother always wishes to please me, and I have a kindness for you; so it seems to me, with these three things, you may indulge good hopes of success in what you desire.' These words remained graven on my memory in such a manner that I have not forgotten them, and never shall whilst life endures.

"Neither the beautiful Leonora nor her mother said a word, nor could I utter one, as I have said before.

"I departed for Barbary, where I remained two years, and fulfilled the duties of my office, giving satisfaction thereby to my king. I returned at the end of this time to Lisbon, and found that the fame of Leonora's beauty was noised abroad to the furthest limits of the kingdom, extending even through Castile and other places, from whence came ambassadors, asking her in marriage for princes and great noblemen; but, as she submitted her will entirely to her parents, I could not hear whether she was or was not favourable to any of them. Seeing now that the two years were come to an end, I went to renew my suit to her father, and implore him to give her to me as my wife. Alas! alas! I cannot dwell upon this part of my story, for in the very prime of life death called for me, and I fear I shall hardly have time to relate the sequel of my unhappy story; if it comes, I shall no longer consider myself unfortunate.

"At last I was informed, that on a certain approaching Sunday, my beloved Leonora should be delivered to me, which news nearly killed me with happiness. I invited my relations, called my friends together, and sent presents, with all the requisite preparations, to show that I was about to be married, and that Leonora was to be the bride.

"The day arrived, and, accompanied by all the highest and noblest gentlemen of the city, I went to a convent called that of the Mother of God, where I was told my bride had been awaiting me since the preceding day, for, that it was her wish to have the celebration of her betrothal performed in the church, by the permission of the Archbishop of the City." Here the melancholy cavalier paused

for a moment, as if to take breath to pursue his narration, and then continued—  
“I arrived at the convent which was adorned with royal pomp; some of the principal persons of the city came out to meet me, who were assembled there with many of the noblest ladies also. The church resounded with music both vocal and instrumental, and at this moment, appeared from the cloister, the peerless Leonora, accompanied by the abbess and many of the nuns. She was dressed in white satin, slashed, and a gown with a train after the Castilian fashion; the slashes were adorned with rich and large pearls. Her gown was lined with a rich stuff of gold and green; her hair hung down over her shoulders, so bright and golden, it would have shamed the sunbeams, and so long, it nearly swept the floor. The girdle, necklace and rings that she wore, were worth almost a kingdom; and again I repeat, she shone forth so beautiful, so lovely and graceful, and so richly adorned and decorated, that she was the envy of every woman, and the admiration of every man, present. For myself, I can only say, that at sight of her, I felt I could never be worthy of such a creature, even though I had been the emperor of the whole world.

“A kind of stage had been erected in the middle of the body of the church, where was an open space, in which the ceremony of our espousals was to take place. The beautiful maiden went up to it first, where she stood revealed in all her loveliness.: she appeared like the bright Aurora at break of day, or as ancient fables tell, so looked the chaste Diana in the woods. Some thought she could be compared to nothing but herself. I went up to the stage next, feeling as if I was going up to heaven, and I knelt on one knee before her, as if I was about to worship her. Then there arose a cry of many voices, and the voices said, ‘May ye live long and happy years in this world, O lovely and loving ones; may beauteous children grow around your table as a crown, and may this love extend to your children’s children; may ye never know anger or jealousy; may doubt and suspicion never dwell within your breasts, may envy be trampled under your feet, and good fortune never cease in your house.’

“All these good and holy wishes filled my soul with pleasure, seeing with what universal joy my happiness was received. But now the beauteous Leonora took my hand, and there, as we stood together side by side, she raised her voice and said to me:— ‘Don Manuel de Sosa, you know well how my father gave his word to you that he would not dispose of my person for two years, which were to count from the day when you first asked for me to be your wife, and if I forget not, I also said (seeing myself pursued by your solicitude, and feeling obliged by the many benefits bestowed by you on me more from your courtesy than my deserts) that I would take no other spouse on earth, but yourself. My father has fulfilled *his* promise to you, as you have seen, and I wish to accomplish *mine*, as

you will see; and therefore because I knew that deceits, although they may be honourable and profitable, yet carry with them a kind of treason, when they are long delayed and entertained, I would wish that mine should appear and be made known to you at this present instant. I, my Lord, am married, and my Spouse being alive, I can in no way marry another. I have not left you for any man on earth, but for a Bridegroom in Heaven; that is, Jesus Christ, God and Man. *He* is my espoused one, I gave my word to him before I gave it to you; to him without deceit, and with my whole heart; to you deceitfully, and without any truth. I confess that if I were to choose an earthly husband none could equal you, but having chosen a heavenly one, who is like God? If this seem to you like treason or unseemly usage, give me any punishment you please, and call me any name you like; but neither death nor promises, nor threats, shall divide me from my crucified Lord and Spouse.’ —

“She ceased to speak, and instantly the abbess and the nuns began to strip off her rich apparel, and to cut off the precious ringlets of her hair. I, strangely moved, and anxious to repress the signs of weakness, strove to keep back the tears which filled my eyes, and falling on my knees I pressed her hand to my lips, and she, Christianly compassionate, let her arms embrace my neck; then, standing up, I said in a voice which every one present could hear, ‘*Maria Optimam partem elegit* and thus saying I left the church, and, accompanied by my friends, returned to my own house, where, by turning and returning in my imagination all this strange history, I well nigh lost my reason, and now for the same cause, I am about to lose my life.” So saying, he heaved a deep sigh, and gave up the ghost, falling heavily to the ground.



## CHAPTER XI.

*They reach another Island, and are hospitably received.*

IN haste Periander flew to help him, and found that he was indeed quite dead; at which all present were greatly astonished, as well as shocked, by so strange and unforeseen an event. "This dream," said Auristella, "has excused the gentleman from relating to us the adventures of the latter part of his life, the events which led to so disastrous a termination, and to the prison of the barbarians, which must doubtless have been most curious and extraordinary."

To this Antonio rejoined, "Seldom do misfortunes come single, sorrows keep one another company, but however great they may be, they cease with the life of him who suffers." They then gave directions to have him buried in the best manner they could; his own garments served him for a shroud. The snow, instead of earth, was his covering, and for a cross they found one in his bosom, with a scapulary, which proved that he was a knight of the order of Christ. But this mark of honour was hardly necessary to prove his nobility, since it was clearly shown in his manners and language. Tears were not wanting at his funeral, for compassion did its work, and drew them from every eye.

Morning now began to dawn. The boats were again launched, the sea appearing calm and tranquil and half sorrowful, half joyful, between hope and fear, they went on their way, uncertain whither they were going.

These seas were nearly covered with islands, for the greater part uninhabited. Of those that were peopled, the inhabitants were a rude, half savage race, rough in manners, and of insolent and harsh nature; yet, in spite of this, they would gladly have found some human beings to receive them, for they thought it impossible that they could be as cruel as snow-covered mountains, or so inhospitable as the hard and rugged rocks of the other islands.

Ten days more they voyaged on, without finding any port, or beach, or shelter, whatever, leaving right and left little isles which gave no promise of being peopled. They turned their eyes to a high mountain that appeared in view, rowing with all their strength, for their boats began to leak terribly, and their provisions were well nigh exhausted. At last, more thanks to Providence than to their own exertions, they reached the wished-for land, and saw two persons, standing on the shore, to whom Transila cried out with a loud voice, and asked, "What land is this? Who governs it? And are ye Catholic Christians?" They

replied, in their own language, which she well understood, that the island was called Golandia, and that they were Catholics, but that it was uninhabited; so few persons lived there that they only occupied one house, which served for an inn to people who put into the harbour, which was behind a great rocky mountain, to which they pointed. And if, said they, you, whoever you are, wish to repair any damage, keep us in sight, and we will direct you to the port. They, in the boats, thanked God for this, and followed on the water those who guided them on land. On turning round the corner of the rock, that had been pointed out, they saw a little bay, that might be termed a harbour, in which lay ten or a dozen vessels, some large, some middle-sized, and some small. Great was their joy in seeing these, since it gave them hopes of obtaining a change of boats to pursue their voyage in safety to other lands.

They landed; some persons came to meet them out of the vessel, some from the house. The beautiful Auristella arrayed in the same garments with which Arnolfo had adorned Periander, when he sold him to the barbarians, was carried on shore by Periander and the two Antonios, father and son; with her came the graceful Transila, the beautiful Constance, with Ricla her mother; and all the rest of the persons in the boats that accompanied this gallant party. So great was the admiration, amazement, and fear of the beholders, both those from the vessels and those on land, at sight of this burst of loveliness, that they all prostrated themselves before them on the ground, and made signs, as if they would worship Auristella. They gazed upon her silently, and with such reverence, that they thought not of uttering a word, or doing anything but look at her. The fair Transila who, as I have already said, understood the language of the country, was the first to break silence, saying to them, "To claim your hospitality, our until now adverse fortune has conducted us; by our dress, and by our mild demeanour, you may perceive we come for peace, not war; since neither women nor afflicted men seek to fight. Afford us then hospitality, and grant us boats in which we may pursue our voyage, for these in which we have come hither are so worn and useless, that it will be impossible to trust ourselves in them again to brave the perils of the ocean. If you will give us the necessaries we require, in exchange for gold and silver, we are able to recompense you abundantly, and still receive the precious supplies we stand in need of as if they were a gift."

Wondrous to tell, a man, who seemed to be a seaman, answered in Spanish, "He who could doubt the truth of what you say, O beauteous lady, must be an idiot; for even though fraud may deceive, and guilt mask herself in the guise of truth and virtue, it could not be harboured in a form so lovely as that you wear. The master of this inn is courteous, the people who belong to these ships are not less so. Therefore, take your choice whether you will go to them or to the inn,

where you will be received and treated as your appearance deserves.”

The elder Antonio seeing, or rather I should say, hearing, his own language spoken, said, “Since it has pleased Heaven to bring us to a place where the sweet accents of my native land once more sound in my ears, I feel already that my misfortunes are ended. Let us go to yonder hostelry, and, after we have taken some repose, we can arrange how best to return to our own countries, with more security than we have hitherto hoped for.”

At this moment a young man, who was in the main tops of one of the vessels, called out in English, “A ship is in sight in full sail, making straight for this harbour.”

They all crowded together in one spot, without moving a step, anxiously watching for the ship announced as being so near at hand, and when she came nearer they perceived that on her swelling sails was a red cross, and they also saw that there was a flag on the yard arm of her main mast, which bore the arms of England. She discharged, as she came in, two heavy rounds of artillery, and immediately after that, about twenty arquebuses or light guns. They were answered from shore by joyful shouts, as a sign of peace, which was all they could do, since artillery they had none wherewith to return the salute.

## CHAPTER XII.

*Wherein is related from whence came the Ship and who the Persons were that came in her.*

THE salute on both sides, land and sea, having passed as I already told, the ship came to an anchor and lowered her boat. The first person who got into it (after four sailors had arranged carpets and prepared their oars) was an old man, apparently about seventy years of age, dressed in a robe of black velvet which reached to his feet, and girded round the waist with a silken sash; on his head he wore a high crowned hat, lined with plush. A lively graceful lad of about four-and-twenty, dressed like a sailor in black velvet, with a golden-hilted sword in his hand, and a dagger in his belt, leaped into the boat next, and seated himself. Immediately after, a man, heavily laden with chains, and a woman also bound with him, and entangled in the same fetters, were flung down into it from the ship. The man seemed about forty years of age; the woman looked about fifty. He was of an animated and indignant aspect; she melancholy and dejected. The sailors plied their oars, and soon reached the shore. The old man, the youth, and the two prisoners, were carried to land by the seamen and archers who guarded the prisoners. Transila, who with the rest had attentively watched the arrival of the strangers, turning to Auristella, said, "I pray you, lady, to cover my face with the veil you have upon your arm; for, unless I greatly mistake, there are persons in yonder boat whom I know, and by whom I am known." Auristella did as she desired; at the same moment the strangers came up to them, and met with a very courteous reception from all. The old man, in velvet, walked straight up to Transila, saying: "If my science deceives me not, and fortune does not prove unkind, this meeting will show that I am favoured by her." So saying he lifted the veil from Transila's face, and fell fainting into the arms she extended to save him from falling to the ground. It cannot be doubted that an event, so new and so unexpected, struck the bystanders with wonder and amazement. Still more, when they heard Transila say, "O my beloved father! what a meeting is this! what can have brought your venerable grey hairs and your great age into lands so distant from your own?"

"What should have brought him here," interposed the eager youth; "but to seek for the happiness he had lost with you. He and I, sweetest lady and my betrothed wife, came seeking in the north our only guide for a port wherein to rest. Thanks be to Heaven we have found it here! Hasten, lady, to recall your

father Maurice to life, and make me a sharer in his joy, by acknowledging him as your father, and me as your lawful husband. Maurice revived, but only to see Transila in her turn sink down in a swoon. Auristella came to help her, for Ladislaus (so was the young stranger called) ventured not to assist, so great was the respect he owed to Transila. However, as swoons, caused by joy, are seldom of long duration, Transila soon recovered, and the master of the inn now said, "Come, sirs, and let me lead you to a place where, more conveniently and with less cold than here, you may give some account of your adventures." They took his advice and followed him to the house, which they found capacious enough to lodge a whole fleet.

The two chained prisoners were lifted on their feet, the archers who guarded them helped to support their fetters. Some persons hastened to the ships, and with as much haste as good will brought thence refreshments, and all that was needed. They got lights, set the tables, and before anything else was thought of they all began to satisfy their hunger, more with various kinds of fish than meat, for of that there was none, except some birds which are found in these parts in great numbers, so numerous in fact, that being a wonderful and remarkable thing, I think it necessary to give some account of it.

They fix some sticks into the edge of the sea, and among the hidden rocks where the water covers them, which sticks, in a short space of time all that are covered by the water are converted into hard stone, and those that remain out of water are putrified and corrupted, from which corruption is engendered a little bird, which, flying to land, becomes large, and is so savoury to eat that it is considered one of the best eatables known. They are most plentiful in the countries of *Hibernia* and Ireland. The bird is called a barnacle.

The great desire which all felt to learn the history of the new arrivals, made them think the meal long; when it was finished, the old man, Maurice, gave a loud knock upon the table, as a signal to demand attention; all ceased speaking directly, silence sealed their lips, and curiosity opened their ears, which Maurice perceiving he raised his voice and spoke thus:

"In one of seven islands which are not far distant from *Hibernia* I was born; my family is as ancient in its origin as the Maurices, for in giving this name I enhance its antiquity as much as I can. I am a Catholic Christian, and not one of those who go about denying the true faith. I was educated in the study of letters, as well as arms, if that may be called a study. I was fond of astrology, a science in which I have obtained some renown. As soon as I was of age, I married a beautiful and well born lady of the same city as myself, who brought me this daughter you now see here present. I followed the customs of my country, at least all those that seemed to me agreeable to reason, and such as were not I

made a semblance of observing, since dissimulation is sometimes prudent. This girl grew up under my care, for she lost that of her mother two years after her birth, and I lost her who should have been the companion of my old age, and the care of bringing up the daughter fell upon me. To relieve myself of this charge, which is a difficult one to the weary and the aged, as soon as she was old enough to be married, I looked about in order to bestow upon her a companion, and a protector, and the youth I fixed upon was this brave lad you now see with me, — he is called Ladislaus, — first having consulted my daughter's inclinations; for to me it appears both convenient and suitable that parents should marry their daughters according to their own liking, since the companion we give them is not merely for a day, but for a whole life. And from not doing this, have followed, follow, and will follow, millions of inconveniences which often times end in disastrous accidents. Now you must know that in my country there is an old custom, which is, that when the marriage is settled and the wedding-day arrived, the bridegroom and his brothers, if he has any, with all his nearest relations, come to fetch away the bride.

“Now it happened that on this occasion among the kindred of the intended bridegroom were some who, having seen my daughter once or twice, had unhappily conceived for her an ardent passion. How it happened I do not rightly know, only that as this little band of young men were escorting the bride through the city, an attempt was made, on the part of one of her disappointed admirers, to carry her off by force. Upon this a tumult arose, and a fierce combat ensued. In the midst of which Transila, who had at the commencement of the confusion snatched a spear from the hands of an attendant, contrived to escape, and never from that hour have I been able to obtain the smallest tidings of her alive or dead.”

At this part of the story Transila arose, and taking up the tale as her father paused, she spoke as you will read in the ensuing chapter.

## CHAPTER XIII.

*Wherein Transila ends the Story her Father had begun.*

I WENT, as my father has told you, dressed in my bridal garments, escorted by all the brothers and near kinsmen of my intended husband. Among these was one I knew only too well, and feared him for his violent and fierce disposition. He contrived to be next me in the procession, and just as we reached a place where a street led towards the seashore, he whispered in my ear that he could not endure to see me the wife of another, and, seizing me by the arm, he endeavoured to hurry me away in the direction of the street I have mentioned, having previously arranged so, as to have some friends of his own favourable to this wicked enterprise; who, crowding about me, hindered the rest of the party from perceiving what was going on; but the forcible resistance I made, and my loud cries for succour, speedily called Ladislaus and his friends to my rescue. Thereupon a furious and bloody combat ensued, in the midst of which I contrived, unperceived, to make my escape, and rushing through the streets I ran till I came to the seaside, where I flung myself into a small boat that seemed as if sent by Heaven to my assistance, and plying the two little oars it contained, I rowed as far away from land as I could. Heaven seemed to favour my desire of escape, the wind arose and carried me and my small bark fast and far into the open sea. By nightfall the wind had driven me many miles, and at length it drove me ashore upon an unknown coast, where some fishermen received me, and offered me hospitality and lodging. They also offered me a husband from among them, if I was unmarried; but avarice, which reigns everywhere, even among the rocks and wild sea caves, and amidst rough and untaught men, entered that night into the breasts of these rude fishermen, and they agreed, that as I was the property of all alike, and yet could only be the prize of one, and as I could not be divided, that I should be sold to some pirates, whom they had discovered not far off from their fishing grounds. Accordingly, when morning dawned, the pirates having come nearer, I was taken on board their ship, and sold for I know not what sum of money, having first despoiled me of all the jewels I wore in my bridal attire. The pirates treated me kindly, and told me not to be melancholy, for they would carry me to a place, where I should be, not a slave, but a queen, and

possibly the queen of the whole world, if certain prophecies should prove true. How I arrived at the barbarous isles, the reception I there met with, how I learned their language during the time I dwelt among them, and the history of their rites and ceremonies, and the vain result of their prophecies, and the finding of these noble gentlemen and ladies, with whom I am; also the burning of the island, and how we obtained our liberty, I will tell at some future time. I have now said enough, and I wish to hear from my father, what chance has brought him hither, when I least expected it?" Here Transila ended her discourse, leaving everybody enchanted by the sweetness of her voice, and her exceeding beauty, which was surpassed alone by that of Auristella.

Then Maurice, her father, said, "Thou already knowest, beloved daughter, how in my studies and occupations, among many others, good and praiseworthy, that of astrology carried me very far, as it often does those who, when they follow it, are impelled by the natural wish of knowing, not only all things past and present, but also those that belong to the future.

"Seeing thee, then, lost, I marked the hour, consulted the stars, examined well the situation of the planets, noted the positions and the houses which were necessary for my desire, since no science is so deceitful as this — the deception being owing to the ignorance of those who practise it; and astrology is principally deceptive from the rapid motions of the heavenly bodies, which have more influence in some places than in others, and thus the astrologer hits by chance in his judgments sometimes, in order to come to the most probable point, and the best of all astrologers is the devil; although even he, is now and then himself deceived; for not only does he look into futurity through his own knowledge, but also by premises and by conjectures, and as he has a long experience of things past, and so much acquaintance with things present, he easily discovers how to judge about the future, which students in the art cannot do, and they must always judge doubtfully and with no certainty. Thus it was, however, that I discovered that your loss must go on for two years, and that I should recover you on this day, and in this place, to renew my youth, rejoice my grey hairs, and to give thanks to Heaven for the restoration of my lost treasure, making my heart glad with thy presence; although I know that it must be mingled with some fears still, since for the most part good fortune does not come without a counterpoise of misfortune, which is permitted, that we may know no good is eternal, nor is evil suffered to last for ever in this world."

"It will surely please Heaven then to send us a prosperous voyage," said Auristella, who had been long silent.



## CHAPTER XIV.

*Some Account of the two Persons who came in Chains.*

I OMIT this chapter, as it is quite unnecessary for the story, and an absurd relation concerning the two prisoners who came in the English ship with Maurice. The woman, who is called Rosamund, is a very abandoned and wicked person; and at last, in consequence of the excessive infamy of her conduct, she has been sentenced to banishment, and ordered to be set on shore on a desert island, in company with Clodio, a man, whose crimes do not appear to be of a nature that would have brought him to punishment in the present day. "I have," says he, "a certain satirical spirit, and a backbiting one, a ready pen, and a free tongue, I delight in malicious wit, and for a bon mot, would sacrifice, not only one friend, but a hundred. Prisons could never silence my tongue, nor exile move me; threats could not intimidate, nor punishment mend me."

He thought being chained in company with Rosamund, the worst part of his sentence, and declared that death would have been preferable; whilst she, on her side, assures him, that she would have thrown herself into the sea to escape from him, had she not been deterred by the reflection, that she must have carried him into the other world with her, which would greatly increase her punishment there. "Far better," said she, "had it pleased the king to take away my life in my own country, than to make me expiate my crimes by the wounds thy tongue inflicts at every step, and from which not even angels or saints are safe."

## CHAPTER XV.

*Arnoldo comes to the Island where are Periander and Auristella.*

WHILST they were all discoursing thus, a sailor rushed into the inn, crying out, that a large ship, in full sail, was making straight for the harbour; “and no signal has she made,” said he, “by which we can discover what she is, or whence she comes. Hardly had he spoken these words, when their ears were deafened by the roar of many pieces of artillery, which the ship discharged as she entered the port; but all harmless, and not laden with shot — signals of peace, and not of war. The English ship returned the salute, and all the soldiers on board fired off their arquebuses. At the same instant, everybody in the inn hastened to the seashore. As soon as Periander saw the newly arrived vessel, he knew her to be that of Arnoldo, prince of Denmark, which gave him no pleasure whatever; his heart beat very quick, and his spirit was troubled within him. Auristella shared the very same terrors in her turn, for well she knew by long experience how Arnoldo loved her, and she could not settle it satisfactorily in her mind, how the inclinations of the prince and Periander could go on together, without the sharp and bitter dart of jealousy entering into their souls.

Arnoldo was already in the boat, and had nearly reached the shore, when Periander advanced to meet him; but Auristella moved not from the spot, where she first placed her foot, and almost wished that there she might take root, and be transformed into twisted boughs, as was the daughter of Peneus, when pursued by the light-footed Apollo.

Arnoldo, who saw Periander, knew him at once, and without waiting till his men could lift him ashore, he sprang with one bound from the boat into the arms of Periander, which were open to receive him. “If,” he cried, “friend Periander, I could be so blest as to find thy sister, Auristella, with thee, I should have nothing left on earth to wish for, nor any evil upon it to fear.”

“She is here with me, noble prince,” replied Periander; “Heaven, that loves to favour the good, has preserved her for you, pure as she deserves to be.”

By this time it began to be rumoured among the new comers, and the persons that were on the island before, who the prince was that had come in the ship, and still Auristella remained where she was, immoveable; near her were the beautiful

Transila, and the two seeming barbarians, Riela and Constance. Arnolfo came up to them, and falling on his knees before Auristella, he said, "Thou art well found, my polar star, thou that guidest my thoughts; thou beacon that hast brought me to that harbour where my wishes rest."

To all which Auristella answered not a word, but tears gathered in her eyes, and began to bathe her lovely face.

Astonished and confounded, Arnolfo knew not what to think, nor whether this reception proceeded from joy or grief; but Periander, who marked it all, and never lost sight of a single motion made by Auristella, relieved him from his doubts, saying to him, "My Lord, the tears and the silence of my sister are the offspring of joy and surprise; surprise at beholding you so unexpectedly, and tears of joy to see you again. She is grateful, as a well-born maiden should be, and knows the greatness of the obligation she is under to you for the courteous and princely treatment she has ever met with at your hands."

They then went together to the inn: once more the table was spread with viands, and hearts were made merry, for the cups flowed with the most exquisite wines; better could not have been found though you were to sail from one extremity of the globe to another; no nectar ever equalled these wines. This second supper was for the Prince Arnolfo. Periander related to him all that had happened in the barbarous isle, with the finding of Auristella, and all the events and adventures that we have already heard; whereat Arnolfo was much surprised, and all present were anew delighted and astonished.

## CHAPTER XVI.

*They all determine to quit the Island, and pursue their Voyage.*

NOW,” said the master of the inn, “I know not that I ought to say that I feel sorry for the fair weather which all the signs in the sky seem to promise at sea. The sun shines clear and bright, far and wide one cannot perceive the smallest cloud. The waves murmur on the shore with a gentle sound, and the birds are scattered abroad over the ocean, all which are signs of fair and durable weather; a fact which will cause me to be soon left alone by the noble guests whom fortune has brought to my inn.”

“Even so will it be,” said Maurice, “for however agreeable and pleasant your company has been, the desire of returning home will prevent our enjoying it much longer. For my part, I must say, that I think of sailing to-night at the first watch, if the opinion of my pilot, and that of the officers who are in the ship, should agree with mine.”

To which Arnolfo rejoined: “The loss of time is irrecoverable; but, most of all, loss of time at sea can never be remedied.” In short, there was but one opinion amongst the whole party — that they should sail that night for England, to which all were bound.

Arnolfo rose from table, and taking Periander by the hand, drew him out of the inn; and when they were alone, and out of hearing of any one, he said, “It is impossible, friend Periander, but that your sister, Auristella, must have told you of the inclination I had for her during the two years that she was in the power of the king, my father; but so much did I respect her, that no word ever fell from my lips, that could disturb her modesty. I never wished for more of her history than she chose to tell me; picturing her in my imagination, not as a person of ordinary or low estate, but as if she was queen of the whole world; because her modesty, gravity, and exceeding great discretion, prevented all possibility of thinking otherwise. A thousand times I offered to marry her, and with the full consent of my father, and yet I thought the offer short of her merits; but ever she made answer, that until she was in the city of Rome, where she had a vow to accomplish, she could not dispose of herself. She never would tell me her quality, nor that of her parents, nor did I, as I said before, ever importune her on that point, for she herself, independent of all nobility of birth, deserved not only the crown of Denmark, but that of every kingdom upon earth.

“I have told you all this, Periander, because I consider you as a person of understanding and discretion, and because the happiness is not small which I ask at your’s and your sister’s hands, asking her of you for a wife; and promising to fulfil this offer, when and where she pleases; here, beneath this humble roof, or in the gilded halls of Rome; and I also swear that I will conduct myself towards her in all respect and decorum, until this desired hour shall arrive.”

Here Arnoldo ended his discourse, and listened attentively to what Periander would say in reply, which was— “I know well, valorous Prince Arnoldo, the obligations which both my sister and myself are under to you for the many favours you have shown us; and for that you now anew offer to us, of receiving me as your brother, and her as your wife; but, although it seems like madness for two poor miserable pilgrims cast out of their own country, not at once to accept the good that is offered to them, yet I must say that it is not in our power to receive it as we ought to do. Impelled by destiny, my sister and myself seek the city of Rome, and till we see ourselves there, we feel that we are not at liberty to use our own free will; if Heaven permits us ever to touch the blessed ground, and adore the holy relics there, we may then be able to dispose of our own hitherto shackled inclinations, and then mine will be entirely devoted to your service. Also, I will own to you, that if you ever reach the accomplishment of your wishes, you will obtain a bride born of illustrious lineage, and a brother-in-law who will be a brother indeed. And now to the many favours that we have both received, I pray you to add yet another, which is that you will not ask me more concerning our home and our life, that I may not be obliged to tell you untruths, and invent false and lying chimeras, to avoid telling you our true history.”

“Dispose of me as thou wilt, O my brother,” answered Arnoldo, “consider me as the wax, and thyself the seal, to impress on me whatever thou shalt desire; and let us, if it seems good to thee, depart this night for England, as we can more easily pass from thence to France, and to Rome; and in this voyage I will accompany you, if it is agreeable to you that I should do so.”

Although Periander was much disturbed at this last offer, he yet accepted it, trusting to time and delays, which sometimes cause events to turn out better than is expected; and the two intended brothers embracing one another, returned to the inn to prepare for their departure.

Auristella had seen Arnoldo and Periander go forth together, and greatly feared what might be the result of their conversation; and although she well knew the modesty of Prince Arnoldo, and the great discretion of Periander, still a thousand vague alarms oppressed her heart. To her it appeared that as Arnoldo’s power was equal to his love, he might try to obtain what he desired by force; since sometimes, in the bosoms of rejected lovers, tenderness is converted into

wrath, and courtesy into rudeness; but seeing them return so amicably together, and in such peaceful guise, she recovered her spirits again.

Clodio, the backbiter, who knew now who Arnolfo was, fell, at his feet, and entreated that he would interfere in his behalf to get him freed from the company of Rosamond. Maurice related to him the story of their crimes and punishment. Moved by compassion, Arnolfo ordered that Clodio should be released from his chains; and he promised to speak in his behalf, seeing that he was a great friend of his sovereign. Upon which Clodio said, "If all great people occupied themselves like you, sir, in doing good, nobody would wish to speak ill of them; but how can he who does evil, expect that men should speak well of him? And if good and virtuous deeds are often calumniated by human malice, why should the wicked escape? Take me with you, O prince, and you shall see how I will sing your praises up to the very skies."

"No, no," replied Arnolfo, "I do not desire to be praised for the good which it is natural to me to do; and besides, praise is only valuable from the good; it is worth nothing to be praised by the vicious and the bad. Praise is the reward of virtue, if he who bestows it is virtuous; from the vicious, praise is blame."

## CHAPTER XVII.

*Arnoldo relates what befell Taurisa.*

AURISTELLA longed greatly to know what had passed between Arnoldo and Periander, when they went forth from the inn, and waited for an opportunity to ask Periander; and also to hear from Arnoldo what he had done with her maid, Taurisa; and, as if he guessed her thoughts, he said to her, “The misfortunes you have gone through, O beautiful Auristella, have made you forget those who would wish to have a place in your memory. Among these, I myself am one, who could live happy only with the imagination and remembrance, which has so long been all I have had to live upon. That destiny which has made me your’s, has left me no other choice, than to obey you in all things. Your brother, Periander, has related to me much of what has happened since you were stolen away from my kingdom; which recital has excited in me wonder, astonishment, and alarm. I perceive also that your distresses have been so great as to blot out of your memory some recollections that should be strong; you have neither asked after my father, nor for Taurisa, your maid. I left her in good hands, longing that I should seek and find you. I brought her with me in the intention of selling her to the barbarians, that she might serve me as a spy, and discover if fortune had thrown you into their power; but how your brother, Periander, came to me, and what we agreed upon together, he will have already told you. Although I have often wished to return to the barbarous isle, yet contrary winds have always prevented my doing so; and now I was intending to return hither, in the same desire and intention, which Heaven has accomplished with ample and perfect satisfaction, seeing that I am in your presence, O thou cure of all my sorrows. It is two days since I delivered Taurisa into the care of two gentlemen, friends of mine, whom I happened to fall in with amongst these seas; they were going to Ireland in a fine vessel, for Taurisa had fallen sick, and her life was in danger, and as this ship of mine is more like that of a corsair than of a king’s son, and contains neither medicine nor food proper for sick persons, I sent her under their care to Ireland, and committed her to the governor of that country, that he should protect, cure, and take care of her, until I should myself come and fetch her away.

“I have this day settled it with your brother, that we depart to-morrow, either for England, or for France or Spain, and whichever it shall please you to make choice of, I promise you perfect security to carry the pious intentions, of which your brother has informed me, into effect; whilst I, meanwhile, will support my hopes upon the shoulders of my patience, sustained by the trust I put in your understanding of my wishes. And now, lady, think well, I implore and entreat you, whether your inclinations agree with ours, for if it be ever so little displeasing to you, it shall not be carried into execution.”

“I have no will but my brother Periander’s,” answered Auristella, “nor will he, if he is wise, wish to differ at all from yours.”

“Then,” returned Arnolfo, “so let it be, and I do not desire to command, but to obey; for none shall say that I wish to take any advantage of my rank in taking the lead in anything.”

This is what passed between Arnolfo and Auristella; the latter repeated it all to Periander. And that night Arnolfo, Periander, Maurice, Ladislaus, and the two captains, with all those who came from the barbarous isle, held a council together, and arranged their departure in the following manner.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

*How Maurice foresees, by his astrological Knowledge, that an evil Accident will befall them at Sea.*

ALL the persons who had escaped from the barbarous isle dungeons, embarked in the vessel which brought Maurice and Ladislaus, along with the officers and soldiers who guarded the prisoners. And in Arnolfo's ship were accommodated Periander, Auristella, Ricla and Constance, and the two Antonios, father and son, Ladislaus, Maurice, and Transila. Nor would Arnolfo permit Clodio and Rosamund to be left on the island; Rutilio, too, had a berth in his vessel. They took in water that night, and brought from the host of the inn all the provisions they could collect. Having prepared on all points for the departure, Maurice said, that if good fortune preserved them from a disaster that threatened them, the voyage would be a prosperous one; and that this evil which threatened, although on the water, would not, if it happened, proceed from any tempest or hurricane, but from treason, forged and devised by wicked and treacherous intentions.

Periander, who was always in fear when in Arnolfo's company, began to be alarmed lest this treason should be devised by the prince, in order to obtain the lovely Auristella, since he might easily carry her off when on board his own ship; but then he opposed to this, the generous nature of the prince, and would not believe it could be as he feared, since treachery lurks not in noble breasts. But, nevertheless, he failed not to ask and question Maurice very closely, touching the quarter from whence the threatened danger might be expected. Maurice answered, that this he could not tell; only he knew that the thing was to be, for certain, although he softened the severity of the evil, by assuring them that none of those who sustained it would lose their life, but only their peace of mind would suffer, because they would find their plans and designs frustrated and the failure of their best arranged hopes. To which Periander suggested, that their departure might be delayed a few days, as possibly the evil influences of the stars might change, or moderate with time. "No," replied Maurice, "better will it be for us to meet this danger, since it does not affect our lives, than to wait for perhaps some other which may prove more fatal."

"Then," said Periander, "since the Fates will have it so, let us depart directly, and let Heaven do as it pleases, since nothing we can contrive will avert its

wrath.”

Arnoldo satisfied their host with magnificent and liberal gifts for his hospitality, and some in one ship, some in another, each one according to what best suited him, left the harbour, and made sail.

Arnoldo's ship went out of port bravely decked, and adorned with light streamers, and banners, and flying pendants: when she weighed anchor, the mist was dispersed by a salute of artillery; the joyous sounds of the clarion, and other musical instruments, filled the air; voices were heard repeating again and again, “a happy voyage; a happy voyage.” Yet all the while did Auristella sit musing, with her head sunk upon her breast, full of sad presage of ills to come. Periander and Arnoldo kept looking at her, again and again; both holding her dear as the apple of their eye, the end of their thoughts and beginning of their joys.

The day closed in, and night came on, clear and serene: a gentle breeze dispersing the fleecy clouds which seemed else as if they would have met together, Maurice fixed his gaze upon the heavens, and seemed to be again reading there, in imagination, the signs of what he had foretold; and to confirm anew the danger which impended; but nothing could he discover of the quarter from which it should come. In this disturbed state of mind, he fell asleep on the deck; and in a short time after awoke in a fright, crying out loudly, “Treason, treason, treason; awake, Prince Arnoldo, we are killed by your people.”

At this cry, the prince, who was not sleeping, because he was in the same berth with Periander, rose, and coming up to Maurice, said, “What ails you, friend Maurice? Who has offended us? or who will kill us? Are not all in this ship our friends? Is not the crew composed of my own vassals and servants? Is not the sky clear and serene? The sea tranquil? And is not our ship sailing steadily, without touching any shoal, or sunken rock? Does any obstacle detain us? If there is nothing of all this, what are you afraid of, that you alarm us thus by your sudden terrors?”

I know *not*,” replied Maurice; “but, my lord, I pray you let the divers go down, and see that all is safe in the hold; *for* unless it was a dream, I thought we were about to sink.” Hardly had he spoken, when four or five seamen let themselves down into the bottom of the ship, and searched it thoroughly, for they were experienced *divers*. *They found neither hole nor opening of any kind* through which the water could enter, and returned to the deck, saying, that the ship was safe and sound; and that the water, in the hold was thick and stagnant, a clear proof that no fresh water had made its way into the ship. “Then,” said Maurice, “it must needs be, that I, like an old man, (since age is often fearful,) have been scared by a dream; and Heaven grant it may be only a dream; for I would rather appear a fearful old man, than be a true prophet.”

“Then” said Arnolfo, “compose yourself, my good Maurice, for such dreams as these affright the ladies.”

“I will if I can,” he replied; and returned to his place on deck to lie down. In the ship an anxious silence prevailed.

Rutilio, who was seated at the foot of the mainmast, invited by the serenity of the night, and the quiet of the hour; or because he had a very fine voice, and that the sweet sounds of the wind, that gently murmured among the sails reminded him of music, began to sing the following words in his own Tuscan tongue, which, if translated, run thus — The Patriarch in days of yore Fled from th’ avenging hand, Which, to a wide destruction doom’d The whole offending land; But to his servant warning gave, Himself and all his kin, The little remnant of mankind, Rest safe the ark within.

Asylum blest! secure abode!

Which ‘scaped th’ inevitable death That then embrac’d each living thing, All creatures that drew breath.

And there, within that wondrous ark, The lamb and lion dwell In friendship, and the gentle dove Sits by the falcon fell.

And so we see in these our days It often does befall, Such things there are, although there be No miracle at all; The most discordant souls on earth In friendship will agree; If in one common peril joined, In fellowship they be.

Antonio, who best understood the words Rutilio sung, cried, “Well sung, Rutilio, if thou hast thyself composed those verses, thou art no bad poet; though I do not know how a dancing master can be a good one; nevertheless, I am wrong in saying this, for I remember well that in my own land of Spain, there were poets of all professions.” Maurice overheard him speak thus, and so did the prince and Periander, who could not sleep; and Maurice said, “It is very possible for an artizan to be a poet; poetry lying not in the fingers, but the mind; and the soul of a tailor is as capable of poetic feeling as that of a gentleman; for souls are all of equal rank, and of the same nature originally, but formed and fashioned by their Maker, and according to the temperament and disposition of the body in which each is enclosed, so appear they more or less learned and wise, and inclined to study and know the arts and sciences, and other things to which their stars dispose them. But in speaking of a poet, one generally says that he is *nascitur*, born such. I see no reason, then, to wonder at Rutilio being a poet, although he is a dancing master.”

“And so great a one,” said Antonio, “that he has cut capers in the air, even

beyond the clouds.”

“Even so,” answered Rutilio, who was listening all this time; “ I made them even up in the sky, when I travelled in the witch’s mantle from Tuscany to Norway, where I killed her when she changed into a wolf, as I have before told you.”

“That tale about men and women being turned into wolves, is a great error,” said Maurice, “although it is believed by many.”

“How is it, then,” asked Arnolfo, “that it is generally said, and held as a fact, that in England, troops of wolves go about the fields, who are human creatures that have been so transformed?”

“In England,” Maurice replied, “such things could not be, because not only are there no wolves in that fertile and cultivated country, but no noxious animals whatever, such as serpents, vipers, toads, spiders and scorpions; also it is a well known fact, that if any poisonous animal is brought thither from other parts, when it arrives there, it dies; and if the earth of this island be carried to any other place, and a viper be surrounded with this earth, it dares not leave the circle so made in which it is imprisoned, and runs round and round until it dies.” (Note 3.) “All we can understand about the transformation of persons into wolves is, that there exists a complaint or disease, which is called by physicians the wolf-mania; its nature is, that the person afflicted with it fancies himself changed into a wolf, and howls like one; and, joining with others who are similarly afflicted, go ranging about the country in parties, barking like dogs, and howling like wolves; tearing down trees, killing any one they meet, and devouring the raw flesh of the dead. And, at the present time, I know that there are in Sicily, which is the largest of the Mediterranean isles, people of this sort, called by the Sicilians, *Lobos menar*, were wolves, or *lous garoux*.

“These persons know and feel when this terrible infirmity is about to seize them, and they warn those who are about them, that they may fly from and avoid them; or that they may tie them fast, or lock them up; because, if not prevented, they will tear anything that approaches them to pieces, and destroy them with both their teeth and nails, uttering frightful and hideous howlings; and so true is this, that where there is a question of marriage on foot, inquiry is made to ascertain that there is no touch of this complaint in the family; and if on good authority they discover it even afterwards, the marriage may be dissolved.

“Pliny also tells us, in Book viii chap. 22, that among the Arcadians there is a kind of people who, in passing a certain lake, hang their garments upon an ilex, and go naked into the inland country, where they join with others they find there of their own lineage, in the form of wolves, and are with them for nine years, at the end of which they return and pass the lake, and recover their lost figure.

But all this is probably fiction and lies; and if there is anything in it, it is in the imagination, and not real.”.

“I do not know,” said Rutilio, “as to that; all I know is that I killed the she-wolf, and found dead at my feet, the sorceress.”

“This might very well be,” replied Maurice; “for the power of the enchantments of those accursed witches is such, that they can make us see one thing for another; and I am perfectly satisfied that there are no people whatever who change their own first form for any other.”

“I have a great desire,” said Arnolfo, “to know the truth of this; for I too have always been one of those who believed these things; and I should like also to know if it is a fable what is said of King Arthur of England having been changed into a crow, a thing so much believed by that wise nation that no one will kill a crow throughout the island.”

“I know not,” answered Maurice, “whence arose this saying, so generally believed, and so ill imagined.”

In such discourse the night passed away. The day dawned brightly, the sea continued calm, the wind fair. Constance, the fair barbarian, observed that all was fair and prosperous; but that the dreams of the worthy Maurice had so disturbed her, she really thought the vessel was about to go down with them all at once.

“Truly, lady,” answered he, “if I was not a good Catholic, and did not remember that which is said in Leviticus, ‘Be ye not diviners, nor give belief to dreams, because it is not given to all to understand them,’ I should venture to try and explain the dream which put me in so great a fright: according to my way of thinking, it did not come from any of the causes that dreams are usually occasioned by. For when they are not divine revelations, or illusions of the evil one, they proceed either from over eating, which oftentimes disturbs the brain, or owing to what has chiefly occupied one in the day-time. The dream which disturbed me, did not belong to astrological observation; because, without observing the stars, taking observations, marking the points of the compass, or seeing figures, it appeared to me that I could visibly see that we all were in a large wooden palace, that rays came down from heaven, which opened, and through the openings, the clouds discharged not one, but a thousand oceans of water; so that, believing I was going to be overwhelmed, I cried out, making such gestures as persons naturally make when about to sink among the waters. And I confess, I cannot yet shake off the terror I felt then; and as I know there is no astrology so certain as prudence, from which the clearest deductions spring, it may be, that sailing in a ship built of wood, I fear rays from heaven, clouds of the sky, and waves of the sea. But that which most confounds and perplexes me,

is the knowledge that if a danger threatens us it will not proceed from the elements, but from the forge of treachery lurking in some wicked breast.”

“I cannot believe it,” said Arnolfo, “of any that are now sailing in this ship; the blandishments of Venus, or the lures of her false son, cannot enter here. To the honourable and chaste, the greater the peril and fear of death, the stronger is the incentive to keep to a virtuous life, and shun all dishonest deeds.”

This Arnolfo said, that Periander and Auristella might understand, and all the rest who were aware of his love for her, that he meant fully to let all his actions be directed by virtue and honour; and he went on to say, “A good prince lives securely amongst his vassals; treasons spring from the fear of injustice.”

“That is true,” said Maurice, “and it is right it should be so; but let this day pass, and if the night arrives without any alarms, I will give a reward for the good tidings.”

The sun sank to rest in the arms of Thetis; the sea was as calm as before; the wind was fair and steady, not a cloud was to be seen that could alarm a mariner. The skies, the sea, the wind, all promised a prosperous voyage; when Maurice cried aloud, in a voice of terror, “Without a doubt, we are sinking; we sink, without a doubt.”

## CHAPTER XIX.

*Wherein is given an account of what two Soldiers did, and how Periander and Auristella were separated.*

To which cries, replied the prince Arnoldo, ‘How is this, O learned Maurice? where are these waters which overwhelm us? where the waves that assail us?’ The answer was given by a sailor, who rushed on deck with gestures of terror, water running from his mouth and eyes, and in affrighted and scarcely articulate accents, exclaimed, “The ship’s sides are opening everywhere; the sea is rushing in fast — you will soon see it cover the deck! let every man see to his safety, and look best how to save his life. Get the skiff out, or the barge, O Prince Arnoldo, and take the things you value most with you, before these cruel waves swallow up all!”

The ship was now motionless from the weight of water in her. The pilot set all the sails with skill. Every one in fear and terror hurried to seek for some remedy, some means of escape. The prince and Periander got out the smaller boat, and launched it into the sea; they placed Auristella, Transila, Ricla, and Constance in this. Finding that nobody thought of her, Rosamund joined herself to the party, and after her, Arnoldo made Maurice follow.

Now there were two soldiers lowering the barge which was hung on the ship’s side, and one of them seeing that his comrade wished to be the first to get into her, drew a knife from his belt, and plunged it into the other’s heart, crying, “Since our crime has been committed to so little purpose, let this serve for thy punishment and my expiation at least during the short time I have to live.” So saying, without attempting to avail himself of the means of escape the boat offered, he desperately flung himself into the sea; but before he sank, he uttered these half-articulate words: —

“Hear, O Prince Arnoldo, the truth from a traitor; at such a moment he may well be believed. I and he whom you have just beheld slain by my hand, made holes and openings all through this vessel, with the intention of letting it sink, and ourselves making our escape in the skiff with Auristella and Transila, whose beauty we had no power to resist, and we determined at all hazards to carry them off; but having seen our plans defeated, contrary to our expectation, I have taken away the life of my companion, and now resign myself to death:” and with this last word he let himself sink into the depths of the sea, which soon stopped his breath, and buried him in eternal silence. Although all were in confusion and

haste, each seeking safety in the general danger, yet Arnolfo heard clearly the words of the dying ruffian; and he and Periander had recourse to the barge, having before they entered it, directed that Antonio, the younger, should go in the skiff, without remembering to put in any provisions whatever.

The prince, Ladislaus, the elder Antonio, Periander and Clodio got into the barge, intending to join the skiff, which had already left the vessel, over which the waves had now entirely closed, and nothing remained above the waters but the mainmast, as a mark to show that she was there entombed.

Night came on before they could reach the skiff; from which the voice of Auristella could be distinctly heard calling for her brother, Periander, who answered by repeatedly uttering her beloved name.

Transila and Ladislaus did the same, so that the air resounded with the mingled sounds of, “Dearest! my beloved! lover! brother! bride! and sister! whose hopes were all frustrated, and whose prospects were changed from the impossibility of joining one another, owing to the increasing darkness of the night, and the wind beginning to rise, and blow from a different quarter; so that the barge and skiff were separated, and the former being lighter, and less heavily laden, flew over the waves, as the wind impelled it. The latter, from the weight of its cargo, seemed as if determined not to move; and when night shut in darker than ever, they felt their fears revive afresh — in an unknown sea, exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and in want of every necessary of life; without oars, and without provisions, though at present their anxiety prevented them from feeling hunger.

Maurice who had gone with the party, in the capacity of captain of the skiff, knew not how or whither to guide its course; and from the tears, and groans, and lamentations of his fair companions, it was to be feared they would themselves cause it to upset. He watched eagerly for the stars, and although they were scarcely visible, yet from time to time they showed themselves through the darkness, and gave hopes of the night becoming clearer, but still they did not show in what parts they were now voyaging.

The anguish they were in was too great to allow of the relief of sleep; so they passed the night in watching. Day came at last; not, however, bringing with it any comfort, but only more sorrow, because it presented to their view the prospect of sea as far as the eye could discern on every side; and though they gazed anxiously, hoping to catch a sight of the barge, which bore with it their very hearts away; or even some other ship or boat, to give them succour in their sore distress, yet nothing could they discover but an island on the left hand, the sight of which gave them both joy and fear — joy to see land so near, fear lest they should be unable to reach it unless the wind drove them ashore.



Maurice felt more confident on the subject of their safety than anybody; because, as I before told you, he knew by his astrological science that this misfortune did not portend death, but only very great inconvenience to those who had to undergo it.

And so it happened, that at length, by the favouring winds, and the mercy of Heaven, the little boat reached the island, and they came ashore in a spacious bay. Not a human being appeared, nothing but snow which covered the face of everything. Miserable and fearful indeed are the perils of the ocean, since they who had experienced them could rejoice to change them for the worst the land could offer. The snows of this desert coast to them seemed a pleasant prospect; and even its very solitude was welcome.

They disembarked. The boy, Antonio, carried the ladies safe to land; Maurice followed; and the party collected together under the shelter of a large rock that was not far from the bay, in which they landed, having first carefully drawn their boat on shore, since in it, under God, lay their hope of escape.

Antonio, aware that hunger must be at work among them, and that unless food could be obtained, they must perish; prepared his bow which was always slung upon his shoulder, and said that he would go and see if any living creature existed in the island; or anything wherewith to relieve their necessities. With a light and active step the youth set out on his expedition; but nothing did he see, nothing but snow, frozen hard, so that he felt as if he was walking on the sharpest flints.

Fearing that if he prosecuted his search further, he might lose his way; at last, with a heavy heart, he returned to his companions. Maurice said that they must needs venture out to sea again, since nothing was to be hoped for in this inhospitable and lonely isle.

## CHAPTER XX.

*A singular Adventure that befell in the Snowy Isle.*

WHILST they were considering about this, afar off they discovered a ship, the sight of which revived their hopes; she came near, her sails were furled, her anchors lowered, and speedily a small boat appeared, making for the bay where the mournful little party were in the act of embarking in the skiff. Auristella advised that they should delay awhile, in order to learn who these people might be. The boat approached, and ran in upon the frozen snow. Two fine strong-looking young men sprang out, seemingly of brisk and gay temperament; they lifted from the boat the fainting and nearly exhausted form of a young woman, who looked as if she could hardly live to reach the shore.

They called aloud to the party who were already in the skiff, and desired that they would stop to witness an event that was about to take place.

Maurice answered, that they had no oars to manage their boat with, unless they could lend them some of theirs. The sailors, who belonged to the newly arrived boat, brought them some, and then returned to trample the snow. Then the two young men, each being armed with a wooden buckler to protect his breast, and each with a short sword in his hand, again leaped on shore. Auristella, full of terror with the foreboding of some new misfortune, hastened to assist the fainting damsel, and the others followed her. The two young men exclaimed, "Stay one moment, ladies and gentlemen, and hear what we have to say."

"This gentleman and myself," said one of the two, "are engaged to fight for the possession of yonder weak damsel who lies there; the death of one of us can alone decide the question of which is to have her, since we have no other means of settling our dispute, unless she herself would choose which of us she would prefer for a husband, in which case we would sheathe our swords, and calm our spirits. What we ask of you is, that you do not in any way interrupt our quarrel, which we shall carry to extremity without fear of hindrance, unless it should be from you; as you may perceive in these deserts there is nothing we can obtain wherewith to restore the life of this damsel, who is about to cost one of us our own. We are too much hurried to find time to ask you who you are, or how you

came to be in this desert island, without even oars to guide your boat, so that you cannot depart from a place which seems uninhabited even by animals.”

Maurice replied that they would do as they desired in all respects; and immediately the two drew their swords, and without waiting for the damsel to pronounce her decision, began the combat; thus rather wishing to let their quarrel be determined by the chance of arms than the inclination of the lady.

The two combatants fought without observing rules; after a few passes the sword of one entered his opponent's body, and pierced his heart through and through, whilst the stroke of the other cleft his rival's head. He had just life enough left to approach the damsel, and lay his face near her's; saying, I have conquered, lady, mine thou art, and although I have but one brief moment, wherein to call thee so, I yet consider myself the most fortunate of men. The blood of the wounded man bathed the face of the lady, but she was senseless, and returned no answer. The two sailors who had rowed the boat to land, now hastened to assist the wounded man. He who had been run through the body, was quite dead; the other, whose head was cut across, joined his lips to those of the bride he had so dearly bought, and breathed his last sigh.

Auristella, who had been observing all this attentively, but who had not yet seen closely the face of the lady, now drew near, and wiping away the blood which had flowed from the wounds of the man now lying dead by her side, she recognized in the damsel her own maid Taurisa, who was with her when she was in the hands of the Prince Arnolfo; and he had told her that he had committed her to the care of two gentlemen, who would convey her safely to Ireland. Auristella stood looking upon her, astonished and wondering, and sadder than sadness itself; yet her sorrow increased, when it became manifest that Taurisa was no more. Alas! alas! she cried, how does Heaven continue to mark my unfortunate existence with the most extraordinary events: if it were pleased now to finish my misfortunes by ending my life, I should be happy; for the sorrows which find an end in the grave can then trouble one no more, and death may be considered as a boon. What is this net with which my sad destiny obstructs every path that leads to peace and rest? What improbable adventures are these I meet with at every turn? But tears and grief are useless now, and lamentations are of small avail; let us devote the time we have to spare in giving burial to the dead, and let me not afflict the living.” Then she entreated Maurice to ask the sailors who belonged to the ship, to return thither, and bring proper implements for making a grave. Maurice did as she requested, and went with them to the ship, in order to make some arrangements with the captain, or persons in command, that they might receive the party on board, and take them to whatever place they might be bound to.

Meantime, Auristella and Transila prepared the corpse of the ill-fated Taurisa for burial. Their Christian piety and decorum would not allow of her being undrest. Maurice returned with the necessary implements, having also made his arrangements for their departure with the ship. They performed the ceremony of interment for Taurisa, but the mariners refused, as good Catholics, to pay the like respect to the bodies of the two young men, who had died in mortal combat.

## CHAPTER XXI.

*They leave the Snowy Island in the Pirate's Vessel.*

THE ship sailed, some among her crew lamented much the death of the two young officers. Another captain was chosen from among them, and they pursued their voyage without letting it be known what course they meant to take. In fact, the vessel was a privateer, and did not belong to Ireland, as Arnaldo was led to suppose, but to an island in rebellion against England.

Maurice felt somewhat ill at ease, and not quite contented with the company they had got amongst; fearing some harm from their free manners and loose habits of living. He feared that the extreme beauty of Auristella; the great comeliness of his own daughter, Transila; the youth and charms of Constance, with her uncommon style of dress, might awaken evil thoughts among these lawless men. He and the young Antonio served as Arguses, and kept a close and anxious watch over their fair charge. Rosamund, who had been in a declining state for some time, died; the wide sea served for her sepulchre, and her companions, though they could not grieve for her as a loss, yet felt her death with true Christian compassion.

Often did they intreat that they might be conveyed to Ireland, if it was not agreeable to the corsairs to go to England or Scotland; but they answered, that until they had taken a valuable prize, they should not touch at any land whatever, unless to take in water or necessary provisions. Ricla had sufficient wealth in her golden ingots to have bribed them to do as they wished; but she durst not discover her riches, lest they should take them away by force.

The captain assigned to his guests a cabin of their own, and behaved with much respect and attention, protecting them in all ways from the rude insolence of the crew.

And thus, for three months they continued to voyage about — sometimes touching at one island, sometimes at another, and scouring the seas, after the fashion of corsairs in search of gain.

The captain, when the weather was tranquil, and his ship becalmed, tried to entertain his guests with many a tale and history, and Maurice did the same; but the beautiful mourners were in general more occupied in thinking of their lost

beloved ones, than in attending to either. Nevertheless, it happened one day that they lent an attentive ear to a story, related by the captain, which you will read in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER XXII.

*In which the Captain gives an account of the great Festivals which were held, in the Dominions of King Polycarp.*

AN island, which is situated not far from Ireland, is my native place. It is large enough to be called a kingdom, but is not hereditary, nor does it go by succession. The people elect their sovereign by their own pleasure, always trying to secure the best and most virtuous man they can find; and without any intermediate treaties and negotiations, without either bribes or solicitations, the king is chosen by the common consent of all, and takes the sceptre of absolute command for life, or whilst his life continues unchanged in virtues. Thus, those who are not kings, try to be virtuous in hopes of becoming such, and those who are kings, continue good, for fear of losing their dignity; ambition is restrained, and covetousness annihilated. The people live in tranquillity, justice and mercy shine brightly forth. The former is not to be obtained or frustrated by bribes, nor by the claims of kindred. It is a land where none need fear insolence or wrong, and where every man may enjoy his own in peace.

“This custom, which is in my opinion a good and wholesome one, placed the sceptre of the kingdom in the hands of Polycarp, a worthy and renowned man, famous both in arms and learning; and he had, when he ascended the throne, two daughters of remarkable beauty; the elder is called Polycarpa, and the younger Sinforosa. They have no mother, which was a loss he hardly felt, except as a companion, for her virtues and good qualities were revived in her daughters, giving a bright example to the whole kingdom. They and their father, are beloved and admired by every one.

“The sovereigns of this country conceiving that evil thoughts are engendered among their subjects by melancholy, tried to encourage mirth and amusement, and established public festivals, and sometimes plays were performed. The principal of these festivals is held on the anniversary of the king’s accession, when there is a revival of what were, by the heathens in ancient days, called Olympic Games, in the best manner they are able. Prizes are given to the swiftest runners; honours adjudged to the most successful in fencing; crowns to the best archer, and rewards for wrestling. These games take place in a spacious plain, near the sea-shore; the spectators are sheltered from the sun by an infinite

quantity of green boughs intertwined together. In the midst is a sumptuous theatre, in which are seats for the king and royal family, who are always present to survey the games.

“One of these days had arrived, and Polycarp desired to celebrate it with greater magnificence than had ever before been known. He and his daughters, with all the greatest in the land, were already seated; the sound of musical instruments, both warlike and pacific, had given the signal that the sports were about to begin; already four youths, light and active in make, were ready to start for the race, only waiting till a cord should be withdrawn which served as a line of restraint till the signal should be given; when, just at this instant, a boat was seen approaching, with her sides white, as if newly painted, and impelled through the waters by six oars on either side, in the hands of twelve graceful youths, of robust and finely formed make, ample shoulders, broad chests, and strong arms. They were dressed in white, all but the one who steered, and he was in the scarlet dress of a mariner. The boat flew rapidly over the waves, and to run her ashore, and all the men in her to leap on land, was the work of an instant. Polycarp commanded that the race should not begin till it was ascertained who these new comers were, and what they came for, as it was possible they were coming to assist at the festival, and prove their skill and prowess in the games.

“The first who advanced to speak to the king, was he who had steered the boat; a very young man, whose smooth skin was fair as snow, his curling hair like rings of gold, and every feature of his face so perfect, his whole form so beautiful, that it was a wondrous sight to look upon. His beauty instantly won all hearts, and I, among the rest, felt directly attracted to love and admire him. He addressed the king, saying, ‘Sire! these my companions and myself, having heard the fame of these games, come to offer our services, and to assist at their celebration. We are not come from a far country, but from a ship, which we left in the Isle of Scinta, which is not very distant. As the wind did not suit to bring her here, we got the boat ready, and manned her ourselves. We are all of noble birth, desirous to win honour; and what we come to demand of you as a king, is, that you will allow us, strangers, to show our strength, or skill, or ingenuity, so as to obtain renown ourselves, and afford pleasure to you.’

“‘Certainly, my agreeable young gentleman,’ answered the king, ‘you make your request with so much grace and courtesy, that it would be difficult to refuse it; you will honour my festival by your presence. Do all you please, and leave to me the charge of bestowing the rewards on those who deserve them; and if I am to judge from what I see, I should say few will have a chance of winning the first prizes while you are present.’

“The beautiful youth gracefully bent his knee, and bowed his head in thanks,



respectfully, and with an air of high breeding. In two bounds he stood before the cord by the side of the four runners; his twelve comrades placed themselves on one side as spectators of the race. A trumpet sounded, the cord was loosed, and the five sprang forwards at full speed; but they had not run twenty paces, when the new corner was more than seven paces a head; at thirty paces he had gained nearly fifteen; finally he left them half way behind, as if they had been made of stone, to the admiration of all beholders, especially of Sinforosa, who followed him with her eyes, whether he ran, or whether he stood still; for indeed the beauty and grace of the youth was enough to attract every eye, and win the hearts of every one that looked upon him. I observed all attentively, because I had my eyes fixed upon Polycarpa, the lovely object of my affections, and thus I remarked also the motions of her sister. Envy began to rise in the breasts of those who were intending to try for the prizes, when they saw the ease with which the stranger had won the race. The second trial was that of fencing; the boy took the foil, and of seven who encountered him, he hit one on the mouth, the nose of another, closed the eyes of a third, and gave blows about the head repeatedly, whilst not one of his adversaries ever succeeded in touching so much as a bit of his clothing.

“With one accord, the public voice adjudged the first prize to him.

“Then six men prepared for wrestling; and the boy, with more grace than ever, bared his broad shoulders, his wide and ample chest, and the nerves and muscles of his strong arms, and with incredible address and dexterity, he shortly made each antagonist measure his length on the ground. Next he lifted a heavy iron bar, which was driven into the earth, because he was told that throwing this was the fourth trial of strength. He swung it for a moment, and then making signs for the people who were before him to stand aside, that he might have space for the throw, he flung the bar without turning his arm round, with such force, that, passing the bounds of the shore, the sea received it, and there it lay buried. This surprising feat dismayed his opponents, and none dared so much as to enter the lists in this contest. They next gave him a crossbow, and some arrows, and showed him a very high and smooth pole, at the top of which was fastened part of a lance, on which a dove was sitting, tied by a slight packthread. Those who were to make this trial, were only permitted a single shot. One, who was esteemed a very skilful marksman, stepped forward, hoping I believe to knock the dove over, before the other could try; he drew his bow, and the arrow struck the end of the lance, the affrighted bird rose into the air; immediately another, not less confident than the first, aimed with such dexterity, that he divided the string which tied the dove, and released from its bonds, it soared free into the sky; but the youth, who had already gained every first prize, let his arrow fly,

and, as if he had given it its mandate what to do, and it understood him, it went whistling through the air, and divided the bird in two, arresting at once its flight and its life. Then the cries and acclamations of the spectators were renewed, and all praised the stranger, who in the race, the fencing-match, wrestling, throwing the bar, and drawing the crossbow, with sundry other exercises which I have not mentioned, was unrivalled, and bore away every first prize, leaving it to his Companions to make their essay, after he had tried each once.

“It was twilight when the games finished; and when the king Polycarp arose from his seat, with the other judges, who were there to pronounce who were the conquerors, and was preparing to reward the victorious boy, he saw him kneeling before him, and saying, ‘Our ship is left unprotected and deserted; the night is coming on; whatever prizes I have to hope for, coming from your hand, will be highly esteemed by me: but, great king, let me pray you to leave them for another time, when, at more leisure, and with more convenience, I may return to offer my services, and claim them at your hands.’

“The king raised and embraced him; asked his name, and he told him he was called Periander. Then the beautiful Sinforosa took a garland from her head, and placed it on that *of* the noble youth, and with sweet and modest grace, she said as she crowned him, ‘ When my father is so fortunate as to see you return, you will find that you do not come to serve him, but to be served, in every way that is in his power.’”

## CHAPTER XXIII.

*How Auristella became a prey to jealousy when she found that it was her Periander who won all the Prizes at the Festival.*

O MIGHTY power of jealousy! O infirmity, that art so planted in the heart, that thou canst only be uprooted thence with life itself! Ah! beauteous Auristella, stay and reflect ere you allow yourself to become a prey to this cruel suffering! But who can restrain thought within bounds, which is so light and subtle, that bodyless it passes through stone walls, enters human bosoms, and penetrates the deepest recesses of the soul?

I have said this, because, when Auristella heard the ‘ name of Periander pronounced, and having before heard the praises of Sinforosa, and now hearing of the favour she had shown to him by placing her garland on his head, suspicion entered her heart, her patience failed, and uttering a deep sigh, she embraced Transila, and said, “O dear friend, I pray to Heaven that thou hast not lost thy beloved Ladislaus, as I lose my brother Periander. Dost thou not hear from the lips of this worthy gentleman, that he is honoured as conqueror, crowned as the victor, and more attentive to win the favour of a fair lady, than to take the trouble of seeking after the wandering steps of his poor sister? He goes about seeking laurels and trophies in foreign lands, and leaves her among the wild rocks and mountains, and perils of the angry ocean, who by his advice and for his pleasure, am placed amid all these dangers.”

The captain of the ship listened to these words with great attention, and knew not what conclusion to draw from them. He was about to speak, but the words that were going to be uttered were arrested suddenly, for the wind rose all at once with such fury, that he was forced to leave Auristella without an answer, and call to his sailors to mind the sails, reef and secure them. All hands hastened to the work. The ship began to fly before the wind, over a tremendous sea; Maurice, with his companions, retired to their cabin, to leave the deck free for the mariners. There, Transila asked Auristella what meant the sudden alarm that had seized her, caused, as it seemed, by only hearing the name of her brother, Periander; and she could not conceive why the praises and successes of a brother should give her so much disquiet.

“Alas! my friend,” replied Auristella, “so it is, that I am forced to keep

perpetual silence over this pilgrimage I am upon; which seems doomed to be endless, unless life should end first; I am obliged to keep it. If you knew who I am (would to heaven that you might know!) you would see the exculpation of my fears, for you would know then what has given them birth; you would see misfortunes unlooked for, and labyrinths, from whose mazes you would not conceive it possible to escape — you would see how strong can be the bond of fraternal love.

“You would see how natural it is for lovers to be jealous, if I, with great propriety, am jealous of a brother. This captain, my friend, does he not exaggerate the beauty of Sinforosa? and do not you see her crowning the head of Periander? Yes, doubtless; and this brother of mine, have not you seen how beautiful and brave he is? Then, how likely it is that he has awakened feelings in the heart of Sinforosa, that have made him forget his sister?”

“Remember, lady,” answered Transila, “that all this which the captain has been relating, happened before the time of the captivity in the barbarous island, and that since then you have both seen and discoursed with your brother, and have you not found that he loves nobody as he loves you, and cares for nothing but to please you. And I do not believe that jealousy can ever be so strong as to divide a sister from a brother.”

“Daughter,” said old Maurice, “the effects of human love are often as different as they are unreasonable. Do you endeavour to be prudent and discreet enough, not to try and fathom the thoughts of others, nor desire to know more than they choose to tell you of themselves. Curiosity about one’s neighbour’s affairs is to be censured and avoided.”

Auristella heard Maurice say this, and it made her determine to keep her own secret, and hold her tongue; for Transila, who was a little indiscreet, might soon have contrived, to draw from her, and make public, all her history.

The wind abated, without having caused the danger which the sailors feared, or disturbing the passengers. The captain came to visit them, and to finish his story, for he was very anxious to learn what could be the cause of Auristella’s disturbance on hearing the name of Periander. Auristella, on her part, wished much to hear more *of* the history, and to learn from the captain whether Sinforosa had bestowed any other favours upon Periander, besides that of crowning him with her garland; and, accordingly, she asked him the question very modestly, and with caution, lest he should suspect her motive.

The captain replied, that Sinforosa had no opportunity to bestow more favours (since that was the word for the civilities of ladies) on Periander, but that in spite of the excellence of Sinforosa, he thought that she kept him much in her imagination; for after he was gone, when any one spoke of his graces and

charms, she praised them up to the skies; and she had persuaded her father to send out a vessel in search of him, and make him return to his court, which more confirmed his suspicions.

“What! is it possible,” said Auristella, “that highborn maidens, daughters of kings, whom fortune has set in high places, should humble themselves so much as to suffer their secret thoughts to be discovered by their subjects? And seeing that it is a truth, that greatness and majesty do not agree well with love, it follows of course that Sinforosa, a princess, beautiful and free, ought not to have been captivated at first sight, by an unknown boy, whose rank could not be very exalted, when he came, the steersman of a boat, with twelve half-naked companions, as all rowers are.”

“Auristella, my daughter,” said Maurice, “be silent, there are more miracles displayed by love than by any other human passion; so many and so wonderful are they, that they pass in silence unnoticed, however remarkable they may be. Love joins the sceptre with the shepherd’s crook; greatness with low estate. It makes possible the impossible, renders different ranks equal, and is powerful as death. You, lady, well know, and so do I also, the fine qualities and rare beauty of your brother Periander; and it is the privilege of beauty to attract and subdue all hearts. Such characters as his, the more they are known, the more are they loved and esteemed; so it would be no miracle if Sinforosa, all princess though she is, should love your brother; because it is not as the simple Periander alone, that she loves, but as one in whom beauty, valour, dexterity, activity, in short every merit and accomplishment is centred.”

“What, then,” cried the captain, “Periander is this lady’s brother?” —

“Yes!” answered Transila, “for whose sake she lives in perpetual sadness, and all of us, her friends who love her and wish her well, and who know him also, in grief and bitterness. Then they related to him the whole story of the wreck and loss of Arnoldo’s ship; the separation of the barge and skiff, with all else that was necessary to make him understand what had happened up to the present moment. And at this part of their history the author of the first volume leaves them and passes to the second, wherein things will be related which although they do not surpass truth, yet go beyond what one could conceive, since they could scarcely enter into the most lively and expansive imagination.



## BOOK II.

## CHAPTER I.

*Wherein it is related how the Ship was turned upside down, with all that were in her.*

IT would seem as though the author of this history was more of a lover than an historian; for nearly the whole of the first chapter of his Second Book is spent in a definition of jealousies, caused by that which was shown by Auristella, on account of the story told by the captain of the vessel. But, as it appears to me to be prolix, I — shall omit it in this translation, and come to facts, which were as follows: —

The wind changing, and the clouds gathering, night came on very dark and gloomy, and the thunder sending forth the lightning as messenger, disturbed and bewildered the mariners. Then began the tempest with a fury that no power or skill could withstand, for it came all at once and without warning; but nevertheless each man was at his post, doing the work that was necessary if not to save, at least to prolong life. The boldest got planks, that they might have something to support them like a raft, in case the ship should go to pieces. Maurice held his daughter, Transila, in his embrace; Antonio clasped in his, his mother and sister. The sad Auristella alone remained without anyone to support her. She had no hope but in death, and would gladly have even sought it, if her religion had not forbidden this, and religion was now her only resource; so she took refuge with the others, and they in a knot, or rather one might say a heap, lay crouched in the most hidden corner of the ship, to escape the fearful sound of the thunder, and the flashes of the lightning, and the confused cries of the mariners. In this sort of prison they were at least spared from seeing the ship lifted one instant almost up to the clouds, and at another sweep with her very topmast the depths of the ocean below. They closed their eyes, expecting death, fearing it, though they could not see the shape in which it was to come.

The storm increased so as to baffle the skill of the mariners and the care of the captain, and finally the hope of all on board. No voice was heard now, giving orders for this or that to be done; but cries, and prayers, and vows to Heaven for aid, and so extreme was their misery, that Transila thought not of her Ladislaus, nor Auristella of Periander. One of the powerful effects of approaching death, is to blot from the memory all things that belong to this life; and if it is able to make the jealous heart forget its pangs, one may indeed say it can do even the



impossible. There was no hour-glass to mark how time passed, nor compass, nor any means of discovering what place they were in. All was confusion; all were crying, sighing, and praying. The captain was dismayed; the mariners gave up all exertion; human strength was of no avail. The general despair at last made all silent. The rude sea broke over the very deck, and even over the highest masts, which, as if in revenge for the insult, struck as it were into the very sands below. At break of day, if so it could be called, when there came no light with it, the ship remained water-logged and immoveable, which is one of the worst disasters that can befall a vessel. At length a furious hurricane lifted her up, as though by some machinery, burying the topmasts in the depths of ocean, and leaving her keel turned up to the skies, making her a tomb for all who were within her.

“Adieu to all the chaste thoughts of Auristella! adieu to all her pious intentions! Rest in peace, honoured and holy one; no other mausoleum, no other monument canst thou expect, except a few poor frail planks. And thou, O Transita, bright example of maiden purity, though thy bridal bed will not be shared with thine espoused Ladislaus, yet wilt thou in the arms of thy wise and aged parent find that hope which will guide thee to a far happier resting-place.

“And thou, O Ricla, clasp in thy arms Antonio and Constance, thy children, and commit them to Him who now takes away your lives, only to give you a far better one in Heaven.”

Such were the words of the author of this most remarkable and pitiful history, in consequence of the upsetting of the ship, and the certain death (as might be supposed) of all who were in her; and what more he says, will be seen in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER II.

*An extraordinary Event.*

THE ship was, as I have said, buried in the waters, and within her were the dead bodies sepulchred, as it seemed without a hope, and destitute of aid. But pitying Heaven, which sometimes helps the unfortunate, when at the last extremity, so ordered it, that the vessel was cast ashore by the waves in an open bay, which seemed as if it served as a safe harbour, from its tranquillity. Not far off was a port capable of containing many vessels, and in these waters, as in a clear mirror, might be seen reflected the buildings of a large and populous city, which reared its head on the summit of a lofty hill.

The people in the city saw the wreck, and thought that it was a whale or some other large fish that had been encountered by the tempest. A good number sallied forth to see, and ascertaining it to be a ship, the news reached the ears of the King Polycarp, for he was the lord of this city; and accompanied by many persons, amongst whom were his two beautiful daughters, Polycarpa and Sinforosa, he went out to give orders that with capstanes, windlass, and with boats to row round the ship, she should be brought into port. Several men jumped upon the wreck, and told the king that they could plainly hear a sound of knocking within, and they almost fancied of human voices. An old knight, who was standing near the king, said, "I remember, Sire, having once seen in the Mediterranean Sea, in the Gulf of Genoa, a Spanish galley, that in shortening sail had upset like this vessel before us, and remained bottom upwards. Before they turned her over, having first heard a noise, as they say they hear in this, they sawed an opening in the hull, so that they might look into the inside; and upon the light being admitted, they discovered the captain of the vessel and four of his crew all alive therein. I saw this, myself, and the details of the story are given in many Spanish histories. The persons who were thus brought into the world a second time, from the womb of the vessel, are yet living, and if here the same thing should happen, it need not be esteemed a miracle, but a mystery, for miracles are events that occur out of the order of nature, and mysteries are things that seem to be miracles, but yet are not so, only of very rare occurrence."

"What then do we wait for?" said the king. "Let us open this vessel instantly,

and see the mystery, but if this should disgorge anything living, a miracle I shall consider it to be." Great was the haste they made to open the hull, and great the anxiety of all present to see the bringing forth. At last a pretty wide opening was made, — many bodies, seemingly dead, lay within; but one man laid his hands on the body of a woman whose heart still beat, and showed symptoms of life; others did the same, and each man brought out a body, some dead, some living.

All the fishermen were not equally lucky. Those who yet breathed when brought into the air and light, and their faces washed and restoratives given, began to move their limbs and gaze around them, as if awakened from a deep sleep. Auristella found herself in the arms of Arnolfo, Transila in those of Clodio; Ricla and Constance were carried out by Rutilio and the elder Antonio. As for Antonio, the son, nobody carried him, for he walked out by himself, and Maurice did the like. Arnolfo was more full of surprise and wonder than even the newly restored ones, and almost as senseless as the dead corpses. Auristella looked at him, but without recognition. The first words she uttered were, (and she it was who first broke the universal silence,) "Is the beautiful Sinforosa here by chance among these persons, O my brother?"

"Great Heavens! what is this I hear?" said Arnolfo to himself; "what means this strange inquiry after Sinforosa, at a moment when she ought only to be thinking of returning thanks to Heaven for her wonderful preservation?" Nevertheless he answered that she was there present, and asked how she knew anything about her, for of course he was ignorant of all that Auristella had learned from the captain of the vessel touching Periander and his success at the games; and he could not divine the reason of Auristella inquiring for Sinforosa. Had he divined it, such is the force of jealousy, that it would have pierced into the inmost recesses of his enamoured heart like a knife, and would almost have separated soul and body.

As soon as the resuscitated ones had a little recovered from their terror, and those around from their astonishment, they began confusedly asking questions one of another; how those they found on land had come there; and they in their turn, how these had been in the wrecked vessel. Polycarp, seeing that she had filled with water through the aperture which had been made, now commanded that she should be towed into the harbour, and drawn ashore by means of machinery, which was speedily done. All the people who had been in the hull now came ashore, and were received by the king and his daughters, and all the principal citizens, with as much joy as admiration; but what chiefly excited this, especially in Sinforosa, was the incomparable loveliness of Auristella. Transila, too, was very much admired; and the odd, but becoming dress, the youth and grace of the fair barbarian, Constance, (not to mention the comeliness of her

mother, Ricla,) did not pass unnoticed.

The city being near, without more ado they all went thither on foot.

Periander had, during this time, found an opportunity of speaking to Auristella, Ladislaus to Transila, and Antonio to his wife and children; all were relating their adventures to one another; only Auristella was silent, occupied entirely in looking at Sinforosa. But at length she said to Periander, "Is that very beautiful lady, who is walking yonder, by chance the king's daughter; and is her name Sinforosa?"

"She is," answered Periander, "one in whom beauty and courtesy unite."

"Very courteous she ought to be," replied Auristella, "for she is very beautiful."

"Even if she were not so much so," he rejoined, "the obligations I owe to her, my sweet sister, would make her seem fair in my eyes."

"If you go by obligations, and if they help to enhance beauty, mine must then seem the greatest on earth to you, according to those you owe me."

"We cannot," said Periander, "compare things divine with things human. Praise and hyperbole, however excessive, has each its limit. When one says a woman is more beautiful than an angel, it is a kind of exaggeration by courtesy; in thy case alone, O sweetest sister mine, rules fail, and truth only gathers strength from speaking of thy beauty."

"If my sufferings and my miseries have not injured mine, O my brother, I might perhaps believe that the praises you bestow upon it are true; but I put my hope in a compassionate Heaven, that my sorrows may at last be one day turned into joy, and my troubles into prosperity. Meanwhile, I implore you, never to let what you owe to me be erased from your memory by any other charms or obligations whatsoever; but that mine may satisfy your heart, and fill the vacuum there, if you find that the beauty of my mind and person, such as it is, offers a compound of charms that can satisfy your wishes."

Periander was confounded to hear Auristella speak thus. He saw that she was jealous, a new thing in her; since in all his experience of her character, he had never known her before to depart from the bounds of politeness: never before had her lips opened to express any but the purest and most modest thoughts. Never had she uttered a word, that might not have been spoken to a brother, in public as well as in private.

Arnoldo, on his side, was discontented and jealous of Periander. Ladislaus was rejoiced to have again his betrothed Transila; Maurice was satisfied with his daughter and son-in-law; Antonio happy to be restored to his wife and children; Rutilio, with the reunion of the whole party; and the gossip-loving Clodio with the fair opportunity that offered itself of having a fine and marvellous story to

tell, wherever he went, of such remarkable events as these.

They reached the city, and the generous Polycarp treated his new guests royally, and lodged them all in his palace; honouring most Arnolde, whom he now knew to be the heir of Denmark, who had left his country for love of Auristella; and as soon as he had looked upon her lovely face, he confessed that he found there full and sufficient excuse for him.

Polycarpa and Sinforosa assigned to Auristella a lodging in their own apartments; Sinforosa could never take her eyes off from looking at her, thanking Heaven that she was the sister, and not the beloved, of Periander; and adoring her, both on account of her excessive beauty and of her relationship to him. She could not bear her to be out of her sight a single instant; she watched closely her every action, attended to every word she spoke, admired her graceful motions, and took delight even in the very tones of her voice.

In the same manner, and as closely did Auristella watch and observe Sinforosa, but with very different feelings. Auristella's observations were excited by her jealousy, Sinforosa's by simple benevolence and love.

They remained in the city many days, reposing after all their sufferings; and Arnolde was now beginning to plan a return to Denmark, or wherever Auristella and Periander might approve, showing as he had always done, that he had no will but theirs.

Clodio, always idle and inquisitive, had watched Arnolde closely, and saw how much he had at heart the love of Auristella. One day, being alone with him, he said, "I, who have always been accustomed to find fault with princes publicly, without preserving the respect due to their high rank, would now fain, in private, speak my mind freely to you. What I ask of you is, that you will hear patiently the advice I am about to give, and let my motive plead my excuse, if it is displeasing to you." Arnolde was puzzled, not knowing what Clodio was going to say; however, he determined to hear him, and so told him he might say freely what he pleased; and Clodio, satisfied with this safe conduct, proceeded thus:—"My lord, you love Auristella. I may say more, you adore her; and, as I understand, you know no more of her history, nor who she is, than what she has been pleased to tell you; and that is — nothing! You have kept her in your power more than two years, during which, I have heard, you took all the pains possible to conquer her severity, and gain her heart, wishing to make her your's by lawful marriage, and yet that she is as cold and immovable now, as she was the first day you spoke to her; whence I argue, that she is as deficient in understanding, as you are superabundant in patience; and it is worthy of consideration, whether there may not exist some great mystery, causing a woman thus to refuse a kingdom, and reject a prince so worthy of being loved. Likewise, it is mysterious

to see a wandering damsel, her rank unknown, accompanied only by a youth, who though he calls himself her brother, may yet not be so, going about from one country to another, from island to island, exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and to the rude treatment and dangers of the land, as well as of the ocean. Honour is dearer than life itself. A wise man should permit reason to moderate his pleasures, and ought not to give way to his own desires.” Clodio was here about to enter upon a philosophical and serious tirade, when Periander came in, and interrupted his oration, greatly to his annoyance, and also to that of Arnolfo, who wished to hear him out. Maurice, Ladislaus, and Transila also came in, and with them Auristella, supported by Sinforosa, so ill, that it was necessary to convey her to her bed; her illness causing such agonies of alarm in the bosoms of Periander and Arnolfo, that they stood nearly as much in need of a physician as Auristella.

## CHAPTER III.

Sinforosa reveals her love to Auristella.

THE instant that the king heard of Auristella's illness, he sent his physicians to visit her. They discovered that her ailment proceeded more from the mind than the body. Arnolfo and Periander had partly guessed this, and Clodio better than anybody.

The physicians ordered that she should never be left alone, and that they should try and divert her mind with music, if she took pleasure in hearing it, or with any other cheerful amusement. Sinforosa took upon herself the care of the invalid, and bestowed her company upon her continually — a kindness which Auristella could willingly have excused, seeing that it was keeping the very cause of her illness always before her eyes. She could not expect a cure, because she was resolved not to tell what ailed her.

She was at length left alone in her apartment with only the two princesses; Sinforosa soon found an excuse to get rid of Polycarpa; and hardly did she see herself alone with Auristella, than embracing her, and pressing both her hands closely in her own, with deep and heavy sighs, she seemed as if she wished to translate her own soul into the body of Auristella, who was greatly disturbed by her emotion, and said, "What ails you, lady, what mean these signs of suffering; as if you, more than myself, required the aid of a physician? Tell me how I can help you, or serve you; for although my body is weak, my will is strong."

"Sweet friend, how much your offer gratifies me," answered Sinforosa, "and with the same readiness you show in obliging me, I will reply, without any affected politeness, or frigid compliments. My sister, for I must call you by that name whilst life endures, my sister! I am in love; very much in love; but shame, and being what I am, restrain my tongue. Must I die in silence? Is there any miracle that can cure my complaint?"

Sinforosa said all this, with so many sighs and tears that Auristella was moved to dry her eyes and embrace her, saying, "Do not die, O most afflicted lady, with thus constraining your tongue to silence. Cast away for a time shame and bashfulness, and confide your secret to me; for griefs communicated, if not healed, are at least alleviated; if, as I guess, your sorrows are those of love, well

do I know that you are made of flesh and blood, although you look like alabaster; and as I also know that our hearts are formed to be restless, and that they cannot help loving those whom their stars have decreed they must love, whether they will or no. Tell me then, lady, who it is you love; for, as it is not probable that you have, like some in ancient story, taken a bull, or a shower of gold and silver for the object of your worship, it must needs be some man that you adore; and this will not cause either fear or amazement in me, for I am woman as you are, and have my own inclinations and feelings; and though they have never escaped from my lips for maiden shame, yet they might well have done so in the unconsciousness of fever. But the hour will come at last when all disguise must cease; and it may be that in my last will, you will learn the cause of my death.”

Sinforosa kept looking at her all the while she spoke, and treasured every word she uttered as if it were an oracle.

“Ah, me! sweet lady,” said she, “I believe that you were sent hither through such extraordinary ways, by Heaven itself, miraculously sent to this land to comfort and console me in my sorrows; and that you were out of the dark hold of the vessel restored to the light of day, to bring light to my darkened soul, and rescue it from the trouble it has been in; and so, not to keep you or myself longer in suspense, you shall know that to this island came your brother, Periander and then she detailed in regular succession the facts of his arrival, the triumphs and honours that he had won, and the difficulties he had conquered, as we have already described. She further told how the grace and beauty of Periander had awakened in her mind a sort of feeling that at first was not love, but simple kindness and admiration; how in time, with idleness and dwelling upon the subject, and accustoming herself to contemplate his graces, love began to represent him to her, not as a simple individual, but rather as a prince, that if he was not one, he deserved so to be. “This idea weighed upon my mind, and unthinkingly I suffered it to rest there, without making any resistance; and so by little and little I came to like him, to love him, and even to adore him as I have told you.”

She would have said more, if at this instant Polycarpa had not returned, desirous of amusing Auristella, with a small harp in her hands to which she was singing. Sinforosa was agitated; Auristella thunderstruck; but the emotion of the one, and the stupor of the other did not prevent them both from lending an attentive ear to the incomparable musician, who sang the following words in her own language, which Antonio afterwards translated thus — *SONG.*

*If nothing, Cynthia, can avail To win thy lost heart back again,*



*Give way to grief, relinquish life,  
'Tis nothing worth, why not complain?*

*The maiden pride with which thou fain  
The fatal passion would subdue, Itself will strike the murd'rous blow,  
Too late shalt thou thy silence rue.*

*Poor broken heart! thy latest sigh  
Shall breathe at last thy secret woe;  
Far wiser had it timely told Its tale of sorrow long ago.*

*Lamenting thee, the world shall learn  
How deep the love thy heart had cherished,  
And some perchance may vainly grieve  
To think how true a heart has perished.*

Nobody understood Polycarpa's verses so well as Sinforosa; her sister was acquainted with all her wishes; and although she had determined to bury them in silence, she now desired to follow her advice by telling her thoughts to Auristella as she had already begun to do. Many times did Sinforosa visit Auristella, giving her to understand that it was more from civility than inclination: at length she one day resumed the subject of their previous conversation, saying, "Hear me once more, dear lady, and do not be weary of my discourse; my heart will burst if I do not speak; and the fear of this in spite of shame, forces me to tell you that I must die if I cannot obtain your brother's love; his virtues have so enslaved my heart, that, without knowing what may be his birth, country, or means of living, I only see the liberal gifts with which nature has endowed him. For himself alone, I love him; for himself alone, I desire to marry him; and I beseech you not to think amiss of my hasty passion, but do me all the good in your power.

I have immense wealth left me by my mother, unknown to my father. What I am, you see; I may not deserve his love, but do I merit his aversion? Give me your brother as my husband. Be my sister; I will divide my riches with you. I will find a husband for you, who may be one day elected king of this country." Sinforosa held Auristella's hands in hers, bathing them with her tears, as she poured forth her love-sick soul. Auristella wept also; judging by her own feelings what must be the conflict of an enamoured heart; and, although she saw a rival in Sinforosa, still she pitied her; and the more that she had never offended her in any way that could demand vengeance; her fault was the same as her own, her wishes the same. She could not condemn the princess without finding herself

guilty of the same crime. What Auristella was most anxious to discover was, if she had ever bestowed any favours on Periander, even of the smallest kind; or whether by word or look she had ever betrayed her tenderness to him. Sinforosa replied, that never once had she possessed boldness enough to raise her eyes to those of Periander, or look at him but with the reserve she owed to her high rank and station; and that the license of her tongue had not exceeded that of her eyes. "I believe you, truly," said Auristella; "but is it possible that he has never shown you any signs of love? If he loves you, and he surely must, for I do not think he has a heart of marble, beauty such as yours must have touched and softened his. It is my opinion that before I can get over this difficulty, you must try to speak with him, and find an occasion to bestow some modest favour upon him; for sometimes unexpected and unsought favours will arouse and inflame the most lukewarm and careless hearts. If once he answers to your feelings, it will be easy for me to make him satisfy you in all things. The beginning, my friend, is the only difficulty in all things; in love affairs, especially, most difficult. I do not advise you to be either precipitate or forward; for the favours of a maiden to him she loves, however chaste they may be, never appear so; and you must not venture honour for the sake of pleasure. Discreet conduct may do much; and love, subtle master of the art of conveying thoughts, offers opportunity and time to the most troubled, that they may exchange them without any danger."

## CHAPTER IV.

*Wherein is continued the History of Sinforosa's Love.*

THE enamoured Sinforosa listened attentively to the prudent counsels of Auristella; but without replying to them, she returned to take up again the thread of their past discourse, saying, "You shall see, my friend, to what extremities this love for your brother has brought me; it made me send a captain, one of my father's guard, in search of him; and to bring him back to my presence, either by force or by his own good will. The vessel in which he embarked is the same in which you arrived hither, for his body was found among the dead."

"Very probably," answered Auristella, "for I heard from his lips a great part of what you have told me; insomuch, that I had already a notion, although somewhat confused, of your feelings towards him; which, if it be possible, I wish you to calm and compose, till you are able to discover them to my brother, or till I can undertake to find a remedy for you, which shall be as soon as you have told me what is the result of your interview. You cannot fail in finding an opportunity shortly." Sinforosa renewed her thanks to Auristella, and she in return anew expressed her sympathy.

Meantime, whilst this was passing between the Princess and Auristella, Arnaldo was in the company of Clodio, who was dying to disturb or destroy, if possible, the tender sentiments he entertained for Auristella, and finding him alone (if a man can be said to be alone whose soul is continually occupied with one image) said to him, "*I told you, my lord, the other day, how little dependence was to be placed on the volatile nature of woman; and after all Auristella is a woman, though to you she seems an Angel. And Periander is a man, although he is her brother. Now, I am far from wishing to excite evil suspicions in your breast, but merely to create a little prudent caution, and if you think what I suggest is reasonable, I wish you sometimes to consider who you are, the loneliness of your father; how much your presence is wanted by your vassals; the chance that may happen of even losing your kingdom, which is as a vessel deserted by its pilot! I would have you observe that princes are usually obliged to marry, not merely for beauty, but for high birth; not for riches so much as for virtue and noble qualities, that they may give good successors to the kingdom. It lessens the respect which a people owe to the sovereign, if they see him demean himself in an alliance; and it is not enough to say that a king stands*

so high and is so great himself, that it matters nothing if the wife he selects be of low degree. Therefore, my noble lord, either return to your kingdom, or look well and with caution that you are not deceived; and pardon this boldness in me, for although I have the character of being an evil-speaker and a backbiter, I do not wish to be thought bad intentioned; with you I would fain find a shelter, and beneath the shield of your valour I would spend my life, fearing no more the storms of fate, for already a better star seems dawning to amend my character and life, hitherto so depraved.”

“I thank you, Clodio,” replied Arnolfo, “for your good advice, but I cannot profit by it or accept it. Auristella is virtuous; Periander is her brother; and I cannot doubt this, because she has herself said so; and for me, her word is truth. I adore her; there is no denying that the infinite measure of her beauty raises her so far above my desires, that I exist only in her, and for her alone has been, is, and will be, life desirable. Therefore, O Clodio, counsel me no more; for your words are only scattered to the winds, and my conduct will prove how useless is all your advice.”

Clodio shrugged his shoulders, hung his head, and left the prince’s presence, resolved to attempt no more to be his adviser; because, to be so, requires three qualities, the first is authority, the second prudence, and the third is to be acceptable, and the counsel desired. These amorous struggles and distresses were busy in the palace of King Polycarp and the bosoms of the lovers. Auristella jealous; Sinforosa, love-lorn; Periander, uneasy; Arnolfo, pertinacious; and Maurice busy arranging plans for returning to his own country, sorely against Transila’s inclination, who had no wish to go back to a place of which the customs and manners were so rude and barbarous; her husband, Ladislaus, neither dared nor desired to contradict her. The elder Antonio was dying to see himself, his wife and children in Spain; and Rutilio sighed after Italy, his native land. Each had wishes, yet was not a single one of them accomplished; this is the lot of humanity, which though God created it perfect, was by our sin made imperfect; and this imperfection we must endure until we cease to wish for anything.

It happened, then, that Sinforosa almost purposely gave Periander an opportunity of being alone with Auristella, wishing to afford her a means of opening the subject of her case, the sentence of which would be to her that of life or death. The first words Auristella said, were, “This, our pilgrimage, my lord and brother, so full of sufferings and surprises, threatening so many dangers, daily and hourly, leaves me in fear of death; and I wish we could form some plan to make life more secure, by remaining quiet in some place; nowhere shall we find one better than this where we are now, for here are riches offered you

abundantly, not only promises but in reality. And, moreover, a nobly born and most beautiful wife, worthy of being wooed instead of herself wooing you, offers her hand to your acceptance.”

Whilst Auristella thus spoke, Periander regarded her so attentively that he never moved his eye-lashes; he followed her rapid discourse to discover whither her reasoning was going to lead to; but soon going on, she relieved him from his confusion, saying, “My brother! for by this name I must call you, let your condition be what it may, I say that Sinforosa adores you, and wishes to marry you. I say, that she has immense riches and immense beauty; I say, immense, for it is such that it can hardly be exaggerated; and as far as I have seen, she is well-conditioned, of quick intellect, and of manners discreet and modest. According to present appearances, such an alliance would not come amiss to you; we are far away from our native country; you, persecuted by your brother, and I, by my hard fate. As to our journey to Rome, the more we try to accomplish it, the more do difficulties increase; my intentions are unchanged, but I tremble, and I do not wish death to surprise me amidst terror and danger; therefore I think of ending my life in a religious house, and I wish you to finish yours in prosperity.”

Here Auristella ceased speaking, and began to shed such floods of tears, that they contradicted and blotted out all she had said. She drew her arms modestly out of the coverlet, and turned her head to the opposite side from that where Periander was; who seeing things at such an extremity, and having heard her last words, remained without power to speak or move; the sight left his eyes, his breath failed, and he sunk upon his knees on the floor, his head resting upon the bed. Auristella turned hers, and seeing that he had fainted, she put her hand upon his face, and bathed his cheeks with her tears, which fell drop by drop without his being conscious of it.

## CHAPTER V.

*What passed between the King and his daughter Sinforosa.*

THERE are in nature many things, of which we do not know the cause. Some persons have their teeth set on edge when they see a loaf cut with a knife; sometimes a man trembles at sight of a rat; I have seen another shudder over the cutting of a radish: and others leave the table, at a formal dinner, on seeing olives placed upon it. Ask the cause? no one can tell it; and they who fancy they can best solve the mystery, say, that the stars have a certain antipathy with the temperature of the man, inclining him to certain actions, fears, and aversions, touching the before-mentioned things, and others similar that occur every day. One of the definitions of man, is to say that he is a laughing animal, for man only laughs, and no other animal; and I think that we may also say, he is a weeping animal — an animal that weeps.

It is lawful for a wise man to weep for three things. For having committed a sin; when he asks pardon for it; and for jealousy. No other tears suit the dignity of a grave man.

Let us return then to the fainting Periander; and although he weeps neither as a sinner nor as a penitent, he sheds the tears of a jealous lover; but he lacks not one who will both excuse his tears, and even wipe them away, as Auristella did, who had thrown him into this condition more from artifice than honestly meaning all she said. He at length recovered his senses, and hearing steps in the apartment, he turned his head and saw beside him Ricla and Constance, who were come to visit Auristella. He seized the opportunity of departing, not finding words wherewith to answer his mistress, so he retired to consider the advice she had given him.

Sinforosa, meanwhile, was longing to hear the sentence that had been pronounced in the court of love, on the first hearing of her suit; and she would, doubtless, have been first to visit Auristella instead of Ricla and Constance, but that she was prevented doing so, by receiving a message from the king her father, who required her immediate presence. She went to him, and found him alone. Polycarp made her sit near him; and, after a few moments' silence, in a low voice (as if he feared being overheard) he said, "Daughter, although thy

tender youth has probably kept thee in ignorance of that passion which is called love; and although my maturer age might well preserve me from its jurisdiction, yet nature will sometimes deviate from its regular course, lighting up the flame of love in the bosom of a mere girl, and consuming with its blaze the dry heart of the old man.”

When Sinforosa heard her father speak thus, she never doubted but that he knew her wishes, nevertheless she was silent, not liking to interrupt him, until he should have spoken more clearly; in the meantime her heart was beating quickly. Her father went on, saying, “After I lost your mother, O my daughter, I devoted myself to the study of your gratification and comfort. I have done in all things as you advised, and as you well know have hitherto preserved strictly and carefully the state of widowhood, as much for the sake of my own character as to keep the Catholic faith which I profess; but since the arrival of these new guests in our city, all the former regularity of my mind has been disconcerted, and the steady course of my life has been disturbed; and, finally, I have fallen from the summit of my boasted discretion, to the very lowest abyss of I know not what desires, which I must die of, if I keep silence, and if I declare them I am disgraced. No longer will I keep you in suspense, daughter, no longer will I be silent. If you would hear further, know that I am dying for love of Auristella; the rays of her bright beauty have penetrated even to the depths of my dried-up heart. I would wish, if it were possible, in giving to you and your sister a step-mother, that her great merits should excuse my so doing; if you agree with me, I care for nothing else that will be said; and as to that, if people think me mad, I will leave my kingdom, and reign only in the heart of my Auristella. There would then be on earth no monarch who could be compared to me. Now, daughter, it is my wish that you should tell her of this, and learn from her what is very important for me to know, (although I do not believe she will make many difficulties,) whether her prudence will esteem my station and authority enough counterpoise to my age, and whether my riches may be set against the difference of our years. It is a great thing to be a queen; it is a great thing to command. Honours are enjoyable things; and amusement and pleasure are not only to be found in marriages where the ages are equal. In reward for this embassy that I employ you in, I am thinking of improving your own condition; if you are as wise as I think you are, you will scarcely desire anything better. Look you, now, there are four things which a person of high rank requires; these are, a good wife, a good house, a good horse, and good armour. The two first are equally necessary for a woman, and even more so, for the wife does not raise her husband, but the husband does raise the wife; so, Auristella, let her be who she may, being my wife will become a queen; and her brother, Periander, being my brother-in-law, and I giving him to

you as a husband, and honouring him with the title of my brother, you will be as great in being his wife, as in being my daughter.”

“But,” said Sinforosa, “how do you know, Sire, that Periander is not already married, and even if he is not, that he wishes to marry me?”

“I think,” said the king, “that one may presume he is unmarried, from his wandering life through foreign countries, a thing incompatible with domestic life. That he will love you, I feel assured, both from his well known sense and prudence, which will point out the advantages of such an alliance; and since the beauty of his sister makes her a queen, it would not be wonderful that yours should make him wish to be your husband.”

With these last words, and with this fair prospect, did the king delight Sinforosa’s fancy; thus gratifying all her desires; and she, without crossing those of her father, promised to undertake his negotiation of a marriage with Auristella, and accepted the offer of the yet unnegotiated one with Periander; only she said that it was best to be cautious in giving him to her as a husband; for even if the qualities of his mind equalled his valour, it would be as well not to be too hasty till the experience of a few more days should have confirmed their opinion; and yet at this moment, to obtain him for a husband, she would have given all she had or desired to have in the world; so in the case of illustrious ladies, the tongue says one thing while the heart feels another.

While this was passing between Polycarp and his daughter, in another room a conversation was going on between Rutilio and Clodio. “Look you, now, friend Rutilio, what is this Arnolfo doing here, following Auristella like her shadow, and leaving his country to the care of his old father, who is nearly in his dotage — almost beside himself at one moment, overwhelmed at another, weeping here, sighing there, and bitterly complaining of the fate he himself has worked out? What are we to think of this Auristella and her brother; a pair of vagabonds, concealing their birth, perhaps, to make it doubtful whether they may not be of an illustrious family; for he who quits his country, and goes where nobody knows him, may easily give himself any parentage he pleases, and even if he be sufficiently skilful may pretend to come from the sun or moon. I don’t deny that they are both worthy of being admired and praised, but they may be this without prejudice to a third person. Honour and praise are due to virtue, but not to deceit and hypocrisy. Who can he be, this wrestler and fencer, this runner and leaper, this Ganymede, this charmer, who is bought here and sold there, who acts as an Argus to the delicate Auristella, and will hardly let anybody look at her too near? No one knows who they are, or whence they came, or where they are going? But that which disturbs me most of all is, that, by the eleven heavens, which they say there are, I swear to you, Rutilio, I cannot persuade myself they are brother and



sister; even if they are, I cannot divine why they are journeying about by sea and land; they have nothing to spend but what comes out of the wallets and sacks full of golden ingots that belong to the barbarians, Ricla and Constance. It is true that the diamond cross and the two pearls, which Auristella wears, are an immense treasure, and of great value, but they are not things to be changed or pledged by little and little. Then to think that they always find kings to give them hospitality, and princes to make favourites of them, as if they were privileged ones! And then, Rutilio, what are we to think of the fancies of Transila and of the father, who imagines himself the first astrologer of the age? I would lay any wager that Ladislaus would gladly be at home in his own country, in peace and quiet, instead of being forced to live upon the charity of others. And this our Spanish barbarian, whose arrogance is so excessive, I would lay anything that if Heaven should restore him to his own country he would be a fine boaster, going about showing his wife and children in their skin dresses, making plans and pictures of the barbarous isle, and pointing out with a rod the place where he was shut up for fourteen years; the dungeon of the captives; and telling the whole history of the ridiculous ideas and expectations of the barbarians, and the sudden conflagration of their island. He would just do like those who, when freed from Turkish slavery, carry their chains on their backs, having got rid of them on their legs, and relate the tale of their misfortunes with piteous voices, and humble prayers for charity in Christian lands. But this shows that although it appears as if they told us very improbable things, yet that the human race is subject even to greater perils, and the histories that are related by exiles, however marvellous, are yet credible.”

“To what does all this lead, O Clodio:” said Rutilio.

“I was going on to show thee, O Rutilio, that in these regions thou canst not well avail thyself of thy profession, where the inhabitants neither dance nor enjoy any other pastimes save such as Bacchus offers in his jocund cup and wanton drinks: It seems to me, that having by the blessing of Heaven and the courtesy of Arnolfo, escaped death, I would neither thank one nor the other, till I had tried to amend my lot, although it should be at the price of displeasing the latter. Friendship may endure between the poor, for equality of fortune helps to link hearts together. Between the rich and the poor friendship can never last, there is too much difference between them.”

“Thou art a philosopher, Clodio,” said Rutilio, “but I cannot imagine what means we can take to amend our lot, as thou sayest, supposing it to have been bad from our birth.

I am not so learned as thou art, but I plainly see that those who are born of lowly parentage, if Heaven does not sufficiently aid them, very seldom rise to

any very notable situation, unless their own great virtue and merit assists them. Now, how canst thou expect such assistance, if thine consists chiefly in speaking ill of thy fellow men? and what is to elevate me, when the utmost that I can do is to cut a caper? I am a dancer; thou art a backbiter. I, condemned to the gallows in my own country; thou, banished from thine for evil speaking. How can we expect to improve our condition?"

Clodio was silent, and paused before he replied; with which pause the author ends this chapter of his history.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Sinforosa makes her Father's wishes known to Auristella.*

EVERY one of our party had somebody with whom to exchange confidential conversation — Polycarp with his daughter; Clodio, with Rutilio; but the astounded Periander held converse with himself alone; for the discourse that Auristella had held so bewildered him, that he knew not where to turn for relief to the trouble of his mind. “O Heaven!” he said to himself, “what can this mean? Has she forgotten our agreement? Has she lost her senses? Auristella, my betrothed wife? what have I to do with Sinforosa? What kingdoms, what wealth could make me leave my Sigismunda, unless I cease to be Persiles?” As he uttered these words, he bit his lips, and looked around to see that no one heard what he said, which having ascertained, he went on, saying, “Doubtless, Auristella is jealous, and the jealous can imagine anything, and be jealous of the very wind that blows, the sun that shines, the ground you tread upon. O lady mine, be careful what you do; injure not your own worth, nor your beauty, nor deprive me of the glory of my constancy, the honesty and strength of which is weaving for me an inestimable crown as a true lover. Beautiful, rich, and highborn is Sinforosa; but, compared with you, she is ugly, she is poor, she is low-born; consider, lady, that love is engendered either by choice or destiny. The love which is fated always comes to pass in its own time. That which is from choice, may increase or diminish as the causes which excited the affection increase or diminish; and this being true, for true it is, I feel that my love for you has no bounds wherewith to measure it, no words wherein to express it.

I may almost say, I have loved you since I was in the swaddling clothes of my infancy. That proves it was my destiny; but as I grew in years and in understanding, that love grew also, with the qualities in you that made you so loveable. I saw them, I contemplated them, I knew them, and I engraved them upon my heart, and from your heart and mine there was formed one, so single and united that it can only be divided again by death. Talk no more, then, my beloved one, of Sinforosas, nor offer to tempt me with beauty, or wealth, or kingdoms. Still let the sweet name of brother sound in mine ears all that I am now saying to myself I would fain say to you; but it would be impossible, for the

glances of those bright eyes, especially when they are angry, disturb me and chain my tongue. It is better to write, for the words will be the same and you can read them over and over again, and ever find in them one same truth, one constant faith, and an earnest desire to be believed. I resolve then to write to you.” And with this determination he became calmer, and the more that he felt he could better express his feelings by the pen than by speech. We will leave Periander to write his letter, and go to hear what passed between Auristella and Sinforosa, who was longing to know what Periander had said, and therefore sought to see her alone, and at the same time to break to her father’s wishes; believing that they need only be declared to be accepted, since riches and honours are rarely despised especially by women, the greater number of whom are by nature avaricious, as they are also for the most part proud and haughty.

Auristella felt very little pleased to see Sinforosa, for she did not well know what to say to her, not having seen Periander again. However, Sinforosa before entering upon her own affairs, wished to settle those of her father; imagining that with these news, which she thought so calculated to give her pleasure, she should have her on her side, on which she thought her success would depend; so she said, “Without a doubt, most beautiful Auristella, Heaven favours you; for it appears to me that it would shower prosperity upon your head. The king, my father, adores you, and has told me to say, that he desires to take you for his wife; and, as a recompense for the hoped for ‘Yes!’ that I am to bring him, he has promised Periander to me as a husband. You are already, lady, a queen, already is Periander mine; already riches pour upon you; and, if you do not object to the gray hairs of my father, you will find pleasure in the authority you will have over the subjects and vassals who will be eager to serve you. I have told you much, dear lady, and much have I to expect at your hands; for when a thing is of great value, one cannot expect less than a great gratitude. Let us begin to consider ourselves as two sisters-in-law, who love each other dearly, and tell me now what your brother said in reply to what you told him of me? I feel confident that the answer is favourable, for it is natural that your words should be received as oracles by him.”

To all this Auristella answered, “My brother is grateful as a gentleman, and discreet as a pilgrim, who has seen and read much; and watched the ways of men. The sufferings and troubles we have experienced have made us know fully the value of quiet and repose; and since what is now offered to our acceptance is such, I do not doubt that we shall have to agree with it; but as yet Periander has never said a word, nor do I know anything from him that can either forward or depress your hopes. Allow him time, O beautiful Sinforosa, and let us consider well these offers; for although we quite appreciate their value, yet a step that we

can only take once, can never be retaken if it happen to be an error. Marriage is one of these actions; therefore it is desirable that we should consider it thoroughly before resolving upon it. Go, I pray you, my sister, and let Periander be sent for to me, for I could wish to let him know this joyful news that you have just told me, and take counsel with him how it will beseem me to act; for I owe respect and obedience to him as an elder brother.”

Sinforosa made no reply, but embraced and left her, to go and give orders that Periander should be sent for. He, meanwhile, had been shut up alone and had taken his pen, and after many beginnings and blottings out, and addings to, he had at length completed a letter which ran thus: —

“Not daring to trust to words, I use the pen; not, however, that I trust even to this, for how can he who is momentarily in fear of death write anything to the purpose.

II — have just learned that even the wise and prudent do not always know how to give advice. Forgive me if I cannot accept yours. It seems to me that either you do not know me, or you have forgotten yourself. Be yourself again, dear lady, and do not allow a vain emotion of jealousy to transport you beyond the bounds of reason and the use of your own fine understanding. Think well who you are, and do not forget who I am. In yourself you will see the epitome of all that is valuable or to be desired; and in me all that can be conceived of true love and constancy. Trusting in this, fear not that any other charms can inflame my heart, nor believe that any other can come before your virtue and beauty. Let us proceed on our journey, let us fulfil our vow, and cast aside all fruitless jealousies and baseless suspicions. With the more eagerness and speed would I entreat you to leave this country, because it seems to me that in quitting it I shall escape from the purgatory of torment I now endure, and enter the glorious heaven which will re-open for me, when I no longer see you a prey to jealousy.”

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Thus wrote Periander, after having made six copies, and folding the paper, he went out to see Auristella, having received her message.

## CHAPTER VII.

*How Rutilio, being enamoured of Polycarpa, and Clodio of Auristella, wrote Letters declaring their Love; Rutilio, perceiving he has done wrong, burns his Letter without showing it, but Clodio determines to present his to Auristella.*

RUTILIO and Clodio, the pair who were disposed to try and mend their fortunes; one, trusting to his abilities, and the other to his impudence; thought themselves worthy of aspiring, one to Polycarpa, the other to Auristella. The sweet voice and lively air of Polycarpa pleased Rutilio infinitely, and the peerless charms of Auristella no less delighted Clodio.

They sought an opportunity to unfold their wishes without getting into any scrape by the declaration, for assuredly it was a bold thing for a low-born man to give utterance to that which it was daring even to think of. However, it does sometimes happen that the inclinations of a high-born, though not virtuous lady, may embolden a low-born man to declare his wishes; but certainly in the present case, the boldness of these two gentlemen did not spring from any encouragement or want of reserve on the part of their ladies, spring whence they might. Rutilio at last wrote a letter to Polycarpa, and Clodio to Auristella, as follows: —

*Rutilio to Polycarpa.*

“I am, lady, a foreigner; and, although I should tell you my birth was illustrious, as I can bring no witnesses to confirm it, possibly it might find no belief in your mind; but as a proof that my family is noble, suffice it that I am bold enough to tell you I adore you; ask what proofs you please, to show the truth of this. It is for you to ask, for me to give them. And since I desire to obtain you for my wife, imagine that I desire according to what I am, and that I deserve that which I desire; for noble minds aspire to noble things. Let your eyes give an answer to this letter; and by the mildness or severity of their glance, I shall judge whether it is the sentence of death or life.” Rutilio put up this letter, intending to give it to Polycarpa the first opportunity. He showed it, however first to Clodio, and Clodio gave him the letter he had written to Auristella, which ran thus: —

*Clodio to Auristella.*

“Some persons are entangled in the chains of love by the bait of beauty; others, by that of lively and pleasing manners. Some, by the merit they discover in her who has subdued them; but I have put my neck into the yoke, and lost my freedom through compassion. It must indeed have been a heart of stone, O beauteous lady, that felt not pity in seeing you bought and sold and placed in such sad circumstances that your last moment often seemed at hand. The pitiless steel has threatened your throat; the flames have reached even your very garment. The cold snow has frozen you, and hunger has enfeebled and faded the bloom upon your cheeks, and lastly the sea engulfed and then cast you forth. What aid in all these sufferings have you had unless it be the slight assistance of a wandering prince, who follows you only for his own ends, or that afforded by your brother, (if indeed he is such,) that can relieve you from your miseries. Trust not lady, to distant promises, but cling to succour which is near at hand, and accept a means of safety which Heaven offers to you. I am a bachelor; I have abilities that will avail me even in the most remote corners of the world. I will form a plan to remove you from this land, and the importunities of Prince Arnoldo, and taking you from this Egyptian bondage, will bring you into a land of promise — Spain, France, or Italy (as I cannot live in England, my own dear and beloved country). I here then offer to be your husband; and from this moment I accept you as my bride.”

Rutilio having read this letter, said, “Truly, I think we have both lost our wits to suppose we can fly without wings, our own pretensions being to crawl like the emmet. In my opinion, Clodio, it will be *best to destroy* these letters, for we are neither of us really in love, and only an idle and absurd fancy has urged us to write in this way.! Love must have some foundation to rest upon, or it cannot exist; failing this, it fails entirely. Now what have we to expect for our pains but the rope to our necks, or the knife to our throats, the more, because in this declaration of love we are traitors as well as ingrates. Dost thou not see the immense distance that exists between a dancing-master, who mended his means by becoming apprentice to a silversmith, and the daughter of a king? And that which exists between a banished backbiter and one who refuses and scorns a crown? Let us forget our folly, and repent that necessity should have brought us to such a pass. At any rate, this letter of mine shall go into the fire, or be cast to the winds ere it reaches Polycarpa.”

“You may do as you please with your’s,” answered Clodio; “as for mine, whether I give it to Auristella or not, I intend to keep it as a sample of my cleverness; but I doubt if I do not give it to her that I shall find my conscience

reproach me during the rest of my life for having repented; it does not always follow that when one makes an attempt one is to be punished for it.”

This conversation passed between our two pretended lovers, but in fact impudent knaves. In the meantime Periander had succeeded in having a private interview with his Auristella. He entered her room intending to give her the letter he had written, but when he saw her, forgetting all the discourses and exculpations, which he had prepared, he said, “Lady, look at me, am not! Periander, who was Persiles; and am I not that Periander whom you loved? Can anything untie the knot that binds us two together but death? and if it be so, what can you mean by giving me advice so much against truth? By the bright heaven above us, and by thine own brighter self, I implore thee to name Sinforosa no more, nor imagine that either her beauty or her riches can avail to make me forget thee and thy incomparable charms both of body and soul. This body of mine, which only breathes for thee, I once again offer to thee, although not possessing more advantages now than when I first offered it to thy acceptance. Try to recover your health, dearest lady, that we may quit this country, and I will try to contrive that we may pursue our journey; for although Rome is the Heaven upon earth, still it is not in the skies; and neither danger nor suffering shall prevent us from reaching it at last, however we may be delayed in doing so.”

Whilst Periander was speaking, Auristella was regarding him with tenderness, and with tears of mingled compassion and jealous feeling; but, finally, his lover-like pleading and the truth that shone through every word, had their effect upon her jealous spirit, and she answered in a few words, thus; “I do believe thee, beloved one, and have nothing to desire but that thou wilt as speedily as may be take me from this place. In another land I may hope to recover from the fever of jealousy that has confined me to this bed.”

“If,” said Periander, “I had given the smallest cause for your thus suffering, I would patiently hear your complaints, and you would find in my exculpations a remedy for your sorrows; but as I have never offended you in anything, I know not how to excuse myself. But I will hasten to do as you require, and we will leave this country as soon as possible.”

“Would you know something that concerns you nearly?” she replied. “Then hear the flattering offers which I have just received, the least of which is a kingdom. Polycarp, the king, wishes to have me for a wife; he sent to tell me this by his daughter, Sinforosa, and she hopes through my good offices (I being her mother-in-law) to obtain you as a husband. You know best whether this can be. If we are in any danger, think well over it, and take what remedies you think proper for the case: and pardon me for those doubts and suspicions whereby I have offended you; love will excuse such faults as these.”



“It is said,” answered Periander, “that love cannot exist without jealousy, and jealousy is often caused by the most trivial things. All I ask of you, and which you owe to an understanding like yours, is, that henceforth you should view my conduct with more candid and less punctilious eyes, (with eyes more beautiful would be impossible,) but not making of any small fault of mine, small as a grain of mustard-seed, a mountain which reaches the skies, from which jealous fancies spring; and for the rest, use your own judgment in dealing with the king and Sinforosa, and do not offend her, but feign to give hopes that may lead them to expect what they desire. And now I will leave you, that our long interview may not lead to any suspicion.” So saying, Periander departed, and in leaving the room he met Clodio and Rutilio. Rutilio had just torn up the letter he had written to Polycarpa, and Clodio had folded up his and put it into his breast. Rutilio had repented of his folly, but Clodio was satisfied with his own cleverness and proud of his boldness: however, the time will come when he would gladly give half his life (supposing a life to be divideable) not to have written that letter.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*What passed between Auristella and Sinforosa. All the Strangers resolve to quit the Island.*

KING Polycarp greatly enlivened by his amorous intentions, and quite confident and secure as to what Auristella's decision would be, set himself already to plan the festivals and rejoicings, which should celebrate the approaching wedding; in all which he never paused to consider the great disparity between his age and the intended bride's — the enormous distance of seventeen years and seventy; and even had he been sixty, the difference would still have been too great. Thus are even the wisest of men led away by the follies that love leads them into. Thus, are they who have not power to resist their amorous inclinations, subdued and carried away by the soft influence of the tender passion. Quite different was the case of Sinforosa, who felt no ways certain of what her fate would be; for, as is most natural, they who hope much, fear much; and those things which might have given weight to her hopes, such as her beauty, rank and station, and great merits, she considered as nothing, for it is a peculiar property of true love to make its votaries fearful that they are not worthy of the beloved object. Love and fear are so coupled together, that one is always to be found with the other; and true love is not arrogant, as some say, but humble, timid and retiring; and the more precious and inestimable is the thing beloved, the more does the lover tremble, lest by some fault of his own he should lose it. The fair Sinforosa considered all this quite differently from her father, and agitated between hope and fear, she went to seek Auristella, and learn from her what she had to expect. When she found herself with Auristella, and alone, as she desired to be, so anxious was she to know whether the tidings she had to impart were good or bad, that without uttering a single word, she fixed her eyes earnestly on her face, in order to discover there, the verdict of life or death. Auristella understood her meaning, and half-smiling, as if in token of encouragement, she said, "Although, lady, it does not seem that fear need put an axe to the root of your tree of hope, to cut it down; yet true it is that both your happiness and mine will have to be delayed some time, though it may at last come to pass; for there are certain impediments in the way of your desires, but not enough to make you despair of ever attaining them. My brother says, that such is your merit and beauty, they

must perforce win the love of any man, and he is very sensible and grateful for the preference you honour him with, and for your wish to become his wife; but before this desirable event can be realized, it will be necessary to deprive the Prince Arnaldo of his hopes of obtaining me as his wife, and without doubt, this must be done if you should marry my brother; for you must know, my sister, that I can no more exist apart from Periander than can a body exist without a soul. Where he dwells, there must I too dwell; he is the spirit that animates me — and this being so, if he marries in this country, how could I live in Arnaldo's land, and my brother absent?

“Now, to escape this misfortune that threatens me, it is settled that we are to go with him to his kingdom, and from thence we shall ask leave to go to Rome, for the performance of a vow, to fulfil which, brought us from our own country, and I well know by experience that he will refuse me nothing I desire. Once at liberty, it will be easy to return to this island, and, by cheating his hopes, accomplish our own; I, marrying your father, and you, my brother.”

To which Sinforosa answered, “How shall I thank you sufficiently, sweet sister, for all you have said; and so I will leave it as it stands, for I know not how to express myself. But what I would now wish to say, you must take more as a warning than a counsel; you are at present in this country, where my father rules, and he both can and will defend you from the whole world; and I do not think it would be well to place your safety in doubt. Would it not be very possible for Arnaldo to carry both you and your brother off by force; and is it not indispensable, if you agree to my father's wishes, that he should retain you in his own kingdom and house? Only give me the assurance that you willingly become my father's wife, and that your brother disdains not to be my lord and husband; and I will speedily smooth away all the difficulties that can possibly arise on Arnaldo's part.”

To which Auristella answered, “Prudent men look to the future as well as to the present and the past. To inculcate your father in any forcible act of detention, would awaken the wrath of Prince Arnaldo, and he is a powerful prince, at least as great as your father; and a deceived and disappointed monarch soon thinks of vengeance, and thus instead of your gaining comfort by allying yourselves with us, we should only bring you evil, involving your country in war: and if you tell me that this will happen the same afterwards, whether we remain now or return later, reflect that Heaven never sends misfortunes without in time also offering a remedy. Therefore I am of opinion, that we go with Arnaldo, and that you discreetly and prudently solicit our departure, and in so doing you will shorten our absence, and hasten our return; and here, if it be not so large a country as Arnaldo's, we may at least hope to enjoy peace and quiet more securely — I,

with your venerable and wise father, and you with my good and handsome brother, without dividing us.”

Sinforosa, on hearing her speak thus, quite beside herself with joy, flung her arms round Auristella’s neck, kissing her on the lips and eyes. At this instant, the two seeming barbarians, Antonio and his son, with Ricla and Constance, entered the room; and immediately after, Maurice, Ladislaus and Transila followed, all wishing to see and speak to Auristella, and learn what had caused her illness.

Sinforosa took leave, more joyful and even more deceived than when she came. They who love, readily believe and catch at even the shadow of a promise of what they wish.

After exchanging with Auristella the usual questions and answers that pass between invalids and their visitors, Maurice said, “If even the very beggar, when banished from his native land, where he leaves nothing but the soil whereon he trod, feels regret, what must they suffer who have left behind all that fortune could promise? I say this, lady, because I am old and rapidly approaching my latter end, which makes me wish earnestly to return home to my own country, where I have friends and kindred who will close my eyes, and pay the last honours to my remains. To attain this desirable end concerns us all equally, for we are all foreigners and exiles, and all of us, I imagine, find a charm in our own country we do not meet with in any other. If you, lady, will solicit the king to assist our departure, or at least agree that we shall try to effect it, it will be well; we cannot bear to think of leaving you, for such is the power of your rare beauty and great prudence that we consider you as the loadstone attracting us all.”

“At least,” said the elder Antonio, “I can answer for myself, for my wife and children, that we would rather lose our lives than the company of the lady, if she does not disdain ours.”

“I thank you, gentlemen, replied Auristella, “ for the obliging things you are pleased to say; and although I can not respond to them as I ought, yet I will try all that I can to carry your wishes into effect, both with the prince Arnaldo and my brother, if my health, which is already improving, does not prevent me. Till then the happy day of our departure arrives, cheer up your hearts, do not give way to melancholy, nor trouble yourself with the thought of sorrow to come, for since Heaven has carried us through such great dangers, let us trust it will restore us to our beloved homes without encountering more, for those evils that are not sufficient to destroy life, ought not to destroy our patience. They all admired Auristella’s answer, which showed her admirable wisdom and the piety of her soul, but at this moment, entered King Polycarp in high good humour, having learnt from his daughter the flattering result of her communications; with him came Arnaldo and Periander. The King felicitated Auristella on her amended

health, and informed her that in token of the joy all felt at this happy news, there were to be illuminations in the city, and festivities and rejoicings for a week together.

Periander acknowledged the compliment as a brother should, and Arnoldo as a lover and intended husband.

‘ Polycarp laughed in his sleeve as he thought how finely he had deceived Prince Arnoldo, who, charmed with Auristella’s amendment, and little dreaming of the designs of the king, only sought how he could effect soonest a means of departure from the city, since the longer this departure was delayed the longer was delayed the accomplishment of his hopes. Maurice, hoping to return to his native country, had recourse to his science, and there learnt that great difficulties would impede the departure. He consulted with Periander and Arnoldo, who were both made acquainted with the wishes and intentions of the king and princess, which gave them much anxiety, knowing how many difficulties must arise from this mighty passion having got hold of such great personages, since they well knew that in these cases all sense of justice and generosity yields to the one overpowering feeling, and that neither promises nor words are to be trusted. The three then agreed that Maurice should hire a vessel from among the number now in the harbour, to convey them secretly to England, and that they should not appear to suspect the intentions of Polycarp. All this was communicated to Auristella, who approved of it, and was anxious to regain her health for her own and all their sakes.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Clodio gives his letter to Auristella, and is killed by the younger Antonio in a mistake.*

OUR history goes on to relate, that the insolence, or rather one should say, the shamelessness of Clodio, rose to such a height that he had the boldness to place the letter he had written in Auristella's hands, deceiving her into the belief that it contained some devout verses, worthy of her perusal and admiration. She opened the letter, and curiosity impelled her to read it to the end. As she was about to close it, her eyes fell upon Clodio, but instead of the love-darting beams that they usually emitted, they now shot forth sparks of angry fire, as she exclaimed, "Hence, and quit my presence, accursed and shameless man, and if I could believe this madness on thy part had been caused by any conduct of mine — if it had been produced by any incautious act or word of mine derogatory to my honour and character, I would chastise myself for this thy insolence, which will not go unpunished, unless I should take pity and treat thee as a madman."

Clodio was surprised, and would now have given half his life not to have been so daring. A thousand terrors oppressed his spirit, and he saw that his life would not be worth much, if Arnolde or Periander came to know what he had done. He cast down his eyes, and quite crestfallen, he turned his back upon Auristella, and left her alone to conjure up a new and not unreasonable fear, which was that Clodio, rendered desperate, might turn traitor, and profit by the intentions of Polycarp, if he should chance to learn what they were. She resolved, therefore, to make Arnolde and Periander acquainted with the whole story.

In the meanwhile it happened that the boy Antonio, being in his room alone, a woman entered. She was about forty years of age, but there was a vivacity in her air that might make her pass for ten years younger. She was drest, not according to the fashion of the country they were in, but after the Spanish mode; and Antonio, although he was ignorant of any customs but those of the barbarous isle, saw at once she was a stranger in this place. He arose from his seat to receive her courteously, for though a barbarian he had been well brought up. The lady, after fixing her eyes intently on his countenance for some time, spoke thus — "It probably may seem strange to thee, O young man, to see me here, since thou art doubtless unaccustomed to receive visits from ladies, having as I am told been educated in a barbarous island, not amongst barbarians but amongst rocks and stones, from whence, as thou hast derived thy beauty, so also mayst

thou have imbibed from them hardness of heart, which may, I dread, prove contrary to my wishes. Fear not, have no suspicions, and do not be alarmed; I am not saying anything very monstrous, but that which accords with our human nature. Thou dost perceive that I speak the Spanish tongue, the language which thou speakest, which similarity should engender friendship between us. I am called Zenotia, and am a native of Spain, born and bred in Alhama, a city of the kingdom of Grenada; my name is well known there, and throughout all Spain, for my renown is so great that it cannot remain in obscurity. It is four years since I left my native land, flying from the vigilance of those watchful mastiff dogs, who there keep guard over the Catholic flock. My race is descended from Hagar, my religion is that of Zoroaster. Behold yonder sun, now shining upon us; if thou wouldst desire to see a sign of the power I possess, wish that those beams may be obscured, and I will instantly command thick clouds to cover them and a dark night to succeed to this brightness; or wouldst thou see the earth tremble, the winds blow, the ocean rage, mountains bow down, and wild beasts howl, or any other terrible signs representing the primæval chaos; only speak the word and it shall be done. Further, know, that in the city of Alhama there has always lived a woman of my race, who with the name of Zenotia has inherited the knowledge which makes us witches, as men call us, but we are in truth enchantresses or magicians, names more appropriate; witches never do anything that is of use or profit, and they exercise their tricks upon small trifles. They play with that they understand not; and if sometimes things turn out as they pretend, it is not by virtue of their art, but that God permits the Evil One to deceive them as their punishment; but we who bear the name of enchantresses and magicians are persons of a higher quality. We read the stars, contemplate the position of the heavens, know the virtue of all plants and herbs, of stones and words, and, joining the active to the passive, we seem to work miracles whereat men wonder — and hence our good and evil fame; good, if we work for good; evil, if we do ill with our knowledge; and as human nature is more prone to evil than to good, we do not always restrain our inclinations within proper bounds; who shall say that the angry spirit will not be led sometimes to avenge an affront? who will say that slighted lovers would not if it were possible, make themselves beloved where they were abhorred? for as to changing the natural disposition, and oversetting or counteracting the free-will, this is what no science can do, no virtue of herb or drug effect.”

Antonio listened to all the Spanish lady said with wonder and curiosity to know how it would end. She went on thus, “Finally, O most discreet barbarian, I would have thee understand that it was the persecution of those who are called Inquisitors in Spain that tore me from my native land; for when one is driven

away by force one may call it being as it were torn up by the roots. I came to this island through many perils and strange adventures, I became known to the predecessor of King Polycarp, performed some wonderful deeds, whereby I greatly amazed the people, and so well did my art avail me, that I became the possessor of great wealth; contented with my gains, I have lived a chaste and virtuous life, and might have continued to do so, had not my good, or it may be evil fortune brought thee hither. My destiny is in thy hands, if I am not fair in thine eyes, I will so contrive that thou shalt think me so. If the gold I offer thee be too little, thou hast but to say what thou wouldst desire, and I will satisfy thee. For thy use I will fetch the pearls of the ocean; the birds of the air I will tame to come at thy bidding. From the secret abysses of the earth I will bring the most precious things for thee. I will make thee invincible; feared in war, mild in peace. Thou shalt be the envy of all, and have nothing to wish for. In return for all this, I ask not to be thy wife, but thy slave; so shall I be most happy. Be pleased, O noble youth, to give me thy hand, in token that thou wilt agree to my desire." So saying, she rose and advanced as if to embrace him; Antonio, seeing this, confused and alarmed, hastily retreated a step or two, and snatched the bow that never was far from him; fitting an arrow to it, he aimed straight at Zenotia, who, on perceiving the threatening attitude of the boy, bent her body quickly, and avoided the dart that was directed at her heart. It flew, however, and not in vain; for at that instant the unfortunate Clodio entered the room, it pierced through mouth and tongue; thus fearfully punishing the very member with which he had most offended. He died without uttering a word. Zenotia turned her head, and saw the mortal blow struck; in terror lest a second arrow should follow, she fled precipitately without staying to avail herself of her boasted power, with, however, a full intention of revenging herself upon the cruel and hard-hearted boy.



## CHAPTER X.

*How the younger Antonio fell sick.*

ANTONIO remained not very well satisfied with himself for the deed he had done, for although assuredly a mistaken one, as he knew nothing of Clodio's faults, and did know and see very clearly that Zenotia was a witch, he was inclined to regret that his aim had not been more sure. He went up to Clodio, to ascertain whether he was really dead, or if any life remained: but saw that he was beyond help in this world.

At this instant his father entered the room, and seeing the blood, and the dead body of Clodio, he knew at once by the arrow that it was his son's work. He asked if it were so; and was answered, Yes! he inquired the cause, and was told it.

Astonished and indignant, he cried, "Savage Boy! if thus thou treatest those who love thee, what wilt thou not do towards thy enemies?"

The young Antonio listened with downcast eyes, abashed and penitent. "I knew not what I did," he answered, "and it grieves me sorely to have committed this deed. I will try to amend my ways in future, and not prove myself a barbarian, even when I fancy I am seeking to be virtuous and resisting the temptations of the evil one."

They then took measures about burying Clodio, and paying all possible respect to his remains. The news of his death was soon spread through the palace by Zenotia, although she concealed her share in it; but she declared that the young barbarian had slain Clodio, no one knew why.

It reached the ears of Auristella, who still held Clodio's letter in her hand, with the intention of showing it to Periander or Arnolfo, in order that he might be chastised for his boldness; but seeing that Heaven had sent the punishment by other hands, she tore the letter, and thought it best to let the errors of the dead remain hidden from sight, which was both a prudent and a Christian measure.

Although Polycarp was much disturbed at the accident, he would not investigate the deed, but placed it in the hands of the Prince Arnolfo, who at the entreaty of Auristella and Transila, pardoned Antonio, and sent orders to have Clodio buried, believing the story to be true which Antonio told; but he

concealed Zenotia's share in the catastrophe, that he might not act entirely a barbarian's part.

Thus the rumour died away; Clodio was buried; Auristella avenged, if indeed her gentle bosom had ever nourished thoughts of vengeance, as did Zenotia's, who was eagerly considering within herself how she might avenge the wrongs inflicted by the hard-hearted archer.

In the course of two or three days he began to feel ill and to droop. He then took to his bed, and declined so rapidly, that the physicians said he would certainly die, and that they could not discover the cause of his illness. His mother, Rida, wept; his father was full of grief. Auristella and Maurice sorrowed much; Ladislaus and Transila were equally afflicted. Seeing this, Polycarp sent for his adviser and confidante, Zenotia, and desired that she would try and find some remedy for Antonio's malady, since it seemed beyond the physician's skill. She gave him good hopes, assuring him that it would not be mortal, but that the cure would be a slow one. Polycarp believed her like an oracle.

Now all these events disturbed Sinforosa very little, seeing that they were a means of detaining Periander; his presence alone was a relief to her full heart; for, although she wished him to go, because unless he went he could not return to her, yet so great was the delight she took in looking upon him, that she could not bear to think of his departure.

It so happened that an opportunity offered itself, when Polycarp and his two daughters, Arnoldo, Periander and Auristella, and all their company, including Rutilio (who, ever since he wrote the letter to Polycarpa, although he had destroyed it, yet continued melancholy and thoughtful as much as if all who were around him had known of his folly). This company, I say, met in the sick room of young Antonio, having come to visit him by Auristella's desire, for she loved and esteemed him and his parents, and was grateful for the aid the young barbarian had given when he saved them from the fire, and took them to his father's dwelling; for in misfortune and danger friendships are more firmly knit, than in common every day life; and a very warm one had sprung up between her and Ricla, in whose company she had been so long, and also for Constance and the two Antonios.

Being then assembled, as I have already said, Sinforosa coaxingly asked Periander if he would relate some of the passages of his life to them; most especially she longed to know from whence he came the first time that he visited their island, when he carried off all the prizes, at all the games that were played and the feats that were performed, at the festival which commemorated the anniversary of the election of her royal father.

To this Periander answered, that he would do as she desired, if he might be

permitted to begin his history where he pleased, and not from the beginning; for this he could reveal to no one, until he should be with his sister Auristella safe at Rome. They all said that he might do according to his own pleasure; they should hear gladly anything he had to tell them; and the best pleased of all was Prince Arnolfo, thinking that he might possibly now discover who he was, from what Periander would relate. These preliminaries settled, Periander spoke in the following manner.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Periander relates the Events of his Voyage.*

If you desire, sirs, to know the preamble and beginning of my story, I would tell it thus: Imagine me and my sister, with an old nurse of her's, on board a ship, the master of which, instead of being, as he seemed, a merchant, was a notorious pirate. We coasted the shores of an island, that is, we were so near it that we could clearly distinguish, not only the trees that grew on it, but the various kinds. My sister, who was tired of having been at sea many days, wished to land by way of refreshing herself. She asked the captain's permission, and as her requests are always held to be commands, he agreed that she should be allowed to do so; and they landed us in the ship's smallest boat — my sister, myself, and Clelia, which was her nurse's name, with only a single sailor. When we approached the shore, we saw that a little river fell into the sea, paying its humble tribute thereto. On either bank grew a quantity of verdant and leafy trees, affording shade, to which the crystal waters served as a mirror. We desired the sailor to steer for this place, as the spot looked inviting. He did so, and we began to work up the river; having lost sight of the ship, throwing down his oars, he stopped short, and said, 'Look you, Sir, and consider this small boat, which we have taken away to-day, as your vessel; for you will not return to that which is awaiting you in the sea, unless you wish to endanger the safety of this lady and your own life.' He then told me how the captain had intended to kill me, and carry off my sister; that till we could remedy our situation, he would follow and accompany us wherever we might go, happen what might. Let him who meets with evil where he expects kindness, judge whether or no we were disturbed at hearing this. His counsel pleased us, and we promised to reward him when we should be once more in safety. 'It will be in our power,' said Clelia, 'for I have my lady's jewels with me.' Then all four of us took counsel together as to what was to be done. The sailor recommended that we should go further up the little river, and we might perhaps discover some place in which we could be protected, if perchance any of those who belonged to the ship should come in search of us. 'But they will not come,' said he, 'for the inhabitants of these isles think every ship that comes near their coasts is a corsair; and if they see a ship or

ships, immediately fly to arms to defend themselves. Therefore, unless it be a secret attempt by night, we need not fear any attack from the ship yonder. What he said seemed good to me. I took an oar and helped him in his work; we had gone about a couple of miles up the stream when our ears were saluted by the sound of many and divers instruments, and our eyes beheld a forest of moving trees, which seemed to cross from one bank to the other. When we came nearer we found that these were boats covered with branches of trees which had deceived us, and that the music proceeded from the persons who were in the boats. The moment they perceived us, they came up and surrounded our boat; my sister rose up, with her beautiful hair falling down her shoulders, confined only on the forehead by a sort of lion-coloured ribbon or band. This sudden apparition was so divinely beautiful, that, as we afterwards learnt, the people in the boats took her for a divinity, for the sailor heard them saying to one another, 'Who can this be? what goddess can it be who deigns to visit us, and bring a blessing upon the nuptials of the fisherman Carino and the peerless Silviana? They then entreated that we would leave our boat and come ashore, not far from the place where we at first met them.

"Hardly had we set foot on dry land, when a troop of fishermen, as their dress showed them to be, crowded around us, and one by one full of respect and admiration, came to kiss the hem of Auristella's garment; who, in spite of her terror, looked so divinely lovely, that I could scarcely wonder at the mistake of those who took her for a goddess. Not far from the river's bank there was a bower formed of thick juniper boughs; and sweet smelling flowers served as a carpet. At the same instant, two men and two women rose up from their seats in the bower — the latter were young girls, the former youths; one of the girls extremely beautiful, and the other extremely ugly. One of the young men, handsome and gay, the other of plain appearance. All four came and knelt down before Auristella; and the handsome youth said, "O thou, whoever thou art, that canst only be of heavenly birth, my brother and I, with all our hearts, thank thee for the favour thou hast shown to us, in honouring our poor (but henceforth rich) marriages. Come, lady, and if, instead of the crystal palaces which thou hast left in the depths of the sea, thou findest only roofs of shells, and walls of osiers, or rather, I should say, walls of shells and roofs of osiers, in our huts; yet wilt thou meet with golden wishes and pearl-like dispositions to serve thee; and I make this comparison, which perhaps sounds strange, because, what is there richer and better than gold — what more beautiful than pearls?' Auristella bent down graciously to salute him; and by her gravity, courtesy, and beauty, she confirmed his notion of her being a deity.

"The other fisherman, and the least good-looking of the two, then left them to

give directions that all the instruments of music should sound, and all voices be raised in praise of the newly arrived stranger. The two damsels came and humbly kissed Auristella's hand, and she embraced them with great kindness.

"The sailor who had come with us, well pleased with this event, told the fishermen, about the ship which lay out in the offing, saying that the crew were corsairs; and that we feared lest they should gain possession of the lady who they saw there, and who was the daughter of a king. This story he judged it best to tell, in order to incline their hearts to defend her. They no sooner heard this than the sounds of rejoicing music ceased, and the warlike instruments which succeeded, seemed like a cry 'to arms, to arms,' on either shore.

"Night now came on; we took refuge in the cabin of the newly-betrothed lovers. Sentinels were posted along the banks of the river, even as far as its mouth. The nets were cast in, the baskets baited, all with a view of regaling us, their new guests; and the more to show us honour and respect, the betrothed couples put off the solemnization of their marriage, leaving their cabins to Auristella and Clelia, and to the two brides; whilst they and their friends, with the sailor and myself, kept watch and guard over them. There was more than sufficient light in the sky, and also that afforded by the rising moon; and all around, the bonfires were still blazing, that had been lighted for the rejoicings over the wedding festival. It was resolved that the men should sup in the open air, the women in the cabins; so abundant was the food, that it seemed as if earth desired to surpass ocean, and ocean, earth — the one offering its flesh, the other its fish. "Supper ended, Carino took me by the hand, and walking with me along the river side, after manifesting various signs of an impassioned heart, with convulsive sighs he thus spoke: 'It surely must be by some miracle that thou hast been brought hither at this time and conjuncture, so as to delay my nuptials, and I feel as a certainty that my woes may find a cure through thy counsels. Therefore, although, doubtless, thou wilt deem me mad, or at least a person of singularly bad taste; yet, I wish thee to know that of the two fisher maidens whom thou sawest, the one ugly, the other beautiful, it has fallen to my lot to have the beautiful one for my wife, whose name is Silviana. I know not what thou wilt say, nor do I know how to account for my choice, but I adore Leoncia, the ugly maiden, beyond the power of doing otherwise; and I would have thee know that in my eyes, Leoncia from her many virtues is the loveliest of women. Moreover Solercio, the other bridegroom, is, I more than suspect, dying for Silviana. Thus are the inclinations of all four crossed, and this because we all desired to obey our parents and friends, who arranged the marriages for us; but I cannot think it reasonable for a man to consent that a burthen, which must endure for life, should be fixed upon his shoulders not by his own choice but for

the pleasure of others. And although this very day we were to have given our consent and pronounced the 'Yes!' which was to enslave us for ever, it has been prevented, not designedly, but by the interposition of Providence, for such I believe thy coming has been, so that there is still time left for our fortunes to amend, and for this I ask thy advice. Being an impartial stranger, thou mayst best counsel me; for I have resolved, if I can discover no means of escape or remedy for my ills, to quit this place and never return to it, whilst life lasts, or parents vex, relations annoy, and friends fatigue me.'

"I listened to him with attention, and instantly a remedy came into my head, and these words to my tongue, ' No, my friend, do not go away, at least till I have spoken to my sister, Auristella, the beautiful lady whom you have seen; her wisdom is such that you would almost deem her superhuman in mind as well as person.'

"We then returned to the huts, and told my sister all that the fisherman had said. She readily devised a means of making my words true, and of satisfying every one. She took Silviana and Leoncia aside, and said to them, 'Know, my friends, that to-day you will become more truly such than ever, for Heaven has endowed me with a clear and sharp penetration, so that by only looking into the countenance of a person, I read their inmost soul, and guess their thoughts. As a proof of this, I here call you both to witness — you, Leoncia, love Carino, and you Silviana, sigh for Solercio; maiden bashfulness keeps you dumb, but my tongue shall break your silence. Say nothing, but leave all to me; either I know nothing, or I promise you a happy end to your secret wishes.'

"They answered not a single word, but covered her hands with kisses innumerable, and closely embracing her, proved how truly she had divined the real state of their affections.

"Night passed away, and day dawned rejoicingly. All the fishing boats appeared decked with fresh green boughs, music again filled the air with merry sounds, and there arose from many voices gay and lively songs, in honour of the day. The bridegrooms went forth to place themselves in the bridal bower, where we had found them on the preceding day. Silviana and Leoncia, were again arrayed in their bridal attire; my sister adorned herself in the best manner she was able with the garments she had, and she placed a diamond cross upon her lovely breast, and pearls in her ears, jewels of inestimable value. Then taking the two brides by the hand, and placing them in the centre of the bower, she called Carino and Solercio to draw near. Carino approached, confused and trembling, not knowing what I had arranged about his wishes, and the priest being ready to join their hands, according to the Catholic ritual, my sister made a sign that she wished to be heard; and instantly there was a silence so profound that not a

breath stirred. Seeing, then, that every one lent a willing ear, she said, in a loud and sonorous voice, ‘This is the will of Heaven’ — and taking Silviana by the hand, she gave her to Solercio; then she took the hand of Leoncia, and gave her to Carino. ‘This, my friends,’ she continued, ‘is what Heaven has ordained, as I said before, and is not mere accidental caprice, but suits well the happy betrothed ones, as you may plainly see by their joyful countenances, and the willing ‘Yes!’ that their tongues pronounce. The lovers embraced each other; seeing which, the spectators approved the exchange, and were more than ever confirmed in the idea of my sister’s supernatural qualities, now that by her command alone, the nearly completed marriages had been thus altered.

“The festival and entertainments now began.”

Periander was thus speaking, when suddenly Antonio, the sick youth, fell into a deep swoon. At this sight his father, as if he had divined the cause, left the room, and went, as will be afterwards seen, to seek Zenotia: what followed will be told in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER XII.

*How Zenotia left off the Sorceries that had bewitched Antonio, so that he might recover; but advised King Polycarp not to let Arnoldo and his companions go.*

IT appears to me that unless patience had been supported by the pleasure which Arnoldo and Polycarp had in only looking at Auristella, and Sinforosa in gazing upon Periander, they must have lost it in listening to so tedious a story, touching which Maurice and Ladislaus were of opinion, that it was much too long and very little to the purpose, for instead of a narration of his own misfortunes, he had been detailing the pleasures of other people. Nevertheless, they liked to listen to him, and were willing to hear his tale to an end, so agreeable was his manner and style in relating anything.

Meanwhile Antonio had sought out Zenotia, whom he found in the royal apartments. The moment he saw her he approached with an unsheathed dagger in his hand, and seizing her by the right arm, and lifting his dagger on high, he cried, "Sorceress! instantly restore my son to me alive and well, or thy last hour is at hand. Perfidious creature! in what collection of eyeless needles, or headless pins, dost thou hold his life enwrapped; or hast thou hidden it in some nook or secret corner thou only knowest where?" Zenotia was terrified, seeing her life threatened by a furious Spaniard, with a dagger drawn in his hand, and trembling, she promised to restore life and health to his son. She would have readily promised to give it to the whole world, had he required it of her, so completely had he filled her whole soul with terror; so she said, "Loose me, O Spaniard, and put thy weapon into its sheath; it: was owing to thy son's over-readiness to use his, that has brought him into his present state. Thou knowest that women are naturally revengeful, and most when we are aroused to vengeance by scorn and disdain. Marvel not, then, if thy son's harshness should have hardened my heart; advise him henceforth to treat with more humanity those who humble themselves before him, and not to repulse those scornfully who only implore his pity. Go in peace, for to-morrow thou shalt see thy son restored to health."

"And if it should not be so," answered Antonio, "depend upon it, I shall not want means to seek thee out, nor shall I fail to take thy life." So saying, he left her, and she was so overpowered with fear, that forgetting her affronts, she drew

from behind the door, the incantations which she had prepared, little by little to consume away the life of the hard-hearted boy, whose grace and beauty had so entirely captivated her affections.

No sooner had Zenotia thrown away her infernal preparations, than Antonio recovered his lost health, the colour returned to his cheek, his eyes regained their lustre, and his limbs their strength, to the joy of all his friends.

When his father was alone with him he said, “I wish to bestow upon thee some advice my son, which is — never offend God in any way. During the fifteen or sixteen years of thy life I have taught thee the law which my parents taught to me, and that is the Catholic faith, the true one by which alone we can be saved, and which has saved all who have ever embraced it, and will save all who desire to enter the kingdom of Heaven. This law teaches us that we are not to chastise all who offend us, but to advise them to amend their faults; punishment belongs to the Judge, but we may all give reproof and counsel. Whenever thou art tempted to do anything that is contrary to the service of God, thou need’st not bend thy bow, nor launch thy arrows, nor use injurious words, but reject the evil counsel and retire from the opportunity. Thou wilt then come off conqueror, and wilt be safe from again incurring such peril as I have now seen thee in. Thou wert bewitched by Zenotia, and with such potent enchantments, that in less than ten days thou wouldst, little by little, have lost thy life, if God and my good speed had not prevented it. Now, come along with me, and rejoice our friends with the sight of thy recovered health, and we will hear the adventures of Periander, which he is to finish to-night.”

Antonio promised to attend to his father’s counsels with God’s help, in spite of all the snares that might beset his path through life.

Meanwhile, Zenotia, affronted and grieved by the scorn of the son and the anger of the father, sought how she could avenge her injuries through the means of others, without depriving herself of the presence of her unloving barbarian; and thus meditating, she went to King Polycarp, and said, “you know, sire, that ever since I entered into your house and service, I have tried to serve you with the greatest zeal and attention: you know also, that trusting to my fidelity and truth, you have made me the depositary of all your secrets; and you know well how prudent I am in all peculiar cases, especially if a love affair be in question, and it is on this account I wish to tell you that, in allowing Arnoldo and all his party to go away, you are acting imprudently and unwisely. Tell me, if when present, you cannot gain Auristella’s consent, how are you to gain it when she is absent?

“And how is it likely she will keep her word, and return to marry an old man, as you in fact are, (for we cannot conceal such truths from ourself,) when she has

Periander with her, who may or may not be, her brother; and Arnolfo, a princely youth, who desires nothing more ardently than to make her his wife? Do not, sire, let slip the opportunity that you now possess: you can take the present one, which offers itself for detaining them, saying that it is necessary to punish the monstrous barbarity of one of the company, who has slain the man they call Clodio, even in your own palace.”

Polycarp listened with attention to the advice of the malicious Zenotia; every word she uttered went straight through his heart, as if each had been a sharp nail, and he would fain have gone directly to carry her advice into effect. In fancy he beheld Auristella in the arms of Periander, not as her brother, but as a lover. In fancy he beheld her seated on the throne of Denmark, and Arnolfo making a joke of him and his amorous intentions; in fine, jealousy took possession of his whole soul in such a manner that he could scarce refrain from giving it utterance, and vowing vengeance upon those who had never offended him. But Zenotia, when she saw that her words had taken effect, and how ready he was to do all she wished him to do, advised him to remain quiet for the present, for that Periander was to finish his story that night, and it would give them time to consider what would be most convenient to be done. Polycarp agreed, and she, still hopelessly enamoured of the young Antonio, gave loose to her imagination how best to accomplish the king’s wishes and her own.

The night came on, and Polycarp, with his daughters, joined the company as they had done before; Periander took up his history where he had left off after the wedding festivities.

## CHAPTER XIII.

*Wherein Periander pursues his pleasant narrative.*

IT was the beautiful Sinforosa who hung with the greatest delight upon the words of Periander, such was the charm and grace of his manner in relating his adventures.

“That night,” said he, “we all went over to a small island in the middle of the river, invited by its verdant appearance, and the tranquillity of the spot. The newly married couples, without openly showing their satisfaction, were diligent, and anxious, to give all the pleasure in their power to those to whom they owed their present happiness; and they gave orders that in this little islet of the river the festivities should be renewed, and should continue for three days.

“The season of the year, which was summer, the beauty of the place, the brilliant moonlight, the murmuring of the stream, the fruit covered trees, the fragrance of the flowers, each of these separately, and altogether, invited us to resolve that we would remain here whilst the festivities lasted; but scarcely had we reached the isle, when from a little grove, which was in it, rushed forth a band of fifty men, lightly armed, like those who rob and run away; and as the unwary when attacked, are overcome through their surprise, almost without attempting to defend ourselves, — bewildered by the suddenness of the assault, we gazed upon the robbers instead of attacking them, who, like hungry wolves that have beset a flock of innocent sheep, carried off, if not in their mouths, yet in their arms, my sister Auristella, her nurse Clelia, and Silviana, and Leoncia, as if it was only for them that they came, for they left many other women who were extremely beautiful.

“I, whom the strangeness of the event had rendered furious rather than stupified, rushed after the robbers, following them with loud cries, insulting them as if they were men capable of feeling insults, in the hope that by irritating them I might move them to return and take vengeance for it; but intent only on their prey, they neither seemed to hear or to wish for revenge, but disappeared with their prizes. Then the bridegrooms and myself, with some of the principal fishermen, took counsel together what we had better do to recover our lost ones; one said, ‘it is not possible but that there must be in these seas some vessel

belonging to these robbers, and in some place from whence they have easily landed, perhaps being aware of our meeting and festivities; if it be thus, as I imagine, the best remedy will be for some of our boats to go out and offer any ransom for the captives that they may require without any reserve.'

"'This business shall be mine,' I then exclaimed, 'for to me my sister is worth more than anything else in the whole world, and Carino and Solercio said the same. *They* wept openly — I was raging inwardly. When we had come to this resolution, it was beginning to grow dark; nevertheless the two bridegrooms and I, got into a boat with six oars, but when we reached the open sea, night had closed in, and we could distinguish no ship at all in the darkness. We resolved to wait for daylight, in the hope of then discovering some vessel. It so happened that we did see two, one that was just leaving the shore, and another that was approaching it; I knew that the one which was departing, was the very same ship in which we had come to the island, for her flags as well as her sails were all marked with a red cross, the other had hers, green, and both were pirates.

"Then, as I imagined, that the ship which was leaving the shore was the one which contained our robbers and their prizes, I put a white flag on the end of a lance, and came near the ship's side to treat about the ransom, being careful not to be taken myself. The captain appeared on the deck, and when I was about to raise my voice and speak to him, I must confess I was startled and disturbed at being cut short in my attempt by a loud and frightful noise, proceeding from a discharge of artillery; this came from the vessel that was outermost, and was a message of defiance to the other vessel that was near the land; it was quickly answered by a return not less tremendous, and then began a cannonading between the two ships, like two fierce and furious enemies.

"We withdrew our little boat from the scene of combat, and from a distance we surveyed the fight. After the firing had lasted an hour, the two ships grappled one another with unexampled fury. The men of the outermost vessel, either more daring or more valiant, leapt into the other ship, and cleared her decks in a few minutes, killing all, without sparing a single soul on board; then, finding themselves masters, they proceeded to pillage the ship of everything valuable that she contained, which was not much, seeing that she was only a pirate vessel, but in my estimation she held what was more precious than anything else in the whole world, for they got possession of my sister and Clelia, and Silviana, and Leoncia, thus carrying a rich cargo to their own vessel, for they saw that the beauty of Auristella would ensure an unheard-of ransom. I wished to row near the ship, and speak to the captain of the conquerors — but the winds have been ever to me a source of misfortune, — a land breeze sprung up, which carried the ship rapidly away, and made it quite impossible for me to reach it, or to offer

impossibilities as a ransom for their prize.

“Thus then were we obliged to return hopeless of recovering our lost ones, and knowing nothing of her course except that she had gone before the wind. We knew nothing of whither she was bound, or who were the pirates, so as to judge from a knowledge of their country what hopes remained of any remedy. With downcast and dejected hearts we entered the river, where all the fishermen in their boats were expecting us.

“I know not if I ought to tell you what is, however, indispensable to be told, that a certain feeling then arose within me which, without changing my being, yet made me feel as if I was more than man; and rising up in the boat I addressed myself to all the men who were gathered around us, and who listened attentively to my words. “Misfortunes,” I said, “are never mended by sitting down idly to lament them — good luck never befriends the pusillanimous soul; we are ourselves the fabricators of our own fortunes, and there breathes not a man who has not the capability of raising himself. The cowardly, though born rich, are always poor, like the miserly beggar. I speak thus, my friends, in hopes of exciting and impelling you to better your lot, to quit these poor nets and fishing tackle, and small boats, and go in search of the treasures that are to be gained by noble enterprises. I call such enterprises noble as are undertaken for high and great ends. If the man who tills the earth by the sweat of his brow, hardly obtains enough for the day’s sustenance, and gains no fame, why does he not take a lance instead of a spade in his hand, and without the fear of the heat of the sun, or the inclemencies of the weather, seek to win, besides his daily bread, fame which can place him high among his fellow men? War, though but a step-mother to cowards, is a true mother to brave men, and for them she has rewards that surpass all calculation. Then arouse yourselves, my friends; cast your eyes towards yonder ship which bore away the beloved prize from the arms of your companions, ye valiant youths. She lies on the shore, and seems left to us as by the peculiar ordonnance of Heaven. Let us take possession of her, and become pirates, not for love of gain like most pirates, but to redress our wrongs: we are all skilled in navigation; in that ship we shall find everything we need to manage her, for she was despoiled of nothing but the women, and if our injury is great, very great also is the opportunity that offers itself of avenging it. Follow me then who will, I entreat you, and Carino and Solercio ask you also, for well I know that they will not leave me to undertake this noble enterprise alone.’

“Hardly had I ceased speaking, when a murmur of many voices arose among all the boats, — the men were asking each other what they should do, — and then from the crowd a voice exclaimed, ‘Embark, generous guest, and be our captain and our guide, for we will all follow thee.’

“I took this sudden resolution as a good omen, and fearing that delay in carrying my plan into execution might give their zeal time to moderate, I immediately steered my boat towards the ship, followed by about forty others. We reconnoitred the vessel, boarded her, examined every part, noted what she had and what she needed, and found all I could desire that was necessary for a voyage; I advised that nobody should return to land, to escape the lamentations of the women and dear children, which I feared might weaken their gallant resolution of departing. They did as I counselled, and took leave in imagination of parents, wives, and children; so wonderful is this, that I feel I shall need all your courtesy to give credit to what I say; not a man returned to land, or wished for more clothing than he had on when he came on board the ship, in which all served as mariners and pilots, except myself, who was unanimously appointed as their captain, and commending myself to God, I instantly began to exercise my new office. The first order I issued was, to have all the dead corpses thrown overboard that had been killed in the late affray, and to cleanse the ship from the blood that stained her decks; I then ordered all the arms to be sought for, and distributed them among the men, giving each what I thought best suited to him; I next inspected the provisions, and calculated how much would be necessary for each person, and for what number of days.

“This done, and having offered our prayers to Heaven to implore that our voyage might be propitious, and that our intentions might have a blessing upon them, I gave the word of command to set the sails, for they were all made fast to the yards, and to take advantage of the wind, which as I before said, blew off shore; and gay as gallant, and gallant as determined, we followed in the same track that we had seen the pirate vessel take with her prey.

“You, my friends, who are listening to my history, behold me turned now into a fisherman and match-maker, rich in the possession of a beloved sister, next robbed by pirates, and poor, deprived of her, raised to the rank of a captain in order to regain my treasure, and say whether the changes of my fortune have not reached a point almost unparalleled and boundless, so as to fatigue your patience in listening to them.”

“Not so, my friend,” said Arnolfo, “for if you are not weary of relating your adventures and misfortunes, we shall not be tired of hearing them, be they ever so numerous.”

“If possible,” answered Periander, “I will bring my story to an end to-morrow night, although it is yet hardly begun.”

All agreed that they would meet again for the purpose of hearing him relate it, in the same place on the following evening.

## CHAPTER XIV.

He tells of a singular Circumstance that happened at Sea.

THE health of the bewitched Antonio was now quite restored, and with his recovered beauty, increased Zenotia's passion, and made her more and more desirous of detaining him; for even those whose cases are most desperate, never give up deluding themselves with hope, so long as the beloved object is before their eyes: therefore with all the means her active mind could suggest, she cast about to throw impediments in the way of the departure of the guests, and went again to advise Polycarp on no account to let the daring crime of the barbarous homicide go unpunished, or at least that he should keep a threat of punishment hanging over his head.

Polycarp was not, however, disposed to comply with the advice, "for," said he to Zenotia, "it will be an interference with Prince Arnoldo, under whose protection this youth is, and it will vex my beloved Auristella, who considers him as her brother; besides, his crime was accidental, and proceeded not from malice, but mischance; moreover, no one demands justice, and all those who know the man, affirm that he well deserved his death, for that he was the worst evil speaker and slanderer that ever lived."

"How is this, sire?" cried Zenotia, "after having settled the other day together that he was to be punished as an excuse for detaining Auristella, — you now seem averse to the measure. They will go, and she will not return; then will you lament your ill-advised consent to allow of her departure, when tears and lamentations will be of no avail. By giving up this boy to justice, and then acting towards him mercifully, you will preserve your character for a good and just king."

Thus did Zenotia counsel Polycarp, who was now in one mind, now in another, as to what he should resolve to do, and how he could continue to detain Auristella without offending Arnoldo, whose power and valour he feared greatly.

In the midst of all these considerations, and in the midst of those which Sinforosa was on her side also indulging, arrived the hour when Periander was to go on with his history, which he did in the following manner: —

"Lightly Hew our ship as the winds impelled her — not a single man amongst



us wished it otherwise — leaving our course to be as fate directed us.

“Having sailed all that day, at the dawn of another the sentinel, on the topmast-head, cried aloud, ‘A ship! a ship!’ I asked what her course was, and how large she might be; he replied that, ‘she was the same size as our own ship, and that she was ahead of us.’

“‘Then, my friends,’ said I, ‘arm yourselves, and if these are pirates, show the valorous spirit which has led you to abandon your nets in search of fame.’ We crowded all our sails, and in less than two hours were alongside the ship, which, as if taken by surprise, offered no resistance: about forty of my men boarded her, but found no occasion to use their swords, as she contained only the mariners and some serving men. Looking about, we found in one of the cabins, two persons, closely confined by the neck in a sort of iron stocks, and separated from each other scarcely two rods; one was a man of good mien; the other, a woman possessing a considerable share of beauty. In another apartment we found a rich couch, on which lay a venerable old man, whose air and manner at once commanded respect. He could not leave his couch, but he raised his head a little, and said, ‘Sheathe your swords, gentlemen, for in this ship you will find none to resist you; necessarily then you must try your fortune in this exercise in some other quarter; but your coming will be fortunate for you, not because the ship has wealth wherewith to enrich you, but because I sail in her, I, who am Leopold, king of Norway.’

“On hearing him speak thus, I felt a desire to know what events could have happened to bring a king into such a defenceless situation; going to him, I asked if this was true that I heard, for although his appearance and noble demeanour well agreed with his words, yet the scanty equipage of his vessel made it difficult of belief. ‘Sir,’ replied the old man, ‘order your people to be quiet, and listen to me, for in a few words you shall hear great things.’ I commanded silence, and my companions and I listened attentively to what he wished to say, which was this: —

“‘It pleased Heaven to make me king of *Norway*; my ancestors, likewise, were kings of that land, and they had ruled as their forefathers did, without tyranny or any other innovations. Early in life I married a wife, who was my equal in rank; she died, and left me childless. Time went on, and still I remained contented in my widower’s state; but for my sins at length I became enamoured of a lady who had been one of the attendants of my late wife, and who might now be a queen, instead of a prisoner in those stocks, where you must have seen her fastened. She then, thinking it would be unjust not to prefer the curling locks of one of my servants to my grey hairs, fled with him, and not only felt a pleasure in thus dishonouring me, but conspired also with him to take away my life; so that, had I

not been timely informed of her plots and machinations, my head would have been oft' my shoulders in the twinkling of an eye, and theirs crowned, as sovereigns in my place.

“I discovered their treason in time; but they also obtained the information that I had found it out; and one night they got on board a small bark, which was ready to sail, and fled from my wrath. I, hearing of this, flew on the wings of my just anger to the seashore, and found that they had been gone about twenty hours. Blind with fury, and full of a desire for vengeance, without waiting to take any counsel or prudent consideration, I embarked in this vessel, and followed them, not with the authority and paraphernalia of a monarch, but as a private enemy. I found them at the end of ten days in an island, called the Isle of Fire; I had them seized and immediately confined in the manner you have seen, to convey them back to Norway, and deliver them up to the punishment due to their crime. ““ This is the plain truth. Those are the delinquents; I am a king; and I promise to give you as my ransom one hundred thousand pieces of gold; not that I have them with me, but I give you my word of honour to send them wheresoever you please; and as a security, if my word suffices not, take me along with you in your own ship, and let some of your people go in mine until they reach Norway, and fetch the money, to carry it whither it pleases you. I have no more to say.’

“My companions looked one on the other, and gave me time to answer for all, which, as their captain, I had a right to do; but, nevertheless, I wished to take the opinion of Carino and Solercio, and some of the others, that they might not think I presumed upon the command they had themselves given me over them; and so the answer I gave the king was to say— “My lord, these men you see before you are not in arms for lucre of gain, nor for any of the ambitious ends which commonly influence people; we are in search of robbers, we are seeking to chastise some ruffians, and to destroy some pirates, and as you are none of these, your life is safe with us; but if we can serve you in any way, you have only to ask us: and, although we thank you for the rich ransom you offer, we absolve you from giving any, since, as you are not a prisoner, you cannot be obliged to act like one. Follow your own course in peace, and all that I would ask of you is, to beseech your pardon for the offenders, as the greatness of a king shines forth more in acts of mercy than even of justice. He would fain have humbled himself at my feet, but I prevented this, and begged that he would give us some powder and divide his provisions with us, which he did immediately. I also said to him, that in case he did not like to forgive the two criminals entirely, I would advise him to allow me take them away in my vessel, and I would convey them to a distant land, where they could never more offend him. He agreed to this, for he

said that the presence of the guilty pair would always revive the memory of their crime. I then gave my command that we should return to our ship, with the provisions and the powder, that the king had given us, and was going to send for the two prisoners, already free from their confinement, when a fresh breeze suddenly sprung up which prevented this: it quickly separated the two vessels without a possibility of their coming again together. I stood upon the deck, and cried aloud, 'Adieu!' to the old king, who had ordered himself to be lifted from his bed, and supported in the arms of his servants, he waved his farewell to our ship — and I also must take my leave of you for the present, as I shall need rest before I begin upon my next adventure.”

## CHAPTER XV.

He relates what passed concerning Sulpicia, the Niece of Cratilius, King of Lithuania.

THE agreeable way in which Periander told the story of his strange adventures, gave pleasure to every one of his hearers, except Maurice, who, when he was alone with his daughter, said to her, "It seemeth to me, Transila, that Periander might relate the events of his life in a few less words, and less diffusely than he does. I do not see why he need detail, so very minutely, all about the fishermen and their festivals, nor yet their marriages, for though episodes may be admitted to ornament a tale, they should not be as long as the original story itself; but the fact, I suspect, is, that Periander likes to show the cleverness with which he can relate, and what fine language he can use in his descriptions."

"It may be so," said Transila, "but all I know is, that whether he dilates, or whether he is succinct in what he tells us, all is charming and gives one pleasure to hear it, but to none of us does it give more delight than to Sinforosa, as I believe I told you before; she hangs on every word that drops from Periander's lips, as if her very soul went along with them."

The perpetually changing thoughts of Polycarp prevented him from lending much attention to Periander's discourse, and he wished that there might not be a great deal more to relate; but Sinforosa had so great a desire to hear the end, that she entreated him to return the next day, which he agreed to do, and continued his history thus:—"You must consider, Sirs, that my crew of mariners were men more rich in valour than in gold, and for my part I began to feel some doubts whether my liberality had quite pleased them, and although allowing the King Leopold to go away free was done by their consent, as well as my own, yet as the dispositions of all men are not the same, I suspected that they were not quite satisfied, and that it would not be easy to make them amends for the hundred thousand pieces of gold which Leopold offered for his ransom, and this moved me to speak to them thus; 'My good friends, do not allow yourselves to regret the recollection of the large treasure you have lost, which was offered to us by the king, for I would have you know that one ounce of honourable fame is worth more than a pound of pearls. And this you cannot feel until you have begun to taste the sweets of having won that renown which is gained by great and good deeds. The poor man, enriched by virtue, may become famous, whilst the rich one, if vicious, can never know anything but infamy. Generosity is one of the

most pleasing virtues in him who aspires to renown; and so true is this, that you will never find an ill-conditioned person liberal; an avaricious or covetous man cannot be so.' I was proceeding thus in my discourse, seeing that they lent an attentive ear to me as their countenances showed, when I was interrupted by discovering a ship which was not far from our own — indeed hard a Ice upon our course: we flew to arms, and gave chase with all the sails we could set. In a short time II — ordered a shot to be fired as a signal to bring her to; we did so, and she slackened sail. On coming near, we beheld one of the strangest sights imaginable: hanging to the yards and the rigging were more than forty men strangled. I marvelled greatly at this; and going alongside, some of my men boarded her without meeting any opposition. They found the deck deluged with blood, and covered with the bodies of men dead and dying, some with their hands cut off, some with their heads cleft asunder, some bleeding, some just expiring; one man was sending forth the most dismal groans, another uttering shrieks of agony. All this death-scene seemed to have taken place after a repast, for divers articles of food swam amidst the blood, and mingled with these were drinking cups and bottles still half full of wine. But now, treading over the bodies of the dead and dying, my mariners passed on to the stern cabin, where they found a party of a dozen beautiful women: foremost amongst them stood one who seemed to be their captain, armed with a white corslet, so clear and polished that it might almost have served as a mirror; she wore a throat piece, but no armour on her arms or legs; on her head was a helmet of curiously twisted workmanship, ornamented with an infinite variety of differently coloured stones; she held a javelin in her hand, all studded over with golden nails, and a large knife of shining and sharp steel. She looked in this array so spirited and graceful, that her bare aspect was enough to make the men, as they entered, stop short and gaze upon her with wonder and awe.

"I, who had been looking on for some time from our own vessel, now came on board the other, to see better what was going on. I arrived just in time to hear her saying to my men, ' I can well suppose, O soldiers, that the sight of this little army of women rather inspires you with wonder than with fear. As for us, after the vengeance we have taken for our wrongs, nothing can ever excite fear in us again. Attack us, if ye are thirsting for blood, and shed ours; we freely give our lives so that we preserve our honour. I am Sulpicia, the niece of Cracilio, king of Lithuania; my uncle gave me in marriage to the great Lampidio, as noble in lineage as he was rich in the gifts of nature and fortune. We were going to visit the king, my uncle, secure, as we imagined, among our own vassals and servants, all of whom were beholden to us for some act of kindness or other with which we were constantly loading them, but all these obligations were forgotten.

One night, after they had drunk deeply, although half stupified by wine, they dared to lay their wicked hands on my husband, and deprived him of life, as the first beginning of their abominable designs; but we resolved to defend ourselves, and at least not to die unavenged. Availing ourselves of the state of drunkenness they were in, and the little sense they had left, we armed ourselves as well as we could, and with the help of four servants, who remained true to us, and had not joined the guilty conspiracy, we performed the work of death which you have witnessed on the deck, and carrying our vengeance further, we made the masts and rigging bear the fruit which you now behold hanging thereon. Forty men are strangled there, and if there had been forty thousand they would have shared the same fate, so weak were they and unable to defend themselves, so fierce in our wrath were we. I possess riches, which I can distribute among you, although, perhaps, I might rather say, that you can take them. I will only add that I give them up to you willingly; take them, gentlemen, and do not molest us.'

"Even if I had been a real pirate, the words of Sulpicia would have softened my heart; one of my fishermen said, 'May I die if here is not another King Leopold offering riches to us, with whom our noble captain may show his high breeding. Look you, my lord Periander, the lady Sulpicia may go free, we ask no more than the glory of having conquered our selfish desires.'

"And so it shall be, my friends,' I replied, 'since you desire it, and I truly believe that Heaven never lets such acts go unrewarded, any more than it surely punishes the deeds that are evil: now clear this bad fruit from the rigging, and clean this deck, and then offer with their liberty your services to these ladies.'

"They did as I commanded, and the fair Sulpicia, full of gratitude and admiration, fell at my feet like one who could not entirely believe all that she heard.

"She tried to answer and return our kindness in some measure, and bade one of her women bring the coffers, where she kept her jewels and money. The lady to whom she spoke did as she was desired, and in a moment, as if suddenly rained down from above, I saw spread before me, four coffers full of gold and precious jewels. Sulpicia opened and displayed these before the eyes of my fishermen; perhaps the sight blinded the eyes of some of them to the generous intentions they had avowed, for there is a great difference between giving up a thing when it is before your eyes, and renouncing only the hope of possessing it. Sulpicia drew forth a rich necklace of gold, glittering with precious stones, which were set in it, and said, 'Accept this, O noble captain, as a gift from me, to show my gratitude. It is the offering of a poor widow, who yesterday saw herself at the height of happiness and prosperity, blest in the possession and protection of a beloved husband; and today subject to the will and pleasure of these men of

yours, who may divide my treasures among them; — there is power in gold to soften the very rocks.

“‘The gifts of so high and noble a lady,’ I replied, ‘are not to be lightly valued,’ and taking the necklace, I turned to my companions and said, ‘this jewel is given to me, my friends, and therefore I can dispose of it as my own property; as its value seems inestimable, it is not fit that it should belong to one man only. Let him who pleases take and keep it, and when he can meet with a purchaser, divide the price among you all, and do not touch one single other thing of the noble lady’s possessions, so shall your fame be sounded even to the skies.’

“‘We would have wished,’ answered one among them, ‘O great captain, that you had not given us the counsel you did, that you might have seen how entirely we feel as you do. Restore the lady her necklace; the fame we seek shall need no collar to restrain or limit its bounds.’

“I was very well pleased with this reply, and Sulpicia marvelled at their disinterestedness. Finally she asked if I would give her twelve of my men to protect her, and some mariners who could take charge of the ship, and steer her to Lithuania; I agreed, and the men I selected were well pleased to be able to do so kind an action.

“Sulpicia gave us some excellent wines, and the most exquisite sweetmeats. The wind blew fair for both her course and our own, for which as yet we knew no positive destination or haven. We took our leave of her — she knew my name, and also that of Carino and Solercio; — she pressed our hands in hers, and with her eyes she thanked the rest, and bade them adieu. She shed many tears, caused by the mingled feelings of sorrow and thankfulness; sorrow for her husband’s death, and joy in finding herself safe and free from the hands of those she had supposed were pirates, and thus we parted. I forgot to mention that I returned the necklace to Sulpicia, who received it with reluctance, and only because of my absolute refusal to accept it; she even seemed half to consider my returning it as an affront.

“I then held a consultation with my men as to what course we should take, and decided to go as the wind impelled us, because we were thus more likely to fall in with other vessels.

“The night came on serene and clear, and I, calling one of the fishermen who was a mariner, and who served as the master and head pilot, to take the helm, seated myself on the forecastle, and began to watch the heavens with deep attention.”

“Now would I lay any wager,” said Maurice, aside to his daughter, “that Persiles is going to give us a description of the celestial hemisphere, as if it signifies to us, one atom, what the motion of the heavenly bodies might be; for

my part I heartily wish he would bring his story to an end, for the desire that I have to get away from this place is such, that I really cannot trouble myself with knowing which are fixed, and which, wandering stars, and the more because I myself know everything on that subject that he can possibly tell me.”

Whilst Maurice and Transila were speaking thus in a whisper, Periander, who had paused to take breath, went on with his tale.



## CHAPTER XVI.

Periander continues his Narration, and relates a singular Dream.

SLUMBER had begun to take possession of the senses of my companions, and I began to question the one who was keeping watch with me, upon many matters important to mariners, and needful for them to know, when it suddenly began to rain, not in drops, but as if whole clouds were at once emptying their contents upon our ship, so that it appeared as if the sea had risen into the sky, and from thence was overflowing upon our vessel. All awoke in great perturbation, and looking about on every side, saw a clear unclouded sky, and no signs of storm or tempest, a thing which struck every one with awe and dread: whilst they were gazing around, the man who had been with me, said, '*I have no doubt but that this rain proceeds from the nostrils of those monstrous fishes which are called wreckers, and if it be so, then are we in the greatest peril, and it will be necessary for us to discharge all our guns, for the noise will sometimes terrify them.*' As he spoke, we saw the neck and head of a terrible serpent rise and enter the ship: it seized, and instantly swallowed at a mouthful, one of our seamen before our eyes. 'Yes, they are "Wreckers,"' cried our pilot; 'we must make haste to fire, no matter with or without shot, for it is from the noise alone we can hope for help against these monsters.'

"Our men were flying in confusion to hide themselves, none dared stand up, lest they should become the prey of these horrible enemies; but at this some flew to the guns, some shouted aloud, and others turned to the pumps to get rid of the water, which overflowed our deck. We set every sail, and fled as though we were escaping from a whole fleet of enemies; our present extreme danger was the greatest, in that it was one we had never yet seen or even heard of. The next day we found ourselves about dusk on the shore of an island unknown to any of us, and with the intention of watering here, we resolved to stay till the following morning close to the land; we, therefore, took down the sails and anchored, having done which, we resigned our weary bodies to sleep, which we greatly needed: sweet and grateful were our slumbers.

"When we had refreshed ourselves with this welcome rest, we landed and sauntered along the delightful shore, the sands of which (without any exaggeration) were all of grains of gold and minute pearls. We penetrated more inland and saw meadows, the grass of which was not merely green, but of the

brightest emerald colour. The brooks and rivulets ran not like simply sparkling streams, but like liquid diamonds; and appeared, as they meandered through the meadows, like crystal serpents. Then we came to a wood of various kinds of trees, so beautiful that we stood transfixed with wonder and delight. From the boughs of some, hung bunches of cherries, that looked like rubies; from others, apples, the cheeks of some like roses, of others like topazes. There were pears, of exquisite fragrance and colour, like the setting sun; in fine, there was every species of fruit we know, all here to be found in perfection, without being confined to any particular season. All here was spring, summer, autumn, in one, — heat without being oppressive, agreeable and delightful beyond belief.

“All our senses were gratified, our eyes revelled in the beauty that lay around us, our ears were enchanted by the soft murmuring of the rivulets, and the singing of an infinite variety of small birds, which, hopping from tree to tree, and bough to bough, seemed as if they were detained as captives who wished not to be free; our sense of smell was regaled with the fragrance that exhaled from every herb, flower, and fruit, and our taste with the delicious proof they afforded of their excellence and sweetness; and it was pleasant to the touch to have them in our hands, so that we seemed to possess the pearls of the South, the diamonds of India, and the gold of Tebir.”

“It is a pity, methinks, that Clodio is dead,” whispered Ladislaus to his father-in-law, “for in truth Periander would have given him something to talk about.”

“Hold your tongue,” said Transila, “you cannot say that he does not tell his story well.”

While these whispers were passing, Periander had paused to take breath, but soon he continued his narration thus:— “All this that I have told you,” said he, “is nothing to what is to come; I shall require all your courtesy to believe the things I shall narrate; your eyes would open wide, gentlemen, and yours too, fair ladies, if you were to see what we saw proceed from the bosom of a rock, with our own eyes, so that there was no deception. I say that out of the aperture of a rock, there came forth, first, a most melodious noise that arrested our attention, then a sound of divers instruments; then issued forth a car, — I hardly know how to describe its form, but something resembling a ship; —— it was drawn by twelve enormous apes, and in the car was a very beautiful lady, arrayed in a gorgeous robe of many colours, crowned with oleanders; she leant upon a black stick, in which was fixed a kind of tablet, or shield, with the word ‘Sensuality’ thereon; behind her followed other beautiful women, each with a musical instrument in her hand, producing a melody now gay, now mournful, altogether singularly pleasing.

“My companions and I were so astonished that we stood as if transformed into

stone statues. The beautiful lady came straight to me, and in a voice half sweet, half angry, she said, 'It has cost thee dear, O noble youth, being my enemy,' and so saying, she passed on, and the musical damsels seized, and carried off, as it were, seven or eight of my mariners, and following their mistress, disappeared again through the aperture of the rock. I then turned to my comrades, and was about to ask what they thought of all this that we had seen, when the sound of other voices reached our ears, very different from the first, more agreeable and even more melodious, and then appeared a band of lovely women. They preceded my sister Auristella: no words can express her more than mortal beauty; — she was between two damsels, one of whom stepped forwards, and spoke to me thus:— 'Virtue and modesty are inseparable companions, and ever accompany chastity, who is here under the semblance of your beloved sister Auristella, nor will they ever leave her until her peregrinations come to a happy termination in the holy city of Rome.' Then I, enraptured with those happy tidings, and wondering at the lovely sight before me, so new and strange an adventure, would fain have raised my voice, and exclaimed, 'O ye bright comforters of my soul; O rich reward granted for my welfare — sweet and joyful now and ever to me.' So great was the energy with which I strove to utter these words, that I awoke from my dream, and the lovely vision vanished; I found myself in the ship with my companions, — all were there, none of them missing."

"Then," exclaimed Constance, "my lord Periander, you were only dreaming?"

"I was," he answered, "all my happiness has ever been but a dream."

"Truly," she rejoined, "I was going to ask the lady Auristella where she had concealed herself all the time before she appeared to you."

"My brother," said Auristella, "has related his dream in such a manner, that I really felt a doubt whether it was truth or not, that he was telling us."

To which Maurice added, "These things are owing to the force of imagination, which represents things sometimes in so varied a way, that they cling to the memory, and remain there till we hardly know whether they are truth or not." —

Meanwhile Arnolfo kept silence; he was considering in his mind the vivacity and warmth of expression that Periander had used in relating his story, and could not help indulging some of the doubts and suspicions which had been infused into his mind by the deceased Clodio, as to whether Periander and Auristella were really brother and sister.

However, at length he said, "Go on with your story, Periander, but leave out your dreams, for weary and overworked minds often engender confused and strange fancies, and here is the peerless Sinforosa longing to have you come to the time of your first appearance in the island, when you went away crowned as

conqueror in the games which take place on the anniversary of her father's election."

"The pleasure that my dream gave me," replied Periander, "made me unaware of the tiresome and fruitless nature of such digressions in a narrative, which should be concise and not amplified."

Polycarp, whose eyes were entirely occupied with looking at Auristella, and his mind in thinking about her, said nothing. It mattered very little to him whether Periander spoke or held his tongue, and he, who began to perceive that some of his hearers were tired of his long story, determined to shorten the rest, and to finish it in as few words as he could, and so he spoke as follows.

## CHAPTER XVII.

He continues his Story.

I AWAKENED from my dream, as I told you, and held a council with my companions what course we should take, and it was resolved to go still as the winds should guide us, for as we were in pursuit of pirates, who never sail against the wind, we should be certain to find some; such was my folly, that I asked Carino and Solercio whether they had seen their wives among the number of those who followed Auristella, as I had seen in my dream. They laughed at my inquiry, and desired, and even forced me, to relate to them what I had dreamt.

“For two months we continued cruising about these seas without meeting with any adventure of importance; but we purged them from more than seventy pirate ships, and appropriated the spoil, filling our vessel with immense wealth, which greatly delighted my companions, and they did not regret having exchanged the trade of fishermen for that of pirates, for they were only robbers of the robber, and stole nothing but what was stolen before.

“It happened that the wind blew so obstinately from one quarter, that without slackening sail or altering our course, it drove us forward in such a manner, that for more than a month we sailed on in the same direction, insomuch that my pilot, taking the altitude of the pole, and measuring the knots we made in an hour, and calculating the number of days we had been sailing thus, found that we had gone four hundred leagues, more or less. Again our pilot took his observations, and found that we were on the coast of Norway; then raising his voice in sorrowful accents, he cried, ‘ Unhappy that we are, if the wind does not change shortly, our lives will be ended here, for we are in the icy sea; I say we are in the frozen ocean, and if the frost comes here, we shall remain, petrified, and fast in these waters.’ He had hardly spoken, when we felt that the ship’s sides and keel were knocking against moving rocks, as it seemed, by which we guessed that the sea was beginning to freeze, and these ice mountains thus formed underneath obstruct the vessel’s course. We lowered the sails at once, lest they should be torn by touching them, and all that day and night the water froze and pressed around us, so that it held us fast enclosed, like a stone that is

set in a ring; and now all at once the frost began to benumb our bodies, and sadden our spirits, till fear took possession of us, and we, seeing the imminent peril of our situation, could only look forward to our lives lasting for just as many days as we had food in the ship to sustain them. From this moment we put ourselves on an allowance, and the measure appointed for each was so small that we soon began to feel the pangs of hunger. We looked around on every side, but met with nothing that could afford the slightest hope, unless it might be a dark bulky object, which appeared to us about seven or eight miles distant. But this we supposed likely to be some other vessel, which the ice held imprisoned like our own.

“Our present danger surpassed all the former ones which I had ever experienced, because a protracted dread, and a continued expectation of death, is more trying than a speedy one, which spares us all those horrors and agonies which are far worse than death itself. Seeing then that we were threatened with starvation, we came to a resolution, which was rash at least, if not quite desperate; and considering that the human mind can conceive no death more terrible than that by hunger, we determined to leave our vessel, and travel across the ice, to see if we could discover in the one we had seen in the distance, anything we could avail ourselves of, either by fair means or force.

“We carried this purpose into effect, and in a few minutes on the frozen waters was formed a squadron, small, perhaps, but composed of brave men, who, with myself as their leader, rolling, falling, and getting up again, reached at last the other vessel, for so it was, and pretty nearly the same size as our own. There were men in her, who, seeing us, and guessing our intentions, called out aloud, ‘What do ye come here for, desperate men? what do ye seek? are ye come to hasten our death, or to die with us? Return to your ship, and if ye lack food, gnaw the rigging, and fill your stomachs with the pitchy wood, for if ye hope to have aid here, the hope is vain, and against the precepts of charity, which begins at home; for the two months during which this frost will last, we have one fortnight’s provisions, and whether it is likely that we shall divide these with you, we leave you to consider upon.’

“To which I answered, ‘In extreme cases we cannot stop to reason; receive us into your ship with good will and divide with us your provisions, which we come in quest of, and which we need: let us eat together in friendship, or we shall be obliged to have recourse to our arms, and to use force.’ I answered in this manner because I did not believe that they spoke the truth about the quantity of provisions they had on board, but they, seeing themselves superior in numbers, and having the advantage in position, neither feared our threats nor listened to our entreaties, but flew to arms, and prepared to defend themselves.

My men, who were rendered more courageous than common by desperation, attacked the ship, and succeeded in getting on board, and making themselves masters of her without any one even receiving a wound. A voice from amongst our company proposed that all the men should be put to death to lessen the number of mouths requiring food. I, however, could not agree to this, and, perhaps in order to help my wish of preserving their lives, Heaven came to our assistance, as I shall tell you by and bye; for first I must inform you, that I found this vessel to be the very pirate ship that had robbed me of my sister, and the fishermen of their young brides. Hardly had I made the discovery than I cried out, 'Ha, robbers? where have ye hidden those who are dear as our own souls? where are our beloved ones, whom ye have stolen from us? What have ye done with my sister Auristella? and where are Silviana and Leoncia, the young wives of my good friends, Carino and Solercio?'

"One of the pirates answered me, 'Those women whom you speak of that belonged to the fishermen, were sold by our captain, who is now dead, to Arnolfo, the prince of Denmark.'"

"That was true," said Arnolfo, "for I did buy Auristella, and her nurse Clelia, and two other very beautiful girls, from some pirates, who sold them to me at a price far below their value."

"Good Heavens" exclaimed Rutilio, "and by what circumlocutions, and through what curious links have you carried your wandering history, O Periander!"

"Out of kindness to yourself," added Sinforosa, "we would fain have you shorten your tale, which is as interesting as it is true."

"I will do so," said Periander, "if it is possible that great events can be narrated in a few words."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

The treacherous conduct of Polycarp in consequence of Zenotia's advice. He loses his Kingdom, and she her Life. His Guests quit the Island, and land on the Isle of Hermits.

All this delay, owing to the length of Periander's history, was so contrary to the wishes of Polycarp, that he could neither lend it his attention, nor mature his thoughts as to what he should do in order to keep Auristella without prejudice to the character he desired to preserve, of a generous and just king. He considered how high was the rank of some of his guests; first and foremost stood Arnoldo, the prince of Denmark, not by election, but hereditary right. In every word and action of Periander, in his noble and spirited demeanour, he plainly discerned some high-born personage; and in the lovely Auristella, an equally illustrious lady: he would willingly have accomplished his desire easily, without any circumlocutions or artifices, smoothing all difficulties by the veil of marriage, although his advanced years were, he could not conceal from himself, rather against it. His ideas were participated in and urged on by the artful Zenotia, with whom he arranged and agreed that before he gave Periander another audience, their plan should be put in execution. This was, to have a feigned alarm raised in the city, in which the palace should be set on fire in two or three places, which would force its inmates to seek for shelter, and throw everybody into confusion, in the midst of which, Auristella and the young Antonio were to be carried off by persons prepared on purpose, and the lady Polycarpa was directed to warn Arnoldo and Periander of the danger which threatened them, without discovering the intention of a robbery, but showing them a way to save themselves by getting to the shore, where in the harbour they would find a small vessel ready, in which they might make their escape.

The night on which this was to happen, arrived, and at three o'clock in the morning the alarm began, which threw the whole city into confusion and terror. The flames began to blaze out, only equalled by those burning in the royal breast. Meanwhile the princess went calmly and composedly to warn Arnoldo and Periander of the designs of her treacherous and enamoured father, which, however, she did not reveal to the full extent of his dishonourable intentions.

Arnoldo and Periander on hearing it, called Auristella, Maurice, Transila, Ladislaus, the two Antonios, Ricla, Constance, and Rutilio, and thanking



Polycarpa for her advice, they assembled their little party, and putting the men in front, went as she had counselled them to do, and made their way to the harbour without any interruption, where they embarked instantly on board the little vessel, the master and pilot of which had been prepared, and paid beforehand by the king to set sail the moment the persons arrived, who seemed intending to take to flight, and not to stop till they reached England, or some other yet more distant place.

Amid the continued cries of “To arms! to arms!” and the shouts of the crowd assembled at the fire, which blazed as though it knew it had the full permission of the master of the palace to do its utmost, Polycarp went forth secretly to look after the theft he meditated — the carrying off Auristella, — and the sorceress Zenotia as anxiously watched for the accomplishment of hers — the detention of Antonio; but finding that all the party had made their escape, and that not one was left behind, orders were given to all the batteries, and to all the ships that were in the harbour, to fire at the little vessel which was seen taking to flight. This only added to the uproar and confusion, and terror of the inhabitants of the town, who could not divine or imagine what enemies were assailing them, or what all this frightful clamour could mean.

Meanwhile the lovesick maiden Sinforosa, who was utterly ignorant of the cause of all this disturbance, made her way with hurried and trembling steps to the top of one of the highest towers in the palace, which seemed likely to be safe from the fire that was consuming the rest of the building. Her sister Polycarpa went to shut herself up with her, and then she told her how their guests had fled; on hearing this news, Sinforosa fainted away, which made Polycarpa repent of what she had done.

Morning dawned at last — welcome to those who hoped to discover with the daylight the cause of the calamity, — but in the bosom of King Polycarp was darkest night, and the deepest sadness that can be imagined. Zenotia wrung her hands, and cursed her deceiving art, and the promises of her accursed masters. Poor Sinforosa still lay in her swoon, whilst her sister wept over her and lamented her sorrows, but continued to use every effort to restore her to life and sense. At last she revived, and casting her eyes towards the sea, she saw the vessel which bore away the other half of her soul, or at least its better part, and like another Dido deceived and abandoned, complaining of another fugitive Eneas, she sighed, wept, and cried aloud in such words as these; “O lovely guest, who hast come to these shores for my misfortune; thou hast never deceived me, it is true, for I have never been happy enough to hear words of love from thee that might have beguiled me; Oh, that I could slacken thy sails, and arrest thy speed, so that these eyes might yet a little longer space behold thy

ship, the very sight of which is consolation, since it containeth thee. Alas! my lord, thou fliest from one who would fain follow thee. Thou hatest one who adores thee; I who am daughter of a king, would gladly be thy slave. The flames that burn this city, if thou wouldst return, might serve as an illumination to show our joy; I have riches safely placed where the fire cannot touch them, for Heaven will preserve them for thee." Then she would turn to her sister, and say, "Dost not thou think, my Polycarpa, that the ship slackens in her course? Seemeth it not to thee that she sails less swiftly? Ah, Heavens! if he should have repented."

"Alas, my sister," answered Polycarpa, "deceive not thyself, our wishes often go hand in hand with delusions. The ship sails on, and thy desires have no power to detain her as thou thinkest, but rather the breath of thy continual sighing impels her on her way."

And now came unto them the king, who, like his daughter, wished to gaze from the high tower upon the vessel which was bearing away, not half, but all his heart's delight. She was, however, no longer visible. Those who had lit up the conflagration by his orders had now to extinguish it. The citizens learnt the cause of the disturbance, and the folly of their sovereign, also the evil counsels and intrigues of the sorceress Zenotia. On that same day they deposed him from the throne, and condemned her to be hanged. Sinforosa and Polycarpa were treated with the same respect as before, and their fortunes were equal to their merits, although Sinforosa did not obtain the happiness she sought, for higher still was the fortune that awaited Periander.

Meanwhile the fugitives on board the little vessel finding themselves all safe together and free, were never weary of returning thanks to Heaven for their successful escape. They were informed afterwards of the treacherous designs of Polycarp, but the horror they felt at his treason was not so great but that they could find some excuse for him, in that it had been caused by love, — love which forms the excuse of so many errors, since when once that passion gains entire possession of a heart, no power can restrain it, and it sets all reason at defiance.

The weather was fine, and though the wind was fresh, the sea was tranquil. They steered their course for England, where they intended to decide upon what plan would be best for them to pursue, and their voyage was so peaceful and prosperous, that no fear or suspicion of evil came across them. For three days this calm endured, and during three days the wind was fair, but on the fourth, it began to blow hard, and the sea to rage, so that the mariners feared a great tempest was at hand. The uncertainty of life is well typified by the sea, in each we cannot promise ourselves security or endurance in anything long; however, it pleased Heaven that just when they were beginning to be alarmed, they

perceived that they were near an island, which the mariners immediately knew, and said, that it was called "The Hermit's Isle," and that it possessed two bays capable of sheltering twenty vessels and more, from all winds; they were, in fact, as good as harbours. They added, moreover, that in one of the hermitages there lived a hermit, who had once been a French gentleman of good family, called Renato; and that in the other hermitage lived a French lady, called Eusebia, and that the history of these two persons was one of the most remarkable ever heard of.

A curiosity to see these hermits joined to the necessity of sheltering from the storm, made all desirous of going directly to the island; they, therefore, steered for it straight, and entered one of the little bays, where they anchored unquestioned by anybody; and Arnolfo having ascertained that the isle contained no inhabitants except the hermits alluded to, ordered the boat to be made ready to land Auristella, and the others who were much fatigued with their voyage, and also Maurice, Rutilio, and Periander, who thought it would be best for them to pass the night on shore, that they might rest in peace after the motion of the waves. It was also agreed that Antonio and his son, and Ladislaus, should remain in the ship, as they had not as yet had sufficient experience of the mariners to know if they were to be trusted implicitly; it was therefore decided that they should stay with the seamen, to whom no land is so pleasant as the planks of their ship, and sweeter to them is the scent of oil and fish, pitch and tar, than to others would be the odours of the most fragrant flowers of the garden.

Under a rock, sheltered from the wind, they settled themselves for the night, making a fire with some branches and bits of wood they found about, to keep themselves warm; and all the party being pretty well accustomed to such shifts as these, past the night pleasantly enough, and the more so, as Periander, being urged by Transila to take this opportunity of concluding his story, and her entreaty followed up by the general voice, went on in the following words.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Of the kind Reception they met with in the Isle of Hermits.

IF it be true, as I think it is, that we find a pleasure in listening to the storm without, when we are comfortably sheltered at home; and in recalling the perils of the past battle in times of peace; or in health, remembering our late weakness; then is it sweet to me to tell of all my wanderings and troubles in this calm and peaceful place of rest, where, although I may not as yet consider that I am quite free from care, I may say I am enjoying repose for the present: and happy in feeling this, I will now return to tell you about the ship wherein I was left with our conquered enemies, and where I learnt, as I have already told you, the particulars of how my sister and Clelia, and the two fishermen's brides, had been sold to the prince Arnolfo here present.

“Whilst my people were busily investigating and weighing the provisions that were in the icebound vessel, I perceived that on the side nearest the land, a body of armed men, about perhaps four thousand in number, was approaching; a sight such as this left us even more frozen than that icy sea. We prepared our arms, but more that we might stand up like men, than with any thought of defending ourselves. They moved along the ice only on one foot, giving with the right a touch against the left heel, and thereby impelling their bodies, and sliding with the other over the sea for a long space, and then immediately renewing the blow again, made another slide for a great distance, in which manner of travelling they were with us speedily, and soon surrounded us on every side. One of the party who was, as I afterwards learnt, the commander of the party, came near enough to the ship to make himself heard by us, and announced that they came with peaceable intentions, by displaying a white flag, which he carried on his arm: he spoke in a loud voice in the Polish tongue, and said, ‘Cratilius, King of Lithuania, and lord of these seas, has a custom, which is to dispatch armed men to all those ships that are detained in the ice, and to take from them the persons and merchandize that they contain, repaying himself for the kindness by taking the latter for his own; if you choose to accept this arrangement without resistance, you shall enjoy both your liberty and your lives, for we have no wish to take you prisoners.’

“The brevity and determination of his manner pleased me. I replied, ‘that I must take counsel with my people,’ and my fishermen said, ‘that of all evils the worst and the last was to lose one’s life, which we must preserve by all the means we could devise, unless it were by infamy, and that, as in the terms now offered, there was none, and that on the other hand, we were certain of losing our lives, as to defend them was more than doubtful; it would be best to submit to the misfortune that pursued us, since we might thus be preserved for a happier fate at some future time.’ I returned pretty nearly all this answer to the commander of the squadron, and in an instant they assailed the ship, in a way that had certainly more the appearance of war than peace. She was completely gutted in a very short time, and all that she had contained, even to the guns and rigging, was transferred to some ox-hides, which they spread upon the ice, and then tying them securely together, they drew them along by means of ropes, without losing a single article; in a similar manner they plundered our own ship, and then, placing us upon some other hides, they set up a loud shout of rejoicing, and drew us all along with them to land, which might be perhaps about twenty miles distant. To me it did appear truly wonderful, and a sight to see so many people travelling over the surface of the water, without any trouble, and without any miracle. —

“That evening we reached the shore, where we remained until the following morning, when we found it thronged with a multitude of persons, who were come to look at the prize of the frozen and petrified ships. Among them, mounted upon a beautiful horse, was the King Cratilius: we easily recognized him to be so by the insignia of royalty that adorned him; by his side, also mounted on horseback, was a very handsome woman, arrayed in white armour, which was nearly covered by a large black veil. She attracted my attention by her appearance, as also did the noble and gallant bearing of the king, and looking at her attentively, I knew her to be the beautiful Sulpicia, who had so lately been restored to the liberty she now enjoyed by the courtesy of my companions. The king came up to us to look at the persons who had been brought from the ships, and the captain taking me by the hand, brought me forward, and said, ‘ In this young man alone, O noble king, I present to you what appears to me the richest prize that human eyes have ever seen.’

“‘Merciful Heaven!’ here exclaimed the fair Sulpicia, springing from her horse to the ground, ‘ either I cannot see aright, or this is my deliverer Periander!’ and so saying, she threw her arms round my neck, and closely embraced me, at which extraordinary demonstrations of affection, Cratilius thought himself obliged to dismount also, and to greet me with the same tokens of pleasure. Until now all hope of anything like good fortune had been lost by

my poor companions; but at the sight of all this joyful reception which they now witnessed, they took courage; joy beamed from their eyes, and from their lips came words of gratitude to God for this unexpected happiness.

“Then Sulpicia said to Cratilius, ‘In this youth, sire, you see one in whom an excess of courtesy and generosity dwells supreme, and although I have learned this by my own experience, I wish you to believe it to be true by the very nobleness of his appearance. (In this you will perceive she only spoke like a very grateful person, and deceived herself.) It was he who did not despise, but would not take my treasures. He received my gifts to return them to me with a kindness that made them doubly valuable: if he could he would have given me more. It was he who knew how to dispose his people’s minds, so that his will was theirs. He bestowed twelve of them upon me, who are even now accompanying me, and I have them here before thee.’ You will easily believe that my cheeks burned with blushes at these praises, so extravagant and unmerited.

I could do no more than bend my knee before the king, asking leave to kiss his hand; he gave it, but not for that purpose, only to raise me from the ground.

“Meanwhile the twelve fishermen who had gone to guard Sulpicia, went amongst the crowd to seek for their former companions, embracing one another, and joyfully recounting each their tale of bad and good fortune; the sea party exaggerating their frost, the land party their riches. One said, ‘The lady Sulpicia has given me this chain of gold;’ another, ‘And I have got a jewel, worth two of your chains.’

‘She has given me heaps of money,’ cried a third; whilst another declared that he had a diamond ring which was of more value than all the rest put together: but all these discourses were stopped by a noise that was heard in the crowd, which was caused by a very magnificent wild horse, whose bridle was held by two grooms, who could not succeed in taming him; he was jet black, with white spots, which made him singularly beautiful. He was without a saddle, for he would not suffer any one to saddle him but the king; however, this submission lasted only till it was put on, for he placed a thousand impediments in the way of mounting him, which vexed the king greatly, and he would willingly have given a whole city to anybody who could cure him of his vicious habits. All this was told me briefly by the king, and I as quickly made up my mind to do what I am going to tell you.”

At this part of Periander’s story, Arnolfo heard a sound on the other side of the rock where they had sheltered themselves, like footsteps approaching; he rose hastily and put his hand on the hilt of his sword, to be prepared for the event. Periander was silent; the women were silenced with fear; the men in eager expectation, especially Periander, awaited the result, and by the faint light of the

moon, which was partly hid by clouds, they saw two dark figures coming towards them, but could not distinguish what these could be, when a clear and pleasing voice said, "Let not our unexpected visit alarm you, whoever you may be, we only come to offer you our services; this apartment of yours is but a cold and rude accommodation, and we think we can afford you a somewhat better shelter in our dwelling, which is at the top of this hill; there you will at least have light and fire and food, which, though simple, will refresh you, and be wholesome and good."

"Are you then by chance, Renato and Eusebia?" inquired Periander; "that pair of true and faithful lovers of whom fame, with her many tongues, has said so much and praised so highly?"

"If," replied the dark figure, "you had said, the unfortunate lovers, I should have answered that we are those persons; however, we are those of whom you spoke, and offer sincerely all the hospitality our narrow means afford."

Arnoldo thought it would be wise to accept their offer, since there was every appearance of rough weather; they all therefore rose, and following Renato and Eusebia, who acted as their guides, reached the summit of a small mountain, or hill rather, where they saw two hermitages, more suitable for persons who were to pass their lives in poverty than attractive by their elegance or rich adornment.

They entered the first dwelling and the largest, which was lighted with two lamps, by the aid of which they could distinguish what was within; this was, an altar, with three images thereon: one was, the image *of* the Saviour *of* the World dead and crucified; another was the Queen of Heaven, and Lady of Joy, seated sorrowfully at the feet of Him who has the whole world under his feet; and the third was of the beloved disciple, who in his sleep saw more than any eyes will ever behold, though they were more numerous than the stars of Heaven.

They knelt and said a prayer with profound respect, and then Renato led them into an adjoining apartment, to which they entered through a door that was close to the altar. Finally, since such simple matters do not need a long history, I will not dwell upon all that passed, nor on the frugal supper which was plentiful only in the ample welcome they received from the hermits, whose poverty was too apparent from the mean and humble clothing they wore: they seemed to be on the verge of old age, yet still there might be seen in Eusebia the remains of beauty, which must once have been very great.

Auristella, Transila, and Constance, remained in this apartment, where beds were prepared for them of dry rushes and sweet smelling herbs. The men were accommodated in the hermitage in different places, — some as hard as they were cold, and as cold as they were hard. Time passed as it usually does — the night flew by, and the day dawned clear and mild; the sea lay before them so calm and

still that it seemed as if inviting them to return and enjoy it by embarking once more, and this they would doubtless have done, if the pilot had not come up to say, it would not do to trust to the signs of fine weather, for though the present promise was fair, he thought it would turn out quite otherwise.

They determined to abide by his opinion, for they well knew that in such matters the simplest mariner is better skilled than the most learned philosopher in the world. The ladies left their herby beds, the men their hard resting-place, and all sallied forth to view from the summit of the hill the smiling prospect that lay around them. The little island was hardly twelve miles in length, but so full of fruit trees, so well watered, so verdant, and so flowery, that in one and the same moment all the five senses might be gratified.

The day was not far advanced when the two venerable hermits came to see their guests, and spreading upon the floor of the hermitage green and dry rushes, they made a carpet, more beautiful, perhaps, than may often be seen in kings' palaces. They placed thereon a great variety of fruits, both fresh and dried, and bread, not very newly baked, but almost like biscuit. The board was adorned with vases or cups, made of cork, curiously worked, filled with the clearest water; the repast and the pure water, which showed its clearness even in spite of the dark hue of the cork cups, aided by hunger, made them all gladly seat themselves round the table; and as soon as they had finished their short and pleasant meal, Arnolfo entreated Renato to tell them his history, and what could be the cause of his being brought to such a life of poverty and privation. Now, as Renato was of noble birth, to which order courtesy ever belongs, he, without waiting to be asked a second time, began to relate the history of his life in these words.



## CHAPTER XX.

Renato relates the History of the Events that led him to the Isle of the Hermitages.

WHEN past sufferings are described in present prosperity, there is often greater pleasure in telling of them than there was pain in their endurance, but this cannot be said in my case, for I am not out of the trouble, but still in the depth of my sorrows.

“I was born in France, and I belong to a noble family, rich and worthy; I was brought up” in the performance of all knightly exercises, and taught to regulate my thoughts by my condition; but nevertheless, I was bold enough to fix them upon the lady Eusebia, a lady belonging to the queen’s household, but it was only with my eyes that I ever gave her to understand that I adored her, and she, either from prudence or because she was not aware of it, never let me think, by word or look, that she understood me; and although disdain and indifference generally put an end to love, in its beginning for want of hope to sustain and feed it, in my case it had a contrary effect, for the silence of Eusebia lent wings to my hopes, which bore me up to the very Heavens to try and deserve her. However, the jealousy or undue curiosity of another gentleman, also a Frenchman, named Lisomir, not less favoured by fortune than by birth, discovered my secret feelings, and instead of viewing them with sympathy or pity, he felt nothing but envy and malice. It should have been quite otherwise, for there are two great griefs in love, which reduce one to the last extremity; one is, to love and not be beloved in return; the other, to love and be abhorred; neither absence nor jealousy can equal these. One day Lisomir went to the king, though I had never given him any cause of offence, and told him that I and Eusebia entertained a secret and illicit correspondence, offending against their majesties, and ‘ against my vow as a loyal and true knight.

“The king on hearing this was greatly disturbed; he sent for me and told me what Lisomir had said; I declared my innocence, and to prove it, and clear the honour of Eusebia, and also as the most suitable way in which to give my enemy the lie, I referred the proof to single combat. The king would not allow any spot of ground to be selected in his kingdom for our purpose, because it was forbidden by the Catholic law, but he allowed us to take one of the free cities of

Germany as the scene of our encounter.

“The appointed day for the combat arrived; I appeared on the spot, with the weapons that had been determined upon, which were a sword and a shield. The judges and the seconds arranged the ceremonial according to the usual custom in such cases. The ground was measured, and they left us. Knowing that I had the right on my side, I entered the lists, confident and in good heart; my adversary, I well know, met me more full of pride and arrogance than of a good conscience. But O ye inscrutable ways of Providence; I did my utmost; I put my hope and trust in God, and in the innocence of my cause, I was neither overcome by fear, nor was my arm weak, nor were its motions irregular; yet how it was I know not; I suddenly found myself on the ground, with my enemy’s sword threatening me with instant death. ‘Strike,’ I exclaimed, ‘O thou who hast conquered more by luck than valour, and let loose the soul that has so ill defended the body in which it dwells; but hope not that I am subdued, or that I shall confess a crime I have never committed. Many are the sins for which I deserve punishment, but I will not add to them by bearing false witness against myself; better far, death with honour, than to live dishonoured.’

“‘If thou dost not yield, Renato,’ answered my enemy, ‘this sword shall pierce thy brain, and with thy blood I will make thee confess my truth and thy guilt.’

“But here the judges interfered, and supposing me dead, they declared my adversary conqueror. He was borne by his friends in triumph from the field, and I was left alone with my shame and my sorrow; more grief than wounds, and yet not grief enough, since it was insufficient to destroy the life my enemy’s sword had spared.

“I was sought out and removed by my servants; I returned to my own country, not daring to raise my eyes from the earth, so heavy was the sense of my dishonour, and the weight of my infamy: in the looks of my friends I fancied I read their condemnation; the Heavens themselves seemed obscured for me. Hardly could two or three neighbours meet to chat together in the street, but I fancied their discourse must be about my disgrace; and at length I grew so oppressed with melancholy and my sad fancies, that to escape from, or at least alleviate their bitterness, I determined to quit my native land, and renouncing my inheritance in favour of a younger brother, to banish myself entirely from my native country and home. I went away in a vessel, with a few servants, and came to these northern parts, to seek some spot where the story of my shameful defeat should be unknown, and where my name might be buried in obscurity.

“By chance I found this little isle — its appearance pleased me; with the assistance of my servants I built this hermitage, and shut myself up in it; I then dismissed them, but desired that once in each year they would come and see me,

in order to bury my remains. The love they bore me, and the gifts which I bestowed on them, made them willingly obey my requests, for I will not call them commands. They departed, and left me to my solitude, wherein I found such pleasant company in these trees, herbs, and flowers, clear streams, and babbling brooks, that I lamented I had not sooner escaped from my sorrows. O sweet solitude! friend of the unhappy! O silence, how welcome art thou, without fear of the voice of the flatterer, or the slanderer. How much could I not say, sirs, in favour of this holy solitude and wholesome silence; but I must stop myself to tell you, how in a year my servants returned, and brought with them my adored Eusebia, whom you see in this sister hermit. She had heard from my servants of the retreat which I had found; and in recompense for my love, and compassion for my disgrace, she resolved to bear me company in my trouble, as we had both been innocent of all guilt, and had not been companions in crime: so embarking with them, she left her home and her country, her wealth and comforts, and what was more than all, she left her good name and honour to become the public talk, since by her flight she confirmed the report of our mutual fault.

“I received her as she had hoped I should, and the beauty and solitude of this place, instead of increasing those wishes and thoughts I had once indulged, had now a contrary effect. Thanks to Heaven, and to her purity and goodness, we consider ourselves as lawfully husband and wife, and in peace and love; like two living statues, have we dwelt here for ten years, during which time, not one has passed without a visit from my servants, bringing us the necessaries which in this desert place we require; and sometimes they are accompanied by a priest, who confesses us. We have in our hermitage everything proper for celebrating the holy offices; we sleep apart, take our meals together, and converse upon heavenly things, despise the world, and, trusting in God’s mercy, we look forward with hope to life eternal.” Here Renato ended his discourse, and all his hearers expressed their pleasure and admiration at the incidents he had related, not because it seemed a new thing that Heaven should send chastisements contrary to human expectations, since they knew that these are sent frequently for two causes; — to the wicked as punishment, and to improve and try the good, amongst whom they considered Renato, and bestowed on him many kind and consolatory words, nor did they omit to do the same by Eusebia.

“O life of solitude!” here exclaimed Rutilio, (who had listened to the hermit’s story with most profound attention,) “O solitary life; holy, free, and safe, are they who embrace thee, choose thee, and enjoy thee!”

“True, friend Rutilio,” said Maurice, “but only in certain cases, for there is no great marvel if a humble shepherd retires into the solitude of the country; nor when a poor wretch, who is half starved in a town, takes refuge in a retreat

where he knows he shall find sustenance. These ways of living are often only a means of fostering idleness and sloth, and it is no small idleness if a man leaves his troubles to be remedied by others. If I were to see a Carthaginian Hannibal leave the world to shut himself up in a hermitage, as we have seen a Charles the Fifth retire into a monastery, I should feel astonishment and admiration; but if a plebeian goes into obscurity, or a poor unknown being retires from society, I neither wonder nor admire. However, Renato is not one of these, since it was neither poverty nor necessity that led him into these solitudes, but his own good feelings; here he finds in scarcity, abundance, and in solitude, society, and lives the more securely, having but little to lose.”

“And,” added Periander, “if I was old instead of very young, so many perils and dangers have been my share, that I should look upon a peaceful hermitage as the extreme of felicity, and in the tomb of silence to bury my name; but I cannot relinquish the object for which I have hitherto lived, nor change the mode of life I was following at the time when the horse of King Cratilius appeared, where my history left off last.”

They heard him say this with great delight, for they perceived by his manner that Periander was willing to return to his so oft begun and never ended story, which in fact he did, as follows.

## CHAPTER XXI.

He relates what happened with the Horse that Cratilius valued so highly, and which was so far famed.

THE size, beauty, and spirit of the horse I have before described, made Cratilius value him very highly, and as desirous of having him tamed as I was to seize the opportunity of doing him a service; I thought that this was a fair means sent by Providence, through which I might make myself useful and agreeable in the eyes of him who was now my Master, and in some degree show that I deserved the praise bestowed on me by Sulpicia; and so, with more haste than prudence I went up to the horse, and leapt upon his back, without placing my foot in the stirrup, for there was none to use. He started off with me without any power in the rein to direct or restrain him, and made his way towards a rock that overhung the sea; urging him on with my feet much against his wish, I made him leap off the rock into the sea below.

“In the midst of our flight, it occurred to me that the sea was frozen, and therefore we should in all probability be dashed to pieces with the shock, so I considered my death and his as certain; but it was not so; — providence, that for its own good reasons watches over and preserves me, was my guard. The limbs of the powerful animal withstood the fall without any other damage than shaking me off, and rolling along the slippery surface for a considerable space. There was not a single person among the spectators on the shore who did not fully believe and think that I must be killed; but when they saw me rise up, although they thought the event a miracle, yet they considered my daring act to have been downright madness.”

Very hard it was to old Maurice, to lend his belief to this tremendous leap of Periander's, so much did it go beyond all the bounds of probability; at least, he thought, there should have been three or four legs broken, that the courtesy of the hearers might not have been so severely tried in listening to so very outrageous a performance. However, so great was the credit which Periander had with them all, that they did not even express a doubt, for as it is one of the inconveniences of lying, that even when a liar speaks truth he is not believed, so it is the glory of the truth-teller to be credited, even when he exaggerates a little; and as Maurice's private thoughts did not interfere with the discourse, Periander

went on, saying, "I returned to shore with the horse — I even mounted him again — and tried to incite him a second time to renew the feat he had just performed, but it was impossible, for, fixing himself firmly on his haunches on the point of the rock, he broke the reins, remaining as if nailed to the ground. He was covered with a profuse sweat from head to foot, and so s thoroughly frightened, that he was changed from a lion into a lamb, and from a savage beast into a noble horse, so that when the grooms came to handle him, they found that they could caparison and mount him, and ride him with the most entire security, and he showed such activity and such perfect paces, that the king was quite enchanted, and Sulpicia was pleased to see my actions support her words.

"The frost lasted three months, and during this time a vessel was finished building which the king had begun, and which was intended to navigate these seas, and clear them of the pirates, enriching himself with the spoil.

"In the meantime I was of service to him in various hunting parties, when I proved myself experienced and sagacious, and hardy in bearing fatigue and hardships, for the chase is something like war, and to it belong fatigue, hunger, and thirst, sometimes even death. The liberality of the Princess Sulpicia was unbounded to me and my companions, and the kindness and courtesy of the king equalled it. The twelve fishermen who had gone with Sulpicia were already rich; those who had been with me were become so. The ship was finished, and by the king's orders it was amply supplied with everything necessary, and I was appointed to command it, with free liberty to do exactly what I pleased; so after having kissed his hands for this very great benefit, I told him that I wished to obtain his leave to go and seek for my sister Auristella, who, as I had heard, was in the power of the King of Denmark. Cratilius gave me permission to do all I wished, saying that I had obliged him for ever by my good conduct; thus speaking like a king whose gracious acts are always enhanced by affability, and in Sulpicia also I found the same: her gentle breeding was accompanied by the most lavish generosity, so that I and all my people, enriched and well content, embarked without leaving a single one behind. Our first course was straight to Denmark, where I hoped to find my sister, but all I found there, was the intelligence that she and some other women had been stolen away from the seashore by some pirates. Thus my wanderings were to begin anew, and my grief and lamentations renewed, in which I was joined by Carino and Solercio, who imagined that their young wives shared the fate and captivity of Auristella."

"Their suspicions," said Arnolfo, interrupting him, "were well founded."

"We swept all these seas," continued Periander, "circumnavigated nearly every island round about, everywhere inquiring for tidings of my sister. It seemed to me, and doubtless may be thought of every great beauty, that charms

such as hers could not remain long concealed, and that the light of her loveliness must shine out, let the place where she was confined be ever so dark; and her exceeding great prudence, I trusted, would be the clue whereby to extricate her from any labyrinth.

We took pirates, released prisoners, restored property fourfold to the right owners, and also enriched our own ship with all sorts of wealth. At length my companions felt a wish to return home to their nets and families; Carino and Solercio fancied that it was possible they might find their wives there, since they were to be discovered nowhere else. Before this, however, we had come to the island, the name of which is, I believe, Scinta, where we heard of the festival and games given by King Polycarp, and we felt a desire to join in them, but our ship could not get near, owing to the contrary wind; so dressing ourselves as rowers, we manned the boat, and went off to the appointed place. There I won the prizes; there I was crowned as victor in all the contests, and thence sprang Sinforosa's curiosity to know who I was, as you have seen by the eagerness with which she sought to discover my history. We returned to our ship, and my companions were resolved to leave me; I asked them to let me keep the boat as a reward for all the perils we had encountered together. They would have given me the ship too if I had wished it, and said, 'They would not have left me, but that it seemed my own desire to be alone in fine, accompanied by six of my fishermen, who would not quit me, perhaps in consequence of the recompense I offered them, I embarked in the boat they had given me — embraced and bade adieu to my friends — and steered towards the barbarous isle, for I had heard the account of the customs of its inhabitants, and of the false and foolish prophecy by which they were deluded, which I need not repeat, as you already know it. We crossed the island, were taken prisoners and thrown into the dungeon, where their captives were buried alive. I was one day dragged from it, in order to be sacrificed; then followed the tempest, which dispersed the rafts they used as boats, and drove me out into the open sea on a portion of one of them, tied hand and foot, and fast bound to it. Then I fell into the compassionate hands of Prince Arnoldo; and afterwards, by his order, I went ashore again to the island, disguised, that I might discover if Auristella was there, he being then ignorant that she was my sister; and there I found her, just about to be sacrificed, the barbarians supposing her to be a man: I knew her, and prevented her death, by declaring her to be a female, as Clelia told you. As to the history of how *they* got there, *that* she herself must relate when it pleases her. All that afterwards befell us in the island is well known to you; and now with this and what my sister has still to tell, you will rest satisfied with having heard all that you desired to know of our adventures."

## CHAPTER XXII.

Sinibald, Renato's brother, arrives with good news from France. He comes to convey Renato and Eusebia home, and takes in his Ship, Arnoldo, Maurice, Transila, and Ladislaus. In the other vessel, Periander, Auristella, the two Antonios, Ricla, and Constance, embark for Spain, and Rutilio remains behind in the Hermitage.

I DO not know that I can positively affirm that Maurice, and some others among his hearers, were glad when Periander came to the end of his history; but very often those extremely long stories, although they may be of great importance, are nevertheless somewhat tiresome. It is even possible that Auristella was herself of this opinion, for she was not disposed to follow up his hint and begin the story of her adventures, although they could not have been many between the period of her being carried off from Arnoldo, and her being discovered by Periander in the barbarous isle, yet still she wished to wait for some other opportunity; and as it happened, she would have been prevented if she *had* wished it, for a ship in full sail appeared in the open sea, evidently making for the island; and very soon she had entered one of the little bays already described, and was recognized by Renato, who said, "This, sirs, is the ship in which my servants and friends occasionally visit me;" and, in fact, they heard the singing out of the seamen, as they let go their anchor, and a boat full of people directly after left the ship, and made for the shore, where Renato and all his guests were awaiting them. About twenty persons landed, among whom was one of noble appearance, who seemed master of the rest. As soon as he saw Renato, he came up to him with open arms, saying, "Embrace me, brother, in reward for the good news I bring yon!" Renato embraced him, for he had recognised his brother Sinibald, and he said, "No news can be pleasanter to me, dear brother, than your presence, for there is nothing that can give me joy in my unhappy situation, only the sight of thee is always an exception to the common rule of my misfortunes." Sinibald then turned to embrace Eusebia, saying, "You too, lady, must permit me to embrace you, for you also owe me a reward for the news I bring, and I will delay no longer telling you what it is, to put you out of suspense. Know, then, that your enemy is dead, of an illness, which deprived him for several days of speech, but Heaven mercifully restored it for a few hours before he died, during which space he expressed a deep repentance, and confessed the sin he had committed of having falsely accused you. He confessed that envy and jealousy were the cause, and



finally made all the declarations possible to avow his crime. He said it was owing to the hidden secrets of Providence that his unjust cause had gained the victory over your good one, and was not satisfied only with this spoken confession, but had a written declaration and acknowledgment made, which he signed; and when this became known to the king, he also had a similar instrument published, openly declaring your innocence and untarnished honour, and also acknowledging Eusebia's perfect innocence and purity. He then gave orders to have you sought for, and when found, to bring you into his presence, that he might try and make you some amends for all you have suffered, by ample and magnificent bounties. If these are tidings likely to give you pleasure or no, I leave to your own consideration."

"They are such," said Arnolfo, "that nothing else in life can surpass, nor any acquisition of the most unhopèd for riches approach; for honour lost, and so fully and perfectly restored, is a blessing the whole earth can never offer the equal of. May you, my lord Renato, enjoy it for many long years, and may the peerless Eusebia enjoy it with you, like the ivy to the wall, the mirror of your delight and the pattern of virtue and excellence."

Then all the others, though in different words, paid the like compliments to the hermits, and afterwards proceeded to inquire what news there was in Europe, or in other places, which they, having been so long on the seas, were ignorant of.

Sinibald answered, "That the news most talked of was, the calamity which threatened the old King of Denmark, by means of the King of Norway, and other allies who favoured him." He also told how people murmured that by the absence of the Prince Arnolfo, the heir of Denmark, his father was in danger of losing his crown. It was said of the prince, that he was fluttering, butterfly-like, in the sunshine of the bright eyes of some fair captive of his, so utterly unknown as to family and birth, that no one knew whose daughter she was. He told also of wars in Transylvania, and of some movements made by the Turks, the common enemy of the human race. He also gave an account of the glorious death of Charles the Fifth, King of Spain, and Emperor of the Romans, — the terror of all the enemies of the church, and dread of the followers of Mahomet. Other matters he spoke of, more trifling, some amusing, and some surprising, all of which gave great satisfaction to everybody except the pensive Arnolfo, who, from the moment that he heard of his father's trouble, sat with his cheek resting in his hand, and his eyes fixed on the ground. After remaining in this attitude for a considerable space, he raised his eyes from the earth and looked up towards Heaven, saying aloud, "O love! O honour! O filial duty! what a struggle ye make within my soul! Love, if I depart and leave thee, can I be forgiven? Honour, ought I to cease to follow thee, because I love. Thou, O my father, desirest my

return, and ye, my vassals, expect me; for love does not render a man a coward, nor will I prove myself one in defending you, although I am the most enamoured of all mortal men. For my peerless Auristella's sake I go to regain that which is mine own; for being a king I may seem more deserving of her than I can hope to be simply as a lover. The poor suitor unfavoured by fortune's gifts, has little chance; as a king I may pretend to her, as a king I may serve her, as a simple lover I can only adore her; but should I fail with all united to win her, I shall blame my own ill fate, and not her."

All the bystanders were much surprised at hearing these words from Arnolfo; but the most astonished of them was Sinibald. Maurice had told him that this was the Prince of Denmark, and had pointed out Auristella as the captive by whom he was said to be enslaved. Sinibald looked more particularly at her, and instantly decided that what had been called madness, in Arnolfo, was very good sense, for the beauty of Auristella, as I have often said before, was such, that it won the hearts of everybody who looked upon it, and therein found sufficient excuse for every fault or folly committed for her sake.

It was now decided that Renato and Eusebia should return to France, and take Arnolfo with them in their vessel, to leave him in his own country. He wished Maurice, Transila, and Ladislaus, to go with him, and that Periander and Auristella, the two Antonios, and Ricla and Constance should proceed to Spain in the vessel they had come in, and continue their voyage as they had desired. Rutilio was expecting to hear to which division he should belong; but before anything was settled, he went up to Renato, and kneeling before him, entreated that he would make him heir to his property in this island, and permit him to stay behind there, in order that there might never fail one to tend the light, which served as a guide to mariners: for here it was his wish to end well, a life that had hitherto not been a very good one. His Christian-like petition met with a general approval, and the good Renato, who was as kind as he was generous, granted all he desired, saying that he only wished the property he left was of more value, seeing it consisted only of the necessaries of life.

Arnolfo promised that if he found things tolerably peaceful in his own country, he would send a ship yearly to his assistance. Rutilio would fain have thrown himself at the feet of his protectors and friends, but they would not suffer it, and embraced him; many of them even wept to see the pious disposition of the new hermit, for although we may not be ourselves prepared to lead new lives and amend our ways, it nevertheless gives us pleasure to see others do so, unless our stubbornness has arrived at such a pitch that we desire to see all fall into the same abyss as ourselves.

Two days were spent in arranging and preparing for the voyages, and at the

final parting they all took affectionate farewells of one another, especially Arnolfo, Periander, and Auristella: although there was great warmth in Arnolfo's manner, and although the excess of his affection was very evident, yet it was expressed in so graceful and delicate a way, that it did not offend Periander. Transila wept, nor were the eyes of old Maurice dry, nor those of Ladislaus; Ricla sighed, and Constance was much affected, whilst her father and brother did not remain unmoved: Rutilio, already arrayed in his hermit robe, went from one to another, bidding adieu to each, and mingling his sobs and tears with theirs. At length, invited by the calm weather and favouring gales, (for the wind served equally well for both the voyages,) they embarked, set sail, and Rutilio, from the hermitage hill, watched their departure, and followed them with a thousand blessings.

And here the author of this wandering story ends his second book.

## BOOK III.

## CHAPTER I.

AS our minds are ever in perpetual motion, and can neither stop nor rest except by God, who is our centre, and for whom we are created, it is no marvel that our thoughts should change, — that this should take, that, leave; one should go on, another forget; and he who is the most quiet, will go on best, if he be not so from want of intellect.

I have made these observations as an excuse for the conduct of Arnolde, and the apparent facility with which he relinquished in one moment the object that had occupied him so long; though one can hardly say that he *relinquished* it, for he only put it off for a time, because honour, the ruling feeling of all human actions, called him away; and this he explained to Periander on the night before their parting, talking with him apart from the others in the hermitage island. There he entreated him (for he who asks for a thing he greatly needs rather begs than asks) to look well after his sister Auristella, and preserve her for him, to be the queen of Denmark; and that if fortune should prove adverse, and he should not recover his kingdom, but lose his life in the endeavour, Auristella should be considered as the widow of a prince, and as such should choose a husband; and frequently he repeated, as he had often done before, that she well deserved to be the greatest queen in the world.

Periander said not one single word of all this to Auristella, for the lover delights in bestowing upon a beloved one praises from himself, and not as coming from another. He has no desire to make her in love with the charms of any one else; his own are all that he wishes her to see: if he cannot himself sing well, he will not bring to her a friend who can: if he is not handsome, he will not visit her in the company of a Ganymede; and, in fine, I am of opinion that if he has faults, he will not mend them by the merits of others; however, these things cannot apply to Periander, who was so richly endowed with nature's choicest gifts, and in those of fortune, was inferior to few.

A favouring gale wafted the two vessels on their different ways, for this is one of the mysteries of the art of navigation. They went on their course, cutting the not crystal but the dark blue waters. The sea was calm, for the wind, treating it with respect, only ruffled the surface, and the ship just seemed gently to kiss its lips, and then bound over it so lightly, that it scarcely appeared to touch it. In this manner, and with the same continued serenity and success, they sailed for

seventeen days, without having occasion once to shorten sail, a great felicity for those who are on a sea voyage, to which, if it were not from the dread of tempests and coming storms, no pleasure in life is equal.

At the end of these or a few more days, early one morning, a boy on the top mast-head cried out, "Land! a reward sirs, a reward; I ask a reward, and deserve it, too; land! land!" although he might rather have said, Heaven!

Heaven! for we were without a doubt within sight of Lisbon, the news of which brought tears — tender and joyful tears — into the eyes of all, but more especially of Ricla, the two Antonios, and Constance, for it seemed to them as if they had now reached the promised land that they so much desired to see. Antonio clasped them in his arms, and cried, "Now you shall learn, my beloved barbarians, how we serve God, and many other things more fully, although not differently from what I have taught you. Now you will see the rich temples in which we worship Him; you will see the Catholic ceremonies with which we serve Him; and you will see what Christian love is. Here, love and modesty join hands and walk together; courtesy repels arrogance, and courage sends cowardice far away: all the inhabitants are civil, courteous, liberal, and loving. This is the greatest city in all Europe, and the one that has most trade. In her the riches of the East are poured out, from her they are scattered over the universe. Her harbour is capacious, and holds countless navies like forests; the beauty of her women is everywhere admired; the gallantry of her men is a wonder to all, and finally, this is the land which pays to Heaven a holy and abundant tribute."

"Say no more, Antonio," observed Periander, "but leave our eyes something to discover for ourselves; let something remain for us to see and admire anew, thus our pleasure will in the end be all the greater for coming by degrees."

Auristella was delighted to think she should soon set her foot on terra firma again, without having to go from port to port, isle to isle, subject to all the inconstancies of wind and weather; and still more pleased was she, when she heard that she might, if she liked, go on dry land from hence to Rome, without embarking again.

It was mid-day when they arrived at Sangian, where the ship was to be registered, and where the governor of the castle, and all who came on board the ship with him, wondered greatly at the exceeding beauty of Auristella, the graceful air of Periander, the barbarian attire of the two Antonios, the comeliness of Ricla, and the agreeable looks of Constance. They learned that they were foreigners and pilgrims going to Rome. Periander magnificently rewarded the mariners who had brought them hither, with some of the gold that Ricla had carried away with her from the barbarous isle; they had changed some of it into money, in King Polycarp's dominions. The mariners wished to go to Lisbon, in

order to make some bargains in the way of merchandize.

The governor of Sangian sent the news of the arrival of the strangers, to the governor of Lisbon; this office was then held by the Archbishop of Braga, in the absence of the king, who was not in the city at this time. He told him of the incomparable beauty of Auristella, and added praises of that of Constance, whose barbarian attire, heightened the effect of her charms. He even exaggerated the excessive liberality and gracefulness of Periander, and extolled the behaviour of them all, who were, he said, much more like courtiers than barbarians.

The ship came up to the town, and they went on shore at Belen, for Auristella wished to visit the holy monastery first, having heard of its fame. She desired devoutly to adore there, the only true God, freely and unembarrassed by the distorted ceremonies of her own land. Crowds of people came down to the shore to see the strangers disembark at Belen. They all ran thither full of curiosity to see the novel sight.

The phalanx of beauty had already left Belen; Ricla was only moderately well looking, but her strange garb became her extremely: Constance looked charming in her dress of skins; the elder Antonio in his wolf skin, with bare legs and arms; his son in a similar array, only that he carried his bow in his hand, and his quiver full of arrows was hung at his shoulder. Periander was dressed in a green velvet tunic, and trousers of the same, like a mariner; on his head he wore a high pointed cap, which could not conceal the bright ringlets of golden hair which escaped beneath it. Auristella was arrayed in the richest and most superb attire, according to the fashion of the north, displaying all that can be imagined most lovely in features, most graceful in form; altogether they created an immense sensation of wonder and admiration; but the graces of Periander and Auristella excelled all the rest.

They went to Lisbon by land, followed by crowds of people of all ranks; they were taken to the governor, who, after having looked at them with admiration, was never weary of asking, "Who they were, whence they came, and whither they were going?" to all which Periander answered, for he had already got his answer ready prepared for similar questions, as many such were to be expected; and so, when he liked or when it seemed advisable to do so, he told his history at length, but always concealing his parentage, so that he satisfied all questions, giving them, if not the whole, at least a great part of his history in a few words.

The viceroy gave orders that they should be lodged in one of the best suites of apartments in the city, which happened to be in the house of a great Portuguese nobleman; so many persons flocked thither in order to look at Auristella and her companions, (the fame of their beauty having got abroad,) that Periander was of opinion it would be better for the barbarians to change their dress for that of

pilgrims, as he thought the novelty and strangeness of the garb they wore, was the chief cause of their being so much followed, and even persecuted by the vulgar crowd, and the other would be very much to the purpose of their intended journey to Rome. They all agreed to do as he proposed, and in two or three days the whole party was curiously pilgrimized.

It happened one day as he was going out of the house, that a Portuguese fell at Periander's feet: calling him by his name, and embracing his knees, he cried, "By what good fortune, my lord Periander, do I see you here? Be not surprised that I call you by your name, for I am one of the twenty who were set at liberty in the conflagration of the barbarous isle, where you also was a prisoner. I was present at the death of Manuel de Souza Coutino, the Portuguese gentleman; I partook with you and yours of the shelter of the inn, at the time when Maurice and Ladislaus arrived in search of Transila, the wife of one, and daughter of the other; my good fortune brought me home to my own country, where I told the story of the poor lover's death, to his relations, and they would have believed me, even if I had not seen it with my own eyes: it is a not uncommon thing for the Portuguese to die of love. A brother who inherited his property had his obsequies performed; and in a chapel belonging to his family he had a tomb of white marble erected, as if he was buried beneath, and thereon an epitaph, which I hope you will all come and see, for I think you will be pleased with it."

Periander knew well by all he said that the man spoke the truth, although he could not recollect ever having seen his face; however, they went to the church of which he spoke, and saw the chapel and the tomb, upon which was engraven in the Portuguese language this epitaph, which, read by Antonio the father, in Castilian, ran thus: —

To the Memory of the deceased  
MANUEL DE SOUZA COUTINO,  
A PORTUGUESE GENTLEMAN,  
Who, had he not been Portuguese, might still be living.  
He died, not by any Castilian hand, but by that of all powerful Love.

*Passenger,*  
If you knew the history of his life, you would think his death a blessing.

Periander thought the Portuguese had good reason to praise the epitaph, in the composition of which that nation have great skill.

Auristella asked him, how the nun, that the deceased loved, had felt when she heard of her lover's death. "A few days after she heard of it," he replied, "she



passed into a better world; whether owing to the austerities of her way of life, or to the news of the unexpected event, was never known.

They then proceeded to the house of a celebrated painter, where Periander gave directions to have a very large piece of canvass, painted with all the different events of his history. On one side there was to be the Barbarous Isle in flames; near it the Prison Island, and a little lower, the raft on which he was found by Arnolfo, and brought into his ship. In another part of the picture was the Snowy Island, where the enamoured Portuguese died. Then came the ship, which was perforated by the two soldiers, and near it was depicted the separation of the skiff and boat. Here was to be the duel between the two rivals for Taurisa, and their death. There, the hull of the vessel that was turned upside down, and which was so near being Auristella's tomb, and that of all who were with her. Then the pleasant isle wherein Periander had his dream, and saw the two squadrons of virtues and vices; and close to this the ship, when the sea monster, carried off the two seamen, and gave them a sepulchre in his belly. Nor was the frozen sea forgotten, wherein the vessel was imbedded — the assault upon her from the people who came over the ice, — nor the delivering of them all to Cratilius: also, there was to be painted, the tremendous leap of the fiery Courser, which turned him from a lion into a lamb. Then, in a corner, was a sketch of King Polycarp's Festival, and himself there, crowned as victor. He was resolved not to pass by one single incident of importance that had happened up to their arrival in Lisbon, and their disembarkation in the same dresses they had worn when they arrived. Also, on the same canvass, was to be seen the fire that burnt King Polycarp's palace; Clodio transfixed by the dart of young Antonio; Zenotia hanging; Hermitage Isle, and Rutilio in his holy garments. This canvass was to be a summary of everything, and was to serve in the place of a continual repetition of the story, for Antonio the younger was to explain the pictures and events when any one came to look at them; but the master-piece of the artist was Auristella's portrait. They stayed ten days in Lisbon, and spent the time in visiting the churches, and giving their souls a help to the right road into salvation; at the end of which time, with the viceroy's permission, and proper passports, and descriptions of who and what they were, and whither bound, they took leave of their host, the Portuguese nobleman, and of the brother of the ill-fated Manuel, from whom they had received great caresses and kindness, and set forth on the road to Castile. This departure was performed at night, from a fear of the crowd that would have followed and impeded them, although the change of dress had done something towards decreasing the wonder.

## CHAPTER II.

The Pilgrims begin their Journey through Spain; new and extraordinary Adventures happen to them.

THE tender years of Auristella, the yet tenderer years of Constance, and the middle age of Ricla, might well have called for all the pomp and luxury of equipages for so long a journey as the one they were about to undertake; but the pious devotion of Auristella had made her vow, that from the moment she arrived on terra firma, she would make her way to Rome on foot, and the others not willing to be behind her in devotion, all with one consent, both men and women, were of the same opinion that the journey should be performed on foot, adding, if necessary, that they would beg from door to door; therefore they put by Ricla's wealth, and Periander determined not to dispose of the diamond cross that Auristella wore, but to keep it, as well as her invaluable pearls, for a future occasion; all they did was to buy a baggage mule, to carry what was too heavy for their own shoulders. They provided themselves with walking sticks, as much for support as defence; and some small swords; and in this humble and lowly array they quitted Lisbon, rich only in their beauty and prudence, the fame of which was the universal subject of discourse; and in every circle and assembly there, nothing was talked of but the extreme and extraordinary loveliness and wisdom of the foreign pilgrims.

In this way, travelling between two and three leagues a day, they arrived at Badajoz, the governor of which had already heard from Lisbon that the new pilgrims were to come that road. They, upon entering the city, took up their lodging in a house in which already a company of comedians had taken their quarters, who were going to rehearse this very night, a piece they were about to perform in public at the house of the Corregidor. The moment they saw Auristella and Constance, they were struck, as all were at first sight, with surprise and admiration; but the most enchanted of the party was a poet, who came with the company on purpose to help and patch up and mend old plays, and also write new ones, an occupation that brought him more work than profit, and more amusement than honour. However, good poetry is always like clear water; it improves all unclean things; like the sun it passes over all impurities without being defiled by them. It is a gleam of light that shines forth from a dark

corner, not burning, but illumining all it meets with. In fine this poet, whose necessities had compelled him to exchange Parnassus and the Castalian springs for the stagnant pools and channels of roads and inns, was the one who was most struck by Auristella's beauty, and he immediately set her down as good for the company, and fit to be an actress, without inquiring or knowing whether she could speak the Castilian language or not. Her form and figure pleased him; her graceful manner delighted him; he saw her at once in imagination, apparelled in the short coat of a man; then as rapidly she appeared to his mind's eye drest as a nymph; but almost in the same instant he had robed her in all the majesty of a queen. There was no part grave or gay in which he did not place her; in each he figured her to himself, serious, lively, prudent, quick, and above all, virtuous; extremes which seldom are to be found in an actress of low comedy.

Ye Heavens, with what facility does the poet's imagination disperse a thousand impossibilities: what grand chimeras does he not build upon the weakest foundations! He can do anything, all is easy and plain; hope can support him even when fortune fails. Thus it was with this our present poet; when he by chance saw the picture in which all the adventures of Periander were portrayed. He there saw, more than he had ever conceived in his whole life, and thereupon he felt a strong desire to write a drama about it, only he was puzzled whether to make it a tragedy or a comedy, or a tragi-comedy; and if he knew the middle, he did not know either the beginning or the end. But what troubled him most was, how he could possibly introduce a *lacquey*, a merry-andrew personage amongst all these islands and seas, fires, and snows; nevertheless, he did not despair, he would still make the play, and bring the merry-andrew in, in spite of all the rules of poetry and the drama; and so fully was he taken up with his idea, that he found an opportunity to speak to Auristella, and open his intention to her, consulting her as to what part she would take if she became an actress, telling her that she would find the theatre a mine of gold, for the princes of that age were like alchymists, who changed your copper into gold; that she might have her garments all of cloth of gold, for all the gentlemen would be at her feet. He represented the pleasure of the journeys she would make, and how she would carry in her train two or three young nobles in disguise, who would be her servants as much as her lovers; and, above all, he extolled up to the very skies the honour and glory she would have in representing all the first parts, and he wound up all, by telling her, that if one thing more falsified than another the old Castilian saying, "That honour and money are seldom found together," it was in the life of a beautiful actress.

Auristella replied that she had not understood a single word of all he had been saying, for that she was ignorant of the Castilian language, as he might plainly

see; but when it was explained to her, she said, her views were very different, and that she had other prospects to look forward to, if not so agreeable, at least more suited to her taste.

The poet was in despair at this reply, which at once destroyed all the castles in the air he had been building in his folly and vanity.

They all went that evening to the Corregidor's house, who, having heard of the arrival of the beautiful pilgrims in the city, sent to invite them to come and see the play, which was to be performed, and to accept his best endeavours to be of any service to them, in consequence of all that he had heard from Lisbon in their praise.

Periander, by the desire of Auristella and the elder Antonio, who he obeyed as his superior in age, accepted the invitation. There were many ladies of the city with the wife of the Corregidor, when the fair pilgrims, with Periander and the two Antonios, entered the room: all were amazed and confounded at the surprising beauty and grace of the strangers, which increased the desire of every one to show them all possible kindness and civility; and their host forced them to take the highest places at the entertainment, which was the representation of the fable of Cephalus and Procris, when she, from an undue jealousy, lost her life by the dart too incautiously thrown by him, to his eternal sorrow. The verse bordered on perfection, as it was composed, they say, by Juan de Herrera de Gamboa, nicknamed *El Maganto*, or the Spiritless, whose genius soared to the highest order of poetry.

When the play was over, the ladies examined the beauties of Auristella minutely, and each feature separately, and found that they composed a whole, that might well be named "perfection" without a blot. The men said as much of Periander, and all agreed in praising highly the beauty of Constance and her brother.

They stayed in the city three days, during which the Corregidor and his lady showed every possible kindness to the pilgrims, and loaded them with gifts. They in return promised to send the history of their adventures, and of all that should befall them, to their kind friends.

They left Badajoz, and travelled on to our lady of Guadaloupe. After a journey of three days, in which they had gone five leagues, night overtook them on a mountain, which was covered with Ilexes, and other trees: it was that pleasant season of the year when there is an equal balance between the two equinoxes — neither too hot nor too cold — and in case of necessity, just as pleasant to spend the night in the open air as in a village; and therefore being far from any inn, it was Auristella's desire that it should be passed in one of the sheepfolds of the herdsmen that they saw were near. They did as she wished, and had hardly gone

above two hundred steps into the wood, when the darkness came on so fast that they paused to look for the light that shone from the herdsmen's fold, which served as their polar star, for fear of losing their way; the extreme darkness, and a sound that was heard at a distance, made them slacken their pace, and the boy Antonio began to think of his bow, his constant companion; at this instant a man on horseback came up to them and said, "Good people, do you belong to this place?"

"Certainly not," answered Periander, "but to one very far distant; we are foreign pilgrims, going to Rome, but at present to Guadaloupe."

"If," said he of the horse, "there is charity and courtesy in foreign lands, there may also be compassionate souls from thence."

"Why not?" said Antonio. "Look you here now, sir, whoever you are; if you want any help from us, speak, and you will see whether you are right or not in your conjectures."

"Take then," said the horseman, "take this chain of gold, which should be worth two hundred crowns; and take also this thing, which is priceless, at least I cannot name its value, and carry it to the city of Trujillo, where you will give it to one of two gentlemen, who are well known both there and elsewhere: one is called Don Francisco Pizarro, and the other, Don Juan de Orellana, both bachelors, both free, both rich, and both extremely generous;" (thus saying, he placed in Rida's arms, who, like a compassionate woman, stepped forward to receive it, a baby, which was beginning to cry, wrapt in clothes that might have been rich or poor, they could not tell which;) "and," continued he, "you will bid them keep it; and say, they shall soon know who it is, and the misfortunes that have brought it to them, if it ever comes there, and forgive my saying more, for I am pursued by my enemies; if they come up with you, and ask if you have seen me, tell them you have not, since there is no occasion for you to say you have seen me, or if you prefer it, you may say that three or four men on horseback have gone by, who went crying, 'For Portugal! for Portugal!' and now please God, I must not delay, for if fear lend spurs, sharper yet are those of honour," and so, touching the horse's sides with his, he vanished like a flash of lightning, not, however, before he had returned, rapidly exclaiming, "It is unbaptized," and then resumed his flight.

Behold our pilgrims now, Ricla with the baby in her arms, Periander with the chain about his neck, and the boy Antonio with his bow ready strung, his father also holding in readiness the sword which was concealed in his staff; Auristella confounded and astonished at the strangeness of the adventure, and altogether wondering at it, and what would come forth from it.

Auristella advised that they should make haste and find the herdsmen's fold,

as there they might procure food to nourish this new born infant, for by its small size and weak cries they guessed it could not be many hours old. They had hardly reached it, after many wrong turnings, and many stumbles and falls, when before they could ask whether the herdsman would give them a shelter for the night, a woman came up weeping, but not aloud, for she showed by her suppressed moans that she tried not to let her voice be heard. She was but half dressed, though the garments she had on, evidently proved her to be a person of some consequence.

By the light of the fires, in spite of the care with which she tried to conceal her face, it was plainly seen that she was as beautiful as she was young, and as young as she was beautiful. Ricla, who was the best judge of ages, guessed that she might be from sixteen to seventeen years old. The herdsmen and shepherds asked her if she was pursued, or if anything had happened to her that required a speedy help; to which the unhappy girl replied, "The first help I need, sirs, is to be put under ground, or I had better say that I may be hidden somewhere, so that no one can find me; the second, that you will give me some food, for I am well nigh expiring from fatigue and fright."

"We will show that we have charity," said an old shepherd; and he went quickly towards the hollow trunk of a tree — the ruin of a once noble oak — and placing within it some snowy fleeces of sheep and goats, he made a sort of bed, good enough for the present necessity; then taking the young lady in his arms, he hid her in the old tree, and then brought her some milk; (he would have given her wine had she wished it;) then he covered her up closely with more sheepskins, and hung them also about the tree, as if to dry them.

Ricla, who watched all this, speedily conjectured that this must be the mother of the baby that she held in her arms. She went up to the old shepherd, saying, "Let not your charity, good sir, stop here, but extend it to this infant, which is perishing of hunger;" and she quickly explained how they had come by it. Answering more to her wants than words, the old shepherd called to one of the other shepherds, and bid him take the child to the sheepfold, and put it by one of the goats in such a manner as to enable it to suck: he had hardly done this, and hardly had the last wailing cry of the baby ceased, when a troop of horsemen rode up to the fold, and asked if they had seen anything of a fugitive young woman, or of a man on horseback. But as no one gave them any intelligence of what they demanded, they passed on with extreme speed, which not a little rejoiced the charitable protectors of the woman and child; and the night passed away more quietly than the pilgrims expected, and more merrily to the herdsmen and shepherds, who had not looked for so much good company.

## CHAPTER III.

The Damsel in the Tree gives an account of herself.

VERY much did they all wish to know what causes had brought the unhappy fugitive lady into such a plight; and also the forsaken infant; but Auristella thought it would be better not to ask any questions till the next day, because after a great fright, nobody feels much inclined to talk even of some pleasant event, far less of a sad one, and though the old shepherd often visited the tree, he asked its tenant no questions, except about her health, to which she replied, “ That although she had every reason to be ill, she felt easy, because she had escaped from those who pursued her, who were her father and brother.” The shepherd covered her up again, and returned to the pilgrims.

Before they allowed themselves to seek in sleep a little repose after their fatigue, they settled with the shepherd that he, who had found a nurse for the babe already among the she goats, should carry it to the house of a sister of the aged shepherd’s, which was about two leagues off, in a small village. They gave him the gold chain to take with it, and desired that it might be nursed secretly, saying that it came from a distant place. This was done, hoping by these means to elude suspicion, if by chance anyone should return hither in search of the lost one. After settling these matters and satisfying their hunger, they suffered sleep to close their eyes and wrap their senses in forgetfulness. So passed the night, and day dawned brightly upon all, unless it were for the terrified creature in the old tree, who scarcely ventured to look out upon the sun’s clear rays. Nevertheless, having first, far and near, placed sentinels at different intervals to give warning if anybody approached, they persuaded her to come out of her hiding-place, and breathe the fresh air, hoping to hear something from her; and now, in the full light of day, they saw that she was very lovely, so much so, that it was a doubt whether to give the second place to her or to Constance: Auristella, of course, came first, for nothing in nature could ever be found to equal her. They prayed her much to tell them the cause of her distress, and she, willing to gratify their desire, after asking them to excuse her weakness, in a feeble voice thus began: — Although, sirs, I shall be forced to reveal such faults in making you acquainted with my history, as will, perhaps, cause me to lose

your good opinion, yet I would rather by obeying show my gratitude than seem unwilling to please you. I am called Feliciana of the voice; my home is in a town not far hence; my parents more noble than rich, and my beauty, although now faded, has been esteemed great by some people. Near the town where I lived, there lived also a rich gentleman, whose conduct and many virtues made him greatly esteemed and respected. He has a son, who bids fair to be the heir of his father's virtues, as well as of his wealth, which is very great. In the same village there lived another gentleman, who also had a son, more well born than rich, but possessed of a sufficient mediocrity, so as to be neither too humble nor too proud. My father and my two brothers wished me to marry this second young gentleman, turning a deaf ear to the entreaties of the rich neighbour, who asked me for a wife; but I unhappily gave myself away to him secretly, and without the knowledge of my relations. I have no mother, to my sorrow; we frequently saw each other in private, for opportunity is rarely wanting in such cases. From these secret interviews arose my shame, if it be shame, for two espoused lovers thus to meet; and at this juncture, unknown to me, my father and brothers agreed to carry into effect my marriage with the young gentleman of their choice; and so bent were they upon having it accomplished, that one night they brought him to our house, accompanied by two of his own near relations, purposing that the ceremony should take place directly. I was much surprised when I saw Louis Antonio, for that is the name of the young nobleman, and still more, when my father desired me to go into my own apartment and adorn myself with more than ordinary care, because I was to give my hand in marriage to Louis Antonio this very moment. Now I was far advanced in pregnancy, and the time was nearly at hand which nature assigns for bringing forth a child. I felt as if I had received my death-blow at this most unlooked-for command, and saying that I would go and dress myself, I hurried into my own room, where throwing myself into the arms of my maid, who was the confidante of my secret, I cried, whilst my eyes were like fountains, 'Alas, my Leonora, I verily believe my last hour is come; Louis Antonio is waiting for me in the ante-chamber, to receive my hand in marriage. What condition can an unhappy woman be in, more utterly deplorable than this? Have you no weapon with which to pierce my heart before I die of shame? alas, my friend, I am dying, my life is departing;' and then uttering a deep sigh, I brought into the world an infant, which sight so took us both by surprise, that all I expected was, that my father or my brothers should come in, and, instead of leading me to my bridal, should carry me to my grave.

"Can you, sirs, conceive a more terrible situation than I was in this night — my intended husband expecting me in the parlour below, whilst his rival was waiting in the garden to speak with me, ignorant of the strait I was in, and of the



arrival of Louis Antonio; — I, nearly senseless at the unexpected event; my maid greatly troubled with the infant in her arms; my father and brothers sending word to me to make haste, and come to these unhappy nuptials.

“It was enough to upset stronger minds than mine: I know not that I can tell you more than, that whilst I lay almost senseless, I heard my father say, as he entered my room, ‘Come girl, finish your adornments, or come as you are, and your beauty shall supply the place of rich attire.’ At this instant, I imagine, the cry of the child reached his ears, which my maiden had contrived to conceal, or was giving it to Rosanio, the name of him whom I had chosen for my husband. My father was disturbed, and, with a candle in his hand, came to look at my countenance, and perceived my state of dismay and confusion; the sound of the infant’s cry seemed again to strike his ears, and drawing his sword, he hastened to the quarter whence the voice had proceeded.

The sight of the naked weapon, and the terror that filled my soul, made me, with the natural instinct that prompts one to save one’s life, endeavour to find a means of doing so; and, hardly had my father turned his back, when, just as I was, I hastened down a winding staircase to the lower apartments of the house, thence with ease I gained the street, and from the street, the fields, and then by roads, I know not where, I ran, impelled by fear, as if I had wings to my feet, faster than you could suppose my feeble strength would have allowed. A thousand times I felt a wish to throw myself into some river or pond, and end my life; and sometimes I felt as if I could lie down on the earth, and let any one find me who chose; but at last seeing the light from your huts, I tried to reach them, in hopes of finding some help and shelter for my misery, and so it happened as you saw, and so it is that I am now alive, thanks to your kindness and charity.”

Thus the unhappy Feliciana ended her relation, which filled her hearers with surprise and pity. Periander then described the finding of the baby, the gift of the chain, and I all that had happened with the gentleman on horseback, who gave them.

“Alas!” said Feliciana, “if this precious gift should indeed be mine, and if it should be Rosanio who brought it! perhaps, if I could see it, if not by its features, which I never looked upon, still, by the clothes in which it is wrapped, I might recognize it, for my maid could only have taken things that were in my room to wrap it in, which I should know again, and even if I should not, perhaps the force of nature would do its work, and a secret feeling speak to me, if it is mine.”

The old shepherd said, “The child is in our village with my sister, and a niece of mine; I will send and tell them to bring it here, and then, beautiful lady, you can try the experiment you desire. In the meantime, calm your spirits, and I and my fellow shepherds, and this old tree, shall serve as clouds in which to keep

you hidden from the eyes of those who seek you.”

## CHAPTER IV.

IT seems to me, my brother," said Auristella to Periander, that troubles and perils are to be met with not only on the sea, but all over the earth; and that misfortunes and distresses are to be found among those who are set up high on the mountains, as well as amongst people who are hiding in corners. That which is called fortune, of which I — have frequently heard, and of which it is said that it gives and takes away good things, when and how it pleases, ought indeed to be represented as blind and capricious, since it raises those who have grovelled upon the earth, and puts down others who have aspired to high places. This lady, who says she is called Feliciana of the voice, and now she has hardly voice enough left to relate the story of her own misfortunes; — think of her but a few hours ago, in her own home with her father, brothers, and servants, hoping to find some help or remedy for her imprudent conduct; and now, behold her, hiding in the hollow of a tree, fearing the insects of the air, and the crawling worm of the earth. It is true she has not sprung from a princely race, but yet hers is an example for all young maidens who live secluded from the world, and wish to live a virtuous life: all this moves me to entreat that you, O my brother, will watch severely over my conduct, for ever since the hour in which I left your mother and home, I have placed my honour in your hands, and although experience has proved well your virtue, alike in the solitude of deserts, or the company of cities; yet still I fear that as days move on, so also may change come across your thoughts. My honour is yours, one sole wish rules us both, and the same hope supports us: our path is a long and weary one, but there is an end to everything, unless idleness and laziness intrude; Heaven has already brought us into Spain, and (for which we should be grateful) released us from the dangerous company of Arnaldo."

"O my sister," answered Periander, "how dost thou prove every moment the greatness of thy wisdom and prudence! I plainly see thou fearest as a woman, and feelest as a discreet and prudent one; gladly would I do anything to calm thy new-born suspicions. We have no occasion to stay longer in this shepherd's fold, and as to Feliciana, we can do no more than bestow upon her our pity; but we should carry the child to Truxillo, as we were charged to do by him who gave us the chain, as it seemed, for payment."

They were still talking together when the old shepherd came up to them, with his sister and the infant which had been sent for, to see whether Feliciana would

recognize it, as she had requested.

She took it in her arms, and looked at it again and again, removed its swaddling clothes, but there was nothing by which she could be certain it was the child she had brought into the world; nor yet, which was remarkable, did she experience the yearnings of a mother towards the child, which was a boy. “No,” said she, “these are not the cloaks that my maid wrapt it in, nor did I ever see this chain in Rosanio’s hands. This precious creature must belong to some one else. Too fortunate should I be, if I could think it mine. Although I have heard Rosanio speak of having friends in Truxillo, yet I cannot remember their names.”

“After all,” said the shepherd, “since the person who gave the child to the pilgrims, desired that it might be taken to Truxillo, I suspect that it *was* Rosanio; and it is my opinion that it will be best for my sister and some of our shepherds to carry the child thither, and see whether either of the gentlemen, whose names were mentioned, will receive it.”

Feliciano only answered by her sobs, and throwing herself at the feet of the old man she embraced him warmly, — signs that she much approved of the proceeding he had advised; and the pilgrims also approved of it, and made all easy by giving the chain of gold to them. The shepherd’s sister was provided with one of the mules belonging to the fold, (she having only recently recovered from a lying-in,) and she had directions given her, to pass through her own village and leave her own baby in concealment, whilst she went with the other to Truxillo.

It was all to be done directly, because the urgency of the case admitted of no delay. In silent gratitude, Feliciano showed how much she felt the kindness of those who were thus active in her service; and having heard how these pilgrims were bound for Rome, charmed by the beauty and prudence of Auristella, the courteous manners of Periander, the loving and affectionate ways of Constance and her mother, and the agreeable behaviour of the two Antonios, after weighing it in her mind, and pondering thereon in the short space of time that they were together, she felt that it would be desirable to quit a place where her disgrace must be public, and entreated that they would allow her to go with them as a pilgrim to Rome — that, as she had wandered from the ways of virtue, she would gladly now be a wanderer in search of grace, if she might be allowed to join their company.

Scarcely had she uttered her desire, than Auristella hastened to grant it, being full of pity and anxiety to relieve her from the terror and alarm she was enduring. The only difficulty that remained was — how could she, who had so lately been delivered of a child, undertake a journey? But the old shepherd said, that there

was no real difference between the bringing forth of a woman and that of a cow, — that the cow immediately after her delivery is exposed to the inclemency of the weather; and thus the woman might perfectly well return to her usual habits of exercise, if custom had not taught them to use the luxurious precautions and repose that are common with lying-in women. “I am sure,” said he, “that when Eve brought forth her first-born son, she neither kept her bed, nor secluded herself from the air, nor took any of the precautions that women adopt in these days. Take courage, lady Feliciana, and follow up your intentions, which are both holy and Christian-like;” to which Auristella added, “You shall not want a pilgrim’s dress, for I had two made, upon setting out on this pilgrimage, and one of them shall be given to the lady Feliciana of the voice, on condition that she tells me the reason why she is so called, unless it is really her true name.”

“It was not mine by lineage, but simply because every one who knew me and heard me sing, declared that I had the finest voice that ever was heard, so I was generally called Feliciana of the voice; and I would readily give you proof of this if I was not more in a mood for crying than singing: however, if better times come, and my tears cease to flow, I will sing, if not merry songs, at least dirges and doleful ditties.”

Now after Feliciana had spoken thus, they were all seized with a strong desire to hear her sing immediately, but no one ventured to ask it of her, because, as she had said, it was not the proper time. The next day Feliciana took off all her attire, except what was absolutely necessary, and put on the pilgrim’s dress, which was given her by Auristella. She took off a pearl necklace and two rings, which, if ornaments betokened a person’s quality, would at once have proclaimed her rich and high born. They were taken into the care of Ricla, as treasurer of the property of everybody; and Feliciana took her place as second among the pilgrims, Auristella being first, and Constance third; although upon this point, opinions were divided, and there were some who gave the second place to Constance, Auristella alone stood unrivalled.

As soon as Feliciana was dressed in her new garb, she felt eager and anxious to be off: Auristella knew this, and by general consent, they took leave of the hospitable old shepherd, and the rest of the herdsmen, and departed, taking the road to Caceres. When at any time any one of the women became weary, the baggage mule afforded her a means of rest, or they sat down by the side of some murmuring stream, or sparkling fountain, or the verdure of some pleasant meadow invited them to repose. —

And so they journeyed on, being weary and resting alternately; but as it rarely happens that good intentions are carried into effect without any hindrances, it pleased Heaven that this charming party (one in intention, although many in

number) should meet with the obstacle of which you shall now hear.

The green herbage of a delightful meadow had offered a pleasant retreat to the travellers: the clear and sweet waters of a little rivulet that trickled through the grass, had refreshed their faces; a number of thorns and brambles formed a wall, and shelter all round them. It was an agreeable spot to rest in, when all of a sudden, breaking through the thick and tangled branches, a youth, in the dress of a traveller, rushed in among them; his back was pierced through with a sword, and the point came out at his breast. He fell down before them, and as he fell, exclaimed, "God be with me;" and so saying, he expired. It happened all in one moment; and although at so strange a sight, every one had risen in confusion, Periander was the first to fly to his assistance, and seeing that he was quite dead, he tried to draw out the sword. The two Antonios leaped over the bushes to look if any one was to be seen who could have committed this treacherous and cruel murder, for it was clearly a traitor's deed, seeing that the blow had been dealt from behind, but they saw nobody. They returned to the rest, and the great youth and noble appearance of the murdered stranger increased the pity they felt for his death. They examined the body minutely, and found, under a loose jacket of grey velvet, over the doublet, a chain of four links of gold, from which was suspended a crucifix, also of gold; and between the doublet and the shirt, they found, in an ebony case richly worked, the portrait of a very beautiful woman, round which were these lines: —

She freezes, she burns,  
She looks and speaks,  
O miracle of beauty!  
Such power your face possesses  
Even in a picture.

Periander, who first read these lines, judged thereby that some love affair had caused his death: they carefully investigated his dress, hoping to find some indication by which to discover who he was, but could find none; and whilst they were making this scrutiny, four men appeared suddenly, armed with cross bows, who were instantly recognised by Antonio the elder, as members of the holy Brotherhood; one of whom cried out, "Stop, thieves! murderers! highwaymen! your work of spoliation, which we are just come in time to punish as it deserves."

"Rogues, there are none here," said the younger Antonio, "nor are we robbers, but enemies of all such persons."

"Truly, so it appears," replied the archer, "with a dead corpse before you; his property in your hands, and his blood upon your clothes; witnesses of your

crime, robbers ye are, and murderers, and as such shall be punished; nor shall that pilgrim garb which you have put on to conceal your misdeeds, avail you anything.”

To this, the young Antonio replied by fitting an arrow to his bow, and aiming at the arm of the archer; the others seeing this, either alarmed or in order to make the capture more secure, turned round hastily, and called lustily for help. “Help for the holy Brotherhood!” In an instant, as if by miracle, they were joined by more than twenty archers, who, aiming their arrows at the party, took them all prisoners, without respect even for the beauty of Auristella; and carrying the dead body along with them, brought the party to Caceres, the Corregidor of which was a knight of the order of St. Jago, who, on seeing the dead body, and the wounded archer, and hearing the account given by the others with the additional proof of Periander’s bloody appearance, was immediately disposed to put them all to the torture; but Periander declared the true state of the case, showing, in proof of his assertions, the papers and passports that he had brought from Lisbon, by way of security on his journey. He also showed the picture of his adventures, which were well described by the younger Antonio; and all these proofs were sufficient to have shown clearly the innocence of the pilgrims.

Ricla, the treasurer of the party, who knew little or nothing of what lawyers and notaries are, offered one of them a quantity of money secretly, to take their case up for them; but she was in danger of losing all she had, for the gentlemen of the law smelling out that the pilgrims had money, would gladly have shorn them close, according to their usual fashion, even to the very bones; and without a doubt, would have done so, if it had not pleased Heaven to let the might of innocence overthrow the attempts of malice. It happened that a certain innkeeper of the place, having seen the dead corpse that had been brought with the pilgrims, recognized it, and went to the Corregidor, and said to him, “My lord, this man who has been brought in dead by the holy Brotherhood, left my house yesterday morning, in company with another person, who seemed to be a gentleman. A little before he went away, he shut himself up in a room with me, and with great caution he said, ‘Mine host, I pray you as a good Christian, if I do not return hither within six days, to open this paper which I give you, before the court of Justice:’ so saying, he gave me this paper, which I now deliver to your worship, conceiving that it may probably explain something that will touch upon this strange affair.” The Corregidor took the paper, and opening it, he found the following words written therein: —

“I, Don Diego de Parraces, left the palace of his majesty on such a day, (and here the date was given,) in company with my relation, Don Sebastian de Soranzo, who asked me to go a certain journey along with him, which concerned

both his honour and his life. I, not wishing to confirm some false suspicions which he harboured respecting me, and trusting in my innocence, consented to accompany him: it is my belief that he means to kill me; if this should happen, and my body is found, let it be known that I am slain by perfidious hands, and that I die guiltless.

(Signed) DON DIEGO DE PARRACES.”

The Corregidor sent off this letter with all speed to Madrid, where the greatest diligence was exerted to trace out the murderer; but he arrived at home the very day when the search was made, and, discovering how matters were, instead of alighting, he gave his horse the rein, and disappeared altogether. Thus the crime remained unpunished: the dead man was not to be restored to life; the prisoners were set free, and some of the links of the chain that Ricla kept, were employed to pay the expenses of justice. The Corregidor kept the portrait to please himself. The archer of the holy Brotherhood received ample satisfaction for his wound.

The younger Antonio began anew to describe the story of their picture, and left the people all wondering greatly thereat.

The whole time the investigation had been going on, Feliciana kept her bed under pretence of illness, that she might not be seen. They took the road to Guadaloupe, talking, as they travelled, over their strange adventure, and hoping that some chance might occur to allow them to hear Feliciana sing. She willingly consented to give them this pleasure, since there is no sorrow that does not soften With time, only that she might keep up the proper decorum due to her misfortune and sad condition: her songs were dirges, and her voice, mournful; but this diminished a good deal after meeting the shepherd's sister on the road, returning from Truxillo, where she told them she had left the infant in the care of Don Francisco Pizarro, and Don Juan de Orellana, who felt convinced that the child must belong to their friend Don Rosanio, judging by the place where he was met, for they knew of no one else in all the neighbourhood who would have so confided in them; “and,” said the good woman, “they told me that he should not be deceived in his expectations by trusting them thus. So you perceive, sirs, that the child is placed according to your desires at Truxillo: if there is anything else you wish me to do to serve you here, I am ready to do it, and here is the chain, for I have not parted with it yet, since what I have done was from Christian kindness, and that weighs more heavily with me than gold.” To which Feliciana answered, that she wished it might remain many years in her possession before she found herself under the necessity of parting with it, for rich trinkets do not stay long with the poor. The shepherd's sister then took leave



of them, and they sent a thousand kind messages to her brother and the other shepherds. In process of time, little by little our pilgrims reached the saintly walls of Guadalupe.

## CHAPTER V.

SCARCELY had our devout pilgrims set foot on one of the two entrances that lead to the valley, which is formed and enclosed by the lofty mountains of Guadaloupe, than at each fresh step they found new subjects of admiration; but their admiration reached the highest possible point when they saw the noble and sumptuous monastery, the walls of which contain the blessed image of the Queen of Heaven; that blessed image, which gives freedom to the captive, cleanses his sins, and relieves his distress; that blessed image, which gives health to the sick, comfort to the afflicted, which is a mother to the orphan, and a defence from all misfortune. They entered the church, and where they expected to find walls adorned with the Tyrian purple, the damask of Syria, the brocades of Milan, in their place they saw, crutches left by the cripple, wax eyes that had belonged to the blind, arms hung there by the maimed, shrouds cast aside by the dead, all, who after having been cast down by misery, now living, healthy, free and happy, loudly return thanks to the Mother of mercies, who in this small space, makes intercession with her blessed Son for his infinite mercy.

So strong an impression was made upon the hearts of the devout pilgrims by all these miracles, that they gazed around them, fancying that they saw in the air the captive in his chains, coming to hang them up on the holy walls. The lame and infirm trailing their crutches along with them, the dead corpse its winding-sheet, seeking where to place them, and not finding space left, so great was the number those walls already held.

This sight, which had never been seen before by Periander, Auristella, Ricla, Constance, or the young Antonio, filled them with awe and wonder; and they were never tired of gazing, nor of admiring; so with devout and humble minds they knelt down to adore the Saviour, and implore the intercession of his holy Mother. But what most deserved notice was, that Feliciano, on bended knees, and with clasped hands, pressed to her breast, whilst tears of tender sorrow bathed her cheeks, almost without appearing to move her lips, or make any sign of being a living creature, raised her voice, and sang some verses which she knew by heart, and which afterwards she gave them in writing. Her sweet and most melodious singing enchanted the senses of all her hearers, and well proved that she had not praised her own voice too highly, fully satisfying the strong wish of all the pilgrims to hear her.

She had sung about four stanzas, when some strangers entered the church,

who knelt down, as they were induced to do both by custom and devotion. They were also struck by the voice of Feliciana, who went on singing; and one among them, who seemed rather advanced in years, turning to the person nearest him, said, "Either that is the voice of some angel in Heaven, or it is that of my daughter Feliciana."

"Who can doubt it?" replied the other. "There she is, but there she shall not be long, if my arm can strike a sure blow so saying, he grasped his poignard, and with hurried steps, white with passion, he was approaching the spot where Feliciana knelt. The venerable old man followed, and drawing him back hastily, said, "This is no place, my son, for punishment. Take time, for now this traitress cannot escape from us, and do not, in seeking to chastise the fault of another, bring down a judgment upon thine own head."

These words, and the disturbance altogether, had stopped the mouth of Feliciana, and put the pilgrims into some consternation, and also every one else in the church. They were not able to prevent the father and brother of Feliciana from dragging her out of the church into the street, where they were very soon joined by a crowd of people, with the officers of justice, who released her from the grasp of those who seemed more like executioners than father or brother.

Things being in this confusion, the father demanding his daughter, and the brother his sister, whilst the magistrate refused to give her up to them until he could learn the state of the case, a little party of horsemen entered on one side of the open place, two of whom were immediately recognised by most of the persons present, as Don Francisco Pizarro, and Don Juan de Orellana. They came up to the spot where the tumult was, and another gentleman with them, whose face was covered with a veil of black taffeta, and inquired the cause of all this disturbance. They were told that nobody knew what was the matter, except that the officers of justice were defending a pilgrim, whom two men, calling themselves her father and brother, wanted to kill. Don Francisco and Don Juan were listening to this account, when the muffled cavalier, leaping from his horse, drew his sword, and uncovering his face, placed himself at Feliciana's side, and cried aloud, "It is from me, sirs, that you must take the satisfaction that you desire for Feliciana's fault, if it be a fault that deserves death for a lady to marry against her parents' consent. Feliciana is my wife, and I am Rosanio, as you see, not so humble in condition as to be undeserving that you should give me openly that which I chose secretly. I am of noble birth, of which I can show you the proofs: I am rich enough to support her as my wife; I do not think it right that what I have gained by good fortune should be taken from me by Louis Antonio, at your pleasure; and if you think I have offended you by that which I have done without your consent, pardon the fault, which was caused by the all-powerful

force of love, and the finding you already so well inclined towards Louis Antonio, which made me forget the duty I owed you, for which once more I entreat your pardon.”

Whilst he spoke thus, he held Feliciana clasped close round the waist, all trembling and full of terror, but still all beautiful. Before her father or brother could speak a word, Don Francisco embraced the former, and Don Juan the latter, who were their intimate friends. Don Francisco said to the father, “Where is your prudence gone, Senor Don Pedro Tenorio? Is it possible that you desire to do what is so much against your own interests? Do not you see that this offence brings its own excuse along with it? What is there in Rosanio undeserving of Feliciana, or what will become of her in future if she loses Rosanio?”

The same or similar arguments were used by Don Juan with the brother, adding more, for he said, “Don Sancho, passion never ends well, and an angry spirit rarely hits correctly: your sister chose a good husband for herself; you would do ill to take vengeance, because they failed in the proper ceremony and respect that was due to you.

“Look you, Don Sancho, I have in my house at home, a nephew of yours you cannot disown, unless you disown yourself, he is so like you.”

The answer of the father was to go to his son and take away the poignard from his hands, after which he embraced Rosanio, who fell at the feet of his father-in-law and embraced them a thousand times. Feliciana also fell on her knees, half fainting, at her father’s feet, amid a flood of tears and sighs.

The bystanders were delighted; the father got credit for his conduct: the son also, and the two friends, for their prudent advice. The Corregidor invited them all to his house; the prior of the monastery showed them great hospitality; the pilgrims visited all the relics, which are very numerous, holy, and rich. They confessed themselves, received the Sacrament, and during the time they stayed, Don Francisco sent for the child, which the shepherd’s sister had brought him, and which was the same that Rosanio delivered to Periander. It was so lovely, that the grandfather, when he saw it, forgetting all his cause for anger, exclaimed, “A blessing on the mother who bore thee, and on thy father also;” and taking it into his arms, he covered it with kisses and tears.

Feliciana, with her father, brother, and husband, returned home, taking the child with them, all well pleased with the happy conclusion of the business.

The pilgrims stayed four days at Guadaloupe, during which they began seeing the monastery. I say they began to see it, because, to come to the end of seeing its many wonders, would be impossible. They next went to Truxillo, where they met with a most friendly reception from the two noble gentlemen, Don Francisco

Pizarro and Don Juan de Orellana. There, the story of Feliciana was again discussed, and her voice and conduct met with due praise, as well as the kind behaviour of her father and brother. From Truxillo they went, after about two days' stay, to Talavera, where they found preparations making to celebrate the great feast of the world, whose origin began many years before the birth of Christ, and which Christians have brought to so good a conclusion, that what the Heathens did in honour of the goddess Venus, is now devoted to celebrate the praise of the blessed Virgin. They would much have liked to see this, but not wishing for any delay, they went on without satisfying their desire.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE spirits of Antonio rose when he breathed again his native air. Ricla and her two children rejoiced to think that they soon should see, — she, her father and mother-in-law, and they, their grand-parents, for Antonio had discovered that they were yet living, in spite of the grief that his absence had given them. He also heard that his adversary had inherited his father's estate, and that he had died in amity with his (Antonio's) father, because it had been proved, from many circumstances, that what Antonio did was not an affront, because they were words spoken in the heat of a quarrel, and with drawn swords, and that the glitter of steel takes away the strength of words, and such words as are spoken with the sword drawn are not affronts, though they may be aggravating: so he who wishes to avenge himself for them, has only to chastise an offence, and not to satisfy himself for an affront as happened in this case. Let us suppose that I mention a fact which is as clear as the day; I am answered that it is an error, that I lie, and shall lie every time I repeat the said fact; and this is supported moreover by the person who utters it clapping his hand on the hilt of his sword, by way of maintaining his assertion.

I, who am thus given the lie, have no need to return to the fact I mentioned, which cannot be denied, but I am obliged to chastise the person who gave me the lie for his want of respect; else he who has had the lie direct given to him, could not meet any one in the field till he has received satisfaction: as I before said, there is a great difference between an affront and an injury; in short, I say that Antonio knew that his father and his former enemy were friends, and that since they were so, they must have considered all the circumstances of his case thoroughly.

Pleased and contented with this good news, he set off again on his journey with his companions, to whom he told all he had heard of his affairs, and that a brother of the man he had considered his enemy, had inherited the estates, and was living on the same friendly terms with his father as his deceased brother had done. It was Antonio's wish that none of them should do anything but as he ordered, as he intended to make them known to his father, not suddenly, but in some circuitous way, so as to increase the pleasure of the discovery, for sometimes too sudden a joy will kill like a sudden grief.

About three days' more travel brought them at dusk to his father's house. The father and mother were sitting at the door of their house, enjoying the freshness

of the evening air, for it was the summer season. They all approached together, and Antonio spoke first to his father. "Is there by chance in this place a hospital for pilgrims, sir?" he asked. "As our inhabitants are good Christians," replied the father, "every house is an hospital for pilgrims, and if no other should be so, mine, as far as it goes, may serve for you all."

"Is not this place called Quintanas de la Orden, sir," asked Antonio; "and does not a person live here called by some a gentleman of the name of Villasenores? I ask you this, because I knew a man of this name in far distant countries, and if he was here, neither I nor my companions need go anywhere for a lodging."

"And what was the name of this Villasenores of whom you speak?" asked the mother.

"He was called Antonio," replied Antonio, "and his father's name was, if I remember right, Diego de Villasenor."

"Ah, sir!" cried the mother, rising from her seat, "and to my sorrow it is now seventeen years that he has been missing from his native land. How many tears, sighs, and prayers, have been exhausted for his restoration to me; would to God that these eyes may ever again behold him, before they are closed in eternal night. Tell me, is it long since you saw him? is it long since you left him? was he in good health? did he talk of returning home? does he remember his parents, to whom he may now come back, for he has no enemies to hinder his doing so. Those who caused his departure from his own country, are now friends."

The old father listened to all these words, and then called aloud to his servants to bring lights, and to admit into the house the pilgrim guests, and going up to his as yet unknown son, he embraced him closely, saying, "For your sake alone I would gladly give you all lodging, even though it were not my custom to receive pilgrims, but now this glad tidings that you have brought increases my inclination to do so, and makes me doubly desirous to serve you."

By this time the servants had brought lights, and shown the pilgrims into the house; and from the middle of a spacious court, which they entered, came forth two pretty and well-mannered young girls, sisters of Antonio, who had both been born since he went away. They were charmed with the beauty of Auristella, and the loveliness of Constance, their niece, also with the pleasant looks of their sister-in-law, Ricla. They could not sufficiently load them with blessings and embraces; but when they expected to see their father enter with the new guests, they saw a confused crowd of people come in also, bringing on their shoulders, upon a seat, a seemingly dead man, whom they knew at once to be the count, who had inherited the estates of him who once had been their brother's enemy. The tumult of the crowd, the confusion that their parents were in, and the care of receiving their new guests embarrassed them so much that they knew not whom

to turn to, nor whom to ask for the cause of all this disturbance. Their parents had the count brought in; he was shot through the shoulders with a ball in an affray between two parties of soldiers, who were lodged in the town, and the townspeople; the ball had passed through into his breast, and on seeing himself wounded, he had ordered his servants to carry him to the house of Diego de Villaseñor, his friend, and he was brought thither exactly at the very moment when he was about to offer hospitality to his son, his daughter-in-law, and his two grandchildren, and to Periander and Auristella. She, taking Antonio's sisters by the hand, prayed that they would take her away from all the tumult, and allow her to rest in some apartment where she might be alone. They did as she desired, not without again admiring her peerless beauty.

Constance, who felt the force of kindred blood animate her heart, neither wished nor would separate from her aunts, who were both of the same age, and of equal beauty. The same feelings actuated the boy Antonio, who, forgetful of all the laws of good breeding and the obligations he owed to his hosts, was so bold in his delight as to embrace one of his aunts, which a servant of the family seeing, said, "For your life, sir pilgrim, keep your hands quiet, for the master of this house is not a man to be trifled with, and you will have to beat a retreat in spite of your shameless behaviour."

"By Heaven, my friend," answered the boy, "this that I have done is very little to what I intend doing, if Heaven favours my wish, which is to be at the service of these fair ladies, and all those of the house."

Meanwhile the wounded man had been placed in a rich bed, and two surgeons called in, who staunched the blood and examined the wound, which they pronounced mortal, and beyond all human remedies. The whole town was in arms against the soldiers, who had marched out into the country in battle array, ready to fight if the people came out to attack them. For some time, little availed the anxiety of the commanding officers to restore peace, nor the Christian cares of the priests and monks of the town, the people of which, a light cause will easily excite and rouse into commotion. However, day came, and the soldiers were made to march off by their officers, and the townspeople were persuaded to remain within the town, in spite of the bad feeling and anger the soldiers had excited.

By slow degrees, little by little, Antonio discovered himself to his parents, and presented to them their two grandchildren and daughter-in-law, whom they received with many tears. The beauty of Auristella, and the grace of Periander, gained admiration from all eyes and hearts. This pleasure, as unexpected as it was great, — this unlooked-for arrival of his son and his family, interrupted, and for a time almost did away with the sad misfortune of the count, who grew worse



and worse every hour; however, he presented his children to him, and anew offered him the services of the whole family, and everything that could be required for his comfort and convenience; for although he had wished to remove to his own house, it would not have been possible, so slight were the hopes of his recovery.

Auristella and Constance never left his bedside, but, moved by Christian compassion and kindness, made themselves his nurses, against the desire of the surgeons, who ordered him to be left alone, or at least not attended by the women. But Heaven, that directs and disposes all things in a manner which we cannot fathom, so ordered it in this case, that the count's last hour drawing nigh, he one day, before he took a final leave of them all, sent for Diego de Villasenor, and when they were alone together, spoke to him thus:—"I left home intending to go to Rome this year, in which the supreme Pontiff has opened the ark of the Church's treasure, and made known to us as in a holy year, the infinite graces that are to be obtained thereby. I meant to travel expeditiously, but as a poor pilgrim, rather than as a rich gentleman. I entered this town, found an affray going on, as you have heard, between the soldiers who were lodging in it, and the inhabitants: I mingled with them, and in trying to save the lives of others, have lost my own, for this wound so treacherously dealt, as I may say, will in a short time end my existence. I do not know by whose hand it was given, for in these popular tumults all is confusion.

My death will not grieve me, unless it should be the cause of that of others, either for justice, or to avenge mine. Nevertheless, to do all that is in my power, I here say that I forgive my murderer, and all who may have been guilty with him; and I also desire to show my gratitude for all the kindness I have received in your house, and the mark I wish to give will be the very greatest you can possibly imagine. In the two chests, which you see here, which contain my wardrobe, I believe I have as much as twenty thousand ducats in gold and in jewels, which do not take up much room; and if this sum, instead of being so small, was as great as the mines of Potosi contain, I would do the same with it as I am now doing. Take it then, or rather make the lady Constance your granddaughter, take it, for I give it to her in earnest as a marriage portion; and further, I desire to espouse her myself; so that although she will be speedily a widow, she will be at the same time honoured as a wife and a maid. Send for her hither, and fetch a priest to perform the ceremony. Her merit, her beauty, and her Christian virtues, make her worthy to be queen of the whole world. Do not be surprised, sir, at what you hear, and believe all I say, for it will be no such monstrous novelty for a nobleman to marry a poor gentleman's daughter, in whom unites every quality that can make a woman desirable. Heaven wills it — my own

wishes lead me to it. Go then, be discreet, and without answering a word, fetch some one who can perform the marriage ceremony between me and your granddaughter, and also some one who can draw up the writings about the money and jewels, so that no slander can ever undo that which I bestow on her." Villaseñor was greatly astonished at this discourse, and believed that without a doubt the count's senses were bewildered, and that his death was near at hand, since at that moment, for the most part, men either say very fine things or very great follies; and so he answered thus:—"My lord, I trust in God that you will recover your health, and then you will more clearly see; and when no pain disturbs you, more plainly feel what you are about as to the way you wish to bestow your wealth; and the wife you will choose, my grandchild, is not your equal. She is very far from deserving the honour of being your wife; and I am not so greedy as to wish to buy the honour you would do me, with what vulgar tongues would surely say (always ready to believe evil). It seems to me that it would be said that I had you in my house, that I worked upon your mind, and did all this from avarice."

"Let the world say what it likes," said the count; "if the vulgar portion of it will deceive itself, then let it be deceived in what it thinks of you."

"Well then," said Villaseñor, "I will not be so foolish as to set myself against the good fortune that offers itself to me;" and so saying, he left the room, and related what the count had said, to his wife and grandchildren, and to Periander and Auristella, who were of opinion that without delay the offer should be accepted, and a person sent for to bring the affair to a conclusion.

He did so, and in less than two hours Constance was married to the count, and the gold and jewels in her possession, with all the securities and confirmations that could possibly be made. There was no music at this wedding, only sighs and tears, for the life of the count was ebbing fast away. On the day that followed the marriage ceremony, they all received the Sacrament, and the count expired in the arms of his wife, the countess Constance, who, covering her head with a black veil, fell on her knees, and raising her eyes to Heaven, she began to say, "I vow;" but hardly had she begun to speak, when she was stopped by Auristella. "What are you going to vow?" said she. "To become a nun," replied the countess. "Stay and consider this," answered Auristella; "those things we would do to serve God ought not to be done in haste; nor as if they were impelled by some sudden accident; and as it is owing to your husband's death that you are about to make this vow, which afterwards, perhaps, you may not wish to fulfil, leave your will in the hands of God; and your own discretion, and that of your parents and relations, will be able to advise and direct you in the path it will be best to take, and give orders for the interment of your husband; and trust in God, that since you have been so unexpectedly made a countess, it may please him to bestow

some other title and honour that will be more lasting than this is." The countess yielded to this reasoning, and gave directions concerning the funeral of the count. A younger brother arrived, to whom the news had been sent at Salamanca, where he was studying. He wept for his brother's death, but the expectation of his inheritance helped to dry the tears. When he heard what had been done, he embraced his sister-in-law, and did not contest the gift. He buried his brother so as to remove him afterwards to his own place, and set out for the king's court, to demand justice against his murderers. He gained his suit, — the captains were beheaded, and many of the townspeople received punishment. Constance remained with the rank and title of countess.

Periander began to think of continuing their journey, in which the elder Antonio no longer wished to bear him company; neither did his wife Ricla, weary of such long pilgrimages and wanderings, which had not, however, tired their son Antonio, nor the young countess, who could not exist separate from Auristella and Periander.

All this time Antonio had never shown his grandfather the canvass on which their history was painted. One day he was displaying it, and telling the story, he observed that one part was still wanting — that of how Auristella got to the barbarous isle, when she and Periander had met in changed attire; she, in that of a man, and he, dressed in female garments — a strange metamorphosis — to which Auristella answered, "That it would be told in a few words, that when the pirates stole her and Clelia, with the two young wives of the fishermen, from the shores of Denmark, they came to an uninhabited island, in order to divide their spoil, and not being able to do this equally, one of the chief among them said, 'He should be satisfied with herself as his share,' and even added gifts to those of the others to make them more equal. Thus," said she, "was I thrown into his power alone, and deprived of a companion to alleviate my misfortunes. He made me put on the dress of a man, and thus I accompanied him to many different places, serving and obeying him in all that was consistent with honour. At length we arrived at the barbarous isle, there we were surprised and made prisoners by the barbarians. He died in the affray, and I was thrown into the prison cave, where I found my beloved Clelia, who by other not less unfortunate adventures had been brought hither. From her I learned the history of these barbarians, the vain superstition that they held, and the ridiculous and false prophecy. She also told me that she had great reason to believe that my brother Periander had been in the same dungeon, but she had not been able to speak to him, from the haste the barbarians were in to drag him out to be sacrificed. I wished to accompany Clelia to ascertain the truth, as I was in the dress of a man, and in spite of her entreaties, who would fain have prevented my doing so, I willingly delivered

myself to be sacrificed by the barbarians, persuaded that it would be infinitely better to end my life at once, than to be perpetually in danger of losing it day after day. And now I have nothing more to say, since you all know well what followed after this.”

The old Villasenor wished this also to be added to the picture, and all agreed that it should be done, and that the history of such wonderful and unheard-of adventures ought not to be merely depicted upon a perishable canvass, but should be written on tables of bronze, and graven on the memories of men.

Meanwhile Villasenor desired to keep the picture, if only to look upon the well portrayed likenesses of his children, and the unequalled beauty of Periander and Auristella.

In a few days the departure was determined upon, that they might accomplish their vow at Rome. Antonio, the father, remained at home, but the younger Antonio would not stay behind, nor his sister, the young Constance, whose affection for Auristella was such, as I have said before, that it would have carried her, not only to Rome, but if it could be done together, she would gladly have accompanied her to the other world.

The day of parting came, and they had tears, and embraces, and grievous sighs, especially from Ricla, who felt in losing her children as if her very heart went with them. The grandfather bestowed his blessing upon them all, for the blessing of an old person is a thing that avails much in such undertakings.

They took one of the servants of the house along with them to be of service on the journey, and set out, leaving the parental home sorrowful; and half in joy, half in sadness, went on their way.

## CHAPTER X.

LONG pilgrimages involve various events, and as this variety is composed of different things, so also must the causes be different. Our history shows this well; the thread of it is broken by the incidents that occur, making us doubt whether to relate them, because all that happens is not good to be narrated, and may be passed over without notice, and without lessening the interest of the story. There are some actions although great, yet upon which we ought to be silent; others so small they are not worthy of being described; for the excellence of this history is, that everything therein written has the relish or seasoning of the truth that goes along with it, which a fabulous history has not. It is necessary in it to suit the events with correct taste, and with so much probability, that in spite of the fiction which would clash with the understanding, the whole may be harmonious.

Profiting then by this truth, I will tell you how the lovely little band of pilgrims, pursuing their journey, arrived at a place, neither very large nor very small, the name of which I forget; and in the midst of the open place of the town, through which they must necessarily pass, they saw a crowd of persons, all attentively listening to, and looking at, two young men, in the garb of recently freed captives, who were describing the story of a painting that lay on the ground before them. It appeared that they had taken off two heavy chains that were near them, — proofs and witnesses of their misfortunes; — and one of them, who appeared about four and twenty years old, spoke in a clear voice, and very eloquent tongue, ever and anon cracking a sort of whip that he held in his hand, in such a way as to make a sound in the air like what a coachman makes when he chastises or threatens his horses, by cracking his driving whip over their heads.

Among those who were listening to the long story, were the two Alcaldes of the town, both old men, but one rather younger than the other. The freed captive was thus saying:— “Here, gentlemen, you may see the picture of the town of Algiers, that bugbear and terror of all the shores of the Mediterranean Sea; the harbour of all pirates; the shelter and refuge of thieves and robbers, who, from this little port you here see pictured, go forth with their vessels to disturb the world, for they are bold enough even to pass the *ne plus ultra* of the pillars of Hercules, and attack and pillage the scattered islands that lie up and down in the immense ocean, fancying themselves secure, at least from the Turkish ships. This vessel, which is here painted so small because the size of the painting

obliges it to be reduced, is a galley of two and twenty oars; — the master and captain of her is the Turk you see there, standing up in the gangway with an arm in his hand that he has just cut off from the body of the Christian you see there also, and which he is using as a whip or a rope's end for the other Christians who are bound fast to the benches. He is fearing lest those four galleys that you perceive here giving chase, should reach him. This first captive of the foremost row of benches, whose countenance is disfigured by the blood that has dripped over it from the severed arm, is myself, who served as stern-rower in this galley. The other who is next to me, is my companion, less bloody, because less wounded. Listen, gentlemen, and pay attention, and you may possibly hear the threats and abusive words uttered by this Dog, Dragut, for that is the name of the captain of the galley. A pirate as famous as he is cruel, and as cruel as Phalaris, or Busiris, the Sicilian tyrants, I seem to hear now sounding in my ears, the fierce Moorish oaths which he was then uttering with the air of a demon; Moorish oaths and words, all expressing contempt and abuse against the Christians, calling them Jews, worthless, vile, and faithless, and to make the terror and horror greater, he beat the living bodies with the dead arms severed from them."

It seems that one of the two Alcaldes had been an Algerine captive for a long period, and in a low voice he said to his companion, "This captive has seemed to speak the truth so far, and so appears to be really what he says he is; but I will examine him in a few particulars, and we will see how he can answer me, for I would have you know that I was in this very galley, and I do not recollect any man as first oar, except one Alonzo Moclin, a native of Velez Malaga," and turning to the captive, he said to him, "Pray tell me, friend, whose galleys were those that chased yours? and did you obtain the freedom you desired by their means?"

"The galleys," answered he, "were Don Sancho de Leiva's; we did not obtain our liberty, for they did not come up with us. We gained it afterwards, for we fell in with a ship, bound to Algiers from Sargel, laden with wheat. We came in her to Oran, and from thence to Malaga, from whence my companion and I set out for Italy, in the intention of serving his majesty (whom may God preserve!) as soldiers."

"Tell me, friends," said the Alcalde, "you two captives, were you taken to Algiers at first, or to any other part of Barbary?"

"We were not made prisoners together," replied the other captive, "for I was taken near Alicant in a vessel laden with wool, going to Genoa, — my companion in the Percheles of Malaga, where he was a fisherman. We became acquainted in a dungeon at Tetuan; we have been friends and shared the same

fortune for a long while, and for ten or twelve *quartos*, which is all you have offered us, we have given full information to my lord Alcalde.”

“Not much, my young gentleman,” replied the Alcalde, “you have not gone through the whole ordeal of the question yet. Listen to me, and say, how many doors are there in Algiers? how many fountains, and how many wells of sweet water?”

“A foolish question,” answered the first captive. “As many doors as houses; — I do not know how many fountains, and so many wells, that I have not seen half; and the troubles I underwent there have gone nigh to take away almost the memory of myself; and if my lord Alcalde wishes to be uncharitable, we will gather up our pence, and strike our tent and say adieu, for there’s as good bread to be got elsewhere as here.”

Then the Alcalde called to a man among the bystanders looking in, who held the office of the town’s crier sometimes, and sometimes that of executioner when needful, and said, ‘Gil Berrueco, go and fetch me here the first two asses you can catch; for by the life of our lord the king, I will make these two captive gentlemen ride through the streets, who have taken the liberty of usurping the alms of the charitable, which belong of right to the real poor, and, telling lies and inventions, whilst they are all the time as whole and sound as an apple, and more able and fit to use their spades than to be flourishing whips senselessly in the air. I was a slave in Algiers five years, and I know that they have said no one thing to show they ever were there.

“Body o’ me!” cried the captive; “is it possible that my lord Alcalde can expect that poor as we are in worldly gifts, we should be so rich in those of memory, and that for a folly not worth three farthings, he will put to shame two such insignificant students as ourselves, and deprive his majesty of two brave soldiers on their way to Italy and Flanders to rout and destroy, and wound and kill, all the enemies of our holy Catholic faith that we may encounter. For if we must needs tell the truth, who is of heavenly birth, my lord Alcalde must know that we are no captives, but students from Salamanca, who, in the midst of our studies, felt a desire to see the world, and to know a little of the life of a soldier, as we were acquainted sufficiently with a peaceful life. To carry our scheme the better into effect, we happened to light upon a party of captives, who might be true, or false, like ourselves; I cannot say if they were or not. From them we bought the canvass and picture, and obtained information respecting Algiers, and such things as seemed necessary to us to render our fraud credible. We sold our books and our furniture at a low price, and laden with this apparatus, have travelled thus far, and we think of going on, if your worship does not forbid it.”

“What I am thinking of doing,” said the Alcalde, “is to give each of you a

hundred lashes, and in lieu of the pike you talk of wielding in Flanders, put an oar into your hands to work with at the galleys, with which you may perhaps be as serviceable to his majesty as you would be with the pike."

"I could wish," rejoined the young man, who had been the principal speaker, "that my lord Alcalde was an Athenian legislator, and that the severity of his office reached the ears of the other lords of the council, where, obtaining credit from them, they would hold him as a severe and rigid judge, and commit to him matters of importance, wherein he might show his severity and his justice. But my lord Alcalde knows that '*Summum jus summa injuria*.'"

"See how you talk, friend," replied the second Alcalde; "here there is no justice without reason; but all the Alcaldes of this place, have ever been, are, and will be, pure and faithful, and it will be better for you to talk less."

At this instant the crier returned and said, "My lord Alcalde, I can find no asses in the place, only the two magistrates, Berrueco and Crespo, who are taking their ride."

"I sent you for asses, not magistrates, blockhead! but go and bring them hither, whether they will or no; I wish to have them present at the pronouncement of this sentence, which shall be given notwithstanding, and is not to fail for want of asses, of which, thank God, we have plenty in this place."

"You will never have them in Heaven, my lord Alcalde," said the youth, "if you go on thus severely. Please to consider that we have stolen nothing; we have hardly gained a miserable sustenance by our trick, which is laborious enough, like the business of a day labourer, or any workmen. Our parents taught us no trade, thus we were obliged to have recourse to our wits. Punish those who are guilty of bribery, of house-breaking, highwaymen, false witnesses, disaffected or disloyal men, the idle and the good-for-nothing, but let alone the poor fellows who go straight forward to serve his majesty, with their best right hand, and their sharpest ingenuity. There are no better soldiers than those who are transplanted from the seats of learning to the fields of war. None ever left his studies to be a soldier who was not a super-excellent one, for when strength and intellect meet and join, they make a marvellous composition, with which Mars rejoices, peace is maintained, and the country aggrandized."

Periander and most of the bystanders admired much what the young man said, and the fluency of his discourse. He proceeded thus:—"Let us examine closely into this matter, my lord Alcalde. Look, and look again, and scrutinize the seams of our garments; if you can find six reals, not only you may give us a hundred, but six hundred lashes. Let us see then if the acquisition of so small an amount of gain deserves to be punished with dishonour, and martyred with the galleys. And again I say that my lord Alcalde should think better of this, and not



overhastily do that which may perhaps give him reason to repent by and by. Discreet judges punish, but do not take vengeance upon faults. The prudent and compassionate mingle equity with justice, and between rigour and clemency prove their excellent judgment.”

“By Heaven,” said the second Alcalde, “but the boy talks well, although he talks too much, and I not only will not consent that they be flogged, but I will have them carried to my own house, and help them on with their journey, on condition that they go straight forwards, for if they are to be wandering here and there, it will prove them rather vicious than necessitous.”

The first Alcalde, already tamer and becoming compassionate, more mildly said, “I will not have them go to your house, they shall go to mine, where I will give them a lesson upon the state of things at Algiers, so that for the future nobody shall be able to catch them tripping in their pretended story.”

The two lads thanked him. The bystanders praised this kind intention of the Alcalde’s, and our pilgrims were delighted with the result of the affair.

The first Alcalde then came up to Periander, and said, “And you, friend pilgrims, have you got any picture with you to tell us about? Have you any history to relate, and make us believe it true, although falsehood herself may have composed it?”

Periander made no answer, for he saw Antonio pulling out the passports, licenses, and dispatches that they carried with them, and placing them in the Alcalde’s hands, he said, “Your worship may see by these papers who we are, and where we are going, but we do not think it necessary to produce them, as we ask no alms, and have no need to ask any. Thus, you perceive, you may let us pass on freely.” The Alcalde took the papers, and because he did not know how to read, he gave them to his companion, who knew as little as he did, and so they passed on into the hands of their clerk, who, glancing over them rapidly, returned them to Antonio, saying, “My lord Alcalde, there is as much worth and goodness as there is beauty in these pilgrims: if they wish to remain here to-night, my house shall serve them for an inn, and I shall attend to their wishes to the utmost of my power.”

Periander thanked him; they staved there that night, as it was late; and they were accommodated at the clerk’s house with kindness, abundance, and cleanliness.

## CHAPTER XI.

DAY came, and with it the thanks of hospitality received, and once more the pilgrims were on their way. As they were leaving the town, they fell in with the false captives, who told them that they had been instructed by the Alcalde in such a way that they could never again be caught in a falsehood as to Algerine matters: "So that sometimes," said one, (he who was the chief spokesman) "sometimes one may rob by authority of the magistrate, — I mean that sometimes a bad minister of justice connives at delinquency for the sake of interest."

They travelled on together till they came to where the road branched off in two separate directions. The captives took that which led to Carthagena, and the pilgrims that to Valencia.

Now had Aurora come forth from her eastern balconies, blotting out the stars, and adorning the path whereon the sun was to take his accustomed course. Bartholomew, for so I think the lad who had the baggage mule in charge was named, seeing so bright and beautiful a sunrise tinging the clouds in the sky with such a variety of hues, so that nothing ever was seen more lovely and pleasing, exclaimed, "That man who used to preach in our town said what was very true, when he told us that heaven and earth declared the glory and greatness of God; and if I did not know God as I have been taught to do, by my parents and by the priests at home, I think I should trace and know him now, by seeing the glory of that sky which seems to tell how great He is; and by yonder sun that lights us, which although it looks no bigger than a shield, is many times larger than the whole earth; and as they tell me also, even more than that, he is so active, that in twenty-four hours he can travel more than three hundred thousand leagues; whether this be true or no, I know not, but many wise men say so, and therefore I believe it, although it is rather hard to understand; but the thing that makes me wonder most is, that underneath us there are other people whom they call Antipodes, so that we above have our feet upon their heads, — a thing that seems to me quite impossible, — for to support so great a load their heads must need be made of iron."

Periander smiled at the rustic learning of the boy, and said to him, "I would fain seek for such words, O Bartholomew, as should show you the error you are labouring under, and the true form of the earth, to understand which it is necessary to go back to the beginning; but to assist your comprehension, I must

limit my explanation, and tell you only one thing, which is that you must understand that the earth is the centre of the heavens; I call the centre an indivisible point, to which all the lines of its circumference go: you can but little comprehend this, and so you must be satisfied to know that the earth has everywhere the sky above it; and in whatever part *of* it a man may be, he will always have the sky over his head; and so as that sky you see above covers you, does it also cover the Antipodes, without hindrance, and as it is ordained by Nature, who is the head servant or steward to God, the Creator of Heaven and earth.”

The boy was well pleased to listen to Periander’s words, which also gave pleasure to Auristella, to the countess, and her brother.

With these and other things, as they travelled, Periander instructed and entertained them, when they heard behind them, a cart accompanied by seven archers on foot and one on horseback, with a musket hanging to his saddle-bow. He came up to Periander and said, “If you should have any cordial or restorative among you, Sir Pilgrims, as I think you possibly may, since, from your appearance, I should judge you rather to be rich gentlefolk than poor pilgrims; I entreat you to give me some for a poor fellow who is lying in a swoon in yonder cart, condemned to the galleys for two years with twelve more soldiers, who, for having been present at the death of a nobleman, some days ago, and found guilty thereof, are condemned to the oar, and their commander, as more guilty, I believe, has been beheaded.”

The fair Constance, on hearing this, could not restrain her tears, for she recognised in this story the death of her short-lived husband; but, listening rather to the dictates of humanity than to thoughts of revenge, she ran to the baggage mule, and took out a case of cordials, and going to the cart, she asked, “Where is the fainting person?” One of the soldiers answered, “He is there, lying in that corner, his face anointed by the grease that is used for the wheels, because he does not wish to be a pretty corpse when he dies, and that will be soon, if he continues obstinate in refusing to eat anything.”

The youth raised his head on hearing these words, and removing from his face an old hat which covered it entirely, showed it to Constance, all begrimed with dirt and grease, and, stretching out his hand to receive the cordial she held, he took it, saying, “Heaven reward you, lady.” He then pulled his hat again over his eyes, and returned to his melancholy and to the corner where he wished to die. There was some further talk between the pilgrims and the guards of the cart, which ended by their taking different roads.

In a few days our pilgrims reached a place which was inhabited by the Moors. It was about a league from the sea, in the kingdom of Valencia. They found here

no inn where they could lodge; but at all the houses they were hospitably invited to come in, which Antonio seeing, said, "I do not know what they mean by speaking ill of these people, they all seem to me saints."

"Our Saviour," said Periander, "was received at Jerusalem with palms, by the very same people, who, in a short time after, crucified him. Now 'tis well, we will trust to God and take our chance, as they say. Let us accept the invitation of this good old gentleman who has offered us hospitality."

So it was, an old Moor almost forcibly drew the pilgrims by their long garments into his house, and seemed anxious to treat them not as Moors, but truly in a Christian manner. His daughter came forward to offer her services, dressed in the Moorish fashion, and so lovely she looked in it, that the most graceful Christian would have been happy to look like her, for Nature in bestowing charms is as prodigal to the barbarian of Scythia as to the citizen of Toledo.

This beautiful Moorish damsel then, taking Auristella and Constance by the hands, led them into a room on the ground-floor, looked cautiously all round her as if fearful of being overheard; and when she had assured herself that she was quite safe, she said, "Alas! dear ladies, why is it that you have come here like simple lambs to the slaughter-house? Do you see that old man, whom I with shame and sorrow call my father? Do you note the extraordinary kindness of his reception? Know that he means nothing else than to be your executioner. It is intended that this night seventeen Barbary pirate vessels are to carry off all the people of this place with all their property, not leaving a thing behind that shall make any one desire to return in search of it. These unfortunate creatures imagine that in Barbary they shall find both pleasure for their bodies and salvation for their souls, without recollecting that of many towns, the inhabitants of which have gone over almost entirely, no news have been received but that they have repented. The Barbary Moors cry up the glories of their land, and those of this country run thither to see them, and are caught in the nets of their misfortune. If you would escape from this, and would preserve the liberty you were born to, leave this house at once, and hasten to the church; there you will find a friend to give you shelter. He is the priest of the place; he and the notary are the only Christians here; you will also find there Iarife, the (Jadraque), who is my uncle, a Moor only in name, but Christian in everything else.

Tell him what is doing, and say that Rafaella told you so; you will then be believed and protected; and do not treat it as a jest, unless you wish to find at your cost there is no greater deception than a too late discovery of one."

The earnestness with which Rafaella spoke went to the hearts of Auristella and Constance, and they believed her words, and only replied by thanks. They

immediately called Periander and Antonio, and told them what had passed. Then, without seeming to do anything particular, they all went out. Bartholomew objected much to the move, for he felt more in need of rest than a change of abode; but he obeyed his masters, and they reached the church, where they were well received by the priest and the Jadraque, to whom they related all Rafaella had told them. The priest said, It is some days, gentlemen, since the arrival of these vessels has disturbed us, and although it is customary for them to come, yet I have felt uneasy. Come in hither, my children, the church is a good castle, and has strong and good doors, not easily burnt or destroyed."

"Ah," said the Jadraque, "if that my eyes may but see, before they close for ever, this land freed from the thorns and the briers that oppress it. Ah! when will the time come, foretold by my grandfather, who was a learned astrologer, when Spain shall see herself entire and firm in the Christian religion, for she alone is the corner of the earth where the true faith is most acknowledged and revered. I am a Moor, sirs, and you hear that I deny it not, but not for this am I the less a Christian, for God gives his grace to all who serve him, and as you know, he makes his sun shine alike upon the good and the bad, and bestows his rain equally on the just and the unjust. I say, then, that this grandfather of mine used to foretell that, about this time, there would reign in Spain a king of the house of Austria, who would conceive in his soul the difficult resolution of expelling the Moors from the country, as one flings from one's bosom a serpent that is devouring one's entrails, or rather, as one who separates the wild flowers from the wheat, and pulls out the weeds from the growing grain. Come, then, brave youth, and prudent king, and execute this decree of expulsion; let not the fear of rendering this country desert and depopulated, deter thee, nor even the consideration that there are many who have been baptized whom it would not be well to expel; for, although these are fears that deserve to be considered, yet the carrying so great a work into effect would make them not worth thinking of. Soon the land would be re-peopled by Christians, it would again be fertile, and more so than it is now: it would have its lords, and, if not so many or such humble vassals as now, yet they would be good Catholics, under whose protection their roads would be secure, and peace would reign, and riches increase without fear of robbers and highwaymen."

After having thus spoken, he made the doors fast, and fortified them by putting all the seats and benches against them. They then mounted to the top of the tower, taking up a portable ladder, or steps. The priest carried up with him the holy vessels belonging to the sacrament, provided a store of stones, and armed himself with two loaded guns. They left the baggage mule at the door relieved of its burden, and Bartholomew shut himself in with his masters.

With watchful eyes, ready hands, and resolute hearts, the little party awaited the hour of assault, of which the Moorish maiden had given them warning.

Midnight passed, the priest knew it by the stars; they looked out upon the sea which lay before them, and not a cloud passed over in the moonlight, but they fancied it a Moorish bark, and, applying themselves to the bells, they began to raise a peal so loud and vigorous that every valley and all the shores resounded again; at which sound the officials in the harbour assembled together, and ran here and there, but their haste was of no use in preventing the vessels approaching the shore and taking away the people from land; those in the place who were expecting them, went out laden with their most valuable property, and were received by the Turks with loud cries and shouts, and the sound of musical instruments.

They set fire to the place, and also to the church doors, not meaning to enter in, but simply to do all the harm they could. Bartholomew was left, to go afoot, for they carried off his mule, demolished a stone cross that stood at the entrance of the town, called aloud upon Mahomet, and gave themselves up to the Turks, a dishonest and thievish nation; Several times, and perhaps not always in vain, did Periander and Antonio fire their guns; many a stone did Bartholomew throw, always to that quarter whence the mule was stolen, and many an arrow was shot by the Jadraque; but more than all were the tears that were shed by Auristella and Constance, praying to God to deliver them from the danger they were in, and that his temple might not be injured by the fire, which it was not: it did not escape, however, by a miracle, but because the doors were of iron, and the fire not very strong.

It was nearly day when the ships laden with their prizes went to sea with shouts of triumph and raising the Moorish war cry, and the joyful sounds of atabals and trumpets.

Two persons were now seen running towards the church, one from the shore, the other from the land side; on their nearer approach, the Jadraque knew one to be his niece Rafaella, who, with a cane cross in her hand, came, crying out, "Christian, Christian, and free, free by the grace and mercy of God!"

They recognized in the other the notary, who had by chance been out of the town that night, and at the sound of the alarm bell came to see the disastrous events, which he deplored, not for the loss of wife or child, since he had none, but for that of his house, which was plundered and burned.

They waited till the day was far advanced, and the ships began to disappear in the distance, and the coast guardians had taken measures to protect the coast, then they descended from the tower, and opened the church, which Rafaella entered with her face bathed in joyful tears, and her beauty heightened by her

emotion. She knelt and offered her prayers to the images, and then embraced her uncle, first having kissed the hands of the good priest. The notary neither said a prayer nor kissed the hand of anybody, for his whole soul was occupied with the thoughts of his lost property.

The first alarm having subsided, the fugitives recovered their spirits, and the Jadraque recovering breath, began afresh to think about his grandfather's prophecy as being undoubtedly inspired from above.— “Ah! noble youth! ah! invincible king, trample down and destroy all impediments, and make Spain clear and free from my bad race, which now infests and injures her. Ah! prince, as wise as thou art illustrious, thou new Atlantis, who supportest the weight of this kingdom, aid, and make easy with thy wisdom this necessary expulsion; fill the seas with thy galleys laden with the useless crowd of the Hagarene generation; cast upon the opposite shores the brambles, weeds, and thorns that hinder the growth and abundance of a Christian population; for, if the few Hebrews who went over into Egypt multiplied so exceedingly, that, when they went away, they were in number more than seven hundred families, what is not to be feared from those who are more numerous and live more idly? Religion does not gather any under her wing, none are cut down by the Indies; war does not diminish their numbers; all marry, all, or most, have children; hence it is to be inferred that they must increase and multiply innumerable. Again, I say, arise, O king! arise, and set to work, and leave the history of thy reign bright as the sun, and clear as the blue sky above us.”

Two days more the pilgrims stayed in this place. They provided themselves with all they wanted; Bartholomew got a new baggage mule; they thanked the priest for his kindness, and praised the Jadraque for his right way of thinking, and, embracing Rafaella, took their leave of all, and went on their way.

## CHAPTER XII.

AS they travelled, they amused themselves by talking over the past dangers, the good feeling of the Jadraque, the gallant conduct of the Priest, the zeal of Rafaella, whom they had forgotten to question as to how she had escaped from the power of the Turks when the assault was made. However they guessed that she must have concealed herself somewhere in order to gain her desire of living and dying a Christian.

They reached Valencia, but would not enter the town for fear they should be detained there; but they could not fail of admiring its noble situation, the excellence of its inhabitants, of which they had heard so much, the pleasantness of its environs, and, finally, all that makes it beautiful and rich beyond all other cities, not only in Spain, but in all Europe; and chiefly they admired the beauty of the women, and the pure and graceful language so sweet and pleasant, that none but the Portuguese can compete with it in sweetness and pleasantness.

They determined to go on and to lengthen their days' journeys, even at the risk of being fatigued, to reach Barcelona, where they heard they might find vessels in which to embark for Genoa without going through France.

Nothing of any importance happened on the way to Barcelona, unless that they saw afar off the holy mountains of Montserrat, which they worshipped with Christian devotion without designing to go there, as it must have detained them.

They arrived at Barcelona at the moment when four Spanish galleys were just entering the port, which fired *a* salute of heavy artillery. Four boats were let down, one of which was adorned with rich carpets from the Levant, and crimson cushions, and in it was seated a young lady, richly dressed, with another older lady, and two young girls, neatly attired. A crowd of people came out of the city, as is usually the custom, both to look at the galleys and the persons who had come in them; and curiosity led our pilgrims so near the boats when they landed, that they nearly touched the lady as she stepped out of the boat. She, casting her eyes around when she had got ashore, they lighted upon Constance, and she said, "Come hither, lovely pilgrim, and accompany me to the town, I have a debt to pay to you of which you little think. Let your companions come likewise, for there is no reason why you should leave such good company."

"Yours, as far as I can see, is so good," replied Constance, "that it would indeed be senseless to refuse it; let us go where you please, my friends will follow, for they never leave me."



The lady took Constance by the hand, and escorted by many gentlemen, who had come out of the city to receive her, and by some of the people who had landed from the galleys, they proceeded together to the town. During their walk, Constance never took her eyes off her, trying, but in vain, to remember where she had ever seen her before.

They took up their lodging in one of the best houses, and would not suffer the pilgrims to go elsewhere. As soon as an opportunity occurred, this discourse took place between them: —

“I would fain relieve you, my friends, from the wonder you must be feeling, as to the cause I have for wishing to be of service to you, and so I will inform you that my name is Ambrosia Agustina, and my birth-place a city of Arragon. Don Bernardo Agustina is my brother, and he commands those galleys that lie in the bay. Contarino de Arblanchez, a knight of the order of Aleantara, during my brother’s absence, secretly and unknown to my relations, fell in love with me, and I, led by my destiny, or, perhaps, by my too great weakness, with the title of wife, made him master of myself and my whole heart. The same day on which I gave my hand to him, he received an order from the king instantly to set off and conduct a regiment of Spanish infantry (just come from Lombardy to Genoa) to Malta, where it was expected that the Turks would make a descent. Contarino obeyed without delay the orders he received; without being moved by my tears, he departed. I felt as if the sky had fallen upon my head, and that my heart was pressed down between it and the earth. A few days passed, when as one scheme after another entered my brain, I resolved to put one into execution, the accomplishment of which had well nigh cost me both life and honour. I left my home in the disguise of a man, the dress of a young page which I took, and engaged myself as servant to a drummer in a regiment about eight leagues off; I soon learned to beat the drum as well as my master, and to play the part of a buffoon like those of my profession. Another regiment joined ours, and both together marched to Carthagen, in order to embark in the galleys commanded by my brother.

It was my intention to go over to Italy, and seek my husband, from whose affection I hoped that my rash conduct would escape censure, and that he would not find fault with my wish to see him, which made me so blind that I never considered the risk I ran of being discovered, if I embarked in my brother’s galley; but as no difficulties deter an enamoured heart, and it sees none which it cannot conquer, no fears it cannot oppose, no roughnesses it cannot make smooth, I resisted all these, and hoped even in a kind of desperation. But, as the event of things often turns out different to what we expect, so mine, as ill considered as it was imprudent, placed me in the situation you soon shall hear.

The soldiers of the regiments I mentioned, engaged in a cruel affray with the people of a town in La Mancha, about lodgings, the result of which was, that a certain count of some place, the name of which I do not know, received his death-wound. There was an enquiry made by the court, the captains were taken into custody, the soldiers separated, and some, among whom I, for my misfortune, was one, though quite guiltless of any fault, condemned to the galleys to work two years at the oar. In vain I lamented my fate, seeing how all my plans were frustrated; I would gladly have died, but the fear of a yet worse fate in another world made the knife drop from my hand, and the rope from my throat; all I did was to endeavour to deform my face, and make myself as ugly as I could, and then shut myself up in a cart we were put into, with the intention of weeping so much and eating so little, that grief and hunger might do what the cord and the knife had left undone. We reached Carthagená, where the galleys were not yet arrived; we were put into a house and well guarded, and there in fear and trembling I awaited my fate. I know not, sirs, if you recollect a cart which came up with you near a small inn, when this lovely pilgrim (pointing to Constance) helped to restore a fainting prisoner with some cordials."

"Yes," said Constance, "I remember it well."

"Then know that it was I whom you assisted," said the lady Ambrosia. "From the place where I lay in the cart I could see you all, and admired you, for your appearance was such that it was impossible to look and not admire."

"The galleys came in at last with a Moorish brigantine that they had taken; the same day the soldiers were put on board in irons, the clothes they wore were taken off, and they were dressed in those worn by the rowers. A sad and miserable change, yet light, for the hardship that does not destroy life, custom will at last alleviate. They came to undress me, the boatswain ordered them to wash my face, for I had not strength to lift an arm; the barber who attended the crew looked at me and said, 'I shall spoil but few razors with this beard. I wonder what they have sent us this boy for, who looks as if he was made of china ware, as if our galleys were made of gingerbread, and our oars of sweetmeat. Eh, boy, what crime hast thou committed to deserve this punishment? I doubt not but that thou art brought to this by the sins of others;' and then continuing his discourse to the boatswain, he said, 'Truly, master, it would be much better to send this boy to the general with a chain to his leg, for at the oar he wont be worth a farthing.'

"This talk, and the thoughts of my misfortune, which now seemed to have reached its climax, so overcame me that I fell down in a swoon, and lay as if dead. I have been told that it was four hours before I came to myself, during which time they had done everything in their power to restore me to my senses,

and what I should most have felt, if I had been conscious, was, that they must have discovered I was no man, but a woman, I recovered at last, and the first thing I saw was the face of my brother and of my husband, the latter held me in his arms. I do not know' how it was that I did not die that moment; I do not know how it was that my tongue did not cleave to the roof of my mouth; all I know is, that I knew not what they said to me; but, I heard my brother say, 'What means this dress, my sister?' and my husband said, 'What is this disguise, my soul? If I did not know so well your virtue and honour, my sweet wife, this dress should be exchanged only for a shroud.'

'Your wife?' said my brother, 'this seems as strange a story to me as it is to find her thus disguised; but if it be true, it would be a sufficient recompense for the trouble it causes me to see her thus.'

"At this instant I had begun to recover my scattered senses, and I remember that *I* said, 'Dear brother, I am Ambrosia Agustina, thy sister, I am also the wife of Senor Contarino de Arbolanchez; Love, and thy absence, O my brother, gave him to me as a husband; but, on the wedding day he left me, and I, rash, desperate, and inconsiderate, set off to seek him in this disguise. Then I told them all the story I have already narrated, and I had the good fortune (for now my fortune was beginning to amend) to find that they believed me, and pitied me. I then heard that my husband had been taken prisoner with one of the two vessels in which he had sailed for Genoa, and that it was only two days ago that he had recovered his liberty, and had had no time or opportunity to see my brother till the moment *of* my fainting. Events so strange are hardly credible, yet it is all as I have said. In these galleys the lady whom you saw with me was going to Italy with her two nieces; her son has the charge *of* the royal patrimony in Sicily; they supplied me with the dress I now wear, and my husband and brother sent us on shore to refresh and amuse ourselves, and see the friends that they have in this city. If you are going to Rome, I will make my brother convey you to the nearest seaport. The case of cordials I would fain repay with the best I possess; and if I should not myself go to Italy, I would ask my brother to take my debt upon him. This, my friends, is my history; *if* you should find it hard to believe I cannot wonder; but there is a common saying that it is courtesy to believe, and, in yours, which must be great, I place my credit."

Thus the fair Ambrosia ended her story; and now her hearers began to express their interest and admiration, and to discuss the different circumstances of the case; and then Constance and Auristella began embracing Ambrosia, who was to return to her home by her husband's desire, because, however charming and lovely she may be, the company of a wife is embarrassing in times of war to a husband.

That night the sea ran very high, so much so that it was necessary to loosen the galleys that were anchored in the bay, which in this part was not safe for them. The courteous Catalans, a people terrible when angry, and most supremely courteous when at peace, to maintain both which qualities they almost outdo themselves, which is therefore outdoing all other nations, visited and feasted the Lady Ambrosia as much as was possible.

Auristella, who had learned by experience what it was to encounter a storm at sea, would not embark in the galleys, but determined to go by way of France, which was then quiet. Ambrosia returned to Arragon. The galleys continued their voyage, and the pilgrims their journey, entering France by way of Perpignan.

## CHAPTER XIII.

OUR party wished to take Perpignan as their first entrance into France. The adventures of Ambrosia furnished them with conversation for some days, her great youth forming some excuse for her many errors, and they all were disposed to find pardon for her rashness in the great love she bore her husband. She had, as I before said, returned home to her own country; the galleys had gone on their voyage, and our pilgrims on their journey.

They travelled through the land of France, and passing through Languedoc, entered Provence, where, in an inn at which they rested, they found three ladies of such extraordinary beauty, that, had not Auristella been in the world, they might have borne away the palm of beauty. They seemed to be of high degree, judging by their retinue and attendants. They, on seeing the pilgrims, were struck by the grace of Periander and the peerless beauty of Auristella and Constance; they went up to them, and, with smiling countenances and courteous demeanour, asked who they were in the Castilian tongue, for they perceived that they were Spanish pilgrims; and in France there is neither man nor woman but learns the Spanish language. Whilst the ladies were waiting for Auristella's reply, to whom they had addressed themselves, Periander had stepped aside to converse with a servant, who appeared to belong to the illustrious Frenchwomen, asking him who they were, and whither going; and he answered, "The Duke de Nemours, who is of the blood-royal in this country, is a gallant and very prudent gentleman, but withal he loves his pleasures; he has lately come into possession of his inheritance, and is resolved to marry, not to please others, but to choose for himself, even though he is offered great increase of wealth and property, and although he is acting contrary to the king's commands; but, he says, that kings may give what wives they choose to their vassals, but he does not choose that they should give one to him. With this fantasy, or folly, or wisdom, or whatever you please to call it, he has despatched some of his servants to different parts of France in search of women, who must, besides being of high birth, be beautiful, for him to select a wife from among them. He does not care for wealth, but is satisfied to let her portion be her qualities and her beauty. He had heard of these three ladies, and sent me, who am in his service, to see them, and have their portraits taken by a famous painter, who travels with me; all three are free from any engagement; all are young, as you perceive; the eldest, who is called Delicia, is very sensible, but poor; the middle one, whose name is Bellarina, is high-

mindful and witty, and moderately rich; the least of the three is called Felicia Flora, she is much the richest of all. They are all acquainted with the duke's desire, and I have a conjecture that each lady would gladly be the chosen one. Having an opportunity to go to Rome for the jubilee of this year, which is the Centenary, so kept according to custom, they have left their homes, and mean to go to Paris and see the duke, hoping, perhaps, that this may be of some avail. But, Sir Pilgrim, since you have come here I have determined to carry my master a present, which will entirely put an end to any hopes these ladies may have conceived, for I intend to take him the portrait of this fair pilgrim who is with you, for she is the sole queen of all earthly beauty; and if she was but as highly born as she is beautiful, my master's servants would have no further to go, nor he anything more to desire. Tell me, sir, on your life, if this pilgrim is married, what is her name, and what her parentage?" To which Periander tremblingly replied, "Her name is Auristella; she is on her way to Rome, and who her parents are, she has never told anybody; that she is free and unmarried I can assure you, for that I know without a doubt; but there is another thing to be said, which is, that she is so independent and mistress of her own will, that she will never submit it to any earthly prince, because, she says, that she will submit it only to a heavenly one; and to convince you that this is the truth, learn that I am her brother, and acquainted with her most secret thoughts; so it will be of no use at all to have her picture taken, but would serve only to disturb the mind of your master, if by chance he should feel disposed to overlook the humble birth of our parents."

"Notwithstanding this," said the other, "I must have the picture if only for curiosity, and that France may be made acquainted with this new miracle of beauty."

So saying, they took leave of each other, and Periander wished to quit the place directly, that the painter might not have time to take Auristella's portrait. Bartholomew had to get the mule ready afresh, and again began to be out of sorts with Periander for being in such a hurry to move.

The duke's servant, seeing that Periander meant to depart immediately, came to him and said, "I would fain, sir, have entreated you to stay a short time in this place, if but until night, that my painter might have time and space to take the likeness of your sister; but you may go in peace, for the painter assures me that though he has only seen her once, her image is so fixed in his imagination that he can paint her by himself quite as well as if he was looking at her."

Periander cursed the rare skill of the artist in his heart, but not the less for this did he wish to be gone; taking leave directly of the three charming Frenchwomen, who embraced Auristella and Constance warmly, and offered to

take them to Rome along with their party, if they pleased. Auristella thanked them in the most polite manner she knew, telling them that she obeyed her brother Periander in all things, and that neither she nor Constance could stay behind, since *her* brother Antonio and Periander were going. So they departed, and in about a week they arrived at a place in Provence; what happened there will be told in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XIV.

HISTORY, poetry, and painting resemble one another, and so it appears that in writing history, one paints a picture; in painting, one composes a story; history does not always treat of weighty matters, neither does the painter always choose great or magnificent subjects for his pencil; poetry is not always in the clouds; history must treat of base deeds; painting has grass and furze in her pictures, and poetry exalts humble things. These truths are shown in our history.

It was noon, the sun's rays shot down vertically upon the ground, and the heat was very great; many pleasant looking houses were scattered over the peaceful plains through which they were now travelling, where the gentry of this country passed the greater part of the year, seldom quitting them for a town life. Our travellers had arrived near one of these, which was a little distant from the high road; the shadow cast by a tall tower of the dwelling, invited them to take their siesta there, as the heat threatened to be great. The careful Bartholomew unloaded his mule, and spread a carpet on the ground; they seated themselves in a circle, and prepared to make their repast upon the provisions that Bartholomew had taken care to provide, which were welcome, for they were beginning to feel hungry; but, hardly had they raised their hands to their mouths, when Bartholomew, looking up, cried out, "Get away, gentlemen! ladies, get away quickly! here is something tumbling down from the skies, I know not what, but it will not be well to have it fall on us." They looked up, and saw a figure coming down from above, which, before they could tell what it was, fell almost at Periander's feet. The figure proved to be a very pretty woman who had been thrown from the top of the tower; but, her clothes serving as a bell, supported her like wings, and she got up unhurt, a thing quite possible without any miracle. However, the event left her in a state of great agitation and fright, as also was the state of those who had seen her fall. In the tower, loud shrieks and screams were heard from a woman whom they saw struggling with a man, and it seemed as if each was endeavouring to throw the other over.

"Help, help!" cried the woman, "Help me, gentlemen, for this madman wants to throw me down from the tower!"

The flying woman, now somewhat recovered, said, "If any of you are bold enough to go up through that door, (pointing to one at the foot of the tower,) you might save my children and other helpless creatures from the mortal danger they are in."



Periander, impelled by his generous feelings, instantly went in, and, in a few minutes they saw him on the top of the tower engaged with the seeming madman, from whom he had taken a knife, and was trying to defend himself; but fate had determined that the tragedy of the man's life should end here, and both fell together from the height on the ground below. The madman had stabbed himself with the knife that Periander held, and Periander's eyes, nose and mouth were streaming with blood; for as he had no petticoats to sustain him, the fall took its effect, and he lay lifeless upon the earth.

Auristella, seeing him thus, immediately supposed him dead; she threw herself upon his body, and, without caring who saw her, she pressed her mouth to his, as if she expected to receive some last breath or last token; but although there had been any such, she would not have received it, because the firmly-closed teeth would have denied its exit. Constance was in no condition to lend her aid, for she stood as if transfixed on the spot, her feet glued to the ground, as though she was taking root there, or as if she had been a marble statue. Antonio flew to assist the sufferers, and to separate the living from those he believed were dead corpses. Bartholomew was the only one of the party whose eyes expressed the grief that he felt in his heart, and he was weeping loudly.

All being in this deep affliction, whilst as yet no one had uttered a word of speech, it was seen that a troop of people was approaching, who had probably from the high road perceived the persons falling from the tower, and came to ask what had happened. It was the travelling party of the three beautiful French ladies, Delicia, Bellarmina, and Felicia Flora. As soon as they came up, they recognized in Auristella and Periander the two pilgrims, whose marvellous beauty left an impression never to be forgotten by any one who had ever seen them. Scarcely had their compassion caused them to alight, in order to give some assistance if possible to the distress they saw before them, when they were assailed from behind by seven or eight armed men, who fell suddenly upon them; at sight of this, Antonio seized his bow and arrows, which were never far off, and which he always kept ready for defence or offence. One of the ruffians had seized upon Felicia Flora, and placed her on his saddle before him; then, turning to his companions, he said, "It is done, this one will do; let us be off." Antonio, who saw this discourteous act, fitted an arrow to his bow, extended to the utmost his left arm, and drew the string with his right till it touched his right ear, so that the two extreme points of the bow almost met, then, taking the robber who held Felicia Flora as his mark, let fly his arrow; without touching Felicia Flora, except a portion of the veil which covered her head, it pierced the ruffian through the body: one of his companions hastened to avenge him, and, without giving Antonio time to fit a second arrow to his bow, he dealt him so violent a

blow on the head, that he fell to the ground senseless. At this sight, Constance left off being a statue, and flew to her brother's assistance. The force of kindred blood was such that it warmed hers, which had frozen at the sight of a friend's sorrow; both, signs of strong affection.

By this time people had come out of the house armed, and the servants in the suite of the three ladies, who were unarmed, had collected stones, and came to the defence of their mistresses. The robbers, who saw their leader dead, and that so many persons were collected, began to think they should gain nothing by the enterprise, and that it would be madness to risk their lives for one who could no longer reward them; they therefore turned their backs and fled, leaving the field free. Hitherto, in this affray, few sword strokes had been heard; no warlike instruments of music had sounded, the wail of the living over the dead had not yet been heard, but in bitter silence the sorrowing ones kept their grief within their lips, only some sad moans and sobs had issued from the breasts of the miserable Auristella and Constance, each one closely embracing her brother, without being able to utter those complaints which relieve the breaking heart. But, at length, heaven not having ordained that they should die thus suddenly, and without complaint or lamentation, untied their tongues, which had been cleaving to the roof of their mouths, and Auristella burst forth in these words: —

“Unhappy that I am, how am I to seek for any breath in a dead body, or how should I be able to feel it, if I am so deprived of it myself that I know not whether I can speak or breathe. Alas, my brother! and what a fall was this, that has so destroyed all my hopes; alas! *and could* not your high lineage save you from this misfortune? But would it have been so great if you were not so high? The highest mountains attract the lightning, and where it meets with most resistance it does the greatest harm; you were a mountain, but a humble mountain, for you concealed yourself from the eyes *of* men in the shade of your wisdom and your ability; you were going to seek your fortune in mine, but death has cut short the intention, and mine is going with it to the tomb. What will the queen, your mother, do, when the news of your unexpected death reaches her ears? Alas! woe is me, once more alone in a foreign land, like the poor ivy torn from her natural support.” These words about queens, and mountains, and greatness, caught the attention of the listening bystanders, and increased their wonder; Constance, who held her wounded brother in her lap whilst the compassionate Felicia Flora tried to staunch the blood with her own handkerchief, spoke thus: —

“Alas!” she said, “my protector, what avails it that fortune has raised me if misfortune is to destroy me. Return to me, O my brother! if you wish that I should return to my senses; or, if not, ye pitying heavens, let our eyes be closed

in death together, and one grave receive our bodies, for the good fortune I met with so unexpectedly can bring no better boon than a speedy end." So saying, she fell fainting on the ground; and Auristella was no better off, so that they seemed more dead than the wounded ones.

The lady who fell from the tower, the chief cause of Periander's fall, ordered her servants, several of whom had come out of the house, to carry him to the bed of Count Domicio, her lord and husband; she likewise commanded them to take his body up that it might receive burial; Bartholomew took the young Antonio in his arms; the ladies had charge of Auristella and Constance, and, in mournful procession and with slow steps, they moved along to the almost regal looking mansion.

## CHAPTER XV.

THE sage advice that the three French ladies gave to the two mourners, Constance and Auristella, was of small avail, for in a recent grief there is no room for consolation. In the agony of a sudden disaster we cannot accept at once of any comfort, however wisely it may be administered; a fresh wound is painful till it is closed, and it takes time to heal before it is again opened; therefore, whilst one weeps, whilst one groans, whilst one is under the influence of the grief that causes one's lamentations and sighs, it is not discreet at all to offer remedies. Let us then leave Auristella still to weep, and Constance to lament, and both to shut their ears to all consolation, whilst the fair Clarice relates the cause of her husband's madness.

She told the French ladies, that, before he married her, he was in love with a relation of his own, who had every expectation of marrying him. "My lot seemed to promise fair, only to become the darker in the end," said Clarice; "for Lorena, (so this relation was called,) concealing the anger she felt at our marriage, used to load him with a variety of presents, the most agreeable and pleasing, rather than costly; among which, she sent him once, much as the false Dejanira sent the shirt to Hercules, I say she sent him some shirts of the finest linen and of beautiful workmanship. Scarcely had he put one on, when he became senseless, and for two days lay like a corpse, although we directly took it off, fancying that it had been bewitched by a slave of Lorena's, who was supposed to be a dealer in magic arts. My husband was restored to life, but his mind was so disturbed and upset, that everything he did was like the act of a madman, and not a quiet madman, but so cruel, furious and wild, that it became necessary to chain him; and, to-day, I being in the tower, he contrived to escape from his place of confinement, and flung me through the upper windows, but I was preserved by my wide garments, which bore me up, or rather, I ought to say, by the mercy of God, who protects the innocent." Then she told how the pilgrim had gone up into the tower to the assistance of another woman, one of her attendants, whom he was also trying to throw over, and with her were two little children whom he wished to strangle, but that the event was that the count and the pilgrim had been dashed down from the tower to the ground below, the count, wounded mortally, and the pilgrim having a knife in his hand, which it appeared he had wrested from the madman, his wound was such that it needed not the fall to kill him, the wound was enough in itself.

Meantime, Periander still lay senseless on the bed where they had placed him, and where the surgeons came to see him and set the dislocated bones. They gave him medicines proper for his case, felt his pulse, and, by degrees, he came a little to himself, and knew some of the persons who stood round him, especially Auristella, to whom, in a scarcely audible voice, he said, "Sister, I die in the holy Catholic faith, and I die loving you." He could say no more, and did not speak again at that time. They bled Antonio, and the surgeons having examined his wound, demanded a reward for the good news they were able to give his sister, that it was deep, but not mortal, and that they would promise to cure him by the help of heaven. Felicia Flora rewarded them handsomely first, and Constance afterwards; and the surgeons, not to be over scrupulous, took it from both.

It took a month and rather more for the invalids to be cured: the French ladies would not hear of leaving them, so great a friendship had sprung up between them and Auristella, and Constance and their two brothers; Felicia Flora, especially, could not quit Antonio's bedside, loving him with a gentle affection, so delicate, that it only seemed kind feeling and gratitude for the deed he had done in saving her when his arrow freed her from the grasp of Rupertino, who was, she told them, a gentleman, lord of a castle not far from her own, and that he, impelled by a desperate passion, not by real love, had long followed and persecuted her to marry him; but that she knew well both by experience and by the voice of common fame, which seldom lies, that the character of Rupertino was harsh and cruel, and that his disposition was changeable and capricious, for which reason she had refused his suit. She guessed, therefore, that furious at her disdain, he had made this attempt to seize her person by force, since she would not give herself to him willingly; but the arrow of Antonio had cut short his wicked designs, and that for this she felt most grateful.

When at length the moment came that the invalids felt health returning, and by their reviving strength showing signs of this; also, with health, revived their wish to pursue their journey: they therefore set to work to provide all things necessary for this. As I before said, the French ladies would not separate from the pilgrims, and already began to treat them with more respect and admiration, since, from the words that were uttered by Auristella in her wild grief, they had an idea of their being persons of very high quality, for sometimes majesty clothes itself in sackcloth and grandeur conceals itself in humility. In fact, they regarded them with perplexity; the poor retinue they had, looked as if they were persons of middling condition, but the grace and elegance of their manners, and their extreme beauty, made them seem of almost heavenly birth. Thus they continued to be in doubt with respect to their real rank and quality. It was decided by the French ladies that they should travel on horseback, because Periander's fall had

made it impossible for him to go on foot. The grateful Felicia Flora would not quit the side of Antonio, and discoursing upon the daring act of Rupertino, whom they left dead and buried, and of the strange history of the Count Domicio, whom his cousin's fatal gifts had first deprived of reason, then of life, and also of the miraculous flight of his wife, more wonderful than credible; they arrived upon the banks of a river which was fordable with some trouble. Periander was of opinion that they should seek a bridge, but all the rest objected to this, and, just as a flock of sheep when all crowded in a narrow space, one makes itself a way out and all the rest directly follow, so Bellarina dashed into the stream, and all followed her example; Periander, however, never quitting Auristella's side, nor Antonio that of Felicia Flora, his sister, Constance, being also close by him. Now fate so willed it that the rapid motion of the water affected Felicia Flora's head, so that she fell off her horse into the middle of the river; but, quick, as thought, the gallant Antonio darted after her, and upon his shoulders bore her, like a second Europa, safe to the opposite shore. She, seeing his quick action, said, "Thou art very courteous, Spaniard." To which Antonio replied, "If my courteous deeds did not spring from your dangers, they might be estimable; but, born as they are of them, they rather grieve than gladden me."

The party at last all passed over, and reached at nightfall a farmhouse, which was also an inn, in which they found lodging to their liking; and what happened to them here demands a new style and a new chapter.

## CHAPTER XVI.

THINGS sometimes happen in this world, that if people were beforehand to devise or project them, they never could succeed in so doing, and so from that and their rarity they pass as apocryphal, and are not believed to be as true as they are, and it is necessary to help people's belief by swearing to the truth, or, at least, it requires that the relator should be a person of good credit, although, for my part, I am of opinion that it is best not to tell them at all, according to the advice in the old Castilian adage, —

“Very wonderful things  
Should never be told,  
For it is not every one  
That can enter into them.”

Our pilgrims had not been long in the inn when Bartholomew came and said, “Make haste, sir, and come and see the most extraordinary sight you ever saw in your life!” He said this in such a scared and frightened manner, that, thinking they were going to see some very strange thing, they followed him, and in a part of the house at some distance from that in which the pilgrims and the ladies were lodged, they saw through some matting an apartment entirely hung with black, the murky darkness of which prevented them from seeing distinctly what was in it. Whilst they were looking at it, an old man, also dressed in black, came up to them, and said, “Gentlemen, if you wish to see the Lady Ruperta without her seeing you, I will contrive it so that you shall be gratified; in about two hours after midnight you will have an opportunity of seeing what will surprise you, both as to her beauty and behaviour.”

“Sir,” said Periander, “our servant, that you see here, brought us to see a wonder, but we have seen nothing yet, except a room hung with black, which is not wonderful at all.”

“If you will return hither at the hour I have named,” replied the man in black, “you shall see what will surprise you; for you must know that in this apartment lodges the Lady Ruperta, who was, not quite a year ago, the wife of Earl Lambert, of Scotland, which marriage cost him his life, and has placed her in danger of losing it every hour; for Claudio Rubicon, a gentleman of very good family in Scotland, whose great wealth and ancient lineage rendered him proud

and overbearing, and he being also of a warm temperament, loved my mistress when she was a maiden; but she, whether she disliked him or not, at any rate, rejected him, and showed her disdain of his addresses by marrying the earl my master. This hasty act of hers seemed as if it was a proof of contempt and aversion to Rubicon, as if the fair Ruperta had not parents who fixed and directed her choice, and, added to which, the years of the husband chosen for her, were far better suited to her own; and it is no doubt desirable that this should be considered in a marriage, although it is good for the husband to have the advantage in point of age. Now Rubicon was a widower, and far from young, and he had a son of about twenty or one-and-twenty years old, a young man extremely amiable, and of a much better disposition than his father, indeed, had it been he who had offered himself, my master might be still alive, and my mistress happier.

“It chanced then that my lady and her husband being at a country seat of his where they had gone to enjoy themselves together, one day, in a lonely spot, they suddenly met Rubicon, attended by a strong party of his servants. At the sight of my lady all the fury he had felt at the injury he conceived she had done him, was aroused, and, instead of love, hate and rage sprang up in his soul, and a desire to revenge himself on her; and as the revenge of a despised lover far surpasses the offence given, so Rubicon, enraged and desperate with jealousy and hate, drew his sword, and ran the earl my master through the body, crying, ‘If this be cruelty, far greater has been that of thy wife to me, for her disdain has tortured me a hundred thousand times!’

“I was present during this scene, these ears heard his words, and these eyes saw the blow given, and with these hands did I endeavour to close the wound. I heard the lamentations of my mistress which pierced the air. We returned to the spot afterwards to remove the body for burial, and by her command the head was cut off, and, in a few days, by dint of certain applications used, all the flesh was removed from the skull. She had a silver case made to hold it, and, placing her hand thereon, she made the following vow: but I forgot to mention that the cruel murderer, either from forgetfulness, or in his fury, or possibly from the hurry of mind he must have been in, left his sword sticking in my lord’s body; and his blood even now looks fresh upon the blade. I was going to tell you that she pronounced these words: —

“‘I, the hapless Ruperta, to whom God gave the fatal gift of beauty, make this vow before high Heaven: with my hand placed on these sad relics, I swear to revenge my husband’s death by all the means in my power, and with all diligence, though I were to risk therein my miserable life a thousand times. No dangers shall scare me, no entreaties shall avail to soften me, and until I have



succeeded in effecting this my just, if not Christian resolve, I swear that my apparel shall be black, my apartments hung with the same gloomy hue, my attendants shall wear mourning, and I will have no company, but live in solitude; at every meal I will have these relics present, which keep up the torment of my soul; this head, which shall, without a voice, command me to revenge its injury; this sword, on which I seem to see the yet streaming blood, shall, by kindling mine, leave me no rest until I am avenged!’

“After speaking thus, her tears seemed to flow less incessantly, and her sighs and complaints became more moderate. She then began to arrange a journey to Rome, to obtain there from some powerful personages, aid and protection against the murderer of her husband, who still threatens her.

“Now, sirs, you will see what I have told you if you come in about two hours from this time; if you are not moved and astonished by it, either I have told my story ill, or your hearts must be of marble.”

Here the mourning squire ceased speaking, and the pilgrims, even without having seen Ruperta, were filled with wonder and compassion for her case.

## CHAPTER XVII.

ANGER is said to be a revolution of the blood about the heart, which warms up at sight of the object which inflamed it, and sometimes with the bare recollection of the offence. It hath for its final goal and resting place, vengeance, which, when it is taken upon the offender with or without reason, calms the ire. This would lead us to suppose the beautiful Ruperta passionate and vindictive, and with so strong a desire to be revenged upon her enemy, that even if she knew that he was dead, her hatred would extend to his descendants, of whom she would not wish to leave one alive, for the wrath of a woman is boundless.

The hour came when the pilgrims were to see her, themselves unseen. They saw her extremely lovely, with a long and flowing white veil, which reached from her head to her feet, as she was seated before a table, on which was placed the head of her murdered lord in its silver case, the sword that had deprived him of life, and a shirt, which was all stained with his blood.

All these melancholy memorials reawakened her anger, which needed no arousing, for it never slept; she arose from her seat, and putting her right hand upon the head, she began to renew the vow of which the mourning squire had told them; showers of tears rained from her eyes, enough to have bathed the sad relics in, sighs burst from her heart, which filled the air far and near; to the usual form of her vow she added words of more intense hatred, so that at times it almost seemed as if fire instead of tears sparkled in her eyes, and from her mouth proceeded smoke instead of sighs, such a slave was she to her passionate desire for revenge — see her weep, see her sigh, see her beside herself, see her brandish the murderous steel, see her kiss the bloodstained shirt, and hear the sobs that impede her words; but, wait only till the morrow, and you will see things that would give you something to talk of for a thousand years, if you were to live so long.

Ruperta was still in the midst of her passionate grief, when one of her attendants entered like a dark phantom, for he was clad in deep mourning vestments, and, in trembling accents, he said, “Lady, the son of your enemy has just alighted with several servants at the door of this inn, Croriano, the gallant, as he is called. Think whether it is your pleasure to discover your being here to him, and if you wish he should know it, or what you like to do, whilst you have time to consider it.”

“Let him know nothing about my being here,” answered Ruperta; “and warn

all my servants that they take care not to mention my name, nor discover me to him." So saying, she gathered up her tokens, and commanded the room to be closed, and that no one should enter it.

The pilgrims returned to theirs; she remained alone and very thoughtful. I cannot tell how it came to be known that she spoke aloud to the following effect, but so it was, in these, or very nearly these, words: —

"Behold now, O Ruperta, how Heaven in its justice has brought hither, like a victim to the sacrifice, the very soul of thine enemy; for sons, and most of all, an only son, are like a part of their father's self. Forget, O Ruperta, that thou art a woman, and if thou canst not forget that, then think that thou art a justly incensed one, and that thy husband's blood cries to thee for vengeance; and this poor speechless head is saying, 'Revenge me, sweet wife, on him who murdered me, guiltless as I was of all offence! Remember Judith who was not afraid of the brave Holofernes.' It is true that my case is different from hers; she chastised an enemy of her God, and I would punish one who is not even mine own enemy; love of her country placed in her hands the steel, and love of a dead husband places it in mine; but why do I delay, making these senseless comparisons? What have I to do but to shut my eyes and bury the steel deep in this boy's heart; the more innocent he, the greater will my vengeance be. Let me then exalt the avenger's name, and let come what may, I must accomplish my task, and do the deed, even though it should be my own death."

Having thus resolved, she took measures to get admittance into the chamber where Croriano slept. She easily gained this by means of one of his servants, who was won over by her gold, thinking also that he was not doing any very ill office to his master in bringing so beautiful a lady into his apartment. She concealed herself in a part where she could not be seen, and committing her fate to Heaven, buried in the profoundest silence, she awaited the moment of her long desired revenge.

She had taken, as the instrument whereby to effect this, a sharp knife, which she thought would be the least embarrassing and most handy weapon she could choose: she also had with her a small lamp, in which burned a wax light. She hardly dared to breathe. What will not a furious woman dare to do? what heaps of difficulties will she not trample under foot? what enormous cruelties will not seem to her like the gentlest deeds?

At length the hour arrived; — Croriano entered his room, and fatigued with his journey, went immediately to bed, giving himself up (little dreaming of death so near) to repose.

Ruperta listened attentively to ascertain whether Croriano slept or no, and having satisfied herself that he slept, both from the length of time that he had

been in bed, and from certain long-drawn breaths, which none but sleepers give, she opened her lamp to find her way across the room, and without either crossing herself, or invoking any Saint to assist her, she made her way to the bedside. Ah, beauteous murderess, lovely fury, charming executioner, now satisfy thy fierce wrath: strike the blow and blot out thy injury for ever; for there he lies before thee, on whom thou mayest wreak thy long desired revenge. But pause an instant, O beautiful Ruperta, and take one look before thou strikest, or rather do not look upon that most lovely Cupid who lies sleeping there, for in a moment that sight will effect a change in the whole tenour of thy thoughts.

She reached the bed, and with a trembling hand removed the coverlet from the face of Croriano, who was buried in a profound sleep. Medusa's head which changed the gazer into marble, never produced a more sudden effect. Struck by the sight of so much beauty, she let fall the murderous knife, and this afforded her time to reflect for a moment upon the deed she was about to commit. The exceeding beauty of the youth dispersed the shades of death that hung over him, as the sun's rays melt the snow, and he no longer appeared to her in the light of a victim to a cruel sacrifice, but rather as a holy peace offering.

"Ah!" said she to herself, "noble youth, thou art fitter far to be my husband than the object of my vengeance; what part hast thou in thy father's crime? why shouldst *thou* be punished who hast done no fault? Live and be happy, thou lovely youth, and my revenge and cruelty shall sleep within my own breast: a better name it will make for me to be called the forgiving instead of the revengeful." As these thoughts passed through her mind, troubled and repentant, she let her lamp fall from her hand upon the sleeper, who awoke. The light was extinguished, and Ruperta hoped to escape in the darkness, but could not find her way out. Meantime Croriano called aloud for his attendants, and snatching up his sword, leaped out of bed. He soon found and seized Ruperta, who trembling, said, "Do not kill me, Croriano, though I am a woman who not an hour ago could have killed thee, and now I am reduced to beg my life at thy hands."

At this crisis the servants rushed in with lights, and saw Croriano, and recognized the beautiful widow, who looked like the resplendent moon enveloped in white clouds.

"What can this mean, lady Ruperta?" he asked; "is this the vengeance you have sworn to execute; and do you desire that I should pay for my father's injustice? What means this knife I see? what can it mean but that you came to be my executioner? My father is already dead, and the dead can no longer afford satisfaction for the offences they have committed; the living can, and I, who now represent my father, will gladly make any amends in my power for the injury he

did to you; but first let me touch you, and see whether you are indeed flesh and blood, or a phantom sent to kill or to delude me, or it may be, sent for my good.”

“And for *thy* hurt,” said Ruperta, “if indeed Heaven can find a sadder fate for me than I have hitherto experienced. You came to this house; I did not see you, but I heard your name, which aroused my angry feelings, and incited me to vengeance. I bribed one of your servants to admit me into your sleeping apartment. I came here, prepared as you may see, and in the full intention of taking your life. When I found that you were asleep, I left my hiding-place, and by the light of the lamp which I had brought with me, I uncovered and saw your face, which filled me with feelings of respect and reverence, so that it blunted the steel which I held, and my desire for vengeance died away. I let the lamp fall — it awoke you — you cried out. I remained in great perplexity; hence all that you have seen. I no longer feel the desire for revenge, nor to remember my injury. Live in peace; I wish to be the first to ask forgiveness myself, if I have not already pardoned you for the fault you never committed.”

“Lady,” answered Croriano, “my father wished to marry you, but you rejected him. In his anger he slew your husband: — he is dead, and his crime has gone with him to another world. I am left as a part of him to do what I can for the good of his soul. Mine is yours if you will have it. Take me as your husband, if you are not, as I said before, a delusive phantom; so great a piece of good fortune coming thus suddenly must bring suspicion along with it.”

“Give me your hand, my lord,” answered she, “and you will find that I am no phantom, and that the heart *I* shall bestow on you is simple, pure, and true.” The servants were made to witness their betrothal. That night sweet peace triumphed over grim war. The field of battle was changed for the bridal bed: love sprang out of hatred, life from death, and happiness from discontent.

When the pilgrims came on the following morning to know what the mourning Ruperta had done about the arrival of her enemy’s son, of which they had been told, they learned the story of the new betrothal; and as they went to offer their congratulations to the young pair, at the entrance of Ruperta’s apartment they met the ancient squire, who had related to them her story, laden with the silver case, wherein the skull of her deceased husband was enshrined, and with the blood stained shirt and sword that had so often renewed the grief of Ruperta, and he said he was to remove them to where the sight should never again disturb the glorious present with the mournful memory of the past. He murmured at Ruperta’s inconstancy, and at that of women in general; the smallest of the faults he charged them with was caprice.

Nevertheless, both Ruperta’s and Croriano’s attendants rejoiced, and the little inn seemed changed into a royal palace fit for such great espousals.

Periander, Auristella, Constance, and Antonio had much discourse with the betrothed pair, and made them acquainted with as much of their own history as was necessary.

Chapter XVIII. — A Fire breaks out in the Inn; all the party are removed from it by an Astrologer, and carried to his cave, where he foretells happy events.

## CHAPTER XIX.

OUR pilgrims again are on their way. They were passed on the road by about seven or eight persons on horseback; among them was a woman seated upon a rich side saddle, on a mule, and dressed in a travelling habit, all green, except her hat, the rich plumes of which floated on the breeze, and her face was covered with a green veil. They went by, and passed on before them without turning their heads, or speaking a word, but silently saluted them, and went forwards. The others did the same, they also bowed and said nothing.

One of the party remained behind the rest, and coming up to the pilgrims and their friends, asked if they could afford them a little water. They gave it, and inquired who the persons were that had gone on, and who was the lady in green; to which the traveller answered, "He who rides yonder, is Signor Alexander Castrucho, a gentleman of Capua, and one of the richest men, not only in Capua, but of the whole kingdom of Naples. The lady is his niece, the lady Isabella Castrucho, who was born in Spain, where she has left her father buried, and in consequence of his death her uncle is bringing her to Capua to be married, and I believe she is not very well pleased with this."

"That may be very likely," said the aged squire of the lady Ruperta, (for she and Croriano were now added to the party,) "not because she is going to be married, but because the journey is long. I hold it that no woman alive but is longing for the other half she wants, — a husband."

"I cannot tell about these philosophies," replied the traveller, "all I know is, that she looks very melancholy, and she probably knows why; and now I must say adieu, for my masters are much in advance," and so spurring on, he was shortly out of sight.

The French ladies had determined to give up going to Paris, and to travel straight to Rome with the pilgrims, who had decided to leave France by Dauphiny, and crossing Piedmont and the States of Milan, visit Florence, and proceed on to Rome.

For many days they travelled without meeting any adventure worth relating. They entered Milan, admired the grandeur of the town, its wealth, its gilding, its warlike forges, as if Vulcan himself had set up there. The infinite abundance of its fruits, the size of its churches, and lastly, the sharp wits of its inhabitants. They had heard from their host that the thing best worth seeing was the Academy of the Entronados, which boasted of some of the most eminent

academicians, whose subtle reasonings and arguments had gained renown for them throughout the whole world. They heard that this was a day when an argument would be held, and that it was to be, Whether love could *exist* without jealousy?

“It can,” said Periander. “To decide this it is not necessary to lose much time.”

“I,” said Auristella, “do not know what is meant by love, although I know what it is to love well.”

To which Bellarmine answered, “I cannot understand this mode of talking, nor the difference between love and loving well.”

“It is,” said Auristella, “that loving well may be without any very great or violent emotion, as one can love a faithful servant, or a statue, or a picture, which pleases one very much, and this does not cause jealousy, nor can give it; but the passion which is generally called love, and which is a violent emotion of the soul, even when it does not produce jealousy can cause such fears as go nigh to destroy life itself, and from this it seems to me that love cannot be free.”

“You say well, lady,” observed Periander, “for when I did there ever exist a lover, who, possessing the beloved one, does not tremble lest he should lose it? There is no happiness so secure that it may not be overturned; — no nail so strong as to stop the wheel of fortune; — and if it were not that we are anxious not to delay our journey, perhaps I might prove to-day in the academy, *that love can* exist without jealousy, but not without fear.”

Thus ended the conversation. They stayed in Milan four days, during which they saw a great part of its grandeur, but not all, as that would have taken them four years.

From thence they went to Lucca, a small town, but beautiful and free, which, under the wings of the empire and of Spain, looks loftily down upon the cities of the surrounding princes, who long to possess her. Here Spaniards are better received and regarded than in any other place; and here our travellers met with one of the strangest adventures that had yet befallen them.



## CHAPTER XX.

THE inns at Lucca are large enough to lodge a whole regiment of soldiers; in one of these our pilgrims took up their abode, being directed thither by some of the guardians of the city gates, who delivered them to the host, so that on the morrow, or when they departed, he would have to give up an account of them. As they entered, the lady Ruperta saw a person coming out who looked like a doctor, and saying so to the hostess, she replied, that he was one. "I do not know, lady," said she, "whether the young lady is mad, or possessed by the evil one, or rather whether she is not both mad and possessed; and yet I have hopes of her recovery, if her uncle is not in too great a hurry to take her away."

"Ah! good Heavens!" cried Ruperta, "and have we then got into a house of mad and possessed people; if it be so, we had much better not enter here."

"Your ladyship may alight without fear," said the hostess; "and I can assure you anybody might come a hundred miles to see the sight we have in this inn." They all alighted, and Auristella and Constance, who had heard what the hostess said, asked her what she had so very well worth seeing in her house.

"Come with me," said the hostess, "and you shall see what you shall see, and you will say what I say."

She led the way, and they followed her into a room, where, on a gilded bed, was lying a very beautiful girl, seemingly not above sixteen or seventeen years of age; her arms were extended on either side, and tied with fillets to the balustrade of the bedstead, to prevent her moving them. Two women, who appeared to be nurses, were going to fasten her legs in a similar way, but she cried out, "It is enough to tie my arms: my own modesty will be sufficient restraint for the rest;" and then turning to the pilgrims, she said in a loud voice, "ye heavenly creatures, ye angels in human form, I doubt not but that you come to restore me to health, for what else can I expect from your beauteous presence and Christian-like visitation. If ye be what I take ye for, command them to untie these bands, for if I do give myself four or five blows it will be all I shall do, and will not hurt me much, for I am not so mad as I seem, nor he who torments me, so cruel as to torment me to death."

"Poor thing! poor niece!" said an old man, who now entered the apartment; "and what is *be* whom thou sayest will not let thee die? Commend thyself to God, Isabella, and try to eat, — not thine own fair flesh, but what thy uncle, who loves thee dearly, brings to thee: — that which flies in the air, that which lives in

the water, that which feeds upon the earth, all this I would offer to thee.”

To which the girl answered, “Let me be left alone with these angels; perhaps my enemy, the devil, will fly from me, rather than stay in their presence;” and she made signs with her head that Auristella, Constance, *Ruperta*, and Felicia Flora should remain with her. “The rest,” she said, “might go.” This was accordingly done with willingness, and even with entreaty, by the unhappy old man, her uncle, from whom they learned that this was the lady in green who had passed them on the road, and whose name they had heard from the servant who remained behind, was Isabella Castrucho, who was going to be married at Naples.

Hardly did the sick person find herself alone with the four ladies we have mentioned, than she looked all round the room to see if there were no others remaining. *Ruperta* looked and scrutinized the apartment well, and assured her that there was not a creature left but themselves; thus assured, Isabella sat up as well as she could on the bed, and seemed about to speak; but first she uttered a sigh that appeared to come from the very bottom of her heart, after which she fell back on the bed fainting, and looked so nearly dead that they were forced to call for help and for some water to bathe her face.

The miserable uncle entered, carrying a cross in one hand, and in the other a sponge dipped in holy water. With him came two priests, who, thinking that she was possessed by the evil one, began to exorcise him. The hostess also entered with water, and after bathing her face she came to herself, saying, “All these ceremonies are quite unnecessary now: I shall go away soon, but it will not be at your pleasure, but when I myself think fit, and that will be when Andrew Marulo, the son of Juan Baptista Marulo, a gentleman of this city, shall arrive here, which said Andrew is now a student at Salamanca, very little thinking of what is happening here.”

All that she said only confirmed the bystanders in the opinion that she was possessed, for they could not imagine how she could know anything about Juan Baptista Marulo, or his son Andrew, and some one present hastened to tell this Juan Baptista what the fair maniac had said of him and of his son. She again entreated to be left alone with those she had before chosen. The priests crossed themselves, and left her as she desired; judging from all she had said, they concluded that she was verily possessed with an evil spirit.

Again did Felicia Flora investigate the apartment, and shutting the door, she said to the afflicted young girl, “We are alone now, lady, tell us what you wish.”

“What I wish,” said Isabella, “is first that you unfasten these ligatures, which although soft, yet fatigue me, because they restrain me.”

They did as she desired speedily, and then Isabella seated herself upon the

bed, holding Auristella with one hand and Ruperta with the other, and making Constance and Felicia Flora sit as close as they could to her on the bed, forming thus a lovely group, and with a low voice and tearful eyes she thus spoke: —

“Ladies’, I am the unhappy Isabella Castrucho, whose parents bestowed on me noble birth; fortune gave me large possessions, and Heaven conferred on me the gift of some degree of beauty. My parents came from Capua, but I was born in Spain, and brought up there in the house of an uncle, whom you saw here, and who belonged to the imperial court. Ah Heavens! must I go so far back to trace the origin of my misfortunes! Living then in my uncle’s house, and left an orphan by my parents, who, dying, bequeathed me to his guardianship, it happened that there arrived at court a young gentleman, whom I afterwards saw at church, and looked at to such purpose; (and do not for this pronounce me bold and forward, ladies, but consider I am but a woman;) I looked at him in the church I repeat, and the impression I received was such, that when I returned home his image was constantly before my eyes; I could not get the recollection of his looks out of my head. It ended in my making inquiries concerning him, and what was his quality and character, and what he was doing at court, and whither he was going; and the result of my inquiries was, that I heard he was called Andrew Marulo, the son of Juan Baptista Marulo, a gentleman of this city, more noble by birth than rich in worldly goods, and that he was going to study at Salamanca. During the week he remained I found means to write him a note, and tell him who I was, and what property I possessed; as to my looks, he could form his own opinion, having seen me at church: I also told him that it was my uncle’s intention to marry me to a cousin of my own, so as to keep my fortune in the family, — a man who was neither to my liking, nor suited to me at all, which is the truth. I bade him seize the opportunity that offered itself, and not by refusing it give himself cause for future repentance; and I begged that he would not consider my forwardness as a reason for denying me his esteem. His answer was, that having seen me very frequently in church, for myself alone, without any of those advantages of birth and fortune of which I spoke, he would have preferred me to all others, and would, if it were in his power, gladly make me mistress of the whole world; and he implored me to continue firm and faithful in my feelings for him, at least until he could leave a friend of his at Salamanca, with whom he was going to that city to finish his studies.

I replied that I could promise him this, since my love was not impetuous or indiscreet — quickly kindled, and as quickly extinguished. He then parted with me at the call of honour, not wishing to desert his friend, and with many tears which I saw him shed as he was going through the street where I lived on the day of his departure, he went, yet never left me; I too went along with him, and

yet I did not depart the following day; who would believe it? In how many ways doth misfortune bring about the accomplishment of her ends to the unhappy; the following day, I say, my uncle resolved to return to Italy, and take me with him; and I could devise no excuse, nor feign sickness, for my pulse was strong, and my complexion healthy; my uncle could not have believed that I was ill, but that I was averse to his matrimonial project, and so sought for means to escape going. I found a moment in which to write and tell Andrew what had happened, and that I was forced to depart, but that I would try and go by this city, where I would feign myself possessed by the evil one, and so gain time for delay to allow time for him to leave Salamanca, and come to Lucca, where, in spite of my uncle and of the whole world, he should be my husband; that my happiness and his own depended upon the haste he made. If this plan pleased him, if my letter reached him, and it must have done, for the posts are safe and certain, he will be here before three days have passed: I, on my side, have done all I could; I have a legion of devils within me, for is it not that to have an ounce of love in one's heart, when hope afar off is flattering one's affections? This, ladies, is my story; this, my madness, this, my illness, my love-sick thoughts are the demons which torment me; I feel no hunger, because I expect the fulfilment of every desire; nevertheless, doubt and anxiety pursue me, for as the saying is, there is many a slip between the cup and the lip. Help me, then, dear ladies, in keeping up my imposture, and assist me by persuading my uncle, if I am not better, to delay our journey further for some days; perhaps it may please Heaven to bless me with the coming of my Andrew."

We need not ask whether the hearers were not greatly astonished at the story of Isabella, since the story was in itself a wonder, and must strike as such the ears of all who heard it. They offered their services to assist her in her devices, and to obtain delay, in hopes of soon seeing the end of them, as they were not able to wait much longer themselves.

## CHAPTER XXI.

THE fair *Isabella* made haste to assume the part of a possessed one again, and her four new friends to support her by confirming the idea of her illness, and that she was verily possessed by an evil spirit; and truly love was such, since it could make a woman seem a demoniac.

Things were in this state, and evening coming on, when the physician returned to pay a second visit, and by chance he brought with him Juan Baptista Marulo, father of Andrew, the lover. As they entered the sick room, he said, "Look at this young lady, Senor Juan Baptista; is it not a pity that a demon should have possession of so fair a body, but we console ourselves with one hope, and that is, that the evil spirit said he would go away when your son Andrew should arrive, and we are expecting him every instant."

"So I have heard," said the Senor Juan Baptista, "and III — should rejoice if anything of mine were to be the harbinger of such good news."

"Thanks to me and my diligence," cried *Isabella*, "but for that he might be still at Salamanca doing the Lord knows what. The Senor Juan Baptista, who is here present, may believe me when I tell him he has a son who is more handsome than holy, and not so studious as he is gallant. Evil betide the fine ornaments and gay attire of those youths who commit such havoc in the republic; and ill betide the spurs that are not sharp, and the mules that do not bestir themselves."

Thus she ran on, stringing together all kinds of dubious words, such as might convey two meanings to those who were in the secret, and the bystanders in general. *These* interpreted them as they were meant. *Those* considered them as incoherent nonsense.

"Where did you see my son Andrew, lady?" asked Marulo; "was it at Madrid, or Salamanca?"

"It was at Illescas," said *Isabella*: "he was gathering cherries on the morning of St. John at day-break; but if I must speak the truth, and it is a marvel if I do so, I see him everywhere, and carry him ever in my heart."

"Better to be gathering cherries than catching fleas," replied Marulo, "for that is the common occupation of the students."

"Those creatures," she replied, "are bold, and will enter the stocking of a prince as freely as the blanket of an hospital."

"You know everything, evil one," said the doctor; "it seems clear that you are an old hand." He spoke this to the devil, who, as he imagined, was inhabiting

Isabella's body.

And now, just as if Satan had ordained it, the old uncle of Isabella entered with every mark of the greatest joy, crying out, "A reward! my niece, my beloved child; a reward for the news I bring. The Senor Andrew Marulo, son of this gentleman, Senor Juan Baptista, is just arrived; and now Heaven grant that we may see the promise accomplished, which you gave of being freed from the evil spirit at the sight of him."

Accursed demon, *vade retro, exi foras*, and never think of returning to this dwelling, which thou shalt see purged and purified.

"Let him come," said Isabella. "Let this reputed Ganymede, this counterfeit Adonis, come, and give me his hand as a husband, free and unrestrained, for here am I expecting him, firm as a rock whereon the sea waves break, but cannot move."

Andrew Marulo entered: he had already heard in his father's house of the stranger lady's illness, and of her expecting him to give the sign and expel the demon. The young man was discreet, and already prepared by the letters Isabella had written to him at Salamanca, for the part he was to play when he arrived at Lucca. So without changing his travelling dress he hurried to the inn where Isabella was, and entering her apartment, like one half mad or crazed, he cried, "Avaunt, avaunt, avaunt; begone, begone, begone, for here cometh the valorous Andrew, the great commander, and lord of hell." Those who knew the state of the case were greatly amused by all this tumult and outcry; but the physician, and even his own father, said, "Why this man is as much possessed as Isabella herself;" and the uncle said, "We expected this young man would come to help us, and do good, and I think he is come to do more harm."

"My son," cried his father, "be composed, calm yourself; you are like a madman."

"He will not be mad long," said Isabella, "if he will come to me. Am not I the centre where all his wishes and thoughts rest? am not I the goal he desires to reach?"

"Assuredly thou art," said Andrew; "thou art the mistress of my heart, my life, and my soul. Give me thy hand, and be my wife, O lady mine, and release me from the thralldom under which I labour, to chain me in thy fetters, and make me submissive to thy yoke; once more I say give me thy hand, beloved one, and exalt the humble Andrew Marulo to the high rank of Isabella Castrucho's husband. May every evil demon who would hinder this sweet union, fly hence for ever, and let not man divide those whom God has joined together."

"You speak well, Senor Andrew," said Isabella, "and that no plans, machinations, or treachery may intervene, give me your hand as my husband,

and receive mine as your wife.” Andrew put forth his hand to take hers, and Auristella raised her voice and said, “It is good, it should be so given that they may be made one.”

“Astonished and stupefied, Isabella’s uncle seized the hand of Andrew, and said, “Sir, what means this? Is it the custom in this country for one devil to marry another?”

“No, truly,” said the physician, “this must needs be a joke to make the devil go; it is impossible that this case now happening could be foreseen by human understanding.”

“Nevertheless,” said Isabella’s uncle, “I desire to know from their own lips, what this marriage means, a jest, or a truth.”

“A truth,” said Isabella, “for neither is Andrew mad, nor I possessed. I have chosen him, and prefer him as my husband, if he loves, and chooses me as a wife.”

“Neither mad nor possessed, but in my perfect senses, such as God has been pleased to give me;” so saying, Andrew took Isabella’s hand, and she gave him hers, and they were thus affianced.

“What is this?” cried Castrucho; “can it be that you will thus dishonour the old man’s white hairs?”

“An alliance with my family can dishonour no one,” said Andrew’s father. “I am noble, and if not rich, yet not poor enough to ask for anything from anybody. I have never engaged in any mercantile concerns: these young people have made this marriage without my knowledge, for in young heads wisdom is not measured by years, and if young heads do foolish things sometimes, yet they often make good hits, and when they do so, although by chance, they frequently succeed better than the most prudent.” Two priests who were present said that the marriage was valid, since, if it had begun under the guise of madness, it! had been confirmed in sober truth.

“And again I will confirm it,” said Andrew; and so said Isabella. On hearing all this, the uncle, heart-broken, let his head fall upon his breast, and heaving a deep sigh, turned up his eyes, and seemed to have received his deathblow. He was carried to bed by his servants. Isabella rose from hers. Andrew took her home to his father’s house, as his wife. Two days after this there came into the church a child (the young brother of Andrew) to be christened; Isabella and Andrew to be married, and the body of her uncle to be buried. Such and so strange are the events of human life. At the same moment some are christened, others married, and others buried.

Isabella was obliged to wear mourning for that which is called death, and thus closely met together the grave and the bridal bed, mourning and mirth.

Four days more did our pilgrims remain in Lucca, and they were hospitably entertained by the newly married pair, and the noble Juan Baptista Marulo. And here the author ends the third book of his history.



## BOOK IV.

## CHAPTER I.

Which shows what was the conversation that passed between Periander and Auristella.

MANY and long were the disputes among our little band of pilgrims, whether the marriage of Isabella Castrucho, effected by so many devices and so much deceit, was valid or not. Periander oftentimes repeated that it was so, for that it was not their business to search into the case, but the thing which had displeased *him* was the mingling of baptism, marriage, and funeral together, and the ignorance of the physician, who had not been skilful enough to see through the trick of Isabella, nor to perceive the danger of her uncle. Sometimes they discoursed upon these matters, at others they retraced their past dangers. Croriano and Ruperta were eagerly trying to discover who Periander and Auristella could be, but they could not succeed in this; Constance and Antonio they also knew nothing of. They had known who the three French ladies were from the first commencement of their acquaintance.

By easy journeys they reached Aqua-pendente, a place near Rome. As they approached the town Periander and Auristella went on a little in advance of the others, out of hearing, and Periander spoke thus:— “You know well, dear lady, that the reasons which made us leave our own country and our royalty were as good as they were necessary. Already is the air of Rome playing on our cheeks, and the hopes that have supported us are beating in our hearts; already it seems to me that I am in possession of the beloved object so long desired. Look well, O Lady, whether your feelings still remain unchanged; scrutinize well your heart, and see if it is still firm and true to its first intentions, or will be after you have fulfilled your vow, which I doubt not that it will, for your royal blood cannot deceive nor give false promises. Let me then hear you say, O lovely Sigismunda, that the Periander you see before you, is the Persiles that you saw in the palace of my royal father; the same Persiles who pledged his word to you to be your husband there, and who would gladly fulfil that promise in the Deserts of Lybia, should our adverse fortune take us there.”

Auristella looked wonderingly at him, listening attentively to all he said. She marvelled how Periander could doubt her truth, and said to him:— “O Persiles, in all my life I have never loved but one, that *one* has been yourself. It is now

two years since I gave my heart to you, not perforce, but of my own free will, and it is as firm and true now as it was the first day I made you master of it. If it were possible that my affection could have increased, it would have done so among the many wanderings and dangers we have gone through together; it gives pleasure to me to hear that you are unchanged in yours for me, and in accomplishing my vow I shall willingly fulfil my promise to you; but tell me, what are we to do afterwards, since we are still bound by the same constraint, and still under the dominion of the same yoke that is about our necks? We are far distant from our homes, and known to none in these countries, without any support to cling to in our need. I do not speak thus, because I lack the courage to suffer any inconveniences or distresses, since it will be with you, but I say it because any trouble you may be in will be mine also; until now my heart has suffered alone, henceforward it will suffer for itself and for you, though I am wrong to talk of two hearts, for are not ours but one?"

"Lady," replied Periander, "why should we not be the fabricators of our own fortune? they say every man makes his own from beginning to end. I will not answer for what I may do after our happy fate has united us; the inconvenience of our present divided state will soon be over, when we are one; there are fields enough where we can maintain ourselves, cottages wherein we may find shelter and clothes to cover us; for as to the happiness two souls made one, can feel, it is as you say unequalled by any other, and we could not enjoy *this* more beneath the gilded roofs of a palace. We shall find means to let my mother know where we are, and she will not fail in finding a way to help us, and in the mean time we have an inestimable treasure in our diamond cross, and the two pearls of priceless value which you possess, and which we have no fear of losing, for who would think such treasures could be hid beneath a pilgrim's weeds?"

Here they were overtaken by the rest of their party, and the conversation ceased, which was the first they had held upon these kind of subjects; for Auristella's excessive modesty and reserve never gave any opportunities to Periander to talk to her in private, and thus they had been able to keep up the play of brother and sister with all who knew them. The deceased Clodio, alone, had ever suspected the truth.

A part of this and the beginning of second Chapter are omitted, and Chapter II. included in Chapter I.

The travellers were now approaching Rome, the sight of which rejoiced their hearts, and the joy which filled their souls also invigorated their bodies. The hearts of Periander and Auristella beat tumultuously, as they saw themselves so

near the end of all their desires. Those of Croriana and Ruperta, and those of the three French ladies were gladdened at the prospect of a happy termination to their journey, and Constance and Antonio shared in this feeling of satisfaction.

The sun had reached his meridian height, and the heat was excessively great; there was a little wood to the right of the road, and they determined to go thither and to gain a shelter from the scorching rays which threatened to be intolerable, and to remain there perhaps even for the night, as they did not wish to enter Rome till the next day. They went accordingly, and as they advanced further into the wood the pleasantness of the place and the freshness of the herbage, through which clear streams murmured, confirmed them in their first intention. They penetrated so far in, that on looking around, they found they were quite hidden from the sight of any one passing along the public road, and as they were debating where to settle themselves, from; he variety of pleasant spots which offered for their choice, all equally peaceful and inviting, Auristella, looking up by chance, perceived a picture hanging on the bough of a green willow, about the size of a quarter of a sheet of paper. It was a painting of the face only, of a very beautiful woman; on looking a little closer at the picture she saw clearly that it was her own likeness, and, surprised and wondering, she pointed it out to Periander; at the same instant Croriano exclaimed, that the ground was wet with blood, and he shewed them his feet all dyed with the crimson hue, and it was yet warm. The picture, which Periander instantly took down, and the blood which Croriano had discovered, disturbed them greatly, and made them anxious to find out the owner of the one and the cause of the other. Auristella was at a loss to divine when and how anybody could have become possessed of her picture, nor did Periander recollect that the servant of the Duke de Nemours had told him that the artist who had painted the portraits of the three French ladies, could also take that of Auristella, though he had seen her only once. If he had remembered this, he might easily have come to the conclusion which he did not guess. Croriano and Antonio followed the track of blood till they came to a sort of thicket or tuft of trees, at the foot of one of which, they saw a man of noble aspect, dressed as a pilgrim, seated on the ground with his hand pressed upon his heart, and covered with blood, a sight which distressed them very greatly to look upon, and still more when it met the eyes of Croriano, who went up to him, and raising his head, he discovered a countenance all bleeding and wounded, which, having wiped with a handkerchief, he knew to be the Duke de Nemours, for in spite of the different dress in which he found him, he recognized him at once, for they were great friends. The wounded duke, or he who appeared to be the duke, without opening his eyes, said in feeble accents, "Better, far better would it have been, O thou, whoever thou mayest be, mortal enemy of my peace, had the blow

which thou hast struck been through my heart, for there thou wouldst have found a portrait still more vivid and true than the one which thou hast taken from me, and hung upon the tree, that it might not serve as a shield and defence to me in the hour of battle.”

Constance, who had now come up, being of a tender and compassionate nature, hastened to inspect the wounds of the sufferer, and to staunch the flowing blood, without attending to the complaining words he uttered. Meantime Periander and Auristella, guided also by the same bloody track, had gone on a little further, and discovered among some green rushes, another man, also in pilgrim’s weeds, and equally bloody, except his face, which was clean, and exposed to view, and was therefore instantly known by them both to be the Prince Arnoldo, who lay before them more dead than alive.

The first sign of life he gave was an attempt to rise, saying, “No, traitor, thou shalt not carry it off; the picture is mine; it is that of the beloved of my own soul: thou hast stolen it, and now wouldst take my life.”

At the unexpected vision of Arnoldo, Auristella trembled, and although the remembrance of all she owed him inclined her to hasten to his assistance, she durst not from fear of Periander, who in a kind and courteous manner took the prince’s hand, and in a low voice (lest he should perchance betray the secret of his name, which he might wish concealed) he said, “Recover yourself, Prince Arnoldo, and you will see that you are amongst friends, and that you are not so forsaken by Heaven, but that better fortune yet awaits you. Open your eyes, and you will see your friend Periander, and your grateful Auristella, as desirous as ever of serving you. Tell us about this misfortune, and all that has befallen you since we parted; on our part we promise to lend you every assistance in our power; tell us where you are wounded, and by whom, that we may try and find some remedy.”

At this Arnoldo opened his eyes, and recognizing them at once, he attempted, but with extreme difficulty, to throw himself at the feet of Auristella, whilst he embraced Periander, even at such a moment remembering to respect the modesty of Auristella, on whom he fixed his eyes, exclaiming, “Is it possible that I see thee, O lady? Can it be indeed Auristella, and not her image only, for sure no spirit ever dwelt in form so fair? Yes, thou art Auristella herself, without a doubt, and I too am that same Arnoldo who has ever adored thee; even now am I come hither in search of thee, for without thee my soul is desolate.”

Whilst this was passing, Croriano and the rest had heard of the discovery of another pilgrim, who also seemed badly hurt and wounded, and Constance having stopped the flow of blood, and bound up the wounds of the duke, now came to see if she could give any assistance to the other wounded person. When

she recognised Arnoldo, she at first stood still, astonished and confused, but soon overcoming her surprise, she, without asking any other questions, hastened to inquire concerning his hurt. To which the prince replied by pointing to his left arm, where his wound was; Constance instantly removed his sleeve, and found the upper part of the arm was pierced quite through. She staunched the blood, which was still flowing in streams, and telling Periander who the other wounded man was, she advised that they should both be removed without delay to the nearest house, that they might obtain surgical aid, for the greatest danger was to be feared from the excessive loss of blood.

When Arnoldo heard the name of the Duke de Nemours, he trembled all over, and the cold freezing shudder of jealousy rushed through every bloodless vein, and almost without knowing what he said, he muttered, "Whether duke or king, neither the one nor the other can deserve Auristella;" and he added aloud, "Do not take us both to the same place, for the presence of him who has aggrieved one, will not tend to improve the condition of the sufferer."

Some servants now came up, two of whom took up Arnoldo, and the others took charge of the duke. They had left their masters alone by their own command, and had gone on before to a place near at hand to prepare lodgings for their respective masters.

"Go," said Arnoldo, "and look well upon the trees that are hereabouts, to see if there is a picture hanging upon any one of them, which was the cause of the combat that took place between the duke and myself. Take it down, and give it to me, for it has caused much blood, and is mine by right."

The duke meanwhile was saying very much the same thing to Ruperta and Croriano, and those who were about him; but Periander satisfied both parties by saying that he had got the picture, and would keep it in his own care as a deposit, which should be restored to the right owner at a better opportunity."

"Is it possible," said Arnoldo, "that anybody can question my right to that picture? Is it not known to every one, that from the first moment I beheld the original, her image has dwelt within my heart? however, let my brother Periander keep it at present, for whilst he has it it will prevent all jealousies, anger, and ill feeling; and now take me away, for I am very faint."

They immediately contrived the best means they could devise for the two wounded princes, whose danger proceeded more from loss of blood than the depth of the wounds; and so they were conveyed to the place where their servants had prepared the best lodging and accommodation it could afford for their masters.

Until this moment the duke had not known that his adversary was the Prince Arnoldo.

## CHAPTER III.

They enter Rome, and lodge in the house of a Jew named Manasseh.

IT aroused the envy and indignation of the three French ladies to find how much more Auristella's portrait was valued by the duke than theirs, which they knew had been brought to him by the servant who was sent to get their pictures for his lord, as has been already related. They heard from him that theirs were much esteemed, but that hers was idolized, a thing which dwelt very heavily upon their hearts, for it is well known that no beauty can bear to be excelled by another without mortal displeasure; they cannot even bear comparisons, for as the common saying goes, "That all comparisons are odious" in the case of rival beauty, they become doubly odious, unless friendship, relationship, quality, and high station, stand in the way of this accursed jealousy and envy, for such it may well be called.

The servant also told them that the duke, his master, enamoured of the beautiful portrait, had quitted Paris in order to seek out the pilgrim Auristella; that he had seated himself that morning at the foot of a tree, with the picture in his hand, and was discoursing with it as if it had been the living original. That, whilst he was thus occupied, another pilgrim passed by, and looking over his shoulder, could hear what the duke said; "without," said he, "myself or the other servants being able to prevent it, for we were a good way off. We came up at last, and hastened to warn the duke that he was overheard. He turned his head, and saw the pilgrim, who, without speaking a word, snatched the picture from his hand, who, taken unawares, had not time to defend himself, and what I heard him say, at least, all I could make out, was, 'Robber of this celestial prize, profane not with those sacrilegious hands this precious thing. Give up the picture whereon that heavenly beauty is portrayed, both because thou dost not deserve to possess it, and also because it belongs to me.'

"'I say that it does not,' answered the other; 'and if I cannot now find any one to bear witness to the truth of what I say, I will leave it to be decided by the edge of the sword, which I wear concealed within this pilgrim's staff. I am the true and sole possessor of that incomparable beauty, for in far distant lands from these where we now are, I purchased her with my treasures, and worshipped her

with my whole heart, and I have served the original of that picture with faithful service, and through many perils and wanderings.'

"Then the duke turning to us, imperiously commanded us to leave them alone, and to come on here, where we were to wait for him, and we were not even to dare to turn round and look what he was about. The other pilgrim gave a similar command to the two servants who attended him.

In spite of the orders I had received, I had the curiosity to look back, and I saw the stranger pilgrim hang the picture upon the bough of a tree, and then, as I rather conjectured than actually saw, he drew out of his staff a short sword, or a weapon that looked like one, and attacked my master, who met his attack with another sword, which he also carried hidden in his staff. The servants on both sides wished to interfere and part the combatants, but I was of a different opinion, telling them that as the combat was equal, and between only two persons, without fear or suspicion of help to either side, it was best for us to go on our way, as we had been desired. We came here, prepared the apartments quickly, and in a short space of time returned to see what had been the fate of our masters. We found them as you saw, where, but for your succour, and if you had not arrived, our arrival would have been too late."

So said the servant; and the ladies listened, and felt as if they had indeed been in love with the duke: at the same instant the plan and hope of marrying him, if ever entertained by either of them, entirely vanished, for nothing destroys or blots out love so quickly from the fancy, as finding it met by disdain or neglect in its first beginning. Disdain starves love in its infancy just as hunger affects the body. Hunger and want of sleep will reduce the bravest spirit, and disdain will kill the warmest desires. It is true that this is in the beginning only, for later, when love has gained strength, and taken possession of the heart, disdain and ill treatment only act as a spur to urge on still faster its feelings.

In about a week, the wounded princes were cured, and able to set out for Rome, from whence surgeons had been sent for to see them.

By this time the duke knew that his adversary was the heir of the crown of Denmark, and also knew of his intentions of choosing Auristella for a wife. This weighed heavily on his thoughts, which were the same as Arnolfo's. It seemed to him that she who was deemed fit to be a queen, might be also fit for a duchess; but amidst all these reflections, jealousy was foremost, embittering every thought, and destroying his repose.

At last the day of their departure arrived, and the duke and Arnolfo each entered Rome privately, unknown to any one. The other pilgrims having reached the top of a high hill, came in view of that city, and at the sight they fell upon their knees, and worshipped, as if it were a holy thing. They entered Rome by



the gate del Popolo, (having gone through the *Prados de Madama*,) and devoutly kissed the thresholds and edges of the gates which led to the holy city.

One of Croriano's servants met two Jews, as he entered the town, and they inquired whether the party was prepared with lodgings, for if not they could provide some, fit to lodge a prince. "You must know, sir," said one, "that we are Jews; I am called Zabulon, and my companion, Abihud. Our business is to furnish and adorn houses with all things necessary, according to the rank and quality of those who hire them. The payment, of course, depends upon the sort of accommodation required."

The servant told him that one of his fellow servants had gone to Rome the day before, with the purpose of preparing a lodging suitable to the quality of their master, and those who were with him. "May I die," said Abihud, "if this is not the Frenchman who yesterday hired the house of our friend Manasseh, which is fitted up like a palace."

"Then," replied the servant, "we must go on, for my companion must be expecting our arrival, and will come to show us the way, and should the house he has provided not suit us, we will commend ourselves to you, Signor Zabulon." So saying, he passed on, and at the entrance of the town the Jews saw their friend Manasseh with Croriano's servant, by which they knew that his house was the one engaged, and well contented our pilgrims were guided thither. It was situated near the Arch of Portugal.

Hardly had the French ladies made their appearance in the town, when they attracted every eye, and it being a festival day the street of our Lady del Popolo was full of people; but the admiration they excited, increased prodigiously when the peerless Auristella and the graceful Constance by her side appeared, like two bright stars that shine together in the sky. A Roman who saw them (I believe he must have been a poet) said, "I will lay a wager that this must be the goddess Venus, who, as in times of old, is come to visit the relics of her loved Eneas. By Heavens! the governor is wrong not to give orders that they may cover the face of this moving idol: does he wish to make the sober ones wild, to destroy the tender-hearted, and turn the foolish youths into idolaters?"

And so amidst praises and admiration, carried even to the heights of hyperbole, passed on the lovely band, and reached the lodging which had been prepared to receive them, and which was splendid and spacious enough to have lodged a king, or a moderate sized regiment.

## CHAPTER IV.

What passed between Arnolfo and Periander, and between the Duke de Nemours and Croriatio.

ON the following day the news of the arrival of the French ladies, and the little band of pilgrims, had spread throughout the town.

Chiefly did the general voice extol Auristella's superhuman beauty, exaggerating it even to the utmost. The house was encompassed by persons, brought by curiosity, and the desire of gazing upon so much beauty assembled in one place, as people talked of. It rose to such a height at last that they even called out from the street to summon the ladies to appear at the windows, but they were reposing, and would not let themselves be seen. Especially they called out for Auristella, but they did not succeed in catching a sight of any one of the party.

Among the rest who appeared at the door were Arnolfo and the duke, still in their pilgrim's dresses, and scarcely did they set eyes upon each other than they felt their jealous hatred revive, and their hearts beat wildly in their breasts.

From the windows they were seen by Periander, who told Croriano, and they instantly descended together, to prevent, as much as possible, the chance of an encounter between the two jealous lovers.

Periander went to meet Arnolfo, and Croriano, the duke. Arnolfo said, "One of the heaviest weights upon my mind, on the subject of Auristella, is to think how this French gentleman, who is said to be the Duke de Nemours, can have obtained possession of her picture, since she is under your care; it appears to have been given by her willingly, yet I possess none. Look you now, friend Periander; in this infirmity, by lovers called jealousy, but which is rather desperate rage, envy and scorn enter in, and when once they gain possession of an enamoured heart, no consideration can soothe, no remedy avail, and however small may be the causes which first engendered it, its effects are so great that at the least they can overthrow reason, and often can destroy the very life. Better is it for a jealous lover to die of despair than to live in jealousy. If he be a true lover, he is not bold enough to show his suspicions to the beloved one, and should he be perfect enough not to show it, he cannot help feeling it, he cannot feel secure, for things that are of great value keep their possessor in continual

fear lest he should lose them. Thus the passion of jealousy, is one, inseparable from a heart that truly loves. I advise thee, O my friend Periander, (if I may give advice who cannot give it to myself,) to reflect that I am a king, and that I am very deeply in love; and thou must be aware from a thousand proofs, that I shall accomplish in my deeds, that which I promise in words, to receive thy peerless sister with no other portion than that she brings so largely in her virtue and her beauty, and that I care not to investigate what her origin may be, since it is clear Nature cannot deny the gifts of fortune to one on whom she has conferred so many. Never, or very rarely, are the highest virtues found in base-born subjects, and beauty of person is oftentimes indicative of beauty of soul, and to sum up all, I once again repeat what I have said so often; I adore Auristella, whether she spring from heavenly birth or from the lowest of the low; and since we are now at Rome, where she has always promised to decide my fate, be my advocate with her, and henceforth I divide my crown and kingdom with thee, and do not let me be mocked by this duke, nor scorned by her whom I adore.”

To all these speeches, offers, and promises, Periander thus replied: “If my sister had been to blame with respect to the offence you have to complain about from the duke, if I did not punish her I should at least renounce her, and that would be to her the greatest possible punishment; but as I know she is perfectly innocent, I cannot tell what answer to make you, and as to the hopes which she permitted you to form when she should have reached this city, as I cannot tell what they were, I do not know how to answer that either. For the offers you now make, and have already made, *I* am as grateful as I ought to be, considering who you are, and to whom they are made; for with all humility be it said, O noble Arnoldo, perhaps this poor pilgrim’s frock may serve as a cloud, such as we sometimes see the sun hidden behind. Be still for the present and compose yourself, we only arrived yesterday, and it is not possible that, in so short a space of time, consequences should have been deduced, traces given, and chimeras removed, so as to bring everything right as we could wish. Avoid, as much as possible, all encounters with the duke, for a lover who is not encouraged, and whose hopes are weak, tries to invent and imagine what does not exist, even though it be against the beloved object herself.”

Arnoldo promised to do as he advised, and offered him money and all that could be required to furnish magnificent entertainment both for himself and all the party.

The conversation between the duke and Croriano was different, since it all ran upon the determination of the duke to recover his portrait, and to make Arnoldo confess he had no right to it. He also begged Croriano would intercede in his favour with Auristella to accept him as her husband, since, said he, his station

was no ways inferior to that of Arnolfo, and his family was one of the most illustrious in Europe; in fine, he displayed great arrogance and no small jealousy, like a man very much in love.

Croriano offered to do all he could, and to let him know what answer Auristella gave to the offer he made her.

## CHAPTER V.

AND thus the two jealous rivals and enemies departed, and took leave, the one of Periander, and the other of Croriano, both their hopes alike founded on air; each, however, being of the same mind to restrain his impetuosity and dissimulate his anger, at least until Auristella had declared which was to be the favoured one — each hoping it would be himself — since the offer of a kingdom and of a condition as high as that the duke could boast, might well be thought temptations enough to shake any previous intentions, for it is natural to love grandeur, and to aim at improving one's condition in life, more especially this is the case with women. But Auristella took small heed of all this, as every thought of hers at that moment was centred in being properly instructed in all the truths that concerned her soul's salvation; for having been born in a country so far off, that in it the Christian faith was not as clear and perfect as it should be, she held it necessary that hers should be purified in its true home.

She took care to instruct herself well upon every particular of the holy Catholic faith, which she had only dimly understood in her own land. She found a sure means of explaining what she wanted by the confessional, where she made her full and entire confession, and was taught and satisfied about everything she desired to know, for these confessors explained to her in the best way they could all the principal and most needful mysteries of our holy religion. They began with the envy and pride of Lucifer, and of his fall with the third part of the stars that fell with him into the abyss, — a fall which left vacant the heavenly seats, which these bad angels lost by their folly and sin. They explained the means God took to fill these empty seats, creating man, whose soul was made capable of the glory lost by these fallen angels. They discoursed upon the truths of the creation of man and of the world, and of the sacred and loving mystery of the incarnation, and with wondrous skill they sketched the deep mystery of the most holy Trinity. They told how it was necessary that the second person of the three, who is the Son, should make himself man, in order that he might, as man, redeem all mankind, and as God, might redeem as God, which hypostatic union alone could satisfy God for the infinite sin committed; and which the infinite Deity could satisfy, and finite man could not by himself alone, and God by himself alone could not be appeased, but that the two together had the property of being infinite, and thus came redemption. They spoke of the death of Christ, the labours and troubles of his life, from the hour of his

beginning his work, to his death upon the cross. They exalted the strength and efficacy of the sacraments, and pointed to the second article of our duty, repentance, which alone can open the path to Heaven, which sin has closed. They showed the Saviour Jesus Christ, as the living God, seated on the right hand of the Father, in full perfection in Heaven, as he is on earth by transubstantiation in the sacrament, which holy presence no absence can divide or part, for one of God's greatest attributes is, that he is everywhere in essence, and in presence. They assured her of the infallible coming again of the Lord to judge the world, and establish firmly his church, against which the gates or rather the forces of hell shall avail little. They told of the power of the supreme Pontiff, God's vicegerent on earth, and who holds the keys of Heaven. At last there remained nothing to be taught, or that was necessary for Periander and Auristella to understand. These lessons filled their hearts with joy, drew them out of themselves, and raised them almost to the Heaven where their thoughts rested.

## CHAPTER VI.

Arnoldo and the Duke de Nemours contend which shall purchase a Portrait of Auristella.

FROM this time Periander and Auristella beheld each other with different eyes, at least with other eyes did Periander look upon his Auristella, for now as it appeared to him, she had fulfilled the vow which brought her to Rome, and might freely and openly accept him as her husband.

But she meanwhile was seeking on all sides some light from above to discern what they were to do after they were married, for it was folly and madness to think of returning to their own country, because she had been destined to become the wife of Periander's elder brother, and he, finding his hopes thus frustrated, would probably seek to avenge his disappointments on his brother and Auristella. These thoughts and apprehensions made her sometimes low-spirited, and at other times pensive.

The French ladies visited the churches, and performed the prayers of the stations with much pomp and majesty, for Croriano was a relation of the French ambassador, and nothing was wanting that was necessary to do them honour. They always took Auristella and Constance with them, and never left the house without being followed by half Rome. It chanced one day as they were passing through a street, the name of which is Bancos, they saw against a wall in one of the houses, a picture. It was the full-length portrait of a woman, with a crown on her head, which was divided in half, and at her feet a world, on which she stood. They had scarcely looked at it when they knew it was the likeness of Auristella, painted so to the life that it was not possible to doubt for an instant who it was. Auristella wonderingly asked whose the picture was, and if it was to be sold? The owner of it (who, as they afterwards knew, was a celebrated painter) said that the picture was for sale, but he did not know whom it represented. He only knew that a friend of his had made a copy of it in France, and that it was said to be a foreign lady, who was on her way to Rome in the dress of a pilgrim.

"And what," said Auristella, "does it mean by painting her with a crown on her head, and a globe beneath her feet? and moreover, why is the crown divided in two?"

"These things, lady," replied the owner, "are fancies or caprices of the artist;

possibly it means that the lady merits the crown of superior beauty, and that she has the whole world at her feet. But it is my opinion that you, lady, are the original, and that you well deserve a whole crown, and not a painted world, but a real one.”

“What do you ask for this picture?” inquired Constance; to which the owner answered, “Two pilgrims are here, one of whom has offered me a thousand crowns of gold, and the other says that he will not lose it for any money.

The sale is not yet concluded, but it seems to me they must be jesting, for the exorbitant sum they offer makes me feel in doubt.”

“Yet it is not so,” said Constance, “for these pilgrims, if they are what I believe them to be, could easily give you even twice what they have promised, and pay you to your satisfaction.”

The French ladies, Ruperta, Croriano, and Periander, all stood wondering greatly to see the very image of Auristella painted on this picture. People came in to look at it, and by degrees a murmur arose, every one declaring that “The picture which is here to be sold is the same as this pilgrim in the carriage.” They wanted not only to look at the likeness, but at the original, and so began to surround the carriage in such a manner that the horses could neither move backwards nor forwards. “Therefore,” said Periander, “Auristella, my sister, conceal thy face with some kind of veil, for so much brightness is dazzling, and will not let us see our road.” Auristella did as he desired, and they moved on; yet still a great many persons followed, hoping that the veil might be withdrawn, and they might obtain a sight of what they wished to see. They had not long been gone when Arnolfo, in his pilgrim’s dress, came to the owner of the picture and said, “I am he who offered a thousand crowns for this portrait if you will part with it; bring it, and come with me now, I will count the money out to you directly in gold.” Then came the other pilgrim, who was the Duke de Nemours, saying, “Do not consider about a price, but come with me, and name any sum you please, it shall be yours at once.”

“My lords,” replied the painter, for so he was, “agree between yourselves as to who is to carry it off, and we will not disagree about the price, since I think that you are more likely to pay me in words than in fact.”

A great number of persons stood by listening to this conversation, expecting to see what would be the result, for to see thousands of ducats offered for a picture, especially by two apparently poor pilgrims, seemed a very amusing matter.

“Then,” said the owner of the picture, “let him who wishes to have it give me some pledge in hand, and I will deliver it up to him.”

Hearing this, Arnolfo put his hand into his breast, and drew forth a chain of



gold, with a jewel set in diamonds suspended from it, and said, "Take this chain, which, with the jewel, is worth two thousand crowns, and deliver up the picture to me."

"*This* is worth ten thousand," said the duke, giving a diamond chain to the painter. "Bring it to my house."

"Holy Saints!" cried one of the bystanders, "what can this picture be? and what can these men and jewels mean? This looks like a case of enchantment, and I would advise thee, friend painter, to look well at the chain, and try the reality of the diamonds before you part with your property, for both chain and jewels may be false, as one may suspect by the exaggerated account of their value."

The princes grew angry upon this, but not being desirous of letting the whole street know their thoughts, they consented that the master of the picture should ascertain the real value of the jewels. The crowd in the street now changed their note, some admiring the picture, others asking who the pilgrims could be, others looking at the jewels, and all watching eagerly to see who would get the picture, because it seemed as if the two pilgrims would have it at any price.

Its owner would willingly have sold it for much less than they offered, if they would have let him sell it freely to either.

Whilst this was going on, the governor of Rome came by, and heard the noise the people were making; he inquired the cause, and saw the picture and the jewels. They, appearing to him to be the property of no ordinary pilgrims, he hoped to discover some secret, and ordered the jewels and picture to be taken to his house, and to take the pilgrims thither also. The painter was left in consternation, seeing all his expectations thus threatened with defeat, and his property in the power of justice, whence it seldom returns again with undiminished lustre.

The painter flew to seek out Periander, and relate to him all the story of the purchase, and of his fears that the governor would keep the picture, which he had bought, he said, in France, from a painter who had sketched it in Portugal from the original, a thing which seemed to Periander very likely, during the time Auristella had been at Lisbon. He then offered to give him a hundred crowns for it, and run the risk of recovering it. The painter was satisfied, and although the descent from a thousand to a hundred crowns was so great, yet he considered he had made a good bargain.

Whilst they were talking, the Jew Zabulon arrived, and told Periander that he wished to take him that evening to see one of the most beautiful women in Rome, indeed, in all Italy, Hippolyta the Ferrarese. Periander said he would go willingly, and this not on account of her beauty of person, nor of her quality, for the courtesy of Periander was the same whether with the high or the low, for in

this had Nature cast both him and Auristella in one mould. He concealed from her that he was going to visit Hippolyta, and the Jew carried him thither more by deceit than any wish of his to go, but sometimes curiosity helps to deceive, and blinds even the most cautious and prudent.

## CHAPTER VII.

Of a singular Adventure and Peril which befell Periander through the Malice of a fair Courtezan.

WITH good manners, great personal charms, and a richly adorned and splendid house, many defects will be overlooked, because a well-bred person does nothing that offends the eye, and rich ornaments and beauty of person are always pleasing to look upon, and every one likes a fine house.

Now Hippolyta possessed all these things. She was a courtesan, who might have vied in wealth with the Flora of ancient days; and in courteous manners, with good breeding itself. It was impossible for those who knew her, not to love her in some degree, for her beauty enchanted them, her riches gave her power, and she made herself adored by the winning courtesy of her manners. When love meets three such charms as these, it melts even hearts of iron, opens the closest purse, and breaks through a determination, though it were made of marble, and still more, when to these three things you add deceitfulness, and a flattering tongue, — very convenient qualities for those who desire to win the admiration of all men by their charms. Is there by chance a man of such sharp wits, that seeing one of these charmers, such as I have painted, setting aside her mere beauty, would not be tempted by her winning and gentle ways. Beauty partly blinds and partly dazzles; with those it blinds, the senses are run away with; with those who are only dazzled, it is the mind that receives pleasure. None of these things were in Periander's thoughts, as he entered Hippolyta's house; but as Love sometimes builds his structure on a careless foundation, he now fabricated one suddenly, not in Periander's, but in Hippolyta's heart; for in the bosoms of such as she, it does not require much time or trouble to light the flame.

Hippolyta had already seen Periander in the street, and his beauty, grace, and above all, the idea of his being a Spaniard, had pleased her fancy. From a Spaniard might be expected the most unheard-of liberality, and the most refined taste. She had made known her thoughts to Zabulon, and desired that he would bring him to her house, which was always in such order and so adorned, as to look more like preparations for a wedding than the reception of pilgrims.

The lady Hippolyta had a friend, called Pyrrhus, a Calabrian, a bully, of a hot temper and bad disposition, and whose living was gained by his sword, his

dexterous fingers, and Hippolyta's contrivances; for he often performed a job for her, without the help of any one. But what he gained most from was the nimbleness of his legs, which he prized more than his hands, and what he chiefly valued himself on was, that he could always keep Hippolyta in fear of him, in whatever mood he might be, amorous or severe; for these tame doves are never without hawks to pursue them, nor birds of prey to tear them to pieces, — a miserable treatment for these poor foolish creatures!

I would tell you, then, that this gentleman (of whom it is enough to know the name) happened to be in Hippolyta's house at the very time that the Jew and Periander entered it. Hippolyta took him aside and said to him, "Go, my friend, and take with thee this chain of gold which has been sent me by the pilgrim; it was brought me by Zabulon this morning."

"Look well what you are about, Hippolyta," said Pyrrhus, "for, as I conjecture, this pilgrim is a Spaniard, and a chain of gold sent from his hand, worth at least a hundred crowns, without having even touched yours, seems much to me, and a thousand fears alarm me."

"Do thou, O Pyrrhus," said she, "take away the chain, and leave it to me to support the weight, and not to give it back in spite of thy Spanish manners."

Pyrrhus took the chain which Hippolyta gave him, and which she had brought expressly for this purpose that morning, and stopping his mouth with it, she got him out of the house. Then, free and disembarassed from all restraint, she hastened to meet Periander, and, with a sort of easy gracefulness, she threw her arms about his neck, saying, "Truly glad shall I be to see whether Spaniards are as brave as fame reports."

When Periander saw this freedom of manner, he thought the whole house was upside down, and repulsing Hippolyta with his hand, he put her away and said to her, "The dress I wear, O Lady Hippolyta, forbids all profanation, at least I can permit none of any sort, and pilgrims, even if they are Spaniards, are not obliged to show their valour unnecessarily: but prove to me, lady, in what way I can show my courage without prejudice to either of us, and I will obey you without a word more."

"It seems to me, Sir Pilgrim," answered Hippolyta, "that you are as valiant in mind as in body; but since you say you will obey my bidding, if it be not to the hurt of either of us, enter this room with me, for I wish to show you a gallery and dressing closet of mine;" to which Periander replied, "Spaniard though I be, yet I am very fearful, and more have I to fear from you alone, than from a whole regiment of enemies. Let some one serve as a guide, and I will go with you where you please."

Hippolyta called two of her maids and Zabulon the Jew, who were present,

and ordered them to lead the way to the gallery and to throw open the saloon, which, as Periander afterwards said, was the most splendidly adorned apartment any prince on earth could possess. Parrhasius, Polygnotus, Apelles, Zeuxis, and Terriantes, some of the most perfect of their productions bought with the treasures of Hippolyta, might there be seen, and there too were the works of the devout Raphael de Urbino, and those of the divine Michael Angelo, riches such as only great princes can and ought to show. Royal buildings, superb palaces, magnificent temples, and exquisite paintings are fit and true signs of the rich and the great. They are, indeed, pledges, against which time hurries on and quickens his flight, as if they, his rivals, are showing in spite of him the magnificence of past ages.

O Hippolyta! good only for this, if among all the pictures thou dost possess, there was but one of thy own good conduct, and that thou wouldst leave Periander his, who amazed, confused and astonished, walked on, gazing at the abundance of sights which this gallery contained. From one end to the other was heard the music of many different sorts of birds, which, in splendid cages, filled the air with a mixed but pleasing melody. It seemed to verify whatever he had heard tell of the gardens of the Hesperides, of the Fairy Falerina, of the famous hanging gardens, or of any of the other celebrated wonders ever known in the world, none of which came up to the decorations of this gallery and hall; but as he went about with a disturbed and amazed spirit, wearied with the sight of so much pleasure and luxury, and troubled to find everything so contrary to his taste; setting courtesy aside, he endeavoured to leave the apartment, and would have gone away if Hippolyta had not prevented him, in such a manner that he was obliged to use some rather discourteous words. She laid hold of his pilgrim's gown, and the doublet being opened thereby, discovered the diamond cross, which until then had escaped so many perils, and dazzled the eyes as well as the mind of Hippolyta. She, finding that he was determined to go, in spite of her gentle force, proceeded to show her intentions of detaining him still more plainly; but Periander by no means approving this, made his escape, flying from the danger and leaving his gown in the hands of this new Egyptian. He gained the street without hat, staff, belt or gown, for the best mode of coming off victor in such combats is flight. She immediately opened the window and began calling out loudly to the people in the street, crying, "Seize that robber who, entering my house under a peaceful guise, has stolen from me a precious treasure worth a whole city."

There happened to be two of the pope's guards in the street, who thinking they had taken him in the very act, hearing the cry of "robbers," seized Periander and tore the cross from his breast, — a treatment which justice uses with new

offenders, although the crime may not be proved.

Periander, on finding himself thus crossed, spoke to the Germans in their own language, and said, he was no thief but a person of consequence, and that the cross was his own; that they might see by its richness it could not be Hippolyta's, and he asked to be taken before the Governor; where he hoped shortly to prove the truth of the matter. He offered them money, and with that, and with having spoken in their own tongue, which will always gain the heart even of those who know you not, the Germans paid no attention to Hippolyta, and so carried Periander before the Governor.

On seeing this she left the window, and, almost ready to scratch her own eyes out, she said to her servants, "Ah! what folly is this that I have done! I have vexed him I meant to honour; I have offended where I wished to serve. He is taken as a thief; he who has stolen my heart. What kind of caresses are these? what kindness? to attack his liberty, and to defame his honour." And then she told them how he had been carried off by two of the pope's guards, and ordered her coach to be got ready directly, that she might follow and exculpate him, for her heart could not bear to wound one who was the very apple of her eye; and she preferred appearing as one who had accused falsely, rather than be cruel, for there was no excuse for cruelty, though for the false accusation there might be pleaded the force of love, which so often causes a thousand follies, and offends even those it loves best.

When she arrived at the governor's house, she found him with the cross in his hands, examining Periander on the matter, who, seeing Hippolyta, said to the governor, "This lady who is just come in, has said that the cross now in your lordship's hands is hers, and was stolen from her by me: I will acknowledge this is the fact when she has declared of what the cross is made, what is its value, and how many diamonds compose it; for unless the angels or some spirit has revealed it to her, she cannot know, for she never saw it but in my bosom, and once only."

"What says the lady Hippolyta to this?" said the governor, so covering the cross that she could not see it.

She answered, "I say that I am in love — blindly and madly in love — and the pilgrim is exculpated, and I await the sentence which my lord the governor thinks due for my crime." And she related the whole of what had passed between her and Periander, which made the governor perfectly amazed, more at the boldness of her conduct than at her love, for such sudden passions are common with ladies of her class. He dismissed the case, and entreated Periander's pardon; pronounced him at liberty, and restored his cross to him, without a line having been written about the case, — no small piece of good luck.

The governor wished to know who were the pilgrims that had offered the jewels in pledge for Auristella's picture, and moreover, who she and he were; to which Periander answered, "The portrait is that of my sister Auristella; those two pilgrims could easily have offered far more costly jewels. This cross is mine, and when the proper time comes, and necessity forces me to do it, I shall say who I am, but at present neither I nor my sister wish to declare this. The picture which is now in your lordship's possession is mine. I bought it from the painter at a suitable price, without any of those extravagant outbiddings, which are founded more on rancour and fancy than on reason."

The governor said that he would gladly keep it himself, to add to the pictures in Rome one more admirable than any she now possessed.

"I will give it to your lordship," said Periander; "for it seems to me that it will be duly honoured by giving it such an owner." The governor thanked him, and that day he restored Arnolfo and the duke to their liberty, and gave them back their jewels, he himself keeping the picture, for it was quite reasonable that it should belong to somebody.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Arnoldo gives an account of all that had happened since he parted with Periander and Auristella in the Isle of Hermits.

HIPPOLYTA returned home more full of confusion than repentance, thoughtful, and more enamoured than ever, for although it is a fact, generally speaking, that disdain kills love in its first beginning, yet Periander's only added fuel to the flame that consumed her. She thought it impossible that a pilgrim could possess a heart of marble, and not soften with the gifts and kindnesses she intended to load him with: but in her heart she said to herself, if this pilgrim was poor he would not wear so rich a cross, the diamonds of which clearly denote his wealth, so that the fortress cannot be attacked on that side. Measures more bold and dexterous must be employed to subdue him. Is it not possible that his heart is elsewhere engaged? Is it not possible that this Auristella may not be his sister? Is it not possible that the force of the disdain he shows me may have its origin, and be set down to Auristella? By Heaven, if it be so, I have found my remedy. Auristella shall die, — we will discover this witchcraft, at least we shall see the true sentiments of his heart. It shall be carried immediately into effect; Auristella shall grow sick; we will take away the light of Periander's eyes; we will see if, when her beauty fades, that first cause of love, the love itself will fade also. It may be that when he sees I possess what she has lost, he may leave *her*, and yield to my tenderness; at least I will try this; there is no harm in trying anything that may lead to the right track.

Somewhat comforted by these reflections, she arrived at her own house, where she found Zabulon, to whom she confided her intentions, knowing that he had a wife who was noted as the most skilful witch in Rome, and she asked him (after first loading him with gifts, and the promise of more) to assist her, not in changing Periander's inclinations, since she knew that was hopeless, but in depriving Auristella of health, and if necessary, of life also.

Zabulon said, it would be an easy matter for a woman who possessed the skill and knowledge of his wife to effect this. He received, as the first payment, a large sum of money, and promised that Auristella's health should begin to fail on the following day. Hippolyta not only rewarded Zabulon, but threatened him besides; and threats and gifts together, would make a Jew perform



impossibilities.

Periander told his friends and Auristella the history of his imprisonment and Hippolyta's love, and the present he had made the governor of Auristella's portrait. Auristella felt far from pleased to hear about Hippolyta's love, for she had heard of her being considered one of the most beautiful women in Rome, one of the freest manners, one of the richest, and one of the cleverest. To a jealous spirit, fear will represent the goblin it has conjured up, as bigger than Mount Olympus, although, in fact, it may be smaller than a fly; and when the tongue is restrained by decorum and modesty, so as to repress all complaint, the heart torments itself within the bonds of silence, till soul and body are almost ready to part. As I have before observed, there is no other remedy for jealousy but to listen to exculpation, and when this is not permitted there is no comfort in life, and life itself Auristella would lose a thousand times, before she would utter one complaint touching the fidelity of Periander.

That same evening Arnolfo paid the ladies a visit, and gave them an account of everything that had happened since they left him, and, on his return to search for them, he told how he had gone to the Hermit's Isle, where he did not find Rutilio, but another hermit in his place, who informed him that Rutilio was gone to Rome. He told, too, how he had gone to the island of the fishermen, and found them free, happy, and contented, both the newly-married couples and the others who had embarked with Periander. He told how he had heard it reported that Polycarpa was dead, and Sinforosa had resolved never to marry. Then he told about the Barbarous Isle, that it had been repeopled, and its inhabitants were still confirmed in their belief of the false prophecy. He had heard that Maurice and Ladislaus, his son-in-law, with Transila, his daughter, had left their own country, and gone to live peacefully in England: then he related how he had been with Leopold, the king of Norway, after the war was ended; that he had married in order to have a successor to his kingdom, and that he had pardoned the two traitors whom he had taken prisoners when Periander and his fishermen fell in with his ship, and that he was very grateful for the courteous treatment he had received at their hands, and, amongst the names he mentioned in these details, sometimes the names of Periander's parents occurred, and sometimes those of Auristella, which made their hearts beat, and brought to their remembrance alike their grandeur and their misfortunes. He said, that in Portugal, and especially in Lisbon, their portraits were much valued. He spoke of the great fame of Constance's beauty in those parts of France she had travelled in, and also of the French ladies. He had heard, too, of Croriano, and the high character he had gained as noble, generous, and wise, in having taken the charming Ruperta to wife. In Lucca, he had heard the clever contrivance of Isabel Castrucho much

talked about, and her quick falling in love with Andrew Marulo, and how, by feigning to be a demoniac, she had gained, as she believed, an angel's lot. He had heard of Periander's fall, which was considered a miracle, and had met on the road a young pilgrim, a poet, who did not wish to come on with him, but was taking his time and composing a play upon the adventures of Periander and Auristella, which he knew by heart, having seen a picture in Portugal, where it was all painted, and that he was firmly resolved to marry Auristella, if she pleased.

Auristella declared herself grateful for his kind intentions, and said she would give him a suit of clothes, should he require it, and if by chance his should be ragged, for the kind wish of a good poet deserves reward.

Arnoldo further told them that he had been at the house of Antonio and Constance's parents, who were well, only uneasy in their minds at knowing nothing about the health or safety of their children, and longing for their return, and that they wished for Constance to become the wife of the late count's brother, her brother-in-law, who wanted to follow his brother's example and imitate his choice of a wife, either because he did not like to give her the twenty thousand ducats, or because of her own merits, which he thought was most likely.

This news rejoiced them much, especially Periander and Auristella, who loved Constance like a sister.

In the minds of all the hearers of this discourse fresh suspicions arose as to the high rank of the pilgrims. They heard now about counts and ducats, and thought the persons who belonged thereunto must needs be illustrious.

Among other things, Arnoldo mentioned having met Renato in France, the gentleman who had been vanquished in single combat against the right, and afterwards proved to have been wrongfully accused by the conscience of his enemy being awakened. In fact, but few things remained to be mentioned of the many persons whose history has been related; he brought forward everything, up to the picture of Auristella, which Periander had retained greatly against his inclination and that of the duke, though, not to offend Periander, Arnoldo concealed his displeasure.

"I should have returned it to you, my Lord Arnoldo," said Periander, "if I had understood that it was yours. Accident, and his own exertions, gave it to the duke, from whom you took it by force, and therefore have no right to complain. A man in love must not judge his cause through the medium of his wishes, which sometimes cannot satisfy him and reason; however, I will do what I hope will please and content both you and the duke: the picture shall remain in the hands of my sister Auristella, for it belongs more to her than any one else."

This decision satisfied Arnolfo, and also Auristella, and here the conversation ended. On the following day early, the witchcraft, venoms and incantations of the malignant Jewess began their work.

## CHAPTER IX.

In which is related the Sickness of Auristella through the Witchcraft of the Jewess, Zabulon's Wife.

DISEASE durst not at once, attack face to face Auristella's beauty, afraid lest its hideousness should be alarmed at so much loveliness, and so it began by the limbs. She was seized with shiverings at dawn, which prevented her from rising as usual; these were followed by a loss of appetite; next, the brilliance of her eyes became clouded and dull; and dismay at such sudden illness filled the hearts both of Constance and Periander, who immediately apprehended the worst result.

She had not been taken ill two hours, and already the bright roses of her cheeks were of a livid purple, the carmine of her sweet lips was changed to green, and the pearllike teeth became the colour of topazes, her very hair had altered its colour, her hands stiffened, and her whole countenance changed. Nevertheless, she was still beautiful to them who saw her, not as she was *now* in her bed, but in their hearts, where her image lay.

Her voice, in a day or two after, could just reach their ears in feeble accents half uttered.

The French ladies joined in assisting Constance to tend and nurse her, and so great was the attention they paid, that at last they required it for themselves.

Physicians were sent for, the best that could be got, at least those who were most noted for skill, for a good opinion helps the proper medicine, and thus we as often meet with lucky doctors as fortunate soldiers — good luck and good fortune are one and the same thing — and one may find it as well in a bag of sackcloth as in a closet full of silver. But neither in silver nor in sackcloth did any find its way to Auristella, which drove Constance and Antonio to despair. Not so was it with the duke; his love had been engendered solely by the great beauty of Auristella, and thus, when that beauty was fled, his love also fled with it, which must be deeply rooted in the heart to be strong enough to follow the beloved one even to the brink of the grave. Death is very hideous, disease is near akin to it, and to love what is ugly seems something unnatural, and worthy to be called a miracle.

Auristella faded away from hour to hour. Those about her had given up all

hope; Periander alone, firm and loving as ever, with a brave and trusting spirit, faced adverse fortune and even death itself, which threatened him, in losing Auristella.

Fifteen days did the Duke de Nemours wait in hopes of seeing her get better, during which time everybody was continually questioning the physicians about her health, but none could speak with certainty, seeing that none knew the cause of her illness.

The duke finding that the angel of light he had adored had changed into one of darkness, feigned a tale which might form an excuse for his conduct, at least in some degree; and one day he came to Auristella's sick bed, with Periander present, and thus spoke: —

“Since fortune has proved adverse to my hopes, O beauteous lady! and will not permit me to indulge the desire I had of calling you my wife, before despair reduces me to such a condition as to threaten the loss of reason, (as it has well nigh taken my life,) I purpose to try my fortune elsewhere — for I know well that I have nothing to hope or expect here — although I should continue to try for it, and thus it might happen that I die miserably. I am summoned home by my mother: she has a wife in view for me; I wish to obey her. But when death assails me, there will be found engraven on my heart the memory of thy beauty and thy illness, — would to God I may not have to pay of thy death!”

His eyes were moist, and he dropped a few tears. Auristella could not answer him, or perhaps did not wish to do so in Periander's presence: the utmost she did was to put her hand under the pillow and draw forth her picture, which she returned to the duke. He kissed her hand for so precious a gift; but Periander stretching out his, took it and said, “If it does not displease you, noble sir, and if you will be so kind as to permit it, I entreat you to lend it me that I may accomplish a promise I have given, which, without prejudice to you, will do me great harm if I accomplish it not.”

The duke resigned it with fresh protestations of being ready to give up fortune, life, and honour itself for it, and more if he had it to offer; and from this time he separated himself from the brother and sister, meaning to see them no more in Rome — a prudent lover, and not the first perhaps who has known how to seize an opportunity that offers itself to him.

All these things might have awakened Arnolfo to the perception of how much his hopes had diminished, and what danger he was in of losing the object of all his pilgrimages; and, in fact, he was quite inclined to accompany the duke, if not in his journey, at least in his intentions, and would have returned to Denmark, but love and his own generous heart forbade his doing this — leaving Periander when he needed consolation, and Auristella at the point of death.

He visited her and renewed his proposals, determined to wait in hopes of better prospects, in spite of all the suspicions that oppressed him.

## CHAPTER X.

Auristella recovers her Health, because the Jewess leaves off her Sorceries, and makes a proposal to Periander that they shall not marry.

WELL pleased was Hippolyta to see what the arts of the Jewess had done in endangering the life of Auristella, for in a week she had become so entirely changed from what she was, as to be only recognizable by the sound of her voice, — a thing which surprised her physicians, and defied their skill. It was the wonder of all who saw her. The French ladies assisted in nursing her with as much care as if she had been their sister, especially Felicia Flora, who loved her with the warmest affection.

At length the illness of Auristella instead of being confined to herself alone, began to affect those who attended her, and as none were so constantly with her as Periander, he was the first who suffered, not because the poisons and witcheries of the wicked Jewess worked directly upon him, but because the grief and sorrow he felt to see her condition, reduced him nearly to a similar state, and thus he fell away so much, that those who were about him began to fear for his life as well as hers.

Hippolyta seeing this, and seeing that her vile practices were turning against herself, guessed at once from whence the sickness of Periander had arisen, and tried to find a remedy by giving one to Auristella, who, reduced to a shadow, livid and ghastly, seemed hovering on the very verge of death, and every moment expecting that its gates would open to receive her, desired to prepare the way for her soul's departure by receiving the sacrament as she had been instructed in the Catholic faith, and therefore taking the proper steps with the utmost devotion in her power, she gave tokens of her good and virtuous way of thinking, and proved the purity of her manners and heart. She showed that she had learned thoroughly the lessons she had been taught since she came to Rome, and resigning herself to God's will, she felt calm and composed in spirit, and forgot kingdoms, thrones, and grandeurs.

Hippolyta then, having as I before said, seen, that if Auristella died, Periander would die too, hastened to the Jewess to desire that she would moderate the spell which was consuming Auristella's life, or cease the charm altogether, for she did not wish to be the cause of destroying three lives with one blow, since Auristella

dying, Periander would die, and Periander dying, she also would lose her life. The Jewess obeyed, as if the health or sickness of others was in her power, as if all the evils we meet with as chastisement, did not depend on God's will; but God, as a punishment for our own sins, permits the agency of what is called witchcraft, in destroying health, by the use of poisons and mixtures, which in process of time take away life from those they wish to kill, without any remedy to escape the danger, because the cause remains unknown, and no one can guess the reason of such mortal sickness, and so for the cure of such great evils, God's mercy is the only medicine.

Auristella began to leave off growing worse, which was a sign she was beginning to be better. The sun of her beauty began to glimmer, and give signs that it would once more dawn upon the heaven of her countenance. Once more the roses returned to bloom upon her cheeks, and in her eyes again shone the light of gladness, dispersing the clouds of melancholy. The sweetness of her voice returned; her lips resumed their carmine hue; her teeth, which had seemed like marble, now were pearls again as before; and in a short space of time she appeared all beautiful, lovely and charming as ever, and the good effects of this quickly told upon Periander and the rest, Croriano and Ruperta, Antonio and Constance; the latter, especially in joy or sorrow, always went along with Auristella.

She, giving thanks to Heaven for the mercies she had received, both in sickness and in health, one day called Periander, and having taken care to be alone, she spoke to him in the following manner: —

“My brother! since it has pleased Heaven that I should now for two years have called you by that sweet and endearing name, without ever stepping beyond the bounds of modesty and decorum; I could wish that this happy bond should still continue, and life alone should end it, instead of looking forward to any other tie; for a happiness is good when it is lasting, and it is lasting when it is pure. Our souls, as you well know, and as you have always taught me, are for ever moving onward, and have no other end and aim but to be with God, who is their centre; our desires in this life are infinite, and linked together they form a chain, which sometimes reaches Heaven, and sometimes leads to hell. If it seems to you, my brother, that this mode of talking is not like myself, and that I am outstepping that which should be expected from my youth and early education, recollect that experience has written much upon the blank paper of my mind. Chiefly I have learned that our greatest joy is to know and be with God, and that all the means whereby we can reach this end, are good, holy, and pleasant. Such are the ways of charity, modesty, and chastity, and if I think this, you will think the same; and thinking thus together, I believe that the love you bear me is so great that you



will wish what I wish. I am the heiress of a kingdom, and you know well the reason why I was sent by my dear mother to your father's court, in order that I might be safe from the dangers of war, which threatened my country. Hence resulted my coming here with you, and being obedient to your will, in which I have never once failed in the least degree. You have been to me father and brother; you have been my shelter, my protector, and finally, my guardian angel. You have been my teacher and my master, since you brought me to this city, where I have learned to be a true Christian, and now I would fain, if possible, go to Heaven without delays, alarms, or anxieties; and that cannot be, unless you release me from the promise I myself have given to you, the promise and the wish to become your wife. Give me back, my lord, the promise, and I will try to lose the wish, even though it should be by forcible means; for in order to attain so great a gift as Heaven, one must leave all one loves best on earth, even one's parents, and one's husband or wife. I leave you for no other: He for whom I leave you is God, who will reward you himself, which reward far exceeds what you lose in losing me. I have a younger sister quite as beautiful as I am, if we can call anything that is mortal beautiful; you may marry her and succeed to the crown, which is my right, and thus while you are yielding to my wishes you will not be cheated of your own. Why hangs your head, my brother? ah! why do your eyes seek the ground? Does my discourse displease you? do my wishes seem to you unreasonable? Tell me; answer me, at least let me know your will; possibly I may try to moderate mine, and find out some way more to your liking, and which will agree with mine."

Periander had listened to every word Auristella said in the most profound silence, a thousand suppositions in one brief moment rapidly forming in his imagination, all uniting in picturing the worst that could befall, for he thought that she abhorred him, as this change of life must put an end to his, since she could not but know that if she refused to become his wife, he had no longer anything to live for in this world: and this idea was so earnestly impressed upon his mind, that, without answering her a single word, he rose from his seat, and seeming as if he went to receive Felicia Flora and Constance and Antonio, who were entering the apartment, he went out and left Auristella, (I know not whether I ought to call it,) repenting, but, at all events, thoughtful, and in some confusion.

## CHAPTER XI.

Periander quits Rome in despair at Auristella's Proposal.

WATER that is enclosed in a narrow vessel, whilst it is in the greatest haste to escape, is slowest to pour out, because the first drops are detained by those which follow, and one impedes the other, till the current begins to rush and all the water breaks forth. So is it with the words that rush into the mind of a distressed lover, sometimes at the very tip of his tongue, yet hindered by those which follow too rapidly for utterance; till scarcely knowing which first came into his head, he is silent, and by silence he says more even than he wishes. This was shown in the small courtesy Periander displayed towards the visitors that he met entering Auristella's apartment. He, full of thoughts and fancies, and oppressed with the imaginations that crowded into his mind, disdained and deceived, as he thought himself, went out of Auristella's presence without knowing how, or wishing, or being able to reply to the long discourse she had held to him.

Antonio and his sister went to her, and found her like one awakening from a heavy dream, and speaking distinctly aloud to herself in such words as these: —

“Have I done wrong? But what does it signify? Is it not better he should know my intentions? Is it not better I should timely leave the crooked paths and dubious ways, and take the straight road by the shortest cut, that which clearly and distinctly shows us the happy end of our journey? I own that Periander's company would not hinder me from going to Heaven, but also I feel that I should reach it quicker without him. I owe more to myself than to another; if to the interests of Heaven and eternal glory, those of earth and earthly ties should yield, how much more should mine when I have no relationship with Periander.”

“I must warn you, sister Auristella,” here interposed Constance, “that you are giving us an idea of things which may awaken our suspicions, and bring you to confusion. If Periander is not your brother, you have been holding a very long conversation with him, and, if he is, why should you deem his company any cause for scandal?”

By this time Auristella had a little recovered herself, and hearing what Constance said, she tried to make amends for her want of caution, but did not

succeed, for it is a difficult matter to mend an untruth, and always leaves some doubts behind.

“I know not, my sister,” said Auristella, “what I have said; I know not whether Periander is my brother or not; all I know is, that he is at least as dear as my own soul; I live, I breathe only in him, in him I move, and by him I am supported, always restraining myself within proper bounds, without giving room for any other thoughts, and keeping a due decorum of manners, such as a woman of high birth ought to show to a brother as high born.”

“I understand you not, Lady Auristella,” here said Antonio, “for, in your discourse, you sometimes speak of Periander as your brother, and sometimes not; tell us who he is, and who you are, if you can tell it? For, whether he is your brother or no, at least you cannot deny that you are of high birth; and we (I speak of myself and my sister Constance) are not so inexperienced as to be astonished at anything you can relate; for, since we left the Barbarous Isle, the troubles and perils that we have seen and passed through have taught us a great deal, and, by a very small sign, we can discover the thread of the most difficult affairs, especially those of love, for it appears that they bring their own explanation with them. What if Periander should not be your brother, what if you are his lawful wife? And, again, is it not much that you have conducted yourselves with such modesty and purity of manners in the sight of Heaven, and of all who have been in your company? Love is not always rash and inconsiderate, nor are all lovers influenced by mere sensual feelings, but by the charm of the heart and mind; and it being thus, dear lady, again I entreat that you will tell us who you are and who is Periander, who seemed, as he passed us just now, to carry away a volcano in his eyes and a gag in his mouth.”

“Alas! unhappy that I am,” replied Auristella, “and far better it would have been that I had kept eternal silence, for silence would have saved him from that gag of which you speak. Women are indiscreet, imprudent, and impatient, and cannot hold their tongues. Whilst I was silent my soul was peaceful, I spoke, and my peace is gone; and now that I may lose it entirely, and so end the tragedy of my life, I will tell you (who have been sent by Heaven to be indeed a brother and a sister to me) that Periander is not my brother, neither is he my husband, nor yet my lover, at least, according to the common acceptation of the word. He is not one of those lovers who seek to dishonour the woman they love. — He is a king’s son, I am a king’s daughter, and the heiress of a kingdom. We are equal in blood. I have some advantage over him in my situation, in my inclinations none, and, withal, our wishes are the same, and our affections are honourably given to one another, only the thing which confounds and disturbs our intentions, and which forces us to wait, and places a restraint upon Periander, and distresses me,

is what I cannot tell you now, my friends; but I beseech you aid me to seek him out, for since he has taken the liberty of going without my leave, he will not return unsought.

“Then,” said Constance, “get up quickly, and let us go in search of him directly, for the cords which bind lovers do not allow of their going away very far from the beloved one. Come, we shall quickly find him. Soon you will see him, and yet sooner you will satisfy him; you will forget the scruples with which you have been surrounded, and give Periander your hand as his espoused wife, thereby putting an end to all calumny and evil report.”

Auristella rose up, and accompanied by Felicia Flora, Constance and Antonio, went out in search of Periander. They who now knew her to be a princess, looked upon her with redoubled reverence, and treated her with more respect.

Periander, meanwhile, whom they were seeking, had tried to go far away from all who might go in search of him. He left Rome on foot, and alone — unless his utter disconsolateness and his sorrow may be considered as company.

His melancholy thoughts and ever varying imaginations never left him. “Alas!” said he to himself, “Most beautiful Sigismunda, queen by nature and beautiful by the bounteous gift of the same Nature, superhumanly prudent, and surpassingly charming! little did it cost thee to consider me as a brother, since never in word or thought did I belie the name — not even malice itself could affirm that I did. If it be thy wish to go to heaven alone in thy maiden pride, without dependence upon any other but thy God and thyself, do so, in God’s name! Yet I warn thee — think not that thou wilt be sinless, or that thou canst act thus without being guilty of my death. Thou hast left me, lady, loaded and oppressed with the weight of silence, and thy falseness! Wherefore didst thou not declare this earlier, when it would not have been tearing my heart from my body to give up my love for thee? It was all thine: I gave up to thee my entire will, and thou hast cast me out. Rest in peace, my beloved, and know that all I can do I have done, in leaving thee.”

Night came on, and diverging a little from the high road, which was that which led to Naples, he heard the murmuring sound of a stream which ran amongst some trees, and throwing himself down upon its margin, he ceased his complaints, but his sighs and tears were ceaseless.

## CHAPTER XII.

Wherein it is related who Periander and Auristella are.

GOOD and evil seem to be so inseparable, that like two lines which form an angle, although they spring from different beginnings, yet both end in the same point.

Periander lay beside the tranquil stream; the clear and beautiful night and the murmuring waters were soothing companions: the trees too were company to him, and a fresh and gentle breeze dried his tears. He forgot his woes for the moment, and Auristella and the hope of finding a remedy for his sorrows, he dismissed to the winds — when suddenly a sound reached his ears; it was of a strange voice, but it caught his attention, for he heard the well known accents of his native language, without being able to distinguish whether it was muttering or singing.

Curiosity made him move nearer, and then he found that the voices proceeded from two persons, and that they were neither singing nor muttering, but engaged in deep conversation. What most surprised him was, that they talked in the Norwegian tongue at so great a distance from that country.

He concealed himself behind a tree in such a manner that the tree's shadow and his own were mingled in one. He collected his breath, and the first words that met his ears were, "You have not to tell me, sir, that the whole year in Norway is divided into two parts, for I have been there myself some time — where my misfortunes carried me — and I know that half the year it is night, and the other half day: I know that it is so; but why it is so, I am ignorant." To which the other answered, "If we reach Rome, I will point out to you upon a globe the cause of this wonderful fact, as natural in that country as it is in this, for day and night to be four and twenty hours long. I have also told you that near the most northern part of Norway, almost under the Arctic Pole, lies the island which is supposed to be the furthest end of the known world, at least of these northern parts. Its name was Tile, or as it is called by Virgil Thulé, in those lines that you will find in the Georgics, Book I: —

Ac tua nautæ

Numina sola colant: tibi serviat ultima Thule.

For Tile in Greek is the same as Thule in Latin. This island is nearly as large as England, rich and abundant in all things necessary for human life; still higher up is the island called Friseland, which was four hundred years undiscovered by any one. It is so large that it is called a kingdom, and not a very small one. The king of Tile is Maximin, son of Queen Eustochia, whose father died not many months ago, and left two sons, one of whom is this Maximin, of whom I spoke, the heir to his crown, and the other a noble youth, called Persiles, rich in the gifts of nature beyond all description, and beloved by his mother beyond all expression. How to praise the virtues of Persiles sufficiently I know not, and therefore I will not attempt it for fear my feeble efforts should impair their greatness; although the affection I have for him, having been his tutor from childhood, is such that I might rather be led to say too much, so it is best to be silent on that point.”

Periander, who heard all this, immediately knew that he who praised him could be no other than Serafido, his tutor; and also in the other, who was listening to him, he recognized Rutilio by his voice, as he made answers from time to time. Whether or not he was astonished at this, I leave to your good consideration, and more still when Serafido (for he it was,) said, —

“Eusebia, the queen of Friseland, had two daughters of exceeding great beauty, particularly the eldest, whose name is Sigismunda (the youngest is called Eusebia, after her mother). Nature had bestowed beauty on them all. The queen, with what design I know not, taking the opportunity of a war with which she was threatened, sent Sigismunda to Tile, to the care of Eustochia, to be brought up at that court, safe from the dangers of war, she said; but I myself believe that this was not the chief reason for sending her away, but that the Prince Maximin might fall in love with her, and make her his wife, which it was natural to suppose might happen from her extreme beauty, enough to melt a heart of marble, at least, if this suspicion of mine was a right one, for I cannot affirm that it was from experience. I know that Prince Maximin is dying for Sigismunda, but he was not in the island at the time she arrived at Tile; his mother sent him the picture of the lady, and told him of the embassy of the queen of Friseland, and his answer was, that she should be very kindly treated, and that he would marry her. This answer was like an arrow shot through the heart of my son Persiles (for by this tender name —— called him, having brought him up). From the moment he heard of it, he could get nothing to please him; he lost the vivacity of youth, and one heard no more of the gallant deeds by which he won the admiration and Jove of every one.

“Above all, he began to lose his health and give way to despair; the physicians, who were sent for, could make nothing of his ailment, for they were ignorant of its cause. The state of the pulse does not show the grief of the heart, and it is difficult and nearly impossible to comprehend the ailments which spring from that source. The mother, seeing her son dying, without being able to discover what was killing him, asked him again and again to reveal the cause of his suffering, since it was impossible that he should be ignorant of it himself, as he felt the effects: so powerful were the persuasions, so great the solicitude of the afflicted mother, that she conquered the obstinacy, or rather the firmness, of Persiles, and forced him to confess that he was dying of love for Sigismunda, and that he was determined to die rather than sin against the duty which he owed his brother. This declaration restored the queen to life, and she bade Persiles hope, telling him that a remedy might be found, and that it would be quite possible to overlook the claims of Maximin, and greater considerations even than a brother’s anger, might be waved to effect this object. Finally she went to Sigismunda herself, and told her of her son’s wishes, exaggerating all she should lose if she lost Persiles, a creature in whom all the graces and all the virtues were united; whereas Maximin was much the reverse, for the harshness of his manners made him somewhat unpopular, and she cried up the merits of Persiles to the highest extent.

“Sigismunda, who was very young, alone, and easily persuaded, replied that she had no will of her own, nor any counsellor but her own modesty; and so as she could preserve it, she left the queen to dispose of her as she pleased. The queen embraced her, and flew to carry her reply to Persiles. It was then agreed between them that they should absent themselves from the island before his brother returned, and as an excuse for their disappearance, she would say that they had made a vow to go to Rome, in order to get properly instructed in the Catholic faith, which was somewhat impaired in these northern countries, Persiles first having sworn that he would neither in word nor deed, offend against her modesty. So, loaded with jewels and advice, the queen dismissed them, and, when they were gone, she told me all that I have now related.

“It was two years and rather more before the prince Maximin returned to his own dominions, for he was engaged in the war he was continually waging with his enemies.

“He enquired for Sigismunda, and not finding her was a great vexation to him. As soon as he heard of the Voyage she had gone upon, he set out in search of her. He had great confidence in his brother’s virtue, but was not without suspicion, which a lover is never entirely free from. As his mother knew of his intentions, she called me aside, and committed to my charge the life, honour and

safety of her younger son, giving me orders to set out in search of him, and, if possible, to let him know that his brother was gone to look for him and Sigismunda. The Prince Maximin set sail with two large ships, and passing through the Straits of Hercules with various changes of weather and many storms, he reached at length the Isle of Trinacria, and from thence the fair city of Parthenope. He was at the present moment not far from thence, in a place called Terracina, where he had been taken ill, and had been at the point of death. I landed at Lisbon, where I obtained news of Persiles and Sigismunda; for two pilgrims whose beauty was making a great noise there, could be no other than they, for unless they are Persiles and Sigismunda, they must be incarnate angels."

"If their names," answered the listener to whom Serafido spoke, "were Periander and Auristella, instead of Persiles and Sigismunda, I could give you certain news of them, for I was some time in their company, and underwent with them many perils." He then related the adventures in the Barbarous Isle with some others.

Meantime day advanced, and Periander, that he might not be seen there, left them in order to return and give Auristella notice of his brother's arrival, and to take counsel with her what was best to be done in order to avoid his indignation, deeming it a miracle that he should have gained this information in so retired a spot; and, full of new thoughts, he went to seek, once more, his penitent Auristella, and the hopes which he had well nigh lost.



## CHAPTER XIII.

Periander returns towards Rome with the News of his Brother Maximums Arrival. Serafido his Tutor, and Rutilio meet with him.

THE pain and sensation of a fresh wound is hardly felt in the moment of anger and hot blood, which, after it becomes cold, causes an agony that is almost unendurable to the sufferer. It is the same with the passions of the mind; in allowing them time and space to be dwelt upon, and considered, they will often nearly vex you to death.

Auristella said all she wanted to Periander, and satisfied with having declared her desire, she expected its accomplishment, trusting to the perfect submission of Periander, who, after as we have already narrated, listening to her in silence, and by silence only, replying, quitted Rome, and the events we have related happened to him.

He recognized Rutilio, who told the history of the Barbarous Isle to his former tutor, Serafido, and added his suspicions that Auristella and Periander might prove to be Sigismunda and Persiles. He also said that they were sure to be found in Rome, and that from the first beginning of his acquaintance, he had seen that they were travelling on some secret business, and were only pretending to be brother and sister. He then questioned Serafido abundantly upon the condition and manners of the inhabitants of those distant isles, of which Maximin and the peerless Auristella were sovereigns; and Serafido again repeated how this island of Tile or Thulé, which is now vulgarly called Iceland, was the most northerly of all the islands in those seas, the other being a little further south, which, as he before said, was called Friseland, and which Nicholas Temo, a Venetian, discovered in the year one thousand three hundred and eighty. It was as large as Sicily, and, until then, unknown by the ancients. Eusebia is its queen, the mother of Sigismunda, whom I seek. There is yet another island nearly as important, and almost always covered with snow, called Greenland, at one corner of which there is a monastery, founded under the name of St. Thomas, and where there are monks of four nations, Spaniards, French, Latin, and Tuscan. They teach their different tongues to the principal people of the island, that when they leave it, they may be understood wherever they go. As I said before, the island is buried in snow; and at the top of a small mountain there

is a fountain, a great wonder, and worthy to be known: it throws out and pours forth a quantity of water of such heat, that when it reaches the sea and mingles with its waves, it not only thaws the frozen water, but warms it so that in that part an incredible variety of fishes are found, which fish form the chief sustenance of the monastery and the island in general, which derives thence her revenues and profits. This fountain also engenders stones of a glutinous quality, of which an adhesive cement is made, with which they build houses, as if they were of the hardest marble.

“Other things I could tell you,” said Serafido to Rutilio, “of these isles, which you would scarcely believe, and yet which are quite true.”

All this Periander did not hear. Rutilio told it to him afterwards, and he believed the truth of all that he related, from his own knowledge of so many of the facts stated.

The day was now come, and Periander had just reached that magnificent temple and church, almost the largest in Europe, of St. Peter, when he saw coming towards him a little troop of persons on horseback and on foot; and as they came near he knew them to be Auristella, Felicia Flora, Constance, and Antonio, and also Hippolyta, who, having heard of Periander’s disappearance, would not leave the pleasure of finding him to others, and so followed Auristella, taking the road pointed out by the Jewess, Zabulon’s wife, much like one who is friendly with the evil one.

The fair squadron came up to Periander, who saluted Auristella, and looking closely at her, he fancied that her countenance was more gentle in its expression, and her eyes milder. He told them directly all that he had heard the night before between his old tutor and Rutilio, and how his brother, Prince Maximin, was at Terracina, laid up with an illness there; and how he intended coming to Rome to be cured, and with a feigned name, and concealing his rank, to search for them.

He then asked advice from Auristella and the others, as to what he should do, for he could not expect a very gentle reception from his brother.

Auristella was thunderstruck at the unexpected tidings, and in an instant vanished alike the hopes of preserving her maiden freedom, and of retaining the company of her loved Periander.

As for the rest of the party they were all busy thinking what advice it would be best to give Periander. The first who offered any was the rich and enamoured Hippolyta. She proposed to take Periander and his sister with her to Naples, and spend her hundred thousand and more of ducats with them there.

The Calabrian Pyrrhus heard this offer, for he was by, and to him it was like a death blow; for in a ruffian soul like his, jealousy is engendered, not by disdain, but self-interest, and as his would suffer with the loss of Hippolyta, despair for

some moments took possession of him, during which he treasured up in his heart a mortal hatred against Periander, whose grace and beauty, great as they were, seemed magnified yet greater in his eyes, for such is the natural effect of jealousy.

Periander thanked Hippolyta, but did not accept her liberal offers. The others had no time to advise anything, for at this instant Serafido and Rutilio came up, and scarcely had they both caught sight of Periander than they ran and threw themselves at his feet, for his change of dress could not change his graceful figure. Rutilio clasped his waist, Serafido hung upon his neck, Rutilio wept with delight, and Serafido with joy and tenderness.

The bystanders watched this extraordinary and happy meeting with the warmest interest. Pyrrhus alone stood gloomily apart, his secret fury preying upon his vitals; and at last, so great was his envy and rage, to see how Periander was respected and beloved, that, impelled by blind passion, and hardly knowing what he did, he plunged his sword into Periander's right shoulder with such force, that the point came out at his left, taking a slanting direction from side to side.

Hippolyta was the first who saw the blow given, and her shriek was first heard crying out, "Ah, traitor! ah, fatal enemy of my peace, hast thou slain him who deserved to live for ever?" Serafido opened his arms, Rutilio loosened his, all bathed in the warm blood of Periander, who sank into those of Auristella. She had no power to speak, to breathe, or even to weep. His head fell upon her breast, and his arms hung down on either side. This sudden stroke, which then appeared more fatal than it afterwards proved, filled all those who witnessed it with horror, and left them pale as death. The great flow of blood was what seemed to threaten Periander's life, at least Auristella looked as if it was about to depart. Serafido and Rutilio arrested the assassin, and in spite of his strength and savage ferocity, they secured him, and with the help of several persons, who had by this time come up, he was taken to prison, and the governor in a few days after sentenced him to the gallows, as an incorrigible villain and assassin. His death was a great relief to Hippolyta, who henceforwards felt able to call her life her own.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Maximin appears among them ill of a fever. He dies after joining the hands of Periander and Auristella, now known as Persiles and Sigismunda.

SO little certainty is there in all earthly joys, that no man can promise himself a moment of perfect security. Auristella repenting the declaration she had made of her wishes and intentions to Periander, now hastened to seek him out joyfully, believing that with her hand and her repentance all would come right, and according to his desire, for she believed herself to be the key of the wheel of his fortune, and the Polar star of all his hopes; nor was she deceived in this, for already had he brought himself to comply with her will. But mark the cheats of this ever changing fortune. In one short instant, as we have seen, she finds herself quite another thing from what she was of late. She meant to smile, and she weeps; she thought of happy life, and she is at the point of death; she expected to see Periander, and lo, in his place, his brother Maximin! who, with a number of equipages and a large retinue, now approaches, entering Rome by this, the Terracina road; and seeing the crowd of persons that surrounded the wounded Periander, he ordered his carriage to stop, that he might learn the cause. Serafido went to meet him, saying, "O Prince Maximin, I bring you evil tidings; yonder wounded man in the arms of that beautiful lady is your brother Persiles, and she is the peerless Sigismunda; after all your diligence you find them in a sad time and season, so that instead of rejoicings, you will only come to follow them to their grave.

"They will not go to it alone," answered Maximin; "but I shall bear them company. Accordingly I am come; and, putting his head out of the carriage, he recognized his brother, although he was all covered with blood. He knew Sigismunda, too, although her face was pale as death, for the terror which had deprived it of colour had not altered the features. Sigismunda was all lovely before, but, if possible, she looked lovelier still in her sorrow, for, in some cases, grief only adds to beauty."

He left his carriage, and sunk into the arms of Sigismunda — Auristella no longer — but the queen of Friseland, and, in his imagination, queen of Tile also.

These strange events all came under the name of what is called fortune, which is but another name for the ordering of a heavenly Providence.

Maximin had set out for Rome, in the hope of finding better physicians to cure him of his disease than those he had at Terracina, and they had warned him that before he could reach Rome, he would be dead, more skilful and sagacious in this matter than in finding out how to cure him: it is true that his was an illness seldom cured.

And now before the great cathedral of St. Peter, in the midst of an open plain, has hideous death stepped forth to meet the young and beautiful Persiles, and threatens him with destruction, whilst to Maximin it gives a grave. He, finding himself near expiring, with his right hand takes Persiles' left in his own, and lifts it to his eyes, whilst in his left hand he takes Persiles' right and joins it with Sigismunda, saying, in a faint and feeble voice, and failing breath, "Your truth and virtue, my children, and my brother, I well know: open, O my brother, those closed lids of thine, and shut these eyes of mine in eternal sleep, and with thy other hand clasp that of Sigismunda, and seal therewith my gift and wish that she should be thy wife, and let this blood that is spilt of thine, and these thy friends who surround thee, be witnesses of the marriage. Thy father's kingdom is left for thee, and thou wilt have Sigismunda's also. May ye both enjoy health and happiness for many years to come!"

These words, so tender, so joyful, and yet so sorrowful, revived the fainting spirits of Periander, and, obedient to his brother's desire (on whom death had set his seal) he closed his eyes, and, in accents divided between grief and joy, pronounced the words which bound him for ever to Sigismunda as her husband.

This unexpected and melancholy event affected the bystanders strongly, and many of them shed tears, and sighs and sobs were heard all around.

They lifted up the dead body of Maximin and carried it into St. Peter's church, and placing Persiles, only half alive, in the carriage of the dead prince, they returned with him to Rome, where they found neither Bellamina nor Delicia, both of whom had gone back to France with the duke.

Arnoldo was strongly affected when he heard of this unexpected and strange marriage; he felt deeply how many years he had wasted in this pursuit, how many deeds he had done, and actions performed, in the hope of being at last rewarded by the peaceable possession of Sigismunda's peerless charms; and that which most vexed and disturbed his mind, was, to remember all that Clodio had said, which he would not believe, and of which he had now obtained such manifest proof. At first, indignant and disturbed, he determined to set off without speaking a word to either Persiles or Sigismunda; but, on second thoughts, considering their royal birth, and the excuse they had, and that this great piece of good fortune was reserved clearly for Persiles, he resolved that he would go to them; he did so, and was very kindly received, and, in order to console him and

give him less cause to complain, they offered him the young princess Eusebia, Sigismunda's sister, for a wife. He accepted this offer willingly, and he would have accompanied them at once to their own country, but that he thought it right to go and ask his father's leave, since in the affair of marriage, and indeed in all serious or important matters, it is right for children to consult their parents' pleasure. He stayed to assist in the cure of his intended brother-in-law; and when he was perfectly restored to health, he departed to join his father, and to prepare for his promised bride.

Felicia Flora had decided to marry Antonio the Barbarian; for she said she would never return to live among the friends and relations of the man who would have murdered him.

Croriano and Ruperta, their pilgrimage ended, returned to France, taking with them ample matter for discourse in the events of the feigned Auristella's history.

Persiles had his brother buried in St. Peter's, and took all his servants under his protection.

They visited all the churches in Rome, and loaded Constance with caresses.

Sigismunda presented her with the diamond cross, and would not part with her till she left her married to the count, her brother-in-law. Then, having kissed the Pope's feet, her vow accomplished, and her soul at peace, she lived in sweet companionship with her husband Persiles, to see their children's children grow up around them, their lives prolonged and blessed in their happy and numerous posterity.

**THE END**

## The Short Stories



*The house that Cervantes lived in at Valladolid between 1604 and 1606, during the publication of the first edition of Don Quixote. The building now serves as a museum.*





*The house seen from the back garden*



## THE EXEMPLARY NOVELS



*Translated by Walter K. Kelly*

This series of short stories was initially published in Madrid in 1613, containing tales that were written by Cervantes between 1590 and 1612. The collection was well received, following the extremely successful release of the first part of *Don Quixote*. The twelve short stories follow a model established in Italy at the time and they are usually grouped into two series: those characterised by an idealised nature and those of a realistic nature.

Those idealised in style, which are the closest to the Italian models, contain plots dealing with amorous entanglements, with improbable stories and fanciful characters, with some consideration of psychological development, in spite of the lack of reality found in the other tales. These stories include: *El amante liberal*, *Las dos doncellas*, *La española inglesa*, *La señora Cornelia* and *La fuerza de la sangre*.

The stories of a more realistic nature offer descriptions of realistic characters and environments, with intentional criticism in many cases. The best known stories in this class are *Rinconete y Cortadillo*, *El licenciado Vidriera*, *La gitanilla* and *La ilustre fregona*. However, the separation between the two groups is not definite and elements of the idealistic may be found in some of the realistic novels and vice versa.

Since there are multiple versions of some of these stories, it is believed that Cervantes introduced some variations in these novels for moral, social and aesthetic purposes, explaining perhaps the use of the epithet 'exemplary'. The more primitive version is found in the manuscript called the *de Porras de la Cámara*, a miscellaneous collection of various literary works which include a novel usually obscurely attributed to Cervantes, *La tía fingida*. On the other hand, some short stories are also embedded in *Don Quixote*, as are *El curioso impertinente* or *Historia del cautivo*, which have autobiographical elements.



*Cervantes*

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comienda de la Zaga de la Orden  
de Alcantara.*

Año



1613.

Có privilegio de Castilla, y de los Reynos de la Corona de Aragón.  
**EN MADRID,** Por Juan de la Cuesta.

Vendese en casa de Francisco de Rojas, librero del Rey nro Señor.

*The original front cover*

## PREFACE.

It seems to be generally admitted that in rendering the title of a book from one language into another, the form of the original should be retained, even at the cost of some deviation from ordinary usage. Cicero's work *De Officiis* is never spoken of as a treatise on Moral Duties, but as Cicero's Offices. Upon the same principle we have not entitled the following collection of tales, Instructive or Moral; though it is in this sense that the author applied to them the epithet *exemplares*, as he states distinctly in his preface. The Spanish word *exemplo*, from the time of the archpriest of Hita and Don Juan Manuel, has had the meaning of *instruction*, or *instructive story*.

The "Novelas Exemplares" were first published in 1613, three years before the death of Cervantes. They are all original, and have the air of being drawn from his personal experience and observation. Ticknor, in his "History of Spanish Literature," says of them, and of the "Impertinent Curiosity," inserted in the first part of Don Quixote: — "Their value is different, for they are written with different views, and in a variety of style greater than he has elsewhere shown; but most of them contain touches of what is peculiar in his talent, and are full of that rich eloquence and of those pleasing descriptions of natural scenery which always flow so easily from his pen. They have little in common with the graceful story-telling spirit of Boccaccio and his followers, and still less with the strictly practical tone of Don Juan Manuel's tales; nor, on the other hand, do they approach, except in the case of the 'Impertinent Curiosity,' the class of short novels which have been frequent in other countries within the last century. The more, therefore, we examine them, the more we shall find that they are original in their composition and general tone, and that they are strongly marked with the original genius of their author, as well as with the more peculiar traits of the national character, — the ground, no doubt, on which they have always been favourites at home, and less valued than they deserve to be abroad. As works of invention, they rank, among their author's productions, next after Don Quixote; in correctness and grace of style they stand before it.... They are all fresh from the racy soil of the national character, as that character is found in Andalusia, and are written with an idiomatic richness, a spirit, and a grace, which, though they are the oldest tales of their class in Spain, have left them ever since without successful rivals."

The first three tales in this volume have merely undergone the revision of the

editor, having been translated by another before he was engaged on the work.  
For the rest he alone is responsible.

W.K.K.

## DEDICATION

TO DON PEDRO FERNANDEZ DE CASTRO, COUNT OF LEMOS,  
ANDRADE, AND VILLALBA, &c.

Those who dedicate their works to some prince commonly fall into two errors. The first is, that in their dedicatory epistle, which ought to be brief and succinct, they dilate very complacently, whether moved by truth or flattery, on the deeds not only of their fathers and forefathers, but also of all their relations, friends, and benefactors. The second is, that they tell their patron they place their works under his protection and safeguard, in order that malicious and captious tongues may not presume to cavil and carp at them. For myself, shunning these two faults, I here pass over in silence the grandeur and titles of your excellency's ancient and royal house, and your infinite virtues both natural and acquired, leaving it to some new Phidias and Lysippus to engrave and sculpture them in marble and bronze, that they may rival time in duration. Neither do I supplicate your Excellency to take this book under your protection, for I know, that if it is not a good one, though I should put it under the wings of Astolfo's hippogrif, or beneath the club of Hercules, the Zoili, the cynics, the Aretinos, and the bores, will not abstain from abusing it, out of respect for anyone. I only beg your Excellency to observe that I present to you, without more words, thirteen tales, which, had they not been wrought in the laboratory of my own brains, might presume to stand beside the best. Such as they are, there they go, leaving me here rejoiced at the thought of manifesting, in some degree, the desire I feel to serve your Excellency as my true lord and benefactor. Our Lord preserve, &c.

Your Excellency's servant, MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA.  
MADRID, *13th of July, 1613.*

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

I wish it were possible, dear reader, to dispense with writing this preface; for that which I put at the beginning of my “Don Quixote” did not turn out so well for me as to give me any inclination to write another. The fault lies with a friend of mine — one of the many I have made in the course of my life with my heart rather than my head. This friend might well have caused my portrait, which the famous Don Juan de Jauregui would have given him, to be engraved and put in the first page of this book, according to custom. By that means he would have gratified my ambition and the wishes of several persons, who would like to know what sort of face and figure has he who makes bold to come before the world with so many works of his own invention. My friend might have written under the portrait— “This person whom you see here, with an oval visage, chestnut hair, smooth open forehead, lively eyes, a hooked but well-proportioned nose, & silvery beard that twenty years ago was golden, large moustaches, a small mouth, teeth not much to speak of, for he has but six, in bad condition and worse placed, no two of them corresponding to each other, a figure midway between the two extremes, neither tall nor short, a vivid complexion, rather fair than dark, somewhat stooped in the shoulders, and not very lightfooted: this, I say, is the author of ‘Galatea,’ ‘Don Quixote de la Mancha,’ ‘The Journey to Parnassus,’ which he wrote in imitation of Cesare Caporali Perusino, and other works which are current among the public, and perhaps without the author’s name. He is commonly called MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA. He was for many years a soldier, and for five years and a half in captivity, where he learned to have patience in adversity. He lost his left hand by a musket-shot in the battle of Lepanto: and ugly as this wound may appear, he regards it as beautiful, having received it on the most memorable and sublime occasion which past times have over seen, or future times can hope to equal, fighting under the victorious banners of the son of that thunderbolt of war, Charles V., of blessed memory.” Should the friend of whom I complain have had nothing more to say of me than this, I would myself have composed a couple of dozen of eulogiums, and communicated them to him in secret, thereby to extend my fame and exalt the credit of my genius; for it would be absurd to expect the exact truth in such matters. We know well that neither praise nor abuse is meted out with strict accuracy.

However, since this opportunity is lost, and I am left in the lurch without a



portrait, I must have recourse to my own tongue, which, for all its stammering, may do well enough to state some truths that are tolerably self-evident. I assure you then, dear reader, that you can by no means make a fricassee of these tales which I here present to you, for they have neither legs, head, bowels, nor anything of the sort; I mean that the amorous intrigues you will find in some of them, are so decorous, so measured, and so conformable to reason and Christian propriety, that they are incapable of exciting any impure thoughts in him who reads them with or without caution.

I have called them *exemplary*, because if you rightly consider them, there is not one of them from which you may not draw some useful example; and were I not afraid of being too prolix, I might show you what savoury and wholesome fruit might be extracted from them, collectively and severally.

My intention has been to set up, in the midst of our community, a billiard-table, at which every one may amuse himself without hurt to body and soul; for innocent recreations do good rather than harm. One cannot be always at church, or always saying one's prayers, or always engaged in one's business, however important it may be; there are hours for recreation when the wearied mind should take repose. It is to this end that alleys of trees are planted to walk in, waters are conveyed from remote fountains, hills are levelled, and gardens are cultivated with such care. One thing I boldly declare: could I by any means suppose that these novels could excite any bad thought or desire in those who read them, I would rather cut off the hand with which I write them, than give them to the public. I am at an age when it does not become me to trifle with the life to come, for I am upwards of sixty-four.

My genius and my inclination prompt me to this kind of writing; the more so as I consider (and with truth) that I am the first who has written novels in the Spanish language, though many have hitherto appeared among us, all of them translated from foreign authors. But these are my own, neither imitated nor stolen from anyone; my genius has engendered them, my pen has brought them forth, and they are growing up in the arms of the press. After them, should my life be spared, I will present to you the Adventures of Persiles, a book which ventures to compete with Heliodorus. But previously you shall see, and that before long, the continuation of the exploits of Don Quixote and the humours of Sancho Panza; and then the Weeks of the Garden. This is promising largely for one of my feeble powers; but who can curb his desires? I only beg you to remark that since I have had the boldness to address these novels to the great Count of Lemos, they must contain some hidden mystery which exalts their merit.

I have no more to say, so pray God to keep you, and give me patience to bear all the ill that will be spoken of me by more than one subtle and starched critic.

*Vale.*

## THE LADY CORNELIA.

Don Antonio de Isunza and Don Juan de Gamboa, gentlemen of high birth and excellent sense, both of the same age, and very intimate friends, being students together at Salamanca, determined to abandon their studies and proceed to Flanders. To this resolution they were incited by the fervour of youth, their desire to see the world, and their conviction that the profession of arms, so becoming to all, is more particularly suitable to men of illustrious race.

But they did not reach Flanders until peace was restored, or at least on the point of being concluded; and at Antwerp they received letters from their parents, wherein the latter expressed the great displeasure caused them by their sons having left their studies without informing them of their intention, which if they had done, the proper measures might have been taken for their making the journey in a manner befitting their birth and station.

Unwilling to give further dissatisfaction to their parents, the young men resolved to return to Spain, the rather as there was now nothing to be done in Flanders. But before doing so they determined to visit all the most renowned cities of Italy; and having seen the greater part of them, they were so much attracted by the noble university of Bologna, that they resolved to remain there and complete the studies abandoned at Salamanca.

They imparted their intentions to their parents, who testified their entire approbation by the magnificence with which they provided their sons with every thing proper to their rank, to the end that, in their manner of living, they might show who they were, and of what house they were born. From the first day, therefore, that the young men visited the schools, all perceived them to be gallant, sensible, and well-bred gentlemen.

Don Antonio was at this time in his twenty-fourth year, and Don Juan had not passed his twenty-sixth. This fair period of life they adorned by various good qualities; they were handsome, brave, of good address, and well versed in music and poetry; in a word, they were endowed with such advantages as caused them to be much sought and greatly beloved by all who knew them. They soon had numerous friends, not only among the many Spaniards belonging to the university, but also among people of the city, and of other nations, to all of whom they proved themselves courteous, liberal, and wholly free from that arrogance which is said to be too often exhibited by Spaniards.

Being young, and of joyous temperament, Don Juan and Don Antonio did not

fail to give their attention to the beauties of the city. Many there were indeed in Bologna, both married and unmarried, remarkable as well for their virtues as their charms; but among them all there was none who surpassed the Signora Cornelia Bentivoglia, of that old and illustrious family of the Bentivogli, who were at one time lords of Bologna.

Cornelia was beautiful to a marvel; she had been left under the guardianship of her brother Lorenzo Bentivoglio, a brave and honourable gentleman. They were orphans, but inheritors of considerable wealth — and wealth is a great alleviation of the evils of the orphan state. Cornelia lived in complete seclusion, and her brother guarded her with unwearied solicitude. The lady neither showed herself on any occasion, nor would her brother consent that any one should see her; but this very fact inspired Don Juan and Don Antonio with the most lively desire to behold her face, were it only at church. Yet all the pains they took for that purpose proved vain, and the wishes they had felt on the subject gradually diminished, as the attempt appeared more and more hopeless. Thus, devoted to their studies, and varying these with such amusements as are permitted to their age, the young men passed a life as cheerful as it was honourable, rarely going out at night, but when they did so, it was always together and well armed.

One evening, however, when Don Juan was preparing to go out, Don Antonio expressed his desire to remain at home for a short time, to repeat certain orisons: but he requested Don Juan to go without him, and promised to follow him.

“Why should I go out to wait for you?” said Don Juan. “I will stay; if you do not go out at all to-night, it will be of very little consequence.” “By no means shall you stay,” returned Don Antonio: “go and take the air; I will be with you almost immediately, if you take the usual way.”

“Well, do as you please,” said Don Juan: “if you come you will find me on our usual beat.” With these words Don Juan left the house.

The night was dark, and the hour about eleven. Don Juan passed through two or three streets, but finding himself alone, and with no one to speak to, he determined to return home. He began to retrace his steps accordingly; and was passing through a street, the houses of which had marble porticoes, when he heard some one call out, “Hist! hist!” from one of the doors. The darkness of the night, and the shadow cast by the colonnade, did not permit him to see the whisperer; but he stopped at once, and listened attentively. He saw a door partially opened, approached it, and heard these words uttered in a low voice, “Is it you, Fabio?” Don Juan, on the spur of the moment, replied, “Yes!” “Take it, then,” returned the voice, “take it, and place it in security; but return instantly, for the matter presses.” Don Juan put out his hand in the dark, and encountered a packet. Proceeding to take hold of it, he found that it required both hands;

instinctively he extended the second, but had scarcely done so before the portal was closed, and he found himself again alone in the street, loaded with, he knew not what.

Presently the cry of an infant, and, as it seemed, but newly born, smote his ears, filling him with confusion and amazement, for he knew not what next to do, or how to proceed in so strange a case. If he knocked at the door he was almost certain to endanger the mother of the infant; and if he left his burthen there, he must imperil the life of the babe itself. But if he took it home he should as little know what to do with it, nor was he acquainted with any one in the city to whom he could entrust the care of the child; yet remembering that he had been required to come back quickly, after placing his charge in safety, he determined to take the infant home, leave it in the hands of his old housekeeper, and return to see if his aid was needed in any way, since he perceived clearly that the person who had been expected to come for the child had not arrived, and the latter had been given to himself in mistake. With this determination, Don Juan soon reached his home; but found that Antonio had already left it. He then went to his chamber, and calling the housekeeper, uncovered the infant, which was one of the most beautiful ever seen; whilst, as the good woman remarked, the elegance of the clothes in which the little creature was wrapped, proved him — for it was a boy — to be the son of rich parents.

“You must, now,” said Don Juan to his housekeeper, “find some one to nurse this infant; but first of all take away these rich coverings, and put on him others of the plainest kind. Having done that, you must carry the babe, without a moment’s delay, to the house of a midwife, for there it is that you will be most likely to find all that is requisite in such a case. Take money to pay what may be needful, and give the child such parents as you please, for I desire to hide the truth, and not let the manner in which I became possessed of it be known.” The woman promised that she would obey him in every point; and Don Juan returned in all haste to the street, to see whether he should receive another mysterious call. But just before he arrived at the house whence the infant had been delivered to him, the clash of swords struck his ear, the sound being as that of several persons engaged in strife. He listened carefully, but could hear no word; the combat was carried on in total silence; but the sparks cast up by the swords as they struck against the stones, enabled him to perceive that one man was defending himself against several assailants; and he was confirmed in this belief by an exclamation which proceeded at length from the last person attacked. “Ah, traitors! you are many and I am but one, yet your baseness shall not avail you.”

Hearing and seeing this, Don Juan, listening only to the impulses of his brave heart, sprang to the side of the person assailed, and opposing the buckler he

carried on his arm to the swords of the adversaries, drew his own, and speaking in Italian that he might not be known as a Spaniard, he said— “Fear not, Signor, help has arrived that will not fail you while life holds; lay on well, for traitors are worth but little however many there may be.” To this, one of the assailants made answer— “You lie; there are no traitors here. He who seeks to recover his lost honour is no traitor, and is permitted to avail himself of every advantage.”

No more was said on either side, for the impetuosity of the assailants, who, as Don Juan thought, amounted to not less than six, left no opportunity for further words. They pressed his companion, meanwhile, very closely; and two of them giving him each a thrust at the same time with the point of their swords, he fell to the earth. Don Juan believed they had killed him; he threw himself upon the adversaries, nevertheless, and with a shower of cuts and thrusts, dealt with extraordinary rapidity, caused them to give way for several paces. But all his efforts must needs have been vain for the defence of the fallen man, had not Fortune aided him, by making the neighbours come with lights to their windows and shout for the watch, whereupon the assailants ran off and left the street clear.

The fallen man was meanwhile beginning to move; for the strokes he had received, having encountered a breastplate as hard as adamant, had only stunned, but not wounded him.

Now, Don Juan’s hat had been knocked off in the fray, and thinking he had picked it up, he had in fact put on that of another person, without perceiving it to be other than his own. The gentleman whom he had assisted now approached Don Juan, and accosted him as follows:— “Signor Cavalier, whoever you may be, I confess that I owe you my life, and I am bound to employ it, with all I have or can command, in your service: do me the favour to tell me who you are, that I may know to whom my gratitude is due.”

“Signor,” replied Don Juan, “that I may not seem discourteous, and in compliance with your request, although I am wholly disinterested in what I have done, you shall know that I am a Spanish gentleman, and a student in this city; if you desire to hear my name I will tell you, rather lest you should have some future occasion for my services than for any other motive, that I am called Don Juan de Gamboa.”

“You have done me a singular service, Signor Don Juan de Gamboa,” replied the gentleman who had fallen, “but I will not tell you who I am, nor my name, which I desire that you should learn from others rather than from myself; yet I will take care that you be soon informed respecting these things.”

Don Juan then inquired of the stranger if he were wounded, observing, that he had seen him receive two furious lunges in the breast; but the other replied that he was unhurt; adding, that next to God, a famous plastron that he wore had

defended him against the blows he had received, though his enemies would certainly have finished him had Don Juan not come to his aid.

While thus discoursing, they beheld a body of men advancing towards them; and Don Juan exclaimed— “If these are enemies, Signor, let us hasten to put ourselves on our guard, and use our hands as men of our condition should do.”

“They are not enemies, so far as I can judge,” replied the stranger. “The men who are now coming towards us are friends.”

And this was the truth; the persons approaching, of whom there were eight, surrounded the unknown cavalier, with whom they exchanged a few words, but in so low a tone that Don Juan could not hear the purport. The gentleman then turned to Don Juan and said— “If these friends had not arrived I should certainly not have left your company, Signor Don Juan, until you had seen me in some place of safety; but as things are, I beg you now, with all kindness, to retire and leave me in this place, where it is of great importance that I should remain.” Speaking thus, the stranger carried his hand to his head, but finding that he was without a hat, he turned towards the persons who had joined him, desiring them to give him one, and saying that his own had fallen. He had no sooner spoken than Don Juan presented him with that which he had himself just picked up, and which he had discovered to be not his own. The stranger having felt the hat, returned it to Don Juan, saying that it was not his, and adding, “On your life, Signor Don Juan, keep this hat as a trophy of this affray, for I believe it to be one that is not unknown.”

The persons around then gave the stranger another hat, and Don Juan, after exchanging a few brief compliments with his companion, left him, in compliance with his desire, without knowing who he was: he then returned home, not daring at that moment to approach the door whence he had received the newly-born infant, because the whole neighbourhood had been aroused, and was in movement.

Now it chanced that as Don Juan was returning to his abode, he met his comrade Don Antonio de Isunza; and the latter no sooner recognised him in the darkness, than he exclaimed, “Turn about, Don Juan, and walk with me to the end of the street; I have something to tell you, and as we go along will relate a story such as you have never heard before in your life.”

“I also have one of the same kind to tell you,” returned Don Juan, “but let us go up the street as you say, and do you first relate your story.” Don Antonio thereupon walked forward, and began as follows:— “You must know that in little less than an hour after you had left the house, I left it also, to go in search of you, but I had not gone thirty paces from this place when I saw before me a black mass, which I soon perceived to be a person advancing in great haste. As

the figure approached nearer, I perceived it to be that of a woman, wrapped in a very wide mantle, and who, in a voice interrupted by sobs and sighs, addressed me thus, 'Are you, sir, a stranger, or one of the city?' 'I am a stranger,' I replied, 'and a Spaniard.' 'Thanks be to God!' she exclaimed, 'he will not have me die without the sacraments.' 'Are you then wounded, madam?' continued I, 'or attacked by some mortal malady?' 'It may well happen that the malady from which I suffer may prove mortal, if I do not soon receive aid,' returned the lady, 'wherefore, by the courtesy which is ever found among those of your nation, I entreat you, Signor Spaniard, take me from these streets, and lead me to your dwelling with all the speed you may; there, if you wish it, you shall know the cause of my sufferings, and who I am, even though it should cost me my reputation to make myself known.'

"Hearing this," continued Don Antonio, "and seeing that the lady was in a strait which permitted no delay, I said nothing more, but offering her my hand, I conducted her by the by-streets to our house. Our page, Santisteban, opened the door, but, commanding him to retire, I led the lady in without permitting him to see her, and took her into my room, where she had no sooner entered than she fell fainting on my bed. Approaching to assist her, I removed the mantle which had hitherto concealed her face, and discovered the most astonishing loveliness that human eyes ever beheld. She may be about eighteen years old, as I should suppose, but rather less than more. Bewildered for a moment at the sight of so much beauty, I remained as one stupified, but recollecting myself, I hastened to throw water on her face, and, with a pitiable sigh, she recovered consciousness.

"The first word she uttered was the question, 'Do you know me, Signor?' I replied, 'No, lady! I have not been so fortunate as ever before to have seen so much beauty.' 'Unhappy is she,' returned the lady, 'to whom heaven has given it for her misfortune. But, Signor, this is not the time to praise my beauty, but to mourn my distress. By all that you most revere, I entreat you to leave me shut up here, and let no one behold me, while you return in all haste to the place where you found me, and see if there be any persons fighting there. Yet do not take part either with one side or the other. Only separate the combatants, for whatever injury may happen to either, must needs be to the increase of my own misfortunes.' I then left her as she desired," continued Don Antonio, "and am now going to put an end to any quarrel which may arise, as the lady has commanded me."

"Have you anything more to say?" inquired Don Juan.

"Do you think I have not said enough," answered Don Antonio, "since I have told you that I have now in my chamber, and hold under my key, the most wonderful beauty that human eyes have ever beheld."



“The adventure is a strange one, without doubt,” replied Don Juan, “but listen to mine;” and he instantly related to his friend all that had happened to him. He told how the newly-born infant was then in their house, and in the care of their housekeeper, with the orders he had given as to changing its rich habits for others less remarkable, and for procuring a nurse from the nearest midwife, to meet the present necessity. “As to the combat you come in quest of,” he added, “that is already ended, and peace is made.” Don Juan further related that he had himself taken part in the strife; and concluded by remarking, that he believed those whom he had found engaged were all persons of high quality, as well as great courage.

Each of the Spaniards was much surprised at the adventure of the other, and they instantly returned to the house to see what the lady shut up there might require. On the way, Don Antonio told Don Juan that he had promised the unknown not to suffer any one to see her; assuring her that he only would enter the room, until she should herself permit the approach of others.

“I shall nevertheless do my best to see her,” replied Don Juan; “after what you have said of her beauty, I cannot but desire to do so, and shall contrive some means for effecting it.”

Saying this they arrived at their house, when one of their three pages, bringing lights, Don Antonio cast his eyes on the hat worn by Don Juan, and perceived that it was glittering with diamonds. Don Juan took it off, and then saw that the lustre of which his companion spoke, proceeded from a very rich band formed of large brilliants. In great surprise, the friends examined the ornament, and concluded that if all the diamonds were as precious as they appeared to be, the hat must be worth more than two thousand ducats. They thus became confirmed in the conviction entertained by Don Juan, that the persons engaged in the combat were of high quality, especially the gentleman whose part he had taken, and who, as he now recollected, when bidding him take the hat, and keep it, had remarked that it was not unknown.

The young men then commanded their pages to retire, and Don Antonio, opening the door of his room, found the lady seated on his bed, leaning her cheek on her hand, and weeping piteously. Don Juan also having approached the door, the splendour of the diamonds caught the eye of the weeping lady, and she exclaimed, “Enter, my lord duke, enter! Why afford me in such scanty measure the happiness of seeing you; enter at once, I beseech you.”

“Signora,” replied Don Antonio, “there is no duke here who is declining to see you.”

“How, no duke!” she exclaimed. “He whom I have just seen is the Duke of Ferrara; the rich decoration of his hat does not permit him to conceal himself.”

“Of a truth, Signora, he who wears the hat you speak of is no duke; and if you please to undeceive yourself by seeing that person, you have but to give your permission, and he shall enter.”

“Let him do so,” said the lady; “although, if he be not the duke, my misfortune will be all the greater.”

Don Juan had heard all this, and now finding that he was invited to enter, he walked into the apartment with his hat in his hand; but he had no sooner placed himself before the lady than she, seeing he was not the person she had supposed, began to exclaim, in a troubled voice and with broken words, “Ah! miserable creature that I am, tell me, Signor — tell me at once, without keeping me in suspense, what do you know of him who owned that sombrero? How is it that he no longer has it, and how did it come into your possession? Does he still live, or is this the token that he sends me of his death? Oh! my beloved, what misery is this! I see the jewels that were thine. I see myself shut up here without the light of thy presence. I am in the power of strangers; and if I did not know that they were Spaniards and gentlemen, the fear of that disgrace by which I am threatened would already have finished my life.”

“Calm yourself, madam,” replied Don Juan, “for the master of this sombrero is not dead, nor are you in a place where any increase to your misfortunes is to be dreaded. We think only of serving you, so far as our means will permit, even to the exposing our lives for your defence and succour. It would ill become us to suffer that the trust you have in the faith of Spaniards should be vain; and since we are Spaniards, and of good quality — for here that assertion, which might otherwise appear arrogant, becomes needful — be assured that you will receive all the respect which is your due.”

“I believe you,” replied the lady; “but, nevertheless, tell me, I pray you, how this rich sombrero came into your possession, and where is its owner? who is no less a personage than Alfonso d’Este, Duke of Ferrara.”

Then Don Juan, that he might not keep the lady longer in suspense, related to her how he had found the hat in the midst of a combat, in which he had taken the part of a gentleman, who, from what she had said, he could not now doubt to be the Duke of Ferrara. He further told her how, having lost his own hat in the strife, the gentleman had bidden him keep the one he had picked up, and which belonged, as he said, to a person not unknown; that neither the cavalier nor himself had received any wound; and that, finally, certain friends or servants of the former had arrived, when he who was now believed to be the duke had requested Don Juan to leave him in that place, where he desired for certain reasons to remain.

“This, madam,” concluded Don Juan, “is the whole history of the manner in

which the hat came into my possession; and for its master, whom you suppose to be the Duke of Ferrara, it is not an hour since I left him in perfect safety. Let this true narration suffice to console you, since you are anxious to be assured that the Duke is unhurt."

To this the lady made answer, "That you, gentlemen, may know how much reason I have to inquire for the duke, and whether I need be anxious for his safety, listen in your turn with attention, and I will relate what I know not yet if I must call my unhappy history."

While these things were passing, the housekeeper of Don Antonio and Don Juan was occupied with the infant, whose mouth she had moistened with honey, and whose rich habits she was changing for clothes of a very humble character. When that was done, she was about to carry the babe to the house of the midwife, as Don Juan had recommended, but as she was passing with it before the door of the room wherein the lady was about to commence her history, the little creature began to cry aloud, insomuch that the lady heard it. She instantly rose to her feet, and set herself to listen, when the complaints of the infant arrived more distinctly to her ear.

"What child is this, gentlemen?" said she, "for it appears to be but just born."

Don Juan replied, "It is a little fellow who has been laid at the door of our house to-night, and our servant is about to seek some one who will nurse it."

"Let them bring it to me, for the love of God!" exclaimed the lady, "for I will offer that charity to the child of others, since it has not pleased Heaven that I should be permitted to nourish my own."

Don Juan then called the housekeeper, and taking the infant from her arms he placed it in those of the lady, saying, "Behold, madam, this is the present that has been made to us to-night, and it is not the first of the kind that we have received, since but few months pass wherein we do not find such God-sends hooked on to the hinges of our doors."

The lady had meanwhile taken the infant into her arms, and looked attentively at its face, but remarking the poverty of its clothing, which was, nevertheless, extremely clean, she could not restrain her tears. She cast the kerchief which she had worn around her head over her bosom, that she might succour the infant with decency, and bending her face over that of the child, she remained long without raising her head, while her eyes rained torrents of tears on the little creature she was nursing.

The babe was eager to be fed, but finding that it could not obtain the nourishment it sought, the lady returned the babe to Don Juan, saying, "I have vainly desired to be charitable to this deserted infant, and have but shown that I am new to such matters. Let your servants put a little honey on the lips of the

child, but do not suffer them to carry it through the streets at such an hour; bid them wait until the day breaks, and let the babe be once more brought to me before they take it away, for I find a great consolation in the sight of it.”

Don Juan then restored the infant to the housekeeper, bidding her take the best care she could of it until daybreak, commanding that the rich clothes it had first worn should be put on it again, and directing her not to take it from the house until he had seen it once more. That done, he returned to the room; and the two friends being again alone with the beautiful lady, she said, “If you desire that I should relate my story, you must first give me something that may restore my strength, for I feel in much need of it.” Don Antonio flew to the beaufet for some conserves, of which the lady ate a little; and having drunk a glass of water, and feeling somewhat refreshed, she said, “Sit down, Signors, and listen to my story.”

The gentlemen seated themselves accordingly, and she, arranging herself on the bed, and covering her person with the folds of her mantle, suffered the veil which she had kept about her head to fall on her shoulders, thus giving her face to view, and exhibiting in it a lustre equal to that of the moon, rather of the sun itself, when displayed in all its splendour. Liquid pearls fell from her eyes, which she endeavoured to dry with a kerchief of extraordinary delicacy, and with hands so white that he must have had much judgment in colour who could have found a difference between them and the cambric. Finally, after many a sigh and many an effort to calm herself, with a feeble and trembling voice, she said —

“I, Signors, am she of whom you have doubtless heard mention in this city, since, such as it is, there are few tongues that do not publish the fame of my beauty. I am Cornelia Bentivoglio, sister of Lorenzo Bentivoglio; and, in saying this, I have perhaps affirmed two acknowledged truths, — the one my nobility, and the other my beauty. At a very early age I was left an orphan to the care of my brother, who was most sedulous in watching over me, even from my childhood, although he reposed more confidence in my sentiments of honour than in the guards he had placed around me. In short, kept thus between walls and in perfect solitude, having no other company than that of my attendants, I grew to womanhood, and with me grew the reputation of my loveliness, bruited abroad by the servants of my house, and by such as had been admitted to my privacy, as also by a portrait which my brother had caused to be taken by a famous painter, to the end, as he said, that the world might not be wholly deprived of my features, in the event of my being early summoned by Heaven to a better life.

“All this might have ended well, had it not chanced that the Duke of Ferrara consented to act as sponsor at the nuptials of one of my cousins; when my

brother permitted me to be present at the ceremony, that we might do the greater honour to our kinswoman. There I saw and was seen; there, as I believe, hearts were subjugated, and the will of the beholders rendered subservient; there I felt the pleasure received from praise, even when bestowed by flattering tongues; and, finally, I there beheld the duke, and was seen by him; in a word, it is in consequence of this meeting that you see me here.

“I will not relate to you, Signors (for that would needlessly protract my story), the various stratagems and contrivances by which the duke and myself, at the end of two years, were at length enabled to bring about that union, our desire for which had received birth at those nuptials. Neither guards, nor seclusion, nor remonstrances, nor human diligence of any kind, sufficed to prevent it, and we were finally made one; for without the sanction due to my honour, Alfonso would certainly not have prevailed. I would fain have had him publicly demand my hand from my brother, who would not have refused it; nor would the duke have had to excuse himself before the world as to any inequality in our marriage, since the race of the Bentivogli is in no manner inferior to that of Este; but the reasons which he gave for not doing as I wished appeared to me sufficient, and I suffered them to prevail.

“The visits of the duke were made through the intervention of a servant, over whom his gifts had more influence than was consistent with the confidence reposed in her by my brother. After a time I perceived that I was about to become a mother, and feigning illness and low spirits, I prevailed on Lorenzo to permit me to visit the cousin at whose marriage it was that I first saw the duke; I then apprised the latter of my situation, letting him also know the danger in which my life was placed from that suspicion of the truth which I could not but fear that Lorenzo must eventually entertain.

“It was then agreed between us, that when the time for my travail drew near, the duke should come, with certain of his friends, and take me to Ferrara, where our marriage should be publicly celebrated. This was the night on which I was to have departed, and I was waiting the arrival of Alfonso, when I heard my brother pass the door with several other persons, all armed, as I could hear, by the noise of their weapons. The terror caused by this event was such as to occasion the premature birth of my infant, a son, whom the waiting-woman, my confidant, who had made all ready for his reception, wrapped at once in the clothes we had provided, and gave at the street-door, as she told me, to a servant of the duke. Soon afterwards, taking such measures as I could under circumstances so pressing, and hastened by the fear of my brother, I also left the house, hoping to find the duke awaiting me in the street. I ought not to have gone forth until he had come to the door; but the armed band of my brother, whose sword I felt at

my throat, had caused me such terror that I was not in a state to reflect. Almost out of my senses I came forth, as you behold me; and what has since happened you know. I am here, it is true, without my husband, and without my son; yet I return thanks to Heaven which has led me into your hands — for from you I promise myself all that may be expected from Spanish courtesy, reinforced, as it cannot but be in your persons, by the nobility of your race.”

Having said this, the lady fell back on the bed, and the two friends hastened to her assistance, fearing she had again fainted. But they found this not to be the case; she was only weeping bitterly. Wherefore Don Juan said to her, “If up to the present moment, beautiful lady, my companion Don Antonio, and I, have felt pity and regret for you as being a woman, still more shall we now do so, knowing your quality; since compassion and grief are changed into the positive obligation and duty of serving and aiding you. Take courage, and do not be dismayed; for little as you are formed to endure such trials, so much the more will you prove yourself to be the exalted person you are, as your patience and fortitude enable you to rise above your sorrows. Believe me, Signora, I am persuaded that these extraordinary events are about to have a fortunate conclusion; for Heaven can never permit so much beauty to endure permanent sorrow, nor suffer your chaste purposes to be frustrated. Go now to bed, Signora, and take that care of your health of which you have so much need; there shall presently come to wait on you a servant of ours, in whom you may confide as in ourselves, for she will maintain silence respecting your misfortunes with no less discretion than she will attend to all your necessities.”

“The condition in which I find myself,” replied the lady, “might compel me to the adoption of more difficult measures than those you advise. Let this woman come, Signors; presented to me by you, she cannot fail to be good and serviceable; but I beseech you let no other living being see me.”

“So shall it be,” replied Don Antonio; and the two friends withdrew, leaving Cornelia alone.

Don Juan then commanded the housekeeper to enter the room, taking with her the infant, whose rich habits she had already replaced. The woman did as she was ordered, having been previously told what she should reply to the questions of the Signora respecting the infant she bore in her arms. Seeing her come in, Cornelia instantly said, “You come in good time, my friend; give me that infant, and place the light near me.”

The servant obeyed; and, taking the babe in her arms, Cornelia instantly began to tremble, gazed at him intently, and cried out in haste, “Tell me, good woman, is this child the same that you brought me a short time since?” “It is the same, Signora,” replied the woman. “How is it, then, that his clothing is so different?

Certainly, dame housekeeper, either these are other wrappings, or the infant is not the same." "It may all be as you say," began the old woman. "All as I say!" interrupted Cornelia, "how and what is this? I conjure you, friend, by all you most value, to tell me whence you received these rich clothes; for my heart seems to be bursting in my bosom! Tell me the cause of this change; for you must know that these things belong to me, if my sight do not deceive me, and my memory have not failed. In these robes, or some like them, I entrusted to a servant of mine the treasured jewel of my soul! Who has taken them from him? Ah, miserable creature that I am! who has brought these things here? Oh, unhappy and woeful day!"

Don Juan and Don Antonio, who were listening to all this, could not suffer the matter to go further, nor would they permit the exchange of the infant's dress to trouble the poor lady any longer. They therefore entered the room, and Don Juan said, "This infant and its wrappings are yours, Signora;" and immediately he related from point to point how the matter had happened. He told Cornelia that he was himself the person to whom the waiting woman had given the child, and how he had brought it home, with the orders he had given to the housekeeper respecting its change of clothes, and his motives for doing so. He added that, from the moment when she had spoken of her own infant, he had felt certain that this was no other than her son; and if he had not told her so at once, that was because he feared the effects of too much gladness, coming immediately after the heavy grief which her trials had caused her.

The tears of joy then shed by Cornelia were many and long-continued; infinite were the acknowledgments she offered to Heaven, innumerable the kisses she lavished on her son, and profuse the thanks which she offered from her heart to the two friends, whom she called her guardian angels on earth, with other names, which gave abundant proof of her gratitude. They soon afterwards left the lady with their housekeeper, whom they enjoined to attend her well, and do her all the service possible — having made known to the woman the position in which Cornelia found herself, to the end that she might take all necessary precautions, the nature of which, she, being a woman, would know much better than they could do. They then went to rest for the little that remained of the night, intending to enter Cornelia's apartment no more, unless summoned by herself, or called thither by some pressing need.

The day having dawned, the housekeeper went to fetch a woman, who agreed to nurse the infant in silence and secrecy. Some hours later the friends inquired for Cornelia, and their servant told them that she had rested a little. Don Juan and Don Antonio then went to the Schools. As they passed by the street where the combat had taken place, and near the house whence Cornelia had fled, they

took care to observe whether any signs of disorder were apparent, and whether the matter seemed to be talked of in the neighbourhood: but they could hear not a word respecting the affray of the previous night, or the absence of Cornelia. So, having duly attended the various lectures, they returned to their dwelling.

The lady then caused them to be summoned to her chamber; but finding that, from respect to her presence, they hesitated to appear, she replied to the message they sent her, with tears in her eyes, begging them to come and see her, which she declared to be now the best proof of their respect as well as interest; since, if they could not remedy, they might at least console her misfortunes.

Thus exhorted, the gentlemen obeyed, and Cornelia received them with a smiling face and great cordiality. She then entreated that they would do her the kindness to walk about the city, and ascertain if anything had transpired concerning her affairs. They replied, that they had already done so, with all possible care, but that not a word had been said reacting the matter.

At this moment, one of the three pages who served the gentlemen approached the door of the room telling his masters from without, that there was then at the street door, attended by two servants, a gentleman, who called himself Lorenzo Bentivoglio, and inquired for the Signor Don Juan de Gamboa. Hearing this message, Cornelia clasped her hands, and placing them on her mouth, she exclaimed, in a low and trembling voice, while her words came with difficulty through those clenched fingers, "It is my brother, Signors! it is my brother! Without doubt he has learned that I am here, and has come to take my life. Help and aid, Signors! help and aid!"

"Calm yourself, lady," replied Don Antonio; "you are in a place of safety, and with people who will not suffer the smallest injury to be offered you. The Signor Don Juan will go to inquire what this gentleman demands, and I will remain to defend you, if need be, from all disturbance."

Don Juan prepared to descend accordingly, and Don Antonio, taking his loaded pistols, bade the pages belt on their swords, and hold themselves in readiness for whatever might happen. The housekeeper, seeing these preparations began to tremble, — Cornelia, dreading some fearful result was in grievous terror, — Don Juan and Don Antonio alone preserved their coolness.

Arrived at the door of the house, Don Juan found Don Lorenzo, who, coming towards him, said, "I entreat your Lordship" — for such is the form of address among Italians — "I entreat your Lordship to do me the kindness to accompany me to the neighbouring church; I have to speak to you respecting an affair which concerns my life and honour."

"Very willingly," replied Don Juan. "Let us go, Signor, wherever you please."

They walked side by side to the church, where they seated themselves on a



retired bench, so as not to be overheard. Don Lorenzo was the first to break silence.

“Signor Spaniard,” he said, “I am Lorenzo Bentivoglio; if not of the richest, yet of one of the most important families belonging to this city; and if this seem like boasting of myself, the notoriety of the fact may serve as my excuse for naming it. I was left an orphan many years since, and to my guardianship was left a sister, so beautiful, that if she were not nearly connected with me, I might perhaps describe her in terms that, while they might seem exaggerated, would yet not by any means do justice to her attractions. My honour being very dear to me, and she being very young, as well as beautiful, I took all possible care to guard her at all points; but my best precautions have proved vain; the self-will of Cornelia, for that is her name, has rendered all useless. In a word, and not to weary you — for this story might become a long one, — I will but tell you, that the Duke of Ferrara, Alfonso d’Este, vanquishing the eyes of Argus by those of a lynx, has rendered all my cares vain, by carrying off my sister last night from the house of one of our kindred; and it is even said that she has already become a mother.

“The misfortune of our house was made known to me last night, and I instantly placed myself on the watch; nay, I met and even attacked Alfonso, sword in hand; but he was succoured in good time by some angel, who would not permit me to efface in his blood the stain he has put upon me. My relation has told me, (and it is from her I have heard all,) that the duke deluded my sister, under a promise to make her his wife; but this I do not believe, for, in respect to present station and wealth, the marriage would not be equal, although, in point of blood, all the world knows how noble are the Bentivogli of Bologna. What I fear is, that the duke has done, what is but too easy when a great and powerful Prince desires to win a timid and retiring girl: he has merely called her by the tender name of wife, and made her believe that certain considerations have prevented him from marrying her at once, — a plausible pretence, but false and perfidious.

“Be that as it may, I see myself at once deprived of my sister and my honour. Up to this moment I have kept the matter secret, purposing not to make known the outrage to any one, until I see whether there may not be some remedy, or means of satisfaction to be obtained. It is better that a disgrace of this kind be supposed and suspected, than certainly and distinctly known — seeing that between the yes and the no of a doubt, each inclines to the opinion that most attracts him, and both sides of the question find defenders. Considering all these things, I have determined to repair to Ferrara, and there demand satisfaction from the duke himself. If he refuse it, I will then offer him defiance. Yet my defiance cannot be made with armed bands, for I could neither get them together

nor maintain them but as from man to man. For this it is, then, that I desire your aid. I hope you will accompany me in the journey; nay, I am confident that you will do so, being a Spaniard and a gentleman, as I am told you are.

“I cannot entrust my purpose to any relation or friend of my family, knowing well that from them I should have nothing more than objections and remonstrances, while from you I may hope for sensible and honourable counsels, even though there should be peril in pursuing them. You must do me the favour to go with me, Signor. Having a Spaniard, and such as you appear to be, at my side, I shall account myself to have the armies of Xerxes. I am asking much at your hands; but the duty of answering worthily to what fame publishes of your nation, would oblige you to do still more than I ask.”

“No more, Signor Lorenzo,” exclaimed Don Juan, who had not before interrupted the brother of Cornelia; “no more. From this moment I accept the office you propose to me, and will be your defender and counsellor. I take upon myself the satisfaction of your honour, or due vengeance for the affront you have received, not only because I am a Spaniard, but because I am a gentleman, and you another, so noble, as you have said, as I know you to be, and as, indeed, all the world reputes you. When shall we set out? It would be better that we did so immediately, for a man does ever well to strike while the iron is hot. The warmth of anger increases courage, and a recent affront more effectually awakens vengeance.”

Hearing this, Don Lorenzo rose and embraced Don Juan, saying to him, “A person so generous as yourself, Signor Don Juan, needs no other incentive than that of the honour to be gained in such a cause: this honour you have assured to yourself to-day, if we come out happily from our adventure; but I offer you in addition all I can do, or am worth. Our departure I would have to be to-morrow, since I can provide all things needful to-day.”

“This appears to me well decided,” replied Don Juan, “but I must beg you, Signor Don Lorenzo, to permit me to make all known to a gentleman who is my friend, and of whose honour and silence I can assure you even more certainly than of my own, if that were possible.”

“Since you, Signor Don Juan,” replied Lorenzo, “have taken charge, as you say, of my honour, dispose of this matter as you please; and make it known to whom and in what manner it shall seem best to you; how much more, then, to a companion of your own, for what can he be but everything that is best.”

This said, the gentlemen embraced each other and took leave, after having agreed that on the following morning Lorenzo should send to summon Don Juan at an hour fixed on when they should mount their horses and pursue their journey in the disguise that Don Lorenzo had selected.

Don Juan then returned, and gave an account of all that had passed to Don Antonio and Cornelia, not omitting the engagement into which he had entered for the morrow.

“Good heavens, Signor!” exclaimed Cornelia; “what courtesy! what confidence! to think of your committing yourself without hesitation to an undertaking so replete with difficulties! How can you know whether Lorenzo will take you to Ferrara, or to what place indeed he may conduct you? But go with him whither you may, be certain that the very soul of honour and good faith will stand beside you. For myself, unhappy creature that I am, I shall be terrified at the very atoms that dance in the sunbeams, and tremble at every shadow; but how can it be otherwise, since on the answer of Duke Alfonso depends my life or death. How do I know that he will reply with sufficient courtesy to prevent the anger of my brother from passing the limits of discretion? and if Lorenzo should draw the sword, think ye he will have a despicable enemy to encounter? Must not I remain through all the days of your absence in a state of mortal suspense and terror, awaiting the favourable or grievous intelligence that you shall bring me! Do I love either my brother or the duke so little as not to tremble for both, and not feel the injury of either to my soul?”

“Your fears affect your judgment, Signora Cornelia,” replied Don Juan; “and they go too far. Amidst so many terrors, you should give some place to hope, and trust in God. Put some faith also in my care, and in the earnest desire I feel to see your affairs attain to a happy conclusion. Your brother cannot avoid making this journey to Ferrara, nor can I excuse myself from accompanying him thither. For the present we do not know the intentions of the duke, nor even whether he be or be not acquainted with your elopement. All this we must learn from his own mouth; and there is no one who can better make the inquiry than myself. Be certain, Signora, that the welfare and satisfaction of both your brother and the Signor Duke are to me as the apples of my eyes, and that I will care for the safety of the one as of the other.”

“Ah Signor Don Juan,” replied Cornelia, “if Heaven grant you as much power to remedy, as grace to console misfortune, I must consider myself exceedingly fortunate in the midst of my sorrows; and now would I fain see you gone and returned; for the whole time of your absence I must pass suspended between hope and fear.”

The determination of Don Juan was approved by Don Antonio, who commended him for the justification which he had thereby given to the confidence of Lorenzo Bentivoglio. He furthermore told his friend that he would gladly accompany him, to be ready for whatever might happen, but Don Juan replied— “Not so; first, because you must remain for the better security of the

lady Cornelia, whom it will not be well to leave alone; and secondly, because I would not have Signor Lorenzo suppose that I desire to avail myself of the arm of another." "But my arm is your own," returned Don Antonio, "wherefore, if I must even disguise myself, and can but follow you at a distance, I will go with you; and as to Signora Cornelia, I know well that she will prefer to have me accompany you, seeing that she will not here want people who can serve and guard her." "Indeed," said Cornelia, "it will be a great consolation to me to know that you are together, Signors, or at least so near as to be able to assist each other in case of necessity; and since the undertaking you are going on appears to be dangerous, do me the favour, gentlemen, to take these Relics with you." Saying this, Cornelia drew from her bosom a diamond cross, of great value, with an Agnus of gold equally rich and costly. The two gentlemen looked at the magnificent jewels, which they esteemed to be of still greater value than the decoration of the hat; but they returned them to the lady, each saying that he carried Relics of his own, which, though less richly decorated, were at least equally efficacious. Cornelia regretted much that they would not accept those she offered, but she was compelled to submit.

The housekeeper was now informed of the departure of her masters, though not of their destination, or of the purpose for which they went. She promised to take the utmost care of the lady, whose name she did not know, and assured her masters that she would be so watchful as to prevent her suffering in any manner from their absence.

Early the following morning Lorenzo was at the door, where he found Don Juan ready. The latter had assumed a travelling dress, with the rich sombrero presented by the duke, and which he had adorned with black and yellow plumes, placing a black covering over the band of brilliants. He went to take leave of Cornelia, who, knowing that her brother was near, fell into an agony of terror, and could not say one word to the two friends who were bidding her adieu. Don Juan went out the first, and accompanied Lorenzo beyond the walls of the city, where they found their servants waiting with the horses in a retired garden. They mounted, rode on before, and the servants guided their masters in the direction of Ferrara by ways but little known. Don Antonio followed on a low pony, and with such a change of apparel as sufficed to disguise him; but fancying that they regarded him with suspicion, especially Lorenzo, he determined to pursue the highway, and rejoin his friend in Ferrara, where he was certain to find him with but little difficulty.

The Spaniards had scarcely got clear of the city before Cornelia had confided her whole history to the housekeeper, informing her that the infant belonged to herself and to the Duke of Ferrara, and making her acquainted with all that has

been related, not concealing from her that the journey made by her masters was to Ferrara, or that they went accompanied by her brother, who was going to challenge the Duke Alfonso.

Hearing all this, the housekeeper, as though the devil had sent her to complicate the difficulties and defer the restoration of Cornelia, began to exclaim— “Alas! lady of my soul! all these things have happened to you, and you remain carelessly there with your limbs stretched out, and doing nothing! Either you have no soul at all, or you have one so poor and weak that you do not feel it! And do you really suppose that your brother has gone to Ferrara? Believe nothing of the kind, but rather be sure that he has carried off my masters, and wiled them from the house, that he may return and take your life, for he can now do it as one would drink a cup of water. Consider only under what kind of guard and protection we are left — that of three pages, who have enough to do with their own pranks, and are little likely to put their hands to any thing good. I, for my part, shall certainly not have courage to await what must follow, and the destruction that cannot but come upon this house. The Signor Lorenzo, an Italian, to put his trust in Spaniards, and ask help and favour from them! By the light of my eyes. I will believe none of that!” So saying, she made a fig at herself. “But if you, my daughter, will take good advice, I will give you such as shall truly enlighten your way.”

Cornelia was thrown into a pitiable state of alarm and confusion by these declarations of the housekeeper, who spoke with so much heat, and gave so many evidences of terror, that all she said appeared to be the very truth. The lady pictured to herself Don Antonio and Don Juan as perhaps already dead; she fancied her brother even then coming in at the door, and felt herself already pierced by the blows of his poniard. She therefore replied, “What advice do you then give me, good friend, that may prevent the catastrophe which threatens us?”

“I will give you counsel so good,” rejoined the housekeeper, “that better could not be. I, Signora, was formerly in the service of a priest, who has his abode in a village not more than two miles from Ferrara. He is a good and holy man, who will do whatever I require from him, since he is under more obligations to me than merely those of a master to a faithful servant. Let us go to him. I will seek some one who shall conduct us thither instantly; and the woman who comes to nurse the infant is a poor creature, who will go with us to the end of the world. And, now make ready, Signora; for supposing you are to be discovered, it would be much better that you should be found under the care of a good priest, old and respected, than in the hands of two young students, bachelors and Spaniards, who, as I can myself bear witness, are but little disposed to lose occasions for amusing themselves. Now that you are unwell, they treat you with respect; but if

you get well and remain in their clutches, Heaven alone will be able to help you; for truly, if my cold disdain and repulses had not been my safeguard, they would long since have torn my honour to rags. All is not gold that glitters. Men say one thing, but think another: happily, it is with me that they have to do; and I am not to be deceived, but know well when the shoe pinches my foot. Above all, I am well born, for I belong to the Crivellis of Milan, and I carry the point of honour ten thousand feet above the clouds; by this you may judge, Signora, through what troubles I have had to pass, since, being what I am, I have been brought to serve as the housekeeper of Spaniards, or as, what they call, their *gouvernante*. Not that I have, in truth, any complaint to make of my masters, who are a couple of half-saints when they are not put into a rage. And, in this respect, they would seem to be Biscayans, as, indeed, they say they are. But, after all, they may be Galicians, which is another nation, and much less exact than the Biscayans; neither are they so much to be depended on as the people of the Bay.”

By all this verbiage, and more beside, the bewildered lady was induced to follow the advice of the old woman, insomuch that, in less than four hours after the departure of the friends, their housekeeper making all arrangements, and Cornelia consenting, the latter was seated in a carriage with the nurse of the babe, and without being heard by the pages they set off on their way to the curate’s village. All this was done not only by the advice of the housekeeper, but also with her money; for her masters had just before paid her a year’s wages, and therefore it was not needful that she should take a jewel which Cornelia had offered her for the purposes of their journey.

Having heard Don Juan say that her brother and himself would not follow the highway to Ferrara, but proceed thither by retired paths, Cornelia thought it best to take the high road. She bade the driver, go slowly, that they might not overtake the gentlemen in any case; and the master of the carriage was well content to do as they liked, since they had paid him as he liked.

We will leave them on their way, which they take with as much boldness as good direction, and let us see what happened to Don Juan de Gamboa and Signor Lorenzo Bentivoglio. On their way they heard that the duke had not gone to Ferrara, but was still at Bologna, wherefore, abandoning the round they were making, they regained the high road, considering that it was by this the duke would travel on his return to Ferrara. Nor had they long entered thereon before they perceived a troop of men on horseback coming as it seemed from Bologna.

Don Juan then begged Lorenzo to withdraw to a little distance, since, if the duke should chance to be of the company approaching, it would be desirable that he should speak to him before he could enter Ferrara, which was but a short distance from them. Lorenzo complied, and as soon as he had withdrawn, Don

Juan removed the covering by which he had concealed the rich ornament of his hat; but this was not done without some little indiscretion, as he was himself the first to admit some time after.

Meanwhile the travellers approached; among them came a woman on a pedit-horse, dressed in a travelling habit, and her face covered with a silk mask, either to conceal her features, or to shelter them from the effects of the sun and air.

Don Juan pulled up his horse in the middle of the road, and remained with his face uncovered, awaiting the arrival of the cavalcade. As they approached him, the height, good looks, and spirited attitude of the Spaniard, the beauty of his horse, his peculiar dress, and, above all, the lustre of the diamonds on his hat, attracted the eyes of the whole party but especially those of the Duke of Ferrara, the principal personage of the group, who no sooner beheld the band of brilliants than he understood the cavalier before him to be Don Juan de Gamboa, his deliverer in the combat frequently alluded to. So well convinced did he feel of this, that, without further question, he rode up to Don Juan, saying, "I shall certainly not deceive myself, Signor Cavalier, if I call you Don Juan de Gamboa, for your spirited looks, and the decoration you wear on your hat, alike assure me of the fact."

"It is true that I am the person you say," replied Don Juan. "I have never yet desired to conceal my name; but tell me, Signor, who you are yourself, that I may not be surprised into any discourtesy."

"Discourtesy from you, Signor, would be impossible," rejoined the duke. "I feel sure that you could not be discourteous in any case; but I hasten to tell you, nevertheless, that I am the Duke of Ferrara, and a man who will be bound to do you service all the days of his life, since it is but a few nights since you gave him that life which must else have been lost."

Alfonzo had not finished speaking, when Don Juan, springing lightly from his horse, hastened to kiss the feet of the duke; but, with all his agility, the latter was already out of the saddle, and alighted in the arms of the Spaniard.

Seeing this, Signor Lorenzo, who could but observe these ceremonies from a distance, believed that what he beheld was the effect of anger rather than courtesy; he therefore put his horse to its speed, but pulled up midway on perceiving that the duke and Don Juan were of a verity clasped in each other's arms. It then chanced that Alfonso, looking over the shoulders of Don Juan, perceived Lorenzo, whom he instantly recognised; and somewhat disconcerted at his appearance, while still holding Don Juan embraced, he inquired if Lorenzo Bentivoglio, whom he there beheld, had come with him or not. Don Juan replied, "Let us move somewhat apart from this place, and I will relate to your excellency some very singular circumstances."

The duke having done as he was requested, Don Juan said to him, "My Lord Duke, I must tell you that Lorenzo Bentivoglio, whom you there see, has a cause of complaint against you, and not a light one; he avers that some nights since you took his sister, the Lady Cornelia, from the house of a lady, her cousin, and that you have deceived her, and dishonoured his house; he desires therefore to know what satisfaction you propose to make for this, that he may then see what it behoves him to do. He has begged me to be his aid and mediator in the matter, and I have consented with a good will, since, from certain indications which he gave me, I perceived that the person of whom of complained, and yourself, to whose liberal courtesy I owe this rich ornament, were one and the same. Thus, seeing that none could more effectually mediate between you than myself, I offered to undertake that office willingly, as I have said; and now I would have you tell me, Signor, if you know aught of this matter, and whether what Lorenzo has told me be true."

"Alas, my friend, it is so true," replied the duke, "that I durst not deny it, even if I would. Yet I have not deceived or carried off Cornelia, although I know that she has disappeared from the house of which you speak. I have not deceived her, because I have taken her for my wife; and I have not carried her off, since I do not know what has become of her. If I have not publicly celebrated my nuptials with her, it is because I waited until my mother, who is now at the last extremity, should have passed to another life, she desiring greatly that I should espouse the Signora Livia, daughter of the Duke of Mantua. There are, besides, other reasons, even more important than this, but which it is not convenient that I should now make known.

"What has in fact happened is this: — on the night when you came to my assistance, I was to have taken Cornelia to Ferrara, she being then in the last month of her pregnancy, and about to present me with that pledge of our love with which it has pleased God to bless us; but whether she was alarmed by our combat or by my delay, I know not; all I can tell you is, that when I arrived at the house, I met the confidante of our affection just coming out. From her I learned that her mistress had that moment left the house, after having given birth to a son, the most beautiful that ever had been seen, and whom she had given to one Fabio, my servant. The woman is she whom you see here. Fabio is also in this company; but of Cornelia and her child I can learn nothing. These two days I have passed at Bologna, in ceaseless endeavours to discover her, or to obtain some clue to her retreat, but I have not been able to learn anything."

"In that case," interrupted Don Juan, "if Cornelia and her child were now to appear, you would not refuse to admit that the first is your wife, and the second your son?"



“Certainly not,” replied the duke; “for if I value myself on being a gentleman, still more highly do I prize the title of Christian. Cornelia, besides, is one who well deserves to be mistress of a kingdom. Let her but come, and whether my mother live or die, the world shall know that I maintain my faith, and that my word, given in private, shall be publicly redeemed.”

“And what you have now said to me you are willing to repeat to your brother, Signor Lorenzo?” inquired Don Juan.

“My only regret is,” exclaimed the duke, “that he has not long before been acquainted with the truth.”

Hearing this, Don Juan made sign to Lorenzo that he should join them, which he did, alighting from his horse and proceeding towards the place where his friends stood, but far from hoping for the good news that awaited him.

The duke advanced to receive him with open arms, and the first word he uttered was to call him brother. Lorenzo scarcely knew how to reply to a reception so courteous and a salutation so affectionate. He stood amazed, and before he could utter a word, Don Juan said to him, “The duke, Signor Lorenzo, is but too happy to admit his affection for your sister, the Lady Cornelia; and, at the same time, he assures you, that she is his legitimate consort. This, as he now says it to you, he will affirm publicly before all the world, when the moment for doing so has arrived. He confesses, moreover, that he did propose to remove her from the house of her cousin some nights since, intending to take her to Ferrara, there to await the proper time for their public espousals, which he has only delayed for just causes, which he has declared to me. He describes the conflict he had to maintain against yourself; and adds, that when he went to seek Cornelia, he found only her waiting-woman, Sulpicia, who is the woman you see yonder: from her he has learned that her lady had just given birth to a son, whom she entrusted to a servant of the duke, and then left the house in terror, because she feared that you, Signor Lorenzo, had been made aware of her secret marriage: the lady hoped, moreover, to find the duke awaiting her in the street. But it seems that Sulpicia did not give the babe to Fabio, but to some other person instead of him, and the child does not appear, neither is the Lady Cornelia to be found, in spite of the duke’s researches. He admits, that all these things have happened by his fault; but declares, that whenever your sister shall appear, he is ready to receive her as his legitimate wife. Judge, then, Signor Lorenzo, if there be any more to say or to desire beyond the discovery of those two dear but unfortunate ones — the lady and her infant.”

To this Lorenzo replied by throwing himself at the feet of the duke, who raised him instantly. “From your greatness and Christian uprightness, most noble lord and dear brother,” said Lorenzo, “my sister and I had certainly nothing less

than this high honour to expect." Saying this, tears came to his eyes, and the duke felt his own becoming moist, for both were equally affected, — the one with the fear of having lost his wife, the other by the generous candour of his brother-in-law; but at once perceiving the weakness of thus displaying their feelings, they both restrained themselves, and drove back those witnesses to their source; while the eyes of Don Juan, shining with gladness, seemed almost to demand from them the *albricias* of good news, seeing that he believed himself to have both Cornelia and her son in his own house.

Things were at this point when Don Antonio de Isunza, whom Don Juan recognised at a considerable distance by his horse, was perceived approaching. He also recognised Don Juan and Lorenzo, but not the duke, and did not know what he was to do, or whether he ought to rejoin his friend or not. He therefore inquired of the duke's servants who the gentleman was, then standing with Lorenzo and Don Juan. They replied that it was the Duke of Ferrara; and Don Antonio, knowing less than ever what it was best for him to do, remained in some confusion, until he was relieved from it by Don Juan, who called him by his name. Seeing that all were on foot, Don Antonio also dismounted, and, approaching the group, was received with infinite courtesy by the duke, to whom Don Juan had already named him as his friend; finally, Don Antonio was made acquainted with all that had taken place before his arrival.

Rejoicing greatly at what he heard, Don Antonio then said to his comrade, "Why, Signor Don Juan, do you not finish your work, and raise the joy of these Signors to its acmè, by requiring from them the *albricias* for discovering the Lady Cornelia and her son?"

"Had you not arrived, I might have taken those *albricias* you speak of," replied Don Juan; "but now they are yours, Don Antonio, for I am certain that the duke and Signor Lorenzo will give them to you most joyfully."

The duke and Lorenzo hearing of Cornelia being found, and of *albricias*, inquired the meaning of those words.

"What can it be," replied Don Antonio, "if not that I also design to become one of the personages in this happily terminating drama, being he who is to demand the *albricias* for the discovery of the Lady Cornelia and her son, who are both in my house." He then at once related to the brothers, point by point, what has been already told, intelligence which gave the duke and Lorenzo so much pleasure, that each embraced one of the friends with all his heart, Lorenzo throwing himself into the arms of Don Juan, and the duke into those of Don Antonio — the latter promising his whole dukedom for *albricias*, and Lorenzo his life, soul, and estates. They then called the woman who had given the child to Don Juan, and she having perceived her master, Lorenzo Bentivoglio, came

forward, trembling. Being asked if she could recognise the man to whom she had given the infant, she replied that she could not; but that when she had asked if he were Fabio, he had answered “yes,” and that she had entrusted the babe to his care in the faith of that reply.

“All this is true,” returned Don Juan; “and you furthermore bade me deposit the child in a place of security, and instantly return.”

“I did so,” replied the waiting-woman, weeping. But the duke exclaimed, “We will have no more tears; all is gladness and joy. I will not now enter Ferrara, but return at once to Bologna; for this happiness is but in shadow until made perfect by the sight of Cornelia herself.” Then, without more words, the whole company wheeled round, and took their way to Bologna.

Don Antonio now rode forward to prepare the Lady Cornelia, lest the sudden appearance of her brother and the duke might cause too violent a revulsion; but not finding her as he expected, and the pages being unable to give him any intelligence respecting her, he suddenly found himself the saddest and most embarrassed man in the world. Learning that the *gouvernante* had departed, he was not long in conjecturing that the lady had disappeared by her means. The pages informed him that the housekeeper had gone on the same day with himself and Don Juan, but as to that Lady Cornelia, respecting whom he inquired, they had never seen her. Don Antonio was almost out of his senses at this unexpected occurrence, which, he feared, must make the duke consider himself and Don Juan to be mere liars and boasters. He was plunged in these sad thoughts when Alfonso entered with Lorenzo and Don Juan, who had spurred on before the attendants by retired and unfrequented streets. They found Don Antonio seated with his head on his hand, and as pale as a man who has been long dead, and when Don Juan inquired what ailed him, and where was the Lady Cornelia, he replied, “Rather ask me what do I not ail, since the Lady Cornelia is not to be found. She quitted the house, on the same day as ourselves, with the *gouvernante* we left to keep her company.”

This sad news seemed as though it would deprive the duke of life, and Lorenzo of his senses. The whole party remained in the utmost consternation and dismay; when one of the pages said to Don Antonio in a whisper, “Signor, Santisteban, Signor Don Juan’s page, has had locked up in his chamber, from the day when your worships left, a very pretty woman, whose name is certainly Cornelia, for I have heard him call her so.” Plunged into a new embarrassment, Don Antonio would rather not have found the lady at all — for he could not but suppose it was she whom the page had shut up in his room — than have discovered her in such a place. Nevertheless, without saying a word, he ascended to the page’s chamber, but found the door fast, for the young man had gone out,

and taken away the key. Don Antonio therefore put his lips to the keyhole, and said in a low voice, "Open the door, Signora Cornelia, and come down to receive your brother, and the duke, your husband, who are waiting to take you hence."

A voice from within replied, "Are you making fun of me? It is certain that I am neither so ugly nor so old but that dukes and counts may very well be looking for me: but this comes of condescending to visit pages." These words quite satisfied Don Antonio that it was not the Lady Cornelia who had replied.

At that moment Santisteban returned and went up to his chamber, where he found Don Antonio, who had just commanded that all the keys of the house should be brought, to see if any one of them would open the door. The page fell on his knees, and held up the key, exclaiming, "Have mercy on me, your worship: your absence, or rather my own villainy, made me bring this woman to my room; but I entreat your grace, Don Antonio, as you would have good news from Spain, that you suffer the fault I have committed to remain unknown to my master, Don Juan, if he be not yet informed of it; I will turn her out this instant."

"What is the name of this woman?" inquired Don Antonio. "Cornelia," replied Santisteban. Down stairs at once went the page who had discovered the hidden woman, and who was not much of a friend to Santisteban, and entered the room where sat the duke, Don Juan, and Lorenzo, and, either from simplicity or malice, began to talk to himself, saying, "Well caught, brother page! by Heaven they have made you give up your Lady Cornelia! She was well hidden, to be sure; and no doubt my gentleman would have liked to see the masters remain away that he might enjoy himself some three or four days longer."

"What is that you are saying?" cried Lorenzo, who had caught a part of these words. "Where is the Lady Cornelia?" "She is above," replied the page; and the duke, who supposed that his consort had just made her appearance, had scarcely heard the words before he rushed from the apartment like a flash of lightning, and, ascending the staircase at a bound, gained the chamber into which Don Antonio was entering.

"Where is Cornelia? where is the life of my life?" he exclaimed, as he hurried into the room.

"Cornelia is here," replied a woman who was wrapped in a quilt taken from the bed with which she had concealed her face. "Lord bless us!" she continued, "one would think an ox had been stolen! Is it a new thing for a woman to visit a page, that you make such a fuss about it?"

Lorenzo, who had now entered the room, angrily snatched off the sheet and exposed to view a woman still young and not ill-looking, who hid her face in her hands for shame, while her dress, which served her instead of a pillow, sufficiently proved her to be some poor castaway.

The duke asked her, was it true her name was Cornelia? It was, she replied — adding, that she had very decent parents in the city, but that no one could venture to say, “Of this water I will never drink.”

The duke was so confounded by all he beheld, that he was almost inclined to think the Spaniards were making a fool of him; but, not to encourage so grievous a suspicion, he turned away without saying a word. Lorenzo followed him; they mounted their horses and rode off, leaving Don Juan and Don Antonio even more astonished and dismayed than himself.

The two friends now determined to leave no means untried, possible or impossible, to discover the retreat of the Lady Cornelia, and convince the duke of their sincerity and uprightness. They dismissed Santisteban for his misconduct, and turned the worthless Cornelia out of the house. Don Juan then remembered that they had neglected to describe to the duke those rich jewels wherein Cornelia carried her relics, with the agnus she had offered to them; and they went out proposing to mention that circumstance, so as to prove to Alfonso that the lady had, indeed, been in their care, and that if she had now disappeared, it was not by any fault of theirs.

They expected to find the duke in Lorenzo’s house; but the latter informed them that Alfonso had been compelled to leave Bologna, and had returned to Ferrara, having committed the search for Cornelia to his care. The friends having told him what had brought them, Lorenzo assured them that the duke was perfectly convinced of their rectitude in the matter, adding, that they both attributed the flight of Cornelia to her great fear, but hoped, and did not doubt, that Heaven would permit her re-appearance before long, since it was certain that the earth had not swallowed the housekeeper, the child, and herself.

With these considerations they all consoled themselves, determining not to make search by any public announcement, but secretly, since, with the exception of her cousin, no person was yet acquainted with the disappearance of Cornelia; and Lorenzo judged that a public search might prove injurious to his sister’s name among such as did not know the whole circumstances of the case, since the labour of effacing such suspicions as might arise would be infinite, and by no means certain of success.

The duke meanwhile continued his journey to Ferrara, and favouring Fortune, which was now preparing his happiness, led him to the village where dwelt that priest in whose house Cornelia, her infant, and the housekeeper, were concealed. The good Father was acquainted with the whole history, and Cornelia had begged his advice as to what it would be best for her to do. Now this priest had been the preceptor of the duke; and to his dwelling, which was furnished in a manner befitting that of a rich and learned clerk, the duke was in the habit of

occasionally repairing from Ferrara, and would thence go to the chase, or amuse himself with the pleasant conversation of his host, and with the knowledge and excellence of which the good priest gave evidence in all he did or said.

The priest was not surprised to receive a visit from the duke, because, as we have said, it was not the first by many; but he was grieved to see him sad and dejected, and instantly perceived that his whole soul was absorbed in some painful thought. As to Cornelia, having been told that the duke was there, she was seized with renewed terror, not knowing how her misfortunes were to terminate. She wrung her hands, and hurried from one side of her apartment to the other, like a person who had lost her senses. Fain would the troubled lady have spoken to the priest, but he was in conversation with the Duke, and could not be approached. Alfonso was meanwhile saying to him, "I come to you, my father, full of sadness, and will not go to Ferrara to-day, but remain your guest; give orders for all my attendants to proceed to the city, and let none remain with me but Fabio."

The priest went to give directions accordingly, as also to see that his own servants made due preparations; and Cornelia then found an opportunity for speaking to him. She took his two hands and said, "Ah, my father, and dear sir, what has the duke come for? for the love of God see what can be done to save me! I pray you, seek to discover what he proposes. As a friend, do for me whatever shall seem best to your prudence and great wisdom."

The priest replied, "Duke Alfonso has come to me in deep sadness, but up to this moment he has not told me the cause. What I would have you now do is to dress this infant with great care, put on it all the jewels you have with you, more especially such as you may have received from the duke himself; leave the rest to me, and I have hope that Heaven is about to grant us a happy day." Cornelia embraced the good man, and kissed his hand, and then retired to dress and adorn the babe, as he had desired.

The priest, meanwhile, returned to entertain the duke with conversation while his people were preparing their meal; and in the course of their colloquy he inquired if he might venture to ask him the cause of his grief, since it was easy to see at the distance of a league that, something gave him sorrow.

"Father," replied the duke, "it is true that the sadness of the heart rises to the face, and in the eyes may be read the history of that which passes in the soul; but for the present I cannot confide the cause of my sorrow to any one."

"Then we will not speak of it further, my lord duke," replied the priest; "but if you were in a condition permitting you to examine a curious and beautiful thing, I have one to show you which I cannot but think would afford you great pleasure."

“He would be very unwise,” returned Alfonso, “who, when offered a solace for his suffering, refuses to accept it. Wherefore show me what you speak of, father; the object is doubtless an addition to one of your curious collections, and they have all great interest in my eyes.”

The priest then rose, and repaired to the apartment where Cornelia was awaiting him with her son, whom she had adorned as he had suggested, having placed on him the relics and agnus, with other rich jewels, all gifts of the duke to the babe’s mother. Taking the infant from her hands, the good priest then went to the duke, and telling him that he must rise and come to the light of the window, he transferred the babe from his own arms into those of Alfonso, who could not but instantly remark the jewels; and perceiving that they were those which he had himself given to Cornelia, he remained in great surprise. Looking earnestly at the infant, meanwhile, he fancied he beheld his own portrait; and full of admiration, he asked the priest to whom the child belonged, remarking, that from its decorations and appearance one might take it to be the son of some princess.

“I do not know,” replied the priest, “to whom it belongs; all I can tell you is, that it was brought to me some nights since by a cavalier of Bologna, who charged me to take good care of the babe and bring it up heedfully, since it was the son of a noble and valiant father, and of a mother highly born as well as beautiful. With the cavalier there came also a woman to suckle the infant, and of her I have inquired if she knew anything of the parents, but she tells me that she knows nothing whatever; yet of a truth, if the mother possess but half the beauty of the nurse, she must be the most lovely woman in Italy.”

“Could I not see her?” asked the Duke. “Yes, certainly you may see her,” returned the priest. “You have only to come with me; and if the beauty and decorations of the child surprise you, I think the sight of the nurse cannot fail to produce an equal effect.”

The priest would then have taken the infant from the duke, but Alfonso would not let it go; he pressed it in his arms, and gave it repeated kisses; the good father, meanwhile, hastened forward, and bade Cornelia approach to receive the duke. The lady obeyed; her emotion giving so rich a colour to her face that the beauty she displayed seemed something more than human. The duke, on seeing her, remained as if struck by a thunderbolt, while she, throwing herself at his feet, sought to kiss them. The duke said not a word, but gave the infant to the priest, and hurried out of the apartment.

Shocked at this, Cornelia said to the priest, “Alas, dear father, have I terrified the duke with the sight of my face? am I become hateful to him? Has he forgot the ties by which he has bound himself to me? Will he not speak one word to me? Was his child such a burden to him that he has thus rejected him from his

arm's?"

To all these questions the good priest could give no reply, for he too was utterly confounded by the duke's hasty departure, which seemed more like a flight than anything else.

Meanwhile Alfonso had but gone out to summon Fabio. "Ride Fabio, my friend," he cried, "ride for your life to Bologna, and tell Lorenzo Bentivoglio that he must come with all speed to this place; let him make no excuse, and bid him bring with him the two Spanish gentlemen, Don Juan de Gamboa and Don Antonio de Isunza. Return instantly, Fabio, but not without them, for it concerns my life to see them here."

Fabio required no further pressing, but instantly carried his master's commands into effect. The duke returned at once to Cornelia, caught her in his arms, mingled his tears with hers, and kissed her a thousand times; and long did the fond pair remain thus silently locked in each other's embrace, both speechless from excess of joy. The nurse of the infant and the dame, who proclaimed herself a Crivella, beheld all this from the door of the adjoining apartment, and fell into such ecstasies of delight that they knocked their heads against the wall, and seemed all at once to have gone out of their wits. The priest bestowed a thousand kisses on the infant, whom he held on one arm, while with his right hand he showered no end of benedictions on the noble pair. At length his reverence's housekeeper, who had been occupied with her culinary preparations, and knew nothing of what had occurred, entered to notify to her master that dinner was on the table, and so put an end to this scene of rapture.

The duke then took his babe from the arms of the priest, and kept it in his own during the repast, which was more remarkable for neatness and good taste than for splendour. While they were at table, Cornelia related to the duke all that had occurred until she had taken refuge with the priest, by the advice of the housekeeper of those two Spanish gentlemen, who had protected and guarded her with such assiduous and respectful kindness. In return the duke related to her all that had befallen himself during the same interval; and the two housekeepers, who were present, received from him the most encouraging promises. All was joy and satisfaction, and nothing more was required for the general happiness, save the arrival of Lorenzo, Don Antonio, and Don Juan.

They came on the third day, all intensely anxious to know if the duke had received intelligence of Cornelia, seeing that Fabio, who did not know what had happened, could tell them nothing on that subject.

The duke received them alone in the antechamber, but gave no sign of gladness in his face, to their great grief and disappointment. Bidding them be seated, Alfonso himself sat down, and thus addressed Lorenzo: —



“You well know, Signor Lorenzo Bentivoglio, that I never deceived your sister, as my conscience and Heaven itself can bear witness; you know also the diligence with which I have sought her, and the wish I have felt to have my marriage with her celebrated publicly. But she is not to be found, and my word cannot so considered eternally engaged to a shadow. I am a young man, and am not so *blasé* as to leave ungathered such pleasures as I find on my path. Before I had ever seen Cornelia I had given my promise to a peasant girl of this village, but whom I was tempted to abandon by the superior charms of Cornelia, giving therein a great proof of my love for the latter, in defiance of the voice of my conscience. Now, therefore, since no one can marry a woman who does not appear, and it is not reasonable that a man should eternally run after a wife who deserts him, lest he should take to his arms one who abhors him, I would have you consider, Signor Lorenzo, whether I can give you any further satisfaction for an affront which was never intended to be one; and further, I would have you give me your permission to accomplish my first promise, and solemnise my marriage with the peasant girl, who is now in this house.”

While the duke spoke this, Lorenzo’s frequent change of colour, and the difficulty with which he forced himself to retain his seat, gave manifest proof that anger was taking possession of all his senses. The same feelings agitated Don Antonio and Don Juan, who were resolved not to permit the duke to fulfil his intention, even should they be compelled to prevent it by depriving him of life. Alfonso, reading these resolves in their faces, resumed: “Endeavour to calm yourself, Signor Lorenzo; and before you answer me one word, I will have you see the beauty of her whom I desire to take to wife, for it is such that you cannot refuse your consent, and it might suffice, as you will acknowledge, to excuse a graver error than mine.”

So saying, the duke rose, and repaired to the apartment where Cornelia was awaiting him in all the splendour of her beauty and rich decorations. No sooner was he gone than Don Juan also rose, and laying both hands on the arms of Lorenzo’s chair, he said to him, “By St. James of Galicia, by the true faith of a Christian, and by my honour as a gentleman, Signor Lorenzo, I will as readily allow the duke to fulfil his project as I will become a worshipper of Mahomed. Here, in this spot, he shall yield up his life at my hands, or he shall redeem the promise given to your sister, the lady Cornelia. At the least, he shall give us time to seek her; and until we know to a certainty that she is dead, he shall not marry.”

“That is exactly my own view,” replied Lorenzo. “And I am sure,” rejoined Don Juan, “that it will be the determination of my comrade, Don Antonio, likewise.”

While they were thus speaking, Cornelia appeared at the door between the duke and the priest, each of whom led her by one hand. Behind them came Sulpicia, her waiting woman, whom the duke had summoned from Ferrara to attend her lady, with the infant's nurse, and the Spaniards' housekeeper. When Lorenzo saw his sister, and had assured himself it was indeed Cornelia, — for at first the apparently impossible character of the occurrence had forbidden his belief, — he staggered on his feet, and cast himself at those of the duke, who, raising him, placed him in the arms of his delighted sister, whilst Don Juan and Don Antonio hastily applauded the duke for the clever trick he had played upon them all.

Alfonso then took the infant from Sulpicia, and, presenting it to Lorenzo, he said, "Signor and brother, receive your nephew, my son, and see whether it please you to give permission for the public solemnisation of my marriage with this peasant girl — the only one to whom I have ever been betrothed."

To repeat the replies of Lorenzo would be never to make an end, and the rather if to these we added the questions of Don Juan, the remarks of Don Antonio, the expressions of delight uttered by the priest, the rejoicing of Sulpicia, the satisfaction of the housekeeper who had made herself the counsellor of Cornelia, the exclamations of the nurse, and the astonishment of Fabio, with the general happiness of all.

The marriage ceremony was performed by the good priest, and Don Juan de Gamboa gave away the bride; but it was agreed among the parties that this marriage also should be kept secret, until he knew the result of the malady under which the duchess-dowager was labouring; for the present, therefore, it was determined that Cornelia should return to Bologna with her brother. All was done as thus agreed on; and when the duchess-dowager died, Cornelia made her entrance into Ferrara, rejoicing the eyes of all who beheld her: the mourning weeds were exchanged for festive robes, the two housekeepers were enriched, and Sulpicia was married to Fabio. For Don Antonio and Don Juan, they were sufficiently rewarded by the services they had rendered to the duke, who offered them two of his cousins in marriage, with rich dowries. But they replied, that the gentlemen of the Biscayan nation married for the most part in their own country; wherefore, not because they despised so honourable a proffer, which was not possible, but that they might not depart from a custom so laudable, they were compelled to decline that illustrious alliance, and the rather as they were still subject to the will of their parents, who had, most probably, already affianced them.

The duke admitted the validity of their excuses, but, availing himself of occasions warranted by custom and courtesy, he found means to load the two

friends with rich gifts, which he sent from time to time to their house in Bologna. Many of these were of such value, that although they might have been refused for fear of seeming to receive a payment, yet the appropriate manner in which they were presented, and the particular periods at which Alfonso took care that they should arrive, caused their acceptance to be easy, not to say inevitable; such, for example, were those despatched by him at the moment of their departure for their own country, and those which he gave them when they came to Ferrara to take their leave of him.

At this period, the Spanish gentlemen found Cornelia the mother of two little girls, and the duke more enamoured of his wife than ever. The duchess gave the diamond cross to Don Juan, and the gold agnus to Don Antonio, both of whom had now no choice but to accept them. They finally arrived without accident in their native Spain, where they married rich, noble, and beautiful ladies; and they never ceased to maintain a friendly correspondence with the duke and duchess of Ferrara, and with Lorenzo Bentivoglio, to the great satisfaction of all parties.

THE END OF THE LADY CORNELIA.

## RINCONETE AND CORTADILLO.

*Or, Peter of the Corner and the Little Cutter.*

At the Venta or hostelry of the Mulinillo, which is situate on the confines of the renowned plain of Alcudia, and on the road from Castile to Andalusia, two striplings met by chance on one of the hottest days of summer. One of them was about fourteen or fifteen years of age; the other could not have passed his seventeenth year. Both were well formed, and of comely features, but in very ragged and tattered plight. Cloaks they had none; their breeches were of linen, and their stockings were merely those bestowed on them by Nature. It is true they boasted shoes; one of them wore alpargates, or rather dragged them along at his heels; the other had what might as well have been shackles for all the good they did the wearer, being rent in the uppers, and without soles. Their respective head-dresses were a montera and a miserable sombrero, low in the crown and wide in the brim. On his shoulder, and crossing his breast like a scarf, one of them carried a shirt, the colour of chamois leather; the body of this garment was rolled up and thrust into one of its sleeves: the other, though travelling without incumbrance, bore on his chest what seemed a large pack, but which proved, on closer inspection, to be the remains of a starched ruff, now stiffened with grease instead of starch, and so worn and frayed that it looked like a bundle of hemp.

Within this collar, wrapped up and carefully treasured, was a pack of cards, excessively dirty, and reduced to an oval form by repeated paring of their dilapidated corners. The lads were both much burned by the sun, their hands were anything but clean, and their long nails were edged with black; one had a dudgeon-dagger by his side; the other a knife with a yellow handle.

These gentlemen had selected for their siesta the porch or penthouse commonly found before a Venta; and, finding themselves opposite each other, he who appeared to be the elder said to the younger, "Of what country is your worship, noble Sir, and by what road do you propose to travel?" "What is my country, Señor Cavalier," returned the other, "I know not; nor yet which way my road lies."

"Your worship, however, does not appear to have come from heaven," rejoined the elder, "and as this is not a place wherein a man can take up his

abode for good, you must, of necessity, be going further.” “That is true,” replied the younger; “I have, nevertheless, told you only the veritable fact; for as to my country, it is mine no more, since all that belongs to me there is a father who does not consider me his child, and a step-mother who treats me like a son-in-law. With regard to my road, it is that which chance places before me, and it will end wherever I may find some one who will give me the wherewithal to sustain this miserable life of mine.”

“Is your worship acquainted with any craft?” inquired the first speaker. “With none,” returned the other, “except that I can run like a hare, leap like a goat, and handle a pair of scissors with great dexterity.”

“These things are all very good, useful, and profitable,” rejoined the elder. “You will readily find the Sacristan of some church who will give your worship the offering-bread of All Saints’ Day, for cutting him his paper flowers to decorate the Monument on Holy Thursday.”

“But that is not my manner of cutting,” replied the younger. “My father, who, by God’s mercy, is a tailor and hose maker, taught me to cut out that kind of spatterdashes properly called Polainas, which, as your worship knows, cover the fore part of the leg and come down over the instep. These I can cut out in such style, that I could pass an examination for the rank of master in the craft; but my ill luck keeps my talents in obscurity.”

“The common lot, Señor, of able men,” replied the first speaker, “for I have always heard that it is the way of the world to let the finest talents go to waste; but your worship is still at an age when this evil fortune may be remedied, and the rather since, if I mistake not, and my eyes do not deceive me, you have other advantageous qualities which it is your pleasure to keep secret.” “It is true that I have such,” returned the younger gentleman, “but they are not of a character to be publicly proclaimed, as your worship has very judiciously observed.”

“But I,” rejoined the elder, “may with confidence assure you, that I am one of the most discreet and prudent persons to be found within many a league. In order to induce your worship to open your heart and repose your faith on my honour, I will enlist your sympathies by first laying bare my own bosom; for I imagine that fate has not brought us together without some hidden purpose. Nay, I believe that we are to be true friends from this day to the end of our lives.

“I, then, Señor Hidalgo, am a native of Fuenfrida, a place very well known, indeed renowned for the illustrious travellers who are constantly passing through it. My name is Pedro del Rincon, my father is a person of quality, and a Minister of the Holy Crusade, since he holds the important charge of a Bulero or Buldero, as the vulgar call it. I was for some time his assistant in that office, and acquitted myself so well, that in all things concerning the sale of bulls I could hold my

own with any man, though he had the right to consider himself the most accomplished in the profession. But one day, having placed my affections on the money produced by the bulls, rather than on the bulls themselves, I took a bag of crowns to my arms, and we two departed together for Madrid.

“In that city, such are the facilities that offer themselves, I soon gutted my bag, and left it with as many wrinkles as a bridegroom’s pocket-handkerchief. The person who was charged with the collection of the money, hastened to track my steps; I was taken, and met with but scant indulgence; only, in consideration of my youth, their worships the judges contented themselves with introducing me to the acquaintance of the whipping-post, to have the flies whisked from my shoulders for a certain time, and commanding me to abstain from revisiting the Court and Capital during a period of four years. I took the matter coolly, bent my shoulders to the operation performed at their command, and made so much haste to begin my prescribed term of exile, that I had no time to procure sumpter mules, but contented myself with selecting from my valuables such as seemed most important and useful.

“I did not fail to include this pack of cards among them,” — here the speaker exhibited that oviform specimen already mentioned— “and with these I have gained my bread among the inns and taverns between Madrid and this place, by playing at Vingt-et-un. It is true they are somewhat soiled and worn, as your worship sees; but for him who knows how to handle them, they possess a marvellous virtue, which is, that you never cut them but you find an ace at the bottom; if your worship then is acquainted with the game, you will see what an advantage it is to know for certain that you have an ace to begin with, since you may count it either for one or eleven; and so you may be pretty sure that when the stakes are laid at twenty-one, your money will be much disposed to stay at home.

“In addition to this, I have acquired the knowledge of certain mysteries regarding Lansquenet and Reversis, from the cook of an ambassador who shall be nameless, — insomuch that, even as your worship might pass as master in the cutting of spatterdashes, so could I, too, take my degrees in the art of flat-catching.

“With all these acquirements, I am tolerably sure of not dying from hunger, since, even in the most retired farm-house I come to, there is always some one to be found who will not refuse himself the recreation of a few moments at cards. We have but to make a trial where we are; let us spread the net, and it will go hard with us if some bird out of all the Muleteers standing about do not fall into it. I mean to say, that if we two begin now to play at Vingt-et-un as though we were in earnest, some one will probably desire to make a third, and, in that case,

he shall be the man to leave his money behind him.”

“With all my heart,” replied the younger lad: “and I consider that your excellency has done me a great favour by communicating to me the history of your life. You have thereby made it impossible for me to conceal mine, and I will hasten to relate it as briefly as possible. Here it is, then: —

“I was born at Pedroso, a village situate between Salamanca and Medina del Campo. My father is a tailor, as I have said, and taught me his trade; but from cutting with the scissors I proceeded — my natural abilities coming in aid — to the cutting of purses. The dull, mean life of the village, and the unloving conduct of my mother-in-law, were besides but little to my taste. I quitted my birthplace, therefore, repaired to Toledo to exercise my art, and succeeded in it to admiration; for there is not a reliquary suspended to the dress, not a pocket, however carefully concealed, but my fingers shall probe its contents, or my scissors snip it off, though the owner were guarded by the eyes of Argus.

“During four months I spent in Toledo, I was never trapped between two doors, nor caught in the fact, nor pursued by the runners of justice, nor blown upon by an informer. It is true that, eight days ago, a double spy did set forth my distinguished abilities to the Corregidor, and the latter, taking a fancy to me from his description, desired to make my acquaintance; but I am a modest youth, and do not wish to frequent the society of personages so important. Wherefore I took pains to excuse myself from visiting him, and departed in so much haste, that I, like yourself, had no time to procure sumpter-mules or small change, — nay, I could not even find a return-chaise, nor so much as a cart.”

“Console yourself for these omissions,” replied Pedro del Rincon; “and since we now know each other, let us drop these grand and stately airs, and confess frankly that we have not a blessed farthing between us, nor even shoes to our feet.”

“Be it so,” returned Diego Cortado, for so the younger boy called himself. “Be it so; and since our friendship, as your worship Señor Rincon is pleased to say, is to last our whole lives, let us begin it with solemn and laudable ceremonies,” — saying which, Diego rose to his feet, and embraced the Señor Rincon, who returned the compliment with equal tenderness and emotion.

They then began to play at Vingt-et-un with the cards above described, which were certainly “free from dust and straw,” as we say, but by no means free from grease and knavery; and after a few deals, Cortado could turn up an ace as well as Rincon his master. When things had attained this point, it chanced that a Muleteer came out at the porch, and, as Rincon had anticipated, he soon proposed to make a third in their game.

To this they willingly agreed, and in less than half an hour they had won from

him twelve reals and twenty-two maravedis, which he felt as sorely as twelve stabs with a dagger and twenty-two thousand sorrows. Presuming that the young chaps would not venture to defend themselves, he thought to get back his money by force; but the two friends laying hands promptly, the one on his dudgeon dagger and the other on his yellow handled knife, gave the Muleteer so much to do, that if his companions had not hastened to assist him, he would have come badly out of the quarrel.

At that moment there chanced to pass by a company of travellers on horseback, who were going to make their siesta at the hostelry of the Alcalde, about half a league farther on. Seeing the affray between the Muleteer with two boys, they interposed, and offered to take the latter in their company to Seville, if they were going to that city.

“That is exactly where we desire to go,” exclaimed Rincon, “and we will serve your worships in all that it shall please you to command.” Whereupon, without more ado, they sprang before the mules, and departed with the travellers, leaving the Muleteer despoiled of his money and furious with rage, while the hostess was in great admiration of the finished education and accomplishments of the two rogues, whose dialogue she had heard from beginning to end, while they were not aware of her presence.

When the hostess told the Muleteer that she had heard the boys say the cards they played with were false, the man tore his beard for rage, and would have followed them to the other Venta, in the hope of recovering his property; for he declared it to be a serious affront, and a matter touching his honour, that two boys should have cheated a grown man like him. But his companions dissuaded him from doing what they declared would be nothing better than publishing his own folly and incapacity; and their arguments, although they did not console the Muleteer, were sufficient to make him remain where he was.

Meanwhile Cortado and Rincon displayed so much zeal and readiness in the service of the travellers, that the latter gave them a lift behind them for the greater part of the way. They might many a time have rifled the portmanteaus of their temporary masters, but did not, lest they should thereby lose the happy opportunity of seeing Seville, in which city they greatly desired to exercise their talents. Nevertheless, as they entered Seville — which they did at the hour of evening prayer, and by the gate of the custom-house, on account of the dues to be paid, and the trunks to be examined — Cortado could not refrain from making an examination, on his own account, of the valise which a Frenchman of the company carried with him on the croup of his mule. With his yellow-handled weapon, therefore, he gave it so deep and broad a wound in the side that its very entrails were exposed to view; and he dexterously drew forth two good shirts, a



sun-dial, and a memorandum book, things that did not greatly please him when he had leisure to examine them. Thinking that since the Frenchman carried that valise on his own mule, it must needs contain matters of more importance than those he had captured, Cortado would fain have looked further into it, but he abstained, as it was probable that the deficiency had been already discovered, and the remaining effects secured. Before performing this feat the friends had taken leave of those who had fed them on their journey, and the following day they sold the two shirts in the old clothes' market, which is held at the gate of the Almacen or arsenal, obtaining twenty reals for their booty.

Having despatched this business, they went to see the city, and admired the great magnificence and vast size of its principal church, and the vast concourse of people on the quays, for it happened to be the season for loading the fleet. There were also six galleys on the water, at sight of which the friends could not refrain from sighing, as they thought the day might come when they should be clapped on board one of those vessels for the remainder of their lives. They remarked the large number of basket-boys, porters, &c., who went to and fro about the ships, and inquired of one among them what sort of a trade it was — whether it was very laborious — and what were the gains.

An Asturian, of whom they made the inquiry, gave answer to the effect that the trade was a very pleasant one, since they had no harbour-dues to pay, and often found themselves at the end of the day with six or seven reals in their pocket, with which they might eat, drink, and enjoy themselves like kings. Those of his calling, he said, had no need to seek a master to whom security must be given, and you could dine when and where you please, since, in the city of Seville, there is not an eating-house, however humble, where you will not find all you want at any hour of the day.

The account given by the Asturian was by no means discouraging to the two friends, neither did his calling seem amiss to them; nay, rather, it appeared to be invented for the very purpose of enabling them to exercise their own profession in secrecy and safety, on account of the facilities it offered for entering houses. They consequently determined to buy such things as were required for the instant adoption of the new trade, especially as they could enter upon it without undergoing any previous scrutiny.

In reply to their further inquiries, the Asturian told them that it would be sufficient if each had a small porter's bag of linen, either new or second-hand, so it was but clean, with three palm-baskets, two large and one small, wherein to carry the meat, fish, and fruit purchased by their employers, while the bag was to be used for carrying the bread. He took them to where all these things were sold; they supplied themselves out of the plunder of the Frenchman, and in less than

two hours they might have been taken for regular graduates in their new profession, so deftly did they manage their baskets, and so jauntily carry their bags. Their instructor furthermore informed them of the different places at which they were to make their appearance daily: in the morning at the shambles, and at the market of St. Salvador; on fast-days at the fish-market; every afternoon on the quay, and on Thursdays at the fair.

All these lessons the two friends carefully stored in their memory, and the following morning both repaired in good time to the market of St. Salvador. Scarcely had they arrived before they were remarked by numbers of young fellows of the trade, who soon perceived, by the shining brightness of their bags and baskets, that they were new beginners. They were assailed with a thousand questions, to all which they replied with great presence of mind and discretion. Presently up came two customers, one of whom had the appearance of a Student, the other was a Soldier; both were attracted by the clean and new appearance of their baskets; and he who seemed to be a student beckoned Cortado, while the soldier engaged Rincon. "In God's name be it!" exclaimed both the novices in a breath — Rincon adding, "It is a good beginning of the trade, master, since it is your worship that is giving me my hansel." "The hansel shall not be a bad one," replied the soldier, "seeing that I have been lucky at cards of late, and am in love. I propose this day to regale the friends of my lady with a feast, and am come to buy the materials." "Load away, then, your worship," replied Rincon, "and lay on me as much as you please, for I feel courage enough to carry off the whole market; nay, if you should desire me to aid in cooking what I carry, it shall be done with all my heart."

The soldier was pleased with the boy's ready goodwill, and told him that if he felt disposed to enter his service he would relieve him from the degrading office he then bore; but Rincon declared, that since this was the first day on which he had tried it, he was not willing to abandon the work so soon, or at least until he had seen what profit there was to be made of it; but if it did not suit him, he gave the gentleman his word that he would prefer the service offered him even to that of a Canon.

The soldier laughed, loaded him well, and showed him the house of his lady, bidding him observe it well that he might know it another time, so that he might be able to send him there again without being obliged to accompany him. Rincon promised fidelity and good conduct; the soldier gave him three quartos, and the lad returned like a shot to the market, that he might lose no opportunity by delay. Besides, he had been well advised in respect of diligence by the Asturian, who had likewise told him that when he was employed to carry small fish, such as sprats, sardines, or flounders, he might very well take a few for himself and have

the first taste of them, were it only to diminish his expenses of the day, but that he must do this with infinite caution and prudence, lest the confidence of the employers should be disturbed; for to maintain confidence was above all things important in their trade.

But whatever haste Rincon had made to return, he found Cortado at his post before him. The latter instantly inquired how he had got on. Rincon opened his hand and showed the three quartos; when Cortado, thrusting his arm into his bosom, drew forth a little purse which appeared to have once been of amber-coloured silk, and was not badly filled. "It was with this," said he, "that my service to his reverence the Student has been rewarded — with this and two quartos besides. Do you take it, Rincon, for fear of what may follow."

Cortado had scarcely given the purse in secret to his companion, before the Student returned in a great heat, and looking in mortal alarm. He no sooner set eyes on Cortado, than, hastening towards him, he inquired if he had by chance seen a purse with such and such marks and tokens, and which had disappeared, together with fifteen crowns in gold pieces, three double reals, and a certain number of maravedis in quartos and octavos. "Did you take it from me yourself," he added, "while I was buying in the market, with you standing beside me?"

To this Cortado replied with perfect composure, "All I can tell you of your purse is, that it cannot be lost, unless, indeed, your worship has left it in bad hands."

"That is the very thing, sinner that I am," returned the Student. "To a certainty I must have left it in bad hands, since it has been stolen from me." "I say the same," rejoined Cortado, "but there is a remedy for every misfortune excepting death. The best thing your worship can do now is to have patience, for after all it is God who has made us, and after one day there comes another. If one hour gives us wealth, another takes it away; but it may happen that the man who has stolen your purse may in time repent, and may return it to your worship, with all the interest due on the loan."

"The interest I will forgive him," exclaimed the Student; and Cortado resumed:— "There are, besides, those letters of excommunication, the Paulinas; and there is also good diligence in seeking for the thief, which is the mother of success. Of a truth, Sir, I would not willingly be in the place of him who has stolen your purse; for if your worship have received any of the sacred orders, I should feel as if I had been guilty of some great crime — nay of sacrilege — in stealing from your person."

"Most certainly the thief has committed a sacrilege," replied the Student, in pitiable tones; "for although I am not in orders, but am only a Sacristan of

certain nuns, yet the money in my purse was the third of the income due from a chapelry, which I had been commissioned to receive by a priest, who is one of my friends, so that the purse does, in fact, contain blessed and sacred money.”

“Let him eat his sin with his bread,” exclaimed Rincon at that moment; “I should be sorry to become bail for the profit he will obtain from it. There will be a day of judgment at the last, when all things will have to pass, as they say, through the holes of the colander, and it will then be known who was the scoundrel that has had the audacity to plunder and make off with the whole third of the revenue of a chapelry! But tell me, Mr. Sacristan, on your life, what is the amount of the whole yearly income?”

“Income to the devil, and you with it,” replied the Sacristan, with more rage than was becoming; “am I in a humour to talk to you about income? Tell me, brother, if you know anything of the purse; if not, God be with you — I must go and have it cried.”

“That does not seem to me so bad a remedy,” remarked Cortado; “but I warn your worship not to forget the precise description of the purse, nor the exact sum that it contains; for if you commit the error of a single mite, the money will never be suffered to appear again while the world is a world, and that you may take for a prophecy.”

“I am not afraid of committing any mistake in describing the purse,” returned the Sacristan, “for I remember it better than I do the ringing of my bells, and I shall not commit the error of an atom.” Saying this, he drew a laced handkerchief from his pocket to wipe away the perspiration which rained down his face as from an alembic; but no sooner had Cortado set eyes on the handkerchief, than he marked it for his own.

When the Sacristan had got to a certain distance, therefore, Cortado followed, and having overtaken him as he was mounting the steps of a church, he took him apart, and poured forth so interminable a string of rigmarole, all about the theft of the purse, and the prospect of recovering it, that the poor Sacristan could do nothing but listen with open mouth, unable to make head or tail of what he said, although he made him repeat it two or three times.

Cortado meanwhile continued to look fixedly into the eyes of the Sacristan, whose own were rivetted on the face of the boy, and seemed to hang, as it were, on his words. This gave Cortado an opportunity to finish his job, and having cleverly whipped the handkerchief out of the pocket, he took leave of the Sacristan, appointing to meet him in the evening at the same place, for he suspected that a certain lad of his own height and the same occupation, who was a bit of a thief, had stolen the purse, and he should be able to ascertain the fact in a few days, more or less.

Somewhat consoled by this promise, the Sacristan took his leave of Cortado, who then returned to the place where Rincon had privily witnessed all that had passed. But a little behind him stood another basket-boy, who had also seen the whole transaction; and at the moment when Cortado passed the handkerchief to Rincon, the stranger accosted the pair.

"Tell me, gallant gentlemen," said he, "are you admitted to the Mala Entrada, or not?"

"We do not understand your meaning, noble Sir," replied Rincon.

"How! not entered, brave Murcians?" replied the other.

"We are neither of Murcia nor of Thebes," replied Cortado. "If you have anything else to say to us, speak; if not, go your ways, and God be with you."

"Oh, your worships do not understand, don't you?" said the porter; "but I will soon make you understand, and even sup up my meaning with a silver spoon. I mean to ask you, gentlemen, are your worships thieves? But why put the question, since I see well that you are thieves; and it is rather for you to tell me how it is that you have not presented yourselves at the custom-house of the Señor Monipodio."

"Do they then pay duty on the right of thieving in this country, gallant Sir?" exclaimed Rincon.

"If they do not pay duty, at least they make them register themselves with the Señor Monipodio, who is the father, master, and protector of thieves; and I recommend you to come with me and pay your respects to him forthwith, or, if you refuse to do that, make no attempt to exercise your trade without his mark and pass-word, or it will cost you dearly."

"I thought, for my part," remarked Cortado, "that the profession of thieving was a free one, exempt from all taxes and port dues; or, at least, that if we must pay, it is something to be levied in the lump, for which we give a mortgage upon our shoulders and our necks; but since it is as you say, and every land has its customs, let us pay due respect to this of yours; we are now in the first country of the world, and without doubt the customs of the place must be in the highest degree judicious. Wherefore your worship may be pleased to conduct us to the place where this gentleman of whom you have spoken is to be found. I cannot but suppose, from what you say, that he is much honoured, of great power and influence, of very generous nature, and, above all, highly accomplished in the profession."

"Honoured, generous, and accomplished! do you say?" replied the boy: "aye, that he is; so much so, that during the four years that he has held the seat of our chief and father, only four of us have suffered at Finibusterry; some thirty or so, and not more, have lost leather; and but sixty-two have been lagged."

“Truly, Sir,” rejoined Rincon, “all this is Hebrew to us; we know no more about it than we do of flying.”

“Let us be jogging, then,” replied the new-comer, “and on the way I will explain to you these and other things, which it is requisite you should know as pat as bread to mouth;” and, accordingly, he explained to them a whole vocabulary of that thieves’ Latin which they call Germanesco, or Gerigonza, and which their guide used in the course of his lecture, — by no means a short one, for the distance they had to traverse was of considerable length.

On the road, Rincon said to his new acquaintance, “Does your worship happen to be a Thief?”

“Yes,” replied the lad, “I have that honour, for the service of God and of all good people; but I cannot boast of being among the most distinguished, since I am as yet but in the year of my novitiate.”

“It is news to me,” remarked Cortado, “that there are thieves for the service of God and of good people.”

“Señor,” the other replied, “I don’t meddle with theology; but this I know, that every one may serve God in his vocation, the more so as daddy Monipodio keeps such good order in that respect among all his children.”

“His must needs be a holy and edifying command,” rejoined Rincon, “since it enjoins thieves to serve God.”

“It is so holy and edifying,” exclaimed the stranger, “that I don’t believe a better will ever be known in our trade. His orders are that we give something by way of alms out of all we steal, to buy oil for the lamp of a highly venerated image, well known in this city; and we have really seen great things result from that good work. Not many days ago, one of our *cuatrer*os had to take three *ansias* for having come the Murcian over a couple of *roznos*, and although he was but a poor weak fellow, and ill of the fever to boot, he bore them all without singing out, as though they had been mere trifles. This we of the profession attribute to his particular devotion to the Virgin of the Lamp, for he was so weak, that, of his own strength, he could not have endured the first *desconcierto* of the hangman’s wrist. But now, as I guess, you will want to know the meaning of certain words just used; I will take physic before I am sick — that is to say, give you the explanation before you ask for it.

“Be pleased to know then, gentlemen, that a *cuatrero* is a stealer of cattle, the *ansia* is the question or torture. *Roznos* — saving your presence — are asses, and the first *desconcierto* is the first turn of the cord which is given by the executioner when we are on the rack. But we do more than burn oil to the Virgin. There is not one of us who does not recite his rosary carefully, dividing it into portions for each day of the week. Many will not steal at all on a Friday, and

on Saturdays we never speak to any woman who is called Mary.”

“All these things fill me with admiration,” replied Cortado; “but may I trouble your worship to tell me, have you no other penance than this to perform? Is there no restitution to make?”

“As to restitution,” returned the other, “it is a thing not to be mentioned; besides, it would be wholly impossible, on account of the numerous portions into which things stolen have to be divided before each one of the agents and contractors has received the part due to him. When all these have had their share, the original thief would find it difficult to make restitution. Moreover, there is no one to bid us do anything of that kind, seeing that we do not go to confession. And if letters of excommunication are out against us, they rarely come to our knowledge, because we take care not to go into the churches while the priests are reading them, unless, indeed, it be on the days of Jubilee, for then we do go, on account of the vast profits we make from the crowds of people assembled on that occasion.”

“And proceeding in this manner,” observed Cortado, “your worships think that your lives are good and holy?”

“Certainly! for what is there bad in them?” replied the other lad! “Is it not worse to be a heretic or a renegade? or to kill your father or mother?”

“Without doubt,” admitted Cortado; “but now, since our fate has decided that we are to enter this brotherhood, will your worship be pleased to step out a little, for I am dying to behold this Señor Monipodio, of whose virtues you relate such fine things.”

“That wish shall soon be gratified,” replied the stranger, “nay even from this place we can perceive his house: but your worships must remain at the door until I have gone in to see if he be disengaged, since these are the hours at which he gives audience.”

“So be it,” replied Rincon; and the thief preceding them for a short distance, they saw him enter a house which, so far from being handsome, had a very mean and wretched appearance. The two friends remained at the door to await their guide, who soon reappeared, and called to them to come in. He then bade them remain for the present in a little paved court, or patio, so clean and carefully rubbed that the red bricks shone as if covered with the finest vermilion. On one side of the court was a three-legged stool, before which stood a large pitcher with the lip broken off, and on the top of the pitcher was placed a small jug equally dilapidated. On the other side lay a rush mat, and in the middle was a fragment of crockery which did service as the recipient of some sweet basil.

The two boys examined these moveables attentively while awaiting the descent of the Señor Monipodio, but finding that he delayed his appearance,

Rincon ventured to put his head into one of two small rooms which opened on the court. There he saw two fencing foils, and two bucklers of cork hung upon four nails; there was also a great chest, but without a lid or anything to cover it, with three rush mats extended on the floor. On the wall in face of him was pasted a figure of Our Lady — one of the coarsest of prints — and beneath it was a small basket of straw, with a little vessel of white earthenware sunk into the wall. The basket Rincon took to be a poor box, for receiving alms, and the little basin he supposed to be a receptacle for holy water, as in truth they were.

While the friends thus waited, there came into the court two young men of some twenty years each; they were clothed as students, and were followed soon afterwards by two of the basket boys or porters, and a blind man. Neither spoke a word to the other, but all began to walk up and down in the court. No long time elapsed before there also came in two old men clothed in black serge, and with spectacles on their noses, which gave them an air of much gravity, and made them look highly respectable: each held in his hand a rosary, the beads of which made a ringing sound. Behind these men came an old woman wearing a long and ample gown, who, without uttering a word, proceeded at once to the room wherein was the figure of Our Lady. She then took holy water with the greatest devotion, placed herself on her knees before the Virgin, and after remaining there a considerable time, first kissed the soil thrice, and then rising, lifted her arms and eyes towards heaven, in which attitude she remained a certain time longer. She then dropped her alms into the little wicker case — and that done, she issued forth among the company in the patio.

Finally there were assembled in the court as many as fourteen persons of various costumes and different professions. Among the latest arrivals were two dashing and elegant youths with long moustachios, hats of immense brims, broad collars, stiffly starched, coloured stockings, garters with great bows and fringed ends, swords of a length beyond that permitted by law, and each having a pistol in his belt, with a buckler hanging on his arm. No sooner had these men entered, than they began to look askance at Rincon and Cortado, whom they were evidently surprised to see there, as persons unknown to themselves. At length the new-comers accosted the two friends, asking if they were of the brotherhood. “We are so,” replied Rincon, “and the very humble servants of your worships besides.”

At this moment the Señor Monipodio honoured the respectable assembly with his welcome presence. He appeared to be about five or six-and-forty years old, tall, and of dark complexion; his eyebrows met on his forehead, his black beard was very thick, and his eyes were deeply sunk in his head. He had come down in his shirt, through the opening of which was seen a hairy bosom, as rough and



thick set as a forest of brushwood. Over his shoulders was thrown a serge cloak, reaching nearly to his feet, which were cased in old shoes, cut down to make slippers; his legs were covered with a kind of linen gaiters, wide and ample, which fell low upon his ankles. His hat was that worn by those of the Hampa, bell-formed in the crown, and very wide in the brim. Across his breast was a leather baldric, supporting a broad, short sword of the *perrillo* fashion. His hands were short and coarse, the fingers thick, and the nails much flattened: his legs were concealed by the gaiters, but his feet were of immoderate size, and the most clumsy form. In short, he was the coarsest and most repulsive barbarian ever beheld. With him came the conductor of the two friends; who, taking Rincon and Cortado each by a hand, presented them to Monipodio, saying, "These are the two good boys of whom I spoke to your worship, Señor Monipodio. May it please your worship to examine them, and you will see how well they are prepared to enter our brotherhood." "That I will do willingly," replied Monipodio.

But I had forgotten to say, that when Monipodio had first appeared, all those who were waiting for him, made a deep and long reverence, the two dashing cavaliers alone excepted, who did but just touch their hats, and then continued their walk up and down the court.

Monipodio also began to pace up and down the patio, and, as he did so, he questioned the new disciples as to their trade, their birthplace, and their parents. To this Rincon replied, "Our trade is sufficiently obvious, since we are here before your worship; as to our country, it does not appear to me essential to the matter in hand that we should declare it, any more than the names of our parents, since we are not now stating our qualifications for admission into some noble order of knighthood."

"What you say, my son, is true, as well as discreet," replied Monipodio; "and it is, without doubt, highly prudent to conceal those circumstances; for if things should turn out badly, there is no need to have placed upon the books of register, and under the sign manual of the justice-clerk, 'So and so, native of such a place, was hanged, or made to dance at the whipping-post, on such a day,' with other announcements of the like kind, which, to say the least of them, do not sound agreeable in respectable ears. Thus, I repeat, that to conceal the name and abode of your parents, and even to change your own proper appellation, are prudent measures. Between ourselves there must, nevertheless, be no concealment: for the present I will ask your names only, but these you must give me."

Rincon then told his name, and so did Cortado: whereupon Monipodio said, "Henceforward I request and desire that you, Rincon, call yourself Rinconete, and you, Cortado, Cortadillo; these being names which accord, as though made

in a mould, with your age and circumstances, as well as with our ordinances, which make it needful that we should also know the names of the parents of our comrades, because it is our custom to have a certain number of masses said every year for the souls of our dead, and of the benefactors of our society; and we provide for the payment of the priests who say them, by setting apart a share of our swag for that purpose.

“These masses, thus said and paid for, are of great service to the souls aforesaid. Among our benefactors we count the Alguazil, who gives us warning; the Advocate, who defends us; the Executioner, who takes pity upon us when we have to be whipped, and the man who, when we are running along the street, and the people in full cry after us bawling ‘Stop thief,’ throws himself between us and our pursuers, and checks the torrent, saying, ‘Let the poor wretch alone, his lot is hard enough; let him go, and his crime will be his punishment.’ We also count among our benefactors the good wenches who aid us by their labours while we are in prison, or at the galleys; our fathers, and the mothers who brought us into the world; and, finally, we take care to include the Clerk of the Court, for if he befriend us, there is no crime which he will not find means to reduce to a slight fault, and no fault which he does not prevent from being punished. For all these our brotherhood causes the *sanctimonies* (ceremonies) I have named to be *solecised* (solemnised) every year, with all possible *grandiloquence*.

“Certainly,” replied Rinconete (now confirmed in that name), “certainly that is a good work, and entirely worthy of the lofty and profound genius with which we have heard that you, Señor Monipodio, are endowed. Our parents still enjoy life; but should they precede us to the tomb, we will instantly give notice of that circumstance to this happy and highly esteemed fraternity, to the end that you may have ‘sanctimonies solecised’ for their souls, as your worship is pleased to say, with the customary ‘grandiloquence.’”

“And so shall it be done,” returned Monipodio, “if there be but a piece of me left alive to look to it.”

He then called their conductor, saying, “Hallo! there, Ganchuelo! Is the watch set?” “Yes,” replied the boy; “three sentinels are on guard, and there is no fear of a surprise.” “Let us return to business, then,” said Monipodio. “I would fain know from you, my sons, what you are able to do, that I may assign you an employment in conformity with your inclinations and accomplishments.”

“I,” replied Rinconete, “know a trick or two to gammon a bumpkin; I am not a bad hand at hiding what a pal has prigged; I have a good eye for a gudgeon; I play well at most games of cards, and have all the best turns of the pasteboard at my finger ends; I have cut my eye teeth, and am about as easy to lay hold of as a

hedgehog; I can creep through a cat-hole or down a chimney, as I would enter the door of my father's house; and will muster a million of tricks better than I could marshal a regiment of soldiers; and flabbergast the knowingest cove a deal sooner than pay back a loan of two reals."

"These are certainly the rudiments," admitted Monipodio, "but all such things are no better than old lavender flowers, so completely worn out of all savour that there is not a novice who may not boast of being a master in them. They are good for nothing but to catch simpletons who are stupid enough to run their heads against the church steeple; but time will do much for you, and we must talk further together. On the foundation already laid you shall have half a dozen lessons; and I then trust in God that you will turn out a famous craftsman, and even, mayhap, a master."

"My abilities shall always be at your service, and that of the gentlemen who are our comrades," replied Rinconete; and Monipodio then turned towards Cortadillo.

"And you, Cortadillo, what may you be good for?" he inquired; to which Cortadillo replied, "For my part I know the trick called 'put in two, and take out five,' and I can dive to the bottom of a pocket with great precision and dexterity." "Do you know nothing more?" continued Monipodio. "Alas, no, for my sins, that is all I can do," admitted Cortadillo, "Do not afflict yourself, nevertheless," said the master; "you are arrived at a good port, where you will not be drowned, and you enter a school in which you can hardly fail to learn all that is requisite for your future welfare. And now as to courage: how do you feel yourselves provided in that respect, my children?" "How should we be provided," returned Rinconete, "but well and amply? We have courage enough to attempt whatever may be demanded in our art and profession." "But I would have you to possess a share of that sort which would enable you to suffer as well as to dare," replied Monipodio, "which would carry you, if need were, through a good half dozen of *ansias* without opening your lips, and without once saying 'This mouth is mine.'" "We already know what the *ansias* are, Señor Monipodio," replied Cortadillo, "and are prepared for all; since we are not so ignorant but that we know very well, that what the tongue says, the throat must pay for; and great is the grace heaven bestows on the bold man (not to give him a different name), in making his life or death depend upon the discretion of his tongue, as though there were more letters in a No than an Aye."

"Halt there, my son; you need say no more," exclaimed Monipodio at this point of the discourse. "The words you have just uttered suffice to convince, oblige, persuade, and constrain me at once to admit you both to full brotherhood, and dispense with your passing through the year of novitiate."

“I also am of that opinion,” said one of the gaily-dressed Bravos; and this was the unanimous feeling of the whole assembly. They therefore requested that Monipodio would immediately grant the new brethren the enjoyment of all the immunities of their confraternity, seeing that their good mien and judicious discourse proved them to be entirely deserving of that distinction.

Monipodio replied, that, to satisfy the wishes of all, he at once conferred on those new-comers all the privileges desired, but he exhorted the recipients to remember that they were to hold the favour in high esteem, since it was a very great one: consisting in the exemption from payment of the *media anata*, or tax levied on the first theft they should commit, and rendering them free of all the inferior occupations of their office for the entire year. They were not obliged, that is to say, to bear messages to a brother of higher grade, whether in prison or at his own residence. They were permitted to drink their wine without water, and to make a feast when and where they pleased, without first demanding permission of their principal. They were, furthermore, to enter at once on a full share of whatever was brought in by the superior brethren, as one of themselves — with many other privileges, which the new comers accepted as most signal favours, and on the possession of which they were felicitated by all present, in the most polite and complimentary terms.

While these pleasing ceremonies were in course of being exchanged, a boy ran in, panting for breath, and cried out, “The Alguazil of the vagabonds is coming direct to the house, but he has none of the Marshalsea men with him.”

“Let no one disturb himself,” said Monipodio. “This is a friend; never does he come here for our injury. Calm your anxiety, and I will go out to speak with him.” At these words all resumed their self-possession, for they had been considerably alarmed; and Monipodio went forth to the door of his house, where he found the Alguazil, with whom he remained some minutes in conversation, and then returned to the company. “Who was on guard to-day,” he asked, “in the market of San Salvador?” “I was,” replied the conductor of our two friends, the estimable Ganchuelo. “You!” replied Monipodio. “How then does it happen that you have not given notice of an amber-coloured purse which has gone astray there this morning, and has carried with it fifteen crowns in gold, two double reals, and I know not how many quartos?”

“It is true,” replied Ganchuelo, “that this purse has disappeared, but it was not I took it, nor can I imagine who has done so.” “Let there be no tricks with me,” exclaimed Monipodio; “the purse must be found, since the Alguazil demands it, and he is a friend who finds means to do us a thousand services in the course of the year.” The youth again swore that he knew nothing about it, while Monipodio’s choler began to rise, and in a moment flames seemed to dart from

his eyes. "Let none of you dare," he shouted, "to venture on infringing the most important rule of our order, for he who does so shall pay for it with his life. Let the purse be found, and if any one has been concealing it to avoid paying the dues, let him now give it up. I will make good to him all that he would have been entitled to, and out of my own pocket too; for, come what may, the Alguazil must not be suffered to depart without satisfaction." But Ganchuelo could do no more than repeat, with all manner of oaths and imprecations, that he had neither taken the purse, nor ever set eyes on it.

All this did but lay fuel on the flame of Monipodio's anger, and the entire assembly partook of his emotions; the honourable members perceiving that their statutes were violated, and their wise ordinances infringed. Seeing, therefore, that the confusion and alarm had now got to such a height, Rinconete began to think it time to allay it, and to calm the anger of his superior, who was bursting with rage. He took counsel for a moment with Cortadillo, and receiving his assent, drew forth the purse of the Sacristan, saying: —

"Let all questions cease, gentlemen: here is the purse, from which nothing is missing that the Alguazil has described, since my comrade Cortadillo prigged it this very day, with a pocket-handkerchief into the bargain, which he borrowed from the same owner." Thereupon Cortadillo produced the handkerchief before the assembled company.

Seeing this, Monipodio exclaimed "Cortadillo the Good! for by that title and surname shall you henceforward be distinguished. Keep the handkerchief, and I take it upon myself to pay you duly for this service; as to the purse, the Alguazil must carry it away just as it is, for it belongs to a Sacristan who happens to be his relation, and we must make good in his case the proverb, which says, 'To him who gives thee the entire bird, thou canst well afford a drumstick of the same.' This good Alguazil can save us from more mischief in one day than we can do him good in a hundred."

All the brotherhood with one voice approved the spirit and gentlemanly proceeding of the two new comers, as well as the judgment and decision of their superior, who went out to restore the purse to the Alguazil. As to Cortadillo, he was confirmed in his title of the *Good*, much as if the matter had concerned a Don Alonzo Perez de Guzman, surnamed the Good, who from the walls of Tarifa threw down to his enemy the dagger that was to destroy the life of his only son.

When Monipodio returned to the assembly he was accompanied by two girls, with rouged faces, lips reddened with carmine, and necks plastered with white. They wore short camlet cloaks, and exhibited airs of the utmost freedom and boldness. At the first glance Rinconete and Cortadillo could see what was the

profession of these women. They had no sooner entered, than they hurried with open arms, the one to Chiquiznaque, the other to Maniferro; these were the two bravos, one of whom bore the latter name because he had an iron hand, in place of one of his own, which had been cut off by the hand of justice. These two men embraced the girls with great glee, and inquired if they had brought the wherewithal to moisten their throats. "How could we think of neglecting that, old blade!" replied one of the girls, who was called Gananciosa. "Silvatillo, your scout, will be here before long with the clothes-basket, crammed with whatever good luck has sent us."

And true it was; for an instant afterwards, a boy entered with a clothes-basket covered with a sheet.

The whole company renewed their rejoicings on the arrival of Silvatillo, and Monipodio instantly ordered that one of the mats should be brought from the neighbouring chamber, and laid out in the centre of the court. Furthermore he commanded that all the brotherhood should take places around it, in order that while they were taking the wrinkles out of their stomachs, they might talk about business.

To this proposal the old woman, who had been kneeling before the image, replied, "Monipodio, my son, I am not in the humour to keep festival this morning, for during the last two days I have had a giddiness and pain in my head, that go near to make me mad; I must, besides, be at our Lady of the Waters before mid-day strikes, having to accomplish my devotions and offer my candles there, as well as at the crucifix of St. Augustin; for I would not fail to do either, even though it were to snow all day and blow a hurricane. What I came here for is to tell you, that last night the Renegade and Centipede brought to my house a basket somewhat larger than that now before us; it was as full as it could hold of fine linen, and, on my life and soul, it was still wet and covered with soap, just as they had taken it from under the nose of the washerwoman, so that the poor fellows were perspiring and breathless beneath its weight. It would have melted your heart to see them as they came in, with the water streaming from their faces, and they as red as a couple of cherubs. They told me, besides, that they were in pursuit of a cattle-dealer, who had just had some sheep weighed at the slaughter-house, and they were then hastening off to see if they could not contrive to grab a great cat which the dealer carried with him. They could not, therefore, spare time to count the linen, or take it out of the basket but they relied on the rectitude of my conscience; and so may God grant my honest desires, and preserve us all from the power of justice, as these fingers have refrained from touching the basket, which is as full as the day it was born."

"We cannot doubt it, good mother," replied Monipodio. "Let the basket

remain where it is; I will come at nightfall to fetch it away, and will then ascertain the quantity and quality of its contents, giving to every one the portion, due to him, faithfully and truly, as it is my habit to do."

"Let it be as you shall command," rejoined the old woman; "and now, as it is getting late, give me something to drink, if you have it there — something that will comfort this miserable stomach, which is almost famishing for want."

"That you shall have, and enough of it, mother," exclaimed Escalanta, the companion of Gananciosa; and, uncovering the basket, she displayed a great leather bottle, containing at least two arrobas of wine, with a cup made of cork, in which you might comfortably carry off an azumbre, or honest half-gallon of the same. This Escalanta now filled, and placed it in the hands of the devout old woman, who took it in both her own, and, having blown away a little froth from the surface, she said, —

"You have poured out a large quantity, Escalanta, my daughter; but God will give me strength." Whereupon, without once taking breath, and at one draught, she poured the whole from the cup down her throat. "It is real Guadalcanal," said the old woman, when she had taken breath; "and yet it has just a tiny smack of the gypsum. God comfort you, my daughter, as you have comforted me; I am only afraid that the wine may do me some mischief, seeing that I have not yet broken my fast."

"No, mother; it will do nothing of the kind," returned Monipodio, "for it is three years old at the least."

"May the Virgin grant that I find it so," replied the old woman. Then turning to the girls, "See, children," she said "whether you have not a few maravedis to buy the candles for my offerings of devotion. I came away in so much haste, to bring the news of the basket of linen, that I forgot my purse, and left it at home."

"Yes, Dame Pipota," — such was the name of the old woman,— "I have some," replied Gananciosa; "here are two cuartos for you, and with one of them I beg you to buy a candle for me, which you will offer in my name to the Señor St. Michael, or if you can get two with the money, you may place the other at the altar of the Señor St. Blas, for those two are my patron-saints. I also wish to give one to the Señora Santa Lucia, for whom I have a great devotion, on account of the eyes; but I have no more change to-day, so it must be put off till another time, when I will square accounts with all."

"And you will do well, daughter," replied the old woman. "Don't be niggard, mind. It is a good thing to carry one's own candles before one dies, and not to wait until they are offered by the heirs and executors of our testament."

"You speak excellently, Mother Pipota," said Escalanta; and, putting her hand into her pocket, she drew forth a cuarto, which she gave the old woman,

requesting her to buy two candles for her likewise, and offer them to such saints as she considered the most useful and the most likely to be grateful. With this old Pipota departed, saying,

“Enjoy yourselves, my dears, now while you have time, for old age will come and you will then weep for the moments you may have lost in your youth, as I do now. Commend me to God in your prayers, and I will remember you, as well as myself, in mine, that he may keep us all, and preserve us in this dangerous trade of ours from all the terrors of justice.” These words concluded, the old woman went her way.

Dame Pipota having disappeared, all seated themselves round the mat, which Gananciosa covered with the sheet in place of a table-cloth. The first thing she drew from the basket was an immense bunch of radishes; this was followed by a couple of dozens or more of oranges and lemons; then came a great earthen pan filled with slices of fried ling, half a Dutch cheese, a bottle of excellent olives, a plate of shrimps, and a large dish of craw-fish, with their appropriate sauce of capers, drowned in pepper-vinegar: three loaves of the whitest bread from Gandul completed the collation. The number of guests at this breakfast was fourteen, and not one of them failed to produce his yellow-handled knife, Rinconete alone excepted, who drew his dudgeon dagger instead. The two old men in serge gowns, and the lad who had been the guide of the two friends, were charged with the office of cupbearers, pouring the wine from the bottle into the cork cup.

But scarcely had the guests taken their places, before they were all startled, and sprang up in haste at the, sound of repeated knocks at the door. Bidding them remain quiet, Monipodio went into one of the lower rooms, unhooked a buckler, took his sword in his hand, and, going to the door, inquired, in a rough and threatening voice, “Who is there?”

“All right Señor! it is I, Tagarote, on sentry this morning,” replied a voice from without. “I come to tell you that Juliana de Cariharta is coming, with her hair all about her face, and crying her eyes out, as though some great misfortune had happened to her.”

He had scarcely spoken when the girl he had named came sobbing to the door, which Monipodio opened for her, commanding Tagarote to return to his post; and ordering him, moreover, to make less noise and uproar when he should next bring notice of what was going forward, — a command to which the boy promised attention.

Cariharta, a girl of the same class and profession with those already in presence, had meanwhile entered the court, her hair streaming in the wind, her eyes swollen with tears, and her face covered with contusions and bruises. She



had no sooner got into the Patio, than she fell to the ground in a fainting fit. Gananciosa and Escalanta sprang to her assistance, unfastened her dress, and found her breast and shoulders blackened and covered with marks of violence. After they had thrown water on her face, she soon came to herself, crying out as she did so, "The justice of God and the king on that shameless thief, that cowardly cut-purse, and dirty scoundrel, whom I have saved from the gibbet more times than he has hairs in his beard. Alas! unhappy creature that I am! see for what I have squandered my youth, and spent the flower of my days! For an unnatural, worthless, and incorrigible villain!"

"Recover yourself, and be calm, Cariharta," said Monipodio; "I am here to render justice to you and to all. Tell me your cause of complaint, and you shall be longer in relating the story than I will be in taking vengeance. Let me know if anything has happened between you and your *respeto*; and if you desire to be well and duly avenged. You have but to open your mouth."

"Protector!" exclaimed the girl. "What kind of a protector is he? It were better for me to be protected in hell than to remain any longer with that lion among sheep, and sheep among men! Will I ever eat again with him at the same table, or live under the same roof? Rather would I give this flesh of mine, which he has put into the state you shall see, to be devoured alive by raging beasts." So saying, she pulled up her petticoats to her knees, and even a little higher, and showed the wheals with which she was covered. "That's the way," she cried, "that I have been treated by that ungrateful Repolido, who owes more to me than to the mother that bore him."

"And why do you suppose he has done this? Do you think I have given him any cause? — no, truly. His only reason for serving me so was, that being at play and losing his money, he sent Cabrillas, his scout, to me for thirty reals, and I could only send him twenty-four. May the pains and troubles with which I earned them be counted to me by heaven in remission of my sins! But in return for this civility and kindness, fancying that I had kept back part of what he chose to think I had got, the blackguard lured me out to the fields this morning, beyond the king's garden, and there, having stripped me among the olive trees, he took off his belt, not even removing the iron buckle — oh that I may see him clapped in irons and chains! — and with that he gave me such an unmerciful flogging, that he left me for dead; and that's a true story, as the marks you see bear witness."

Here Cariharta once more set up her pipes and craved for justice, which was again promised to her by Monipodio and all the bravos present.

The Gananciosa then tried her hand at consoling the victim; saying to her, among other things— "I would freely give my best gown that my fancy man had

done as much by me; for I would have you know, sister Cariharta, if you don't know it yet, that he who loves best thrashes best; and when these scoundrels whack us and kick us, it is then they most devoutly adore us. Tell me now, on our life, after having beaten and abused you, did not Repolido make much of you, and give you more than one caress?"

"More than one!" replied the weeping girl; "he gave me more than a hundred thousand, and would have given a finger off his hand if I would only have gone with him to his posada; nay, I even think that the tears were almost starting from his eyes after he had leathered me."

"Not a doubt of it," replied Gananciosa; "and he would weep now to see the state he has put you into: for men like him have scarcely committed the fault before repentance begins. You will see, sister, if he does not come here to look for you before we leave the place; and see if he does not beg you to forgive what has passed, and behave to you as meek and as humble as a lamb."

"By my faith," observed Monipodio, "the cowardly ruffian shall not enter these doors until he has made full reparation for the offence he has committed. How dare he lay a hand on poor Cariharta, who for cleanliness and industry is a match for Gananciosa herself, and that is saying everything."

"Alas! Señor Monipodio," replied Juliana, "please do not speak too severely of the miserable fellow; for, hard as he is, I cannot but love him as I do the very folds of my heart; and the words spoken in his behalf by my friend Gananciosa have restored the soul to my body. Of a truth, if I consulted only my own wishes, I should go this moment and look for him."

"No, no," replied Gananciosa, "you shall not do so by my counsel; for to do that would make him proud; he would think too much of himself, and would make experiments upon you as on a dead body. Keep quiet, sister, and in a short time you will see him here repentant, as I have said; and if not, we will write verses on him that shall make him roar with rage."

"Let us write by all means," returned Juliana, "for I have a thousand things to say to him."

"And I will be your secretary, if need be," rejoined Monipodio, "for although I am no poet, yet a man has but to tuck up the sleeves of his shirt, set well to work, and he may turn off a couple of thousand verses in the snapping of a pair of scissors. Besides, if the rhymes should not come so readily as one might wish, I have a friend close by, a barber, who is a great poet, and will trim up the ends of the verses at an hour's notice. At present, however, let us go finish our repast; all the rest can be done afterwards."

Juliana was not unwilling to obey her superior, so they all fell to again at the O-be-joyful with so much goodwill that they soon saw the bottom of the basket

and the dregs of the great leather bottle. The old ones drank *sine fine*, the younger men to their hearts' content, and the ladies till they could drink no more. When all was consumed, the two old men begged permission to take their leave, which Monipodio allowed them to do, but charged them to return punctually, for the purpose of reporting all they should see or hear that could be useful to the brotherhood; they assured him they would by no means fail in their duty, and then departed.

After these gentlemen had left the company, Rinconete, who was of a very inquiring disposition, begged leave to ask Monipodio in what way two persons so old, grave, and formal as those he had just seen, could be of service to their community. Monipodio replied, that such were called "Hornets" in their jargon, and that their office was to poke about all parts of the city, spying out such places as might be eligible for attempts to be afterwards made in the night-time. "They watch people who receive money from the bank or treasury," said he, "observe where they go with it, and, if possible, the very place in which it is deposited. When this is done, they make themselves acquainted with the thickness of the walls, marking out the spot where we may most conveniently make our *guzpataros*, which are the holes whereby we contrive to force an entrance. In a word, these persons are among the most useful of the brotherhood: and they receive a fifth of all that the community obtains by their intervention, as his majesty does, on treasure trove. They are, moreover, men of singular integrity and rectitude. They lead a respectable life, and enjoy a good reputation, fearing God and regarding the voice of their consciences, insomuch that not a day passes over their heads in which they have not heard mass with extraordinary devotion. There are, indeed, some of them so conscientious, that they content themselves with even less than by our rules would be their due. Those just gone are of this number. We have two others, whose trade it is to remove furniture; and as they are daily employed in the conveyance of articles for persons who are changing their abode, they know all the ins and outs of every house in the city, and can tell exactly where we may hope for profit and where not."

"That is all admirable," replied Rinconete, "and greatly do I desire to be of some use to so noble a confraternity."

"Heaven is always ready to favour commendable desires," replied Monipodio.

While the two were thus discoursing, a knock was heard at the door, and Monipodio went to see who might be there. "Open, Sor Monipodio — open," said a voice without; "it is I, Repolido."

Cariharta hearing this voice, began to lift up her own to heaven, and cried out, "Don't open the door, Señor Monipodio; don't let in that Tarpeian mariner —

that tiger of Ocaña.”

Monipodio opened the door, nevertheless, in despite of her cries; when Cariharta, starting to her feet, hurried away, and hid herself in the room where the bucklers were hung up. There, bolting the door, she bawled from her refuge, “Drive out that black-visaged coward, that murderer of innocents, that white-livered terror of house-lambs, who durst not look a man in the face.”

Repolido was meanwhile kept back by Maniferro and Chiquiznaque, as he struggled with all his might to get into the room where Cariharta was hidden. But when he saw that to be impossible, he called to her from without, “Come, come, let us have done with this, my little sulky; by your life, let us have peace, as you would wish to be married.” “Married!” retorted the lady, “married to you too! Don’t you wish you may get it? See what kind of a string he’s playing on now. I would rather be married to a dead notomy.” “Oh, bother!” exclaimed Repolido; “let us have done with this, for it is getting late; take care of being too much puffed up at hearing me speak so gently, and seeing me so meek; for, by the light of heaven, if my rage should get steeple-high, the relapse will be worse than the first fit. Come down from your stilts, let us all have done with our *tantrums*, and not give the devil a dinner.”

“I will give him a supper to boot, if he will take you from my sight to some place where I may never set eyes on you more,” exclaimed the gentle Juliana from within.

“Haven’t I told you once to beware, Madame Hemp-sack? By the powers, I suspect I must serve out something to you by the dozen, though I make no charge for it.”

Here Monipodio interposed: “In my presence,” he said, “there shall be no violence. Cariharta will come out, not for your threats, but for my sake, and all will go well. Quarrels between people who love each other are but the cause of greater joy and pleasure when peace is once made. Listen to me, Juliana, my daughter; listen to me, my Cariharta. Come out to us, for the love of your friend Monipodio, and I will make Repolido beg your pardon on his knees.”

“Ah! if he will do that,” exclaimed Escalanta, “we shall then be all on his side, and will entreat Juliana to come out.”

“If I am asked to beg pardon in a sense of submission that would dishonour my person,” replied Repolido, “an army of lansquenets would not make me consent; but if it be merely in the way of doing pleasure to Cariharta, I do not say merely that I would go on my knees, but I would drive a nail into my forehead to do her service.”

At these words Chiquiznaque and Maniferro began to laugh, and Repolido, who thought they were making game of him, cried out in a transport of rage,

“Whoever shall laugh or think of laughing at anything whatsoever that may pass between Cariharta and myself, I say that he lies, and that he will have lied every time he shall laugh or think of laughing.”

Hearing this, Chiquiznaque and Maniferro looked at each other and scowled so sternly, that Monipodio saw things were likely to come to a crisis unless he prevented it. Throwing himself, therefore, into the midst of the group, he cried out, “No more of this, gentlemen! have done with all big words; grind them up between your teeth; and since those that have been said do not reach to the belt, let no one here apply them to himself.”

“We are very sure,” replied Chiquiznaque, “that such admonitions neither have been nor will be uttered for our benefit; otherwise, or if it should be imagined that they were addressed to us, the tambourine is in hands that would well know how to beat it.”

“We also, Sor Chiquiznaque, have our drum of Biscay,” retorted Repolido, “and, in case of need, can make the bells as well as another. I have already said, that whoever jests in our matters is a liar: and whoever thinks otherwise, let him follow me; with a palm’s length of my sword I will show him that what is said is said.” Having uttered these words, Repolido turned towards the outer door, and proceeded to leave the place.

Cariharta had meanwhile been listening to all this, and when she found that Repolido was departing in anger, she rushed out, screaming, “Hold him, hold him, — don’t let him go, or he will be showing us some more of his handiwork; can’t you see that he is angry? and he is a Judas Macarelo in the matter of bravery. Come here, Hector of the world and of my eyes!” With these words, Cariharta threw herself upon the retiring bravo, and held him with all her force by his cloak. Monipodio lent her his aid, and between them they contrived to detain him.

Chiquiznaque and Maniferro, undetermined whether to resume the dispute or not, stood waiting apart to see what Repolido would do, and the latter perceiving himself to be in the hands of Monipodio and Cariharta, exclaimed, “Friends should never annoy friends, nor make game of friends, more especially when they see that friends are vexed.”

“There is not a friend here,” replied Maniferro, “who has any desire to vex a friend; and since we are all friends, let us give each other the hand like friends.” “Your worships have all spoken like good friends,” added Monipodio, “and as such friends should do; now finish by giving each other your hands like true friends.”

All obeyed instantly, whereupon Escalanta, whipping off her cork-soled clog, began to play upon it as if it had been a tambourine. Gananciosa, in her turn,

caught up a broom, and, scratching the rushes with her fingers, drew forth a sound which, if not soft or sweet, yet agreed very well with the beating of the slipper. Monipodio then broke a plate, the two fragments of which he rattled together in such fashion as to make a very praiseworthy accompaniment to the slipper and the broom.

Rinconete and Cortadillo stood in much admiration of that new invention of the broom, for up to that time they had seen nothing like it. Manferro perceived their amazement, and said to them, "The broom awakens your admiration, — and well it may, since a more convenient kind of instrument was never invented in this world, nor one more readily formed, or less costly. Upon my life, I heard a student the other day affirm, that neither the man who fetched his wife out of hell — Negrofeo, Ogrofeo, or what was he called — nor that Marion who got upon a dolphin, and came out of the sea like a man riding on a hired mule — nor even that other great musician who built a city with a hundred gates and as many posterns — never a one of them invented an instrument half so easy of acquirement, so ready to the touch, so pleasing and simple as to its frets, keys, and chords, and so far from troublesome in the tuning and keeping in accord; and by all the saints, they swear that it was invented by a gallant of this very city, a perfect Hector in matters of music."

"I fully believe all you say," replied Rinconete, "but let us listen, for our musicians are about to sing. Gananciosa is blowing her nose, which is a certain sign that she means to sing."

And she was, in fact, preparing to do so. Monipodio had requested her to give the company some of the Seguidillas most in vogue at the moment. But the first to begin was Escalanta, who sang as follows, in a thin squeaking voice: —

"For a boy of Sevilla, Red as a Dutchman, All my heart's in flame."

To which Gananciosa replied, taking up the measure as she best might —

"For the little brown lad, With a good bright eye, Who would not lose her name?"

Then Monipodio, making great haste to perform a symphony with his pieces of platter, struck in —

"Two lovers dear, fall out and fight, But soon, to make their peace, take leisure; And all the greater was the row, So much the greater is the pleasure."

But Cariharta had no mind to enjoy her recovered happiness in silence and fingering another clog, she also entered the dance, joining her voice to those of her friends, in the following words —

"Pause, angry lad! and do not beat me more, For 'tis thine own dear flesh that thou dost baste, If thou but well consider, and— "

"Fair and soft," exclaimed Repolido, at that moment, "give us no old stories,

there's no good in that. Let bygones be bygones! Choose another gait, girl; we've had enough of that one."

The canticle, for a moment interrupted by these words, was about to recommence, and would not, apparently, have soon come to an end, had not the performers been disturbed by violent knocks at the door. Monipodio hastened to see who was there, and found one of his sentinels, who informed him that at the end of the street was the alcalde of criminal justice, with the little Piebald and the Kestrel (two catchpolls, who were called neutral, since they did the community of robbers neither good nor harm), marching before him.

The joyous company within heard the report of their scout, and were in a terrible fright. Escalanta and Cariharta put on their clogs in great haste, Gananciosa threw down her broom, and Monipodio his broken plate, every instrument sinking at once into silence. Chiquiznaque lost his joyous grin, and stood dumb as a fish; Repolido trembled with fear, and Maniferro looked pale with anxiety. But these various demonstrations were exhibited only for a moment, — in the next, all that goodly brotherhood had disappeared. Some rushed across a kind of terrace, and gained another court; others clambered over the roof, and so passed into a neighbouring alley. Never did the sound of a fowling piece, or a sudden peal of thunder, more effectually disperse a flock of careless pigeons, than did the news of the alcalde's arrival that select company assembled in the house of the Señor Monipodio. Rinconete and Cortadillo, not knowing whither to flee, stood in their places waiting to see what would be the end of that sudden storm, which finished simply enough by the return of the sentinel, who came to say that the alcalde had passed through the whole length of the street without seeming to have any troublesome suspicions respecting them, or even appearing to think of their house at all.

While Monipodio was in the act of receiving this last report, there came to the door a gentleman in the prime of youth, and dressed in the half-rustic manner suitable to the morning, or to one residing in the country. Monipodio caused this person to enter the house with himself; he then sent to look for Chiquiznaque, Repolido, and Maniferro, with orders that they should come forth from their hiding places, but that such others as might be with them should remain where they were.

Rinconete and Cortadillo having remained in the court, could hear all the conversation which took place between Monipodio and the gentleman who had just arrived, and who began by inquiring how it happened that the job he had ordered had been so badly done. At this point of the colloquy, Chiquiznaque appeared, and Monipodio asked him if he had accomplished the work with which he had been entrusted — namely, the knife-slash of fourteen stitches.

“Which of them was it,” inquired Chiquiznaque, “that of the merchant at the Cross-ways?” “Exactly,” replied the gentleman. “Then I’ll tell you how the matter went,” responded the bravo. “Last night, as I watched before the very door of his house, and the man appeared just before to the ringing of the *Ave Maria*, I got near him, and took the measure of his face with my eyes; but I perceived it was so small that it was impossible, totally impossible, to find room in it for a cut of fourteen stitches. So that, perceiving myself unable to fulfil my destructions”— “Instructions you mean,” said the gentleman;— “Well, well, instructions if you will,” admitted Chiquiznaque,— “seeing that I could not find room for the number of stitches I had to make, because of the narrowness, I say, and want of space in the visage of the merchant, I gave the cut to a lacquey he had with him, to the end that I might not have my journey for nothing; and certainly his allowance may pass for one of the best quality.”

“I would rather you had given the master a cut of seven stitches than the servant one of fourteen,” remarked the gentleman. “You have not fulfilled the promise made me, but the thirty ducats which I gave you as earnest money, will be no great loss.” This said, he saluted the two ruffians and turned to depart, but Monipodio detained him by the cloak of mixed cloth which he wore on his shoulders, saying: “Be pleased to stop, Señor cavalier, and fulfil your promise, since we have kept our word with strict honour and to great advantage. Twenty ducats are still wanting to our bargain, and your worship shall not go from this place until you have paid them, or left us something of equal value in pledge.”

“Do you call this keeping your word,” said the gentleman, “making a cut on the servant when you should have made it on the master?”

“How well his worship understands the business,” remarked Chiquiznaque. “One can easily see that he does not remember the proverb which says: ‘He who loves Beltran, loves his dog likewise.’”

“But what has this proverb to do with the matter?” inquired the gentleman.

“Why, is it not the same thing as to say, ‘He who loves Beltran ill, loves his dog ill too?’ Now the master is Beltran, whom you love ill, and the servant is his dog; thus in giving the cut to the dog I have given it to Beltran, and our part of the agreement is fulfilled; the work has been properly done, and nothing remains but to pay for it on the spot and without further delay.”

“That is just what I am ready to swear to,” cried Monipodio; “and you, friend Chiquiznaque, have taken all that you have said from my mouth; wherefore let not your worship, Señor gallant, be making difficulties out of trifles with your friends and servants. Take my advice and pay us what is our due. After that, if your worship would like to have another cut given to the master, of as many stitches as the space can contain, consider that they are already sewing up the



wound.”

“If it be so,” said the gentleman, “I will very willingly pay the whole sum.”

“Make no more doubt of it than of my being a good Christian, for Chiquiznaque will set the mark on his face so neatly, that he shall seem to have been born with it.”

“On this promise, then, and with this assurance,” replied the gentleman, “receive this chain in pledge for the twenty ducats before agreed on, and for forty other ducats which I will give you for the cut that is to come. The chain weighs a thousand reals, and it may chance to remain with you altogether, as I have an idea that I shall want fourteen stitches more before long.”

Saying this, he took a chain from his neck, and put it into the hands of Monipodio, who found immediately by the weight and touch that it was not gold made by the chemist, but the true metal. He received it accordingly with great pleasure and much courtesy, for Monipodio was particularly well-bred. The execution of the work to be done for it was committed to Chiquiznaque, who declared that it should be delayed no longer than till the arrival of night. The gentleman then departed, well satisfied with his bargain.

Monipodio now summoned the confraternity from the hiding places into which their terror had driven them. When all had entered, he placed himself in the midst of them, drew forth a memorandum book from the hood of his cloak, and as he himself could not read, he handed it to Rinconete, who opened it, and read as follows: —

“Memoranda of the cuts to be given this week.

“The first is to the merchant at the Cross-ways, and is worth fifty crowns, thirty of which have been received on account. *Secutor*, Chiquiznaque.

“I believe there are no others, my son,” said Monipodio; “go on and look for the place where it is written, ‘Memoranda of blows with a cudgel.’” Rinconete turned to that heading, and found under it this entry:— “To the keeper of the pot-house called the Trefoil, twelve blows, to be laid on in the best style, at a crown a-piece, eight of which crowns have been received; time of execution, within six days. *Secutor*, Maniferro.”

“That article may be scratched out of the account,” remarked Maniferro, “for to-night I shall give the gentleman his due.”

“Is there not another, my son?” asked Monipodio.

“There is,” replied Rinconete, and he read as follows: —

“To the hunch-backed Tailor, called by the nick-name Silguero, six blows of the best sort for the lady whom he compelled to leave her necklace in pledge with him. *Secutor*, the Desmochado.”

“I am surprised to find this article still on the account,” observed Monipodio,

“seeing that two days have elapsed since it ought to have been taken off the book; and yet the secutor has not done his work. Desmochado must be indisposed.”

“I met him yesterday,” said Maniferro. “He is not ill himself, but the Hunchback has been so, and being confined to the house on that account, the Desmochado has been unable to encounter him.”

“I make no doubt of it,” rejoined Monipodio, “for I consider the Desmochado to be so good a workman, that but for some such reasonable impediment he would certainly before this have finished a job of much greater importance. Is there any more, my boy?” “No, Señor,” replied Rinconete. “Turn over, then, till you find the ‘Memorandum of miscellaneous damages.’”

Rinconete found the page inscribed “Memorandum of miscellaneous damages,” namely, Radomagos, greasing with oil of juniper, clapping on sanbenitos and horns, false alarms, threatened stabbings, befoolings, *calomels*, &c. &c.

“What do you find lower down?” inquired Monipodio. “I find, ‘Greasing with oil of juniper at the house in—’” ““Don’t read the place or name of the house,” interrupted Monipodio, “for we know where it is, and I am myself the *tu autem* and *secutor* of this trifling matter; four crowns have already been given on account, and the total is eight.” “That is exactly what is here written,” replied Rinconete. “A little lower down,” continued the boy, “I find, ‘Horns to be attached to the house—’” ““Read neither the name nor the place where,” interrupted Monipodio. “It is quite enough that we offer this outrage to the people in question; we need not make it public in our community, for that would be an unnecessary load on your consciences. I would rather nail a hundred horns, and as many sanbenitos, on a man’s door, provided I were paid for my work, than once tell that I had done so, were it to the mother that bore me.” “The executor of this is Nariqueta,” resumed Rinconete. “It is already done and paid for,” said Monipodio; “see if there be not something else, for if my memory is not at fault, there ought to be a fright of the value of twenty crowns. One half the money has already been paid, and the work is to be done by the whole community, the time within which it is to come off being all the current month. Nor will we fail in our duty; the commission shall be fulfilled to the very letter without missing a tilde, and it will be one of the finest things that has been executed in this city for many years. Give me the book, boy, I know there is nothing more, and it is certain that business is very slack with us just now; but times will mend, and we shall perhaps have more to do than we want. There is not a leaf on the tree that moves without the will of God, and we cannot force people to avenge themselves, whether they will or not. Besides, many a man has

the habit of being brave in his own cause, and does not care to pay for the execution of work which he can do as well with his own hands."

"That is true," said Repolido; "but will your worship, Señor Monipodio, see what you have for us to do, as it is getting late, and the heat is coming on at more than a foot-pace."

"What you have now to do is this," rejoined Monipodio: "Every one is to return to his post of the week, and is not to change it until Sunday. We will then meet here again, and make the distribution of all that shall have come in, without defrauding any one. To Rinconete and Cortadillo I assign for their district, until Sunday, from the Tower of Gold, all without the city, and to the postern of the Alcazar, where they can work with their fine flowers. I have known those who were much less clever than they appear to be, come home daily with more than twenty reals in small money, to say nothing of silver, all made with a single pack, and that four cards short. Ganchuelo will show them the limits of their district, and even though they should extend it as far as to San Sebastian, or Santelmo, there will be no great harm done, although it is perhaps of more equal justice that none should enter on the domain of another."

The two boys kissed his hand in acknowledgment of the favour he was doing them; and promised to perform their parts zealously and faithfully, and with all possible caution and prudence.

Monipodio then drew from the hood of his cloak a folded paper, on which was the list of the brotherhood, desiring Rinconete to inscribe his name thereon, with that of Cortadillo; but as there was no escritoire in the place, he gave them the paper to take with them, bidding them enter the first apothecary's shop they could find, and there write what was needful: "Rinconete, and Cortadillo," namely, "comrades; novitiate, none; Rinconete, a florist; Cortadillo, a bassoon-player." To this was to be added the year, month, and day, but not the parents or birthplace.

At this moment one of the old hornets came in and said, "I come to tell your worships that I have just now met on the steps, Lobillo of Malaga, who tells me that he has made such progress in his art as to be capable of cheating Satan himself out of his money, if he have but clean cards. He is so ragged and out of condition at this moment, that he dares not instantly make his appearance to register himself, and pay his respects as usual, but will be here without fail on Sunday."

"I have always been convinced," said Monipodio, "that Lobillo would some day become supereminent in his art, for he has the best hands for the purpose that have ever been seen; and to be a good workman in his trade, a man should be possessed of good tools, as well as capacity for learning."

“I have also met the Jew,” returned the hornet; “he wears the garb of a priest, and is at a tavern in the Street of the Dyers, because he has learned that two Peruleros are now stopping there. He wishes to try if he cannot do business with them, even though it should be but in a trifling way to begin; for from small endeavours often come great achievements. He, too, will be here on Sunday, and will then give an account of himself.”

“The Jew is a keen hawk too,” observed Monipodio, “but it is long since I have set eyes on him, and he does not do well in staying away, for, by my faith, if he do not mend, I will cut his crown for him. The scoundrel has received orders as much as the Grand Turk, and knows no more Latin than my grandmother. Have you anything further to report?”

The old man replied that he had not. “Very well,” said Monipodio; “Take this trifle among you,” distributing at the same time some forty reals among those assembled, “and do not fail to be here on Sunday, when there shall be nothing wanting of the booty.” All returned him thanks. Repolido and Cariharta embraced each other; so did Maniferro and Escalanta, and Chiquiznaque and Gananciosa; and all agreed that they would meet that same evening, when they left off work at the house of Dame Pipota, whither Monipodio likewise promised to repair, for the examination of the linen announced in the morning, before he went to his job with the juniper oil.

The master finally embraced Rinconete and Cortadillo, giving them his benediction; he then dismissed them, exhorting them to have no fixed dwelling or known habitation, since that was a precaution most important to the safety of all. Ganchuelo accompanied the friends for the purpose of guiding them to their districts, and pointing out the limits thereof. He warned them on no account to miss the assembly on Sunday, when it seemed that Monipodio intended to give them a lecture on matters concerning their profession. That done, the lad went away, leaving the two novices in great astonishment at all they had seen.

Now Rinconete, although very young, had a good understanding, and much intelligence. Having often accompanied his father in the sale of his bulls, he had acquired the knowledge of a more refined language than that they had just been hearing, and laughed with all his heart as he recalled the expressions used by Monipodio, and the other members of the respectable community they had entered. He was especially entertained by the solecising sanctimonies; and by Cariharta calling Repolido a Tarpeian Mariner, and a Tiger of Ocaña. He was also mightily edified by the expectation of Cariharta that the pains she had taken to earn the twenty-four reals would be accepted in heaven as a set-off against her sins, and was amazed to see with what security they all counted on going to heaven by means of the devotions they performed, notwithstanding the many

thefts, homicides, and other offences against God and their neighbour which they were daily committing. The boy laughed too with all his heart, as he thought of the good old woman Pipota, who suffered the basket of stolen linen to be concealed in her house, and then went to place her little wax candles before the images of the saints, expecting thereby to enter heaven full dressed in her mantle and clogs.

But he was most surprised at the respect and deference which all these people paid to Monipodio, whom he saw to be nothing better than a coarse and brutal barbarian. He recalled the various entries which he had read in the singular memorandum-book of the burly thief, and thought over all the various occupations in which that goodly company was hourly engaged. Pondering all these things, he could not but marvel at the carelessness with which justice was administered in that renowned city of Seville, since such pernicious hordes and inhuman ruffians were permitted to live there almost openly.

He determined to dissuade his companion from continuing long in such a reprobate course of life. Nevertheless, led away by his extreme youth, and want of experience, he remained with these people for some months, during which there happened to him adventures which would require much writing to detail them; wherefore I propose to remit the description of his life and adventures to some other occasion, when I will also relate those of his master, Monipodio, with other circumstances connected with the members of that infamous academy, which may serve as warnings to those who read them.

END OF PETER OF THE CORNER AND THE LITTLE CUTTER.

## THE LICENTATE VIDRIERA; OR, DOCTOR GLASS-CASE.

Two students were one day passing along the banks of the Tormes, when they found a boy, about eleven years old, dressed as a labourer, and sleeping under a tree. They sent a servant to wake him, and when he had well opened his eyes, they asked him whence he came, and what he was doing, to be lying asleep and defenceless in that lonely place. The boy replied, that he had forgotten the name of his birthplace, but was going to Salamanca, there to seek a master whom he might serve, on condition of being permitted and aided to pursue his studies.

The gentlemen then asked if he could read, and he replied that he could, and write also.

“It is not from want of memory, then, that you have forgotten the name of your country,” remarked the students.

“Let the cause be what it may,” replied the boy, “neither that nor the name of my parents shall be known to any one until I can do honour to them both.”

“But in what manner do you propose to do them honour?” inquired the gentlemen.

“By the results of my studies,” said the boy, “and when I have rendered myself famous by the learning I mean to acquire; for I have heard that some men have made themselves bishops by their studies.”

This reply moved the two gentlemen to receive the lad into their service, and take him with them to Salamanca, giving him such facilities for studying as it is not unusual for masters to afford in that university to those who serve them.

The youth subsequently informed his masters, that they might call him Thomas Rodaja; whence the students judged him to be the son of some poor labourer. A day or two after their meeting, they caused him to be clothed in a suit of black; and, in the course of a few weeks, he gave proof of extraordinary talent. He was, besides, very grateful, and laboured so earnestly in the service of his masters, that although in fact exceedingly attentive to his studies, it might well have been thought that he did nothing but wait upon those he served.

Now the good service of the valet led the masters to treat him well; Thomas soon became their companion rather than servant, and, during eight years, all of which he passed with them, he acquired for himself so high a reputation in the university, by his great ability and excellent conduct, that he was beloved and esteemed by those of every rank.

The principal object of Rodaja’s study was the law, but he was almost equally

distinguished in polite learning, and his memory was matter of marvel to all; and the correctness of his views on all subjects was not less remarkable.

The time had now arrived when the studies of his masters were completed, and they returned to their birthplace, which was one of the most important cities of Andalusia. They took Rodaja with them, and he remained in their company for some time; but, assailed by a perpetual longing to return to his studies at Salamanca, — a city that enchains the will of all who have tasted the amenities of life in that fair seat of learning — he entreated permission of his masters to depart for that purpose. With their usual kindness, they accorded him the favour he desired, and took such measures in his behalf that by their bounty he was supplied with a sufficiency to support him in the university for three years.

Rodaja took his leave with manifest proofs of gratitude, and departed from Malaga, for that was the native city of his masters, without further delay. Descending the declivity of the Zambra on the road to Antequera, he chanced to encounter a gentleman on horseback, gaily accoutred in a rich travelling dress, and attended by two servants, also on horseback, whose company he joined; their journey thenceforward lay in the same direction, and the gentleman accepted Thomas as his comrade. They discoursed of various matters, and, in a short time, Rodaja gave such proof of his quality as much delighted his fellow-traveller; while the latter, on his part, soon proved himself to be a kind and courteous man. He told Rodaja that he was a captain of infantry in the service of the king, and that his ensign was then completing their company at Salamanca. He praised the life of a soldier in the highest terms, describing, with much encomium, the many cities and other places visited by those who lead that life. Among other themes of which he spoke were the beauty of Naples, the feasting and pleasures of Palermo, the rich abundance of Milan, and the frequent festivals held in other parts of Lombardy — not omitting the good cheer of the numerous hostelries — in the description of which he broke forth rapturously in the Tuscan language, discoursing of *Macarela*, *Macarroni*, and *Polastri*, with the most cordial goodwill. He expatiated largely on the free enjoyment of life in Italy, and on the pleasures of the soldier's life in general, which he exalted to the skies; but he did not say a word of the chilling night-watch, the perils of the assault, the terrors of battle, the hunger and privation endured in blockades and sieges, or the ruin caused by mines, with other matters of similar kind whereof he might have spoken, but which he passed over in silence — although there are those who would consider such things as having something to do with the life of the soldier, not to call them its principal features. In a word, he said so much on the subject, that the resolution of our Thomas Rodaja began to waver, and his inclination went near to fix itself on that life, which is so near a neighbour to

death.

The captain, whose name was Don Diego de Valdivia, charmed, on his part, with the handsome looks, cheerful manners, and admirable abilities of Rodaja, entreated him to accompany the march into Italy, were it only for the purpose of seeing the country. He offered him his table, and even, if he would adopt the military life, he proposed to procure him a pair of colours; nay, he assured him that those of his own regiment would soon be vacant, and should be at his service.

But little persuasion was required to induce Rodaja's acceptance of a part of this offer. Weighing it in his mind, he considered that it would be well to see Italy and Flanders, to say nothing of other countries, since travel contributes to increase knowledge and discretion. He thought, too, that although he should spend three, or even four years in that occupation, yet these, added to the few he then counted, would not make him so old but that he might afterwards return to his studies. These and other considerations had their weight, and the opportunity being so much to his taste, Rodaja finally told the captain that he would go with him into Italy; but it must be on condition of being left at perfect liberty. He would not consent to enlist under his banner, nor to have his name enrolled in the books of the regiment, that he might not be subjected to the restraints of service. The captain represented that his being inscribed on the lists was a matter which involved no duty, and that he would thereby obtain all the appointments, with the regular pay accorded to his rank; while he, Don Diego, would take care that he should have leave of absence whenever he might demand it. Yet Rodaja was not to be moved from his determination. "For this," said he, "would be to act against the dictates of my conscience and of yours, señor captain; I would, besides, much rather go free than be attached to military service in any manner."

"A conscience so scrupulous is more suitable to the cowl of a monk than the helmet of a soldier," said Don Diego, laughing; "but let it be as you will, so we but remain comrades."

The first night of their journey they had passed at Antequera, and making long stages each day, they speedily arrived at the place where the captain was to join his company. All arrangements being completed, the company began its march with four others to Carthagena, quartering at such places as fell in their way.

And now Rodaja could not fail to remark the authority assumed by the commissaries; the intractable character of many among the captains; the rapacity of the quartermasters, and the unreasonable nature of their demands; the fashion in which the paymasters managed their accounts; the complaints of the people; the traffic in and exchange of billets; the insolence of the undisciplined troops; their quarrels with the other guests at the inns; the requisition of more rations



and other stores than were rightful or necessary; and, finally, the almost inevitable consequences of all this. Much besides came under his observation, which he could not but see to be in every way wrong and injurious.

For Rodaja himself, he had now abandoned the garb of a student, and dressed himself parrot-fashion (as we say), conforming to such things as the life around him presented. The many books he had possessed were now reduced to the “Orisons of Our Lady,” and a “Garcilaso without Comments,” which he carried in two of his pockets.

The party with which he travelled arrived at Carthagená much earlier than he desired, for the varied life he led was very pleasant, and each day brought something new and agreeable. At Carthagená the troops embarked in four galleys for Naples; and in his cabin, also, Rodaja made many observations on the strange life passed in those maritime houses, where, for the most part, a man is devoured by vermin and destroyed by rats, vexed by the sailors, robbed by the galley-slaves, and tormented by the swell of the waters. He endured terrible fear from violent storms and tempests, more especially in the Gulf of Lyons, where they had two, by one of which they were cast on the Island of Corsica, while the other drove them back upon Toulon, in France. At last, weary and half-drowned, they reached land in the darkness of the night, and with great difficulty arrived at the most peaceful and beautiful city of Genoa.

Having disembarked, and hastily visited a church to return thanks for their safety, the captain with all his comrades adjourned to a tavern, where they quickly forgot past storms and tempests in present rejoicing and feasting.

Here they learned to appreciate the respective merits of the different wines presented to them by their active and voluble host; the delicacy of Trebbiano, the fine body of Montefiascone, the purity of Asperino, the generous spirit of the wines from Candia and Soma, and the strength of those from the Cincovinas, or Five Vineyards. Neither did they disregard the sweetness and amenity of the Señora Guarnacha, or the rustic bloom of the Centola, not forgetting even in this bright array the humble Romanesco, which likewise came in for its meed of praise.

The host having passed in review all these and other wines, of many various qualities, offered besides to place before his guests, without having any recourse to magic, and not as one marks down places on a map, but in all their vivid reality, Madriga, Coca, Alacjos, and the imperial, rather than royal city — that favourite abode of the god of smiles — Ciudad Real. He furthermore offered Esquibias, Alanis, Cazalla, Guadalcanal, and Membrilla, without forgetting the wines of Ribadavia or of Descargamaria. At a word, the host offered and even gave them more wines than Bacchus himself could have stored in all his cellars.

Nor was the good Thomas unmindful of the admiration due to the radiant locks of the Genoese maidens, renowned for those fair tresses, while he likewise appreciated the obliging and cheerful disposition of the male inhabitants, and was never weary of expatiating on the beauty of the city itself, which, as you look at it from the sea, appears to hold the houses enchased amidst the rocks, as diamonds are set in gold.

The day after their arrival, such of the companies as were destined for Piedmont were disembarked; Rodaja, however, had no wish to proceed thither, but determined to go from Genoa by land to Rome and Naples, and return by the way of Our Lady of Loretto to the great and magnificent Venice, and thence to Milan and Piedmont, where it was agreed that he should rejoin Don Diego, if the latter had not previously been compelled to set off for Flanders, as was expected.

Two days after these arrangements were made, Rodaja took leave of the captain, and in five days from that time he reached Florence, having first seen Lucca, a city which is small but very well built, and one where Spaniards are more kindly received and better treated than in any other part of Italy.

With Florence Rodaja was infinitely delighted, as well for the pleasantness of its position as for its sumptuous buildings, its fine river, agreeable streets, and cleanliness of aspect. He remained there but four days, and then departed for Rome, the queen of cities and mistress of the world, whose temples he visited, whose relics he adored, and whose grandeur he admired: and as from the claws of the lion you may judge of its mass and force, so did Rodaja infer the greatness of Rome from the fragments of her marbles — her statues, broken or entire — her arches, fallen or fractured — her baths, crumbled to ruin — her magnificent porticos and vast amphitheatres — her renowned and holy river, which ever fills the banks with water to the brim, while it blesses them with innumerable remains of the martyrs whose bodies have found a burial beneath its waves. Nor did our traveller fail to estimate the beauty of the bridges, which one might fancy to be admiring each other, or the streets, which, by their very names alone, claim authority and pre-eminence over those of all other cities in the world: the Via Flaminia, for example, the Via Julia, the Appia, and others of the same character.

No less was Rodaja satisfied with the division of those hills which exist within the city itself, the Cælian, the Quirinal, the Vatican, and the other four, whose very names bear evidence to the Roman greatness and majesty. He took careful note, moreover, of that authority which attaches to the College of Cardinals, and of the dignity represented in the person of the Supreme Pontiff; nor did he suffer to pass unnoticed that great concourse and variety of men from all nations ever congregated within the walls of the city.

All these things Rodaja admired, reflected on, and arranged in the order of

their importance; and having made the station of the Seven Churches, confessed to a Penitentiary, and kissed the feet of his Holiness, he departed, well loaded with *Agnus Deis* and legends, determining thence to proceed to Naples.

But the time was one of important changes and much disorder; this rendered the roads dangerous for all desiring to enter or travel out of Rome; and as he had come to the city by land, so he now resolved to depart by sea, wherefore, proceeding to the port of Ostia, he there embarked, and having reached Naples, added to the satisfaction which he had previously felt at seeing Rome, that of finding himself in a city, in his estimation, and in the opinion of all who have seen it, the finest in Europe, or even in the whole world.

From Naples, Rodaja proceeded to Sicily, where he visited Palermo and Messina; the first of these cities he admired for the advantages of its position and its beauty, and the second for the convenience of its port; while to the whole island he could not but offer the tribute of his praise for that abundance which causes it to be justly denominated the granary of all Italy.

Returning from Sicily to Naples and Rome, Rodaja thence proceeded to Our Lady of Loretto, in whose Holy Temple he could see neither walls nor partitions, since every part was covered with crutches, biers, shrouds, chains, padlocks, fetters, and locks of hair; with arms, hands, legs, or busts in wax, to say nothing of pictures and prints, all giving manifest indication of the mercies and favours innumerable which hundreds of men have received in that place from the hand of God, by the intercession of his Divine Mother, whose sacred Image (there preserved) He has been pleased to exalt and sanction by a vast number of miracles, which have been performed in recompense of the devotion of her votaries; for by them it is that the walls of her house have been adorned in the manner described.

Here Rodaja beheld that very chamber of the Virgin, wherein was delivered the most stupendous embassy ever heard or witnessed by all the heavens, all the angels, and all the archangels, or other inhabitants of the everlasting abodes.

From this place our traveller proceeded to Ancona, where he embarked and repaired to Venice, a city which, had Columbus never appeared in the world, would certainly be still supposed to have no equal; but, by the favour of heaven, and thanks to the great Fernando Cortez who conquered Mexico, the magnificent Venice has now found a city that may be compared to herself. The streets of these two renowned capitals, which are almost wholly of water, make them the admiration and terror of all mankind — that of Europe dominating the old world, and that of America the new. For of the former it would appear that her riches are infinite, her position impregnable, her government most wise, the abundance of her products inexhaustible; in a word, she is herself, as a whole, and in all her

parts, entirely worthy of that fame for greatness and majesty which has penetrated to all the regions of the world: the justice of the praise bestowed on Venice is, besides, accredited by her renowned arsenal, wherein are constructed her potent galleys, with other vessels of which the number is not to be told.

To our curious traveller the delights and pastimes found in Venice had almost proved fatal as those of Calypso, since they had nearly caused him to forget his first intentions. Yet when he had passed a month in that enchanting place, he found resolution to continue his journey, passing by Ferrara, Parma, and Placentia, to Milan, that workshop of Vulcan — that grudge and despair of France — that superb city of which more wonders are reported than words can tell, her own grandeur being increased by that of her famous Temple, and by the marvellous abundance of all things necessary to human life that are to be found therein.

From Milan, Rodaja journeyed to Asti, where he arrived in very good time, since the regiment of Don Diego was to depart for Flanders on the following day. He was received very kindly by his friend the captain, with whom he passed into Flanders, and arrived at Antwerp, a city no less worthy of admiration than those which he had seen in Italy. He visited Ghent and Brussels likewise, finding the whole country preparing to take arms, and well disposed to enter on the campaign of the following year.

Rodaja having now seen all that he had desired to behold, resolved to return to his native Spain, and to the city of Salamanca, there to complete his studies. He had no sooner determined than he instantly put his purpose into execution, to the great regret of his friend, who, finding him resolved to depart, entreated him at least to write him word of his safe arrival, and likewise of his future success. This Rodaja promised to do, and then returned to Spain through France, but he did not see Paris, which was at that time in arms. At length he arrived at Salamanca, where he was well received by his friends, and with the facilities which they procured him, he continued his studies until he finally attained to the degree of doctor of laws.

Now it chanced that, about this time, there arrived in Salamanca one of those ladies who belong to all the points of the compass; she was besides well furnished with devices of every colour. To the whistle and bird-call of this fowler there instantly came flocking all the birds of the place; nor was there a *vade mecum* who refrained from paying a visit to that gay decoy. Among the rest our Thomas was informed that the Señora said she had been in Italy and Flanders when he, to ascertain if he were acquainted with the dame, likewise paid her a visit. She, on her part, immediately fell in love with Rodaja, but he rejected her advances, and never approached her house but when led thither by

others, and almost by force. Attending much more zealously to his studies than his amusements, he did not in any manner return her affection, even when she had made it known to him by the offer of her hand and all her possessions.

Seeing herself thus scorned, and perceiving that she could not bend the will of Rodaja by ordinary means, the woman determined to seek others, which in her opinion would be more efficacious, and must, as she thought, ensure the desired effect. So, by the advice of a Morisca woman, she took a Toledan quince, and in that fruit she gave him one of those contrivances called charms, thinking that she was thereby forcing him to love her; as if there were, in this world, herbs, enchantments, or words of power, sufficient to enchain the free-will of any creature. These things are called charms, but they are in fact poisons: and those who administer them are actual poisoners, as has been proved by sundry experiences.

In an unhappy moment Rodaja ate the quince, but had scarcely done so when he began to tremble from head to foot as if struck by apoplexy, remaining many hours before he could be brought to himself. At the end of that time he partially recovered, but appeared to have become almost an idiot. He complained, with a stammering tongue and feeble voice, that a quince which he had eaten had poisoned him, and also found means to intimate by whom it had been given, when justice at once began to move in quest of the criminal; but she, perceiving the failure of her attempt, took care to hide herself, and never appeared again.

Six months did Thomas remain confined to his bed; and during that time he not only became reduced to a skeleton, but seemed also to have lost the use of his faculties. Every remedy that could be thought of was tried in his behalf; but although the physicians succeeded in curing the physical malady, they could not remove that of the mind; so that when he was at last pronounced cured, he was still afflicted with the strangest madness that was ever heard of among the many kinds by which humanity has been assailed. The unhappy man imagined that he was entirely made of glass; and, possessed with this idea, when any one approached him he would utter the most terrible outcries, begging and beseeching them not to come near him, or they would assuredly break him to pieces, as he was not like other men but entirely of glass from head to foot.

In the hope of rousing him from this strange hallucination, many persons, without regard to his prayers and cries, threw themselves upon him and embraced him, bidding him observe that he was not broken for all that. But all they gained by this was to see the poor creature sink to the earth, uttering lamentable moans, and instantly fall into a fainting fit, from which he could not be recovered for several hours; nay, when he did recover, it was but to renew his complaints, from which he never desisted but to implore that such a misfortune

might not be suffered to happen again.

He exhorted every one to speak to him from a great distance; declaring that on this condition they might ask him what they pleased, and that he could reply with all the more effect, now he was a man of glass and not of flesh and bones, since glass, being a substance of more delicate subtlety, permits the soul to act with more promptitude and efficacy than it can be expected to do in the heavier body formed of mere earth.

Certain persons then desiring to ascertain if what he had said were true, asked him many questions of great difficulty respecting various circumstances; to all these he replied with the utmost acuteness, insomuch that his answers awakened astonishment in the most learned professors of medicine and philosophy whom that university could boast. And well they might be amazed at seeing a man who was subject to so strange an hallucination as that of believing himself to be made of glass, still retain such extraordinary judgment on other points as to be capable of answering difficult questions with the marvellous propriety and truth which distinguished the replies of Rodaja.

The poor man had often entreated that some case might be given to him wherein he might enclose the brittle vase of his body, so that he might not break it in putting on the ordinary clothing. He was consequently furnished with a surplice of ample width, and a cloth wrapper, which he folded around him with much care, confining it to his waist with a girdle of soft cotton, but he would not wear any kind of shoes. The method he adopted to prevent any one from approaching him when they brought him food, was to fix an earthen pot into the cleft of a stick prepared for that purpose, and in this vessel he would receive such fruits as the season presented. He would not eat flesh or fish; nor would he drink anything but the water of the river, which he lapped from his hands.

In passing through the streets, Rodaja was in the habit of walking carefully in the middle of them, lest a tile should fall from the houses upon his head and break it. In the summer he slept in the open air, and in the winter he lodged at one of the inns, where he buried himself in straw to his throat, remarking that this was the most proper and secure bed for men of glass. When it thundered, Rodaja trembled like an aspen leaf, and would rush out into the fields, not returning to the city until the storm had passed.

His friends kept him shut up for some time, but perceiving that his malady increased, they at last complied with his earnest request that they would let him go about freely; and he might be seen walking through the streets of the city, dressed as we have described, to the astonishment and regret of all who knew him.

The boys soon got about him, but he kept them off with his staff, requesting

them to speak to him from a distance, lest they should break him, seeing that he, being a man of glass, was exceedingly tender and brittle. But far from listening to his request, the boys, who are the most perverse generation in the world, soon began to throw various missiles and even stones at him, notwithstanding all his prayers and exclamations. They declared that they wished to see if he were in truth of glass, as he affirmed; but the lamentations and outcries of the poor maniac induced the grown persons who were near to reprove and even beat the boys, whom they drove away for the moment, but who did not fail to return at the next opportunity.

One day, that a horde of these tormentors had pursued him with more than their usual pertinacity, and had worn out his patience, he turned to them, saying — “What do you want with me you varlets? more obstinate than flies, more disgusting than *Chinches*, and bolder than the boldest fleas. Am I, perchance, the Monte Testaccio of Rome, that you cast upon me so many potsherds and tiles?” But Rodaja was followed by many who kept about him for the purpose of hearing him reply to the questions asked, or reprove the questioner, as the case might be. And after a time, even the boys found it more amusing to listen to his words than to throw tiles at him; when they gave him, for the most part, somewhat less annoyance.

The maniac Rodaja was one day passing through the Ropery at Salamanca, when a woman who was working there accosted him, and said, “By my soul, Señor Doctor, I am sorry for your misfortune, but what shall I do for you, since, try as I may, I cannot weep?” To which Rodaja, fixedly regarding her, gravely replied, “*Filiæ Jerusalem, plorate super vos et super filios vestros.*” The husband of the ropeworker was standing by, and comprehending the reply, he said to Rodaja, “Brother Glasscase, for so they tell me you are to be called, you have more of the rogue than the fool in you!” “You are not called on to give me an obolus,” rejoined Rodaja, “for I have not a grain of the fool about me!” One day that he was passing near a house well known as the resort of thieves and other disorderly persons, he saw several of the inhabitants assembled round the door, and called out, “See, here you have baggage belonging to the army of Satan, and it is lodged in the house of hell accordingly.”

A man once asked him what advice he should give to a friend whose wife had left him for another, and who was in great sorrow for her loss. “You shall bid him thank God,” replied Rodaja, “for the favour he has obtained, in that his enemy is removed from his house.”

“Then you would not have him go seek her?” inquired the other.

“Let him not even think of doing so,” returned Rodaja, “for if he find her, what will he have gained but the perpetual evidence of his dishonour?”

“And what shall I do to keep peace with my own wife?” inquired the same person.

“Give her all that she can need or rightfully claim,” said the maniac, “and let her be mistress of every person and thing thy house contains, but take care that she be not mistress of thyself.”

A boy one day said to him, “Señor Glasscase, I have a mind to run away from my father, and leave my home for ever, because he beats me.” “I would have thee beware, boy,” replied Rodaja; “the stripes given by a father are no dishonour to the son, and may save him from those of the hangman, which are indeed a disgrace.”

Intelligence of his peculiar state, with a description of the replies he gave, and the remarks he uttered, was much spread abroad, more especially among those who had known him in different parts, and great sorrow was expressed for the loss of a man who had given so fair a promise of distinction. A person of high rank then at Court wrote to a friend of his at Salamanca, begging that Rodaja might be sent to him at Valladolid, and charging his friend to make all needful arrangements for that purpose. The gentleman consequently accosted Vidriera the next time he met him, and said, “Señor Glasscase, you are to know that a great noble of the Court is anxious to have you go to Valladolid;” whereupon Rodaja replied, “Your worship will excuse me to that nobleman, and say that I am not fit to dwell at Court, nor in the Palace, because I have some sense of shame left, and do not know how to flatter.” He was nevertheless persuaded to go, and the mode in which he travelled was as follows: a large pannier of that kind in which glass is transported was prepared, and in this Rodaja was placed, well defended by straw, which was brought up to his neck, the opposite pannier being carefully balanced by means of stones, among which appeared the necks of bottles, since Rodaja desired it to be understood that he was sent as a vessel of glass. In this fashion he journeyed to Valladolid, which city he entered by night, and was not unpacked until he had first been carefully deposited in the house of the noble who had requested his presence.

By this gentleman he was received with much kindness, and the latter said to him, “You are extremely welcome, Doctor Glasscase; I hope you have had a pleasant journey.” Rodaja replied, that no journey could be called a bad one if it took you safe to your end, unless indeed it were that which led to the gallows.

Being one day shown the Falconry, wherein were numerous falcons and other birds of similar kind, he remarked that the sport pursued by means of those birds was entirely suitable to great nobles, since the cost was as two thousand to one of the profit.

When it pleased Rodaja to go forth into the city, the nobleman caused him to



be attended by a servant, whose office it was to protect him from intrusion, and see that he was not molested by the boys of the place, by whom he was at once remarked; indeed but few days had elapsed before he became known to the whole city, since he never failed to find a reply for all who questioned or consulted him.

Among those of the former class, there once came a student, who inquired if he were a poet, to which Rodaja replied, that up to the moment they had then arrived at, he had neither been so stupid nor so bold as to become a poet. "I do not understand what you mean by so stupid or so bold, Señor Glasscase," rejoined the student; to which Rodaja made answer, "I am not so stupid as to be a bad poet, nor so bold as to think myself capable of being a good one." The student then inquired in what estimation he held poets, to which he answered that he held the poets themselves in but little esteem; but as to their art, that he esteemed greatly. His hearer inquiring further what he meant by that, Rodaja said that among the innumerable poets, by courtesy so called, the number of good ones was so small as scarcely to count at all, and that as the bad were not true poets, he could not admire them: but that he admired and even revered greatly the art of poetry, which does in fact comprise every other in itself, since it avails itself of all things, and purifies and beautifies all things, bringing its own marvellous productions to light for the advantage, the delectation, and the wonder of the world, which it fills with its benefits. He added further, "I know thoroughly to what extent, and for what qualities, we ought to estimate the good poet, since I perfectly well remember those verses of Ovid, wherein he says: —

"*Cura ducum fuerunt olim regumque poetæ, Præmiaque antiqui magna tulere chori. Sanctaque majestas, et erat venerabile nomen Vatibus; et largæ sæpe dabantur opes.*"

And still less do I forget the high quality of the poets whom Plato calls the interpreters of the Gods, while Ovid says of them —

"*Est deus in nobis; agitante calescimus illo.*"

And again —

"*At sacri vates et divum cura vocamur.*"

"These things are said of good poets; but, as respects the bad ones — the gabbling pretenders — what can we say, save only that they are the idiocy and the arrogance of the world.

"Who is there that has not seen one of this sort when he is longing to bring forth some sonnet to the ears of his neighbours? How he goes round and round them with— 'Will your worships excuse me if I read you a little sonnet, which I made one night on a certain occasion; for it appears to me, although indeed it be worth nothing, to have yet a certain something — a *je ne scai quoi* of pretty, and

pleasing.' Then shall he twist his lips, and arch his eyebrows, and make a thousand antics, diving into his pockets meanwhile and bringing out half a hundred scraps of paper, greasy and torn, as if he had made a good million of sonnets; he then recites that which he proffered to the company, reading it in a chanting and affected voice.

"If, perchance, those who hear him, whether because of their knowledge or their ignorance, should fail to commend him, he says, 'Either your worships have not listened to the verses, or I have not been able to read them properly, for indeed and in truth they deserve to be heard;' and he begins, as before, to recite his poem, with new gestures and varied pauses.

"Then to hear these poetasters censure and tear one another to pieces! And what shall I say of the thefts committed by these cubs and whelps of modern pretence on the grave and ancient masters of the art, or of their malevolent carplings at those excellent persons of their own day in whom shines the true light of poetry; who, making a solace and recreation of their arduous labours, prove the divinity of their genius and the elevation of their thoughts to the despite and vexation of these ignorant pretenders, who presume to judge that of which they know nothing, and abhor the beauties which they are not able to comprehend? What will you have me esteem in the nullity which seeks to find place for itself under the canopy spread for others — in the ignorance which is ever leaning for support on another man's chair?"

Rodaja was once asked how it happened that poets are always poor; to which he replied, "That if they were poor, it was because they chose to be so, since it was always in their power to be rich if they would only take advantage of the opportunities in their hands. For see how rich are their ladies," he added; "have they not all a very profusion of wealth in their possession? Is not their hair of gold, their brows of burnished silver, their eyes of the most precious jewels, their lips of coral, their throats of ivory and transparent crystal? Are not their tears liquid pearls, and where they plant the soles of their feet do not jasmine and roses spring up at the moment, however rebellious and sterile the earth may previously have been? Then what is their breath but pure amber, musk, and frankincense? Yet to whom do all these things belong, if not to the poets? They are, therefore, manifest signs and proofs of their great riches."

In this manner he always spoke of bad poets; as to the good ones, he was loud in their praise, and exalted them above the horns of the moon.

Being at San Francisco, he one day saw some very indifferent pictures, by an incapable hand; whereupon he remarked that the good painters imitate nature, while the bad ones have the impertinence to daub her face.

Having planted himself one day in front of a bookseller's shop with great care,

to avoid being broken, he began to talk to the owner, and said, "This trade would please me greatly, were it not for one fault that it has." The bookseller inquiring what that might be, Rodaja replied, "It is the tricks you play on the writers when you purchase the copyright of a book, and the sport you make of the author if, perchance, he desire to print at his own cost. For what is your method of proceeding? Instead of the one thousand five hundred copies which you agree to print for him, you print three thousand; and when the author supposes that you are selling his books, you are but disposing of your own."

One of those men who carry sedan-chairs, once standing by while Rodaja was enumerating the faults committed by various trades and occupations, remarked to the latter, "Of us, Señor Doctor, you can find nothing amiss to say." "Nothing," replied Rodaja, "except that you are made acquainted with more sins than are known to the confessor; but with this difference, that the confessor learns them to keep all secret, but you to make them the public talk of the taverns."

A muleteer who heard this, for all kinds of people were continually listening to him, said aloud, "There is little or nothing that you can say of us, Señor Phial, for we are people of great worth, and very useful servants to the commonwealth." To which the man of glass replied, "The honour of the master exalts the honour of the servant. You, therefore, who call those who hire your mules your masters, see whom you serve, and what honour you may borrow from them; for your employers are some of the dirtiest rubbish that this earth endures.

"Once, when I was not a man of glass, I was travelling on a mule which I had hired, and I counted in her master one hundred and twenty-one defects, all capital ones, and all enemies to the human kind. All muleteers have a touch of the ruffian, a spice of the thief, and a dash of the mountebank. If their masters, as they call those they take on their mules, be of the butter-mouthed kind, they play more pranks with them than all the rogues of this city could perform in a year. If they be strangers, the muleteers rob them; if students, they malign them; if monks, they blaspheme them; but if soldiers, they tremble before them. These men, with the sailors, the carters, and the arrieros or pack carriers, lead a sort of life which is truly singular, and belongs to themselves alone.

"The carter passes the greater part of his days in a space not more than a yard and a half long, for there cannot be much more between the yoke of his mules and the mouth of his cart. He is singing for one half of his time, and blaspheming the other; and if he have to drag one of his wheels out of a hole in the mire, he is more aided, as it might seem, by two great oaths than by three strong mules.

"The mariners are a pleasant people, but little like those of the towns, and they

can speak no other language than that used in ships. When the weather is fine they are very diligent, but very idle, when it is stormy. During the tempest they order much and obey little. Their ship, which is their mess-room, is also their god, and their pastime is the torment endured by sea-sick passengers.

“As to the mule-carriers, they are a race which has taken out a divorce from all sheets, and has married the pack-saddle. So diligent and careful are these excellent men, that to save themselves from losing a day, they will lose their souls. Their music is the tramp of a hoof; their sauce is hunger; their matins are an exchange of abuse and bad words; their mass is — to hear none at all.”

While speaking thus, Rodaja stood at an apothecary’s door, and turning to the master of the shop, he said, “Your worship’s occupation would be a most salutary one if it were not so great an enemy to your lamps.”

“Wherein is my trade an enemy to my lamps?” asked the apothecary.

“In this way,” replied Rodaja; “whenever other oils fail you, immediately you take that of the lamp, as being the one which most readily comes to hand. But there is, indeed, another fault in your trade, and one that would suffice to ruin the most accredited physician in the world.” Being asked what that was, he replied that an apothecary never ventured to confess, or would admit, that any drug was absent from his stock; and so, if he have not the medicine prescribed, he makes use of some other which, in his opinion, has the same virtues and qualities; but as that is very seldom the case, the medicine, being badly compounded, produces an effect contrary to that expected by the physician.

Rodaja was then asked what he thought, of the physicians themselves, and he replied as follows: “*Honora medicum propter necessitatem, etenim creavit cum altissimus: à Deo enim est omnis medela, et a rege accipiet donationem: disciplina medici exaltavit caput illius, et in conspectu magnatum collaudabitur. Altissimus de terra creavit medicinam, et vir prudens non abhorrebit illam.* Thus,” he added, “speaketh the Book of Ecclesiasticus, of Medicine, and good Physicians; but of the bad ones we may safely affirm the very contrary, since there are no people more injurious to the commonwealth than they are. The judge may distort or delay the justice which he should render us; the lawyer may support an unjust demand; the merchant may help us to squander our estate, and, in a word, all those with whom we have to deal in common life may do us more or less injury; but to kill us without fear and standing quietly at his ease; unsheathing no other sword than that wrapped in the folds of a recipe, and without being subject to any danger of punishment, that can be done only by the physician; he alone can escape all fear of the discovery of his crimes, because at the moment of committing them he puts them under the earth. When I was a man of flesh, and not of glass, as I now am, I saw many things that might be adduced

in support of what I have now said, but the relation of these I refer to some other time."

A certain person asked him what he should do to avoid envying another, and Rodaja bade him go to sleep, for, said he, "While you sleep you will be the equal of him whom you envy."

It happened on a certain occasion that the Criminal Judge passed before the place where Rodaja stood. There was a great crowd of people, and two alguazils attended the magistrate, who was proceeding to his court, when Rodaja inquired his name. Being told, he replied, "Now, I would lay a wager that this judge has vipers in his bosom, pistols in his inkhorn, and flashes of lightning in his hands, to destroy all that shall come within his commission. I once had a friend who inflicted so exorbitant a sentence in respect to a criminal commission which he held, that it exceeded by many carats the amount of guilt incurred by the crime of the delinquents. I inquired of him wherefore he had uttered so cruel a sentence, and committed so manifest an injustice? To which he replied that he intended to grant permission of appeal, and that in this way he left the field open for the Lords of the Council to show their mercy by moderating and reducing that too rigorous punishment to its due proportions. But I told him it would have been still better for him to have given such a sentence as would have rendered their labour unnecessary, by which means he would also have merited and obtained the reputation of being a wise and exact judge."

Among the number of those by whom Rodaja, as I have said, was constantly surrounded, was an acquaintance of his own, who permitted himself to be saluted as the Señor Doctor, although Thomas knew well that he had not taken even the degree of bachelor. To him, therefore, he one day said, "Take care, gossip mine, that you and your title do not meet with the Fathers of the Redemption, for they will certainly take possession of your doctorship as being a creature unrighteously detained captive."

"Let us behave well to each other, Señor Glasscase," said the other, "since you know that I am a man of high and profound learning."

"I know you rather to be a Tantalus in the same," replied Rodaja; "for if learning reach high to you, you are never able to plunge into its depths."

He was one day leaning against the stall of a tailor, who was seated with his hands before him, and to whom he said —

"Without doubt, Señor Maeso, you are in the way to salvation."

"From what symptom do you judge me to be so, Señor Doctor?" inquired the tailor.

"From the fact that, as you have nothing to do, so you have nothing to lie about, and may cease lying, which is a great step."

Of the shoemakers he said, that not one of that trade ever performed his office badly; seeing that if the shoe be too narrow, and pinches the foot, the shoemaker says, "In two hours it will be as wide as an alpagate;" or he declares it right that it should be narrow, since the shoe of a gentleman must needs fit closely; and if it be too wide, he maintains that it still ought to be so, for the ease of the foot, and lest a man should have the gout.

Seeing the waiting-maid of an actress attending her mistress, he said she was much to be pitied who had to serve so many women, to say nothing of the men whom she also had to wait on; and the bystanders requiring to know how the damsel, who had but to serve one, could be said to wait on so many, he replied, "Is she not the waiting-maid of a queen, a nymph, a goddess, a scullery-maid, and a shepherdess? besides that she is also the servant of a page and a lackey? for all these, and many more, are in the person of an actress."

Some one asked Rodaja, who had been the happiest man in the world? To which he answered— "*Nemo*, seeing that *Nemo novit patrem — Nemo sine crimine vivit — Nemo sua sorte contentus — Nemo ascendit in coelum*," &c. &c.

Of the fencing masters he said, that they were professors of an art which was never to be known when it was most wanted, since they pretended to reduce to mathematical demonstrations, which are infallible, the angry thoughts and movements of a man's adversaries.

To such men as dyed their beards, Rodaja always exhibited a particular enmity; and one day observing a Portuguese, whose beard he knew to be dyed, in dispute with a Spaniard, to whom he said, "I swear by the beard that I wear on my face," Rodaja called out to him, "Halt there, friend; you should not say that you *wear* on your face, but that you *dye* on your face." To another, whose beard had been streaked by an imperfect dye, Doctor Glasscase said, "Your beard is of the true dust-coloured pieball." He related, on another occasion, that a certain damsel, discreetly conforming to the will of her parents, had agreed to marry an old man with a white beard, who, on the evening before his marriage was to take place, thought fit to have his beard dyed, and whereas he had taken it from the sight of his betrothed as white as snow, he presented it at the altar with a colour blacker than that of pitch.

Seeing this, the damsel turned to her parents and requested them to give her the spouse they had promised, saying that she would have him, and no other.

They assured her, that he whom she there saw was the person they had before shewn her, and given her for her spouse: but she refused to believe it, maintaining, that he whom her parents had given her was a grave person, with a white beard: nor was she, by any means, to be persuaded that the dyed man before her was her betrothed, and the marriage was broken off.

Towards Duennas he entertained as great a dislike as towards those who dyed their beards — uttering wonderful things respecting their falsehood and affectation, their tricks and pretences, their simulated scruples and their real wickedness, — reproaching them with their fancied maladies of stomach, and the frequent giddiness with which they were afflicted in the head; nay, even their mode of speaking, was made the subject of his censure; and he declared that there were more turns in their speech than folds in their great togas and wide gowns; finally, he declared them altogether useless, if not much worse.

Being one day much tormented by a hornet which settled on his neck, he nevertheless refused to take it off, lest in seeking to catch the insect he should break himself; but he still complained woefully of the sting. Some one then remarked to him, that it was scarcely to be supposed he would feel it much, since his whole person was of glass. But Rodaja replied, that the hornet in question must needs be a slanderer, seeing that slanderers were of a race whose tongues were capable of penetrating bodies of bronze, to say nothing of glass.

A monk, who was enormously fat, one day passed near where Rodaja was sitting, when one who stood by ironically remarked, that the father was so reduced and consumptive, as scarcely to be capable of walking. Offended by this, Rodaja exclaimed, “Let none forget the words of Holy Scripture, ‘*Nolite tangere Christos meos*,’ and, becoming still more heated, he bade those around him reflect a little, when they would see, that of the many saints canonised, and placed among the number of the blessed by the Church within a few years in those parts, none had been called the Captain Don Such a one, or the Lawyer Don So and So, or the Count Marquis, or Duke of Such a Place; but all were brother Diego, brother Jacinto, or brother Raimundo: all monks and friars, proceeding, that is to say, from the monastic orders.” “These,” he added, “are the orange-trees of heaven, whose fruits are placed on the table of God.” Of evil-speakers Rodaja said, that they were like the feathers of the eagle which gnaw, wear away, and reduce to nothing, whatever feathers of other birds are mingled with them in beds or cushions, how good soever those feathers may be.

Concerning the keepers of gaming-houses he uttered wonders, and many more than can here be repeated — commending highly the patience of a certain gamester, who would remain all night playing and losing; yea, though of choleric disposition by nature, he would never open his mouth to complain, although he was suffering the martyrdom of Barabbas, provided only his adversary did not cut the cards. At a word, Rodaja uttered so many sage remarks, that, had it not been for the cries he sent forth when any one approached near enough to touch him, for his peculiar dress, slight food, strange manner of eating, and sleeping in the air, or buried in straw, as we have related, no one

could have supposed but that he was one of the most acute persons in the world.

He remained more than two years in this condition; but, at the end of that time, a monk of the order of St. Jerome, who had extraordinary powers in the cure of lunacy, nay, who even made deaf and dumb people hear and speak in a certain manner; this monk, I say, undertook the care and cure of Rodaja, being moved thereto by the charity of his disposition. Nor was it long before the lunatic was restored to his original state of judgment and understanding. When the cure was effected, the monk presented his patient with his previous dress of a doctor of laws, exhorting him to return to his earlier mode of life, and assuring him that he might now render himself as remarkable for the force of his intellect, as he had before done for his singular folly.

Thomas returned accordingly to his past pursuits; but, instead of calling himself Rodaja, as before, he assumed the name of Rueda. He had scarcely appeared in the street, before he was recognised by the boys; but seeing him in a dress so different from that he had before worn and been known by, they dared not cry after him or ask him questions, but contented themselves with saying, one to another, "Is not this the madman, Doctor Glasscase? It is certainly he; and though he now looks so discreet, he may be just as mad in this handsome dress as he was in that other. Let us ask him some questions, and get rid of our doubts."

All this was heard by Thomas, who maintained silence, but felt much confused, and hurried along more hastily than he had been wont to do before he regained his senses. The men at length made the same remarks as the boys and before he had arrived at the courts he had a train of more than two hundred persons of all classes following him, being more amply attended than the most popular professor of the university.

Having gained the first court, which is that of the entrance, these people ended by surrounding him completely; when, perceiving that he was so crowded on as no longer to have the power of proceeding, he finally raised his voice, and said

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"Señores, it is true that I am Doctor Glasscase, but not he whom you formerly knew. I am now Doctor Rueda. Misfortunes such as not unfrequently happen in this world, by the permission of heaven, had deprived me of my senses, but the mercy of God has restored them; and by those things which you have heard me say when I was mad, you may judge of what I shall say now that I am become sane. I am a doctor in laws of the university of Salamanca, where I studied in much poverty, but raised myself through all the degrees to that I now hold; but my poverty may serve to assure you that I owe my rank to industry and not to favour. I have come to this great sea of the Court, hoping to swim and get



forward and gain the bread of my life; but if you do not leave me I shall be more likely to sink and find my death. For the love of God, I entreat that you follow me no further, since, in doing so, you persecute and injure me. What you formerly enquired of me in the streets, I beg you now to come and ask me at my house, when you shall see that the questions to which I before replied, impromptu, shall be more perfectly answered now that I shall take time to consider.”

All listened to him, many left him as he desired, and he returned to his abode with a much smaller train. But it was every day the same: his exhortations availed nothing; and Thomas finally resolved to repair to Flanders, there to support himself by the strength of his arm, since he could no longer profit by that of his intellect.

This resolution he executed accordingly, exclaiming as he departed— “Oh, city and court! you by whom the expectations of the bold pretender are fulfilled, while the hopes of the modest labourer are destroyed; you who abundantly sustain the shameless Buffoon, while the worthy sage is left to die of hunger; I bid you farewell.” That said, he proceeded to Flanders, where he finished in arms the life which he might have rendered immortal by letters, and died in the company of his friend the Captain Don Diego, leaving behind him the reputation of a most valiant soldier and upright man.

## THE DECEITFUL MARRIAGE.

From the Hospital of the Resurrection, which stands just beyond the Puerta del Campo, in Valladolid, there issued one day a soldier, who, by the excessive paleness of his countenance, and the weakness of his limbs, which obliged him to, lean upon his sword, showed clearly to all who set eyes on him that, though the weather was not very warm, he must have sweated a good deal in the last few weeks. He had scarcely entered the gate of the city, with tottering steps, when he was accosted by an old friend who had not seen him for the last six months, and who approached the invalid, making signs of the cross as if he had seen a ghost. "What; is all this?" he cried; "do I, indeed, behold the Señor Alferez Campuzano? Is it possible that I really see you in this country? Why, I thought you were in Flanders trailing a pike, instead of hobbling along with your sword for a walking-stick. How pale — how emaciated you look!"

"As to whether I am in this country or elsewhere, Sigñor Licentiate Peralta, the fact that you now see me is a sufficient answer," replied Campuzano; "as for your other questions, all I can tell you is, that I have just come out of that hospital, where I have been confined for a long time in a dreadful state of health, brought upon me by the conduct of a woman I was indiscreet enough to make my wife."

"You have been married, then?" said Peralta.

"Yes, Señor."

"Married without benefit of clergy, I presume. Marriages of that sort bring their own penance with them."

"Whether it was without benefit of clergy I cannot say," replied the Alferez; "but I can safely aver that it was not without benefit of physic. Such were the torments of body and soul which my marriage brought upon me, that those of the body cost me forty sudations to cure them, and, as for those of the soul, there is no remedy at all that can relieve them. But excuse me, if I cannot hold a long conversation in the street; another day I will, with more convenience, relate to you my adventures, which are the strangest and most singular you ever heard in all the days of your life."

"That will not do," said the licentiate; "I must have you come to my lodgings, and there we will do penance together. You will have an olla, very fit for a sick man; and though it is scanty enough for two, we will make up the deficiency with a pie and a few slices of Rute ham, and, above all, with a hearty welcome,

not only now, but whenever you choose to claim it.”

Campuzano accepted the polite invitation. They turned into the church of San Lorente and heard mass, and then Peralta took his friend home, treated him as he had promised, repeated his courteous offers, and requested him after dinner to relate his adventures. Campuzano, without more ado, began as follows: —

You remember, Señor Licentiate Peralta, how intimate I was in this city with Captain Pedro de Herrera, who is now in Flanders. “I remember it very well,” replied Peralta. Well, one day when we had done dinner in the Posada della Solana, where we lived, there came in two ladies of genteel appearance, with two waiting women: one of the ladies entered into conversation with the Captain, both leaning against a window; the other sat down in a chair beside me, with her veil low down, so that I could not see her face, except so far as the thinness of the texture allowed. I entreated her to do me the favour to unveil, but I could not prevail, which the more inflamed my desire to have sight of her; but what especially increased my curiosity was that, whether on purpose, or by chance, the lady displayed a very white hand, with very handsome rings.

At that time I made a very gallant appearance with that great chain you have seen me wear, my hat with plumes and bands, my flame-coloured military garments, and, in the eyes of my own folly, I seemed so engaging that I imagined all the women must fall in love with me! Well, I implored her to unveil. “Be not importunate,” she replied; “I have a house; let a servant follow me; for though I am of more honourable condition than this reply of mine would indicate, yet for the sake of seeing whether your discretion corresponds to your gallant appearance, I will allow you to see me with less reserve.” I kissed her hand for the favour she granted me, in return for which I promised mountains of gold. The captain ended his conversation, the ladies went away, and a servant of mine followed them. The captain told me that what the lady had been asking of him was to take some letters to Flanders to another captain, who she said was her cousin, though he knew he was nothing but her gallant.

For my part I was all on fire for the snow-white hands I had seen, and dying for a peep at the face; so I presented myself next day at the door which my servant pointed out to me, and was freely admitted. I found myself in a house very handsomely decorated and furnished, in presence of a lady about thirty years of age, whom I recognised by her hands. Her beauty was not extraordinary, but of a nature well suited to fascinate in conversation; for she talked with a sweetness of tone that won its way through the ears to the soul. I had long *tête-à-têtes* with her, in which I made love with all my might: I bragged, bounced, swaggered, offered, promised, and made all the demonstrations I thought necessary to work myself into her good graces; but as she was accustomed to

such offers and protestations, she listened to them with an attentive, but apparently far from credulous ear. In short, during the four days I continued to visit her, our intercourse amounted only to talking soft nonsense, without my being able to gather the tempting fruit.

In the course of my visits I always found the house free from intruders, and without a vestige of pretended relations or real gallants. She was waited on by a girl in whom there was more of the rogue than the simpleton. At last resolving to push my suit in the style of a soldier, who is about to shift his quarters, I came to the point with my fair one, Doña Estefania de Caycedo (for that is the name of my charmer), and this was the answer she gave me:— “Señor Alferez Campuzano, I should be a simpleton if I sought to pass myself off on you for a saint; I have been a sinner, ay, and am one still, but not in a manner to become a subject of scandal in the neighbourhood or of notoriety in public. I have inherited no fortune either from my parents or any other relation; and yet the furniture of my house is worth a good two thousand five hundred ducats, and would fetch that sum if put up to auction at any moment. With this property I look for a husband to whom I may devote myself in all obedience, and with whom I may lead a better life, whilst I apply myself with incredible solicitude to the task of delighting and serving him; for there is no master cook who can boast of a more refined palate, or can turn out more exquisite ragouts and made-dishes than I can, when I choose to display my housewifery in that way. I can be the major domo in the house, the tidy wench in the kitchen, and the lady in the drawing room: in fact, I know how to command and make myself obeyed. I squander nothing and accumulate a great deal; my coin goes all the further for being spent under my own directions. My household linen, of which I have a large and excellent stock, did not come out of drapers’ shops or warehouses; these fingers and those of my maid servants stitched it all, and it would have been woven at home had that been possible. If I give myself these commendations, it is because I cannot incur your censure by uttering what it is absolutely necessary that you should know. In fine, I wish to say that I desire a husband to protect, command, and honour me, and not a gallant to flatter and abuse me: if you like to accept the gift that is offered you, here I am, ready and willing to put myself wholly at your disposal, without going into the public market with my hand, for it amounts to no less to place oneself at the mercy of match-makers’ tongues, and no one is so fit to arrange the whole affair as the parties themselves.”

My wits were not in my head at that moment, but in my heels. Delighted beyond imagination, and seeing before me such a quantity of property, which I already beheld by anticipation converted into ready money, without making any

other reflections than those suggested by the longing that fettered my reason, I told her that I was fortunate and blest above all men since heaven had given me by a sort of miracle such a companion, that I might make her the lady of my affections and my fortune, — a fortune which was not so small, but that with that chain which I wore round my neck, and other jewels which I had at home, and by disposing of some military finery, I could muster more than two thousand ducats, which, with her two thousand five hundred, would be enough for us to retire upon to a village of which I was a native, and where I had relations and some patrimony. Its yearly increase, helped by our money, would enable us to lead a cheerful and unembarrassed life. In fine, our union was at once agreed on; the banns were published on three successive holidays (which happened to fall together), and on the fourth day, the marriage was celebrated in the presence of two mends of mine, and a youth who she said was her cousin, and to whom I introduced myself as a relation with words of great urbanity. Such, indeed, were all those which hitherto I had bestowed on my bride — with how crooked and treacherous an intention I would rather not say; for though I am telling truths, they are not truths under confession which must not be kept back.

My servant removed my trunk from my lodgings to my wife's house. I put by my magnificent chain in my wife's presence; showed her three or four others, not so large, but of better workmanship, with three or four other trinkets of various kinds; laid before her my best dresses and my plumes, and gave her about four hundred reals, which I had, to defray the household expenses. For six days I tasted the bread of wedlock, enjoying myself like a beggarly bridegroom in the house of a rich father-in-law. I trod on rich carpets, lay in holland sheets, had silver candlesticks to light me, breakfasted in bed, rose at eleven o'clock, dined at twelve, and at two took my siesta in the drawing-room. Doña Estefania and the servant girl danced attendance upon me; my servant, whom I had always found lazy, was suddenly become nimble as a deer. If ever Doña Estefania quitted my side, it was to go to the kitchen and devote all her care to preparing fricassees to please my palate and quicken my appetite. My shirts, collars, and handkerchiefs were a very Aranjuez of flowers, so drenched they were with fragrant waters. Those days flew fast, like the years which are under the jurisdiction of time; and seeing myself so regaled and so well treated, I began to change for the better the evil intention with which I had begun this affair.

At the end of them, one morning, whilst I was still in bed with Doña Estefania, there was a loud knocking and calling at the street door. The servant girl put her head out of the window, and immediately popped it in again, saying, — "There she is, sure enough; she is come sooner than she mentioned in her letter the other day, but she is welcome!"

“Who’s come, girl?” said I.

“Who?” she replied; “why, my lady Doña Clementa Bueso, and with her señor Don Lope Melendez de Almendarez, with two other servants, and Hortigosa, the dueña she took with her.”

“Bless me! Run, wench, and open the door for them,” Doña Estefania now exclaimed; “and you, señor, as you love me, don’t put yourself out, or reply for me to anything you may hear said against me.”

“Why, who is to say anything to offend you, especially when I am by? Tell me, who are these people, whose arrival appears to have upset you?”

“I have no time to answer,” said Doña Estefania; “only be assured that whatever takes place here will be all pretended, and bears upon a certain design which you shall know by and by.”

Before I could make any reply to this, in walked Doña Clementa Bueso, dressed in lustrous green satin, richly laced with gold, a hat with green, white, and pink feathers, a gold hat-band, and a fine veil covering half her face. With her entered Don Lope Melendez de Almendarez in a travelling suit, no less elegant than rich. The dueña Hortigosa was the first who opened her lips, exclaiming, “Saints and angels, what is this! My lady Doña Clementa’s bed occupied, and by a man too! Upon my faith, the señora Doña Estefania has availed herself of my lady’s friendliness to some purpose!”

“That she has, Hortigosa,” replied Doña Clementa; “but I blame myself for never being on my guard against friends who can only be such when it is for their own advantage.”

To all this Doña Estefania replied: “Pray do not be angry, my lady Doña Clementa. I assure you there is a mystery in what you see; and when you are made acquainted with it you will acquit me of all blame.”

During this time I had put on my hose and doublet, and Doña Estefania, taking me by the hand, led me into another room. There she told me that this friend of hers wanted to play a trick on that Don Lope who was come with her, and to whom she expected to be married. The trick was to make him believe that the house and everything in it belonged to herself. Once married, it would matter little that the truth was discovered, so confident was the lady in the great love of Don Lope; the property would then be returned; and who could blame her, or any woman, for contriving to get an honourable husband, though it were by a little artifice? I replied that it was a very great stretch of friendship she thought of making, and that she ought to look well to it beforehand, for very probably she might be constrained to have recourse to justice to recover her effects. She gave me, however, so many reasons, and alleged so many obligations by which she was bound to serve Doña Clementa even in matters of more importance, that

much against my will, and with sore misgivings, I complied with Doña Estefania's wishes, on the assurance that the affair would not last more than eight days, during which we were to lodge with another friend of hers.

We finished dressing; she went to take her leave of the señora Doña Clementa Bueso and the señor Lope Melendez Almendarez, ordered my servant to follow her with my luggage, and I too followed without taking leave of any one. Doña Estefania stopped at a friend's house, and stayed talking with her a good while, leaving us in the street, till at last a girl came out and told me and my servant to come in. We went up stairs to a small room in which there were two beds so close together that they seemed but one, for the bed-clothes actually touched each other. There we remained six days, during which not an hour passed in which we did not quarrel; for I was always telling her what a stupid thing she had done in giving up her house and goods, though it were to her own mother. One day, when Doña Estefania had gone out, as she said, to see how her business was going on, the woman of the house asked me what was the reason of my wrangling so much with my wife, and what had she done for which I scolded her so much, saying it was an act of egregious folly rather than of perfect friendship. I told her the whole story, how I had married Doña Estefania, the dower she had brought me, and the folly she had committed in leaving her house and goods to Doña Clementa, even though it was for the good purpose of catching such a capital husband as Don Lope. Thereupon the woman began to cross and bless herself at such a rate, and to cry out, "O, Lord! O, the jade!" that she put me into a great state of uneasiness. At last, "Señor Alferez," said she, "I don't know but I am going against my conscience in making known to you what I feel would lie heavy on it if I held my tongue. Here goes, however, in the name of God, — happen what may, the truth for ever, and lies to the devil! The truth is, that Doña Clementa Bueso is the real owner of the house and property which you have had palmed upon you for a dower; the lies are every word that Doña Estefania has told you, for she has neither house nor goods, nor any clothes besides those on her back. What gave her an opportunity for this trick was that Doña Clementa went to visit one of her relations in the city of Plasencia, and there to perform a novenary in the church of our Lady of Guadalupe, meanwhile leaving Doña Estefania to look after her house, for in fact they are great friends. And after all, rightly considered, the poor señora is not to blame, since she has had the wit to get herself such a person as the Señor Alferez for a husband."

Here she came to an end, leaving me almost desperate; and without doubt I should have become wholly so, if my guardian angel had failed in the least to support me, and whisper to my heart that I ought to consider I was a Christian, and that the greatest sin men can be guilty of is despair, since it is the sin of

devils. This consideration, or good inspiration, comforted me a little; not so much, however, but that I took my cloak and sword, and went out in search of Doña Estefania, resolved to inflict upon her an exemplary chastisement; but chance ordained, whether for my good or not I cannot tell, that she was not to be found in any of the places where I expected to fall in with her. I went to the church of San Lorente, commended me to our Lady, sat down on a bench, and in my affliction fell into so deep a sleep that I should not have awoke for a long time if others had not roused me. I went with a heavy heart to Doña Clementa's, and found her as much at ease as a lady should be in her own house. Not daring to say a word to her, because Señor Don Lope was present, I returned to my landlady, who told me she had informed Doña Estefania that I was acquainted with her whole roguery; that she had asked how I had seemed to take the news; that she, the landlady, said I had taken it very badly, and had gone out to look for her, apparently with the worst intentions; whereupon Doña Estefania had gone away, taking with her all that was in my trunk, only leaving me one travelling coat. I flew to my trunk, and found it open, like a coffin waiting for a dead body; and well might it have been my own, if sense enough had been left me to comprehend the magnitude of my misfortune.

"Great it was, indeed," observed the licentiate Peralta; "only to think that Doña Estefania carried off your fine chain and hat-band! Well, it is a true saying, 'Misfortunes never come single.'"

I do not so much mind that loss, replied the Alferez, since I may apply to myself the old saw, "My father-in-law thought to cheat me by putting off his squinting daughter upon me; and I myself am blind of an eye."

"I don't know in what respect you can say that?" replied Peralta.

Why, in this respect, that all that lot of chains and gewgaws might be worth some ten or twelve crowns.

"Impossible!" exclaimed the licentiate; "for that which the Señor Alferez wore on his neck must have weighed more than two hundred ducats."

So it would have done, replied the Alferez, if the reality had corresponded with the appearance; but "All is not gold that glitters," and my fine things were only imitations, but so well made that nothing but the touchstone or the fire could have detected that they were not genuine.

"So, then, it seems to have been a drawn game between you and the Señora Doña Estefania," said the licentiate.

So much so that we may shuffle the cards and make a fresh deal. Only the mischief is, Señor Licentiate, that she may get rid of my mock chains, but I cannot get rid of the cheat she put upon me; for, in spite of my teeth, she remains my wife.



“You may thank God, Señor Campuzano,” said Peralta, “that your wife has taken to her heels, and that you are not obliged to go in search of her.”

Very true; but for all that, even without looking for her, I always find her — in imagination; and wherever I am, my disgrace is always present before me.

“I know not what answer to make you, except to remind you of these two verses of Petrarch: —

“*Che qui prende diletto di far frode, Non s’ha di lamentar s’altro l’inganna.*”

That is to say, whoever makes it his practice and his pleasure to deceive others, has no right to complain when he is himself deceived.”

But I don’t complain, replied the Alferez; only I pity myself — for the culprit who knows his fault does not the less feel the pain of his punishment. I am well aware that I sought to deceive and that I was deceived, and caught in my own snare; but I cannot command my feelings so much as not to lament over myself. To come, however, to what more concerns my history (for I may give that name to the narrative of my adventures), I learned that Doña Estefania had been taken away by that cousin whom she brought to our wedding, who had been a lover of hers of long standing. I had no mind to go after her and bring back upon myself an evil I was rid of. I changed my lodgings and my skin too within a few days. My eyebrows and eyelashes began to drop; my hair left me by degrees; and I was bald before my time, and stripped of everything; for I had neither a beard to comb nor money to spend. My illness kept pace with my want; and as poverty bears down honour, drives some to the gallows, some to the hospital, and makes others enter their enemies’ doors with cringing submissiveness, which is one of the greatest miseries that can befall an unlucky man; that I might not expend upon my cure the clothes that should cover me respectably in health, I entered the Hospital of the Resurrection, where I took forty sudations. They say that I shall get well if I take care of myself. I have my sword; for the rest I trust in God.

The licentiate renewed his friendly offers, much wondering at the things he had heard.

If you are surprised at the little I have told you, Señor Peralta, said the Alferez, what will you say to the other things I have yet to relate, which exceed all imagination, since they pass all natural bounds? I can only tell you that they are such that I think it a full compensation for all my disasters that they were the cause of my entering the hospital, where I saw what I shall now relate to you; and what you can never believe; no; nor anybody else in the world.

All these preambles of the Alferez so excited Peralta’s curiosity, that he earnestly desired to hear, in detail, all that remained to be told.

You have no doubt seen, said the Alferez, two dogs going about by night with

lanterns along with the Capuchin brethren, to give them light when they are collecting alms.

“I have,” replied Peralta.

You have also seen, or heard tell of them, that if alms are thrown from the windows, and happen to fall on the ground, they immediately help with the light and begin to look for what has fallen; that they stop of their own accord before the windows from which they know they are used to receive alms; and that with all their tameness on these occasions, so that they are more like lambs than dogs, they are lions in the hospital, keeping guard with great care and vigilance.

“I have heard that all this is as you say,” said Peralta; “but there is nothing in this to move my wonder.”

But what I shall now tell you of them, returned the Alferez, is enough to do so; yet, strange as it is, you must bring yourself to believe it. One night, the last but one of my sudation, I heard, and all but saw with my eyes those two dogs, one of which is called Scipio, the other Berganza, stretched on an old mat outside my room. In the middle of the night, lying awake in the dark, thinking of my past adventures and my present sorrows, I heard talking, and set myself to listen attentively, to see if I could make out who were the speakers and what they said. By degrees I did both, and ascertained that the speakers were the dogs Scipio and Berganza.

The words were hardly out of Campuzano’s mouth, when the licentiate jumped up and said: “Saving your favour, Señor Campuzano, till this moment I was in much doubt whether or not to believe what you have told me about your marriage; but what you now tell me of your having heard dogs talk, makes me decide upon not believing you at all. For God’s sake, Señor Alferez, do not relate such nonsense to any body, unless it be to one who is as much your friend as I am.”

Do not suppose I am so ignorant, replied Campuzano, as not to know that brutes cannot talk unless by a miracle. I well know that if starlings, jays, and parrots talk, it is only such words as they have learned by rote, and because they have tongues adapted to pronounce them; but they cannot, for all that, speak and reply with deliberate discourse as those dogs did. Many times, indeed, since I heard them I have been disposed not to believe myself, but to regard as a dream that which, being really awake, with all the five senses which our Lord was pleased to give me, I heard, marked, and finally wrote down without missing a word; whence you may derive proof enough to move and persuade you to believe this verity which I relate. The matters they talked of were various and weighty, such as might rather have been discussed by learned men than by the mouths of dogs; so that, since I could not have invented them out of my own

head, I am come, in spite of myself, to believe that I did not dream, and that the dogs did talk.

“Body of me!” exclaimed the licentiate, “are the times of Æsop come back to us, when the cock conversed with the fox, and one beast with another?”

I should be one of them, and the greatest, replied the Alferez, if I believed that time had returned; and so I should be, too, if I did not believe what I have heard and seen, and what I am ready to swear to by any form of oath that can constrain incredulity itself to believe. But, supposing that I have deceived myself, and that this reality was a dream, and that to contend for it is an absurdity, will it not amuse you, Señor Peralta, to see, written in the form of a dialogue, the matters talked of by those dogs, or whoever the speakers may have been?

“Since you no longer insist on having me believe that you heard dogs talk,” replied Peralta, “with much pleasure I will hear this colloquy, of which I augur well, since it is reported by a gentlemen of such talents as the Señor Alferez.”

Another thing I have to remark, said Campuzano, is, that, as I was very attentive, my apprehension very sensitive, and my memory very retentive (thanks to the many raisins and almonds I had swallowed), I got it all by heart, and wrote it down, word for word, the next day, without attempting to colour or adorn it, or adding or suppressing anything to make it attractive. The conversation took place not on one night only, but on two consecutive nights, though I have not written down more than one dialogue, that which contains the life of Berganza. His comrade Scipio’s life, which was the subject of the second night’s discourse, I intend to write out, if I find that the first one is believed, or at least not despised. I have thrown the matter into the form of a dialogue to avoid the cumbrous repetition of such phrases as, *said Scipio, replied Berganza*.

So saying, he took a roll of paper out of his breast pocket, and put it in the hands of the licentiate, who received it with a smile, as if he made very light of all he had heard, and was about to read.

I will recline on this sofa, said the Alferez, whilst you are reading those dreams or ravings, if you will, which have only this to recommend them, that you may lay them down when you grow tired of them.

“Make yourself comfortable,” said Peralta; “and I will soon despatch my reading.”

The Alferez lay down; the licentiate opened the scroll, and found it headed as follows: —

## DIALOGUE BETWEEN SCIPIO AND BERGANZA, DOGS OF THE HOSPITAL OF THE RESURRECTION IN THE CITY OF VALLADOLID, COMMONLY CALLED THE DOGS OF MAHUDES.

*Scip.* Berganza, my friend, let us leave our watch over the hospital to-night, and retire to this lonely place and these mats, where, without being noticed, we may enjoy that unexampled favour which heaven has bestowed on us both at the same moment.

*Berg.* Brother Scipio, I hear you speak, and know that I am speaking to you; yet cannot I believe, so much does it seem to me to pass the bounds of nature.

*Scip.* That is true, Berganza; and what makes the miracle greater is, that we not only speak but hold intelligent discourse, as though we had souls capable of reason; whereas we are so far from having it, that the difference between brutes and man consists in this, that man is a rational animal and the brute is irrational.

*Berg.* I hear all you say, Scipio; and that you say it, and that I hear it, causes me fresh admiration and wonder. It is very true that in the course of my life I have many a time heard tell of our great endowments, insomuch that some, it appears, have been disposed to think that we possess a natural instinct, so vivid and acute in many things that it gives signs and tokens little short of demonstrating that we have a certain sort of understanding capable of reason.

*Scip.* What I have heard highly extolled is our strong memory, our gratitude, and great fidelity; so that it is usual to depict us as symbols of friendship. Thus you will have seen (if it has ever come under your notice) that, on the alabaster tombs, on which are represented the figures of those interred in them, when they are husband and wife, a figure of a dog is placed between the pair at their feet, in token that in life their affection and fidelity to each other was inviolable, *Berg.* I know that there have been grateful dogs who have cast themselves into the same grave with the bodies of their deceased masters; others have stood over the graves in which their lords were buried without quitting them or taking food till they died. I know, likewise, that next to the elephant the dog holds the first place in the way of appearing to possess understanding, then the horse, and last the ape.

*Scip.* True; but you will surely confess that you never saw or heard tell of any elephant, dog, horse, or monkey having talked: hence I infer, that this fact of our coming by the gift of speech so unexpectedly falls within the list of those things

which are called portents, the appearance of which indicates, as experience testifies, that some great calamity threatens the nations.

*Berg.* That being so I can readily enough set down as a portentous token what I heard a student say the other day as I passed through Alcala de Henares.

*Scip.* What was that?

*Berg.* That of five thousand students this year attending the university — two thousand are studying medicine.

*Scip.* And what do you infer from that?

*Berg.* I infer either that those two thousand doctors will have patients to treat, and that would be a woful thing, or that they must die of hunger.

*Scip.* Be that as it may, let us talk, portent or no portent; for what heaven has ordained to happen, no human diligence or wit can prevent. Nor is it needful that we should fall to disputing as to the how or the why we talk. Better will it be to make the best of this good clay or good night at home; and since we enjoy it so much on these mats, and know not how long this good fortune of ours may last, let us take advantage of it and talk all night, without suffering sleep to deprive us of a pleasure which I, for my part, have so long desired.

*Berg.* And I, too; for ever since I had strength enough to gnaw a bone I have longed for the power of speech, that I might utter a multitude of things I had laid up in my memory, and which lay there so long that they were growing musty or almost forgotten. Now, however, that I see myself so unexpectedly enriched with this divine gift of speech, I intend to enjoy it and avail myself of it as much as I can, taking pains to say everything I can recollect, though it be confusedly and helter-skelter, not knowing when this blessing, which I regard as a loan, shall be reclaimed from me.

*Scip.* Let us proceed in this manner, friend Berganza: to-night you shall relate the history of your life to me, and the perils through which you have passed to the present hour; and to-morrow night, if we still have speech, I will recount mine to you; for it will be better to spend the time in narrating our own lives than in trying to know those of others.

*Berg.* I have ever looked upon you, Scipio, as a discreet dog and a friend, and now I do so more than ever, since, as a friend, you desire to tell me your adventures and know mine; and, as a discreet dog, you apportion the time in which we may narrate them. But first observe whether any one overhears us.

*Scip.* No one, I believe; since hereabouts there is a soldier going through a sweating-course; but at this time of night he will be more disposed to sleep than to listen to anything.

*Berg.* Since then we can speak so securely, hearken; and if I tire you with what I say, either check me or bid me hold my tongue.

*Scip.* Talk till dawn, or till we are heard, and I will listen to you with very great pleasure, without interrupting you, unless I see it to be necessary.

*Berg.* It appears to me that the first time I saw the sun was in Seville, in its slaughter-houses, which were outside the Puerta do la Carne; wence I should imagine (were it not for what I shall afterwards tell you) that my progenitors were some of those mastiff's which are bred by those ministers of confusion who are called butchers. The first I knew for a master, was one Nicholas the Pugnosed, a stout, thick-set, passionate fellow, as all butchers are. This Nicholas taught me and other whelps to run at bulls in company with old dogs and catch them by the ears. With great ease I became an eagle among my fellows in this respect.

*Scip.* I do not wonder, Berganza, that ill-doing is so easily learned, since it comes by a natural obliquity.

*Berg.* What can I say to you, brother Scipio, of what I saw in those slaughter-houses, and the enormous things that were done in them? In the first place, you must understand that all who work in them, from the lowest to the highest, are people without conscience or humanity, fearing neither the king nor his justice; most of them living in concubinage; carrion birds of prey; maintaining themselves and their doxies by what they steal. On all flesh days, a great number of wenches and young chaps assemble in the slaughtering place before dawn, all of them with bags which come empty and go away full of pieces of meat. Not a beast is killed out of which these people do not take tithes, and that of the choicest and most savoury pickings. The masters trust implicitly in these honest folk, not with the hope that they will not rob them (for that is impossible), but that they may use their knives with some moderation. But what struck me as the worst thing of all, was that these butchers make no more of killing a man than a cow. They will quarrel for straws, and stick a knife into a person's body as readily as they would fell an ox. It is a rare thing for a day to pass without brawls and bloodshed, and even murder. They all pique themselves on being men of mettle, and they observe, too, some punctilios of the bravo; there is not one of them but has his guardian angel in the Plaza de San Francisco, whom he propitiates with sirloins, and beef tongues.

*Scip.* If you mean to dwell at such length, friend Berganza, on the characteristics and faults of all the masters you have had, we had better pray to heaven to grant us the gift of speech for a year; and even then I fear, at the rate you are going, you will not get through half your story. One thing I beg to remark to you, of which you will see proof when I relate my own adventures; and that is, that some stories are pleasing in themselves, and others from the manner in which they are told; I mean that there are some which give

satisfaction, though they are told without preambles and verbal adornments; while others require to be decked in that way and set off by expressive play of features, hands, and voice; whereby, instead of flat and insipid, they become pointed and agreeable. Do not forget this hint, but profit by it in what you are about to say.

*Berg.* I will do so, if I can, and if I am not hindered by the great temptation I feel to speak; though, indeed, it appears to me that I shall have the greatest difficulty in constraining myself to moderation.

*Scip.* Be wary with your tongue, for from that member flow the greatest ills of human life.

*Berg.* Well, then, to go on with my story, my master taught me to carry a basket in my mouth, and to defend it against any one who should attempt to take it from me. He also made me acquainted with the house in which his mistress lived, and thereby spared her servant the trouble of coming to the slaughter-house, for I used to carry to her the pieces of meat he had stolen over night. Once as I was going along on this errand in the gray of the morning, I heard some one calling me by name from a window. Looking up I saw an extremely pretty girl; she came down to the street door, and began to call me again. I went up to her to see what she wanted of me; and what was it but to take away the meat I was carrying in the basket and put an old clog in its place? "Be off with you," she said, when she had done so; "and tell Nicholas the Pugnosed, your master, not to put trust in brutes." I might easily have made her give up what she had taken from me; but I would not put a cruel tooth on those delicate white hands.

*Scip.* You did quite right; for it is the prerogative of beauty always to be held in respect.

*Berg.* Well, I went back to my master without the meat and with the old clog. It struck him that I had come back very soon, and seeing the clog, he guessed the trick, snatched up a knife, and flung it at me; and if I had not leaped aside, you would not now be listening to my story. I took to my heels, and was off like a shot behind St. Bernard's, away over the fields, without stopping to think whither my luck would lead me. That night I slept under the open sky, and the following day I chanced to fall in with a flock of sheep. The moment I saw it, I felt that I had found the very thing that suited me, since it appeared to me to be the natural and proper duty of dogs to guard the fold, that being an office which involves the great virtue of protecting and defending the lowly and the weak against the proud and mighty. One of the three shepherds who were with the flock immediately called me to him, and I, who desired nothing better, went up at once to him, lowering my head and wagging my tail. He passed his hand

along my back, opened my mouth, examined my fangs, ascertained my age, and told his master that I had all the works and tokens of a dog of good breed. Just then up came the owner of the flock on a gray mare with lance and surge, so that he looked more a coast-guard than a sheep master.

“What dog is that!” said he to the shepherd; “he seems a good one.” “You may well say that,” replied the man; “for I have examined him closely, and there is not a mark about him but shows that he must be of the right sort. He came here just now; I don’t know whose he is, but I know that he does not belong to any of the flocks hereabouts.”

“If that be so,” said the master, “put on him the collar that belonged to the dog that is dead, and give him the same rations as the rest, treat him kindly that he may take a liking to the fold, and remain with it henceforth.” So saying he went away, and the shepherd put on my neck a collar set with steel points, after first giving me a great mess of bread sopped in milk in a trough. At the same time I had a name bestowed on me, which was Barcino. I liked my second master, and my new duty very well; I was careful and diligent in watching the flock, and never quitted it except in the afternoons, when I went to repose under the shade of some tree, or rock, or bank, or by the margin of one of the many streams that watered the country. Nor did I spend those leisure hours idly, but employed them in calling many things to mind, especially the life I had led in the slaughter-house, and also that of my master and all his fellows, who were bound to satisfy the inordinate humours of their mistresses. O how many things I could tell you of that I learned in the school of that she-butcher, my master’s lady; but I must pass them over, lest you should think me tedious and censorious.

*Scip.* I have heard that it was a saying of a great poet among the ancients, that it was a difficult thing to write satires. I consent that you put some point into your remarks, but not to the drawing of blood. You may hit lightly, but not wound or kill; for sarcasm, though it make many laugh, is not good if it mortally wounds one; and if you can please without it, I shall think you more discreet.

*Berg.* I will take your advice, and I earnestly long for the time when you will relate your own adventures; for seeing how judiciously you correct the faults into which I fall in my narrative, I may well expect that your own will be delivered in a manner equally instructive and delightful. But to take up the broken thread of my story, I say that in those hours of silence and solitude, it occurred to me among other things, that there could be no truth in what I had heard tell of the life of shepherds — of those, at least, about whom my master’s lady used to read, when I went to her house, in certain books, all treating of shepherds and shepherdesses; and telling how they passed their whole life in singing and playing on pipes and rebecks, and other old fashioned instruments. I



remember her reading how the shepherd of Anfriso sang the praises of the peerless Belisarda, and that there was not a tree on all the mountains of Arcadia on whose trunk he had not sat and sung from the moment Sol quitted the arms of Aurora, till he threw himself into those of Thetis, and that even after black night had spread its murky wings over the face of the earth, he did not cease his melodious complaints. I did not forget the shepherd Elicio, more enamoured than bold, of whom it was said, that without attending to his own loves or his flock, he entered into others' griefs; nor the great shepherd Filida, unique painter of a single portrait, who was more faithful than happy; nor the anguish of Sireno and the remorse of Diana, and how she thanked God and the sage Felicia, who, with her enchanted water, undid that maze of entanglements and difficulties. I bethought me of many other tales of the same sort, but they were not worthy of being remembered.

The habits and occupations of my masters, and the rest of the shepherds in that quarter, were very different from those of the shepherds in the books. If mine sang, it was no tuneful and finely composed strains, but very rude and vulgar songs, to the accompaniment not of pipes and rebecks, but to that of one crook knocked against another, or of bits of tile jingled between the fingers, and sung with voices not melodious and tender, but so coarse and out of tune, that whether singly or in chorus, they seemed to be howling or grunting. They passed the greater part of the day in hunting up their fleas or mending their brogues; and none of them were named Amarillis, Filida, Galatea, or Diana; nor were there any Lisardos, Lausos, Jacintos, or Riselos; but all were Antones, Domingos, Pablos, or Llorentes. This led me to conclude that all those books about pastoral life are only fictions ingeniously written for the amusement of the idle, and that there is not a word of truth in them; for, were it otherwise, there would have remained among my shepherds some trace of that happy life of yore, with its pleasant meads, spacious groves, sacred mountains, handsome gardens, clear streams and crystal fountains, its ardent but no less decorous love-descants, with here the shepherd, there the shepherdess all woe-begone, and the air made vocal everywhere with flutes and pipes and flageolets.

*Scip.* Enough, Berganza; get back into your road, and trot on.

*Berg.* I am much obliged to you, friend Scipio; for, but for your hint, I was getting so warm upon the scent, that I should not have stopped till I had given you one whole specimen of those books that had so deceived me. But a time will come when I shall discuss the whole matter more fully and more opportunely than now.

*Scip.* Look to your feet, and don't run after your tail, that is to say, recollect that you are an animal devoid of reason; or if you seem at present to have a little

of it, we are already agreed that this is a supernatural and altogether unparalleled circumstance.

*Berg.* That would be all very well if I were still in my pristine state of ignorance; but now that I bethink me of what I should have mentioned to you in the beginning of our conversation, I not only cease to wonder that I speak, but I am terrified at the thought of leaving off.

*Scip.* Can you not tell me that something now that you recollect it?

*Berg.* It was a certain affair that occurred to me with a sorntess, a disciple of la Camacha de Montilla.

*Scip.* Let me hear it now, before you proceed with the story of your life.

*Berg.* No, not till the proper time. Have patience and listen to the recital of my adventures in the order they occurred, for they will afford you more pleasure in that way.

*Scip.* Very well; tell me what you will and how you will, but be brief.

*Berg.* I say, then, that I was pleased with my duty as a guardian of the flock, for it seemed to me that in that way I ate the bread of industry, and that sloth, the root and mother of all vices, came not nigh me; for if I rested by day, I never slept at night, the wolves continually assailing us and calling us to arms. The instant the shepherds said to me, "The wolf! the wolf! at him, Barcino," I dashed forward before all the other dogs, in the direction pointed out to me by the shepherds. I scoured the valleys, searched the mountains, beat the thickets, leaped the gullies, crossed the roads, and on the morning returned to the fold without having caught the wolf or seen a glimpse of him, panting, weary, all scratched and torn, and my feet cut with splinters; and I found in the fold either a ewe or a wether slaughtered and half eaten by the wolf. It vexed me desperately to see of what little avail were all my care and diligence. Then the owner of the flock would come; the shepherds would go out to meet him with the skin of the slaughtered animal: the owner would scold the shepherds for their negligence, and order the dogs to be punished for cowardice. Down would come upon us a shower of sticks and revilings; and so, finding myself punished without fault, and that my care, alertness, and courage were of no avail to keep off the wolf, I resolved to change my manner of proceeding, and not to go out to seek him, as I had been used to do, but to remain close to the fold; for since the wolf came to it, that would be the surest place to catch him. Every week we had an alarm; and one dark night I contrived to get a sight of the wolves, from which it was so impossible to guard the fold. I crouched behind a bank; the rest of the dogs ran forward; and from my lurking-place I saw and heard how two shepherds picked out one of the fattest wethers, and slaughtered it in such a manner, that it really appeared next morning as if the executioner had been a wolf. I was horror-

struck, when I saw that the shepherds themselves were the wolves, and that the flock was plundered by the very men who had the keeping of it. As usual, they made known to their master the mischief done by the wolf, gave him the skin and part of the carcase, and ate the rest, and that the choicest part, themselves. As usual, they had a scolding, and the dogs a beating. Thus there were no wolves, yet the flock dwindled away, and I was dumb, all which filled me with amazement and anguish. O Lord! said I to myself, who can ever remedy this villany? Who will have the power to make known that the defence is offensive, the sentinels sleep, the trustees rob, and those who guard you kill you?

*Scip.* You say very true, Berganza; for there is no worse or more subtle thief than the domestic thief; and accordingly there die many more of those who are trustful than of those who are wary. But the misfortune is, that it is impossible for people to get on in the world in any tolerable way without mutual confidence. However, let us drop this subject: there is no need that we should be evermore preaching. Go on.

*Berg.* I determined then to quit that service, though it seemed so good a one, and to choose another, in which well-doing, if not rewarded, was at least not punished. I went back to Seville, and entered the service of a very rich merchant.

*Scip.* How did you set about getting yourself a master? As things are now-a-days, an honest man has great difficulty in finding an employer. Very different are the lords of the earth from the Lord of Heaven; the former, before they will accept a servant, first scrutinise his birth and parentage, examine into his qualifications, and even require to know what clothes he has got; but for entering the service of God, the poorest is the richest, the humblest is the best born; and whoso is but disposed to serve him in purity of heart is at once entered in his book of wages, and has such assigned to him as his utmost desire can hardly compass, so ample are they.

*Berg.* All this is preaching, Scipio.

*Scip.* Well, it strikes me that it is. So go on.

*Berg.* With respect to your question, how I set about getting a master: you are aware that humility is the base and foundation of all virtues, and that without it there are none. It smooths inconveniences, overcomes difficulties, and is a means which always conducts us to glorious ends; it makes friends of enemies, tempers the wrath of the cholerick, and abates the arrogance of the proud: it is the mother of modesty, and sister of temperance. I availed myself of this virtue whenever I wanted to get a place in any house, after having first considered and carefully ascertained that it was one which could maintain a great dog. I then placed myself near the door; and whenever any one entered whom I guessed to be a stranger, I barked at him; and when the master entered, I went up to him

with my head down, my tail wagging, and licked his shoes. If they drove me out with sticks, I took it patiently, and turned with the same gentleness to fawn in the same way on the person who beat me. The rest let me alone, seeing my perseverance and my generous behaviour; and after one or two turns of this kind, I got a footing in the house. I was a good servant: they took a liking to me immediately; and I was never turned out, but dismissed myself, or, to speak more properly, I ran away; and sometimes I met with such a master, that but for the persecution of fortune I should have remained with him to this day.

*Scip.* It was just in the same way that I got into the houses of the masters I served. It seems that we read men's thoughts.

*Berg.* I will tell you now what happened to me after I left the fold in the power of those reprobates. I returned, as I have said, to Seville, the asylum of the poor and refuge for the destitute, which embraces in its greatness not only the rude but the mighty and nourishing. I planted myself at the door of a large house belonging to a merchant, exerted myself as usual, and after a few trials gained admission. They kept me tied up behind the door by day, and let me loose at night. I did my duty with great care and diligence, barked at strangers, and growled at those who were not well known. I did not sleep at night, but visited the yards, and walked about the terraces, acting as general guard over our own house and those of the neighbours; and my master was so pleased with my good service, that he gave orders I should be well treated, and have a ration of bread, with the bones from his table, and the kitchen scraps. For this I showed my gratitude by no end of leaps when I saw my master, especially when he came home after being abroad; and such were my demonstrations of joy that my master ordered me to be untied, and left loose day and night. As soon as I was set free, I ran to him, and gambolled all round him, without venturing to lay my paws on him; for I bethought me of that ass in Æsop's Fables, who was ass enough to think of fondling his master in the same manner as his favourite lap-dog, and was well basted for his pains. I understood that fable to signify, that what is graceful and comely in some is not so in others. Let the ribald flout and jeer, the mountebank tumble, — let the common fellow, who has made it his business, imitate the song of birds and the gestures of animals, but not the man of quality, who can deserve no credit or renown from any skill in these things.

*Scip.* Enough said, Berganza; I understand you; go on.

*Berg.* Would that others for whom I say this understood me as well! For there is something or other in my nature which makes me feel greatly shocked when I see a cavalier make a buffoon of himself, and taking pride in being able to play at thimblery, and in dancing the *chacona* to perfection, I know a cavalier who boasted, that he had, at the request of a sacristan, cut out thirty-two paper

ornaments, to stick upon the black cloth over a monument; and he was so proud of his performance that he took his friends to see it, as though he were showing them pennons and trophies taken from the enemy, and hung over the tombs of his forefathers. Well, this merchant I have been telling you of had two sons, one aged twelve, the other about fourteen, who were studying the humanities in the classes of the Company of Jesus. They went in pomp to the college, accompanied by their tutor, and by pages to carry their books, and what they called their Vademecum. To see them go with such parade, on horseback in fine weather, and in a carriage when it rained, made me wonder at the plain manner in which their father went abroad upon his business, attended by no other servant than a negro, and sometimes mounted upon a sorry mule.

*Scip.* You must know, Berganza, that it is a customary thing with the merchants of Seville, and of other cities also, to display their wealth and importance, not in their own persons, but in those of their sons: for merchants are greater in their shadows than in themselves; and as they rarely attend to anything else than their bargains, they spend little on themselves; but as ambition and wealth burn to display themselves, they show their own in the persons of their sons, maintaining them as sumptuously as if they were sons of princes. Sometimes too they purchase titles for them, and set upon their breasts the mark that so much distinguishes men of rank from the commonalty.

*Berg.* It is ambition, but a generous ambition that seeks to improve one's condition without prejudice to others.

*Scip.* Seldom or never can ambition consist with abstinence from injury to others.

*Berg.* Have we not said that we are not to speak evil of any one?

*Scip.* Ay, but I don't speak evil of any one.

*Berg.* You now convince me of the truth of what I have often heard say, that a person of a malicious tongue will utter enough to blast ten families, and calumniate twenty good men; and if he is taken to task for it, he will reply that he said nothing; or, if he did, he meant nothing by it, and would not have said it if he had thought any one would take it amiss. In truth, Scipio, one had need of much wisdom and wariness to be able to entertain a conversation for two hours, without approaching the confines of evil speaking. In my own case, for instance, brute as I am, I see that with every fourth phrase I utter, words full of malice and detraction come to my tongue like flies to wine. I therefore say again that doing and speaking evil are things we inherit from our first parents, and suck in with our mother's milk. This is manifest in the fact, that hardly is a boy out of swaddling clothes before he lifts his hand to take vengeance upon those by whom he thinks himself offended; and the first words he articulates are to call

his nurse or his mother a jade.

*Scip.* That is true. I confess my error, and beg you will forgive it, as I have forgiven you so many. Let us pitch ill-nature into the sea — as the boys say — and henceforth backbite no more. Go on with your story. You were talking of the grand style in which the sons of your master the merchant went to the college of the Company of Jesus.

*Berg.* I will go on then; and though I hold it a sufficient thing to abstain from ill-natured remarks, yet I propose to use a remedy, which I am told was employed by a great swearer, who repenting of his bad habit, made it a practice to pinch his arm, or kiss the ground as penance, whenever an oath escaped him; but he continued to swear for all that. In like manner, whenever I act contrary to the precept you have given me against evil speaking, and contrary to my own intention to abstain from that practice, I will bite the tip of my tongue, so that the smart may remind me of my fault, and hinder me from relapsing into it.

*Scip.* If that is the remedy you mean to use, I expect that you will have to bite your tongue so often, that there will be none of it left, and it will be put beyond the possibility of offending.

*Berg.* At least I will do my best; may heaven make up my deficiencies. Well, to resume: one day my master's sons left a note-book in the court-yard where I was; and as I had been taught to fetch and carry, I took it up, and went after them, resolved to put it into their own hands. It turned out exactly as I desired; for my masters seeing me coming with the note-book in my mouth, which I held cleverly by its string, sent a page to take it from me; but I would not let him, nor quitted it till I entered the hall with it, at which all the students fell a laughing. Going up to the elder of my masters, I put it into his hands, with all the obsequiousness I could, and went and seated myself on my haunches at the door of the hall, with my eyes fixed on the master who was lecturing in the chair. There is some strange charm in virtue; for though I know little or nothing about it, I at once took delight in seeing the loving care and industry with which the reverend fathers taught those youths, shaping their tender minds aright, and guiding them in the path of virtue, which they demonstrated to them along with letters. I observed how they reproved them with suavity, chastised them with mercy, animated them with examples, incited them with rewards, and indulged them with prudence; and how they set before them the loathsomeness of vice and the beauty of virtue, so that abhorring the one and loving the other, they might achieve the end for which they were created.

*Scip.* You say very well, Berganza; for I have heard tell of this holy fraternity, that for worldly wisdom there are none equal to them; and that as guides and leaders on the road to heaven, few come up to them. They are mirrors of

integrity, catholic doctrine, rare wisdom, and profound humility, the base on which is erected the whole edifice of beatitude.

*Berg.* That is every word true. But to return to my story: my masters were so pleased with my carrying them the note-book, that they would have me do so every day; and thus I enjoyed the life of a king, or even better, having nothing to do but to play with the students, with whom I grew so tame, that they would put their hands in my mouth, and the smallest of them would ride on my back. They would fling their hats or caps for me to fetch, and I would put them into their hands with marks of great delight. They used to give me as much to eat as they could; and they were fond of seeing, when they gave me nuts or almonds, how I cracked them like a monkey, let fall the shells, and ate the kernels. One student, to make proof of my ability, brought me a great quantity of salad in a basket, and I ate it like a human being. It was the winter season, when manchets and mantequillas abound in Seville; and I was so well supplied with them, that many an Antonio was pawned or sold that I might breakfast. In short, I spent a student's life, without hunger or itch, and that is saying everything for it; for if hunger and itch were not identified with the student's life, there would be none more agreeable in the world; since virtue and pleasure go hand in hand through it, and it is passed in learning and taking diversion. This happy life ended too soon for me. It appeared to the professors that the students spent the half-hour between the classes not in studying their lessons, but in playing with me; and therefore they ordered my masters not to bring me any more to the college. I was left at home accordingly, at my old post behind the door; and notwithstanding the order graciously given by the head of the family, that I should be at liberty day and night, I was again confined to a small mat, with a chain round my neck. Ah, friend Scipio, did you but know how sore a thing it is to pass from a state of happiness to one of wretchedness! When sorrows and distresses flood the whole course of life, either they soon end in death, or their continuance begets a habit of endurance, which generally alleviates their greatest rigour; but when one passes suddenly and unexpectedly from a miserable and calamitous lot to one of prosperity and enjoyment, and soon after relapses into his former state of woe and suffering: this is such a poignant affliction, that if it does not extinguish life, it is only to make it a prolonged torment. Well, I returned to my ordinary rations, and to the bones which were flung to me by a negress belonging to the house; but even these were partly filched from me by two cats, who very nimbly snapped up whatever fell beyond the range of my chain. Brother Scipio, as you hope that heaven will prosper all your desires, do suffer me to philosophise a little at present; for unless I utter the reflections which have now occurred to my mind, I feel that my story will not be complete or duly edifying.

*Scip.* Beware, Berganza, that this inclination to philosophise is not a temptation of the fiend; for slander has no better cloak to conceal its malice than the pretence that all it utters are maxims of philosophers, that evil speaking is moral reproof, and the exposure of the faults of others is nothing but honest zeal. There is no sarcastic person whose life, if you scrutinise it closely, will not be found full of vices and improprieties. And now, after this warning, philosophise as much as you have a mind.

*Berg.* You may be quite at your ease on that score, Scipio. What I have to remark is, that as I was the whole day at leisure — and leisure is the mother of reflection — I conned over several of those Latin phrases I had heard when I was with my masters at college, and wherewith it seemed to me that I had somewhat improved my mind; and I determined to make use of them as occasion should arise, as if I knew how to talk, but in a different manner from that practised by some ignorant persons, who interlard their conversation with Latin apophthegms, giving those who do not understand them to believe that they are great Latinists, whereas they can hardly decline a noun or conjugate a verb.

*Scip.* That is not so bad as what is done by some who really understand Latin; some of whom are so absurd, that in talking with a shoemaker or a tailor, they pour out Latin like water.

*Berg.* On the whole we may conclude, that he who talks Latin before persons who do not understand it, and he who talks it, being himself ignorant of it, are both equally to blame.

*Scip.* Another thing you may remark, which is that some persons who know Latin are not the less asses for all that.

*Berg.* No doubt of it; and the reason is clear; for when in the time of the Romans everybody spoke Latin as his mother tongue, that did not hinder some among them from being boobies.

*Scip.* But to know when to keep silence in the mother tongue, and speak in Latin, is a thing that needs discretion, brother Berganza.

*Berg.* True; for a foolish word may be spoken in Latin as well as in the vulgar tongue; and I have seen silly literati, tedious pedants, and babblers in the vernacular, who were enough to plague one to death with their scraps of Latin.

*Scip.* No more of this: proceed to your philosophical remarks.

*Berg.* They are already delivered.

*Scip.* How so?

*Berg.* In those remarks on Latin and the vulgar tongue, which I began and you finished.

*Scip.* Do you call railing philosophising? Sanctify the unhallowed plague of evil speaking, Berganza, and give it any name you please, it will, nevertheless



entail upon us the name of cynics, which means dogs of ill tongue. In God's name, hold your peace, and go on with your story.

*Berg.* How can I go on with my story, if I hold my peace?

*Scip.* I mean go on with it in one piece, and don't hang on so many tails to it as to make it look like a polypus.

*Berg.* Speak correctly, Scipio: one does not say the tails but the arms of a polypus. But to my story: my evil fortune, not content with having torn me from my studies, and from the calm and joyous life I led amid them; not content with having fastened me up behind a door, and transferred me from the liberality of the students to the stinginess of the negress, resolved to rob me of the little ease and comfort I still enjoyed. Look ye, Scipio, you may set it down with me for a certain fact, that ill luck will hunt out and find the unlucky one, though he hides in the uttermost parts of the earth. I have reason to say this; for the negress was in love with a negro, also belonging to the house, who slept in the porch between the street-door and the inner one behind which I was fastened, and they could only meet at night, to which end they had stolen the keys or got false ones. Every night the negress came down stairs, and stopping my mouth with a piece of meat or cheese, opened the door for the negro. For some days, the woman's bribes kept my conscience asleep; for but for them, I began to fear that my ribs would come together, and that I should be changed from a mastiff to a greyhound. But my better nature coming at last to my aid, I bethought me of what was due to my master, whose bread I ate; and that I ought to act as becomes not only honest dogs, but all who have masters to serve.

*Scip.* There now, Berganza, you have spoken what I call true philosophy; but go on. Do not make too long a yarn — not to say tail of your history.

*Berg.* But, first of all, pray tell me if you know what is the meaning of the word philosophy? For though I use it, I do not know what the thing really is, only I guess that it is something good.

*Scip.* I will tell you briefly. The word is compounded of two Greek words, *philo*, love, and *sophia*, wisdom; so that it means love of wisdom, and philosopher a lover of wisdom.

*Berg.* What a deal you know, Scipio. Who the deuce taught you Greek words?

*Scip.* Truly you are a simpleton, Berganza, to make so much of a matter that is known to every schoolboy; indeed, there are many persons who pretend to know Greek, though they are ignorant of it, just as is the case with Latin.

*Berg.* I believe it, Scipio; and I would have such persons put under a press, as the Portuguese do with the negroes of Guinea, and have all the juice of their knowledge well squeezed out of them, so that they might no more cheat the world with their scraps of broken Greek and Latin.

*Scip.* Now indeed, Berganza, you may bite your tongue, and I may do the same; for we do nothing but rail in every word.

*Berg.* Ay, but I am not bound to do as I have heard that one Charondas, a Tyrian, did, who published a law that no one should enter the national assembly in arms, on pain of death. Forgetting this, he one day entered the assembly girt with a sword; the fact was pointed out to him, and, on the instant, he drew his sword, plunged it into his body, and thus he was the first who made the law, broke it, and suffered its penalty. But I made no law; all I did was to promise that I would bite my tongue, if I chanced to utter an acrimonious word; but things are not so strictly managed in these times as in those of the ancients. To-day a law is made, and to-morrow it is broken, and perhaps it is fit it should be so. To-day a man promises to abandon his fault, and to-morrow he falls into a greater. It is one thing to extol discipline, and another to inflict it on one's self; and indeed there is a wide difference between saying and doing. The devil may bite himself, not I; nor have I a mind to perform heroic acts of self-denial here on this mat, where there are no witnesses to commend my honourable determination.

*Scip.* In that case, Berganza, were you a man you would be a hypocrite, and all your acts would be fictitious and false, though covered with the cloak of virtue, and done only that men might praise you, like the acts of all hypocrites.

*Berg.* I don't know what I should do if I were a man; but what I do know is that at present I shall not bite my tongue, having so many things yet to tell, and not knowing how or when I shall be able to finish them; but rather fearing that when the sun rises we shall be left groping without the power of speech.

*Scip.* Heaven forbid it! Go on with your story, and do not run off the road into needless digressions; in that way only you will come soon to the end of it, however long it may be.

*Berg.* I say, then, that having seen the thievery, impudence, and shameful conduct of the negroes, I determined, like a good servant, to put an end to their doings, if possible, and I succeeded completely in my purpose. The negress, as I have told you, used to come to amuse herself with the negro, making sure of my silence on account of the pieces of meat, bread, or cheese she threw me. Gifts have much power, Scipio.

*Scip.* Much. Don't digress: go on.

*Berg.* I remember, when I was a student, to have heard from the master a Latin phrase or adage, as they call it, which ran thus: *habet bovem in lingua*.

*Scip.* O confound your Latin! Have you so soon forgotten what we have said of those who mix up that language with ordinary conversation?

*Berg.* But this bit of Latin comes in here quite pat; for you must know that the

Athenians had among their coin one which was stamped with the figure of an ox; and whenever a judge failed to do justice in consequence of having been corrupted, they used to say, "He has the ox on his tongue."

*Scip.* I do not see the application.

*Berg.* Is it not very manifest, since I was rendered mute many times by the negress's gifts, and was careful not to bark when she came down to meet her amorous negro? Wherefore I repeat, that great is the power of gifts.

*Scip.* I have already admitted it; and were it not to avoid too long a digression, I could adduce many instances in point; but I will speak of these another time, if heaven grants me an opportunity of narrating my life to you.

*Berg.* God grant it! meanwhile I continue. At last my natural integrity prevailed over the negress's bribes; and one very dark night, when she came down as usual, I seized her without barking, in order not to alarm the household; and in a trice I tore her shift all to pieces, and bit a piece out of her thigh. This little joke confined her for eight days to her bed, for which she accounted to her masters by some pretended illness or other. When she was recovered, she came down another night: I attacked her again; and without biting, scratched her all over as if I had been carding wool. Our battles were always noiseless, and the negress always had the worst of them; but she had her revenge. She stinted my rations and my bones, and those of my own body began to show themselves through my skin. But though she cut short my victuals, that did not hinder me from barking; so to make an end of me altogether, she threw me a sponge fried in grease. I perceived the snare, and knew that what she offered me was worse than poison, for it would swell up in the stomach, and never leave it with life. Judging then that it was impossible for me to guard against the insidious attacks of such a base enemy, I resolved to get out of her sight, and put some space between her and me. One day, I found myself at liberty, and without bidding adieu to any of the family, I went into the street; and before I had gone a hundred paces, I fell in with the alguazil I mentioned in the beginning of my story, as being a great friend of my first master Nicholas the butcher. He instantly knew me, and called me by my name. I knew him too, and went up to him with my usual ceremonies and caresses. He took hold of me by the neck, and said to his men, "This is a famous watch-dog, formerly belonging to a friend of mine: let us bring him home." The men said, if I was a watch-dog, I should be of great use to them all, and they wanted to lay hold on me to lead me along; but the alguazil said, it was not necessary, for I knew him, and would follow him. I forgot to tell you, that the spiked collar I wore when I ran away from the flock was stolen from me at an inn by a gipsy, and I went without one in Seville; but my new master put on me a collar all studded with brass. Only consider, Scipio, this

change in my fortunes, Yesterday I was a student, and to-day I found myself a bailiff.

*Scip.* So wags the world, and you need not exaggerate the vicissitudes of fortune, as if there were any difference between the service of a butcher and that of a bailiff. I have no patience when I hear some persons rail at fortune, whose highest hopes never aspired beyond the life of a stable-boy. How they curse their ill-luck, and all to make the hearers believe that they have known better days, and have fallen from some high estate.

*Berg.* Just so. Now you must know that this alguazil was on intimate terms with an attorney; and the two were connected with a pair of wenches not a bit better than they ought to be, but quite the reverse. They were rather good looking, but full of meretricious arts and impudence. These two served their male associates as baits to fish with. Their dress and deportment was such that you might recognise them for what they were at the distance of a musket shot; they frequented the houses of entertainment for strangers, and the period of the fairs in Cadiz and Seville was their harvest time, for there was not a Breton with whom they did not grapple. Whenever a bumpkin fell into their snares they apprised the alguazil and the attorney to what inn they were going, and the latter then seized the party as lewd persons, but never took them to prison, for the strangers always paid money to get out of the scrape.

One day it happened that Colendres — this was the name of the alguazil's mistress — picked up a Breton, and made an appointment with him for the night, whereof she informed her friend; and they were hardly undressed before the alguazil, the attorney, two bailiffs, and myself entered the room. The amorous pair were sorely disconcerted, and the alguazil, inveighing against the enormity of their conduct, ordered them to dress with all speed, and go with him to prison. The Breton was dismayed, the attorney interceded from motives of compassion, and prevailed on the alguazil to commute the penalty for only a hundred reals. The Breton called for a pair of leather breeches he had laid on a chair at the end of the room, and in which there was money to pay his ransom, but the breeches were not to be seen. The fact was, that when I entered the room, my nostrils were saluted by a delightful odour of ham. I followed the scent, and found a great piece of ham in one of the pockets of the breeches, which I carried off into the street, in order to enjoy the contents without molestation. Having done so, I returned to the house, where I found the Breton vociferating in his barbarous jargon, and calling for his breeches, in one of the pockets of which he said he had fifty gold crowns. The attorney suspected that either Colendres or the bailiffs had stolen the money; the alguazil was of the same opinion, took them aside, and questioned them. None of them knew anything, and they all swore at

each other like troopers. Seeing the hubbub, I went back to the street where I had left the breeches, having no use for the money in them; but I could not find them, for some one passing by had no doubt picked them up.

The alguazil, in despair at finding that the Breton had no money to bribe with, thought to indemnify himself by extorting something from the mistress of the house. He called for her, and in she came half dressed, and when she saw and heard the Breton bawling for his money, Colindres crying in her shift, the alguazil storming, the attorney in a passion, and the bailiffs ransacking the room, she was in no very good humour. The alguazil ordered her to put on her clothes and be off with him to prison, for allowing men and women to meet for bad purposes in her house. Then indeed the row grew more furious than ever. "Señor Alguazil and Señor Attorney," said the hostess, "none of your tricks upon me, for I know a thing or two, I tell you. Give me none of your blustering, but shut your mouth, and go your ways in God's name, otherwise by my faith I'll pitch the house out of the windows, and blow upon you all; for I am well acquainted with the Señora Colendres, and I know moreover that for many months past she has been kept by the Señor Alguazil; so don't provoke me to let out any more, but give this gentleman back his money, and let us all part good friends, for I am a respectable woman, and I have a husband with his patent of nobility with its leaden seals all hanging to it, God be thanked! and I carry on this business with the greatest propriety. I have the table of charges hung up where everybody may see it, so don't meddle with me, or by the Lord I'll soon settle your business. It is no affair of mine if women come in with my lodgers; they have the keys of their rooms, and I am not a lynx to see through seven walls."

My masters were astounded at the harangue of the landlady, and at finding how well acquainted she was with the story of their lives; but seeing there was nobody else from whom they could squeeze money, they still pretended that they meant to drag her to prison. She appealed to heaven against the unreasonableness and injustice of their behaving in that manner when her husband was absent, and he too a man of such quality. The Breton bellowed for his fifty crowns; the bailiffs persisted in declaring that they had never set eyes on the breeches, God forbid! The attorney privately urged the alguazil to search Colindres' clothes, for he suspected she must have possessed herself of the fifty crowns, since it was her custom to grope in the pockets of those who took up with her company. Colindres declared that the Breton was drunk, and that it was all a lie about his money. All in short was confusion, oaths, and bawling, and there would have been no end to the uproar if the lieutenant corregidor had not just then entered the room, having heard the noise as he was going his rounds. He asked what it was all about, and the landlady replied with great copiousness

of detail. She told him who was the damsel Colindres (who by this time had got her clothes on), made known the connection between her and the alguazil, and exposed her plundering tricks; protested her own innocence, and that it was never with her consent that a woman of bad repute had entered her house; cried herself up for a saint, and her husband for a pattern of excellence; and called out to a servant wench to run and fetch her husband's patent of nobility out of the chest, that she might show it to the Señor Lieutenant. He would then be able to judge whether the wife of so respectable a man was capable of anything but what was quite correct. If she did keep a lodging-house, it was because she could not help it. God knows if she would not rather have some comfortable independence to live upon at her ease. The lieutenant, tired of her volubility and her bouncing about the patent of gentility, said to her, "Sister hostess, I am willing to believe that your husband is a gentleman, but then you must allow he is only a gentleman innkeeper." The landlady replied with great dignity, "And where is the family in the world, however good its blood may be, but you may pick some holes in its coat?" "Well, all I have to say, sister, is, that you must put on your clothes, and come away to prison." This brought her down from her high flights at once; she tore her hair, cried, screamed, and prayed, but all in vain; the inexorable lieutenant carried the whole party off to prison, that is to say, the Breton, Colindres, and the landlady. I learned afterwards that the Breton lost his fifty crowns, and was condemned besides to pay costs; the landlady had to pay as much more. Colindres was let off scot free, and the very day she was liberated she picked up a sailor, out of whom she made good her disappointment in the affair of the Breton. Thus you see, Scipio, what serious troubles arose from my gluttony.

*Scip.* Say rather from the rascality of your master.

*Berg.* Nay but listen, for worse remains to be told, since I am loth to speak ill of alguazil and attorneys.

*Scip.* Ay, but speaking ill of one is not speaking ill of all. There is many and many an attorney who is honest and upright. They do not all take fees from both parties in a suit; nor extort more than their right; nor go prying about into other people's business in order to entangle them in the webs of the law; nor league with the justice to fleece one side and skin the other. It is not every alguazil that is in collusion with thieves and vagabonds, or keeps a decoy-duck in the shape of a mistress, as your master did. Very many of them are gentlemen in feeling and conduct; neither arrogant nor insolent, nor rogues and knaves, like those who go about inns, measuring the length of strangers' swords, and ruining their owners if they find them a hair's breadth longer than the law allows.

*Berg.* My master hawked at higher game. He set himself up for a man of

valour, piqued himself on making famous captures, and sustained his reputation for courage without risk to his person, but at the cost of his purse. One day at the Puerta de Xeres he fell in, single-handed, with six famous bravoos, whilst I could not render him any assistance, having a muzzle on my mouth, which he made me wear by day and took off at night. I was amazed at his intrepidity and headlong valour. He dashed in and out between the six swords of the ruffians, and made as light of them as if they were so many osier wands. It was wonderful to behold the agility with which he assaulted, his thrusts and parries, and with what judgment and quickness of eye he prevented his enemies from attacking him from behind. In short, in my opinion and that of all the spectators of the fight, he was a very Rhodomont, having fought his men all the way from the Puerta de Xeres to the statues of the college of Maese Rodrigo, a good hundred paces and more. Having put them to flight, he returned to collect the trophies of the battle, consisting of three sheaths, and these he carried to the corregidor, who was then, if I mistake not, the licentiate Sarmiento de Valladares, renowned for the destruction of the Saucedá. As my master walked through the streets, people pointed to him and said, "There goes the valiant man who ventured, singly, to encounter the flower of the bravoos of Andalusia."

He spent the remainder of the day in walking about the city, to let himself be seen, and at night we went to the suburb of Triana, to a street near the powder-mill, where my master, looking about to see if any one observed him, entered a house, myself following him, and in the court-yard we found the six rogues he had fought with, all untrussed, and without cloaks or swords. One fellow, who appeared to be the landlord, had a big jar of wine in one hand and a great tavern goblet in the other, and, filling a sparkling bumper, he drank to all the company. No sooner had they set eyes on my master than they all ran to him with open arms. They all drank his health, and he returned the compliment in every instance, and would have done it in as many more had there been occasion — so affable he was and so averse to disoblige any one for trifles. Were I to recount all that took place there — the supper that was served up, the fights and the robberies they related, the ladies of their acquaintance whom they praised or disparaged, the encomiums they bestowed on each other, the absent bravoos whom they named, the clever tricks they played, jumping up from supper to exhibit their sleight of hand, the picked words they used, and, finally, the figure of the host, whom all respected as their lord and father, — were I to attempt this, I should entangle myself in a maze, from which I could never extricate myself. I ascertained that the master of the house, whose name was Monipodio, was a regular fence, and that my master's battle of the morning had been preconcerted between him and his opponents, with all its circumstances, including the

dropping of the sword-sheaths, which my master now delivered, in lieu of his share of the reckoning. The entertainment was continued almost till breakfast time; and, by way of a final treat, they gave my master information of a foreign bravo, an out-and-outer, just arrived in the city. In all probability he was an abler blade than themselves, and they denounced him from envy. My master captured him the next night as he lay in bed; but had he been up and armed, there was that in his face and figure which told me that he would not have allowed himself to be taken so quietly. This capture, coming close upon the heels of the pretended fight, enhanced the fame of my poltroon of a master, who had no more courage than a hare, but sustained his valorous reputation by treating and feasting; so that all the gains of his office, both fair and foul, were frittered away upon his false renown.

I am afraid I weary you, Scipio, but have patience and listen to another affair that befel him, which I will tell you without a tittle more or less than the truth. Two thieves stole a fine horse in Antequera, brought him to Seville, and in order to sell him without risk, adopted what struck me as being a very ingenious stratagem. They put up at two different inns, and one of them entered a plaint in the courts of law, to the effect that Pedro de Losada owed him four hundred reals, money lent, as appeared by a note of hand, signed by the said Pedro, which he produced in evidence. The lieutenant corregidor directed that Losada should be called upon to state whether or not he acknowledged the note as his own, and if he did, that he should be compelled to pay the amount by seizure of his goods, or go to prison. My master and his friend the attorney were employed in this business. One of the thieves took them to the lodgings of the other, who at once acknowledged his note of hand, admitted the debt, and offered his horse in satisfaction of the amount. My master was greatly taken with the animal, and resolved to have it if it should be sold. The time prescribed by the law being expired, the horse was put up for sale; my master employed a friend to bid for it, and it was knocked down to him for five hundred reals, though well worth twelve or thirteen hundred. Thus one thief obtained payment of the debt which was not due to him, the other a quittance of which he had no need, and my master became possessed of the horse, which was as fatal to him as the famous Sejanus was to his owners.

The thieves decamped at once; and two days afterwards my master, after having repaired the horse's trappings, appeared on his back in the Plaza de San Francisco, as proud and conceited as a bumpkin in his holiday clothes. Everybody complimented him on his bargain, declaring the horse was worth a hundred and fifty ducats as surely as an egg was worth a maravedi. But whilst he was caracolling and curvetting, and showing off his own person and his horse's



paces, two men of good figure and very well dressed entered the square, one of whom cried out, "Why, bless my soul! that is my horse Ironfoot, that was stolen from me a few days ago in Antequera." Four servants, who accompanied him, said the same thing. My master was greatly chopfallen; the gentleman appealed to justice, produced his proofs, and they were so satisfactory that sentence was given in his favour, and my master was dispossessed of the horse. The imposture was exposed; and it came out how, through the hands of justice itself, the thieves had sold what they had stolen; and almost everybody rejoiced that my master's covetousness had made him burn his fingers.

His disasters did not end there. That night the lieutenant going his rounds, was informed that there were robbers abroad as far as San Julian's wards. Passing a cross-road he saw a man running away, and taking me by the collar, "At him, good dog!" he said, "At him, boy!" Disgusted as I was with my master's villanies, and eager to obey the lieutenant's orders, I made no hesitation to seize my own master and pull him down to the ground, where I would have torn him to pieces if the thief-takers had not with great difficulty separated us. They wanted to punish me, and even to beat me to death with sticks; and they would have done so if the lieutenant had not bade them let me alone, for I had only done what he ordered me. The warning was not lost upon me, so without taking my leave of anybody, I leaped through an opening in the wall, and before daybreak I was in Mayrena, a place about four leagues from Seville.

There by good luck I fell in with a party of soldiers, who, as I heard, were going to embark at Cartagena. Among them were four of my late master's ruffian friends; one of them was the drummer, who had been a catchpole and a great buffoon, as drummers frequently are. They all knew me and spoke to me, asking after my master as if I could reply; but the one who showed the greatest liking for me was the drummer, and so I determined to attach myself to him, if he would let me, and to accompany the expedition whether they were bound for Italy or Flanders. For in spite of the proverb, a blockhead at home is a blockhead all the world over, you must agree with me that travelling and sojourning among various people makes men wise.

*Scip.* That is so true that I remember to have heard from a master of mine, a very clever man, that the famous Greek, Ulysses, was renowned as wise solely because he had travelled and seen many men and nations. I therefore applaud your determination to go with the soldiers, wherever they might take you.

*Berg.* To help him in the display of his jugglery, the drummer began to teach me to dance to the sound of the drum, and to play other monkey tricks such as no other dog than myself could ever have acquired. The detachment marched by very short stages; we had no commissary to control us; the captain was a mere

lad, but a perfect gentleman, and a great christian; the ensign had but just left the page's hall at the court; the serjeant was a knowing blade, and a great conductor of companies from the place where they were raised to the port of embarkation. The detachment was full of ruffians whose insolent behaviour, in the places through which we passed, redounded in curses directed to a quarter where they were not deserved. It is the misfortune of the good prince to be blamed by some of his subjects, for faults committed by others of them, which he could not remedy if he would, for the circumstances attendant on war are for the most part inevitably harsh, oppressive, and untoward.

In the course of a fortnight, what with my own cleverness, and the diligence of him I had chosen for my patron, I learned to jump for the king of France, and not to jump for the good-for-nothing landlady; he taught me to curvet like a Neapolitan courser, to move in a ring like a mill horse, and other things which might have made one suspect that they were performed by a demon in the shape of a dog. The drummer gave me the name of the wise dog, and no sooner were we arrived at a halting place, than he went about, beating his drum, and giving notice to all who desired to behold the marvellous graces and performances of the wise dog, that they were to be seen at such a house, for four or eight maravedis a head, according to the greater or less wealth of the place. After these encomiums everybody ran to see me, and no one went away without wonder and delight. My master exulted in the gains I brought him, which enabled him to maintain six of his comrades like princes. The envy and covetousness of the rogues was excited, and they were always watching for an opportunity to steal me, for any way of making money by sport has great charms for many. This is why there are so many puppet showmen in Spain, so many who go about with peep shows, so many others who hawk pens and ballads, though their stock, if they sold it all, would not be enough to keep them for a day; and yet they are to be found in taverns and drinking-shops all the year round, whence I infer that the cost of their guzzling is defrayed by other means than the profits of their business. They are all good-for-nothing vagabonds, bread weevils and winesponges.

*Scip.* No more of that, Berganza; let us not go over the same ground again. Continue your story, for the night is waning, and I should not like, when the sun rises, that we should be left in the shades of silence.

*Berg.* Keep it and listen. As it is an easy thing to extend and improve our inventions, my master, seeing how well I imitated a Neapolitan courser, made me housings of gilt leather, and a little saddle, which he fitted on my back; he put on it a little figure of a man, with lance in hand, and taught me to run straight at a ring fixed between two stakes. As soon as I was perfect in that performance,

my master announced that on that day the wise dog would run at the ring, and exhibit other new and incomparable feats, which, indeed, I drew from my own invention, not to give my master the lie. We next marched to Montilla, a town belonging to the famous and great christian, Marquis of Priego, head of the house of Aguilar and Montilla. My master was quartered, at his own request, in a hospital; he made his usual proclamation, and as my great fame had already reached the town, the court-yard was filled with spectators in less than an hour. My master rejoiced to see such a plenteous harvest, and resolved to show himself that day a first-rate conjuror. The entertainment began with my leaping through a hoop. He had a willow switch in his hand, and when he lowered it, that was a signal for me to leap; and when he kept it raised, I was not to budge.

On that day (for ever memorable in my life) he began by saying, "Come, my friend, jump for that juvenile old gentleman, you know, who blacks his beard; or, if you won't, jump for the pomp and grandeur of Donna Pimpinela de Plafagonia, who was the fellow servant of the Galician kitchen wench at Valdeastillas. Don't you like that, my boy? Then jump for the bachelor Pasillas, who signs himself licentiate without having any degree. How lazy you are! Why don't you jump? Oh! I understand! I am up to your roguery! Jump, then, for the wine of Esquivias, a match for that of Ciudad Real, St. Martin, and Rivadavia." He lowered the switch, and I jumped in accordance with the signal. Then, addressing the audience, "Do not imagine, worshipful senate," he said, "that it is any laughing matter what this dog knows. I have taught him four-and-twenty performances, the least of which is worth going thirty leagues to see. He can dance the zaraband and the chacona better than their inventor; he tosses off a pint of wine without spilling a drop; he intones a sol, fa, mi, re, as well as any sacristan. All these things, and many others which remain to be told, your worships shall witness during the time the company remains here. At present, our wise one will give another jump, and then we will enter upon the main business."

Having inflamed the curiosity of the audience, or senate, as he called them, with this harangue, he turned to me and said, "Come now, my lad, and go through all your jumps with your usual grace and agility; but this time it shall be for the sake of the famous witch who is said to belong to this place." The words were hardly out of his mouth, when the matron of the hospital, an old woman, who seemed upwards of seventy, screamed out, "Rogue, charlatan, swindler, there is no witch here. If you mean Camacha, she has paid the penalty of her sin, and is where God only knows; if you mean me, you juggling cheat, I am no witch, and never was one in my life; and if I ever was reputed to be a witch, I may thank false witnesses, and the injustice of the law, and a presumptuous and

ignorant judge. All the world knows the life of penance I lead, not for any acts of witchcraft, which I have never done, but for other great sins which I have committed as a poor sinner. So get out of the hospital, you rascally sheep-skin thumper, or by all the saints I'll make you glad to quit it at a run." And with that she began to screech at such a rate, and pour such a furious torrent of abuse upon my master, that he was utterly confounded. In fine, she would not allow the entertainment to proceed on any account. My master did not care much about the row, as he had his money in his pocket, and he announced that he would give the performance next day in another hospital. The people went away cursing the old woman, and calling her a witch, and a bearded hag into the bargain. We remained for all that in the hospital that night, and the old woman meeting me alone in the yard, said, "Is that you, Montiel, my son? Is that you?" I looked up as she spoke, and gazed steadily at her, seeing which, she came to me with tears in her eyes, threw her arms round my neck, and would have kissed my mouth if I had allowed her; but I was disgusted, and would not endure it.

*Scip.* You were quite right, for it is no treat, but quite the reverse, to kiss or be kissed by an old woman.

*Berg.* What I am now going to relate I should have told you at the beginning of my story, as it would have served to diminish the surprise we felt at finding ourselves endowed with speech. Said the old woman to me, "Follow me, Montiel, my son, that you may know my room; and be sure you come to me to-night, that we may be alone together, for I have many things to tell you of great importance for you to know." I drooped my head in token of obedience, which confirmed her in her belief that I was the dog Montiel whom she had been long looking for, as she afterwards told me. I remained bewildered with surprise, longing for the night to see what might be the meaning of this mystery or prodigy, and as I had heard her called a witch, I expected wonderful things from the interview. At last the time came, and I entered the room, which was small, and low, and dimly lighted by an earthenware lamp. The old woman trimmed it, sat down on a chest, drew me to her, and without speaking a word, fell to embracing me, and I to taking care that she did not kiss me.

"I did always hope in heaven," the old woman began, "that I should see my son before my eyes were closed in the last sleep; and now that I have seen you, let death come when it will, and release me from this life of sorrow. You must know, my son, that there lived in this city the most famous witch in the world, called Camacha de Montilla. She was so perfect in her art, that the Erichtheas, Circes, and Medeas, of whom old histories, I am told, are full, were not to be compared to her. She congealed the clouds when she pleased, and covered the face of the sun with them; and when the whim seized her, she made the murkiest

sky clear up at once. She fetched men in an instant from remote lands; admirably relieved the distresses of damsels who had forgot themselves for a moment; enabled widows to console themselves without loss of reputation; unmarried wives, and married those she pleased. She had roses in her garden in December, and gathered wheat in January. To make watercresses grow in a handbasin was a trifle to her, or to show any persons whom you wanted to see, either dead or alive, in a looking-glass, or on the nail of a newborn infant. It was reported that she turned men into brutes, and that she made an ass of a sacristan, and used him really and truly in that form for six years. I never could make out how this was done; for as for what is related of those ancient sorceresses, that they turned men into beasts, the learned are of opinion that this means only that by their great beauty and their fascinations, they so captivated men and subjected them to their humours, as to make them seem unreasoning animals. But in you, my son, I have a living instance to the contrary, for I know that you are a rational being, and I see you in the form of a dog; unless indeed this is done through that art which they call Tropelia, which makes people mistake appearances and take one thing for another.

“Be this as it may, what mortifies me is that neither your mother nor myself, who were disciples of the great Camacha, ever came to know as much as she did, and that not for want of capacity, but through her inordinate selfishness, which could never endure that we should learn the higher mysteries of her art, and be as wise as herself. Your mother, my son, was called Montiel, and next to Camacha, she was the most famous of witches. My name is Cañizares; and, if not equal in proficiency to either of these two, at least I do not yield to them in good will to the art. It is true that in boldness of spirit, in the intrepidity with which she entered a circle, and remained enclosed in it with a legion of fiends, your mother was in no wise inferior to Camacha herself; while, for my part, I was always somewhat timid, and contented myself with conjuring half a legion; but though I say it that should not, in the matter of compounding witches’ ointment, I would not turn my back upon either of them, no, nor upon any living who follow our rules. But you must know, my son, ever since I have felt how fast my life is hastening away upon the light wings of time, I have sought to withdraw from all the wickedness of witchcraft in which I was plunged for many years, and I have only amused myself with white magic, a practice so engaging that it is most difficult to forego it. Your mother acted in the same manner; she abandoned many evil practices, and performed many righteous works; but she would not relinquish white magic to the hour of her death. She had no malady, but died by the sorrow brought upon her by her mistress, Camacha, who hated her because she saw that in a short time Montiel would know as much as

herself, unless indeed she had some other cause of jealousy not known to me.

“Your mother was pregnant, and her time being come, Camacha was her midwife. She received in her hands what your mother brought forth, and showed her that she had borne two puppy dogs. ‘This is a bad business,’ said Camacha; ‘there is some knavery here. But, sister Montiel, I am your friend, and I will conceal this unfortunate birth; so have patience and get well, and be assured that your misfortune shall remain an inviolable secret.’ I was present at this extraordinary occurrence, and was not less astounded than your mother. Camacha went away taking the whelps with her, and I remained to comfort the lying-in woman, who could not bring herself to believe what had happened. At last Camacha’s end drew near, and when she felt herself at the point of death, she sent for her and told her how she had turned her sons into dogs on account of a certain grudge she bore her, but that she need not distress herself, for they would return to their natural forms when it was least expected; but this would not happen ‘until they shall see the exalted quickly brought low, and the lowly exalted by an arm that is mighty to do it.’

“Your mother wrote down this prophecy, and deeply engraved it in her memory, and so did I, that I might impart it to one of you if ever the opportunity should present itself. And in hopes to recognise you, I have made it a practice to call every dog of your colour by your mother’s name, to see if any of them would answer to one so unlike those usually given to dogs; and, this evening, when I saw you do so many things, and they called you the wise dog, and also when you looked up at me upon my calling to you in the yard, I believed that you were really the son of Montiel. It is with extreme pleasure I acquaint you with the history of your birth, and the manner in which you are to recover your original form. I wish it was as easy as it was for the golden ass of Apuleius, who had only to eat a rose for his restoration; but yours depends upon the actions of others, and not upon your own efforts. What you have to do meanwhile, my son, is to commend yourself heartily to God, and hope for the speedy and prosperous fulfilment of the prophecy; for since it was pronounced by Camacha it will be accomplished without any doubt, and you and your brother, if he is alive, will see yourselves as you would wish to be. All that grieves me is that I am so near my end, that I can have no hope of witnessing the joyful event.

“I have often longed to ask my goat how matters would turn out with you at last; but I had not the courage to do so, for he never gives a straightforward answer, but as crooked and perplexing as possible. That is always the way with our lord and master; there is no use in asking him anything, for with one truth he mingles a thousand lies, and from what I have noted of his replies it appears that he knows nothing for certain of the future, but only by way of conjecture. At the

same time he so be-fools us that, in spite of a thousand treacherous tricks he plays us, we cannot shake off his influence. We go to see him a long way from here in a great field, where we meet a multitude of warlocks and witches, and are feasted without measure, and other things take place which, indeed and in truth, I cannot bring myself to mention, nor will I offend your chaste ears by repeating things so filthy and abominable. Many are of opinion that we frequent these assemblies only in imagination, wherein the demon presents to us the images of all those things which we afterwards relate as having occurred to us in reality; others, on the contrary, believe that we actually go to them in body and soul; and for my part I believe that both opinions are true, since we know not when we go in the one manner or in the other; for all that happens to us in imagination does so with such intensity, that it is impossible to distinguish between it and reality. Their worships the inquisitors have had sundry opportunities of investigating this matter, in the cases of some of us whom they have had under their hands, and I believe that they have ascertained the truth of what I state.

“I should like, my son, to shake off this sin, and I have exerted myself to that end. I have got myself appointed matron to this hospital; I tend the poor, and some die who afford me a livelihood either by what they leave me, or by what I find among their rags, through the great care I always take to examine them well. I say but few prayers, and only in public, but grumble a good deal in secret. It is better for me to be a hypocrite than an open sinner; for my present good works efface from the memory of those who know me the bad ones of my past life. After all, pretended sanctity injures no one but the person who practises it. Look you, Montiel, my son, my advice to you is this: be good all you can; but if you must be wicked, contrive all you can not to appear so. I am a witch, I do not deny it, and your mother was one likewise; but the appearances we put on were always enough to maintain our credit in the eyes of the whole world. Three days before she died, we were both present at a grand sabbath of witches in a valley of the Pyrenees; and yet when she died it was with such calmness and serenity, that were it not for some grimaces she made a quarter of an hour before she gave up the ghost, you would have thought she lay upon a bed of flowers. But her two children lay heavy at her heart, and even to her last gasp she never would forgive Camacha, such a resolute spirit she had. I closed her eyes and followed her to the grave, and there took my last look at her; though, indeed, I have not lost the hope of seeing her again before I die, for they say that several persons have met her going about the churchyards and the cross-roads in various forms, and who knows but I may fall in with her some time or other, and be able to ask her whether I can do anything for the relief of her conscience?”

Every word that the old hag uttered in praise of her she called my mother went

like a knife to my heart; I longed to fall upon her and tear her to pieces, and only refrained from unwillingness that death should find her in such a wicked state. Finally she told me that she intended to anoint herself that night and go to one of their customary assemblies, and inquire of her master as to what was yet to befall me. I should have liked to ask her what were the ointments she made use of; and it seemed as though she read my thoughts, for she replied to my question as though it had been uttered.

“This ointment,” she said, “is composed of the juices of exceedingly cold herbs, and not, as the vulgar assert, of the blood of children whom we strangle. And here you may be inclined to ask what pleasure or profit can it be to the devil to make us murder little innocents, since he knows that being baptised they go as sinless creatures to heaven, and every Christian soul that escapes him is to him a source of poignant anguish. I know not what answer to give to this except by quoting the old saying, that some people would give both their eyes to make their enemy lose one. He may do it for sake of the grief beyond imagination which the parents suffer from the murder of their children; but what is still more important to him is to accustom us to the repeated commission of such a cruel and perverse sin. And all this God allows by reason of our sinfulness; for without his permission, as I know by experience, the devil has not the power to hurt a pismire; and so true is this, that one day when I requested him to destroy a vineyard belonging to an enemy of mine, he told me that he could not hurt a leaf of it, for God would not allow him. Hence you may understand when you come to be a man, that all the casual evils that befall men, kingdoms, and cities, and peoples, sudden deaths, shipwrecks, devastations, and all sorts of losses and disasters, come from the hand of the Almighty, and by his sovereign permission; and the evils which fall under the denomination of crime, are caused by ourselves. God is without sin, whence it follows that we ourselves are the authors of sin, forming it in thought, word, and deed; God permitting all this by reason of our sinfulness, as I have already said.

“Possibly you will ask, my son, if so be you understand me, who made me a theologian? And mayhap you will say to yourself, Confound the old hag! why does not she leave off being a witch since she knows so much? Why does not she turn to God, since she knows that he is readier to forgive sin than to permit it? To this I reply, as though you had put the question to me, that the habit of sinning becomes a second nature, and that of being a witch transforms itself into flesh and blood; and amidst all its ardour, which is great, it brings with it a chilling influence which so overcomes the soul as to freeze and benumb its faith, whence follows a forgetfulness of itself, and it remembers neither the terrors with which God threatens it, nor the glories with which he allures it. In fact, as



sin is fleshly and sensual, it must exhaust and stupefy all the feelings, and render the soul incapable of rising to embrace any good thought, or to clasp the hand which God in his mercy continually holds out to it. I have one of those souls I have described; I see it clearly; but the empire of the senses enchains my will, and I have ever been and ever shall be bad.

“But let us quit this subject, and go back to that of our unguents. They are of so cold a nature that they take away all our senses when we anoint ourselves with them; we remain stretched on the ground, and then they say we experience all those things in imagination which we suppose to occur to us in reality. Sometimes after we have anointed and changed ourselves into fowls, foals, or deer, we go to the place where our master awaits us. There we recover our own forms and enjoy pleasures which I will not describe, for they are such as the memory is ashamed to recal, and the tongue refuses to relate. The short and the long of it is, I am a witch, and cover my many delinquencies with the cloak of hypocrisy. It is true that if some esteem and honour me as a good woman, there are many who bawl in my ear the name imprinted upon your mother and me by order of an ill-tempered judge, who committed his wrath to the hands of the hangman; and the latter, not being bribed, used his plenary power upon our shoulders. But that is past and gone; and all things pass, memories wear out, lives do not renew themselves, tongues grow tired, and new events make their predecessors forgotten. I am matron of a hospital; my behaviour is plausible in appearance; my unguents procure me some pleasant moments, and I am not so old but that I may live another year, my age being seventy-five. I cannot fast on account of my years, nor pray on account of the swimming in my head, nor go on pilgrimages for the weakness of my legs, nor give alms because I am poor, nor think rightly because I am given to backbiting, and to be able to backbite one must first think evil. I know for all that that God is good and merciful, and that he knows what is in store for me, and that is enough; so let us drop this conversation which really makes me melancholy. Come, my son, and see me anoint myself; for there is a cure for every sorrow; and though the pleasures which the devil affords us are illusive and fictitious, yet they appear to us to be pleasures; and sensual delight is much greater in imagination than in actual fruition, though it is otherwise with true joys.”

After this long harangue she got up, and taking the lamp went into another and smaller room. I followed her, filled with a thousand conflicting thoughts, and amazed at what I had heard and what I expected to see. Cañizares hung the lamp against the wall, hastily stripped herself to her shift, took a jug from a corner, put her hand into it, and, muttering between her teeth, anointed herself from her feet to the crown of her head. Before she had finished she said to me, that whether

her body remained senseless in that room, or whether it quitted it, I was not to be frightened, nor fail to wait there till morning, when she would bring me word of what was to befall me until I should be a man. I signified my assent by drooping my head; and she finished her unction, and stretched herself on the floor like a corpse. I put my mouth to hers, and perceived that she did not breathe at all. One thing I must own to you, friend Scipio, that I was terribly frightened at seeing myself shut up in that narrow room with that figure before me, which I will describe to you as well as I can.

She was more than six feet high, a mere skeleton covered with a black wrinkled skin. Her dug nose was like two dried and puckered ox-bladders; her lips were blackened; her long teeth locked together; her nose was hooked; her eyes starting from her head; her hair hung in elf-locks on her hollow wrinkled cheeks; — in short, she was all over diabolically hideous. I remained gazing on her for a while, and felt myself overcome with horror as I contemplated the hideous spectacle of her body, and the worse occupation of her soul. I wanted to bite her to see if she would come to herself, but I could not find a spot on her whole body that did not fill me with disgust. Nevertheless, I seized her by one heel, and dragged her to the yard, without her ever giving any sign of feeling. There seeing myself at large with the sky above me, my fear left me, or at least abated, so much as to give me courage to await the result of that wicked woman's expedition, and the news she was to bring me. Meanwhile, I asked myself, how comes this old woman to be at once so knowing and so wicked? How is it that she can so well distinguish between casual and culpable evils? How is it that she understands and speaks so much about God, and acts so much from the prompting of the devil? How is it that she sins so much from choice, not having the excuse of ignorance?

In these reflections I passed the night. The day dawned and found us both in the court, she lying still insensible, and I on my haunches beside her, attentively watching her hideous countenance. The people of the hospital came out, and seeing this spectacle, some of them exclaimed, "The pious Cañizares is dead! See how emaciated she is with fasting and penance." Others felt her pulse, and finding that she was not dead, concluded that she was in a trance of holy ecstasy; whilst others said, "This old hag is unquestionably a witch, and is no doubt anointed, for saints are never seen in such an indecent condition when they are lost in religious ecstasy; and among us who know her, she has hitherto had the reputation of a witch rather than a saint." Some curious inquirers went so far as to stick pins in her flesh up to the head, yet without ever awaking her. It was not till seven o'clock that she came to herself; and then finding how she was stuck over with pins, bitten in the heels, and her back flayed by being dragged from

her room, and seeing so many eyes intently fixed upon her, she rightly concluded that I had been the cause of her exposure. "What, you thankless, ignorant, malicious villain," she cried, "is this my reward for the acts I did for your mother and those I intended to do for you?" Finding myself in peril of my life under the talons of that ferocious harpy, I shook her off, and seizing her by her wrinkled flank, I worried and dragged her all about the yard, whilst she shrieked for help from the fangs of that evil spirit. At these words, most present believed that I must be one of those fiends who are continually at enmity with good Christians. Some were for sprinkling me with holy water, some were for pulling me off the old woman, but durst not; others bawled out words to exorcise me. The witch howled, I tightened my grip with my teeth, the confusion increased, and my master was in despair, hearing it said that I was a fiend. A few who knew nothing of exorcisms caught up three or four sticks and began to baste me. Not liking the joke, I let go the old woman; in three bounds I was in the street, and in a few more I was outside the town, pursued by a host of boys, shouting, "Out of the way! the wise dog is gone mad." Others said "he is not mad, but he is the devil in the form of a dog." The people of the place were confirmed in their belief that I was a devil by the tricks they had seen me perform, by the words spoken by the old woman when she woke out of her infernal trance, and by the extraordinary speed with which I shot away from them, so that I seemed to vanish from before them like a being of the other world. In six hours I cleared twelve leagues; and arrived at a camp of gipsies in a field near Granada. There I rested awhile, for some of the gipsies who recognised me as the wise dog, received me with great delight, and hid me in a cave, that I might not be found if any one came in search of me; their intention being, as I afterwards learned, to make money by me as my master the drummer had done. I remained twenty days among them, during which I observed their habits and ways of life; and these are so remarkable that I must give you an account of them.

*Scip.* Before you go any further, Berganza, we had better consider what the witch said to you, and see if there can possibly be a grain of truth in the great lie to which you give credit. Now, what an enormous absurdity it would be to believe that Camacha could change human beings into brutes, or that the sacristan served her for years under the form of an ass. All these things, and the like, are cheats, lies, or illusions of the devil; and if it now seems to ourselves that we have some understanding and reason — since we speak, though we are really dogs or bear that form — we have already said that this is a portentous and unparalleled case; and though it is palpably before us, yet we must suspend our belief until the event determines what it should be. Shall I make this more plain

to you? Consider upon what frivolous things Camacha declared our restoration to depend, and that what seems a prophecy to you is nothing but a fable, or one of those old woman's tales, such as the headless horse, and the wand of virtues, which are told by the fireside in the long winter nights; for were it anything else it would already have been accomplished, unless, indeed, it is to be taken in what I have heard called an allegorical sense: that is to say, a sense which is not the same as that which the letter imports, but which, though differing from it, yet resembles it. Now for your prophecy:— "They are to recover their true forms when they shall see the exalted quickly brought low, and the lowly exalted by a hand that is mighty to do it." If we take this in the sense I have mentioned, it seems to me to mean that we shall recover our forms when we shall see those who yesterday were at the top of fortune's wheel, to-day cast down in the mire, and held of little account by those who most esteemed them; so, likewise, when we shall see others who, but two hours ago, seemed sent into the world only to figure as units in the sum of its population, and now are lifted up to the very summit of prosperity. Now, if our return, as you say, to human form, were to depend on this, why we have already seen it, and we see it every hour. I infer, then, that Camacha's words are to be taken, not in an allegorical, but in a literal, sense; but this will help us out no better, since we have many times seen what they say, and we are still dogs, as you see. And so Carnacha was a cheat, Cañizares an artful hag, and Montiel a fool and a rogue — be it said without offence, if by chance she was the mother of us both, or yours, for I won't have her for mine. Furthermore, I say that the true meaning is a game of nine-pins, in which those that stand up are quickly knocked down, and the fallen are set up again, and that by a hand that is able to do it. Now think whether or not in the course of our lives we have ever seen a game of nine-pins, or having seen it, have therefore been changed into men.

*Berg.* I quite agree with you Scipio, and have a higher opinion of your judgment than ever. From all you have said, I am come to think and believe that all that has happened to us hitherto, and that is now happening, is a dream; but let us not therefore fail to enjoy this blessing of speech, and the great excellence of holding human discourse all the time we may; and so let it not weary you to hear me relate what befel me with the gipsies who hid me in the cave.

*Scip.* With great pleasure. I will listen to you, that you in your turn may listen to me, when I relate, if heaven pleases, the events of my life.

*Berg.* My occupation among the gipsies was to contemplate their numberless tricks and frauds, and the thefts they all commit from the time they are out of leading-strings and can walk alone. You know what a multitude there is of them dispersed all over Spain. They all know each other, keep up a constant

intelligence among themselves, and reciprocally pass off and carry away the articles they have purloined. They render less obedience to their king than to one of their own people whom they style count, and who bears the surname of Maldonado, as do all his descendants. This is not because they come of that noble line, but because a page belonging to a cavalier of that name fell in love with a beautiful gipsy, who would not yield to his wishes unless he became a gipsy and made her his wife. The page did so, and was so much liked by the other gipsies, that they chose him for their lord, yielded him obedience, and in token of vassalage rendered to him a portion of everything they stole, whatever it might be.

To give a colour to their idleness the gipsies employ themselves in working in iron, and you may always see them hawking pincers, tongs, hammers, fire-shovels, and so forth, the sale of which facilitates their thefts. The women are all midwives, and in this they have the advantage over others, for they bring forth without cost or attendants. They wash their newborn infants in cold water, and accustom them from birth to death to endure every inclemency of weather. Hence they are all strong, robust, nimble leapers, runners, and dancers. They always marry among themselves, in order that their bad practices may not come to be known, except by their own people. The women are well behaved to their husbands, and few of them intrigue except with persons of their own race. When they seek for alms, it is rather by tricks and juggling than by appeals to charity; and as no one puts faith in them, they keep none, but own themselves downright vagabonds; nor do I remember to have ever seen a gipsy-woman taking the sacrament, though I have often been in the churches. The only thoughts of their minds are how to cheat and steal. They are fond of talking about their thefts and how they effected them. A gipsy, for instance, related one day in my presence how he had swindled a countryman as you shall hear: The gipsy had an ass with a docked tail, and he fitted a false tail to the stump so well that it seemed quite natural. Then he took the ass to market and sold it to a countryman for ten ducats. Having pocketed the money, he told the countryman that if he wanted another ass, own brother to the one he had bought, and every bit as good, he might have it a bargain. The countryman told him to go and fetch it, and meanwhile he would drive that one home. Away went the purchaser; the gipsy followed him, and some how or other, it was not long before he had stolen the ass, from which he immediately whipped off the false tail, leaving only a bare stump. He then changed the halter and saddle, and had the audacity to go and offer the animal for sale to the countryman, before the latter had discovered his loss. The bargain was soon made; the purchaser went into his house to fetch the money to pay for the second ass, and there he discovered the loss of the first.

Stupid as he was, he suspected that the gipsy had stolen the animal, and he refused to pay him. The gipsy brought forward as witness the man who had received the alcabala on the first transaction, and who swore that he had sold the countryman an ass with a very bushy tail, quite different from the second one; and an alguazil, who was present, took the gipsy's part so strongly that the countryman was forced to pay for the ass twice over. Many other stories they told, all about stealing beasts of burden, in which art they are consummate masters. In short, they are a thoroughly bad race, and though many able magistrates have taken them in hand, they have always remained incorrigible.

After I had remained with them twenty days, they set out for Murcia, taking me with them. We passed through Granada, where the company was quartered to which my master the drummer belonged. As the gipsies were aware of this, they shut me up in the place where they were lodged. I overheard them talking about their journey, and thinking that no good would come of it, I contrived to give them the slip, quitted Granada, and entered the garden of a Morisco, who gladly received me. I was quite willing to remain with him and watch his garden, — a much less fatiguing business in my opinion than guarding a flock of sheep; and as there was no need to discuss the question of wages, the Morisco soon had a servant and I a master. I remained with him more than a month, not that the life I led with him was much to my liking, but because it gave me opportunities of observing that of my master, which was like that of all the other Moriscoes in Spain. O what curious things I could tell you, friend Scipio, about that half Paynim rabble, if I were not afraid that I should not get to the end of my story in a fortnight! Nay, if I were to go into particulars, two months would not be enough. Some few specimens, however, you shall hear.

Hardly will you find among the whole race one man who is a sincere believer in the holy law of Christianity. Their only thought is how to scrape up money and keep it; and to this end they toil incessantly and spend nothing. The moment a real falls into their clutches, they condemn it to perpetual imprisonment; so that by dint of perpetually accumulating and never spending, they have got the greater part of the money of Spain into their hands. They are the grubs, the magpies, the weasels of the nation. Consider how numerous they are, and that every day they add much or little to their hoards, and that as they increase in number so the amount of their hoarded wealth must increase without end. None of them of either sex make monastic vows, but all marry and multiply, for thrifty living is a great promoter of fecundity. They are not wasted by war or excessive toil; they plunder us in a quiet way, and enrich themselves with the fruits of our patrimonies which they sell back to us. They have no servants, for they all wait upon themselves. They are at no expense for the education of their sons, for all

their lore is but how to rob us. From the twelve sons of Jacob, who entered Egypt, as I have heard, there had sprung, when Moses freed them from captivity, six hundred thousand fighting men, besides women and children. From this we may infer how much the Moriscoes have multiplied, and how incomparably greater must be their numbers.

*Scip.* Means have been sought for remedying the mischiefs you have mentioned and hinted at; and, indeed, I am sure that those which you have passed over in silence, are even more serious than those which you have touched upon. But our commonwealth has most wise and zealous champions, who, considering that Spain produces and retains in her bosom such vipers as the Moriscoes, will, with God's help, provide a sure and prompt remedy for so great an evil. Go on.

*Berg.* My master being a stingy hunk, like all his caste, I lived like himself chiefly on maize bread and buckwheat porridge; but this penury helped me to gain paradise, in the strange manner you shall hear. Every morning, by daybreak, a young man used to seat himself at the foot of one of the many pomegranate trees. He had the look of a student, being dressed in a rusty suit of threadbare baize, and was occupied in writing in a note book, slapping his forehead from time to time, biting his nails, and gazing up at the sky. Sometimes he was so immersed in reverie, that he neither moved hand nor foot, nor even winked his eyes. One day I drew near him unperceived, and heard him muttering between his teeth. At last, after a long silence, he cried out aloud, "Glorious! The very best verse I ever composed in my life!" and down went something in his note book. From all this, it was plain that the luckless wight was a poet. I approached him with my ordinary courtesies, and when I had convinced him of my gentleness, he let me lie down at his feet, and resumed the course of his thoughts, scratching his head, falling into ecstasies, and then writing as before.

Meanwhile there came into the garden another young man, handsome and well dressed, with papers in his hand, at which he glanced from time to time. The new comer walked up to the pomegranate tree, and said to the poet, "Have you finished the first act?"

"I have just this moment finished it in the happiest manner possible," was the reply.

"How is that?"

"I will tell you! His Holiness the Pope comes forth in his pontificals, with twelve cardinals in purple canonicals — for the action of my comedy is supposed to take place at the season of *mutatio caparum*, when their eminences are not dressed in scarlet but in purple — therefore propriety absolutely requires that my cardinals should wear purple. This is a capital point, and one on which

your common run of writers would be sure to blunder; but as for me I could not go wrong, for I have read the whole Roman ceremonial through, merely that I might be exact as to these dresses."

"But where do you suppose," said the other, "that our manager is to find purple robes for twelve cardinals?"

"If a single one is wanting," cried the poet, "I would as soon think of flying, as of letting my comedy be represented without it. Zounds! is the public to lose that magnificent spectacle! Just imagine the splendid effect on the stage of a supreme Pontiff and twelve grave cardinals, with all the other dignitaries, who will of course accompany them! By heavens, it will be one of the grandest things ever seen on the stage, not excepting even the nosegay of Duraja!"

I now perceived that one of these young men was a poet, and the other a comedian. The latter advised the former that he should cut out a few of his cardinals, if he did not want to make it impossible for the manager to produce the piece. The poet would not listen to this, but said they might be thankful that he had not brought in the whole conclave, to be present at the memorable event which he proposed to immortalise in his brilliant comedy. The player laughed, left him to his occupation, and returned to his own, which was studying a part in a new play. The poet, after having committed to writing some verses of his magnificent comedy, slowly and gravely drew from his pocket some morsels of bread, and about twenty raisins, or perhaps not so many, for there were some crumbs of bread among them, which increased their apparent number. He blew the crumbs from the raisins, and ate them one by one, stalks and all, for I did not see him throw anything away, adding to them the pieces of bread, which had got such a colour from the lining of his pocket, that they looked mouldy, and were so hard that he could not get them down, though he chewed them over and over again. This was lucky for me, for he threw them to me, saying, "Catch, dog, and much good may it do you." Look, said I to myself, what nectar and ambrosia this poet gives me; for that is the food on which they say these sons of Apollo are nourished. In short, great for the most part is the penury of poets; but greater was my need, since it obliged me to eat what he left.

As long as he was busy with the composition of his comedy he did not fail to visit the garden, nor did I want crusts, for he shared them with me very liberally; and then we went to the well, where we satisfied our thirst like monarchs, I lapping, and he drinking out of a pitcher. But at last the poet came no more, and my hunger became so intolerable, that I resolved to quit the Morisco and seek my fortune in the city. As I entered it, I saw my poet coming out of the famous monastery of San Geronimo. He came to me with open arms, and I was no less delighted to see him. He immediately began to empty his pockets of pieces of



bread, softer than those he used to, carry to the garden, and to put them between my teeth without passing them through his own. From the softness of the bits of bread, and my having seen my poet come out of the monastery, I surmised that his muse, like that of many of his brethren, was a bashful beggar. He walked into the city, and I followed him, intending to take him for my master if he would let me, thinking that the crumbs from his table might serve to support me, since there is no better or ampler purse than charity, whose liberal hands are never poor.

After some time, we arrived at the house of a theatrical manager, called Angulo the Bad, to distinguish him from another Angulo, not a manager but a player, one of the best ever seen. The whole company was assembled to hear my master's comedy read; but before the first act was half finished, all had vanished, one by one, except the manager and myself, who formed the whole audience. The comedy was such that to me, who am but an ass in such matters, it seemed as though Satan himself had composed it for the utter ruin and perdition of the poet; and I actually shivered with vexation to see the solitude in which his audience had left him. I wonder did his prophetic soul presage to him the disgrace impending over him; for all the players — and there were more than twelve of them — came back, laid hold on the poet, without saying a word, and, had it not been for the authoritative interference of the manager, they would have tossed him in a blanket. I was confounded by this sad turn of affairs, the manager was incensed, the players very merry; and the poor forlorn poet, with great patience, but a somewhat wry face, took the comedy, thrust it into his bosom, muttering, "It is not right to cast pearls before swine," and sadly quitted the place without another word. I was so mortified and ashamed that I could not follow him, and the manager caressed me so much that I was obliged to remain; and within a month I became an excellent performer in interludes and pantomimes. Interludes, you know, usually end with a cudgelling bout, but in my master's theatre they ended with setting me at the characters of the piece, whom I worried and tumbled one over the other, to the huge delight of the ignorant spectators, and my master's great gain.

Oh, Scipio! what things I could tell you that I saw among these players, and two other companies to which I belonged; but I must leave them for another day, for it would be impossible to compress them within moderate limits. All you have heard is nothing to what I could relate to you about these people and their ways, their work and their idleness, their ignorance and their cleverness, and other matters without end, which might serve to disenchant many who idolise these fictitious divinities.

*Scip.* I see clearly, Berganza, that the field is large; but leave it now, and go

on.

*Berg.* I arrived with a company of players in this city of Valladolid, where they gave me a wound in an interlude that was near being the death of me. I could not revenge myself then, because I was muzzled, and I had no mind to do so afterwards in cold blood; for deliberate vengeance argues a cruel and malicious disposition. I grew weary of this employment, not because it was laborious, but because I saw in it many things which called for amendment and castigation; and, as it was not in my power to remedy them, I resolved to see them no more, but to take refuge in an abode of holiness, as those do who forsake their vices when they can no longer practise them; but better late than never. Well, then, seeing you one night carrying the lantern with that good Christian Mahudes, I noticed how contented you were, how righteous and holy was your occupation. Filled with honest emulation, I longed to follow your steps; and, with that laudable intention, I placed myself before Mahudes, who immediately elected me your companion, and brought me to this hospital. What has occurred to me since I have been here would take some time to relate. I will just mention a conversation I heard between four invalids, who lay in four beds next each other. It will not take long to tell, and it fits in here quite pat.

*Scip.* Very well; but be quick, for, to the best of my belief, it cannot be far from daylight.

*Berg.* The four beds were at the end of the infirmary, and in them lay an alchemist, a poet, a mathematician, and one of those persons who are called projectors.

*Scip.* I recollect these good people well.

*Berg.* One afternoon, last summer, the windows being closed, I lay panting under one of their beds, when the poet began piteously to bewail his ill fortune. The mathematician asked him what he complained of.

“Have I not good cause for complaint?” he replied. “I have strictly observed the rule laid down by Horace in his Art of Poetry, not to bring to light any work until ten years after it has been composed. Now, I have a work on which I was engaged for twenty years, and which has lain by me for twelve. The subject is sublime, the invention perfectly novel, the episodes singularly happy, the versification noble, and the arrangement admirable, for the beginning is in perfect correspondence with the middle and the end. Altogether it is a lofty, sonorous, heroic poem, delectable and full of matter; and yet I cannot find a prince to whom I may dedicate it — a prince, I say, who is intelligent, liberal, and magnanimous. Wretched and depraved age this of ours!”

“What is the subject of the work?” inquired the alchemist.

“It treats,” said the poet, “of that part of the history of king Arthur of England

which archbishop Turpin left unwritten, together with the history of the quest of the Sangreal, the whole in heroic measure, — part rhymes, part blank-verse; and in dactyles moreover, that is to say, in dactylic noun substantives, without any admission of verbs.”

“For my part, I am not much of a judge in matters of poetry,” returned the alchemist, “and therefore I cannot precisely estimate the misfortune you complain of; but in any case it cannot equal my own in wanting means, or a prince to back me and supply me with the requisites, for prosecuting the science of alchemy; but for which want alone I should now be rolling in gold, and richer than ever was Midas, Crassus, or Croesus.”

“Have you ever succeeded, Señor Alchemist,” said the mathematician, “in extracting gold from the other metals?”

“I have not yet extracted it,” the alchemist replied, “but I know for certain that the thing is to be done, and that in less than two months more I could complete the discovery of the philosopher’s stone, by means of which gold can be made even out of pebbles.”

“Your worships,” rejoined the mathematician, “have both of you made a great deal of your misfortunes; but after all, one of you has a book to dedicate, and the other is on the point of discovering the philosopher’s stone, by means of which he will be as rich as all those who have followed that course. But what will you say of my misfortune, which is great beyond compare? For two and twenty years I have been in pursuit of the fixed point; here I miss it, there I get sight of it again, and just when it seems that I am down upon it so that it can by no means escape me, I find myself on a sudden so far away from it that I am utterly amazed. It is just the same with the quadrature of the circle. I have been within such a hair’s breadth of it, that I cannot conceive how it is that I have not got it in my pocket. Thus I suffer a torment like that of Tantalus, who starves with fruits all round him, and burns with thirst with water at his lip. At one moment I seem to grasp the truth, at another it is far away from me; and, like another Sisyphus, I begin again to climb the hill which I have just rolled down, along with all the mass of my labours.”

The projector, who had hitherto kept silence, now struck in. “Here we are,” he said, “four complainants, brought together by poverty under the roof of this hospital. To the devil with such callings and employments, as give neither pleasure nor bread to those who exercise them! I, gentlemen, am a projector, and have at various times offered sundry valuable projects to his majesty, all to his advantage, and without prejudice to the realm; and I have now a memorial in which I supplicate his majesty to appoint a person to whom I may communicate a new project of mine, which will be the means of entirely liquidating all his

debts. But from the fate which all my other memorials have had, I foresee that this one also will be thrown into the dust-hole. Lest, however, your worships should think me crack-brained, I will explain my project to you, though this be in some degree a publication of my secret.

“I propose that all his majesty’s vassals, from the age of fourteen to sixty, be bound once a month, on a certain appointed day, to fast on bread and water; and that the whole expenditure, which would otherwise be made on that day for food, including fruit, meat, fish, wine, eggs, and vegetables, be turned into money, and the amount paid to his majesty, without defrauding him of a doit, as each shall declare on oath. By this means, in the course of twenty years the king will be freed from all debts and incumbrances. The calculation is easily made. There are in Spain more than three millions of persons of the specified age, exclusive of invalids, old, and young, and there is not one of these but spends at least a real and a half daily; however, I am willing to put it at a real only, and less it cannot be, even were they to eat nothing but leeks. Now does it not strike your worships that it would be no bad thing to realise every month three millions of reals, all net and clear as if they were winnowed and sifted? The plan, moreover, instead of a loss to his majesty’s subjects, would be a real advantage to them; for by means of their fasts they would make themselves acceptable to God and would serve their king, and some of them even might find it beneficial to their health. The project is in every way admirable, as you must confess; the money too might be collected by parishes, without the cost of tax gatherers and receivers, those plagues and bloodsuckers of the realm.”

The others all laughed at the projector’s scheme, and even he himself joined in the laugh at last. For my part I found much matter for reflection in the strange conversation I had heard, and in the fact that people such as these usually end their days in a hospital.

*Scip.* That is true, Berganza. Have you anything more to say?

*Berg.* Two things more and then I shall have done, for I think day is beginning to dawn. One day I accompanied Mahudes to ask for alms in the house of the corregidor of this city, who is a great cavalier and a very great Christian. We found him alone, and I thought fit to take advantage of that opportunity to give him certain counsels which I had gathered from the lips of an old invalid in this hospital, who was discussing the means of saving from perdition those vagabond girls who take to a life of vice to avoid labour, — an intolerable evil demanding an immediate and effectual remedy. Wishing to impart what I had heard to the corregidor, I lifted up my voice, thinking to speak; but instead of articulate speech I barked so loudly that the corregidor called out in a passion to his servants to drive me out of the room with sticks; whereupon one of them caught

up a copper syphon, which Was the nearest thing at hand, and thrashed me with it so, that I feel it in my ribs to this hour.

*Scip.* And do you complain of that, Berganza?

*Berg.* Nay; have I not reason to complain, since I feel the pain even now; and since it appears to me that my good intentions merited no such chastisement?

*Scip.* Look you, Berganza, no one should interfere where he is not wanted, nor take upon himself a business that in no wise is his concern. Besides, you ought to know, that the advice of the poor, however good it may be, is never taken; nor should the lowly presume to offer advice to the great, who fancy they know everything. Wisdom in a poor man lies under a cloud, and cannot be seen; or if by chance it shines through it, people mistake it for folly, and treat it with contempt.

*Berg.* You are right, Scipio; and having had the lesson well beaten into me, I will henceforth act accordingly. That same night I entered the house of a lady of quality, who had in her arms a little lap-dog, so very diminutive that she could have hid it in her bosom. The instant it saw me, it flew at me out of its mistress's arms, barking with all its might, and even went so far as to bite my leg. I looked at it with disgust, and said to myself, "If I met you in the street, paltry little animal, either I would take no notice of you at all, or I would make mince meat of you." The little wretch was an example of the common rule — that mean-souled persons when they are in favour are always insolent, and ready to offend those who are much better than themselves, though inferior to them in fortune.

*Scip.* We have many instances of this in worthless fellows, who are insolent enough under cover of their masters' protection; but if death or any other chance brings down the tree against which they leaned, their true value becomes apparent, since they have no other merit than that borrowed from their patrons; whilst virtue and good sense are always the same, whether clothed or naked, alone or accompanied. But let us break off now; for the light beaming in through those chinks shows that the dawn is far advanced.

*Berg.* Be it so; and I trust in heaven that to-night we shall find ourselves in a condition to renew our conversation.

The licentiate finished the reading of this dialogue, and the Alferez his nap, both at the same time. "Although this colloquy is manifestly fictitious," said the licentiate, "it is, in my opinion, so well composed, that the Señor Alferez may well proceed with the second part."

"Since you give me such encouragement, I will do so," replied the alferez, "without further discussing the question with you, whether the dogs spoke or not."

"There is no need that we should go over that ground again," said the

licentiate. "I admire the art and the invention you have displayed in the dialogue, and that is enough. Let us go to the Espolon, and recreate our bodily eyes, as we have gratified those of our minds."

"With all my heart," said the alferez, and away they went.

## THE LITTLE GIPSY GIRL.

It would almost seem that the Gitanos and Gitanas, or male and female gipsies, had been sent into the world for the sole purpose of thieving. Born of parents who are thieves, reared among thieves, and educated as thieves, they finally go forth perfected in their vocation, accomplished at all points, and ready for every species of roguery. In them the love of thieving, and the ability to exercise it, are qualities inseparable from their existence, and never lost until the hour of their death.

Now it chanced that an old woman of this race, one who had merited retirement on full pay as a veteran in the ranks of Cacus, brought up a girl whom she called Preciosa, and declared to be her granddaughter. To this child she imparted all her own acquirements, all the various tricks of her art. Little Preciosa became the most admired dancer in all the tribes of Gipsydom; she was the most beautiful and discreet of all their maidens; nay she shone conspicuous not only among the gipsies, but even as compared with the most lovely and accomplished damsels whose praises were at that time sounded forth by the voice of fame. Neither sun, nor wind, nor all those vicissitudes of weather, to which the gipsies are more constantly exposed than any other people, could impair the bloom of her complexion or embrown her hands; and what is more remarkable, the rude manner in which she was reared only served to reveal that she must have sprung from something better than the Gitano stock; for she was extremely pleasing and courteous in conversation, and lively though she was, yet in no wise did she display the least unseemly levity; on the contrary, amidst all her sprightliness, there was at the same time so much genuine decorum in her manner, that in the presence of Preciosa no gitana, old or young, ever dared to sing lascivious songs, or utter unbecoming words.

The grandmother fully perceived what a treasure she had in her grandchild; and the old eagle determined to set her young eaglet flying, having been careful to teach her how to live by her talons. Preciosa was rich in hymns, ballads, seguidillas, sarabands, and other ditties, especially romances, which she sang with peculiar grace; for the cunning grandmother knew by experience that such accomplishments, added to the youth and beauty of her granddaughter, were the best means of increasing her capital, and therefore she failed not to promote their cultivation in every way she could. Nor was the aid of poets wanting; for some there are who do not disdain to write for the gipsies, as there are those who

invent miracles for the pretended blind, and go snacks with them in what they gain from charitable believers.

During her childhood, Preciosa lived in different parts of Castile; but in her sixteenth year her grandmother brought her to Madrid, to the usual camping-ground of the gipsies, in the fields of Santa Barbara. Madrid seemed to her the most likely place to find customers; for there everything is bought and sold. Preciosa made her first appearance in the capital on the festival of Santa Anna, the patroness of the city, when she took part in a dance performed by eight gitanas, with one gitano, an excellent dancer, to lead them. The others were all very well, but such was the elegance of Preciosa, that she fascinated the eyes of all the spectators. Amidst the sound of the tambourine and castanets, in the heat of the dance, a murmur of admiration arose for the beauty and grace of Preciosa; but when they heard her sing — for the dance was accompanied with song — the fame of the gitana reached its highest point; and by common consent the jewel offered as the prize of the best dancer in that festival was adjudged to her. After the usual dance in the church of Santa Maria, before the image of the glorious Santa Anna, Preciosa caught up a tambourine, well furnished with bells, and having cleared a wide circle around her with pirouettes of exceeding lightness, she sang a hymn to the patroness of the day. It was the admiration of all who heard her. Some said, “God bless the girl!” Others, “’Tis a pity that this maiden is a gitana: truly she deserves to be the daughter of some great lord!” Others more coarsely observed, “Let the wench grow up, and she will show you pretty tricks; she is closing the meshes of a very nice net to fish for hearts.” Another more good-natured but ill-bred and stupid, seeing her foot it so lightly, “Keep it up! keep it up! Courage, darling! Grind the dust to atoms!” “Never fear,” she answered, without losing a step; “I’ll grind it to atoms.”

At the vespers and feast of Santa Anna Preciosa was somewhat fatigued; but so celebrated had she become for beauty, wit, and discretion, as well as for her dancing, that nothing else was talked of throughout the capital. A fortnight afterwards, she returned to Madrid, with three other girls, provided with their tambourines and a new dance, besides a new stock of romances and songs, but all of a moral character; for Preciosa would never permit those in her company to sing immodest songs, nor would she ever sing them herself. The old gitana came with her, for she now watched her as closely as Argus, and never left her side, lest some one should carry her off. She called her granddaughter, and the girl believed herself to be her grandchild.

The young gitanas began their dance in the shade, in the Calle de Toledo, and were soon encircled by a crowd of spectators. Whilst they danced, the old woman gathered money among the bystanders, and they showered it down like



stones on the highway; for beauty has such power that it can awaken slumbering charity. The dance over, Preciosa said, "If you will give me four quartos, I will sing by myself a beautiful romance about the churching of our lady the Queen Doña Margarita. It is a famous composition, by a poet of renown, one who may be called a captain in the battalion of poets." No sooner had she said this, than almost every one in the ring cried out, "Sing it, Preciosa; here are my four quartos;" and so many quartos were thrown down for her, that the old gitana had not hands enough to pick them up. When the gathering was ended, Preciosa resumed her tambourine, and sang the promised romance, which was loudly encored, the whole audience crying out with one voice, "Sing again, Preciosa, sing again, and dance for us, girl: thou shalt not want quartos, whilst thou hast the ground beneath thy feet."

Whilst more than two hundred persons were thus looking on at the dance, and listening to the singing of the gitana, one of the lieutenants of the city passed by; and seeing so many people together, he asked what was the occasion of the crowd. Being told that the handsome gitana was singing there, the lieutenant, who was not without curiosity, drew near also to listen, but in consideration of his dignity, he did not wait for the end of the romance. The gitanilla, however, pleased him so much, that he sent his page to tell the old crone to come to his house that evening with her troop, as he wished his wife Doña Clara to hear them. The page delivered the message, and the old gitana promised to attend.

After the performance was ended, and the performers were going elsewhere, a very well-dressed page came up to Preciosa, and giving her a folded paper, said, "Pretty Preciosa, will you sing this romance? It is a very good one, and I will give you others from time to time, by which you will acquire the fame of having the best romances in the world."

"I will learn this one with much willingness," replied Preciosa; "and be sure, señor, you bring me the others you speak of, but on condition that there is nothing improper in them. If you wish to be paid for them, we will agree for them by the dozen; but do not expect to be paid in advance; that will be impossible. When a dozen have been sung, the money for a dozen shall be forthcoming."

"If the Señora Preciosa only pays me for the paper," said the page, "I shall be content. Moreover, any romance which does not turn out so well shall not be counted."

"I will retain the right of choice," said Preciosa; and then she continued her way with her companions up the street, when some gentlemen called and beckoned to them from a latticed window. Preciosa went up and looked through the window, which was near the ground, into a cheerful, well-furnished

apartment, in which several cavaliers were walking about, and others playing at various games. "Will you give me a share of your winnings, señors?" said Preciosa, in the lisping accent of the gipsies, which she spoke not by nature but from choice. At the sight of Preciosa, and at the sound of her voice, the players quitted the tables, the rest left off lounging, and all thronged to the window, for her fame had already reached them. "Come in! Let the little gipsies come in," said the cavaliers, gaily; "we will certainly give them a share of our winnings."

"But you might make it cost us dear, señors," said Preciosa.

"No, on the honour of gentlemen," said one, "you may come in, niña, in full security that no one will touch the sole of your shoe. I swear this to you by the order I wear on my breast;" and as he spoke he laid his hand on the cross of the order of Calatrava which he wore.

"If you like to go in, Preciosa," said one of the gitanillas who were with her, "do so by all means; but I do not choose to go where there are so many men."

"Look you, Christina," answered Preciosa, "what you have to beware of is one man alone; where there are so many there is nothing to fear. Of one thing you may be sure, Christina; the woman who is resolved to be upright may be so amongst an army of soldiers. It is well, indeed, to avoid occasions of temptation, but it is not in crowded rooms like this that danger lurks."

"Well then, let us go in, Preciosa," said her companion, "you know more than a witch."

The old gipsy also encouraged them to go in, and that decided the question. As soon as they had entered the room, the cavalier of the order, seeing the paper which Preciosa carried, stretched out his hand to take it. "Do not take it from me," she said: "It is a romance but just given to me, and which I have not yet had time to read."

"And do you know how to read, my girl?" said one of the cavaliers.

"Ay, and to write too," said the old woman. "I have brought up my grandchild as if she was a lawyer's daughter."

The cavalier opened the paper, and finding a gold crown inclosed in it, said, "Truly, Preciosa, the contents of this letter are worth the postage. Here is a crown inclosed in the romance."

"The poet has treated me like a beggar," said Preciosa; "but it is certainly a greater marvel for one of his trade to give a crown than for one of mine to receive it. If his romances come to me with this addition, he may transscribe the whole *Romancero General* and send me every piece in it one by one. I will weigh their merit; and if I find there is good matter in them, I will not reject them. Read the paper aloud, señor, that we may see if the poet is as wise as he is liberal." The cavalier accordingly read as follows: —

Sweet gipsy girl, whom envy's self Must own of all fair maids the fairest, Ah!  
well befits thy stony heart The name thou, Preciosa, bearest.

If as in beauty, so in pride And cruelty thou grow to sight, Woe worth the  
land, woe worth the age Which brought thy fatal charms to light.

A basilisk in thee we see, Which fascinates our gaze and kills. No empire mild  
is thine, but one That tyrannises o'er our wills.

How grew such charms 'mid gipsy tribes, From roughest blasts without a  
shield? How such a perfect chrysolite Could humble Manzanares yield?

River, for this thou shalt be famed, Like Tagus with its golden show, And  
more for Preciosa prized Than Ganges with its lavish flow.

In telling fortunes who can say What dupes to ruin thou beguilest? Good luck  
thou speak'st with smiling lips. But luckless they on whom thou smilest!

Tis said they're witches every one, The women of the gipsy race; And all men  
may too plainly see That thou hast witchcraft in thy face.

A thousand different modes are thine To turn the brain; for rest or move,  
Speak, sing, be mute, approach, retire, Thou kindlest still the fire of love.

The freest hearts bend to thy sway, And lose the pride of liberty; Bear witness  
mine, thy captive thrall, Which would not, if it could, be free.

These lines, thou precious gem of love, Whose praise all power of verse  
transcend, He who for thee will live or die, Thy poor and humble lover sends.

"The poem ends with 'poor' in the last line," said Preciosa; "and that is a bad  
sign. Lovers should never begin by saying that they are poor, for poverty, it  
strikes me, is a great enemy to love."

"Who teaches you these things, girl?" said one of the cavaliers.

"Who should teach me?" she replied. "Have I not a soul in my body? Am I  
not fifteen years of age? I am neither lame, nor halt, nor maimed in my  
understanding. The wit of a gipsy girl steers by a different compass from that  
which guides other people. They are always forward for their years. There is no  
such thing as a stupid gitano, or a silly gitana. Since it is only by being sharp and  
ready that they can earn a livelihood, they polish their wits at every step, and by  
no means let the moss grow under their feet. You see these girls, my  
companions, who are so silent. You may think they are simpletons, but put your  
fingers in their mouths to see if they have cut their wise teeth; and then you shall  
see what you shall see. There is not a gipsy girl of twelve who does not know as  
much as one of another race at five-and-twenty, for they have the devil and  
much practice for instructors, so that they learn in one hour what would  
otherwise take them a year."

The company were much amused by the gitana's chat, and all gave her  
money. The old woman sacked thirty reals, and went off with her flock as merry

as a cricket to the house of the señor lieutenant, after promising that she would return with them another day to please such liberal gentlemen. Doña Clara, the lieutenant's lady, had been apprised of the intended visit of the gipsies, and she and her doncellas and dueñas, as well as those of another señora, her neighbour, were expecting them as eagerly as one looks for a shower in May. They had come to see Preciosa. She entered with her companions, shining among them like a torch among lesser lights, and all the ladies pressed towards her. Some kissed her, some gazed at her; others blessed her sweet face, others her graceful carriage. "This, indeed, is what you may call golden hair," cried Doña Clara; "these are truly emerald eyes." The señora, her neighbour, examined the gitanilla piecemeal. She made a *pepetoria* of all her joints and members, and coming at last to a dimple in her chin, she said, "Oh, what a dimple! it is a pit into which all eyes that behold it must fall." Thereupon an esquire in attendance on Doña Clara, an elderly gentleman with a long beard, exclaimed, "Call you this a dimple, señora? I know little of dimples then if this be one. It is no dimple, but a grave of living desires. I vow to God the gitanilla is such a dainty creature, she could not be better if she was made of silver or sugar paste. Do you know how to tell fortunes, niña?"

"That I do, and in three or four different manners," replied Preciosa.

"You can do that too?" exclaimed Doña Clara. "By the life of my lord the lieutenant, you must tell me mine, niña of gold, niña of silver, niña of pearls, niña of carbuncles, niña of heaven, and more than that cannot be said."

"Give the niña the palm of your hand, señora, and something to cross it with," said the old gipsy; "and you will see what things she will tell you, for she knows more than a doctor of medicine."

The señora Tenienta put her hand in her pocket, but found it empty; she asked for the loan of a quarto from her maids, but none of them had one, neither had the señora her neighbour. Preciosa seeing this, said, "For the matter of crosses all are good, but those made with silver or gold are best. As for making the sign of the cross with copper money, that, ladies, you must know lessens the luck, at least it does mine. I always like to begin by crossing the palm with a good gold crown, or a piece of eight, or at least a quarto, for, I am like the sacristans who rejoice when there is a good collection."

"How witty you are," said the lady visitor; then turning to the squire, "Do you happen to have a quarto about you, Señor Contreras? if you have, give it me, and when my husband the doctor comes you shall have it again."

"I have one," replied Contreras, "but it is pledged for two-and-twenty maravedis for my supper; give me so much and I will fly to fetch it."

"We have not a quarto amongst us all," said Doña Clara, "and you ask for

two-and-twenty maravedis? Go your ways, Contreras, for a tiresome blockhead, as you always were.”

One of the damsels present, seeing the penury of the house, said to Preciosa, “Niña, will it be of any use to make the cross with a silver thimble?”

“Certainly,” said Preciosa; “the best crosses in the world are made with silver thimbles, provided there are plenty of them.”

“I have one,” said the doncella; “if that is enough, here it is, on condition that my fortune be told too.”

“So many fortunes to be told for a thimble!” exclaimed the old gipsy. “Make haste, granddaughter, for it will soon be night.” Preciosa took the thimble, and began her sooth saying.

Pretty lady, pretty lady, With a hand as silver fair, How thy husband dearly loves thee 'Tis superfluous to declare.

Thou'rt a dove, all milk of kindness; Yet at times too thou canst be Wrathful as a tiger, or a Lioness of Barbary.

Thou canst show thy teeth when jealous; Truly the lieutenant's sly; Loves with furtive sports to vary Magisterial gravity.

What a pity! One worth having Woo'd thee when a maiden fair. Plague upon all interlopers! You'd have made a charming pair.

Sooth, I do not like to say it, Yet it may as well be said; Thou wilt be a buxom widow; Twice again shalt thou be wed.

Do not weep, my sweet senora; We gitanas, you must know, Speak not always true as gospel Weep not then sweet lady so.

If the thought is too distressing, Losing such a tender mate, Thou hast but to die before him, To escape a widow's fate.

Wealth abundant thou'lt inherit, And that quickly, never fear: Thou shalt have a son, a canon, — Of what church does not appear;

Not Toledo; no, that can't be; And a daughter — let me see — Ay, she'll rise to be an abbess; — That is, if a nun she be.

If thy husband do not drop off From this moment in weeks four, Burgos him, or Salamanca, Shall behold corregidor.

Meanwhile keep thyself from tripping: Where thou walkest, many a snare For the feet of pretty ladies Naughty gallants lay: beware!

Other things still more surprising Shall on Friday next be told, Things to startle and delight thee, When I've crossed thy palm with gold.

Preciosa having finished this oracular descant for the lady of the house, the rest of the company were all eager to have their fortunes told likewise, but she put them off till the next Friday, when they promised to have silver coin ready for crossing their palms. The señor lieutenant now came in, and heard a glowing

account of the charms and accomplishments of the leading gitana. Having made her and her companions dance a little, he emphatically confirmed the encomiums bestowed on Preciosa; and putting his hand in his pocket he groped and rummaged about in it for a while, but at last drew his hand out empty, saying, "Upon my life I have not a doit. Give Preciosa a real, Doña Clara; I will give it you by and by."

"That is all very well, señor," the lady replied; "but where is the real to come from? Amongst us all we could not find a quarto to cross our hands with."

"Well, give her some trinket or another, that Preciosa may come another day to see us, when we will treat her better."

"No," said Doña Clara, "I will give her nothing to-day, and I shall be sure she will come again."

"On the contrary," said Preciosa, "if you give me nothing. I will never come here any more. Sell justice, señor lieutenant, sell justice, and then you will have money. Do not introduce new customs, but do as other magistrates do, or you will die of hunger. Look you, señor, I have heard say that money enough may be made of one's office to pay any mulets that may be incurred, and to help one to other appointments."

"So say and do those who have no conscience," said the lieutenant; "but the judge who does his duty will have no mulet to pay; and to have well discharged his office, will be his best help to obtain another."

"Your worship speaks like a very saint," replied Preciosa; "proceed thus, and we shall snip pieces off your old coats for relics."

"You know a great deal, Preciosa," said the lieutenant; "say no more, and I will contrive that their majesties shall see you, for you are fit to be shown to a king."

"They will want me for a court fool," said the gitanilla, "and as I never shall learn the trade, your pains will be all for nothing. If they wanted me for my cleverness, they might have me; but in some palaces fools thrive better than the wise. I am content to be a gitana, and poor, and let Heaven dispose of me as it pleases."

"Come along, niña," said the old gipsy; "say no more, you have said a great deal already, and know more than I ever taught you. Don't put too fine a point to your wit for fear it should get blunted; speak of things suitable to your years; and don't set yourself on the high ropes, lest you should chance to have a fall."

"The deuce is in these gitanas," said the delighted lieutenant, as they were taking their leave. The doncella of the thimble stopped them for a moment, saying to Preciosa, "Tell me my fortune, or give me back my thimble, for I have not another to work with."

“Señora doncella,” replied Preciosa, “count upon your fortune as if it were already told, and provide yourself with another; or else sew no more gussets until I come again on Friday, when I will tell you more fortunes and adventures than you could read in any book of knight errantry.”

The gipsies went away, and falling in with numerous workwomen returning from Madrid to their villages as usual at the Ave Maria, they joined company with them, as they always did for the greater security; for the old gipsy lived in perpetual terror lest some one should run away with her granddaughter.

One morning after this as they were returning to Madrid to levy black mail along with other gitanas, in a little valley about five hundred yards from the city, they met a handsome young gentleman richly dressed; his sword and dagger were a blazo of gold; his hat was looped with a jewelled band, and was adorned with plumes of various colours. The gitanas stopped on seeing him, and set themselves to observe his movements at their leisure, wondering much that so fine a cavalier should be alone and on foot in such a place at that early hour. He came up to them, and addressing the eldest gitana, said, “On your life, friend, I entreat you do me the favour to let me say two words in private to you and Preciosa. It shall be for your good.”

“With all my heart,” said the old woman, “so you do not take us much out of our way, or delay us long;” and calling Preciosa, they withdrew to some twenty paces distance, where they stopped, and the young gentleman thus addressed them: “I am so subdued by the wit and beauty of Preciosa, that after having in vain endeavoured to overcome my admiration, I have at last found the effort impossible. I, señoras (for I shall always give you that title if heaven favours my pretensions), am a knight, as this dress may show you;” and opening his cloak he displayed the insignia of one of the highest orders in Spain; “I am the son of — — “ (here he mentioned a personage whose name we suppress for obvious reasons), “and am still under tutelage and command. I am an only son, and expect to inherit a considerable estate. My father is here in the capital, looking for a certain post which by all accounts he is on the point of obtaining. Being then of the rank and condition which I have declared to you, I should yet wish to be a great lord for the sake of Preciosa, that I might raise her up to my own level, and make her my equal and my lady. I do not seek to deceive; the love I bear her is too deep for any kind of deception; I only desire to serve her in whatever way shall be most agreeable to her; her will is mine; for her my heart is wax to be moulded as she pleases but enduring as marble to retain whatever impression she shall make upon it. If you believe me I shall fear no discouragement from any other quarter, but if you doubt me, I shall despond. My name is — — ; my father’s I have already given you; he lives in such a house in such a street and

you may inquire about him and me of the neighbours, and of others also; for our name and quality are not so obscure but that you may hear of us about the court, and every, where in the capital. I have here a hundred crowns in gold to present to you, as earnest of what I mean to give you hereafter; for a man will be no niggard of his wealth who has given away his very soul.”

Whilst the cavalier was speaking, Preciosa watched him attentively, and doubtless she saw nothing to dislike either in his language or his person. Turning to the old woman, she said, “Pardon me, grandmother, if I take the liberty of answering this enamoured señor myself.”

“Make whatever answer you please, granddaughter,” said the old woman, “for I know you have sense enough for anything.” So Preciosa began.

“Señor cavalier,” she said, “though I am but a poor gitana and humbly born, yet I have a certain fantastic little spirit within me, which moves me to great things. Promises do not tempt me, nor presents sap my resolution, nor obsequiousness allure, nor amorous wiles ensnare me; and although by my grandmother’s reckoning I shall be but fifteen next Michaelmas, I am already old in thought, and have more understanding than my years would seem to promise. This may, perhaps, be more from nature than from experience; but be that as it may, I know that the passion of love is an impetuous impulse, which violently distorts the current of the will, makes it dash furiously against all impediments, and recklessly pursue the desired object. But not unfrequently when the lover believes himself on the point of gaining the heaven of his wishes, he falls into the hell of disappointment. Or say that the object is obtained, the lover soon becomes wearied of his so much desired treasure, and opening the eyes of his understanding he finds that what before was so devoutly adored is now become abhorrent to him. The fear of such a result inspires me with so great a distrust, that I put no faith in words, and doubt many deeds. One sole jewel I have, which I prize more than life, and that is my virgin purity, which I will not sell for promises or gifts, for sold it would be in that case, and if it could be bought, small indeed would be its value. Nor is it to be filched from me by wiles or artifices; rather will I carry it with me to my grave, and perhaps to heaven, than expose it to danger by listening to specious tales and chimeras. It is a flower which nothing should be allowed to sully, even in imagination if it be possible. Nip the rose from the spray, and how soon it fades! One touches it, another smells it, a third plucks its leaves, and at last the flower perishes in vulgar hands. If you are come then, señor, for this booty, you shall never bear it away except bound in the ties of wedlock. If you desire to be my spouse, I will be yours; but first there are many conditions to be fulfilled, and many points to be ascertained.

“In the first place I must know if you are the person you declare yourself to



be. Next, should I find this to be true, you must straightway quit your father's mansion, and exchange it for our tents, where, assuming the garb of a gipsy, you must pass two years in our schools, during which I shall be able to satisfy myself as to your disposition, and you will become acquainted with mine. At the end of that period, if you are pleased with me and I with you, I will give myself up to you as your wife; but till then I will be your sister and your humble servant, and nothing more. Consider, señor, that during the time of this novitiate you may recover your sight, which now seems lost, or at least disordered, and that you may then see fit to shun what now you pursue with so much ardour. You will then be glad to regain your lost liberty, and having done so, you may by sincere repentance obtain pardon of your family for your faults. If on these conditions you are willing to enlist in our ranks, the matter rests in your own hands; but if you fail in any one of them, you shall not touch a finger of mine."

The youth was astounded at Preciosa's decision, and remained as if spell-bound, with his eyes bent on the ground, apparently considering what answer he should return. Seeing this, Preciosa said to him, "This is not a matter of such light moment that it can or ought to be resolved on the spot. Return, señor, to the city, consider maturely what is best for you to do; and you may speak with me in this same place any week-day you please, as we are on our way to or from Madrid."

"When Heaven disposed me to love you, Preciosa," replied the cavalier, "I determined to do for you whatever it might be your will to require of me, though it never entered my thoughts that you would make such a demand as you have now done; but since it is your pleasure that I should comply with it, count me henceforth as a gipsy, and put me to all the trials you desire, you will always find me the same towards you as I now profess myself. Fix the time when you will have me change my garb. I will leave my family under pretext of going to Flanders, and will bring with me money for my support for some time. In about eight days I shall be able to arrange for my departure, and I will contrive some means to get rid of my attendants, so as to be free to accomplish my purpose. What I would beg of you (if I might make bold to ask any favour) is that, except to-day for the purpose of inquiring about me and my family, you go no more to Madrid, for I would not that any of the numerous occasions that present themselves there, should deprive me of the good fortune I prize so dearly."

"Not so, señor gallant," said Preciosa: "wherever I go I must be free and unfettered; my liberty must not be restrained or encumbered by jealousy. Be assured, however, that I will not use it to such excess, but that any one may see from a mile off that my honesty is equal to my freedom. The first charge, therefore, I have to impose upon you is, that you put implicit confidence in me;

for lovers who begin by being jealous, are either silly or deficient in confidence.”

“You must have Satan himself within you, little one,” said the old gipsy; “why you talk like a bachelor of Salamanca. You know all about love and jealousy and confidence. How is this? You make me look like a fool, and I stand listening to you as to a person possessed, who talks Latin without knowing it.”

“Hold your peace, grandmother,” replied Preciosa; “and know that all the things you have heard me say are mere trifles to the many greater truths that remain in my breast.”

All that Preciosa said, and the sound sense she displayed, added fuel to the flame that burned in the breast of the enamoured cavalier. Finally, it was arranged that they should meet in the same place on that day sennight, when he would report how matters stood with him, and they would have had time to inquire into the truth of what he had told them. The young gentleman then took out a brocaded purse in which he said there were a hundred gold crowns, and gave it to the old woman; but Preciosa would by no means consent that she should take them.

“Hold your tongue, niña,” said her grandmother; “the best proof this señor has given of his submission, is in thus having yielded up his arms to us in token of surrender. To give, upon whatever occasion it may be, is always the sign of a generous heart. Moreover, I do not choose that the gitanas should lose, through my fault, the reputation they have had for long ages of being greedy of lucre. Would you have me lose a hundred crowns, Preciosa? A hundred crowns in gold that one may stitch up in the hem of a petticoat not worth two reals, and keep them there as one holds a rent-charge on the pastures of Estramadura! Suppose that any of our children, grandchildren, or relations should fall by any mischance into the hands of justice, is there any eloquence so sure to touch the ears of the judge as the music of these crowns when they fall into his purse? Three times, for three different offences, I have seen myself all but mounted on the ass to be whipped; but once I got myself off by means of a silver mug, another time by a pearl necklace, and the third time with the help of forty pieces of eight, which I exchanged for quartos, throwing twenty reals into the bargain. Look you, niña, ours is a very perilous occupation, full of risks and accidents; and there is no defence that affords us more ready shelter and succour than the invincible arms of the great Philip: nothing beats the *plus ultra*. For the two faces of a doubloon, a smile comes over the grim visage of the procurator and of all the other ministers of mischief, who are downright harpies to us poor gitanas, and have more mercy for highway robbers than for our poor hides. Let us be ever so ragged and wretched in appearance, they will not believe that we are poor, but

say that we are like the doublets of the gavachos of Belmont, ragged and greasy and full of doubloons.”

“Say no more, for heaven’s sake, grandmother,” said Preciosa; “do not string together so many arguments for keeping the money, but keep it, and much good may it do you. I wish to God you would bury it in a grave out of which it may never return to the light, and that there may never be any need of it. We must, however, give some of it to these companions of ours, who must be tired of waiting so long for us.”

“They shall see one coin out of this purse as soon as they will see the Grand Turk,” the old woman replied. “The good señor will try if he has any silver coin or a few coppers remaining, to divide amongst them, for they will be content with a little.”

“Yes, I have,” he said, and he took from his pocket three pieces of eight which he divided among the gitanas, with which they were more delighted than the manager of a theatre when he is placarded as victor in a contest with a rival. Finally it was settled that the party should meet there again in a week, as before mentioned, and that the young man’s gipsy name should be Andrew Caballero, for that was a surname not unknown among the gipsies. Andrew (as we shall henceforth call him) could not find courage to embrace Preciosa, but darting his very soul into her with a glance, he went away without it, so to speak, and returned to Madrid. The gipsies followed soon after; and Preciosa, who already felt a certain interest in the handsome and amiable Andrew, was anxious to learn if he was really what he said.

They had not gone far before they met the page of the verses and the gold crown. “Welcome, Preciosa,” he said, coming up to her. “Have you read the lines I gave you the other day?”

“Before I answer you a word,” said she, “you must, by all you love best, tell me one thing truly.”

“Upon that adjuration,” he replied, “I could not refuse an answer to any question, though it should cost me my head.”

“Well, then, what I want to know is this: are you, perchance, a poet?”

“If I were one, it would certainly be perchance,” said the page; “but you must know, Preciosa, that the name of poet is one which very few deserve. Thus I am not a poet, but only a lover of poetry; yet for my own use I do not borrow of others. The verses I gave you were mine, as are these also which I give you now; but I am not a poet for all that — God forbid.”

“Is it such a bad thing to be a poet?” Preciosa asked.

“It is not a bad thing,” he answered; “but to be a poet and nothing else I do not hold to be very good. We should use poetry like a rich jewel, the owner of which

does not wear it every day, or show it to all people, but displays it only at suitable times. Poetry is a beautiful maiden, chaste, honest, discreet, reserved, and never overstepping the limits of perfect refinement. She is fond of solitude; she finds pleasure and recreation among fountains, meadows, trees, and flowers; and she delights and instructs all who are conversant with her."

"I have heard for all that," said Preciosa, "that she is exceedingly poor; something of a beggar in short."

"It is rather the reverse," said the page, "for there is no poet who is not rich, since they all live content with their condition; and that is a piece of philosophy which few understand. But what has moved you, Preciosa, to make this inquiry?"

"I was moved to it, because, as I believe all poets, or most of them, to be poor, that crown which you gave me wrapped up with the verses caused me some surprise; but now that I know that you are not a poet, but only a lover of poetry, it may be that you are rich, though I doubt it, for your propensity is likely to make you run through all you have got. It is a well-known saying, that no poet can either keep or make a fortune."

"But the saying is not applicable to me," said the page. "I make verses, and I am neither rich nor poor; and without feeling it or making a talk about it, as the Genoese do of their invitations, I can afford to give a crown, or even two, to whom I like. Take then, precious pearl, this second paper, and this second crown enclosed in it, without troubling yourself with the question whether I am a poet or not. I only beg you to think and believe that he who gives you this would fain have the wealth of Midas to bestow upon you."

Preciosa took the paper, and feeling a crown within it, she said, "This paper bids fair to live long, for it has two souls within it, that of the crown and that of the verses, which, of course, are full of souls and hearts as usual. But please to understand, Señor Page, that I do not want so many souls; and that unless you take back one of them, I will not receive the other on any account. I like you as a poet and not as a giver of gifts; and thus we may be the longer friends, for your stock of crowns may run out sooner than your verses."

"Well," said the page, "since you will have it that I am poor, do not reject the soul I present to you in this paper, and give me back the crown, which, since it has been touched by your hand, shall remain with me as a hallowed relic as long as I live."

Preciosa gave him the crown, and kept the paper, but would not read it in the street. The page went away exulting in the belief that Preciosa's heart was touched, since she had treated him with such affability.

It being now her object to find the house of Andrew's father, she went straight

to the street, which she well knew, without stopping anywhere to dance. About half way down it, she saw the gilded iron balcony which Andrew had mentioned to her, and in it a gentleman of about fifty years of age, of noble presence, with a red cross on his breast. This gentleman seeing the gitanilla, called out, "Come up here, niñas, and we will give you something." These words brought three other gentlemen to the balcony, among whom was the enamoured Andrew. The instant he cast his eyes on Preciosa he changed colour, and well nigh swooned, such was the effect her sudden appearance had upon him. The girls went up stairs, whilst the old woman remained below to pump the servants with respect to Andrew. As they entered the room, the elder gentleman was saying to the others, "This is no doubt the handsome gitanilla who is so much talked of in Madrid."

"It is," said Andrew; "and she is unquestionably the most beautiful creature that ever was seen."

"So they say," said Preciosa, who had overheard these remarks as she came in; "but indeed they must be half out in the reckoning. I believe I am pretty well, but as handsome as they say — not a bit of it!"

"By the life of Don Juanico, my son," said the elder gentleman, "you are far more so, fair gitana."

"And who is Don Juanico, your son?" said Preciosa.

"That gallant by your side," said the cavalier.

"Truly, I thought your worship had sworn by some bantling of two years old," said Preciosa. "What a pretty little pet of a Don Juanico! Why he is old enough to be married; and by certain lines on his forehead, I foresee that married he will be before three years are out, and much to his liking too, if in the meantime he be neither lost nor changed."

"Ay, ay," said one of the company; "the gitanilla can tell the meaning of a wrinkle."

During this time, the three gipsy girls, who accompanied Preciosa, had got their heads together and were whispering each other. "Girls," said Christina, "that is the gentleman that gave us the three pieces of eight this morning."

"Sure enough," said they; "but don't let us say a word about it unless he mentions it. How do we know but he may wish to keep it secret?"

Whilst the three were thus conferring together, Preciosa replied to the last remark about wrinkles. "What I see with my eyes, I divine with my fingers. Of the Señor Don Juanico, I know without lines that he is somewhat amorous, impetuous, and hasty; and a great promiser of things that seem impossible. God grant he be not a deceiver, which would be worse than all. He is now about to make a long journey; but the bay horse thinks one thing, and the man that saddles him thinks another thing. Man proposes and God disposes. Perhaps he

may think he is bound for Oñez, and will find himself on the way to Gaviboa.”

“In truth, gitana,” said Don Juan, “you have guessed right respecting me in several points. I certainly intend, with God’s will, to set out for Flanders in four or five days, though you forebode that I shall have to turn out of my road; yet I hope no obstacle will occur to frustrate my purpose.”

“Say no more, señorito,” the gipsy replied; “but commend yourself to God, and all will be well. Be assured I know nothing at all of what I have been saying. It is no wonder if I sometimes hit the mark, since I talk so much and always at random. I wish I could speak to such good purpose as to persuade you not to leave home, but remain quietly with your parents to comfort their old age; for I am no friend to these Flanders expeditions, especially for a youth of your tender years. Wait till you are grown a little more and better able to bear the toils of war; and the rather as you have war enough at home, considering all the amorous conflicts that are raging in your bosom. Gently, gently with you, madcap! Look what you are doing before you marry; and now give us a little dole for God’s sake and for the name you bear; for truly I believe you are well born, and if along with this you are loyal and true, then I will sing jubilee for having hit the mark in all I have said to you.”

“I told you before, niña,” said Don Juan, otherwise Andrew Caballero, “that you were right on every point except as to the fear you entertain that I am not quite a man of my word. In that respect you are certainly mistaken. The word that I pledge in the field I fulfil in the town, or wherever I may be, without waiting to be asked; for no man can esteem himself a gentleman, who yields in the least to the vice of falsehood. My father will give you alms for God’s sake and for mine; for in truth I gave all I had this morning to some ladies, of whom I would not venture to assert that they are as obliging as they are beautiful, one of them especially.”

Hearing this, Christina said to her companions, “May I be hanged, girls, if he is not talking of the three pieces of eight he gave us this morning.”

“No, that can’t be,” one of them observed; “for he said they were ladies, and we are none; and being so true-spoken as he says he is, he would not lie in this matter.”

“Oh, but,” said Christina, “that is not a lie of any moment that is told without injury to anybody, but for the advantage and credit of him who tells it. Be that as it may, I see he neither gives us anything, nor asks us to dance.”

The old gipsy now came into the room and said, “Make haste, granddaughter; for it is late, and there is much to be done, and more to be said.”

“What is it, grandmother?” said Preciosa, “A boy or a girl?”

“A boy, and a very fine one. Come along, Preciosa, and you shall hear

marvels.”

“God grant the mother does not die of her after pains,” said the granddaughter.

“We will take all possible care of her. She has had a very good time, and the child is a perfect beauty.”

“Has any lady been confined?” said Andrew’s father.

“Yes, señor,” replied the old Gitana: “but it is such a secret, that no one knows of it except Preciosa, myself, and one other person. So we cannot mention the lady’s name.”

“Well, we don’t want to know it,” said one of the gentlemen present; “but God help the lady who trusts her secret to your tongues, and her honour to your aid.”

“We are not all bad,” replied Preciosa; “perhaps there may be one among us who piques herself on being as trusty and as true as the noblest man in this room. Let us begone, grandmother; for here we are held in little esteem, though in truth we are neither thieves nor beggars.”

“Do not be angry, Preciosa,” said Andrew’s father. “Of you at least I imagine no one can presume anything ill, for your good looks are warrant for your good conduct. Do me the favour to dance a little with your companions. I have here a doubloon for you with two faces, and neither of them as good as your own, though they are the faces of two kings.”

The moment the old woman heard this she cried, “Come along, girls: tuck up your skirts, and oblige these gentlemen.” Preciosa took the tambourine, and they all danced with so much grace and freedom, that the eyes of all the spectators were riveted upon their steps, especially those of Andrew, who gazed upon Preciosa as if his whole soul was centred in her; but an untoward accident turned his delight into anguish. In the exertion of the dance, Preciosa let fall the paper given her by the page. It was immediately picked up by the gentleman who had no good opinion of the gipsies. He opened it, and said, “What have we here? A madrigal? Good! Break off the dance, and listen to it; for, as far as I can judge from the beginning, it is really not bad.” Preciosa was annoyed at this, as she did not know the contents of the paper; and she begged the gentleman not to read it, but give it back to her. All her entreaties, however, only made Andrew more eager to hear the lines, and his friend read them out as follows: —

Who hath Preciosa seen Dancing like the Fairy Queen? Ripplets on a sunlit river  
Like her small feet glance and quiver. When she strikes the timbrel featly,  
When she warbles, oh how sweetly! Pearls from her white hands she showers,  
From her rosy lips drop flowers. Not a ringlet of her hair But doth thousand  
souls ensnare. Not a glance of her bright eyes But seems shot from Love’s own  
skies. He in obeisance to this sovereign maid, His bow and quiver at her feet  
hath laid.

“Por dios!” exclaimed the reader, “he is a dainty poet who wrote this.”

“He is not a poet, señor,” said Preciosa, “but a page, and a very gallant and worthy man.”

“Mind what you say, Preciosa,” returned the other; “for the praises you bestow on the page are so many lance-thrusts through Andrew’s heart. Look at him as he sits aghast, thrown back on his chair, with a cold perspiration breaking through all his pores. Do not imagine, maiden, that he loves you so lightly but that the least slight from you distracts him. Go to him, for God’s sake, and whisper a few words in his ear, that may go straight to his heart, and recall him to himself. Go on receiving such madrigals as this every day, and just see what will come of it.”

It was just as he had said. Andrew had been racked by a thousand jealousies on hearing the verses; and was so overcome that his father observed it, and cried out, “What ails you, Don Juan? You are turned quite pale, and look as if you were going to faint.”

“Wait a moment,” said Preciosa, “let me whisper certain words in his ear, and you will see that he will not faint.” Then bending over him she said, almost without moving her lips, “A pretty sort of gitano you will make! Why, Andrew, how will you be able to bear the torture with gauze, when you are overcome by a bit of paper?” Then making half-a-dozen signs of the cross over his heart, she left him, after which Andrew breathed a little, and told his friends that Preciosa’s words had done him good.

Finally, the two-faced doubloon was given to Preciosa, who told her companions that she would change it, and share the amount honourably with them. Andrew’s father intreated her to leave him in writing the words she had spoken to his son, as he wished by all means to know them. She said she would repeat them with great pleasure; and that though they might appear to be mere child’s play, they were of sovereign virtue to preserve from the heartache and dizziness of the head. The words were these: —

Silly pate, silly pate, Why run on at this rate? No tripping, or slipping, or sliding! Have trusty assurance, And patient endurance And ever be frank and confiding. To ugly suspicion Refuse all admission, Nor let it your better sense twist over. All this if you do You’ll not rue, For excellent things will ensue, With the good help of God and St. Christopher.

“Only say these words,” she continued, “over any person who has a swimming in the head, making at the same time six signs of the cross over his heart, and he will soon be as sound as an apple.”

When the old woman heard the charm, she was amazed at the clever trick played by her granddaughter; and Andrew was still more so when he found that



the whole was an invention of her quick wit. Preciosa left the madrigal in the hands of the gentleman, not liking to ask for it, lest she should again distress Andrew; for she knew, without any one teaching her, what it was to make a lover feel the pangs of jealousy. Before she took her leave, she said to Don Juan, "Every day of the week, señor, is lucky for beginning a journey: not one of them is black. Hasten your departure, therefore, as much as you can; for there lies before you a free life of ample range and great enjoyment, if you choose to accommodate yourself to it."

"It strikes me that a soldier's life is not so free as you say," replied Andrew, "but one of submission rather than liberty. However, I will see what I can do."

"You will see more than you think for," said Preciosa; "and may God have you in his keeping, and lead you to happiness, as your goodly presence deserves."

These farewell words filled Andrew with delight; the gitanas went away no less gratified, and shared the doubloon between them, the old woman as usual taking a part and a half, both by reason of her seniority, as because she was the compass by which they steered their course on the wide sea of their dances, pleasantries, and tricks.

At last the appointed day of meeting came, and Andrew arrived in the morning at the old trysting place, mounted on a hired mule, and without any attendant. He found Preciosa and her grandmother waiting for him, and was cordially welcomed by them. He begged they would take him at once to the rancho, before it was broad day, that he might not be recognised should he be sought for. The two gitanas, who had taken the precaution to come alone, immediately wheeled round, and soon arrived with him at their huts. Andrew entered one of them, which was the largest in the rancho, where he was forthwith assisted by ten or twelve gitanos, all handsome strapping young fellows, whom the old woman had previously informed respecting the new comrade who was about to join them. She had not thought it necessary, to enjoin them to secrecy; for, as we have already said, they habitually observed it with unexampled sagacity and strictness. Their eyes were at once on the mule, and said one of them, "We can sell this on Thursday in Toledo."

"By no means," said Andrew; "for there is not a hired mule in Madrid, or any other town, but is known to all the muleteers that tramp the roads of Spain."

"Por dios, Señor Andrew," said one of the gang, "if there were more signs and tokens upon the mule than are to precede the day of judgment, we will transform it in such a manner that it could not be known by the mother that bore it, or the master that owned it."

"That maybe," said Andrew; "but for this time you must do as I recommend.

This mule must be killed, and buried where its bones shall never be seen.”

“Put the innocent creature to death!” cried another gipsy. “What a sin! Don’t say the word, good Andrew; only do one thing. Examine the beast well, till you have got all its marks well by heart; then let me take it away, and if in two hours from this time you are able to know, it again, let me be basted like a runaway negro.”

“I must insist upon the mule’s being put to death,” said Andrew, “though I were ever so sure of its transformation. I am in fear of being discovered unless it is put under ground. If you object for sake of the profit to be made by selling it, I am not come so destitute to this fraternity but that I can pay my footing with more than the price of four mules.”

“Well, since the Señor Andrew Caballero will have it so,” said the other gitano, “let the sinless creature die, though God knows how much it goes against me, both because of its youth, for it has not yet lost mark of mouth, a rare thing among hired mules, and because it must be a good goer, for it has neither scars on its flank nor marks of the spur.”

The slaughter of the mule was postponed till night, and the rest of the day was spent in the ceremonies of Andrew’s initiation. They cleared out one of the best huts in the encampment, dressed it with boughs and rushes, and seating Andrew in it on the stump of a cork tree, they put a hammer and tongs in his hands, and made him cut two capers to the sound of two guitars. They then bared one of his arms, tied round it a new silk ribbon through which they passed a short stick, and gave it two turns gently, after the manner of the garotte with which criminals are strangled. Preciosa was present at all this, as were many other gitanas, old and young, some of whom gazed at Andrew with admiration, others with love, and such was his good humour, that even the gitanos took most kindly to him.

These ceremonies being ended, an old gipsy took Preciosa by the hand, and setting her opposite Andrew, spoke thus: “This girl, who is the flower and cream of all beauty among the gitanas of Spain, we give to you either for your wife or your mistress, for in that respect you may do whatever shall be most to your liking, since our free and easy life is not subject to squeamish scruples or to much ceremony. Look at her well, and see if she suits you, or if there is anything in her you dislike; if there is, choose from among the maidens here present the one you like best, and we will give her to you. But bear in mind that once your choice is made, you must not quit it for another, nor make or meddle either with the married women or the maids. We are strict observers of the law of good fellowship; none among us covets the good that belongs to another. We live free and secure from the bitter plague of jealousy; and though incest is frequent amongst us there is no adultery. If a wife or a mistress is unfaithful, we do not go

ask the courts of justice to punish; but we ourselves are the judges and executioners of our wives and mistresses, and make no more ado about killing and burying them in the mountains and desert places than if they were vermin. There are no relations to avenge them, no parents to call us to account for their deaths. By reason of this fear and dread, our women learn to live chaste; and we, as I have said, feel no uneasiness about their virtue.

“We have few things which are not common to us all, except wives and mistresses, each of whom we require to be his alone to whom fortune has allotted her. Among us divorce takes place, because of old age as well as by death. Any man may if he likes leave a woman who is too old for him, and choose one more suitable to his years. By means of these and other laws and statutes we contrive to lead a merry life. We are lords of the plains, the corn fields, the woods, mountains, springs, and rivers. The mountains yield us wood for nothing, the orchards fruit, the vineyards grapes, the gardens vegetables, the fountains water, the rivers fish, the parks feathered game; the rocks yield us shade, the glades and valleys fresh air, and the caves shelter. For us the inclemencies of the weather are zephyrs, the snow refreshment, the rain baths, the thunder music, and the lightning torches. For us the hard ground is a bed of down; the tanned skin of our bodies is an impenetrable harness to defend us; our nimble limbs submit to no obstacle from iron bars, or trenches, or walls; our courage is not to be twisted out of us by cords, or choked by gauze, or quelled by the rack.

“Between yes and no we make no difference when it suits our convenience to confound them; we always pride ourselves more on being martyrs than confessors. For us the beasts of burden are reared in the fields, and pockets are filled in the cities. No eagle or other bird of prey pounces more swiftly on its quarry than we upon opportunities that offer us booty. And finally, we possess many qualities which promise us a happy end; for we sing in prison, are silent on the rack, work by day, and by night we thieve, or rather we take means to teach all men that they should exempt themselves from the trouble of seeing where they put their property. We are not distressed by the fear of losing our honour, or kept awake by ambition to increase it. We attach ourselves to no parties; we do not rise by daylight to attend levees and present memorials, or to swell the trains of magnates, or to solicit favours. Our gilded roofs and sumptuous palaces are these portable huts; our Flemish pictures and landscapes are those which nature presents to our eyes at every step in the rugged cliffs and snowy peaks, the spreading meads and leafy groves. We are rustic astronomers, for as we sleep almost always under the open sky, we can tell every hour by day or night. We see how Aurora extinguishes and sweeps away the stars from heaven, and how

she comes forth with her companion the dawn, enlivening the air, refreshing the water, and moistening the earth; and after her appears the sun gilding the heights, as the poet sings, and making the mountains smile. We are not afraid of being left chilly by his absence, when his rays fall aslant upon us, or of being roasted when they blaze down upon us perpendicularly. We turn the same countenance to sun and frost, to dearth and plenty. In conclusion, we are people who live by our industry and our wits, without troubling ourselves with the old adage, 'The church, the sea, or the king's household.' We have all we want, for we are content with what we have.

"All these things have I told you, generous youth, that you may not be ignorant of the life to which you are come, and the manners and customs you will have to profess, which I have here sketched for you in the rough. Many other particulars, no less worthy of consideration, you will discover for yourself in process of time."

Here the eloquent old gitano closed his discourse, and the novice replied, that he congratulated himself much on having been made acquainted with such laudable statutes; that he desired to make profession of an order so based on reason and politic principles; that his only regret was that he had not sooner come to the knowledge of so pleasant a life; and that from that moment he renounced his knighthood, and the vain glory of his illustrious lineage, and placed them beneath the yoke, or beneath the laws under which they lived, forasmuch as they so magnificently recompensed the desire he had to serve them, in bestowing upon him the divine Preciosa, for whom he would surrender many crowns and wide empires, or desire them only for her sake.

Preciosa spoke next: "Whereas these señores, our lawgivers," she said, "have determined, according to their laws that I should be yours, and as such have given me up to you, I have decreed, in accordance with the law of my own will, which is the strongest of all, that I will not be so except upon the conditions heretofore concerted between us two. You must live two years in our company before you enjoy mine, so that you may neither repent through fickleness, nor I be deceived through precipitation. Conditions supersede laws; those which I have prescribed you know; if you choose to keep them, I may be yours, and you mine; if not, the mule is not dead, your clothes are whole, and not a doit of your money is spent. Your absence from home has not yet extended to the length of a day; what remains you may employ in considering what best suits you. These señores may give up my body to you, but not my soul, which is free, was born free, and shall remain free. If you remain, I shall esteem you much; if you depart, I shall do so no less; for I hold that amorous impulses run with a loose rein, until they are brought to a halt by reason or disenchantment. I would not

have you be towards me like the sportsman, who when he has bagged a hare thinks no more of it, but runs after another. The eyes are sometimes deceived; at first sight tinsel looks like gold; but they soon recognise the difference between the genuine and the false metal. This beauty of mine, which you say I possess, and which you exalt above the sun, and declare more precious than gold, how do I know but that at a nearer view it will appear to you a shadow, and when tested will seem but base metal? I give you two years to weigh and ponder well what will be right to choose or reject. Before you buy a jewel, which you can only get rid of by death, you ought to take much time to examine it, and ascertain its faults or its merits. I do not assent to the barbarous licence which these kinsmen of mine have assumed, to forsake their wives or chastise them when the humour takes them; and as I do not intend to do anything which calls for punishment, I will not take for my mate one who will abandon me at his own caprice.”

“You are right, Preciosa,” said Andrew; “and so if you would have me quiet your fears and abate your doubts, by swearing not to depart a jot from the conditions you prescribe, choose what form of oath I shall take, or what other assurance I shall give you, and I will do exactly as you desire.”

“The oaths and promises which the captive makes to obtain his liberty are seldom fulfilled when he is free,” returned Preciosa; “and it is just the same, I fancy, with the lover, who to obtain his desire will promise the wings of Mercury, and the thunderbolts of Jove; and indeed a certain poet promised myself no less, and swore it by the Stygian lake. I want no oaths or promises, Señor Andrew, but to leave everything to the result of this novitiate. It will be my business to take care of myself, if at any time you should think of offending me.”

“Be it so,” said Andrew. “One request I have to make of these señores and comrades mine, and that is that they will not force me to steal anything for a month or so; for it strikes me that it will take a great many lessons to make me a thief.”

“Never fear, my son,” said the old gipsy; “for we will instruct you in such a manner that you will turn out an eagle in our craft; and when you have learned it, you will like it so much, that you will be ready to eat your hand, it will so itch after it. Yes, it is fine fun to go out empty-handed in the morning, and to return loaded at night to the rancho.”

“I have seen some return with a whipping,” said Andrew.

“One cannot catch trouts dry shod,” the old man replied: “all things in this life have their perils: the acts of the thief are liable to the galleys, whipping, and the scragging-post; but it is not because one ship encounters a storm, or springs a leak, that others should cease to sail the seas. It would be a fine thing if there

were to be no soldiers, because war consumes men and horses. Besides, a whipping by the hand of justice is for us a badge of honour, which becomes us better worn on the shoulders than on the breast. The main point is to avoid having to dance upon nothing in our young days and for our first offences; but as for having our shoulders dusted, or thrashing the water in a galley, we don't mind that a nutshell. For the present, Andrew, my son, keep snug in the nest under the shelter of our wings; in duo time, we will take you out to fly, and that where you will not return without a prey; and the short and the long of it is, that by and by you will lick your fingers after every theft."

"Meanwhile," said Andrew, "as a compensation for what I might bring in by thieving during the vacation allowed me, I will divide two hundred gold crowns among all the members of the rancho."

The words were no sooner out of his mouth, than several gitanos caught him up in their arms, hoisted him upon their shoulders, and bore him along, shouting, "Long life to the great Andrew, and long life to Preciosa his beloved!" The gitanas did the same with Preciosa, not without exciting the envy of Christina, and the other gitanillas present; for envy dwells alike in the tents of barbarians, the huts of shepherds, and the palaces of princes; and to see another thrive who seems no better than oneself is a great weariness to the spirit.

This done, they ate a hearty dinner, made an equitable division of the gift money, repeated their praises of Andrew, and exalted Preciosa's beauty to the skies. When night fell, they broke the mule's neck, and buried it, so as to relieve Andrew of all fear of its leading to his discovery; they likewise buried with it the trappings, saddle, bridle, girths and all, after the manner of the Indians, whose chief ornaments are laid in the grave with them.

Andrew was in no small astonishment at all he had seen and heard, and resolved to pursue his enterprise without meddling at all with the customs of his new companions, so far as that might be possible. Especially he hoped to exempt himself, at the cost of his purse, from participating with them in any acts of injustice. On the following day, Andrew requested the gipsies to break up the camp, and remove to a distance from Madrid; for he feared that he should be recognised if he remained there. They told him they had already made up their minds to go to the mountains of Toledo, and thence to scour all the surrounding country, and lay it under contribution. Accordingly they struck their tents, and departed, offering Andrew an ass to ride; but he chose rather to travel on foot, and serve as attendant to Preciosa, who rode triumphantly another ass, rejoicing in her gallant esquire; whilst he was equally delighted at finding himself close to her whom he had made the mistress of his freedom.

O potent force of him who is called the sweet god of bitterness — a title given

him by our idleness and weakness — how effectually dost thou enslave us! Here was Andrew, a knight, a youth of excellent parts, brought up at court, and maintained in affluence by his noble parents; and yet since yesterday such a change has been wrought in him that he has deceived his servants and friends; disappointed the hopes of his parents; abandoned the road to Flanders, where he was to have exercised his valour and increased the honours of his line; and he has prostrated himself at the feet of a girl, made himself the lackey of one who, though exquisitely beautiful, is after all a gitana! Wondrous prerogative of beauty, which brings down the strongest will to its feet, in spite of all its resistance!

In four days' march, the gipsies arrived at a pleasant village, within two leagues of the great Toledo, where they pitched their camp, having first given some articles of silver to the alcalde of the district, as a pledge that they would steal nothing within all his bounds, nor do any other damage that might give cause of complaint against them. This done, all the old gitanas, some young ones, and the men, spread themselves all over the country, to the distance of four or five leagues from the encampment. Andrew went with them to take his first lesson in thievery; but though they gave him many in that expedition, he did not profit by any of them. On the contrary, as was natural in a man of gentle blood, every theft committed by his masters wrung his very soul, and sometimes he paid for them out of his own pocket, being moved by the tears of the poor people who had been despoiled. The gipsies were in despair at this behavior: it was in contravention, they said, of their statutes and ordinances, which prohibited the admission of compassion into their hearts; because if they had any they must cease to be thieves, — a thing which was not to be thought of on any account. Seeing this, Andrew said he would go thieving by himself; for he was nimble enough to run from danger, and did not lack courage to encounter it; so that the prize or the penalty of his thieving would be exclusively his own.

The gipsies tried to dissuade him from this good purpose, telling him that occasions might occur in which he would have need of companions, as well to attack as to defend; and that one person alone could not make any great booty. But in spite of all they could say, Andrew was determined to be a solitary robber; intending to separate from the gang, and purchase for money something which he might say he had stolen, and thus burden his conscience as little as possible. Proceeding in this way, in less than a month, he brought more gain to the gang than four of the most accomplished thieves in it. Preciosa rejoiced not a little to see her tender lover become such a smart and handy thief; but for all that she was sorely afraid of some mischance, and would not have seen him in the hands of justice for all the treasures of Venice; such was the good feeling

towards him which she could not help entertaining, in return for his many good offices and presents. After remaining about a month in the Toledan district, where they reaped a good harvest, the gipsies entered the wealthy region of Estramadura.

Meanwhile Andrew frequently held honourable and loving converse with Preciosa, who was gradually becoming enamoured of his good qualities; while, in like manner, his love for her went on increasing, if that were possible: such were the virtues, the good sense and beauty of his Preciosa. Whenever the gipsies engaged in athletic games, he carried off the prize for running and leaping: he played admirably at skittles and at ball, and pitched the bar with singular strength and dexterity. In a short while, his fame spread through all Estramadura, and there was no part of it where they did not speak of the smart young gitano Andrew, and his graces and accomplishments. As his fame extended, so did that of Preciosa's beauty; and there was no town, village, or hamlet, to which they were not invited, to enliven their patron saints' days, or other festivities. The tribe consequently became rich, prosperous, and contented, and the lovers were happy in the mere sight of each other.

It happened one night, when the camp was pitched among some evergreen oaks, a little off the highway, they heard their dogs barking about the middle watch, with unusual vehemence. Andrew and some others got up to see what was the matter, and found a man dressed in white battling with them, whilst one of them held him by the leg. "What the devil brought you here, man," said one of the gipsies, after they had released him, "at such an hour, away from the high road? Did you come to thief? If so, you have come to the right door?"

"I do not come to thief; and I don't know whether or not I am off the road, though I see well enough that I am gone astray," said the wounded man. "But tell me, señores, is there any venta or place of entertainment where I can get a night's lodging, and dress the wounds which these dogs have given me?"

"There is no venta or public place to which we can take you," replied Andrew; "but as for a night's lodging, and dressing your wounds, that you can have at our ranchos. Come along with us; for though we are gipsies, we are not devoid of humanity."

"God reward you!" said the man: "take me whither you please, for my leg pains me greatly." Andrew lifted him up, and carried him along with the help of some of the other compassionate gipsies; for even among the fiends there are some worse than others, and among many bad men you may find one good.

It was a clear moonlight night, so that they could see that the person they carried was a youth of handsome face and figure. He was dressed all in white linen, with a sort of frock of the same material belted round his waist. They



arrived at Andrew's hut or shed, quickly kindled a fire, and fetched Preciosa's grandmother to attend to the young man's hurts. She took some of the dogs' hairs, fried them in oil, and after washing with wine the two bites she found on the patient's left leg, she put the hairs and the oil upon them, and over this dressing a little chewed green rosemary. She then bound the leg up carefully with clean bandages, made the sign of the cross over it, and said, "Now go to sleep, friend and with the help of God your hurts will not signify."

Whilst they were attending to the wounded man, Preciosa stood by, eyeing him with great curiosity, whilst he did the same by her, insomuch that Andrew took notice of the eagerness with which he gazed; but he attributed this to the extraordinary beauty of Preciosa, which naturally attracted all eyes. Finally, having done all that was needful for the youth, they left him alone on a bed of dry hay, not caring to question him then as to his road, or any other matter.

As soon as all the others were gone, Preciosa called Andrew aside, and said to him, "Do you remember, Andrew, a paper I let fall in your house, when I was dancing with my companions, and which caused you, I think, some uneasiness?"

"I remember it well," said Andrew; "it was a madrigal in your praise, and no bad one either."

"Well, you must know, Andrew, that the person who wrote those verses is no other than the wounded youth we have left in the hut. I cannot be mistaken, for he spoke to me two or three times in Madrid, and gave me too a very good romance. He was then dressed, I think, as a page, — not an ordinary one, but like a favourite of some prince. I assure you, Andrew, he is a youth of excellent understanding, and remarkably well behaved; and I cannot imagine what can have brought him hither, and in such a garb."

"What should you imagine, Preciosa, but that the same power which has made me a gitano, has made him put on the dress of a miller, and come in search of you? Ah, Preciosa! Preciosa! how plain it begins to be that you pride yourself on having more than one adorer. If this be so, finish me first, and then kill off this other, but do not sacrifice both at the same time to your perfidy."

"God's mercy, Andrew, how thin-skinned you are! On how fine a thread you make your hopes and my reputation hang, since you let the cruel sword of jealousy so easily pierce your soul. Tell me, Andrew, if there were any artifice or deceit in this case, could I not have held my tongue about this youth, and concealed all knowledge of him? Am I such a fool that I cannot help telling you what should make you doubt my integrity and good behaviour? Hold your tongue, Andrew, in God's name, and try to-morrow to extract from this cause of your alarm whither he is bound, and why he is come hither. It may be that you are mistaken in your suspicion, though I am not mistaken in what I told you of

the stranger. And now for your greater satisfaction — since it is come to that pass with me that I seek to satisfy you — whatever be the reason of this youth's coming, send him away at once. All our people obey you, and none of them will care to receive him into their huts against your wish. But if this fails, I give you my word not to quit mine, or let myself be seen by him, or by anybody else from whom you would have me concealed. Look you, Andrew, I am not vexed at seeing you jealous, but it would vex me much to see you indiscreet."

"Unless you see me mad, Preciosa," said Andrew, "any other demonstration would be far short of showing you what desperate havoc jealousy can make of a man's feelings. However, I will do as you bid me, and find out what this señor page-poet wants, whither he is going, and whom he is in search of. It may be, that unawares he may let me get hold of some end of thread which shall lead to the discovery of the whole snare which I fear he is come to set for me."

"Jealousy, I imagine," said Preciosa, "never leaves the understanding clear to apprehend things as they really are. Jealousy always looks through magnifying glasses, which make mountains of molehills, and realities of mere suspicions. On your life, Andrew, and on mine, I charge you to proceed in this matter, and all that touches our concerns, with prudence and discretion; and if you do, I know that you will have to concede the palm to me, as honest, upright, and true to the very utmost."

With these words she quitted Andrew, leaving him impatient for daylight, that he might receive the confession of the wounded man, and distracted in mind by a thousand various surmises. He could not believe but that this page had come thither attracted by Preciosa's beauty; for the thief believes that all men are such as himself. On the other hand, the pledge voluntarily made to him by Preciosa appeared so highly satisfactory, that he ought to set his mind quite at ease, and commit all his happiness implicitly to the keeping of her good faith. At last day appeared: he visited the wounded man; and after inquiring how he was, and did his bites pain him, he asked what was his name, whither he was going, and how it was he travelled so late and so far off the road. The youth replied that he was better, and felt no pain so that he was able to resume his journey. His name was Alonzo Hurtado; he was going to our Lady of the Peña de Francia, on a certain business; he travelled by night for the greater speed; and having missed his way, he had come upon the encampment, and been worried by the dogs that guarded it. Andrew did not by any means consider this a straightforward statement: his suspicions returned to plague him; and, said he, "Brother, if I were a judge, and you had been brought before me upon any charge which would render necessary such questions as those I have put to you, the reply you have given would oblige me to apply the thumb-screw. It is nothing to me who you are, what is your

name, or whither you are going: I only warn you, that if it suits your convenience to lie on this journey, you should lie with more appearance of truth. You say you are going to La Peña de Francia, and you leave it on the right hand more than thirty leagues behind this place. You travel by night for sake of speed, and you quit the high road, and strike into thickets and woods where there is scarcely a footpath. Get up, friend, learn to lie better, and go your ways, in God's name. But in return for this good advice I give you, will you not tell me one truth? I know you will, you are such a bad hand at lying. Tell me, are you not one I have often seen in the capital, something between a page and a gentleman? One who has the reputation of being a great poet, and who wrote a romance and a sonnet upon a gitanilla who some time ago went about Madrid, and was celebrated for her surpassing beauty? Tell me, and I promise you, on the honour of a gentleman gipsy, to keep secret whatever you may wish to be so kept. Mind you, no denial that you are the person I say will go down with me; for the face I see before me is unquestionably the same I saw in Madrid. The fame of your talents made me often stop to gaze at you as a distinguished man, and therefore your features are so strongly impressed on my memory, though your dress is very different from that in which I formerly saw you. Don't be alarmed, cheer up, and don't suppose you have fallen in with a tribe of robbers, but with an asylum, where you may be guarded and defended from all the world. A thought strikes me; and if it be as I conjecture, you have been lucky in meeting me above all men. What I conjecture is, that being in love with Preciosa — that beautiful young gipsy, to whom you addressed the verses — you have come in search of her; for which I don't think a bit the worse of you, but quite the reverse: for gipsy though I am, experience has shown me how far the potent force of love reaches, and the transformations it makes those undergo whom it brings beneath its sway and jurisdiction. If this be so, as I verily believe it is, the fair gitanilla is here."

"Yes, she is here; I saw her last night," said the stranger. This was like a death-blow to Andrew; for it seemed at once to confirm all his suspicions.

"I saw her last night," the young man repeated; "but I did not venture to tell her who I was, for it did not suit my purpose."

"So, then," said Andrew, "you are indeed the poet of whom I spoke."

"I am: I neither can nor will deny it. Possibly it may be that where I thought myself lost I have come right to port, if, as you say, there is fidelity in the forests, and hospitality in the mountains."

"That there is, beyond doubt," said Andrew; "and among us gipsies the strictest secrecy in the world. On that assurance, señor, you may unburden your breast to me: you will find in mine no duplicity whatever. The gitanilla is my

relation, and entirely under my control. If you desire her for a wife, myself and all other relations will be quite willing; and if for a mistress, we will not make any squeamish objections, provided you have money, for covetousness never departs from our ranchos."

"I have money," the youth replied; "in the bands of this frock, which I wear girt round my body, there are four hundred gold crowns."

This was another mortal blow for Andrew, who assumed that the stranger could carry so large a sum about him for no other purpose than to purchase possession of the beloved object. With a faltering tongue he replied, "That is a good lump of money; you have only to discover yourself, and go to work: the girl is no fool, and will see what a good thing it will be for her to be yours."

"O friend," exclaimed the youth, "I would have you know that the power which has made me change my garb is not that of love, as you say, nor any longing for Preciosa; for Madrid has beauties who know how to steal hearts and subdue souls as well as the handsomest gitanas, and better; though I confess that the beauty of your kinswoman surpasses any I have ever seen. The cause of my being in this dress, on foot, and bitten by dogs, is not love but my ill luck."

Upon this explanation, Andrew's downcast spirit began to rise again; for it was plain that the wind was in quite a different quarter from what he had supposed. Eager to escape from this confusion, he renewed his assurances of secrecy, and the stranger proceeded thus: —

"I was in Madrid, in the house of a nobleman, whom I served not as a master but as a relation. He had an only son and heir, who treated me with great familiarity and friendship, both on account of our relationship, and because we were both of the same age and disposition. This young gentleman fell in love with a young lady of rank, whom he would most gladly have made his wife, had it not been for his dutiful submission to the will of his parents, who desired him to marry into a higher family. Nevertheless, he continued furtively to pay court to the lady of his choice, carefully concealing his proceedings from all eyes but mine. One night, which ill luck must have especially selected for the adventure I am about to relate to you, as we were passing by the lady's house, we saw ranged against it two men of good figure apparently. My kinsman wished to reconnoitre them, but no sooner had he made a step towards them than their swords were out, their bucklers ready, and they made at us, whilst we did the same on our side, and engaged them with equal arms. The fight did not last long, neither did the lives of our two opponents; for two thrusts, urged home by my kinsman's jealousy and my zeal in his defence, laid them both low — an extraordinary occurrence, and such as is rarely witnessed. Thus involuntarily victorious, we returned home, and taking all the money we could, set off secretly

to the church of San Geronimo, waiting to see what would happen when the event was discovered next day, and what might be the conjectures as to the persons of the homicides.

“We learned that no trace of our presence on the scene had been discovered, and the prudent monks advised us to return home, so as not by our absence to arouse any suspicion against us. We had already resolved to follow their advice, when we were informed that the alcaldes of the court had arrested the young lady and her parents; and that among their domestics, whom they examined, one person, the young lady’s attendant, had stated that my kinsman visited her mistress by night and by day. Upon this evidence they had sent in search of us; and the officers not finding us, but many indications of our flight, it became a confirmed opinion throughout the whole city, that we were the very men who had slain the two cavaliers, for such they were, and of very good quality. Finally, by the advice of the count, my relation, and of the monks, after remaining hid a fortnight in the monastery, my comrade departed in company with a monk, himself disguised as one, and took the road to Aragon, intending to pass over to Italy, and thence to Flanders, until he should see what might be the upshot of the matter. For my part, thinking it well to divide our fortunes, I set out on foot, in a different direction, and in the habit of a lay brother, along with a monk, who quitted me at Talavera. From that city I travelled alone, and missed my way, till last night I reached this wood, when I met with the mishap you know. If I asked for La Peña de Francia, it was only by way of making some answer to the questions put to me; for I know that it lies beyond Salamanca.”

“True,” observed Andrew, “you left it on your right, about twenty leagues from this. So you see what a straight road you were taking, if you were going thither.”

“The road I did intend to take was that to Seville; for there I should find a Genoese gentleman, a great friend of the count my relation, who is in the habit of exporting large quantities of silver ingots to Genoa; and my design is, that he should send me with his carriers, as one of themselves, by which means I may safely reach Carthagená, and thence pass over to Italy; for two galleys are expected shortly to ship some silver. This is my story, good friend: was I not right in saying it is the result of pure ill luck, rather than disappointed love? Now if these señores gitanos will take me in their company to Seville, supposing they are bound thither, I will pay them handsomely; for I believe that I should travel more safely with them, and have some respite from the fear that haunts me.”

“Yes, they will take you,” said Andrew; “or if you cannot go with our band — for as yet I know not that we are for Andalusia — you can go with another which we shall fall in with in a couple of days; and if you give them some of the

money you have about you, they will be able and willing to help you out of still worse difficulties.” He then left the young man, and reported to the other gipsies what the stranger desired, and the offer he had made of good payment for their services.

They were all for having their guest remain in the camp; but Preciosa was against it; and her grandmother said, that she could not go to Seville or its neighbourhood, on account of a hoax she had once played off upon a capmaker named Truxillo, well known in Seville. She had persuaded him to put himself up to his neck in a butt of water, stark naked, with a crown of cypress on his head, there to remain till midnight, when he was to step out, and look for a great treasure, which she had made him believe was concealed in a certain part of his house. When the good capmaker heard matins ring, he made such haste to get out of the butt, lest he should lose his chance, that it fell with him, bruising his flesh, and deluging the floor with water, in which he fell to swimming with might and main, roaring out that he was drowning. His wife and his neighbours ran to him with lights, and found him striking out lustily with his legs and arms. “Help! help!” he cried; “I am suffocating;” and he really was not far from it, such was the effect of his excessive fright. They seized and rescued him from his deadly peril. When he had recovered a little, he told them the trick the gipsy woman had played him; and yet for all that, he dug a hole, more than a fathom deep, in the place pointed out to him, in spite of all his neighbours could say; and had he not been forcibly prevented by one of them, when he was beginning to undermine the foundations of the house, he would have brought the whole of it down about his ears. The story spread all over the city; so that the little boys in the streets used to point their fingers at him, and shout in his ears the story of the gipsy’s trick, and his own credulity. Such was the tale told by the old gitana, in explanation of her unwillingness to go to Seville.

The gipsies, knowing from Andrew that the youth had a sum of money about him, readily assented to his accompanying them, and promised to guard and conceal him as long as he pleased. They determined to make a bend to the left, and enter La Mancha and the kingdom of Murcia. The youth thanked them cordially, and gave them on the spot a hundred gold crowns to divide amongst them, whereupon they became as pliant as washed leather. Preciosa, however, was not pleased with the continuance among them of Don Sancho, for that was the youth’s name, but the gipsies changed it to Clement. Andrew too was rather annoyed at this arrangement; for it seemed to him that Clement had given up his original intention upon very slight grounds; but the latter, as if he read his thoughts, told him that he was glad to go to Murcia, because it was near Carthage, whence, if galleys arrived there, as he expected, he could easily pass

over to Italy. Finally, in order to have him more under his own eye, to watch his acts, and scrutinise his thoughts, Andrew desired to have Clement for his own comrade, and the latter accepted this friendly offer as a signal favour. They were always together, both spent largely, their crowns came down like rain; they ran, leaped, danced, and pitched the bar better than any of their companions, and were more than commonly liked by the women of the tribe, and held in the highest respect by the men.

Leaving Estramadura they entered La Mancha, and gradually traversed the kingdom of Murcia. In all the villages and towns they passed through, they had matches at ball-playing, fencing, running, leaping, and pitching the bar; and in all these trials of strength, skill, and agility Andrew and Clement were victorious, as Andrew alone had been before. During the whole journey, which occupied six weeks, Clement neither found nor sought an opportunity to speak alone with Preciosa, until one day when she and Andrew were conversing together, they called him to them, and Preciosa said, "The first time you came to our camp I recognised you, Clement, and remembered the verses you gave me in Madrid; but I would not say a word, not knowing with what intention you had come among us. When I became acquainted with your misfortune, it grieved me to the soul, though at the same time it was a relief to me; for I had been much disturbed, thinking that as there was a Don Juan in the world who had become a gipsy, a Don Sancho might undergo transformation in like manner. I speak this to you, because Andrew tells me he has made known to you who he is, and with what intention he turned gipsy." (And so it was, for Andrew had acquainted Clement with his whole story, that he might be able to converse with him on the subject nearest to his thoughts.) "Do not think that my knowing you was of little advantage to you, since for my sake, and in consequence of what I said of you, our people the more readily admitted you amongst them, where I trust in God you may find things turn out according to your best wishes. You will repay me, I hope, for this good will on my part, by not making Andrew ashamed of having set his mind so low, or representing to him how ill he does in persevering in his present way of life; for though I imagine that his will is enthralled to mine, still it would grieve me to see him show signs, however slight, of repenting what he has done."

"Do not suppose, peerless Preciosa," replied Clement, "that Don Juan acted lightly in revealing himself to me. I found him out beforehand: his eyes first disclosed to me the nature of his feelings; I first told him who I was, and detected that enthralment of his will which you speak of; and he, reposing a just confidence in me, made his secret mine. He can witness whether I applauded his determination and his choice; for I am not so dull of understanding, Preciosa, as

not to know how omnipotent is beauty; and yours, which surpasses all bounds of loveliness, is a sufficient excuse for all errors, if error that can be called for which there is so irresistible a cause. I am grateful to you, señora, for what you have said in my favour; and I hope to repay you by hearty good wishes that you may find a happy issue out of your perplexities, and that you may enjoy the love of your Andrew, and Andrew that of his Preciosa, with the consent of his parents; so that from so beautiful a couple there may come into the world the finest progeny which nature can form in her happiest mood. This is what I shall always desire, Preciosa; and this is what I shall always say to your Andrew, and not anything which could tend to turn him from his well-placed affections.”

With such emotion did Clement utter these words, that Andrew was in doubt whether they were spoken in courtesy only, or from love; for the infernal plague of jealousy is so susceptible that it will take offence at the motes in the sunbeams; and the lover finds matter for self-torment in everything that concerns the beloved object. Nevertheless, he did not give way to confirmed jealousy; for he relied more on the good faith of his Preciosa than on his own fortune, which, in common with all lovers, he regarded as luckless, so long as he had not obtained the object of his desires. In fine, Andrew and Clement continued to be comrades and friends, their mutual good understanding being secured by Clement’s upright intentions, and by the modesty and prudence of Preciosa, who never gave Andrew an excuse for jealousy. Clement was somewhat of a poet, Andrew played the guitar a little, and both were fond of music. One night, when the camp was pitched in a valley four leagues from Murcia, Andrew seated himself at the foot of a cork-tree, and Clement near him under an evergreen oak. Each of them had a guitar; and invited by the stillness of the night, they sang alternately, Andrew beginning the descant, and Clement responding.

ANDREW.

Ten thousand golden lamps are lit on high, Making this chilly night Rival the noon-day’s light; Look, Clement, on yon star-bespangled sky, And in that image see, If so divine thy fancy be, That lovely radiant face, Where centres all of beauty and of grace.



CLEMENT

Where centres all of beauty and of grace, And where in concord sweet  
Goodness and beauty meet, And purity hath fixed its dwelling-place. Creature so  
heavenly fair, May any mortal genius dare, Or less than tongue divine, To praise  
in lofty, rare, and sounding line?

ANDREW

To praise in lofty, rare, and sounding line Thy name, gitana bright! Earth's wonder and delight, Worthy above the empyrean vault to shine; Fain would I snatch from Fame The trump and voice, whose loud acclaim Should startle every ear, And lift Preciosa's name to the eighth sphere.

## CLEMENT

To lift Preciosa's fame to the eighth sphere Were meet and fit, that so The heavens new joy might know Through all their shining courts that name to hear, Which on this earth doth sound Like music spreading gladness round, Breathing with charm intense Peace to the soul and rapture to the sense.

It seemed as though the freeman and the captive were in no haste to bring their tuneful contest to conclusion, had not the voice of Preciosa, who had overheard them, sounded from behind in response to theirs. They stopped instantly, and remained listening to her in breathless attention. Whether her words were delivered impromptu, or had been composed some time before, I know not; however that may be, she sang the following lines with infinite grace, as though they were made for the occasion.

While in this amorous emprise An equal conflict I maintain, 'Tis higher glory to remain Pure maid, than boast the brightest eyes.

The humblest plant on which we tread, If sound and straight it grows apace, By aid of nature or of grace May rear aloft towards heaven its head.

In this my lowly poor estate, By maiden honour dignified, No good wish rests unsatisfied; Their wealth I envy not the great.

I find not any grief or pain In lack of love or of esteem; For I myself can shape, I deem, My fortunes happy in the main.

Let me but do what in me lies The path of rectitude to tread; And then be welcomed on this head Whatever fate may please the skies.

I fain would know if beauty hath Such high prerogative, to raise My mind above the common ways, And set me on a loftier path.

If equal in their souls they be, The humblest hind on earth may vie In honest worth and virtue high With one of loftiest degree.

What inwardly I feel of mine Doth raise me all that's base above; For majesty, be sure, and love Do not on common soil recline.

Preciosa having ended her song, Andrew and Clement rose to meet her. An animated conversation ensued between the three; and Preciosa displayed so much intelligence, modesty, and acuteness, as fully excused, in Clement's opinion, the extraordinary determination of Andrew, which he had before attributed more to his youth than his judgment. The next morning the camp was broken up, and they proceeded to a place in the jurisdiction of Murcia, three leagues from the city, where a mischance befel Andrew, which went near to cost him his life.

After they had given security in that place, according to custom, by the deposit of some silver vessels and ornaments, Preciosa and her grandmother, Christina and two other gitanillas, Clement, and Andrew, took up their quarters

in an inn, kept by a rich widow, who had a daughter aged about seventeen or eighteen, rather more forward than handsome. Her name was Juana Carducha. This girl having seen the gipsies dance, the devil possessed her to fall in love with Andrew to that degree that she proposed to tell him of it, and take him for a husband, if he would have her, in spite of all her relations. Watching for an opportunity to speak to him, she found it in a cattle-yard, which Andrew had entered in search of two young asses, when she said to him, hurriedly, "Andrew" (she already knew his name), "I am single and wealthy. My mother has no other child: this inn is her own; and besides it she has large vineyards, and several other houses. You have taken my fancy; and if you will have me for a wife, only say the word. Answer me quickly, and if you are a man of sense, only wait, and you shall see what a life we shall lead."

Astonished as he was at Carducha's boldness, Andrew nevertheless answered her with the promptitude she desired, "Señora doncella, I am under promise to marry, and we gitanos intermarry only with gitanas. Many thanks for the favour you would confer on me, of which I am not worthy."

Carducha was within two inches of dropping dead at this unwelcome reply, to which she would have rejoined, but that she saw some of the gitanos come into the yard. She rushed from the spot, athirst for vengeance. Andrew, like a wise man, determined to get out of her way, for he read in her eyes that she would willingly give herself to him with matrimonial bonds, and he had no wish to find himself engaged foot to foot and alone in such an encounter; accordingly, he requested his comrades to quit the place that night. Complying with his wishes as they always did, they set to work at once, took up their securities again that evening, and decamped. Carducha, seeing that Andrew was going away and half her soul with him, and that she should not have time to obtain the fulfilment of her desires, resolved to make him stop by force, since he would not do so of good will. With all the cunning and secrecy suggested to her by her wicked intentions, she put among Andrew's baggage, which she knew to be his, a valuable coral necklace, two silver medals, and other trinkets belonging to her family. No sooner had the gipsies left the inn than she made a great outcry, declaring that the gipsies had robbed her, till she brought about her the officers of justice and all the people of the place. The gipsies halted, and all swore that they had no stolen property with them, offering at the same time to let all their baggage be searched. This made the old gipsy woman very uneasy, lest the proposed scrutiny should lead to the discovery of Preciosa's trinkets and Andrew's clothes, which she preserved with great care. But the good wench Carducha quickly put an end to her fears on that head, for before they had turned over two packages, she said to the men, "Ask which of these bundles belongs to

that gipsy who is such a great dancer. I saw him enter my room twice, and probably he is the thief.”

Andrew knew it was himself she meant, and answered with a laugh, “Señora doncella, this is my bundle, and that is my ass. If you find in or upon either of them what you miss, I will pay you the value sevenfold, beside submitting to the punishment which the law awards for theft.”

The officers of justice immediately unloaded the ass, and in the turn of a hand discovered the stolen property, whereat Andrew was so shocked and confounded that he stood like a stone statue. “I was not out in my suspicions,” said Carducha; “see with what a good looking face the rogue covers his villany.” The alcalde, who was present, began to abuse Andrew and the rest of the gipsies, calling them common thieves and highwaymen. Andrew said not a word, but stood pondering in the utmost perplexity, for he had no surmise of Carducha’s treachery. At last, an insolent soldier, nephew to the alcalde, stepped up to him, saying “Look at the dirty gipsy thief! I will lay a wager he will give himself airs as if he were an honest man, and deny the robbery, though the goods have been found in his hands. Good luck to whoever sends the whole pack of you to the galleys. A fitter place it will be for this scoundrel, where he may serve his Majesty, instead of going about dancing from place to place, and thieving from venta to mountain. On the faith of a soldier, I have a mind to lay him at my feet with a blow.”

So saying, without more ado he raised his hand, and gave Andrew such a buffet as roused him from his stupor, and made him recollect that he was not Andrew Caballero but Don Juan and a gentleman; therefore, flinging himself upon the soldier with sudden fury, he snatched his sword from its sheath, buried it in his body, and laid him dead at his feet. The people shouted and yelled; the dead man’s uncle, the alcalde, was frantic with rage; Preciosa fainted, and Andrew, regardless of his own defence, thought only of succouring her. As ill luck would have it, Clement was not on the spot, having gone forward with some baggage, and Andrew was set upon, by so many, that they overpowered him, and loaded him with heavy chains. The alcalde would gladly have hanged him on the spot, but was obliged to send him to Murcia, as he belonged to the jurisdiction of that city. It was not, however, till the next day that he was removed thither, and meanwhile he was loaded with abuse and maltreatment by the alcalde and all the people of the place. The alcalde, moreover, arrested all the rest of the gipsies he could lay hands on, but most of them had made their escape, among others Clement, who was afraid of being seized and discovered. On the following morning the alcalde, with his officers and a great many other armed men, entered Murcia with a caravan of gipsy captives, among whom were Preciosa

and poor Andrew, who was chained on the back of a mule, and was handcuffed and had a fork fixed under his chin. All Murcia flocked to see the prisoners, for the news of the soldier's death had been received there; but so great was Preciosa's beauty that no one looked upon her that day without blessing her. The news of her loveliness reached the corregidor's lady, who being curious to see her, prevailed on her husband to give orders that she should not enter the prison to which all the rest of the gipsies were committed. Andrew was thrust into a dark narrow dungeon, where, deprived of the light of the sun and of that which Preciosa's presence diffused, he felt as though he should leave it only for his grave. Preciosa and her grandmother were taken to the corregidor's lady, who at once exclaiming, "Well might they praise her beauty," embraced her tenderly, and never was tired of looking at her. She asked the old woman what was the girl's age. "Fifteen, within a month or two, more or less," was the reply. "That would be the age of my poor Constantia," observed the lady. "Ah, amigas! how the sight of this young girl has brought my bereavement back afresh to my mind."

Upon this, Preciosa took hold of the corregidora's hands, kissed them repeatedly, bathed them with tears, and said, "Señora mia, the gitano who is in custody is not in fault, for he had provocation. They called him a thief, and he is none; they gave him a blow on the face, though his is such a face that you can read in it the goodness of his soul. I entreat you, señora, to see that justice is done him, and that the señor corregidor is not too hasty in executing upon him the penalty of the law. If my beauty has given you any pleasure, preserve it for me by preserving the life of the prisoner, for with it mine ends too. He is to be my husband, but just and proper impediments have hitherto prevented our union. If money would avail to obtain his pardon, all the goods of our tribe should be sold by auction, and we would give even more than was asked of us. My lady, if you know what love is, and have felt and still feel it for your dear husband, have pity on me who love mine tenderly and honestly."

All the while Preciosa was thus speaking she kept fast hold of the corregidora's hands, and kept her tearful eyes fixed on her face, whilst the lady gazed on her with no less wistfulness, and wept as she did. Just then the corregidor entered, and seeing his wife and Preciosa thus mingling their tears, he was surprised as much by the scene as by the gitanilla's beauty. On his asking the cause of her affliction, Preciosa let go the lady's hands, and threw herself at the corregidor's feet, crying, "Mercy, mercy, señor! If my husband dies, I die too. He is not guilty; if he is, let me bear the punishment; or if that cannot be, at least let the trial be delayed until means be sought which may save him; for as he did not sin through malice, it may be that heaven in its grace will send him

safety.” The corregidor was still more surprised to hear such language from the gitanilla’s lips, and but that he would not betray signs of weakness, he could have wept with her.

While all this was passing, the old gitana was busily turning over a great many things in her mind, and after all this cogitation, she said, “Wait a little, your honour, and I will turn these lamentations into joy, though it should cost me my life;” and she stepped briskly out of the room. Until she returned, Preciosa never desisted from her tears and entreaties that they would entertain the cause of her betrothed, being inwardly resolved that she would send to his father that he might come and interfere in his behalf.

The old gipsy woman returned with a little box under her arm, and requested that the corregidor and his lady would retire with her into another room, for she had important things to communicate to them in secret. The corregidor imagined she meant to give him information respecting some thefts committed by the gipsies, in order to bespeak his favour for the prisoner, and he instantly withdrew with her and his lady to his closet, where the gipsy, throwing herself on her knees before them both, began thus:

“If the good news I have to give to your honours be not worth forgiveness for a great crime I have committed, I am here to receive the punishment I deserve. But before I make my confession, I beg your honours will tell me if you know these trinkets;” and she put the box which contained those belonging to Preciosa into the corregidor’s hands. He opened it, and saw those childish gewgaws, but had no idea what they could mean. The corregidora looked at them, too, with as little consciousness as her husband, and merely observed that they were the ornaments of some little child. “That is true,” replied the gipsy, “and to what child they belonged is written in this folded paper.” The corregidor hastily opened the paper, and read as follows: —

*“The child’s name was Doña Constanza de Acevedo y de Menesis; her mother’s, Doña Guiomar de Menesis; and her father’s, D. Fernando de Acevedo, knight of the order of Calatrava. She disappeared on the day of the Lord’s Ascension, at eight in the morning, in the year one thousand five hundred and ninety-five. The child had upon her the trinkets which are contained in this box.”*

Instantly, on hearing the contents of the paper, the corregidora recognised the trinkets, put them to her lips, kissed them again and again, and swooned away; and the corregidor was too much occupied in assisting her to ask the gitana for his daughter. “Good woman, angel rather than gitana,” cried the lady when she came to herself, “where is the owner of these baubles?”

“Where, señora?” was the reply. “She is in your own house. That young gipsy

who drew tears from your eyes is their owner, and is indubitably your own daughter, whom I stole from your house in Madrid on the day and hour named in this paper.”

On hearing this, the agitated lady threw off her clogs, and rushed with open arms into the sala, where she found Preciosa surrounded by her doncellas and servants, and still weeping and wailing. Without a word she caught her hurriedly in her arms, and examined if she had under her left breast a mark in the shape of a little white mole with which she was born, and she found it there enlarged by time. Then, with the same haste, she took off the girl’s shoe, uncovered a snowy foot, smooth as polished marble, and found what she sought; for the two smaller toes of the right foot were joined together by a thin membrane, which the tender parents could not bring themselves to let the surgeon cut when she was an infant. The mole on the bosom, the foot, the trinkets, the day assigned for the kidnapping, the confession of the gitana, and the joy and emotion which her parents felt when they first beheld her, confirmed with the voice of truth in the corregidora’s soul that Preciosa was her own daughter: clasping her therefore in her arms, she returned with her to the room where she had left the corregidor and the old gipsy. Preciosa was bewildered, not knowing why she had made all those investigations, and was still more surprised when the lady raised her in her arms, and gave her not one kiss, but a hundred.

Doña Guiomar at last appeared with her precious burthen in her husband’s presence, and transferring the maiden from her own arms to his, “Receive, Señor, your daughter Constanza,” she said; “for your daughter she is without any doubt, since I have seen the marks on the foot and the bosom; and stronger even than these proofs is the voice of my own heart ever since I set eyes on her.”

“I doubt it not,” replied the corregidor, folding Preciosa in his arms, “for the same sensations have passed through my heart as through yours; and how could so many strange particulars combine together unless it were by a miracle?”

The people of the house were now lost in wonder, going about and asking each other, “What is all this?” but erring widely in their conjectures; for who would have imagined that the gitanilla was the daughter of their lord? The corregidor told his wife and daughter and the old gipsy that he desired the matter should be kept secret until he should himself think fit to divulge it. As for the old gipsy, he assured her that he forgave the injury she had done him in stealing his treasure, since she had more than made atonement by restoring it. The only thing that grieved him was that, knowing Preciosa’s quality, she should have betrothed her to a gipsy, and worse than that, to a thief and murderer. “Alas, señor mio,” said Preciosa, “he is neither a gipsy nor a thief, although he has killed a man, but then it was one who had wounded his honour, and he could not do less than



show who he was, and kill him.”

“What! he is not a gipsy, my child?” said Doña Guiomar.

“Certainly not,” said the old gitana; and she related the story of Andrew Caballero, that he was the son of Don Francisco de Cárcamo, knight of Santiago; that his name was Don Juan de Cárcamo, of the same order; and that she had kept his clothes after he had changed them for those of a gipsy. She likewise stated the agreement which Preciosa and Don Juan had made not to marry until after two years of mutual trial; and she put in their true light the honourable conduct of both, and the suitable condition of Don Juan.

The parents were as much surprised at this as at the recovery of their daughter. The corregidor sent the gitana for Don Juan’s clothes, and she came back with them accompanied by a gipsy who carried them. Previously to her return, Preciosa’s parents put a thousand questions to her, and she replied with so much discretion and grace, that even though they had not recognised her for their child, they must have loved her. To their inquiry whether she had any affection for Don Juan, she replied, not more than that to which she was bound in gratitude towards one who had humbled himself to become a gipsy for her sake; but even this should not extend farther than her parents desired. “Say no more, daughter Preciosa,” said her father; “(for I wish you to retain this name of Preciosa in memory of your loss and your recovery); as your father, I take it upon myself to establish you in a position not derogatory to your birth.”

Preciosa sighed, and her mother shrewdly suspecting that the sigh was prompted by love for Don Juan, said to the corregidor, “Since Don Juan is a person of such rank, and is so much attached to our daughter, I think, señor, it would not be amiss to bestow her upon him.”

“Hardly have we found her to-day,” he replied, “and already would you have us lose her? Let us enjoy her company for a while at least, for when she marries she will be ours no longer but her husband’s.”

“You are right, señor,” said the lady, “but give orders to bring out Don Juan, for he is probably lying in some filthy dungeon.”

“No doubt he is,” said Preciosa, “for as a thief and homicide, and above all as a gipsy, they will have given him no better lodging.”

“I will go see him,” said the corregidor, “as if for the purpose of taking his confession. Meanwhile, señora, I again charge you not to let any one know this history until I choose to divulge it, for so it behoves my office.” Then embracing Preciosa he went to the prison where Don Juan was confined, and entered his cell, not allowing any one to accompany him.

He found the prisoner with both legs in fetters, handcuffed, and with the iron fork not yet removed from beneath his chin. The cell was dark, only a scanty

gleam of light passing into it from a loop-hole near the top of the wall. "How goes it, sorry knave?" said the corregidor, as he entered. "I would I had all the gipsies in Spain leashed here together to finish them all at once, as Nero would have beheaded all Rome at a single blow. Know, thou thief, who art so sensitive on the point of honour, that I am the corregidor of this city, and come to know from thee if thy betrothed is a gitanilla who is here with the rest of you?"

Hearing this Andrew imagined that the corregidor had surely fallen in love with Preciosa; for jealousy is a subtle thing, and enters other bodies without breaking or dividing them. He replied, however, "If she has said that I am her betrothed, it is very true; and, if she has said I am not her betrothed, she has also spoken the truth; for it is not possible that Preciosa should utter a falsehood."

"Is she so truthful then?" said the corregidor. "It is no slight thing to be so and be a gitana. Well, my lad, she has said that she is your betrothed, but that she has not yet given you her hand; she knows that you must die for your crime, and she has entreated me to marry her to you before you die, that she may have the honour of being the widow of so great a thief as yourself."

"Then, let your worship do as she has requested," said Andrew; "for so I be married to her, I will go content to the other world, leaving this one with the name of being hers."

"You must love her very much?"

"So much," replied the prisoner, "that whatever I could say of it would be nothing to the truth. In a word, señor corregidor, let my business be despatched. I killed the man who insulted me; I adore this young gitana; I shall die content if I die in her grace, and God's I know will not be wanting to us, for we have both observed honourably and strictly the promise we made each other."

"This night then I will send for you," said the corregidor, "and you shall marry Preciosa in my house, and to-morrow morning you shall be on the gallows. In this way I shall have complied with the demands of justice and with the desire of you both." Andrew thanked him; the corregidor returned home, and told his wife what had passed between them.

During his absence Preciosa had related to her mother the whole course of her life; and how she had always believed she was a gipsy and the old woman's granddaughter; but that at the same time she had always esteemed herself much more than might have been expected of a gitana. Her mother bade her say truly, was she very fond of Don Juan? With great bashfulness and with downcast eyes she replied that, having considered herself a gipsy, and that she should better her condition by marrying a knight of Santiago, and one of such station as Don Juan de Cárcamo, and having, moreover, learned by experience his good disposition and honourable conduct, she had sometimes looked upon him with the eyes of

affection; but that as she had said once for all, she had no other will than that which her parents might approve.

Night arrived; and about ten they took Andrew out of prison without handcuffs and fetters, but not without a great chain with which his body was bound from head to foot. In this way he arrived, unseen by any but those who had charge of him, in the corregidor's house, was silently and cautiously admitted into a room, and there left alone. A confessor presently entered and bade him confess, as he was to die next day. "With great pleasure I will confess," replied Andrew; "but why do they not marry me first? And if I am to be married, truly it is a sad bridal chamber that awaits me."

Doña Guiomar, who heard all this, told her husband that the terrors he was inflicting on Don Juan were excessive, and begged he would moderate them, lest they should cost him his life. The corregidor assented, and called out to the confessor that he should first marry the gipsy to Preciosa, after which the prisoner would confess, and commend himself with all his heart to God, who often rains down his mercies at the moment when hope is most parched and withering. Andrew was then removed to a room where there was no one but Doña Guiomar, the corregidor, Preciosa, and two servants of the family. But when Preciosa saw Don Juan in chains, his face all bloodless, and his eyes dimmed with recent weeping, her heart sank within her, and she clutched her mother's arm for support. "Cheer up, my child," said the corregidora, kissing her, "for all you now see will turn to your pleasure and advantage." Knowing nothing of what was intended, Preciosa could not console herself; the old gipsy was sorely disturbed, and the bystanders awaited the issue in anxious suspense.

"Señor Vicar," said the corregidor, "this gitano and gitana are the persons whom your reverence is to marry."

"That I cannot do," replied the priest, "unless the ceremony be preceded by the formalities required in such cases. Where have the banns been published? Where is the license of my superior, authorising the espousals?"

"The inadvertance has been mine," said the corregidor; "but I will undertake to get the license from the bishop's deputy."

"Until it comes then, your worships will excuse me," said the priest, and without another word, to avoid scandal, he quitted the house, leaving them all in confusion.

"The padre has done quite right," said the corregidor, "and it may be that it was by heaven's providence, to the end that Andrew's execution might be postponed; for married to Preciosa he shall assuredly be, but first the banns must be published, and thus time will be gained, and time often works a happy issue out of the worst difficulties. Now I want to know from Andrew, should matters

take such a turn, that without any more of those shocks and perturbations, he should become the husband of Preciosa, would he consider himself a happy man, whether as Andrew Caballero, or as Don Juan de Cárcamo?"

As soon as Don Juan heard himself called by his true name, he said, "Since Preciosa has not chosen to confine herself to silence, and has discovered to you who I am, I say to you, that though my good fortune should make me monarch of the world, she would still be the sole object of my desires; nor would I aspire to have any blessing besides, save that of heaven."

"Now for this good spirit you have shown, Señor Don Juan de Cárcamo, I will in fitting time make Preciosa your lawful wife, and at present I bestow her upon you in that expectation, as the richest jewel of my house, my life, and my soul; for in her I bestow upon you Doña Constanza de Acevedo Menesis, my only daughter, who, if she equals you in love, is nowise inferior to you in birth."

Andrew was speechless with astonishment, while in a few words Doña Guiomar related the loss of her daughter, her recovery, and the indisputable proofs which the old gipsy woman had given of the kidnapping. More amazed than ever, but filled with immeasurable joy, Don Juan embraced his father and mother-in-law, called them his parents and señores, and kissed Preciosa's hands, whose tears called forth his own. The secret was no longer kept; the news was spread abroad by the servants who had been present, and reached the ears of the alcalde, the dead man's uncle, who saw himself debarred of all hope of vengeance, since the rigour of justice could not be inflicted on the corregidor's son-in-law. Don Juan put on the travelling dress which the old woman had preserved; his prison and his iron chain were exchanged for liberty and chains of gold; and the sadness of the incarcerated gipsies was turned into joy, for they were all bailed out on the following day. The uncle of the dead man received a promise of two thousand ducats on condition of his abandoning the suit and forgiving Don Juan. The latter, not forgetting his comrade Clement, sent at once in quest of him, but he was not to be found, nor could anything be learned of him until four days after, when authentic intelligence was obtained that he had embarked in one of two Genoese galleys that lay in the port of Cartagena, and had already sailed. The corregidor informed Don Juan, that he had ascertained that his father, Don Francisco de Cárcano, had been appointed corregidor of that city, and that it would be well to wait until the nuptials could be celebrated with his consent and approbation. Don Juan was desirous to conform to the corregidor's wishes, but said that before all things he must be made one with Preciosa. The archbishop granted his license, requiring that the banns should be published only once.

The city made a festival on the wedding-day, the corregidor being much liked,

and there were illuminations, bullfights, and tournaments. The old woman remained in the house of her pretended grandchild, not choosing to part from Preciosa. The news reached Madrid, and Don Francisco de Cárcamo learned that the gipsy bridegroom was his son, and that Preciosa was the gitanilla he had seen in his house. Her beauty was an excuse in his eyes for the levity of his son, whom he had supposed to be lost, having ascertained that he had not gone to Flanders. Besides, he was the more reconciled when he found what a good match Don Juan had made with the daughter of so great and wealthy a cavalier as was Don Fernando de Acevedo. He hastened his departure in order to see his children, and within twenty days he was in Murcia. His arrival renewed the general joy; the lives of the pair were related, and the poets of that city, which numbers some very good ones, took it upon them to celebrate the extraordinary event along with the incomparable beauty of the gitanilla; and the licentiate Pozo wrote in such wise, that Preciosa's fame will endure in his verses whilst the world lasts. I forgot to mention that the enamoured damsel of the inn owned that the charge of theft she had preferred against Andrew was not true, and confessed her love and her crime, for which she was not visited with any punishment, because the joyous occasion extinguished revenge and resuscitated clemency.

## THE GENEROUS LOVER.

“O lamentable ruins of the ill-fated Nicosia, still moist with the blood of your valorous and unfortunate defenders! Were you capable of feeling, we might jointly bewail our disasters in this solitude, and perhaps find some relief for our sorrows in mutually declaring them. A hope may remain that your dismantled towers may rise again, though not for so just a defence as that in which they fell; but I, unfortunate! what good can I hope for in my wretched distress, even should I return to my former state? Such is my hard fate, that in freedom I was without happiness, and in captivity I have no hope of it.”

These words were uttered by a captive Christian as he gazed from an eminence on the ruined walls of Nicosia; and thus he talked with them, comparing his miseries with theirs, as if they could understand him, — a common habit with the afflicted, who, carried away by their imaginations, say and do things inconsistent with all sense and reason. Meanwhile there issued from a pavilion or tent, of which there were four pitched in the plain, a young Turk, of good-humoured and graceful appearance, who approached the Christian, saying, “I will lay a wager, friend Ricardo, that the gloomy thoughts you are continually ruminating have led you to this place.”

“It is true,” replied Ricardo, for that was the captive’s name; “but what avails it, since, go where I will, I find no relief from them; on the contrary, the sight of yonder ruins have given them increased force.”

“You mean the ruins of Nicosia?”

“Of course I do, since there are no others visible here.”

“Such a sight as that might well move you to tears,” said the Turk; “for any one who saw this famous and plenteous isle of Cyprus about two years ago, when its inhabitants enjoyed all the felicity that is granted to mortals, and who now sees them exiled from it, or captive and wretched, how would it be possible not to mourn over its calamity? But let us talk no more of these things, for which there is no remedy, and speak of your own, for which I would fain find one. Now I entreat you, by what you owe me for the good-will I have shown you, and for the fact that we are of the same country, and were brought up together in boyhood, that you tell me what is the cause of your inordinate sadness. For even, admitting that captivity alone is enough to sadden the most cheerful heart in the world, yet I imagine that your sorrows have a deeper source; for generous spirits like yours do not yield to ordinary misfortunes so

much as to betray extraordinary grief on account of them. Besides, I know that you are not so poor as to be unable to pay the sum demanded for your ransom; nor are you shut up in the castles of the Black Sea as a captive of consideration, who late or never obtains the liberty he sighs for. Since, then, you are not deprived of the hope of freedom, and yet manifest such deep despondency, I cannot help thinking that it proceeds from some other cause than the loss of your liberty. I entreat you to tell me what is that cause, and I offer you my help to the utmost of my means and power. Who knows but that it was in order that I might serve you that fortune induced me to wear this dress which I abhor.

“You know, Ricardo, that my master is the *cadi* (which is the same thing as the bishop) of this city. You know, too, how great is his power, and my influence with him. Moreover, you are not ignorant of the ardent desire I feel not to die in this creed, which I nominally profess; but if it can be done in no other way, I propose to confess and publicly cry aloud my faith in Jesus Christ, from which I lapsed by reason of my youth and want of understanding. Such a confession I know will cost me my life, which I will give freely, that I may not lose my soul. From all this I would have you infer, and be assured, that my friendship may be of some use to you. But that I may know what remedies or palliations your case may admit of, it is necessary that you explain it to me, as the sick man does to the doctor, taking my word for it, that I will maintain the strictest secrecy concerning it.”

Ricardo, who had listened in silence all this while, finding himself at last obliged to reply, did so as follows: “If, as you have guessed rightly, respecting my misfortune, friend Mahmoud,” (that was the Turk’s name,) “so also you could hit upon the remedy for it, I should think my liberty well lost, and would not exchange my mischance for the greatest imaginable good fortune. But I know that it is such, that though all the world should know the cause whence it proceeds, no one ever would make bold to find for it a remedy, or even an alleviation. That you may be satisfied of this truth, I will relate my story to you, as briefly as I can; but before I enter upon the confused labyrinth of my woes, tell me what is the reason why my master, Hassan Pasha, has caused these pavilions to be pitched here in the plain, before he enters Nicosia, to which he has been appointed pasha, as the Turks call their viceroys.”

“I will satisfy you briefly,” replied Mahmoud. “You must know, then, that it is the custom among the Turks, for those who are sent as viceroys of any province, not to enter the city in which their predecessor dwells until he quits it, and leaves the new comer to take up his residence freely; and when the new pasha has done so, the old one remains encamped beyond the walls, waiting the result of the inquiry into his administration, which is made without his being able to interfere,

and avail himself of bribery or affection, unless he has done so beforehand. The result of the inquiry, enrolled on a sealed parchment, is then given to the departing pasha, and this he must present to the Sublime Porte, that is to say, the court in front of the grand council of the Turk. It is then read by the vizier pasha and the four lesser pashas, (or, as we should say, by the president and members of the royal council,) who punish or reward the bearer according to its contents; though, if these are not favourable, he buys off his punishment with money. If there is no accusation against him, and he is not rewarded, as commonly happens, he obtains by means of presents the post he most desires; for, at that court, offices are not bestowed by merit, but for money; everything is bought and sold. The bestowers of office fleece the receivers; but he who purchases a post, makes enough by it to purchase another which promises more profit.

“Everything proceeds as I tell you; in this empire all is violence: a fact which betokens that it will not be durable; but, as I full surely believe, it is our sins that uphold it, the sins, I mean, of those who imprudently and forwardly offend God, as I am doing: may he forgive me in his mercy!

“It is, then, for the reason I have stated that your master, Hassan Pasha, has been encamped here four days, and if the Pasha of Nicosia has not come out as he should have done, it is because he has been very ill. But he is now better, and he will come out to-day or to-morrow without fail, and lodge in some tents behind this hill, which you have not seen, after which your master will immediately enter the city. And now I have replied to the question you put to me.”

“Listen, then, to my story,” said Ricardo, “but I know not if I shall be able to fulfil my promise to be brief, since my misfortune is so vast that it cannot be comprised within any reasonable compass of words. However, I will do what I may and as time allows. Let me ask you, in the first place, if you knew in our town of Trapani, a young lady whom fame pronounced to be the most beautiful woman in Sicily? A young lady, I say, of whom the most ingenious tongues, and the choicest wits declared that her beauty was the most perfect ever known in past ages or the present, or that may be looked for in the future. One, of whom the poets sang that she had hair of gold, that her eyes were two shining suns, her cheeks roses, her teeth pearls, her lips rubies, her neck alabaster; and that every part of her made with the whole, and the whole with every part, a marvellous harmony and consonance, nature diffusing all over her such an exquisite sweetness of tone and colour, that envy itself could not find a fault in her. How is it possible, Mahmoud, that you have not already named her? Surely you have either not listened to me, or when you were in Trapani you wanted common sensibility.”



“In truth, Ricardo,” replied Mahmoud, “if she whom you have depicted in such glowing colours is not Leonisa, the daughter of Rodolfo Florencio, I know not who she is, for that lady alone was famed as you have described.”

“Leonisa it is, Mahmoud,” exclaimed Ricardo; “Leonisa is the sole cause of all my bliss and all my sorrow; it is for her, and not for the loss of liberty, that my eyes pour forth incessant tears, my sighs kindle the air, and my wailings weary heaven and the ears of men. It is she who makes me appear in your eyes a madman, or at least a being devoid of energy and spirit. This Leonisa, so cruel to me, was not so to another, and this is the cause of my present miserable plight. For you must know that, from my childhood, or at least from the time I was capable of understanding, I not only loved, but adored and worshipped her, as though I knew no other deity on earth. Her parents and relations were aware of my affection for her, and never showed signs of disapproving it, for they knew that my designs were honourable and virtuous; and I know that they often said as much to Leonisa, in order to dispose her to receive me as her betrothed; but she had set her heart on Cornelio, the son of Ascanio Rotulo, whom you well know — a spruce young gallant, *point-de-vice* in his attire, with white hands, curly locks, mellifluous voice, amorous discourse — made up, in short, of amber and sugar-paste, garnished with plumes and brocade. She never cared to bestow a look on my less dainty face, nor to be touched in the least by my assiduous courtship; but repaid all my affection with disdain and abhorrence; whilst my love for her grew to such an extreme, that I should have deemed my fate most blest if she had killed me by her scorn, provided she did not bestow open, though maidenly, favours on Cornelio. Imagine the anguish of my soul, thus lacerated by her disdain, and tortured by the most cruel jealousy. Leonisa’s father and mother winked at her preference for Cornelio, believing, as they well might, that the youth, fascinated by her incomparable beauty, would chose her for his wife, and thus they should have a wealthier son-in-law than myself. That he might have been; but they would not have had one (without arrogance, be it said) of better birth than myself, or of nobler sentiments or more approved worth.

“Well, in the course of my wooing, I learned one day last May, that is to say, about a year ago, that Leonisa and her parents, Cornelio and his, accompanied by all their relations and servants had gone to enjoy themselves in Ascanio’s garden, close to the sea shore on the road to the Saltpits.

“I know the place well,” interrupted Mahmoud, “and passed many a merry day there in better times. Go on, Ricardo.”

“The moment I received information of this party, such an infernal fury of jealousy possessed my soul that I was utterly distraught, as you will see, by what I straightway did; and that was to go to the garden, where I found the whole

party taking their pleasure, and Cornelio and Leonisa seated together under a nopal-tree, a little apart from the rest.

“What were their sensations on seeing me I know not, all I know is that my own were such that a cloud came over my sight, and I was like a statue without power of speech or motion. But this torpor soon gave way to choler, which roused my heart’s blood, and unlocked my hands and my tongue. My hands indeed were for a while restrained by respect for that divine face before me; but my tongue at least broke silence.

“‘Now hast thou thy heart’s content,’ I cried, ‘O mortal enemy of my repose, thine eyes resting with so much composure on the object that makes mine a perpetual fountain of tears! Closer to him! Closer to him, cruel girl! Cling like ivy round that worthless trunk. Comb and part the locks of that new Ganymede, thy lukewarm admirer. Give thyself up wholly to the capricious boy on whom thy gaze is fixed, so that losing all hope of winning thee I may lose too the life I abhor. Dost thou imagine, proud, thoughtless girl, that the laws and usages which are acknowledged in such cases by all mankind, are to give way for thee alone? Dost thou imagine that this boy, puffed up with his wealth, vain of his looks, presuming upon his birth, inexperienced from his youth, can preserve constancy in love, or be capable of estimating the inestimable, or know what riper years and experience know? Do not think it. One thing alone is good in this world, to act always consistently, so that no one be deceived unless it be by his own ignorance. In extreme youth there is much inconstancy; in the rich there is pride; in the arrogant, vanity; in men who value themselves on their beauty, there is disdain; and in one who unites all these in himself, there is a fatuity which is the mother of all mischief.

“‘As for thee, boy, who thinkest to carry off so safely a prize more due to my earnest love than to thy idle philandering, why dost thou not rise from that flowery bank, and tear from my bosom the life which so abhors thine? And that not for the insult thou puttest upon myself, but because thou knowest not how to prize the blessing which fortune bestows upon thee. ’Tis plain, indeed, how little thou esteemest it, since thou wilt not budge to defend it for fear of ruffling the finical arrangement of thy pretty attire. Had Achilles been of as placid temper as thou art, Ulysses would certainly have failed in his attempt, for all his show of glittering arms and burnished helmets. Go, play among thy mother’s maids; they will help thee to dress thy locks and take care of those dainty hands that are fitter to wind silk than to handle a sword.’

“In spite of all these taunts Cornelio never stirred from his seat, but remained perfectly still, staring at me as if he was bewitched. The loud tones in which I spoke had brought round us all the people who were walking in the garden, and

they arrived in time to hear me assail Cornelio with many other opprobrious terms. Plucking up heart, at last, from the presence of numbers, most of whom were his relations, servants, or friends, he made a show as if he would rise; but before he was on his feet my sword was out, and I attacked not him only but all who were before me. The moment Leonisa saw the gleam of my sword she swooned away, which only exasperated my frantic rage. I know not whether it was that those whom I assailed contented themselves with acting on the defensive as against a raving madman, or that it was my own good luck and adroitness, or Heaven's design to reserve me for greater ills, but the fact was that I wounded seven or eight of those who came under my hand. As for Cornelio, he made such good use of his heels that he escaped me.

"In this imminent danger, surrounded by enemies who were now incensed to vengeance, I was saved by an extraordinary chance; but better would it have been to have lost my life on the spot than to be saved in order to suffer hourly death. On a sudden the garden was invaded by a great number of Turkish corsairs, who had landed in the neighbourhood without being perceived by the sentinels in the castles on the coast, or by our cruisers. As soon as my antagonists descried them they left me, and escaped with all speed. Of all the persons in the garden the Turks captured only three, besides Leonisa, who was still in her swoon. As for me, I fell into their hands after receiving four ugly wounds, which, however, I had revenged by laying four Turks dead upon the ground.

"The Turks having effected this onslaught with their usual expedition, returned to their galleys, ill-satisfied with a success which had cost them so dear. Having set sail they quickly arrived at Fabiana, where mustering their hands to see who was missing, they found that they had lost four Levantine soldiers whom they esteemed their best men. They resolved to revenge the loss on me, and the commander of the galley immediately ordered the yard-arm to be lowered in order to hang me. Leonisa was present at all this. She had come to her senses, and seeing herself in the power of the corsairs, she stood weeping and wringing her delicate hands, without saying a word, but listening if she could understand what was said by the Turks. One of the Christian slaves at the oar told her in Italian that the captain had ordered that Christian to be hanged, pointing to me, because he had killed in his own defence four of the best soldiers belonging to the galley. On hearing this, Leonisa (it was the first time she showed any pity for me) bade the captive tell the Turks not to hang me, for they would lose a large ransom, but return at once, to Trapani, where it would be paid them. This, I say, was the first, as it will also be the last mark of compassion bestowed on me by Leonisa, and all for my greater woe.

“The Turks believed what the captive told them: interest got the better of their resentment, and they returned next morning with a flag of peace. I passed a night of the greatest anguish, not so much from the pain of my wounds, as from thinking of the danger in which my fair and cruel enemy was placed among those barbarians. When we arrived at the town one galley entered the port, the other remained in the offing. The Christian inhabitants lined the whole shore, and the effeminate Cornelio stood watching from a distance what was going on in the galley. My steward immediately came to treat for my ransom, and I told him on no account to bargain for it but for that of Leonisa, for which he should offer all I was worth. I furthermore ordered him to return to shore, and toll Leonisa’s parents that they might leave it to him to treat for their daughter’s liberation, and give themselves no trouble about the matter.

“The chief captain, who was a Greek renegade named Yusuf, demanded six thousand crowns for Leonisa and four thousand for me, adding that he would not give up the one without the other. He asked this large sum, as I afterwards ascertained, because he was in love with Leonisa, and did not wish to ransom her, but to give me and a thousand crowns to boot to the other captain, with whom he was bound to share equally whatever prizes they made, and to keep Leonisa for himself as valued at five thousand crowns. It was for this reason that he appraised us both at ten thousand.

“Leonisa’s parents made no offer at all, relying on my promise, nor did Cornelio so much as open his lips on the matter. After much bargaining my steward agreed to pay five thousand crowns for Leonisa and three for me, and Yusuf accepted this offer at the persuasion of the other captain and of all his men. But as my agent had not so large an amount in ready money, he asked for three days to get it in, being resolved to expend all I possessed rather than fail to rescue us. Yusuf was glad of this, thinking that something might possibly occur in the interval to prevent the completion of the bargain, and he departed for the isle of Fabiana, saying that in three days he would return for the money. But fortune, never weary of persecuting me, ordained that a Turkish sentinel descried from the highest point of the island, far out at sea, six vessels which appeared to be either the Maltese squadron or one belonging to Sicily. He ran down to give warning, and as quick as thought the Turks who were on shore, some cooking their dinners, some washing their linen, embarked again, heaved anchor, got out their oars, hoisted sail, and heading in the direction of Barbary, in less than two hours lost sight of the galleys. I leave you to conjecture, friend Mahmoud, what I suffered in that voyage, so contrary to my expectation, and more when we arrived the following day at the south-west of the isle of Pantanalea. There the Turks landed, and the two captains began to divide all the prizes they had made.

All this was for me a lingering death.

“When Leonisa’s turn and mine came, Yusuf gave Fatallah (the other captain) myself and six other Christians, four of them fit for the oar, and two very handsome Corsican boys, as an equivalent for Leonisa, whom he himself retained; Fatallah being content with that arrangement. I was present at all this, but knew not what they said, though I saw what they did, nor should I have then understood the nature of the partition, had not Fatallah come up to me and said in Italian, ‘Christian, you now belong to me; you have cost me two thousand crowns; if you desire your liberty you must pay me four thousand, or else die here.’ I asked him if the Christian maiden was his also. He said she was not, but that Yusuf had kept her with the intention to make her a Moor and marry her; and this was true, for I was told the same thing by one of the Christian rowers, who understood Turkish very well, and had overheard the conversation that had passed between Yusuf and Fatallah. I told my master to take measures for possessing himself of the maiden, and that I would give him for her ransom alone ten thousand gold crowns. He replied that it was impossible, but he would let Yusuf know the large sum I had offered for the Christian girl, and perhaps he would be tempted to change his intention and ransom her. He did so, and ordered all his crew to go on board again immediately, for he intended to sail to Tripoli, to which city he belonged. Yusuf also determined to make for Biserta, and they all embarked with as much speed as they use when they discover galleys to give them chase or merchant craft to plunder. They had reason for this haste, for the weather seemed to be changing, and to threaten a storm.

“Leonisa was ashore, but not where I could see her, until just as we were embarking we met at the water side. Her new master and newer lover led her by the hand, and as she set foot on the ladder that reached from the shore to the galley, she turned her eyes upon me. Mine were fixed on her, and such a pang of mingled tenderness and grief came over me that a mist overspread my eyes, and I fell senseless on the ground. I was told afterwards that Leonisa was affected in the same way, for she fell off the ladder into the sea, into which Yusuf plunged after her and brought her out in his arms. This was told me in my master’s galley into which I had been carried insensible. When I came to my senses, and found myself there, and saw the other galley steering a different course and carrying off the half of my soul or rather the whole of it, my heart sank within me again; again I cursed my unhappy fate, and clamorously invoked! death, till my master, annoyed by my loud lamentations, threatened me with a great stick if I did not hold my tongue. I restrained my tears and groans, believing that the force with which I compressed them would make them burst a passage for my soul, which so longed to quit this miserable body. But my misfortune did not end here. The

storm which had been foreseen suddenly burst upon us. The wind veered round to the south and blew in our teeth with such violence that we were forced to quit our course and run before it.

“It was the captain’s intention to make for the island and take shelter under its northern shore, but in this he was disappointed; for such was the fury of the storm that although before it we had been making way continually for two days and nights, yet in little more than fourteen hours we saw ourselves again within six or seven miles of the island, and driving helplessly against it, not where the shore was low, but just where the rocks were highest and threatened us with inevitable death. We saw near us the other galley, on board of which was Leonisa, and all its Turk and captive rowers straining every nerve to keep themselves off the rocks. Ours did the same, but with more success than the crew of our consort, who, spent with toil, and vanquished in the desperate struggle with the elements, let fall their oars, and suffered themselves to drift ashore, where the galley struck with such violence that it was dashed to pieces before our eyes.

“Night began to close in, and such were the shrieks of those who were drowning, and the alarm of those on board our galley, that none of our captain’s orders were heard or executed. All the crew did, was to keep fast hold of their oars, turn the vessel’s head to the wind, and let go two anchors, in hopes to delay for a little while the death that seemed certain. Whilst all were in dread of dying, with me it was quite the reverse; for in the fallacious hope of seeing in the other world her who had so lately departed from this, every instant the galley delayed to founder or drive ashore was to me an age of agony. I watched every billow that dashed by us and over us, to see if they bore the body of the unfortunate Leonisa. I will not detain you, Mahmoud, with a recital of the tortures that distracted my soul in that long and bitter night; it is enough to say that they were such that had death come, it would have had little to do in bereaving me of life.

“Day broke with every appearance of worse weather than ever, and we found that our vessel had shifted its course considerably, having drifted away from the rocks and approached a point of the island. Setting all of us to work, both Turks and Christians, with renewed hope and strength, in six hours we doubled the point, and found ourselves in calmer water, so that we could better use our oars; and the Turks saw a prospect of going on shore to see if there were any remains of the galley that had been wrecked the night before. But Heaven denied me the consolation I hoped for in seeing in my arms the body of Leonisa. I asked a renegade, who was about to land, to look for it and see if it had been cast on the strand. But, as I have said, Heaven denied me this consolation, for at that moment the wind rose with such fresh fury that the shelter of the island was no

longer of any avail to us.

“Seeing this, Fatallah would no longer strive against the fortune that so persecuted him. He ordered some sail to be spread, turned the prow to the sea and the poop to the wind, and himself taking the helm, let the vessel run over the wide sea, secure of not being crossed in his way by any impediment. The oars were all placed in their regular positions, the whole crew was seated on the benches, and no one else was seen on foot in the whole galley but the boatswain, who had lashed himself strongly amidship for his greater security. The vessel flew so swiftly that in three days and nights, passing in sight of Trapani, Melazo, and Palermo, she entered the straits of Messina, to the dismay of all on board, and of the spectators on shore. Not to be as long-winded as the storm that buffeted us, I will only say that wearied, famishing, and exhausted by such a long run, almost all round the island of Sicily, we arrived at Tripoli, where my master, before he had divided the booty with his partners, and accounted to the king for one-fifth part, according to custom, was seized with such a pleurisy that in three days it carried him off to hell.

“The king of Tripoli, and the alcaide of the Grand Turk, who, as you know, is heir to all those who die without natural heirs, immediately took possession of all Fatallah’s effects. I became the property of the then viceroy of Tripoli, who a fortnight afterwards received the patent appointing him viceroy of Cyprus, and hither I am come with him without any intention of redeeming myself. He has often told me to do so, since I am a man of station, as Fatallah’s soldiers informed him; I have never complied, but have declared that he was deceived by those who had exaggerated my means. If you would have me tell you my whole purpose, Mahmoud, you must know that I desire not to turn in any direction in which I may find any sort of consolation, but that the sad thoughts and memories which have never left me since the death of Leonisa may become so identified with my captive life that it may never afford me the least pleasure. And if it is true that continual sorrow must at last wear out itself, or him who suffers it, mine cannot fail to wear me out, for I am resolved to give it such free scope that in a few days it shall put an end to the wretched life I endure so unwillingly.

“This is, brother Mahmoud, my sad story; this is the cause of my sighs and tears; judge now if it is enough to draw them forth from my inmost vitals, and to engender them in the desolation of my afflicted heart, Leonisa is dead, and with her all my hope; and though whilst she lived it hung by the merest thread, yet, yet— “

Here the speaker’s voice faltered, so that he could not utter another word, or restrain the tears which coursed each other down his cheeks so fast that they bedewed the ground. Mahmoud mingled his own with them; and when the

paroxysm had somewhat abated, he tried to console Ricardo with the best suggestions he could offer; but the mourner cut them short, saying, "What you have to do, friend, is to advise me how I shall contrive to fall into disgrace with my master, and with all those I have to do with, so that, being abhorred by him and by them, I may be so maltreated and persecuted that I may find the death I so much long for."

"I have now," said Mahmoud, "experienced the truth of the common saying, that what is deeply felt is well expressed, though it is true that sometimes excess of feeling paralyses the tongue. Be that as it may, friend Ricardo, — whether your woes inspire your language, or your language exalts your woes, — you shall always find in me a true friend, to aid or to counsel, though my youth, and the folly I committed in assuming this garb, cry aloud that I am little to be relied on in this capacity. I will try, however, to prove that such a conclusion is unfounded; and though you do not desire either counsel or help, I will not the more desist from doing what your case requires, just as people give a sick man not what he asks for, but what is good for him. There is no one who has more power and influence in this city than my master, the Cadi; not even your own master, who comes to it as viceroy, will have so much. This being the case, I may say that I am the most powerful person here, since I can do what I please with my master. I mention this because it may be that I shall so contrive with him that you shall become his property, and being constantly with me, time will tell us what we had best do, both for your consolation, if you will or can be consoled, and to enable me to exchange the life I lead here for a better one."

"I thank you, Mahmoud, for the friendship you offer me," replied Ricardo, "though I well know that, do what you may, it will avail nothing. But let us quit this subject, and go to the tents, for, as I perceive, great numbers of people are coming forth from the city; no doubt it is the old viceroy who is quitting it to give place to my master."

"It is so," said Mahmoud. "Come then, Ricardo, and you will see the ceremony of the reception."

"Come on," said Ricardo; "perhaps I shall have need of you, if the superintendent of my master's slaves have missed me, for he is a Corsican renegade of no very tender heart."

Here the conversation ended, and the two friends reached the tents, just as the new pasha was coming out to receive his predecessor, Ali Pasha. The latter came attended by all the janissaries who have formed the garrison of Nicosia ever since the Turks have had possession of it, in number about five hundred. They marched in two divisions, the one armed with guns, the other with drawn scimeters. Arrived at the tent of Hassan, the new Pasha, they all surrounded it.



Ali made a low obeisance to Hassan, who returned the salutation, but did not bow so low. Ali then entered Hassan's tent, and the Turks placed the new Pasha on a powerful steed, richly caparisoned, and led him round the tents, and up and down the plain; vociferating in their own language, "Long live Sultan Soliman, and Hassan Pasha, his representative!" which cry they frequently repeated, and each time louder and louder. This part of the ceremony being ended, they brought Hassan back to Ali's tent, where the two pashas and the cadi remained alone together for an hour to consult, as Mahmoud informed Ricardo, as to what was to be done upon some works which Ali had begun. Afterwards the cadi appeared at the door of the tent, and proclaimed in Turkish, Arabic, and Greek, that all who desired to crave justice or make any other appeal against Ali Pasha, might now enter freely, for there was Hassan Pasha, sent by the Grand Signor to be viceroy of Cyprus, who would accord them all reason and justice.

In conformity with this permission the janissaries opened a passage to the door of the tent, and every one entered who pleased. Mahmoud made Ricardo go in along with him, for being Hassan's slave his entrance was not opposed. Several Greek Christians and some Turks appeared as appellants, but all upon such trifling matters, that the cadi despatched most of them without the formality of written declarations, rejoinders, and replications. It is, in fact, the custom of the Turks that all causes, except those which relate to marriage, shall be immediately and summarily decided, rather by the rules of common sense than of legal precedent; and among these barbarians (if such they are in this respect) the cadi is the sole judge in all cases, cuts short the pleadings, gives sentence in a breath, and there is no appeal from his decision. Presently a khawass (that is to say, a Turkish alguazil) entered and said that a Jew stood without, at the door of the tent, with a most beautiful Christian maiden for sale. The cadi gave orders to admit him. The khawass withdrew and immediately returned, accompanied by a Jew of venerable appearance, who led by the hand a young woman clothed in the Moorish dress, which became her so well that the most richly arrayed women of Fez or Morocco could not be compared with her, though in the art of adorning themselves they surpass all the other women of Africa, not excepting even those of Algiers, with all their profusion of pearls.

The face of the female slave was covered with a mask of crimson taffety. On her naked ankles she wore two rings, apparently of pure gold; and two others, set with large pearls, on her arms, which shone through the sleeves of a transparent camisole. Her whole dress was rich, gay, and graceful. Struck by her appearance, the first thing the cadi and the pashas did, was to bid the Jew make the Christian uncover her face. She did so, and disclosed a countenance which, like the sun bursting through thick clouds which have long obscured it, dazzled the eyes and

gladdened the hearts of the beholders. But on none did that marvellous light produce such an effect as on the woe-worn Ricardo, for he saw before him no other than his cruel and beloved Leonisa, whom he had so often and with such bitter tears bewailed as dead.

At the unexpected sight of such unparalleled loveliness, Ali felt his heart transfixed; Hassan's was pierced with as deep a wound; nor did the *cadi's* escape scatheless, but, even more deeply smitten than the two pashas, he could not take his eyes off the Christian's face. All three were seized at the same moment with an absolute determination to possess her; and without stopping to inquire how, or where, or when, she had come into the hands of the Jew, they bade him name her price. Four thousand *doblas*, he replied. The words were no sooner out of the Jew's mouth than Ali Pasha said he would give the price, and that the Jew had only to go to his tent to fetch the money. Hassan Pasha, however, who looked as if he had no mind to lose her, though she were to cost him his life, interposed and said, "I myself will give the four thousand *doblas* demanded by the Jew, though I would not interfere with Ali's bargain or oppose his wishes, were I not compelled by motives the imperious force and obligation of which he will himself acknowledge. This exquisitely beautiful slave is not for us, but for the Grand Signor alone, and therefore I say that I purchase her in his name. Let us see now who will be so bold as to dispute the purchase with me."

"That will I," replied Ali, "for it is for that very purpose I buy her of the Jew; and it suits me the better to make the present to his Highness, as I have the opportunity of taking her to Constantinople in a few days, and thus winning the favour of the Sultan; for being, as you see, Hassan, a man without employment, I must seek means for obtaining one; whereas, you are secure in that respect for three years, since to-day you enter upon the government of this rich realm of Cyprus. On these grounds, and as I was the first to offer the price demanded for the slave, it stands to reason, Hassan, that you should yield her to me."

"The satisfaction I shall feel in purchasing and sending her to the Sultan," said Hassan, "is so much the greater, as I shall do it without being prompted by any motives of interest whatever. And as for a convenient means of sending her to Constantinople, she shall go thither in a galley manned only by my own slaves."

Ali now started up in wrath, and, clutching his scimeter, cried out, "Since we both intend the same thing, Hassan, namely, to present this Christian to the Grand Signor, and since I was the first purchaser, reason and justice require that you should leave her to me; if you will not, this blade in my hand shall defend my right, and punish your audacity."

The *cadi*, who had been closely watching this contest, and who was himself no less inflamed with desire than either of the pashas, bethought him how he

might remain possessor of the prize, without giving any cause to suspect his insidious designs. Rising therefore to his feet, he stepped between the two angry pashas. "Be quiet, Hassan," he said; "calm yourself, Ali; here am I who can and will arrange your differences in such wise that you shall both have your intentions fulfilled, the Sultan shall be gratified as you desire, and shall be under obligations to you both alike for your loyal and acceptable homage."

The two pashas submitted at once to the cadì, as they would have done even had the terms he imposed appeared harder to them, such is the respect which is paid to their elders by those of that accursed sect. The cadì then continued his address to them. "Ali," said he, "you say that you want this Christian to present her to the Grand Signor; and Hassan says the same. You allege that, having been the first to offer the price required, she ought to be yours; but Hassan denies this; and though he does not know how to assign valid grounds for his claim, yet I find that he has the same as yourself, namely, the intention, which doubtless must have arisen within him at the same time as within yourself, to purchase the slave for the self-same purpose; only you had the advantage of him in being the first to declare yourself. This, however, is no reason why he should be out and out defrauded of the benefit of his good-will, and therefore I am of opinion that it will be well to arrange matters between you in this wise: let the slave be bought by you both; and since she is to belong to the Grand Signor, for whom you buy her, it will be for him to dispose of her. Meanwhile, you Hassan shall pay two thousand doblas, and you Ali another two thousand, and the slave shall remain in my custody, so that I may send her in the name of you both to Constantinople, and thus I too shall not be without some reward for my presence and aid on this occasion. Accordingly, I undertake to send her at my own cost in a style worthy of the great sovereign to whom she is to be presented; and I will write to the Grand Signor a true account of all that has occurred here, and of the good-will you have shown in his service."

The two enamoured pashas could find no pretext for gainsaying this decision; and though it thwarted their desires, they were constrained to submit, each of them comforting himself with the hope, however doubtful, that he would succeed at last. Hassan, who was to remain viceroy of Cyprus, resolved to make such presents to the cadì as would induce him to give up the slave. Ali formed other plans, and as he flattered himself that he should carry them into successful operation, they both professed themselves satisfied, and paid the Jew two thousand doblas each on the spot. The Jew then said that he had sold the slave, but not the clothes she wore, which were worth another two thousand doblas; and this indeed was true, for her hair which she wore partly loose on her shoulders, and partly braided on her forehead, was most gracefully interwoven

with strings of pearls; her bracelets and anklets too were set with very large pearls, and her green satin robe was heavily flounced and embroidered with gold. In short, all agreed that the Jew had set a low price on the dress, and the cadi, to show himself no less liberal than the two pashas, said that he would pay for it, that the slave might appear before the Grand Signor as she then stood. The two competitors agreed in approving of this, each of them believing that slave, dress, and all would soon be his own.

It is impossible to describe Ricardo's feelings, when he saw the treasure of his soul thus put up for sale, and found that he had regained it only to lose it more cruelly. He knew not whether he was asleep or awake, and could not believe his own eyes; for it seemed incredible that they should have so unexpectedly before them her whom he had supposed to have disappeared for ever. "Do you know her?" he whispered in Mahmoud's ear.

"No! I do not," was the reply.

"Then I must tell you that it is Leonisa."

"What do you say, Ricardo?" exclaimed Mahmoud.

"I say it is Leonisa."

"Say no more; fortune is proving your friend, and all is turning out for the best, for she is to remain in my master's custody."

"What think you? Shall I place myself where I may be seen by her?"

"By no means, lest you give her a sudden shock; nor must you let it be known that you have seen her, for that might disconcert the plan I have in view."

"I will do as you advise," said Ricardo, turning away his eyes, and carefully avoiding those of Leonisa, which were meanwhile bent upon the ground. Presently the cadi went up to her, and taking her by the hand, delivered her to Mahmoud, ordering him to take her into the city and give her up to his lady, Halema, with directions to keep her as a slave of the Grand Signor. Mahmoud obeyed and left Ricardo alone, following with his eyes the star of his soul, until it disappeared behind the walls of Nicosia. He then went up to the Jew, and asked him where he had bought that Christian slave, or how he had become possessed of her. The Jew replied that he had bought her in the island of Pantanalea, of some Turks who had been shipwrecked there. Ricardo would have pursued his inquiries, but the Jew was called away to give the pashas the very same information which Ricardo so much longed to obtain.

During the long walk from the tents to the city Mahmoud conversed with Leonisa in Italian, and asked her whence she came. She replied that she belonged to the illustrious city of Trapani, and that her parents were noble and wealthy, though as for herself she was utterly unfortunate. Mahmoud then asked her if she knew a gentleman of birth and fortune in that city, named Ricardo. On

hearing that name a sigh escaped her that seemed to come from the bottom of her heart. "I know him," she replied, "to my sorrow."

"Why to your sorrow?"

"Because it was to his sorrow that he knew me, and for my misfortune."

"Perhaps," said Mahmoud, "you may also know in the same city another gentleman of very amiable disposition, the son of very wealthy parents, and himself a person of great spirit, liberality, and discretion. His name is Cornelio."

"Him too I know, and of him still more than Ricardo I may say that I know him to my sorrow. But who are you, sir, who know these gentlemen and inquire of me respecting them? Doubtless, Heaven, in compassion for the trouble and mischances I have undergone, has sent me to a place where, if they do not cease, at least I may find a person to console me for them."

"I am a native of Palermo," said Mahmoud, "brought by various chances to wear this garb, and to be in appearance so different from what I am in my secret soul. I know the gentlemen in question, because not many days ago they were with me. Cornelio was captured by some Moors of Tripoli, and sold by them to a Turk who brought him to this island, whither he came to trade, for he is a merchant of Rhodes, and so highly satisfied was he with Cornelio, and such was the confidence he reposed in his truth and integrity, that he entrusted him with his whole property."

"He will be sure to take care of it," said Leonisa, "for he takes very good care of his own. But tell me, señor, how or with whom did Ricardo come to this island?"

"He came," said Mahmoud, "with a corsair who had captured him in a garden on the coast near Trapani, and along with him a damsel, whose name I never thought of asking, though the corsair often spoke to me in praise of her beauty. Ricardo remained here some days with his master until the latter went to visit the tomb of Mahomet, which is in the city of Almedina, and then Ricardo fell into such a sickness that his master left him with me, as being my countryman, that I might take care of him until the return of the pilgrim to Cyprus, should that happen; or else I was to send Ricardo to Constantinople, when his master should advise me of his arrival there. But heaven ordered it otherwise; for the unfortunate Ricardo died in a few days, always invoking to the last the name of one Leonisa, whom he had told me he loved more than his life and soul. She had been drowned, he said, in the wreck of a galley on the coast of the island of Pantanalea; and he never ceased to deplore her death till his grief destroyed him, for that in fact was the only malady I discovered in him."

"Tell me, señor," said Leonisa, "in the conversations you had with the other young man, did he sometimes name this Leonisa? Did he relate the manner in

which he and she and Ricardo were captured?”

“He did name her,” replied Mahmoud, “and asked me if there had been brought to this island a Christian of that name, of such and such appearance; for if so he should like to ransom her, provided her owner had been undeceived as to his notion that she was richer than she really was, or should it chance that having enjoyed her, he held her in less esteem. If her price did not exceed three or four hundred crowns, he would pay it gladly, because he had once had some regard for her.”

“It must have been very little,” said Leonisa, “since it was worth no more than four hundred crowns. Ricardo was more generous. Heaven forgive her who was the cause of his death, and that was myself; for I am the unhappy maiden whom he wept as dead, and God knows how I should rejoice were he alive, that I might repay him by letting him see how I felt for his misfortunes. Yes, señor, I am the little loved of Cornello, the truly wept of Ricardo, whom various chances have brought to the miserable state in which I now am; but through all my perils, by the favour of Heaven, I have preserved my honour unsullied, and that consoles me in my misery. I know not at this moment where I am, nor who is my master, nor what my adverse fates have determined is to become of me. I entreat you, therefore, señor, by the Christian blood that flows in your veins, that you will advise me in my difficulties; for though they have already taught me something by experience, yet they are so great and never-ending, that I know not what to do.”

Mahmoud assured her he would do what he could to help her to the best of his understanding and his power. He acquainted her with the nature of the dispute there had been between the pashas concerning her, and how she was now in the keeping of his master the *cadi*, who was to send her to Constantinople to the Grand Turk Selim; but that he trusted that the true God, in whom he, though a bad Christian, believed, would dispose of her otherwise. He advised her to conciliate Halima, the wife of his master the *cadi*, with whom she was to remain until she was sent to Constantinople, and of whose character he gave her some details. Having given her this and other useful counsel, he arrived at the *cadi*’s house, and delivered her over to Halima along with his master’s message.

The Moorish woman received her well, seeing her so beautiful and so handsomely dressed, and Mahmoud returned to the tents, where he recounted to Ricardo, point by point, all that had passed between himself and Leonisa; and the tears came into his eyes when he spoke of the feeling displayed by Leonisa, when he told her that Ricardo was dead. He stated how he had invented the story of Cornelio’s captivity, in order to see what impression it made on her; and in what disparaging terms he had spoken of him. All this was balm to Ricardo’s

afflicted heart.

“I remember, friend Mahmoud,” he said, “an anecdote related to me by my father; you know how ingenious he was, and you have heard how highly he was honoured by the emperor, Charles V., whom he always served in honourable posts in peace and war. He told me that when the emperor was besieging Tunis, a Moorish woman was brought to him one day in his tent, as a marvel of beauty, and that some rays of the sun, entering the tent, fell upon her hair, which vied with them in its golden lustre; a rare thing among the Moorish women, whose hair is almost universally black. Among many other Spanish gentlemen present on that occasion, there were two of distinguished talent as poets, the one an Andalusian, the other a Catalan. Struck with admiration at the sight before him, the Andalusian began to extemporise some verses, but stopped short in the middle of the last line, unable to finish them for want of a rhyme; whereupon the Catalan, who saw his embarrassment, caught the line as it were out of his mouth, finished it, continued the thought, and completed the poem. This incident came into my mind when I saw the exquisitely beautiful Leonisa enter the pasha’s tent obscuring not only the rays of the sun, but the whole firmament with all its stars.”

“Gently, gently, friend Ricardo,” said Mahmoud; “I am afraid if you praise your mistress at that rate you will seem to be a heathen rather than a Christian.”

“Well, tell me then,” said Ricardo, “what you think of doing in our business. Whilst you were conducting Leonisa to Halima, a Venetian renegade who was in the pasha’s tent, and who understands Turkish very well, explained to me all that had passed between them. Above all things, then, we must try to find some means of preventing Leonisa’s being sent to the Grand Signor.”

“The first thing to be done is to have you transferred to my master,” said Mahmoud, “and then we will consider what next.”

The keeper of Hassan’s Christian slaves now came up and took Ricardo away with him. The cadı returned to the city with Hassan, who in a few days made out the report on Ali’s administration, and gave it to him under seal that he might depart to Constantinople. Ali went away at once, laying strict injunctions on the cadı to send the captive without delay to the sultan, along with such a letter as would be serviceable to himself. The cadı promised all this with a treacherous heart, for it was inflamed for the fair Christian. Ali went away full of false hopes, leaving Hassan equally deluded by them. Mahmoud contrived that Ricardo should pass into the possession of his master; but day after day stole on, and Ricardo was so racked with longing to see Leonisa, that he could have no rest. He changed his name to Mario, that his own might not reach her ears before he saw her, which, indeed, was a very difficult thing, because the Moors are

exceedingly jealous, and conceal the faces of their women from the eyes of all men; it is true they are not so scrupulous with regard to Christian slaves, perhaps, because being slaves they do not regard them as men.

Now it chanced that one day the lady Halima saw her slave Mario, and gazed so much upon him that his image regained printed on her heart. Not very well satisfied with the languid embraces of her old husband, she readily gave admission to a reprehensible desire, and as readily communicated it to Leonisa, whom she liked much for her agreeable temper, and treated with great respect as a slave of the Grand Signor. She told her how the *cadi* had brought home a Christian captive of such graceful manners and appearance, that she had never set eyes on a more engaging man in all her life; she understood that he was a *chilidi* (that is, a gentleman) of the same country as her renegade Mahmoud, and she knew not how to make known to him her inclination, so that the Christian might not despise her for her voluntary declaration. Leonisa asked what was the captive's name, and being told that it was Mario, she replied, "If he was a gentleman, and of the place they say, I should know him; but there is no one of that name in Trapani. But let me see him, and speak with him, lady, and I will tell you who he is, and what may be expected of him."

"It shall be so," said Halima. "On Friday, when the *cadi* is at prayers in the mosque, I will make Mario come in here where you may speak to him alone, and if you can give him a hint of my desires you will do so in the best way you can."

Not two hours after this conversation the *cadi* sent for Mahmoud and Mario, and with no less earnestness than Halima had unbosomed herself to Leonisa, the amorous graybeard opened his own to his two slaves, asking their advice as to what he should do to enjoy the Christian and cheat the Grand Signor, to whom she belonged, for he would sooner die a thousand deaths, than give her up to him. So earnestly did the reverend Turk declare his passion that he inspired his two slaves with no less earnestness, though their purposes were quite the reverse of his. It was settled between them that Mario, as a countryman of the fair Christian's, should take it in hand to solicit her on the *cadi's* part; and that if that failed, the latter should use force, since she was in his power, and afterwards account for not sending her to Constantinople by pretending that she was dead. The *cadi* was highly delighted with the advice of his two slaves, and with all imaginable alacrity he gave Mahmoud his freedom on the spot, and promised to bequeath him half his property when he died. To Mario likewise he promised, in case of success his liberty and money enough to enable him to return home a wealthy man.

If he was liberal in promises, his slaves were prodigal; they would bring down the moon to him from Heaven, much more Leonisa, if only he gave them an



opportunity of speaking with her. "Mario shall have one whenever he pleases," said the *cadi*, "for I will make Halima go for some days to the house of her parents, who are Greek Christians, and when she is away I will order the porter to admit Mario into the house as often as he pleases, and I will tell Leonisa that she may converse with her countryman whenever she has a mind." Thus did the wind begin to shift in Ricardo's favour, his master and mistress working for him without knowing it; and the first who began was Halima, as was to be expected of her, for it is the nature of women ever to be prompt and bold where their pleasures are concerned.

That same day the *cadi* told Halima that she might pay a visit to her parents, and stay with them some time if she liked; but elated as she was with the false hopes given her by Leonisa, she was so far from wishing to visit her parents, that she would not have cared to go to the imaginary paradise of Mahomet. She replied then that she had no such wish at that moment; when she had she would mention it, and then she would take the Christian maiden with her. "That you must not," replied the *cadi*, "for it is not right that the Grand Signor's slave should be seen by any one, much less should she converse with Christians; for you know that when she comes into the Sultan's possession she will be shut up in the *seraglio*, and must become a Turk whether she will or not."

"As she will be in my company," said Halima, "there will be no harm in her being in the house of my parents, or conversing with them. I do so myself, and I am not less a good Turk for all that. Besides, I do not intend to remain with them more than four or five days at most, for my love for you will not allow me to be so long without seeing you." Here the conversation dropped, the *cadi* not venturing to make any further objection, for fear of rousing her suspicions.

Friday being come, he went to the mosque, from which he was sure not to return for about four hours. He was no sooner gone than Halima sent for Mario; but a Corsican slave who acted as porter, would not have admitted him into the court-yard if Halima had not called out to let him pass, whereupon he came in confused and trembling as if he were going to encounter a host of enemies. Leonisa was seated at the foot of a great marble staircase, in the dress in which she had appeared before the pashas. Her right arm resting on her knee supported her head, and her back was towards the door by which Mario entered, so that though he advanced to where she sat, she did not see him.

Ricardo cast his eyes all round the place when he entered; all was silence and solitude till he turned his gaze to where Leonisa sat. Instantly he was seized with a thousand conflicting emotions. He was within twenty paces of the object of his soul's desire; but he was a captive, and the glory of his life was in the power of another. Thus agitated with fear and exultation, joy and sadness, he advanced

towards her slowly, until Leonisa suddenly turned round and her eyes met his earnest gaze. He stopped, unable to move another step. Leonisa, who believed him to be dead, was struck with awe and consternation at seeing him so unexpectedly before her. With her eyes still fixed upon him and without turning her back, she retreated up four or five stairs, took a little cross from her breast, kissed it again and again, and crossed herself repeatedly, as though a being from the other world stood before her. Ricardo presently recovered himself, and perceiving from Leonisa's gestures what was the cause of her terror, he said, "It grieves me, beautiful Leonisa, that the news which Mahmoud gave you of my death was not true, so that I might be free from the fear I now feel lest the rigour you have also shown towards me still subsists entire. Set your mind at ease, lady, and come down; and if you will do what you have never yet done — approach me — you will see that I am not a phantom. I am Ricardo, Leonisa, — Ricardo the happy, if you will bid him be so."

Here Leonisa put her finger to her lips, giving Ricardo to understand that he should be silent or speak more low. Gathering a little courage, he drew near enough to hear her whisper thus: "Speak softly, Mario (for so I hear you are now called): talk of nothing but what I talk of, and bear in mind that if we are overheard it will be the cause of our never meeting again. I believe that Halima, our mistress, is listening to us: she has told me that she adores you, and has sent me here as her intercessor. If you will respond to her desires, you will consult the interest of your body more than of your soul; and if you will not, you must feign to do so, were it only because I request it, and for sake of what is due to the declared desires of a woman."

"Never did I think, never could I imagine, beautiful Leonisa," replied Ricardo, "that you could ever ask anything of me with which I should find it impossible to comply; but this present request of yours has undeceived me. Is the inclination so slight a thing that it can be moved this way or that at pleasure? Or would it become a man of truth and honour to feign in matters of such weight? If you think that such things can or ought to be done, be it as you will, since it is for you to command and for me to obey; and that it may not be said I failed to do so with regard to the first order you laid upon me, I will impose silence on the voice of my honour, and will pretend to return Halima's passion, as you desire, if I may thereby secure the blessing of seeing you; and you have only to signify as much to her in such terms as you shall think proper. In return for this sacrifice, to me the greatest possible, I entreat you to tell me briefly how you escaped from the hands of the corsairs, and fell into those of the Jew who sold you."

"The recital of my misfortunes," Leonisa answered, "demands more time than

we have now at our disposal; nevertheless, I will tell you some particulars. The day after we parted company, Yusuf's galley was driven back by a contrary wind to the island of Pantanalea, where we also saw your galley, but ours, in spite of all efforts, was driven upon the rocks. My master, seeing death so near, quickly emptied two water-casks, closed them tightly, lashed them together with ropes, and placed me between them. Then stripping off his clothes he took another cask in his arms, and passing round his body a rope attached to the casks on which I was placed, he boldly plunged into the sea. I had not the courage to follow his example, but another Turk pushed me in. I fell senseless into the water, and did not recover until I found myself on land, in the arms of two Turks, who held me with my mouth downwards, discharging a great quantity of water which I had swallowed. I opened my eyes, and looking wildly round me, the first thing I saw was Yusuf lying beside me with his skull shattered, having, as I afterwards learned, been dashed head foremost against the rocks.

"The Turks told me that they had hawled me ashore by the rope, more dead than alive. Only eight persons escaped out of the unfortunate galley. We remained eight days on the island, during which the Turks treated me with as much respect as if I were their sister. We lay hid in a cave, the Turks being afraid of being captured by some of the Christian garrison of a fort in the island, and we supported ourselves with biscuits from the foundered galley which the waves cast ashore, and which the men collected by night. It happened for my misfortune that the commandant of the fort had died a few days before, and that there were in it only twenty soldiers; this fact we learned from a boy whom the Turks captured as he was amusing himself gathering shells on the shore. At the end of eight days a Moorish vessel, of the kind which the Turks call *caramuzal*, hove in sight; the Turks quitted their hiding-place, and made signals which were recognised by the crew of the *caramuzal*. They landed, and hearing from their countrymen an account of their disasters, they took us all on board, where there was a very rich Jew, to whom the whole cargo, or the greater part of it, belonged, consisting of carpets, stuffs, and other wares, which are commonly exported by the Jews from Barbary to the Levant. The vessel carried us to Tripoli, and during the voyage I was sold to the Jew, who gave two thousand doubloons, an excessive price; but the Jew was made liberal by the love he conceived for me.

"After leaving the Turks in Tripoli, the vessel continued its voyage, and the Jew began to importune me with his solicitations, which I treated with the scorn they deserved. Despairing, therefore, of success, he resolved to get rid of me upon the first opportunity; and knowing that the two pashas, Ali and Hassan, were in this island, where he could sell his goods as well as in Scio, whither he had been bound, he landed here in hopes of disposing of me to one of the two

pashas, with which view he had me dressed as you now see me. I find that I have been purchased by the cadi, for the purpose of being presented to the Grand Turk, which causes me no little dread. Here I heard of your pretended death, which, if you will believe me, grieved me to the soul; yet I envied rather than pitied you, not from ill will towards you, for, if insensible to love, I am yet neither unfeeling nor ungrateful, but because I believed that your sorrows were all at an end."

"You would be right, lady," said Ricardo, "were it not that death would have robbed me of the bliss of seeing you again. The felicity of this moment is more to me than any blessing that life or death could bring me, that of eternity alone excepted. My master, the cadi, into whose hands I have fallen by as strange a series of adventures as your own, is just in the same disposition towards you as Halima is towards me, and has deputed me to be the interpreter of his feelings. I accepted the office, not with the intention of serving his wishes, but my own in obtaining opportunities to speak with you. Only see, Leonisa, to what a pass our misfortunes have brought us; you to ask from me what you know to be impossible; and me to propose to you what I would give my life not to obtain, dear as that life is to me now, since I have the happiness to behold you."

"I know not what to say to you, Ricardo," replied Leonisa, "nor what issue we can find from the labyrinth in which we are involved. I can only say that we must practise, what would not be expected from us, dissimulation and deceit. I will repeat to Halima some phrases on your part which will rather encourage than make her despair; and you may tell the cadi whatever you think may serve, with safety to my honour, to keep him in his delusion. And since I place my honour in your hands, you may be assured that I have preserved it intact, in spite of all the perils and trials I have undergone. Opportunity to converse together will be easily afforded us, and to me this will be most pleasing, provided you never address me on the subject of your suit; from the moment you do so, I shall cease to see you; for I would not have you suppose that my spirit is so weak as to be swayed by captivity. With the favour of heaven, I hope to prove like gold which becomes the purer the more it is passed through the furnace. Be content with the assurance I have given you, that I shall no longer look upon you with repugnance, as I used to do; for I must tell you, Ricardo, that I always found you somewhat more arrogant and presumptuous than became you. I confess, also, that I was deceived, and that my eyes being now opened, if the experiment were to be made over again, perhaps I should be more humane to you, within the bounds of honour. Go now, and God be with you; for I am afraid lest Halima may have been listening to us, and she understands something of our language."

"I fully acknowledge the propriety of all you have said, lady," replied

Ricardo. "I am infinitely obliged for the explanation you have given me, and perhaps time will show you how profoundly respectful is the adoration I profess for you. Rely upon me that I will deal in the best manner with the *cadi*, and do you do the same with Halima. Believe me, lady, since I have seen you, there has sprung up in my heart an assured hope that we shall soon achieve our freedom; and so I commend you to God's keeping, deferring to another time to tell you the events by which fortune brought me to this place, after we were parted."

They now separated, Leonisa well pleased with Ricardo's modest behaviour, and he overjoyed at having heard from her lips words unmixed with harshness. Halima, meanwhile, had shut herself up in her room, and was praying to Mahomet for Leonisa's success in the commission she had given her. The *cadi* was in the mosque, burning, like his wife, with desire, and anxiously awaiting the answer to be brought him by the slave he had sent to speak to Leonisa, and whom Mahmoud was to admit to her presence for that purpose, even though Halima was at home. Leonisa inflamed Halima's impure desires, giving her very good hopes that Mario would do all she wished, but telling her that two months must elapse before he could consent to what he longed for even more than herself; and that he asked that delay that he might complete a course of devotion for the recovery of his freedom. Halima was satisfied with this excuse, but begged Leonisa to tell her dear Mario to spare himself the trouble and her the delay he proposed, for she would give him, at once, whatever the *cadi* required for his ransom.

Before Ricardo went with his answer to his master, he consulted Mahmoud as to what it should be. They agreed between them that it should be as discouraging as possible, and that he should advise the *cadi* to take the girl as soon as possible to Constantinople, and accomplish his wishes on the way by fair means or by force. Moreover, that in order to prevent the unpleasant consequences that might ensue from supplanting the sultan, it would be well to purchase another slave, then pretend, or contrive on the voyage, that Leonisa should fall sick, and throw the newly-purchased Christian woman into the sea by night, with all possible secrecy, giving out that the person who had died was Leonisa, the sultan's slave. All this might be done in such a manner that the truth should never be known, and the *cadi* would remain blameless in the sultan's eyes, and have the full enjoyment of his desires. The wretched old *cadi*, who was so blinded by his passion that he would have listened to any absurdity they proposed, eagerly fell in with this scheme as one full of promise; and so indeed it was, but not as he imagined; for the intention of his two advisers was to make off with the boat, and pitch the old fool into the sea.

But a difficulty occurred to the *cadi*, one of the greatest in his eyes that could

possibly be. It occurred to him that his wife would not let him go to Constantinople without her; but presently he got over this obstacle by saying, that instead of buying a Christian woman to put to death in Leonisa's name, he would make Halima serve his turn, for he longed with all his heart to be rid of her. Mahmoud and Ricardo agreed to this expedient as readily as he proposed it, and this being finally settled, the *cadi* that same day imparted to his wife his design of setting out at once for Constantinople, to present the Christian captive to the Sultan, who, he expected would, in his munificence, make him grand *cadi* of Cairo or Constantinople. Halima, with great alacrity, expressed her approval of his intention, believing that Mario would be left at home; but when the *cadi* told her that he would take both him and Mahmoud along with him, she changed her mind, and began to dissuade him from what she had before advised; and finally, she told him that unless she went with him she would not allow him to go at all. The *cadi* had great satisfaction in complying with her desire, for he thought he would soon get rid of a burden that hung like a millstone round his neck.

All this while Hassan Pasha was indefatigable in pressing the *cadi* to give up the slave girl to him, in return for which he offered him mountains of gold, and had already made him a present of Ricardo, whose ransom he valued at two thousand crowns. Moreover, to facilitate the transfer, he suggested to the *cadi* the same expedient which the latter had himself devised, namely, that when the Grand Turk sent for Leonisa he should pretend she was dead. But all the pasha's gifts, promises, and entreaties, had no other effect on the *cadi* than to increase his eagerness to hasten his departure. Tormented therefore by his own desires, by Hassan's importunities, and by those of Halima (for she, too, was amusing herself with vain hopes) he made such despatch that in twenty days he had equipped a brigantine of fifteen benches, which he manned with able Turkish mariners and some Greek Christians. He put all his wealth on board it; Halima, too, left nothing of value behind her, and asked her husband to let her take her parents with her that they might see Constantinople. Halima entertained the same designs as Mahmoud and Ricardo; she intended, with their help, to seize the brigantine, but would not make this known to them until she found herself actually embarked. Afterwards she proposed to land among Christians, return to her old creed, and marry Ricardo; for she had reason to suppose that bringing so much wealth with her, he would not fail to take her to wife on her again becoming a Christian.

Ricardo had another interview with Leonisa, and made known to her the whole scheme they had projected; and she in return apprised him of the designs of Halima, who kept no secret from Leonisa. After mutual injunctions of

secrecy, they bade each other adieu until the day of embarkation. When it arrived, Hassan escorted the party to the shore with all his soldiers, and did not leave them until they had set sail. Even then he never took his eyes off the brigantine until it was out of sight. It almost seemed as if the sighs heaved by the enamoured mussulman swelled the gale, and impelled with more force the sails that were wafting away his soul. But as love had allowed him no rest, but plenty of time to consider what he should do to escape being killed by the vehemence of his unsatisfied desire, he immediately put in operation a plan he had long matured. He put fifty soldiers, all trusty men, bound to him by many favours received and expected, on board a vessel of seventeen benches, which he had secretly fitted out in another port; and he ordered them to pursue and capture the brigantine with all its wealth, and put every soul on board to the sword, with the exception of Leonisa, whom he desired to have as his own sole share of the immense booty. He also ordered them to sink the brigantine, so that no trace of her fate might remain.

Animated with the hope of plunder the soldiers proceeded with the utmost alacrity to execute the pasha's orders, which seemed the more easy as the crew of the brigantine were unarmed, not anticipating any such encounter. It had been now two days under sail, which seemed two centuries to the *cadi*, who would fain, on the very first of them, have carried his design into effect. But his two slaves represented to him the absolute necessity that Leonisa should first fall sick in order to give colour to the report of her death, and that the feigned malady ought to last some days. The *cadi* was much more disposed to say that she died suddenly, finish the whole job at once, despatch his wife, and allay the raging fire that was consuming his vitals; but he was obliged to submit to the advice of his two counsellors.

Meanwhile, Halima had declared her design to Mahmoud and Ricardo, who had signified their readiness to accomplish it when passing the Crosses of Alexandria, or entering the castles of Anatolia; but so intolerably did the *cadi* importune them, that they made up their minds to do so upon the first opportunity that offered. After they had been six days at sea the *cadi* thought that Leonisa's feigned malady had lasted quite long enough, and was very urgent with them that they should finish with Halima on the following day, and to quiet him they promised that they would do so. But when that day came, which, as they expected, was to witness the accomplishment of their own secret plans, or to be the last of their lives, they suddenly discovered a vessel giving chase to them, with all speed of sails and oars. They were afraid it was a Christian corsair, from which neither party had any good to expect; for if it were one, the mussulmans would be made captive, and the Christians, though left at liberty,

would be plundered of everything. Mahmoud and Ricardo, however, took comfort in the prospect of freedom for Leonisa and themselves; nevertheless, they were not without fear of the insolence of the corsairs, for people who abandon themselves to such practices, whatever be their religion or law, are invariably cruel and brutal. The cadi's crew made preparation to defend themselves; but without quitting their oars, and still doing all in their power to escape; but the vessel in chase gained upon them so fast that in less than two hours it was within cannon-shot. Seeing her so close, they lowered their sails, stood to their arms, and awaited the assault, though the cadi told them they had nothing to fear, for the stranger was under Turkish colours and would do them no harm. He then gave orders to hoist the white flag of peace.

Just then Mahmoud chanced to turn his head, and espied another galley of some twenty benches apparently, bearing down upon them from the west. He told the cadi, and some Christians at the oar said that this was a vessel of their own people. The confusion and alarm was now doubled, and all awaited the issue in anxious suspense, not knowing whether to hope or fear it. I fancy the cadi, just then, would have gladly foregone all his amorous hopes to be safe again in Nicosia, so great was his perplexity. It did not last long however; for the first galley, without paying the least regard to the flag of peace, or to what was due to a community in religion, bore down upon his brigantine with such fury as nearly to send it to the bottom. The cadi then perceived that the assailants were soldiers of Nicosia, and guessing what was the real state of the case, he gave himself up for lost; and had it not been for the greed of the soldiers, who fell to plundering in the first instance, not a soul would have been left alive. Suddenly, however, while they were busy with all their might in pillaging, a voice cried out in Turkish, "To arms! to arms! Here's a Christian galley bearing down upon us!" And this indeed was true, for the galley which Mahmoud had descried to the westward was bearing furiously down upon Hassan's under Christian colours; but before it came to close quarters it hailed the latter.

"What galley is that?"

"Hassan Pasha's, viceroy of Cyprus."

"How comes it, then, that you, being mussulmans are plundering this brigantine, on board of which, as we know, is the cadi of Nicosia?"

The reply to this was that they only knew that the pasha had ordered them to take it, and that they, as his soldiers, had done his bidding. The commander of the galley under Christian colours having now ascertained what he wanted to know, desisted from attacking Hassan's and fell upon the cadi's brigantine, killed ten of its Turkish crew at the first volley, and immediately boarded it with great impetuosity. Then the cadi discovered that his assailant was no Christian,



but Ali Pasha, Leonisa's lover, who had been laying wait to carry her off, and had disguised himself and his soldiers as Christians, the better to conceal his purpose.

The cadì, finding himself thus assailed on all sides, began loudly to exert his lungs. "What means this, Ali Pasha, thou traitor?" he cried. "How comes it that, being a mussulman, thou attackest me in the garb of a Christian? And you, perfidious soldiers of Hassan, what demon has moved you to commit so great an outrage? How dare you, to please the lascivious appetite of him who sent you, set yourselves against your sovereign?" At these words, the soldiers on both sides lowered their arms, looked upon and recognised each other, for they had all served under one captain and one flag. Confounded by the cadì's words, and by their conscious criminality, they sheathed their blades, and seemed quite discomfited. Ali alone shut his eyes and his ears to everything, and rushing upon the cadì, dealt him such a stroke on the head with his scimeter, that, but for the hundred ells of stuff that formed his turban, he would certainly have cleft it in two. As it was, he knocked the cadì down among the rower's benches, where he lay, exclaiming amid his groans, "O cruel renegade! Enemy of the Prophet! Can it be that there is no true mussulman left to avenge me? Accursed one! to lay violent hands on thy cadì, on a minister of Mahomet!"

The cadì's denunciations made a strong impression on the minds of Hassan's soldiers, who, fearing besides that Ali's men would despoil them of the booty they already looked upon as their own, determined to put all to the hazard of battle. Suddenly they fell upon Ali's men with such vehemence that, although the latter were the stronger party, they soon thinned their numbers considerably; the survivors, however, quickly rallied, and so well avenged their slaughtered comrades, that barely four of Hassan's men remained alive, and those too badly wounded. Ricardo and Mahmoud, who had been watching the fight, putting their heads out every now and then at the cabin hatchway, seeing now that most of the Turks were dead, and the survivors all wounded, and that they might very easily be mastered, called upon Halima's father and two of his nephews to aid them in seizing the vessel. Then arming themselves with the dead men's scimeters, they rushed amidships, shouting "Liberty! Liberty!" and with the help of the stout Christian rowers, they soon despatched all the Turks. Then they boarded Ali Pasha's galley. He had been one of the first slain in the last conflict, a Turk having cut him down in revenge for the cadì, and the galley being defenceless, they took possession of it with all its stores.

By Ricardo's advice, all the valuables on board the brigantine and Hassan's galley were transhipped to Ali's, that being the largest of the three vessels, with plenty of stowage room, and a good sailer. The rowers, too, were Christians, and

being highly delighted with the acquisition of their freedom, and with the gifts which Ricardo liberally divided amongst them, they offered to carry him to Trapani, or to the end of the world, if he desired it. After this, Mahmoud and Ricardo, exulting in their success, went to Halima, and told her that if she desired to return to Cyprus they would give her her own brigantine, with its full complement of men, and half the wealth she had put on board it; but as her affection for Ricardo was unabated, she replied that she would rather go with them to Christian lands, whereat her parents were exceedingly rejoiced.

The cadi having by this time got upon his legs again, he, too, had his choice given him either to go into Christendom or return to Nicosia in his own vessel. He replied that, "as fortune had reduced him to his present situation, he thanked them for the boon of his liberty; and that he desired to go to Constantinople to complain to the Grand Signor of the outrage he had received at the hands of Ali and Hassan." But when he heard that Halima was leaving him, and intended to go back to Christianity, he was almost beside himself. Finally, they put him on board his own vessel, supplying him abundantly with all accessories for his voyage, and even giving him back some of his own sequins; and he took leave of them all with the intention of returning to Nicosia; but first he entreated that Leonisa would embrace him, declaring that if she would graciously grant him that favour, it would wipe out the recollection of all his misfortunes. All joined in entreating Leonisa to grant him what he so earnestly desired, since she might do so without prejudice to her honour. She complied, and the cadi besought her to lay her hands on his head, that he might have hopes of his wound being healed.

These adieux concluded, and having scuttled Hassan's galley, they sailed away with a favouring breeze and soon lost sight of the brigantine, on the deck of which stood the unlucky cadi, watching with swimming eyes how the wind was wafting away his property, his delight, his wife, and his whole soul. With very different feelings did Ricardo and Mahmoud pursue their way. They passed in sight of Alexandria, and without shortening sail, or needing to have recourse to their oars, they touched at Corfu, where they took in water; and then without more delay they left behind them the ill-famed Acroceraunian rocks, and descried afar off Paquino, a promontory of the most fertile Trinacria, at sight of which, and of the illustrious island of Malta, their prosperous barque seemed to fly across the waters. In fine, fetching a compass round the island, in four days afterwards they made Lampadosa, and then the island where Leonisa had been shipwrecked, at sight of which she almost swooned.

On the following day the beloved native land they so longed for gladdened their eyes and their hearts. Their spirits rose tumultuously with this new joy, one

of the greatest that can be known in this life, to return safe and sound to one's country after long captivity; and one which may compare with it is that of victory achieved over its enemies. There was in the galley a chest full of flags and streamers of various colours, with which Ricardo had the rigging adorned. Soon after daybreak they were within less than a league of the city, when taking to their oars, and uttering every now and then joyous cries, they advanced to the harbour, the shore of which was immediately lined by a great concourse of people; for the gaily adorned galley had been so long in sight, that the whole town had come down to observe it more closely.

Meanwhile, Ricardo had entreated Leonisa to dress herself just as she had appeared in the tent before the two pashas, for he wished to play off a pleasant trick upon his relations. She did so, adding jewels to jewels, pearls to pearls, and beauty to beauty (for it increases with the satisfaction of the heart), to the renewed admiration and astonishment of all. Ricardo and Mahmoud also dressed themselves in the Turkish costume, and made the crew put on the garments of the dead Turks. It was about eight o'clock when they entered the harbour, and the morning was so calm and clear that it seemed as though it were intent on beholding this joyful arrival.

Before coming into port, Ricardo fired a salute with the three pieces belonging to the galley, which were one gun amidships, and two falconets; the town returned the salute with an equal number. The whole shore was in lively commotion, watching the approach of the gaily decked galley; but when they had a nearer view of it, and saw by the white turbans of the pretended mussulmans that it was a Turkish craft, there was a general alarm. Suspecting some stratagem, the people flew to arms, all the soldiers in the town were marched down to the port, and the cavalry scoured the coast. Highly amused at all this, the navigators held on their course, entered the port, and anchored close to the shore. Then running out a plank they all stepped ashore one after the other as if in procession, and falling on their knees kissed the ground with tears of joy — a clear proof to all who witnessed their proceedings that they were no Turks. When all the crew were out of the vessel, Halima with her father and mother, and her two nephews, followed next, all dressed as Turks; and the beautiful Leonisa, her face covered with a crimson veil, and escorted on either side by Mahmoud and Ricardo, closed the procession, while the eyes of the whole multitude were fixed upon her. They too did as the others had done, and knelt and kissed the ground.

Presently the captain and governor of the city advanced towards them, perceiving that they were the principal persons belonging to the vessel. The moment he set eyes on Ricardo he recognised him, ran to him with open arms,

and embraced him with the liveliest demonstrations of joy. With the governor came Cornelio and his father, Leonisa's parents and relations, and those of Ricardo, all of whom were among the principal persons in the city. Ricardo returned the governor's embrace and his cordial greeting; held out his hand to Cornelio (who had changed colour at sight of him, and almost quaked for fear), and, holding Leonisa also by the hand, thus addressed the bystanders: "Under your favour, gentlemen, I beg that, before we enter the city and the temple to return the thanks so justly due to our Lord for the great mercies vouchsafed to us in our distresses, that you will listen to a few words I have to say to you." The governor bade him say on, for all present would listen to him with pleasure and in silence. All the principal people then formed a circle round him, and he addressed them as follows: —

"You must well remember, gentlemen, the misfortune which befel me some months ago in the garden of the Salt Pits, and the loss of Leonisa: nor can you have forgotten the exertions I made to procure her liberation, since, regardless of my own, I offered all I was worth for her ransom. But this seeming generosity is not to be imputed to me as a merit, since I did but offer my fortune for the ransom of my soul. What has since happened to us both requires more time to relate, a more convenient season, and a speaker less agitated than myself. For the present, let it suffice to tell you that after various extraordinary adventures, and after a thousand disappointments of our hopes of relief, merciful Heaven has, without any merit of ours, restored us to our beloved country, with hearts full of joy and with abundance of wealth. It is not from this, nor from the recovery of my freedom, that springs the incomparable pleasure I now experience, but from that which I imagine this sweet enemy of mine in peace and in war enjoys on seeing herself restored to freedom and to her birth-place. Yet, I rejoice in the general joy of those who have been my companions in misery; and though grievous disasters are apt to alter the disposition and debase worthy minds, it has not been so with the fair destroyer of my hopes, for with more fortitude and invincibility than can well be told, she has passed through the wrecking sea of her disasters and the encounters of my ardent though honourable importunities.

"But to return to the point from which I set out: I offered my fortune for her ransom, and with it the surrender of my soul's desires; I strove for her liberation, and ventured more for her than for my own life. All these things might seem to be obligations of some moment, but I will not have them regarded in that light; what I would have so considered, is that which I now do;" and so saying, he raised his hand and respectfully withdrew the veil from Leonisa's face — it was like removing a cloud from before the sun — and then he continued: "See, Cornelio; here I present to you the prize which you should value above all

precious things on earth; and here, beauteous Leonisa, I present to you him whom you have always borne in memory. This is what I would have you all esteem as generosity, in comparison with which to give fortune, life, and honour, is nothing.

“Take her, O fortunate youth, take her; and if your understanding can reach the height of comprehending the greatness of her worth, esteem yourself the most fortunate of mankind. With her I will also give you my whole share of what Heaven has bestowed on us all; it will exceed, as I fully believe, thirty thousand crowns. You may enjoy it all freely and at your ease, and Heaven grant you to do so for many happy years. For my hapless self, since I am left without Leonisa, it is my pleasure to be poor. To want Leonisa, is to find life superfluous.”

Here he ceased speaking, as if his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, but soon afterwards, before any one else had spoken, he exclaimed, “Good heavens! how toil and trouble confuse the understanding! In the eagerness of my desire to do right, I have spoken inconsiderately, for no one can be generous in disposing of what is not his own. What authority have I over Leonisa to give her to another? Or how can I bestow what is so far from being mine? Leonisa is her own mistress, and so much so, that failing her parents (long and happily may they live), her wishes could have no opposition to encounter. Should they meet an imaginary obstacle in the obligations which she, in her good feeling, may think she is under to me, from this moment I cancel them, and declare them null and void. I unsay, then, what I have said, and I give Cornelio nothing, for I cannot; only I confirm the transfer of my property made to Leonisa, without desiring any other recompense than that she will believe in the sincerity of my honourable sentiments towards her, and be assured that they never had an aim unbecoming her incomparable virtue, her worth, and her infinite beauty.”

Ricardo closed his speech with these words, and Leonisa thus replied, “If you imagine, Ricardo, that I bestowed any favour on Cornelio during the time when you were enamoured of me and jealous, think that it was in all honour, as being done by the express desire of my parents, who wished to have him for their son-in-law. If you are satisfied with this explanation, I am sure you are no less so with what you have yourself experienced as to my virtue and modesty. I say this, Ricardo, that you may know that I have always been mistress of myself, and subject to no one else except my parents, whom I now entreat humbly, as is meet, to grant me leave and license to dispose of what your magnanimous generosity has given me.”

Her parents said she might do so, for they relied on her great discretion that she would make such use of it as would always redound to her honour and advantage. “With that permission, then,” said Leonisa, “I beg it may not be taken

amiss if I choose rather to seem overbold than ungrateful; and so, worthy Ricardo, my inclination, hitherto coy, perplexed, and dubious, declares in your favour, that the world may know that women are not all ungrateful. I am yours, Ricardo, and yours I will be till death, unless better knowledge move you to refuse me your hand.”

Ricardo was almost beside himself to hear her speak thus, and could make no other reply than by falling on his knees before her, grasping her hands, and kissing them a thousand times, with delicious tears. Cornelio wept with vexation, Leonisa’s parents for joy, and all the bystanders for admiration and sympathy.

The bishop, who was present, led them with his blessing to the church, and dispensing with the usual forms, married them at once. The whole city overflowed with gladness, which it testified that night by a splendid illumination, and for many days following in jousts and rejoicings given by the relations of Ricardo and Leonisa. Halima, who had lost all hope of having Ricardo for her husband, was content to become the wife of Mahmoud, having returned with him to the bosom of the church. Her parents and her two nephews were, by Ricardo’s bounty, presented with so much out of his share of the spoil as sufficed to maintain them for the rest of their lives. In a word, all were happy to their heart’s content; and the fame of Ricardo, spreading beyond the limits of Sicily, extended throughout all Italy and beyond it. He was universally known as the Generous Lover, and his renown is still prolonged in the persons of the many sons borne to him by Leonisa, who was a rare example of discretion, virtue, modesty, and beauty.

## THE SPANISH-ENGLISH LADY.

Among the spoils which the English carried off from the city of Cadiz, was a little girl of about seven years old. An English gentleman, named Clotald, commander of a squadron of vessels, took her to London without the knowledge of the Earl of Essex, and in defiance of his general orders. The parents complained to the earl of the loss of their child, and implored him, since he had declared that property alone should be seized, and the persons of the inhabitants should be left free, they should not, besides being reduced to poverty, suffer the additional misery of being deprived of their daughter, who was the very light of their eyes. The earl caused it to be proclaimed throughout his whole army, that whoever had possession of the child, should restore her on pain of death; but no threatened penalties could constrain Clotald to obey; in spite of them, he kept the child concealed in his ship, being fascinated, though in a Christian manner, with the incomparable beauty of Isabella, as she was called. In fine, her inconsolable parents were left to mourn her loss, and Clotald, rejoicing beyond measure, returned to London, and presented the pretty child to his wife, as the richest prize he had brought home from the war.

It happened fortunately that all the members of Clotald's household were catholics in secret, though in public they affected to follow the religion of the state. Clotald had a son about twelve years old, named Richard, who was brought up by his parents to love and fear God, and to be very stedfast in the truths of the catholic faith. Catherine, the wife of Clotald, a noble, Christian, and prudent lady, conceived such an affection for Isabella, that she reared her as if she was her own daughter; and the child was so well endowed by nature, that she readily learned all they taught her. Time and the kind treatment she received, gradually wore out from her recollection that which her parents had bestowed upon her; not so much so, however, but that she often thought of them with a sigh. Though she learned English, she did not forget her native tongue, for Clotald took care to bring Spaniards secretly to his house to converse with her, and thus it was, that without ceasing to speak Spanish, she became as proficient in English as if she had been born in London.

After having learned all kinds of work becoming a young lady of good birth, she was taught to read and write more than passably well; but what she excelled in above all, was in playing all sorts of instruments suitable to her sex, with extraordinary perfection of musical taste and skill, and with the accompaniment

of a voice which Heaven had endowed with such melody that when she chanted she enchanted. All these graces, natural and acquired, gradually inflamed the heart of Richard, whom she loved and respected as the son of her lord. At first his affection for her was like that of a brother for a sister, but when she reached her twelfth year, this feeling had changed into a most ardent desire to possess her, but only in the honourable way of becoming her lawful spouse; for Isabella's incomparable virtue made it hopeless to obtain her in any other way, nor would he have done so even, if he could, for his own noble disposition, and the high estimation in which he held her, forbade any bad thought to take root in his soul.

A thousand times he determined to make known his passion to his father and mother, and as often broke his resolution, knowing that they had destined him to be the husband of a young Scotch lady of great wealth and good family, who, like themselves, secretly professed the catholic faith; and it seemed clear to him, that after having betrothed him to a lady of rank, they would not think of bestowing him on a slave, if that name could be applied to Isabella. Agitated by these distressing reflections, not knowing what course to pursue or whom to consult, he fell into a melancholy that nearly cost him his life. But thinking it was a very cowardly thing to let himself die without making any kind of effort for his own relief, he strove to gather up courage enough to declare his feelings to Isabella.

Everybody in the house was grieved for Richard's illness for he was beloved by them all, and by his parents to the utmost degree, both because he was their only child, and because his virtues, his worth, and good sense deserved all their affection. The physicians could not make out the nature of his complaint, nor could he himself venture to declare it. At last, one day when Isabella entered his room alone, to attend upon him, he said to her, with a faltering voice and stammering tongue, "Lovely Isabella, your worth, your great virtue, and exceeding beauty, have brought me to the state you see; if you would not have me perish in the worst agonies that can be imagined, say that you return the love I feel for you, and consent to my fondest desire, which is to make you secretly my wife; for I fear that my parents, not knowing your merits as I do, would refuse me a blessing to me so indispensable. If you will give me your word to be mine, I here pledge you my own, as a true catholic Christian, to be yours; and though our union be deferred, as deferred it shall be until it can take place with the church's sanction and that of my parents, yet the thought that you will surely be mine, will be enough to restore me to health, and to keep my spirits buoyant until the happy day arrives."

Whilst Richard was speaking, Isabella stood with downcast eyes, and when he



had ceased, she replied with equal modesty and good sense, “Ever since Heaven, in its anger or its mercy (I know not which), withdrew me from my parents, Señor Richard, and gave me to yours, I have resolved, in gratitude for the infinite kindness they have bestowed upon me, never to act in opposition to their wishes; and without their consent, I should regard the inestimable boon you desire to confer upon me, not as a good but as an evil fortune. Should it ever be my happy destiny to be acknowledged by them as worthy of you, be assured that my heart shall be yours; but till that time comes, or should it never come, let it console you to know that the dearest wish of my soul will ever be that you may know every blessing which Heaven can bestow upon you.” She said no more, but from that moment began the convalescence of Richard, and the revival of his parents’ drooping hopes.

The youthful pair took courteous leave of each other, he with tears in his eyes, and she wondering in her soul to see that of Richard captive to her love. As for him, having been raised from his sick bed by a miracle, as it seemed to his parents, he would no longer conceal from them the state of his feelings, but disclosed it one day to his mother, and ended a long conversation by declaring that they might as well put him to death as refuse him Isabella, for it amounted to the same thing. He extolled the virtues of Isabella in such terms, that he almost brought his mother to think that in becoming her son’s wife she would have the worst of the bargain. Accordingly she gave Richard good hopes that she would prevail on his father to assent to his wishes, as she herself did; in this she succeeded, for by repeating to her husband all Richard’s arguments, she easily induced him to approve of the young man’s design, and to find excuses for breaking off the match with the Scotch lady.

At this time Isabella was fourteen and Richard twenty; but even in that early spring time of their youth, they were old in sense and judgment. It wanted but four days of the time appointed by Richard’s parents when he should bend his neck to the holy yoke of matrimony; and wise and fortunate did they deem themselves in choosing their prisoner to be their daughter, esteeming her virtues to be a better dower than the great wealth of the Scotch lady. The preparations for the wedding were all made, the relations and friends of the family were invited, and nothing remained but to make known the intended match to the Queen, no marriage between persons of noble blood being lawful without her knowledge and consent; but making no doubt of obtaining the royal licence, they put off applying for it to the last. Things being in this state, their joy was disturbed one evening by the appearance of one of the Queen’s servants with an order to Clotald from her Majesty, requiring his appearance before her next morning with his Spanish prisoner. He replied that he would cheerfully obey her

Majesty's command. The messenger retired, and left the family in great perturbation; "Alas," said dame Catherine, "what if the Queen knows that I have brought up this girl as a Catholic, and thence infers that we are all of us Christians in this house! For, if her Majesty asks her what she has learned during the eight years she has been with us, what answer can she give with all her discretion, poor timid girl, that will not condemn us?"

"Be under no fear on that account, dear lady," said Isabella; "for I trust in the divine goodness and mercy of Heaven, that it will put such words into my mouth as will not only not condemn you, but redound to your advantage."

Richard trembled as if he foreboded some calamity. Clotald cast about for some encouragement to allay his grievous fears, and found none but in his great trust in God and in the prudence of Isabella, whom he earnestly entreated to try in every possible way to avoid convicting them of being Catholics; for, though their spirits were willing to encounter martyrdom, yet their flesh was weak and recoiled from the bitter trial. Isabella assured them over and over again that they might set their minds at rest; what they apprehended should not befall them through her instrumentality; for though she knew not then what answer she should make to the questions that should be put to her on the morrow, she had a lively and confident hope that she would reply in such a manner as would be for their good.

Many were the comments and surmises they made that night on this unwelcome incident, and especially it occurred to them that, if the Queen knew they were Catholics, she would not have sent them so mild a message; it seemed reasonable to infer from it, that she only desired to see Isabella, the fame of whose incomparable beauty and accomplishments, known to every one in the capital, must have reached her Majesty's ears. Clotald and his wife confessed to themselves, however, that they had done wrong in not presenting her at court, and they thought the best excuse they could make for this, was to say that ever since she had come into their hands, they had destined her to be the wife of their son. But even this would be acknowledging themselves culpable, since it would appear that they arranged the marriage without the Queen's leave; but such an offence would probably not incur any severe punishment. In this way, they comforted themselves, and they resolved that Isabella should not be dressed humbly like a prisoner, but in rich bridal attire, such as became the betrothed of a gentleman of importance like their son. Next day accordingly they dressed Isabella in the Spanish style, in a robe of green satin with a long train, and slashes lined with cloth of gold and looped with the pearls, the whole being adorned with precious stones; a diamond necklace and girdle, with a fan such as is carried by Spanish ladies; and for head dress her own luxuriant golden hair

entwined with diamonds and pearls.

In that sumptuous attire, with her sprightly air and marvellous beauty, she made her appearance in London in a handsome coach, fascinating the eyes and souls of all who beheld her. Clotald, his wife, and Richard rode with her in the coach, and many noble relations of the family escorted her on horseback, Clotald desiring that all these honours should be paid to his prisoner, in order that the queen might treat her as his son's betrothed. When they arrived at the palace, and entered the vast hall in which her majesty was seated, Isabella's escort halted at the lower end, and she herself advanced alone in all her inconceivable beauty, producing an effect like that of a brilliant meteor shooting through the sky on a calm clear night, or of a sunbeam darting at the first dawn of day through a mountain gorge. A comet she seemed, portending a fiery doom to the hearts of many in that presence hall. Full of meekness and courtesy, she advanced to the foot of the throne, knelt before the queen, and said to her in English, "May it please your Majesty to extend your royal hands to your servant's lips, who will henceforth esteem herself exalted, since she has been so fortunate as to behold your grandeur."

The queen remained a good while gazing on her without saying a word, figuring to herself, as she afterwards told her lady of the bed-chamber, that she had before her a starry heaven, the stars of which were the many pearls and diamonds worn by Isabella; her fair face and her eyes its sun and moon, and her whole person a new marvel of beauty. The queen's ladies would fain have been all eyes, that they might do nothing but gaze on Isabella; one praised her brilliant eyes, one her complexion, another her fine figure, another her sweet voice; and one there was who said in pure envy, "The Spaniard is good looking, but I do not like her dress."

At last the queen motioned to Isabella to rise, and said to her, "Speak to me in Spanish, maiden, for I understand it well, and shall like to hear it." Then turning to Clotald, "You have done me wrong, Clotald," she said, "in keeping this treasure so many years concealed from me; but it is such a one as may well have excited you to avarice. You are bound however to restore it to me, for by right it is mine."

"My liege," replied Clotald, "what your majesty says is quite true; I confess my fault, if it is one, to have kept this treasure until it arrived at the perfection suitable for appearing before your majesty's eyes. Now that it has done so, I had it in mind to enhance it still more, by asking your majesty's leave for Isabella to become the wife of my son Richard."

"I like her name, too," returned the queen. "Nothing was wanting to the fulness of her perfection but that she should be called Isabella the Spaniard. But,

mark you, Clotald, I know that, without my leave, you have promised her to your son."

"That is true, my liege, but it was in the confident hope that the many eminent services which my ancestors and I have rendered to the crown, would obtain from your majesty favours still more difficult to grant than the leave in question, the more so as my son is not yet wedded."

"Nor shall he be wedded to Isabella," said the queen, "until he has merited it in his own person. I mean that I will not have him avail himself to that end of your services or those of his forefathers. He must himself prepare to serve me, and win by his own deserts this prize which I esteem as if she were my daughter."

The queen had no sooner uttered these last words than Isabella again fell on her knees before her, saying in Spanish, "Such thwartings as these, most gracious sovereign, are rather to be esteemed auspicious boons than misfortunes. Your majesty has given me the name of daughter; after that what can I have to fear, or what may I not hope?"

Isabella uttered this with so winning a grace, that the queen conceived an extreme affection for her, desired that she should remain in her service, and committed her to the care of a great lady, her keeper of the robes, who was to instruct her in the duties of her new position.

Richard, who saw himself thus, as it were, deprived of his life in losing Isabella, was almost at his wits' end. Agitated and discomfited, he knelt before the queen, and said, "I need no other rewards to induce me to serve your majesty than such as my ancestors have obtained in the service of your royal predecessors; but since it is your majesty's pleasure that I should have new motives and incentives for my zeal, I would crave to know in what way I may fulfil your majesty's behest?"

"There are two ships ready to set out on a cruise," said the queen, "of which I have made the Baron de Lansac general. I appoint you captain of one of them, being assured that the qualities you derive from those whose blood is in your veins will supply the defect of your years. Mark what a favour I confer upon you, since I give you an opportunity to signalise yourself in the service of your queen, to display your capacity and your valour, and to win the highest reward, methinks, which you yourself could desire. I myself will be Isabella's guardian, though she manifests that her own virtue will be her truest guardian. Go in God's name; for since you are in love, as I imagine, I expect great things from your prowess. Fortunate were the king who in time of war had in his army ten thousand soldiers in love, expecting to obtain their mistresses as the reward of their victories. Rise, Richard, and if you have anything to say to Isabella, say it

now, for to-morrow you must sail.”

Richard kissed the queen’s hands, highly prizing the favour she had conferred upon him, and went and knelt before Isabella. He tried to speak to her, but could not, for he felt as if there was a knot in his throat that paralysed his tongue. He strove with all his might to keep down the tears that started into his eyes, but he could not conceal them from the queen. “Shame not to weep, Richard,” said her majesty, “nor think less of yourself for allowing such evidence of a tender heart to escape you, for it is one thing to fight the enemy, and another to take leave of one who is dearly loved. Isabella, embrace Richard, and give him your blessing: his affection well deserves it.”

Isabella’s heart ached to see Richard so cast down. She could not understand what her majesty said. Conscious of nothing but her grief, motionless, and blinded by her tears, she looked like a weeping statue of alabaster. The anguish of the two lovers drew tears from most of the beholders. In fine, Richard and Isabella separated without exchanging a word; and Clotald and his friends, after saluting the queen, left the hall full of grief and pity. Isabella felt like an orphan whose parents have just been buried, and dreaded lest her new mistress should make her abandon the rule of life in which she had been brought up.

Two days afterwards, Richard put to sea, distracted among many other sources of incertitude by two reflections — one was that he had to perform exploits by which he might merit Isabella’s hand; and the other, that he could perform none without violating his conscience as a catholic, which forbade him to draw his sword against those of his own faith, but unless he did so, he should be denounced as a catholic or as a coward, to the peril of his life and his hopes. But, in fine, he determined to postpone his inclinations as a lover to his duty as a catholic, and in his heart he prayed heaven to send him occasions in which he might show himself at once valiant and a true Christian, — might satisfy his queen and merit Isabella.

For six days the two vessels sailed with a prosperous wind, shaping their course for the Western Islands, for, in that direction they could not fail to fall in with Portuguese East India men, or vessels returning from the West Indies; but on the seventh day the wind became contrary and continued that way so long that they could not make the islands, but were forced to run for the coast of Spain. On nearing it at the entrance of the straits of Gibraltar, they discovered three vessels, one very large and two small. Richard steered towards his commander’s ship to know if it was his intention they should attack the three vessels just discovered; but on nearing it, he saw them hoist a black flag, and presently he heard a mournful sound of trumpets, indicating that either the general or one of his chief officers was dead. When he came within hail, which

had not before been the case since they put to sea, there was a call from the leading ship for Captain Richard to come on board, as their general had died of apoplexy the preceding night. Sad as this news was, Richard could not help being glad, not of his admiral's death, but at finding himself in command of both ships, according to the Queen's orders for the contingency which had occurred. He went on board the flag-ship where he found some lamenting the old commander, and some rejoicing over the new one; but all promised him obedience, yet proclaimed him general with short ceremony, not having time for longer, for two out of the three vessels they had discovered had quitted the third and were bearing down upon them.

They at once made them out by the crescents on their flags to be Turkish galleys, to the great delight of Richard, who believed that with the help of Heaven he should make an important capture without prejudice to his religion. The two galleys came up to reconnoitre the English ships, which had not shown their national colours but those of Spain, in order to baffle those who might overhaul them, and prevent their recognising them as war cruisers. The Turks mistook them for trading vessels from India, and made sure of capturing them with ease. Richard took care to let them approach till they were well within range of his guns, which he let fly at them so opportunely, that with a single broadside he disabled one of the galleys, sending five balls through her middle and nearly cutting her in two. She immediately heeled over and began to founder; the other galley made haste to take her in tow, in order to get her under the lee of the large ship; but Richard, whose ships manoeuvred as rapidly as if they were impelled by oars, having reloaded his guns, pursued the retreating galleys, pouring upon them an incessant shower of balls. The crew of the crippled galley having clambered on board the large ship, Richard poured such a cross fire from his two ships on her consort, that she could neither use sails nor oars, and the Turks on board her, following the example of their comrades, took refuge in the large ship, not with the intention of defending her, but for the momentary safety of their lives. The Christian galley-slaves broke their chains, and mingling with the Turks also boarded the large ship, but as they were in danger from the musquetry of Richard's two ships as they were swarming up the side, he gave orders to cease firing on Turks and Christians alike. The former, however, had already lost the great part of their numbers, and the rest were cut to pieces with their own weapons by the revolted slaves, who, thinking the two English ships were Spanish, did marvels for the recovery of their freedom.

At last, when nearly all the Turks were killed, some Spaniards shouted from the deck to their supposed countrymen to come on board and enjoy the fruits of their victory. Richard asked them in Spanish what ship was that? They replied

that she was a Portuguese ship from the West Indies, freighted with spices, and with such a quantity of diamonds and pearls that she was worth a million. She had been driven into those latitudes by a storm, much damaged, with all her guns thrown overboard, and her crew almost perishing of hunger and thirst. In that condition, being unable to make any resistance, she had been captured the day before by these two galleys, which belonged to the corsair Arnaut Mami, and which not having stowage room for her great cargo, had taken her in tow to convey her to the river Larache. Richard apprised them, in return, that if they supposed his two vessels were Spanish, they were greatly mistaken, for they belonged to the Queen of England. This information astonished and alarmed them, making them fear that they had escaped from one rock to founder on another; but Richard told them they had nothing to fear, and that they might rely on obtaining their liberty, provided they did not make any defence. "It would be impossible for us to do so," they said, "for as we have told you, we have neither cannon nor other arms, and have no choice but to throw ourselves upon the generosity of your general. Since he has freed us from the intolerable yoke of the Turks, let him enhance his good work by an act which will exalt his fame all over the world wherever the news reaches of this memorable victory and his magnanimity."

Richard lent a favourable ear to this request, and immediately called a council of his officers to consider what might be the best means of sending all the Christians to Spain, without incurring any risk from them, should their numbers encourage them to rise and attempt to overpower his crews. There were some who suggested that they should be brought on board one by one, and put to death as they entered. "No," said Richard; "since by God's grace we have obtained so rich a prize, I will not betray my ingratitude by such an act of cruelty. It is never well to have recourse to the sword, when, with a little forethought, the end may be secured by other means. I will, therefore, not have any Catholic Christian put to death, not that I care so much for them, but for my own sake and for yours, for I would not have the honour of our victory tarnished by cruelty. My orders are, then, that the crew of one of our ships, with all her guns and arms and the greater part of her stores, be put on board the large Portuguese vessel, which we will then take to England, and leave the Spaniards to return home on ours."

No one ventured to contravene this proposal, which to some appeared equally magnanimous and judicious, while others in their hearts condemned it as showing an undue leaning towards the Catholics.

Taking with him fifty arquebusiers Richard went on board the Portuguese ship, in which he found about three hundred persons, who had escaped out of the galleys. He immediately had the vessel he intended to discharge brought

alongside, and had its guns brought on board. Then making a short speech to the Christians, he ordered them to pass into the discharged vessel, where they found stores enough for more than a month and for a greater number of people; and as they embarked he gave each of them four Spanish crowns, which he sent for to his own ship, in order partly to relieve their wants when they reached land, which was not far off; for the lofty mountains of Abyla and Calpe were in sight. They all thanked him heartily for his generous behaviour, and when they were nearly all embarked, the same person who had first spoken to him from the deck of the ship, addressed him, “You would do me a greater service, valorous sir, in taking me with you to England than in sending me to Spain; for, though it is my country, and it is but six days since I left it, I have nothing to look for there but grief and desolation.

“You must know, señor, that at the sack of Cadiz which happened about fifteen years ago, I lost a daughter, whom the English carried away with them to England, and with her I lost the comfort of my age and the light of my eyes, which since she passed from their sight, have never seen anything to gladden them. Grief for this calamity and for the loss of my property, of which I was also despoiled, so overcame me that I was no longer able or willing to apply myself to commerce, in which I had been so successful that I was commonly reputed to be the richest merchant in our whole city; and so indeed I was, for, besides my credit, which was good for many hundred thousand dollars, my estate was worth more than fifty thousand ducats. I lost all; yet all my losses would have been nothing had I not lost my daughter. After the general calamity and my own, want pressed me so hard, that not being able to bear up against it, myself and my wife — that woe-begone creature sitting yonder — determined to emigrate to the Indies, the common refuge of the well-born poor. We embarked six days ago in a packet-ship, but just outside the harbour of Cadiz we were captured by those two corsairs. This was a new addition to our affliction; but it would have been greater had not the corsair taken this Portuguese ship, which fortunately detained them until you came to our rescue.”

In reply to Richard’s question what was his daughter’s name, the Spaniard said it was Isabella. This confirmed the suspicion which Richard had all along entertained, that the person before him was the father of his beloved mistress. Keeping this fact to himself, he told the Spaniard that he would willingly take him and his wife to London, where possibly they might obtain some intelligence about their child.

Taking them both on board his flag-ship, and having sufficiently armed and manned the Portuguese galleon, he set sail that night, avoiding the coast of Spain as much as possible, lest he should be intercepted in consequence of!



information given by the liberated captives. Among the latter there were some twenty Turks, to whom also Richard granted freedom, to show that his conduct had been the result simply of his generous disposition, and not of any secret leaning to the Catholics: and he asked the Spaniards to set the Turks at liberty upon the first opportunity. The wind, which had blown fresh and fair at first, died away into a calm, to the dismay of the English, who murmured against Richard's unseasonable generosity, saying, that the liberated captives might give information of what had happened, and that if there chanced to be armed galleons in port, they might sally out and intercept them.

Richard knew that this was quite true, but strove to allay their fears in the best way he could. But what availed with them more than all his arguments, was that the wind sprang up again, so that they crowded all sail, and in nine days reached London, from which they had been only a month absent on their cruise. Richard would not enter the port with only joyous demonstrations, on account of the death of his late commander, but mingled signs of grief with them. At one moment bugles rang out cheerily, at the next they were answered by melancholy trumpet notes, and the wailing fife was heard at intervals between the lively rattle of the drum and the clash of arms. From one mast-head hung a Turkish banner reversed, and from another a long black streamer, the ends of which dipped in the water. In this manner he entered the river of London in his English ship, leaving the Portuguese ship at sea, for want of depth of water in the river to float it.

These conflicting demonstrations puzzled the vast multitudes, who observed them from the shore. They easily recognised the smaller vessel as the flag-ship of Baron Lansac; but they could not make out how it was that his second vessel had been exchanged for the large and powerful ship which lay out at sea. But the problem was solved when they saw the valorous Richard jump into his boat, fully equipped in rich and splendid armour. Without waiting for any other escort than that of a vast multitude of the people who followed him, he proceeded on foot to the palace, where the queen was standing in a balcony, waiting for news of the ships, and surrounded by her ladies, among whom was Isabella, dressed in the English style, which became her as well as the Castilian. A messenger, who had anticipated Richard's arrival, had startled her by the announcement of his coming, and she stood watching for him with feelings that fluttered between hope and fear, not knowing whether he had sped well or ill upon his expedition.

Richard was a young man of noble presence, tall and finely proportioned, and he looked to great advantage in a complete suit of Milanese armour all graven and gilded, and instead of a helmet, a wide-leafed fawn coloured hat with Walloon plumes. Thus equipped, and with his spirited bearing, to some he

seemed like Mars the god of battles; others, struck by the beauty of his face, compared him to Venus sportively disguised in the armour of that god. When he came before the Queen he knelt, and gave a brief account of his expedition.

“After the sudden death of general de Lansac,” he said, “I took his place in pursuance of your Majesty’s gracious orders. Shortly afterwards we discovered two Turkish galleys towing a large ship, which we have brought home with us. We attacked them; your Majesty’s soldiers fought with great spirit, as they always do, and the corsair galleys went to the bottom. I liberated in your Majesty’s royal name the Christians who had escaped out of the hands of the Turks, and sent them away in one of our vessels; and have only brought with me one Spaniard and his wife, who desired of their own accord to come and behold your Majesty’s greatness. The great ship we took, is one of those which come from the Portuguese possessions in India; being damaged by a storm, it fell into the power of the Turks, who took it without any difficulty. According to the account given by some of the Portuguese on board the ship, her cargo of spices, and the pearls and diamonds she carries, are worth more than a million. All is untouched, the Turks not having had time to lay hands on anything, and I have given orders that the whole should be presented to your Majesty. There is one jewel alone which, if your Majesty will bestow it upon me, will leave me your debtor for ten other ships. That jewel your Majesty has promised me: it is my Isabella, in obtaining whom I shall be richly rewarded, not only for this service, such as it is, which I have rendered your Majesty, but for many others which I intend to perform in order to repay some part of the incalculable amount which your Majesty will bestow upon me in that jewel.”

“Rise, Richard,” replied the queen, “and believe me that were I to deliver Isabella to you in the way of bargain at the price at which I value her, you could not pay for her with all the wealth of your prize-ship, nor with what remains in the Indies. I give her to you because I promised to do so, and because she is worthy of you, and you of her; your valour alone entitles you to have her. If you have kept the jewels in the ship for me, I have kept your jewel for you; and though it may seem to you that I do not do much for you in returning to you what is your own, I know that I confer upon you a boon the worth of which is beyond all human computation. Isabella is yours; there she stands; you may claim her when you will, and I believe that it will be with her own consent, for she has the good sense to prize your affection as it deserves. I shall expect you again to-morrow to give me a more detailed account of your exploits, and bring me those two Spaniards who wish to see me, that I may gratify their desire.” Richard kissed the queen’s hand, and her majesty retired.

The ladies now gathered round Richard, and one of them, the lady Tansi, who

had taken a great liking to Isabella, and who was the liveliest and most facetious lady of the court, said to him, "What is all this, sir? Why these arms? Did you, perchance, imagine that you were coming here to fight your enemies? Believe me, you have none but friends here, unless it be the lady Isabella, who, as a Spaniard, is bound to bear you no good will."

"Let her only vouchsafe, Lady Tansi, to have me a little in her thoughts, and I am sure she will not think of me with ill will; for ingratitude can have no place in the heart of one so good, so wise, and so exquisitely fair."

"Since I am to be yours, señor Richard," said Isabella, "claim from me what you will in recompense for the praises you bestow upon me."

Whilst Isabella and the other ladies were thus conversing with Richard, there was a little girl present who did nothing but gaze at him, lift up his cuishes to see what was beneath them, touch his sword, and, with childlike simplicity, peep at her own image reflected in his bright armour. When Richard was gone away, she said, turning to the ladies, "Now I see what a fine thing war must be, since armed men look to such advantage even among ladies." "Look to advantage!" exclaimed Lady Tansi; "one might take Richard for the sun, come down from Heaven, to walk the streets in that garb." Every one laughed at the little girl's remark, and at Lady Tansi's hyperbole; and there lacked not back-biters, who thought his appearing in arms at the palace was an act of great impropriety; but others excused him, saying that it was a very natural and pardonable act of vanity on the part of a gallant young soldier.

Richard was most cordially welcomed by his parents, relations, and friends, and that night there were general rejoicings in London. On his return home, he found Isabella's parents already there, and told his father and mother who they were, but begged they would give no hint of the matter to Isabella till he should make it known to her himself. His desire was punctually observed. That night they began with a great number of boats and barges, and in presence of a multitude of admiring spectators, to unload the great galleon, but eight days were consumed in the work before they had disembowelled it of its aromatic and precious freight. On the following day, Richard went again to the palace, taking with him Isabella's father and mother, dressed in the English style, telling them that the queen wished to see them. They found the queen surrounded by her ladies, with Isabella by her side, wearing, by the queen's desire, for Richard's special gratification, the same dress in which she had made her first appearance at court. Isabella's parents were filled with admiration and astonishment at such a display of grandeur and gaiety combined. They looked at Isabella, but did not recognise her, though their hearts, prophetic of the happiness so near at hand, began to throb, not anxiously, but with an emotion of joy for which they could

not account.

The queen would not allow Richard to kneel before her, but made him rise and be seated on a chair which was placed for him alone, an unusual favour, which provoked many envious comments. "It is not on a chair he sits," said one, "but on the pepper he has brought." "It is a true saying," remarked another, "that gifts can soften rocks, since they have mollified the hard heart of our queen." "He sits at his ease," said a third, "but there are those who will make bold to push him from his seat." In fact, that new mark of honour which the queen bestowed on Richard gave occasion to many to regard him with envy and malice; for there is no favour which the sovereign bestows on a subject but pierces the heart of the envious like a lance. In obedience to the queen's command, Richard narrated more minutely the details of his conflict with the corsairs, attributing the victory to God, and to the arms of her valiant soldiers. He extolled them all collectively, and made special mention of some who had particularly distinguished themselves, in order that the queen might reward them all and singly. When he came to speak of his having, in her majesty's name, set the Turks and Christians at liberty, he said, pointing to Isabella's parents, "These are the persons of whom I spoke yesterday to your majesty, who, desiring to behold your greatness, earnestly besought me to bring them away with me. They are from Cadiz, and from what they have told me, and from what I have myself observed, I am assured that they are persons of worth and quality."

The queen commanded them to approach her. Isabella raised her eyes to look at persons who she heard were Spaniards, and, above all, from Cadiz, longing to know if perchance they were acquainted with her parents. Her mother first encountered her gaze, and as she looked attentively at her, there rose on her mind some shadowy confused reminiscences that seemed to intimate she had seen that face before. Her father was in the same wavering state of mind, not daring to believe the evidence of his eyes, whilst Richard watched intently the workings of their perplexed and dubious souls. The queen too noticed the emotion of the two strangers, and also Isabella's uneasiness, for she saw her often raise her hand to her forehead, which was bedewed with perspiration. Whilst Isabella was longing that the person she imagined to be her mother would speak, thinking that the sound of her voice would resolve her doubts, the queen commanded her to ask the strangers in Spanish what had induced them voluntarily to forego the freedom which Richard had offered them, since freedom was the thing most prized, not only by reasonable creatures, but even by irrational animals. Isabella put this question to her mother, who, without answering a word, rushed abruptly and almost tottering to Isabella, and forgetting all respect of place or circumstances, put her hand to her daughter's

right ear, and discovered a dark mole behind it. Assured now beyond all doubt that Isabella was her daughter, she cried out, "Child of my heart! treasure of my soul!" and swooned in her arms. The father, no less tender hearted but with more self-command, gave no other token of his feelings than the tears that streamed down his venerable face and beard. With her lips pressed upon her mother's, Isabella bent her eyes upon her father, with looks that spoke the gladness of her soul.

The queen was greatly affected by this touching scene, and said to Richard, "I know not whether you have done wisely in contriving this meeting, for sudden joy, it is known, can kill as well as grief." Then, turning to Isabella, she withdrew her from her mother, who, after her face had been sprinkled with water, came to her senses, and recollecting herself a little better, fell on her knees before the queen, entreating her majesty's pardon. Elizabeth graciously replied, and commanded that the two strangers should take up their abode in the palace, that they might have the more opportunity of rejoicing in their daughter's society. Richard then renewed his request that the queen would fulfil her promise, and bestow Isabella upon him, if so it were that he had deserved her, but if not, he begged to be sent where he might find opportunities of doing so.

The queen was well aware that Richard was well satisfied with himself, and that there was no need of putting him to further proof; she told him, therefore, that in four days he should obtain the object of his desires, and that she would honour their union with her royal countenance. Richard then took his leave of her majesty, his heart swelling with joy at the near prospect of Isabella becoming his own for ever. Time sped, but not with the nimbleness he desired; for those who live on the hopes of pleasure to come, always imagine that time does not fly, but hobbles on the feet of sloth itself. At last the day came on which Richard expected, not to end his desires, but to find in Isabella new graces which should make him love her more, if more was possible. But in that brief space of time, in which he thought the bark of his fortunes was running with a prosperous gale towards the desired haven, it encountered such a fearful tempest, as a thousand times threatened it with wreck.

The queen's keeper of the robes, who had charge of Isabella, had a son aged two-and-twenty, named Count Ernest, whom his great wealth, his high blood, and his mother's great favour with the queen, made too arrogant and overbearing. He fell most violently in love with Isabella, and, during Richard's absence, he had made some overtures to her which she had coldly disregarded. Although repugnance and disdain manifested at the outset usually make the enamoured desist from their suit, yet Isabella's notorious disdain had the contrary effect on Ernest, for it fired his passion, and consumed his sense of

honour. He was almost distracted when he found that the queen had adjudged Isabella to Richard, and that she was so soon to become his; but before he committed himself to the infamous and dastardly course which he ultimately adopted, he first besought his mother to use her influence with the queen on his behalf, declaring that his death was at hand unless he obtained Isabella for his wife.

The countess, well knowing her son's violent and arrogant disposition, and the obstinacy with which he pursued his desires, had reason to fear that his passion would lead to some unhappy result. With a mother's natural anxiety to gratify her son's wishes, she promised to speak to the queen, not with the hope of succeeding in the impossible attempt to make her majesty break her word, but in order not to sit down in despair, while any remedy remained to be tried. That morning Isabella was dressed by the queen's orders with a magnificence which defies description. With her own hands her majesty put on her neck a string of the largest pearls found in the galleon, valued at twenty thousand ducats, and a diamond ring on her finger worth six thousand crowns. But whilst the ladies were in great glee anticipating the glad time so near at hand, the keeper of the robes presented herself before the queen, and implored her on her knees to postpone Isabella's wedding for two days longer, declaring that if her majesty would only do so, it would more than reward her for all her past services. The queen desired to know, in the first instance, why she made that request, so directly at variance with the royal promise given to Richard; but the countess would not explain until the queen, urged by curiosity to discover the cause of this strange request, promised that she would grant it. Having thus succeeded in her immediate object, the lady keeper made the queen acquainted with her son's passion, and how, fearing that unless he obtained Isabella he would commit some desperate deed against himself or others, she had asked for that delay of two days in order that her majesty might devise the best means of saving the life of her son. The queen replied that had she not pledged her royal word, she would have found a way to smooth over that difficulty, but that, for no consideration, could she retract her promise or defraud Richard of the hope she had given him.

The lady keeper reported the queen's answer to her son, but nothing could overcome his headstrong presumption. Arming himself at all points he mounted a powerful charger, and presented himself before Clotald's house, and shouted for Richard to come to the window. Richard was dressed as a bridegroom, and was on the point of setting out for the palace with his friends, but hearing himself thus summoned, he went with some surprise and showed himself at an open window. "Hark you, Richard; I have something to say to you," said Count Ernest. "Our lady the queen ordered you to go forth on her service and perform

exploits that should render you worthy of the peerless Isabella. You set out, and returned with ships laden with wealth, with which you think you have bought your title to Isabella. But though our lady the queen promised her to you, it was under the belief that there was no one at her court who could serve her better than you, or more justly aspire to the fair Spaniard's hand; but in this it may be that her majesty was mistaken. Being of that opinion, and holding it for very truth, I say that you have done no such deeds as can make you worthy of Isabella, nor can you ever perform any to raise you to that honour; and if you dare to maintain the contrary, I defy you to the death."

"I am in no wise called upon to take up your defial," replied Richard; "because I confess not only that I do not merit Isabella, but that no man living does so. Confessing, therefore, the truth of what you allege, I say again, that your defial touches not me; nevertheless, I accept it in order to chastise your insolence." So saying, he left the window and called for his arms.

Richard's family and the friends who had assembled to escort him to the palace were thrown into confusion by this untoward incident. The challenge having been so publicly given, it could not be but that some one should report it to the queen. This was done accordingly, and her majesty ordered the captain of her guard to arrest Count Ernest. The captain made such good speed that he arrived just as Richard was riding out from his father's house, mounted on a handsome steed, and equipped with the magnificent arms in which he had gone to pay his respects to the queen on his return from his expedition. The moment the count saw the captain of the queen's guard, he guessed his purpose, and resolving not to let himself be caught, he shouted out, "You see, Richard, how we are interrupted. If you are bent upon chastising me, you will look for me as I will look for you. Two people surely meet when they have a mind." "The sooner the better," said Richard. Meanwhile, the captain of the guards came up and, in the queen's name, arrested the count, who surrendered, requesting to be taken into the queen's presence. The captain complied, and carried Ernest before the queen, who, without entering into any discourse with him, ordered that he should surrender his sword and be committed to the Tower.

All these things were torture to the heart of Isabella and to her parents, who saw their new-found happiness so soon disturbed. The lady keeper advised the queen that to prevent the mischief which might break out between her own family and Richard's, the possible cause of it should be withdrawn, by sending Isabella to Spain. In support of this suggestion she added that Isabella was a Catholic, and so rooted in that faith, that all the arguments and persuasions she had used to withdraw her from it, and they were many, were of no avail. The queen replied that she esteemed her the more, since she was steadfast to the law

taught her by her parents; and that as for sending her to Spain, it was not to be thought of, for she was charmed with her lovely presence and her many graces and virtues. In fine, the queen was resolved that Isabella should become Richard's wife, if not that day, on another, without fail. The lady keeper was so mortified by this reply that she withdrew without saying a word; and having already made up her mind that unless Isabella was removed there could be no hope of relief for her son or of peace between him and Richard, she determined to commit one of the most atrocious acts that could enter the mind of a lady of her exalted station.

Women being, for the most part, rash and sudden in the execution of their resolves, the lady keeper that evening gave Isabella poison in a conserve which she pressed her to take, under the pretence that it was good for the sinking and oppression of the heart which she complained of. A short while after Isabella had swallowed it her throat and tongue began to swell, her lips turned black, her voice became hoarse, her eyes fixed and glassy, and her breathing laboured and stertorous: in short, she exhibited all the symptoms of having been poisoned. The queen's ladies hastened to inform her majesty, assuring her that the lady keeper had been the author of the nefarious deed.

The queen had no great difficulty in coming to the same conclusion, and went at once to see Isabella, who seemed to be almost at the last gasp. Sending with all speed for her physicians, she, meanwhile, ordered that the sufferer should be given a quantity of powdered unicorn's horn and several other antidotes, with which great princes are usually provided against such casualties. The physicians arrived and begged the queen to make the lady keeper declare what kind of poison she had used (for no one doubted that she was the poisoner). This information having been obtained from the criminal, the physician applied the proper remedies with such good effect that, with God's help, Isabella's life was saved, or at least there was a hope that it would be so.

The queen ordered that the lady keeper should be arrested and confined in a chamber of the palace, intending to punish her as her crime deserved; whilst the guilty woman thought to excuse herself by saying that in killing Isabella she offered an acceptable sacrifice to heaven by ridding the world of a Catholic, and removing with her the cause of affliction to her son. Finally, Isabella did not die; but she escaped only with the loss of her hair, eyebrows, and eyelashes, her face swollen, her bloom gone, her skin blotched and blistered, and her eyes red and humid. In a word, she was now become an object as loathsome to look at as she had before been surpassingly beautiful. The change was so frightful that those who knew her thought it would have been better had the poison killed her. But notwithstanding all this, Richard supplicated the queen to let him take her home



with him, for the great love he bore her comprehended not only her body but her soul, and if Isabella had lost her beauty, she could not have lost her infinite virtues. "Be it so," said the queen. "Take her, Richard, and reckon that you take in her a most precious jewel, in a rough wooden casket. God knows how gladly I would give her to you as I received her; but since that is impossible, perhaps the punishment I will inflict on the perpetrator of the crime will be some satisfaction to your feelings."

Richard spoke earnestly in the culprit's behalf, and besought her majesty to pardon her. Finally, Isabella and her parents were consigned to his care, and he took them home to his father's house, the queen having added to the fine pearls and the diamonds she had bestowed on Isabella other jewels and rich dresses, such as manifested the great affection she felt for her. Isabella remained for two months in the same state, without the least sign appearing that her beauty would ever return; but at the end of that time her skin began to peel off, and she gradually recovered the natural bloom of her lovely complexion. Meanwhile, Richard's parents, thinking it impossible that Isabella should ever again be what she had been, determined to send for the Scotch lady, to whom they had at first intended to unite him. They did not doubt that the actual beauty of the new bride would make their son forget the lost beauty of her rival, whom they intended to send to Spain with her parents, giving them so much wealth as would compensate them for their past losses. All this was settled between them without Richard's knowledge, and soon after the new bride entered their doors, duly accompanied, and so beautiful that none could compare with her in London, now that Isabella's charms were gone.

Richard was astounded at this unexpected arrival, and fearing that it would have a fatal effect upon Isabella, he went to her bedside, and said to her, in presence of her parents, "Beloved of my soul, my parents, in their great love for me, but ill conceiving how great is mine for you, have brought hither a Scotch lady, to whom they arranged to marry me before I knew your worth. They have done so, I believe, upon the supposition that her great beauty will efface from my soul the image of yours, which is deeply impressed upon it. But from the moment I first loved you, Isabella, it was with a different love from that which finds its end attained in the gratification of the sensual appetite: for though your great beauty captivated my senses, your infinite virtues enthralled my soul, so that if I loved you in your beauty, I adore you in your plainness. That I may confirm that truth, put your hand in mine."

She held out her right hand; he took it in his, and continued:

"By the Catholic faith which my Christian parents have taught me; or, if that is not as pure and perfect as it ought, then, by that held by the Roman pontiff,

and which in my heart I confess, believe, and hold, do I swear, and by the true God who hears us, I promise you, Isabella, soul of my soul! to be your husband; and your husband I am from this moment, if you will raise me up so high."

Isabella could only kiss Richard's hand again and again, and tell him in a voice broken by her tears, that she accepted him as hers, and gave herself to him as his slave. Richard kissed her disfigured face, which he had never ventured to kiss in its beauty; and her parents, with tears of affection, ratified their solemn betrothal. Richard told them that he would find a way to postpone his marriage with the Scotch lady, and that when his father proposed to send them to Spain they were not to refuse, but were to go to Cadiz and wait for him there or in Seville for two years, within which time he gave them his word he would be with them, if God spared his life. Should he not appear within that time, they might be assured that he was prevented by some insuperable impediment, and most probably by death. Isabella replied that she would wait for him not only two years, but all the years of her life, until she knew that he was no longer alive; for the moment that brought her that news would be her last.

Richard having at length quitted Isabella, went and told his parents that on no account would he marry the Scotch lady until he had first been to Rome for the satisfaction of his conscience; and he represented the matter in such a light to them and to the relations of Clesterna (that was the name of the Scotch lady), that as they were all Catholics, they easily assented, and Clesterna was content to remain in her father-in-law's house until the return of Richard, who proposed to be away a year. This being settled, Clotald told his son of his intention to send Isabella and her parents to Spain, if the queen gave them leave; perhaps her native air would confirm and expedite her incipient recovery. Richard, to avoid betraying his secret intentions, desired his father, with seeming indifference, to do as he thought best; only he begged him not to take away from Isabella any of the presents which the queen had given her. Clotald promised this, and the same day he went and asked the queen's leave both to marry his son to Clesterna, and to send Isabella and her parents to Spain. The queen granted both requests, and without having recourse to lawyers or judges, she forthwith passed sentence on the lady keeper, condemning her to lose her office, and to pay down ten thousand crowns for Isabella. As for Count Ernest, she banished him from England for six years.

Four days afterwards Richard set out on his exile, and the money had been already paid. The queen, sending for a rich merchant, resident in London, who was a Frenchman, and had correspondents in France, Italy, and Spain, put the ten thousand crowns into his hands, and desired him to let Isabella's father have bills for the amount on Seville or some other place in Spain. The merchant having

deducted his profit, told the queen he would give good and safe bills on another French merchant, his correspondent in Seville, in the following manner: — He would write to Paris that the bills might be drawn there by another correspondent of his, in order that they should be dated from France and not from England, because of the interdicted communication between that country and Spain. It would only be necessary to have a letter of advice from him, with his signature and without date, in sight of which the merchant of Seville would immediately pay the money, according to previous advice from the merchant of Paris.

In fine, the queen took such securities from the merchant as made the payment certain; and not content with this, she sent for the master of a Flemish vessel who was about to sail for France, only to obtain a manifest from some French port, in order to be allowed to land in Spain; and she begged him to take Isabella and her parents, treat them well, and land them safely at the first Spanish port he reached. The master, who desired to please the queen, said he would do so, and would land them at Lisbon, Cadiz, or Seville. After this the queen sent word to Clotald not to take from Isabella any of the presents she had given her, whether jewels or clothes.

The next day Isabella and her parents came to take leave of the queen, who received them with great affection. The queen gave them the merchant's bills, besides many other presents, both in money and in things suitable for their voyage. Isabella expressed her gratitude in such terms as to increase the queen's gracious disposition towards her. She took leave of the ladies of the court, who, now that she had become plain, would rather have had her remain among them, having no longer reason to envy her beauty, and being willing to enjoy her society for the sake of her good qualities of mind and disposition. The queen embraced the three, and took leave of them, commending them to good fortune and to the master of the vessel, and asking Isabella to inform her of her arrival in Spain, and of her health at all times through the French merchant. That evening they embarked, not without tears on the part of Clotald, his wife, and his whole household, by whom Isabella was exceedingly beloved. Richard was not present at the departure, for, in order to avoid betraying his feelings, he had gone with some of his friends to the chase.

Many were the dainties which the lady Catherine gave. Isabella for use on the voyage; endless were her embraces, her tears, and her injunctions that she should write to her; for all which Isabella and her parents returned suitable thanks. That night the vessel set sail, and having reached France with a fair wind, and obtained the necessary papers to enable them to enter Spain, they crossed the bar of Cadiz thirty days afterwards, and there Isabella and her parents disembarked. Being known to the whole city, they were joyfully welcomed, and warmly

congratulated on their recovery of Isabella, and on their liberation, from their Turkish captors (for that fact had been made known by the captives whom Richard generously released), and also from detention in England. By this time Isabella began to give great hopes that she would quite recover her original beauty.

For more than a month they remained in Cadiz, recruiting themselves after the toils of their voyage; and then they went to Seville, to see if they should obtain payment of the ten thousand crowns upon the French merchant's bill. Two days after their arrival they called upon the person on whom it was drawn. He acknowledged it, but said that, until the arrival of advices from Paris, he could not pay the money. Isabella's father hired a large house facing St. Paul's, because there was in that holy convent a nun who was remarkable for rare musical talents, and who was his own niece. They chose the house to be near her for that reason, and because Isabella had told Richard that if he came to look for her he would find her in Seville, and her cousin, the nun of St. Paula's, would tell him where: he had only to ask for the nun who had the best voice in the convent; every one would know her by that description.

It was forty days more before the advices came from Paris, and two days after their arrival the French merchant paid Isabella the ten thousand crowns, which she handed over to her parents. With that sum, and something more made by the sale of part of Isabella's numerous jewels, her father again began business as a merchant, to the surprise of those who were cognisant of his great losses. After a few months his lost credit began to return; so, too, did his daughter's good looks, so that, whenever female beauty was the subject of discourse, the palm was universally conceded to the Spanish-English lady; for by that name, as well as for her great beauty, she was known throughout the city. Through the French merchant of Seville, Isabella and her parents wrote to the queen of England, announcing their arrival in such grateful and dutiful terms as the many favours received at her Majesty's hands required. They also wrote to Clotald and Catherine, whom Isabella addressed as her revered parents.

Their letters to the queen remained unanswered, but from Clotald and his wife they received a reply, congratulating them on their safe arrival, and informing them that their son Richard had set out from France the day after their departure, and thence to other countries, which it behoved him to visit for the tranquillity of his conscience. Isabella immediately concluded that Richard had left England for no other purpose than to seek her; and cheered by this hope, she was as happy as she could be, and strove to live in such a manner that, when Richard arrived in Seville, the fame of her virtues should reach his ears before he learned where she lived.

She seldom or never quitted the house, except to go to the convent, and attended no other church services than those performed there. She never went near the river, or to Triana, or witnessed the general rejoicings at the Campo de Tablada, or the Puerta de Xeres on Sari Sebastian's day, celebrated by an almost innumerable multitude; in short, she never went abroad for any kind of amusement in Seville; her whole time was spent in her devotions, and in praying and hoping for Richard's arrival. The consequence of this strict retirement was a great increase of the general interest about her; thence came serenades in her street by night, and promenades by day. The desire which so many felt to see her, and the difficulty of accomplishing it, was a great source of gain to the professional go-betweens, who severally professed that they alone had the ear of Isabella, and some there were who had recourse to what are called charms, which are nothing but deceits and follies; but in spite of all this, Isabella was like a rock in the ocean, which the winds and waves assail in vain. A year and a half had now passed, and her heart began to yearn more and more as the end of the period assigned by Richard drew near. Already, in imagination, she looked upon him as arrived; he stood before her eyes; she asked him what had caused his long delay; she heard his excuses; she forgave him, embraced and welcomed him as the half of her soul; and then there was put into her hands a letter from the lady Catherine, dated from London fifty days before. It was as follows: —

“Daughter of my heart, — You doubtless recollect Richard's page, Guillart. He accompanied Richard on his journey the day after you sailed, to France and other parts, whereof I informed you in a former letter. This said Guillart, after we had been sixteen months without hearing news of my son, yesterday entered our house with news that Count Ernest had basely murdered Richard in France. Imagine, my daughter, the effect upon his father, myself, and his intended wife, of such news as this, coming to us in such wise as left no doubt of our misfortune. What Clotald and myself beg of you once more, daughter of my soul, is that you will pray heartily to God for the soul of Richard, for well he deserves this service at your hands, he who loved you so much as you know. Pray also to our Lord to grant us patience, and that we may make a good end; as we will pray for long life for you and your parents.”

This letter and the signature left no doubt in Isabella's mind of the death of her husband. She knew the page Guillart very well, and knew that he was a person of veracity, and that he could have had no motive for publishing false news in such a matter; still less could the lady Catharine have had any interest in deceiving her so painfully. In fine, in whatever way she considered the subject, the conclusion at which she invariably arrived was, that this dismal intelligence was unquestionably true. When she had finished reading the letter, without

shedding tears or showing any outward tokens of grief, with a composed face and apparently tranquil breast, she rose from her seat, entered an oratory, and kneeling before a crucifix, made a vow to become a nun, thinking herself free to do so, as she was no longer a betrothed maiden, but a widow. Her parents studiously concealed the grief which this affecting news caused them, in order that they might the better console their bereaved daughter; whilst she, as if mistress over her sorrow, having subdued it by the holy Christian resolution she had made, became their comforter. She made her intention known to them, and they advised her to postpone its execution, until the two years were elapsed which Richard had assigned as the duration of his absence. That delay would suffice for confirming the news of his death, and then she might with more security change her condition. Isabella followed their advice; and the six months and a half which remained to complete the term of two years were spent by her in devotional exercises, and in arranging for her entrance into the convent of Santa Paula, in which her cousin was a nun.

The remainder of the two years elapsed, and the day arrived when she was to take the veil. The news having spread through the city, the convent, and the space between it and Isabella's abode, was thronged by those who knew her by sight, or by report only; and her father having invited her friends, and these having invited others, Isabella had for her escort one of the most imposing retinues ever seen in Seville on such occasions. It included the chief justice of Seville, the vicar-general, and all the titled personages of both sexes in the city, so great was the desire of all to behold the sun of Isabella's beauty, which had been for so many months eclipsed. And as it is customary for maidens about to take the veil to dress themselves in their very gayest attire on the day when they are to renounce for ever the pomps and vanities of the world, Isabella wore the same splendid dress in which she was presented to the queen of England, with her necklace and girdle of lustrous pearls, her diamond ring, and all her other sumptuous jewels. Thus gorgeously attired, Isabella set out from home on foot, for the short distance to the convent seemed to render carriages superfluous; but the concourse was so great that the procession could hardly advance, and its members regretted too late that they had not chosen to ride instead of walking. Some of the spectators blessed the father and mother of that lovely creature; others praised Heaven that had endowed her with so much beauty. Some strained forward to see her; others, having seen her once, ran forward to have a second view of her. Among those who were most eager to behold her, was a man who attracted the notice of many by his extraordinary efforts. He was dressed in the garb of a slave lately ransomed, and wore on his breast the emblem of the Holy Trinity, by which it was known that he had been redeemed by the charity of the

Redemptorist fathers.

Already Isabella had set one foot on the threshold of the convent gate, where the prioress and the nuns stood ready to receive her with the cross, when this ransomed captive cried out, "Stop, Isabella, stop!" Isabella and her parents turned at this cry, and saw the man cleaving his way towards them through the crowd by main strength. The blue hat he wore having fallen oft through the violence of his exertions, disclosed a profusion of flaxen hair, and a clear red and white complexion, which showed him at once to be a foreigner.

Struggling, stumbling, and rising again, he at last reached the spot where Isabella stood, caught her hand in his, and said, "Do you know me, Isabella? I am Richard, your betrothed." "Well do I know you," said Isabella, "if indeed you are not a phantom come to trouble my repose." Her parents also examined his features attentively, and saw that this captive was indeed Richard. As for him, weeping at Isabella's feet, he implored her not to let the strange garb he wore prevent her recognising him, nor his low fortune impede the fulfilment of the pledges exchanged between them. In spite of the impression which the letter from Richard's mother had made on her memory, Isabella chose rather to believe the living evidence before her eyes; and embracing the captive, she said, "Without doubt, my lord and master, you are he who alone could hinder the fulfilment of my Christian determination; you are without doubt the half of my soul; my own betrothed! your image is stamped upon my memory, and treasured in my heart. The news of your death, sent me by your lady mother, not having killed me on the spot, I resolved to dedicate myself to religion, and I was just about to enter this convent for the rest of my days; but since God has shown us by so just an impediment that he wills otherwise, it is not for me to refuse obedience. Come, señor, to the house of my parents, which is yours, and there I will give myself to you in the way which our holy catholic faith prescribes."

This dialogue, overheard by the spectators, struck them all with amazement. The chief justice and the vicar-general immediately demanded what was all this ado, who was this stranger, and what marriage was this they talked about. Isabella's father replied, that what they had seen was the sequel of a story which required a different place for the telling of it; therefore, he begged that all who desired to hear it should turn back to his house, which was close by, and there he would fully satisfy their curiosity, and fill them with wonder at the strange things he should relate.

Just then one of the crowd cried out, "Señors, this young man is the great English corsair. It is not much more than two years since he took from the Algerine corsairs the great Portuguese galleon from the Indies. There is not the least doubt that he is the very man; I know him, because he set me at liberty, and

gave me money to carry me to Spain, and not me only, but three hundred other captives likewise.” These words increased the general excitement and the desire to see all these intricate matters cleared up. Finally, the principal persons of the city, with the chief justice and the vicar-general, went back with Isabella to her father’s house, leaving the nuns sorely discomfited, and crying with vexation at the loss they had sustained in not having the beautiful Isabella to grace their nunnery. The company being arrived at the house of Isabella’s father, she made them be seated in a long hall, and though Richard would willingly have taken it upon himself to tell his story, yet he thought it better to trust it to Isabella’s tongue than to his own, which was not very expert in speaking Spanish. Accordingly she began her narration in the midst of profound silence and attention.

She related all that happened to her from the day when Clotald carried her off from Cadiz until her return thither; also Richard’s engagement with the Turks; his liberality to the Christians; the promise they had given each other to be husband and wife; the two years’ delay agreed on, and the news she had received of his death, which seemed to her so certain, as to have nearly occasioned her taking the veil! She extolled the liberality of the queen of England, the Christian faith of Richard and his parents, and she concluded by saying, that Richard would relate what had happened to him since he left London until that moment, when he stood before them in the dress of a captive, and with the mark of having been ransomed by charity. “I will do so,” said Richard, “and briefly relate the hardships I have undergone.

“I quitted London to avoid marrying Clisterna, the Scottish Catholic lady, to whom Isabella has told you that my parents wished to unite me, and I took with me Guillart, my page, the same who carried the news of my death to London, as my mother stated in her letter. Passing through France, I arrived in Rome, where my soul was gladdened, and my faith fortified. I kissed the feet of the supreme pontiff, confessed my sins to the grand penitentiary, obtained absolution, and received the necessary certificates of my confession and penance, and of the submission I had paid to our holy mother, the church. This done, I visited the numberless holy places in that sacred city, and out of two thousand crowns I had with me in gold, I deposited one thousand six hundred with a money-changer, who gave me a letter of credit for them on one Roqui, a Florentine, in this city. With the four hundred that remained, I set out for Spain, by way of Genoa, where I had heard that there were two galleys of that signory bound for this country. I arrived with Guillart at a place called Aquapendente, which is the last town in the pope’s dominions on the road to Florence, and in an inn at which I alighted, I met Count Ernest, my mortal enemy. He had four servants with him,



he was disguised, and was going, as I understood, to Rome, not because he was a Catholic, but from motives of curiosity. I thought he had not recognised me, and shut myself up in a room with my servant Guillart, where I remained on my guard, intending to shift my quarters at nightfall. I did not do so, however, for the perfect indifference shown by the count and his servants made me confident that they had not recognised me. I supped in my room, locked the door, looked to my sword, commended myself to God, but would not lie down.

“My servant lay asleep, and I sat on a chair between asleep and awake; but a little after midnight, I was near put to sleep for eternity by four pistol shots fired at me, as I afterwards learned, by the count and his servants. They left me for dead, and their horses being in readiness, they rode off, telling the innkeeper to bury me suitably, for I was a man of quality. My servant, awaking in terror at the noise, leaped out of a window, and ran away in such mortal fear, that it seems he never stopped till he got to London, for it was he brought the news of my death.

“The people of the inn came up and found I had been struck by four balls and several slugs, but none of the wounds in any vital part. Calling for a confessor, I received all the sacraments as became a Catholic Christian; but I gradually recovered, though it was two months before I was able to continue my journey. I then proceeded to Genoa, but found no other means of passage than two feluccas, which were hired by myself and two Spanish gentlemen. One of them we employed to go before and pilot the way, and in the other we ourselves embarked. In this way we pursued our voyage, closely hugging the shore; but when we came to a spot on the coast of France, called the Three Marias, two Turkish galleys suddenly came out upon us from a creek, and one keeping to seaward of us, the other more in shore, they cut off our escape to the land and captured us. The corsairs stripped us to the skin, plundered the feluccas, and having completely emptied them, let them drift ashore, instead of sinking them, saying that they might serve to bring them more pickings another time.

“You may well believe how bitterly I felt my captivity, and above all, the loss of the certificates from Rome, which I carried in a tin case, with the bill for the sixteen hundred ducats; but, by good fortune, they fell into the hands of a Christian slave, a Spaniard, who kept them, for if the Turks had got hold of them, they would have required for my ransom at least the amount of the bill. They carried us to Algiers, where I found that the fathers of the Most Holy Trinity were redeeming Christian slaves. I spoke to them, told them who I was, and they, moved by charity, ransomed me, though I was a foreigner. The price set upon me was three hundred ducats; they paid down one hundred on the spot, and engaged to pay the remaining two hundred as soon as the ship should return with the contributions for the release of the Redemptorist father who remained in

Algiers in pledge for four thousand ducats, which he had spent over and above the amount he had brought in hand; for so extreme is the charity of these compassionate fathers, that they give their liberty for another's, and remain in captivity that others may go free. In addition to the happiness of obtaining my liberty, I recovered the case with the certificates and the bill. I showed its contents to the good father, and promised him five hundred ducats, in addition to the amount of my ransom, as a contribution towards the payment of the sum for which he was a hostage.

“It was nearly a year before the ship returned with the redemption money. What befel me in that year would, of itself, furnish matter for another history too long to relate at present. I will only say, that I was recognised by one of the twenty Turks whom I liberated with the Christians on the occasion already mentioned; but he was so grateful and so honest, that he would not betray me, for had the Turks known me to be the person who had sunk two of their galleys, and despoiled them of the great Indian galleon, they would either have put me to death, or presented me to the Grand Turk, in which case I should never have recovered my liberty. Finally, the Redemptorist father came to Spain with me, and fifty other ransomed Christians. We made a general procession in Valentia, and from that place we dispersed and took each his own several way, wearing this garb in token of the means by which we had been released. For myself, I arrived to-day in this city, burning with desire to see Isabella, my betrothed, and asked my way at once to the convent, where I was to hear of her. What happened there you all know. It now only remains for me to exhibit these certificates to satisfy you of the truth of my strange story.”

So saying, he produced the documents from a tin case, and placed them in the hands of the vicar-general, who examined them along with the chief justice, and found nothing in them to make him doubt the truth of what Richard had stated. Moreover, for the fuller confirmation of his story, Heaven ordained that among the persons present should be that very Florentine merchant on whom the bill for sixteen hundred ducats was drawn. He asked to see it, found it genuine, and accepted it on the spot, for he had received advice of it several months before. Thereupon Richard confirmed the promise he had made of contributing five hundred ducats to the funds of the Redemptorist fathers. The chief justice embraced him, Isabella, and her parents, and complimented them all in the most courteous terms. So, too, did the vicar-general, who requested Isabella to commit this whole story to writing, that he might lay it before his superior, the archbishop, and this she promised to do.

The deep silence in which the audience had listened to this extraordinary narrative was broken by thanksgivings to God for his great marvels; and all

present, from the highest to the lowest, congratulated Isabella, Richard, and their parents, and prayed for their happiness as they took leave of them. Eight days afterwards, Richard and Isabella were united before the altar, their marriage being honoured by the presence of the chief justice, and all the persons of distinction in Seville. Thus, after so many vicissitudes, Isabella's parents recovered their daughter, and re-established their fortune; and she, favoured by heaven, and aided by her many virtues, in spite of so many crosses and troubles, obtained for her husband a man so deserving as Richard, with whom it is believed that she lives to this day, in the house facing Santa Paula, which her father had hired, and which they subsequently bought of the heirs of a gentleman of Burgos, named Hernando Cifuentes.

This tale may teach us what virtue and what beauty can effect, since they are sufficient together, or either singly, to win the love even of enemies; and how Heaven is able to bring forth our greatest happiness even out of our heaviest misfortunes.

## THE FORCE OF BLOOD.

One night, after a sultry summer's day, an old hidalgo of Toledo walked out to take the air by the river's side, along with his wife, his little boy, his daughter aged sixteen, and a female servant. Eleven o'clock had struck: it was a fine clear night: they were the only persons on the road; and they sauntered leisurely along, to avoid paying the price of fatigue for the recreation provided for the Toledans in their valley or on the banks of their river. Secure as he thought in the careful administration of justice in that city, and the character of its well-disposed inhabitants, the good hidalgo was far from thinking that any disaster could befall his family. But as misfortunes commonly happen when they are least looked for, so it chanced with this family, who were that night visited, in the midst of their innocent enjoyment, by a calamity which gave them cause to weep for many a year.

There was in that city a young cavalier, about two-and-twenty years of age, whom wealth, high birth, a wayward disposition, inordinate indulgence, and profligate companions impelled to do things which disgraced his rank. This young cavalier — whose real name we shall, for good reasons, conceal under that of Rodolfo — was abroad that night with four of his companions, insolent young roisterers like himself, and happened to be coming down a hill as the old hidalgo and his family were ascending it. The two parties, the sheep and the wolves, met each other. Rodolfo and his companions, with their faces muffled in their cloaks, stared rudely and insolently at the mother, the daughter, and the servant-maid. The old hidalgo indignantly remonstrated; they answered him with mocks and jeers, and passed on. But Rodolfo had been struck by the great beauty of Leocadia, the hidalgo's daughter, and presently he began to entertain the idea of enjoying it at all hazards. In a moment he communicated his thoughts to his companions, and in the next moment they resolved to turn back and carry her off to please Rodolfo; for the rich who are open-handed always find parasites ready to encourage their bad propensities; and thus to conceive this wicked design, to communicate it, approve it, resolve on ravishing Leocadia, and to carry that design into effect was the work of a moment.

They drew their swords, hid their faces in the flaps of their cloaks, turned back, and soon came in front of the little party, who had not yet done giving thanks to God for their escape from those audacious men. Rodolfo laid hold on Leocadia, caught her up in his arms, and ran off with her, whilst she was so

overcome with surprise and terror, that far from being able to defend herself or cry out, she had not even sense or sight left to see her ravisher, or know whither he was carrying her. Her father shouted, her mother shrieked, her little brother cried, the servant-maid tore her own face and hair; but the shouts and shrieks were disregarded, the wailings moved no pity, the clawing and scratching was of no avail; for all was lost upon the loneliness of the spot, the silence of the night, and the cruel hearts of the ravishers. Finally, the one party went off exulting, and the other was left in desolation and woe.

Rodolfo arrived at his own house without any impediment, and Leocadia's parents reached theirs heart-broken and despairing. They were afraid to appeal for justice to the laws, lest thereby they should only publish their daughter's disgrace; besides, though well born they were poor, and had not the means of commanding influence and favour; and above all, they knew not the name of their injurer, or of whom or what to complain but their luckless stars. Meanwhile Rodolfo had Leocadia safe in his custody, and in his own apartment. It was in a wing of his father's house, of which he had the keys, a great imprudence on the part of any parent. When Leocadia fainted in his arms, he had bandaged her eyes, in order that she might not notice the streets through which she passed, or the house into which he took her; and before she recovered her senses, he effected his guilty purpose.

Apathy and disgust commonly follow satiated lust. Rodolfo was now impatient to get rid of Leocadia, and made up his mind to lay her in the street, insensible as she was. He had set to work with that intention, when she came to herself, saying, "Where am I? Woe is me! What darkness is this? Am I in the limbo of my innocence, or the hell of my sins? Who touches me? Am I in bed? Mother! dear father! do you hear me? Alas, too well I perceive that you cannot hear me, and that I am in the hands of enemies. Well would it be for me if this darkness were to last for ever, and my eyes were never more to see the light! Whoever thou art," She exclaimed, suddenly seizing Rodolfo's hand, "if thy soul is capable of pity, grant me one prayer: having deprived me of honour, now deprive me of life. Let me not survive my disgrace! In mercy kill me this moment! It is the only amends I ask of you for the wrong you have done me."

Confused by the vehemence of her reproaches, Rodolfo knew not what to say or do, and answered not a word. This silence so astonished Leocadia, that she began to fancy she was dreaming, or haunted by a phantom; but the hands she grasped were of flesh and blood. She remembered the violence with which she had been torn from her parents, and she became but too well aware of the real nature of her calamity. After a passionate burst of tears and groans, "Inhuman youth!" she continued, "for your deeds assure me that your years are few, I will

forgive the outrage you have done me, on the sole condition that you promise and vow to conceal your crime in perpetual silence, as profound as this darkness in which you have perpetrated it. This is but a small recompense for so grievous a wrong; but it is the greatest which I can ask, or you can grant me. I have never seen your face, nor ever desire to see it. It is enough for me to remember the injury I have sustained, without having before my mind's eye the image of my ravisher. My complaints shall be addressed only to Heaven: I would not have them heard by the world, which judges not according to the circumstances of each case, but according to its own preconceived notions. You may wonder to hear me speak thus, being so young. I am surprised at it myself; and I perceive that if great sorrows are sometimes dumb, they are sometimes eloquent. Be this as it may, grant me the favour I implore: it will cost you little. Put me at once into the street, or at least near the great church; for I shall know my way thence to the house of my parents. But you must also swear not to follow me, or make any attempts to ascertain my name or that of my family, who if they were as wealthy as they are noble, would not have to bear patiently such insult in my person. Answer me, and if you are afraid of being known by your voice, know, that except my father and my confessor, I have never spoken with any man in my life, and that I should never be able to tell who you were, though you were to speak ever so long."

The only reply Rodolfo made to the unhappy Leocadia was to embrace her, and attempt a repetition of his offence; but she defended herself with hands, feet, and teeth, and with a strength he could not have supposed her capable of exerting. "Base villain," she cried, "you took an infamous advantage of me when I had no more power to resist than a stock or a stone; but now that I have recovered my senses, you shall kill me before you shall succeed. You shall not have reason to imagine, from my weak resistance, that I pretended only to faint when you effected my ruin." In fine, she defended herself with such spirit and vigour as completely damped Rodolfo's ardour. Without saying a word he left the room, locked the door behind him, and went in quest of his companions, to consult them as to what he should do.

Finding herself left alone, Leocadia got out of bed, and groped about the room, and along the walls, feeling for a door or window through which she might make her escape. She found the door, but it was locked outside. She succeeded in opening the window; and the moonlight shone in so brightly, that she could distinguish the colour of some damask hangings in the room. She saw that the bed was gilded, and so rich, that it seemed that of a prince rather than of a private gentleman. She counted the chairs and the cabinets, observed the position of the door, and also perceived some pictures hanging on the walls, but

was not able to distinguish the subjects. The window was large, and protected by a stout iron grating: it looked out on a garden, surrounded by high walls, so that escape in that direction was as impossible as by the door.

Everything she observed in this sumptuous apartment showed her that its master was a person of quality, and of extraordinary wealth. Among other things on which she cast her eyes was a small crucifix of solid silver, standing on a cabinet near the window. She took it, and hid it in the sleeve of her gown, not out of devotion, nor yet with a felonious intention, but with a very proper and judicious design. Having done this, she shut the window as before, and returned to the bed, to see what would be the end of an affair which had begun so badly. In about half an hour, as it seemed to her, the door was opened; some one came in, blindfolded her, and taking her by the arm, without a word spoken, led her out of the room, which she heard him lock behind him.

This person was Rodolfo, who though he had gone to look for his friends, had changed his mind in that respect, not thinking it advisable to acquaint them with what had passed between him and the girl. On the contrary, he resolved to tell them, that repenting of his violence, and moved by her tears, he had only carried her half-way towards his house, and then let her go. Having come to this resolution, he hastened back to remove Leocadia before daylight appeared, which would compel him to keep her in his room all the following day. He led her then to the Plaza del Ayuntamiento, and there, in a feigned voice, speaking half Portuguese and half Spanish, he told her she might go home without fear, for she should not be followed; and he was already out of sight before she had taken the bandage from her eyes.

Leocadia looked all round her: she was quite alone: no one was in sight; but suspecting that she might be followed at a distance, she stopped every now and then on her way home, which was not far, and looked behind her. To baffle any spies that might perchance be watching her, she entered a house which she found open; and by and by she went from it to her own, where she found her parents stupefied with grief. They had not undressed, or thought of taking any rest. When they saw her, they ran to her with open arms, and welcomed her with tears. Choking with emotion, Leocadia made a sign to her parents that she wished to be alone with them. They retired with her, and she gave them a succinct account of all that had befallen her. She described the room in which she had been robbed of her honour, the window, the grating, the garden, the cabinets, the bed, the damask hangings, and, last of all, she showed them the crucifix which she had carried off, and before which the three innocent victims renewed their tears, imprecated Heaven's vengeance on the insolent ravisher, and prayed that he might be miraculously punished. She told her parents, that although she had

no wish to know the name of him at whose hands she had received such cruel wrong, yet if they thought fit to make such a discovery, they might do so by means of the crucifix, by directing the sacristans of the several parishes in the city to announce from the pulpits that whoever had lost such an image would find it in the hands of a certain monk whom he should name. By this means, they would discover their enemy in the person of the owner of the crucifix.

“That would be very well, my child,” replied her father, “if your plan were not liable to be frustrated by ordinary cunning; but no doubt this image has been already missed by its owner, and he will have set it down for certain that it was taken out of the room by the person he locked up there. To give him notice that the crucifix was in the hands of a certain monk would only serve to make known the person who deposited it in such keeping, but not to make the owner declare himself; for the latter might send another person for it, and furnish him with all the particulars by which he should identify it. Thus you see we should only damage ourselves without obtaining the information we sought; though to be sure we might employ the same artifice on our side, and deposit the image with the monk through a third hand. What you had best do, my child, is to keep it, and pray to it, that since it was a witness to your undoing, it will deign to vindicate your cause by its righteous judgment. Bear in mind, my child, that an ounce of public dishonour outweighs a quintal of secret infamy; and since, by the blessing of God, you can live in honour before the public eye, let it not distress you so much to be dishonoured in your ownself in secret. Real dishonour consists in sin, and real honour in virtue. There are three ways of offending God; by thought, word, and deed; but since neither in thought, nor in word, nor in deed have you offended, look upon yourself as a person of unsullied honour, as I shall always do, who will never cease to regard you with the affection of a father.”

Thus did this humane and right-minded father comfort his unhappy daughter; and her mother embracing her again did all she could to soothe her feelings. In spite of all their tenderness her anguish was too poignant to be soon allayed; and from that fatal night, she continued to live the life of a recluse under the protection of her parents.

Rodolfo meanwhile having returned home, and having missed the crucifix, guessed who had taken it, but gave himself no concern about it. To a person of his wealth such a loss was of no importance; nor did his parents make any inquiry about it, when three days afterwards, on his departure for Italy, one of his mother’s women took an inventory of all the effects he left in his apartment. Rodolfo had long contemplated a visit to Italy; and his father, who himself had been there, encouraged him in that design, telling him that no one could be a finished gentleman without seeing foreign countries. For this and other reasons,



Rodolfo readily complied with the wishes of his father, who gave him ample letters of credit on Barcelona, Genoa, Rome, and Naples. Taking with him two of his companions, he set out on his travels, with expectations raised to a high pitch, by what he had been told by some soldiers of his acquaintance, concerning the good cheer in the hostelrys of Italy and France, and the free and easy life enjoyed by the Spaniards in their quarters. His ears were tickled with the sound of such phrases as these: *ecco li buoni polastri, picioni, presuto, salcie*, and all the other fine things of the sort, which soldiers are fond of calling to mind when they return from those parts to Spain. In fine, he went away with as little thought or concern about what had passed between him and the beautiful Leocadia as though it had never happened. She meanwhile passed her life with her parents in the strictest retirement, never letting herself be seen, but shunning every eye lest it should read her misfortune in her face. What she had thus done voluntarily at first, she found herself, in a few months, constrained to do by necessity; for she discovered that she was pregnant, to the grievous renewal of her affliction.

Time rolled on: the hour of her delivery arrived: it took place in the utmost secrecy, her mother taking upon her the office of midwife: and she gave birth to a son, one of the most beautiful ever seen. The babe was conveyed, with the same secrecy, to a village, where he remained till he was four years old, when his grandfather brought him, under the name of nephew, to his own house, where he was reared, if not in affluence, at least most virtuously. The boy, who was named Luis after his grandfather, was remarkably handsome, of a sweet docile disposition; and his manners and deportment, even at that tender age, were such as showed him to be the son of some noble father. His grandfather and grandmother were so delighted with his grace, beauty, and good behaviour, that they came at last to regard their daughter's mischance as a happy event, since it had given them such a grandson. When the boy walked through the streets, blessings were showered upon him by all who saw him — blessings upon his beauty, upon the mother that bore him, upon the father that begot him, upon those who brought him up so well. Thus admired by strangers, as well as by all who knew him, he grew up to the age of seven, by which time he could already read Latin and his mother tongue, and write a good round hand; for it was the intention of his grandparents to make him learned and virtuous, since they could not make him rich, learning and virtue being such wealth as thieves cannot steal, or fortune destroy.

One day, when the boy was sent by his grandfather with a message to a relation, he passed along a street in which there was a great concourse of horsemen. He stopped to look at them; and to see them the better, he moved from his position, and crossed the street. In doing so, he was not rapid enough to

avoid a fiery horse, which its rider could not pull up in time, and which knocked Luis down, and trampled upon him. The poor child lay senseless on the ground, bleeding profusely from his head. A moment after the accident had happened, an elderly gentleman threw himself from his horse with surprising agility, took the boy out of the arms of a person who had raised him from the ground, and carried him to his own house, bidding his servants go fetch a surgeon.

Many gentlemen followed him, greatly distressed at the sad accident which had befallen the general favourite; for it was soon on everybody's lips that the sufferer was little Luis. The news speedily reached the ears of his grandparents and his supposed cousin, who all hurried in wild dismay to look for their darling. The gentleman who had humanely taken charge of him being of eminent rank, and well known, they easily found their way to his house, and arrived there just as Luis was under the surgeon's hands. The master and mistress begged them not to cry, or raise their voices in lamentation; for it would do the little patient no good. The surgeon, who was an able man, having dressed the wound with great care and skill, saw that it was not so deadly as he had at first supposed. In the midst of the dressing, Luis came to his senses, and was glad to see his relations, who asked him how he felt. "Pretty well," he said, only his head and his body pained him a good deal. The surgeon desired them not to talk to him, but leave him to repose. They did so, and the grandfather then addressed himself to the master of the house, thanking him for the kindness he had shown to his nephew. The gentleman replied that there was nothing to thank him for; the fact being, that when he saw the boy knocked down, his first thought was that he saw under the horses' heels the face of a son of his own, whom he tenderly loved. It was this that impelled him to take the boy up, and carry him to his own house, where he should remain all the time he was in the surgeon's hands, and be treated with all possible care. The lady of the house spoke to the same effect, and with no less kindness and cordiality.

The grandfather and grandmother were surprised at meeting with so much sympathy on the part of strangers; but far greater was the surprise of their daughter, who, on looking round her, after the surgeon's report had somewhat allayed her agitation, plainly perceived that she was in the very room to which she had been carried by her ravisher. The damask hangings were no longer there; but she recognised it by other tokens. She saw the grated window that opened on the garden: it was then closed on account of the little patient; but she asked if there was a garden on the outside, and was answered in the affirmative. The bed she too well remembered was there; and, above all, the cabinet, on which had stood the image she had taken away, was still on the same spot. Finally, to corroborate all the other indications, and confirm the truth of her discovery

beyond all question, she counted the steps of the staircase leading from the room to the street, and found the number exactly what she had expected; for she had had the presence of mind to count them on the former occasion, when she descended them blindfold. On her return home, she imparted her discovery to her mother, who immediately made inquiries as to whether the gentleman in whose house her grandson lay ever had a son. She found he had one son, Rodolfo — as we call him — who was then in Italy; and on comparing the time he was said to have been abroad with that which had elapsed since her daughter's ravishment, she found them to agree very closely. She made all this known to her husband; and it was finally settled between the three that they should not move in the matter for the present, but wait till the will of Heaven had declared itself respecting the little patient.

Luis was out of danger in a fortnight; in a month he rose from his bed; and during all that time he was visited daily by his mother and grandmother, and treated by the master and mistress of the house as if he was their own child. Doña Estafania, the kind gentleman's wife, often observed, in conversation with Leocadia, that the boy so strongly resembled a son of hers who was in Italy, she never could look at him without thinking her son was actually before her. One day, when Doña Estafania repeated this remark, no one being present but herself and Leocadia, the latter thought it a good opportunity to open her mind to the lady, in the manner previously concerted between herself and her parents.

"Señora," she said, "when my parents heard of the terrible accident that had befallen their nephew, they felt as if the sky had fallen upon their heads. For them it was losing the light of their eyes, and the staff of their age, to lose their nephew, their love for whom far surpasses that which parents commonly bear towards their sons. But, as the proverb says, with the disease God sends the remedy. The boy found his recovery in this house; and I found in it reminiscences of events I shall never forget as long as I live. I, señora, am noble, for so are my parents, and so were all my ancestors, who, though but moderately endowed with the gifts of fortune, always happily maintained their honour where-ever they lived."

Doña Estafania listened attentively to Leocadia, and was astonished to hear her speak with an intelligence beyond her years, for she did not think her more than twenty; and without interrupting her by a single word, she heard her relate her whole story, how she had been forcibly carried into that chamber, what had been done to her there, and by what tokens she had been able to recognise it again. In confirmation of all this, she drew forth from her bosom the crucifix she had taken away with her, and thus addressed it: "Lord, who wast witness of the violence done to me, be thou the judge of the amends which are my due. I took

thee from off this cabinet, that I might continually remind thee of my wrong, not in order to pray to thee for vengeance, which I do not invoke, but to beseech thee to inspire me with some counsel which may enable me to bear it with patience." Then turning to Doña Estafania, "This boy, señora," she said, "towards whom you have manifested the extreme of your great kindness and compassion, is your own grandson. It was by the merciful providence of Heaven that he was run over, in order that being taken to your house, I should find him in it, as I hope to find there, if not the remedy most appropriate to my misfortune, at least the means of alleviating it." Thus saying, and pressing the crucifix to her breast, she fell fainting into the arms of Doña Estafania, who as a gentlewoman, to whose sex pity is as natural as cruelty is to man, instantly pressed her lips to those of the fainting girl, shedding over her so many tears that there needed no other sprinkling of water to recover Leocadia from her swoon.

Whilst the two were in this situation, Doña Estafania's husband entered the room, leading little Luis by the hand. On seeing his wife all in tears, and Leocadia fainting, he eagerly inquired the cause of so startling a spectacle. The boy having embraced his mother, calling her his cousin, and his grandmother, calling her his benefactress, repeated his grandfather's question. "I have great things to tell you, señor," said Doña Estafania to her husband, "the cream and substance of which is this: the fainting girl before you is your daughter, and that boy is your grandson. This truth which I have learned from her lips is confirmed by his face, in which we have both beheld that of our son."

"Unless you speak more fully, señora, I cannot understand you," replied her husband.

Just then Leocadia came to herself, and embracing the cross seemed changed into a sea of tears, and the gentleman remained in utter bewilderment, until his wife had repeated to him, from beginning to end, Leocadia's whole story; and he believed it, through the blessed dispensation of Heaven, which had confirmed it by so many convincing testimonies. He embraced and comforted Leocadia, kissed his grandson, and that same day he despatched a courier to Naples, with a letter to his son, requiring him to come home instantly, for his mother and he had concluded a suitable match for him with a very beautiful lady. They would not allow Leocadia and her son to return any more to the house of her parents, who, overjoyed at her good fortune, gave thanks for it to Heaven with all their hearts.

The courier arrived at Naples; and Rodolfo, eager to become possessed of so beautiful a wife as his father had described, took advantage of the opportunity offered by four galleys which were ready to sail for Spain; and two days after the receipt of the letter he embarked with his two comrades, who were still with him. After a prosperous run of twelve days, he reached Barcelona, whence he posted

in seven to Toledo, and entered his father's house, dressed in the very extreme of fashionable bravery. His parents were beyond measure rejoiced at his safe arrival, after so long an absence; and Leocadia was filled with indescribable emotions, as she beheld him, herself unseen, from a secret place in which she had been stationed by Doña Estafania's contrivance. Rodolfo's two comrades proposed to take leave of him at once, and retire to their own homes; but Estafania would not suffer them to depart, for their presence was needful for the execution of a scheme she had in her head.

It was nearly night when Rodolfo arrived; and whilst preparations were making for supper, Estafania took her son's companions aside, believing that they were two of the three whom Leocadia mentioned as having been with Rodolfo on the night of her abduction. She earnestly entreated them to tell her, if they remembered that her son had carried off a young woman, on such a night, so many years ago; for the honour and the peace of mind of all his relations depended on their knowing the truth of that matter. So persuasive were her entreaties, and so strong her assurances that no harm whatever could result to them from the information she sought, they were induced to confess that one summer's night, the same she had mentioned, themselves and another friend being out on a stroll with Rodolfo, they had been concerned in the abduction of a girl whom Rodolfo carried off, whilst the rest of them detained her family, who made a great outcry, and would have defended her if they could. They added that Rodolfo told them, on the following day, that he had carried the girl to his own apartment; and this was all they knew of the matter.

All doubts which could possibly have remained on the case having been removed by this confession, Estafania determined to pursue her scheme. Shortly before supper she took her son in private into a room, where she put the portrait of a lady into his hands, saying, "Here is something to give you an appetite for your supper, Rodolfo; this is the portrait of your bride; but I must tell you that what she wants in beauty is more than made up for in virtue. She is of good family, and tolerably wealthy; and since your father and I have made choice of her, you may be assured she will suit you very well."

"Well," said Rodolfo, staring at the portrait, "if the painter of this portrait has flattered the original as much as painters usually do, then beyond all doubt the lady must be the very incarnation of ugliness. Truly, my lady mother, if it is just and right that sons should obey their parents in all things, it is no less proper that parents should have regard to the inclinations of their sons; and since matrimony is a bond not to be loosed till death, they ought to take care that it shall press as smoothly and equably as possible. Virtue, good birth, prudence, and the gifts of fortune, are all very good things, and may well gladden the heart of whoever

may have the lot to obtain this lady for a wife; but that her ugliness can ever gladden the eyes of her spouse, appears to me an impossibility. I am a bachelor to be sure, but I perfectly comprehend the coincidence there should be between the sacrament of marriage and the just and due delight mutually enjoyed by the married pair, and that if that be wanting, the object of marriage is frustrated; for to imagine that an ugly face which one must have before his eyes at all hours, in the hall, at table, and in bed, I say once more that is impossible. For God's sake, my lady mother, give me a wife who would be an agreeable companion, not one who will disgust me, so that we may both bear evenly, and with mutual goodwill, the yoke imposed on us by Heaven, instead of pulling this way and that way, and fretting each other to death. If this lady is well-born, discreet, and rich as you say, she will easily find a husband of a different humour from mine. Some look for noble blood in a wife, some for understanding, others for money, and others again for beauty, and of the latter class I am one. As for high birth, thank Heaven and my ancestors I am well enough off in that respect; as for understanding, provided a woman is neither a dolt nor a simpleton, there is no need of her having a very subtle wit; in point of wealth, I am amply provided by my parents; but beauty is what I covet, with no other addition than virtue and good breeding. If my wife brings me this, I will thank Heaven for the gift, and make my parents happy in their old age."

Estafania was delighted to hear Rodolfo speak thus, for the sentiments he expressed were just such as best accorded with the success of the scheme she had in hand. She told him that she would endeavour to marry him in conformity with his inclination, and that he need not make himself uneasy, for there would be no difficulty in breaking off the match which seemed so distasteful to him. Rodolfo thanked her, and supper being ready they went to join the rest of the party at table. The father and mother, Rodolfo and his two companions had already seated themselves, when Doña Estafania said, in an off-hand way, "Sinner that I am, how well I behave to my guest! Go," she said to a servant, "and ask the señora. Doña Leocadia to honour our table with her presence, and tell her she need not stand on any punctilio, for all here are my sons and her servants." All this was part of her scheme, with the whole of which Leocadia had been previously made acquainted.

The lady soon appeared, presenting a most charming spectacle of perfect beauty, set off by the most appropriate adornments. The season being winter, she was dressed in a robe and train of black velvet, with gold and pearl buttons; her girdle and necklace were of diamonds; her head was uncovered, and the shining braids and ringlets of her thick chestnut hair, spangled with diamonds, dazzled the eyes of the beholders. Her bearing was graceful and animated; she led her

son by the hand, and before her walked two maids with wax-lights and silver candlesticks. All rose to do her reverence, as if something from heaven had miraculously appeared before them; but gazing on her, entranced with admiration, not one of them was able to address a single word to her. Leocadia bowed to them all with courteous dignity, and Estafania taking her by the hand led her to a seat next herself and opposite to Rodolfo, whilst the boy was seated beside his grandfather. "Ah," said Rodolfo to himself, as he gazed on the lovely being before him, "could I find but half that beauty in the wife my mother has chosen for me, I should think myself the happiest man in the world. Good God! what is it I behold? Is it some angel in human shape that sits before me?" Whilst his eyes were thus making his soul captive to the lovely image of Leocadia, she, on the other hand, finding herself so near to him who was dearer to her than the light of those eyes with which she furtively glanced at him from time to time, began to revolve in her mind what had passed between her and Rodolfo. The hopes her mother had given her of being his wife began to droop, and the fear came strong upon her that such bliss was not for one so luckless as herself. She reflected how near she stood to the crisis which was to determine whether she was to be blessed or unhappy for ever, and racked by the intensity of her emotions, she suddenly changed colour, her head dropped, and she fell forward in a swoon into the arms of the dismayed Estafania.

The whole party sprang up in alarm and hastened to her assistance, but no one showed more earnest sympathy than Rodolfo, who fell twice in his haste to reach her. They unlaced her, and sprinkled her face with cold water; but far from coming to her senses, the fulness of her congested bosom, her total insensibility, and the absence of all pulse gave such mortal indications, that the servants began imprudently to cry out that she was dead. This shocking news reached the ears of her parents, whom Doña Estafania had concealed in another room that they might make their appearance at the right moment. They now rushed into the supper room, and the parish priest, who was also with them, went up to the prostrate lady to see if she could by any signs make known that she repented of her sins in order that he might give her absolution; but instead of one fainting person he found two, for Rodolfo lay with his face on Leocadia's bosom. His mother had left her to him as being her destined protector; but when she saw that he too was insensible, she was near making a third, and would have done so had he not come to himself. He was greatly confused at finding that he had betrayed such emotion; but his mother, who guessed his thoughts, said to him, "Do not be ashamed, my son, at having been so overcome by your feelings; you would have been so still more had you known what I will no longer conceal from you, though I had intended to reserve it for a more joyful occasion. Know then, son of

my heart, that this fainting lady is your real bride: I say real, because she is the one whom your father and I have chosen for you, and the portrait was a pretence.”

When Rodolfo heard this, carried away by the vehemence of his passion, and on the strength of his title as a bridegroom disdaining all conventional proprieties, he clasped Leocadia in his arms, and with his lips pressed to hers, seemed as if he was waiting for her soul to issue forth that he might absorb and mingle it with his own. Just at the moment when the tears of the pitying beholders flowed fastest, and their ejaculations were most expressive of despair, Leocadia gave signs of recovery, and brought back gladness to the hearts of all. When she came to her senses, and, blushing to find herself in Rodolfo’s arms, would have disengaged herself, “No, señora,” he said, “that must not be; strive not to withdraw from the arms of him who holds you in his soul.” There needed no more than these words to complete her revival; and Doña Estafania having no further need of stratagem, requested the priest to marry her son to Leocadia on the spot. This was done; for the event took place at a time when the consent of the parties was sufficient for the celebration of a marriage, without any of the preliminary formalities which are now so properly required. I leave it to a more ingenious pen than mine to describe the gladness of all present; the embraces bestowed on Rodolfo by Leocadia’s parents; the thanks they offered to Heaven, and to his father and mother; the congratulations on both sides; the astonishment of Rodolfo’s companions who saw him so unexpectedly married to so charming a bride on the very night of his arrival; and above all, when they learned from the statement openly made by Doña Estafania, that Leocadia was the very person whose abduction her son had effected with their aid. Nor was Rodolfo less surprised than they; and the better to assure himself of so wonderful a fact, he begged Leocadia to give him some token which should make perfectly clear to him that which indeed he did not doubt, since it was authenticated by his parents.

“Once when I recovered from a swoon,” replied Leocadia, “I found myself, señor, in your arms without honour; but for that I have had full compensation, since on my recovery from my this day’s swoon I found myself in the same arms, but honoured. If this is not enough for you, let it suffice to mention a crucifix which no one could have purloined from you but myself, if it be true that you missed it in the morning, and that it is the same that is now in the hands of your mother, my lady.”

“You are mine, the lady of my soul, and shall be so as long as God grants me life,” cried Rodolfo; embracing her again, amidst a fresh shower of benedictions and congratulations from the rest of the party.

At last they sat down to a merry supper to the sound of music, for the



performers, who had been previously engaged, were now arrived. Rodolfo saw his own likeness in his son's face as in a mirror. The four grandparents wept for joy: there was not a corner of the house but was full of gladness; and though night was hurrying on with her swift black wings, it seemed to Rodolfo that she did not fly, but hobble on crutches, so great was his impatience to be alone with his beloved bride. The longed-for hour came at last: every one retired to rest: the whole house was buried in silence; but not so shall be the truth of this story, which will be kept alive in the memory of men by the many children and descendants of that illustrious house in Toledo, where that happy pair still live, and have, for many prosperous years, enjoyed the society of each other, their children, and their grandchildren, by the blessing of Heaven, and through the force of that blood which was seen shed on the ground by the valorous, illustrious, and Christian grandfather of the little Luis.

## THE JEALOUS ESTRAMADURAN.

Not many years ago there issued from a town in Estramadura a hidalgo nobly born, who, like another prodigal son, went about various parts of Spain, Italy, and Flanders, squandering his years and his wealth. At last, after long peregrinations, his parents being dead and his fortune spent, he made his appearance in the great city of Seville, where he found abundant opportunity to get rid of the little he had left. Finding himself then so bare of money, and not better provided with friends, he adopted the remedy to which many a spendthrift in that city has recourse; that is, to betake themselves to the Indies, the refuge of the despairing sons of Spain, the church of the homeless, the asylum of homicides, the haven of gamblers and cheats, the general receptacle for loose women, the common centre of attraction for many, but effectual resource of very few. A fleet being about to sail for Tierrafirma, he agreed with the admiral for a passage, got ready his sea-stores and his shroud of Spanish grass cloth, and embarking at Cadiz, gave his benediction to Spain, intending never to see it again. The fleet slipped from its moorings, and, amidst the general glee of its living freight, the sails were spread to the soft and prosperous gale, which soon wafted them out of sight of land into the wide domains of the great father of waters, the ocean.

Our passenger now became very thoughtful, revolving in his memory the many and various dangers he had passed in the years of his peregrinations, and the thriftless conduct he had pursued all his life long. The result of the account to which he thus called himself was a firm resolution to change his way of life, to keep a much better hold of whatever wealth God might yet be pleased to bestow upon him, and to behave with more reserve towards women than he had hitherto done.

The fleet was nearly becalmed whilst the mind of Felipe de Carrizales was actuated by these reflections. The wind soon after rose and became so boisterous that Carrizales had enough to do to keep on his legs, and was obliged to leave off his meditations, and concern himself only with the affairs of his voyage. It was so prosperous that they arrived without check or accident at the port of Cartagena. To shorten the introduction of my narrative and avoid all irrelevant matter, I content myself with saying that Felipe was about eight-and-forty years of age when he went to the Indies, and that in the twenty years he remained there he succeeded, by dint of industry and thrift, in amassing more than a hundred

and fifty thousand crowns. Seeing himself once more rich and prosperous, he was moved by the natural desire, which all men experience, to return to his native country. Rejecting therefore great opportunities for profit which presented themselves to him, he quitted Peru, where he had amassed his wealth, turned all his money into ingots, and putting it on board a registered ship, to avoid accidents, returned to Spain, landed at San Lucar, and arrived at Seville, loaded alike with years and riches.

Having placed his property in safety, he went in search of his friends, and found they were all dead. He then thought of retiring to his native place, and ending his days there, although he had ascertained that death had not left him one survivor of his kindred; and if, when he went to the Indies poor and needy, he had no rest from the thoughts that distracted him in the midst of the wide ocean, he was now no less assailed by care, but from a different cause. Formerly his poverty would not let him sleep, and now his wealth disturbed his rest; for riches are as heavy a burden to one who is not used to them, or knows not how to employ them, as indigence to one who is continually under its pressure. Money and the want of it alike bring care; but in the one case the acquisition of a moderate quantity affords a remedy; the other case grows worse by further acquisition. Carrizales contemplated his ingots with anxiety, not as a miser, for, during the few years he had been a soldier, he had learned to be liberal; but from not knowing what to do with them; for to hoard them was unprofitable, and keeping them in his house was offering a temptation to thieves. On the other hand, all inclination for resuming the anxious life of traffic had died out in him, and at his time of life his actual wealth was more than enough for the rest of his days. He would fain have spent them in his native place, put out his money there to interest, and passed his old age in peace and quiet, giving what he could to God, since he had given more than he ought to the world. He considered, however, that the penury of his native place was great, the inhabitants very needy, and that to go and live there would be to offer himself as a mark for all the importunities with which the poor usually harass a rich neighbour, especially when there is only one in the place to whom they can have recourse in their distress.

He wanted some one to whom he might leave his property after his death, and with that view, taking measure of the vigour of his constitution, he concluded that he was not yet too old to bear the burthen of matrimony. But immediately on conceiving this notion, he was seized with such a terrible fear as scattered it like a mist before the wind. He was naturally the most jealous man in the world, even without being married, and the mere thought of taking a wife called up such horrible spectres before his imagination that he resolved by all means to remain

a bachelor.

That point was settled; but it was not yet settled what he should do with the rest of his life, when it chanced that, passing one day through a street, he looked up and saw at a window a young girl apparently about thirteen or fourteen, with a face so very handsome and so very pleasing in its expression, that poor old Carrizales was vanquished at once, and surrendered without an effort to the charms of the beautiful Leonora, for that was the girl's name. Without more ado, he began to string together a long train of arguments to the following effect:—"This girl is very handsome, and to judge from the appearance of the house, her parents cannot be rich. She is almost a child too; assuredly a wife of her age could not give a husband any uneasiness. Let me see: say that I marry her; I will keep her close at home, I will train her up to my own hand, and so fashion her to my wishes that she will never have a thought beyond them! I am not so old but that I may yet hope to have children to inherit my wealth. Whether she brings me any dower or not is a matter of no consideration, since Heaven has given me enough for both, and rich people should not look for money with a wife, but for enjoyment, for that prolongs life, whereas jarring discontent between married people makes it wear out faster than it would do otherwise. So be it then; the die is cast, and this is the wife whom heaven destines me to have."

Having thus soliloquised, not once but a hundred times on that day, and the two or three following, Carrizales had an interview with Leonora's parents, and found that, although poor, they were persons of good birth. He made known his intention to them, acquainted them with his condition and fortune, and begged them very earnestly to bestow their daughter upon him in marriage. They required time to consider his proposal, and to give him also an opportunity to satisfy himself that their birth and quality was such as they had stated.

The parties took leave of each other, made the necessary inquiries, found them satisfactory on both sides, and finally Leonora was betrothed to Carrizales, who settled upon her twenty thousand ducats, so hotly enamoured was the jealous old bridegroom. But no sooner had he pronounced the conjugal "yes," than he was all at once assailed by a host of rabid fancies; he began to tremble without cause and to find his cares and anxieties come thicker and faster upon him than ever. The first proof he gave of his jealous temper was, in resolving that no tailor should take measure of his betrothed for any of the many wedding garments he intended to present her. Accordingly, he went about looking for some other woman, who might be nearly of the same height and figure as Leonora. He found a poor woman, who seemed suitable for his purpose, and having had a gown made to her measure, he tried it on his betrothed, found that it fitted well, and gave orders that it should serve as a pattern for all the other dresses, which

were so many and so rich that the bride's parents thought themselves fortunate beyond measure, in having obtained for themselves and their daughter a son-in-law and a husband so nobly munificent. As for Leonora, she was at her wit's end with amazement at the sight of such gorgeous finery, for the best she had ever worn in her life had been but a serge petticoat and a silk jacket.

The second proof of jealousy given by Felipe was, that he would not consummate his marriage until he had provided a house after his own fancy, which he arranged in this singular manner. He bought one for twelve thousand ducats, in one of the best wards of the city, with a fountain and pond, and a garden well stocked with orange trees. He put screens before all the windows that looked towards the street, leaving them no other prospect than the sky, and did much the same with all the others in the house. In the gateway next the street, he erected a stable for a mule, and over it a straw loft, and a room for an old black eunuch, who was to take care of the mule. He raised the parapets round the flat roof of the house so high, that nothing could be seen above them but the sky, and that only by turning one's face upwards. In the inner door, opening from the gateway upon the quadrangle, he fixed a turning box like that of a convent, by means of which articles were to be received from without. He furnished the house in a sumptuous style, such as would have become the mansion of a great lord; and he bought four white slave girls, whom he branded in the face, and two negresses. For the daily supplies of his establishment he engaged a purveyor, who was to make all the necessary purchases, but was not to sleep in the house or ever enter it further than to the second door, where he was to deposit what he had brought in the turning box. Having made these arrangements, Carrizales invested part of his money in sundry good securities; part he placed in the bank, and the rest he kept by him to meet any emergencies that might arise. He also had a master key made for his whole house; and he laid up a whole year's store of all such things as it is usual to purchase in bulk at their respective seasons; and everything being now ready to his mind, he went to his father-in-law's house and claimed his bride, whom her parents delivered up to him with no few tears, for it seemed to them as if they were giving her up for burial.

Leonora knew not, poor young creature, what was before her, but she shed tears because she saw her parents weep, and taking leave of them with their blessing, she went to her new home, her husband leading her by the hand, and her slaves and servants attending her. On their arrival Carrizales harangued all his domestics, enjoining them to keep careful watch over Leonora, and by no means, on any pretence whatsoever, to allow anybody to enter within the second gate, not even the black eunuch. But the person whom above all others he

charged with the safe keeping and due entertainment of his wife was a dueña of much prudence and gravity, whom he had taken to be Leonora's monitress, and superintendent of the whole house, and to command the slaves and two other maidens of Leonora's age whom he had also added to his family, that his wife might not be without companions of her own years. He promised them all that he would treat them so well, and take such care for their comfort and gratification, that they should not feel their confinement, and that on holidays they should every one of them without exception be allowed to go to mass; but so early in the morning that daylight itself should scarcely have a chance of seeing them. The servant maids and the slaves promised to obey all his orders cheerfully and with prompt alacrity and the bride, with a timid shrinking of her shoulders, bowed her head, and said that she had no other will than that of her lord and spouse, to whom she always owed obedience.

Having thus laid down the law for the government of his household, the worthy Estramaduran began to enjoy, as well as he could, the fruits of matrimony, which, to Leonora's inexperienced taste, were neither sweet-flavoured nor insipid. Her days were spent with her dueña, her damsels, and her slaves, who, to make the time pass more agreeably, took to pampering their palates, and few days passed in which they did not make lots of things in which they consumed a great deal of honey and sugar. Their master gladly supplied them with all they could wish for in that way without stint, for by that means he expected to keep them occupied and amused, so that they should have no time to think of their confinement and seclusion. Leonora lived on a footing of equality with her domestics, amused herself as they did, and even in her simplicity took pleasure in dressing dolls and other childish pastime. All this afforded infinite satisfaction to the jealous husband; it seemed to him that he had chosen the best way of life imaginable, and that it was not within the compass of human art or malice to trouble his repose: accordingly his whole care was devoted to anticipating his wife's wishes by all sorts of presents, and encouraging her to ask for whatever came into her head, for in everything it should be his pleasure to gratify her.

On the days she went to mass, which as we have said was before daylight, her parents attended at church and talked with their daughter in presence of her husband, who made them such liberal gifts as mitigated the keenness of their compassion for the secluded life led by their daughter. Carrizales used to get up in the morning and watch for the arrival of the purveyor, who was always made aware of what was wanted for the day by means of a note placed over-night in the turning box. After the purveyor had come and gone, Carrizales used to go abroad, generally on foot, locking both entrance doors behind him — that next

the street, and that which opened on the quadrangle, — and leaving the negro shut up between them. Having despatched his business, which was not much, he speedily returned, shut himself up in his house, and occupied himself in making much of his wife and her handmaids, who all liked him for his placid and agreeable humour, and above all for his great liberality towards them. In this way they passed a year of novitiate, and made profession of that manner of life, resolved every one of them to continue in it to the end of their days; and so it would have been, if the crafty perturber of the human race had not brought their chaste purposes to nought, as you shall presently hear.

Now, I ask the most long-headed and wary of my readers, what more could old Felipe have done in the way of taking precautions for his security, since he would not even allow that there should be any male animal within his dwelling? No tom-cat ever persecuted its rats, nor was the barking of a dog ever heard within its walls; all creatures belonging to it were of the feminine gender. He took thought by day, and by night he did not sleep; he was himself the patrol and sentinel of his house, and the Argus of what he held dear. Never did a man set foot within the quadrangle; he transacted his business with his friends in the street; the pictures that adorned his rooms were all female figures, flowers, or landscapes; his whole dwelling breathed an odour of propriety, seclusion, and circumspection; the very tales which the maid servants told by the fireside in the long winter nights, being told in his presence, were perfectly free from the least tinge of wantonness. Her aged spouse's silver hairs seemed in Leonora's eyes locks of pure gold; for the first love known by maidens imprints itself on their hearts like a seal on melted wax. His inordinate watchfulness seemed to her no more than the due caution of an experienced and judicious man. She was fully persuaded that the life she led was the same as that led by all married women. Her thoughts never wandered beyond the walls of her dwelling, nor had she a wish that was not the same as her husband's. It was only on the days she went to mass that she set eyes on the streets, and that was so early in the morning, that except on the way home she had not light to look about her. Never was there seen a convent more closely barred and bolted; never were nuns kept more recluse, or golden apples better guarded; and yet for all his precautions poor Felipe could not help falling into the pit he dreaded, — or at least believing that he had so fallen.

There is in Seville an idle pleasure-seeking class of people who are commonly called men on town, a sauntering, sprucely dressed, mellifluous race, always finding means to make, themselves welcome at rich men's feasts. Of these people, their manners and customs, and the laws they observe among themselves, I should have much to say, but abstain from it for good reasons. One

of these gallants, a bachelor, — or a *virote*, as such persons are called in their jargon, the newly married being styled *matones*, — took notice of the house of Carrizales, and seeing it always shut close, he was curious to know who lived there. He set about this inquiry with such ardour and ingenuity, that he failed not to obtain all the information he desired. He learned the character and habits of the old man, the beauty of Leonora, and the singular method adopted by her husband in order to keep her safe. All this inflamed him with desire to see if it would not be possible, by force or stratagem, to effect the reduction of so well-guarded a fortress. He imparted his thoughts to three of his friends, and they all agreed that he should go to work, for in such an enterprise no one lacks counsellors to aid and abet him. At first they were at a loss how to set about so difficult an exploit; but after many consultations they agreed upon the following plan: — Loaysa (so the *virote* was named) disappeared from among his friends, giving out that he was leaving Seville for some time. Then drawing on a pair of linen drawers and a clean shirt, he put over them a suit of clothes so torn and patched, that the poorest beggar in the city would have disdained to wear such rags. He shaved off the little beard he had, covered one of his eyes with a plaster, tied up one of his legs, and hobbling along on two crutches, appeared so completely metamorphosed into a lame beggar, that no real cripple could have looked less of a counterfeit than he.

In this guise he posted himself closely at the hour of evening prayer before the door of Carrizales' house, which was fast shut, and Luis the negro locked up between the two doors. Having taken up his position there, Loaysa produced a greasy guitar, wanting some of its strings, and as he was something of a musician, he began to play a few lovely airs, and to sing Moorish ballads in a feigned voice, with so much expression that all who were passing through the street stopped to listen. The boys all made a ring round him when he sang, and Luis the negro, enchanted by the *virote's* music, would have given one of his hands to be able to open the door, and listen to him more at his ease, such is the fondness for music inherent in the negro race. When Loaysa wanted to get rid of his audience, he had only to cease singing, put up his guitar, and hobble away on his crutches.

Loaysa four or five times repeated this serenade to the negro, for whose sake alone he played and sang, thinking that the way to succeed in his sap and siege was to begin by making sure of old Luis; nor was his expectation disappointed. One night when he had taken his place as usual before the door, and had begun to time his guitar, perceiving that the negro was already on the alert, he put his lips to the key-hole and whispered, "Can you give me a drop of water, Luis? I am dying with thirst, and can't sing."



“No,” said the negro, “for I have not the key of this door, and there is no hole through which I can give you drink.”

“Who keeps the key, then?”

“My master, who is the most jealous man in the world; and if he knew that I was now talking here with any one, it were pity of my life. But who are you who ask me for water?”

“I am a poor cripple, who get my bread by asking alms of all good people in God’s name; besides which I teach the guitar to some moriscoes, and other poor people. Among my pupils I have three negroes, slaves to three aldermen, whom I have taught so well that they are fit to sing and play at dance or in any tavern, and they have paid me for it very well indeed.”

“A deal better would I pay you to have the opportunity of taking lessons; but it is not possible, for when my master goes out in the morning he locks the door behind him, and he does the same when he comes in, leaving me shut up between two doors.”

“I vow to God, Luis, if you would only contrive to let me in a few nights to give you lessons, in less than a fortnight I would make you such a dabster at the guitar, that you need not be ashamed to play at any street corner; for I would have you to know that I have an extraordinary knack in teaching; moreover, I have heard tell that you have a very promising capacity, and from what I can judge from the tone of your voice, you must sing very well.”

“I don’t sing; badly; but what good is that since I don’t know any tunes, except the ‘Star of Venus,’ or, ‘In the green meadow,’ or the tune that is now so much in vogue, ‘Clinging to her grated window, with a trembling hand?’”

“All these are moonshine to what I could teach you, for I know all the ballads of the Moor Abendaraez, with those of his lady Xarifa, and all those comprising the history of the grand sofi Tomunibeyo, and the divine sarabands which enchant the souls of the Portuguese themselves, among whom they are most in vogue; and all these I teach by such methods and with such facility, that almost before you have swallowed three or four bushels of salt, you will find yourself an out-and-out performer in every kind of guitar music.”

“What’s the good of all that,” (here the negro sighed heavily,) “since I can’t get you into the house?”

“There’s a remedy for all things: contrive to take the keys from your master, and I will give you a piece of wax, with which you may take an impression of the wards, for I have taken such a liking to you, I will get a locksmith, a friend of mine, to make new keys, and then I can come in at night and teach you to play better than Prester John in the Indies. It is a thousand pities that a voice like yours should be lost for want of the accompaniment of the guitar; for I would

have you to know, brother Luis, that the finest voice in the world loses its perfection when it is not accompanied by some instrument, be it guitar or harpsichord, organ or harp; but the instrument that will suit your voice best is the guitar, because it is the handiest and the least costly of all.”

“All that is very good; but the thing can’t be done, for I never get hold of the keys, nor does my master ever let them out of his keeping; day and night they sleep under his pillow.”

“Well, then, there’s another thing you may do, if so be you have made up a mind to be a first-rate musician; if you haven’t, I need not bother myself with advising you.”

“Have a mind, do you say? Ay, and to that degree that there is nothing I wouldn’t do, if it were possible anyhow, for sake of being able to play music.”

“Well, if that’s the case, you have only to scrape away a little mortar from the gate-post near the hinge, and I will give you, through that opening, a pair of pincers and a hammer, with which you may by night draw out the nails of the staple, and we can easily put that to rights again, so that no one will ever suspect that the lock was opened. Once shut up with you in your loft, or wherever you sleep, I will go to work in such style that you will turn out even better than I said, to my own personal advantage, and to the increase of your accomplishments. You need not give yourself any concern about what we shall have to eat. I will bring enough to last us both for more than a week, for I have pupils who will not let me be pinched.”

“As for that matter we are all right; for with what my master allows me, and the leavings brought me by the slave-girls, we should have enough for two more besides ourselves. Only bring the hammer and pincers, and I will make an opening close to the hinge, through which you may pass them in, and I will stop it up again with mud. I will take the fastenings out of the lock, and even should it be necessary to give some loud knocks, my master sleeps so far off from this gate, that it must be either a miracle or our extraordinary ill luck if he hears them.”

“Well, then, with the blessing of God, friend Luis, in two days from this time you shall have everything necessary for the execution of your laudable purpose. Meanwhile, take care not to eat such things as are apt to make phlegm, for they do the voice no good, but a deal of harm.”

“Nothing makes me so hoarse so much as wine, but I would not give it up for all the voices above ground.”

“Don’t think I would have you do so; God forbid! Drink, Luis my boy, drink; and much good may it do you, for wine drunk in measure never did any one harm.”

“I always drink in measure. I have a jug here that holds exactly three pints and a half. The girls fill this for me unknown to my master, and the purveyor brings me on the sly a bottle holding a good gallon, which makes up for the deficiency of the jug.”

“That’s the way to live, my boy, for a dry throat can neither grunt nor sing.”

“Well, go your ways now, and God be with you; but don’t forget to come and sing here every night until such time as you bring the tools for getting you within doors. My fingers itch to be at the guitar.”

“I’ll come, never fear, and I’ll bring some new tunes too.”

“Ay, do; but before you go away now, sing me something that I may go to sleep pleasantly; and for the matter of payment, be it known to the *señor pobre* that I will be more liberal than many a rich man.”

“Oh, I ain’t uneasy on that score. If you think I teach you well, I will leave it to yourself to pay me accordingly. And now I’ll just sing you one song, but when I am inside you will see wonders.”

Here ended this long dialogue, and Loaysa sang a sprightly ditty with such good effect, that the negro was in ecstasies, and felt as if the time for opening the door would never arrive.

Having finished his song, Loaysa took his departure, and set off at a rounder pace than might have been expected of a man on crutches, to report to his friends what a good beginning he had made. He told them what he had concerted with the negro, and the following day they procured tools of the right sort, fit to break any fastening as if it was made of straw. The virote failed not to serenade the negro, nor the latter to scrape at the gate-post till he had made a sufficiently wide hole, which he plastered up so well, that no one could perceive it unless he searched for it on purpose. On the second night Loaysa passed in the tools, Luis went to work with them, whipped off the staple in a trice, opened the door, and let in his Orpheus. Great was his surprise to see him on his two crutches, with such a distorted leg, and in such a tattered plight. Loaysa did not wear the patch over his eye, for it was not necessary, and as soon as he entered he embraced his pupil, kissed him on the cheek, and immediately put into his hand a big jar of wine, a box of preserves, and other sweet things, with which his wallet was well stored. Then throwing aside his crutches, he began to cut capers, as if nothing ailed him, to the still greater amazement of the negro.

“You must know, brother Luis,” said Loaysa, “that my lameness does not come of natural infirmity, but from my own ingenious contrivance, whereby I get my bread, asking alms for the love of God. In this way, and with the help of my music, I lead the merriest life in the world, where others, with less cleverness and good management, would be starved to death. Of this you will be convinced

in the course of our friendship.”

“We shall see,” said the negro; “but now let us put this staple back in its place, so that it may not appear that it has been moved.”

“Very good,” said Loaysa, and taking out some nails from his wallet, he soon made the lock seem as secure as ever, to the great satisfaction of the negro, who, taking him at once to his loft, made him as comfortable there as he could. Luis lighted a lamp; Loaysa took up his guitar, and began to strike the chords softly and sweetly, so that the poor negro was transported with delight. After he had played awhile, he drew forth a fresh supply of good things for a collation, which they partook of together, and the pupil applied himself so earnestly to the bottle that it took away his senses still more than the music had done. Supper over, Loaysa proposed that Luis should take his first lesson at once; and though the poor negro was too much fuddled to distinguish one string from another, Loaysa made him believe that he had already learnt at least two notes. So persuaded was the poor fellow of this, that he did nothing all night but jangle and strum away. They had but a short sleep that night. In the morning, just on the strike of six, Carrizales came down, opened both entrance doors, and stood waiting for the purveyor, who came soon afterwards; and after depositing the day’s supplies in the turning-box, called the negro down to receive his ration and oats for the mule. After the purveyor was gone, old Carrizales went out, locking both doors after him, without having seen what had been done to the lock of one of them, whereat both master and pupil rejoiced not a little.

No sooner was the master of the house gone, than the negro laid hold on the guitar, and began to scrape it in such a manner, that all the servant maids came to the second door, and asked him, through the turning-box, “What is this, Luis? How long have you had a guitar? Who gave it you?”

“Who gave it me? The best musician in the world, and one who is to teach me in six days more than six thousand tunes!”

“Where is he, this musician?” said the dueña.

“He is not far off,” replied the negro; “and if it were not for fear of my master, perhaps I would tell you where at once, and I warrant you would be glad to see him.”

“But where can he be for us to see him,” returned the dueña, “since no one but our master ever enters this house?”

“I will not tell you any more about the matter till you have heard what I can do, and how much he has taught me in this short time.”

“By my troth, unless he is a demon who has taught you, I don’t know how you can have become a musician all at once.”

“Stop a bit and you shall hear him, and mayhap you will see him too some

day.”

“That can’t be,” said another of the women, “for there are no windows on the street through which we could hear or see anybody.”

“Never mind” said the negro; “there’s a remedy for everything but death. If you only could or would keep silence— “

“Keep silence! Ay that we will, brother Luis, as if we were born dumb. I give you my word, friend, I am dying to hear a good voice, for ever since we have been shut up here we have not even heard the birds sing.”

Loaysa listened with great inward glee to this conversation, which showed how readily the women were taking the very bent he would have given them. The negro was afraid lest his master should return and catch him talking with them; but they would not go away until he had promised that, when they least expected it, he would call them to hear a capital voice. He then retreated to his loft, where he would gladly have resumed his lessons, but durst not do so by day for fear of detection. His master returned soon after and went into the house, locking both doors behind him as usual. When Luis went that day to the turning-box for his victuals, he told the negress, who brought them, to let her fellow-servants know that when their master was asleep that night, they should all of them come down to the turning-box, when he would be sure to give them the treat he had promised. He was enabled to say so much, having previously entreated his music-master to condescend to sing and play that night before the inner door for the amusement of the women. The maestro suffered himself to be pressed very hard to do the thing he most desired, but after much seeming reluctance he at last yielded to the solicitations of his esteemed pupil, and said he would be happy to oblige him. The negro embraced him cordially, in testimony of his grateful sense of the promised favour, and treated him that day to as good cheer as he could possibly have had at home, or perhaps better.

Towards midnight Luis knew, by the signals cautiously given at the turning-box, that the women were all there; whereupon he and Loaysa went down from the loft with the guitar, complete in all its strings and well tuned. The maestro asked how many were there to hear him, and was told that all the women in the house were there, except their lady, who was in bed with her husband. This was not what Loaysa wished for, nevertheless, by way of making a beginning and obliging his pupil, he touched the guitar softly, and drew from it such tones as ravished the ears of his audience. But who could describe the delight of the women when he sang *Pesame de ello*, and followed it up with the magic strains of the saraband, then new in Spain? There was not one of them that did not keep time to the music as if she were dancing like mad, but all noiselessly and with extreme caution, keeping scouts on the watch to warn them if the old man

awoke. Loaysa finally played them several seguidillas, and so put the climax to his success, that they all eagerly begged the negro to tell them who was this marvellous musician. Luis replied that he was a poor beggar, but the most gallant and genteel man in all the back slums of Seville. They conjured the negro to contrive some means that they might see him, and not to let him quit the house for a fortnight, for they would take care to supply him with the best of good cheer, and plenty of it. They were curious to know how Luis had managed to get him into the house; but to this the negro made no reply. For the rest he told them that if they wanted to see the maestro, they might bore a small hole in the turning-box and afterwards stop it up with wax; and that as for keeping him in the house, he would do his best.

Loaysa then addressed them, and offered them his services in such obliging and polite terms, that they were sure such fine language never came out of the head of a poor beggar. They entreated he would come the next night, and they would prevail on their lady to come down and hear him, in spite of the light sleep of her lord and master — the result not so much of his age as of his extreme jealousy. Loaysa replied that if they wished to hear him without fear of being surprised by the old man, he would give them a powder to put in his wine, which would make him sleep more soundly. “Good heaven!” cried one of the damsels, “if that were true, what a blessing would have come home to us without our knowing or deserving it! It would not be a sleeping powder for him so much as it would be a powder of life for all of us, and for my poor dear lady, Leonora his wife, to whom he sticks as close as her shadow, never losing sight of her for a moment. Ah, señor of my soul! bring that powder, and may God reward you with all the good you can desire. Go! don’t lose a moment — bring it, señor mio; I will take it upon me to put it in his wine and to be his cupbearer. Oh, that it might please God that the old man should sleep three days and nights! Three glorious days and nights they would be for us.”

“Well, I’ll bring it then,” said Loaysa. “It is of such a nature that it does no harm to the person who takes it; the only effect of it being to cause a most profound sleep.”

They all entreated him to bring it without delay, and then they took their leave of him, after agreeing that on the following night they would make a hole in the turning-box with a gimlet, and that they would try and persuade their mistress to come down. By this time it was nearly daylight, yet the negro wished to take a lesson. Loaysa complied with his desire, and assured him that among all the pupils he had ever taught, he had not known one with a finer ear; and yet the poor negro could never, to the end of his days, have learned the gamut.

Loaysa’s friends took care to come at night to Carrizales’ door to see if their

friend had any instructions to give them, or wanted anything. On the second night, when they had made him aware of their presence by a preconcerted signal, he gave them, through the key-hole, a brief account of the prosperous beginning he had made, and begged they would try and get him something to be given to Carrizales to make him sleep. He had heard, he said, that there were powders which produced that effect. They told him they had a friend, a physician, who would give them the best drug for that purpose if he happened to have it; and after encouraging him to persist in the enterprise, and promising to return on the following night, they left him.

Presently the whole flock of doves came to the lure of the guitar, and among them was the simple Leonora, trembling for fear her husband should awake. So great was her dread of his discovering her absence, that her women had great difficulty in persuading her to make the hazardous venture. But they all, especially the dueña, told her such wonderful things of the sweetness of the music, and the engaging manners of the poor musician, whom, without having seen him, they extolled above Absalom and Orpheus, that they persuaded her to do what she would never have done of her own accord. Their first act was to bore a hole in the turning-box through which they might peep at the musician, who was no longer clad in rags, but in wide breeches of buff silk, cut sailor fashion, a jacket of the same material, a satin cap to match, and a starched double-pointed ruff, all which he had brought in his wallet, expecting that he would have to show himself on an occasion which would require him to change his costume. Loaysa was young, good-looking, and of pleasing deportment; and as the eyes of all the women had been so long accustomed only to the sight of old Carrizales, they fancied as they looked at Loaysa that they beheld an angel.

Each of them took her turn at the peephole, and that they might see him the better, the negro stood by him with a lighted flambeau, which he moved up and down before the maestro's body. After all the women, from the lady of the house down to the two negresses, had thus gratified their eyes, Loaysa took his guitar, and played and sang more bewitchingly than ever. Leonora's women were bewildered with delight, and all besought Luis to contrive so that the señor maestro should come in through the inner door, so that they might hear and see him better, instead of squinting at him through a gimlet-hole, and without the risk they ran of being caught in the fact by their master, which would not be so great if they had the musician concealed inside. Their lady strenuously opposed this proposition, declaring she would not permit any such thing. She was shocked to hear them mention it, for they could hear and see him well enough as it was, without danger to their honour. "Honour," exclaimed the dueña; "the king has plenty. Your ladyship may shut yourself up with your Methusalem, if you

have a mind, but leave us to amuse ourselves as well as we can; the more so since this señor appears to be too much the gentleman to ask anything of us but what would be pleasing to ourselves."

"Never!" interposed Loaysa. "I came hither, ladies, with no other intention than to offer you my humble services, with all my heart and soul, moved by commiseration for the unparalleled rigour of your confinement, and for the precious moments that are lost to you through this recluse way of life. By the life of my father, I am a man so artless, so meek, so tractable and obedient, that I will never do more than I am bidden. If any one of you should please to say, 'Maestro, sit down here; Maestro, step this way, step that way, go yonder,' I will do just as you bid me, like the tamest and best trained dog that jumps for the king of France."

"Well, if that be so," said the inexperienced Leonora, "what is to be done, so that the señor maestro may come in?"

"Nothing can be easier," said Loaysa. "So please you, ladies, just take the trouble to make an impression on wax with the key of this door; and I will take care that by to-morrow night another shall be made exactly like it, which will answer our purpose."

"With that key," one of the women remarked, "we shall have those of the whole house, for it is a master-key."

"So much the better," said Loaysa.

"That is true," said Leonora; "but this señor must first of all swear, that when he is inside here he will not attempt to do anything but sing and play when he is asked, and that he will keep close and quiet wherever we may put him."

"I swear to this," said Loaysa.

"That oath is good for nothing," replied Leonora: "the señor must swear by the life of his father, and by the cross, which he must kiss in sight of us all."

"I swear by the life of my father," said Loaysa, "and by this sign of the cross, which I kiss with my unworthy mouth;" and crossing two of his fingers, he kissed them three times.

"That will do," said one of the women; "and now, señor, be sure you don't forget the powder, for that is the main thing of all."

Here the conversation ended for that night, and all parties retired highly satisfied with the interview. Good luck had evidently declared in favour of Loaysa; and just then, about two o'clock in the morning, it brought his friends to the door. On their giving the usual signal by blowing a French horn, he went to the door, told them what progress he had made, and asked had they brought the powder or other drug to put Carrizales to sleep. At the same time, he spoke to them respecting the master-key. They told him that on the following night they



would bring the powder, or else an ointment of such virtue that one had only to rub the patient's wrists and temples with it to throw him into such a profound sleep, that he would not wake for two days, unless the anointed parts were well washed with vinegar. As to the key, he had only to give them the impression in wax, and they would have a false one made forthwith. Having said this, the friends retired, and Loaysa and his pupil went to rest for the short remainder of the night. The next day hung heavily on hand, as always happens to those who are filled with eager expectation; but the longest day must have an end, and Loaysa's impatient desire was at last gratified.

The appointed hour having arrived, all the domestics, great and small, black and white, repaired to the turning-box, longing to see the señor musico fairly within their seraglio; but no Leonora was there. When Loaysa inquired for her, they said she was in bed with her good man, who had locked the bedroom door, and put the key under his pillow; and that their lady had told them, that when the old man had fallen asleep she would take the key, and they were to go to her by and by for the wax impression she would take from it, and pass to them through a trap-hole in the door. Loaysa was astonished at the old man's extreme wariness, in spite of which he by no means despaired of baffling his precautions. Just then the French horn was heard: Loaysa hastened to the door, and received from his friends a pot containing the promised ointment. Bidding them wait awhile, and he would bring them the mould of the key, he went back to the turning-box, and told the dueña, who seemed the most eager of all the women for his admission, to give the ointment to her lady, bid her anoint her husband with it so cautiously that he should not be aware of what she was doing, and she would soon see wonders. The dueña took the pot, stole up to her mistress's door, and found her waiting on the inside, stretched full length on the floor, with her face to the trap-hole. The dueña laid herself down in the same manner, and putting her mouth to her mistress's ear, whispered that she had brought the ointment, telling her at the same time how to apply it. Leonora took the ointment, but told the dueña that she could by no means get the key, for her husband had not put it under the pillow as usual, but between the mattresses, just under where he lay. However, she was to tell the maestro, that if the ointment operated as he said, she could easily get the key as often as she pleased, and so there would be no need of copying it in wax. Having delivered this message at once, the dueña was to come back, and see how the ointment worked, for she intended to apply it forthwith. The dueña having reported all this to Loaysa, he sent away his friends who were waiting without for the mould of the key.

Trembling in every limb, and scarcely daring to breathe, Leonora began to rub the wrists of her jealous husband. Next she smeared his nostrils; but as she did

so, the old man jerked his head, and Leonora was petrified with terror, believing that he was awake, and had caught her in the fact. It was a false alarm, however, and she went on with her task the best way she could, till she had completed it according to her instructions. It was not long before its effects manifested themselves; for presently the old man began to snore loud enough to be heard in the street. This was music more delightful to Leonora's ears than the maestro's voice or guitar; but still hardly trusting what she saw, she ventured to shake him, a very little at first, to see if he would wake; and then a wee bit more and more, till finding that he still snored on, she made bold to turn him over from one side to the other, without his showing any signs of waking. Seeing this, she stepped joyfully to the door; and in a voice not so low as before, called out to the dueña, who was waiting with her ear to the trap-hole. "Good news, sister; Carrizales is sleeping more soundly than the dead."

"What stops you then from taking the key, señora?" said the dueña. "The musico has been waiting for it this hour and more."

"Stay a moment, sister; I am going for it," said Leonora; and stepping back to the bed, she put her hand between the mattresses, and drew out the key without the old man's perceiving it. No sooner was the key in her hands, than dancing with delight she unlocked the door, and gave it to the exulting dueña, bidding her let in the maestro, and bring him into the gallery; but as for herself, she durst not stir from that spot, for fear of what might happen. But before all things she insisted that the maestro should ratify anew the oath he had taken not to do more than they should order him; and if he would not give this renewed pledge, he was not to be let in on any consideration.

"Never fear," said the dueña; "not a bit shall he come in until he has sworn, and sworn again, and kissed the cross at least six times."

"Don't bind him to any fixed number," said Leonora; "but let him kiss the cross as many times as he pleases; but be sure that he swears by the life of his father, and by all he holds dear; for then we shall be safe and sure, and we may take our fill of hearing him sing and play; and exquisitely he does so, upon my word. There now, get you gone without more delay, and let us not waste the night in words."

The good dueña caught up her petticoats, and ran with all her speed to the turning-box, where the whole party was impatiently awaiting her; and no sooner had she shown them the key in her hand, than they hoisted her upon their shoulders, and paraded up and down with her, crying "Viva! viva!" But still greater was their joy when she told them there was no need to have a false key made; for so soundly did the old man sleep after being anointed, that they might have the house-key as often as they required it.

“Quick then, good friend,” said one of the troop, “open the door, and let in this gentleman who has been waiting so long, and let us have a jolly bout of music, for that is all we have now to do.”

“Nay, but there is more to be done,” replied the dueña; “for we must exact another oath of him; the same as last night.”

“He is so good,” said one of the slave girls, “that he won’t grudge taking as many oaths as we like.”

The dueña now unlocked the door, and holding it ajar called to Loaysa, who had been listening at the aperture to all that had passed. He was for springing in at a bound; but the dueña stopped him, laying her hand on his breast, and said, “Fair and softly, señor; I would have you to know, as God is my judge, we are all of us virgins here as truly as the mothers that bore us, except my lady; and I am one too, the Lord forgive me, though you would take me for forty years old; but I am not thirty all out, wanting two months and a fortnight of my thirtieth birthday; and if I look older, it is that cares, and troubles, and vexations tell upon one more than years. Now this being so, it does not stand to reason, that for the sake of hearing two or three songs we should risk the loss of so much virginity as is here collected together. And so you see, my sweet sir, before you enter our domain, you must first take a very solemn oath, that you will do nothing beyond our orders. If you think it is much we ask of you, do but consider how much more it is we risk; and if your intentions are good and proper, you will not be loth to swear; for a good paymaster does not mind giving security.”

“Well said, Marialonso,” cried one of the damsels; “spoken like a person of sense, and who knows what’s what. If the señor won’t swear, then let him not come in here.”

“Tell you what,” said Guiomar, the negress, in her broken jargon, “s’ppose him no swear, let him in all the same, in devil’s name; for s’ppose him swear, once him in, him forget eberyting.”

Loaysa listened very demurely to the Señora Marialonso’s harangue, and replied with great gravity, “Be assured, ladies, my charming sisters and companions, my intention never was, is, or shall be other than to gratify and content you to the utmost of my powers; and therefore I make no difficulty with regard to this oath which is required of me, though I could have wished that some confidence had been reposed in my simple word, which, given by such a person as I am, would have been as good as a bond signed and sealed; for I would have you to know, ladies, that under a bad cloak there is often a good drinker. But to the end that you may all be assured of my upright intentions, I will take the oath as a catholic and a man of parts. I swear then by the immaculate efficacy, wherever it abides in greatest sanctity and fulness, by all

the entrances and exits of the holy mount Libanus, and by all that is contained in the preface to the true history of Charlemagne, with the death of the giant Fierabras, not to swerve or depart from the oath I have taken, or from the commands which may be laid upon me by the least of these ladies, under penalty, should I do otherwise, or attempt to do otherwise, that from this time forth till then, and from thenceforth till now, the same shall be null and void and of no effect whatsoever.”

When honest Loaysa had got so far in his oath, one of the young maidens, who had listened to him with wrapt attention, cried out, “Well, if that is not what you may call an oath! it is enough to melt the heart of a stone. Plague take me if you shall swear any more for me; for after such an oath as that you might enter the very cave of Cabra.” So saying, she caught hold of him by the breeches, and drew him within the door, where the rest immediately gathered close round him. One of them ran off with the news to her mistress, who stood watching her husband; and who, when she heard that the musico was actually within doors, was moved almost at the same moment by joy and fear, and hurriedly asked if he had sworn. The girl told her he had done so, and with the most singular form of oath she had ever heard in her life.

“Well, since he has sworn, we have him fast,” said Leonora. “Oh, what a good thought it was of mine to make him swear!”

They were now met by the whole party advancing in procession, with the musico in the midst of them, and the negro and Guiomar lighting the way. As soon as Loaysa saw Leonora, he threw himself at her feet to kiss her hands; but without saying a word, she made signs to him to rise, and he obeyed. Observing then that they all remained as mute as if they had lost their tongues, Loaysa told them they might talk, and talk aloud too; for there was no fear that their lord-master would wake and hear them, such being the virtue of the ointment, that without endangering life it made a man lie like one dead.

“That I fully believe,” said Leonora; “for were it not so, he would have been awake twenty times before this, such a light sleeper he is, in consequence of his frequent indispositions; but ever since I anointed him, he has been snoring like a pig.”

“That being the case,” said the dueña, “let us go into the saloon, where we may hear the gentleman sing, and amuse ourselves a little.”

“Let us go,” said Leonora; “but let Guiomar remain here on the watch, to warn us if Carrizales wakes.”

“Ay,” said Guiomar, “black woman stay, white woman go: God pardon all.”

Leaving the negress behind, the rest all went to the saloon, where they seated themselves on a rich carpet, with Loaysa in the centre of the group. Marialonso

took a candle, and began to examine the figure of the musician from head to foot. Every one had something to say in his commendation: "Oh, what a nice curly head of hair he has!" said one. "What nice teeth!" cried another; "blanched almonds are nothing to them." "What eyes!" exclaimed a third; "so large and full, and so green! By the life of my mother, they look for all the world like emeralds." Leonora alone said not a word; but as she looked at the maestro, she could not help thinking that he was better looking than her good man. Presently the dueña took the guitar out of the negro's hands, and putting it into Loaysa's, begged he would sing to it a villanetta then in high fashion at Seville. He complied; the women all jumped up, and began to dance; whilst the dueña sang the words of the song with more good will than good voice.

Close you watch me, mother mine, Watch me, and immure me: Don't you know without my help You can not secure me?

Appetite, 'tis said with truth, By privation groweth; Thwarted love, like flame confined, All the fiercer gloweth. Better therefore 'twere, methinks, You should not immure me: Don't you know without my help You can not secure me? Close you watch me, &c.

Moths will to the taper fly, Bees on flowers will cluster; Keep a loving maid who can From love's golden lustre! Fear you lest that beacon light From your arms should lure me? Well I know without my help You can not secure me. Close you watch me, &c.

There's a way where there's a will: Keep the will from straying. Wayward hearts will have their fling, Spite of all gainsaying. If you'd have me very good, Don't be hard on poor me; Sure I am without, my help You can not secure me. Close you watch me, &c.

The song and the dance were just ended, when in rushed Guiomar in wild affright, gesticulating as if she was in a fit, and in a voice between a croak and a whisper, she stammered out, "Master wake, señora; señora, master wake: him getting up, and coming." Whoever has seen a flock of pigeons feeding tranquilly in the field, and has marked the fear and confusion with which they take flight at the terrible sound of the gun, may picture to himself the fluttering dismay of the dancers at the unexpected news blurted out by Guiomar. Off they ran in all directions, leaving the musico in the lurch, and in a pitiable state of perplexity. Leonora wrung her beautiful hands; and the Señora Marialonso beat her face, and tore her hair, but not with great violence. In short, all was panic and confusion; but the dueña, who had more cunning and presence of mind than the rest, directed that Loaysa should go into her own room, whilst she and her mistress remained where they were, never doubting but they should find some excuse or another to put off upon Carrizales.

Loaysa hid himself, and the dueña bent her ear to listen for her master's footsteps; but hearing nothing, she took courage by degrees, and stealing on tip-toe to his bedroom, she found him snoring there as soundly as ever. Back she ran, at her best speed, to gladden her mistress's heart with the joyful intelligence; and then discreetly resolving not to lose so lucky an opportunity of being the first to enjoy the good graces of the musico, she told Leonora to wait there whilst she went and called him. Hastily entering the room where he was concealed, she found him sorely discomfited by the untoward issue of his adventure, cursing the inefficiency of the ointment, the credulity of his friends, and his own want of forethought in not making an experiment with the ointment on some other person before he tried its effect on Carrizales. But when the dueña assured him that the old man was sleeping as soundly as ever, there was an end to all his uneasiness, and he lent a complacent ear to the very liquorish language in which Marialonso addressed him. "Oho," said he to himself, "that's what you would be at, is it? Well, you will do capitally as a bait to fish with for your lady."

Whilst this *tête-à-tête* was pending, the rest of the women had one by one crept out of their several hiding-places, to see if it was true that their master was awake; and finding all still in the house, they returned to the saloon where they had left their mistress. Having learnt from her that the alarm had been a false one, they asked what had become of the musico and the dueña. Leonora told them that Marialonso had gone to fetch the maestro, whereupon they all stole out of the room as noiselessly as they had entered it, and set themselves to listen at the door to what was passing between the pair. Guiomar was one of the party, but the negro was not among them; for upon the first alarm he had run off, hugging his guitar, and hid himself in his loft, where he lay huddled up under the bed-clothes, sweating with terror; in spite of which he could not forbear from tinkling the guitar from time to time, so inordinate — may Satan as confound him! — was his love of music. The soft speeches of the amorous dueña were distinctly heard by the group outside the door; and there was not one of them but bestowed a blessing upon her from the wrong side of the mouth, with the addition of sundry epithets which I had rather not repeat. The result of the confabulation between the pair was that Loaysa would comply with the dueña's desires, provided that first of all she brought her mistress to consent to his. It cost the dueña something to subscribe to these conditions; but, after all, there was nothing she would not have done to compass the gratification of the desires that had laid hold on her soul and body, and were undermining her very bones and marrow. The bargain was struck; and quitting the room to go and speak to her mistress, she found all the rest of the women assembled round the door. Putting a bold face on the matter, she bade them all go to bed, and next night

they should be able to enjoy themselves without any such false alarm as had spoiled their sport for that time. The women all knew well that the old dueña only wanted to be left alone; but they could not help obeying her, for she had command over them all.

Having got rid of the servants, the dueña went back to the saloon, and began to exercise her powers of persuasion upon Leonora. She made her a long and plausible harangue, so well put together that one might have supposed she had composed it beforehand. She extolled the good looks of the gentle musico, the elegance of his manners, his wondrous suavity, and his countless other good qualities; represented how infinitely more agreeable must be the caresses of such a charming young gallant than those of the old husband; assured her the affair would never be discovered, and plied her with a thousand other arguments which the devil put into her mouth, all so specious and so artfully coloured, that they might have beguiled the firmest mind, much more that of a being so artless and unwary as poor Leonora. O dueñas, born and used for the perdition of thousands of modest, virtuous beings! O ye long plaited coifs, chosen to impart an air of grave decorum to the *salas* of noble ladies, how do you reverse the functions of your perhaps needful office! In fine, the dueña talked with such effect, that Leonora consented to her own undoing, and to that of all the precautions of the wary Carrizales, whose sleep was the death of his honour. Marialonso took her mistress by the hand, led the weeping lady almost by force to Loaysa, and wishing them much joy with a diabolical leer, she left them both shut in together, and laid herself down in the saloon to sleep, or rather to await the reward she had earned. Overcome, however, by the loss of rest on two successive nights, she could not keep her eyes open, but fell fast asleep on the carpet.

And now, if we did not know that Carrizales was asleep, it would not be amiss to ask him, where now were all his jealous cares and precautions? What now availed the lofty walls of his house, and the exclusion from it of every male creature? What had he gained by his turning-box, his thick walls, his stopped up windows, the enormously strict seclusion to which he had doomed his family, the large jointure he had settled on Leonora, the presents he was continually making her, his liberal treatment of her attendants, and his unfailing alacrity in supplying them with everything he imagined they could want or wish for? But as we have said, he was asleep. Had he been awake, and disposed to reply, he could not have given a better answer than by saying, as he shrugged his shoulders and arched his eyebrows, that all this had been brought to nought by the craft of an idle and vicious young man, and the wickedness of a faithless dueña, working upon the weakness of an artless and inexperienced girl. Heaven save us all from such enemies as these, against whom the shield of prudence and the sword of

vigilance are alike impotent to defend us!

Such, nevertheless, was Leonora's rectitude, and so opportunely did she manifest it, that all the villanous arts of the crafty seducer were of no avail; till both of them, wearied by the contest, the baffled tempter and the victorious defender of her own chastity, fell asleep almost at the moment when it pleased Heaven that Carrizales should awake in spite of the ointment. As usual he felt all about the bed, and not finding his dear wife in it, he jumped up in the utmost consternation, and with strange agility for a man of his years. He looked all over the room for her, and when he found the door open, and the key gone from between the mattresses, he was nearly distracted. Recovering himself a little, he went out into the gallery, stole softly thence to the saloon, where the dueña was asleep, and seeing no Leonora there, he went to the dueña's own room, opened the door gently, and beheld Leonora in Loaysa's arms, and both of them looking as if the soporific ointment was exerting its influence over themselves instead of upon the jealous husband.

Carrizales was petrified with horror; his voice stuck in his throat; his arms fell powerless by his sides, and his feet seemed rooted to the ground; and though the fierce revulsion of his wrath presently aroused his torpid senses, he yet could scarcely breathe, so intense was his anguish. Thirsting for vengeance as terrible as his monstrous wrong, but having no weapon at hand, he returned to his chamber as stealthily as he had quitted it, in search of a dagger, with which he would wash out the stain cast upon his honour in the blood of the guilty pair, and then massacre his whole household; but he had no sooner reached his room than his grief again overpowered him, and he fell senseless on the bed.

Day broke now, and found Leonora still in the arms of Loaysa. Marialonso awoke, and thinking it time to receive what she counted was due to her, she awoke Leonora, who was shocked to find it so late, and bitterly accused her own imprudence and the dueña's negligence. With trembling steps the two women crept up to Felipe's bedroom, praying inwardly to Heaven that they might find him still snoring; and when they saw him lying on the bed, apparently asleep, they made no doubt that he was still under the effect of the opiate, and embraced each other in a transport of joy. Leonora went up to her husband, and taking him by the arm, turned him over on his side to see if he would wake without their being obliged to wash him with vinegar according to the directions given with the ointment; but the movement roused Carrizales from his swoon, and heaving a deep sigh, he ejaculated in a faint and piteous tone, "Miserable man that I am! to what a woeful pass I am come!"

Leonora did not distinctly hear what her husband said; but seeing with surprise that the effect of the opiate was not so lasting as she had been led to



expect, she bent over him, put her cheek to his, and pressing him closely in her arms, said, "What ails you, dear señor? You seem to be complaining?"

Carrizales opened his eyes to their utmost width, and turning them full upon her, stared at her a long while with a look of profound amazement. At last he said, "Do me the pleasure, señora, to send instantly for your parents in my name, and ask them to come hither, for I feel something at my heart which distresses me exceedingly. I fear I have but a short time to live, and I should like to see them before I die."

Leonora immediately despatched the negro with this message to her parents. She fully believed what her husband had told her, and attributing his danger to the violence of the opiate instead of to its real cause, she put her arms round his neck, caressed him more fondly than ever she had done before, and inquired how he felt, with such tender solicitude, as if she loved him above everything in the world; while he, on the other hand, continued to gaze upon her with the same unvarying look of astonishment, every endearing word or caress of hers being like a dagger to his heart. The dueña had, by this time, acquainted Loaysa and the domestics with her master's illness, which, she remarked, was evidently very serious, since he had forgotten to give orders that the street door should be locked after the negro's departure to summon her lady's parents. The message was itself a portentous occurrence, for neither father nor mother had ever set foot within that house since their daughter's marriage. In short, the whole household was in anxiety, though no one divined the true cause of the old man's illness. He lay sighing at intervals, so heavily that every sigh seemed like the parting of soul and body. Leonora wept to see him in such a state, whilst he beheld her feigned tears, as he deemed them, with a bitter smile, that looked like the grin of insanity.

Leonora's parents now arrived, and were struck with no little misgivings when they found both entrance doors open and the house all lonely and silent. They went up to their son-in-law's room, and found him in the posture he had all along maintained, with his eyes immovably fixed on his wife, whom he held by the hands, whilst both were in tears; she, because she saw his flow, and he at seeing how deceitfully she wept. As soon as they entered the room, Carrizales begged them to be seated, ordered all the domestics to withdraw except Marialonso, then wiped his eyes, and with a calm voice and an air of perfect composure addressed them thus: —

"I am sure, my respected father and mother-in-law, I need no other witnesses than yourselves to the truth of what I have now to say to you in the first place. You must well remember with how much love and what tender affection I received your daughter when you bestowed her upon me one year, one month,

five days, and nine hours ago, as my lawful wife. You know, also, with what liberality I behaved to her, for the settlement I made upon her would have been more than enough to furnish three young ladies of her quality with handsome marriage portions. You must remember the pains I took to dress and adorn her with everything she could desire or I could think of as suitable to her. It is known to you likewise how, prompted by my natural disposition, fearful of the evil to which I shall surely owe my death, and taught by the experience of a long life to be on my guard against the many strange chances that occur in life, I sought to guard this jewel which I had chosen and you had bestowed upon me, with all possible care and caution. I raised the walls of this house higher, blocked up all the windows that looked on the street, doubled the locks of the doors, set up a turning-box as in a nunnery, and perpetually banished from my dwelling every vestige of the male sex. I gave my wife female servants and slaves to wait upon her: I denied neither her nor them anything they chose to ask of me. I made her my equal, communicated my most secret thoughts to her, and put my whole property at her disposal. Having done all this, I thought I might fairly expect to enjoy securely what had cost me so much, and that it would be her care not to afford me cause for conceiving any kind of jealous fear whatever. But it is not within the power of human efforts to prevent the chastisement which Heaven is pleased to inflict on those who do not rest their whole hopes and desires upon it alone. No wonder then if mine have been deceived, and I have myself prepared the poison of which I am now dying. But I see how anxiously you hang upon the words of my mouth. I will therefore keep you no longer in suspense, but conclude this long preamble by telling you, in one word, what no words were adequate to describe, were I to speak for ever. This morning I found this woman," (here he pointed to his wife,) "who was born for the ruin of my peace and the destruction of my life, in the arms of a young gallant, who is now shut up in the bed-chamber of this pestilent dueña."

Carrizales had no sooner uttered these words than Leonora swooned, and fell with her head upon his lap. Marialonso turned as white as ashes, and Leonora's parents were so astounded that they could not utter a word. After a short pause, Carrizales continued thus: —

"The vengeance I intend to take for this outrage shall be no common one. As I have been singular in all my other actions, so will I be in this. My vengeance shall fall upon myself, as the person most culpable of all, for I ought to have considered how ill this girl's fifteen years could assort with my threescore and ten. I have been like the silkworm, which builds itself a house in which it must die. I do not reproach you, misguided girl" — here he bent down and kissed his still insensible wife— "for the persuasions of a wicked old woman, and the

wheedling tongue of an amorous youth, easily prevail over the little wit of a green girl; but that all the world may see how strong and how true was the love I bore you, I shall give such a proof of it here on my death-bed, as the world has never seen or heard of; — one that shall remain an unparalleled example, if not of goodness, at least of singleness of heart. I desire that a notary be immediately sent for to make my will, wherein I will double Leonora's jointure, and recommend her, after my death, which will not be long delayed, to marry that young man whom these gray hairs have never offended. Thus she will see that, as in life I never departed in the slightest particular from what I thought could please her, so I wish her to be happy when I am no more, and to be united to him whom she must love so much. The rest of my fortune I will bequeath to pious uses, after leaving to you both wherewith to live honourably for the rest of your days. Let the notary come instantly, for the anguish I am now suffering is such that, if it continues, my time here will be very short."

Here Carrizales was seized with a terrible swoon, and sank down so close to Leonora that their faces touched. During this scene the dueña stole out of the room, and went to apprise Loaysa of all that had happened. She advised him to quit the house immediately, and she would take care to keep him informed of all that was going on, for there were no locked doors now to hinder her from sending the negro to him whenever it was necessary. Astounded at this news, Loaysa took her advice, put on his beggar's rags again, and went away to make known to his friends the strange issue of his amour.

Leonora's father, meanwhile, sent for a notary, who arrived soon after both husband and wife had recovered their senses. Carrizales made his will in the manner he had stated, without saying anything of his wife's transgressions; he only declared that, for good reasons, he advised, and begged her to marry, should he die, that young man of whom he had spoken to her in private. When Leonora heard this, she threw herself at her husband's feet, and cried, while her heart throbbed as if it would burst, "Long may you live, my lord and my only joy; for though you may not believe a word I say, indeed, indeed I have not offended you, except in thought."

More she would have said, but when she attempted to exculpate herself by a full statement of what had really occurred, her tongue failed her, and she fainted away a second time. The poor old man embraced her as she lay; so, too, did her parents — all three weeping bitterly; and even the notary could not refrain from tears. Carrizales gave the negro and the other slaves their liberty, and left all the servants enough to maintain them; the perfidious Marialonso alone was to have nothing beyond the arrears of her wages. Seven days afterwards Carrizales was laid in his grave.

Leonora remained a mourning though wealthy widow; and whilst Loaysa expected that she would fulfil the desire which he knew her husband had expressed in his will, he learned that within a week she had become a nun in one of the most austere and rigid convents in all Seville. Mortified by this disappointment, he left the country and went to the Indies. Leonora's father and mother were deeply grieved, but found consolation in the wealth which their son-in-law had bequeathed them. The two damsels likewise consoled themselves, as did the negro and the female slaves, the former being well provided for, and the latter having obtained their freedom; the wicked dueña alone was left to digest, in poverty, the frustration of her base schemes. For my part I was long possessed with the desire to complete this story, which so signally exemplifies the little reliance that can be put in locks, turning-boxes, and walls, whilst the will remains free; and the still less reason there is to trust the innocence and simplicity of youth, if its ear be exposed to the suggestions of your demure dueñas, whose virtue consists in their long black gowns and their formal white hoods. Only I know not why it was that Leonora did not persist in exculpating herself, and explaining to her jealous husband how guiltless she had been in the whole of that unhappy business. But her extreme agitation paralysed her tongue at the moment, and the haste which her husband made to die, left her without another opportunity to complete her justification.

## THE ILLUSTRIOUS SCULLERY-MAID.

In the famous city of Burgos there lived two wealthy cavaliers, one of whom was called Don Diego de Carriazo, and the other Don Juan de Avendaño. Don Diego had a son called after himself, and Don Juan another, whose name was Don Tomas de Avendaño. These two young gentlemen being the principal persons of the following tale, we shall for the sake of brevity call them Carriazo and Avendaño.

Carriazo might be about thirteen or little more, when, prompted by a scampish disposition, without having had any cause to complain of bad treatment at home, he ran away from his father's house, and cast himself upon the wide world. So much did he enjoy a life of unrestricted freedom, that amidst all the wants and discomforts attendant upon it, he never missed the plenty of his father's house. He neither tired of trudging on foot, nor cared for cold or heat. For him all seasons of the year were genial spring. His sleep was as sound on a heap of straw as on soft mattresses, and he made himself as snug in a hayloft as between two Holland sheets. In short, he made such way in the profession he had chosen, that he could have given lessons to the famous Guzman de Alfarache.

During the three years he absented himself from home, he learned to play at sheepshanks in Madrid, at *rentoy* in the public-houses of Toledo, and at *presa y pinta* in the barbacans of Seville. In spite of the sordid penury of his way of life, Carriazo showed himself a prince in his actions. It was easy to see by a thousand tokens that he came of gentle blood. His generosity gained him the esteem of all his comrades. He seldom was present at drinking bouts; and though he drank wine, it was in moderation, and he carried it well. He was not one of those unlucky drinkers, who whenever they exceed a little, show it immediately in their faces, which look as if they were painted with vermilion or red ochre. In short, the world beheld in Carriazo a virtuous, honourable, well-bred, rogue, of more than common ability. He passed through all the degrees of roguery till he graduated as a master in the tunny fisheries of Zahara, the chief school of the art. O kitchen-walloping rogues, fat and shining with grease; feigned cripples; cutpurses of Zocodober and of the Plaza of Madrid; sanctimonious patterers of prayers; Seville porters; bullies of the Hampa, and all the countless host comprised under the denomination of rogues! never presume to call yourself by that name if you have not gone through two courses, at least, in the academy of the tunny fisheries. There it is that you may see converging as it were in one

grand focus, toil and idleness, filth and spruceness, sharp set hunger and lavish plenty, vice without disguise, incessant gambling, brawls and quarrels every hour in the day, murders every now and then, ribaldry and obscenity, singing, dancing, laughing, swearing, cheating, and thieving without end. There many a man of quality seeks for his truant son, nor seeks in vain; and the youth feels as acutely the pain of being torn from that life of licence as though he were going to meet his death. But this joyous life has its bitters as well as its sweets. No one can lie down to sleep securely in Zahara, but must always have the dread hanging over him of being carried off to Barbary at any moment. For this reason, they all withdraw at night into some fortified places on the coast, and place scouts and sentinels to watch whilst they sleep; but in spite of all precautions, it has sometimes happened that scouts, sentinels, rogues, overseers, boats, nets, and all the posse comitatus of the place have begun the night in Spain and have seen the dawn in Tetuan. No apprehensions of this kind, however, could deter Carriazo from spending three successive summers at the fisheries for his pastime; and such was his luck during his third season, that he won at cards about seven hundred reals, with which he resolved to buy himself good clothes, return to Burgos, and gladden the heart of his sorrowing mother.

He took a most affectionate leave of his many dear friends, assuring them that nothing but sickness or death should prevent his being with them in the following summer; for his heart was in Zahara, and to his eyes its parched sands were fresher than all the verdure of the Elysian fields. Ambling merrily along on shanks' mare, he arrived at Valladolid, where he stopped a fortnight to get rid of the mahogany hue of his complexion, and to change his rogue's costume for that of a gentleman. Having equipped himself properly, he had still a hundred reals left, which he spent on the hire of a mule and a servant, that he might make a good figure when he presented himself to his parents. They received him with the utmost joy, and all the friends and relations of the family came to congratulate them on the safe arrival of their son Don Diego de Carriazo. I had forgotten to mention that, during his peregrination, Don Diego had taken the name of Vidiales, and by that name alone he was known to his new acquaintances.

Among those who came to see the new arrival were Don Juan de Avendaño and his son Don Tomas, with the latter of whom, as they were both of the same age and neighbours, Carriazo contracted a very close friendship. Carriazo gave his parents a long and circumstantial account of all the fine things he had seen and done during the three years he had been from home, in all which there was not one word of truth; but he never so much as hinted at the tunny fisheries, though they were constantly in his thoughts, more especially as the time

approached in which he had promised his friends he would return to them. He took no pleasure in the chase, with which his father sought often to divert him, nor in any of the convivial meetings of that hospitable city. All kinds of amusements wearied him, and the best enjoyments that could be offered to him were not to be compared, he thought, with those he had known at the tunny fisheries. His friend Avendaño, finding him often melancholy and musing, ventured to inquire after the cause, at the same time professing his readiness to assist his friend in any way that might be requisite, and to the utmost of his power, even at the cost of his blood. Carriazo felt that it would be wronging the great friendship subsisting between him and Avendaño if he concealed from the latter the cause of his present sadness; and therefore he described to him in detail the life he had led at Zahara, and declared that all his gloom arose from his strong desire to be there once more. So attractive was the picture he drew, that Avendaño, far from blaming his taste, expressed his entire sympathy with it. The end of the matter was that Avendaño determined to go off with Carriazo, and enjoy for one summer that delicious life of which he had just heard such a glowing description; and in this determination he was strongly encouraged to persist by Carriazo, who was glad to be so countenanced in his own low propensities. They set their wits to work to see how they could scrape together as much money as possible, and the best means that occurred to them was that suggested by Avendaño's approaching departure for Salamanca, where he had already studied for three years, and where his father wished him to complete his education, and take a degree in whatever faculty he pleased. Carriazo now made known to his father that he had a strong desire to go with Avendaño and study at Salamanca. Don Diego gladly fell in with his son's proposal; he talked with his friend Don Juan on the subject, and it was agreed between them that the two young men should reside together at Salamanca, and be sent thither well supplied with all requisites, and in a manner suitable to the sons of men of quality.

The time for their departure being arrived, they were furnished with money, and with a tutor who was more remarkable for integrity than for mother wit. Their fathers talked much and impressively to their sons about what they should do, and how they should govern themselves, in order that they might become fraught with virtue and knowledge, for that is the fruit which every student should aspire to reap from his labours and his vigils, especially such as are of good family. The sons were all humility and obedience; their mothers cried; both parents gave them their blessing, and away they went, mounted on their own mules, and attended by two servants of their respective households, besides the tutor, who had let his beard grow, to give him a more imposing air of gravity, as

became his charge.

When they arrived at Valladolid, they told their tutor they should like to remain there a couple of days to see the city, having never been in it before. The tutor severely reprimanded them for entertaining any such idle notion, telling them they had no time to lose in silly diversions; that their business was to get as fast as possible to the place where they were to pursue their studies; that he should be doing extreme violence to his conscience if he allowed them to stop for one hour, not to speak of two days; that they should continue their journey forthwith, or, if not, then brown bread should be their portion.

Such was the extent of the ability in his office possessed by this tutor, or major-domo, as we should rather call him. The lads, who had already gathered in their harvest, since they had laid hands upon four hundred gold crowns which were in the major-domo's keeping, begged that he would let them remain in Valladolid for that day only, that they might see the grand aqueducts, which were then in course of construction, for the purpose of conveying the waters of Argales to that city. He consented at last, but with extreme reluctance, for he wished to avoid the expense of an additional day on the road, and to spend the night at Valdiastellas, whence he could easily reach Salamanca in two days. But the bay horse thinks one thing, and the man on his back another thing, and so it proved in the major-domo's case. The lads, mounted on two excellent mules, and attended by only one servant, rode out to see the fountain of Argales, famous for its antiquity and the abundance of its water. On their arrival there, Avendaño gave the servant a sealed paper, bidding him return forthwith to the city, and deliver it to his tutor, after which the servant was to wait for them at the Puerta del Campo. The servant did as he was bid, and went back to the city with the letter; and they, turning their mules' heads another way, slept that night in Mojados, and arrived two days afterwards in Madrid, where they sold their mules.

They dressed themselves like peasants in short jerkins, loose breeches, and gray stockings. An old clothes dealer, to whom they sold their handsome apparel in the morning, transformed them by night in such a manner that their own mothers would not have known them. Lightly equipped, as suited their purpose, and without swords, for they had sold them to the old clothes dealer, they took to the road to Toledo. There let us leave them for the present, stepping out briskly with merry hearts, while we return to the tutor, and see him open the letter delivered to him by the servant, which he read as follows: —

“Your worship, señor Pedro Alonso, will be pleased to have patience and go back to Burgos, where you will say to our parents that we, their sons, having with mature deliberation considered how much more arms befit cavaliers than do



letters, have determined to exchange Salamanca for Brussels, and Spain for Flanders. We have got the four hundred crowns; the mules we intend to sell. The course we have chosen, which is so worthy of persons of our quality, and the length of the journey before us, are sufficient to excuse our fault, though a fault it will not be deemed by any one but a coward. Our departure takes place now; our return will be when it shall please God, to whose keeping, we, your humble pupils, heartily commend you. Given from the fountain of Argales, with one foot in the stirrup for Flanders.

“CARRIAZO,  
“AVENDANO.”

Aghast at the contents of this letter, Pedro Alonso hurried to his valise, and found that the paper spoke but too truly, for the money was gone. Instantly mounting the remaining mule, he returned to Burgos to carry these tidings to his patrons, in order that they might take measures to recover possession of their sons' persons. But as to how he was received, the author of this tale says not a word, for the moment he has put Pedro Alonso into the saddle, he leaves him to give the following account of what occurred to Avendaño and Carriazo at the entrance of Illescas.

Just by the town gate they met two muleteers, Andalusians apparently, one of whom was coming from Seville, and the other going thither. Said the latter to the former, “If my masters were not so far ahead, I should like to stop a little longer to ask you a thousand things I want to know, for I am quite astonished at what you have told me about the conde's having hanged Alonzo Gines and Ribera without giving them leave to appeal.”

“As I'm a sinner,” replied the Sevillian, “the conde laid a trap for them, got them under his jurisdiction — for they were soldiers, and once having them in his gripe, the court of appeal could never get them out of it. I tell you what it is, friend, he has a devil within him, that same conde de Puñonrostro. Seville, and the whole country round it for ten leagues, is swept clear of swash-bucklers; not a thief ventures within his limits; they all fear him like fire. It is whispered, however, that he will soon give up his place as corregidor, for he is tired of being at loggerheads at every hand's turn with the señores of the court of appeal.”

“May they live a thousand years!” exclaimed he who was going to Seville; “for they are the fathers of the miserable, and a refuge for the unfortunate. How many poor fellows must eat dirt, for no other reason than the anger of an arbitrary judge of a corregidor, either ill-informed or wrong-headed! Many eyes see more than two; the venom of injustice cannot so soon lay hold on many

hearts as on one alone.”

“You have turned preacher!” said he of Seville; “but I am afraid I can’t stop to hear the end of your sermon. Don’t put up to night at your usual place, but go to the Posada del Sevillano, for there you will see the prettiest scullery-wench I know. Marinilla at the Venta Tejada is a dishclout in comparison with her. I will only tell you that it is said the son of the corregidor is very sweet upon her. One of my masters gone on ahead there, swears, that on his way back to Andalusia, he will stop two months in Toledo, and in that same inn, only to have his fill of looking at her. I myself ventured once to give her a little bit of a squeeze, and all I got for it was a swinging box on the ear. She is as hard as a flint, as savage as a kestrel, and as touch-me-not as a nettle; but she has a face that does a body’s eyes good to look at. She has the sun in one cheek, and the moon in the other; the one is made of roses and the other of carnations, and between them both are lilies and jessamine. I say no more, only see her for yourself, and you will see that all I have told you is nothing to what I might say of her beauty. I’d freely settle upon her those two silver gray mules of mine that you know, if they would let me have her for my wife; but I know they won’t, for she is a morsel for an archbishop or a conde. Once more I say, go and see her; and so, good-bye to you, for I must be off.”

The two muleteers went their several ways, leaving the two friends much struck by what they had overheard of the conversation, especially Avendaño, in whom the mere relation which the muleteer had given of the scullery-maid’s beauty awoke an intense desire to see her. It had the same effect on Carriazo, but not to an equal degree, nor so as to extinguish his desire to reach his beloved tunny fisheries, from which he would not willingly be delayed to behold the pyramids of Egypt, or any or all of the other seven wonders of the world.

Repeating the dialogue between the muleteers, and mimicking their tones and gestures, served as pastime to beguile the way until they reached Toledo. Carriazo, who had been there before, led the way at once to the Posada del Sevillano; but they did not venture to ask for accommodation there, their dress and appearance not being such as would have gained them a ready welcome. Night was coming on, and though Carriazo importuned Avendaño to go with him in search of lodgings elsewhere, he could not prevail on him to quit the doors of the Sevillano, or cease from hanging about them, upon the chance that the celebrated scullery-maid might perhaps make her appearance. When it was pitch dark Carriazo was in despair, but still Avendaño stuck to the spot; and, at last, he went into the courtyard of the inn, under pretence of inquiring after some gentlemen of Burgos who were on their way to Seville. He had but just entered the courtyard, when a girl, who seemed to be about fifteen, and was dressed in

working clothes, came out of one of the side doors with a lighted candle. Avendaño's eyes did not rest on the girl's dress, but on her face, which seemed to him such as a painter would give to the angels; and so overcome was he by her beauty, that he could only gaze at it in speechless admiration, without being able to say one word for himself.

"What may you please to want, brother?" said the girl. "Are you servant to one of the gentlemen in the house?"

"I am no one's servant but yours," replied Avendaño, trembling with emotion.

"Go to, brother," returned the girl disdainfully, "we who are servants ourselves have no need of others to wait on us;" and calling her master, she said, "Please to see, sir, what this lad wants."

The master came out, and, in reply to his question, Avendaño said that he was looking for some gentlemen of Burgos who were on their way to Seville. One of them was his master, and had sent him on before them to Alcalá de Henares upon business of importance, bidding him, when that was done, to proceed to Toledo, and wait for him at the Sevillano; and he believed that his master would arrive there that night or the following day at farthest.

So plausibly did Avendaño tell this fib that the landlord was quite taken in by it. "Very well, friend," said he, "you may stop here till your master comes."

"Many thanks, señor landlord," replied Avendaño; "and will your worship bid them give me a room for myself, and a comrade of mine who is outside? We have got money to pay for it, as well as another."

"Certainly," said the host, and turning to the girl he said, "Costanza, bid la Argüello take these two gallants to the corner room, and give them clean sheets."

"I will do so, señor," and curtsying to her master she went away, leaving Avendaño by her departure in a state of feeling like that of the tired wayfarer when the sun sets and he finds himself wrapt in cheerless darkness. He went, however, to give an account of what he had seen and done to Carriazo, who very soon perceived that his friend had been smitten in the heart; but he would not say a word about the matter then, until he should see whether there was a fair excuse for the hyperbolical praises with which Avendaño exalted the beauty of Costanza above the stars.

At last they went in doors, and la Argüello, the chamber maid, a woman of some five-and-forty years of age, showed them a room which was neither a gentleman's nor a servant's, but something between the two. On their asking for supper, la Argüello told them they did not provide meals in that inn; they only cooked and served up such food as the guests bought and fetched for themselves; but there were eating-houses in the neighbourhood, where they might without scruple of conscience go and sup as they pleased. The two friends took la

Argüello's advice, and went to an eating-house, where Carriazo supped on what they set before him, and Avendaño on what he had brought with him, to wit, thoughts and fancies. Carriazo noticed that his friend ate little or nothing, and, by way of sounding him, he said on their way back to the inn, "We must be up betimes to-morrow morning, so that we may reach Orgez before the heat of the day."

"I am not disposed for that," replied Avendaño, "for I intend, before I leave this city, to see all that is worth seeing in it, such as the cathedral, the waterworks of Juanelo, the view from the top of St. Augustine's, the King's garden, and the promenade by the river."

"Very well, we can see all that in two days."

"What need of such haste? We are not posting to Rome to ask for a vacant benefice."

"Ha! ha! friend, I see how it is, I'll be hanged if you are not more inclined to stay in Toledo than to continue our journey."

"That's true, I confess; it is as impossible for me to forego the sight of that girl's face, as it is to get into heaven without good works."

"Gallantly spoken, and as becomes a generous breast like yours! Here's a pretty story! Don Tomas de Avendaño, son of the wealthy and noble cavalier, Don Juan de Avendaño, over head and ears in love with the scullery-maid at the Posada del Sevillano!"

"It strikes me, I may answer you in the same strain. Here's Don Diego de Carriazo, son and sole heir of the noble knight of Alcántara of the same name, a youth finely gifted alike in body and mind, and behold him in love — with whom, do you suppose? With queen Ginevra? No such thing, but with the tunny fisheries of Zahara, and all its rogues and rascals, — a more loathsome crew, I suspect, than ever beset St. Anthony in his temptations."

"You have given me tit for tat, friend, and slain me with my own weapon. Let us say no more now, but go to bed, and to-morrow who knows but we come to our senses?"

"Look ye, Carriazo, you have not yet seen Costanza; when you have seen her, I will give you leave to say what you like to me."

"Well, I know beforehand what will be the upshot of the matter."

"And that is?"

"That I shall be off to my tunny fisheries, and you will remain with your scullery-maid."

"I shall not be so happy."

"Nor I such a fool as to give up my own good purpose for the sake of your bad one."

By this time they reached the inn, where the conversation was prolonged in the same tone, half the night long. After they had slept, as it seemed to them, little more than an hour, they were awakened by the loud sound of clarions in the street. They sat up in bed, and after they had listened awhile, "I'll lay a wager," said Carriazo, "that it is already day, and that there is some feast or other in the convent of Nostra Señora del Carmen, in this neighbourhood, and that is why the clarions are pealing."

"That can't be," said Avendaño; "we have not been long asleep. It must be some time yet till dawn."

While they were talking, some one knocked at the door, and called out, "Young men, if you want to hear some fine music, go to the window of the next room, which looks on the street; it is not occupied."

They got up and opened the door, but the person who had spoken was gone. The music still continuing, however, they went in their shirts, just as they were, into the front room, where they found three or four other lodgers, who made place for them at the window; and soon afterwards an excellent voice sang a sonnet to the accompaniment of the harp. There was no need of any one to tell Carriazo and Avendaño that this music was intended for Costanza, for this was very clear from the words of the sonnet, which grated so horribly on Avendaño's ears, that he could have wished himself deaf rather than have heard it. The pangs of jealousy laid hold on him, and the worst of all was, that he knew not who was his rival. But this was soon made known to him when one of the persons at the window exclaimed, "What a simpleton is the corregidor's son, to make a practice of serenading a scullery-maid. It is true, she is one of the most beautiful girls I have ever seen, and I have seen a great many; but that is no reason why he should court her so publicly."

"After all," said another, "I have been told for certain that she makes no more account of him than if he never existed. I warrant she is this moment fast asleep behind her mistress's bed, without ever thinking of all this music."

"I can well believe it," said the first speaker, "for she is the most virtuous girl I know; and it is marvellous that though she lives in a house like this, where there is so much traffic, and where there are new comers every day, and though she goes about all the rooms, not the least thing in the world is known to her disparagement."

Avendaño began to breathe more freely after hearing this, and was able to listen to many fine things which were sung to the accompaniment of various instruments, all being addressed to Costanza, who, as the stranger said, was fast asleep all the while.

The musicians departed at the approach of dawn. Avendaño and Carriazo

returned to their room, where one of them slept till morning. They then rose, both of them eager to see Costanza, but the one only from curiosity, the other from love. Both were gratified; for Costanza came out of her master's room looking so lovely, that they both felt that all the praises bestowed on her by the muleteer, fell immeasurably short of her deserts. She was dressed in a green bodice and petticoat, trimmed with the same colour. A collar embroidered with black silk set off the alabaster whiteness of her neck. The thick tresses of her bright chestnut hair were bound up with white ribbon; she had pendants in her ears which seemed to be pearls, but were only glass; her girdle was a St. Francis cord, and a large bunch of keys hung at her side. When she came out of the room she crossed herself, and made a profound reverence with great devotion to an image of our Lady, that hung on one of the walls of the quadrangle. Then looking up and seeing the two young men intently gazing on her, she immediately retired again into the room, and called thence to Argüello to get up.

Carriazo, it must be owned, was much struck by Costanza's beauty; he admired it as much as his companion, only he did not fall in love with her; on the contrary, he had no desire to spend another night in the inn, but to set out at once for the fisheries.

La Argüello presently appeared in the gallery with two young women, natives of Galicia, who were also servants in the inn; for the number employed in the Sevillano was considerable, that being one of the best and most frequented houses of its kind in Toledo. At the same time the servants of the persons lodging in the inn began to assemble to receive oats for their masters' beasts; and the host dealt them out, all the while grumbling and swearing at his maid-servants who had been the cause of his losing the services of a capital hostler, who did the work so well and kept such good reckoning, that he did not think he had ever lost the price of a grain of oats by him. Avendaño, who heard all this, seized the opportunity at once. "Don't fatigue yourself, señor host," he said; "give me the account-book, and whilst I remain here I will give out the oats, and keep such an exact account of it that you will not miss the hostler who you say has left you."

"Truly I thank you for the offer, my lad," said the host, "for I have no time to attend to this business; I have too much to do, both indoors and out of doors. Come down and I will give you the book; and mind ye, these muleteers are the very devil, and will do you out of a peck of oats under your very nose, with no more conscience than if it was so much chaff."

Avendaño went down to the quadrangle, took the book, and began to serve out pecks of oats like water, and to note them down with such exactness that the landlord, who stood watching him, was greatly pleased with his performance. "I

wish to God," he said, "your master would not come, and that you would make up your mind to stop with me; you would lose nothing by the change, believe me. The hostler who has just quitted me came here eight months ago all in tatters, and as lean as a shotten herring, and now he has two very good suits of clothes, and is as fat as a dormouse; for you must know, my son, that in this house there are excellent vails to be got over and above the wages."

"If I should stop," replied Avendaño, "I should not stand out much for the matter of what I should gain, but should be content with very little for sake of being in this city, which, they tell me, is the best in Spain."

"At least it is one of the best and most plentiful," said the host. "But we are in want of another thing, too, and that is a man to fetch water, for the lad that used to attend to that job has also left me. He was a smart fellow, and with the help of a famous ass of mine he used to keep all the tanks overflowing, and make a lake of the house. One of the reasons why the muleteers like to bring their employers to my house is, that they always find plenty of water in it for their beasts, instead of having to drive them down to the river."

Carriazo, who had been listening to this dialogue, and who saw Avendaño already installed in office, thought he would follow his example, well knowing how much it would gratify him. "Out with the ass, señor host," he said; "I'm your man, and will do your work as much to your satisfaction as my comrade."

"Aye, indeed," said Avendaño, "my comrade, Lope Asturiano will fetch water like a prince, I'll go bail for him."

La Argüello, who had been all the while within earshot, here put in her word. "And pray, my gentleman," said she to Avendaño, "who is to go bail for you? By my faith, you look to me as if you wanted some one to answer for you instead of your answering for another."

"Hold your tongue, Argüello," said her master; "don't put yourself forward where you're not wanted. I'll go bail for them, both of them. And mind, I tell you, that none of you women meddle or make with the men-servants, for it is through you they all leave me."

"So these two chaps are engaged, are they?" said another of the servant-women; "by my soul, if I had to keep them company I would never trust them with the wine-bag."

"None of your gibes, señora Gallega," cried her master; "do your work, and don't meddle with the men-servants, or I'll baste you with a stick."

"Oh, to be sure!" replied the Gallician damsel; "a'nt they dainty dears to make a body's mouth water? I'm sure master has never known me so frolicksome with the chaps in the house, nor yet out of it, that he should have such an opinion of me. The blackguards go away when they take it into their heads, without our

giving them any occasion. Very like indeed they're the right sort to be in need of any one's putting them to bidding their masters an early good morning, when they least expect it."

"You've a deal to say for yourself, my friend," said the landlord; "shut your mouth and mind your business."

While this colloquy was going on Carriazo had harnessed the ass, jumped on his back, and set off to the river, leaving Avendaño highly delighted at witnessing his jovial resolution.

Here then, we have Avendaño and Carriazo changed, God save the mark! into Tomas Pedro, a hostler, and Lope Asturiano, a water-carrier: transformations surpassing those of the long-nosed poet. No sooner had la Argüello heard that they were hired, than she formed a design upon Asturiano, and marked him for her own, resolving to regale him in such a manner, that, if he was ever so shy, she would make him as pliant as a glove. The prudish Gallegan formed a similar design upon Avendaño, and, as the two women were great friends, being much together in their business by day, and bed-fellows at night, they at once confided their amorous purposes to each other; and that night they determined to begin the conquest of their two unimpassioned swains. Moreover they agreed that they must, in the first place, beg them not to be jealous about anything they might see them do with their persons; for girls could hardly regale their friends within doors, unless they put those without under contribution. "Hold your tongues, lads," said they, apostrophising their absent lovers, "hold your tongues and shut your eyes; leave the timbrel in the hands that can play it, and let those lead the dance that know how, and no pair of canons in this city will be better regaled than you will be by our two selves."

While the Gallegan and la Argüello were settling matters in this way, our good friend, Lope Asturiano, was on his way to the river, musing upon his beloved tunny fisheries and on his sudden change of condition. Whether it was for this reason, or that fate ordained it so, it happened that as he was riding down a steep and narrow lane, he ran against another water-carrier's ass, which was coming, laden, up-hill; and, as his own was fresh and lively and in good condition, the poor, half-starved, jaded brute that was toiling up hill, was knocked down, the pitchers were broken, and the water spilled. The driver of the fallen ass, enraged by this disaster, immediately flew upon the offender, and pommelled him soundly before poor Lope well knew where he was. At last, his senses were roused with a vengeance, and seizing his antagonist with both hands by the throat, he dashed him to the ground. That was not all, for, unluckily, the man's head struck violently against a stone; the wound was frightful, and bled so profusely, that Lope thought he had killed him. Several other water-carriers who



were on their way to and from the river, seeing their comrade so maltreated, seized Lope and held him fast, shouting, "Justice! justice! this water-carrier has murdered a man." And all the while they beat and thumped him lustily. Others ran to the fallen man, and found that his skull was cracked, and that he was almost at the last gasp. The outcry spread all up the hill, and to the Plaza del Carmen, where it reached the ears of an alguazil, who flew to the spot with two police-runners. They did not arrive a moment too soon, for they found Lope surrounded by more than a score of water-carriers, who were basting his ribs at such a rate that there was almost as much reason to fear for his life as that of the wounded man. The alguazil took him out of their hands, delivered him and his ass into those of his followers, had the wounded man laid like a sack upon his own ass, and marched them all off to prison attended by such a crowd that they could hardly make way through the streets. The noise drew Tomas Pedro and his master to the door, and, to their great surprise, they saw Asturiano led by in the gripe of two police-runners, with his face all bloody. The landlord immediately looked about for his ass, and saw it in the hands of another catchpoll, who had joined the alguazil's party. He inquired the cause of these captures, was told what had happened, and was sorely distressed on account of his ass, fearing that he should lose it, or have to pay more for it than it was worth.

Tomas followed his comrade, but could not speak a single word to him, such was the throng round the prisoner, and the strictness of the catchpolls. Lope was thrust into a narrow cell in the prison, with a doubly grated window, and the wounded man was taken to the infirmary, where the surgeon pronounced his case extremely dangerous.

The alguazil took home the two asses with him, besides five pieces of eight which had been found on Lope. Tomas returned greatly disconcerted to the inn, where he found the landlord in no better spirits than himself, and gave him an account of the condition in which he had left his comrade, the danger of the wounded man, and the fate of the ass. "To add to the misfortune," said he, "I have just met a gentleman of Burgos, who tells me that my master will not now come this way. In order to make more speed and shorten his journey by two leagues, he has crossed the ferry at Aceca; he will sleep to-night at Orgaz, and has sent me twelve crowns, with orders to meet him at Seville. But that cannot be, for it is not in reason that I should leave my friend and comrade in prison and in such peril. My master must excuse me for the present, and I know he will, for he is so good-natured that he will put up with a little inconvenience rather than that I should forsake my comrade. Will you do me the favour, señor, to take this money, and see what you can do in this business. While you are spending this, I will write to my master for more, telling him all that has happened, and I am sure

he will send us enough to get us out of any scrape.”

The host opened his eyes a palm wide in glad surprise to find himself indemnified for the loss of his ass. He took the money and comforted Tomas, telling him that he could make interest with persons of great influence in Toledo, especially a nun, a relation of the corregidor's, who could do anything she pleased with him. Now the washerwoman of the convent in which the nun lived had a daughter, who was very thick indeed with the sister of a friar, who was hand and glove with the said nun's confessor. All he had to do, then, was to get the washerwoman to ask her daughter to get the monk's sister to speak to her brother to say a good word to the confessor, who would prevail on the nun to write a note to the corregidor begging him to look into Lope's business, and then, beyond a doubt, they might expect to come off with flying colours; that is provided the water-carrier did not die of his wound, and provided also there was no lack of stuff to grease the palms of all the officers of justice, for unless they are well greased they creak worse than the wheels of a bullock cart.

Whatever Tomas thought of this roundabout way of making interest, he failed not to thank the innkeeper, and to assure him that he was confident his master would readily send the requisite money.

Argüello, who had seen her new flame in the hands of the officers, ran directly to the prison with some dinner for him; but she was not permitted to see him. This was a great grief to her, but she did not lose her hopes for all that. After the lapse of a fortnight the wounded man was out of danger, and in a week more, the surgeon pronounced him cured. During this time, Tomas Pedro pretended to have had fifty crowns sent to him from Seville, and taking them out of his pocket, he presented them to the innkeeper, along with a fictitious letter from his master. It was nothing to the landlord whether the letter was genuine or not, so he gave himself no trouble to authenticate it; but he received the fifty good gold crowns with great glee. The end of the matter was, that the wounded man was quieted with six ducats, and Asturiano was sentenced to the forfeiture of his ass, and a fine of ten ducats with costs, on the payment of which he was liberated.

On his release from prison, Asturiano had no mind to go back to the Sevillano, but excused himself to his comrade on the ground that during his confinement he had been visited by Argüello, who had pestered him with her fulsome advances, which were to him so sickening and insufferable, that he would rather be hanged than comply with the desires of so odious a jade. His intention was to buy an ass, and to do business as a water carrier on his own account as long as they remained in Toledo. This would protect him from the risk of being arrested as a vagabond; besides, it was a business he could carry on with great ease and satisfaction to himself, since with only one load of water, he could saunter about

the city all day long, looking at silly wenches.

“Looking at beautiful women, you mean,” said his friend, “for of all the cities in Spain, Toledo has the reputation of being that in which the women surpass all others, whether in beauty or conduct. If you doubt it, only look at Costanza, who could spare from her superfluity of loveliness charms enough to beautify the rest of the women, not only of Toledo, but of the whole world.”

“Gently, señor Tomas; not so fast with your praises of the señora scullion, unless you wish that, besides thinking you a fool, I take you for a heretic into the bargain.”

“Do you call Costanza a scullion, brother Lope? God forgive you, and bring you to a true sense of your error.”

“And is not she a scullion?”

“I have yet to see her wash the first plate.”

“What does that matter, if you have seen her wash the second, or the fiftieth?”

“I tell you brother she does not wash dishes, or do anything but look after the business of the house, and take care of the plate, of which there is a great deal.”

“How is it, then, that throughout the whole city they call her the illustrious scullery-maid, if so be she does not wash dishes? Perhaps it is because she washes silver and not crockery that they give her that name. But to drop this subject, tell me, Tomas, how stand your hopes?”

“In a state of perdition; for during the whole time you were in gaol, I never have been able to say one word to her. It is true, that to all that is said to her by the guests in the house, she makes no other reply than to cast down her eyes and keep her lips closed; such is her virtue and modesty; so that her modesty excites my love, no less than her beauty. But it is almost too much for my patience, to think that the corregidor’s son, who is an impetuous and somewhat licentious youth, is dying for her; a night seldom passes but he serenades her, and that so openly, that she is actually named in the songs sung in her praise. She never hears them to be sure, nor ever quits her mistress’s room from the time she retires until morning; but in spite of all that, my heart cannot escape being pierced by the keen shaft of jealousy.”

“What do you intend to do, then, with this Portia, this Minerva, this new Penelope, who, under the form of a scullery-maid, has vanquished your heart?”

“Her name is Costanza, not Portia, Minerva, or Penelope. That she is a servant in an inn, I cannot deny; but what can I do, if, as it seems, the occult force of destiny, and the deliberate choice of reason, both impel me to adore her? Look you, friend, I cannot find words to tell you how love exalts and glorifies in my eyes this humble scullery-maid, as you call her, so that, though seeing her low condition, I am blind to it, and knowing it, I ignore it. Try as I may, it is

impossible for me to keep it long before my eyes; for that thought is at once obliterated by her beauty, her grace, her virtue, and modesty, which tell me that, beneath that plebeian husk, must be concealed some kernel of extraordinary worth. In short, be it what it may, I love her, and not with that common-place love I have felt for others, but with a passion so pure that it knows no wish beyond that of serving her, and prevailing on her to love me, and return in the like kind what is due to my honourable affection.”

Here Lope gave a shout, and cried out in a declamatory tone, “O Platonic love! O illustrious scullery-maid! O thrice-blessed age of ours, wherein we see love renewing the marvels of the age of gold! O my poor tunnies, you must pass this year without a visit from your impassioned admirer, but next year be sure I will make amends, and you shall no longer find me a truant.”

“I see, Asturiano,” said Tomas, “how openly you mock me. Why don’t you go to your fisheries? There is nothing to hinder you. I will remain where I am, and you will find me here on your return. If you wish to take your share of the money with you, take it at once; go your ways in peace, and let each of us follow the course prescribed to him by his own destiny.”

“I thought you had more sense,” said Lope. “Don’t you know that I was only joking? But now that I perceive you are in earnest, I will serve you in earnest in everything I can do to please you. Only one thing I entreat in return for the many I intend to do for you: do not expose me to Argüello’s persecution, for I would rather lose your friendship than have to endure hers. Good God, friend! her tongue goes like the clapper of a mill; you can smell her breath a league off; all her front teeth are false, and it is my private opinion that she does not wear her own hair, but a wig. To crown all, since she began to make overtures to me, she has taken to painting white, till her face looks like nothing but a mask of plaster.”

“True, indeed, my poor comrade; she is worse even than the Gallegan who makes me suffer martyrdom. I’ll tell you what you shall do; only stay this night in the inn, and to-morrow you shall buy yourself an ass, find a lodging, and so secure yourself from the importunities of Argüello, whilst I remain exposed to those of the Gallegan, and to the fire of my Costanza’s eyes.”

This being agreed on, the two friends returned to the inn, where Asturiano was received with great demonstrations of love by Argüello. That night a great number of muleteers stopping in the house, and those near it, got up a dance before the door of the Sevillano. Asturiano played the guitar: the female dancers were the two Gallegans and Argüello, and three girls from another inn. Many persons stood by as spectators, with their faces muffled, prompted more by a desire to see Costanza than the dance; but they were disappointed, for she did

not make her appearance. Asturiano played for the dancers with such spirit and precision of touch that they all vowed he made the guitar speak; but just as he was doing his best, accompanying the instrument with his voice, and the dancers were capering like mad, one of the muffled spectators cried out, "Stop, you drunken sot! hold your noise, wineskin, piperly poet, miserable catgut scraper!" Several others followed up this insulting speech with such a torrent of abuse that Lope thought it best to cease playing and singing; but the muleteers took the interruption so much amiss, that had it not been for the earnest endeavours of the landlord to appease them, there would have been a terrible row. In spite indeed of all he could do, the muleteers would not have kept their hands quiet, had not the watch happened just then to come up and clear the ground. A moment afterwards the ears of all who were awake in the quarter were greeted by an admirable voice proceeding from a man who had seated himself on a stone opposite the door of the Sevillano. Everybody listened with rapt attention to his song, but none more so than Tomas Pedro, to whom every word sounded like a sentence of excommunication, for the romance ran thus:

In what celestial realms of space Is hid that beauteous, witching face? Where shines that star, which, boding ills, My trembling heart with torment fills?

Why in its wrath should Heaven decree That we no more its light should see? Why bid that sun no longer cheer With glorious beams our drooping sphere?

Yes, second sun! 'tis true you shine, But not for us, with light divine! Yet gracious come from ocean's bed; Why hide from us your radiant head?

Constance! a faithful, dying swain Adores your beauty, though in vain; For when his love he would impart, You fly and scorn his proffered heart!

O let his tears your pity sway, And quick he'll bear you hence away; For shame it is this sordid place, Should do your charms such foul disgrace

Here you're submissive to control, Sweet mistress of my doating soul! But altars youths to you should raise, And passion'd vot'ries sound your praise!

Quit then a scene which must consume Unworthily your early bloom! To my soft vows your ear incline, Nor frown, but be for ever mine!

His gladsome torch let Hymen light, And let the god our hearts unite! This day would then before its end, See me your husband, lover, friend.

The last line was immediately followed by the flight of two brick-bats, which fell close to the singer's feet; but had they come in contact with his head, they would certainly have knocked all the music and poetry out of it. The poor frightened musician took to his heels with such speed that a greyhound could not have caught him. Unhappy fate of night-birds, to be always subject to such showers! All who had heard the voice of the fugitive admired it, but most of all, Tomas Pedro, only he would rather the words had not been addressed to

Costanza, although she had not heard one of them. The only person who found fault with the romance was a muleteer, nicknamed Barrabas. As soon as this man saw the singer run off, he bawled after him; "There you go, you Judas of a troubadour! May the fleas eat your eyes out! Who the devil taught you to sing to a scullery-maid about celestial realms, and spheres, and ocean-beds, and to call her stars and suns and all the rest of it? If you had told her she was as straight as asparagus, as white as milk, as modest as a lay-brother in his novitiate, more full of humours and unmanageable than a hired mule, and harder than a lump of dry mortar, why then she would have understood you and been pleased; but your fine words are fitter for a scholar than for a scullery-maid. Truly, there are poets in the world who write songs that the devil himself could not understand; for my part, at least, Barrabas though I am, I cannot make head or tail of what this fellow has been singing. What did he suppose Costanza could make of them? But she knows better than to listen to such stuff, for she is snug in bed, and cares no more for all these caterwaulers than she does for Prester John. This fellow at least, is not one of the singers belonging to the corregidor's son, for they are out and out good ones, and a body can generally understand them; but, by the Lord, this fellow sets me mad."

The bystanders coincided in opinion with Barrabas, and thought his criticism very judicious. Everybody now went to bed, but no sooner was the house all still, than Lope heard some one calling very softly at his bed-room door. "Who's there?" said he. "It is we," whispered a voice, "Argüello and the Gallegan. Open the door and let us in, for we are dying of cold."

"Dying of cold indeed," said Lope, "and we are in the middle of the dog days."

"Oh, leave off now, friend Lope," said the Gallegan; "get up and open the door; for here we are as fine as archduchesses."

"Archduchesses, and at this hour? I don't believe a word of it, but rather think you must be witches or something worse. Get out of that this moment, or, by all that's damnable, if you make me get up I'll leather you with my belt till your hinder parts are as red as poppies."

Finding that he answered them so roughly, and in a manner so contrary to their expectations, the two disappointed damsels returned sadly to their beds; but before they left the door, Argüello put her lips to the key-hole, and hissed through it, "Honey was not made for the mouth of the ass;" and with that, as if she had said something very bitter indeed, and taken adequate revenge on the scorner, she went off to her cheerless bed.

"Look you, Tomas," said Lope to his companion, as soon as they were gone, "set me to fight two giants, or to break the jaws of half a dozen, or a whole

dozen of lions, if it be requisite for your service, and I shall do it as readily as I would drink a glass of wine; but that you should put me under the necessity of encountering Argüello, this is what I would never submit to, no, not if I were to be flayed alive. Only think, what damsels of Denmark fate has thrown upon us this night. Well, patience! To-morrow will come, thank God, and then we shall see."

"I have already told you, friend," replied Tomas, "that you may do as you please — either go on your pilgrimage, or buy an ass and turn water-carrier as you proposed."

"I stick to the water-carrying business," said Lope. "My mind is made up not to quit you at present."

They then went to sleep till daylight, when they rose; Tomas Pedro went to give out oats, and Lope set off to the cattle-market to buy an ass. Now it happened that Tomas had spent his leisure on holidays in composing some amorous verses, and had jotted them down in the book in which he kept the account of the oats, intending to copy them out fairly, and then blot them out of the book, or tear out the page. But, before he had done so, he happened to go out one day and leave the book on the top of the oat-bin. His master found it there, and looking into it to see how the account of the oats stood, he lighted upon the verses. Surprised and annoyed, he went off with them to his wife, but before he read them to her, he called Costanza into the room, and peremptorily commanded her to declare whether Tomas Pedro, the hostler, had over made love to her, or addressed any improper language to her, or any that gave token of his being partial to her. Costanza vowed that Tomas had never yet spoken to her in any such way, nor ever given her reason to suppose that he had any bad thoughts towards her.

Her master and mistress believed her, because they had always found her to speak the truth. Having dismissed her, the host turned to his wife and said, "I know not what to say of the matter. You must know, señora, that Tomas has written in this book, in which he keeps the account of the oats, verses that give me an ugly suspicion that he is in love with Costanza."

"Let me see the verses," said the wife, "and I'll tell you what we are to conclude."

"Oh, of course; as you are a poet you will at once see into his thoughts."

"I am not a poet, but you well know that I am a woman of understanding, and that I can say the four prayers in Latin."

"You would do better to say them in plain Spanish; you know your uncle the priest has told you that you make no end of blunders when you patter your Latin, and that what you say is good for nothing."

“That was an arrow from his niece’s quiver. She is jealous of seeing me take the Latin hours in hand, and make my way through them as easily as through a vineyard after the vintage.”

“Well, have it your own way. Listen now, here are the verses;” and he read some impassioned lines addressed to Costanza.

“Is there any more?” said the landlady.

“No. But what do you think of these verses?”

“In the first place, we must make sure that they are by Tomas.”

“Of that there can be no manner of doubt, for the handwriting is most unquestionably the same as that in which the account of the oats is kept.”

“Look ye, husband, it appears to me that although Costanza is named in the verses, whence it may be supposed that they were made for her, we ought not for that reason to set the fact down for certain, just as if we had seen them written, for there are other Costanzas in the world besides ours. But even supposing they were meant for her, there is not a word in them that could do her discredit. Let us be on the watch, and look sharply after the girl; for if he is in love with her, we may be sure he will make more verses, and try to give them to her.”

“Would it not be better to get rid of all this bother by turning him out of doors?”

“That is for you to do if you think proper. But really, by your own account, the lad does his work so well that it would go against one’s conscience to turn him off upon such slight grounds.”

“Very well; let us be on the watch as you say, and time will tell us what we have to do.” Here the conversation ended, and the landlord carried the book back to the place where he had found it.

Tomas returned in great anxiety to look for his book, found it, and that it might not occasion him another fright, he immediately copied out the verses, effaced the original, and made up his mind to hazard a declaration to Costanza upon the first opportunity that should present itself. Her extreme reserve, however, was such that there seemed little likelihood of his finding such an opportunity; besides, the great concourse of people in the house made it almost impossible that he should have any private conversation with her, — to the despair of her unfortunate lover. That day, however, it chanced that Costanza appeared with one cheek muffled, and told some one who asked her the reason, that she was suffering from a violent face ache. Tomas, whose wits were sharpened by his passion, instantly saw how he might avail himself of that circumstance. “Señora Costanza,” he said, “I will give you a prayer in writing, which you have only to recite once or twice, and it will take away your pain forthwith.”



“Give it me, if you please,” said Costanza, “and I will recite it; for I know how to read.”

“It must be on condition, however,” said Tomas, “that you do not show it to anybody; for I value it highly, and I should not wish it to lose its charm by being made known to many.”

“I promise you that no person shall see it; but let me have it at once, for I can hardly bear this pain.”

“I will write it out from memory, and bring it you immediately.”

This was the very first conversation that had ever taken place between Tomas and Costanza during all the time he had been in the house, which was nearly a month. Tomas withdrew, wrote out the prayer, and found means to deliver it, unseen by any one else, into Costanza’s hand; and she, with great eagerness, and no less devotion, went with it into a room, where she shut herself up alone. Then, opening the paper, she read as follows: —

“Lady of my soul, I am a gentleman of Burgos; and if I survive my father, I shall inherit a property of six thousand ducats yearly income. Upon the fame of your beauty, which spreads far and wide, I left my native place, changed my dress, and came in the garb in which you see me, to serve your master. If you would consent to be mine in the way most accordant with your virtue, put me to any proof you please, to convince you of my truth and sincerity; and when you have fully satisfied yourself in this respect, I will, if you consent, become your husband, and the happiest of men. For the present, I only entreat you not to turn such loving and guileless feelings as mine into the street; for if your master, who has no conception of them, should come to know my aspirations, he would condemn me to exile from your presence, and that would be the same thing as sentencing me to death. Suffer me, señora, to see you until you believe me, considering that he does not deserve the rigorous punishment of being deprived of the sight of you, whose only fault has been that he adores you. You can reply to me with your eyes, unperceived by any of the numbers who are always gazing upon you; for your eyes are such that their anger kills, but their compassion gives new life.”

When Tomas saw that Costanza had gone away to read his letter, he remained with a palpitating heart, fearing and hoping either his death-doom, or the one look that should bid him live. Presently Costanza returned, looking so beautiful in spite of her muffling, that if any extraneous cause could have heightened her loveliness, it might be supposed that her surprise at finding the contents of the paper so widely different from what she had expected, had produced that effect. In her hand she held the paper torn into small pieces, and returning, the fragments to Tomas, whose legs could hardly bear him up, “Brother Tomas,” she

said, "this prayer of yours seems to me to savour more of witchcraft and delusion than of piety, therefore I do not choose to put faith in it or to use it, and I have torn it up that it may not be seen by any one more credulous than myself. Learn other prayers, for it is impossible that this one can ever do you any good."

So saying, she returned to her mistress's room, leaving Tomas sorely distressed, but somewhat comforted at finding that his secret remained safe confined to Costanza's bosom; for as she had not divulged it to her master, he reckoned that at least he was in no danger of being turned out of doors. He considered also, that in having taken the first step, he had overcome mountains of difficulties, for in great and doubtful enterprises the chief difficulty is always in the beginning.

Whilst these things were happening in the posada, Asturiano was going about the market in search of an ass. He examined a great many, but did not find one to his mind; though a gipsy tried hard to force upon him one that moved briskly enough, but more from the effects of some quicksilver which the vendor had put into the animal's ears, than from its natural spirit and nimbleness. But though the pace was good enough, Lope was not satisfied with the size, for he wanted an ass big and strong enough to carry himself and the water vessels, whether they were full or empty. At last a young fellow came up, and whispered in his ear, "If you want a beast of the right sort for a water-carrier's business, I have one close by in a meadow; a bigger or a better you will not find in Toledo. Take my advice, and never buy a gipsy's beast, for though they may seem sound and good, they are all shams, and full of hidden defects. If you want to buy the real thing, come along with me, and shut your mouth."

Lope consented, and away went the pair shoulder to shoulder, till they arrived at the King's Gardens, where they found several water-carriers seated under the shade of a water wheel, whilst their asses were grazing in an adjoining meadow. The vendor pointed out his ass, which took Lope's fancy immediately, and was praised by all present, as a very strong animal, a good goer, and a capital feeder. The bargain was soon struck, and Lope gave sixteen ducats for the ass, with all its accoutrements. The bystanders congratulated him on his purchase, and on his entrance into the business, assuring him that he had bought an exceedingly lucky ass, for the man who had sold him had, in less than a year, without over-working himself, made enough to buy two suits of clothes, over and above his own keep, and that of the ass, and the sixteen ducats, with which he intended to return to his native place, where a marriage had been arranged with a half kinswoman of his. Besides the water-carriers who assisted at the sale of the ass, there was a group of four stretched on the ground, and playing at primera, the earth serving them for a table, and their cloaks for a table cloth. Lope went up to watch their game,

and saw that they played more like archdeacons than like water-carriers, each of them having before him a pile of more than a hundred reals in cuartos and in silver. Presently two of the players, having lost all they had, got up; whereupon the seller of the ass said, that, if there was a fourth hand, he would play, but he did not like a three-handed game.

Lope, who never liked to spoil sport, said that he would make a fourth. They sat down at once, and went at it so roundly that, in a few moments, Lope lost six crowns which he had about him, and finding himself without coin, said if they liked to play for the ass he would stake him. The proposal was agreed to, and he staked one quarter of the ass, saying they should play for him, quarter by quarter. His luck was so bad, that in four consecutive games he lost the four quarters of his ass, and they were won by the very man who had sold him. The winner got up to take possession, but Lope stopped him, observing that he had only played for and lost the four quarters of his ass, which the winner was welcome to take, but he must leave him the tail. This queer demand made all present shout with laughter; and some of them, who were knowing in the law, were of opinion that his claim was unreasonable, for when a sheep or any other beast is sold, the tail is never separated from the carcass, but goes as a matter of course with one of the hind quarters. To this Lope replied that in Barbary they always reckon five quarters to a sheep, the tail making the fifth, and being reckoned as valuable as any of the other quarters. He admitted that when a beast was sold alive, and not quartered, that the tail was included in the sale; but this was not to the point in question, for he had not sold his ass, but played it away, and it had never been his intention to stake the tail; therefore he required them forthwith to give him up the same, with everything thereto annexed, or pertaining, that is to say, the whole series of spinal bones, from the back of the skull to where they ended in the tail, and to the tips of the lowest hairs thereof.

“Well,” said one, “suppose it be as you say, and that your claim is allowed; leave the tail sticking to the rest of the ass, and hold on by it.”

“No,” said Lope, “give me up the tail, or all the water-carriers in the world shall never make me give up the ass. Don’t imagine because there are so many of you, that I will let you put any cheating tricks on me, for I am a man who can stand up to another man, and put two handbreadths of cold steel into his guts without his being able to tell how he came by them. Moreover, I won’t be paid in money for the tail at so much a pound, but I will have it in substance, and cut off from the ass, as I have said.”

The winner of the four quarters and the rest of the company began to think that it would not be advisable to resort to force in this business, for Lope seemed to them to be a man of such mettle, that he would not be vanquished without

some trouble. Nor were they mistaken; for, as became a man who had spent three seasons at the tunny fisheries, where all sorts of rows and brawls are familiar things, he rattled out a few of the most out of the way oaths in vogue there, threw his cap into the air, whipped out a knife from beneath his cloak, and put himself into such a posture as struck the whole company with awe and respect. At last, one of them, who seemed the most rational, induced the rest to agree that Lope should be allowed to stake the tail against a quarter of the ass at a game of *quinola*. So said, so done. Lope won the first game; the loser was piqued and staked another quarter, which went the way of the first; and in two more games the whole ass was gone. He then proposed to play for money: Lope was unwilling, but was so importuned on all hands, that at last he consented; and such was his run of luck that he left his opponent without a maravedi. So intense was the loser's vexation, that he rolled and writhed upon the ground and knocked his head against it. Lope, however, like a good-natured, liberal gentleman, raised him up, returned all the money he had won, including the sixteen ducats the price of the ass, and even divided what he had left among the bystanders. Great was the surprise of them all at this extraordinary liberality; and had they lived in the time of the great Tamerlane, they would have made him king of the water-carriers.

Accompanied by a great retinue, Lope returned to the city, where he related his adventure to Tomas, who in turn recounted to him his own partial success. There was no tavern, or eating house, or rogues' gathering, in which the play for the ass was not known, the dispute about the tail, and the high spirit and liberality of the Asturian; but as the mob are for the most part unjust, and more prone to evil than to good, they thought nothing of the generosity and high mettle of the great Lope, but only of the tail; and he had scarcely been two days carrying water about the city, before he found himself pointed at by people who cried, "There goes the man of the tail!" The boys caught up the cry, and no sooner had Lope shown himself in any street, than it rang from one end to the other with shouts of "Asturiano, give up the tail! Give up the tail, Asturiano!" At first Lope said not a word, thinking that his silence would tire out his persecutors; but in this he was mistaken, for the more he held his tongue the more the boys wagged theirs, till at last he lost patience, and getting off his ass began to drub the boys; but this was only cutting off the heads of Hydra, and for every one he laid low by thrashing some boy, there sprang up on the instant, not seven but seven hundred more, that began to pester him more and more for the tail. At last he found it expedient to retire to the lodgings he had taken apart from his companion in order to avoid Argüello, and to keep close there until the influence of the malignant planet which then ruled the hours should have passed

away, and the boys should have forgotten to ask him for the tail. For two days he never left the house except by night to go and see Tomas, and ask him how he got on. Tomas told him that since he had given the paper to Costanza he had never been able to speak a single word to her, and that she seemed to be more reserved than ever. Once he had found as he thought an opportunity to accost her, but before he could get out a word, she stopped him, saying, "Tomas, I am in no pain now, and therefore have no need of your words or of your prayers. Be content that I do not accuse you to the Inquisition, and give yourself no further trouble." But she made this declaration without any expression of anger in her countenance. Lope then related how the boys annoyed him, calling after him for the tail, and Tomas advised him not to go abroad, at least with his ass, or if he did that he should choose only the least frequented streets. If that was not enough, he had an unfailing remedy left, which was to get rid of his business and with it of the uncivil demand to which it subjected him. Lope asked him had the Gallegan come again to his room. He said she had not, but that she persisted in trying to ingratiate herself with him by means of dainties which she purloined out of what she cooked for the guests. After this conversation Lope went back to his lodgings, intending not to leave them again for another six days, at least in company with his ass.

It might be about eleven at night, when the corregidor most unexpectedly entered the Posado del Sevillano, at the head of a formidable posse. The host and even the guests were startled and agitated by his visit; for as comets, when they appear, always excite fears of disaster, just so the ministers of justice, when they suddenly enter a house, strike even guiltless consciences with alarm. The unwelcome visitor walked into a room, and called for the master of the house, who came tremblingly to know what might be the señor corregidor's pleasure. "Are you the landlord?" said the magistrate with great gravity. "Yes, señor, and your worship's humble servant to command," was the reply. The corregidor then ordered that every one else should quit the room, and leave him alone with the landlord. This being done, he resumed his questions.

"What servants have you in your inn, landlord?"

"Señor, I have two Gallegan wenches, a housekeeper, and a young man who gives out the oats and straw, and keeps the reckoning."

"No more?"

"No, señor."

"Then tell me, landlord, what is become of a girl who is said to be a servant in this house, and so beautiful that she is known all over this city as the illustrious scullery-maid? It has even reached my ears that my son Don Perequito is in love with her, and that not a night passes in which he does not serenade her."

“Señor, it is true that this illustrious scullery-maid, as they call her, is in my house, but she neither is my servant, nor ceases to be so.”

“I do not understand you. What do you mean by saying that she is and is not your servant?”

“It is the real truth, and if your worship will allow me, I will explain the matter to you, and tell you what I have never told to any one.”

“Before I hear what you have to say, I must first see this scullery-maid.”

Upon this the landlord went to the door and called to his wife to send in Costanza, When the landlady heard that, she was in great dismay, and began to wring her hands, saying, “Lord, have mercy on me! What can the corregidor want with Costanza, and alone! Some terrible calamity must surely have happened, for this girl’s beauty bewitches the men.”

“Don’t be alarmed, señora,” said Costanza, “I will go and see what the señor corregidor wants, and if anything bad has happened, be assured the fault is not mine;” and without waiting to be called a second time, she took a lighted candle in a silver candlestick, and went into the room where the corregidor was. As soon as he saw her, he bade the landlord shut the door, and then taking the candle out of her hand; and holding it near her face, he stood gazing at her from head to foot. The blush which this called up into Costanza’s cheeks, made her look so beautiful and so modest that it seemed to the corregidor he beheld an angel descended on earth. After a long scrutiny, “Landlord,” he said, “an inn is not fit setting for a jewel like this, and I now declare that my son Don Perequito has shown his good sense in fixing his affections so worthily. I say, damsel, that they may well call you not only illustrious, but most illustrious: but it should not be with the addition of scullery-maid, but with that of duchess.”

“She is no scullery-maid, señor,” said the host; “her only service in the house is to keep the keys of the plate, of which, by God’s bounty, I have some quantity for the service of the honourable guests who come to this inn.”

“Be that as it may, landlord,” returned the corregidor; “I say it is neither seemly nor proper that this damsel should live in an inn. Is she a relation of yours?”

“She is neither my relation nor my servant; and if your worship would like to know who she is, your worship shall hear, when she is not present, things that will both please and surprise you.”

“I should like to know it. Let Costanza retire, and be assured she may count on me in all things, as she would upon her own father; for her great modesty and beauty oblige all who see her to offer themselves for her service.”

Costanza replied not a word, but with great composure made a profound reverence to the corregidor. On leaving the room she found her mistress waiting

in great agitation. She told her all that had passed, and how her master remained with the corregidor to tell some things, she knew not what, which he did not choose her to hear. All this did not quite tranquilise the landlady, nor did she entirely recover her equanimity until the corregidor went away, and she saw her husband safe and free. The latter meanwhile had told the corregidor the following tale: —

“It is now, by my reckoning, señor, fifteen years, one month, and four days, since there came to this house a lady dressed in the habit of a pilgrim, and carried in a litter. She was attended by four servant-men on horseback, and two dueñas and a damsel who rode in a coach. She had also two sumpter mules richly caparisoned, and carrying a fine bed and all the necessary implements for cooking. In short, the whole equipage was first rate, and the pilgrim had all the appearance of being some great lady; and though she seemed to be about forty years of age, she was nevertheless beautiful in the extreme. She was in bad health, looked pale, and was so weary, that she ordered her bed to be instantly made, and her servants made it in this very room. They asked me who was the most famous physician in this city. I said Doctor de la Fuente. They went for him instantly; he came without delay, saw his patient alone, and the result was that he ordered the bed to be made in some other part of the house, where the lady might not be disturbed by any noise, which was immediately done. None of the men-servants entered the lady’s apartment, but only the two dueñas and the damsel. My wife and I asked the men-servants who was this lady, what was her name, whence she came, and whither she was going? Was she wife, widow, or maid, and why she wore that pilgrim’s dress? To all these questions, which we repeated many and many a time, we got no other answer than that this pilgrim was a noble and wealthy lady of old Castile, that she was a widow, and had no children to inherit her wealth; and that having been for some months ill of the dropsy, she had made a vow to go on a pilgrimage to our Lady of Guadalupe, and that was the reason for the dress she wore. As for her name, they were under orders to call her nothing but the lady pilgrim.

“So much we learned then; but three days after one of the dueñas called myself and my wife into the lady’s presence, and there, with the door locked, and before her women, she addressed us with tears in her eyes, I believe in these very words: —

““Heaven is my witness, friends, that without any fault of mine, I find myself in the cruel predicament which I shall now declare to you. I am pregnant, and so near my time, that I already feel the pangs of travail. None of my men-servants are aware of my misfortune, but from my women here I have neither been able nor desirous to conceal it. To escape prying eyes in my own neighbourhood, and

that this hour might not come upon me there, I made a vow to go to our Lady of Guadalupe; but it is plainly her will that my labour should befall me in your house. It is now for you to succour and aid me with the secrecy due to one who commits her honour to your hands. In this purse there are two hundred gold crowns, which I present to you as a first proof how grateful I shall be for the good offices I am sure you will render me;’ and taking from under her pillow a green silk purse, embroidered with gold, she put it into the hands of my wife, who, like a simpleton, stood gaping at the lady, and did not say so much as a word in the way of thanks or acknowledgment. For my part I remember that I said there was no need at all of that, we were not persons to be moved more by interest than by humanity to do a good deed when the occasion offered. The lady then continued, ‘You must immediately, my friends, look out for some place to which you may convey my child as soon as it is born, and also you must contrive some story to tell to the person in whose charge you will leave it. At first I wish the babe to remain in this city, and afterwards to be taken to a village. As for what is subsequently done, I will give you instructions on my return from Guadalupe, if it is God’s will that I should live to complete my pilgrimage, for in the meantime I shall have had leisure to consider what may be my best course. I shall have no need of a midwife; for as I know from other confinements of mine, more honourable than this, I shall do well enough with the aid of my women only, and thus I shall avoid having an additional witness to my misfortune.’

“Here the poor distressed pilgrim ended what she had to say, and broke out into a flood of tears, but was partly composed by the soothing words spoken to her by my wife, who had recovered her wits. I immediately went in search of a woman to whom I might take the child when it was born; and, between twelve and one o’clock that night, when all the people in the house were fast asleep, the lady was delivered of the most beautiful little girl that eyes ever beheld, and the very same that your worship has just seen. But the wonder was that neither did the mother make any moan in her labour, nor did the baby cry; but all passed off quietly, and in all the silence that became this extraordinary case. The lady kept her bed for six days, during which the doctor was constant in his visits; not that she had informed him of the cause of her illness, or that she took any of the medicines he prescribed; but she thought to blind her men-servants by his visits, as she afterwards informed me when she was out of danger. On the eighth day she left her bed, apparently as big as she had been before her delivery, continued her pilgrimage, and returned in three weeks, looking almost quite well, for she had gradually reduced the bulk of her artificial dropsy. The little girl had been christened Costanza, in accordance with the order given me by her mother, and was already placed with a nurse in a village about two leagues hence, where she



passed for my niece. The lady was pleased to express her satisfaction with all I had done, and gave me when she was going away a gold chain, which is now in my possession, from which she took off six links, telling me that they would be brought by the person who should come to claim the child. She also took a piece of white parchment, wrote upon it, and then cut zigzag through what she had written. Look, sir, here are my hands locked together with the fingers interwoven. Now suppose your honour were to write across my fingers, it is easy to imagine that one could read the writing whilst the fingers were joined, but that the meaning would be lost as soon as the hands were separated, and would appear again as soon as they were united as before. Just so with the parchment; one half serves as a key to the other; when they are put together the letters make sense, but separately they have no meaning. One-half of the parchment and the whole chain, short of the six links, were left with me, and I keep them still, always expecting the arrival of the person who is to produce the counterparts; for the lady told me that in two years she would send for her daughter, charging me that I should have her brought up not as became her mother's quality, but as a simple villager; and if by any chance she was not able to send for the child so soon, I was on no account to acquaint her with the secret of her birth, even should she have arrived at years of discretion. The lady moreover begged me to excuse her if she did not tell me who she was; having for the present important reasons to conceal her name. Finally, after giving us four hundred gold crowns more, and embracing my wife with tears, she departed, leaving us filled with admiration for her discretion, worth, beauty, and modesty.

"Costanza remained at nurse in the village for two years. At the end of that time I brought her home, and have kept her ever since constantly with me, in the dress of a girl who had to work for her bread, as her mother directed. Fifteen years, one month, and four days I have been looking for the person who should come and claim her, but the length of time that has elapsed makes me begin to lose all hope of his coming. If he does not make his appearance before this year is out, it is my determination to adopt her and bequeath her all I am worth, which is upwards of sixteen thousand ducats, thanks be to God. It now remains for me, señor Corregidor, to enumerate to you the virtues and good qualities of Costanza, if it be possible for me to express them. First and foremost, she is most piously devoted to our Lady; she confesses and communicates every month; she can read and write; there's not a better lace maker in all Toledo; she sings without accompaniment like an angel; in the matter of behaving with propriety she has not her equal; as for her beauty, your worship has seen it with your own eyes. Señor Don Pedro, your worship's son, has never exchanged a word with her in her life. It is true that from time to time he treats her to some music, which

she never listens to. Many señors, and men of title too, have put up at this house, and have delayed their journey for several days solely to have their fill of looking at her; but I well know there is not one of them can boast with truth that she ever gave them opportunity to say one word to her either alone or before folk. This, señor, is the real history of the illustrious scullery-maid, who is no scullion, in which I have not departed one tittle from the truth."

The host had long ended his narrative before the corregidor broke silence, so much was he struck by the strange facts he had heard. At last he desired to see the parchment and the chain; the host produced them without delay, and they corresponded exactly to the description he had given of them. The chain was of curious workmanship, and on the parchment were written, one under the other, on the projecting portions of the zigzag, the letters, TIITEREOE which manifestly required to be joined with those of the counterpart to make sense. The corregidor admired the ingenuity of the contrivance, and judged from the costliness of the chain, that the pilgrim must have been a lady of great wealth. It was his intention to remove the lovely girl from the inn as soon as he had chosen a suitable convent for her abode; but for the present he contented himself with taking away the parchment only, desiring the innkeeper to inform him if any one came for Costanza, before he showed that person the chain, which he left in his custody. And with this parting injunction the corregidor left the house, much marvelling at what he had seen and heard.

Whilst all this affair was going on, Tomas was almost beside himself with agitation and alarm, and lost in a thousand conjectures, every one of which he dismissed as improbable the moment it was formed. But when he saw the corregidor go away, leaving Costanza behind him, his spirits revived and he began to recover his self-possession. He did not venture to question the landlord, nor did the latter say a word about what had passed between him and the corregidor to any body but his wife, who was greatly relieved thereby, and thanked God for her delivery out of a terrible fright.

About one o'clock on the following day, there came to the inn two elderly cavaliers of venerable presence, attended by four servants on horseback and two on foot. Having inquired if that was the Posada del Sevillano, and being answered in the affirmative, they entered the gateway, and the four mounted servants, dismounting, first helped their master's out of their saddles. Costanza came out to meet the new-comers with her wonted propriety of demeanour, and no sooner had one of the cavaliers set eyes on her, than, turning to his companion, he said, "I believe, señor Don Juan, we have already found the very thing we are come in quest of." Tomas, who had come as usual to take charge of the horses and mules, instantly recognised two of his father's servants; a moment

after he saw his father himself, and found that his companion was no other than the father of Carriazo. He instantly conjectured that they were both on their way to the tunny fisheries to look for himself and his friend, some one having no doubt told them that it was there, and not in Flanders, they would find their sons. Not daring to appear before his father in the garb he wore, he made a bold venture, passed by the party with his hand before his face, and went to look for Costanza, whom, by great good luck, he found alone. Then hurriedly, and with a tremulous voice, dreading lest she would not give him time to say a word to her, "Costanza," he said, "one of those two elderly cavaliers is my father — that one whom you will hear called Don Juan de Avendaño. Inquire of his servants if he has a son, Don Tomas de Avendaño by name, and that is myself. Thence you may go on to make such other inquiries as will satisfy you that I have told you the truth respecting my quality, and that I will keep my word with regard to every offer I have made you. And now farewell, for I will not return to this house until they have left it."

Costanza made him no reply, nor did he wait for any, but hurrying out, with his face concealed as he had come in, he went to acquaint Carriazo that their fathers had arrived at the Sevillano. The landlord called for Tomas to give out oats, but no Tomas appearing, he had to do it himself.

Meanwhile, one of the two cavaliers called one of the Gallegan wenches aside, and asked her what was the name of the beautiful girl he had seen, and was she a relation of the landlord or the landlady. "The girl's name is Costanza," replied the Gallegan; "she is no relation either to the landlord or the landlady, nor do I know what she is. All I can say is, I wish the murrain had her, for I don't know what there is about her, that she does not leave one of us girls in the house a single chance, for all we have our own features too, such as God made them. Nobody enters these doors but the first thing he does is to ask, Who is that beautiful girl? and the next is to say all sorts of flattering things of her, while nobody condescends to say a word to the rest of us, not so much as 'What are you doing here, devils, or women, or whatever you are?'"

"From your account, then," said the gentleman, "I suppose she has a fine time of it with the strangers who put up at this house."

"You think so. Well, just you hold her foot for the shoeing, and see how you'll like the job. By the Lord, señor, if she would only give her admirers leave to look at her, she might roll in gold; but she's more touch-me-not than a hedgehog; she's a devourer of Ave Marias, and spends the whole day at her needle and her prayers. I wish I was as sure of a good legacy as she is of working miracles some day. Bless you, she's a downright saint; my mistress says she wears hair-cloth next her skin."

Highly delighted with what he had heard from the Gallegan, the gentleman did not wait till they had taken off his spurs, but called for the landlord, and withdrew with him into a private room. "Señor host," said he, "I am come to redeem a pledge of mine which has been in your hands for some years, and I bring you for it a thousand gold crowns, these links of a chain, and this parchment."

The host instantly recognised the links and the parchment, and highly delighted with the promise of the thousand crowns, replied, "Señor, the pledge you wish to redeem is in this house, but not the chain or the parchment which is to prove the truth of your claim; I pray you therefore to have patience, and I will return immediately." So saying, he ran off to inform the corregidor of what was happening.

The corregidor, who had just done dinner, mounted his horse without delay, and rode to the Posada del Sevillano, taking with him the tally parchment. No sooner had he entered the room where the two cavaliers sat, than hastening with open arms to embrace one of them, "Bless my soul! my good cousin Don Juan de Avendaño! This is indeed a welcome surprise."

"I am delighted to see you, my good cousin," said Don Juan, "and to find you as well as I always wish you. Embrace this gentleman, cousin; this is Don Diego de Carriazo, a great señor and my friend."

"I am already acquainted with the señor Don Diego," replied the corregidor, "and am his most obedient servant."

After a further interchange of civilities they passed into another room, where they remained alone with the innkeeper, who said as he produced the chain, "The señor corregidor knows what you are come for, Don Diego de Carriazo. Be pleased to produce the links that are wanting to this chain; his worship will show the parchment which he holds, and let us come to the proof for which I have been so long waiting."

"It appears, then," said Don Diego, "that it will not be necessary to explain to the señor corregidor the reason of our coming, since you have done so already, señor landlord."

"He told me something," said the corregidor, "but he has left much untold which I long to know. Here is the parchment."

Don Diego produced that which he had brought; the two were put together and found to fit accurately into each other; and between every two letters of the innkeeper's portion, which as we have said were TIITEREOE there now appeared one of the following series HSSHTUTKN, the whole making together the words, *This is the true token*. The six links of the chain brought by Don Diego were then compared with the larger fragment, and found to correspond

exactly.

“So far all is clear,” said the corregidor; “it now remains for us to discover, if it be possible, who are the parents of this very beautiful lady.”

“Her father,” said Don Diego, “you see in me; her mother is not living, and you must be content with knowing that she was a lady of such rank that I might have been her servant. But though I conceal her name, I would not have you suppose that she was in any wise culpable, however manifest and avowed her fault may appear to have been. The story I will now briefly relate to you will completely exonerate her memory.

“You must know, then, that Costanza’s mother, being left a widow by a man of high rank, retired to an estate of hers, where she lived a calm sequestered life among her servants and vassals. It chanced one day when I was hunting, that I found myself very near her house and determined to pay her a visit. It was siesta time when I arrived at her palace (for I can call it nothing else): giving my horse to one of my servants, I entered, and saw no one till I was in the very room in which she lay asleep on a black ottoman. She was extremely handsome; the silence, the loneliness of the place, and the opportunity, awakened my guilty desires, and without pausing to reflect, I locked the door, woke her, and holding her firmly in my grasp said, ‘No cries, señora! they would only serve to proclaim your dishonour; no one has seen me enter this room, for by good fortune all your servants are fast asleep, and should your cries bring them hither, they can do no more than kill me in your very arms; and if they do, your reputation will not be the less blighted for all that.’ In fine, I effected my purpose against her will and by main force, and left her so stupefied by the calamity that had befallen her, that she either could not or would not utter one word to me. Quitting the place as I had entered it, I rode to the house of one of my friends, who resided within two leagues of my victim’s abode. The lady subsequently removed to another residence, and two years passed without my seeing her, or making any attempt to do so. At the end, of that time I heard that she was dead.

“About three weeks since I received a letter from a man who had been the deceased lady’s steward, earnestly entreating me to come to him, as he had something to communicate to me which deeply concerned my happiness and honour. I went to him, very far from dreaming of any such thing as I was about to hear from him, and found him at the point of death. He told me in brief terms that his lady on her deathbed had made known to him what had happened between her and me, how she had become pregnant, had made a pilgrimage to our Lady of Guadalupe to conceal her misfortune, and had been delivered in this inn of a daughter named Costanza. The man gave me the tokens upon which she was to be delivered to me, namely the piece of chain and the parchment, and

with them thirty thousand gold crowns, which the lady had left as a marriage portion for her daughter. At the same time, he told me that it was the temptation to appropriate that money which had so long prevented him from obeying the dying behest of his mistress, but now that he was about to be called to the great account, he was eager to relieve his conscience by giving me up the money and putting me in the way to find my daughter. Returning home with the money and the tokens, I related the whole story to Don Juan de Avendaño, and he has been kind enough to accompany me to this city."

Don Diego had but just finished his narrative when some one was heard shouting at the street-door, "Tell Tomas Pedro, the hostler, that they are taking his friend the Asturiano to prison." On hearing this the corregidor immediately sent orders to the alguazil to bring in his prisoner, which was forthwith done. In came the Asturian with his mouth all bloody. He had evidently been very roughly handled, and was held with no tender grasp by the alguazil. The moment he entered the room he was thunderstruck at beholding his own father and Avendaño's, and to escape recognition he covered his face with a handkerchief, under pretence of wiping away the blood. The corregidor inquired what that young man had done who appeared to have been so roughly handed. The alguazil replied that he was a water-carrier, known by the name of the Asturian, and the boys in the street used to shout after him, "Give up the tail, Asturiano; give up the tail." The alguazil then related the story out of which that cry had grown, whereat all present laughed not a little. The alguazil further stated that as the Asturian was going out at the Puerta de Alcantara, the boys who followed him having redoubled their cries about the tail, he dismounted from his ass, laid about them all, and left one of them half dead with the beating he had given him. Thereupon the officer proceeded to arrest him; he resisted, and that was how he came to be in the state in which he then appeared. The corregidor ordered the prisoner to uncover his face, but as he delayed to do so the alguazil snatched away the handkerchief. "My son, Don Diego!" cried the astonished father. "What is the meaning of all this? How came you in that dress? What, you have not yet left off your scampish tricks?" Carriazo fell on his knees before his father, who, with tears in his eyes, held him long in his embrace. Don Juan de Avendaño, knowing that his son had accompanied Carriazo, asked the latter where he was, and received for answer the news that Don Tomas de Avendaño was the person who gave out the oats and straw in that inn.

This new revelation made by the Asturiano put the climax to the surprises of the day. The corregidor desired the innkeeper to bring in his hostler. "I believe he is not in the house, but I will go look for him," said he, and he left the room for that purpose. Don Diego asked Carriazo what was the meaning of these

metamorphoses, and what had induced him to turn water-carrier, and Don Tomas hostler? Carriazo replied, that he could not answer these questions in public, but he would do so in private. Meanwhile Tomas Pedro lay hid in his room, in order to see thence, without being himself seen, what his father and Carriazo's were doing; but he was in great perplexity about the arrival of the corregidor, and the general commotion in the inn. At last some one having told the landlord where he was hidden, he went and tried half by fair means and half by force to bring him down; but he would not have succeeded had not the corregidor himself gone out into the yard, and called him by his own name, saying, "Come down, señor kinsman; you will find neither bears nor lions in your way." Tomas then left his hiding place, and went and knelt with downcast eyes and great submission at the feet of his father, who embraced him with a joy surpassing that of the Prodigal's father when the son who had been lost was found again.

The corregidor sent for Costanza, and taking her by the hand, presented her to her father, saying, "Receive, Señor Don Diego, this treasure, and esteem it the richest you could desire. And you, beautiful maiden, kiss your father's hand, and give thanks to heaven which has so happily exalted your low estate." Costanza, who till that moment had not even guessed at what was occurring, could only fall at her father's feet, all trembling with emotion, clasp his hands in hers, and cover them with kisses and tears.

Meanwhile the corregidor had been urgent with his cousin Don Juan that the whole party should come with him to his house; and though Don Juan would have declined the invitation, the corregidor was so pressing that he carried his point, and the whole party got into his coach, which he had previously sent for. But when the corregidor bade Costanza take her place in it, her heart sank within her; she threw herself into the landlady's arms, and wept so piteously, that the hearts of all the beholders were moved. "What is this, daughter of my soul?" said the hostess; "Going to leave me? Can you part from her who has reared you with the love of a mother?" Costanza was no less averse to the separation; but the tenderhearted corregidor declared that the hostess also should enter the coach, and that she should not be parted from her whom she regarded as a daughter, as long as she remained in Toledo. So the whole party, including the hostess, set out together for the corregidor's house, where they were well received by his noble lady.

After they had enjoyed a sumptuous repast, Carriazo related to his father how, for love of Costanza, Don Tomas had taken service as hostler in the inn, and how his devotion to her was such that, before he knew her to be a lady, and the daughter of a man of such quality, he would gladly have married her even as a

scullery-maid. The wife of the corregidor immediately made Costanza put on clothes belonging to a daughter of hers of the same age and figure, and if she had been beautiful in the dress of a working girl, she seemed heavenly in that of a lady, and she wore it with such ease and grace that one would have supposed she had never been used to any other kind of costume from her birth. But among so many who rejoiced, there was one person who was full of sadness, and that was Don Pedro, the corregidor's son, who at once concluded that Costanza was not to be his; nor was he mistaken, for it was arranged between the corregidor, Don Diego de Carriazo, and Don Juan de Avendaño, that Don Tomas should marry Costanza, her father bestowing upon her the thirty thousand crowns left by her mother; that the water-carrier Don Diego de Carriazo should marry the daughter of the corregidor, and that Don Pedro the corregidor's son, should receive the hand of Don Juan de Avendaño's daughter, his father undertaking to obtain a dispensation with regard to their relationship. In this manner all were finally made happy. The news of the three marriages, and of the singular fortune of the illustrious scullery-maid, spread through the city, and multitudes flocked to see Costanza in her new garb as a lady, which became her so well. These persons saw the hostler Tomas Pedro changed into Don Tomas de Avendaño, and dressed as a man of quality. They observed, too, that Lope Asturiano looked very much the gentleman since he had changed his costume, and dismissed the ass and the water-vessels; nevertheless, there were not wanting some who, as he passed through the streets in all his pomp, still called out to him for the tail.

After remaining a month in Toledo most of the party went to Burgos, namely, Don Diego de Carriazo, his wife, and his father; Costanza, and her husband, Don Tomas, and the corregidor's son, who desired to visit his kinswoman and destined bride. The host was enriched by the present of the thousand crowns, and by the many jewels which Costanza bestowed upon her señora, as she persisted in calling her who had brought her up. The story of the illustrious scullery-maid afforded the poets of the golden Tagus a theme on which to exercise their pens in celebrating the incomparable beauty of Costanza, who still lives happily with her faithful hostler. Carriazo has three sons, who, without inheriting their father's tastes, or caring to know whether or not there are any such things as tunny fisheries in the world, are all pursuing their studies at Salamanca; whilst their father never sees a water-carrier's ass but he thinks of the one he drove in Toledo, and is not without apprehension that, when he least expects it, his ears shall be saluted with some squib having for its burden, "Give us the tail, Asturiano! Asturiano, give us the tail!"



## THE TWO DAMSELS.

Five leagues from the city of Seville there is a town called Castelblanco. At one of the many inns belonging to that town there arrived at nightfall a traveller, mounted on a handsome nag of foreign breed. He had no servant with him, and, without waiting for any one to hold his stirrup, he threw himself nimbly from the saddle. The host, who was a thrifty, active man, quickly presented himself, but not until the traveller had already seated himself on a bench under the gateway, where the host found him hastily unbuttoning his breast, after which he let his arms drop and fainted. The hostess, who was a good-natured soul, made haste to sprinkle his face with cold water, and presently he revived. Evidently ashamed of having been seen in such a state, he buttoned himself up again, and asked for a room to which he might retire, and, if possible, be alone. The hostess said they had only one in the house and that had two beds, in one of which she must accommodate any other guest that might arrive. The traveller replied that he would pay for both beds, guest or no guest; and taking out a gold crown he gave it to the hostess, on condition that no one should have the vacant bed. The hostess, well satisfied with such good payment, promised that she would do as he required, though the Dean of Seville himself should arrive that night at her house. She then asked him if he would sup. He declined, and only begged they would take great care of his nag. Then, taking the key of the chamber, and carrying with him a large pair of leathern saddle-bags, he went in, locked the door, and even, as it afterwards appeared, barricaded it with two chairs.

The moment he was gone, the host, the hostess, the hostler, and two neighbours who chanced to be there, held a council together, and all extolled the great comeliness and graceful deportment of the stranger, agreeing that they had never seen any one so handsome. They discussed his age, and came to the conclusion that it was between sixteen and seventeen. They speculated largely as to what might have been the cause of his fainting, but could make no plausible guess at it. The neighbours after a while went home, the host went to look after the nag, and the hostess to prepare supper in case any other guest should arrive; nor was it long before another entered, not much older than the first, and of no less engaging mien, so that the hostess no sooner saw him than she exclaimed, "God bless me! how is this? Are angels coming to stop here to-night?"

"Why does the lady hostess say that?" said the cavalier.

"It is not for nothing I say it. Only I must beg your honour not to dismount,

for I have no bed to give you; for the two I had have been taken by a cavalier who has paid for both, though he has no need of more than one; but he does that because no one else may enter the room, being, I suppose, fond of solitude; though upon my conscience I can't tell why, for his face and appearance are not such that he need be ashamed of them or want to hide them, but quite the contrary."

"Is he so good-looking, señora hostess?"

"Good-looking? Ay, the best of good-looking."

"Here, my man, hold my stirrup," said the cavalier to a muleteer who accompanied him; "for though I have to sleep on the floor, I must see a man of whom I hear such high encomiums;" and then dismounting he called for supper, which was immediately placed before him. Presently an alguazil dropped in — as they commonly do at the inns in small towns — and taking a seat, entered into conversation with the cavalier while he supped; not forgetting at intervals to swallow three large glasses of wine, and the breast and leg of a partridge, which the cavalier gave him. He paid his scot meanwhile by asking news of the capital, of the wars in Flanders, and the decay of the Turk, not forgetting the exploits of the Transylvanian, whom God preserve. The cavalier supped and said nothing, not having come from a place which would have supplied him with the means of satisfying these inquiries. By and by, the innkeeper, having seen to the nag, came in and sat down to make a third in the conversation, and to taste his own wine no less copiously than the alguazil; and at every gulp he leaned his head back over his left shoulder, and praised the wine, which he exalted to the clouds, though he did not leave much of it there, for fear it should get watered.

From one subject to another, the host fell at last upon the praises of the first comer; told how he had fainted, how he had gone to bed without supper, and had locked himself in; and spoke of his well-filled saddle-bags, the goodness of his nag, and the handsome travelling-dress he wore, all which made it strange that he travelled without any attendant. The cavalier felt his curiosity piqued anew, and asked the landlord to contrive that he might sleep in the second bed, for which he would give him a gold crown. The landlord's fingers itched to take the money; but he said the thing was impossible, for the door was locked inside, and he durst not wake the sleeper, who had paid so well for both the beds. The alguazil, however, got over the difficulty. "I'll tell you what is to be done," said he. "I will knock at the door, and say that I am an officer of justice; that I have orders from the señor alcalde to see this cavalier accommodated in this inn; and that as there is no other bed, he must have one of those two. The landlord will cry out against this, and say it is not fair, for the second bed is already engaged and paid for; and so he will clear himself of all responsibility, while your honour

will attain your object.” This scheme of the alguazil’s was unanimously approved, and the cavalier rewarded him for it with four reals. It was carried into effect at once; the first guest was compelled, with manifest reluctance, to open the door; the second entered the room with many apologies for the intrusion, to which the first made no reply, nor did he even show his face; for instantly hastening back into bed, he turned to the wall, and pretended to be asleep. The last comer also went to bed, hoping to have his curiosity satisfied in the morning when they both got up.

The night was one of the long and weary ones of December, when the cold and the fatigues of the day should naturally have disposed the two travellers to sleep; but they had not that effect on the first of the pair, who not long after midnight began to sigh and moan as if his heart would break. His lamentations awoke the occupant of the other bed, who distinctly overheard the following soliloquy, though uttered in a faint and tremulous voice, broken by sighs and sobs.

“Wretch that I am! Whither is the irresistible force of my destiny hurrying me? What a path is mine; and what issue can I hope for out of the labyrinth in which I am entangled? O my youth and inexperience! Honour disregarded! Love ungratefully repaid! Regard for honoured parents and kindred trampled under foot! Woe is me a thousand times to have thus given the reins to my inclinations! O false words which I have too trustingly responded to by deeds! But of whom do I complain? Did I not wilfully betray myself? Did not my own hands wield the knife that cut down my reputation, and destroyed the trust which my parents reposed in my rectitude? O perjured Marco Antonio! Is it possible that your honeyed words concealed so much of the gall of unkindness and disdain? Where art thou, ingrate? Whither hast thou fled, unthankful man? Answer her who calls upon thee! Wait for her who pursues thee; sustain me, for I droop; pay me what thou owest me; succour me since thou art in so many ways bound to me!”

Here the sorrowing stranger relapsed into silence, broken only by sobs. The other, who had been listening attentively, inferred from what he had heard that the speaker was a woman. The curiosity he had before felt was now excited to the highest degree: he was several times on the point of approaching the lady’s bed; and he would have done so at last, but just then he heard her open the door, call to the landlord, and bid him saddle the nag, for she wanted to go. It was a pretty long time before she could make the landlord hear her; and finally, all the answer she could obtain was a recommendation to go to sleep again, for there was more than half the night yet to come, and it was so dark that it would be a very rash thing to venture upon the road. Upon this she said no more, but shut the door, and went back to bed, sighing dismally.

The other stranger now thought it would be well to address her, and offer her his aid in any way that might be serviceable, as a means of inducing her to say who she was, and relate her piteous story. "Assuredly, señor gentleman," said he, "I should think myself destitute of natural feeling — nay, that I had a heart of stone and a bosom of brass — if your sighs and the words you have uttered did not move me to sympathy. If the compassion I feel for you, and the earnest desire I have conceived to risk my life for your relief — if your misfortunes admit of any — may give me some claim upon your courtesy, I entreat you to manifest it in declaring to me the cause of your grief without reserve."

"If that grief had not deprived me of understanding," said the person addressed, "I ought to have remembered that I was not alone in this room, and have bridled my tongue and suppressed my sighs; but to punish myself for my imprudent forgetfulness, I will do what you ask; for it may be that the pangs it will cost me to relate the bitter story of my misfortunes will end at once my life and my woes. But first you must promise me solemnly, that whatever I may reveal, you will not quit your bed nor come to mine, nor ask more of me than I choose to disclose; for if you do, the very moment I hear you move I will run myself through with my sword, which lies ready to my hand."

The cavalier, who would have promised anything to obtain the information he so much desired, vowed that he would not depart a jot from the conditions so courteously imposed. "On that assurance, then," said the lady, "I will do what I have never done before, and relate to you the history of my life. Harken then.

"You must know, señor, that although I entered this inn, as they have doubtless told you, in the dress of a man, I am an unhappy maiden, or at least I was one not eight days ago, and ceased to be so, because I had the folly to believe the delusive words of a perjured man. My name is Teodosia; my birthplace is one of the chief towns of the province of Andalusia, the name of which I suppress, because it does not import you so much to know it as me to conceal it. My parents, who are noble and wealthy, had a son and a daughter; the one for their joy and honour, the other for the reverse. They sent my brother to study at Salamanca, and me they kept at home, where they brought me up with all the scrupulous care becoming their own virtue and nobility; whilst on my part I always rendered them the most cheerful obedience, and punctually conformed to all their wishes, until my unhappy fate set before my eyes the son of a neighbour of ours, wealthier than my parents, and no less noble than they. The first time I saw him, I felt nothing more than the pleasure one feels at making an agreeable acquaintance; and this I might well feel, for his person, air, manners, disposition, and understanding were the admiration of all who knew him. But why dwell on the praises of my enemy, or make so long a preface to the

confession of my infatuation and my ruin? Let me say at once that he saw me repeatedly from a window opposite to mine; whence, as it seemed to me, he shot forth his soul towards me from his eyes, whilst mine beheld him with a pleasure very different from that which I had experienced at our first interview, and one which constrained me to believe that everything I read in his face was the pure truth.

“Seeing each other in this way led to conversation; he declared his passion, and mine responded to it, with no misgiving of his sincerity, for his suit was urged with promises, oaths, tears, sighs, and every accompaniment that could make me believe in the reality of his devoted attachment. Utterly inexperienced as I was, every word of his was a cannon shot that breached the fortress of my honour; every tear was a fire in which my virtue was consumed; every sigh was a rushing wind that fanned the destructive flame. In fine, upon his promise to marry me in spite of his parents, who had another wife in view for him, I forgot all my maidenly reserve, and without knowing how, put myself into his power, having no other witness of my folly than a page belonging to Marco Antonio — for that is the name of the destroyer of my peace — who two days afterwards disappeared from the neighbourhood, without any person, not even his parents, having the least idea whither he was gone. In what condition I was left, imagine if you can; it is beyond my power to describe it.

“I tore my hair as if it was to blame for my fault, and punished my face as thinking it the primary occasion of my ruin; I cursed my fate, and my own precipitation; I shed an infinity of tears, and was almost choked by them and by my sighs; I complained mutely to heaven, and pondered a thousand expedients to see if there was any which might afford me help or remedy, and that which I finally resolved on was to dress myself in male apparel, and go in quest of this perfidious Æneas, this cruel and perjured Bireno, this defrauder of my honest affections and my legitimate and well-founded hopes. Having once formed this resolution, I lost no time in putting it in execution. I put on a travelling suit belonging to my brother, saddled one of my father’s horses with my own hand, and left home one very dark night, intending to go to Salamanca, whither it was conjectured that Marco Antonio might have gone; for he too is a student, and an intimate friend of my brother’s. I did not omit to take at the same time a quantity of gold sufficient for all contingencies upon my journey. What most distresses me is the thought that my parents will send in pursuit of me, and that I shall be discovered by means of my dress and the horse; and even had I not this to fear, I must dread my brother’s resentment; for he is in Salamanca, and should he discover me, I need not say how much my life would be in peril. Even should he listen to my excuses, the least scruple of his honour would outweigh them all.

“Happen what may, my fixed resolve is to seek out my heartless husband, who cannot deny that he is my husband without belying the pledge which he left in my possession — a diamond ring, with this legend: ‘Marco Antonio is the husband of Teodosia.’ If I find him, I will know from him what he discovered in me that prompted him so soon to leave me; and I will make him fulfil his plighted troth, or I will prove as prompt to vengeance as I was easy in suffering myself to be aggrieved, and will take his life; for the noble blood that runs in my veins is not to be insulted with impunity. This, señor cavalier, is the true and sad history you desired to hear, and which you will accept as a sufficient apology for the words and sighs that awoke you. What I would beseech of you is, that though you may not be able to remedy my misfortune, at least you may advise me how to escape the dangers that beset me, evade being caught, and accomplish what I so much desire and need.”

The cavalier said not a syllable in reply, and remained so long silent that Teodosia supposed he was asleep and had not heard a word she had been saying. To satisfy herself of this, she said, “Are you asleep, señor? No wonder if you are; for a mournful tale poured into an unimpassioned ear is more likely to induce drowsiness than pity.”

“I am not asleep,” replied the cavalier; “on the contrary, I am so thoroughly awake, and feel so much for your calamity, that I know not if your own anguish exceeds mine. For this reason I will not only give you the advice you ask, but my personal aid to the utmost of my powers; for though the manner in which you have told your tale proves that you are gifted with no ordinary intelligence, and therefore that you have been your own betrayer, and owe your sorrow to a perverted will rather than to the seductions of Marco Antonio, nevertheless I would fain see your excuse in your youth and your inexperience of the wily arts of men. Compose yourself, señora, and sleep if you can during the short remainder of the night. When daylight comes we will consult together, and see what means may be devised for helping you out of your affliction.”

Teodosia thanked him warmly, and tried to keep still for a while in order that the cavalier might sleep; but he could not close an eye; on the contrary he began to toss himself about in the bed, and to heave such deep sighs that Teodosia was constrained to ask him what was the matter? was he suffering in any way, and could she do anything for his relief?

“Though you are yourself the cause of my distress, señora,” he replied, “you are not the person who can relieve it, for if you were I should not feel it.”

Teodosia could not understand the drift of this perplexed reply; she suspected, however, that he was under the influence of some amorous passion, and even that she herself might be the object of it; for it might well be that the fact of his

being alone with one he knew to be a woman, at that dead hour of the night, and in the same bed-room, should have awakened in him some bad thoughts. Alarmed at the idea, she hastily put on her clothes without noise, buckled on her sword and dagger, and sat down on the bed to wait for daylight, which did not long delay to appear through the many openings there were in the sides of the room, as usual in inn-chambers. The cavalier on his part, had made ready exactly as Teodosia had done; and he no sooner perceived the first rays of light, than he started up from his bed, saying, "Get up, señora Teodosia, and let us be gone; for I will accompany you on your journey, and never quit your side until I see Marco Antonio become your lawful husband, or until he or I shall be a dead man;" and so saying, he opened the windows and the doors of the room.

Teodosia had longed for daylight that she might see what manner of man he was with whom she had been conversing all night; but when she beheld him, she would have been glad that it had never dawned, but that her eyes had remained in perpetual darkness, for the cavalier who stood before her was her brother! At sight of him she was stupefied with emotion, her face was deadly pale, and she could not utter a word. At last, rallying her spirits, she drew her dagger, and presenting the handle to her brother, fell at his feet, and gasped out, "Take it, dear señor and brother, punish the fault I have committed, and satisfy your resentment, for my offence deserves no mercy, and I do not desire that my repentance should be accepted as an atonement. The only thing I entreat is that you will deprive me of life, but not of my honour; for though I have placed it in manifest danger by absenting myself from the house of my parents, yet its semblance may be preserved before the world if my death be secret."

Her brother regarded her fixedly, and although her wantonness excited him to vengeance, he could not withstand this affecting appeal. With a placable countenance he raised her from the ground, and consoled her as well as he could, telling her, among other things, that as he knew of no punishment adequate to the magnitude of her folly, he would suspend the consideration of that matter for the present; and as he thought that fortune had not yet made all remedy impossible, he thought it better to seek one than at once to take vengeance on her for her levity. These words restored Teodosia to life; the colour returned to her cheeks, and her despair gave way to revived hope. Don Rafael (that was the brother's name) would speak no more on the subject, but bade her change her name from Teodosia to Teodoro, and decided that they should both proceed at once to Salamanca in quest of Marco Antonio, though he hardly expected to find him there; for as they were intimate friends, they would have met had he been at the university, unless indeed Marco Antonio might have shunned him from a consciousness of the wrong he had done him. The new Teodoro acquiesced in

everything proposed by her brother; and the innkeeper coming in, they ordered breakfast, intending to depart immediately.

Before all was ready another traveller arrived. This was a gentleman who was known to Don Rafael and Teodoro, and the latter, to avoid being seen by him, remained in the chamber. Don Rafael, having embraced the newcomer, asked him what news he brought. His friend replied that he had just come from the port of Santa Maria, where he had left four galleys bound for Naples, and that he had seen Marco Antonio Adorno, the son of Don Leonardo Adorno, on board one of them. This intelligence rejoiced Don Rafael, to whom it appeared that since he had so unexpectedly learned what it was of such importance for him to know, he might regard this an omen of his future success. He asked his friend, who knew his father well, to exchange the hired mule he rode for his father's nag, giving him to understand, not that he was coming from Salamanca, but that he was going thither, and that he was unwilling to take so good an animal on so long a journey. The other obligingly consented, and promised to deliver the nag to its owner. Don Rafael and he breakfasted together, and Teodoro alone; and finally the friend pursued his journey to Cazallo, where he had an estate, whilst Don Rafael excused himself from accompanying him by saying that he had to return that day to Seville.

As soon as the friend was gone, and the reckoning paid, Don Rafael and Teodoro mounted and bade adieu to the people of the inn, leaving them all in admiration of the comeliness of the pair. Don Rafael told his sister what news he had received of Marco Antonio, and that he proposed they should make all haste to reach Barcelona; for vessels on their way to or fro between Italy and Spain usually put in at that port; and if Marco Antonio's ship had not yet arrived there, they would wait for it, and be sure of seeing him. His sister said he should do as he thought best, for his will was hers. Don Rafael then told the muleteer who accompanied him to have patience, for he intended to go to Barcelona, but would pay him accordingly. The muleteer, who was one of the merriest fellows of his trade, and who knew Don Rafael's liberality, declared that he was willing to go with him to the end of the world.

Don Rafael asked his sister what money she had. She told him she had not counted it; all she knew was that she had put her hand seven or eight times into her father's strong box, and had taken it out full of gold crowns. From this Don Rafael calculated that she might have something about five hundred crowns, which, with two hundred of his own, and a gold chain he wore, seemed to him no bad provision for the journey; the more so, as he felt confident of meeting Marco Antonio in Barcelona. They pursued their journey rapidly without accident or impediment until they arrived within two leagues of a town called



Igualada, which is nine leagues from Barcelona, and there they learned that a cavalier who was going as ambassador to Rome, was waiting at Barcelona for the galleys, which had not yet arrived. Greatly cheered by this news, they pushed on until they came to the verge of a small wood, from which they saw a man running, and looking back over his shoulder with every appearance of terror. "What is the matter with you, good man?" said Don Rafael, going up to him. "What has happened to you, that you seem so frightened and run so fast?"

"Have I not good cause to be frightened and to run fast," said the man, "since I have escaped by a miracle from a gang of robbers in that wood?"

"Malediction! Lord save us!" exclaimed the muleteer. "Robbers at this hour! By my halidom, they'll leave us as bare as we were born."

"Don't make yourself uneasy, brother," replied the man from the wood, "for the robbers have by this time gone away, after leaving more than thirty passengers stripped to their shirts and tied to trees, with the exception of one only, whom they have left to unbind the rest as soon as they should have passed a little hill they pointed out to him."

"If that be so," said Calvete, the muleteer, "we may proceed without fear, for where the robbers have made an attack, they do not show themselves again for some days. I say this with confidence, as a man who has been twice in their hands, and knows all their ways."

This fact being confirmed by the stranger, Don Rafael resolved to go on. They entered the wood, and had not advanced far, when they came upon the persons who had been robbed, and who were more than forty in number. The man who had been left free, had unbound some of them; but his work was not yet complete, and several of them were still tied to the trees. They presented a strange spectacle, some of them stripped naked, others dressed in the tattered garments of the robbers; some weeping over their disaster, some laughing at the strange figure the others made in their robber's costume; one dolorously reciting the list of the things he had lost, another declaring that the loss of a box of Agnus Dei he was bringing home from Rome afflicted him more than all besides. In short, the whole wood resounded with the moans and lamentations of the despoiled wretches. The brother and sister beheld them with deep compassion, and heartily thanked heaven for their own narrow escape from so great a peril. But what affected Teodoro more than anything else was the sight of a lad apparently about fifteen, tied to a tree, with no covering on him but a shirt and a pair of linen drawers, but with a face of such beauty that none could refrain from gazing on it. Teodoro dismounted and unbound him, a favour which he acknowledged in very courteous terms; and Teodoro, to make it the greater, begged Calvete to lend the gentle youth his cloak, until he could buy him

another at the first town they came to. Calvete complied, and Teodoro threw the cloak over his shoulders, asking him in Don Rafael's presence to what part of the country he belonged, whence he was coming, and whither he was going. The youth replied that he was from Andalusia, and he named as his birthplace a town which was but two leagues distant from that of the brother and sister. He said he was on his way from Seville to Italy, to seek his fortune in arms like many another Spaniard; but that he had had the misfortune to fall in with a gang of thieves, who had taken from him a considerable sum of money and clothes, which he could not replace for three hundred crowns. Nevertheless he intended to pursue his journey, for he did not come of a race which was used to let the ardour of its zeal evaporate at the first check.

The manner in which the youth expressed himself, the fact that he was from their own neighbourhood, and above all, the letter of recommendation he carried in his face, inspired the brother and sister with a desire to befriend him as much as they could. After they had distributed some money among such of the rest as seemed in most need of it, especially among monks and priests, of whom there were eight, they made this youth mount Calvete's mule, and went on without more delay to Igualada. There they were informed that the galleys had arrived the day before at Barcelona, whence they would sail in two days, unless the insecurity of the roadstead compelled them to make an earlier departure. On account of this news, they rose next morning before the sun, although they had not slept all night in consequence of a circumstance which had occurred at supper, and which had more surprised and interested the brother and sister than they were themselves aware. As they sat at table, and the youth with them whom they had taken under their protection, Teodoro fixed her eyes intently on his face, and scrutinising his features somewhat curiously, perceived that his ears were bored. From this and from a certain bashfulness that appeared in his looks, she suspected that the supposed youth was a woman, and she longed for supper to be over that she might verify her suspicion. Meanwhile Don Rafael asked him whose son he was, for he knew all the principal people in the town he had named as his birth place. The youth said he was the son of Don Enrique de Cardenas. Don Rafael replied that he was well acquainted with Don Enrique, and knew for certain that he had no son; but that if he had given that answer because he did not choose to make known his family, it was of no consequence, and he should not be questioned again on that subject.

"It is true," said the youth, "that Don Enrique has no children, but his brother Don Sancho has."

"He has no son either," replied Don Rafael, "but an only daughter, who, by the bye, they say is one of the handsomest damsels in Andalusia; but this I know

only by report; for though I have been often in her town I have never seen her.”

“It is quite true, as you say, señor, that Don Sancho has only a daughter, but not one so handsome as fame reports; and if I said that I was the son of Don Enrique it was only to give myself some importance in your eyes; for in fact, I am only the son of Don Sancho’s steward, who has been many years in his service, and I was born in his house. Having displeased my father, I carried off a good sum of money from him, and resolved to go to Italy, as I have told you, and follow the career of arms, by which men even of obscure birth have been known to make themselves illustrious.”

Teodoro, who listened attentively to all this conversation, was more and more confirmed in her suspicion, both by the manner and the substance of what the youth said. After the cloth was removed, and while Don Rafael was preparing for bed, she made known to him her surmise, and then, with his permission, took the youth aside, and, going out with him upon a balcony which looked on the street, addressed him thus: —

“Don Francisco,” for that was the name he had given himself, “I would fain have done you so much service that you could not help granting me anything that I should ask of you; but the short time we have known you has not permitted this. Hereafter perhaps you may know how far I deserve that you should comply with my desires; but if you do not choose to satisfy that which I am now about to express, I will not the less continue to be your faithful servant. Furthermore, before I prefer my present request, I would impress upon you that although my age does exceed yours, I have more experience of the world than is usual at my years, as you will admit when I tell you that it has led me to suspect that you are not a man, as your garb imports, but a woman, and one as well-born as your beauty proclaims, and perhaps as unfortunate as your disguise implies, for such transformations are never made willingly, or except under the pressure of some painful necessity. If what I suspect is the case, tell me so, and I swear to you on the faith of a cavalier to aid and serve you in every way I can. That you are a woman you cannot make me doubt, for the holes in your ears make that fact very clear. It was thoughtless of you not to close them with a little flesh-coloured wax, for somebody else as inquisitive as myself, and not so fit to be trusted with a secret, might discover by means of them what you have so ill concealed. Believe me, you need not hesitate to tell me who you are, in full reliance on my inviolable secrecy.”

The youth had listened with great attention to all Teodoro said, and, before answering her a word, he seized her hands, carried them by force to his lips, kissed them with great fervour, and even bedewed them copiously with tears. Teodoro could not help sympathising with the acute feelings of the youth, and

shedding tears also. Although, when she had with difficulty withdrawn her hands from the youth's lips, he replied with a deep-drawn sigh, "I will not, and cannot deny, señora, that your suspicion is true; I am a woman, and the most unfortunate of my sex; and since the acts of kindness you have conferred upon me, and the offers you make me, oblige me to obey all your commands, listen and I will tell you who I am, if indeed it will not weary you to hear the tale of another's misfortunes."

"May I never know aught else myself," replied Teodoro, "if I shall not feel a pleasure in hearing of those misfortunes equal to the pain it will give me to know that they are yours, and that will be such as if they were my own." And again she embraced and encouraged the seeming youth, who, somewhat more tranquilised, continued thus: —

"I have spoken the truth with regard to my native place, but not with regard to my parents; for Don Enrique is not my father but my uncle, and his brother Don Sancho is my father. I am that unhappy daughter of his of whom your brother says that she is celebrated for her beauty, but how mistakenly you now perceive. My name is Leocadia; the occasion of my disguise you shall now hear.

"Two leagues from my native town there is another, one of the wealthiest and noblest of Andalusia, where lives a cavalier of quality, who derives his origin from the noble and ancient Adornos of Genoa. He has a son, who, unless fame exaggerates his praises as it does mine, is one of the most gallant gentlemen one would desire to see. Being so near a neighbour of ours, and being like my father strongly addicted to the chase, he often came on a visit of five or six days to our house, the greater part of that time, much of the night even included, being spent by my father and him in the field. From these visits of his, fortune, or love, or my own imprudence, took occasion to bring me down to my present state of degradation. Having observed, with more attention than became a modest and well-behaved maiden, the graceful person and manners of our visitor, and taking into consideration his distinguished lineage and the great wealth of his parents, I thought that to obtain him for my husband would be the highest felicity to which my wishes could aspire. With this thought in my head I began to gaze at him most intently, and also, no doubt, with too little caution, for he perceived it, and the traitor needed no other hint to discover the secret of my bosom and rob me of my peace. But why should I weary you by recapitulating every minute detail of my unfortunate attachment? Let me say at once that he won so far upon me by his ceaseless solicitations, having plighted his faith under the most solemn and, as I thought, the most Christian vows that he would become my husband, that I put myself wholly at his disposal. Nevertheless, not being quite satisfied with his vows alone, and in order that the wind might not bear them away, I made him

commit them to writing, and give them to me in a paper signed with his own hand, and drawn up in terms so strong and unequivocal as to remove all my mistrust. Once in possession of this paper, I arranged that he should come to me one night, climb the garden-wall, and enter my chamber, where he might securely pluck the fruit destined for him alone. The night so longed for by me at last arrived— “

Up to this point Teodoro had listened with rapt attention, especially since she had heard the name of Adorno, but now she could contain herself no longer. “Well,” she cried, suddenly interrupting the speaker, “and then, what did he do? Did he keep the assignation? Were you happy in his arms? Did he confirm his written pledge anew? Was he content when he had obtained from you what you say was his? Did your father know it? What was the end of this good and wise beginning?”

“The end was to bring me to what you see, for he never came.”

Teodoro breathed again at these words, and partly recovered her self-possession, which had been almost destroyed by the frantic influence of jealousy. Even yet she was not so free from it but that she trembled inwardly as Leocadia continued her story.

“Not only did he fail to keep the assignation, but a week after I learned for certain that he had disappeared from home, and carried off from the house of her parents, persons of distinction in his own neighbourhood, a very beautiful and accomplished young lady named Teodosia. I was nearly mad with jealousy and mortification. I pictured Teodosia to myself in imagination, more beautiful than the sun, more perfect than perfection itself, and above all, more blissful than I was miserable. I read the written engagement over and over again; it was as binding as any form of words could be; but though my hopes would fain have clung to it as something sacred and inviolable, they all fell to the ground when I remembered in what company Marco Antonio had departed. I beat my face, tore my hair, and cursed my fate; but what was most irksome to me was that I could not practise these self-inflictions at all hours in consequence of my father’s presence. In fine, that I might be free to indulge my woe without impediment, I resolved to quit my home. It would seem that the execution of a bad purpose never fails for want of opportunity. I boldly purloined a suit of clothes belonging to one of my father’s pages, and from himself a considerable sum of money; then leaving the house by night I travelled some leagues on foot, and reached a town called Osuna, where I hired a car. Two days afterwards I entered Seville, where I was quite safe from all pursuit.

“There I bought other clothes, and a mule, and set out with some cavaliers who were travelling with all speed to Barcelona, that they might be in time for

some galleys that were on their way to Italy. I continued my journey until yesterday, when the robbers took everything from me, and among the rest, that precious thing which sustained my soul and lightened my toils, the written engagement given me by Marco Antonio. I had intended to carry it with me to Italy, find Marco Antonio there, and present it to him as an evidence of his faithlessness and my constancy, and constrain him to fulfil his promise. At the same time I am conscious that he may readily deny the words written on this paper, since he has made nought of the obligations that should have been engraved on his soul; besides, it is plain that if he is accompanied by the incomparable Teodosia he will not deign to look upon the unfortunate Leocadia. But happen what may, I am resolved to die or present myself before the pair, that the sight of me may trouble their joy. This Teodosia, this enemy of my peace, shall not so cheaply enjoy what is mine. I will seek her out, I will find her, and will take her life if I can."

"But how is Teodosia in fault," said Teodoro, "if, as is very probably the case, she too has been deluded by Marco Antonio, as you, señora, have been?"

"How can that be so," returned Leocadia, "if he has her with him? Being with the man she loves, what question can there be of delusion? They are together, and therefore they are happy, and would be so, though they were in the burning deserts of Lybia, or the dreary wastes of Scythia. She is blest in his arms wherever she is, and therefore she shall pay for all I shall suffer till I find her."

"It is very likely you are mistaken," said Teodoro; "I am very well acquainted with this enemy of yours, as you call her, and I know her prudence and modesty to be such, that she never would venture to quit her father's house and go away with Marco Antonio. And even had she done so, not knowing you, nor being aware of any claim you had on him, she has not wronged you at all, and where there is no wrong, vengeance is out of place."

"Tell me not of her modesty, señor; for I was as modest and as virtuous as any maiden in the world, and yet I have done what I have told you. That he has carried her off there is no doubt. I acknowledge, looking on the matter dispassionately, that she has not wronged me; but the pangs of jealousy which she occasions me make me abhor her. If a sword were thrust through my vitals, should I not naturally strive to pluck it out and break it to pieces?"

"Well, well, señora Leocadia, since the passion that sways you makes you speak so wildly, I see it is not the fit time to offer you rational advice. I shall therefore content myself with repeating that I am ready and willing to render you every service in my power, and I know my brother's generous nature so well, that I can boldly make you the same promise on his part. We are going to Italy, and it rests only with yourself to accompany us. One thing only I entreat, that

you will allow me to tell my brother what I know of your story, that he may treat you with the attention and respect which is your due. I think you had better continue to wear male attire, and if it is to be procured in this place, I will take care that you shall be suitably equipped to morrow. For the rest, trust to time, for it is a great provider of remedies even for the most desperate cases.”

Leocadia gratefully thanked the generous Teodoro, saying he might tell his brother whatever he thought fit, and beseeching him not to forsake her, since he saw to what dangers she was exposed, if she was known to be a woman. Here the conversation ended, and they retired to rest, Teodosia in her brother’s room, and Leocadia in another next it. Don Rafael was still awake, waiting for his sister to know what had passed between her and the suspected woman; and before she lay down, he made her relate the whole to him in detail. “Well, sister,” he said when she had finished, “if she is the person she declares herself to be, she belongs to the best family in her native place, and is one of the noblest ladies of Andalusia. Her father is well known to ours, and the fame of her beauty perfectly corresponds with the evidence of our own eyes. My opinion is, that we must proceed with caution, lest she come to speak with Marco Antonio before us, for I feel some uneasiness about that written engagement she speaks of, even though she has lost it. But be of good cheer, sister, and go to rest, for all will come right at last.”

Teodosia complied with her brother’s advice so far as to go to bed, but it was impossible for her to rest, so racked was she by jealous fears. Oh, how she exaggerated the beauty of Leocadia, and the disloyalty of Marco Antonio! How often she read with the eyes of her imagination his written promise to her rival! What words and phrases she added to it, to make it more sure and binding! How often she refused to believe that it was lost! And how many a time she repeated to herself, that even though it were lost, Marco Antonio would not the less fulfil his promise to Leocadia, without thinking of that by which he was bound to herself! In such thoughts as these she passed the night without a wink of sleep; nor was her brother Don Rafael less wakeful; for no sooner had he heard who Leocadia was, than his heart was on fire for her. He beheld her in imagination, not tied to a tree, or in tattered male garments, but in her own rich apparel in her wealthy father’s house. He would not suffer his mind to dwell on that which was the primary cause of his having become acquainted with her; and he longed for day that he might continue his journey and find out Marco Antonio, not so much that he might make him his brother-in-law, as that he might hinder him from becoming the husband of Leocadia. In fact, he was so possessed by love and jealousy, that he could have borne to see his sister comfortless, and Marco Antonio fairly buried, rather than be himself without hope of obtaining

Leocadia.

Thus with different thoughts, they all quitted their beds at break of day, and Don Rafael sent for the host, and asked him if he could purchase a suit of clothes in that place for a page who had been stripped by robbers. The host said he happened to have one for sale which he would dispose of at a reasonable price. He produced it, Leocadia found that it fitted her very well, she put it on, and girt herself with sword and dagger with such sprightly grace that she enchanted Don Rafael, and redoubled Teodosia's jealousy. Calvete saddled the mules, and about eight in the morning, they started for Barcelona, not intending to take the famous monastery of Monserrate on their way, but to visit it on a future occasion, whenever it might please God to send them home again with hearts more at ease.

Words are not adequate to describe the feelings of the two brothers, or with what different eyes they severally regarded Leocadia; Teodosia wishing for her death, and Don Rafael for her life; Teodosia striving to find faults in her, in order that she might not despair of her own hopes; and Don Rafael finding out new perfections, that more and more obliged him to love her. All these thoughts, however, did not hinder their speed, for they reached Barcelona before sunset. They admired the magnificent situation of the city, and esteemed it to be the flower of the world, the honour of Spain, the terror of all enemies near and far, the delight of its inhabitants, the refuge of strangers, the school of chivalry, the model of loyalty, in a word, a union of all that a judicious curiosity could desire in a grand, famous, wealthy, and well-built city. Upon their entering it they heard a great uproar, and saw a multitude of people running with loud cries. They inquired the cause, and were told that the people of the galleys in the port had fallen upon those of the town. Don Rafael desired to see what was going on, though Calvete would have dissuaded him; for, as the muleteer said, he knew well what mischief came of interfering in such frays as this, which usually occurred in Barcelona when galleys put in there.

In spite of this good advice, Don Rafael and his fellow-travellers went down at once towards the beach, where they saw many swords drawn, and numbers of people slashing at each other without mercy, and they approached so near the scene without dismounting, that they could distinctly see the faces of the combatants, for the sun was still above the horizon. The number of townspeople engaged was immense, and great crowds issued from the galleys, although their commander, Don Pedro Vique, a gentleman of Valencia, stood on the prow of the flagship, threatening all who entered the boats to succour their comrades. Finding his commands disregarded, he ordered a gun to be fired without ball, as a warning that if the combatants did not separate, the next gun he fired would be shotted. Meanwhile, Don Rafael, who narrowly watched the fray, observed



among those who took part with the seamen a young man of about two-and-twenty, dressed in green, with a hat of the same colour, adorned with a rich loop and buttons apparently of diamonds. The skill and courage with which he fought, and the elegance of his dress, drew upon him the attention of all the spectators, and Teodosia and Leocadia both cried out, as if with one voice, "Good heavens! either my eyes deceive me, or he in green is Marco Antonio." Then, with great nimbleness, they dismounted, drew their swords and daggers, cleared their way through the crowd, and placed themselves one on each side of Marco Antonio. "Fear nothing, Señor Marco Antonio," cried Leocadia, "for there is one by your side who will defend your life at the cost of his own." "Who doubts it," ejaculated Teodosia, on the other side, "since I am here?" Don Rafael, who had seen and heard all this, followed his two companions, and took sides as they did.

Marco Antonio was too busy smiting and defending himself to heed what his two seconds had said; he could think of nothing but fighting, and no man ever fought more bravely; but as the party of the town was every moment increasing in numbers, the people of the galleys were forced to retreat and take to the water. Marco Antonio retreated with the rest, much against his will, still attended on either side by his two valiant Amazons. By this time a Catalonian knight of the renowned House of Cardonas, made his appearance on a noble charger, and, throwing himself between the two parties, ordered the townspeople to retire. The majority obeyed, but some still continued to fling stones, one of which unluckily struck Marco Antonio on the breast with such force that he fell senseless into the water, in which he was wading up to his knees. Leocadia instantly raised and supported him in her arms, and Teodosia aided her.

Don Rafael, who had turned aside a little to avoid a shower of stones, saw the accident which had befallen Marco Antonio, and was hastening forward to his aid, when the Catalonian knight stopped him, saying, "Stay, señor, and do me the favour to put yourself by my side. I will secure you from the insolence of this unruly rabble."

"Ah, señor!" replied Rafael, "let me pass, for I see that in great danger which I most love in this world."

The knight let him pass, but before he could reach the spot, the crew of the flagship's boat had already taken on board Marco Antonio and Leocadia, who never let him out of her arms. As for Teodosia, whether it was that she was weary, or overcome with grief to see her lover wounded, or enraged with jealousy to see her rival with him, she had not strength to get into the boat, and would certainly have fallen in a fainting fit into the water, if her brother had not opportunely come to her aid, while he himself felt no less torment than his sister at seeing Leocadia go away with Marco Antonio.

The Catalonian knight being very much taken with the goodly presence of Don Rafael and his sister (whom he supposed to be a man), called them from the shore, and requested them to go with him, and they were constrained to accept his friendly offer, lest they should suffer some injury from the people, who were not yet pacified. Thereupon, the knight dismounted, and with his drawn sword in his hand, led them through the tumultuous throng, who made way at his command. Don Rafael looked round to see if he could discover Calvete with the mules; but he was not to be seen, for the moment his employers dismounted, he had gone off to an inn where he had lodged on previous occasions. On their arrival at the knight's abode, which was one of the principal houses in the city, he asked them in which of the galleys they had arrived. Don Rafael replied that they had not come in any, for they had arrived in the city just as the fray began; and it was because they had recognised the gentleman who was wounded with a stone that they had involved themselves in danger. Moreover, he entreated the knight would have the gentleman brought on shore, as he was one on whom his own dearest interests depended. "I will do so with great pleasure," replied the knight, "and I am sure the general will allow it, for he is a worthy gentleman and a relation of mine." Thereupon he went at once to the galley, where he found Marco Antonio under the hands of the surgeon, who pronounced his wound dangerous, being near the heart. With the general's consent he had him brought on shore with great care, accompanied by Leocadia, and carried to his own house in a litter, where he entertained the whole party with great hospitality.

A famous surgeon of the city was now sent for, but he would not touch the patient's wound until the following day, alleging that it had no doubt been properly treated already, army and navy surgeons being always men of skill, in consequence of their continual experience in cases of wounds. He only desired that the patient should be placed in a quiet room and left to rest. Presently the surgeon of the galley arrived, and had a conference with his colleague, who approved of what he had done, and agreed with him in thinking the case highly dangerous. Leocadia and Teodosia heard this with as much anguish of heart as if it had been a sentence of death upon themselves; but not wishing to betray their grief, they strove to conceal it in silence. Leocadia, however, determined to do what she thought requisite for her honour, and as soon as the surgeons were gone, she entered Marco Antonio's room, where, going up to his bed side, and taking his hand in presence of the master of the house, Don Rafael, Teodosia, and others, "Señor Marco Antonio Adorno," she said, "it is now no seasonable time, considering your condition, to utter many words; and therefore I shall only entreat you to lend your ear to some few which concern, if not the safety of your body, at least that of your soul. But I must have your permission to speak; for it

would ill become me, who have striven never to disoblige you from the first moment I knew you, to disturb you now in what seems almost your last.”

At these words Marco Antonio opened his eyes, looked steadfastly at Leocadia, and recognising her rather by the tone of her voice than by her face, said with a feeble voice, like one in pain, “Say on, señor, what you please, for I am not so far gone but that I can listen to you; nor is that voice of yours so harsh and unpleasing that I should dislike to hear it.”

Teodosia hearkened most attentively, and every word that Leocadia spoke pierced her heart like an arrow, and at the same time harrowed the soul of Don Rafael. “If the blow you have received,” continued Leocadia, “or rather that which has struck my heart, has not effaced from your memory, señor Marco Antonio, the image of her whom not long ago you called your glory and your heaven, you must surely call to mind who Leocadia was, and what was the promise you gave her in writing under your own hand; nor can you have forgotten the worth of her parents, her own modesty and virtue, and the obligation you are under to her for having always gratified you in everything you desired. If you have not forgotten all this, you may readily know, in spite of this disguise, that I am Leocadia. As soon as I heard of your departure from home, dreading lest new chances and opportunities should deprive me of what is so justly mine, I resolved, in defiance of the worst miseries, to follow you in this garb, and to search the wide world over till I found you. Nor need you wonder at this, if you have ever felt what the strength of true love is capable of, or know the frenzy of a deceived woman. I have suffered some hardships in my quest, all of which I regard as pastime since they have resulted in my seeing you; for, though you are in this condition, if it be God’s will to remove you to a better world, I shall esteem myself more than happy if before your departure you do what becomes you, in which case I promise you to live in such a manner after your death that I shall soon follow you on that last inevitable journey. I beseech you then, for the love of heaven, for your own honour, and for my sake, to whom you owe more than to all the world, receive me at once as your lawful wife, not leaving it to the law to do what you have so many righteous motives for doing of your own accord.”

Here Leocadia ceased speaking. All present had listened to her in profound silence, and in the same way they awaited the reply of Marco Antonio. “I cannot deny, señora,” he said, “that I know you; your voice and your face will not suffer me to do that. Nor yet can I deny how much I owe to you, nor the great worth of your parents and your own incomparable modesty and virtue. I do not, and never shall, think lightly of you for what you have done in coming to seek me in such a disguise; on the contrary, I shall always esteem you for it in the highest degree.

But since, as you say, I am so near my end, I desire to make known to you a truth, the knowledge of which, if it be unpleasant to you now, may hereafter be useful to you.

“I confess, fair Leocadia, that I loved you, and you loved me; and yet I confess also that my written promise was given more in compliance with your desire than my own; for before I had long signed it my heart was captivated by a lady named Teodosia, whom you know, and whose parentage is as noble as your own. If I gave you a promise signed with my hand, to her I gave that hand itself in so unequivocal a manner that it is impossible for me to bestow it on any other person in the world. My amour with you was but a pastime from which I culled only some flowers, leaving you nothing the worse; from her I obtained the consummate fruit of love upon my plighted faith to be her husband. That I afterwards deserted you both was the inconsiderate act of a young man who thought that all such things were of little importance, and might be done without scruple. My intention was to go to Italy, and after spending some of the years of my youth there, to return and see what had become of you and my real wife; but Heaven in its mercy, as I truly believe, has permitted me to be brought to the state in which you see me, in order that in thus confessing my great faults, I may fulfil my last duty in this world, by leaving you disabused and free, and ratifying on my deathbed the pledge I gave to Teodosia. If there is anything, señora Leocadia, in which I can serve you during the short time that remains to me, let me know it; so it be not to receive you as my wife, for that I cannot, there is nothing else which I will not do, if it be in my power, to please you.”

Marco Antonio, who had raised himself on one arm while he spoke, now fell back senseless. Don Rafael then came forward. “Recover yourself, dear señor,” he said, embracing him affectionately, “and embrace your friend and your brother, since such you desire him to be.”

Marco Antonio opened his eyes, and recognising Don Rafael, embraced him with great warmth. “Dear brother and señor,” he said, “the extreme joy I feel in seeing you must needs be followed by a proportionate affliction, since, as they say, after gladness comes sorrow; but whatever befalls me now I will receive with pleasure in exchange for the happiness of beholding you.”

“To make your happiness more complete,” replied Don Rafael, “I present to you this jewel as your own.” Then, turning to look for his sister, he found her behind the rest of the people in the room, bathed in tears, and divided between joy and grief at what she saw and what she had heard. Taking her by the hand, her brother led her passively to the bed-side, and presented her to Marco Antonio, who embraced her with loving tears.

The rest of those present stared in each others’ faces in speechless amazement

at these extraordinary occurrences; but the hapless Leocadia, seeing her whom she had mistaken for Don Rafael's brother locked in the arms of him she looked on as her own husband, and all her hopes mocked and ruined, stole out of the room unperceived by the others, whose attention was engrossed by the scene about the bed. She rushed wildly into the street, intending to wander over the world, no matter whither; but she was hardly out of doors before Don Rafael missed her, and, as if he had lost his soul, began to inquire anxiously after her; but nobody could tell what had become of her. He hastened in dismay to the inn where he was told Calvete lodged, thinking she might have gone thither to procure a mule; but, not finding her there, he ran like a madman through the streets, seeking her in every quarter, till the thought struck him that she might have made for the galleys, and he turned in that direction. As he approached the shore he heard some one calling from the land for the boat belonging to the general's galley, and soon recognised the voice as that of the beautiful Leocadia. Hearing his footsteps as he hastened towards her, she drew her sword and stood upon her guard; but perceiving it was Don Rafael, she was vexed and confused at his having found her, especially in so lonely a place; for she was aware, from many indications, that he was far from regarding her with indifference; on the contrary, she would have been delighted to know that Marco Antonio loved her as well. How shall I relate all that Don Rafael now said to Leocadia? I can give but a faint idea of the glowing language in which he poured out his soul.

"Were it my fate, beautiful Leocadia," he said, "along with the favours of fortune to lack also at this moment the courage to disclose to you the secret of my soul, then would there be doomed to perpetual oblivion the most ardent and genuine affection that ever was harboured in a lover's breast. But not to do it that wrong, I will make bold, señora, come of it what may, to beg you will observe, if your wounded feelings allow you, that in nothing has Marco Antonio the advantage of me, except the happiness of being loved by you. My lineage is as good as his, and in fortune he is not much superior to me. As for the gifts of nature, it becomes me not to laud myself, especially if in your eyes those which have fallen to my share are of no esteem. All this I say, adored señora, that you may seize the remedy for your disasters which fortune offers to your hand. You see that Marco Antonio cannot be yours, since Heaven has already made him my sister's; and the same Heaven which has taken him from you is now willing to compensate you with me, who desire no higher bliss in this life than that of being your husband. See how good fortune stands knocking at the door of the evil fortune you have hitherto known. And do not suppose that I shall ever think the worse of you for the boldness you have shown in seeking after Marco Antonio; for from the moment I determine to match myself with you, I am

bound to forget all that is past. Well I know that the same power which has constrained me so irresistibly to adore you, has brought you also to your present pass, and therefore there will be no need to seek an excuse where there has been no fault.”

Leocadia listened in silence to all Don Rafael said, only from time to time heaving a sigh from the bottom of her heart. Don Rafael ventured to take her hand; she did not withdraw it; and kissing it again and again, he said, “Tell me, lady of my soul, that you will be so wholly, in presence of these starry heavens, this calm listening sea, and these watery sands. Say that yes, which surely behoves your honour as well as my happiness. I repeat to you that I am a gentleman, as you know, and wealthy; that I love you, which you ought to esteem above every other consideration; and that whereas I find you alone, in a garb that derogates much from your honour, far from the home of your parents and your kindred, without any one to aid you at your need, and without the hope of obtaining what you were in quest of, you may return home in your own proper and seemly garb, accompanied by as good a husband as you had chosen for yourself, and be wealthy, happy, esteemed, and even applauded by all who may become acquainted with the events of your story. All this being so, I know not why you hesitate. Say the one word that shall raise me from the depth of wretchedness to the heaven of bliss, and in so doing, you will do what is best for yourself; you will comply with the demands of courtesy and good sense, and show yourself at once grateful and discreet.”

“Well,” said the doubting Leocadia, at last, “since Heaven has so ordained, and neither I nor any one living can oppose its will, be it as Heaven and you desire, señor. I take the same power to witness with what bashfulness I consent to your wishes, not because I am unconscious of what I gain by complying with them, but because I fear that when I am yours you will regard me with other eyes than those with which hitherto perhaps you have mistakingly beheld me. But be it as it may, to be the lawful wife of Don Rafael de Villavicencio is an honour I cannot lose, and with that alone I shall live contented. But if my conduct after I am your wife give me any claim to your esteem, I will thank Heaven for having brought me through such strange circumstances and such great misfortunes to the happiness of being yours. Give me your hand, Don Rafael, and take mine in exchange; and, as you say, let the witnesses of our mutual engagement be the sky, the sea, the sands, and this silence, interrupted only by my sighs and your entreaties.”

So saying, she permitted Don Rafael to embrace her, and taking each other’s hand they solemnised their betrothal with a few tears drawn from their eyes by the excess of joy succeeding to their past sorrows. They immediately returned to

the knight's house, where their absence had occasioned great anxiety, and where the nuptials of Marco Antonio and Teodosia had already been celebrated by a priest, at the instance of Teodosia, who dreaded lest any untoward chance should rob her of her new-found hopes. The appearance of Don Rafael and Leocadia, and the account given by the former of what had passed between them, augmented the general joy, and the master of the house rejoiced as if they were his own near relations; for it is an innate characteristic of the Catalonian gentry to feel and act as friends towards such strangers as have any need of their services.

The priest, who was still present, desired that Leocadia should change her dress for one appropriate to her sex, and the knight at once supplied both the ladies with handsome apparel from the wardrobe of his wife, who was a lady of the ancient house of the Granolliques, famous in that kingdom. The surgeon was moved by charity to complain that the wounded man talked so much and was not left alone; but it pleased God that Marco Antonio's joy, and the little silence he observed, were the very means of his amendment, so that when they came to dress his wound next day, they found him out of danger, and in a fortnight more he was fit to travel. During the time he kept his bed he had made a vow that if he recovered he would go on a pilgrimage on foot to Santiago de Galicia, and in the fulfilment of that vow he was accompanied by Don Rafael, Leocadia, Teodosia, and even by the muleteer Calvete, unusual as such pious practices are with men of his calling; but he had found Don Rafael so liberal and good-humoured that he would not quit him till he had returned home. The party having to travel on foot as pilgrims, the mules were sent on to Salamanca.

The day fixed for their departure arrived, and equipped in their dalmaticas and with all things requisite, they took leave of their generous and hospitable friend, the knight Don Sancho de Cardona, a man of most illustrious blood and personally famous; and they pledged themselves that they and their descendants, to whom they should bequeath it as a duty, should perpetually preserve the memory of the singular favours received from him, in order that they might not be wanting at least in grateful feeling, if they could not repay them in any other way. Don Sancho embraced them all, and said it was a matter of course with him to render such services or others to all whom he knew or supposed to be Castilian hidalgos. They repeated their embraces twice, and departed with gladness, mingled with some sorrow. Travelling by easy stages to suit the strength of the lady pilgrims, they reached Monserrate in three days, remained as many more there, fulfilling their duties as good Catholic Christians, and resuming their journey, arrived without accident at Santiago, where they accomplished their vows with all possible devotion. They determined not to quit

their pilgrim garbs until they reached their homes. After travelling towards them leisurely, they came at last to a rising ground whence Leocadia and Teodosia looked down upon their respective birthplaces, nor could they restrain their tears at the glad sight which brought back to their recollection all their past vicissitudes.

From the same spot they discovered a broad valley, which divided the two townships, and in it they saw under the shades of an olive a stalwart knight, mounted on a powerful charger, armed with a strong keen lance and a dazzlingly white shield. Presently they saw issuing from among some olive trees two other knights similarly armed, and of no less gallant appearance. These two rode up to the first, and after remaining awhile together they separated. The first knight and one of the two others set spurs to their horses, and charging each other like mortal enemies, began mutually to deal such vigorous thrusts, and to avoid or parry them with such dexterity, that it was plain they were masters in that exercise. The third knight remained a spectator of the fight without quitting his place. Don Rafael, who could not be content with a distant view of the gallant conflict, hurried down the hill, followed by the other three, and came up close to the two champions just as they had both been slightly wounded. The helmet of one of them had fallen off, and as he turned his face towards Don Rafael, the latter recognised his father, and Marco Antonio knew that the other was his own, whilst Leocadia discovered hers in the third knight who had not fought. Astounded at this spectacle, the two brothers instantly rushed between the champions, crying out "Stop, cavaliers! Stop! We who call on you to do so are your own sons! Father, I am Marco Antonio, for whose sake, as I guess, your honoured life is put to this peril. Allay your anger; cast away your weapons, or turn them against another enemy; for the one before you must henceforth be your brother."

The two knights instantly stopped; and looking round they observed that Don Sancho had dismounted and was embracing his daughter, who briefly narrated to him the occurrences at Barcelona. Don Sancho was proceeding to make peace between the combatants, but there was no need of that, for he found them already dismounted and embracing their sons with tears of joy. There now appeared at the entrance of the valley a great number of armed men on foot and on horseback: these were the vassals of the three knights, who had come to support the cause of their respective lords; but when they saw them embracing the pilgrims they halted, and knew not what to think until Don Sancho briefly recounted to them what he had learned from his daughter. The joy of all was unbounded. Five of the vassals immediately mounted the pilgrims on their own horses, and the whole party set out for the house of Marco Antonio's father,



where it was arranged that the two weddings should be celebrated. On the way Don Rafael and Marco Antonio learned that the cause of the quarrel which had been so happily ended was a challenge sent to the father of the latter by the fathers of Teodosia and Leocadia, under the belief that he had been privy to the acts of seduction committed by his son. The two challengers having found him alone would not take any advantage of him, but agreed to fight him one after the other, like brave and generous knights. The combat, nevertheless, must have ended in the death of one or all of them but for the timely arrival of their children, who gave thanks to God for so happy a termination of the dispute.

The day after the arrival of the pilgrims, Marco Antonio's father celebrated the marriages of his son and Teodosia, Don Rafael and Leocadia, with extraordinary magnificence. The two wedded pairs lived long and happily together, leaving an illustrious progeny which still exists in their two towns, which are among the best in Andalusia. Their names, however, we suppress, in deference to the two ladies, whom malicious or prudish tongues might reproach with levity of conduct. But I would beg of all such to forbear their sentence, until they have examined themselves and seen whether they too have not been assailed some time or other by what are called the arrows of Cupid, weapons whose force is truly irresistible. Calvete was made happy with the gift of the mule which Don Rafael had left at Salamanca, and with many other presents; and the poets of the time took occasion to employ their pens in celebrating the beauty and the adventures of the two damsels, as bold as they were virtuous, the heroines of this strange story.

## The Spanish Texts



*Calle Cervantes, esquina con León, Madrid — the house where Cervantes died on April 22, 1611*



*A plaque commemorating the death of the author*

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# LA GALATEA



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## Tasa

Yo, Miguel de Ondarza Zavala, escribano de Cámara de Su Majestad, de los que residen en el su Consejo, doy fe que, habiéndose visto por los dichos señores del Consejo un libro que con privilegio real imprimió Miguel de Cervantes, intitulado *Los seis libros de Galatea*, tasaron a tres maravedís el pliego escrito en molde, para que sin pena alguna se pueda vender. Y mandaron que esta tasa se ponga al principio de cada volumen de los que así fueren impresos, para que no se exceda dello; y, en fe dello, lo firmé de mi nombre. Fecha en Madrid, a trece días del mes de marzo de mil y quinientos y ochenta y cinco años.

*Miguel de Ondarza Zavala.*

### Erratas

Folio 2, página 2, línea 1: la desdeñaba, *le desdeñaba*; folio 3, página 1, línea 8: tal mala, *tan mala*; folio 20, página 2, línea 9: acababan, *acababa*; folio 25, página 1, línea 14: sus a padres, *a sus padres*; folio 29, página 2, línea 15: esfogado, *desfogado*; folio 69, página 2, línea última: por toda, *por todo*; folio 90, página 1, línea penúltima: valla, *allá*; folio 90, página 2, línea 10: ne se diese, *no se diese*; folio 93, página 2, línea 5: que tan doloroso, *que en tan doloroso*; folio 98, página 2, línea 1: no da la luz, *no da luz*; folio 105, página 2, línea 18: se hallase, *me hallase*; folio 107, página 1, línea 2: acordara, *acobardara*; folio 119, página 1, línea 11: ePro, *Pero*; folio 138, página 1, línea penúltima: no pudo, *no puedo*; folio 144, página 1, línea 4: tierra, *tierna*; folio 147, página 1, línea 2: flor tierra, *flor tierna*; folio 203, página 2, línea 22: derriban, *derivan*; folio 214, página 1, línea 13: deleitar, *dilatar*; folio 219, página 1, línea 4: alegar, *alegra*; folio 221, página 1, línea 5: creer que, *creer lo que*; folio 223, página 1, línea 14: es gusto, *es justo*; folio 229, página 1, línea 17: al te adora, *al que te adora*; folio 262, página 2, línea 8: ímpelu, *ímpetu*; folio 278, página 1, línea 19: valeroso amo, *valeroso ánimo*; folio 330, página 2, línea 2: Y así, *Y si*; folio 335, página 1, línea 2: León el que, *León es el que*; folio 339, página 1, línea 10: Romero, *Romeo*; folio 343, página 1, línea 14: sin las obras, *sin las sombras*; folio 344, página 1, línea 16: un fin hermoso, *si un fin hermoso*; folio 354, página 2, línea 5: desechas, *endechas*; folio 355, página 1, tras el verso 5: *di este, anchas, cortas y extendidas*; folio 362, página 2, línea 1: ardiente, *ardientes*; folio 193, página 1, línea 13: después que dice el oro, el brocado, diga *que sobre nuestros cuerpos echamos. Como, &c.*

Yo, el licenciado Várez de Castro, corrector por Su Majestad en esta Universidad de Alcalá, vi este libro, intitulado *Primera parte de la Galatea*, y le hallé bien impreso conforme a su original, sacadas las erratas arriba dichas; y por la verdad, di ésta, firmada de mi nombre. Fecha hoy, postrero de febrero de ochenta y cinco años.

*El licenciado Várez de Castro.*

### Aprobación

Por mandado de los señores del Real Consejo, he visto este libro, intitulado *Los seis libros de Galatea*, y lo que me parece es que se puede y debe imprimir, atento a ser tratado apacible y de mucho ingenio, sin perjuicio de nadie, así la prosa como el verso; antes, por ser libro provechoso, de muy casto estilo, buen romance y galana invención, sin tener cosa malsonante, deshonesto ni contraria a

buenas costumbres, se le puede dar al autor, en premio de su trabajo, el privilegio y licencia que pide. Fecha en Madrid, a primero de febrero de MDLXXXIII.

*Lucas Gracián de Antisco.*

## El rey

Por cuanto por parte de vos, Miguel de Cervantes, estante en nuestra Corte, nos ha sido hecha relación que vos habíades compuesto un libro intitulado *Galatea*, en verso y en prosa castellano, y que os había costado mucho trabajo y estudio, por ser obra de mucho ingenio, suplicándonos os mandásemos dar licencia para lo poder imprimir, y privilegio por doce años, o como la nuestra merced fuese; lo cual visto por los del nuestro Consejo, y como por su mandado se hizo en el dicho libro la diligencia que la pregmática por nos ahora nuevamente hecha sobre ello dispone, fue acordado que debíamos mandar dar esta nuestra cédula para vos en la dicha razón, e nos tuvimoslo por bien, por lo cual vos damos licencia y facultad para que, por tiempo de diez años primeros siguientes, que corren y se cuentan desde el día de la data della, vos, o la persona que vuestro poder hubiere, podáis imprimir y vender el dicho libro, que desuso se hace mención, en estos nuestros reinos. Y por la presente damos licencia y facultad a cualquier impresor dellos que vos nombráredes para que por esta vez le pueda imprimir por el original que en el nuestro Consejo se vio, que van rubricadas las planas y firmado al fin dél de Miguel de Ondarza Zavala, nuestro escribano de Cámara de los que en el nuestro Consejo residen; y con que, antes que se venda, le traigáis al nuestro Consejo, juntamente con el original, para que se vea si la dicha impresión está conforme a él, o trayáis fe en pública forma en cómo por el corretor nombrado por nuestro mandado se vio y corrigió la dicha impresión con el original, y se imprimió conforme a él, y quedan asimismo impresas las erratas por él apuntadas para cada un libro de los que así fueren impresos; y tase el precio que por cada volumen hubiéredes de haber, so pena de caer e incurrir en las penas contenidas en la dicha pregmática y leyes de nuestros reinos. Y mandamos que, durante el dicho tiempo, persona alguna, sin vuestra licencia, no lo pueda imprimir, so pena que el que le imprimiere o vendiere en estos nuestros reinos haya perdido y pierda todos y cualesquier libros y moldes que dél tuviere y vendiere; y más, incurra en pena de cincuenta mil maravedís: la tercera parte para el denunciador, y la otra tercera parte para la nuestra Cámara, y la otra tercera parte para el juez que lo sentenciare. Y mandamos a los del nuestro Consejo, presidentes, oidores de las nuestras audiencias, alcaldes, alguaciles de la nuestra Casa y Corte y chancillerías, y a todos los corregidores, asistentes, gobernadores, alcaldes mayores y ordinarios, y otros jueces y justicias cualesquier de todas las ciudades, villas y lugares de nuestros reinos y señoríos, así a los que ahora son como los que serán de aquí adelante, que vos guarden y cumplan esta cédula y merced que así vos hacemos, y contra el tenor y forma della no vayan ni pasen en manera alguna, so pena de la nuestra merced y de

diez mil maravedís para la nuestra Cámara. Fecha en Madrid, a XXII días del mes de febrero de mil y quinientos y ochenta y cuatro años.

Yo, el rey.

Por mandado de Su Majestad: *Antonio de Eraso*.

## Dedicatoria

*Al Ilustrísimo señor Ascanio Colona,  
abad de Sancta Sofía.*

Ha podido tanto conmigo el valor de V. S. Ilustrísima, que me ha quitado el miedo que, con razón, debiera tener en osar ofrescerle estas primicias de mi corto ingenio. Mas, considerando que el estremado de V. S. Ilustrísima no sólo vino a España para ilustrar las mejores universidades della, sino también para ser norte por donde se encaminen los que alguna virtuosa sciencia profesan, especialmente los que en la de la poesía se ejercitan, no he querido perder la ocasión de seguir esta guía, pues sé que en ella y por ella todos hallan seguro puerto y favorable acogimiento. Hágale V. S. Ilustrísima bueno a mi deseo, el cual envío delante, para dar algún ser a este mi pequeño servicio. Y si por esto no lo meresciere, merézcalo, a lo menos, por haber seguido algunos años las vencedoras banderas de aquel sol de la milicia que ayer nos quitó el cielo delante de los ojos, pero no de la memoria de aquellos que procuran tenerla de cosas dignas della, que fue el Excelentísimo padre de V. S. Ilustrísima. Juntando a esto el efecto de reverencia que hacían en mi ánimo las cosas que, como en profecía, oí muchas veces decir de V. S. Ilustrísima al cardenal de Aquaviva, siendo yo su camarero en Roma, las cuales ahora no sólo las veo cumplidas, sino todo el mundo que goza de la virtud, cristiandad, magnificiencia y bondad de V. S. Ilustrísima, con que da cada día señales de la clara y generosa estirpe do deciendo, la cual en antigüedad compite con el principio y príncipes de la grandeza romana, y en las virtudes y heroicas obras con la misma virtud y más encumbradas hazañas, como nos lo certifican mil verdaderas historias, llenas de los famosos hechos del tronco y ramos de la real casa Colona, debajo de cuya fuerza y sitio yo me pongo ahora, para hacer escudo a los murmuradores que ninguna cosa perdonan; aunque si V. S. Ilustrísima perdona este mi atrevimiento, ni tendré qué temer, ni más que desear, sino que Nuestro Señor guarde la Ilustrísima persona de V. S. con el acrescentamiento de dignidad y estado que sus servidores deseamos.

Ilustrísimo Señor, B. L. M. de V. S.

Su mayor servidor: *Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra.*

## Curiosos lectores

La ocupación de escribir églogas en tiempo que, en general, la poesía anda tan desfavorecida, bien recelo que no será tenido por ejercicio tan loable que no sea necesario dar alguna particular satisfacción a los que, siguiendo el diverso gusto de su inclinación natural, todo lo que es diferente dél estiman por trabajo y tiempo perdido. Mas, pues a ninguno toca satisfacer a ingenios que se encierran en términos tan limitados, sólo quiero responder a los que, libres de pasión, con mayor fundamento se mueven a no admitir las diferencias de la poesía vulgar, creyendo que los que en esta edad tratan della se mueven a publicar sus escritos con ligera consideración, llevados de la fuerza que la pasión de las composiciones propias suele tener en los autores dellas; para lo cual puedo alegar de mi parte la inclinación que a la poesía siempre he tenido y la edad, que, habiendo apenas salido de los límites de la juventud, parece que da licencia a semejantes ocupaciones. De más de que no puede negarse que los estudios desta facultad (en el pasado tiempo, con razón, tan estimada) traen consigo más que medianos provechos, como son enriquecer el poeta, considerando su propia lengua, y enseñorearse del artificio de la elocuencia que en ella cabe, para empresas más altas y de mayor importancia, y abrir camino para que, a su imitación, los ánimos estrechos, que en la brevedad del lenguaje antiguo quieren que se acabe la abundancia de la lengua castellana, entiendan que tienen campo abierto, fértil y espacioso, por el cual, con facilidad y dulzura, con gravedad y elocuencia, pueden correr con libertad, descubriendo la diversidad de conceptos agudos, graves, sotiles y levantados que en la fertilidad de los ingenios españoles la favorable influencia del cielo con tal ventaja en diversas partes ha producido, y cada hora produce en la edad dichosa nuestra, de lo cual puedo ser yo cierto testigo, que conozco algunos que, con justo derecho, y sin el empacho que yo llevo, pudieran pasar con seguridad carrera tan peligrosa.

Mas son tan ordinarias y tan diferentes las humanas dificultades, y tan varios los fines y las acciones, que unos, con deseo de gloria, se aventuran; otros, con temor de infamia, no se atreven a publicar lo que, una vez descubierto, ha de sufrir el juicio del vulgo, peligroso y casi siempre engañado. Yo, no porque tenga razón para ser confiado, he dado muestras de atrevido en la publicación deste libro, sino porque no sabría determinarme destos dos inconvenientes cuál sea el mayor: o el de quien con ligereza, deseando comunicar el talento que del cielo ha rescibido, temprano se aventura a ofrescer los frutos de su ingenio a su

patria y amigos, o el que, de puro escrupuloso, perezoso y tardío, jamás acabando de contentarse de lo que hace y entiende, tiniendo sólo por acertado lo que no alcanza, nunca se determina a descubrir y comunicar sus escriptos. De manera que, así como la osadía y confianza del uno podría condenarse por la licencia demasiada, que con seguridad se concede, asimesmo el recelo y la tardanza del otro es vicioso, pues tarde o nunca aprovecha con el fruto de su ingenio y estudio a los que esperan y desean ayudas y ejemplos semejantes para pasar adelante en sus ejercicios.

Huyendo destos dos inconvenientes, no he publicado antes de ahora este libro, ni tampoco quise tenerle para mí solo más tiempo guardado, pues para más que para mi gusto solo le compuso mi entendimiento. Bien sé lo que suele condenarse exceder nadie en la materia del estilo que debe guardarse en ella, pues el príncipe de la poesía latina fue calumniado en alguna de sus églogas por haberse levantado más que en las otras; y así, no temeré mucho que alguno condemne haber mezclado razones de filosofía entre algunas amorosas de pastores, que pocas veces se levantan a más que a tratar cosas del campo, y esto con su acostumbrada llaneza. Mas, advirtiéndolo, como en el discurso de la obra alguna vez se hace, que muchos de los disfrazados pastores della lo eran sólo en el hábito, queda llana esta objeción. Las demás que en la invención y en la disposición se pudieren poner, discúlpelas la intención segura del que leyere, como lo hará siendo discreto, y la voluntad del autor, que fue de agradar, haciendo en esto lo que pudo y alcanzó; que, ya que en esta parte la obra no responda a su deseo, otras ofresce para adelante de más gusto y de mayor artificio.

De Luis Gálvez de Montalvo al autor

#### Soneto

Mientra del yugo sarracino anduvo  
tu cuello preso y tu cerviz domada,  
y allí tu alma, al de la fe amarrada,  
a más rigor, mayor firmeza tuvo,

gozóse el cielo; mas la tierra estuvo 5  
casi viuda sin ti, y, desamparada  
de nuestras musas, la real morada  
tristeza, llanto, soledad mantuvo.



Pero después que diste al patrio suelo  
tu alma sana y tu garganta suelta 10  
dentre las fuerzas bárbaras confusas,

descubre claro tu valor el cielo,  
gózase el mundo en tu felice vuelta  
y cobra España las perdidas musas.

De don Luis de Vargas Manrique

Soneto

Hicieron muestra en vos de su grandeza,  
gran Cervantes, los dioses celestiales,  
y, cual primera, dones inmortales  
sin tasa os repartió naturaleza.

Jove su rayo os dio, que es la viveza 5  
de palabras que mueven pedernales;  
Diana, en exceder a los mortales  
en castidad de estilo con pureza;

Mercurio, las historias marañadas;  
Marte, el fuerte vigor que el brazo os mueve; 10  
Cupido y Venus, todos sus amores;  
Cupido y Venus, todos sus amores;

Apolo, las canciones concertadas;  
su sciencia, las hermanas todas nueve;  
y, al fin, el dios silvestre, sus pastores. 15

De López Maldonado

Soneto

Salen del mar, y vuelven a sus senos,

después de una veloz, larga carrera,  
como a su madre universal primera,  
los hijos della largo tiempo ajenos.

Con su partida no la hacen menos, 5  
ni con su vuelta más soberbia y fiera,  
porque tiene, quedándose ella entera,  
de su humor siempre sus estanques llenos.

La mar sois vos, ¡oh Galatea estremada!, los ríos, los loores, premio y fruto  
10 con que ensalzáis la más ilustre vida.

Por más que deis, jamás seréis menguada, y menos cuando os den todos  
tributo,  
con él vendréis a veros más crecida.

## Primero libro de Galatea

Mientras que al triste, lamentable acento  
del mal acorde son del canto mío,  
en eco amarga de cansado aliento,  
responde el monte, el prado, el llano, el río, demos al sordo y presuroso viento

5

las quejas que del pecho ardiente y frío  
salen a mi pesar, pidiendo en vano  
ayuda al río, al monte, al prado, al llano.

Crece el humor de mis cansados ojos  
las aguas deste río, y deste prado 10  
las variadas flores son abrojos  
y espinas que en el alma s'han entrado.  
No escucha el alto monte mis enojos,  
y el llano de escucharlos se ha cansado;  
y así, un pequeño alivio al dolor mío 15  
no hallo en monte, en llano, en prado, en río.

Creí que el fuego que en el alma enciende  
el niño alado, el lazo con que aprieta,  
la red sutil con que a los dioses prende  
y la furia y rigor de su saeta, 20  
que así ofendiera como a mí me ofende  
al sujeto sin par que me subjeta;  
mas contra un alma que es de mármol hecha,  
la red no puede, el fuego, el lazo y flecha.

Yo sí que al fuego me consumo y quemo, 25  
y al lazo pongo humilde la garganta,  
y a la red invisible poco temo,  
y el rigor de la flecha no me espanta.  
Por esto soy llegado a tal extremo,  
a tanto daño, a desventura tanta, 30  
que tengo por mi gloria y mi sosiego  
la saeta, la red, el lazo, el fuego.

Esto cantaba Elicio, pastor en las riberas de Tajo, con quien naturaleza se mostró tan liberal, cuanto la fortuna y el amor escasos, aunque los discursos del tiempo, consumidor y renovador de las humanas obras, le trujeron a términos que tuvo por dichosos los infinitos y desdichados en que se había visto, y en los que su deseo le había puesto, por la incomparable belleza de la sin par Galatea, pastora en las mismas riberas nacida; y, aunque en el pastoral y rústico ejercicio criada, fue de tan alto y subido entendimiento, que las discretas damas, en los reales palacios crecidas y al discreto tracto de la corte acostumbradas, se tuvieran por dichosas de parescerla en algo, así en la discreción como en la hermosura. Por los infinitos y ricos dones con que el cielo a Galatea había adornado, fue querida, y con entrañable ahínco amada, de muchos pastores y ganaderos que por las riberas de Tajo su ganado apascentaban; entre los cuales se atrevió a quererla el gallardo Elicio, con tan puro y sincero amor cuanto la virtud y honestidad de Galatea permitía.

De Galatea no se entiende que aborresciese a Elicio, ni menos que le amase; porque a veces, casi como convencida y obligada a los muchos servicios de Elicio, con algún honesto favor le subía al cielo; y otras veces, sin tener cuenta con esto, de tal manera le desdeñaba que el enamorado pastor la suerte de su estado apenas conocía. No eran las buenas partes y virtudes de Elicio para aborrecerse, ni la hermosura, gracia y bondad de Galatea para no amarse. Por lo uno, Galatea no desechaba de todo punto a Elicio; por lo otro, Elicio no podía, ni debía, ni quería olvidar a Galatea. Parescíale a Galatea que, pues Elicio con tanto miramiento de su honra la amaba, que sería demasiada ingratitud no pagarle con algún honesto favor sus honestos pensamientos. Imaginábase Elicio que, pues Galatea no desdeñaba sus servicios, que tendrían buen suceso sus deseos. Y cuando estas imaginaciones le avivaban la esperanza, hallábase tan contento y atrevido, que mil veces quiso descubrir a Galatea lo que con tanta dificultad encubría. Pero la discreción de Galatea conocía bien, en los movimientos del rostro, lo que Elicio en el alma traía; y tal el suyo mostraba, que al enamorado pastor se le helaban las palabras en la boca, y quedábase solamente con el gusto de aquel primer movimiento, por parescerle que a la honestidad de Galatea se le hacía agravio en tratarle de cosas que en alguna manera pudiesen tener sombra de no ser tan honestas que la misma honestidad en ellas se transformase.

Con estos altibajos de su vida, la pasaba el pastor tan mala que a veces tuviera por bien el mal de perderla, a trueco de no sentir el que le causaba no acabarla. Y así, un día, puesta la consideración en la variedad de sus pensamientos, hallándose en medio de un deleitoso prado, convidado de la soledad y del murmurio de un deleitoso arroyuelo que por el llano corría, sacando de su zurrón

un polido rabel, al son del cual sus querellas con el cielo cantando comunicaba,  
con voz en extremo buena, cantó los siguientes versos: Amoroso pensamiento,  
si te precias de ser mío,  
camina con tan buen tiento

que ni te humille el desvío  
ni ensoberbezca el contento. 5  
Ten un medio -si se acierta  
a tenerse en tal porfía-:  
no huyas el alegría,  
ni menos cierres la puerta  
al llanto que amor envía. 10

Si quieres que de mi vida  
no se acabe la carrera,  
no la lleves tan corrida  
ni subas do no se espera  
sino muerte en la caída. 15  
Esa vana presunción  
en dos cosas parará:  
la una, en tu perdición;  
la otra, en que pagará  
tus deudas el corazón. 20

Dél naciste, y en naciendo,  
pecaste, y págalo él;  
huyes dél, y si pretendo  
recogerte un poco en él,  
ni te alcanzo ni te entiendo. 25

Ese vuelo peligroso  
con que te subes al cielo,  
si no fueres venturoso,  
ha de poner por el suelo  
mi descanso y tu reposo. 30

Dirás que quien bien se emplea  
y se ofrece a la ventura,  
que no es posible que sea

del tal juzgado a locura  
el brío de que se arrea. 35  
Y que, en tan alta ocasión,  
es gloria que par no tiene  
tener tanta presunción,  
cuanto más si le conviene  
al alma y al corazón. 40

Yo lo tengo así entendido,  
mas quiero desengañarte;  
que es señal ser atrevido  
tener de amor menos parte  
qu'el humilde y encogido. 45  
Subes tras una beldad

que no puede ser mayor:  
no entiendo tu calidad,  
que puedas tener amor  
con tanta desigualdad. 50

Que si el pensamiento mira  
un sujeto levantado,  
contéplalo y se retira,  
por no ser caso acertado  
poner tan alta la mira. 55  
Cuanto más, que el amor nasce  
junto con la confianza,  
y en ella se ceba y paze;  
y, en faltando la esperanza,  
como niebla se deshace. 60

Pues tú, que vees tan distante  
el medio del fin que quieres,  
sin esperanza y constante,  
si en el camino murieres,  
morirás como ignorante. 65  
Pero no se te dé nada,  
que en esta empresa amorosa,

do la causa es sublimada,  
el morir es vida honrosa;  
la pena, gloria estremada. 70

No dejara tan presto el agradable canto el enamorado Elicio, si no sonaran a su derecha mano las voces de Erastro, que con el rebaño de sus cabras hacia el lugar donde él estaba se venía. Era Erastro un rústico ganadero, pero no le valió tanto su rústica y selvática suerte que defendiese que de su robusto pecho el blando amor no tomase entera posesión, haciéndole querer más que a su vida a la hermosa Galatea, a la cual sus querellas, cuando ocasión se le ofrecía, declaraba. Y, aunque rústico, era, como verdadero enamorado, en las cosas del amor tan discreto que, cuando en ellas hablaba, parecía que el mismo amor se las mostraba y por su lengua las profería; pero, con todo eso, puesto que de Galatea eran escuchadas, eran en aquella cuenta tenidas en que las cosas de burla se tienen. No le daba a Elicio pena la competencia de Erastro, porque entendía del ingenio de Galatea que a cosas más altas la inclinaba. Antes tenía lástima y envidia a Erastro: lástima, en ver que al fin amaba, y en parte donde era imposible coger el fruto de sus deseos; envidia, por parescerle que quizá no era tal su entendimiento, que diese lugar al alma a que sintiese los desdenes o favores de Galatea, de suerte, o que los unos le acabasen, o los otros lo enloqueciesen.

Venía Erastro acompañado de sus mastines, fieles guardadores de las simples ovejuelas (que debajo de su amparo están seguras de los carniceros dientes de los hambrientos lobos), holgándose con ellos, y por sus nombres los llamaba, dando a cada uno el título que su condición y ánimo merecía: a quién llamaba *León*, a quién *Gavilán*, a quién *Robusto*, a quién *Manchado*; y ellos, como si de entendimiento fueran dotados, con el mover las cabezas, viniéndose para él, daban a entender el gusto que de su gusto sentían. Desta manera llegó Erastro adonde de Elicio fue agradablemente rescibido, y aun rogado que, si en otra parte no había determinado de pasar el sol de la calurosa siesta, pues aquella en que estaban era tan aparejada para ello, no le fuese enojoso pasarla en su compañía.

-Con nadie -respondió Erastro-la podría yo tener mejor que contigo, Elicio, si ya no fuese con aquella que está tan enrobrescida a mis demandas, cuan hecha encina a tus continuos quejidos.

Luego los dos se sentaron sobre la menuda yerba, dejando andar a sus anchuras el ganado despuntando con los rumiadores dientes las tiernas yerbezuelas del herboso llano. Y como Erastro, por muchas y descubiertas señales, conocía claramente que Elicio a Galatea amaba, y que el merescimiento

de Elicio era de mayores quilates que el suyo, en señal de que reconocía esta verdad, en medio de sus pláticas, entre otras razones, le dijo las siguientes: -No sé, gallardo y enamorado Elicio, si habrá sido causa de darte pesadumbre el amor que a Galatea tengo; y si lo ha sido, debes perdonarme, porque jamás imaginé de enojarte, ni de Galatea quise otra cosa que servirla. Mala rabia o cruda roña consume y acabe mis retozadores chivatos, y mis ternezuelos corderillos, cuando dejaren las tetas de las queridas madres, no hallen en el verde prado para sustentarse sino amargos tueros y ponzoñosas adelfas, si no he procurado mil veces quitarla de la memoria, y si otras tantas no he andado a los médicos y curas del lugar a que me diesen remedio para las ansias que por su causa padezco. Los unos me mandan que tome no sé qué bebedizos de paciencia; los otros dicen que me encomiende a Dios, que todo lo cura, o que todo es locura. Permíteme, buen Elicio, que yo la quiera, pues puedes estar seguro que si tú con tus habilidades y estremadas gracias y razones no la ablandas, mal podré yo con mis simplezas enternecerla. Esta licencia te pido por lo que estoy obligado a tu merescimiento; que, puesto que no me la dieses, tan imposible sería dejar de amarla, como hacer que estas aguas no mojasen, ni el sol con sus peinados cabellos no nos alumbrase.

No pudo dejar de reírse Elicio de las razones de Erastro y del comedimiento con que la licencia de amar a Galatea le pedía; y así, le respondió: -No me pesa a mí, Erastro, que tú ames a Galatea; pésame bien de entender de su condición que podrán poco para con ella tus verdaderas razones y no fingidas palabras; déte Dios tan buen suceso en tus deseos, cuanto meresce la sinceridad de tus pensamientos. Y de aquí adelante no dejes por mi respecto de querer a Galatea, que no soy de tan ruin condición que, ya que a mí me falte ventura, huelgue de que otros no la tengan; antes te ruego, por lo que debes a la voluntad que te muestro, que no me niegues tu conversación y amistad, pues de la mía puedes estar tan seguro como te he certificado. Anden nuestros ganados juntos, pues andan nuestros pensamientos apareados. Tú, al son de tu zampoña, publicarás el contento o pena que el alegre o triste rostro de Galatea te causare; yo, al de mi rabel, en el silencio de las sosegadas noches, o en el calor de las ardientes siestas, a la fresca sombra de los verdes árboles de que esta nuestra ribera está tan adornada, te ayudaré a llevar la pesada carga de tus trabajos, dando noticia al cielo de los míos. Y, para señal de nuestro buen propósito y verdadera amistad, en tanto que se hacen mayores las sombras destos árboles y el sol hacia el occidente se declina, acordemos nuestros instrumentos y demos principio al ejercicio que de aquí adelante hemos de tener.

No se hizo de rogar Erastro; antes, con muestras de extraño contento por verse en tanta amistad con Elicio, sacó su zampoña y Elicio su rabel; y, comenzando



el uno y replicando el otro, cantaron lo que sigue:

## ELICIO

Blanda, süave, reposadamente,  
ingrato Amor, me sujetaste el día  
que los cabellos de oro y bella frente  
miré del sol que al sol escurecía;  
tu tósigo cruel, cual de serpiente, 5  
en las rubias madejas se escondía;  
yo, por mirar el sol en los manojos,  
todo vine a beberle por los ojos.

## ERASTRO

Atónito quedé y embelesado,  
como estatua sin voz de piedra dura, 10  
cuando de Galatea el estremado  
donaire vi, la gracia y hermosura.  
Amor me estaba en el siniestro lado,  
con las saetas de oro, ¡ay muerte dura!,  
haciéndome una puerta por do entrase 15  
Galatea y el alma me robase.

## ELICIO

¿Con qué milagro, amor, abres el pecho  
del miserable amante que te sigue,  
y de la llaga interna que le has hecho  
crecida gloria muestra que consigue? 20  
¿Cómo el daño que haces es provecho?  
¿Cómo en tu muerte alegre vida vive?  
L'alma que prueba estos efectos todos

la causa sabe, pero no los modos.

## ERASTRO

No se ven tantos rostros figurados 25  
en roto espejo o hecho por tal arte  
que, si uno en él se mira, retratados  
se ve una multitud en cada parte,  
cuantos nacen cuidados y cuidados  
de un cuidado crüel que no se parte 30  
del alma mía a su rigor vencida,  
hasta apartarse junto con la vida.

## ELICIO

La blanca nieve y colorada rosa,  
qu'el verano no gasta ni el invierno;  
el sol de dos luceros, do reposa 35  
el blando amor, y a do estará in eterno;  
la voz, cual la de Orfeo poderosa  
de suspender las furias del infierno,  
y otras cosas que vi quedando ciego,  
yesca me han hecho al invisible fuego. 40

## ERASTRO

Dos hermosas manzanas coloradas,  
  
que tales me semejan dos mejillas,  
y el arco de dos cejas levantadas,  
quel de Iris no llegó a sus maravillas;  
dos rayos, dos hileras estremadas 45

de perlas entre grana y, si hay decillas,  
mil gracias que no tienen par ni cuento,  
niebla m'han hecho al amoroso viento.

## ELICIO

Yo ardo y no me abraso, vivo y muero;  
estoy lejos y cerca de mí mismo; 50  
espero en solo un punto y desespero;  
súbome al cielo, bájome al abismo;  
quiero lo que aborrezco, blando y fiero;  
me pone el amaros parasismo;  
y con estos contrarios, paso a paso, 55  
cerca estoy ya del último traspaso.

## ERASTRO

Yo te prometo, Elicio, que le diera  
todo cuanto en la vida me ha quedado  
a Galatea, porque me volviera  
el alma y corazón que m'ha robado; 60  
y después del ganado, le añadiera  
mi perro *Gavilán* con el *Manchado*; pero, como ella debe de ser diosa,  
el alma querrá más que no otra cosa.

## ELICIO

Erastro, el corazón que en alta parte 65  
es puesto por el hado, suerte o signo,  
quererle derribar por fuerza o arte  
o diligencia humana, es desatino.  
Debes de su ventura contentarte;

que, aunque mueras sin ella, yo imagino 70  
que no hay vida en el mundo más dichosa  
como el morir por causa tan honrosa.

Ya se aparejaba Erastro para seguir adelante en su canto, cuando sintieron, por un espeso montecillo que a sus espaldas estaba, un no pequeño estruendo y ruido; y, levantándose los dos en pie por ver lo que era, vieron que del monte salía un pastor corriendo a la mayor priesa del mundo, con un cuchillo desnudo en la mano y la color del rostro mudada; y que tras él venía otro ligero pastor, que a pocos pasos alcanzó al primero; y, asiéndole por el cabezón del pellico, levantó el brazo en el aire cuanto pudo, y un agudo puñal que sin vaina traía se le escondió dos veces en el cuerpo, diciendo: -Recibe, ¡oh mal lograda Leonida!, la vida deste traidor, que en venganza de tu muerte sacrífico.

Y esto fue con tanta presteza hecho que no tuvieron lugar Elicio y Erastro de estorbárselo, porque llegaron a tiempo que ya el herido pastor daba el último aliento, envuelto en estas pocas y mal formadas palabras.

-Dejárasme, Lisandro, satisfacer al cielo con más largo arrepentimiento el agravio que te hice, y después quitárasme la vida, que agora, por la causa que he dicho, mal contenta destas carnes se aparta.

Y, sin poder decir más, cerró los ojos en sempiterna noche.

Por las cuales palabras imaginaron Elicio y Erastro que no con pequeña causa había el otro pastor ejecutado en él tan cruda y violenta muerte. Y, por mejor informarse de todo el suceso, quisieran preguntárselo al pastor homicida, pero él, con tirado paso, dejando al pastor muerto y a los dos admirados, se tornó a entrar por el montecillo adelante. Y, queriendo Elicio seguirle y saber dél lo que deseaba, le vieron tornar a salir del bosque; y, estando por buen espacio desviado dellos, en alta voz les dijo: -Perdonadme, comedidos pastores, si yo no lo he sido en haber hecho en vuestra presencia lo que habéis visto, porque la justa y mortal ira que contra ese traidor tenía concebida no me dio lugar a más moderados discursos. Lo que os aviso es que, si no queréis enojar a la deidad que en el alto cielo mora, no hagáis las obsequias ni plegarias acostumbradas por el alma traidora dese cuerpo que delante tenéis, ni a él deis sepultura, si ya aquí en vuestra tierra no se acostumbra darla a los traidores.

Y, diciendo esto, a todo correr se volvió a entrar por el monte, con tanta priesa que quitó la esperanza a Elicio de alcanzarle aunque le siguiese. Y así, se volvieron los dos con tiernas entrañas a hacer el piadoso oficio y dar sepultura, como mejor pudiesen, al miserable cuerpo que tan repentinamente había acabado el curso de sus cortos días. Erastro fue a su cabaña, que no lejos estaba, y, trayendo suficiente aderezo, hizo una sepultura en el mismo lugar do el cuerpo

estaba, y, dándole el último vale, le pusieron en ella; y, no sin compasión de su desdichado caso, se volvieron a sus ganados, y, recogiénolos con alguna priesa, porque ya el sol se entraba a más andar por las puertas de occidente, se recogieron a sus acostumbrados albergues, donde no su sosiego dellos, ni el poco que sus cuidados le concedían, podían apartar a Elicio de pensar qué causas habían movido a los dos pastores para venir a tan desesperado trance; y ya le pesaba de no haber seguido al pastor homicida, y saber dél, si fuera posible, lo que deseaba.

Con este pensamiento y con los muchos que sus amores le causaban, después de haber dejado en segura parte su rebaño, se salió de su cabaña, como otras veces solía; y con la luz de la hermosa Diana, que resplandeciente en el cielo se mostraba, se entró por la espesura de un espeso bosque adelante, buscando algún solitario lugar adonde en el silencio de la noche con más quietud pudiese soltar la rienda a sus amorosas imaginaciones, por ser cosa ya averiguada que a los tristes imaginativos corazones ninguna cosa les es de mayor gusto que la soledad, despertadora de memorias tristes o alegres. Y así, yéndose poco a poco gustando de un templado céfiro que en el rostro le hería, lleno del suavísimo olor que de las olorosas flores, de que el verde suelo estaba colmado, al pasar por ellas blandamente robaba, envuelto en el aire delicado, oyó una voz como de persona que dolorosamente se quejaba; y, recogiendo por un poco en sí mismo el aliento, porque el ruido no le estorbaba de oír lo que era, sintió que de unas apretadas zarzas que poco desviadas dél estaban, la entristecida voz salía; y, aunque interrota de infinitos sospiros, entendió que estas tristes razones pronunciaba: -Cobarde y temeroso brazo, enemigo mortal de lo que a ti mismo debes; mira que ya no queda de quién tomar venganza, sino de ti mismo. ¿De qué te sirve alargar la vida que tan aborrecida tengo? Si piensas que es nuestro mal de los que el tiempo suele curar, vives engañado, porque no hay cosa más fuera de remedio que nuestra desventura; pues quien la pudiera hacer buena la tuvo tan corta que en los verdes años de su alegre juventud ofreció la vida al carnicero cuchillo, que se la quitase por la traición del malvado Carino, que hoy, con perder la suya, habrá aplacado en parte a aquella venturosa alma de Leonida, si en la celeste parte donde mora puede caber deseo de venganza alguna. ¡Ah, Carino, Carino! Ruego yo a los altos cielos, si dellos las justas plegarias son oídas, que no admitan la disculpa, si alguna dieres, de la traición que me heciste, y que permitan que tu cuerpo carezca de sepultura, así como tu alma careció de misericordia. Y tú, hermosa y mal lograda Leonida, recibe en muestra del amor que en vida te tuve, las lágrimas que en tu muerte derramo; y no atribuyas a poco sentimiento el no acabar la vida con el que de tu muerte recibo, pues sería poca re compensa a lo que debo y deseo sentir el dolor que tan presto se acabase. Tú

verás, si de las cosas de acá tienes cuenta, cómo este miserable cuerpo quedará un día consumido del dolor poco a poco, para mayor pena y sentimiento: bien así como la mojada y encendida pólvora, que, sin hacer estrépito ni levantar llama en alto, entre sí misma se consume, sin dejar de sí sino el rastro de las consumidas cenizas. Duéleme cuanto puede dolerme, ¡oh alma del alma mía!, que ya que no pude gozarte en la vida, en la muerte no puedo hacerte las obsequias y honras que a tu bondad y virtud se convenían. Pero yo te prometo y juro que el poco tiempo -que será bien poco-que esta apasionada ánima mía rigiere la pesada carga deste miserable cuerpo, y la voz cansada tuviere aliento que la forme, de no tratar otra cosa en mis tristes y amargas canciones que de tus alabanzas y merescimientos.

A este punto cesó la voz, por la cual Elicio conoció claramente que aquél era el pastor homicida, de que recibió mucho gusto, por parecerle que estaba en parte donde podría saber dél lo que deseaba. Y, queriéndose llegar más cerca, hubo de tornarse a parar, porque le pareció que el pastor templaba un rabel, y quiso escuchar primero si al son dél alguna cosa diría; y no tardó mucho que con suave y acordada voz oyó que desta manera cantaba:

## LISANDRO

¡Oh alma venturosa,  
que del humano velo  
libre al alta región viva volaste,  
dejando en tenebrosa  
cárcel de desconsuelo 5  
mi vida, aunque contigo la llevaste!  
Sin ti, oscura dejaste  
la luz clara del día;

por tierra derribada,  
la esperanza fundada 10  
en el más firme asiento de alegría;  
en fin, con tu partida  
quedó vivo el dolor, muerta la vida.

Envuelto en tus despojos,  
la muerte s'ha llevado 15

el más subido extremo de belleza,  
la luz de aquellos ojos  
qu'en haberte mirado  
tenían encerrada su riqueza;  
con presta ligereza, 20  
del alto pensamiento  
y enamorado pecho,  
la gloria se ha deshecho,  
como la cera al sol o niebla al viento;  
y toda mi ventura 25  
cierra la piedra de tu sepultura.

¿Cómo pudo la mano  
inexorable y cruda,  
y el intento cruel, facinoroso,

del vengativo hermano 30  
dejar libre y desnuda  
tu alma del mortal velo hermoso?  
¿Por qué turbó el reposo  
de nuestros corazones?  
Que, si no se acabaran, 35  
en uno se juntaran  
con honestas y sanctas condiciones.  
¡Ay, fiera mano esquivá!,  
¿cómo ordenaste que muriendo viva?

En llanto sempiterno 40  
mi ánima mezquina  
los años pasará, meses y días;  
la tuya, en gozo eterno  
y edad firme y continua,  
no temerá del tiempo las porfías; 45  
con dulces alegrías  
verás firme la gloria  
que tu loable vida  
te tuvo merescida;  
y si puede caber en tu memoria 50  
del suelo no perderla,

de quien tanto te amó debes tenerla.

Mas, ¡oh!, cuán simple he sido,  
alma bendita y bella,  
de pedir que te acuerdes, ni aun burlando 55  
de mí que t'he querido,  
pues sé que mi querella  
se irá con tal favor eternizando.  
Mejor es que, pensando  
que soy de ti olvidado, 60  
me apriete con mi llaga,  
hasta que se deshaga  
con el dolor la vida, qu'ha quedado  
en tan estraña suerte,  
que no tiene por mal el de la muerte. 65

Goza en el sancto coro  
con otras almas sanctas,  
alma, de aquel seguro bien entero,  
alto, rico tesoro,  
mercedes, gracias tantas 70  
que goza el que no huye el buen sendero;  
allí gozar espero,

si por tus pasos guío,  
contigo en paz entera  
de eterna primavera, 75  
sin temor, sobresalto ni desvío;  
a esto me encamina,  
pues será hazaña de tus obras digna.

Y, pues vosotras, celestiales almas,  
veis el bien que deseo, 80  
creced las alas a tan buen deseo.

Aquí cesó la voz, pero no los suspiros del desdichado que cantado había, y lo uno y lo otro fue parte de acrescentar en Elicio la gana de saber quién era. Y, rompiendo por las espinosas zarzas, por llegar más presto a do la voz salía, salió



a un pequeño prado, que todo en redondo, a manera de teatro, de espesísimas e intrincadas matas estaba ceñido, en el cual vio un pastor que con estremado brío estaba con el pie derecho delante y el izquierdo atrás, y el diestro brazo levantado, a guisa de quien esperaba hacer algún recio tiro. Y así era la verdad, porque, con el ruido que Elicio al romper por las matas había hecho, pensando ser alguna fiera de la cual convenía defenderse, el pastor del bosque se había puesto a punto de arrojarle una pesada piedra que en la mano tenía. Elicio, conociendo por su postura su intento, antes que le efectuase le dijo: -Sosiega el pecho, lastimado pastor, que el que aquí viene trae el suyo aparejado a lo que mandarle quisieres, y quien el deseo de saber tu ventura le ha hecho romper tus lágrimas y turbar el alivio que de estar solo se te podría seguir.

Con estas blandas y comedidas palabras de Elicio, se sosegó el pastor, y con no menos blandura le respondió diciendo: -Tu buen ofrecimiento agradezco, cualquiera que tú seas, comedido pastor, pero si ventura quieres saber de mí, que nunca la tuve, mal podrás ser satisfecho.

-Verdad dices -respondió Elicio-, pues por las palabras y quejas que esta noche te he oído, muestras bien claro la poca o ninguna que tienes; pero no menos satisfacerás mi deseo con decirme tus trabajos que con declararme tus contentos; y así la Fortuna te los dé en lo que desees, que no me niegues lo que te suplico si ya el no conocerme no lo impide; aunque, para asegurarte y moverte, te hago saber que no tengo el alma tan contenta que no sienta en el punto que es razón las miserias que me contares. Esto te digo porque sé que no hay cosa más escusada, y aun perdida, que contar el miserable sus desdichas a quien tiene el pecho colmo de contentos.

-Tus buenas razones me obligan -respondió el pastora que te satisfaga en lo que me pides, así porque no imagines que de poco y acobardado ánimo nacen las quejas y lamentaciones que dices que de mí has oído, como porque conozcas que aún es muy poco el sentimiento que muestro a la causa que tengo de mostrarlo.

Elicio se lo agradeció mucho; y, después de haber pasado entre los dos más palabras de comedimiento, dando señales Elicio de ser verdadero amigo del pastor del bosque, y conociendo él que no eran fingidos ofrecimientos, vino a conceder lo que Elicio rogaba. Y, sentándose los dos sobre la verde yerba, cubiertos con el resplandor de la hermosa Diana, que en claridad aquella noche con su hermano competir podía, el pastor del bosque, con muestras de un interno dolor, comenzó a decir desta manera: -«En las riberas de Betis, caudalosísimo río que la gran Vandalia enriquece, nació Lisandro -que éste es el nombre desdichado mío-, y de tan nobles padres cual pluviera al soberano Dios que en más baja fortuna fuera engendrado; porque muchas veces la nobleza del linaje pone alas y esfuerza el ánimo a levantar los ojos adonde la humilde suerte no

osara jamás levantarlos, y de tales atrevimientos suelen suceder a menudo semejantes calamidades como las que de mí oirás si con atención me escuchas.

»Nació ansimesmo en mi aldea una pastora, cuyo nombre era Leonida, summa de toda la hermosura que en gran parte de la tierra -según yo imagino-pudiera hallarse; de no menos nobles y ricos padres nacida que su hermosura y virtud merescían. De do nació que, por ser los parientes de entrambos de los más principales del lugar y estar en ellos el mando y gobernación del pueblo, la envidia, enemiga mortal de la sosegada vida, sobre algunas diferencias del gobierno del pueblo, vino a poner entre ellos cizaña y mortalísima discordia; de manera que el pueblo fue dividido en dos parcialidades: la una seguía la de mis parientes, la otra la de los de Leonida, con tan arraigado rencor y mal ánimo, que no ha sido parte para ponerlos en paz ninguna humana diligencia. Ordenó, pues, la suerte, para echar de todo punto el sello a nuestra enemistad, que yo me enamorase de la hermosa Leonida, hija de Parmindro, principal cabeza del bando contrario. Y fue mi amor tan de veras que, aunque procuré con infinitos medios quitarle de mis entrañas, el fin de todos venía a parar a quedar más vencido y sujeto. Poníaseme delante un monte de dificultades que conseguir el fin de mi deseo me estorbaban, como eran el mucho valor de Leonida, la endurecida enemistad de nuestros padres, las pocas coyunturas, o ninguna, que se me ofrecían para descubrirle mi pensamiento; y, con todo esto, cuando ponía los ojos de la imaginación en la singular belleza de Leonida, cualquiera dificultad se allanaba, de suerte que me parecía poco romper por entre agudas puntas de diamantes, para llegar al fin de mis amorosos y honestos pensamientos. Habiendo, pues, por muchos días combatido conmigo mismo, por ver si podría apartar el alma de tan ardua empresa, y viendo ser imposible, recogí toda mi industria a considerar con cuál podría dar a entender a Leonida el secreto amor de mi pecho; y, como los principios en cualquier negocio sean siempre dificultosos, en los que tratan de amor son, por la mayor parte, dificultosísimos, hasta que el mismo Amor, cuando se quiere mostrar favorable, abre las puertas del remedio donde parece que están más cerradas. Y así se pareció en mí, pues, guiado por su pensamiento el mío, vine a imaginar que ningún medio se ofrecía mejor a mi deseo que hacerme amigo de los padres de Silvia, una pastora que era en extremo amiga de Leonida, y muchas veces la una a la otra, en compañía de sus padres, en sus casas se visitaban. Tenía Silvia un pariente que se llamaba Carino, compañero familiar de Crisalbo, hermano de la hermosa Leonida, cuya bizarría y aspereza de costumbres le habían dado renombre de cruel; y así, de todos los que le conocían, “el cruel Crisalbo” era llamado; y ni más ni menos a Carino, el pariente de Silvia y compañero de Crisalbo, por ser entremetido y agudo de ingenio, “el astuto Carino” le llamaban; del cual y de Silvia, por

parecerme que me convenía, con el medio de muchos presentes y dádivas, forjé la amistad -al parecer-posible; a lo menos, de parte de Silvia fue más firme de lo que yo quisiera, pues los regalos y favores que ella con limpias entrañas me hacía, obligada de mis continuos servicios, tomó por instrumentos mi fortuna para ponerme en la desdicha en que ahora me veo.

»Era Silvia hermosa en extremo, y de tantas gracias adornada que la dureza del crudo corazón de Crisalbo se movió a amarla; y esto yo no lo supe sino con mi daño, y de allí a muchos días. Y, ya que con la larga experiencia estuve seguro de la voluntad de Silvia, un día, ofreciéndoseme comodidad, con las más tiernas palabras que pude, le descubrí la llaga de mi lastimado pecho, diciéndole que, aunque era tan profunda y peligrosa, no la sentía tanto, sólo por imaginar que en su solicitud estaba el remedio della; advirtiéndole ansimesmo el honesto fin a que mis pensamientos se encaminaban, que era a juntarme por legítimo matrimonio con la bella Leonida; y que, pues era causa tan justa y buena, no se había de desdeñar de tomarla a su cargo.

»En fin, por no serte prolijo, el amor me ministró tales palabras que le dijese, que ella, vencida dellas, y más por la pena que ella, como discreta, por las señales de mi rostro conoció que en mi alma moraba, se determinó de tomar a su cargo mi remedio y decir a Leonida lo que yo por ella sentía, prometiendo de hacer por mí todo cuanto su fuerza e industria alcanzase, puesto que se le hacía dificultosa tal empresa, por la inimicicia grande que entre nuestros padres conocía, aunque, por otra parte, imaginaba poder dar principio al fin de sus discordias si Leonida conmigo se casase. Movida, pues, con esta buena intención, y enternecida de las lágrimas que yo derramaba -como ya he dicho-, se aventuró a ser intercesora de mi contento. Y, discurriendo consigo qué entrada tendría para con Leonida, me mandó que le escribiese una carta, la cual ella se ofrecía a darla cuando tiempo le pareciese. Parecióme a mí bien su parecer, y aquel mismo día le envié una que, por haber sido principio del contento que por su respuesta sentí, siempre la he tenido en la memoria, puesto que fuera mejor no acordarme de cosas alegres en tiempo tan triste como es el en que ahora me hallo. Recibió la carta Silvia, y aguardaba ocasión de ponerla en las manos de Leonida.»

-No -dijo Elicio, atajando las razones de Lisandro-, no es justo que me dejes de decir la carta que a Leonida enviaste, que por ser la primera y por hallarte tan enamorado en aquella sazón, sin duda debe de ser discreta. Y, pues me has dicho que la tienes en la memoria y el gusto que por ella granjeaste, no me lo niegues ahora en no decírmela.

-Bien dices, amigo -respondió Lisandro-; que yo estaba entonces tan enamorado y temeroso, como ahora descontento y desesperado, y por esta razón

me parece que no acerté a decir alguna, aunque fue harto acertamiento que Leonida las creyese las que en la carta iban. Ya que tanto deseas saberlas, decía desta manera:

## **LISANDRO A LEONIDA**

«Mientras que he podido, aunque con grandísimo dolor mío, resistir con las propias fuerzas a la amorosa llama que por ti, ¡oh, hermosa Leonida!, me abrasa, jamás he tenido ardimiento, temeroso del subido valor que en ti conozco, de descubrirte el amor que te tengo; mas, ya que es consumida aquella virtud que hasta aquí me ha hecho fuerte, hame sido forzoso, descubriendo la llaga de mi pecho, tentar con escrebirte su primero y último remedio. Que sea el primero, tú lo sabes, y de ser el último está en tu mano, de la cual espero la misericordia que tu hermosura promete y mis honestos deseos merescen, los cuales y el fin adonde se encaminan conocerás de Silvia, que ésta te dará. Y, pues ella se ha atrevido, con ser quien es, a llevártela, entiende que son tan justos cuanto a tu merescimiento se deben.»

No le parecieron mal a Elicio las razones de la carta de Lisandro, el cual, prosiguiendo la historia de sus amores, dijo: -«No pasaron muchos días sin que esta carta viniese a las hermosas manos de Leonida, por medio de las piadosas de Silvia, mi verdadera amiga, la cual, junto con dársela, le dijo tales cosas que con ellas templó en gran parte la ira y alteración que con mi carta Leonida había recibido: como fue decirle cuánto bien se seguiría si por nuestro casamiento la enemistad de nuestros padres se acababa, y que el fin de tan buena intención la había de mover a no desechar mis deseos; cuanto más, que no se debía compadecer con su hermosura dejar morir sin más respecto a quien tanto como yo la amaba; añadiendo a estas otras razones que Leonida conoció que lo eran. Pero, por no mostrarse al primer encuentro rendida y a los primeros pasos alcanzada, no dio tan agradable respuesta a Silvia como ella quisiera. Pero, con todo esto, por intercesión de Silvia, que a ello le forzó, respondió con esta carta que agora te diré:

## **LEONIDA A LISANDRO**

»Si entendiera, Lisandro, que tu mucho atrevimiento había nacido de mi poca honestidad, en mí mesma ejecutara la pena que tu culpa meresce; pero, por

asegurarme desto lo que yo de mí conozco, vengo a conocer que más ha procedido tu osadía de pensamientos ociosos que de enamorados. Y, aunque ellos sean de la manera que dices, no pienses que me has de mover a mí para remediallos como a Silvia para creellos, de la cual tengo más queja por haberme forzado a responderte que de ti que te atreviste a escrebirme, pues el callar fuera digna respuesta a tu locura. Si te retraes de lo comenzado, harás como discreto, porque te hago saber que pienso tener más cuenta con mi honra que con tus vanidades.

»Esta fue la respuesta de Leonida, la cual, junto con las esperanzas que Silvia me dio, aunque ella parecía algo áspera, me hizo tener por el más bien afortunado del mundo.

»Mientras estas cosas entre nosotros pasaban, no se descuidaba Crisalbo de solicitar a Silvia con infinitos mensajes, presentes y servicios; mas, era tan fuerte y desabrida la condición de Crisalbo, que jamás pudo mover a la de Silvia a que un pequeño favor le diese, de lo cual estaba tan desesperado e impaciente como un agarrochado y vencido toro.

»Por causa de sus amores había tomado amistad con el astuto Carino, pariente de Silvia, habiendo los dos sido primero mortales enemigos, porque, en cierta lucha que un día de una grande fiesta delante de todo el pueblo los zagales más diestros del lugar tuvieron, Carino fue vencido de Crisalbo y maltratado; de manera que concibió en su corazón odio perpetuo contra Crisalbo. Y no menos lo tenía contra otro hermano mío, por haberle sido contrario en unos amores, de los cuales mi hermano llevó el fruto que Carino esperaba. Este rancor y mala voluntad tuvo Carino secreta, hasta que el tiempo le descubrió ocasión cómo a un mismo punto se vengase de entrambos por el más cruel estilo que imaginarse puede.

»Yo le tenía por amigo, porque la entrada en casa de Silvia no se me impidiese; Crisalbo le adoraba, porque favoreciese sus pensamientos con Silvia; y era de suerte su amistad, que todas las veces que Leonida venía a casa de Silvia Carino la acompañaba. Por la cual causa le pareció bien a Silvia darle cuenta, pues era mi amigo, de los amores que yo con Leonida trataba, que en aquella sazón andaban ya tan vivos y venturosos, por la buena intercesión de Silvia, que ya no esperábamos sino tiempo y lugar donde coger el honesto fruto de nuestros limpios deseos, los cuales sabidos de Carino, tomó por instrumento para hacer la mayor traición del mundo. Porque un día, haciendo del leal con Crisalbo, y dándole a entender que tenía en más su amistad que la honra de su parienta, le dijo que la principal causa porque Silvia no le amaba ni favorecía era por estar de mí enamorada, y que él lo sabía inefaliblemente; y que ya nuestros amores iban tan al descubierto, que si él no hubiera estado ciego de la

pasión amorosa, en mil señales lo hubiera ya conocido; y que para certificarse más de la verdad que le decía, que de allí adelante mirase en ello, porque vería claramente cómo, sin empacho alguno, Silvia me daba extraordinarios favores. Con estas nuevas debió de quedar tan fuera de sí Crisalbo, como pareció por lo que dellas sucedió.

»De allí adelante Crisalbo traía espías por ver lo que yo con Silvia pasaba; y, como yo muchas veces procurase hallarme solo con ella para tratar, no de los amores que él pensaba, sino de lo que a los míos convenía, éranle a Crisalbo referidas, con otros favores que, de limpia amistad procedidos, Silvia a cada paso me hacía; por lo que vino Crisalbo a términos tan desesperados que muchas veces procuró matarme, aunque yo no pensaba que era por semejante ocasión, sino por lo de la antigua enemistad de nuestros padres. Mas, por ser él hermano de Leonida, tenía yo más cuenta con guardarme que con ofenderle, teniendo por cierto que, si yo con su hermana me casaba, tendrían fin nuestras enemistades; de lo que él estaba bien ajeno, antes se pensaba que por serle yo enemigo, había procurado tratar amores con Silvia, y no porque yo bien la quisiese. Y esto le acrescentaba la cólera y enojo de manera que le sacaba de juicio, aunque él tenía tan poco, que poco era menester para acabárselo. Y pudo tanto en él este mal pensamiento, que vino a aborrecer a Silvia tanto cuanto la había querido, sólo porque a mí me favorecía, no con la voluntad que él pensaba, sino como Carino le decía. Y así, en cualesquier corrillos y juntas que se hallaba, decía mal de Silvia, dándole títulos y renombres deshonestos; pero, como todos conocían su terrible condición y la bondad de Silvia, daban poco o ningún crédito a sus palabras.

»En este medio, había concertado Silvia con Leonida que los dos nos desposásemos y que, para que más a nuestro salvo se hiciese, sería bien que un día que con Carino Leonida viniese a su casa, no volviese por aquella noche a la de sus padres, sino que desde allí, en compañía de Carino, se fuese a una aldea que media legua de la nuestra estaba, donde unos ricos parientes míos vivían, en cuya casa con más quietud podíamos poner en efecto nuestras intenciones; porque si del suceso dellas los padres de Leonida no fuesen contentos, a lo menos estando ella ausente sería más fácil el concertarse. Tomado, pues, este apuntamiento y dada cuenta dél a Carino, se ofreció, con muestras de grandísimo ánimo, que llevaría a Leonida a la otra aldea, como ella fuese contenta. Los servicios que yo hice a Carino por la buena voluntad que mostraba, las palabras de ofrecimiento que le dije, los abrazos que le di, me parece que bastaran a deshacer en un corazón de acero cualquiera mala intención que contra mí tuviera. Pero el traidor de Carino, echando a las espaldas mis palabras, obras y promesas, sin tener cuenta con la que a sí mismo debía, ordenó la traición que

agora oirás.

»Informado Carino de la voluntad de Leonida, y viendo ser conforme a la que Silvia le había dicho, ordenó que la primera noche que, por las muestras del día, entendiesen que había de ser oscura, se pusiese por obra la ida de Leonida, ofreciéndose de nuevo a guardar el secreto y lealtad posible. Después de hecho este concierto que has oído, se fue a Crisalbo, según después acá he sabido, y le dijo que su parienta Silvia iba tan adelante en los amores que conmigo traía, que en una cierta noche había determinado de sacarla de casa de sus padres y llevarla a la otra aldea, do mis parientes moraban; donde se le ofrecía coyuntura de vengar su corazón en entrambos: en Silvia, por la poca cuenta que de sus servicios había hecho; en mí, por nuestra vieja enemistad y por el enojo que le había hecho en quitarle a Silvia, pues por sólo mi respecto le dejaba. De tal manera le supo encarecer y decir Carino lo que quiso, que con mucho menos a otro corazón no tan cruel como el suyo moviera a cualquier mal pensamiento.

»Llegado, pues, ya el día que yo pensé que fuera el de mi mayor contento, dejando dicho a Carino, no lo que hizo, sino lo que había de hacer, me fui a la otra aldea a dar orden cómo recibir a Leonida. Y fue el dejarla encomendada a Carino como quien deja a la simple corderuela en poder de los hambrientos lobos, o a la mansa paloma entre las uñas del fiero gavilán que la despedace. ¡Ay, amigo!, que llegando a este paso con la imaginación, no sé cómo tengo fuerzas para sostener la vida, ni pensamiento para pensarlo, cuanto más, lengua para decirlo. ¡Ay, mal aconsejado Lisandro!, ¿cómo, y no sabías tú las condiciones dobladas de Carino? Mas, ¿quién no se fiara de sus palabras, aventurando él tan poco en hacerlas verdaderas con las obras? ¡Ay, mal lograda Leonida, cuán mal supe gozar de la merced que me heciste en escogermelo por tuyo!

»En fin, por concluir con la tragedia de mi desgracia, sabrás, discreto pastor, que la noche que Carino había de traer consigo a Leonida a la aldea donde yo la esperaba, él llamó a otro pastor, que debía de tener por enemigo, aunque él se lo encubría debajo de su falsa acostumbrada disimulación, el cual Libeo se llamaba, y le rogó que aquella noche le hiciese compañía, porque determinaba llevar una pastora, su aficionada, a la aldea que te he dicho, donde pensaba desposarse con ella. Libeo, que era gallardo y enamorado, con facilidad le ofreció su compañía. Despidióse Leonida de Silvia con estrechos abrazos y amorosas lágrimas, como présaga que había de ser la última despedida. Debía de considerar entonces la sin ventura la traición que a sus padres hacía, y no la que a ella Carino le ordenaba, y cuán mala cuenta daba de la buena opinión que della en el pueblo se tenía. Mas, pasando de paso por todos estos pensamientos, forzada del enamorado que la vencía, se entregó a la guardia de Carino, que

adonde yo la aguardaba la trujese.

»¡Cuántas veces se me viene a la memoria, llegando a este punto, lo que soñé el día que le tuviera yo por dichoso, si en él feneciera la cuenta de los de mi vida! Acuérdomé que, saliendo del aldea un poco antes que el sol acabase de quitar sus rayos de nuestro horizonte, me senté al pie de un alto fresno, en el mismo camino por donde Leonida había de venir, esperando que cerrase algo más la noche para adelantarme y recibirla; y, sin saber cómo y sin yo quererlo, me quedé dormido. Y apenas hube entregado los ojos al sueño, cuando me pareció que el árbol donde estaba arrimado, rindiéndose a la furia de un recísimo viento que soplaba, desarraigando las hondas raíces de la tierra, sobre mi cuerpo se caía; y que, procurando yo evadirme del grave peso, a una y otra parte me revolvía. Y, estando en esta pesadumbre, me pareció ver una blanca cierva junto a mí, a la cual yo ahincadamente suplicaba que, como mejor pudiese, apartase de mis hombros la pesada carga; y que, queriendo ella, movida de compasión, hacerlo, al mismo instante salió un fiero león del bosque, y, cogiéndola entre sus agudas uñas, se metía con ella por el bosque adelante; y que, después que con gran trabajo me había escapado del grave peso, la iba a buscar al monte, y la hallaba despedazada y herida por mil partes; de lo cual tanto dolor sentía, que el alma se me arrancaba sólo por la compasión que ella había mostrado de mi trabajo. Y así, comencé a llorar entre sueños de manera que las mismas lágrimas me despertaron, y, hallando las mejillas bañadas del llanto quedé fuera de mí, considerando lo que había soñado. Pero con la alegría que esperaba tener de ver a mi Leonida, no eché de ver entonces que la fortuna en sueños me mostraba lo que de allí a poco rato despierto me había de suceder.

»A la sazón que yo desperté, acababa de cerrar la noche, con tanta escuridad, con tan espantosos truenos y relámpagos, como convenía para cometerse con más facilidad la crueldad que en ella se cometió. Así como Carino salió de casa de Silvia con Leonida, se la entregó a Libeo, diciéndole que se fuese con ella por el camino de la aldea que he dicho; y, aunque Leonida se alteró de ver a Libeo, Carino le aseguró que no era menor amigo mío Libeo que él propio, y que con toda seguridad podía ir con él poco a poco, en tanto que él se adelantaba a darme a mí las nuevas de su llegada. Creyó la simple -en fin, como enamorada-las palabras del falso Carino, y, con menor recelo del que convenía, guiada del comedido Libeo, tendía los temerosos pasos para venir a buscar el último de su vida, pensando hallar el mejor de su contento.

»Adelantóse Carino de los dos, como ya te he dicho, y vino a dar aviso a Crisalbo de lo que pasaba, el cual, con otros cuatro parientes suyos, en el mismo camino por donde habían de pasar, que todo era cerrado de bosque de una y otra parte, escondidos estaban. Y díjoles cómo Silvia venía, y solo yo que la



acompañaba, y que se alegrasen de la buena ocasión que la suerte les ponía en las manos para vengarse de la injuria que los dos les habíamos hecho; y que él sería el primero que en Silvia, aunque era parienta suya, probase los filos de su cuchillo. Apercibiéronse luego los cinco crueles carniceros para colorarse en la inocente sangre de los dos que tan sin cuidado de traición semejante por el camino se venían, los cuales, llegados a do la celada estaba, al instante fueron con ellos los pérfidos homicidas y cerráronlos en medio. Crisalbo se llegó a Leonida, pensando ser Silvia, y con injuriosas y turbadas palabras, con la infernal cólera que le señoreaba, con seis mortales heridas la dejó tendida en el suelo, a tiempo que ya Libeo por los otros cuatro -creyendo que a mí me las daban-con infinitas puñaladas se revolcaba por la tierra. Carino, que vio cuán bien había salido el traidor intento suyo, sin aguardar razones, se les quitó delante, y los cinco traidores, contentísimos, como si hubieran hecho alguna famosa hazaña, se volvieron a su aldea; y Crisalbo se fue a casa de Silvia a dar él mismo a sus padres la nueva de lo que había hecho, por acrescentarles el pesar y sentimiento, diciéndoles que fuesen a dar sepultura a su hija Silvia, a quien él había quitado la vida por haber hecho más caudal de la fría voluntad de Lisandro, su enemigo, que no de los continuos sirvicios suyos. Silvia, que sintió lo que Crisalbo decía, dándole el alma lo que había sido, le dijo cómo ella estaba viva, y aun libre de todo lo que la imputaba, y que mirase no hubiese muerto a quien le doliese más su muerte que perder él mismo la vida. Y con esto le dijo que su hermana Leonida se había partido aquella noche de su casa en traje no acostumbrado. Atónito quedó Crisalbo de ver a Silvia viva, teniendo él por cierto que la dejaba ya muerta, y con no pequeño sobresalto acudió luego a su casa, y, no hallando en ella a su hermana, con grandísima confusión y furia volvió él solo a ver quién era la que había muerto, pues Silvia estaba viva.

»Mientras todas estas cosas pasaban, estaba yo con una ansia estraña esperando a Carino y Leonida, y, pareciéndome que ya tardaban más de lo que debían, quise ir a encontrarlos, o a saber si por algún caso aquella noche se habían detenido, y no anduve mucho por el camino cuando oí una lastimada voz que decía: “¡Oh soberano hacedor del cielo!, encoge la mano de tu justicia y abre la de tu misericordia, para tenerla desta alma, que presto te dará cuenta de las ofensas que te ha hecho. ¡Ay, Lisandro, Lisandro!, y cómo la amistad de Carino te costará la vida, pues no es posible sino que te la acabe el dolor de haberla yo por ti perdido. ¡Ay, cruel hermano!, ¿es posible que sin oír mis disculpas tan presto me quesiste dar la pena de mi yerro?” Cuando estas razones oí, en la voz y en ellas conocí luego ser Leonida la que las decía, y présago de mi desventura, con el sentido turbado, fui a tienta a dar adonde Leonida estaba envuelta en su propia sangre; y, habiéndola conocido luego, dejándome caer sobre el herido

cuerpo, haciendo los extremos de dolor posible, le dije: “¿Qué desdicha es esta, bien mío? Ánima mía, ¿cuál fue la cruel mano que no ha tenido respecto a tanta hermosura?” En estas palabras fui conocido de Leonida, y, levantando con gran trabajo los cansados brazos, los echó por cima de mi cuello, y, apretando con la mayor fuerza que pudo, juntando su boca con la mía, con flacas y mal pronunciadas razones, me dijo solas estas: “Mi hermano me ha muer to; Carino, vendido; Libeo está sin vida, la cual te dé Dios a ti, Lisandro mío, largos y felices años, y a mí me deje gozar en la otra del reposo que aquí me ha negado”. Y, juntando más su boca con la mía, habiendo cerrado los labios para darme el primero y último beso, al abrillos se le salió el alma y quedó muer ta en mis brazos. Cuando yo lo sentí, abandonándome sobre el helado cuerpo, quedé sin ningún sentido. Y si como era yo el vivo, fuera el muerto, quien en aquel trance nos viera, el lamentable de Píramo y Tisbe trujera a la memoria. Mas, después que volví en mí, abriendo ya la boca para llenar el aire de voces y suspiros, sentí que hacia donde yo estaba venía uno con apresurados pasos; y, llegándose cerca, aunque la noche hacía oscura, los ojos del alma me dieron a conocer que el que allí venía era Crisalbo; como era la verdad, porque él tornaba a certificarse si por ventura era su hermana Leonida la que había muerto. Y, como yo le conocí, sin que de mí se guardase, llegué a él como sañudo león y, dándole dos heridas, di con él en tierra; y, antes que acabase de espirar, le llevé arrastrando adonde Leonida estaba; y, puniendo en la mano muerta de Leonida el puñal que su hermano traía, que era el mismo con que él la había muerto, ayudándole yo a ello, tres veces se le hiqué por el corazón. Y, consolado en algo el mío con la muerte de Crisalbo, sin más detenerme, tomé sobre mis hombros el cuerpo de Leonida y llevéle al aldea donde mis parientes vivían; y, contándoles el caso, les rogué le diesen honrada sepultura, y luego puse por obra y determiné de tomar en Carino la venganza que en Crisalbo; la cual, por haberse él ausentado de nuestra aldea, se ha tardado hasta hoy, que le hallé a la salida deste bosque, después de haber seis meses que ando en su de man da. Él ha hecho ya el fin que su traición merescía, y a mí no me queda ya de quién tomar venganza, si no es de la vida que tan contra mi voluntad sostengo.» Esta es, pastor, la causa de do proceden los lamentos que me has oído. Si te parece que es bastante para causar mayores sentimientos, a tu buena discreción dejo que lo considere.

Y con esto dio fin a su plática y principio a tantas lágrimas, que no pudo dejar Elicio de tenerle compañía en ellas. Pero, después que por largo espacio habían desfogado con tiernos suspiros, el uno la pena que sentía, el otro la compasión que della tomaba, Elicio comenzó con las mejores razones que supo a consolar a Lisandro, aunque era su mal tan sin consuelo como por el suceso dél había visto. Y entre otras cosas que le dijo, y la que a Lisandro más le cuadró, fue decirle que

en los males sin remedio, el mejor era no esperarles ninguno; y que, pues de la honestidad y noble condición de Leonida se podría creer -según él decía-que de dulce vida gozaba, antes debía alegrarse del bien que ella había ganado, que no entristecerse por el que él había perdido. A lo cual respondió Lisandro: -Bien conozco, amigo, que tienen fuerza tus razones para hacerme creer que son verdaderas, pero no que la tienen, ni la tendrán las que todo el mundo decirme pudiese, para darme consuelo alguno. En la muerte de Leonida comenzó mi desventura, la cual se acabará cuando yo la torne a ver; y, pues esto no puede ser sin que yo muera, al que me induciere a procurar la muerte tendré yo por más amigo de mi vida.

No quiso Elicio darle más pesadumbre con sus consuelos, pues él no los tenía por tales; sólo le rogó que se viniese con él a su cabaña, en la cual estaría todo el tiempo que gusto le diese, ofreciéndole su amistad en todo aquello que podía ser buena para servirle. Lisandro se lo agradeció cuanto fue posible; y, aunque no quería acetar el venir con Elicio, todavía lo hubo de hacer forzado de su importunación; y así, los dos se levantaron y se vinieron a la cabaña de Elicio, donde reposaron lo poco que de la noche quedaba. Pero ya que la blanca Aurora dejaba el lecho del celoso marido y comenzaba a dar muestras del venidero día, levantándose Erastro, comenzó a poner en orden el ganado de Elicio y suyo, para sacarle al pasto acostumbrado. Elicio convidó a Lisandro a que con él se viniese, y así, viniendo los tres pastores con el manso rebaño de sus ovejas por una cañada abajo, al subir de una ladera oyeron el sonido de una suave zampoña, que luego por Elicio y Erastro fue conocido que era Galatea quien la sonaba. Y no tardó mucho que por la cumbre de la cuesta se comenzaron a descubrir algunas ovejas, y luego tras ellas Galatea, cuya hermosura era tanta que sería mejor dejarla en su punto, pues faltan palabras para encarecerla. Venía vestida a la serrana, con los luengos cabellos sueltos al viento, de quien el mismo sol parecía tener envidia, porque, hiriéndoles con sus rayos, procuraba quitarles la luz si pudiera, mas la que la salía de la vislumbre dellos, otro nuevo sol semejava. Estaba Erastro fuera de sí mirándola, y Elicio no podía apartar los ojos de verla. Cuando Galatea vio que el rebaño de Elicio y Erastro con el suyo se juntaba, mostrando no gustar de tenerles aquel día compañía, llamó a la borrega mansa de su manada, a la cual siguieron las demás, y encaminóla a otra parte diferente de la que los pastores llevaban. Viendo Elicio lo que Galatea hacía, sin poder sufrir tan notorio desdén, llegándose a do la pastora estaba, le dijo: -Deja, hermosa Galatea, que tu rebaño venga con el nuestro, y si no gustas de nuestra compañía, escoge la que más te agradare; que no por tu ausencia dejarán tus ovejas de ser bien apacentadas, pues yo, que nací para servirte, tendré más cuenta dellas que de las mías propias. Y no quieras tan a la clara desdeñarme,

pues no lo merece la limpia voluntad que te tengo; que, según el viaje que traías, a la fuente de las Pizarras le encaminabas, y ahora que me has visto quieres torcer el camino. Y si esto es así como pienso, dime adónde quieres hoy y siempre apascentar tu ganado, que yo te juro de no llevar allí jamás el mío.

-Yo te prometo, Elicio -respondió Galatea-, que no por huir de tu compañía ni de la de Erastro he vuelto del camino que tú imaginas que llevaba, porque mi intención es pasar hoy la siesta en el arroyo de las Palmas, en compañía de mi amiga Florisa, que allá me aguarda, porque desde ayer concertamos las dos de apascentar hoy allí nuestros ganados; y, como yo venía descuidada sonando mi zampoña, la mansa borrega tomó el camino de las Pizarras, como della más acostumbrado. La voluntad que me tienes y ofrecimientos que me haces te agradezco, y no tengas en poco haber dado yo disculpa a tu sospecha.

-¡Ay, Galatea! -replicó Elicio-, y cuán bien que finges lo que te parece, teniendo tan poca necesidad de usar conmigo artificio, pues al cabo no tengo de querer más de lo que tú quisieres. Ora vayas al arroyo de las Palmas, al soto del Concejo o a la fuente de las Pizarras, ten por cierto que no has de ir sola, que siempre mi alma te acompaña, y si tú no la vees, es porque no quieres verla, por no obligarte a remediarla.

-Hasta agora -respondió Galatea-tengo por ver la primera alma, y así no tengo culpa si no he remediado a ninguna.

-No sé cómo puedes decir eso -respondió Elicio-, hermosa Galatea, que las veas para herirlas y no para curarlas.

-Testimonio me levantas -replicó Galatea-en decir que yo, sin armas, pues a mujeres no son concedidas, haya herido a nadie.

-¡Ay, discreta Galatea! -dijo Elicio-, cómo te burlas con lo que de mi alma sientes, a la cual invisiblemente has llagado, y no con otras armas que con las de tu hermosura. Y no me quejo yo tanto del daño que me has hecho, como de que le tengas en poco.

-En menos me tendría yo -respondió Galatea-si en más le tuviese.

A esta sazón llegó Erastro, y, viendo que Galatea se iba y les dejaba, le dijo: -¿Adónde vas, o de quién huyes, hermosa Galatea? Si de nosotros, que te adoramos, te alejas, ¿quién esperará de ti compañía? ¡Ay, enemiga!, cuán al desgaire te vas, triunfando de nuestras voluntades. El cielo destruya la buena que tengo, si no deseo verte enamorada de quien estime tus quejas en el grado que tú estimas las mías. ¿Ríeste de lo que digo, Galatea? Pues yo lloro de lo que tú haces.

No pudo Galatea responder a Erastro, porque andaba guiando su ganado hacia el arroyo de las Palmas, y, abajando desde lejos la cabeza en señal de despedirse, los dejó. Y, como se vio sola, en tanto que llegaba adonde su amiga Florisa

creyó que estaría, con la estremada voz que al cielo plugo darle, fue cantando este soneto:

## **GALATEA**

Afuera el fuego, el lazo, el yelo y flecha  
de amor, que abrasa, aprieta, enfría y hiere; que tal llama mi alma no la quiere,  
  
ni queda de tal ñudo satisfecha.

Consuma, ciña, yele, mate; estrecha 5  
tenga otra la voluntad cuanto quisiere;  
que por dardo, o por nieve, o red no'spere  
tener la mía en su calor deshecha.

Su fuego enfriará mi casto intento,  
el ñudo romperé por fuerza o arte, 10  
la nieve deshará mi ardiente celo,

la flecha embotará mi pensamiento;  
y así, no temeré en segura parte  
de amor el fuego, el lazo, el dardo, el yelo.

Con más justa causa se pudieran parar los brutos, mover los árboles y juntar las piedras a escuchar el suave canto y dulce armonía de Galatea, que cuando a la cítara de Orfeo, lira de Apolo y música de Anfión los muros de Troya y Tebas por sí mismos se fundaron, sin que artífice alguno pusiese en ellos las manos, y las hermanas, negras moradoras del hondo caos, a la estremada voz del incauto amante se ablandaron. El acabar el canto Galatea y llegar adonde Florisa estaba, fue todo a un tiempo, de la cual fue con alegre rostro recebida, como aquella que era su amiga verdadera y con quien Galatea sus pensamientos comunicaba. Y, después que las dos dejaron ir a su albedrío a sus ganados a que de la verde yerba paciesen, convidadas de la claridad del agua de un arroyo que allí corría, determinaron de lavarse los hermosos rostros, pues no era menester para acrecentarles hermosura el vano y enfadoso artificio con que los suyos martirizan las damas que en las grandes ciudades se tienen por más hermosas. Tan hermosas quedaron después de lavadas como antes lo estaban, excepto que

por haber llegado las manos con movimiento al rostro, quedaron sus mejillas encendidas y sonroseadas, de modo que un no sé qué de hermosura les acrescentaba; especialmente a Galatea, en quien se vieron juntas las tres Gracias, a quien los antiguos griegos pintaban desnudas por mostrar, entre otros efectos, que eran señoras de la belleza. Comenzaron luego a coger diversas flores del verde prado, con intención de hacer sendas guirnaldas con que recoger los desornados cabellos que sueltos por las espaldas traían.

En este ejercicio andaban ocupadas las dos hermosas pastoras, cuando por el arroyo abajo vieron al improviso venir una pastora de gentil donaire y apostura, de que no poco se admiraron, porque les pareció que no era pastora de su aldea ni de las otras comarcas a ella, a cuya causa con más atención la miraron, y vieron que venía poco a poco hacia donde ellas estaban. Y, aunque estaban bien cerca, ella venía tan embebida y transportada en sus pensamientos, que nunca las vio hasta que ellas quisieron mostrarse. De trecho en trecho se paraba, y, vueltos los ojos al cielo, daba unos sospiros tan dolorosos que de lo más íntimo de sus entrañas parecían arrancados. Torcía asimesmo sus blancas manos y dejaba correr por sus mejillas algunas lágrimas, que líquidas perlas semejaban. Por los extremos de dolor que la pastora hacía, conocieron Galatea y Florisa que de algún interno dolor traía el alma ocupada, y por ver en qué paraban sus sentimientos, entrambas se escondieron entre unos cerrados mirtos, y desde allí con curiosos ojos miraban lo que la pastora hacía. La cual, llegándose al margen del arroyo, con atentos ojos se paró a mirar el agua que por él corría, y, dejándose caer a la orilla dél como persona cansada, corvando una de sus hermosas manos, cogió en ella del agua clara, con la cual lavándose los húmidos ojos, con voz baja y debilitada dijo: -¡Ay, claras y frescas aguas!, ¡cuán poca parte es vuestra frialdad para templar el fuego que en mis entrañas sienten! Mal podré esperar de vosotras, ni aun de todas las que contiene el gran mar océano, el remedio que he menester, pues, aplicadas todas al ardor que me consume, haríades el mismo efecto que suele hacer la pequeña cantidad en la ardiente fragua, que más su llama acrecienta. ¡Ay, tristes ojos, causadores de mi perdición, y en qué fuerte punto os alcé para tan gran caída! ¡Ay, Fortuna, enemiga de mi descanso, con cuánta velocidad me derribaste de la cumbre de mis contentos al abismo de la miseria en que me hallo! ¡Ay, cruda hermana!, ¿cómo no aplacó la ira de tu desamorado pecho la humilde y amorosa presencia de Artidoro? ¿Qué palabras te pudo decir él para que le diceses tan aceda y cruel respuesta? Bien parece, hermana, que tú no le tenías en la cuenta que yo le tengo, que si así fuera, a fe que tú te mostraras tan humilde cuanto él a ti sujeto.

Todo esto que la pastora decía mezclaba con tantas lágrimas, que no hubiera corazón que escuchándola no se enterneciera. Y, después que por algún espacio

hubo sosegado el afligido pecho, al son del agua que mansamente corría,  
acomodando a su propósito una copla antigua, con suave y delicada voz cantó  
esta glosa: *Ya la esperanza es perdida,*  
*y un solo bien me consuela:*  
*qu'el tiempo, que pasa y vuela,*  
*llevará presto la vida.*

Dos cosas hay en amor 5  
con que su gusto se alcanza:  
deseo de lo mejor,  
es la otra la esperanza  
que pone esfuerzo al temor.  
Las dos hicieron manida 10  
en mi pecho, y no las veo;  
antes en l'alma afligida,  
porque me acabe el deseo,  
*ya la esperanza es perdida.*

Si el deseo desfallece 15  
cuando la esperanza mengua,  
al contrario en mí parece,  
pues cuanto ella más desmengua  
tanto más él s'engrandece.  
Y no hay usar de cautela 20  
con las llagas que me atizan,

que en esta amorosa escuela  
mil males me martirizan,  
*y un solo bien me consuela.*

Apenas hubo llegado 25  
el bien a mi pensamiento,  
cuando el cielo, suerte y hado,  
con ligero movimiento  
l'han del alma arrebatado.  
Y si alguno hay que se duela 30  
de mi mal tan lastimero,  
al mal amaina la vela,  
y al bien pasa más ligero

*qu'el tiempo, que pasa y vuela.*

¿Quién hay que no se consuma 35  
con estas ansias que tomo?,  
pues en ellas se ve en suma  
ser los cuidados de plomo  
y los placeres de pluma.  
Y aunque va tan de caída 40  
mi dichosa buena andanza  
en ella este bien se anida:

que quien llevó la esperanza  
*llevará presto la vida.*

Presto acabó el canto la pastora, pero no las lágrimas con que lo solemnizaba, de las cuales movidas a compasión Galatea y Florisa, salieron de do escondidas estaban, y con amorosas y corteses palabras a la triste pastora saludaron, diciéndole, entre otras razones: -Así los cielos, hermosa pastora, se muestren favorables a lo que pedirles quisieres, y dellos alcances lo que desees, que nos digas, si no te es enojoso, qué ventura o qué destino te ha traído por esta tierra, que según la plática que nosotras tenemos della, jamás por estas riberas te habemos visto. Y por haber oído lo que poco ha cantaste, y entender por ello que no tiene tu corazón el sosiego que ha menester, y por las lágrimas que has derramado, de que dan indicio tus húmidos y hermosos ojos, en ley de buen comedimiento estamos obligadas a procurarte el consuelo que de nuestra parte fuere posible. Y si fuere tu mal de los que no sufren ser consolados, a lo menos conocerás en nosotras una buena voluntad de servirte.

-No sé con qué poder pagaros -respondió la forastera pastora-, hermosas zagalas, los corteses ofrecimientos que me hacéis, si no es con callar y agradecello, y estimarlos en el punto que merecen, y con no negaros lo que de mí saber quisiéredes, puesto que me sería mejor pasar en silencio los sucesos de mi ventura, que no, con decirlos, daros indicios para que me tengáis por liviana.

-No muestra tu rostro y gentil apostura, hermosa pastora -respondió Galatea-, que el cielo te ha dado tan grosero entendimiento que con él hicieses cosa que después hubieses de perder reputación en decirla. Y, pues tu vista y palabras en tan poco ha hecho esta impresión en nosotras, que ya te tenemos por discreta, muéstranos, con contarnos tu vida, si llega a tu discreción tu ventura.

-A lo que yo creo -respondió la pastora-, en un igual andan entrambas, si ya no me ha dado la suerte más juicio para que sienta más los dolores que se



ofrecen. Pero yo estoy bien cierta que sobrepujan tanto mis males a mi discreción, cuanto dellos es vencida toda mi habilidad, pues no tengo ninguna para saber remediallos. Y, porque la experiencia os desengañe, si quisiéredes oírme, bellas zagalas, yo os contaré con las más breves razones que pudiere, cómo, del mucho entendimiento que juzgáis que tengo, ha nascido el mal que le hace ventaja.

-Con ninguna cosa, discreta zagala, satisfarás más nuestros deseos -respondió Florisa-, que con darnos cuenta de lo que te hemos rogado.

-Apartémonos, pues -dijo la pastora-, deste lugar y busquemos otro donde, sin ser vistas ni estorbadas, pueda deciros lo que me pesa de haberos prometido, porque adivino que no estará más en perderse la buena opinión que con vosotras he cobrado, que cuanto tarde en descubriros mis pensamientos, si acaso los vuestros no han sido tocados de la enfermedad que yo padezco.

Deseosas de que la pastora cumpliese lo que prometía, se levantaron luego las tres y se fueron a un lugar secreto y apartado que ya Galatea y Florisa sabían, donde, debajo de la agradable sombra de unos acopados mirtos, sin ser vistas de alguno, podían todas tres estar sentadas. Y luego, con estremado donaire y gracia, la forastera pastora comenzó a decir desta manera: -«En las riberas del famoso Henares, que al vuestro dorado Tajo, hermosísimas pastoras, da siempre fresco y agradable tributo, fui yo nascida y criada, y no en tan baja fortuna que me tuviese por la peor de mi aldea. Mis padres son labradores y a la labranza del campo acostumbrados, en cuyo ejercicio les imitaba, trayendo yo una manada de simples ovejas por las dehesas concejiles de nuestra aldea, acomodando tanto mis pensamientos al estado en que mi suerte me había puesto, que ninguna cosa me daba más gusto que ver multiplicar y crecer mi ganado, sin tener cuenta con más que con procurarle los más fructíferos y abundosos pastos, claras y frescas aguas que hallar pudiese. No tenía ni podía tener más cuidados que los que podían nacer del pastoral oficio en que me ocupaba. Las selvas eran mis compañeras, en cuya soledad muchas veces, convidada de la suave armonía de los dulces pajarillos, despedía la voz a mil honestos cantares, sin que en ellos mezclase suspiros ni razones que de enamorado pecho diesen indicio alguno. ¡Ay!, cuántas veces, sólo por contentarme a mí mesma y por dar lugar al tiempo que se pasase, andaba de ribera en ribera, de valle en valle, cogiendo aquí la blanca azucena, allí el cárdeno lirio, acá la colorada rosa, acullá la olorosa clavellina, haciendo de todas suertes de odoríferas flores una tejida guirnalda, con que adornaba y recogía mis cabellos; y después, mirándome en las claras y reposadas aguas de alguna fuente, quedaba tan gozosa de haberme visto que no trocara mi contento por otro alguno. Y cuántas hice burla de algunas zagalas que, pensando hallar en mi pecho alguna manera de compasión del mal que los

suyos sentían, con abundancia de lágrimas y suspiros, los secretos enamorados de su alma me descubrían.

»Acuérdome ahora, hermosas pastoras, que llegó a mí un día una zagala amiga mía, y, echándome los brazos al cuello y juntando su rostro con el mío, hechos sus ojos fuentes, me dijo: “¡Ay, hermana Teolinda -que éste es el nombre desta desdichada-, y cómo creo que el fin de mis días es llegado, pues amor no ha tenido la cuenta conmigo que mis deseos merecían!”. Yo, entonces, admirada de los extremos que la veía hacer, creyendo que algún gran mal le había sucedido de pérdida de ganado, o de muerte de padre o hermano, limpiándole los ojos con la manga de mi camisa, le rogué que me dijese qué mal era el que tanto la aquejaba. Ella, prosiguiendo en sus lágrimas y no dando tregua a sus suspiros, me dijo: “¿Qué mayor mal quieres, ¡oh Teolinda!, que me haya sucedido que el haberse ausentado sin decirme nada el hijo del mayoral de nuestra aldea, a quien yo quiero más que a los propios ojos de la cara; y haber visto esta mañana en poder de Leocadia, la hija del rabadán Lisalco, una cinta encarnada que yo había dado a aquel fementido de Eugenio, por donde se me ha confirmado la sospecha que yo tenía de los amores que el traidor con ella trataba?” Cuando yo acabé de entender sus quejas, os juro, amigas y señoras mías, que no pude acabar conmigo de no reírme y decirle: “Mía fe, Lidia -que así se llama la sin ventura-, pensé que de otra mayor llaga venías herida, según te quejabas, pero ahora conozco cuán fuera de sentido andáis vosotras, las que presumís de enamoradas, en hacer caso de semejantes niñerías. Dime, por tu vida, Lidia amiga: ¿cuánto vale una cinta encarnada, para que te duela de verla en poder de Leocadia, ni de que se la haya dado Eugenio? Mejor harías de tener cuenta con tu honra y con lo que conviene al pasto de tus ovejas, y no entremeterte en estas burlerías de amor, pues no se saca dellas, según veo, sino menoscabo de nuestras honras y sosiego”. Cuando Lidia oyó de mi boca tan contraria respuesta de la que esperaba de mi piadosa condición, no hizo otra cosa sino abajar la cabeza, y, acrescentando lágrimas a lágrimas y sollozos a sollozos, se apartó de mí; y, volviendo a cabo de poco trecho el rostro, me dijo: “Ruego yo a Dios, Teolinda, que presto te veas en estado que tengas por dichoso el mío, y que el amor te trate de manera que cuentes tu pena a quien la estime y sienta en el grado que tú has hecho la mía”. Y con esto se fue, y yo me quedé riendo de sus desvaríos. Mas, ¡ay, desdichada, y cómo a cada paso conozco que me va alcanzando bien su maldición, pues aun ahora temo que estoy contando mi pena a quien se dolerá poco de haberla sabido!»

A esto respondió Galatea:

-Pluviera a Dios, discreta Teolinda, que así como hallarás en nosotras compasión de tu daño, pudieras hallar el remedio dél, que presto perdieras la

sospecha que de nuestro conocimiento tienes.

-Vuestra hermosa presencia y agradable conversación, dulces pastoras -respondió Teolinda-, me hace esperar eso, pero mi corta ventura me fuerza a temer estotro. Mas, suceda lo que sucediere, que al fin habré de contaros lo que os he prometido.

«Con la libertad que os he dicho, y en los ejercicios que os he contado, pasaba yo mi vida tan alegre y sosegadamente que no sabía qué pedirme el deseo, hasta que el vengativo Amor me vino a tomar estrecha cuenta de la poca que con él tenía, y alcanzóme en ella de manera que, con quedar su esclava, creo que aún no está pagado ni satisfecho.

»Acaeció, pues, que un día -que fuera para mí el más venturoso de los de mi vida, si el tiempo y las ocasiones no hubieran traído tal descuento a mis alegrías-, viniendo yo con otras pastoras de nuestra aldea a cortar ramos y a coger juncia y flores y verdes espadañas para adornar el templo y calles de nuestro lugar, por ser el siguiente día solemnísimas fiestas y estar obligados los moradores de nuestro pueblo por promesa y voto a guardalla, acertamos a pasar todas juntas por un deleitoso bosque que entre el aldea y el río está puesto, adonde hallamos una junta de agraciados pastores, que a la sombra de los verdes árboles pasaban el ardor de la caliente siesta, los cuales, como nos vieron, al punto fuimos dellos conocidas, por ser todos cuál primo y cuál hermano y cuál pariente nuestro. Y, saliéndonos al encuentro y entendido de nosotras el intento que llevábamos, con corteses palabras nos persuadieron y forzaron a que adelante no pasásemos, porque algunos dellos tomarían el trabajo de traer hasta allí los ramos y flores por que íbamos. Y así, vencidas de sus ruegos, por ser ellos tales, hubimos de conceder lo que querían; y luego seis de los más mozos, apercebidos de sus hocinos, se partieron con gran contento a traernos los verdes despojos que buscábamos. Nosotras, que seis éramos, nos juntamos donde los demás pastores estaban, los cuales nos recibieron con el comedimiento posible, especialmente de un pastor forastero que allí estaba, que de ninguna de nosotras fue conocido, el cual era de tan gentil donaire y brío que quedaron todas admiradas en verle; pero yo quedé admirada y rendida. No sé qué os diga, pastoras, sino que, así como mis ojos le vieron, sentí entermecérseme el corazón, y comenzó a discurrir por todas mis venas un yelo que me encendía, y, sin saber cómo, sentí que mi alma se alegraba de tener puestos los ojos en el hermoso rostro del no conocido pastor. Y en un punto, sin ser en los casos de amor experimentada, vine a conocer que era amor el que salteado me había. Y luego quisiera quejarme dél, si el tiempo y la ocasión me dieran lugar a ello.

»En fin, yo quedé cual ahora estoy, vencida y enamorada, aunque con más confianza de salud que la que ahora tengo. ¡Ay!, cuántas veces en aquella sazón

me quise llegar a Lidia, que con nosotras estaba y decirle: “Perdóname, Lidia hermana, de la desabrida respuesta que te di el otro día, porque te hago saber que ya tengo más experiencia del mal de que te quejabas que tú misma”. Una cosa me tiene maravillada: de cómo cuantas allí estaban no conocieron, por los movimientos de mi rostro, los secretos de mi corazón; y debiólo de causar que todos los pastores se volvieron al forastero y le rogaron que acabase de cantar una canción que había comenzado antes que nosotras llegásemos; el cual, sin hacerse de rogar, siguió su comenzado canto con tan estremada y maravillosa voz, que todos los que la escuchaban estaban transportados en oírla. Entonces acabé yo de entregarme de todo en todo a todo lo que el amor quiso, sin quedar en mí más voluntad que si no la hubiera tenido para cosa alguna en mi vida. Y, puesto que yo estaba más suspensa que todos escuchando la suave armonía del pastor, no por eso dejé de poner grandísima atención a lo que en sus versos cantaba, porque me tenía ya el amor puesta en tal extremo que me llegara al alma si le oyera cantar cosas de enamorado, que imaginara que ya tenía ocupados sus pensamientos, y quizá en parte que no tuviesen alguna los míos en lo que deseaban. Mas lo que él entonces cantó no fueron sino ciertas alabanzas del pastoral estado y de la sosegada vida del campo, y algunos avisos útiles a la conservación del ganado, de que no poco quedé yo contenta, pareciéndome que si el pastor estuviera enamorado, que de ninguna cosa tratara que de sus amores, por ser condición de los amantes parecerles mal gastado el tiempo que en otra cosa que en ensalzar y alabar la causa de sus tristezas o contentos se gasta. Ved, amigas, en cuán poco espacio estaba ya maestra en la escuela de amor.

»El acabar el pastor su canto y el descubrir los que con los ramos venían fue todo a un tiempo; los cuales, a quien de lejos los miraba, no parecían sino un pequeño montecillo que con todos sus árboles se movía, según venían pomposos y enramados. Y, llegando ya cerca de nosotras, todos seis entonaron sus voces, y comenzando el uno y respondiendo todos, con muestras de grandísimo contento, y con muchos placenteros alaridos, dieron principio a un gracioso villancico. Con este contento y alegría llegaron más presto de lo que yo quisiera, porque me quitaron la que yo sentía de la vista del pastor. Descargados, pues, de la verde carga, vimos que traía cada uno una hermosa guirnalda enroscada en el brazo, compuesta de diversas y agradables flores, las cuales con graciosas palabras a cada una de nosotras la suya presentaron, y se ofrecieron de llevar los ramos hasta el aldea. Mas, agradeciéndoles nosotras su buen comedimiento, llenas de alegría, queríamos dar la vuelta al lugar, cuando Eleuco, un anciano pastor que allí estaba, nos dijo: “Bien será, hermosas pastoras, que nos paguéis lo que por vosotras nuestros zagales han hecho, con dejarnos las guirnaldas, que demasiadas lleváis de lo que a buscar veníades; pero ha de ser con condición que

de vuestra mano las deis a quien os pareciere”. “Si con tan pequeña paga quedaréis de nosotras satisfechos -respondió la una-, yo por mí soy contenta”. Y, tomando la guirnalda con ambas manos, la puso en la cabeza de un gallardo primo suyo. Las otras, guiadas deste ejemplo, dieron las suyas a diferentes zagales que allí estaban; que todos, sus parientes eran. Yo, que a lo último quedaba, y que allí deudo alguno no tenía, mostrando hacer de la desenvuelta, me llegué al forastero pastor, y, puniéndole la guirnalda en la cabeza, le dije: “Ésta te doy, buen zagal, por dos cosas: la una, por el contento que a todos nos has dado con tu agradable canto; la otra, porque en nuestra aldea se usa honrar a los extranjeros”. Todos los circunstantes recibieron gusto de lo que yo hacía; pero, ¿qué os diré yo de lo que mi alma sintió, viéndome tan cerca de quien me la tenía robada, sino que diera cualquiera otro bien que acertara a desear en aquel punto, fuera de quererle, por poder ceñirle con mis brazos al cuello, como le ceñí las sienes con la guirnalda? El pastor se me humilló y con discretas palabras me agradeció la merced que le hacía, y, al despedirse de mí, con voz baja, hurtando la ocasión a los muchos ojos que allí había, me dijo: “Mejor te he pagado de lo que piensas, hermosa pastora, la guirnalda que me has dado: prenda llevas contigo que, si la sabes estimar, conocerás que me quedas deudora”. Bien quisiera yo responderle, pero la priesa que mis compañeras me daban era tanta, que no tuve lugar de replicarle.

»Desta manera me volví al aldea, con tan diferente corazón del con que había salido, que yo mesma de mí mesma me maravillaba. La compañía me era enojosa, y cualquiera pensamiento que me viniese, que a pensar en mi pastor no se encaminase, con gran presteza procuraba luego de desecharle de mi memoria, como indigno de ocupar el lugar que de amorosos cuidados estaba lleno. Yo no sé cómo en tan pequeño espacio de tiempo me transformé en otro ser del que tenía, porque yo ya no vivía en mí, sino en Artidoro -que así se llama la mitad de mi alma que ando buscando-: doquiera que volvía los ojos me parecía ver su figura; cualquiera cosa que escuchaba, luego sonaba en mis oídos su suave música y armonía; a ninguna parte movía los pies, que no diera por hallarle en ella mi vida, si él la quisiera; en los manjares no hallaba el acostumbrado gusto, ni las manos acertaban a tocar cosa que se le diese. En fin, todos mis sentidos estaban trocados del ser que primero tenían, ni el alma obraba por ellos como era acostumbrada.

»En considerar la nueva Teolinda que en mí había nacido, y en contemplar las gracias del pastor, que impresas en el alma me quedaron, se me pasó todo aquel día y la noche antes de la solemne fiesta, la cual venida, fue con grandísimo regocijo y aplauso de todos los moradores de nuestra aldea y de los circunvecinos lugares solemnizada. Y, después de acabadas en el templo las

sacras oblacones, y cumplidas las debidas ceremonias, en una ancha plaza que delante del templo se hacía, a la sombra de cuatro antiguos y frondosos álamos que en ella estaban, se juntó casi la más gente del pueblo, y, haciéndose todos un corro, dieron lugar a que los zagales vecinos y forasteros se ejercitasen, por honra de la fiesta, en algunos pastoriles ejercicios. Luego en el instante, se mostraron en la plaza un buen número de dispuestos y gallardos pastores, los cuales, dando alegres muestras de su juventud y destreza, dieron principios a mil graciosos juegos: ora tirando la pesada barra, ora mostrando la ligereza de sus sueltos miembros en los desusados saltos, ora descubriendo su crecida fuerza e industriosa maña en las intrincadas luchas, ora enseñando la velocidad de sus pies en las largas carreras, procurando cada uno de ser tal en todo, que el primero premio alcanzase de muchos que los mayores del pueblo tenían puestos para los mejores que en tales ejercicios se aventajasen. Pero, en estos que he contado, ni en otros muchos que callo por no ser prolija, ningunos de cuantos allí estaban, vecinos y comarcanos, llegó al punto que mi Artidoro, el cual con su presencia quiso honrar y alegrar nuestra fiesta, y llevarse el primero honor y premio de todos los juegos que se hicieron. Tal era, pastoras, su destreza y gallardía; las alabanzas que todas le daban eran tantas, que yo mesma me ensoberbecía, y un desusado contento en el pecho me retozaba, sólo en considerar cuán bien había sabido ocupar mis pensamientos. Pero, con todo esto, me daba grandísima pesadumbre que Artidoro, como forastero, se había de partir presto de nuestra aldea, y que si él se iba sin saber, a lo menos, lo que de mí llevaba -que era el alma-, ¿qué vida sería la mía en su ausencia, o cómo podría yo aliviar mi pena siquiera con quejarme, pues no tenía de quién, sino de mí mesma? Estando yo, pues, en estas imaginaciones, se acabó la fiesta y regocijo, y, queriendo Artidoro despedirse de los pastores sus amigos, todos ellos juntos le rogaron que, por los días que había de durar el octavario de la fiesta, fuese contento de pasarlos con ellos, si otra cosa de más gusto no se lo impedía. “Ninguna me la puede dar a mí mayor, graciosos pastores -respondió Artidoro-, que serviros en esto y en todo lo que más fuere vuestra voluntad, que, puesto que la mía era por agora querer buscar a un hermano mío que pocos días ha falta de nuestra aldea, cumpliré vuestro deseo, por ser yo el que gano en ello”. Todos se lo agradecieron mucho, y quedaron contentos de su quedada, pero más lo quedé yo, considerando que en aquellos ocho días no podía dejar de ofrecérseme ocasión donde le descubriese lo que ya encubrir no podía. Toda aquella noche casi se nos pasó en bailes y juegos, y en contar unas a otras las pruebas que habíamos visto hacer a los pastores aquel día, diciendo: “Fulano bailó mejor que fulano, puesto que el tal sabía más mudanzas que el tal; Mingo derribó a Bras, pero Bras corrió más que Mingo”. Y, al fin fin, todas concluían que Artidoro, el

pastor forastero, había llevado la ventaja a todos, loándole cada una en particular sus particulares gracias; las cuales alabanzas, como ya he dicho, todas en mi contento redundaban.

»Venida la mañana del día después de la fiesta, antes que la fresca aurora perdiese el rocío aljofarado de sus hermosos cabellos, y que el sol acabase de descubrir sus rayos por las cumbres de los vecinos montes, nos juntamos hasta una docena de pastoras, de las más miradas del pueblo, y asidas unas de otras de las manos, al son de una gaita y de una zampoña, haciendo y deshaciendo intrincadas vueltas y bailes, nos salimos de la aldea a un verde prado que no lejos della estaba, dando gran contento a todos los que nuestra enmarañada danza miraban. Y la ventura, que hasta entonces mis cosas de bien en mejor iba guiando, ordenó que en aquel mismo prado hallásemos todos los pastores del lugar, y con ellos a Artidoro, los cuales, como nos vieron, acordando luego el son de un tamborino suyo con el de nuestras zampoñas, con el mismo compás y baile nos salieron a recibir, mezclándonos unos con otros confusa y concertadamente, y mudando los instrumentos el son, mudamos el baile, de manera que fue menester que las pastoras nos desasiésemos y diésemos las manos a los pastores; y quiso mi buena dicha que acerté yo a dar la mía a Artidoro. No sé cómo os encarezca, amigas, lo que en tal punto sentí, si no es deciros que me turbé de manera que no acertaba a dar paso concertado en el baile; tanto, que le convenía a Artidoro llevarme con fuerza tras sí, porque no rompiese, soltándome, el hilo de la concertada danza. Y, tomando dello ocasión, le dije: “¿En qué te ha ofendido mi mano, Artidoro, que así la aprietas?” Él me respondió, con voz que de ninguno pudo ser oída: “Mas, ¿qué te ha hecho a ti mi alma, que así la maltratas?” “Mi ofensa es clara -respondí yo mansamente-; mas la tuya, ni la veo ni podrá verse”. “Y aun ahí está el daño -replicó Artidoro-: que tengas vista para hacer el mal y te falte para sanarle”. En esto cesaron nuestras razones, porque los bailes cesaron, quedando yo contenta y pensativa de lo que Artidoro me había dicho; y, aunque consideraba que eran razones enamoradas, no me aseguraban si era de enamorado.

»Luego nos sentamos todos los pastores y pastoras sobre la verde yerba; y, habiendo reposado un poco del cansancio de los bailes pasados, el viejo Eleuco, acordando su instrumento, que un rabel era, con la zampoña de otro pastor, rogó a Artidoro que alguna cosa cantase, pues él más que otro alguno lo debía hacer, por haberle dado el cielo tal gracia que sería ingrato si encubrir la quisiese. Artidoro, agradeciendo a Eleuco las alabanzas que le daba, comenzó luego a cantar unos versos, que, por haberme puesto en mí sospecha aquellas palabras que antes me había dicho, los tomé tan en la memoria que aun hasta agora no se me han olvidado; los cuales, aunque os dé pesadumbre oírlos, sólo porque hacen

al caso para que entendáis punto por punto por los que me ha traído el amor al  
desdichado en que me hallo, os los habré de decir, que son estos: En áspera,  
cerrada, oscura noche,

sin ver jamás el esperado día,  
y en continuo, crecido, amargo llanto,  
ajeno de placer, contento y risa,  
meresce estar, y en una viva muerte, 5  
aquel que sin amor pasa la vida.

¿Qué puede ser la más alegre vida,  
sino una sombra de una breve noche,  
o natural retrato de la muerte,  
si en todas cuantas horas tiene el día, 10  
puesto silencio al congojoso llanto,  
no admite del amor la dulce risa?

Do vive el blando amor, vive la risa,  
y adonde muere, muere nuestra vida,  
y el sabroso placer se vuelve en llanto, 15  
y en tenebrosa sempiterna noche  
la clara luz del sosegado día,

y es el vivir sin él amarga muerte.

Los rigurosos trances de la muerte  
no huye el amador; antes con risa 20  
desea la ocasión y espera el día  
donde pueda ofrescer la cara vida  
hasta ver la tranquila última noche,  
al amoroso fuego, al dulce llanto.

No se llama de amor el llanto, llanto, 25  
ni su muerte llamarse debe muerte,  
ni a su noche dar título de noche;  
que su risa llamarse debe risa,  
y su vida tener por cierta vida,  
y sólo festejar su alegre día. 30

¡Oh venturoso para mí este día,



do pude poner freno al triste llanto,  
y alegrarme de haber dado mi vida  
a quien dárme la puede, o darme muerte!  
Mas ¿qué puede esperarse, si no es risa, 35  
de un rostro que al sol vence y vuelve en noche?

Vuelto ha mi escura noche en claro día  
amor, y en risa mi crecido llanto,  
y mi cercana muerte en larga vida.

»Estos fueron los versos, hermosas pastoras, que con maravillosa gracia y no menos satisfacción de los que le escuchaban aquel día, cantó mi Artidoro, de los cuales y de las razones que antes me había dicho, tomé yo ocasión de imaginar si por ventura mi vista algún nuevo accidente amoroso en el pecho de Artidoro había causado; y no me salió tan vana mi sospecha que él mismo no me la certificase al volvernó al aldea.»

A este punto del cuento de sus amores llegaba Teolinda, cuando las pastoras sintieron grandísimo estruendo de voces de pastores y ladridos de perros, que fue causa para que dejaran la comenzada plática y se parasen a mirar por entre las ramas lo que era. Y así, vieron que por un verde llano que a su mano derecha estaba, atravesaban una multitud de perros, los cuales venían siguiendo una temerosa liebre, que a toda furia a las espesas matas venía a guarecerse. Y no tardó mucho que por el mismo lugar donde las pastoras estaban la vieron entrar y irse derecha al lado de Galatea; y allí, vencida del cansancio de la larga carrera y casi como segura del cercano peligro, se dejó caer en el suelo con tan cansado aliento que parecía que faltaba poco para dar el espíritu. Los perros, por el olor y rastro, la siguieron hasta entrar adonde estaban las pastoras; mas Galatea, tomando la temerosa liebre en los brazos, estorbó su vengativo intento a los cobdiciosos perros, por parecerle no ser bien si dejaba de defender a quien della había querido valerse. De allí a poco llegaron algunos pastores, que en seguimiento de los perros y de la liebre venían, entre los cuales venía el padre de Galatea, por cuyo respecto ella, Florisa y Teolinda le salieron a rescebir con la debida cortesía. Él y los pastores quedaron admirados de la hermosura de Teolinda, y con deseo de saber quién fuese, porque bien conocieron que era forastera. No poco les pesó desta llegada a Galatea y Florisa, por el gusto que les había quitado de saber el suceso de los amores de Teolinda, a la cual rogaron fuese servida de no partirse por algunos días de su compañía, si en ello no se estorbaba acaso el cumplimiento de sus deseos.

-Antes, por ver si pueden cumplirse -respondió Teolinda-, me conviene estar

algún día en esta ribera; y, así por esto como por no dejar imperfecto mi comenzado cuento, habré de hacer lo que me mandáis.

Galatea y Florisa la abrazaron y le ofrecieron de nuevo su amistad, y de servirla en cuanto sus fuerzas alcanzasen. En este entre tanto, habiendo el padre de Galatea y los otros pastores en el margen del claro arroyo tendido sus gabanes y sacado de sus zurroneos algunos rústicos manjares, convidaron a Galatea y a sus compañeras a que con ellos comiesen. Acetaron ellas el convite; y, sentándose luego, desecharon la hambre, que por ser ya subido el día comenzaba a fatigarles. En estos y en algunos cuentos que, por entretener el tiempo, los pastores contaron, se llegó la hora acostumbrada de recogerse al aldea. Y luego Galatea y Florisa, dando vuelta a sus rebaños, los recogieron, y en compañía de Teolinda y de los otros pastores hacia el lugar poco a poco se encaminaron; y, al quebrar de la cuesta donde aquella mañana habían topado a Elicio, oyeron todos la zampoña del desamorado Lenio, el cual era un pastor en cuyo pecho el amor jamás pudo hacer morada, y desto vivía él tan alegre y satisfecho que, en cualquiera conversación y junta de pastores que se hallaba, no era otro su intento sino decir mal de amor y de los enamorados, y todos sus cantares a este fin se encaminaban. Y por esta tan estraña condición que tenía, era de los pastores de todas aquellas comarcas conocido, y de unos aborrecido y de otros estimado. Galatea y los que allí venían se pararon a escuchar, por ver si Lenio, como de costumbre tenía, alguna cosa cantaba. Y luego vieron que, dando su zampoña a otro compañero suyo, al son della comenzó a cantar lo que se sigue:

## LENIO

Un vano, descuidado pensamiento,  
una loca, altanera fantasía,  
un no sé qué, que la memoria cría,  
sin ser, sin calidad, sin fundamento;

una esperanza que se lleva el viento,   5  
un dolor con renombre de alegría,  
una noche confusa do no hay día,  
un ciego error de nuestro entendimiento,

son las raíces propias de do nasce  
esta quimera antigua celebrada   10

que amor tiene por nombre en todo el suelo.

Y el alma qu'en amor tal se complace,  
meresce ser del suelo desterrada,  
y que no la recojan en el cielo.

A la sazón que Lenio cantaba lo que habéis oído, habían ya llegado con sus rebaños Elicio y Erastro, en compañía del lastimado Lisandro; y, pareciéndole a Elicio que la lengua de Lenio en decir mal de amor a más de lo que era razón se estendía, quiso mostrarle a la clara su engaño; y, aprovechándose del mismo concepto de los versos que él había cantado, al tiempo que ya llegaban Galatea, Florisa y Teolinda y los demás pastores, al son de la zampoña de Erastro, comenzó a cantar desta manera:

## ELICIO

*Meresce quien en el suelo  
en su pecho a amor no encierra,  
que lo desechen del cielo  
y no le sufra la tierra.*

Amor, que es virtud entera, 5  
con otras muchas que alcanza,  
de una en otra semejanza  
sube a la causa primera.  
Y meresce el que su celo  
de tal amor le destierra, 10  
*que le desechen del cielo  
y no le acoja la tierra.*

Un bello rostro y figura,  
aunque caduca y mortal,  
es un traslado y señal 15  
de la divina hermosura.  
Y el que lo hermoso en el suelo  
desama y echa por tierra,  
*desechado sea del cielo*

*y no le sufra la tierra.* 20

Amor tomado en sí solo,  
sin mezcla de otro accidente,  
es al suelo conviniente,  
como los rayos de Apolo.

Y el que tuviere recelo 25  
de amor que tal bien encierra,  
*meresce no ver el cielo*  
*y que le trague la tierra.*

Bien se conoce que amor  
está de mil bienes lleno, 30  
pues hace del malo bueno  
y del qu'es bueno, mejor.  
Y así el que discrepa un pelo

en limpia amorosa guerra,  
*ni meresce ver el cielo,* 35  
*ni sustentarse en la tierra.*

El amor es infinito,  
si se funda en ser honesto,  
y aquel que se acaba presto,  
no es amor sino apetito. 40  
Y al que sin alzar el vuelo,  
con su voluntad se cierra,  
*mátele rayo del cielo*  
*y no le cubra la tierra.*

No recibieron poco gusto los enamorados pastores de ver cuán bien Elicio su parte defendía, pero no por esto el desamorado Lenio dejó de estar firme en su opinión; antes, quería de nuevo volver a cantar y a mostrar en lo que cantase de cuán poco momento eran las razones de Elicio para escurecer la verdad tan clara que él a su parecer sustentaba. Mas el padre de Galatea, que Aurelio el Venerable se llamaba, le dijo: -No te fatigues por agora, discreto Lenio, en querernos mostrar en tu canto lo que en tu corazón sientes, que el camino de aquí al aldea es breve, y me parece que es menester más tiempo del que piensas para defenderte de los muchos que tienen tu contrario parescer. Guarda tus razones

para lugar más oportuno, que algún día te juntarás tú y Elicio con otros pastores en la fuente de las Pizarras o arroyo de las Palmas, donde con más comodidad y sosiego podáis argüir y aclarar vuestras diferentes opiniones.

-La que Elicio tiene es opinión -respondió Lenio-, que la mía no es sino sciencia averiguada, la cual en breve o en largo tiempo, por traer ella consigo la verdad, me obligo a sustentarla; pero no faltará tiempo, como dices, más aparejado para este efecto.

-Ese procuraré yo -respondió Elicio-, porque me pesa que tan subido ingenio como el tuyo, amigo Lenio, le falte quien le pueda requintar y subir de punto, como es el limpio y verdadero amor, de quien te muestras tan enemigo.

-Engañado estás, ¡oh Elicio! -replicó Lenio-, si piensas con afeitadas y sofísticas palabras hacerme mudar de lo que no me tendría por hombre si me mudase.

-Tan malo es -dijo Elicio-ser pertinaz en el mal, como bueno perseverar en el bien, y siempre he oído decir a mis mayores que de sabios es mudar consejo.

-No niego yo eso -respondió Lenio-, cuando yo entendiese que mi parecer no es justo, pero en tanto que la experiencia y la razón no me mostraren el contrario de lo que hasta aquí me han mostrado, yo creo que mi opinión es tan verdadera cuanto la tuya falsa.

-Si se castigasen los herejes de amor -dijo a esta sazón Erastro-, desde agora comenzara yo, amigo Lenio, a cortar leña con que te abrasaran, por el mayor hereje y enemigo que el amor tiene.

-Y aun si yo no viera otra cosa del amor sino que tú, Erastro, le sigues, y eres del bando de los enamorados -respondió Lenio-, sola ella me bastara a renegar dél con cien mil lenguas, si cien mil lenguas tuviera.

-Pues, ¿parécete, Lenio -replicó Erastro-, que no soy bueno para enamorado?

-Antes me parece -respondió Lenio-que los que fueren de tu condición y entendimiento son propios para ser ministros suyos; porque quien es cojo, con el más mínimo traspí da de ojos; y el que tiene poco discurso, poco ha menester para que le pierda del todo. Y los que siguen la bandera deste vuestro valeroso capitán, yo tengo para mí que no son los más sabios del mundo, y si lo han sido, en el punto que se enamoraron dejaron de serlo.

Grande fue el enojo que Erastro recibió de lo que Lenio le dijo, y así le respondió: -Paréceme, Lenio, que tus desvariadas razones merescen otro castigo que palabras, mas yo espero que algún día pagarás lo que agora has dicho, sin que te valga lo que en tu defensa dijeres.

-Si yo entendiese de ti, Erastro -respondió Lenio-, que fueses tan valiente como enamorado, no dejarían de darme temor tus amenazas; mas, como sé que

te quedas tan atrás en lo uno como vas adelante en lo otro, antes me causan risa que espanto.

Aquí acabó de perder la paciencia Erastro, y si no fuera por Lisandro y por Elicio, que en medio se pusieron, él respondiera a Lenio con las manos, porque ya su lengua, turbada con la cólera, apenas podía usar su oficio. Grande fue el gusto que todos recibieron de la graciosa pendencia de los pastores, y más de la cólera y enojo que Erastro mostraba, que fue menester que el padre de Galatea hiciese las amistades de Lenio y suyas; aunque Erastro, si no fuera por no perder el respecto al padre de su señora, en ninguna manera las hiciera. Luego que la cuestión fue acabada, todos con regocijo se encaminaron al aldea; y, en tanto que llegaban, la hermosa Florisa, al son de la zampoña de Galatea, cantó este soneto:

## FLORISA

Crezcan las simples ovejuelas mías  
en el cerrado bosque y verde prado,  
y el caluroso estío e invierno helado  
abunde en yerbas verdes y aguas frías.

Pase en sueños las noches y los días, 5  
en lo que toca al pastoral estado,  
sin que de amor un mínimo cuidado  
sienta, ni sus ancianas niñerías.

Éste mil bienes del amor pregona;  
aquél publica dél vanos cuidados; 10  
yo no sé si los dos andan perdidos,

ni sabré al vencedor dar la corona:  
sé bien que son de amor los escogidos  
tan pocos, cuanto muchos los llamados.

Breve se les hizo a los pastores el camino, engañados y entretenidos con la graciosa voz de Florisa, la cual no dejó el canto hasta que estuvieron bien cerca del aldea y de las cabañas de Elicio y Erastro, que con Lisandro se quedaron en ellas, despidiéndose primero del venerable Aurelio, de Galatea y Florisa, que con Teolinda al aldea se fueron, y los demás pastores cada cual adonde tenía su

cabaña. Aquella misma noche pidió el lastimado Lisandro licencia a Elicio para volverse a su tierra, o adonde pudiese, conforme a sus deseos, acabar lo poco que, a su parecer, le quedaba de vida. Elicio, con todas las razones que supo decirle y con infinitos ofrecimientos de verdadera amistad que le ofreció, jamás pudo acabar con él que en su compañía, siquiera algunos días, se quedase. Y así, el sin ventura pastor, abrazando a Elicio, con abundantes lágrimas y suspiros se despidió dél, prometiendo de avisarle de su estado donde quiera que estuviese. Y, habiéndole acompañado Elicio hasta media legua de su cabaña, le tornó a abrazar estrechamente; y, tornándose a hacer de nuevo nuevos ofrecimientos, se apartaron, quedando Elicio con harto pesar del que Lisandro llevaba. Y así, se volvió a su cabaña a pasar lo más de la noche en sus amorosas imaginaciones, y a esperar el venidero día para gozar el bien que de ver a Galatea se le causaba. La cual, después que llegó a su aldea, deseando saber el suceso de los amores de Teolinda, procuró hacer de manera que aquella noche estuviesen solas ella y Florisa y Teolinda; y, hallando la comodidad que deseaba, la enamorada pastora prosiguió su cuento, como se verá en el segundo libro.

FIN DEL PRIMERO LIBRO DE *GALATEA*

## Segundo libro de Galatea

LIBRES ya y desembarazadas de lo que aquella noche con sus ganados habían de hacer, procuraron recogerse y apartarse con Teolinda en parte donde, sin ser de nadie impedidas, pudiesen oír lo que del suceso de sus amores les faltaba. Y así, se fueron a un pequeño jardín que estaba en casa de Galatea; y, sentándose las tres debajo de una verde y pomposa parra que entricadamente por unas redes de palos se entretejía, tornando a repetir Teolinda algunas palabras de lo que antes había dicho, prosiguió diciendo: -«Después de acabado nuestro baile y el canto de Artidoro -como ya os he dicho, bellas pastoras-, a todos nos pareció volvernos al aldea a hacer en el templo los solemnes sacrificios, y por parecernos asimesmo que la solemnidad de la fiesta daba en alguna manera licencia para que, no teniendo cuenta tan a punto con el recogimiento, con más libertad nos holgásemos; y por esto, todos los pastores y pastoras, en montón confuso, alegre y regocijadamente al aldea nos volvimos, hablando cada uno con quien más gusto le daba. Ordenó, pues, la suerte y mi diligencia, y aun la solicitud de Artidoro, que sin mostrar artificio en ello, los dos nos apareamos, de manera que a nuestro salvo pudiéramos hablar en aquel camino más de lo que hablamos, si cada uno por sí no tuviera respecto a lo que a sí mismo y al otro debía. En fin, yo, por sacarle a barrera -como decirse suele-, le dije: “Años se te harán, Artidoro, los días que en nuestra aldea estuvieres, pues debes de tener en la tuya cosas en que ocuparte que te deben de dar más gusto”. “Todo el que yo puedo esperar en mi vida trocara yo -respondió Artidoro-porque fueran, no años, sino siglos, los días que aquí tengo de estar, pues, en acabándose, no espero tener otros que más contento me hagan”. “¿Tanto es el que rescibes -respondí yo-en mirar nuestras fiestas?” “No nasce de ahí -respondió él-, sino de contemplar la hermosura de las pastoras desta vuestra aldea”. “¡Es verdad -repliqué yo-, que deben de faltar hermosas zagalas en la tuya!”. “Verdad es que allá no faltan -respondió él-, pero aquí sobran, de manera que una sola que yo he visto, basta para que, en su comparación, las de allá se tengan por feas”. “Tu cortesía te hace decir eso, ¡oh Artidoro! -respondí yo-, porque bien sé que en este pueblo no hay ninguna que tanto se aventaje como dices”. “Mejor sé yo ser verdad lo que digo -respondió él-, pues he visto la una y mirado las otras”. “Quizá la miraste de lejos, y la distancia del lugar -dije yo-te hizo parecer otra cosa de lo que debe de ser”. “De la misma manera -respondió él-que a ti te veo y estoy mirando agora, la he mirado y visto a ella; y yo me holgaría de haberme engañado, si no



conforma su condición con su hermosura”. “No me pesara a mí ser la que dices, por el gusto que debe sentir la que se vee pregonada y tenida por hermosa”. “Harto más -respondió Artidoro-quisiera yo que tú no fueras”. “Pues, ¿qué perdieras tú -respondí yo-si, como yo no soy la que dices, lo fuera?” “Lo que he ganado -respondió él-bien lo sé; de lo que he de perder estoy incierto y temeroso”. “Bien sabes hacer del enamorado -dije yo-, ¡oh Artidoro!” “Mejor sabes tú enamorar, ¡oh Teolinda!”, respondió él. A esto le dije: “No sé si te diga, Artidoro, que deseo que ninguno de los dos sea el engañado”. A lo que él respondió: “De que yo no me engaño estoy bien seguro, y de querer tú desengañarte, está en tu mano, todas las veces que quisieres hacer experiencia de la limpia voluntad que tengo de servirte”. “Ésa te pagaré yo con la misma -repliqué yo-, por parecerme que no sería bien a tan poca costa quedar en deuda con alguno”.

»A esta sazón, sin que él tuviese lugar de responderme, llegó Eleuco, el mayoral, y dijo con voz alta: “¡Ea, gallardos pastores y hermosas pastoras!, haced que sientan en el aldea vuestra venida, entonando vosotras, zagalas, algún villancico, de modo que nosotros os respondamos; porque vean los del pueblo cuánto hacemos al caso los que aquí vamos para alegrar nuestra fiesta”. Y porque en ninguna cosa que Eleuco mandaba dejaba de ser obedecido, luego los pastores me dieron a mí la mano para que comenzase. Y así, sirviéndome de la ocasión y aprovechándome de lo que con Artidoro había pasado, di principio a este villancico: *En los estados de amor,*

*nadie llega a ser perfecto,  
sino el honesto y secreto.*

Para llegar al süave  
gusto de amor, si se acierta, 5  
es el secreto la puerta,  
y la honestidad la llave.  
Y esta entrada no la sabe  
quien presume de discreto,  
*sino el honesto y secreto.* 10

Amar humana beldad  
suele ser reprehendido,  
si tal amor no es medido  
con razón y honestidad.  
Y amor de tal calidad 15  
luego le alcanza, en efecto,

*el qu'es honesto y secreto.*

Es ya caso averiguado,  
que no se puede negar,  
que a veces pierde el hablar 20  
lo qu'el callar ha ganado.  
Y el que fuere enamorado,  
jamás se verá en aprieto,  
*si fuere honesto y secreto.*

Cuanto una parlera lengua 25  
y unos atrevidos ojos  
suelen causar mil enojos  
y poner al alma en mengua,  
tanto este dolor desmengua  
y se libra deste aprieto 30  
*el qu'es honesto y secreto.*

»No sé si acerté, hermosas pastoras, en cantar lo que habéis oído, pero sé bien que se supo aprovechar dello Artidoro, pues, en todo el tiempo que en nuestra aldea estuvo, puesto que me habló muchas veces, fue con tanto recato, secreto y honestidad, que los ociosos ojos y lenguas parleras ni tuvieron ni vieron que decir cosa que a nuestra honra perjudicase. Mas con el temor que yo tenía que, acabado el término que Artidoro había prometido de estar en nuestra aldea, se había de ir a la suya, procuré, aunque a costa de mi vergüenza, que no quedase mi corazón con lástima de haber callado lo que después fuera escusado decirse estando Artidoro ausente. Y así, después que mis ojos dieron licencia que los suyos amorosamente me mirasen, no estuvieron quedas las lenguas, ni dejaron de mostrar con palabras lo que hasta entonces por señas los ojos habían bien claramente manifestado.

»En fin, sabréis, amigas mías, que un día, hallándome acaso sola con Artidoro, con señales de un encendido amor y comedimiento, me descubrió el verdadero y honesto amor que me tenía; y, aunque yo quisiera entonces hacer de la retirada y melindrosa, porque temía, como ya os he dicho, que él se partiese, no quise desdeñarle ni despedirle; y también por parecerme que los sinsabores que se dan y sienten en el principio de los amores son causa de que abandonen y dejen la comenzada empresa los que en sus sucesos no son muy experimentados. Y por esto le di respuesta tal cual yo deseaba dársela, quedando, en resolución, concertados en que él se fuese a su aldea, y que, de allí a pocos días, con alguna

honrosa tercería me enviase a pedir por esposa a mis padres; de lo que él fue tan contento y satisfecho, que no acababa de llamar venturoso el día en que sus ojos me miraron. De mí os sé decir que no trocara mi contento por ningún otro que imaginar pudiera, por estar segura que el valor y calidad de Artidoro era tal, que mi padre sería contento de recibirle por yerno.

»En el dichoso punto que habéis oído, pastoras, estaba el de nuestros amores, que no quedaban sino dos o tres días a la partida de Artidoro, cuando la Fortuna, como aquella que jamás tuvo término en sus cosas, ordenó que una hermana mía de poco menos edad que yo a nuestra aldea tornase, de otra donde algunos días había estado en casa de una tía nuestra que mal dispuesta se hallaba. Y porque consideréis, señoras, cuán estraños y no pensados casos en el mundo suceden, quiero que entendáis una cosa que creo no os dejará de causar alguna admiración estraña; y es que esta hermana mía que os he dicho, que hasta entonces había estado ausente, me parece tanto en el rostro, estatura, donaire y brío, si alguno tengo, que no sólo los de nuestro lugar, sino nuestros mismos padres muchas veces nos han desconocido, y a la una por la otra hablado; de manera que, para no caer en este engaño, por la diferencia de los vestidos, que diferentes eran, nos diferenciaban. En una cosa sola, a lo que yo creo, nos hizo bien diferentes la naturaleza, que fue en las condiciones, por ser la de mi hermana más áspera de lo que mi contento había menester, pues por ser ella menos piadosa que advertida, tendré yo que llorar todo el tiempo que la vida me durare.

»Sucedió, pues, que luego que mi hermana vino al aldea, con el deseo que tenía de volver al agradable pastoral ejercicio suyo, madrugó luego otro día más de lo que yo quisiera, y con las ovejas propias que yo solía llevar se fue al prado; y, aunque yo quise seguirla, por el contento que se me seguía de la vista de mi Artidoro, con no sé qué ocasión, mi padre me detuvo todo aquel día en casa, que fue el último de mis alegrías. Porque aquella noche, habiendo mi hermana recogido su ganado, me dijo, como en secreto, que tenía necesidad de decirme una cosa que mucho me importaba. Yo, que cualquiera otra pudiera pensar de la que me dijo, procuré que presto a solas nos viésemos, adonde ella, con rostro algo alterado, estando yo colgada de sus palabras, me comenzó a decir: “No sé, hermana mía, lo que piense de tu honestidad, ni menos sé si calle lo que no puedo dejar de decirte, por ver si me das alguna disculpa de la culpa que imagino que tienes; y, aunque yo, como hermana menor, estaba obligada a hablarte con más respecto, debes perdonarme, porque en lo que hoy he visto hallarás la disculpa de lo que te dijere”. Cuando yo desta manera la oí hablar, no sabía qué responderle, sino decirle que pasase adelante con su plática. “Has de saber, hermana -siguió ella-, que esta mañana, saliendo con nuestras ovejas al prado, y yendo sola con ellas por la ribera de nuestro fresco Henares, al pasar

por el alameda del Concejo, salió a mí un pastor que con verdad osaré jurar que jamás le he visto en estos nuestros contornos, y, con una estraña desenvoltura, me comenzó a hacer tan amorosas saluciones que yo estaba con vergüenza y confusa, sin saber qué responderle; y él, no escarmentado del enojo que, a lo que yo creo, en mi rostro mostraba, se llegó a mí diciéndome: ‘¿Qué silencio es éste, hermosa Teolinda, último refugio de esta ánima que os adora?’. Y faltó poco que no me tomó las manos para besármelas, añadiendo a lo que he dicho un catálogo de requiebros, que parecía que los traía estudiados. Luego di yo en la cuenta, considerando que él daba en el error en que otros muchos han dado, y que pensaba que con vos estaba hablando, de donde me nació sospecha que si vos, hermana, jamás le hubiéradéis visto, ni familiarmente tratado, no fuera posible tener el atrevimiento de hablaros de aquella manera. De lo cual tomé tanto enojo, que apenas podía formar palabra para responderle; pero al fin respondí de la suerte que su atrevimiento merescía, y cual a mí me pareció que estábades vos, hermana, obligada a responder a quien con tanta libertad os hablara. Y si no fuera porque en aquel instante llegó la pastora Licea, yo le añadiera tales razones, que fuera bien arrepentido de haberme dicho las tuyas. Y es lo bueno, que nunca le quise decir el engaño en que estaba, sino que así creyó él que yo era Teolinda como si con vos misma estuviera hablando. En fin, él se fue llamándome ingrata, desagradecida y de poco conocimiento; y, a lo que yo puedo juzgar del semblante que él llevaba, a fe, hermana, que otra vez no ose hablaros, aunque más sola os encuentre. Lo que deseo saber es quién es este pastor y qué conversación ha sido la de entrambos, de do nasce que con tanta desenvoltura él se atreviese a hablaros”.

»A vuestra mucha discreción dejo, discretas pastoras, lo que mi alma sentiría, oyendo lo que mi hermana me contaba. Pero al fin, disimulando lo mejor que pude, le dije: “La mayor merced del mundo me has hecho, hermana Leonarda - que así se llama la turbadora de mi descanso-, en haberme quitado con tus ásperas razones el fastidio y desasosiego que me daban las importunas de ese pastor que dices, el cual es un forastero que habrá ocho días que está en esta nuestra aldea, en cuyo pensamiento ha cabido tanta arrogancia y locura que, doquiera que me vee, me trata de la manera que has visto, dándose a entender que tiene granjeada mi voluntad; y, aunque yo le he desengañado, quizá con más ásperas palabras de las que tú le dijiste, no por eso deja él de proseguir en su vano propósito; y a fe, hermana, que deseo que venga ya el nuevo día, para ir a decirle que si no se aparta de su vanidad, que espere el fin della que mis palabras siempre le han significado”. Y así era la verdad, dulces amigas, que diera yo porque ya fuera el alba cuanto pedírseme pudiera, sólo por ir a ver a mi Artidoro y desengañarle del error en que había caído, temerosa que con la aceda y

desabrida respuesta que mi hermana le había dado, él no se desdeñase y hiciese alguna cosa que en perjuicio de nuestro concierto viniese.

»Las largas noches del escabroso diciembre no dieron más pesadumbre al amante que del venidero día algún contento esperase, cuanto a mí me dio disgusto aquella, puesto que era de las cortas del verano, según deseaba la nueva luz, para ir a ver a la luz por quien mis ojos veían. Y así, antes que las estrellas perdiesen del todo la claridad, estando aún en duda si era de noche o de día, forzada de mi deseo, con la ocasión de ir a apacentar las ovejas, salí del aldea; y, dando más priesa al ganado de la acostumbrada para que caminase, llegué al lugar adonde otras veces solía hallar a Artidoro, el cual hallé solo y sin ninguno que dél noticia me diese, de que no pocos saltos me dio el corazón, que casi adivinó el mal que le estaba guardado. ¡Cuántas veces, viendo que no le hallaba, quise con mi voz herir el aire, llamando el amado nombre de mi Artidoro, y decir: “¡Ven, bien mío, que yo soy la verdadera Teolinda, que más que a sí te quiere y ama!”, sino que el temor que de otro que dél fuesen mis palabras oídas, me hizo tener más silencio del que quisiera. Y así, después que hube rodeado una y otra vez toda la ribera y el soto del manso Henares, me senté cansada al pie de un verde sauce, esperando que del todo el claro sol sus rayos por la faz de la tierra estendiese, para que con su claridad no quedase mata, cueva, espesura, choza ni cabaña que de mí mi bien no fuese buscado. Mas, apenas había dado la nueva luz lugar para discernir las colores, cuando luego se me ofreció a los ojos un cortecido álamo blanco, que delante de mí estaba, en el cual y en otros muchos vi escritas unas letras, que luego conocí ser de la mano de Artidoro allí fijadas; y, levantándome con priesa a ver lo que decían, vi, hermosas pastoras, que era esto:

Pastora en quien la belleza  
en tanto extremo se halla,  
que no hay a quien comparalla  
sino a tu misma crüeza.  
Mi firmeza y tu mudanza 5

han sembrado a mano llena  
tus promesas en la arena  
y en el viento mi esperanza.  
Nunca imaginara yo  
que cupiera en lo que vi, 10  
tras un dulce alegre sí, tan amargo y triste no.  
Mas yo no fuera engañado  
si pusiera en mi ventura,

así como en tu hermosura, 15  
los ojos que te han mirado.  
Pues cuanto tu gracia estraña  
promete, alegre y conierta,  
tanto turba y desconierta  
mi desdicha, y enmaraña. 20  
Unos ojos me engañaron,  
al parecer piadosos.  
¡Ay, ojos falsos, hermosos!,  
los que os ven, ¿en qué pecaron?  
Dime, pastora crüel: 25

¿a quién no podrá engañar  
tu sabio honesto mirar  
y tus palabras de miel?  
De mí ya está conoscido  
que, con menos que hicieras, 30  
días ha que me tuvieras  
preso, engañado y rendido.  
Las letras que fijaré  
en esta áspera corteza  
crecerán con más firmeza 35  
que no ha crecido tu fe;  
la cual pusiste en la boca  
y en vanos prometimientos,  
no firme al mar y a los vientos,  
como bien fundada roca. 40  
Tan terrible y rigurosa  
como víbora pisada,  
tan crüel como agraciada,  
tan falsa como hermosa;  
lo que manda tu crueldad 45  
cumpliré sin más rodeo,

pues nunca fue mi deseo  
contrario a tu voluntad.  
Yo moriré desterrado  
porque tú vivas contenta, 50  
mas mira que amor no sienta

del modo que me has tratado;  
porque, en la amorosa danza,  
aunque amor ponga estrechez,  
sobre el compás de firmeza 55  
no se sufre hacer mudanza.

Así como en la belleza  
pasas cualquiera mujer,  
creí yo que en el querer  
fueras de mayor firmeza; 60  
mas ya sé, por mi pasión,  
que quiso pintar natura  
un ángel en tu figura,  
y el tiempo en tu condición.  
Si quieres saber dó voy 65  
y el fin de mi triste vida,

la sangre por mí vertida  
te llevará donde estoy;  
y, aunque nada no te cale  
de nuestro amor y concierto, 70  
no niegues al cuerpo muerto  
el triste y último *vale*; que bien serás rigurosa,  
y más que un diamante dura,  
si el cuerpo y la sepultura 75  
no te vuelven piadosa.  
Y en caso tan desdichado  
tendré por dulce partido,  
si fui vivo aborrecido,  
ser muerto y por ti llorado. 80

»¿Qué palabras serán bastantes, pastoras, para daros a entender el extremo de dolor que ocupó mi corazón cuando claramente entendí que los versos que había leído eran de mi querido Artidoro? Mas no hay para qué encarescérosle, pues no llegó al punto que era menester para acabarme la vida, la cual, desde entonces acá tengo tan aborrecida, que no sentiría ni me podría venir mayor gusto que perderla. Los suspiros que entonces di, las lágrimas que derramé, las lástimas que hice, fueron tantas y tales, que ninguno me oyera que por loca no me

juzgara.

»En fin, yo quedé tal que, sin acordarme de lo que a mi honra debía, propuse de desamparar la cara patria, amados padres y queridos hermanos, y dejar con la guardia de sí mismo al simple ganado mío. Y, sin entremeterme en otras cuentas, mas de en aquellas que para mi gusto entendí ser necesarias, aquella misma mañana, abrazando mil veces la corteza donde las manos de mi Artidoro habían llegado, me partí de aquel lugar con intención de venir a estas riberas, donde sé que Artidoro tiene y hace su habitación, por ver si ha sido tan inconsiderado y cruel consigo que haya puesto en ejecución lo que en los últimos versos dejó escrito; que si así fuese, desde aquí os prometo, amigas mías, que no sea menor el deseo y presteza con que le siga en la muerte, que ha sido la voluntad con que le he amado en la vida. Mas, ¡ay de mí, y cómo creo que no hay sospecha que en mi daño sea que no salga verdadera!, pues ha ya nueve días que a estas frescas riberas he llegado, y en todos ellos no he sabido nuevas de lo que deseo; y quiera Dios que cuando las sepa, no sean las últimas que sospecho.» Veis aquí, discretas zagalas, el lamentable suceso de mi enamorada vida. Ya os he dicho quién soy y lo que busco; si algunas nuevas sabéis de mi contento, así la fortuna os conceda el mayor que deseáis, que no me las neguéis.

Con tantas lágrimas acompañaba la enamorada pastora las palabras que decía, que bien tuviera corazón de acero quien dellas no se doliera. Galatea y Florisa, que naturalmente eran de condición piadosa, no pudieron detener las suyas, ni menos dejaron, con las más blandas y eficaces razones que pudieron, de consolarla, dándole por consejo que se estuviese algunos días en su compañía; quizá haría la fortuna que en ellos algunas nuevas de Artidoro supiese; pues no permitiría el cielo que, por tan extraño engaño, acabase un pastor tan discreto como ella le pintaba el curso de sus verdes años; y que podría ser que Artidoro, habiendo con el discurso del tiempo vuelto a mejor discurso y propósito su pensamiento, volviese a ver la deseada patria y dulces amigos; y que por esto, allí mejor que en otra parte podía tener esperanza de hallarle. Con estas y otras razones, la pastora, algo consolada, holgó de quedarse con ellas, agradeciéndoles la merced que le hacían y el deseo que mostraban de procurar su contento. A esta sazón, la serena noche, aguijando por el cielo el estrellado carro, daba señal que el nuevo día se acercaba; y las pastoras, con el deseo y necesidad de reposo, se levantaron y del fresco jardín a sus estancias se fueron. Mas, apenas el claro sol había con sus calientes rayos deshecho y consumido la cerrada niebla que en las frescas mañanas por el aire suele estenderse, cuando las tres pastoras, dejando los ociosos lechos, al usado ejercicio de apascentar su ganado se volvieron, con harto diferentes pensamientos Galatea y Florisa del que la hermosa Teolinda



llevaba, la cual iba tan triste y pensativa que era maravilla. Y a esta causa, Galatea, por ver si podría en algo divertirla, le rogó que, puesta aparte un poco la melancolía, fuese servida de cantar algunos versos al son de la zampoña de Florisa. A esto respondió Teolinda: -Si la mucha causa que tengo de llorar, con la poca que de cantar tengo, entendiera que en algo se menguara, bien pudieras, hermosa Galatea, perdonarme porque no hiciera lo que me mandas; pero, por saber ya por experiencia que lo que mi lengua cantando pronuncia mi corazón llorando lo solemniza, haré lo que quieres, pues en ello, sin ir contra mi deseo, satisfaré el tuyo.

Y luego la pastora Florisa tocó su zampoña, a cuyo son Teolinda cantó este soneto:

## TEOLINDA

Sabido he por mi mal adónde llega  
la cruda fuerza de un notorio engaño,  
y cómo amor procura, con mi daño,  
darme la vida qu'el temor me niega.

Mi alma de las carnes se despega, 5  
siguiendo aquella que, por hado extraño, la tiene puesta en pena, en mal tamaño,  
qu'el bien la turba y el dolor sosiega.

Si vivo, vivo en fe de la esperanza,  
que, aunque es pequeña y débil, se sustenta 10  
siendo a la fuerza de mi amor asida.

¡Oh firme comenzar, frágil mudanza,  
amarga suma de una dulce cuenta,  
cómo acabáis por términos la vida!

No había bien acabado de cantar Teolinda el soneto que habéis oído, cuando las tres pastoras sintieron a su mano derecha, por la ladera de un fresco valle, el son de una zampoña, cuya suavidad era de suerte que todas se suspendieron y pararon, para con más atención gozar de la suave armonía. Y de allí a poco oyeron que al son de la zampoña el de un pequeño rabel se acordaba, con tanta gracia y destreza que las dos pastoras Galatea y Florisa estaban suspensas,

imaginando qué pastores podrían ser los que tan acordadamente sonaban, porque bien vieron que ninguno de los que ellas conocían, si Elicio no, era en la música tan diestro. A esta sazón, dijo Teolinda: -Si los oídos no me engañan, hermosas pastoras, yo creo que tenéis hoy en vuestras riberas a los dos nombrados y famosos pastores Tirsi y Damón, naturales de mi patria; a lo menos Tirsi, que en la famosa Compluto, villa fundada en las riberas de nuestro Henares, fue nacido. Y Damón, su íntimo y perfecto amigo, si no estoy mal informada, de las montañas de León trae su origen, y en la nombrada Mantua Carpentanea fue criado: tan aventajados los dos en todo género de discreción, sciencia y loables ejercicios, que no sólo en el circuito de nuestra comarca son conocidos, pero por todo el de la tierra conocidos y estimados. Y no penséis, pastoras, que el ingenio destos dos pastores sólo se estiende en saber lo que al pastoral estado se conviene, porque pasa tan adelante que lo escondido del cielo y lo no sabido de la tierra, por términos y modos concertados, enseñan y disputan. Y estoy confusa en pensar qué causa les habrá movido a dejar Tirsi su dulce y querida Fili, y Damón su hermosa y honesta Amarili: Fili de Tirsi, Amarili de Damón, tan amadas, que no hay en nuestra aldea, ni en los contornos della, persona, ni en la campaña, bosque, prado, fuente o río, que de sus encendidos y honestos amores no tengan entera noticia.

-Deja por agora, Teolinda -dijo Florisa-, de alabarnos estos pastores, que más nos importa escuchar lo que vienen cantando, pues no menor gracia me parece que tienen en la voz que en la música de los instrumentos.

-Pues ¿qué diréis -replicó Teolinda-cuando veáis que a todo eso sobrepuja la excelencia de su poesía, la cual es de manera que al uno ya le ha dado renombre de «divino» y al otro de «más que humano»?

Estando en estas razones las pastoras, vieron que por la ladera del valle por donde ellas mismas iban, se descubrían dos pastores de gallarda dispusición y estremado brío, de poca más edad el uno que el otro; tan bien vestidos, aunque pastorilmente, que más parecían en su talle y apostura bizarros cortesanos que serranos ganaderos. Traía cada uno un bien tallado pellico de blanca y finísima lana, guarnecidos de leonado y pardo, colores a quien más sus pastoras eran aficionadas; pendían de sus hombros sendos zurrone, no menos vistosos y adornados que los pellicos; venían de verde laurel y fresca yerba coronados, con los retorcidos cayados debajo del brazo puestos. No traían compañía alguna, y tan embebecidos en su música venían, que estuvieron gran espacio sin ver a las pastoras, que por la misma ladera iban caminando, no poco admiradas del gentil donaire y gracia de los pastores; los cuales, con concertadas voces, comenzando el uno y replicando el otro, esto que se sigue cantaban: DAMÓN TIRSI

## DAMÓN

Tirsi, qu'el solitario cuerpo alejas,  
con atrevido paso, aunque forzoso,  
de aquella luz con quien el alma dejas:  
¿cómo en son no te dueles doloroso,  
pues hay tanta razón para quejarte 5  
del fiero turbador de tu reposo?

## TIRSI

Damón, si el cuerpo miserable parte  
sin la mitad del alma en la partida,  
dejando della la más alta parte,  
¿de qué virtud o ser será movida 10  
mi lengua, que por muerta ya la cuento,  
pues con el alma se quedó la vida?  
Y, aunque muestro que veo, oigo y siento, fantasma soy por el amor formada,  
que con sola esperanza me sustento. 15

## DAMÓN

¡Oh Tirsi venturoso, y qué envidiada  
es tu suerte de mí con causa justa,  
por ser de las de amor más estremada!  
A ti sola la ausencia te disgusta,

y tienes el arrimo de esperanza 20  
con quien el alma en sus desdichas gusta.  
Pero, ¡ay de mí!, que adonde voy me alcanza la fría mano del temor esquivo  
y del desdén la rigurosa lanza.  
Ten la vida por muerta, aunque más viva 25  
se te muestre, pastor; que es cual la vela, que cuando muere, más su luz aviva.  
Ni con el tiempo que ligero vuela,  
ni con los medios que el ausencia ofrece, mi alma fatigada se consuela. 30

## TIRSI

El firme y puro amor jamás descrece  
en el discurso de la ausencia amarga;  
antes en fe de la memoria crece.  
Así que, en el ausencia, corta o larga,  
no vee remedio el amador perfecto 35  
de dar alivio a la amorosa carga.  
Que la memoria puesta en el objeto  
que amor puso en el alma, representa  
la amada imagen viva al intelecto.  
Y allí en blando silencio le da cuenta 40  
de su bien o su mal, según la mira  
amorosa, o de amor libre y esenta.

Y si ves que mi alma no sospira,  
es porque veo a Fili acá en mi pecho,  
de modo que a cantar me llama y tira. 45

## DAMÓN

Si en el hermoso rostro algún despecho  
vieras de Fili, cuando te partiste  
del bien que así te tiene satisfecho,  
yo sé, discreto Tirsi, que tan triste  
vinieras como yo cuitado vengo, 50  
que vi al contrario de lo que tú viste.

## TIRSI

Damón, con lo que he dicho me entretengo, y el extremo del mal de ausencia  
tiempo, y alegre voy, si voy, si quedo o vengo.  
Que aquella que nació por vivo ejemplo 55  
de la inmortal belleza acá en el suelo,

digna de mármol, de corona y templo,  
con su rara virtud y honesto celo  
así los ojos codiciosos ciega,  
que de ningún contrario me recelo. 60  
La estrecha sujeción que no le niega  
mi alma al alma suya, el alto intento,  
que sólo en la adorar para y sosiega,  
el tener deste amor conocimiento  
Fili, y corresponder a fe tan pura, 65

destierran el dolor, traen el contento.

## DAMÓN

¡Dichoso Tirsi, Tirsi con ventura,  
de la cual goces siglos prolongados  
en amoroso gusto, en paz segura!  
Yo, a quien los cortos implacables hados 70  
trujeron a un estado tan incierto,  
pobre en el merecer, rico en cuidados,  
bien es que muera; pues, estando muerto, no temeré a Amarili rigurosa,  
ni del ingrato amor el desconcierto. 75  
¡Oh más que el cielo, oh más que el sol hermosa, y para mí más dura que un  
diamante,  
presta a mi mal y al bien muy perezosa!  
¿Cuál ábrego, cuál cierzo, cuál levante  
te sopló de aspereza, que así ordenas 80  
que huiga el paso y no te esté delante?  
Yo moriré, pastora, en las ajenas  
tierras, pues tú lo mandas, condenado  
a hierros, muertes, yugos y cadenas.

## TIRSI

Pues con tantas ventajas te ha dotado, 85  
Damón amigo, el piadoso cielo

de un ingenio tan vivo y levantado,  
tiempla con él el llanto, tiempla el duelo, considerando bien que no contino  
nos quema el sol ni nos enfría el yelo. 90  
Quiero decir, que no sigue un camino  
siempre con pasos llanos reposados  
para darnos el bien nuestro destino;  
que alguna vez, por trances no pensados, lejos, al parecer, de gusto y gloria, 95  
nos lleva a mil contentos regalados.  
Revuelve, dulce amigo, la memoria  
por los honestos gustos que algún tiempo amor te dio por prendas de victoria;  
y si es posible, busca un pasatiempo 100  
que al alma engañe, en tanto que se pasa este desamorado airado tiempo.

### DAMÓN

Al yelo que por términos me abrasa,  
y al fuego que sin término me yela,  
¿quién le pondrá, pastor, término o tasa? 105  
En vano cansa, en vano se desvela  
el desfavorecido que procura  
a su gusto cortar de amor la tela,  
que si sobra en amor, falta en ventura.

Aquí cesó el estremado canto de los agraciados pastores, pero no el gusto que las pastoras habían recibido en escucharle; antes quisieran que tan presto no se acabara, por ser de aquellos que no todas veces suelen oírse. A esta sazón, los dos gallardos pastores encaminaban sus pasos hacia donde las pastoras estaban, de que pesó a Teolinda, porque temió ser dellos conocida; y por esta causa rogó a Galatea que de aquel lugar se desviasen. Ella lo hizo, y ellos pasaron, y, al pasar, oyó Galatea que Tirsi a Damón decía: -Estas riberas, amigo Damón, son en las que la hermosa Galatea apascienta su ganado, y adonde trae el suyo el enamorado Elicio, íntimo y particular amigo tuyo, a quien dé la ventura tal suceso en sus amores, cuanto merescen sus honestos y buenos deseos. Yo ha muchos días que no sé en qué términos le trae su suerte; pero, según he oído decir de la recatada condición de la discreta Galatea, por quien él muere, temo que más aína debe de estar quejoso que satisfecho.

-No me maravillaría yo deso -respondió Damón-, porque con cuantas gracias

y particulares dones que el cielo enriqueció a Galatea, al fin fin la hizo mujer, en cuyo frágil sujeto no se halla todas veces el conocimiento que se debe, y el que ha menester el que por ellas lo menos que aventura es la vida. Lo que yo he oído decir de los amores de Elicio, es que él adora a Galatea sin salir del término que a su honestidad se debe, y que la discreción de Galatea es tanta, que no da muestras de querer ni de aborrecer a Elicio. Y así, debe de andar el desdichado sujeto a mil contrarios accidentes, esperando en el tiempo y la fortuna, medios harto perdidos, que le alarguen o acorten la vida, de los cuales está más cierto el acortarla que el entretenerla.

Hasta aquí pudo oír Galatea de lo que della y de Elicio los pastores tratando iban, de que no recibió poco contento, por entender que lo que la fama de sus cosas publicaba era lo que a su limpia intención se debía. Y, desde aquel punto, determinó de no hacer por Elicio cosa que diese ocasión a que la fama no saliese verdadera en lo que de sus pensamientos publicaba. A este tiempo, los dos bizarros pastores, con vagarosos pasos, poco a poco hacia el aldea se encaminaban, con deseo de hallarse a las bodas del venturoso pastor Daranio, que con Silveria «de los verdes ojos» se casaba. Y ésta fue una de las causas por que ellos habían dejado sus rebaños y al lugar de Galatea se venían. Pero, ya que les faltaba poco del camino, a la mano derecha dél sintieron el son de un rabel que acordada y suavemente sonaba; y parándose Damón, trabó a Tirsi del brazo, diciéndole: -Espera y escucha un poco, Tirsi, que si los oídos no me mienten, el son que a ellos llega es del rabel de mi buen amigo Elicio, a quien dio naturaleza tanta gracia en muchas y diversas habilidades, cuanto las oirás si le escuchas y conocerás si le tratas.

-No creas, Damón -respondió Tirsi-, que hasta agora estoy por conocer las buenas partes de Elicio, que días ha que la fama me las tiene bien manifiestas. Pero calla agora, y escuchemos si canta alguna cosa que del estado de su vida nos dé algún manifiesto indicio.

-Bien dices -replicó Damón-, mas será menester, para que mejor le oigamos, que nos lleguemos por entre estas ramas, de modo que, sin ser vistos dél, de más cerca le escuchemos.

Hiciéronlo así, y pusiéronse en parte tan buena que ninguna palabra que Elicio dijo o cantó dejó de ser de ellos oída, y aun notada. Estaba Elicio en compañía de su amigo Erastro, de quien pocas veces se apartaba por el entretenimiento y gusto que de su buena conversación recibía, y todos o los más ratos del día en cantar y tañer se les pasaba. Y, a este punto, tocando su rabel Elicio y su zampoña Erastro, a estos versos dio principio Elicio:

# ELICIO

Rendido a un amoroso pensamiento,  
con mi dolor contento,  
sin esperar más gloria,

sigo la que persigue mi memoria,  
porque contino en ella se presenta 5  
de los lazos de amor libre y esenta.

Con los ojos del alma aun no es posible  
ver el rostro apacible  
de la enemiga mía,  
gloria y honor de cuanto el cielo cría; 10  
y los del cuerpo quedan, sólo en vella,  
ciegos por haber visto el sol en ella.

¡Oh dura servidumbre, aunque gustosa!  
¡Oh mano poderosa  
de Amor, que así pudiste 15  
quitarme, ingrato, el bien que prometiste de hacerme, cuando libre me burlaba  
de ti, del arco tuyo y de tu aljaba!

¡Cuánta belleza, cuánta blanca mano  
me mostraste, tirano! 20  
¡Cuánto te fatigaste  
primero que a mi cuello el lazo echaste!  
Y aun quedaras vencido en la pelea,  
si no hubiera en el mundo Galatea.

Ella fue sola la que sola pudo 25  
rendir el golpe crudo

el corazón esento,  
y avasallar el libre pensamiento,  
el cual, si a su querer no se rindiera,  
por de mármol o acero le tuviera. 30



¿Qué libertad puede mostrar su fuero  
ante el rostro severo,  
y más quel sol hermoso,  
de la que turba y cansa mi reposo?  
¡Ay rostro, que en el suelo 35  
descubres cuanto bien encierra el cielo!

¿Cómo pudo juntar naturaleza  
tal rigor y aspereza  
con tanta hermosura,  
tanto valor y condición tan dura? 40  
Mas mi dicha consiente  
en mi daño juntar lo diferente.

Esle tan fácil a mi corta suerte  
ver con la amarga muerte  
junta la dulce vida, 45  
y estar su mal a do su bien se anida,  
que entre contrarios veo  
que mengua la esperanza y no el deseo.

No cantó más el enamorado pastor, ni quisieron más detenerse Tirsi y Damón; antes, haciendo de sí gallarda e improvisa muestra, hacia donde estaba Elicio se fueron; el cual, como los vio, conociendo a su amigo Damón, con increíble alegría le salió a rescebir, diciéndole: -¿Qué ventura ha ordenado, discreto Damón, que la des tan buena con tu presencia a estas riberas, que grandes tiempos ha que te desean?

-No puede ser sino buena -respondió Damón-, pues me ha traído a verte, ¡oh Elicio!, cosa que yo estimo en tanto, cuanto es el deseo que dello tenía, y la larga ausencia y la amistad que te tengo me obligaba. Pero si por alguna cosa puedes decir lo que has dicho, es porque tienes delante al famoso Tirsi, gloria y honor del castellano suelo.

Cuando Elicio oyó decir que aquél era Tirsi, dél solamente por fama conocido, rescibiéndole con mucha cortesía, le dijo: -Bien conforma tu agradable semblante, nombrado Tirsi, con lo que de tu valor y discreción en las cercanas y apartadas tierras la parlera fama pregona. Y así, a mí, a quien tus escriptos han admirado e inclinado a desear conocerte y servirte, puedes, de hoy más, tener y tratar como verdadero amigo.

-Es tan conocido lo que yo gano en eso -respondió Tirsi-, que en vano pregonaría la fama lo que la afición que me tienes te hace decir que de mí pregonas, si no conociese la merced que me haces en querer ponerme en el número de tus amigos; y, porque entre los que lo son las palabras de comedimiento han de ser excusadas, cesen las nuestras en este caso, y den las obras testimonio de nuestras voluntades.

-La mía será contino de servirte -replicó Elicio-, como lo verás, ¡oh Tirsi!, si el tiempo o la fortuna me ponen en estado que valga algo para ello; porque el que agora tengo, puesto que no le trocaría con otro de mayores ventajas, es tal, que apenas me deja con libertad de ofrecer el deseo.

-Tiniendo como tienes el tuyo en lugar tan alto -dijo Damón-, por locura tendría procurar bajarle a cosa que menos fuese. Y así, amigo Elicio, no digas mal del estado en que te hallas, porque yo te prometo que, cuando se comparase con el mío, hallaría yo ocasión de tenerte más envidia que lástima.

-Bien parece, Damón -dijo Elicio-, que ha muchos días que faltas destas riberas, pues no sabes lo que en ellas amor me hace sentir; y si esto no es, no debes conocer ni tener experiencia de la condición de Galatea; que si della tuvieses noticia, trocarías en lástima la envidia que de mí tendrías.

-Quien ha gustado de la condición de Amarili, ¿qué cosa nueva puede esperar de la de Galatea? -respondió Damón.

-Si la estada tuya en estas riberas -replicó Elicio- fuere tan larga como yo deseo, tú, Damón, conocerás y verás en ella, y oirás en otros, cómo andan en igual balanza su crueldad y gentileza: estremos que acaban la vida al que su desventura trujo a términos de adorarla.

-En las riberas de nuestro Henares -dijo a esta sazón Tirsi- más fama tiene Galatea de hermosa que de cruel; pero, sobre todo, se dice que es discreta; y si esta es la verdad, como lo debe ser, de su discreción nasce conocerse, y de conocerse estimarse, y de estimarse no querer perderse, y del no querer perderse viene el no querer contentarte; y viendo tú, Elicio, cuán mal corresponde a tus deseos, das nombre de crueldad a lo que deberías llamar honroso recato; y no me maravillo, que, en fin, es condición propia de los enamorados poco favorecidos.

-Razón tendrías en lo que has dicho, ¡oh Tirsi! -replicó Elicio-, cuando mis deseos se desviarán del camino que a su honra y honestidad conviene; pero si van tan medidos como a su valor y crédito se debe, ¿de qué sirve tanto desdén, tan amargas y desabridas respuestas, y tan a la clara esconder el rostro al que tiene puesta toda su gloria en sólo verle?

-¡Ay, Tirsi, Tirsi! -respondió Elicio-, y cómo te debe tener el amor puesto en lo alto de sus contentos, pues con tan sosegado espíritu hablas de sus efectos. No

sé yo cómo viene bien lo que tú agora dices con lo que un tiempo decías cuando cantabas:

«¡Ay, de cuán ricas esperanzas vengo  
al deseo más pobre y encogido!»;

con lo demás que a esto añadiste.

Hasta este punto había estado callando Erastro, mirando lo que entre los pastores pasaba, admirado de ver su gentil donaire y apostura, con las muestras que cada uno daba de la mucha discreción que tenía. Pero, viendo que, de lance en lance, a razonar de casos de amor se habían reducido, como aquél que tan experimentado en ellos estaba, rompió el silencio y dijo: -Bien creo, discretos pastores, que la larga experiencia os habrá mostrado que no se puede reducir a continuado término la condición de los enamorados corazones, los cuales, como se gobiernan por voluntad ajena, a mil contrarios accidentes están sujetos. Y así, tú, famoso Tirsi, no tienes de qué maravillarte de lo que Elicio ha dicho, ni él tampoco de lo que tú dices, ni traer por ejemplo aquello que él dice que cantabas; ni menos lo que yo sé que cantaste cuando dijiste:

«La amarillez y la flaqueza mía»;

donde claramente mostrabas el afligido estado que entonces poseías; porque de allí a poco llegaron a nuestras cabañas las nuevas de tu contento, solemnizadas en aquellos versos tan nombrados tuyos, que si mal no me acuerdo comenzaban:

«Sale el aurora y de su fértil manto»;

por do claro se conoce la diferencia que hay de tiempos a tiempos, y cómo con ellos suele mudar amor los estados, haciendo que hoy se ría el que ayer lloraba y que mañana llore el que hoy ríe. Y, por tener yo tan conocida esta su condición, no puede la aspereza y desdén zahareño de Galatea acabar de derribar mis esperanzas, puesto que yo no espero della otra cosa si no es que se contente de que yo la quiera.

-El que no esperase buen suceso de un tan enamorado y medido deseo como el que has mostrado, ¡oh pastor! -respondió Damón-, renombre más que de

desesperado merescía. Por cierto que es gran cosa la que de Galatea pretendes. Pero dime, pastor, así ella te la conceda: ¿es posible que tan a regla tienes tu deseo, que no se adelanta a desear más de lo que has dicho?

-Bien puedes creerle, amigo Damón -dijo Elicio-, porque el valor de Galatea no da lugar a que della otra cosa se desee ni se espere; y aun ésta es tan difícil de obtenerse, que a veces a Erastro se entibia la esperanza y a mí se enfriaba, de manera que él tiene por cierto, y yo por averiguado, que primero ha de llegar la muerte que el cumplimiento della. Mas, porque no es razón recibir tan honrados huéspedes con los amargos cuentos de nuestras miserias, quédense ellas aquí y recojámonos al aldea, donde descansaréis del pesado trabajo del camino, y con más sosiego, si dello gustáredes, entenderéis el desasosiego nuestro.

Holgaron todos de acomodarse a la voluntad de Elicio, el cual y Erastro, recogiendo sus ganados, puesto que era algunas horas antes de lo acostumbrado, en compañía de los dos pastores, hablando en diversas cosas, aunque todas enamoradas, hacia el aldea se encaminaron. Mas, como todo el pasatiempo de Erastro era tañer y cantar, así por esto como por el deseo que tenía de saber si los dos nuevos pastores lo hacían tan bien como dellos se sonaba, por moverlos y convidarlos a que otro tanto hiciesen, rogó a Elicio que su rabel tocase, al son del cual así comenzó a cantar:

## ERASTRO

Ante la luz de unos serenos ojos

que al sol dan luz con que da luz al suelo, mi alma así se enciende, que recelo  
que presto tendrá muerte sus despojos.

Con la luz se conciertan los manojos 5  
de aquellos rayos del señor de Delo:  
tales son los cabellos de quien suelo  
adorar su beldad puesto de hinojos.

¡Oh clara luz, oh rayos del sol claro,  
antes el mismo sol! De vos espero 10  
sólo que consintáis que Erastro os quiera.

Si en esto el cielo se me muestra avaro, antes que acabe del dolor que muero,

haced, ¡oh rayos!, que de un rayo muera.

No les pareció mal el soneto a los pastores, ni les descontentó la voz de Erastro; que, puesto que no era de las muy estremadas, no dejaba de ser de las acordadas. Y luego Elicio, movido del ejemplo de Erastro, le hizo que tocase su zampoña, al son de la cual este soneto dijo:

## ELICIO

¡Ay, que al alto designio que se cría  
en mi amoroso firme pensamiento,  
contradicen el cielo, el fuego, el viento, la agua, la tierra y la enemiga mía!

Contrarios son de quien temer debería, 5  
y abandonar la empresa el sano intento;  
mas, ¿quién podrá estorbar lo qu'el violento hado implacable quiere, amor  
porfía?

El alto cielo, amor, el viento, el fuego, la agua, la tierra y mi enemiga bella,  
10 cada cual con fuerza, y con mi hado,

mi bien estorbe, esparza, abrase y luego deshaga mi esperanza; que, aun sin  
ella, imposible es dejar lo comenzado.

En acabando Elicio, luego Damón, al son de la misma zampoña de Erastro,  
desta manera comenzó a cantar: DAMÓN

Más blando fui que no la blanda cera,  
cuando imprimí en mi alma la figura  
de la bella Amarili, esquiva y dura  
cual duro mármol o silvestre fiera.

Amor me puso entonces en la esfera 5  
más alta de su bien y su ventura;  
y agora temo que la sepultura  
ha de acabar mi presunción primera.

Arrimóse el amor a la esperanza  
cual vid al olmo y fue subiendo apriesa; 10  
mas faltóle el humor, y cesó el vuelo:

no el de mis ojos, que por larga usanza, Fortuna sabe bien que jamás cesa  
de dar tributo al rostro, al pecho, al suelo.

Acabó Damón y comenzó Tirsi, al son de los instrumentos de los tres  
pastores, a cantar este soneto:

## **TIRSI**

Por medio de los filos de la muerte  
rompió mi fe, y a tal punto he llegado,  
que no envidio el más alto y rico estado que encierra humana venturosa suerte.

Todo este bien nació de sólo verte, 5  
hermosa Fili, ¡oh Fili!, a quien el hado dotó de un ser tan raro y estremado,  
que en risa el llanto, el mal en bien convierte.

Como amansa el rigor de la sentencia  
si el condenado el rostro del rey mira, 10  
y es ley que nunca tuerce su derecho,

así ante tu hermosísima presencia  
la muerte huye, el daño se retira,  
y deja en su lugar vida y provecho.

Al acabar de Tirsi, todos los instrumentos de los pastores formaron tan agradable música, que causaba grande contento a quien la oía; y más, ayudándoles de entre las espesas ramas mil suertes de pintados pajarillos que, con divina armonía, parece que como a coros les iban respondiendo. Desta suerte habían caminado un trecho, cuando llegaron a una antigua ermita que en la ladera de un montecillo estaba, no tan desviada del camino que dejase de oírse el son de una arpa que dentro, al parecer, tañían; el cual oído por Erastro, dijo: - Deteneos, pastores, que según pienso, hoy oiremos todos lo que ha días que yo deseo oír, que es la voz de un agraciado mozo que dentro de aquella ermita habrá

doce o catorce días se ha venido a vivir una vida más áspera de lo que a mí me parece que puedan llevar sus pocos años, y algunas veces que por aquí he pasado, he sentido tocar una arpa y entonar una voz tan suave que me ha puesto en grandísimo deseo de escucharla; pero siempre he llegado a punto que él le ponía en su canto. Y, aunque con hablarle he procurado hacerme su amigo, ofreciéndole a su servicio todo lo que valgo y puedo, nunca he podido acabar con él que me descubra quién es y las causas que le han movido a venir de tan pocos años a ponerse en tanta soledad y estrechez.

Lo que Erastro decía del mozo y nuevo ermitaño puso en los pastores el mismo deseo de conocerle que él tenía. Y así, acordaron de llegarse a la ermita de modo que, sin ser sentidos, pudiesen entender lo que cantaba antes que llegasen a hablarle; y, haciéndolo así, les sucedió tan bien, que se pusieron de parte donde, sin ser vistos ni sentidos, oyeron que al son de la arpa, el que estaba dentro semejantes versos decía: Si han sido el cielo, amor y la fortuna, sin ser de mí ofendidos,

contentos de ponerme en tal estado,  
en vano al aire envió mis gemidos,  
en vano hasta la luna 5  
se vio mi pensamiento levantado.  
¡Oh riguroso hado!,  
¡por cuán estrañas desusadas vías  
mis dulces alegrías  
han venido a parar en tal extremo, 10  
que estoy muriendo y aun la vida temo!

Contra mí mismo estoy ardiendo en ira,  
por ver que sufro tanto  
sin romper este pecho, y dar al viento  
esta alma, qu'en mitad del duro llanto 15  
al corazón retira  
las últimas reliquias del aliento;  
y allí de nuevo siento  
que acude la esperanza a darme fuerza,  
y, aunque fingida, a mi vivir es fuerza, 20  
y no es piedad del cielo, porque ordena  
a larga vida dar más larga pena.

Del caro amigo el lastimado pecho  
enterneció este mío,

y la empresa difícil tomé a cargo. 25  
¡Oh discreto fingir de desvarío!  
¡Oh nunca visto hecho!  
¡Oh caso gustosísimo y amargo!  
¡Cuán dadivoso y largo  
amor se mostró por bien ajeno, 30  
y cuán avaro y lleno  
de temor y lealtad para conmigo!  
Pero a más nos obliga un firme amigo.

Injustas pagas a voluntades justas  
a cada paso vemos, 35  
dadas por mano de fortuna esquivas;  
y de ti, falso amor, de quien sabemos  
que te alegras y gustas  
de que un firme amador muriendo viva,  
abrasadora y viva 40  
llama se encienda en tus ligeras alas,  
y las buenas y malas  
saetas en ceniza se resuelvan,  
o al dispararlas, contra ti se vuelvan.

¿Por qué camino, con qué fraude y mañas, 45  
por qué extraño rodeo  
entera posesión de mí tomaste?  
Y ¿cómo en mi piadoso alto deseo  
y en mis limpias entrañas  
la sana voluntad, falso, trocaste? 50  
¿Juicio habrá que baste  
a llevar en paciencia el ver, perjurio,  
que entré libre y seguro  
a tratar de tus glorias y tus penas,  
y agora al cuello siento tus cadenas? 55

Mas no de ti, sino de mí sería  
razón que me quejase,  
que a tu fuego no hice resistencia.  
Yo me entregué, yo hice que soprase  
el viento que dormía 60



de la ocasión con furia y violencia.  
Justísima sentencia  
ha dado el cielo contra mí que muera,  
aunque sólo se espera  
de mi infelice hado y desventura 65  
que no acabe mi mal la sepultura.

¡Oh amigo dulce, oh dulce mi enemiga,  
Timbrio y Nísida bella,  
dichosos juntamente y desdichados!  
¿Cuál dura, inicua, inexorable estrella, 70  
de mi daño enemiga;  
cuál fuerza injusta de implacables hados nos tiene así apartados?  
¡Oh miserable, humana, frágil suerte!  
¡Cuán presto se convierte 75  
en súbito pesar un alegría,  
y sigue oscura noche al claro día!

De la inestabilidad, de la mudanza  
de las humanas cosas,  
¿cuál será el atrevido que se fíe? 80  
Con alas vuela el tiempo presurosas,  
y tras sí la esperanza  
se lleva del que llora y del que ríe;  
y ya que el cielo envíe  
su favor, sólo sirve al que con celo 85  
sancto levanta al cielo  
el alma, en fuego de su amor deshecha,  
y al que no, más le daña que aprovecha.

Yo, como puedo, buen señor, levanto  
la una y otra palma, 90  
los ojos, la intención al cielo sancto,  
por quien espera el alma  
ver vuelto en risa su continuo llanto.

Con un profundo suspiro dio fin al lastimado canto el recogido mozo que dentro de la ermita estaba. Y, sintiendo los pastores que adelante no procedía, sin detenerse más, todos juntos entraron en ella, donde vieron a un cabo, sentado

encima de una dura piedra, a un dispuesto y agraciado mancebo, al parecer de edad de veinte y dos años, vestido de un tosco buriel con los pies descalzos y una áspera sogá ceñida al cuerpo, que de cordón le servía. Estaba con la cabeza inclinada a un lado, y la una mano asida de la parte de la túnica que sobre el corazón caía, y el otro brazo a la otra parte flojamente derribado. Y, por verle desta manera, y por no haber hecho movimiento al entrar de los pastores, claramente conocieron que desmayado estaba, como era la verdad, porque la profunda imaginación de sus miserias, muchas veces a semejante término le conducía. Llegóse a él Erastro, y, trabándole recio del brazo, le hizo volver en sí, aunque tan desacordado que parecía que de un pesado sueño recordaba, las cuales muestras de dolor no pequeño le causaron a los que le veían, y luego Erastro le dijo: -¿Qué es esto, señor? ¿Qué es lo que siente vuestro fatigado pecho? No dejéis de decirlo, que presentes tenéis quien no rehusará fatiga alguna por dar remedio a la vuestra.

-No son esos -respondió el mancebo con voz algo desmayada-los primeros ofrecimientos, comedido pastor, que me has hecho, ni aun serían los últimos que yo acertase a servir si pudiese; pero hame traído la Fortuna a términos, que ni ellos pueden aprovecharme ni yo satisfacerlos más de con el deseo. Éste puedes tomar en cuenta del bueno que me ofreces; y si otra cosa de mí deseas saber, el tiempo, que no encubre nada, te dirá más de lo que yo quisiera.

-Si al tiempo dejás que me satisfaga de lo que me dices -respondió Erastro-poco debe agradecerse tal paga, pues él, a pesar nuestro, echa en las plazas lo más secreto de nuestros corazones.

A este tiempo, todos los demás pastores le rogaron que la ocasión de su tristeza les contase, especialmente Tirsi, que con eficaces razones le persuadió, y dio a entender que no hay mal en esta vida que con ella su remedio no se alcanzase, si ya la muerte, atajadora de los humanos discursos, no se opone a ellos. Y a esto añadió otras palabras que al obstinado mozo movieron a que con la suyas hiciese satisfechos a todos de lo que dél saber deseaban. Y así, les dijo: -Puesto que a mí me fuera mejor, ¡oh agradable compañía!, vivir lo poco que me queda de vida sin ella, y haberme recogido a mayor soledad de la que tengo, todavía, por no mostrarme esquivo a la voluntad que me habéis mostrado, determino de contaros todo aquello que entiendo bastará, y los términos por donde la mudable Fortuna me ha traído al estrecho estado en que me hallo; pero, porque me parece que es ya algo tarde, y, según mis desventuras son muchas, sería posible que antes de contároslas la noche sobreviniese, será bien que todos juntos a la aldea nos vamos, pues a mí no me hace otra descomodidad de hacer el camino esta noche que mañana tenía determinado, y esto me es forzoso, pues de vuestra aldea soy proveído de lo que he menester para mi sustento, y por el

camino, como mejor pudiere, os haré ciertos de mis desgracias.

A todos pareció bien lo que el mozo ermitaño decía, y, puniéndole en medio dellos, con vagarosos pasos tornaron a seguir el camino de la aldea, y luego el lastimado ermitaño, con muestras de mucho dolor, desta manera al cuento de sus miserias dio principio: -«En la antigua y famosa ciudad de Jerez, cuyos moradores de Minerva y Marte son favorecidos, nació Timbrio, un valeroso caballero, del cual, si sus virtudes y generosidad de ánimo hubiese de contar, a difícil empresa me pondría. Basta saber que, no sé si por la mucha bondad suya o por la fuerza de las estrellas, que a ello me inclinaban, yo procuré, por todas las vías que pude, serle particular amigo, y fueme el cielo en esto tan favorable que, casi olvidándose a los que nos conocían el nombre de Timbrio y el de Silerio -que es el mío-, solamente *los dos amigos* nos llamaban, haciendo nosotros, con nuestra continua conversación y amigables obras, que tal opinión no fuese vana.

»Desta suerte los dos, con increíble gusto y contento, los mozos años pasábamos, ora en el campo en el ejercicio de la caza, ora en la ciudad en el del honroso Marte entreteniéndonos, hasta que un día, de los muchos aciagos que el enemigo tiempo en el discurso de mi vida me ha hecho ver, le sucedió a mi amigo Timbrio una pesada pendencia con un poderoso caballero, vecino de la misma ciudad. Llegó a término la questión que el caballero quedó lastimado en la honra, y a Timbrio fue forzoso ausentarse, por dar lugar a que la furiosa discordia cesase que entre los dos parentales se comenzaba a encender, dejando escrita una carta a su enemigo, dándole aviso que le hallaría en Italia, en la ciudad de Milán o de Nápoles, todas las veces que, como caballero, de su agravio satisfacerse quisiese. Con esto cesaron los bandos entre los parientes de entrambos, y ordenóse que a igual y mortal batalla el ofendido caballero, que Pransiles se llamaba, a Timbrio desafiase, y que, en hallando campo seguro para la batalla, se avisase a Timbrio. Ordenó más mi suerte: que al tiempo que esto sucedió yo me hallase tan falto de salud, que apenas del lecho levantarme podía, y por esta ocasión se me pasó la de seguir a mi amigo dondequiera que fuese, el cual al partir se despidió de mí con no pequeño descontento, encargándome que, en cobrando fuerzas, le buscase, que en la ciudad de Nápoles le hallaría. Y así, se partió, dejándome con más pena que yo sabré agora significaros. Mas, al cabo de pocos días, pudiendo en mí más el deseo que de verle tenía, que no la flaqueza que me fatigaba, me puse luego en camino; y, para que con más brevedad y más seguro le hiciese, la ventura me ofreció la comodidad de cuatro galeras que en la famosa Isla de Cádiz, de partida para Italia, prestas y aparejadas estaban. Embarquéme en una dellas, y, con próspero viento, en tiempo breve, las riberas catalanas descubrimos; y, habiendo dado fondo en un

puerto dellas, yo, que algo fatigado de la mar venía, asegurado primero de que por aquella noche las galeras de allí no partirían, me desembarqué con solo un amigo y un criado mío. Y no creo que debía de ser la media noche, cuando los marineros y los que a cargo las galeras llevaban, viendo que la serenidad del cielo calma o próspero viento señalaba, por no perder la buena ocasión que se les ofrecía, a la segunda guardia hicieron la señal de partida, y, zarpando las áncoras, dieron con mucha presteza los remos al sesgo mar y las velas al sosegado viento. Y fue, como digo, con tanta diligencia hecho que, por mucha que yo puse para volver a embarcarme, no fui a tiempo; y así, me hube de quedar en la marina con el enojo que podrá considerar quien por semejantes y ordinarios casos habrá pasado, porque quedaba mal acomodado de todas las cosas que para seguir mi viaje por tierra eran necesarias. Mas, considerando que, de quedarme allí, poco remedio se esperaba, acordé de volverme a Barcelona, adonde, como ciudad más grande, podría ser hallar quien me acomodase de lo que me faltaba, correspondiendo a Jerez o a Sevilla con la paga dello.

»Amanecióme en estos pensamientos, y, con determinación de ponerlos en efecto, aguardaba a que el día más se levantase; y, estando a punto de partirme, sentí un grande estruendo por la tierra y que toda la gente corría a la calle más principal del pueblo, y, preguntando a uno qué era aquello, me respondió: “Llegaos, señor, aquella esquina, que a voz de pregonero sabréis lo que deseáis”. Hícelo así, y lo primero en que puse los ojos fue en un alto crucifijo y en mucho tumulto de gente, señales que alguno sentenciado a muerte entre ellos venía, todo lo cual me certificó la voz del pregonero, que declaraba que, por haber sido salteador y bandolero, la justicia mandaba ahorcar un hombre, que, como a mí llegó, luego conocí que era el mi buen amigo Timbrio, el cual venía a pie, con unas esposas a las manos y una soga a la garganta, los ojos enclavados en el crucifijo que delante llevaba, diciendo y protestando a los clérigos que con él iban, que por la estrecha cuenta que pensaba dar en breves horas al verdadero Dios, cuyo retrato delante los ojos tenía, que nunca en todo el discurso de su vida había cometido cosa por donde públicamente mereciese recibir tan ignominiosa muerte; y que a todos rogaba rogasen a los jueces le diesen algún término para probar cuán inocente estaba de lo que le acusaban.

»Considérese aquí, si tanto la consideración pudo levantarse, cuál quedaría yo al horrendo espectáculo que a los ojos se me ofrecía. No sé qué os diga, señores, sino que quedé tan embelesado y fuera de mí, y de tal modo quedé ajeno de todos mis sentidos, que una estatua de mármol debiera de parecer a quien en aquel punto me miraba. Pero ya que el confuso rumor del pueblo, las levantadas voces de los pregoneros, las lastimosas palabras de Timbrio y las consoladoras de los sacerdotes, y el verdadero conocimiento de mi buen amigo, me hubieron

vuelto de aquel embelesamiento primero, y la alterada sangre acudió a dar ayuda al desmayado corazón, y despertado en él la cólera debida a la notoria venganza de la ofensa de Timbrio, sin mirar al peligro que me ponía, sino al de Timbrio, por ver si podía librarle, o seguirle hasta la otra vida, con poco temor de perder la mía, eché mano a la espada, y con más que ordinaria furia entré por medio de la confusa turba, hasta que llegué adonde Timbrio iba, el cual, no sabiendo si en provecho suyo tantas espadas se habían desenvainado, con perplejo y angustiado ánimo, estaba mirando lo que pasaba, hasta que yo le dije: “¿Adónde está, ¡oh Timbrio!, el esfuerzo de tu valeroso pecho? ¿Qué esperas, o qué aguardas? ¿Por qué no te favoreces de la ocasión presente? Procura, ¡oh verdadero amigo!, salvar tu vida, en tanto que esta mía hace escudo a la sinrazón que, según creo, aquí te es hecha”. Estas palabras mías y el conocerme Timbrio, fue parte para que, olvidado todo temor, rompiese las ataduras o esposas de las manos; mas todo su ardimiento fuera poco si los sacerdotes, de compasión movidos, no ayudaran su deseo, los cuales, tomándole en peso, a pesar de los que estorbarlo querían, se entraron con él en una iglesia que allí junto estaba, dejándome a mí en medio de toda la justicia, que con grande instancia procuraba prenderme, como al fin lo hizo, pues a tantas fuerzas juntas no fue poderosa la sola mía de resistirlas. Y, con más ofensas que, a mi parecer, mi pecado merecía, a la cárcel pública, herido de dos heridas, me llevaron.

»El atrevimiento mío, y el haberse escapado Timbrio, aumentó mi culpa y el enojo en los jueces, los cuales, condenando bien el exceso por mí cometido, pareciéndoles ser justo que yo muriese, y luego luego, la cruel sentencia pronunciaron, y para otro día guardaban la ejecución. Llegó a Timbrio esta triste nueva allá en la iglesia donde estaba, y, según yo después supe, más alteración le dio mi sentencia que le había dado la de su muerte; y, por librarme della, de nuevo se ofrecía a entregarse otra vez en poder de la justicia, pero los sacerdotes le aconsejaron que servía de poco aquello, antes era añadir mal a mal y desgracia a desgracia, pues no sería parte el entregarse él para que yo fuese suelto, pues no lo podía ser sin ser castigado de la culpa cometida. No fueron menester pocas razones para persuadir a Timbrio no se diese a la justicia; pero sosegóse con proponer en su ánimo de hacer otro día por mí lo que yo por él había hecho, por pagarme en la misma moneda, o morir en la demanda. De toda su intención fui avisado por un clérigo que a confesarme vino, con el cual le envié a decir que el mejor remedio que mi desdicha podía tener era que él se salvase, y procurase que, con toda brevedad, el virrey de Barcelona supiese todo el suceso antes que la justicia de aquel pueblo la ejecutase en él. Supe también la causa por que a mi amigo Timbrio llevaban al amargo suplicio, según me contó el mismo sacerdote que os he dicho; y fue que, viniendo Timbrio caminando por el reino de

Cataluña, a la salida de Perpiñán, dieron con él una cantidad de bandoleros, los cuales tenían por señor y cabeza a un valeroso caballero catalán, que por ciertas enemistades andaba en la compañía, como es ya antiguo uso de aquel reino, cuando los enemistados son personas de cuenta, salirse a ella y hacerse todo el mal que pueden, no solamente en las vidas, pero en las haciendas: cosa ajena de toda cristiandad y digna de toda lástima.

»Sucedió, pues, que, al tiempo que los bandoleros estaban ocupados en quitar a Timbrio lo que llevaba, llegó en aquella sazón el señor y caudillo dellos, y como en fin era caballero, no quiso que delante de sus ojos agravio alguno a Timbrio se hiciese; antes, pareciéndole hombre de valor y prendas, le hizo mil cortesés ofrecimientos, rogándole que por aquella noche se quedase con él en un lugar allí cerca, que otro día por la mañana le daría una señal de seguro para que sin temor alguno pudiese seguir su camino hasta salir de aquella provincia. No pudo Timbrio dejar de hacer lo que el cortés caballero le pedía, obligado de las buenas obras dél rescibidas. Fuéronse juntos, y llegaron a un pequeño lugar, donde por los del pueblo alegremente rescebidos fueron. Mas la Fortuna, que hasta entonces con Timbrio se había burlado, ordenó que aquella mesma noche diesen con los bandoleros una compañía de soldados, sólo para este efecto juntada; y, habiéndolos cogido de sobresalto, con facilidad los desbarataron, y, puesto que no pudieron prender al caudillo, prendieron y mataron a otros muchos, y uno de los presos fue Timbrio, a quien tuvieron por un famoso salteador que en aquella compañía andaba; y, según se debe imaginar, sin duda le debía de parecer mucho, pues con atestiguar los demás presos que aquél no era el que pensaban, contando la verdad de todo el caso, pudo tanto la malicia en el pecho de los jueces que, sin más averiguaciones, le sentenciaron a muerte, la cual fuera puesta en efecto si el cielo, favorecedor de los justos intentos, no ordenara que las galeras se fuesen y yo en tierra quedase, para hacer lo que hasta agora os he contado que hice.

»Estábase Timbrio en la iglesia, y yo en la cárcel, ordenando de partirse aquella noche a Barcelona; y yo, que esperando estaba en qué pararía la furia de los ofendidos jueces, cuando con otra mayor desventura suya, Timbrio y yo de la nuestra fuimos librados. Mas, ¡ójala fuera servido el cielo que en mí solo se ejecutara la furia de su ira, con tal que la alzarán de aquel pequeño y desventurado pueblo, que a los filos de mil bárbaras espadas tuvo puesto el miserable cuello! Poco más de media noche sería, hora acomodada a facinorosos insultos, y en la cual la trabajada gente suele entregar los trabajados miembros en brazos del dulce sueño, cuando improvisamente por todo el pueblo se levantó una confusa vocería, diciendo: “¡Al arma, al arma, que turcos hay en tierra!” Los ecos destas tristes voces ¿quién duda que no causaron espanto en los mujeriles

pechos, y aun pusieron confusión en los fuertes ánimos de los varones? No sé qué os diga, señores, sino que en un punto la miserable tierra comenzó a arder con tanta gana, que no parecía sino que las mismas piedras, con que las casas fabricadas estaban, ofrecían acomodada materia al encendido fuego, que todo lo consumía. A la luz de las furiosas llamas se vieron relucir los bárbaros alfanjes y parecerse las blancas tocas de la turca gente, que, encendida, con sigures o hachas de duro acero, las puertas de las casas derribaban, y, entrando en ellas, de cristianos despojos salían cargados. Cuál llevaba la fatigada madre, y cuál el pequeñuelo hijo, que con cansados y débiles gemidos, la madre por el hijo, y el hijo por la madre, preguntaba; y alguno sé que hubo que con sacrílega mano estorbó el cumplimiento de los justos deseos de la casta recién desposada virgen y del esposo desdichado, ante cuyos llorosos ojos quizá vio coger el fruto de que el sin ventura pensaba gozar en tiempo breve. La confusión era tanta, tantos los gritos y mezclas de las voces tan diferentes, que gran espanto ponían. La fiera y endiablada canalla, viendo cuán poca resistencia se les hacía, se atrevieron a entrar en los sagrados templos y poner las descomulgadas manos en las sanctas reliquias, poniendo en el seno el oro con que guarnecidas estaban, y arrojándolas en el suelo con asqueroso menosprecio. Poco le valía al sacerdote su santimonia, y al fraile su retrainimiento, y al viejo sus nevadas canas, y al mozo su juventud gallarda, y al pequeño niño su inocencia simple, que de todos llevaban el saco aquellos descreídos perros; los cuales, después de abrasadas las casas, robado los templos, desflorado las vírgines, muertos los defensores, más cansados que satisfechos de lo hecho, al tiempo que el alba venía, sin impedimento alguno se volvieron a sus bajeles, habiéndolos ya cargado de todo lo mejor que en el pueblo había, dejándole desolado y sin gente, porque toda la más gente se llevaban, y la otra a la montaña se había recogido.

»¿Quién en tan triste espectáculo pudiera tener quedas las manos y enjutos los ojos? Mas, ¡ay!, que está tan llena de miserias nuestra vida, que en tan doloroso suceso como el que os he contado, hubo cristianos corazones que se alegraron; y estos fueron los de aquellos que en la cárcel estaban, que con la desdicha general cobraron la dicha propia, porque, en son de ir a defender el pueblo, rompieron las puertas de la prisión y en libertad se pusieron, procurando cada uno, no de ofender a los contrarios, sino de salvar a sí mismos, entre los cuales yo gocé de la libertad tan caramente adquirida. Y, viendo que no había quien hiciese rostro a los enemigos, por no venir a su poder ni tornar al de la prisión, desamparando el consumido pueblo, con no pequeño dolor de lo que había visto y con el que mis heridas me causaban, seguí a un hombre que me dijo que seguramente me llevaría a un monasterio que en aquellas montañas estaba, donde de mis llagas sería curado, y aun defendido si de nuevo prenderme quisiesen. Seguíle, en fin,

como os he dicho, con deseo de saber qué habría hecho la Fortuna de mi amigo Timbrio, el cual, como después supe, con algunas heridas se había escapado y seguido por la montaña otro camino diferente del que yo llevaba; vino a parar al puerto de Rosas, donde estuvo algunos días, procurando saber qué suceso habría sido el mío, y que, en fin, sin saber nuevas algunas, se partió en una nave y con próspero viento llegó a la gran ciudad de Nápoles. Yo volví a Barcelona, y allí me acomodé de lo que menester había; y después, ya sano de mis heridas, torné a seguir mi viaje, y, sin sucederme revés alguno, llegué a Nápoles, donde hallé enfermo a Timbrio; y fue tal el contento que en vernos los dos recibimos, que no me siento con fuerzas para encarecérosle por agora.

»Allí nos dimos cuenta de nuestras vidas y de todo aquello que hasta aquel momento nos había sucedido; pero todo este placer mío se aguaba con el ver a Timbrio no tan bueno como yo quisiera; antes, tan malo, y de una enfermedad tan estraña, que si yo a aquella sazón no llegara, pudiera llegar a tiempo de hacerle las obsequias de su muerte y no solemnizar las alegrías de su vista. Después que él hubo sabido de mí todo lo que quiso, con lágrimas en los ojos, me dijo: “¡Ay, amigo Silerio, y cómo creo que el cielo procura cargar la mano en mis desventuras, para que, dándome la salud por la vuestra, quede yo cada día con más obligación de serviros!” Palabras fueron estas de Timbrio que me enternecieron; mas, por parecerme de comedimientos, tan poco usados entre nosotros, me admiraron. Y, por no cansaros en deciros punto por punto lo que yo le respondí y lo que él más replicó, sólo os diré que el desdichado de Timbrio estaba enamorado de una señora principal de aquella ciudad, cuyos padres eran españoles, aunque ella en Nápoles había nacido. Su nombre era Nísida y su hermosura tanta, que me atrevo a decir que la naturaleza cifró en ella el extremo de sus perfecciones; y andaban tan a una en ella la honestidad y belleza, que lo que la una encendía la otra enfriaba, y los deseos que su gentileza hasta el más subido cielo levantaba, su honesta gravedad hasta lo más bajo de la tierra abatía. A esta causa estaba Timbrio tan pobre de esperanza, cuan rico de pensamientos, y sobre todo falto de salud, y en términos de acabar la vida sin descubrirlos: tal era el temor y reverencia que había cobrado a la hermosa Nísida. Pero, después que tuve bien conocida su enfermedad y hube visto a Nísida, y considerado la calidad y nobleza de sus padres, determiné de posponer por él la hacienda, la vida y la honra, y más si más tuviera y pudiera. Y así, usé de un artificio, el más estraño que hasta hoy se habrá oído ni leído; y fue que acordé de vestirme como truhán y con una guitarra entrarme en casa de Nísida, que por ser, como ya he dicho, sus padres de los principales de la ciudad, de otros muchos truhanes era continuada. Parecióle bien este acuerdo a Timbrio, y resignó luego en las manos de mi industria todo su contento. Hice yo hacer luego muchas y diferentes galas,



y, en vistiéndome, comencé a ensayarme en el nuevo oficio delante de Timbrio, que no poco reía de verme tan truhanamente vestido; y, por ver si la habilidad correspondía al hábito, me dijo que, haciendo cuenta que él era un gran príncipe y que yo de nuevo venía a visitarle, le dijese algo. Y si yo no me acuerdo mal, y si vosotros, señores, no os cansáis de escucharme, diréos lo que entonces le canté, con ser la primera vez.»

Todos dijeron que ninguna cosa les daría más contento que saber por estenso todo el suceso de su negocio, y que así, le rogaban que ninguna cosa, por de poco momento que fuese, dejase de contarles.

-Pues esa licencia me dais -dijo el ermitaño-, no quiero dejaros de decir cómo comencé a dar muestras de mi locura; que fue con estos versos que a Timbrio canté, imaginando ser un gran señor a quien los decía:

## SILERIO

«De príncipe que en el suelo  
va por tan justo nivel,  
*¿qué se puede esperar dél  
que no sean obras del cielo?*

»No se vee en la edad presente, 5  
ni se vio en la edad pasada,  
república gobernada  
de príncipe tan prudente.  
Y del que mide su cielo  
por tan cristiano nivel, 10  
*¿qué se puede esperar dél  
que no sean obras del cielo?*

»Del que trae por bien ajeno,  
sin codiciar más despojos,  
misericordia en los ojos 15  
y la justicia en el seno;  
del que lo más deste suelo  
es lo menos que hay en él,  
*¿qué se puede esperar dél  
que no sean obras del cielo?* 20

»La liberal fama vuestra,  
que hasta'l cielo se levanta,  
de que tenéis alma sancta  
nos da indicio y clara muestra.  
Del que no discrepa un pelo 25  
de ser al cielo fiel,  
*¿qué se puede esperar dél*  
*que no sean obras del cielo?*

»Del que con cristiano pecho  
siempre en el rigor se tarda, 30  
y a la justicia le guarda,  
con clemencia, su derecho;  
de aquel que levanta el vuelo  
do ninguno llega a él,  
*¿qué se puede esperar dél* 35  
*que no sean obras del cielo?*

»Estas y otras cosas de más risa y juego canté entonces a Timbrio, procurando acomodar el brío y donaire del cuerpo a que en todo diese muestras de ejercitado truhán; y salí tan bien con ello que en pocos días fui conocido de toda la más gente principal de la ciudad; y la fama del truhán español por toda ella volaba, hasta tanto que ya en casa del padre de Nísida me deseaban ver, el cual deseo les cumpliera yo con mucha facilidad, si de industria no aguardara a ser rogado. Mas, en fin, no me pude excusar que un día de un banquete allá no fuese, donde vi más cerca la justa causa que Timbrio tenía de padecer, y la que el cielo me dio para quitarme el contento todos los días que en esta vida durare. Vi a Nísida, a Nísida vi, para no ver más, ni hay más que ver después de haberla visto. ¡Oh fuerza poderosa de amor, contra quien valen poco las poderosas nuestras! ¿Y es posible que en un punto, en un momento, los reparos y pertrechos de mi lealtad pusieses en términos de dar con todos ellos por tierra? ¡Ay, que si se tardara un poco en socorrerme la consideración de quien yo era, la amistad que a Timbrio debía, el mucho valor de Nísida, el afrentoso hábito en que me hallaba ...; que todo era impedimento a que, con el nuevo y amoroso deseo que en mí había nascido, no nasciese también la esperanza de alcanzarla, que es el arrimo con que el amor camina o vuelve atrás en los enamorados principios! En fin, vi la belleza que os he dicho, y, porque me importaba tanto el verla, siempre procuré granjear el amistad de sus padres y de todos los de su casa, y esto con hacer del

gracioso y bien criado, haciendo mi oficio con la mayor discreción y gracia a mí posible. Y, rogándome un caballero que aquel día a la mesa estaba que alguna cosa en loor de la hermosura de Nísida cantase, quiso la ventura que me acordase de unos versos que muchos días antes, para otra ocasión casi semejante, yo había hecho; y, sirviéndome para la presente, los dije; que eran estos:

## SILERIO

»Nísida, con quien el cielo  
tan liberal se ha mostrado,  
que en daros a vos, dio al suelo

una imagen y traslado  
de cuanto encubre su velo, 5  
si él no tuvo más que os dar,  
ni vos más que desear,  
con facilidad se entiende  
que lo posible pretende  
quien os pretende loar. 10

»Desa beldad peregrina  
la perfección soberana,  
que al cielo nos encamina,  
pues no es posible la humana,  
cante la lengua divina, 15  
y diga: bien se conviene  
que al alma que en sí contiene  
ser tan alto y milagroso,  
se le diese el velo hermoso  
más qu'el mundo tuvo o tiene. 20

»Tomó del sol los cabellos;  
del sesgo cielo, la frente;  
la luz de los ojos bellos,  
de la estrella más luciente,

que ya no da luz ante ellos. 25

Como quien puede y se atreve,  
a la grana y a la nieve  
robó las colores bellas,  
que lo más perfecto dellas  
a tus mejillas se debe. 30

»De marfil y de coral  
formó los dientes y labios,  
do sale rico caudal  
de agudos dichos y sabios,  
y armonía celestial. 35  
De duro mármol ha hecho  
el blanco y hermoso pecho,  
y de tal obra ha quedado  
tanto el suelo mejorado,  
cuanto el cielo satisfecho. 40

»Con estas y otras cosas que entonces canté, quedaron todos tan mis aficionados, especialmente los padres de Nísida, que me ofrecieron todo lo que menester hubiese y me rogaron que ningún día dejase de visitarlos. Y así, sin descubrirse ni imaginarse mi industria, vine a salir con mi primero disignio, que era facilitar la entrada en casa de Nísida, la cual gustaba en extremo de mis desenvolturas. Pero ya que los muchos días y la mucha conversación mía, y la grande amistad que todos los de aquella casa me mostraban, hubieron quitado algunas sombras al demasiado temor que de descubrir mi intento a Nísida tenía, determiné ver a do llegaba la ventura de Timbrio, que sólo de mi solicitud la esperaba. Mas, ¡ay de mí!, que yo estaba entonces más para pedir medicina para mi llaga que salud para la ajena, porque el donaire, belleza, discreción, gravedad de Nísida, habían hecho en mi alma tal efecto, que no estaba en menos extremo de dolor y de amor puesta que la del lastimado Timbrio. A vuestra consideración discreta dejo el imaginar lo que podía sentir un corazón a quien de una parte combatían las leyes de la amistad, y de otra las inviolables de Cupido; porque si las unas le obligaban a no salir de lo que ellas y la razón le pedían, las otras le forzaban que tuviese cuenta con lo que a su contento era obligado.

»Estos sobresaltos y combates me apretaban de manera que, sin procurar la salud ajena, comencé a dudar de la propia y a ponerme tan flaco y amarillo que causaba general compasión a todos los que me miraban; y los que más la mostraban eran los padres de Nísida; y aun ella mesma, con limpias y cristianas entrañas, me rogó muchas veces que la causa de mi enfermedad le dijese,

ofreciéndome todo lo necesario para el remedio della. “¡Ay -decía yo entre mí cuando Nísida tales ofrecimientos me hacía-, y con cuánta facilidad, hermosa Nísida, podría remediar vuestra mano el mal que vuestra hermosura ha hecho! Pero préciome tanto de buen amigo que, aunque tuviese tan cierto mi remedio como le tengo por imposible, imposible sería que le acetase”. Y, como estas consideraciones en aquellos instantes me turbasen la fantasía, no acertaba a responder a Nísida cosa alguna, de lo cual ella y otra hermana suya, que Blanca se llamaba, de menos años, aunque no de menos discreción y hermosura que Nísida, estaban maravilladas; y con más deseo de saber el origen de mi tristeza, con muchas importunaciones me rogaban que nada de mi dolor les encubriese. Viendo, pues, yo que la ventura me ofrecía la comodidad de poner en efecto lo que hasta aquel punto mi industria había fabricado, una vez que, acaso, Nísida y su hermana solas se hallaban, tornando ellas de nuevo a pedirme lo que tantas veces, les dije: “No penséis, señoras, que el silencio que hasta agora he tenido en no deciros la causa de la pena que imagináis que siento lo haya causado tener yo poco deseo de obedeceros, pues ya se sabe que si algún bien mi abatido estado en esta vida tiene, es haber granjeado con él venir a términos de conoceros y como criado serviros; sólo ha sido la causa imaginar que, aunque la descubra, no servirá para más de daros lástima, viendo cuán lejos está el remedio della. Pero, ya que me es forzoso satisfaceros en esto, sabréis, señoras, que en esta ciudad está un caballero natural de mi misma patria, a quien tengo por señor, por amparo y por amigo, el más liberal, discreto y gentilhomme que en gran parte hallarse pueda, el cual está aquí ausente de la amada patria por ciertas quistiones que allá le sucedieron, que le forzaron a venir a esta ciudad, creyendo que si allá en la suya dejaba enemigos, acá en la ajena no le faltarán amigos; más hale salido tan al revés su pensamiento, que un solo enemigo, que él mismo, sin saber cómo, aquí se ha procurado, le tiene puesto en tal extremo, que si el cielo no le socorre, con acabar la vida acabará sus amistades y enemistades. Y como yo conozco el valor de Timbrio -que este es el nombre del caballero cuya desgracia os voy contando-, y sé lo que perderá el mundo en perderle, y lo que yo perderé si le pierdo, doy las muestras de sentimiento que habéis visto, y aun son pocas, según a lo que me obliga el peligro en que Timbrio está puesto. Bien sé que deseáis saber, señoras, quién es el enemigo que a tan valeroso caballero, como es el que os he pintado, tiene puesto en tal extremo; pero también sé que, en diciéndosle, no os maravillaréis sino de cómo ya no le tiene consumido y muerto. Su enemigo es amor, universal destruidor de nuestros sosiegos y bienandanzas. Este fiero enemigo tomó posesión de sus entrañas. En entrando en esta ciudad, vio Timbrio una hermosa dama, de singular valor y hermosura, mas tan principal y honesta que jamás el miserable se ha aventurado a descubrirle su

pensamiento”.

»A este punto llegaba yo cuando Nísida me dijo: “Por cierto, Astor -que entonces era este el nombre mío-, que no sé yo si crea que ese caballero sea tan valeroso y discreto como dices, pues tan fácil mente se ha dejado rendir a un mal deseo tan recién nacido, entregándose tan sin ocasión alguna en los brazos de la desesperación. Y, aunque a mí se me alcanza poco destos amorosos efectos, todavía me parece que es simplicidad y flaqueza dejar, el que se vee fatigado dellos, de descubrir su pensamiento a quien se le causa, puesto que sea del valor que imaginar se puede; porque, ¿qué afrenta se le puede seguir a ella de saber que es bien querida, o a él qué mayor mal de su aceda y desabrida respuesta, que la muerte que él mismo se procura callando? Y no sería bien que por tener un juez fama de riguroso, dejase alguno de alegar de su derecho. Pero pongamos que sucede la muerte de un amante tan callado y temeroso como ese tu amigo; dime, ¿llamarías tú cruel a la dama de quien estaba enamorado? No, por cierto; que mal puede remediar nadie la necesidad que no llega a su noticia, ni cae en su obligación procurar saberla para remediarla. Así que, Astor, perdóname, que las obras de ese tu amigo no hacen muy verdaderas las alabanzas que le das”.

»Cuando yo oí a Nísida semejantes razones, luego luego quisiera con las mías descubrirle todo el secreto de mi pecho; mas, como yo entendía la bondad y llaneza con que ella las hablaba, hube de detenerme y esperar más sola y mejor coyuntura; y así, le respondí: “Cuando los casos de amor, hermosa Nísida, con libres ojos se miran, tantos desatinos se veen en ellos, que no menos de risa que de compasión son dignos; pero si de la sutil red amorosa se halla enlazada el alma, allí están los sentidos tan trabados y tan fuera de su propio ser, que la memoria sólo sirve de tesorera y guardadora del objeto que los ojos miraron, y el entendimiento en escudriñar y conocer el valor de la que bien ama, y la voluntad de consentir de que la memoria y entendimiento en otra cosa no se ocupen; y así, los ojos veen como por espejo de alinde, que todas las cosas se les hacen mayores: ora cresce la esperanza cuando son favorecidos, ora el temor cuando desechados; y así, sucede a muchos lo que a Timbrio ha sucedido, que, pareciéndoles a los principios altísimo el objeto a quien los ojos levantaron, pierden la esperanza de alcanzarle; pero no de manera que no les diga amor allá dentro en el alma: ‘¿Quién sabe? Podría ser...’. Y con esto anda la esperanza, como decirse suele, entre dos aguas, la cual si del todo les desamparase, con ella huiría el amor. Y de aquí nasce andar, entre el temor y osar, el corazón del amante tan afligido que, sin aventurarse a decirla, se recoge y aprieta en su llaga, y espera, aunque no sabe de quién, el remedio de que se vee tan apartado. En este mismo extremo he yo hallado a Timbrio, aunque todavía, a persuaciones mías, ha escripto una carta a la dama por quien muere, la cual me dio para que la

viese y mirase si en alguna manera se mostraba en ella descomedido, porque la enmendaría. Encargóme asimesmo que buscasse orden de ponerla en manos de su señora, que creo será imposible, no porque yo no me aventure a ello, pues lo menos que aventuraré será la vida por servirle, mas porque me parece que no he de hallar ocasión para darla”. “Veámosla -dijo Nísida-, porque deseo ver cómo escriben los enamorados discretos”. Luego saqué yo una carta del seno, que algunos días antes estaba escripta, esperando ocasión de que Nísida la viese; y, ofreciéndome la ventura ésta, se la mostré; la cual, por haberla yo leído muchas veces, se me quedó en la memoria, cuyas razones eran éstas: TIMBRIO A NÍSIDA

»Determinado había, hermosa señora, que el fin desastrado mío os diese noticia de quien yo era, pareciéndome ser mejor que alabárades mi silencio en la muerte, que no que vituperárades mi atrevimiento en la vida; mas, porque imagino que a mi alma conviene partirse deste mundo en gracia vuestra, porque en el otro no le niegue amor el premio de lo que ha padecido, os hago sabidora del estado en que vuestra rara beldad me tiene puesto, que es tal, que, a poder significarle, no procurara su remedio, pues por pequeñas cosas nadie se ha de aventurar a ofender el valor estremado vuestro, del cual y de vuestra honesta liberalidad espero restaurar la vida para serviros, o alcanzar la muerte para nunca más ofenderos.

»Con mucha atención estuvo Nísida escuchando esta carta, y, en acabándola de oír, dijo: “No tiene de qué agraviarse la dama a quien esta carta se envía, si ya de puro grave no da en ser melindrosa, enfermedad de quien no se escapa la mayor parte de las damas desta ciudad. Pero, con todo eso, no dejes, Astor, de dársela, pues, como ya te he dicho, no se puede esperar más mal de su respuesta, que no sea peor el que agora dices que tu amigo padece. Y, para más animarte, te quiero asegurar que no hay mujer tan recatada y tan puesta en atalaya para mirar por su honra, que le pese mucho de ver y saber que es querida, porque entonces conoce ella que no es vana la presunción que de sí tiene, lo cual sería al revés si viese que de nadie era solicitada”. “Bien sé, señora, que es verdad lo que dices -respondí yo-, mas tengo temor que el atreverme a darla, por lo menos, me ha de costar negarme de allí adelante la entrada en aquella casa, de que no menor daño me vendría a mí que a Timbrio”. “No quieras, Astor -replicó Nísida-, confirmar tú la sentencia que aún el juez no tiene dada. Muestra buen ánimo, que no es riguroso trance de batalla éste a que te aventuras”. “¡Pluguiera al cielo, hermosa Nísida -respondí yo-, que en ese término me viera, que de mejor gana ofreciera el pecho al peligro y rigor de mil contrapuestas armas, que no la mano a dar esta amorosa carta a quien temo que, siendo con ella ofendida, ha de arrojar sobre

mis hombros la pena que la ajena culpa meresce! Pero, con todos estos inconvenientes, pienso seguir, señora, el consejo que me has dado, puesto que aguardaré tiempo en que el temor no tenga tan ocupados mis sentidos como agora; y en este entretanto te suplico que, haciendo cuenta que tú eres a quien esta carta se envía, me des alguna respuesta que lleve a Timbrio, para que con este engaño él se entretenga un poco, y a mí el tiempo y las ocasiones me descubran lo que tengo de hacer”. “De mal artificio quieres usar -respondió Nísida-, porque, puesto caso que yo agora diese en nombre ajeno alguna blanda o esquivada respuesta, ¿no ves que el tiempo, descubridor de nuestros fines, aclarará el engaño y Timbrio quedará de ti más quejoso que satisfecho?; cuanto más que, por no haber dado hasta agora respuesta a semejantes cartas, no querría comenzar a darlas mentirosa y fingidamente; mas, aunque sepa ir contra lo que a mí mesma debo, si me prometes de decir quién es la dama, yo te diré qué digas a tu amigo, y cosa tal, que él quede contento por agora; y, puesto que después las cosas sucedan al revés de lo que él pensare, no por eso se averiguará la mentira”. “Eso no me lo mandes, ¡oh Nísida! -respondí yo-, porque en tanta confusión me pone decirte yo a ti su nombre, como me pondría el darle a ella la carta; basta saber que es principal, y que, sin hacerte agravio alguno, no te debe nada en la hermosura, que con esto me parece que la encarezco sobre cuantas son nascidas”. “No me maravillo que digas eso de mí -dijo Nísida-, pues los hombres de vuestra condición y trato, lisonjear es su propio oficio. Mas, dejando todo esto a una parte, porque deseo que no pierdas la comodidad de un tan buen amigo, te aconsejo que le digas que fuiste a dar la carta a su dama, y que has pasado con ella todas las razones que conmigo, sin faltar punto, y cómo leyó tu carta, y el ánimo que te daba para que a su dama la llevases, pensando que no era ella a quien venía; y que, aunque no te atreviste a declarar del todo, que has conocido della que, cuando sepa ser ella para quien la carta venía, no le causará el engaño y desengaño mucha pesadumbre. Desta suerte rescibirá él algún alivio en su trabajo; y después, al descubrir tu intención a su dama, puedes responder a Timbrio lo que ella te respondiere, pues hasta el punto que ella lo sepa, queda en fuerza esta mentira y la verdad de lo que sucediere, sin que haga al caso el engaño de agora”.

»Admirado quedé de la discreta traza de Nísida, y aun no sin sospecha de la verdad de mi artificio. Y así, besándole las manos por el buen aviso, y quedando con ella que de cualquiera cosa que en este negocio sucediere le había de dar particular cuenta, vine a contar a Timbrio todo lo que con Nísida me había sucedido, que fue parte para que la tuviese en su alma la esperanza, y volviese de nuevo a sustentarle y a desterrar de su corazón los nublados del frío temor que hasta entonces le tenían ofuscado. Y todo este gusto se le acrescentaba el



prometerle yo a cada paso que los míos no serían dados sino en servicio suyo, y que otra vez que con Nísida me hallase, sacaría el juego de maña con tan buen suceso como sus pensamientos merecían. Una cosa se me ha olvidado de deciros: que en todo el tiempo que con Nísida y su hermana estuve hablando, jamás la menor hermana habló palabra, sino que, con un estraño silencio, estuvo siempre colgada de las mías. Y seos decir, señores, que si callaba, no era por no saber hablar con toda discreción y donaire, porque en estas dos hermanas mostró naturaleza todo lo que ella puede y vale; y, con todo esto, no sé si os diga que holgara que me hubiera negado el cielo la ventura de haberlas conocido, especialmente a Nísida, principio y fin de toda mi desdicha. Pero, ¿qué puedo hacer, si lo que los hados tienen ordenado no puede por discursos humanos estorbarse? Yo quise, quiero y querré bien a Nísida, tan sin ofensa de Timbrio cuanto lo ha mostrado bien mi cansada lengua, que jamás la habló que en favor de Timbrio no fuese, encubriendo siempre, con más que ordinaria discreción, la pena propia por remediar la ajena.

»Sucedió, pues, que, como la belleza de Nísida tan esculpida en mi alma quedó desde el primer punto que mis ojos la vieron, no pudiendo tener mi pecho tan rico tesoro encubierto, cuando solo o apartado alguna vez me hallaba, con algunas amorosas y lamentables canciones le descubría con velo de fingido nombre. Y así, una noche, pensando que ni Timbrio ni otro alguno me escuchaba, por dar alivio un poco al fatigado espíritu, en un retirado aposento, sólo de un laúd acompañado, canté unos versos, que, por haberme puesto en una confusión gravísima, os los habré de decir, que eran éstos:

## SILERIO

»¿Qué laberinto es éste do se encierra  
mi loca, levantada fantasía?  
¿Quién ha vuelto mi paz en cruda guerra, y en tal tristeza toda mi alegría?  
¿O cuál hado me trujo a ver la tierra   5  
qu'ha de servir de sepultura mía,  
o quién reducirá mi pensamiento  
al término que pide un sano intento?

»Si por romper este mi frágil pecho  
y despojarme de la dulce vida,   10  
quedase el suelo y cielo satisfecho

de que a Timbrio guardé la fe debida,  
sin que me acobardara el crudo hecho,  
yo fuera de mí mismo el homicida;  
mas si yo acabo, en él acaba luego 15  
la amorosa esperanza y cresce el fuego.

»Lluevan y caigan las doradas flechas  
del ciego dios, y con rigor insano  
al triste corazón vengan derechas,  
disparadas con fiera airada mano; 20  
que, aunque ceniza y polvo queden hechas las heridas entrañas, lo que gano  
en encubrir su dolorosa llaga  
es rica de mi mal ilustre paga.

»Silencio eterno a mi cansada lengua 25  
pondrá la ley de la amistad sincera,  
por cuya sin igual virtud desmengua  
la pena que acabar jamás espera;  
mas, aunque nunca acabe y ponga en mengua la honra y la salud, será cual era  
30  
mi limpia fe: más firme y contrastada  
que roca en medio de la mar airada.

»Del humor que derraman estos ojos,  
y de la lengua el pñadoso oficio;  
del bien que se le debe a mis enojos, 35  
y de la voluntad el sacrificio,  
lleve los dulces premios y despojos  
el caro amigo, y muéstrese propicio  
el cielo a mi deseo, que pretende  
el bien ajeno y a sí mismo ofende. 40

»Socorre, ¡oh blando amor!, levanta y guía mi bajo ingenio en la ocasión  
dudosa;  
y al esperado punto esfuerzo envía  
al alma y a la lengua temerosa,  
la cual podrá, si lleva tu osadía, 45  
facilitar la más difícil cosa,

y romper contra el hado y desventura,  
hasta llegar a la mayor ventura.

»El estar tan trasportado en mis continuas imaginaciones fue ocasión para que yo no tuviese cuenta en cantar estos versos que he dicho con tan baja voz como debiera, ni el lugar do estaba era tan escondido que estorbara que de Timbrio no fueran escuchados, el cual, así como los oyó, le vino al pensamiento que el mío no estaba libre de amor, y que si yo alguno tenía, era a Nísida, según se podía colegir de mi canto. Y, aunque él alcanzó la verdad de mis pensamientos, no alcanzó la de mis deseos; antes, entendiendo ser al contrario de lo que yo pensaba, determinó de ausentarse aquella misma noche e irse adonde de ninguno fuese hallado, sólo por dejarme comodidad de que solo a Nísida sirviese. Todo esto supe yo de un paje suyo, sabidor de todos sus secretos, el cual vino a mí muy angustiado y me dijo: “Acudid, señor Silerio, que Timbrio, mi señor y vuestro amigo, nos quiere dejar y partirse esta noche, y no me ha dicho adónde, sino que le apareje no sé qué dineros, y que a nadie diga que se parte. Principalmente me dijo que a vos no lo dijese. Y este pensamiento le ha venido después que estuvo escuchando no sé qué versos que poco ha cantábades, y, según los extremos que le he visto hacer, creo que va a desesperarse. Y, por parecerme que debo antes acudir a su remedio que a obedecer su mandado, os lo vengo a decir, como a quien puede ser parte para que no ponga en efecto tan dañado propósito”.

»Con estraño sobresalto escuché lo que el paje me decía, y fui luego a ver a Timbrio a su aposento, y, antes que dentro entrase, me paré a ver lo que hacía, el cual estaba tendido encima de su lecho boca abajo, derramando infinitas lágrimas, acompañadas de profundos suspiros, y con baja voz y mal formadas razones me pareció que éstas decía: “Procura, verdadero amigo Silerio, alcanzar el fruto que tu solicitud y trabajo tiene bien merecido, y no quieras, por lo que te parece que debes a mi amistad, dejar de dar gusto a tu deseo, que yo refrenaré el mío, aunque sea con el medio extremo de la muerte, que, pues tú della me libraste, cuando con tanto amor y fortaleza al rigor de mil espadas te ofreciste, no es mucho que yo agora te pague en parte tan buena obra con dar lugar a que, sin el impedimento que mi presencia causarte puede, goces de aquélla en quien cifró el cielo toda su belleza y puso el amor todo mi contento. De una sola cosa me pesa, dulce amigo, y es que no puedo despedirme de ti en esta amarga partida; mas, admite por disculpa el ser tú la causa della. ¡Oh Nísida, Nísida, y cuán cierto está de tu hermosura, que se ha de pagar la culpa del que se atreve a mirarla con la pena de morir por ella! Silerio la vio, y si no quedara cual imagino que ha quedado, perdiera en gran parte conmigo la opinión que tiene de discreto.

Mas, pues mi ventura así lo ha querido, sepa el cielo que no soy menos amigo de Silerio que él lo es mío; y, para muestras desta verdad, apártese Timbrio de su gloria, destiérrese de su contento, vaya peregrino de tierra en tierra, ausente de Silerio y de Nísida, dos verdaderas y mejores mitades de su alma”. Y luego, con mucha furia, se levantó del lecho y abrió la puerta, y, hallándome allí, me dijo: “¿Qué quieres, amigo, a tales horas? ¿Hay, por ventura, algo de nuevo?” “Hay tanto -le respondí yo-que, aunque hubiera menos no me pesara”. En fin, por no cansaros más, yo llegué a tales términos con él, que le persuadí y di a entender ser su imaginación falsa, no en cuanto estaba yo enamorado, sino en el de quién, porque no era de Nísida, sino de su hermana Blanca; y súpelo decir esto de manera que él lo tuvo por verdadero. Y, porque más crédito a ello diese, la memoria me ofreció unas estancias que muchos días antes yo mesmo había hecho a otra dama del mismo nombre, y díjele que para la hermana de Nísida las había compuesto, las cuales vinieron tan a pro pósito que, aunque sea fuera dél decirlas ahora, no las quiero pasar en silencio, que fueron estas:

## SILERIO

»¡Oh Blanca, a quien rendida está la nieve, y en condición más que la nieve helada!, no presumáis ser mi dolor tan leve  
que estéis de remediarle descuidada.

Mirad que si mi mal no ablanda y mueve 5

vuestra alma, en mi desdicha conjurada,  
se volverá tan negra mi ventura  
cuanta sois blanca en nombre y hermosura.

»¡Blanca gentil, en cuyo blanco pecho  
el contento de amor se anida y cierra!: 10  
antes qu’el mío, en lágrimas deshecho,  
se vuelva polvo y miserable tierra,  
mostrad el vuestro en algo satisfecho  
del amor y dolor qu’el mío encierra,  
que ésta será tan caudalosa paga, 15  
que a cuanto mal padezco satisfaga.

»Blanca, sois vos por quien trocar querría de oro el más finísimo ducado,

y por tan alta posesión tendría  
por bien perder la del más alto estado. 20  
Pues esto conocéis, ¡oh Blanca mía!,  
dejad ese desdén desamorado,  
y haced, ¡oh Blanca!, que el amor acierte a sacar, si sois vos, blanca mi suerte.

»Puesto que con pobreza tal me hallara 25

que tan sola una blanca poseyera,  
si ella fuérades vos, no me trocara  
por el más rico que en el mundo hubiera; y si mi ser en aquel ser tornara  
de Juan de Espera en Dios, dichoso fuera 30  
si al tiempo que las tres blancas buscase, a vos, ¡oh Blanca!, entre ellas os  
hallase.»

Adelante pasara con su cuento Silerio, si no lo estorbara el son de muchas zampoñas y acordados caramillos que a sus espaldas se oía; y, volviendo la cabeza, vieron venir hacia ellos hasta una docena de gallardos pastores puestos en dos hileras, y en medio venía un dispuesto pastor, coronado con una guirnalda de madreselva y de otras diferentes flores. Traía un bastón en la una mano, y con grave paso poco a poco se movía; y los demás pastores, andando con el mismo aplauso y tocando todos sus instrumentos, daban de sí agradable y estraña muestra. Luego que Elicio los vio, conoció ser Daranio el pastor que en medio traían, y los demás ser todos circunvecinos que a sus bodas querían hallarse, a las cuales asimesmo Tirsi y Damón vinieron, y, por alegrar la fiesta del desposorio y honrar al nuevo desposado, de aquella manera hacia el aldea se encaminaban. Pero, viendo Tirsi que su venida había puesto silencio al cuento de Silerio, le rogó que aquella noche juntos en la aldea la pasasen, donde sería servido con la voluntad posible, y haría satisfechas las suyas con acabar el comenzado suceso. Silerio lo prometió. Y a esta sazón llegó el montón alegre de pastores, los cuales conociendo a Elicio y Daranio, a Tirsi y a Damón, sus amigos, con señales de grande alegría se recibieron; y, renovando la música y renovando el contento, tornaron a proseguir el comenzado camino; y, ya que llegaban junto al aldea, llegó a sus oídos el son de la zampoña del desamorado Lenio, de que no poco gusto recibieron todos, porque ya conocían la estremada condición suya. Y, así como Lenio los vio y conoció, sin interromper el suave canto, desta manera cantando hacia ellos se vino:

# LENIO

Por bienaventurada,  
por llena de contento y alegría,  
será por mí juzgada  
tan dulce compañía,  
si no siente de amor la tiranía. 5  
Y besaré la tierra  
que pisa aquel que de su pensamiento  
el falso amor destierra  
y tiene el pecho esento  
desta furia cruel, deste tormento. 10  
Y llamaré dichoso  
al rústico advertido ganadero  
que vive cuidadoso  
del pobre manso apero  
y muestra el rostro al crudo amor severo. 15  
Deste tal las corderas,  
antes que venga la sazón madura,

serán ya parideras,  
y en la peña más dura  
hallarán claras aguas y verdura. 20  
Si, estando amor airado  
con él, pusiere en su salud desvío,  
llevaré su ganado,  
con el ganado mío,  
al abundoso pasto, al claro río. 25  
Y en tanto, del encienso  
el humo sancto irá volando al cielo,  
a quien decirle pienso  
con pío y justo celo,  
las rodillas prostradas por el suelo: 30  
«¡Oh cielo sancto y justo!,  
pues eres protector del que pretende  
hacer lo que es tu gusto,  
a la salud atiende

de aquel que por servirte amor le ofende. 35  
No lleve este tirano

los despojos a ti solo debidos;  
antes, con larga mano  
y premios merescidos,  
restituye su fuerza a los sentidos». 40

En acabando de cantar Lenio, fue de todos los pastores cortésmente rescibido, el cual, como oyese nombrar a Damón y a Tirsi, a quien él sólo por fama conocía, quedó admirado en ver su estremada presencia; y así, les dijo: -¿Qué encarecimientos bastarían, aunque fueran los mejores que en la elocuencia pudieran hallarse, a poder levantar y encarecer el valor vuestro, famosos pastores, si por ventura las niñerías de amor no se mezclaran con las veras de vuestros celebrados escritos? Pero, pues ya estáis éticos de amor, enfermedad al parecer incurable, puesto que mi rudeza, con estimar y alabar vuestra rara discreción, os pague lo que os debe, imposible será que yo deje de vituperar vuestros pensamientos.

-Si los tuyos tuvieras, discreto Lenio -respondió Tirsi-, sin las sombras de la vana opinión que los ocupa, vieras luego la claridad de los nuestros, y que, por ser amorosos, merescen más gloria y alabanza que por ninguna otra sutileza o discreción que encerrar pudieran.

-No más, Tirsi, no más -replicó Lenio-, que bien sé que contra tantos y tan obstinados enemigos poca fuerza tendrán mis razones.

-Si ellas lo fueran -respondió Elicio-, tan amigos son de la verdad los que aquí están, que ni aun burlando la contradijeran; y en esto podrás ver, Lenio, cuán fuera vas della, pues no hay ninguno que apruebe tus palabras, ni aun tenga por buenas tus intenciones.

-Pues, a fe -dijo Lenio-, que no te salve a ti la tuya, ¡oh Elicio! Si no, dígalo el aire, a quien contino acrescientas con sospiros, y la yerba destos prados, que va creciendo con tus lágrimas, y los versos que el otro día en las hayas de aquel bosque escribiste, que en ellos se verá qué es lo que en ti alabas y en mí vituperas.

No quedara Lenio sin respuesta, si no vieran venir hacia donde ellos estaban a la hermosa Galatea con las discretas pastoras Florisa y Teolinda, la cual, por no ser conocida de Damón y Tirsi, se había puesto un blanco velo ante su hermoso rostro. Llegaron y fueron de los pastores con alegre acogimiento rescebidas,

principalmente de los enamorados Elicio y Erastro, que con la vista de Galatea tan extraño contento rescibieron que, no pudiendo Erastro disimularle, en señal dél, sin mandárselo alguno, hizo señas a Elicio que su zampoña tocase, al son de la cual, con alegres y suaves acentos, cantó los siguientes versos:

## ERASTRO

Vea yo los ojos bellos  
deste sol que estoy mirando,  
y si se van apartando,  
váyase el alma tras ellos.  
Sin ellos no hay claridad, 5  
ni mi alma no la espere,  
que, ausente dellos, no quiere  
luz, salud, ni libertad.

Mire quien puede estos ojos,  
que no es posible alaballos; 10  
mas ha de dar por mirallos  
de la vida los despojos.  
Yo los veo y yo los vi,  
y cada vez que los veo  
les doy un nuevo deseo 15  
tras el alma que les di.  
Ya no tengo más que dar  
ni imagino más que dé,  
si por premio de mi fe  
no se admite el desear. 20  
Cierta está mi perdición  
si estos ojos do el bien sobra  
los pusieren en la obra  
y no en la sana intención.  
Aunque durase este día 25  
mil siglos, como deseo,  
a mí, que tanto bien veo,  
un punto parecería.  
No hace el tiempo ligero



curso en alterar mi edad, 30  
mientras miro la beldad  
de la vida por quien muero.  
En esta vista reposa  
mi alma y halla sosiego,  
y vive en el vivo fuego 35  
de su luz pura, hermosa.  
Y hace amor tan alta prueba  
con ella, que en esta llama  
a dulce vida la llama  
y, cual fénix, la renueva. 40  
Salgo con mi pensamiento  
buscando mi dulce gloria,  
y al fin hallo en mi memoria  
encerrado mi contento.  
Allí está y allí se encierra, 45  
no en mandos, no en poderíos,  
no en pompas, no en señoríos  
ni en riquezas de la tierra.

Aquí acabó su canto Erastro, y se acabó el camino de llegar a la aldea, adonde Tirsi y Damón y Silerio en casa de Elicio se recogieron, por no perder la ocasión de saber en qué paraba el comenzado cuento de Silerio. Las hermosas pastoras Galatea y Florisa, ofreciendo de hallarse el venidero día a las bodas de Daranio, dejaron a los pastores, y todos o los más con el desposado se quedaron, y ellas a sus casas se fueron. Y aquella misma noche, solicitado Silerio de su amigo Erastro, y por el deseo que le fatigaba de volver a su ermita, dio fin al suceso de su historia, como se verá en el siguiente libro.

## **FIN DEL SEGUNDO LIBRO**

### Tercero libro de Galatea

EL REGOCIJADO alboroto que con la ocasión de las bodas de Daranio aquella noche en el aldea había, no fue parte para que Elicio, Tirsi, Damón y Erastro dejasen de acomodarse en parte donde, sin ser de alguno estorbados, pudiese seguir Silerio su comenzada historia. El cual, después que todos juntos grato silencio le prestaron, siguió desta manera: -«Con las fingidas estancias de Blanca que os he dicho que a Timbrio dije, quedó él satisfecho de que mi pena procedía, no de amores de Nísida, sino de su hermana. Y, con este seguro, pidiéndome perdón de la falsa imaginación que de mí había tenido, me tornó a encargar su remedio. Y así, yo, olvidado del mío, no me descuidé un punto de lo que al suyo tocaba. Algunos días se pasaron, en los cuales la fortuna no me mostró tan abierta ocasión como yo quisiera para descubrir a Nísida la verdad de mis pensamientos, aunque ella siempre me preguntaba cómo a mi amigo en sus amores le iba, y si su dama tenía ya alguna noticia dellos. A lo que yo le dije que todavía el temor de ofenderla no me dejaba aventurar a decirle cosa alguna. De lo cual Nísida se enojaba mucho, y me llamaba cobarde y de poca discreción, añadiendo a esto que, pues yo me acobardaba, o que Timbrio no sentía el dolor que yo dél publicaba, o que yo no era tan verdadero amigo suyo como decía. Todo esto fue parte para que me determinase y en la primera ocasión me descubriese, como lo hice un día que sola estaba, la cual escuchó con estraño silencio todo lo que decirle quise; y yo, como mejor pude, le encarecí el valor de Timbrio, el verdadero amor que le tenía, el cual era de suerte que me había movido a mí a tomar tan abatido ejercicio como era el de truhán, sólo por tener lugar de decirle lo que le decía, añadiendo a éstas otras razones que a Nísida le debió parecer que lo eran. Mas no quiso mostrar entonces por palabras lo que después con obras no pudo tener cubierto; antes, con gravedad y honestidad estraña, reprehendió mi atrevimiento, acusó mi osadía, afeó mis palabras y desmayó mi confianza; pero no de manera que me desterrase de su presencia, que era lo que yo más temía. Sólo concluyó con decirme que de allí adelante tuviese más cuenta con lo que a su honestidad era obligado, y procurase que el artificio de mi mentido hábito no se descubriese. Conclusión fue esta que cerró y acabó la tragedia de mi vida, pues por ella entendí que Nísida daría oídos a las quejas de Timbrio.

»¿En qué pecho pudo caber ni puede el extremo de dolor que entonces en el mío se encerraba, pues el fin de su mayor deseo era el remate y fin de su

contento? Alegrábame el buen principio que al remedio de Timbrio había dado, y esta alegría en mi pesar redundaba, por parecerme, como era la verdad, que en viendo a Nísida en poder ajeno el propio mío se acababa. ¡Oh fuerza poderosa de verdadera amistad, a cuánto te estiendes y a cuánto me obligaste, pues yo mismo, forzado de tu obligación, afilé con mi industria el cuchillo que había de degollar mis esperanzas, las cuales, muriendo en mi alma, vivieron y resucitaron en la de Timbrio cuando de mí supo todo lo que con Nísida pasado había! Pero ella andaba tan recatada con él y conmigo, que nunca de todo punto dio a entender que de la solicitud mía y amor de Timbrio se contentaba, ni menos se desdeñó de suerte que sus sinsabores y desvíos hiciesen a los dos abandonar la empresa, hasta que, habiendo llegado a noticia de Timbrio cómo su enemigo Pransiles -aquel caballero a quien él había agraviado en Jerez-, deseoso de satisfacer su honra, le enviaba a desafiar, señalándole campo franco y seguro en una tierra del estado del duque de Gravina, dándole término de seis meses, desde entonces hasta el día de la batalla. El cuidado deste aviso no fue parte para que se descuidase de lo que a sus amores convenía; antes, con nueva solicitud mía y servicios suyos, vino a estar Nísida de manera que no se mostraba esquivada aunque la mirase Timbrio y en casa de sus padres visitase, guardando en todo tan honesto decoro, cuanto a su valor era obligada. Acercándose ya el término del desafío, y viendo Timbrio serle inexcusable aquella jornada, determinó de partirse, y, antes que lo hiciese, escribió a Nísida una carta tal, que acabó con ella en un punto lo que yo en muchos meses atrás y en muchas palabras no había comenzado. Tengo la carta en la memoria, y, por hacer al caso de mi cuento, no os dejaré de decir que así decía: TIMBRIO A NÍSIDA

»Salud te envía aquél que no la tiene, Nísida, ni la espera en tiempo alguno si por tus manos mismas no le viene.

El nombre aborrecible de importuno temo me adquirirán estos renglones, 5  
escriptos con mi sangre de uno en uno.

Mas, la furia cruel de mis pasiones de tal modo me turba, que no puedo huir las amorosas sinrazones.

Entre un ardiente osar y un frío miedo, 10

arrimado a mi fe y al valor tuyo, mientras ésta rescibes triste quedo, por ver que en escrebirte me destruyo, si tienes a donaire lo que digo y entregas al desdén lo que no es suyo. 15

El cielo verdadero me es testigo si no te adoro desde el mismo punto que vi ese rostro hermoso y mi enemigo.

El verte y adorarte llegó junto; porque, ¿quién fuera aquél que no adorara 20

de un ángel bello el sin igual trasumpto?

Mi alma tu belleza, al mundo rara, vio tan curiosamente que no quiso en el rostro parar la vista clara.

Allá en el alma tuya un paraíso 25

fue descubriendo de bellezas tantas, que dan de nueva gloria cierto aviso.

Con estas ricas alas te levantas hasta llegar al cielo, y en la tierra al sabio admiras y al que es simple espantas. 30

Dichosa el alma que tal bien encierra, y no menos dichoso el que por ella la suya rinde a la amorosa guerra.

En deuda soy a mi fatal estrella, que me quiso rendir a quien encubre 35  
en tan hermoso cuerpo alma tan bella.

Tu condición, señora, me descubre el desengaño de mi pensamiento, y de temor a mi esperanza cubre.

Pero, en fe de mi justo honroso intento, 40

hago buen rostro a la desconfianza, y cobro al postrer punto nuevo aliento.

Dicen que no hay amor sin esperanza; pienso que es opinión, que yo no espero, y del amor la fuerza más me alcanza. 45

Por sola tu bondad te adoro y quiero, atraído también de tu belleza, que fue la red que amor tendió primero para atraer con rara subtileza al alma descuidada libre mía 50

al amoroso ñudo y su estrechez.

Sustenta amor su mando y tiranía con cualquiera belleza en algún pecho; pero no en la curiosa fantasía, que mira, no de amor el lazo estrecho 55

que tiende en los cabellos de oro fino, dejando al que los mira satisfecho, ni en el pecho, a quien llama alabastrino quien del pecho no pasa más adentro, ni en el marfil del cuello peregrino, 60

sino del alma el escondido centro mira, y contempla mil bellezas puras que le acuden y salen al encuentro.

Mortales y caducas hermosuras no satisfacen a la inmortal alma, 65  
si de la luz perfecta no anda a oscuras.

Tu sin igual virtud lleva la palma y los despojos de mis pensamientos, y a los torpes sentidos tiene en calma.

Y en esta subjeción están contentos, 70

porque miden su dura amarga pena con el valor de tus merescimientos.

Aro en el mar y siembro en el arena cuando la fuerza estraña del deseo a más que a contemplarte me condena. 75

Tu alteza entiendo, mi bajeza veo, y, en extremos que son tan diferentes, ni hay medio que esperar ni le poseo.

Ofrécense por esto inconvenientes tantos a mi remedio, cuantas tiene 80  
el cielo estrellas y la tierra gentes.

Conozco lo que al alma le conviene, sé lo mejor, y a lo peor me atengo,  
llevado del amor que me entretiene.

Mas ya, Nísida bella, al paso vengo, 85  
de mí con mortal ansia deseado, do acabaré la pena que sostengo.

El enemigo brazo levantado me espera, y la feroz aguda espada, contra mí con  
tu saña conjurado. 90

Presto será tu voluntad vengada del vano atrevimiento desta mía, de ti sin  
causa alguna desechada.

Otro más duro trance, otra agonía, aunque fuera mayor que de la muerte 95  
no turbara mi triste fantasía, si cupiera en mi corta amarga suerte verte de mis  
deseos satisfecha, así como al contrario puedo verte.

La senda de mi bien hállola estrecha; 100

la de mi mal, tan ancha y espaciosa, cual de mi desventura ha sido hecha.

Por ésta corre airada y presurosa la muerte, en tu desdén fortalecida, de  
triunfar de mi vida deseosa. 105

Por aquélla mi bien va de vencida, de tu rigor, señora, perseguido, qu'es el  
que ha de acabar mi corta vida.

A términos tan tristes conducido me tiene mi ventura, que ya temo 110

al enemigo airado y ofendido, sólo por ver qu'el fuego en que me quemo es  
yelo en ese pecho, y esto es parte para que yo acobarde al paso extremo; que si tú  
no te muestras de mi parte, 115

¿a quién no temerá mi flaca mano, aunque más le acompañe esfuerzo y arte?

Pero si me ayudaras, ¿qué romano o griego capitán me contrastara, que al fin  
su intento no saliera vano? 120

Por el mayor peligro me arrojara, y de las fieras manos de la muerte los  
despojos seguro arrebatara.

Tú sola puedes levantar mi suerte sobre la humana pompa, o derribarla 125

al centro do no hay bien con que se acierte; que, si como ha podido sublimarla  
el puro amor, quisiera la fortuna en la difícil cumbre sustentarla, subida sobre el  
cielo de la luna 130

se viera mi esperanza, que ahora yace en lugar do no espera en cosa alguna.

Tal estoy ya, que ya me satisface el mal que tu desdén airado, esquivo, por tan  
estraños términos me hace, 135

sólo por ver que en tu memoria vivo, y que te acuerdas, Nísida, siquiera de  
hacerme mal, que yo por bien rescibo.

Con más facilidad contar pudiera del mar los granos de la blanca arena, 140

y las estrellas de la octava esfera, que no las ansias, el dolor, la pena a qu'el

fiero rigor de tu aspereza, sin haberte ofendido, me condena.

No midas tu valor con mi bajeza, 145

que al respecto de tu ser famoso, por tierra quedará cualquiera alteza.

Así cual soy te amo, y decir oso que me adelanto en firme enamorado al más subido término amoroso. 150

Por esto no merezco ser tratado como enemigo; antes, me parece que debería de ser remunerado.

Mal con tanta beldad se compadece tamaña crueldad, y mal asienta 155

ingratitude do tal valor floresce.

Quisiérate pedir, Nísida, cuenta de un alma que te di: ¿dónde la echaste, o cómo, estando ausente, me sustenta?

Ser señora de un alma no aceptaste; 160

pues, ¿qué te puede dar quien más te quiera?

¡Cuán bien tu presunción aquí mostraste!

Sin alma estoy desde la vez primera que te vi, por mi mal y por bien mío, que todo fuera mal si no te viera. 165

Allí el freno te di de mi albedrío, tú me gobiernas, por ti sola vivo, y aun puede mucho más tu poderío.

En el fuego de amor puro me avivo y me deshago, pues, cual fénix, luego 170  
de la muerte de amor vida rescibo.

En fe desta mi fe, te pido y ruego sólo que creas, Nísida, que es cierto que vivo ardiendo en amoroso fuego, y que tú puedes ya, después de muerto, 175

reducirme a la vida, y en un punto del mar airado conducirme al puerto; que está para conmigo en ti tan junto el querer y el poder, que es todo uno, sin discrepar y sin faltar un punto; 180

y acabo, por no ser más importuno.

»No sé si las razones desta carta, o las muchas que yo antes a Nísida había dicho, asegurándole el verdadero amor que Timbrio la tenía, o los continuos servicios de Timbrio, o los cielos, que así lo tenían ordenado, movieron las entrañas de Nísida para que, en el punto que la acabó de leer, me llamase y con lágrimas en los ojos me dijese: “¡Ay, Silerio, Silerio, y cómo creo que a costa de la salud mía has querido granjear la de tu amigo! Hagan los hados, que a este punto me han traído, con las obras de Timbrio verdaderas tus palabras. Y si las unas y las otras me han engañado, tome de mi ofensa venganza el cielo, al cual pongo por testigo de la fuerza que el deseo me hace, para que no le tenga más

encubierto. Mas ¡ay, cuán liviano descargo es éste para tan pesada culpa, pues debiera yo primero morir callando porque mi honra viviera, que, con decir lo que agora quiero decirte, enterrarla a ella y acabar mi vida!” Confuso me tenían estas palabras de Nísida, y más el sobresalto con que las decía; y, queriendo con las mías animarla a que sin temor alguno se declarase, no fue menester importunarla mucho, que al fin me dijo que no sólo amaba, pero que adoraba a Timbrio, y que aquella voluntad tuviera ella cubierta siempre, si la forzosa ocasión de la partida de Timbrio no la forzara a descubrirla.

»Cuál yo quedé, pastores, oyendo lo que Nísida decía y la voluntad amorosa que tener a Timbrio mostraba, no es posible encarecerlo, y aun es bien que carezca de encarecimiento dolor que a tanto se estiende; no porque me pesase de ver a Timbrio querido, sino de verme a mí imposibilitado de tener jamás contento, pues estaba y está claro que ni podía, ni puedo vivir sin Nísida, a la cual, como otras veces he dicho, viéndola en ajenas manos puesta, era enajenarme yo de todo gusto. Y si alguno la suerte en este trance me concedía, era considerar el bien de mi amigo Timbrio, y esto fue parte para que no llegase a un mismo punto mi muerte. Y la declaración de la voluntad de Nísida escuchéla como pude, y aseguréla como supe de la entereza del pecho de Timbrio, a lo cual ella me respondió que ya no había necesidad de asegurarle aquello, porque estaba de manera que no podía, ni le convenía, dejar de creerme, y que sólo me rogaba, si fuese posible, procurase de persuadir a Timbrio buscase algún medio honroso para no venir a batalla con su enemigo; y, respondiéndole yo ser esto imposible sin quedar deshonado, se sosegó, y, quitándose del cuello unas preciosas reliquias, me las dio para que a Timbrio de su parte las diese. Quedó ansimesmo concertado entre los dos que ella sabía que sus padres habían de ir a ver el combate de Timbrio, y que llevarían a ella y a su hermana consigo; mas, porque no le bastaría el ánimo de estar presente al riguroso trance de Timbrio, que ella fingiría estar mal dispuesta, con la cual ocasión se quedaría en una casa de placer donde sus padres habían de posar, que media legua estaba de la villa donde se había de hacer el combate; y que allí esperaría su buena o mala suerte, según la tuviese Timbrio. Mandóme también que, para acortar el deseo que tendría de saber el suceso de Timbrio, que llevase yo conmigo una toca blanca que ella me dio, y que si Timbrio venciese, me la atase al brazo y volviese a darle las nuevas; y si fuese vencido, que no la atase, y así ella sabría por la señal de la toca desde lejos el principio de su contento o el fin de su vida.

»Prometile de hacer todo lo que me mandaba, y, tomando las reliquias y la toca, me despedí della, con la mayor tristeza y el mayor contento que jamás tuve: mi poca ventura causaba la tristeza, y la mucha de Timbrio el alegría. Él supo de mí lo que de parte de Nísida le llevaba, y quedó con ello tan lozano, contento y

orgullosa, que el peligro de la batalla que esperaba por ninguno le tenía, pareciéndole que en ser favorecido de su señora, aun la misma muerte contrastar no le podría. Paso ahora en silencio los encarecimientos que Timbrio hizo para mostrarse agradecido a lo que a mi solicitud debía, porque fueron tales, que mostraba estar fuera de seso tratando en ello.

»Esforzado, pues, y animado con esta buena nueva, comenzó a aparejar su partida, llevando por padrinos un principal caballero español y otro napolitano. Y a la fama deste particular duelo, se movió a verlo infinita gente del reino, y yendo también allá los padres de Nísida, llevando con ellos a ella y a su hermana Blanca. Y, como a Timbrio tocaba escoger las armas, quiso mostrar que no en la ventaja dellas, sino en la razón que tenía fundaba su derecho; y así, las que escogió fueron espada y daga, sin otra arma defensiva alguna. Pocos días faltaban al término señalado, cuando de la ciudad de Nápoles se partieron, con otros muchos caballeros, Nísida y sus padres, habiendo llegado primero ella, acordándome muchas veces que no se olvidase nuestro concierto. Pero mi cansada memoria, que jamás sirvió sino de acordarme solas las cosas de mi desgusto, por no mudar su condición, se olvidó tanto de lo que Nísida me había dicho, cuanto vio que convenía para quitarme la vida, o, a lo menos, para ponerme en el miserable estado en que ahora me veo.»

Con grande atención estaban los pastores escuchando lo que Silerio contaba, cuando interrumpió el hilo de su cuento la voz de un lastimado pastor que entre unos árboles cantando estaba, y no tan lejos de las ventanas de la estancia donde ellos estaban que dejase de oírse todo lo que decía. La voz era de suerte que puso silencio a Silerio, el cual en ninguna manera quiso pasar adelante, antes rogó a los demás pastores que la escuchasen, pues, «para lo poco que de mi cuento quedaba, tiempo habría de acabarlo». Hiciéraseles de mal esto a Tirsi y Damón, si no les dijera Elicio: -Poco se perderá, pastores, en escuchar al desdichado Mireno -que, sin duda, es el pastor que canta-, y a quien ha traído la fortuna a términos que imagino que no espera él ninguno en su contento.

-¿Cómo le ha de esperar -dijo Erastro-, si mañana se desposa Daranio con la pastora Silveria, con quien él pensaba casarse? Pero en fin, han podido más con los padres de Silveria las riquezas de Daranio que las habilidades de Mireno.

-Verdad dices -replicó Elicio-, pero con Silveria más había de poder la voluntad que de Mireno tenía conocida que otro tesoro alguno; cuanto más, que no es Mireno tan pobre que, aunque Silveria se casara con él, fuera su necesidad notada.

Por estas razones que Elicio y Erastro dijeron, creció el deseo en los pastores de escuchar lo que Mireno cantaba. Y así, rogó Silerio que más no se hablase, y todos con atento oído se pararon a escucharle, el cual, afligido de la ingratitud de



Silveria, viendo que otro día con Daranio se desposaba, con la rabia y dolor que le causaba este hecho, se había salido de su casa, acompañado de solo su rabel; y, convidándole la soledad y silencio de un pequeño pradecillo que junto a las paredes de la aldea estaba, y confiado que en tan sosegada noche ninguno le escucharía, se sentó al pie de un árbol, y, templando su rabel, desta manera cantando estaba:

## MIRENO

Cielo sereno, que con tantos ojos los dulces amorosos hurtos miras, y con tu curso alegras o entristeces a aquel que en tu silencio sus enojos a quien los causa dice, o al que retiras 5

de gusto tal y espacio no le ofreces: si acaso no careces  
de tu benignidad para conmigo, pues ya con sólo hablar me satisfago, y sabes  
cuanto hago, 10

no es mucho que ahora escuches lo que digo, que mi voz lastimera  
saldrá con la doliente ánima fuera.

Ya mi cansada voz, ya mis lamentos bien poco ofenderán al aire vano, 15  
pues a término tal soy reducido, que ofrece amor a los airados vientos mis  
esperanzas, y en ajena mano ha puesto el bien que tuve merecido.

Será el fruto cogido 20  
que sembró mi amoroso pensamiento y regaron mis lágrimas cansadas, por las  
afortunadas

manos a quien faltó merescimiento y sobró la ventura, 25  
que allana lo difícil y asegura.

Pues el que vee su gloria convertida en tan amarga dolorosa pena, y tomando  
su bien cualquier camino, ¿por qué no acaba la enojosa vida? 30

¿Por qué no rompe la vital cadena contra todas las fuerzas del destino?

Poco a poco camino

al dulce trance de la amarga muerte, y así, atrevido aunque cansado brazo, 35  
sufrid el embarazo

del vivir, pues ensalza nuestra suerte saber que a amor le place  
qu'el dolor haga lo qu'el hierro hace.

Cierta mi muerte está, pues no es posible 40  
que viva aquél que tiene la esperanza tan muerta y tan ajeno está de gloria;  
pero temo que amor haga imposible mi muerte, y que una falsa confianza dé  
vida, a mi pesar, a la memoria. 45

Mas, ¿qué?, si por la historia de mis pasados bienes la poseo, y miro bien que  
todos son pasados, y los graves cuidados  
que triste agora en su lugar poseo, 50  
ella será más parte  
para que della y del vivir me aparte.

¡Ay, bien único y solo al alma mía, sol que mi tempestad aserenaste, término  
del valor que se desea! 55

¿Será posible que se llega el día donde he de conocer que me olvidaste, y que  
permita amor que yo le vea?

Primero que esto sea,  
primero que tu blanco hermoso cuello 60  
esté de ajenos brazos rodeado, primero que el dorado  
-oro es mejor decir-de tu cabello a Daranio enriquezca,  
con fenecer mi vida el mal fenezca. 65

Nadie por fe te tuvo merescida mejor que yo; mas veo que es fe muerta la que  
con obras no se manifiesta.

Si se estimara el entregar la vida al dolor cierto y a la gloria incierta, 70  
pudiera yo esperar alegre fiesta; mas no se admite en esta  
cruda ley que amor usa el buen deseo, pues es proverbio antiguo entre  
amadores, que son obras amores; 75  
y yo, que por mi mal sólo poseo la voluntad de hacellas,  
¿qué no m'ha de faltar faltando en ellas?

En ti pensaba yo que se rompiera esta ley del avaro amor usada, 80  
pastora, y que los ojos levantaras a una alma de la tuya prisionera, y a tu  
proprio querer tan ajustada, que si la conocieras, la estimaras.

Pensé que no trocaras 85  
una fe que dio muestras de tan buena por una que quilata sus deseos con los  
vanos arreos  
de la riqueza, de cuidados llena: entregástete al oro, 90  
por entregarme a mí contino al lloro.

Abatida pobreza, causadora deste dolor que me atormenta el alma, aquel te loa

que jamás te mira.

Turbóse en ver tu rostro mi pastora, 95  
a su amor tu aspereza puso en calma; y así, por no encontrarte, el pie retira.  
Mal contigo se aspira  
a conseguir intentos amorosos: tú derribas las altas esperanzas, 100  
y siembras mil mudanzas  
en femeniles pechos codiciosos; tú jamás perfeccionas  
con amor el valor de las personas.

Sol es el oro cuyos rayos ciegan 105  
la vista más aguda, si se ceba en la vana apariencia del provecho.  
A liberales manos no se niegan las que gustan de hacer notoria prueba de un  
blando, codicioso, hermoso pecho. 110  
Oro tuerce el derecho  
de la limpia intención y fe sincera, y más que la firmeza de un amante, acaba  
un diamante,  
pues su dureza vuelve un pecho cera, 115  
por más duro que sea,  
pues se le da con él lo que desea.

De ti me pesa, dulce mi enemiga, que tantas tuyas puras perfecciones con una  
avara muestra has afeado. 120  
Tanto del oro te mostraste amiga, que echaste a las espaldas mis pasiones y al  
olvido entregaste mi cuidado.  
En fin, ¡que te has casado!  
¡Casado te has, pastora! El cielo haga 125  
tan buena tu elección como querías, y de las penas mías  
injustas no rescibas justa paga; mas, ¡ay!, que el cielo amigo da premio a la  
virtud, y al mal, castigo. 130

Aquí dio fin a su canto el lastimado Mireno, con muestras de tanto dolor, que  
le causó a todos los que escuchándole estaban, principalmente a los que le  
conocían y sabían sus virtudes, gallarda disposición y honroso trato. Y, después  
de haber dicho entre los pastores algunos discursos sobre la estraña condición de  
las mujeres, en especial sobre el casamiento de Silveria, que, olvidada del amor  
y bondad de Mireno, a las riquezas de Daranio se había entregado, deseosos de  
que Silerio diese fin a su cuento, puesto silencio a todo, sin ser menester  
pedírselo, él comenzó a seguir diciendo: -«Llegado, pues, el día del riguroso  
trance, habiéndose quedado Nísida media legua antes de la villa en unos

jardines, como conmigo había concertado, con excusa que dio a sus padres de no hallarse bien dispuesta, al partirme della me encargó la brevedad de mi tornada con la señal de la toca, porque, en traerla o no, ella entendiese el bueno o el mal suceso de Timbrio. Tornéselo yo a prometer, agraviándome de que tanto me lo encargase; y con esto me despedí della y de su hermana, que con ella se quedaba. Y, llegado al puesto del combate, y llegada la hora de comenzarle, después de haber hecho los padrinos de entrambos las ceremonias y amonestaciones que en tal caso se requieren, puestos los dos caballeros en el estacado, al temeroso son de una ronca trompeta, se acometieron con tanta destreza y arte que causaba admiración en quien los miraba. Pero el amor, o la razón -que es lo más cierto-, que a Timbrio favorecía, le dio tal esfuerzo que, aunque a costa de algunas heridas, en poco espacio puso a su contrario de suerte que, tiniéndole a sus pies herido y desangrado, le importunaba que si quería salvar la vida, se rindiese. Pero el desdichado Pransiles le persuadía que le acabase de matar, pues le era más fácil a él, y de menos daño, pasar por mil muertes que rendirse una. Mas el generoso ánimo de Timbrio es de manera que, ni quiso matar a su enemigo, ni menos que se confesase por rendido; sólo se contentó con que dijese y conociese que era tan bueno Timbrio como él, lo cual Pransiles confesó de buena gana, pues hacía en esto tan poco, que, sin verse en aquel término, pudiera muy bien decirlo.

»Todos los circunstantes, que entendieron lo que Timbrio con su enemigo había pasado, lo alabaron y estimaron en mucho. Y, apenas hube yo visto el feliz suceso de mi amigo, cuando, con alegría increíble y presta ligereza, volví a dar las nuevas a Nísida. Pero, ¡ay de mí!, que el descuido de entonces me ha puesto en el cuidado de agora. ¡Oh memoria, memoria mía! ¿Por qué no la tuviste para lo que tanto me importaba? Mas creo que estaba ordenado en mi ventura que el principio de aquella alegría fuese el remate y fin de todos mis contentos. Yo volví a ver a Nísida con la presteza que he dicho, pero volví sin ponerme la blanca toca al brazo. Nísida, que con crecido deseo estaba esperando y mirando desde unos altos corredores mi tornada, viéndome volver sin la toca, entendió que algún siniestro revés a Timbrio había sucedido, y creyólo y sintiólo de manera que, sin ser parte otra cosa, faltándole todos los espíritus, cayó en el suelo con tan extraño desmayo que todos por muerta la tuvieron. Cuando ya yo llegué, hallé a toda la gente de su casa alborotada, y a su hermana haciendo mil extremos de dolor sobre el cuerpo de la triste Nísida. Cuando yo la vi en tal estado, creyendo firmemente que era muerta y viendo que la fuerza del dolor me iba sacando de sentido, temeroso que, estando fuera dél, no diese o descubriese algunas muestras de mis pensamientos, me salí de la casa, y poco a poco volvía a dar las desdichadas nuevas al desdichado Timbrio. Pero, como me hubiesen

privado las ansias de mi fatiga las fuerzas de cuerpo y alma, no fueron tan ligeros mis pasos que no lo hubiesen sido más otros que la triste nueva a los padres de Nísida llevasen, certificándoles cierto que de un agudo paracismo había quedado muerta. Debió de oír esto Timbrio, y debió de quedar cual yo quedé, si no quedó peor; sólo sé decir que cuando llegué a do pensaba hallarle, era ya algo anochecido, y supe de uno de sus padrinos que con el otro, y por la posta, se había partido a Nápoles, con muestras de tanto descontento, como si de la contienda vencido y deshonorado salido hubiera. Luego imaginé yo lo que ser podía, y púseme luego en camino para seguirle; y, antes que a Nápoles llegase, tuve nuevas ciertas de que Nísida no era muerta, sino que le había dado un desmayo que le duró veinte y cuatro horas, al cabo de las cuales había vuelto en sí con muchas lágrimas y sospiros. Con la certidumbre desta nueva me consolé, y con más contento llegué a Nápoles, pensando hallar allí a Timbrio; pero no fue así, porque el caballero con quien él había venido me certificó que, en llegando a Nápoles, se partió sin decir cosa alguna, y que no sabía a qué parte; sólo imaginaba que, según le vio triste y malencólico después de la batalla, que no podía creer sino que a desesperarse hubiese ido.

»Nuevas fueron estas que me tornaron a mis primeras lágrimas; y aun no contenta mi ventura con esto, ordenó que, al cabo de pocos días, llegasen a Nápoles los padres de Nísida, sin ella y sin su hermana, las cuales, según supe y según era pública voz, entrambas a dos se habían ausentado una noche viniendo con sus padres a Nápoles, sin que se supiese dellas nueva alguna. Tan confuso quedé con esto, que no sabía qué hacerme ni decirme; y, estando puesto en esta confusión tan estraña, vine a saber, aunque no muy cierto, que Timbrio, en el puerto de Gaeta, en una gruesa nave que para España iba, se había embarcado. Y, pensando que podría ser verdad, me vine luego a España, y en Jerez y en todas las partes que imaginé que podría estar, le he buscado sin hallar dél rastro alguno. Finalmente, he venido a la ciudad de Toledo, donde están todos los parientes de los padres de Nísida, y lo que he alcanzado a saber es que ellos se vuelven a Toledo sin haber sabido nuevas de sus hijas. Viéndome, pues, yo ausente de Timbrio, ajeno de Nísida, y considerando que ya que los hallase, ha de ser para gusto suyo y perdición mía, cansado ya y desengañado de las cosas deste falso mundo en que vivimos, he acordado de volver el pensamiento a mejor norte, y gastar lo poco que de vivir me queda en servicio del que estima los deseos y las obras en el punto que merescen. Y así, he escogido este hábito que veis y la ermita que habéis visto, adonde en dulce soledad reprima mis deseos y encamine mis obras a mejor paradero, puesto que, como viene de tan atrás la corrida de las malas inclinaciones que hasta aquí he tenido, no son tan fáciles de parar que no trascorran algo y vuelva la memoria a combatirme,

representándome las pasadas cosas; y, cuando en estos puntos me veo, al son de aquella arpa que escogí por compañera en mi soledad, procuro aliviar la pesada carga de mis cuidados, hasta que el cielo le tenga y se acuerde de llamarme a mejor vida.» Éste es, pastores, el suceso de mi desventura; y si he sido largo en contárosle, es porque no ha sido ella corta en fatigarme. Lo que os ruego es me dejéis volver a mi ermita, porque, aunque vuestra compañía me es agradable, he llegado a términos que ninguna cosa me da más gusto que la soledad; y de aquí entenderéis la vida que paso y el mal que sostengo.

Acabó con esto Silerio su cuento, pero no las lágrimas con que muchas veces le había acompañado. Los pastores le consolaron en ellas lo mejor que pudieron, especialmente Damón y Tirsi, los cuales con muchas razones le persuadieron a no perder la esperanza de ver a su amigo Timbrio con más contento que él sabría imaginar, pues no era posible sino que tras tanta fortuna aserenase el cielo, del cual se debía esperar que no consintiría que la falsa nueva de la muerte de Nísida a noticia de Timbrio con más verdadera relación no viniese antes que la desesperación le acabase. Y que de Nísida se podía creer y conjeturar que, por ver a Timbrio ausente, se habría partido en su busca; y que si entonces la Fortuna por tan estraños accidentes los había apartado, agora por otros no menos estraños sabría juntarlos. Todas estas razones y otras muchas que le dijeron le consolaron algo, pero no de manera que despertase en él la esperanza de verse en vida más contenta; ni aun él la procuraba, por parecerle que la que había escogido era la que más le convenía.

Gran parte era ya pasada de la noche, cuando los pastores acordaron de reposar el poco tiempo que hasta el día quedaba, en el cual se habían de celebrar las bodas de Daranio y Silveria. Mas, apenas había dejado la blanca aurora el enfadoso lecho del celoso marido, cuando dejaron los suyos todos los más pastores de la aldea, y cada cual, como mejor pudo, comenzó por su parte a regocijar la fiesta: cuál trayendo verdes ramos para adornar la puerta de los desposados, y cuál con su tamborino y flauta les daba la madrugada; acullá se oía la regocijada gaita; acá sonaba el acordado rabel; allí, el antiguo salterio; aquí, los cursados albogues; quién con coloradas cintas adornaba sus castañetas para los esperados bailes; quién pulía y repulía sus rústicos aderezos para mostrarse galán a los ojos de alguna su querida pastorcilla; de modo que, por cualquier parte de la aldea que se fuese, todo sabía a contento, placer y fiesta. Sólo el triste y desdichado Mireno era aquél a quien todas estas alegrías causaban summa tristeza; el cual, habiéndose salido de la aldea por no ver hacer sacrificio de su gloria, se subió en una costezuela que junto al aldea estaba, y allí, sentándose al pie de un antiguo fresno, puesta la mano en la mejilla y la caperuza encajada hasta los ojos, que en el suelo tenía clavados, comenzó a

imaginar el desdichado punto en que se hallaba y cuán sin poderlo estorbar, ante sus ojos, había de ver coger el fruto de sus deseos. Y esta consideración le tenía de suerte, que lloraba tan tierna y amargamente, que ninguno en tal trance le viera que con lágrimas no le acompañara. A esta sazón, Damón y Tirsi, Elicio y Erastro se levantaron, y, asomándose a una ventana que al campo salía, lo primero en quien pusieron los ojos fue en el lastimado Mireno; y, en verle de la suerte que estaba, conocieron bien el dolor que padecía, y, movidos a compasión, determinaron todos de ir a consolarle, como lo hicieran si Elicio no les rogara que le dejaran ir a él solo, porque imaginaba que por ser Mireno tan amigo suyo, con él más abiertamente que con otro su dolor comunicaría. Los pastores se lo concedieron, y, yendo allá Elicio, hallóle tan fuera de sí y tan en su dolor trasportado, que ni le conoció Mireno, ni le habló palabra; lo cual visto por Elicio, hizo señal a los demás pastores que viniesen, los cuales, temiendo algún extraño accidente a Mireno sucedido, pues Elicio con priesa los llamaba, fueron luego allá, y vieron que estaba Mireno con los ojos tan fijos en el suelo, y tan sin hacer movimiento alguno, que una estatua semejaba, pues con la llegada de Elicio, ni con la de Tirsi, Damón y Erastro, no volvió de su extraño embelesamiento, si no fue que, a cabo de un buen espacio de tiempo, casi como entre dientes, comenzó a decir: -¿Tú eres Silveria, Silveria? Si tú lo eres, yo no soy Mireno; y si soy Mireno, tú no eres Silveria: porque no es posible que esté Silveria sin Mireno, o Mireno sin Silveria. Pues, ¿quién soy yo, desdichado? ¿O quién eres tú, desconocida? Yo bien sé que no soy Mireno, porque tú no has querido ser Silveria; a lo menos, la Silveria que ser debías y yo pensaba que fueras.

A esta sazón, alzó los ojos, y, como vio alrededor de sí los cuatro pastores y conoció entre ellos a Elicio, se levantó, y, sin dejar su amargo llanto, le echó los brazos al cuello, diciéndole: -¡Ay, verdadero amigo mío, y cómo ahora no tendrás ocasión de envidiar mi estado, como le envidiabas cuando de Silveria me veías favorecido; pues si entonces me llamaste venturoso, ahora puedes llamarme desdichado y trocar todos los títulos alegres que en aquel tiempo me dabas, en los de pesar que ahora puedes darme! Yo sí que te podré llamar dichoso, Elicio, pues te consuela más la esperanza que tienes de ser querido, que no te fatiga el verdadero temor de ser olvidado.

-Confuso me tienes, ¡oh Mireno! -respondió Elicio-, de ver los extremos que haces por lo que Silveria ha hecho, sabiendo que tiene padres a quien ha sido justo haber obedecido.

-Si ella tuviera amor -replicó Mireno-, poco inconveniente era la obligación de los padres para dejar de cumplir con lo que al amor debía; de do vengo a considerar, ¡oh Elicio!, que si me quiso bien, hizo mal en casarse, y si fue

fingido el amor que me mostraba, hizo peor en engañarme; y ofrécame el desengaño a tiempo que no puede aprovecharme si no es con dejar en sus manos la vida.

-No está en términos la tuya, Mireno -replicó Elicio-, que tengas por remedio el acabarla, pues podría ser que la mudanza de Silveria no estuviese en la voluntad, sino en la fuerza de la obediencia de sus padres; y si tú la quisiste limpia y honestamente doncella, también la puedes querer agora casada, correspondiendo ella ahora como entonces a tus buenos y honestos deseos.

-Mal conoces a Silveria, Elicio -respondió Mireno-, pues imaginas della que ha de hacer cosa de que pueda ser notada.

-Esta misma razón que has dicho te condena -respondió Elicio-, pues si tú, Mireno, sabes de Silveria que no hará cosa que mal le esté, en la que ha hecho no debe de haber errado.

-Si no ha errado -respondió Mireno-, ha acertado a quitarme todo el buen suceso que de mis buenos pensamientos esperaba, y sólo en esto la culpo: que nunca me advirtió deste daño; antes, temiéndome dél, con firme juramento que me aseguraba que eran imaginaciones mías, y que nunca a la suya había llegado pensar con Daranio casarse, ni se casaría, si conmigo no, con él ni con otro alguno, aunque aventurara en ello quedar en perpetua desgracia con sus padres y parientes; y, debajo deste seguro y prometimiento, faltar y romper la fe agora de la manera que has visto, ¿qué razón hay que tal consienta, o qué corazón que tal sufra?

Aquí tornó Mireno a renovar su llanto, y aquí de nuevo le tuvieron lástima los pastores. A este instante, llegaron dos zagales adonde ellos estaban, que el uno era pariente de Mireno y el otro criado de Daranio, que a llamar a Elicio, Tirsi, Damón y Erastro venía, porque las fiestas de su desposorio querían comenzarse. Pesábales a los pastores de dejar solo a Mireno, pero aquel pastor su pariente se ofreció a quedar con él. Y aun Mireno dijo a Elicio que se quería ausentar de aquella tierra, por no ver cada día a los ojos la causa de su desventura. Elicio le loó su determinación, y le encargó que, doquiera que estuviese, le avisase de cómo le iba. Mireno se lo prometió, y, sacando del seno un papel, le rogó que, en hallando comodidad, se le diese a Silveria; y con esto se despidió de todos los pastores, no sin muestras de mucho dolor y tristeza. El cual no se hubo bien apartado de su presencia, cuando Elicio, deseoso de saber lo que en el papel venía, viendo que, pues estaba abierto, importaba poco leerle, le descogió, y, convidando a los otros pastores a escucharle, vio que en él venían escriptos estos versos:



# MIRENO A SILVERIA

El pastor que te ha entregado lo más de cuanto tenía,  
pastora, agora te envía  
lo menos que le'ha quedado; que es este pobre papel, 5  
adonde claro verás  
la fe que en ti no hallarás y el dolor que queda en él.  
Pero poco al caso hace  
darte desto cuenta estrecha, 10  
si mi fe no me aprovecha  
y mi mal te satisface.  
No pienses que es mi intención quejarme porque me dejas,  
que llegan tarde las quejas 15  
de mi temprana pasión.

Tiempo fue ya que escucharas el cuento de mis enojos,  
y aun, si lloraran mis ojos, las lágrimas enjugaras. 20  
Entonces era Mireno  
el que era de ti mirado;  
mas ¡ay, cómo te has trocado, tiempo bueno, tiempo bueno!  
Si durara aquel engaño, 25  
templárase mi desgusto,  
pues más vale un falso gusto, que un notorio y cierto daño.  
Pero tú, por quien se ordena mi terrible mala andanza, 30  
has hecho con tu mudanza  
falso el bien, cierta la pena.  
Tus palabras lisonjeras  
y mis crédulos oídos,  
me han dado bienes fingidos 35  
y males que son de veras.  
Los bienes, con su apariencia, crecieron mi sanidad;  
los males, con su verdad,  
han doblado mi dolencia. 40  
Por esto juzgo y discierno, por cosa cierta y notoria, que tiene el amor su  
gloria a las puertas del infierno, y que un desdén acarrea 45  
y un olvido en un momento  
desde la gloria al tormento al que en amar no se emplea.

Con tanta presteza has hecho este mudamiento extraño, 50  
que estoy ya dentro del daño y no salgo del provecho:  
porque imagino que ayer  
era cuando me querías,  
o a lo menos lo fingías, 55  
que es lo que se ha de creer; y el agradable sonido

de tus palabras sabrosas  
y razones amorosas  
aún me suena en el oído. 60  
Estas memorias süaves  
al fin me dan más tormento, pues tus palabras el viento llevó, y las obras,  
quien sabes.

¿Eras tú la que jurabas 65  
que se acabasen tus días  
si a Mireno no querías  
sobre todo cuanto amabas?  
¿Eres tú, Silveria, quien  
hizo de mí tal caudal, 70  
que siendo todo tu mal,  
me tenías por tu bien?  
¡Oh, qué títulos te diera  
de ingrata, como mereces,  
si como tú me aborreces, 75  
también yo te aborreciera!  
Mas no puedo aprovecharme  
del medio de aborrecerte,

que estimo más el quererte que tú has hecho el olvidarme. 80  
Triste gemido a mi canto  
ha dado tu mano fiera;  
invierno a mi primavera,  
y a mi risa amargo llanto.  
Mi gasajo ha vuelto en luto, 85  
y de mis blandos amores  
cambio en abrojos las flores y en veneno el dulce fruto.  
Y aun dirás -y esto me dañaque es el haberte casado 90  
y el haberme así olvidado  
una honesta honrosa hazaña.

¡Disculpa fuera admitida,  
si no te fuera notorio  
que estaba en tu desposorio 95  
el fin de mi triste vida!  
Mas, en fin, tu gusto fue  
gusto; pero no fue justo,

pues con premio tan injusto pagó mi inviolable fe; 100  
la cual, por ver que se ofrece de mostrar la fe que alcanza, ni la muda tu  
mudanza,  
ni mi mal la desfallece.  
Quien esto vendrá a entender 105  
cierto estoy que no se asombre, viendo al fin que yo soy hombre, y tú,  
Silveria, mujer,  
adonde la ligereza  
hace de contino asiento, 110  
y adonde en mí el sufrimiento es otra naturaleza.  
Ya te contemplo casada,  
y de serlo arrepentida,  
porque ya es cosa sabida 115  
que no estarás firme en nada.  
Procura alegre llevarlo  
el yugo que echaste al cuello, que podrás aborrecello

y no podrás desecharlo. 120  
Mas eres tan inhumana  
y de tan mudable ser,  
que lo que quisiste ayer  
has de aborrecer mañana.  
Y así, por estraña cosa, 125  
dirá aquél que de ti hable: «Hermosa, pero mudable;  
mudable, pero hermosa».

No parecieron mal los versos de Mireno a los pastores, sino la ocasión a que se habían hecho, considerando con cuánta presteza la mudanza de Silveria le había traído a punto de desamparar la amada patria y queridos amigos, temeroso cada uno que en el suceso de sus pretensiones lo mismo le sucediese. Entrados,

pues, en el aldea y llegados adonde Daranio y Silveria estaban, la fiesta se comenzó tan alegre y regocijadamente, cuanto en las riberas de Tajo en muchos tiempos se había visto; que, por ser Daranio uno de los más ricos pastores de toda aquella comarca, y Silveria de las más hermosas pastoras de toda la ribera, acudieron a sus bodas toda o la más pastoría de aquellos contornos. Y así, se hizo una célebre junta de discretos pastores y hermosas pastoras, y entre los que a los demás en muchas y diversas habilidades se aventajaron, fueron el triste Orompo, el celoso Orfenio, el ausente Crisio y el desamado Masilio, mancebos todos y todos enamorados, aunque de diferentes pasiones oprimidos; porque al triste Orompo fatigaba la temprana muerte de su querida Listea; y al celoso Orfenio, la insufrible rabia de los celos, siendo enamorado de la hermosa pastora Eandra; al ausente Crisio, el verse apartado de Claraura, bella y discreta pastora, a quien él por único bien suyo tenía; y al desesperado Marsilio, el desamor que para con él en el pecho de Belisa se encerraba. Eran todos amigos y de una misma aldea, y la pasión del uno el otro no la ignoraba; antes, en dolorosa competencia, muchas veces se habían juntado a encarecer cada cual la causa de su tormento, procurando cada uno mostrar, como mejor podía, que su dolor a cualquier otro se aventajaba, teniendo por summa gloria ser en la pena mejorado; y tenían todos tal ingenio, o por mejor decir, tal dolor padecían, que comoquiera que le significasen, mostraban ser el mayor que imaginar se podía. Por estas disputas y competencias eran famosos y conocidos en todas las riberas de Tajo, y habían puesto deseo a Tirsi y a Damón de conocerlos; y, viéndolos allí juntos, unos a otros se hicieron corteses y agradables rescibimientos; principalmente, todos con admiración miraban a los dos pastores Tirsi y Damón, hasta allí dellos solamente por fama conocidos.

A esta sazón, salió el rico pastor Daranio a la serrana vestido: traía camisa alta de cuello plegado, almilla de frisa, sayo verde escotado, zaragüelles de delgado lienzo, antiparas azules, zapato redondo, cinto tachonado, y de la color del sayo una cuarteada caperuza. No menos salió bien aderezada su esposa Silveria, porque venía con saya y cuerpos leonados guarnecidos de raso blanco, camisa de pechos labrada de azul y verde, gorguera de hilo amarillo sembrado de argentería (invención de Galatea y Florisa, que la vistieron), garbín turquesado con fluecos de encarnada seda, alcorque dorado, zapatillas justas, corales ricos y sortija de oro; y, sobre todo, su belleza, que más que todo la adornaba. Salió luego tras ella la sin par Galatea, como sol tras el aurora, y su amiga Florisa, con otras muchas y hermosas pastoras que, por honrar las bodas, a ellas habían venido, entre las cuales también iba Teolinda, con cuidado de hurtar el rostro a los ojos de Damón y Tirsi, por no ser de ellos conocida. Y luego las pastoras, siguiendo a los pastores que guiaban, al son de muchos pastoriles instrumentos,

hacia el templo se encaminaron, en el cual espacio le tuvieron Elicio y Erastro de cebar los ojos en el hermoso rostro de Galatea, deseando que durara aquel camino más que la larga peregrinación de Ulises. Y, con el contento de verla, iba tan fuera de sí Erastro que hablando con Elicio le dijo: -¿Qué miras, pastor, si a Galatea no miras? Pero, ¿cómo podrás mirar el sol de sus cabellos, el cielo de su frente, las estrellas de sus ojos, la nieve de su rostro, la grana de sus mejillas, el color de sus labios, el marfil de sus dientes, el cristal de su cuello, el mármol de su pecho?

-Todo eso he podido ver, ¡oh Erastro! -respondió Elicio-, y ninguna cosa de cuantas has dicho es causa de mi tormento, si no es la aspereza de su condición, que si no fuera tal como tú sabes, todas las gracias y bellezas que en Galatea conoces fueran ocasión de mayor gloria nuestra.

-Bien dices -dijo Erastro-; pero todavía no me podrás negar que a no ser Galatea tan hermosa, no fuera tan deseada, y a no ser tan deseada, no fuera tanta nuestra pena, pues toda ella nace del deseo.

-No te puedo yo negar, Erastro -respondió Elicio-, que todo cualquier dolor y pesadumbre no nazca de la privación y falta de aquello que deseamos; mas juntamente con esto te quiero decir que ha perdido conmigo mucho la calidad del amor con que yo pensé que a Galatea querías; porque si solamente la quieres por ser hermosa, muy poco tiene que agradecerte, pues no habrá ningún hombre, por rústico que sea, que la mire que no la desea, porque la belleza, dondequiera que está, trae consigo el hacer desear. Así que, a este simple deseo, por ser tan natural, ningún premio se le debe, porque si se le debiera, con sólo desear el cielo le tuviéramos merecido; mas ya ves, Erastro, ser esto tan al revés como nuestra verdadera ley nos lo tiene mostrado. Y, puesto caso que la hermosura y belleza sea una principal parte para atraernos a desearla y a procurar gozarla, el que fuere verdadero enamorado no ha de tener tal gozo por último fin suyo, sino que, aunque la belleza le acarree este deseo, la ha de querer solamente por ser bueno, sin que otro algún interés le mueva. Y éste se puede llamar, aun en las cosas de acá, perfecto y verdadero amor, y es digno de ser agradecido y premiado, como vemos que premia conocida y aventajadamente el Hacedor de todas las cosas a aquellos que sin moverles otro interés alguno de temor, de pena o de esperanza de gloria, le quieren, le aman y le sirven solamente por ser bueno y digno de ser amado; y ésta es la última y mayor perfección que en el amor divino se encierra, y en el humano también, cuando no se quiere más de por ser bueno lo que se ama, sin haber error de entendimiento; porque muchas veces lo malo nos parece bueno y lo bueno malo; y así, amamos lo uno y aborrecemos lo otro, y este tal amor no merece premio, sino castigo. Quiero inferir de todo lo que he dicho, ¡oh Erastro!, que si tú quieres y amas la

hermosura de Galatea con intención de gozarla, y en esto para el fin de tu deseo, sin pasar adelante a querer su virtud, su acrescentamiento de fama, su salud, su vida y bienes, entiende que no amas como debes, ni debes ser remunerado como quieres.

Quisiera Erastro replicar a Elicio y darle a entender cómo no entendía bien del amor con que a Galatea amaba, pero estorbólo el son de la zampoña del desamorado Lenio, el cual quiso también hallarse a las bodas de Daranio y regocijar la fiesta con su canto. Y así, puesto delante de los desposados, en tanto que al templo llegaban, al son del rabel de Eugenio, estos versos fue cantando:

## LENIO

¡Desconocido, ingrato Amor, que asombras a veces los gallardos corazones, y con vanas figuras, vanas sombras, pones al alma libre mil prisiones!, si de ser dios te precias, y te nombras 5

con tan subido nombre, no perdones al que, rendido al lazo de Himineo, rindiere a nuevo ñudo su deseo.

En conservar la ley pura y sincera del sancto matrimonio pon tu fuerza; 10

descoge en este campo tu bandera; haz a tu condición en esto fuerza, que bella flor, que dulce fruto espera, por pequeño trabajo, el que se esfuerza a llevar este yugo como debe, 15

que, aunque parece carga, es carga leve.

Tú puedes, si te olvidas de tus hechos y de tu condición tan desabrida, hacer alegres tálamos y lechos do el yugo conyugal a dos anida. 20

Enciérrate en sus almas y en sus pechos hasta que acabe el curso de su vida y vayan a gozar, como se espera, de la agradable eterna primavera.

Deja las pastoriles cabañuelas, 25

y al libre pastorcillo hacer su oficio; vuela más alto ya, pues tanto vuelas, y aspira a mejor grado y ejercicio.

En vano te fatigas y desvelas en hacer de las almas sacrificio, 30

si no las rindes con mejor intento al dulce de Himineo ayuntamiento.

Aquí puedes mostrar la poderosa mano de tu poder maravilloso, haciendo que

la nueva tierna esposa 35

quiera, y que sea querida de su esposo, sin que aquella infernal rabia celosa les turbe su contento y su reposo, ni el desdén sacudido y zahareño les prive del sabroso y dulce sueño. 40

Mas si, ¡pérfido Amor!, nunca escuchadas fueron de ti plegarias de tu amigo, bien serán estas mías desechadas, que te soy y seré siempre enemigo.

Tu condición, tus obras mal miradas, 45

de quien es todo el mundo buen testigo, hacen que yo no espere de tu mano contento alegre, venturoso y sano.

Ya se maravillaban los que al desamorado Lenio escuchando iban, de ver con cuanta mansedumbre las cosas de amor trataba, llamándole dios y de mano poderosa, cosa que jamás le habían oído decir. Mas, habiendo oído los versos con que acabó su canto, no pudieron dejar de reírse, porque ya les pareció que se iba colerizando, y, que si adelante en su canto pasara, él pusiera al amor como otras veces solía; pero faltóle el tiempo, porque se acabó el camino. Y así, llegados al templo y hechas en él por los sacerdotes las acostumbradas ceremonias, Daranio y Silveria quedaron en perpetuo y estrecho ñudo ligados, no sin envidia de muchos que los miraban, ni sin dolor de algunos que la hermosura de Silveria codiciaban; pero a todo dolor sobrepujara el que sintiera el sin ventura Mireno, si a este espectáculo se hallara presente. Vueltos, pues, los desposados del templo con la misma compañía que habían llevado, llegaron a la plaza de la aldea, donde hallaron las mesas puestas, y adonde quiso Daranio hacer públicamente demostración de sus riquezas, haciendo a todo el pueblo un generoso y sumptuoso convite. Estaba la plaza tan enramada que una hermosa verde floresta parecía, entretejidas las ramas por cima de tal modo, que los agudos rayos del sol en todo aquel circuito no hallaban entrada para calentar el fresco suelo, que cubierto con muchas espadañas y con mucha diversidad de flores se mostraba.

Allí, pues, con general contento de todos, se solemnizó el generoso banquete, al son de muchos pastorales instrumentos, sin que diesen menos gusto que el que suelen dar las acordadas músicas que en los reales palacios se acostumbran. Pero lo que más autorizó la fiesta fue ver que, en alzándose las mesas, en el mismo lugar, con mucha presteza, hicieron un tablado, para efecto de que los cuatro discretos y lastimados pastores, Orompo, Marsilo, Crisio y Orfenio, por honrar las bodas de su amigo Daranio, y por satisfacer el deseo que Tirsi y Damón tenían de escucharles, querían allí en público recitar una égloga que ellos mismos de la ocasión de sus mismos dolores habían compuesto. Acomodados,

pues, en sus asientos todos los pastores y pastoras que allí estaban, después que la zampoña de Erastro y la lira de Lenio y los otros instrumentos hicieron prestar a los presentes un sosegado y maravilloso silencio, el primero que se mostró en el humilde teatro fue el triste Orompo, con un pellico negro vestido y un cayado de amarillo boj en la mano, el remate del cual era una fea figura de la muerte; venía con hojas de funesto ciprés coronado, insinias todas de la tristeza que en él reinaba por la inmadura muerte de su querida Listea; y, después que con triste semblante los llorosos ojos a una y a otra parte hubo tendido, con muestras de infinito dolor y amargura, rompió el silencio con semejantes razones:

## OROMPO

Salid de lo hondo del pecho cuitado, palabras sangrientas, con muerte mezcladas; y si los suspiros os tienen atadas, abrid y romped el siniestro costado.

El aire os impide, que está ya inflamado 5  
del fiero veneno de vuestros acentos; salid, y siquiera os lleven los vientos,  
que todo mi bien también me han llevado.

Poco perdéis en veros perdidas, pues ya os ha faltado el alto sujeto 10  
por quien en estilo grave y perfecto hablábades cosas de punto subidas;  
notadas un tiempo y bien conocidas fuistes por dulces, alegres, sabrosas; agora  
por tristes, amargas, llorosas, 15  
seréis de la tierra y del cielo tenidas.

Pero, aunque salgáis, palabras, temblando, ¿con cuáles podréis decir lo que  
siento?, si es incapaz mi fiero tormento de irse cual es al vivo pintando. 20

Mas, ya que me falta el cómo y el cuándo de significar mi pena y mi mengua,  
aquello que falta y no puede la lengua, suplan mis ojos, contino llorando.

¡Oh muerte, que atajas y cortas el hilo 25  
de mil pretensiones gustosas humanas, y en un volver de ojos las sierras  
allanas y haces iguales a Henares y al Nilo!

¿Por qué no templaste, traidora, el estilo tuyo cruel? ¿Por qué a mi despecho,  
30

probaste en el blanco y más lindo pecho, de tu fiero alfanje la furia y el filo?

¿En qué te ofendían, ¡oh falsa!, los años tan tiernos y verdes de aquella  
cordera?

¿Por qué te mostraste con ella tan fiera? 35



¿Por qué en el suyo creciste mis daños?

¡Oh mi enemiga, y amiga de engaños!, de mí, que te busco, te escondes y ausentas, y quieres y trabas razones y cuentas con el que más teme tus males tamaños. 40

En años maduros, tu ley, tan injusta, pudiera mostrar su fuerza crecida, y no descargar la dura herida en quien del vivir ha poco que gusta.

Mas esa tu hoz, que todo lo ajusta, 45

y mando ni ruego jamás la doblega, así con rigor la flor tierna siega, como la caña ñudosa y robusta.

Cuando a Listea del suelo quitaste, tu ser, tu valor, tu fuerza, tu brío, 50  
tu ira, tu mando y tu señorío con solo aquel triunfo al mundo mostraste.

Llevando a Listea, también te llevaste la gracia, el donaire, belleza y cordura mayor de la tierra, y en su sepultura 55

este bien todo con ella encerraste.

Sin ella, en tiniebla perpetua ha quedado mi vida penosa, que tanto se alarga, que es insufrible a mis hombros su carga: que es muerte la vida del que es desdichado. 60

Ni espero en fortuna, ni espero en el hado, ni espero en el tiempo, ni espero en el cielo, ni tengo de quién espere consuelo, ni es bien que se espere en mal tan sobrado.

¡Oh vos, que sentís qué cosa es dolores!, 65

venid y tomad consuelo en los míos; que en viendo su ahínco, sus fuerzas, sus bríos, veréis que los vuestros son mucho menores.

¿Dó estáis agora, gallardos pastores?

Crisio, Marsilo y Orfenio, ¿qué hacéis? 70

¿Por qué no venís? ¿Por qué no tenéis por más que los vuestros mis daños mayores?

Mas, ¿quién es aquel que asoma y que quiebra por la encrucijada de aqueste sendero?

Marsilo es, sin duda, de amor prisionero: 75

Belisa es la causa, a quien siempre celebra.

A éste le roe la fiera culebra del crudo desdén el pecho y el alma, y pasa su vida en tormenta sin calma, y aun no es, cual la mía, su suerte tan negra. 80

Él piensa qu'el mal qu'el alma le aqueja es más que el dolor de mi desventura.

Aquí será bien que entre esta espesura me esconda, por ver si acaso se queja.

Mas, ¡ay!, que a la pena que nunca me deja 85

pensar igualarla es gran desatino, pues abre la senda y cierra el camino al mal

que se acerca y al bien que se aleja.

## MARSILO

¡Pasos que al de la muerte me lleváis paso a paso, 90  
forzoso he de acusar vuestra pereza!  
Seguid tan dulce suerte,  
que en este amargo paso  
está mi bien y en vuestra ligereza.  
Mirad que la dureza 95  
de la enemiga mía  
en el airado pecho,  
contrario a mi provecho,  
en su entereza está cual ser solía; huigamos, si es posible, 100  
del áspero rigor suyo terrible.  
¿A qué apartado clima,  
a qué región incierta  
iré a vivir, que pueda asegurarme del mal que me lastima, 105  
del ansia triste y cierta

que no se ha de acabar hasta acabarme?  
Ni estar quedo, o mudarme  
a la arenosa Libia,  
o al lugar donde habita 110  
el fiero y blanco scita,  
un solo punto mi dolor alivia: que no está mi contento  
en hacer de lugares mudamiento.  
Aquí y allí me alcanza 115  
el desdén riguroso  
de la sin par cruel pastora mía, sin que amor ni esperanza  
un término dichoso  
me puedan prometer en tal porfía. 120  
¡Belisa, luz del día,  
gloria de la edad nuestra, si valen ya contigo  
ruegos de un firme amigo,  
tiempla el rigor airado de tu diestra, 125

y el fuego deste mío  
pueda en tu pecho deshacer el frío!  
Más sorda a mi lamento,

más implacable y fiera  
que a la voz del cansado marinero 130  
el riguroso viento  
qu'el mar turba y altera  
y amenaza a la vida el fin postrero; mármol, diamante, acero,  
alpestre y dura roca, 135  
robusta, antigua encina,  
roble que nunca inclina  
la altiva rama al cierzo que le toca: todo es blando y suave,  
comparado al rigor que'n tu alma cabe. 140  
Mi duro amargo hado,  
mi inexorable estrella,  
mi voluntad, que todo lo consiente, me tienen condenado,  
Belisa ingrata y bella, 145  
a que te sirva y ame eternamente.  
Y, aunque tu hermosa frente, con riguroso ceño,  
y tus serenos ojos  
me anuncien mil enojos, 150

serás desta alma conocida dueño, en tanto que en el suelo  
la cubriere mortal corpóreo velo.  
¿Hay bien que se le iguale al mal que me atormenta? 155  
¿Y hay mal en todo el mundo tan esquivo?  
El uno y otro sale  
de toda humana cuenta,  
y aun yo sin ella en viva muerte vivo.  
En el desdén avivo 160  
mi fe, y allí se enciende  
con el helado frío;  
mirad qué desvarío,  
y el dolor desusado que me ofende, y si podrá igualarse 165  
al mal que más quisiere aventajarse.  
Mas, ¿quién es el que mueve las ramas intrincadas  
deste acopado mirto y verde asiento?

## OROMPO

Un pastor que se atreve, 170  
con razones fundadas

en la pura verdad de su tormento, mostrar que el sentimiento de su dolor  
crescido

al tuyo se aventaja, 175  
por más que tú le estimes, levantes y sublimes.

## MARSILO

Vencido quedarás en tal baraja, Orompo, fiel amigo,  
y tú mismo serás dello testigo. 180  
Si de las ansias mías,  
si de mi mal insano  
la más mínima parte conocieras, cesaran tus porfías,  
Orompo, viendo llano 185  
que tú penas de burla y yo de veras.

## OROMPO

Haz, Marsilo, quimeras  
de tu dolor extraño,  
y al mío menoscaba  
que la vida me acaba, 190  
que yo espero sacarte d'ese engaño, mostrando al descubierto  
que el tuyo es sombra de mi mal, que's cierto.

Pero la voz sonora  
de Crisio oigo que suena, 195  
pastor que en la opinión se te parece; escuchémosle ahora,  
que su cansada pena

no menos que la tuya la engrandece.

## MARSILO

Hoy el tiempo me ofrece 200  
lugar y coyuntura  
donde pueda mostraros  
a entrambos y enteraros  
de que sola la mía es desventura.

## OROMPO

Atiende ahora, Marsilo, 205  
la voz de Crisio y lamentable estilo.

## CRISIO

¡Ay dura, ay importuna, ay triste ausencia!, ¡cuán fuera debió estar de  
conocerte el que igualó tu fuerza y violencia al poder invencible de la muerte!

210

Que, cuando con mayor rigor sentencia, ¿qué puede más su limitada suerte  
que deshacer el ñudo y recia liga que a cuerpo y alma estrechamente liga?

Tu duro alfanje a mayor mal se estiende, 215  
pues un espíritu en dos mitades parte.

¡Oh milagros de amor que nadie entiende, ni se alcanzan por sciencia ni por  
arte!

¡Que deje su mitad con quien la enciende allá mi alma, y traiga acá la parte  
220

más frágil, con la cual más mal se siente que estar mil veces de la vida  
ausente!

Ausente estoy de aquellos ojos bellos que serenaban la tormenta mía; ojos

vida de aquél que pudo vellos, 225

si de allí no pasó la fantasía: que verlos y pensar de merescellos es loco atrevimiento y demasía.

Yo los vi, ¡desdichado!, y no los veo, y márame de verlos el deseo. 230

Deseo, y con razón, ver dividida, por acortar el término a mi daño, esta antigua amistad, que tiene unida mi alma al cuerpo con amor tamaño, que siendo de las carnes despedida 235

con ligereza presta y vuelo extraño, podrá tornar a ver aquellos ojos, que son descanso y gloria a sus enojos.

Enojos son la paga y recompensa que amor concede al amador ausente, 240

en quien se cifra el mayor mal y ofensa que en los males de amor s'encierra y siente.

Ni poner discreción a la defensa, ni un querer firme, levantado, ardiente, aprovecha a temprar deste tormento 245

la dura pena y el furor violento.

Violento es el rigor desta dolencia; pero junto con esto, es tan durable, que se acaba primero la paciencia, y aun de la vida el curso miserable. 250

Muertes, desvíos, celos, inclemencia de airado pecho, condición mudable, no atormentan así ni dañan tanto como este mal, que'l nombre aun pone espanto.

Espanto fuera si dolor tan fiero 255

dolores tan mortales no causara; pero todos son flacos, pues no muero, ausente de mi vida dulce y cara.

Mas cese aquí mi canto lastimero, que a compañía tan discreta y rara 260

como es la que allí veo, será justo que muestre al verla más sabroso gusto.

## OROMPO

Gusto nos da, buen Crisio, tu presencia, y más viniendo a tiempo que podremos acabar nuestra antigua diferencia. 265

## CRISIO

Orompo, si es tu gusto, comencemos, pues que juez de la contienda nuestra tan recto aquí en Marsilo le tendremos.

## MARSILO

Indicio dais y conocida muestra del error en que os trae tan embebidos 270

esa vana opinión notoria vuestra, pues queréis que a los míos preferidos vuestros dolores, tan pequeños, sean, hartos llorados más que conocidos.

Mas, porque el suelo y cielo juntos vean 275

cuánto vuestro dolor es menos grave que las ansias que el alma me rodean, la más pequeña que en mi pecho cabe pienso mostrar en vuestra competencia, así como mi ingenio torpe sabe; 280

y dejaré a vosotros la sentencia y el juzgar si mi mal es muy más fuerte que el riguroso de la larga ausencia, o el amargo espantoso de la muerte, de quien entrambos os quejáis sin tiento, 285

llamando dura y corta a vuestra suerte.

## OROMPO

Deso yo, soy, Marsilo, muy contento, pues la razón que tengo de mi parte el triunfo le asegura a mi tormento.

## CRISIO

Aunque de exagerar me falta el arte, 290

veréis, cuando yo os muestre mi tristeza, cómo quedan las vuestras a una parte.

## MARSILO

¿Qué ausencia llega a la inmortal dureza de mi pastora?, que es, con ser tan dura, señora universal de la belleza. 295

## OROMPO

¡Oh, a qué buen tiempo llega y coyuntura Orfenio! ¿Veisle?, asoma. Estad atentos: oiréisle ponderar su desventura.

Celos es la ocasión de sus tormentos: celos, cuchillo y ciertos turbadores 300

de las paces de amor y los contentos.

## CRISIO

Escuchad, que ya canta sus dolores.

## ORFINIO

¡Oh sombra oscura que contino sigues a mi confusa triste fantasía; enfadosa tiniebla, siempre fría, 305

que a mi contento y a mi luz persigues!

¿Cuándo será que tu rigor mitigues, monstruo cruel y rigurosa harpía?

¿Qué ganas en turbarme la alegría, o qué bien en quitármele consigues? 310

Mas, si la condición de que te arreas se estiende a pretender quitar la vida al que te dio la tuya y te ha engendrado, no me debe admirar que de mí seas y de todo mi bien fiero homicida, 315

sino de verme vivo en tal estado.

## OROMPO



Si el prado deleitoso,  
Orfinio, te es alegre, cual solía en tiempo más dichoso,  
ven; pasarás el día 320  
en nuestra lastimada compañía.

Con los tristes el triste  
bien ves que se acomoda fácilmente; ven, que aquí se resiste,  
par desta clara fuente, 325  
del levantado sol el rayo ardiente.  
Ven, y el usado estilo  
levanta, y como sueles te defiende de Crisio y de Marsilio,  
que cada cual pretende 330  
mostrar que sólo es mal el que le ofende.  
Yo solo, en este caso  
contrario habré de ser a ti y a ellos, pues los males que paso  
bien podré encarecellos, 335  
mas no mostrar la menor parte dellos.

## ORFINIO

No al gusto le es sabrosa  
así a la corderuela deshambrida la yerba, ni gustosa  
salud restituida 340  
a aquel que ya la tuvo por perdida, como es a mí sabroso  
mostrar en la contienda que se ofrece que el dolor riguroso  
que el corazón padece 345  
sobr'el mayor del suelo se engrandece.  
Calle su mal sobrado  
Orompo; encubra Crisio su dolencia; Marsilo esté callado:  
muerte, desdén ni ausencia 350  
no tengan con los celos competencia.  
Pero si el cielo quiere  
que hoy salga a campo la contienda nuestra, comience el que quisiere,  
y dé a los otros muestra 355  
de su dolor con torpe lengua o diestra: que no está en la elegancia y modo de

decir el fundamento y principal sustancia  
del verdadero cuento 360  
que en la pura verdad tiene su asiento.

## **CRISIO**

Siento, pastor, que tu arrogancia mucha en esta lucha de pasiones nuestras dará  
mil muestras de tu desvarío.

## **ORFINIO**

Tiempla ese brío, o muéstralo a su tiempo; 365

que es pasatiempo, Crisio, tu congoja: que el mal que afloja con volver el paso  
no hay que hacer caso de su sentimiento.

## **CRISIO**

Es mi tormento tan extraño y fiero, que presto espero que tú mismo digas 370  
que a mis fatigas no se iguala alguna.

## **MARSILO**

Desde la cuna soy yo desdichado.

## **OROMPO**

Aun engendrado creo que no estaba, cuando sobraba en mí la desventura.

## **ORFINIO**

En mí se apura la mayor desdicha. 375

## **CRISIO**

Tu mal es dicha, comparado al mío.

## **MARSILO**

Opuesto al brío de mi mal extraño, es gloria el daño que a vosotros daña.

## **OROMPO**

Esta maraña quedará muy clara cuando a la clara mi dolor descubra. 380  
Ninguno encubra agora su tormento, que yo del mío doy principio al cuento.  
Mis esperanzas, que fueron sembradas en parte buena,  
dulce fruto prometieron, 385  
y cuando darle quisieron  
convirtióle el cielo en pena.

Vi su flor maravillosa  
en mil muestras deseosa  
de darme una rica suerte, 390  
y en aquel punto la muerte cortómela de envidiosa.  
Yo quedé cual labrador  
que del trabajo contino

de su espaciosa labor 395  
fruto amargo de dolor  
le concede su destino;  
y aun le quita la esperanza de otra nueva buena andanza, porque cubrió con la  
tierra 400  
el cielo donde se encierra de su bien la confianza.  
Pues si a término he llegado que de tener gusto o gloria vivo ya desesperado,  
405  
de que yo soy más penado  
es cosa cierta y notoria:  
que la esperanza asegura  
  
en la mayor desventura  
un dichoso fin que viene; 410  
mas, ¡ay de aquél que la tiene cerrada en la sepultura!

## MARSILO

Yo, qu'el humor de mis ojos siempre derramado ha sido  
en lugar donde han nascido 415  
cien mil espinas y abrojos qu'el corazón m'han herido; yo sí soy el  
desdichado,  
pues con nunca haber mostrado un momento el rostro enjuto, 420  
ni hoja, ni flor, ni fruto he del trabajo sacado.  
Que si alguna muestra viera de algún pequeño provecho, sosegárase mi pecho;  
425  
y, aunque nunca se cumpliera, quedara al fin satisfecho, porque viera que  
valía  
mi enamorada porfía  
  
con quien es tan desabrida, 430  
que a mi yelo está encendida y a mi fuego helada y fría.  
Pues si es el trabajo vano de mi llanto y sospirar,  
y dél no pienso cesar, 435  
a mi dolor inhumano,  
¿cuál se le podrá igualar?  
Lo que tu dolor concierta

es que está la causa muerta, Orompo, de tu tristeza; 440  
la mía, en más entereza,  
cuanto más me desconcierta.

## CRISIO

Yo, que tiniendo en sazón  
el fruto que se debía  
a mi continua pasión, 445  
una súbita ocasión  
de gozarle me desvía;  
muy bien podré ser llamado sobre todos desdichado,  
pues que vendré a perecer, 450

pues no puedo parecer  
adonde el alma he dejado.  
Del bien que lleva la muerte el no poder recobrallo  
en alivio se convierte, 455  
y un corazón duro y fuerte el tiempo suele ablandallo.  
Mas en ausencia se siente, con un estraño accidente,  
sin sombra de ningún bien, 460  
celos, muertes y desdén,  
que esto y más teme el ausente.  
Cuando tarda el cumplimiento de la cercana esperanza,  
aflige más el tormento, 465  
y allí llega el sufrimiento adonde ella nunca alcanza.  
En las ansias desiguales,  
el remedio de los males  
es el no esperar remedio; 470  
mas carecen deste medio

las de ausencia más mortales.

## ORFINIO

El fruto que fue sembrado  
por mi trabajo contino,  
a dulce sazón llegado, 475  
fue con próspero destino  
en mi poder entregado.  
Y apenas pude llegar  
a términos tan sin par,  
cuando vine a conocer 480  
la ocasión de aquel placer ser para mí de pesar.  
Yo tengo el fruto en la mano, y el tenerle me fatiga,  
porque en mi mal inhumano, 485  
a la más granada espiga  
la roe un fiero gusano.  
Aborrezco lo que quiero,  
y por lo que vivo muero,  
y yo me fabrico y pinto 490  
un revuelto laberinto  
de do salir nunca espero.

Busco la muerte en mi daño, que ella es vida a mi dolencia; con la verdad más  
me engaño, 495  
y en ausencia y en presencia va creciendo un mal tamaño.  
No hay esperanza que acierte a remediar mal tan fuerte, ni por estar ni  
alejarme 500  
es imposible apartarme  
desta triste viva muerte.

## OROMPO

¿No es error conocido  
decir que el daño que la muerte hace, por ser tan estendido, 505  
en parte satisface,  
pues la esperanza quita  
qu'el dolor administra y solicita?  
Si de la gloria muerta

no se quedara viva la memoria 510  
qu'el gusto desconcierta,  
es cosa ya notoria

que el no esperar tenella, tiempla el dolor en parte de perdella.  
Pero si está presente 515  
la memoria del bien ya fenescido, más viva y más ardiente  
que cuando poseído,  
¿quién duda que esta pena  
no está más que otras de miserias llena? 520

## MARSILO

Si a un pobre caminante  
le sucediese, por estraña vía, huírsele delante,  
al fenecer del día,  
el albergue esperado 525  
y con vana presteza procurado, quedaría, sin duda,  
confuso del temor que allí le ofrece la escura noche y muda,  
y más si no amanesce, 530  
que el cielo a su ventura  
no concede la luz serena y pura.

Yo soy el que camino  
para llegar a un albergue venturoso, y cuando más vecino 535  
pienso estar del reposo,  
cual fugitiva sombra,  
el bien me huye y el dolor me asombra.

## CRISIO

Cual raudó y hondo río  
suele impedir al caminante el paso, 540  
y al viento, nieve y frío

le tiene en campo raso,  
y el albergue delante  
se le muestra de allí poco distante, tal mi contento impide 545  
esta penosa y tan prolija ausencia, que nunca se comide  
a aliviar su dolencia,  
y casi ante mis ojos  
veo quien remediará mis enojos. 550  
Y el ver de mis dolores  
tan cerca la salud, tanto me aprieta, que los hace mayores,  
pues por causa secreta,  
cuanto el bien es cercano, 555  
tanto más lejos huye de mi mano.

## ORFINIO

Mostróseme a la vista  
un rico albergue de mil bienes lleno; triunfé de su conquista,  
y, cuando más sereno 560  
se me mostraba el hado,  
vilo en escuridad negra cambiado.  
Allí donde consiste  
el bien de los amantes bien queridos, allí mi mal asiste; 565  
allí se ven unidos  
los males y desdenes  
donde suelen estar todos los bienes.  
Dentro desta morada  
estoy, de do salir nunca procuro, 570  
por mi dolor fundada  
de tan estraño muro,  
  
que pienso que le abaten  
cuantos le quieren, miran y combaten.

## OROMPO



Antes el sol acabará el camino 575

que es propio suyo, dando vuelta al cielo después de haber tocado en cada signo, que la parte menor de nuestro duelo podamos declarar como se siente, por más qu'el bien hablar levante el vuelo. 580

Tú dices, Crisio, qu'el que vive ausente muere; yo, que estoy muerto, pues mi vida a muerte la entregó el hado inclemente.

Y tú, Marsilo, afirmas que perdida tienes de gusto y bien toda esperanza, 585  
pues un fiero desdén es tu homicida.

Tú repites, Orfinio, que la lanza aguda de los celos te traspasa, no sólo el pecho, que hasta el alma alcanza.

Y como el uno lo que el otro pasa 590

no siente, su dolor solo exagera, y piensa que al rigor del otro pasa.

Y, por nuestra contienda lastimera, de tristes argumentos está llena del caudaloso Tajo la ribera. 595

Ni por esto desmengua nuestra pena; antes, por el tratar la llaga tanto, a mayor sentimiento nos condena.

Cuanto puede decir la lengua, y cuanto pueden pensar los tristes pensamientos, 600

es ocasión de renovar el llanto.

Cesen, pues, los agudos argumentos, que en fin no hay mal que no fatigue y pene, ni bien que dé seguros los contentos.

¡Harto mal tiene quien su vida tiene 605

cerrada en una estrecha sepultura, y en soledad amarga se mantiene!

¡Desdichado del triste sin ventura que padece de celos la dolencia, con quien no valen fuerzas ni cordura, 610

y aquel que en el rigor de larga ausencia pasa los tristes miserables días, llegado al flaco arrimo de paciencia, y no menos aquel qu'en sus porfías siente, cuando más arde, en su pastora 615

entrañas duras e intenciones frías!

## CRISIO

Hágase lo que pide Orompo agora, pues ya de recoger nuestro ganado se va llegando a más andar la hora; y, en tanto que al albergue acostumbrado 620

llegamos, y que el sol claro se aleja, escondiendo su faz del verde prado, con

voz amarga y lamentable queja, al son de los acordes instrumentos, cantemos el dolor que nos aqueja. 625

## MARSILO

Comienza, pues, ¡oh Crisio!, y tus acentos lleguen a los oídos de Claraura, llevados mansamente de los vientos, como a quien todo tu dolor restaura.

## CRISIO

Al que ausencia viene a dar 630  
su cáliz triste a beber,  
no tiene mal que temer,  
ni ningún bien que esperar.  
En esta amarga dolencia  
no hay mal que no esté cifrado: 635  
temor de ser olvidado,  
celos de ajena presencia;  
quien la viniere a probar

luego vendrá a conocer  
que no hay mal de que temer, 640  
ni menos bien que esperar.

## OROMPO

Ved si es mal el que me aqueja más que muerte conocida,  
pues forma quejas la vida  
de que la muerte la deja. 645  
Cuando la muerte llevó  
toda mi gloria y contento, por darme mayor tormento,  
con la vida me dejó.

El mal viene, el bien se aleja 650  
con tan ligera corrida,  
que forma quejas la vida  
de que la muerte la deja.

## MARSILO

En mi terrible pesar  
ya faltan, por más enojos, 655  
las lágrimas a los ojos  
y el aliento al sospirar.

La ingratitud y desdén  
me tienen ya de tal suerte, que espero y llamo a la muerte 660  
por más vida y por más bien.  
Poco se podrá tardar,  
pues faltan en mis enojos  
las lágrimas a los ojos  
y el aliento al sospirar. 665

## ORFINIO

Celos, a fe, si pudiera,  
que yo hiciera por mejor  
que fueran celos amor,  
y que el amor celos fuera.  
Deste trueco granjeara 670  
tanto bien y tanta gloria, que la palma y la victoria de enamorado llevara.  
Y aun fueran de tal manera los celos en mi favor, 675  
que a ser los celos amor,  
el amor yo solo fuera.

Con esta última canción del celoso Orfinio dieron fin a su égloga los discretos pastores, dejando satisfechos de su discreción a todos los que escuchado los

habían; especialmente a Damón y a Tirsi, que gran contento en oírlos rescibieron, paresciéndoles que más que de pastoril ingenio parecían las razones y argumentos que para salir con su propósito los cuatro pastores habían propuesto. Pero, habiéndose movido contienda entre muchos de los circunstantes sobre cuál de los cuatro había alegado mejor de su derecho, en fin se vino a conformar el parecer de todos con el que dio el discreto Damón, diciéndoles que él para sí tenía que, entre todos los disgustos y sinsabores que el amor trae consigo, ninguno fatiga tanto al enamorado pecho como la incurable pestilencia de los celos; y que no se podían igualar a ella la pérdida de Orompo, ausencia de Crisio, ni la desconfianza de Marsilo.

-La causa es -dijo-que no cabe en razón natural que las cosas que están imposibilitadas de alcanzarse, puedan por largo tiempo apremiar la voluntad a quererlas, ni fatigar al deseo por alcanzarlas, porque el que tuviese voluntad y deseo de alcanzar lo imposible, claro está que, cuanto más el deseo le sobrase, tanto más el entendimiento le faltaría. Y por esta misma razón digo que la pena que Orompo padece no es sino una lástima y compasión del bien perdido; y, por haberle perdido de manera que no es posible tornarle a cobrar, esta imposibilidad ha de ser causa para que su dolor se acabe; que, puesto que el humano entendimiento no puede estar tan unido siempre con la razón que deje de sentir la pérdida del bien que cobrar no se puede, y que en efecto, ha de dar muestras de su sentimiento con tiernas lágrimas, ardientes sospiros y lastimosas palabras, so pena de que quien esto no hiciese, antes por bruto que por hombre racional sería tenido, en fin fin, el discurso del tiempo cura esta dolencia, la razón la mitiga y las nuevas ocasiones tienen mucha parte para borrarla de la memoria.

»Todo esto es al revés en el ausencia, como apuntó bien Crisio en sus versos, que, como la esperanza en el ausente ande tan junta con el deseo, dale terrible fatiga la dilación de la tornada, porque, como no le impide otra cosa el gozar su bien sino algún brazo de mar, o alguna distancia de tierra, parécele que teniendo lo principal, que es la voluntad de la persona amada, que se hace notorio agravio a su gusto que cosas que son tan menos como un poco de agua o tierra le impidan su felicidad y gloria. Júntase asimesmo a esta pena el temor de ser olvidado, las mudanzas de los humanos corazones; y, en tanto que la ausencia dura, sin duda alguna que es extraño el rigor y aspereza con que trata al alma del desdichado ausente; pero, como tiene tan cerca el remedio, que consiste en la tornada, puédese llevar con algún alivio su tormento, y si sucediere ser la ausencia de manera que sea imposible volver a la presencia deseada, aquella imposibilidad viene a ser el remedio, como en el de la muerte.

»El dolor de que Marsilo se queja, puesto que es como el mismo que yo

padezco, y por esta causa me había de parecer mayor que otro alguno, no por eso dejaré de decir lo que en él la razón me muestra, antes que aquello a que la pasión me incita. Confieso que es terrible dolor querer y no ser querido, pero mayor sería amar y ser aborrecido. Y si los nuevos amadores nos guiásemos por lo que la razón y la experiencia nos enseña, veríamos que todos los principios en cualquier cosa son dificultosos, y que no padece esta regla excepción en los casos de amor, antes en ellos más se confirma y fortalece; así que, quejarse el nuevo amante de la dureza del rebelde pecho de su señora, va fuera de todo razonable término, porque, como el amor sea y ha de ser voluntario, y no forzoso, no debo yo quejarme de no ser querido de quien quiero, ni debo hacer caudal del cargo que le hago, diciéndole que está obligada a amarme porque yo la amo; que, puesto que la persona amada debe, en ley de naturaleza y en buena cortesía, no mostrarse ingrata con quien bien la quiere, no por eso le ha de ser forzoso y de obligación que corresponda del todo y por todo a los deseos de su amante; que si esto así fuese, mil enamorados importunos habría que por su solicitud alcanzasen lo que quizá no se les debía de derecho. Y, como el amor tenga por padre al conocimiento, puede ser que no halle en mí la que es de mí bien querida, partes tan buenas que la muevan e inclinen a quererme; y así, no está obligada, como ya he dicho, a amarme, como yo estaré obligado a adorarla, porque hallé en ella lo que a mí me falta. Y por esta razón no debe el desdeñado quejarse de su amada, sino de su ventura, que le negó las gracias que al conocimiento de su señora pudieran mover a bien quererle. Y así, debe procurar con continos servicios, con amorosas razones, con la no importuna presencia, con las ejercitadas virtudes, adobar y enmendar en él la falta que naturaleza hizo, que este es tan principal remedio, que estoy por afirmar que será imposible dejar de ser amado el que con tan justos medios procurase granjear la voluntad de su señora. Y, pues este mal del desdén tiene el bien deste remedio, consuélase Marsilo y tenga lástima al desdichado y celoso Orfinio, en cuya desventura se encierra la mayor que en las de amor imaginar se puede.

»¡Oh celos, turbadores de la sosegada paz amorosa; celos, cuchillo de las más firmes esperanzas! No sé yo qué pudo saber de linajes el que a vosotros os hizo hijos del amor, siendo tan al revés, que por el mismo caso dejara el amor de serlo si tales hijos engendrara. ¡Oh celos, hipócritas y fementidos ladrones, pues, para que se haga cuenta de vosotros en el mundo, en viendo nacer alguna centella de amor en algún pecho, luego procuráis mezclarlos con ella, volviéndoos de su color, y aun procuráis usurparle el mando y señorío que tiene! Y de aquí nasce que, como os ven tan unidos con el amor, puesto que por vuestros efectos dais a conocer que no sois el mismo amor, todavía procuráis que entienda el ignorante que sois sus hijos, siendo, como lo sois, nascidos de

una baja sospecha, engendrados de un vil y desastrado temor, criados a los pechos de falsas imaginaciones, crescidos entre vilísimas envidias, sustentados de chismes y mentiras. Y, porque se vea la destrucción que hace en los enamorados pechos esta maldita dolencia de los rabiosos celos, en siendo el amante celoso, conviene -con paz sea dicho de los celosos enamorados-; conviene, digo, que sea, como lo es, traidor, astuto, revoltoso, chismero, antojadizo y aun mal criado; y a tanto se estiende la celosa furia que le señorea, que a la persona que más quiere es a quien más mal desea. Querría el amante celoso que sólo para él su dama fuese hermosa, y fea para todo el mundo; desea que no tenga ojos para ver más de lo que él quisiere, ni oídos para oír, ni lengua para hablar; que sea retirada, desabrida, soberbia y mal acondicionada; y aun a veces desea, apretado desta pasión diabólica, que su dama se muera y que todo se acabe.

»Todas estas pasiones engendran los celos en los ánimos de los amantes celosos; al revés de las virtudes que el puro y sencillo amor multiplica en los verdaderos y comedidos amadores, porque en el pecho de un buen enamorado se encierra discreción, valentía, liberalidad, comedimiento y todo aquello que le puede hacer loable a los ojos de las gentes. Tiene más, asimesmo, la fuerza deste crudo veneno: que no hay antídoto que le preserve, consejo que le valga, amigo que le ayude, ni disculpa que le cuadre; todo esto cabe en el enamorado celoso, y más: que cualquiera sombra le espanta, cualquiera niñería le turba y cualquier sospecha, falsa o verdadera, le deshace; y a toda esta desventura se le añade otra: que con las disculpas que le dan, piensa que le engañan. Y no habiendo para la enfermedad de los celos otra medicina que las disculpas, y no queriendo el enfermo celoso admitirlas, síguese que esta enfermedad es sin remedio, y que a todas las demás debe anteponerse. Y así, es mi parecer que Orfinio es el más penado, pero no el más enamorado, porque no son los celos señales de mucho amor, sino de mucha curiosidad impertinente; y si son señales de amor, es como la calentura en el hombre enfermo, que el tenerla es señal de tener vida, pero vida enferma y mal dispuesta; y así, el enamorado celoso tiene amor, mas es amor enfermo y mal acondicionado. Y también el ser celoso es señal de poca confianza del valor de sí mismo. Y que sea esto verdad nos lo muestra el discreto y firme enamorado, el cual, sin llegar a la escuridad de los celos, toca en las sombras del temor, pero no se entra tanto en ellas que le escurezcan el sol de su contento, ni dellas se aparta tanto que le descuiden de andar solícito y temeroso; que si este discreto temor faltase en el amante, yo le tendría por soberbio y demasiadamente confiado, porque, como dice un común proverbio nuestro: «quien bien ama, teme»; teme, y aun es razón que tema el amante que, como la cosa que ama es en extremo buena, o a él le pareció serlo, no parezca lo

mesmo a los ojos de quien la mirare, y por la mesma causa se engendre el amor en otro que pueda y venga a turbar el suyo. Teme y tema el buen enamorado las mudanzas de los tiempos, de las nuevas ocasiones que en su daño podrían ofrecerse, de que con brevedad no se acabe el dichoso estado que goza; y este temor ha de ser tan secreto que no le salga a la lengua para decirle, ni aun a los ojos para significarle; y hace tan contrarios efectos este temor del que los celos hacen en los pechos enamorados, que cría en ellos nuevos deseos de acrescentar más el amor, si pudiesen; de procurar con toda solicitud que los ojos de su amada no vean en ellos cosa que no sea digna de alabanza, mostrándose liberales, comedidos, galanes, limpios y bien criados; y tanto cuanto este virtuoso temor es justo se alabe, tanto y más es digno que los celos se vituperen.

Calló en diciendo esto el famoso Damón, y llevó tras la suya las contrarias opiniones de algunos que escuchado le habían, dejando a todos satisfechos de la verdad que con tanta llaneza les había mostrado. Pero no se quedara sin respuesta si los pastores Orompo, Crisio, Marsilo y Orfinio hubieran estado presentes a su plática, los cuales, cansados de la recitada égloga, se habían ido a casa de su amigo Daranio.

Estando todos en esto, ya que los bailes y danzas querían renovarse, vieron que por una parte de la plaza entraban tres dispuestos pastores, que luego de todos fueron conocidos, los cuales eran el gentil Francenio, el libre Lauso y el anciano Arsindo, el cual venía en medio de los dos pastores con una hermosa guirnalda de verde lauro en las manos; y, atravesando por medio de la plaza, vinieron a parar adonde Tirsi, Damón, Elicio y Erastro y todos los más principales pastores estaban, a los cuales con corteses palabras saludaron, y con no menor cortesía fueron dellos rescebidos, especialmente Lauso de Damón, de quien era antiguo y verdadero amigo. Cesando los comedimientos, puestos los ojos Arsindo en Damón y en Tirsi, comenzó a hablar desta manera: -La fama de vuestra sabiduría, que cerca y lejos se estiende, discretos y gallardos pastores, es la que a estos pastores y a mí nos trae a suplicaros queráis ser jueces de una graciosa contienda que entre estos dos pastores ha nascido; y es que la fiesta pasada, Francenio y Lauso, que están presentes, se hallaron en una conversación de hermosas pastoras, entre las cuales, por pasar sin pesadumbre las horas ociosas del día, entre otros muchos juegos, ordenaron el que se llama de los propósitos. Sucedió, pues, que, llegando la vez de proponer y comenzar a uno destos pastores, quiso la suerte que la pastora que a su lado estaba y a la mano derecha tenía, fuese, según él dice, la tesorera de los secretos de su alma, y la que por más discreta y más enamorada en la opinión de todos estaba. Llegándosele, pues, al oído, le dijo: «Huyendo va la esperanza». La pastora, sin detenerse en nada, prosiguió adelante, y al decir después cada uno en público lo

que al otro había dicho en secreto, hallóse que la pastora había seguido el propósito, diciendo: «Tenella con el deseo». Fue celebrada por los que presentes estaban la agudeza desta respuesta, pero el que más la solemnizó fue el pastor Lauso; y no menos le pareció bien a Francenio. Y así, cada uno, viendo que lo propuesto y respondido eran versos medidos, se ofreció de glosallos; y, después de haberlo hecho, cada cual procura que su glosa a la del otro se aventaje; y, para asegurarse desto, me quisieron hacer juez dello. Pero, como yo supe que vuestra presencia alegraba nuestras riberas, aconsejéles que a vosotros viniesen, de cuya estremada sciencia y sabiduría questiones de mayor importancia pueden bien fiarse. Han seguido ellos mi parecer, y yo he querido tomar trabajo de hacer esta guirnalda, para que sea dada en premio al que vosotros, pastores, viéredes que mejor ha glosado.

Calló Arsindo y esperó la respuesta de los pastores, que fue agradecerle la buena opinión que dellos tenía, y ofrecerse de ser jueces desapasionados en aquella honrosa contienda. Con este seguro, luego Francenio tornó a repetir los versos y a decir su glosa, que era ésta: *Huyendo va la esperanza; tenella con el deseo.*

## GLOSA

Cuando me pienso salvar  
en la fe de mi querer,  
me vienen luego a espantar 5  
las faltas del merescer  
y las sobras del pesar.  
Muérese la confianza,  
no tiene pulsos la vida,  
pues se ve en mi mala andanza 10  
que, del temor perseguida, *huyendo va la esperanza.*

Huye y llévase consigo  
todo el gusto de mi pena,  
dejando, por más castigo, 15  
las llaves de mi cadena  
en poder de mi enemigo.  
Tanto se aleja que creo



que presto se hará invisible, y en su ligereza veo 20  
que, ni puedo, ni es posible *tenerla con el deseo*.

Dicha la glosa de Francenio, Lauso comenzó la suya, que así decía: En el punto que os miré,  
como tan hermosa os vi,  
luego temí y esperé;  
pero, en fin, tanto temí  
que con el temor quedé. 5  
De veros, esto se alcanza: una flaca confianza  
y un temor acobardado,  
que, por no verle a su lado, *huyendo va la esperanza*. 10

Y, aunque me deja y se va  
con tan estraña corrida,  
por milagro se verá  
que se acabará mi vida  
y mi amor no acabará. 15  
Sin esperanza me veo;  
mas, por llevar el trofeo  
de amador sin interese,  
no querría, aunque pudiese, *tenella con el deseo*. 20

En acabando Lauso de decir su glosa, dijo Arsindo: -Veis aquí, famosos Damón y Tirsi, declarada la causa sobre que es la contienda destos pastores; sólo resta agora que vosotros deis la guirnalda a quien viéredes que con más justo título la meresce: que Lauso y Francenio son tan amigos, y vuestra sentencia será tan justa, que ellos tendrán por bien lo que por vosotros fuere juzgado.

-No entiendas Arsindo -respondió Tirsi-, que con tanta presteza, aunque nuestros ingenios fueran de la calidad que tú los imaginas, se puede ni debe juzgar la diferencia, si hay alguna, destas discretas glosas. Lo que yo sé decir dellas, y lo que Damón no querrá contradecirme, es que igualmente entrambas son buenas, y que la guirnalda se debe dar a la pastora que dio la ocasión a tan curiosa y loable contienda. Y si deste parecer quedáis satisfechos, pagádnosle con honrar las bodas de nuestro amigo Daranio, alegrándolas con vuestras agradables canciones y autorizándolas con vuestra honrosa presencia.

A todos pareció bien la sentencia de Tirsi; los dos pastores la consintieron y se ofrecieron de hacer lo que Tirsi les mandaba. Pero las pastoras y pastores que a Lauso conocían se maravillaban de ver la libre condición suya en la red

amorosa envuelta, porque luego vieron en la amarillez de su rostro, en el silencio de su lengua y en la contienda que con Francenio había tomado, que no estaba su voluntad tan esenta como solía; y andaban entre sí imaginando quién podría ser la pastora que de su libre corazón triunfado había. Quién imaginaba que la discreta Belisa, y quién que la gallarda Leandra, y algunos que la sin par Arminda, moviéndoles a imaginar esto la ordinaria costumbre que Lauso tenía de visitar las cabañas destas pastoras, y ser cada una dellas para subjectar con su gracia, valor y hermosura otros tan libres corazones como el de Lauso. Y desta duda tardaron muchos días en certificarse, porque el enamorado pastor apenas de sí mismo fiaba el secreto de sus amores. Acabado esto, luego toda la juventud del pueblo renovó las danzas, y los pastoriles instrumentos formaron una agradable música. Pero, viendo que ya el sol apresuraba su carrera hacia el ocaso, cesaron las concertadas voces, y todos los que allí estaban determinaron de llevar a los desposados hasta su casa. Y el anciano Arsindo, por cumplir lo que a Tirsi había prometido, en el espacio que había desde la plaza hasta la casa de Daranio, al son de la zampoña de Erastro, estos versos fue cantando:

## ARSINDO

Haga señales el cielo  
de regocijo y contento  
en tan venturoso día;  
celebrese en todo el suelo este alegre casamiento 5  
con general alegría.  
Cámbiese de hoy más el llanto en süave y dulce canto,  
y, en lugar de los pesares, vengan gustos a millares 10  
que destierren el quebranto.

Todo el bien suceda en colmo entre desposados tales,  
tan para en uno nascidos:  
peras les ofrezca el olmo, 15  
cerezas los carrascales,  
guindas los mirtos floridos; hallen perlas en los riscos, uvas les den los  
lentiscos, manzanas los algarrobos, 20  
y sin temor de los lobos  
ensanchen más sus apriscos.

Y sus machorras ovejas  
vengan a ser parideras,  
con que doblen su ganancia; 25  
las solícitas abejas  
en los surcos de sus eras  
hagan miel en abundancia;  
logren siempre su semilla  
en el campo y en la villa, 30  
cogida a tiempo y sazón;  
no entre en sus viñas pulgón, ni en su trigo la neguilla.

Y dos hijos presto tengan, tan hechos en paz y amor 35  
cuanto pueden desear;  
y, en siendo crecidos, vengan a ser el uno doctor,  
y otro, cura del lugar.  
Sean siempre los primeros 40

en virtudes y en dineros,  
que sí serán, y aun señores, si no salen fiadores  
de agudos alcabaleros.

Más años que Sarra vivan, 45  
con salud tan confirmada  
que dello pese al doctor;  
y ningún pesar resciban,  
ni por hija mal casada,  
ni por hijo jugador. 50  
Y, cuando los dos estén  
viejos cual Matusalén,  
mueran sin temor de daño,  
y háganles su cabo de año  
por siempre jamás, amén. 55

Con grandísimo gusto fueron escuchados los rústicos versos de Arsindo, en los cuales más se alargara si no lo impidiera el llegar a la casa de Daranio, el cual, convidando a todos los que con él venían, se quedó en ella, si no fue que Galatea y Florisa, por temor que Teolinda de Tirsi y Damón no fuese conocida, no quisieron quedarse a la cena de los desposados. Bien quisiera Elicio y Erastro acompañar a Galatea hasta su casa, pero no fue posible que lo consintiese; y así,

se hubieron de quedar con sus amigos, y ellas se fueron cansadas de los bailes de aquel día; y Teolinda con más pena que nunca, viendo que en las solemnes bodas de Daranio, donde tantos pastores habían acudido, sólo su Artidoro faltaba. Con esta penosa imaginación, pasó aquella noche en compañía de Galatea y Florisa, que con más libres y desapasionados corazones la pasaron, hasta que, en el nuevo venidero día, les sucedió lo que se dirá en el libro que se sigue.

## **FIN DEL TERCERO LIBRO**

## Cuarto libro de Galatea

CON GRAN deseo esperaba la hermosa Teolinda el venidero día, para despedirse de Galatea y Florisa y acabar de buscar por todas las riberas de Tajo a su querido Artidoro, con intención de fenecer la vida en triste y amarga soledad, si fuese tan corta de ventura que del amado pastor alguna nueva no supiese. Llegada, pues, la hora deseada, cuando el sol comenzaba a tender sus rayos por la faz de la tierra, ella se levantó, y, con lágrimas en sus ojos, pidió licencia a las dos pastoras para proseguir su demanda, las cuales con muchas razones la persuadieron que en su compañía algunos días más esperase, ofreciéndole Galatea de enviar algún pastor de los de su padre a buscar a Artidoro por todas las riberas de Tajo y por donde se imaginase que podría ser hallado. Teolinda agradeció sus ofrecimientos, pero no quiso hacer lo que le pedían; antes, después de haber mostrado, con las mejores palabras que supo, la obligación en que quedaba de servir todos los días de su vida las obras que dellas había rescebido, abrazándolas con tierno sentimiento, les rogaba que una sola hora no la detuviesen. Viendo, pues, Galatea y Florisa cuán en vano trabajaban en pensar detenerla, le encargaron que de cualquier suceso bueno o malo que en aquella amorosa demanda le sucediese, procurase de avisarlas, certificándola del gusto que de su contento o la pena que de su desgracia rescibirían. Teolinda se ofreció ser ella misma quien las nuevas de su buena dicha trujese, pues las malas no tendría sufrimiento la vida para resistirlas, y así, sería escusado que della saberse pudiesen. Con esta promesa de Teolinda se satisficieron Galatea y Florisa, y determinaron de acompañarla algún trecho fuera del lugar. Y así, tomando las dos solos sus cayados, y habiendo proveído el zurrón de Teolinda de algunos regalos para el trabajoso camino, se salieron con ella del aldea a tiempo que ya los rayos del sol más derechos y con más fuerzas comenzaban a herir la tierra.

Y, habiéndola acompañado casi media legua del lugar, al tiempo que ya querían volverse y dejarla, vieron atravesar, por una quebrada que poco desviada dellas estaba, cuatro hombres de a caballo y algunos de a pie, que luego conocieron ser cazadores en el hábito y en los halcones y perros que llevaban. Y, estándolos con atención mirando, por ver si los conocían, vieron salir de entre unas espesas matas que cerca de la quebrada estaban, dos pastoras de gallardo talle y brío. Traían los rostros rebozados con dos blancos lienzos; y, alzando la una dellas la voz, pidió a los cazadores que se detuviesen, los cuales así lo hicieron, y, llegándose entrambas a uno dellos, que en su talle y postura el

principal de todos parecía, le asieron las riendas del caballo y estuvieron un poco hablando con él, sin que las tres pastoras pudiesen oír palabra de las que decían, por la distancia del lugar, que lo estorbaba. Solamente vieron que, a poco espacio que con él hablaron, el caballero se apeó, y, habiendo, a lo que juzgarse pudo, mandado a los que le acompañaban que se volviesen, quedando sólo un mozo con el caballo, trabó a las dos pastoras de las manos, y poco a poco comenzó a entrar con ellas por medio de un cerrado bosque que allí estaba. Lo cual visto por las tres pastoras, Galatea, Florisa y Teolinda, determinaron de ver, si pudiesen, quién eran las disfrazadas pastoras y el caballero que las llevaba; y así, acordaron de rodear por una parte del bosque, y mirar si podían ponerse en alguna que pudiese serlo para satisfacerles de lo que deseaban. Y, haciéndolo así como pensado lo habían, atajaron al caballero y a las pastoras, y, mirando Galatea por entre las ramas lo que hacían, vio que, torciendo sobre la mano derecha, se emboscaban en lo más espeso del bosque, y luego por sus mismas pisadas les fueron siguiendo, hasta que el caballero y las pastoras, pareciéndoles estar bien adentro del bosque, en medio de un estrecho pradecillo, que de infinitas breñas estaba rodeado, se pararon. Galatea y sus compañeras se llegaron tan cerca que, sin ser vistas ni sentidas, veían todo lo que el caballero y las pastoras hacían y decían; las cuales, habiendo mirado a una y a otra parte por ver si podrían ser vistas de alguno, aseguradas desto, la una se quitó el rebozo; y apenas se le hubo quitado cuando de Teolinda fue conocida, y, llegándose al oído de Galatea, le dijo con la más baja voz que pudo: -Estrañísima ventura es ésta, porque, si no es que con la pena que traigo he perdido el conocimiento, sin duda alguna aquella pastora que se ha quitado el rebozo es la bella Rosaura, hija de Roselio, señor de una aldea que a la nuestra está vecina, y no sé qué pueda ser la causa que la haya movido a ponerse en tan estraño traje y a dejar su tierra, cosas que tan en perjuicio de su honestidad se declaran. Mas, ¡ay desdichada! -añadió Teolinda-, que el caballero que con ella está es Grisaldo, hijo mayor del rico Laurencio, que junto a esta vuestra aldea tiene otras dos suyas.

-Verdad dices, Teolinda -respondió Galatea-, que yo le conozco; pero calla y sosiégate, que presto veremos con qué intento ha sido aquí su venida.

Quietóse con esto Teolinda, y con atención se puso a mirar lo que Rosaura hacía, la cual, llegándose al caballero, que de edad de veinte años parecía, con voz turbada y airado semblante, le comenzó a decir: -En parte estamos, fementido caballero, donde podré tomar de tu desamor y descuido la deseada venganza. Pero, aunque yo la tomase de ti tal que la vida te costase, poca recompensa sería al daño que me tienes hecho. Vesme aquí, desconocido Grisaldo, desconocida por conocerte; ves aquí que ha mudado el traje por buscarte la que nunca mudó la voluntad de quererte. Considera, ingrato y

desamorado, que la que apenas en su casa y con sus criadas sabía mover el paso, agora por tu causa anda de valle en valle y de sierra en sierra con tanta soledad buscando tu compañía.

Todas estas razones que la bella Rosaura decía las escuchaba el caballero con los ojos hincados en el suelo y haciendo rayas en la tierra con la punta de un cuchillo de monte que en la mano tenía. Pero, no contenta Rosaura con lo dicho, con semejantes palabras prosiguió su plática: -Dime: ¿conoces, por ventura, conoces, Grisaldo, que yo soy aquélla que no ha mucho tiempo que enjugó tus lágrimas, atajó tus suspiros, remedió tus penas, y sobre todo, la que creyó tus palabras? ¿O, por suerte, entiendes tú que eres aquél a quien parecían cortos y de ninguna fuerza todos los juramentos que imaginarse podían, para asegurarme la verdad con que me engañabas? ¿Eres tú, acaso, Grisaldo, aquél cuyas infinitas lágrimas ablandaron la dureza del honesto corazón mío? Tú eres, que ya te veo, y yo soy, que ya me conozco. Pero si tú eres Grisaldo, el que yo creo, y yo soy Rosaura, la que tú imaginas, cúmpleme la palabra que me diste; darte he yo la promesa que nunca te he negado. Hanme dicho que te casas con Leopersia, la hija de Marcelio, tan a gusto tuyo que eres tú mismo el que la procuras; si esta nueva me ha dado pesadumbre, bien se puede ver por lo que he hecho por venir a estorbar el cumplimiento della; y si tú la puedes hacer verdadera, a tu consciencia lo dejo. ¿Qué respondes a esto, enemigo mortal de mi descanso? ¿Otorgas, por ventura, callando, lo que por el pensamiento sería justo que no te pasase? Alza los ojos ya y ponlos en estos que por su mal te miraron; levántalos y mira a quién engañas, a quién dejas y a quién olvidas. Verás que engañas, si bien lo consideras, a la que siempre te trató verdades, dejas a quien ha dejado a su honra y a sí misma por seguirte, olvidas a la que jamás te apartó de su memoria. Considera, Grisaldo, que en nobleza no te debo nada, y que en riqueza no te soy desigual, y que te aventajo en la bondad del ánimo y en la firmeza de la fe. Cúmpleme, señor, la que me diste, si te precias de caballero y no te desprecias de cristiano. Mira que si no correspondes a lo que me debes, que rogaré al cielo que te castigue, al fuego que te consuma, al aire que te falte, al agua que te anegue, a la tierra que no te sufra, y a mis parientes que me venguen. Mira que si faltas a la obligación que me tienes, que has de tener en mí una perpetua turbadora de tus gustos en cuanto la vida me durare; y aun después de muerta, si ser pudiere, con continuas sombras espantaré tu fermentido espíritu, y con espantosas visiones atormentaré tus engañadores ojos. Advierte que no pido sino lo que es mío, y que tú ganas en darlo lo que en negarlo pierdes. Mueve agora tu lengua para desengañarme de cuantas la has movido para ofenderme.

Calló diciendo esto la hermosa dama, y estuvo un poco esperando a ver lo que Grisaldo respondía; el cual, levantando el rostro, que hasta allí inclinado había

tenido, encendido con la vergüenza que las razones de Rosaura le habían causado, con sosegada voz le respondió desta manera: -Si yo quisiese negar, ¡oh Rosaura!, que no te soy deudor de más de lo que dices, negaría asimesmo que la luz del sol no es clara, y aun diría que el fuego es frío y el aire duro. Así que, en esta parte confieso lo que te debo, y que estoy obligado a la paga. Pero, que yo confiese que puedo pagarte como quieres, es imposible, porque el mandamiento de mi padre lo ha prohibido y tu riguroso desdén imposibilitado; y no quiero en esta verdad poner otro testigo que a ti misma, como a quien tan bien sabe cuántas veces y con cuántas lágrimas rogué que me aceptases por esposo, y que fueses servida que yo cumpliese la palabra que de serlo te había dado. Y tú, por las causas que te imaginaste, o por parecerte ser bien corresponder a las vanas promesas de Artandro, jamás quisiste que a tal ejecución se llegase; antes, de día en día me ibas entretiniendo y haciendo pruebas de mi firmeza, pudiendo asegurarla de todo punto con admitirme por tuyo. También sabes, Rosaura, el deseo que mi padre tenía de ponerme en estado y la priesa que daba a ello, trayendo los ricos honrosos casamientos que tú sabes, y cómo yo con mil excusas me apartaba de sus importunaciones, dándotelas siempre a ti para que no dilatases más lo que tanto a ti convenía y yo deseaba; y que al cabo de todo esto, te dije un día que la voluntad de mi padre era que yo con Leopersia me casase; y tú, en oyendo el nombre de Leopersia, con una furia desesperada me dijiste que más no te hablase, y que me casase norabuena con Leopersia o con quien más gusto me diese. Sabes también que te persuadí muchas veces que dejases aquellos celosos devaneos, que yo era tuyo, y no de Leopersia, y que jamás quisiste admitir mis disculpas ni condescender con mis ruegos; antes, perseverando en tu obstinación y dureza, y en favorecer a Artandro, me enviaste a decir que te daría gusto en que jamás te viese. Yo hice lo que me mandaste, y, por no tener ocasión de quebrar tu mandamiento, viendo también que cumplía el de mi padre, determiné de desposarme con Leopersia, o, a lo menos, desposaréme mañana, que así está concertado entre sus parientes y los míos; porque veas, Rosaura, cuán disculpado estoy de la culpa que me pones, y cuán tarde has tú venido en conocimiento de la sinrazón que conmigo usabas. Mas, porque no me juzgues de aquí adelante por tan ingrato como en tu imaginación me tienes pintado, mira bien si hay algo en que yo pueda satisfacer tu voluntad, que, como no sea casarme contigo, aventuraré por servirte la hacienda, la vida y la honra.

En tanto que estas palabras Grisaldo decía, tenía la hermosa Rosaura los ojos clavados en su rostro, vertiendo por ellos tantas lágrimas que daban bien a entender el dolor que en el alma sentía; pero, viendo ella que Grisaldo callaba, dando un profundo y doloroso suspiro, le dijo: -Como no puede caber en tus



verdes años tener, ¡oh Grisaldo!, larga y conocida experiencia de los infinitos accidentes amorosos, no me maravillo que un pequeño desdén mío te haya puesto en la libertad que publicas; pero si tú conocieras que los celosos temores son espuelas que hacen salir al amor de su paso, vieras claramente que los que yo tuve de Leopersia, en que yo más te quisiese redundaban. Mas, como tú tratabas tan de pasatiempo mis cosas, con la menor ocasión que te imaginaste, descubriste el poco amor de tu pecho, y confirmaste las verdaderas sospechas mías, y en tal manera, que me dices que mañana te casas con Leopersia. Pero yo te certifico que, antes que a ella lleves al tálamo, me has de llevar a mí a la sepultura, si ya no eres tan cruel que niegues de darla al cuerpo de cuya alma fuiste siempre señor absoluto. Y, porque claro conozcas y veas que la que perdió por ti su honestidad y puso en detrimento su honra tendrá en poco perder la vida, este agudo puñal que aquí traigo pondrá en efecto mi desesperado y honroso intento, y será testigo de la crueldad que en ese tu fermentado pecho encierras.

Y, diciendo esto, sacó del seno una desnuda daga, y con gran celeridad se iba a pasar el corazón con ella, si con mayor presteza Grisaldo no le tuviera el brazo y la rebozada pastora, su compañera, no aguijara a abrazarse con ella. Gran rato estuvieron Grisaldo y la pastora primero que quitasen a Rosaura la daga de las manos, la cual a Grisaldo decía: -¡Déjame, traidor enemigo, acabar de una vez la tragedia de mi vida, sin que tantas tu desamorado desdén me haga probar la muerte!

-Esa no gustarás tú por mi ocasión -replicó Grisaldo-, pues quiero que mi padre falte antes la palabra que por mí a Leopersia tiene dada, que faltar yo un punto a lo que conozco que te debo. Sosiega el pecho, Rosaura, pues te aseguro que este mío no sabrá desear otra cosa que la que fuere de tu contento.

Con estas enamoradas razones de Grisaldo resucitó Rosaura de la muerte de su tristeza a la vida de su alegría, y, sin cesar de llorar, se hincó de rodillas ante Grisaldo, pidiéndole las manos en señal de la merced que le hacía. Grisaldo hizo lo mismo, y, echándole los brazos al cuello, estuvieron gran rato sin poderse hablar el uno al otro palabra, derramando entrambos cantidad de amorosas lágrimas. La pastora arrebozada, viendo el feliz suceso de su compañera, fatigada del cansancio que había tomado en ayudar a quitar la daga a Rosaura, no pudiendo más sufrir el velo, se le quitó, descubriendo un rostro tan parecido al de Teolinda, que quedaron admiradas de verle Galatea y Florisa; pero más lo fue Teolinda, pues sin poderlo disimular, alzó la voz, diciendo: -¡Oh cielos!, y ¿qué es lo que veo? ¿No es, por ventura, ésta mi hermana Leonarda, la turbadora de mi reposo? Ella es, sin duda alguna.

Y, sin más detenerse, salió de donde estaba, y con ella Galatea y Florisa. Y, como la otra pastora viese a Teolinda, luego la conoció, y con abiertos brazos se

fueron la una a la otra, admiradas de haberse hallado en tal lugar y en tal sazón y coyuntura. Viendo, pues, Grisaldo y Rosaura lo que Leonarda con Teolinda hacía, y que habían sido descubiertos de las pastoras Galatea y Florisa, con no poca vergüenza de que los hubiesen hallado de aquella suerte, se levantaron, y, limpiándose las lágrimas, con disimulación y comedimiento rescibieron a las pastoras, que luego de Grisaldo fueron conocidas. Mas, la discreta Galatea, por volver en siguridad el disgusto que, quizá, de su vista los dos enamorados habían recibido, con aquel donaire con que ella todas las cosas decía, les dijo: -No os pese de nuestra venida, venturosos Grisaldo y Rosaura, pues sólo servirá de acrescentar vuestro contento, pues se ha comunicado con quien siempre le tendrá en serviros. Nuestra ventura ha ordenado que os viésemos, y en parte donde ninguna se nos ha encubierto de vuestros pensamientos; y, pues el cielo los ha traído a término tan dichoso, en satisfacción dello, asegurad vuestros pechos y perdonad nuestro atrevimiento.

-Nunca tu presencia, hermosa Galatea -respondió Grisaldo-, dejó de dar gusto doquiera que estuviese; y, siendo esta verdad tan conocida, antes quedamos en obligación a tu vista que con desabrimiento de tu llegada.

Con éstas, pasaron otras algunas comedidas razones, harto diferentes de las que entre Leonarda y Teo linda pasaban, las cuales, después de haberse abrazado una y dos veces, con tiernas palabras mezcladas con amorosas lágrimas, la cuenta de su vida se demandaban, tiniendo suspensos mirándolas a todos los que allí estaban, porque se parecían tanto que casi no se podían decir semejantes, sino una misma cosa; y si no fuera porque el traje de Teolinda era diferente del de Leonarda, sin duda alguna que Galatea y Florisa no supieran diferenciallas; y entonces vieron con cuánta razón Artidoro se había engañado en pensar que Leonarda Teolinda fuese. Mas, viendo Florisa que el sol estaba hacia la mitad del cielo, y que sería bien buscar alguna sombra que de sus rayos las defendiese, o, a lo menos, volverse a la aldea, pues, faltándoles la ocasión de apascentar sus ovejas, no debían estarse tanto en el prado, dijo a Teolinda y a Leonarda: -Tiempo habrá, pastoras, donde con más comodidad podáis satisfacer nuestros deseos y daros más larga cuenta de vuestros pensamientos, y por agora busquemos a do pasar el rigor de la siesta que nos amenaza: o en una fresca fuente que está a la salida del valle que atrás dejamos, o tornándonos a la aldea, donde será Leonarda tratada con la voluntad que tú, Teolinda, de Galatea y de mí conoces. Y si a vosotras, pastoras, hago sólo este ofrecimiento, no es porque me olvide de Grisaldo y Rosaura, sino porque me parece que a su valor y merescimiento no puedo ofrecerles más del deseo.

-Ése no faltará en mí mientras la vida me durare -respondió Grisaldo-, de hacer, pastora, lo que fuere en tu servicio, pues no se debe pagar con menos la

voluntad que nos muestras. Mas, por parecerme que será bien hacer lo que dices, y por tener entendido que no ignoráis lo que entre mí y Rosaura ha pasado, no quiero deteneros ni detenerme en referirlo. Sólo os ruego seáis servidas de llevar a Rosaura en vuestra compañía a vuestra aldea, en tanto que yo aparejo en la mía algunas cosas que son necesarias para concluir lo que nuestros corazones desean. Y, porque Rosaura quede libre de sospecha, y no la pueda tener jamás de la fe de mi pensamiento, con voluntad considerada mía, siendo vosotras testigos della, le doy la mano de ser su verdadero esposo.

Y, diciendo esto, tendió la suya y tomó la de la bella Rosaura. Y ella quedó tan fuera de sí de ver lo que Grisaldo hacía, que apenas pudo responderle palabra, sino que se dejó tomar la mano; y, de allí a un pequeño espacio, dijo: -A términos me había traído el amor, Grisaldo, señor mío, que con menos que por mí hicieras, te quedara perpetuamente obligada; pero, pues tú has querido corresponder antes a ser quien eres que no a mi merescimiento, haré yo lo que en mí es, que es darte de nuevo el alma, en recompensa deste beneficio; y después, el cielo de tan agradecida voluntad te dé la paga.

-No más -dijo a esta sazón Galatea-, no más, señores, que adonde andan las obras tan verdaderas, no han de tener lugar los demasiados comedimientos. Lo que resta es rogar al cielo que traiga a dichoso fin estos principios, y que en larga y saludable paz gocéis vuestros amores. Y en lo que dices, Grisaldo, que Rosaura venga a nuestra aldea, es tanta la merced que en ello nos haces, que nosotras mismas te lo suplicamos.

-De tan buena gana iré en vuestra compañía -dijo Rosaura-, que no sé con qué la encarezca más que con deciros que no sentiré mucho el ausencia de Grisaldo, estando en vuestra compañía.

-Pues, ¡ea! -dijo Florisa-, que el aldea es lejos y el sol mucho, y nuestra tardanza de volver a ella notada. Vos, señor Grisaldo, podéis ir a hacer lo que os conviniere, que en casa de Galatea hallaréis a Rosaura, y a éstas, una pastora, que no merecen ser llamadas dos las que tanto se parecen.

-Sea como queréis -dijo Grisaldo.

Y, tomando a Rosaura de la mano, se salieron todos del bosque, quedando concertado entre ellos que otro día enviaría Grisaldo un pastor, de los muchos de su padre, a avisar a Rosaura de lo que había de hacer; y que, enviando aquel pastor, sin ser notado, podría hablar a Galatea o a Florisa, y dar la orden que más conviniese. A todas pareció bien este concierto; y, habiendo salido del bosque, vio Grisaldo que le estaba esperando su criado con el caballo; y, abrazando de nuevo a Rosaura y despidiéndose de las pastoras, se fue acompañado de lágrimas y de los ojos de Rosaura, que nunca dél se apartaron hasta que le perdieron de vista. Como las pastoras solas quedaron, luego Teolinda se apartó con Leonarda,

con deseo de saber la causa de su venida; y Rosaura asimesmo fue contando a Galatea y Florisa la ocasión que la había movido a tomar el hábito de pastora y a venir a buscar a Grisaldo, diciendo: -«No os causara admiración, hermosas pastoras, el verme a mí en este traje, si supiérades hasta dó se estiende la poderosa fuerza de amor, la cual no sólo hace mudar el vestido a los que bien quieren, sino la voluntad y el alma de la manera que más es de su gusto; y hubiera yo perdido el mío eternamente si de la invención deste traje no me hubiera aprovechado, porque sabréis, amigas, que, estando yo en el aldea de Leonarda, de quien mi padre es señor, vino a ella Grisaldo con intención de estarse allí algunos días ocupado en el sabroso ejercicio de la caza; y, por ser mi padre muy amigo del suyo, ordenó de hospedarle en casa y de hacerle todos los regalos que pudiese. Hízolo así; y la venida de Grisaldo a mi casa fue para sacarme a mí della, porque, en efecto, aunque sea a costa de mi vergüenza, os habré de decir que la vista, la conversación, el valor de Grisaldo, hicieron tal impresión en mi alma que, sin saber cómo, a pocos días que él allí estuvo, yo no estuve más en mí, ni quise ni pude estar sin hacerle señor de mi libertad; pero no fue tan arrebatadamente que primero no estuviese satisfecha que la voluntad de Grisaldo de la mía un punto no discrepaba, según él me lo dio a entender con muchas y muy verdaderas señales. Enterada, pues, yo en esta verdad, y viendo cuán bien me estaba tener a Grisaldo por esposo, vine a condescender con sus deseos y a poner en efecto los míos. Y así, con la intercesión de una doncella mía, en un apartado corredor nos vimos Grisaldo y yo muchas veces, sin que nuestra estada solos a más se estendiese que a vernos y a darme él la palabra que hoy con más fuerza delante de vosotras me ha tornado a dar.

»Ordenó, pues, mi triste ventura, que en el tiempo que yo de tan dulce estado gozaba, vino asimesmo a visitar a mi padre un valeroso caballero aragonés que Artandro se llama, el cual, vencido, a lo que él mostró, de mi hermosura -si alguna tengo-, con grandísima solicitud procuró que yo con él me casase sin que mi padre lo supiese. Había en este medio procurado Grisaldo traer a efecto su propósito, y, mostrándome yo algo más dura de lo que fuera menester, le iba entretiniendo con palabras, con intención que mi padre saliese al camino de casarme, y que entonces Grisaldo me pidiese por esposa; pero no quería él hacer esto, porque sabía que la voluntad de su padre era casarle con la rica y hermosa Leopersia, que bien debéis conocerla por la fama de su riqueza y hermosura. Vino esto a mi noticia, y tomé ocasión de pedirle celos, aunque fingidos, sólo por hacer prueba de la entereza de su fe, y fui tan descuidada, o por mejor decir, tan simple, que, pensando que granjeaba algo en ello, comencé a hacer algunos favores a Artandro, lo cual visto por Grisaldo, muchas veces me significó la pena que rescibía de lo que yo con Artandro pasaba; y aun me avisó que, si no

era mi voluntad de que él me cumpliera la palabra que me había dado, que no podía dejar de obedecer a la de su padre. A todas estas amonestaciones y avisos respondí yo sin ninguno, llena de soberbia y arrogancia, confiada en que los lazos que mi hermosura habían echado al alma de Grisaldo no podían tan fácilmente ser rompidos ni aun tocados de otra cualquier belleza. Mas salíome tan al revés mi confianza como me lo mostró presto Grisaldo, el cual, cansado de mis necios y esquivos desdenes, tuvo por bien de dejarme y venir obediente al mandado de su padre. Pero, apenas se hubo él partido de mi aldea y apartado de mi presencia, cuando yo conocí el error en que había caído, y con tanto ahínco me comenzó a fatigar el ausencia de Grisaldo y los celos de Leopersia, que el ausencia dél me acababa y los celos della me consumían.

»Considerando, pues, que si mi remedio se dilataba, había de dejar por fuerza en las manos del dolor la vida, determiné de aventurar a perder lo menos, que a mi parecer era la fama, por ganar lo más, que es a Grisaldo. Y así, con escusa que di a mi padre de ir a ver una tía mía, señora de otra aldea a la nuestra cercana, salí de mi casa acompañada de muchos criados de mi padre; y, llegada en casa de mi tía, le descubrí todo el secreto de mi pensamiento, y le rogué fuese servida de que yo me pusiese en este hábito y viniese a hablar a Grisaldo, certificándole que si yo mesma no venía, que tendrían mal suceso mis negocios. Ella me lo concedió, con condición que trujese a Leonarda conmigo, como persona de quien ella mucho se fiaba; y, enviando por ella a nuestra aldea, y acomodándome destos vestidos, y advirtiéndonos de algunas cosas que las dos habíamos de hacer, nos despedimos della habrá ocho días; y, habiendo seis que llegamos a la aldea de Grisaldo, jamás hemos podido hallar lugar de hablarle a solas, como yo deseaba, hasta esta mañana que supe que venía a caza, y le aguardé en el mismo lugar adonde él se despidió. Y he pasado con él todo lo que vosotras, amigas, habéis visto, del cual venturoso suceso quedo tan contenta cuanto es razón lo quede la que tanto lo deseaba.» Esta es, pastoras, la historia de mi vida, y si os he cansado en contárosla, echad la culpa al deseo que teníades de saberla, y al mío, que no pudo hacer menos de satisfaceros.

-Antes quedamos tan obligadas -respondió Florisa-a la merced que nos has hecho que, aunque siempre nos ocupemos en servirla, no saldremos de la deuda.

-Yo soy la que quedo en ella -replicó Rosaura-, y la que procuraré pagarla como mis fuerzas alcanzaren. Pero, dejando esto aparte, volved los ojos, pastoras, y veréis los de Teolinda y Leonarda tan llenos de lágrimas que moverán a los vuestros a no dejar de acompañarlos en ellas.

Volvieron Galatea y Florisa a mirarlas, y vieron ser verdad lo que Rosaura decía; y lo que el llanto de las dos hermanas causaba era que, después de haberle dicho Leonarda a su hermana todo lo que Rosaura había contado a Galatea y a

Floris, le dijo: -«Sabrás, hermana, que así como tú faltaste de nuestra aldea, se imaginó que te había llevado el pastor Artidoro, que aquel mismo día faltó él también, sin que de nadie se despidiera. Confirmé yo esta opinión en mis padres, porque les conté lo que con Artidoro había pasado en la floresta. Con este indicio creció la sospecha, y mi padre procuraba venir en tu busca y de Artidoro, y en efecto lo pusiera por obra si de allí a dos días no viniera a nuestra aldea un pastor que, al momento que fue visto, todos le tuvieron por Artidoro. Llegando estas nuevas a mi padre de que allí estaba el robador tuyo, luego vino con la justicia adonde el pastor estaba, al cual le preguntaron si te conocía, o adónde te había llevado. El pastor negó con juramento que en toda su vida te había visto, ni sabía qué era lo que le preguntaban. Todos los que estaban presentes se maravillaron de ver que el pastor negaba conocerte, habiendo estado diez días en el pueblo, y hablado y bailado contigo muchas veces, y sin duda alguna creyeron todos que Artidoro era culpado en lo que se le imputaba; y, sin querer admitir disculpa suya ni escucharle palabra, le llevaron a la prisión, donde estuvo algunos días sin que ninguno le hablase, al cabo de los cuales, yéndole a tomar su confesión, tornó a jurar que no te conocía y que en toda su vida había estado más de aquella vez en nuestra aldea, y que mirasen -y esto otras veces lo había dicho-que aquel Artidoro que ellos pensaban ser él, por ventura no fuese un hermano suyo que le parecía en tanto extremo, como descubriría la verdad cuando les mostrase que se habían engañado teniendo a él por Artidoro, porque él se llamaba Galercio, hijo de Briseno, natural de la aldea de Grisaldo. Y, en efecto, tantas demostraciones dio y tantas pruebas hizo, que conocieron claramente todos que él no era Artidoro, de que quedaron más admirados; y decían que tal maravilla como la de parecernos yo a ti, y Galercio a Artidoro, no se había visto en el mundo.

»Esto que de Galercio se publicaba me movió a ir a verle muchas veces a do estaba preso; y fue la vista de suerte que quedé sin ella, a lo menos para mirar cosas que me den gusto en tanto que a Galercio no viere. Pero lo que más mal hay en esto, hermana, es que él se fue de la aldea sin que supiese que llevaba consigo mi libertad, ni yo tuve lugar jamás de decírselo; y así, me quedé con la pena que imaginarse puede, hasta que la tía de Rosaura me envió a pedir a mi padre por algunos días, todo a fin de venir a acompañar a Rosaura, de lo que recibí summo contento, por saber que veníamos a la aldea de Galercio y que allí le podría hacer sabidor de la deuda en que me estaba. Pero he sido tan corta de ventura que ha cuatro días que estamos en su aldea y nunca le he visto, aunque he preguntado por él, y me dicen que está en el campo con su ganado. He preguntado también por Artidoro, y hanme dicho que de unos días a esta parte no parece en el aldea; y, por no apartarme de Rosaura, no he tenido lugar de ir a

buscar a Galercio, del cual podría ser saber nuevas de Artidoro.» Esto es lo que a mí me ha sucedido, y lo demás que has visto, con Grisaldo, después que faltas, hermana, del aldea.

Admirada quedó Teolinda de lo que su hermana le contaba; pero, cuando llegó a saber que en el aldea de Artidoro no se sabía dél nueva alguna, no pudo tener las lágrimas, aunque en parte se consoló, creyendo que Galercio sabría nuevas de su hermano. Y así, determinó de ir otro día a buscar a Galercio, doquiera que estuviese. Y, habiéndole contado con la más brevedad que pudo a Leonarda todo lo que le había sucedido después que en busca de Artidoro andaba, abrazándola otra vez, se volvió adonde las pastoras estaban, que, un poco desviadas del camino, iban por entre unos árboles, que del calor del sol un poco las defendían. Y, en llegando a ellas, Teolinda les contó todo lo que su hermana le había dicho, con el suceso de sus amores y la semejanza de Galercio y Artidoro, de que no poco se admiraron, aunque dijo Galatea: -Quien vee la semejanza tan estraña que hay entre ti, Teolinda, y tu hermana, no tiene de qué maravillarse aunque otras vea, pues ninguna, a lo que yo creo, a la vuestra iguala.

-No hay duda -respondió Leonarda-sino que la que hay entre Artidoro y Galercio es tanta que, si a la nuestra no excede, a lo menos en ninguna cosa se queda atrás.

-Quiera el cielo -dijo Florisa-, que así como los cuatro os semejáis unos a otros, así os acomodéis y parezcáis en la ventura, siendo tan buena la que la fortuna conceda a vuestros deseos, que todo el mundo envidie vuestros contentos, como admira vuestras semejanzas.

Replicara a estas razones Teolinda, si no lo estorbara una voz que oyeron que dentre los árboles salía; y, parándose todas a escucharla, luego conocieron ser del pastor Lauso, de que Galatea y Florisa grande contento rescibieron, porque en extremo deseaban saber de quién andaba Lauso enamorado, y creyeron que desta duda las sacaría lo que el pastor cantase. Y, por esta ocasión, sin moverse de donde estaban, con grandísimo silencio le escucharon. Estaba el pastor sentado al pie de un verde sauce, acompañado de solos sus pensamientos y de un pequeño rabel, al son del cual desta manera cantaba:

## LAUSO

Si yo dijere el bien del pensamiento,  
en mal se vuelva cuanto bien poseo;

que no es para decirse el bien que siento.  
De mí mismo se encubra mi deseo,  
enmudezca la lengua en esta parte 5  
y en el silencio ponga su trofeo.  
Pare aquí el artificio, cese el arte  
de exagerar el gusto qu'en un alma  
con mano liberal amor reparte.  
Baste decir que en sosegada calma 10  
paso el mar amoroso, confiado  
de honesto triunfo y vencedera palma.  
Sin saberse la causa, lo causado  
se sepa; que es un bien tan sin medida  
que sólo para el alma es reservado. 15  
Ya tengo nuevo ser, ya tengo vida,  
ya puedo cobrar nombre en todo el suelo  
de ilustre y clara fama conocida;  
qu'el limpio intento, al amoroso celo  
que encierra el pecho enamorado mío, 20  
alzarme puede al más subido cielo.  
En ti, Silena, espero; en ti confío,

Silena, gloria de mi pensamiento,  
norte por quien se rige mi albedrío.  
Espero qu'el sin par entendimiento 25  
tuyo levantes a entender que valgo  
por fe lo que no está en merescimiento.  
Confío que tendrás, pastora, en algo,  
después de hacerte cierta la experiencia,  
la sana voluntad de un pecho hidalgo. 30  
¿Qué bienes no asegura tu presencia?  
¿Qué males no destierra? ¿Y quién sin ella  
sufrirá un punto la terrible ausencia?  
¡Oh, más que la belleza misma bella,  
más que la propia discreción discreta, 35  
sol a mis ojos y a mi mar estrella!  
No la que fue de la nombrada Creta  
robada por el falso hermoso toro  
igualó a tu hermosura tan perfecta;  
ni aquella que en sus faldas granos de oro 40



sintió llover, por quien después no pudo  
guardar el virginal rico tesoro;  
ni aquella que con brazo airado y crudo,  
en la sangre castísima del pecho  
tiñó el puñal, en su limpieza, agudo; 45

ni aquella que a furor movió y despecho  
contra Troya los griegos corazones,  
por quien fue el Ilión roto y desecho;  
ni la que los latinos escuadrones  
hizo mover contra la teucra gente, 50  
a quien Juno causó tantas pasiones;  
ni menos la que tiene diferente  
fama de la entereza y el trofeo  
con que su honestidad guardó excelente:  
digo de aquella que lloró a Siqueo, 55  
del mantuano Títiro notada  
de vano antojo y no cabal deseo;  
no en cuantas tuvo hermosas la pasada  
edad, ni la presente tiene agora,  
ni en la de por venir será hallada 60  
quien llegase ni llegue a mi pastora  
en valor, en saber, en hermosura,  
en merecer del mundo ser señora.  
¡Dichoso aquél que con firmeza pura  
fuere de ti, Silena, bien querido, 65  
sin gustar de los celos la amargura!  
¡Amor, que a tanta alteza me has subido,  
no me derribes con pesada mano

a la bajeza oscura del olvido!  
¡Sé conmigo señor, y no tirano! 70

No cantó más el enamorado pastor, ni por lo que cantado había pudieron las pastoras venir en conocimiento de lo que deseaban; que, puesto que Lauso nombró a Silena en su canto, por este nombre no fue la pastora conocida. Y así, imaginaron que, como Lauso había andado por muchas partes de España y aun

de toda la Asia y Europa, que alguna pastora forastera sería la que había rendido la libre voluntad suya. Mas, volviendo a considerar que le habían visto pocos días atrás triunfar de la libertad y hacer burla de los enamorados, sin duda alguna creyeron que con disfrazado nombre celebraba alguna conocida pastora a quien había hecho señora de sus pensamientos. Y así, sin satisfacerse en su sospecha, se fueron hacia el aldea, dejando al pastor en el mismo lugar do se estaba. Mas no hubieron andado mucho, cuando vieron venir de lejos algunos pastores, que luego fueron conocidos, porque eran Tirsi, Damón, Elicio, Erastro, Arsindo, Francenio, Crisio, Orompo, Daranio, Orfinio y Marsilo, con todos los más principales pastores de la aldea, y entre ellos el desamorado Lenio, con el lastimado Silerio, los cuales salían a tener la siesta a la Fuente de las Pizarras, a la sombra que en aquel lugar hacían las entricadas ramas de los espesos y verdes árboles. Y, antes que los pastores llegasen, tuvieron cuidado Teolinda, Leonarda y Rosaura de rebozarse cada una con un blanco lienzo, porque de Tirsi y Damón no fuesen conocidas. Los pastores llegaron haciendo cortés rescibimiento a las pastoras, convidándolas que en su compañía la siesta pasar quisiesen; mas Galatea se escusó con decir que aquellas forasteras pastoras que con ella venían tenían necesidad de ir a la aldea. Con esto se despidió dellos, llevando tras sí las almas de Elicio y Erastro, y aun las encubiertas pastoras los deseos de conocerlas de cuantos allí estaban.

Ellas se fueron al aldea y los pastores a la fresca fuente, pero, antes que allá llegasen, Silerio se despidió de todos, pidiendo licencia para volverse a su ermita; y, puesto que Tirsi, Damón, Elicio y Erastro le rogaron que por aquel día con ellos se quedase, jamás lo pudieron acabar con él, antes, abrazándolos a todos, se despidió, encargando y rogando a Erastro que no dejase de verle todas las veces que por su ermita pasase. Erastro se lo prometió; y con esto, torciendo el camino, acompañado de su continua pesadumbre, se volvió a la soledad de su ermita, dejando a los pastores no sin dolor de ver la estrechez de vida que en tan verdes años había escogido; pero más se sentía entre aquellos que le conocían y sabían la calidad y valor de su persona.

Llegados los pastores a la fuente, hallaron en ella a tres caballeros y a dos hermosas damas que de camino venían, y, fatigados del cansancio y convidados del ameno y fresco lugar, les pareció ser bien dejar el camino que llevaban y pasar allí las calurosas horas de la siesta. Venían con ellos algunos criados, de manera que, en su apariencia, mostraban ser personas de calidad. Quisieran los pastores, así como los vieron, dejarles el lugar desocupado, pero uno de los caballeros, que el principal parecía, viendo que los pastores de comedidos se querían ir a otra parte, les dijo: -Si era, por ventura, vuestro contento, gallardos pastores, pasar la siesta en este deleitoso sitio, no os lo estorbe nuestra

compañía; antes, nos haced merced de que con la vuestra augmentéis nuestro contento, pues no promete menos vuestra gentil disposición y manera; y, siendo el lugar, como lo es, tan acomodado para mayor cantidad de gente, haréis agravio a mí y a estas damas si no venís en lo que yo en su nombre y el mío os pido.

-Con hacer, señor, lo que nos mandas -respondió Elicio-, cumpliremos nuestro deseo, que por agora no se estendía a más que venir a este lugar a pasar en él en buena conversación las enfadosas horas de la siesta; y, aunque fuera diferente nuestro intento, lo torciéramos sólo por hacer lo que pides.

-Obligado quedo -respondió el caballero-a muestras de tanta voluntad; y, para más certificarme y obligarme con ella, sentaos, pastores, alrededor desta fresca fuente, donde, con algunas cosas que estas damas traen para regalo del camino, podáis despertar la sed y mitigarla en las frescas aguas que esta clara fuente nos ofrece.

Todos lo hicieron así, obligados de su buen comedimiento. Hasta este punto, habían tenido las damas cubiertos los rostros con dos ricos antifaces; pero, viendo que los pastores se quedaban, se descubrieron, descubriendo una belleza tan estraña que en gran admiración puso a todos los que la vieron, pareciéndoles que, después de la de Galatea, no podía haber en la tierra otra que se igualase. Eran las dos damas igualmente hermosas, aunque la una dellas, que de más edad parecía, a la más pequeña en cierto donaire y brío se aventajaba. Sentados, pues, y acomodados todos, el segundo caballero, que hasta entonces ninguna cosa había hablado, dijo: -Cuando me paro a considerar, agradables pastores, la ventaja que hace al cortesano y soberbio trato el pastoral y humilde vuestro, no puedo dejar de tener lástima a mí mismo y a vosotros una honesta envidia.

-¿Por qué dices eso, amigo Darinto? -dijo el otro caballero.

-Dílogo, señor, -replicó estotro-, porque veo con cuánta curiosidad vos y yo, y los que siguen el trato nuestro, procuramos adornar las personas, sustentar los cuerpos y aumentar las haciendas, y cuán poco viene a lucirnos, pues la púrpura, el oro, el brocado que sobre nuestros cuerpos echamos, como los rostros están marchitos de los mal degiridos manjares, comidos a deshoras, y tan costosos como malgastados, ninguna cosa nos adornan, ni pulen, ni son parte para que más bien parezcamos a los ojos de quien nos mira. Todo lo cual puedes ver diferente en los que siguen el rústico ejercicio del campo, haciendo experiencia en los que tienes delante, los cuales podría ser, y aun es así, que se hubiesen sustentado y sustentan de manjares simples y en todo contrarios de la vana compostura de los nuestros; y, con todo eso, mira el moreno de sus rostros, que promete más entera salud que la blancura quebrada de los nuestros; y cuán bien les está a sus robustos y sueltos miembros un pellico de blanca lana, una

caperuza parda y unas antiparas de cualquier color que sean; y con esto, a los ojos de sus pastoras, deben de parecer más hermosos que los bizarros cortesanos a los de las retiradas damas. ¿Qué te diría, pues, si quisiese, de la sencillez de su vida, de la llaneza de su condición y de la honestidad de sus amores? No te digo más, sino que conmigo puede tanto lo que de la vida pastoral conozco, que de buena gana trocaría la mía con ella.

-En deuda te estamos los pastores -dijo Elicio- por la buena opinión que de nosotros tienes; pero, con todo eso, te sé decir que hay en la rústica vida nuestra tantos resbaladeros y trabajos como se encierran en la cortesana vuestra.

-No podré yo dejar de venir en lo que dices, amigo -replicó Darinto-, porque ya se sabe bien que es una guerra nuestra vida sobre la tierra. Pero, en fin, en la pastoral hay menos que en la ciudadana, por estar más libre de ocasiones que alteren y desasosiegen el espíritu.

-Cuán bien se conforma con tu opinión, Darinto -dijo Damón-, la de un pastor amigo mío que Lauso se llama, el cual, después de haber gastado algunos años en cortesanos ejercicios y algunos otros en los trabajosos del duro Marte, al fin se ha reducido a la pobreza de nuestra rústica vida; y, antes que a ella viniese, mostró desearlo mucho, como parece por una canción que compuso y envió al famoso Larsileo, que en los negocios de la Corte tiene larga y ejercitada experiencia. Y, por haberme a mí parecido bien, la tomé toda en la memoria, y aun os la dijera si imaginara que a ello diera lugar el tiempo y a vosotros no os cansara el escucharla.

-Ninguna otra cosa nos dará más gusto que escucharte, discreto Damón -respondió Darinto, llamando a Damón por su nombre, que ya le sabía, por haberle oído nombrar a los otros pastores, sus amigos-; y así, yo de mi parte te ruego nos digas la canción de Lauso; que, pues ella es hecha, como dices, a mi propósito y tú la has tomado de memoria, imposible será que deje de ser buena.

Comenzaba Damón a arrepentirse de lo que había dicho y procuraba escusarse de lo prometido; mas, los caballeros y damas se lo rogaron tanto, y todos los pastores, que él no pudo escusar el decirla. Y así, habiéndose sosegado un poco, con gentil donaire y gracia, dijo desta manera: DAMÓN

El vano imaginar de nuestra mente,  
de mil contrarios vientos arrojada  
acá y allá con curso presuroso;  
la humana condición, flaca, doliente,  
en caducos placeres ocupada, 5  
do busca, sin hallarle, algún reposo;  
el falso, el mentiroso

mundo, prometedor de alegres gustos;

la voz de sus sirenas,  
mal escuchada apenas 10  
cuando cambia su gusto en mil disgustos;  
la Babilonia, el caos que miro y leo  
en todo cuanto veo;  
el cauteloso trato cortesano,  
junto con mi deseo, 15  
puesto han la pluma en la cansada mano.

Quisiera yo, señor, que allí llegara  
do llega mi deseo, el corto vuelo  
de mi grosera mal cortada pluma,  
sólo para que luego se ocupara 20  
en levantar el más subido vuelo  
vuestra rara bondad y virtud summa.  
Mas, ¿quién hay que presuma  
echar sobre sus hombros tanta carga,  
si no es un nuevo Adlante, 25  
en fuerzas tan bastante  
que poco el cielo le fatiga y carga?  
Y aun le será forzoso que se ayude  
y el grave peso mude  
sobre los brazos de otro Alcides nuevo; 30

y, aunque se encorve y sude,  
yo tal fatiga por descanso apruebo.

Ya que a mis fuerzas esto es imposible  
y el inútil deseo doy por muestra  
de lo que encierra el justo pensamiento, 35  
veamos si, quizá, será posible  
mover la flaca mal contenta diestra  
a mostrar por enigma algún contento;  
mas, tan sin fuerzas siento  
mi fuerza en esto, que será forzoso 40  
que apliquéis los oídos  
a los tristes gemidos

de un desdenado pecho congojoso,  
a quien el fuego, el aire, el mar, la tierra  
hacen contino guerra, 45  
todos en su desdicha conjurados,  
que se remata y cierra  
con la corta ventura de sus hados.

Si esto no fuera, fácil cosa fuera  
tender por la región del gusto el paso, 50  
y reducir cien mil a la memoria,

pintando el monte, el río y la ribera  
do amor, el hado, la fortuna y caso  
rindieron a un pastor toda su gloria.  
Mas desta dulce historia 55  
el tiempo triunfa, y sólo queda della  
una pequeña sombra,  
que ahora espanta, asombra  
al pensamiento que más piensa en ella:  
condición propia de la humana suerte, 60  
que el gusto nos convierte  
en pocas horas en mortal disgusto,  
y nadie habrá que acierte  
en muchos años con un firme gusto.

Vuelva y revuelva; en alto suba o baje 65  
el vano pensamiento al hondo abismo;  
corra en un punto desde Tile a Batro,  
qu'él dirá, cuanto más sude y trabaje,  
y del término salga de sí mismo,  
puesto en la esfera o en el cruel Baratro: 70  
¡oh, una, y tres, y cuatro,  
cinco, y seis y más veces venturoso  
el simple ganadero,

que con un pobre apero  
vive con más contento y más reposo 75  
qu'el rico Craso o el avariento Mida,  
pues con aquella vida

robusta, pastoral, sencilla y sana,  
de todo punto olvida  
esta mísera, falsa, cortesana! 80

En el rigor del erizado invierno,  
al tronco entero de robusta encina,  
de Vulcano abrazada, se calienta  
y allí en sosiego trata del gobierno  
mejor de su ganado, y determina 85  
dar de sí al cielo no entricada cuenta.  
Y cuando ya se ahuyenta  
el encogido, estéril, yerto frío,  
y el gran señor de Delo  
abrsa el aire, el suelo, 90  
en el margen sentado de algún río,  
de verdes sauces y álamos cubierto,  
con rústico concierto  
suelta la voz o toca el caramillo,  
y a veces se vee cierto 95

las aguas detenerse por oílo.

Poco allí le fatiga el rostro grave  
del privado, que muestra en apariencia  
mandar allí do no es obedecido,  
ni el alto exagerar con voz süave 100  
del falso adulador, que en poca ausencia  
muda opinión, señor, bando y partido;  
ni el desdén sacudido  
del sutil secretario le fatiga,  
ni la altivez honrada 105  
de la llave dorada,  
ni de los varios príncipes la liga,  
ni del manso ganado un punto parte,  
porque el furor de Marte  
a una y a otra parte suene airado, 110  
regido por tal arte  
que apenas su secuaz se ve medrado.

Reduce a poco espacio sus pisadas,  
del alto monte al apacible llano,  
desde la fresca fuente al claro río, 115  
sin que, por ver las tierras apartadas,

las movibles campañas de Oceano  
are con loco antiguo desvarío.  
No le levanta el brío  
saber qu'el gran monarca invicto vive 120  
bien cerca de su aldea,  
y, aunque su bien desea,  
poco disgusto en no verle rescibe;  
no como el ambicioso entremetido,  
que con seso perdido 125  
anda tras el favor, tras la privanza,  
sin nunca haber teñido  
en turca o en mora sangre espada o lanza.

No su semblante o su color se muda  
porque mude color, mude semblante, 130  
el señor a quien sirve, pues no tiene  
señor que fuerce a que con lengua muda  
siga, cual Clicie a su dorado amante,  
el dulce o amargo gusto que le viene.  
No le veréis que pene 135  
de temor que un descuido, una nonada,  
en el ingrato pecho  
del señor el derecho

borre de sus servicios, y sea dada  
de breve despedida la sentencia. 140  
No muestra en apariencia  
otro de lo que encierra el pecho sano;  
que la rústica sciencia  
no alcanza el falso trato cortesano.

¿Quién tendrá vida tal en menosprecio? 145  
¿Quién no dirá que aquélla sola es vida  
que al sosiego del alma se encamina?



El no tenerla el cortesano en precio  
hace que su bondad sea conocida  
de quien aspira al bien y al mal declina. 150

¡Oh vida, do se afina  
en soledad el gusto acompañado!  
¡Oh pastoral bajeza,  
más alta que la alteza  
del cetro más subido y levantado! 155

¡Oh flores olorosas, oh sombríos  
bosques, oh claros ríos!  
¡Quién gozar os pudiera un breve tiempo,  
sin que los males míos  
turbasen tan honesto pasatiempo! 160

¡Canción, a parte vas do serán luego  
conocidas tus faltas y tus sobras!  
Mas di, si aliento cobras,  
con rostro humilde enderezado a ruego:  
«¡Señor, perdón, porque el que acá me envía, 165  
en vos y en su deseo se confía!».

-Ésta es, señores, la canción de Lauso -dijo Damón en acabándola-, la cual fue tan celebrada de Lariseo, cuanto bien admitida de los que en aquel tiempo la vieron.

-Con razón lo puedes decir -respondió Darinto-, pues la verdad y artificio suyo es digno de justas alabanzas.

-Estas canciones son las de mi gusto -dijo a este punto el desamorado Lenio-, y no aquellas que a cada paso llegan a mis oídos, llenas de mil simples conceptos amorosos, tan mal dispuestos e intrincados que osaré jurar que hay algunas que, ni las alcanza quien las oye, por discreto que sea, ni las entiende quien las hizo. Pero no menos fatigan otras que se enzarzan en dar alabanzas a Cupido y en exagerar su poder, su valor, sus maravillas y milagros, haciéndole señor del cielo y de la tierra, dándole otros mil atributos de potencia, de mando y señorío. Y lo que más me cansa de los que las hacen es que, cuando hablan de amor, entienden de un no sé quién que ellos llaman Cupido, que la misma significación del nombre nos declara quién es él, que es un apetito sensual y vano, digno de todo vituperio.

Habló el desamorado Lenio, y en fin hubo de parar en decir mal de amor; pero, como todos los más que allí estaban conocían su condición, no repararon

mucho en sus razones, si no fue Erastro, que le dijo: -¿Piensas, Lenio, por ventura, que siempre estás hablando con el simple Erastro, que no sabe contradecir tus opiniones ni responder a tus argumentos? Pues quíerote advertir que te será sano el callar por agora, o, a lo menos, tratar de otras cosas que de decir mal de amor, si ya no gustas que la discreción y sciencia de Tirsi y de Damón te alumbren de la ceguedad en que estás, y te muestren a la clara lo que ellos entienden y lo que tú debes entender del amor y de sus cosas.

-¿Qué me podrán ellos decir que yo no sepa? -dijo Lenio-. O ¿qué les podré yo replicar que ellos no ignoren?

-Soberbia es esa, Lenio -respondió Elicio-, y en ella muestras cuán fuera vas del camino de la verdad de amor, y que te riges más por el norte de tu parecer y antojo, que no por el que te debías regir, que es el de la verdad y experiencia.

-Antes por la mucha que yo tengo de sus obras -respondió Lenio-, le soy tan contrario como nuestro y mostraré mientras la vida me durare.

-¿En qué fundas tu razón? -dijo Tirsi.

-¿En qué, pastor? -respondió Lenio-. En que, por los efectos que hace, conozco cuán mala es la causa que los produce.

-¿Cuáles son los efectos de amor que tú tienes por tan malos? -replicó Tirsi.

-Yo te los diré, si con atención me escuchas -dijo Lenio-; pero no querría que mi plática enfadase los oídos de los que están presentes, pudiendo pasar el tiempo en otra conversación de más gusto.

-Ninguna cosa habrá que sea más del nuestro -dijo Darinto-que oír tratar desta materia, especialmente entre personas que tan bien sabrán defender su opinión; y así, por mi parte, si la destos pastores no lo estorba, te ruego, Lenio, que sigas adelante la comenzada plática.

-Eso haré yo de buen grado -respondió Lenio-, porque pienso mostrar claramente en ella cuántas razones me fuerzan a seguir la opinión que sigo y a vituperar cualquiera otra que a la mía se opusiere.

-Comienza, pues, ¡oh Lenio! -dijo Damón-, que no estarás más en ella de cuanto mi compañero Tirsi descubra la suya.

A esta sazón, ya que Lenio se preparaba a decir los vituperios de amor, llegaron a la fuente el venerable Aurelio, padre de Galatea, con algunos pastores, y con él asimesmo venían Galatea y Florisa, con las tres rebozadas pastoras, Rosaura, Teolinda y Leonarda, a las cuales, habiéndolas topado a la entrada de la aldea y sabiendo dellas la junta de pastores que en la Fuente de las Pizarras quedaba, a ruego suyo las hizo volver, fiadas las forasteras pastoras en que, por sus rebozos, no serían de alguno conocidas. Levantáronse todos a rescebir a Aurelio y a las pastoras, las cuales se sentaron con las damas, y Aurelio y los pastores con los demás pastores. Pero, cuando las damas vieron la singular

belleza de Galatea, quedaron tan admiradas que no podían apartar los ojos de mirarla. No lo fue menos Galatea de la hermosura dellas, especialmente de la que de mayor edad parecía. Pasó entre ellas algunas palabras de comedimiento; pero todo cesó cuando supieron lo que entre el discreto Tirsi y el desamorado Lenio estaba concertado, de lo que se holgó infinito el venerable Aurelio, porque en extremo deseaba ver aquella junta y oír aquella disputa; y más entonces, donde tendría Lenio quien tan bien le supiese responder. Y así, sin más esperar, sentándose Lenio en un tronco de un desmochado olmo, con voz al principio baja y después sonora, desta manera comenzó a decir:

## LENIO

-Ya casi adivino, valerosa y discreta compañía, cómo ya en vuestro entendimiento me vais juzgando por atrevido y temerario, pues con el poco ingenio y menos experiencia que puede prometer la rústica vida en que yo algún tiempo me he criado, quiero tomar contienda, en materia tan ardua como ésta, con el famoso Tirsi, cuya crianza en famosas academias y cuyos bien sabidos estudios no pueden asegurar en mi pretensión sino segura pérdida. Pero confiado que, a las veces, la fuerza del natural ingenio, adornado con algún tanto de experiencia, suele descubrir nuevas sendas con que facilitan las sciencias por largos años sabidas, quiero atreverme hoy a mostrar en público las razones que me han movido a ser tan enemigo de amor, que he merecido por ello alcanzar renombre de desamorado. Y, aunque otra cosa no me moviera a hacer esto sino vuestro mandamiento, no me escusara de hacerla; cuan to más, que no será pequeña la gloria que de aquí he de granjear, aunque pierda la empresa, pues al fin dirá la fama que tuve ánimo para competir con el nombrado Tirsi. Y así, con este presupuesto, sin querer ser favorecido si no es de la razón que tengo, a ella sola invoco y ruego dé tal fuerza a mis palabras y argumentos, que se muestre en ellas y en ellos la que tengo para ser tan enemigo del amor como publico. Es, pues, amor, según he oído decir a mis mayores, un deseo de belleza, y esta definición le dan, entre otras muchas, los que en esta cuestión han llegado más al cabo. Pues, si se me concede que el amor es deseo de belleza, forzosamente se me ha conceder que, cual fuere la belleza que se amare, tal será el amor con que se ama. Y, porque la belleza es en dos maneras, corpórea a incorpórea, el amor que la belleza corporal amare como último fin suyo, este tal amor no puede ser bueno, y éste es el amor de quien yo soy enemigo. Pero, como la belleza corpórea se divide asimesmo en dos partes, que son en cuerpos vivos y en

cuerpos muertos, también puede haber amor de belleza corporal que sea bueno. Muéstrase la una parte de la belleza corporal en cuerpos vivos de varones y de hembras, y ésta consiste en que todas las partes del cuerpo sean de por sí buenas, y que todas juntas hagan un todo perfecto y formen un cuerpo proporcionado de miembros y suavidad de colores. La otra belleza de la parte corporal no viva consiste en pinturas, estatuas, edificios, la cual belleza puede amarse sin que el amor con que se amare se vitupere. La belleza incorpórea se divide también en dos partes, en las virtudes y sciencias del ánima; y el amor que a la virtud se tiene, necesariamente ha de ser bueno, y ni más ni menos el que se tiene a las virtuosas sciencias y agradables estudios. Pues, como sean estas dos suertes de belleza la causa que engendra el amor en nuestros pechos, síguese que en el amar la una a la otra, consista ser el amor bueno o malo. Pero, como la belleza incorpórea se considera con los ojos del entendimiento, limpios y claros, y la belleza corpórea se mire con los ojos corporales, en comparación de los incorpóreos, turbios y ciegos, y, como sean más prestos los ojos del cuerpo a mirar la belleza presente corporal, que agrada, que no los del entendimiento a considerar la ausente incorpórea, que glorifica, síguese que más ordinariamente aman los mortales la caduca y mortal belleza, que los destruye, que no la singular y divina, que los mejora. Pues deste amor o desear la corporal belleza, han nacido, nascen y nascerán en el mundo asolación de ciudades, ruina de estados, destrucción de imperios y muertes de amigos; y, cuando esto generalmente no suceda, ¿qué desdichas mayores, qué tormentos más graves, qué incendios, qué celos, qué penas, qué muertes puede imaginar el humano entendimiento que a las que padece el miserabre amante puedan compararse? Y es la causa desto que, como toda la felicidad del amante consista en gozar la belleza que desea, y esta belleza sea imposible poseerse y gozarse enteramente, aquel no poder llegar al fin que se desea, engendra en él los sos piros, las lágrimas, las quejas y desabrimientos. Pues, que sea verdad que la belleza de quien hablo no se puede gozar perfecta y enteramente, está manifiesto y claro, porque no está en mano del hombre gozar cumplidamente cosa que esté fuera dél y no sea toda suya; porque las estrañas, conosciada cosa es que están siempre debajo del arbitrio de la que llamamos fortuna y caso, y no en poder de nuestro albedrío. Y así, se concluye que, donde hay amor, hay dolor, y quien esto negase negaría asimesmo que el sol es claro y que el fuego abrasa. Mas, porque se venga con más facilidad en conocimiento de la amargura que amor encierra, por las pasiones del ánimo discurriendo se verá clara la verdad que sigo. Son, pues, las pasiones del ánimo, como mejor vosotros sabéis, discretos caballeros y pastores, cuatro generales, y no más: desear demasiado, alegrarse mucho, gran temor de las futuras miserias, gran dolor de las presentes calamidades; las cuales

pasiones, por ser como vientos contrarios que la tranquilidad del ánimo perturban, con más propio vocablo, perturbaciones son llamadas. Y destas perturbaciones la primera es propia del amor, pues el amor no es otra cosa que deseo; y así, es el deseo principio y origen de do todas nuestras pasiones proceden, como cualquier arroyo de su fuente; y de aquí viene que todas las veces que el deseo de alguna cosa se enciende en nuestros corazones luego nos mueve a seguirla y a buscarla; y, buscándola y siguiéndola, a mil desordenados fines nos conduce. Este deseo es aquél que incita al hermano a procurar de la amada hermana los abominables abrazos, la madrastra del alnado, y lo que peor es, el mismo padre de la propia hija. Este deseo es el que nuestros pensamientos a dolorosos peligros acarrea: ni aprovecha que le hagamos obstáculo con la razón, que, puesto que nuestro mal claramente conozcamos, no por eso sabemos retirarnos dél. Y no se contenta amor de tenernos a una sola voluntad atentos; antes, como del deseo de las cosas, como ya está dicho, todas las pasiones nascen, así, del primer deseo que nasce en nosotros, otros mil se derivan; y éstos son en los enamorados no menos diversos que infinitos. Y, aunque todas las más de las veces miren a un solo fin, con todo eso, como son diversos los objetos y diversa la fortuna de cada uno de los amadores, sin duda alguna, diversamente se desea. Hay algunos que, por llegar a alcanzar lo que desean, ponen toda su fuerza en una carrera, en la cual ¡oh cuántas y cuán duras cosas se encuentran, cuántas veces se cae, y cuántas agudas espinas atormentan sus pies, y cuántas veces primero se pierde la fuerza y el aliento, que den alcance a lo que procuran! Algunos otros hay que ya de la cosa amada son poseedores, y ninguna otra desean, ni piensan sino en mantenerse en aquel estado; y, tiniendo en esto sólo ocupados sus pensamientos, y en esto sólo todas sus obras y tiempo consumido, en la felicidad son míseros, en la riqueza pobres y en la ventura desventurados. Otros, que ya están fuera de la posesión de sus bienes, procuran tornar a ellos, usando para ello mil ruegos, mil promesas, mil condiciones, infinitas lágrimas, y al cabo, en estas miserias ocupándose, se ponen a términos de perder la vida. Mas no se ven estos tormentos en la entrada de los primeros deseos, porque entonces el engañoso amor nos muestra una senda por do entremos, al parecer ancha y espaciosa, la cual después poco a poco se va cerrando, de manera que para volver ni pasar adelante ningún camino se ofrece. Y así, engañados y atraídos los míseros amantes con una dulce y falsa risa, con un solo volver de ojos, con dos malformadas palabras que en sus pechos una falsa y flaca esperanza engendran, arrójanse luego a caminar tras ella, aguijados del deseo; y después, a poco trecho y a pocos días, hallando la senda de su remedio cerrada y el camino de su gusto impedido, acuden luego a regar su rostro con lágrimas, a turbar el aire con sospiros, a fatigar los oídos con lamentables quejas; y lo peor

es que, si acaso con las lágrimas, con los suspiros y con las quejas no puede venir al fin de lo que desea, luego muda estilo y procura alcanzar por malos medios lo que por buenos no puede. De aquí nascen los odios, las iras, las muertes, así de amigos como de enemigos; por esta causa se han visto, y se veen a cada paso, que las tiernas y delicadas mujeres se ponen a hacer cosas tan estrañas y temerarias que aun sólo el imaginarlas pone espanto; por ésta se veen los sanctos y conyugales lechos de roja sangre bañados, ora de la triste mal advertida esposa, ora del incauto y descuidado marido. Por venir al fin deste deseo, es traidor el hermano al hermano, el padre al hijo y el amigo al amigo. Éste rompe enemistades, atropella respectos, traspasa leyes, olvida obligaciones y solicita parientas. Mas, porque claramente se vea cuánta es la miseria de los enamorados, ya se sabe que ningún apetito tiene tanta fuerza en nosotros, ni con tanto ímpetu al objecto propuesto nos lleva, como aquél que de las espuelas de amor es solicitado; y de aquí viene que ninguna alegría o contento pasa tanto del debido término, como aquélla del amante cuando viene a conseguir alguna cosa de las que desea. Y esto se ve porque, ¿qué persona habrá de juicio, si no es el amante, que tenga a summa felicidad un tocar la mano de su amada, una sortijuela suya, un breve amoroso volver de ojos y otras cosas semejantes, de tan poco momento cual las considera un entendimiento desapasionado? Y no por estos gustos tan colmados que, a su parecer, los amantes consiguen, se ha de decir que son felices y bienaventurados, porque no hay ningún contento suyo que no venga acompañado de innumerables disgustos y sinsabores, con que amor se los agua y turba, y nunca llegó gloria amorosa adonde llega y alcanza la pena. Y es tan mala el alegría de los amantes, que los saca fuera de sí mismos, tornándolos descuidados y locos, porque, como ponen todo su intento y fuerzas en mantenerse en aquel gustoso estado que ellos se imaginan, de toda otra cosa se descuidan, de que no poco daño se les sigue, así de hacienda como de honra y vida, pues, a trueco de lo que he dicho, se hacen ellos mismos esclavos de mil congojas y enemigos de sí propios; pues que, cuando sucede que en medio de la carrera de sus gustos les toca el hierro frío de la pesada lanza de los celos, allí se les escurece el cielo, se les turba el aire y todos los elementos se les vuelven contrarios. No tienen entonces de quién esperar contento, pues no se le puede dar el conseguir el fin que desean; allí acude el temor contino, la desesperación ordinaria, las agudas sospechas, los pensamientos varios, la solicitud sin provecho, la falsa risa y el verdadero llanto, con otros mil estraños y terribles accidentes que le consumen y atierran. Todas las ocasiones de la cosa amada les fatigan: si mira, si ríe, si torna, si vuelve, si calla, si habla; y, finalmente, todas las gracias que le movieron a querer bien, son las mismas que atormentan al amante celoso. ¿Y quién no sabe que si la ventura a manos llenas no favorece a

los amorosos principios, y con presta diligencia a dulce fin los conduce, cuán costosos le son al amante cualesquier otros medios que el desdichado pone para conseguir su intento? ¿Qué de lágrimas derrama, qué de suspiros esparce, cuántas cartas escribe, cuántas noches no duerme, cuántos y cuán contrarios pensamientos le combaten, cuántos celos le fatigan y cuántos temores le sobresaltan? ¿Hay, por ventura, Tántalo que más fatiga tenga entre las aguas y el manzano puesto, que la que tiene el miserable amante entre el temor y la esperanza colocado? Son los servicios del amante no favorecido los cántaros de las hijas de Dánao, tan sin provecho derramados que jamás llegan a conseguir una mínima parte de su intento. ¿Hay águila que así destruya las entrañas de Ticio, como destruyen y roen los celos las del amante celoso? ¿Hay piedra que tanto cargue las espaldas de Sísifo, como carga el temor continuo los pensamientos de los enamorados? ¿Hay rueda de Ixión que más presto se vuelva y atormente, que las prestas y varias imaginaciones de los temerosos amantes? ¿Hay Minos ni Radamanto que así castiguen y apremien las desdichadas condenadas almas, como castiga y apremia el amor al enamorado pecho que al insufrible mando suyo está sujeto? No hay cruda Megera, ni rabiosa Tesifón, ni vengadora Alecto que así maltraten el ánimo do se encierran, como maltrata esta furia, este deseo, a los sin ventura que le reconocen por señor y se le humillan como vasallos; los cuales, por dar alguna disculpa de las locuras que hacen, dicen, o a lo menos dijeron los antiguos gentiles, que aquel instinto que incita y mueve al enamorado para amar más que a su propia vida la ajena, era un dios a quien pusieron por nombre Cupido, y que así, forzados de su deidad, no podían dejar de seguir y caminar tras lo que él quería. Movióles a decir esto y a dar nombre de dios a este deseo, el ver los efectos sobrenaturales que hace en los enamorados. Sin duda, parece que es sobrenatural cosa estar un amante en un instante mismo temeroso y confiado, arder lejos de su amada y helarse cuando más cerca della, mudo cuando parlero y parlero cuando mudo. Extraña cosa es asimesmo seguir a quien me huye, alabar a quien me vitupera, dar voces a quien no me escucha, servir a una ingrata y esperar en quien jamás promete ni puede dar cosa que buena sea. ¡Oh amarga dulzura, oh venenosa medicina de los amantes no sanos, oh triste alegría, oh flor amorosa que ningún fruto señalas, si no es de tardo arrepentimiento! Éstos son los efectos deste dios imaginado, éstas son sus hazañas y maravillosas obras. Y aun también puede verse en la pintura con que figuraban a este su vano dios cuán vanos ellos andaban: pintábanle niño, desnudo, alado, vendados los ojos, con arco y saetas en las manos, por darnos a entender, entre otras cosas, que, en siendo uno enamorado, se vuelve de la condición de un niño simple y antojadizo, que es ciego en las pretensiones, ligero en los pensamientos, cruel en las obras, desnudo y pobre de las riquezas

del entendimiento. Decían asimesmo que entre las saetas tuyas tenía dos, la una de plomo y la otra de oro, con las cuales diferentes efectos hacía, porque la de plomo engendraba odio en los pechos que tocaba, y la de oro, crecido amor en los que hería, por sólo avisarnos que el oro rico es aquél que hace amar, y el plomo pobre aborrecer. Y, por esta ocasión, no en balde cantan los poetas Atalante vencida de tres hermosas manzanas de oro, y a la bella Dánae preñada de la dorada lluvia, y al piadoso Eneas descender al infierno con el ramo de oro en la mano. En fin, el oro y la dádiva es una de las más fuertes saetas que el amor tiene y con la que más corazones subjeta; bien al revés de la de plomo, metal bajo y menospreciado, como lo es la pobreza, la cual antes engendra odio y aborrecimiento donde llega, que otra benevolencia alguna. Pero si las razones hasta agora por mí dichas no bastan a persuadir la que yo tengo de estar mal con este pérfido amor de quien trato, oí en algunos ejemplos verdaderos y pasados los efectos tuyos, y veréis, como yo veo, que no ve ni tiene ojos de entendimiento el que no alcanza la verdad que sigo. Veamos, pues: ¿quién, sino este amor, es aquel que al justo Loth hizo romper el casto intento y violar a las propias hijas tuyas? Éste es, sin duda, el que hizo que el escogido David fuese adúltero y homicida; y el que forzó al libidinoso Amón a procurar el torpe ayuntamiento de Tamar, su querida hermana; y el que puso la cabeza del fuerte Sansón en las traidoras faldas de Dalida, por do, perdiendo él su fuerza, perdieron los tuyos su amparo, y al cabo, él y otros muchos la vida; éste fue el que movió la lengua de Herodes para prometer a la bailadora niña la cabeza del precursor de la vida; éste hace que se dude de la salvación del más sabio y rico rey de los reyes, y aun de todos los hombres; éste redujo los fuertes brazos del famoso Hércules, acostumbrados a regir la pesada maza, a torcer un pequeñuelo huso y a ejercitarse en mujeriles ejercicios; éste hizo que la furiosa y enamorada Medea esparciese por el aire los tiernos miembros de su pequeño hermano; éste cortó la lengua a Progne, arrastró a Hipólito, infamó a Pasífae, destruyó a Troya, mató a Egisto; éste hizo cesar las comenzadas obras de la nueva Cartago, y que su primera reina pasase su casto pecho con la aguda espada; éste puso en las manos de la nombrada y hermosa Sofonisba el vaso del mortífero veneno que le acabó la vida; éste quitó la tuya al valiente Turno, y el reino a Tarquino, el mando a Marco Antonio, y la vida y la honra a su amiga; éste, en fin, entregó nuestras Españas a la bárbara furia agarena, llamada a la venganza del desordenado amor del miserable Rodrigo. Mas, porque pienso que primero nos cubriría la noche con su sombra, que yo acabase de traeros a la memoria los ejemplos que se ofrecen a la mía de las hazañas que el amor ha hecho y cada día hace en el mundo, no quiero pasar más adelante en ellos, ni aun en la comenzada plática, por dar lugar a que el famoso Tirsi me responda, rogándoos primero,



señores, no os enfade oír una canción que días ha tengo hecha en vituperio deste  
mi enemigo, la cual, si bien me acuerdo, dice desta manera: Sin que me pongan  
miedo el yelo y fuego,

el arco y flechas del amor tirano,  
en su deshonor he de mover mi lengua;  
que ¿quién ha de temer a un niño ciego,  
de vario antojo y de juicio insano, 5  
aunque más amenace daño y mengua?  
Mi gusto cresce y el dolor desmengua  
cuando la voz levanto  
al verdadero canto  
qu'en vituperio del amor se forma, 10  
con tal verdad, con tal manera y forma,  
que a todo el mundo su maldad descubre,  
y claramente informa  
del cierto daño qu'el amor encubre.

Amor es fuego que consume al alma, 15  
yelo que yela, flecha que abre el pecho

que de sus mañas vive descuidado;  
turbado mar do no se ha visto calma,  
ministro de ira, padre del despecho,  
enemigo en amigo disfrazado, 20  
dador de escaso bien y mal colmado,  
afable, lisonjero,  
tirano crudo y fiero,  
y Circe engañadora que nos muda  
en varios monstruos, sin que humana ayuda 25  
pueda al pasado ser nuestro volvernos,  
aunque ligera acuda  
la luz de la razón a socorrernos;

yugo que humilla al más erguido cuello,  
blanco a do se encaminan los deseos 30  
del ocio blando sin razón nascidos,  
red engañosa de sutil cabello  
que cubre y prende en torpes actos feos  
los que del mundo son en más tenidos,

sabroso mal de todos los sentidos, 35  
ponzoña disfrazada  
cual píldora dorada,  
rayo que adonde toca abrasa y hiende,

airado brazo que a traición ofende,  
verdugo del captivo pensamiento 40  
y del que se defiende  
del dulce halago de su falso intento;

daño que aplace en los principios, cuando  
se regala la vista en el sujeto,  
que, cual el cielo, bello le parece; 45  
mas tanto cuanto más pasa mirando,  
tanto más pena en público y secreto  
el corazón, que todo lo padece.  
Mudo hablador, parlero que enmudece,  
cuerdo que desatina, 50  
pura total ruína  
de la más concertada alegre vida,  
sombra de bien en males convertida,  
vuelo que nos levanta hasta la esfera,  
para que en la caída 55  
quede vivo el pesar y el gusto muera;

invisible ladrón que nos destruye  
y roba lo mejor de nuestra hacienda,  
llevándonos el alma a cada paso;

ligereza que alcanza al que más huye, 60  
enigma que ninguno hay que la entienda,  
vida que de continuo está en traspaso,  
guerra elegida y que nasce acaso,  
tregua que poco dura,  
amada desventura, 65  
preñez que por jamás a sazón llega,  
enfermedad que al ánima se pega,  
cobarde que se arroja al mal y atreve,  
deudor que siempre niega

la deuda averiguada que nos debe, 70

cercado laberinto do se anida  
una fiera crüel que se sustenta  
de rendidos humanos corazones,  
lazo donde se enlaza nuestra vida,  
señor que al mayordomo pide cuenta 75  
de las obras, palabras e intenciones;  
codicia de mil varias pretensiones,  
gusano que fabrica  
estancia pobre o rica,  
do poco espacio habita, y al fin muere; 80  
querer que nunca sabe lo que quiere,

nube que los sentidos escurece,  
cuchillo que nos hiere.  
Éste es el amor. ¡Seguidle, si os parece!

Con esta canción acabó su razonamiento el desamorado Lenio, y con ella y con él dejó admirados a algunos de los que presentes estaban, especialmente a los caballeros, pareciéndoles que lo que Lenio había dicho de más caudal que de pastoril ingenio parecía; y con gran deseo y atención estaban esperando la respuesta de Tirsi, prometiéndose todos en su imaginación que, sin duda alguna, a la de Lenio haría ventaja, por la que Tirsi le hacía en la edad y en la experiencia y en los más acostumbrados estudios; y asimesmo les aseguraba esto porque deseaban que la opinión desamorada de Lenio no prevaleciese. Bien es verdad que la lastimada Teolinda, la enamorada Leonarda, la bella Rosaura y aun la dama que con Darinto y su compañero venía claramente vieron figurados en el discurso de Lenio mil puntos de los sucesos de sus amores, y esto fue cuando llegó a tratar de lágrimas y suspiros y de cuán caros se compraban los contentos amorosos. Solas la hermosa Galatea y la discreta Florisa iban fuera desta cuenta, porque hasta entonces no se la había tomado amor de sus hermosos y rebeldes pechos; y así, estaban atentas, no más de a escuchar la agudeza con que los dos famosos pastores disputaban, sin que de los efectos de amor que oían viesan alguno en sus libres voluntades. Pero, siendo la de Tirsi reducir a mejor término la opinión del desamorado pastor, sin esperar ser rogado, tiniendo de su boca colgados los ánimos de los circunstantes, puniéndose frontero de Lenio, con suave y levantado tono, desta manera comenzó a decir:

# TIRSI

-Si la agudeza de tu buen ingenio, desamorado pastor, no me asegurara que con facilidad puede alcanzar la verdad, de quien tan lejos agora se halla, antes que ponerme en trabajo de contradecir tu opinión, te dejara con ella por castigo de tus sinrazones. Mas, porque me advierten las que en vituperio del amor has dicho los buenos principios que tienes para poder reducirte a mejor propósito, no quiero dejar con mi silencio, a los que nos oyen, escandalizados; al amor, desfavorecido, y a ti, pertinaz y vanaglorioso. Y así, ayudado del amor, a quien llamo, pienso en pocas palabras dar a entender cuán otras son sus obras y efectos de los que tú dél has publicado, hablando sólo del amor que tú entiendes, el cual tú definiste diciendo que era un deseo de belleza, declarando asimesmo qué cosa era belleza, y poco después desmenuzaste todos los efectos que el amor, de quien hablamos, hacía en los enamorados pechos, confirmándolo al cabo con varios y desdichados sucesos por el amor causados. Y, aunque la definición que del amor hiciste sea la más general que se suele dar, todavía no lo es tanto que no se pueda contradecir, porque amor y deseo son dos cosas diferentes: que no todo lo que se ama se desea, ni todo lo que se desea se ama. La razón está clara en todas las cosas que se poseen, que entonces no se podrá decir que se desean, sino que se aman, como el que tiene salud no dirá que desea la salud, sino que la ama, y el que tiene hijos no podrá decir que desea hijos, sino que ama los hijos; ni tampoco las cosas que se desean se pueden decir que se aman, como la muerte de los enemigos, que se desea y no se ama. Y así, que, por esta razón, el amor y deseo vienen a ser diferentes afectos de la voluntad. Verdad es que amor es padre del deseo, y entre otras definiciones que del amor se dan, ésta es una: amor es aquella primera mutación que sentimos hacer en nuestra mente, por el apetito que nos conmueve y nos tira a sí, y nos deleita y aplice; y aquel placer engendra movimiento en el ánimo, el cual movimiento se llama deseo; y, en resolución, deseo es movimiento del apetito acerca de lo que se ama, y un querer de aquello que se posee, y el objeto suyo es el bien; y, como se hallan diversas especies de deseos, y el amor es una especie de deseo que atiende y mira al bien que se llama bello. Pero para más clara definición y diversión del amor, se ha de entender que en tres maneras se divide: en amor honesto, en amor útil y en amor deleitable. Y a estas tres suertes de amor se reducen cuantas maneras de amar y desear pueden caber en nuestra voluntad, porque el amor honesto mira a las cosas del cielo, eternas y divinas; el útil, a las de la tierra, alegres y perecederas, como son las riquezas, mandos y señoríos; el deleitable, a las gustosas y placenteras, como son

las bellezas corporales vivas, que tú, Lenio, dijiste. Y cualquiera suerte destos amores que he dicho no debe ser de ninguna lengua vituperada, porque el amor honesto siempre fue, es y ha de ser limpio, sencillo, puro y divino, y que sólo en Dios para y sosiega; el amor provechoso, por ser, como es, natural, no debe condenarse; ni menos el deleitable, por ser más natural que el provechoso. Que sean naturales estas dos suertes de amor en nosotros la experiencia nos lo muestra claro, porque luego que el atrevido primer padre nuestro pasó el divino mandamiento, y de señor quedó hecho siervo, y de libre esclavo, luego conoció la miseria en que había caído y la pobreza en que estaba; y así, tomó en el momento las hojas de los árboles que le cubriesen, y sudó y trabajó, rompiendo la tierra para sustentarse y vivir con la menos incomodidad que pudiese; y, tras esto, obedeciendo mejor a su Dios en ello que en otra cosa, procuró tener hijos y perpetuar y dilatar en ellos la generación humana; y, así como por su inobediencia entró la muerte en él y por él en todos sus descendientes, así heredamos juntamente todos sus afectos y pasiones, como heredamos su misma naturaleza; y, como él procuró remediar su necesidad y pobreza, también nosotros no podemos dejar de procurar y desear remediar la nuestra. Y de aquí nasce el amor que tenemos a las cosas útiles a la vida humana, y tanto cuanto más alcanzamos dellas, tanto más nos parece que remediamos nuestra falta, y por el mismo consiguiente heredamos el deseo de perpetuarnos en nuestros hijos; y deste deseo se sigue el que tenemos de gozar la belleza viva corporal, como solo y verdadero medio que tales deseos a dichoso fin conduce. Así que, este amor deleitable, solo y sin mezcla de otro accidente, es digno antes de alabanza que de vituperio, y este es el amor que tú, Lenio, tienes por enemigo; y cáusalo que no le entiendes ni conoces, porque nunca le has visto solo y en su misma figura, sino siempre acompañado de deseos perniciosos, lascivos y mal colocados. Y esto no es culpa de amor, que siempre es bueno, sino de los accidentes que se le llegan, como vemos que acaece en algún caudaloso río, el cual tiene su nacimiento de alguna líquida y clara fuente que siempre claras y frescas aguas le va ministrando, y, a poco espacio que de la limpia madre se aleja, sus dulces y cristalinas aguas en amargas y turbias son convertidas, por los muchos y no limpios arroyos que de una y otra parte se le juntan. Así que, este primer movimiento -amor o deseo, como llamarlo quisieres- no puede nacer sino de buen principio; y aun dellos es el conocimiento de la belleza, la cual, conocida por tal, casi parece imposible que de amar se deje. Y tiene la belleza tanta fuerza para mover nuestros ánimos, que ella sola fue parte para que los antiguos filósofos, ciegos y sin lumbre de fe que los encaminase, llevados de la razón natural, y traídos de la belleza que en los estrellados cielos y en la máquina y redondez de la tierra contemplaban, admirados de tanto contento y hermosura,

fueron con el entendimiento rastreando, haciendo escala por estas causas segundas, hasta llegar a la primera causa de las causas; y conocieron que había un solo principio sin principio de todas las cosas. Pero lo que más los admiró y levantó la consideración, fue ver la compostura del hombre, tan ordenada, tan perfecta y tan hermosa, que le vinieron a llamar mundo abreviado; y así es verdad, que en todas las obras hechas por el mayordomo de Dios, naturaleza, ninguna es de tanto primor ni que más descubra la grandeza y sabiduría de su Hacedor, porque en la figura y compostura del hombre se cifra y cierra la belleza que en todas las otras partes della se reparte, y de aquí nasce que esta belleza conocida se ama, y como toda ella más se muestre y resplandezca en el rostro, luego como se ve un hermoso rostro, llama y tira la voluntad a amarle. De do se sigue que, como los rostros de las mujeres hagan tanta ventaja en hermosura al de los varones, ellas son las que son de nosotros más queridas, servidas y solicitadas, como a cosa en quien consiste la belleza que naturalmente más a nuestra vista contenta. Pero, viendo el hacedor y criador nuestro que es propria naturaleza del ánima nuestra estar contino en perpetuo movimiento y deseo, por no poder ella parar sino en Dios, como en su proprio centro, quiso, porque no se arrojase a rienda suelta a desear las cosas perecederas y vanas, y esto sin quitarle la libertad del libre albedrío, ponerle encima de sus tres potencias una despierta centinela que la avisase de los peligros que la contrastaban y de los enemigos que la perseguían, la cual fue la razón, que corrige y enfrena nuestros desordenados deseos. Y, viendo asimesmo que la belleza humana había de llevar tras sí nuestros afectos e inclinaciones, ya que no le pareció quitarnos este deseo, a lo menos quiso templarle y corregirle, ordenando el sancto yugo del matrimonio, debajo del cual al varón y a la hembra los más de los gustos y contentos amorosos naturales les son lícitos y debidos. Con estos dos remedios, puestos por la divina mano, se viene a templar la demasía que puede haber en el amor natural, que tú, Lenio, vituperas, el cual amor de sí es tan bueno que si en nosotros faltase, el mundo y nosotros acabaríamos. En este mesmo amor de quien voy hablando están cifradas todas las virtudes, porque el amor es templanza que el amante, conforme la casta voluntad de la cosa amada, la suya tiempla; es fortaleza, porque el enamorado cualquier variedad puede sufrir por amor de quien ama; es justicia, porque con ella a la que bien quiere sirve, forzándole la mesma razón a ello; es prudencia, porque de toda sabiduría está el amor adornado. Mas yo te demando, ¡oh Lenio!, tú que has dicho que el amor es causa de ruina de imperios, destrucción de ciudades, de muertes de amigos, de sacrílegos hechos, inventor de traiciones, transgresor de leyes, digo que te demando que me digas cuál loable cosa hay hoy en el mundo, por buena que sea, que el uso della no pueda en mal ser convertida. Condémnese la filosofía, porque

muchas veces nuestros defectos descubre, y muchos filósofos han sido malos; abrásense las obras de los heroicos poetas, porque con sus sátiras y versos los vicios reprehenden y vituperan; vitupérese la medicina, porque los venenos descubre; llámese inútil la elocuencia, porque algunas veces ha sido tan arrogante que ha puesto en duda la verdad conocida; no se forjen armas, porque los ladrones y los homicidas las usan; no se fabriquen casas, porque puedan caer sobre sus habitantes; prohíbanse la variedad de los manjares, porque suelen ser causa de enfermedad; ninguno procure tener hijos, porque Edipo, instigado de cruelísima furia, mató a su padre, y Oreste hirió el pecho de la madre propia; téngase por malo el fuego, porque suele abrasar las casas y consumir las ciudades; desdéñese el agua, porque con ella se anegó toda la tierra; condémnense, en fin, los elementos, porque pueden ser de algunos perversos perversamente usados; y desta manera cualquier cosa buena puede ser en mala convertida, y proceder della efectos malos, si en las manos de aquéllos son puestas que, como irracionales sin mediocridad, del apetito gobernar se dejan. Aquella antigua Cartago, émula del imperio romano; la belicosa Numancia, la adornada Corinto, la soberbia Tebas, la docta Atenas y la ciudad de Dios, Hierusalém, que fueron vencidas y asoladas: digamos por eso que el amor fue causa de su destrucción y ruina. Así que, debrían los que tienen por costumbre de decir mal del amor, decirlo dellos mismos, porque los dones de amor, si con templanza se usan, son dignos de perpetua alabanza, pues siempre los medios fueron alabados en todas las cosas, como vituperados los extremos; que si abrazamos la virtud más de aquello que basta, el sabio granjeará nombre de loco y el justo de inicuo. Del antiguo Cremona trágico fue opinión que, como el vino mezclado con el agua es bueno, así el amor templado es provechoso, lo que es al revés en el immoderado. La generación de los animales racionales y brutos sería ninguna si el amor no procediese, y, faltando en la tierra, quedaría desierta y vacua. Los antiguos creyeron que el amor era obra de los dioses, dada para conservación y cura de los hombres. Pero, viniendo a lo que tú, Lenio, dijiste de los tristes y estraños efectos que el amor en los enamorados pechos hace, tiniéndolos siempre en continas lágrimas, profundos sospiros, desesperadas imaginaciones, sin concederles jamás una hora de reposo, veamos, por ventura, ¿qué cosa puede desearse en esta vida que el alcanzarla no cueste fatiga y trabajo? Y tanto cuanto más es de valor la cosa, tanto más se ha de padecer y se padece por ella, porque el deseo presupone falta de lo deseado, y hasta conseguirlo es forzosa la inquietud del ánimo nuestro, pues si todos los deseos humanos se pueden pagar y contentarse sin alcanzar de todo punto lo que desean, con que se les dé parte dello, y con todo eso se padece por conseguirla, ¿qué mucho es que, por alcanzar aquello que no puede satisfacer ni contentar al

deseo sino con ello mismo, se padezca, se llore, se tema y se espere? El que desea señoríos, mandos, honras y riquezas, ya que ve que no puede subir al último grado que quisiera, como llegue a ponerse en algún buen punto, queda en parte satisfecho, porque la esperanza que le falta de no poder subir a más, le hace parar donde puede y como mejor puede, todo lo cual es contrario en el amor, porque el amor no tiene otra paga ni otra satisfacción sino el mismo amor, y él propio es su propia y verdadera paga. Y por esta razón es imposible que el amante esté contento hasta que a la clara conozca que verdaderamente es amado, certificándole desto las amorosas señales que ellos saben. Y así, estiman en tanto un regalado volver de ojos, una prenda cualquiera que sea de su amada, un no sé qué de risa, de habla, de burlas, que ellos de veras toman, como indicios que le van asegurando la paga que desean, y así, todas las veces que ven señales en contrario destas, esle fuerza al amante lamentarse y afligirse, sin tener medio en sus dolores, pues no le puede tener en sus contentos, cuando la favorable fortuna y el blando amor se los concede. Y, como sea hazaña de tanta dificultad reducir una voluntad ajena a que sea una propia con la mía, y juntar dos diferentes almas en tan disoluble ñudo y estrechez que de las dos sean uno los pensamientos y una todas las obras, no es mucho que, por conseguir tan alta empresa, se padezca más que por otra cosa alguna, pues, después de conseguida, satisface y alegra sobre todas las que en esta vida se desean. Y no todas veces son las lágrimas con razón y causa derramadas, ni esparcidos los sospiros de los enamorados, porque si todas sus lágrimas y sospiros se causaron de ver que no se responde a su voluntad como se debe y con la paga que se requiere, habría de considerar primero adónde levantaron la fantasía, y si la subieron más arriba de lo que su merecimiento alcanza, no es maravilla que, cual nuevos Ícaros, caigan abrasados en el río de las miserias, de las cuales no tendrá la culpa amor, sino su locura. Con todo eso, yo no niego, sino afirmo, que el deseo de alcanzar lo que se ama por fuerza ha de causar pesadumbre, por la razón de la carestía que presupone, como ya otras veces he dicho; pero también digo que el conseguirla sea de grandísimo gusto y contento, como lo es al cansado el reposo y la salud al enfermo. Junto con esto, confieso que si los amantes señalasen, como en el uso antiguo, con piedras blancas y negras sus tristes o dichosos días, sin duda alguna que serían más las infelices; mas, también conozco que la calidad de sola una blanca piedra haría ventaja a la cantidad de otras infinitas negras. Y, por prueba desta verdad, vemos que los enamorados jamás de serlo se arrepienten; antes, si alguno les prometiese librarles de la enfermedad amorosa, como a enemigo le desecharían, porque aun el sufrirla les es suave. Y por esto, ¡oh amadores!, no os impida ningún temor para dejar de ofreceros y dedicaros a amar lo que más os pareciere dificultoso, ni os quejéis ni arrepintáis si a la grandeza vuestra las



cosas bajas habéis levantado, que amor iguala lo pequeño a lo sublime, y lo menos a lo más; y con justo acuerdo tiempla las diversas condiciones de los amantes, cuando con puro afecto la gracia suya en sus corazones rescibe. No cedáis a los peligros, porque la gloria será tanta que quite el sentimiento de todo dolor. Y, como a los antiguos capitanes y emperadores, en premio de sus trabajos y fatigas, les eran, según la grandeza de sus victorias, aparejados triunfos, así a los amantes les están guardados muchedumbre de placeres y contentos, y, como a aquéllos el glorioso rescibimiento les hacía olvidar todos los incomodos y disgustos pasados, así al amante de la amada amado. Los espantosos sueños, el dormir no seguro, las veladas noches, los inquietos días, en summa tranquilidad y alegría se convierten. De manera, Lenio, que si por sus efectos tristes les condenas, por los gustosos y alegres les debes de absolver; y a la interpretación que diste de la figura de Cupido, estoy por decir que vas tan engañado en ella, como casi en las demás cosas que contra el amor has dicho. Porque, píntanle niño, ciego, desnudo, con las alas y saetas; no quiere significar otra cosa, sino que el amante ha de ser niño en no tener condición doblada, sino pura y sencilla; ha de ser ciego a todo cualquier otro objeto que se le ofreciere, sino es a aquel a quien ya supo mirar y entregarse; ha de ser desnudo, porque no ha de tener cosa que no sea de la que ama; ha de tener alas de ligereza, para estar prompto a todo lo que por su parte se le quisiere mandar; píntanle con saetas, porque la llaga del enamorado pecho ha de ser profunda y secreta, y que apenas se descubra sino a la misma causa que ha de remedialla. Que el amor hiera con dos saetas, las cuales obran en diferentes maneras, es darnos a entender que en el perfecto amor, no ha de haber medio de querer y no querer en un mismo punto, sino que el amante ha de amar enteramente, sin mezcla de alguna tibieza. En fin, ¡oh Lenio!, este amor es el que si consumió a los troyanos, engrandeció a los griegos; si hizo cesar las obras de Cartago, hizo crescer los edificios de Roma; si quitó el reino a Tarquino, redujo a libertad la república. Y, aunque pudiera traer aquí muchos ejemplos en contrario de los que tú trujiste de los efectos buenos que el amor hace, no me quiero ocupar en ellos, pues de sí son tan notorios; sólo quiero rogarte te dispongas a creer lo que he mostrado, y que tengas paciencia para oír una canción mía, que parece que en competencia de la tuya se hizo; y si por ella y por lo que te he dicho no quisieres reducirte a ser de la parte de amor, y te pareciere que no quedas satisfecho de las verdades que dél he declarado, si el tiempo de agora lo concede, o en otro cualquiera que tú escogieres y señalares, te prometo de satisfacer a todas las réplicas y argumentos que en contrario de los míos decir quisieres. Y, por agora, estéme atento y escucha: CANCIÓN DE TIRSI

Salga del limpio enamorado pecho  
la voz sonora, y en süave acento  
cante de amor las altas maravillas,  
de modo que contento y satisfecho  
quede el más libre y suelto pensamiento, 5

sin que las sienta con no más de oíllas.  
Tú, dulce amor, que puedes referillas  
por mi lengua, si quieres,  
tal gracia le concede,  
que con la palma quede 10  
de gusto y gloria por decir quién eres,  
que si me ayudas, como yo confío,  
veráse en presto vuelo  
subir al cielo tu valor y el mío.

Es el amor principio del bien nuestro, 15  
medio por do se alcanza y se granjea  
el más dichoso fin que se pretende;  
de todas sciencias sin igual maestro;  
fuego que, aunque de yelo un pecho sea,  
en claras llamas de virtud le enciende; 20  
poder que al flaco ayuda, al fuerte ofende;  
raíz de adonde nasce  
la venturosa planta  
que al cielo nos levanta,  
con tal fruto que al alma satisface 25  
de bondad, de valor, de honesto celo,  
de gusto sin segundo,

que alegra al mundo y enamora al cielo;

cortesano, galán, sabio, discreto,  
callado, liberal, manso, esforzado; 30  
de aguda vista, aunque de ciegos ojos;  
guardador verdadero del respecto,  
capitán que en la guerra do ha triunfado  
sola la honra quiere por despojos;  
flor que cresce entre espinas y entre abrojos, 35

que a vida y alma adorna;  
del temor enemigo,  
de la esperanza amigo;  
huésped que más alegra cuando torna;  
instrumento de honrosos ricos bienes, 40  
por quien se mira y medra  
la honrosa yedra en las honradas sienes;

instinto natural que nos conmueve  
a levantar los pensamientos, tanto  
que apenas llega allí la vista humana; 45  
escala por do sube, el que se atreve,  
a la dulce región del cielo sancto;  
sierra en su cumbre deleitosa y llana,

facilidad que lo intricado allana,  
norte por quien se guía 50  
en este mar insano  
el pensamiento sano,  
alivio de la triste fantasía,  
padrino que no quiere nuestra afrenta;  
farol que no se encubre, 55  
mas nos descubre el puerto en la tormenta;

pintor que en nuestras ánimas retrata,  
con apacibles sombras y colores,  
ora mortal, ora inmortal belleza;  
sol que todo ñublado desbarata, 60  
gusto a quien son sabrosos los dolores;  
espejo en quien se ve naturaleza  
liberal, que en su punto la franqueza  
pone con justo medio;  
espíritu de fuego 65  
que alumbra al que es más ciego;  
del odio y del temor solo remedio;  
Argos que nunca puede estar dormido,  
por más que a sus orejas  
lleguen consejas de algún dios fingido; 70

ejército de armada infantería  
que atropella cien mil dificultades,  
y siempre queda con victoria y palma;  
morada adonde asiste el alegría;  
rostro que nunca encubre las verdades, 75  
mostrando claro lo que está en el alma;  
mar donde la tormenta es dulce calma  
con sólo que se espere  
tenerla en tiempo alguno;  
refrigerio oportuno 80  
que cura al desdeñado cuando muere;  
en fin, amor es vida, es gloria, es gusto,  
almo feliz sosiego.  
¡Seguilde luego, qu'el seguirle es justo!

El fin del razonamiento y canción de Tirsi fue principio para confirmar de nuevo en todos la opinión que de discreto tenía, si no fue en el desamorado Lenio, a quien no pareció tan bien su respuesta que le satisficiese al entendimiento y le mudase de su primer propósito. Viose esto claro, porque ya iba dando muestras de querer responder y replicar a Tirsi, si las alabanzas que a los dos daban Darinto y su compañero, y todos los pastores y pastoras presentes, no lo estorbaran, porque, tomando la mano el amigo de Darinto, dijo: -En este punto acabo de conocer cómo la potencia y sabiduría de amor por todas las partes de la tierra se estiende, y que donde más se afina y apura es en los pastorales pechos, como nos lo ha mostrado lo que hemos oído al desamorado Lenio y al discreto Tirsi, cuyas razones y argumentos más parecen de ingenios entre libros y las aulas criados, que no de aquéllos que entre pajizas cabañas son crecidos. Pero no me maravillaría yo tanto desto si fuese de aquella opinión del que dijo que el saber de nuestras almas era acordarse de lo que ya sabían, prosuponiendo que todas se crían enseñadas; mas, cuando veo que debo seguir el otro mejor parecer del que afirmó que nuestra alma era como una tabla rasa, la cual no tenía ninguna cosa pintada, no puedo dejar de admirarme de ver cómo haya sido imposible que en la compañía de las ovejas, en la soledad de los campos, se puedan aprender las sciencias que apenas saben disputarse en las nombradas universidades, si ya no quiero persuadirme a lo que primero dije, que el amor por todo se estiende y a todos se comunica, al caído levanta, al simple avisa y al avisado perfecciona.

-Si conocieras, señor -respondió a esta sazón Elicio-, cómo la crianza del nombrado Tirsi no ha sido entre los árboles y florestas, como tú imaginas, sino

en las reales cortes y conocidas escuelas, no te maravillaras de lo que ha dicho, sino de lo que ha dejado de decir. Y, aunque el desamorado Lenio, por su humildad, ha confesado que la rusticidad de su vida pocas prendas de ingenio puede prometer, con todo eso, te aseguro que los más floridos años de su edad gastó, no en el ejercicio de guardar las cabras en los montes, sino en las riberas del claro Tormes, en loables estudios y discretas conversaciones. Así que, si la plática que los dos han tenido de más que de pastores te parece, contémploslos como fueron y no como ahora son. Cuanto más, que hallarás pastores en estas nuestras riberas que no te causarán menos admiración, si los oyes, que los que ahora has oído, porque en ellas apascientan sus ganados los famosos y conocidos Eranio, Siralbo, Filardo, Silvano, Lisardo y los dos Matuntos, padre y hijo, uno en la lira y otro en la poesía sobre todo extremo estremados. Y, para remate de todo, vuelve los ojos y conoce al conocido Damón, que presente tienes, donde puede parar tu deseo, si desea conocer el extremo de discreción y sabiduría.

Responder quería el caballero a Elicio, cuando una de aquellas damas que con él venían dijo a la otra: -Paréceme, señora Nísida, que, pues el sol va ya declinando, que sería bien que nos fuésemos, si habemos de llegar mañana adonde dicen que está nuestro padre.

No hubo bien dicho esto la dama, cuando Darinto y su compañero la miraron, mostrando que les había pesado de que hubiese llamado por su nombre a la otra. Pero, así como Elicio oyó el nombre de Nísida, le dio el alma si era aquella Nísida de quien el ermitaño Silerio tantas cosas había contado, y el mismo pensamiento les vino a Tirsi, Damón y a Erastro; y, por certificarse Elicio de lo que sospechaba, dijo: -Pocos días ha, señor Darinto, que yo y algunos de los que aquí estamos oímos nombrar el nombre de Nísida, como aquella dama agora ha hecho; pero de más lágrimas acompañado y con más sobresaltos referido.

-Por ventura -respondió Darinto-, ¿hay alguna pastora en estas vuestras riberas que se llame Nísida?

-No -respondió Elicio-; pero esta que yo digo en ellas nació y en las apartadas del famoso Sebeto fue criada.

-¿Qué es lo que dices, pastor? -replicó el otro caballero.

-Lo que oyes -respondió Elicio-, y lo que más oirás si me aseguras una sospecha que tengo.

-Dímela -dijo el caballero-, que podría ser se te satisficiese.

A esto replicó Elicio:

-¿A dicha, señor, tu propio nombre es Timbrio?

-No te puedo negar esa verdad -respondió el otro-, porque Timbrio me llamo, el cual nombre quisiera encubrir hasta otra sazón más oportuna; mas la voluntad

que tengo de saber por qué sospechaste que así me llamaba me fuerza a que no te encubra nada de lo que de mí saber quisieres.

-Según eso, tampoco me negarás -dijo Elicio-que esta dama que contigo traes se llame Nísida, y aun, por lo que yo puedo conjeturar, la otra se llama Blanca, y es su hermana.

-En todo has acertado -respondió Timbrio-; pero, pues yo no te he negado nada de lo que me has preguntado, no me niegues tú la causa que te ha movido a preguntármelo.

-Ella es tan buena y será tan de tu gusto -replicó Elicio-cual lo verás antes de muchas horas.

Todos los que no sabían lo que el ermitaño Silerio a Elicio, Tirsi, Damón y Erastro había contado, estaban confusos oyendo lo que entre Timbrio y Elicio pasaba; mas a este punto dijo Damón, volviéndose a Elicio: -No entretengas, ¡oh Elicio!, las buenas nuevas que puedes dar a Timbrio.

-Y aun yo -dijo Erastro-no me detendré un punto de ir a dárselas al lastimado Silerio del hallazgo de Timbrio.

-¡Sanctos cielos! ¿Y qué es lo que oigo -dijo Timbrio-, y qué es lo que dices, pastor? ¿Es por ventura ese Silerio que has nombrado el que es mi verdadero amigo, el que es la mitad de mi alma, el que yo deseo ver más que otra cosa que me pueda pedir el deseo? ¡Sácame desta duda luego, así crezcan y multipliquen tus rebaños de manera que te tengan envidia todos los vecinos ganaderos!

-No te fatigues tanto, Timbrio -dijo Damón-, que el Silerio que Erastro dice es el mismo que tú dices, y el que desea saber más de tu vida que sostener y aumentar la suya propia; porque, después que te partiste de Nápoles, según él nos ha contado, ha sentido tanto tu ausencia que la pena della, con la que le causaban otras pérdidas que él nos contó, le ha reducido a términos que en una pequeña ermita que poco menos de una legua está de aquí distante, pasa la más estrecha vida que imaginarse puede, con determinación de esperar allí la muerte, pues de saber el suceso de tu vida no podía ser satisfecho. Esto sabemos cierto Tirsi, Elicio, Erastro y yo, porque él mismo nos ha contado la amistad que contigo tenía, con toda la historia de los casos a entrambos sucedidos hasta que la fortuna por tan estraños accidentes os apartó, para apartarle a él a vivir en tan estraña soledad que te causará admiración cuando le veas.

-Véale yo, y llegue luego el último remate de mis días -dijo Timbrio-; y así, os ruego, famosos pastores, por aquella cortesía que en vuestros pechos mora, que satisfagáis éste mío con decirme adónde está esa ermita adonde Silerio vive.

-Adonde muere, podrás mejor decir -dijo Erastro-; pero de aquí adelante vivirá con las nuevas de tu venida; y, pues tanto su gusto y el tuyo deseas, levántate y vamos, que antes que el sol se ponga, te pondré con Silerio; mas ha de ser con

condición que en el camino nos cuentes todo lo que te ha sucedido después que de Nápoles te partiste, que de todo lo demás, hasta aquel punto, satisfechos están algunos de los presentes.

-Poca paga me pides -respondió Timbrio-para tan gran cosa como me ofreces, porque, no digo yo contarte eso, pero todo aquello que de mí saber quisieres.

Y más, volviéndose a las damas que con él venían, les dijo:

-Pues con tan buena ocasión, querida y señora Nísida, se ha rompido el prosupuesto que traíamos de no decir nuestros propios nombres, con el alegría que requiere la buena nueva que nos han dado, os ruego que no nos detengamos, sino que luego vamos a ver a Silerio, a quien vos y yo debemos las vidas y el contento que poseemos.

-Escusado es, señor Timbrio -respondió Nísida-, que vos me roguéis que haga cosa que tanto deseo y que tan bien me está el hacerla. Vamos en hora buena, que ya cada momento que tardare de verle se me hará un siglo.

Lo mismo dijo la otra dama, que era su hermana Blanca, la misma que Silerio había dicho, y la que más muestras dio de contento. Sólo Darinto, con las nuevas de Silerio, se puso tal, que los labios no movía; antes, con un extraño silencio, se levantó, y mandando a un su criado que le trujese el caballo en que allí había venido, sin despedirse de ninguno, subió en él, y, volviendo las riendas, a paso tirado se desvió de todos. Cuando esto vio Timbrio, subió en otro caballo, y con mucha priesa siguió a Darinto hasta que le alcanzó; y, trabando por las riendas del caballo, le hizo estar quedo, y allí estuvo con él hablando un buen rato, al cabo del cual Timbrio se volvió adonde los pastores estaban, y Darinto siguió su camino, enviando a disculparse con Timbrio del haberse partido sin despedirse dellos. En este tiempo Galatea, Rosaura, Teolinda, Leonarda y Florisa a las hermosas Nísida y Blanca se llegaron; y la discreta Nísida, en breves razones, les contó la amistad tan grande que entre Timbrio y Silerio había, con mucha parte de los sucesos por ellos pasados; pero, con la vuelta de Timbrio, todos quisieron ponerse en camino para la ermita de Silerio; sino que a la misma sazón llegó a la fuente una hermosa pastorcilla de hasta edad de quince años, con su zurrón al hombro y cayado en la mano; la cual, como vio tanta y tan agradable compañía, con lágrimas en los ojos, les dijo: -Si por ventura hay entre vosotros, señores, quien de los extraños efectos y casos de amor tenga alguna noticia, y las lágrimas y suspiros amorosos le suelen enternecer el pecho, acuda quien esto siente a ver si es posible remediar y detener las más amorosas lágrimas y profundos suspiros que jamás de ojos y pechos enamorados salieron. Acudid, pues, pastores, a lo que os digo: veréis cómo, con la experiencia de lo que os muestro, hago verdaderas mis palabras.

Y, en diciendo esto, volvió las espaldas, y todos cuantos allí estaban la

siguieron. Viendo, pues, la pastora que la seguían, con presuroso paso se entró por entre unos árboles que a un lado de la fuente estaban; y no hubo andado mucho cuando, volviéndose a los que tras ella iban, les dijo: -Veis allí, señores, la causa de mis lágrimas; porque aquel pastor que allí parece es un hermano mío, que por aquella pastora ante quien está hincado de hinojos, sin duda alguna, él dejará la vida en manos de su crueldad.

Volvieron todos los ojos a la parte que la pastora señalaba, y vieron que al pie de un verde sauce estaba arrimada una pastora, vestida como cazadora ninfa, con una rica aljaba que del lado le pendía y un encorvado arco en las manos, con sus hermosos y rubios cabellos cogidos con una verde guirnalda. El pastor estaba ante ella de rodillas, con un cordel echado a la garganta y un cuchillo desenvainado en la derecha mano, y con la izquierda tenía asida a la pastora de un blanco cendal que encima de los vestidos traía. Mostraba la pastora ceño en su rostro, y estar disgustada de que el pastor allí por fuerza la detuviese. Mas, cuando ella vio que la estaban mirando, con grande ahínco procuraba desasirse de la mano del lastimado pastor, que con abundancia de lágrimas, tiernas y amorosas palabras, la estaba rogando que siquiera le diese lugar para poderle significar la pena que por ella padecía. Pero la pastora, desdeñosa y airada, se apartó dél, a tiempo que ya todos los pastores llegaban cerca, tanto, que oyeron al enamorado mozo que en tal manera a la pastora hablaba: -¡Oh ingrata y desconocida Gelasia, y con cuán justo título has alcanzado el renombre de cruel que tienes! Vuelve, endurecida, los ojos a mirar al que por mirarte está en el extremo de dolor que imaginarse puede. ¿Por qué huyes de quien te sigue? ¿Por qué no admites a quién te sirve? ¿Y por qué aborreces al que te adora? ¡Oh, sin razón enemiga mía, dura cual levantado risco, airada cual ofendida sierpe, sorda cual muda selva, esquiva como rústica, rústica como fiera, fiera como tigre, tigre que en mis entrañas se ceba! ¿Será posible que mis lágrimas no te ablanden, que mis suspiros no te apiaden y que mis servicios no te muevan? Sí que será posible, pues así lo quiere mi corta y desdichada suerte, y aun será también posible que tú no quieras apretar este lazo que a la garganta tengo, ni atravesar este cuchillo por medio deste corazón que te adora. Vuelve, pastora, vuelve, y acaba la tragedia de mi miserable vida, pues con tanta facilidad puedes añadir este cordel a mi garganta o ensangrentar este cuchillo en mi pecho.

Estas y otras semejantes razones decía el lastimado pastor, acompañadas de tantos sollozos y lágrimas que movía a compasión a todos cuantos le escuchaban. Pero no por esto la cruel y desamorada pastora dejaba de seguir su camino, sin querer aun volver los ojos a mirar al pastor que por ella en tal estado quedaba, de que no poco se admiraron todos los que su airado desdén conocieron; y fue de manera que hasta al desamorado Lenio le pareció mal la



crueledad de la pastora. Y así, él, con el anciano Arsindo, se adelantaron a rogarla tuviese por bien de volver a escuchar las quejas del enamorado mozo, aunque nunca tuviese intención de remediarlas. Mas no fue posible mudarla de su propósito; antes, les rogó que no la tuviesen por descomedida en no hacer lo que le mandaban, porque su intención era de ser enemiga mortal del amor y de todos los enamorados, por muchas razones que a ello la movían, y una dellas era haberse desde su niñez dedicado a seguir el ejercicio de la casta Diana; añadiendo a éstas tantas causas para no hacer el ruego de los pastores, que Arsindo tuvo por bien de dejarla y volverse, lo que no hizo el desamorado Lenio, el cual, como vio que la pastora era tan enemiga del amor como parecía, y que tan de todo en todo con la condición desamorada suya se conformaba, determinó de saber quién era y de seguir su compañía por algunos días. Y así, le declaró cómo él era el mayor enemigo que el amor y los enamorados tenían, rogándole que, pues tanto en las opiniones se conformaban, tuviese por bien de no enfadarse con su compañía, que no sería más de lo que ella quisiese.

La pastora se holgó de saber la intención de Lenio, y le concedió que con ella viniese hasta su aldea, que dos leguas de la de Lenio era. Con esto, se despidió Lenio de Arsindo, rogándole que le disculpase con todos sus amigos y les dijese la causa que le había movido a irse con aquella pastora, y sin esperar más, él y Gelasia alargaron el paso, y en poco rato desaparecieron. Cuando Arsindo volvió a decir lo que con la pastora había pasado, halló que todos aquellos pastores habían llegado a consolar al enamorado pastor, y que las dos de las tres rebozadas pastoras, la una estaba desmayada en las faldas de la hermosa Galatea y la otra abrazada con la bella Rosaura, que asimesmo el rostro cubierto tenía. La que con Galatea estaba era Teolinda, y la otra, su hermana Leonarda; las cuales, así como vieron al desesperado pastor que con Gelasia hallaron, un celoso y enamorado desmayo les cubrió el corazón, porque Leonarda creyó que el pastor era su querido Galercio, y Teolinda tuvo por verdad que era su enamorado Artidoro; y, como las dos le vieron tan rendido y perdido por la cruel Gelasia, llególes tan al alma el sentimiento que, sin sentido alguno, la una en las faldas de Galatea, la otra en los brazos de Rosaura, desmayadas cayeron. Pero de allí a poco rato, volviendo en sí Leonarda, a Rosaura dijo: -¡Ay, señora mía, y cómo creo que todos los pasos de mi remedio me tiene tomados la Fortuna, pues la voluntad de Galercio está tan ajena de ser mía, como se puede ver por las palabras que aquel pastor ha dicho a la desamorada Gelasia! Porque te hago saber, señora, que aquél es el que ha robado mi libertad y aun el que ha de dar fin a mis días.

Maravillada quedó Rosaura de lo que Leonarda decía, y más lo fue cuando, habiendo también vuelto en sí Teolinda, ella y Galatea la llamaron; y, juntándose

todas con Florisa y Leonarda, Teolinda dijo cómo aquel pastor era el su deseado Artidoro. Pero aún no le hubo bien nombrado, cuando su hermana le respondió que se engañaba, que no era sino Galercio, su hermano.

-¡Ay, traidora Leonarda! -respondió Teolinda-. ¿Y no te basta haberme una vez apartado de mi bien, sino ahora que le hallo quieres decir que es tuyo? Pues desengáñate que en esto no te pienso ser hermana, sino declarada enemiga.

-Sin duda que te engañas, hermana -respondió Leonarda-, y no me maravillo, que en ese mismo error cayeron todos los de nuestra aldea, creyendo que este pastor era Artidoro, hasta que claramente vinieron a entender que no era sino su hermano Galercio, que tanto se parece el uno al otro como nosotras la una a la otra, y aun, si puede haber mayor semejanza, mayor semejanza tienen.

-No lo quiero creer -respondió Teolinda-, porque, aunque nosotras nos parecemos tanto, no tan fácilmente se hallan estos milagros en naturaleza; y así, te hago saber que en tanto que la experiencia no me haga más cierta de la verdad que tus palabras me hacen, yo no pienso dejar de creer que aquel pastor que allí veo es Artidoro; y si alguna cosa me lo pudiera poner en duda, es no pensar que de la condición y firmeza que yo de Artidoro tengo conocida, se puede esperar o temer que tan presto haya hecho mudanza y me olvide.

-Sosegaos, pastoras -dijo entonces Rosaura-, que yo os sacaré presto de la duda en que estáis.

Y, dejándolas a ellas, se fue adonde el pastor estaba dando a aquellos pastores cuenta de la estraña condición de Gelasia y de las infinitas sinrazones que con él usaba. A su lado tenía el pastor la hermosa pastorcilla que decía que era su hermano, a la cual llamó Rosaura, y, apartándose con ella a un cabo, la importunó y rogó le dijese cómo se llamaba su hermano y si tenía otro alguno que le pareciese, a lo cual la pastora respondió que se llamaba Galercio y que tenía otro, llamado Artidoro, que le parecía tanto que apenas se diferenciaban, si no era por alguna señal de los vestidos o por el órgano de la voz, que en algo difería. Preguntóle también qué se había hecho Artidoro. Respondióle la pastora que andaba en unos montes algo de allí apartados, repastando parte del ganado de Grisaldo con otro rebaño de cabras suyas, y que nunca había querido entrar en el aldea ni tener conversación con hombre alguno después que de las riberas de Henares había venido. Y con éstas le dijo otras particularidades, tales que Rosaura quedó satisfecha de que aquel pastor no era Artidoro, sino Galercio, como Leonarda había dicho y aquella pastora decía, de la cual supo el nombre, que se llamaba Maurisa; y, trayéndola consigo adonde Galatea y las otras pastoras estaban, otra vez, en presencia de Teolinda y Leonarda, contó todo lo que de Artidoro y Galercio sabía, con lo que quedó Teolinda sosegada y Leonarda descontenta, viendo cuán descuidadas estaban las mientes de Galercio

de pensar en cosas suyas. En las pláticas que las pastoras tenían, acertó que Leonarda llamó por su nombre a la encubierta Rosaura, y oyéndolo Maurisa, dijo: -Si yo no me engaño, señora, por vuestra causa ha sido aquí mi venida y la de mi hermano.

-¿En qué manera? -dijo Rosaura.

-Yo os lo diré si me dais licencia de que a solas os lo diga -respondió la pastora.

-De buena gana -replicó Rosaura.

Y, apartándose con ella, la pastora le dijo:

-Sin duda alguna, hermosa señora, que a vos y a la pastora Galatea mi hermano y yo con un recaudo de nuestro amo Grisaldo venimos.

-Así debe ser -respondió Rosaura.

Y, llamando a Galatea, entrambas escucharon lo que Maurisa de Grisaldo decía, que fue avisarles cómo de allí a dos días vendría con dos amigos suyos a llevarla en casa de su tía, adonde en secreto celebrarían sus bodas, y juntamente con esto dio de parte de Grisaldo a Galatea unas ricas joyas de oro, como en agradecimiento de la voluntad que de hospedar a Rosaura había mostrado. Rosaura y Galatea agradecieron a Maurisa el buen aviso, y en pago dél, la discreta Galatea quería partir con ella el presente que Grisaldo le había enviado, pero nunca Maurisa quiso recibirlo. Allí de nuevo se tornó a informar Galatea de la semejanza extraña que entre Galercio y Artidoro había. Todo el tiempo que Galatea y Rosaura gastaban en hablar a Maurisa, le entretenían Teolinda y Leonarda en mirar a Galercio; porque, cebados los ojos de Teolinda en el rostro de Galercio, que tanto al de Artidoro semejaba, no podía apartarlos de mirar, y, como los de la enamorada Leonarda sabían lo que miraban, también le era imposible a otra parte volverlos.

A esta sazón ya los pastores habían consolado a Galercio, aunque, para el mal que él padecía, cualesquier consejos y consuelos tenía por vanos y escusados, todo lo cual redundaba en daño de Leonarda. Rosaura y Galatea, viendo que los pastores hacia ellas se venían, despidieron a Maurisa, diciéndole que dijese a Grisaldo cómo Rosaura estaría en casa de Galatea. Maurisa se despidió de ellas, y, llamando a su hermano en secreto, le contó lo que con Rosaura y Galatea pasado había; y así, con buen comedimiento, se despidió de ellas y de los pastores, y con su hermana dio la vuelta a su aldea. Pero las enamoradas hermanas Teolinda y Leonarda, que vieron que en irse Galercio se les iba la luz de sus ojos y la vida de su vida, entrambas a dos se llegaron a Galatea y a Rosaura y les rogaron les diesen licencia para seguir a Galercio, dando por excusa Teolinda que Galercio le diría adónde Artidoro estaba, y Leonarda que podría ser que la voluntad de Galercio se trocase, viendo la obligación en que la estaba. Las pastoras se la

concedieron, con la condición que antes Galatea a Teolinda había pedido, que era que de todo su bien o su mal la avisase. Tornóselo a prometer Teolinda de nuevo, y de nuevo despidiéndose, siguió el camino que Galercio y Maurisa llevaban. Lo mismo hicieron luego, aunque por diferente parte, Timbrio, Tirsi, Damón, Orompo, Crisio, Marsilo y Orfinio, que a la ermita de Silerio con las hermosas hermanas Nísida y Blanca se encaminaron, habiendo primero ellos y ellas despediéndose del venerable Aurelio, y de Galatea, Rosaura y Florisa, y ansimismo de Elicio y Erastro, que no quisieron dejar de volver con Galatea, ofreciéndose Aurelio que, en llegando a su aldea, iría luego con Elicio y Erastro a buscarlos a la ermita de Silerio, y llevaría algo con que satisfacer la incomodidad que para agasajar tales huéspedes Silerio tendría. Con este prosupuesto, unos por una y otros por otra parte se apartaron, y, echando al despedirse menos al anciano Arsindo, miraron por él y vieron que, sin despedirse de ninguno, iba ya lejos por el mismo camino que Galercio y Maurisa y las rebozadas pastoras llevaban, de que se maravillaron. Y, viendo que ya el sol apresuraba su carrera para entrarse por las puertas de occidente, no quisieron detenerse allí más, por llegar al aldea antes que las sombras de la noche. Viéndose, pues, Elicio y Erastro ante la señora de sus pensamientos, por mostrar en algo lo que encubrir no podían, y por aligerar el cansancio del camino, y aun por cumplir el mandado de Florisa, que les mandó que, en tanto que a la aldea llegaban, algo cantasen, al son de la zampoña de Florisa, desta manera comenzó a cantar Elicio, y a responderle Erastro:

## **ELICIO ERASTRO**

### **ELICIO**

El que quisiere ver la hermosura  
mayor que tuvo, o tiene o terná el suelo;  
el fuego y el crisol donde se apura  
la blanca castidad, el limpio celo;  
todo lo que es valor, ser y cordura, 5  
y cifrado en la tierra un nuevo cielo,  
juntas en uno alteza y cortesía,  
venga a mirar a la pastora mía.

## ERASTRO

Venga a mirar a la pastora mía  
quien quisiere contar de gente en gente 10  
que vio otro sol que daba luz al día,  
más claro qu'el que sale del oriente.  
Podrá decir cómo su fuego enfría  
  
y abrasa al alma que tocar se siente  
del vivo rayo de sus ojos bellos, 15  
y que no hay más que ver después de vellos.

## ELICIO

Y que no hay más que ver después de vellos  
sábenlo bien estos cansados ojos,  
ojos que, por mi mal, fueron tan bellos,  
ocasión principal de mis enojos. 20  
Vilos y vi que se abrasaba en ellos  
mi alma, y que entregaba los despojos  
de todas sus potencias a su llama,  
que me abrasa y me yela, arroja y llama.

## ERASTRO

Que me abrasa y me yela, arroja y llama 25  
esta dulce enemiga de mi gloria,  
de cuyo ilustre ser puede la fama  
hacer estraña y verdadera historia.  
Sólo sus ojos, do el amor derrama  
toda su gracia y fuerza más notoria, 30

darán materia que levante al cielo  
la pluma del más bajo humilde vuelo.

## ELICIO

La pluma del más bajo humilde vuelo,

si quiere levantarse hasta la esfera,  
cante la cortesía y justo celo 35  
desta fénix sin par, sola y primera,  
gloria de nuestra edad, honra del suelo,  
valor del claro Tajo y su ribera,  
cordura sin igual, rara belleza  
donde más se estremó naturaleza. 40

## ERASTRO

Donde más se estremó naturaleza,  
donde ha igualado al pensamiento el arte,  
donde juntó el valor y gentileza  
que en diversos sujetos se reparte,  
y adonde la humildad con la grandeza 45  
ocupan solas una mesma parte,  
y adonde tiene amor su albergue y nido,  
la bella ingrata mi enemiga ha sido.

## ELICIO

La bella ingrata mi enemiga ha sido  
quien quiso, pudo y supo en un momento 50  
tenerme de un sutil cabello asido  
el libre vagaroso pensamiento.

Y, aunque al estrecho lazo estoy rendido,  
tal gusto y gloria en las prisiones siento,

que estiendo el pie y el cuello a las cadenas, 55  
llamando dulces tan amargas penas.

## ERASTRO

Llamando dulces tan amargas penas  
paso la corta fatigada vida,  
del alma triste sustentada apenas,  
y aun apenas del cuerpo sostenida. 60  
Ofrecióle fortuna a manos llenas  
a mi breve esperanza fe cumplida:  
¿qué gusto, pues, qué gloria o bien se ofrece,  
do mengua la esperanza y la fe crece?

## ELICIO

Do mengua la esperanza y la fe crece 65  
se descubre y parece el alto intento  
del firme pensamiento enamorado,  
que sólo confiado en amor puro,  
vive cierto y seguro de una paga  
que al alma satisfaga limpiamente. 70

## ERASTRO

El mísero doliente a quien subjeta  
la enfermedad y aprieta, se contenta,  
cuando más le atormenta el dolor fiero,  
con cualquiera ligero breve alivio;

mas, cuando ya más tibio el daño toca, 75

a la salud invoca y busca entera.  
Así, desta manera, el tierno pecho  
del amador, deshecho en llanto triste,  
dice que el bien consiste de su pena  
en que la luz serena de los ojos, 80  
a quien dio los despojos de su vida,  
le mire con fingida o cierta muestra;  
mas luego amor le adiestra y le desmanda  
y más cosas demanda que primero.

## ELICIO

Ya traspone el otero el sol hermoso, 85  
Erastro, y a reposo nos convida  
la noche denegrida que se acerca.

## ERASTRO

Y el aldea está cerca, y yo cansado.

## ELICIO

Pongamos, pues, silencio al canto usado.

Bien tomaran por partido los que escuchando a Elicio y a Erastro iban que más el camino se alargara, por gustar más del agradable canto de los enamorados pastores. Pero el cerrar de la noche, y el llegar a la aldea, hizo que dél cesasen, y que Aurelio, Galatea, Rosaura y Florisa en su casa se recogiesen. Elicio y Erastro hicieron lo mismo en las suyas, con intención de irse luego adonde Tirsi y Damón y los demás pastores estaban, que así quedó concertado entre ellos y el



padre de Galatea. Sólo esperaban a que la blanca luna desterrase la oscuridad de la noche, y así como ella mostró su hermoso rostro, ellos se fueron a buscar a Aurelio, y todos juntos la vuelta de la ermita se encaminaron, donde les sucedió lo que se verá en el siguiente libro.

## **FIN DEL CUARTO LIBRO**

## Quinto libro de Galatea

ERA TANTO el deseo que el enamorado Timbrio y las dos hermosas hermanas Nísida y Blanca llevaban de llegar a la ermita de Silerio, que la ligereza de los pasos, aunque era mucha, no era posible que a la de la voluntad llegase; y, por conocer esto, no quisieron Tirsi y Damón importunar a Timbrio cumpliera la palabra que había dado de contarles en el camino todo lo por él sucedido después que se apartó de Silerio. Pero todavía, llevados del deseo que tenían de saberlo, se lo iban ya a preguntar, si en aquel punto no hiriera en los oídos de todos una voz de un pastor que, un poco apartado del camino, entre unos verdes árboles, cantando estaba, que luego, en el son no muy concertado de la voz y en lo que cantaba, fue de los más que allí venían conocido, principalmente de su amigo Damón, porque era el pastor Lauso el que, al son de un pequeño rabel, unos versos decía; y, por ser el pastor tan conocido y saber ya todos la mudanza que de su libre voluntad había hecho, de común parecer recogieron el paso y se pararon a escuchar lo que Lauso cantaba, que era esto:

### LAUSO

¿Quién mi libre pensamiento  
me le vino a sujetar?  
¿Quién pudo en flaco cimiento  
sin ventura fabricar  
tan altas torres de viento? 5  
¿Quién rindió mi libertad,  
estando en seguridad  
de mi vida satisfecho?  
¿Quién abrió y rompió mi pecho,  
y robó mi voluntad? 10

¿Dónde está la fantasía  
de mi esquivada condición?  
¿Dó el alma que ya fue mía,  
y dónde mi corazón,  
que no está donde solía? 15

Mas, yo todo, ¿dónde estoy,  
dónde vengo, o adónde voy?  
A dicha, ¿sé yo de mí?  
¿Soy, por ventura, el que fui,  
o nunca he sido el que soy? 20

Estrecha cuenta me pido,  
sin poder averigualla,  
pues a tal punto he venido,  
que aquello que en mí se halla,  
es sombra de lo que he sido. 25  
No me entiendo de entenderme,  
ni me valgo por valerme,  
y en tan ciega confusión,  
cierta está mi perdición,  
y no pienso de perderme. 30

La fuerza de mi cuidado  
y el amor que lo consiente  
me tienen en tal estado,  
que adoro el tiempo presente,  
y lloro por el pasado. 35  
Véome en éste morir,

y en el pasado, vivir;  
y en éste adoro mi muerte,  
y en el pasado, la suerte,  
que ya no puede venir. 40

En tan estraña agonía,  
el sentido tengo ciego,  
pues viendo que amor porfía  
y que estoy dentro del fuego,  
aborrezco el agua fría; 45  
que si no es la de mis ojos,  
qu'el fuego aumenta y despojos,  
en esta amorosa fragua,  
no quiero ni busco otro agua

ni otro alivio a mis enojos. 50

Todo mi bien comenzara,  
todo mi mal feneciera,  
si mi ventura ordenara  
que de ser mi fe sincera  
Silena se asegurara. 55  
Sospiros, aseguralda;  
ojos míos, enteralda

llorando en esta verdad;  
pluma, lengua, voluntad,  
en tal razón confirmalda. 60

No pudo ni quiso el presuroso Timbrio aguardar a que más adelante el pastor Lauso con su canto pasase, porque, rogando a los pastores que el camino de la ermita le enseñasen, si ellos quedarse querían, hizo muestras de adelantarse; y así, todos le siguieron, y pasaron tan cerca de donde el enamorado Lauso estaba, que no pudo dejar de sentirlo y de salirles al encuentro, como lo hizo, con cuya compañía todos se holgaron, especialmente Damón, su verdadero amigo, con el cual se acompañó todo el camino que desde allí a la ermita había, razonando en diversos y varios acaecimientos que a los dos habían sucedido después que dejaron de verse, que fue desde el tiempo que el valeroso y nombrado pastor Astraliano había dejado los cisalpinos pastos por ir a reducir aquéllos que del famoso hermano y de la verdadera religión se habían rebelado; y al cabo, vinieron a reducir su razonamiento a tratar de los amores de Lauso, preguntándole ahincadamente Damón que le dijese quién era la pastora que con tanta facilidad la libre voluntad le había rendido. Y, cuando esto no pudo saber de Lauso, le rogó que, a lo menos, le dijese en qué estado se hallaba, si era de temor o de esperanza, si le fatigaba ingratitud o si le atormentaban celos. A todo lo cual le satisfizo bien Lauso, contándole algunas cosas que con su pastora le habían sucedido; y, entre otras, le dijo cómo, hallándose un día celoso y desfavorecido, había llegado a términos de desesperarse o de dar alguna muestra que en daño de su persona y en el del crédito y honra de su pastora redundase; pero que todo se remedió con haberla él hablado, y haberle ella asegurado ser falsa la sospecha que tenía, confirmando todo esto con darle un anillo de su mano, que fue parte para volver a mejor discurso su entendimiento y para solemnizar aquel favor con un soneto, que de algunos que le vieron fue por bueno estimado. Pidió entonces Damón a Lauso que le dijese. Y así, sin poder

escusarse, le hubo de decir; que era éste:

## LAUSO

¡Rica y dichosa prenda que adornaste  
el precioso marfil, la nieve pura!  
¡Prenda que de la muerte y sombra oscura  
a la nueva luz y vida me tornaste!

El claro cielo de tu bien trocaste 5  
con el infierno de mi desventura,  
porque viviese en dulce paz segura  
la esperanza que en mí resuscitaste.

Sabes cuánto me cuestas, dulce prenda,  
el alma, y aun no quedo satisfecho, 10  
pues menos doy de aquello que rescibo.

Mas, porque el mundo tu valor entienda,  
sé tú mi alma, enciértrate en mi pecho,  
verán cómo por ti sin alma vivo.

Dijo Lauso el soneto, y Damón le tornó a rogar que, si otra alguna cosa a su pastora había escripto, se la dijese, pues sabía de cuánto gusto le eran a él oír sus versos. A esto respondió Lauso: -Eso será, Damón, por haberme sido tú maestro en ellos, y el deseo que tienes de ver lo que en mí aprovechaste te hace desear oírlos; pero sea lo que fuere, que ninguna cosa de las que yo pudiere te ha de ser negada. Y así, te digo que, en estos mesmos días, cuando andaba celoso y mal seguro, envié estos versos a mi pastora:

## LAUSO A SILENA

En tan notoria simpleza,  
nascida de intento sano,  
el amor rige la mano,  
y la intención tu belleza.

El amor y tu hermosura, 5  
Silena, en esta ocasión,  
juzgarán a discreción  
lo que tendrás tú a locura.  
Él me fuerza y ella mueve  
a que te adore y escriba; 10

y como en los dos estriba  
mi fe, la mano se atreve.  
Y, aunque en esta grave culpa  
me amenaza tu rigor,  
mi fe, tu hermosura, amor, 15  
darán del yerro disculpa.  
Pues con un arrimo tal,  
puesto que culpa me den,  
bien podré decir el bien  
que ha nascido de mi mal; 20  
el cual bien, según yo siento,  
no es otra cosa, Silena,  
sino que tenga en la pena  
un extraño sufrimiento.  
Y no lo encarezco poco 25  
este bien de ser sufrido,  
que si no lo hubiera sido,  
ya el mal me tuviera loco.  
Mas mis sentidos, de acuerdo  
todos, han dado en decir 30  
que, ya que haya de morir,

que muera sufrido y cuerdo.  
Pero, bien considerado,  
mal podrá tener paciencia  
en la amorosa dolencia 35  
un celoso y desamado;  
que, en el mal de mis enojos,  
todo mi bien desconcierta  
tener la esperanza muerta  
y el enemigo a los ojos. 40  
Goces, pastora, mil años

el bien de tu pensamiento,  
que yo no quiero contento  
granjeado con tus daños.  
Sigue tu gusto, señora, 45  
pues te parece tan bueno,  
que yo por el bien ajeno  
no pienso llorar agora.  
Porque fuera liviandad  
entregar mi alma al alma 50  
que tiene por gloria y palma

el no tener libertad.  
Mas, ¡ay!, que fortuna quiere  
y el amor que viene en ello,  
que no pueda huir el cuello 55  
del cuchillo que me hiere.  
Conozco claro que voy  
tras quien ha de condenarme,  
y cuando pienso apartarme,  
más quedo y más firme estoy. 60  
¿Qué lazos, qué redes tienen,  
Silena, tus ojos bellos,  
que cuanto más huigo dellos,  
más me enlazan y detienen?  
¡Ay, ojos, de quien recelo 65  
que si soy de vos mirado,  
es por crecerme el cuidado  
y por menguarme el consuelo!  
Ser vuestras vistas fingidas  
conmigo, es pura verdad, 70  
pues pagan mi voluntad  
con prendas aborrecidas.

¡Qué recelos, qué temores  
persiguen mi pensamiento,  
y qué de contrarios siento 75  
en mis secretos amores!  
Déjame, aguda memoria;  
olvídate, no te acuerdes

del bien ajeno, pues pierdes  
en ello tu propia gloria. 80  
Con tantas firmas afirmas  
el amor que está en tu pecho,  
Silena, que a mi despecho,  
siempre mis males confirmas.  
¡Oh pérfido amor cruel! 85  
¿Cuál ley tuya me condena  
que dé yo el alma a Silena  
y que me niegue un papel?  
No más, Silena, que toco  
en puntos de tal porfía, 90  
qu'el menor dellos podría  
dejarme sin vida o loco.  
No pase de aquí mi pluma,

pues tú la haces sentir  
que no puede reducir 95  
tanto mal a breve summa.

En lo que se detuvo Lauso en decir estos versos y en alabar la singular hermosura, discreción, donaire, honestidad y valor de su pastora, a él y a Damón se les aligeró la pesadumbre del camino y se les pasó el tiempo sin ser sentido, hasta que llegaron junto de la ermita de Silerio, en la cual no querían entrar Timbrio, Nísida y Blanca, por no sobresaltarle con su no pensada venida. Mas la suerte lo ordenó de otra manera, porque, habiéndose adelantado Tirsi y Damón a ver lo que Silerio hacía, hallaron la ermita abierta y sin ninguna persona dentro; y, estando confusos, sin saber dónde podría estar Silerio a tales horas, llegó a sus oídos el son de su arpa, por do entendieron que él no debía estar lejos; y, saliendo a buscarle, guiados por el sonido de la arpa, con el resplandor claro de la luna vieron que estaba sentado en el tronco de un olivo, solo y sin otra compañía que la de su arpa, la cual tan dulcemente tocaba que, por gozar de tan suave armonía, no quisieron los pastores llegar luego a hablarle, y más cuando oyeron que con estremada voz estos versos comenzó a cantar:

## SILERIO



Ligeras horas del ligero tiempo,  
para mí perezosas y cansadas:  
si no estáis en mi daño conjuradas,  
parézcaos ya que es de acabarme tiempo.

Si agora me acabáis, haréislo a tiempo 5  
que están mis desventuras más colmadas;  
mirad que menguarán si sois pesadas,  
qu'el mal se acaba si da tiempo al tiempo.

No os pido que vengáis dulces, sabrosas,  
pues no hallaréis camino, senda o paso 10  
de reducirme al ser que ya he perdido.

¡Horas a cualquier otro venturosas,  
aquélla dulce del mortal traspaso,  
aquélla de mi muerte sola os pido!

Después que los pastores escucharon lo que Silerio cantado había, sin que él los viese, se volvieron a encontrar los demás que allí venían, con intención que Timbrio hiciese lo que agora oiréis: que fue que, habiéndole dicho de la manera que habían hallado a Silerio y en el lugar do quedaba, le rogó a Tirsi que, sin que ninguno dellos se le diese a conocer, se fuesen llegando poco a poco hacia él, ora les viese o no, porque aunque la noche hacía clara, no por eso sería alguno conocido; y que hiciese ansimesmo que Nísida o él algo cantasen; y todo esto hacía por entretener el gusto que de su venida había de rescibir Silerio. Contentóse Timbrio dello, y, diciéndoselo a Nísida, vino en su mesmo parescer. Y así, cuando a Tirsi le pareció que estaban ya tan cerca que de Silerio podían ser oídos, hizo a la bella Nísida que comenzase, la cual, al son del rabel del celoso Orfino, desta manera comenzó a cantar: NÍSIDA

Aunque es el bien que poseo  
tal que al alma satisface,  
le turba en parte y deshace  
otro bien que vi y no veo;  
que amor y fortuna escasa, 5  
enemigos de mi vida,  
me dan el bien por medida

y el mal sin término o tasa.  
En el amoroso estado,  
aunque sobre el merescer, 10  
tan solo viene el placer,  
cuanto el mal acompañado.  
Andan los males unidos,  
sin un momento apartarse;  
los bienes, por acabarse, 15  
en mil partes divididos.  
Lo que cuesta, si se alcanza,  
del amor algún contento,  
declárelo el sufrimiento,  
el amor y la esperanza. 20

Mil penas cuesta una gloria;  
un contento, mil enojos:  
sábenlo bien estos ojos  
y mi cansada memoria;  
la cual se acuerda contino 25  
de quien pudo mejoralla,  
y para hallarle no halla  
alguna senda o camino.  
¡Ay, dulce amigo de aquél  
que te tuvo por tan suyo 30  
cuanto él se tuvo por tuyo  
y cuanto yo lo soy dél!  
Mejora con tu presencia  
nuestra no pensada dicha,  
y no la vuelva en desdicha 35  
tu tan larga esquiva ausencia.  
A duro mal me provoca  
la memoria, que me acuerda  
que fuiste loco y yo cuerda,  
y eres cuerdo y yo estoy loca. 40

Aquel que, por buena suerte,  
tú mismo quisiste darme  
no ganó tanto en ganarme  
cuanto ha perdido en perderte.

Mitad de su alma fuiste, 45  
y medio por quien la mía  
pudo alcanzar la alegría  
que tu ausencia tiene triste.

Si la estremada gracia con que la hermosa Nísida cantaba causó admiración a los que con ella iban, ¿qué causaría en el pecho de Silerio, que, sin faltar punto, notó y escuchó todas las circunstancias de su canto? Y, como tenía tan en el alma la voz de Nísida, apenas llegó a sus oídos el acento suyo, cuando él se comenzó a alborotar, y a suspender y enajenar de sí mismo, elevado en lo que escuchaba. Y, aunque verdaderamente le pareció que era la voz de Nísida aquélla, tenía tan perdida la esperanza de verla, y más en semejante lugar, que en ninguna manera podía asegurar su sospecha. Desta suerte llegaron todos donde él estaba, y, en saludándole, Tirsi le dijo: -Tan aficionados nos dejaste, amigo Silerio, de la condición y conversación tuya, que, atraídos Damón y yo de la experiencia, y toda esta compañía de la fama della, dejando el camino que llevábamos, te hemos venido a buscar a tu ermita, donde, no hallándote, como no te hallamos, quedara sin cumplirse nuestro deseo, si el son de tu arpa y el de tu estimado canto aquí no nos hubiera encaminado.

-Harto mejor fuera, señores -respondió Silerio-, que no me hallárades, pues en mí no hallaréis sino ocasiones que a tristeza os muevan, pues la que yo padezco en el alma, tiene cuidado el tiempo cada día renovarla, no sólo con la memoria del bien pasado, sino con las sombras del presente, que al fin lo serán, pues de mi ventura no se puede esperar otra cosa que bienes fingidos y temores ciertos.

Lástima pusieron las razones de Silerio en todos los que le conocían, principalmente en Timbrio, Nísida y Blanca, que tanto le amaban, y luego quisieran dársele a conocer, si no fuera por no salir de lo que Tirsi les había rogado; el cual hizo que todos sobre la verde yerba se sentasen, y de manera que los rayos de la clara luna hiriesen de espaldas los rostros de Nísida y Blanca, porque Silerio no los conociese. Estando, pues, desta suerte, y después que Damón a Silerio había dicho algunas palabras de consuelo, porque el tiempo no se pasase todo en tratar en cosas de tristeza, y por dar principio a que la de Silerio feneciese, le rogó que su arpa tocase, al son de la cual el mismo Damón cantó este soneto: DAMÓN

Si el áspero furor del mar airado  
por largo tiempo en su rigor durase,

mal se podría hallar quien entregase  
su flaca nave al piélago alterado.

No permanece siempre en un estado 5  
el bien ni el mal, que el uno y otro vase;  
porque si huyese el bien y el mal quedase,  
ya sería el mundo a confusión tornado.

La noche al día, y el calor al frío,  
la flor al fruto van en seguimiento, 10  
formando de contrarios igual tela.

La sujeción se cambia en señorío,  
en placer el pesar, la gloria en viento,  
che per tal variar natura è bella.

Acabó Damón de cantar, y luego hizo de señas a Timbrio que lo mismo hiciese; el cual, al propio son de la arpa de Silerio, dio principio a un soneto que en el tiempo del hervor de sus amores había hecho, el cual de Silerio era tan sabido como del mismo Timbrio:

## **TIMBRIO**

Tan bien fundada tengo la esperanza,  
que, aunque más sople riguroso viento,  
no podrá desdecir de su cimiento:  
tal fe, tal suerte y tal valor alcanza.

No pudo acabar Timbrio el comenzado soneto, porque el oír Silerio su voz y el conocerle todo fue uno; y, sin ser parte a otra cosa, se levantó de do sentado estaba y se fue a abrazar del cuello de Timbrio, con muestras de tan extraño contento y sobresalto que, sin hablar palabra, se transpuso y estuvo un rato sin acuerdo, con tanto dolor de los presentes, temerosos de algún mal suceso, que ya condenaban por mala el astucia de Tirsi; pero quien más extremos de dolor hacía era la hermosa Blanca, como aquélla que tiernamente le amaba. Acudió luego Nísida y su hermana a remediar el desmayo de Silerio, el cual, a cabo de

poco espacio, volvió en sí diciendo: -¡Oh poderoso cielo! ¿Y es posible que el que tengo presente es mi verdadero amigo Timbrio? ¿Es Timbrio el que oigo? ¿Es Timbrio el que veo? Sí es, si no me burla mi ventura, y mis ojos no me engañan.

-Ni tu ventura te burla, ni tus ojos te engañan, dulce amigo mío -respondió Timbrio-, que yo soy el que sin ti no era, y el que no lo fuera jamás si el cielo no permitiera que te hallara. Cesen ya tus lágrimas, Silerio amigo, si por mí las has derramado, pues ya me tienes presente; que yo atajaré las mías, pues te tengo delante, llamándome el más dichoso de cuantos viven en el mundo, pues mis desventuras y adversidades han traído tal descuento, que goza mi alma de la posesión de Nísida, y mis ojos de tu presencia.

Por estas palabras de Timbrio, entendió Silerio que la que cantado había y la que allí estaba era Nísida; pero certificóse más en ello cuando ella misma le dijo: -¿Qué es esto, Silerio mío? ¿Qué soledad y qué hábito es éste, que tantas muestras dan de tu descontento? ¿Qué falsas sospechas o qué engaños te han conducido a tal extremo, para que Timbrio y yo leuviésemos de dolor toda la vida, ausentes de ti, que nos la diste?

-Engaños fueron, hermosa Nísida -respondió Silerio-; mas, por haber traído tales desengaños, serán celebrados de mi memoria el tiempo que ella me durare.

Lo más deste tiempo tenía Blanca asida una mano de Silerio, mirándole atentamente al rostro, derramando algunas lágrimas que de la alegría y lástima de su corazón daban manifiesto indicio. Largo sería de contar las palabras de amor y contento que entre Silerio, Timbrio, Nísida y Blanca pasaron, que fueron tan tiernas y tales, que todos los pastores que las escuchaban tenían los ojos bañados en lágrimas de alegría. Contó luego Silerio brevemente la ocasión que le había movido a retirarse en aquella ermita, con pensamiento de acabar en ella la vida, pues de la dellos no había podido saber nueva alguna; y todo lo que dijo fue ocasión de avivar más en el pecho de Timbrio el amor y amistad que a Silerio tenía, y en el de Blanca la lástima de su miseria. Y, así como acabó de contar Silerio lo que después que partió de Nápoles le había sucedido; y así, rogó a Timbrio que lo mismo hiciese, porque en extremo lo deseaba, y que no se recelase de los pastores que estaban presentes, que todos ellos, o los más, sabían ya su mucha amistad y parte de sus sucesos. Holgóse Timbrio de hacer lo que Silerio pedía, y más se holgaron los pastores, que ansimesmo lo deseaban; que ya, porque Tirsi se lo había contado, todos sabían los amores de Timbrio y Nísida, y todo aquello que el mismo Tirsi de Silerio había oído. Sentados, pues, todos, como ya he dicho, en la verde yerba, con maravillosa atención estaban esperando lo que Timbrio diría, el cual dijo: -«Después que la Fortuna me fue tan favorable y tan adversa, que me dejó vencer a mi enemigo y me venció con

el sobresalto de la falsa nueva de la muerte de Nísida, con el dolor que pensar se puede, en aquel mismo instante me partí para Nápoles, y, confirmándose allí el desdichado suceso de Nísida, por no ver las casas de su padre, donde yo la había visto, y porque las calles, ventanas y otras partes donde yo la solía ver no me renovasen continuamente la memoria de mi bien pasado, sin saber qué camino tomase y sin tener algún discurso mi albedrío, salí de la ciudad, y a cabo de dos días llegué a la fuerte Gaeta, donde hallé una nave que ya quería desplegar las velas al viento para partirse a España. Embarquéme en ella, no más de por huir la odiosa tierra donde dejaba mi cielo; mas, apenas los diligentes marineros zarparon los ferros y descogieron las velas, y al mar algún tanto se alargaron, cuando se levantó una no pensada y súbita borrasca, y una ráfiga de viento imbistió las velas del navío con tanta furia que rompió el árbol del trinquete, y la vela mezana abrió de arriba abajo. Acudieron luego los prestos marineros al remedio, y, con dificultad grandísima, amainaron todas las velas, porque la borrasca crecía, y la mar comenzaba a alterarse, y el cielo daba señales de durable y espantosa fortuna. No fue volver al puerto posible, porque era maestral el viento que soplaba, y con tan grande violencia que fue forzoso poner la vela de trinquete al árbol mayor y amollar -como dicen-en popa, dejándose llevar donde el viento quisiese. Y así, comenzó la nave, llevada de su furia, a correr por el levantado mar con tanta ligereza que, en dos días que duró el maestral, discurrimos por todas las islas de aquel derecho, sin poder en ninguna tomar abrigo, pasando siempre a vista dellas, sin que Estrómbalo nos abrigase, ni Lípar nos acogiese, ni el Cimbalo, Lampadosa ni Pantanalea sirviesen para nuestro remedio; y pasamos tan cerca de Berbería que los recién derribados muros de la Goleta se descubrían y las antiguas ruinas de Cartago se manifestaban. No fue pequeño el miedo de los que en la nave iban, temiendo que, si el viento algo más reforzaba, era forzoso embestir en la enemiga tierra; mas, cuando desto estaban más temerosos, la suerte, que mejor nos la tenía guardada, o el cielo, que escuchó los votos y promesas que allí se hicieron, ordenó que el maestral se cambiase en un mediodía tan reforzado, y que tocaba en la cuarta del jaloque, que en otros dos días nos volvió al mismo puerto de Gaeta, donde habíamos partido, con tanto consuelo de todos que algunos se partieron a cumplir las romerías y promesas que en el peligro pasado habían hecho.

»Estuvo allí la nave otros cuatro días, reparándose de algunas cosas que le faltaban, al cabo de los cuales tornó a seguir su viaje con más sosegado mar y próspero viento, llevando a vista la hermosa ribera de Génova, llena de adornados jardines, blancas casas y relumbrantes capiteles, que, heridos de los rayos del sol, reverberan con tan encendidos rayos que apenas dejan mirarse.

Todas estas cosas que desde la nave se miraban pudieran causar contento, como le causaban a todos los que en la nave iban, sino a mí, que me era ocasión de más pesadumbre. Sólo el descanso que tenía era entretenerme la mentando mis penas, cantándolas o, por mejor decir, llorándolas al son de un laúd de uno de aquellos marineros. Y una noche, me acuerdo -y aun es bien que me acuerde, pues en ella comenzó a amanecer mi día-que, estando sosegado el mar, quietos los vientos, las velas pegadas a los árboles, y los marineros, sin cuidado alguno, por diferentes partes del navío tendidos, y el timonero casi dormido por la bonanza que había y por la que el cielo le aseguraba, en medio deste silencio y en medio de mis imaginaciones, como mis dolores no me dejaban entregar los ojos al sueño, sentado en el castillo de popa, tomé el laúd y comencé a cantar unos versos que habré de repetir agora, porque se advierta de qué extremo de tristeza y cuán sin pensarlo me pasó la suerte al mayor de alegría que imaginar supiera. Era, si no me acuerdo mal, lo que cantaba esto:

## TIMBRIO

»Agora que calla el viento  
y el sesgo mar está en calma,  
no se calle mi tormento:  
salga con la voz el alma,  
para mayor sentimiento. 5  
Que, para contar mis males,  
mostrando en parte que son,  
por fuerza han de dar señales  
el alma y el corazón

de vivas ansias mortales. 10

»Llevóme el amor en vuelo  
por uno y otro dolor  
hasta ponerme en el cielo,  
y agora muerte y amor  
me han derribado en el suelo. 15  
Amor y muerte ordenaron  
una muerte y amor tal,  
cual en Nísida causaron,

y de mi bien y su mal  
eterna fama ganaron. 20

»Con nueva voz y terrible,  
de hoy más, y en son espantoso,  
hará la fama creíble  
qu'el amor es poderoso  
y la muerte es invencible. 25  
De su poder satisfecho  
quedará el mundo, si advierte  
qué hazaña los dos han hecho,  
qué vida llevó la muerte,  
qué tal tiene amor mi pecho. 30

»Mas creo, pues no he venido  
a morir o estar más loco  
con el daño que he sufrido,  
o que muerte puede poco  
o que no tengo sentido. 35  
Que si sentido tuviera,  
según mis penas crecidas  
me persiguen dondequiera,  
aunque tuviera mil vidas,  
cien mil veces muerto fuera. 40

»Mi victoria tan subida,  
fue con muerte celebrada  
de la más ilustre vida  
que en la presente o pasada  
edad fue ni es conocida. 45  
Della llevé por despojos  
dolor en el corazón,  
mil lágrimas en los ojos,  
en el alma confusión  
y en el firme pecho enojos. 50

»¡Oh fiera mano enemiga!

¡Cómo, si allí me acabaras,



te tuviera por amiga,  
pues, con matarme, estorbaras  
las ansias de mi fatiga! 55  
¡Oh!, ¡cuán amargo descuento  
trujo la victoria mía,  
pues pagaré, según siento,  
el gusto solo de un día  
con mil siglos de tormento! 60

»¡Tú, mar, que escuchas mi llanto;  
tú, cielo, que le ordenaste;  
amor, por quien lloro tanto;  
muerte, que mi bien llevaste;  
acabad ya mi quebranto! 65  
¡Tú, mar, mi cuerpo rescibe;  
tú, cielo, acoge mi alma;  
tú, amor, con la fama escribe  
que muerte llevó la palma  
desta vida que no vive! 70

»¡No os descuidéis de ayudarme,  
mar, cielo, amor y la muerte!

¡Acabad ya de acabarme,  
que será la mejor suerte  
que yo espero y podréis darme! 75  
Pues si no me anega el mar,  
y no me recoge el cielo,  
y el amor ha de durar,  
y de no morir recelo,  
no sé en qué habré de parar. 80

»Acuérdome que llegaba a estos últimos versos que he dicho, cuando, sin poder pasar adelante, interrumpido de infinitos suspiros y sollozos que de mi lastimado pecho despedía, aquejado de la memoria de mis desventuras, del puro sentimiento dellas, vine a perder el sentido, con un parasismo tal que me tuvo un buen rato fuera de todo acuerdo; pero ya, después que el amargo accidente hubo pasado, abrí mis cansados ojos y halléme puesta la cabeza en las faldas de una mujer vestida en hábito de peregrina, y a mi lado estaba otra con el mismo traje

adornada, la cual, estando de mis manos asida, la una y la otra tiernamente lloraban. Cuando yo me vi de aquella manera, quedé admirado y confuso, y estaba dudando si era sueño aquello que veía, porque nunca tales mujeres había visto jamás en la nave después que en ella andaba; pero desta confusión me sacó presto la hermosa Nísida, que aquí está, que era la peregrina que allá estaba, diciéndome: “¡Ay Timbrio, verdadero señor y amigo mío! ¿Qué falsas imaginaciones o qué desdichados accidentes han sido parte para poneros donde agora estáis, y para que yo y mi hermana tuviésemos tan poca cuenta con lo que a nuestras honras debíamos, y que, sin mirar en inconveniente alguno, hayamos querido dejar nuestros amados padres y nuestros usados trajes, con intención de buscaros y desengañaros de tan incierta muerte mía que pudiera causar la verdadera vuestra?” Cuando yo tales razones oí, de todo punto acabé de creer que soñaba, y que era alguna visión aquella que delante los ojos tenía, y que la continua imaginación, que de Nísida no se apartaba, era la causa que allí a los ojos viva la representase. Mil preguntas les hice, y a todas ellas enteramente me satisficieron, primero que pudiese sosegar el entendimiento y enterarme que ellas eran Nísida y Blanca. Mas, cuando yo fui conociendo la verdad, el gozo que sentí fue de manera que también me puso en condición de perder la vida, como el dolor pasado había hecho. Allí supe de Nísida cómo el engaño y descuido que tuviste, ¡oh Silerio!, en hacer la señal de la toca fue la causa para que, creyendo algún mal suceso mío, le sucediese el parasismo y desmayo, tal que todos creyeron que era muerta, como yo lo pensé, y tú, Silerio, lo creíste. Díjome también cómo, después de vuelta en sí, supo la verdad de la victoria mía, junto con mi súbita y arrebatada partida, y la ausencia tuya, cuyas nuevas la pusieron en extremo de hacer verdaderas las de su muerte. Pero ya que al último término no la llegaron, hicieron con ella y con su hermana, por industria de una ama suya que con ellas venía, que vistiéndose en hábitos de peregrinas, desconocidamente se saliesen de con sus padres una noche que llegaban junto a Gaeta, a la vuelta que a Nápoles se volvían; y fue a tiempo que la nave donde yo estaba embarcado, después de reparada de la pasada tormenta, estaba ya para partirse. Y, diciendo al capitán que querían pasar en España para ir a Sanctiago de Galicia, se concertaron con él y se embarcaron, con prosupuesto de venir a buscarme a Jerez, do pensaban hallarme o saber de mí nueva alguna, y en todo el tiempo que en la nave estuvieron, que sería cuatro días, no habían salido de un aposento que el capitán en la popa les había dado, hasta que, oyéndome cantar los versos que os he dicho, y conociéndome en la voz y en lo que en ellos decía, salieron al tiempo que os he contado, donde, solemnizando con alegres lágrimas el contento de habernos hallado, estábamos mirando los unos a los otros, sin saber con qué palabras engrandecer nuestra nueva y no pensada alegría, la cual

se acrescentara más y llegara al término y punto que agora llega, si de ti, amigo Silerio, allí supiéramos nueva alguna; pero, como no hay placer que venga tan entero que de todo en todo al corazón satisfaga, en el que entonces teníamos, no sólo nos faltó tu presencia, pero aun las nuevas della. La claridad de la noche, el fresco y agradable viento, que en aquel instante comenzó a herir las velas próspera y blandamente, el mar tranquilo y desembarazado cielo, parece que todos juntos, y cada uno por sí, ayudaban a solemnizar la alegría de nuestros corazones.

»Mas la fortuna variable, de cuya condición no se puede prometer firmeza alguna, envidiosa de nuestra ventura, quiso turbarla con la mayor desventura que imaginar se pudiera, si el tiempo y los prósperos sucesos no la hubieran reducido a mejor término. Sucedió, pues, que a la sazón que el viento comenzaba a refrescar, los solícitos marineros izaron más todas las velas, y con general alegría de todos, seguro y próspero viaje se aseguraban. Uno dellos, que a una parte de la proa iba sentado, descubrió, con la claridad de los bajos rayos de la luna, que cuatro bajeles de remo, a larga y tirada boga, con gran celeridad y priesa, hacia la nave se encaminaban, y al momento conoció ser de contrarios, y con grandes voces comenzó a gritar: “¡Arma, arma, que bajeles turquescos se descubren!” Esta voz y súbito alarido puso tanto sobresalto en todos los de la nave que, sin saber darse maña en el cercano peligro, unos a otros se miraban; mas el capitán della, que en semejantes ocasiones algunas veces se había visto, viniéndose a la proa, procuró reconocer qué tamaño de bajeles y cuántos eran, y descubrió dos más que el marinero, y conoció que eran galeotas forzadas, de que no poco temor debió de rescibir; pero, disimulando lo mejor que pudo, mandó luego alistar la artillería y cargar las velas todo lo más que se pudiese la vuelta de los contrarios bajeles, por ver si podría entrarse entre ellos y jugar de todas bandas la artillería. Acudieron luego todos a las armas, y repartidos por sus postas como mejor se pudo, la venida de los enemigos esperaban.

»¡Quién podrá significaros, señores, la pena que yo a esta sazón tenía, viendo con tanta celeridad turbado mi contento y tan cerca de poder perderle, y más cuando vi que Nísida y Blanca se miraban, sin hablarse palabra, confusas del estruendo y vocería que en la nave andaba y viéndome a mí rogarles que en su aposento se encerrasen y rogasen a Dios que de las enemigas manos nos librase! Paso y punto fue éste que desmaya la imaginación cuando dél se acuerda la memoria. Sus descubiertas lágrimas, y la fuerza que yo me hacía por no mostrar las mías, me tenían de tal manera, que casi me olvidaba de lo que debía hacer, o quién era, y a lo que el peligro obligaba. Mas, en fin, las hice retraer a su estancia casi desmayadas, y, cerrándolas por defuera, acudí a ver lo que el capitán ordenaba, el cual, con prudente solicitud, todas las cosas al caso

necesarias estaba proveyendo; y, dando cargo a Darinto -que es aquel caballero que hoy se partió de nosotros-de la guarda del castillo de proa y encomendándome a mí el de popa, él con algunos marineros y pasajeros, por todo el cuerpo de la nave, a una y a otra parte discurría. No tardaron mucho en llegar los enemigos, y tardó hartos menos en calmar el viento, que fue la total causa de la perdición nuestra. No osaron los enemigos llegar a bordo, porque, viendo que el viento calmaba, les pareció mejor aguardar el día para embestirnos. Hiciéronlo así, y, el día venido, aunque ya los habíamos contado, acabamos de ver que eran quince bajeles gruesos los que cercados nos tenían, y entonces se acabó de confirmar en nuestros pechos el temor de perdernos. Con todo eso, no desmayando el valeroso capitán ni alguno de los que con él estaban, esperó a ver lo que los contrarios harían, los cuales, luego como vino la mañana, echaron de su capitana una barquilla al agua, y con un renegado enviaron a decir a nuestro capitán que se rindiese, pues veía ser imposible defenderse de tantos bajeles; y más, que eran todos los mejores de Argel, amenazándole de parte de Arnaut Mamí, su general, que si disparaba alguna pieza el navío, que le había de colgar de una entena en cogiéndole, y añadiendo a éstas otras amenazas. El renegado le persuadió que se rindiese; mas, no quiriéndolo hacer el capitán, respondió al renegado que se alargase de la nave, si no, que le echaría a fondo con la artillería. Oyó Arnaut esta respuesta, y luego, cebando el navío por todas partes, comenzó a jugar desde lejos el artillería con tanta priesa, furia y estruendo que era maravilla. Nuestra nave comenzó a hacer lo mismo, tan venturosamente, que a uno de los bajeles que por la popa la combatían echó a fondo, porque le acertó con una bala junto a la cinta, de modo que, sin ser socorrido, en breve espacio se le sorbió el mar. Viendo esto los turcos, apresuraron el combate, y en cuatro horas nos embistieron cuatro veces, y otras tantas se retiraron, con mucho daño suyo y no con poco nuestro.

»Mas, por no iros cansando contándoos particularmente las cosas sucedidas en este combate, sólo diré que, después de habernos combatido diez y seis horas, y después de haber muerto nuestro capitán y toda la más gente del navío, a cabo de nueve asaltos que nos dieron, al último dellos entraron furiosamente en el navío. Tampoco, aunque quiera, no podré encarecer el dolor que a mi alma llegó cuando vi que las amadas prendas mías, que ahora tengo delante, habían de ser entonces entregadas y venidas a poder de aquellos crueles carniceros. Y así, llevado de la ira que este temor y consideración me causaba, con pecho desarmado me arrojé por medio de las bárbaras espadas, deseoso de morir al rigor de sus filos, antes que ver a mis ojos lo que esperaba. Pero sucedióme al revés mi pensamiento, porque, abrazándose conmigo tres membrudos turcos, y yo forcejando con ellos, de tropel venimos a dar todos en la puerta de la cámara

donde Nísida y Blanca estaban; y con el ímpetu del golpe se rompió y abrió la puerta, que hizo manifiesto el tesoro que allí estaba encerrado, del cual codiciosos los enemigos, el uno dellos asió a Nísida y el otro a Blanca; y yo, que de los dos me vi libre, al otro que me tenía hice dejar la vida a mis pies, y de los dos pensaba hacer lo mismo, si ellos, advertidos del peligro, no dejaran la presa de las damas y con dos grandes heridas no me derribaran en el suelo; lo cual visto por Nísida, arrojándose sobre mi herido cuerpo, con lamentables voces pedía a los dos turcos que la acabasen.

»En este instante, atraído de las voces y lamentos de Blanca y Nísida, acudió a aquella estancia Arnaute, el general de los bajeles, e, informándose de los soldados de lo que pasaba, hizo llevar a Nísida y a Blanca a su galera, y, a ruegos de Nísida, mandó también que a mí me llevasen, pues no estaba aún muerto. Desta manera, sin tener yo sentido alguno, me llevaron a la enemiga galera capitana, donde fui luego curado con alguna diligencia, porque Nísida había dicho al capitán que yo era hombre principal y de gran rescate, con intención que, cebados de la codicia y del dinero que de mí podrían haber, con algo más recato mirasen por la salud mía. Sucedió, pues, que estando curándome las heridas, con el dolor dellas volví en mi acuerdo, y, volviendo los ojos a una parte y a otra, conocí que estaba en poder de mis enemigos y en el bajel contrario; pero ninguna cosa me llegó tan al alma como fue ver en la popa de la galera a Nísida y Blanca, sentadas a los pies del perro general, derramando por sus ojos infinitas lágrimas, indicios del interno dolor que padecían. No el temor de la afrentosa muerte que esperaba cuando tú della, buen amigo Silerio, en Cataluña me libraste; no la falsa nueva de la muerte de Nísida, de mí por verdadera creída; no el dolor de mis mortales heridas ni otra cualquiera aflicción que imaginar pudiera me causó ni causará más sentimiento que el que me vino de ver a Nísida y Blanca en poder de aquel bárbaro descreído, donde a tan cercano y claro peligro estaban puestas sus honras. El dolor deste sentimiento hizo tal operación en mi alma, que torné de nuevo a perder los sentidos y a quitar la esperanza de mi salud y vida al cirujano que me curaba, de tal modo que, creyendo que era muerto, paró en medio de la cura, certificando a todos que ya yo desta vida había pasado. Oídas estas nuevas por las dos desdichadas hermanas, digan ellas lo que sintieron, si se atreven; que yo sólo sé decir que después supe que, levantándose las dos de do estaban, tirando de sus rubios cabellos y arañando sus hermosos rostros, sin que nadie pudiese detenerlas, vinieron adonde yo desmayado estaba, y allí comenzaron a hacer tan lastimero llanto que a los mismos pechos de los crueles bárbaros enternecieron. Con las lágrimas de Nísida que en el rostro me caían, o por las ya frías y enconadas heridas, que gran dolor me causaban, torné a volver de nuevo en mi acuerdo,

para acordarme de mi nueva desventura. Pasaré en silencio agora las lastimeras y amorosas palabras que en aquel desdichado punto entre mí y Nísida pasaron, por no entristecer tanto el alegre en que ahora nos hallamos, ni quiero decir por extenso los trances que ella me contó que con el capitán había pasado, el cual, vencido de su hermosura, mil promesas, mil regalos, mil amenazas le hizo porque viniese a condescender con la desordenada voluntad suya; pero, mostrándose ella con él tan esquiva como honrada, y tan honrada como esquiva, pudo todo aquel día y otra noche siguiente defenderse de las pesadas importunaciones del cosario. Mas, como la continua presencia de Nísida iba creciendo en él por puntos el libidinoso deseo, sin duda alguna se pudiera temer, como yo temía, que, dejando los ruegos y usando la fuerza, Nísida perdiera su honra, o la vida, que era lo más cierto que de su bondad se podía esperar.

»Pero, cansada ya la fortuna de habernos puesto en el más bajo estado de miseria, quiso darnos a entender ser verdad lo que de la inestabilidad suya se pregona, por un medio que nos puso en términos de rogar al cielo que en aquella desdichada suerte nos mantuviese, a trueco de no perder la vida sobre las hinchadas ondas del mar airado, el cual, a cabo de dos días que captivos fuimos, y a la sazón que llevábamos el derecho viaje de Berbería, movido de un furioso jaloque, comenzó a hacer montañas de agua y a azotar con tanta furia la cosaria armada que, sin poder los cansados remeros aprovecharse de los remos, afrenillaron y acudieron al usado remedio de la vela del trinquete al árbol, y a dejarse llevar por donde el viento y mar quisiese; y de tal manera creció la tormenta que en menos de media hora esparció y apartó a diferentes partes los bajeles, sin que ninguno pudiese tener cuenta con seguir su capitán; antes, en poco rato divididos todos, como he dicho, vino nuestro bajel a quedar solo y a ser el que más el peligro amenazaba, porque comenzó a hacer tanta agua por las costuras que, por mucho que por todas las cámaras de popa, proa y medianía le agotaban, siempre en la centina llegaba el agua a la rodilla; y añadióse a toda esta desgracia sobrevenir la noche, que en semejantes casos, más que en otros algunos, el medroso temor acrescencia; y vino con tanta escuridad y nueva borrasca que, de todo en todo, todos desesperamos de remedio. No queráis más saber, señores, sino que los mismos turcos rogaban a los cristianos que iban al remo captivos que invocasen y llamasen a sus sanctos y a su Cristo para que de tal desventura los librase; y no fueron tan en vano las plegarias de los míseros cristianos que allí iban, que, movido el alto cielo dellas, dejase sosegar el viento; antes, le creció con tanto ímpetu y furia que al amanecer del día, que sólo pudo conocerse por las horas del reloj de arena por quien se rigen, se halló el mal gobernado bajel en la costa de Cataluña, tan cerca de tierra y tan sin poder

apartarse della, que fue forzoso alzar un poco más la vela para que con más furia embistiese en una ancha playa que delante se nos ofrecía: que el amor de la vida les hizo parecer dulce a los turcos la esclavitud que esperaban.

»Apenas hubo la galera embestido en tierra, cuando luego acudió a la playa mucha gente armada, cuyo traje y lengua dio a entender ser catalanes y ser de Cataluña aquella costa, y aun aquel mismo lugar donde, a riesgo de la tuya, amigo Silerio, la vida mía escapaste. ¡Quién pudiera exagerar ahora el gozo de los cristianos, que del insufrible y pesado yugo del amargo captiverio veían libres y desembarazados sus cuellos, y las plegarias y ruegos que los turcos, poco antes libres y señores, hacían a sus mismos esclavos, rogándoles fuesen parte para que de los indignados cristianos maltratados no fuesen, los cuales ya en la playa los esperaban, con deseo de vengarse de la ofensa que estos mismos turcos les habían hecho, saqueándoles su lugar, como tú, Silerio, sabes! Y no les salió vano el temor que tenían, porque, en entrando los del pueblo en la galera, que encallada en la arena estaba, hicieron tan cruel matanza en los cosarios, que muy pocos quedaron con la vida; y si no fuera que les cegó la codicia de robar la galera, todos los turcos en aquel primero ímpetu fueran muertos. Finalmente, los turcos que quedaron y cristianos captivos que allí veníamos, todos fuimos saqueados, y si los vestidos que yo traía no estuvieran sangrentados, creo que aun no me los dejaran. Darinto, que también allí venía, acudió luego a mirar por Nísida y Blanca y a procurar que me sacasen a tierra donde fuese curado.

»Cuando yo salí y reconocí el lugar donde estaba, y consideré el peligro en que en él me había visto, no dejó de darme alguna pesadumbre, causada de temor no fuese conocido y castigado por lo que no debía; y así, rogué a Darinto que, sin poner dilación alguna, procurase que a Barcelona nos fuésemos, diciéndole la causa que me movía a ello; pero no fue posible, porque mis heridas me fatigaban de manera que me forzaron a que allí algunos días estuviese, como estuve, sin ser de más de un cirujano visitado. En este entretanto fue Darinto a Barcelona, donde proveyéndose de lo que menester habíamos, dio la vuelta; y, hallándome mejor y con más fuerza, luego nos pusimos en camino para la ciudad de Toledo, por saber de los parientes de Nísida que sí sabían de sus padres, a quien ya hemos escripto todo el suceso de nuestras vidas, pidiéndole perdón de nuestros pasados yerros. Y todo el contento y dolor destos buenos y malos sucesos, lo ha acrescentado o diminuido la ausencia tuya, Silerio. Mas, pues el cielo agora con tantas ventajas ha dado remedio a nuestras calamidades, no resta otra cosa sino que, dándole las debidas gracias por ello, tú, Silerio amigo, deseches la tristeza pasada con la ocasión de la alegría presente, y procures darla a quien ha muchos días que por tu causa vive sin ella, como lo sabrás cuando más a solas y contigo las comunique. Otras algunas cosas me quedan por decir

que me han sucedido en el discurso desta mi peregrinación; pero dejarlas he por agora, por no dar con la prolijidad dellas disgusto a estos pastores, que han sido el instrumento de todo mi placer y gusto.» Éste es, pues, Silerio amigo y amigos pastores, el suceso de mi vida: ved si, por la que he pasado y por la que agora paso, me puedo llamar el más lastimado y venturoso hombre de los que hoy viven.

Con estas últimas palabras dio fin a su cuento el alegre Timbrio, y todos los que presentes estaban se alegraron del felice suceso que sus trabajos habían tenido, pasando el contento de Silerio a todo lo que decir se puede; el cual, tornando de nuevo a abrazar a Timbrio, forzado del deseo de saber quién era la persona que por su causa sin contento vivía, pidiendo licencia a los pastores, se apartó con Timbrio a una parte, donde supo dél que la hermosa Blanca, hermana de Nísida, era la que más que a sí le amaba desde el mismo día y punto que ella supo quién él era y el valor de su persona; y que jamás, por no ir contra aquello que a su honestidad estaba obligada, había querido descubrir este pensamiento sino a su hermana, por cuyo medio esperaba tenerle honrado en el cumplimiento de sus deseos. Díjole asimismo Timbrio cómo aquel caballero Darinto, que con él venía, y de quien él había hecho mención en la plática pasada, conociendo quién era Blanca y llevado de su hermosura, se había enamorado della con tantas veras que la pidió por esposa a su hermana Nísida, la cual le desengañó que Blanca no lo haría en manera alguna, y que, agraviado desto Darinto, creyendo que por el poco valor suyo le desechaban, y por sacarle desta sospecha, le hubo de decir Nísida cómo Blanca tenía ocupados los pensamientos en Silerio; mas, que no por esto Darinto había desmayado ni dejado la empresa, «porque, como supo que de ti, Silerio, no se sabía nueva alguna, imaginó que los servicios que él pensaba hacer a Blanca, y el tiempo, la apartarían de su intención primera; y con este presupuesto jamás nos quiso dejar, hasta que ayer, oyendo a los pastores las ciertas nuevas de tu vida y conociendo el contento que con ellas Blanca había rescibido, y considerando ser imposible que, pareciendo Silerio, pudiese Darinto alcanzar lo que deseaba, sin despedirse de ninguno, se había, con muestras de grandísimo dolor, apartado de todos.» Junto con esto, aconsejó Timbrio a su amigo fuese contento de que Blanca le tuviese, escogiéndola y aceptándola por esposa, pues ya la conocía y no ignoraba su valor y honestidad, encareciéndole el gusto y placer que los dos tendrían viéndose con tales dos hermanas casados. Silerio le respondió que le diese espacio para pensar en aquel hecho, aunque él sabía que al cabo era imposible dejar de hacer lo que él le mandase.

A esta sazón, comenzaba ya la blanca aurora a dar señales de su nueva venida, y las estrellas poco a poco iban escondiendo la claridad suya; y a este mismo



punto llegó a los oídos de todos la voz del enamorado Lauso, el cual, como su amigo Damón había sabido que aquella noche la habían de pasar en la ermita de Silerio, quiso venir a hallarse con él y con los demás pastores; y, como todo su gusto y pasatiempo era cantar al son de su rabel los sucesos prósperos o adversos de sus amores, llevado de la condición suya, y convidado de la soledad del camino y de la sabrosa armonía de las aves, que ya comenzaban con su dulce y concertado canto a saludar el venidero día, con baja voz, semejantes versos venía cantando:

## LAUSO

Alzo la vista a la más noble parte  
que puede imaginar el pensamiento,  
donde miro el valor, admiro el arte  
que suspende el más alto entendimiento.  
Mas, si queréis saber quién fue la parte 5  
que puso fiero yugo al cuello esento,  
quién me entregó, quién lleva mis despojos,

mis ojos son, Silena, y son tus ojos.

Tus ojos son, de cuya luz serena  
me viene la que al cielo me encamina: 10  
luz de cualquiera escuridad ajena,  
segura muestra de la luz divina.  
Por ella el fuego, el yugo y la cadena  
que me consume, carga y desatina,  
es refrigerio, alivio, es gloria, es palma 15  
al alma, y vida que te ha dado el alma.

¡Divinos ojos, bien del alma mía,  
término y fin de todo mi deseo;  
ojos que serenáis el turbio día,  
ojos por quien yo veo si algo veo! 20  
En vuestra luz mi pena y mi alegría  
ha puesto amor; en vos contemplo y leo  
la dulce, amarga, verdadera historia

del cierto infierno, de mi incierta gloria.

En ciega oscuridad andaba cuando 25  
vuestra luz me faltaba, ¡oh bellos ojos!;  
acá y allá, sin ver el cielo, errando

entre agudas espinas y entre abrojos;  
mas luego, en el momento que tocando  
fueron al alma mía los manojos 30  
de vuestros rayos claros, vi a la clara  
la senda de mi bien abierta y clara.

Vi que sois y seréis, ojos serenos,  
quien me levanta y puede levantarme  
a que entre el corto número de buenos 35  
venga como mejor a señalarme.  
Esto podréis hacer no siendo ajenos  
y con pequeño acuerdo de mirarme,  
que el gusto del más bien enamorado  
consiste en el mirar y ser mirado. 40

Si esto es verdad, Silena, ¿quién ha sido,  
es ni será que, con firmeza pura,  
cual yo te quiera ni te habrá querido,  
por más que amor le ayude y la ventura?  
La gloria de tu vista he merecido 45  
por mi inviolable fe; mas es locura  
pensar que pueda merecerse aquello  
que apenas puede contemplarse en ello.

El canto y el camino acabó en un mismo punto el enamorado Lauso, el cual de todos los que con Silerio estaban fue amorosamente recibido, acrescentando con su presencia el alegría que todos tenían por el buen suceso que los trabajos de Silerio habían tenido. Y, estándoselos Damón contando, vieron asomar por junto a la ermita al venerable Aurelio, que, con algunos de sus pastores, traía algunos regalos con que regalar y satisfacer a los que allí estaban, como lo había prometido el día antes que dellos se partió. Maravillados quedaron Tirsi y Damón de verle venir sin Elicio y Erastro; y más lo fueron cuando vinieron a entender la causa del haberse quedado. Llegó Aurelio, y su llegada aumentara

más el contento de todos, si no dijera, encaminando su razón a Timbrio: -Si te precias, como es razón que te precies, valeroso Timbrio, de ser verdadero amigo del que lo es tuyo, agora es tiempo de mostrarlo, acudiendo a remediar a Darinto, que no lejos de aquí queda tan triste y apasionado, y tan fuera de admitir consuelo alguno en el dolor que padece, que algunos que yo le di no fueron parte para que él los tuviese por tales. Hallámosle Elicio, Erastro y yo, habrá dos horas, en medio de aquel monte que a esta mano derecha se descubre, el caballo arrendado a un pino, y él en el suelo boca abajo tendido, dando tiernos y dolorosos sospiros, y de cuando en cuando decía algunas palabras que a maldecir su ventura se encaminaban; al son lastimero de las cuales, llegamos a él, y con el rayo de la luna, aunque con dificultad, fue de nosotros conocido; e importunado que la causa de su mal nos dijese, díjonosla, y por ella entendimos el poco remedio que tenía. Con todo eso, se han quedado con él Elicio y Erastro, y yo he venido a darte las nuevas del término en que le tienen sus pensamientos; y, pues a ti te son tan manifiestos, procura remediarlos con obras, o acude a consolarlos con palabras.

-Palabras serán todas, buen Aurelio -respondió Timbrio-, las que yo en esto gastaré, si ya él no quiere aprovecharse de la ocasión del desengaño y disponer sus deseos a que el tiempo y la ausencia hagan en él sus acostumbrados efectos. Mas, porque no se piense que no correspondo a lo que a su amistad estoy obligado, enséñame, Aurelio, a qué parte le dejaste, que yo quiero ir luego a verle.

-Yo iré contigo -respondió Aurelio.

Y luego, al momento, se levantaron todos los pastores para acompañar a Timbrio y saber la causa del mal de Darinto, dejando a Silerio con Nísida y Blanca, con tanto contento de los tres que no se acertaban a hablar palabra. En el camino que había desde allí adonde Aurelio a Darinto había dejado, contó Timbrio a los que con él iban la ocasión de la pena de Darinto y el poco remedio que della se podría esperar, pues la hermosa Blanca, por quien él penaba, tenía ocupados sus deseos en su buen amigo Silerio; diciéndoles, asimesmo, que había de procurar con toda su industria y fuerzas que Silerio viniese en lo que Blanca deseaba, suplicándoles que todos fuesen en ayudar a favorecer su intención, porque, en dejando a Darinto, quería que todos a Silerio rogasen diese el sí de rescibir a Blanca por su ligítima esposa. Los pastores se ofrecieron de hacer lo que se les mandaba, y en estas pláticas llegaron adonde creyó Aurelio que Elicio, Darinto y Erastro estarían; pero no hallaron alguno, aunque rodearon y anduvieron gran parte de un pequeño bosque que allí estaba, de que no poco pesar rescibieron todos. Pero, estando en esto, oyeron un tan doloroso suspiro que les puso en confusión y deseo de saber quién le había dado; mas sacóles

presto desta duda otro que oyeron no menos triste que el pasado, y, acudiendo todos a aquella parte adonde el suspiro venía, vieron estar no lejos dellos, al pie de un crecido nogal, dos pastores: el uno sentado sobre la yerba verde, y el otro tendido en el suelo y la cabeza puesta sobre las rodillas del otro. Estaba el sentado con la cabeza inclinada, derramando lágrimas y mirando atentamente al que en las rodillas tenía; y, así por esto como por estar el otro con color perdida y rostro desmayado, no pudieron luego conocer quién era; mas, cuando más cerca llegaron, luego conocieron que los pastores eran Elicio y Erastro: Elicio, el desmayado, y Erastro, el lloroso. Grande admiración y tristeza causó en todos los que allí venían la triste semblanza de los dos lastimados pastores, por ser tan amigos suyos y por ignorar la causa que de tal modo los tenía; pero el que más se maravilló fue Aurelio, por ver que tan poco antes los había dejado en compañía de Darinto con muestras de todo placer y contento, como si él no hubiera sido la causa de toda su desdicha. Viendo, pues, Erastro, que los pastores a él se llegaban, estremeció a Elicio, diciéndole: -Vuelve en ti, lastimado pastor; levántate y busca lugar donde puedas a solas llorar tu desventura, que yo pienso hacer lo mismo hasta acabar la vida.

Y, diciendo esto, cogió con las dos manos la cabeza de Elicio, y, quitándola de sus rodillas, la puso en el suelo, sin que el pastor pudiese volver en su acuerdo; y, levantándose Erastro, volvía las espaldas para irse, si Tirsi y Damón y los demás pastores no se lo impidieran. Llegó Damón adonde Elicio estaba, y, tomándole entre los brazos, le hizo volver en sí. Abrió Elicio los ojos, y, porque conoció a todos los que allí estaban, tuvo cuenta con que su lengua, movida y forzada del dolor, no dijese algo que la causa dél manifestase; y, aunque ésta le fue preguntada por todos los pastores, jamás respondió sino que no sabía otra cosa de sí mismo sino que, estando hablando con Erastro, le había tomado un recio desmayo. Lo propio decía Erastro, y a esta causa los pastores dejaron de preguntarle más la causa de su pasión; antes, le rogaron que con ellos a la ermita de Silerio se volviese, y que desde allí le llevarían a la aldea o a su cabaña; mas no fue posible que con él esto se acabase, sino que le dejasen volver a la aldea. Viendo, pues, que ésta era su voluntad, no quisieron contradecírsela; antes, se ofrecieron de ir con él; pero de ninguno quiso compañía, ni la llevara si la porfía de su amigo Damón no le venciera; y así, se hubo de partir con él, dejando concertado Damón con Tirsi que se vieses aquella noche en el aldea o cabaña de Elicio, para dar orden de volverse a la suya. Aurelio y Timbrio preguntaron a Erastro por Darinto, el cual les respondió que, ansí como Aurelio se había apartado dellos, le tomó el desmayo a Elicio, y que entretanto que él le socorría, Darinto se había partido con toda priesa, y que nunca más le habían visto. Viendo, pues, Timbrio y los que con él venían que a Darinto no hallaban,

determinaron de volver a la ermita a rogar a Silerio aceptase a la hermosa Blanca por su esposa, y con esta intención se volvieron todos, excepto Erastro, que quiso seguir a su amigo Elicio. Y así, despidiéndose dellos, acompañado de solo su rabel, se apartó por el mismo camino que Elicio había ido, el cual, habiéndose un rato apartado con su amigo Damón de la demás compañía, con lágrimas en los ojos y con muestras de grandísima tristeza, así le comenzó a decir: -Bien sé, discreto Damón, que tienes de los efectos de amor tanta experiencia que no te maravillarás de los que agora pienso contarte, que son tales que, a la cuenta de mi opinión, los estimo y tengo por de los más desastrados que en el amor se hallan.

Damón, que no deseaba otra cosa que saber la causa del desmayo y tristeza suya, le aseguró que ninguna cosa le sería a él nueva, como tocase a los males que el amor suele hacer. Y así, Elicio, con este seguro, y con el mayor que de su amistad tenía, prosiguió diciendo: -Ya sabes, amigo Damón, cómo la buena suerte mía -que este nombre de buena le daré siempre, aunque me cueste la vida el haberla tenido-; digo, pues, que la buena suerte mía quiso, como todo el cielo y todas estas riberas saben, que yo amase, ¿qué digo amase?, que adorase a la sin par Galatea, con tan limpio y verdadero amor cual a su merecimiento se debe; juntamente te confieso, amigo, que, en todo el tiempo que ha que ella tiene noticia de mi cabal deseo, no ha correspondido a él con otras muestras que las generales que suele y debe dar un casto y agradecido pecho; y así, ha algunos años que, sustentada mi esperanza con una honesta correspondencia amorosa, he vivido tan alegre y satisfecho de mis pensamientos, que me juzgaba por el más dichoso pastor que jamás apascentó ganado, contentándome sólo de mirar a Galatea y de ver que, si no me quería, no me aborrecía, y que otro ningún pastor no se podría alabar que aun della fuese mirado; que no era poca satisfacción de mi deseo tener puestos mis pensamientos en tan segura parte que de otros algunos no me recelaba, confirmándome en esta verdad la opinión que conmigo tiene el valor de Galatea, que es tal, que no da lugar a que se le atreva el mismo atrevimiento. Contra este bien que tan a poca costa el amor me daba, contra esta gloria tan sin ofensa de Galatea gozada, contra este gusto tan justamente de mi deseo merecido, se ha dado hoy irrevocable sentencia: que el bien se acabe, que la gloria fenezca, que el gusto se cambie y que, finalmente, se concluya la tragedia de mi dolorosa vida. Porque sabrás, Damón, que esta mañana, viniendo con Aurelio, padre de Galatea, a buscaros a la ermita de Silerio, en el camino me dijo cómo tenía concertado de casar a Galatea con un pastor lusitano que en las riberas del blando Lima gran número de ganado apascienta. Pidióme que le dijese qué me parecía, porque, de la amistad que me tenía y de mi entendimiento, esperaba ser bien aconsejado. Lo que yo le respondí fue que me

parecía cosa recia poder acabar con su voluntad privarse de la vista de tan hermosa hija, desterrándola a tan apartadas tierras, y que si lo hacía llevado y cebado de las riquezas del extranjero pastor, que considerase que no carecía él tanto dellas que no tuviese para vivir en su lugar mejor que cuantos en él de ricos presumían, y que ninguno de los mejores de cuantos habitan las riberas de Tajo dejaría de tenerse por venturoso cuando alcanzase a Galatea por esposa. No fueron mal admitidas mis razones del venerable Aurelio; pero, en fin, se resolvió diciendo que el rabadán mayor de todos los aperos se lo mandaba, y él era el que lo había concertado y tratado, y que era imposible deshacerse. Preguntéle con qué semblante Galatea había rescibido las nuevas de su destierro. Díjome que se había conformado con su voluntad, y que disponía la suya a hacer todo lo que él quisiese, como obediente hija. Esto supe de Aurelio, y ésta es, Damón, la causa de mi desmayo, y la que será de mi muerte, pues de ver a Galatea en poder ajeno y ajena de mi vista, no se puede esperar otra cosa que el fin de mis días.

Acabó su razón el enamorado Elicio y comenzaron sus lágrimas, derramadas en tanta abundancia que, enternecido el pecho de su amigo Damón, no pudo dejar de acompañarle en ellas; más, a cabo de poco espacio, comenzó, con las mejores razones que supo, a consolar a Elicio; pero todas sus palabras en ser palabras paraban, sin que ningún otro efecto hiciesen. Todavía quedaron de acuerdo que Elicio a Galatea hablase y supiese della si de su voluntad consintía en el casamiento que su padre le trataba; y que, cuando no fuese con el gusto suyo, se le ofreciese de librarla de aquella fuerza, pues para ello no le faltaría ayuda. Parecióle bien a Elicio lo que Damón decía, y determinó de ir a buscar a Galatea, para declararle su voluntad y saber la que ella en su pecho encerraba. Y así, trocando el camino que de su cabaña llevaban, hacia el aldea se encaminaron; y, llegando a una encrucijada que junto a ella cuatro caminos dividía, por uno dellos vieron venir hasta ocho dispuestos pastores, todos con azagayas en las manos, excepto uno dellos, que a caballo venía sobre una hermosa yegua, vestido con un gabán morado, y los demás a pie, y todos rebozados los rostros con unos pañizuelos. Damón y Elicio se pararon hasta que los pastores pasasen, los cuales, pasando junto a ellos, bajando las cabezas, cortésmente les saludaron, sin que alguno alguna palabra hablase. Maravillados quedaron los dos de ver la estrañeza de los ocho, y estuvieron quedos por ver qué camino seguían; pero luego vieron que el de la aldea tomaban, aunque por otro diferente que por el que ellos iban. Dijo Damón a Elicio que los siguiesen, mas no quiso, diciendo que por aquel camino que él quería seguir, junto a una fuente que no lejos dél estaba, solía estar muchas veces Galatea con algunas pastoras del lugar, y que sería bien ver si la dicha se la ofrescía tan buena que allí la hallasen. Contentóse Damón de lo que Elicio quería; y así, le dijo que guiase

por do quisiese. Y sucedióle la suerte como él mismo se había imaginado, porque no anduvieron mucho cuando llegó a sus oídos la zampoña de Florisa, acompañada de la voz de la hermosa Galatea, que, como de los pastores fue oída, quedaron enajenados de sí mismos. Entonces acabó de conocer Damón cuánta verdad decían todos los que las gracias de Galatea alababan, la cual estaba en compañía de Rosaura y Florisa, y de la hermosa y recién casada Silveria, con otras dos pastoras de la misma aldea. Y, puesto que Galatea vio venir a los pastores, no por eso quiso dejar su comenzado canto; antes, pareció dar muestras de que recibía contento en que los pastores la escuchasen, los cuales así lo hicieron con toda la atención posible; y lo que alcanzaron a oír de lo que la pastora cantaba fue lo siguiente:

## GALATEA

¿A quién volveré los ojos  
en el mal que se apareja,

si, cuanto mi bien se aleja,  
se acercan más mis enojos?  
A duro mal me condena 5  
el dolor que me destierra,  
que si me acaba en mi tierra,  
¿qué bien me hará en el ajena?  
¡Oh justa amarga obediencia,  
que por cumplirte he de dar 10  
el sí que ha de confirmar  
de mi muerte la sentencia!  
Puesta estoy en tanta mengua,  
que por gran bien estimara  
que la vida me faltara, 15  
o, por lo menos, la lengua.  
Breves horas y cansadas  
fueron las de mi contento;  
eternas las del tormento,  
mas confusas y pesadas. 20  
Gocé de mi libertad  
en mi temprana sazón;

pero ya la subjeción

anda tras mi voluntad.

Ved si es el combate fiero 25

que dan a mi fantasía,

si al cabo de su porfía

he de querer y no quiero.

¡Oh fastidioso gobierno,

que a los respetos humanos 30

tengo de cruzar las manos

y abajar el cuello tierno!

¿Que tengo de despedirme

de ver el Tajo dorado?

¿Que ha de quedar mi ganado, 35

y yo, triste, he de partirme?

¿Que estos árboles sombríos

y estos anchos verdes prados

no serán ya más mirados

de los tristes ojos míos? 40

Severo padre, ¿qué haces?

Mira que es cosa sabida

que a mí me quitas la vida

con lo que a ti satisfaces.

Si mis suspiros no valen 45

a descubrirte mi mengua,

lo que no puede mi lengua

mis ojos te lo señalen.

Ya triste se me figura

el punto de mi partida, 50

la dulce gloria perdida

y la amarga sepultura.

El rostro que no se alegra

del no conocido esposo,

el camino trabajoso, 55

la antigua enfadosa suegra,

y otros mil inconvenientes,

todos para mí contrarios;

los gustos extraordinarios



del esposo y sus parientes. 60

Mas todos estos temores

que me figura mi suerte

se acabarán con la muerte,

que es el fin de los dolores.

No cantó más Galatea, porque las lágrimas que derramaba le impidieron la voz, y aun el contento a todos los que escuchado la habían, porque luego supieron claramente lo que en confuso imaginaban del casamiento de Galatea con el lusitano pastor, y cuán contra su voluntad se hacía; pero a quien más sus lágrimas y suspiros lastimaron fue a Elicio, que diera él por remediarlas su vida, si en ella consistiera el remedio dellas; pero, aprovechándose de su discreción y disimulando el rostro el dolor que el alma sentía, él y Damón se llegaron adonde las pastoras estaban, a las cuales cortésmente saludaron, y con no menos cortesía fueron dellas rescibidos. Preguntó luego Galatea a Damón por su padre, y respondióle que en la ermita de Silerio quedaba, en compañía de Timbrio y Nísida y de todos los otros pastores que a Timbrio acompañaron; y asimesmo le dio cuenta del conocimiento de Silerio y Timbrio y de los amores de Darinto y Blanca, la hermana de Nísida, con todas las particularidades que Timbrio había contado de lo que en el discurso de sus amores le había sucedido, a lo cual Galatea dijo: -Dichoso Timbrio y dichosa Nísida, pues en tanta felicidad han parado los desasosiegos hasta aquí padecidos, con la cual pondréis en olvido los pasados desastres; antes servirán ellos de acrescentar vuestra gloria, pues se suele decir que la memoria de las pasadas calamidades aumenta el contento en las alegrías presentes. Mas, ¡ay del alma desdichada que se vee puesta en términos de acordarse del bien perdido, y con temor del mal que está por venir, sin que vea ni halle remedio ni medio alguno para estorbar la desventura que le está amenazando, pues tanto más fatigan los dolores cuanto más se temen!

-Verdad dices, hermosa Galatea -dijo Damón-, que no hay duda sino que el repentino y no esperado dolor que viene no fatiga tanto, aunque sobresalta, como el que con largo discurso de tiempo amenaza y quita todos los caminos de remediarse. Pero, con todo eso, digo, Galatea, que no da el cielo tan apurados los males que quite de todo en todo el remedio dellos, principalmente cuando nos los deja ver primero, porque parece que entonces quiere dar lugar al discurso de nuestra razón para que se ejercite y ocupe en templar o desviar las venideras desdichas, y muchas veces se contenta de fatigarnos con sólo tener ocupados nuestros ánimos con algún espacioso temor, sin que se venga a la ejecución del

mal que se teme; y, cuando a ella se viniese, como no acabe la vida, ninguno, por ningún mal que padezca, debe desesperar del remedio.

-No dudo yo deso -replicó Galatea-, si fuesen tan ligeros los males que se temen o se padecen, que dejasen libre y desembarazado el discurso de nuestro entendimiento; pero bien sabes, Damón, que, cuando el mal es tal que se le puede dar este nombre, lo primero que hace es añublar nuestro sentido y aniquilar las fuerzas de nuestro albedrío, descaeciendo nuestra virtud de manera que apenas puede levantarse aunque más la solicite la esperanza.

-No sé yo, Galatea -respondió Damón-, cómo en tus verdes años puede caber tanta experiencia de los males, si no es que quieres que entendamos que tu mucha discreción se estiende a hablar por sciencia de las cosas; que, por otra manera, ninguna noticia dellas tienes.

-Pluguiera al cielo, discreto Damón -replicó Galatea-, que no pudiera contradecirte lo que dices, pues en ello granjeara dos cosas: quedar en la buena opinión que de mí tienes, y no sentir la pena que me hace hablar con tanta experiencia en ella.

Hasta este punto estuvo callando Elicio; pero, no pudiendo sufrir más ver a Galatea dar muestras del amargo dolor que padecía, le dijo: -Si imaginas, por ventura, sin par Galatea, que la desdicha que te amenaza puede por alguna ser remediada, por lo que debes a la voluntad que para servirte de mí tienes conocida, te ruego me la declares; y si esto no quisieres, por cumplir con lo que a la paternal obediencia debes, dame, a lo menos, licencia para que yo me oponga contra quien quisiere llevarnos destas riberas el tesoro de tu hermosura, que en ellas se ha criado. Y no entiendas, pastora, que presumo yo tanto de mí mismo, que solo me atreva a cumplir con las obras lo que agora por palabras te ofrezco; que, puesto que el amor que te tengo para mayor empresa me da aliento, desconfío de mi ventura; y así, la habré de poner en las manos de la razón y en las de todos los pastores que por estas riberas de Tajo apascientan sus ganados, los cuales no querrán consentir que se les arrebaté y quite delante de sus ojos el sol que los alumbra, y la discreción que los admira, y la belleza que los incita y anima a mil honrosas competencias. Ansí que, hermosa Galatea, en fe de la razón que he dicho y de la que tengo de adorarte, te hago este ofrescimiento, el cual te ha de obligar a que tu voluntad me descubras, para que yo no caiga en error de ir contra ella en cosa alguna; pero, considerando que la bondad y honestidad incomparable tuya te ha de mover a que correspondas antes al querer de tu padre que al tuyo, no quiero, pastora, que me le declares, sino tomar a mi cargo hacer lo que me pareciere, con presupuesto de mirar por tu honra con el cuidado que tú mesma has mirado siempre por ella.

Iba Galatea a responder a Elicio y a agradecerle su buen deseo, mas estorbólo

la repentina llegada de los ocho rebozados pastores que Damón y Elicio habían visto pasar poco antes hacia el aldea. Llegaron todos donde las pastoras estaban, y, sin hablar palabra, los seis dellos, con increíble celeridad, arremetieron a abrazarse con Damón y con Elicio, teniéndolos tan fuertemente apretados que en ninguna manera pudieron desasirse. En este entretanto, los otros dos, que era el uno el que a caballo venía, se fueron adonde Rosaura estaba dando gritos por la fuerza que a Damón y a Elicio se les hacía; pero, sin aprovecharle defensa alguna, uno de los pastores la tomó en brazos y púsola sobre la yegua y en los del que en ella venía, el cual, quitándose el rebozo, se volvió a los pastores y pastoras, diciendo: -No os maravilléis, buenos amigos, de la sinrazón que al parecer aquí se os ha hecho, porque la fuerza de amor y la ingratitud de esta dama han sido causa della; ruégoos me perdonéis, pues no está más en mi mano; y si por estas partes llegare, como creo que presto llegará, el conocido Grisaldo, diréisle cómo Artandro se lleva a Rosaura, porque no pudo sufrir ser burlado della; y que si el amor y esta injuria le movieren a querer vengarse, que ya sabe que Aragón es mi patria y el lugar donde vivo.

Estaba Rosaura desmayada sobre el arzón de la silla, y los demás pastores no querían dejar a Elicio ni a Damón, hasta que Artandro mandó que los dejaran, los cuales, viéndose libres, con valeroso ánimo sacaron sus cuchillos y arremetieron contra los siete pastores, los cuales todos juntos les pusieron las azagayas que traían a los pechos, diciéndoles que se tuviesen, pues veían cuán poco podían ganar en la empresa que tomaban.

-Harto menos podrá ganar Artandro -les respondió Elicio-en haber cometido tal traición.

-No la llames traición -respondió uno de los otros-, porque esta señora ha dado la palabra de ser esposa de Artandro, y agora, por cumplir con la condición mudable de mujer, la ha negado y entregádose a Grisaldo, que es agravio tan manifiesto, y tal, que no pudo ser disimulado de nuestro amo Artandro. Por eso, sosegaos, pastores, y tenednos en mejor opinión que hasta aquí, pues el servir a nuestro amo en tan justa ocasión nos disculpa.

Y, sin decir más, volvieron las espaldas, recelándose todavía de los malos semblantes con que Elicio y Damón quedaron, los cuales estaban con tanto enojo por no poder deshacer aquella fuerza, y por hallarse inhabilitados de vengarse de lo que a ellos se les hacía, que ni sabían qué decirse ni qué hacerse. Pero los extremos que Galatea y Florisa hacían, por ver llevar de aquella manera a Rosaura, eran tales, que movieron a Elicio a poner su vida en manifiesto peligro de perderla, porque, sacando su honda, y haciendo Damón lo mismo, a todo correr fue siguiendo a Artandro, y desde lejos, con mucho ánimo y destreza, comenzaron a tirarles tantas piedras que les hicieron detener y tornarse a poner

en defensa. Pero, con todo esto, no dejara de sucederles mal a los dos atrevidos pastores, si Artandro no mandara a los suyos que se adelantaran y los dejaran, como lo hicieron, hasta entrarse por un espeso montezuelo que a un lado del camino estaba, y con la defensa de los árboles hacían poco efecto las hondas y piedras de los enojados pastores. Y, con todo esto, los siguieran, si no vieran que Galatea y Florisa y las otras dos pastoras a más andar hacia donde ellos estaban se venían, y por esto se detuvieron, haciendo fuerza al enojo que los incitaba y a la deseada venganza que pretendían; y, adelantándose a rescebir a Galatea, ella les dijo: -Templad vuestra ira, gallardos pastores, pues a la ventaja de nuestros enemigos no puede igualar vuestra diligencia, aunque ha sido tal, cual nos la ha mostrado el valor de vuestros ánimos.

-El ver el tuyo descontento, Galatea -dijo Elicio-, creí yo que diera tales fuerzas al mío, que no se alabaran aquellos descomedidos pastores de la que nos han hecho; pero en mi ventura cabe no tenerla en cuanto deseo.

-El amoroso que Artandro tiene -dijo Galatea-fue el que le movió a tal descomedimiento; y así, conmigo en parte queda desculpado.

Y luego, punto por punto, les contó la historia de Rosaura, y cómo estaba esperando a Grisaldo para rescebirle por esposo, lo cual podría haber llegado a noticia de Artandro, y que la celosa rabia le hubiese movido a hacer lo que habían visto.

-Si así pasa como dices, discreta Galatea -dijo Damón-, del descuido de Grisaldo, y atrevimiento de Artandro, y mudable condición de Rosaura, temo que han de nacer algunas pesadumbres y diferencias.

-Eso fuera -respondió Galatea-cuando Artandro residiera en Castilla, pero si él se encierra en Aragón, que es su patria, quedarse ha Grisaldo con sólo el deseo de vengarse.

-¿No hay quien le pueda avisar deste agravio? -dijo Elicio.

-Sí -respondió Florisa-; que yo seguro que, antes que la noche llegue, él tenga dél noticia.

-Si eso así fuese -respondió Damón-, podría ser cobrar su prenda antes que a Aragón llegasen; porque un pecho enamorado no suele ser perezoso.

-No creo yo que lo será el de Grisaldo -dijo Florisa-; y, porque no le falte tiempo y ocasión para mostrarlo, suplicote, Galatea, que al aldea nos volvamos, porque yo quiero enviar a avisar a Grisaldo de su desdicha.

-Hágase como lo mandas, amiga -respondió Galatea-, que yo te daré un pastor que lleve la nueva.

Y con esto se querían despedir de Damón y de Elicio, si ellos no porfiaran a querer ir con ellas; y ya que se encaminaban al aldea, a su mano derecha sintieron la zampoña de Erastro, que luego de todos fue conocida, el cual venía

en seguimiento de su amigo Elicio. Paráronse a escucharlo, y oyeron que, con muestras de tierno dolor, esto venía cantando:

## ERASTRO

Por ásperos caminos voy siguiendo  
el fin dudoso de mi fantasía,  
siempre en cerrada noche oscura y fría  
las fuerzas de la vida consumiendo.

Y, aunque morir me veo, no pretendo 5  
salir un paso de la estrecha vía;  
que en fe de la alta fe sin igual mía,  
mayores miedos contrastar entiendo.

Mi fe es la luz que me señala el puerto  
seguro a mi tormenta, y sola es ella 10  
quien promete buen fin a mi viaje,

por más que el medio se me muestre incierto,  
por más que el claro rayo de mi estrella  
me encubra amor, y el cielo más me ultraje.

Con un profundo suspiro acabó el enamorado canto el lastimado pastor, y, creyendo que ninguno le oía, soltó la voz a semejantes razones: -¡Amor, cuya poderosa fuerza, sin hacer ninguna a mi alma, fue parte para que yo la tuviese de tener tan bien ocupados mis pensamientos! Ya que tanto bien me heciste, no quieras mostrarte agora, haciéndome el mal en que me amenazas, que es más mudable tu condición que la de la variable Fortuna. Mira, señor, cuán obediente he estado a tus leyes, cuán prompto a seguir tus mandamientos, y cuán subjeta he tenido mi voluntad a la tuya. Págame esta obediencia con hacer lo que a ti tanto importa que hagas: no permitas que estas riberas nuestras que den desamparadas de aquella hermosura que la ponía y la daba a sus frescas y menudas yerbas, a sus humildes plantas y levantados árboles; no consientas, señor, que al claro Tajo se le quite la prenda que le enriquece y por quien él tiene más fama que no por las arenas de oro que en su seno cría; no quites a los pastores destos prados la luz de sus ojos, la gloria de sus pensamientos y el honroso estímulo que a mil

honrosas y virtuosas empresas les incitaba. Considera bien que, si desta a la ajena tierra consientes que Galatea sea llevada, que te despojas del dominio que en estas riberas tienes, pues por Galatea sola le usas, y si ella falta, ten por averiguado que no serás en todos estos prados conocido, que todos cuantos en ellos habitan te negarán la obediencia y no te acudirán con el usado tributo. Advierte que lo que te suplico es tan conforme y llegado a razón, que irías de todo en todo fuera della si no me lo concedieses. Porque, ¿qué ley ordena, o qué razón consiente que la hermosura que nosotros criamos, la discreción que en estas selvas y aldeas nuestras tuvo principio, el donaire por particular don del cielo a nuestra patria concedido, agora que esperábamos coger el honesto fruto de tantos bienes y riquezas, se haya de llevar a estraños reinos, a ser poseído y tratado de ajenas y no conocidas manos? No, no quiera el cielo piadoso hacernos tan notable daño. ¡Oh verdes prados, que con su vista os alegrábades! ¡Oh flores olorosas, que de sus pies tocadas, de mayor fragancia érades llenas! ¡Oh plantas, oh árboles desta deleitosa selva!, haced todos, en la mejor forma que pudiéredes, aunque a vuestra naturaleza no se conceda, algún género de sentimiento que mueva al cielo a concederme lo que le suplico!

Decía esto derramando tantas lágrimas el enamorado pastor, que no pudo Galatea disimular las suyas, ni menos ninguno de los que con ella iban, haciendo todos un tan notable sentimiento, como si lloraran en las obsequias de su muerte. Llegó a este punto a ellos Erastro, a quien rescibieron con agradable comedimiento, el cual, como vio a Galatea con señales de haberle acompañado en las lágrimas, sin apartar los ojos della, la estuvo atento mirando por un rato, al cabo del cual dijo: -Agora acabo de conocer, Galatea, que ninguno de los humanos se escapa de los golpes de la variable Fortuna, pues tú, de quien yo entendía que, por particular privilegio, habías de estar esenta dellos, veo que con mayor ímpetu te acometen y fatigan, de donde averiguo que ha querido el cielo con un solo golpe lastimar a todos los que te conocen y a todos los que del valor tuyo tienen alguna noticia; pero, con todo eso, tengo esperanza que no se ha de estender tanto su rigor que lleve adelante la comenzada desgracia, viniendo tan en perjuicio de tu contento.

-Antes, por esa misma razón -respondió Galatea-estoy yo menos segura de mi desdicha, pues jamás la tuve en lo que desease; mas, porque no está bien a la honestidad de que me precio que tan a la clara descubra cuán por los cabellos me lleva tras sí la obediencia que a mis padres debo, ruégote, Erastro, que no me des ocasión de renovar mi sentimiento, ni de ti ni de otro alguno se trate cosa que antes de tiempo despierte en mí la memoria del disgusto que temo. Y con esto asimesmo os ruego, pastores, me dejéis adelantar a la aldea, porque, siendo avisado Grisaldo, le quede tiempo para satisfacerse del agravio que Artandro le

ha hecho.

Ignorante estaba Erastro del suceso de Artandro, pero la pastora Florisa, en breves razones, se lo contó todo; de que se maravilló Erastro, estimando que no debía de ser poco el valor de Artandro, pues a tan dificultosa empresa se había puesto. Querían ya los pastores hacer lo que Galatea les mandaba, si en aquella sazón no descubrieran toda la compañía de caballeros, pastores y damas que la noche antes en la ermita de Silerio se quedaron, los cuales, en señal de grandísimo contento, a la aldea se venían, trayendo consigo a Silerio con diferente traje y gusto que hasta allí había tenido, porque ya había dejado el de ermitaño, mudándole en el de alegre desposado, como ya lo era de la hermosa Blanca, con igual contento y satisfacción de entrambos y de sus buenos amigos Timbrio y Nísida, que se lo persuadieron, dando con aquel casamiento fin a todas sus miserias, y quietud y reposo a los pensamientos que por Nísida le fatigaban. Y así, con el regocijo que tal suceso les causaba, venían todos dando muestras dél con agradable música y discretas y amorosas canciones, de las cuales cesaron cuando vieron a Galatea y a los demás que con ella estaban, rescibiéndose unos a otros con mucho placer y comedimiento, dándole Galatea a Silerio el parabién de su suceso, y a la hermosa Blanca el de su desposorio; y lo mismo hicieron los pastores Damón, Elicio y Erastro, que en extremo a Silerio estaban aficionados. Luego que cesaron entre ellos los parabienes y cortesías, acordaron de proseguir su camino al aldea; y para entretenerle, rogó Tirsi a Timbrio que acabase el soneto que había comenzado a decir cuando de Silerio fue conocido; y, no escusándose Timbrio de hacerlo, al son de la flauta del celoso Orfinio, con estremada y suave voz, le cantó y acabó; que era éste:

## TIMBRIO

Tan bien fundada tengo la esperanza,  
que, aunque más sople riguroso viento,  
no podrá desdecir de su cimiento:  
tal fe, tal fuerza y tal valor alcanza.

Tan lejos voy de consentir mudanza   5  
en mi firme amoroso pensamiento,  
cuan cerca de acabar en mi tormento

antes la vida que la confianza.

Que si al contraste del amor vacila  
el pecho enamorado, no meresce 10  
del mismo amor la dulce paz tranquila.

Por esto el mío, que su fe engrandece,  
rabie Caribdis o amenace Cila,  
al mar se arroja y al amor se ofresce.

Pareció bien el soneto de Timbrio a los pastores, y no menos la gracia con que cantado le había, y fue de manera que le rogaron que otra alguna cosa dijese; mas escusóse con decir a su amigo Silerio respondiese por él en aquella causa, como lo había hecho siempre en otras más peligrosas. No pudo Silerio dejar de hacer lo que su amigo le mandaba; y así, con el gusto de verse en tan felice estado, al son de la mesma flauta de Orfinio, cantó lo que se sigue:

## SILERIO

Gracias al cielo doy, pues he escapado  
de los peligros deste mar incierto,

y al recogido favorable puerto,  
tan sin saber por dónde, he ya llegado.

Recójanse las velas del cuidado, 5  
repárese el navío pobre abierto,  
cumpla los votos quien con rostro muerto  
hizo promesas en el mar airado.

Beso la tierra, reverencio al cielo,  
mi suerte abrazo mejorada y buena, 10  
llamo dichoso a mi fatal destino,

y a la nueva sin par blanda cadena,  
con nuevo intento y amoroso celo,  
el lastimado cuello alegre inclino.



Acabó Silerio y rogó a Nísida fuese servida de alegrar aquellos campos con su canto, la cual, mirando a su querido Timbrio, con los ojos le pidió licencia para cumplir lo que Silerio le pedía; y, dándosela él ansimesmo con la vista, ella, sin más esperar, con mucho donaire y gracia, cesando el son de la flauta de Orfinio, al de la zampoña de Orompo, cantó este soneto: NÍSIDA

Voy contra la opinión de aquel que jura  
que jamás del amor llegó el contento  
a do llega el rigor de su tormento,  
por más que al bien ayude la ventura.

Yo sé qué es bien, yo sé qué es desventura, 5  
y sé de sus efectos claro, y siento  
que cuanto más destruye el pensamiento  
el mal de amor, el bien más lo asegura.

No el verme en brazos de la amarga muerte,  
por la mal referida triste nueva, 10  
ni a los cosarios bárbaros rendida,

fue dura pena, fue dolor tan fuerte,  
que agora no conozca y haga prueba  
que es más el gusto de mi alegre vida.

Admiradas quedaron Galatea y Florisa de la estremada voz de la hermosa Nísida, la cual, por parecerle que por entonces en cantar Timbrio y los de su parte habían tomado la mano, no quiso que su hermana quedase sin hacerlo; y así, sin importunarle mucho, con no menos gracia que Nísida, haciendo señal a Orfinio que su flauta tocase, al son della, cantó desta manera:

## BLANCA

Cual si estuviera en la arenosa Libia,  
o en la apartada Citia siempre helada,  
tal vez del frío temor me vi asaltada,  
y tal del fuego que jamás se entibia.

Mas la esperanza, que el dolor alivia, 5  
en uno y otro extremo, disfrazada  
tuvo la vida en su poder guardada,  
cuándo con fuerzas, cuándo flaca y tibia.

Pasó la furia del invierno helado,  
y, aunque el fuego de amor quedó en su punto, 10  
llegó la deseada primavera,

donde, en un solo venturoso punto,  
gozo del dulce fruto deseado,  
con largas pruebas de una fe sincera.

No menos contentó a los pastores la voz y lo que cantó Blanca, que todas las demás que habían oído. Y, ya que ellos querían dar muestras de que no toda la habilidad se encerraba en los cortesanos caballeros, y para esto, casi de un mismo pensamiento movidos, Orompo, Crisio, Orfinio y Marsilo comenzaban a templar sus instrumentos, les forzó a volver las cabezas un ruido que a sus espaldas sintieron, el cual causaba un pastor que con furia iba atravesando por las matas del verde bosque, el cual fue de todos conocido, que era el enamorado Lauso, de que se maravilló Tirsi, porque la noche antes se había despedido dél, diciendo que iba a un negocio que importaba el acabarle acabar su pesar y comenzar su gusto, y que, sin decirle más, con otro pastor su amigo se había partido, y que no sabía qué podía haberle sucedido agora, que con tanta priesa caminaba. Lo que Tirsi dijo movió a Damón a querer llamar a Lauso, y así, le dio voces que viniese; mas, viendo que no las oía y que ya a más andar iba traspuniendo un recuesto, con toda ligereza se adelantó, y desde encima de otro collado le tornó a llamar con mayores voces, las cuales oídas por Lauso, y conociendo quién le llamaba, no pudo dejar de volver, y, en llegando a Damón, le abrazó con señales de extraño contento, y tanto, que admiraron a Damón las muestras que de estar alegre daba; y así, le dijo: -¿Qué es esto, amigo Lauso? ¿Has, por ventura, alcanzado el fin de tus deseos, o hante desde ayer acá correspondido a ellos de manera que halles con facilidad lo que pretendes?

-Mucho mayor es el bien que traigo, Damón, verdadero amigo -respondió Lauso-, pues la causa que a otros suele ser desesperación y muerte, a mí me ha servido de esperanza y vida; y ésta ha sido de un desdén y desengaño, acompañado de un melindroso donaire que en mi pastora he visto, que me ha restituido a mi ser primero. Ya, ya, pastor, no siente mi trabajado cuello el pesado yugo amoroso, ya se han deshecho en mi sentido las encumbradas

máquinas de pensamientos que desvanecido me traían, ya tornaré a la perdida conversación de mis amigos, ya me parecerán lo que son las verdes yerbas y olorosas flores destos apacibles campos, ya tendrán treguas mis suspiros, vado mis lágrimas y quietud mis desasosiegos; porque consideres, Damón, si es causa ésta bastante para mostrarme alegre y regocijado.

-Sí es, Lauso -respondió Damón-, pero temo que alegría tan repentinamente nascida no ha de ser duradera, y tengo ya experiencia que todas las libertades que de desdenes son engendradas se deshacen como el humo, y torna luego la enamorada intención con mayor priesa a seguir sus intentos. Así que, amigo Lauso, plega al cielo que sea más firme tu contento de lo que yo imagino, y goces largos tiempos la libertad que pregonas; que no sólo me holgaría por lo que debo a nuestra amistad, sino por ver un no acostumbrado milagro en los deseos amorosos.

-Comoquiera que sea, Damón -respondió Lauso-, yo me siento agora libre y señor de mi voluntad; y, porque se satisfaga la tuya de ser verdad lo que digo, mira qué quieres que haga en prueba dello. ¿Quieres que me ausente? ¿Quieres que no visite más las cabañas donde imaginas que puede estar la causa de mis pasadas penas y presentes alegrías? Cualquiera cosa haré por satisfacerte.

-La importancia está en que tú, Lauso, estés satisfecho -respondió Damón-; y veré yo que lo estás cuando de aquí a seis días te vea en ese mismo propósito. Y por agora no quiero otra cosa de ti sino que dejes el camino que llevabas y te vengas conmigo adonde todos aquellos pastores y damas nos esperan, y que la alegría que traes la solemnices con entretenernos con tu canto mientras que al aldea llegamos.

Fue contento Lauso de hacer lo que Damón le mandaba, y así, volvió con él a tiempo que Tirsi estaba haciendo señas a Damón que se volviese; y, en llegando que él y Lauso llegaron, sin gastar palabras de comedimiento, Lauso dijo: -No vengo, señores, para menos que para fiestas y contentos; por eso, si le rescibiréis de escucharme, suene Marsilo su zampoña, y aparejaos a oír lo que jamás pensé que mi lengua tuviera ocasión de decirlo, ni aun mi pensamiento para imaginarlo.

Todos los pastores respondieron a una que les sería de gran gusto el oírle. Y luego Marsilo, con el deseo que tenía de escucharle, tocó su zampoña, al son de la cual Lauso comenzó a cantar desta manera:

## LAUSO

¡Con las rodillas en el suelo hincadas,  
las manos en humilde modo puestas  
y el corazón de un justo celo lleno,  
te adoro, desdén sancto, en quien cifradas 5  
están las causas de las dulces fiestas  
que gozo en tiempo sosegado y bueno!  
¡Tú del rigor del áspero veneno  
que el mal de amor encierra  
fuiste la cierta y presta medicina;  
tú mi total ruína 10  
volviste en bien, en sana paz mi guerra,  
y así como a mi rico almo tesoro,  
no una vez sola, mas cien mil te adoro!

Por ti la luz de mis cansados ojos,  
tanto tiempo turbada, y aun perdida, 15

al ser primero ha vuelto que tenía;  
por ti torno a gozar de los despojos  
que de mi voluntad y de mi vida  
llevó de amor la antigua tiranía;  
por ti la noche de mi error en día 20  
de sereno discurso  
se ha vuelto, y la razón, que antes estaba  
en posesión de esclava,  
con sosegado y advertido curso,  
siendo agora señora, me conduce 25  
do el bien eterno más se muestra y luce.

Mostrásteme, desdén, cuán engañosas,  
cuán falsas y fingidas habían sido  
las señales de amor que me mostraban,  
y que aquellas palabras amorosas, 30  
que tanto regalaban el oído  
y al alma de sí mesma enajenaban,  
en falsedad y en burla se forjaban,  
y el regalado y tierno  
mirar de aquellos ojos sólo era 35  
porque mi primavera

se convirtiese en desabrido invierno,

cuando llegase el claro desengaño;  
mas tú, dulce desdén, curaste el daño.

¡Desdén, que sueles ser espuela aguda 40  
que hace caminar al pensamiento  
tras la amorosa deseada empresa!  
En mí tu efecto y condición se muda,  
que yo por ti me aparto del intento  
tras quien corría con no vista priesa, 45  
y, aunque contino el fiero amor no cesa,  
mal de mí satisfecho,  
tender de nuevo el lazo por cogerme,  
y por más ofenderme,  
encarar mil saetas a mi pecho, 50  
tú, desdén, solo, sólo tú bien puedes  
romper sus flechas y rasgar sus redes.

No era mi amor tan flaco, aunque sencillo,  
que pudiera un desdén echarle a tierra;  
cien mil han sido menester primero: 55  
que fue, cual suele, sin poder sufrillo,  
venir al suelo el pino que le atierra,  
en virtud de otros golpes, el postrero.

Grave desdén, de parecer severo,  
en desamor fundado 60  
y en poca estimación de ajena suerte:  
dulce me ha sido el verte,  
el oírte y tocarte, y que gustado  
haya sido del alma en coyuntura  
que derribas y acabas mi locura. 65

Derribas mi locura y das la mano  
al ingenio, desdén, que se levante  
y sacuda de sí el pesado sueño,  
para que con mejor intento sano,  
nuevas grandezas, nuevos loores cante 70

de otro, si le halla, agradescido dueño.  
Tú has quitado las fuerzas al beleño  
con que el amor ingrato  
adormecía a mi virtud doliente,  
y con la tuya ardiente, 75  
soy reducido a nueva vida y trato:  
que ahora entiendo que yo soy quien puedo  
temer con tasa, y esperar sin miedo.

No cantó más Lauso, aunque bastó lo que cantado había para poner admiración en los presentes; que, como todos sabían que el día antes estaba tan enamorado y tan contento de estarlo, maravillábales verle en tan pequeño espacio de tiempo tan mudado y tan otro del que solía. Y, considerando bien esto, su amigo Tirsi le dijo: -No sé si te dé el parabién, amigo Lauso, del bien en tan breves horas alcanzado, porque temo que no debe de ser tan firme y seguro como tú imaginas; pero todavía me huelgo de que goces, aunque sea pequeño espacio, del gusto que acarrea al alma la libertad alcanzada, pues podría ser que, conociendo ahora en lo que se debe estimar, aunque tornases de nuevo a las rotas cadenas y lazos, hicieses más fuerza para romperlos, atraído de la dulzura y regalo que goza un libre entendimiento y una voluntad desapasionada.

-No tengas temor alguno, discreto Tirsi -respondió Lauso-, que ninguna otra nueva asechanza sea bastante a que yo torne a poner los pies en el cepo amoroso, ni me tengas por tan liviano y antojadizo que no me haya costado ponerme en el estado en que estoy infinitas consideraciones, mil averiguadas sospechas y mil cumplidas promesas hechas al cielo porque a la perdida luz me tornase; y, pues en ella veo ahora cuán poco antes veía, yo procuraré conservarla en el mejor modo que pudiere.

-Ninguno otro será tan bueno -dijo Tirsi- como no volver a mirar lo que atrás dejas, porque perderás, si vuelves, la libertad que tanto te ha costado, y quedarás cual quedó aquel incauto amante, con nuevas ocasiones de perpetuo llanto. Y ten por cierto, Lauso amigo, que no hay tan enamorado pecho en el mundo, a quien los desdenes y arrogancias escusadas no entibien y aun le hagan retirar de sus mal colocados pensamientos; y háceme creer más esta verdad saber yo quién es Silena, aunque tú jamás no me lo has dicho, y saber ansimesmo la mudable condición suya, sus acelerados ímpetus y la llaneza, por no darle otro nombre, de sus deseos; cosas que, a no templarlas y disfrazarlas con la sin igual hermosura de que el cielo la ha dotado, fuera por ellas de todo el mundo aborrescida.

-Verdad dices, Tirsi -respondió Lauso-, porque, sin duda alguna, la singular belleza suya y las apariencias de la incomparable honestidad de que se arrea, son

partes para que no sólo sea querida, sino adorada de todos cuantos la miraren; y así, no debe maravillarse alguno que la libre voluntad mía se haya rendido a tan fuertes y poderosos contrarios: sólo es justo que se maraville de cómo me he podido escapar dellos, que, puesto que salgo de sus manos tan maltratado, estragada la voluntad, turbado el entendimiento, descaecida la memoria, todavía me parece que puedo triunfar de la batalla.

No pasaron más adelante en su plática los dos pastores, porque a este punto vieron que, por el mismo camino que ellos iban, venía una hermosa pastora, y poco desviado della un pastor, que luego fue conocido que era el anciano Arsindo, y la pastora era la hermana de Galercio, Maurisa; la cual, como fue conocida de Galatea y de Florisa, entendieron que con algún recaudo de Grisaldo para Rosaura venía; y, adelantándose las dos a rescebir la, Maurisa llegó a abrazar a Galatea, y el anciano Arsindo saludó a todos los pastores y abrazó a su amigo Lauso, el cual estaba con grande deseo de saber lo que Arsindo había hecho después que le dijeron que en seguimiento de Maurisa se había partido; y, viéndole agora volver con ella, luego comenzó a perder con él y con todos el crédito que sus blancas canas le habían adquirido; y aun le acabara de perder, si los que allí venían no supieran tan de experiencia adónde y a cuánto la fuerza del amor se extendía; y así, en los mismos que le culpaban halló la disculpa de su yerro. Y parece que, adivinando Arsindo lo que los pastores dél adivinaban, como en satisfacción y disculpa de su cuidado, les dijo: -Oíd, pastores, uno de los más estraños sucesos amorosos que por largos años en estas nuestra riberas ni en las ajenas se habrá visto. Bien creo que conocéis y conocemos todos al nombrado pastor Lenio, aquel cuya desamorada condición le adquirió renombre de desamorado; aquel que no ha muchos días que, por sólo decir mal de amor, osó tomar competencia con el famoso Tirsi, que está presente; aquel, digo, que jamás supo mover la lengua que para decir mal de amor no fuese; aquel que con tantas veras reprehendía a los que de la amorosa dolencia veía lastimados. Éste, pues, tan declarado enemigo del amor, ha venido a término que tengo por cierto que no tiene el amor quien con más veras le siga, ni aun él tiene vasallo a quien más persiga, porque le ha hecho enamorar de la desamorada Gelasia, aquella cruel pastora que al hermano desta -señalando a Maurisa-, que tanto en la condición se le parece, tuvo el otro día, como vistes, con el cordel a la garganta, para fenecer a manos de su crueldad sus cortos y mal logrados días. Digo, en fin, pastores, que Lenio el desamorado muere por la endurecida Gelasia, y por ella llena el aire de suspiros y la tierra de lágrimas; y lo que hay más malo en esto es que me parece que el amor ha querido vengarse del rebelde corazón de Lenio, rindiéndole a la más dura y esquiva pastora que se ha visto, y conociéndolo él, procura agora en cuanto dice y hace reconciliarse con el amor, y por los mismos

términos que antes le vituperaba, ahora le ensalza y honra; y, con todo esto, ni el amor se mueve a favorecerle, ni Gelasia se inclina a remediarle, como lo he visto por los ojos, pues no ha muchas horas que, viniendo yo en compañía desta pastora, le hallamos en la fuente de las Pizarras, tendido en el suelo, cubierto el rostro de un sudor frío y anhelando el pecho con una estraña priesa. Lleguéme a él y conocíle, y con el agua de la fuente le rocié el rostro, con que cobró los perdidos espíritus; y, sentándome junto a él, le pregunté la causa de su dolor, la cual él me dijo sin faltar punto, contándomela con tan tierno sentimiento que le puso en esta pastora, en quien creo que jamás cupo señal de compasión alguna. Encarecióme la crueldad de Gelasia y el amor que la tenía, y la sospecha que en él reinaba de que el amor le había traído a tal estado por vengarse en un solo punto de las muchas ofensas que le había hecho. Consoléle yo lo mejor que supe, y, dejándole libre del pasado parasismo, vengo acompañando a esta pastora, y a buscarte a ti, Lauso, para que si fueres servido, volvamos a nuestras cabañas, pues ha ya diez días que dellas nos partimos, y podrá ser que nuestros ganados sientan el ausencia nuestra más que nosotros la suya.

-No sé si te responda, Arsindo -respondió Lauso-, que creo que más por cumplimiento que por otra cosa me convidas a que a nuestras cabañas nos volvamos, teniendo tanto que hacer en las ajenas, cuanto la ausencia que de mí has hecho estos días lo ha mostrado. Pero, dejando lo más que en esto te pudiera decir para mejor sazón y coyuntura, tórname a decir si es verdad lo que de Lenio dices, porque, si así es, podré yo afirmar que ha hecho amor en estos días de los mayores milagros que en todos los de su vida ha hecho, como son rendir y avasallar el duro corazón de Lenio y poner en libertad el tan sujeto mío.

-Mira lo que dices -dijo entonces Orompo-, amigo Lauso, que si el amor te tenía sujeto, como hasta aquí has significado, ¿cómo el mismo amor ahora te ha puesto en la libertad que publicas?

-Si me quieres entender, Orompo -replicó Lauso-, verás que en nada me contradigo, porque digo, o quiero decir, que el amor que reinaba y reina en el pecho de aquella a quien yo tan en extremo quería, como se encamina a diferente intento que el mío, puesto que todo es amor, el efecto que en mí ha hecho es ponerme en libertad, y a Lenio en servidumbre; y no me hagas, Orompo, que cuente con éstos otros milagros.

Y, diciendo esto, volvió los ojos a mirar al anciano Arsindo, y con ellos dijo lo que con la lengua callaba, porque todos entendieron que el tercero milagro que pudiera contar fuera ver enamoradas las canas de Arsindo de los pocos y verdes años de Maurisa, la cual todo este tiempo estuvo hablando aparte con Galatea y Florisa, diciéndoles cómo otro día sería Grisaldo en el aldea en hábito de pastor, y que allí pensaba desposarse con Rosaura en secreto, porque en público no



podía, a causa que los parientes de Leopersia, con quien su padre tenía concertado de casarle, habían sabido que Grisaldo quería faltar en la prometida palabra, y en ninguna manera querían que tal agravio se les hiciese; pero que, con todo esto, estaba Grisaldo determinado de corresponder antes a lo que a Rosaura debía, que no a la obligación en que a su padre estaba.

-Todo esto que os he dicho, pastoras -prosiguió Maurisa-, mi hermano Galercio me dijo que os lo dijese, el cual a vosotras con este recaudo venía; pero la cruel Gelasia, cuya hermosura lleva siempre tras sí el alma de mi desdichado hermano, fue la causa que él no pudiese venir a deciros lo que he dicho, pues, por seguir a ella, dejó de seguir el camino que traía, fiándose de mí como de hermana. Ya habéis entendido, pastoras, a lo que vengo; decidme dó está Rosaura, para decíselo, o decídselo vosotras, porque la angustia en que mi hermano queda puesto no consiente que un punto más aquí me detenga.

En tanto que la pastora esto decía, estaba Galatea considerando la amarga respuesta que pensaba darle, y las tristes nuevas que habían de llegar a los oídos del desdichado Grisaldo; pero, viendo que no escusaba de darlas y que era peor detenerla, luego le contó todo lo que a Rosaura había sucedido, y cómo Artandro la llevaba, de que quedó maravillada Maurisa; y al instante quisiera dar la vuelta a avisar a Grisaldo, si Galatea no la detuviera, preguntándole qué se habían hecho las dos pastoras que con ella y con Galercio se habían ido, a lo que respondió Maurisa: -Cosas te pudiera contar dellas, Galatea, que te pusieran en mayor admiración que no en la en que a mí me ha puesto el suceso de Rosaura, pero el tiempo no me da lugar a ello; sólo te digo que la que se llamaba Leonarda se ha desposado con mi hermano Artidoro por el más sutil engaño que jamás se ha visto, y Teolinda, la otra, está en término de acabar la vida o de perder el juicio, y sólo la entretiene la vista de Galercio, que, como se parece tanto a la de mi hermano Artidoro, no se aparta un punto de su compañía, cosa que es a Galercio tan pesada y enojosa, cuanto le es dulce y agradable la compañía de la cruel Gelasia. El modo como esto pasó te contaré más despacio, cuando otra vez nos veamos, porque no será razón que por mi tardanza se impida el remedio que Grisaldo puede tener en su desgracia, usando en remediarla la diligencia posible, porque si no ha más que esta mañana que Artandro robó a Rosaura, no se podrá haber alejado tanto destas riberas que quite la esperanza a Grisaldo de cobrarla, y más si yo aguijo los pies, como pienso.

Parecióle bien a Galatea lo que Maurisa decía; y así, no quiso más detenerla; sólo le rogó que fuese servida de tornarla a ver lo más presto que pudiese, para contarle el suceso de Teolinda y lo que haría en el hecho de Rosaura. La pastora se lo prometió, y, sin más detenerse, despidiéndose de los que allí estaban, se volvió a su aldea, dejando a todos satisfechos de su donaire y hermosura; pero

quien más sintió su partida fue el anciano Arsindo, el cual, por no dar claras muestras de su deseo, se hubo de quedar tan solo sin Maurisa, cuanto acompañado de sus pensamientos. Quedaron también las pastoras suspensas de lo que de Teolinda habían oído, y en extremo deseaban saber su suceso. Y, estando en esto, oyeron el claro son de una bocina que a su diestra mano sonaba, y, volviendo los ojos a aquella parte, vieron encima de un recuesto algo levantado dos ancianos pastores, que en medio tenían un antiguo sacerdote, que luego conocieron ser el anciano Telesio; y, habiendo uno de los pastores tocado otra vez la bocina, todos tres se bajaron del recuesto y se encaminaron hacia otro que allí junto estaba, donde subidos, de nuevo tornaron a tocarla, a cuyo son de diferentes partes se comenzaron a mover muchos pastores, para venir a ver lo que Telesio quería, porque con aquella señal solía él convocar todos los pastores de aquella ribera cuando quería hacerles algún provechoso razonamiento, o decirles la muerte de algún conocido pastor de aquellos contornos, o para traerles a la memoria el día de alguna solemne fiesta o el de algunas tristes obsequias. Tiniendo, pues, Aurelio, y casi los más pastores que allí venían, conocida la costumbre y condición de Telesio, todos se fueron acercando adonde él estaba, y cuando llegaron, ya se habían juntado. Pero, como Telesio vio venir tantas gentes y conoció cuán principales todos eran, bajando de la cuesta, los fue a recibir con mucho amor y cortesía, y con la misma fue de todos rescibido, y, llegándose Aurelio a Telesio, le dijo: -Cuéntanos, si fueres servido, honrado y venerable Telesio, qué nueva causa te mueve a querer juntar los pastores destos prados. ¿Es, por ventura, de alegres fiestas o de tristes y fúnebres sucesos? ¿O quiéresnos mostrar alguna cosa perteneciente al mejoramiento de nuestras vidas? Dinos, Telesio, lo que tu voluntad ordena, pues sabes que no saldrán las nuestras de todo aquello que la tuya quisiere.

-Págueos el cielo, pastores -respondió Telesio-, la sinceridad de vuestras intenciones, pues tanto se conforman con la de aquel que sólo vuestro bien y provecho pretende. Mas, por satisfacer el deseo que tenéis de saber lo que quiero, quiéroos traer a la memoria la que debéis tener perpetuamente del valor y fama del famoso y aventajado pastor Meliso, cuyas dolorosas obsequias se renuevan y se irán renovando de año en año tal día como mañana, en tanto que en nuestras riberas hubiere pastores y en nuestras almas no faltare el conocimiento de lo que se debe a la bondad y valor de Meliso. A lo menos, de mí os sé decir que, en tanto que la vida me durare, no dejaré de acordaros a su tiempo la obligación en que os tiene puestos la habilidad, cortesía y virtud del sin par Meliso; y así, agora os la acuerdo, y os advierto que mañana es el día en que se ha de renovar el desdichado, donde tanto bien perdimos, como fue perder la agradable presencia del prudente pastor Meliso. Por lo que a la bondad suya

debéis, y por lo que a la intención que tengo de serviros estáis obligados, os ruego, pastores, que mañana, al romper del día, os halléis todos en el Valle de los Cipreses, donde está el sepulcro de las honradas cenizas de Meliso, para que allí, con tristes cantos y piadosos sacrificios, procuremos alegerar la pena, si alguna padece, a aquella venturosa alma, que en tanta soledad nos ha dejado.

Y, diciendo esto, con el tierno sentimiento que la memoria de la muerte de Meliso le causaba, sus venerables ojos se llenaron de lágrimas, acompañándole en ellas casi los más de los circunstantes; los cuales, todos de una misma conformidad, se ofrecieron de acudir otro día adonde Telesio les mandaba, y lo mismo hicieron Timbrio y Silerio, Nísida y Blanca, por parecerles que no sería bien dejar de hallarse en ocasión tan piadosa y en junta de tan célebres pastores como allí imaginaron que se juntarían. Con esto se despidieron de Telesio y tornaron a seguir el comenzado camino de la aldea; mas no se habían apartado mucho de aquel lugar, cuando vieron venir hacia ellos al desamorado Lenio, con semblante tan triste y pensativo que puso admiración en todos; y tan transportado en sus imaginaciones venía, que pasó lado con lado de los pastores, sin que los viese; antes, torciendo el camino a la izquierda mano, no hubo andado muchos pasos, cuando se arrojó al pie de un verde sauce, y, dando un recio y profundo suspiro, levantó la mano, y, puniéndola por el collar del pellico, tiró tan recio que le hizo pedazos hasta abajo, y luego se quitó el zurrón del lado, y, sacando dél un pulido rabel, con grande atención y sosiego se le puso a templar, y, a cabo de poco espacio, con lastimada y concertada voz, comenzó a cantar, de manera que forzó a todos los que le habían visto a que se parasen a escucharle hasta el fin de su canto, que fue éste:

## LENIO

¡Dulce amor, ya me arrepiento  
de mis pasadas porfías;  
ya de hoy más confieso y siento  
que fue sobre burlerías  
levantado su cimiento; 5  
ya el rebelde cuello erguido  
humilde pongo y rendido  
al yugo de tu obediencia;  
ya conozco la potencia  
de tu valor estendido! 10

Sé que puedes cuanto quieres,  
y que quieres lo imposible;  
sé que muestras bien quién eres  
en tu condición terrible,  
en tus penas y placeres; 15

y sé, en fin, que yo soy quien  
tuvo siempre a mal tu bien,  
tu engaño por desengaño,  
tus certezas por engaño,  
por caricias tu desdén. 20

Estas cosas, bien sabidas,  
han agora descubierto  
en mis entrañas rendidas  
que tú solo eres el puerto  
do descansan nuestras vidas; 25  
tú la implacable tormenta  
que al alma más atormenta  
vuelves en serena calma;  
tú eres gusto y luz del alma,  
y manjar que la sustenta. 30

Pues esto juzgo y confieso,  
aunque tarde vengo en ello,  
tiempla tu rigor y exceso,  
amor, y del flaco cuello  
aligera un poco el peso. 35  
Al ya rendido enemigo,

no se ha de dar el castigo  
como a aquél que se defiende;  
cuanto más, que aquí se ofende  
quien ya quiere ser tu amigo. 40

Salgo de la pertinacia  
do me tuvo mi malicia  
y el estar en tu desgracia,

y apelo de tu justicia  
ante el rostro de tu gracia; 45  
que si a mi poco valor  
no le quilata en favor  
de tu gracia conocida,  
presto dejaré la vida  
en las manos del dolor. 50

Las de Gelasia me han puesto  
en tan estraña agonía,  
que si más porfía en esto,  
mi dolor y su porfía  
sé que acabarán bien presto. 55  
¡Oh dura Gelasia, esquiva,  
zahareña, dura, altiva!,

¿por qué gustas, di, pastora,  
que el corazón que te adora  
en tantos tormentos viva? 60

Poco fue lo que cantó Lenio, pero lo que lloró fue tanto que allí quedara deshecho en lágrimas, si los pastores no acudieran a consolarle. Mas, como él los vio venir, y conoció entre ellos a Tirsi, sin más detenerse, se levantó y fue a arrojar a sus pies, abrazándole estrechamente las rodillas; y, sin dejar las lágrimas, le dijo: -Ahora puedes, famoso pastor, tomar justa venganza del atrevimiento que tuve de competir contigo, defendiendo la injusta causa que mi ignorancia me proponía. Ahora digo que puedes levantar el brazo y con algún agudo cuchillo traspasar este corazón, donde cupo tan notoria simpleza como era no tener al amor por universal señor del mundo. Pero de una cosa te quiero advertir: que si quieres tomar al justo la venganza de mi yerro, que me dejes con la vida que sostengo, que es tal, que no hay muerte que se le compare.

Había ya Tirsi levantado del suelo al lastimado Lenio, y, teniéndole abrazado, con discretas y amorosas palabras procuraba consolarle, diciéndole: -La mayor culpa que hay en las culpas, Lenio amigo, es el estar pertinaces en ellas, porque es de condición de demonios el nunca arrepentirse de los yerros cometidos, y, asimesmo, una de las principales causas que mueve y fuerza a perdonar las ofensas es ver el ofendido arrepentimiento en el que ofende; y más cuando está el perdonar en manos de quien no hace nada en hacerlo, pues su noble condición le tira y compele a que lo haga, quedando más rico y satisfecho con el perdón

que con la venganza, como se ve esto a cada paso en los grandes señores y reyes, que más gloria granjean en perdonar las injurias que en vengarlas. Y, pues tú, Lenio, confiesas el error en que has estado, y conoces agora las poderosas fuerzas del amor, y entiendes dél que es señor universal de nuestros corazones, por este nuevo conocimiento, y por el arrepentimiento que tienes, puedes estar confiado y vivir seguro que el generoso y blando amor te reducirá presto a sosegada y amorosa vida; que si ahora te castiga con darte la penosa que tienes, hácelo porque le conozcas y porque después tengas y estimes en más la alegre que sin duda piensa darte.

A estas razones añadieron otras muchas Elicio y los demás pastores que allí estaban, con las cuales pareció que quedó Lenio algo más consolado. Y luego les contó cómo moría por la cruel pastora Gelasia, exagerándoles la esquiva y desamorada condición suya, y cuán libre y esenta estaba de pensar en ningún efecto amoroso, encareciéndoles también el insufrible tormento que por ella el gentil pastor Galercio padecía; de quien ella hacía tan poco caso, que mil veces le había puesto en términos de desesperarse. Mas, después que por un rato en estas cosas hubieron razonado, tornaron a seguir su camino, llevando consigo a Lenio; y, sin sucederles otra cosa, llegaron al aldea, llevándose consigo Elicio a Tirsi, Damón, Erastro, Lauso y Arsindo. Con Daranio se fueron Crisio, Orfinio, Marsilo y Orompo. Florisa y las otras pastoras se fueron con Galatea y con su padre, Aurelio, quedando primero concertado que otro día, al salir del alba, se juntasen para ir al valle de los Cipreses, como Telesio les había mandado, para celebrar las obsequias de Meliso, en las cuales, como ya está dicho, quisieron hallarse Timbrio, Silerio, Nísida y Blanca, que con el venerable Aurelio aquella noche se fueron.

## **FIN DEL LIBRO QUINTO**

## Sexto y último libro de Galatea

APENAS habían los rayos del dorado Febo comenzado a dispuntar por la más baja línea de nuestro horizonte, cuando el anciano y venerable Telesio hizo llegar a los oídos de todos los que en el aldea estaban el lastimero son de su bocina, señal que movió a los que le escucharon a dejar el reposo de los pastorales lechos y acudir a lo que Telesio pedía. Pero los primeros que en esto tomaron la mano fueron Elicio, Aurelio, Daranio y todos los pastores y pastoras que con ellos estaban, no faltando las hermosas Nísida y Blanca y los venturosos Timbrio y Silerio, con otra cantidad de gallardos pastores y bellas pastoras que a ellos se juntaron y al número de treinta llegarían, entre los cuales iban la sin par Galatea, nuevo milagro de hermosura, y la recién desposada Silveria, la cual llevaba consigo a la hermosa y zahareña Belisa, por quien el pastor Marsilo tan amorosas y mortales angustias padecía. Había venido Belisa a visitar a Silveria y darle el parabién del nuevo rescibido estado, y quiso ansimesmo hallarse en tan célebres obsequias como esperaba serían las que tantos y tan famosos pastores celebraban.

Salieron, pues, todos juntos de la aldea, fuera de la cual hallaron a Telesio con otros muchos pastores que le acompañaban, todos vestidos y adornados de manera que bien mostraban que para triste y lamentable negocio habían sido juntados. Ordenó luego Telesio, porque con intenciones más puras y pensamientos más reposados se hiciesen aquel día los solemnes sacrificios, que todos los pastores fuesen juntos por su parte y desviados de las pastoras, y que ellas lo mismo hiciesen, de que los menos quedaron contentos y los más no muy satisfechos, especialmente el apasionado Marsilo, que ya había visto a la desamorada Belisa, con cuya vista quedó tan fuera de sí y tan suspenso, cual lo conocieron bien sus amigos Orompo, Crisio y Orfinio, los cuales, viéndole tal, se llegaron a él, y Orompo le dijo: -Esfuerza, amigo Marsilo, esfuerza y no des ocasión con tu desmayo a que se descubra el poco valor de tu pecho. ¿Qué sabes si el cielo, movido a compasión de tu pena, ha traído a tal tiempo a estas riberas a la pastora Belisa para que las remedie?

-Antes para más acabarme, a lo que yo creo -respondió Marsilo-, habrá ella venido a este lugar, que de mi ventura esto y más se debe temer; pero yo haré, Orompo, lo que mandas, si acaso puede conmigo en este duro trance más la razón que mi sentimiento.

Y con esto volvió algo más en sí Marsilo, y luego los pastores por una parte y

las pastoras por otra, como de Telesio estaba ordenado, se comenzaron a encaminar al Valle de los Cipreses, llevando todos un maravilloso silencio, hasta que, admirado Timbrio de ver la frescura y belleza del claro Tajo, por do caminaba, vuelto a Elicio, que al lado le venía, le dijo: -No poca maravilla me causa, Elicio, la incomparable belleza destas frescas riberas; y no sin razón, porque quien ha visto, como yo, las espaciosas del nombrado Betis y las que visten y adornan al famoso Ebro y al conocido Pisuerga, y en las apartadas tierras ha paseado las del sancto Tíber y las amenas del Po, celebrado por la caída del atrevido mozo, sin dejar de haber rodeado las frescuras del apascible Sebeto, grande ocasión había de ser la que a maravilla me moviese de ver otras algunas.

-No vas tan fuera de camino en lo que dices, según yo creo, discreto Timbrio -respondió Elicio-, que con los ojos no veas la razón que de decirlo tienes; porque, sin duda, puedes creer que la amenidad y frescura de las riberas deste río hace notoria y conocida ventaja a todas las que has nombrado, aunque entrase en ellas las del apartado Janto, y del conocido Anfriso y el enamorado Alfeo; porque tiene y ha hecho cierto la experiencia que, casi por derecha línea, encima de la mayor parte destas riberas se muestra un cielo luciente y claro, que con un largo movimiento y con vivo resplandor, parece que convida a regocijo y gusto al corazón que dél está más ajeno. Y si ello es verdad que las estrellas y el sol se mantienen, como algunos dicen, de las aguas de acá bajo, creo firmemente que las deste río sean en gran parte ocasión de causar la belleza del cielo que le cubre, o creeré que Dios, por la misma razón que dicen que mora en los cielos, en esta parte haga lo más de su habitación. La tierra que lo abraza, vestida de mil verdes ornamentos, parece que hace fiesta y se alegra de poseer en sí un don tan raro y agradable, y el dorado río, como en cambio, en los abrazos della dulcemente entretejiéndose, forma como de industria mil entradas y salidas, que a cualquiera que las mira llenan el alma de placer maravilloso, de donde nasce que, aunque los ojos tornen de nuevo muchas veces a mirarle, no por eso dejan de hallar en él cosas que les causen nuevo placer y nueva maravilla. Vuelve, pues, los ojos, valeroso Timbrio, y mira cuánto adornan sus riberas las muchas aldeas y ricas caserías que por ellas se ven fundadas. Aquí se vee en cualquiera sazón del año andar la risueña primavera con la hermosa Venus en hábito subcinto y amoroso, y Céfiro que la acompaña, con la madre Flora delante, esparciendo a manos llenas varias y odoríferas flores. Y la industria de sus moradores ha hecho tanto, que la naturaleza, encorporada con el arte, es hecha artífice y connatural del arte, y de entrambasados se ha hecho una tercia naturaleza, a la cual no sabré dar nombre. De sus cultivados jardines, con quien los huertos Hespérides y de Alcino pueden callar; de los espesos bosques, de los



pacíficos olivos, verdes laureles y acopados mirtos; de sus abundosos pastos, alegres valles y vestidos collados, arroyos y fuentes que en esta ribera se hallan, no se espere que yo diga más, sino que, si en alguna parte de la tierra los Campos Elíseos tienen asiento, es, sin duda, en ésta. ¿Qué diré de la industria de las altas ruedas, con cuyo continuo movimiento sacan las aguas del profundo río y humedecen abundantamente las eras que por largo espacio están apartadas? Añádese a todo esto criarse en estas riberas las más hermosas y discretas pastoras que en la redondez del suelo pueden hallarse, para cuyo testimonio, dejando aparte el que la experiencia nos muestra y lo que tú, Timbrio, ha que estás en ellas y que has visto, bastará traer por ejemplo a aquella pastora que allí ves, ¡oh Timbrio!

Y, diciendo esto, señaló con el cayado a Galatea; y, sin decir más, dejó admirado a Timbrio de ver la discreción y palabras con que había alabado las riberas de Tajo y la hermosura de Galatea. Y, respondiéndole que no se le podía contradecir ninguna cosa de las dichas, en aquellas y en otras entretenían la pesadumbre del camino, hasta que, llegados a vista del Valle de los Cipreses, vieron que dél salían casi otros tantos pastores y pastoras como los que con ellos iban. Juntáronse todos, y con sosegados pasos comenzaron a entrar por el sagrado valle, cuyo sitio era tan extraño y maravilloso que, aun a los mismos que muchas veces le habían visto, causaba nueva admiración y gusto. Levántanse en una parte de la ribera del famoso Tajo, en cuatro diferentes y contrapuestas partes, cuatro verdes y apacibles collados, como por muros y defensores de un hermoso valle que en medio contienen, cuya entrada en él por otros cuatro lugares es concedida, los cuales mismos collados estrechan de modo que vienen a formar cuatro largas y apacibles calles, a quien hacen pared de todos lados altos e infinitos cipreses, puestos por tal orden y concierto que hasta las mismas ramas de los unos y de los otros parece que igualmente van creciendo, y que ninguna se atreve a pasar ni salir un punto más de la otra. Cierran y ocupan el espacio que entre ciprés y ciprés se hace, mil olorosos rosales y suaves jazmines, tan juntos y entretejidos como suelen estar en los vallados de las guardadas viñas las espinosas zarzas y puntosas cambronerías. De trecho en trecho destas apacibles entradas, se ven correr por entre la verde y menuda yerba claros y frescos arroyos de limpias y sabrosas aguas, que en las faldas de los mismos collados tienen su nacimiento. Es el remate y fin destas calles una ancha y redonda plaza, que los recuestos y los cipreses forman, en medio de la cual está puesta una artificiosa fuente de blanco y precioso mármol fabricada, con tanta industria y artificio hecha, que las vistosas del conocido Tíbulo y las soberbias de la antigua Tinacria no le pueden ser comparadas. Con el agua desta maravillosa fuente se humedecen y sustentan las frescas yerbas de la deleitosa

plaza; y lo que más hace a este agradable sitio digno de estimación y reverencia es ser privilegiado de las golosas bocas de los simples corderuelos y mansas ovejas, y de otra cualquier suerte de ganado: que sólo sirve de guardador y tesorero de los honrados huesos de algunos famosos pastores que, por general decreto de todos los que quedan vivos en el contorno de aquellas riberas, se determina y ordena ser digno y merescedor de tener sepultura en este famoso valle. Por esto se veían, entre los muchos y diversos árboles que por las espaldas de los cipreses estaban, en el lugar y distancia que había dellos hasta las faldas de los collados, algunas sepulturas, cuál de jaspe y cuál de mármol fabricada, en cuyas blancas piedras se leían los nombres de los que en ellas estaban sepultados. Pero la que más sobre todas resplandecía, y la que más a los ojos de todos se mostraba, era la del famoso pastor Meliso, la cual, apartada de las otras, a un lado de la ancha plaza, de lisas y negras pizarras y de blanco y bien labrado alabastro hecha parecía. Y, en el mismo punto que los ojos de Telesio la miraron, volviendo el rostro a toda aquella agradable compañía, con sosegada voz y lamentables acentos, les dijo: -Veis allí, gallardos pastores, discretas y hermosas pastoras; veis allí, digo, la triste sepultura donde reposan los honrados huesos del nombrado Meliso, honor y gloria de nuestras riberas. Comenzad, pues, a levantar al cielo los humildes corazones, y con puros afectos, abundantes lágrimas y profundos sospiros, entonad los sanctos himnos y devotas oraciones, y rogalde tenga por bien de acoger en su estrellado asiento la bendita alma del cuerpo que allí yace.

Y, en diciendo esto, se llegó a un ciprés de aquéllos, y, cortando algunas ramas, hizo dellas una funesta guirnalda con que coronó sus blancas y veneradas sienes, haciendo señal a los demás que lo mismo hiciesen; de cuyo ejemplo movidos todos, en un momento se coronaron de las tristes ramas, y, guiados de Telesio, llegaron a la sepultura, donde lo primero que Telesio hizo fue inclinar las rodillas y besar la dura piedra del sepulcro. Hicieron todos lo mismo, y algunos hubo que, tiernos con la memoria de Meliso, dejaban regado con lágrimas el blanco mármol que besaban. Hecho esto, mandó Telesio encender el sacro fuego, y en un momento, alrededor de la sepultura, se hicieron muchas, aunque pequeñas, hogueras, en las cuales solas ramas de ciprés se quemaban; y el venerable Telesio, con graves y sosegados pasos, comenzó a rodear la pira y a echar en todos los ardientes fuegos alguna cantidad de sacro y oloroso incienso, diciendo cada vez que lo esparcía alguna breve y devota oración, a rogar por el alma de Meliso encaminada, al fin de la cual levantaba la tremante voz, y todos los circunstantes, con triste y piadoso acento, respondían: «Amén, amén», tres veces; a cuyo lamentable sonido resonaban los cercanos collados y apartados valles, y las ramas de los altos cipreses y de los otros muchos árboles de que el

valle estaba lleno, heridas de un manso céfiro que soplabá, hacían y formaban un sordo y tristísimo susurro, casi como en señal de que por su parte ayudaban a la tristeza del funesto sacrificio.

Tres veces rodeó Telesio la sepultura, y tres veces dijo las piadosas plegarias, y otras nueve se escucharon los llorosos acentos del «amén», que los pastores repitían. Acabada esta ceremonia, el anciano Telesio se arrimó a un subido ciprés que a la cabecera de la sepultura de Meliso se levantaba, y con volver el rostro a una y otra parte, hizo que todos los circunstantes estuviesen atentos a lo que decir quería; y luego, levantando la voz todo lo que pudo conceder la antigüedad de sus años, con maravillosa elocuencia comenzó a alabar las virtudes de Meliso, la integridad de su inculpable vida, la alteza de su ingenio, la entereza de su ánimo, la graciosa gravedad de su plática y la excelencia de su poesía; y, sobre todo, la solicitud de su pecho en guardar y cumplir la sancta religión que profesado había, juntando a estas otras tantas y tales virtudes de Meliso, que, aunque el pastor no fuera tan conocido de todos los que a Telesio escuchaban, sólo por lo que él decía, quedaran aficionados a amarle si fuera vivo, y a reverenciarle después de muerto. Concluyó, pues, el viejo su plática diciendo: -Si a do llegaron, famosos pastores, las bondades de Meliso, y adonde llega el deseo que tengo de alabarlas, llegara la bajeza de mi corto entendimiento, y las flacas y pocas fuerzas adquiridas de mis tantos y tan cansados años no me acortaran la voz y el aliento, primero este sol que nos alumbra le viérades bañar una y otra vez en el grande océano, que yo cesara de la comenzada plática; mas, pues esto en mi marchita edad no se permite, suplid vosotros mi falta, y mostraos agradecidos a las frías cenizas de Meliso, celebrándolas en la muerte como os obliga el amor que él os tuvo en la vida. Y, puesto que a todos en general nos toca y cabe parte desta obligación, a quien en particular más obliga es a los famosos Tirsi y Damón, como a tan conocidos amigos y familiares suyos; y así, les ruego, cuan encarecidamente puedo, correspondan a esta deuda supliendo y cantando ellos con más reposada y sonora voz lo que yo he faltado llorando con la trabajosa mía.

No dijo más Telesio, ni aun fuera menester decirlo para que los pastores se moviesen a hacer lo que se les rogaba; porque luego, sin replicar cosa alguna, Tirsi sacó su rabel y hizo señal a Damón que lo mesmo hiciese, a quien acompañaron luego Elicio y Lauso y todos los pastores que allí instrumentos tenían, y a poco espacio formaron una tan triste y agradable música que, aunque regalaba los oídos, movía los corazones a dar señales de tristeza con lágrimas que los ojos derramaban. Juntábase a esto la dulce armonía de los pintados y muchos pajarillos que por los aires cruzaban, y algunos sollozos que las pastoras, ya tiernas y movidas con el razonamiento de Telesio y con lo que los pastores

hacían, de cuando en cuando, de sus hermosos pechos arrancaban; y era de suerte que, concordándose el son de la triste música y el de la alegre armonía de los jilguerillos, calandrias y ruiseñores, y el amargo de los profundos gemidos, formaba todo junto un tan extraño y lastimoso concento que no hay lengua que encarecerlo pueda. De allí a poco espacio, cesando los demás instrumentos, solos los cuatro de Tirsi, Damón, Elicio y de Lauso se escucharon, los cuales, llegándose al sepulcro de Meliso, a los cuatro lados del sepulcro, señal por donde todos los presentes entendieron que alguna cosa cantar querían; y así, les prestaron un maravilloso y sosegado silencio; y luego el famoso Tirsi, con levantada, triste y sonora voz, ayudándole Elicio, Damón y Lauso, desta manera comenzó a cantar:

## **TIRSI**

Tal cual es la ocasión de nuestro llanto, no sólo nuestro, más de todo el suelo, pastores, entonad el triste canto.

## **DAMÓN**

El aire rompan, lleguen hasta el cielo los sospiros dolientes, fabricados   5  
entre justa piedad y justo duelo.

## **ELICIO**

Serán de tierno humor siempre bañados mis ojos, mientras viva la memoria,  
Meliso, de tus hechos celebrados.

## **LAUSO**

Meliso, digno de inmortal historia,   10

digno que goces en el cielo sancto

de alegre vida y de perpetua gloria.

## **TIRSI**

Mientras que a las grandezas me levanto de cantar sus hazañas, como pienso,  
pastores, entonad el triste canto. 15

## **DAMÓN**

Como puedo, Meliso, recompenso  
a tu amistad: con lágrimas vertidas, con ruegos píos y sagrado incienso.

## **ELICIO**

Tu muerte tiene en llanto convertidas nuestras dulces pasadas alegrías, 20  
y a tierno sentimiento reducidas.

## **LAUSO**

Aquellos claros, venturosos días,  
donde el mundo gozó de tu presencia, se han vuelto en noches miserables  
frías.

## **TIRSI**

¡Oh muerte, que con presta violencia 25  
tal vida en poca tierra reduciste!  
¿A quién no alcanzará tu diligencia?

## DAMÓN

Después, ¡oh muerte!, que aquel golpe diste que echó por tierra nuestro fuerte  
arrimo, de yerba el prado ni de flor se viste. 30

## ELICIO

Con la memoria deste mal reprimo  
el bien, si alguno llega a mi sentido, y con nueva aspereza me lastimo.

## LAUSO

¿Cuándo suele cobrarse el bien perdido?  
¿Cuándo el mal sin buscarle no se halla? 35  
¿Cuándo hay quietud en el mortal ruido?

## TIRSI

¿Cuándo de la mortal fiera batalla  
triunfó la vida, y cuándo contra el tiempo se opuso o fuerte arnés o dura  
malla?

## DAMÓN

Es nuestra vida un sueño, un pasatiempo, 40  
un vano encanto que desaparece  
cuando más firme pareció en su tiempo.

## ELICIO

Día que al medio curso se escuresce, y le sucede noche tenebrosa,  
envuelta en sombras qu'el temor ofrece. 45

## LAUSO

Mas tú, pastor famoso, en venturosa hora pasaste deste mar insano  
a la dulce región maravillosa.

## TIRSI

Después que en el aprisco veneciano las causas y demandas decidiste 50  
del gran pastor del ancho suelo hispano.

## DAMÓN

Después también que con valor sufriste el trance de fortuna acelerado  
que a Italia hizo, y aun a España, triste.

## ELICIO

Y después que, en sosiego reposado, 55  
con las nueve doncellas solamente

tanto tiempo estuviste retirado.

## LAUSO

Sin que las fieras armas del oriente ni la francesa furia inquietase

tu levantada y sosegada mente. 60

## **TIRSI**

Entonces quiso el cielo que llegase la fría mano de la muerte airada,  
y en tu vida el bien nuestro arrebatase.

## **DAMÓN**

Quedó tu suerte entonces mejorada,  
quedó la nuestra a un triste amargo lloro 65  
perpetua, eternamente condenada.

## **ELICIO**

Viose el sacro virgíneo hermoso coro de aquellas moradoras del Parnaso  
romper llorando sus cabellos de oro.

## **LAUSO**

A lágrimas movió el doliente caso 70  
al gran competidor del niño ciego,  
que entonces de dar luz se mostró escaso.

## **TIRSI**

No entre las armas y el ardiente fuego los tristes teucros tanto se afligieron con  
el engaño del astuto griego, 75  
como lloraron, como repitieron



el nombre de Meliso los pastores  
cuando informados de su muerte fueron.

## DAMÓN

No de olorosas variadas flores

adornaron sus frentes, ni cantaron 80  
con voz suave algún cantar de amores.  
De funesto ciprés se coronaron,  
y en triste repetido amargo llanto  
lamentables canciones entonaron.

## ELICIO

Y así, pues hoy el áspero quebranto 85  
y la memoria amarga se renueva,  
pastores, entonad el triste canto,  
qu'el duro caso que a doler nos lleva es tal, que será pecho de diamante  
el que a llorar en él no se conmueva. 90

## LAUSO

El firme pecho, el ánimo constante, qu'en las adversidades siempre tuvo este  
pastor por mil lenguas se cante, como al desdén que de contino hubo  
en el pecho de Filis indignado 95  
cual firme roca contra el mar estuvo.

## TIRSI

Repítanse los versos que ha cantado, queden en la memoria de las gentes

por muestras de su ingenio levantado.

## DAMÓN

Por tierras de las nuestras diferentes, 100  
lleve su nombre la parlera fama  
con pasos prestos y alas diligentes.

## ELICIO

Y de su casta y amorosa llama  
ejemplo tome el más lascivo pecho  
y el que en ardor menos cabal se inflama. 105

## LAUSO

¡Venturoso Meliso, que a despecho  
de mil contrastes fieros de fortuna, vives ahora alegre y satisfecho!

## TIRSI

Poco te cansa, poco te importuna  
esta mortal bajeza que dejaste, 110  
llena de más mudanzas que la luna.

## DAMÓN

Por firme alteza la humildad trocaste, por bien el mal, la muerte por la vida tan  
seguro temiste y esperaste.

## ELICIO

Desta mortal, al parecer, caída, 115

quien vive bien, al cabo se levanta, cual tú, Meliso, a la región florida, donde  
por más de una inmortal garganta se despide la voz, que gloria suena, gloria  
repite, dulce gloria canta; 120

donde la hermosa clara faz serena

se ve, en cuya visión se goza y mira la summa gloria más perfecta y buena.

Mi flaca voz a tu alabanza aspira,

y tanto cuanto más cresce el deseo, 125

tanto, Meliso, el miedo le retira.

Que aquello que contemplo agora, y veo con el entendimiento levantado,

del sacro tuyo sobrehumano arreo,

tiene mi entendimiento acobardado, 130

y sólo paro en levantar las cejas

y en recoger los labios de admirado.

## LAUSO

Con tu partida, en triste llanto dejas cuantos con tu presencia se alegraban, y el  
mal se acerca porque tú te alejas. 135

## TIRSI

En tu sabiduría se enseñaban

los rústicos pastores, y en un punto, con nuevo ingenio y discreción quedaban.

Pero llegóse aquel forzoso punto

donde tú te partiste y do quedamos 140

con poco ingenio y corazón difunto.

Esta amarga memoria celebramos

los que en la vida te quisimos tanto, cuanto ahora en la muerte te lloramos.

Por esto, al son de tan confuso llanto, 145

cobrando de continuo nuevo aliento,  
pastores, entonad el triste canto.

Lleguen do llega el duro sentimiento las lágrimas vertidas y suspiros,  
con quien se aumenta el presuroso viento. 150

Poco os encargo, poco sé pedirlos;

más habéis de sentir que cuanto ahora puede mi atada lengua referiros.

Mas, pues Febo se ausenta, y descolora la tierra, que se cubre en negro manto,  
155

hasta que venga la esperada aurora, pastores, cesad ya del triste canto.

Tirsi, que comenzado había la triste y dolorosa elegía, fue el que la puso fin, sin que le pusiesen por un buen espacio a las lágrimas todos los que el lamentable canto escuchado habían. Mas, a esta sazón, el venerable Telesio les dijo: -Pues habemos cumplido en parte, gallardos y comedidos pastores, con la obligación que al venturoso Meliso tenemos, poned por agora silencio a vuestras tiernas lágrimas, y dad algún vado a vuestros dolientes suspiros, pues ni por ellas ni ellos podemos cobrar la pérdida que lloramos; y, puesto que el humano sentimiento no pueda dejar de mostrarle en los adversos acaecimientos, todavía es menester templar la demasía de sus accidentes con la razón que al discreto acompaña; y, aunque las lágrimas y suspiros sean señales del amor que se tiene al que se llora, más provecho consiguen las almas por quien se derraman con los píos sacrificios y devotas oraciones que por ellas se hacen, que si todo el mar océano por los ojos de todo el mundo hecho lágrimas se destilase. Y, por esta razón, y por la que tenemos de dar algún alivio a nuestros cansados cuerpos, será bien que, dejando lo que nos resta de hacer para el venidero día, por agora visitéis vuestros zurroneos y cumpláis con lo que naturaleza os obliga.

Y, en diciendo esto, dio orden como todas las pastoras estuviesen a una parte del valle, junto a la sepultura de Meliso, dejando con ellas seis de los más ancianos pastores que allí había, y los demás, poco desviados dellas, en otra parte se estuvieron. Y luego, con lo que en los zurroneos traían, y con el agua de la clara fuente, satisficieron a la común necesidad de la hambre, acabando a tiempo que ya la noche vestía de una misma color todas las cosas debajo de nuestro horizonte contenidas, y la luciente luna mostraba su rostro hermoso y claro en toda la entereza que tiene cuando más el rubio hermano sus rayos le comunica. Pero, de allí a poco rato, levantándose un alterado viento, se comenzaron a ver algunas negras nubes, que algún tanto la luz de la casta diosa encubrían, haciendo sombras en la tierra, señales por donde algunos pastores que allí estaban, en la rústica astrología maestros, algún venidero turbión y borrasca esperaban. Mas todo paró en no más de quedar la noche parda y serena, y en

acomodarse ellos a descansar sobre la fresca yerba, entregando los ojos al dulce y reposado sueño, como lo hicieron todos, si no algunos que repartieron como en centinelas la guarda de las pastoras, y la de algunas antorchas que alrededor de la sepultura de Meliso ardiendo quedaban. Pero, ya que el sosegado silencio se extendió por todo aquel sagrado valle, y ya que el perezoso Morfeo había con el bañado ramo tocado las sienes y párpados de todos los presentes, a tiempo que a la redonda de nuestro polo buena parte las errantes estrellas andado habían, señalando los puntuales cursos de la noche, en aquel instante, de la misma sepultura de Meliso se levantó un grande y maravilloso fuego, tan luciente y claro que en un momento todo el oscuro valle quedó con tanta claridad como si el mismo sol le alumbrara; por la cual improvisa maravilla, los pastores que despiertos junto a la sepultura estaban, cayeron atónitos en el suelo, deslumbrados y ciegos con la luz del transparente fuego, el cual hizo contrario efecto en los demás que durmiendo estaban, porque, heridos de sus rayos, huyó dellos el pesado sueño, y, aunque con dificultad alguna, abrieron los dormidos ojos, y, viendo la estrañeza de la luz que se les mostraba, confusos y admirados quedaron. Y así, cuál en pie, cuál recostado, y cuál sobre las rodillas puesto, cada uno, con admiración y espanto, el claro fuego miraba. Todo lo cual visto por Telesio, adornándose en un punto de las sacras vestiduras, acompañado de Elicio, Tirsi, Damón, Lauso y otros animosos pastores, poco a poco se comenzó a llegar al fuego, con intención de, con algunos lícitos y acomodados exorcismos, procurar deshacer o entender de dó procedía la estraña visión que se les mostraba. Pero, ya que llegaban cerca de las encendidas llamas, vieron que, dividiéndose en dos partes, en medio dellas parecía una tan hermosa y agraciada ninfa, que en mayor admiración les puso que la vista del ardiente fuego. Mostraba estar vestida de una rica y sutil tela de plata, recogida y retirada a la cintura, de modo que la mitad de las piernas se descubrían, adornadas con unos coturnos, o calzado justo, dorados, llenos de infinitos lazos de listones de diferentes colores; sobre la tela de plata traía otra vestidura de verde y delicado cendal, que, llevado a una y a otra parte por un ventecillo que mansamente soplabá, estremadamente parecía; por las espaldas traía esparcidos los más luengos y rubios cabellos que jamás ojos humanos vieron, y sobre ellos una guirnalda sólo de verde laurel compuesta; la mano derecha ocupaba con un alto ramo de amarilla y vencedora palma, y la izquierda con otro de verde y pacífica oliva, con los cuales ornamentos tan hermosa y admirable se mostraba, que a todos los que la miraban tenía colgados de su vista; de tal manera que, desechando de sí el temor primero, con seguros pasos alrededor del fuego se llegaron, persuadiéndose que, de tan hermosa visión, ningún daño podía sucederles. Y estando, como se ha dicho, todos transportados en mirarla, la bella

ninfa abrió los brazos a una y a otra parte, y hizo que las apartadas llamas más se apartasen y dividiesen, para dar lugar a que mejor pudiese ser mirada; y luego, levantando el sereno rostro, con gracia y gravedad estraña, a semejantes razones dio principio: -Por los efectos que mi improvisa vista ha causado en vuestros corazones, discreta y agradable compañía, podéis considerar que no en virtud de malignos espíritus ha sido formada esta figura mía que aquí se os representa; porque una de las razones por do se conoce ser una visión buena o mala es por los efectos que hace en el ánimo de quien la mira; porque la buena, aunque cause en él admiración y sobresalto, el tal sobresalto y admiración viene mezclado con un gustoso alboroto, que a poco rato le sosiega y satisface; al revés de lo que causa la visión perversa, la cual sobresalta, descontenta, atemoriza y jamás asegura. Esta verdad os aclarará la experiencia cuando me conozcáis y yo os diga quién soy y la ocasión que me ha movido a venir de mis remotas moradas a visitaros. Y, porque no quiero teneros colgados del deseo que tenéis de saber quién yo sea, sabed, discretos pastores y bellas pastoras, que yo soy una de las nueve doncellas que en las altas y sagradas cumbres de Parnaso tienen su propia y conocida morada. Mi nombre es Calíope; mi oficio y condición es favorecer y ayudar a los divinos espíritus, cuyo loable ejercicio es ocuparse en la maravillosa y jamás como debe alabada sciencia de la poesía. Yo soy la que hice cobrar eterna fama al antiguo ciego natural de Esmirna, por él solamente famosa; la que hará vivir el mantuano Títiro por todos los siglos venideros, hasta que el tiempo se acabe; y la que hace que se tengan en cuenta, desde la pasada hasta la edad presente, los escriptos tan ásperos como discretos del antiquísimo Enio. En fin, soy quien favoreció a Catulo, la que nombró a Horacio, eternizó a Propercio, y soy la que con inmortal fama tiene conservada la memoria del conocido Petrarca, y la que hizo bajar a los oscuros infiernos y subir a los claros cielos al famoso Dante. Soy la que ayudó a tejer al divino Ariosto la variada y hermosa tela que compuso; la que en esta patria vuestra tuvo familiar amistad con el agudo Boscán y con el famoso Garcilaso, con el docto y sabio Castillejo y el artificioso Torres Naharro, con cuyos ingenios, y con los frutos dellos, quedó vuestra patria enriquecida y yo satisfecha. Yo soy la que moví la pluma del celebrado Aldana, y la que no dejó jamás el lado de don Fernando de Acuña, y la que me precio de la estrecha amistad y conversación que siempre tuve con la bendita alma del cuerpo que en esta sepultura yace, cuyas obsequias, por vosotros celebradas, no sólo han alegrado su espíritu, que ya por la región eterna se pasea, sino que a mí me han satisfecho de suerte que, forzada, he venido a agradecer tan loable y piadosa costumbre como es la que entre vosotros se usa; y así, os prometo, con las veras que de mi virtud pueden esperarse, que en pago del beneficio que a las cenizas de mi querido y amado Meliso habéis hecho, de

hacer siempre que en vuestras riberas jamás falten pastores que en la alegre sciencia de la poesía a todos los de las otras riberas se aventajen; favoresceré ansimesmo siempre vuestros consejos, y guiaré vuestros entendimientos, de manera que nunca deis torcido voto cuando decretéis quién es merescedor de enterrarse en este sagrado valle; porque no será bien que, de honra tan particular y señalada, y que sólo es merescida de los blancos y canoros cisnes, la vengan a gozar los negros y rontos cuervos. Y así, me parece que será bien daros alguna noticia agora de algunos señalados varones que en esta vuestra España viven, y algunos en las apartadas Indias a ella sujetas; los cuales, si todos o alguno dellos su buena ventura le trujere a acabar el curso de sus días en estas riberas, sin duda alguna le podéis conceder sepultura en este famoso sitio. Junto con esto, os quiero advertir que no entendáis que los primeros que nombrare son dignos de más honra que los postreros, porque en esto no pienso guardar orden alguna: que, puesto que yo alcanzo la diferencia que el uno al otro y los otros a los otros hacen, quiero dejar esta declaración en duda, porque vuestros ingenios en entender la diferencia de los suyos tengan en qué ejercitarse, de los cuales darán testimonio sus obras. Irélos nombrando como se me vinieren a la memoria, sin que ninguno se atribuya a que ha sido favor que yo le he hecho en haberme acordado dél primero que de otro; porque, como digo, a vosotros, discretos pastores, dejo que después les deis el lugar que os pareciere que de justicia se les debe. Y, para que con menos pesadumbre y trabajo a mi larga relación estéis atentos, haréla de suerte que sólo sintáis disgusto por la brevedad della.

Calló diciendo esto la bella ninfa, y luego tomó una arpa que junto a sí tenía, que hasta entonces de ninguno había sido vista; y, en comenzándola a tocar, parece que comenzó a esclarecerse el cielo, y que la luna, con nuevo y no usado resplandor, alumbraba la tierra; los árboles, a despecho de un blando céfiro que soplaba, tuvieron quedas las ramas; y los ojos de todos los que allí estaban no se atrevían a abajar los párpados, porque aquel breve punto que se tardaban en alzarlos, no se privasen de la gloria que en mirar la hermosura de la ninfa gozaban; y aun quisieran todos que todos sus cinco sentidos se convirtieran en el del oír solamente: con tal estrañeza, con tal dulzura, con tanta suavidad tocaba la arpa la bella musa; la cual, después de haber tañido un poco, con la más sonora voz que imaginarse puede, en semejantes versos dio principio: CANTO DE CALÍOPE

Al dulce son de mi templada lira,  
prestad, pastores, el oído atento:  
oiréis cómo en mi voz y en él respira de mis hermanas el sagrado aliento.  
Veréis cómo os suspende, y os admira, 5

y colma vuestras almas de contento, cuando os dé relación, aquí en el suelo,  
de los ingenios que ya son del cielo.

Pienso cantar de aquellos solamente a quien la Parca el hilo aún no ha cortado,  
10

de aquéllos que son dignos justamente d'en tal lugar tenerle señalado,  
donde, a pesar del tiempo diligente, por el laudable oficio acostumbrado  
vuestro, vivan mil siglos sus renombres, 15  
sus claras obras, sus famosos nombres.

Y el que con justo título meresce  
gozar de alta y honrosa preeminencia, un don ALONSO es, en quien floresce  
del sacro Apolo la divina sciencia; 20  
y en quien con alta lumbré resplandece de Marte el brío y sin igual potencia,  
DE LEIVA tiene el sobrenombre ilustre, que a Italia ha dado, y aun a España,  
lustre.

Otro del mismo nombre, que de Arauco 25  
cantó las guerras y el valor de España, el cual los reinos donde habita Glauco  
pasó y sintió la embravescida saña.

No fue su voz, no fue su acento rauco, que uno y otro fue de gracia estraña,  
30  
y tal, que ERCILLA, en este hermoso asiento meresce eterno y sacro  
monumento.

Del famoso don JUAN DE SILVA os digo que toda gloria y todo honor  
meresce, así por serle Febo tan amigo, 35  
como por el valor que en él floresce.

Serán desto sus obras buen testigo, en las cuales su ingenio resplandece con  
claridad que al ignorante alumbra y al sabio agudo a veces le deslumbra. 40

Crezca el número rico desta cuenta  
aquel con quien la tiene tal el cielo, que con febeo aliento le sustenta,  
y con valor de Marte acá en el suelo.  
A Homero iguala si a escribir intenta, 45  
y a tanto llega de su pluma el vuelo, cuanto es verdad que a todos es notorio el  
alto ingenio de don DIEGO OSORIO.



Por cuantas vías la parlera fama  
puede loar un caballero ilustre, 50  
por tantas su valor claro derrama,

dando sus hechos a su nombre lustre.

Su vivo ingenio, su virtud, inflama más de una lengua, a que de lustre en  
lustre, sin que cursos de tiempos las espanten, 55  
de don FRANCISCO DE MENDOZA canten.

¡Feliz don DIEGO DE SARMIENTO, ilustre, y Carvajal, famoso, producido  
de nuestro coro y de Hipocrene lustre, mozo en la edad, anciano en el sentido,  
60  
de siglo en siglo irá, de lustre en lustre, a pesar de las aguas del olvido,  
tu nombre, con tus obras excelentes, de lengua en lengua y de gente en gentes!

Quiéroos mostrar por cosa soberana, 65  
en tierna edad, maduro entendimiento, destreza y gallardía sobrehumana,  
cortesía, valor, comedimiento,  
y quien puede mostrar en la toscana como en su propia lengua aquel talento  
70  
que mostró el que cantó la casa d'Este: un don GUTIERRE CARVAJAL es  
éste.

Tú, don LUIS DE VARGAS, en quien veo maduro ingenio en verdes pocos  
días, procura de alcanzar aquel trofeo 75  
que te prometen las hermanas mías;  
mas tan cerca estás dél, que, a lo que creo, ya triunfas, pues procuras por mil  
vías virtuosas y sabias que tu fama  
resplandezca con viva y clara llama. 80

Del claro Tajo la ribera hermosa  
adornan mil espíritus divinos,  
que hacen nuestra edad más venturosa que aquélla de los griegos y latinos.  
Dellos pienso decir sola una cosa: 85  
que son de vuestro valle y honra dignos tanto cuanto sus obras nos lo  
muestran, que al camino del cielo nos adiestran.

Dos famosos doctores, presidentes  
en las sciencias de Apolo, se me ofrescen, 90

que no más que en la edad son diferentes, y en el trato e ingenio se parecen.  
Admíranlos ausentes y presentes,

y entre unos y otros tanto resplandecen con su saber altísimo y profundo, 95  
que presto han de admirar a todo el mundo.

Y el nombre que me viene más a mano, destos dos que a loar aquí me atrevo,  
es del doctor famoso CAMPUZANO,  
a quien podéis llamar segundo Febo. 100

El alto ingenio suyo, el sobrehumano discurso nos descubre un mundo nuevo,  
de tan mejores Indias y excelencias, cuanto mejor qu'el oro son las sciencias.

Es el doctor SUÁREZ, que DE SOSA 105  
el sobrenombre tiene, el que se sigue, que de una y otra lengua artificiosa lo  
más cendrado y lo mejor consigue.

Cualquiera que en la fuente milagrosa, cual él la mitigó, la sed mitigue, 110  
no tendrá que envidiar al docto griego, ni a aquél que nos cantó el troyano  
fuego.

Del doctor VACA, si decir pudiera

lo que yo siento dél, sin duda creo que cuantos aquí estáis os suspendiera: 115  
tal es su sciencia, su virtud y arreo.

Yo he sido en ensalzarle la primera del sacro coro, y soy la que deseo  
eternizar su nombre en cuanto al suelo diere su luz el gran señor de Delo. 120

Si la fama os trujere a los oídos  
de algún famoso ingenio maravillas, conceptos bien dispuestos y subidos, y  
sciencias que os asombren en oíllas, cosas que paran sólo en los sentidos 125  
y la lengua no puede referillas,  
el dar salida a todo dubio y traza, sabed que es el licenciado DAZA.

Del maestro GARAY las dulces obras  
me incitan sobre todos a alabarle; 130  
tú, Fama, que al ligero tiempo sobras, ten por heroica empresa el celebrarle.  
Verás cómo en él más fama cobras,  
Fama, que está la tuya en ensalzarle, que hablando desta fama, en verdadera  
135  
has de trocar la fama de parlera.

Aquel ingenio que al mayor humano  
se deja atrás, y aspira al que es divino, y, dejando a una parte el castellano,  
sigue el heroico verso del latino; 140

el nuevo Homero, el nuevo mantuano, es el maestro CÓRDOBA, que es digno  
de celebrarse en la dichosa España, y en cuanto el sol alumbra y el mar baña.

De ti, el doctor FRANCISCO DÍAZ, puedo 145

asegurar a estos mis pastores  
que con seguro corazón y ledó,  
pueden aventajarse en tus loores.

Y si en ellos yo agora corta quedo, debiéndose a tu ingenio los mayores, 150  
es porque el tiempo es breve y no me atrevo a poderte pagar lo que te debo.

LUJÁN, que con la toga merescida

honras el propio y el ajeno suelo, y con tu dulce musa conocida 155  
subes tu fama hasta el más alto cielo, yo te daré después de muerto vida,  
haciendo que, en ligero y presto vuelo, la fama de tu ingenio único, solo,  
vaya del nuestro hasta el contrario polo. 160

El alto ingenio y su valor declara

un licenciado tan amigo vuestro

cuanto ya sabéis que es JUAN DE VERGARA, honra del siglo venturoso  
nuestro.

Por la senda qu'él sigue, abierta y clara, 165

yo mesma el paso y el ingenio adiestro, y adonde él llega, de llegar me pago, y  
en su ingenio y virtud me satisfago.

Otros quiero nombrar, porque se estime y tenga en precio mi atrevido canto,  
170

el cual hará que ahora más le anime y llegue allí donde el deseo levanto.

Y es este que me fuerza y que me oprime a decir sólo dél, y cantar cuanto  
canto de los ingenios más cabales, 175

el licenciado ALONSO DE MORALES.

Por la difícil cumbre va subiendo

al templo de la Fama, y se adelanta, un generoso mozo, el cual, rompiendo por  
la dificultad que más espanta, 180

tan presto ha de llegar allá, que entiendo que en profecía ya la fama canta  
del lauro que le tiene aparejado  
al licenciado HERNANDO MALDONADO.

La sabia frente del laurel honroso 185  
adornada veréis de aquél que ha sido en todas sciencias y artes tan famoso que  
es ya por todo el orbe conocido.  
Edad dorada, siglo venturoso,  
que gozar de tal hombre has merescido: 190  
¿cuál siglo, cuál edad ahora te llega, si en ti está MARCO ANTONIO DE LA  
VEGA?

Un DIEGO se me viene a la memoria,  
que DE MENDOZA es cierto que se llama, digno que sólo dél se hiciera  
historia 195

tal que llegara allí donde su fama.  
Su sciencia y su virtud, que es tan notoria, que ya por todo el orbe se derrama,  
admira a los ausentes y presentes  
de las remotas y cercanas gentes. 200

Un conocido el alto Febo tiene;  
¿qué digo un conocido?, un verdadero amigo, con quien sólo se entretiene,  
que es de toda sciencia tesoro.  
Y es éste que de industria se detiene 205  
a no comunicar su bien entero,  
DIEGO DURÁN, en quien contino dura  
y durará el valor, ser y cordura.

¿Quién pensáis que es aquél que en voz sonora sus ansias canta  
regaladamente, 210  
aquél en cuyo pecho Febo mora,  
el docto Orfeo y Aríón prudente?  
Aquel que de los reinos del aurora  
hasta los apartados de occidente  
es conocido, amado y estimado 215  
por el famoso LÓPEZ MALDONADO.

¿Quién pudiera loaros, mis pastores, un pastor vuestro amado y conocido,

pastor mejor de cuantos son mejores, que de Fílida tiene el apellido? 220  
La habilidad, la sciencia, los primores, el raro ingenio y el valor subido  
de LUIS DE MONTALVO, le aseguran  
gloria y honor mientras los cielos duran.

El sacro Ibero, de dorado acanto, 225  
de siempre verde yedra y blanca oliva su frente adorne, y en alegre canto su  
gloria y fama para siempre viva, pues su antiguo valor ensalza tanto que al fértil  
Nilo de su nombre priva 230  
de PEDRO DE LIÑÁN la sutil pluma,  
de todo el bien de Apolo cifra y suma.

De ALONSO DE VALDÉS me está incitando el raro y alto ingenio a que dél  
cante, y que os vaya, pastores, declarando 235  
que a los más raros pasa, y va adelante.  
Halo mostrado ya, y lo va mostrando en el fácil estilo y elegante  
con que descubre el lastimado pecho y alaba el mal qu'el fiero amor l'ha  
hecho. 240

Admíreos un ingenio en quien se encierra todo cuanto pedir puede el deseo,  
ingenio que, aunque vive acá en la tierra, del alto cielo es su caudal y arreo.  
Ora trate de paz, ora de guerra, 245  
todo cuanto yo miro, escucho y leo  
del celebrado PEDRO DE PADILLA,  
me causa nuevo gusto y maravilla.

Tú, famoso GASPAR ALFONSO, ordenas, según aspiras a inmortal subida,  
250  
que yo no pueda celebrarte apenas,  
si te he de dar loor a tu medida.  
Las plantas fertilísimas amenas  
que nuestro celebrado monte anida,  
todas ofrescen ricas laureolas 255  
para ceñir y honrar tus sienes solas.

De CRISTÓBAL DE MESA os digo cierto que puede honrar vuestro sagrado  
valle; no sólo en vida, más después de muerto podéis con justo título alaballe.  
260

De sus heroicos versos el concierto, su grave y alto estilo, pueden dalle alto y

honroso nombre, aunque callara la fama dél, y yo no me acordara.

Pues sabéis cuánto adorna y enriquece 265  
vuestras riberas PEDRO DE RIBERA,  
dalde el honor, pastores, que meresce, que yo seré en honrarle la primera.  
Su dulce musa, su virtud, ofresce  
un sujeto cabal donde pudiera 270  
la fama y cien mil famas ocuparse,  
y en solos sus loores estremarse.

Tú, que de Luso el sin igual tesoro trujiste en nueva forma a la ribera del fértil  
río, a quien el lecho de oro 275  
tan famoso le hace adonde quiera,  
con el debido aplauso y el decoro  
debido a ti, BENITO DE CALDERA,

y a tu ingenio sin par, prometo honrarte y de lauro y de yedra coronarte. 280

De aquel que la cristiana poesía  
tan en su punto ha puesto en tanta gloria, haga la fama y la memoria mía  
famosa para siempre su memoria.  
De donde nasce adonde muere el día, 285  
la sciencia sea y la bondad notoria del gran FRANCISCO DE GUZMÁN,  
qu'el arte de Febo sabe, así como el de Marte.

Del capitán SALCEDO está bien claro que llega su divino entendimiento 290  
al punto más subido, agudo y raro  
que puede imaginar el pensamiento.  
Si le comparo, a él mesmo le comparo, que no hay comparación que llegue a  
cuento de tamaño valor, que la medida 295  
ha de mostrar ser falta o ser torcida.

Por la curiosidad y entendimiento  
de TOMÁS DE GRACIÁN, dadme licencia que yo le escoja en este valle  
asiento igual a su virtud, valor y sciencia, 300  
el cual, si llega a su merescimiento, será de tanto grado y preeminencia, que, a  
lo que creo, pocos se le igualen: tanto su ingenio y sus virtudes valen.

Agora, hermanas bellas, de improviso, 305

BAPTISTA DE VIVAR quiere alabaros  
con tanta discreción, gala y aviso, que podáis, siendo musas, admiraros.  
No cantará desdenes de Narciso,  
que a Eco solitaria cuestan caros, 310  
sino cuidados suyos que han nascido entre alegre esperanza y triste olvido.

Un nuevo espanto, un nuevo asombro y miedo me acude y sobresalta en este  
punto, sólo por ver que quiero y que no puedo 315  
subir de honor al más subido punto  
al grave BALTASAR, que DE TOLEDO  
el sobrenombre tiene, aunque barrunto que de su docta pluma el alto vuelo le  
ha de subir hasta el impíreo cielo. 320

Muestra en un ingenio la experiencia que en años verdes y en edad temprana  
hace su habitación así la sciencia, como en la edad madura, antigua y cana.  
No entraré con alguno en competencia 325  
que contradiga una verdad tan llana, y más si acaso a sus oídos llega  
que lo digo por vos, LOPE DE VEGA.

De pacífica oliva coronado,  
ante mi entendimiento se presenta 330  
agora el sacro Betis, indignado,  
y de mi inadvertencia se lamenta.  
Pide que en el discurso comenzado,  
de los raros ingenios os dé cuenta  
que en sus riberas moran, y yo ahora 335  
harélo con la voz muy más sonora.

Mas, ¿qué haré, que en los primeros pasos que doy descubro mil estrañas  
cosas, otros mil nuevos Pindos y Parnasos, otros coros de hermanas más  
hermosas, 340

con que mis altos bríos quedan lasos, y más cuando, por causas milagrosas,  
oigo cualquier sonido servir de eco, cuando se nombra el nombre de  
PACHECO?

Pacheco es éste, con quien tiene Febo 345  
y las hermanas tan discretas mías  
nueva amistad, discreto trato y nuevo desde sus tiernos y pequeños días.  
Yo desde entonces hasta agora llevo por tan estrañas desusadas vías 350

su ingenio y sus escriptos, que han llegado al título de honor más encumbrado.

En punto estoy donde, por más que diga en alabanza del divino HERRERA,  
será de poco fruto mi fatiga, 355

aunque le suba hasta la cuarta esfera.

Mas, si soy sospechosa por amiga,

sus obras y su fama verdadera

dirán que en sciencias es HERNANDO solo del Gange al Nilo, y de uno al  
otro polo. 360

De otro FERNANDO quiero daros cuenta, que DE CANGAS se nombra, en  
quien se admira el suelo, y por quien vive y se sustenta la sciencia en quien al  
sacro lauro aspira.

Si al alto cielo algún ingenio intenta 365

de levantar y de poner la mira,

póngala en éste sólo, y dará al punto en el más ingenioso y alto punto.

De don CRISTÓBAL, cuyo sobrenombre

es de VILLARROEL, tened creído 370

que bien meresce que jamás su nombre toque las aguas negras del olvido.

Su ingenio admire, su valor asombre, y el ingenio y valor sea conocido

por el mayor extremo que descubre 375

en cuanto mira el sol o el suelo encubre.

Los ríos de elocuencia que del pecho del grave antiguo Cicerón manaron;

los que al pueblo de Atenas satisfecho tuvieron y a Demóstenes honraron;

380

los ingenios qu'el tiempo ha ya deshecho, que tanto en los pasados se  
estimaron, humíllense a la sciencia alta y divina del maestro FRANCISCO DE  
MEDINA.

Puedes, famoso Betis, dignamente 385

al Mincio, al Arno, al Tibre aventajarte, y alzar contento la sagrada frente

y en nuevos anchos senos dilatarte, pues quiso el cielo, que en tu bien  
consiste, tal gloria, tal honor, tal fama darte, 390

cual te la adquiere a tus riberas bellas BALTASAR DEL ALCÁZAR, que está  
en ellas.

Otro veréis en quien veréis cifrada del sacro Apolo la más rara sciencia, que



en otros mil sujetos derramada, 395  
hace en todos de sí grave apariencia.  
Mas, en este sujeto mejorada,  
asiste en tantos grados de excelencia, que bien puede MOSQUERA, el  
licenciado, ser como el mismo Apolo celebrado. 400

No se desdeña aquel varón prudente, que de ciencias adorna y enriquece su  
limpio pecho, de mirar la fuente que en nuestro monte en sabias aguas cresce;  
antes, en la sin par clara corriente 405  
tanto la sed mitiga, que floresce  
por ello el claro nombre acá en la tierra del gran doctor DOMINGO DE  
BECERRA.

Del famoso ESPINEL cosas diría  
que exceden al humano entendimiento, 410  
de aquellas ciencias que en su pecho cría el divino de Febo sacro aliento;  
mas, pues no puede de la lengua mía decir lo menos de lo más que siento, no  
diga más sino que al cielo aspira, 415  
ora tome la pluma, ora la lira.

Si queréis ver en una igual balanza al rubio Febo y colorado Marte,  
procurad de mirar al gran CARRANZA, de quien el uno y otro no se parte.  
420  
En él veréis, amigas, pluma y lanza con tanta discreción, destreza y arte, que  
la destreza, en partes dividida, la tiene a ciencia y arte reducida.

De LÁZARO LUIS IRANZO, lira 425  
templada había de ser más que la mía, a cuyo son cantase el bien que inspira  
en él el cielo, y el valor que cría.  
Por las sendas de Marte y Febo aspira a subir do la humana fantasía 430  
apenas llega; y él, sin duda alguna, llegará contra el hado y la fortuna.

BALTASAR DE ESCOBAR, que agora adorna del Tíber las riberas tan  
famosas,  
y con su larga ausencia desadorna 435  
las del sagrado Betis espaciosas;  
fértil ingenio, si por dicha torna  
al patrio amado suelo, a sus honrosas y juveniles sienes les ofrezco  
el lauro y el honor que yo merezco. 440

¿Qué título, qué honor, qué palma o lauro se le debe a JUAN SANZ, que DE ZUMETA se nombra, si del Indo al Rojo Mauro cual su musa no hay otra tan perfecta?

Su fama aquí de nuevo le restauro 445  
con deciros, pastores, cuán acepta  
será de Apolo cualquier honra y lustre que a Zumeta hagáis que más le lustre.

Dad a JUAN DE LAS CUEVAS el debido  
lugar, cuando se ofrezca en este asiento, 450  
pastores, pues lo tiene merecido  
su dulce musa y raro entendimiento.  
Sé que sus obras del eterno olvido, a despecho y pesar del violento  
curso del tiempo, librarán su nombre, 455  
quedando con un claro alto renombre.

Pastores, si le viéredes, honraldo  
al famoso varón que os diré ahora  
y en graves dulces versos celebraldo, como a quien tanto en ellos se mejora.  
460  
El sobrenombre tiene DE VIVALDO;  
de ADAM el nombre, el cual ilustra y dora con su florido ingenio y excelente  
la venturosa nuestra edad presente.

Cual suele estar de variadas flores 465  
adorno y rico el más florido mayo,  
tal de mil varias sciencias y primores está el ingenio de don JUAN AGUAYO.  
Y, aunque más me detenga en sus loores, sólo sabré deciros que me ensayo  
470  
ahora, y que otra vez os diré cosas tales que las tengáis por milagrosas.

De JUAN GUTIÉRREZ RUFO el claro nombre quiero que viva en la inmortal  
memoria, y que al sabio y al simple admire, asombre 475  
la heroica que compuso ilustre historia.  
Déle el sagrado Betis el renombre  
que su estilo meresce; denle gloria los que pueden y saben; déle el cielo igual  
la fama a su encumbrado vuelo. 480

En don LUIS DE GÓNGORA os ofrezco  
un vivo raro ingenio sin segundo;  
con sus obras me alegro y enriquezco no sólo yo, mas todo el ancho mundo.  
Y si, por lo que os quiero, algo merezco, 485  
haced que su saber alto y profundo  
en vuestras alabanzas siempre viva  
contra el ligero tiempo y muerte esquivia.

490 Ciña el verde laurel, la verde yedra, y aun la robusta encina, aquella frente  
de GONZALO CERVANTES SAAVEDRA,  
pues la deben ceñir tan justamente.  
Por él la sciencia más de Apolo medra; en él Marte nos muestra el brío  
ardiente de su furor, con tal razón medido 495  
que por él es amado y es temido.

Tú, que de Celidón, con dulce plectro heciste resonar el nombre y fama,  
cuyo admirable y bien limado metro  
a lauro y triunfo te convida y llama, 500  
rescibe el mando, la corona y cetro, GONZALO GÓMEZ, désta que te ama,  
en señal que meresce tu persona  
el justo señorío de Helicon.

Tú, Dauro, de oro conocido río, 505  
cual bien agora puedes señalarte,  
y con nueva corriente y nuevo brío  
al apartado Idaspe aventajarte,  
pues GONZALO MATEO DE BERRÍO  
tanto procura con su ingenio honrarte, 510  
que ya tu nombre la parlera fama,  
por él, por todo el mundo le derrama.

Tejed de verde lauro una corona,  
pastores, para honrar la digna frente del licenciado SOTO BARAHONA, 515  
varón insigne, sabio y elocuente.  
En él el licor sancto de Helicon,  
si se perdiera en la sagrada fuente, se pudiera hallar, ¡oh extraño caso!, como  
en las altas cumbres del Parnaso. 520

De la región antártica podría  
eternizar ingenios soberanos,  
que si riquezas hoy sustenta y cría, también entendimientos sobrehumanos.  
Mostrarlo puedo en muchos este día, 525

y en dos os quiero dar llenas las manos: uno, de Nueva España y nuevo  
Apolo; del Perú, el otro, un sol único y solo.

FRANCISCO, el uno, DE TERRAZAS, tiene el nombre acá y allá tan  
conocido, 530

cuya vena caudal nueva Hipocrene  
ha dado al patrio venturoso nido.

La misma gloria al otro igual le viene, pues su divino ingenio ha producido en  
Arequipa eterna primavera, 535

que éste es DIEGO MARTÍNEZ DE RIBERA.

Aquí, debajo de felice estrella,  
un resplandor salió tan señalado,  
que de su lumbré la menor centella  
nombre de oriente al occidente ha dado. 540

Cuando esta luz nació, nació con ella todo el valor, nació ALONSO  
PICADO; nació mi hermano y el de Palas junto, que ambas vimos en él vivo  
transumpto.

Pues si he de dar la gloria a ti debida, 545

gran ALONSO DE ESTRADA, hoy eres digno que no se cante así tan de  
corrida

tu ser y entendimiento peregrino.

Contigo está la tierra enriquecida que al Betis mil tesoros da contino, 550

y aun no da el cambio igual: que no hay tal paga que a tan dichosa deuda  
satisfaga.

Por prenda rara desta tierra ilustre, claro don JUAN, te nos ha dado el cielo,  
DE ÁVALOS gloria, Y DE RIBERA lustre, 555

honra del propio y del ajeno suelo.

Dichosa España, do por más de un lustre muestra serán tus obras y modelo  
de cuanto puede dar naturaleza

de ingenio claro y singular nobleza. 560

El que en la dulce patria está contento, las puras aguas de Limar gozando,  
la famosa ribera, el fresco viento  
con sus divinos versos alegrando,  
venga, y veréis por summa deste cuento, 565  
su heroico brío y discreción mirando, que es SANCHO DE RIBERA, en toda  
parte Febo primero, y sin segundo Marte.

Este mesmo famoso insigne valle  
un tiempo al Betis usurpar solía 570  
un nuevo Homero, a quien podemos dalle la corona de ingenio y gallardía.  
Las Gracias le cortaron a su talle, y el cielo en todas lo mejor le envía; éste, ya  
en vuestro Tajo conocido, 575  
PEDRO DE MONTESDOCA es su apellido.

En todo cuanto pedirá el deseo,  
un DIEGO ilustre DE AGUILAR admira, un águila real que en vuelo veo  
alzarse a do llegar ninguno aspira. 580  
Su pluma entre cien mil gana trofeo, que, ante ella, la más alta se retira; su  
estilo y su valor tan celebrado  
Guánuco lo dirá, pues lo ha gozado.

Un GONZALO FERNÁNDEZ se me ofresce, 585  
gran capitán del escuadrón de Apolo, que hoy DE SOTOMAYOR  
ensoberbece  
el nombre, con su nombre heroico y solo.  
En verso admira, y en saber floresce en cuanto mira el uno y otro polo; 590  
y si en la pluma en tanto grado agrada, no menos es famoso por la espada.

De un ENRIQUE GARCÉS, que al piruano reino enriquece, pues con dulce  
rima, con sutil, ingeniosa y fácil mano, 595  
a la más ardua empresa en él dio cima, pues en dulce español al gran toscano  
nuevo lenguaje ha dado y nueva estima, ¿quién será tal que la mayor le quite,  
aunque el mesmo Petrarca resucite? 600

Un RODRIGO FERNÁNDEZ DE PINEDA,  
cuya vena inmortal, cuya excelente  
y rara habilidad gran parte hereda  
del licor sacro de la equina fuente, pues cuanto quiere dél no se le veda, 605

pues de tal gloria goza en occidente, tenga también aquí tan larga parte, cual la merescen hoy su ingenio y parte.

Y tú, que al patrio Betis has tenido lleno de envidia, y con razón quejoso 610  
de que otro cielo y otra tierra han sido testigos de tu canto numeroso,  
alégrate, que el nombre esclarecido tuyo, JUAN DE MESTANZA, generoso,  
sin segundo será por todo el suelo 615  
mientras diere su luz el cuarto cielo.

Toda la suavidad que en dulce vena  
se puede ver, veréis en uno solo,  
que al son sabroso de su musa enfrena la furia al mar, el curso al dios Eolo.  
620

El nombre déste es BALTASAR DE ORENA, cuya fama del uno al otro polo  
corre ligera, y del oriente a ocaso, por honra verdadera de Parnaso.

Pues de una fértil y preciosa planta, 625  
de allá traspuesta en el mayor collado que en toda la Tesalia se levanta,

planta que ya dichoso fruto ha dado, callaré yo lo que la fama canta  
del ilustre don PEDRO DE ALVARADO, 630  
ilustre, pero ya no menos claro,  
por su divino ingenio, al mundo raro.

Tú, que con nueva musa extraordinaria, CAIRASCO, cantas del amor el  
ánimo  
y aquella condición del vulgo varia 635  
donde se opone al fuerte el pusilánimo; si a este sitio de la Gran Canaria  
vinieres, con ardor vivo y magnánimo mis pastores ofrecen a tus méritos  
mil lauros, mil loores beneméritos. 640

¿Quién es, ¡oh anciano Tormes!, el que niega que no puedes al Nilo  
aventajarte,  
si puede sólo el licenciado VEGA  
más que Títiro al Mincio celebrarte?  
Bien sé, DAMIÁN, que vuestro ingenio llega 645  
do alcanza deste honor la mayor parte, pues sé, por muchos años de  
experiencia, vuestra tan sin igual virtud y sciencia.

Aunque el ingenio y la elegancia vuestra, FRANCISCO SÁNCHEZ, se me concediera, 650

por torpe me juzgara y poco diestra, si a querer alabaros me pusiera.

Lengua del cielo única y maestra

tiene de ser la que por la carrera

de vuestras alabanzas se dilate, 655

que hacerlo humana lengua es disparate.

Las raras cosas y en estilo nuevas

que un espíritu muestran levantado, en cien mil ingeniosas, arduas pruebas, por sabio conocido y estimado, 660

hacen que don FRANCISCO DE LAS CUEVAS

por mí sea dignamente celebrado,

en tanto que la fama pregonera

no detuviere su veloz carrera.

Quisiera rematar mi dulce canto 665

en tal sazón, pastores, con loaros

un ingenio que al mundo pone espanto y que pudiera en éstasis robaros.

En él cifro y recojo todo cuanto

he mostrado hasta aquí y he de mostraros: 670

FRAY LUIS DE LEÓN es el que digo,

a quien yo reverencio, adoro y sigo.

¿Qué modos, qué caminos o qué vías

de alabar buscaré para qu'el nombre viva mil siglos de aquel gran MATÍAS 675

que DE ZÚÑIGA tiene el sobrenombre?

A él se den las alabanzas mías,

que, aunque yo soy divina y él es hombre, por ser su ingenio, como lo es, divino, de mayor honra y alabanza es digno. 680

Volved el presuroso pensamiento

a las riberas de Pisuerga bellas:

veréis que aumentan este rico cuento claros ingenios con quien se honran ellas.

Ellas no sólo, sino el firmamento, 685

do lucen las claríficas estrellas,

honrarse puede bien cuando consigo  
tenga allá los varones que aquí digo.

Vos, DAMASIO DE FRÍAS, podéis solo

loaros a vos mismo, pues no puede 690  
hacer, aunque os alabe el mismo Apolo, que en tan justo loor corto no quede.  
Vos sois el cierto y el seguro polo por quien se guía aquel que le sucede en el  
mar de las sciencias buen pasaje, 695  
propicio viento y puerto en su viaje.

ANDRÉS SANZ DE PORTILLO, tú me envía aquel aliento con que Febo  
mueve

tu sabia pluma y alta fantasía,  
porque te dé el loor que se te debe. 700  
Que no podrá la ruda lengua mía,  
por más caminos que aquí tienta y pruebe, hallar alguno así cual le deseo  
para loar lo que en ti siento y veo.

Felicísimo ingenio, que te encumbras 705  
sobre el que más Apolo ha levantado, y con tus claros rayos nos alumbras y  
sacas del camino más errado;  
y, aunque ahora con ella me deslumbras y tienes a mi ingenio alborotado, 710

yo te doy sobre muchos palma y gloria, pues a mí me la has dado, doctor  
SORIA.

Si vuestras obras son tan estimadas, famoso CANTORAL, en toda parte,  
serán mis alabanzas escusadas, 715  
si en nuevo modo no os alabo, y arte.  
Con las palabras más calificadas,  
con cuanto ingenio el cielo en mí reparte, os admiro y alabo aquí callando,  
y llevo do llegar no puedo hablando. 720

Tú, HIERÓNIMO VACA Y DE QUIÑONES,  
si tanto me he tardado en celebrarte, mi pasado descuido es bien perdones, con  
la enmienda que ofrezco de mi parte.  
De hoy más en claras voces y pregones, 725  
en la cubierta y descubierta parte



del ancho mundo, haré con clara llama lucir tu nombre y estender tu fama.

Tu verde y rico margen, no d'enebro, ni de ciprés funesto enriquecido, 730

claro, abundoso y conocido Ebro,  
sino de lauro y mirto florecido,  
ahora como puedo le celebro,  
celebrando aquel bien qu'han concedido el cielo a tus riberas, pues en ellas  
735 moran ingenios claros más que estrellas.

Serán testigo desto dos hermanos,  
dos luceros, dos soles de poesía,  
a quien el cielo con abiertas manos dio cuanto ingenio y arte dar podía. 740  
Edad temprana, pensamientos canos,  
maduro trato, humilde fantasía,  
labran eterna y digna laureola  
a LUPERCIO LEONARDO DE ARGENSOLA.

Con sancta envidia y competencia sancta 745  
parece qu'el menor hermano aspira  
a igualar al mayor, pues se adelanta y sube do no llega humana mira.  
Por esto escribe y mil sucesos canta con tan suave y acordada lira, 750  
que este BARTOLOMÉ menor meresce

lo que al mayor, Lupercio, se le ofresce.

Si el buen principio y medio da esperanza que el fin ha de ser raro y excelente,  
en cualquier caso ya mi ingenio alcanza 755  
qu'el tuyo has de encumbrar, COSME PARIENTE.  
Y así, puedes, con cierta confianza, prometer a tu sabia honrosa frente  
la corona que tiene merescida  
tu claro ingenio, tu inculpable vida. 760

En soledad, del cielo acompañado,  
vives, ¡oh gran MORILLO!, y allí muestras que nunca dejan tu cristiano lado  
otras musas más sanctas y más diestras.  
De mis hermanas fuiste alimentado, 765  
y ahora, en pago dello, nos adiestras y enseñas a cantar divinas cosas,

gratas al cielo, al suelo provechosas.

Turia, tú que otra vez con voz sonora cantaste de tus hijos la excelencia, 770  
si gustas de escuchar la mía ahora, formada no en envidia o competencia,  
oirás cuánto tu fama se mejora  
con los que yo diré, cuya presencia, valor, virtud, ingenio, te enriquecen 775  
y sobre el Indo y Gange te engrandecen.

¡Oh tú, don JUAN COLOMA, en cuyo seno tanta gracia del cielo se ha  
encerrado, que a la envidia pusiste en duro freno y en la fama mil lenguas has  
criado, 780  
con que del gentil Tajo al fértil Reno tu nombre y tu valor va levantado!  
Tú, conde de Elda, en todo tan dichoso, haces el Turia más qu'el Po famoso.

Aquel en cuyo pecho abunda y llueve 785  
siempre una fuente que es por él divina, y a quien el coro de sus lumbres  
nueve como a señor con gran razón se inclina, a quien único nombre se le debe  
de la etíope hasta la gente austrina, 790  
don LUIS GARCERÁN es sin segundo,  
maestre de Montesa y bien del mundo.

Meresce bien en este insigne valle  
lugar ilustre, asiento conocido,  
aquel a quien la fama quiere dalle 795  
el nombre que su ingenio ha merecido.  
Tenga cuidado el cielo de loalle,  
pues es del cielo su valor crecido: el cielo alabe lo que yo no puedo  
del sabio don ALONSO REBOLLEDO. 800

Alzas, doctor FALCÓN, tan alto el vuelo, que al águila caudal atrás te dejas,  
pues te remontas con tu ingenio al cielo y deste valle mísero te alejas.  
Por esto temo y con razón recelo 805  
que, aunque te alabe, formarás mil quejas de mí, porque en tu loa noche y día  
no se ocupa la voz y lengua mía.

Si tuviera, cual tiene la Fortuna,  
la dulce poesía varia rueda, 810  
ligera y más movable que la luna,  
que ni estuvo, ni está, ni estará queda, en ella, sin hacer mudanza alguna,

pusiera sólo a MICER ARTIEDA,  
y el más alto lugar siempre ocupara, 815  
por sciencias, por ingenio y virtud rara.

Todas cuantas bien dadas alabanzas  
diste a raros ingenios, ¡oh GIL POLO!, tú las mereces solo y las alcanzas, tú  
las alcanzas y mereces solo. 820

Ten ciertas y seguras esperanzas  
que en este valle un nuevo mauseolo te harán estos pastores, do guardadas tus  
cenizas serán y celebradas.

CRISTÓBAL DE VIRUÉS, pues se adelanta 825  
tu sciencia y tu valor tan a tus años, tú mismo aquel ingenio y virtud canta  
con que huyes del mundo los engaños.

Tierna, dichosa y bien nascida planta, yo haré que en propios reinos y en  
estraños 830

el fruto de tu ingenio levantado  
se conozca, se admire y sea estimado.

Si conforme al ingenio que nos muestra SILVESTRE DE ESPINOSA, así se  
hubiera de loar, otra voz más viva y diestra, 835  
más tiempo y más caudal menester fuera.

Mas, pues la mía a su intención adiestra, yo le daré por paga verdadera,  
con el bien que del dios de Delo tiene, el mayor de las aguas de Hipocrene.  
840

Entre éstos, como Apolo, venir veo, hermoseando al mundo con su vista,  
al discreto galán GARCÍA ROMEO,  
dignísimo de estar en esta lista.

Si la hija del húmido Peneo, 845  
de quien ha sido Ovidio coronista,  
en campos de Tesalia le hallara,  
en él y no en laurel se transformara.

Rompe el silencio y sancto encerramiento, traspasa el aire, al cielo se levanta  
850  
de fray PEDRO DE HUETE aquel acento de su divina musa, heroica y sancta.  
Del alto suyo raro entendimiento

cantó la fama, ha de cantar y canta, llevando, para dar al mundo espanto, 855  
sus obras por testigos de su canto.

Tiempo es ya de llegar al fin postrero, dando principio a la mayor hazaña  
que jamás emprendí, la cual espero  
que ha de mover al blando Apolo a saña, 860  
pues, con ingenio rústico y grosero, a dos soles que alumbran vuestra España -  
no sólo a España, mas al mundo todo-pienso loar, aunque me falte el modo.

De Febo la sagrada honrosa sciencia, 865  
la cortesana discreción madura,  
los bien gastados años, la experiencia, que mil sanos consejos asegura;  
la agudeza de ingenio, el advertencia en apuntar y en descubrir la escura 870  
dificultad y duda que se ofrece,  
en estos soles dos sólo floresce.

En ellos un epílogo, pastores,  
del largo canto mío ahora hago,

y a ellos enderezo los loores 875  
cuantos habéis oído, y no los pago: que todos los ingenios son deudores a  
estos de quien yo me satisfago;  
satisfácese dellos todo el suelo,  
y aun los admira, porque son del cielo. 880

Estos quiero que den fin a mi canto, y a nueva admiración comienzo;  
y si pensáis que en esto me adelanto, cuando os diga quién son, veréis que os  
venzo.

Por ellos hasta el cielo me levanto, 885  
y sin ellos me corro y me avergüenzo: tal es LAÍNEZ, tal es FIGUEROA,  
dignos de eterna y de incesable loa.

No había aún bien acabado la hermosa ninfa los últimos acentos de su sabroso  
canto, cuando, tornándose a juntar las llamas, que divididas estaban, la cerraron  
en medio, y luego, poco a poco consumiéndose, en breve espacio desapareció el  
ardiente fuego y la discreta musa delante de los ojos de todos, a tiempo que ya la  
clara aurora comenzaba a descubrir sus frescas y rosadas mejillas por el  
espacioso cielo, dando alegres muestras del venidero día. Y luego el venerable  
Telesio, puniéndose encima de la sepultura de Meliso, y rodeado de toda la

agradable compañía que allí estaba, prestándole todos una agradable atención y estraño silencio, desta manera comenzó a decirles: -Lo que esta pasada noche en este mismo lugar y por vuestros mismos ojos habéis visto, discretos y gallardos pastores y hermosas pastoras, os habrá dado a entender cuán acepta es al cielo la loable costumbre que tenemos de hacer estos anales sacrificios y honrosas obsequias por las felices almas de los cuerpos que por decreto vuestro en este famoso valle tener sepultura merescieron. Dígoos esto, amigos míos, porque de aquí adelante con más fervor y diligencia acudáis a poner en efecto tan sancta y famosa obra, pues ya veis de cuán raros y altos espíritus nos ha dado noticia la bella Calíope, que todos son dignos, no sólo de las vuestras, pero de todas las posibles alabanzas. Y no penséis que es pequeño el gusto que he rescibido en saber por tan verdadera relación cuán grande es el número de los divinos ingenios que en nuestra España hoy viven, porque siempre ha estado y está en opinión de todas las naciones extranjeras que no son muchos, sino pocos, los espíritus que en la sciencia de la poesía en ella muestran que le tienen levantado, siendo tan al revés como se parece, pues cada uno de los que la ninfa ha nombrado al más agudo extranjero se aventaja, y darían claras muestras dello, si en esta nuestra España se estimase en tanto la poesía como en otras provincias se estima. Y así, por esta causa, los insignes y claros ingenios que en ella se aventajan, con la poca estimación que dellos los príncipes y el vulgo hacen, con solos sus entendimientos comunican sus altos y estraños conceptos, sin osar publicarlos al mundo; y tengo para mí que el cielo debe de ordenarlo desta manera, porque no meresce el mundo ni el mal considerado siglo nuestro gozar de manjares al alma tan gustosos. Mas, porque me parece, pastores, que el poco sueño desta pasada noche y las largas ceremonias nuestras os tendrán algún tanto fatigados y deseosos de reposo, será bien que, haciendo lo poco que nos falta para cumplir nuestro intento, cada uno se vuelva a su cabaña o al aldea, llevando en la memoria lo que la musa nos deja encomendado.

Y, en diciendo esto, se abajó de la sepultura; y, tornándose a coronar de nuevas y funestas ramas, tornó a rodear la pira tres veces, siguiéndole todos y acompañándole en algunas devotas oraciones que decía. Esto acabado, teniéndole todos en medio, volvió el grave rostro a una y otra parte, y, bajando la cabeza y mostrando agradescido semblante y amorosos ojos, se despidió de toda la compañía, la cual, yéndose quién por una y quién por otra parte de las cuatro salidas que aquel sitio tenía, en poco espacio se deshizo y dividió toda, quedando solos los del aldea de Aurelio, y con ellos Timbrio, Silerio, Nísida y Blanca, con los famosos pastores Elicio, Tirsi, Damón, Lauso, Erastro, Daranio, Arsindo y los cuatro lastimados Orompo, Marsilo, Crisio y Orfinio, con las pastoras Galatea, Florisa, Silveria y su amiga Belisa, por quien Marsilo moría. Juntos,

pues, todos estos, el venerable Aurelio les dijo que sería bien partirse luego de aquel lugar, para llegar a tiempo de pasar la siesta en el Arro yo de las Palmas, pues tan acomodado sitio era para ello. A todos pareció bien lo que Aurelio decía; y luego, con reposados pasos, hacia donde él dijo se encaminaron. Mas, como la hermosa vista de la pastora Belisa no dejase reposar los espíritus de Marsilo, quisiera él, si pudiera y le fuera lícito, llegarse a ella y decirle la sinrazón que con él usaba; mas, por no perder el decoro que a la honestidad de Belisa se debía, estábase el triste más mudo de lo que había menester su deseo. Los mismos efectos y accidentes hacía amor en las almas de los enamorados Elicio y Erastro, que cada cual por sí quisiera decir a Galatea lo que ya ella bien sabía. A esta sazón, dijo Aurelio: -No me parece bien, pastores, que os mostréis tan avaros que no queráis corresponder y pagar lo que debéis a las calandrias y ruiseñoles y a los otros pintados pajarillos que por entre estos árboles con su no aprendida y maravillosa armonía os van entretiniendo y regocijando. Tocad vuestros instrumentos y levantad vuestras sonoras voces, y mostraldes que el arte y destreza vuestra en la música a la natural suya se aventaja; y con tal entretenimiento sentiremos menos la pesadumbre del camino y los rayos del sol, que ya parece que van amenazando el rigor con que esta siesta han de herir la tierra.

Poco fue menester para ser Aurelio obedecido, porque luego Erastro tocó su zampoña y Arsindo su rabel, al son de los cuales instrumentos, dando todos la mano a Elicio, él comenzó a cantar desta manera:

## ELICIO

Por lo imposible peleo,  
y si quiero retirarme,  
ni paso ni senda veo;  
que hasta vencer o acabarme,  
tras sí me lleva el deseo. 5  
Y, aunque sé que aquí es forzoso  
antes morir que vencer,  
cuando estoy más peligroso,  
entonces vengo a tener  
*mayor fe en lo más dudoso.* 10

El cielo que me condena

a no esperar buena andanza,  
me da siempre a mano llena,  
sin las sombras de esperanza,  
mil certidumbres de pena. 15  
Mas mi pecho valeroso,  
que se abrasa y se resuelve  
en vivo fuego amoroso,  
en contracambio, le vuelve  
*mayor fe en lo más dudoso.* 20

Inconstancia, firme duda,  
falsa fe, cierto temor,  
voluntad de amor desnuda,  
nunca turban el amor  
que de firme no se muda. 25  
Vuele el tiempo presuroso,  
suceda ausencia o desdén,  
crezca el mal, mengüe el reposo,  
que yo tendré por mi bien  
*mayor fe en lo más dudoso.* 30

¿No es conocida locura  
y notable desvarío  
querer yo lo que ventura  
me niega, y el hado mío  
y la suerte no asegura? 35  
De todo estoy temeroso;  
no hay gusto que me entretenga,  
y en trance tan peligroso,  
me hace el amor que tenga  
*mayor fe en lo más dudoso.* 40

Alcanzo de mi dolor  
que está en tal término puesto,  
que llega donde el amor;  
y el imaginar en esto,  
tiempla en parte su rigor. 45  
De pobre y menesteroso,  
doy a la imaginación

alivio tan congojoso,  
porque tenga el corazón  
*mayor fe en lo más dudoso.* 50

Y más agora, que vienen  
de golpe todos los males;  
y para que más me penen,  
aunque todos son mortales,  
en la vida me entretienen. 55  
Mas, en fin, si un fin hermoso  
nuestra vida en honra sube,  
el mío me hará famoso,  
porque en muerte y vida tuve  
*mayor fe en lo más dudoso.* 60

Parecióle a Marsilo que lo que Elicio había cantado tan a su propósito hacía,  
que quiso seguirle en el mismo concepto; y así, sin esperar que otro le tomase la  
mano, al son de los mismos instrumentos, desta manera comenzó a cantar:

## MARSILO

¡Cuán fácil cosa es llevarse  
el viento las esperanzas  
que pudieron fabricarse  
de las vanas confianzas  
que suelen imaginarse! 5  
Todo concluye y fenece:  
las esperanzas de amor,  
los medios qu'el tiempo ofresce;  
mas en el buen amador  
*sola la fe permanece.* 10

Ella en mí tal fuerza alcanza,  
que, a pesar de aquel desdén,  
lleno de desconfianza,  
siempre me asegura un bien  
que sustenta la esperanza. 15



Y, aunqu'el amor desfallece  
en el blanco, airado pecho  
que tanto mis males cresce,  
en el mío, a su despecho,  
*sola la fe permanece.* 20

Sabes, amor, tú, que cobras  
tributo de mi fe cierta,  
y tanto en cobrarle sobras,  
que mi fe nunca fue muerta,  
pues se aviva con mis obras. 25  
Y sabes bien que descrece  
toda mi gloria y contento  
cuanto más tu furia cresce,  
y que en mi alma de asiento  
*sola la fe permanece.* 30

Pero si es cosa notoria,  
y no hay poner duda en ella,  
que la fe no entra en la gloria,  
yo, que no estaré sin ella,  
¿qué triunfo espero o victoria? 35  
Mi sentido desvanece

con el mal que se figura;  
todo el bien desaparece;  
y entre tanta desventura,  
*sola la fe permanece.* 40

Con un profundo suspiro dio fin a su canto el lastimado Marsilo; y luego Erastro, dando su zampoña, sin más detenerse, desta manera comenzó a cantar:

## ERASTRO

En el mal que me lastima  
y en el bien de mi dolor,

es mi fe de tanta estima  
que ni huye del temor,  
ni a la esperanza se arrima. 5  
No la turba o desconcierta  
ver que está mi pena cierta  
en su difícil subida,  
ni que consumen la vida  
*fe viva, esperanza muerta.* 10

Milagro es éste en mi mal;  
mas eslo porque mi bien,

si viene, venga a ser tal,  
que, entre mil bienes, le den  
la palma por principal. 15  
La fama, con lengua experta,  
dé al mundo noticia cierta  
qu'el firme amor se mantiene  
en mi pecho, adonde tiene  
*fe viva, esperanza muerta.* 20

Vuestro desdén riguroso  
y mi humilde merescer,  
me tienen tan temeroso  
que, ya que os supe querer,  
ni puedo hablaros, ni oso. 25  
Veo de contino abierta  
a mi desdicha la puerta,  
y que acabo poco a poco,  
porque con vos valen poco  
*fe viva, esperanza muerta.* 30

No llega a mi fantasía  
un tan loco desvaneó,  
como es pensar que podría

el menor bien que deseo  
alcanzar por la fe mía. 35  
Podéis, pastora, estar cierta

qu'el alma rendida acierta  
a amaros cual merecéis,  
pues siempre en ella hallaréis  
*fe viva, esperanza muerta.* 40

Calló Erastro; y luego, el ausente Crisio, al son de los mismos instrumentos,  
desta suerte comenzó a cantar:

## CRISIO

Si a las veces desespera  
del bien la firme afición,  
quien desmaya en la carrera  
de la amorosa pasión,  
¿qué fruto o qué premio espera? 5  
Yo no sé quien se asegura  
gloria, gustos y ventura  
por un ímpetu amoroso,  
si en él y en el más dichoso  
*no es fe la fe que no dura.* 10

En mil trances ya sabidos  
se han visto, y en los de amores,  
los soberbios y atrevidos,  
al principio vencedores,  
y a la fin quedar vencidos. 15  
Sabe el que tiene cordura  
que en la firmeza se apura  
el triunfo de la batalla,  
y sabe que, aunque se halla,  
*no es fe la fe que no dura.* 20

En el que quisiere amar  
no más de por su contento,  
es imposible durar  
en su vano pensamiento  
la fe que se ha de guardar. 25

Si en la mayor desventura  
mi fe tan firme y segura  
como en el bien no estuviera,  
yo mismo della dijera:  
*no es fe la fe que no dura.* 30

El ímpetu y ligereza

de un nuevo amador insano,  
los llantos y la tristeza,  
son nubes que en el verano  
se deshacen con presteza. 35  
No es amor el que le apura,  
sino apetito y locura,  
pues cuando quiere, no quiere:  
no es amante el que no muere,  
*no es fe la fe que no dura.* 40

A todos pareció bien la orden que los pastores en sus canciones guardaban, y con deseo atendían a que Tirsi o Damón comenzasen; mas presto se le cumplió Damón, pues, en acabando Crisio, al son de su mesmo rabel, cantó desta manera:  
DAMÓN

Amarili, ingrata y bella,  
¿quién os podrá enternecer,  
si os vienen a endurescer  
las ansias de mi querella  
y la fe de mi querer? 5  
¡Bien sabéis, pastora, vos

que en el amor que mantengo  
a tan alto extremo vengo  
que, después de la de Dios,  
*sola es fe la fe que os tengo!* 10

Y, puesto que subo tanto  
en amar cosa mortal,  
tal bien encierra mi mal,  
que al alma por él levanto

a su patria natural. 15  
Por esto conozco y sé  
que tal es mi amor, tan luengo  
como muero y me entretengo,  
y que, si en amor hay fe,  
*sola es fe la fe que os tengo.* 20

Los muchos años gastados  
en amorosos servicios,  
del alma los sacrificios,  
de mi fe y de mis cuidados  
dan manifiestos indicios. 25  
Por esto no os pediré  
remedio al mal que sostengo;

y si a pedírosle vengo,  
es, Amarili, porque  
*sola es fe la fe que os tengo.* 30

En el mar de mi tormenta  
jamás he visto bonanza,  
y aquella alegre esperanza  
con quien la fe se sustenta,  
de la mía no se alcanza. 35  
Del amor y de fortuna  
me quejo; mas no me vengo,  
pues por ellas a tal vengo  
que, sin esperanza alguna,  
*sola es fe la fe que os tengo.* 40

El canto de Damón acabó de confirmar en Timbrio y en Silerio la buena opinión que del raro ingenio de los pastores que allí estaban habían concebido; y más cuando, a persuasión de Tirsi y de Elicio, el ya libre y desdeñoso Lauso, al son de la flauta de Arsindo, soltó la voz en semejantes versos:

## LAUSO

Rompió el desdén tus cadenas,  
falso amor, y a mi memoria  
el mismo ha vuelto la gloria  
de la ausencia de tus penas.  
Llame mi fe quien quisiere 5  
antojadiza, y no firme,  
y en su opinión me confirme  
como más le pareciere.  
Diga que presto olvidé,  
y que de un sutil cabello, 10  
que un soplo pudo rompello,  
colgada estaba mi fe.  
Digan que fueron fingidos  
mis llantos y mis suspiros,  
y que del Amor los tiros 15  
no pasaron mis vestidos.  
Que no el ser llamado vano  
y mudable me atormenta,  
a trueco de ver esenta  
mi cerviz del yugo insano. 20

Sé yo bien quién es Silena  
y su condición estraña,  
y que asegura y engaña  
su apacible faz serena.  
A su estraña gravedad 25  
y a sus bajos bellos ojos,  
no es mucho dar los despojos  
de cualquiera voluntad.  
Esto en la vista primera;  
mas, después de conocida, 30  
por no verla, dar la vida,  
y más, si más se pudiera.  
Silena del cielo y mía,  
muchas veces la llamaba  
porque tan hermosa estaba 35  
que del cielo parecía;  
Mas ahora, sin recelo,  
mejor la podré llamar

serena falsa del mar,  
que no Silena del cielo. 40

Con los ojos, con la pluma,  
con las veras y los juegos,  
de amantes vanos y ciegos  
prende innumerable suma.  
Siempre es primero el postrero; 45  
mas el más enamorado  
al cabo es tan maltratado  
cuanto querido primero.  
¡Oh cuánto más se estimara  
de Silena la hermosura, 50  
si el proceder y cordura  
a su belleza igualara!  
No le falta discreción;  
mas empléala tan mal,  
que le sirve de dogal 55  
que ahoga su presunción.  
Y no hablo de corrido,  
pues sería apasionado,  
pero hablo de engañado  
y sin razón ofendido. 60  
Ni me ciega la pasión,

ni el deseo de su mengua:  
que siempre siguió mi lengua  
los términos de razón.  
Sus muchos antojos varios, 65  
su mudable pensamiento,  
le vuelven cada momento  
los amigos en contrarios.  
Y pues hay por tantos modos  
enemigos de Silena, 70  
o ella no es toda buena,  
o son ellos malos todos.

Acabó Lauso su canto; y, aunque él creyó que ninguno le entendía, por ignorar el disfrazado nombre de Silena, más de tres de los que allí iban la conocieron, y aun se maravillaron que la modestia de Lauso a ofender alguno se estendiese: principalmente a la disfrazada pastora, de quien tan enamorado le habían visto. Pero en la opinión de Damón, su amigo, quedó bien disculpado, porque conocía el término de Silena y sabía el que con Lauso había usado, y de lo que no dijo se maravillaba. Acabó, como se ha dicho, Lauso; y, como Galatea estaba informada del extremo de la voz de Nísida, quiso, por obligarla, cantar ella primero; y por esto, antes que otro pastor comenzase, haciendo señal a Arsindo que en tañer su flauta procediese, al son della, con su estremada voz, cantó desta manera:

## GALATEA

Tanto cuanto el amor convida y llama al alma con sus gustos de apariencia, tanto  
más huye su mortal dolencia  
quien sabe el nombre que le da la fama.

Y el pecho opuesto a su amorosa llama, 5  
armado de una honesta resistencia,  
poco puede empecerle su inclemencia, poco su fuego y su rigor le inflama.

Segura está, quien nunca fue querida ni supo querer bien, de aquella lengua  
10 que en su deshonor se adelgaza y lima; mas si el querer y el no querer da  
mengua, ¿en qué ejercicios pasará la vida  
la que más que al vivir la honra estima?

Bien se echó de ver en el canto de Galatea que respondía al malicioso de Lauso, y que no estaba mal con las voluntades libres, sino con las lenguas maliciosas y los ánimos dañados, que, en no alcanzando lo que quieren, con vierten el amor que un tiempo mostraron en un odio malicioso y detestable, como ella en Lauso imaginaba; pero quizá saliera deste engaño, si la buena condición de Lauso conociera y la mala de Silena no ignorara. Luego que Galatea acabó de cantar, con corteses palabras rogó a Nísida que lo mismo hiciese; la cual, como era tan comedida como hermosa, sin hacerse de rogar, al son de la zampoña de Florisa, cantó desta suerte: NÍSIDA



Bien puse yo valor a la defensa  
del duro encuentro y amoroso asalto; bien levanté mi presumpción en alto  
contra el rigor de la notoria ofensa.

Mas fue tan reforzada y tan intensa 5

la batería, y mi poder tan falto,  
que sin cogerme amor de sobresalto, me dio a entender su potestad inmensa.

Valor, honestidad, recogimiento,  
recato, ocupación, esquivo pecho, 10  
amor con poco premio lo conquista.

Ansí que, para huir el vencimiento, consejos jamás fueron de provecho:  
desta verdad testigo soy de vista.

Cuando Nísida acabó de cantar y acabó de admirar a Galatea y a los que  
escuchado la habían, estaban ya bien cerca del lugar adonde tenían determinado  
de pasar la siesta; pero en aquel poco espacio le tuvo Belisa para cumplirlo que  
Silveria le rogó, que fue que algo cantase; la cual, acompañándola el son de la  
flauta de Arsindo, cantó lo que se sigue:

## BELISA

Libre voluntad esenta,  
atended a la razón  
que nuestro crédito aumenta;

dejad la vana afición,  
engendradora de afrenta; 5  
que cuando el alma se encarga  
de alguna amorosa carga,  
a su gusto es cualquier cosa  
compusición venenosa  
con jugo de adelfa amarga. 10

Por la mayor cantidad  
de la riqueza subida  
en valor y en calidad,  
no es bien dada ni vendida  
la preciosa libertad. 15  
¿Pues, quién se pondrá a perdella  
por una simple querella  
de un amador porfiado,  
si cuanto bien hay criado  
no se compara con ella? 20

Si es insufrible dolor  
tener en prisión esquivada  
el cuerpo libre de amor,  
tener el alma captiva

¿no será pena mayor? 25  
Sí será, y aun de tal suerte,  
que remedio a mal tan fuerte  
no se halla en la paciencia,  
en años, valor o sciencia,  
porque sólo está en la muerte. 30

Vaya, pues, mi sano intento  
lejos deste desvarío;  
huiga tan falso contento;  
rija mi libre albedrío  
a su modo el pensamiento; 35  
mi tierna cerviz esenta  
no permita ni consienta  
sobre sí el yugo amoroso,  
por quien se turba el reposo  
y la libertad se ausenta. 40

Al alma del lastimado Marsilo llegaron los libres versos de la pastora, por la poca esperanza que sus palabras prometían de ser mejoradas sus obras; pero, como era tan firme la fe con que la amaba, no pudieron las notorias muestras de libertad que había oído hacer que él no quedase tan sin ella como hasta entonces estaba. Acabóse en esto el camino de llegar al Arroyo de las Palmas, y, aunque

no llevaran intención de pasar allí la siesta, en llegando a él y en viendo la comodidad del hermoso sitio, él mismo a no pasar adelante les forzara. Llegados, pues, a él, luego el venerable Aurelio ordenó que todos se sentasen junto al claro y espejado arroyo, que por entre la menuda yerba corría, cuyo nacimiento era al pie de una altísima y antigua palma, que por no haber en todas las riberas de Tajo sino aquélla y otra que junto a ella estaba, aquel lugar y arroyo el de las Palmas era llamado. Y, después de sentados, con más voluntad y llaneza que de costosos manjares, de los pastores de Aurelio fueron servidos, satisfaciendo la sed con las claras y frescas aguas que el limpio arroyo les ofrescía; y, en acabando la breve y sabrosa comida, algunos de los pastores se dividieron y apartaron a buscar algún apartado y sombrío lugar donde restaurar pudiesen las no dormidas horas de la pasada noche; y sólo se quedaron solos los de la compañía y aldea de Aurelio, con Timbrio, Silerio, Nísida y Blanca, Tirsi y Damón, a quien les pareció ser mejor gustar de la buena conversación que allí se esperaba, que de cualquier otro gusto que el sueño ofrecerles podía. Adivinada, pues, y casi conocida esta su intención de Aurelio, les dijo: -Bien será, señores, que los que aquí estamos, ya que entregarnos al dulce sueño no habemos querido, que este tiempo que le hurtamos no dejemos de aprovecharle en cosa que más de nuestro gusto sea; y la que a mí me parece que no podrá dejar de dárnosle, es que cada cual, como mejor supiere, muestre aquí la agudeza de su ingenio, proponiendo alguna pregunta o enigma, a quien esté obligado a responder el compañero que a su lado estuviere; pues con este ejercicio se granjearán dos cosas: la una, pasar con menos enfado las horas que aquí estuviéremos; la otra, no cansar tanto nuestros oídos con oír siempre lamentaciones de amor y endechas enamoradas.

Conformáronse todos luego con la voluntad de Aurelio; y, sin mudarse del lugar do estaban, el primero que comenzó a preguntar fue el mismo Aurelio, diciendo desta manera:

## AURELIO

¿Cuál es aquel poderoso  
que desde oriente a occidente  
es conocido y famoso?  
A veces, fuerte y valiente:  
otras, flaco y temeroso; 5  
quita y pone la salud,

muestra y cubre la virtud  
en muchos más de una vez,  
es más fuerte en la vejez  
que en la alegre juventud. 10

Múdase en quien no se muda

por estraña preeminencia,  
hace temblar al que suda,  
y a la más rara elocuencia  
suele tornar torpe y muda; 15  
con diferentes medidas,  
anchas, cortas y estendidas,  
mide su ser y su nombre,  
y suele tomar renombre  
de mil tierras conocidas. 20

Sin armas vence al armado,  
y es forzoso que le venza,  
y aquél que más le ha tratado,  
mostrando tener vergüenza,  
es el más desvergonzado. 25  
Y es cosa de maravilla  
que en el campo y en la villa,  
a capitán de tal prueba  
cualquier hombre se le atreva,  
aunque pierda en la rencilla. 30

Tocó la respuesta desta pregunta al anciano Arsindo, que junto a Aurelio estaba; y, habiendo un poco considerado lo que significar podía, al fin le dijo: - Paréceme, Aurelio, que la edad nuestra nos fuerza a andar más enamorados de lo que significa tu pregunta que no de la más gallarda pastora que se nos pueda ofrecer, porque si no me engaño, el poderoso y conocido que dices es el vino, y en él cuadran todos los atributos que le has dado.

-Verdad dices, Arsindo -respondió Aurelio-, y estoy para decir que me pesa de haber propuesto pregunta que con tanta facilidad haya sido declarada; mas di tú la tuya, que al lado tienes quien te la sabrá desatar, por más añudada que venga.

-Que me place -dijo Arsindo.

Luego propuso la siguiente:

## ARSINDO

¿Quién es quien pierde el color  
donde se suele avivar,  
y luego torna a cobrar  
otro más vivo y mejor?  
Es pardo en su nascimiento, 5  
y después negro atezado,  
y al cabo tan colorado,  
que su vista da contento.

No guarda fueros ni leyes,  
tiene amistad con las llamas, 10  
visita a tiempos las camas  
de señores y de reyes.  
Muerto, se llama varón,  
y vivo, hembra se nombra;  
tiene el aspecto de sombra; 15  
de fuego, la condición.

Era Damón el que al lado de Arsindo estaba, el cual, apenas había acabado Arsindo su pregunta, cuando le dijo: -Paréceme, Arsindo, que no es tan oscura tu demanda como lo que significa, porque si mal no estoy en ella, el carbón es por quien dices que muerto se llama varón y encendido y vivo brasa, que es nombre de hembra, y todas las demás partes le convienen en todo como ésta; y si quedas con la misma pena que Aurelio, por la facilidad con que tu pregunta ha sido entendida, yo os quiero tener compañía en ella, pues Tirsi, a quien toca responderme, nos hará iguales.

Y luego dijo la suya:

DAMÓN

¿Cuál es la dama polida,

aseada y bien compuesta,  
temerosa y atrevida,  
vergonzosa y deshonesto,  
y gustosa y desabrida? 5  
Si son muchas -porque asombre-,  
mudan de mujer el nombre  
en varón; y es cierta ley  
que va con ellas el rey  
y las lleva cualquier hombre. 10

-Bien es, amigo Damón -dijo luego Tirsi-, que salga verdadera tu porfía, y que quedes con la pena de Aurelio y Arsindo, si alguna tienen, porque te hago saber que sé que lo que encubre tu pregunta es la carta y el pliego de cartas.  
Concedió Damón lo que Tirsi dijo, y luego Tirsi propuso desta manera:

## **TIRSI**

¿Quién es la que es toda ojos  
de la cabeza a los pies,

y a veces, sin su interés,  
causa amorosos enojos?  
También suele aplacar riñas, 5  
y no le va ni le viene,  
y, aunque tantos ojos tiene,  
se descubren pocas niñas.  
Tiene nombre de un dolor  
que se tiene por mortal, 10  
hace bien y hace mal,  
enciende y tiembla el amor.

En confusión puso a Elicio la pregunta de Tirsi, porque a él tocaba responder a ella, y casi estuvo por darse, como dicen, por vencido; pero, a cabo de poco, vino a decir que era la celosía; y, concediéndolo Tirsi, luego Elicio preguntó lo

siguiente:

## ELICIO

Es muy oscura y es clara;  
tiene mil contrariedades:  
encúbrenos las verdades,  
y al cabo nos las declara.  
Nasce, a veces, de donaire, 5

otras, de altas fantasías,  
y suele engendrar porfías  
aunque trate cosas de aire.  
Sabe su nombre cualquiera,  
hasta los niños pequeños; 10  
son muchas y tiene dueños  
de diferente manera.  
No hay vieja que no se abrace  
con una destas señoras;  
son de gusto algunas horas: 15  
cuál cansa, cuál satisface.  
Sabios hay que se desvelan  
por sacarles los sentidos,  
y algunos quedan corridos  
cuanto más sobre ello velan. 20  
Cuál es nescia, cuál curiosa,  
cuál fácil, cuál intricada,  
pero sea o no sea nada,  
decidme qué es cosa y cosa.

No podía Timbrio atinar con lo que significaba la pregunta de Elicio, y casi comenzó a correrse de ver que más que otro alguno se tardaba en la respuesta, mas ni aun por eso venía en el sentido della; y tanto se detuvo, que Galatea, que estaba después de Nísida, dijo: -Si vale a romper la orden que está dada, y puede responder el que primero supiere, yo por mí digo que sé lo que significa la propuesta enigma, y estoy por declararla, si el señor Timbrio me da licencia.

-Por cierto, hermosa Galatea -respondió Timbrio-, que conozco yo que, así como a mí me falta, os sobra a vos ingenio para aclarar mayores dificultades; pero, con todo eso, quiero que tengáis paciencia hasta que Elicio la torne a decir, y si desta vez no la acertare, confirmarse ha con más veras la opinión que de mi ingenio y del vuestro tengo.

Tornó Elicio a decir su pregunta, y luego Timbrio declaró lo que era, diciendo: -Con lo mismo que yo pensé que tu demanda, Elicio, se escurecía, con eso mismo me parece que se declara, pues el último verso dice que te digan qué es cosa y cosa, y así yo te respondo a lo que me dices, y digo que tu pregunta es el «qué es cosa y cosa»; y no te maravilles haberme tardado en la respuesta, porque más me maravillara yo de mi ingenio si más presto respondiera, el cual mostrará quién es en el poco artificio de mi pregunta, que es ésta:

## **TIMBRIO**

¿Quién es el que, a su pesar,  
mete sus pies por los ojos,  
y sin causarles enojos,  
les hace luego cantar?  
El sacarlos es de gusto, 5  
aunque, a veces, quien los saca,  
no sólo su mal no aplaca,  
mas cobra mayor disgusto.

A Nísida tocaba responder a la pregunta de Timbrio, mas no fue posible que la adivinasen ella ni Galatea, que se le seguían. Y, viendo Orompo que las pastoras se fatigaban en pensar lo que significaba, les dijo: -No os canséis, señoras, ni fatiguéis vuestros entendimientos en la declaración desta enigma, porque podría ser que ninguna de vosotras en toda su vida hubiese visto la figura que la pregunta encubre; y así, no es mucho que no deis en ella; que si de otra suerte fuera, bien seguros estábamos de vuestros entendimientos, que en menos espacio, otras más dificultosas hubiéradades declarado. Y por esto, con vuestra licencia, quiero yo responder a Timbrio y decirle que su demanda significa un hombre con grillos, pues cuando saca los pies de aquellos ojos que él dice, o es para ser libre, o para llevarle al suplicio. Porque veáis, pastoras, si tenía yo razón



de imaginar que quizá ninguna de vosotras había visto en toda su vida cárceles ni prisiones.

-Yo por mí sé decir -dijo Galatea-que jamás he visto aprisionado alguno.

Lo mismo dijeron Nísida y Blanca; y luego Nísida propuso su pregunta en esta forma: NÍSIDA

Muerde el fuego, y el bocado  
es daño y bien del mordido;

no pierde sangre el herido,  
aunque se ve acuchillado;  
mas, si es profunda la herida, 5  
y de mano que no acierte,  
causa al herido la muerte,  
y en tal muerte está su vida.

Poco se tardó Galatea en responder a Nísida, porque luego le dijo: -Bien sé que no me engaño, hermosa Nísida, si digo que a ninguna cosa se puede mejor atribuir tu enigma que a las tijeras de despabilar y a la vela o cirio que despabilan. Y si esto es verdad, como lo es, y quedas satisfecha de mi respuesta, escucha ahora la mía, que no con menos facilidad espero que será declarada de tu hermana, que yo he hecho la tuya.

Y luego la dijo; que fue ésta:

## **GALATEA**

Tres hijos que de una madre  
nascieron con ser perfecto,  
y de un hermano era nieto  
el uno, y el otro padre;

y estos tres tan sin clemencia 5  
a su madre maltrataban  
que mil puñadas la daban,  
mostrando en ello su sciencia.

Considerando estaba Blanca lo que podía significar la enigma de Galatea, cuando vieron atravesar corriendo, por junto al lugar donde estaban, dos gallardos pastores, mostrando en la furia con que corrían que alguna cosa de importancia les forzaba a mover los pasos con tanta ligereza; y luego, en el mismo instante, oyeron unas dolorosas voces, como de personas que socorro pedían. Y con este sobresalto se levantaron todos, y siguieron el tino donde las voces sonaban; y, a pocos pasos, salieron de aquel deleitoso sitio y dieron sobre la ribera del fresco Tajo, que por allí cerca mansamente corría; y, apenas vieron el río, cuando se les ofreció a la vista la más estraña cosa que imaginar pudieran, porque vieron dos pastoras, al parecer de gentil donaire, que tenían a un pastor asido de las faldas del pellico con toda la fuerza a ellas posible porque el triste no se ahogase, porque tenía ya el medio cuerpo en el río y la cabeza debajo del agua, forcejando con los pies por desasirse de las pastoras, que su desesperado intento estorbaban, las cuales ya casi querían soltarle, no pudiendo vencer al tesón de su porfía con las débiles fuerzas suyas. Mas, en esto, llegaron los dos pastores que corriendo habían venido, y, asiendo al desesperado, le sacaron del agua a tiempo que ya todos los demás llegaban, espantándose del estraño espectáculo, y más lo fueron cuando conocieron que el pastor que quería ahogarse era Galercio, el hermano de Artidoro, y las pastoras eran Maurisa, su hermana, y la hermosa Teolinda; las cuales, como vieron a Galatea y a Florisa, con lágrimas en los ojos corrió Teolinda a abrazar a Galatea, diciendo: -¡Ay, Galatea, dulce amiga y señora mía, cómo ha cumplido esta desdichada la palabra que te dio de volver a verte y a decirte las nuevas de su contento!

-De que le tengas, Teolinda -respondió Galatea-, holgaré yo tanto cuanto te lo asegura la voluntad que de mí para servirte tienes conocida; mas parésceme que no acreditan tus ojos tus palabras, ni aun ellas me satisfacen de modo que imagine buen suceso de tus deseos.

En tanto que Galatea con Teolinda esto pasaba, Elicio y Arsindo, con los otros pastores, habían desnudado a Galercio; y, al desceñirle el pellico, que con todo el vestido mojado estaba, se le cayó un papel del seno, el cual alzó Tirsi, y abriéndole, vio que eran versos, y por no poderlos leer, por estar mojados, encima de una alta rama le puso al rayo del sol para que se enjugase. Pusieron a Galercio un gabán de Arsindo, y el desdichado mozo estaba como atónito y embelesado, sin hablar palabra alguna, aunque Elicio le preguntaba qué era la causa que a tan estraño término le había conducido; mas por él respondió su hermana Maurisa, diciendo: -Alzad los ojos, pastores, y veréis quién es la ocasión que al desgraciado de mi hermano en tan estraños y desesperados puntos

ha puesto.

Por lo que Maurisa dijo, alzaron los pastores los ojos, y vieron encima de una pendiente roca que sobre el río caía una gallarda y dispuesta pastora, sentada sobre la misma peña, mirando con risueño semblante todo lo que los pastores hacían, la cual fue luego de todos conocida por la cruel Gelasia.

-Aquella desamorada, aquella desconocida -siguió Maurisa-, es, señores, la enemiga mortal deste desventurado hermano mío, el cual, como ya todas estas riberas saben y vosotras no ignoráis, la ama, la quiere y la adora; y, en cambio de los continuos servicios que siempre le ha hecho y de las lágrimas que por ella ha derramado, esta mañana, con el más esquivo y desamorado desdén que jamás en la crueldad pudiera hallarse, le mandó que de su presencia se partiese y que ahora ni nunca jamás a ella tornase. Y quiso tan de veras mi hermano obedecerla, que procuraba quitarse la vida, por escusar la ocasión de nunca traspasar su mandamiento; y si, por dicha, estos pastores tan presto no llegaran, llegado fuera ya el fin de mi alegría y el de los días de mi lastimado hermano.

En admiración puso lo que Maurisa dijo a todos los que la escucharon, y más admirados quedaron cuando vieron que la cruel Gelasia, sin moverse del lugar donde estaba, y sin hacer cuenta de toda aquella compañía, que los ojos en ella tenía puestos, con un extraño donaire y desdeñoso brío, sacó un pequeño rabel de su zurrón, y, parándosele a templar muy despacio, a cabo de poco rato, con voz en extremo buena, comenzó a cantar desta manera:

## GELASIA

¿Quién dejará del verde prado umbroso las frescas yerbas y las frescas fuentes?

¿Quién de seguir con pasos diligentes la suelta liebre o jabalí cerdoso?

¿Quién, con el son amigo y sonoro, 5  
no detendrá las aves inocentes?

¿Quién, en las horas de la siesta ardientes, no buscará en las selvas el reposo,  
por seguir los incendios, los temores, los celos, iras, rabias, muertes, penas 10  
del falso amor, que tanto aflige al mundo?

Del campo son y han sido mis amores; rosas son y jazmines mis cadenas;  
libre nascí, y en libertad me fundo.

Cantando estaba Gelasia, y en el movimiento y ademán de su rostro, la desamorada condición suya descubría. Mas, apenas hubo llegado al último verso de su canto, cuando se levantó con una estraña ligereza, y, como si de alguna cosa espantable huyera, así comenzó a correr por la peña abajo, dejando a los pastores admirados de su condición y confusos de su corrida. Mas luego vieron qué era la causa della con ver al enamorado Lenio, que con tirante paso, por la misma peña subía, con intención de llegar adonde Gelasia estaba; pero no quiso ella aguardarle, por no faltar de corresponder en un solo punto a la crueldad de su propósito. Llegó el cansado Lenio a lo alto de la peña cuando ya Gelasia estaba al pie della, y, viendo que no detenía el paso, sino que con más presteza por la espaciosa campaña le tendía, con fatigado aliento y laso espíritu, se sentó en el mismo lugar donde Gelasia había estado, y allí comenzó con desesperadas razones a maldecir su ventura y la hora en que alzó la vista a mirar a la cruel pastora Gelasia; y en aquel mismo instante, como arrepentido de lo que decía, tornaba a bendecir sus ojos y a tener por dichosa y buena la ocasión que en tales términos le tenía. Y luego, incitado y movido de un furioso accidente, arrojó lejos de sí el cayado, y, desnudándose el pellico, le entregó a las aguas del claro Tajo, que junto al pie de la peña corría, lo cual visto por los pastores que mirándole estaban, sin duda creyeron que la fuerza de la enamorada pasión le sacaba de juicio; y así, Elicio y Erastro comenzaron a subir la peña para estorbarle que no hiciese algún otro desatino que le costase más caro. Y, puesto que Lenio los vio subir, no hizo otro movimiento alguno si no fue sacar de su zurrón su rabel, y con un nuevo y estraño reposo se tornó asentar; y, vuelto el rostro hacia donde su pastora huía, con voz suave y de lágrimas acompañada, comenzó a cantar desta suerte:

## LENIO

¿Quién te impele, crüel? ¿Quién te desvía?  
¿Quién te retira del amado intento?  
¿Quién en tus pies veloces alas cría, con que corres ligera más qu'el viento?  
¿Por qué tienes en poco la fe mía, 5  
y desprecias el alto pensamiento?  
¿Por qué huyes de mí? ¿Por qué me dejas?  
*¡Oh, más dura que mármol a mis quejas!*

¿Soy, por ventura, de tan bajo estado que no merezca ver tus ojos bellos? 10  
¿Soy pobre? ¿Soy avaro? ¿Hasme hallado en falsedad desde que supe vellos?  
La condición primera no he mudado.

¿No pende del menor de tus cabellos mi alma? Pues ¿por qué de mí te alejas?  
15  
*¡Oh, más dura que mármol a mis quejas!*

Tome escarmiento tu altivez sobrada de ver mi libre voluntad rendida,  
mira mi antigua presunción trocada y en amoroso intento convertida. 20  
Mira que contra amor no puede nada  
la más esenta descuidada vida.  
Detén el paso ya: ¿por qué le aquejas?  
*¡Oh, más dura que mármol a mis quejas!*

Vime cual tú te ves, y ahora veo 25  
que como fui jamás espero verme:  
tal me tiene la fuerza del deseo;  
tal quiero, que se estrema en no quererme.  
Tú has ganado la palma, tú el trofeo de que amor pueda en su prisión tenerme;  
30  
tú me rendiste: ¿y tú de mí te quejas?  
*¡Oh, más dura que mármol a mis quejas!*

En tanto que el lastimado pastor sus dolorosas quejas entonaba, estaban los demás pastores reprehendiendo a Galercio su mal propósito, afeándole el dañado intento que había mostrado. Mas el desesperado mozo a ninguna cosa respondía, de que no poco Maurisa se fatigaba, creyendo que, en dejándole solo, había de poner en ejecución su mal pensamiento. En este medio, Galatea y Florisa, apartándose con Teolinda, le preguntaron qué era la causa de su tornada y si por ventura había sabido ya de su Artidoro; a lo cual ella respondió llorando: -«No sé qué os diga, amigas y señoras mías, sino que el cielo quiso que yo hallase a Artidoro para que enteramente le perdiese; porque habréis de saber que aquella mal considerada y traidora hermana mía, que fue el principio de mi desventura, aquella misma ha sido la ocasión del fin y remate de mi contento; porque, sabiendo ella, así como llegamos con Galercio y Maurisa a su aldea, que Artidoro estaba en una montaña no lejos de allí con su ganado, sin decirme nada, se partió a buscarle. Hallóle, y, fingiendo ser yo -que para sólo este daño ordenó el cielo que nos pareciésemos-, con poca dificultad le dio a entender que la

pastora que en nuestra aldea le había desdeñado era una su hermana que en extremo le parecía. En fin, le contó por suyos todos los pasos que yo por él he dado, y los extremos de dolor que he padecido; y, como las entrañas del pastor estaban tan tiernas y enamoradas, con harto menos que la traidora le dijera fuera dél creída, como la creyó, tan en mi perjuicio que, sin aguardar que la Fortuna mezclase en su gusto algún nuevo impedimento, luego en el mismo instante dio la mano a Leonarda de ser un legítimo esposo, creyendo que se la daba a Teolinda. Veis aquí, pastoras, en qué ha parado el fruto de mis lágrimas y suspiros; veis aquí ya arrancada de raíz toda mi esperanza; y lo que más siento es que haya sido por la mano que a sustentarla estaba más obligada. Leonarda goza de Artidoro por el medio del falso engaño que os he contado, y, puesto que ya él lo sabe, aunque debe de haber sentido la burla, hala disimulado, como discreto.

»Llegaron luego al aldea las nuevas de su casamiento, y con ellas las del fin de mi alegría. Súpose también el artificio de mi hermana, la cual dio por disculpa ver que Galercio, a quien tanto ella amaba, por la pastora Gelasia se perdía, y que así le pareció más fácil reducir a su voluntad la enamorada de Artidoro que no la desesperada de Galercio; y que, pues los dos eran uno solo en cuanto a la apariencia y gentileza, que ella se tenía por dichosa y bien afortunada con la compañía de Artidoro. Con esto se disculpa, como he dicho, la enemiga de mi gloria. Y así, yo, por no verla gozar de la que de derecho se me debía, dejé el aldea y la presencia de Artidoro, y, acompañada de las más tristes imaginaciones que imaginar se pueden, venía a daros las nuevas de mi desdicha en compañía de Maurisa, que ansimesmo viene con intención de contaros lo que Grisaldo ha hecho después que supo el hurto de Rosaura. Y esta mañana, al salir del sol, topamos con Galercio, el cual, con tiernas y enamoradas razones, estaba persuadiendo a Gelasia que bien le quisiese; mas ella, con el más estraño desdén y esquivaza que decir se puede, le mandó que se le quitase delante y que no fuese osado de jamás hallarla, y el desdichado pastor, apretado de tan recio mandamiento y de tan estraña crueldad, quiso cumplirle, haciendo lo que habéis visto. Todo esto es lo que por mí ha pasado, amigas mías, después que de vuestra presencia me partí.» Ved ahora si tengo más que llorar que antes, y si se ha augmentado la ocasión para que vosotras os ocupéis en consolarme, si acaso mi mal recibiese consuelo.

No dijo más Teolinda, porque la infinidad de lágrimas que le vinieron a los ojos, y los suspiros que del alma arrancaba, impidieron el oficio a la lengua; y, aunque las de Galatea y Florisa quisieron mostrarse expertas y elocuentes en consolarla, fue de poco efecto su trabajo. Y en el tiempo que entre las pastoras estas razones pasaban, se acabó de enjugar el papel que Tirsi a Galercio del seno sacado había, y deseoso de leerle, le tomó, y vio que desta manera decía:

## GALERCIO A GELASIA

¡Ángel de humana figura,  
furia con rostro de dama,  
fría y encendida llama  
donde mi alma se apura!  
Escucha las sinrazones, 5  
de tu desamor causadas,  
de mi alma trasladadas  
en estos tristes renglones.  
No escribo por ablandarte,  
pues con tu dureza estraña 10  
no valen ruegos ni maña,  
ni servicios tienen parte.  
Escríbote porque veas  
la sinrazón que me haces,  
y cuán mal que satisfaces 15  
al valor de que te arreas.  
Que alabes la libertad  
es muy justo, y razón tienes;

mas mira que la mantienes  
sólo con la crueldad; 20  
y no es justo lo que ordenas:  
querer, sin ser ofendida,  
sustentar tu libre vida  
con tantas muertes ajenas.  
No imagines que es deshonra 25  
que te quieran todos bien,  
ni que está en usar desdén  
depositada tu honra.  
Antes, templando el rigor  
de los agravios que haces, 30  
con poco amor satisfaces  
y cobras nombre mejor.  
Tu crueldad me da a entender  
que las sierras te engendraron,

o que los montes formaron 35  
tu duro, indomable ser;  
que en ellos es tu recreo,  
y en los páramos y valles,  
do no es posible que halles

quien te enamore el deseo. 40  
En una fresca espesura  
una vez te vi sentada,  
y dije: «Estatua es formada  
aquélla de piedra dura».  
Y, aunque el moverte después 45  
contradijo a mi opinión,  
«en fin, en la condición  
-dije-, más que estatua es».  
¡Y ojalá que estatua fueras  
de piedra, que yo esperara 50  
qu'el cielo por mí cambiara  
tu ser, y en mujer volvieras!  
Que Pigmaleón no fue  
tanto a la suya rendido,  
como yo te soy y he sido, 55  
pastora, y siempre seré.  
Con razón, y de derecho,  
del mal y bien me das pago:  
pena por el mal que hago,

gloria por el bien que he hecho. 60  
En el modo que me tratas  
tal verdad es conocida:  
con la vista me das vida,  
con la condición me matas.  
Dese pecho que se atreve 65  
a esquivar de Amor los tiros,  
el fuego de mis suspiros  
deshaga un poco la nieve.  
Concédase al llanto mío,  
y al nunca admitir descanso, 70  
que vuelva agradable y manso



un solo punto tu brío.  
Bien sé que habrás de decir  
que me alargo, y yo lo creo;  
pero acorta tú el deseo, 75  
y acortaré yo el pedir.  
Mas, según lo que me das  
en cuantas demandas toco,  
a ti te importa muy poco  
que pida menos o más. 80

Si de tu estraña dureza  
pudiera reprehenderte,  
y aquella señal ponerte  
que muestra nuestra flaqueza,  
dijera, viendo tu ser, 85  
y no así como se enseña:  
«Acuérdate que eres peña,  
y en peña te has de volver».  
Mas seas peña o acero,  
duro mármol o diamante, 90  
de un acero soy amante,  
a una peña adoro y quiero.  
Si eres ángel disfrazado,  
o furia, que todo es cierto,  
por tal ángel vivo muerto, 95  
y por tal furia penado.

Mejor le parecieron a Tirsi los versos de Galercio que la condición de Gelasia; y, quiriéndoselos mostrar a Elicio, vio tan mudado de color y de semblante que una imagen de muerto parecía. Llegóse a él, y cuando le quiso preguntar si algún dolor le fatigaba, no fue menester esperar su respuesta para entender la causa de su pena, porque luego oyó publicar entre todos los que allí estaban cómo los dos pastores que a Galercio socorrieron eran amigos del pastor lusitano con quien el venerable Aurelio tenía concertado de casar a Galatea, los cuales venían a decirle cómo de allí a tres días el venturoso pastor vendría a su aldea a concluir el felicísimo desposorio, y luego vio Tirsi que estas nuevas más nuevos y estraños accidentes de los causados habían de causar en el alma de Elicio.

Pero, con todo esto, se llegó a él y le dijo: -Ahora es menester, buen amigo, que te sepas valer de la discreción que tienes, pues en el peligro mayor se muestran los corazones valerosos; y asegúrote que no sé quién a mí me asegura que ha de tener mejor fin este negocio de lo que tú piensas. Disimula y calla, que si la voluntad de Galatea no gusta de corresponder de todo en todo a la de su padre, tú satisfacerás la tuya, aprovechándote de las nuestras, y aun de todo el favor que te puedan ofrescer cuantos pastores hay en las riberas deste río y en las del manso Henares, el cual favor yo te ofrezco, que bien imagino que el deseo que todos han conocido que yo tengo de servirles, les obligará a hacer que no salga en vano lo que aquí te prometo.

Suspenso quedó Elicio viendo el gallardo y verdadero ofrescimiento de Tirsi, y no supo ni pudo responderle más que abrazarle estrechamente y decirle: -El cielo te pague, discreto Tirsi, el consuelo que me has dado, con el cual, y con la voluntad de Galatea, que, a lo que creo, no discrepará de la nuestra, sin duda entiendo que tan notorio agravio como el que se hace a todas estas riberas en desterrar dellas la rara hermosura de Galatea, no pase adelante.

Y, tornándole a abrazar, tornó a su rostro la color perdida. Pero no tornó al de Galatea, a quien fue oír la embajada de los pastores como si oyera la sentencia de su muerte. Todo lo notaba Elicio y no lo podía disimular Erastro, ni menos la discreta Florisa, ni aun fue gustosa la nueva a ninguno de cuantos allí estaban. A esta sazón, ya el sol declinaba a su acostumbrada carrera, y, así por esto como por ver que el enamorado Lenio había seguido a Gelasia, y que allí no quedaba otra cosa que hacer, trayendo a Galercio y a Maurisa consigo, toda aquella compañía movió los pasos hacia el aldea, y, al llegar junto a ella, Elicio y Erastro se quedaron en sus cabañas, y con ellos Tirsi, Damón, Orompo, Crisio, Marsilo, Arsindo y Orfinio se quedaron, con otros algunos pastores; y de todos ellos, con corteses palabras y ofrescimientos, se despidieron los venturosos Timbrio, Silerio, Nísida y Blanca, diciéndoles que otro día se pensaban partir a la ciudad de Toledo, donde había de ser el fin de su viaje; y, abrazando a todos los que con Elicio quedaban, se fueron con Aurelio, con el cual iban Florisa, Teolinda y Maurisa, y la triste Galatea, tan congojada y pensativa que, con toda su discreción, no podía dejar de dar muestras de estraño descontento. Con Daranio se fueron su esposa Silveria y la hermosa Belisa. Cerró en esto la noche y parecióle a Elicio que con ella se le cerraban todos los caminos de su gusto; y si no fuera por agasajar con buen semblante a los huéspedes que tenía aquella noche en su cabaña, él la pasara tan mala que desesperara de ver el día. La misma pena pasaba el mísero Erastro, aunque con más alivio, porque sin tener respecto a nadie, con altas voces y lastimeras palabras maldecía su ventura y la acelerada determinación de Aurelio.

Estando en esto, ya que los pastores habían satisfecho a la hambre con algunos rústicos manjares, y algunos dellos entregádose en los brazos del reposado sueño, llegó a la cabaña de Elicio la hermosa Maurisa; y, hallando a Elicio a la puerta de su cabaña, le apartó y le dio un papel, diciéndole que era de Galatea, y que le leyese luego, que, pues ella a tal hora le traía, entendiese que era de importancia lo que en él debía de venir. Admirado el pastor de la venida de Maurisa, y más de ver en sus manos papel de su pastora, no pudo sosegar un punto hasta leerle. Y, entrándose en su cabaña, a la luz de una raja de teoso pino, le leyó, y vio que así decía:

## **GALATEA A ELICIO**

En la apresurada determinación de mi padre está la que yo he tomado de escribirte, y en la fuerza que me hace la que a mí mesma me he hecho hasta llegar a este punto. Bien sabes en el que estoy, y sé yo bien que quisiera verme en otro mejor, para pagarte algo de lo mucho que conozco que te debo; mas, si el cielo quiere que yo quede con esta deuda, quéjate dél, y no de la voluntad mía. La de mi padre quisiera mudar, si fuera posible, pero veo que no lo es; y así, no lo intento. Si algún remedio por allá imaginas, como en él no intervengan ruegos, ponle en efecto, con el miramiento que a tu crédito debes y a mi honra estás obligado. El que me dan por esposo, y el que me ha de dar sepultura, viene pasado mañana: poco tiempo te queda para aconsejarte, aunque a mí me quedará harto para arrepentirme. No digo más, sino que Maurisa es fiel y yo desdichada.

En estraña confusión pusieron a Elicio las razones de la carta de Galatea, pareciéndole cosa nueva, así el escribirle, pues hasta entonces jamás lo había hecho, como el mandarle buscar remedio a la sinrazón que se le hacía; mas, pasando por todas estas cosas, sólo paró en imaginar cómo cumpliría lo que le era mandado, aunque en ello aventurase mil vidas si tantas tuviera. Y, no ofreciéndosele otro algún remedio sino el que de sus amigos esperaba, confiado en ellos, se atrevió a responder a Galatea con una carta que dio a Maurisa, la cual desta manera decía:

## **ELICIO A GALATEA**

Si las fuerzas de mi poder llegaran al deseo que tengo de serviros, hermosa Galatea, ni la que vuestro padre os hace, ni las mayores del mundo, fueran parte

para ofenderos; pero, comoquiera que ello sea, vos veréis ahora, si la sinrazón pasa adelante, cómo yo no me quedo atrás en hacer vuestro mandamiento por la vía mejor que el caso pidiere. Asegúeos esto la fe que de mí tenéis conocida, y haced buen rostro a la fortuna presente, confiada en la bonanza venidera; que el cielo, que os ha movido a acordaros de mí y a escribirme, me dará valor para mostrar que en algo merezco la merced que me habéis hecho; que, como sea obedeceros, ni recelo ni temor serán parte para que yo no ponga en efecto lo que a vuestro gusto conviene y al mío tanto importa. No más, pues lo más que en esto ha de haber sabréis de Maurisa, a quien yo he dado cuenta dello; y si vuestro parecer con el mío no se conforma, sea yo avisado, porque el tiempo no se pase, y con él la sazón de nuestra ventura, la cual os dé el cielo como puede y como vuestro valor meresce.

Dada esta carta a Maurisa, como está dicho, le dijo asimesmo cómo él pensaba juntar todos los más pastores que pudiese, y que todos juntos irían a hablar al padre de Galatea, pidiéndole por merced señalada fuese servido de no desterrar de aquellos prados la sin par hermosura suya; y, cuando esto no bastase, pensaba poner tales inconvenientes y miedos al lusitano pastor, que él mismo dijese no ser contento de lo concertado; y, cuando los ruegos y astucias no fuesen de provecho alguno, determinaba usar la fuerza y con ella ponerla en su libertad; y esto con el miramiento de su crédito que se podía esperar de quien tanto la amaba. Con esta resolución se fue Maurisa, y esta mesma tomaron luego todos los pastores que con Elicio estaban, a quien él dio cuenta de sus pensamientos y pidió favor y consejo en tan árduo caso. Luego Tirsi y Damón se ofrescieron de ser aquéllos que al padre de Galatea hablarían. Lauso, Arsindo y Erastro, con los cuatro amigos, Orompo, Marsilo, Crisio y Orfinio, prometieron de buscar y juntar para el día siguiente sus amigos, y poner en obra con ellos cualquiera cosa que por Elicio les fuese mandada.

En tratar lo que más al caso convenía y en tomar este apuntamiento, se pasó lo más de aquella noche, y, la mañana venida, todos los pastores se partieron a cumplir lo que prometido habían, si no fueron Tirsi y Damón, que con Elicio se quedaron. Y aquél mismo día tornó a venir Maurisa a decir a Elicio cómo Galatea estaba determinada de seguir en todo su parecer. Despidióla Elicio con nuevas promesas y confianzas, y con alegre semblante y estraño alborozo estaba esperando el siguiente día, por ver la buena o mala salida que la fortuna daba a su hecho. Llegó en esto la noche, y, recogándose con Damón y Tirsi a su cabaña, casi todo el tiempo della pasaron en tantear y advertir las dificultades que en aquel negocio podían suceder, si acaso no movían a Aurelio las razones que Tirsi pensaba decirle. Mas Elicio, por dar lugar a los pastores que reposasen,

se salió de su cabaña y se subió en una verde cuesta que frontero de ella se levantaba; y allí, con el aparejo de la soledad, revolvía en su memoria todo lo que por Galatea había padecido y lo que temía padecer si el cielo a sus intentos no favorecía. Y, sin salir desta imaginación, al son de un blando céfiro que mansamente soplaba, con voz suave y baja, comenzó a cantar desta manera:

## ELICIO

Si deste herviente mar y golfo insano, donde tanto amenaza la tormenta,  
libro la vida de tan dura afrenta  
y toco el suelo venturoso y sano,

al aire alzadas una y otra mano, 5  
con alma humilde y voluntad contenta, haré que amor conozca, el cielo sienta,  
qu'el bien les agradezco soberano.

Llamaré venturosos mis suspiros,  
mis lágrimas tendré por agradables, 10  
por refrigerio el fuego en que me quemo.

Diré que son de Amor los recios tiros dulces al alma, al cuerpo saludables, y  
que en su bien no hay medio, sino extremo.

Cuando Elicio acabó su canto, comenzaba a descubrirse por las orientales puertas la fresca aurora con sus hermosas y variadas mejillas, alegrando el suelo, aljofarando las yerbas y pintando los prados, cuya deseada venida comenzaron luego a saludar las parleras aves con mil suertes de concertadas cantilenas. Levantóse en esto Elicio, y tendió los ojos por la espaciosa campaña; descubrió no lejos dos escuadras de pastores, los cuales, según le pareció, hacia su cabaña se encaminaban, como era la verdad, porque luego conoció que eran sus amigos Arsindo y Lauso, con otros que consigo traían, y los otros, Orompo, Marsilo, Crisio y Orfinio, con todos los más amigos que juntar pudieron. Conocidos, pues, de Elicio, bajó de la cuesta para ir a recibirlos; y, cuando ellos llegaron junto de la cabaña, ya estaban fuera della Tirsi y Damón, que a buscar a Elicio iban. Llegaron en esto todos los pastores, y con alegre semblante unos a otros se rescibieron. Y luego Lauso, volviéndose a Elicio, le dijo: -En la compañía que traemos puedes ver, amigo Elicio, si comenzamos a dar muestras de querer

cumplir la palabra que te dimos. Todos los que aquí vees vienen con deseo de servirte, aunque en ello aventuren las vidas; lo que falta es que tú no la hagas en lo que más conviniere.

Elicio, con las mejores razones que supo, agradeció a Lauso y a los demás la merced que le hacían, y luego les contó todo lo que con Tirsi y Damón estaba concertado de hacerse para salir bien con aquella empresa. Parecióles bien a los pastores lo que Elicio decía; y así, sin más detenerse, hacia el aldea se encaminaron, yendo delante Tirsi y Damón, siguiéndoles todos los demás, que hasta veinte pastores serían, los más gallardos y bien dispuestos que en todas las riberas de Tajo hallarse pudieran, y todos llevaban intención de que, si las razones de Tirsi no movían a que Aurelio la hiciese en lo que le pedían, de usar en su lugar la fuerza y no consentir que Galatea al forastero pastor se entregase, de que iba tan contento Erastro, como si el buen suceso de aquella demanda en sólo su contento de redundar hubiera; porque, a trueco de no ver a Galatea ausente y descontenta, tenía por bien empleado que Elicio la alcanzase, como lo imaginaba, pues tanto Galatea le había de quedar obligada.

El fin deste amoroso cuento y historia, con los sucesos de Galercio, Lenio y Gelasia, Arsindo y Maurisa, Grisaldo, Artandro y Rosaura, Marsilo y Belisa, con otras cosas sucedidas a los pastores hasta aquí nombrados, en la segunda parte desta historia se prometen, la cual, si con apacibles voluntades esta primera viere rescibida, tendrá atrevimiento de salir con brevedad a ser vista y juzgada de los ojos y entendimiento de las gentes.

**FIN**

# EL INGENIOSO HIDALGO DON QUIJOTE DE LA MANCHA



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### Tasa

Yo, Juan Gallo de Andrada, escribano de Cámara del Rey nuestro señor, de los que residen en su Consejo, certifico y doy fe que, habiendo visto por los señores dél un libro intitulado *El ingenioso hidalgo de la Mancha*, compuesto por Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, tasaron cada pliego del dicho libro a tres maravedís y medio; el cual tiene ochenta y tres pliegos, que al dicho precio monta el dicho libro docientos y noventa maravedís y medio, en que se ha de vender en papel; y dieron licencia para que a este precio se pueda vender, y mandaron que esta tasa se ponga al principio del dicho libro, y no se pueda vender sin ella. Y para que dello conste, di la presente en Valladolid, a veinte días del mes de diciembre de mil y seiscientos y cuatro años.

*Juan Gallo de Andrada.*

Testimonio de las erratas

Este libro no tiene cosa digna que no corresponda a su original; en testimonio de lo haber correcto, di esta FEE. En el Colegio de la Madre de Dios de los Teólogos de la Universidad de Alcalá, en primero de diciembre de 1604 años.

*El licenciado Francisco Murcia de la Llana.*

## El rey

Por cuanto por parte de vos, Miguel de Cervantes, nos fue fecha relación que habíades compuesto un libro intitulado *El ingenioso hidalgo de la Mancha*, el cual os había costado mucho trabajo y era muy útil y provechoso, nos pedistes y suplicastes os mandásemos dar licencia y facultad para le poder imprimir, y privilegio por el tiempo que fuésemos servidos, o como la nuestra merced fuese; lo cual visto por los del nuestro Consejo, por cuanto en el dicho libro se hicieron las diligencias que la premática últimamente por nos fecha sobre la impresión de los libros dispone, fue acordado que debíamos mandar dar esta nuestra cédula para vos, en la dicha razón; y nos tuvimoslo por bien. Por la cual, por os hacer bien y merced, os damos licencia y facultad para que vos, o la persona que vuestro poder hubiere, y no otra alguna, podáis imprimir el dicho libro, intitulado *El ingenioso hidalgo de la Mancha*, que desuso se hace mención, en todos estos nuestros reinos de Castilla, por tiempo y espacio de diez años, que corran y se cuenten desde el dicho día de la data desta nuestra cédula; so pena que la persona o personas que, sin tener vuestro poder, lo imprimiere o vendiere, o hiciere imprimir o vender, por el mesmo caso pierda la impresión que hiciere, con los moldes y aparejos della; y más, incurra en pena de cincuenta mil maravedís cada vez que lo contrario hiciere. La cual dicha pena sea la tercia parte para la persona que lo acusare, y la otra tercia parte para nuestra Cámara, y la otra tercia parte para el juez que lo sentenciare. Con tanto que todas las veces que hubiéredes de hacer imprimir el dicho libro, durante el tiempo de los dichos diez años, le traigáis al nuestro Consejo, juntamente con el original que en él fue visto, que va rubricado cada plana y firmado al fin dél de Juan Gallo de Andrada, nuestro escribano de Cámara, de los que en él residen, para saber si la dicha impresión está conforme el original; o traigáis fe en pública forma de cómo por corretor nombrado por nuestro mandado, se vio y corrigió la dicha impresión por el original, y se imprimió conforme a él, y quedan impresas las erratas por él apuntadas, para cada un libro de los que así fueren impresos, para que se tase el precio que por cada volumen hubiéredes de haber. Y mandamos al impresor que así imprimiere el dicho libro, no imprima el principio ni el primer pliego dél, ni entregue más de un solo libro con el original al autor, o persona a cuya costa lo imprimiere, ni otro alguno, para efeto de la dicha corrección y tasa, hasta que antes y primero el dicho libro esté corregido y tasado por los del nuestro Consejo; y, estando hecho, y no de otra manera, pueda imprimir el dicho principio y primer pliego, y sucesivamente ponga esta nuestra cédula y la aprobación, tasa y erratas, so pena de caer e incurrir en las penas contenidas en las leyes y premáticas destos nuestros reinos. Y mandamos a los del nuestro

Consejo, y a otras cualesquier justicias dellos, guarden y cumplan esta nuestra cédula y lo en ella contenido. Fecha en Valladolid, a veinte y seis días del mes de setiembre de mil y seiscientos y cuatro años.

YO, EL REY.

Por mandado del rey nuestro señor: *Juan de Amezqueta.*

Al duque de Béjar,  
*marqués de Gibraleón, conde de Benalcázar y Bañares, vizconde de La Puebla de Alcocer, señor de las villas de Capilla, Curiel y Burguillos*

En fe del buen acogimiento y honra que hace Vuestra Excelencia a toda suerte de libros, como príncipe tan inclinado a favorecer las buenas artes, mayormente las que por su nobleza no se abaten al servicio y granjerías del vulgo, he determinado de sacar a luz al *Ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*, al abrigo del clarísimo nombre de Vuestra Excelencia, a quien, con el acatamiento que debo a tanta grandeza, suplico le reciba agradablemente en su protección, para que a su sombra, aunque desnudo de aquel precioso ornamento de elegancia y erudición de que suelen andar vestidas las obras que se componen en las casas de los hombres que saben, ose parecer seguramente en el juicio de algunos que, contiéndose en los límites de su ignorancia, suelen condenar con más rigor y menos justicia los trabajos ajenos; que, poniendo los ojos la prudencia de Vuestra Excelencia en mi buen deseo, fío que no desdeñará la cortedad de tan humilde servicio.

*Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra.*

## Prólogo

Desocupado lector: sin juramento me podrás creer que quisiera que este libro, como hijo del entendimiento, fuera el más hermoso, el más gallardo y más discreto que pudiera imaginarse. Pero no he podido yo contravenir al orden de naturaleza; que en ella cada cosa engendra su semejante. Y así, ¿qué podrá engendrar el estéril y mal cultivado ingenio mío, sino la historia de un hijo seco, avellanado, antojadizo y lleno de pensamientos varios y nunca imaginados de otro alguno, bien como quien se engendró en una cárcel, donde toda incomodidad tiene su asiento y donde todo triste ruido hace su habitación? El sosiego, el lugar apacible, la amenidad de los campos, la serenidad de los cielos, el murmurar de las fuentes, la quietud del espíritu son grande parte para que las musas más estériles se muestren fecundas y ofrezcan partos al mundo que le colmen de maravilla y de contento. Acontece tener un padre un hijo feo y sin gracia alguna, y el amor que le tiene le pone una venda en los ojos para que no vea sus faltas, antes las juzga por discreciones y lindezas y las cuenta a sus amigos por agudezas y donaires. Pero yo, que, aunque parezco padre, soy padraastro de *Don Quijote*, no quiero irme con la corriente del uso, ni suplicarte, casi con las lágrimas en los ojos, como otros hacen, lector carísimo, que perdones o disimules las faltas que en este mi hijo vieres; y ni eres su pariente ni su amigo, y tienes tu alma en tu cuerpo y tu libre albedrío como el más pintado, y estás en tu casa, donde eres señor della, como el rey de sus alcabalas, y sabes lo que comúnmente se dice: que debajo de mi manto, al rey mato. Todo lo cual te esenta y hace libre de todo respecto y obligación; y así, puedes decir de la historia todo aquello que te pareciere, sin temor que te calunien por el mal ni te premien por el bien que dijeres della.

Sólo quisiera dártela monda y desnuda, sin el ornato de prólogo, ni de la innumerabilidad y catálogo de los acostumbrados sonetos, epigramas y elogios que al principio de los libros suelen ponerse. Porque te sé decir que, aunque me costó algún trabajo componerla, ninguno tuve por mayor que hacer esta prefación que vas leyendo. Muchas veces tomé la pluma para escribille y muchas la dejé, por no saber lo que escribiría; y, estando una suspenso, con el papel delante, la pluma en la oreja, el codo en el bufete y la mano en la mejilla, pensando lo que diría, entró a deshora un amigo mío, gracioso y bien entendido, el cual, viéndome tan imaginativo, me preguntó la causa; y, no encubriéndosela yo, le dije que pensaba en el prólogo que había de hacer a la historia de don

Quijote, y que me tenía de suerte que ni quería hacerle, ni menos sacar a luz las hazañas de tan noble caballero.

-Porque, ¿cómo queréis vos que no me tenga confuso el qué dirá el antiguo legislador que llaman vulgo cuando vea que, al cabo de tantos años como ha que duermo en el silencio del olvido, salgo ahora, con todos mis años auestas, con una leyenda seca como un esparto, ajena de invención, menguada de estilo, pobre de concetos y falta de toda erudición y doctrina; sin acotaciones en las márgenes y sin anotaciones en el fin del libro, como veo que están otros libros, aunque sean fabulosos y profanos, tan llenos de sentencias de Aristóteles, de Platón y de toda la caterva de filósofos, que admiran a los leyentes y tienen a sus autores por hombres leídos, eruditos y elocuentes? Pues ¿qué, cuando citan la *Divina Escritura*? No dirán sino que son unos santos Tomases y otros doctores de la Iglesia; guardando en esto un decoro tan ingenioso, que en un renglón han pintado un enamorado distraído y en otro hacen un sermoncico cristiano, que es un contento y un regalo oírle o leelle. De todo esto ha de carecer mi libro, porque ni tengo qué acotar en el margen, ni qué anotar en el fin, ni menos sé qué autores sigo en él, para ponerlos al principio, como hacen todos, por las letras del A B C, comenzando en Aristóteles y acabando en Xenofonte y en Zoílo o Zeuxis, aunque fue maldiciente el uno y pintor el otro. También ha de carecer mi libro de sonetos al principio, a lo menos de sonetos cuyos autores sean duques, marqueses, condes, obispos, damas o poetas celebérrimos; aunque, si yo los pidiese a dos o tres oficiales amigos, yo sé que me los darían, y tales, que no les igualasen los de aquellos que tienen más nombre en nuestra España. En fin, señor y amigo mío -proseguí-, yo determino que el señor don Quijote se quede sepultado en sus archivos en la Mancha, hasta que el cielo depare quien le adorne de tantas cosas como le faltan; porque yo me hallo incapaz de remediarlas, por mi insuficiencia y pocas letras, y porque naturalmente soy poltrón y perezoso de andarme buscando autores que digan lo que yo me sé decir sin ellos. De aquí nace la suspensión y elevamiento, amigo, en que me hallastes; bastante causa para ponerme en ella la que de mí habéis oído.

Oyendo lo cual mi amigo, dándose una palmada en la frente y disparando en una carga de risa, me dijo: -Por Dios, hermano, que agora me acabo de desengañar de un engaño en que he estado todo el mucho tiempo que ha que os conozco, en el cual siempre os he tenido por discreto y prudente en todas vuestras acciones. Pero agora veo que estáis tan lejos de serlo como lo está el cielo de la tierra. ¿Cómo que es posible que cosas de tan poco momento y tan fáciles de remediar puedan tener fuerzas de suspender y absortar un ingenio tan maduro como el vuestro, y tan hecho a romper y atropellar por otras dificultades mayores? A la fe, esto no nace de falta de habilidad, sino de sobra de pereza y

penuria de discurso. ¿Queréis ver si es verdad lo que digo? Pues estadme atento y veréis cómo, en un abrir y cerrar de ojos, confundo todas vuestras dificultades y remedio todas las faltas que decís que os suspenden y acobardan para dejar de sacar a la luz del mundo la historia de vuestro famoso don Quijote, luz y espejo de toda la caballería andante.

-Decid -le repliqué yo, oyendo lo que me decía-: ¿de qué modo pensáis llenar el vacío de mi temor y reducir a claridad el caos de mi confusión?

A lo cual él dijo:

-Lo primero en que reparáis de los sonetos, epigramas o elogios que os faltan para el principio, y que sean de personajes graves y de título, se puede remediar en que vos mismo toméis algún trabajo en hacerlos, y después los podéis bautizar y poner el nombre que quisiéredes, ahijándolos al Preste Juan de las Indias o al Emperador de Trapisonda, de quien yo sé que hay noticia que fueron famosos poetas; y cuando no lo hayan sido y hubiere algunos pedantes y bachilleres que por detrás os muerdan y murmuren desta verdad, no se os dé dos maravedís; porque, ya que os averigüen la mentira, no os han de cortar la mano con que lo escribistes.

»En lo de citar en las márgenes los libros y autores de donde sacáredes las sentencias y dichos que pusiéredes en vuestra historia, no hay más sino hacer, de manera que venga a pelo, algunas sentencias o latines que vos sepáis de memoria, o, a lo menos, que os cuesten poco trabajo el buscalles; como será poner, tratando de libertad y cautiverio: Non bene pro toto libertas venditur auro.

Y luego, en el margen, citar a Horacio o a quien lo dijo. Si tratáredes del poder de la muerte, acudir luego con:

Pallida mors aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas, regumque turres.

Si de la amistad y amor que Dios manda que se tenga al enemigo, entraros luego al punto por la *Escritura Divina*, que lo podéis hacer con tantico de curiosidad, y decir las palabras, por lo menos, del mismo Dios: Ego autem dico vobis: diligite inimicos vestros. Si tratáredes de malos pensamientos, acudir con el *Evangelio*: De corde exeunt cogitationes malae. Si de la inestabilidad de los amigos, ahí está Catón, que os dará su dístico: Donec eris felix, multos numerabis amicos,

tempora si fuerint nubila, solus eris.

Y con estos latinicos y otros tales os tendrán siquiera por gramático, que el serlo no es de poca honra y provecho el día de hoy.

»En lo que toca el poner anotaciones al fin del libro, seguramente lo podéis



hacer desta manera: si nombráis algún gigante en vuestro libro, hacelde que sea el gigante Golías, y con sólo esto, que os costará casi nada, tenéis una grande anotación, pues podéis poner: “El gigante Golías, o Goliath, fue un filisteo a quien el pastor David mató de una gran pedrada en el valle de Terebinto, según se cuenta en el Libro de los Reyes, en el capítulo que vos halláredes que se escribe”. Tras esto, para mostraros hombre erudito en letras humanas y cosmógrafo, haced de modo como en vuestra historia se nombre el río Tajo, y veréis luego con otra famosa anotación, poniendo: “El río Tajo fue así dicho por un rey de las Españas; tiene su nacimiento en tal lugar y muere en el mar océano, besando los muros de la famosa ciudad de Lisboa; y es opinión que tiene las arenas de oro, etc.”. Si tratáredes de ladrones, yo os diré la historia de Caco, que la sé de coro; si de mujeres ramera, ahí está el obispo de Mondoñedo, que os prestará a Lamia, Laida y Flora, cuya anotación os dará gran crédito; si de crueles, Ovidio os entregará a Medea; si de encantadores y hechiceras, Homero tiene a Calipso, y Virgilio a Circe; si de capitanes valerosos, el mesmo Julio César os prestará a sí mismo en sus *Comentarios*, y Plutarco os dará mil Alejandro. Si tratáredes de amores, con dos onzas que sepáis de la lengua toscana, toparáis con León Hebreo, que os hincha las medidas. Y si no queréis andaros por tierras extrañas, en vuestra casa tenéis a Fonseca, *Del amor de Dios*, donde se cifra todo lo que vos y el más ingenioso acertare a desear en tal materia. En resolución, no hay más sino que vos procuréis nombrar estos nombres, o tocar estas historias en la vuestra, que aquí he dicho, y dejadme a mí el cargo de poner las anotaciones y acotaciones; que yo os voto a tal de llenaros las márgenes y de gastar cuatro pliegos en el fin del libro.

»Vengamos ahora a la citación de los autores que los otros libros tienen, que en el vuestro os faltan. El remedio que esto tiene es muy fácil, porque no habéis de hacer otra cosa que buscar un libro que los acote todos, desde la A hasta la Z, como vos decís. Pues ese mismo abecedario pondréis vos en vuestro libro; que, puesto que a la clara se vea la mentira, por la poca necesidad que vos teníades de aprovecharos dellos, no importa nada; y quizá alguno habrá tan simple, que crea que de todos os habéis aprovechado en la simple y sencilla historia vuestra; y, cuando no sirva de otra cosa, por lo menos servirá aquel largo catálogo de autores a dar de improviso autoridad al libro. Y más, que no habrá quien se ponga a averiguar si los seguistes o no los seguistes, no yéndole nada en ello. Cuanto más que, si bien caigo en la cuenta, este vuestro libro no tiene necesidad de ninguna cosa de aquellas que vos decís que le falta, porque todo él es una invectiva contra los libros de caballerías, de quien nunca se acordó Aristóteles, ni dijo nada San Basilio, ni alcanzó Cicerón; ni caen debajo de la cuenta de sus fabulosos disparates las puntualidades de la verdad, ni las observaciones de la

astrología; ni le son de importancia las medidas geométricas, ni la confutación de los argumentos de quien se sirve la retórica; ni tiene para qué predicar a ninguno, mezclando lo humano con lo divino, que es un género de mezcla de quien no se ha de vestir ningún cristiano entendimiento. Sólo tiene que aprovecharse de la imitación en lo que fuere escribiendo; que, cuanto ella fuere más perfecta, tanto mejor será lo que se escribiere. Y, pues esta vuestra escritura no mira a más que a deshacer la autoridad y cabida que en el mundo y en el vulgo tienen los libros de caballerías, no hay para qué andéis mendigando sentencias de filósofos, consejos de la *Divina Escritura*, fábulas de poetas, oraciones de retóricos, milagros de santos, sino procurar que a la llana, con palabras significantes, honestas y bien colocadas, salga vuestra oración y período sonoro y festivo; pintando, en todo lo que alcanzáredes y fuere posible, vuestra intención, dando a entender vuestros conceptos sin intricarlos y escurecerlos. Procurad también que, leyendo vuestra historia, el melancólico se mueva a risa, el risueño la acreciente, el simple no se enfade, el discreto se admire de la invención, el grave no la desprecie, ni el prudente deje de alabarla. En efecto, llevad la mira puesta a derribar la máquina mal fundada destos caballerescos libros, aborrecidos de tantos y alabados de muchos más; que si esto alcanzádes, no habríades alcanzado poco.

Con silencio grande estuve escuchando lo que mi amigo me decía, y de tal manera se imprimieron en mí sus razones que, sin ponerlas en disputa, las aprobé por buenas y de ellas mismas quise hacer este prólogo; en el cual verás, lector suave, la discreción de mi amigo, la buena ventura mía en hallar en tiempo tan necesitado tal consejero, y el alivio tuyo en hallar tan sincera y tan sin revueltas la historia del famoso don Quijote de la Mancha, de quien hay opinión, por todos los habitantes del distrito del campo de Montiel, que fue el más casto enamorado y el más valiente caballero que de muchos años a esta parte se vio en aquellos contornos. Yo no quiero encarecerte el servicio que te hago en darte a conocer tan noble y tan honrado caballero, pero quiero que me agradezcas el conocimiento que tendrás del famoso Sancho Panza, su escudero, en quien, a mi parecer, te doy cifradas todas las gracias escuderiles que en la caterva de los libros vanos de caballerías están esparcidas.

Y con esto, Dios te dé salud y a mí no olvide.

*Vale*

Al libro de don Quijote de la Mancha, Urganda la desconocida  
Si de llegarte a los bue-,  
libro, fueres con letu-,

no te dirá el boquirru—  
que no pones bien los de-.  
Mas si el pan no se te cue- 5  
por ir a manos de idio-,  
verás de manos a bo-,  
aun no dar una en el cla-,  
si bien se comen las ma—  
por mostrar que son curio-. 10

Y, pues la espiriencia ense—  
que el que a buen árbol se arri—  
buena sombra le cobi-,  
en Béjar tu buena estre—  
un árbol real te ofre- 15  
que da príncipes por fru-,  
en el cual floreció un duque es nuevo Alejandro Ma-:  
llega a su sombra, que a osa—  
favorece la fortu-. 20

De un noble hidalgo manche—  
contarás las aventu-,  
a quien ociosas letu-,  
trastornaron la cabe-:  
damas, armas, caballe-, 25  
le provocaron de mo-,  
que, cual Orlando furio-,  
templado a lo enamora-,

alcanzó a fuerza de bra—  
a Dulcinea del Tobo-. 30

No indiscretos hieroglí-  
estampes en el escu-,  
que, cuando es todo figu-,  
con ruines puntos se envi-.  
Si en la dirección te humi-, 35  
no dirá, mofante, algu-:  
«¡Qué don Álvaro de Lu-,  
qué Aníbal el de Carta-,

qué rey Francisco en Espa—  
se queja de la Fortu-!» 40

Pues al cielo no le plu—  
que salieses tan ladi—  
como el negro Juan Lati-,  
hablar latines rehú-.  
No me despuntes de agu-, 45  
ni me alegues con filó-,  
porque, torciendo la bo-,  
dirá el que entiende la le-,  
no un palmo de las ore-:  
«¿Para qué conmigo flo-?» 50

No te metas en dibu-,  
ni en saber vidas aje-,  
que, en lo que no va ni vie-,  
pasar de largo es cordu-,  
que suelen en caperu- 55  
darles a los que grace-;  
mas tú quémate las cesólo en cobrar buena fa-;  
que el que imprime neceda—  
dalas a censo perpe-. 60

Advierte que es desati-,

siendo de vidrio el teja-,  
tomar piedras en las ma—  
para tirar al veci-.  
Deja que el hombre de jui-, 65  
en las obras que compo-,  
se vaya con pies de plo-;  
que el que saca a luz pape—  
para entretener donce—  
escribe a tontas y a lo-. 70

Amadís de Gaula a don Quijote de la Mancha

## Soneto

Tú, que imitaste la llorosa vida  
que tuve, ausente y desdeñado sobre  
el gran ribazo de la Peña Pobre,  
de alegre a penitencia reducida;

tú, a quien los ojos dieron la bebida 5  
de abundante licor, aunque salobre,  
y alzándote la plata, estaño y cobre,  
te dio la tierra en tierra la comida,

vive seguro de que eternamente,  
en tanto, al menos, que en la cuarta esfera, 10  
sus caballos aguije el rubio Apolo,

tendrás claro renombre de valiente;  
tu patria será en todas la primera;  
tu sabio autor, al mundo único y solo.

Don Belianís de Grecia a don Quijote de la Mancha

## Soneto

Rompí, corté, abollé, y dije y hice  
más que en el orbe caballero andante;  
fui diestro, fui valiente, fui arrogante;  
mil agravios vengué, cien mil deshice.

Hazañas di a la Fama que eternice; 5  
fui comedido y regalado amante;  
fue enano para mí todo gigante,  
y al duelo en cualquier punto satisface.

Tuve a mis pies postrada la Fortuna,  
y trajo del copete mi cordura 10  
a la calva Ocasión al estricote.

Más, aunque sobre el cuerno de la luna  
siempre se vio encumbrada mi ventura,  
tus proezas envidio, ¡oh gran Quijote!

La señora Oriana a Dulcinea del Toboso

Soneto

¡Oh, quién tuviera, hermosa Dulcinea,  
por más comodidad y más reposo,  
a Miraflores puesto en el Toboso,  
y trocara sus Londres con tu aldea!

¡Oh, quién de tus deseos y librea 5  
alma y cuerpo adornara, y del famoso  
caballero que hiciste venturoso  
mirara alguna desigual pelea!

¡Oh, quién tan castamente se escapara  
del señor Amadís como tú hiciste 10  
del comedido hidalgo don Quijote!

Que así envidiada fuera, y no envidiara,  
y fuera alegre el tiempo que fue triste,  
y gozara los gustos sin escote.

Gandalín, escudero de Amadís de Gaula, a Sancho Panza, escudero de don  
Quijote

Soneto

Salve, varón famoso, a quien Fortuna,  
cuando en el trato escuderil te puso,  
tan blanda y cuerdamente lo dispuso,  
que lo pasaste sin desgracia alguna.

Ya la azada o la hoz poco repugna 5

al andante ejercicio; ya está en uso  
la llaneza escudera, con que acuso  
al soberbio que intenta hollar la luna.

Envidia a tu jumento y a tu nombre,  
y a tus alforjas igualmente invidia, 10  
que mostraron tu cuerda providencia.

Salve otra vez, ¡oh Sancho!, tan buen hombre, que a solo tú nuestro español  
Ovidio  
con buzcorona te hace reverencia.

Del Donoso, poeta entreverado, a Sancho Panza y Rocinante  
Soy Sancho Panza, escude—  
del manchego don Quijo-.  
Puse pies en polvoro-,  
por vivir a lo discre-;

que el tácito Villadie- 5  
toda su razón de esta—  
cifró en una retira-,  
según siente *Celesti*-, libro, en mi opinión, divi—  
si encubriera más lo huma-. 10

A Rocinante

Soy Rocinante, el famo-,  
bisnieto del gran Babie-.  
Por pecados de flaque-,  
fui a poder de un don Quijo-.  
Parejas corrí a lo flo-; 15  
mas, por uña de caba-,  
no se me escapó ceba-;  
que esto saqué a Lazari—  
cuando, para hurtar el vi—  
al ciego, le di la pa-. 20

## Orlando furioso a don Quijote de la Mancha

### Soneto

Si no eres par, tampoco le has tenido:  
que par pudieras ser entre mil pares;  
ni puede haberle donde tú te hallares,  
invito vencedor, jamás vencido.

Orlando soy, Quijote, que, perdido 5  
por Angélica, vi remotos mares,  
ofreciendo a la Fama en sus altares  
aquel valor que respetó el olvido.

No puedo ser tu igual; que este decoro  
se debe a tus proezas y a tu fama, 10  
puesto que, como yo, perdiste el seso.

Mas serlo has mío, si al soberbio moro  
y cita fiero domas, que hoy nos llama  
iguales en amor con mal suceso.

## El Caballero del Febo a don Quijote de la Mancha

### Soneto

A vuestra espada no igualó la mía,  
Febo español, curioso cortesano,  
ni a la alta gloria de valor mi mano,  
que rayo fue do nace y muere el día.

Imperios desprecié; la monarquía 5  
que me ofreció el Oriente rojo en vano  
dejé, por ver el rostro soberano  
de Claridiana, aurora hermosa mía.

Améla por milagro único y raro,



y, ausente en su desgracia, el propio infierno 10  
temió mi brazo, que domó su rabia.

Mas vos, godo Quijote, ilustre y claro,  
por Dulcinea sois al mundo eterno,  
y ella, por vos, famosa, honesta y sabia.

## De Solisdán a don Quijote de la Mancha

### Soneto

Maguer, señor Quijote, que sandeces  
vos tengan el cerbelo derrumbado,

nunca seréis de alguno reprochado  
por home de obras viles y soeces.

Serán vuestas fazañas los joeques, 5  
pues tuertos desfaciendo habéis andado,  
siendo vegadas mil apaleado  
por follones cautivos y raheces.

Y si la vuesa linda Dulcinea  
desaguisado contra vos comete, 10  
ni a vuestas cuitas muestra buen talante,

en tal desmán, vuesto conorte sea  
que Sancho Panza fue mal alcagüete,  
necio él, dura ella, y vos no amante.

## Diálogo entre Babieca y Rocinante

### Soneto

B.

¿Cómo estáis, Rocinante, tan delgado?

R.

Porque nunca se come y se trabaja.

B.

Pues ¿qué es de la cebada y de la paja?

R.

No me deja mi amo ni un bocado.

B.

Andá, señor, que estáis muy mal criado, 5  
pues vuestra lengua de asno al amo ultraja.

R.

Asno se es de la cuna a la mortaja.  
¿Queréislo ver? Miraldo enamorado.

B.

¿Es necedad amar?

R.

No es gran prudencia.

B.

Metafísico estáis.

R.

Es que no como. 10

B.

Quejaos del escudero.

R.

No es bastante.

¿Cómo me he de quejar en mi dolencia,  
si el amo y escudero o mayordomo  
son tan rocines como Rocinante?

## Capítulo primero

*Que trata de la condición y ejercicio del famoso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*

EN UN LUGAR de la Mancha, de cuyo nombre no quiero acordarme, no ha mucho tiempo que vivía un hidalgo de los de lanza en astillero, adarga antigua, rocín flaco y galgo corredor. Una olla de algo más vaca que carnero, salpicón las más noches, duelos y quebrantos los sábados, lantejas los viernes, algún palomino de añadidura los domingos, consumían las tres partes de su hacienda. El resto della concluían sayo de velarte, calzas de velludo para las fiestas, con sus pantuflos de lo mismo, y los días de entresemana se honraba con su vellorí de lo más fino. Tenía en su casa una ama que pasaba de los cuarenta, y una sobrina que no llegaba a los veinte, y un mozo de campo y plaza, que así ensillaba el rocín como tomaba la podadera. Frisaba la edad de nuestro hidalgo con los cincuenta años; era de complexión recia, seco de carnes, enjuto de rostro, gran madrugador y amigo de la caza. Quieren decir que tenía el sobrenombre de Quijada o Quesada, que en esto hay alguna diferencia en los autores que deste caso escriben; aunque, por conjeturas verosímiles, se deja entender que se llamaba Quejana. Pero esto importa poco a nuestro cuento: basta que en la narración dél no se salga un punto de la verdad.

Es, pues, de saber que este sobredicho hidalgo, los ratos que estaba ocioso, que eran los más del año, se daba a leer libros de caballerías, con tanta afición y gusto, que olvidó casi de todo punto el ejercicio de la caza y aun la administración de su hacienda. Y llegó a tanto su curiosidad y desatino en esto, que vendió muchas hanegas de tierra de sembradura para comprar libros de caballerías en que leer, y así, llevó a su casa todos cuantos pudo haber dellos; y de todos, ningunos le parecían tan bien como los que compuso el famoso Feliciano de Silva, porque la claridad de su prosa y aquellas entricadas razones suyas le parecían de perlas, y más cuando llegaba a leer aquellos requiebros y cartas de desafíos, donde en muchas partes hallaba escrito: *La razón de la sinrazón que a mi razón se hace, de tal manera mi razón enflaquece, que con razón me quejo de la vuestra fermosura*. Y también cuando leía: *... los altos cielos que de vuestra divinidad divinamente con las estrellas os fortifican y os hacen merecedora del merecimiento que merece la vuestra grandeza*.

Con estas razones perdía el pobre caballero el juicio, y desvelábase por

entenderlas y desentrañarles el sentido, que no se lo sacara ni las entendiera el mismo Aristóteles, si resucitara para sólo ello. No estaba muy bien con las heridas que don Belianís daba y recebía, porque se imaginaba que, por grandes maestros que le hubiesen curado, no dejaría de tener el rostro y todo el cuerpo lleno de cicatrices y señales. Pero, con todo, alababa en su autor aquel acabar su libro con la promesa de aquella inacabable aventura, y muchas veces le vino deseo de tomar la pluma y dalle fin al pie de la letra, como allí se promete; y sin duda alguna lo hiciera, y aun saliera con ello, si otros mayores y continuos pensamientos no se lo estorbaran. Tuvo muchas veces competencia con el cura de su lugar -que era hombre docto, graduado en Sigüenza-, sobre cuál había sido mejor caballero: Palmerín de Inglaterra o Amadís de Gaula; mas maese Nicolás, barbero del mismo pueblo, decía que ninguno llegaba al Caballero del Febo, y que si alguno se le podía comparar, era don Galaor, hermano de Amadís de Gaula, porque tenía muy acomodada condición para todo; que no era caballero melindroso, ni tan llorón como su hermano, y que en lo de la valentía no le iba en zaga.

En resolución, él se enfrascó tanto en su letura, que se le pasaban las noches leyendo de claro en claro, y los días de turbio en turbio; y así, del poco dormir y del mucho leer, se le secó el cerebro, de manera que vino a perder el juicio. Llenósele la fantasía de todo aquello que leía en los libros, así de encantamientos como de pendencias, batallas, desafíos, heridas, requiebros, amores, tormentas y disparates imposibles; y asentósele de tal modo en la imaginación que era verdad toda aquella máquina de aquellas sonadas sonadas invenciones que leía, que para él no había otra historia más cierta en el mundo. Decía él que el Cid Ruy Díaz había sido muy buen caballero, pero que no tenía que ver con el Caballero de la Ardiente Espada, que de sólo un revés había partido por medio dos fieros y descomunales gigantes. Mejor estaba con Bernardo del Carpio, porque en Roncesvalles había muerto a Roldán, el encantado, valiéndose de la industria de Hércules, cuando ahogó a Anteo, el hijo de la Tierra, entre los brazos. Decía mucho bien del gigante Morgante, porque, con ser de aquella generación gigantea, que todos son soberbios y descomedidos, él solo era afable y bien criado. Pero, sobre todos, estaba bien con Reinaldos de Montalbán, y más cuando le veía salir de su castillo y robar cuantos topaba, y cuando en allende robó aquel ídolo de Mahoma que era todo de oro, según dice su historia. Diera él, por dar una mano de coces al traidor de Galalón, al ama que tenía y aun a su sobrina de añadidura.

En efeto, rematado ya su juicio, vino a dar en el más extraño pensamiento que jamás dio loco en el mundo; y fue que le pareció conveniente y necesario, así para el aumento de su honra como para el servicio de su república, hacerse caballero

andante, y irse por todo el mundo con sus armas y caballo a buscar las aventuras y a ejercitarse en todo aquello que él había leído que los caballeros andantes se ejercitaban, deshaciendo todo género de agravio, y poniéndose en ocasiones y peligros donde, acabándolos, cobrase eterno nombre y fama. Imaginábase el pobre ya coronado por el valor de su brazo, por lo menos, del imperio de Trapisonda; y así, con estos tan agradables pensamientos, llevado del extraño gusto que en ellos sentía, se dio prisa a poner en efecto lo que deseaba.

Y lo primero que hizo fue limpiar unas armas que habían sido de sus bisabuelos, que, tomadas de orín y llenas de moho, luengos siglos había que estaban puestas y olvidadas en un rincón. Limpiólas y aderezólas lo mejor que pudo, pero vio que tenían una gran falta, y era que no tenían celada de encaje, sino morrión simple; mas a esto suplió su industria, porque de cartones hizo un modo de media celada, que, encajada con el morrión, hacían una apariencia de celada entera. Es verdad que para probar si era fuerte y podía estar al riesgo de una cuchillada, sacó su espada y le dio dos golpes, y con el primero y en un punto deshizo lo que había hecho en una semana; y no dejó de parecerle mal la facilidad con que la había hecho pedazos, y, por asegurarse deste peligro, la tornó a hacer de nuevo, poniéndole unas barras de hierro por de dentro, de tal manera que él quedó satisfecho de su fortaleza; y, sin querer hacer nueva experiencia della, la diputó y tuvo por celada finísima de encaje.

Fue luego a ver su rocín, y, aunque tenía más cuartos que un real y más tachas que el caballo de Gonela, que *tantum pellis et ossa fuit*, le pareció que ni el Bucéfalo de Alejandro ni Babieca el del Cid con él se igualaban. Cuatro días se le pasaron en imaginar qué nombre le pondría; porque, según se decía él a sí mismo, no era razón que caballo de caballero tan famoso, y tan bueno él por sí, estuviese sin nombre conocido; y ansí, procuraba acomodársele de manera que declarase quién había sido, antes que fuese de caballero andante, y lo que era entonces; pues estaba muy puesto en razón que, mudando su señor estado, mudase él también el nombre, y le cobrase famoso y de estruendo, como convenía a la nueva orden y al nuevo ejercicio que ya profesaba. Y así, después de muchos nombres que formó, borró y quitó, añadió, deshizo y tornó a hacer en su memoria e imaginación, al fin le vino a llamar *Rocinante*: nombre, a su parecer, alto, sonoro y significativo de lo que había sido cuando fue rocín, antes de lo que ahora era, que era antes y primero de todos los rocines del mundo.

Puesto nombre, y tan a su gusto, a su caballo, quiso ponérsele a sí mismo, y en este pensamiento duró otros ocho días, y al cabo se vino a llamar *don Quijote*; de donde -como queda dicho-tomaron ocasión los autores desta tan verdadera historia que, sin duda, se debía de llamar Quijada, y no Quesada, como otros quisieron decir. Pero, acordándose que el valeroso Amadís no sólo se había

contentado con llamarse Amadís a secas, sino que añadió el nombre de su reino y patria, por Hepila famosa, y se llamó Amadís de Gaula, así quiso, como buen caballero, añadir al suyo el nombre de la suya y llamarse *don Quijote de la Mancha*, con que, a su parecer, declaraba muy al vivo su linaje y patria, y la honraba con tomar el sobrenombre della.

Limpias, pues, sus armas, hecho del morrión celada, puesto nombre a su rocín y confirmándose a sí mismo, se dio a entender que no le faltaba otra cosa sino buscar una dama de quien enamorarse; porque el caballero andante sin amores era árbol sin hojas y sin fruto y cuerpo sin alma. Decíase él:

-Si yo, por malos de mis pecados, o por mi buena suerte, me encuentro por ahí con algún gigante, como de ordinario les acontece a los caballeros andantes, y le derribo de un encuentro, o le parto por mitad del cuerpo, o, finalmente, le venzo y le rindo, ¿no será bien tener a quien enviarle presentado y que entre y se hinque de rodillas ante mi dulce señora, y diga con voz humilde y rendido: «Yo, señora, soy el gigante Caraculiambro, señor de la ínsula Malindrania, a quien venció en singular batalla el jamás como se debe alabado caballero don Quijote de la Mancha, el cual me mandó que me presentase ante vuestra merced, para que la vuestra grandeza disponga de mí a su talante?». ».

¡Oh, cómo se holgó nuestro buen caballero cuando hubo hecho este discurso, y más cuando halló a quien dar nombre de su dama! Y fue, a lo que se cree, que en un lugar cerca del suyo había una moza labradora de muy buen parecer, de quien él un tiempo anduvo enamorado, aunque, según se entiende, ella jamás lo supo, ni le dio cata dello. Llamábase Aldonza Lorenzo, y a ésta le pareció ser bien darle título de señora de sus pensamientos; y, buscándole nombre que no desdijese mucho del suyo, y que tirase y se encaminase al de princesa y gran señora, vino a llamarla *Dulcinea del Toboso*, porque era natural del Toboso; nombre, a su parecer, músico y peregrino y significativo, como todos los demás que a él y a sus cosas había puesto.

## Capítulo II

*Que trata de la primera salida que de su tierra hizo el ingenioso don Quijote*

HECHAS, pues, estas prevenciones, no quiso aguardar más tiempo a poner en efecto su pensamiento, apretándole a ello la falta que él pensaba que hacía en el mundo su tardanza, según eran los agravios que pensaba deshacer, tuertos que enderezar, sinrazones que emendar, y abusos que mejorar y deudas que satisfacer. Y así, sin dar parte a persona alguna de su intención, y sin que nadie le viese, una mañana, antes del día, que era uno de los calurosos del mes de julio, se armó de todas sus armas, subió sobre Rocinante, puesta su mal compuesta celada, embrazó su adarga, tomó su lanza y, por la puerta falsa de un corral, salió al campo con grandísimo contento y alborozo de ver con cuánta facilidad había dado principio a su buen deseo. Mas, apenas se vio en el campo, cuando le asaltó un pensamiento terrible, y tal, que por poco le hiciera dejar la comenzada empresa; y fue que le vino a la memoria que no era armado caballero y que, conforme a ley de caballería, ni podía ni debía tomar armas con ningún caballero; y, puesto que lo fuera, había de llevar armas blancas, como novel caballero, sin empresa en el escudo, hasta que por su esfuerzo la ganase. Estos pensamientos le hicieron titubear en su propósito; mas, pudiendo más su locura que otra razón alguna, propuso de hacerse armar caballero del primero que topase, a imitación de otros muchos que así lo hicieron, según él había leído en los libros que tal le tenían. En lo de las armas blancas, pensaba limpiarlas de manera, en teniendo lugar, que lo fuesen más que un armiño; y con esto se quietó y prosiguió su camino, sin llevar otro que aquel que su caballo quería, creyendo que en aquello consistía la fuerza de las aventuras.

Yendo, pues, caminando nuestro flamante aventurero, iba hablando consigo mismo y diciendo:

-¿Quién duda sino que en los venideros tiempos, cuando salga a luz la verdadera historia de mis famosos hechos, que el sabio que los escribiere no ponga, cuando llegue a contar esta mi primera salida tan de mañana, desta manera?: «Apenas había el rubicundo Apolo tendido por la faz de la ancha y espaciosa tierra las doradas hebras de sus hermosos cabellos, y apenas los pequeños y pintados pajarillos con sus arpadas lenguas habían saludado con dulce y meliflua armonía la venida de la rosada aurora, que, dejando la blanda cama del celoso marido, por las puertas y balcones del manchego horizonte a los



mortales se mostraba, cuando el famoso caballero don Quijote de la Mancha, dejando las ociosas plumas, subió sobre su famoso caballo Rocinante y comenzó a caminar por el antiguo y conocido campo de Montiel».

Y era la verdad que por él caminaba. Y añadió diciendo:

-Dichosa edad, y siglo dichoso aquel adonde saldrán a luz las famosas hazañas mías, dignas de entallarse en bronces, esculpirse en mármoles y pintarse en tablas para memoria en lo futuro. ¡Oh tú, sabio encantador, quienquiera que seas, a quien ha de tocar el ser coronista desta peregrina historia, ruégote que no te olvides de mi buen Rocinante, compañero eterno mío en todos mis caminos y carreras!

Luego volvía diciendo, como si verdaderamente fuera enamorado:

-¡Oh princesa Dulcinea, señora deste cautivo corazón!, mucho agravio me habedes fecho en despedirme y reprocharme con el riguroso afincamiento de mandarme no parecer ante la vuestra ferrosura. Plégaos, señora, de membraros deste vuestro sujeto corazón, que tantas cuitas por vuestro amor padece.

Con éstos iba ensartando otros disparates, todos al modo de los que sus libros le habían enseñado, imitando en cuanto podía su lenguaje. Con esto, caminaba tan despacio, y el sol entraba tan apriesa y con tanto ardor, que fuera bastante a derretirle los sesos, si algunos tuviera.

Casi todo aquel día caminó sin acontecerle cosa que de contar fuese, de lo cual se desesperaba, porque quisiera topar luego luego con quien hacer experiencia del valor de su fuerte brazo. Autores hay que dicen que la primera aventura que le avino fue la del Puerto Lápice; otros dicen que la de los molinos de viento; pero, lo que yo he podido averiguar en este caso, y lo que he hallado escrito en los *Anales de la Mancha*, es que él anduvo todo aquel día y, al anochecer, su rocín y él se hallaron cansados y muertos de hambre; y que, mirando a todas partes por ver si descubriría algún castillo o alguna majada de pastores donde recogerse y adonde pudiese remediar su mucha hambre y necesidad, vio, no lejos del camino por donde iba, una venta, que fue como si viera una estrella que, no a los portales, sino a los alcázares de su redención le encaminaba. Diose priesa a caminar y llegó a ella a tiempo que anochecía.

Estaban acaso a la puerta dos mujeres mozas, destas que llaman del partido, las cuales iban a Sevilla con unos arrieros que en la venta aquella noche acertaron a hacer jornada; y, como a nuestro aventurero todo cuanto pensaba, veía o imaginaba le parecía ser hecho y pasar al modo de lo que había leído, luego que vio la venta, se le representó que era un castillo con sus cuatro torres y chapiteles de luciente plata, sin faltarle su puente levadiza y honda cava, con todos aquellos adherentes que semejantes castillos se pintan. Fuese llegando a la venta, que a él le parecía castillo, y a poco trecho della detuvo las riendas a

Rocinante, esperando que algún enano se pusiese entre las almenas a dar señal con alguna trompeta de que llegaba caballero al castillo. Pero, como vio que se tardaban y que Rocinante se daba prisa por llegar a la caballeriza, se llegó a la puerta de la venta, y vio a las dos distraídas mozas que allí estaban, que a él le parecieron dos hermosas doncellas o dos graciosas damas que delante de la puerta del castillo se estaban solazando. En esto, sucedió acaso que un porquero que andaba recogiendo de unos rastros una manada de puercos -que, sin perdón, así se llaman-tocó un cuerno, a cuya señal ellos se recogen, y al instante se le representó a don Quijote lo que deseaba, que era que algún enano hacía señal de su venida; y así, con estraño contento, llegó a la venta y a las damas, las cuales, como vieron venir un hombre de aquella suerte, armado y con lanza y adarga, llenas de miedo, se iban a entrar en la venta; pero don Quijote, coligiendo por su huida su miedo, alzándose la visera de papelón y descubriendo su seco y polvoroso rostro, con gentil talante y voz reposada, les dijo:

-No fuyan las vuestras mercedes ni teman desaguisado alguno; ca a la orden de caballería que profeso non toca ni atañe facerle a ninguno, cuanto más a tan altas doncellas como vuestras presencias demuestran.

Mirábanle las mozas y andaban con los ojos buscándole el rostro, que la mala visera le encubría; mas, como se oyeron llamar doncellas, cosa tan fuera de su profesión, no pudieron tener la risa, y fue de manera que don Quijote vino a correrse y a decirles:

-Bien parece la misura en las fermosas, y es mucha sandez además la risa que de leve causa procede; pero no vos lo digo porque os acuitedes ni mostredes mal talante; que el mío non es de ál que de serviros.

El lenguaje, no entendido de las señoras, y el mal talle de nuestro caballero acrecentaba en ellas la risa y en él el enojo; y pasara muy adelante si a aquel punto no saliera el ventero, hombre que, por ser muy gordo, era muy pacífico, el cual, viendo aquella figura contrahecha, armada de armas tan desiguales como eran la brida, lanza, adarga y coselete, no estuvo en nada en acompañar a las doncellas en las muestras de su contento. Mas, en efeto, temiendo la máquina de tantos pertrechos, determinó de hablarle comedidamente; y así, le dijo:

-Si vuestra merced, señor caballero, busca posada, amén del lecho (porque en esta venta no hay ninguno), todo lo demás se hallará en ella en mucha abundancia.

Viendo don Quijote la humildad del alcaide de la fortaleza, que tal le pareció a él el ventero y la venta, respondió:

-Para mí, señor castellano, cualquiera cosa basta, porque

mis arreos son las armas,  
mi descanso el pelear, *etc.*

Pensó el huésped que el haberle llamado castellano había sido por haberle parecido de los sanos de Castilla, aunque él era andaluz y de los de la playa de Sanlúcar, no menos ladrón que Caco, ni menos maleante que estudiantado paje; y así, le respondió:

-Según eso, las camas de vuestra merced serán duras peñas, y su dormir, siempre velar; y siendo así, bien se puede apearse, con seguridad de hallar en esta choza ocasión y ocasiones para no dormir en todo un año, cuanto más en una noche.

Y, diciendo esto, fue a tener el estribo a don Quijote, el cual se apeó con mucha dificultad y trabajo, como aquel que en todo aquel día no se había desayunado.

Dijo luego al huésped que le tuviese mucho cuidado de su caballo, porque era la mejor pieza que comía pan en el mundo. Miróle el ventero, y no le pareció tan bueno como don Quijote decía, ni aun la mitad; y, acomodándole en la caballeriza, volvió a ver lo que su huésped mandaba, al cual estaban desarmando las doncellas, que ya se habían reconciliado con él; las cuales, aunque le habían quitado el peto y el espaldar, jamás supieron ni pudieron desencajarle la gola, ni quitalle la contrahecha celada, que traía atada con unas cintas verdes, y era menester cortarlas, por no poderse quitar los nudos; mas él no lo quiso consentir en ninguna manera, y así, se quedó toda aquella noche con la celada puesta, que era la más graciosa y estraña figura que se pudiera pensar; y, al desarmarle, como él se imaginaba que aquellas traídas y llevadas que le desarmaban eran algunas principales señoras y damas de aquel castillo, les dijo con mucho donaire:

-Nunca fuera caballero  
de damas tan bien servido  
como fuera don Quijote  
cuando de su aldea vino:  
doncellas curaban dél;  
princesas, del su rocino,

o Rocinante, que éste es el nombre, señoras mías, de mi caballo, y don Quijote de la Mancha el mío; que, puesto que no quisiera descubrirme fasta que las fazañas fechas en vuestro servicio y pro me descubrieran, la fuerza de acomodar al propósito presente este romance viejo de Lanzarote ha sido causa que sepáis mi nombre antes de toda sazón; pero, tiempo vendrá en que las vuestras señorías me manden y yo obedezca, y el valor de mi brazo descubra el deseo que tengo de serviros.

Las mozas, que no estaban hechas a oír semejantes retóricas, no respondían palabra; sólo le preguntaron si quería comer alguna cosa.

-Cualquiera yantaría yo -respondió don Quijote-, porque, a lo que entiendo, me haría mucho al caso.

A dicha, acertó a ser viernes aquel día, y no había en toda la venta sino unas raciones de un pescado que en Castilla llaman abadejo, y en Andalucía bacallao, y en otras partes curadillo, y en otras truchuela. Preguntáronle si por ventura comería su merced truchuela, que no había otro pescado que dalle a comer.

-Como haya muchas truchuelas -respondió don Quijote-, podrán servir de una trucha, porque eso se me da que me den ocho reales en sencillos que en una pieza de a ocho. Cuanto más, que podría ser que fuesen estas truchuelas como la ternera, que es mejor que la vaca, y el cabrito que el cabrón. Pero, sea lo que fuere, venga luego, que el trabajo y peso de las armas no se puede llevar sin el gobierno de las tripas.

Pusiéronle la mesa a la puerta de la venta, por el fresco, y trújole el huésped una porción del mal remojado y peor cocido bacallao, y un pan tan negro y mugriento como sus armas; pero era materia de grande risa verle comer, porque, como tenía puesta la celada y alzada la visera, no podía poner nada en la boca con sus manos si otro no se lo daba y ponía; y así, una de aquellas señoras servía deste menester. Mas, al darle de beber, no fue posible, ni lo fuera si el ventero no horadara una caña, y, puesto el un cabo en la boca, por el otro le iba echando el vino; y todo esto lo recibía en paciencia, a trueco de no romper las cintas de la celada.

Estando en esto, llegó acaso a la venta un castrador de puercos; y, así como llegó, sonó su silbato de cañas cuatro o cinco veces, con lo cual acabó de confirmar don Quijote que estaba en algún famoso castillo, y que le servían con música, y que el abadejo eran truchas; el pan, candeal; y las rameras, damas; y el ventero, castellano del castillo, y con esto daba por bien empleada su determinación y salida. Mas lo que más le fatigaba era el no verse armado caballero, por parecerle que no se podría poner legítimamente en aventura alguna sin recibir la orden de caballería.

## Capítulo III

*Donde se cuenta la graciosa manera que tuvo don Quijote en armarse caballero*

Y ASÍ, fatigado deste pensamiento, abrevió su venteril y limitada cena; la cual acabada, llamó al ventero y, encerrándose con él en la caballeriza, se hincó de rodillas ante él, diciéndole:

-No me levantaré jamás de donde estoy, valeroso caballero, fasta que la vuestra cortesía me otorgue un don que pedirle quiero, el cual redundará en alabanza vuestra y en pro del género humano.

El ventero, que vio a su huésped a sus pies y oyó semejantes razones, estaba confuso mirándole, sin saber qué hacerse ni decirle, y porfiaba con él que se levantase, y jamás quiso, hasta que le hubo de decir que él le otorgaba el don que le pedía.

-No esperaba yo menos de la gran magnificencia vuestra, señor mío -respondió don Quijote-; y así, os digo que el don que os he pedido, y de vuestra liberalidad me ha sido otorgado, es que mañana en aquel día me habéis de armar caballero, y esta noche en la capilla deste vuestro castillo velaré las armas; y mañana, como tengo dicho, se cumplirá lo que tanto deseo, para poder, como se debe, ir por todas las cuatro partes del mundo buscando las aventuras, en pro de los menesterosos, como está a cargo de la caballería y de los caballeros andantes, como yo soy, cuyo deseo a semejantes fazañas es inclinado.

El ventero, que, como está dicho, era un poco socarrón y ya tenía algunos barruntos de la falta de juicio de su huésped, acabó de creerlo cuando acabó de oírle semejantes razones, y, por tener qué reír aquella noche, determinó de seguirle el humor; y así, le dijo que andaba muy acertado en lo que deseaba y pedía, y que tal prosupuesto era propio y natural de los caballeros tan principales como él parecía y como su gallarda presencia mostraba; y que él, ansimesmo, en los años de su mocedad, se había dado a aquel honroso ejercicio, andando por diversas partes del mundo buscando sus aventuras, sin que hubiese dejado los Percheles de Málaga, Islas de Riarán, Compás de Sevilla, Azoguejo de Segovia, la Olivera de Valencia, Rondilla de Granada, Playa de Sanlúcar, Potro de Córdoba y las Ventillas de Toledo y otras diversas partes, donde había ejercitado la ligereza de sus pies, sutileza de sus manos, haciendo muchos tuertos, recuestando muchas viudas, deshaciendo algunas doncellas y engañando a algunos pupilos y, finalmente, dándose a conocer por cuantas audiencias y

tribunales hay casi en toda España; y que, a lo último, se había venido a recoger a aquel su castillo, donde vivía con su hacienda y con las ajenas, recogiendo en él a todos los caballeros andantes, de cualquiera calidad y condición que fuesen, sólo por la mucha afición que les tenía y porque partiesen con él de sus haberes, en pago de su buen deseo.

Díjole también que en aquel su castillo no había capilla alguna donde poder velar las armas, porque estaba derribada para hacerla de nuevo; pero que, en caso de necesidad, él sabía que se podían velar dondequiera, y que aquella noche las podría velar en un patio del castillo; que a la mañana, siendo Dios servido, se harían las debidas ceremonias, de manera que él quedase armado caballero, y tan caballero que no pudiese ser más en el mundo.

Preguntóle si traía dineros; respondió don Quijote que no traía blanca, porque él nunca había leído en las historias de los caballeros andantes que ninguno los hubiese traído. A esto dijo el ventero que se engañaba; que, puesto caso que en las historias no se escribía, por haberles parecido a los autores dellas que no era menester escribir una cosa tan clara y tan necesaria de traerse como eran dineros y camisas limpias, no por eso se había de creer que no los trujeron; y así, tuviese por cierto y averiguado que todos los caballeros andantes, de que tantos libros están llenos y atestados, llevaban bien herradas las bolsas, por lo que pudiese sucederles; y que asimismo llevaban camisas y una arqueta pequeña llena de ungüentos para curar las heridas que recibían, porque no todas veces en los campos y desiertos donde se combatían y salían heridos había quien los curase, si ya no era que tenían algún sabio encantador por amigo, que luego los socorría, trayendo por el aire, en alguna nube, alguna doncella o enano con alguna redoma de agua de tal virtud que, en gustando alguna gota della, luego al punto quedaban sanos de sus llagas y heridas, como si mal alguno hubiesen tenido. Mas que, en tanto que esto no hubiese, tuvieron los pasados caballeros por cosa acertada que sus escuderos fuesen proveídos de dineros y de otras cosas necesarias, como eran hilas y ungüentos para curarse; y, cuando sucedía que los tales caballeros no tenían escuderos, que eran pocas y raras veces, ellos mismos lo llevaban todo en unas alforjas muy sutiles, que casi no se parecían, a las ancas del caballo, como que era otra cosa de más importancia; porque, no siendo por ocasión semejante, esto de llevar alforjas no fue muy admitido entre los caballeros andantes; y por esto le daba por consejo, pues aún se lo podía mandar como a su ahijado, que tan presto lo había de ser, que no caminase de allí adelante sin dineros y sin las prevenciones referidas, y que vería cuán bien se hallaba con ellas cuando menos se pensase.

Prometióle don Quijote de hacer lo que se le aconsejaba con toda puntualidad; y así, se dio luego orden como velase las armas en un corral grande que a un

lado de la venta estaba; y, recogiénolas don Quijote todas, las puso sobre una pila que junto a un pozo estaba y, embrazando su adarga, asió de su lanza y con gentil continente se comenzó a pasear delante de la pila; y cuando comenzó el paseo comenzaba a cerrar la noche.

Contó el ventero a todos cuantos estaban en la venta la locura de su huésped, la vela de las armas y la armazón de caballería que esperaba. Admiráronse de tan extraño género de locura y fuéronse a mirar desde lejos, y vieron que, con sosegado ademán, unas veces se paseaba; otras, arrimado a su lanza, ponía los ojos en las armas, sin quitarlos por un buen espacio dellas. Acabó de cerrar la noche, pero con tanta claridad de la luna, que podía competir con el que se la prestaba, de manera que cuanto el novel caballero hacía era bien visto de todos. Antojósele en esto a uno de los arrieros que estaban en la venta ir a dar agua a su recua, y fue menester quitar las armas de don Quijote, que estaban sobre la pila; el cual, viéndole llegar, en voz alta le dijo:

-¡Oh tú, quienquiera que seas, atrevido caballero, que llegas a tocar las armas del más valeroso andante que jamás se ciñó espada!, mira lo que haces y no las toques, si no quieres dejar la vida en pago de tu atrevimiento.

No se curó el arriero destas razones (y fuera mejor que se curara, porque fuera curarse en salud); antes, trabando de las correas, las arrojó gran trecho de sí. Lo cual visto por don Quijote, alzó los ojos al cielo y, puesto el pensamiento -a lo que pareció-en su señora Dulcinea, dijo:

-Acorredme, señora mía, en esta primera afrenta que a este vuestro avasallado pecho se le ofrece; no me desfallezca en este primero trance vuestro favor y amparo.

Y, diciendo estas y otras semejantes razones, soltando la adarga, alzó la lanza a dos manos y dio con ella tan gran golpe al arriero en la cabeza, que le derribó en el suelo, tan maltrecho que, si segundara con otro, no tuviera necesidad de maestro que le curara. Hecho esto, recogió sus armas y tornó a pasearse con el mismo reposo que primero. Desde allí a poco, sin saberse lo que había pasado (porque aún estaba aturdido el arriero), llegó otro con la misma intención de dar agua a sus mulos; y, llegando a quitar las armas para desembarazar la pila, sin hablar don Quijote palabra y sin pedir favor a nadie, soltó otra vez la adarga y alzó otra vez la lanza y, sin hacerla pedazos, hizo más de tres la cabeza del segundo arriero, porque se la abrió por cuatro. Al ruido acudió toda la gente de la venta, y entre ellos el ventero. Viendo esto don Quijote, embrazó su adarga y, puesta mano a su espada, dijo:

-¡Oh señora de la fermosura, esfuerzo y vigor del debilitado corazón mío! Ahora es tiempo que vuelvas los ojos de tu grandeza a este tu cautivo caballero,

que tamaña aventura está atendiendo.

Con esto cobró, a su parecer, tanto ánimo, que si le acometieran todos los arrieros del mundo, no volviera el pie atrás. Los compañeros de los heridos, que tales los vieron, comenzaron desde lejos a llover piedras sobre don Quijote, el cual, lo mejor que podía, se reparaba con su adarga, y no se osaba apartar de la pila por no desamparar las armas. El ventero daba voces que le dejaran, porque ya les había dicho como era loco, y que por loco se libraría, aunque los matase a todos. También don Quijote las daba, mayores, llamándolos de alevosos y traidores, y que el señor del castillo era un follón y mal nacido caballero, pues de tal manera consentía que se tratasen los andantes caballeros; y que si él hubiera recibido la orden de caballería, que él le diera a entender su alevosía:

-Pero de vosotros, soez y baja canalla, no hago caso alguno: tirad, llegad, venid y ofendedme en cuanto pudiéredes, que vosotros veréis el pago que lleváis de vuestra sandez y demasía.

Decía esto con tanto brío y denuedo, que infundió un terrible temor en los que le acometían; y, así por esto como por las persuaciones del ventero, le dejaron de tirar, y él dejó retirar a los heridos y tornó a la vela de sus armas con la misma quietud y sosiego que primero.

No le parecieron bien al ventero las burlas de su huésped, y determinó abreviar y darle la negra orden de caballería luego, antes que otra desgracia sucediese. Y así, llegándose a él, se disculpó de la insolencia que aquella gente baja con él había usado, sin que él supiese cosa alguna; pero que bien castigados quedaban de su atrevimiento. Díjole cómo ya le había dicho que en aquel castillo no había capilla, y para lo que restaba de hacer tampoco era necesaria; que todo el toque de quedar armado caballero consistía en la pescozada y en el espaldarazo, según él tenía noticia del ceremonial de la orden, y que aquello en mitad de un campo se podía hacer, y que ya había cumplido con lo que tocaba al velar de las armas, que con solas dos horas de vela se cumplía, cuanto más, que él había estado más de cuatro. Todo se lo creyó don Quijote, y dijo que él estaba allí pronto para obedecerle, y que concluyese con la mayor brevedad que pudiese; porque si fuese otra vez acometido y se viese armado caballero, no pensaba dejar persona viva en el castillo, eceto aquellas que él le mandase, a quien por su respeto dejaría.

Advertido y medroso desto el castellano, trujo luego un libro donde asentaba la paja y cebada que daba a los arrieros, y con un cabo de vela que le traía un muchacho, y con las dos ya dichas doncellas, se vino adonde don Quijote estaba, al cual mandó hincar de rodillas; y, leyendo en su manual, como que decía alguna devota oración, en mitad de la leyenda alzó la mano y dióle sobre el cuello un buen golpe, y tras él, con su misma espada, un gentil espaldarazo,



siempre murmurando entre dientes, como que rezaba. Hecho esto, mandó a una de aquellas damas que le ciñese la espada, la cual lo hizo con mucha desenvoltura y discreción, porque no fue menester poca para no reventar de risa a cada punto de las ceremonias; pero las proezas que ya habían visto del novel caballero les tenía la risa a raya. Al ceñirle la espada, dijo la buena señora:

-Dios haga a vuestra merced muy venturoso caballero y le dé ventura en lides.

Don Quijote le preguntó cómo se llamaba, porque él supiese de allí adelante a quién quedaba obligado por la merced recebida; porque pensaba darle alguna parte de la honra que alcanzase por el valor de su brazo. Ella respondió con mucha humildad que se llamaba la Tolosa, y que era hija de un remendón natural de Toledo que vivía a las tendillas de Sancho Bienaya, y que dondequiera que ella estuviese le serviría y le tendría por señor. Don Quijote le replicó que, por su amor, le hiciese merced que de allí adelante se pusiese *don* y se llamase doña Tolosa. Ella se lo prometió, y la otra le calzó la espuela, con la cual le pasó casi el mismo coloquio que con la de la espada: preguntóle su nombre, y dijo que se llamaba la Molinera, y que era hija de un honrado molinero de Antequera; a la cual también rogó don Quijote que se pusiese *don* y se llamase doña Molinera, ofreciéndole nuevos servicios y mercedes.

Hechas, pues, de galope y aprisa las hasta allí nunca vistas ceremonias, no vio la hora don Quijote de verse a caballo y salir buscando las aventuras; y, ensillando luego a Rocinante, subió en él y, abrazando a su huésped, le dijo cosas tan estrañas, agradeciéndole la merced de haberle armado caballero, que no es posible acertar a referirlas. El ventero, por verle ya fuera de la venta, con no menos retóricas, aunque con más breves palabras, respondió a las suyas y, sin pedirle la costa de la posada, le dejó ir a la buen hora.

## Capítulo IV

### *De lo que le sucedió a nuestro caballero cuando salió de la venta*

LA DEL ALBA sería cuando don Quijote salió de la venta, tan contento, tan gallardo, tan alborozado por verse ya armado caballero, que el gozo le reventaba por las cinchas del caballo. Mas, viniéndole a la memoria los consejos de su huésped cerca de las prevenciones tan necesarias que había de llevar consigo, especial la de los dineros y camisas, determinó volver a su casa y acomodarse de todo, y de un escudero, haciendo cuenta de recibir a un labrador vecino suyo, que era pobre y con hijos, pero muy a propósito para el oficio escuderil de la caballería. Con este pensamiento guió a Rocinante hacia su aldea, el cual, casi conociendo la querencia, con tanta gana comenzó a caminar, que parecía que no ponía los pies en el suelo.

No había andado mucho, cuando le pareció que a su diestra mano, de la espesura de un bosque que allí estaba, salían unas voces delicadas, como de persona que se quejaba; y apenas las hubo oído, cuando dijo:

-Gracias doy al cielo por la merced que me hace, pues tan presto me pone ocasiones delante donde yo pueda cumplir con lo que debo a mi profesión, y donde pueda coger el fruto de mis buenos deseos. Estas voces, sin duda, son de algún menesteroso o menesterosa que ha menester mi favor y ayuda.

Y, volviendo las riendas, encaminó a Rocinante hacia donde le pareció que las voces salían. Y, a pocos pasos que entró por el bosque, vio atada una yegua a una encina, y atado en otra a un muchacho, desnudo de medio cuerpo arriba, hasta de edad de quince años, que era el que las voces daba; y no sin causa, porque le estaba dando con una pretina muchos azotes un labrador de buen talle, y cada azote le acompañaba con una reprehensión y consejo. Porque decía:

-La lengua queda y los ojos listos.

Y el muchacho respondía:

-No lo haré otra vez, señor mío; por la pasión de Dios, que no lo haré otra vez; y yo prometo de tener de aquí adelante más cuidado con el hato.

Y, viendo don Quijote lo que pasaba, con voz airada dijo:

-Descortés caballero, mal parece tomaros con quien defender no se puede; subid sobre vuestro caballo y tomad vuestra lanza -que también tenía una lanza arrimada a la encina adonde estaba arrendada la yegua-, que yo os haré conocer ser de cobardes lo que estáis haciendo.

El labrador, que vio sobre sí aquella figura llena de armas blandiendo la lanza sobre su rostro, túvose por muerto, y con buenas palabras respondió:

-Señor caballero, este muchacho que estoy castigando es un mi criado, que me sirve de guardar una manada de ovejas que tengo en estos contornos, el cual es tan descuidado, que cada día me falta una; y, porque castigo su descuido, o bellaquería, dice que lo hago de miserable, por no pagalle la soldada que le debo, y en Dios y en mi ánima que miente.

-¿«Miente», delante de mí, ruin villano? -dijo don Quijote-. Por el sol que nos alumbra, que estoy por pasaros de parte a parte con esta lanza. Pagadle luego sin más réplica; si no, por el Dios que nos rige, que os concluya y aniquile en este punto. Desatadlo luego.

El labrador bajó la cabeza y, sin responder palabra, desató a su criado, al cual preguntó don Quijote que cuánto le debía su amo. Él dijo que nueve meses, a siete reales cada mes. Hizo la cuenta don Quijote y halló que montaban setenta y tres reales, y díjole al labrador que al momento los desembolsase, si no quería morir por ello. Respondió el medroso villano que para el paso en que estaba y juramento que había hecho -y aún no había jurado nada-, que no eran tantos, porque se le habían de descontar y recibir en cuenta tres pares de zapatos que le había dado y un real de dos sangrías que le habían hecho estando enfermo.

-Bien está todo eso -replicó don Quijote-, pero quédense los zapatos y las sangrías por los azotes que sin culpa le habéis dado; que si él rompió el cuero de los zapatos que vos pagastes, vos le habéis rotpido el de su cuerpo; y si le sacó el barbero sangre estando enfermo, vos en sanidad se la habéis sacado; así que, por esta parte, no os debe nada.

-El daño está, señor caballero, en que no tengo aquí dineros: véngase Andrés conmigo a mi casa, que yo se los pagaré un real sobre otro.

-¿Irme yo con él? -dijo el muchacho-. Mas ¡mal año! No, señor, ni por pienso; porque, en viéndose solo, me desuelle como a un San Bartolomé.

-No hará tal -replicó don Quijote-: basta que yo se lo mande para que me tenga respeto; y con que él me lo jure por la ley de caballería que ha recibido, le dejaré ir libre y aseguraré la paga.

-Mire vuestra merced, señor, lo que dice -dijo el muchacho-, que este mi amo no es caballero ni ha recibido orden de caballería alguna; que es Juan Haldudo el rico, el vecino del Quintanar.

-Importa poco eso -respondió don Quijote-, que Haldudos puede haber caballeros; cuanto más, que cada uno es hijo de sus obras.

-Así es verdad -dijo Andrés-; pero este mi amo, ¿de qué obras es hijo, pues me niega mi soldada y mi sudor y trabajo?

-No niego, hermano Andrés -respondió el labrador-; y hacedme placer de

veníros conmigo, que yo juro por todas las órdenes que de caballerías hay en el mundo de pagaros, como tengo dicho, un real sobre otro, y aun sahumados.

-Del sahumero os hago gracia -dijo don Quijote-; dadse los en reales, que con eso me contento; y mirad que lo cumpláis como lo habéis jurado; si no, por el mismo juramento os juro de volver a buscaros y a castigaros, y que os tengo de hallar, aunque os escondáis más que una lagartija. Y si queréis saber quién os manda esto, para quedar con más veras obligado a cumplirlo, sabed que yo soy el valeroso don Quijote de la Mancha, el desfacedor de agravios y sinrazones; y a Dios quedad, y no se os parta de las mientes lo prometido y jurado, so pena de la pena pronunciada.

Y, en diciendo esto, picó a su Rocinante, y en breve espacio se apartó dellos. Siguióle el labrador con los ojos, y cuando vio que había traspuesto del bosque y que ya no parecía, volvióse a su criado Andrés y díjole:

-Venid acá, hijo mío, que os quiero pagar lo que os debo, como aquel deshacedor de agravios me dejó mandado.

-Eso juro yo -dijo Andrés-; y ¡cómo que andará vuestra merced acertado en cumplir el mandamiento de aquel buen caballero, que mil años viva; que, según es de valeroso y de buen juez, vive Roque, que si no me paga, que vuelva y ejecute lo que dijo!

-También lo juro yo -dijo el labrador-; pero, por lo mucho que os quiero, quiero acrecentar la deuda por acrecentar la paga.

Y, asiéndole del brazo, le tornó a atar a la encina, donde le dio tantos azotes que le dejó por muerto.

-Llamad, señor Andrés, ahora -decía el labrador-al desfacedor de agravios, veréis cómo no desface aquéste; aunque creo que no está acabado de hacer, porque me viene gana de desollaros vivo como vos temíades.

Pero, al fin, le desató y le dio licencia que fuese a buscar su juez, para que ejecutase la pronunciada sentencia. Andrés se partió algo mohíno, jurando de ir a buscar al valeroso don Quijote de la Mancha y contalle punto por punto lo que había pasado, y que se lo había de pagar con las setenas. Pero, con todo esto, él se partió llorando y su amo se quedó riendo.

Y desta manera deshizo el agravio el valeroso don Quijote; el cual, contentísimo de lo sucedido, pareciéndole que había dado felicísimo y alto principio a sus caballerías, con gran satisfacción de sí mismo iba caminando hacia su aldea, diciendo a media voz:

-Bien te puedes llamar dichosa sobre cuantas hoy viven en la tierra, ¡oh sobre las bellas bella Dulcinea del Toboso!, pues te cupo en suerte tener sujeto y rendido a toda tu voluntad e talante a un tan valiente y tan nombrado caballero como lo es y será don Quijote de la Mancha, el cual, como todo el mundo sabe,

ayer rescibió la orden de caballería, y hoy ha desfecho el mayor tuerto y agravio que formó la sinrazón y cometió la crueldad: hoy quitó el látigo de la mano a aquel despiadado enemigo que tan sin ocasión vapulaba a aquel delicado infante.

En esto, llegó a un camino que en cuatro se dividía, y luego se le vino a la imaginación las encrucejadas donde los caballeros andantes se ponían a pensar cuál camino de aquéllos tomarían y, por imitarlos, estuvo un rato quedo; y, al cabo de haberlo muy bien pensado, soltó la rienda a Rocinante, dejando a la voluntad del rocín la suya, el cual siguió su primer intento, que fue el irse camino de su caballeriza.

Y, habiendo andado como dos millas, descubrió don Quijote un grande tropel de gente, que, como después se supo, eran unos mercaderes toledanos que iban a comprar seda a Murcia. Eran seis, y venían con sus quitasoles, con otros cuatro criados a caballo y tres mozos de mulas a pie. Apenas los divisó don Quijote, cuando se imaginó ser cosa de nueva aventura; y, por imitar en todo cuanto a él le parecía posible los pasos que había leído en sus libros, le pareció venir allí de molde uno que pensaba hacer. Y así, con gentil continente y denuedo, se afirmó bien en los estribos, apretó la lanza, llegó la adarga al pecho y, puesto en la mitad del camino, estuvo esperando que aquellos caballeros andantes llegasen, que ya él por tales los tenía y juzgaba; y, cuando llegaron a trecho que se pudieron ver y oír, levantó don Quijote la voz y con ademán arrogante dijo:

-Todo el mundo se tenga, si todo el mundo no confiesa que no hay en el mundo todo doncella más hermosa que la emperatriz de la Mancha, la sin par Dulcinea del Toboso.

Paráronse los mercaderes al son destas razones, y a ver la estraña figura del que las decía; y, por la figura y por las razones, luego echaron de ver la locura de su dueño; mas quisieron ver despacio en qué paraba aquella confesión que se les pedía, y uno dellos, que era un poco burlón y muy mucho discreto, le dijo:

-Señor caballero, nosotros no conocemos quién sea esa buena señora que decís; mostrádnosla: que si ella fuere de tanta hermosura como significáis, de buena gana y sin apremio alguno confesaremos la verdad que por parte vuestra nos es pedida.

-Si os la mostrara -replicó don Quijote-, ¿qué hiciérades vosotros en confesar una verdad tan notoria? La importancia está en que sin verla lo habéis de creer, confesar, afirmar, jurar y defender; donde no, conmigo sois en batalla, gente descomunal y soberbia. Que, ahora vengáis uno a uno, como pide la orden de caballería, ora todos juntos, como es costumbre y mala usanza de los de vuestra ralea, aquí os aguardo y espero, confiado en la razón que de mi parte tengo.

-Señor caballero -replicó el mercader-, suplico a vuestra merced, en nombre de todos estos príncipes que aquí estamos, que, porque no encarguemos nuestras

conciencias confesando una cosa por nosotros jamás vista ni oída, y más siendo tan en perjuicio de las emperatrices y reinas del Alcarria y Estremadura, que vuestra merced sea servido de mostrarnos algún retrato de esa señora, aunque sea tamaño como un grano de trigo; que por el hilo se sacará el ovillo, y quedaremos con esto satisfechos y seguros, y vuestra merced quedará contento y pagado; y aun creo que estamos ya tan de su parte que, aunque su retrato nos muestre que es tuerta de un ojo y que del otro le mana bermellón y piedra azufre, con todo eso, por complacer a vuestra merced, diremos en su favor todo lo que quisiere.

-No le mana, canalla infame -respondió don Quijote, encendido en cólera-; no le mana, digo, eso que decís, sino ámbar y algalia entre algodones; y no es tuerta ni corcovada, sino más derecha que un huso de Guadarrama. Pero vosotros pagaréis la grande blasfemia que habéis dicho contra tamaña beldad como es la de mi señora.

Y, en diciendo esto, arremetió con la lanza baja contra el que lo había dicho, con tanta furia y enojo que, si la buena suerte no hiciera que en la mitad del camino tropezara y cayera Rocinante, lo pasara mal el atrevido mercader. Cayó Rocinante, y fue rodando su amo una buena pieza por el campo; y, queriéndose levantar, jamás pudo: tal embarazo le causaban la lanza, adarga, espuelas y celada, con el peso de las antiguas armas. Y, entretanto que pugnaba por levantarse y no podía, estaba diciendo:

-¡Non fuyáis, gente cobarde; gente cautiva, atended!; que no por culpa mía, sino de mi caballo, estoy aquí tendido.

Un mozo de mulas de los que allí venían, que no debía de ser muy bien intencionado, oyendo decir al pobre caído tantas arrogancias, no lo pudo sufrir sin darle la respuesta en las costillas. Y, llegándose a él, tomó la lanza y, después de haberla hecho pedazos, con uno dellos comenzó a dar a nuestro don Quijote tantos palos que, a despecho y pesar de sus armas, le molió como cibera. Dábanle voces sus amos que no le diese tanto y que le dejase, pero estaba ya el mozo picado y no quiso dejar el juego hasta envidar todo el resto de su cólera; y, acudiendo por los demás trozos de la lanza, los acabó de deshacer sobre el miserable caído, que, con toda aquella tempestad de palos que sobre él vía, no cerraba la boca, amenazando al cielo y a la tierra, y a los malandrines, que tal le parecían.

Cansóse el mozo, y los mercaderes siguieron su camino, llevando qué contar en todo él del pobre apaleado. El cual, después que se vio solo, tornó a probar si podía levantarse; pero si no lo pudo hacer cuando sano y bueno, ¿cómo lo haría molido y casi deshecho? Y aún se tenía por dichoso, pareciéndole que aquélla era propia desgracia de caballeros andantes, y toda la atribuía a la falta de su

caballo; y no era posible levantarse, según tenía brumado todo el cuerpo.

## Capítulo V

*Donde se prosigue la narración de la desgracia de nuestro caballero*

VIENDO, pues, que, en efeto, no podía menearse, acordó de acogerse a su ordinario remedio, que era pensar en algún paso de sus libros; y trújole su locura a la memoria aquel de Valdovinos y del marqués de Mantua, cuando Carloto le dejó herido en la montiña, historia sabida de los niños, no ignorada de los mozos, celebrada y aun creída de los viejos; y, con todo esto, no más verdadera que los milagros de Mahoma. Ésta, pues, le pareció a él que le venía de molde para el paso en que se hallaba; y así, con muestras de grande sentimiento, se comenzó a volcar por la tierra y a decir con debilitado aliento lo mismo que dicen decía el herido caballero del bosque:

-¿Donde estás, señora mía,  
que no te duele mi mal?  
O no lo sabes, señora,  
o eres falsa y desleal.

Y, desta manera, fue prosiguiendo el romance hasta aquellos versos que dicen:

-¡Oh noble marqués de Mantua,  
mi tío y señor carnal!

Y quiso la suerte que, cuando llegó a este verso, acertó a pasar por allí un labrador de su mismo lugar y vecino suyo, que venía de llevar una carga de trigo al molino; el cual, viendo aquel hombre allí tendido, se llegó a él y le preguntó que quién era y qué mal sentía que tan tristemente se quejaba. Don Quijote creyó, sin duda, que aquél era el marqués de Mantua, su tío; y así, no le respondió otra cosa si no fue proseguir en su romance, donde le daba cuenta de su desgracia y de los amores del hijo del Emperante con su esposa, todo de la misma manera que el romance lo canta.



El labrador estaba admirado oyendo aquellos disparates; y, quitándole la visera, que ya estaba hecha pedazos de los palos, le limpió el rostro, que le tenía cubierto de polvo; y apenas le hubo limpiado, cuando le conoció y le dijo:

-Señor Quijana -que así se debía de llamar cuando él tenía juicio y no había pasado de hidalgo sosegado a caballero andante-, ¿quién ha puesto a vuestra merced desta suerte?

Pero él seguía con su romance a cuanto le preguntaba. Viendo esto el buen hombre, lo mejor que pudo le quitó el peto y espaldas, para ver si tenía alguna herida; pero no vio sangre ni señal alguna. Procuró levantarle del suelo, y no con poco trabajo le subió sobre su jumento, por parecer caballería más sosegada. Recogió las armas, hasta las astillas de la lanza, y liólas sobre Rocinante, al cual tomó de la rienda, y del cabestro al asno, y se encaminó hacia su pueblo, bien pensativo de oír los disparates que don Quijote decía; y no menos iba don Quijote, que, de puro molido y quebrantado, no se podía tener sobre el borrico, y de cuando en cuando daba unos suspiros que los ponía en el cielo; de modo que de nuevo obligó a que el labrador le preguntase le dijese qué mal sentía; y no parece sino que el diablo le traía a la memoria los cuentos acomodados a sus sucesos, porque, en aquel punto, olvidándose de Valdovinos, se acordó del moro Abindarráez, cuando el alcaide de Antequera, Rodrigo de Narváez, le prendió y llevó cautivo a su alcaidía. De suerte que, cuando el labrador le volvió a preguntar que cómo estaba y qué sentía, le respondió las mismas palabras y razones que el cautivo Abencerraje respondía a Rodrigo de Narváez, del mismo modo que él había leído la historia en *La Diana*, de Jorge de Montemayor, donde se escribe; aprovechándose della tan a propósito, que el labrador se iba dando al diablo de oír tanta máquina de necedades; por donde conoció que su vecino estaba loco, y dábale prisa a llegar al pueblo, por escusar el enfado que don Quijote le causaba con su larga arenga. Al cabo de lo cual, dijo:

-Sepa vuestra merced, señor don Rodrigo de Narváez, que esta hermosa Jarifa que he dicho es ahora la linda Dulcinea del Toboso, por quien yo he hecho, hago y haré los más famosos hechos de caballerías que se han visto, vean ni verán en el mundo.

A esto respondió el labrador:

-Mire vuestra merced, señor, pecador de mí, que yo no soy don Rodrigo de Narváez, ni el marqués de Mantua, sino Pedro Alonso, su vecino; ni vuestra merced es Valdovinos, ni Abindarráez, sino el honrado hidalgo del señor Quijana.

-Yo sé quien soy -respondió don Quijote-; y sé que puedo ser no sólo los que he dicho, sino todos los Doce Pares de Francia, y aun todos los Nueve de la Fama, pues a todas las hazañas que ellos todos juntos y cada uno por sí hicieron,

se aventajarán las mías.

En estas pláticas y en otras semejantes, llegaron al lugar a la hora que anoecía, pero el labrador aguardó a que fuese algo más noche, porque no viesen al molido hidalgo tan mal caballero. Llegada, pues, la hora que le pareció, entró en el pueblo, y en la casa de don Quijote, la cual halló toda alborotada; y estaban en ella el cura y el barbero del lugar, que eran grandes amigos de don Quijote, que estaba diciéndoles su ama a voces:

-¿Qué le parece a vuestra merced, señor licenciado Pero Pérez -que así se llamaba el cura-, de la desgracia de mi señor? Tres días ha que no parecen él, ni el rocín, ni la adarga, ni la lanza ni las armas. ¡Desventurada de mí!, que me doy a entender, y así es ello la verdad como nací para morir, que estos malditos libros de caballerías que él tiene y suele leer tan de ordinario le han vuelto el juicio; que ahora me acuerdo haberle oído decir muchas veces, hablando entre sí, que quería hacerse caballero andante e irse a buscar las aventuras por esos mundos. Encomendados sean a Satanás y a Barrabás tales libros, que así han echado a perder el más delicado entendimiento que había en toda la Mancha.

La sobrina decía lo mismo, y aun decía más:

-Sepa, señor maese Nicolás -que éste era el nombre del barbero-, que muchas veces le aconteció a mi señor tío estarse leyendo en estos desalmados libros de desventuras dos días con sus noches, al cabo de los cuales, arrojaba el libro de las manos, y ponía mano a la espada y andaba a cuchilladas con las paredes; y cuando estaba muy cansado, decía que había muerto a cuatro gigantes como cuatro torres, y el sudor que sudaba del cansancio decía que era sangre de las heridas que había recibido en la batalla; y bebíase luego un gran jarro de agua fría, y quedaba sano y sosegado, diciendo que aquella agua era una preciosísima bebida que le había traído el sabio Esquife, un grande encantador y amigo suyo. Mas yo me tengo la culpa de todo, que no avisé a vuestras mercedes de los disparates de mi señor tío, para que lo remediaran antes de llegar a lo que ha llegado, y quemaran todos estos descomulgados libros, que tiene muchos, que bien merecen ser abrasados, como si fuesen de herejes.

-Esto digo yo también -dijo el cura-, y a fee que no se pase el día de mañana sin que dellos no se haga acto público y sean condenados al fuego, porque no den ocasión a quien los leyere de hacer lo que mi buen amigo debe de haber hecho.

Todo esto estaban oyendo el labrador y don Quijote, con que acabó de entender el labrador la enfermedad de su vecino; y así, comenzó a decir a voces:

-Abran vuestras mercedes al señor Valdovinos y al señor marqués de Mantua, que viene malferido, y al señor moro Abindarráez, que trae cautivo el valeroso Rodrigo de Narváez, alcaide de Antequera.

A estas voces salieron todos y, como conocieron los unos a su amigo, las otras a su amo y tío, que aún no se había apeado del jumento, porque no podía, corrieron a abrazarle. Él dijo:

-Ténganse todos, que vengo malferido por la culpa de mi caballo. Llévenme a mi lecho y llámese, si fuere posible, a la sabia Urganda, que cure y cate de mis heridas.

-¡Mirá, en hora maza -dijo a este punto el ama-, si me decía a mí bien mi corazón del pie que cojeaba mi señor! Suba vuestra merced en buen hora, que, sin que venga esa Hurgada, le sabremos aquí curar. ¡Malditos, digo, sean otra vez y otras ciento estos libros de caballerías, que tal han parado a vuestra merced!

Lleváronle luego a la cama y, catándole las heridas, no le hallaron ninguna; y él dijo que todo era molimiento, por haber dado una gran caída con Rocinante, su caballo, combatiéndose con diez jayanes, los más desaforados y atrevidos que se pudieran fallar en gran parte de la tierra.

-¡Ta, ta! -dijo el cura-. ¿Jayanes hay en la danza? Para mi santiguada, que yo los queme mañana antes que llegue la noche.

Hiciéronle a don Quijote mil preguntas, y a ninguna quiso responder otra cosa sino que le diesen de comer y le dejasen dormir, que era lo que más le importaba. Hízose así, y el cura se informó muy a la larga del labrador del modo que había hallado a don Quijote. Él se lo contó todo, con los disparates que al hallarle y al traerle había dicho; que fue poner más deseo en el licenciado de hacer lo que otro día hizo, que fue llamar a su amigo el barbero maese Nicolás, con el cual se vino a casa de don Quijote.

## Capítulo VI

*Del donoso y grande escrutinio que el cura y el barbero hicieron en la librería de nuestro ingenioso hidalgo*

EL CUAL aún todavía dormía. Pidió las llaves, a la sobrina, del aposento donde estaban los libros, autores del daño, y ella se las dio de muy buena gana. Entraron dentro todos, y la ama con ellos, y hallaron más de cien cuerpos de libros grandes, muy bien encuadernados, y otros pequeños; y, así como el ama los vio, volvióse a salir del aposento con gran prisa, y tornó luego con una escudilla de agua bendita y un hisopo, y dijo:

-Tome vuestra merced, señor licenciado: rocíe este aposento, no esté aquí algún encantador de los muchos que tienen estos libros, y nos encanten, en pena de las que les queremos dar echándolos del mundo.

Causó risa al licenciado la simplicidad del ama, y mandó al barbero que le fuese dando de aquellos libros uno a uno, para ver de qué trataban, pues podía ser hallar algunos que no mereciesen castigo de fuego.

-No -dijo la sobrina-, no hay para qué perdonar a ninguno, porque todos han sido los dañadores; mejor será arrojarlos por las ventanas al patio, y hacer un rintero dellos y pegarles fuego; y si no, llevarlos al corral, y allí se hará la hoguera, y no ofenderá el humo.

Lo mismo dijo el ama: tal era la gana que las dos tenían de la muerte de aquellos inocentes; mas el cura no vino en ello sin primero leer siquiera los títulos. Y el primero que maese Nicolás le dio en las manos fue *Los cuatro de Amadís de Gaula*, y dijo el cura:

-Parece cosa de misterio ésta; porque, según he oído decir, este libro fue el primero de caballerías que se imprimió en España, y todos los demás han tomado principio y origen deste; y así, me parece que, como a dogmatizador de una secta tan mala, le debemos, sin excusa alguna, condenar al fuego.

-No, señor -dijo el barbero-, que también he oído decir que es el mejor de todos los libros que de este género se han compuesto; y así, como a único en su arte, se debe perdonar.

-Así es verdad -dijo el cura-, y por esa razón se le otorga la vida por ahora. Veamos esotro que está junto a él.

-Es -dijo el barbero- las *Sergas de Esplandián*, hijo legítimo de Amadís de Gaula.

-Pues, en verdad -dijo el cura-que no le ha de valer al hijo la bondad del padre. Tomad, señora ama: abrid esa ventana y echadle al corral, y dé principio al montón de la hoguera que se ha de hacer.

Hízolo así el ama con mucho contento, y el bueno de Esplandián fue volando al corral, esperando con toda paciencia el fuego que le amenazaba.

-Adelante -dijo el cura.

-Este que viene -dijo el barbero-es *Amadís de Grecia*; y aun todos los deste lado, a lo que creo, son del mismo linaje de Amadís.

-Pues vayan todos al corral -dijo el cura-; que, a trueco de quemar a la reina Pintiquiniestra, y al pastor Darinel, y a sus églogas, y a las endiabladas y revueltas razones de su autor, quemaré con ellos al padre que me engendró, si anduviera en figura de caballero andante.

-De ese parecer soy yo -dijo el barbero.

-Y aun yo -añadió la sobrina.

-Pues así es -dijo el ama-, vengan, y al corral con ellos.

Diéronselos, que eran muchos, y ella ahorró la escalera y dio con ellos por la ventana abajo.

-¿Quién es ese tonel? -dijo el cura.

-Éste es -respondió el barbero- *Don Olivante de Laura*.

-El autor de ese libro -dijo el cura-fue el mismo que compuso a *Jardín de flores*; y en verdad que no sepa determinar cuál de los dos libros es más verdadero o, por decir mejor, menos mentiroso; sólo sé decir que éste irá al corral por disparatado y arrogante.

-Éste que se sigue es *Florimorte de Hircania* -dijo el barbero.

-¿Ahí está el señor Florimorte? -replicó el cura-. Pues a fe que ha de parar presto en el corral, a pesar de su extraño nacimiento y sonadas aventuras; que no da lugar a otra cosa la dureza y sequedad de su estilo. Al corral con él y con esotro, señora ama.

-Que me place, señor mío -respondía ella; y con mucha alegría ejecutaba lo que le era mandado.

-Éste es *El Caballero Platir* -dijo el barbero.

-Antiguo libro es ése -dijo el cura-, y no hallo en él cosa que merezca venia. Acompañe a los demás sin réplica.

Y así fue hecho. Abrióse otro libro y vieron que tenía por título *El Caballero de la Cruz*.

-Por nombre tan santo como este libro tiene, se podía perdonar su ignorancia; mas también se suele decir: «tras la cruz está el diablo»; vaya al fuego.

Tomando el barbero otro libro, dijo:

-Éste es *Espejo de caballerías*.

-Ya conozco a su merced -dijo el cura-. Ahí anda el señor Reinaldos de Montalbán con sus amigos y compañeros, más ladrones que Caco, y los doce Pares, con el verdadero historiador Turpín; y en verdad que estoy por condenarlos no más que a destierro perpetuo, siquiera porque tienen parte de la invención del famoso Mateo Boyardo, de donde también tejió su tela el cristiano poeta Ludovico Ariosto; al cual, si aquí le hallo, y que habla en otra lengua que la suya, no le guardaré respeto alguno; pero si habla en su idioma, le pondré sobre mi cabeza.

-Pues yo le tengo en italiano -dijo el barbero-, mas no le entiendo.

-Ni aun fuera bien que vos le entendiéades -respondió el cura-, y aquí le perdonáramos al señor capitán que no le hubiera traído a España y hecho castellano; que le quitó mucho de su natural valor, y lo mesmo harán todos aquellos que los libros de verso quisieren volver en otra lengua: que, por mucho cuidado que pongan y habilidad que muestren, jamás llegarán al punto que ellos tienen en su primer nacimiento. Digo, en efeto, que este libro, y todos los que se hallaren que tratan destas cosas de Francia, se echen y depositen en un pozo seco, hasta que con más acuerdo se vea lo que se ha de hacer dellos, ecetuando a un *Bernardo del Carpio* que anda por ahí y a otro llamado *Roncesvalles*; que éstos, en llegando a mis manos, han de estar en las del ama, y dellas en las del fuego, sin remisión alguna.

Todo lo confirmó el barbero, y lo tuvo por bien y por cosa muy acertada, por entender que era el cura tan buen cristiano y tan amigo de la verdad, que no diría otra cosa por todas las del mundo. Y, abriendo otro libro, vio que era *Palmerín de Oliva*, y junto a él estaba otro que se llamaba *Palmerín de Inglaterra*; lo cual visto por el licenciado, dijo:

-Esa oliva se haga luego rajas y se queme, que aun no queden della las cenizas; y esa palma de Inglaterra se guarde y se conserve como a cosa única, y se haga para ello otra caja como la que halló Alejandro en los despojos de Darío, que la diputó para guardar en ella las obras del poeta Homero. Este libro, señor compadre, tiene autoridad por dos cosas: la una, porque él por sí es muy bueno, y la otra, porque es fama que le compuso un discreto rey de Portugal. Todas las aventuras del castillo de Miraguarda son bonísimas y de grande artificio; las razones, cortesanas y claras, que guardan y miran el decoro del que habla con mucha propiedad y entendimiento. Digo, pues, salvo vuestro buen parecer, señor maese Nicolás, que éste y *Amadís de Gaula* queden libres del fuego, y todos los demás, sin hacer más cala y cata, perezcan.

-No, señor compadre -replicó el barbero-; que éste que aquí tengo es el afamado *Don Belianís*.

-Pues ése -replicó el cura-, con la segunda, tercera y cuarta parte, tienen

necesidad de un poco de ruibarbo para purgar la demasiada cólera suya, y es menester quitarles todo aquello del castillo de la Fama y otras impertinencias de más importancia, para lo cual se les da término ultramarino, y como se enmendaren, así se usará con ellos de misericordia o de justicia; y en tanto, tenedlos vos, compadre, en vuestra casa, mas no los dejéis leer a ninguno.

-Que me place -respondió el barbero.

Y, sin querer cansarse más en leer libros de caballerías, mandó al ama que tomase todos los grandes y diese con ellos en el corral. No se dijo a tonta ni a sorda, sino a quien tenía más gana de quemallos que de echar una tela, por grande y delgada que fuera; y, asiendo casi ocho de una vez, los arrojó por la ventana. Por tomar muchos juntos, se le cayó uno a los pies del barbero, que le tomó gana de ver de quién era, y vio que decía: *Historia del famoso caballero Tirante el Blanco*.

-¡Válame Dios! -dijo el cura, dando una gran voz-. ¡Que aquí esté Tirante el Blanco! Dádmele acá, compadre; que hago cuenta que he hallado en él un tesoro de contento y una mina de pasatiempos. Aquí está don Quirieleisón de Montalbán, valeroso caballero, y su hermano Tomás de Montalbán, y el caballero Fonseca, con la batalla que el valiente de Tirante hizo con el alano, y las agudezas de la doncella Placerdemivida, con los amores y embustes de la viuda Reposada, y la señora Emperatriz, enamorada de Hipólito, su escudero. Dígoos verdad, señor compadre, que, por su estilo, es éste el mejor libro del mundo: aquí comen los caballeros, y duermen, y mueren en sus camas, y hacen testamento antes de su muerte, con estas cosas de que todos los demás libros deste género carecen. Con todo eso, os digo que merecía el que le compuso, pues no hizo tantas necesidades de industria, que le echaran a galeras por todos los días de su vida. Llévadle a casa y leedle, y veréis que es verdad cuanto dél os he dicho.

-Así será -respondió el barbero-; pero, ¿qué haremos destos pequeños libros que quedan?

-Éstos -dijo el cura-no deben de ser de caballerías, sino de poesía.

Y abriendo uno, vio que era *La Diana*, de Jorge de Montemayor, y dijo, creyendo que todos los demás eran del mismo género:

-Éstos no merecen ser quemados, como los demás, porque no hacen ni harán el daño que los de caballerías han hecho; que son libros de entendimiento, sin perjuicio de tercero.

-¡Ay señor! -dijo la sobrina-, bien los puede vuestra merced mandar quemar, como a los demás, porque no sería mucho que, habiendo sanado mi señor tío de la enfermedad caballeresca, leyendo éstos, se le antojase de hacerse pastor y andarse por los bosques y prados cantando y tañendo; y, lo que sería peor,

hacerse poeta; que, según dicen, es enfermedad incurable y pegadiza.

-Verdad dice esta doncella -dijo el cura-, y será bien quitarle a nuestro amigo este tropiezo y ocasión delante. Y, pues comenzamos por *La Diana* de Montemayor, soy de parecer que no se queme, sino que se le quite todo aquello que trata de la sabia Felicia y de la agua encantada, y casi todos los versos mayores, y quédesele en hora buena la prosa, y la honra de ser primero en semejantes libros.

-Éste que se sigue -dijo el barbero-es *La Diana* llamada *segunda del Salmantino*; y éste, otro que tiene el mismo nombre, cuyo autor es Gil Polo.

-Pues la del Salmantino -respondió el cura-, acompañe y acreciente el número de los condenados al corral, y la de Gil Polo se guarde como si fuera del mismo Apolo; y pase adelante, señor compadre, y démonos prisa, que se va haciendo tarde.

-Este libro es -dijo el barbero, abriendo otro- *Los diez libros de Fortuna de Amor*, compuestos por Antonio de Lofraso, poeta sardo.

-Por las órdenes que recibí -dijo el cura-, que, desde que Apolo fue Apolo, y las musas musas, y los poetas poetas, tan gracioso ni tan disparatado libro como ése no se ha compuesto, y que, por su camino, es el mejor y el más único de cuantos deste género han salido a la luz del mundo; y el que no le ha leído puede hacer cuenta que no ha leído jamás cosa de gusto. Dádmele acá, compadre, que precio más haberle hallado que si me dieran una sotana de raja de Florencia.

Púsole aparte con grandísimo gusto, y el barbero prosiguió diciendo:

-Estos que se siguen son *El Pastor de Iberia*, *Ninfas de Henares* y *Desengaños de celos*.

-Pues no hay más que hacer -dijo el cura-, sino entregarlos al brazo seglar del ama; y no se me pregunte el porqué, que sería nunca acabar.

-Este que viene es *El Pastor de Fílida*.

-No es ése pastor -dijo el cura-, sino muy discreto cortesano; guárdese como joya preciosa.

-Este grande que aquí viene se intitula -dijo el barbero- *Tesoro de varias poesías*.

-Como ellas no fueran tantas -dijo el cura-, fueran más estimadas; menester es que este libro se escarde y limpie de algunas bajezas que entre sus grandezas tiene. Guárdese, porque su autor es amigo mío, y por respeto de otras más heroicas y levantadas obras que ha escrito.

-Éste es -siguió el barbero- *El Cancionero* de López Maldonado.

-También el autor de ese libro -replicó el cura-es grande amigo mío, y sus versos en su boca admiran a quien los oye; y tal es la suavidad de la voz con que los canta, que encanta. Algo largo es en las églogas, pero nunca lo bueno fue



mucho: guárdese con los escogidos. Pero, ¿qué libro es ese que está junto a él?

-*La Galatea*, de Miguel de Cervantes -dijo el barbero.

-Muchos años ha que es grande amigo mío ese Cervantes, y sé que es más versado en desdichas que en versos. Su libro tiene algo de buena invención; propone algo, y no concluye nada: es menester esperar la segunda parte que promete; quizá con la emienda alcanzará del todo la misericordia que ahora se le niega; y, entre tanto que esto se ve, tenedle recluso en vuestra posada, señor compadre.

-Que me place -respondió el barbero-. Y aquí vienen tres, todos juntos: *La Araucana*, de don Alonso de Ercilla; *La Austríada*, de Juan Rufo, jurado de Córdoba, y *El Monserrato*, de Cristóbal de Virués, poeta valenciano.

-Todos esos tres libros -dijo el cura-son los mejores que, en verso heroico, en lengua castellana están escritos, y pueden competir con los más famosos de Italia: guárdense como las más ricas prendas de poesía que tiene España.

Cansóse el cura de ver más libros; y así, a carga cerrada, quiso que todos los demás se quemasen; pero ya tenía abierto uno el barbero, que se llamaba *Las lágrimas de Angélica*.

-Lloráralas yo -dijo el cura en oyendo el nombre-si tal libro hubiera mandado quemar; porque su autor fue uno de los famosos poetas del mundo, no sólo de España, y fue felicísimo en la traducción de algunas fábulas de Ovidio.

## Capítulo VII

*De la segunda salida de nuestro buen caballero don Quijote de la Mancha*

ESTANDO en esto, comenzó a dar voces don Quijote, diciendo:

-¡Aquí, aquí, valerosos caballeros; aquí es menester mostrar la fuerza de vuestros valerosos brazos, que los cortesanos llevan lo mejor del torneo!

Por acudir a este ruido y estruendo, no se pasó adelante con el escrutinio de los demás libros que quedaban; y así, se cree que fueron al fuego, sin ser vistos ni oídos, *La Carolea y León de España*, con *Los Hechos del Emperador*, compuestos por don Luis de Ávila, que, sin duda, debían de estar entre los que quedaban; y quizá, si el cura los viera, no pasaran por tan rigurosa sentencia.

Cuando llegaron a don Quijote, ya él estaba levantado de la cama, y proseguía en sus voces y en sus desatinos, dando cuchilladas y reveses a todas partes, estando tan despierto como si nunca hubiera dormido. Abrazáronse con él, y por fuerza le volvieron al lecho; y, después que hubo sosegado un poco, volviéndose a hablar con el cura, le dijo:

-Por cierto, señor arzobispo Turpín, que es gran mengua de los que nos llamamos doce Pares dejar, tan sin más ni más, llevar la vitoria deste torneo a los caballeros cortesanos, habiendo nosotros los aventureros ganado el prez en los tres días antecedentes.

-Calle vuestra merced, señor compadre -dijo el cura-, que Dios será servido que la suerte se mude, y que lo que hoy se pierde se gane mañana; y atienda vuestra merced a su salud por agora, que me parece que debe de estar demasiadamente cansado, si ya no es que está malferido.

-Ferido no -dijo don Quijote-, pero molido y quebrantado, no hay duda en ello; porque aquel bastardo de don Roldán me ha molido a palos con el tronco de una encina, y todo de envidia, porque ve que yo solo soy el opuesto de sus valentías. Mas no me llamaría yo Reinaldos de Montalbán si, en levantándome deste lecho, no me lo pagare, a pesar de todos sus encantamentos; y, por agora, tráiganme de yantar, que sé que es lo que más me hará al caso, y quédese lo del vengarme a mi cargo.

Hiciéronlo ansí: diéronle de comer, y quedóse otra vez dormido, y ellos, admirados de su locura.

Aquella noche quemó y abrasó el ama cuantos libros había en el corral y en

toda la casa, y tales debieron de arder que merecían guardarse en perpetuos archivos; mas no lo permitió su suerte y la pereza del escrutiñador; y así, se cumplió el refrán en ellos de que pagan a las veces justos por pecadores.

Uno de los remedios que el cura y el barbero dieron, por entonces, para el mal de su amigo, fue que le murasen y tapiasen el aposento de los libros, porque cuando se levantase no los hallase -quizá quitando la causa, cesaría el efeto-, y que dijese que un encantador se los había llevado, y el aposento y todo; y así fue hecho con mucha presteza.

De allí a dos días se levantó don Quijote, y lo primero que hizo fue ir a ver sus libros; y, como no hallaba el aposento donde le había dejado, andaba de una en otra parte buscándole. Llegaba adonde solía tener la puerta, y tentábala con las manos, y volvía y revolvía los ojos por todo, sin decir palabra; pero, al cabo de una buena pieza, preguntó a su ama que hacia qué parte estaba el aposento de sus libros. El ama, que ya estaba bien advertida de lo que había de responder, le dijo:

-¿Qué aposento, o qué nada, busca vuestra merced? Ya no hay aposento ni libros en esta casa, porque todo se lo llevó el mismo diablo.

-No era diablo -replicó la sobrina-, sino un encantador que vino sobre una nube una noche, después del día que vuestra merced de aquí se partió, y, apeándose de una sierpe en que venía caballero, entró en el aposento, y no sé lo que se hizo dentro, que a cabo de poca pieza salió volando por el tejado, y dejó la casa llena de humo; y, cuando acordamos a mirar lo que dejaba hecho, no vimos libro ni aposento alguno; sólo se nos acuerda muy bien a mí y al ama que, al tiempo del partirse aquel mal viejo, dijo en altas voces que, por enemistad secreta que tenía al dueño de aquellos libros y aposento, dejaba hecho el daño en aquella casa que después se vería. Dijo también que se llamaba el sabio Muñatón.

-Frestón diría -dijo don Quijote.

-No sé -respondió el ama-si se llamaba Frestón o Fritón; sólo sé que acabó en tón su nombre.

-Así es -dijo don Quijote-; que ése es un sabio encantador, grande enemigo mío, que me tiene ojeriza, porque sabe por sus artes y letras que tengo de venir, andando los tiempos, a pelear en singular batalla con un caballero a quien él favorece, y le tengo de vencer, sin que él lo pueda estorbar, y por esto procura hacerme todos los sinsabores que puede; y mándole yo que mal podrá él contradecir ni evitar lo que por el cielo está ordenado.

-¿Quién duda de eso? -dijo la sobrina-. Pero ¿quién le mete a vuestra merced, señor tío, en esas pendencias? ¿No será mejor estarse pacífico en su casa y no irse por el mundo a buscar pan de trastrigo, sin considerar que muchos van por lana y vuelven tresquilados?

-¡Oh sobrina mía -respondió don Quijote-, y cuán mal que estás en la cuenta! Primero que a mí me tresquilen, tendré peladas y quitadas las barbas a cuantos imaginaren tocarme en la punta de un solo cabello.

No quisieron las dos replicarle más, porque vieron que se le encendía la cólera.

Es, pues, el caso que él estuvo quince días en casa muy sosegado, sin dar muestras de querer segundar sus primeros devaneos, en los cuales días pasó graciosísimos cuentos con sus dos compadres el cura y el barbero, sobre que él decía que la cosa de que más necesidad tenía el mundo era de caballeros andantes y de que en él se resucitase la caballería andantesca. El cura algunas veces le contradecía y otras concedía, porque si no guardaba este artificio, no había poder averiguarse con él.

En este tiempo, solicitó don Quijote a un labrador vecino suyo, hombre de bien -si es que este título se puede dar al que es pobre-, pero de muy poca sal en la mollera. En resolución, tanto le dijo, tanto le persuadió y prometió, que el pobre villano se determinó de salirse con él y servirle de escudero. Decíale, entre otras cosas, don Quijote que se dispusiese a ir con él de buena gana, porque tal vez le podía suceder aventura que ganase, en quítame allá esas pajas, alguna ínsula, y le dejase a él por gobernador della. Con estas promesas y otras tales, Sancho Panza, que así se llamaba el labrador, dejó su mujer y hijos y asentó por escudero de su vecino.

Dio luego don Quijote orden en buscar dineros; y, vendiendo una cosa y empeñando otra, y malbaratándolas todas, llegó una razonable cantidad. Acomodóse asimesmo de una rodela, que pidió prestada a un su amigo, y, pertrechando su rota celada lo mejor que pudo, avisó a su escudero Sancho del día y la hora que pensaba ponerse en camino, para que él se acomodase de lo que viese que más le era menester. Sobre todo le encargó que llevase alforjas; e dijo que sí llevaría, y que ansimesmo pensaba llevar un asno que tenía muy bueno, porque él no estaba duecho a andar mucho a pie. En lo del asno reparó un poco don Quijote, imaginando si se le acordaba si algún caballero andante había traído escudero caballero asnalmente, pero nunca le vino alguno a la memoria; mas, con todo esto, determinó que le llevase, con presupuesto de acomodarle de más honrada caballería en habiendo ocasión para ello, quitándole el caballo al primer descortés caballero que topase. Proveyóse de camisas y de las demás cosas que él pudo, conforme al consejo que el ventero le había dado; todo lo cual hecho y cumplido, sin despedirse Panza de sus hijos y mujer, ni don Quijote de su ama y sobrina, una noche se salieron del lugar sin que persona los viese; en la cual caminaron tanto, que al amanecer se tuvieron por seguros de que no los hallarían aunque los buscasen.

Iba Sancho Panza sobre su jumento como un patriarca, con sus alforjas y su bota, y con mucho deseo de verse ya gobernador de la ínsula que su amo le había prometido. Acertó don Quijote a tomar la misma derrota y camino que el que él había tomado en su primer viaje, que fue por el campo de Montiel, por el cual caminaba con menos pesadumbre que la vez pasada, porque, por ser la hora de la mañana y herirles a soslayo los rayos del sol, no les fatigaban. Dijo en esto Sancho Panza a su amo:

-Mire vuestra merced, señor caballero andante, que no se le olvide lo que de la ínsula me tiene prometido; que yo la sabré gobernar, por grande que sea.

A lo cual le respondió don Quijote:

-Has de saber, amigo Sancho Panza, que fue costumbre muy usada de los caballeros andantes antiguos hacer gobernadores a sus escuderos de las ínsulas o reinos que ganaban, y yo tengo determinado de que por mí no falte tan agradecida usanza; antes, pienso aventajarme en ella: porque ellos algunas veces, y quizá las más, esperaban a que sus escuderos fuesen viejos; y, ya después de hartos de servir y de llevar malos días y peores noches, les daban algún título de conde, o, por lo mucho, de marqués, de algún valle o provincia de poco más a menos; pero, si tú vives y yo vivo, bien podría ser que antes de seis días ganase yo tal reino que tuviese otros a él adherentes, que viniesen de molde para coronarte por rey de uno dellos. Y no lo tengas a mucho, que cosas y casos acontecen a los tales caballeros, por modos tan nunca vistos ni pensados, que con facilidad te podría dar aún más de lo que te prometo.

-De esa manera -respondió Sancho Panza-, si yo fuese rey por algún milagro de los que vuestra merced dice, por lo menos, Juana Gutiérrez, mi oísló, vendría a ser reina, y mis hijos infantiles.

-Pues ¿quién lo duda? -respondió don Quijote.

-Yo lo dudo -replicó Sancho Panza-; porque tengo para mí que, aunque lloviese Dios reinos sobre la tierra, ninguno asentaría bien sobre la cabeza de Mari Gutiérrez. Sepa, señor, que no vale dos maravedís para reina; condesa le caerá mejor, y aun Dios y ayuda.

-Encomiéndalo tú a Dios, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, que Él dará lo que más le convenga, pero no apoques tu ánimo tanto, que te vengas a contentar con menos que con ser adelantado.

-No lo haré, señor mío -respondió Sancho-; y más teniendo tan principal amo en vuestra merced, que me sabrá dar todo aquello que me esté bien y yo pueda llevar.

## Capítulo VIII

*Del buen suceso que el valeroso don Quijote tuvo en la espantable y jamás imaginada aventura de los molinos de viento, con otros sucesos dignos de felice recordación*

EN ESTO, descubrieron treinta o cuarenta molinos de viento que hay en aquel campo; y, así como don Quijote los vio, dijo a su escudero:

-La ventura va guiando nuestras cosas mejor de lo que acertáramos a desear, porque ves allí, amigo Sancho Panza, donde se descubren treinta, o pocos más, desaforados gigantes, con quien pienso hacer batalla y quitarles a todos las vidas, con cuyos despojos comenzaremos a enriquecer; que ésta es buena guerra, y es gran servicio de Dios quitar tan mala simiente de sobre la faz de la tierra.

-¿Qué gigantes? -dijo Sancho Panza.

-Aquellos que allí ves -respondió su amo-de los brazos largos, que los suelen tener algunos de casi dos leguas.

-Mire vuestra merced -respondió Sancho-que aquellos que allí se parecen no son gigantes, sino molinos de viento, y lo que en ellos parecen brazos son las aspas, que, volteadas del viento, hacen andar la piedra del molino.

-Bien parece -respondió don Quijote-que no estás cursado en esto de las aventuras: ellos son gigantes; y si tienes miedo, quítate de ahí, y ponte en oración en el espacio que yo voy a entrar con ellos en fiera y desigual batalla.

Y, diciendo esto, dio de espuelas a su caballo Rocinante, sin atender a las voces que su escudero Sancho le daba, advirtiéndole que, sin duda alguna, eran molinos de viento, y no gigantes, aquellos que iba a acometer. Pero él iba tan puesto en que eran gigantes, que ni oía las voces de su escudero Sancho ni echaba de ver, aunque estaba ya bien cerca, lo que eran; antes, iba diciendo en voces altas:

-Non fuyades, cobardes y viles criaturas, que un solo caballero es el que os acomete.

Levantóse en esto un poco de viento y las grandes aspas comenzaron a moverse, lo cual visto por don Quijote, dijo:

-Pues, aunque mováis más brazos que los del gigante Briareo, me lo habéis de pagar.

Y, en diciendo esto y encomendándose de todo corazón a su señora Dulcinea, pidiéndole que en tal trance le socorriese, bien cubierto de su rodela, con la lanza

en el ristre, arremetió a todo el galope de Rocinante y embistió con el primero molino que estaba delante; y, dándole una lanzada en el aspa, la volvió el viento con tanta furia que hizo la lanza pedazos, llevándose tras sí al caballo y al caballero, que fue rodando muy maltrecho por el campo. Acudió Sancho Panza a socorrerle, a todo el correr de su asno, y cuando llegó halló que no se podía menear: tal fue el golpe que dio con él Rocinante.

-¡Válame Dios! -dijo Sancho-. ¿No le dije yo a vuestra merced que mirase bien lo que hacía, que no eran sino molinos de viento, y no lo podía ignorar sino quien llevase otros tales en la cabeza?

-Calla, amigo Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, que las cosas de la guerra, más que otras, están sujetas a continua mudanza; cuanto más, que yo pienso, y es así verdad, que aquel sabio Frestón que me robó el aposento y los libros ha vuelto estos gigantes en molinos por quitarme la gloria de su vencimiento: tal es la enemistad que me tiene; mas, al cabo al cabo, han de poder poco sus malas artes contra la bondad de mi espada.

-Dios lo haga como puede -respondió Sancho Panza.

Y, ayudándole a levantar, tornó a subir sobre Rocinante, que medio despaldado estaba. Y, hablando en la pasada aventura, siguieron el camino del Puerto Lápice, porque allí decía don Quijote que no era posible dejar de hallarse muchas y diversas aventuras, por ser lugar muy pasajero; sino que iba muy pesaroso por haberle faltado la lanza; y, diciéndoselo a su escudero, le dijo:

-Yo me acuerdo haber leído que un caballero español, llamado Diego Pérez de Vargas, habiéndosele en una batalla roto la espada, desgajó de una encina un pesado ramo o tronco, y con él hizo tales cosas aquel día, y machacó tantos moros, que le quedó por sobrenombre Machuca, y así él como sus descendientes se llamaron, desde aquel día en adelante, Vargas y Machuca. Hete dicho esto, porque de la primera encina o roble que se me depare pienso desgajar otro tronco tal y tan bueno como aquél, que me imagino y pienso hacer con él tales hazañas, que tú te tengas por bien afortunado de haber merecido venir a velas y a ser testigo de cosas que apenas podrán ser creídas.

-A la mano de Dios -dijo Sancho-; yo lo creo todo así como vuestra merced lo dice; pero enderécese un poco, que parece que va de medio lado, y debe de ser del molimiento de la caída.

-Así es la verdad -respondió don Quijote-; y si no me quejo del dolor, es porque no es dado a los caballeros andantes quejarse de herida alguna, aunque se le salgan las tripas por ella.

-Si eso es así, no tengo yo qué replicar -respondió Sancho-, pero sabe Dios si yo me holgara que vuestra merced se quejara cuando alguna cosa le doliera. De mí sé decir que me he de quejar del más pequeño dolor que tenga, si ya no se

entiende también con los escuderos de los caballeros andantes eso del no quejarse.

No se dejó de reír don Quijote de la simplicidad de su escudero; y así, le declaró que podía muy bien quejarse, como y cuando quisiese, sin gana o con ella; que hasta entonces no había leído cosa en contrario en la orden de caballería. Díjole Sancho que mirase que era hora de comer. Respondióle su amo que por entonces no le hacía menester; que comiese él cuando se le antojase. Con esta licencia, se acomodó Sancho lo mejor que pudo sobre su jumento y, sacando de las alforjas lo que en ellas había puesto, iba caminando y comiendo detrás de su amo muy de su espacio, y de cuando en cuando empinaba la bota, con tanto gusto, que le pudiera envidiar el más regalado bodegonero de Málaga. Y, en tanto que él iba de aquella manera menudeando tragos, no se le acordaba de ninguna promesa que su amo le hubiese hecho, ni tenía por ningún trabajo, sino por mucho descanso, andar buscando las aventuras, por peligrosas que fuesen.

En resolución, aquella noche la pasaron entre unos árboles, y del uno dellos desgajó don Quijote un ramo seco que casi le podía servir de lanza, y puso en él el hierro que quitó de la que se le había quebrado. Toda aquella noche no durmió don Quijote, pensando en su señora Dulcinea, por acomodarse a lo que había leído en sus libros, cuando los caballeros pasaban sin dormir muchas noches en las florestas y despoblados, entretenidos con las memorias de sus señoras. No la pasó así Sancho Panza, que, como tenía el estómago lleno, y no de agua de chicoria, de un sueño se la llevó toda; y no fueran parte para despertarle, si su amo no lo llamara, los rayos del sol, que le daban en el rostro, ni el canto de las aves, que, muchas y muy regocijadamente, la venida del nuevo día saludaban. Al levantarse dio un tiento a la bota, y hallóla algo más flaca que la noche antes; y afligiósele el corazón, por parecerle que no llevaban camino de remediar tan presto su falta. No quiso desayunarse don Quijote, porque, como está dicho, dio en sustentarse de sabrosas memorias. Tornaron a su comenzado camino del Puerto Lápice, y a obra de las tres del día le descubrieron.

-Aquí -dijo, en viéndole, don Quijote-podemos, hermano Sancho Panza, meter las manos hasta los codos en esto que llaman aventuras. Mas advierte que, aunque me veas en los mayores peligros del mundo, no has de poner mano a tu espada para defenderme, si ya no vieres que los que me ofenden es canalla y gente baja, que en tal caso bien puedes ayudarme; pero si fueren caballeros, en ninguna manera te es lícito ni concedido por las leyes de caballería que me ayudes, hasta que seas armado caballero.

-Por cierto, señor -respondió Sancho-, que vuestra merced sea muy bien obedecido en esto; y más, que yo de mí me soy pacífico y enemigo de meterme



en ruidos ni pendencias. Bien es verdad que, en lo que tocara a defender mi persona, no tendré mucha cuenta con esas leyes, pues las divinas y humanas permiten que cada uno se defienda de quien quisiere agraviarle.

-No digo yo menos -respondió don Quijote-; pero, en esto de ayudarme contra caballeros, has de tener a raya tus naturales ímpetus.

-Digo que así lo haré -respondió Sancho-, y que guardaré ese precepto tan bien como el día del domingo.

Estando en estas razones, asomaron por el camino dos frailes de la orden de San Benito, caballeros sobre dos dromedarios: que no eran más pequeñas dos mulas en que venían. Traían sus antojos de camino y sus quitasoles. Detrás dellos venía un coche, con cuatro o cinco de a caballo que le acompañaban y dos mozos de mulas a pie. Venía en el coche, como después se supo, una señora vizcaína, que iba a Sevilla, donde estaba su marido, que pasaba a las Indias con un muy honroso cargo. No venían los frailes con ella, aunque iban el mismo camino; mas, apenas los divisó don Quijote, cuando dijo a su escudero:

-O yo me engaño, o ésta ha de ser la más famosa aventura que se haya visto; porque aquellos bultos negros que allí parecen deben de ser, y son sin duda, algunos encantadores que llevan hurtada alguna princesa en aquel coche, y es menester deshacer este tuerto a todo mi poderío.

-Peor será esto que los molinos de viento -dijo Sancho-. Mire, señor, que aquéllos son frailes de San Benito, y el coche debe de ser de alguna gente pasajera. Mire que digo que mire bien lo que hace, no sea el diablo que le engañe.

-Ya te he dicho, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, que sabes poco de achaque de aventuras; lo que yo digo es verdad, y ahora lo verás.

Y, diciendo esto, se adelantó y se puso en la mitad del camino por donde los frailes venían y, en llegando tan cerca que a él le pareció que le podrían oír lo que dijese, en alta voz dijo:

-Gente endiablada y descomunal, dejad luego al punto las altas princesas que en ese coche lleváis forzadas; si no, aparejaos a recibir presta muerte, por justo castigo de vuestras malas obras.

Detuvieron los frailes las riendas, y quedaron admirados, así de la figura de don Quijote como de sus razones, a las cuales respondieron:

-Señor caballero, nosotros no somos endiablados ni descomunales, sino dos religiosos de San Benito que vamos nuestro camino, y no sabemos si en este coche vienen, o no, ningunas forzadas princesas.

-Para conmigo no hay palabras blandas, que ya yo os conozco, fementida canalla -dijo don Quijote.

Y, sin esperar más respuesta, picó a Rocinante y, la lanza baja, arremetió

contra el primero fraile, con tanta furia y desnudo que, si el fraile no se dejara caer de la mula, él le hiciera venir al suelo mal de su grado, y aun malferido, si no cayera muerto. El segundo religioso, que vio del modo que trataban a su compañero, puso piernas al castillo de su buena mula, y comenzó a correr por aquella campaña, más ligero que el mismo viento.

Sancho Panza, que vio en el suelo al fraile, apeándose ligeramente de su asno, arremetió a él y le comenzó a quitar los hábitos. Llegaron en esto dos mozos de los frailes y preguntáronle que por qué le desnudaba. Respondióles Sancho que aquello le tocaba a él legítimamente, como despojos de la batalla que su señor don Quijote había ganado. Los mozos, que no sabían de burlas, ni entendían aquello de despojos ni batallas, viendo que ya don Quijote estaba desviado de allí, hablando con las que en el coche venían, arremetieron con Sancho y dieron con él en el suelo; y, sin dejarle pelo en las barbas, le molieron a coces y le dejaron tendido en el suelo sin aliento ni sentido. Y, sin detenerse un punto, tornó a subir el fraile, todo temeroso y acobardado y sin color en el rostro; y, cuando se vio a caballo, picó tras su compañero, que un buen espacio de allí le estaba aguardando, y esperando en qué paraba aquel sobresalto; y, sin querer aguardar el fin de todo aquel comenzado suceso, siguieron su camino, haciéndose más cruces que si llevaran al diablo a las espaldas.

Don Quijote estaba, como se ha dicho, hablando con la señora del coche, diciéndole:

-La vuestra fermosura, señora mía, puede facer de su persona lo que más le viniere en talante, porque ya la soberbia de vuestros robadores yace por el suelo, derribada por este mi fuerte brazo; y, porque no penéis por saber el nombre de vuestro libertador, sabed que yo me llamo don Quijote de la Mancha, caballero andante y aventurero, y cautivo de la sin par y hermosa doña Dulcinea del Toboso; y, en pago del beneficio que de mí habéis recibido, no quiero otra cosa sino que volváis al Toboso, y que de mi parte os presentéis ante esta señora y le digáis lo que por vuestra libertad he fecho.

Todo esto que don Quijote decía escuchaba un escudero de los que el coche acompañaban, que era vizcaíno; el cual, viendo que no quería dejar pasar el coche adelante, sino que decía que luego había de dar la vuelta al Toboso, se fue para don Quijote y, asiéndole de la lanza, le dijo, en mala lengua castellana y peor vizcaína, desta manera:

-Anda, caballero que mal andes; por el Dios que crióme, que, si no dejas coche, así te matas como estás ahí vizcaíno.

Entendióle muy bien don Quijote, y con mucho sosiego le respondió:

-Si fueras caballero, como no lo eres, ya yo hubiera castigado tu sandez y atrevimiento, cautiva criatura.

A lo cual replicó el vizcaíno:

-¿Yo no caballero? Juro a Dios tan mientes como cristiano. Si lanza arrojas y espada sacas, ¡el agua cuán presto verás que al gato llevas! Vizcaíno por tierra, hidalgo por mar, hidalgo por el diablo; y mientes que mira si otra dices cosa.

-¡Ahora lo veredes, dijo Agrajes! -respondió don Quijote.

Y, arrojando la lanza en el suelo, sacó su espada y embrazó su rodela, y arremetió al vizcaíno con determinación de quitarle la vida. El vizcaíno, que así le vio venir, aunque quisiera apearse de la mula, que, por ser de las malas de alquiler, no había que fiar en ella, no pudo hacer otra cosa sino sacar su espada; pero avínole bien que se halló junto al coche, de donde pudo tomar una almohada que le sirvió de escudo, y luego se fueron el uno para el otro, como si fueran dos mortales enemigos. La demás gente quisiera ponerlos en paz, mas no pudo, porque decía el vizcaíno en sus mal trabadas razones que si no le dejaban acabar su batalla, que él mismo había de matar a su ama y a toda la gente que se lo estorbase. La señora del coche, admirada y temerosa de lo que veía, hizo al cochero que se desviase de allí algún poco, y desde lejos se puso a mirar la rigurosa contienda, en el discurso de la cual dio el vizcaíno una gran cuchillada a don Quijote encima de un hombro, por encima de la rodela, que, a dársela sin defensa, le abriera hasta la cintura. Don Quijote, que sintió la pesadumbre de aquel desaforado golpe, dio una gran voz, diciendo:

-¡Oh señora de mi alma, Dulcinea, flor de la fermosura, socorred a este vuestro caballero, que, por satisfacer a la vuestra mucha bondad, en este riguroso trance se halla!

El decir esto, y el apretar la espada, y el cubrirse bien de su rodela, y el arremeter al vizcaíno, todo fue en un tiempo, llevando determinación de aventurarlo todo a la de un golpe solo.

El vizcaíno, que así le vio venir contra él, bien entendió por su desnudo su coraje, y determinó de hacer lo mismo que don Quijote; y así, le aguardó bien cubierto de su almohada, sin poder rodear la mula a una ni a otra parte; que ya, de puro cansada y no hecha a semejantes niñerías, no podía dar un paso.

Venía, pues, como se ha dicho, don Quijote contra el cauto vizcaíno, con la espada en alto, con determinación de abrirle por medio, y el vizcaíno le aguardaba ansimesmo levantada la espada y aforrado con su almohada, y todos los circunstantes estaban temerosos y colgados de lo que había de suceder de aquellos tamaños golpes con que se amenazaban; y la señora del coche y las demás criadas suyas estaban haciendo mil votos y ofrecimientos a todas las imágenes y casas de devoción de España, porque Dios librase a su escudero y a ellas de aquel tan grande peligro en que se hallaban.

Pero está el daño de todo esto que en este punto y término deja pendiente el

autor desta historia esta batalla, disculpándose que no halló más escrito destas hazañas de don Quijote de las que deja referidas. Bien es verdad que el segundo autor desta obra no quiso creer que tan curiosa historia estuviese entregada a las leyes del olvido, ni que hubiesen sido tan poco curiosos los ingenios de la Mancha que no tuviesen en sus archivos o en sus escritorios algunos papeles que deste famoso caballero tratasen; y así, con esta imaginación, no se desesperó de hallar el fin desta apacible historia, el cual, siéndole el cielo favorable, le halló del modo que se contará en la segunda parte.

*Segunda parte del ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*

## Capítulo IX

*Donde se concluye y da fin a la estupenda batalla que el gallardo vizcaíno y el valiente manchego tuvieron*

DEJAMOS en la primera parte desta historia al valeroso vizcaíno y al famoso don Quijote con las espadas altas y desnudas, en guisa de descargar dos furibundos fendientes, tales que, si en lleno se acertaban, por lo menos se dividirían y fenderían de arriba abajo y abrirían como una granada; y que en aquel punto tan dudoso paró y quedó destroncada tan sabrosa historia, sin que nos diese noticia su autor dónde se podría hallar lo que della faltaba.

Causóme esto mucha pesadumbre, porque el gusto de haber leído tan poco se volvía en disgusto, de pensar el mal camino que se ofrecía para hallar lo mucho que, a mi parecer, faltaba de tan sabroso cuento. Parecióme cosa imposible y fuera de toda buena costumbre que a tan buen caballero le hubiese faltado algún sabio que tomara a cargo el escrebir sus nunca vistas hazañas, cosa que no faltó a ninguno de los caballeros andantes,

de los que dicen las gentes  
que van a sus aventuras,

porque cada uno dellos tenía uno o dos sabios, como de molde, que no solamente escribían sus hechos, sino que pintaban sus más mínimos pensamientos y niñerías, por más escondidas que fuesen; y no había de ser tan desdichado tan buen caballero, que le faltase a él lo que sobró a Platir y a otros semejantes. Y así, no podía inclinarme a creer que tan gallarda historia hubiese quedado manca y estropeada; y echaba la culpa a la malignidad del tiempo, devorador y consumidor de todas las cosas, el cual, o la tenía oculta o consumida.

Por otra parte, me parecía que, pues entre sus libros se habían hallado tan modernos como *Desengaño de celos y Ninfas y pastores de Henares*, que también su historia debía de ser moderna; y que, ya que no estuviese escrita, estaría en la memoria de la gente de su aldea y de las a ella circunvecinas. Esta imaginación me traía confuso y deseoso de saber, real y verdaderamente, toda la

vida y milagros de nuestro famoso español don Quijote de la Mancha, luz y espejo de la caballería manchega, y el primero que en nuestra edad y en estos tan calamitosos tiempos se puso al trabajo y ejercicio de las andantes armas, y al desfacer agravios, socorrer viudas, amparar doncellas, de aquellas que andaban con sus azotes y palafrenes, y con toda su virginidad a cuestras, de monte en monte y de valle en valle; que, si no era que algún follón, o algún villano de hacha y capellina, o algún descomunal gigante las forzaba, doncella hubo en los pasados tiempos que, al cabo de ochenta años, que en todos ellos no durmió un día debajo de tejado, y se fue tan entera a la sepultura como la madre que la había parido. Digo, pues, que, por estos y otros muchos respetos, es digno nuestro gallardo Quijote de continuas y memorables alabanzas; y aun a mí no se me deben negar, por el trabajo y diligencia que puse en buscar el fin desta agradable historia; aunque bien sé que si el cielo, el caso y la fortuna no me ayudan, el mundo quedará falto y sin el pasatiempo y gusto que bien casi dos horas podrá tener el que con atención la leyere. Pasó, pues, el hallarla en esta manera:

Estando yo un día en el Alcaná de Toledo, llegó un muchacho a vender unos cartapacios y papeles viejos a un sedero; y, como yo soy aficionado a leer, aunque sean los papeles rotos de las calles, llevado desta mi natural inclinación, tomé un cartapacio de los que el muchacho vendía, y vile con caracteres que conocí ser arábigos. Y, puesto que, aunque los conocía, no los sabía leer, anduve mirando si parecía por allí algún morisco aljamiado que los leyese; y no fue muy dificultoso hallar intérprete semejante, pues, aunque le buscara de otra mejor y más antigua lengua, le hallara. En fin, la suerte me deparó uno, que, diciéndole mi deseo y poniéndole el libro en las manos, le abrió por medio y, leyendo un poco en él, se comenzó a reír.

Preguntéle yo que de qué se reía, y respondiome que de una cosa que tenía aquel libro escrita en el margen por anotación. Díjele que me la dijese; y él, sin dejar la risa, dijo:

-Está, como he dicho, aquí en el margen escrito esto: «Esta Dulcinea del Toboso, tantas veces en esta historia referida, dicen que tuvo la mejor mano para salar puercos que otra mujer de toda la Mancha».

Cuando yo oí decir «Dulcinea del Toboso», quedé atónito y suspenso, porque luego se me representó que aquellos cartapacios contenían la historia de don Quijote. Con esta imaginación, le di priesa que leyese el principio y, haciéndolo así, volviendo de improviso el arábigo en castellano, dijo que decía: *Historia de don Quijote de la Mancha, escrita por Cide Hamete Benengeli, historiador arábigo*. Mucha discreción fue menester para disimular el contento que recibí cuando llegué a mis oídos el título del libro; y, salteándosele al sedero, compré al

muchacho todos los papeles y cartapacios por medio real; que, si él tuviera discreción y supiera lo que yo los deseaba, bien se pudiera prometer y llevar más de seis reales de la compra. Apartéme luego con el morisco por el claustro de la iglesia mayor, y roguéle me volviese aquellos cartapacios, todos los que trataban de don Quijote, en lengua castellana, sin quitarles ni añadirles nada, ofreciéndole la paga que él quisiese. Contentóse con dos arrobas de pasas y dos fanegas de trigo, y prometió de traducirlos bien y fielmente y con mucha brevedad. Pero yo, por facilitar más el negocio y por no dejar de la mano tan buen hallazgo, le truje a mi casa, donde en poco más de mes y medio la tradujo toda, del mismo modo que aquí se refiere.

Estaba en el primero cartapacio, pintada muy al natural, la batalla de don Quijote con el vizcaíno, puestos en la misma postura que la historia cuenta, levantadas las espadas, el uno cubierto de su rodela, el otro de la almohada, y la mula del vizcaíno tan al vivo, que estaba mostrando ser de alquiler a tiro de ballesta. Tenía a los pies escrito el vizcaíno un título que decía: *Don Sancho de Azpetia*, que, sin duda, debía de ser su nombre, y a los pies de Rocinante estaba otro que decía: *Don Quijote*. Estaba Rocinante maravillosamente pintado, tan largo y tendido, tan atenuado y flaco, con tanto espinazo, tan hético confirmado, que mostraba bien al descubierto con cuánta advertencia y propiedad se le había puesto el nombre de Rocinante. Junto a él estaba Sancho Panza, que tenía del cabestro a su asno, a los pies del cual estaba otro rétulo que decía: *Sancho Zancas*, y debía de ser que tenía, a lo que mostraba la pintura, la barriga grande, el talle corto y las zancas largas; y por esto se le debió de poner nombre de Panza y de Zancas, que con estos dos sobrenombres le llama algunas veces la historia. Otras algunas menudencias había que advertir, pero todas son de poca importancia y que no hacen al caso a la verdadera relación de la historia; que ninguna es mala como sea verdadera.

Si a ésta se le puede poner alguna objeción cerca de su verdad, no podrá ser otra sino haber sido su autor árabe, siendo muy propio de los de aquella nación ser mentirosos; aunque, por ser tan nuestros enemigos, antes se puede entender haber quedado falto en ella que demasiado. Y ansí me parece a mí, pues, cuando pudiera y debiera estender la pluma en las alabanzas de tan buen caballero, parece que de industria las pasa en silencio: cosa mal hecha y peor pensada, habiendo y debiendo ser los historiadores puntuales, verdaderos y no nada apasionados, y que ni el interés ni el miedo, el rancor ni la afición, no les hagan torcer del camino de la verdad, cuya madre es la historia, émula del tiempo, depósito de las acciones, testigo de lo pasado, ejemplo y aviso de lo presente, advertencia de lo por venir. En ésta sé que se hallará todo lo que se acertare a desear en la más apacible; y si algo bueno en ella faltare, para mí tengo que fue

por culpa del galgo de su autor, antes que por falta del sujeto. En fin, su segunda parte, siguiendo la traducción, comenzaba desta manera:

Puestas y levantadas en alto las cortadoras espadas de los dos valerosos y enojados combatientes, no parecía sino que estaban amenazando al cielo, a la tierra y al abismo: tal era el desnudo y continente que tenían. Y el primero que fue a descargar el golpe fue el colérico vizcaíno, el cual fue dado con tanta fuerza y tanta furia que, a no volvérselo la espada en el camino, aquel solo golpe fuera bastante para dar fin a su rigurosa contienda y a todas las aventuras de nuestro caballero; mas la buena suerte, que para mayores cosas le tenía guardado, torció la espada de su contrario, de modo que, aunque le acertó en el hombro izquierdo, no le hizo otro daño que desarmarle todo aquel lado, llevándole de camino gran parte de la celada, con la mitad de la oreja; que todo ello con espantosa ruina vino al suelo, dejándole muy maltrecho.

¡Válame Dios, y quién será aquel que buenamente pueda contar ahora la rabia que entró en el corazón de nuestro manchego, viéndose parar de aquella manera! No se diga más, sino que fue de manera que se alzó de nuevo en los estribos y, apretando más la espada en las dos manos, con tal furia descargó sobre el vizcaíno, acertándole de lleno sobre la almohada y sobre la cabeza, que, sin ser parte tan buena defensa, como si cayera sobre él una montaña, comenzó a echar sangre por las narices, y por la boca y por los oídos, y a dar muestras de caer de la mula abajo, de donde cayera, sin duda, si no se abrazara con el cuello; pero, con todo eso, sacó los pies de los estribos y luego soltó los brazos; y la mula, espantada del terrible golpe, dio a correr por el campo, y a pocos corcovos dio con su dueño en tierra.

Estábaselo con mucho sosiego mirando don Quijote y, como lo vio caer, saltó de su caballo y con mucha ligereza se llegó a él y, poniéndole la punta de la espada en los ojos, le dijo que se rindiese; si no, que le cortaría la cabeza. Estaba el vizcaíno tan turbado que no podía responder palabra, y él lo pasara mal, según estaba ciego don Quijote, si las señoras del coche, que hasta entonces con gran desmayo habían mirado la pendencia, no fueran adonde estaba y le pidieran con mucho encarecimiento les hiciese tan gran merced y favor de perdonar la vida a aquel su escudero. A lo cual don Quijote respondió, con mucho entono y gravedad:

-Por cierto, hermosas señoras, yo soy muy contento de hacer lo que me pedís; mas ha de ser con una condición y concierto, y es que este caballero me ha de prometer de ir al lugar del Toboso y presentarse de mi parte ante la sin par doña Dulcinea, para que ella haga dél lo que más fuere de su voluntad.

La temerosa y desconsolada señora, sin entrar en cuenta de lo que don Quijote pedía, y sin preguntar quién Dulcinea fuese, le prometió que el escudero haría



todo aquello que de su parte le fuese mandado.

-Pues en fe de esa palabra, yo no le haré más daño, puesto que me lo tenía bien merecido.

## Capítulo X

*De lo que más le avino a don Quijote con el vizcaíno, y del peligro en que se vio con una turba de yangüeses*

YA EN ESTE tiempo se había levantado Sancho Panza, algo maltratado de los mozos de los frailes, y había estado atento a la batalla de su señor don Quijote, y rogaba a Dios en su corazón fuese servido de darle vitoria y que en ella ganase alguna ínsula de donde le hiciese gobernador, como se lo había prometido. Viendo, pues, ya acabada la pendencia, y que su amo volvía a subir sobre Rocinante, llegó a tenerle el estribo; y antes que subiese se hincó de rodillas delante dél, y, asiéndole de la mano, se la besó y le dijo:

-Sea vuestra merced servido, señor don Quijote mío, de darme el gobierno de la ínsula que en esta rigurosa pendencia se ha ganado; que, por grande que sea, yo me siento con fuerzas de saberla gobernar tal y tan bien como otro que haya gobernado ínsulas en el mundo.

A lo cual respondió don Quijote:

-Advertid, hermano Sancho, que esta aventura y las a ésta semejantes no son aventuras de ínsulas, sino de encrucijadas, en las cuales no se gana otra cosa que sacar rota la cabeza o una oreja menos. Tened paciencia, que aventuras se ofrecerán donde no solamente os pueda hacer gobernador, sino más adelante.

Agradecióselo mucho Sancho, y, besándole otra vez la mano y la falda de la loriga, le ayudó a subir sobre Rocinante; y él subió sobre su asno y comenzó a seguir a su señor, que, a paso tirado, sin despedirse ni hablar más con las del coche, se entró por un bosque que allí junto estaba. Seguía Sancho a todo el trote de su jumento, pero caminaba tanto Rocinante que, viéndose quedar atrás, le fue forzoso dar voces a su amo que se aguardase. Hízolo así don Quijote, teniendo las riendas a Rocinante hasta que llegase su cansado escudero, el cual, en llegando, le dijo:

-Paréceme, señor, que sería acertado irnos a retraer a alguna iglesia; que, según quedó maltrecho aquel con quien os combatistes, no será mucho que den noticia del caso a la Santa Hermandad y nos prendan; y a fe que si lo hacen, que primero que salgamos de la cárcel que nos ha de sudar el hopo.

-Calla -dijo don Quijote-. Y ¿dónde has visto tú, o leído jamás, que caballero andante haya sido puesto ante la justicia, por más homicidios que hubiese cometido?

-Yo no sé nada de omecillos -respondió Sancho-, ni en mi vida le caté a ninguno; sólo sé que la Santa Hermandad tiene que ver con los que pelean en el campo, y en esotro no me entremeto.

-Pues no tengas pena, amigo -respondió don Quijote-, que yo te sacaré de las manos de los caldeos, cuanto más de las de la Hermandad. Pero dime, por tu vida: ¿has visto más valeroso caballero que yo en todo lo descubierto de la tierra? ¿Has leído en historias otro que tenga ni haya tenido más brío en acometer, más aliento en el perseverar, más destreza en el herir, ni más maña en el derribar?

-La verdad sea -respondió Sancho-que yo no he leído ninguna historia jamás, porque ni sé leer ni escribir; mas lo que osaré apostar es que más atrevido amo que vuestra merced yo no le he servido en todos los días de mi vida, y quiera Dios que estos atrevimientos no se paguen donde tengo dicho. Lo que le ruego a vuestra merced es que se cure, que le va mucha sangre de esa oreja; que aquí traigo hilas y un poco de ungüento blanco en las alforjas.

-Todo eso fuera bien escusado -respondió don Quijote-si a mí se me acordara de hacer una redoma del bálsamo de Fierabrás, que con sola una gota se ahorraran tiempo y medicinas.

-¿Qué redoma y qué bálsamo es ése? -dijo Sancho Panza.

-Es un bálsamo -respondió don Quijote-de quien tengo la receta en la memoria, con el cual no hay que tener temor a la muerte, ni hay pensar morir de ferida alguna. Y así, cuando yo le haga y te le dé, no tienes más que hacer sino que, cuando vieres que en alguna batalla me han partido por medio del cuerpo (como muchas veces suele acontecer), bonitamente la parte del cuerpo que hubiere caído en el suelo, y con mucha sotileza, antes que la sangre se yele, la pondrás sobre la otra mitad que quedare en la silla, advirtiéndole de encajallo igualmente y al justo; luego me darás a beber solos dos tragos del bálsamo que he dicho, y verásme quedar más sano que una manzana.

-Si eso hay -dijo Panza-, yo renuncio desde aquí el gobierno de la prometida ínsula, y no quiero otra cosa, en pago de mis muchos y buenos servicios, sino que vuestra merced me dé la receta de ese estremado licor; que para mí tengo que valdrá la onza adondequiera más de a dos reales, y no he menester yo más para pasar esta vida honrada y descansadamente. Pero es de saber agora si tiene mucha costa el hacelle.

-Con menos de tres reales se pueden hacer tres azumbres -respondió don Quijote.

-¡Pecador de mí! -replicó Sancho-. Pues ¿a qué aguarda vuestra merced a hacelle y a enseñármelo?

-Calla, amigo -respondió don Quijote-, que mayores secretos pienso enseñarte

y mayores mercedes hacerte; y, por agora, curémonos, que la oreja me duele más de lo que yo quisiera.

Sacó Sancho de las alforjas hilas y ungüento. Mas, cuando don Quijote llegó a ver rota su celada, pensó perder el juicio, y, puesta la mano en la espada y alzando los ojos al cielo, dijo:

-Yo hago juramento al Criador de todas las cosas y a los santos cuatro Evangelios, donde más largamente están escritos, de hacer la vida que hizo el grande marqués de Mantua cuando juró de vengar la muerte de su sobrino Valdovinos, que fue de no comer pan a manteles, ni con su mujer folgar, y otras cosas que, aunque dellas no me acuerdo, las doy aquí por expresadas, hasta tomar entera venganza del que tal desaguizado me fizo.

Oyendo esto Sancho, le dijo:

-Advierta vuestra merced, señor don Quijote, que si el caballero cumplió lo que se le dejó ordenado de irse a presentar ante mi señora Dulcinea del Toboso, ya habrá cumplido con lo que debía, y no merece otra pena si no comete nuevo delito.

-Has hablado y apuntado muy bien -respondió don Quijote-; y así, anulo el juramento en cuanto lo que toca a tomar dél nueva venganza; pero hágole y confírmole de nuevo de hacer la vida que he dicho, hasta tanto que quite por fuerza otra celada tal y tan buena como ésta a algún caballero. Y no pienses, Sancho, que así a humo de pajas hago esto, que bien tengo a quien imitar en ello; que esto mesmo pasó, al pie de la letra, sobre el yelmo de Mambrino, que tan caro le costó a Sacripante.

-Que dé al diablo vuestra merced tales juramentos, señor mío -replicó Sancho-; que son muy en daño de la salud y muy en perjuicio de la conciencia. Si no, dígame ahora: si acaso en muchos días no topamos hombre armado con celada, ¿qué hemos de hacer? ¿Hase de cumplir el juramento, a despecho de tantos inconvenientes e incomodidades, como será el dormir vestido, y el no dormir en poblado, y otras mil penitencias que contenía el juramento de aquel loco viejo del marqués de Mantua, que vuestra merced quiere revalidar ahora? Mire vuestra merced bien, que por todos estos caminos no andan hombres armados, sino arrieros y carreteros, que no sólo no traen celadas, pero quizá no las han oído nombrar en todos los días de su vida.

-Engañaste en eso -dijo don Quijote-, porque no habremos estado dos horas por estas encrucijadas, cuando veamos más armados que los que vinieron sobre Albraca a la conquista de Angélica la Bella.

-Alto, pues; sea así -dijo Sancho-, y a Dios prazga que nos suceda bien, y que se llegue ya el tiempo de ganar esta ínsula que tan cara me cuesta, y muérame yo luego.

-Ya te he dicho, Sancho, que no te dé eso cuidado alguno; que, cuando faltare ínsula, ahí está el reino de Dinamarca o el de Soliadisa, que te vendrán como anillo al dedo; y más, que, por ser en tierra firme, te debes más alegrar. Pero dejemos esto para su tiempo, y mira si traes algo en esas alforjas que comamos, porque vamos luego en busca de algún castillo donde alojemos esta noche y hagamos el bálsamo que te he dicho; porque yo te voto a Dios que me va doliendo mucho la oreja.

-Aquí trayo una cebolla, y un poco de queso y no sé cuántos mendrugos de pan -dijo Sancho-, pero no son manjares que pertenecen a tan valiente caballero como vuestra merced.

-¡Qué mal lo entiendes! -respondió don Quijote-. Hágote saber, Sancho, que es honra de los caballeros andantes no comer en un mes; y, ya que coman, sea de aquello que hallaren más a mano; y esto se te hiciera cierto si hubieras leído tantas historias como yo; que, aunque han sido muchas, en todas ellas no he hallado hecha relación de que los caballeros andantes comiesen, si no era acaso y en algunos suntuosos banquetes que les hacían, y los demás días se los pasaban en flores. Y, aunque se deja entender que no podían pasar sin comer y sin hacer todos los otros menesteres naturales, porque, en efeto, eran hombres como nosotros, hase de entender también que, andando lo más del tiempo de su vida por las florestas y despoblados, y sin cocinero, que su más ordinaria comida sería de viandas rústicas, tales como las que tú ahora me ofreces. Así que, Sancho amigo, no te congoje lo que a mí me da gusto. Ni querrás tú hacer mundo nuevo, ni sacar la caballería andante de sus quicios.

-Perdóneme vuestra merced -dijo Sancho-; que, como yo no sé leer ni escribir, como otra vez he dicho, no sé ni he caído en las reglas de la profesión caballeresca; y, de aquí adelante, yo proveeré las alforjas de todo género de fruta seca para vuestra merced, que es caballero, y para mí las proveeré, pues no lo soy, de otras cosas volátiles y de más sustancia.

-No digo yo, Sancho -replicó don Quijote-, que sea forzoso a los caballeros andantes no comer otra cosa sino esas frutas que dices, sino que su más ordinario sustento debía de ser dellas, y de algunas yerbas que hallaban por los campos, que ellos conocían y yo también conozco.

-Virtud es -respondió Sancho-conocer esas yerbas; que, según yo me voy imaginando, algún día será menester usar de ese conocimiento.

Y, sacando, en esto, lo que dijo que traía, comieron los dos en buena paz y compañía. Pero, deseosos de buscar donde alojar aquella noche, acabaron con mucha brevedad su pobre y seca comida. Subieron luego a caballo, y diéronse prisa por llegar a poblado antes que anocheciese; pero faltóles el sol, y la esperanza de alcanzar lo que deseaban, junto a unas chozas de unos cabreros, y

así, determinaron de pasarla allí; que cuanto fue de pesadumbre para Sancho no llegar a poblado, fue de contento para su amo dormirla al cielo descubierto, por parecerle que cada vez que esto le sucedía era hacer un acto posesivo que facilitaba la prueba de su caballería.

## Capítulo XI

### *De lo que le sucedió a don Quijote con unos cabreros*

FUE RECOGIDO de los cabreros con buen ánimo; y, habiendo Sancho, lo mejor que pudo, acomodado a Rocinante y a su jumento, se fue tras el olor que despedían de sí ciertos tasajos de cabra que hirviendo al fuego en un caldero estaban; y, aunque él quisiera en aquel mismo punto ver si estaban en sazón de trasladarlos del caldero al estómago, lo dejó de hacer, porque los cabreros los quitaron del fuego, y, tendiendo por el suelo unas pieles de ovejas, aderezaron con mucha priesa su rústica mesa y convidaron a los dos, con muestras de muy buena voluntad, con lo que tenían. Sentáronse a la redonda de las pieles seis dellos, que eran los que en la majada había, habiendo primero con groseras ceremonias rogado a don Quijote que se sentase sobre un dornajo que vuelto del revés le pusieron. Sentóse don Quijote, y quedábase Sancho en pie para servirle la copa, que era hecha de cuerno. Viéndole en pie su amo, le dijo: -Porque veas, Sancho, el bien que en sí encierra la andante caballería, y cuán a pique están los que en cualquiera ministerio della se ejercitan de venir brevemente a ser honrados y estimados del mundo, quiero que aquí a mi lado y en compañía desta buena gente te sientes, y que seas una mesma cosa conmigo, que soy tu amo y natural señor; que comas en mi plato y bebas por donde yo bebiere; porque de la caballería andante se puede decir lo mismo que del amor se dice: que todas las cosas iguala.

-¡Gran merced! -dijo Sancho-; pero sé decir a vuestra merced que, como yo tuviese bien de comer, tan bien y mejor me lo comería en pie y a mis solas como sentado a par de un emperador. Y aun, si va a decir verdad, mucho mejor me sabe lo que como en mi rincón, sin melindres ni respetos, aunque sea pan y cebolla, que los gallipavos de otras mesas donde me sea forzoso mascar despacio, beber poco, limpiarme a menudo, no estornudar ni toser si me viene gana, ni hacer otras cosas que la soledad y la libertad traen consigo. Ansí que, señor mío, estas honras que vuestra merced quiere darme por ser ministro y adherente de la caballería andante, como lo soy siendo escudero de vuestra merced, conviértalas en otras cosas que me sean de más cómodo y provecho; que éstas, aunque las doy por bien recibidas, las renuncio para desde aquí al fin del mundo.

-Con todo eso, te has de sentar; porque a quien se humilla, Dios le ensalza.

Y, asiéndole por el brazo, le forzó a que junto dél se sentase.

No entendían los cabreros aquella jerigonza de escuderos y de caballeros andantes, y no hacían otra cosa que comer y callar, y mirar a sus huéspedes, que, con mucho donaire y gana, embaulaban tasajo como el puño. Acabado el servicio de carne, tendieron sobre las zaleas gran cantidad de bellotas avellanadas, y juntamente pusieron un medio queso, más duro que si fuera hecho de argamasa. No estaba, en esto, ocioso el cuerno, porque andaba a la redonda tan a menudo (ya lleno, ya vacío, como arcaduz de noria), que con facilidad vació un zaque de dos que estaban de manifiesto. Después que don Quijote hubo bien satisfecho su estómago, tomó un puño de bellotas en la mano y, mirándolas atentamente, soltó la voz a semejantes razones: -Dichosa edad y siglos dichosos aquéllos a quien los antiguos pusieron nombre de dorados, y no porque en ellos el oro, que en esta nuestra edad de hierro tanto se estima, se alcanzase en aquella venturosa sin fatiga alguna, sino porque entonces los que en ella vivían ignoraban estas dos palabras de *tuyo* y *mío*. Eran en aquella santa edad todas las cosas comunes; a nadie le era necesario, para alcanzar su ordinario sustento, tomar otro trabajo que alzar la mano y alcanzarle de las robustas encinas, que liberalmente les estaban convidando con su dulce y sazonado fruto. Las claras fuentes y corrientes ríos, en magnífica abundancia, sabrosas y transparentes aguas les ofrecían. En las quiebras de las peñas y en lo hueco de los árboles formaban su república las solícitas y discretas abejas, ofreciendo a cualquiera mano, sin interés alguno, la fértil cosecha de su dulcísimo trabajo. Los valientes alcornoques despedían de sí, sin otro artificio que el de su cortesía, sus anchas y livianas cortezas, con que se comenzaron a cubrir las casas, sobre rústicas estacas sustentadas, no más que para defensa de las inclemencias del cielo. Todo era paz entonces, todo amistad, todo concordia; aún no se había atrevido la pesada reja del corvo arado a abrir ni visitar las entrañas piadosas de nuestra primera madre, que ella, sin ser forzada, ofrecía, por todas las partes de su fértil y espacioso seno, lo que pudiese hartar, sustentar y deleitar a los hijos que entonces la poseían. Entonces sí que andaban las simples y hermosas zagalejas de valle en valle y de otero en otero, en trenza y en cabello, sin más vestidos de aquellos que eran menester para cubrir honestamente lo que la honestidad quiere y ha querido siempre que se cubra; y no eran sus adornos de los que ahora se usan, a quien la púrpura de Tiro y la por tantos modos martirizada seda encarecen, sino de algunas hojas verdes de lampazos y yedra entretejidas, con lo que quizá iban tan pomposas y compuestas como van agora nuestras cortesanas con las raras y peregrinas invenciones que la curiosidad ociosa les ha mostrado. Entonces se decoraban los concetos amorosos del alma simple y sencillamente, del mismo modo y manera que ella los concebía, sin buscar artificioso rodeo de



palabras para encarecerlos. No había la fraude, el engaño ni la malicia mezclándose con la verdad y llaneza. La justicia se estaba en sus propios términos, sin que la osasen turbar ni ofender los del favor y los del interese, que tanto ahora la menoscaban, turban y persiguen. La ley del encaje aún no se había sentado en el entendimiento del juez, porque entonces no había qué juzgar, ni quién fuese juzgado. Las doncellas y la honestidad andaban, como tengo dicho, por dondequiera, sola y señora, sin temor que la ajena desenvoltura y lascivo intento le menoscabasen, y su perdición nacía de su gusto y propia voluntad. Y agora, en estos nuestros detestables siglos, no está segura ninguna, aunque la oculte y cierre otro nuevo laberinto como el de Creta; porque allí, por los resquicios o por el aire, con el celo de la maldita solicitud, se les entra la amorosa pestilencia y les hace dar con todo su recogimiento al traste. Para cuya seguridad, andando más los tiempos y creciendo más la malicia, se instituyó la orden de los caballeros andantes, para defender las doncellas, amparar las viudas y socorrer a los huérfanos y a los menesterosos. Desta orden soy yo, hermanos cabreros, a quien agradezco el gasaje y buen acogimiento que hacéis a mí y a mi escudero; que, aunque por ley natural están todos los que viven obligados a favorecer a los caballeros andantes, todavía, por saber que sin saber vosotros esta obligación me acogistes y regalastes, es razón que, con la voluntad a mí posible, os agradezca la vuestra.

Toda esta larga arenga -que se pudiera muy bien escusar-dijo nuestro caballero porque las bellotas que le dieron le trujeron a la memoria la edad dorada y antojósele hacer aquel inútil razonamiento a los cabreros, que, sin respondelle palabra, embobados y suspensos, le estuvieron escuchando. Sancho, asimesmo, callaba y comía bellotas, y visitaba muy a menudo el segundo zaque, que, porque se enfriase el vino, le tenían colgado de un alcornoque.

Más tardó en hablar don Quijote que en acabarse la cena; al fin de la cual, uno de los cabreros dijo: -Para que con más veras pueda vuestra merced decir, señor caballero andante, que le agasajamos con prompta y buena voluntad, queremos darle solaz y contento con hacer que cante un compañero nuestro que no tardará mucho en estar aquí; el cual es un zagal muy entendido y muy enamorado, y que, sobre todo, sabe leer y escribir y es músico de un rabel, que no hay más que desear.

Apenas había el cabrero acabado de decir esto, cuando llegó a sus oídos el son del rabel, y de allí a poco llegó el que le tañía, que era un mozo de hasta veinte y dos años, de muy buena gracia. Preguntáronle sus compañeros si había cenado, y, respondiendo que sí, el que había hecho los ofrecimientos le dijo: -De esa manera, Antonio, bien podrás hacernos placer de cantar un poco, porque vea este señor huésped que tenemos quien; también por los montes y selvas hay quien

sepa de música. Hémosle dicho tus buenas habilidades, y deseamos que las muestres y nos saques verdaderos; y así, te ruego por tu vida que te sientes y cantes el romance de tus amores que te compuso el beneficiado tu tío, que en el pueblo ha parecido muy bien.

-Que me place -respondió el mozo.

Y, sin hacerse más de rogar, se sentó en el tronco de una desmochada encina, y, templando su rabel, de allí a poco, con muy buena gracia, comenzó a cantar, diciendo desta manera: ANTONIO

-Yo sé, Olalla, que me adoras,  
puesto que no me lo has dicho  
ni aun con los ojos siquiera,  
mudas lenguas de amoríos.

Porque sé que eres sabida, 5  
en que me quieres me afirmo;  
que nunca fue desdichado  
amor que fue conocido.

Bien es verdad que tal vez,  
Olalla, me has dado indicio 10

que tienes de bronce el alma  
y el blanco pecho de risco.

Mas allá entre tus reproches  
y honestísimos desvíos,  
tal vez la esperanza muestra 15  
la orilla de su vestido.

Abalánzase al señuelo  
mi fe, que nunca ha podido,  
ni menguar por no llamado,  
ni crecer por escogido. 20

Si el amor es cortesía,  
de la que tienes colijo  
que el fin de mis esperanzas  
ha de ser cual imagino.

Y si son servicios parte 25  
de hacer un pecho benigno,  
algunos de los que he hecho  
fortalecen mi partido.

Porque si has mirado en ello,  
más de una vez habrás visto 30  
que me he vestido en los lunes  
lo que me honraba el domingo.

Como el amor y la gala  
andan un mesmo camino,  
en todo tiempo a tus ojos 35  
quise mostrarme polido.

Dejo el bailar por tu causa,  
ni las músicas te pinto  
que has escuchado a deshoras  
y al canto del gallo primo. 40

No cuento las alabanzas  
que de tu belleza he dicho;  
que, aunque verdaderas, hacen  
ser yo de algunas malquisto.

Teresa del Berrocal, 45  
yo alabándote, me dijo:  
«Tal piensa que adora a un ángel,  
y viene a adorar a un jimio;

merced a los muchos dijes  
y a los cabellos postizos, 50  
y a hipócritas hermosuras,  
que engañan al Amor mismo».

Desmentíla y enojóse;  
volvió por ella su primo:  
desafióme, y ya sabes 55

lo que yo hice y él hizo.

No te quiero yo a montón,  
ni te pretendo y te sirvo  
por lo de barraganía;  
que más bueno es mi designio. 60

Coyundas tiene la Iglesia  
que son lazadas de sirgo;

pon tú el cuello en la gamella;  
verás como pongo el mío.

Donde no, desde aquí juro, 65  
por el santo más bendito,  
de no salir destas sierras  
sino para capuchino.

Con esto dio el cabrero fin a su canto; y, aunque don Quijote le rogó que algo más cantase, no lo consintió Sancho Panza, porque estaba más para dormir que para oír canciones. Y así, dijo a su amo: -Bien puede vuestra merced acomodarse desde luego adonde ha de posar esta noche, que el trabajo que estos buenos hombres tienen todo el día no permite que pasen las noches cantando.

-Ya te entiendo, Sancho -le respondió don Quijote-; que bien se me trasluce que las visitas del zaque piden más recompensa de sueño que de música.

-A todos nos sabe bien, bendito sea Dios -respondió Sancho.

-No lo niego -replicó don Quijote-, pero acomódate tú donde quisieres, que los de mi profesión mejor parecen velando que durmiendo. Pero, con todo esto, sería bien, Sancho, que me vuelvas a curar esta oreja, que me va doliendo más de lo que es menester.

Hizo Sancho lo que se le mandaba; y, viendo uno de los cabreros la herida, le dijo que no tuviese pena, que él pondría remedio con que fácilmente se sanase. Y, tomando algunas hojas de romero, de mucho que por allí había, las mascó y las mezcló con un poco de sal, y, aplicándoselas a la oreja, se la vendó muy bien, asegurándole que no había menester otra medicina; y así fue la verdad.

## Capítulo XII

*De lo que contó un cabrero a los que estaban con don Quijote*

ESTANDO en esto, llegó otro mozo de los que les traían del aldea el bastimento, y dijo: -¿Sabéis lo que pasa en el lugar, compañeros?

-¿Cómo lo podemos saber? -respondió uno dellos.

-Pues sabed -prosiguió el mozo-que murió esta mañana aquel famoso pastor estudiante llamado Grisóstomo, y se murmura que ha muerto de amores de aquella endiablada moza de Marcela, la hija de Guillermo el rico, aquélla que se anda en hábito de pastora por esos andurriales.

-Por Marcela dirás -dijo uno.

-Por ésa digo -respondió el cabrero-. Y es lo bueno, que mandó en su testamento que le enterrasen en el campo, como si fuera moro, y que sea al pie de la peña donde está la fuente del alcornoque; porque, según es fama, y él dicen que lo dijo, aquel lugar es adonde él la vio la vez primera. Y también mandó otras cosas, tales, que los abades del pueblo dicen que no se han de cumplir, ni es bien que se cumplan, porque parecen de gentiles. A todo lo cual responde aquel gran su amigo Ambrosio, el estudiante, que también se vistió de pastor con él, que se ha de cumplir todo, sin faltar nada, como lo dejó mandado Grisóstomo, y sobre esto anda el pueblo alborotado; mas, a lo que se dice, en fin se hará lo que Ambrosio y todos los pastores sus amigos quieren; y mañana le vienen a enterrar con gran pompa adonde tengo dicho. Y tengo para mí que ha de ser cosa muy de ver; a lo menos, yo no dejaré de ir a verla, si supiese no volver mañana al lugar.

-Todos haremos lo mismo -respondieron los cabreros-; y echaremos suertes a quién ha de quedar a guardar las cabras de todos.

-Bien dices, Pedro -dijo uno-; aunque no será menester usar de esa diligencia, que yo me quedaré por todos. Y no lo atribuyas a virtud y a poca curiosidad mía, sino a que no me deja andar el garrancho que el otro día me pasó este pie.

-Con todo eso, te lo agradecemos -respondió Pedro.

Y don Quijote rogó a Pedro le dijese qué muerto era aquél y qué pastora aquélla; a lo cual Pedro respondió que lo que sabía era que el muerto era un hijodalgo rico, vecino de un lugar que estaba en aquellas sierras, el cual había sido estudiante muchos años en Salamanca, al cabo de los cuales había vuelto a su lugar, con opinión de muy sabio y muy leído.

-«Principalmente, decían que sabía la ciencia de las estrellas, y de lo que pasan, allá en el cielo, el sol y la luna; porque puntualmente nos decía el cris del sol y de la luna.»

-*Eclipse* se llama, amigo, que no *cris*, el escurecerse esos dos luminares mayores -dijo don Quijote.

Mas Pedro, no reparando en niñerías, prosiguió su cuento diciendo: -«Asimesmo adivinaba cuándo había de ser el año abundante o estil.»

-*Estéril* queréis decir, amigo -dijo don Quijote.

-*Estéril* o *estil* -respondió Pedro-, todo se sale allá. «Y digo que con esto que decía se hicieron su padre y sus amigos, que le daban crédito, muy ricos, porque hacían lo que él les aconsejaba, diciéndoles: “Sembrad este año cebada, no trigo; en éste podéis sembrar garbanzos y no cebada; el que viene será de guilla de aceite; los tres siguientes no se cogerá gota”.»

-Esa ciencia se llama astrología -dijo don Quijote.

-No sé yo cómo se llama -replicó Pedro-, mas sé que todo esto sabía y aún más. «Finalmente, no pasaron muchos meses, después que vino de Salamanca, cuando un día remaneció vestido de pastor, con su cayado y pellico, habiéndose quitado los hábitos largos que como escolar traía; y juntamente se vistió con él de pastor otro su grande amigo, llamado Ambrosio, que había sido su compañero en los estudios. Olvidábaseme de decir como Grisóstomo, el difunto, fue grande hombre de componer coplas; tanto, que él hacía los villancicos para la noche del Nacimiento del Señor, y los autos para el día de Dios, que los representaban los mozos de nuestro pueblo, y todos decían que eran por el cabo. Cuando los del lugar vieron tan de improviso vestidos de pastores a los dos escolares, quedaron admirados, y no podían adivinar la causa que les había movido a hacer aquella tan estraña mudanza. Ya en este tiempo era muerto el padre de nuestro Grisóstomo, y él quedó heredado en mucha cantidad de hacienda, así en muebles como en raíces, y en no pequeña cantidad de ganado, mayor y menor, y en gran cantidad de dineros; de todo lo cual quedó el mozo señor desoluto, y en verdad que todo lo merecía, que era muy buen compañero y caritativo y amigo de los buenos, y tenía una cara como una bendición. Después se vino a entender que el haberse mudado de traje no había sido por otra cosa que por andarse por estos despoblados en pos de aquella pastora Marcela que nuestro zagal nombró denantes, de la cual se había enamorado el pobre difunto de Grisóstomo.» Y quiéroos decir agora, porque es bien que lo sepáis, quién es esta rapaza; quizá, y aun sin quizá, no habréis oído semejante cosa en todos los días de vuestra vida, aunque viváis más años que sarna.

-Decid *Sarra* -replicó don Quijote, no pudiendo sufrir el trocar de los vocablos del cabrero.

-Harto vive la sarna -respondió Pedro-; y si es, señor, que me habéis de andar zaheriendo a cada paso los vocablos, no acabaremos en un año.

-Perdonad, amigo -dijo don Quijote-; que por haber tanta diferencia de *sarna* a *Sarra* os lo dije; pero vos respondistes muy bien, porque vive más *sarna* que *Sarra*; y proseguí vuestra historia, que no os replicaré más en nada.

-«Digo, pues, señor mío de mi alma -dijo el cabrero-, que en nuestra aldea hubo un labrador aún más rico que el padre de Grisóstomo, el cual se llamaba Guillermo, y al cual dio Dios, amén de las muchas y grandes riquezas, una hija, de cuyo parto murió su madre, que fue la más honrada mujer que hubo en todos estos contornos. No parece sino que ahora la veo, con aquella cara que del un cabo tenía el sol y del otro la luna; y, sobre todo, hacendosa y amiga de los pobres, por lo que creo que debe de estar su ánima a la hora de ahora gozando de Dios en el otro mundo. De pesar de la muerte de tan buena mujer murió su marido Guillermo, dejando a su hija Marcela, muchacha y rica, en poder de un tío suyo sacerdote y beneficiado en nuestro lugar. Creció la niña con tanta belleza, que nos hacía acordar de la de su madre, que la tuvo muy grande; y, con todo esto, se juzgaba que le había de pasar la de la hija. Y así fue, que, cuando llegó a edad de catorce a quince años, nadie la miraba que no bendecía a Dios, que tan hermosa la había criado, y los más quedaban enamorados y perdidos por ella. Guardábala su tío con mucho recato y con mucho encerramiento; pero, con todo esto, la fama de su mucha hermosura se extendió de manera que, así por ella como por sus muchas riquezas, no solamente de los de nuestro pueblo, sino de los de muchas leguas a la redonda, y de los mejores dellos, era rogado, solicitado e importunado su tío se la diese por mujer. Mas él, que a las derechas es buen cristiano, aunque quisiera casarla luego, así como la vía de edad, no quiso hacerlo sin su consentimiento, sin tener ojo a la ganancia y granjería que le ofrecía el tener la hacienda de la moza, dilatando su casamiento. Y a fe que se dijo esto en más de un corrillo en el pueblo, en alabanza del buen sacerdote.» Que quiero que sepa, señor andante, que en estos lugares cortos de todo se trata y de todo se murmura; y tened para vos, como yo tengo para mí, que debía de ser demasiadamente bueno el clérigo que obliga a sus feligreses a que digan bien dél, especialmente en las aldeas.

-Así es la verdad -dijo don Quijote-, y proseguí adelante, que el cuento es muy bueno, y vos, buen Pedro, le contáis con muy buena gracia.

-La del Señor no me falte, que es la que hace al caso. «Y en lo demás sabréis que, aunque el tío proponía a la sobrina y le decía las calidades de cada uno en particular, de los muchos que por mujer la pedían, rogándole que se casase y escogiese a su gusto, jamás ella respondió otra cosa sino que por entonces no quería casarse, y que, por ser tan muchacha, no se sentía hábil para poder llevar

la carga del matrimonio. Con estas que daba, al parecer justas excusas, dejaba el tío de importunarla, y esperaba a que entrase algo más en edad y ella supiese escoger compañía a su gusto. Porque decía él, y decía muy bien, que no habían de dar los padres a sus hijos estado contra su voluntad. Pero hételo aquí, cuando no me cato, que remanece un día la melindrosa Marcela hecha pastora; y, sin ser parte su tío ni todos los del pueblo, que se lo desaconsejaban, dio en irse al campo con las demás zagalas del lugar, y dio en guardar su mismo ganado. Y, así como ella salió en público y su hermosura se vio al descubierto, no os sabré buenamente decir cuántos ricos mancebos, hidalgos y labradores han tomado el traje de Grisóstomo y la andan requebrando por esos campos. Uno de los cuales, como ya está dicho, fue nuestro difunto, del cual decían que la dejaba de querer, y la adoraba. Y no se piense que porque Marcela se puso en aquella libertad y vida tan suelta y de tan poco o de ningún recogimiento, que por eso ha dado indicio, ni por semejas, que venga en menoscabo de su honestidad y recato; antes es tanta y tal la vigilancia con que mira por su honra, que de cuantos la sirven y solicitan ninguno se ha alabado, ni con verdad se podrá alabar, que le haya dado alguna pequeña esperanza de alcanzar su deseo. Que, puesto que no huye ni se esquivo de la compañía y conversación de los pastores, y los trata cortés y amigablemente, en llegando a descubrirle su intención cualquiera dellos, aunque sea tan justa y santa como la del matrimonio, los arroja de sí como con un trabuco. Y con esta manera de condición hace más daño en esta tierra que si por ella entrara la pestilencia; porque su afabilidad y hermosura atrae los corazones de los que la tratan a servirla y a amarla, pero su desdén y desengaño los conduce a términos de desesperarse; y así, no saben qué decirle, sino llamarla a voces cruel y desagradecida, con otros títulos a éste semejantes, que bien la calidad de su condición manifiestan. Y si aquí estuviédeses, señor, algún día, veríades resonar estas sierras y estos valles con los lamentos de los desengañados que la siguen. No está muy lejos de aquí un sitio donde hay casi dos docenas de altas hayas, y no hay ninguna que en su lisa corteza no tenga grabado y escrito el nombre de Marcela; y encima de alguna, una corona grabada en el mismo árbol, como si más claramente dijera su amante que Marcela la lleva y la merece de toda la hermosura humana. Aquí sospira un pastor, allí se queja otro; acullá se oyen amorosas canciones, acá desesperadas endechas. Cuál hay que pasa todas las horas de la noche sentado al pie de alguna encina o peñasco, y allí, sin plegar los llorosos ojos, embebecido y transportado en sus pensamientos, le halló el sol a la mañana; y cuál hay que, sin dar vado ni tregua a sus suspiros, en mitad del ardor de la más enfadosa siesta del verano, tendido sobre la ardiente arena, envía sus quejas al piadoso cielo. Y déste y de aquél, y de aquéllos y de éstos, libre y desenfadadamente triunfa la hermosa Marcela; y



todos los que la conocemos estamos esperando en qué ha de parar su altivez y quién ha de ser el dichoso que ha de venir a domeñar condición tan terrible y gozar de hermosura tan estremada.» Por ser todo lo que he contado tan averiguada verdad, me doy a entender que también lo es la que nuestro zagal dijo que se decía de la causa de la muerte de Grisóstomo. Y así, os aconsejo, señor, que no dejéis de hallaros mañana a su entierro, que será muy de ver, porque Grisóstomo tiene muchos amigos, y no está de este lugar a aquél donde manda enterrarse media legua.

-En cuidado me lo tengo -dijo don Quijote-, y agradézcoos el gusto que me habéis dado con la narración de tan sabroso cuento.

-¡Oh! -replicó el cabrero-, aún no sé yo la mitad de los casos sucedidos a los amantes de Marcela, mas podría ser que mañana topásemos en el camino algún pastor que nos los dijese. Y, por ahora, bien será que os vais a dormir debajo de techado, porque el sereno os podría dañar la herida, puesto que es tal la medicina que se os ha puesto, que no hay que temer de contrario accidente.

Sancho Panza, que ya daba al diablo el tanto hablar del cabrero, solicitó, por su parte, que su amo se entrase a dormir en la choza de Pedro. Hízolo así, y todo lo más de la noche se le pasó en memorias de su señora Dulcinea, a imitación de los amantes de Marcela. Sancho Panza se acomodó entre Rocinante y su jumento, y durmió, no como enamorado desfavorecido, sino como hombre molido a coces.

## Capítulo XIII

*Donde se da fin al cuento de la pastora Marcela, con otros sucesos*

MAS, APENAS comenzó a descubrirse el día por los balcones del oriente, cuando los cinco de los seis cabreros se levantaron y fueron a despertar a don Quijote, y a decille si estaba todavía con propósito de ir a ver el famoso entierro de Grisóstomo, y que ellos le harían compañía. Don Quijote, que otra cosa no deseaba, se levantó y mandó a Sancho que ensillase y enalbardase al momento, lo cual él hizo con mucha diligencia, y con la misma se pusieron luego todos en camino. Y no hubieron andado un cuarto de legua, cuando, al cruzar de una senda, vieron venir hacia ellos hasta seis pastores, vestidos con pellicos negros y coronadas las cabezas con guirnaldas de ciprés y de amarga adelfa. Traía cada uno un grueso bastón de acebo en la mano. Venían con ellos, asimesmo, dos gentiles hombres de a caballo, muy bien aderezados de camino, con otros tres mozos de a pie que los acompañaban. En llegándose a juntar, se saludaron cortésmente, y, preguntándose los unos a los otros dónde iban, supieron que todos se encaminaban al lugar del entierro; y así, comenzaron a caminar todos juntos.

Uno de los de a caballo, hablando con su compañero, le dijo:

-Páreceme, señor Vivaldo, que habemos de dar por bien empleada la tardanza que hiciéremos en ver este famoso entierro, que no podrá dejar de ser famoso, según estos pastores nos han contado estrañezas, ansí del muerto pastor como de la pastora homicida.

-Así me lo parece a mí -respondió Vivaldo-; y no digo yo hacer tardanza de un día, pero de cuatro la hiciera a trueco de verle.

Preguntóles don Quijote qué era lo que habían oído de Marcela y de Grisóstomo. El caminante dijo que aquella madrugada habían encontrado con aquellos pastores, y que, por haberles visto en aquel tan triste traje, les habían preguntado la ocasión por que iban de aquella manera; que uno dellos se lo contó, contando la estrañeza y hermosura de una pastora llamada Marcela, y los amores de muchos que la recuestaban, con la muerte de aquel Grisóstomo a cuyo entierro iban. Finalmente, él contó todo lo que Pedro a don Quijote había contado.

Cesó esta plática y comenzóse otra, preguntando el que se llamaba Vivaldo a don Quijote qué era la ocasión que le movía a andar armado de aquella manera

por tierra tan pacífica. A lo cual respondió don Quijote:

-La profesión de mi ejercicio no consiente ni permite que yo ande de otra manera. El buen paso, el regalo y el reposo, allá se inventó para los blandos cortesanos; mas el trabajo, la inquietud y las armas sólo se inventaron e hicieron para aquellos que el mundo llama caballeros andantes, de los cuales yo, aunque indigno, soy el menor de todos.

Apenas le oyeron esto, cuando todos le tuvieron por loco; y, por averiguarlo más y ver qué género de locura era el suyo, le tornó a preguntar Vivaldo que qué quería decir «caballeros andantes».

-¿No han vuestras mercedes leído -respondió don Quijote- los anales e historias de Inglaterra, donde se tratan las famosas fazañas del rey Arturo, que continuamente en nuestro romance castellano llamamos el rey Artús, de quien es tradición antigua y común en todo aquel reino de la Gran Bretaña que este rey no murió, sino que, por arte de encantamento, se convirtió en cuervo, y que, andando los tiempos, ha de volver a reinar y a cobrar su reino y cetro; a cuya causa no se probará que desde aquel tiempo a éste haya ningún inglés muerto cuervo alguno? Pues en tiempo deste buen rey fue instituida aquella famosa orden de caballería de los caballeros de la Tabla Redonda, y pasaron, sin faltar un punto, los amores que allí se cuentan de don Lanzarote del Lago con la reina Ginebra, siendo medianera dellos y sabidora aquella tan honrada dueña Quinaña, de donde nació aquel tan sabido romance, y tan decantado en nuestra España, de:

Nunca fuera caballero  
de damas tan bien servido  
como fuera Lanzarote  
cuando de Bretaña vino;

con aquel progreso tan dulce y tan suave de sus amorosos y fuertes fechos. Pues desde entonces, de mano en mano, fue aquella orden de caballería estendiéndose y dilatándose por muchas y diversas partes del mundo; y en ella fueron famosos y conocidos por sus fechos el valiente Amadís de Gaula, con todos sus hijos y nietos, hasta la quinta generación, y el valeroso Felismarte de Hircania, y el nunca como se debe alabado Tirante el Blanco, y casi que en nuestros días vimos y comunicamos y oímos al invencible y valeroso caballero don Belianís de Grecia. Esto, pues, señores, es ser caballero andante, y la que he dicho es la orden de su caballería; en la cual, como otra vez he dicho, yo, aunque

pecador, he hecho profesión, y lo mesmo que profesaron los caballeros referidos profeso yo. Y así, me voy por estas soledades y despoblados buscando las aventuras, con ánimo deliberado de ofrecer mi brazo y mi persona a la más peligrosa que la suerte me deparare, en ayuda de los flacos y menesterosos.

Por estas razones que dijo, acabaron de enterarse los caminantes que era don Quijote falto de juicio, y del género de locura que lo señoreaba, de lo cual recibieron la misma admiración que recibían todos aquellos que de nuevo venían en conocimiento della. Y Vivaldo, que era persona muy discreta y de alegre condición, por pasar sin pesadumbre el poco camino que decían que les faltaba, al llegar a la sierra del entierro, quiso darle ocasión a que pasase más adelante con sus disparates. Y así, le dijo:

-Paréceme, señor caballero andante, que vuestra merced ha profesado una de las más estrechas profesiones que hay en la tierra, y tengo para mí que aun la de los frailes cartujos no es tan estrecha.

-Tan estrecha bien podía ser -respondió nuestro don Quijote-, pero tan necesaria en el mundo no estoy en dos dedos de ponello en duda. Porque, si va a decir verdad, no hace menos el soldado que pone en ejecución lo que su capitán le manda que el mismo capitán que se lo ordena. Quiero decir que los religiosos, con toda paz y sosiego, piden al cielo el bien de la tierra; pero los soldados y caballeros ponemos en ejecución lo que ellos piden, defendiéndola con el valor de nuestros brazos y filos de nuestras espadas; no debajo de cubierta, sino al cielo abierto, puestos por blanco de los insufribles rayos del sol en el verano y de los erizados yelos del invierno. Así que, somos ministros de Dios en la tierra, y brazos por quien se ejecuta en ella su justicia. Y, como las cosas de la guerra y las a ellas tocantes y concernientes no se pueden poner en ejecución sino sudando, afanando y trabajando, síguese que aquellos que la profesan tienen, sin duda, mayor trabajo que aquellos que en sosegada paz y reposo están rogando a Dios favorezca a los que poco pueden. No quiero yo decir, ni me pasa por pensamiento, que es tan buen estado el de caballero andante como el del encerrado religioso; sólo quiero inferir, por lo que yo padezco, que, sin duda, es más trabajoso y más aporreado, y más hambriento y sediento, miserable, roto y piojoso; porque no hay duda sino que los caballeros andantes pasados pasaron mucha malaventura en el discurso de su vida. Y si algunos subieron a ser emperadores por el valor de su brazo, a fe que les costó buen porqué de su sangre y de su sudor; y que si a los que a tal grado subieron les faltaran encantadores y sabios que los ayudaran, que ellos quedaran bien defraudados de sus deseos y bien engañados de sus esperanzas.

-De ese parecer estoy yo -replicó el caminante-; pero una cosa, entre otras muchas, me parece muy mal de los caballeros andantes, y es que, cuando se ven

en ocasión de acometer una grande y peligrosa aventura, en que se vee manifiesto peligro de perder la vida, nunca en aquel instante de acometella se acuerdan de encomendarse a Dios, como cada cristiano está obligado a hacer en peligros semejantes; antes, se encomiendan a sus damas, con tanta gana y devoción como si ellas fueran su Dios: cosa que me parece que huele algo a gentilidad.

-Señor -respondió don Quijote-, eso no puede ser menos en ninguna manera, y caería en mal caso el caballero andante que otra cosa hiciese; que ya está en uso y costumbre en la caballería andantesca que el caballero andante que, al acometer algún gran fecho de armas, tuviese su señora delante, vuelva a ella los ojos blanda y amorosamente, como que le pide con ellos le favorezca y ampare en el dudoso trance que acomete; y aun si nadie le oye, está obligado a decir algunas palabras entre dientes, en que de todo corazón se le encomiende; y desto tenemos innumerables ejemplos en las historias. Y no se ha de entender por esto que han de dejar de encomendarse a Dios; que tiempo y lugar les queda para hacerlo en el discurso de la obra.

-Con todo eso -replicó el caminante-, me queda un escrúpulo, y es que muchas veces he leído que se traban palabras entre dos andantes caballeros, y, de una en otra, se les viene a encender la cólera, y a volver los caballos y tomar una buena pieza del campo, y luego, sin más ni más, a todo el correr dellos, se vuelven a encontrar; y, en mitad de la corrida, se encomiendan a sus damas; y lo que suele suceder del encuentro es que el uno cae por las ancas del caballo, pasado con la lanza del contrario de parte a parte, y al otro le viene también que, a no tenerse a las crines del suyo, no pudiera dejar de venir al suelo. Y no sé yo cómo el muerto tuvo lugar para encomendarse a Dios en el discurso de esta tan acelerada obra. Mejor fuera que las palabras que en la carrera gastó encomendándose a su dama las gastara en lo que debía y estaba obligado como cristiano. Cuanto más, que yo tengo para mí que no todos los caballeros andantes tienen damas a quien encomendarse, porque no todos son enamorados.

-Eso no puede ser -respondió don Quijote-: digo que no puede ser que haya caballero andante sin dama, porque tan propio y tan natural les es a los tales ser enamorados como al cielo tener estrellas, y a buen seguro que no se haya visto historia donde se halle caballero andante sin amores; y por el mismo caso que estuviese sin ellos, no sería tenido por legítimo caballero, sino por bastardo, y que entró en la fortaleza de la caballería dicha, no por la puerta, sino por las bardas, como salteador y ladrón.

-Con todo eso -dijo el caminante-, me parece, si mal no me acuerdo, haber leído que don Galaor, hermano del valeroso Amadís de Gaula, nunca tuvo dama señalada a quien pudiese encomendarse; y, con todo esto, no fue tenido en

menos, y fue un muy valiente y famoso caballero.

A lo cual respondió nuestro don Quijote:

-Señor, una golondrina sola no hace verano. Cuanto más, que yo sé que de secreto estaba ese caballero muy bien enamorado; fuera que, aquello de querer a todas bien cuantas bien le parecían era condición natural, a quien no podía ir a la mano. Pero, en resolución, averiguado está muy bien que él tenía una sola a quien él había hecho señora de su voluntad, a la cual se encomendaba muy a menudo y muy secretamente, porque se preció de secreto caballero.

-Luego, si es de esencia que todo caballero andante haya de ser enamorado -dijo el caminante-, bien se puede creer que vuestra merced lo es, pues es de la profesión. Y si es que vuestra merced no se precia de ser tan secreto como don Galaor, con las veras que puedo le suplico, en nombre de toda esta compañía y en el mío, nos diga el nombre, patria, calidad y hermosura de su dama; que ella se tendría por dichosa de que todo el mundo sepa que es querida y servida de un tal caballero como vuestra merced parece.

Aquí dio un gran suspiro don Quijote y dijo:

-Yo no podré afirmar si la dulce mi enemiga gusta, o no, de que el mundo sepa que yo la sirvo; sólo sé decir, respondiendo a lo que con tanto comedimiento se me pide, que su nombre es Dulcinea; su patria, el Toboso, un lugar de la Mancha; su calidad, por lo menos, ha de ser de princesa, pues es reina y señora mía; su hermosura, sobrehumana, pues en ella se vienen a hacer verdaderos todos los imposibles y quiméricos atributos de belleza que los poetas dan a sus damas: que sus cabellos son oro, su frente campos elíseos, sus cejas arcos del cielo, sus ojos soles, sus mejillas rosas, sus labios corales, perlas sus dientes, alabastro su cuello, mármol su pecho, marfil sus manos, su blancura nieve, y las partes que a la vista humana encubrió la honestidad son tales, según yo pienso y entiendo, que sólo la discreta consideración puede encarecerlas, y no compararlas.

-El linaje, prosapia y alcurnia queríamos saber -replicó Vivaldo.

A lo cual respondió don Quijote:

-No es de los antiguos Curcios, Gayos y Cipiones romanos, ni de los modernos Colonas y Ursinos; ni de los Moncadas y Requesenes de Cataluña, ni menos de los Rebellas y Villanovas de Valencia; Palafoxes, Nuzas, Rocabertis, Corellas, Lunas, Alagones, Urreas, Foces y Gurreas de Aragón; Cerdas, Manriques, Mendozas y Guzmanes de Castilla; Alencastros, Pallas y Meneses de Portugal; pero es de los del Toboso de la Mancha, linaje, aunque moderno, tal, que puede dar generoso principio a las más ilustres familias de los venideros siglos. Y no se me replique en esto, si no fuere con las condiciones que puso

Cervino al pie del trofeo de las armas de Orlando, que decía:

## NADIE LAS MUEVA

### QUE ESTAR NO PUEDA CON ROLDÁN A PRUEBA.

-Aunque el mío es de los Cachopines de Laredo -respondió el caminante-, no le osaré yo poner con el del Toboso de la Mancha, puesto que, para decir verdad, semejante apellido hasta ahora no ha llegado a mis oídos.

-¡Como eso no habrá llegado! -replicó don Quijote.

Con gran atención iban escuchando todos los demás la plática de los dos, y aun hasta los mismos cabreros y pastores conocieron la demasiada falta de juicio de nuestro don Quijote. Sólo Sancho Panza pensaba que cuanto su amo decía era verdad, sabiendo él quién era y habiéndole conocido desde su nacimiento; y en lo que dudaba algo era en creer aquello de la linda Dulcinea del Toboso, porque nunca tal nombre ni tal princesa había llegado jamás a su noticia, aunque vivía tan cerca del Toboso.

En estas pláticas iban, cuando vieron que, por la quiebra que dos altas montañas hacían, bajaban hasta veinte pastores, todos con pellicos de negra lana vestidos y coronados con guirnaldas, que, a lo que después pareció, eran cuál de tejo y cuál de ciprés. Entre seis dellos traían unas andas, cubiertas de mucha diversidad de flores y de ramos. Lo cual visto por uno de los cabreros, dijo:

-Aquellos que allí vienen son los que traen el cuerpo de Grisóstomo, y el pie de aquella montaña es el lugar donde él mandó que le enterrasen.

Por esto se dieron prisa a llegar, y fue a tiempo que ya los que venían habían puesto las andas en el suelo; y cuatro dellos con agudos picos estaban cavando la sepultura a un lado de una dura peña.

Recibiéronse los unos y los otros cortésmente; y luego don Quijote y los que con él venían se pusieron a mirar las andas, y en ellas vieron cubierto de flores un cuerpo muerto, vestido como pastor, de edad, al parecer, de treinta años; y, aunque muerto, mostraba que vivo había sido de rostro hermoso y de disposición gallarda. Alrededor dél tenía en las mismas andas algunos libros y muchos papeles, abiertos y cerrados. Y así los que esto miraban, como los que abrían la sepultura, y todos los demás que allí había, guardaban un maravilloso silencio, hasta que uno de los que al muerto trujeron dijo a otro:

-Mirá bien, Ambrosio, si es éste el lugar que Grisóstomo dijo, ya que queréis que tan puntualmente se cumpla lo que dejó mandado en su testamento.

-Éste es -respondió Ambrosio-; que muchas veces en él me contó mi desdichado amigo la historia de su desventura. Allí me dijo él que vio la vez primera a aquella enemiga mortal del linaje humano, y allí fue también donde la primera vez le declaró su pensamiento, tan honesto como enamorado, y allí fue la última vez donde Marcela le acabó de desengañar y desdeñar, de suerte que puso fin a la tragedia de su miserable vida. Y aquí, en memoria de tantas desdichas, quiso él que le depositasen en las entrañas del eterno olvido.

Y, volviéndose a don Quijote y a los caminantes, prosiguió diciendo:

-Ese cuerpo, señores, que con piadosos ojos estáis mirando, fue depositario de un alma en quien el cielo puso infinita parte de sus riquezas. Ése es el cuerpo de Grisóstomo, que fue único en el ingenio, solo en la cortesía, extremo en la gentileza, fénix en la amistad, magnífico sin tasa, grave sin presunción, alegre sin bajeza, y, finalmente, primero en todo lo que es ser bueno, y sin segundo en todo lo que fue ser desdichado. Quiso bien, fue aborrecido; adoró, fue desdeñado; rogó a una fiera, importunó a un mármol, corrió tras el viento, dio voces a la soledad, sirvió a la ingratitud, de quien alcanzó por premio ser despojos de la muerte en la mitad de la carrera de su vida, a la cual dio fin una pastora a quien él procuraba eternizar para que viviera en la memoria de las gentes, cual lo pudieran mostrar bien esos papeles que estáis mirando, si él no me hubiera mandado que los entregara al fuego en habiendo entregado su cuerpo a la tierra.

-De mayor rigor y crueldad usaréis vos con ellos -dijo Vivaldo- que su mismo dueño, pues no es justo ni acertado que se cumpla la voluntad de quien lo que ordena va fuera de todo razonable discurso. Y no le tuviera bueno Augusto César si consintiera que se pusiera en ejecución lo que el divino Mantuano dejó en su testamento mandado. Ansí que, señor Ambrosio, ya que deis el cuerpo de vuestro amigo a la tierra, no queráis dar sus escritos al olvido; que si él ordenó como agraviado, no es bien que vos cumpláis como indiscreto. Antes haced, dando la vida a estos papeles, que la tenga siempre la crueldad de Marcela, para que sirva de ejemplo, en los tiempos que están por venir, a los vivientes, para que se aparten y huyan de caer en semejantes despeñaderos; que ya sé yo, y los que aquí venimos, la historia deste vuestro enamorado y desesperado amigo, y sabemos la amistad vuestra, y la ocasión de su muerte, y lo que dejó mandado al acabar de la vida; de la cual lamentable historia se puede sacar cuánto haya sido la crueldad de Marcela, el amor de Grisóstomo, la fe de la amistad vuestra, con el paradero que tienen los que a rienda suelta corren por la senda que el desvariado amor delante de los ojos les pone. Anoche supimos la muerte de Grisóstomo, y que en este lugar había de ser enterrado; y así, de curiosidad y de lástima, dejamos nuestro derecho viaje, y acordamos de venir a ver con los ojos



lo que tanto nos había lastimado en oído. Y, en pago desta lástima y del deseo que en nosotros nació de remedialla si pudiéramos, te rogamos, ¡oh discreto Ambrosio! (a lo menos, yo te lo suplico de mi parte), que, dejando de abrasar estos papeles, me dejes llevar algunos dellos.

Y, sin aguardar que el pastor respondiese, alargó la mano y tomó algunos de los que más cerca estaban; viendo lo cual Ambrosio, dijo:

-Por cortesía consentiré que os quedéis, señor, con los que ya habéis tomado; pero pensar que dejaré de abrasar los que quedan es pensamiento vano.

Vivaldo, que deseaba ver lo que los papeles decían, abrió luego el uno dellos y vio que tenía por título: *Canción desesperada*. Oyólo Ambrosio y dijo:

-Ése es el último papel que escribió el desdichado; y, porque veáis, señor, en el término que le tenían sus desventuras, leelde de modo que seáis oído; que bien os dará lugar a ello el que se tardare en abrir la sepultura.

-Eso haré yo de muy buena gana -dijo Vivaldo.

Y, como todos los circunstantes tenían el mismo deseo, se le pusieron a la redonda; y él, leyendo en voz clara, vio que así decía:

## Capítulo XIV

*Donde se ponen los versos desesperados del difunto pastor, con otros no  
esperados sucesos*

### CANCIÓN DE GRISÓSTOMO

YA QUE quieres, cruel, que se publique, de lengua en lengua y de una en otra  
gente, del áspero rigor tuyo la fuerza, haré que el mismo infierno comunique al  
triste pecho mío un son doliente, 5

con que el uso común de mi voz tuerza.

Y al par de mi deseo, que se esfuerza a decir mi dolor y tus hazañas, de la  
espantable voz irá el acento, y en él mezcladas, por mayor tormento, 10  
pedazos de las míseras entrañas.

Escucha, pues, y presta atento oído, no al concertado son, sino al rüido que de  
lo hondo de mi amargo pecho, llevado de un forzoso desvarío, 15  
por gusto mío sale y tu despecho.

El rugir del león, del lobo fiero el temeroso aullido, el silbo horrendo de  
escamosa serpiente, el espantable baladro de algún monstruo, el agorero 20

graznar de la corneja, y el estruendo del viento contrastado en mar inestable;  
del ya vencido toro el implacable bramido, y de la viuda tortolilla el sentible  
arrullar; el triste canto 25

del envidiado búho, con el llanto de toda la infernal negra cuadrilla, salgan  
con la doliente ánima fuera, mezclados en un son, de tal manera que se  
confundan los sentidos todos, 30

pues la pena cruel que en mí se halla para contalla pide nuevos modos.

De tanta confusión no las arenas del padre Tajo oirán los tristes ecos, ni del  
famoso Betis las olivas: 35

que allí se esparcirán mis duras penas en altos riscos y en profundos huecos,  
con muerta lengua y con palabras vivas; o ya en oscuros valles, o en esquivas  
playas, desnudas de contrato humano, 40

o adonde el sol jamás mostró su lumbre, o entre la venenosa muchedumbre de

fieras que alimenta el libio llano; que, puesto que en los páramos desiertos los ecos roncós de mi mal, inciertos, 45

suenen con tu rigor tan sin segundo, por privilegio de mis cortos hados, serán llevados por el ancho mundo.

Mata un desdén, atierra la paciencia, o verdadera o falsa, una sospecha; 50  
matan los celos con rigor más fuerte; desconcierta la vida larga ausencia;  
contra un temor de olvido no aprovecha firme esperanza de dichosa suerte.

En todo hay cierta, inevitable muerte; 55

mas yo, ¡milagro nunca visto!, vivo celoso, ausente, desdeñado y cierto de las sospechas que me tienen muerto; y en el olvido en quien mi fuego avivo, y, entre tantos tormentos, nunca alcanza 60

mi vista a ver en sombra a la esperanza, ni yo, desesperado, la procuro; antes, por estremarme en mi querella, estar sin ella eternamente juro.

¿Puédese, por ventura, en un instante 65

esperar y temer, o es bien hacello, siendo las causas del temor más ciertas?

¿Tengo, si el duro celo está delante, de cerrar estos ojos, si he de vello por mil heridas en el alma abiertas? 70

¿Quién no abrirá de par en par las puertas a la desconfianza, cuando mira descubierto el desdén, y las sospechas, ¡oh amarga conversión!, verdades hechas, y la limpia verdad vuelta en mentira? 75

¡Oh, en el reino de amor fieros tiranos celos, ponedme un hierro en estas manos!

Dame, desdén, una torcida sogá.

Mas, ¡ay de mí!, que, con cruel vitoria, vuestra memoria el sufrimiento ahoga.  
80

Yo muero, en fin; y, porque nunca espere buen suceso en la muerte ni en la vida, pertinaz estaré en mi fantasía.

Diré que va acertado el que bien quiere, y que es más libre el alma más rendida 85

a la de amor antigua tiranía.

Diré que la enemiga siempre mía hermosa el alma como el cuerpo tiene, y que su olvido de mi culpa nace, y que, en fe de los males que nos hace, 90

amor su imperio en justa paz mantiene.

Y, con esta opinión y un duro lazo, acelerando el miserable plazo a que me han conducido sus desdenes, ofreceré a los vientos cuerpo y alma, 95

sin lauro o palma de futuros bienes.

Tú, que con tantas sinrazones muestras la razón que me fuerza a que la haga a la cansada vida que aborrezco, pues ya ves que te da notorias muestras 100

esta del corazón profunda llaga, de cómo, alegre, a tu rigor me ofrezco, si, por dicha, conoces que merezco que el cielo claro de tus bellos ojos en mi muerte se turbe, no lo hagas; 105

que no quiero que en nada satisfagas, al darte de mi alma los despojos.

Antes, con risa en la ocasión funesta, descubre que el fin mío fue tu fiesta; mas gran simpleza es avisarte desto, 110

pues sé que está tu gloria conocida en que mi vida llegue al fin tan presto.

Venga, que es tiempo ya, del hondo abismo Tántalo con su sed; Sísifo venga con el peso terrible de su canto; 115

Ticio traya su buitre, y ansimismo con su rueda Egión no se detenga, ni las hermanas que trabajan tanto; y todos juntos su mortal quebranto trasladen en mi pecho, y en voz baja 120

-si ya a un desesperado son debidas-canten obsequias tristes, doloridas, al cuerpo a quien se niegue aun la mortaja.

Y el portero infernal de los tres rostros, con otras mil quimeras y mil monstros, 125

lleven el doloroso contrapunto; que otra pompa mejor no me parece que la merece un amador difunto.

Canción desesperada, no te quejes cuando mi triste compañía dejes; 130

antes, pues que la causa do naciste con mi desdicha aumenta su ventura, aun en la sepultura no estés triste.

Bien les pareció, a los que escuchado habían, la canción de Grisóstomo, puesto que el que la leyó dijo que no le parecía que conformaba con la relación que él había oído del recato y bondad de Marcela, porque en ella se quejaba Grisóstomo de celos, sospechas y de ausencia, todo en perjuicio del buen crédito y buena fama de Marcela. A lo cual respondió Ambrosio, como aquel que sabía bien los más escondidos pensamientos de su amigo: -Para que, señor, os satisfagáis desa duda, es bien que sepáis que cuando este desdichado escribió esta canción estaba ausente de Marcela, de quien él se había ausentado por su voluntad, por ver si usaba con él la ausencia de sus ordinarios fueros. Y, como al enamorado ausente no hay cosa que no le fatigue ni temor que no le dé alcance,

así le fatigaban a Grisóstomo los celos imaginados y las sospechas temidas como si fueran verdaderas. Y con esto queda en su punto la verdad que la fama pregona de la bondad de Marcela; la cual, fuera de ser cruel, y un poco arrogante y un mucho desdeñosa, la misma envidia ni debe ni puede ponerle falta alguna.

-Así es la verdad -respondió Vivaldo.

Y, queriendo leer otro papel de los que había reservado del fuego, lo estorbó una maravillosa visión -que tal parecía ella-que improvisamente se les ofreció a los ojos; y fue que, por cima de la peña donde se cavaba la sepultura, pareció la pastora Marcela, tan hermosa que pasaba a su fama su hermosura. Los que hasta entonces no la habían visto la miraban con admiración y silencio, y los que ya estaban acostumbrados a verla no quedaron menos suspensos que los que nunca la habían visto. Mas, apenas la hubo visto Ambrosio, cuando, con muestras de ánimo indignado, le dijo: -¿Vienes a ver, por ventura, ¡oh fiero basilisco destas montañas!, si con tu presencia vierten sangre las heridas deste miserable a quien tu crueldad quitó la vida? ¿O vienes a ufanarte en las crueles hazañas de tu condición, o a ver desde esa altura, como otro despiadado Nero, el incendio de su abrasada Roma, o a pisar, arrogante, este desdichado cadáver, como la ingrata hija al de su padre Tarquino? Dinos presto a lo que vienes, o qué es aquello de que más gustas; que, por saber yo que los pensamientos de Grisóstomo jamás dejaron de obedecerte en vida, haré que, aun él muerto, te obedezcan los de todos aquellos que se llamaron sus amigos.

-No vengo, ¡oh Ambrosio!, a ninguna cosa de las que has dicho -respondió Marcela-, sino a volver por mí misma, y a dar a entender cuán fuera de razón van todos aquellos que de sus penas y de la muerte de Grisóstomo me culpan; y así, ruego a todos los que aquí estáis me estéis atentos, que no será menester mucho tiempo ni gastar muchas palabras para persuadir una verdad a los discretos.

»Hízome el cielo, según vosotros decís, hermosa, y de tal manera que, sin ser poderosos a otra cosa, a que me améis os mueve mi hermosura; y, por el amor que me mostráis, decís, y aun queréis, que esté yo obligada a amaros. Yo conozco, con el natural entendimiento que Dios me ha dado, que todo lo hermoso es amable; mas no alcanzo que, por razón de ser amado, esté obligado lo que es amado por hermoso a amar a quien le ama. Y más, que podría acontecer que el amador de lo hermoso fuese feo, y, siendo lo feo digno de ser aborrecido, cae muy mal el decir “Quiérote por hermosa; hasme de amar aunque sea feo”. Pero, puesto caso que corran igualmente las hermosuras, no por eso han de correr iguales los deseos, que no todas hermosuras enamoran; que algunas alegran la vista y no rinden la voluntad; que si todas las bellezas enamorasen y rindiesen, sería un andar las voluntades confusas y descaminadas, sin saber en cuál habían de parar; porque, siendo infinitos los sujetos hermosos, infinitos

habían de ser los deseos. Y, según yo he oído decir, el verdadero amor no se divide, y ha de ser voluntario, y no forzoso. Siendo esto así, como yo creo que lo es, ¿por qué queréis que rinda mi voluntad por fuerza, obligada no más de que decís que me queréis bien? Si no, decidme: si como el cielo me hizo hermosa me hiciera fea, ¿fuera justo que me quejara de vosotros porque no me amábades? Cuanto más, que habéis de considerar que yo no escogí la hermosura que tengo; que, tal cual es, el cielo me la dio de gracia, sin yo pedilla ni escogella. Y, así como la víbora no merece ser culpada por la ponzoña que tiene, puesto que con ella mata, por habérsela dado naturaleza, tampoco yo merezco ser reprehendida por ser hermosa; que la hermosura en la mujer honesta es como el fuego apartado o como la espada aguda, que ni él quema ni ella corta a quien a ellos no se acerca. La honra y las virtudes son adornos del alma, sin las cuales el cuerpo, aunque lo sea, no debe de parecer hermoso. Pues si la honestidad es una de las virtudes que al cuerpo y al alma más adornan y hermocean, ¿por qué la ha de perder la que es amada por hermosa, por corresponder a la intención de aquel que, por sólo su gusto, con todas sus fuerzas e industrias procura que la pierda?

»Yo nací libre, y para poder vivir libre escogí la soledad de los campos. Los árboles destas montañas son mi compañía, las claras aguas destos arroyos mis espejos; con los árboles y con las aguas comunico mis pensamientos y hermosura. Fuego soy apartado y espada puesta lejos. A los que he enamorado con la vista he desengañado con las palabras. Y si los deseos se sustentan con esperanzas, no habiendo yo dado alguna a Grisóstomo ni a otro alguno, el fin de ninguno dellos bien se puede decir que antes le mató su porfía que mi crueldad. Y si se me hace cargo que eran honestos sus pensamientos, y que por esto estaba obligada a corresponder a ellos, digo que, cuando en ese mismo lugar donde ahora se cava su sepultura me descubrió la bondad de su intención, le dije yo que la mía era vivir en perpetua soledad, y de que sola la tierra gozase el fruto de mi recogimiento y los despojos de mi hermosura; y si él, con todo este desengaño, quiso porfiar contra la esperanza y navegar contra el viento, ¿qué mucho que se anegase en la mitad del golfo de su desatino? Si yo le entretuviera, fuera falsa; si le contentara, hiciera contra mi mejor intención y prosupuesto. Porfió desengañado, desesperó sin ser aborrecido: ¡mirad ahora si será razón que de su pena se me dé a mí la culpa! Quéjese el engañado, desespérese aquel a quien le faltaron las prometidas esperanzas, confíese el que yo llamare, ufánese el que yo admitiere; pero no me llame cruel ni homicida aquel a quien yo no prometo, engaño, llamo ni admito.

»El cielo aún hasta ahora no ha querido que yo ame por destino, y el pensar que tengo de amar por elección es escusado. Este general desengaño sirva a cada uno de los que me solicitan de su particular provecho; y entiéndase, de aquí

adelante, que si alguno por mí muriere, no muere de celoso ni desdichado, porque quien a nadie quiere, a ninguno debe dar celos; que los desengaños no se han de tomar en cuenta de desdenes. El que me llama fiera y basilisco, déjeme como cosa perjudicial y mala; el que me llama ingrata, no me sirva; el que desconocida, no me conozca; quien cruel, no me siga; que esta fiera, este basilisco, esta ingrata, esta cruel y esta desconocida ni los buscará, servirá, conocerá ni seguirá en ninguna manera. Que si a Grisóstomo mató su impaciencia y arrojado deseo, ¿por qué se ha de culpar mi honesto proceder y recato? Si yo conservo mi limpieza con la compañía de los árboles, ¿por qué ha de querer que la pierda el que quiere que la tenga con los hombres? Yo, como sabéis, tengo riquezas propias y no codicio las ajenas; tengo libre condición y no gusto de sujetarme: ni quiero ni aborrezco a nadie. No engaño a éste ni solicito aquél, ni burlo con uno ni me entretengo con el otro. La conversación honesta de las zagalas destas aldeas y el cuidado de mis cabras me entretiene. Tienen mis deseos por término estas montañas, y si de aquí salen, es a contemplar la hermosura del cielo, pasos con que camina el alma a su morada primera.

Y, en diciendo esto, sin querer oír respuesta alguna, volvió las espaldas y se entró por lo más cerrado de un monte que allí cerca estaba, dejando admirados, tanto de su discreción como de su hermosura, a todos los que allí estaban. Y algunos dieron muestras -de aquellos que de la poderosa flecha de los rayos de sus bellos ojos estaban heridos-de quererla seguir, sin aprovecharse del manifiesto desengaño que habían oído. Lo cual visto por don Quijote, pareciéndole que allí venía bien usar de su caballería, socorriendo a las doncellas menesterosas, puesta la mano en el puño de su espada, en altas e inteligibles voces, dijo: -Ninguna persona, de cualquier estado y condición que sea, se atreva a seguir a la hermosa Marcela, so pena de caer en la furiosa indignación mía. Ella ha mostrado con claras y suficientes razones la poca o ninguna culpa que ha tenido en la muerte de Grisóstomo, y cuán ajena vive de condescender con los deseos de ninguno de sus amantes, a cuya causa es justo que, en lugar de ser seguida y perseguida, sea honrada y estimada de todos los buenos del mundo, pues muestra que en él ella es sola la que con tan honesta intención vive.

O ya que fuese por las amenazas de don Quijote, o porque Ambrosio les dijo que concluyesen con lo que a su buen amigo debían, ninguno de los pastores se movió ni apartó de allí hasta que, acabada la sepultura y abrasados los papeles de Grisóstomo, pusieron su cuerpo en ella, no sin muchas lágrimas de los circunstantes. Cerraron la sepultura con una gruesa peña, en tanto que se acababa una losa que, según Ambrosio dijo, pensaba mandar hacer, con un epitafio que había de decir desta manera: YACE AQUÍ DE UN AMADOR

EL MÍSERO CUERPO HELADO,  
QUE FUE PASTOR DE GANADO,  
PERDIDO POR DESAMOR.

MURIÓ A MANOS DEL RIGOR 5

DE UNA ESQUIVA HERMOSA INGRATA,  
CON QUIEN SU IMPERIO DILATA  
LA TIRANÍA DE AMOR.

Luego esparcieron por cima de la sepultura muchas flores y ramos, y, dando todos el pésame a su amigo Ambrosio, se despidieron dél. Lo mismo hicieron Vivaldo y su compañero, y don Quijote se despidió de sus huéspedes y de los caminantes, los cuales le rogaron se viniese con ellos a Sevilla, por ser lugar tan acomodado a hallar aventuras, que en cada calle y tras cada esquina se ofrecen más que en otro alguno. Don Quijote les agradeció el aviso y el ánimo que mostraban de hacerle merced, y dijo que por entonces no quería ni debía ir a Sevilla, hasta que hubiese despojado todas aquellas sierras de ladrones malandrines, de quien era fama que todas estaban llenas. Viendo su buena determinación, no quisieron los caminantes importunarle más, sino, tornándose a despedir de nuevo, le dejaron y prosiguieron su camino, en el cual no les faltó de qué tratar, así de la historia de Marcela y Grisóstomo como de las locuras de don Quijote. El cual determinó de ir a buscar a la pastora Marcela y ofrecerle todo lo que él podía en su servicio. Mas no le avino como él pensaba, según se cuenta en el discurso desta verdadera historia, dando aquí fin la segunda parte.

*Tercera parte del ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*



## Capítulo XV

*Donde se cuenta la desgraciada aventura que se topó don Quijote en topar con unos desalmados yangüeses*

CUENTA el sabio Cide Hamete Benengeli que, así como don Quijote se despidió de sus huéspedes y de todos los que se hallaron al entierro del pastor Grisóstomo, él y su escudero se entraron por el mismo bosque donde vieron que se había entrado la pastora Marcela; y, habiendo andado más de dos horas por él, buscándola por todas partes sin poder hallarla, vinieron a parar a un prado lleno de fresca yerba, junto del cual corría un arroyo apacible y fresco; tanto, que convidó y forzó a pasar allí las horas de la siesta, que rigurosamente comenzaba ya a entrar.

Apeáronse don Quijote y Sancho, y, dejando al jumento y a Rocinante a sus anchuras pacer de la mucha yerba que allí había, dieron saco a las alforjas, y, sin cerimonia alguna, en buena paz y compañía, amo y mozo comieron lo que en ellas hallaron.

No se había curado Sancho de echar sueltas a Rocinante, seguro de que le conocía por tan manso y tan poco rijoso que todas las yeguas de la dehesa de Córdoba no le hicieran tomar mal siniestro. Ordenó, pues, la suerte, y el diablo, que no todas veces duerme, que andaban por aquel valle paciendo una manada de hacas galicianas de unos arrieros gallegos, de los cuales es costumbre sestear con su recua en lugares y sitios de yerba y agua; y aquel donde acertó a hallarse don Quijote era muy a propósito de los gallegos.

Sucedió, pues, que a Rocinante le vino en deseo de refocilarse con las señoras facas; y saliendo, así como las olió, de su natural paso y costumbre, sin pedir licencia a su dueño, tomó un trotico algo picadillo y se fue a comunicar su necesidad con ellas. Mas ellas, que, a lo que pareció, debían de tener más gana de pacer que de ál, recibieronle con las herraduras y con los dientes, de tal manera que, a poco espacio, se le rompieron las cinchas y quedó, sin silla, en pelota. Pero lo que él debió más de sentir fue que, viendo los arrieros la fuerza que a sus yeguas se les hacía, acudieron con estacas, y tantos palos le dieron que le derribaron malparado en el suelo.

Ya en esto don Quijote y Sancho, que la paliza de Rocinante habían visto, llegaban ijadeando; y dijo don Quijote a Sancho:

-A lo que yo veo, amigo Sancho, éstos no son caballeros, sino gente soez y de

baja ralea. Dígolo porque bien me puedes ayudar a tomar la debida venganza del agravio que delante de nuestros ojos se le ha hecho a Rocinante.

-¿Qué diablos de venganza hemos de tomar -respondió Sancho-, si éstos son más de veinte y nosotros no más de dos, y aun, quizá, nosotros sino uno y medio?

-Yo valgo por ciento -replicó don Quijote.

Y, sin hacer más discursos, echó mano a su espada y arremetió a los gallegos, y lo mismo hizo Sancho Panza, incitado y movido del ejemplo de su amo. Y, a las primeras, dio don Quijote una cuchillada a uno, que le abrió un sayo de cuero de que venía vestido, con gran parte de la espalda.

Los gallegos, que se vieron maltratar de aquellos dos hombres solos, siendo ellos tantos, acudieron a sus estacas, y, cogiendo a los dos en medio, comenzaron a menudear sobre ellos con grande ahínco y vehemencia. Verdad es que al segundo toque dieron con Sancho en el suelo, y lo mismo le avino a don Quijote, sin que le valiese su destreza y buen ánimo; y quiso su ventura que viniese a caer a los pies de Rocinante, que aún no se había levantado; donde se echa de ver la furia con que machacan estacas puestas en manos rústicas y enojadas.

Viendo, pues, los gallegos el mal recado que habían hecho, con la mayor presteza que pudieron, cargaron su recua y siguieron su camino, dejando a los dos aventureros de mala traza y de peor talante.

El primero que se resintió fue Sancho Panza; y, hallándose junto a su señor, con voz enferma y lastimada, dijo:

-¡Señor don Quijote! ¡Ah, señor don Quijote!

-¿Qué quieres, Sancho hermano? -respondió don Quijote con el mismo tono afeminado y doliente que Sancho.

-Querría, si fuese posible -respondió Sancho Panza-, que vuestra merced me diese dos tragos de aquella bebida del feo Blas, si es que la tiene vuestra merced ahí a mano. Quizá será de provecho para los quebrantamientos de huesos como lo es para las heridas.

-Pues, a tenerla yo aquí, desgraciado yo, ¿qué nos faltaba? -respondió don Quijote-. Mas yo te juro, Sancho Panza, a fe de caballero andante, que antes que pasen dos días, si la fortuna no ordena otra cosa, la tengo de tener en mi poder, o mal me han de andar las manos.

-Pues ¿en cuántos le parece a vuestra merced que podremos mover los pies? -replicó Sancho Panza.

-De mí sé decir -dijo el molido caballero don Quijote-que no sabré poner término a esos días. Mas yo me tengo la culpa de todo, que no había de poner mano a la espada contra hombres que no fuesen armados caballeros como yo; y

así, creo que, en pena de haber pasado las leyes de la caballería, ha permitido el dios de las batallas que se me diese este castigo. Por lo cual, Sancho Panza, conviene que estés advertido en esto que ahora te diré, porque importa mucho a la salud de entrambos; y es que, cuando veas que semejante canalla nos hace algún agravio, no aguardes a que yo ponga mano al espada para ellos, porque no lo haré en ninguna manera, sino pon tú mano a tu espada y castígalos muy a tu sabor; que si en su ayuda y defensa acudieren caballeros, yo te sabré defender y ofendellos con todo mi poder; que ya habrás visto por mil señales y experiencias hasta adónde se estiende el valor de este mi fuerte brazo.

Tal quedó de arrogante el pobre señor con el vencimiento del valiente vizcaíno. Mas no le pareció tan bien a Sancho Panza el aviso de su amo que dejase de responder, diciendo:

-Señor, yo soy hombre pacífico, manso, sosegado, y sé disimular cualquiera injuria, porque tengo mujer y hijos que sustentar y criar. Así que, séale a vuestra merced también aviso, pues no puede ser mandato, que en ninguna manera pondré mano a la espada, ni contra villano ni contra caballero; y que, desde aquí para delante de Dios, perdono cuantos agravios me han hecho y han de hacer: ora me los haya hecho, o haga o haya de hacer, persona alta o baja, rico o pobre, hidalgo o pechero, sin eceptar estado ni condición alguna.

Lo cual oído por su amo, le respondió:

-Quisiera tener aliento para poder hablar un poco descansado, y que el dolor que tengo en esta costilla se aplacara tanto cuanto, para darte a entender, Panza, en el error en que estás. Ven acá, pecador; si el viento de la fortuna, hasta ahora tan contrario, en nuestro favor se vuelve, llevándonos las velas del deseo para que seguramente y sin contraste alguno tomemos puerto en alguna de las ínsulas que te tengo prometida, ¿qué sería de ti si, ganándola yo, te hiciese señor della? Pues ¿lo vendrás a imposibilitar por no ser caballero, ni quererlo ser, ni tener valor ni intención de vengar tus injurias y defender tu señorío? Porque has de saber que en los reinos y provincias nuevamente conquistados nunca están tan quietos los ánimos de sus naturales, ni tan de parte del nuevo señor que no se tengan temor de que han de hacer alguna novedad para alterar de nuevo las cosas, y volver, como dicen, a probar ventura; y así, es menester que el nuevo poseedor tenga entendimiento para saberse gobernar, y valor para ofender y defenderse en cualquiera acontecimiento.

-En este que ahora nos ha acontecido -respondió Sancho-, quisiera yo tener ese entendimiento y ese valor que vuestra merced dice; mas yo le juro, a fe de pobre hombre, que más estoy para bizmas que para pláticas. Mire vuestra merced si se puede levantar, y ayudaremos a Rocinante, aunque no lo merece, porque él fue la causa principal de todo este molimiento. Jamás tal creí de

Rocinante, que le tenía por persona casta y tan pacífica como yo. En fin, bien dicen que es menester mucho tiempo para venir a conocer las personas, y que no hay cosa segura en esta vida. ¿Quién dijera que tras de aquellas tan grandes cuchilladas como vuestra merced dio a aquel desdichado caballero andante, había de venir, por la posta y en seguimiento suyo, esta tan grande tempestad de palos que ha descargado sobre nuestras espaldas?

-Aun las tuyas, Sancho -replicó don Quijote-, deben de estar hechas a semejantes nublados; pero las mías, criadas entre sinabafas y holandas, claro está que sentirán más el dolor desta desgracia. Y si no fuese porque imagino..., ¿qué digo imagino?, sé muy cierto, que todas estas incomodidades son muy anejas al ejercicio de las armas, aquí me dejaría morir de puro enojo.

A esto replicó el escudero:

-Señor, ya que estas desgracias son de la cosecha de la caballería, dígame vuestra merced si suceden muy a menudo, o si tienen sus tiempos limitados en que acaecen; porque me parece a mí que a dos cosechas quedaremos inútiles para la tercera, si Dios, por su infinita misericordia, no nos socorre.

-Sábetelo, amigo Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, que la vida de los caballeros andantes está sujeta a mil peligros y desventuras; y, ni más ni menos, está en potencia propinqua de ser los caballeros andantes reyes y emperadores, como lo ha mostrado la experiencia en muchos y diversos caballeros, de cuyas historias yo tengo entera noticia. Y pudierate contar agora, si el dolor me diera lugar, de algunos que, sólo por el valor de su brazo, han subido a los altos grados que he contado; y estos mismos se vieron antes y después en diversas calamidades y miserias. Porque el valeroso Amadís de Gaula se vio en poder de su mortal enemigo Arcaláus el encantador, de quien se tiene por averiguado que le dio, teniéndole preso, más de docientos azotes con las riendas de su caballo, atado a una columna de un patio. Y aun hay un autor secreto, y de no poco crédito, que dice que, habiendo cogido al Caballero del Febo con una cierta trampa que se le hundió debajo de los pies, en un cierto castillo, y al caer, se halló en una honda sima debajo de tierra, atado de pies y manos, y allí le echaron una destas que llaman melecinas, de agua de nieve y arena, de lo que llegó muy al cabo; y si no fuera socorrido en aquella gran cuita de un sabio grande amigo suyo, lo pasara muy mal el pobre caballero. Ansí que, bien puedo yo pasar entre tanta buena gente; que mayores afrentas son las que éstos pasaron, que no las que ahora nosotros pasamos. Porque quiero hacerte sabidor, Sancho, que no afrentan las heridas que se dan con los instrumentos que acaso se hallan en las manos; y esto está en la ley del duelo, escrito por palabras expresas: que si el zapatero da a otro con la horma que tiene en la mano, puesto que verdaderamente es de palo, no por eso se dirá que queda apaleado aquel a quien dio con ella. Digo esto porque

no pienses que, puesto que quedamos desta pendencia molidos, quedamos afrentados; porque las armas que aquellos hombres traían, con que nos machacaron, no eran otras que sus estacas, y ninguno dellos, a lo que se me acuerda, tenía estoque, espada ni puñal.

-No me dieron a mí lugar -respondió Sancho-a que mirase en tanto; porque, apenas puse mano a mi tizona, cuando me santiguaron los hombros con sus pinos, de manera que me quitaron la vista de los ojos y la fuerza de los pies, dando conmigo adonde ahora yago, y adonde no me da pena alguna el pensar si fue afrenta o no lo de los estacazos, como me la da el dolor de los golpes, que me han de quedar tan impresos en la memoria como en las espaldas.

-Con todo eso, te hago saber, hermano Panza -replicó don Quijote-, que no hay memoria a quien el tiempo no acabe, ni dolor que muerte no le consuma.

-Pues ¿qué mayor desdicha puede ser -replicó Panza-de aquella que aguarda al tiempo que la consuma y a la muerte que la acabe? Si esta nuestra desgracia fuera de aquellas que con un par de bizmas se curan, aun no tan malo; pero voy viendo que no han de bastar todos los emplastos de un hospital para ponerlas en buen término siquiera.

-Déjate deso y saca fuerzas de flaqueza, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, que así haré yo, y veamos cómo está Rocinante; que, a lo que me parece, no le ha cabido al pobre la menor parte desta desgracia.

-No hay de qué maravillarse deso -respondió Sancho-, siendo él tan buen caballero andante; de lo que yo me maravillo es de que mi jumento haya quedado libre y sin costas donde nosotros salimos sin costillas.

-Siempre deja la ventura una puerta abierta en las desdichas, para dar remedio a ellas -dijo don Quijote-. Dígolo porque esa bestezuela podrá suplir ahora la falta de Rocinante, llevándome a mí desde aquí a algún castillo donde sea curado de mis heridas. Y más, que no tendré a deshonra la tal caballería, porque me acuerdo haber leído que aquel buen viejo Sileno, ayo y pedagogo del alegre dios de la risa, cuando entró en la ciudad de las cien puertas iba, muy a su placer, caballero sobre un muy hermoso asno.

-Verdad será que él debía de ir caballero, como vuestra merced dice -respondió Sancho-, pero hay grande diferencia del ir caballero al ir atravesado como costal de basura.

A lo cual respondió don Quijote:

-Las heridas que se reciben en las batallas, antes dan honra que la quitan. Así que, Panza amigo, no me repliques más, sino, como ya te he dicho, levántate lo mejor que pudieres y ponme de la manera que más te agradare encima de tu jumento, y vamos de aquí antes que la noche venga y nos saltee en este despoblado.

-Pues yo he oído decir a vuestra merced -dijo Panza-que es muy de caballeros andantes el dormir en los páramos y desiertos lo más del año, y que lo tienen a mucha ventura.

-Eso es -dijo don Quijote-cuando no pueden más, o cuando están enamorados; y es tan verdad esto, que ha habido caballero que se ha estado sobre una peña, al sol y a la sombra, y a las inclemencias del cielo, dos años, sin que lo supiese su señora. Y uno déstos fue Amadís, cuando, llamándose Beltenebros, se alojó en la Peña Pobre, ni sé si ocho años o ocho meses, que no estoy muy bien en la cuenta: basta que él estuvo allí haciendo penitencia, por no sé qué sinsabor que le hizo la señora Oriana. Pero dejemos ya esto, Sancho, y acaba, antes que suceda otra desgracia al jumento, como a Rocinante.

-Aun ahí sería el diablo -dijo Sancho.

Y, despidiendo treinta ayes, y sesenta suspiros, y ciento y veinte pésetes y reniegos de quien allí le había traído, se levantó, quedándose agobiado en la mitad del camino, como arco turquesco, sin poder acabar de enderezarse; y con todo este trabajo aparejó su asno, que también había andado algo distraído con la demasiada libertad de aquel día. Levantó luego a Rocinante, el cual, si tuviera lengua con que quejarse, a buen seguro que Sancho ni su amo no le fueran en zaga.

En resolución, Sancho acomodó a don Quijote sobre el asno y puso de reata a Rocinante; y, llevando al asno de cabestro, se encaminó, poco más a menos, hacia donde le pareció que podía estar el camino real. Y la suerte, que sus cosas de bien en mejor iba guiando, aún no hubo andado una pequeña legua, cuando le deparó el camino, en el cual descubrió una venta que, a pesar suyo y gusto de don Quijote, había de ser castillo. Porfiaba Sancho que era venta, y su amo que no, sino castillo; y tanto duró la porfía, que tuvieron lugar, sin acabarla, de llegar a ella, en la cual Sancho se entró, sin más averiguación, con toda su recua.

## Capítulo XVI

*De lo que le sucedió al ingenioso hidalgo en la venta que él imaginaba ser castillo*

EL VENTERO, que vio a don Quijote atravesado en el asno, preguntó a Sancho qué mal traía. Sancho le respondió que no era nada, sino que había dado una caída de una peña abajo, y que venía algo brumadas las costillas. Tenía el ventero por mujer a una, no de la condición que suelen tener las de semejante trato, porque naturalmente era caritativa y se dolía de las calamidades de sus prójimos; y así, acudió luego a curar a don Quijote y hizo que una hija suya, doncella, muchacha y de muy buen parecer, la ayudase a curar a su huésped. Servía en la venta, asimesmo, una moza asturiana, ancha de cara, llana de cogote, de nariz roma, del un ojo tuerta y del otro no muy sana. Verdad es que la gallardía del cuerpo suplía las demás faltas: no tenía siete palmos de los pies a la cabeza, y las espaldas, que algún tanto le cargaban, la hacían mirar al suelo más de lo que ella quisiera. Esta gentil moza, pues, ayudó a la doncella, y las dos hicieron una muy mala cama a don Quijote en un camaranchón que, en otros tiempos, daba manifiestos indicios que había servido de pajar muchos años. En la cual también alojaba un arriero, que tenía su cama hecha un poco más allá de la de nuestro don Quijote. Y, aunque era de las enjalmas y mantas de sus machos, hacía mucha ventaja a la de don Quijote, que sólo contenía cuatro mal lisas tablas, sobre dos no muy iguales bancos, y un colchón que en lo sutil parecía colcha, lleno de bodoques, que, a no mostrar que eran de lana por algunas roturas, al tiento, en la dureza, semejaban de guijarro, y dos sábanas hechas de cuero de adarga, y una frazada, cuyos hilos, si se quisieran contar, no se perdiera uno solo de la cuenta.

En esta maldita cama se acostó don Quijote, y luego la ventera y su hija le emplastaron de arriba abajo, alumbrándoles Maritornes, que así se llamaba la asturiana; y, como al bizmalle viese la ventera tan acardenalado a partes a don Quijote, dijo que aquello más parecían golpes que caída.

-No fueron golpes -dijo Sancho-, sino que la peña tenía muchos picos y tropezones.

Y que cada uno había hecho su cardenal. Y también le dijo:

-Haga vuestra merced, señora, de manera que queden algunas estopas, que no faltará quien las haya menester; que también me duelen a mí un poco los lomos.

-Desa manera -respondió la ventera-, también debistes vos de caer.

-No caí -dijo Sancho Panza-, sino que del sobresalto que tomé de ver caer a mi amo, de tal manera me duele a mí el cuerpo que me parece que me han dado mil palos.

-Bien podrá ser eso -dijo la doncella-; que a mí me ha acontecido muchas veces soñar que caía de una torre abajo y que nunca acababa de llegar al suelo, y, cuando despertaba del sueño, hallarme tan molida y quebrantada como si verdaderamente hubiera caído.

-Ahí está el toque, señora -respondió Sancho Panza-: que yo, sin soñar nada, sino estando más despierto que ahora estoy, me hallo con pocos menos cardenales que mi señor don Quijote.

-¿Cómo se llama este caballero? -preguntó la asturiana Maritornes.

-Don Quijote de la Mancha -respondió Sancho Panza-, y es caballero aventurero, y de los mejores y más fuertes que de luengos tiempos acá se han visto en el mundo.

-¿Qué es caballero aventurero? -replicó la moza.

-¿Tan nueva sois en el mundo que no lo sabéis vos? -respondió Sancho Panza-. Pues sabed, hermana mía, que caballero aventurero es una cosa que en dos palabras se ve apaleado y emperador. Hoy está la más desdichada criatura del mundo y la más menesterosa, y mañana tendría dos o tres coronas de reinos que dar a su escudero.

-Pues ¿cómo vos, siéndolo deste tan buen señor -dijo la ventera-, no tenéis, a lo que parece, siquiera algún condado?

-Aún es temprano -respondió Sancho-, porque no ha sino un mes que andamos buscando las aventuras, y hasta ahora no hemos topado con ninguna que lo sea. Y tal vez hay que se busca una cosa y se halla otra. Verdad es que, si mi señor don Quijote sana desta herida o caída y yo no quedo contrecho della, no trocaría mis esperanzas con el mejor título de España.

Todas estas pláticas estaba escuchando, muy atento, don Quijote, y, sentándose en el lecho como pudo, tomando de la mano a la ventera, le dijo:

-Creedme, hermosa señora, que os podéis llamar venturosa por haber alojado en este vuestro castillo a mi persona, que es tal, que si yo no la alabo, es por lo que suele decirse que la alabanza propia envilece; pero mi escudero os dirá quién soy. Sólo os digo que tendré eternamente escrito en mi memoria el servicio que me habedes fecho, para agradecéroslo mientras la vida me durare; y pluguiera a los altos cielos que el amor no me tuviera tan rendido y tan sujeto a sus leyes, y los ojos de aquella hermosa ingrata que digo entre mis dientes; que los desta hermosa doncella fueran señores de mi libertad.

Confusas estaban la ventera y su hija y la buena de Maritornes oyendo las



razones del andante caballero, que así las entendían como si hablara en griego, aunque bien alcanzaron que todas se encaminaban a ofrecimiento y requiebros; y, como no usadas a semejante lenguaje, mirábanle y admirábanse, y parecíales otro hombre de los que se usaban; y, agradeciéndole con venteriles razones sus ofrecimientos, le dejaron; y la asturiana Maritornes curó a Sancho, que no menos lo había menester que su amo.

Había el arriero concertado con ella que aquella noche se refocilarían juntos, y ella le había dado su palabra de que, en estando sosegados los huéspedes y durmiendo sus amos, le iría a buscar y satisfacerle el gusto en cuanto le mandase. Y cuéntase desta buena moza que jamás dio semejantes palabras que no las cumpliese, aunque las diese en un monte y sin testigo alguno; porque presumía muy de hidalga, y no tenía por afrenta estar en aquel ejercicio de servir en la venta, porque decía ella que desgracias y malos sucesos la habían traído a aquel estado.

El duro, estrecho, apocado y fementido lecho de don Quijote estaba primero en mitad de aquel estrellado establo, y luego, junto a él, hizo el suyo Sancho, que sólo contenía una estera de enea y una manta, que antes mostraba ser de anjeo tundido que de lana. Sucedió a estos dos lechos el del arriero, fabricado, como se ha dicho, de las enjalmas y todo el adorno de los dos mejores mulos que traía, aunque eran doce, lucios, gordos y famosos, porque era uno de los ricos arrieros de Arévalo, según lo dice el autor desta historia, que deste arriero hace particular mención, porque le conocía muy bien, y aun quieren decir que era algo pariente suyo. Fuera de que Cide Mahamate Benengeli fue historiador muy curioso y muy puntual en todas las cosas; y échase bien de ver, pues las que quedan referidas, con ser tan mínimas y tan rateras, no las quiso pasar en silencio; de donde podrán tomar ejemplo los historiadores graves, que nos cuentan las acciones tan corta y sucintamente que apenas nos llegan a los labios, dejándose en el tintero, ya por descuido, por malicia o ignorancia, lo más sustancial de la obra. ¡Bien haya mil veces el autor de *Tablante de Ricamonte*, y aquel del otro libro donde se cuenta los hechos del conde Tomillas; y con qué puntualidad lo describen todo!

Digo, pues, que después de haber visitado el arriero a su recua y dádole el segundo pienso, se tendió en sus enjalmas y se dio a esperar a su puntualísima Maritornes. Ya estaba Sancho bismado y acostado, y, aunque procuraba dormir, no lo consentía el dolor de sus costillas; y don Quijote, con el dolor de las suyas, tenía los ojos abiertos como liebre. Toda la venta estaba en silencio, y en toda ella no había otra luz que la que daba una lámpara que colgada en medio del portal ardía.

Esta maravillosa quietud, y los pensamientos que siempre nuestro caballero

traía de los sucesos que a cada paso se cuentan en los libros autores de su desgracia, le trujo a la imaginación una de las estrañas locuras que buenamente imaginarse pueden. Y fue que él se imaginó haber llegado a un famoso castillo - que, como se ha dicho, castillos eran a su parecer todas las ventas donde alojaba-, y que la hija del ventero lo era del señor del castillo, la cual, vencida de su gentileza, se había enamorado dél y prometido que aquella noche, a furto de sus padres, vendría a yacer con él una buena pieza; y, teniendo toda esta quimera, que él se había fabricado, por firme y valedera, se comenzó a acuitar y a pensar en el peligroso trance en que su honestidad se había de ver, y propuso en su corazón de no cometer alevosía a su señora Dulcinea del Toboso, aunque la misma reina Ginebra con su dama Quinañona se le pusiesen delante.

Pensando, pues, en estos disparates, se llegó el tiempo y la hora -que para él fue menguada-de la venida de la asturiana, la cual, en camisa y descalza, cogidos los cabellos en una albanega de fustán, con tábitos y atentados pasos, entró en el aposento donde los tres alojaban en busca del arriero. Pero, apenas llegó a la puerta, cuando don Quijote la sintió, y, sentándose en la cama, a pesar de sus bizmas y con dolor de sus costillas, tendió los brazos para recibir a su fermosa doncella. La asturiana, que, toda recogida y callando, iba con las manos delante buscando a su querido, topó con los brazos de don Quijote, el cual la asió fuertemente de una muñeca y, tirándola hacía sí, sin que ella osase hablar palabra, la hizo sentar sobre la cama. Tentóle luego la camisa, y, aunque ella era de harpillera, a él le pareció ser de finísimo y delgado cendal. Traía en las muñecas unas cuentas de vidro, pero a él le dieron vislumbres de preciosas perlas orientales. Los cabellos, que en alguna manera tiraban a crines, él los marcó por hebras de lucidísimo oro de Arabia, cuyo resplandor al del mismo sol escurecía. Y el aliento, que, sin duda alguna, olía a ensalada fiambre y trasnochada, a él le pareció que arrojaba de su boca un olor suave y aromático; y, finalmente, él la pintó en su imaginación de la misma traza y modo que lo había leído en sus libros de la otra princesa que vino a ver el mal ferido caballero, vencida de sus amores, con todos los adornos que aquí van puestos. Y era tanta la ceguedad del pobre hidalgo, que el tacto, ni el aliento, ni otras cosas que traía en sí la buena doncella, no le desengañaban, las cuales pudieran hacer vomitar a otro que no fuera arriero; antes, le parecía que tenía entre sus brazos a la diosa de la hermosura. Y, teniéndola bien asida, con voz amorosa y baja le comenzó a decir:

-Quisiera hallarme en términos, fermosa y alta señora, de poder pagar tamaña merced como la que con la vista de vuestra gran fermosura me habedes fecho, pero ha querido la fortuna, que no se cansa de perseguir a los buenos, ponerme en este lecho, donde yago tan molido y quebrantado que, aunque de mi voluntad

quisiera satisfacer a la vuestra, fuera imposible. Y más, que se añade a esta imposibilidad otra mayor, que es la prometida fe que tengo dada a la sin par Dulcinea del Toboso, única señora de mis más escondidos pensamientos; que si esto no hubiera de por medio, no fuera yo tan sandio caballero que dejara pasar en blanco la venturosa ocasión en que vuestra gran bondad me ha puesto.

Maritornes estaba congojadísima y trasudando de verse tan asida de don Quijote, y, sin entender ni estar atenta a las razones que le decía, procuraba, sin hablar palabra, desasirse. El bueno del arriero, a quien tenían despierto sus malos deseos, desde el punto que entró su coima por la puerta, la sintió; estuvo atentamente escuchando todo lo que don Quijote decía, y, celoso de que la asturiana le hubiese faltado la palabra por otro, se fue llegando más al lecho de don Quijote, y estúvose quedo hasta ver en qué paraban aquellas razones, que él no podía entender. Pero, como vio que la moza forcejaba por desasirse y don Quijote trabajaba por tenella, pareciéndole mal la burla, enarboló el brazo en alto y descargó tan terrible puñada sobre las estrechas quijadas del enamorado caballero, que le bañó toda la boca en sangre; y, no contento con esto, se le subió encima de las costillas, y con los pies más que de trote, se las paseó todas de cabo a cabo.

El lecho, que era un poco endeble y de no firmes fundamentos, no pudiendo sufrir la añadidura del arriero, dio consigo en el suelo, a cuyo gran ruido despertó el ventero, y luego imaginó que debían de ser pendencias de Maritornes, porque, habiéndola llamado a voces, no respondía. Con esta sospecha se levantó, y, encendiendo un candil, se fue hacia donde había sentido la pelaza. La moza, viendo que su amo venía, y que era de condición terrible, toda medrosica y alborotada, se acogió a la cama de Sancho Panza, que aún dormía, y allí se acorruco y se hizo un ovillo. El ventero entró diciendo:

-¿Adónde estás, puta? A buen seguro que son tus cosas éstas.

En esto, despertó Sancho, y, sintiendo aquel bulto casi encima de sí, pensó que tenía la pesadilla, y comenzó a dar puñadas a una y otra parte, y entre otras alcanzó con no sé cuántas a Maritornes, la cual, sentida del dolor, echando a rodar la honestidad, dio el retorno a Sancho con tantas que, a su despecho, le quitó el sueño; el cual, viéndose tratar de aquella manera y sin saber de quién, alzándose como pudo, se abrazó con Maritornes, y comenzaron entre los dos la más reñida y graciosa escaramuza del mundo.

Viendo, pues, el arriero, a la lumbrer del candil del ventero, cuál andaba su dama, dejando a don Quijote, acudió a darme el socorro necesario. Lo mismo hizo el ventero, pero con intención diferente, porque fue a castigar a la moza, creyendo sin duda que ella sola era la ocasión de toda aquella armonía. Y así como suele decirse: «el gato al rato, el rato a la cuerda, la cuerda al palo», daba

el arriero a Sancho, Sancho a la moza, la moza a él, el ventero a la moza, y todos menudeaban con tanta priesa que no se daban punto de reposo; y fue lo bueno que al ventero se le apagó el candil, y, como quedaron ascuras, dábanse tan sin compasión todos a bulto que, a doquiera que ponían la mano, no dejaban cosa sana.

Alojaba acaso aquella noche en la venta un cuadrillero de los que llaman de la Santa Hermandad Vieja de Toledo, el cual, oyendo ansimesmo el extraño estruendo de la pelea, asió de su media vara y de la caja de lata de sus títulos, y entró ascuras en el aposento, diciendo:

-¡Ténganse a la justicia! ¡Ténganse a la Santa Hermandad!

Y el primero con quien topó fue con el apuñeado de don Quijote, que estaba en su derribado lecho, tendido boca arriba, sin sentido alguno, y, echándole a tiento mano a las barbas, no cesaba de decir:

-¡Favor a la justicia!

Pero, viendo que el que tenía asido no se bullía ni meneaba, se dio a entender que estaba muerto, y que los que allí dentro estaban eran sus matadores; y con esta sospecha reforzó la voz, diciendo:

-¡Ciérrese la puerta de la venta! ¡Miren no se vaya nadie, que han muerto aquí a un hombre!

Esta voz sobresaltó a todos, y cada cual dejó la pendencia en el grado que le tomó la voz. Retiróse el ventero a su aposento, el arriero a sus enjalmas, la moza a su rancho; solos los desventurados don Quijote y Sancho no se pudieron mover de donde estaban. Soltó en esto el cuadrillero la barba de don Quijote, y salió a buscar luz para buscar y prender los delincuentes; mas no la halló, porque el ventero, de industria, había muerto la lámpara cuando se retiró a su estancia, y fuele forzoso acudir a la chimenea, donde, con mucho trabajo y tiempo, encendió el cuadrillero otro candil.

## Capítulo XVII

*Donde se prosiguen los innumerables trabajos que el bravo don Quijote y su buen escudero Sancho Panza pasaron en la venta que, por su mal, pensó que era castillo*

HABÍA ya vuelto en este tiempo de su parasismo don Quijote, y, con el mismo tono de voz con que el día antes había llamado a su escudero, cuando estaba tendido en el val de las estacas, le comenzó a llamar, diciendo:

-Sancho amigo, ¿duermes? ¿Duermes, amigo Sancho?

-¡Qué tengo de dormir, pesia a mí -respondió Sancho, lleno de pesadumbre y de despecho-; que no parece sino que todos los diablos han andado conmigo esta noche!

-Puédeslo creer así, sin duda -respondió don Quijote-, porque, o yo sé poco, o este castillo es encantado. Porque has de saber... Mas, esto que ahora quiero decirte hasme de jurar que lo tendrás secreto hasta después de mi muerte.

-Sí juro -respondió Sancho.

-Dígolo -replicó don Quijote-, porque soy enemigo de que se quite la honra a nadie.

-Digo que sí juro -tornó a decir Sancho-que lo callaré hasta después de los días de vuestra merced, y plega a Dios que lo pueda descubrir mañana.

-¿Tan malas obras te hago, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, que me querías ver muerto con tanta brevedad?

-No es por eso -respondió Sancho-, sino porque soy enemigo de guardar mucho las cosas, y no querría que se me pudriesen de guardadas.

-Sea por lo que fuere -dijo don Quijote-; que más fío de tu amor y de tu cortesía; y así, has de saber que esta noche me ha sucedido una de las más estrañas aventuras que yo sabré encarecer; y, por contártela en breve, sabrás que poco ha que a mí vino la hija del señor deste castillo, que es la más apuesta y hermosa doncella que en gran parte de la tierra se puede hallar. ¿Qué te podría decir del adorno de su persona? ¿Qué de su gallardo entendimiento? ¿Qué de otras cosas ocultas, que, por guardar la fe que debo a mi señora Dulcinea del Toboso, dejaré pasar intactas y en silencio? Sólo te quiero decir que, envidioso el cielo de tanto bien como la ventura me había puesto en las manos, o quizá, y esto es lo más cierto, que, como tengo dicho, es encantado este castillo, al tiempo que yo estaba con ella en dulcísimos y amorosísimos coloquios, sin que

yo la viese ni supiese por dónde venía, vino una mano pegada a algún brazo de algún descomunal gigante y asentóme una puñada en las quijadas, tal, que las tengo todas bañadas en sangre; y después me molió de tal suerte que estoy peor que ayer cuando los gallegos, que, por demasías de Rocinante, nos hicieron el agravio que sabes. Por donde conjeturo que el tesoro de la fermosura desta doncella le debe de guardar algún encantado moro, y no debe de ser para mí.

-Ni para mí tampoco -respondió Sancho-, porque más de cuatrocientos moros me han aporreado a mí, de manera que el molimiento de las estacas fue tortas y pan pintado. Pero dígame, señor, ¿cómo llama a ésta buena y rara aventura, habiendo quedado della cual quedamos? Aun vuestra merced menos mal, pues tuvo en sus manos aquella incomparable fermosura que ha dicho, pero yo, ¿qué tuve sino los mayores porrazos que pienso recibir en toda mi vida? ¡Desdichado de mí y de la madre que me parió, que ni soy caballero andante, ni lo pienso ser jamás, y de todas las malandanzas me cabe la mayor parte!

-Luego, ¿también estás tú aporreado? -respondió don Quijote.

-¿No le he dicho que sí, pesia a mi linaje? -dijo Sancho.

-No tengas pena, amigo -dijo don Quijote-, que yo haré agora el bálsamo precioso con que sanaremos en un abrir y cerrar de ojos.

Acabó en esto de encender el candil el cuadrillero, y entró a ver el que pensaba que era muerto; y, así como le vio entrar Sancho, viéndole venir en camisa y con su paño de cabeza y candil en la mano, y con una muy mala cara, preguntó a su amo:

-Señor, ¿si será éste, a dicha, el moro encantado, que nos vuelve a castigar, si se dejó algo en el tintero?

-No puede ser el moro -respondió don Quijote-, porque los encantados no se dejan ver de nadie.

-Si no se dejan ver, déjanse sentir -dijo Sancho-; si no, díganlo mis espaldas.

-También lo podrían decir las mías -respondió don Quijote-, pero no es bastante indicio ése para creer que este que se vea sea el encantado moro.

Llegó el cuadrillero, y, como los halló hablando en tan sosegada conversación, quedó suspenso. Bien es verdad que aún don Quijote se estaba boca arriba, sin poderse menear, de puro molido y emplastado. Llegóse a él el cuadrillero y díjole:

-Pues ¿cómo va, buen hombre?

-Hablara yo más bien criado -respondió don Quijote-, si fuera que vos. ¿Úsase en esta tierra hablar desa suerte a los caballeros andantes, majadero?

El cuadrillero, que se vio tratar tan mal de un hombre de tan mal parecer, no lo pudo sufrir, y, alzando el candil con todo su aceite, dio a don Quijote con él en la cabeza, de suerte que le dejó muy bien descalabrado; y, como todo quedó

ascuras, salióse luego; y Sancho Panza dijo:

-Sin duda, señor, que éste es el moro encantado, y debe de guardar el tesoro para otros, y para nosotros sólo guarda las puñadas y los candilazos.

-Así es -respondió don Quijote-, y no hay que hacer caso destas cosas de encantamientos, ni hay para qué tomar cólera ni enojo con ellas; que, como son invisibles y fantásticas, no hallaremos de quién vengarnos, aunque más lo procuremos. Levántate, Sancho, si puedes, y llama al alcaide desta fortaleza, y procura que se me dé un poco de aceite, vino, sal y romero para hacer el salutífero bálsamo; que en verdad que creo que lo he bien menester ahora, porque se me va mucha sangre de la herida que esta fantasma me ha dado.

Levantóse Sancho con harto dolor de sus huesos, y fue ascuras donde estaba el ventero; y, encontrándose con el cuadrillero, que estaba escuchando en qué paraba su enemigo, le dijo:

-Señor, quienquiera que seáis, hacednos merced y beneficio de darnos un poco de romero, aceite, sal y vino, que es menester para curar uno de los mejores caballeros andantes que hay en la tierra, el cual yace en aquella cama, malferido por las manos del encantado moro que está en esta venta.

Cuando el cuadrillero tal oyó, túvole por hombre falto de seso; y, porque ya comenzaba a amanecer, abrió la puerta de la venta, y, llamando al ventero, le dijo lo que aquel buen hombre quería. El ventero le proveyó de cuanto quiso, y Sancho se lo llevó a don Quijote, que estaba con las manos en la cabeza, quejándose del dolor del candilazo, que no le había hecho más mal que levantarle dos chichones algo crecidos, y lo que él pensaba que era sangre no era sino sudor que sudaba con la congoja de la pasada tormenta.

En resolución, él tomó sus simples, de los cuales hizo un compuesto, mezclándolos todos y cociéndolos un buen espacio, hasta que le pareció que estaban en su punto. Pidió luego alguna redoma para echallo, y, como no la hubo en la venta, se resolvió de ponello en una alcuza o aceitera de hoja de lata, de quien el ventero le hizo grata donación. Y luego dijo sobre la alcuza más de ochenta paternostres y otras tantas avemarías, salves y credos, y a cada palabra acompañaba una cruz, a modo de bendición; a todo lo cual se hallaron presentes Sancho, el ventero y cuadrillero; que ya el arriero sosegadamente andaba entendiendo en el beneficio de sus machos.

Hecho esto, quiso él mesmo hacer luego la experiencia de la virtud de aquel precioso bálsamo que él se imaginaba; y así, se bebió, de lo que no pudo caber en la alcuza y quedaba en la olla donde se había cocido, casi media azumbre; y apenas lo acabó de beber, cuando comenzó a vomitar de manera que no le quedó cosa en el estómago; y con las ansias y agitación del vómito le dio un sudor copiosísimo, por lo cual mandó que le arropasen y le dejasen solo. Hiciéronlo

ansí, y quedóse dormido más de tres horas, al cabo de las cuales despertó y se sintió aliviadísimo del cuerpo, y en tal manera mejor de su quebrantamiento que se tuvo por sano; y verdaderamente creyó que había acertado con el bálsamo de Fierabrás, y que con aquel remedio podía acometer desde allí adelante, sin temor alguno, cualesquiera ruinas, batallas y pendencias, por peligrosas que fuesen.

Sancho Panza, que también tuvo a milagro la mejoría de su amo, le rogó que le diese a él lo que quedaba en la olla, que no era poca cantidad. Concedióselo don Quijote, y él, tomándola a dos manos, con buena fe y mejor talante, se la echó a pechos, y envasó bien poco menos que su amo. Es, pues, el caso que el estómago del pobre Sancho no debía de ser tan delicado como el de su amo, y así, primero que vomitase, le dieron tantas ansias y bascas, con tantos trasudores y desmayos que él pensó bien y verdaderamente que era llegada su última hora; y, viéndose tan afligido y congojado, maldecía el bálsamo y al ladrón que se lo había dado. Viéndole así don Quijote, le dijo:

-Yo creo, Sancho, que todo este mal te viene de no ser armado caballero, porque tengo para mí que este licor no debe de aprovechar a los que no lo son.

-Si eso sabía vuestra merced -replicó Sancho-, ¡mal haya yo y toda mi parentela!, ¿para qué consintió que lo gustase?

En esto, hizo su operación el brebaje, y comenzó el pobre escudero a desaguarse por entrambas canales, con tanta priesa, que la estera de enea, sobre quien se había vuelto a echar, ni la manta de anjeo con que se cubría, fueron más de provecho. Sudaba y trasudaba con tales parasismos y accidentes, que no solamente él, sino todos pensaron que se le acababa la vida. Duróle esta borrasca y mala andanza casi dos horas, al cabo de las cuales no quedó como su amo, sino tan molido y quebrantado, que no se podía tener.

Pero don Quijote, que, como se ha dicho, se sintió aliviado y sano, quiso partirse luego a buscar aventuras, pareciéndole que todo el tiempo que allí se tardaba era quitársele al mundo y a los en él menesterosos de su favor y amparo; y más con la seguridad y confianza que llevaba en su bálsamo. Y así, forzado deste deseo, él mismo ensilló a Rocinante y enalbardó al jumento de su escudero, a quien también ayudó a vestir y a subir en el asno. Púsose luego a caballo, y, llegándose a un rincón de la venta, asió de un lanzón que allí estaba, para que le sirviese de lanza.

Estábanle mirando todos cuantos había en la venta, que pasaban de más de veinte personas; mirábale también la hija del ventero, y él también no quitaba los ojos della, y de cuando en cuando arrojaba un suspiro que parecía que le arrancaba de lo profundo de sus entrañas, y todos pensaban que debía de ser del dolor que sentía en las costillas; a lo menos, pensábanlo aquellos que la noche antes le habían visto bizmar.



Ya que estuvieron los dos a caballo, puesto a la puerta de la venta, llamó al ventero, y con voz muy reposada y grave le dijo:

-Muchas y muy grandes son las mercedes, señor alcaide, que en este vuestro castillo he recebido, y quedo obligadísimo a agradecéros las todos los días de mi vida. Si os las puedo pagar en haceros vengado de algún soberbio que os haya fecho algún agravio, sabed que mi oficio no es otro sino valer a los que poco pueden, y vengar a los que reciben tuertos, y castigar alevosías. Recorred vuestra memoria, y si halláis alguna cosa deste jaez que encomendarme, no hay sino decilla; que yo os prometo, por la orden de caballero que recibí, de faceros satisfecho y pagado a toda vuestra voluntad.

El ventero le respondió con el mismo sosiego:

-Señor caballero, yo no tengo necesidad de que vuestra merced me vengue ningún agravio, porque yo sé tomar la venganza que me parece, cuando se me hacen. Sólo he menester que vuestra merced me pague el gasto que esta noche ha hecho en la venta, así de la paja y cebada de sus dos bestias, como de la cena y camas.

-Luego, ¿venta es ésta? -replicó don Quijote.

-Y muy honrada -respondió el ventero.

-Engañado he vivido hasta aquí -respondió don Quijote-, que en verdad que pensé que era castillo, y no malo; pero, pues es ansí que no es castillo sino venta, lo que se podrá hacer por agora es que perdonéis por la paga, que yo no puedo contravenir a la orden de los caballeros andantes, de los cuales sé cierto, sin que hasta ahora haya leído cosa en contrario, que jamás pagaron posada ni otra cosa en venta donde estuviesen, porque se les debe de fuero y de derecho cualquier buen acogimiento que se les hiciere, en pago del insufrible trabajo que padecen buscando las aventuras de noche y de día, en invierno y en verano, a pie y a caballo, con sed y con hambre, con calor y con frío, sujetos a todas las inclemencias del cielo y a todos los incómodos de la tierra.

-Poco tengo yo que ver en eso -respondió el ventero-; págueseme lo que se me debe, y dejémonos de cuentos ni de caballerías, que yo no tengo cuenta con otra cosa que con cobrar mi hacienda.

-Vos sois un sandio y mal hostelero -respondió don Quijote.

Y, poniendo piernas al Rocinante y terciando su lanzón, se salió de la venta sin que nadie le detuviese, y él, sin mirar si le seguía su escudero, se alongó un buen trecho.

El ventero, que le vio ir y que no le pagaba, acudió a cobrar de Sancho Panza, el cual dijo que, pues su señor no había querido pagar, que tampoco él pagaría; porque, siendo él escudero de caballero andante, como era, la misma regla y razón corría por él como por su amo en no pagar cosa alguna en los mesones y

ventas. Amohinóse mucho desto el ventero, y amenazóle que si no le pagaba, que lo cobraría de modo que le pesase. A lo cual Sancho respondió que, por la ley de caballería que su amo había recibido, no pagaría un solo cornado, aunque le costase la vida; porque no había de perder por él la buena y antigua usanza de los caballeros andantes, ni se habían de quejar dél los escuderos de los tales que estaban por venir al mundo, reprochándole el quebrantamiento de tan justo fuero.

Quiso la mala suerte del desdichado Sancho que, entre la gente que estaba en la venta, se hallasen cuatro perales de Segovia, tres agujeros del Potro de Córdoba y dos vecinos de la Heria de Sevilla, gente alegre, bien intencionada, maleante y juguetona, los cuales, casi como instigados y movidos de un mismo espíritu, se llegaron a Sancho, y, apeándole del asno, uno dellos entró por la manta de la cama del huésped, y, echándole en ella, alzaron los ojos y vieron que el techo era algo más bajo de lo que habían menester para su obra, y determinaron salirse al corral, que tenía por límite el cielo. Y allí, puesto Sancho en mitad de la manta, comenzaron a levantarle en alto y a holgarse con él como con perro por carnestolendas.

Las voces que el mísero manteado daba fueron tantas, que llegaron a los oídos de su amo; el cual, determinándose a escuchar atentamente, creyó que alguna nueva aventura le venía, hasta que claramente conoció que el que gritaba era su escudero; y, volviendo las riendas, con un penado galope llegó a la venta, y, hallándola cerrada, la rodeó por ver si hallaba por donde entrar; pero no hubo llegado a las paredes del corral, que no eran muy altas, cuando vio el mal juego que se le hacía a su escudero. Viole bajar y subir por el aire, con tanta gracia y presteza que, si la cólera le dejara, tengo para mí que se riera. Probó a subir desde el caballo a las bardas, pero estaba tan molido y quebrantado, que aun apearse no pudo; y así, desde encima del caballo, comenzó a decir tantos denuestos y baldones a los que a Sancho manteaban, que no es posible acertar a escribillos; mas no por esto cesaban ellos de su risa y de su obra, ni el volador Sancho dejaba sus quejas, mezcladas ya con amenazas, ya con ruegos; mas todo aprovechaba poco, ni aprovechó, hasta que de puro cansados le dejaron. Trujéronle allí su asno, y, subiéndole encima, le arroparon con su gabán. Y la compasiva de Maritornes, viéndole tan fatigado, le pareció ser bien socorrelle con un jarro de agua, y así, se le trujo del pozo, por ser más frío. Tomóle Sancho, y llevándole a la boca, se paró a las voces que su amo le daba, diciendo:

-¡Hijo Sancho, no bebas agua! ¡Hijo, no la bebas, que te matará! ¿Ves? Aquí tengo el santísimo bálsamo -y enseñáble la alcuza del brebaje-, que con dos gotas que dél bebas sanarás sin duda.

A estas voces volvió Sancho los ojos, como de través, y dijo con otras

mayores:

-¿Por dicha hásele olvidado a vuestra merced como yo no soy caballero, o quiere que acabe de vomitar las entrañas que me quedaron de anoche? Guárdese su licor con todos los diablos y déjeme a mí.

Y el acabar de decir esto y el comenzar a beber todo fue uno; mas, como al primer trago vio que era agua, no quiso pasar adelante, y rogó a Maritornes que se le trujese de vino, y así lo hizo ella de muy buena voluntad, y lo pagó de su mismo dinero; porque, en efecto, se dice della que, aunque estaba en aquel trato, tenía unas sombras y lejos de cristiana.

Así como bebió Sancho, dio de los carcaños a su asno, y, abriéndole la puerta de la venta de par en par, se salió della, muy contento de no haber pagado nada y de haber salido con su intención, aunque había sido a costa de sus acostumbrados fiadores, que eran sus espaldas. Verdad es que el ventero se quedó con sus alforjas en pago de lo que se le debía; mas Sancho no las echó menos, según salió turbado. Quiso el ventero atrancar bien la puerta así como le vio fuera, mas no lo consintieron los manteadores, que eran gente que, aunque don Quijote fuera verdaderamente de los caballeros andantes de la Tabla Redonda, no le estimaran en dos ardites.

## Capítulo XVIII

*Donde se cuentan las razones que pasó Sancho Panza con su señor Don Quijote, con otras aventuras dignas de ser contadas*

LLEGÓ Sancho a su amo marchito y desmayado; tanto, que no podía arrear a su jumento. Cuando así le vio don Quijote, le dijo:

-Ahora acabo de creer, Sancho bueno, que aquel castillo o venta, de que es encantado sin duda; porque aquellos que tan atrozmente tomaron pasatiempo contigo, ¿qué podían ser sino fantasmas y gente del otro mundo? Y confirmo esto por haber visto que, cuando estaba por las bardas del corral mirando los actos de tu triste tragedia, no me fue posible subir por ellas, ni menos pude apear-me de Rocinante, porque me debían de tener encantado; que te juro, por la fe de quien soy, que si pudiera subir o apear-me, que yo te hiciera vengado de manera que aquellos follones y malandrines se acordaran de la burla para siempre, aunque en ello supiera contravenir a las leyes de la caballería, que, como ya muchas veces te he dicho, no consienten que caballero ponga mano contra quien no lo sea, si no fuere en defensa de su propia vida y persona, en caso de urgente y gran necesidad.

-También me vengara yo si pudiera, fuera o no fuera armado caballero, pero no pude; aunque tengo para mí que aquellos que se holgaron conmigo no eran fantasmas ni hombres encantados, como vuestra merced dice, sino hombres de carne y de hueso como nosotros; y todos, según los oí nombrar cuando me volteaban, tenían sus nombres: que el uno se llamaba Pedro Martínez, y el otro Tenorio Hernández, y el ventero oí que se llamaba Juan Palomeque el Zurdo. Así que, señor, el no poder saltar las bardas del corral, ni apear-se del caballo, en ál estuvo que en encantamientos. Y lo que yo saco en limpio de todo esto es que estas aventuras que andamos buscando, al cabo al cabo, nos han de traer a tantas desventuras que no sepamos cuál es nuestro pie derecho. Y lo que sería mejor y más acertado, según mi poco entendimiento, fuera el volvernos a nuestro lugar, ahora que es tiempo de la siega y de entender en la hacienda, dejándonos de andar de Ceca en Meca y de zoca en colodra, como dicen.

-¡Qué poco sabes, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, de achaque de caballería! Calla y ten paciencia, que día vendrá donde veas por vista de ojos cuán honrosa cosa es andar en este ejercicio. Si no, dime: ¿qué mayor contento puede haber en el mundo, o qué gusto puede igualarse al de vencer una batalla y al de triunfar de

su enemigo? Ninguno, sin duda alguna.

-Así debe de ser -respondió Sancho-, puesto que yo no lo sé; sólo sé que, después que somos caballeros andantes, o vuestra merced lo es (que yo no hay para qué me cuente en tan honroso número), jamás hemos vencido batalla alguna, si no fue la del vizcaíno, y aun de aquélla salió vuestra merced con media oreja y media celada menos; que, después acá, todo ha sido palos y más palos, puñadas y más puñadas, llevando yo de ventaja el manteamiento y haberme sucedido por personas encantadas, de quien no puedo vengarme, para saber hasta dónde llega el gusto del vencimiento del enemigo, como vuestra merced dice.

-Ésa es la pena que yo tengo y la que tú debes tener, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-; pero, de aquí adelante, yo procuraré haber a las manos alguna espada hecha por tal maestría, que al que la trujere consigo no le puedan hacer ningún género de encantamientos; y aun podría ser que me deparase la ventura aquella de Amadís, cuando se llamaba *el Caballero de la Ardiente Espada*, que fue una de las mejores espadas que tuvo caballero en el mundo, porque, fuera que tenía la virtud dicha, cortaba como una navaja, y no había armadura, por fuerte y encantada que fuese, que se le parase delante.

-Yo soy tan venturoso -dijo Sancho-que, cuando eso fuese y vuestra merced viniese a hallar espada semejante, sólo vendría a servir y aprovechar a los armados caballeros, como el bálsamo; y a los escuderos, que se los papen duelos.

-No temas eso, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, que mejor lo hará el cielo contigo.

En estos coloquios iban don Quijote y su escudero, cuando vio don Quijote que por el camino que iban venía hacia ellos una grande y espesa polvareda; y, en viéndola, se volvió a Sancho y le dijo:

-Éste es el día, ¡oh Sancho!, en el cual se ha de ver el bien que me tiene guardado mi suerte; éste es el día, digo, en que se ha de mostrar, tanto como en otro alguno, el valor de mi brazo, y en el que tengo de hacer obras que queden escritas en el libro de la Fama por todos los venideros siglos. ¿Ves aquella polvareda que allí se levanta, Sancho? Pues toda es cuajada de un copiosísimo ejército que de diversas e innumerables gentes por allí viene marchando.

-A esa cuenta, dos deben de ser -dijo Sancho-, porque desta parte contraria se levanta asimesmo otra semejante polvareda.

Volvió a mirarlo don Quijote, y vio que así era la verdad; y, alegrándose sobremanera, pensó, sin duda alguna, que eran dos ejércitos que venían a embestirse y a encontrarse en mitad de aquella espaciosa llanura; porque tenía a todas horas y momentos llena la fantasía de aquellas batallas, encantamientos, sucesos, desatinos, amores, desafíos, que en los libros de caballerías se cuentan, y todo cuanto hablaba, pensaba o hacía era encaminado a cosas semejantes. Y la

polvareda que había visto la levantaban dos grandes manadas de ovejas y carneros que, por aquel mismo camino, de dos diferentes partes venían, las cuales, con el polvo, no se echaron de ver hasta que llegaron cerca. Y con tanto ahínco afirmaba don Quijote que eran ejércitos, que Sancho lo vino a creer y a decirle:

-Señor, pues ¿qué hemos de hacer nosotros?

-¿Qué? -dijo don Quijote-: favorecer y ayudar a los menesterosos y desvalidos. Y has de saber, Sancho, que este que viene por nuestra frente le conduce y guía el grande emperador Alifanfarón, señor de la grande isla Trapobana; este otro que a mis espaldas marcha es el de su enemigo, el rey de los garamantas, Pentapolén del Arremangado Brazo, porque siempre entra en las batallas con el brazo derecho desnudo.

-Pues, ¿por qué se quieren tan mal estos dos señores? -preguntó Sancho.

-Quiérense mal -respondió don Quijote- porque este Alefanfarón es un foribundo pagano y está enamorado de la hija de Pentapolín, que es una muy hermosa y además agraciada señora, y es cristiana, y su padre no se la quiere entregar al rey pagano si no deja primero la ley de su falso profeta Mahoma y se vuelve a la suya.

-¡Para mis barbas -dijo Sancho-, si no hace muy bien Pentapolín, y que le tengo de ayudar en cuanto pudiere!

-En eso harás lo que debes, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, porque, para entrar en batallas semejantes, no se requiere ser armado caballero.

-Bien se me alcanza eso -respondió Sancho-, pero ¿dónde pondremos a este asno que estemos ciertos de hallarle después de pasada la refriega? Porque el entrar en ella en semejante caballería no creo que está en uso hasta agora.

-Así es verdad -dijo don Quijote-. Lo que puedes hacer dél es dejarle a sus aventuras, ora se pierda o no, porque serán tantos los caballos que tendremos, después que salgamos vencedores, que aun corre peligro Rocinante no le trueque por otro. Pero estáme atento y mira, que te quiero dar cuenta de los caballeros más principales que en estos dos ejércitos vienen. Y, para que mejor los veas y notes, retirémonos a aquel altillo que allí se hace, de donde se deben de descubrir los dos ejércitos.

Hiciéronlo así, y pusiéronse sobre una loma, desde la cual se vieran bien las dos manadas que a don Quijote se le hicieron ejército, si las nubes del polvo que levantaban no les turbara y cegara la vista; pero, con todo esto, viendo en su imaginación lo que no veía ni había, con voz levantada comenzó a decir:

-Aquel caballero que allí ves de las armas jaldes, que trae en el escudo un león coronado, rendido a los pies de una doncella, es el valeroso Laurcalco, señor de la Puente de Plata; el otro de las armas de las flores de oro, que trae en el escudo

tres coronas de plata en campo azul, es el temido Micocolembos, gran duque de Quirocia; el otro de los miembros gigantes, que está a su derecha mano, es el nunca medroso Brandabarbarán de Boliche, señor de las tres Arabias, que viene armado de aquel cuero de serpiente, y tiene por escudo una puerta que, según es fama, es una de las del templo que derribó Sansón, cuando con su muerte se vengó de sus enemigos. Pero vuelve los ojos a estotra parte y verás delante y en la frente destotro ejército al siempre vencedor y jamás vencido Timonel de Carcajona, príncipe de la Nueva Vizcaya, que viene armado con las armas partidas a cuarteles, azules, verdes, blancas y amarillas, y trae en el escudo un gato de oro en campo leonado, con una letra que dice: *Miau*, que es el principio del nombre de su dama, que, según se dice, es la sin par Miulina, hija del duque Alfeñiquén del Algarbe; el otro, que carga y oprime los lomos de aquella poderosa alfana, que trae las armas como nieve blancas y el escudo blanco y sin empresa alguna, es un caballero novel, de nación francés, llamado Pierres Papín, señor de las baronías de Utrique; el otro, que bate las ijadas con los herrados carcaños a aquella pintada y ligera cebría, y trae las armas de los veros azules, es el poderoso duque de Nerbia, Espartafilardo del Bosque, que trae por empresa en el escudo una esparraguera, con una letra en castellano que dice así: *Rastrea mi suerte*.

Y desta manera fue nombrando muchos caballeros del uno y del otro escuadrón, que él se imaginaba, y a todos les dio sus armas, colores, empresas y motes de improviso, llevado de la imaginación de su nunca vista locura; y, sin parar, prosiguió diciendo:

-A este escuadrón frontero forman y hacen gentes de diversas naciones: aquí están los que bebían las dulces aguas del famoso Janto; los montuosos que pisan los masílicos campos; los que criban el finísimo y menudo oro en la felice Arabia; los que gozan las famosas y frescas riberas del claro Termodonte; los que sangran por muchas y diversas vías al dorado Pactolo; los núbidas, dudosos en sus promesas; los persas, arcos y flechas famosos; los partos, los medos, que pelean huyendo; los árabes, de mudables casas; los citas, tan crueles como blancos; los etiopes, de horadados labios, y otras infinitas naciones, cuyos rostros conozco y veo, aunque de los nombres no me acuerdo. En estotro escuadrón vienen los que beben las corrientes cristalinas del olivífero Betis; los que tersan y pulen sus rostros con el licor del siempre rico y dorado Tajo; los que gozan las provechosas aguas del divino Genil; los que pisan los tartesios campos, de pastos abundantes; los que se alegran en los elíseos jerezanos prados; los manchegos, ricos y coronados de rubias espigas; los de hierro vestidos, reliquias antiguas de la sangre goda; los que en Pisuerga se bañan, famoso por la mansedumbre de su corriente; los que su ganado apacientan en las estendidas

dehesas del tortuoso Guadiana, celebrado por su escondido curso; los que tiemblan con el frío del silvoso Pirineo y con los blancos copos del levantado Apenino; finalmente, cuantos toda la Europa en sí contiene y encierra.

¡Válame Dios, y cuántas provincias dijo, cuántas naciones nombró, dándole a cada una, con maravillosa presteza, los atributos que le pertenecían, todo absorto y empapado en lo que había leído en sus libros mentirosos!

Estaba Sancho Panza colgado de sus palabras, sin hablar ninguna, y, de cuando en cuando, volvía la cabeza a ver si veía los caballeros y gigantes que su amo nombraba; y, como no descubría a ninguno, le dijo:

-Señor, encomiendo al diablo hombre, ni gigante, ni caballero de cuantos vuestra merced dice parece por todo esto; a lo menos, yo no los veo; quizá todo debe ser encantamento, como las fantasmas de anoche.

-¿Cómo dices eso? -respondió don Quijote-. ¿No oyes el relinchar de los caballos, el tocar de los clarines, el ruido de los atambores?

-No oigo otra cosa -respondió Sancho-sino muchos balidos de ovejas y carneros.

Y así era la verdad, porque ya llegaban cerca los dos rebaños.

-El miedo que tienes -dijo don Quijote-te hace, Sancho, que ni veas ni oyas a derechas; porque uno de los efectos del miedo es turbar los sentidos y hacer que las cosas no parezcan lo que son; y si es que tanto temes, retírate a una parte y déjame solo, que solo basto a dar la victoria a la parte a quien yo diere mi ayuda.

Y, diciendo esto, puso las espuelas a Rocinante, y, puesta la lanza en el ristre, bajó de la costezuela como un rayo. Diole voces Sancho, diciéndole:

-¡Vuélvase vuestra merced, señor don Quijote, que voto a Dios que son carneros y ovejas las que va a embestir! ¡Vuélvase, desdichado del padre que me engendró! ¿Qué locura es ésta? Mire que no hay gigante ni caballero alguno, ni gatos, ni armas, ni escudos partidos ni enteros, ni veros azules ni endiablados. ¿Qué es lo que hace? ¡Pecador soy yo a Dios!

Ni por ésas volvió don Quijote; antes, en altas voces, iba diciendo:

-¡Ea, caballeros, los que seguís y militáis debajo de las banderas del valeroso emperador Pentapolín del Arremangado Brazo, seguidme todos: veréis cuán fácilmente le doy venganza de su enemigo Alefanfarón de la Trapobana!

Esto diciendo, se entró por medio del escuadrón de las ovejas, y comenzó de alanceallas con tanto coraje y denuedo como si de veras alanceara a sus mortales enemigos. Los pastores y ganaderos que con la manada venían dábanle voces que no hiciese aquello; pero, viendo que no aprovechaban, descñéronse las hondas y comenzaron a saludarle los oídos con piedras como el puño. Don Quijote no se curaba de las piedras; antes, discurriendo a todas partes, decía:

-¿Adónde estás, soberbio Alifanfuón? Vente a mí; que un caballero solo soy,



que desea, de solo a solo, probar tus fuerzas y quitarte la vida, en pena de la que das al valeroso Pentapolín Garamanta.

Llegó en esto una peladilla de arroyo, y, dándole en un lado, le sepultó dos costillas en el cuerpo. Viéndose tan maltrecho, creyó sin duda que estaba muerto o malferido, y, acordándose de su licor, sacó su alcuza y púsosela a la boca, y comenzó a echar licor en el estómago; mas, antes que acabase de envasar lo que a él le parecía que era bastante, llegó otra almendra y dióle en la mano y en el alcuza tan de lleno, que se la hizo pedazos, llevándole de camino tres o cuatro dientes y muelas de la boca, y machucándole malamente dos dedos de la mano.

Tal fue el golpe primero, y tal el segundo, que le fue forzoso al pobre caballero dar consigo del caballo abajo. Llegáronse a él los pastores y creyeron que le habían muerto; y así, con mucha priesa, recogieron su ganado, y cargaron de las reses muertas, que pasaban de siete, y, sin averiguar otra cosa, se fueron.

Estábase todo este tiempo Sancho sobre la cuesta, mirando las locuras que su amo hacía, y arrancábase las barbas, maldiciendo la hora y el punto en que la fortuna se le había dado a conocer. Viéndole, pues, caído en el suelo, y que ya los pastores se habían ido, bajó de la cuesta y llegóse a él, y hallóle de muy mal arte, aunque no había perdido el sentido, y díjole:

-¿No le decía yo, señor don Quijote, que se volviese, que los que iba a acometer no eran ejércitos, sino manadas de carneros?

-Como eso puede desaparecer y contrahacer aquel ladrón del sabio mi enemigo. Sábetelo, Sancho, que es muy fácil cosa a los tales hacernos parecer lo que quieren, y este maligno que me persigue, envidioso de la gloria que vio que yo había de alcanzar desta batalla, ha vuelto los escuadrones de enemigos en manadas de ovejas. Si no, haz una cosa, Sancho, por mi vida, porque te desengañes y veas ser verdad lo que te digo: sube en tu asno y síguelos bonitamente, y verás cómo, en alejándose de aquí algún poco, se vuelven en su ser primero, y, dejando de ser carneros, son hombres hechos y derechos, como yo te los pinté primero... Pero no vayas ahora, que he menester tu favor y ayuda; llégate a mí y mira cuántas muelas y dientes me faltan, que me parece que no me ha quedado ninguno en la boca.

Llegóse Sancho tan cerca, que casi le metía los ojos en la boca, y fue a tiempo que ya había obrado el bálsamo en el estómago de don Quijote; y, al tiempo que Sancho llegó a mirarle la boca, arrojó de sí, más recio que una escopeta, cuanto dentro tenía, y dio con todo ello en las barbas del compasivo escudero.

-¡Santa María! -dijo Sancho-, ¿y qué es esto que me ha sucedido? Sin duda, este pecador está herido de muerte, pues vomita sangre por la boca.

Pero, reparando un poco más en ello, echó de ver en la color, sabor y olor, que no era sangre, sino el bálsamo de la alcuza que él le había visto beber; y fue

tanto el asco que tomó que, revolviéndosele el estómago, vomitó las tripas sobre su mismo señor, y quedaron entrambos como de perlas. Acudió Sancho a su asno para sacar de las alforjas con qué limpiarse y con qué curar a su amo; y, como no las halló, estuvo a punto de perder el juicio. Maldíjose de nuevo, y propuso en su corazón de dejar a su amo y volverse a su tierra, aunque perdiese el salario de lo servido y las esperanzas del gobierno de la prometida ínsula.

Levantóse en esto don Quijote, y, puesta la mano izquierda en la boca, porque no se le acabasen de salir los dientes, asió con la otra las riendas de Rocinante, que nunca se había movido de junto a su amo -tal era de leal y bien acondicionado-, y fuese adonde su escudero estaba, de pechos sobre su asno, con la mano en la mejilla, en guisa de hombre pensativo además. Y, viéndole don Quijote de aquella manera, con muestras de tanta tristeza, le dijo:

-Sábetete, Sancho, que no es un hombre más que otro si no hace más que otro. Todas estas borrascas que nos suceden son señales de que presto ha de serenar el tiempo y han de sucedernos bien las cosas; porque no es posible que el mal ni el bien sean durables, y de aquí se sigue que, habiendo durado mucho el mal, el bien está ya cerca. Así que, no debes congojarte por las desgracias que a mí me suceden, pues a ti no te cabe parte dellas.

-¿Cómo no? -respondió Sancho-. Por ventura, el que ayer mantearon, ¿era otro que el hijo de mi padre? Y las alforjas que hoy me faltan, con todas mis alhajas, ¿son de otro que del mismo?

-¿Que te faltan las alforjas, Sancho? -dijo don Quijote.

-Sí que me faltan -respondió Sancho.

-Dese modo, no tenemos qué comer hoy -replicó don Quijote.

-Eso fuera -respondió Sancho-cuando faltaran por estos prados las yerbas que vuestra merced dice que conoce, con que suelen suplir semejantes faltas los tan malaventurados andantes caballeros como vuestra merced es.

-Con todo eso -respondió don Quijote-, tomara yo ahora más aún un cuartal de pan, o una hogaza y dos cabezas de sardinas arenques, que cuantas yerbas describe *Dioscórides*, aunque fuera el ilustrado por el doctor Laguna. Mas, con todo esto, sube en tu jumento, Sancho el bueno, y vente tras mí; que Dios, que es proveedor de todas las cosas, no nos ha de faltar, y más andando tan en su servicio como andamos, pues no falta a los mosquitos del aire, ni a los gusanillos de la tierra, ni a los renacuajos del agua; y es tan piadoso que hace salir su sol sobre los buenos y los malos, y llueve sobre los injustos y justos.

-Más bueno era vuestra merced -dijo Sancho-para predicador que para caballero andante.

-De todo sabían y han de saber los caballeros andantes, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, porque caballero andante hubo en los pasados siglos que así se paraba a

hacer un sermón o plática, en mitad de un campo real, como si fuera graduado por la Universidad de París; de donde se infiere que nunca la lanza embotó la pluma, ni la pluma la lanza.

-Ahora bien, sea así como vuestra merced dice -respondió Sancho-, vamos ahora de aquí, y procuremos donde alojar esta noche, y quiera Dios que sea en parte donde no haya mantas, ni manteadores, ni fantasmas, ni moros encantados; que si los hay, daré al diablo el hato y el garabato.

-Pídeselo tú a Dios, hijo -dijo don Quijote-, y guía tú por donde quisieres, que esta vez quiero dejar a tu elección el alojarnos. Pero dame acá la mano y atiéntame con el dedo, y mira bien cuántos dientes y muelas me faltan deste lado derecho de la quijada alta, que allí siento el dolor.

Metió Sancho los dedos, y, estándole tentando, le dijo:

-¿Cuántas muelas solía vuestra merced tener en esta parte?

-Cuatro -respondió don Quijote-, fuera de la cordal, todas enteras y muy sanas.

-Mire vuestra merced bien lo que dice, señor -respondió Sancho.

-Digo cuatro, si no eran cinco -respondió don Quijote-, porque en toda mi vida me han sacado diente ni muela de la boca, ni se me ha caído ni comido de neguijón ni de reuma alguna.

-Pues en esta parte de abajo -dijo Sancho- no tiene vuestra merced más de dos muelas y media, y en la de arriba, ni media ni ninguna, que toda está rasa como la palma de la mano.

-¡Sin ventura yo! -dijo don Quijote, oyendo las tristes nuevas que su escudero le daba-, que más quisiera que me hubieran derribado un brazo, como no fuera el de la espada; porque te hago saber, Sancho, que la boca sin muelas es como molino sin piedra, y en mucho más se ha de estimar un diente que un diamante. Mas a todo esto estamos sujetos los que profesamos la estrecha orden de la caballería. Sube, amigo, y guía, que yo te seguiré al paso que quisieres.

Hízolo así Sancho, y encaminóse hacia donde le pareció que podía hallar acogimiento, sin salir del camino real, que por allí iba muy seguido.

Yéndose, pues, poco a poco, porque el dolor de las quijadas de don Quijote no le dejaba sosegar ni atender a darse prisa, quiso Sancho entretenerle y divertille diciéndole alguna cosa; y, entre otras que le dijo, fue lo que se dirá en el siguiente capítulo.

## Capítulo XIX

*De las discretas razones que Sancho pasaba con su amo, y de la aventura que le sucedió con un cuerpo muerto, con otros acontecimientos famosos*

-PARÉCEME, señor mío, que todas estas desventuras que estos días nos han sucedido, sin duda alguna han sido pena del pecado cometido por vuestra merced contra la orden de su caballería, no habiendo cumplido el juramento que hizo de no comer pan a manteles ni con la reina folgar, con todo aquello que a esto se sigue y vuestra merced juró de cumplir, hasta quitar aquel almete de Malandrino, o como se llama el moro, que no me acuerdo bien.

-Tienes mucha razón, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-; mas, para decirte verdad, ello se me había pasado de la memoria; y también puedes tener por cierto que por la culpa de no habérmelo tú acordado en tiempo te sucedió aquello de la manta; pero yo haré la enmienda, que modos hay de composición en la orden de la caballería para todo.

-Pues ¿juré yo algo, por dicha? -respondió Sancho.

-No importa que no hayas jurado -dijo don Quijote-: basta que yo entiendo que de participantes no estás muy seguro, y, por sí o por no, no será malo proveernos de remedio.

-Pues si ello es así -dijo Sancho-, mire vuestra merced no se le torne a olvidar esto, como lo del juramento; quizá les volverá la gana a las fantasmas de solazarse otra vez conmigo, y aun con vuestra merced si le ven tan pertinaz.

En estas y otras pláticas les tomó la noche en mitad del camino, sin tener ni descubrir donde aquella noche se recogiesen; y lo que no había de bueno en ello era que perecían de hambre; que, con la falta de las alforjas, les faltó toda la despensa y matalotaje. Y, para acabar de confirmar esta desgracia, les sucedió una aventura que, sin artificio alguno, verdaderamente lo parecía. Y fue que la noche cerró con alguna escuridad; pero, con todo esto, caminaban, creyendo Sancho que, pues aquel camino era real, a una o dos leguas, de buena razón, hallaría en él alguna venta.

Yendo, pues, desta manera, la noche oscura, el escudero hambriento y el amo con gana de comer, vieron que por el mismo camino que iban venían hacia ellos gran multitud de lumbres, que no parecían sino estrellas que se movían. Pasmóse Sancho en viéndolas, y don Quijote no las tuvo todas consigo; tiró el uno del cabestro a su asno, y el otro de las riendas a su rocino, y estuvieron quedos,

mirando atentamente lo que podía ser aquello, y vieron que las lumbres se iban acercando a ellos, y mientras más se llegaban, mayores parecían; a cuya vista Sancho comenzó a temblar como un azogado, y los cabellos de la cabeza se le erizaron a don Quijote; el cual, animándose un poco, dijo:

-Ésta, sin duda, Sancho, debe de ser grandísima y peligrosísima aventura, donde será necesario que yo muestre todo mi valor y esfuerzo.

-¡Desdichado de mí! -respondió Sancho-; si acaso esta aventura fuese de fantasmas, como me lo va pareciendo, ¿adónde habrá costillas que la sufran?

-Por más fantasmas que sean -dijo don Quijote-, no consentiré yo que te toque en el pelo de la ropa; que si la otra vez se burlaron contigo, fue porque no pude yo saltar las paredes del corral, pero ahora estamos en campo raso, donde podré yo como quisiere esgremir mi espada.

-Y si le encantan y entomecen, como la otra vez lo hicieron -dijo Sancho-, ¿qué aprovechará estar en campo abierto o no?

-Con todo eso -replicó don Quijote-, te ruego, Sancho, que tengas buen ánimo, que la experiencia te dará a entender el que yo tengo.

-Sí tendré, si a Dios place -respondió Sancho.

Y, apartándose los dos a un lado del camino, tornaron a mirar atentamente lo que aquello de aquellas lumbres que caminaban podía ser; y de allí a muy poco descubrieron muchos encamisados, cuya temerosa visión de todo punto remató el ánimo de Sancho Panza, el cual comenzó a dar diente con diente, como quien tiene frío de quartana; y creció más el batir y dentellear cuando distintamente vieron lo que era, porque descubrieron hasta veinte encamisados, todos a caballo, con sus hachas encendidas en las manos; detrás de los cuales venía una litera cubierta de luto, a la cual seguían otros seis de a caballo, enlutados hasta los pies de las mulas; que bien vieron que no eran caballos en el sosiego con que caminaban. Iban los encamisados murmurando entre sí, con una voz baja y compasiva. Esta estraña visión, a tales horas y en tal despoblado, bien bastaba para poner miedo en el corazón de Sancho, y aun en el de su amo; y así fuera en cuanto a don Quijote, que ya Sancho había dado al través con todo su esfuerzo. Lo contrario le avino a su amo, al cual en aquel punto se le representó en su imaginación al vivo que aquélla era una de las aventuras de sus libros.

Figurósele que la litera eran andas donde debía de ir algún malferido o muerto caballero, cuya venganza a él solo estaba reservada; y, sin hacer otro discurso, enristró su lanzón, púsose bien en la silla, y con gentil brío y continente se puso en la mitad del camino por donde los encamisados forzosamente habían de pasar, y cuando los vio cerca alzó la voz y dijo:

-Deteneos, caballeros, o quienquiera que seáis, y dadme cuenta de quién sois, de dónde venís, adónde vais, qué es lo que en aquellas andas lleváis; que, según

las muestras, o vosotros habéis fecho, o vos han fecho, algún desaguisado, y conviene y es menester que yo lo sepa, o bien para castigaros del mal que fecistes, o bien para vengaros del tuerto que vos ficieron.

-Vamos de priesa -respondió uno de los encamisados-y está la venta lejos, y no nos podemos detener a dar tanta cuenta como pedís.

Y, picando la mula, pasó adelante. Sintióse desta respuesta grandemente don Quijote, y, trabando del freno, dijo:

-Deteneos y sed más bien criado, y dadme cuenta de lo que os he preguntado; si no, conmigo sois todos en batalla.

Era la mula asombradiza, y al tomarla del freno se espantó de manera que, alzándose en los pies, dio con su dueño por las ancas en el suelo. Un mozo que iba a pie, viendo caer al encamisado, comenzó a denostar a don Quijote, el cual, ya encolerizado, sin esperar más, enristrando su lanzón, arremetió a uno de los enlutados, y, malferido, dio con él en tierra; y, revolviéndose por los demás, era cosa de ver con la presteza que los acometía y desbarataba; que no parecía sino que en aquel instante le habían nacido alas a Rocinante, según andaba de ligero y orgulloso.

Todos los encamisados era gente medrosa y sin armas, y así, con facilidad, en un momento dejaron la refriega y comenzaron a correr por aquel campo con las hachas encendidas, que no parecían sino a los de las máscaras que en noche de regocijo y fiesta corren. Los enlutados, asimesmo, revueltos y envueltos en sus faldamentos y lobs, no se podían mover; así que, muy a su salvo, don Quijote los apaleó a todos y les hizo dejar el sitio mal de su grado, porque todos pensaron que aquél no era hombre, sino diablo del infierno que les salía a quitar el cuerpo muerto que en la litera llevaban.

Todo lo miraba Sancho, admirado del ardimiento de su señor, y decía entre sí:

-Sin duda este mi amo es tan valiente y esforzado como él dice.

Estaba una hacha ardiendo en el suelo, junto al primero que derribó la mula, a cuya luz le pudo ver don Quijote; y, llegándose a él, le puso la punta del lanzón en el rostro, diciéndole que se rindiese; si no, que le mataría. A lo cual respondió el caído:

-Harto rendido estoy, pues no me puedo mover, que tengo una pierna quebrada; suplico a vuestra merced, si es caballero cristiano, que no me mate; que cometerá un gran sacrilegio, que soy licenciado y tengo las primeras órdenes.

-Pues, ¿quién diablos os ha traído aquí -dijo don Quijote-, siendo hombre de Iglesia?

-¿Quién, señor? -replicó el caído-: mi desventura.

-Pues otra mayor os amenaza -dijo don Quijote-, si no me satisfacéis a todo cuanto primero os pregunté.

-Con facilidad será vuestra merced satisfecho -respondió el licenciado-; y así, sabrá vuestra merced que, aunque denantes dije que yo era licenciado, no soy sino bachiller, y llámome Alonso López; soy natural de Alcobendas; vengo de la ciudad de Baeza con otros once sacerdotes, que son los que huyeron con las hachas; vamos a la ciudad de Segovia acompañando un cuerpo muerto, que va en aquella litera, que es de un caballero que murió en Baeza, donde fue depositado; y ahora, como digo, llevábamos sus huesos a su sepultura, que está en Segovia, de donde es natural.

-¿Y quién le mató? -preguntó don Quijote.

-Dios, por medio de unas calenturas pestilentes que le dieron -respondió el bachiller.

-Desa suerte -dijo don Quijote-, quitado me ha Nuestro Señor del trabajo que había de tomar en vengar su muerte si otro alguno le hubiera muerto; pero, habiéndole muerto quien le mató, no hay sino callar y encoger los hombros, porque lo mesmo hiciera si a mí mismo me matara. Y quiero que sepa vuestra reverencia que yo soy un caballero de la Mancha, llamado don Quijote, y es mi oficio y ejercicio andar por el mundo enderezando tuertos y desfaciendo agravios.

-No sé cómo pueda ser eso de enderezar tuertos -dijo el bachiller-, pues a mí de derecho me habéis vuelto tuerto, dejándome una pierna quebrada, la cual no se verá derecha en todos los días de su vida; y el agravio que en mí habéis deshecho ha sido dejarme agraviado de manera que me quedará agraviado para siempre; y harta desventura ha sido topar con vos, que vais buscando aventuras.

-No todas las cosas -respondió don Quijote- suceden de un mismo modo. El daño estuvo, señor bachiller Alonso López, en venir, como veníades, de noche, vestidos con aquellas sobrepellices, con las hachas encendidas, rezando, cubiertos de luto, que propiamente semejábaden cosa mala y del otro mundo; y así, yo no pude dejar de cumplir con mi obligación acometiéndolos, y os acometiera aunque verdaderamente supiera que érades los memos satanases del infierno, que por tales os juzgué y tuve siempre.

-Ya que así lo ha querido mi suerte -dijo el bachiller-, suplico a vuestra merced, señor caballero andante (que tan mala andanza me ha dado), me ayude a salir de debajo desta mula, que me tiene tomada una pierna entre el estribo y la silla.

-¡Hablara yo para mañana! -dijo don Quijote-. Y ¿hasta cuándo aguardábaden a decirme vuestro afán?

Dio luego voces a Sancho Panza que viniese; pero él no se curó de venir, porque andaba ocupado desvalijando una acémila de repuesto que traían aquellos buenos señores, bien bastecida de cosas de comer. Hizo Sancho costal de su gabán, y, recogiendo todo lo que pudo y cupo en el talego, cargó su jumento, y luego acudió a las voces de su amo y ayudó a sacar al señor bachiller de la opresión de la mula; y, poniéndole encima della, le dio la hacha, y don Quijote le dijo que siguiese la derrota de sus compañeros, a quien de su parte pidiese perdón del agravio, que no había sido en su mano dejar de haberle hecho. Díjole también Sancho:

-Si acaso quisieren saber esos señores quién ha sido el valeroso que tales los puso, diráles vuestra merced que es el famoso don Quijote de la Mancha, que por otro nombre se llama *el Caballero de la Triste Figura*.

Con esto, se fue el bachiller; y don Quijote preguntó a Sancho que qué le había movido a llamarle *el Caballero de la Triste Figura*, más entonces que nunca.

-Yo se lo diré -respondió Sancho-: porque le he estado mirando un rato a la luz de aquella hacha que lleva aquel malandante, y verdaderamente tiene vuestra merced la más mala figura, de poco acá, que jamás he visto; y débelo de haber causado, o ya el cansancio deste combate, o ya la falta de las muelas y dientes.

-No es eso -respondió don Quijote-, sino que el sabio, a cuyo cargo debe de estar el escribir la historia de mis hazañas, le habrá parecido que será bien que yo tome algún nombre apelativo, como lo tomaban todos los caballeros pasados: cuál se llamaba *el de la Ardiente Espada*; cuál, *el del Unicornio*; aquel, *de las Doncellas*; aquéste, *el del Ave Fénix*; el otro, *el Caballero del Grifo*; estotro, *el de la Muerte*; y por estos nombres e insignias eran conocidos por toda la redondez de la tierra. Y así, digo que el sabio ya dicho te habrá puesto en la lengua y en el pensamiento ahora que me llamas *el Caballero de la Triste Figura*, como pienso llamarme desde hoy en adelante; y, para que mejor me cuadre tal nombre, determino de hacer pintar, cuando haya lugar, en mi escudo una muy triste figura.

-No hay para qué gastar tiempo y dineros en hacer esa figura -dijo Sancho-, sino lo que se ha de hacer es que vuestra merced descubra la suya y dé rostro a los que le miraren; que, sin más ni más, y sin otra imagen ni escudo, le llamarán *el de la Triste Figura*; y créame que le digo verdad, porque le prometo a vuestra merced, señor, y esto sea dicho en burlas, que le hace tan mala cara la hambre y la falta de las muelas, que, como ya tengo dicho, se podrá muy bien escusar la triste pintura.

Rióse don Quijote del donaire de Sancho, pero, con todo, propuso de llamarse de aquel nombre en pudiendo pintar su escudo, o rodela, como había imaginado.



En esto, volvió el bachiller y le dijo a don Quijote:

-Olvidábaseme de decir que advierta vuestra merced que queda descomulgado por haber puesto las manos violentamente en cosa sagrada: juxta illud: Si quis suadente diabolo, etc.

-No entiendo ese latín -respondió don Quijote-, mas yo sé bien que no puse las manos, sino este lanzón; cuanto más, que yo no pensé que ofendía a sacerdotes ni a cosas de la Iglesia, a quien respeto y adoro como católico y fiel cristiano que soy, sino a fantasmas y a vestiglos del otro mundo; y, cuando eso así fuese, en la memoria tengo lo que le pasó al Cid Ruy Díaz, cuando quebró la silla del embajador de aquel rey delante de Su Santidad del Papa, por lo cual lo descomulgó, y anduvo aquel día el buen Rodrigo de Vivar como muy honrado y valiente caballero.

En oyendo esto el bachiller, se fue, como queda dicho, sin replicarle palabra. Quisiera don Quijote mirar si el cuerpo que venía en la litera eran huesos o no, pero no lo consintió Sancho, diciéndole:

-Señor, vuestra merced ha acabado esta peligrosa aventura lo más a su salvo de todas las que yo he visto; esta gente, aunque vencida y desbaratada, podría ser que cayese en la cuenta de que los venció sola una persona, y, corridos y avergonzados desto, volviesen a rehacerse y a buscarnos, y nos diesen en qué entender. El jumento está como conviene, la montaña cerca, la hambre carga, no hay qué hacer sino retirarnos con gentil compás de pies, y, como dicen, váyase el muerto a la sepultura y el vivo a la hogaza.

Y, antecogiendo su asno, rogó a su señor que le siguiese; el cual, pareciéndole que Sancho tenía razón, sin volverle a replicar, le siguió. Y, a poco trecho que caminaban por entre dos montañuelas, se hallaron en un espacioso y escondido valle, donde se apearon; y Sancho alivió el jumento, y, tendidos sobre la verde yerba, con la salsa de su hambre, almorzaron, comieron, merendaron y cenaron a un mismo punto, satisfaciendo sus estómagos con más de una fiambarrera que los señores clérigos del difunto -que pocas veces se dejan mal pasar-en la acémila de su repuesto traían.

Mas sucedióles otra desgracia, que Sancho la tuvo por la peor de todas, y fue que no tenían vino que beber, ni aun agua que llegar a la boca; y, acosados de la sed, dijo Sancho, viendo que el prado donde estaban estaba colmado de verde y menuda yerba, lo que se dirá en el siguiente capítulo.

## Capítulo XX

*De la jamás vista ni oída aventura que con más poco peligro fue acabada de famoso caballero en el mundo, como la que acabó el valeroso don Quijote de la Mancha*

NO ES POSIBLE, señor mío, sino que estas yerbas dan testimonio de que por aquí cerca debe de estar alguna fuente o arroyo que estas yerbas humedece; y así, será bien que vamos un poco más adelante, que ya toparemos donde podamos mitigar esta terrible sed que nos fatiga, que, sin duda, causa mayor pena que la hambre.

Parecióle bien el consejo a don Quijote, y, tomando de la rienda a Rocinante, y Sancho del cabestro a su asno, después de haber puesto sobre él los relieves que de la cena quedaron, comenzaron a caminar por el prado arriba a tiento, porque la escuridad de la noche no les dejaba ver cosa alguna; mas, no hubieron andado docientos pasos, cuando llegó a sus oídos un grande ruido de agua, como que de algunos grandes y levantados riscos se despeñaba. Alegróles el ruido en gran manera, y, parándose a escuchar hacia qué parte sonaba, oyeron a deshora otro estruendo que les aguó el contento del agua, especialmente a Sancho, que naturalmente era medroso y de poco ánimo. Digo que oyeron que daban unos golpes a compás, con un cierto crujir de hierros y cadenas, que, acompañados del furioso estruendo del agua, que pusieran pavor a cualquier otro corazón que no fuera el de don Quijote.

Era la noche, como se ha dicho, oscura, y ellos acertaron a entrar entre unos árboles altos, cuyas hojas, movidas del blando viento, hacían un temeroso y manso ruido; de manera que la soledad, el sitio, la escuridad, el ruido del agua con el susurro de las hojas, todo causaba horror y espanto, y más cuando vieron que ni los golpes cesaban, ni el viento dormía, ni la mañana llegaba; añadiéndose a todo esto el ignorar el lugar donde se hallaban. Pero don Quijote, acompañado de su intrépido corazón, saltó sobre Rocinante, y, embrazando su rodela, terció su lanzón y dijo:

-Sancho amigo, has de saber que yo nací, por querer del cielo, en esta nuestra edad de hierro, para resucitar en ella la de oro, o la dorada, como suele llamarse. Yo soy aquél para quien están guardados los peligros, las grandes hazañas, los valerosos hechos. Yo soy, digo otra vez, quien ha de resucitar los de la Tabla Redonda, los Doce de Francia y los Nueve de la Fama, y el que ha de poner en

olvido los Platires, los Tablantes, Olivantes y Tirantes, los Febos y Belianises, con toda la caterva de los famosos caballeros andantes del pasado tiempo, haciendo en este en que me hallo tales grandezas, estrañezas y fechos de armas, que escurezcan las más claras que ellos ficieron. Bien notas, escudero fiel y legal, las tinieblas desta noche, su estraño silencio, el sordo y confuso estruendo destos árboles, el temeroso ruido de aquella agua en cuya busca venimos, que parece que se despeña y derrumba desde los altos montes de la luna, y aquel incesable golpear que nos hiere y lastima los oídos; las cuales cosas, todas juntas y cada una por sí, son bastantes a infundir miedo, temor y espanto en el pecho del mismo Marte, cuanto más en aquel que no está acostumbrado a semejantes acontecimientos y aventuras. Pues todo esto que yo te pinto son incentivos y despertadores de mi ánimo, que ya hace que el corazón me reviente en el pecho, con el deseo que tiene de acometer esta aventura, por más dificultosa que se muestra. Así que, aprieta un poco las cinchas a Rocinante y quédate a Dios, y espérame aquí hasta tres días no más, en los cuales, si no volviere, puedes tú volverte a nuestra aldea, y desde allí, por hacerme merced y buena obra, irás al Toboso, donde dirás a la incomparable señora mía Dulcinea que su cautivo caballero murió por acometer cosas que le hiciesen digno de poder llamarse suyo.

Cuando Sancho oyó las palabras de su amo, comenzó a llorar con la mayor ternura del mundo y a decille:

-Señor, yo no sé por qué quiere vuestra merced acometer esta tan temerosa aventura: ahora es de noche, aquí no nos vee nadie, bien podemos torcer el camino y desviarnos del peligro, aunque no bebamos en tres días; y, pues no hay quien nos vea, menos habrá quien nos note de cobardes; cuanto más, que yo he oído predicar al cura de nuestro lugar, que vuestra merced bien conoce, que quien busca el peligro perece en él; así que, no es bien tentar a Dios acometiendo tan desaforado hecho, donde no se puede escapar sino por milagro; y basta los que ha hecho el cielo con vuestra merced en librarle de ser manteado, como yo lo fui, y en sacarle vencedor, libre y salvo de entre tantos enemigos como acompañaban al difunto. Y, cuando todo esto no mueva ni ablande ese duro corazón, muévale el pensar y creer que apenas se habrá vuestra merced apartado de aquí, cuando yo, de miedo, dé mi ánima a quien quisiere llevarla. Yo salí de mi tierra y dejé hijos y mujer por venir a servir a vuestra merced, creyendo valer más y no menos; pero, como la cudicia rompe el saco, a mí me ha rasgado mis esperanzas, pues cuando más vivas las tenía de alcanzar aquella negra y malhadada ínsula que tantas veces vuestra merced me ha prometido, veo que, en pago y trueco della, me quiere ahora dejar en un lugar tan apartado del trato humano. Por un solo Dios, señor mío, que non se me faga tal desaguizado; y ya

que del todo no quiera vuestra merced desistir de acometer este fecho, dilátelo, a lo menos, hasta la mañana; que, a lo que a mí me muestra la ciencia que aprendí cuando era pastor, no debe de haber desde aquí al alba tres horas, porque la boca de la Bocina está encima de la cabeza, y hace la media noche en la línea del brazo izquierdo.

-¿Cómo puedes tú, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, ver dónde hace esa línea, ni dónde está esa boca o ese colodrillo que dices, si hace la noche tan oscura que no parece en todo el cielo estrella alguna?

-Así es -dijo Sancho-, pero tiene el miedo muchos ojos y ve las cosas debajo de tierra, cuanto más encima en el cielo; puesto que, por buen discurso, bien se puede entender que hay poco de aquí al día.

-Falte lo que faltare -respondió don Quijote-; que no se ha de decir por mí, ahora ni en ningún tiempo, que lágrimas y ruegos me apartaron de hacer lo que debía a estilo de caballero; y así, te ruego, Sancho, que calles; que Dios, que me ha puesto en corazón de acometer ahora esta tan no vista y tan temerosa aventura, tendrá cuidado de mirar por mi salud y de consolar tu tristeza. Lo que has de hacer es apretar bien las cinchas a Rocinante y quedarte aquí, que yo daré la vuelta presto, o vivo o muerto.

Viendo, pues, Sancho la última resolución de su amo y cuán poco valían con él sus lágrimas, consejos y ruegos, determinó de aprovecharse de su industria y hacerle esperar hasta el día, si pudiese; y así, cuando apretaba las cinchas al caballo, bonitamente y sin ser sentido, ató con el cabestro de su asno ambos pies a Rocinante, de manera que cuando don Quijote se quiso partir, no pudo, porque el caballo no se podía mover sino a saltos. Viendo Sancho Panza el buen suceso de su embuste, dijo:

-Ea, señor, que el cielo, conmovido de mis lágrimas y plegarias, ha ordenado que no se pueda mover Rocinante; y si vos queréis porfiar, y espolear, y dalle, será enojar a la fortuna y dar coces, como dicen, contra el aguijón.

Desesperábase con esto don Quijote, y, por más que ponía las piernas al caballo, menos le podía mover; y, sin caer en la cuenta de la ligadura, tuvo por bien de sosegar y esperar, o a que amaneciese, o a que Rocinante se menease, creyendo, sin duda, que aquello venía de otra parte que de la industria de Sancho; y así, le dijo:

-Pues así es, Sancho, que Rocinante no puede moverse, yo soy contento de esperar a que ría el alba, aunque yo llore lo que ella tardare en venir.

-No hay que llorar -respondió Sancho-, que yo entretendré a vuestra merced contando cuentos desde aquí al día, si ya no es que se quiere apearse y echarse a dormir un poco sobre la verde yerba, a uso de caballeros andantes, para hallarse más descansado cuando llegue el día y punto de acometer esta tan desemejable

aventura que le espera.

-¿A qué llamas apear o a qué dormir? -dijo don Quijote-. ¿Soy yo, por ventura, de aquellos caballeros que toman reposo en los peligros? Duerme tú, que naciste para dormir, o haz lo que quisieres, que yo haré lo que viere que más viene con mi pretensión.

No se enoje vuestra merced, señor mío -respondió Sancho-, que no lo dije por tanto.

Y, llegándose a él, puso la una mano en el arzón delantero y la otra en el otro, de modo que quedó abrazado con el muslo izquierdo de su amo, sin osarse apartar dél un dedo: tal era el miedo que tenía a los golpes, que todavía alternativamente sonaban. Díjole don Quijote que contase algún cuento para entretenerle, como se lo había prometido, a lo que Sancho dijo que sí hiciera si le dejara el temor de lo que oía.

-Pero, con todo eso, yo me esforzaré a decir una historia que, si la acierto a contar y no me van a la mano, es la mejor de las historias; y estéme vuestra merced atento, que ya comienzo. «Érase que se era, el bien que viniere para todos sea, y el mal, para quien lo fuere a buscar...» Y advierta vuestra merced, señor mío, que el principio que los antiguos dieron a sus consejas no fue así comoquiera, que fue una sentencia de Catón Zonzorino, romano, que dice: «Y el mal, para quien le fuere a buscar», que viene aquí como anillo al dedo, para que vuestra merced se esté quedo y no vaya a buscar el mal a ninguna parte, sino que nos volvamos por otro camino, pues nadie nos fuerza a que sigamos éste, donde tantos miedos nos sobresaltan.

-Sigue tu cuento, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, y del camino que hemos de seguir déjame a mí el cuidado.

-«Digo, pues -prosiguió Sancho-, que en un lugar de Estremadura había un pastor cabrerizo (quiero decir que guardaba cabras), el cual pastor o cabrerizo, como digo, de mi cuento, se llamaba Lope Ruiz; y este Lope Ruiz andaba enamorado de una pastora que se llamaba Torralba, la cual pastora llamada Torralba era hija de un ganadero rico, y este ganadero rico...»

-Si desamano cuentas tu cuento, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, repitiendo dos veces lo que vas diciendo, no acabarás en dos días; dilo seguidamente y cuéntalo como hombre de entendimiento, y si no, no digas nada.

-De la misma manera que yo lo cuento -respondió Sancho-, se cuentan en mi tierra todas las consejas, y yo no sé contarlas de otra, ni es bien que vuestra merced me pida que haga usos nuevos.

-Di como quisieres -respondió don Quijote-; que, pues la suerte quiere que no pueda dejar de escucharte, prosigue.

-«Así que, señor mío de mi ánima -prosiguió Sancho-, que, como ya tengo

dicho, este pastor andaba enamorado de Torralba, la pastora, que era una moza rolliza, zahareña y tiraba algo a hombruna, porque tenía unos pocos de bigotes, que parece que ahora la veo.»

-Luego, ¿conocístela tú? -dijo don Quijote.

-No la conocí yo -respondió Sancho-, pero quien me contó este cuento me dijo que era tan cierto y verdadero, que podía bien, cuando lo contase a otro, afirmar y jurar que lo había visto todo. «Así que, yendo días y viniendo días, el diablo, que no duerme y que todo lo añasca, hizo de manera que el amor que el pastor tenía a la pastora se volviese en omecillo y mala voluntad; y la causa fue, según malas lenguas, una cierta cantidad de celillos que ella le dio, tales, que pasaban de la raya y llegaban a lo vedado; y fue tanto lo que el pastor la aborreció de allí adelante que, por no verla, se quiso ausentar de aquella tierra e irse donde sus ojos no la viesan jamás. La Torralba, que se vio desdeñada del Lope, luego le quiso bien, mas que nunca le había querido.»

-Ésa es natural condición de mujeres -dijo don Quijote-: desdeñar a quien las quiere y amar a quien las aborrece. Pasa adelante, Sancho.

-«Sucedió -dijo Sancho-que el pastor puso por obra su determinación, y, antecogiendo sus cabras, se encaminó por los campos de Estremadura, para pasarse a los reinos de Portugal. La Torralba, que lo supo, se fue tras él, y seguía a pie y descalza desde lejos, con un bordón en la mano y con unas alforjas al cuello, donde llevaba, según es fama, un pedazo de espejo y otro de un peine, y no sé qué botecillo de mudas para la cara; mas, llevase lo que llevase, que yo no me quiero meter ahora en averiguallo, sólo diré que dicen que el pastor llegó con su ganado a pasar el río Guadiana, y en aquella sazón iba crecido y casi fuera de madre, y por la parte que llegó no había barca ni barco, ni quien le pasase a él ni a su ganado de la otra parte, de lo que se congojó mucho, porque veía que la Torralba venía ya muy cerca y le había de dar mucha pesadumbre con sus ruegos y lágrimas; mas, tanto anduvo mirando, que vio un pescador que tenía junto a sí un barco, tan pequeño que solamente podían caber en él una persona y una cabra; y, con todo esto, le habló y concertó con él que le pasase a él y a trecientas cabras que llevaba. Entró el pescador en el barco, y pasó una cabra; volvió, y pasó otra; tornó a volver, y tornó a pasar otra.» Tenga vuestra merced cuenta en las cabras que el pescador va pasando, porque si se pierde una de la memoria, se acabará el cuento y no será posible contar más palabra dél. «Sigo, pues, y digo que el desembarcadero de la otra parte estaba lleno de cieno y resbaloso, y tardaba el pescador mucho tiempo en ir y volver. Con todo esto, volvió por otra cabra, y otra, y otra...»

-Haz cuenta que las pasó todas -dijo don Quijote-: no andes yendo y viniendo desa manera, que no acabarás de pasarlas en un año.

-¿Cuántas han pasado hasta ahora? -dijo Sancho.

-¡Yo qué diablos sé! -respondió don Quijote-.

-He ahí lo que yo dije: que tuviese buena cuenta. Pues, por Dios, que se ha acabado el cuento, que no hay pasar adelante.

-¿Cómo puede ser eso? -respondió don Quijote-. ¿Tan de esencia de la historia es saber las cabras que han pasado, por estenso, que si se yerra una del número no puedes seguir adelante con la historia?

-No señor, en ninguna manera -respondió Sancho-; porque, así como yo pregunté a vuestra merced que me dijese cuántas cabras habían pasado y me respondió que no sabía, en aquel mismo instante se me fue a mí de la memoria cuanto me quedaba por decir, y a fe que era de mucha virtud y contento.

-¿De modo -dijo don Quijote-que ya la historia es acabada?

-Tan acabada es como mi madre -dijo Sancho.

-Dígame de verdad -respondió don Quijote-que tú has contado una de las más nuevas consejas, cuento o historia, que nadie pudo pensar en el mundo; y que tal modo de contarla ni dejarla, jamás se podrá ver ni habrá visto en toda la vida, aunque no esperaba yo otra cosa de tu buen discurso; mas no me maravillo, pues quizá estos golpes, que no cesan, te deben de tener turbado el entendimiento.

-Todo puede ser -respondió Sancho-, mas yo sé que en lo de mi cuento no hay más que decir: que allí se acaba do comienza el yerro de la cuenta del pasaje de las cabras.

-Acabe norabuena donde quisiere -dijo don Quijote-, y veamos si se puede mover Rocinante.

Tornóle a poner las piernas, y él tornó a dar saltos y a estarse quedo: tanto estaba de bien atado.

En esto, parece ser, o que el frío de la mañana, que ya venía, o que Sancho hubiese cenado algunas cosas lenitivas, o que fuese cosa natural -que es lo que más se debe creer-, a él le vino en voluntad y deseo de hacer lo que otro no pudiera hacer por él; mas era tanto el miedo que había entrado en su corazón, que no osaba apartarse un negro de uña de su amo. Pues pensar de no hacer lo que tenía gana, tampoco era posible; y así, lo que hizo, por bien de paz, fue soltar la mano derecha, que tenía asida al arzón trasero, con la cual, bonitamente y sin rumor alguno, se soltó la lazada corrediza con que los calzones se sostenían, sin ayuda de otra alguna, y, en quitándosela, dieron luego abajo y se le quedaron como grillos. Tras esto, alzó la camisa lo mejor que pudo y echó al aire entrambas posaderas, que no eran muy pequeñas. Hecho esto -que él pensó que era lo más que tenía que hacer para salir de aquel terrible aprieto y angustia-, le sobrevino otra mayor, que fue que le pareció que no podía mudarse sin hacer estrépito y ruido, y comenzó a apretar los dientes y a encoger los hombros,

recogiendo en sí el aliento todo cuanto podía; pero, con todas estas diligencias, fue tan desdichado que, al cabo al cabo, vino a hacer un poco de ruido, bien diferente de aquel que a él le ponía tanto miedo. Oyólo don Quijote y dijo:

-¿Qué rumor es ése, Sancho?

-No sé, señor -respondió él-. Alguna cosa nueva debe de ser, que las aventuras y desventuras nunca comienzan por poco.

Tornó otra vez a probar ventura, y sucedióle tan bien que, sin más ruido ni alboroto que el pasado, se halló libre de la carga que tanta pesadumbre le había dado. Mas, como don Quijote tenía el sentido del olfato tan vivo como el de los oídos, y Sancho estaba tan junto y cosido con él, que casi por línea recta subían los vapores hacia arriba, no se pudo escusar de que algunos no llegasen a sus narices; y, apenas hubieron llegado, cuando él fue al socorro, apretándolas entre los dos dedos; y, con tono algo gangoso, dijo:

-Paréceme, Sancho, que tienes mucho miedo.

-Sí tengo -respondió Sancho-; mas ¿en qué lo echa de ver vuestra merced ahora más que nunca?

-En que ahora más que nunca hueles, y no a ámbar -respondió don Quijote.

-Bien podrá ser -dijo Sancho-, mas yo no tengo la culpa, sino vuestra merced, que me trae a deshoras y por estos no acostumbrados pasos.

-Retírate tres o cuatro allá, amigo -dijo don Quijote (todo esto sin quitarse los dedos de las narices)-, y desde aquí adelante ten más cuenta con tu persona y con lo que debes a la mía; que la mucha conversación que tengo contigo ha engendrado este menosprecio.

-Apostaré -replicó Sancho-que piensa vuestra merced que yo he hecho de mi persona alguna cosa que no deba.

-Peor es meneallo, amigo Sancho -respondió don Quijote.

En estos coloquios y otros semejantes pasaron la noche amo y mozo. Mas, viendo Sancho que a más andar se venía la mañana, con mucho tiento desligó a Rocinante y se ató los calzones. Como Rocinante se vio libre, aunque él de suyo no era nada brioso, parece que se resintió, y comenzó a dar manotadas; porque corvetas -con perdón suyo-no las sabía hacer. Viendo, pues, don Quijote que ya Rocinante se movía, lo tuvo a buena señal, y creyó que lo era de que acometiese aquella temerosa aventura.

Acabó en esto de descubrirse el alba y de parecer distintamente las cosas, y vio don Quijote que estaba entre unos árboles altos, que ellos eran castaños, que hacen la sombra muy oscura. Sintió también que el golpear no cesaba, pero no vio quién lo podía causar; y así, sin más detenerse, hizo sentir las espuelas a Rocinante, y, tornando a despedirse de Sancho, le mandó que allí le aguardase tres días, a lo más largo, como ya otra vez se lo había dicho; y que, si al cabo



dellos no hubiese vuelto, tuviese por cierto que Dios había sido servido de que en aquella peligrosa aventura se le acabasen sus días. Tornóle a referir el recado y embajada que había de llevar de su parte a su señora Dulcinea, y que, en lo que tocaba a la paga de sus servicios, no tuviese pena, porque él había dejado hecho su testamento antes que saliera de su lugar, donde se hallaría gratificado de todo lo tocante a su salario, rata por cantidad, del tiempo que hubiese servido; pero que si Dios le sacaba de aquel peligro sano y salvo y sin cautela, se podía tener por muy más que cierta la prometida ínsula.

De nuevo tornó a llorar Sancho, oyendo de nuevo las lastimeras razones de su buen señor, y determinó de no dejarle hasta el último tránsito y fin de aquel negocio.

Destas lágrimas y determinación tan honrada de Sancho Panza saca el autor desta historia que debía de ser bien nacido, y, por lo menos, cristiano viejo. Cuyo sentimiento enterneció algo a su amo, pero no tanto que mostrase flaqueza alguna; antes, disimulando lo mejor que pudo, comenzó a caminar hacia la parte por donde le pareció que el ruido del agua y del golpear venía.

Seguíale Sancho a pie, llevando, como tenía de costumbre, del cabestro a su jumento, perpetuo compañero de sus prósperas y adversas fortunas; y, habiendo andado una buena pieza por entre aquellos castaños y árboles sombríos, dieron en un pradecillo que al pie de unas altas peñas se hacía, de las cuales se precipitaba un grandísimo golpe de agua. Al pie de las peñas, estaban unas casas mal hechas, que más parecían ruinas de edificios que casas, de entre las cuales advirtieron que salía el ruido y estruendo de aquel golpear, que aún no cesaba.

Alborotóse Rocinante con el estruendo del agua y de los golpes, y, sosegándole don Quijote, se fue llegando poco a poco a las casas, encomendándose de todo corazón a su señora, suplicándole que en aquella temerosa jornada y empresa le favoreciese, y de camino se encomendaba también a Dios, que no le olvidase. No se le quitaba Sancho del lado, el cual alargaba cuanto podía el cuello y la vista por entre las piernas de Rocinante, por ver si vería ya lo que tan suspenso y medroso le tenía.

Otros cien pasos serían los que anduvieron, cuando, al doblar de una punta, pareció descubierta y patente la misma causa, sin que pudiese ser otra, de aquel horrísono y para ellos espantable ruido, que tan suspensos y medrosos toda la noche los había tenido. Y eran -si no lo has, ¡oh lector!, por pesadumbre y enojoseis mazos de batán, que con sus alternativos golpes aquel estruendo formaban.

Cuando don Quijote vio lo que era, enmudeció y pasmóse de arriba abajo. Miróle Sancho, y vio que tenía la cabeza inclinada sobre el pecho, con muestras de estar corrido. Miró también don Quijote a Sancho, y vio que tenía los carrillos hinchados y la boca llena de risa, con evidentes señales de querer

reventar con ella, y no pudo su melancolía tanto con él que, a la vista de Sancho, pudiese dejar de reírse; y, como vio Sancho que su amo había comenzado, soltó la presa de manera que tuvo necesidad de apretarse las ijadas con los puños, por no reventar riendo. Cuatro veces sosegó, y otras tantas volvió a su risa con el mismo ímpetu que primero; de lo cual ya se daba al diablo don Quijote, y más cuando le oyó decir, como por modo de fisga:

-«Has de saber, ¡oh Sancho amigo!, que yo nací, por querer del cielo, en esta nuestra edad de hierro, para resucitar en ella la dorada, o de oro. Yo soy aquél para quien están guardados los peligros, las hazañas grandes, los valerosos fechos...»

Y por aquí fue repitiendo todas o las más razones que don Quijote dijo la vez primera que oyeron los temerosos golpes.

Viendo, pues, don Quijote que Sancho hacía burla dél, se corrió y enojó en tanta manera, que alzó el lanzón y le asentó dos palos, tales que, si, como los recibió en las espaldas, los recibiera en la cabeza, quedara libre de pagarle el salario, si no fuera a sus herederos. Viendo Sancho que sacaba tan malas veras de sus burlas, con temor de que su amo no pasase adelante en ellas, con mucha humildad le dijo:

-Sosiéguese vuestra merced; que, por Dios, que me burlo.

-Pues, porque os burláis, no me burlo yo -respondió don Quijote-. Venid acá, señor alegre: ¿paréceos a vos que, si como éstos fueron mazos de batán, fueran otra peligrosa aventura, no había yo mostrado el ánimo que convenía para emprendella y acaballa? ¿Estoy yo obligado, a dicha, siendo, como soy, caballero, a conocer y distinguir los sonos y saber cuáles son de batán o no? Y más, que podría ser, como es verdad, que no los he visto en mi vida, como vos los habréis visto, como villano ruin que sois, criado y nacido entre ellos. Si no, haced vos que estos seis mazos se vuelvan en seis jayanes, y echádmelos a las barbas uno a uno, o todos juntos, y, cuando yo no diere con todos patas arriba, haced de mí la burla que quisiéredes.

-No haya más, señor mío -replicó Sancho-, que yo confieso que he andado algo risueño en demasía. Pero dígame vuestra merced, ahora que estamos en paz (así Dios le saque de todas las aventuras que le sucedieren tan sano y salvo como le ha sacado ésta), ¿no ha sido cosa de reír, y lo es de contar, el gran miedo que hemos tenido? A lo menos, el que yo tuve; que de vuestra merced ya yo sé que no le conoce, ni sabe qué es temor ni espanto.

-No niego yo -respondió don Quijote- que lo que nos ha sucedido no sea cosa digna de risa, pero no es digna de contarse; que no son todas las personas tan discretas que sepan poner en su punto las cosas.

-A lo menos -respondió Sancho-, supo vuestra merced poner en su punto el

lanzón, apuntándome a la cabeza, y dándome en las espaldas, gracias a Dios y a la diligencia que puse en ladearme. Pero vaya, que todo saldrá en la colada; que yo he oído decir: «Ése te quiere bien, que te hace llorar»; y más, que suelen los principales señores, tras una mala palabra que dicen a un criado, darle luego unas calzas; aunque no sé lo que le suelen dar tras haberle dado de palos, si ya no es que los caballeros andantes dan tras palos ínsulas o reinos en tierra firme.

-Tal podría correr el dado -dijo don Quijote-que todo lo que dices viniese a ser verdad; y perdona lo pasado, pues eres discreto y sabes que los primeros movimientos no son en mano del hombre, y está advertido de aquí adelante en una cosa, para que te abstengas y reportes en el hablar demasiado conmigo; que en cuantos libros de caballerías he leído, que son infinitos, jamás he hallado que ningún escudero hablase tanto con su señor como tú con el tuyo. Y en verdad que lo tengo a gran falta, tuya y mía: tuya, en que me estimas en poco; mía, en que no me dejo estimar en más. Sí, que Gandalín, escudero de Amadís de Gaula, conde fue de la ínsula Firme; y se lee dél que siempre hablaba a su señor con la gorra en la mano, inclinada la cabeza y doblado el cuerpo more *turquesco*. Pues, ¿qué diremos de Gasabal, escudero de don Galaor, que fue tan callado que, para declararnos la excelencia de su maravilloso silencio, sola una vez se nombra su nombre en toda aquella tan grande como verdadera historia? De todo lo que he dicho has de inferir, Sancho, que es menester hacer diferencia de amo a mozo, de señor a criado y de caballero a escudero. Así que, desde hoy en adelante, nos hemos de tratar con más respeto, sin darnos cordelejo, porque, de cualquiera manera que yo me enoje con vos, ha de ser mal para el cántaro. Las mercedes y beneficios que yo os he prometido llegarán a su tiempo; y si no llegaren, el salario, a lo menos, no se ha de perder, como ya os he dicho.

-Está bien cuanto vuestra merced dice -dijo Sancho-, pero querría yo saber, por si acaso no llegase el tiempo de las mercedes y fuese necesario acudir al de los salarios, cuánto ganaba un escudero de un caballero andante en aquellos tiempos, y si se concertaban por meses, o por días, como peones de albañir.

-No creo yo -respondió don Quijote-que jamás los tales escuderos estuvieron a salario, sino a merced. Y si yo ahora te le he señalado a ti en el testamento cerrado que dejé en mi casa, fue por lo que podía suceder; que aún no sé cómo prueba en estos tan calamitosos tiempos nuestros la caballería, y no querría que por pocas cosas penase mi ánima en el otro mundo. Porque quiero que sepas, Sancho, que en él no hay estado más peligroso que el de los aventureros.

-Así es verdad -dijo Sancho-, pues sólo el ruido de los mazos de un batán pudo alborotar y desasosegar el corazón de un tan valeroso andante aventurero como es vuestra merced. Mas, bien puede estar seguro que, de aquí adelante, no despliegue mis labios para hacer donaire de las cosas de vuestra merced, si no

fuere para honrarle, como a mi amo y señor natural.

-Desa manera -replicó don Quijote-, vivirás sobre la haz de la tierra; porque, después de a los padres, a los amos se ha de respetar como si lo fuesen.

## Capítulo XXI

*Que trata de la alta aventura y rica ganancia del yelmo de Mambrino, con otras cosas sucedidas a nuestro invencible caballero*

EN ESTO, comenzó a llover un poco, y quisiera Sancho que se entraran en el molino de los batanes; mas habíales cobrado tal aborrecimiento don Quijote, por la pesada burla, que en ninguna manera quiso entrar dentro; y así, torciendo el camino a la derecha mano, dieron en otro como el que habían llevado el día de antes.

De allí a poco, descubrió don Quijote un hombre a caballo, que traía en la cabeza una cosa que relumbraba como si fuera de oro, y aún él apenas le hubo visto, cuando se volvió a Sancho y le dijo:

-Paréceme, Sancho, que no hay refrán que no sea verdadero, porque todos son sentencias sacadas de la misma experiencia, madre de las ciencias todas, especialmente aquel que dice: «Donde una puerta se cierra, otra se abre». Dígolo porque si anoche nos cerró la ventura la puerta de la que buscábamos, engañándonos con los batanes, ahora nos abre de par en par otra, para otra mejor y más cierta aventura; que si yo no acertare a entrar por ella, mía será la culpa, sin que la pueda dar a la poca noticia de batanes ni a la escuridad de la noche. Digo esto porque, si no me engaño, hacia nosotros viene uno que trae en su cabeza puesto el yelmo de Mambrino, sobre que yo hice el juramento que sabes.

-Mire vuestra merced bien lo que dice, y mejor lo que hace -dijo Sancho-, que no querría que fuesen otros batanes que nos acabasen de abatanar y aporrear el sentido.

-¡Válate el diablo por hombre! -replicó don Quijote-. ¿Qué va de yelmo a batanes?

-No sé nada -respondió Sancho-; mas, a fe que si yo pudiera hablar tanto como solía, que quizá diera tales razones que vuestra merced viera que se engañaba en lo que dice.

-¿Cómo me puedo engañar en lo que digo, traidor escrupuloso? -dijo don Quijote-. Dime, ¿no ves aquel caballero que hacia nosotros viene, sobre un caballo rucio rodado, que trae puesto en la cabeza un yelmo de oro?

-Lo que yo veo y columbro -respondió Sancho- no es sino un hombre sobre un asno pardo, como el mío, que trae sobre la cabeza una cosa que relumbra.

-Pues ése es el yelmo de Mambrino -dijo don Quijote-. Apártate a una parte y

déjame con él a solas: verás cuán sin hablar palabra, por ahorrar del tiempo, concluyo esta aventura y queda por mío el yelmo que tanto he deseado.

-Yo me tengo en cuidado el apartarme -replicó Sancho-, mas quiera Dios, torno a decir, que orégano sea, y no batanes.

-Ya os he dicho, hermano, que no me mentéis, ni por pienso, más eso de los batanes -dijo don Quijote-; que voto..., y no digo más, que os batanee el alma.

Calló Sancho, con temor que su amo no cumpliese el voto que le había echado, redondo como una bola.

Es, pues, el caso que el yelmo, y el caballo y caballero que don Quijote veía, era esto: que en aquel contorno había dos lugares, el uno tan pequeño, que ni tenía botica ni barbero, y el otro, que estaba junto a él, sí; y así, el barbero del mayor servía al menor, en el cual tuvo necesidad un enfermo de sangrarse y otro de hacerse la barba, para lo cual venía el barbero, y traía una bacía de azófar; y quiso la suerte que, al tiempo que venía, comenzó a llover, y, porque no se le manchase el sombrero, que debía de ser nuevo, se puso la bacía sobre la cabeza; y, como estaba limpia, desde media legua relumbraba. Venía sobre un asno pardo, como Sancho dijo, y ésta fue la ocasión que a don Quijote le pareció caballo rucio rodado, y caballero, y yelmo de oro; que todas las cosas que veía, con mucha facilidad las acomodaba a sus desvariadas caballerías y malandantes pensamientos. Y cuando él vio que el pobre caballero llegaba cerca, sin ponerse con él en razones, a todo correr de Rocinante le enristró con el lanzón bajo, llevando intención de pasarle de parte a parte; mas cuando a él llegaba, sin detener la furia de su carrera, le dijo:

-¡Defiéndete, cautiva criatura, o entriégame de tu voluntad lo que con tanta razón se me debe!

El barbero, que, tan sin pensarlo ni temerlo, vio venir aquella fantasma sobre sí, no tuvo otro remedio, para poder guardarse del golpe de la lanza, si no fue el dejarse caer del asno abajo; y no hubo tocado al suelo, cuando se levantó más ligero que un gamo y comenzó a correr por aquel llano, que no le alcanzara el viento. Dejóse la bacía en el suelo, con la cual se contentó don Quijote, y dijo que el pagano había andado discreto y que había imitado al castor, el cual, viéndose acosado de los cazadores, se taraza y arpa con los dientes aquello por lo que él, por distinto natural, sabe que es perseguido. Mandó a Sancho que alzase el yelmo, el cual, tomándola en las manos, dijo:

-Por Dios, que la bacía es buena y que vale un real de a ocho como un maravedí.

Y, dándosela a su amo, se la puso luego en la cabeza, rodeándola a una parte y a otra, buscándole el encaje; y, como no se le hallaba, dijo:

-Sin duda que el pagano, a cuya medida se forjó primero esta famosa celada,

debía de tener grandísima cabeza, y lo peor dello es que le falta la mitad.

Cuando Sancho oyó llamar a la bacía celada, no pudo tener la risa; mas vínosele a las mientes la cólera de su amo, y calló en la mitad della.

-¿De qué te ríes, Sancho? -dijo don Quijote.

-Ríome -respondió él-de considerar la gran cabeza que tenía el pagano dueño deste almete, que no semeja sino una bacía de barbero pintiparada.

-¿Sabes qué imagino, Sancho? Que esta famosa pieza deste encantado yelmo, por algún extraño accidente, debió de venir a manos de quien no supo conocer ni estimar su valor, y, sin saber lo que hacía, viéndola de oro purísimo, debió de fundir la otra mitad para aprovecharse del precio, y de la otra mitad hizo ésta, que parece bacía de barbero, como tú dices. Pero, sea lo que fuere; que para mí que la conozco no hace al caso su trasmutación; que yo la aderezaré en el primer lugar donde haya herrero, y de suerte que no le haga ventaja, ni aun le llegue, la que hizo y forjó el dios de las herrerías para el dios de las batallas; y, en este entretanto, la traeré como pudiere, que más vale algo que no nada; cuanto más, que bien será bastante para defenderme de alguna pedrada.

-Eso será -dijo Sancho-si no se tira con honda, como se tiraron en la pelea de los dos ejércitos, cuando le santiguaron a vuestra merced las muelas y le rompieron el alcuza donde venía aquel benditísimo brebaje que me hizo vomitar las asaduras.

-No me da mucha pena el haberle perdido, que ya sabes tú, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, que yo tengo la receta en la memoria.

-También la tengo yo -respondió Sancho-, pero si yo le hiciere ni le probare más en mi vida, aquí sea mi hora. Cuanto más, que no pienso ponerme en ocasión de haberle menester, porque pienso guardarme con todos mis cinco sentidos de ser ferido ni de ferir a nadie. De lo del ser otra vez manteado, no digo nada, que semejantes desgracias mal se pueden prevenir, y si vienen, no hay que hacer otra cosa sino encoger los hombros, detener el aliento, cerrar los ojos y dejarse ir por donde la suerte y la manta nos llevare.

-Mal cristiano eres, Sancho -dijo, oyendo esto, don Quijote-, porque nunca olvidas la injuria que una vez te han hecho; pues sábette que es de pechos nobles y generosos no hacer caso de niñerías. ¿Qué pie sacaste cojo, qué costilla quebrada, qué cabeza rota, para que no se te olvide aquella burla? Que, bien apurada la cosa, burla fue y pasatiempo; que, a no entenderlo yo ansí, ya yo hubiera vuelto allá y hubiera hecho en tu venganza más daño que el que hicieron los griegos por la robada Elena. La cual, si fuera en este tiempo, o mi Dulcinea fuera en aquél, pudiera estar segura que no tuviera tanta fama de hermosa como tiene.

Y aquí dio un suspiro, y le puso en las nubes. Y dijo Sancho:

-Pase por burlas, pues la venganza no puede pasar en veras; pero yo sé de qué calidad fueron las veras y las burlas, y sé también que no se me caerán de la memoria, como nunca se quitarán de las espaldas. Pero, dejando esto aparte, dígame vuestra merced qué haremos deste caballo rucio rodado, que parece asno pardo, que dejó aquí desamparado aquel Martino que vuestra merced derribó; que, según él puso los pies en polvorosa y cogió las de Villadiego, no lleva pergenio de volver por él jamás; y ¡para mis barbas, si no es bueno el rucio!

-Nunca yo acostumbro -dijo don Quijote-despojar a los que venzo, ni es uso de caballería quitarles los caballos y dejarlos a pie, si ya no fuese que el vencedor hubiese perdido en la pendencia el suyo; que, en tal caso, lícito es tomar el del vencido, como ganado en guerra lícita. Así que, Sancho, deja ese caballo, o asno, o lo que tú quisieres que sea, que, como su dueño nos vea alongados de aquí, volverá por él.

-Dios sabe si quisiera llevarle -replicó Sancho-, o, por lo menos, trocalle con este mío, que no me parece tan bueno. Verdaderamente que son estrechas las leyes de caballería, pues no se estienden a dejar trocar un asno por otro; y querría saber si podría trocar los aparejos siquiera.

-En eso no estoy muy cierto -respondió don Quijote-; y, en caso de duda, hasta estar mejor informado, digo que los trueques, si es que tienes dellos necesidad extrema.

-Tan extrema es -respondió Sancho-que si fueran para mi misma persona, no los hubiera menester más.

Y luego, habilitado con aquella licencia, hizo mutatio caparum y puso su jumento a las mil lindezas, dejándole mejorado en tercio y quinto.

Hecho esto, almorzaron de las sobras del real que del acémila despojaron, bebieron del agua del arroyo de los batanes, sin volver la cara a mirallos: tal era el aborrecimiento que les tenían por el miedo en que les habían puesto.

Cortada, pues, la cólera, y aun la malenconía, subieron a caballo, y, sin tomar determinado camino, por ser muy de caballeros andantes el no tomar ninguno cierto, se pusieron a caminar por donde la voluntad de Rocinante quiso, que se llevaba tras sí la de su amo, y aun la del asno, que siempre le seguía por dondequiera que guiaba, en buen amor y compañía. Con todo esto, volvieron al camino real y siguieron por él a la ventura, sin otro disignio alguno.

Yendo, pues, así caminando, dijo Sancho a su amo:

-Señor, ¿quiere vuestra merced darme licencia que departa un poco con él? Que, después que me puso aquel áspero mandamiento del silencio, se me han podrido más de cuatro cosas en el estómago, y una sola que ahora tengo en el pico de la lengua no querría que se mal lograra.

-Dila -dijo don Quijote-, y sé breve en tus razonamientos, que ninguno hay



gustoso si es largo.

-Digo, pues, señor -respondió Sancho-, que, de algunos días a esta parte, he considerado cuán poco se gana y granjea de andar buscando estas aventuras que vuestra merced busca por estos desiertos y encrucijadas de caminos, donde, ya que se venzan y acaben las más peligrosas, no hay quien las vea ni sepa; y así, se han de quedar en perpetuo silencio, y en perjuicio de la intención de vuestra merced y de lo que ellas merecen. Y así, me parece que sería mejor, salvo el mejor parecer de vuestra merced, que nos fuésemos a servir a algún emperador, o a otro príncipe grande que tenga alguna guerra, en cuyo servicio vuestra merced muestre el valor de su persona, sus grandes fuerzas y mayor entendimiento; que, visto esto del señor a quien sirviéremos, por fuerza nos ha de remunerar, a cada cual según sus méritos, y allí no faltará quien ponga en escrito las hazañas de vuestra merced, para perpetua memoria. De las mías no digo nada, pues no han de salir de los límites escuderiles; aunque sé decir que, si se usa en la caballería escribir hazañas de escuderos, que no pienso que se han de quedar las mías entre renglones.

-No dices mal, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-; mas, antes que se llegue a ese término, es menester andar por el mundo, como en aprobación, buscando las aventuras, para que, acabando algunas, se cobre nombre y fama tal que, cuando se fuere a la corte de algún gran monarca, ya sea el caballero conocido por sus obras; y que, apenas le hayan visto entrar los muchachos por la puerta de la ciudad, cuando todos le sigan y rodeen, dando voces, diciendo: «Éste es el Caballero del Sol», o de la Sierpe, o de otra insignia alguna, debajo de la cual hubiere acabado grandes hazañas. «Éste es -dirán-el que venció en singular batalla al gigantazo Brocabruno de la Gran Fuerza; el que desencantó al Gran Mameluco de Persia del largo encantamento en que había estado casi novecientos años». Así que, de mano en mano, irán pregonando tus hechos, y luego, al alboroto de los muchachos y de la demás gente, se parará a las fenestras de su real palacio el rey de aquel reino, y así como vea al caballero, conociéndole por las armas o por la empresa del escudo, forzosamente ha de decir: «¡Ea, sus! ¡Salgan mis caballeros, cuantos en mi corte están, a recibir a la flor de la caballería, que allí viene!» A cuyo mandamiento saldrán todos, y él llegará hasta la mitad de la escalera, y le abrazará estrechísimamente, y le dará paz besándole en el rostro; y luego le llevará por la mano al aposento de la señora reina, adonde el caballero la hallará con la infanta, su hija, que ha de ser una de las más hermosas y acabadas doncellas que, en gran parte de lo descubierto de la tierra, a duras penas se pueda hallar. Sucederá tras esto, luego en continente, que ella ponga los ojos en el caballero y él en los della, y cada uno parezca a otro cosa más divina que humana; y, sin saber cómo ni cómo no, han

de quedar presos y enlazados en la intricable red amorosa, y con gran cuita en sus corazones por no saber cómo se han de hablar para descubrir sus ansias y sentimientos. Desde allí le llevarán, sin duda, a algún cuarto del palacio, ricamente aderezado, donde, habiéndole quitado las armas, le traerán un rico manto de escarlata con que se cubra; y si bien pareció armado, tan bien y mejor ha de parecer en farseto. Venida la noche, cenará con el rey, reina e infanta, donde nunca quitará los ojos della, mirándola a furto de los circustantes, y ella hará lo mismo con la misma sagacidad, porque, como tengo dicho, es muy discreta doncella. Levantarse han las tablas, y entrará a deshora por la puerta de la sala un feo y pequeño enano con una hermosa dueña, que, entre dos gigantes, detrás del enano viene, con cierta aventura, hecha por un antiquísimo sabio, que el que la acabare será tenido por el mejor caballero del mundo. Mandará luego el rey que todos los que están presentes la prueben, y ninguno le dará fin y cima sino el caballero huésped, en mucho pro de su fama, de lo cual quedará contentísima la infanta, y se tendrá por contenta y pagada además, por haber puesto y colocado sus pensamientos en tan alta parte. Y lo bueno es que este rey, o príncipe, o lo que es, tiene una muy reñida guerra con otro tan poderoso como él, y el caballero huésped le pide (al cabo de algunos días que ha estado en su corte) licencia para ir a servirle en aquella guerra dicha. Darásela el rey de muy buen talante, y el caballero le besará cortésmente las manos por la merced que le face. Y aquella noche se despedirá de su señora la infanta por las rejas de un jardín, que cae en el aposento donde ella duerme, por las cuales ya otras muchas veces la había hablado, siendo medianera y sabidora de todo una doncella de quien la infanta mucho se fiaba. Sospirará él, desmayaráse ella, traerá agua la doncella, acuitaráse mucho porque viene la mañana, y no querría que fuesen descubiertos, por la honra de su señora. Finalmente, la infanta volverá en sí y dará sus blancas manos por la reja al caballero, el cual se las besará mil y mil veces y se las bañará en lágrimas. Quedará concertado entre los dos del modo que se han de hacer saber sus buenos o malos sucesos, y rogará la princesa que se detenga lo menos que pudiere; prometérselo ha él con muchos juramentos; tórñale a besar las manos, y despídese con tanto sentimiento que estará poco por acabar la vida. Vase desde allí a su aposento, échase sobre su lecho, no puede dormir del dolor de la partida, madruga muy de mañana, vase a despedir del rey y de la reina y de la infanta; dícnle, habiéndose despedido de los dos, que la señora infanta está mal dispuesta y que no puede recibir visita; piensa el caballero que es de pena de su partida, traspásasele el corazón, y falta poco de no dar indicio manifiesto de su pena. Está la doncella medianera delante, halo de notar todo, váselo a decir a su señora, la cual la recibe con lágrimas y le dice que una de las mayores penas que tiene es no saber quién sea su caballero, y si es de

linaje de reyes o no; asegúrala la doncella que no puede caber tanta cortesía, gentileza y valentía como la de su caballero sino en sujeto real y grave; consuélase con esto la cuitada; procura consolarse, por no dar mal indicio de sí a sus padres, y, a cabo de dos días, sale en público. Ya se es ido el caballero: pelea en la guerra, vence al enemigo del rey, gana muchas ciudades, triunfa de muchas batallas, vuelve a la corte, ve a su señora por donde suele, concíértase que la pida a su padre por mujer en pago de sus servicios. No se la quiere dar el rey, porque no sabe quién es; pero, con todo esto, o robada o de otra cualquier suerte que sea, la infanta viene a ser su esposa y su padre lo viene a tener a gran ventura, porque se vino a averiguar que el tal caballero es hijo de un valeroso rey de no sé qué reino, porque creo que no debe de estar en el mapa. Muérese el padre, hereda la infanta, queda rey el caballero en dos palabras. Aquí entra luego el hacer mercedes a su escudero y a todos aquellos que le ayudaron a subir a tan alto estado: casa a su escudero con una doncella de la infanta, que será, sin duda, la que fue tercera en sus amores, que es hija de un duque muy principal.

-Eso pido, y barras derechas -dijo Sancho-; a eso me atengo, porque todo, al pie de la letra, ha de suceder por vuestra merced, llamándose *el Caballero de la Triste Figura*.

-No lo dudes, Sancho -replicó don Quijote-, porque del mismo y por los mismos pasos que esto he contado suben y han subido los caballeros andantes a ser reyes y emperadores. Sólo falta agora mirar qué rey de los cristianos o de los paganos tenga guerra y tenga hija hermosa; pero tiempo habrá para pensar esto, pues, como te tengo dicho, primero se ha de cobrar fama por otras partes que se acuda a la corte. También me falta otra cosa; que, puesto caso que se halle rey con guerra y con hija hermosa, y que yo haya cobrado fama increíble por todo el universo, no sé yo cómo se podía hallar que yo sea de linaje de reyes, o, por lo menos, primo segundo de emperador; porque no me querrá el rey dar a su hija por mujer si no está primero muy enterado en esto, aunque más lo merezcan mis famosos hechos. Así que, por esta falta, temo perder lo que mi brazo tiene bien merecido. Bien es verdad que yo soy hijodalgo de solar conocido, de posesión y propiedad y de devengar quinientos sueldos; y podría ser que el sabio que escribiese mi historia deslindase de tal manera mi parentela y decendencia, que me hallase quinto o sexto nieto de rey. Porque te hago saber, Sancho, que hay dos maneras de linajes en el mundo: unos que traen y derriban su decendencia de príncipes y monarcas, a quien poco a poco el tiempo ha deshecho, y han acabado en punta, como pirámide puesta al revés; otros tuvieron principio de gente baja, y van subiendo de grado en grado, hasta llegar a ser grandes señores. De manera que está la diferencia en que unos fueron, que ya no son, y otros son, que ya no fueron; y podría ser yo éstos que, después de averiguado, hubiese sido mi

principio grande y famoso, con lo cual se debía de contentar el rey, mi suegro, que hubiere de ser. Y cuando no, la infanta me ha de querer de manera que, a pesar de su padre, aunque claramente sepa que soy hijo de un azacán, me ha de admitir por señor y por esposo; y si no, aquí entra el roballa y llevalla donde más gusto me diere; que el tiempo o la muerte ha de acabar el enojo de sus padres.

-Ahí entra bien también -dijo Sancho-lo que algunos desalmados dicen: «No pidas de grado lo que puedes tomar por fuerza»; aunque mejor cuadra decir: «Más vale salto de mata que ruego de hombres buenos». Dígolo porque si el señor rey, suegro de vuestra merced, no se quisiere domeñar a entregalle a mi señora la infanta, no hay sino, como vuestra merced dice, roballa y trasponella. Pero está el daño que, en tanto que se hagan las paces y se goce pacíficamente del reino, el pobre escudero se podrá estar a diente en esto de las mercedes. Si ya no es que la doncella tercera, que ha de ser su mujer, se sale con la infanta, y él pasa con ella su mala ventura, hasta que el cielo ordene otra cosa; porque bien podrá, creo yo, desde luego dársela su señor por ligítima esposa.

-Eso no hay quien la quite -dijo don Quijote.

-Pues, como eso sea -respondió Sancho-, no hay sino encomendarnos a Dios, y dejar correr la suerte por donde mejor lo encaminare.

-Hágalo Dios -respondió don Quijote-como yo deseo y tú, Sancho, has menester; y ruin sea quien por ruin se tiene.

-Sea par Dios -dijo Sancho-, que yo cristiano viejo soy, y para ser conde esto me basta.

-Y aun te sobra -dijo don Quijote-; y cuando no lo fueras, no hacía nada al caso, porque, siendo yo el rey, bien te puedo dar nobleza, sin que la compres ni me sirvas con nada. Porque, en haciéndote conde, cádate ahí caballero, y digan lo que dijeren; que a buena fe que te han de llamar señoría, mal que les pese.

-Y ¡montas, que no sabría yo autorizar el litado! -dijo Sancho.

-*Dictado* has de decir, que no litado -dijo su amo.

-Sea así -respondió Sancho Panza-. Digo que le sabría bien acomodar, porque, por vida mía, que un tiempo fui muñidor de una cofradía, y que me asentaba tan bien la ropa de muñidor, que decían todos que tenía presencia para poder ser prioste de la misma cofradía. Pues, ¿qué será cuando me ponga un ropón ducal a cuestras, o me vista de oro y de perlas, a uso de conde extranjero? Para mí tengo que me han de venir a ver de cien leguas.

-Bien parecerás -dijo don Quijote-, pero será menester que te rapes las barbas a menudo; que, según las tienes de espesas, aborrascadas y mal puestas, si no te las rapas a navaja, cada dos días por lo menos, a tiro de escopeta se echará de ver lo que eres.

-¿Qué hay más -dijo Sancho-, sino tomar un barbero y tenelle asalariado en

casa? Y aun, si fuere menester, le haré que ande tras mí, como caballerizo de grande.

-Pues, ¿cómo sabes tú -preguntó don Quijote- que los grandes llevan detrás de sí a sus caballerizos?

-Yo se lo diré -respondió Sancho-: los años pasados estuve un mes en la corte, y allí vi que, paseándose un señor muy pequeño, que decían que era muy grande, un hombre le seguía a caballo a todas las vueltas que daba, que no parecía sino que era su rabo. Pregunté que cómo aquel hombre no se juntaba con el otro, sino que siempre andaba tras dél. Respondiéronme que era su caballerizo y que era uso de grandes llevar tras sí a los tales. Desde entonces lo sé tan bien que nunca se me ha olvidado.

-Digo que tienes razón -dijo don Quijote-, y que así puedes tú llevar a tu barbero; que los usos no vinieron todos juntos, ni se inventaron a una, y puedes ser tú el primero conde que lleve tras sí su barbero; y aun es de más confianza el hacer la barba que ensillar un caballo.

-Quédese eso del barbero a mi cargo -dijo Sancho-, y al de vuestra merced se quede el procurar venir a ser rey y el hacerme conde.

-Así será -respondió don Quijote.

Y, alzando los ojos, vio lo que se dirá en el siguiente capítulo.

## Capítulo XXII

*De la libertad que dio don Quijote a muchos desdichados que, mal de su grado, los llevaban donde no quisieran ir*

CUENTA Cide Hamete Benengeli, autor árabe y manchego, en esta gravísima, altisonante, mínima, dulce e imaginada historia que, después que entre el famoso don Quijote de la Mancha y Sancho Panza, su escudero, pasaron aquellas razones que en el fin del capítulo veinte y uno quedan referidas, que don Quijote alzó los ojos y vio que por el camino que llevaba venían hasta doce hombres a pie, ensartados, como cuentas, en una gran cadena de hierro por los cuellos, y todos con esposas a las manos. Venían ansimismo con ellos dos hombres de a caballo y dos de a pie; los de a caballo, con escopetas de rueda, y los de a pie, con dardos y espadas; y que así como Sancho Panza los vido, dijo:

-Ésta es cadena de galeotes, gente forzada del rey, que va a las galeras.

-¿Cómo gente forzada? -preguntó don Quijote-. ¿Es posible que el rey haga fuerza a ninguna gente?

-No digo eso -respondió Sancho-, sino que es gente que, por sus delitos, va condenada a servir al rey en las galeras de por fuerza.

-En resolución -replicó don Quijote-, comoquiera que ello sea, esta gente, aunque los llevan, van de por fuerza, y no de su voluntad.

-Así es -dijo Sancho.

-Pues desamane -dijo su amo-, aquí encaja la ejecución de mi oficio: desfacer fuerzas y socorrer y acudir a los miserables.

-Advierta vuestra merced -dijo Sancho- que la justicia, que es el mismo rey, no hace fuerza ni agravio a semejante gente, sino que los castiga en pena de sus delitos.

Llegó, en esto, la cadena de los galeotes, y don Quijote, con muy corteses razones, pidió a los que iban en su guarda fuesen servidos de informarle y decille la causa, o causas, por que llevan aquella gente de aquella manera.

Una de las guardas de a caballo respondió que eran galeotes, gente de Su Majestad que iba a galeras, y que no había más que decir, ni él tenía más que saber.

-Con todo eso -replicó don Quijote-, querría saber de cada uno dellos en particular la causa de su desgracia.

Añadió a éstas otras tales y tan comedidas razones, para moverlos a que le

dijesen lo que deseaba, que la otra guarda de a caballo le dijo:

-Aunque llevamos aquí el registro y la fe de las sentencias de cada uno destos malaventurados, no es tiempo éste de detenerles a sacarlas ni a leellas; vuestra merced llegue y se lo pregunte a ellos mismos, que ellos lo dirán si quisieren, que sí querrán, porque es gente que recibe gusto de hacer y decir bellaquerías.

Con esta licencia, que don Quijote se tomara aunque no se la dieran, se llegó a la cadena, y al primero le preguntó que por qué pecados iba de tan mala guisa. Él le respondió que por enamorado iba de aquella manera.

-¿Por eso no más? -replicó don Quijote-. Pues, si por enamorados echan a galeras, días ha que pudiera yo estar bogando en ellas.

-No son los amores como los que vuestra merced piensa -dijo el galeote-; que los míos fueron que quise tanto a una canasta de colar, atestada de ropa blanca, que la abracé conmigo tan fuertemente que, a no quitármela la justicia por fuerza, aún hasta agora no la hubiera dejado de mi voluntad. Fue en fragante, no hubo lugar de tormento; concluyóse la causa, acomodáronme las espaldas con ciento, y por añadidura tres precisos de gurapas, y acabóse la obra.

-¿Qué son gurapas? -preguntó don Quijote.

-Gurapas son galeras -respondió el galeote.

El cual era un mozo de hasta edad de veinte y cuatro años, y dijo que era natural de Piedrahíta. Lo mismo preguntó don Quijote al segundo, el cual no respondió palabra, según iba de triste y malencónico; mas respondió por él el primero, y dijo:

-Éste, señor, va por canario; digo, por músico y cantor.

-Pues, ¿cómo -repitió don Quijote-, por músicos y cantores van también a galeras?

-Sí, señor -respondió el galeote-, que no hay peor cosa que cantar en el ansia.

-Antes, he yo oído decir -dijo don Quijote- que quien canta sus males espanta.

-Acá es al revés -dijo el galeote-, que quien canta una vez llora toda la vida.

-No lo entiendo -dijo don Quijote.

Mas una de las guardas le dijo:

-Señor caballero, cantar en el ansia se dice, entre esta gente non santa, confesar en el tormento. A este pecador le dieron tormento y confesó su delito, que era ser cuatrero, que es ser ladrón de bestias, y, por haber confesado, le condenaron por seis años a galeras, amén de docientos azotes que ya lleva en las espaldas. Y va siempre pensativo y triste, porque los demás ladrones que allá quedan y aquí van le maltratan y aniquilan, y escarnecen y tienen en poco, porque confesó y no tuvo ánimo de decir nones. Porque dicen ellos que tantas letras tiene un *no* como un *sí*, y que harta ventura tiene un delincuente, que está en su lengua su vida o su muerte, y no en la de los testigos y probanzas; y para

mí tengo que no van muy fuera de camino.

-Y yo lo entiendo así -respondió don Quijote.

El cual, pasando al tercero, preguntó lo que a los otros; el cual, de presto y con mucho desenfado, respondió y dijo:

-Yo voy por cinco años a las señoras gurapas por faltarme diez ducados.

-Yo daré veinte de muy buena gana -dijo don Quijote-por libraros de esa pesadumbre.

-Eso me parece -respondió el galeote-como quien tiene dineros en mitad del golfo y se está muriendo de hambre, sin tener adonde comprar lo que ha menester. Dígolo porque si a su tiempo tuviera yo esos veinte ducados que vuestra merced ahora me ofrece, hubiera untado con ellos la péndola del escribano y avivado el ingenio del procurador, de manera que hoy me viera en mitad de la plaza de Zocodover, de Toledo, y no en este camino, atraillado como galgo; pero Dios es grande: paciencia y basta.

Pasó don Quijote al cuarto, que era un hombre de venerable rostro con una barba blanca que le pasaba del pecho; el cual, oyéndose preguntar la causa por que allí venía, comenzó a llorar y no respondió palabra; mas el quinto condenado le sirvió de lengua, y dijo:

-Este hombre honrado va por cuatro años a galeras, habiendo paseado las acostumbradas vestido en pompa y a caballo.

-Eso es -dijo Sancho Panza-, a lo que a mí me parece, haber salido a la vergüenza.

-Así es -replicó el galeote-; y la culpa por que le dieron esta pena es por haber sido corredor de oreja, y aun de todo el cuerpo. En efecto, quiero decir que este caballero va por alcahuete, y por tener asimesmo sus puntas y collar de hechicero.

-A no haberle añadido esas puntas y collar -dijo don Quijote-, por solamente el alcahuete limpio, no merecía él ir a bogar en las galeras, sino a mandallas y a ser general dellas; porque no es así comoquiera el oficio de alcahuete, que es oficio de discretos y necesárisimo en la república bien ordenada, y que no le debía ejercer sino gente muy bien nacida; y aun había de haber veedor y examinador de los tales, como le hay de los demás oficios, con número deputado y conocido, como corredores de lonja; y desta manera se escusarían muchos males que se causan por andar este oficio y ejercicio entre gente idiota y de poco entendimiento, como son mujercillas de poco más a menos, pajecillos y truhanes de pocos años y de poca experiencia, que, a la más necesaria ocasión y cuando es menester dar una traza que importe, se les yelan las migas entre la boca y la mano y no saben cuál es su mano derecha. Quisiera pasar adelante y dar las razones por que convenía hacer elección de los que en la república habían de



tener tan necesario oficio, pero no es el lugar acomodado para ello: algún día lo diré a quien lo pueda proveer y remediar. Sólo digo ahora que la pena que me ha causado ver estas blancas canas y este rostro venerable en tanta fatiga, por alcahuete, me la ha quitado el adjunto de ser hechicero; aunque bien sé que no hay hechizos en el mundo que puedan mover y forzar la voluntad, como algunos simples piensan; que es libre nuestro albedrío, y no hay yerba ni encanto que le fuerce. Lo que suelen hacer algunas mujercillas simples y algunos embusteros bellacos es algunas misturas y venenos con que vuelven locos a los hombres, dando a entender que tienen fuerza para hacer querer bien, siendo, como digo, cosa imposible forzar la voluntad.

-Así es -dijo el buen viejo-, y, en verdad, señor, que en lo de hechicero que no tuve culpa; en lo de alcahuete, no lo pude negar. Pero nunca pensé que hacía mal en ello: que toda mi intención era que todo el mundo se holgase y viviese en paz y quietud, sin pendencias ni penas; pero no me aprovechó nada este buen deseo para dejar de ir adonde no espero volver, según me cargan los años y un mal de orina que llevo, que no me deja reposar un rato.

Y aquí tornó a su llanto, como de primero; y túvole Sancho tanta compasión, que sacó un real de a cuatro del seno y se le dio de limosna.

Pasó adelante don Quijote, y preguntó a otro su delito, el cual respondió con no menos, sino con mucha más gallardía que el pasado:

-Yo voy aquí porque me burlé demasiadamente con dos primas hermanas mías, y con otras dos hermanas que no lo eran mías; finalmente, tanto me burlé con todas, que resultó de la burla crecer la parentela, tan intrincadamente que no hay diablo que la declare. Probóseme todo, faltó favor, no tuve dineros, víame a pique de perder los tragaderos, sentenciáronme a galeras por seis años, consentí: castigo es de mi culpa; mozo soy: dure la vida, que con ella todo se alcanza. Si vuestra merced, señor caballero, lleva alguna cosa con que socorrer a estos pobretes, Dios se lo pagará en el cielo, y nosotros tendremos en la tierra cuidado de rogar a Dios en nuestras oraciones por la vida y salud de vuestra merced, que sea tan larga y tan buena como su buena presencia merece.

Éste iba en hábito de estudiante, y dijo una de las guardas que era muy grande hablador y muy gentil latino.

Tras todos éstos, venía un hombre de muy buen parecer, de edad de treinta años, sino que al mirar metía el un ojo en el otro un poco. Venía diferentemente atado que los demás, porque traía una cadena al pie, tan grande que se la liaba por todo el cuerpo, y dos argollas a la garganta, la una en la cadena, y la otra de las que llaman guardaamigo o piedeamigo, de la cual decendían dos hierros que llegaban a la cintura, en los cuales se asían dos esposas, donde llevaba las manos, cerradas con un grueso candado, de manera que ni con las manos podía

llegar a la boca, ni podía bajar la cabeza a llegar a las manos. Preguntó don Quijote que cómo iba aquel hombre con tantas prisiones más que los otros. Respondióle la guarda porque tenía aquel solo más delitos que todos los otros juntos, y que era tan atrevido y tan grande bellaco que, aunque le llevaban de aquella manera, no iban seguros dél, sino que temían que se les había de huir.

-¿Qué delitos puede tener -dijo don Quijote-, si no han merecido más pena que echalle a las galeras?

-Va por diez años -replicó la guarda-, que es como muerte civil. No se quiera saber más, sino que este buen hombre es el famoso Ginés de Pasamonte, que por otro nombre llaman Ginesillo de Parapilla.

-Señor comisario -dijo entonces el galeote-, váyase poco a poco, y no andemos ahora a deslindar nombres y sobrenombres. Ginés me llamo y no Ginesillo, y Pasamonte es mi alcurnia, y no Parapilla, como voacé dice; y cada uno se dé una vuelta a la redonda, y no hará poco.

-Hable con menos tono -replicó el comisario-, señor ladrón de más de la marca, si no quiere que le haga callar, mal que le pese.

-Bien parece -respondió el galeote- que va el hombre como Dios es servido, pero algún día sabrá alguno si me llamo Ginesillo de Parapilla o no.

-Pues, ¿no te llaman así, embustero? -dijo la guarda.

-Sí llaman -respondió Ginés-, mas yo haré que no me lo llamen, o me las pelaría donde yo digo entre mis dientes. Señor caballero, si tiene algo que darnos, dénoslo ya, y vaya con Dios, que ya enfada con tanto querer saber vidas ajenas; y si la mía quiere saber, sepa que yo soy Ginés de Pasamonte, cuya vida está escrita por estos pulgares.

-Dice verdad -dijo el comisario-: que él mismo ha escrito su historia, que no hay más, y deja empeñado el libro en la cárcel en docientos reales.

-Y le pienso quitar -dijo Ginés-, si quedara en docientos ducados.

-¿Tan bueno es? -dijo don Quijote.

-Es tan bueno -respondió Ginés- que mal año para *Lazarillo de Tormes* y para todos cuantos de aquel género se han escrito o escribieren. Lo que le sé decir a voacé es que trata verdades, y que son verdades tan lindas y tan donosas que no pueden haber mentiras que se le igualen.

-¿Y cómo se intitula el libro? -preguntó don Quijote.

-La vida de Ginés de Pasamonte -respondió el mismo.

-¿Y está acabado? -preguntó don Quijote.

-¿Cómo puede estar acabado -respondió él-, si aún no está acabada mi vida? Lo que está escrito es desde mi nacimiento hasta el punto que esta última vez me han echado en galeras.

-Luego, ¿otra vez habéis estado en ellas? -dijo don Quijote.

-Para servir a Dios y al rey, otra vez he estado cuatro años, y ya sé a qué sabe el bizcocho y el corbacho -respondió Ginés-; y no me pesa mucho de ir a ellas, porque allí tendré lugar de acabar mi libro, que me quedan muchas cosas que decir, y en las galeras de España hay mas sosiego de aquel que sería menester, aunque no es menester mucho más para lo que yo tengo de escribir, porque me lo sé de coro.

-Hábil pareces -dijo don Quijote.

-Y desdichado -respondió Ginés-; porque siempre las desdichas persiguen al buen ingenio.

-Persiguen a los bellacos -dijo el comisario.

-Ya le he dicho, señor comisario -respondió Pasamonte-, que se vaya poco a poco, que aquellos señores no le dieron esa vara para que maltratase a los pobres que aquí vamos, sino para que nos guiase y llevase adonde Su Majestad manda. Si no, ¡por vida de...! ¡Basta!, que podría ser que saliesen algún día en la colada las manchas que se hicieron en la venta; y todo el mundo calle, y viva bien, y hable mejor y caminemos, que ya es mucho regodeo éste.

Alzó la vara en alto el comisario para dar a Pasamonte en respuesta de sus amenazas, mas don Quijote se puso en medio y le rogó que no le maltratase, pues no era mucho que quien llevaba tan atadas las manos tuviese algún tanto suelta la lengua. Y, volviéndose a todos los de la cadena, dijo:

-De todo cuanto me habéis dicho, hermanos carísimos, he sacado en limpio que, aunque os han castigado por vuestras culpas, las penas que vais a padecer no os dan mucho gusto, y que vais a ellas muy de mala gana y muy contra vuestra voluntad; y que podría ser que el poco ánimo que aquél tuvo en el tormento, la falta de dineros déste, el poco favor del otro y, finalmente, el torcido juicio del juez, hubiese sido causa de vuestra perdición y de no haber salido con la justicia que de vuestra parte teníades. Todo lo cual se me representa a mí ahora en la memoria de manera que me está diciendo, persuadiendo y aun forzando que muestre con vosotros el efeto para que el cielo me arrojó al mundo, y me hizo profesar en él la orden de caballería que profeso, y el voto que en ella hice de favorecer a los menesterosos y oprimidos de los mayores. Pero, porque sé que una de las partes de la prudencia es que lo que se puede hacer por bien no se haga por mal, quiero rogar a estos señores guardianes y comisario sean servidos de desataros y dejaros ir en paz, que no faltarán otros que sirvan al rey en mejores ocasiones; porque me parece duro caso hacer esclavos a los que Dios y naturaleza hizo libres. Cuanto más, señores guardas -añadió don Quijote-, que estos pobres no han cometido nada contra vosotros. Allá se lo haya cada uno con su pecado; Dios hay en el cielo, que no se descuida de castigar al malo ni de premiar al bueno, y no es bien que los hombres honrados sean verdugos de los

otros hombres, no yéndoles nada en ello. Pido esto con esta mansedumbre y sosiego, porque tenga, si lo cumplís, algo que agradecereros; y, cuando de grado no lo hagáis, esta lanza y esta espada, con el valor de mi brazo, harán que lo hagáis por fuerza.

-¡Donosa majadería! -respondió el comisario-. ¡Bueno está el donaire con que ha salido a cabo de rato! ¡Los forzados del rey quiere que le dejemos, como si tuviéramos autoridad para soltarlos o él la tuviera para mandárnoslo! Váyase vuestra merced, señor, norabuena, su camino adelante, y enderécese ese bacín que trae en la cabeza, y no ande buscando tres pies al gato.

-¡Vos sois el gato, y el rato, y el bellaco! -respondió don Quijote.

Y, diciendo y haciendo, arremetió con él tan presto que, sin que tuviese lugar de ponerse en defensa, dio con él en el suelo, malherido de una lanzada; y avínole bien, que éste era el de la escopeta. Las demás guardas quedaron atónitas y suspensas del no esperado acontecimiento; pero, volviendo sobre sí, pusieron mano a sus espadas los de a caballo, y los de a pie a sus dardos, y arremetieron a don Quijote, que con mucho sosiego los aguardaba; y, sin duda, lo pasara mal si los galeotes, viendo la ocasión que se les ofrecía de alcanzar libertad, no la procuraran, procurando romper la cadena donde venían ensartados. Fue la revuelta de manera que las guardas, ya por acudir a los galeotes, que se desataban, ya por acometer a don Quijote, que los acometía, no hicieron cosa que fuese de provecho.

Ayudó Sancho, por su parte, a la soltura de Ginés de Pasamonte, que fue el primero que saltó en la campaña libre y desembarazado, y, arremetiendo al comisario caído, le quitó la espada y la escopeta, con la cual, apuntando al uno y señalando al otro, sin disparalla jamás, no quedó guarda en todo el campo, porque se fueron huyendo, así de la escopeta de Pasamonte como de las muchas pedradas que los ya sueltos galeotes les tiraban.

Entristeciósese mucho Sancho deste suceso, porque se le representó que los que iban huyendo habían de dar noticia del caso a la Santa Hermandad, la cual, a campana herida, saldría a buscar los delincuentes, y así se lo dijo a su amo, y le rogó que luego de allí se partiesen y se emboscasen en la sierra, que estaba cerca.

-Bien está eso -dijo don Quijote-, pero yo sé lo que ahora conviene que se haga.

Y, llamando a todos los galeotes, que andaban alborotados y habían despojado al comisario hasta dejarle en cueros, se le pusieron todos a la redonda para ver lo que les mandaba, y así les dijo:

-De gente bien nacida es agradecer los beneficios que reciben, y uno de los pecados que más a Dios ofende es la ingratitud. Dígolo porque ya habéis visto,

señores, con manifiesta experiencia, el que de mí habéis recibido; en pago del cual querría, y es mi voluntad, que, cargados de esa cadena que quité de vuestros cuellos, luego os pongáis en camino y vais a la ciudad del Toboso, y allí os presentéis ante la señora Dulcinea del Toboso y le digáis que su caballero, el de la Triste Figura, se le envía a encomendar, y le contéis, punto por punto, todos los que ha tenido esta famosa aventura hasta ponerlos en la deseada libertad; y, hecho esto, os podréis ir donde quisiéredes a la buena ventura.

Respondió por todos Ginés de Pasamonte, y dijo:

-Lo que vuestra merced nos manda, señor y libertador nuestro, es imposible de toda imposibilidad cumplirlo, porque no podemos ir juntos por los caminos, sino solos y divididos, y cada uno por su parte, procurando meterse en las entrañas de la tierra, por no ser hallado de la Santa Hermandad, que, sin duda alguna, ha de salir en nuestra busca. Lo que vuestra merced puede hacer, y es justo que haga, es mudar ese servicio y montazgo de la señora Dulcinea del Toboso en alguna cantidad de avemarías y credos, que nosotros diremos por la intención de vuestra merced; y ésta es cosa que se podrá cumplir de noche y de día, huyendo o reposando, en paz o en guerra; pero pensar que hemos de volver ahora a las ollas de Egipto, digo, a tomar nuestra cadena y a ponernos en camino del Toboso, es pensar que es ahora de noche, que aún no son las diez del día, y es pedir a nosotros eso como pedir peras al olmo.

-Pues ¡voto a tal! -dijo don Quijote, ya puesto en cólera-, don hijo de la puta, don Ginesillo de Paropillo, o como os llamáis, que habéis de ir vos solo, rabo entre piernas, con toda la cadena a cuestas.

Pasamonte, que no era nada bien sufrido, estando ya enterado que don Quijote no era muy cuerdo, pues tal disparate había acometido como el de querer darles libertad, viéndose tratar de aquella manera, hizo del ojo a los compañeros, y, apartándose aparte, comenzaron a llover tantas piedras sobre don Quijote, que no se daba manos a cubrirse con la rodela; y el pobre de Rocinante no hacía más caso de la espuela que si fuera hecho de bronce. Sancho se puso tras su asno, y con él se defendía de la nube y pedrisco que sobre entrambos llovía. No se pudo escudar tan bien don Quijote que no le acertasen no sé cuántos guijarros en el cuerpo, con tanta fuerza que dieron con él en el suelo; y apenas hubo caído, cuando fue sobre él el estudiante y le quitó la bacía de la cabeza, y dióle con ella tres o cuatro golpes en las espaldas y otros tantos en la tierra, con que la hizo pedazos. Quitáronle una ropilla que traía sobre las armas, y las medias calzas le querían quitar si las grebas no lo estorbaran. A Sancho le quitaron el gabán, y, dejándole en pelota, repartiendo entre sí los demás despojos de la batalla, se fueron cada uno por su parte, con más cuidado de escaparse de la Hermandad, que temían, que de cargarse de la cadena e ir a presentarse ante la señora

Dulcinea del Toboso.

Solos quedaron jumento y Rocinante, Sancho y Don Quijote; el jumento, cabizbajo y pensativo, sacudiendo de cuando en cuando las orejas, pensando que aún no había cesado la borrasca de las piedras, que le perseguían los oídos; Rocinante, tendido junto a su amo, que también vino al suelo de otra pedrada; Sancho, en pelota y temeroso de la Santa Hermandad; don Quijote, mohinísimo de verse tan malparado por los mismos a quien tanto bien había hecho.

## Capítulo XXIII

*De lo que le aconteció al famoso don Quijote en Sierra Morena, que fue una de las más raras aventuras que en esta verdadera historia se cuentan*

VIÉNDOSE tan malparado don Quijote, dijo a su escudero:

-Siempre, Sancho, lo he oído decir, que el hacer bien a villanos es echar agua en la mar. Si yo hubiera creído lo que me dijiste, yo hubiera escusado esta pesadumbre; pero ya está hecho: paciencia, y escarmentar para desde aquí adelante.

-Así escarmentará vuestra merced -respondió Sancho- como yo soy turco; pero, pues dice que si me hubiera creído se hubiera escusado este daño, créame ahora y escusará otro mayor; porque le hago saber que con la Santa Hermandad no hay usar de caballerías, que no se le da a ella por cuantos caballeros andantes hay dos maravedís; y sepa que ya me parece que sus saetas me zumban por los oídos.

-Naturalmente eres cobarde, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, pero, porque no digas que soy contumaz y que jamás hago lo que me aconsejas, por esta vez quiero tomar tu consejo y apartarme de la furia que tanto temes; mas ha de ser con una condición: que jamás, en vida ni en muerte, has de decir a nadie que yo me retiré y aparté deste peligro de miedo, sino por complacer a tus ruegos; que si otra cosa dijeres, mentirás en ello, y desde ahora para entonces, y desde entonces para ahora, te desmiento, y digo que mientes y mentirás todas las veces que lo penses o lo dijeres. Y no me repliques más, que en sólo pensar que me aparto y retiro de algún peligro, especialmente déste, que parece que lleva algún es no es de sombra de miedo, estoy ya para quedarme, y para aguardar aquí solo, no solamente a la Santa Hermandad que dices y temes, sino a los hermanos de los doce tribus de Israel, y a los siete Macabeos, y a Cástor y a Pólux, y aun a todos los hermanos y hermandades que hay en el mundo.

-Señor -respondió Sancho-, que el retirar no es huir, ni el esperar es cordura, cuando el peligro sobrepuja a la esperanza, y de sabios es guardarse hoy para mañana y no aventurarse todo en un día. Y sepa que, aunque zafio y villano, todavía se me alcanza algo desto que llaman buen gobierno; así que, no se arrepienta de haber tomado mi consejo, sino suba en Rocinante, si puede, o si no yo le ayudaré, y sígame, que el caletre me dice que hemos menester ahora más los pies que las manos.

Subió don Quijote, sin replicarle más palabra, y, guiando Sancho sobre su asno, se entraron por una parte de Sierra Morena, que allí junto estaba, llevando Sancho intención de atravesarla toda e ir a salir al Viso, o a Almodóvar del Campo, y esconderse algunos días por aquellas asperezas, por no ser hallados si la Hermandad los buscara. Animóle a esto haber visto que de la refriega de los galeotes se había escapado libre la despensa que sobre su asno venía, cosa que la juzgó a milagro, según fue lo que llevaron y buscaron los galeotes. 1

Así como don Quijote entró por aquellas montañas, se le alegró el corazón, pareciéndole aquellos lugares acomodados para las aventuras que buscaba. Reducíansele a la memoria los maravillosos acaecimientos que en semejantes soledades y asperezas habían sucedido a caballeros andantes. Iba pensando en estas cosas, tan embebecido y trasportado en ellas que de ninguna otra se acordaba. Ni Sancho llevaba otro cuidado -después que le pareció que caminaba por parte segura-sino de satisfacer su estómago con los relieves que del despojo clerical habían quedado; y así, iba tras su amo sentado a la mujeriega sobre su jumento, sacando de un costal y embaulando en su panza; y no se le diera por hallar otra ventura, entretanto que iba de aquella manera, un ardite.

En esto, alzó los ojos y vio que su amo estaba parado, procurando con la punta del lanzón alzar no sé qué bulto que estaba caído en el suelo, por lo cual se dio prisa a llegar a ayudarle si fuese menester; y cuando llegó fue a tiempo que alzaba con la punta del lanzón un cojín y una maleta asida a él, medio podridos, o podridos del todo, y deshechos; mas, pesaba tanto, que fue necesario que Sancho se apease a tomarlos, y mandóle su amo que viese lo que en la maleta venía.

Hízolo con mucha presteza Sancho, y, aunque la maleta venía cerrada con una cadena y su candado, por lo roto y podrido della vio lo que en ella había, que eran cuatro camisas de delgada holanda y otras cosas de lienzo, no menos curiosas que limpias, y en un pañizuelo halló un buen montoncillo de escudos de oro; y, así como los vio, dijo:

-¡Bendito sea todo el cielo, que nos ha deparado una aventura que sea de provecho!

Y buscando más, halló un librito de memoria, ricamente guarnecido. Éste le pidió don Quijote, y mandóle que guardase el dinero y lo tomase para él. Besóle las manos Sancho por la merced, y, desvalijando a la valija de su lencería, la puso en el costal de la despensa. Todo lo cual visto por don Quijote, dijo:

-Paréceme, Sancho, y no es posible que sea otra cosa, que algún caminante descaminado debió de pasar por esta sierra, y, salteándole malandrines, le debieron de matar, y le trujeron a enterrar en esta tan escondida parte.

-No puede ser eso -respondió Sancho-, porque si fueran ladrones, no se



dejaran aquí este dinero.

-Verdad dices -dijo don Quijote-, y así, no adivino ni doy en lo que esto pueda ser; mas, espérate: veremos si en este librito de memoria hay alguna cosa escrita por donde podamos rastrear y venir en conocimiento de lo que deseamos.

Abrióle, y lo primero que halló en él escrito, como en borrador, aunque de muy buena letra, fue un soneto, que, leyéndole alto porque Sancho también lo oyese, vio que decía desta manera:

O le falta al Amor conocimiento,  
o le sobra crueldad, o no es mi pena  
igual a la ocasión que me condena  
al género más duro de tormento.

Pero si Amor es dios, es argumento 5  
que nada ignora, y es razón muy buena  
que un dios no sea cruel. Pues, ¿quién ordena  
el terrible dolor que adoro y siento?

Si digo que sois vos, Fili, no acierto;  
que tanto mal en tanto bien no cabe, 10

ni me viene del cielo esta ruina.

Presto habré de morir, que es lo más cierto;  
que al mal de quien la causa no se sabe  
milagro es acertar la medicina.

-Por esa trova -dijo Sancho-no se puede saber nada, si ya no es que por ese hilo que está ahí se saque el ovillo de todo.

-¿Qué hilo está aquí? -dijo don Quijote.

-Paréceme -dijo Sancho-que vuestra merced nombró ahí *hilo*.

-No dije sino *Fili* -respondió don Quijote-, y éste, sin duda, es el nombre de la dama de quien se queja el autor deste soneto; y a fe que debe de ser razonable poeta, o yo sé poco del arte.

-Luego, ¿también -dijo Sancho-se le entiende a vuestra merced de trovas?

-Y más de lo que tú piensas -respondió don Quijote-, y veráslo cuando lleves una carta, escrita en verso de arriba abajo, a mi señora Dulcinea del Toboso. Porque quiero que sepas, Sancho, que todos o los más caballeros andantes de la edad pasada eran grandes trovadores y grandes músicos; que estas dos

habilidades, o gracias, por mejor decir, son anexas a los enamorados andantes. Verdad es que las coplas de los pasados caballeros tienen más de espíritu que de primor.

-Lea más vuestra merced -dijo Sancho-, que ya hallará algo que nos satisfaga.

Volvió la hoja don Quijote y dijo:

-Esto es prosa, y parece carta.

-¿Carta misiva, señor? -preguntó Sancho.

-En el principio no parece sino de amores -respondió don Quijote.

-Pues lea vuestra merced alto -dijo Sancho-, que gusto mucho destas cosas de amores.

-Que me place -dijo don Quijote.

Y, leyéndola alto, como Sancho se lo había rogado, vio que decía desta manera:

Tu falsa promesa y mi cierta desventura me llevan a parte donde antes volverán a tus oídos las nuevas de mi muerte que las razones de mis quejas. Desechásteme, ¡oh ingrata!, por quien tiene más, no por quien vale más que yo; mas si la virtud fuera riqueza que se estimara, no envidiara yo dichas ajenas ni llorara desdichas propias. Lo que levantó tu hermosura han derribado tus obras: por ella entendí que eras ángel, y por ellas conozco que eres mujer. Quédate en paz, causadora de mi guerra, y haga el cielo que los engaños de tu esposo estén siempre encubiertos, porque tú no quedes arrepentida de lo que heciste y yo no tome venganza de lo que no deseo.

Acabando de leer la carta, dijo don Quijote:

-Menos por ésta que por los versos se puede sacar más de que quien la escribió es algún desdeñado amante.

Y, hojeando casi todo el librito, halló otros versos y cartas, que algunos pudo leer y otros no; pero lo que todos contenían eran quejas, lamentos, desconfianzas, sabores y sinsabores, favores y desdenes, solenizados los unos y llorados los otros.

En tanto que don Quijote pasaba el libro, pasaba Sancho la maleta, sin dejar rincón en toda ella, ni en el cojín, que no buscara, escudriñase e inquiriese, ni costura que no deshiciese, ni vedija de lana que no escarmenase, porque no se quedase nada por diligencia ni mal recado: tal golosina habían despertado en él los hallados escudos, que pasaban de ciento. Y, aunque no halló mas de lo hallado, dio por bien empleados los vuelos de la manta, el vomitar del brebaje, las bendiciones de las estacas, las puñadas del arriero, la falta de las alforjas, el robo del gabán y toda la hambre, sed y cansancio que había pasado en servicio de su buen señor, pareciéndole que estaba más que rebién pagado con la merced recibida de la entrega del hallazgo.

Con gran deseo quedó el Caballero de la Triste Figura de saber quién fuese el dueño de la maleta, conjeturando, por el soneto y carta, por el dinero en oro y por las tan buenas camisas, que debía de ser de algún principal enamorado, a quien desdenes y malos tratamientos de su dama debían de haber conducido a algún desesperado término. Pero, como por aquel lugar inhabitable y escabroso no parecía persona alguna de quien poder informarse, no se curó de más que de pasar adelante, sin llevar otro camino que aquel que Rocinante quería, que era por donde él podía caminar, siempre con imaginación que no podía faltar por aquellas malezas alguna estraña aventura.

Yendo, pues, con este pensamiento, vio que, por cima de una montañuela que delante de los ojos se le ofrecía, iba saltando un hombre, de risco en risco y de mata en mata, con estraña ligereza. Figurósele que iba desnudo, la barba negra y espesa, los cabellos muchos y rabultados, los pies descalzos y las piernas sin cosa alguna; los muslos cubrían unos calzones, al parecer de terciopelo leonado, mas tan hechos pedazos que por muchas partes se le descubrían las carnes. Traía la cabeza descubierta, y, aunque pasó con la ligereza que se ha dicho, todas estas menudencias miró y notó el Caballero de la Triste Figura; y, aunque lo procuró, no pudo seguille, porque no era dado a la debilidad de Rocinante andar por aquellas asperezas, y más siendo él de suyo pisacorto y flemático. Luego imaginó don Quijote que aquél era el dueño del cojín y de la maleta, y propuso en sí de buscallo, aunque supiese andar un año por aquellas montañas hasta hallarle; y así, mandó a Sancho que se apease del asno y atajase por la una parte de la montaña, que él iría por la otra y podría ser que topasen, con esta diligencia, con aquel hombre que con tanta priesa se les había quitado de delante.

-No podré hacer eso -respondió Sancho-, porque, en apartándome de vuestra merced, luego es conmigo el miedo, que me asalta con mil géneros de sobresaltos y visiones. Y sírvale esto que digo de aviso, para que de aquí adelante no me aparte un dedo de su presencia.

-Así será -dijo el de la Triste Figura-, y yo estoy muy contento de que te quieras valer de mi ánimo, el cual no te ha de faltar, aunque te falte el ánima del cuerpo. Y vente ahora tras mí poco a poco, o como pudieres, y haz de los ojos lanternas; rodearemos esta serrezuela: quizá toparemos con aquel hombre que vimos, el cual, sin duda alguna, no es otro que el dueño de nuestro hallazgo.

A lo que Sancho respondió:

-Harto mejor sería no buscallo, porque si le hallamos y acaso fuese el dueño del dinero, claro está que lo tengo de restituir; y así, fuera mejor, sin hacer esta inútil diligencia, poseerlo yo con buena fe hasta que, por otra vía menos curiosa y diligente, pareciera su verdadero señor; y quizá fuera a tiempo que lo hubiera

gastado, y entonces el rey me hacía franco.

-Engañaste en eso, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-; que, ya que hemos caído en sospecha de quién es el dueño, cuasi delante, estamos obligados a buscarle y volvérselos; y, cuando no le buscásemos, la vehemente sospecha que tenemos de que él lo sea nos pone ya en tanta culpa como si lo fuese. Así que, Sancho amigo, no te dé pena el buscallo, por la que a mí se me quitará si le hallo.

Y así, picó a Rocinante, y siguióle Sancho con su acostumbrado jumento; y, habiendo rodeado parte de la montaña, hallaron en un arroyo, caída, muerta y medio comida de perros y picada de grajos, una mula ensillada y enfrenada; todo lo cual confirmó en ellos más la sospecha de que aquel que huía era el dueño de la mula y del cojín.

Estándola mirando, oyeron un silbo como de pastor que guardaba ganado, y a deshora, a su siniestra mano, parecieron una buena cantidad de cabras, y tras ellas, por cima de la montaña, pareció el cabrero que las guardaba, que era un hombre anciano. Dióle voces don Quijote, y rogóle que bajase donde estaban. Él respondió a gritos que quién les había traído por aquel lugar, pocas o ningunas veces pisado sino de pies de cabras o de lobos y otras fieras que por allí andaban. Respondióle Sancho que bajase, que de todo le darían buena cuenta. Bajó el cabrero, y, en llegando adonde don Quijote estaba, dijo:

-Apostaré que está mirando la mula de alquiler que está muerta en esa hondonada. Pues a buena fe que ha ya seis meses que está en ese lugar. Díganme: ¿han topado por ahí a su dueño?

-No hemos topado a nadie -respondió don Quijote-, sino a un cojín y a una maletilla que no lejos deste lugar hallamos.

-También la hallé yo -respondió el cabrero-, mas nunca la quise alzar ni llegar a ella, temeroso de algún desmán y de que no me la pidiesen por de hurto; que es el diablo sutil, y debajo de los pies se levanta allombre cosa donde tropiece y caya, sin saber cómo ni cómo no.

-Eso mismo es lo que yo digo -respondió Sancho-: que también la hallé yo, y no quise llegar a ella con un tiro de piedra; allí la dejé y allí se queda como se estaba, que no quiero perro con cencerro.

-Decidme, buen hombre -dijo don Quijote-, ¿sabéis vos quién sea el dueño destas prendas?

-Lo que sabré yo decir -dijo el cabrero-es que «habrá al pie de seis meses, poco más a menos, que llegó a una majada de pastores, que estará como tres leguas deste lugar, un mancebo de gentil talle y apostura, caballero sobre esa misma mula que ahí está muerta, y con el mismo cojín y maleta que decís que hallastes y no tocastes. Preguntónos que cuál parte desta sierra era la más áspera y escondida; dijímosle que era esta donde ahora estamos; y es ansí la verdad,

porque si entráis media legua más adentro, quizá no acertaréis a salir; y estoy maravillado de cómo habéis podido llegar aquí, porque no hay camino ni senda que a este lugar encamine. Digo, pues, que, en oyendo nuestra respuesta el mancebo, volvió las riendas y encaminó hacia el lugar donde le señalamos, dejándonos a todos contentos de su buen tallo, y admirados de su demanda y de la priesa con que le víamos caminar y volverse hacia la sierra; y desde entonces nunca más le vimos, hasta que desde allí a algunos días salió al camino a uno de nuestros pastores, y, sin decirle nada, se llegó a él y le dio muchas puñadas y coces, y luego se fue a la borrica del hato y le quitó cuanto pan y queso en ella traía; y, con extraña ligereza, hecho esto, se volvió a emboscar en la sierra. Como esto supimos algunos cabreros, le anduvimos a buscar casi dos días por lo más cerrado desta sierra, al cabo de los cuales le hallamos metido en el hueco de un grueso y valiente alcornoque. Salió a nosotros con mucha mansedumbre, ya roto el vestido, y el rostro disfigurado y tostado del sol, de tal suerte que apenas le conocíamos, sino que los vestidos, aunque rotos, con la noticia que dellos teníamos, nos dieron a entender que era el que buscábamos. Saludónos cortésmente, y en pocas y muy buenas razones nos dijo que no nos maravillásemos de verle andar de aquella suerte, porque así le convenía para cumplir cierta penitencia que por sus muchos pecados le había sido impuesta. Rogámosle que nos dijese quién era, mas nunca lo pudimos acabar con él. Pedímosle también que, cuando hubiese menester el sustento, sin el cual no podía pasar, nos dijese dónde le hallaríamos, porque con mucho amor y cuidado se lo llevaríamos; y que si esto tampoco fuese de su gusto, que, a lo menos, saliese a pedirlo, y no a quitarlo a los pastores. Agradeció nuestro ofrecimiento, pidió perdón de los asaltos pasados, y ofreció de pedillo de allí adelante por amor de Dios, sin dar molestia alguna a nadie. En cuanto lo que tocaba a la estancia de su habitación, dijo que no tenía otra que aquella que le ofrecía la ocasión donde le tomaba la noche; y acabó su plática con un tan tierno llanto, que bien fuéramos de piedra los que escuchado le habíamos, si en él no le acompañáramos, considerándole cómo le habíamos visto la vez primera, y cuál le veíamos entonces. Porque, como tengo dicho, era un muy gentil y agraciado mancebo, y en sus cortesías y concertadas razones mostraba ser bien nacido y muy cortesana persona; que, puesto que éramos rústicos los que le escuchábamos, su gentileza era tanta, que bastaba a darse a conocer a la misma rusticidad. Y, estando en lo mejor de su plática, paró y enmudecióse; clavó los ojos en el suelo por un buen espacio, en el cual todos estuvimos quedos y suspensos, esperando en qué había de parar aquel embelesamiento, con no poca lástima de verlo; porque, por lo que hacía de abrir los ojos, estar fijo mirando al suelo sin mover pestaña gran rato, y otras veces cerrarlos, apretando los labios y

enarcando las cejas, fácilmente conocimos que algún accidente de locura le había sobrevenido. Mas él nos dio a entender presto ser verdad lo que pensábamos, porque se levantó con gran furia del suelo, donde se había echado, y arremetió con el primero que halló junto a sí, con tal denuedo y rabia que, si no se le quitáramos, le matara a puñadas y a bocados; y todo esto hacía diciendo: “¡Ah, fementido Fernando! ¡Aquí, aquí me pagarás la sinrazón que me heciste: estas manos te sacarán el corazón, donde albergan y tienen manida todas las maldades juntas, principalmente la fraude y el engaño!” Y a éstas añadía otras razones, que todas se encaminaban a decir mal de aquel Fernando y a tacharle de traidor y fementido. Quitámossele, pues, con no poca pesadumbre, y él, sin decir más palabra, se apartó de nosotros y se emboscó corriendo por entre estos jarales y malezas, de modo que nos imposibilitó el seguille. Por esto conjeturamos que la locura le venía a tiempos, y que alguno que se llamaba Fernando le debía de haber hecho alguna mala obra, tan pesada cuanto lo mostraba el término a que le había conducido. Todo lo cual se ha confirmado después acá con las veces, que han sido muchas, que él ha salido al camino, unas a pedir a los pastores le den de lo que llevan para comer y otras a quitárselo por fuerza; porque cuando está con el accidente de la locura, aunque los pastores se lo ofrezcan de buen grado, no lo admite, sino que lo toma a puñadas; y cuando está en su seso, lo pide por amor de Dios, cortés y comedidamente, y rinde por ello muchas gracias, y no con falta de lágrimas. Y en verdad os digo, señores -prosiguió el cabrero-, que ayer determinamos yo y cuatro zagales, los dos criados y los dos amigos míos, de buscarle hasta tanto que le hallemos, y, después de hallado, ya por fuerza ya por grado, le hemos de llevar a la villa de Almodóvar, que está de aquí ocho leguas, y allí le curaremos, si es que su mal tiene cura, o sabremos quién es cuando esté en sus seso, y si tiene parientes a quien dar noticia de su desgracia». Esto es, señores, lo que sabré deciros de lo que me habéis preguntado; y entended que el dueño de las prendas que hallastes es el mismo que vistes pasar con tanta ligereza como desnudez -que ya le había dicho don Quijote cómo había visto pasar aquel hombre saltando por la sierra.

El cual quedó admirado de lo que al cabrero había oído, y quedó con más deseo de saber quién era el desdichado loco; y propuso en sí lo mismo que ya tenía pensado: de buscallo por toda la montaña, sin dejar rincón ni cueva en ella que no mirase, hasta hallarle. Pero hízolo mejor la suerte de lo que él pensaba ni esperaba, porque en aquel mismo instante pareció, por entre una quebrada de una sierra que salía donde ellos estaban, el mancebo que buscaba, el cual venía hablando entre sí cosas que no podían ser entendidas de cerca, cuanto más de lejos. Su traje era cual se ha pintado, sólo que, llegando cerca, vio don Quijote que un colete hecho pedazos que sobre sí traía era de ámbar; por donde acabó de

entender que persona que tales hábitos traía no debía de ser de ínfima calidad.

En llegando el mancebo a ellos, les saludó con una voz desentonada y bronca, pero con mucha cortesía. Don Quijote le volvió las saludes con no menos comedimiento, y, apeándose de Rocinante, con gentil continente y donaire, le fue a abrazar y le tuvo un buen espacio estrechamente entre sus brazos, como si de luengos tiempos le hubiera conocido. El otro, a quien podemos llamar *el Roto de la Mala Figura* -como a don Quijote *el de la Triste*-, después de haberse dejado abrazar, le apartó un poco de sí, y, puestas sus manos en los hombros de don Quijote, le estuvo mirando, como que quería ver si le conocía; no menos admirado quizá de ver la figura, talle y armas de don Quijote, que don Quijote lo estaba de verle a él. En resolución, el primero que habló después del abrazamiento fue el Roto, y dijo lo que se dirá adelante.

## Capítulo XXIV

### *Donde se prosigue la aventura de la Sierra Morena*

DICE la historia que era grandísima la atención con que don Quijote escuchaba al astroso Caballero de la Sierra, el cual, prosiguiendo su plática, dijo:

-Por cierto, señor, quienquiera que seáis, que yo no os conozco, yo os agradezco las muestras y la cortesía que conmigo habéis usado; y quisiera yo hallarme en términos que con más que la voluntad pudiera servir la que habéis mostrado tenerme en el buen acogimiento que me habéis hecho, mas no quiere mi suerte darme otra cosa con que corresponda a las buenas obras que me hacen, que buenos deseos de satisfacerlas.

-Los que yo tengo -respondió don Quijote-son de serviros; tanto, que tenía determinado de no salir destas sierras hasta hallaros y saber de vos si el dolor que en la estrañeza de vuestra vida mostráis tener se podía hallar algún género de remedio; y si fuera menester buscarle, buscarle con la diligencia posible. Y, cuando vuestra desventura fuera de aquellas que tienen cerradas las puertas a todo género de consuelo, pensaba ayudaros a llorarla y plañirla como mejor pudiera, que todavía es consuelo en las desgracias hallar quien se duela dellas. Y, si es que mi buen intento merece ser agradecido con algún género de cortesía, yo os suplico, señor, por la mucha que veo que en vos se encierra, y juntamente os conjuro por la cosa que en esta vida más habéis amado o amáis, que me digáis quién sois y la causa que os ha traído a vivir y a morir entre estas soledades como bruto animal, pues moráis entre ellos tan ajeno de vos mismo cual lo muestra vuestro traje y persona. Y juro -añadió don Quijote-, por la orden de caballería que recibí, aunque indigno y pecador, y por la profesión de caballero andante, que si en esto, señor, me complacéis, de serviros con las veras a que me obliga el ser quien soy: ora remediando vuestra desgracia, si tiene remedio, ora ayudándoos a llorarla, como os lo he prometido.

El Caballero del Bosque, que de tal manera oyó hablar al de la Triste Figura, no hacía sino mirarle, y remirarle y tornarle a mirar de arriba abajo; y, después que le hubo bien mirado, le dijo:

-Si tienen algo que darme a comer, por amor de Dios que me lo den; que, después de haber comido, yo haré todo lo que se me manda, en agradecimiento de tan buenos deseos como aquí se me han mostrado.

Luego sacaron, Sancho de su costal y el cabrero de su zurrón, con que



satisfizo el Roto su hambre, comiendo lo que le dieron como persona atontada, tan aprieta que no daba espacio de un bocado al otro, pues antes los engullía que tragaba; y, en tanto que comía, ni él ni los que le miraban hablaban palabra. Como acabó de comer, les hizo de señas que le siguiesen, como lo hicieron, y él los llevó a un verde pradecillo que a la vuelta de una peña poco desviada de allí estaba. En llegando a él, se tendió en el suelo, encima de la yerba, y los demás hicieron lo mismo; y todo esto sin que ninguno hablase, hasta que el Roto, después de haberse acomodado en su asiento, dijo:

-Si gustáis, señores, que os diga en breves razones la inmensidad de mis desventuras, habéisme de prometer de que con ninguna pregunta, ni otra cosa, no interromperéis el hilo de mi triste historia; porque en el punto que lo hagáis, en ése se quedará lo que fuere contando.

Estas razones del Roto trujeron a la memoria a don Quijote el cuento que le había contado su escudero, cuando no acertó el número de las cabras que habían pasado el río y se quedó la historia pendiente. Pero, volviendo al Roto, prosiguió diciendo:

-Esta prevención que hago es porque querría pasar brevemente por el cuento de mis desgracias; que el traerlas a la memoria no me sirve de otra cosa que añadir otras de nuevo, y, mientras menos me preguntáredes, más presto acabaré yo de decillas, puesto que no dejaré por contar cosa alguna que sea de importancia para no satisfacer del todo a vuestro deseo.

Don Quijote se lo prometió, en nombre de los demás, y él, con este seguro, comenzó desta manera:

-«Mi nombre es Cardenio; mi patria, una ciudad de las mejores desta Andalucía; mi linaje, noble; mis padres, ricos; mi desventura, tanta que la deben de haber llorado mis padres y sentido mi linaje, sin poderla aliviar con su riqueza; que para remediar desdichas del cielo poco suelen valer los bienes de fortuna. Vivía en esta misma tierra un cielo, donde puso el amor toda la gloria que yo acertara a desearme: tal es la hermosura de Luscinda, doncella tan noble y tan rica como yo, pero de más ventura y de menos firmeza de la que a mis honrados pensamientos se debía. A esta Luscinda amé, quise y adoré desde mis tiernos y primeros años, y ella me quiso a mí con aquella sencillez y buen ánimo que su poca edad permitía. Sabían nuestros padres nuestros intentos, y no les pesaba dello, porque bien veían que, cuando pasaran adelante, no podían tener otro fin que el de casarnos, cosa que casi la concertaba la igualdad de nuestro linaje y riquezas. Creció la edad, y con ella el amor de entrambos, que al padre de Luscinda le pareció que por buenos respetos estaba obligado a negarme la entrada de su casa, casi imitando en esto a los padres de aquella Tisbe tan decantada de los poetas. Y fue esta negación añadir llama a llama y deseo a

deseo, porque, aunque pusieron silencio a las lenguas, no le pudieron poner a las plumas, las cuales, con más libertad que las lenguas, suelen dar a entender a quien quieren lo que en el alma está encerrado; que muchas veces la presencia de la cosa amada turba y enmudece la intención más determinada y la lengua más atrevida. ¡Ay cielos, y cuántos billetes le escribí! ¡Cuán regaladas y honestas respuestas tuve! ¡Cuántas canciones compuse y cuántos enamorados versos, donde el alma declaraba y trasladaba sus sentimientos, pintaba sus encendidos deseos, entretenía sus memorias y recreaba su voluntad!

»En efeto, viéndome apurado, y que mi alma se consumía con el deseo de verla, determiné poner por obra y acabar en un punto lo que me pareció que más convenía para salir con mi deseado y merecido premio; y fue el pedírsela a su padre por legítima esposa, como lo hice; a lo que él me respondió que me agradecía la voluntad que mostraba de honralle, y de querer honrarme con prendas suyas, pero que, siendo mi padre vivo, a él tocaba de justo derecho hacer aquella demanda; porque, si no fuese con mucha voluntad y gusto suyo, no era Luscinde mujer para tomarse ni darse a hurto.

»Yo le agradecí su buen intento, pareciéndome que llevaba razón en lo que decía, y que mi padre vendría en ello como yo se lo dijese; y con este intento, luego en aquel mismo instante, fui a decirle a mi padre lo que deseaba. Y, al tiempo que entré en un aposento donde estaba, le hallé con una carta abierta en la mano, la cual, antes que yo le dijese palabra, me la dio y me dijo: “Por esa carta verás, Cardenio, la voluntad que el duque Ricardo tiene de hacerte merced”.» Este duque Ricardo, como ya vosotros, señores, debéis de saber, es un grande de España que tiene su estado en lo mejor desta Andalucía. «Tomé y leí la carta, la cual venía tan encarecida que a mí mismo me pareció mal si mi padre dejaba de cumplir lo que en ella se le pedía, que era que me enviase luego donde él estaba; que quería que fuese compañero, no criado, de su hijo el mayor, y que él tomaba a cargo el ponerme en estado que correspondiese a la estimación en que me tenía. Leí la carta y enmudecí leyéndola, y más cuando oí que mi padre me decía: “De aquí a dos días te partirás, Cardenio, a hacer la voluntad del duque; y da gracias a Dios que te va abriendo camino por donde alcances lo que yo sé que mereces”. Añadió a éstas otras razones de padre consejero.

»Llegóse el término de mi partida, hablé una noche a Luscinde, díjele todo lo que pasaba, y lo mesmo hice a su padre, suplicándole se entretuviese algunos días y dilatase el darle estado hasta que yo viese lo que Ricardo me quería. Él me lo prometió y ella me lo confirmó con mil juramentos y mil desmayos. Vine, en fin, donde el duque Ricardo estaba. Fui dél tan bien recebido y tratado, que desde luego comenzó la envidia a hacer su oficio, teniéndomela los criados antiguos, pareciéndoles que las muestras que el duque daba de hacerme merced

habían de ser en perjuicio suyo. Pero el que más se holgó con mi ida fue un hijo segundo del duque, llamado Fernando, mozo gallardo, gentilhombre, liberal y enamorado, el cual, en poco tiempo, quiso que fuese tan su amigo, que daba que decir a todos; y, aunque el mayor me quería bien y me hacía merced, no llegó al extremo con que don Fernando me quería y trataba.

»Es, pues, el caso que, como entre los amigos no hay cosa secreta que no se comunique, y la privanza que yo tenía con don Fernando dejada de serlo por ser amistad, todos sus pensamientos me declaraba, especialmente uno enamorado, que le traía con un poco de desasosiego. Quería bien a una labradora, vasalla de su padre (y ella los tenía muy ricos), y era tan hermosa, recatada, discreta y honesta que nadie que la conocía se determinaba en cuál destas cosas tuviese más excelencia ni más se aventajase. Estas tan buenas partes de la hermosa labradora redujeron a tal término los deseos de don Fernando, que se determinó, para poder alcanzarlo y conquistar la entereza de la labradora, darle palabra de ser su esposo, porque de otra manera era procurar lo imposible. Yo, obligado de su amistad, con las mejores razones que supe y con los más vivos ejemplos que pude, procuré estorbarle y apartarle de tal propósito. Pero, viendo que no aprovechaba, determiné de decirle el caso al duque Ricardo, su padre. Mas don Fernando, como astuto y discreto, se receló y temió desto, por parecerle que estaba yo obligado, en vez de buen criado, no tener encubierta cosa que tan en perjuicio de la honra de mi señor el duque venía; y así, por divertirme y engañarme, me dijo que no hallaba otro mejor remedio para poder apartar de la memoria la hermosura que tan sujeto le tenía, que el ausentarse por algunos meses; y que quería que el ausencia fuese que los dos nos viniésemos en casa de mi padre, con ocasión que darían al duque que venía a ver y a feriar unos muy buenos caballos que en mi ciudad había, que es madre de los mejores del mundo.

»Apenas le oí yo decir esto, cuando, movido de mi afición, aunque su determinación no fuera tan buena, la aprobara yo por una de las más acertadas que se podían imaginar, por ver cuán buena ocasión y coyuntura se me ofrecía de volver a ver a mi Luscinda. Con este pensamiento y deseo, aprobé su parecer y esforcé su propósito, diciéndole que lo pusiese por obra con la brevedad posible, porque, en efeto, la ausencia hacía su oficio, a pesar de los más firmes pensamientos. Ya cuando él me vino a decir esto, según después se supo, había gozado a la labradora con título de esposo, y esperaba ocasión de descubrirse a su salvo, temeroso de lo que el duque su padre haría cuando supiese su disparate.

»Sucedió, pues, que, como el amor en los mozos, por la mayor parte, no lo es, sino apetito, el cual, como tiene por último fin el deleite, en llegando a alcanzarle se acaba y ha de volver atrás aquello que parecía amor, porque no puede pasar adelante del término que le puso naturaleza, el cual término no le

puso a lo que es verdadero amor...; quiero decir que, así como don Fernando gozó a la labradora, se le aplacaron sus deseos y se resfriaron sus ahíncos; y si primero fingía quererse ausentar, por remediarlos, ahora de veras procuraba irse, por no ponerlos en ejecución. Diole el duque licencia, y mandóme que le acompañase. Venimos a mi ciudad, recibióle mi padre como quien era; vi yo luego a Luscinda, tornaron a vivir, aunque no habían estado muertos ni amortiguados, mis deseos, de los cuales di cuenta, por mi mal, a don Fernando, por parecerme que, en la ley de la mucha amistad que mostraba, no le debía encubrir nada. Alabéle la hermosura, donaire y discreción de Luscinda de tal manera, que mis alabanzas movieron en él los deseos de querer ver doncella de tantas buenas partes adornada. Cumplíselos yo, por mi corta suerte, enseñándosela una noche, a la luz de una vela, por una ventana por donde los dos solíamos hablarnos. Viola en sayo, tal, que todas las bellezas hasta entonces por él vistas las puso en olvido. Enmudeció, perdió el sentido, quedó absorto y, finalmente, tan enamorado cual lo veréis en el discurso del cuento de mi desventura. Y, para encenderle más el deseo, que a mí me celaba y al cielo a solas descubría, quiso la fortuna que hallase un día un billete suyo pidiéndome que la pidiese a su padre por esposa, tan discreto, tan honesto y tan enamorado que, en leyéndolo, me dijo que en sola Luscinda se encerraban todas las gracias de hermosura y de entendimiento que en las demás mujeres del mundo estaban repartidas.

»Bien es verdad que quiero confesar ahora que, puesto que yo veía con cuán justas causas don Fernando a Luscinda alababa, me pesaba de oír aquellas alabanzas de su boca, y comencé a temer y a recelarme dél, porque no se pasaba momento donde no quisiese que tratásemos de Luscinda, y él movía la plática, aunque la trujese por los cabellos; cosa que despertaba en mí un no sé qué de celos, no porque yo temiese revés alguno de la bondad y de la fe de Luscinda, pero, con todo eso, me hacía temer mi suerte lo mesmo que ella me aseguraba. Procuraba siempre don Fernando leer los papeles que yo a Luscinda enviaba y los que ella me respondía, a título que de la discreción de los dos gustaba mucho. Acaeció, pues, que, habiéndome pedido Luscinda un libro de caballerías en que leer, de quien era ella muy aficionada, que era el de *Amadís de Gaula...*»

No hubo bien oído don Quijote nombrar libro de caballerías, cuando dijo:

-Con que me dijera vuestra merced, al principio de su historia, que su merced de la señora Luscinda era aficionada a libros de caballerías, no fuera menester otra exageración para darme a entender la alteza de su entendimiento, porque no le tuviera tan bueno como vos, señor, le habéis pintado, si careciera del gusto de tan sabrosa leyenda: así que, para conmigo, no es menester gastar más palabras en declararme su hermosura, valor y entendimiento; que, con sólo haber

entendido su afición, la confirmo por la más hermosa y más discreta mujer del mundo. Y quisiera yo, señor, que vuestra merced le hubiera enviado junto con *Amadís de Gaula* al bueno de *Don Rugel de Grecia*, que yo sé que gustara la señora Luscinda mucho de Daraida y Geraya, y de las discreciones del pastor Darinel y de aquellos admirables versos de sus bucólicas, cantadas y representadas por él con todo donaire, discreción y desenvoltura. Pero tiempo podrá venir en que se enmiende esa falta, y no dura más en hacerse la enmienda de cuanto quiera vuestra merced ser servido de venirse conmigo a mi aldea, que allí le podré dar más de trecientos libros, que son el regalo de mi alma y el entretenimiento de mi vida; aunque tengo para mí que ya no tengo ninguno, merced a la malicia de malos y envidiosos encantadores. Y perdóneme vuestra merced el haber contravenido a lo que prometimos de no interrumpir su plática, pues, en oyendo cosas de caballerías y de caballeros andantes, así es en mi mano dejar de hablar en ellos, como lo es en la de los rayos del sol dejar de calentar, ni humedecer en los de la luna. Así que, perdón y proseguir, que es lo que ahora hace más al caso.

En tanto que don Quijote estaba diciendo lo que queda dicho, se le había caído a Cardenio la cabeza sobre el pecho, dando muestras de estar profundamente pensativo. Y, puesto que dos veces le dijo don Quijote que prosiguiese su historia, ni alzaba la cabeza ni respondía palabra; pero, al cabo de un buen espacio, la levantó y dijo:

-No se me puede quitar del pensamiento, ni habrá quien me lo quite en el mundo, ni quien me dé a entender otra cosa (y sería un majadero el que lo contrario entendiese o creyese), sino que aquel bellaconazo del maestro Elisabat estaba amancebado con la reina Madésima.

-Eso no, ¡voto a tal! -respondió con mucha cólera don Quijote (y arrojóle, como tenía de costumbre)-; y ésa es una muy gran malicia, o bellaquería, por mejor decir: la reina Madásima fue muy principal señora, y no se ha de presumir que tan alta princesa se había de amancebar con un sacapotras; y quien lo contrario entendiere, miente como muy gran bellaco. Y yo se lo daré a entender, a pie o a caballo, armado o desarmado, de noche o de día, o como más gusto le diere.

Estáble mirando Cardenio muy atentamente, al cual ya había venido el accidente de su locura y no estaba para proseguir su historia; ni tampoco don Quijote se la oyera, según le había disgustado lo que de Madásima le había oído. ¡Estraño caso; que así volvió por ella como si verdaderamente fuera su verdadera y natural señora: tal le tenían sus descomulgados libros! Digo, pues, que, como ya Cardenio estaba loco y se oyó tratar de mentís y de bellaco, con otros denuestos semejantes, parecióle mal la burla, y alzó un guijarro que halló junto a

sí, y dio con él en los pechos tal golpe a don Quijote que le hizo caer de espaldas. Sancho Panza, que de tal modo vio parar a su señor, arremetió al loco con el puño cerrado; y el Roto le recibió de tal suerte que con una puñada dio con él a sus pies, y luego se subió sobre él y le brumó las costillas muy a su sabor. El cabrero, que le quiso defender, corrió el mismo peligro. Y, después que los tuvo a todos rendidos y molidos, los dejó y se fue, con gentil sosiego, a emboscarse en la montaña.

Levantóse Sancho, y, con la rabia que tenía de verse aporreado tan sin merecerlo, acudió a tomar la venganza del cabrero, diciéndole que él tenía la culpa de no haberles avisado que a aquel hombre le tomaba a tiempos la locura; que, si esto supieran, hubieran estado sobre aviso para poderse guardar. Respondió el cabrero que ya lo había dicho, y que si él no lo había oído, que no era suya la culpa. Replicó Sancho Panza, y tornó a replicar el cabrero, y fue el fin de las réplicas asirse de las barbas y darse tales puñadas que, si don Quijote no los pusiera en paz, se hicieran pedazos. Decía Sancho, asido con el cabrero:

-Déjeme vuestra merced, señor Caballero de la Triste Figura, que en éste, que es villano como yo y no está armado caballero, bien puedo a mi salvo satisfacerme del agravio que me ha hecho, peleando con él mano a mano, como hombre honrado.

-Así es -dijo don Quijote-, pero yo sé que él no tiene ninguna culpa de lo sucedido.

Con esto los apaciguó, y don Quijote volvió a preguntar al cabrero si sería posible hallar a Cardenio, porque quedaba con grandísimo deseo de saber el fin de su historia. Díjole el cabrero lo que primero le había dicho, que era no saber de cierto su manida; pero que, si anduviese mucho por aquellos contornos, no dejaría de hallarle, o cuerdo o loco.

## Capítulo XXV

*Que trata de las estrañas cosas que en Sierra Morena sucedieron al valiente caballero de la Mancha, y de la imitación que hizo a la penitencia de Beltenebros*

DESPIDIÓSE del cabrero don Quijote, y, subiendo otra vez sobre Rocinante, mandó a Sancho que le siguiese, el cual lo hizo, con su jumento, de muy mala gana. Íbanse poco a poco entrando en lo más áspero de la montaña, y Sancho iba muerto por razonar con su amo, y deseaba que él comenzase la plática, por no contravenir a lo que le tenía mandado; mas, no pudiendo sufrir tanto silencio, le dijo:

-Señor don Quijote, vuestra merced me eche su bendición y me dé licencia; que desde aquí me quiero volver a mi casa, y a mi mujer y a mis hijos, con los cuales, por lo menos, hablaré y departiré todo lo que quisiere; porque querer vuestra merced que vaya con él por estas soledades, de día y de noche, y que no le hable cuando me diere gusto es enterrarme en vida. Si ya quisiera la suerte que los animales hablaran, como hablaban en tiempos de Guisopete, fuera menos mal, porque departiera yo con mi jumento lo que me viniera en gana, y con esto pasara mi mala ventura; que es recia cosa, y que no se puede llevar en paciencia, andar buscando aventuras toda la vida y no hallar sino coces y manteamientos, ladrillazos y puñadas, y, con todo esto, nos hemos de coser la boca, sin osar decir lo que el hombre tiene en su corazón, como si fuera mudo.

-Ya te entiendo, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-: tú mueres porque te alce el entredicho que te tengo puesto en la lengua. Dale por alzado y di lo que quisieres, con condición que no ha de durar este alzamiento más de en cuanto anduviéremos por estas sierras.

-Sea así -dijo Sancho-: hable yo ahora, que después Dios sabe lo que será; y, comenzando a gozar de ese salvoconduto, digo que ¿qué le iba a vuestra merced en volver tanto por aquella reina Magimasa, o como se llama? O, ¿qué hacía al caso que aquel abad fuese su amigo o no? Que, si vuestra merced pasara con ello, pues no era su juez, bien creo yo que el loco pasara adelante con su historia, y se hubieran ahorrado el golpe del guijarro, y las coces, y aun más de seis torniscones.

-A fe, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, que si tú supieras, como yo lo sé, cuán honrada y cuán principal señora era la reina Madásima, yo sé que dijeras que

tuve mucha paciencia, pues no quebré la boca por donde tales blasfemias salieron; porque es muy gran blasfemia decir ni pensar que una reina esté amancebada con un cirujano. La verdad del cuento es que aquel maestro Elisabat, que el loco dijo, fue un hombre muy prudente y de muy sanos consejos, y sirvió de ayo y de médico a la reina; pero pensar que ella era su amiga es disparate digno de muy gran castigo. Y, porque veas que Cardenio no supo lo que dijo, has de advertir que cuando lo dijo ya estaba sin juicio.

-Eso digo yo -dijo Sancho-: que no había para qué hacer cuenta de las palabras de un loco, porque si la buena suerte no ayudara a vuestra merced y encaminara el guijarro a la cabeza, como le encaminó al pecho, buenos quedáramos por haber vuelto por aquella mi señora, que Dios cohonda. Pues ¡montas, que no se librara Cardenio por loco!

-Contra cuerdos y contra locos está obligado cualquier caballero andante a volver por la honra de las mujeres, cualesquiera que sean, cuanto más por las reinas de tan alta guisa y pro como fue la reina Madásima, a quien yo tengo particular afición por sus buenas partes; porque, fuera de haber sido hermosa, además fue muy prudente y muy sufrida en sus calamidades, que las tuvo muchas; y los consejos y compañía del maestro Elisabat le fue y le fueron de mucho provecho y alivio para poder llevar sus trabajos con prudencia y paciencia. Y de aquí tomó ocasión el vulgo ignorante y mal intencionado de decir y pensar que ella era su manceba; y mienten, digo otra vez, y mentirán otras docientas, todos los que tal pensaren y dijeren.

-Ni yo lo digo ni lo pienso -respondió Sancho-: allá se lo hayan; con su pan se lo coman. Si fueron amancebados, o no, a Dios habrán dado la cuenta. De mis viñas vengo, no sé nada; no soy amigo de saber vidas ajenas; que el que compra y miente, en su bolsa lo siente. Cuanto más, que desnudo nací, desnudo me hallo: ni pierdo ni gano; mas que lo fuesen, ¿qué me va a mí? Y muchos piensan que hay tocinos y no hay estacas. Mas, ¿quién puede poner puertas al campo? Cuanto más, que de Dios dijeron.

-¡Válame Dios -dijo don Quijote-, y qué de necedades vas, Sancho, ensartando! ¿Qué va de lo que tratamos a los refranes que enhilas? Por tu vida, Sancho, que calles; y de aquí adelante, entremétete en espolear a tu asno, y deja de hacello en lo que no te importa. Y entiende con todos tus cinco sentidos que todo cuanto yo he hecho, hago e hiciere, va muy puesto en razón y muy conforme a las reglas de caballería, que las sé mejor que cuantos caballeros las profesaron en el mundo.

-Señor -respondió Sancho-, y ¿es buena regla de caballería que andemos perdidos por estas montañas, sin senda ni camino, buscando a un loco, el cual, después de hallado, quizá le vendrá en voluntad de acabar lo que dejó



comenzado, no de su cuento, sino de la cabeza de vuestra merced y de mis costillas, acabándonoslas de romper de todo punto?

-Calla, te digo otra vez, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-; porque te hago saber que no sólo me trae por estas partes el deseo de hallar al loco, cuanto el que tengo de hacer en ellas una hazaña con que he de ganar perpetuo nombre y fama en todo lo descubierto de la tierra; y será tal, que he de echar con ella el sello a todo aquello que puede hacer perfecto y famoso a un andante caballero.

-Y ¿es de muy gran peligro esa hazaña? -preguntó Sancho Panza.

-No -respondió el de la Triste Figura-, puesto que de tal manera podía correr el dado, que echásemos azar en lugar de encuentro; pero todo ha de estar en tu diligencia.

-¿En mi diligencia? -dijo Sancho.

-Sí -dijo don Quijote-, porque si vuelves presto de adonde pienso enviarte, presto se acabará mi pena y presto comenzará mi gloria. Y, porque no es bien que te tenga más suspenso, esperando en lo que han de parar mis razones, quiero, Sancho, que sepas que el famoso Amadís de Gaula fue uno de los más perfectos caballeros andantes. No he dicho bien *fue uno*: fue el solo, el primero, el único, el señor de todos cuantos hubo en su tiempo en el mundo. Mal año y mal mes para don Belianís y para todos aquellos que dijeron que se le igualó en algo, porque se engañan, juro cierto. Digo asimismo que, cuando algún pintor quiere salir famoso en su arte, procura imitar los originales de los más únicos pintores que sabe; y esta misma regla corre por todos los más oficios o ejercicios de cuenta que sirven para adorno de las repúblicas. Y así lo ha de hacer y hace el que quiere alcanzar nombre de prudente y sufrido, imitando a Ulises, en cuya persona y trabajos nos pinta Homero un retrato vivo de prudencia y de sufrimiento; como también nos mostró Virgilio, en persona de Eneas, el valor de un hijo piadoso y la sagacidad de un valiente y entendido capitán, no pintándolo ni descubriéndolo como ellos fueron, sino como habían de ser, para quedar ejemplo a los venideros hombres de sus virtudes. Desta misma suerte, Amadís fue el norte, el lucero, el sol de los valientes y enamorados caballeros, a quien debemos de imitar todos aquellos que debajo de la bandera de amor y de la caballería militamos. Siendo, pues, esto así, como lo es, hallo yo, Sancho amigo, que el caballero andante que más le imitare estará más cerca de alcanzar la perfección de la caballería. Y una de las cosas en que más este caballero mostró su prudencia, valor, valentía, sufrimiento, firmeza y amor, fue cuando se retiró, desdeñado de la señora Oriana, a hacer penitencia en la Peña Pobre, mudado su nombre en el de Beltenebros, nombre, por cierto, significativo y propio para la vida que él de su voluntad había escogido. Así que, me es a mí más fácil imitarle en esto que no en hender gigantes, descabezar serpientes, matar

endriagos, desbaratar ejércitos, fracasar armadas y deshacer encantamientos. Y, pues estos lugares son tan acomodados para semejantes efectos, no hay para qué se deje pasar la ocasión, que ahora con tanta comodidad me ofrece sus guedejas.

-En efecto -dijo Sancho-, ¿qué es lo que vuestra merced quiere hacer en este tan remoto lugar?

-¿Ya no te he dicho -respondió don Quijote-que quiero imitar a Amadís, haciendo aquí del desesperado, del sandio y del furioso, por imitar juntamente al valiente don Roldán, cuando halló en una fuente las señales de que Angélica la Bella había cometido vileza con Medoro, de cuya pesadumbre se volvió loco y arrancó los árboles, enturbió las aguas de las claras fuentes, mató pastores, destruyó ganados, abrasó chozas, derribó casas, arrastró yeguas y hizo otras cien mil insolencias, dignas de eterno nombre y escritura? Y, puesto que yo no pienso imitar a Roldán, o Orlando, o Rotolando (que todos estos tres nombres tenía), parte por parte en todas las locuras que hizo, dijo y pensó, haré el bosquejo, como mejor pudiere, en las que me pareciere ser más esenciales. Y podrá ser que viniese a contentarme con sola la imitación de Amadís, que sin hacer locuras de daño, sino de lloros y sentimientos, alcanzó tanta fama como el que más.

-Paréceme a mí -dijo Sancho-que los caballeros que lo tal hicieron fueron provocados y tuvieron causa para hacer esas necedades y penitencias, pero vuestra merced, ¿qué causa tiene para volverse loco? ¿Qué dama le ha desdeñado, o qué señales ha hallado que le den a entender que la señora Dulcinea del Toboso ha hecho alguna niñería con moro o cristiano?

-Ahí está el punto -respondió don Quijote-y ésa es la fineza de mi negocio; que volverse loco un caballero andante con causa, ni grado ni gracias: el toque está desatinar sin ocasión y dar a entender a mi dama que si en seco hago esto, ¿qué hiciera en mojado? Cuanto más, que harta ocasión tengo en la larga ausencia que he hecho de la siempre señora mía Dulcinea del Toboso; que, como ya oíste decir a aquel pastor de marras, Ambrosio: quien está ausente todos los males tiene y teme. Así que, Sancho amigo, no gastes tiempo en aconsejarme que deje tan rara, tan felice y tan no vista imitación. Loco soy, loco he de ser hasta tanto que tú vuelvas con la respuesta de una carta que contigo pienso enviar a mi señora Dulcinea; y si fuere tal cual a mi fe se le debe, acabarse ha mi sandez y mi penitencia; y si fuere al contrario, seré loco de veras, y, siéndolo, no sentiré nada. Ansí que, de cualquiera manera que responda, saldré del conflicto y trabajo en que me dejares, gozando el bien que me trujeres, por cuerdo, o no sintiendo el mal que me aportares, por loco. Pero dime, Sancho, ¿traes bien guardado el yelmo de Mambrino?; que ya vi que le alzaste del suelo cuando aquel desagradecido le quiso hacer pedazos; pero no pudo, donde se puede echar de ver la fineza de su temple.

A lo cual respondió Sancho:

-Vive Dios, señor Caballero de la Triste Figura, que no puedo sufrir ni llevar en paciencia algunas cosas que vuestra merced dice, y que por ellas vengo a imaginar que todo cuanto me dice de caballerías y de alcanzar reinos e imperios, de dar ínsulas y de hacer otras mercedes y grandezas, como es uso de caballeros andantes, que todo debe de ser cosa de viento y mentira, y todo pastraña, o patraña, o como lo llamáremos. Porque quien oyere decir a vuestra merced que una bacía de barbero es el yelmo de Mambrino, y que no salga de este error en más de cuatro días, ¿qué ha de pensar, sino que quien tal dice y afirma debe de tener güero el juicio? La bacía yo la llevo en el costal, toda abollada, y llévola para aderezarla en mi casa y hacerme la barba en ella, si Dios me diere tanta gracia que algún día me vea con mi mujer y hijos.

-Mira, Sancho, por el mismo que denantes juraste, te juro -dijo don Quijote- que tienes el más corto entendimiento que tiene ni tuvo escudero en el mundo. ¿Que es posible que en cuanto ha que andas conmigo no has echado de ver que todas las cosas de los caballeros andantes parecen quimeras, necedades y desatinos, y que son todas hechas al revés? Y no porque sea ello así, sino porque andan entre nosotros siempre una caterva de encantadores que todas nuestras cosas mudan y truecan y les vuelven según su gusto, y según tienen la gana de favorecernos o destruirnos; y así, eso que a ti te parece bacía de barbero, me parece a mí el yelmo de Mambrino, y a otro le parecerá otra cosa. Y fue rara providencia del sabio que es de mi parte hacer que parezca bacía a todos lo que real y verdaderamente es yelmo de Mambrino, a causa que, siendo él de tanta estima, todo el mundo me perseguirá por quitármele; pero, como ven que no es más de un bacín de barbero, no se curan de procuralle, como se mostró bien en el que quiso rompelle y le dejó en el suelo sin llevarle; que a fe que si le conociera, que nunca él le dejara. Guárdale, amigo, que por ahora no le he menester; que antes me tengo de quitar todas estas armas y quedar desnudo como cuando nací, si es que me da en voluntad de seguir en mi penitencia más a Roldán que a Amadís.

Llegaron, en estas pláticas, al pie de una alta montaña que, casi como peñón tajado, estaba sola entre otras muchas que la rodeaban. Corría por su falda un manso arroyuelo, y hacíaase por toda su redondez un prado tan verde y vicioso, que daba contento a los ojos que le miraban. Había por allí muchos árboles silvestres y algunas plantas y flores, que hacían el lugar apacible. Este sitio escogió el Caballero de la Triste Figura para hacer su penitencia; y así, en viéndole, comenzó a decir en voz alta, como si estuviera sin juicio:

-Éste es el lugar, ¡oh cielos!, que diputo y escojo para llorar la desventura en que vosotros mismos me habéis puesto. Éste es el sitio donde el humor de mis

ojos acrecentará las aguas deste pequeño arroyo, y mis continos y profundos sospiros moverán a la continua las hojas destos montaraces árboles, en testimonio y señal de la pena que mi asendereado corazón padece. ¡Oh vosotros, quienquiera que seáis, rústicos dioses que en este inhabitable lugar tenéis vuestra morada, oíd las quejas deste desdichado amante, a quien una luenga ausencia y unos imaginados celos han traído a lamentarse entre estas asperezas, y a quejarse de la dura condición de aquella ingrata y bella, término y fin de toda humana hermosura! ¡Oh vosotras, napeas y dríadas, que tenéis por costumbre de habitar en las espesuras de los montes, así los ligeros y lascivos sátiros, de quien sois, aunque en vano, amadas, no perturben jamás vuestro dulce sosiego, que me ayudéis a lamentar mi desventura, o, a lo menos, no os canséis de oílla! ¡Oh Dulcinea del Toboso, día de mi noche, gloria de mi pena, norte de mis caminos, estrella de mi ventura, así el cielo te la dé buena en cuanto acertares a pedirle, que consideres el lugar y el estado a que tu ausencia me ha conducido, y que con buen término correspondas al que a mi fe se le debe! ¡Oh solitarios árboles, que desde hoy en adelante habéis de hacer compañía a mi soledad, dad indicio, con el blando movimiento de vuestras ramas, que no os desagrade mi presencia! ¡Oh tú, escudero mío, agradable compañero en más prósperos y adversos sucesos, toma bien en la memoria lo que aquí me verás hacer, para que lo cuentes y recetes a la causa total de todo ello!

Y, diciendo esto, se apeó de Rocinante, y en un momento le quitó el freno y la silla; y, dándole una palmada en las ancas, le dijo:

-Libertad te da el que sin ella queda, ¡oh caballo tan estremado por tus obras cuan desdichado por tu suerte! Vete por do quisieres, que en la frente llevas escrito que no te igualó en ligereza el Hipogrifo de Astolfo, ni el nombrado Frontino, que tan caro le costó a Bradamante.

Viendo esto Sancho, dijo:

-Bien haya quien nos quitó ahora del trabajo de desenalbardar al rucio; que a fe que no faltaran palmadicas que dalle, ni cosas que decille en su alabanza; pero si él aquí estuviera, no consintiera yo que nadie le desalbardara, pues no había para qué, que a él no le tocaban las generales de enamorado ni de desesperado, pues no lo estaba su amo, que era yo, cuando Dios quería. Y en verdad, señor Caballero de la Triste Figura, que si es que mi partida y su locura de vuestra merced va de veras, que será bien tornar a ensillar a Rocinante, para que supla la falta del rucio, porque será ahorrar tiempo a mi ida y vuelta; que si la hago a pie, no sé cuándo llegaré ni cuándo volveré, porque, en resolución, soy mal caminante.

-Digo, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, que sea como tú quisieres, que no me

parece mal tu designio; y digo que de aquí a tres días te partirás, porque quiero que en este tiempo veas lo que por ella hago y digo, para que se lo digas.

-Pues, ¿qué más tengo de ver -dijo Sancho- que lo que he visto?

-¡Bien estás en el cuento! -respondió don Quijote-. Ahora me falta rasgar las vestiduras, esparcir las armas y darme de calabazadas por estas peñas, con otras cosas deste jaez que te han de admirar.

-Por amor de Dios -dijo Sancho-, que mire vuestra merced cómo se da esas calabazadas; que a tal peña podrá llegar, y en tal punto, que con la primera se acabase la máquina desta penitencia; y sería yo de parecer que, ya que a vuestra merced le parece que son aquí necesarias calabazadas y que no se puede hacer esta obra sin ellas, se contentase, pues todo esto es fingido y cosa contrahecha y de burla, se contentase, digo, con dárselas en el agua, o en alguna cosa blanda, como algodón; y déjeme a mí el cargo, que yo diré a mi señora que vuestra merced se las daba en una punta de peña más dura que la de un diamante.

-Yo agradezco tu buena intención, amigo Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, mas quíerote hacer sabidor de que todas estas cosas que hago no son de burlas, sino muy de veras; porque de otra manera, sería contravenir a las órdenes de caballería, que nos mandan que no digamos mentira alguna, pena de relasos, y el hacer una cosa por otra lo mismo es que mentir. Ansí que, mis calabazadas han de ser verdaderas, firmes y valederas, sin que lleven nada del sofístico ni del fantástico. Y será necesario que me dejes algunas hilas para curarme, pues que la ventura quiso que nos faltase el bálsamo que perdimos.

-Más fue perder el asno -respondió Sancho-, pues se perdieron en él las hilas y todo. Y ruégole a vuestra merced que no se acuerde más de aquel maldito brebaje; que en sólo oírle mentar se me revuelve el alma, no que el estómago. Y más le ruego: que haga cuenta que son ya pasados los tres días que me ha dado de término para ver las locuras que hace, que ya las doy por vistas y por pasadas en cosa juzgada, y diré maravillas a mi señora; y escriba la carta y despácheme luego, porque tengo gran deseo de volver a sacar a vuestra merced deste purgatorio donde le dejo.

-¿Purgatorio le llamas, Sancho? -dijo don Quijote-. Mejor hicieras de llamarle infierno, y aun peor, si hay otra cosa que lo sea.

-*Quien ha infierno* -respondió Sancho-, *nula es retencio*, según he oído decir.

-No entiendo qué quiere decir *retencio* -dijo don Quijote.

-*Retencio* es -respondió Sancho- que quien está en el infierno nunca sale dél, ni puede. Lo cual será al revés en vuestra merced, o a mí me andarán mal los pies, si es que llevo espuelas para avivar a Rocinante; y póngame yo una por una en el Toboso, y delante de mi señora Dulcinea, que yo le diré tales cosas de las necedades y locuras, que todo es uno, que vuestra merced ha hecho y queda

haciendo, que la venga a poner más blanda que un guante, aunque la halle más dura que un alcornoque; con cuya respuesta dulce y melificada volveré por los aires, como brujo, y sacaré a vuestra merced deste purgatorio, que parece infierno y no lo es, pues hay esperanza de salir dél, la cual, como tengo dicho, no la tienen de salir los que están en el infierno, ni creo que vuestra merced dirá otra cosa.

-Así es la verdad -dijo el de la Triste Figura-; pero, ¿qué haremos para escribir la carta?

-Y la libranza pollinesca también -añadió Sancho.

-Todo irá inserto -dijo don Quijote-; y sería bueno, ya que no hay papel, que la escribiésemos, como hacían los antiguos, en hojas de árboles, o en unas tablitas de cera; aunque tan dificultoso será hallarse eso ahora como el papel. Mas ya me ha venido a la memoria dónde será bien, y aun más que bien, escribilla: que es en el librito de memoria que fue de Cardenio; y tú tendrás cuidado de hacerla trasladar en papel, de buena letra, en el primer lugar que hallares, donde haya maestro de escuela de muchachos, o si no, cualquiera sacristán te la trasladará; y no se la des a trasladar a ningún escribano, que hacen letra procesada, que no la entenderá Satanás.

-Pues, ¿qué se ha de hacer de la firma? -dijo Sancho.

-Nunca las cartas de Amadís se firman -respondió don Quijote.

-Está bien -respondió Sancho-, pero la libranza forzosamente se ha de firmar, y ésa, si se traslada, dirán que la firma es falsa y quedaréme sin pollinos.

-La libranza irá en el mismo librito firmada; que, en viéndola, mi sobrina no pondrá dificultad en cumplirla. Y, en lo que toca a la carta de amores, pondrás por firma: «Vuestro hasta la muerte, el Caballero de la Triste Figura». Y hará poco al caso que vaya de mano ajena, porque, a lo que yo me sé acordar, Dulcinea no sabe escribir ni leer, y en toda su vida ha visto letra mía ni carta mía, porque mis amores y los suyos han sido siempre platónicos, sin estenderse a más que a un honesto mirar. Y aun esto tan de cuando en cuando, que osaré jurar con verdad que en doce años que ha que la quiero más que a la lumbre destos ojos que han de comer la tierra, no la he visto cuatro veces; y aun podrá ser que destas cuatro veces no hubiese ella echado de ver la una que la miraba: tal es el recato y encerramiento con que sus padres, Lorenzo Corchuelo, y su madre, Aldonza Nogales, la han criado.

-¡Ta, ta! -dijo Sancho-. ¿Que la hija de Lorenzo Corchuelo es la señora Dulcinea del Toboso, llamada por otro nombre Aldonza Lorenzo?

-Ésa es -dijo don Quijote-, y es la que merece ser señora de todo el universo.

-Bien la conozco -dijo Sancho-, y sé decir que tira tan bien una barra como el más forzado zagal de todo el pueblo. ¡Vive el Dador, que es moza de chapa,

hecha y derecha y de pelo en pecho, y que puede sacar la barba del lodo a cualquier caballero andante, o por andar, que la tuviere por señora! ¡Oh hideputa, qué rejo que tiene, y qué voz! Sé decir que se puso un día encima del campanario del aldea a llamar unos zagales suyos que andaban en un barbecho de su padre, y, aunque estaban de allí más de media legua, así la oyeron como si estuvieran al pie de la torre. Y lo mejor que tiene es que no es nada melindrosa, porque tiene mucho de cortesana: con todos se burla y de todo hace mueca y donaire. Ahora digo, señor Caballero de la Triste Figura, que no solamente puede y debe vuestra merced hacer locuras por ella, sino que, con justo título, puede desesperarse y ahorcarse; que nadie habrá que lo sepa que no diga que hizo demasiado de bien, puesto que le lleve el diablo. Y querría ya verme en camino, sólo por vella; que ha muchos días que no la veo, y debe de estar ya trocada, porque gasta mucho la faz de las mujeres andar siempre al campo, al sol y al aire. Y confieso a vuestra merced una verdad, señor don Quijote: que hasta aquí he estado en una grande ignorancia; que pensaba bien y fielmente que la señora Dulcinea debía de ser alguna princesa de quien vuestra merced estaba enamorado, o alguna persona tal, que mereciese los ricos presentes que vuestra merced le ha enviado: así el del vizcaíno como el de los galeotes, y otros muchos que deben ser, según deben de ser muchas las vitorias que vuestra merced ha ganado y ganó en el tiempo que yo aún no era su escudero. Pero, bien considerado, ¿qué se le ha de dar a la señora Aldonza Lorenzo, digo, a la señora Dulcinea del Toboso, de que se le vayan a hincar de rodillas delante della los vencidos que vuestra merced le envía y ha de enviar? Porque podría ser que, al tiempo que ellos llegasen, estuviese ella rastrillando lino, o trillando en las eras, y ellos se corriesen de verla, y ella se riese y enfadase del presente.

-Ya te tengo dicho antes de agora muchas veces, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, que eres muy grande hablador, y que, aunque de ingenio boto, muchas veces despuntas de agudo. Mas, para que veas cuán necio eres tú y cuán discreto soy yo, quiero que me oyas un breve cuento. «Has de saber que una viuda hermosa, moza, libre y rica, y, sobre todo, desenfadada, se enamoró de un mozo motilón, rollizo y de buen tomo. Alcanzólo a saber su mayor, y un día dijo a la buena viuda, por vía de fraternal reprehensión: “Maravillado estoy, señora, y no sin mucha causa, de que una mujer tan principal, tan hermosa y tan rica como vuestra merced, se haya enamorado de un hombre tan soez, tan bajo y tan idiota como fulano, habiendo en esta casa tantos maestros, tantos presentados y tantos teólogos, en quien vuestra merced pudiera escoger como entre peras, y decir: ‘Éste quiero, aquéste no quiero’”. Mas ella le respondió, con mucho donaire y desenvoltura: “Vuestra merced, señor mío, está muy engañado, y piensa muy a lo antiguo si piensa que yo he escogido mal en fulano, por idiota que le parece,

pues, para lo que yo le quiero, tanta filosofía sabe, y más, que Aristóteles”.» Así que, Sancho, por lo que yo quiero a Dulcinea del Toboso, tanto vale como la más alta princesa de la tierra. Sí, que no todos los poetas que alaban damas, debajo de un nombre que ellos a su albedrío les ponen, es verdad que las tienen. ¿Piensas tú que las Amariles, las Filis, las Silvias, las Dianas, las Galateas, las Alidas y otras tales de que los libros, los romances, las tiendas de los barberos, los teatros de las comedias, están llenos, fueron verdaderamente damas de carne y hueso, y de aquéllos que las celebran y celebraron? No, por cierto, sino que las más se las fingen, por dar sujeto a sus versos y porque los tengan por enamorados y por hombres que tienen valor para serlo. Y así, bástame a mí pensar y creer que la buena de Aldonza Lorenzo es hermosa y honesta; y en lo del linaje importa poco, que no han de ir a hacer la información dél para darle algún hábito, y yo me hago cuenta que es la más alta princesa del mundo. Porque has de saber, Sancho, si no lo sabes, que dos cosas solas incitan a amar más que otras, que son la mucha hermosura y la buena fama; y estas dos cosas se hallan consumadamente en Dulcinea, porque en ser hermosa ninguna le iguala, y en la buena fama, pocas le llegan. Y para concluir con todo, yo imagino que todo lo que digo es así, sin que sobre ni falte nada; y píntola en mi imaginación como la deseo, así en la belleza como en la principalidad, y ni la llega Elena, ni la alcanza Lucrecia, ni otra alguna de las famosas mujeres de las edades pretéritas, griega, bárbara o latina. Y diga cada uno lo que quisiere; que si por esto fuere reprehendido de los ignorantes, no seré castigado de los rigurosos.

-Digo que en todo tiene vuestra merced razón -respondió Sancho-, y que yo soy un asno. Mas no sé yo para qué nombro asno en mi boca, pues no se ha de mentar la sogá en casa del ahorcado. Pero venga la carta, y a Dios, que me mudo.

Sacó el libro de memoria don Quijote, y, apartándose a una parte, con mucho sosiego comenzó a escribir la carta; y, en acabándola, llamó a Sancho y le dijo que se la quería leer, porque la tomase de memoria, si acaso se le perdiese por el camino, porque de su desdicha todo se podía temer. A lo cual respondió Sancho:

-Escríbala vuestra merced dos o tres veces ahí en el libro y démele, que yo le llevaré bien guardado, porque pensar que yo la he de tomar en la memoria es disparate: que la tengo tan mala que muchas veces se me olvida cómo me llamo. Pero, con todo eso, dígamela vuestra merced, que me holgaré mucho de oílla, que debe de ir como de molde.

-Escucha, que así dice -dijo don Quijote:

## CARTA DE DON QUIJOTE A DULCINEA DEL TOBOSO



Soberana y alta señora:

El ferido de punta de ausencia y el llagado de las telas del corazón, dulcísima Dulcinea del Toboso, te envía la salud que él no tiene. Si tu fermosura me desprecia, si tu valor no es en mi pro, si tus desdenes son en mi afincamiento, maguer que yo sea asaz de sufrido, mal podré sostenerme en esta cuita, que, además de ser fuerte, es muy duradera. Mi buen escudero Sancho te dará entera relación, ¡oh bella ingrata, amada enemiga mía!, del modo que por tu causa quedo. Si gustares de acorrerme, tuyo soy; y si no, haz lo que te viniere en gusto; que, con acabar mi vida, habré satisfecho a tu crueldad y a mi deseo.

Tuyo hasta la muerte,

*El Caballero de la Triste Figura.*

-Por vida de mi padre -dijo Sancho en oyendo la carta-, que es la más alta cosa que jamás he oído. ¡Pesia a mí, y cómo que le dice vuestra merced ahí todo cuanto quiere, y qué bien que encaja en la firma *El Caballero de la Triste Figura*! Digo de verdad que es vuestra merced el mismo diablo, y que no haya cosa que no sepa.

-Todo es menester -respondió don Quijote-para el oficio que trayo.

-Ea, pues -dijo Sancho-, ponga vuestra merced en esotra vuelta la cédula de los tres pollinos y fírmela con mucha claridad, porque la conozcan en viéndola.

-Que me place -dijo don Quijote.

Y, habiéndola escrito, se la leyó; que decía así:

Mandaré vuestra merced, por esta primera de pollinos, señora sobrina, dar a Sancho Panza, mi escudero, tres de los cinco que dejé en casa y están a cargo de vuestra merced. Los cuales tres pollinos se los mando librar y pagar por otros tantos aquí recibidos de contado, que consta, y con su carta de pago serán bien dados. Fecha en las entrañas de Sierra Morena, a veinte y dos de agosto deste presente año.

-Buena está -dijo Sancho-; fírmela vuestra merced.

-No es menester firmarla -dijo don Quijote-, sino solamente poner mi rúbrica, que es lo mismo que firma, y para tres asnos, y aun para trecientos, fuera bastante.

-Yo me confío de vuestra merced -respondió Sancho-. Déjeme, iré a ensillar a Rocinante, y aparéjese vuestra merced a echarme su bendición, que luego pienso partirme, sin ver las sandeces que vuestra merced ha de hacer, que yo diré que le vi hacer tantas que no quiera más.

-Por lo menos quiero, Sancho, y porque es menester así, quiero, digo, que me veas en cueros, y hacer una o dos docenas de locuras, que las haré en menos de media hora, porque, habiéndolas tú visto por tus ojos, puedas jurar a tu salvo en

las demás que quisieres añadir; y asegúrote que no dirás tú tantas cuantas yo pienso hacer.

-Por amor de Dios, señor mío, que no vea yo en cueros a vuestra merced, que me dará mucha lástima y no podré dejar de llorar; y tengo tal la cabeza, del llanto que anoche hice por el rucio, que no estoy para meterme en nuevos lloros; y si es que vuestra merced gusta de que yo vea algunas locuras, hágalas vestido, breves y las que le vinieren más a cuento. Cuanto más, que para mí no era menester nada deso, y, como ya tengo dicho, fuera ahorrar el camino de mi vuelta, que ha de ser con las nuevas que vuestra merced desea y merece. Y si no, aparéjese la señora Dulcinea; que si no responde como es razón, voto hago solene a quien puedo que le tengo de sacar la buena respuesta del estómago a coces y a bofetones. Porque, ¿dónde se ha de sufrir que un caballero andante, tan famoso como vuestra merced, se vuelva loco, sin qué ni para qué, por una...? No me lo haga decir la señora, porque por Dios que despotrique y lo eche todo a doce, aunque nunca se venda. ¡Bonico soy yo para eso! ¡Mal me conoce! ¡Pues, a fe que si me conociese, que me ayunase!

-A fe, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, que, a lo que parece, que no estás tú más cuerdo que yo.

-No estoy tan loco -respondió Sancho-, mas estoy más colérico. Pero, dejando esto aparte, ¿qué es lo que ha de comer vuestra merced en tanto que yo vuelvo? ¿Ha de salir al camino, como Cardenio, a quitárselo a los pastores?

-No te dé pena ese cuidado -respondió don Quijote-, porque, aunque tuviera, no comiera otra cosa que las yerbas y frutos que este prado y estos árboles me dieren, que la fineza de mi negocio está en no comer y en hacer otras asperezas equivalentes.

-A Dios, pues. Pero, ¿sabe vuestra merced qué temo? Que no tengo de acertar a volver a este lugar donde agora le dejo, según está de escondido.

-Toma bien las señas, que yo procuraré no apartarme destos contornos -dijo don Quijote-, y aun tendré cuidado de subirme por estos más altos riscos, por ver si te descubro cuando vuelvas. Cuanto más, que lo más acertado será, para que no me yerres y te pierdas, que cortes algunas retamas de las muchas que por aquí hay y las vayas poniendo de trecho a trecho, hasta salir a lo raso, las cuales te servirán de mojones y señales para que me halles cuando vuelvas, a imitación del hilo del laberinto de Teseo.

-Así lo haré -respondió Sancho Panza.

Y, cortando algunos, pidió la bendición a su señor, y, no sin muchas lágrimas de entrambos, se despidió dél. Y, subiendo sobre Rocinante, a quien don Quijote encomendó mucho, y que mirase por él como por su propia persona, se puso en

camino del llano, esparciendo de trecho a trecho los ramos de la retama, como su amo se lo había aconsejado. Y así, se fue, aunque todavía le importunaba don Quijote que le viese siquiera hacer dos locuras. Mas no hubo andado cien pasos, cuando volvió y dijo:

-Digo, señor, que vuestra merced ha dicho muy bien: que, para que pueda jurar sin cargo de conciencia que le he visto hacer locuras, será bien que vea siquiera una, aunque bien grande la he visto en la quedada de vuestra merced.

-¿No te lo decía yo? -dijo don Quijote-. Espérate, Sancho, que en un credo las haré.

Y, desnudándose con toda priesa los calzones, quedó en carnes y en pañales, y luego, sin más ni más, dio dos zapatetas en el aire y dos tumbas, la cabeza abajo y los pies en alto, descubriendo cosas que, por no verlas otra vez, volvió Sancho la rienda a Rocinante y se dio por contento y satisfecho de que podía jurar que su amo quedaba loco. Y así, le dejaremos ir su camino, hasta la vuelta, que fue breve.

## Capítulo XXVI

*Donde se prosiguen las finezas que de enamorado hizo don Quijote en Sierra Morena*

VOLVIENDO a contar lo que hizo el de la Triste Figura después que se vio solo, dice la historia que, así como don Quijote acabó de dar las tumbas o vueltas, de medio abajo desnudo y de medio arriba vestido, y que vio que Sancho se había ido sin querer aguardar a ver más sandeces, se subió sobre una punta de una alta peña y allí tornó a pensar lo que otras muchas veces había pensado, sin haberse jamás resuelto en ello. Y era que cuál sería mejor y le estaría más a cuento: imitar a Roldán en las locuras desaforadas que hizo, o Amadís en las malencónicas. Y, hablando entre sí mismo, decía:

-Si Roldán fue tan buen caballero y tan valiente como todos dicen, ¿qué maravilla?, pues, al fin, era encantado y no le podía matar nadie si no era metiéndole un alfiler de a blanca por la planta del pie, y él traía siempre los zapatos con siete suelas de hierro. Aunque no le valieron tretas contra Bernardo del Carpio, que se las entendió y le ahogó entre los brazos en Roncesvalles. Pero, dejando en él lo de la valentía a una parte, vengamos a lo de perder el juicio, que es cierto que le perdió, por las señales que halló en la fontana y por las nuevas que le dio el pastor de que Angélica había dormido más de dos siestas con Medoro, un morillo de cabellos enrizados y paje de Agramante; y si él entendió que esto era verdad y que su dama le había cometido desaguisado, no hizo mucho en volverse loco. Pero yo, ¿cómo puedo imitalle en las locuras, si no le imito en la ocasión dellas? Porque mi Dulcinea del Toboso osaré yo jurar que no ha visto en todos los días de su vida moro alguno, así como él es, en su mismo traje, y que se está hoy como la madre que la parió; y haríale agravio manifiesto si, imaginando otra cosa della, me volviese loco de aquel género de locura de Roldán el furioso. Por otra parte, veo que Amadís de Gaula, sin perder el juicio y sin hacer locuras, alcanzó tanta fama de enamorado como el que más; porque lo que hizo, según su historia, no fue más de que, por verse desdeñado de su señora Oriana, que le había mandado que no pareciese ante su presencia hasta que fuese su voluntad, de que se retiró a la Peña Pobre en compañía de un ermitaño, y allí se hartó de llorar y de encomendarse a Dios, hasta que el cielo le acorrió, en medio de su mayor cuita y necesidad. Y si esto es verdad, como lo es, ¿para qué quiero yo tomar trabajo agora de desnudarme del todo, ni dar

pesadumbre a estos árboles, que no me han hecho mal alguno? Ni tengo para qué enturbiar el agua clara destos arroyos, los cuales me han de dar de beber cuando tenga gana. Viva la memoria de Amadís, y sea imitado de don Quijote de la Mancha en todo lo que pudiere; del cual se dirá lo que del otro se dijo: que si no acabó grandes cosas, murió por acometellas; y si yo no soy desechado ni desdeñado de Dulcinea del Toboso, bástame, como ya he dicho, estar ausente della. Ea, pues, manos a la obra: venid a mi memoria, cosas de Amadís, y enseñadme por dónde tengo de comenzar a imitaros. Mas ya sé que lo más que él hizo fue rezar y encomendarse a Dios; pero, ¿qué haré de rosario, que no le tengo?

En esto le vino al pensamiento cómo le haría, y fue que rasgó una gran tira de las faldas de la camisa, que andaban colgando, y dióle once ñudos, el uno más gordo que los demás, y esto le sirvió de rosario el tiempo que allí estuvo, donde rezó un millón de avemarías. Y lo que le fatigaba mucho era no hallar por allí otro ermitaño que le confesase y con quien consolarse. Y así, se entretenía paseándose por el pradecillo, escribiendo y grabando por las cortezas de los árboles y por la menuda arena muchos versos, todos acomodados a su tristeza, y algunos en alabanza de Dulcinea. Mas los que se pudieron hallar enteros y que se pudiesen leer, después que a él allí le hallaron, no fueron más que estos que aquí se siguen:

Árboles, yerbas y plantas  
que en aqueste sitio estáis,  
tan altos, verdes y tantas,  
si de mi mal no os holgáis,  
escuchad mis quejas santas. 5

Mi dolor no os alborote,  
aunque más terrible sea,  
pues, por pagaros escote,  
aquí lloró don Quijote  
ausencias de Dulcinea 10  
del Toboso.

Es aquí el lugar adonde  
el amador más leal  
de su señora se esconde,  
y ha venido a tanto mal 15  
sin saber cómo o por dónde.

Tráele amor al estricote,  
que es de muy mala ralea;  
y así, hasta henchir un pipote,

aquí lloró don Quijote 20  
ausencias de Dulcinea  
del Toboso.

Buscando las aventuras  
por entre las duras peñas,  
maldiciendo entrañas duras, 25  
que entre riscos y entre breñas  
halla el triste desventuras,

hirióle amor con su azote,  
no con su blanda correa;  
y, en tocándole el cogote, 30  
aquí lloró don Quijote  
ausencias de Dulcinea  
del Toboso.

No causó poca risa en los que hallaron los versos referidos el añadidura *del Toboso* al nombre de Dulcinea, porque imaginaron que debió de imaginar don Quijote que si, en nombrando a Dulcinea, no decía también *del Toboso*, no se podría entender la copla; y así fue la verdad, como él después confesó. Otros muchos escribió, pero, como se ha dicho, no se pudieron sacar en limpio, ni enteros, más destas tres coplas. En esto, y en suspirar y en llamar a los faunos y silvanos de aquellos bosques, a las ninfas de los ríos, a la dolorosa y húmida Eco, que le respondiese, consolasen y escuchasen, se entretenía, y en buscar algunas yerbas con que sustentarse en tanto que Sancho volvía; que, si como tardó tres días, tardara tres semanas, el Caballero de la Triste Figura quedara tan desfigurado que no le conociera la madre que lo parió.

Y será bien dejalle, envuelto entre sus suspiros y versos, por contar lo que le avino a Sancho Panza en su mandadería. Y fue que, en saliendo al camino real, se puso en busca del Toboso, y otro día llegó a la venta donde le había sucedido la desgracia de la manta; y no la hubo bien visto, cuando le pareció que otra vez andaba en los aires, y no quiso entrar dentro, aunque llegó a hora que lo pudiera y debiera hacer, por ser la del comer y llevar en deseo de gustar algo caliente;

que había grandes días que todo era fiambre.

Esta necesidad le forzó a que llegase junto a la venta, todavía dudoso si entraría o no. Y, estando en esto, salieron de la venta dos personas que luego le conocieron; y dijo el uno al otro:

-Dígame, señor licenciado, aquel del caballo, ¿no es Sancho Panza, el que dijo el ama de nuestro aventurero que había salido con su señor por escudero?

-Sí es -dijo el licenciado-; y aquél es el caballo de nuestro don Quijote.

Y conociéronle tan bien como aquellos que eran el cura y el barbero de su mismo lugar, y los que hicieron el escrutinio y acto general de los libros. Los cuales, así como acabaron de conocer a Sancho Panza y a Rocinante, deseosos de saber de don Quijote, se fueron a él; y el cura le llamó por su nombre, diciéndole:

-Amigo Sancho Panza, ¿adónde queda vuestro amo?

Conociólos luego Sancho Panza, y determinó de encubrir el lugar y la suerte donde y como su amo quedaba; y así, les respondió que su amo quedaba ocupado en cierta parte y en cierta cosa que le era de mucha importancia, la cual él no podía descubrir, por los ojos que en la cara tenía.

-No, no -dijo el barbero-, Sancho Panza; si vos no nos decís dónde queda, imaginaremos, como ya imaginamos, que vos le habéis muerto y robado, pues venís encima de su caballo. En verdad que nos habéis de dar el dueño del rocín, o sobre eso, morena.

-No hay para qué conmigo amenazas, que yo no soy hombre que robo ni mato a nadie: a cada uno mate su ventura, o Dios, que le hizo. Mi amo queda haciendo penitencia en la mitad desta montaña, muy a su sabor.

Y luego, de corrida y sin parar, les contó de la suerte que quedaba, las aventuras que le habían sucedido y cómo llevaba la carta a la señora Dulcinea del Toboso, que era la hija de Lorenzo Corchuelo, de quien estaba enamorado hasta los hígados.

Quedaron admirados los dos de lo que Sancho Panza les contaba; y, aunque ya sabían la locura de don Quijote y el género della, siempre que la oían se admiraban de nuevo. Pidiéronle a Sancho Panza que les enseñase la carta que llevaba a la señora Dulcinea del Toboso. Él dijo que iba escrita en un libro de memoria y que era orden de su señor que la hiciese trasladar en papel en el primer lugar que llegase; a lo cual dijo el cura que se la mostrase, que él la trasladaría de muy buena letra. Metió la mano en el seno Sancho Panza, buscando el librillo, pero no le halló, ni le podía hallar si le buscara hasta agora, porque se había quedado don Quijote con él y no se le había dado, ni a él se le acordó de pedirle.

Cuando Sancho vio que no hallaba el libro, fuélele parando mortal el rostro;

y, tornándose a tentar todo el cuerpo muy apriesa, tornó a echar de ver que no le hallaba; y, sin más ni más, se echó entrambos puños a las barbas y se arrancó la mitad de ellas, y luego, apriesa y sin cesar, se dio media docena de puñadas en el rostro y en las narices, que se las bañó todas en sangre. Visto lo cual por el cura y el barbero, le dijeron que qué le había sucedido, que tan mal se paraba.

-¿Qué me ha de suceder -respondió Sancho-, sino el haber perdido de una mano a otra, en un estante, tres pollinos, que cada uno era como un castillo?

-¿Cómo es eso? -replicó el barbero.

-He perdido el libro de memoria -respondió Sancho-, donde venía carta para Dulcinea y una cédula firmada de su señor, por la cual mandaba que su sobrina me diese tres pollinos, de cuatro o cinco que estaban en casa.

Y, con esto, les contó la pérdida del rucio. Consolóle el cura, y díjole que, en hallando a su señor, él le haría revalidar la manda y que tornase a hacer la libranza en papel, como era uso y costumbre, porque las que se hacían en libros de memoria jamás se acetaban ni cumplían.

Con esto se consoló Sancho, y dijo que, como aquello fuese así, que no le daba mucha pena la pérdida de la carta de Dulcinea, porque él la sabía casi de memoria, de la cual se podría trasladar donde y cuando quisiesen.

-Decildo, Sancho, pues -dijo el barbero-, que después la trasladaremos.

Paróse Sancho Panza a rascar la cabeza para traer a la memoria la carta, y ya se ponía sobre un pie, y ya sobre otro; unas veces miraba al suelo, otras al cielo; y, al cabo de haberse roído la mitad de la yema de un dedo, teniendo suspensos a los que esperaban que ya la dijese, dijo al cabo de grandísimo rato:

-Por Dios, señor licenciado, que los diablos lleven la cosa que de la carta se me acuerda; aunque en el principio decía: «Alta y sobajada señora».

-No diría -dijo el barbero- *sobajada*, sino sobrehumana o soberana señora.

-Así es -dijo Sancho-. Luego, si mal no me acuerdo, proseguía..., si mal no me acuerdo: «el llega y falta de sueño, y el ferido besa a vuestra merced las manos, ingrata y muy desconocida hermosa», y no sé qué decía de salud y de enfermedad que le enviaba, y por aquí iba escurriendo, hasta que acababa en «Vuestro hasta la muerte, el Caballero de la Triste Figura».

No poco gustaron los dos de ver la buena memoria de Sancho Panza, y alabáronse mucho, y le pidieron que dijese la carta otras dos veces, para que ellos, ansimesmo, la tomasen de memoria para trasladarla a su tiempo. Tornóla a decir Sancho otras tres veces, y otras tantas volvió a decir otros tres mil disparates. Tras esto, contó asimesmo las cosas de su amo, pero no habló palabra acerca del manteamiento que le había sucedido en aquella venta, en la cual rehusaba entrar. Dijo también como su señor, en trayendo que le trujese buen despacho de la señora Dulcinea del Toboso, se había de poner en camino a



procurar cómo ser emperador, o, por lo menos, monarca; que así lo tenían concertado entre los dos, y era cosa muy fácil venir a serlo, según era el valor de su persona y la fuerza de su brazo; y que, en siéndolo, le había de casar a él, porque ya sería viudo, que no podía ser menos, y le había de dar por mujer a una doncella de la emperatriz, heredera de un rico y grande estado de tierra firme, sin ínsulos ni ínsulas, que ya no las quería.

Decía esto Sancho con tanto reposo, limpiándose de cuando en cuando las narices, y con tan poco juicio, que los dos se admiraron de nuevo, considerando cuán vehemente había sido la locura de don Quijote, pues había llevado tras sí el juicio de aquel pobre hombre. No quisieron cansarse en sacarle del error en que estaba, pareciéndoles que, pues no le dañaba nada la conciencia, mejor era dejarle en él, y a ellos les sería de más gusto oír sus necedades. Y así, le dijeron que rogase a Dios por la salud de su señor, que cosa contingente y muy agible era venir, con el discurso del tiempo, a ser emperador, como él decía, o, por lo menos, arzobispo, o otra dignidad equivalente. A lo cual respondió Sancho:

-Señores, si la fortuna rodease las cosas de manera que a mi amo le viniese en voluntad de no ser emperador, sino de ser arzobispo, querría yo saber agora qué suelen dar los arzobispos andantes a sus escuderos.

-Suélenles dar -respondió el cura-algún beneficio, simple o curado, o alguna sacristanía, que les vale mucho de renta rentada, amén del pie de altar, que se suele estimar en otro tanto.

-Para eso será menester -replicó Sancho-que el escudero no sea casado y que sepa ayudar a misa, por lo menos; y si esto es así, ¡desdichado de yo, que soy casado y no sé la primera letra del ABC! ¿Qué será de mí si a mi amo le da antojo de ser arzobispo, y no emperador, como es uso y costumbre de los caballeros andantes?

-No tengáis pena, Sancho amigo -dijo el barbero-, que aquí rogaremos a vuestro amo y se lo aconsejaremos, y aun se lo pondremos en caso de conciencia, que sea emperador y no arzobispo, porque le será más fácil, a causa de que él es más valiente que estudiante.

-Así me ha parecido a mí -respondió Sancho-, aunque sé decir que para todo tiene habilidad. Lo que yo pienso hacer de mi parte es rogarle a Nuestro Señor que le eche a aquellas partes donde él más se sirva y adonde a mí más mercedes me haga.

-Vos lo decís como discreto -dijo el cura-y lo haréis como buen cristiano. Mas lo que ahora se ha de hacer es dar orden como sacar a vuestro amo de aquella inútil penitencia que decís que queda haciendo; y, para pensar el modo que hemos de tener, y para comer, que ya es hora, será bien nos entremos en esta venta.

Sancho dijo que entrasen ellos, que él esperaba allí fuera y que después les diría la causa por que no entraba ni le convenía entrar en ella; mas que les rogaba que le sacasen allí algo de comer que fuese cosa caliente, y, ansimismo, cebada para Rocinante. Ellos se entraron y le dejaron, y, de allí a poco, el barbero le sacó de comer. Después, habiendo bien pensado entre los dos el modo que tendrían para conseguir lo que deseaban, vino el cura en un pensamiento muy acomodado al gusto de don Quijote y para lo que ellos querían. Y fue que dijo al barbero que lo que había pensado era que él se vestiría en hábito de doncella andante, y que él procurase ponerse lo mejor que pudiese como escudero, y que así irían adonde don Quijote estaba, fingiendo ser ella una doncella afligida y menesterosa, y le pediría un don, el cual él no podría dejársele de otorgar, como valeroso caballero andante. Y que el don que le pensaba pedir era que se viniese con ella donde ella le llevase, a desfacelle un agravio que un mal caballero le tenía fecho; y que le suplicaba, ansimesmo, que no la mandase quitar su antifaz, ni la demandase cosa de su hacienda, fasta que la hubiese fecho derecho de aquel mal caballero; y que creyese, sin duda, que don Quijote vendría en todo cuanto le pidiese por este término; y que desta manera le sacarían de allí y le llevarían a su lugar, donde procurarían ver si tenía algún remedio su estraña locura.

## Capítulo XXVII

*De cómo salieron con su intención el cura y el barbero, con otras cosas dignas de que se cuenten en esta grande historia*

NO LE PARECIÓ mal al barbero la invención del cura, sino tan bien, que luego la pusieron por obra. Pidiéronle a la ventera una saya y unas tocas, dejándole en prendas una sotana nueva del cura. El barbero hizo una gran barba de una cola rucia o roja de buey, donde el ventero tenía colgado el peine. Preguntóles la ventera que para qué le pedían aquellas cosas. El cura le contó en breves razones la locura de don Quijote, y cómo convenía aquel disfraz para sacarle de la montaña, donde a la sazón estaba. Cayeron luego el ventero y la ventera en que el loco era su huésped, el del bálsamo, y el amo del manteado escudero, y contaron al cura todo lo que con él les había pasado, sin callar lo que tanto callaba Sancho. En resolución, la ventera vistió al cura de modo que no había más que ver: púsole una saya de paño, llena de fajas de terciopelo negro de un palmo en ancho, todas acuchilladas, y unos corpiños de terciopelo verde, guarnecidos con unos ribetes de raso blanco, que se debieron de hacer, ellos y la saya, en tiempo del rey Wamba. No consintió el cura que le tocasen, sino púsose en la cabeza un birretillo de lienzo colchado que llevaba para dormir de noche, y ciñóse por la frente una liga de tafetán negro, y con otra liga hizo un antifaz, con que se cubrió muy bien las barbas y el rostro; encasquetóse su sombrero, que era tan grande que le podía servir de quitasol, y, cubriéndose su herreruelo, subió en su mula a mujeriegas, y el barbero en la suya, con su barba que le llegaba a la cintura, entre roja y blanca, como aquella que, como se ha dicho, era hecha de la cola de un buey barroso.

Despidiéronse de todos, y de la buena de Maritornes, que prometió de rezar un rosario, aunque pecadora, porque Dios les diese buen suceso en tan arduo y tan cristiano negocio como era el que habían emprendido.

Mas, apenas hubo salido de la venta, cuando le vino al cura un pensamiento: que hacía mal en haberse puesto de aquella manera, por ser cosa indecente que un sacerdote se pusiese así, aunque le fuese mucho en ello; y, diciéndoselo al barbero, le rogó que trocasen trajes, pues era más justo que él fuese la doncella menesterosa, y que él haría el escudero, y que así se profanaba menos su dignidad; y que si no lo quería hacer, determinaba de no pasar adelante, aunque a don Quijote se le llevase el diablo.

En esto, llegó Sancho, y de ver a los dos en aquel traje no pudo tener la risa. En efeto, el barbero vino en todo aquello que el cura quiso, y, trocando la invención, el cura le fue informando el modo que había de tener y las palabras que había de decir a don Quijote para moverle y forzarle a que con él se viniese, y dejase la querencia del lugar que había escogido para su vana penitencia. El barbero respondió que, sin que se le diese lición, él lo pondría bien en su punto. No quiso vestirse por entonces, hasta que estuviesen junto de donde don Quijote estaba; y así, dobló sus vestidos, y el cura acomodó su barba, y siguieron su camino, guiándolos Sancho Panza; el cual les fue contando lo que les aconteció con el loco que hallaron en la sierra, encubriendo, empero, el hallazgo de la maleta y de cuanto en ella venía; que, maguer que tonto, era un poco codicioso el mancebo.

Otro día llegaron al lugar donde Sancho había dejado puestas las señales de las ramas para acertar el lugar donde había dejado a su señor; y, en reconociéndole, les dijo como aquélla era la entrada, y que bien se podían vestir, si era que aquello hacía al caso para la libertad de su señor; porque ellos le habían dicho antes que el ir de aquella suerte y vestirse de aquel modo era toda la importancia para sacar a su amo de aquella mala vida que había escogido, y que le encargaban mucho que no dijese a su amo quien ellos eran, ni que los conocía; y que si le preguntase, como se lo había de preguntar, si dio la carta a Dulcinea, dijese que sí, y que, por no saber leer, le había respondido de palabra, diciéndole que le mandaba, so pena de la su desgracia, que luego al momento se viniese a ver con ella, que era cosa que le importaba mucho; porque con esto y con lo que ellos pensaban decirle tenían por cosa cierta reducirle a mejor vida, y hacer con él que luego se pusiese en camino para ir a ser emperador o monarca; que en lo de ser arzobispo no había de qué temer.

Todo lo escuchó Sancho, y lo tomó muy bien en la memoria, y les agradeció mucho la intención que tenían de aconsejar a su señor fuese emperador y no arzobispo, porque él tenía para sí que, para hacer mercedes a sus escuderos, más podían los emperadores que los arzobispos andantes. También les dijo que sería bien que él fuese delante a buscarle y darle la respuesta de su señora, que ya sería ella bastante a sacarle de aquel lugar, sin que ellos se pusiesen en tanto trabajo. Parecióles bien lo que Sancho Panza decía, y así, determinaron de aguardarle hasta que volviese con las nuevas del hallazgo de su amo.

Entróse Sancho por aquellas quebradas de la sierra, dejando a los dos en una por donde corría un pequeño y manso arroyo, a quien hacían sombra agradable y fresca otras peñas y algunos árboles que por allí estaban. El calor, y el día que allí llegaron, era de los del mes de agosto, que por aquellas partes suele ser el ardor muy grande; la hora, las tres de la tarde: todo lo cual hacía al sitio más

agradable, y que convidase a que en él esperasen la vuelta de Sancho, como lo hicieron.

Estando, pues, los dos allí, sosegados y a la sombra, llegó a sus oídos una voz que, sin acompañarla son de algún otro instrumento, dulce y regaladamente sonaba, de que no poco se admiraron, por parecerles que aquél no era lugar donde pudiese haber quien tan bien cantase. Porque, aunque suele decirse que por las selvas y campos se hallan pastores de voces estremadas, más son encarecimientos de poetas que verdades; y más, cuando advirtieron que lo que oían cantar eran versos, no de rústicos ganaderos, sino de discretos cortesanos. Y confirmó esta verdad haber sido los versos que oyeron éstos: ¿Quién menoscaba mis bienes?

Desdenes.

Y ¿quién aumenta mis duelos?

Los celos.

Y ¿quién prueba mi paciencia? 5

Ausencia.

De ese modo, en mi dolencia  
ningún remedio se alcanza,  
pues me matan la esperanza  
desdenes, celos y ausencia. 10

¿Quién me causa este dolor?

Amor.

Y ¿quién mi gloria repugna?

Fortuna.

Y ¿quién consiente en mi duelo? 15

El cielo

De ese modo, yo recelo

morir deste mal extraño,  
pues se aumentan en mi daño,  
amor, fortuna y el cielo. 20

¿Quién mejorará mi suerte?

La muerte.

Y el bien de amor, ¿quién le alcanza?

Mudanza.

Y sus males, ¿quién los cura? 25

Locura.

De ese modo, no es cordura  
querer curar la pasión  
cuando los remedios son  
muerte, mudanza y locura. 30

La hora, el tiempo, la soledad, la voz y la destreza del que cantaba causó admiración y contento en los dos oyentes, los cuales se estuvieron quedos, esperando si otra alguna cosa oían; pero, viendo que duraba algún tanto el silencio, determinaron de salir a buscar el músico que con tan buena voz cantaba. Y, queriéndolo poner en efeto, hizo la misma voz que no se moviesen, la cual llegó de nuevo a sus oídos, cantando este soneto: SONETO

Santa amistad, que con ligeras alas,  
tu apariencia quedándose en el suelo,  
entre benditas almas, en el cielo,  
  
subiste alegre a las impíreas salas,  
  
desde allá, cuando quieres, nos señalas 5  
la justa paz cubierta con un velo,  
por quien a veces se trasluce el cielo  
de buenas obras que, a la fin, son malas.

Deja el cielo, ¡oh amistad!, o no permitas  
que el engaño se vista tu librea, 10  
con que destruye a la intención sincera;

que si tus apariencias no le quitas,  
presto ha de verse el mundo en la pelea  
de la discorde confusión primera.

El canto se acabó con un profundo suspiro, y los dos, con atención, volvieron a esperar si más se cantaba; pero, viendo que la música se había vuelto en sollozos y en lastimeros ayes, acordaron de saber quién era el triste, tan estremado en la voz como doloroso en los gemidos; y no anduvieron mucho, cuando, al volver de una punta de una peña, vieron a un hombre del mismo talle y figura que Sancho Panza les había pintado cuando les contó el cuento de Cardenio; el cual hombre, cuando los vio, sin sobresaltarse, estuvo quedo, con la cabeza inclinada sobre el pecho a guisa de hombre pensativo, sin alzar los ojos a

mirarlos más de la vez primera, cuando de improviso llegaron.

El cura, que era hombre bien hablado (como el que ya tenía noticia de su desgracia, pues por las señas le había conocido), se llegó a él, y con breves aunque muy discretas razones le rogó y persuadió que aquella tan miserable vida dejase, porque allí no la perdiese, que era la desdicha mayor de las desdichas. Estaba Cardenio entonces en su entero juicio, libre de aquel furioso accidente que tan a menudo le sacaba de sí mismo; y así, viendo a los dos en traje tan no usado de los que por aquellas soledades andaban, no dejó de admirarse algún tanto, y más cuando oyó que le habían hablado en su negocio como en cosa sabida -porque las razones que el cura le dijo así lo dieron a entender-; y así, respondió desta manera: -Bien veo yo, señores, quienquiera que seáis, que el cielo, que tiene cuidado de socorrer a los buenos, y aun a los malos muchas veces, sin yo merecerlo, me envía, en estos tan remotos y apartados lugares del trato común de las gentes, algunas personas que, poniéndome delante de los ojos con vivas y varias razones cuán sin ella ando en hacer la vida que hago, han procurado sacarme désta a mejor parte; pero, como no saben que sé yo que en saliendo deste daño he de caer en otro mayor, quizá me deben de tener por hombre de flacos discursos, y aun, lo que peor sería, por de ningún juicio. Y no sería maravilla que así fuese, porque a mí se me trasluce que la fuerza de la imaginación de mis desgracias es tan intensa y puede tanto en mi perdición que, sin que yo pueda ser parte a estorbarlo, vengo a quedar como piedra, falto de todo buen sentido y conocimiento; y vengo a caer en la cuenta desta verdad, cuando algunos me dicen y muestran señales de las cosas que he hecho en tanto que aquel terrible accidente me señorea, y no sé más que dolerme en vano y maldecir sin provecho mi ventura, y dar por disculpa de mis locuras el decir la causa dellas a cuantos oírla quieren; porque, viendo los cuerdos cuál es la causa, no se maravillarán de los efetos, y si no me dieren remedio, a lo menos no me darán culpa, convirtiéndoseles el enojo de mi desenvoltura en lástima de mis desgracias. Y si es que vosotros, señores, venís con la misma intención que otros han venido, antes que paséis adelante en vuestras discretas persuaciones, os ruego que escuchéis el cuento, que no le tiene, de mis desventuras; porque quizá, después de entendido, ahorraréis del trabajo que tomaréis en consolar un mal que de todo consuelo es incapaz.

Los dos, que no deseaban otra cosa que saber de su misma boca la causa de su daño, le rogaron se la contase, ofreciéndole de no hacer otra cosa de la que él quisiese, en su remedio o consuelo; y con esto, el triste caballero comenzó su lastimera historia, casi por las mismas palabras y pasos que la había contado a don Quijote y al cabrero pocos días atrás, cuando, por ocasión del maestro Elisabat y puntualidad de don Quijote en guardar el decoro a la caballería, se

quedó el cuento imperfeto, como la historia lo deja contado. Pero ahora quiso la buena suerte que se detuvo el accidente de la locura y le dio lugar de contarlo hasta el fin; y así, llegando al paso del billete que había hallado don Fernando entre el libro de *Amadís de Gaula*, dijo Cardenio que le tenía bien en la memoria, y que decía desta manera: «LUSCINDA A CARDENIO

Cada día descubro en vos valores que me obligan y fuerzan a que en más os estime; y así, si quisiéredes sacarme desta deuda sin ejecutarme en la honra, lo podréis muy bien hacer. Padre tengo, que os conoce y que me quiere bien, el cual, sin forzar mi voluntad, cumplirá la que será justo que vos tengáis, si es que me estimáis como decís y como yo creo.

»-Por este billete me moví a pedir a Luscinda por esposa, como ya os he contado, y éste fue por quien quedó Luscinda en la opinión de don Fernando por una de las más discretas y avisadas mujeres de su tiempo; y este billete fue el que le puso en deseo de destruirme, antes que el mío se efetuase. Díjele yo a don Fernando en lo que reparaba el padre de Luscinda, que era en que mi padre se la pidiese, lo cual yo no le osaba decir, temeroso que no vendría en ello, no porque no tuviese bien conocida la calidad, bondad, virtud y hermosura de Luscinda, y que tenía partes bastantes para enoblecir cualquier otro linaje de España, sino porque yo entendía dél que deseaba que no me casase tan presto, hasta ver lo que el duque Ricardo hacía conmigo. En resolución, le dije que no me aventuraba a decírselo a mi padre, así por aquel inconveniente como por otros muchos que me acobardaban, sin saber cuáles eran, sino que me parecía que lo que yo desease jamás había de tener efeto.

»A todo esto me respondió don Fernando que él se encargaba de hablar a mi padre y hacer con él que hablase al de Luscinda. ¡Oh Mario ambicioso, oh Catilina cruel, oh Sila facinoroso, oh Galalón embustero, oh Vellido traidor, oh Julián vengativo, oh Judas codicioso! Traidor, cruel, vengativo y embustero, ¿qué deservicios te había hecho este triste, que con tanta llaneza te descubrió los secretos y contentos de su corazón? ¿Qué ofensa te hice? ¿Qué palabras te dije, o qué consejos te di, que no fuesen todos encaminados a acrecentar tu honra y tu provecho? Mas, ¿de qué me quejo?, ¡desventurado de mí!, pues es cosa cierta que cuando traen las desgracias la corriente de las estrellas, como vienen de alto abajo, despeñándose con furor y con violencia, no hay fuerza en la tierra que las detenga, ni industria humana que prevenirlas pueda. ¿Quién pudiera imaginar que don Fernando, caballero ilustre, discreto, obligado de mis servicios, poderoso para alcanzar lo que el deseo amoroso le pidiese dondequiera que le ocupase, se había de enconar, como suele decirse, en tomarme a mí una sola oveja, que aún no poseía? Pero quédense estas consideraciones aparte, como inútiles y sin provecho, y añudemos el roto hilo de mi desdichada historia.



»Digo, pues, que, pareciéndole a don Fernando que mi presencia le era inconveniente para poner en ejecución su falso y mal pensamiento, determinó de enviarme a su hermano mayor, con ocasión de pedirle unos dineros para pagar seis caballos, que de industria, y sólo para este efeto de que me ausentase (para poder mejor salir con su dañado intento), el mismo día que se ofreció hablar a mi padre los compró, y quiso que yo viniese por el dinero. ¿Pude yo prevenir esta traición? ¿Pude, por ventura, caer en imaginarla? No, por cierto; antes, con grandísimo gusto, me ofrecí a partir luego, contento de la buena compra hecha. Aquella noche hablé con Luscinda, y le dije lo que con don Fernando quedaba concertado, y que tuviese firme esperanza de que tendrían efeto nuestros buenos y justos deseos. Ella me dijo, tan segura como yo de la traición de don Fernando, que procurase volver presto, porque creía que no tardaría más la conclusión de nuestras voluntades que tardase mi padre de hablar al suyo. No sé qué se fue, que, en acabando de decirme esto, se le llenaron los ojos de lágrimas y un nudo se le atravesó en la garganta, que no le dejaba hablar palabra de otras muchas que me pareció que procuraba decirme.

»Quedé admirado deste nuevo accidente, hasta allí jamás en ella visto, porque siempre nos hablábamos, las veces que la buena fortuna y mi diligencia lo concedía, con todo regocijo y contento, sin mezclar en nuestras pláticas lágrimas, suspiros, celos, sospechas o temores. Todo era engrandecer yo mi ventura, por habérmela dado el cielo por señora: exageraba su belleza, admirábame de su valor y entendimiento. Volvíame ella el recambio, alabando en mí lo que, como enamorada, le parecía digno de alabanza. Con esto, nos contábamos cien mil niñerías y acaecimientos de nuestros vecinos y conocidos, y a lo que más se estendía mi desenvoltura era a tomarle, casi por fuerza, una de sus bellas y blancas manos, y llevarla a mi boca, según daba lugar la estrechez de una baja reja que nos dividía. Pero la noche que precedió al triste día de mi partida, ella lloró, gimió y suspiró, y se fue, y me dejó lleno de confusión y sobresalto, espantado de haber visto tan nuevas y tan tristes muestras de dolor y sentimiento en Luscinda. Pero, por no destruir mis esperanzas, todo lo atribuí a la fuerza del amor que me tenía y al dolor que suele causar la ausencia en los que bien se quieren.

»En fin, yo me partí triste y pensativo, llena el alma de imaginaciones y sospechas, sin saber lo que sospechaba ni imaginaba: claros indicios que me mostraban el triste suceso y desventura que me estaba guardada. Llegué al lugar donde era enviado. Di las cartas al hermano de don Fernando. Fui bien recibido, pero no bien despachado, porque me mandó aguardar, bien a mi disgusto, ocho días, y en parte donde el duque, su padre, no me viese, porque su hermano le escribía que le enviase cierto dinero sin su sabiduría. Y todo fue invención del

falso don Fernando, pues no le faltaban a su hermano dineros para despacharme luego. Orden y mandato fue éste que me puso en condición de no obedecerle, por parecerme imposible sustentar tantos días la vida en el ausencia de Luscinda, y más, habiéndola dejado con la tristeza que os he contado; pero, con todo esto, obedecí, como buen criado, aunque veía que había de ser a costa de mi salud.

»Pero, a los cuatro días que allí llegué, llegó un hombre en mi busca con una carta, que me dio, que en el sobrescrito conocí ser de Luscinda, porque la letra dél era suya. Abríla, temeroso y con sobresalto, creyendo que cosa grande debía de ser la que la había movido a escribirme estando ausente, pues presente pocas veces lo hacía. Preguntéle al hombre, antes de leerla, quién se la había dado y el tiempo que había tardado en el camino. Díjome que acaso, pasando por una calle de la ciudad a la hora de medio día, una señora muy hermosa le llamó desde una ventana, los ojos llenos de lágrimas, y que con mucha priesa le dijo: “Hermano: si sois cristiano, como parecéis, por amor de Dios os ruego que encaminéis luego esta carta al lugar y a la persona que dice el sobrescrito, que todo es bien conocido, y en ello haréis un gran servicio a nuestro Señor; y, para que no os falte comodidad de poderlo hacer, tomad lo que va en este pañuelo”. “Y, diciendo esto, me arrojó por la ventana un pañuelo, donde venían atados cien reales y esta sortija de oro que aquí traigo, con esa carta que os he dado. Y luego, sin aguardar respuesta mía, se quitó de la ventana; aunque primero vio cómo yo tomé la carta y el pañuelo, y, por señas, le dije que haría lo que me mandaba. Y así, viéndome tan bien pagado del trabajo que podía tomar en traérsela y conociendo por el sobrescrito que érades vos a quien se enviaba, porque yo, señor, os conozco muy bien, y obligado asimesmo de las lágrimas de aquella hermosa señora, determiné de no fiarme de otra persona, sino venir yo mesmo a dárosela; y en diez y seis horas que ha que se me dio, he hecho el camino, que sabéis que es de diez y ocho leguas”.

»En tanto que el agradecido y nuevo correo esto me decía, estaba yo colgado de sus palabras, temblándome las piernas de manera que apenas podía sostenerme. En efeto, abrí la carta y vi que contenía estas razones: La palabra que don Fernando os dio de hablar a vuestro padre para que hablase al mío, la ha cumplido más en su gusto que en vuestro provecho. Sabed, señor, que él me ha pedido por esposa, y mi padre, llevado de la ventaja que él piensa que don Fernando os hace, ha venido en lo que quiere, con tantas veras que de aquí a dos días se ha de hacer el desposorio, tan secreto y tan a solas, que sólo han de ser testigos los cielos y alguna gente de casa. Cual yo quedo, imaginaldo; si os cumple venir, veldo; y si os quiero bien o no, el suceso deste negocio os lo dará a entender. A Dios plega que ésta llegue a vuestras manos antes que la mía se vea en condición de juntarse con la de quien tan mal sabe guardar la fe que

promete.

»Éstas, en suma, fueron las razones que la carta contenía y las que me hicieron poner luego en camino, sin esperar otra respuesta ni otros dineros; que bien claro conocí entonces que no la compra de los caballos, sino la de su gusto, había movido a don Fernando a enviarme a su hermano. El enojo que contra don Fernando concebí, junto con el temor de perder la prenda que con tantos años de servicios y deseos tenía granjeada, me pusieron alas, pues, casi como en vuelo, otro día me puse en mi lugar, al punto y hora que convenía para ir a hablar a Luscinda. Entré secreto, y dejé una mula en que venía en casa del buen hombre que me había llevado la carta; y quiso la suerte que entonces la tuviese tan buena que hallé a Luscinda puesta a la reja, testigo de nuestros amores. Conocióme Luscinda luego, y conocíla yo; mas no como debía ella conocerme y yo conocerla. Pero, ¿quién hay en el mundo que se pueda alabar que ha penetrado y sabido el confuso pensamiento y condición mudable de una mujer? Ninguno, por cierto.

»Digo, pues, que, así como Luscinda me vio, me dijo: “Cardenio, de boda estoy vestida; ya me están aguardando en la sala don Fernando el traidor y mi padre el codicioso, con otros testigos, que antes lo serán de mi muerte que de mi desposorio. No te turbes, amigo, sino procura hallarte presente a este sacrificio, el cual si no pudiere ser estorbado de mis razones, una daga llevo escondida que podrá estorbar más determinadas fuerzas, dando fin a mi vida y principio a que conozcas la voluntad que te he tenido y tengo”. Yo le respondí turbado y apriesa, temeroso no me faltase lugar para responderla: “Hagan, señora, tus obras verdaderas tus palabras; que si tú llevas daga para acreditarte, aquí llevo yo espada para defenderte con ella o para matarme si la suerte nos fuere contraria”. No creo que pudo oír todas estas razones, porque sentí que la llamaban apriesa, porque el desposado aguardaba. Cerróse con esto la noche de mi tristeza, púsoseme el sol de mi alegría: quedé sin luz en los ojos y sin discurso en el entendimiento. No acertaba a entrar en su casa, ni podía moverme a parte alguna; pero, considerando cuánto importaba mi presencia para lo que suceder pudiese en aquel caso, me animé lo más que pude y entré en su casa. Y, como ya sabía muy bien todas sus entradas y salidas, y más con el alboroto que de secreto en ella andaba, nadie me echó de ver. Así que, sin ser visto, tuve lugar de ponerme en el hueco que hacía una ventana de la misma sala, que con las puntas y remates de dos tapices se cubría, por entre las cuales podía yo ver, sin ser visto, todo cuanto en la sala se hacía.

»¿Quién pudiera decir ahora los sobresaltos que me dio el corazón mientras allí estuve, los pensamientos que me ocurrieron, las consideraciones que hice?, que fueron tantas y tales, que ni se pueden decir ni aun es bien que se digan.

Basta que sepáis que el desposado entró en la sala sin otro adorno que los mismos vestidos ordinarios que solía. Traía por padrino a un primo hermano de Luscinda, y en toda la sala no había persona de fuera, sino los criados de casa. De allí a un poco, salió de una recámara Luscinda, acompañada de su madre y de dos doncellas suyas, tan bien aderezada y compuesta como su calidad y hermosura merecían, y como quien era la perfección de la gala y bizarría cortesana. No me dio lugar mi suspensión y arrobamiento para que mirase y notase en particular lo que traía vestido; sólo pude advertir a las colores, que eran encarnado y blanco, y en las vislumbres que las piedras y joyas del tocado y de todo el vestido hacían, a todo lo cual se aventajaba la belleza singular de sus hermosos y rubios cabellos; tales que, en competencia de las preciosas piedras y de las luces de cuatro hachas que en la sala estaban, la suya con más resplandor a los ojos ofrecían. ¡Oh memoria, enemiga mortal de mi descanso! ¿De qué sirve representarme ahora la incomparable belleza de aquella adorada enemiga mía? ¿No será mejor, cruel memoria, que me acuerdes y representes lo que entonces hizo, para que, movido de tan manifiesto agravio, procure, ya que no la venganza, a lo menos perder la vida?» No os canséis, señores, de oír estas digresiones que hago; que no es mi pena de aquellas que puedan ni deban contarse sucintamente y de paso, pues cada circunstancia suya me parece a mí que es digna de un largo discurso.

A esto le respondió el cura que no sólo no se cansaban en oírle, sino que les daba mucho gusto las menudencias que contaba, por ser tales, que merecían no pasarse en silencio, y la misma atención que lo principal del cuento.

-«Digo, pues -prosiguió Cardenio-, que, estando todos en la sala, entró el cura de la parroquia, y, tomando a los dos por la mano para hacer lo que en tal acto se requiere, al decir: “¿Queréis, señora Luscinda, al señor don Fernando, que está presente, por vuestro legítimo esposo, como lo manda la Santa Madre Iglesia?”, yo saqué toda la cabeza y cuello de entre los tapices, y con atentísimos oídos y alma turbada me puse a escuchar lo que Luscinda respondía, esperando de su respuesta la sentencia de mi muerte o la confirmación de mi vida. ¡Oh, quién se atreviera a salir entonces, diciendo a voces!: “¡Ah Luscinda, Luscinda, mira lo que haces, considera lo que me debes, mira que eres mía y que no puedes ser de otro! Advierte que el decir tú sí y el acabármeme la vida ha de ser todo a un punto. ¡Ah traidor don Fernando, robador de mi gloria, muerte de mi vida! ¿Qué quieres? ¿Qué pretendes? Considera que no puedes cristianamente llegar al fin de tus deseos, porque Luscinda es mi esposa y yo soy su marido”. ¡Ah, loco de mí, ahora que estoy ausente y lejos del peligro, digo que había de hacer lo que no hice! ¡Ahora que dejé robar mi cara prenda, maldigo al robador, de quien pudiera vengarme si tuviera corazón para ello como le tengo para quejarme! En

fin, pues fui entonces cobarde y necio, no es mucho que muera ahora corrido, arrepentido y loco.

»Estaba esperando el cura la respuesta de Luscinda, que se detuvo un buen espacio en darla, y, cuando yo pensé que sacaba la daga para acreditarse, o desataba la lengua para decir alguna verdad o desengaño que en mi provecho redundase, oigo que dijo con voz desmayada y flaca: “Sí quiero”; y lo mismo dijo don Fernando; y, dándole el anillo, quedaron en disoluble nudo ligados. Llegó el desposado a abrazar a su esposa, y ella, poniéndose la mano sobre el corazón, cayó desmayada en los brazos de su madre. Resta ahora decir cuál quedé yo viendo, en el sí que había oído, burladas mis esperanzas, falsas las palabras y promesas de Luscinda: imposibilitado de cobrar en algún tiempo el bien que en aquel instante había perdido. Quedé falto de consejo, desamparado, a mi parecer, de todo el cielo, hecho enemigo de la tierra que me sustentaba, negándome el aire aliento para mis suspiros y el agua humor para mis ojos; sólo el fuego se acrecentó de manera que todo ardía de rabia y de celos.

»Alborotáronse todos con el desmayo de Luscinda, y, desabrochándole su madre el pecho para que le diese el aire, se descubrió en él un papel cerrado, que don Fernando tomó luego y se le puso a leer a la luz de una de las hachas; y, en acabando de leerle, se sentó en una silla y se puso la mano en la mejilla, con muestras de hombre muy pensativo, sin acudir a los remedios que a su esposa se hacían para que del desmayo volviese. Yo, viendo alborotada toda la gente de casa, me aventuré a salir, ora fuese visto o no, con determinación que si me viesen, de hacer un desatino tal, que todo el mundo viniera a entender la justa indignación de mi pecho en el castigo del falso don Fernando, y aun en el mudable de la desmayada traidora. Pero mi suerte, que para mayores males, si es posible que los haya, me debe tener guardado, ordenó que en aquel punto me sobrase el entendimiento que después acá me ha faltado; y así, sin querer tomar venganza de mis mayores enemigos (que, por estar tan sin pensamiento mío, fuera fácil tomarla), quise tomarla de mi mano y ejecutar en mí la pena que ellos merecían; y aun quizá con más rigor del que con ellos se usara si entonces les diera muerte, pues la que se recibe repentina presto acaba la pena; mas la que se dilata con tormentos siempre mata, sin acabar la vida.

»En fin, yo salí de aquella casa y vine a la de aquél donde había dejado la mula; hice que me la ensillase, sin despedirme dél subí en ella, y salí de la ciudad, sin osar, como otro Lot, volver el rostro a miralla; y cuando me vi en el campo solo, y que la escuridad de la noche me encubría y su silencio convidaba a quejarme, sin respeto o miedo de ser escuchado ni conocido, solté la voz y desaté la lengua en tantas maldiciones de Luscinda y de don Fernando, como si con ellas satisficiera el agravio que me habían hecho. Dile títulos de cruel, de

ingrata, de falsa y desagradecida; pero, sobre todos, de codiciosa, pues la riqueza de mi enemigo la había cerrado los ojos de la voluntad, para quitármela a mí y entregarla a aquél con quien más liberal y franca la fortuna se había mostrado; y, en mitad de la fuga destas maldiciones y vituperios, la disculpaba, diciendo que no era mucho que una doncella recogida en casa de sus padres, hecha y acostumbrada siempre a obedecerlos, hubiese querido condescender con su gusto, pues le daban por esposo a un caballero tan principal, tan rico y tan gentil hombre que, a no querer recibirle, se podía pensar, o que no tenía juicio, o que en otra parte tenía la voluntad: cosa que redundaba tan en perjuicio de su buena opinión y fama. Luego volvía diciendo que, puesto que ella dijera que yo era su esposo, vieran ellos que no había hecho en escogermelo tan mala elección, que no la disculparan, pues antes de ofrecérseles don Fernando no pudieran ellos mismos acertar a desear, si con razón midiesen su deseo, otro mejor que yo para esposo de su hija; y que bien pudiera ella, antes de ponerse en el trance forzoso y último de dar la mano, decir que ya yo le había dado la mía; que yo viniera y concediera con todo cuanto ella acertara a fingir en este caso.

»En fin, me resolví en que poco amor, poco juicio, mucha ambición y deseos de grandezas hicieron que se olvidase de las palabras con que me había engañado, entretenido y sustentado en mis firmes esperanzas y honestos deseos. Con estas voces y con esta inquietud caminé lo que quedaba de aquella noche, y di al amanecer en una entrada destas sierras, por las cuales caminé otros tres días, sin senda ni camino alguno, hasta que vine a parar a unos prados, que no sé a qué mano destas montañas caen, y allí pregunté a unos ganaderos que hacia dónde era lo más áspero destas sierras. Dijéronme que hacia esta parte. Luego me encaminé a ella, con intención de acabar aquí la vida, y, en entrando por estas asperezas, del cansancio y de la hambre se cayó mi mula muerta, o, lo que yo más creo, por desechar de sí tan inútil carga como en mí llevaba. Yo quedé a pie, rendido de la naturaleza, traspasado de hambre, sin tener, ni pensar buscar, quien me socorriese.

»De aquella manera estuve no sé qué tiempo, tendido en el suelo, al cabo del cual me levanté sin hambre, y hallé junto a mí a unos cabreros, que, sin duda, debieron ser los que mi necesidad remediaron, porque ellos me dijeron de la manera que me habían hallado, y cómo estaba diciendo tantos disparates y desatinos, que daba indicios claros de haber perdido el juicio; y yo he sentido en mí, después acá, que no todas veces le tengo cabal, sino tan desmedrado y flaco que hago mil locuras, rasgándome los vestidos, dando voces por estas soledades, maldiciendo mi ventura y repitiendo en vano el nombre amado de mi enemiga, sin tener otro discurso ni intento entonces que procurar acabar la vida voceando; y cuando en mí vuelvo, me hallo tan cansado y molido, que apenas puedo

moverme. Mi más común habitación es en el hueco de un alcornoque, capaz de cubrir este miserable cuerpo. Los vaqueros y cabreros que andan por estas montañas, movidos de caridad, me sustentan, poniéndome el manjar por los caminos y por las peñas por donde entienden que acaso podré pasar y hallarlo; y así, aunque entonces me falte el juicio, la necesidad natural me da a conocer el mantenimiento, y despierta en mí el deseo de apetecerlo y la voluntad de tomarlo. Otras veces me dicen ellos, cuando me encuentran con juicio, que yo salgo a los caminos y que se lo quito por fuerza, aunque me lo den de grado, a los pastores que vienen con ello del lugar a las majadas.

»Desta manera paso mi miserable y extrema vida, hasta que el cielo sea servido de conducirme a su último fin, o de ponerle en mi memoria, para que no me acuerde de la hermosura y de la traición de Luscinda y del agravio de don Fernando; que si esto él hace sin quitarme la vida, yo volveré a mejor discurso mis pensamientos; donde no, no hay sino rogarle que absolutamente tenga misericordia de mi alma, que yo no siento en mí valor ni fuerzas para sacar el cuerpo desta estrechez en que por mi gusto he querido ponerle». Ésta es, ¡oh señores!, la amarga historia de mi desgracia: decidme si es tal, que pueda celebrarse con menos sentimientos que los que en mí habéis visto; y no os canséis en persuadirme ni aconsejarme lo que la razón os dijere que puede ser bueno para mi remedio, porque ha de aprovechar conmigo lo que aprovecha la medicina recetada de famoso médico al enfermo que recibir no la quiere. Yo no quiero salud sin Luscinda; y, pues ella gustó de ser ajena, siendo, o debiendo ser, mía, guste yo de ser de la desventura, pudiendo haber sido de la buena dicha. Ella quiso, con su mudanza, hacer estable mi perdición; yo querré, con procurar perderme, hacer contenta su voluntad, y será ejemplo a los por venir de que a mí solo faltó lo que a todos los desdichados sobra, a los cuales suele ser consuelo la imposibilidad de tenerle, y en mí es causa de mayores sentimientos y males, porque aun pienso que no se han de acabar con la muerte.

Aquí dio fin Cardenio a su larga plática y tan desdichada como amorosa historia. Y, al tiempo que el cura se prevenía para decirle algunas razones de consuelo, le suspendió una voz que llegó a sus oídos, que en lastimados acentos oyeron que decía lo que se dirá en la cuarta parte desta narración, que en este punto dio fin a la tercera el sabio y atentado historiador Cide Hamete Benengeli.

#### *Cuarta parte del ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*

## Capítulo XXVIII

*Que trata de la nueva y agradable aventura que al cura y barbero sucedió en la misma sierra*

FELICÍSIMOS y venturosos fueron los tiempos donde se echó al mundo el audacísimo caballero don Quijote de la Mancha, pues por haber tenido tan honrosa determinación como fue el querer resucitar y volver al mundo la ya perdida y casi muerta orden de la andante caballería, gozamos ahora, en esta nuestra edad, necesitada de alegres entretenimientos, no sólo de la dulzura de su verdadera historia, sino de los cuentos y episodios della, que, en parte, no son menos agradables y artificiosos y verdaderos que la misma historia; la cual, prosiguiendo su rastrillado, torcido y aspado hilo, cuenta que, así como el cura comenzó a prevenirse para consolar a Cardenio, lo impidió una voz que llegó a sus oídos, que, con tristes acentos, decía desta manera:

-¡Ay Dios! ¿Si será posible que he ya hallado lugar que pueda servir de escondida sepultura a la carga pesada deste cuerpo, que tan contra mi voluntad sostengo? Sí será, si la soledad que prometen estas sierras no me miente. ¡Ay, desdichada, y cuán más agradable compañía harán estos riscos y malezas a mi intención, pues me darán lugar para que con quejas comunique mi desgracia al cielo, que no la de ningún hombre humano, pues no hay ninguno en la tierra de quien se pueda esperar consejo en las dudas, alivio en las quejas, ni remedio en los males!

Todas estas razones oyeron y percibieron el cura y los que con él estaban, y por parecerles, como ello era, que allí junto las decían, se levantaron a buscar el dueño, y no hubieron andado veinte pasos, cuando detrás de un peñasco vieron, sentado al pie de un fresno, a un mozo vestido como labrador, al cual, por tener inclinado el rostro, a causa de que se lavaba los pies en el arroyo que por allí corría, no se le pudieron ver por entonces. Y ellos llegaron con tanto silencio que dél no fueron sentidos, ni él estaba a otra cosa atento que a lavarse los pies, que eran tales, que no parecían sino dos pedazos de blanco cristal que entre las otras piedras del arroyo se habían nacido. Suspendióles la blancura y belleza de los pies, pareciéndoles que no estaban hechos a pisar terrones, ni a andar tras el arado y los bueyes, como mostraba el hábito de su dueño; y así, viendo que no habían sido sentidos, el cura, que iba delante, hizo señas a los otros dos que se agazapasen o escondiesen detrás de unos pedazos de peña que allí había, y así lo



hicieron todos, mirando con atención lo que el mozo hacía; el cual traía puesto un capotillo pardo de dos haldas, muy ceñido al cuerpo con una toalla blanca. Traía, ansimesmo, unos calzones y polainas de paño pardo, y en la cabeza una montera parda. Tenía las polainas levantadas hasta la mitad de la pierna, que, sin duda alguna, de blanco alabastro parecía. Acabóse de lavar los hermosos pies, y luego, con un paño de tocar, que sacó debajo de la montera, se los limpió; y, al querer quitársele, alzó el rostro, y tuvieron lugar los que mirándole estaban de ver una hermosura incomparable; tal, que Cardenio dijo al cura, con voz baja:

-Ésta, ya que no es Luscinda, no es persona humana, sino divina.

El mozo se quitó la montera, y, sacudiendo la cabeza a una y a otra parte, se comenzaron a descoger y desparcir unos cabellos, que pudieran los del sol tenerles envidia. Con esto conocieron que el que parecía labrador era mujer, y delicada, y aun la más hermosa que hasta entonces los ojos de los dos habían visto, y aun los de Cardenio, si no hubieran mirado y conocido a Luscinda; que después afirmó que sola la belleza de Luscinda podía contender con aquélla. Los luengos y rubios cabellos no sólo le cubrieron las espaldas, mas toda en torno la escondieron debajo de ellos; que si no eran los pies, ninguna otra cosa de su cuerpo se parecía: tales y tantos eran. En esto, les sirvió de peine unas manos, que si los pies en el agua habían parecido pedazos de cristal, las manos en los cabellos semejabán pedazos de apretada nieve; todo lo cual, en más admiración y en más deseo de saber quién era ponía a los tres que la miraban.

Por esto determinaron de mostrarse, y, al movimiento que hicieron de ponerse en pie, la hermosa moza alzó la cabeza, y, apartándose los cabellos de delante de los ojos con entrambas manos, miró los que el ruido hacían; y apenas los hubo visto, cuando se levantó en pie, y, sin aguardar a calzarse ni a recoger los cabellos, asió con mucha presteza un bulto, como de ropa, que junto a sí tenía, y quiso ponerse en huida, llena de turbación y sobresalto; mas no hubo dado seis pasos cuando, no pudiendo sufrir los delicados pies la aspereza de las piedras, dio consigo en el suelo. Lo cual visto por los tres, salieron a ella, y el cura fue el primero que le dijo:

-Deteneos, señora, quienquiera que seáis, que los que aquí veis sólo tienen intención de serviros. No hay para qué os pongáis en tan impertinente huida, porque ni vuestros pies lo podrán sufrir ni nosotros consentir.

A todo esto, ella no respondía palabra, atónita y confusa. Llegaron, pues, a ella, y, asiéndola por la mano el cura, prosiguió diciendo:

-Lo que vuestro traje, señora, nos niega, vuestros cabellos nos descubren: señales claras que no deben de ser de poco momento las causas que han disfrazado vuestra belleza en hábito tan indigno, y traídola a tanta soledad como es ésta, en la cual ha sido ventura el hallaros, si no para dar remedio a vuestros

males, a lo menos para darles consejo, pues ningún mal puede fatigar tanto, ni llegar tan al extremo de serlo, mientras no acaba la vida, que rehúya de no escuchar siquiera el consejo que con buena intención se le da al que lo padece. Así que, señora mía, o señor mío, o lo que vos quisierdes ser, perded el sobresalto que nuestra vista os ha causado y contadnos vuestra buena o mala suerte; que en nosotros juntos, o en cada uno, hallaréis quien os ayude a sentir vuestras desgracias.

En tanto que el cura decía estas razones, estaba la disfrazada moza como embelesada, mirándolos a todos, sin mover labio ni decir palabra alguna: bien así como rústico aldeano que de improviso se le muestran cosas raras y dél jamás vistas. Mas, volviendo el cura a decirle otras razones al mismo efeto encaminadas, dando ella un profundo suspiro, rompió el silencio y dijo:

-Pues que la soledad destas sierras no ha sido parte para encubrirme, ni la soltura de mis descompuestos cabellos no ha permitido que sea mentirosa mi lengua, en balde sería fingir yo de nuevo ahora lo que, si se me creyese, sería más por cortesía que por otra razón alguna. Presupuesto esto, digo, señores, que os agradezco el ofrecimiento que me habéis hecho, el cual me ha puesto en obligación de satisfaceros en todo lo que me habéis pedido, puesto que temo que la relación que os hiciere de mis desdichas os ha de causar, al par de la compasión, la pesadumbre, porque no habéis de hallar remedio para remediarlas ni consuelo para entretenerlas. Pero, con todo esto, porque no ande vacilando mi honra en vuestras intenciones, habiéndome ya conocido por mujer y viéndome moza, sola y en este traje, cosas todas juntas, y cada una por sí, que pueden echar por tierra cualquier honesto crédito, os habré de decir lo que quisiera callar si pudiera.

Todo esto dijo sin parar la que tan hermosa mujer parecía, con tan suelta lengua, con voz tan suave, que no menos les admiró su discreción que su hermosura. Y, tornándole a hacer nuevos ofrecimientos y nuevos ruegos para que lo prometido cumpliera, ella, sin hacerse más de rogar, calzándose con toda honestidad y recogiendo sus cabellos, se acomodó en el asiento de una piedra, y, puestos los tres alrededor della, haciéndose fuerza por detener algunas lágrimas que a los ojos se le venían, con voz reposada y clara, comenzó la historia de su vida desta manera:

-«En esta Andalucía hay un lugar de quien toma título un duque, que le hace uno de los que llaman grandes en España. Éste tiene dos hijos: el mayor, heredero de su estado, y, al parecer, de sus buenas costumbres; y el menor, no sé yo de qué sea heredero, sino de las traiciones de Vellido y de los embustes de Galalón. Deste señor son vasallos mis padres, humildes en linaje, pero tan ricos que si los bienes de su naturaleza igualaran a los de su fortuna, ni ellos tuvieran

más que desear ni yo temiera verme en la desdicha en que me veo; porque quizá nace mi poca ventura de la que no tuvieron ellos en no haber nacido ilustres. Bien es verdad que no son tan bajos que puedan afrentarse de su estado, ni tan altos que a mí me quiten la imaginación que tengo de que de su humildad viene mi desgracia. Ellos, en fin, son labradores, gente llana, sin mezcla de alguna raza mal sonante, y, como suele decirse, cristianos viejos ranciosos; pero tan ricos que su riqueza y magnífico trato les va poco a poco adquiriendo nombre de hidalgos, y aun de caballeros. Puesto que de la mayor riqueza y nobleza que ellos se preciaban era de tenerme a mí por hija; y, así por no tener otra ni otro que los heredase como por ser padres, y aficionados, yo era una de las más regaladas hijas que padres jamás regalaron. Era el espejo en que se miraban, el báculo de su vejez, y el sujeto a quien encaminaban, midiéndolos con el cielo, todos sus deseos; de los cuales, por ser ellos tan buenos, los míos no salían un punto. Y del mismo modo que yo era señora de sus ánimos, así lo era de su hacienda: por mí se recibían y despedían los criados; la razón y cuenta de lo que se sembraba y cogía pasaba por mi mano; los molinos de aceite, los lagares del vino, el número del ganado mayor y menor, el de las colmenas. Finalmente, de todo aquello que un tan rico labrador como mi padre puede tener y tiene, tenía yo la cuenta, y era la mayordoma y señora, con tanta solicitud mía y con tanto gusto suyo, que buenamente no acertaré a encarecerlo. Los ratos que del día me quedaban, después de haber dado lo que convenía a los mayores, a capataces y a otros jornaleros, los entretenía en ejercicios que son a las doncellas tan lícitos como necesarios, como son los que ofrece la aguja y la almohadilla, y la rueca muchas veces; y si alguna, por recrear el ánimo, estos ejercicios dejaba, me acogía al entretenimiento de leer algún libro devoto, o a tocar una arpa, porque la experiencia me mostraba que la música compone los ánimos descompuestos y alivia los trabajos que nacen del espíritu.

»Ésta, pues, era la vida que yo tenía en casa de mis padres, la cual, si tan particularmente he contado, no ha sido por ostentación ni por dar a entender que soy rica, sino porque se advierta cuán sin culpa me he venido de aquel buen estado que he dicho al infelice en que ahora me hallo. Es, pues, el caso que, pasando mi vida en tantas ocupaciones y en un encerramiento tal, que al de un monesterio pudiera compararse, sin ser vista, a mi parecer, de otra persona alguna que de los criados de casa, porque los días que iba a misa era tan de mañana, y tan acompañada de mi madre y de otras criadas, y yo tan cubierta y recatada, que apenas vían mis ojos más tierra de aquella donde ponía los pies; y, con todo esto, los del amor, o los de la ociosidad, por mejor decir, a quien los de lince no pueden igualarse, me vieron, puestos en la solicitud de don Fernando, que éste es el nombre del hijo menor del duque que os he contado.»

No hubo bien nombrado a don Fernando la que el cuento contaba, cuando a Cardenio se le mudó la color del rostro, y comenzó a trasudar, con tan grande alteración que el cura y el barbero, que miraron en ello, temieron que le venía aquel accidente de locura que habían oído decir que de cuando en cuando le venía. Mas Cardenio no hizo otra cosa que trasudar y estarse quedo, mirando de hito en hito a la labradora, imaginando quién ella era; la cual, sin advertir en los movimientos de Cardenio, prosiguió su historia diciendo:

-«Y no me hubieron bien visto cuando, según él dijo después, quedó tan preso de mis amores cuanto lo dieron bien a entender sus demostraciones. Mas, por acabar presto con el cuento, que no le tiene, de mis desdichas, quiero pasar en silencio las diligencias que don Fernando hizo para declararme su voluntad. Sobornó toda la gente de mi casa, dio y ofreció dádivas y mercedes a mis parientes. Los días eran todos de fiesta y de regocijo en mi calle; las noches no dejaban dormir a nadie las músicas. Los billetes que, sin saber cómo, a mis manos venían, eran infinitos, llenos de enamoradas razones y ofrecimientos, con menos letras que promesas y juramentos. Todo lo cual no sólo no me ablandaba, pero me endurecía de manera como si fuera mi mortal enemigo, y que todas las obras que para reducirme a su voluntad hacía, las hiciera para el efeto contrario; no porque a mí me pareciese mal la gentileza de don Fernando, ni que tuviese a demasía sus solicitudes; porque me daba un no sé qué de contento verme tan querida y estimada de un tan principal caballero, y no me pesaba ver en sus papeles mis alabanzas: que en esto, por feas que seamos las mujeres, me parece a mí que siempre nos da gusto el oír que nos llaman hermosas.

»Pero a todo esto se opone mi honestidad y los consejos continuos que mis padres me daban, que ya muy al descubierto sabían la voluntad de don Fernando, porque ya a él no se le daba nada de que todo el mundo la supiese. Decíanme mis padres que en sola mi virtud y bondad dejaban y depositaban su honra y fama, y que considerase la desigualdad que había entre mí y don Fernando, y que por aquí echaría de ver que sus pensamientos, aunque él dijese otra cosa, mas se encaminaban a su gusto que a mi provecho; y que si yo quisiese poner en alguna manera algún inconveniente para que él se dejase de su injusta pretensión, que ellos me casarían luego con quien yo más gustase: así de los más principales de nuestro lugar como de todos los circunvecinos, pues todo se podía esperar de su mucha hacienda y de mi buena fama. Con estos ciertos prometimientos, y con la verdad que ellos me decían, fortificaba yo mi entereza, y jamás quise responder a don Fernando palabra que le pudiese mostrar, aunque de muy lejos, esperanza de alcanzar su deseo.

»Todos estos recatos míos, que él debía de tener por desdenes, debieron de ser causa de avivar más su lascivo apetito, que este nombre quiero dar a la voluntad

que me mostraba; la cual, si ella fuera como debía, no la supiérades vosotros ahora, porque hubiera faltado la ocasión de decíroslo. Finalmente, don Fernando supo que mis padres andaban por darme estado, por quitalle a él la esperanza de poseerme, o, a lo menos, porque yo tuviese más guardas para guardarme; y esta nueva o sospecha fue causa para que hiciese lo que ahora oiréis. Y fue que una noche, estando yo en mi aposento con sola la compañía de una doncella que me servía, teniendo bien cerradas las puertas, por temor que, por descuido, mi honestidad no se viese en peligro, sin saber ni imaginar cómo, en medio destos recatos y prevenciones, y en la soledad deste silencio y encierro, me le hallé delante, cuya vista me turbó de manera que me quitó la de mis ojos y me enmudeció la lengua; y así, no fui poderosa de dar voces, ni aun él creo que me las dejara dar, porque luego se llegó a mí, y, tomándome entre sus brazos (porque yo, como digo, no tuve fuerzas para defenderme, según estaba turbada), comenzó a decirme tales razones, que no sé cómo es posible que tenga tanta habilidad la mentira que las sepa componer de modo que parezcan tan verdaderas. Hacía el traidor que sus lágrimas acreditasen sus palabras y los suspiros su intención. Yo, pobrecilla, sola entre los míos, mal ejercitada en casos semejantes, comencé, no sé en qué modo, a tener por verdaderas tantas falsedades, pero no de suerte que me moviesen a compasión menos que buena sus lágrimas y suspiros.

»Y así, pasándoseme aquel sobresalto primero, torné algún tanto a cobrar mis perdidos espíritus, y con más ánimo del que pensé que pudiera tener, le dije: “Si como estoy, señor, en tus brazos, estuviera entre los de un león fiero y el librarme dellos se me asegurara con que hiciera, o dijera, cosa que fuera en perjuicio de mi honestidad, así fuera posible hacella o decilla como es posible dejar de haber sido lo que fue. Así que, si tú tienes ceñido mi cuerpo con tus brazos, yo tengo atada mi alma con mis buenos deseos, que son tan diferentes de los tuyos como lo verás si con hacerme fuerza quisieres pasar adelante en ellos. Tu vasalla soy, pero no tu esclava; ni tiene ni debe tener imperio la nobleza de tu sangre para deshonar y tener en poco la humildad de la mía; y en tanto me estimo yo, villana y labradora, como tú, señor y caballero. Conmigo no han de ser de ningún efecto tus fuerzas, ni han de tener valor tus riquezas, ni tus palabras han de poder engañarme, ni tus suspiros y lágrimas enternecerme. Si alguna de todas estas cosas que he dicho viera yo en el que mis padres me dieran por esposo, a su voluntad se ajustara la mía, y mi voluntad de la suya no saliera; de modo que, como quedara con honra, aunque quedara sin gusto, de grado te entregara lo que tú, señor, ahora con tanta fuerza procuras. Todo esto he dicho porque no es pensar que de mí alcance cosa alguna el que no fuere mi legítimo esposo”. “Si no reparas más que en eso, bellísima Dorotea -(que éste es el

nombre desta desdichada), dijo el desleal caballero-, ves: aquí te doy la mano de serlo tuyo, y sean testigos desta verdad los cielos, a quien ninguna cosa se asconde, y esta imagen de Nuestra Señora que aquí tienes”.»

Cuando Cardenio le oyó decir que se llamaba Dorotea, tornó de nuevo a sus sobresaltos y acabó de confirmar por verdadera su primera opinión; pero no quiso interrromper el cuento, por ver en qué venía a parar lo que él ya casi sabía; sólo dijo:

-¿Que Dorotea es tu nombre, señora? Otra he oído yo decir del mismo, que quizá corre parejas con tus desdichas. Pasa adelante, que tiempo vendrá en que te diga cosas que te espanten en el mismo grado que te lastimen.

Reparó Dorotea en las razones de Cardenio y en su estraño y desastrado traje, y rogóle que si alguna cosa de su hacienda sabía, se la dijese luego; porque si algo le había dejado bueno la fortuna, era el ánimo que tenía para sufrir cualquier desastre que le sobreviniese, segura de que, a su parecer, ninguno podía llegar que el que tenía acrecentase un punto.

-No le perdiera yo, señora -respondió Cardenio-, en decirte lo que pienso, si fuera verdad lo que imagino; y hasta ahora no se pierde coyuntura, ni a ti te importa nada el saberlo.

-Sea lo que fuere -respondió Dorotea-, «lo que en mi cuento pasa fue que, tomando don Fernando una imagen que en aquel aposento estaba, la puso por testigo de nuestro desposorio. Con palabras eficacísimas y juramentos extraordinarios, me dio la palabra de ser mi marido, puesto que, antes que acabase de decirlas, le dije que mirase bien lo que hacía y que considerase el enojo que su padre había de recibir de verle casado con una villana vasalla suya; que no le cegase mi hermosura, tal cual era, pues no era bastante para hallar en ella disculpa de su yerro, y que si algún bien me quería hacer, por el amor que me tenía, fuese dejar correr mi suerte a lo igual de lo que mi calidad podía, porque nunca los tan desiguales casamientos se gozan ni duran mucho en aquel gusto con que se comienzan.

»Todas estas razones que aquí he dicho le dije, y otras muchas de que no me acuerdo, pero no fueron parte para que él dejase de seguir su intento, bien ansí como el que no piensa pagar, que, al concertar de la barata, no repara en inconvenientes. Yo, a esta sazón, hice un breve discurso conmigo, y me dije a mí mesma: “Sí, que no seré yo la primera que por vía de matrimonio haya subido de humilde a grande estado, ni será don Fernando el primero a quien hermosura, o ciega afición, que es lo más cierto, haya hecho tomar compañía desigual a su grandeza. Pues si no hago ni mundo ni uso nuevo, bien es acudir a esta honra que la suerte me ofrece, puesto que en éste no dure más la voluntad que me muestra de cuanto dure el cumplimiento de su deseo; que, en fin, para con Dios

seré su esposa. Y si quiero con desdenes despedille, en término le veo que, no usando el que debe, usará el de la fuerza y vendré a quedar deshonorada y sin disculpa de la culpa que me podía dar el que no supiere cuán sin ella he venido a este punto. Porque, ¿qué razones serán bastantes para persuadir a mis padres, y a otros, que este caballero entró en mi aposento sin consentimiento mío?”

»Todas estas demandas y respuestas revolví yo en un instante en la imaginación; y, sobre todo, me comenzaron a hacer fuerza y a inclinarme a lo que fue, sin yo pensarlo, mi perdición: los juramentos de don Fernando, los testigos que ponía, las lágrimas que derramaba, y, finalmente, su disposición y gentileza, que, acompañada con tantas muestras de verdadero amor, pudieran rendir a otro tan libre y recatado corazón como el mío. Llamé a mi criada, para que en la tierra acompañase a los testigos del cielo; tornó don Fernando a reiterar y confirmar sus juramentos; añadió a los primeros nuevos santos por testigos; echóse mil futuras maldiciones, si no cumpliese lo que me prometía; volvió a humedecer sus ojos y a acrecentar sus suspiros; apretóme más entre sus brazos, de los cuales jamás me había dejado; y con esto, y con volverse a salir del aposento mi doncella, yo dejé de serlo y él acabó de ser traidor y fementido.

»El día que sucedió a la noche de mi desgracia se venía aun no tan apriesa como yo pienso que don Fernando deseaba, porque, después de cumplido aquello que el apetito pide, el mayor gusto que puede venir es apartarse de donde le alcanzaron. Digo esto porque don Fernando dio prisa por partirse de mí, y, por industria de mi doncella, que era la misma que allí le había traído, antes que amaneciese se vio en la calle. Y, al despedirse de mí, aunque no con tanto ahínco y vehemencia como cuando vino, me dijo que estuviese segura de su fe y de ser firmes y verdaderos sus juramentos; y, para más confirmación de su palabra, sacó un rico anillo del dedo y lo puso en el mío. En efecto, él se fue y yo quedé ni sé si triste o alegre; esto sé bien decir: que quedé confusa y pensativa, y casi fuera de mí con el nuevo acaecimiento, y no tuve ánimo, o no se me acordó, de reñir a mi doncella por la traición cometida de encerrar a don Fernando en mi mismo aposento, porque aún no me determinaba si era bien o mal el que me había sucedido. Díjele, al partir, a don Fernando que por el mismo camino de aquélla podía verme otras noches, pues ya era suya, hasta que, cuando él quisiese, aquel hecho se publicase. Pero no vino otra alguna, si no fue la siguiente, ni yo pude verle en la calle ni en la iglesia en más de un mes; que en vano me cansé en solicitallo, puesto que supe que estaba en la villa y que los más días iba a caza, ejercicio de que él era muy aficionado.

»Estos días y estas horas bien sé yo que para mí fueron aciagos y menguadas, y bien sé que comencé a dudar en ellos, y aun a descreer de la fe de don Fernando; y sé también que mi doncella oyó entonces las palabras que en

reprehensión de su atrevimiento antes no había oído; y sé que me fue forzoso tener cuenta con mis lágrimas y con la compostura de mi rostro, por no dar ocasión a que mis padres me preguntasen que de qué andaba descontenta y me obligasen a buscar mentiras que decilles. Pero todo esto se acabó en un punto, llegándose uno donde se atropellaron respetos y se acabaron los honrados discursos, y adonde se perdió la paciencia y salieron a plaza mis secretos pensamientos. Y esto fue porque, de allí a pocos días, se dijo en el lugar como en una ciudad allí cerca se había casado don Fernando con una doncella hermosísima en todo extremo, y de muy principales padres, aunque no tan rica que, por la dote, pudiera aspirar a tan noble casamiento. Díjose que se llamaba Luscinda, con otras cosas que en sus desposorios sucedieron dignas de admiración.»

Oyó Cardenio el nombre de Luscinda, y no hizo otra cosa que encoger los hombros, morderse los labios, enarcar las cejas y dejar de allí a poco caer por sus ojos dos fuentes de lágrimas. Mas no por esto dejó Dorotea de seguir su cuento, diciendo:

-«Llegó esta triste nueva a mis oídos, y, en lugar de helárseme el corazón en oílla, fue tanta la cólera y rabia que se encendió en él, que faltó poco para no salirme por las calles dando voces, publicando la alevosía y traición que se me había hecho. Mas templóse esta furia por entonces con pensar de poner aquella misma noche por obra lo que puse: que fue ponerme en este hábito, que me dio uno de los que llaman zagales en casa de los labradores, que era criado de mi padre, al cual descubrí toda mi desventura, y le rogué me acompañase hasta la ciudad donde entendí que mi enemigo estaba. Él, después que hubo reprehendido mi atrevimiento y afeado mi determinación, viéndome resuelta en mi parecer, se ofreció a tenerme compañía, como él dijo, hasta el cabo del mundo. Luego, al momento, encerré en una almohada de lienzo un vestido de mujer, y algunas joyas y dineros, por lo que podía suceder. Y en el silencio de aquella noche, sin dar cuenta a mi traidora doncella, salí de mi casa, acompañada de mi criado y de muchas imaginaciones, y me puse en camino de la ciudad a pie, llevada en vuelo del deseo de llegar, ya que no a estorbar lo que tenía por hecho, a lo menos a decir a don Fernando me dijese con qué alma lo había hecho.

»Llegué en dos días y medio donde quería, y, en entrando por la ciudad, pregunté por la casa de los padres de Luscinda, y al primero a quien hice la pregunta me respondió más de lo que yo quisiera oír. Díjome la casa y todo lo que había sucedido en el desposorio de su hija, cosa tan pública en la ciudad, que se hace en corrillos para contarla por toda ella. Díjome que la noche que don Fernando se desposó con Luscinda, después de haber ella dado el sí de ser su



esposa, le había tomado un recio desmayo, y que, llegando su esposo a desabrocharle el pecho para que le diese el aire, le halló un papel escrito de la misma letra de Luscinda, en que decía y declaraba que ella no podía ser esposa de don Fernando, porque lo era de Cardenio, que, a lo que el hombre me dijo, era un caballero muy principal de la misma ciudad; y que si había dado el sí a don Fernando, fue por no salir de la obediencia de sus padres. En resolución, tales razones dijo que contenía el papel, que daba a entender que ella había tenido intención de matarse en acabándose de desposar, y daba allí las razones por que se había quitado la vida. Todo lo cual dicen que confirmó una daga que le hallaron no sé en qué parte de sus vestidos. Todo lo cual visto por don Fernando, pareciéndole que Luscinda le había burlado y escarnecido y tenido en poco, arremetió a ella, antes que de su desmayo volviese, y con la misma daga que le hallaron la quiso dar de puñaladas; y lo hiciera si sus padres y los que se hallaron presentes no se lo estorbaran. Dijeron más: que luego se ausentó don Fernando, y que Luscinda no había vuelto de su parasismo hasta otro día, que contó a sus padres cómo ella era verdadera esposa de aquel Cardenio que he dicho. Supe más: que el Cardenio, según decían, se halló presente en los desposorios, y que, en viéndola desposada, lo cual él jamás pensó, se salió de la ciudad desesperado, dejándole primero escrita una carta, donde daba a entender el agravio que Luscinda le había hecho, y de cómo él se iba adonde gentes no le viesen.

»Esto todo era público y notorio en toda la ciudad, y todos hablaban dello; y más hablaron cuando supieron que Luscinda había faltado de casa de sus padres y de la ciudad, pues no la hallaron en toda ella, de que perdían el juicio sus padres y no sabían qué medio se tomar para hallarla. Esto que supe puso en bando mis esperanzas, y tuve por mejor no haber hallado a don Fernando, que no hallarle casado, pareciéndome que aún no estaba del todo cerrada la puerta a mi remedio, dándome yo a entender que podría ser que el cielo hubiese puesto aquel impedimento en el segundo matrimonio, por atraerle a conocer lo que al primero debía, y a caer en la cuenta de que era cristiano y que estaba más obligado a su alma que a los respetos humanos. Todas estas cosas revolvía en mi fantasía, y me consolaba sin tener consuelo, fingiendo unas esperanzas largas y desmayadas, para entretener la vida, que ya aborrezco.

»Estando, pues, en la ciudad, sin saber qué hacerme, pues a don Fernando no hallaba, llegó a mis oídos un público pregón, donde se prometía grande hallazgo a quien me hallase, dando las señas de la edad y del mismo traje que traía; y oí decir que se decía que me había sacado de casa de mis padres el mozo que conmigo vino, cosa que me llegó al alma, por ver cuán de caída andaba mi crédito, pues no bastaba perderle con mi venida, sino añadir el con quién, siendo sujeto tan bajo y tan indigno de mis buenos pensamientos. Al punto que oí el

pregón, me salí de la ciudad con mi criado, que ya comenzaba a dar muestras de titubear en la fe que de fidelidad me tenía prometida, y aquella noche nos entramos por lo espeso desta montaña, con el miedo de no ser hallados. Pero, como suele decirse que un mal llama a otro, y que el fin de una desgracia suele ser principio de otra mayor, así me sucedió a mí, porque mi buen criado, hasta entonces fiel y seguro, así como me vio en esta soledad, incitado de su mesma bellaquería antes que de mi hermosura, quiso aprovecharse de la ocasión que, a su parecer, estos yermos le ofrecían; y, con poca vergüenza y menos temor de Dios ni respeto mío, me requirió de amores; y, viendo que yo con feas y justas palabras respondía a las desvergüenzas de sus propósitos, dejó aparte los ruegos, de quien primero pensó aprovecharse, y comenzó a usar de la fuerza. Pero el justo cielo, que pocas o ningunas veces deja de mirar y favorecer a las justas intenciones, favoreció las mías, de manera que con mis pocas fuerzas, y con poco trabajo, di con él por un derrumbadero, donde le dejé, ni sé si muerto o si vivo; y luego, con más ligereza que mi sobresalto y cansancio pedían, me entré por estas montañas, sin llevar otro pensamiento ni otro disignio que esconderme en ellas y huir de mi padre y de aquellos que de su parte me andaban buscando.

»Con este deseo, ha no sé cuántos meses que entré en ellas, donde hallé un ganadero que me llevó por su criado a un lugar que está en las entrañas desta sierra, al cual he servido de zagal todo este tiempo, procurando estar siempre en el campo por encubrir estos cabellos que ahora, tan sin pensarlo, me han descubierto. Pero toda mi industria y toda mi solicitud fue y ha sido de ningún provecho, pues mi amo vino en conocimiento de que yo no era varón, y nació en él el mismo mal pensamiento que en mi criado; y, como no siempre la fortuna con los trabajos da los remedios, no hallé derrumbadero ni barranco de donde despeñar y despenar al amo, como le hallé para el criado; y así, tuve por menor inconveniente dejalle y asconderme de nuevo entre estas asperezas que probar con él mis fuerzas o mis disculpas. Digo, pues, que me torné a emboscar, y a buscar donde sin impedimento alguno pudiese con suspiros y lágrimas rogar al cielo se duela de mi desventura y me dé industria y favor para salir della, o para dejar la vida entre estas soledades, sin que quede memoria desta triste, que tan sin culpa suya habrá dado materia para que de ella se hable y murmure en la suya y en las ajenas tierras.»

## Capítulo XXIX

*Que trata de la discreción de la hermosa Dorotea, con otras cosas de mucho gusto y pasatiempo*

ESTA es, señores, la verdadera historia de mi tragedia: mirad y juzgad ahora si los suspiros que escuchastes, las palabras que oísteis y las lágrimas que de mis ojos salían, tenían ocasión bastante para mostrarse en mayor abundancia; y, considerada la calidad de mi desgracia, veréis que será en vano el consuelo, pues es imposible el remedio della. Sólo os ruego (lo que con facilidad podréis y debéis hacer) que me aconsejéis dónde podré pasar la vida sin que me acabe el temor y sobresalto que tengo de ser hallada de los que me buscan; que, aunque sé que el mucho amor que mis padres me tienen me asegura que seré dellos bien recibida, es tanta la vergüenza que me ocupa sólo el pensar que, no como ellos pensaban, tengo de parecer a su presencia, que tengo por mejor desterrarme para siempre de ser vista que no verles el rostro, con pensamiento que ellos miran el mío ajeno de la honestidad que de mí se debían de tener prometida.

Calló en diciendo esto, y el rostro se le cubrió de un color que mostró bien claro el sentimiento y vergüenza del alma. En las suyas sintieron los que escuchado la habían tanta lástima como admiración de su desgracia; y, aunque luego quisiera el cura consolarla y aconsejarla, tomó primero la mano Cardenio, diciendo:

-En fin, señora, que tú eres la hermosa Dorotea, la hija única del rico Clenardo.

Admirada quedó Dorotea cuando oyó el nombre de su padre, y de ver cuán de poco era el que le nombraba, porque ya se ha dicho de la mala manera que Cardenio estaba vestido; y así, le dijo:

-Y ¿quién sois vos, hermano, que así sabéis el nombre de mi padre? Porque yo, hasta ahora, si mal no me acuerdo, en todo el discurso del cuento de mi desdicha no le he nombrado.

-Soy -respondió Cardenio-aquel sin ventura que, según vos, señora, habéis dicho, Luscinda dijo que era su esposa. Soy el desdichado Cardenio, a quien el mal término de aquel que a vos os ha puesto en el que estáis me ha traído a que me veáis cual me veis: roto, desnudo, falto de todo humano consuelo y, lo que es peor de todo, falto de juicio, pues no le tengo sino cuando al cielo se le antoja dármele por algún breve espacio. Yo, Teodora, soy el que me hallé presente a las

sinrazones de don Fernando, y el que aguardó oír el sí que de ser su esposa pronunció Luscinda. Yo soy el que no tuvo ánimo para ver en qué paraba su desmayo, ni lo que resultaba del papel que le fue hallado en el pecho, porque no tuvo el alma sufrimiento para ver tantas desventuras juntas; y así, dejé la casa y la paciencia, y una carta que dejé a un huésped mío, a quien rogué que en manos de Luscinda la pusiese, y víneme a estas soledades, con intención de acabar en ellas la vida, que desde aquel punto aborrecí como mortal enemiga mía. Mas no ha querido la suerte quitármela, contentándose con quitarme el juicio, quizá por guardarme para la buena ventura que he tenido en hallaros; pues, siendo verdad, como creo que lo es, lo que aquí habéis contado, aún podría ser que a entrambos nos tuviese el cielo guardado mejor suceso en nuestros desastres que nosotros pensamos. Porque, presupuesto que Luscinda no puede casarse con don Fernando, por ser mía, ni don Fernando con ella, por ser vuestro, y haberlo ella tan manifiestamente declarado, bien podemos esperar que el cielo nos restituya lo que es nuestro, pues está todavía en ser, y no se ha enajenado ni deshecho. Y, pues este consuelo tenemos, nacido no de muy remota esperanza, ni fundado en desvariadas imaginaciones, suplícoos, señora, que toméis otra resolución en vuestros honrados pensamientos, pues yo la pienso tomar en los míos, acomodándoos a esperar mejor fortuna; que yo os juro, por la fe de caballero y de cristiano, de no desampararos hasta veros en poder de don Fernando, y que, cuando con razones no le pudiere atraer a que conozca lo que os debe, de usar entonces la libertad que me concede el ser caballero, y poder con justo título desafialle, en razón de la sinrazón que os hace, sin acordarme de mis agravios, cuya venganza dejaré al cielo por acudir en la tierra a los vuestros.

Con lo que Cardenio dijo se acabó de admirar Dorotea, y, por no saber qué gracias volver a tan grandes ofrecimientos, quiso tomarle los pies para besárselos; mas no lo consintió Cardenio, y el licenciado respondió por entrambos, y aprobó el buen discurso de Cardenio, y, sobre todo, les rogó, aconsejó y persuadió que se fuesen con él a su aldea, donde se podrían reparar de las cosas que les faltaban, y que allí se daría orden cómo buscar a don Fernando, o cómo llevar a Dorotea a sus padres, o hacer lo que más les pareciese conveniente. Cardenio y Dorotea se lo agradecieron, y acetaron la merced que se les ofrecía. El barbero, que a todo había estado suspenso y callado, hizo también su buena plática y se ofreció con no menos voluntad que el cura a todo aquello que fuese bueno para servirles.

Contó asimesmo con brevedad la causa que allí los había traído, con la estrañeza de la locura de don Quijote, y cómo aguardaban a su escudero, que había ido a buscallo. Vínosele a la memoria a Cardenio, como por sueños, la pendencia que con don Quijote había tenido y contóla a los demás, mas no supo

decir por qué causa fue su quisti6n.

En esto, oyeron voces, y conocieron que el que las daba era Sancho Panza, que, por no haberlos hallado en el lugar donde los dej6, los llamaba a voces. Sali6ronle al encuentro, y, pregunt6ndole por don Quijote, les dijo c6mo le haba hallado desnudo en camisa, flaco, amarillo y muerto de hambre, y suspirando por su se1ora Dulcinea; y que, puesto que le haba dicho que ella le mandaba que saliese de aquel lugar y se fuese al del Toboso, donde le quedaba esperando, haba respondido que estaba determinado de no parecer ante su fermosura fasta que hobiese fecho faza1as que le ficiesen digno de su gracia. Y que si aquello pasaba adelante, corr6a peligro de no venir a ser emperador, como estaba obligado, ni aun arzobispo, que era lo menos que pod6a ser. Por eso, que mirasen lo que se haba de hacer para sacarle de all6.

El licenciado le respondi6 que no tuviese pena, que ellos le sacar6an de all6, mal que le pesase. Cont6 luego a Cardenio y a Dorotea lo que ten6an pensado para remedio de don Quijote, a lo menos para llevarle a su casa. A lo cual dijo Dorotea que ella har6a la doncella menesterosa mejor que el barbero, y m6s, que ten6a all6 vestidos con que hacerlo al natural, y que la dejasen el cargo de saber representar todo aquello que fuese menester para llevar adelante su intento, porque ella haba le6do muchos libros de caballer6as y sab6a bien el estilo que ten6an las doncellas cuitadas cuando ped6an sus dones a los andantes caballeros.

-Pues no es menester m6s -dijo el cura-sino que luego se ponga por obra; que, sin duda, la buena suerte se muestra en favor nuestro, pues, tan sin pensarlo, a vosotros, se1ores, se os ha comenzado a abrir puerta para vuestro remedio y a nosotros se nos ha facilitado la que hab6amos menester.

Sac6 luego Dorotea de su almohada una saya entera de cierta telilla rica y una mantellina de otra vistosa tela verde, y de una cajita un collar y otras joyas, con que en un instante se adorn6 de manera que una rica y gran se1ora parec6a. Todo aquello, y m6s, dijo que haba sacado de su casa para lo que se ofreciese, y que hasta entonces no se le haba ofrecido ocasi6n de habello menester. A todos content6 en extremo su mucha gracia, donaire y hermosura, y confirmaron a don Fernando por de poco conocimiento, pues tanta belleza desechaba.

Pero el que m6s se admir6 fue Sancho Panza, por parecerle -como era as6 verdad-que en todos los d6as de su vida haba visto tan hermosa criatura; y as6, pregunt6 al cura con grande ah6nco le dijese qui6n era aquella tan fermosa se1ora, y qu6 era lo que buscaba por aquellos andurriales.

-Esta hermosa se1ora -respondi6 el cura-, Sancho hermano, es, como quien no dice nada, es la heredera por l6nea recta de var6n del gran reino de Micomic6n, la cual viene en busca de vuestro amo a pedirle un don, el cual es que le desfaga un tuerto o agravio que un mal gigante le tiene fecho; y, a la fama que de buen

caballero vuestro amo tiene por todo lo descubierto, de Guinea ha venido a buscarle esta princesa.

-Dichosa buscada y dichoso hallazgo -dijo a esta sazón Sancho Panza-, y más si mi amo es tan venturoso que desfaga ese agravio y enderece ese tuerto, matando a ese hideputa dese gigante que vuestra merced dice; que sí matará si él le encuentra, si ya no fuese fantasma, que contra las fantasmas no tiene mi señor poder alguno. Pero una cosa quiero suplicar a vuestra merced, entre otras, señor licenciado, y es que, porque a mi amo no le tome gana de ser arzobispo, que es lo que yo temo, que vuestra merced le aconseje que se case luego con esta princesa, y así quedará imposibilitado de recibir órdenes arzobispales y vendrá con facilidad a su imperio y yo al fin de mis deseos; que yo he mirado bien en ello y hallo por mi cuenta que no me está bien que mi amo sea arzobispo, porque yo soy inútil para la Iglesia, pues soy casado, y andarme ahora a traer dispensaciones para poder tener renta por la Iglesia, teniendo, como tengo, mujer y hijos, sería nunca acabar. Así que, señor, todo el toque está en que mi amo se case luego con esta señora, que hasta ahora no sé su gracia, y así, no la llamo por su nombre.

-Llámase -respondió el cura-la princesa Micomicona, porque, llamándose su reino Micomicón, claro está que ella se ha de llamar así.

-No hay duda en eso -respondió Sancho-, que yo he visto a muchos tomar el apellido y alcurnia del lugar donde nacieron, llamándose Pedro de Alcalá, Juan de Úbeda y Diego de Valladolid; y esto mismo se debe de usar allá en Guinea: tomar las reinas los nombres de sus reinos.

-Así debe de ser -dijo el cura-; y en lo del casarse vuestro amo, yo haré en ello todos mis poderíos.

Con lo que quedó tan contento Sancho cuanto el cura admirado de su simplicidad, y de ver cuán encajados tenía en la fantasía los mismos disparates que su amo, pues sin alguna duda se daba a entender que había de venir a ser emperador.

Ya, en esto, se había puesto Dorotea sobre la mula del cura y el barbero se había acomodado al rostro la barba de la cola de buey, y dijeron a Sancho que los guiase adonde don Quijote estaba; al cual advirtieron que no dijese que conocía al licenciado ni al barbero, porque en no conocerlos consistía todo el toque de venir a ser emperador su amo; puesto que ni el cura ni Cardenio quisieron ir con ellos, porque no se le acordase a don Quijote la pendencia que con Cardenio había tenido, y el cura porque no era menester por entonces su presencia. Y así, los dejaron ir delante, y ellos los fueron siguiendo a pie, poco a poco. No dejó de avisar el cura lo que había de hacer Dorotea; a lo que ella dijo que descuidasen, que todo se haría, sin faltar punto, como lo pedían y pintaban

los libros de caballerías.

Tres cuartos de legua habrían andado, cuando descubrieron a don Quijote entre unas intrincadas peñas, ya vestido, aunque no armado; y, así como Dorotea le vio y fue informada de Sancho que aquél era don Quijote, dio del azote a su palafrén, siguiéndole el bien barbado barbero. Y, en llegando junto a él, el escudero se arrojó de la mula y fue a tomar en los brazos a Dorotea, la cual, apeándose con grande desenvoltura, se fue a hincar de rodillas ante las de don Quijote; y, aunque él pugnaba por levantarla, ella, sin levantarse, le fabló en esta guisa:

-De aquí no me levantaré, ¡oh valeroso y esforzado caballero!, fasta que la vuestra bondad y cortesía me otorgue un don, el cual redundará en honra y prez de vuestra persona, y en pro de la más desconsolada y agraviada doncella que el sol ha visto. Y si es que el valor de vuestro fuerte brazo corresponde a la voz de vuestra inmortal fama, obligado estáis a favorecer a la sin ventura que de tan lueñas tierras viene, al olor de vuestro famoso nombre, buscándoos para remedio de sus desdichas.

-No os responderé palabra, hermosa señora -respondió don Quijote-, ni oiré más cosa de vuestra hacienda, fasta que os levantéis de tierra.

-No me levantaré, señor -respondió la afligida doncella-, si primero, por la vuestra cortesía, no me es otorgado el don que pido.

-Yo vos le otorgo y concedo -respondió don Quijote-, como no se haya de cumplir en daño o mengua de mi rey, de mi patria y de aquella que de mi corazón y libertad tiene la llave.

-No será en daño ni en mengua de los que decís, mi buen señor -replicó la dolorosa doncella.

Y, estando en esto, se llegó Sancho Panza al oído de su señor y muy pasito le dijo:

-Bien puede vuestra merced, señor, concederle el don que pide, que no es cosa de nada: sólo es matar a un gigantazo, y esta que lo pide es la alta princesa Micomicona, reina del gran reino Micomicón de Etiopía.

-Sea quien fuere -respondió don Quijote-, que yo haré lo que soy obligado y lo que me dicta mi conciencia, conforme a lo que profesado tengo.

Y, volviéndose a la doncella, dijo:

-La vuestra gran hermosura se levante, que yo le otorgo el don que pedirme quisiere.

-Pues el que pido es -dijo la doncella- que la vuestra magnánima persona se venga luego conmigo donde yo le llevare, y me prometa que no se ha de entremeter en otra aventura ni demanda alguna hasta darme venganza de un traidor que, contra todo derecho divino y humano, me tiene usurpado mi reino.

-Digo que así lo otorgo -respondió don Quijote-, y así podéis, señora, desde hoy más, desechar la malenconía que os fatiga y hacer que cobre nuevos bríos y fuerzas vuestra desmayada esperanza; que, con el ayuda de Dios y la de mi brazo, vos os veréis presto restituida en vuestro reino y sentada en la silla de vuestro antiguo y grande estado, a pesar y a despecho de los follones que contradecirlo quisieren. Y manos a labor, que en la tardanza dicen que suele estar el peligro.

La menesterosa doncella pugnó, con mucha porfía, por besarle las manos, mas don Quijote, que en todo era comedido y cortés caballero, jamás lo consintió; antes, la hizo levantar y la abrazó con mucha cortesía y comedimiento, y mandó a Sancho que requiriese las cinchas a Rocinante y le armase luego al punto. Sancho descolgó las armas, que, como trofeo, de un árbol estaban pendientes, y, requiriendo las cinchas, en un punto armó a su señor; el cual, viéndose armado, dijo:

-Vamos de aquí, en el nombre de Dios, a favorecer esta gran señora.

Estábase el barbero aún de rodillas, teniendo gran cuenta de disimular la risa y de que no se le cayese la barba, con cuya caída quizá quedaran todos sin conseguir su buena intención; y, viendo que ya el don estaba concedido y con la diligencia que don Quijote se alistaba para ir a cumplirle, se levantó y tomó de la otra mano a su señora, y entre los dos la subieron en la mula. Luego subió don Quijote sobre Rocinante, y el barbero se acomodó en su cabalgadura, quedándose Sancho a pie, donde de nuevo se le renovó la pérdida del rucio, con la falta que entonces le hacía; mas todo lo llevaba con gusto, por parecerle que ya su señor estaba puesto en camino, y muy a pique de ser emperador; porque sin duda alguna pensaba que se había de casar con aquella princesa, y ser, por lo menos, rey de Micomicón. Sólo le daba pesadumbre el pensar que aquel reino era en tierra de negros, y que la gente que por sus vasallos le diesen habían de ser todos negros; a lo cual hizo luego en su imaginación un buen remedio, y díjose a sí mismo:

-¿Qué se me da a mí que mis vasallos sean negros? ¿Habrás más que cargar con ellos y traerlos a España, donde los podré vender, y adonde me los pagarán de contado, de cuyo dinero podré comprar algún título o algún oficio con que vivir descansado todos los días de mi vida? ¡No, sino dormíos, y no tengáis ingenio ni habilidad para disponer de las cosas y para vender treinta o diez mil vasallos en dácame esas pajas! Par Dios que los he de volar, chico con grande, o como pudiere, y que, por negros que sean, los he de volver blancos o amarillos. ¡Llegaos, que me mamo el dedo!

Con esto, andaba tan solícito y tan contento que se le olvidaba la pesadumbre de caminar a pie.



Todo esto miraban de entre unas breñas Cardenio y el cura, y no sabían qué hacerse para juntarse con ellos; pero el cura, que era gran tracista, imaginó luego lo que harían para conseguir lo que deseaban; y fue que con unas tijeras que traía en un estuche quitó con mucha presteza la barba a Cardenio, y vistióle un capotillo pardo que él traía y diole un herreruelo negro, y él se quedó en calzas y en jubón; y quedó tan otro de lo que antes parecía Cardenio, que él mismo no se conociera, aunque a un espejo se mirara. Hecho esto, puesto ya que los otros habían pasado adelante en tanto que ellos se disfrazaron, con facilidad salieron al camino real antes que ellos, porque las malezas y malos pasos de aquellos lugares no concedían que anduviesen tanto los de a caballo como los de a pie. En efeto, ellos se pusieron en el llano, a la salida de la sierra, y, así como salió della don Quijote y sus camaradas, el cura se le puso a mirar muy de espacio, dando señales de que le iba reconociendo; y, al cabo de haberle una buena pieza estado mirando, se fue a él abiertos los brazos y diciendo a voces:

-Para bien sea hallado el espejo de la caballería, el mi buen compatriote don Quijote de la Mancha, la flor y la nata de la gentileza, el amparo y remedio de los menesterosos, la quintaesencia de los caballeros andantes.

Y, diciendo esto, tenía abrazado por la rodilla de la pierna izquierda a don Quijote; el cual, espantado de lo que veía y oía decir y hacer aquel hombre, se le puso a mirar con atención, y, al fin, le conoció y quedó como espantado de verle, y hizo grande fuerza por apearse; mas el cura no lo consintió, por lo cual don Quijote decía:

-Déjeme vuestra merced, señor licenciado, que no es razón que yo esté a caballo, y una tan reverenda persona como vuestra merced esté a pie.

-Eso no consentiré yo en ningún modo -dijo el cura-: estése la vuestra grandeza a caballo, pues estando a caballo acaba las mayores fazañas y aventuras que en nuestra edad se han visto; que a mí, aunque indigno sacerdote, bastaráme subir en las ancas de una destas mulas destes señores que con vuestra merced caminan, si no lo han por enojo. Y aun haré cuenta que voy caballero sobre el caballo Pegaso, o sobre la cebra o alfana en que cabalgaba aquel famoso moro Muzaraque, que aún hasta ahora yace encantado en la gran cuesta Zulema, que dista poco de la gran Compluto.

-Aún no caía yo en tanto, mi señor licenciado -respondió don Quijote-; y yo sé que mi señora la princesa será servida, por mi amor, de mandar a su escudero dé a vuestra merced la silla de su mula, que él podrá acomodarse en las ancas, si es que ella las sufre.

-Sí sufre, a lo que yo creo -respondió la princesa-; y también sé que no será menester mandárselo al señor mi escudero, que él es tan cortés y tan cortesano que no consentirá que una persona eclesiástica vaya a pie, pudiendo ir a caballo.

-Así es -respondió el barbero.

Y, apeándose en un punto, convidó al cura con la silla, y él la tomó sin hacerse mucho de rogar. Y fue el mal que al subir a las ancas el barbero, la mula, que, en efeto, era de alquiler, que para decir que era mala esto basta, alzó un poco los cuartos traseros y dio dos coces en el aire, que, a darlas en el pecho de maese Nicolás, o en la cabeza, él diera al diablo la venida por don Quijote. Con todo eso, le sobresaltaron de manera que cayó en el suelo, con tan poco cuidado de las barbas, que se le cayeron en el suelo; y, como se vio sin ellas, no tuvo otro remedio sino acudir a cubrirse el rostro con ambas manos y a quejarse que le habían derribado las muelas. Don Quijote, como vio todo aquel mazo de barbas, sin quijadas y sin sangre, lejos del rostro del escudero caído, dijo:

-¡Vive Dios, que es gran milagro éste! ¡Las barbas le ha derribado y arrancado del rostro, como si las quitaran aposta!

El cura, que vio el peligro que corría su invención de ser descubierta, acudió luego a las barbas y fuese con ellas adonde yacía maese Nicolás, dando aún voces todavía, y de un golpe, llegándole la cabeza a su pecho, se las puso, murmurando sobre él unas palabras, que dijo que era cierto ensalmo apropiado para pegar barbas, como lo verían; y, cuando se las tuvo puestas, se apartó, y quedó el escudero tan bien barbado y tan sano como de antes, de que se admiró don Quijote sobremanera, y rogó al cura que cuando tuviese lugar le enseñase aquel ensalmo; que él entendía que su virtud a más que pegar barbas se debía de estender, pues estaba claro que de donde las barbas se quitasen había de quedar la carne llagada y maltrecha, y que, pues todo lo sanaba, a más que barbas aprovechaba.

-Así es -dijo el cura, y prometió de enseñársele en la primera ocasión.

Concertáronse que por entonces subiese el cura, y a trechos se fuesen los tres mudando, hasta que llegasen a la venta, que estaría hasta dos leguas de allí. Puestos los tres a caballo, es a saber, don Quijote, la princesa y el cura, y los tres a pie, Cardenio, el barbero y Sancho Panza, don Quijote dijo a la doncella:

-Vuestra grandeza, señora mía, guíe por donde más gusto le diere.

Y, antes que ella respondiese, dijo el licenciado:

-¿Hacia qué reino quiere guiar la vuestra señoría? ¿Es, por ventura, hacia el de Micomicón?; que sí debe de ser, o yo sé poco de reinos.

Ella, que estaba bien en todo, entendió que había de responder que sí; y así, dijo:

-Sí, señor, hacia ese reino es mi camino.

-Si así es -dijo el cura-, por la mitad de mi pueblo hemos de pasar, y de allí tomará vuestra merced la derrota de Cartagena, donde se podrá embarcar con la buena ventura; y si hay viento próspero, mar tranquilo y sin borrasca, en poco

menos de nueve años se podrá estar a vista de la gran laguna Meona, digo, Meótides, que está poco más de cien jornadas más acá del reino de vuestra grandeza.

-Vuestra merced está engañado, señor mío -dijo ella-, porque no ha dos años que yo partí dél, y en verdad que nunca tuve buen tiempo, y, con todo eso, he llegado a ver lo que tanto deseaba, que es al señor don Quijote de la Mancha, cuyas nuevas llegaron a mis oídos así como puse los pies en España, y ellas me movieron a buscarle, para encomendarme en su cortesía y fiar mi justicia del valor de su invencible brazo.

-No más: cesen mis alabanzas -dijo a esta sazón don Quijote-, porque soy enemigo de todo género de adulación; y, aunque ésta no lo sea, todavía ofenden mis castas orejas semejantes pláticas. Lo que yo sé decir, señora mía, que ora tenga valor o no, el que tuviere o no tuviere se ha de emplear en vuestro servicio hasta perder la vida; y así, dejando esto para su tiempo, ruego al señor licenciado me diga qué es la causa que le ha traído por estas partes, tan solo, y tan sin criados, y tan a la ligera, que me pone espanto.

-A eso yo responderé con brevedad -respondió el cura-, porque sabrá vuestra merced, señor don Quijote, que yo y maese Nicolás, nuestro amigo y nuestro barbero, íbamos a Sevilla a cobrar cierto dinero que un pariente mío que ha muchos años que pasó a Indias me había enviado, y no tan pocos que no pasan de sesenta mil pesos ensayados, que es otro que tal; y, pasando ayer por estos lugares, nos salieron al encuentro cuatro salteadores y nos quitaron hasta las barbas; y de modo nos las quitaron, que le convino al barbero ponérselas postizas; y aun a este mancebo que aquí va -señalando a Cardenio-le pusieron como de nuevo. Y es lo bueno que es pública fama por todos estos contornos que los que nos saltearon son de unos galeotes que dicen que libertó, casi en este mismo sitio, un hombre tan valiente que, a pesar del comisario y de las guardas, los soltó a todos; y, sin duda alguna, él debía de estar fuera de juicio, o debe de ser tan grande bellaco como ellos, o algún hombre sin alma y sin conciencia, pues quiso soltar al lobo entre las ovejas, a la raposa entre las gallinas, a la mosca entre la miel; quiso defraudar la justicia, ir contra su rey y señor natural, pues fue contra sus justos mandamientos. Quiso, digo, quitar a las galeras sus pies, poner en alboroto a la Santa Hermandad, que había muchos años que reposaba; quiso, finalmente, hacer un hecho por donde se pierda su alma y no se gane su cuerpo.

Habíales contado Sancho al cura y al barbero la aventura de los galeotes, que acabó su amo con tanta gloria suya, y por esto cargaba la mano el cura refiriéndola, por ver lo que hacía o decía don Quijote; al cual se le mudaba la color a cada palabra, y no osaba decir que él había sido el libertador de aquella

buena gente.

-Éstos, pues -dijo el cura-, fueron los que nos robaron; que Dios, por su misericordia, se lo perdone al que no los dejó llevar al debido suplicio.

## Capítulo XXX

*Que trata del gracioso artificio y orden que se tuvo en sacar a nuestro enamorado caballero de la asperísima penitencia en que se había puesto*

NO HUBO bien acabado el cura, cuando Sancho dijo:

-Pues, mía fe, señor licenciado, el que hizo esa fazaña fue mi amo, y no porque yo no le dije antes y le avisé que mirase lo que hacía, y que era pecado darles libertad, porque todos iban allí por grandísimos bellacos.

-¡Majadero! -dijo a esta sazón don Quijote-, a los caballeros andantes no les toca ni atañe averiguar si los afligidos, encadenados y opresos que encuentran por los caminos van de aquella manera, o están en aquella angustia, por sus culpas o por sus gracias; sólo le toca ayudarles como a menesterosos, poniendo los ojos en sus penas y no en sus bellaquerías. Yo topé un rosario y sarta de gente mohína y desdichada, y hice con ellos lo que mi religión me pide, y lo demás allá se avenga; y a quien mal le ha parecido, salvo la santa dignidad del señor licenciado y su honrada persona, digo que sabe poco de achaque de caballería, y que miente como un hideputa y mal nacido; y esto le haré conocer con mi espada, donde más largamente se contiene.

Y esto dijo afirmándose en los estribos y calándose el morrión; porque la bacía de barbero, que a su cuenta era el yelmo de Mambrino, llevaba colgado del arzón delantero, hasta adobarla del mal tratamiento que la hicieron los galeotes.

Dorotea, que era discreta y de gran donaire, como quien ya sabía el menguado humor de don Quijote y que todos hacían burla dél, sino Sancho Panza, no quiso ser para menos, y, viéndole tan enojado, le dijo:

-Señor caballero, miémbresele a la vuestra merced el don que me tiene prometido, y que, conforme a él, no puede entremeterse en otra aventura, por urgente que sea; sosiegue vuestra merced el pecho, que si el señor licenciado supiera que por ese invicto brazo habían sido librados los galeotes, él se diera tres puntos en la boca, y aun se mordiera tres veces la lengua, antes que haber dicho palabra que en despecho de vuestra merced redundara.

-Eso juro yo bien -dijo el cura-, y aun me hubiera quitado un bigote.

-Yo callaré, señora mía -dijo don Quijote-, y reprimiré la justa cólera que ya en mi pecho se había levantado, y iré quieto y pacífico hasta tanto que os cumpla el don prometido; pero, en pago deste buen deseo, os suplico me digáis, si no se os hace de mal, cuál es la vuestra cuita y cuántas, quiénes y cuáles son las

personas de quien os tengo de dar debida, satisfecha y entera venganza.

-Eso haré yo de gana -respondió Dorotea-, si es que no os enfadan oír lástimas y desgracias.

-No enfadaré, señora mía -respondió don Quijote.

A lo que respondió Dorotea:

-Pues así es, esténme vuestras mercedes atentos.

No hubo ella dicho esto, cuando Cardenio y el barbero se le pusieron al lado, deseosos de ver cómo fingía su historia la discreta Dorotea; y lo mismo hizo Sancho, que tan engañado iba con ella como su amo. Y ella, después de haberse puesto bien en la silla y prevenídose con toser y hacer otros ademanes, con mucho donaire, comenzó a decir desta manera:

-«Primeramente, quiero que vuestras mercedes sepan, señores míos, que a mí me llaman...»

Y detúvose aquí un poco, porque se le olvidó el nombre que el cura le había puesto; pero él acudió al remedio, porque entendió en lo que reparaba, y dijo:

-No es maravilla, señora mía, que la vuestra grandeza se turbe y empache contando sus desventuras, que ellas suelen ser tales, que muchas veces quitan la memoria a los que maltratan, de tal manera que aun de sus mismos nombres no se les acuerda, como han hecho con vuestra gran señoría, que se ha olvidado que se llama la princesa Micomicona, legítima heredera del gran reino Micomicón; y con este apuntamiento puede la vuestra grandeza reducir ahora fácilmente a su lastimada memoria todo aquello que contar quisiere.

-Así es la verdad -respondió la doncella-, y desde aquí adelante creo que no será menester apuntarme nada, que yo saldré a buen puerto con mi verdadera historia. «La cual es que el rey mi padre, que se llamaba Tinacrio el Sabidor, fue muy docto en esto que llaman el arte mágica, y alcanzó por su ciencia que mi madre, que se llamaba la reina Jaramilla, había de morir primero que él, y que de allí a poco tiempo él también había de pasar desta vida y yo había de quedar huérfana de padre y madre. Pero decía él que no le fatigaba tanto esto cuanto le ponía en confusión saber, por cosa muy cierta, que un descomunal gigante, señor de una grande ínsula, que casi alinda con nuestro reino, llamado Pandafilando de la Fosca Vista (porque es cosa averiguada que, aunque tiene los ojos en su lugar y derechos, siempre mira al revés, como si fuese bizco, y esto lo hace él de maligno y por poner miedo y espanto a los que mira); digo que supo que este gigante, en sabiendo mi orfandad, había de pasar con gran poderío sobre mi reino y me lo había de quitar todo, sin dejarme una pequeña aldea donde me recogiese; pero que podía escusar toda esta ruina y desgracia si yo me quisiese casar con él; mas, a lo que él entendía, jamás pensaba que me vendría a mí en voluntad de hacer tan desigual casamiento; y dijo en esto la pura verdad, porque

jamás me ha pasado por el pensamiento casarme con aquel gigante, pero ni con otro alguno, por grande y desaforado que fuese. Dijo también mi padre que, después que él fuese muerto y viese yo que Pandafilando comenzaba a pasar sobre mi reino, que no aguardase a ponerme en defensa, porque sería destruirme, sino que libremente le dejase desembarazado el reino, si quería escusar la muerte y total destrucción de mis buenos y leales vasallos, porque no había de ser posible defenderme de la endiablada fuerza del gigante; sino que luego, con algunos de los míos, me pusiese en camino de las Españas, donde hallaría el remedio de mis males hallando a un caballero andante, cuya fama en este tiempo se extendería por todo este reino, el cual se había de llamar, si mal no me acuerdo, don Azote o don Gigote.»

-Don Quijote diría, señora -dijo a esta sazón Sancho Panza-, o, por otro nombre, el Caballero de la Triste Figura.

-Así es la verdad -dijo Dorotea-. «Dijo más: que había de ser alto de cuerpo, seco de rostro, y que en el lado derecho, debajo del hombro izquierdo, o por allí junto, había de tener un lunar pardo con ciertos cabellos a manera de cerdas.»

En oyendo esto don Quijote, dijo a su escudero:

-Ten aquí, Sancho, hijo, ayúdame a desnudar, que quiero ver si soy el caballero que aquel sabio rey dejó profetizado.

-Pues, ¿para qué quiere vuestra merced desnudarse? -dijo Dorotea.

-Para ver si tengo ese lunar que vuestro padre dijo -respondió don Quijote.

-No hay para qué desnudarse -dijo Sancho-, que yo sé que tiene vuestra merced un lunar desas señas en la mitad del espinazo, que es señal de ser hombre fuerte.

-Eso basta -dijo Dorotea-, porque con los amigos no se ha de mirar en pocas cosas, y que esté en el hombro o que esté en el espinazo, importa poco; basta que haya lunar, y esté donde estuviere, pues todo es una misma carne; y, sin duda, acertó mi buen padre en todo, y yo he acertado en encomendarme al señor don Quijote, que él es por quien mi padre dijo, pues las señales del rostro vienen con las de la buena fama que este caballero tiene, no sólo en España, pero en toda la Mancha, pues apenas me hube desembarcado en Osuna, cuando oí decir tantas hazañas tuyas, que luego me dio el alma que era el mismo que venía a buscar.

-Pues, ¿cómo se desembarcó vuestra merced en Osuna, señora mía -preguntó don Quijote-, si no es puerto de mar?

Mas, antes que Dorotea respondiese, tomó el cura la mano y dijo:

-Debe de querer decir la señora princesa que, después que desembarcó en Málaga, la primera parte donde oyó nuevas de vuestra merced fue en Osuna.

-Eso quise decir -dijo Dorotea.

-Y esto lleva camino -dijo el cura-, y prosiga vuestra majestad adelante.

-No hay que proseguir -respondió Dorotea-, sino que, finalmente, mi suerte ha sido tan buena en hallar al señor don Quijote, que ya me cuento y tengo por reina y señora de todo mi reino, pues él, por su cortesía y magnificencia, me ha prometido el don de irse conmigo dondequiera que yo le llevare, que no será a otra parte que a ponerle delante de Pandafilando de la Fosca Vista, para que le mate y me restituya lo que tan contra razón me tiene usurpado: que todo esto ha de suceder a pedir de boca, pues así lo dejó profetizado Tinacrio el Sabidor, mi buen padre; el cual también dejó dicho y escrito en letras caldeas, o griegas, que yo no las sé leer, que si este caballero de la profecía, después de haber degollado al gigante, quisiese casarse conmigo, que yo me otorgase luego sin réplica alguna por su legítima esposa, y le diese la posesión de mi reino, junto con la de mi persona.

-¿Qué te parece, Sancho amigo? -dijo a este punto don Quijote-. ¿No oyes lo que pasa? ¿No te lo dije yo? Mira si tenemos ya reino que mandar y reina con quien casar.

-¡Eso juro yo -dijo Sancho-para el puto que no se casare en abriendo el gaznatico al señor Pandahilado! Pues, ¡monta que es mala la reina! ¡Así se me vuelvan las pulgas de la cama!

Y, diciendo esto, dio dos zapatetas en el aire, con muestras de grandísimo contento, y luego fue a tomar las riendas de la mula de Dorotea, y, haciéndola detener, se hincó de rodillas ante ella, suplicándole le diese las manos para besárselas, en señal que la recibía por su reina y señora. ¿Quién no había de reír de los circustantes, viendo la locura del amo y la simplicidad del criado? En efecto, Dorotea se las dio, y le prometió de hacerle gran señor en su reino, cuando el cielo le hiciese tanto bien que se lo dejase cobrar y gozar. Agradecióselo Sancho con tales palabras que renovó la risa en todos.

-Ésta, señores -prosiguió Dorotea-, es mi historia: sólo resta por deciros que de cuanta gente de acompañamiento saqué de mi reino no me ha quedado sino sólo este buen barbado escudero, porque todos se anegaron en una gran borrasca que tuvimos a vista del puerto, y él y yo salimos en dos tablas a tierra, como por milagro; y así, es todo milagro y misterio el discurso de mi vida, como lo habréis notado. Y si en alguna cosa he andado demasiada, o no tan acertada como debiera, echad la culpa a lo que el señor licenciado dijo al principio de mi cuento: que los trabajos continuos y extraordinarios quitan la memoria al que los padece.

-Ésa no me quitarán a mí, ¡oh alta y valerosa señora! -dijo don Quijote-, cuantos yo pasare en serviros, por grandes y no vistos que sean; y así, de nuevo confirmo el don que os he prometido, y juro de ir con vos al cabo del mundo, hasta verme con el fiero enemigo vuestro, a quien pienso, con el ayuda de Dios y



de mi brazo, tajar la cabeza soberbia con los filos desta... no quiero decir buena espada, merced a Ginés de Pasamonte, que me llevó la mía.

Esto dijo entre dientes, y prosiguió diciendo:

-Y después de habérsela tajado y puéstoos en pacífica posesión de vuestro estado, quedará a vuestra voluntad hacer de vuestra persona lo que más en talante os viniere; porque, mientras que yo tuviere ocupada la memoria y cautiva la voluntad, perdido el entendimiento, a aquella..., y no digo más, no es posible que yo arrostre, ni por pienso, el casarme, aunque fuese con el ave fénix.

Parecióle tan mal a Sancho lo que últimamente su amo dijo acerca de no querer casarse, que, con grande enojo, alzando la voz, dijo:

-Voto a mí, y juro a mí, que no tiene vuestra merced, señor don Quijote, cabal juicio. Pues, ¿cómo es posible que pone vuestra merced en duda el casarse con tan alta princesa como aquésta? ¿Piensa que le ha de ofrecer la fortuna, tras cada cantillo, semejante ventura como la que ahora se le ofrece? ¿Es, por dicha, más hermosa mi señora Dulcinea? No, por cierto, ni aun con la mitad, y aun estoy por decir que no llega a su zapato de la que está delante. Así, noramala alcanzaré yo el condado que espero, si vuestra merced se anda a pedir cotufas en el golfo. Cásese, cásele luego, encomiéndole yo a Satanás, y tome ese reino que se le viene a las manos de vobis, vobis, y, en siendo rey, hágame marqués o adelantado, y luego, siquiera se lo lleve el diablo todo.

Don Quijote, que tales blasfemias oyó decir contra su señora Dulcinea, no lo pudo sufrir, y, alzando el lanzón, sin hablalle palabra a Sancho y sin decirle esta boca es mía, le dio tales dos palos que dio con él en tierra; y si no fuera porque Dorotea le dio voces que no le diera más, sin duda le quitara allí la vida.

-¿Pensáis -le dijo a cabo de rato-, villano ruin, que ha de haber lugar siempre para ponerme la mano en la horcajadura, y que todo ha de ser errar vos y perdonaros yo? Pues no lo penséis, bellaco descomulgado, que sin duda lo estás, pues has puesto lengua en la sin par Dulcinea. ¿Y no sabéis vos, gañán, faquín, belitre, que si no fuese por el valor que ella infunde en mi brazo, que no le tendría yo para matar una pulga? Decid, socarrón de lengua viperina, ¿y quién pensáis que ha ganado este reino y cortado la cabeza a este gigante, y héchoos a vos marqués, que todo esto doy ya por hecho y por cosa pasada en cosa juzgada, si no es el valor de Dulcinea, tomando a mi brazo por instrumento de sus hazañas? Ella pelea en mí, y vence en mí, y yo vivo y respiro en ella, y tengo vida y ser. ¡Oh hideputa bellaco, y cómo sois desagradecido: que os veis levantado del polvo de la tierra a ser señor de título, y correspondéis a tan buena obra con decir mal de quien os la hizo!

No estaba tan maltrecho Sancho que no oyese todo cuanto su amo le decía, y, levantándose con un poco de presteza, se fue a poner detrás del palafrén de

Dorotea, y desde allí dijo a su amo:

-Dígame, señor: si vuestra merced tiene determinado de no casarse con esta gran princesa, claro está que no será el reino suyo; y, no siéndolo, ¿qué mercedes me puede hacer? Esto es de lo que yo me quejo; cásese vuestra merced una por una con esta reina, ahora que la tenemos aquí como llovida del cielo, y después puede volverse con mi señora Dulcinea; que reyes debe de haber habido en el mundo que hayan sido amancebados. En lo de la hermosura no me entremeto; que, en verdad, si va a decirla, que entrambas me parecen bien, puesto que yo nunca he visto a la señora Dulcinea.

-¿Cómo que no la has visto, traidor blasfemo? -dijo don Quijote-. Pues, ¿no acabas de traerme ahora un recado de su parte?

-Digo que no la he visto tan despacio -dijo Sancho-que pueda haber notado particularmente su hermosura y sus buenas partes punto por punto; pero así, a bulto, me parece bien.

-Ahora te disculpo -dijo don Quijote-, y perdóname el enojo que te he dado, que los primeros movimientos no son en manos de los hombres.

-Ya yo lo veo -respondió Sancho-; y así, en mí la gana de hablar siempre es primero movimiento, y no puedo dejar de decir, por una vez siquiera, lo que me viene a la lengua.

-Con todo eso -dijo don Quijote-, mira, Sancho, lo que hablas, porque tantas veces va el cantarillo a la fuenteâ, y no te digo más.

-Ahora bien -respondió Sancho-, Dios está en el cielo, que ve las trampas, y será juez de quién hace más mal: yo en no hablar bien, o vuestra merced en obrallo.

-No haya más -dijo Dorotea-: corred, Sancho, y besad la mano a vuestro señor, y pedilde perdón, y de aquí adelante andad más atentado en vuestras alabanzas y vituperios, y no digáis mal de aquea señora Tobosa, a quien yo no conozco si no es para servilla, y tened confianza en Dios, que no os ha de faltar un estado donde viváis como un príncipe.

Fue Sancho cabizbajo y pidió la mano a su señor, y él se la dio con reposado continente; y, después que se la hubo besado, le echó la bendición, y dijo a Sancho que se adelantasen un poco, que tenía que preguntalle y que departir con él cosas de mucha importancia. Hízolo así Sancho y apartáronse los dos algo adelante, y díjole don Quijote:

-Después que veniste, no he tenido lugar ni espacio para preguntarte muchas cosas de particularidad acerca de la embajada que llevaste y de la respuesta que trujiste; y ahora, pues la fortuna nos ha concedido tiempo y lugar, no me niegues tú la ventura que puedes darme con tan buenas nuevas.

-Pregunte vuestra merced lo que quisiere -respondió Sancho-, que a todo daré

tan buena salida como tuve la entrada. Pero suplico a vuestra merced, señor mío, que no sea de aquí adelante tan vengativo.

-¿Por qué lo dices, Sancho? -dijo don Quijote.

-Dígoles -respondió- porque estos palos de agora más fueron por la pendencia que entre los dos trabó el diablo la otra noche, que por lo que dije contra mi señora Dulcinea, a quien amo y reverencio como a una reliquia, aunque en ella no lo haya, sólo por ser cosa de vuestra merced.

-No tornes a esas pláticas, Sancho, por tu vida -dijo don Quijote-, que me dan pesadumbre; ya te perdoné entonces, y bien sabes tú que suele decirse: a pecado nuevo, penitencia nueva. 2

En tanto que los dos iban en estas pláticas, dijo el cura a Dorotea que había andado muy discreta, así en el cuento como en la brevedad dél, y en la similitud que tuvo con los de los libros de caballerías. Ella dijo que muchos ratos se había entretenido en leellos, pero que no sabía ella dónde eran las provincias ni puertos de mar, y que así, había dicho a tiento que se había desembarcado en Osuna.

-Yo lo entendí así -dijo el cura-, y por eso acudí luego a decir lo que dije, con que se acomodó todo. Pero, ¿no es cosa estraña ver con cuánta facilidad cree este desventurado hidalgo todas estas invenciones y mentiras, sólo porque llevan el estilo y modo de las necedades de sus libros?

-Sí es -dijo Cardenio-, y tan rara y nunca vista, que yo no sé si queriendo inventarla y fabricarla mentirosamente, hubiera tan agudo ingenio que pudiera dar en ella.

-Pues otra cosa hay en ello -dijo el cura-: que fuera de las simplicidades que este buen hidalgo dice tocantes a su locura, si le tratan de otras cosas, discurre con bonísimas razones y muestra tener un entendimiento claro y apacible en todo. De manera que, como no le toquen en sus caballerías, no habrá nadie que le juzgue sino por de muy buen entendimiento.

En tanto que ellos iban en esta conversación, prosiguió don Quijote con la suya y dijo a Sancho:

-Echemos, Panza amigo, pelillos a la mar en esto de nuestras pendencias, y dime ahora, sin tener cuenta con enojo ni rencor alguno: ¿Dónde, cómo y cuándo hallaste a Dulcinea? ¿Qué hacía? ¿Qué le dijiste? ¿Qué te respondió? ¿Qué rostro hizo cuando leía mi carta? ¿Quién te la trasladó? Y todo aquello que vieres que en este caso es digno de saberse, de preguntarse y satisfacerse, sin que añadidas o mientas por darme gusto, ni menos te acortes por no quitármele.

-Señor -respondió Sancho-, si va a decir la verdad, la carta no me la trasladó nadie, porque yo no llevé carta alguna.

-Así es como tú dices -dijo don Quijote-, porque el librito de memoria donde yo la escribí le hallé en mi poder a cabo de dos días de tu partida, lo cual me

causó grandísima pena, por no saber lo que habías tú de hacer cuando te vieses sin carta, y creí siempre que te volvieras desde el lugar donde la echaras menos.

-Así fuera -respondió Sancho-, si no la hubiera yo tomado en la memoria cuando vuestra merced me la leyó, de manera que se la dije a un sacristán, que me la trasladó del entendimiento, tan punto por punto, que dijo que en todos los días de su vida, aunque había leído muchas cartas de descomunión, no había visto ni leído tan linda carta como aquélla.

-Y ¿tiénesla todavía en la memoria, Sancho? -dijo don Quijote.

-No, señor -respondió Sancho-, porque después que la di, como vi que no había de ser de más provecho, di en olvidalla. Y si algo se me acuerda, es aquello del *sobajada*, digo, del *soberana señora*, y lo último: *Vuestro hasta la muerte, el Caballero de la Triste Figura*. Y, en medio destas dos cosas, le puse más de trecientas almas, y vidas, y ojos míos.

## Capítulo XXXI

*De los sabrosos razonamientos que pasaron entre don Quijote y Sancho Panza, su escudero, con otros sucesos*

-TODO eso no me descontenta; prosigue adelante -dijo don Quijote-. Llegaste, ¿y qué hacía aquella reina de la hermosura? A buen seguro que la hallaste ensartando perlas, o bordando alguna empresa con oro de cañutillo para este su cautivo caballero.

-No la hallé -respondió Sancho-sino ahechando dos hanegas de trigo en un corral de su casa.

-Pues haz cuenta -dijo don Quijote-que los granos de aquel trigo eran granos de perlas, tocados de sus manos. Y si miraste, amigo, el trigo ¿era candeal, o trechel?

-No era sino rubión -respondió Sancho.

-Pues yo te aseguro -dijo don Quijote-que, ahechado por sus manos, hizo pan candeal, sin duda alguna. Pero pasa adelante: cuando le diste mi carta, ¿besóla? ¿Púsosela sobre la cabeza? ¿Hizo alguna ceremonia digna de tal carta, o qué hizo?

-Cuando yo se la iba a dar -respondió Sancho-, ella estaba en la fuga del meneo de una buena parte de trigo que tenía en la criba, y díjome: «Poned, amigo, esa carta sobre aquel costal, que no la puedo leer hasta que acabe de acribar todo lo que aquí está».

-¡Discreta señora! -dijo don Quijote-. Eso debió de ser por leerla despacio y recrearse con ella. Adelante, Sancho: y, en tanto que estaba en su menester, ¿qué coloquios pasó contigo? ¿Qué te preguntó de mí? Y tú, ¿qué le respondiste? Acaba, cuéntamelo todo; no se te quede en el tintero una mínima.

-Ella no me preguntó nada -dijo Sancho-, mas yo le dije de la manera que vuestra merced, por su servicio, quedaba haciendo penitencia, desnudo de la cintura arriba, metido entre estas sierras como si fuera salvaje, durmiendo en el suelo, sin comer pan a manteles ni sin peinarse la barba, llorando y maldiciendo su fortuna.

-En decir que maldecía mi fortuna dijiste mal -dijo don Quijote-, porque antes la bendigo y bendeciré todos los días de mi vida, por haberme hecho digno de merecer amar tan alta señora como Dulcinea del Toboso.

-Tan alta es -respondió Sancho-, que a buena fe que me lleva a mí más de un

coto.

-Pues, ¿cómo, Sancho? -dijo don Quijote-. ¿Haste medido tú con ella?

-Medíme en esta manera -respondió Sancho-: que, llegándole a ayudar a poner un costal de trigo sobre un jumento, llegamos tan juntos que eché de ver que me llevaba más de un gran palmo.

-Pues ¡es verdad -replicó don Quijote-que no acompaña esa grandeza y la adorna con mil millones y gracias del alma! Pero no me negarás, Sancho, una cosa: cuando llegaste junto a ella, ¿no sentiste un olor sabeo, una fragancia aromática, y un no sé qué de bueno, que yo no acierto a darte nombre? Digo, ¿un tufo o tufo como si estuvieras en la tienda de algún curioso guantero?

-Lo que sé decir -dijo Sancho-es que sentí un olorcillo algo hombruno; y debía de ser que ella, con el mucho ejercicio, estaba sudada y algo correosa.

-No sería eso -respondió don Quijote-, sino que tú debías de estar romadizado, o te debiste de oler a ti mismo; porque yo sé bien a lo que huele aquella rosa entre espinas, aquel lirio del campo, aquel ámbar desleído.

-Todo puede ser -respondió Sancho-, que muchas veces sale de mí aquel olor que entonces me pareció que salía de su merced de la señora Dulcinea; pero no hay de qué maravillarse, que un diablo parece a otro.

-Y bien -prosiguió don Quijote-, he aquí que acabó de limpiar su trigo y de enviallo al molino. ¿Qué hizo cuando leyó la carta?

-La carta -dijo Sancho-no la leyó, porque dijo que no sabía leer ni escribir; antes, la rasgó y la hizo menudas piezas, diciendo que no la quería dar a leer a nadie, porque no se supiesen en el lugar sus secretos, y que bastaba lo que yo le había dicho de palabra acerca del amor que vuestra merced le tenía y de la penitencia extraordinaria que por su causa quedaba haciendo. Y, finalmente, me dijo que dijese a vuestra merced que le besaba las manos, y que allí quedaba con más deseo de verle que de escribirle; y que, así, le suplicaba y mandaba que, vista la presente, saliese de aquellos matorrales y se dejase de hacer disparates, y se pusiese luego luego en camino del Toboso, si otra cosa de más importancia no le sucediese, porque tenía gran deseo de ver a vuestra merced. Rióse mucho cuando le dije como se llamaba vuestra merced *el Caballero de la Triste Figura*. Preguntéle si había ido allá el vizcaíno de marras; díjome que sí, y que era un hombre muy de bien. También le pregunté por los galeotes, mas díjome que no había visto hasta entonces alguno.

-Todo va bien hasta agora -dijo don Quijote-. Pero dime: ¿qué joya fue la que te dio, al despedirte, por las nuevas que de mí le llevaste? Porque es usada y antigua costumbre entre los caballeros y damas andantes dar a los escuderos, doncellas o enanos que les llevan nuevas, de sus damas a ellos, a ellas de sus andantes, alguna rica joya en albricias, en agradecimiento de su recado.

-Bien puede eso ser así, y yo la tengo por buena usanza; pero eso debió de ser en los tiempos pasados, que ahora sólo se debe de acostumbrar a dar un pedazo de pan y queso, que esto fue lo que me dio mi señora Dulcinea, por las bardas de un corral, cuando della me despedí; y aun, por más señas, era el queso ovejuno.

-Es liberal en extremo -dijo don Quijote-, y si no te dio joya de oro, sin duda debió de ser porque no la tendría allí a la mano para dártela; pero buenas son mangas después de Pascua: yo la veré, y se satisfará todo. ¿Sabes de qué estoy maravillado, Sancho? De que me parece que fuiste y veniste por los aires, pues poco más de tres días has tardado en ir y venir desde aquí al Toboso, habiendo de aquí allá más de treinta leguas; por lo cual me doy a entender que aquel sabio nigromante que tiene cuenta con mis cosas y es mi amigo (porque por fuerza le hay, y le ha de haber, so pena que yo no sería buen caballero andante); digo que este tal te debió de ayudar a caminar, sin que tú lo sintieses; que hay sabio éstos que coge a un caballero andante durmiendo en su cama, y, sin saber cómo o en qué manera, amanece otro día más de mil leguas de donde anocheció. Y si no fuese por esto, no se podrían socorrer en sus peligros los caballeros andantes unos a otros, como se socorren a cada paso. Que acaece estar uno peleando en las sierras de Armenia con algún endriago, o con algún fiero vestiglo, o con otro caballero, donde lleva lo peor de la batalla y está ya a punto de muerte, y cuando no os me cato, asoma por acullá, encima de una nube, o sobre un carro de fuego, otro caballero amigo suyo, que poco antes se hallaba en Ingalaterra, que le favorece y libra de la muerte, y a la noche se halla en su posada, cenando muy a su sabor; y suele haber de la una a la otra parte dos o tres mil leguas. Y todo esto se hace por industria y sabiduría destos sabios encantadores que tienen cuidado destos valerosos caballeros. Así que, amigo Sancho, no se me hace dificultoso creer que en tan breve tiempo hayas ido y venido desde este lugar al del Toboso, pues, como tengo dicho, algún sabio amigo te debió de llevar en volandillas, sin que tú lo sintieses.

-Así sería -dijo Sancho-; porque a buena fe que andaba Rocinante como si fuera asno de gitano con azogue en los oídos.

-Y ¡cómo si llevaba azogue! -dijo don Quijote-, y aun una legión de demonios, que es gente que camina y hace caminar, sin cansarse, todo aquello que se les antoja. Pero, dejando esto aparte, ¿qué te parece a ti que debo yo de hacer ahora cerca de lo que mi señora me manda que la vaya a ver?; que, aunque yo veo que estoy obligado a cumplir su mandamiento, véome también imposibilitado del don que he prometido a la princesa que con nosotros viene, y fuérame la ley de caballería a cumplir mi palabra antes que mi gusto. Por una parte, me acosa y fatiga el deseo de ver a mi señora; por otra, me incita y llama la prometida fe y la gloria que he de alcanzar en esta empresa. Pero lo que

pienso hacer será caminar apriesa y llegar presto donde está este gigante, y, en llegando, le cortaré la cabeza, y pondré a la princesa pacíficamente en su estado, y al punto daré la vuelta a ver a la luz que mis sentidos alumbra, a la cual daré tales disculpas que ella venga a tener por buena mi tardanza, pues verá que todo redunda en aumento de su gloria y fama, pues cuanta yo he alcanzado, alcanzo y alcanzaré por las armas en esta vida, toda me viene del favor que ella me da y de ser yo suyo.

-¡Ay -dijo Sancho-, y cómo está vuestra merced lastimado de esos cascos! Pues dígame, señor: ¿piensa vuestra merced caminar este camino en balde, y dejar pasar y perder un tan rico y tan principal casamiento como éste, donde le dan en dote un reino, que a buena verdad que he oído decir que tiene más de veinte mil leguas de contorno, y que es abundantísimo de todas las cosas que son necesarias para el sustento de la vida humana, y que es mayor que Portugal y que Castilla juntos? Calle, por amor de Dios, y tenga vergüenza de lo que ha dicho, y tome mi consejo, y perdóneme, y cásese luego en el primer lugar que haya cura; y si no, ahí está nuestro licenciado, que lo hará de perlas. Y advierta que ya tengo edad para dar consejos, y que este que le doy le viene de molde, y que más vale pájaro en mano que buitre volando, porque quien bien tiene y mal escoge, por bien que se enoja no se venga.

-Mira, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-: si el consejo que me das de que me case es porque sea luego rey, en matando al gigante, y tenga cómodo para hacerte mercedes y darte lo prometido, hágote saber que sin casarme podré cumplir tu deseo muy fácilmente, porque yo sacaré de adahala, antes de entrar en la batalla, que, saliendo vencedor della, ya que no me case, me han de dar una parte del reino, para que la pueda dar a quien yo quisiere; y, en dándomela, ¿a quién quieres tú que la dé sino a ti?

-Eso está claro -respondió Sancho-, pero mire vuestra merced que la escoja hacia la marina, porque, si no me contentare la vivienda, pueda embarcar mis negros vasallos y hacer dellos lo que ya he dicho. Y vuestra merced no se cure de ir por agora a ver a mi señora Dulcinea, sino váyase a matar al gigante, y concluyamos este negocio; que por Dios que se me asienta que ha de ser de mucha honra y de mucho provecho.

-Dígame, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, que estás en lo cierto, y que habré de tomar tu consejo en cuanto el ir antes con la princesa que a ver a Dulcinea. Y avísote que no digas nada a nadie, ni a los que con nosotros vienen, de lo que aquí hemos departido y tratado; que, pues Dulcinea es tan recatada que no quiere que se sepan sus pensamientos, no será bien que yo, ni otro por mí, los descubra.

-Pues si eso es así -dijo Sancho-, ¿cómo hace vuestra merced que todos los que vence por su brazo se vayan a presentar ante mi señora Dulcinea, siendo esto



firma de su nombre que la quiere bien y que es su enamorado? Y, siendo forzoso que los que fueren se han de ir a hincar de finojos ante su presencia, y decir que van de parte de vuestra merced a dalle la obediencia, ¿cómo se pueden encubrir los pensamientos de entrambos?

-¡Oh, qué necio y qué simple que eres! -dijo don Quijote-. ¿Tú no ves, Sancho, que eso todo redundaba en su mayor ensalzamiento? Porque has de saber que en este nuestro estilo de caballería es gran honra tener una dama muchos caballeros andantes que la sirvan, sin que se estiendan más sus pensamientos que a servilla, por sólo ser ella quien es, sin esperar otro premio de sus muchos y buenos deseos, sino que ella se contente de acetarlos por sus caballeros.

-Con esa manera de amor -dijo Sancho-he oído yo predicar que se ha de amar a Nuestro Señor, por sí solo, sin que nos mueva esperanza de gloria o temor de pena, aunque yo le querría amar y servir por lo que pudiese.

-¡Válate el diablo por villano -dijo don Quijote-, y qué de discreciones dices a las veces! No parece sino que has estudiado.

-Pues a fe mía que no sé leer -respondió Sancho.

En esto, les dio voces maese Nicolás que esperasen un poco, que querían detenerse a beber en una fontecilla que allí estaba. Detúvose don Quijote, con no poco gusto de Sancho, que ya estaba cansado de mentir tanto y temía no le cogiese su amo a palabras; porque, puesto que él sabía que Dulcinea era una labradora del Toboso, no la había visto en toda su vida.

Habíase en este tiempo vestido Cardenio los vestidos que Dorotea traía cuando la hallaron, que, aunque no eran muy buenos, hacían mucha ventaja a los que dejaba. Apeáronse junto a la fuente, y con lo que el cura se acomodó en la venta satisficieron, aunque poco, la mucha hambre que todos traían.

Estando en esto, acertó a pasar por allí un muchacho que iba de camino, el cual, poniéndose a mirar con mucha atención a los que en la fuente estaban, de allí a poco arremetió a don Quijote, y, abrazándole por las piernas, comenzó a llorar muy de propósito, diciendo:

-¡Ay, señor mío! ¿No me conoce vuestra merced? Pues míreme bien, que yo soy aquel mozo Andrés que quitó vuestra merced de la encina donde estaba atado.

Reconocióle don Quijote, y, asiéndole por la mano, se volvió a los que allí estaban y dijo:

-Porque vean vuestras mercedes cuán de importancia es haber caballeros andantes en el mundo, que desfagan los tuertos y agravios que en él se hacen por los insolentes y malos hombres que en él viven, sepan vuestras mercedes que los días pasados, pasando yo por un bosque, oí unos gritos y unas voces muy lastimosas, como de persona afligida y menesterosa; acudí luego, llevado de mi

obligación, hacia la parte donde me pareció que las lamentables voces sonaban, y hallé atado a una encina a este muchacho que ahora está delante (de lo que me huelgo en el alma, porque será testigo que no me dejará mentir en nada); digo que estaba atado a la encina, desnudo del medio cuerpo arriba, y estábale abriendo a azotes con las riendas de una yegua un villano, que después supe que era amo suyo; y, así como yo le vi, le pregunté la causa de tan atroz vapulamiento; respondió el zafio que le azotaba porque era su criado, y que ciertos descuidos que tenía nacían más de ladrón que de simple; a lo cual este niño dijo: «Señor, no me azota sino porque le pido mi salario». El amo replicó no sé qué arengas y disculpas, las cuales, aunque de mí fueron oídas, no fueron admitidas. En resolución, yo le hice desatar, y tomé juramento al villano de que le llevaría consigo y le pagaría un real sobre otro, y aun sahumados. ¿No es verdad todo esto, hijo Andrés? ¿No notaste con cuánto imperio se lo mandé, y con cuánta humildad prometió de hacer todo cuanto yo le impuse, y notifiqué y quise? Responde; no te turbes ni dudes en nada: di lo que pasó a estos señores, porque se vea y considere ser del provecho que digo haber caballeros andantes por los caminos.

-Todo lo que vuestra merced ha dicho es mucha verdad -respondió el muchacho-, pero el fin del negocio sucedió muy al revés de lo que vuestra merced se imagina.

-¿Cómo al revés? -replicó don Quijote-; luego, ¿no te pagó el villano?

-No sólo no me pagó -respondió el muchacho-, pero, así como vuestra merced traspuso del bosque y quedamos solos, me volvió a atar a la misma encina, y me dio de nuevo tantos azotes que quedé hecho un San Bartolomé desollado; y, a cada azote que me daba, me decía un donaire y chufeta acerca de hacer burla de vuestra merced, que, a no sentir yo tanto dolor, me riera de lo que decía. En efeto: él me paró tal, que hasta ahora he estado curándome en un hospital del mal que el mal villano entonces me hizo. De todo lo cual tiene vuestra merced la culpa, porque si se fuera su camino adelante y no viniera donde no le llamaban, ni se entremetiera en negocios ajenos, mi amo se contentara con darme una o dos docenas de azotes, y luego me soltara y pagara cuanto me debía. Mas, como vuestra merced le deshonoró tan sin propósito y le dijo tantas villanías, encendiósele la cólera, y, como no la pudo vengar en vuestra merced, cuando se vio solo descargó sobre mí el nublado, de modo que me parece que no seré más hombre en toda mi vida.

-El daño estuvo -dijo don Quijote-en irme yo de allí; que no me había de ir hasta dejarte pagado, porque bien debía yo de saber, por luengas experiencias, que no hay villano que guarde palabra que tiene, si él vee que no le está bien guardalla. Pero ya te acuerdas, Andrés, que yo juré que si no te pagaba, que

había de ir a buscarle, y que le había de hallar, aunque se escondiese en el vientre de la ballena.

-Así es la verdad -dijo Andrés-, pero no aprovechó nada.

-Ahora verás si aprovecha -dijo don Quijote.

Y, diciendo esto, se levantó muy apriesa y mandó a Sancho que enfrenase a Rocinante, que estaba paciando en tanto que ellos comían.

Preguntóle Dorotea qué era lo que hacer quería. Él le respondió que quería ir a buscar al villano y castigalle de tan mal término, y hacer pagado a Andrés hasta el último maravedí, a despecho y pesar de cuantos villanos hubiese en el mundo. A lo que ella respondió que advirtiese que no podía, conforme al don prometido, entremeterse en ninguna empresa hasta acabar la suya; y que, pues esto sabía él mejor que otro alguno, que sosegase el pecho hasta la vuelta de su reino.

-Así es verdad -respondió don Quijote-, y es forzoso que Andrés tenga paciencia hasta la vuelta, como vos, señora, decís; que yo le torno a jurar y a prometer de nuevo de no parar hasta hacerle vengado y pagado.

-No me creo desos juramentos -dijo Andrés-; más quisiera tener agora con qué llegar a Sevilla que todas las venganzas del mundo: déme, si tiene ahí, algo que coma y lleve, y quédese con Dios su merced y todos los caballeros andantes; que tan bien andantes sean ellos para consigo como lo han sido para conmigo.

Sacó de su repuesto Sancho un pedazo de pan y otro de queso, y, dándoselo al mozo, le dijo:

-Tomá, hermano Andrés, que a todos nos alcanza parte de vuestra desgracia.

-Pues, ¿qué parte os alcanza a vos? -preguntó Andrés.

-Esta parte de queso y pan que os doy -respondió Sancho-, que Dios sabe si me ha de hacer falta o no; porque os hago saber, amigo, que los escuderos de los caballeros andantes estamos sujetos a mucha hambre y a mala ventura, y aun a otras cosas que se sienten mejor que se dicen.

Andrés asió de su pan y queso, y, viendo que nadie le daba otra cosa, abajó su cabeza y tomó el camino en las manos, como suele decirse. Bien es verdad que, al partirse, dijo a don Quijote:

-Por amor de Dios, señor caballero andante, que si otra vez me encontrare, aunque vea que me hacen pedazos, no me socorra ni ayude, sino déjeme con mi desgracia; que no será tanta, que no sea mayor la que me vendrá de su ayuda de vuestra merced, a quien Dios maldiga, y a todos cuantos caballeros andantes han nacido en el mundo.

Íbase a levantar don Quijote para castigalle, mas él se puso a correr de modo que ninguno se atrevió a seguille. Quedó corridísimo don Quijote del cuento de Andrés, y fue menester que los demás tuviesen mucha cuenta con no reírse, por no acaballe de correr del todo.

## Capítulo XXXII

*Que trata de lo que sucedió en la venta a toda la cuadrilla de don Quijote*

ACABÓSE la buena comida, ensillaron luego, y, sin que les sucediese cosa digna de contar, llegaron otro día a la venta, espanto y asombro de Sancho Panza; y, aunque él quisiera no entrar en ella, no lo pudo huir. La ventera, ventero, su hija y Maritornes, que vieron venir a don Quijote y a Sancho, les salieron a recibir con muestras de mucha alegría, y él las recibió con grave continente y aplauso, y díjoles que le aderezasen otro mejor lecho que la vez pasada; a lo cual le respondió la huéspeda que como la pagase mejor que la otra vez, que ella se la daría de príncipes. Don Quijote dijo que sí haría, y así, le aderezaron uno razonable en el mismo caramanchón de marras, y él se acostó luego, porque venía muy quebrantado y falto de juicio.

No se hubo bien encerrado, cuando la huéspeda arremetió al barbero, y, asiéndole de la barba, dijo:

-Para mi santiguada, que no se ha aún de aprovechar más de mi rabo para su barba, y que me ha de volver mi cola; que anda lo de mi marido por esos suelos, que es vergüenza; digo, el peine, que solía yo colgar de mi buena cola.

No se la quería dar el barbero, aunque ella más tiraba, hasta que el licenciado le dijo que se la diese, que ya no era menester más usar de aquella industria, sino que se descubriese y mostrase en su misma forma, y dijese a don Quijote que cuando le despojaron los ladrones galeotes se habían venido a aquella venta huyendo; y que si preguntase por el escudero de la princesa, le dirían que ella le había enviado adelante a dar aviso a los de su reino como ella iba y llevaba consigo el libertador de todos. Con esto, dio de buena gana la cola a la ventera el barbero, y asimismo le volvieron todos los adherentes que había prestado para la libertad de don Quijote. Espantáronse todos los de la venta de la hermosura de Dorotea, y aun del buen talle del zagal Cardenio. Hizo el cura que les aderezasen de comer de lo que en la venta hubiese, y el huésped, con esperanza de mejor paga, con diligencia les aderezó una razonable comida; y a todo esto dormía don Quijote, y fueron de parecer de no despertalle, porque más provecho le haría por entonces el dormir que el comer.

Trataron sobre comida, estando delante el ventero, su mujer, su hija, Maritornes, todos los pasajeros, de la estraña locura de don Quijote y del modo que le habían hallado. La huéspeda les contó lo que con él y con el arriero les

había acontecido, y, mirando si acaso estaba allí Sancho, como no le viese, contó todo lo de su manteamiento, de que no poco gusto recibieron. Y, como el cura dijese que los libros de caballerías que don Quijote había leído le habían vuelto el juicio, dijo el ventero:

-No sé yo cómo puede ser eso; que en verdad que, a lo que yo entiendo, no hay mejor letrado en el mundo, y que tengo ahí dos o tres dellos, con otros papeles, que verdaderamente me han dado la vida, no sólo a mí, sino a otros muchos. Porque, cuando es tiempo de la siega, se recogen aquí, las fiestas, muchos segadores, y siempre hay algunos que saben leer, el cual coge uno destos libros en las manos, y rodeámonos dél más de treinta, y estámosle escuchando con tanto gusto que nos quita mil canas; a lo menos, de mí sé decir que cuando oyo decir aquellos furibundos y terribles golpes que los caballeros pegan, que me toma gana de hacer otro tanto, y que querría estar oyéndolos noches y días.

-Y yo ni más ni menos -dijo la ventera-, porque nunca tengo buen rato en mi casa sino aquel que vos estáis escuchando leer: que estáis tan embobado, que no os acordáis de reñir por entonces.

-Así es la verdad -dijo Maritornes-, y a buena fe que yo también gusto mucho de oír aquellas cosas, que son muy lindas; y más, cuando cuentan que se está la otra señora debajo de unos naranjos abrazada con su caballero, y que les está una dueña haciéndoles la guarda, muerta de envidia y con mucho sobresalto. Digo que todo esto es cosa de mieles.

-Y a vos ¿qué os parece, señora doncella? -dijo el cura, hablando con la hija del ventero.

-No sé, señor, en mi ánima -respondió ella-; también yo lo escucho, y en verdad que, aunque no lo entiendo, que recibo gusto en oírlo; pero no gusto yo de los golpes de que mi padre gusta, sino de las lamentaciones que los caballeros hacen cuando están ausentes de sus señoras: que en verdad que algunas veces me hacen llorar de compasión que les tengo.

-Luego, ¿bien las remediárades vos, señora doncella -dijo Dorotea-, si por vos lloraran?

-No sé lo que me hiciera -respondió la moza-; sólo sé que hay algunas señoras de aquéllas tan crueles, que las llaman sus caballeros tigres y leones y otras mil inmundicias. Y, ¡Jesús!, yo no sé qué gente es aquélla tan desalmada y tan sin conciencia, que por no mirar a un hombre honrado, le dejan que se muera, o que se vuelva loco. Yo no sé para qué es tanto melindre: si lo hacen de honradas, cásense con ellos, que ellos no desean otra cosa.

-Calla, niña -dijo la ventera-, que parece que sabes mucho destas cosas, y no está bien a las doncellas saber ni hablar tanto.

-Como me lo pregunta este señor -respondió ella-, no pude dejar de respondelle.

-Ahora bien -dijo el cura-, traedme, señor huésped, aqueles libros, que los quiero ver.

-Que me place -respondió él.

Y, entrando en su aposento, sacó dél una maletilla vieja, cerrada con una cadenilla, y, abriéndola, halló en ella tres libros grandes y unos papeles de muy buena letra, escritos de mano. El primer libro que abrió vio que era *Don Cirongilio de Tracia*; y el otro, de *Felixmarte de Hircania*; y el otro, la *Historia del Gran Capitán Gonzalo Hernández de Córdoba, con la vida de Diego García de Paredes*. Así como el cura leyó los dos títulos primeros, volvió el rostro al barbero y dijo:

-Falta nos hacen aquí ahora el ama de mi amigo y su sobrina.

-No hacen -respondió el barbero-, que también sé yo llevarlos al corral o a la chimenea; que en verdad que hay muy buen fuego en ella.

-Luego, ¿quiere vuestra merced quemar más libros? -dijo el ventero.

-No más -dijo el cura-que estos dos: el de *Don Cirongilio* y el de *Felixmarte*.

-Pues, ¿por ventura -dijo el ventero-mis libros son herejes o flemáticos, que los quiere quemar?

-*Cismáticos* queréis decir, amigo -dijo el barbero-, que no *flemáticos*.

-Así es -replicó el ventero-; mas si alguno quiere quemar, sea ese del *Gran Capitán* y dese *Diego García*, que antes dejaré quemar un hijo que dejar quemar ninguno desotros.

-Hermano mío -dijo el cura-, estos dos libros son mentirosos y están llenos de disparates y devaneos; y este del Gran Capitán es historia verdadera, y tiene los hechos de Gonzalo Hernández de Córdoba, el cual, por sus muchas y grandes hazañas, mereció ser llamado de todo el mundo *Gran Capitán*, renombre famoso y claro, y dél sólo merecido. Y este Diego García de Paredes fue un principal caballero, natural de la ciudad de Trujillo, en Estremadura, valentísimo soldado, y de tantas fuerzas naturales que detenía con un dedo una rueda de molino en la mitad de su furia; y, puesto con un montante en la entrada de una puente, detuvo a todo un innumerable ejército, que no pasase por ella; y hizo otras tales cosas que, como si él las cuenta y las escribe él asimismo, con la modestia de caballero y de coronista propio, las escribiera otro, libre y desapasionado, pusieran en su olvido las de los Hétores, Aquiles y Roldanes.

-¡Tomaos con mi padre! -dijo el dicho ventero-. ¡Mirad de qué se espanta: de detener una rueda de molino! Por Dios, ahora había vuestra merced de leer lo que hizo Felixmarte de Hircania, que de un revés solo partió cinco gigantes por la cintura, como si fueran hechos de habas, como los frailecicos que hacen los

niños. Y otra vez arremetió con un grandísimo y poderosísimo ejército, donde llevó más de un millón y seiscientos mil soldados, todos armados desde el pie hasta la cabeza, y los desbarató a todos, como si fueran manadas de ovejas. Pues, ¿qué me dirán del bueno de don Cirongilio de Tracia, que fue tan valiente y animoso como se verá en el libro, donde cuenta que, navegando por un río, le salió de la mitad del agua una serpiente de fuego, y él, así como la vio, se arrojó sobre ella, y se puso a horcajadas encima de sus escamosas espaldas, y la apretó con ambas manos la garganta, con tanta fuerza que, viendo la serpiente que la iba ahogando, no tuvo otro remedio sino dejarse ir a lo hondo del río, llevándose tras sí al caballero, que nunca la quiso soltar? Y, cuando llegaron allá bajo, se halló en unos palacios y en unos jardines tan lindos que era maravilla; y luego la sierpe se volvió en un viejo anciano, que le dijo tantas de cosas que no hay más que oír. Calle, señor, que si oyese esto, se volvería loco de placer. ¡Dos higas para el Gran Capitán y para ese Diego García que dice!

Oyendo esto Dorotea, dijo callando a Cardenio:

-Poco le falta a nuestro huésped para hacer la segunda parte de don Quijote.

-Así me parece a mí -respondió Cardenio-, porque, según da indicio, él tiene por cierto que todo lo que estos libros cuentan pasó ni más ni menos que lo escriben, y no le harán creer otra cosa frailes descalzos.

-Mirad, hermano -tornó a decir el cura-, que no hubo en el mundo Felixmarte de Hircania, ni don Cirongilio de Tracia, ni otros caballeros semejantes que los libros de caballerías cuentan, porque todo es compostura y ficción de ingenios ociosos, que los compusieron para el efeto que vos decís de entretener el tiempo, como lo entretienen leyéndolos vuestros segadores; porque realmente os juro que nunca tales caballeros fueron en el mundo, ni tales hazañas ni disparates acontecieron en él.

-¡A otro perro con ese hueso! -respondió el ventero-. ¡Como si yo no supiese cuántas son cinco y adónde me aprieta el zapato! No piense vuestra merced darme papilla, porque por Dios que no soy nada blanco. ¡Bueno es que quiera darme vuestra merced a entender que todo aquello que estos buenos libros dicen sea disparates y mentiras, estando impreso con licencia de los señores del Consejo Real, como si ellos fueran gente que habían de dejar imprimir tanta mentira junta, y tantas batallas y tantos encantamientos que quitan el juicio!

-Ya os he dicho, amigo -replicó el cura-, que esto se hace para entretener nuestros ociosos pensamientos; y, así como se consiente en las repúblicas bien concertadas que haya juegos de ajedrez, de pelota y de trucos, para entretener a algunos que ni tienen, ni deben, ni pueden trabajar, así se consiente imprimir y que haya tales libros, creyendo, como es verdad, que no ha de haber alguno tan ignorante, que tenga por historia verdadera ninguna destos libros. Y si me fuera

lícito agora, y el auditorio lo requiriera, yo dijera cosas acerca de lo que han de tener los libros de caballerías para ser buenos, que quizá fueran de provecho y aun de gusto para algunos; pero yo espero que vendrá tiempo en que lo pueda comunicar con quien pueda remediallo, y en este entretanto creed, señor ventero, lo que os he dicho, y tomad vuestros libros, y allá os avenid con sus verdades o mentiras, y buen provecho os hagan, y quiera Dios que no cojeéis del pie que cojea vuestro huésped don Quijote.

-Eso no -respondió el ventero-, que no seré yo tan loco que me haga caballero andante: que bien veo que ahora no se usa lo que se usaba en aquel tiempo, cuando se dice que andaban por el mundo estos famosos caballeros.

A la mitad desta plática se halló Sancho presente, y quedó muy confuso y pensativo de lo que había oído decir que ahora no se usaban caballeros andantes, y que todos los libros de caballerías eran necedades y mentiras, y propuso en su corazón de esperar en lo que paraba aquel viaje de su amo, y que si no salía con la felicidad que él pensaba, determinaba de dejalle y volverse con su mujer y sus hijos a su acostumbrado trabajo.

Llevábase la maleta y los libros el ventero, mas el cura le dijo:

-Esperad, que quiero ver qué papeles son esos que de tan buena letra están escritos.

Sacólos el huésped, y, dándoselos a leer, vio hasta obra de ocho pliegos escritos de mano, y al principio tenían un título grande que decía: *Novela del curioso impertinente*. Leyó el cura para sí tres o cuatro renglones y dijo:

-Cierto que no me parece mal el título desta novela, y que me viene voluntad de leella toda.

A lo que respondió el ventero:

-Pues bien puede leella su reverencia, porque le hago saber que algunos huéspedes que aquí la han leído les ha contentado mucho, y me la han pedido con muchas veras; mas yo no se la he querido dar, pensando volvérsela a quien aquí dejó esta maleta olvidada con estos libros y esos papeles; que bien puede ser que vuelva su dueño por aquí algún tiempo, y, aunque sé que me han de hacer falta los libros, a fe que se los he de volver: que, aunque ventero, todavía soy cristiano.

-Vos tenéis mucha razón, amigo -dijo el cura-, mas, con todo eso, si la novela me contenta, me la habéis de dejar trasladar.

-De muy buena gana -respondió el ventero.

Mientras los dos esto decían, había tomado Cardenio la novela y comenzado a leer en ella; y, pareciéndole lo mismo que al cura, le rogó que la leyese de modo que todos la oyesen.

-Sí leyera -dijo el cura-, si no fuera mejor gastar este tiempo en dormir que en



leer.

-Harto reposo será para mí -dijo Dorotea-entretener el tiempo oyendo algún cuento, pues aún no tengo el espíritu tan sosegado que me conceda dormir cuando fuera razón.

-Pues, desamano -dijo el cura-, quiero leerla, por curiosidad siquiera; quizá tendrá alguna de gusto.

Acudió maese Nicolás a rogarle lo mismo, y Sancho también; lo cual visto del cura, y entendiendo que a todos daría gusto y él le recibiría, dijo:

-Pues así es, esténme todos atentos, que la novela comienza desta manera:

## Capítulo XXXIII

*Donde se cuenta la novela del Curioso impertinente*

«EN FLORENCIA, ciudad rica y famosa de Italia, en la provincia que llaman Toscana, vivían Anselmo y Lotario, dos caballeros ricos y principales, y tan amigos que, por excelencia y antonomasia, de todos los que los conocían *los dos amigos* eran llamados. Eran solteros, mozos de una misma edad y de unas mismas costumbres; todo lo cual era bastante causa a que los dos con recíproca amistad se correspondiesen. Bien es verdad que el Anselmo era algo más inclinado a los pasatiempos amorosos que el Lotario, al cual llevaban tras sí los de la caza; pero, cuando se ofrecía, dejaba Anselmo de acudir a sus gustos por seguir los de Lotario, y Lotario dejaba los suyos por acudir a los de Anselmo; y, desta manera, andaban tan a una sus voluntades, que no había concertado reloj que así lo anduviese.

»Andaba Anselmo perdido de amores de una doncella principal y hermosa de la misma ciudad, hija de tan buenos padres y tan buena ella por sí, que se determinó, con el parecer de su amigo Lotario, sin el cual ninguna cosa hacía, de pedilla por esposa a sus padres, y así lo puso en ejecución; y el que llevó la embajada fue Lotario, y el que concluyó el negocio tan a gusto de su amigo, que en breve tiempo se vio puesto en la posesión que deseaba, y Camila tan contenta de haber alcanzado a Anselmo por esposo, que no cesaba de dar gracias al cielo, y a Lotario, por cuyo medio tanto bien le había venido.

»Los primeros días, como todos los de boda suelen ser alegres, continuó Lotario, como solía, la casa de su amigo Anselmo, procurando honralle, festejalle y regocijalle con todo aquello que a él le fue posible; pero, acabadas las bodas y sosegada ya la frecuencia de las visitas y parabienes, comenzó Lotario a descuidarse con cuidado de las idas en casa de Anselmo, por parecerle a él -como es razón que parezca a todos los que fueren discretos- que no se han de visitar ni continuar las casas de los amigos casados de la misma manera que cuando eran solteros; porque, aunque la buena y verdadera amistad no puede ni debe de ser sospechosa en nada, con todo esto, es tan delicada la honra del casado, que parece que se puede ofender aun de los mismos hermanos, cuanto más de los amigos.

»Notó Anselmo la remisión de Lotario, y formó dél quejas grandes, diciéndole que si él supiera que el casarse había de ser parte para no comunicalle como

solía, que jamás lo hubiera hecho, y que si, por la buena correspondencia que los dos tenían mientras él fue soltero, habían alcanzado tan dulce nombre como el de ser llamados *los dos amigos*, que no permitiese, por querer hacer del circunspecto, sin otra ocasión alguna, que tan famoso y tan agradable nombre se perdiese; y que así, le suplicaba, si era lícito que tal término de hablar se usase entre ellos, que volviese a ser señor de su casa, y a entrar y salir en ella como de antes, asegurándole que su esposa Camila no tenía otro gusto ni otra voluntad que la que él quería que tuviese, y que, por haber sabido ella con cuántas veras los dos se amaban, estaba confusa de ver en él tanta esquivaza.

»A todas estas y otras muchas razones que Anselmo dijo a Lotario para persuadirle volviese como solía a su casa, respondió Lotario con tanta prudencia, discreción y aviso, que Anselmo quedó satisfecho de la buena intención de su amigo, y quedaron de concierto que dos días en la semana y las fiestas fuese Lotario a comer con él; y, aunque esto quedó así concertado entre los dos, propuso Lotario de no hacer más de aquello que viese que más convenía a la honra de su amigo, cuyo crédito estimaba en más que el suyo propio. Decía él, y decía bien, que el casado a quien el cielo había concedido mujer hermosa, tanto cuidado había de tener qué amigos llevaba a su casa como en mirar con qué amigas su mujer conversaba, porque lo que no se hace ni concierto en las plazas, ni en los templos, ni en las fiestas públicas, ni estaciones -cosas que no todas veces las han de negar los maridos a sus mujeres-, se concierto y facilita en casa de la amiga o la parienta de quien más satisfacción se tiene.

»También decía Lotario que tenían necesidad los casados de tener cada uno algún amigo que le advirtiese de los descuidos que en su proceder hiciese, porque suele acontecer que con el mucho amor que el marido a la mujer tiene, o no le advierte o no le dice, por no enojalla, que haga o deje de hacer algunas cosas, que el hacellas o no, le sería de honra o de vituperio; de lo cual, siendo del amigo advertido, fácilmente pondría remedio en todo. Pero, ¿dónde se hallará amigo tan discreto y tan leal y verdadero como aquí Lotario le pide? No lo sé yo, por cierto; sólo Lotario era éste, que con toda solicitud y advertimiento miraba por la honra de su amigo y procuraba dezmar, frisar y acortar los días del concierto del ir a su casa, porque no pareciese mal al vulgo ocioso y a los ojos vagabundos y maliciosos la entrada de un mozo rico, gentilhomme y bien nacido, y de las buenas partes que él pensaba que tenía, en la casa de una mujer tan hermosa como Camila; que, puesto que su bondad y valor podía poner freno a toda maldiciente lengua, todavía no quería poner en duda su crédito ni el de su amigo, y por esto los más de los días del concierto los ocupaba y entretenía en otras cosas, que él daba a entender ser inexcusables. Así que, en quejas del uno y disculpas del otro se pasaban muchos ratos y partes del día.

»Sucedió, pues, que uno que los dos se andaban paseando por un prado fuera de la ciudad, Anselmo dijo a Lotario las semejantes razones: »-Pensabas, amigo Lotario, que a las mercedes que Dios me ha hecho en hacerme hijo de tales padres como fueron los míos y al darme, no con mano escasa, los bienes, así los que llaman de naturaleza como los de fortuna, no puedo yo corresponder con agradecimiento que llegue al bien recibido, y sobre al que me hizo en darme a ti por amigo y a Camila por mujer propia: dos prendas que las estimo, si no en el grado que debo, en el que puedo. Pues con todas estas partes, que suelen ser el todo con que los hombres suelen y pueden vivir contentos, vivo yo el más despechado y el más desabrido hombre de todo el universo mundo; porque no sé qué días a esta parte me fatiga y aprieta un deseo tan extraño, y tan fuera del uso común de otros, que yo me maravillo de mí mismo, y me culpo y me riño a solas, y procuro callarlo y encubrirlo de mis propios pensamientos; y así me ha sido posible salir con este secreto como si de industria procurara decillo a todo el mundo. Y, pues que, en efeto, él ha de salir a plaza, quiero que sea en la del archivo de tu secreto, confiado que, con él y con la diligencia que pondrás, como mi amigo verdadero, en remediarme, yo me veré presto libre de la angustia que me causa, y llegará mi alegría por tu solicitud al grado que ha llegado mi descontento por mi locura.

»Suspenso tenían a Lotario las razones de Anselmo, y no sabía en qué había de parar tan larga prevención o preámbulo; y, aunque iba revolviendo en su imaginación qué deseo podría ser aquel que a su amigo tanto fatigaba, dio siempre muy lejos del blanco de la verdad; y, por salir presto de la agonía que le causaba aquella suspensión, le dijo que hacía notorio agravio a su mucha amistad en andar buscando rodeos para decirle sus más encubiertos pensamientos, pues tenía cierto que se podía prometer dél, o ya consejos para entretenellos, o ya remedio para cumplillos.

»-Así es la verdad -respondió Anselmo-, y con esa confianza te hago saber, amigo Lotario, que el deseo que me fatiga es pensar si Camila, mi esposa, es tan buena y tan perfeta como yo pienso; y no puedo enterarme en esta verdad, si no es probándola de manera que la prueba manifieste los quilates de su bondad, como el fuego muestra los del oro. Porque yo tengo para mí, ¡oh amigo!, que no es una mujer más buena de cuanto es o no es solicitada, y que aquella sola es fuerte que no se dobla a las promesas, a las dádivas, a las lágrimas y a las continuas importunidades de los solícitos amantes. Porque, ¿qué hay que agradecer -decía él-que una mujer sea buena, si nadie le dice que sea mala? ¿Qué mucho que esté recogida y temerosa la que no le dan ocasión para que se suelte, y la que sabe que tiene marido que, en cogiéndola en la primera desenvoltura, la ha de quitar la vida? Ansí que, la que es buena por temor, o por falta de lugar, yo

no la quiero tener en aquella estima en que tendré a la solicitada y perseguida que salió con la corona del vencimiento. De modo que, por estas razones y por otras muchas que te pudiera decir para acreditar y fortalecer la opinión que tengo, deseo que Camila, mi esposa, pase por estas dificultades y se acrisole y quilate en el fuego de verse requerida y solicitada, y de quien tenga valor para poner en ella sus deseos; y si ella sale, como creo que saldrá, con la palma desta batalla, tendré yo por sin igual mi ventura; podré yo decir que está colmo el vacío de mis deseos; diré que me cupo en suerte la mujer fuerte, de quien el Sabio dice que ¿quién la hallará? Y, cuando esto suceda al revés de lo que pienso, con el gusto de ver que acerté en mi opinión, llevaré sin pena la que de razón podrá causarme mi tan costosa experiencia. Y, prosupuesto que ninguna cosa de cuantas me dijeres en contra de mi deseo ha de ser de algún provecho para dejar de ponerle por la obra, quiero, ¡oh amigo Lotario!, que te dispongas a ser el instrumento que labre aquesta obra de mi gusto; que yo te daré lugar para que lo hagas, sin faltarte todo aquello que yo viere ser necesario para solicitar a una mujer honesta, honrada, recogida y desinteresada. Y muéveme, entre otras cosas, a fiar de ti esta tan ardua empresa, el ver que si de ti es vencida Camila, no ha de llegar el vencimiento a todo trance y rigor, sino a sólo a tener por hecho lo que se ha de hacer, por buen respeto; y así, no quedaré yo ofendido más de con el deseo, y mi injuria quedará escondida en la virtud de tu silencio, que bien sé que en lo que me tocare ha de ser eterno como el de la muerte. Así que, si quieres que yo tenga vida que pueda decir que lo es, desde luego has de entrar en esta amorosa batalla, no tibia ni perezosamente, sino con el ahínco y diligencia que mi deseo pide, y con la confianza que nuestra amistad me asegura.

»Éstas fueron las razones que Anselmo dijo a Lotario, a todas las cuales estuvo tan atento, que si no fueron las que quedan escritas que le dijo, no desplegó sus labios hasta que hubo acabado; y, viendo que no decía más, después que le estuvo mirando un buen espacio, como si mirara otra cosa que jamás hubiera visto, que le causara admiración y espanto, le dijo: »-No me puedo persuadir, ¡oh amigo Anselmo!, a que no sean burlas las cosas que me has dicho; que, a pensar que de veras las decías, no consintiera que tan adelante pasaras, porque con no escucharte previniera tu larga arenga. Sin duda imagino, o que no me conoces, o que yo no te conozco. Pero no; que bien sé que eres Anselmo, y tú sabes que yo soy Lotario; el daño está en que yo pienso que no eres el Anselmo que solías, y tú debes de haber pensado que tampoco yo soy el Lotario que debía ser, porque las cosas que me has dicho, ni son de aquel Anselmo mi amigo, ni las que me pides se han de pedir a aquel Lotario que tú conoces; porque los buenos amigos han de probar a sus amigos y valerse dellos, como dijo un poeta, usque ad aras; que quiso decir que no se habían de valer de

su amistad en cosas que fuesen contra Dios. Pues, si esto sintió un gentil de la amistad, ¿cuánto mejor es que lo sienta el cristiano, que sabe que por ninguna humana ha de perder la amistad divina? Y cuando el amigo tirase tanto la barra que pusiese aparte los respetos del cielo por acudir a los de su amigo, no ha de ser por cosas ligeras y de poco momento, sino por aquellas en que vaya la honra y la vida de su amigo. Pues dime tú ahora, Anselmo: ¿cuál destas dos cosas tienes en peligro para que yo me aventure a complacerte y a hacer una cosa tan detestable como me pides? Ninguna, por cierto; antes, me pides, según yo entiendo, que procure y solicite quitarte la honra y la vida, y quitármela a mí juntamente. Porque si yo he de procurar quitarte la honra, claro está que te quito la vida, pues el hombre sin honra peor es que un muerto; y, siendo yo el instrumento, como tú quieres que lo sea, de tanto mal tuyo, ¿no vengo a quedar deshonorado, y, por el mismo consiguiente, sin vida? Escucha, amigo Anselmo, y ten paciencia de no responderme hasta que acabe de decirte lo que se me ofreciere acerca de lo que te ha pedido tu deseo; que tiempo quedará para que tú me repliques y yo te escuche.

»-Que me place -dijo Anselmo-: di lo que quisieres.

»Y Lotario prosiguió diciendo:

»-Paréceme, ¡oh Anselmo!, que tienes tú ahora el ingenio como el que siempre tienen los moros, a los cuales no se les puede dar a entender el error de su secta con las acotaciones de la Santa Escritura, ni con razones que consistan en especulación del entendimiento, ni que vayan fundadas en artículos de fe, sino que les han de traer ejemplos palpables, fáciles, intelegibles, demostrativos, indubitables, con demostraciones matemáticas que no se pueden negar, como cuando dicen: “Si de dos partes iguales quitamos partes iguales, las que quedan también son iguales”; y, cuando esto no entiendan de palabra, como, en efeto, no lo entienden, háseles de mostrar con las manos y ponérselo delante de los ojos, y, aun con todo esto, no basta nadie con ellos a persuadirles las verdades de mi sacra religión. Y este mismo término y modo me convendrá usar contigo, porque el deseo que en ti ha nacido va tan descaminado y tan fuera de todo aquello que tenga sombra de razonable, que me parece que ha de ser tiempo gastado el que ocupare en darte a entender tu simplicidad, que por ahora no le quiero dar otro nombre, y aun estoy por dejarte en tu desatino, en pena de tu mal deseo; mas no me deja usar deste rigor la amistad que te tengo, la cual no consiente que te deje puesto en tan manifiesto peligro de perderte. Y, porque claro lo veas, dime, Anselmo: ¿tú no me has dicho que tengo de solicitar a una retirada, persuadir a una honesta, ofrecer a una desinteresada, servir a una prudente? Sí que me lo has dicho. Pues si tú sabes que tienes mujer retirada, honesta, desinteresada y prudente, ¿qué buscas? Y si piensas que de todos mis

asaltos ha de salir vencedora, como saldrá sin duda, ¿qué mejores títulos piensas darle después que los que ahora tiene, o qué será más después de lo que es ahora? O es que tú no la tienes por la que dices, o tú no sabes lo que pides. Si no la tienes por lo que dices, ¿para qué quieres probarla, sino, como a mala, hacer della lo que más te viniere en gusto? Mas si es tan buena como crees, impertinente cosa será hacer experiencia de la misma verdad, pues, después de hecha, se ha de quedar con la estimación que primero tenía. Así que, es razón concluyente que el intentar las cosas de las cuales antes nos puede suceder daño que provecho es de juicios sin discurso y temerarios, y más cuando quieren intentar aquellas a que no son forzados ni compelidos, y que de muy lejos traen descubierto que el intentarlas es manifiesta locura. Las cosas dificultosas se intentan por Dios, o por el mundo, o por entrambos a dos: las que se acometen por Dios son las que acometieron los santos, acometiendo a vivir vida de ángeles en cuerpos humanos; las que se acometen por respeto del mundo son las de aquellos que pasan tanta infinidad de agua, tanta diversidad de climas, tanta estrañeza de gentes, por adquirir estos que llaman bienes de fortuna. Y las que se intentan por Dios y por el mundo juntamente son aquellas de los valerosos soldados, que apenas veen en el contrario muro abierto tanto espacio cuanto es el que pudo hacer una redonda bala de artillería, cuando, puesto aparte todo temor, sin hacer discurso ni advertir al manifiesto peligro que les amenaza, llevados en vuelo de las alas del deseo de volver por su fe, por su nación y por su rey, se arrojan intrépidamente por la mitad de mil contrapuestas muertes que los esperan. Estas cosas son las que suelen intentarse, y es honra, gloria y provecho intentarlas, aunque tan llenas de inconvenientes y peligros. Pero la que tú dices que quieres intentar y poner por obra, ni te ha de alcanzar gloria de Dios, bienes de la fortuna, ni fama con los hombres; porque, puesto que salgas con ella como deseas, no has de quedar ni más ufano, ni más rico, ni más honrado que estás ahora; y si no sales, te has de ver en la mayor miseria que imaginarse pueda, porque no te ha de aprovechar pensar entonces que no sabe nadie la desgracia que te ha sucedido, porque bastará para afligirte y deshacerte que la sepas tú mismo. Y, para confirmación desta verdad, te quiero decir una estancia que hizo el famoso poeta Luis Tansilo, en el fin de su primera parte de *Las lágrimas de San Pedro*, que dice así:

Crece el dolor y crece la vergüenza  
en Pedro, cuando el día se ha mostrado;  
y, aunque allí no ve a nadie, se avergüenza  
de sí mismo, por ver que había pecado:  
que a un magnánimo pecho a haber vergüenza  
no sólo ha de moverle el ser mirado;

que de sí se avergüenza cuando yerra,  
si bien otro no ve que cielo y tierra.

»Así que, no escusarás con el secreto tu dolor; antes, tendrás que llorar continuo, si no lágrimas de los ojos, lágrimas de sangre del corazón, como las lloraba aquel simple doctor que nuestro poeta nos cuenta que hizo la prueba del vaso, que, con mejor discurso, se escusó de hacerla el prudente Reinaldos; que, puesto que aquello sea ficción poética, tiene en sí encerrados secretos morales dignos de ser advertidos y entendidos e imitados. Cuanto más que, con lo que ahora pienso decirte, acabarás de venir en conocimiento del grande error que quieres cometer. Dime, Anselmo, si el cielo, o la suerte buena, te hubiera hecho señor y legítimo posesor de un finísimo diamante, de cuya bondad y quilates estuviesen satisfechos cuantos lapidarios le vieses, y que todos a una voz y de común parecer dijese que llegaba en quilates, bondad y fineza a cuanto se podía estender la naturaleza de tal piedra, y tú mismo lo creyeses así, sin saber otra cosa en contrario, ¿sería justo que te viniese en deseo de tomar aquel diamante, y ponerle entre un ayunque y un martillo, y allí, a pura fuerza de golpes y brazos, probar si es tan duro y tan fino como dicen? Y más, si lo pusieses por obra; que, puesto caso que la piedra hiciese resistencia a tan necia prueba, no por eso se le añadiría más valor ni más fama; y si se rompiese, cosa que podría ser, ¿no se perdería todo? Sí, por cierto, dejando a su dueño en estimación de que todos le tengan por simple. Pues haz cuenta, Anselmo amigo, que Camila es finísimo diamante, así en tu estimación como en la ajena, y que no es razón ponerla en contingencia de que se quiebre, pues, aunque se quede con su entereza, no puede subir a más valor del que ahora tiene; y si faltase y no resistiese, considera desde ahora cuál quedarías sin ella, y con cuánta razón te podrías quejar de ti mismo, por haber sido causa de su perdición y la tuya. Mira que no hay joya en el mundo que tanto valga como la mujer casta y honrada, y que todo el honor de las mujeres consiste en la opinión buena que dellas se tiene; y, pues la de tu esposa es tal que llega al extremo de bondad que sabes, ¿para qué quieres poner esta verdad en duda? Mira, amigo, que la mujer es animal imperfecto, y que no se le han de poner embarazos donde tropiece y caiga, sino quitárselos y despejalle el camino de cualquier inconveniente, para que sin pesadumbre corra ligera a alcanzar la perfección que le falta, que consiste en el ser virtuosa. Cuentan los naturales que el arminio es un animalejo que tiene una piel blanquísima, y que cuando quieren cazarle, los cazadores usan deste artificio: que, sabiendo las partes por donde suele pasar y acudir, las atajan con lodo, y después, ojeándole, le encaminan hacia aquel lugar, y así como el arminio llega al lodo, se está quedo y se deja prender y cautivar, a trueco de no pasar por el cieno y perder y



ensuciar su blancura, que la estima en más que la libertad y la vida. La honesta y casta mujer es arminio, y es más que nieve blanca y limpia la virtud de la honestidad; y el que quisiere que no la pierda, antes la guarde y conserve, ha de usar de otro estilo diferente que con el arminio se tiene, porque no le han de poner delante el cieno de los regalos y servicios de los importunos amantes, porque quizá, y aun sin quizá, no tiene tanta virtud y fuerza natural que pueda por sí misma atropellar y pasar por aquellos embarazos, y es necesario quitárselos y ponerle delante la limpieza de la virtud y la belleza que encierra en sí la buena fama. Es asimesmo la buena mujer como espejo de cristal luciente y claro; pero está sujeto a empañarse y escurecerse con cualquiera aliento que le toque. Hase de usar con la honesta mujer el estilo que con las reliquias: adorarlas y no tocarlas. Hase de guardar y estimar la mujer buena como se guarda y estima un hermoso jardín que está lleno de flores y rosas, cuyo dueño no consiente que nadie le pasee ni manosee; basta que desde lejos, y por entre las verjas de hierro, gocen de su fragancia y hermosura. Finalmente, quiero decirte unos versos que se me han venido a la memoria, que los oí en una comedia moderna, que me parece que hacen al propósito de lo que vamos tratando. Aconsejaba un prudente viejo a otro, padre de una doncella, que la recogiese, guardase y encerrase, y entre otras razones, le dijo éstas: Es de vidrio la mujer;

pero no se ha de probar  
si se puede o no quebrar,  
porque todo podría ser.

Y es más fácil el quebrarse,

y no es cordura ponerse

a peligro de romperse  
lo que no puede soldarse.

Y en esta opinión estén  
todos, y en razón la fundo:  
que si hay Dánaes en el mundo,  
hay pluvias de oro también.

»Cuanto hasta aquí te he dicho, ¡oh Anselmo!, ha sido por lo que a ti te toca; y ahora es bien que se oiga algo de lo que a mí me conviene; y si fuere largo, perdóname, que todo lo requiere el laberinto donde te has entrado y de donde quieres que yo te saque. Tú me tienes por amigo y quieres quitarme la honra, cosa que es contra toda amistad; y aun no sólo pretendes esto, sino que procuras que yo te la quite a ti. Que me la quieres quitar a mí está claro, pues, cuando Camila vea que yo la solicito, como me pides, cierto está que me ha de tener por hombre sin honra y mal mirado, pues intento y hago una cosa tan fuera de aquello que el ser quien soy y tu amistad me obliga. De que quieres que te la quite a ti no hay duda, porque, viendo Camila que yo la solicito, ha de pensar que yo he visto en ella alguna liviandad que me dio atrevimiento a descubrirle mi mal deseo; y, teniéndose por deshonorada, te toca a ti, como a cosa suya, su misma deshonor. Y de aquí nace lo que comúnmente se platica: que el marido de la mujer adúltera, puesto que él no lo sepa ni haya dado ocasión para que su mujer no sea la que debe, ni haya sido en su mano, ni en su descuido y poco recato estorbar su desgracia, con todo, le llaman y le nombran con nombre de vituperio y bajo; y en cierta manera le miran, los que la maldad de su mujer saben, con ojos de menosprecio, en cambio de mirarle con los de lástima, viendo que no por su culpa, sino por el gusto de su mala compañera, está en aquella desventura. Pero quíérote decir la causa por que con justa razón es deshonorado el marido de la mujer mala, aunque él no sepa que lo es, ni tenga culpa, ni haya sido parte, ni dado ocasión, para que ella lo sea. Y no te canses de oírme, que todo ha de redundar en tu provecho. Cuando Dios crió a nuestro primero padre en el Paraíso terrenal, dice la Divina Escritura que infundió Dios sueño en Adán, y que, estando durmiendo, le sacó una costilla del lado siniestro, de la cual formó a nuestra madre Eva; y, así como Adán despertó y la miró, dijo: “Ésta es carne de mi carne y hueso de mis huesos”. Y Dios dijo: “Por ésta dejará el hombre a su padre y madre, y serán dos en una carne misma”. Y entonces fue instituido el divino sacramento del matrimonio, con tales lazos, que sola la muerte puede desatarlos. Y tiene tanta fuerza y virtud este milagroso sacramento, que hace que dos diferentes personas sean una misma carne; y aún

hace más en los buenos casados, que, aunque tienen dos almas, no tienen más de una voluntad. Y de aquí viene que, como la carne de la esposa sea una misma con la del esposo, las manchas que en ella caen, o los defectos que se procura, redundan en la carne del marido, aunque él no haya dado, como queda dicho, ocasión para aquel daño. Porque, así como el dolor del pie o de cualquier miembro del cuerpo humano le siente todo el cuerpo, por ser todo de una carne misma, y la cabeza siente el daño del tobillo, sin que ella se le haya causado, así el marido es participante de la deshonra de la mujer, por ser una misma cosa con ella. Y como las honras y deshonoras del mundo sean todas y nazcan de carne y sangre, y las de la mujer mala sean deste género, es forzoso que al marido le quepa parte dellas, y sea tenido por deshonorado sin que él lo sepa. Mira, pues, ¡oh Anselmo!, al peligro que te pones en querer turbar el sosiego en que tu buena esposa vive. Mira por cuán vana e impertinente curiosidad quieres revolver los humores que ahora están sosegados en el pecho de tu casta esposa. Advierte que lo que aventuras a ganar es poco, y que lo que perderás será tanto que lo dejaré en su punto, porque me faltan palabras para encarecerlo. Pero si todo cuanto he dicho no basta a moverte de tu mal propósito, bien puedes buscar otro instrumento de tu deshonra y desventura, que yo no pienso serlo, aunque por ello pierda tu amistad, que es la mayor pérdida que imaginar puedo.

»Calló, en diciendo esto, el virtuoso y prudente Lotario, y Anselmo quedó tan confuso y pensativo que por un buen espacio no le pudo responder palabra; pero, en fin, le dijo: »-Con la atención que has visto he escuchado, Lotario amigo, cuanto has querido decirme, y en tus razones, ejemplos y comparaciones he visto la mucha discreción que tienes y el extremo de la verdadera amistad que alcanzas; y ansimesmo veo y confieso que si no sigo tu parecer y me voy tras el mío, voy huyendo del bien y corriendo tras el mal. Prosupuesto esto, has de considerar que yo padezco ahora la enfermedad que suelen tener algunas mujeres, que se les antoja comer tierra, yeso, carbón y otras cosas peores, aun asquerosas para mirarse, cuanto más para comerse; así que, es menester usar de algún artificio para que yo sane, y esto se podía hacer con facilidad, sólo con que comiences, aunque tibia y fingidamente, a solicitar a Camila, la cual no ha de ser tan tierna que a los primeros encuentros dé con su honestidad por tierra; y con solo este principio quedaré contento y tú habrás cumplido con lo que debes a nuestra amistad, no solamente dándome la vida, sino persuadiéndome de no verme sin honra. Y estás obligado a hacer esto por una razón sola; y es que, estando yo, como estoy, determinado de poner en plática esta prueba, no has tú de consentir que yo dé cuenta de mi desatino a otra persona, con que pondría en aventura el honor que tú procuras que no pierda; y, cuando el tuyo no esté en el punto que debe en la intención de Camila en tanto que la solicitares, importa

poco o nada, pues con brevedad, viendo en ella la entereza que esperamos, le podrás decir la pura verdad de nuestro artificio, con que volverá tu crédito al ser primero. Y, pues tan poco aventuras y tanto contento me puedes dar aventurándote, no lo dejes de hacer, aunque más inconvenientes se te pongan delante, pues, como ya he dicho, con sólo que comiences daré por concluida la causa.

»Viendo Lotario la resoluta voluntad de Anselmo, y no sabiendo qué más ejemplos traerle ni qué más razones mostrarle para que no la siguiese, y viendo que le amenazaba que daría a otro cuenta de su mal deseo, por evitar mayor mal, determinó de contentarle y hacer lo que le pedía, con propósito e intención de guiar aquel negocio de modo que, sin alterar los pensamientos de Camila, quedase Anselmo satisfecho; y así, le respondió que no comunicase su pensamiento con otro alguno, que él tomaba a su cargo aquella empresa, la cual comenzaría cuando a él le diese más gusto. Abrazóle Anselmo tierna y amorosamente, y agradecióle su ofrecimiento, como si alguna grande merced le hubiera hecho; y quedaron de acuerdo entre los dos que desde otro día siguiente se comenzase la obra; que él le daría lugar y tiempo como a sus solas pudiese hablar a Camila, y asimesmo le daría dineros y joyas que darla y que ofrecerla. Aconsejóle que le diese músicas, que escribiese versos en su alabanza, y que, cuando él no quisiese tomar trabajo de hacerlos, él mismo los haría. A todo se ofreció Lotario, bien con diferente intención que Anselmo pensaba.

»Y con este acuerdo se volvieron a casa de Anselmo, donde hallaron a Camila con ansia y cuidado, esperando a su esposo, porque aquel día tardaba en venir más de lo acostumbrado.

»Fuese Lotario a su casa, y Anselmo quedó en la suya, tan contento como Lotario fue pensativo, no sabiendo qué traza dar para salir bien de aquel impertinente negocio. Pero aquella noche pensó el modo que tendría para engañar a Anselmo, sin ofender a Camila; y otro día vino a comer con su amigo, y fue bien recibido de Camila, la cual le recibía y regalaba con mucha voluntad, por entender la buena que su esposo le tenía.

»Acabaron de comer, levantaron los manteles y Anselmo dijo a Lotario que se quedase allí con Camila, en tanto que él iba a un negocio forzoso, que dentro de hora y media volvería. Rogóle Camila que no se fuese y Lotario se ofreció a hacerle compañía, más nada aprovechó con Anselmo; antes, importunó a Lotario que se quedase y le aguardase, porque tenía que tratar con él una cosa de mucha importancia. Dijo también a Camila que no dejase solo a Lotario en tanto que él volviese. En efeto, él supo tan bien fingir la necesidad, o necedad, de su ausencia, que nadie pudiera entender que era fingida. Fuese Anselmo, y quedaron solos a la mesa Camila y Lotario, porque la demás gente de casa toda

se había ido a comer. Viose Lotario puesto en la estacada que su amigo deseaba y con el enemigo delante, que pudiera vencer con sola su hermosura a un escuadrón de caballeros armados: mirad si era razón que le temiera Lotario.

»Pero lo que hizo fue poner el codo sobre el brazo de la silla y la mano abierta en la mejilla, y, pidiendo perdón a Camila del mal comedimiento, dijo que quería reposar un poco en tanto que Anselmo volvía. Camila le respondió que mejor reposaría en el estrado que en la silla, y así, le rogó se entrase a dormir en él. No quiso Lotario, y allí se quedó dormido hasta que volvió Anselmo, el cual, como halló a Camila en su aposento y a Lotario durmiendo, creyó que, como se había tardado tanto, ya habrían tenido los dos lugar para hablar, y aun para dormir, y no vio la hora en que Lotario despertase, para volverse con él fuera y preguntarle de su ventura.

»Todo le sucedió como él quiso: Lotario despertó, y luego salieron los dos de casa, y así, le preguntó lo que deseaba, y le respondió Lotario que no le había parecido ser bien que la primera vez se descubriese del todo; y así, no había hecho otra cosa que alabar a Camila de hermosa, diciéndole que en toda la ciudad no se trataba de otra cosa que de su hermosura y discreción, y que éste le había parecido buen principio para entrar ganando la voluntad, y disponiéndola a que otra vez le escuchase con gusto, usando en esto del artificio que el demonio usa cuando quiere engañar a alguno que está puesto en atalaya de mirar por sí: que se transforma en ángel de luz, siéndolo él de tinieblas, y, poniéndole delante apariencias buenas, al cabo descubre quién es y sale con su intención, si a los principios no es descubierto su engaño. Todo esto le contentó mucho a Anselmo, y dijo que cada día daría el mismo lugar, aunque no saliese de casa, porque en ella se ocuparía en cosas que Camila no pudiese venir en conocimiento de su artificio.

»Sucedió, pues, que se pasaron muchos días que, sin decir Lotario palabra a Camila, respondía a Anselmo que la hablaba y jamás podía sacar della una pequeña muestra de venir en ninguna cosa que mala fuese, ni aun dar una señal de sombra de esperanza; antes, decía que le amenazaba que si de aquel mal pensamiento no se quitaba, que lo había de decir a su esposo.

»-Bien está -dijo Anselmo-. Hasta aquí ha resistido Camila a las palabras; es menester ver cómo resiste a las obras: yo os daré mañana dos mil escudos de oro para que se los ofrezcáis, y aun se los deis, y otros tantos para que compréis joyas con que cebarla; que las mujeres suelen ser aficionadas, y más si son hermosas, por más castas que sean, a esto de traerse bien y andar galanas; y si ella resiste a esta tentación, yo quedaré satisfecho y no os daré más pesadumbre.

»Lotario respondió que ya que había comenzado, que él llevaría hasta el fin aquella empresa, puesto que entendía salir della cansado y vencido. Otro día

recibió los cuatro mil escudos, y con ellos cuatro mil confusiones, porque no sabía qué decirse para mentir de nuevo; pero, en efeto, determinó de decirle que Camila estaba tan entera a las dádivas y promesas como a las palabras, y que no había para qué cansarse más, porque todo el tiempo se gastaba en balde.

»Pero la suerte, que las cosas guiaba de otra manera, ordenó que, habiendo dejado Anselmo solos a Lotario y a Camila, como otras veces solía, él se encerró en un aposento y por los agujeros de la cerradura estuvo mirando y escuchando lo que los dos trataban, y vio que en más de media hora Lotario no habló palabra a Camila, ni se la hablara si allí estuviera un siglo, y cayó en la cuenta de que cuanto su amigo le había dicho de las respuestas de Camila todo era ficción y mentira. Y, para ver si esto era así, salió del aposento, y, llamando a Lotario aparte, le preguntó qué nuevas había y de qué temple estaba Camila. Lotario le respondió que no pensaba más darle puntada en aquel negocio, porque respondía tan áspera y desabridamente, que no tendría ánimo para volver a decirle cosa alguna.

»-¡Ah! -dijo Anselmo-, Lotario, Lotario, y cuán mal correspondest a lo que me debes y a lo mucho que de ti confío! Ahora te he estado mirando por el lugar que concede la entrada desta llave, y he visto que no has dicho palabra a Camila, por donde me doy a entender que aun las primeras le tienes por decir; y si esto es así, como sin duda lo es, ¿para qué me engañas, o por qué quieres quitarme con tu industria los medios que yo podría hallar para conseguir mi deseo?

»No dijo más Anselmo, pero bastó lo que había dicho para dejar corrido y confuso a Lotario; el cual, casi como tomando por punto de honra el haber sido hallado en mentira, juró a Anselmo que desde aquel momento tomaba tan a su cargo el contentalle y no mentille, cual lo vería si con curiosidad lo espiaba; cuanto más, que no sería menester usar de ninguna diligencia, porque la que él pensaba poner en satisfacelle le quitaría de toda sospecha. Creyóle Anselmo, y para dalle comodidad más segura y menos sobresaltada, determinó de hacer ausencia de su casa por ocho días, yéndose a la de un amigo suyo, que estaba en una aldea, no lejos de la ciudad, con el cual amigo concertó que le enviase a llamar con muchas veras, para tener ocasión con Camila de su partida.

»¡Desdichado y mal advertido de ti, Anselmo! ¿Qué es lo que haces? ¿Qué es lo que trazas? ¿Qué es lo que ordenas? Mira que haces contra ti mismo, trazando tu deshonor y ordenando tu perdición. Buena es tu esposa Camila, quieta y sosegadamente la posees, nadie sobresalta tu gusto, sus pensamientos no salen de las paredes de su casa, tú eres su cielo en la tierra, el blanco de sus deseos, el cumplimiento de sus gustos y la medida por donde mide su voluntad, ajustándola en todo con la tuya y con la del cielo. Pues si la mina de su honor, hermosura, honestidad y recogimiento te da sin ningún trabajo toda la riqueza que tiene y tú

puedes desear, ¿para qué quieres ahondar la tierra y buscar nuevas vetas de nuevo y nunca visto tesoro, poniéndote a peligro que toda venga abajo, pues, en fin, se sustenta sobre los débiles arrimos de su flaca naturaleza? Mira que el que busca lo imposible es justo que lo posible se le niegue, como lo dijo mejor un poeta, diciendo:

Busco en la muerte la vida,  
salud en la enfermedad,  
en la prisión libertad,



en lo cerrado salida  
y en el traidor lealtad.  
Pero mi suerte, de quien  
jamás espero algún bien,

con el cielo ha estatuido  
que, pues lo imposible pido,  
lo posible aun no me den.

»Fuese otro día Anselmo a la aldea, dejando dicho a Camila que el tiempo que él estuviese ausente vendría Lotario a mirar por su casa y a comer con ella; que tuviese cuidado de tratalle como a su misma persona. Afligióse Camila, como mujer discreta y honrada, de la orden que su marido le dejaba, y díjole que advirtiese que no estaba bien que nadie, él ausente, ocupase la silla de su mesa, y que si lo hacía por no tener confianza que ella sabría gobernar su casa, que probase por aquella vez, y vería por experiencia como para mayores cuidados era bastante. Anselmo le replicó que aquél era su gusto, y que no tenía más que hacer que bajar la cabeza y obedecelle. Camila dijo que así lo haría, aunque contra su voluntad.

»Partióse Anselmo, y otro día vino a su casa Lotario, donde fue rescebido de Camila con amoroso y honesto acogimiento; la cual jamás se puso en parte donde Lotario la viese a solas, porque siempre andaba rodeada de sus criados y criadas, especialmente de una doncella suya, llamada Leonela, a quien ella mucho quería, por haberse criado desde niñas las dos juntas en casa de los padres de Camila, y cuando se casó con Anselmo la trujo consigo.

»En los tres días primeros nunca Lotario le dijo nada, aunque pudiera, cuando se levantaban los manteles y la gente se iba a comer con mucha priesa, porque así se lo tenía mandado Camila. Y aun tenía orden Leonela que comiese primero que Camila, y que de su lado jamás se quitase; mas ella, que en otras cosas de su gusto tenía puesto el pensamiento y había menester aquellas horas y aquel lugar para ocuparle en sus contentos, no cumplía todas veces el mandamiento de su señora; antes, los dejaba solos, como si aquello le hubieran mandado. Mas la honesta presencia de Camila, la gravedad de su rostro, la compostura de su persona era tanta, que ponía freno a la lengua de Lotario.

»Pero el provecho que las muchas virtudes de Camila hicieron, poniendo silencio en la lengua de Lotario, redundó más en daño de los dos, porque si la lengua callaba, el pensamiento discurría y tenía lugar de contemplar, parte por parte, todos los extremos de bondad y de hermosura que Camila tenía, bastantes a enamorar una estatua de mármol, no que un corazón de carne.

»Mirábala Lotario en el lugar y espacio que había de hablarla, y consideraba cuán digna era de ser amada; y esta consideración comenzó poco a poco a dar asaltos a los respetos que a Anselmo tenía, y mil veces quiso ausentarse de la

ciudad y irse donde jamás Anselmo le viese a él, ni él viese a Camila; mas ya le hacía impedimento y detenía el gusto que hallaba en mirarla. Hacíase fuerza y peleaba consigo mismo por desechar y no sentir el contento que le llevaba a mirar a Camila. Culpábase a solas de su desatino, llamábase mal amigo y aun mal cristiano; hacía discursos y comparaciones entre él y Anselmo, y todos paraban en decir que más había sido la locura y confianza de Anselmo que su poca fidelidad, y que si así tuviera disculpa para con Dios como para con los hombres de lo que pensaba hacer, que no temiera pena por su culpa.

»En efecto, la hermosura y la bondad de Camila, juntamente con la ocasión que el ignorante marido le había puesto en las manos, dieron con la lealtad de Lotario en tierra. Y, sin mirar a otra cosa que aquella a que su gusto le inclinaba, al cabo de tres días de la ausencia de Anselmo, en los cuales estuvo en continua batalla por resistir a sus deseos, comenzó a requebrar a Camila, con tanta turbación y con tan amorosas razones que Camila quedó suspensa, y no hizo otra cosa que levantarse de donde estaba y entrarse a su aposento, sin respondelle palabra alguna. Mas no por esta sequedad se desmayó en Lotario la esperanza, que siempre nace juntamente con el amor; antes, tuvo en más a Camila. La cual, habiendo visto en Lotario lo que jamás pensara, no sabía qué hacerse. Y, pareciéndole no ser cosa segura ni bien hecha darle ocasión ni lugar a que otra vez la hablase, determinó de enviar aquella misma noche, como lo hizo, a un criado suyo con un billete a Anselmo, donde le escribió estas razones:

## Capítulo XXXIV

*Donde se prosigue la novela del Curioso impertinente*

»ASÍ como suele decirse que parece mal el ejército sin su general y el castillo sin su castellano, digo yo que parece muy peor la mujer casada y moza sin su marido, cuando justísimas ocasiones no lo impiden. Yo me hallo tan mal sin vos, y tan imposibilitada de no poder sufrir esta ausencia, que si presto no venís, me habré de ir a entretener en casa de mis padres, aunque deje sin guarda la vuestra; porque la que me dejastes, si es que quedó con tal título, creo que mira más por su gusto que por lo que a vos os toca; y, pues sois discreto, no tengo más que deciros, ni aun es bien que más os diga.

»Esta carta recibió Anselmo, y entendió por ella que Lotario había ya comenzado la empresa, y que Camila debía de haber respondido como él deseaba; y, alegre sobremanera de tales nuevas, respondió a Camila, de palabra, que no hiciese mudamiento de su casa en modo ninguno, porque él volvería con mucha brevedad. Admirada quedó Camila de la respuesta de Anselmo, que la puso en más confusión que primero, porque ni se atrevía a estar en su casa, ni menos irse a la de sus padres; porque en la quedada corría peligro su honestidad, y en la ida iba contra el mandamiento de su esposo.

»En fin, se resolvió en lo que le estuvo peor, que fue en el quedarse, con determinación de no huir la presencia de Lotario, por no dar que decir a sus criados; y ya le pesaba de haber escrito lo que escribió a su esposo, temerosa de que no pensase que Lotario había visto en ella alguna desenvoltura que le hubiese movido a no guardalle el decoro que debía. Pero, fiada en su bondad, se fió en Dios y en su buen pensamiento, con que pensaba resistir callando a todo aquello que Lotario decirle quisiese, sin dar más cuenta a su marido, por no ponerle en alguna pendencia y trabajo. Y aun andaba buscando manera como disculpar a Lotario con Anselmo, cuando le preguntase la ocasión que le había movido a escribirle aquel papel. Con estos pensamientos, más honrados que acertados ni provechosos, estuvo otro día escuchando a Lotario, el cual cargó la mano de manera que comenzó a titubear la firmeza de Camila, y su honestidad tuvo hartos que hacer en acudir a los ojos, para que no diesen muestra de alguna amorosa compasión que las lágrimas y las razones de Lotario en su pecho habían despertado. Todo esto notaba Lotario, y todo le encendía.

»Finalmente, a él le pareció que era menester, en el espacio y lugar que daba

la ausencia de Anselmo, apretar el cerco a aquella fortaleza. Y así, acometió a su presunción con las alabanzas de su hermosura, porque no hay cosa que más presto rinda y allane las encastilladas torres de la vanidad de las hermosas que la misma vanidad, puesta en las lenguas de la adulación. En efecto, él, con toda diligencia, minó la roca de su entereza, con tales pertrechos que, aunque Camila fuera toda de bronce, viniera al suelo. Lloró, rogó, ofreció, aduló, porfió, y fingió Lotario con tantos sentimientos, con muestras de tantas veras, que dio al través con el recato de Camila y vino a triunfar de lo que menos se pensaba y más deseaba.

»Rindióse Camila, Camila se rindió; pero ¿qué mucho, si la amistad de Lotario no quedó en pie? Ejemplo claro que nos muestra que sólo se vence la pasión amorosa con huilla, y que nadie se ha de poner a brazos con tan poderoso enemigo, porque es menester fuerzas divinas para vencer las suyas humanas. Sólo supo Leonela la flaqueza de su señora, porque no se la pudieron encubrir los dos malos amigos y nuevos amantes. No quiso Lotario decir a Camila la pretensión de Anselmo, ni que él le había dado lugar para llegar a aquel punto, porque no tuviese en menos su amor y pensase que así, acaso y sin pensar, y no de propósito, la había solicitado.

»Volvió de allí a pocos días Anselmo a su casa, y no echó de ver lo que faltaba en ella, que era lo que en menos tenía y más estimaba. Fuese luego a ver a Lotario, y hallóle en su casa; abrazáronse los dos, y el uno preguntó por las nuevas de su vida o de su muerte.

»-Las nuevas que te podré dar, ¡oh amigo Anselmo! -dijo Lotario-, son de que tienes una mujer que dignamente puede ser ejemplo y corona de todas las mujeres buenas. Las palabras que le he dicho se las ha llevado el aire, los ofrecimientos se han tenido en poco, las dádivas no se han admitido, de algunas lágrimas fingidas más se ha hecho burla notable. En resolución, así como Camila es cifra de toda belleza, es archivo donde asiste la honestidad y vive el comedimiento y el recato, y todas las virtudes que pueden hacer loable y bien afortunada a una honrada mujer. Vuelve a tomar tus dineros, amigo, que aquí los tengo, sin haber tenido necesidad de tocar a ellos; que la entereza de Camila no se rinde a cosas tan bajas como son dádivas ni promesas. Conténtate, Anselmo, y no quieras hacer más pruebas de las hechas; y, pues a pie enjuto has pasado el mar de las dificultades y sospechas que de las mujeres suelen y pueden tenerse, no quieras entrar de nuevo en el profundo piélago de nuevos inconvenientes, ni quieras hacer experiencia con otro piloto de la bondad y fortaleza del navío que el cielo te dio en suerte para que en él pasases la mar deste mundo, sino haz cuenta que estás ya en seguro puerto, y aférrate con las áncoras de la buena consideración, y déjate estar hasta que te vengan a pedir la deuda que no hay

hidalguía humana que de pagarla se escuse.

»Contentísimo quedó Anselmo de las razones de Lotario, y así se las creyó como si fueran dichas por algún oráculo. Pero, con todo eso, le rogó que no dejase la empresa, aunque no fuese más de por curiosidad y entretenimiento, aunque no se aprovechase de allí adelante de tan ahincadas diligencias como hasta entonces; y que sólo quería que le escribiese algunos versos en su alabanza, debajo del nombre de Clori, porque él le daría a entender a Camila que andaba enamorado de una dama, a quien le había puesto aquel nombre por poder celebrarla con el decoro que a su honestidad se le debía; y que, cuando Lotario no quisiera tomar trabajo de escribir los versos, que él los haría.

»-No será menester eso -dijo Lotario-, pues no me son tan enemigas las musas que algunos ratos del año no me visiten. Dile tú a Camila lo que has dicho del fingimiento de mis amores, que los versos yo los haré; si no tan buenos como el sujeto merece, serán, por lo menos, los mejores que yo pudiere.

»Quedaron deste acuerdo el impertinente y el traidor amigo; y, vuelto Anselmo a su casa, preguntó a Camila lo que ella ya se maravillaba que no se lo hubiese preguntado: que fue que le dijese la ocasión por que le había escrito el papel que le envió. Camila le respondió que le había parecido que Lotario la miraba un poco más desenvueltamente que cuando él estaba en casa; pero que ya estaba desengañada y creía que había sido imaginación suya, porque ya Lotario huía de vella y de estar con ella a solas. Díjole Anselmo que bien podía estar segura de aquella sospecha, porque él sabía que Lotario andaba enamorado de una doncella principal de la ciudad, a quien él celebraba debajo del nombre de Clori, y que, aunque no lo estuviera, no había que temer de la verdad de Lotario y de la mucha amistad de entrambos. Y, a no estar avisada Camila de Lotario de que eran fingidos aquellos amores de Clori, y que él se lo había dicho a Anselmo por poder ocuparse algunos ratos en las mismas alabanzas de Camila, ella, sin duda, cayera en la desesperada red de los celos; mas, por estar ya advertida, pasó aquel sobresalto sin pesadumbre.

»Otro día, estando los tres sobre mesa, rogó Anselmo a Lotario dijese alguna cosa de las que había compuesto a su amada Clori; que, pues Camila no la conocía, seguramente podía decir lo que quisiese.

»-Aunque la conociera -respondió Lotario-, no encubriera yo nada, porque cuando algún amante loa a su dama de hermosa y la nota de cruel, ningún oprobrio hace a su buen crédito. Pero, sea lo que fuere, lo que sé decir, que ayer hice un soneto a la ingratitud desta Clori, que dice así:

# SONETO

En el silencio de la noche, cuando  
ocupa el dulce sueño a los mortales,  
la pobre cuenta de mis ricos males  
estoy al cielo y a mi Clori dando.

Y, al tiempo cuando el sol se va mostrando 5  
por las rosadas puertas orientales,  
con suspiros y acentos desiguales,  
voy la antigua querella renovando.

Y cuando el sol, de su estrellado asiento,  
derechos rayos a la tierra envía, 10  
el llanto crece y doblo los gemidos.

Vuelve la noche, y vuelvo al triste cuento,  
y siempre hallo, en mi mortal porfía,  
al cielo, sordo; a Clori, sin oídos.

»Bien le pareció el soneto a Camila, pero mejor a Anselmo, pues le alabó, y dijo que era demasiadamente cruel la dama que a tan claras verdades no correspondía. A lo que dijo Camila:

»-Luego, ¿todo aquello que los poetas enamorados dicen es verdad?

»-En cuanto poetas, no la dicen -respondió Lotario-; mas, en cuanto enamorados, siempre quedan tan cortos como verdaderos.

»-No hay duda deso -replicó Anselmo, todo por apoyar y acreditar los pensamientos de Lotario con Camila, tan descuidada del artificio de Anselmo como ya enamorada de Lotario.

»Y así, con el gusto que de sus cosas tenía, y más, teniendo por entendido que sus deseos y escritos a ella se encaminaban, y que ella era la verdadera Clori, le rogó que si otro soneto o otros versos sabía, los dijese:

»-Sí sé -respondió Lotario-, pero no creo que es tan bueno como el primero, o, por mejor decir, menos malo. Y podréislo bien juzgar, pues es éste:

# SONETO

Yo sé que muero; y si no soy creído,  
es más cierto el morir, como es más cierto  
verme a tus pies, ¡oh bella ingrata!, muerto,  
antes que de adorarte arrepentido.

Podré yo verme en la región de olvido, 5  
de vida y gloria y de favor desierto,  
y allí verse podrá en mi pecho abierto  
cómo tu hermoso rostro está esculpido.

Que esta reliquia guardo para el duro  
trance que me amenaza mi porfía, 10  
que en tu mismo rigor se fortalece.

¡Ay de aquel que navega, el cielo oscuro,  
por mar no usado y peligrosa vía,  
adonde norte o puerto no se ofrece!

»También alabó este segundo soneto Anselmo, como había hecho el primero, y desta manera iba añadiendo eslabón a eslabón a la cadena con que se enlazaba y trababa su deshonor, pues cuando más Lotario le deshonoraba, entonces le decía que estaba más honrado; y, con esto, todos los escalones que Camila bajaba hacia el centro de su menosprecio, los subía, en la opinión de su marido, hacia la cumbre de la virtud y de su buena fama.

»Sucedió en esto que, hallándose una vez, entre otras, sola Camila con su doncella, le dijo:

»-Corrida estoy, amiga Leonela, de ver en cuán poco he sabido estimarme, pues siquiera no hice que con el tiempo comprara Lotario la entera posesión que le di tan presto de mi voluntad. Temo que ha de estimar mi presteza o ligereza, sin que eche de ver la fuerza que él me hizo para no poder resistirle.

»-No te dé pena eso, señora mía -respondió Leonela-, que no está la monta, ni es causa para menguar la estimación, darse lo que se da presto, si, en efecto, lo que se da es bueno, y ello por sí digno de estimarse. Y aun suele decirse que el que luego da, da dos veces.

»-También se suele decir -dijo Camila- que lo que cuesta poco se estima en menos.

»-No corre por ti esa razón -respondió Leonela-, porque el amor, según he oído decir, unas veces vuela y otras anda, con éste corre y con aquél va despacio,



a unos entibia y a otros abrasa, a unos hiere y a otros mata, en un mismo punto comienza la carrera de sus deseos y en aquel mismo punto la acaba y concluye, por la mañana suele poner el cerco a una fortaleza y a la noche la tiene rendida, porque no hay fuerza que le resista. Y, siendo así, ¿de qué te espantas, o de qué temes, si lo mismo debe de haber acontecido a Lotario, habiendo tomado el amor por instrumento de rendirnos la ausencia de mi señor? Y era forzoso que en ella se concluyese lo que el amor tenía determinado, sin dar tiempo al tiempo para que Anselmo le tuviese de volver, y con su presencia quedase imperfecta la obra. Porque el amor no tiene otro mejor ministro para ejecutar lo que desea que es la ocasión: de la ocasión se sirve en todos sus hechos, principalmente en los principios. Todo esto sé yo muy bien, más de experiencia que de oídas, y algún día te lo diré, señora, que yo también soy de carne y de sangre moza. Cuanto más, señora Camila, que no te entregaste ni diste tan luego, que primero no hubieses visto en los ojos, en los suspiros, en las razones y en las promesas y dádivas de Lotario toda su alma, viendo en ella y en sus virtudes cuán digno era Lotario de ser amado. Pues si esto es así, no te asalten la imaginación esos escrupulosos y melindrosos pensamientos, sino asegúrate que Lotario te estima como tú le estimas a él, y vive con contento y satisfacción de que, ya que caíste en el lazo amoroso, es el que te aprieta de valor y de estima. Y que no sólo tiene las cuatro eses que dicen que han de tener los buenos enamorados, sino todo un ABC entero: si no, escúchame y verás como te le digo de coro. Él es, según yo veo y a mí me parece, *agradecido, bueno, caballero, dadivoso, enamorado, firme, gallardo, honrado, ilustre, leal, mozo, noble, onesto, principal, quantioso, rico*, y las eses que dicen; y luego, *tácito, verdadero*. La X no le cuadra, porque es letra áspera; la Y ya está dicha; la Z, zelador de tu honra.

»Rióse Camila del ABC de su doncella, y túvola por más plática en las cosas de amor que ella decía; y así lo confesó ella, descubriendo a Camila como trataba amores con un mancebo bien nacido, de la misma ciudad; de lo cual se turbó Camila, temiendo que era aquél camino por donde su honra podía correr riesgo. Apuróla si pasaban sus pláticas a más que serlo. Ella, con poca vergüenza y mucha desenvoltura, le respondió que sí pasaban; porque es cosa ya cierta que los descuidos de las señoras quitan la vergüenza a las criadas, las cuales, cuando ven a las amas echar traspiés, no se les da nada a ellas de cojear, ni de que lo sepan.

»No pudo hacer otra cosa Camila sino rogar a Leonela no dijese nada de su hecho al que decía ser su amante, y que tratase sus cosas con secreto, porque no viniesen a noticia de Anselmo ni de Lotario. Leonela respondió que así lo haría, mas cumpliólo de manera que hizo cierto el temor de Camila de que por ella había de perder su crédito. Porque la deshonesta y atrevida Leonela, después que

vio que el proceder de su ama no era el que solía, atrevióse a entrar y poner dentro de casa a su amante, confiada que, aunque su señora le viese, no había de osar descubrirle; que este daño acarrear, entre otros, los pecados de las señoras: que se hacen esclavas de sus mismas criadas y se obligan a encubrirles sus deshonestidades y vilezas, como aconteció con Camila; que, aunque vio una y muchas veces que su Leonela estaba con su galán en un aposento de su casa, no sólo no la osaba reñir, mas dábale lugar a que lo encerrase, y quitábale todos los estorbos, para que no fuese visto de su marido.

»Pero no los pudo quitar que Lotario no le viese una vez salir, al romper del alba; el cual, sin conocer quién era, pensó primero que debía de ser alguna fantasma; mas, cuando le vio caminar, embozarse y encubrirse con cuidado y recato, cayó de su simple pensamiento y dio en otro, que fuera la perdición de todos si Camila no lo remediara. Pensó Lotario que aquel hombre que había visto salir tan a deshora de casa de Anselmo no había entrado en ella por Leonela, ni aun se acordó si Leonela era en el mundo; sólo creyó que Camila, de la misma manera que había sido fácil y ligera con él, lo era para otro; que estas añadiduras trae consigo la maldad de la mujer mala: que pierde el crédito de su honra con el mismo a quien se entregó rogada y persuadida, y cree que con mayor facilidad se entrega a otros, y da infalible crédito a cualquiera sospecha que desto le venga. Y no parece sino que le faltó a Lotario en este punto todo su buen entendimiento, y se le fueron de la memoria todos sus advertidos discursos, pues, sin hacer alguno que bueno fuese, ni aun razonable, sin más ni más, antes que Anselmo se levantara, impaciente y ciego de la celosa rabia que las entrañas le roía, muriendo por vengarse de Camila, que en ninguna cosa le había ofendido, se fue a Anselmo y le dijo:

»-Sábet, Anselmo, que ha muchos días que he andado peleando conmigo mismo, haciéndome fuerza a no decirte lo que ya no es posible ni justo que más te encubra. Sábet que la fortaleza de Camila está ya rendida y sujeta a todo aquello que yo quisiere hacer della; y si he tardado en descubrirete esta verdad, ha sido por ver si era algún liviano antojo suyo, o si lo hacía por probarme y ver si eran con propósito firme tratados los amores que, con tu licencia, con ella he comenzado. Creí, ansimismo, que ella, si fuera la que debía y la que entrambos pensábamos, ya te hubiera dado cuenta de mi solicitud, pero, habiendo visto que se tarda, conozco que son verdaderas las promesas que me ha dado de que, cuando otra vez hagas ausencia de tu casa, me hablará en la recámara, donde está el repuesto de tus alhajas -y era la verdad, que allí le solía hablar Camila-; y no quiero que precipitosamente corras a hacer alguna venganza, pues no está aún cometido el pecado sino con pensamiento, y podría ser que, desde éste hasta el tiempo de ponerle por obra, se mudase el de Camila y naciese en su lugar el

arrepentimiento. Y así, ya que, en todo o en parte, has seguido siempre mis consejos, sigue y guarda uno que ahora te diré, para que sin engaño y con medroso advertimento te satisfagas de aquello que más vieres que te convenga. Finge que te ausentas por dos o tres días, como otras veces sueles, y haz de manera que te quedes escondido en tu recámara, pues los tapices que allí hay y otras cosas con que te puedas encubrir te ofrecen mucha comodidad, y entonces verás por tus mismos ojos, y yo por los míos, lo que Camila quiere; y si fuere la maldad que se puede temer antes que esperar, con silencio, sagacidad y discreción podrás ser el verdugo de tu agravio.

»Absorto, suspenso y admirado quedó Anselmo con las razones de Lotario, porque le cogieron en tiempo donde menos las esperaba oír, porque ya tenía a Camila por vencedora de los fingidos asaltos de Lotario y comenzaba a gozar la gloria del vencimiento. Callando estuvo por un buen espacio, mirando al suelo sin mover pestaña, y al cabo dijo:

»-Tú lo has hecho, Lotario, como yo esperaba de tu amistad; en todo he de seguir tu consejo: haz lo que quisieres y guarda aquel secreto que ves que conviene en caso tan no pensado.

»Prometióselo Lotario, y, en apartándose dél, se arrepintió totalmente de cuanto le había dicho, viendo cuán neciamente había andado, pues pudiera él vengarse de Camila, y no por camino tan cruel y tan deshonorado. Maldecía su entendimiento, afeaba su ligera determinación, y no sabía qué medio tomarse para deshacer lo hecho, o para dalle alguna razonable salida. Al fin, acordó de dar cuenta de todo a Camila; y, como no faltaba lugar para poderlo hacer, aquel mismo día la halló sola, y ella, así como vio que le podía hablar, le dijo.

»-Sabed, amigo Lotario, que tengo una pena en el corazón que me le aprieta de suerte que parece que quiere reventar en el pecho, y ha de ser maravilla si no lo hace, pues ha llegado la desvergüenza de Leonela a tanto, que cada noche encierra a un galán suyo en esta casa y se está con él hasta el día, tan a costa de mi crédito cuanto le quedará campo abierto de juzgarlo al que le viere salir a horas tan inusitadas de mi casa. Y lo que me fatiga es que no la puedo castigar ni reñir: que el ser ella secretario de nuestros tratos me ha puesto un freno en la boca para callar los suyos, y temo que de aquí ha de nacer algún mal suceso.

»Al principio que Camila esto decía creyó Lotario que era artificio para desmentille que el hombre que había visto salir era de Leonela, y no suyo; pero, viéndola llorar y afligirse, y pedirle remedio, vino a creer la verdad, y, en creyéndola, acabó de estar confuso y arrepentido del todo. Pero, con todo esto, respondió a Camila que no tuviese pena, que él ordenaría remedio para atajar la insolencia de Leonela. Díjole asimismo lo que, instigado de la furiosa rabia de los celos, había dicho a Anselmo, y cómo estaba concertado de esconderse en la

recámara, para ver desde allí a la clara la poca lealtad que ella le guardaba. Pidióle perdón desta locura, y consejo para poder remedialla y salir bien de tan revuelto laberinto como su mal discurso le había puesto.

»Espantada quedó Camila de oír lo que Lotario le decía, y con mucho enojo y muchas y discretas razones le riñó y afeó su mal pensamiento y la simple y mala determinación que había tenido. Pero, como naturalmente tiene la mujer ingenio presto para el bien y para el mal más que el varón, puesto que le va faltando cuando de propósito se pone a hacer discursos, luego al instante halló Camila el modo de remediar tan al parecer inremediable negocio, y dijo a Lotario que procurase que otro día se escondiese Anselmo donde decía, porque ella pensaba sacar de su escondimiento comodidad para que desde allí en adelante los dos se gozasen sin sobresalto alguno; y, sin declararle del todo su pensamiento, le advirtió que tuviese cuidado que, en estando Anselmo escondido, él viniese cuando Leonela le llamase, y que a cuanto ella le dijese le respondiese como respondiera aunque no supiera que Anselmo le escuchaba. Porfió Lotario que le acabase de declarar su intención, porque con más seguridad y aviso guardase todo lo que viese ser necesario.

»-Digo -dijo Camila-que no hay más que guardar, si no fuere responderme como yo os preguntare (no queriendo Camila darle antes cuenta de lo que pensaba hacer, temerosa que no quisiese seguir el parecer que a ella tan bueno le parecía, y siguiese o buscase otros que no podrían ser tan buenos).

»Con esto, se fue Lotario; y Anselmo, otro día, con la excusa de ir aquella aldea de su amigo, se partió y volvió a esconderse: que lo pudo hacer con comodidad, porque de industria se la dieron Camila y Leonela.

»Escondido, pues, Anselmo, con aquel sobresalto que se puede imaginar que tendría el que esperaba ver por sus ojos hacer notomía de las entrañas de su honra, íbase a pique de perder el sumo bien que él pensaba que tenía en su querida Camila. Seguras ya y ciertas Camila y Leonela que Anselmo estaba escondido, entraron en la recámara; y apenas hubo puesto los pies en ella Camila, cuando, dando un grande suspiro, dijo:

»-¡Ay, Leonela amiga! ¿No sería mejor que, antes que llegase a poner en ejecución lo que no quiero que sepas, porque no procures estorbarlo, que tomases la daga de Anselmo, que te he pedido, y pasases con ella este infame pecho mío? Pero no hagas tal, que no será razón que yo lleve la pena de la ajena culpa. Primero quiero saber qué es lo que vieron en mí los atrevidos y deshonestos ojos de Lotario que fuese causa de darle atrevimiento a descubrirme un tan mal deseo como es el que me ha descubierto, en desprecio de su amigo y en deshonor mía. Ponte, Leonela, a esa ventana y llámale, que, sin duda alguna, él debe de estar en la calle, esperando poner en efeto su mala intención. Pero

primero se pondrá la cruel cuanto honrada mía.

»-¡Ay, señora mía! -respondió la sagaz y advertida Leonela-, y ¿qué es lo que quieres hacer con esta daga? ¿Quieres por ventura quitarte la vida o quitársela a Lotario? Que cualquiera destas cosas que quieras ha de redundar en pérdida de tu crédito y fama. Mejor es que disimules tu agravio, y no des lugar a que este mal hombre entre ahora en esta casa y nos halle solas. Mira, señora, que somos flacas mujeres, y él es hombre y determinado; y, como viene con aquel mal propósito, ciego y apasionado, quizá antes que tú pongas en ejecución el tuyo, hará él lo que te estaría más mal que quitarte la vida. ¡Mal haya mi señor Anselmo, que tanto mal ha querido dar a este desuellacaras en su casa! Y ya, señora, que le mates, como yo pienso que quieres hacer, ¿qué hemos de hacer dél después de muerto?

»-¿Qué, amiga? -respondió Camila-: dejáremosle para que Anselmo le entierre, pues será justo que tenga por descanso el trabajo que tomare en poner debajo de la tierra su misma infamia. Llámale, acaba, que todo el tiempo que tardo en tomar la debida venganza de mi agravio parece que ofendo a la lealtad que a mi esposo debo.

»Todo esto escuchaba Anselmo, y, a cada palabra que Camila decía, se le mudaban los pensamientos; mas, cuando entendió que estaba resuelta en matar a Lotario, quiso salir y descubrirse, porque tal cosa no se hiciese; pero detúvole el deseo de ver en qué paraba tanta gallardía y honesta resolución, con propósito de salir a tiempo que la estorbase.

»Tomóle en esto a Camila un fuerte desmayo, y, arrojándose encima de una cama que allí estaba, comenzó Leonela a llorar muy amargamente y a decir:

»-¡Ay, desdichada de mí si fuese tan sin ventura que se me muriese aquí entre mis brazos la flor de la honestidad del mundo, la corona de las buenas mujeres, el ejemplo de la castidad...!

»Con otras cosas a éstas semejantes, que ninguno la escuchara que no la tuviera por la más lastimada y leal doncella del mundo, y a su señora por otra nueva y perseguida Penélope. Poco tardó en volver de su desmayo Camila; y, al volver en sí, dijo:

»-¿Por qué no vas, Leonela, a llamar al más leal amigo de amigo que vio el sol o cubrió la noche? Acaba, corre, aguija, camina, no se esfogue con la tardanza el fuego de la cólera que tengo, y se pase en amenazas y maldiciones la justa venganza que espero.

»-Ya voy a llamarle, señora mía -dijo Leonela-, mas hasme de dar primero esa daga, porque no hagas cosa, en tanto que falto, que dejes con ella que llorar toda la vida a todos los que bien te quieren.

»-Ve segura, Leonela amiga, que no haré -respondió Camila-; porque, ya que

sea atrevida y simple a tu parecer en volver por mi honra, no lo he de ser tanto como aquella Lucrecia de quien dicen que se mató sin haber cometido error alguno, y sin haber muerto primero a quien tuvo la causa de su desgracia. Yo moriré, si muero, pero ha de ser vengada y satisfecha del que me ha dado ocasión de venir a este lugar a llorar sus atrevimientos, nacidos tan sin culpa mía.

»Mucho se hizo de rogar Leonela antes que saliese a llamar a Lotario, pero, en fin, salió; y, entre tanto que volvía, quedó Camilia diciendo, como que hablaba consigo misma:

»-¡Válame Dios! ¿No fuera más acertado haber despedido a Lotario, como otras muchas veces lo he hecho, que no ponerle en condición, como ya le he puesto, que me tenga por deshonesto y mala, siquiera este tiempo que he de tardar en desengañarle? Mejor fuera, sin duda; pero no quedara yo vengada, ni la honra de mi marido satisfecha, si tan a manos lavadas y tan a paso llano se volviera a salir de donde sus malos pensamientos le entraron. Pague el traidor con la vida lo que intentó con tan lascivo deseo: sepa el mundo, si acaso llegare a saberlo, de que Camila no sólo guardó la lealtad a su esposo, sino que le dio venganza del que se atrevió a ofendelle. Mas, con todo, creo que fuera mejor dar cuenta desto a Anselmo, pero ya se la apunté a dar en la carta que le escribí al aldea, y creo que el no acudir él al remedio del daño que allí le señalé, debió de ser que, de puro bueno y confiado, no quiso ni pudo creer que en el pecho de su tan firme amigo pudiese haber género de pensamiento que contra su honra fuese; ni aun yo lo creí después, por muchos días, ni lo creyera jamás, si su insolencia no llegara a tanto, que las manifiestas dádivas y las largas promesas y las continuas lágrimas no me lo manifestaran. Mas, ¿para qué hago yo ahora estos discursos? ¿Tiene, por ventura, una resuelta necesidad de consejo alguno? No, por cierto. ¡Afuera, pues, traidores; aquí, venganzas! ¡Entre el falso, venga, llegue, muera y acabe, y suceda lo que sucediere! Limpia entré en poder del que el cielo me dio por mío, limpia he de salir dél; y, cuando mucho, saldré bañada en mi casta sangre, y en la impura del más falso amigo que vio la amistad en el mundo.

»Y, diciendo esto, se paseaba por la sala con la daga desenvainada, dando tan desconcertados y desaforados pasos, y haciendo tales ademanes, que no parecía sino que le faltaba el juicio, y que no era mujer delicada, sino un rufián desesperado.

»Todo lo miraba Anselmo, cubierto detrás de unos tapices donde se había escondido, y de todo se admiraba, y ya le parecía que lo que había visto y oído era bastante satisfacción para mayores sospechas; y ya quisiera que la prueba de venir Lotario faltara, temeroso de algún mal repentino suceso. Y, estando ya

para manifestarse y salir, para abrazar y desengañar a su esposa, se detuvo porque vio que Leonela volvía con Lotario de la mano; y, así como Camila le vio, haciendo con la daga en el suelo una gran raya delante della, le dijo:

»-Lotario, advierte lo que te digo: si a dicha te atrevieres a pasar desta raya que ves, ni aun llegar a ella, en el punto que viere que lo intentas, en ese mismo me pasaré el pecho con esta daga que en las manos tengo. Y, antes que a esto me respondas palabra, quiero que otras algunas me escuches; que después responderás lo que más te agradare. Lo primero, quiero, Lotario, que me digas si conoces a Anselmo, mi marido, y en qué opinión le tienes; y lo segundo, quiero saber también si me conoces a mí. Respóndeme a esto, y no te turbes, ni pienses mucho lo que has de responder, pues no son dificultades las que te pregunto.

»No era tan ignorante Lotario que, desde el primer punto que Camila le dijo que hiciese esconder a Anselmo, no hubiese dado en la cuenta de lo que ella pensaba hacer; y así, correspondió con su intención tan discretamente, y tan a tiempo, que hicieran los dos pasar aquella mentira por más que cierta verdad; y así, respondió a Camila desta manera:

»-No pensé yo, hermosa Camila, que me llamabas para preguntarme cosas tan fuera de la intención con que yo aquí vengo. Si lo haces por dilatar me la prometida merced, desde más lejos pudieras entretenerla, porque tanto más fatiga el bien deseado cuanto la esperanza está más cerca de poseello; pero, porque no digas que no respondo a tus preguntas, digo que conozco a tu esposo Anselmo, y nos conocemos los dos desde nuestros más tiernos años; y no quiero decir lo que tú tan bien sabes de nuestra amistad, por no me hacer testigo del agravio que el amor hace que le haga, poderosa disculpa de mayores yerros. A ti te conozco y tengo en la misma posesión que él te tiene; que, a no ser así, por menos prendas que las tuyas no había yo de ir contra lo que debo a ser quien soy y contra las santas leyes de la verdadera amistad, ahora por tan poderoso enemigo como el amor por mí rompidas y violadas.

»-Si eso confieras -respondió Camila-, enemigo mortal de todo aquello que justamente merece ser amado, ¿con qué rostro osas parecer ante quien sabes que es el espejo donde se mira aquel en quien tú te debieras mirar, para que vieras con cuán poca ocasión le agravias? Pero ya cayo, ¡ay, desdichada de mí!, en la cuenta de quién te ha hecho tener tan poca con lo que a ti mismo debes, que debe de haber sido alguna desenvoltura mía, que no quiero llamarla deshonestidad, pues no habrá procedido de deliberada determinación, sino de algún descuido de los que las mujeres que piensan que no tienen de quién recatarse suelen hacer inadvertidamente. Si no, dime: ¿cuándo, ¡oh traidor!, respondí a tus ruegos con alguna palabra o señal que pudiese despertar en ti alguna sombra de esperanza de cumplir tus infames deseos? ¿Cuándo tus amorosas palabras no fueron

deshechas y reprehendidas de las mías con rigor y con aspereza? ¿Cuándo tus muchas promesas y mayores dádivas fueron de mí creídas, ni admitidas? Pero, por parecerme que alguno no puede perseverar en el intento amoroso luengo tiempo, si no es sustentado de alguna esperanza, quiero atribuirme a mí la culpa de tu impertinencia, pues, sin duda, algún descuido mío ha sustentado tanto tiempo tu cuidado; y así, quiero castigarme y darme la pena que tu culpa merece. Y, porque vieses que, siendo conmigo tan inhumana, no era posible dejar de serlo contigo, quise traerte a ser testigo del sacrificio que pienso hacer a la ofendida honra de mi tan honrado marido, agraviado de ti con el mayor cuidado que te ha sido posible, y de mí también con el poco recato que he tenido del huir la ocasión, si alguna te di, para favorecer y canonizar tus malas intenciones. Torno a decir que la sospecha que tengo que algún descuido mío engendró en ti tan desvariados pensamientos es la que más me fatiga, y la que yo más deseo castigar con mis propias manos, porque, castigándome otro verdugo, quizá sería más pública mi culpa; pero, antes que esto haga, quiero matar muriendo, y llevar conmigo quien me acabe de satisfacer el deseo de la venganza que espero y tengo, viendo allá, dondequiera que fuere, la pena que da la justicia desinteresada y que no se dobla al que en términos tan desesperados me ha puesto.

»Y, diciendo estas razones, con una increíble fuerza y ligereza arremetió a Lotario con la daga desenvainada, con tales muestras de querer enclavársela en el pecho, que casi él estuvo en duda si aquellas demostraciones eran falsas o verdaderas, porque le fue forzoso valerse de su industria y de su fuerza para estorbar que Camila no le diese. La cual tan vivamente fingía aquel extraño embuste y fealdad que, por dalle color de verdad, la quiso matizar con su misma sangre; porque, viendo que no podía haber a Lotario, o fingiendo que no podía, dijo:

»-Pues la suerte no quiere satisfacer del todo mi tan justo deseo, a lo menos, no será tan poderosa que, en parte, me quite que no le satisfaga.

»Y, haciendo fuerza para soltar la mano de la daga, que Lotario la tenía asida, la sacó, y, guiando su punta por parte que pudiese herir no profundamente, se la entró y escondió por más arriba de la islilla del lado izquierdo, junto al hombro, y luego se dejó caer en el suelo, como desmayada.

»Estaban Leonela y Lotario suspensos y atónitos de tal suceso, y todavía dudaban de la verdad de aquel hecho, viendo a Camila tendida en tierra y bañada en su sangre. Acudió Lotario con mucha presteza, despavorido y sin aliento, a sacar la daga, y, en ver la pequeña herida, salió del temor que hasta entonces tenía, y de nuevo se admiró de la sagacidad, prudencia y mucha discreción de la hermosa Camila; y, por acudir con lo que a él le tocaba, comenzó a hacer una



larga y triste lamentación sobre el cuerpo de Camila, como si estuviera difunta, echándose muchas maldiciones, no sólo a él, sino al que había sido causa de habelle puesto en aquel término. Y, como sabía que le escuchaba su amigo Anselmo, decía cosas que el que le oyera le tuviera mucha más lástima que a Camila, aunque por muerta la juzgara.

»Leonela la tomó en brazos y la puso en el lecho, suplicando a Lotario fuese a buscar quien secretamente a Camila curase; pedíale asimismo consejo y parecer de lo que dirían a Anselmo de aquella herida de su señora, si acaso viniese antes que estuviese sana. Él respondió que dijese lo que quisiesen, que él no estaba para dar consejo que de provecho fuese; sólo le dijo que procurase tomarle la sangre, porque él se iba adonde gentes no le vieses. Y, con muestras de mucho dolor y sentimiento, se salió de casa; y, cuando se vio solo y en parte donde nadie le veía, no cesaba de hacerse cruces, maravillándose de la industria de Camila y de los ademanes tan propios de Leonela. Consideraba cuán enterado había de quedar Anselmo de que tenía por mujer a una segunda Porcia, y deseaba verse con él para celebrar los dos la mentira y la verdad más disimulada que jamás pudiera imaginarse.

»Leonela tomó, como se ha dicho, la sangre a su señora, que no era más de aquello que bastó para acreditar su embuste; y, lavando con un poco de vino la herida, se la ató lo mejor que supo, diciendo tales razones, en tanto que la curaba, que, aunque no hubieran precedido otras, bastaran a hacer creer a Anselmo que tenía en Camila un simulacro de la honestidad.

»Juntáronse a las palabras de Leonela otras de Camila, llamándose cobarde y de poco ánimo, pues le había faltado al tiempo que fuera más necesario tenerle, para quitarse la vida, que tan aborrecida tenía. Pedía consejo a su doncella si daría, o no, todo aquel suceso a su querido esposo; la cual le dijo que no se lo dijese, porque le pondría en obligación de vengarse de Lotario, lo cual no podría ser sin mucho riesgo suyo, y que la buena mujer estaba obligada a no dar ocasión a su marido a que riñese, sino a quitalle todas aquellas que le fuese posible.

»Respondió Camila que le parecía muy bien su parecer y que ella le seguiría; pero que en todo caso convenía buscar qué decir a Anselmo de la causa de aquella herida, que él no podría dejar de ver; a lo que Leonela respondía que ella, ni aun burlando, no sabía mentir.

»-Pues yo, hermana -replicó Camila-, ¿qué tengo de saber, que no me atreveré a forjar ni sustentar una mentira, si me fuese en ello la vida? Y si es que no hemos de saber dar salida a esto, mejor será decirle la verdad desnuda, que no que nos alcance en mentirosa cuenta.

»-No tengas pena, señora: de aquí a mañana -respondió Leonela- yo pensaré qué le digamos, y quizá que, por ser la herida donde es, la podrás encubrir sin

que él la vea, y el cielo será servido de favorecer a nuestros tan justos y tan honrados pensamientos. Sosiégate, señora mía, y procura sosegar tu alteración, porque mi señor no te halle sobresaltada, y lo demás déjalo a mi cargo, y al de Dios, que siempre acude a los buenos deseos.

»Atentísimo había estado Anselmo a escuchar y a ver representar la tragedia de la muerte de su honra; la cual con tan estraños y eficaces afectos la representaron los personajes della, que pareció que se habían transformado en la misma verdad de lo que fingían. Deseaba mucho la noche, y el tener lugar para salir de su casa, y ir a verse con su buen amigo Lotario, congratulándose con él de la margarita preciosa que había hallado en el desengaño de la bondad de su esposa. Tuvieron cuidado las dos de darle lugar y comodidad a que saliese, y él, sin perdella, salió y luego fue a buscar a Lotario, el cual hallado, no se puede buenamente contar los abrazos que le dio, las cosas que de su contento le dijo, las alabanzas que dio a Camila. Todo lo cual escuchó Lotario sin poder dar muestras de alguna alegría, porque se le representaba a la memoria cuán engañado estaba su amigo y cuán injustamente él le agraviaba. Y, aunque Anselmo veía que Lotario no se alegraba, creía ser la causa por haber dejado a Camila herida y haber él sido la causa; y así, entre otras razones, le dijo que no tuviese pena del suceso de Camila, porque, sin duda, la herida era ligera, pues quedaban de concierto de encubrírsele a él; y que, según esto, no había de qué temer, sino que de allí adelante se gozase y alegrase con él, pues por su industria y medio él se veía levantado a la más alta felicidad que acertara desearse, y quería que no fuesen otros sus entretenimientos que en hacer versos en alabanza de Camila, que la hiciesen eterna en la memoria de los siglos venideros. Lotario alabó su buena determinación y dijo que él, por su parte, ayudaría a levantar tan ilustre edificio.

»Con esto quedó Anselmo el hombre más sabrosamente engañado que pudo haber en el mundo: él mismo llevó por la mano a su casa, creyendo que llevaba el instrumento de su gloria, toda la perdición de su fama. Recebíale Camila con rostro, al parecer, torcido, aunque con alma risueña. Duró este engaño algunos días, hasta que, al cabo de pocos meses, volvió Fortuna su rueda y salió a plaza la maldad con tanto artificio hasta allí cubierta, y a Anselmo le costó la vida su impertinente curiosidad.»

## Capítulo XXXV

*Donde se da fin a la novela del Curioso impertinente*

POCO más quedaba por leer de la novela, cuando del caramanchón donde reposaba don Quijote salió Sancho Panza todo alborotado, diciendo a voces:

-Acudid, señores, presto y socorred a mi señor, que anda envuelto en la más reñida y trabada batalla que mis ojos han visto. ¡Vive Dios, que ha dado una cuchillada al gigante enemigo de la señora princesa Micomicona, que le ha tajado la cabeza, cercen a cercen, como si fuera un nabo!

-¿Qué dices, hermano? -dijo el cura, dejando de leer lo que de la novela quedaba-. ¿Estáis en vos, Sancho? ¿Cómo diablos puede ser eso que decís, estando el gigante dos mil leguas de aquí?

En esto, oyeron un gran ruido en el aposento, y que don Quijote decía a voces:

-¡Tente, ladrón, malandrín, follón, que aquí te tengo, y no te ha de valer tu cimitarra!

Y parecía que daba grandes cuchilladas por las paredes. Y dijo Sancho:

-No tienen que pararse a escuchar, sino entren a despartir la pelea, o a ayudar a mi amo; aunque ya no será menester, porque, sin duda alguna, el gigante está ya muerto, y dando cuenta a Dios de su pasada y mala vida, que yo vi correr la sangre por el suelo, y la cabeza cortada y caída a un lado, que es tamaño como un gran cuero de vino.

-Que me maten -dijo a esta sazón el ventero-si don Quijote, o don diablo, no ha dado alguna cuchillada en alguno de los cueros de vino tinto que a su cabecera estaban llenos, y el vino derramado debe de ser lo que le parece sangre a este buen hombre.

Y, con esto, entró en el aposento, y todos tras él, y hallaron a don Quijote en el más extraño traje del mundo: estaba en camisa, la cual no era tan cumplida que por delante le acabase de cubrir los muslos, y por detrás tenía seis dedos menos; las piernas eran muy largas y flacas, llenas de vello y no nada limpias; tenía en la cabeza un bonetillo colorado, grasiento, que era del ventero; en el brazo izquierdo tenía revuelta la manta de la cama, con quien tenía ojeriza Sancho, y él se sabía bien el porqué; y en la derecha, desenvainada la espada, con la cual daba cuchilladas a todas partes, diciendo palabras como si verdaderamente estuviera peleando con algún gigante. Y es lo bueno que no tenía los ojos abiertos, porque estaba durmiendo y soñando que estaba en batalla con el gigante; que fue tan

intensa la imaginación de la aventura que iba a fenecer, que le hizo soñar que ya había llegado al reino de Micomicón, y que ya estaba en la pelea con su enemigo. Y había dado tantas cuchilladas en los cueros, creyendo que las daba en el gigante, que todo el aposento estaba lleno de vino; lo cual visto por el ventero, tomó tanto enojo que arremetió con don Quijote, y a puño cerrado le comenzó a dar tantos golpes que si Cardenio y el cura no se le quitaran, él acabara la guerra del gigante; y, con todo aquello, no despertaba el pobre caballero, hasta que el barbero trujo un gran caldero de agua fría del pozo y se le echó por todo el cuerpo de golpe, con lo cual despertó don Quijote; mas no con tanto acuerdo que echase de ver de la manera que estaba.

Dorotea, que vio cuán corta y sotilmente estaba vestido, no quiso entrar a ver la batalla de su ayudador y de su contrario.

Andaba Sancho buscando la cabeza del gigante por todo el suelo, y, como no la hallaba, dijo:

-Ya yo sé que todo lo desta casa es encantamento; que la otra vez, en este mismo lugar donde ahora me hallo, me dieron muchos mojicones y porrazos, sin saber quién me los daba, y nunca pude ver a nadie; y ahora no parece por aquí esta cabeza que vi cortar por mis mismísimos ojos, y la sangre corría del cuerpo como de una fuente.

-¿Qué sangre ni qué fuente dices, enemigo de Dios y de sus santos? -dijo el ventero-. ¿No vees, ladrón, que la sangre y la fuente no es otra cosa que estos cueros que aquí están horadados y el vino tinto que nada en este aposento, que nadando vea yo el alma en los infiernos de quien los horadó?

-No sé nada -respondió Sancho-; sólo sé que vendré a ser tan desdichado que, por no hallar esta cabeza, se me ha de deshacer mi condado como la sal en el agua.

Y estaba peor Sancho despierto que su amo durmiendo: tal le tenían las promesas que su amo le había hecho. El ventero se desesperaba de ver la flema del escudero y el maleficio del señor, y juraba que no había de ser como la vez pasada, que se le fueron sin pagar; y que ahora no le habían de valer los privilegios de su caballería para dejar de pagar lo uno y lo otro, aun hasta lo que pudiesen costar las botanas que se habían de echar a los rotos cueros.

Tenía el cura de las manos a don Quijote, el cual, creyendo que ya había acabado la aventura, y que se hallaba delante de la princesa Micomicona, se hincó de rodillas delante del cura, diciendo:

-Bien puede la vuestra grandeza, alta y famosa señora, vivir, de hoy más, segura que le pueda hacer mal esta mal nacida criatura; y yo también, de hoy más, soy quitto de la palabra que os di, pues, con el ayuda del alto Dios y con el

favor de aquella por quien yo vivo y respiro, tan bien la he cumplido.

-¿No lo dije yo? -dijo oyendo esto Sancho-. Sí que no estaba yo borracho: ¡mirad si tiene puesto ya en sal mi amo al gigante! ¡Ciertos son los toros: mi condado está de molde!

¿Quién no había de reír con los disparates de los dos, amo y mozo? Todos reían sino el ventero, que se daba a Satanás. Pero, en fin, tanto hicieron el barbero, Cardenio y el cura que, con no poco trabajo, dieron con don Quijote en la cama, el cual se quedó dormido, con muestras de grandísimo cansancio. Dejáronle dormir, y saliéronse al portal de la venta a consolar a Sancho Panza de no haber hallado la cabeza del gigante; aunque más tuvieron que hacer en aplacar al ventero, que estaba desesperado por la repentina muerte de sus cueros. Y la ventera decía en voz y en grito:

-En mal punto y en hora menguada entró en mi casa este caballero andante, que nunca mis ojos le hubieran visto, que tan caro me cuesta. La vez pasada se fue con el costo de una noche, de cena, cama, paja y cebada, para él y para su escudero, y un rocín y un jumento, diciendo que era caballero aventurero (que mala ventura le dé Dios a él y a cuantos aventureros hay en el mundo) y que por esto no estaba obligado a pagar nada, que así estaba escrito en los aranceles de la caballería andantesca. Y ahora, por su respeto, vino estotro señor y me llevó mi cola, y hámela vuelto con más de dos cuartillos de daño, toda pelada, que no puede servir para lo que la quiere mi marido. Y, por fin y remate de todo, romperme mis cueros y derramarme mi vino; que derramada le vea yo su sangre. ¡Pues no se piense; que, por los huesos de mi padre y por el siglo de mi madre, si no me lo han de pagar un cuarto sobre otro, o no me llamaría yo como me llamo ni sería hija de quien soy!

Estas y otras razones tales decía la ventera con grande enojo, y ayudábala su buena criada Maritornes. La hija callaba, y de cuando en cuando se sonreía. El cura lo sosegó todo, prometiendo de satisfacerles su pérdida lo mejor que pudiese, así de los cueros como del vino, y principalmente del menoscabo de la cola, de quien tanta cuenta hacían. Dorotea consoló a Sancho Panza diciéndole que cada y cuando que pareciese haber sido verdad que su amo hubiese descabezado al gigante, le prometía, en viéndose pacífica en su reino, de darle el mejor condado que en él hubiese. Consolóse con esto Sancho, y aseguró a la princesa que tuviese por cierto que él había visto la cabeza del gigante, y que, por más señas, tenía una barba que le llegaba a la cintura; y que si no parecía, era porque todo cuanto en aquella casa pasaba era por vía de encantamento, como él lo había probado otra vez que había posado en ella. Dorotea dijo que así lo creía, y que no tuviese pena, que todo se haría bien y sucedería a pedir de boca.

Sosegados todos, el cura quiso acabar de leer la novela, porque vio que faltaba poco. Cardenio, Dorotea y todos los demás le rogaron la acabase. Él, que a todos quiso dar gusto, y por el que él tenía de leerla, prosiguió el cuento, que así decía:

«Sucedió, pues, que, por la satisfacción que Anselmo tenía de la bondad de Camila, vivía una vida contenta y descuidada, y Camila, de industria, hacía mal rostro a Lotario, porque Anselmo entendiese al revés de la voluntad que le tenía; y, para más confirmación de su hecho, pidió licencia Lotario para no venir a su casa, pues claramente se mostraba la pesadumbre que con su vista Camila recibía; mas el engañado Anselmo le dijo que en ninguna manera tal hiciese. Y, desta manera, por mil maneras era Anselmo el fabricante de su deshonor, creyendo que lo era de su gusto.

»En esto, el que tenía Leonela de verse cualificada, no de con sus amores, llegó a tanto que, sin mirar a otra cosa, se iba tras él a suelta rienda, fiada en que su señora la encubría, y aun la advertía del modo que con poco recelo pudiese ponerle en ejecución. En fin, una noche sintió Anselmo pasos en el aposento de Leonela, y, queriendo entrar a ver quién los daba, sintió que le detenían la puerta, cosa que le puso más voluntad de abrirla; y tanta fuerza hizo, que la abrió, y entró dentro a tiempo que vio que un hombre saltaba por la ventana a la calle; y, acudiendo con presteza a alcanzarle o conocerle, no pudo conseguir lo uno ni lo otro, porque Leonela se abrazó con él, diciéndole:

»-Sosiégate, señor mío, y no te alborotes, ni sigas al que de aquí saltó; es cosa mía, y tanto, que es mi esposo.

»No lo quiso creer Anselmo; antes, ciego de enojo, sacó la daga y quiso herir a Leonela, diciéndole que le dijese la verdad, si no, que la mataría. Ella, con el miedo, sin saber lo que se decía, le dijo:

»-No me mates, señor, que yo te diré cosas de más importancia de las que puedes imaginar.

»-Dilas luego -dijo Anselmo-; si no, muerta eres.

»-Por ahora será imposible -dijo Leonela-, según estoy de turbada; déjame hasta mañana, que entonces sabrás de mí lo que te ha de admirar; y está seguro que el que saltó por esta ventana es un mancebo desta ciudad, que me ha dado la mano de ser mi esposo.

»Sosegóse con esto Anselmo y quiso aguardar el término que se le pedía, porque no pensaba oír cosa que contra Camila fuese, por estar de su bondad tan satisfecho y seguro; y así, se salió del aposento y dejó encerrada en él a Leonela, diciéndole que de allí no saldría hasta que le dijese lo que tenía que decirle.

»Fue luego a ver a Camila y a decirle, como le dijo, todo aquello que con su doncella le había pasado, y la palabra que le había dado de decirle grandes cosas

y de importancia. Si se turbó Camila o no, no hay para qué decirlo, porque fue tanto el temor que cobró, creyendo verdaderamente -y era de creer-que Leonela había de decir a Anselmo todo lo que sabía de su poca fe, que no tuvo ánimo para esperar si su sospecha salía falsa o no. Y aquella misma noche, cuando le pareció que Anselmo dormía, juntó las mejores joyas que tenía y algunos dineros, y, sin ser de nadie sentida, salió de casa y se fue a la de Lotario, a quien contó lo que pasaba, y le pidió que la pusiese en cobro, o que se ausentasen los dos donde de Anselmo pudiesen estar seguros. La confusión en que Camila puso a Lotario fue tal, que no le sabía responder palabra, ni menos sabía resolverse en lo que haría.

»En fin, acordó de llevar a Camila a un monesterio, en quien era priora una su hermana. Consintió Camila en ello, y, con la presteza que el caso pedía, la llevó Lotario y la dejó en el monesterio, y él, ansimesmo, se ausentó luego de la ciudad, sin dar parte a nadie de su ausencia.

»Cuando amaneció, sin echar de ver Anselmo que Camila faltaba de su lado, con el deseo que tenía de saber lo que Leonela quería decirle, se levantó y fue adonde la había dejado encerrada. Abrió y entró en el aposento, pero no halló en él a Leonela: sólo halló puestas unas sábanas añudadas a la ventana, indicio y señal que por allí se había descolgado e ido. Volvió luego muy triste a decírselo a Camila, y, no hallándola en la cama ni en toda la casa, quedó asombrado. Preguntó a los criados de casa por ella, pero nadie le supo dar razón de lo que pedía.

»Acertó acaso, andando a buscar a Camila, que vio sus cofres abiertos y que dellos faltaban las más de sus joyas, y con esto acabó de caer en la cuenta de su desgracia, y en que no era Leonela la causa de su desventura. Y, así como estaba, sin acabarse de vestir, triste y pensativo, fue a dar cuenta de su desdicha a su amigo Lotario. Mas, cuando no le halló, y sus criados le dijeron que aquella noche había faltado de casa y había llevado consigo todos los dineros que tenía, pensó perder el juicio. Y, para acabar de concluir con todo, volviéndose a su casa, no halló en ella ninguno de cuantos criados ni criadas tenía, sino la casa desierta y sola.

»No sabía qué pensar, qué decir, ni qué hacer, y poco a poco se le iba volviendo el juicio. Contemplábase y mirábase en un instante sin mujer, sin amigo y sin criados; desamparado, a su parecer, del cielo que le cubría, y sobre todo sin honra, porque en la falta de Camila vio su perdición.

»Resolvióse, en fin, a cabo de una gran pieza, de irse a la aldea de su amigo, donde había estado cuando dio lugar a que se maquinase toda aquella desventura. Cerró las puertas de su casa, subió a caballo, y con desmayado aliento se puso en camino; y, apenas hubo andado la mitad, cuando, acosado de

sus pensamientos, le fue forzoso apearse y arrendar su caballo a un árbol, a cuyo tronco se dejó caer, dando tiernos y dolorosos suspiros, y allí se estuvo hasta casi que anochecía; y aquella hora vio que venía un hombre a caballo de la ciudad, y, después de haberle saludado, le preguntó qué nuevas había en Florencia. El ciudadano respondió:

»-Las más estrañas que muchos días ha se han oído en ella; porque se dice públicamente que Lotario, aquel grande amigo de Anselmo el rico, que vivía a San Juan, se llevó esta noche a Camila, mujer de Anselmo, el cual tampoco parece. Todo esto ha dicho una criada de Camila, que anoche la halló el gobernador descolgándose con una sábana por las ventanas de la casa de Anselmo. En efeto, no sé puntualmente cómo pasó el negocio; sólo sé que toda la ciudad está admirada deste suceso, porque no se podía esperar tal hecho de la mucha y familiar amistad de los dos, que dicen que era tanta, que los llamaban *los dos amigos*.

»-¿Sábase, por ventura -dijo Anselmo-, el camino que llevan Lotario y Camila?

»-Ni por pienso -dijo el ciudadano-, puesto que el gobernador ha usado de mucha diligencia en buscarlos.

»-A Dios vais, señor -dijo Anselmo.

»-Con Él quedéis -respondió el ciudadano, y fuese.

»Con tan desdichadas nuevas, casi casi llegó a términos Anselmo, no sólo de perder el juicio, sino de acabar la vida. Levantóse como pudo y llegó a casa de su amigo, que aún no sabía su desgracia; mas, como le vio llegar amarillo, consumido y seco, entendió que de algún grave mal venía fatigado. Pidió luego Anselmo que le acostasen, y que le diesen aderezo de escribir. Hízose así, y dejáronle acostado y solo, porque él así lo quiso, y aun que le cerrasen la puerta. Viéndose, pues, solo, comenzó a cargar tanto la imaginación de su desventura, que claramente conoció que se le iba acabando la vida; y así, ordenó de dejar noticia de la causa de su estraña muerte; y, comenzando a escribir, antes que acabase de poner todo lo que quería, le faltó el aliento y dejó la vida en las manos del dolor que le causó su curiosidad impertinente.

»Viendo el señor de casa que era ya tarde y que Anselmo no llamaba, acordó de entrar a saber si pasaba adelante su indisposición, y hallóle tendido boca abajo, la mitad del cuerpo en la cama y la otra mitad sobre el bufete, sobre el cual estaba con el papel escrito y abierto, y él tenía aún la pluma en la mano. Llegóse el huésped a él, habiéndole llamado primero; y, trabándole por la mano, viendo que no le respondía y hallándole frío, vio que estaba muerto. Admiróse y congojóse en gran manera, y llamó a la gente de casa para que vieses la desgracia a Anselmo sucedida; y, finalmente, leyó el papel, que conoció que de



su misma mano estaba escrito, el cual contenía estas razones:

Un necio e impertinente deseo me quitó la vida. Si las nuevas de mi muerte llegaren a los oídos de Camila, sepa que yo la perdono, porque no estaba ella obligada a hacer milagros, ni yo tenía necesidad de querer que ella los hiciese; y, pues yo fui el fabricante de mi deshonra, no hay para qué...

»Hasta aquí escribió Anselmo, por donde se echó de ver que en aquel punto, sin poder acabar la razón, se le acabó la vida. Otro día dio aviso su amigo a los parientes de Anselmo de su muerte, los cuales ya sabían su desgracia, y el monesterio donde Camila estaba, casi en el término de acompañar a su esposo en aquel forzoso viaje, no por las nuevas del muerto esposo, mas por las que supo del ausente amigo. Dícese que, aunque se vio viuda, no quiso salir del monesterio, ni, menos, hacer profesión de monja, hasta que, no de allí a muchos días, le vinieron nuevas que Lotario había muerto en una batalla que en aquel tiempo dio monsiur de Lautrec al Gran Capitán Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba en el reino de Nápoles, donde había ido a parar el tarde arrepentido amigo; lo cual sabido por Camila, hizo profesión, y acabó en breves días la vida a las rigurosas manos de tristezas y melancolías. Éste fue el fin que tuvieron todos, nacido de un tan desatinado principio.»

-Bien -dijo el cura-me parece esta novela, pero no me puedo persuadir que esto sea verdad; y si es fingido, fingió mal el autor, porque no se puede imaginar que haya marido tan necio que quiera hacer tan costosa experiencia como Anselmo. Si este caso se pusiera entre un galán y una dama, pudiérase llevar, pero entre marido y mujer, algo tiene del imposible; y, en lo que toca al modo de contarle, no me descontenta.

## Capítulo XXXVI

*Que trata de la brava y descomunal batalla que don Quijote tuvo con unos cueros de vino tinto, con otros raros sucesos que en la venta le sucedieron*

ESTANDO en esto, el ventero, que estaba a la puerta de la venta, dijo:

-Esta que viene es una hermosa tropa de huéspedes: si ellos paran aquí, gaudeamus tenemos.

-¿Qué gente es? -dijo Cardenio.

-Cuatro hombres -respondió el ventero- vienen a caballo, a la jineta, con lanzas y adargas, y todos con antifaces negros; y junto con ellos viene una mujer vestida de blanco, en un sillón, ansimesmo cubierto el rostro, y otros dos mozos de a pie.

-¿Vienen muy cerca? -preguntó el cura.

-Tan cerca -respondió el ventero-, que ya llegan.

Oyendo esto Dorotea, se cubrió el rostro, y Cardenio se entró en el aposento de don Quijote; y casi no habían tenido lugar para esto, cuando entraron en la venta todos los que el ventero había dicho; y, apeándose los cuatro de a caballo, que de muy gentil talle y disposición eran, fueron a apearse a la mujer que en el sillón venía; y, tomándola uno dellos en sus brazos, la sentó en una silla que estaba a la entrada del aposento donde Cardenio se había escondido. En todo este tiempo, ni ella ni ellos se habían quitado los antifaces, ni hablado palabra alguna; sólo que, al sentarse la mujer en la silla, dio un profundo suspiro y dejó caer los brazos, como persona enferma y desmayada. Los mozos de a pie llevaron los caballos a la caballeriza.

Viendo esto el cura, deseoso de saber qué gente era aquella que con tal traje y tal silencio estaba, se fue donde estaban los mozos, y a uno dellos le preguntó lo que ya deseaba; el cual le respondió:

-Pardiez, señor, yo no sabré deciros qué gente sea ésta; sólo sé que muestra ser muy principal, especialmente aquel que llegó a tomar en sus brazos a aquella señora que habéis visto; y esto dígoles porque todos los demás le tienen respeto, y no se hace otra cosa más de la que él ordena y manda.

-Y la señora, ¿quién es? -preguntó el cura.

-Tampoco sabré decir eso -respondió el mozo-, porque en todo el camino no la he visto el rostro; suspirar sí la he oído muchas veces, y dar unos gemidos que parece que con cada uno dellos quiere dar el alma. Y no es de maravillar que no

sepamos más de lo que habemos dicho, porque mi compañero y yo no ha más de dos días que los acompañamos; porque, habiéndolos encontrado en el camino, nos rogaron y persuadieron que viniésemos con ellos hasta el Andalucía, ofreciéndose a pagárnoslo muy bien.

-¿Y habéis oído nombrar a alguno dellos? -preguntó el cura.

-No, por cierto -respondió el mozo-, porque todos caminan con tanto silencio que es maravilla, porque no se oye entre ellos otra cosa que los suspiros y sollozos de la pobre señora, que nos mueven a lástima; y sin duda tenemos creído que ella va forzada dondequiera que va, y, según se puede colegir por su hábito, ella es monja, o va a serlo, que es lo más cierto, y quizá porque no le debe de nacer de voluntad el monjío, va triste, como parece.

-Todo podría ser -dijo el cura.

Y, dejándolos, se volvió adonde estaba Dorotea, la cual, como había oído suspirar a la embozada, movida de natural compasión, se llegó a ella y le dijo:

-¿Qué mal sentís, señora mía? Mirad si es alguno de quien las mujeres suelen tener uso y experiencia de curarle, que de mi parte os ofrezco una buena voluntad de serviros.

A todo esto callaba la lastimada señora; y, aunque Dorotea tornó con mayores ofrecimientos, todavía se estaba en su silencio, hasta que llegó el caballero embozado que dijo el mozo que los demás obedecían, y dijo a Dorotea:

-No os canséis, señora, en ofrecer nada a esa mujer, porque tiene por costumbre de no agradecer cosa que por ella se hace, ni procuréis que os responda, si no queréis oír alguna mentira de su boca.

-Jamás la dije -dijo a esta sazón la que hasta allí había estado callando-; antes, por ser tan verdadera y tan sin trazas mentirosas, me veo ahora en tanta desventura; y desto vos mismo quiero que seáis el testigo, pues mi pura verdad os hace a vos ser falso y mentiroso.

Oyó estas razones Cardenio bien clara y distintamente, como quien estaba tan junto de quien las decía que sola la puerta del aposento de don Quijote estaba en medio; y, así como las oyó, dando una gran voz dijo:

-¡Válgame Dios! ¿Qué es esto que oigo? ¿Qué voz es esta que ha llegado a mis oídos?

Volvió la cabeza a estos gritos aquella señora, toda sobresaltada, y, no viendo quién las daba, se levantó en pie y fuese a entrar en el aposento; lo cual visto por el caballero, la detuvo, sin dejarla mover un paso. A ella, con la turbación y desasosiego, se le cayó el tafetán con que traía cubierto el rostro, y descubrió una hermosura incomparable y un rostro milagroso, aunque descolorido y asombrado, porque con los ojos andaba rodeando todos los lugares donde alcanzaba con la vista, con tanto ahínco, que parecía persona fuera de juicio;

cuyas señales, sin saber por qué las hacía, pusieron gran lástima en Dorotea y en cuantos la miraban. Teníala el caballero fuertemente asida por las espaldas, y, por estar tan ocupado en tenerla, no pudo acudir a alzarse el embozo, que se le caía, como, en efeto, se le cayó del todo; y, alzando los ojos Dorotea, que abrazada con la señora estaba, vio que el que abrazada ansimesmo la tenía era su esposo don Fernando; y, apenas le hubo conocido, cuando, arrojando de lo íntimo de sus entrañas un luengo y tristísimo «¡ay!», se dejó caer de espaldas desmayada; y, a no hallarse allí junto el barbero, que la recogió en los brazos, ella diera consigo en el suelo.

Acudió luego el cura a quitarle el embozo, para echarle agua en el rostro, y así como la descubrió, la conoció don Fernando, que era el que estaba abrazado con la otra, y quedó como muerto en verla; pero no porque dejase, con todo esto, de tener a Luscinda, que era la que procuraba soltarse de sus brazos; la cual había conocido en el suspiro a Cardenio, y él la había conocido a ella. Oyó asimesmo Cardenio el ¡ay! que dio Dorotea cuando se cayó desmayada, y, creyendo que era su Luscinda, salió del aposento despavorido, y lo primero que vio fue a don Fernando, que tenía abrazada a Luscinda. También don Fernando conoció luego a Cardenio; y todos tres, Luscinda, Cardenio y Dorotea, quedaron mudos y suspensos, casi sin saber lo que les había acontecido.

Callaban todos y mirábanse todos: Dorotea a don Fernando, don Fernando a Cardenio, Cardenio a Luscinda y Luscinda a Cardenio. Mas quien primero rompió el silencio fue Luscinda, hablando a don Fernando desta manera:

-Dejadme, señor don Fernando, por lo que debéis a ser quien sois, ya que por otro respeto no lo hagáis; dejadme llegar al muro de quien yo soy yedra, al arrimo de quien no me han podido apartar vuestras importunaciones, vuestras amenazas, vuestras promesas ni vuestras dádivas. Notad cómo el cielo, por desusados y a nosotros encubiertos caminos, me ha puesto a mi verdadero esposo delante. Y bien sabéis por mil costosas experiencias que sola la muerte fuera bastante para borrarle de mi memoria. Sean, pues, parte tan claros desengaños para que volváis, ya que no podáis hacer otra cosa, el amor en rabia, la voluntad en despecho, y acabadme con él la vida; que, como yo la rinda delante de mi buen esposo, la daré por bien empleada: quizá con mi muerte quedará satisfecho de la fe que le mantuve hasta el último trance de la vida.

Había en este entretanto vuelto Dorotea en sí, y había estado escuchando todas las razones que Luscinda dijo, por las cuales vino en conocimiento de quién ella era; que, viendo que don Fernando aún no la dejaba de los brazos, ni respondía a sus razones, esforzándose lo más que pudo, se levantó y se fue a hincar de rodillas a sus pies; y, derramando mucha cantidad de hermosas y lastimeras

lágrimas, así le comenzó a decir:

-Si ya no es, señor mío, que los rayos deste sol que en tus brazos eclipsado tienes te quitan y ofuscan los de tus ojos, ya habrás echado de ver que la que a tus pies está arrodillada es la sin ventura, hasta que tú quieras, y la desdichada Dorotea. Yo soy aquella labradora humilde a quien tú, por tu bondad o por tu gusto, quisiste levantar a la alteza de poder llamarse tuya. Soy la que, encerrada en los límites de la honestidad, vivió vida contenta hasta que, a las voces de tus importunidades, y, al parecer, justos y amorosos sentimientos, abrió las puertas de su recato y te entregó las llaves de su libertad: dádiva de ti tan mal agradecida, cual lo muestra bien claro haber sido forzoso hallarme en el lugar donde me hallas, y verte yo a ti de la manera que te veo. Pero, con todo esto, no querría que cayese en tu imaginación pensar que he venido aquí con pasos de mi deshonra, habiéndome traído sólo los del dolor y sentimiento de verme de ti olvidada. Tú quisiste que yo fuese tuya, y quisístelo de manera que, aunque ahora quieras que no lo sea, no será posible que tú dejes de ser mío. Mira, señor mío, que puede ser recompensa a la hermosura y nobleza por quien me dejas la incomparable voluntad que te tengo. Tú no puedes ser de la hermosa Luscinda, porque eres mío, ni ella puede ser tuya, porque es de Cardenio; y más fácil te será, si en ello miras, reducir tu voluntad a querer a quien te adora, que no encaminar la que te aborrece a que bien te quiera. Tú solicitaste mi descuido, tú rogaste a mi entereza, tú no ignoraste mi calidad, tú sabes bien de la manera que me entregué a toda tu voluntad: no te queda lugar ni acogida de llamarte a engaño. Y si esto es así, como lo es, y tú eres tan cristiano como caballero, ¿por qué por tantos rodeos dilatas de hacerme venturosa en los fines, como me heciste en los principios? Y si no me quieres por la que soy, que soy tu verdadera y legítima esposa, quiéreme, a lo menos, y admíteme por tu esclava; que, como yo esté en tu poder, me tendré por dichosa y bien afortunada. No permitas, con dejarme y desampararme, que se hagan y junten corrillos en mi deshonra; no des tan mala vejez a mis padres, pues no lo merecen los leales servicios que, como buenos vasallos, a los tuyos siempre han hecho. Y si te parece que has de aniquilar tu sangre por mezclarla con la mía, considera que pocas o ninguna nobleza hay en el mundo que no haya corrido por este camino, y que la que se toma de las mujeres no es la que hace al caso en las ilustres decendencias; cuanto más, que la verdadera nobleza consiste en la virtud, y si ésta a ti te falta, negándome lo que tan justamente me debes, yo quedaré con más ventajas de noble que las que tú tienes. En fin, señor, lo que últimamente te digo es que, quieras o no quieras, yo soy tu esposa: testigos son tus palabras, que no han ni deben ser mentirosas, si ya es que te precias de aquello por que me desprecias; testigo será la firma que hiciste, y testigo el cielo, a quien tú llamaste por testigo

de lo que me prometías. Y, cuando todo esto falte, tu misma conciencia no ha de faltar de dar voces callando en mitad de tus alegrías, volviendo por esta verdad que te he dicho y turbando tus mejores gustos y contentos.

Estas y otras razones dijo la lastimada Dorotea, con tanto sentimiento y lágrimas, que los mismos que acompañaban a don Fernando, y cuantos presentes estaban, la acompañaron en ellas. Escuchóla don Fernando sin replicalle palabra, hasta que ella dio fin a las suyas y principio a tantos sollozos y suspiros, que bien había de ser corazón de bronce el que con muestras de tanto dolor no se enterneciera. Mirándola estaba Luscinda, no menos lastimada de su sentimiento que admirada de su mucha discreción y hermosura; y, aunque quisiera llegarse a ella y decirle algunas palabras de consuelo, no la dejaban los brazos de don Fernando, que apretada la tenían. El cual, lleno de confusión y espanto, al cabo de un buen espacio que atentamente estuvo mirando a Dorotea, abrió los brazos y, dejando libre a Luscinda, dijo:

-Venciste, hermosa Dorotea, venciste; porque no es posible tener ánimo para negar tantas verdades juntas.

Con el desmayo que Luscinda había tenido, así como la dejó don Fernando, iba a caer en el suelo; mas, hallándose Cardenio allí junto, que a las espaldas de don Fernando se había puesto porque no le conociese, prosupuesto todo temor y aventurando a todo riesgo, acudió a sostener a Luscinda, y, cogiéndola entre sus brazos, le dijo:

-Si el piadoso cielo gusta y quiere que ya tengas algún descanso, leal, firme y hermosa señora mía, en ninguna parte creo yo que le tendrás más seguro que en estos brazos que ahora te reciben, y otro tiempo te recibieron, cuando la fortuna quiso que pudiese llamarte mía.

A estas razones, puso Luscinda en Cardenio los ojos, y, habiendo comenzado a conocerle, primero por la voz, y asegurándose que él era con la vista, casi fuera de sentido y sin tener cuenta a ningún honesto respeto, le echó los brazos al cuello, y, juntando su rostro con el de Cardenio, le dijo:

-Vos sí, señor mío, sois el verdadero dueño desta vuestra captiva, aunque más lo impida la contraria suerte, y aunque más amenazas le hagan a esta vida que en la vuestra se sustenta.

Estraño espectáculo fue éste para don Fernando y para todos los circunstantes, admirándose de tan no visto suceso. Parecióle a Dorotea que don Fernando había perdido la color del rostro y que hacía además de querer vengarse de Cardenio, porque le vio encaminar la mano a ponella en la espada; y, así como lo pensó, con no vista presteza se abrazó con él por las rodillas, besándoselas y teniéndole apretado, que no le dejaba mover, y, sin cesar un punto de sus lágrimas, le decía:

-¿Qué es lo que piensas hacer, único refugio mío, en este tan impensado

trance? Tú tienes a tus pies a tu esposa, y la que quieres que lo sea está en los brazos de su marido. Mira si te estará bien o te será posible deshacer lo que el cielo ha hecho, o si te convendrá querer levantar a igualar a ti mismo a la que, pospuesto todo inconveniente, confirmada en su verdad y firmeza, delante de tus ojos tiene los suyos, bañados de licor amoroso el rostro y pecho de su verdadero esposo. Por quien Dios es te ruego, y por quien tú eres te suplico, que este tan notorio desengaño no sólo no acreciente tu ira, sino que la mengüe en tal manera, que con quietud y sosiego permitas que estos dos amantes le tengan, sin impedimiento tuyo, todo el tiempo que el cielo quisiere concedérsele; y en esto mostrarás la generosidad de tu ilustre y noble pecho, y verá el mundo que tiene contigo más fuerza la razón que el apetito.

En tanto que esto decía Dorotea, aunque Cardenio tenía abrazada a Luscinda, no quitaba los ojos de don Fernando, con determinación de que, si le viese hacer algún movimiento en su perjuicio, procurar defenderse y ofender como mejor pudiese a todos aquellos que en su daño se mostrasen, aunque le costase la vida. Pero a esta sazón acudieron los amigos de don Fernando, y el cura y el barbero, que a todo habían estado presentes, sin que faltase el bueno de Sancho Panza, y todos rodeaban a don Fernando, suplicándole tuviese por bien de mirar las lágrimas de Dorotea; y que, siendo verdad, como sin duda ellos creían que lo era, lo que en sus razones había dicho, que no permitiese quedase defraudada de sus tan justas esperanzas. Que considerase que, no acaso, como parecía, sino con particular providencia del cielo, se habían todos juntado en lugar donde menos ninguno pensaba; y que advirtiese -dijo el cura-que sola la muerte podía apartar a Luscinda de Cardenio; y, aunque los dividiesen filos de alguna espada, ellos tendrían por felicísima su muerte; y que en los lazos inremediables era suma cordura, forzándose y venciéndose a sí mismo, mostrar un generoso pecho, permitiendo que por sola su voluntad los dos gozasen el bien que el cielo ya les había concedido; que pusiese los ojos ansimesmo en la beldad de Dorotea, y vería que pocas o ninguna se le podían igualar, cuanto más hacerle ventaja, y que juntase a su hermosura su humildad y el extremo del amor que le tenía; y, sobre todo, advirtiese que si se preciaba de caballero y de cristiano, que no podía hacer otra cosa que cumplille la palabra dada, y que, cumpliéndosela, cumpliría con Dios y satisfaría a las gentes discretas, las cuales saben y conocen que es prerrogativa de la hermosura, aunque esté en sujeto humilde, como se acompañe con la honestidad, poder levantarse e igualarse a cualquiera alteza, sin nota de menoscabo del que la levanta e iguala a sí mismo; y, cuando se cumplen las fuertes leyes del gusto, como en ello no intervenga pecado, no debe de ser culpado el que las sigue.

En efeto, a estas razones añadieron todos otras, tales y tantas, que el valeroso

pecho de don Fernando (en fin, como alimentado con ilustre sangre) se ablandó y se dejó vencer de la verdad, que él no pudiera negar aunque quisiera; y la señal que dio de haberse rendido y entregado al buen parecer que se le había propuesto fue abajarse y abrazar a Dorotea, diciéndole:

-Levantaos, señora mía, que no es justo que esté arrodillada a mis pies la que yo tengo en mi alma; y si hasta aquí no he dado muestras de lo que digo, quizá ha sido por orden del cielo, para que, viendo yo en vos la fe con que me amáis, os sepa estimar en lo que merecéis. Lo que os ruego es que no me reprehendáis mi mal término y mi mucho descuido, pues la misma ocasión y fuerza que me movió para acetaros por mía, esa misma me impelió para procurar no ser vuestro. Y que esto sea verdad, volved y mirad los ojos de la ya contenta Luscinda, y en ellos hallaréis disculpa de todos mis yerros; y, pues ella halló y alcanzó lo que deseaba, y yo he hallado en vos lo que me cumple, viva ella segura y contenta luengos y felices años con su Cardenio, que yo rogaré al cielo que me los deje vivir con mi Dorotea.

Y, diciendo esto, la tornó a abrazar y a juntar su rostro con el suyo, con tan tierno sentimiento, que le fue necesario tener gran cuenta con que las lágrimas no acabasen de dar indubitables señas de su amor y arrepentimiento. No lo hicieron así las de Luscinda y Cardenio, y aun las de casi todos los que allí presentes estaban, porque comenzaron a derramar tantas, los unos de contento propio y los otros del ajeno, que no parecía sino que algún grave y mal caso a todos había sucedido. Hasta Sancho Panza lloraba, aunque después dijo que no lloraba él sino por ver que Dorotea no era, como él pensaba, la reina Micomicona, de quien él tantas mercedes esperaba. Duró algún espacio, junto con el llanto, la admiración en todos, y luego Cardenio y Luscinda se fueron a poner de rodillas ante don Fernando, dándole gracias de la merced que les había hecho con tan corteses razones, que don Fernando no sabía qué responderles; y así, los levantó y abrazó con muestras de mucho amor y de mucha cortesía.

Preguntó luego a Dorotea le dijese cómo había venido a aquel lugar tan lejos del suyo. Ella, con breves y discretas razones, contó todo lo que antes había contado a Cardenio, de lo cual gustó tanto don Fernando y los que con él venían, que quisieran que durara el cuento más tiempo: tanta era la gracia con que Dorotea contaba sus desventuras. Y, así como hubo acabado, dijo don Fernando lo que en la ciudad le había acontecido después que halló el papel en el seno de Luscinda, donde declaraba ser esposa de Cardenio y no poderlo ser suya. Dijo que la quiso matar, y lo hiciera si de sus padres no fuera impedido; y que así, se salió de su casa, despechado y corrido, con determinación de vengarse con más comodidad; y que otro día supo como Luscinda había faltado de casa de sus padres, sin que nadie supiese decir dónde se había ido, y que, en resolución, al



cabo de algunos meses vino a saber como estaba en un monesterio, con voluntad de quedarse en él toda la vida, si no la pudiese pasar con Cardenio; y que, así como lo supo, escogiendo para su compañía aquellos tres caballeros, vino al lugar donde estaba, a la cual no había querido hablar, temeroso que, en sabiendo que él estaba allí, había de haber más guarda en el monesterio; y así, aguardando un día a que la portería estuviese abierta, dejó a los dos a la guarda de la puerta, y él, con otro, habían entrado en el monesterio buscando a Luscinda, la cual hallaron en el claustro hablando con una monja; y, arrebatándola, sin darle lugar a otra cosa, se habían venido con ella a un lugar donde se acomodaron de aquello que hubieron menester para traella. Todo lo cual habían podido hacer bien a su salvo, por estar el monesterio en el campo, buen trecho fuera del pueblo. Dijo que, así como Luscinda se vio en su poder, perdió todos los sentidos; y que, después de vuelta en sí, no había hecho otra cosa sino llorar y suspirar, sin hablar palabra alguna; y que así, acompañados de silencio y de lágrimas, habían llegado a aquella venta, que para él era haber llegado al cielo, donde se rematan y tienen fin todas las desventuras de la tierra.

## Capítulo XXXVII

*Que prosigue la historia de la famosa infanta Micomicona, con otras graciosas aventuras*

TODO esto escuchaba Sancho, no con poco dolor de su ánimo, viendo que se le desaparecían e iban en humo las esperanzas de su ditado, y que la linda princesa Micomicona se le había vuelto en Dorotea, y el gigante en don Fernando, y su amo se estaba durmiendo a sueño suelto, bien descuidado de todo lo sucedido. No se podía asegurar Dorotea si era soñado el bien que poseía. Cardenio estaba en el mismo pensamiento, y el de Luscinda corría por la misma cuenta. Don Fernando daba gracias al cielo por la merced recibida y haberle sacado de aquel intrincado laberinto, donde se hallaba tan a pique de perder el crédito y el alma; y, finalmente, cuantos en la venta estaban, estaban contentos y gozosos del buen suceso que habían tenido tan trabados y desesperados negocios.

Todo lo ponía en su punto el cura, como discreto, y a cada uno daba el parabién del bien alcanzado; pero quien más jubilaba y se contentaba era la ventera, por la promesa que Cardenio y el cura le habían hecho de pagalle todos los daños e intereses que por cuenta de don Quijote le hubiesen venido. Sólo Sancho, como ya se ha dicho, era el afligido, el desventurado y el triste; y así, con malencónico semblante, entró a su amo, el cual acababa de despertar, a quien dijo:

-Bien puede vuestra merced, señor Triste Figura, dormir todo lo que quisiere, sin cuidado de matar a ningún gigante, ni de volver a la princesa su reino: que ya todo está hecho y concluido.

-Eso creo yo bien -respondió don Quijote-, porque he tenido con el gigante la más descomunal y desaforada batalla que pienso tener en todos los días de mi vida; y de un revés, ¡zas!, le derribé la cabeza en el suelo, y fue tanta la sangre que le salió, que los arroyos corrían por la tierra como si fueran de agua.

-Como si fueran de vino tinto, pudiera vuestra merced decir mejor -respondió Sancho-, porque quiero que sepa vuestra merced, si es que no lo sabe, que el gigante muerto es un cuero horadado, y la sangre, seis arrobas de vino tinto que encerraba en su vientre; y la cabeza cortada es la puta que me parió, y llévelo todo Satanás.

-Y ¿qué es lo que dices, loco? -replicó don Quijote-. ¿Estás en tu seso?

-Levántese vuestra merced -dijo Sancho-, y verá el buen recado que ha hecho,

y lo que tenemos que pagar; y verá a la reina convertida en una dama particular, llamada Dorotea, con otros sucesos que, si cae en ellos, le han de admirar.

-No me maravillaría de nada deso -replicó don Quijote-, porque, si bien te acuerdas, la otra vez que aquí estuvimos te dije yo que todo cuanto aquí sucedía eran cosas de encantamento, y no sería mucho que ahora fuese lo mismo.

-Todo lo creyera yo -respondió Sancho-, si también mi manteamiento fuera cosa dese jaez, mas no lo fue, sino real y verdaderamente; y vi yo que el ventero que aquí está hoy día tenía del un cabo de la manta, y me empujaba hacia el cielo con mucho donaire y brío, y con tanta risa como fuerza; y donde interviene conocerse las personas, tengo para mí, aunque simple y pecador, que no hay encantamento alguno, sino mucho molimiento y mucha mala ventura.

-Ahora bien, Dios lo remediará -dijo don Quijote-. Dame de vestir y déjame salir allá fuera, que quiero ver los sucesos y transformaciones que dices.

Diole de vestir Sancho, y, en el entretanto que se vestía, contó el cura a don Fernando y a los demás las locuras de don Quijote, y del artificio que habían usado para sacarle de la Peña Pobre, donde él se imaginaba estar por desdenes de su señora. Contóles asimismo casi todas las aventuras que Sancho había contado, de que no poco se admiraron y rieron, por parecerles lo que a todos parecía: ser el más extraño género de locura que podía caber en pensamiento desparatado. Dijo más el cura: que, pues ya el buen suceso de la señora Dorotea impedía pasar con su disignio adelante, que era menester inventar y hallar otro para poderle llevar a su tierra. Ofrecióse Cardenio de proseguir lo comenzado, y que Luscinda haría y representaría la persona de Dorotea.

-No -dijo don Fernando-, no ha de ser así: que yo quiero que Dorotea prosiga su invención; que, como no sea muy lejos de aquí el lugar deste buen caballero, yo holgaré de que se procure su remedio.

-No está más de dos jornadas de aquí.

-Pues, aunque estuviera más, gustara yo de caminallas, a trueco de hacer tan buena obra.

Salió, en esto, don Quijote, armado de todos sus pertrechos, con el yelmo, aunque abollado, de Mambrino en la cabeza, embrazado de su rodela y arrimado a su tronco o lanzón. Suspendió a don Fernando y a los demás la extraña presencia de don Quijote, viendo su rostro de media legua de andadura, seco y amarillo, la desigualdad de sus armas y su mesurado continente, y estuvieron callando hasta ver lo que él decía, el cual, con mucha gravedad y reposo, puestos los ojos en la hermosa Dorotea, dijo:

-Estoy informado, hermosa señora, deste mi escudero que la vuestra grandeza se ha aniquilado, y vuestro ser se ha deshecho, porque de reina y gran señora que solíades ser os habéis vuelto en una particular doncella. Si esto ha sido por orden

del rey nigromante de vuestro padre, temeroso que yo no os diese la necesaria y debida ayuda, digo que no supo ni sabe de la misa la media, y que fue poco versado en las historias caballerescas, porque si él las hubiera leído y pasado tan atentamente y con tanto espacio como yo las pasé y leí, hallara a cada paso cómo otros caballeros de menor fama que la mía habían acabado cosas más dificultosas, no siéndolo mucho matar a un gigantillo, por arrogante que sea; porque no ha muchas horas que yo me vi con él, y... quiero callar, porque no me digan que miento; pero el tiempo, descubridor de todas las cosas, lo dirá cuando menos lo pensemos.

-Vístesos vos con dos cueros, que no con un gigante -dijo a esta sazón el ventero.

Al cual mandó don Fernando que callase y no interrumpiese la plática de don Quijote en ninguna manera; y don Quijote prosiguió diciendo:

-Digo, en fin, alta y desheredada señora, que si por la causa que he dicho vuestro padre ha hecho este metamorfóseos en vuestra persona, que no le deis crédito alguno, porque no hay ningún peligro en la tierra por quien no se abra camino mi espada, con la cual, poniendo la cabeza de vuestro enemigo en tierra, os pondré a vos la corona de la vuestra en la cabeza en breves días.

No dijo más don Quijote, y esperó a que la princesa le respondiese, la cual, como ya sabía la determinación de don Fernando de que se prosiguiese adelante en el engaño hasta llevar a su tierra a don Quijote, con mucho donaire y gravedad, le respondió:

-Quienquiera que os dijo, valeroso caballero de la Triste Figura, que yo me había mudado y trocado de mi ser, no os dijo lo cierto, porque la misma que ayer fui me soy hoy. Verdad es que alguna mudanza han hecho en mí ciertos acaecimientos de buena ventura, que me la han dado la mejor que yo pudiera desearme, pero no por eso he dejado de ser la que antes y de tener los mismos pensamientos de valirme del valor de vuestro valeroso e invenerable brazo que siempre he tenido. Así que, señor mío, vuestra bondad vuelva la honra al padre que me engendró, y téngale por hombre advertido y prudente, pues con su ciencia halló camino tan fácil y tan verdadero para remediar mi desgracia; que yo creo que si por vos, señor, no fuera, jamás acertara a tener la ventura que tengo; y en esto digo tanta verdad como son buenos testigos della los más destos señores que están presentes. Lo que resta es que mañana nos pongamos en camino, porque ya hoy se podrá hacer poca jornada, y en lo demás del buen suceso que espero, lo dejaré a Dios y al valor de vuestro pecho.

Esto dijo la discreta Dorotea, y, en oyéndolo don Quijote, se volvió a Sancho, y, con muestras de mucho enojo, le dijo:

-Ahora te digo, Sanchuelo, que eres el mayor bellacuelo que hay en España.

Dime, ladrón vagamundo, ¿no me acabaste de decir ahora que esta princesa se había vuelto en una doncella que se llamaba Dorotea, y que la cabeza que entiendo que corté a un gigante era la puta que te parió, con otros disparates que me pusieron en la mayor confusión que jamás he estado en todos los días de mi vida? ¡Voto... -y miró al cielo y apretó los dientes-que estoy por hacer un estrago en ti, que ponga sal en la mollera a todos cuantos mentirosos escuderos hubiere de caballeros andantes, de aquí adelante, en el mundo!

-Vuestra merced se sosiegue, señor mío -respondió Sancho-, que bien podría ser que yo me hubiese engañado en lo que toca a la mutación de la señora princesa Micomicona; pero, en lo que toca a la cabeza del gigante, o, a lo menos, a la horadación de los cueros y a lo de ser vino tinto la sangre, no me engaño, ¡vive Dios!, porque los cueros allí están heridos, a la cabecera del lecho de vuestra merced, y el vino tinto tiene hecho un lago el aposento; y si no, al freír de los huevos lo verá; quiero decir que lo verá cuando aquí su merced del señor ventero le pida el menoscabo de todo. De lo demás, de que la señora reina se esté como se estaba, me regocijo en el alma, porque me va mi parte, como a cada hijo de vecino.

-Ahora yo te digo, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, que eres un mentecato; y perdóname, y basta.

-Basta -dijo don Fernando-, y no se hable más en esto; y, pues la señora princesa dice que se camine mañana, porque ya hoy es tarde, hágase así, y esta noche la podremos pasar en buena conversación hasta el venidero día, donde todos acompañaremos al señor don Quijote, porque queremos ser testigos de las valerosas e inauditas hazañas que ha de hacer en el discurso desta grande empresa que a su cargo lleva.

-Yo soy el que tengo de servir y acompañaros -respondió don Quijote-, y agradezco mucho la merced que se me hace y la buena opinión que de mí se tiene, la cual procuraré que salga verdadera, o me costará la vida, y aun más, si más costarme puede.

Muchas palabras de comedimiento y muchos ofrecimientos pasaron entre don Quijote y don Fernando; pero a todo puso silencio un pasajero que en aquella sazón entró en la venta, el cual en su traje mostraba ser cristiano recién venido de tierra de moros, porque venía vestido con una casaca de paño azul, corta de faldas, con medias mangas y sin cuello; los calzones eran asimismo de lienzo azul, con bonete de la misma color; traía unos borceguíes datilados y un alfanje morisco, puesto en un tahelí que le atravesaba el pecho. Entró luego tras él, encima de un jumento, una mujer a la morisca vestida, cubierto el rostro con una toca en la cabeza; traía un bonetillo de brocado, y vestida una almalafa, que desde los hombros a los pies la cubría. Era el hombre de robusto y agraciado

talle, de edad de poco más de cuarenta años, algo moreno de rostro, largo de bigotes y la barba muy bien puesta. En resolución, él mostraba en su apostura que si estuviera bien vestido, le juzgaran por persona de calidad y bien nacida.

Pidió, en entrando, un aposento, y, como le dijeron que en la venta no le había, mostró recibir pesadumbre; y, llegándose a la que en el traje parecía mora, la apeó en sus brazos. Luscinda, Dorotea, la ventera, su hija y Maritornes, llevadas del nuevo y para ellas nunca visto traje, rodearon a la mora, y Dorotea, que siempre fue agraciada, comedida y discreta, pareciéndole que así ella como el que la traía se congojaban por la falta del aposento, le dijo:

-No os dé mucha pena, señora mía, la incomodidad de regalo que aquí falta, pues es propio de ventas no hallarse en ellas; pero, con todo esto, si gustáredes de pasar con nosotras -señalando a Luscinda-, quizá en el discurso de este camino habréis hallado otros no tan buenos acogimientos.

No respondió nada a esto la embozada, ni hizo otra cosa que levantarse de donde sentado se había, y, puestas entrambas manos cruzadas sobre el pecho, inclinada la cabeza, dobló el cuerpo en señal de que lo agradecía. Por su silencio imaginaron que, sin duda alguna, debía de ser mora, y que no sabía hablar cristiano. Llegó, en esto, el cautivo, que entendiendo en otra cosa hasta entonces había estado, y, viendo que todas tenían cercada a la que con él venía, y que ella a cuanto le decían callaba, dijo:

-Señoras mías, esta doncella apenas entiende mi lengua, ni sabe hablar otra ninguna sino conforme a su tierra, y por esto no debe de haber respondido, ni responde, a lo que se le ha preguntado.

-No se le pregunta otra cosa ninguna -respondió Luscinda-sino ofrecelle por esta noche nuestra compañía y parte del lugar donde nos acomodáremos, donde se le hará el regalo que la comodidad ofreciere, con la voluntad que obliga a servir a todos los extranjeros que dello tuvieren necesidad, especialmente siendo mujer a quien se sirve.

-Por ella y por mí -respondió el cautivo-os beso, señora mía, las manos, y estimo mucho y en lo que es razón la merced ofrecida; que en tal ocasión, y de tales personas como vuestro parecer muestra, bien se echa de ver que ha de ser muy grande.

-Decidme, señor -dijo Dorotea-: ¿esta señora es cristiana o mora? Porque el traje y el silencio nos hace pensar que es lo que no querríamos que fuese.

-Mora es en el traje y en el cuerpo, pero en el alma es muy grande cristiana, porque tiene grandísimos deseos de serlo.

-Luego, ¿no es bautizada? -replicó Luscinda.

-No ha habido lugar para ello -respondió el cautivo-después que salió de Argel, su patria y tierra, y hasta agora no se ha visto en peligro de muerte tan

cercana que obligase a baptizalla sin que supiese primero todas las ceremonias que nuestra Madre la Santa Iglesia manda; pero Dios será servido que presto se bautice con la decencia que la calidad de su persona merece, que es más de lo que muestra su hábito y el mío.

Con estas razones puso gana en todos los que escuchándole estaban de saber quién fuese la mora y el cautivo, pero nadie se lo quiso preguntar por entonces, por ver que aquella sazón era más para procurarles descanso que para preguntarles sus vidas. Dorotea la tomó por la mano y la llevó a sentar junto a sí, y le rogó que se quitase el embozo. Ella miró al cautivo, como si le preguntara le dijese lo que decían y lo que ella haría. Él, en lengua árabe, le dijo que le pedían se quitase el embozo, y que lo hiciese; y así, se lo quitó, y descubrió un rostro tan hermoso, que Dorotea la tuvo por más hermosa que a Luscinda, y Luscinda por más hermosa que a Dorotea, y todos los circustantes conocieron que si alguno se podría igualar al de las dos, era el de la mora, y aun hubo algunos que le aventajaron en alguna cosa. Y, como la hermosura tenga prerrogativa y gracia de reconciliar los ánimos y atraer las voluntades, luego se rindieron todos al deseo de servir y acariciar a la hermosa mora.

Preguntó don Fernando al cautivo cómo se llamaba la mora, el cual respondió que *lela* Zoraida; y, así como esto oyó, ella entendió lo que le habían preguntado al cristiano, y dijo con mucha priesa, llena de congoja y donaire:

-¡No, no Zoraida: María, María! -dando a entender que se llamaba María y no Zoraida.

Estas palabras, el grande afecto con que la mora las dijo, hicieron derramar más de una lágrima a algunos de los que la escucharon, especialmente a las mujeres, que de su naturaleza son tiernas y compasivas. Abrazóla Luscinda con mucho amor, diciéndole:

-Sí, sí: María, María.

A lo cual respondió la mora:

-¡Sí, sí: María; Zoraida macange! -que quiere decir no.

Ya en esto llegaba la noche, y, por orden de los que venían con don Fernando, había el ventero puesto diligencia y cuidado en aderezarles de cenar lo mejor que a él le fue posible. Llegada, pues, la hora, sentáronse todos a una larga mesa, como de tinelo, porque no la había redonda ni cuadrada en la venta, y dieron la cabecera y principal asiento, puesto que él lo rehusaba, a don Quijote, el cual quiso que estuviese a su lado la señora Micomicona, pues él era su aguardador. Luego se sentaron Luscinda y Zoraida, y frontero dellas don Fernando y Cardenio, y luego el cautivo y los demás caballeros, y, al lado de las señoras, el cura y el barbero. Y así, cenaron con mucho contento, y acrecentóseles más viendo que, dejando de comer don Quijote, movido de otro semejante espíritu

que el que le movió a hablar tanto como habló cuando cenó con los cabreros, comenzó a decir:

-Verdaderamente, si bien se considera, señores míos, grandes e inauditas cosas ven los que profesan la orden de la andante caballería. Si no, ¿cuál de los vivientes habrá en el mundo que ahora por la puerta deste castillo entrara, y de la suerte que estamos nos viere, que juzgue y crea que nosotros somos quien somos? ¿Quién podrá decir que esta señora que está a mi lado es la gran reina que todos sabemos, y que yo soy aquel Caballero de la Triste Figura que anda por ahí en boca de la fama? Ahora no hay que dudar, sino que esta arte y ejercicio excede a todas aquellas y aquellos que los hombres inventaron, y tanto más se ha de tener en estima cuanto a más peligros está sujeto. Quítenseme delante los que dijeren que las letras hacen ventaja a las armas, que les diré, y sean quien se fueren, que no saben lo que dicen. Porque la razón que los tales suelen decir, y a lo que ellos más se atienen, es que los trabajos del espíritu exceden a los del cuerpo, y que las armas sólo con el cuerpo se ejercitan, como si fuese su ejercicio oficio de ganapanes, para el cual no es menester más de buenas fuerzas; o como si en esto que llamamos armas los que las profesamos no se encerrasen los actos de la fortaleza, los cuales piden para ejecutarlos mucho entendimiento; o como si no trabajase el ánimo del guerrero que tiene a su cargo un ejército, o la defensa de una ciudad sitiada, así con el espíritu como con el cuerpo. Si no, véase si se alcanza con las fuerzas corporales a saber y conjeturar el intento del enemigo, los disignios, las estratagemas, las dificultades, el prevenir los daños que se temen; que todas estas cosas son acciones del entendimiento, en quien no tiene parte alguna el cuerpo. Siendo pues así, que las armas requieren espíritu, como las letras, veamos ahora cuál de los dos espíritus, el del letrado o el del guerrero, trabaja más. Y esto se vendrá a conocer por el fin y paradero a que cada uno se encamina, porque aquella intención se ha de estimar en más que tiene por objeto más noble fin. Es el fin y paradero de las letras..., y no hablo ahora de las divinas, que tienen por blanco llevar y encaminar las almas al cielo, que a un fin tan sin fin como éste ninguno otro se le puede igualar; hablo de las letras humanas, que es su fin poner en su punto la justicia distributiva y dar a cada uno lo que es suyo, entender y hacer que las buenas leyes se guarden. Fin, por cierto, generoso y alto y digno de grande alabanza, pero no de tanta como merece aquel a que las armas atienden, las cuales tienen por objeto y fin la paz, que es el mayor bien que los hombres pueden desear en esta vida. Y así, las primeras buenas nuevas que tuvo el mundo y tuvieron los hombres fueron las que dieron los ángeles la noche que fue nuestro día, cuando cantaron en los aires: «Gloria sea en las alturas, y paz en la tierra, a los hombres de buena voluntad»; y a la salutación que el mejor maestro



de la tierra y del cielo enseñó a sus allegados y favoritos, fue decirles que cuando entrasen en alguna casa, dijese: «Paz sea en esta casa»; y otras muchas veces les dijo: «Mi paz os doy, mi paz os dejo: paz sea con vosotros», bien como joya y prenda dada y dejada de tal mano; joya que sin ella, en la tierra ni en el cielo puede haber bien alguno. Esta paz es el verdadero fin de la guerra, que lo mismo es decir armas que guerra. Prosupuesta, pues, esta verdad, que el fin de la guerra es la paz, y que en esto hace ventaja al fin de las letras, vengamos ahora a los trabajos del cuerpo del letrado y a los del profesor de las armas, y véase cuáles son mayores.

De tal manera, y por tan buenos términos, iba prosiguiendo en su plática don Quijote que obligó a que, por entonces, ninguno de los que escuchándole estaban le tuviese por loco; antes, como todos los más eran caballeros, a quien son anejas las armas, le escuchaban de muy buena gana; y él prosiguió diciendo:

-Digo, pues, que los trabajos del estudiante son éstos: principalmente pobreza (no porque todos sean pobres, sino por poner este caso en todo el extremo que pueda ser); y, en haber dicho que padece pobreza, me parece que no había que decir más de su mala ventura, porque quien es pobre no tiene cosa buena. Esta pobreza la padece por sus partes, ya en hambre, ya en frío, ya en desnudez, ya en todo junto; pero, con todo eso, no es tanta que no coma, aunque sea un poco más tarde de lo que se usa, aunque sea de las sobras de los ricos; que es la mayor miseria del estudiante éste que entre ellos llaman *andar a la sopa*; y no les falta algún ajeno brasero o chimenea, que, si no callenta, a lo menos entibie su frío, y, en fin, la noche duermen debajo de cubierta. No quiero llegar a otras menudencias, conviene a saber, de la falta de camisas y no sobra de zapatos, la rareza y poco pelo del vestido, ni aquel ahitarse con tanto gusto, cuando la buena suerte les depara algún banquete. Por este camino que he pintado, áspero y dificultoso, tropezando aquí, cayendo allí, levantándose acullá, tornando a caer acá, llegan al grado que desean; el cual alcanzado, a muchos hemos visto que, habiendo pasado por estas Sirtes y por estas Scilas y Caribdis, como llevados en vuelo de la favorable fortuna, digo que los hemos visto mandar y gobernar el mundo desde una silla, trocada su hambre en hartura, su frío en refrigerio, su desnudez en galas, y su dormir en una estera en reposar en holandas y damascos: premio justamente merecido de su virtud. Pero, contrapuestos y comparados sus trabajos con los del milite guerrero, se quedan muy atrás en todo, como ahora diré.

## Capítulo XXXVIII

*Que trata del curioso discurso que hizo don Quijote de las armas y las letras*

PROSIGUIENDO don Quijote, dijo:

-Pues comenzamos en el estudiante por la pobreza y sus partes, veamos si es más rico el soldado. Y veremos que no hay ninguno más pobre en la misma pobreza, porque está atenido a la miseria de su paga, que viene o tarde o nunca, o a lo que garbeare por sus manos, con notable peligro de su vida y de su conciencia. Y a veces suele ser su desnudez tanta, que un colete acuchillado le sirve de gala y de camisa, y en la mitad del invierno se suele reparar de las inclemencias del cielo, estando en la campaña rasa, con sólo el aliento de su boca, que, como sale de lugar vacío, tengo por averiguado que debe de salir frío, contra toda naturaleza. Pues esperad que espere que llegue la noche, para restaurarse de todas estas incomodidades, en la cama que le aguarda, la cual, si no es por su culpa, jamás pecará de estrecha; que bien puede medir en la tierra los pies que quisiere, y revolverse en ella a su sabor, sin temor que se le encojan las sábanas. Lléguese, pues, a todo esto, el día y la hora de recibir el grado de su ejercicio; lléguese un día de batalla, que allí le pondrán la borla en la cabeza, hecha de hilas, para curarle algún balazo, que quizá le habrá pasado las sienes, o le dejará estropeado de brazo o pierna. Y, cuando esto no suceda, sino que el cielo piadoso le guarde y conserve sano y vivo, podrá ser que se quede en la misma pobreza que antes estaba, y que sea menester que suceda uno y otro rencuentro, una y otra batalla, y que de todas salga vencedor, para medrar en algo; pero estos milagros vense raras veces. Pero, decidme, señores, si habéis mirado en ello: ¿cuán menos son los premiados por la guerra que los que han perecido en ella? Sin duda, habéis de responder que no tienen comparación, ni se pueden reducir a cuenta los muertos, y que se podrán contar los premiados vivos con tres letras de guarismo. Todo esto es al revés en los letrados; porque, de faldas, que no quiero decir de mangas, todos tienen en qué entretenerse. Así que, aunque es mayor el trabajo del soldado, es mucho menor el premio. Pero a esto se puede responder que es más fácil premiar a dos mil letrados que a treinta mil soldados, porque a aquéllos se premian con darles oficios, que por fuerza se han de dar a los de su profesión, y a éstos no se pueden premiar sino con la misma hacienda del señor a quien sirven; y esta imposibilidad fortifica más la razón que tengo. Pero dejemos esto aparte, que es laberinto de muy dificultosa salida, sino

volvamos a la preeminencia de las armas contra las letras, materia que hasta ahora está por averiguar, según son las razones que cada una de su parte alega. Y, entre las que he dicho, dicen las letras que sin ellas no se podrían sustentar las armas, porque la guerra también tiene sus leyes y está sujeta a ellas, y que las leyes caen debajo de lo que son letras y letrados. A esto responden las armas que las leyes no se podrán sustentar sin ellas, porque con las armas se defienden las repúblicas, se conservan los reinos, se guardan las ciudades, se aseguran los caminos, se despejan los mares de cosarios; y, finalmente, si por ellas no fuese, las repúblicas, los reinos, las monarquías, las ciudades, los caminos de mar y tierra estarían sujetos al rigor y a la confusión que trae consigo la guerra el tiempo que dura y tiene licencia de usar de sus privilegios y de sus fuerzas. Y es razón averiguada que aquello que más cuesta se estima y debe de estimar en más. Alcanzar alguno a ser eminente en letras le cuesta tiempo, vigiliias, hambre, desnudez, váguídos de cabeza, indigestiones de estómago, y otras cosas a éstas adherentes, que, en parte, ya las tengo referidas; mas llegar uno por sus términos a ser buen soldado le cuesta todo lo que a el estudiante, en tanto mayor grado que no tiene comparación, porque a cada paso está a pique de perder la vida. Y ¿qué temor de necesidad y pobreza puede llegar ni fatigar al estudiante, que llegue al que tiene un soldado, que, hallándose cercado en alguna fuerza, y estando de posta, o guarda, en algún revellín o caballero, siente que los enemigos están minando hacia la parte donde él está, y no puede apartarse de allí por ningún caso, ni huir el peligro que de tan cerca le amenaza? Sólo lo que puede hacer es dar noticia a su capitán de lo que pasa, para que lo remedie con alguna contramina, y él estarse quedo, temiendo y esperando cuándo improvisamente ha de subir a las nubes sin alas y bajar al profundo sin su voluntad. Y si éste parece pequeño peligro, veamos si le iguala o hace ventaja el de embestirse dos galeras por las proas en mitad del mar espacioso, las cuales enclavijadas y trabadas, no le queda al soldado más espacio del que concede dos pies de tabla del espolón; y, con todo esto, viendo que tiene delante de sí tantos ministros de la muerte que le amenazan cuantos cañones de artillería se asestan de la parte contraria, que no distan de su cuerpo una lanza, y viendo que al primer descuido de los pies iría a visitar los profundos senos de Neptuno; y, con todo esto, con intrépido corazón, llevado de la honra que le incita, se pone a ser blanco de tanta arcabucería, y procura pasar por tan estrecho paso al bajel contrario. Y lo que más es de admirar: que apenas uno ha caído donde no se podrá levantar hasta la fin del mundo, cuando otro ocupa su mismo lugar; y si éste también cae en el mar, que como a enemigo le aguarda, otro y otro le sucede, sin dar tiempo al tiempo de sus muertes: valentía y atrevimiento el mayor que se puede hallar en todos los trances de la guerra. Bien hayan aquellos benditos siglos que carecieron de la

espantable furia de aquestos endemoniados instrumentos de la artillería, a cuyo inventor tengo para mí que en el infierno se le está dando el premio de su diabólica invención, con la cual dio causa que un infame y cobarde brazo quite la vida a un valeroso caballero, y que, sin saber cómo o por dónde, en la mitad del coraje y brío que enciende y anima a los valientes pechos, llega una desmandada bala, disparada de quien quizá huyó y se espantó del resplandor que hizo el fuego al disparar de la maldita máquina, y corta y acaba en un instante los pensamientos y vida de quien la merecía gozar luengos siglos. Y así, considerando esto, estoy por decir que en el alma me pesa de haber tomado este ejercicio de caballero andante en edad tan detestable como es esta en que ahora vivimos; porque, aunque a mí ningún peligro me pone miedo, todavía me pone recelo pensar si la pólvora y el estaño me han de quitar la ocasión de hacerme famoso y conocido por el valor de mi brazo y filos de mi espada, por todo lo descubierto de la tierra. Pero haga el cielo lo que fuere servido, que tanto seré más estimado, si salgo con lo que pretendo, cuanto a mayores peligros me he puesto que se pusieron los caballeros andantes de los pasados siglos.

Todo este largo preámbulo dijo don Quijote, en tanto que los demás cenaban, olvidándose de llevar bocado a la boca, puesto que algunas veces le había dicho Sancho Panza que cenase, que después habría lugar para decir todo lo que quisiese. En los que escuchado le habían sobrevino nueva lástima de ver que hombre que, al parecer, tenía buen entendimiento y buen discurso en todas las cosas que trataba, le hubiese perdido tan rematadamente, en tratándole de su negra y pizmienta caballería. El cura le dijo que tenía mucha razón en todo cuanto había dicho en favor de las armas, y que él, aunque letrado y graduado, estaba de su mismo parecer.

Acabaron de cenar, levantaron los manteles, y, en tanto que la ventera, su hija y Maritornes aderezaban el camaranchón de don Quijote de la Mancha, donde habían determinado que aquella noche las mujeres solas en él se recogiesen, don Fernando rogó al cautivo les contase el discurso de su vida, porque no podría ser sino que fuese peregrino y gustoso, según las muestras que había comenzado a dar, viniendo en compañía de Zoraida. A lo cual respondió el cautivo que de muy buena gana haría lo que se le mandaba, y que sólo temía que el cuento no había de ser tal, que les diese el gusto que él deseaba; pero que, con todo eso, por no faltar en obedecelle, le contaría. El cura y todos los demás se lo agradecieron, y de nuevo se lo rogaron; y él, viéndose rogar de tantos, dijo que no eran menester ruegos adonde el mandar tenía tanta fuerza.

-Y así, estén vuestras mercedes atentos, y oirán un discurso verdadero, a quien podría ser que no llegasen los mentirosos que con curioso y pensado artificio suelen componerse.

Con esto que dijo, hizo que todos se acomodasen y le prestasen un grande silencio; y él, viendo que ya callaban y esperaban lo que decir quisiese, con voz agradable y reposada, comenzó a decir desta manera:

## Capítulo XXXIX

### *Donde el cautivo cuenta su vida y sucesos*

-«EN un lugar de las Montañas de León tuvo principio mi linaje, con quien fue más agradecida y liberal la naturaleza que la fortuna, aunque, en la estrechez de aquellos pueblos, todavía alcanzaba mi padre fama de rico, y verdaderamente lo fuera si así se diera maña a conservar su hacienda como se la daba en gastalla. Y la condición que tenía de ser liberal y gastador le procedió de haber sido soldado los años de su juventud, que es escuela la soldadesca donde el mezquino se hace franco, y el franco, pródigo; y si algunos soldados se hallan miserables, son como monstruos, que se ven raras veces. Pasaba mi padre los términos de la liberalidad, y rayaba en los de ser pródigo: cosa que no le es de ningún provecho al hombre casado, y que tiene hijos que le han de suceder en el nombre y en el ser. Los que mi padre tenía eran tres, todos varones y todos de edad de poder elegir estado. Viendo, pues, mi padre que, según él decía, no podía irse a la mano contra su condición, quiso privarse del instrumento y causa que le hacía gastador y dadivoso, que fue privarse de la hacienda, sin la cual el mismo Alejandro pareciera estrecho.

»Y así, llamándonos un día a todos tres a solas en un aposento, nos dijo unas razones semejantes a las que ahora diré: “Hijos, para deciros que os quiero bien, basta saber y decir que sois mis hijos; y, para entender que os quiero mal, basta saber que no me voy a la mano en lo que toca a conservar vuestra hacienda. Pues, para que entendáis desde aquí adelante que os quiero como padre, y que no os quiero destruir como padrastro, quiero hacer una cosa con vosotros que ha muchos días que la tengo pensada y con madura consideración dispuesta. Vosotros estáis ya en edad de tomar estado, o, a lo menos, de elegir ejercicio, tal que, cuando mayores, os honre y aproveche. Y lo que he pensado es hacer de mi hacienda cuatro partes: las tres os daré a vosotros, a cada uno lo que le tocare, sin exceder en cosa alguna, y con la otra me quedará yo para vivir y sustentarme los días que el cielo fuere servido de darme de vida. Pero querría que, después que cada uno tuviese en su poder la parte que le toca de su hacienda, siguiese uno de los caminos que le diré. Hay un refrán en nuestra España, a mi parecer muy verdadero, como todos lo son, por ser sentencias breves sacadas de la lengua y discreta experiencia; y el que yo digo dice: ‘Iglesia, o mar, o casa real’, como si más claramente dijera: ‘Quien quisiere valer y ser rico siga o la Iglesia,

o navegue, ejercitando el arte de la mercancía, o entre a servir a los reyes en sus casas'; porque dicen: 'Más vale migaja de rey que merced de señor'. Digo esto porque querría, y es mi voluntad, que uno de vosotros siguiese las letras, el otro la mercancía, y el otro sirviese al rey en la guerra, pues es dificultoso entrar a servirle en su casa; que, ya que la guerra no dé muchas riquezas, suele dar mucho valor y mucha fama. Dentro de ocho días, os daré toda vuestra parte en dineros, sin defraudaros en un ardite, como lo veréis por la obra. Decidme ahora si queréis seguir mi parecer y consejo en lo que os he propuesto". Y, mandándome a mí, por ser el mayor, que respondiese, después de haberle dicho que no se deshiciese de la hacienda, sino que gastase todo lo que fuese su voluntad, que nosotros éramos mozos para saber ganarla, vine a concluir en que cumpliría su gusto, y que el mío era seguir el ejercicio de las armas, sirviendo en él a Dios y a mi rey. El segundo hermano hizo los mismos ofrecimientos, y escogió el irse a las Indias, llevando empleada la hacienda que le cupiese. El menor, y, a lo que yo creo, el más discreto, dijo que quería seguir la Iglesia, o irse a acabar sus comenzados estudios a Salamanca. Así como acabamos de concordarnos y escoger nuestros ejercicios, mi padre nos abrazó a todos, y, con la brevedad que dijo, puso por obra cuanto nos había prometido; y, dando a cada uno su parte, que, a lo que se me acuerda, fueron cada tres mil ducados, en dineros (porque un nuestro tío compró toda la hacienda y la pagó de contado, porque no saliese del tronco de la casa), en un mismo día nos despedimos todos tres de nuestro buen padre; y, en aquel mismo, pareciéndome a mí ser inhumanidad que mi padre quedase viejo y con tan poca hacienda, hice con él que de mis tres mil tomase los dos mil ducados, porque a mí me bastaba el resto para acomodarme de lo que había menester un soldado. Mis dos hermanos, movidos de mi ejemplo, cada uno le dio mil ducados: de modo que a mi padre le quedaron cuatro mil en dineros, y más tres mil, que, a lo que parece, valía la hacienda que le cupo, que no quiso vender, sino quedarse con ella en raíces. Digo, en fin, que nos despedimos dél y de aquel nuestro tío que he dicho, no sin mucho sentimiento y lágrimas de todos, encargándonos que les hiciésemos saber, todas las veces que hubiese comodidad para ello, de nuestros sucesos, prósperos o adversos. Prometímosselo, y, abrazándonos y echándonos su bendición, el uno tomó el viaje de Salamanca, el otro de Sevilla y yo el de Alicante, adonde tuve nuevas que había una nave ginovesa que cargaba allí lana para Génova.

»Éste hará veinte y dos años que salí de casa de mi padre, y en todos ellos, puesto que he escrito algunas cartas, no he sabido dél ni de mis hermanos nueva alguna. Y lo que en este discurso de tiempo he pasado lo diré brevemente. Embarquéme en Alicante, llegué con próspero viaje a Génova, fui desde allí a

Milán, donde me acomodé de armas y de algunas galas de soldado, de donde quise ir a asentar mi plaza al Piamonte; y, estando ya de camino para Alejandría de la Palla, tuve nuevas que el gran duque de Alba pasaba a Flandes. Mudé propósito, fuime con él, servíle en las jornadas que hizo, halléme en la muerte de los condes de Eguemón y de Hornos, alcancé a ser alférez de un famoso capitán de Guadalajara, llamado Diego de Urbina; y, a cabo de algún tiempo que llegué a Flandes, se tuvo nuevas de la liga que la Santidad del Papa Pío Quinto, de felice recordación, había hecho con Venecia y con España, contra el enemigo común, que es el Turco; el cual, en aquel mesmo tiempo, había ganado con su armada la famosa isla de Chipre, que estaba debajo del dominio del veneciano: y pérdida lamentable y desdichada. Súpose cierto que venía por general desta liga el serenísimo don Juan de Austria, hermano natural de nuestro buen rey don Felipe. Divulgóse el grandísimo aparato de guerra que se hacía. Todo lo cual me incitó y conmovió el ánimo y el deseo de verme en la jornada que se esperaba; y, aunque tenía barruntos, y casi promesas ciertas, de que en la primera ocasión que se ofreciese sería promovido a capitán, lo quise dejar todo y venirme, como me vine, a Italia. Y quiso mi buena suerte que el señor don Juan de Austria acababa de llegar a Génova, que pasaba a Nápoles a juntarse con la armada de Venecia, como después lo hizo en Mecina.

»Digo, en fin, que yo me hallé en aquella felicísima jornada, ya hecho capitán de infantería, a cuyo honroso cargo me subió mi buena suerte, más que mis merecimientos. Y aquel día, que fue para la cristiandad tan dichoso, porque en él se desengañó el mundo y todas las naciones del error en que estaban, creyendo que los turcos eran invencibles por la mar: en aquel día, digo, donde quedó el orgullo y soberbia otomana quebrantada, entre tantos venturosos como allí hubo (porque más ventura tuvieron los cristianos que allí murieron que los que vivos y vencedores quedaron), yo solo fui el desdichado, pues, en cambio de que pudiera esperar, si fuera en los romanos siglos, alguna naval corona, me vi aquella noche que siguió a tan famoso día con cadenas a los pies y esposas a las manos.

»Y fue desta suerte: que, habiendo el Uchalí, rey de Argel, atrevido y venturoso cosario, embestido y rendido la capitana de Malta, que solos tres caballeros quedaron vivos en ella, y éstos malheridos, acudió la capitana de Juan Andrea a socorrella, en la cual yo iba con mi compañía; y, haciendo lo que debía en ocasión semejante, salté en la galera contraria, la cual, desviándose de la que la había embestido, estorbó que mis soldados me siguiesen, y así, me hallé solo entre mis enemigos, a quien no pude resistir, por ser tantos; en fin, me rindieron lleno de heridas. Y, como ya habréis, señores, oído decir que el Uchalí se salvó con toda su escuadra, vine yo a quedar cautivo en su poder, y solo fui el triste entre tantos alegres y el cautivo entre tantos libres; porque fueron quince mil



cristianos los que aquel día alcanzaron la deseada libertad, que todos venían al remo en la turquesca armada.

»Lleváronme a Costantinopla, donde el Gran Turco Selim hizo general de la mar a mi amo, porque había hecho su deber en la batalla, habiendo llevado por muestra de su valor el estandarte de la religión de Malta. Halléme el segundo año, que fue el de setenta y dos, en Navarino, bogando en la capitana de los tres fanales. Vi y noté la ocasión que allí se perdió de no coger en el puerto toda el armada turquesca, porque todos los leventes y jenízaros que en ella venían tuvieron por cierto que les habían de embestir dentro del mismo puerto, y tenían a punto su ropa y pasamaques, que son sus zapatos, para huirse luego por tierra, sin esperar ser combatidos: tanto era el miedo que habían cobrado a nuestra armada. Pero el cielo lo ordenó de otra manera, no por culpa ni descuido del general que a los nuestros regía, sino por los pecados de la cristiandad, y porque quiere y permite Dios que tengamos siempre verdugos que nos castiguen.

»En efeto, el Uchalí se recogió a Modón, que es una isla que está junto a Navarino, y, echando la gente en tierra, fortificó la boca del puerto, y estúvose quedo hasta que el señor don Juan se volvió. En este viaje se tomó la galera que se llamaba *La Presa*, de quien era capitán un hijo de aquel famoso cosario Barbarroja. Tomóla la capitana de Nápoles, llamada *La Loba*, regida por aquel rayo de la guerra, por el padre de los soldados, por aquel venturoso y jamás vencido capitán don Álvaro de Bazán, marqués de Santa Cruz. Y no quiero dejar de decir lo que sucedió en la presa de *La Presa*. Era tan cruel el hijo de Barbarroja, y trataba tan mal a sus cautivos, que, así como los que venían al remo vieron que la galera *Loba* les iba entrando y que los alcanzaba, soltaron todos a un tiempo los remos, y asieron de su capitán, que estaba sobre el estanterol gritando que bogasen apriesa, y pasándole de banco en banco, de popa a proa, le dieron bocados, que a poco más que pasó del árbol ya había pasado su ánima al infierno: tal era, como he dicho, la crueldad con que los trataba y el odio que ellos le tenían.

»Volvimos a Constantinopla, y el año siguiente, que fue el de setenta y tres, se supo en ella cómo el señor don Juan había ganado a Túnez, y quitado aquel reino a los turcos y puesto en posesión dél a Muley Hamet, cortando las esperanzas que de volver a reinar en él tenía Muley Hamida, el moro más cruel y más valiente que tuvo el mundo. Sintió mucho esta pérdida el Gran Turco, y, usando de la sagacidad que todos los de su casa tienen, hizo paz con venecianos, que mucho más que él la deseaban; y el año siguiente de setenta y cuatro acometió a la Goleta y al fuerte que junto a Túnez había dejado medio levantado el señor don Juan. En todos estos trances andaba yo al remo, sin esperanza de libertad alguna; a lo menos, no esperaba tenerla por rescate, porque tenía determinado de

no escribir las nuevas de mi desgracia a mi padre.

»Perdióse, en fin, la Goleta; perdióse el fuerte, sobre las cuales plazas hubo de soldados turcos, pagados, setenta y cinco mil, y de moros, y alárabes de toda la África, más de cuatrocientos mil, acompañado este tan gran número de gente con tantas municiones y pertrechos de guerra, y con tantos gastadores, que con las manos y a puñados de tierra pudieran cubrir la Goleta y el fuerte. Perdióse primero la Goleta, tenida hasta entonces por inexpugnable; y no se perdió por culpa de sus defensores, los cuales hicieron en su defensa todo aquello que debían y podían, sino porque la experiencia mostró la facilidad con que se podían levantar trincheas en aquella desierta arena, porque a dos palmos se hallaba agua, y los turcos no la hallaron a dos varas; y así, con muchos sacos de arena levantaron las trincheas tan altas que sobrepujaban las murallas de la fuerza; y, tirándoles a caballero, ninguno podía parar, ni asistir a la defensa. Fue común opinión que no se habían de encerrar los nuestros en la Goleta, sino esperar en campaña al desembarcadero; y los que esto dicen hablan de lejos y con poca experiencia de casos semejantes, porque si en la Goleta y en el fuerte apenas había siete mil soldados, ¿cómo podía tan poco número, aunque más esforzados fuesen, salir a la campaña y quedar en las fuerzas, contra tanto como era el de los enemigos?; y ¿cómo es posible dejar de perderse fuerza que no es socorrida, y más cuando la cercan enemigos muchos y porfiados, y en su misma tierra? Pero a muchos les pareció, y así me pareció a mí, que fue particular gracia y merced que el cielo hizo a España en permitir que se asolase aquella oficina y capa de maldades, y aquella gomia o esponja y polilla de la infinidad de dineros que allí sin provecho se gastaban, sin servir de otra cosa que de conservar la memoria de haberla ganado la felicísima del invictísimo Carlos Quinto; como si fuera menester para hacerla eterna, como lo es y será, que aquellas piedras la sustentaran.

»Perdióse también el fuerte; pero fuéronle ganando los turcos palmo a palmo, porque los soldados que lo defendían pelearon tan valerosa y fuertemente, que pasaron de veinte y cinco mil enemigos los que mataron en veinte y dos asaltos generales que les dieron. Ninguno cautivaron sano de treientos que quedaron vivos, señal cierta y clara de su esfuerzo y valor, y de lo bien que se habían defendido y guardado sus plazas. Rindióse a partido un pequeño fuerte o torre que estaba en mitad del estaño, a cargo de don Juan Zanoguera, caballero valenciano y famoso soldado. Cautivaron a don Pedro Puertocarrero, general de la Goleta, el cual hizo cuanto fue posible por defender su fuerza; y sintió tanto el haberla perdido que de pesar murió en el camino de Constantinopla, donde le llevaban cautivo. Cautivaron ansimesmo al general del fuerte, que se llamaba Gabrio Cervellón, caballero milanés, grande ingeniero y valentísimo soldado.

Murieron en estas dos fuerzas muchas personas de cuenta, de las cuales fue una Pagán de Oria, caballero del hábito de San Juan, de condición generoso, como lo mostró la summa liberalidad que usó con su hermano, el famoso Juan de Andrea de Oria; y lo que más hizo lastimosa su muerte fue haber muerto a manos de unos alárabes de quien se fió, viendo ya perdido el fuerte, que se ofrecieron de llevarle en hábito de moro a Tabarca, que es un portezuelo o casa que en aquellas riberas tienen los ginoveses que se ejercitan en la pesquería del coral; los cuales alárabes le cortaron la cabeza y se la trujeron al general de la armada turquesca, el cual cumplió con ellos nuestro refrán castellano: “Que aunque la traición aplace, el traidor se aborrece”; y así, se dice que mandó el general ahorcar a los que le trujeron el presente, porque no se le habían traído vivo.

»Entre los cristianos que en el fuerte se perdieron, fue uno llamado don Pedro de Aguilar, natural no sé de qué lugar del Andalucía, el cual había sido alférez en el fuerte, soldado de mucha cuenta y de raro entendimiento: especialmente tenía particular gracia en lo que llaman poesía. Dígolo porque su suerte le trujo a mi galera y a mi banco, y a ser esclavo de mi mismo patrón; y, antes que nos partiésemos de aquel puerto, hizo este caballero dos sonetos, a manera de epitafios, el uno a la Goleta y el otro al fuerte. Y en verdad que los tengo de decir, porque los sé de memoria y creo que antes causarán gusto que pesadumbre.»

En el punto que el cautivo nombró a don Pedro de Aguilar, don Fernando miró a sus camaradas, y todos tres se sonrieron; y, cuando llegó a decir de los sonetos, dijo el uno:

-Antes que vuestra merced pase adelante, le suplico me diga qué se hizo ese don Pedro de Aguilar que ha dicho.

-Lo que sé es -respondió el cautivo-que, al cabo de dos años que estuvo en Constantinopla, se huyó en traje de arnaúte con un griego espía, y no sé si vino en libertad, puesto que creo que sí, porque de allí a un año vi yo al griego en Constantinopla, y no le pude preguntar el suceso de aquel viaje.

-Pues lo fue -respondió el caballero-, porque ese don Pedro es mi hermano, y está ahora en nuestro lugar, bueno y rico, casado y con tres hijos.

-Gracias sean dadas a Dios -dijo el cautivo-por tantas mercedes como le hizo; porque no hay en la tierra, conforme mi parecer, contento que se iguale a alcanzar la libertad perdida.

-Y más -replicó el caballero-, que yo sé los sonetos que mi hermano hizo.

-Dígalos, pues, vuestra merced -dijo el cautivo-, que los sabrá decir mejor que yo.

-Que me place -respondió el caballero-; y el de la Goleta decía así:

## Capítulo XL

*Donde se prosigue la historia del cautivo*

### SONETO

Almas dichosas que del mortal velo libres y esentas, por el bien que obrastes,  
desde la baja tierra os levantastes a lo más alto y lo mejor del cielo, y, ardiendo  
en ira y en honroso celo, 5

de los cuerpos la fuerza ejercitastes, que en propia y sangre ajena colorastes el  
mar vecino y arenoso suelo; primero que el valor faltó la vida en los cansados  
brazos, que, muriendo, 10  
con ser vencidos, llevan la vitoria.

Y esta vuestra mortal, triste caída entre el muro y el hierro, os va adquiriendo  
fama que el mundo os da, y el cielo gloria.

-Desa mesma manera le sé yo -dijo el cautivo.

-Pues el del fuerte, si mal no me acuerdo -dijo el caballero-, dice así:  
SONETO

De entre esta tierra estéril, derribada, destos terrones por el suelo echados, las  
almas santas de tres mil soldados subieron vivas a mejor morada, siendo  
primero, en vano, ejercitada 5

la fuerza de sus brazos esforzados, hasta que, al fin, de pocos y cansados,  
dieron la vida al filo de la espada.

Y éste es el suelo que continuo ha sido de mil memorias lamentables lleno 10  
en los pasados siglos y presentes.

Mas no más justas de su duro seno habrán al claro cielo almas subido, ni aun  
él sostuvo cuerpos tan valientes.

No parecieron mal los sonetos, y el cautivo se alegró con las nuevas que de su

camarada le dieron; y, prosiguiendo su cuento, dijo: -«Rendidos, pues, la Goleta y el fuerte, los turcos dieron orden en dismantelar la Goleta, porque el fuerte quedó tal, que no hubo qué poner por tierra, y para hacerlo con más brevedad y menos trabajo, la minaron por tres partes; pero con ninguna se pudo volar lo que parecía menos fuerte, que eran las murallas viejas; y todo aquello que había quedado en pie de la fortificación nueva que había hecho el Fratín, con mucha facilidad vino a tierra. En resolución, la armada volvió a Constantinopla, triunfante y vencedora: y de allí a pocos meses murió mi amo el Uchalí, al cual llamaban *Uchalí Fartax*, que quiere decir, en lengua turquesca, *el renegado tiñoso*, porque lo era; y es costumbre entre los turcos ponerse nombres de alguna falta que tengan, o de alguna virtud que en ellos haya. Y esto es porque no hay entre ellos sino cuatro apellidos de linajes, que decien de la casa Otomana, y los demás, como tengo dicho, toman nombre y apellido ya de las tachas del cuerpo y ya de las virtudes del ánimo. Y este Tiñoso bogó el remo, siendo esclavo del Gran Señor, catorce años, y a más de los treinta y cuatro de sus edad renegó, de despecho de que un turco, estando al remo, le dio un bofetón, y por poderse vengar dejó su fe; y fue tanto su valor que, sin subir por los torpes medios y caminos que los más privados del Gran Turco suben, vino a ser rey de Argel, y después, a ser general de la mar, que es el tercero cargo que hay en aquel señorío. Era calabrés de nación, y moralmente fue hombre de bien, y trataba con mucha humanidad a sus cautivos, que llegó a tener tres mil, los cuales, después de su muerte, se repartieron, como él lo dejó en su testamento, entre el Gran Señor (que también es hijo heredero de cuantos mueren, y entra a la parte con los más hijos que deja el difunto) y entre sus renegados; y yo cupe a un renegado veneciano que, siendo grumete de una nave, le cautivó el Uchalí, y le quiso tanto, que fue uno de los más regalados garzones suyos, y él vino a ser el más cruel renegado que jamás se ha visto. Llamábase Azán Agá, y llegó a ser muy rico, y a ser rey de Argel; con el cual yo vine de Constantinopla, algo contento, por estar tan cerca de España, no porque pensase escribir a nadie el desdichado suceso mío, sino por ver si me era más favorable la suerte en Argel que en Constantinopla, donde ya había probado mil maneras de huirme, y ninguna tuvo sazón ni ventura; y pensaba en Argel buscar otros medios de alcanzar lo que tanto deseaba, porque jamás me desamparó la esperanza de tener libertad; y cuando en lo que fabricaba, pensaba y ponía por obra no correspondía el suceso a la intención, luego, sin abandonarme, fingía y buscaba otra esperanza que me sustentase, aunque fuese débil y flaca.

»Con esto entretenía la vida, encerrado en una prisión o casa que los turcos llaman *baño*, donde encierran los cautivos cristianos, así los que son del rey como de algunos particulares; y los que llaman *del almacén*, que es como decir

*cautivos del concejo*, que sirven a la ciudad en las obras públicas que hace y en otros oficios, y estos tales cautivos tienen muy dificultosa su libertad, que, como son del común y no tienen amo particular, no hay con quien tratar su rescate, aunque le tengan. En estos baños, como tengo dicho, suelen llevar a sus cautivos algunos particulares del pueblo, principalmente cuando son de rescate, porque allí los tienen holgados y seguros hasta que venga su rescate. También los cautivos del rey que son de rescate no salen al trabajo con la demás chusma, si no es cuando se tarda su rescate; que entonces, por hacerles que escriban por él con más ahínco, les hacen trabajar y ir por leña con los demás, que es un no pequeño trabajo.

»Yo, pues, era uno de los de rescate; que, como se supo que era capitán, puesto que dije mi poca posibilidad y falta de hacienda, no aprovechó nada para que no me pusiesen en el número de los caballeros y gente de rescate. Pusiéronme una cadena, más por señal de rescate que por guardarme con ella; y así, pasaba la vida en aquel baño, con otros muchos caballeros y gente principal, señalados y tenidos por de rescate. Y, aunque la hambre y desnudez pudiera fatigarnos a veces, y aun casi siempre, ninguna cosa nos fatigaba tanto como oír y ver, a cada paso, las jamás vistas ni oídas crueldades que mi amo usaba con los cristianos. Cada día ahorcaba el suyo, empalaba a éste, desorejaba aquél; y esto, por tan poca ocasión, y tan sin ella, que los turcos conocían que lo hacía no más de por hacerlo, y por ser natural condición suya ser homicida de todo el género humano. Sólo libró bien con él un soldado español, llamado tal de Saavedra, el cual, con haber hecho cosas que quedarán en la memoria de aquellas gentes por muchos años, y todas por alcanzar libertad, jamás le dio palo, ni se lo mandó dar, ni le dijo mala palabra; y, por la menor cosa de muchas que hizo, temíamos todos que había de ser empalado, y así lo temió él más de una vez; y si no fuera porque el tiempo no da lugar, yo dijera ahora algo de lo que este soldado hizo, que fuera parte para entreteneros y admiraros harto mejor que con el cuento de mi historia.

»Digo, pues, que encima del patio de nuestra prisión caían las ventanas de la casa de un moro rico y principal, las cuales, como de ordinario son las de los moros, más eran agujeros que ventanas, y aun éstas se cubrían con celosías muy espesas y apretadas. Acaeció, pues, que un día, estando en un terrado de nuestra prisión con otros tres compañeros, haciendo pruebas de saltar con las cadenas, por entretener el tiempo, estando solos, porque todos los demás cristianos habían salido a trabajar, alcé acaso los ojos y vi que por aquellas cerradas ventanillas que he dicho parecía una caña, y al remate della puesto un lienzo atado, y la caña se estaba blandiendo y moviéndose, casi como si hiciera señas que llegásemos a tomarla. Miramos en ello, y uno de los que conmigo estaban fue a ponerse

debajo de la caña, por ver si la soltaban, o lo que hacían; pero, así como llegó, alzarón la caña y la movieron a los dos lados, como si dijeran no con la cabeza. Volvióse el cristiano, y tornáronla a bajar y hacer los mismos movimientos que primero. Fue otro de mis compañeros, y sucedióle lo mismo que al primero. Finalmente, fue el tercero y avínole lo que al primero y al segundo. Viendo yo esto, no quise dejar de probar la suerte, y, así como llegué a ponerme debajo de la caña, la dejaron caer, y dio a mis pies dentro del baño. Acudí luego a desatar el lienzo, en el cual vi un nudo, y dentro dél venían diez cianíis, que son unas monedas de oro bajo que usan los moros, que cada una vale diez reales de los nuestros. Si me holgué con el hallazgo, no hay para qué decirlo, pues fue tanto el contento como la admiración de pensar de dónde podía venirnos aquel bien, especialmente a mí, pues las muestras de no haber querido soltar la caña sino a mí claro decían que a mí se hacía la merced. Tomé mi buen dinero, quebré la caña, volvíme al terradillo, miré la ventana, y vi que por ella salía una muy blanca mano, que la abrían y cerraban muy apriesa. Con esto entendimos, o imaginamos, que alguna mujer que en aquella casa vivía nos debía de haber hecho aquel beneficio; y, en señal de que lo agradecíamos, hecimos zalemas a uso de moros, inclinando la cabeza, doblando el cuerpo y poniendo los brazos sobre el pecho. De allí a poco sacaron por la misma ventana una pequeña cruz hecha de cañas, y luego la volvieron a entrar. Esta señal nos confirmó en que alguna cristiana debía de estar cautiva en aquella casa, y era la que el bien nos hacía; pero la blancura de la mano, y las ajorcas que en ella vimos, nos deshizo este pensamiento, puesto que imaginamos que debía de ser cristiana renegada, a quien de ordinario suelen tomar por legítimas mujeres sus mismos amos, y aun lo tienen a ventura, porque las estiman en más que las de su nación.

»En todos nuestros discursos dimos muy lejos de la verdad del caso; y así, todo nuestro entretenimiento desde allí adelante era mirar y tener por norte a la ventana donde nos había aparecido la estrella de la caña; pero bien se pasaron quince días en que no la vimos, ni la mano tampoco, ni otra señal alguna. Y, aunque en este tiempo procuramos con toda solicitud saber quién en aquella casa vivía, y si había en ella alguna cristiana renegada, jamás hubo quien nos dijese otra cosa, sino que allí vivía un moro principal y rico, llamado Agi Morato, alcaide que había sido de La Pata, que es oficio entre ellos de mucha calidad. Mas, cuando más descuidados estábamos de que por allí habían de llover más cianíis, vimos a deshora parecer la caña, y otro lienzo en ella, con otro nudo más crecido; y esto fue a tiempo que estaba el baño, como la vez pasada, solo y sin gente. Hecimos la acostumbrada prueba, yendo cada uno primero que yo, de los mismos tres que estábamos, pero a ninguno se rindió la caña sino a mí, porque, en llegando yo, la dejaron caer. Desaté el nudo, y hallé cuarenta escudos de oro

españoles y un papel escrito en arábigo, y al cabo de lo escrito hecha una grande cruz. Besé la cruz, tomé los escudos, volvíme al terrado, hecimos todas nuestras zalemas, tornó a parecer la mano, hice señas que leería el papel, cerraron la ventana. Quedamos todos confusos y alegres con lo sucedido; y, como ninguno de nosotros no entendía el arábigo, era grande el deseo que teníamos de entender lo que el papel contenía, y mayor la dificultad de buscar quien lo leyese.

»En fin, yo me determiné de fiarme de un renegado, natural de Murcia, que se había dado por grande amigo mío, y puesto prendas entre los dos, que le obligaban a guardar el secreto que le encargase; porque suelen algunos renegados, cuando tienen intención de volverse a tierra de cristianos, traer consigo algunas firmas de cautivos principales, en que dan fe, en la forma que pueden, como el tal renegado es hombre de bien, y que siempre ha hecho bien a cristianos, y que lleva deseo de huirse en la primera ocasión que se le ofrezca. Algunos hay que procuran estas fees con buena intención, otros se sirven dellas acaso y de industria: que, viniendo a robar a tierra de cristianos, si a dicha se pierden o los cautivan, sacan sus firmas y dicen que por aquellos papeles se verá el propósito con que venían, el cual era de quedarse en tierra de cristianos, y que por eso venían en corso con los demás turcos. Con esto se escapan de aquel primer ímpetu, y se reconcilian con la Iglesia, sin que se les haga daño; y, cuando veen la suya, se vuelven a Berbería a ser lo que antes eran. Otros hay que usan destos papeles, y los procuran, con buen intento, y se quedan en tierra de cristianos.

»Pues uno de los renegados que he dicho era este mi amigo, el cual tenía firmas de todas nuestras camaradas, donde le acreditábamos cuanto era posible; y si los moros le hallaran estos papeles, le quemaran vivo. Supe que sabía muy bien arábigo, y no solamente hablarlo, sino escribirlo; pero, antes que del todo me declarase con él, le dije que me leyese aquel papel, que acaso me había hallado en un agujero de mi rancho. Abrióle, y estuvo un buen espacio mirándole y construyéndole, murmurando entre los dientes. Preguntéle si lo entendía; díjome que muy bien, y, que si quería que me lo declarase palabra por palabra, que le diese tinta y pluma, porque mejor lo hiciese. Dímosle luego lo que pedía, y él poco a poco lo fue traduciendo; y, en acabando, dijo: “Todo lo que va aquí en romance, sin faltar letra, es lo que contiene este papel morisco; y hase de advertir que adonde dice *Lela Marién* quiere decir *Nuestra Señora la Virgen María*”.

»Leímos el papel, y decía así: Cuando yo era niña, tenía mi padre una esclava, la cual en mi lengua me mostró la zalá cristianesca, y me dijo muchas cosas de Lela Marién. La cristiana murió, y yo sé que no fue al fuego, sino con Alá, porque después la vi dos veces, y me dijo que me fuese a tierra de cristianos a



ver a Lela Marién, que me quería mucho. No sé yo cómo vaya: muchos cristianos he visto por esta ventana, y ninguno me ha parecido caballero sino tú. Yo soy muy hermosa y muchacha, y tengo muchos dineros que llevar conmigo: mira tú si puedes hacer cómo nos vamos, y serás allá mi marido, si quisieres, y si no quisieres, no se me dará nada, que Lela Marién me dará con quien me case. Yo escribí esto; mira a quién lo das a leer: no te fíes de ningún moro, porque son todos marfuces. Desto tengo mucha pena: que quisiera que no te descubrieras a nadie, porque si mi padre lo sabe, me echará luego en un pozo, y me cubrirá de piedras. En la caña pondré un hilo: ata allí la respuesta; y si no tienes quien te escriba arábigo, dímelo por señas, que Lela Marién hará que te entienda. Ella y Alá te guarden, y esa cruz que yo beso muchas veces; que así me lo mandó la cautiva.

»Mirad, señores, si era razón que las razones deste papel nos admirasen y alegrasen. Y así, lo uno y lo otro fue de manera que el renegado entendió que no acaso se había hallado aquel papel, sino que realmente a alguno de nosotros se había escrito; y así, nos rogó que si era verdad lo que sospechaba, que nos fiásemos dél y se lo dijésemos, que él aventuraría su vida por nuestra libertad. Y, diciendo esto, sacó del pecho un crucifijo de metal, y con muchas lágrimas juró por el Dios que aquella imagen representaba, en quien él, aunque pecador y malo, bien y fielmente creía, de guardarnos lealtad y secreto en todo cuanto quisiésemos descubrirle, porque le parecía, y casi adivinaba que, por medio de aquella que aquel papel había escrito, había él y todos nosotros de tener libertad, y verse él en lo que tanto deseaba, que era reducirse al gremio de la Santa Iglesia, su madre, de quien como miembro podrido estaba dividido y apartado por su ignorancia y pecado.

»Con tantas lágrimas y con muestras de tanto arrepentimiento dijo esto el renegado, que todos de un mismo parecer consentimos, y venimos en declararle la verdad del caso; y así, le dimos cuenta de todo, sin encubrirle nada. Mostrámosle la ventanilla por donde parecía la caña, y él marcó desde allí la casa, y quedó de tener especial y gran cuidado de informarse quién en ella vivía. Acordamos, ansimesmo, que sería bien responder al billete de la mora; y, como teníamos quien lo supiese hacer, luego al momento el renegado escribió las razones que yo le fui notando, que puntualmente fueron las que diré, porque de todos los puntos sustanciales que en este suceso me acontecieron, ninguno se me ha ido de la memoria, ni aun se me irá en tanto que tuviere vida.

»En efeto, lo que a la mora se le respondió fue esto: El verdadero Alá te guarde, señora mía, y aquella bendita Marién, que es la verdadera madre de Dios y es la que te ha puesto en corazón que te vayas a tierra de cristianos, porque te quiere bien. Ruégale tú que se sirva de darte a entender cómo podrás poner por

obra lo que te manda, que ella es tan buena que sí hará. De mi parte y de la de todos estos cristianos que están conmigo, te ofrezco de hacer por ti todo lo que pudiéremos, hasta morir. No dejes de escribirme y avisarme lo que pensares hacer, que yo te responderé siempre; que el grande Alá nos ha dado un cristiano cautivo que sabe hablar y escribir tu lengua tan bien como lo verás por este papel. Así que, sin tener miedo, nos puedes avisar de todo lo que quisieres. A lo que dices que si fueres a tierra de cristianos, que has de ser mi mujer, yo te lo prometo como buen cristiano; y sabe que los cristianos cumplen lo que prometen mejor que los moros. Alá y Marién, su madre, sean en tu guarda, señora mía.

»Escrito y cerrado este papel, aguardé dos días a que estuviese el baño solo, como solía, y luego salí al paso acostumbrado del terradillo, por ver si la caña parecía, que no tardó mucho en asomar. Así como la vi, aunque no podía ver quién la ponía, mostré el papel, como dando a entender que pusiesen el hilo, pero ya venía puesto en la caña, al cual até el papel, y de allí a poco tornó a parecer nuestra estrella, con la blanca bandera de paz del atadillo. Dejáronla caer, y alcé yo, y hallé en el paño, en toda suerte de moneda de plata y de oro, más de cincuenta escudos, los cuales cincuenta veces más doblaron nuestro contento y confirmaron la esperanza de tener libertad.

»Aquella misma noche volvió nuestro renegado, y nos dijo que había sabido que en aquella casa vivía el mismo moro que a nosotros nos habían dicho que se llamaba Agi Morato, riquísimo por todo extremo, el cual tenía una sola hija, heredera de toda su hacienda, y que era común opinión en toda la ciudad ser la más hermosa mujer de la Berbería; y que muchos de los virreyes que allí venían la habían pedido por mujer, y que ella nunca se había querido casar; y que también supo que tuvo una cristiana cautiva, que ya se había muerto; todo lo cual concertaba con lo que venía en el papel. Entramos luego en consejo con el renegado, en qué orden se tendría para sacar a la mora y venirnos todos a tierra de cristianos, y, en fin, se acordó por entonces que esperásemos al aviso segundo de Zoraida, que así se llamaba la que ahora quiere llamarse María; porque bien vimos que ella, y no otra alguna era la que había de dar medio a todas aquellas dificultades. Después que quedamos en esto, dijo el renegado que nouviésemos pena, que él perdería la vida o nos pondría en libertad.

»Cuatro días estuvo el baño con gente, que fue ocasión que cuatro días tardase en parecer la caña; al cabo de los cuales, en la acostumbrada soledad del baño, pareció con el lienzo tan preñado, que un felicísimo parto prometía. Inclínose a mí la caña y el lienzo, hallé en él otro papel y cien escudos de oro, sin otra moneda alguna. Estaba allí el renegado, dímosle a leer el papel dentro de nuestro rancho, el cual dijo que así decía: Yo no sé, mi señor, cómo dar orden que nos

vamos a España, ni Lela Marién me lo ha dicho, aunque yo se lo he preguntado. Lo que se podrá hacer es que yo os daré por esta ventana muchísimos dineros de oro: rescataos vos con ellos y vuestros amigos, y vaya uno en tierra de cristianos, y compre allá una barca y vuelva por los demás; y a mí me hallarán en el jardín de mi padre, que está a la puerta de Babazón, junto a la marina, donde tengo de estar todo este verano con mi padre y con mis criados. De allí, de noche, me podréis sacar sin miedo y llevarme a la barca; y mira que has de ser mi marido, porque si no, yo pediré a Marién que te castigue. Si no te fías de nadie que vaya por la barca, rescátate tú y ve, que yo sé que volverás mejor que otro, pues eres caballero y cristiano. Procura saber el jardín, y cuando te pasees por ahí sabré que está solo el baño, y te daré mucho dinero. Alá te guarde, señor mío.

»Esto decía y contenía el segundo papel. Lo cual visto por todos, cada uno se ofreció a querer ser el rescatado, y prometió de ir y volver con toda puntualidad, y también yo me ofrecí a lo mismo; a todo lo cual se opuso el renegado, diciendo que en ninguna manera consentiría que ninguno saliese de libertad hasta que fuesen todos juntos, porque la experiencia le había mostrado cuán mal cumplían los libres las palabras que daban en el cautiverio; porque muchas veces habían usado de aquel remedio algunos principales cautivos, rescatando a uno que fuese a Valencia, o Mallorca, con dineros para poder armar una barca y volver por los que le habían rescatado, y nunca habían vuelto; porque la libertad alcanzada y el temor de no volver a perderla les borraba de la memoria todas las obligaciones del mundo. Y, en confirmación de la verdad que nos decía, nos contó brevemente un caso que casi en aquella misma sazón había acaecido a unos caballeros cristianos, el más extraño que jamás sucedió en aquellas partes, donde a cada paso suceden cosas de grande espanto y de admiración.

»En efecto, él vino a decir que lo que se podía y debía hacer era que el dinero que se había de dar para rescatar al cristiano, que se le diese a él para comprar allí en Argel una barca, con achaque de hacerse mercader y tratante en Tetuán y en aquella costa; y que, siendo él señor de la barca, fácilmente se daría traza para sacarlos del baño y embarcarlos a todos. Cuanto más, que si la mora, como ella decía, daba dineros para rescatarlos a todos, que, estando libres, era facilísima cosa aun embarcarse en la mitad del día; y que la dificultad que se ofrecía mayor era que los moros no consienten que renegado alguno compre ni tenga barca, si no es bajel grande para ir en corso, porque se temen que el que compra barca, principalmente si es español, no la quiere sino para irse a tierra de cristianos; pero que él facilitaría este inconveniente con hacer que un moro tagarino fuese a la parte con él en la compañía de la barca y en la ganancia de las mercancías, y con esta sombra él vendría a ser señor de la barca, con que daba por acabado todo lo demás.

»Y, puesto que a mí y a mis camaradas nos había parecido mejor lo de enviar por la barca a Mallorca, como la mora decía, no osamos contradecirle, temerosos que, si no hacíamos lo que él decía, nos había de descubrir y poner a peligro de perder las vidas, si descubriese el trato de Zoraida, por cuya vida diéramos todas las nuestras. Y así, determinamos de ponernos en las manos de Dios y en las del renegado, y en aquel mismo punto se le respondió a Zoraida, diciéndole que haríamos todo cuanto nos aconsejaba, porque lo había advertido tan bien como si Lela Marién se lo hubiera dicho, y que en ella sola estaba dilatar aquel negocio, o ponello luego por obra. Ofrecímele de nuevo de ser su esposo, y, con esto, otro día que acaeció a estar solo el baño, en diversas veces, con la caña y el paño, nos dio dos mil escudos de oro, y un papel donde decía que el primer jumá, que es el viernes, se iba al jardín de su padre, y que antes que se fuese nos daría más dinero, y que si aquello no bastase, que se lo avisásemos, que nos daría cuanto le pidiésemos: que su padre tenía tantos, que no lo echaría menos, cuanto más, que ella tenía la llaves de todo.

»Dimos luego quinientos escudos al renegado para comprar la barca; con ochocientos me rescaté yo, dando el dinero a un mercader valenciano que a la sazón se hallaba en Argel, el cual me rescató del rey, tomándome sobre su palabra, dándola de que con el primer bajel que viniese de Valencia pagaría mi rescate; porque si luego diera el dinero, fuera dar sospechas al rey que había muchos días que mi rescate estaba en Argel, y que el mercader, por sus granjerías, lo había callado. Finalmente, mi amo era tan caviloso que en ninguna manera me atreví a que luego se desembolsase el dinero. El jueves antes del viernes que la hermosa Zoraida se había de ir al jardín, nos dio otros mil escudos y nos avisó de su partida, rogándome que, si me rescatase, supiese luego el jardín de su padre, y que en todo caso buscase ocasión de ir allá y verla. Respondíle en breves palabras que así lo haría, y que tuviese cuidado de encomendarnos a Lela Marién, con todas aquellas oraciones que la cautiva le había enseñado.

»Hecho esto, dieron orden en que los tres compañeros nuestros se rescatasen, por facilitar la salida del baño, y porque, viéndome a mí rescatado, y a ellos no, pues había dinero, no se alborotasen y les persuadiese el diablo que hiciesen alguna cosa en perjuicio de Zoraida; que, puesto que el ser ellos quien eran me podía asegurar deste temor, con todo eso, no quise poner el negocio en aventura, y así, los hice rescatar por la misma orden que yo me rescaté, entregando todo el dinero al mercader, para que, con certeza y seguridad, pudiese hacer la fianza; al cual nunca descubrimos nuestro trato y secreto, por el peligro que había.

## Capítulo XLI

*Donde todavía prosigue el cautivo su suceso*

»NO SE PASARON quince días, cuando ya nuestro renegado tenía comprada una muy buena barca, capaz de más de treinta personas: y, para asegurar su hecho y dalle color, quiso hacer, como hizo, un viaje a un lugar que se llamaba Sargel, que está treinta leguas de Argel hacia la parte de Orán, en el cual hay mucha contratación de higos pasos. Dos o tres veces hizo este viaje, en compañía del tagarino que había dicho. *Tagarinos* llaman en Berbería a los moros de Aragón, y a los de Granada, *mudéjares*; y en el reino de Fez llaman a los mudéjares *elches*, los cuales son la gente de quien aquel rey más se sirve en la guerra.

»Digo, pues, que cada vez que pasaba con su barca daba fondo en una caleta que estaba no dos tiros de ballesta del jardín donde Zoraida esperaba; y allí, muy de propósito, se ponía el renegado con los morillos que bogaban el remo, o ya a hacer la zalá, o a como por ensayarse de burlas a lo que pensaba hacer de veras; y así, se iba al jardín de Zoraida y le pedía fruta, y su padre se la daba sin conocelle; y, aunque él quisiera hablar a Zoraida, como él después me dijo, y decille que él era el que por orden mía le había de llevar a tierra de cristianos, que estuviese contenta y segura, nunca le fue posible, porque las moras no se dejan ver de ningún moro ni turco, si no es que su marido o su padre se lo manden. De cristianos cautivos se dejan tratar y comunicar, aun más de aquello que sería razonable; y a mí me hubiera pesado que él la hubiera hablado, que quizá la alborotara, viendo que su negocio andaba en boca de renegados. Pero Dios, que lo ordenaba de otra manera, no dio lugar al buen deseo que nuestro renegado tenía; el cual, viendo cuán seguramente iba y venía a Sargel, y que daba fondo cuando y como y adonde quería, y que el tagarino, su compañero, no tenía más voluntad de lo que la suya ordenaba, y que yo estaba ya rescatado, y que sólo faltaba buscar algunos cristianos que bogasen el remo, me dijo que mirase yo cuáles quería traer conmigo, fuera de los rescatados, y que los tuviese hablados para el primer viernes, donde tenía determinado que fuese nuestra partida. Viendo esto, hablé a doce españoles, todos valientes hombres del remo, y de aquellos que más libremente podían salir de la ciudad; y no fue poco hallar tantos en aquella coyuntura, porque estaban veinte bajeles en corso, y se habían llevado toda la gente de remo, y éstos no se hallaran, si no fuera que su amo se

quedó aquel verano sin ir en corso, a acabar una galeota que tenía en astillero. A los cuales no les dije otra cosa, sino que el primer viernes en la tarde se saliesen uno a uno, disimuladamente, y se fuesen la vuelta del jardín de Agi Morato, y que allí me aguardasen hasta que yo fuese. A cada uno di este aviso de por sí, con orden que, aunque allí viesan a otros cristianos, no les dijiesen sino que yo les había mandado esperar en aquel lugar.

»Hecha esta diligencia, me faltaba hacer otra, que era la que más me convenía: y era la de avisar a Zoraida en el punto que estaban los negocios, para que estuviese apercibida y sobre aviso, que no se sobresaltase si de improviso la asaltásemos antes del tiempo que ella podía imaginar que la barca de cristianos podía volver. Y así, determiné de ir al jardín y ver si podría hablarla; y, con ocasión de coger algunas yerbas, un día, antes de mi partida, fui allá, y la primera persona con quién encontré fue con su padre, el cual me dijo, en lengua que en toda la Berbería, y aun en Costantinopla, se halla entre cautivos y moros, que ni es morisca, ni castellana, ni de otra nación alguna, sino una mezcla de todas las lenguas con la cual todos nos entendemos; digo, pues, que en esta manera de lenguaje me preguntó que qué buscaba en aquel su jardín, y de quién era. Respondíle que era esclavo de Arnaúte Mamí (y esto, porque sabía yo por muy cierto que era un grandísimo amigo suyo), y que buscaba de todas yerbas, para hacer ensalada. Preguntóme, por el consiguiente, si era hombre de rescate o no, y que cuánto pedía mi amo por mí. Estando en todas estas preguntas y respuestas, salió de la casa del jardín la bella Zoraida, la cual ya había mucho que me había visto; y, como las moras en ninguna manera hacen melindre de mostrarse a los cristianos, ni tampoco se esquivan, como ya he dicho, no se le dio nada de venir adonde su padre conmigo estaba; antes, luego cuando su padre vio que venía, y de espacio, la llamó y mandó que llegase.

»Demasiada cosa sería decir yo agora la mucha hermosura, la gentileza, el gallardo y rico adorno con que mi querida Zoraida se mostró a mis ojos: sólo diré que más perlas pendían de su hermosísimo cuello, orejas y cabellos, que cabellos tenía en la cabeza. En las gargantas de los sus pies, que descubiertas, a su usanza, traía, traía dos carcajes (que así se llamaban las manillas o ajorcas de los pies en morisco) de purísimo oro, con tantos diamantes engastados, que ella me dijo después que su padre los estimaba en diez mil doblas, y las que traía en las muñecas de las manos valían otro tanto. Las perlas eran en gran cantidad y muy buenas, porque la mayor gala y bizarría de las moras es adornarse de ricas perlas y aljófar, y así, hay más perlas y aljófar entre moros que entre todas las demás naciones; y el padre de Zoraida tenía fama de tener muchas y de las mejores que en Argel había, y de tener asimismo más de docientos mil escudos españoles, de todo lo cual era señora ésta que ahora lo es mía. Si con todo este

adorno podía venir entonces hermosa, o no, por las reliquias que le han quedado en tantos trabajos se podrá conjeturar cuál debía de ser en las prosperidades. Porque ya se sabe que la hermosura de algunas mujeres tiene días y sazones, y requiere accidentes para disminuirse o acrecentarse; y es natural cosa que las pasiones del ánimo la levanten o abajen, puesto que las más veces la destruyen.

»Digo, en fin, que entonces llegó en todo extremo aderezada y en todo extremo hermosa, o, a lo menos, a mí me pareció serlo la más que hasta entonces había visto; y con esto, viendo las obligaciones en que me había puesto, me parecía que tenía delante de mí una deidad del cielo, venida a la tierra para mi gusto y para mi remedio. Así como ella llegó, le dijo su padre en su lengua como yo era cautivo de su amigo Arnaúte Mamí, y que venía a buscar ensalada. Ella tomó la mano, y en aquella mezcla de lenguas que tengo dicho, me preguntó si era caballero y qué era la causa que no me rescataba. Yo le respondí que ya estaba rescatado, y que en el precio podía echar de ver en lo que mi amo me estimaba, pues había dado por mí mil y quinientos zoltanís. A lo cual ella respondió: “En verdad que si tú fueras de mi padre, que yo hiciera que no te diera él por otros dos tantos, porque vosotros, cristianos, siempre mentís en cuanto decís, y os hacéis pobres por engañar a los moros”. “Bien podría ser eso, señora -le respondí-, mas en verdad que yo la he tratado con mi amo, y la trato y la trataré con cuantas personas hay en el mundo”. “Y ¿cuándo te vas?”, dijo Zoraida. “Mañana, creo yo -dije-, porque está aquí un bajel de Francia que se hace mañana a la vela, y pienso irme en él”. “¿No es mejor -replicó Zoraida-, esperar a que vengan bajeles de España, y irte con ellos, que no con los de Francia, que no son vuestros amigos?” “No -respondí yo-, aunque si como hay nuevas que viene ya un bajel de España, es verdad, todavía yo le aguardaré, puesto que es más cierto el partirme mañana; porque el deseo que tengo de verme en mi tierra, y con las personas que bien quiero, es tanto que no me dejaré esperar otra comodidad, si se tarda, por mejor que sea”. “Debes de ser, sin duda, casado en tu tierra -dijo Zoraida-, y por eso deseas ir a verte con tu mujer”. “No soy -respondí yo-casado, mas tengo dada la palabra de casarme en llegando allá”. “Y ¿es hermosa la dama a quien se la diste?”, dijo Zoraida. “Tan hermosa es -respondí yo-que para encarecella y decirte la verdad, te parece a ti mucho”. Desto se riyó muy de veras su padre, y dijo: “Gualá, cristiano, que debe de ser muy hermosa si se parece a mi hija, que es la más hermosa de todo este reino. Si no, mírala bien, y verás cómo te digo verdad”. Servíanos de intérprete a las más de estas palabras y razones el padre de Zoraida, como más ladino; que, aunque ella hablaba la bastarda lengua que, como he dicho, allí se usa, más declaraba su intención por señas que por palabras.

»Estando en estas y otras muchas razones, llegó un moro corriendo, y dijo, a

grandes voces, que por las bardas o paredes del jardín habían saltado cuatro turcos, y andaban cogiendo la fruta, aunque no estaba madura. Sobresaltóse el viejo, y lo mismo hizo Zoraida, porque es común y casi natural el miedo que los moros a los turcos tienen, especialmente a los soldados, los cuales son tan insolentes y tienen tanto imperio sobre los moros que a ellos están sujetos, que los tratan peor que si fuesen esclavos suyos. Digo, pues, que dijo su padre a Zoraida: “Hija, retírate a la casa y enciértrate, en tanto que yo voy a hablar a estos canes; y tú, cristiano, busca tus yerbas, y vete en buen hora, y llévete Alá con bien a tu tierra”. Yo me incliné, y él se fue a buscar los turcos, dejándome solo con Zoraida, que comenzó a dar muestras de irse donde su padre la había mandado. Pero, apenas él se encubrió con los árboles del jardín, cuando ella, volviéndose a mí, llenos los ojos de lágrimas, me dijo: “Ámexi, cristiano, ámexi”; que quiere decir: “¿Vaste, cristiano, vaste?” Yo la respondí: “Señora, sí, pero no en ninguna manera sin ti: el primero jumá me aguarda, y no te sobresaltes cuando nos veas; que sin duda alguna iremos a tierra de cristianos”.

»Yo le dije esto de manera que ella me entendió muy bien a todas las razones que entrambos pasamos; y, echándome un brazo al cuello, con desmayados pasos comenzó a caminar hacia la casa; y quiso la suerte, que pudiera ser muy mala si el cielo no lo ordenara de otra manera, que, yendo los dos de la manera y postura que os he contado, con un brazo al cuello, su padre, que ya volvía de hacer ir a los turcos, nos vio de la suerte y manera que íbamos, y nosotros vimos que él nos había visto; pero Zoraida, advertida y discreta, no quiso quitar el brazo de mi cuello, antes se llegó más a mí y puso su cabeza sobre mi pecho, doblando un poco las rodillas, dando claras señales y muestras que se desmayaba, y yo, ansimismo, di a entender que la sostenía contra mi voluntad. Su padre llegó corriendo adonde estábamos, y, viendo a su hija de aquella manera, le preguntó que qué tenía; pero, como ella no le respondiese, dijo su padre: “Sin duda alguna que con el sobresalto de la entrada de estos canes se ha desmayado”. Y, quitándola del mío, la arrimó a su pecho; y ella, dando un suspiro y aún no enjutos los ojos de lágrimas, volvió a decir: “Ámexi, cristiano, ámexi”: “Vete, cristiano, vete”. A lo que su padre respondió: “No importa, hija, que el cristiano se vaya, que ningún mal te ha hecho, y los turcos ya son idos. No te sobresalte cosa alguna, pues ninguna hay que pueda darte pesadumbre, pues, como ya te he dicho, los turcos, a mi ruego, se volvieron por donde entraron”. “Ellos, señor, la sobresaltaron, como has dicho -dije yo a su padre-; mas, pues ella dice que yo me vaya, no la quiero dar pesadumbre: quédate en paz, y, con tu licencia, volveré, si fuere menester, por yerbas a este jardín; que, según dice mi amo, en ninguno las hay mejores para ensalada que en él”. “Todas las que quisieres podrás volver -respondió Agi Morato-, que mi hija no dice esto porque



tú ni ninguno de los cristianos la enojaban, sino que, por decir que los turcos se fuesen, dijo que tú te fueses, o porque ya era hora que buscases tus yerbas”.

»Con esto, me despedí al punto de entrambos; y ella, arrancándosele el alma, al parecer, se fue con su padre; y yo, con achaque de buscar las yerbas, rodeé muy bien y a mi placer todo el jardín: miré bien las entradas y salidas, y la fortaleza de la casa, y la comodidad que se podía ofrecer para facilitar todo nuestro negocio. Hecho esto, me vine y di cuenta de cuanto había pasado al renegado y a mis compañeros; y ya no veía la hora de verme gozar sin sobresalto del bien que en la hermosa y bella Zoraida la suerte me ofrecía.

»En fin, el tiempo se pasó, y se llegó el día y plazo de nosotros tan deseado; y, siguiendo todos el orden y parecer que, con discreta consideración y largo discurso, muchas veces habíamos dado, tuvimos el buen suceso que deseábamos; porque el viernes que se siguió al día que yo con Zoraida hablé en el jardín, nuestro renegado, al anochecer, dio fondo con la barca casi frontero de donde la hermosísima Zoraida estaba. Ya los cristianos que habían de bogar el remo estaban prevenidos y escondidos por diversas partes de todos aquellos alrededores. Todos estaban suspensos y alborozados, aguardándome, deseosos ya de embestir con el bajel que a los ojos tenían; porque ellos no sabían el concierto del renegado, sino que pensaban que a fuerza de brazos habían de haber y ganar la libertad, quitando la vida a los moros que dentro de la barca estaban.

»Sucedió, pues, que, así como yo me mostré y mis compañeros, todos los demás escondidos que nos vieron se vinieron llegando a nosotros. Esto era ya a tiempo que la ciudad estaba ya cerrada, y por toda aquella campaña ninguna persona parecía. Como estuvimos juntos, dudamos si sería mejor ir primero por Zoraida, o rendir primero a los moros bagarinos que bogaban el remo en la barca. Y, estando en esta duda, llegó a nosotros nuestro renegado diciéndonos que en qué nos deteníamos, que ya era hora, y que todos sus moros estaban descuidados, y los más de ellos durmiendo. Dijámosle en lo que reparábamos, y él dijo que lo que más importaba era rendir primero el bajel, que se podía hacer con grandísima facilidad y sin peligro alguno, y que luego podíamos ir por Zoraida. Pareciónos bien a todos lo que decía, y así, sin detenernos más, haciendo él la guía, llegamos al bajel, y, saltando él dentro primero, metió mano a un alfanje, y dijo en morisco: “Ninguno de vosotros se mueva de aquí, si no quiere que le cueste la vida”. Ya, a este tiempo, habían entrado dentro casi todos los cristianos. Los moros, que eran de poco ánimo, viendo hablar de aquella manera a su arráez, quedáronse espantados, y sin ninguno de todos ellos echar mano a las armas, que pocas o casi ningunas tenían, se dejaron, sin hablar alguna palabra, maniatar de los cristianos, los cuales con mucha presteza lo hicieron,

amenazando a los moros que si alzaban por alguna vía o manera la voz, que luego al punto los pasarían todos a cuchillo.

»Hecho ya esto, quedándose en guardia dellos la mitad de los nuestros, los que quedábamos, haciéndonos asimismo el renegado la guía, fuimos al jardín de Agi Morato, y quiso la buena suerte que, llegando a abrir la puerta, se abrió con tanta facilidad como si cerrada no estuviera; y así, con gran quietud y silencio, llegamos a la casa sin ser sentidos de nadie. Estaba la bellísima Zoraida aguardándonos a una ventana, y, así como sintió gente, preguntó con voz baja si éramos *nizarani*, como si dijera o preguntara si éramos cristianos. Yo le respondí que sí, y que bajase. Cuando ella me conoció, no se detuvo un punto, porque, sin responderme palabra, bajó en un instante, abrió la puerta y mostróse a todos tan hermosa y ricamente vestida que no lo acierto a encarecer. Luego que yo la vi, le tomé una mano y la comencé a besar, y el renegado hizo lo mismo, y mis dos camaradas; y los demás, que el caso no sabían, hicieron lo que vieron que nosotros hacíamos, que no parecía sino que le dábamos las gracias y la reconocíamos por señora de nuestra libertad. El renegado le dijo en lengua morisca si estaba su padre en el jardín. Ella respondió que sí y que dormía. “Pues será menester despertalle -replicó el renegado-, y llevárnosle con nosotros, y todo aquello que tiene de valor este hermoso jardín”. “No -dijo ella-, a mi padre no se ha de tocar en ningún modo, y en esta casa no hay otra cosa que lo que yo llevo, que es tanto, que bien habrá para que todos quedéis ricos y contentos; y esperaros un poco y lo veréis”. Y, diciendo esto, se volvió a entrar, diciendo que muy presto volvería; que nos estuviésemos quedos, sin hacer ningún ruido. Preguntéle al renegado lo que con ella había pasado, el cual me lo contó, a quien yo dije que en ninguna cosa se había de hacer más de lo que Zoraida quisiese; la cual ya que volvía cargada con un cofrecillo lleno de escudos de oro, tantos, que apenas lo podía sustentar, quiso la mala suerte que su padre despertase en el ínterin y sintiese el ruido que andaba en el jardín; y, asomándose a la ventana, luego conoció que todos los que en él estaban eran cristianos; y, dando muchas, grandes y desaforadas voces, comenzó a decir en arábigo: “¡Cristianos, cristianos! ¡Ladrones, ladrones!”; por los cuales gritos nos vimos todos puestos en grandísima y temerosa confusión. Pero el renegado, viendo el peligro en que estábamos, y lo mucho que le importaba salir con aquella empresa antes de ser sentido, con grandísima presteza, subió donde Agi Morato estaba, y juntamente con él fueron algunos de nosotros; que yo no osé desamparar a la Zoraida, que como desmayada se había dejado caer en mis brazos. En resolución, los que subieron se dieron tan buena maña que en un momento bajaron con Agi Morato, trayéndole atadas las manos y puesto un pañizuelo en la boca, que no le dejaba hablar palabra, amenazándole que el hablarla le había de costar la vida. Cuando

su hija le vio, se cubrió los ojos por no verle, y su padre quedó espantado, ignorando cuán de su voluntad se había puesto en nuestras manos. Mas, entonces siendo más necesarios los pies, con diligencia y presteza nos pusimos en la barca; que ya los que en ella habían quedado nos esperaban, temerosos de algún mal suceso nuestro.

»Apenas serían dos horas pasadas de la noche, cuando ya estábamos todos en la barca, en la cual se le quitó al padre de Zoraida la atadura de las manos y el paño de la boca; pero tornóle a decir el renegado que no hablase palabra, que le quitarían la vida. Él, como vio allí a su hija, comenzó a suspirar ternísimamente, y más cuando vio que yo estrechamente la tenía abrazada, y que ella sin defender, quejarse ni esquivarse, se estaba queda; pero, con todo esto, callaba, porque no pusiesen en efeto las muchas amenazas que el renegado le hacía. Viéndose, pues, Zoraida ya en la barca, y que queríamos dar los remos al agua, y viendo allí a su padre y a los demás moros que atados estaban, le dijo al renegado que me dijese le hiciese merced de soltar a aquellos moros y de dar libertad a su padre, porque antes se arrojaría en la mar que ver delante de sus ojos y por causa suya llevar cautivo a un padre que tanto la había querido. El renegado me lo dijo; y yo respondí que era muy contento; pero él respondió que no convenía, a causa que, si allí los dejaban apellidarían luego la tierra y alborotarían la ciudad, y serían causa que saliesen a buscarlos con algunas fragatas ligeras, y les tomasen la tierra y la mar, de manera que no pudiésemos escaparnos; que lo que se podría hacer era darles libertad en llegando a la primera tierra de cristianos. En este parecer venimos todos, y Zoraida, a quien se le dio cuenta, con las causas que nos movían a no hacer luego lo que quería, también se satisfizo; y luego, con regocijado silencio y alegre diligencia, cada uno de nuestros valientes remeros tomó su remo, y comenzamos, encomendándonos a Dios de todo corazón, a navegar la vuelta de las islas de Mallorca, que es la tierra de cristianos más cerca.

»Pero, a causa de soplar un poco el viento tramontana y estar la mar algo picada, no fue posible seguir la derrota de Mallorca, y fueros forzoso dejarnos ir tierra a tierra la vuelta de Orán, no sin mucha pesadumbre nuestra, por no ser descubiertos del lugar de Sargel, que en aquella costa cae sesenta millas de Argel. Y, asimismo, temíamos encontrar por aquel paraje alguna galeota de las que de ordinario vienen con mercancía de Tetuán, aunque cada uno por sí, y por todos juntos, presumíamos de que, si se encontraba galeota de mercancía, como no fuese de las que andan en corso, que no sólo no nos perderíamos, mas que tomaríamos bajel donde con más seguridad pudiésemos acabar nuestro viaje. Iba Zoraida, en tanto que se navegaba, puesta la cabeza entre mis manos, por no ver a su padre, y sentía yo que iba llamando a Lela Marién que nos ayudase.

»Bien habríamos navegado treinta millas, cuando nos amaneció, como tres tiros de arcabuz desviados de tierra, toda la cual vimos desierta y sin nadie que nos descubriese; pero, con todo eso, nos fuimos a fuerza de brazos entrando un poco en la mar, que ya estaba algo más sosegada; y, habiendo entrado casi dos leguas, diose orden que se bogase a cuarteles en tanto que comíamos algo, que iba bien proveída la barca, puesto que los que bogaban dijeron que no era aquél tiempo de tomar reposo alguno, que les diesen de comer los que no bogaban, que ellos no querían soltar los remos de las manos en manera alguna. Hízose así, y en esto comenzó a soplar un viento largo, que nos obligó a hacer luego vela y a dejar el remo, y enderezar a Orán, por no ser posible poder hacer otro viaje. Todo se hizo con mucha presteza; y así, a la vela, navegamos por más de ocho millas por hora, sin llevar otro temor alguno sino el de encontrar con bajel que de corso fuese.

»Dimos de comer a los moros bagarinos, y el renegado les consoló diciéndoles como no iban cautivos, que en la primera ocasión les darían libertad. Lo mismo se le dijo al padre de Zoraida, el cual respondió: “Cualquiera otra cosa pudiera yo esperar y creer de vuestra liberalidad y buen término, ¡oh cristianos!, mas el darme libertad, no me tengáis por tan simple que lo imagine; que nunca os pusistes vosotros al peligro de quitármela para volverla tan liberalmente, especialmente sabiendo quién soy yo, y el interese que se os puede seguir de dármele; el cual interese, si le queréis poner nombre, desde aquí os ofrezco todo aquello que quisiéredes por mí y por esa desdichada hija mía, o si no, por ella sola, que es la mayor y la mejor parte de mi alma”. En diciendo esto, comenzó a llorar tan amargamente que a todos nos movió a compasión, y forzó a Zoraida que le mirase; la cual, viéndole llorar, así se enterneció que se levantó de mis pies y fue a abrazar a su padre, y, juntando su rostro con el suyo, comenzaron los dos tan tierno llanto que muchos de los que allí íbamos le acompañamos en él. Pero, cuando su padre la vio adornada de fiesta y con tantas joyas sobre sí, le dijo en su lengua: “¿Qué es esto, hija, que ayer al anocheecer, antes que nos sucediese esta terrible desgracia en que nos vemos, te vi con tus ordinarios y caseros vestidos, y agora, sin que hayas tenido tiempo de vestirte y sin haberte dado alguna nueva alegre de solenizalle con adornarte y pulirte, te veo compuesta con los mejores vestidos que yo supe y pude darte cuando nos fue la ventura más favorable? Respóndeme a esto, que me tiene más suspenso y admirado que la misma desgracia en que me hallo”.

»Todo lo que el moro decía a su hija nos lo declaraba el renegado, y ella no le respondía palabra. Pero, cuando él vio a un lado de la barca el cofrecillo donde ella solía tener sus joyas, el cual sabía él bien que le había dejado en Argel, y no traídole al jardín, quedó más confuso, y preguntóle que cómo aquel cofre había

venido a nuestras manos, y qué era lo que venía dentro. A lo cual el renegado, sin aguardar que Zoraida le respondiese, le respondió: “No te canses, señor, en preguntar a Zoraida, tu hija, tantas cosas, porque con una que yo te responda te satisfaré a todas; y así, quiero que sepas que ella es cristiana, y es la que ha sido la lima de nuestras cadenas y la libertad de nuestro cautiverio; ella va aquí de su voluntad, tan contenta, a lo que yo imagino, de verse en este estado, como el que sale de las tinieblas a la luz, de la muerte a la vida y de la pena a la gloria”. “¿Es verdad lo que éste dice, hija?”, dijo el moro. “Así es”, respondió Zoraida. “¿Que, en efeto -replicó el viejo-, tú eres cristiana, y la que ha puesto a su padre en poder de sus enemigos?” A lo cual respondió Zoraida: “La que es cristiana yo soy, pero no la que te ha puesto en este punto, porque nunca mi deseo se estendió a dejarte ni a hacerte mal, sino a hacerme a mí bien”. “Y ¿qué bien es el que te has hecho, hija?” “Eso -respondió ella-pregúntaselo tú a Lela Marién, que ella te lo sabrá decir mejor que no yo”.

»Apenas hubo oído esto el moro, cuando, con una increíble presteza, se arrojó de cabeza en la mar, donde sin ninguna duda se ahogara, si el vestido largo y embarazoso que traía no le entretuviera un poco sobre el agua. Dio voces Zoraida que le sacasen, y así, acudimos luego todos, y, asiéndole de la almalafa, le sacamos medio ahogado y sin sentido, de que recibió tanta pena Zoraida que, como si fuera ya muerto, hacía sobre él un tierno y doloroso llanto. Volvimosle boca abajo, volvió mucha agua, tornó en sí al cabo de dos horas, en las cuales, habiéndose trocado el viento, nos convino volver hacia tierra, y hacer fuerza de remos, por no embestir en ella; mas quiso nuestra buena suerte que llegamos a una cala que se hace al lado de un pequeño promontorio o cabo que de los moros es llamado el de *La Cava Rumía*, que en nuestra lengua quiere decir *La mala mujer cristiana*; y es tradición entre los moros que en aquel lugar está enterrada la Cava, por quien se perdió España, porque *cava* en su lengua quiere decir *mujer mala*, y *rumía*, *cristiana*; y aun tienen por mal agüero llegar allí a dar fondo cuando la necesidad les fuerza a ello, porque nunca le dan sin ella; puesto que para nosotros no fue abrigo de mala mujer, sino puerto seguro de nuestro remedio, según andaba alterada la mar.

»Pusimos nuestras centinelas en tierra, y no dejamos jamás los remos de la mano; comimos de lo que el renegado había proveído, y rogamos a Dios y a Nuestra Señora, de todo nuestro corazón, que nos ayudase y favoreciese para que felicemente diésemos fin a tan dichoso principio. Diose orden, a suplicación de Zoraida, como echásemos en tierra a su padre y a todos los demás moros que allí atados venían, porque no le bastaba el ánimo, ni lo podían sufrir sus blandas entrañas, ver delante de sus ojos atado a su padre y aquellos de su tierra presos. Prometimosle de hacerlo así al tiempo de la partida, pues no corría peligro el

dejallos en aquel lugar, que era despoblado. No fueron tan vanas nuestras oraciones que no fuesen oídas del cielo; que, en nuestro favor, luego volvió el viento, tranquilo el mar, convidándonos a que tornásemos alegres a proseguir nuestro comenzado viaje.

»Viendo esto, desatamos a los moros, y uno a uno los pusimos en tierra, de lo que ellos se quedaron admirados; pero, llegando a desembarcar al padre de Zoraida, que ya estaba en todo su acuerdo, dijo: “¿Por qué pensáis, cristianos, que esta mala hembra huelga de que me deis libertad? ¿Pensáis que es por piedad que de mí tiene? No, por cierto, sino que lo hace por el estorbo que le dará mi presencia cuando quiera poner en ejecución sus malos deseos; ni penséis que la ha movido a mudar religión entender ella que la vuestra a la nuestra se aventaja, sino el saber que en vuestra tierra se usa la deshonestidad más libremente que en la nuestra”. Y, volviéndose a Zoraida, teniéndole yo y otro cristiano de entrambos brazos asido, porque algún desatino no hiciese, le dijo: “¡Oh infame moza y mal aconsejada muchacha! ¿Adónde vas, ciega y desatinada, en poder destos perros, naturales enemigos nuestros? ¡Maldita sea la hora en que yo te engendré, y malditos sean los regalos y deleites en que te he criado!” Pero, viendo yo que llevaba término de no acabar tan presto, di prisa a ponelle en tierra, y desde allí, a voces, prosiguió en sus maldiciones y lamentos, rogando a Mahoma rogase a Alá que nos destruyese, confundiese y acabase; y cuando, por habernos hecho a la vela, no podimos oír sus palabras, vimos sus obras, que eran arrancarse las barbas, mesarse los cabellos y arrastrarse por el suelo; mas una vez esforzó la voz de tal manera que podimos entender que decía: “¡Vuelve, amada hija, vuelve a tierra, que todo te lo perdono; entrega a esos hombres ese dinero, que ya es suyo, y vuelve a consolar a este triste padre tuyo, que en esta desierta arena dejará la vida, si tú le dejas!” Todo lo cual escuchaba Zoraida, y todo lo sentía y lloraba, y no supo decirle ni respondelle palabra, sino: “Plega a Alá, padre mío, que Lela Marién, que ha sido la causa de que yo sea cristiana, ella te consuele en tu tristeza. Alá sabe bien que no pude hacer otra cosa de la que he hecho, y que estos cristianos no deben nada a mi voluntad, pues, aunque quisiera no venir con ellos y quedarme en mi casa, me fuera imposible, según la prisa que me daba mi alma a poner por obra ésta que a mí me parece tan buena como tú, padre amado, la juzgas por mala”. Esto dijo, a tiempo que ni su padre la oía, ni nosotros ya le veíamos; y así, consolando yo a Zoraida, atendimos todos a nuestro viaje, el cual nos le facilitaba el propio viento, de tal manera que bien tuvimos por cierto de vernos otro día al amanecer en las riberas de España.

»Mas, como pocas veces, o nunca, viene el bien puro y sencillo, sin ser acompañado o seguido de algún mal que le turbe o sobresalte, quiso nuestra

ventura, o quizá las maldiciones que el moro a su hija había echado, que siempre se han de temer de cualquier padre que sean; quiso, digo, que estando ya engolfados y siendo ya casi pasadas tres horas de la noche, yendo con la vela tendida de alto baja, frenillados los remos, porque el próspero viento nos quitaba del trabajo de haberlos menester, con la luz de la luna, que claramente resplandecía, vimos cerca de nosotros un bajel redondo, que, con todas las velas tendidas, llevando un poco a orza el timón, delante de nosotros atravesaba; y esto tan cerca, que nos fue forzoso amainar por no embestirle, y ellos, asimesmo, hicieron fuerza de timón para darnos lugar que pasásemos.

»Habíanse puesto a bordo del bajel a preguntarnos quién éramos, y adónde navegábamos, y de dónde veníamos; pero, por preguntarnos esto en lengua francesa, dijo nuestro renegado: “Ninguno responda; porque éstos, sin duda, son cosarios franceses, que hacen a toda ropa”. Por este advertimiento, ninguno respondió palabra; y, habiendo pasado un poco delante, que ya el bajel quedaba sotavento, de improviso soltaron dos piezas de artillería, y, a lo que parecía, ambas venían con cadenas, porque con una cortaron nuestro árbol por medio, y dieron con él y con la vela en la mar; y al momento, disparando otra pieza, vino a dar la bala en mitad de nuestra barca, de modo que la abrió toda, sin hacer otro mal alguno; pero, como nosotros nos vimos ir a fondo, comenzamos todos a grandes voces a pedir socorro y a rogar a los del bajel que nos acogiesen, porque nos anegábamos. Amainaron entonces, y, echando el esquife o barca a la mar, entraron en él hasta doce franceses bien armados, con sus arcabuces y cuerdas encendidas, y así llegaron junto al nuestro; y, viendo cuán pocos éramos y cómo el bajel se hundía, nos recogieron, diciendo que, por haber usado de la descortesía de no respondelles, nos había sucedido aquello. Nuestro renegado tomó el cofre de las riquezas de Zoraida, y dio con él en la mar, sin que ninguno echase de ver en lo que hacía. En resolución, todos pasamos con los franceses, los cuales, después de haberse informado de todo aquello que de nosotros saber quisieron, como si fueran nuestros capitales enemigos, nos despojaron de todo cuanto teníamos, y a Zoraida le quitaron hasta los carcajes que traía en los pies. Pero no me daba a mí tanta pesadumbre la que a Zoraida daban, como me la daba el temor que tenía de que habían de pasar del quitar de las riquísimas y preciosísimas joyas al quitar de la joya que más valía y ella más estimaba. Pero los deseos de aquella gente no se estienden a más que al dinero, y desto jamás se ve harta su codicia; lo cual entonces llegó a tanto, que aun hasta los vestidos de cautivos nos quitaran si de algún provecho les fueran. Y hubo parecer entre ellos de que a todos nos arrojasen a la mar envueltos en una vela, porque tenían intención de tratar en algunos puertos de España con nombre de que eran bretones, y si nos llevaban vivos, serían castigados, siendo descubierto su hurto.

Mas el capitán, que era el que había despojado a mi querida Zoraida, dijo que él se contentaba con la presa que tenía, y que no quería tocar en ningún puerto de España, sino pasar el estrecho de Gibraltar de noche, o como pudiese, y irse a la Rochela, de donde había salido; y así, tomaron por acuerdo de darnos el esquite de su navío, y todo lo necesario para la corta navegación que nos quedaba, como lo hicieron otro día, ya a vista de tierra de España, con la cual vista, todas nuestras pesadumbres y pobrezaas se nos olvidaron de todo punto, como si no hubieran pasado por nosotros: tanto es el gusto de alcanzar la libertad perdida.

»Cerca de mediodía podría ser cuando nos echaron en la barca, dándonos dos barriles de agua y algún bizcocho; y el capitán, movido no sé de qué misericordia, al embarcarse la hermosísima Zoraida, le dio hasta cuarenta escudos de oro, y no consintió que le quitasen sus soldados estos mismos vestidos que ahora tiene puestos. Entramos en el bajel; dímosles las gracias por el bien que nos hacían, mostrándonos más agradecidos que quejosos; ellos se hicieron a lo largo, siguiendo la derrota del estrecho; nosotros, sin mirar a otro norte que a la tierra que se nos mostraba delante, nos dimos tanta priesa a bogar que al poner del sol estábamos tan cerca que bien pudiéramos, a nuestro parecer, llegar antes que fuera muy noche; pero, por no parecer en aquella noche la luna y el cielo mostrarse oscuro, y por ignorar el paraje en que estábamos, no nos pareció cosa segura embestir en tierra, como a muchos de nosotros les parecía, diciendo que diésemos en ella, aunque fuese en unas peñas y lejos de poblado, porque así aseguraríamos el temor que de razón se debía tener que por allí anduviesen bajeles de cosarios de Tetuán, los cuales anochecen en Berbería y amanecen en las costas de España, y hacen de ordinario presa, y se vuelven a dormir a sus casas. Pero, de los contrarios pareceres, el que se tomó fue que nos llegásemos poco a poco, y que si el sosiego del mar lo concediese, desembarcásemos donde pudiésemos.

»Hízose así, y poco antes de la media noche sería cuando llegamos al pie de una disformísima y alta montaña, no tan junto al mar que no concediese un poco de espacio para poder desembarcar cómodamente. Embestimos en la arena, salimos a tierra, besamos el suelo, y, con lágrimas de muy alegrísimo contento, dimos todos gracias a Dios, Señor Nuestro, por el bien tan incomparable que nos había hecho. Sacamos de la barca los bastimentos que tenía, tirámosla en tierra, y subímonos un grandísimo trecho en la montaña, porque aún allí estábamos, y aún no podíamos asegurar el pecho, ni acabábamos de creer que era tierra de cristianos la que ya nos sostenía. Amaneció más tarde, a mi parecer, de lo que quisiéramos. Acabamos de subir toda la montaña, por ver si desde allí algún poblado se descubría, o algunas cabañas de pastores; pero, aunque más tendimos la vista, ni poblado, ni persona, ni senda, ni camino descubrimos. Con todo esto,



determinamos de entrarnos la tierra adentro, pues no podría ser menos sino que presto descubriésemos quien nos diese noticia della. Pero lo que a mí más me fatigaba era el ver ir a pie a Zoraida por aquellas asperezas, que, puesto que alguna vez la puse sobre mis hombros, más le cansaba a ella mi cansancio que la reposaba su reposo; y así, nunca más quiso que yo aquel trabajo tomase; y, con mucha paciencia y muestras de alegría, llevándola yo siempre de la mano, poco menos de un cuarto de legua debíamos de haber andado, cuando llegó a nuestros oídos el son de una pequeña esquila, señal clara que por allí cerca había ganado; y, mirando todos con atención si alguno se parecía, vimos al pie de un alcornoque un pastor mozo, que con grande reposo y descuido estaba labrando un palo con un cuchillo. Dimos voces, y él, alzando la cabeza, se puso ligeramente en pie, y, a lo que después supimos, los primeros que a la vista se le ofrecieron fueron el renegado y Zoraida, y, como él los vio en hábito de moros, pensó que todos los de la Berbería estaban sobre él; y, metiéndose con estraña ligereza por el bosque adelante, comenzó a dar los mayores gritos del mundo diciendo: “¡Moros, moros hay en la tierra! ¡Moros, moros! ¡Arma, arma!”

»Con estas voces quedamos todos confusos, y no sabíamos qué hacernos; pero, considerando que las voces del pastor habían de alborotar la tierra, y que la caballería de la costa había de venir luego a ver lo que era, acordamos que el renegado se desnudase las ropas del turco y se vistiese un gilecuelco o casaca de cautivo que uno de nosotros le dio luego, aunque se quedó en camisa; y así, encomendándonos a Dios, fuimos por el mismo camino que vimos que el pastor llevaba, esperando siempre cuándo había de dar sobre nosotros la caballería de la costa. Y no nos engañó nuestro pensamiento, porque, aún no habrían pasado dos horas cuando, habiendo ya salido de aquellas malezas a un llano, descubrimos hasta cincuenta caballeros, que con gran ligereza, corriendo a media rienda, a nosotros se venían, y así como los vimos, nos estuvimos quedos aguardándolos; pero, como ellos llegaron y vieron, en lugar de los moros que buscaban, tanto pobre cristiano, quedaron confusos, y uno dellos nos preguntó si éramos nosotros acaso la ocasión por que un pastor había apellidado al arma. “Sí”, dije yo; y, queriendo comenzar a decirle mi suceso, y de dónde veníamos y quién éramos, uno de los cristianos que con nosotros venían conoció al jinete que nos había hecho la pregunta, y dijo, sin dejarme a mí decir más palabra: “¡Gracias sean dadas a Dios, señores, que a tan buena parte nos ha conducido!, porque, si yo no me engaño, la tierra que pisamos es la de Vélez Málaga, si ya los años de mi cautiverio no me han quitado de la memoria el acordarme que vos, señor, que nos preguntáis quién somos, sois Pedro de Bustamante, tío mío”. Apenas hubo dicho esto el cristiano cautivo, cuando el jinete se arrojó del caballo y vino a abrazar al mozo, diciéndole: “Sobrino de mi alma y de mi vida, ya te conozco, y

ya te he llorado por muerto yo, y mi hermana, tu madre, y todos los tuyos, que aún viven; y Dios ha sido servido de darles vida para que gocen el placer de verte: ya sabíamos que estabas en Argel, y por las señales y muestras de tus vestidos, y la de todos los desta compañía, comprehendo que habéis tenido milagrosa libertad”. “Así es -respondió el mozo-, y tiempo nos quedará para contároslo todo”.

»Luego que los jinetes entendieron que éramos cristianos cautivos, se apearon de sus caballos, y cada uno nos convidaba con el suyo para llevarnos a la ciudad de Vélez Málaga, que legua y media de allí estaba. Algunos dellos volvieron a llevar la barca a la ciudad, diciéndoles dónde la habíamos dejado; otros nos subieron a las ancas, y Zoraida fue en las del caballo del tío del cristiano. Salíonos a recibir todo el pueblo, que ya de alguno que se había adelantado sabían la nueva de nuestra venida. No se admiraban de ver cautivos libres, ni moros cautivos, porque toda la gente de aquella costa está hecha a ver a los unos y a los otros; pero admirábanse de la hermosura de Zoraida, la cual en aquel instante y sazón estaba en su punto, ansí con el cansancio del camino como con la alegría de verse ya en tierra de cristianos, sin sobresalto de perderse; y esto le había sacado al rostro tales colores que, si no es que la afición entonces me engañaba, osaré decir que más hermosa criatura no había en el mundo; a lo menos, que yo la hubiese visto.

»Fuimos derechos a la iglesia, a dar gracias a Dios por la merced recibida; y, así como en ella entró Zoraida, dijo que allí había rostros que se parecían a los de Lela Marién. Dijímosle que eran imágenes suyas, y como mejor se pudo le dio el renegado a entender lo que significaban, para que ella las adorase como si verdaderamente fueran cada una dellas la misma Lela Marién que la había hablado. Ella, que tiene buen entendimiento y un natural fácil y claro, entendió luego cuanto acerca de las imágenes se le dijo. Desde allí nos llevaron y repartieron a todos en diferentes casas del pueblo; pero al renegado, Zoraida y a mí nos llevó el cristiano que vino con nosotros, y en casa de sus padres, que medianamente eran acomodados de los bienes de fortuna, y nos regalaron con tanto amor como a su mismo hijo.

»Seis días estuvimos en Vélez, al cabo de los cuales el renegado, hecha su información de canto le convenía, se fue a la ciudad de Granada, a reducirse por medio de la Santa Inquisición al gremio santísimo de la Iglesia; los demás cristianos libertados se fueron cada uno donde mejor le pareció; solos quedamos Zoraida y yo, con solos los escudos que la cortesía del francés le dio a Zoraida, de los cuales compré este animal en que ella viene; y, sirviéndola yo hasta agora de padre y escudero, y no de esposo, vamos con intención de ver si mi padre es vivo, o si alguno de mis hermanos ha tenido más próspera ventura que la mía,

puesto que, por haberme hecho el cielo compañero de Zoraida, me parece que ninguna otra suerte me pudiera venir, por buena que fuera, que más la estimara. La paciencia con que Zoraida lleva las incomodidades que la pobreza trae consigo, y el deseo que muestra tener de verse ya cristiana es tanto y tal, que me admira y me mueve a servirla todo el tiempo de mi vida, puesto que el gusto que tengo de verme suyo y de que ella sea mía me le turba y deshace no saber si hallaré en mi tierra algún rincón donde recogella, y si habrán hecho el tiempo y la muerte tal mudanza en la hacienda y vida de mi padre y hermanos que apenas halle quien me conozca, si ellos faltan.» No tengo más, señores, que deciros de mi historia; la cual, si es agradable y peregrina, juzguenlo vuestros buenos entendimientos; que de mí sé decir que quisiera habéroslo contado más brevemente, puesto que el temor de enfadaros más de cuatro circunstancias me ha quitado de la lengua.

## Capítulo XLII

*Que trata de lo que más sucedió en la venta y de otras muchas cosas dignas de saberse*

CALLÓ, en diciendo esto, el cautivo, a quien don Fernando dijo:

-Por cierto, señor capitán, el modo con que habéis contado este extraño suceso ha sido tal, que iguala a la novedad y extrañeza del mismo caso. Todo es peregrino y raro, y lleno de accidentes que maravillan y suspenden a quien los oye; y es de tal manera el gusto que hemos recibido en escuchalle, que, aunque nos hallara el día de mañana entretenidos en el mismo cuento, holgáramos que de nuevo se comenzara.

Y, en diciendo esto, don Fernando y todos los demás se le ofrecieron, con todo lo a ellos posible para servirle, con palabras y razones tan amorosas y tan verdaderas que el capitán se tuvo por bien satisfecho de sus voluntades. Especialmente, le ofreció don Fernando que si quería volverse con él, que él haría que el marqués, su hermano, fuese padrino del bautismo de Zoraida, y que él, por su parte, le acomodaría de manera que pudiese entrar en su tierra con el autoridad y cómodo que a su persona se debía. Todo lo agradeció cortesísimamente el cautivo, pero no quiso acetar ninguno de sus liberales ofrecimientos.

En esto, llegaba ya la noche, y, al cerrar della, llegó a la venta un coche, con algunos hombres de a caballo. Pidieron posada; a quien la ventera respondió que no había en toda la venta un palmo desocupado.

-Pues, aunque eso sea -dijo uno de los de a caballo que habían entrado-, no ha de faltar para el señor oidor que aquí viene.

A este nombre se turbó la güéspedes, y dijo:

-Señor, lo que en ello hay es que no tengo camas: si es que su merced del señor oidor la trae, que sí debe de traer, entre en buen hora, que yo y mi marido nos saldremos de nuestro aposento por acomodar a su merced.

-Sea en buen hora -dijo el escudero.

Pero, a este tiempo, ya había salido del coche un hombre, que en el traje mostró luego el oficio y cargo que tenía, porque la ropa luenga, con las mangas arrocadas, que vestía, mostraron ser oidor, como su criado había dicho. Traía de la mano a una doncella, al parecer de hasta diez y seis años, vestida de camino, tan bizarra, tan hermosa y tan gallarda que a todos puso en admiración su vista;

de suerte que, a no haber visto a Dorotea y a Luscinda y Zoraida, que en la venta estaban, creyeran que otra tal hermosura como la desta doncella difícilmente pudiera hallarse. Hallóse don Quijote al entrar del oidor y de la doncella, y, así como le vio, dijo:

-Seguramente puede vuestra merced entrar y espaciarse en este castillo, que, aunque es estrecho y mal acomodado, no hay estrechez ni incomodidad en el mundo que no dé lugar a las armas y a las letras, y más si las armas y letras traen por guía y adalid a la fermosura, como la traen las letras de vuestra merced en esta fermosa doncella, a quien deben no sólo abrirse y manifestarse los castillos, sino apartarse los riscos, y devidirse y abajarse las montañas, para dalle acogida. Entre vuestra merced, digo, en este paraíso, que aquí hallará estrellas y soles que acompañen el cielo que vuestra merced trae consigo; aquí hallará las armas en su punto y la hermosura en su extremo.

Admirado quedó el oidor del razonamiento de don Quijote, a quien se puso a mirar muy de propósito, y no menos le admiraba su talle que sus palabras; y, sin hallar ningunas con que respondelle, se tornó a admirar de nuevo cuando vio delante de sí a Luscinda, Dorotea y a Zoraida, que, a las nuevas de los nuevos güéspedes y a las que la ventera les había dado de la hermosura de la doncella, habían venido a verla y a recibirla. Pero don Fernando, Cardenio y el cura le hicieron más llanos y más cortesanos ofrecimientos. En efecto, el señor oidor entró confuso, así de lo que veía como de lo que escuchaba, y las hermosas de la venta dieron la bienllegada a la hermosa doncella.

En resolución, bien echó de ver el oidor que era gente principal toda la que allí estaba; pero el talle, visaje y la apostura de don Quijote le desatinaba; y, habiendo pasado entre todos cortesos ofrecimientos y tanteado la comodidad de la venta, se ordenó lo que antes estaba ordenado: que todas las mujeres se entrasen en el camaranchón ya referido, y que los hombres se quedasen fuera, como en su guarda. Y así, fue contento el oidor que su hija, que era la doncella, se fuese con aquellas señoras, lo que ella hizo de muy buena gana. Y con parte de la estrecha cama del ventero, y con la mitad de la que el oidor traía, se acomodaron aquella noche mejor de lo que pensaban.

El cautivo, que, desde el punto que vio al oidor, le dio saltos el corazón y barruntos de que aquél era su hermano, preguntó a uno de los criados que con él venían que cómo se llamaba y si sabía de qué tierra era. El criado le respondió que se llamaba el licenciado Juan Pérez de Viedma, y que había oído decir que era de un lugar de las montañas de León. Con esta relación y con lo que él había visto se acabó de confirmar de que aquél era su hermano, que había seguido las letras por consejo de su padre; y, alborotado y contento, llamando aparte a don Fernando, a Cardenio y al cura, les contó lo que pasaba, certificándoles que

aquel oidor era su hermano. Habíale dicho también el criado como iba proveído por oidor a las Indias, en la Audiencia de Méjico. Supo también como aquella doncella era su hija, de cuyo parto había muerto su madre, y que él había quedado muy rico con el dote que con la hija se le quedó en casa. Pidióles consejo qué modo tendría para descubrirse, o para conocer primero si, después de descubierto, su hermano, por verle pobre, se afrentaba o le recibía con buenas entrañas.

-Déjeseme a mí el hacer esa experiencia -dijo el cura-; cuanto más, que no hay pensar sino que vos, señor capitán, seréis muy bien recibido; porque el valor y prudencia que en su buen parecer descubre vuestro hermano no da indicios de ser arrogante ni desconocido, ni que no ha de saber poner los casos de la fortuna en su punto.

-Con todo eso -dijo el capitán-yo querría, no de improviso, sino por rodeos, dármele a conocer.

-Ya os digo -respondió el cura-que yo lo trazaré de modo que todos quedemos satisfechos.

Ya, en esto, estaba aderezada la cena, y todos se sentaron a la mesa, eceto el cautivo y las señoras, que cenaron de por sí en su aposento. En la mitad de la cena dijo el cura:

-Del mismo nombre de vuestra merced, señor oidor, tuve yo una camarada en Costantinopla, donde estuve cautivo algunos años; la cual camarada era uno de los valientes soldados y capitanes que había en toda la infantería española, pero tanto cuanto tenía de esforzado y valeroso tenía de desdichado.

-Y ¿cómo se llamaba ese capitán, señor mío? -preguntó el oidor.

-Llamábase -respondió el cura-Ruy Pérez de Viedma, y era natural de un lugar de las montañas de León, el cual me contó un caso que a su padre con sus hermanos le había sucedido, que, a no contármelo un hombre tan verdadero como él, lo tuviera por conseja de aquellas que las viejas cuentan el invierno al fuego. Porque me dijo que su padre había dividido su hacienda entre tres hijos que tenía, y les había dado ciertos consejos, mejores que los de Catón. Y sé yo decir que el que él escogió de venir a la guerra le había sucedido tan bien que en pocos años, por su valor y esfuerzo, sin otro brazo que el de su mucha virtud, subió a ser capitán de infantería, y a verse en camino y predicamento de ser presto maestro de campo. Pero fuele la fortuna contraria, pues donde la pudiera esperar y tener buena, allí la perdió, con perder la libertad en la felicísima jornada donde tantos la cobraron, que fue en la batalla de Lepanto. Yo la perdí en la Goleta, y después, por diferentes sucesos, nos hallamos camaradas en Costantinopla. Desde allí vino a Argel, donde sé que le sucedió uno de los más estraños casos que en el mundo han sucedido.

De aquí fue prosiguiendo el cura, y, con brevedad sucinta, contó lo que con Zoraida a su hermano había sucedido; a todo lo cual estaba tan atento el oidor, que ninguna vez había sido tan oidor como entonces. Sólo llegó el cura al punto de cuando los franceses despojaron a los cristianos que en la barca venían, y la pobreza y necesidad en que su camarada y la hermosa mora habían quedado; de los cuales no había sabido en qué habían parado, ni si habían llegado a España, o llevádoslos los franceses a Francia.

Todo lo que el cura decía estaba escuchando, algo de allí desviado, el capitán, y notaba todos los movimientos que su hermano hacía; el cual, viendo que ya el cura había llegado al fin de su cuento, dando un grande suspiro y llenándosele los ojos de agua, dijo:

-¡Oh, señor, si supiésedes las nuevas que me habéis contado, y cómo me tocan tan en parte que me es forzoso dar muestras dello con estas lágrimas que, contra toda mi discreción y recato, me salen por los ojos! Ese capitán tan valeroso que decís es mi mayor hermano, el cual, como más fuerte y de más altos pensamientos que yo ni otro hermano menor mío, escogió el honroso y digno ejercicio de la guerra, que fue uno de los tres caminos que nuestro padre nos propuso, según os dijo vuestra camarada en la conseja que, a vuestro parecer, le oístes. Yo seguí el de las letras, en las cuales Dios y mi diligencia me han puesto en el grado que me veis. Mi menor hermano está en el Pirú, tan rico que con lo que ha enviado a mi padre y a mí ha satisfecho bien la parte que él se llevó, y aun dado a las manos de mi padre con que poder hartar su liberalidad natural; y yo, ansimesmo, he podido con más decencia y autoridad tratarme en mis estudios y llegar al puesto en que me veo. Vive aún mi padre, muriendo con el deseo de saber de su hijo mayor, y pide a Dios con continuas oraciones no cierre la muerte sus ojos hasta que él vea con vida a los de su hijo; del cual me maravillo, siendo tan discreto, cómo en tantos trabajos y aflicciones, o prósperos sucesos, se haya descuidado de dar noticia de sí a su padre; que si él lo supiera, o alguno de nosotros, no tuviera necesidad de aguardar al milagro de la caña para alcanzar su rescate. Pero de lo que yo agora me temo es de pensar si aquellos franceses le habrán dado libertad, o le habrán muerto por encubrir su hurto. Esto todo será que yo prosiga mi viaje, no con aquel contento con que le comencé, sino con toda melancolía y tristeza. ¡Oh buen hermano mío, y quién supiera agora dónde estabas; que yo te fuera a buscar y a librar de tus trabajos, aunque fuera a costa de los míos! ¡Oh, quién llevara nuevas a nuestro viejo padre de que tenías vida, aunque estuvieras en las mazmorras más escondidas de Berbería; que de allí te sacaran sus riquezas, las de mi hermano y las mías! ¡Oh Zoraida hermosa y liberal, quién pudiera pagar el bien que a un hermano hiciste!; ¡quién pudiera hallarse al renacer de tu alma, y a las bodas, que tanto gusto a todos nos

dieran!

Estas y otras semejantes palabras decía el oidor, lleno de tanta compasión con las nuevas que de su hermano le habían dado, que todos los que le oían le acompañaban en dar muestras del sentimiento que tenían de su lástima.

Viendo, pues, el cura que tan bien había salido con su intención y con lo que deseaba el capitán, no quiso tenerlos a todos más tiempo tristes, y así, se levantó de la mesa, y, entrando donde estaba Zoraida, la tomó por la mano, y tras ella se vinieron Luscinda, Dorotea y la hija del oidor. Estaba esperando el capitán a ver lo que el cura quería hacer, que fue que, tomándole a él asimesmo de la otra mano, con entrambos a dos se fue donde el oidor y los demás caballeros estaban, y dijo:

-Cesen, señor oidor, vuestras lágrimas, y cólmese vuestro deseo de todo el bien que acertare a desearse, pues tenéis delante a vuestro buen hermano y a vuestra buena cuñada. Éste que aquí veis es el capitán Viedma, y ésta, la hermosa mora que tanto bien le hizo. Los franceses que os dije los pusieron en la estrechez que veis, para que vos mostréis la liberalidad de vuestro buen pecho.

Acudió el capitán a abrazar a su hermano, y él le puso ambas manos en los pechos por mirarle algo más apartado; mas, cuando le acabó de conocer, le abrazó tan estrechamente, derramando tan tiernas lágrimas de contento, que los más de los que presentes estaban le hubieron de acompañar en ellas. Las palabras que entrambos hermanos se dijeron, los sentimientos que mostraron, apenas creo que pueden pensarse, cuanto más escribirse. Allí, en breves razones, se dieron cuenta de sus sucesos; allí mostraron puesta en su punto la buena amistad de dos hermanos; allí abrazó el oidor a Zoraida; allí la ofreció su hacienda; allí hizo que la abrazase su hija; allí la cristiana hermosa y la mora hermosísima renovaron las lágrimas de todos.

Allí don Quijote estaba atento, sin hablar palabra, considerando estos tan estraños sucesos, atribuyéndolos todos a quimeras de la andante caballería. Allí concertaron que el capitán y Zoraida se volviesen con su hermano a Sevilla y avisasen a su padre de su hallazgo y libertad, para que, como pudiese, viniese a hallarse en las bodas y bautismo de Zoraida, por no le ser al oidor posible dejar el camino que llevaba, a causa de tener nuevas que de allí a un mes partía flota de Sevilla a la Nueva España, y fuérale de grande incomodidad perder el viaje.

En resolución, todos quedaron contentos y alegres del buen suceso del cautivo; y, como ya la noche iba casi en las dos partes de su jornada, acordaron de recogerse y reposar lo que de ella les quedaba. Don Quijote se ofreció a hacer la guardia del castillo, porque de algún gigante o otro mal andante follón no fuesen acometidos, codiciosos del gran tesoro de hermosura que en aquel castillo se encerraba. Agradeciéronselo los que le conocían, y dieron al oidor cuenta del



humor extraño de don Quijote, de que no poco gusto recibió.

Sólo Sancho Panza se desesperaba con la tardanza del recogimiento, y sólo él se acomodó mejor que todos, echándose sobre los aparejos de su jumento, que le costaron tan caros como adelante se dirá.

Recogidas, pues, las damas en su estancia, y los demás acomodándose como menos mal pudieron, don Quijote se salió fuera de la venta a hacer la centinela del castillo, como lo había prometido.

Sucedió, pues, que faltando poco por venir el alba, llegó a los oídos de las damas una voz tan entonada y tan buena, que les obligó a que todas le prestasen atento oído, especialmente Dorotea, que despierta estaba, a cuyo lado dormía doña Clara de Viedma, que así se llamaba la hija del oidor. Nadie podía imaginar quién era la persona que tan bien cantaba, y era una voz sola, sin que la acompañase instrumento alguno. Unas veces les parecía que cantaban en el patio; otras, que en la caballeriza; y, estando en esta confusión muy atentas, llegó a la puerta del aposento Cardenio y dijo:

-Quien no duerme, escuche; que oirán una voz de un mozo de mulas, que de tal manera canta que encanta.

-Ya lo oímos, señor -respondió Dorotea.

Y, con esto, se fue Cardenio; y Dorotea, poniendo toda la atención posible, entendió que lo que se cantaba era esto:

## Capítulo XLIII

*Donde se cuenta la agradable historia del mozo de mulas, con otros estraños  
acaecimientos en la venta sucedidos*

-Marinero soy de amor,  
y en su piélago profundo  
navego sin esperanza  
de llegar a puerto alguno.

Siguiendo voy a una estrella  
que desde lejos descubro,  
más bella y resplandeciente  
que cuantas vio Palinuro.

Yo no sé adónde me guía,  
y así, navego confuso,  
el alma a mirarla atenta,  
cuidadosa y con descuido.

Recatos impertinentes,  
honestidad contra el uso,  
son nubes que me la encubren  
cuando más verla procuro.

¡Oh clara y luciente estrella,  
en cuya lumbre me apuro!;  
al punto que te me encubras,  
será de mi muerte el punto.

Llegando el que cantaba a este punto, le pareció a Dorotea que no sería bien que dejase Clara de oír una tan buena voz; y así, moviéndola a una y a otra parte, la despertó diciéndole: -Perdóname, niña, que te despierto, pues lo hago porque gustes de oír la mejor voz que quizá habrás oído en toda tu vida.

Clara despertó toda soñolienta, y de la primera vez no entendió lo que Dorotea le decía; y, volviéndoselo a preguntar, ella se lo volvió a decir, por lo cual estuvo

atenta Clara. Pero, apenas hubo oído dos versos que el que cantaba iba prosiguiendo, cuando le tomó un temblor tan extraño como si de algún grave accidente de cuartana estuviera enferma, y, abrazándose estrechamente con Dorotea, le dijo: -¡Ay señora de mi alma y de mi vida!, ¿para qué me despertastes?; que el mayor bien que la fortuna me podía hacer por ahora era tenerme cerrados los ojos y los oídos, para no ver ni oír a ese desdichado músico.

-¿Qué es lo que dices, niña?; mira que dicen que el que canta es un mozo de mulas.

-No es sino señor de lugares -respondió Clara-, y el que le tiene en mi alma con tanta seguridad que si él no quiere dejalle, no le será quitado eternamente.

Admirada quedó Dorotea de las sentidas razones de la muchacha, pareciéndole que se aventajaban en mucho a la discreción que sus pocos años prometían; y así, le dijo: -Habláis de modo, señora Clara, que no puedo entenderos: declaraos más y decidme qué es lo que decís de alma y de lugares, y deste músico, cuya voz tan inquieta os tiene. Pero no me digáis nada por ahora, que no quiero perder, por acudir a vuestro sobresalto, el gusto que recibo de oír al que canta; que me parece que con nuevos versos y nuevo tono torna a su canto.

-Sea en buen hora -respondió Clara.

Y, por no oírle, se tapó con las manos entrambos oídos, de lo que también se admiró Dorotea; la cual, estando atenta a lo que se cantaba, vio que proseguían en esta manera: -Dulce esperanza mía,

que, rompiendo imposibles y malezas,  
sigues firme la vía  
que tú mesma te finges y aderezas:  
no te desmaye el verte  
a cada paso junto al de tu muerte.

No alcanzan perezosos  
honrados triunfos ni vitoria alguna,  
ni pueden ser dichosos  
los que, no contrastando a la fortuna,  
entregan, desvalidos,  
al ocio blando todos los sentidos.

Que amor sus glorias venda  
caras, es gran razón, y es trato justo,  
pues no hay más rica prenda

que la que se quilata por su gusto;  
y es cosa manifiesta  
que no es de estima lo que poco cuesta.

Amorosas porfías  
tal vez alcanzan imposibles cosas;  
y así, aunque con las mías  
sigo de amor las más dificultosas,

no por eso recelo  
de no alcanzar desde la tierra el cielo.

Aquí dio fin la voz, y principio a nuevos sollozos Clara. Todo lo cual encendía el deseo de Dorotea, que deseaba saber la causa de tan suave canto y de tan triste lloro. Y así, le volvió a preguntar qué era lo que le quería decir denantes. Entonces Clara, temerosa de que Luscinda no la oyese, abrazando estrechamente a Dorotea, puso su boca tan junto del oído de Dorotea, que seguramente podía hablar sin ser de otro sentida, y así le dijo: -Este que canta, señora mía, es un hijo de un caballero natural del reino de Aragón, señor de dos lugares, el cual vivía frontero de la casa de mi padre en la Corte; y, aunque mi padre tenía las ventanas de su casa con lienzos en el invierno y celosías en el verano, yo no sé lo que fue, ni lo que no, que este caballero, que andaba al estudio, me vio, ni sé si en la iglesia o en otra parte. Finalmente, él se enamoró de mí, y me lo dio a entender desde las ventanas de su casa con tantas señas y con tantas lágrimas, que yo le hube de creer, y aun querer, sin saber lo que me quería. Entre las señas que me hacía, era una de juntarse la una mano con la otra, dándome a entender que se casaría conmigo; y, aunque yo me holgaría mucho de que así fuera, como sola y sin madre, no sabía con quién comunicallo, y así, lo dejé estar sin dalle otro favor si no era, cuando estaba mi padre fuera de casa y el suyo también, alzar un poco el lienzo o la celosía y dejarme ver toda, de lo que él hacía tanta fiesta, que daba señales de volverse loco. Llegóse en esto el tiempo de la partida de mi padre, la cual él supo, y no de mí, pues nunca pude decírselo. Cayó malo, a lo que yo entiendo, de pesadumbre; y así, el día que nos partimos nunca pude verle para despedirme dél, siquiera con los ojos. Pero, a cabo de dos días que caminábamos, al entrar de una posada, en un lugar una jornada de aquí, le vi a la puerta del mesón, puesto en hábito de mozo de mulas, tan al natural que si yo no le trujera tan retratado en mi alma fuera imposible conocele. Conocíle, admiréme y alegréme; él me miró a hurto de mi padre, de quien él siempre se esconde cuando atraviesa por delante de mí en los caminos y en las posadas do

llegamos; y, como yo sé quién es, y considero que por amor de mí viene a pie y con tanto trabajo, muérome de pesadumbre, y adonde él pone los pies pongo yo los ojos. No sé con qué intención viene, ni cómo ha podido escaparse de su padre, que le quiere estraordinariamente, porque no tiene otro heredero, y porque él lo merece, como lo verá vuestra merced cuando le vea. Y más le sé decir: que todo aquello que canta lo saca de su cabeza; que he oído decir que es muy gran estudiante y poeta. Y hay más: que cada vez que le veo o le oigo cantar, tiemblo toda y me sobresalto, temerosa de que mi padre le conozca y venga en conocimiento de nuestros deseos. En mi vida le he hablado palabra, y, con todo eso, le quiero de manera que no he de poder vivir sin él. Esto es, señora mía, todo lo que os puedo decir deste músico, cuya voz tanto os ha contentado; que en sola ella echaréis bien de ver que no es mozo de mulas, como decís, sino señor de almas y lugares, como yo os he dicho.

-No digáis más, señora doña Clara -dijo a esta sazón Dorotea, y esto, besándola mil veces-; no digáis más, digo, y esperad que venga el nuevo día, que yo espero en Dios de encaminar de manera vuestros negocios, que tengan el felice fin que tan honestos principios merecen.

-¡Ay señora! -dijo doña Clara-, ¿qué fin se puede esperar, si su padre es tan principal y tan rico que le parecerá que aun yo no puedo ser criada de su hijo, cuanto más esposa? Pues casarme yo a hurto de mi padre, no lo haré por cuanto hay en el mundo. No querría sino que este mozo se volviese y me dejase; quizá con no velle y con la gran distancia del camino que llevamos se me aliviaría la pena que ahora llevo, aunque sé decir que este remedio que me imagino me ha de aprovechar bien poco. No sé qué diablos ha sido esto, ni por dónde se ha entrado este amor que le tengo, siendo yo tan muchacha y él tan muchacho, que en verdad que creo que somos de una edad mesma, y que yo no tengo cumplidos diez y seis años; que para el día de San Miguel que vendrá dice mi padre que los cumplo.

No pudo dejar de reírse Dorotea, oyendo cuán como niña hablaba doña Clara, a quien dijo: -Reposemos, señora, lo poco que creo queda de la noche, y amanecerá Dios y medraremos, o mal me andarán las manos.

Sosegáronse con esto, y en toda la venta se guardaba un grande silencio; solamente no dormían la hija de la ventera y Maritornes, su criada, las cuales, como ya sabían el humor de que pecaba don Quijote, y que estaba fuera de la venta armado y a caballo haciendo la guarda, determinaron las dos de hacelle alguna burla, o, a lo menos, de pasar un poco el tiempo oyéndole sus disparates.

Es, pues, el caso que en toda la venta no había ventana que saliese al campo, sino un agujero de un pajar, por donde echaban la paja por defuera. A este

agujero se pusieron las dos semidoncellas, y vieron que don Quijote estaba a caballo, recostado sobre su lanzón, dando de cuando en cuando tan dolientes y profundos suspiros, que parecía que con cada uno se le arrancaba el alma. Y asimesmo oyeron que decía con voz blanda, regalada y amorosa: -¡Oh mi señora Dulcinea del Toboso, extremo de toda hermosura, fin y remate de la discreción, archivo del mejor donaire, depósito de la honestidad, y, ultimadamente, idea de todo lo provechoso, honesto y deleitable que hay en el mundo! Y ¿qué hará agora la tu merced? ¿Si tendrás por ventura las mientes en tu cautivo caballero, que a tantos peligros, por sólo servirte, de su voluntad ha querido ponerse? Dame tú nuevas della, ¡oh luminaria de las tres caras! Quizá con envidia de la suya la estás ahora mirando; que, o paseándose por alguna galería de sus suntuosos palacios, o ya puesta de pechos sobre algún balcón, está considerando cómo, salva su honestidad y grandeza, ha de amansar la tormenta que por ella este mi cuitado corazón padece, qué gloria ha de dar a mis penas, qué sosiego a mi cuidado y, finalmente, qué vida a mi muerte y qué premio a mis servicios. Y tú, sol, que ya debes de estar apriesa ensillando tus caballos, por madrugar y salir a ver a mi señora, así como la veas, suplícode que de mi parte la saludes; pero guárdate que al verla y saludarla no le des paz en el rostro, que tendré más celos de ti que tú los tuviste de aquella ligera ingrata que tanto te hizo sudar y correr por los llanos de Tesalia, o por las riberas de Peneo, que no me acuerdo bien por dónde corriste entonces celoso y enamorado.

A este punto llegaba entonces don Quijote en su tan lastimero razonamiento, cuando la hija de la ventera le comenzó a cecear y a decirle: -Señor mío, lléguese acá la vuestra merced si es servido.

A cuyas señas y voz volvió don Quijote la cabeza, y vio, a la luz de la luna, que entonces estaba en toda su claridad, cómo le llamaban del agujero que a él le pareció ventana, y aun con rejas doradas, como conviene que las tengan tan ricos castillos como él se imaginaba que era aquella venta; y luego en el instante se le representó en su loca imaginación que otra vez, como la pasada, la doncella hermosa, hija de la señora de aquel castillo, vencida de su amor, tornaba a solicitarle; y con este pensamiento, por no mostrarse descortés y desagradecido, volvió las riendas a Rocinante y se llegó al agujero, y, así como vio a las dos mozas, dijo: -Lástima os tengo, hermosa señora, de que hayades puesto vuestras amorosas mientes en parte donde no es posible corresponderos conforme merece vuestro gran valor y gentileza; de lo que no debéis dar culpa a este miserable andante caballero, a quien tiene amor imposibilitado de poder entregar su voluntad a otra que aquella que, en el punto que sus ojos la vieron, la hizo señora absoluta de su alma. Perdonadme, buena señora, y recogeos en vuestro aposento, y no queráis, con significarme más vuestros deseos, que yo me muestre más

desagradecido; y si del amor que me tenéis halláis en mí otra cosa con que satisfaceros, que el mismo amor no sea, pedídmela; que yo os juro, por aquella ausente enemiga dulce mía, de dárosela en continente, si bien me pidiédes una guedeja de los cabellos de Medusa, que eran todos culebras, o ya los mismos rayos del sol encerrados en una redoma.

-No ha menester nada deso mi señora, señor caballero -dijo a este punto Maritornes.

-Pues, ¿qué ha menester, discreta dueña, vuestra señora? -respondió don Quijote.

-Sola una de vuestras hermosas manos -dijo Maritornes-, por poder deshogar con ella el gran deseo que a este agujero la ha traído, tan a peligro de su honor que si su señor padre la hubiera sentido, la menor tajada della fuera la oreja.

-¡Ya quisiera yo ver eso! -respondió don Quijote-; pero él se guardará bien deso, si ya no quiere hacer el más desastrado fin que padre hizo en el mundo, por haber puesto las manos en los delicados miembros de su enamorada hija.

Parecióle a Maritornes que sin duda don Quijote daría la mano que le habían pedido, y, proponiendo en su pensamiento lo que había de hacer, se bajó del agujero y se fue a la caballeriza, donde tomó el cabestro del jumento de Sancho Panza, y con mucha presteza se volvió a su agujero, a tiempo que don Quijote se había puesto de pies sobre la silla de Rocinante, por alcanzar a la ventana enrejada, donde se imaginaba estar la ferida doncella; y, al darle la mano, dijo: -Tomad, señora, esa mano, o, por mejor decir, ese verdugo de los malhechores del mundo; tomad esa mano, digo, a quien no ha tocado otra de mujer alguna, ni aun la de aquella que tiene entera posesión de todo mi cuerpo. No os la doy para que la beséis, sino para que miréis la contestura de sus nervios, la trabazón de sus músculos, la anchura y espaciosidad de sus venas; de donde sacaréis qué tal debe de ser la fuerza del brazo que tal mano tiene.

-Ahora lo veremos -dijo Maritornes.

Y, haciendo una lazada corrediza al cabestro, se la echó a la muñeca, y, bajándose del agujero, ató lo que quedaba al cerrojo de la puerta del pajar muy fuertemente. Don Quijote, que sintió la aspereza del cordel en su muñeca, dijo: -Más parece que vuestra merced me ralla que no que me regala la mano; no la tratéis tan mal, pues ella no tiene la culpa del mal que mi voluntad os hace, ni es bien que en tan poca parte venguéis el todo de vuestro enojo. Mirad que quien quiere bien no se venga tan mal.

Pero todas estas razones de don Quijote ya no las escuchaba nadie, porque, así como Maritornes le ató, ella y la otra se fueron, muertas de risa, y le dejaron asido de manera que fue imposible soltarse.

Estaba, pues, como se ha dicho, de pies sobre Rocinante, metido todo el brazo

por el agujero y atado de la muñeca, y al cerrojo de la puerta, con grandísimo temor y cuidado, que si Rocinante se desviaba a un cabo o a otro, había de quedar colgado del brazo; y así, no osaba hacer movimiento alguno, puesto que de la paciencia y quietud de Rocinante bien se podía esperar que estaría sin moverse un siglo entero.

En resolución, viéndose don Quijote atado, y que ya las damas se habían ido, se dio a imaginar que todo aquello se hacía por vía de encantamento, como la vez pasada, cuando en aquel mismo castillo le molió aquel moro encantado del arriero; y maldecía entre sí su poca discreción y discurso, pues, habiendo salido tan mal la vez primera de aquel castillo, se había aventurado a entrar en él la segunda, siendo advertimiento de caballeros andantes que, cuando han probado una aventura y no salido bien con ella, es señal que no está para ellos guardada, sino para otros; y así, no tienen necesidad de probarla segunda vez. Con todo esto, tiraba de su brazo, por ver si podía soltarse; mas él estaba tan bien asido, que todas sus pruebas fueron en vano. Bien es verdad que tiraba con tiento, porque Rocinante no se moviese; y, aunque él quisiera sentarse y ponerse en la silla, no podía sino estar en pie, o arrancarse la mano.

Allí fue el desear de la espada de Amadís, contra quien no tenía fuerza de encantamento alguno; allí fue el maldecir de su fortuna; allí fue el exagerar la falta que haría en el mundo su presencia el tiempo que allí estuviese encantado, que sin duda alguna se había creído que lo estaba; allí el acordarse de nuevo de su querida Dulcinea del Toboso; allí fue el llamar a su buen escudero Sancho Panza, que, sepultado en sueño y tendido sobre el albarda de su jumento, no se acordaba en aquel instante de la madre que lo había parido; allí llamó a los sabios Lirgandeo y Alquife, que le ayudasen; allí invocó a su buena amiga Urganda, que le socorriese, y, finalmente, allí le tomó la mañana, tan desesperado y confuso que bramaba como un toro; porque no esperaba él que con el día se remediaría su cuita, porque la tenía por eterna, teniéndose por encantado. Y hacíale creer esto ver que Rocinante poco ni mucho se movía, y creía que de aquella suerte, sin comer ni beber ni dormir, habían de estar él y su caballo hasta que aquel mal influjo de las estrellas se pasase, o hasta que otro más sabio encantador le desencantase.

Pero engañóse mucho en su creencia, porque, apenas comenzó a amanecer, cuando llegaron a la venta cuatro hombres de a caballo, muy bien puestos y aderezados, con sus escopetas sobre los arzones. Llamaron a la puerta de la venta, que aún estaba cerrada, con grandes golpes; lo cual, visto por don Quijote desde donde aún no dejaba de hacer la centinela, con voz arrogante y alta dijo: - Caballeros, o escuderos, o quienquiera que seáis: no tenéis para qué llamar a las puertas deste castillo; que asaz de claro está que a tales horas, o los que están



dentro duermen, o no tienen por costumbre de abrirse las fortalezas hasta que el sol esté tendido por todo el suelo. Desviaos afuera, y esperad que aclare el día, y entonces veremos si será justo o no que os abran.

-¿Qué diablos de fortaleza o castillo es éste -dijo uno-, para obligarnos a guardar esas ceremonias? Si sois el ventero, mandad que nos abran, que somos caminantes que no queremos más de dar cebada a nuestras cabalgaduras y pasar adelante, porque vamos de priesa.

-¿Paréceos, caballeros, que tengo yo talle de ventero? -respondió don Quijote.

-No sé de qué tenéis talle -respondió el otro-, pero sé que decís disparates en llamar castillo a esta venta.

-Castillo es -replicó don Quijote-, y aun de los mejores de toda esta provincia; y gente tiene dentro que ha tenido cetro en la mano y corona en la cabeza.

-Mejor fuera al revés -dijo el caminante-: el cetro en la cabeza y la corona en la mano. Y será, si a mano viene, que debe de estar dentro alguna compañía de representantes, de los cuales es tener a menudo esas coronas y cetros que decís, porque en una venta tan pequeña, y adonde se guarda tanto silencio como ésta, no creo yo que se alojan personas dignas de corona y cetro.

-Sabéis poco del mundo -replicó don Quijote-, pues ignoráis los casos que suelen acontecer en la caballería andante.

Cansábanse los compañeros que con el preguntante venían del coloquio que con don Quijote pasaba, y así, tornaron a llamar con grande furia; y fue de modo que el ventero despertó, y aun todos cuantos en la venta estaban; y así, se levantó a preguntar quién llamaba. Sucedió en este tiempo que una de las cabalgaduras en que venían los cuatro que llamaban se llegó a oler a Rocinante, que, melancólico y triste, con las orejas caídas, sostenía sin moverse a su estirado señor; y como, en fin, era de carne, aunque parecía de leño, no pudo dejar de resentirse y tornar a oler a quien le llegaba a hacer caricias; y así, no se hubo movido tanto cuanto, cuando se desviaron los juntos pies de don Quijote, y, resbalando de la silla, dieran con él en el suelo, a no quedar colgado del brazo: cosa que le causó tanto dolor que creyó o que la muñeca le cortaban, o que el brazo se le arrancaba; porque él quedó tan cerca del suelo que con los extremos de las puntas de los pies besaba la tierra, que era en su perjuicio, porque, como sentía lo poco que le faltaba para poner las plantas en la tierra, fatigábase y estirábase cuanto podía por alcanzar al suelo: bien así como los que están en el tormento de la garrucha, puestos a toca, no toca, que ellos mismos son causa de acrecentar su dolor, con el ahínco que ponen en estirarse, engañados de la esperanza que se les representa, que con poco más que se estiren llegarán al suelo.

## Capítulo XLIV

*Donde se prosiguen los inauditos sucesos de la venta*

EN EFETO, fueron tantas las voces que don Quijote dio, que, abriendo de presto las puertas de la venta, salió el ventero, despavorido, a ver quién tales gritos daba, y los que estaban fuera hicieron lo mismo. Maritornes, que ya había despertado a las mismas voces, imaginando lo que podía ser, se fue al pajar y desató, sin que nadie lo viese, el cabestro que a don Quijote sostenía, y él dio luego en el suelo, a vista del ventero y de los caminantes, que, llegándose a él, le preguntaron qué tenía, que tales voces daba. Él, sin responder palabra, se quitó el cordel de la muñeca, y, levantándose en pie, subió sobre Rocinante, abrazó su adarga, enristró su lanzón, y, tomando buena parte del campo, volvió a medio galope, diciendo:

-Cualquiera que dijere que yo he sido con justo título encantado, como mi señora la princesa Micomicona me dé licencia para ello, yo le desmiento, le rieto y desafío a singular batalla.

Admirados se quedaron los nuevos caminantes de las palabras de don Quijote, pero el ventero les quitó de aquella admiración, diciéndoles que era don Quijote, y que no había que hacer caso dél, porque estaba fuera de juicio.

Preguntáronle al ventero si acaso había llegado a aquella venta un muchacho de hasta edad de quince años, que venía vestido como mozo de mulas, de tales y tales señas, dando las mismas que traía el amante de doña Clara. El ventero respondió que había tanta gente en la venta, que no había echado de ver en el que preguntaban. Pero, habiendo visto uno dellos el coche donde había venido el oidor, dijo:

-Aquí debe de estar sin duda, porque éste es el coche que él dicen que sigue; quédese uno de nosotros a la puerta y entren los demás a buscarle; y aun sería bien que uno de nosotros rodease toda la venta, porque no se fuese por las bardas de los corrales.

-Así se hará -respondió uno dellos.

Y, entrándose los dos dentro, uno se quedó a la puerta y el otro se fue a rodear la venta; todo lo cual veía el ventero, y no sabía atinar para qué se hacían aquellas diligencias, puesto que bien creyó que buscaban aquel mozo cuyas señas le habían dado.

Ya a esta sazón aclaraba el día; y, así por esto como por el ruido que don Quijote había hecho, estaban todos despiertos y se levantaban, especialmente doña Clara y Dorotea, que la una con sobresalto de tener tan cerca a su amante, y la otra con el deseo de verle, habían podido dormir bien mal aquella noche. Don Quijote, que vio que ninguno de los cuatro caminantes hacía caso dél, ni le respondían a su demanda, moría y rabiaba de despecho y saña; y si él hallara en las ordenanzas de su caballería que lícitamente podía el caballero andante tomar y emprender otra empresa, habiendo dado su palabra y fe de no ponerse en ninguna hasta acabar la que había prometido, él embistiera con todos, y les hiciera responder mal de su grado. Pero, por parecerle no convenirle ni estarle bien comenzar nueva empresa hasta poner a Micomicona en su reino, hubo de callar y estarse quedo, esperando a ver en qué paraban las diligencias de aquellos caminantes; uno de los cuales halló al mancebo que buscaba, durmiendo al lado de un mozo de mulas, bien descuidado de que nadie ni le buscase, ni menos de que le hallase. El hombre le trabó del brazo y le dijo:

-Por cierto, señor don Luis, que responde bien a quien vos sois el hábito que tenéis, y que dice bien la cama en que os hallo al regalo con que vuestra madre os crió.

Limpióse el mozo los soñolientos ojos y miró de espacio al que le tenía asido, y luego conoció que era criado de su padre, de que recibió tal sobresalto, que no acertó o no pudo hablarle palabra por un buen espacio. Y el criado prosiguió diciendo:

-Aquí no hay que hacer otra cosa, señor don Luis, sino prestar paciencia y dar la vuelta a casa, si ya vuestra merced no gusta que su padre y mi señor la dé al otro mundo, porque no se puede esperar otra cosa de la pena con que queda por vuestra ausencia.

-Pues, ¿cómo supo mi padre -dijo don Luis- que yo venía este camino y en este traje?

-Un estudiante -respondió el criado- a quien distes cuenta de vuestros pensamientos fue el que lo descubrió, movido a lástima de las que vio que hacía vuestro padre al punto que os echó menos; y así, despachó a cuatro de sus criados en vuestra busca, y todos estamos aquí a vuestro servicio, más contentos de lo que imaginar se puede, por el buen despacho con que tornaremos, llevándoos a los ojos que tanto os quieren.

-Eso será como yo quisiere, o como el cielo lo ordenare -respondió don Luis.

-¿Qué habéis de querer, o qué ha de ordenar el cielo, fuera de consentir en volveros?; porque no ha de ser posible otra cosa.

Todas estas razones que entre los dos pasaban oyó el mozo de mulas junto a

quien don Luis estaba; y, levantándose de allí, fue a decir lo que pasaba a don Fernando y a Cardenio, y a los demás, que ya vestido se habían; a los cuales dijo cómo aquel hombre llamaba de *don* a aquel muchacho, y las razones que pasaban, y cómo le quería volver a casa de su padre, y el mozo no quería. Y con esto, y con lo que dél sabían de la buena voz que el cielo le había dado, vinieron todos en gran deseo de saber más particularmente quién era, y aun de ayudarle si alguna fuerza le quisiesen hacer; y así, se fueron hacia la parte donde aún estaba hablando y porfiando con su criado.

Salía en esto Dorotea de su aposento, y tras ella doña Clara, toda turbada; y, llamando Dorotea a Cardenio aparte, le contó en breves razones la historia del músico y de doña Clara, a quien él también dijo lo que pasaba de la venida a buscarle los criados de su padre, y no se lo dijo tan callando que lo dejase de oír Clara; de lo que quedó tan fuera de sí que, si Dorotea no llegara a tenerla, diera consigo en el suelo. Cardenio dijo a Dorotea que se volviesen al aposento, que él procuraría poner remedio en todo, y ellas lo hicieron.

Ya estaban todos los cuatro que venían a buscar a don Luis dentro de la venta y rodeados dél, persuadiéndole que luego, sin detenerse un punto, volviese a consolar a su padre. Él respondió que en ninguna manera lo podía hacer hasta dar fin a un negocio en que le iba la vida, la honra y el alma. Apretáronle entonces los criados, diciéndole que en ningún modo volverían sin él, y que le llevarían, quisiese o no quisiese.

-Eso no haréis vosotros -replicó don Luis-, si no es llevándome muerto; aunque, de cualquiera manera que me llevéis, será llevarme sin vida.

Ya a esta sazón habían acudido a la porfía todos los más que en la venta estaban, especialmente Cardenio, don Fernando, sus camaradas, el oidor, el cura, el barbero y don Quijote, que ya le pareció que no había necesidad de guardar más el castillo. Cardenio, como ya sabía la historia del mozo, preguntó a los que llevarle querían que qué les movía a querer llevar contra su voluntad aquel muchacho.

-Muévenos -respondió uno de los cuatro-dar la vida a su padre, que por la ausencia deste caballero queda a peligro de perderla.

A esto dijo don Luis:

-No hay para qué se dé cuenta aquí de mis cosas: yo soy libre, y volveré si me diere gusto, y si no, ninguno de vosotros me ha de hacer fuerza.

-Harásela a vuestra merced la razón -respondió el hombre-; y, cuando ella no bastare con vuestra merced, bastará con nosotros para hacer a lo que venimos y lo que somos obligados.

-Sepamos qué es esto de raíz -dijo a este tiempo el oidor.

Pero el hombre, que lo conoció, como vecino de su casa, respondió:

-¿No conoce vuestra merced, señor oidor, a este caballero, que es el hijo de su vecino, el cual se ha ausentado de casa de su padre en el hábito tan indecente a su calidad como vuestra merced puede ver?

Miróle entonces el oidor más atentamente y conocióle; y, abrazándole, dijo:

-¿Qué niñerías son éstas, señor don Luis, o qué causas tan poderosas, que os hayan movido a venir desta manera, y en este traje, que dice tan mal con la calidad vuestra?

Al mozo se le vinieron las lágrimas a los ojos, y no pudo responder palabra. El oidor dijo a los cuatro que se sosegasen, que todo se haría bien; y, tomando por la mano a don Luis, le apartó a una parte y le preguntó qué venida había sido aquélla.

Y, en tanto que le hacía esta y otras preguntas, oyeron grandes voces a la puerta de la venta, y era la causa dellas que dos huéspedes que aquella noche habían alojado en ella, viendo a toda la gente ocupada en saber lo que los cuatro buscaban, habían intentado a irse sin pagar lo que debían; mas el ventero, que atendía más a su negocio que a los ajenos, les asió al salir de la puerta y pidió su paga, y les afeó su mala intención con tales palabras, que les movió a que le respondiesen con los puños; y así, le comenzaron a dar tal mano, que el pobre ventero tuvo necesidad de dar voces y pedir socorro. La ventera y su hija no vieron a otro más desocupado para poder socorrerle que a don Quijote, a quien la hija de la ventera dijo:

-Socorra vuestra merced, señor caballero, por la virtud que Dios le dio, a mi pobre padre, que dos malos hombres le están moliendo como a cibera.

A lo cual respondió don Quijote, muy de espacio y con mucha flema:

-Fermosa doncella, no ha lugar por ahora vuestra petición, porque estoy impedido de entremeterme en otra aventura en tanto que no diere cima a una en que mi palabra me ha puesto. Mas lo que yo podré hacer por serviros es lo que ahora diré: corred y decid a vuestro padre que se entretenga en esa batalla lo mejor que pudiere, y que no se deje vencer en ningún modo, en tanto que yo pido licencia a la princesa Micomicona para poder socorrerle en su cuita; que si ella me la da, tened por cierto que yo le sacaré della.

-¡Pecadora de mí! -dijo a esto Maritornes, que estaba delante-: primero que vuestra merced alcance esa licencia que dice, estará ya mi señor en el otro mundo.

-Dadme vos, señora, que yo alcance la licencia que digo -respondió don Quijote-; que, como yo la tenga, poco hará al caso que él esté en el otro mundo; que de allí le sacaré a pesar del mismo mundo que lo contradiga; o, por lo menos, os daré tal venganza de los que allá le hubieren enviado, que quedéis más que medianamente satisfechas.

Y sin decir más se fue a poner de hinojos ante Dorotea, pidiéndole con palabras caballerescas y andantescas que la su grandeza fuese servida de darle licencia de acorrer y socorrer al castellano de aquel castillo, que estaba puesto en una grave mengua. La princesa se la dio de buen talante, y él luego, embrazando su adarga y poniendo mano a su espada, acudió a la puerta de la venta, adonde aún todavía traían los dos huéspedes a mal traer al ventero; pero, así como llegó, embazó y se estuvo quedo, aunque Maritornes y la ventera le decían que en qué se detenía, que socorriese a su señor y marido.

-Deténgome -dijo don Quijote- porque no me es lícito poner mano a la espada contra gente escudiril; pero llamadme aquí a mi escudero Sancho, que a él toca y atañe esta defensa y venganza.

Esto pasaba en la puerta de la venta, y en ella andaban las puñadas y mojicones muy en su punto, todo en daño del ventero y en rabia de Maritornes, la ventera y su hija, que se desesperaban de ver la cobardía de don Quijote, y de lo mal que lo pasaba su marido, señor y padre.

Pero dejémosle aquí, que no faltará quien le socorra, o si no, sufra y calle el que se atreve a más de a lo que sus fuerzas le prometen, y volvámonos atrás cincuenta pasos, a ver qué fue lo que don Luis respondió al oidor, que le dejamos aparte, preguntándole la causa de su venida a pie y de tan vil traje vestido. A lo cual el mozo, asiéndole fuertemente de las manos, como en señal de que algún gran dolor le apretaba el corazón, y derramando lágrimas en grande abundancia, le dijo:

-Señor mío, yo no sé deciros otra cosa sino que desde el punto que quiso el cielo y facilitó nuestra vecindad que yo viese a mi señora doña Clara, hija vuestra y señora mía, desde aquel instante la hice dueño de mi voluntad; y si la vuestra, verdadero señor y padre mío, no lo impide, en este mismo día ha de ser mi esposa. Por ella dejé la casa de mi padre, y por ella me puse en este traje, para seguirla dondequiera que fuese, como la saeta al blanco, o como el marinero al norte. Ella no sabe de mis deseos más de lo que ha podido entender de algunas veces que desde lejos ha visto llorar mis ojos. Ya, señor, sabéis la riqueza y la nobleza de mis padres, y como yo soy su único heredero: si os parece que éstas son partes para que os aventuréis a hacerme en todo venturoso, recebidme luego por vuestro hijo; que si mi padre, llevado de otros disignios suyos, no gustare deste bien que yo supe buscarme, más fuerza tiene el tiempo para deshacer y mudar las cosas que las humanas voluntades.

Calló, en diciendo esto, el enamorado mancebo, y el oidor quedó en oírle suspenso, confuso y admirado, así de haber oído el modo y la discreción con que don Luis le había descubierto su pensamiento, como de verse en punto que no sabía el que poder tomar en tan repentino y no esperado negocio; y así, no

respondió otra cosa sino que se sosegase por entonces, y entretuviese a sus criados, que por aquel día no le volviesen, porque se tuviese tiempo para considerar lo que mejor a todos estuviese. Besóle las manos por fuerza don Luis, y aun se las bañó con lágrimas, cosa que pudiera enternecer un corazón de mármol, no sólo el del oidor, que, como discreto, ya había conocido cuán bien le estaba a su hija aquel matrimonio; puesto que, si fuera posible, lo quisiera efetuar con voluntad del padre de don Luis, del cual sabía que pretendía hacer de título a su hijo.

Ya a esta sazón estaban en paz los huéspedes con el ventero, pues, por persuasión y buenas razones de don Quijote, más que por amenazas, le habían pagado todo lo que él quiso, y los criados de don Luis aguardaban el fin de la plática del oidor y la resolución de su amo, cuando el demonio, que no duerme, ordenó que en aquel mismo punto entró en la venta el barbero a quien don Quijote quitó el yelmo de Mambrino y Sancho Panza los aparejos del asno, que trocó con los del suyo; el cual barbero, llevando su jumento a la caballeriza, vio a Sancho Panza que estaba aderezando no sé qué de la albarda, y así como la vio la conoció, y se atrevió a arremeter a Sancho, diciendo:

-¡Ah don ladrón, que aquí os tengo! ¡Venga mi bacía y mi albarda, con todos mis aparejos que me robastes!

Sancho, que se vio acometer tan de improviso y oyó los vituperios que le decían, con la una mano asió de la albarda, y con la otra dio un mojicón al barbero que le bañó los dientes en sangre; pero no por esto dejó el barbero la presa que tenía hecha en el albarda; antes, alzó la voz de tal manera que todos los de la venta acudieron al ruido y pendencia, y decía:

-¡Aquí del rey y de la justicia, que, sobre cobrar mi hacienda, me quiere matar este ladrón salteador de caminos!

-Mentís -respondió Sancho-, que yo no soy salteador de caminos; que en buena guerra ganó mi señor don Quijote estos despojos.

Ya estaba don Quijote delante, con mucho contento de ver cuán bien se defendía y ofendía su escudero, y túvole desde allí adelante por hombre de pro, y propuso en su corazón de armalle caballero en la primera ocasión que se le ofreciese, por parecerle que sería en él bien empleada la orden de la caballería. Entre otras cosas que el barbero decía en el discurso de la pendencia, vino a decir:

-Señores, así esta albarda es mía como la muerte que debo a Dios, y así la conozco como si la hubiera parido; y ahí está mi asno en el establo, que no me dejará mentir; si no, pruébensela, y si no le viniere pintiparada, yo quedaré por infame. Y hay más: que el mismo día que ella se me quitó, me quitaron también una bacía de azófar nueva, que no se había estrenado, que era señora de un

escudo.

Aquí no se pudo contener don Quijote sin responder: y, poniéndose entre los dos y apartándoles, depositando la albarda en el suelo, que la tuviese de manifiesto hasta que la verdad se aclarase, dijo:

-¡Porque vean vuestras mercedes clara y manifiestamente el error en que está este buen escudero, pues llama bacía a lo que fue, es y será yelmo de Mambrino, el cual se le quitó yo en buena guerra, y me hice señor dél con ligítima y lícita posesión! En lo del albarda no me entremeto, que lo que en ello sabré decir es que mi escudero Sancho me pidió licencia para quitar los jaeces del caballo deste vencido cobarde, y con ellos adornar el suyo; yo se la di, y él los tomó, y, de haberse convertido de jaez en albarda, no sabré dar otra razón si no es la ordinaria: que como esas transformaciones se ven en los sucesos de la caballería; para confirmación de lo cual, corre, Sancho hijo, y saca aquí el yelmo que este buen hombre dice ser bacía.

-¡Pardiez, señor -dijo Sancho-, si no tenemos otra prueba de nuestra intención que la que vuestra merced dice, tan bacía es el yelmo de Malino como el jaez deste buen hombre albarda!

-Haz lo que te mando -replicó don Quijote-, que no todas las cosas deste castillo han de ser guiadas por encantamento.

Sancho fue a do estaba la bacía y la trujo; y, así como don Quijote la vio, la tomó en las manos y dijo:

-Miren vuestras mercedes con qué cara podía decir este escudero que ésta es bacía, y no el yelmo que yo he dicho; y juro por la orden de caballería que profeso que este yelmo fue el mismo que yo le quitó, sin haber añadido en él ni quitado cosa alguna.

-En eso no hay duda -dijo a esta sazón Sancho-, porque desde que mi señor le ganó hasta agora no ha hecho con él más de una batalla, cuando libró a los sin ventura encadenados; y si no fuera por este *baciyelmo*, no lo pasara entonces muy bien, porque hubo asaz de pedradas en aquel trance.



## Capítulo XLV

*Donde se acaba de averiguar la duda del yelmo de Mambrino y de la albarda, y otras aventuras sucedidas, con toda verdad*

-¿QUÉ LES PARECE a vuestras mercedes, señores -dijo el barbero-, de lo que afirman estos gentiles hombres, pues aún porfían que ésta no es bacía, sino yelmo?

-Y quien lo contrario dijere -dijo don Quijote-, le haré yo conocer que miente, si fuere caballero, y si escudero, que remiente mil veces.

Nuestro barbero, que a todo estaba presente, como tenía tan bien conocido el humor de don Quijote, quiso esforzar su desatino y llevar adelante la burla para que todos riesen, y dijo, hablando con el otro barbero:

-Señor barbero, o quien sois, sabed que yo también soy de vuestro oficio, y tengo más ha de veinte años carta de examen, y conozco muy bien de todos los instrumentos de la barbería, sin que le falte uno; y ni más ni menos fui un tiempo en mi mocedad soldado, y sé también qué es yelmo, y qué es morrión, y celada de encaje, y otras cosas tocantes a la milicia, digo, a los géneros de armas de los soldados; y digo, salvo mejor parecer, remitiéndome siempre al mejor entendimiento, que esta pieza que está aquí delante y que este buen señor tiene en las manos, no sólo no es bacía de barbero, pero está tan lejos de serlo como está lejos lo blanco de lo negro y la verdad de la mentira; también digo que éste, aunque es yelmo, no es yelmo entero.

-No, por cierto -dijo don Quijote-, porque le falta la mitad, que es la babera.

-Así es -dijo el cura, que ya había entendido la intención de su amigo el barbero.

Y lo mismo confirmó Cardenio, don Fernando y sus camaradas; y aun el oidor, si no estuviera tan pensativo con el negocio de don Luis, ayudara, por su parte, a la burla; pero las veras de lo que pensaba le tenían tan suspenso, que poco o nada atendía a aquellos donaires.

-¡Válame Dios! -dijo a esta sazón el barbero burlado-; ¿que es posible que tanta gente honrada diga que ésta no es bacía, sino yelmo? Cosa parece ésta que puede poner en admiración a toda una universidad, por discreta que sea. Basta: si es que esta bacía es yelmo, también debe de ser esta albarda jaez de caballo, como este señor ha dicho.

-A mí albarda me parece -dijo don Quijote-, pero ya he dicho que en eso no me entremeto.

-De que sea albarda o jaez -dijo el cura-no está en más de decirlo el señor don Quijote; que en estas cosas de la caballería todos estos señores y yo le damos la ventaja.

-Por Dios, señores míos -dijo don Quijote-, que son tantas y tan estrañas las cosas que en este castillo, en dos veces que en él he alojado, me han sucedido, que no me atreva a decir afirmativamente ninguna cosa de lo que acerca de lo que en él se contiene se preguntare, porque imagino que cuanto en él se trata va por vía de encantamento. La primera vez me fatigó mucho un moro encantado que en él hay, y a Sancho no le fue muy bien con otros sus secuaces; y anoche estuve colgado deste brazo casi dos horas, sin saber cómo ni cómo no vine a caer en aquella desgracia. Así que, ponerme yo agora en cosa de tanta confusión a dar mi parecer, será caer en juicio temerario. En lo que toca a lo que dicen que ésta es bacía, y no yelmo, ya yo tengo respondido; pero, en lo de declarar si ésa es albarda o jaez, no me atrevo a dar sentencia difinitiva: sólo lo dejo al buen parecer de vuestras mercedes. Quizá por no ser armados caballeros, como yo lo soy, no tendrán que ver con vuestras mercedes los encantamentos deste lugar, y tendrán los entendimientos libres, y podrán juzgar de las cosas deste castillo como ellas son real y verdaderamente, y no como a mí me parecían.

-No hay duda -respondió a esto don Fernando-, sino que el señor don Quijote ha dicho muy bien hoy que a nosotros toca la definición deste caso; y, porque vaya con más fundamento, yo tomaré en secreto los votos destos señores, y de lo que resultare daré entera y clara noticia.

Para aquellos que la tenían del humor de don Quijote, era todo esto materia de grandísima risa; pero, para los que le ignoraban, les parecía el mayor disparate del mundo, especialmente a los cuatro criados de don Luis, y a don Luis ni más ni menos, y a otros tres pasajeros que acaso habían llegado a la venta, que tenían parecer de ser cuadrilleros, como, en efeto, lo eran. Pero el que más se desesperaba era el barbero, cuya bacía, allí delante de sus ojos, se le había vuelto en yelmo de Mambrino, y cuya albarda pensaba sin duda alguna que se le había de volver en jaez rico de caballo; y los unos y los otros se reían de ver cómo andaba don Fernando tomando los votos de unos en otros, hablándolos al oído para que en secreto declarasen si era albarda o jaez aquella joya sobre quien tanto se había peleado. Y, después que hubo tomado los votos de aquellos que a don Quijote conocían, dijo en alta voz:

-El caso es, buen hombre, que ya yo estoy cansado de tomar tantos pareceres, porque veo que a ninguno pregunto lo que deseo saber que no me diga que es disparate el decir que ésta sea albarda de jumento, sino jaez de caballo, y aun de

caballo castizo; y así, habréis de tener paciencia, porque, a vuestro pesar y al de vuestro asno, éste es jaez y no albarda, y vos habéis alegado y probado muy mal de vuestra parte.

-No la tenga yo en el cielo -dijo el sobrebarbero-si todos vuestras mercedes no se engañan, y que así parezca mi ánima ante Dios como ella me parece a mí albarda, y no jaez; pero allá van leyes..., etcétera; y no digo más; y en verdad que no estoy borracho: que no me he desayunado, si de pecar no.

No menos causaban risa las necedades que decía el barbero que los disparates de don Quijote, el cual a esta sazón dijo:

-Aquí no hay más que hacer, sino que cada uno tome lo que es suyo, y a quien Dios se la dio, San Pedro se la bendiga.

Uno de los cuatro dijo:

-Si ya no es que esto sea burla pesada, no me puedo persuadir que hombres de tan buen entendimiento como son, o parecen, todos los que aquí están, se atrevan a decir y afirmar que ésta no es bacía, ni aquélla albarda; mas, como veo que lo afirman y lo dicen, me doy a entender que no carece de misterio el porfiar una cosa tan contraria de lo que nos muestra la misma verdad y la misma experiencia; porque, ¡voto a tal! -y arrojóle redondo-, que no me den a mí a entender cuantos hoy viven en el mundo al revés de que ésta no sea bacía de barbero y ésta albarda de asno.

-Bien podría ser de borrica -dijo el cura.

-Tanto monta -dijo el criado-, que el caso no consiste en eso, sino en si es o no es albarda, como vuestras mercedes dicen.

Oyendo esto uno de los cuadrilleros que habían entrado, que había oído la pendencia y quistión, lleno de cólera y de enfado, dijo:

-Tan albarda es como mi padre; y el que otra cosa ha dicho o dijere debe de estar hecho uva.

-Mentís como bellaco villano -respondió don Quijote.

Y, alzando el lanzón, que nunca le dejaba de las manos, le iba a descargar tal golpe sobre la cabeza, que, a no desviarse el cuadrillero, se le dejara allí tendido. El lanzón se hizo pedazos en el suelo, y los demás cuadrilleros, que vieron tratar mal a su compañero, alzaron la voz pidiendo favor a la Santa Hermandad.

El ventero, que era de la cuadrilla, entró al punto por su varilla y por su espada, y se puso al lado de sus compañeros; los criados de don Luis rodearon a don Luis, porque con el alboroto no se les fuese; el barbero, viendo la casa revuelta, tornó a asir de su albarda, y lo mismo hizo Sancho; don Quijote puso mano a su espada y arremetió a los cuadrilleros. Don Luis daba voces a sus criados que le dejasen a él y acorriesen a don Quijote, y a Cardenio, y a don

Fernando, que todos favorecían a don Quijote. El cura daba voces, la ventera gritaba, su hija se afligía, Maritornes lloraba, Dorotea estaba confusa, Luscinda suspensa y doña Clara desmayada. El barbero aporreaba a Sancho, Sancho molía al barbero; don Luis, a quien un criado suyo se atrevió a asirle del brazo porque no se fuese, le dio una puñada que le bañó los dientes en sangre; el oidor le defendía, don Fernando tenía debajo de sus pies a un cuadrillero, midiéndole el cuerpo con ellos muy a su sabor. El ventero tornó a reforzar la voz, pidiendo favor a la Santa Hermandad: de modo que toda la venta era llantos, voces, gritos, confusiones, temores, sobresaltos, desgracias, cuchilladas, mojicones, palos, coces y efusión de sangre. Y, en la mitad deste caos, máquina y laberinto de cosas, se le representó en la memoria de don Quijote que se veía metido de hoz y de coz en la discordia del campo de Agramante; y así dijo, con voz que atronaba la venta:

-¡Ténganse todos; todos envainen; todos se sosieguen; óiganme todos, si todos quieren quedar con vida!

A cuya gran voz, todos se pararon, y él prosiguió diciendo:

-¿No os dije yo, señores, que este castillo era encantado, y que alguna región de demonios debe de habitar en él? En confirmación de lo cual, quiero que veáis por vuestros ojos cómo se ha pasado aquí y trasladado entre nosotros la discordia del campo de Agramante. Mirad cómo allí se pelea por la espada, aquí por el caballo, acullá por el águila, acá por el yelmo, y todos peleamos, y todos no nos entendemos. Venga, pues, vuestra merced, señor oidor, y vuestra merced, señor cura, y el uno sirva de rey Agramante, y el otro de rey Sobrino, y pónganos en paz; porque por Dios Todopoderoso que es gran bellaquería que tanta gente principal como aquí estamos se mate por causas tan livianas.

Los cuadrilleros, que no entendían el frasis de don Quijote, y se veían malparados de don Fernando, Cardenio y sus camaradas, no querían sosegar; el barbero sí, porque en la pendencia tenía deshechas las barbas y el albarda; Sancho, a la más mínima voz de su amo, obedeció como buen criado; los cuatro criados de don Luis también se estuvieron quedos, viendo cuán poco les iba en no estarlo. Sólo el ventero porfiaba que se habían de castigar las insolencias de aquel loco, que a cada paso le alborotaba la venta. Finalmente, el rumor se apaciguó por entonces, la albarda se quedó por jaez hasta el día del juicio, y la bacía por yelmo y la venta por castillo en la imaginación de don Quijote.

Puestos, pues, ya en sosiego, y hechos amigos todos a persuasión del oidor y del cura, volvieron los criados de don Luis a porfiarle que al momento se viniese con ellos; y, en tanto que él con ellos se avenía, el oidor comunicó con don Fernando, Cardenio y el cura qué debía hacer en aquel caso, contándoseles con las razones que don Luis le había dicho. En fin, fue acordado que don Fernando

dijese a los criados de don Luis quién él era y cómo era su gusto que don Luis se fuese con él al Andalucía, donde de su hermano el marqués sería estimado como el valor de don Luis merecía; porque desta manera se sabía de la intención de don Luis que no volvería por aquella vez a los ojos de su padre, si le hiciesen pedazos. Entendida, pues, de los cuatro la calidad de don Fernando y la intención de don Luis, determinaron entre ellos que los tres se volviesen a contar lo que pasaba a su padre, y el otro se quedase a servir a don Luis, y a no dejalle hasta que ellos volviesen por él, o viese lo que su padre les ordenaba.

Desta manera se apaciguó aquella máquina de pendencias, por la autoridad de Agramante y prudencia del rey Sobrino; pero, viéndose el enemigo de la concordia y el émulo de la paz menospreciado y burlado, y el poco fruto que había granjeado de haberlos puesto a todos en tan confuso laberinto, acordó de probar otra vez la mano, resucitando nuevas pendencias y desasosiegos.

Es, pues, el caso que los cuadrilleros se sosegaron, por haber entreoído la calidad de los que con ellos se habían combatido, y se retiraron de la pendencia, por parecerles que, de cualquiera manera que sucediese, habían de llevar lo peor de la batalla; pero uno dellos, que fue el que fue molido y pateado por don Fernando, le vino a la memoria que, entre algunos mandamientos que traía para prender a algunos delincuentes, traía uno contra don Quijote, a quien la Santa Hermandad había mandado prender, por la libertad que dio a los galeotes, y como Sancho, con mucha razón, había temido.

Imaginando, pues, esto, quiso certificarse si las señas que de don Quijote traía venían bien, y, sacando del seno un pergamino, topó con el que buscaba; y, poniéndoselo a leer de espacio, porque no era buen lector, a cada palabra que leía ponía los ojos en don Quijote, y iba cotejando las señas del mandamiento con el rostro de don Quijote, y halló que, sin duda alguna, era el que el mandamiento rezaba. Y, apenas se hubo certificado, cuando, recogiendo su pergamino, en la izquierda tomó el mandamiento, y con la derecha asió a don Quijote del cuello fuertemente, que no le dejaba alentar, y a grandes voces decía:

-¡Favor a la Santa Hermandad! Y, para que se vea que lo pido de veras, léase este mandamiento, donde se contiene que se prenda a este salteador de caminos.

Tomó el mandamiento el cura, y vio como era verdad cuanto el cuadrillero decía, y cómo convenía con las señas con don Quijote; el cual, viéndose tratar mal de aquel villano malandrín, puesta la cólera en su punto y crujiéndole los huesos de su cuerpo, como mejor pudo él, asió al cuadrillero con entrambas manos de la garganta, que, a no ser socorrido de sus compañeros, allí dejara la vida antes que don Quijote la presa. El ventero, que por fuerza había de favorecer a los de su oficio, acudió luego a dalle favor. La ventera, que vio de nuevo a su marido en pendencias, de nuevo alzó la voz, cuyo tenor le llevaron

luego Maritornes y su hija, pidiendo favor al cielo y a los que allí estaban. Sancho dijo, viendo lo que pasaba:

-¡Vive el Señor, que es verdad cuanto mi amo dice de los encantos deste castillo, pues no es posible vivir una hora con quietud en él!

Don Fernando despartió al cuadrillero y a don Quijote, y, con gusto de entrambos, les desenclavijó las manos, que el uno en el collar del sayo del uno, y el otro en la garganta del otro, bien asidas tenían; pero no por esto cesaban los cuadrilleros de pedir su preso, y que les ayudasen a dársele atado y entregado a toda su voluntad, porque así convenía al servicio del rey y de la Santa Hermandad, de cuya parte de nuevo les pedían socorro y favor para hacer aquella prisión de aquel robador y salteador de sendas y de carreras. Reíase de oír decir estas razones don Quijote; y, con mucho sosiego, dijo:

-Venid acá, gente soez y malnacida: ¿saltear de caminos llamáis al dar libertad a los encadenados, soltar los presos, acorrer a los miserables, alzar los caídos, remediar los menesterosos? ¡Ah, gente infame, digna por vuestro bajo y vil entendimiento que el cielo no os comunique el valor que se encierra en la caballería andante, ni os dé a entender el pecado e ignorancia en que estáis en no reverenciar la sombra, cuanto más la asistencia, de cualquier caballero andante! Venid acá, ladrones en cuadrilla, que no cuadrilleros, salteadores de caminos con licencia de la Santa Hermandad; decidme: ¿quién fue el ignorante que firmó mandamiento de prisión contra un tal caballero como yo soy? ¿Quién el que ignoró que son esentos de todo judicial fuero los caballeros andantes, y que su ley es su espada; sus fueros, sus bríos; sus premáticas, su voluntad? ¿Quién fue el mentecato, vuelvo a decir, que no sabe que no hay secutoria de hidalgo con tantas preeminencias, ni esenciones, como la que adquiere un caballero andante el día que se arma caballero y se entrega al duro ejercicio de la caballería? ¿Qué caballero andante pagó pecho, alcabala, chapín de la reina, moneda forera, portazgo ni barca? ¿Qué sastre le llevó hechura de vestido que le hiciese? ¿Qué castellano le acogió en su castillo que le hiciese pagar el escote? ¿Qué rey no le asentó a su mesa? ¿Qué doncella no se le aficionó y se le entregó rendida, a todo su talante y voluntad? Y, finalmente, ¿qué caballero andante ha habido, hay ni habrá en el mundo, que no tenga bríos para dar él solo cuatrocientos palos a cuatrocientos cuadrilleros que se le pongan delante?

## Capítulo XLVI

*De la notable aventura de los cuadrilleros, y la gran ferocidad de nuestro buen caballero don Quijote*

EN TANTO que don Quijote esto decía, estaba persuadiendo el cura a los cuadrilleros como don Quijote era falto de juicio, como lo veían por sus obras y por sus palabras, y que no tenían para qué llevar aquel negocio adelante, pues, aunque le prendiesen y llevasen, luego le habían de dejar por loco; a lo que respondió el del mandamiento que a él no tocaba juzgar de la locura de don Quijote, sino hacer lo que por su mayor le era mandado, y que una vez preso, siquiera le soltasen trecientas.

-Con todo eso -dijo el cura-, por esta vez no le habéis de llevar, ni aun él dejará llevarse, a lo que yo entiendo.

En efeto, tanto les supo el cura decir, y tantas locuras supo don Quijote hacer, que más locos fueran que no él los cuadrilleros si no conocieran la falta de don Quijote; y así, tuvieron por bien de apaciguarse, y aun de ser medianeros de hacer las paces entre el barbero y Sancho Panza, que todavía asistían con gran rancor a su pendencia. Finalmente, ellos, como miembros de justicia, mediaron la causa y fueron árbitros della, de tal modo que ambas partes quedaron, si no del todo contentas, a lo menos en algo satisfechas, porque se trocaron las albardas, y no las cinchas y jáquimas; y en lo que tocaba a lo del yelmo de Mambrino, el cura, a socapa y sin que don Quijote lo entendiese, le dio por la bacía ocho reales, y el barbero le hizo una cédula del recibo y de no llamarse a engaño por entonces, ni por siempre jamás, amén.

Sosegadas, pues, estas dos pendencias, que eran las más principales y de más tomo, restaba que los criados de don Luis se contentasen de volver los tres, y que el uno quedase para acompañarle donde don Fernando le quería llevar; y, como ya la buena suerte y mejor fortuna había comenzado a romper lanzas y a facilitar dificultades en favor de los amantes de la venta y de los valientes della, quiso llevarlo al cabo y dar a todo felice suceso, porque los criados se contentaron de cuanto don Luis quería; de que recibió tanto contento doña Clara, que ninguno en aquella sazón la mirara al rostro que no conociera el regocijo de su alma.

Zoraida, aunque no entendía bien todos los sucesos que había visto, se entristecía y alegraba a bulto, conforme veía y notaba los semblantes a cada uno,

especialmente de su español, en quien tenía siempre puestos los ojos y traía colgada el alma. El ventero, a quien no se le pasó por alto la dádiva y recompensa que el cura había hecho al barbero, pidió el escote de don Quijote, con el menoscabo de sus cueros y falta de vino, jurando que no saldría de la venta Rocinante, ni el jumento de Sancho, sin que se le pagase primero hasta el último ardite. Todo lo apaciguó el cura, y lo pagó don Fernando, puesto que el oidor, de muy buena voluntad, había también ofrecido la paga; y de tal manera quedaron todos en paz y sosiego, que ya no parecía la venta la discordia del campo de Agramante, como don Quijote había dicho, sino la misma paz y quietud del tiempo de Otaviano; de todo lo cual fue común opinión que se debían dar las gracias a la buena intención y mucha elocuencia del señor cura y a la incomparable liberalidad de don Fernando.

Viéndose, pues, don Quijote libre y desembarazado de tantas pendencies, así de su escudero como suyas, le pareció que sería bien seguir su comenzado viaje y dar fin a aquella grande aventura para que había sido llamado y escogido; y así, con resoluta determinación se fue a poner de hinojos ante Dorotea, la cual no le consintió que hablase palabra hasta que se levantase; y él, por obedecella, se puso en pie y le dijo:

-Es común proverbio, hermosa señora, que la diligencia es madre de la buena ventura, y en muchas y graves cosas ha mostrado la experiencia que la solicitud del negociante trae a buen fin el pleito dudoso; pero en ningunas cosas se muestra más esta verdad que en las de la guerra, adonde la celeridad y presteza previene los discursos del enemigo, y alcanza la vitoria antes que el contrario se ponga en defensa. Todo esto digo, alta y preciosa señora, porque me parece que la estada nuestra en este castillo ya es sin provecho, y podría sernos de tanto daño que lo echásemos de ver algún día; porque, ¿quién sabe si por ocultas espías y diligentes habrá sabido ya vuestro enemigo el gigante de que yo voy a destruíle?; y, dándole lugar el tiempo, se fortificase en algún inexpugnable castillo o fortaleza contra quien valiesen poco mis diligencias y la fuerza de mi incansable brazo. Así que, señora mía, prevengamos, como tengo dicho, con nuestra diligencia sus designios, y partámonos luego a la buena ventura; que no está más de tenerla vuestra grandeza como desea, de cuanto yo tarde de verme con vuestro contrario.

Calló y no dijo más don Quijote, y esperó con mucho sosiego la respuesta de la hermosa infanta; la cual, con ademán señorial y acomodado al estilo de don Quijote, le respondió desta manera:

-Yo os agradezco, señor caballero, el deseo que mostráis tener de favorecerme en mi gran cuita, bien así como caballero, a quien es anejo y concerniente favorecer los huérfanos y menesterosos; y quiera el cielo que el vuestro y mi



deseo se cumplan, para que veáis que hay agradecidas mujeres en el mundo. Y en lo de mi partida, sea luego; que yo no tengo más voluntad que la vuestra: disponed vos de mí a toda vuestra guisa y talante; que la que una vez os entregó la defensa de su persona y puso en vuestras manos la restauración de sus señoríos no ha de querer ir contra lo que la vuestra prudencia ordenare.

-A la mano de Dios -dijo don Quijote-; pues así es que una señora se me humilla, no quiero yo perder la ocasión de levantalla y ponella en su heredado trono. La partida sea luego, porque me va poniendo espuelas al deseo y al camino lo que suele decirse que en la tardanza está el peligro. Y, pues no ha criado el cielo, ni visto el infierno, ninguno que me espante ni acobarde, ensilla, Sancho, a Rocinante, y apareja tu jumento y el palafrén de la reina, y despedámonos del castellano y destos señores, y vamos de aquí luego al punto.

Sancho, que a todo estaba presente, dijo, meneando la cabeza a una parte y a otra:

-¡Ay señor, señor, y cómo hay más mal en el aldegüela que se suena, con perdón sea dicho de las tocadas honradas!

-¿Qué mal puede haber en ninguna aldea, ni en todas las ciudades del mundo, que pueda sonarse en menoscabo mío, villano?

-Si vuestra merced se enoja -respondió Sancho-, yo callaré, y dejaré de decir lo que soy obligado como buen escudero, y como debe un buen criado decir a su señor.

-Di lo que quisieres -replicó don Quijote-, como tus palabras no se encaminen a ponerme miedo; que si tú le tienes, haces como quien eres, y si yo no le tengo, hago como quien soy.

-No es eso, ¡pecador fui yo a Dios! -respondió Sancho-, sino que yo tengo por cierto y por averiguado que esta señora que se dice ser reina del gran reino Micomicón no lo es más que mi madre; porque, a ser lo que ella dice, no se anduviera hociendo con alguno de los que están en la rueda, a vuelta de cabeza y a cada traspuesta.

Paróse colorada con las razones de Sancho Dorotea, porque era verdad que su esposo don Fernando, alguna vez, a hurto de otros ojos, había cogido con los labios parte del premio que merecían sus deseos (lo cual había visto Sancho, y pareciéndole que aquella desenvoltura más era de dama cortesana que de reina de tan gran reino), y no pudo ni quiso responder palabra a Sancho, sino dejóle proseguir en su plática, y él fue diciendo:

-Esto digo, señor, porque, si al cabo de haber andado caminos y carreras, y pasado malas noches y peores días, ha de venir a coger el fruto de nuestros trabajos el que se está holgando en esta venta, no hay para qué darme prisa a que ensille a Rocinante, albarde el jumento y aderece al palafrén, pues será

mejor que nos estemos quedos, y cada puta hile, y comamos.

¡Oh, váleme Dios, y cuán grande que fue el enojo que recibió don Quijote, oyendo las descompuestas palabras de su escudero! Digo que fue tanto, que, con voz atropellada y tartamuda lengua, lanzando vivo fuego por los ojos, dijo:

-¡Oh bellaco villano, mal mirado, descompuesto, ignorante, infacundo, deslenguado, atrevido, murmurador y maldiciente! ¿Tales palabras has osado decir en mi presencia y en la destas ínclitas señoras, y tales deshonestidades y atrevimientos osaste poner en tu confusa imaginación? ¡Vete de mi presencia, monstruo de naturaleza, depositario de mentiras, almario de embustes, silo de bellaquerías, inventor de maldades, publicador de sandeces, enemigo del decoro que se debe a las reales personas! ¡Vete; no parezcas delante de mí, so pena de mi ira!

Y, diciendo esto, enarcó las cejas, hinchó los carrillos, miró a todas partes, y dio con el pie derecho una gran patada en el suelo, señales todas de la ira que encerraba en sus entrañas. A cuyas palabras y furibundos ademanes quedó Sancho tan encogido y medroso, que se holgara que en aquel instante se abriera debajo de sus pies la tierra y le tragara. Y no supo qué hacerse, sino volver las espaldas y quitarse de la enojada presencia de su señor. Pero la discreta Dorotea, que tan entendido tenía ya el humor de don Quijote, dijo, para templarle la ira:

-No os despechéis, señor Caballero de la Triste Figura, de las sandeces que vuestro buen escudero ha dicho, porque quizá no las debe de decir sin ocasión, ni de su buen entendimiento y cristiana conciencia se puede sospechar que levante testimonio a nadie; y así, se ha de creer, sin poner duda en ello, que, como en este castillo, según vos, señor caballero, decís, todas las cosas van y suceden por modo de encantamento, podría ser, digo, que Sancho hubiese visto por esta diabólica vía lo que él dice que vio, tan en ofensa de mi honestidad.

-Por el omnipotente Dios juro -dijo a esta sazón don Quijote-, que la vuestra grandeza ha dado en el punto, y que alguna mala visión se le puso delante a este pecador de Sancho, que le hizo ver lo que fuera imposible verse de otro modo que por el de encantos no fuera; que sé yo bien de la bondad e inocencia deste desdichado, que no sabe levantar testimonios a nadie.

-Ansí es y ansí será -dijo don Fernando-; por lo cual debe vuestra merced, señor don Quijote, perdonalle y reducirle al gremio de su gracia, sicut erat in principio, antes que las tales visiones le sacasen de juicio.

Don Quijote respondió que él le perdonaba, y el cura fue por Sancho, el cual vino muy humilde, y, hincándose de rodillas, pidió la mano a su amo; y él se la dio, y, después de habérsela dejado besar, le echó la bendición, diciendo:

-Agora acabarás de conocer, Sancho hijo, ser verdad lo que yo otras muchas veces te he dicho de que todas las cosas deste castillo son hechas por vía de

encantamento.

-Así lo creo yo -dijo Sancho-, excepto aquello de la manta, que realmente sucedió por vía ordinaria.

-No lo creas -respondió don Quijote-; que si así fuera, yo te vengara entonces, y aun agora; pero ni entonces ni agora pude ni vi en quién tomar venganza de tu agravio.

Desearon saber todos qué era aquello de la manta, y el ventero lo contó, punto por punto: la volatería de Sancho Panza, de que no poco se rieron todos; y de que no menos se corriera Sancho, si de nuevo no le asegurara su amo que era encantamento; puesto que jamás llegó la sandez de Sancho a tanto, que creyese no ser verdad pura y averiguada, sin mezcla de engaño alguno, lo de haber sido manteado por personas de carne y hueso, y no por fantasmas soñadas ni imaginadas, como su señor lo creía y lo afirmaba.

Dos días eran ya pasados los que había que toda aquella ilustre compañía estaba en la venta; y, pareciéndoles que ya era tiempo de partirse, dieron orden para que, sin ponerse al trabajo de volver Dorotea y don Fernando con don Quijote a su aldea, con la invención de la libertad de la reina Micomicona, pudiesen el cura y el barbero llevársele, como deseaban, y procurar la cura de su locura en su tierra. Y lo que ordenaron fue que se concertaron con un carretero de bueyes que acaso acertó a pasar por allí, para que lo llevase en esta forma: hicieron una como jaula de palos enrejados, capaz que pudiese en ella caber holgadamente don Quijote; y luego don Fernando y sus camaradas, con los criados de don Luis y los cuadrilleros, juntamente con el ventero, todos por orden y parecer del cura, se cubrieron los rostros y se disfrazaron, quién de una manera y quién de otra, de modo que a don Quijote le pareciese ser otra gente de la que en aquel castillo había visto.

Hecho esto, con grandísimo silencio se entraron adonde él estaba durmiendo y descansando de las pasadas refriegas. Llegáronse a él, que libre y seguro de tal acontecimiento dormía, y, asiéndole fuertemente, le ataron muy bien las manos y los pies, de modo que, cuando él despertó con sobresalto, no pudo menearse, ni hacer otra cosa más que admirarse y suspenderse de ver delante de sí tan estraños visajes; y luego dio en la cuenta de lo que su continua y desvariada imaginación le representaba, y se creyó que todas aquellas figuras eran fantasmas de aquel encantado castillo, y que, sin duda alguna, ya estaba encantado, pues no se podía menear ni defender: todo a punto como había pensado que sucedería el cura, trazador desta máquina. Sólo Sancho, de todos los presentes, estaba en su mismo juicio y en su misma figura; el cual, aunque le faltaba bien poco para tener la misma enfermedad de su amo, no dejó de conocer quién eran todas aquellas contrahechas figuras; mas no osó descoser su

boca, hasta ver en qué paraba aquel asalto y prisión de su amo, el cual tampoco hablaba palabra, atendiendo a ver el paradero de su desgracia; que fue que, trayendo allí la jaula, le encerraron dentro, y le clavaron los maderos tan fuertemente que no se pudieran romper a dos tirones.

Tomáronle luego en hombros, y, al salir del aposento, se oyó una voz temerosa, todo cuanto la supo formar el barbero, no el del albarda, sino el otro, que decía:

-¡Oh Caballero de la Triste Figura!, no te dé afincamiento la prisión en que vas, porque así conviene para acabar más presto la aventura en que tu gran esfuerzo te puso; la cual se acabará cuando el furibundo león manchado con la blanca paloma tobosina yoguieren en uno, ya después de humilladas las altas cervices al blando yugo matrimoñesco; de cuyo inaudito consorcio saldrán a la luz del orbe los bravos cachorros, que imitarán las rumpantes garras del valeroso padre. Y esto será antes que el seguidor de la fugitiva ninfa haga dos veces la visita de las lucientes imágenes con su rápido y natural curso. Y tú, ¡oh, el más noble y obediente escudero que tuvo espada en cinta, barbas en rostro y olfato en las narices!, no te desmaye ni descontente ver llevar así delante de tus ojos mismos a la flor de la caballería andante; que presto, si al plasmador del mundo le place, te verás tan alto y tan sublimado que no te conozcas, y no saldrán defraudadas las promesas que te ha fecho tu buen señor. Y asegúrote, de parte de la sabia Mentironiana, que tu salario te sea pagado, como lo verás por la obra; y sigue las pisadas del valeroso y encantado caballero, que conviene que vayas donde paréis entrambos. Y, porque no me es lícito decir otra cosa, a Dios quedad, que yo me vuelvo adonde yo me sé.

Y, al acabar de la profecía, alzó la voz de punto, y diminuyóla después, con tan tierno acento, que aun los sabidores de la burla estuvieron por creer que era verdad lo que oían.

Quedó don Quijote consolado con la escuchada profecía, porque luego coligió de todo en todo la significación de ella; y vio que le prometían el verse ayuntados en santo y debido matrimonio con su querida Dulcinea del Toboso, de cuyo felice vientre saldrían los cachorros, que eran sus hijos, para gloria perpetua de la Mancha. Y, creyendo esto bien y firmemente, alzó la voz, y, dando un gran suspiro, dijo:

-¡Oh tú, quienquiera que seas, que tanto bien me has pronosticado!, ruégote que pidas de mi parte al sabio encantador que mis cosas tiene a cargo, que no me deje perecer en esta prisión donde agora me llevan, hasta ver cumplidas tan alegres e incomparables promesas como son las que aquí se me han hecho; que, como esto sea, tendré por gloria las penas de mi cárcel, y por alivio estas

cadenas que me ciñen, y no por duro campo de batalla este lecho en que me acuestan, sino por cama blanda y tálamo dichoso. Y, en lo que toca a la consolación de Sancho Panza, mi escudero, yo confío de su bondad y buen proceder que no me dejará en buena ni en mala suerte; porque, cuando no suceda, por la suya o por mi corta ventura, el poderle yo dar la ínsula, o otra cosa equivalente que le tengo prometida, por lo menos su salario no podrá perderse; que en mi testamento, que ya está hecho, dejo declarado lo que se le ha de dar, no conforme a sus muchos y buenos servicios, sino a la posibilidad mía.

Sancho Panza se le inclinó con mucho comedimiento, y le besó entrambas las manos, porque la una no pudiera, por estar atadas entrambas.

Luego tomaron la jaula en hombros aquellas visiones, y la acomodaron en el carro de los bueyes.

## Capítulo XLVII

*Del extraño modo con que fue encantado don Quijote de la Mancha, con otros famosos sucesos*

CUANDO don Quijote se vio de aquella manera enjaulado y encima del carro, dijo:

-Muchas y muy graves historias he yo leído de caballeros andantes, pero jamás he leído, ni visto, ni oído, que a los caballeros encantados los lleven desta manera y con el espacio que prometen estos perezosos y tardíos animales; porque siempre los suelen llevar por los aires, con extraña ligereza, encerrados en alguna parda y oscura nube, o en algún carro de fuego, o ya sobre algún hipogrifo o otra bestia semejante; pero que me lleven a mí ahora sobre un carro de bueyes, ¡vive Dios que me pone en confusión! Pero quizá la caballería y los encantos destos nuestros tiempos deben de seguir otro camino que siguieron los antiguos. Y también podría ser que, como yo soy nuevo caballero en el mundo, y el primero que ha resucitado el ya olvidado ejercicio de la caballería aventurera, también nuevamente se hayan inventado otros géneros de encantamientos y otros modos de llevar a los encantados. ¿Qué te parece desto, Sancho hijo?

-No sé yo lo que me parece -respondió Sancho-, por no ser tan leído como vuestra merced en las escrituras andantes; pero, con todo eso, osaría afirmar y jurar que estas visiones que por aquí andan, que no son del todo católicas.

-¿Católicas? ¡Mi padre! -respondió don Quijote-. ¿Cómo han de ser católicas si son todos demonios que han tomado cuerpos fantásticos para venir a hacer esto y a ponerme en este estado? Y si quieres ver esta verdad, tócalos y pálpalos, y verás como no tienen cuerpo sino de aire, y como no consiste más de en la apariencia.

-Par Dios, señor -replicó Sancho-, ya yo los he tocado; y este diablo que aquí anda tan solícito es rollizo de carnes, y tiene otra propiedad muy diferente de la que yo he oído decir que tienen los demonios; porque, según se dice, todos huelen a piedra azufre y a otros malos olores; pero éste huele a ámbar de media legua.

Decía esto Sancho por don Fernando, que, como tan señor, debía de oler a lo que Sancho decía.

-No te maravilles deso, Sancho amigo -respondió don Quijote-, porque te hago saber que los diablos saben mucho, y, puesto que traigan olores consigo,

ellos no huelen nada, porque son espíritus, y si huelen, no pueden oler cosas buenas, sino malas y hidiondas. Y la razón es que como ellos, dondequiera que están, traen el infierno consigo, y no pueden recibir género de alivio alguno en sus tormentos, y el buen olor sea cosa que deleita y contenta, no es posible que ellos huelan cosa buena. Y si a ti te parece que ese demonio que dices huele a ámbar, o tú te engañas, o él quiere engañarte con hacer que no le tengas por demonio.

Todos estos coloquios pasaron entre amo y criado; y, temiendo don Fernando y Cardenio que Sancho no viniese a caer del todo en la cuenta de su invención, a quien andaba ya muy en los alcances, determinaron de abreviar con la partida; y, llamando aparte al ventero, le ordenaron que ensillase a Rocinante y enalbardase el jumento de Sancho; el cual lo hizo con mucha presteza.

Ya en esto, el cura se había concertado con los cuadrilleros que le acompañasen hasta su lugar, dándoles un tanto cada día. Colgó Cardenio del arzón de la silla de Rocinante, del un cabo la adarga y del otro la bacía, y por señas mandó a Sancho que subiese en su asno y tomase de las riendas a Rocinante, y puso a los dos lados del carro a los dos cuadrilleros con sus escopetas. Pero, antes que se moviese el carro, salió la ventera, su hija y Maritornes a despedirse de don Quijote, fingiendo que lloraban de dolor de su desgracia; a quien don Quijote dijo:

-No lloreis, mis buenas señoras, que todas estas desdichas son anexas a los que profesan lo que yo profeso; y si estas calamidades no me acontecieran, no me tuviera yo por famoso caballero andante; porque a los caballeros de poco nombre y fama nunca les suceden semejantes casos, porque no hay en el mundo quien se acuerde dellos. A los valerosos sí, que tienen envidiosos de su virtud y valentía a muchos príncipes y a muchos otros caballeros, que procuran por malas vías destruir a los buenos. Pero, con todo eso, la virtud es tan poderosa que, por sí sola, a pesar de toda la nigromancia que supo su primer inventor, Zoroastes, saldrá vencedora de todo trance, y dará de sí luz en el mundo, como la da el sol en el cielo. Perdonadme, hermosas damas, si algún desaguisado, por descuido mío, os he fecho, que, de voluntad y a sabiendas, jamás le di a nadie; y rogad a Dios me saque destas prisiones, donde algún mal intencionado encantador me ha puesto; que si de ellas me veo libre, no se me caerá de la memoria las mercedes que en este castillo me habedes fecho, para gratificallas, servillas y recompensallas como ellas merecen.

En tanto que las damas del castillo esto pasaban con don Quijote, el cura y el barbero se despidieron de don Fernando y sus camaradas, y del capitán y de su hermano y todas aquellas contentas señoras, especialmente de Dorotea y Luscinda. Todos se abrazaron y quedaron de darse noticia de sus sucesos,

diciendo don Fernando al cura dónde había de escribirle para avisarle en lo que paraba don Quijote, asegurándole que no habría cosa que más gusto le diese que saberlo; y que él, asimesmo, le avisaría de todo aquello que él viese que podría darle gusto, así de su casamiento como del bautismo de Zoraida, y suceso de don Luis, y vuelta de Luscinda a su casa. El cura ofreció de hacer cuanto se le mandaba, con toda puntualidad. Tornaron a abrazarse otra vez, y otra vez tornaron a nuevos ofrecimientos.

El ventero se llegó al cura y le dio unos papeles, diciéndole que los había hallado en un aforro de la maleta donde se halló la *Novela del curioso impertinente*, y que, pues su dueño no había vuelto más por allí, que se los llevase todos; que, pues él no sabía leer, no los quería. El cura se lo agradeció, y, abriéndolos luego, vio que al principio de lo escrito decía: *Novela de Rinconete y Cortadillo*, por donde entendió ser alguna novela y coligió que, pues la del *Curioso impertinente* había sido buena, que también lo sería aquélla, pues podría ser fuesen todas de un mismo autor; y así, la guardó, con prosupuesto de leerla cuando tuviese comodidad.

Subió a caballo, y también su amigo el barbero, con sus antifaces, porque no fuesen luego conocidos de don Quijote, y pusiéronse a caminar tras el carro. Y la orden que llevaban era ésta: iba primero el carro, guiándole su dueño; a los dos lados iban los cuadrilleros, como se ha dicho, con sus escopetas; seguía luego Sancho Panza sobre su asno, llevando de rienda a Rocinante. Detrás de todo esto iban el cura y el barbero sobre sus poderosas mulas, cubiertos los rostros, como se ha dicho, con grave y reposado continente, no caminando más de lo que permitía el paso tardo de los bueyes. Don Quijote iba sentado en la jaula, las manos atadas, tendidos los pies, y arrimado a las verjas, con tanto silencio y tanta paciencia como si no fuera hombre de carne, sino estatua de piedra.

Y así, con aquel espacio y silencio caminaron hasta dos leguas, que llegaron a un valle, donde le pareció al boyero ser lugar acomodado para reposar y dar pasto a los bueyes; y, comunicándolo con el cura, fue de parecer el barbero que caminasen un poco más, porque él sabía, detrás de un recuesto que cerca de allí se mostraba, había un valle de más yerba y mucho mejor que aquel donde parar querían. Tomóse el parecer del barbero, y así, tornaron a proseguir su camino.

En esto, volvió el cura el rostro, y vio que a sus espaldas venían hasta seis o siete hombres de a caballo, bien puestos y aderezados, de los cuales fueron presto alcanzados, porque caminaban no con la flema y reposo de los bueyes, sino como quien iba sobre mulas de canónigos y con deseo de llegar presto a sestar a la venta, que menos de una legua de allí se parecía. Llegaron los diligentes a los perezosos y saludáronse cortésmente; y uno de los que venían, que, en resolución, era canónigo de Toledo y señor de los demás que le



acompañaban, viendo la concertada procesión del carro, cuadrilleros, Sancho, Rocinante, cura y barbero, y más a don Quijote, enjaulado y aprisionado, no pudo dejar de preguntar qué significaba llevar aquel hombre de aquella manera; aunque ya se había dado a entender, viendo las insignias de los cuadrilleros, que debía de ser algún facinoroso salteador, o otro delincuente cuyo castigo tocase a la Santa Hermandad. Uno de los cuadrilleros, a quien fue hecha la pregunta, respondió así:

-Señor, lo que significa ir este caballero desta manera, dígalo él, porque nosotros no lo sabemos.

Oyó don Quijote la plática, y dijo:

-¿Por dicha vuestras mercedes, señores caballeros, son versados y perictos en esto de la caballería andante? Porque si lo son, comunicaré con ellos mis desgracias, y si no, no hay para qué me canse en decillas.

Y, a este tiempo, habían ya llegado el cura y el barbero, viendo que los caminantes estaban en pláticas con don Quijote de la Mancha, para responder de modo que no fuese descubierto su artificio.

El canónigo, a lo que don Quijote dijo, respondió:

-En verdad, hermano, que sé más de libros de caballerías que de las *Súmulas* de Villalpando. Ansí que, si no está más que en esto, seguramente podéis comunicar conmigo lo que quisiéredes.

-A la mano de Dios -replicó don Quijote-. Pues así es, quiero, señor caballero, que sepades que yo voy encantado en esta jaula, por envidia y fraude de malos encantadores; que la virtud más es perseguida de los malos que amada de los buenos. Caballero andante soy, y no de aquellos de cuyos nombres jamás la Fama se acordó para eternizarlos en su memoria, sino de aquellos que, a despecho y pesar de la misma envidia, y de cuantos magos crió Persia, bracmanes la India, ginosofistas la Etiopía, ha de poner su nombre en el templo de la inmortalidad para que sirva de ejemplo y dechado en los venideros siglos, donde los caballeros andantes vean los pasos que han de seguir, si quisieren llegar a la cumbre y alteza honrosa de las armas.

-Dice verdad el señor don Quijote de la Mancha -dijo a esta sazón el cura-; que él va encantado en esta carreta, no por sus culpas y pecados, sino por la mala intención de aquellos a quien la virtud enfada y la valentía enoja. Éste es, señor, el Caballero de la Triste Figura, si ya le oístes nombrar en algún tiempo, cuyas valerosas hazañas y grandes hechos serán escritas en bronces duros y en eternos mármoles, por más que se canse la envidia en escurecerlos y la malicia en ocultarlos.

Cuando el canónigo oyó hablar al preso y al libre en semejante estilo, estuvo por hacerse la cruz, de admirado, y no podía saber lo que le había acontecido; y

en la misma admiración cayeron todos los que con él venían. En esto, Sancho Panza, que se había acercado a oír la plática, para adobarlo todo, dijo:

-Ahora, señores, quiéranme bien o quiéranme mal por lo que dijere, el caso de ello es que así va encantado mi señor don Quijote como mi madre; él tiene su entero juicio, él come y bebe y hace sus necesidades como los demás hombres, y como las hacía ayer, antes que le enjaulasen. Siendo esto ansí, ¿cómo quieren hacerme a mí entender que va encantado? Pues yo he oído decir a muchas personas que los encantados ni comen, ni duermen, ni hablan, y mi amo, si no le van a la mano, hablará más que treinta procuradores.

Y, volviéndose a mirar al cura, prosiguió diciendo:

-¡Ah señor cura, señor cura! ¿Pensaba vuestra merced que no le conozco, y pensará que yo no calo y adivino adónde se encaminan estos nuevos encantamientos? Pues sepa que le conozco, por más que se encubra el rostro, y sepa que le entiendo, por más que disimule sus embustes. En fin, donde reina la envidia no puede vivir la virtud, ni adonde hay escaseza la liberalidad. ¡Mal haya el diablo!; que, si por su reverencia no fuera, ésta fuera ya la hora que mi señor estuviera casado con la infanta Micomicona, y yo fuera conde, por lo menos, pues no se podía esperar otra cosa, así de la bondad de mi señor el de la Triste Figura como de la grandeza de mis servicios. Pero ya veo que es verdad lo que se dice por ahí: que la rueda de la Fortuna anda más lista que una rueda de molino, y que los que ayer estaban en pinganitos hoy están por el suelo. De mis hijos y de mi mujer me pesa, pues cuando podían y debían esperar ver entrar a su padre por sus puertas hecho gobernador o visorrey de alguna ínsula o reino, le verán entrar hecho mozo de caballos. Todo esto que he dicho, señor cura, no es más de por encarecer a su paternidad haga conciencia del mal tratamiento que a mi señor se le hace, y mire bien no le pida Dios en la otra vida esta prisión de mi amo, y se le haga cargo de todos aquellos socorros y bienes que mi señor don Quijote deja de hacer en este tiempo que está preso.

-¡Adóbame esos candiles! -dijo a este punto el barbero-. ¿También vos, Sancho, sois de la cofradía de vuestro amo? ¡Vive el Señor, que voy viendo que le habéis de tener compañía en la jaula, y que habéis de quedar tan encantado como él, por lo que os toca de su humor y de su caballería! En mal punto os empreñastes de sus promesas, y en mal hora se os entró en los cascos la ínsula que tanto deseáis.

-Yo no estoy preñado de nadie -respondió Sancho-, ni soy hombre que me dejaría empreñar, del rey que fuese; y, aunque pobre, soy cristiano viejo, y no debo nada a nadie; y si ínsulas deseo, otros desean otras cosas peores; y cada uno es hijo de sus obras; y, debajo de ser hombre, puedo venir a ser papa, cuanto más gobernador de una ínsula, y más pudiendo ganar tantas mi señor que le falte a

quien dallas. Vuestra merced mire cómo habla, señor barbero; que no es todo hacer barbas, y algo va de Pedro a Pedro. Dígolo porque todos nos conocemos, y a mí no se me ha de echar dado falso. Y en esto del encanto de mi amo, Dios sabe la verdad; y quédese aquí, porque es peor meneallo.

No quiso responder el barbero a Sancho, porque no descubriese con sus simplicidades lo que él y el cura tanto procuraban encubrir; y, por este mismo temor, había el cura dicho al canónigo que caminasen un poco delante: que él le diría el misterio del enjaulado, con otras cosas que le diesen gusto. Hízolo así el canónigo, y adelantóse con sus criados y con él: estuvo atento a todo aquello que decirle quiso de la condición, vida, locura y costumbres de don Quijote, contándole brevemente el principio y causa de su desvarío, y todo el progreso de sus sucesos, hasta haberlo puesto en aquella jaula, y el disignio que llevaban de llevarle a su tierra, para ver si por algún medio hallaban remedio a su locura. Admiráronse de nuevo los criados y el canónigo de oír la peregrina historia de don Quijote, y, en acabándola de oír, dijo:

-Verdaderamente, señor cura, yo hallo por mi cuenta que son perjudiciales en la república estos que llaman libros de caballerías; y, aunque he leído, llevado de un ocioso y falso gusto, casi el principio de todos los más que hay impresos, jamás me he podido acomodar a leer ninguno del principio al cabo, porque me parece que, cuál más, cuál menos, todos ellos son una misma cosa, y no tiene más éste que aquél, ni estotro que el otro. Y, según a mí me parece, este género de escritura y composición cae debajo de aquel de las fábulas que llaman milesias, que son cuentos disparatados, que atienden solamente a deleitar, y no a enseñar: al contrario de lo que hacen las fábulas apólogas, que deleitan y enseñan juntamente. Y, puesto que el principal intento de semejantes libros sea el deleitar, no sé yo cómo puedan conseguirle, yendo llenos de tantos y tan desaforados disparates; que el deleite que en el alma se concibe ha de ser de la hermosura y concordancia que vee o contempla en las cosas que la vista o la imaginación le ponen delante; y toda cosa que tiene en sí fealdad y descompostura no nos puede causar contento alguno. Pues, ¿qué hermosura puede haber, o qué proporción de partes con el todo y del todo con las partes, en un libro o fábula donde un mozo de diez y seis años da una cuchillada a un gigante como una torre, y le divide en dos mitades, como si fuera de alfeñique; y que, cuando nos quieren pintar una batalla, después de haber dicho que hay de la parte de los enemigos un millón de competientes, como sea contra ellos el señor del libro, forzosamente, mal que nos pese, habemos de entender que el tal caballero alcanzó la vitoria por solo el valor de su fuerte brazo? Pues, ¿qué diremos de la facilidad con que una reina o emperatriz heredera se conduce en los brazos de un andante y no conocido caballero? ¿Qué ingenio, si no es del

todo bárbaro e inculto, podrá contentarse leyendo que una gran torre llena de caballeros va por la mar adelante, como nave con próspero viento, y hoy anochece en Lombardía, y mañana amanezca en tierras del Preste Juan de las Indias, o en otras que ni las descubrió Tolomeo ni las vio Marco Polo? Y, si a esto se me respondiese que los que tales libros componen los escriben como cosas de mentira, y que así, no están obligados a mirar en delicadezas ni verdades, responderles hía yo que tanto la mentira es mejor cuanto más parece verdadera, y tanto más agrada cuanto tiene más de lo dudoso y posible. Hanse de casar las fábulas mentirosas con el entendimiento de los que las leyeren, escribiéndose de suerte que, facilitando los imposibles, allanando las grandezas, suspendiendo los ánimos, admiren, suspendan, alborocen y entretengan, de modo que anden a un mismo paso la admiración y la alegría juntas; y todas estas cosas no podrá hacer el que huyere de la verisimilitud y de la imitación, en quien consiste la perfección de lo que se escribe. No he visto ningún libro de caballerías que haga un cuerpo de fábula entero con todos sus miembros, de manera que el medio corresponda al principio, y el fin al principio y al medio; sino que los componen con tantos miembros, que más parece que llevan intención a formar una quimera o un monstruo que a hacer una figura proporcionada. Fuera desto, son en el estilo duros; en las hazañas, increíbles; en los amores, lascivos; en las cortesías, mal mirados; largos en las batallas, necios en las razones, disparatados en los viajes, y, finalmente, ajenos de todo discreto artificio, y por esto dignos de ser desterrados de la república cristiana, como a gente inútil.

El cura le estuvo escuchando con grande atención, y parecióle hombre de buen entendimiento, y que tenía razón en cuanto decía; y así, le dijo que, por ser él de su misma opinión y tener ojeriza a los libros de caballerías, había quemado todos los de don Quijote, que eran muchos. Y contóle el escrutinio que dellos había hecho, y los que había condenado al fuego y dejado con vida, de que no poco se rió el canónigo, y dijo que, con todo cuanto mal había dicho de tales libros, hallaba en ellos una cosa buena: que era el sujeto que ofrecían para que un buen entendimiento pudiese mostrarse en ellos, porque daban largo y espacioso campo por donde sin empacho alguno pudiese correr la pluma, descubriendo naufragios, tormentas, rencuentros y batallas; pintando un capitán valeroso con todas las partes que para ser tal se requieren, mostrándose prudente previniendo las astucias de sus enemigos, y elocuente orador persuadiendo o disuadiendo a sus soldados, maduro en el consejo, presto en lo determinado, tan valiente en el esperar como en el acometer; pintando ora un lamentable y trágico suceso, ahora un alegre y no pensado acontecimiento; allí una hermosísima dama, honesta, discreta y recatada; aquí un caballero cristiano, valiente y comedido; acullá un desaforado bárbaro fanfarrón; acá un príncipe cortés,

valeroso y bien mirado; representando bondad y lealtad de vasallos, grandezas y mercedes de señores. Ya puede mostrarse astrólogo, ya cosmógrafo excelente, ya músico, ya inteligente en las materias de estado, y tal vez le vendrá ocasión de mostrarse nigromante, si quisiere. Puede mostrar las astucias de Ulixes, la piedad de Eneas, la valentía de Aquiles, las desgracias de Héctor, las traiciones de Sinón, la amistad de Eurialio, la liberalidad de Alejandro, el valor de César, la clemencia y verdad de Trajano, la fidelidad de Zopiro, la prudencia de Catón; y, finalmente, todas aquellas acciones que pueden hacer perfecto a un varón ilustre, ahora poniéndolas en uno solo, ahora dividiéndolas en muchos.

-Y, siendo esto hecho con apacibilidad de estilo y con ingeniosa invención, que tire lo más que fuere posible a la verdad, sin duda compondrá una tela de varios y hermosos lazos tejida, que, después de acabada, tal perfección y hermosura muestre, que consiga el fin mejor que se pretende en los escritos, que es enseñar y deleitar juntamente, como ya tengo dicho. Porque la escritura desatada destos libros da lugar a que el autor pueda mostrarse épico, lírico, trágico, cómico, con todas aquellas partes que encierran en sí las dulcísimas y agradables ciencias de la poesía y de la oratoria; que la épica también puede escribirse en prosa como en verso.

## Capítulo XLVIII

*Donde prosigue el canónigo la materia de los libros de caballerías, con otras cosas dignas de su ingenio*

-ASÍ ES COMO vuestra merced dice, señor canónigo -dijo el cura-, y por esta causa son más dignos de reprehensión los que hasta aquí han compuesto semejantes libros sin tener advertencia a ningún buen discurso, ni al arte y reglas por donde pudieran guiarse y hacerse famosos en prosa, como lo son en verso los dos príncipes de la poesía griega y latina.

-Yo, a lo menos -replicó el canónigo-, he tenido cierta tentación de hacer un libro de caballerías, guardando en él todos los puntos que he significado; y si he de confesar la verdad, tengo escritas más de cien hojas. Y para hacer la experiencia de si correspondían a mi estimación, las he comunicado con hombres apasionados desta leyenda, dotos y discretos, y con otros ignorantes, que sólo atienden al gusto de oír disparates, y de todos he hallado una agradable aprobación; pero, con todo esto, no he proseguido adelante, así por parecerme que hago cosa ajena de mi profesión, como por ver que es más el número de los simples que de los prudentes; y que, puesto que es mejor ser loado de los pocos sabios que burlado de los muchos necios, no quiero sujetarme al confuso juicio del desvanecido vulgo, a quien por la mayor parte toca leer semejantes libros. Pero lo que más me le quitó de las manos, y aun del pensamiento, de acabarle, fue un argumento que hice conmigo mismo, sacado de las comedias que ahora se representan, diciendo: «Si estas que ahora se usan, así las imaginadas como las de historia, todas o las más son conocidos disparates y cosas que no llevan pies ni cabeza, y, con todo eso, el vulgo las oye con gusto, y las tiene y las aprueba por buenas, estando tan lejos de serlo, y los autores que las componen y los actores que las representan dicen que así han de ser, porque así las quiere el vulgo, y no de otra manera; y que las que llevan traza y siguen la fábula como el arte pide, no sirven sino para cuatro discretos que las entienden, y todos los demás se quedan ayunos de entender su artificio, y que a ellos les está mejor ganar de comer con los muchos, que no opinión con los pocos, deste modo vendrá a ser un libro, al cabo de haberme quemado las cejas por guardar los preceptos referidos, y vendré a ser el sastre del cantillo». Y, aunque algunas veces he procurado persuadir a los actores que se engañan en tener la opinión que tienen, y que más gente atraerán y más fama cobrarán representando

comedias que hagan el arte que no con las disparatadas, y están tan asidos y encorporados en su parecer, que no hay razón ni evidencia que dél los saque. Acuérdomé que un día dije a uno destos pertinaces: «Decidme, ¿no os acordáis que ha pocos años que se representaron en España tres tragedias que compuso un famoso poeta destos reinos, las cuales fueron tales, que admiraron, alegraron y suspendieron a todos cuantos las oyeron, así simples como prudentes, así del vulgo como de los escogidos, y dieron más dineros a los representantes ellas tres solas que treinta de las mejores que después acá se han hecho?» «Sin duda -respondió el autor que digo-, que debe de decir vuestra merced por *La Isabela*, *La Filis* y *La Alejandra*». «Por ésas digo -le repliqué yo-; y mirad si guardaban bien los preceptos del arte, y si por guardarlos dejaron de parecer lo que eran y de agradar a todo el mundo. Así que no está la falta en el vulgo, que pide disparates, sino en aquellos que no saben representar otra cosa. Sí, que no fue disparate *La ingratitud vengada*, ni le tuvo *La Numancia*, ni se le halló en la del *Mercader amante*, ni menos en *La enemiga favorable*, ni en otras algunas que de algunos entendidos poetas han sido compuestas, para fama y renombre suyo, y para ganancia de los que las han representado». Y otras cosas añadí a éstas, con que, a mi parecer, le dejé algo confuso, pero no satisfecho ni convencido para sacarle de su errado pensamiento.

-En materia ha tocado vuestra merced, señor canónigo -dijo a esta sazón el cura-, que ha despertado en mí un antiguo rancor que tengo con las comedias que agora se usan, tal, que iguala al que tengo con los libros de caballerías; porque, habiendo de ser la comedia, según le parece a Tulio, espejo de la vida humana, ejemplo de las costumbres y imagen de la verdad, las que ahora se representan son espejos de disparates, ejemplos de necedades e imágenes de lascivia. Porque, ¿qué mayor disparate puede ser en el sujeto que tratamos que salir un niño en mantillas en la primera cena del primer acto, y en la segunda salir ya hecho hombre barbado? Y ¿qué mayor que pintarnos un viejo valiente y un mozo cobarde, un lacayo rectórico, un paje consejero, un rey ganapán y una princesa fregona? ¿Qué diré, pues, de la observancia que guardan en los tiempos en que pueden o podían suceder las acciones que representan, sino que he visto comedia que la primera jornada comenzó en Europa, la segunda en Asia, la tercera se acabó en África, y ansí fuera de cuatro jornadas, la cuarta acababa en América, y así se hubiera hecho en todas las cuatro partes del mundo? Y si es que la imitación es lo principal que ha de tener la comedia, ¿cómo es posible que satisfaga a ningún mediano entendimiento que, fingiendo una acción que pasa en tiempo del rey Pepino y Carlomagno, el mismo que en ella hace la persona principal le atribuyan que fue el emperador Heraclio, que entró con la Cruz en Jerusalén, y el que ganó la Casa Santa, como Godofre de Bullón, habiendo

infinitos años de lo uno a lo otro; y fundándose la comedia sobre cosa fingida, atribuirle verdades de historia, y mezclarle pedazos de otras sucedidas a diferentes personas y tiempos, y esto, no con trazas verisímiles, sino con patentes errores de todo punto inexcusables? Y es lo malo que hay ignorantes que digan que esto es lo perfecto, y que lo demás es buscar gullurías. Pues, ¿qué si venimos a las comedias divinas?: ¡qué de milagros falsos fingen en ellas, qué de cosas apócrifas y mal entendidas, atribuyendo a un santo los milagros de otro! Y aun en las humanas se atreven a hacer milagros, sin más respeto ni consideración que parecerles que allí estará bien el tal milagro y apariencia, como ellos llaman, para que gente ignorante se admire y venga a la comedia; que todo esto es en perjuicio de la verdad y en menoscabo de las historias, y aun en oprobrio de los ingenios españoles; porque los extranjeros, que con mucha puntualidad guardan las leyes de la comedia, nos tienen por bárbaros e ignorantes, viendo los absurdos y disparates de las que hacemos. Y no sería bastante disculpa desto decir que el principal intento que las repúblicas bien ordenadas tienen, permitiendo que se hagan públicas comedias, es para entretener la comunidad con alguna honesta recreación, y divertirla a veces de los malos humores que suele engendrar la ociosidad; y que, pues éste se consigue con cualquier comedia, buena o mala, no hay para qué poner leyes, ni estrechar a los que las componen y representan a que las hagan como debían hacerse, pues, como he dicho, con cualquiera se consigue lo que con ellas se pretende. A lo cual respondería yo que este fin se conseguiría mucho mejor, sin comparación alguna, con las comedias buenas que con las no tales; porque, de haber oído la comedia artificiosa y bien ordenada, saldría el oyente alegre con las burlas, enseñado con las veras, admirado de los sucesos, discreto con las razones, advertido con los embustes, sagaz con los ejemplos, airado contra el vicio y enamorado de la virtud; que todos estos afectos ha de despertar la buena comedia en el ánimo del que la escuchare, por rústico y torpe que sea; y de toda imposibilidad es imposible dejar de alegrar y entretener, satisfacer y contentar, la comedia que todas estas partes tuviere mucho más que aquella que careciere dellas, como por la mayor parte carecen estas que de ordinario agora se representan. Y no tienen la culpa desto los poetas que las componen, porque algunos hay dellos que conocen muy bien en lo que yerran, y saben estremadamente lo que deben hacer; pero, como las comedias se han hecho mercadería vendible, dicen, y dicen verdad, que los representantes no se las comprarían si no fuesen de aquel jaez; y así, el poeta procura acomodarse con lo que el representante que le ha de pagar su obra le pide. Y que esto sea verdad véase por muchas e infinitas comedias que ha compuesto un felicísimo ingenio destos reinos, con tanta gala, con tanto donaire, con tan elegante verso, con tan



buenas razones, con tan graves sentencias y, finalmente, tan llenas de elocución y alteza de estilo, que tiene lleno el mundo de su fama. Y, por querer acomodarse al gusto de los representantes, no han llegado todas, como han llegado algunas, al punto de la perfección que requieren. Otros las componen tan sin mirar lo que hacen, que después de representadas tienen necesidad los recitantes de huirse y ausentarse, temerosos de ser castigados, como lo han sido muchas veces, por haber representado cosas en perjuicio de algunos reyes y en deshonor de algunos linajes. Y todos estos inconvenientes cesarían, y aun otros muchos más que no digo, con que hubiese en la Corte una persona inteligente y discreta que examinase todas las comedias antes que se representasen (no sólo aquellas que se hiciesen en la Corte, sino todas las que se quisiesen representar en España), sin la cual aprobación, sello y firma, ninguna justicia en su lugar dejase representar comedia alguna; y, desta manera, los comediantes tendrían cuidado de enviar las comedias a la Corte, y con seguridad podrían representallas, y aquellos que las componen mirarían con más cuidado y estudio lo que hacían, temerosos de haber de pasar sus obras por el riguroso examen de quien lo entiende; y desta manera se harían buenas comedias y se conseguiría felicísimamente lo que en ellas se pretende: así el entretenimiento del pueblo, como la opinión de los ingenios de España, el interés y seguridad de los recitantes y el ahorro del cuidado de castigallos. Y si diese cargo a otro, o a este mismo, que examinase los libros de caballerías que de nuevo se compusiesen, sin duda podrían salir algunos con la perfección que vuestra merced ha dicho, enriqueciendo nuestra lengua del agradable y precioso tesoro de la elocuencia, dando ocasión que los libros viejos se escureciesen a la luz de los nuevos que saliesen, para honesto pasatiempo, no solamente de los ociosos, sino de los más ocupados; pues no es posible que esté continuo el arco armado, ni la condición y flaqueza humana se pueda sustentar sin alguna lícita recreación.

A este punto de su coloquio llegaban el canónigo y el cura, cuando, adelantándose el barbero, llegó a ellos, y dijo al cura:

-Aquí, señor licenciado, es el lugar que yo dije que era bueno para que, sesteando nosotros, tuviesen los bueyes fresco y abundoso pasto.

-Así me lo parece a mí -respondió el cura.

Y, diciéndole al canónigo lo que pensaba hacer, él también quiso quedarse con ellos, convidado del sitio de un hermoso valle que a la vista se les ofrecía. Y, así por gozar dél como de la conversación del cura, de quien ya iba aficionado, y por saber más por menudo las hazañas de don Quijote, mandó a algunos de sus criados que se fuesen a la venta, que no lejos de allí estaba, y trujesen della lo que hubiese de comer, para todos, porque él determinaba de sestear en aquel lugar aquella tarde; a lo cual uno de sus criados respondió que el acémila del

repuesto, que ya debía de estar en la venta, traía recado bastante para no obligar a no tomar de la venta más que cebada.

-Pues así es -dijo el canónigo-, llévense allá todas las cabalgaduras, y haced volver la acémila.

En tanto que esto pasaba, viendo Sancho que podía hablar a su amo sin la continua asistencia del cura y el barbero, que tenía por sospechosos, se llegó a la jaula donde iba su amo, y le dijo:

-Señor, para descargo de mi conciencia, le quiero decir lo que pasa cerca de su encantamiento; y es que aquestos dos que vienen aquí cubiertos los rostros son el cura de nuestro lugar y el barbero; y imagino han dado esta traza de llevarle desta manera, de pura envidia que tienen como vuestra merced se les adelanta en hacer famosos hechos. Presupuesta, pues, esta verdad, síguese que no va encantado, sino embaído y tonto. Para prueba de lo cual le quiero preguntar una cosa; y si me responde como creo que me ha de responder, tocará con la mano este engaño y verá como no va encantado, sino trastornado el juicio.

-Pregunta lo que quisieres, hijo Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, que yo te satisfaré y responderé a toda tu voluntad. Y en lo que dices que aquellos que allí van y vienen con nosotros son el cura y el barbero, nuestros compatriotas y conocidos, bien podrá ser que parezca que son ellos mismos; pero que lo sean realmente y en efeto, eso no lo creas en ninguna manera. Lo que has de creer y entender es que si ellos se les parecen, como dices, debe de ser que los que me han encantado habrán tomado esa apariencia y semejanza; porque es fácil a los encantadores tomar la figura que se les antoja, y habrán tomado las destos nuestros amigos, para darte a ti ocasión de que pienses lo que piensas, y ponerte en un laberinto de imaginaciones, que no aciertes a salir dél, aunque tuvieses la sogá de Teseo. Y también lo habrán hecho para que yo vacile en mi entendimiento, y no sepa atinar de dónde me viene este daño; porque si, por una parte, tú me dices que me acompañan el barbero y el cura de nuestro pueblo, y, por otra, yo me veo enjaulado, y sé de mí que fuerzas humanas, como no fueran sobrenaturales, no fueran bastantes para enjaularme, ¿qué quieres que diga o piense sino que la manera de mi encantamiento excede a cuantas yo he leído en todas las historias que tratan de caballeros andantes que han sido encantados? Ansí que, bien puedes darte paz y sosiego en esto de creer que son los que dices, porque así son ellos como yo soy turco. Y, en lo que toca a querer preguntarme algo, di, que yo te responderé, aunque me preguntes de aquí a mañana.

-¡Válame Nuestra Señora! -respondió Sancho, dando una gran voz-. Y ¿es posible que sea vuestra merced tan duro de cerebro, y tan falto de meollo, que no eche de ver que es pura verdad la que le digo, y que en esta su prisión y desgracia tiene más parte la malicia que el encanto? Pero, pues así es, yo le

quiero probar evidentemente como no va encantado. Si no, dígame, así Dios le saque desta tormenta, y así se vea en los brazos de mi señora Dulcinea cuando menos se piense...

-Acaba de conjurarme -dijo don Quijote-, y pregunta lo que quisieres; que ya te he dicho que te responderé con toda puntualidad.

-Eso pido -replicó Sancho-; y lo que quiero saber es que me diga, sin añadir ni quitar cosa ninguna, sino con toda verdad, como se espera que la han de decir y la dicen todos aquellos que profesan las armas, como vuestra merced las profesa, debajo de título de caballeros andantes...

-Digo que no mentiré en cosa alguna -respondió don Quijote-. Acaba ya de preguntar, que en verdad que me cansas con tantas salvas, plegarias y prevenciones, Sancho.

-Digo que yo estoy seguro de la bondad y verdad de mi amo; y así, porque hace al caso a nuestro cuento, pregunto, hablando con acatamiento, si acaso después que vuestra merced va enjaulado y, a su parecer, encantado en esta jaula, le ha venido gana y voluntad de hacer aguas mayores o menores, como suele decirse.

-No entiendo eso de *hacer aguas*, Sancho; aclárate más, si quieres que te responda derechamente.

-¿Es posible que no entiende vuestra merced de hacer aguas menores o mayores? Pues en la escuela destetan a los muchachos con ello. Pues sepa que quiero decir si le ha venido gana de hacer lo que no se escusa.

-¡Ya, ya te entiendo, Sancho! Y muchas veces; y aun agora la tengo. ¡Sácame deste peligro, que no anda todo limpio!

## Capítulo XLIX

*Donde se trata del discreto coloquio que Sancho Panza tuvo con su señor don Quijote*

-¡AH -DIJO Sancho-; cogido le tengo! Esto es lo que yo deseaba saber, como al alma y como a la vida. Venga acá, señor: ¿podría negar lo que comúnmente suele decirse por ahí cuando una persona está de mala voluntad: «No sé qué tiene fulano, que ni come, ni bebe, ni duerme, ni responde a propósito a lo que le preguntan, que no parece sino que está encantado»? De donde se viene a sacar que los que no comen, ni beben, ni duermen, ni hacen las obras naturales que yo digo, estos tales están encantados; pero no aquellos que tienen la gana que vuestra merced tiene y que bebe cuando se lo dan, y come cuando lo tiene, y responde a todo aquello que le preguntan.

-Verdad dices, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, pero ya te he dicho que hay muchas maneras de encantamientos, y podría ser que con el tiempo se hubiesen mudado de unos en otros, y que agora se use que los encantados hagan todo lo que yo hago, aunque antes no lo hacían. De manera que contra el uso de los tiempos no hay que argüir ni de qué hacer consecuencias. Yo sé y tengo para mí que voy encantado, y esto me basta para la seguridad de mi conciencia; que la formaría muy grande si yo pensase que no estaba encantado y me dejase estar en esta jaula, perezoso y cobarde, defraudando el socorro que podría dar a muchos menesterosos y necesitados que de mi ayuda y amparo deben tener a la hora de ahora precisa y extrema necesidad.

-Pues, con todo eso -replicó Sancho-, digo que, para mayor abundancia y satisfacción, sería bien que vuestra merced probase a salir desta cárcel, que yo me obligo con todo mi poder a facilitarlo, y aun a sacarle della, y probase de nuevo a subir sobre su buen Rocinante, que también parece que va encantado, según va de malencólico y triste; y, hecho esto, probásemos otra vez la suerte de buscar más aventuras; y si no nos sucediese bien, tiempo nos queda para volvernos a la jaula, en la cual prometo, a ley de buen y leal escudero, de encerrarme juntamente con vuestra merced, si acaso fuere vuestra merced tan desdichado, o yo tan simple, que no acierte a salir con lo que digo.

-Yo soy contento de hacer lo que dices, Sancho hermano -replicó don Quijote-; y cuando tú veas coyuntura de poner en obra mi libertad, yo te obedeceré en todo y por todo; pero tú, Sancho, verás como te engañas en el conocimiento de

mi desgracia.

En estas pláticas se entretuvieron el caballero andante y el mal andante escudero, hasta que llegaron donde, ya apeados, los aguardaban el cura, el canónigo y el barbero. Desunció luego los bueyes de la carreta el boyero, y dejólos andar a sus anchuras por aquel verde y apacible sitio, cuya frescura convidaba a quererla gozar, no a las personas tan encantadas como don Quijote, sino a los tan advertidos y discretos como su escudero; el cual rogó al cura que permitiese que su señor saliese por un rato de la jaula, porque si no le dejaban salir, no iría tan limpia aquella prisión como requiría la decencia de un tal caballero como su amo. Entendióle el cura, y dijo que de muy buena gana haría lo que le pedía si no temiera que, en viéndose su señor en libertad, había de hacer de las suyas, y irse donde jamás gentes le viesan.

-Yo le fío de la fuga -respondió Sancho.

-Y yo y todo -dijo el canónigo-; y más si él me da la palabra, como caballero, de no apartarse de nosotros hasta que sea nuestra voluntad.

-Sí doy -respondió don Quijote, que todo lo estaba escuchando-; cuanto más, que el que está encantado, como yo, no tiene libertad para hacer de su persona lo que quisiere, porque el que le encantó le puede hacer que no se mueva de un lugar en tres siglos; y si hubiere huido, le hará volver en volandas. -Y que, pues esto era así, bien podían soltalle, y más, siendo tan en provecho de todos; y del no soltalle les protestaba que no podía dejar de fatigalles el olfato, si de allí no se desviaban.

Tomóle la mano el canónigo, aunque las tenía atadas, y, debajo de su buena fe y palabra, le desenjaularon, de que él se alegró infinito y en grande manera de verse fuera de la jaula. Y lo primero que hizo fue estirarse todo el cuerpo, y luego se fue donde estaba Rocinante, y, dándole dos palmadas en las ancas, dijo:

-Aún espero en Dios y en su bendita Madre, flor y espejo de los caballos, que presto nos hemos de ver los dos cual deseamos; tú, con tu señor auestas; y yo, encima de ti, ejercitando el oficio para que Dios me echó al mundo.

Y, diciendo esto, don Quijote se apartó con Sancho en remota parte, de donde vino más aliviado y con más deseos de poner en obra lo que su escudero ordenase.

Mirábalo el canónigo, y admirábase de ver la estrañeza de su grande locura, y de que, en cuanto hablaba y respondía, mostraba tener bonísimo entendimiento: solamente venía a perder los estribos, como otras veces se ha dicho, en tratándole de caballería. Y así, movido de compasión, después de haberse sentado todos en la verde yerba, para esperar el repuesto del canónigo, le dijo:

-¿Es posible, señor hidalgo, que haya podido tanto con vuestra merced la amarga y ociosa letura de los libros de caballerías, que le hayan vuelto el juicio

de modo que venga a creer que va encantado, con otras cosas deste jaez, tan lejos de ser verdaderas como lo está la misma mentira de la verdad? Y ¿cómo es posible que haya entendimiento humano que se dé a entender que ha habido en el mundo aquella infinidad de Amadises, y aquella turbamulta de tanto famoso caballero, tanto emperador de Trapisonda, tanto Felixmarte de Hircania, tanto palafrén, tanta doncella andante, tantas sierpes, tantos endriagos, tantos gigantes, tantas inauditas aventuras, tanto género de encantamientos, tantas batallas, tantos desaforados encuentros, tanta bizarría de trajes, tantas princesas enamoradas, tantos escuderos condes, tantos enanos graciosos, tanto billete, tanto requiebro, tantas mujeres valientes; y, finalmente, tantos y tan disparatados casos como los libros de caballerías contienen? De mí sé decir que, cuando los leo, en tanto que no pongo la imaginación en pensar que son todos mentira y liviandad, me dan algún contento; pero, cuando caigo en la cuenta de lo que son, doy con el mejor dellos en la pared, y aun diera con él en el fuego si cerca o presente le tuviera, bien como a merecedores de tal pena, por ser falsos y embusteros, y fuera del trato que pide la común naturaleza, y como a inventores de nuevas sectas y de nuevo modo de vida, y como a quien da ocasión que el vulgo ignorante venga a creer y a tener por verdaderas tantas necedades como contienen. Y aun tienen tanto atrevimiento, que se atreven a turbar los ingenios de los discretos y bien nacidos hidalgos, como se echa bien de ver por lo que con vuestra merced han hecho, pues le han traído a términos que sea forzoso encerrarle en una jaula, y traerle sobre un carro de bueyes, como quien trae o lleva algún león o algún tigre, de lugar en lugar, para ganar con él dejando que le vean. ¡Ea, señor don Quijote, duélase de sí mismo, y redúzgase al gremio de la discreción, y sepa usar de la mucha que el cielo fue servido de darle, empleando el felicísimo talento de su ingenio en otra letura que redunde en aprovechamiento de su conciencia y en aumento de su honra! Y si todavía, llevado de su natural inclinación, quisiere leer libros de hazañas y de caballerías, lea en la Sacra Escritura el de los *Jueces*; que allí hallará verdades grandiosas y hechos tan verdaderos como valientes. Un Viriato tuvo Lusitania; un César, Roma; un Aníbal, Cartago; un Alejandro, Grecia; un conde Fernán González, Castilla; un Cid, Valencia; un Gonzalo Fernández, Andalucía; un Diego García de Paredes, Extremadura; un Garci Pérez de Vargas, Jerez; un Garcilaso, Toledo; un don Manuel de León, Sevilla, cuya lección de sus valerosos hechos puede entretener, enseñar, deleitar y admirar a los más altos ingenios que los leyeren. Ésta sí será letura digna del buen entendimiento de vuestra merced, señor don Quijote mío, de la cual saldrá erudito en la historia, enamorado de la virtud, enseñado en la bondad, mejorado en las costumbres, valiente sin temeridad, osado sin cobardía, y todo esto, para honra de Dios, provecho suyo y fama de la Mancha; do, según he sabido, trae

vuestra merced su principio y origen.

Atentísimamente estuvo don Quijote escuchando las razones del canónigo; y, cuando vio que ya había puesto fin a ellas, después de haberle estado un buen espacio mirando, le dijo:

-Paréceme, señor hidalgo, que la plática de vuestra merced se ha encaminado a querer darme a entender que no ha habido caballeros andantes en el mundo, y que todos los libros de caballerías son falsos, mentirosos, dañadores e inútiles para la república; y que yo he hecho mal en leerlos, y peor en creerlos, y más mal en imitarlos, habiéndome puesto a seguir la durísima profesión de la caballería andante, que ellos enseñan, negándome que no ha habido en el mundo Amadises, ni de Gaula ni de Grecia, ni todos los otros caballeros de que las escrituras están llenas.

-Todo es al pie de la letra como vuestra merced lo va relatando -dijo a está sazón el canónigo.

A lo cual respondió don Quijote:

-Añadió también vuestra merced, diciendo que me habían hecho mucho daño tales libros, pues me habían vuelto el juicio y puéstome en una jaula, y que me sería mejor hacer la enmienda y mudar de letura, leyendo otros más verdaderos y que mejor deleitan y enseñan.

-Así es -dijo el canónigo.

-Pues yo -replicó don Quijote-hallo por mi cuenta que el sin juicio y el encantado es vuestra merced, pues se ha puesto a decir tantas blasfemias contra una cosa tan recebida en el mundo, y tenida por tan verdadera, que el que la negase, como vuestra merced la niega, merecía la misma pena que vuestra merced dice que da a los libros cuando los lee y le enfadan. Porque querer dar a entender a nadie que Amadís no fue en el mundo, ni todos los otros caballeros aventureros de que están colmadas las historias, será querer persuadir que el sol no alumbrá, ni el yelo enfría, ni la tierra sustenta; porque, ¿qué ingenio puede haber en el mundo que pueda persuadir a otro que no fue verdad lo de la infanta Floripes y Guy de Borgoña, y lo de Fierabrás con la puente de Mantible, que sucedió en el tiempo de Carlomagno; que voto a tal que es tanta verdad como es ahora de día? Y si es mentira, también lo debe de ser que no hubo Héctor, ni Aquiles, ni la guerra de Troya, ni los Doce Pares de Francia, ni el rey Artús de Ingalaterra, que anda hasta ahora convertido en cuervo y le esperan en su reino por momentos. Y también se atreverán a decir que es mentirosa la historia de Guarino Mezquino, y la de la demanda del Santo Grial, y que son apócrifos los amores de don Tristán y la reina Iseo, como los de Ginebra y Lanzarote, habiendo personas que casi se acuerdan de haber visto a la dueña Quintañoña, que fue la mejor escanciadora de vino que tuvo la Gran Bretaña. Y es esto tan

ansí, que me acuerdo yo que me decía una mi agüela de partes de mi padre, cuando veía alguna dueña con tocas reverendas: «Aquélla, nieto, se parece a la dueña Quintañona»; de donde arguyo yo que la debió de conocer ella o, por lo menos, debió de alcanzar a ver algún retrato suyo. Pues, ¿quién podrá negar no ser verdadera la historia de Pierres y la linda Magalona, pues aun hasta hoy día se vee en la armería de los reyes la clavija con que volvía al caballo de madera, sobre quien iba el valiente Pierres por los aires, que es un poco mayor que un timón de carreta? Y junto a la clavija está la silla de Babieca, y en Roncesvalles está el cuerno de Roldán, tamaño como una grande viga: de donde se infiere que hubo Doce Pares, que hubo Pierres, que hubo Cides, y otros caballeros semejantes,

déstos que dicen las gentes  
que a sus aventuras van.

Si no, díganme también que no es verdad que fue caballero andante el valiente lusitano Juan de Merlo, que fue a Borgoña y se combatió en la ciudad de Ras con el famoso señor de Charní, llamado mosén Pierres, y después, en la ciudad de Basilea, con mosén Enrique de Remestán, saliendo de entrambas empresas vencedor y lleno de honrosa fama; y las aventuras y desafíos que también acabaron en Borgoña los valientes españoles Pedro Barba y Gutierre Quijada (de cuya alcurnia yo diciendo por línea recta de varón), venciendo a los hijos del conde de San Polo. Niéguenme, asimesmo, que no fue a buscar las aventuras a Alemania don Fernando de Guevara, donde se combatió con micer Jorge, caballero de la casa del duque de Austria; digan que fueron burla las justas de Suero de Quiñones, del Paso; las empresas de mosén Luis de Falces contra don Gonzalo de Guzmán, caballero castellano, con otras muchas hazañas hechas por caballeros cristianos, déstos y de los reinos extranjeros, tan auténticas y verdaderas, que torno a decir que el que las negase carecería de toda razón y buen discurso.

Admirado quedó el canónigo de oír la mezcla que don Quijote hacía de verdades y mentiras, y de ver la noticia que tenía de todas aquellas cosas tocantes y concernientes a los hechos de su andante caballería; y así, le respondió:

-No puedo yo negar, señor don Quijote, que no sea verdad algo de lo que vuestra merced ha dicho, especialmente en lo que toca a los caballeros andantes españoles; y, asimesmo, quiero conceder que hubo Doce Pares de Francia, pero



no quiero creer que hicieron todas aquellas cosas que el arzobispo Turpín dellos escribe; porque la verdad dello es que fueron caballeros escogidos por los reyes de Francia, a quien llamaron *pares* por ser todos iguales en valor, en calidad y en valentía; a lo menos, si no lo eran, era razón que lo fuesen y era como una religión de las que ahora se usan de Santiago o de Calatrava, que se presupone que los que la profesan han de ser, o deben ser, caballeros valerosos, valientes y bien nacidos; y, como ahora dicen caballero de San Juan, o de Alcántara, decían en aquel tiempo caballero de los Doce Pares, porque no fueron doce iguales los que para esta religión militar se escogieron. En lo de que hubo Cid no hay duda, ni menos Bernardo del Carpio, pero de que hicieron las hazañas que dicen, creo que la hay muy grande. En lo otro de la clavija que vuestra merced dice del conde Pierres, y que está junto a la silla de Babieca en la armería de los reyes, confieso mi pecado; que soy tan ignorante, o tan corto de vista, que, aunque he visto la silla, no he echado de ver la clavija, y más siendo tan grande como vuestra merced ha dicho.

-Pues allí está, sin duda alguna -replicó don Quijote-; y, por más señas, dicen que está metida en una funda de vaqueta, porque no se tome de moho.

-Todo puede ser -respondió el canónigo-; pero, por las órdenes que recibí, que no me acuerdo haberla visto. Mas, puesto que conceda que está allí, no por eso me obligo a creer las historias de tantos Amadises, ni las de tanta turbamulta de caballeros como por ahí nos cuentan; ni es razón que un hombre como vuestra merced, tan honrado y de tan buenas partes, y dotado de tan buen entendimiento, se dé a entender que son verdaderas tantas y tan estrañas locuras como las que están escritas en los disparatados libros de caballerías.

## Capítulo L

*De las discretas altercaciones que don Quijote y el canónigo tuvieron, con otros sucesos*

-¡BUENO está eso! -respondió don Quijote-. Los libros que están impresos con licencia de los reyes y con aprobación de aquellos a quien se remitieron, y que con gusto general son leídos y celebrados de los grandes y de los chicos, de los pobres y de los ricos, de los letrados e ignorantes, de los plebeyos y caballeros, finalmente, de todo género de personas, de cualquier estado y condición que sean, ¿habían de ser mentira?; y más llevando tanta apariencia de verdad, pues nos cuentan el padre, la madre, la patria, los parientes, la edad, el lugar y las hazañas, punto por punto y día por día, que el tal caballero hizo, o caballeros hicieron. Calle vuestra merced, no diga tal blasfemia (y créame que le aconsejo en esto lo que debe de hacer como discreto), si no léalos, y verá el gusto que recibe de su leyenda. Si no, dígame: ¿hay mayor contento que ver, como si dijésemos: aquí ahora se muestra delante de nosotros un gran lago de pez hirviendo a borbollones, y que andan nadando y cruzando por él muchas serpientes, culebras y lagartos, y otros muchos géneros de animales feroces y espantables, y que del medio del lago sale una voz tristísima que dice: «Tú, caballero, quienquiera que seas, que el temeroso lago estás mirando, si quieres alcanzar el bien que debajo destas negras aguas se encubre, muestra el valor de tu fuerte pecho y arrójate en mitad de su negro y encendido licor; porque si así no lo haces, no serás digno de ver las altas maravillas que en sí encierran y contienen los siete castillos de las siete fadas que debajo desta negregura yacen?» ¿Y que, apenas el caballero no ha acabado de oír la voz temerosa, cuando, sin entrar más en cuentas consigo, sin ponerse a considerar el peligro a que se pone, y aun sin despojarse de la pesadumbre de sus fuertes armas, encomendándose a Dios y a su señora, se arroja en mitad del bullente lago, y, cuando no se cata ni sabe dónde ha de parar, se halla entre unos floridos campos, con quien los Elíseos no tienen que ver en ninguna cosa? Allí le parece que el cielo es más transparente, y que el sol luce con claridad más nueva; ofrécese a los ojos una apacible floresta de tan verdes y frondosos árboles compuesta, que alegra a la vista su verdura, y entretiene los oídos el dulce y no aprendido canto de los pequeños, infinitos y pintados pajarillos que por los intrincados ramos van cruzando. Aquí descubre un arroyuelo, cuyas frescas aguas, que líquidos

cristales parecen, corren sobre menudas arenas y blancas pedrezuelas, que oro cernido y puras perlas semejan; acullá vee una artificiosa fuente de jaspe variado y de liso mármol compuesta; acá vee otra a lo brutesco adornada, adonde las menudas conchas de las almejas, con las torcidas casas blancas y amarillas del caracol, puestas con orden desordenada, mezclados entre ellas pedazos de cristal luciente y de contrahechas esmeraldas, hacen una variada labor, de manera que el arte, imitando a la naturaleza, parece que allí la vence. Acullá de improviso se le descubre un fuerte castillo o vistoso alcázar, cuyas murallas son de macizo oro, las almenas de diamantes, las puertas de jacintos; finalmente, él es de tan admirable compostura que, con ser la materia de que está formado no menos que de diamantes, de carbuncos, de rubíes, de perlas, de oro y de esmeraldas, es de más estimación su hechura. Y ¿hay más que ver, después de haber visto esto, que ver salir por la puerta del castillo un buen número de doncellas, cuyos galanos y vistosos trajes, si yo me pusiese ahora a decirlos como las historias nos los cuentan, sería nunca acabar; y tomar luego la que parecía principal de todas por la mano al atrevido caballero que se arrojó en el ferviente lago, y llevarle, sin hablarle palabra, dentro del rico alcázar o castillo, y hacerle desnudar como su madre le parió, y bañarle con templadas aguas, y luego untarle todo con olorosos ungüentos, y vestirle una camisa de cendal delgadísimo, toda olorosa y perfumada, y acudir otra doncella y echarle un mantón sobre los hombros, que, por lo menos menos, dicen que suele valer una ciudad, y aun más? ¿Qué es ver, pues, cuando nos cuentan que, tras todo esto, le llevan a otra sala, donde halla puestas las mesas, con tanto concierto, que queda suspenso y admirado?; ¿qué, el verle echar agua a manos, toda de ámbar y de olorosas flores distilada?; ¿qué, el hacerle sentar sobre una silla de marfil?; ¿qué, verle servir todas las doncellas, guardando un maravilloso silencio?; ¿qué, el traerle tanta diferencia de manjares, tan sabrosamente guisados, que no sabe el apetito a cuál deba de alargar la mano? ¿Cuál será oír la música que en tanto que come suena, sin saberse quién la canta ni adónde suena? ¿Y, después de la comida acabada y las mesas alzadas, quedarse el caballero recostado sobre la silla, y quizá mondándose los dientes, como es costumbre, entrar a deshora por la puerta de la sala otra mucho más hermosa doncella que ninguna de las primeras, y sentarse al lado del caballero, y comenzar a darle cuenta de qué castillo es aquél, y de cómo ella está encantada en él, con otras cosas que suspenden al caballero y admiran a los leyentes que van leyendo su historia? No quiero alargarme más en esto, pues dello se puede colegir que cualquiera parte que se lea, de cualquiera historia de caballero andante, ha de causar gusto y maravilla a cualquiera que la leyere. Y vuestra merced créame, y, como otra vez le he dicho, lea estos libros, y verá cómo le destierran la melancolía que tuviere, y le mejoran la condición, si acaso la tiene

mala. De mí sé decir que, después que soy caballero andante, soy valiente, comedido, liberal, bien criado, generoso, cortés, atrevido, blando, paciente, sufridor de trabajos, de prisiones, de encantos; y, aunque ha tan poco que me vi encerrado en una jaula, como loco, pienso, por el valor de mi brazo, favoreciéndome el cielo y no me siendo contraria la fortuna, en pocos días verme rey de algún reino, adonde pueda mostrar el agradecimiento y liberalidad que mi pecho encierra. Que, mía fe, señor, el pobre está inhabilitado de poder mostrar la virtud de liberalidad con ninguno, aunque en sumo grado la posea; y el agradecimiento que sólo consiste en el deseo es cosa muerta, como es muerta la fe sin obras. Por esto querría que la fortuna me ofreciese presto alguna ocasión donde me hiciese emperador, por mostrar mi pecho haciendo bien a mis amigos, especialmente a este pobre de Sancho Panza, mi escudero, que es el mejor hombre del mundo, y querría darle un condado que le tengo muchos días ha prometido, sino que temo que no ha de tener habilidad para gobernar su estado.

Casi estas últimas palabras oyó Sancho a su amo, a quien dijo:

-Trabaje vuestra merced, señor don Quijote, en darme ese condado, tan prometido de vuestra merced como de mí esperado, que yo le prometo que no me falte a mí habilidad para gobernarle; y, cuando me faltare, yo he oído decir que hay hombres en el mundo que toman en arrendamiento los estados de los señores, y les dan un tanto cada año, y ellos se tienen cuidado del gobierno, y el señor se está a pierna tendida, gozando de la renta que le dan, sin curarse de otra cosa; y así haré yo, y no repararé en tanto más cuanto, sino que luego me desistiré de todo, y me gozaré mi renta como un duque, y allá se lo hayan.

-Eso, hermano Sancho -dijo el canónigo-, entiéndese en cuanto al gozar la renta; empero, al administrar justicia, ha de atender el señor del estado, y aquí entra la habilidad y buen juicio, y principalmente la buena intención de acertar; que si ésta falta en los principios, siempre irán errados los medios y los fines; y así suele Dios ayudar al buen deseo del simple como desfavorecer al malo del discreto.

-No sé esas filosofías -respondió Sancho Panza-; mas sólo sé que tan presto tuviese yo el condado como sabría regirle; que tanta alma tengo yo como otro, y tanto cuerpo como el que más, y tan rey sería yo de mi estado como cada uno del suyo; y, siéndolo, haría lo que quisiese; y, haciendo lo que quisiese, haría mi gusto; y, haciendo mi gusto, estaría contento; y, en estando uno contento, no tiene más que desear; y, no teniendo más que desear, acabóse; y el estado venga, y a Dios y veámonos, como dijo un ciego a otro.

-No son malas filosofías éstas, como tú dices, Sancho; pero, con todo eso, hay mucho que decir sobre esta materia de condados.

A lo cual replicó don Quijote:

-Yo no sé que haya más que decir; sólo me guío por el ejemplo que me da el grande Amadís de Gaula, que hizo a su escudero conde de la Ínsula Firme; y así, puedo yo, sin escrúpulo de conciencia, hacer conde a Sancho Panza, que es uno de los mejores escuderos que caballero andante ha tenido.

Admirado quedó el canónigo de los concertados disparates que don Quijote había dicho, del modo con que había pintado la aventura del Caballero del Lago, de la impresión que en él habían hecho las pensadas mentiras de los libros que había leído; y, finalmente, le admiraba la necedad de Sancho, que con tanto ahínco deseaba alcanzar el condado que su amo le había prometido.

Ya en esto, volvían los criados del canónigo, que a la venta habían ido por la acémila del repuesto, y, haciendo mesa de una alhombra y de la verde yerba del prado, a la sombra de unos árboles se sentaron, y comieron allí, porque el boyero no perdiese la comodidad de aquel sitio, como queda dicho. Y, estando comiendo, a deshora oyeron un recio estruendo y un son de esquila, que por entre unas zarzas y espesas matas que allí junto estaban sonaba, y al mismo instante vieron salir de entre aquellas malezas una hermosa cabra, toda la piel manchada de negro, blanco y pardo. Tras ella venía un cabrero dándole voces, y diciéndole palabras a su uso, para que se detuviese, o al rebaño volviese. La fugitiva cabra, temerosa y despavorida, se vino a la gente, como a favorecerse della, y allí se detuvo. Llegó el cabrero, y, asiéndola de los cuernos, como si fuera capaz de discurso y entendimiento, le dijo:

-¡Ah cerrera, cerrera, Manchada, Manchada, y cómo andáis vos estos días de pie cojo! ¿Qué lobos os espantan, hija? ¿No me diréis qué es esto, hermosa? Mas ¡qué puede ser sino que sois hembra, y no podéis estar sosegada; que mal haya vuestra condición, y la de todas aquellas a quien imitáis! Volved, volved, amiga; que si no tan contenta, a lo menos, estaréis más segura en vuestro aprisco, o con vuestras compañeras; que si vos que las habéis de guardar y encaminar andáis tan sin guía y tan descaminada, ¿en qué podrán parar ellas?

Contento dieron las palabras del cabrero a los que las oyeron, especialmente al canónigo, que le dijo:

-Por vida vuestra, hermano, que os soseguéis un poco y no os acuciéis en volver tan presto esa cabra a su rebaño; que, pues ella es hembra, como vos decís, ha de seguir su natural distinto, por más que vos os pongáis a estorbarlo. Tomad este bocado y bebed una vez, con que templaréis la cólera, y en tanto, descansará la cabra.

Y el decir esto y el darle con la punta del cuchillo los lomos de un conejo fiambre, todo fue uno. Tomólo y agradeciolo el cabrero; bebió y sosegóse, y luego dijo:

-No querría que por haber yo hablado con esta alimaña tan en seso, me

tuviesen vuestras mercedes por hombre simple; que en verdad que no carecen de misterio las palabras que le dije. Rústico soy, pero no tanto que no entienda cómo se ha de tratar con los hombres y con las bestias.

-Eso creo yo muy bien -dijo el cura-, que ya yo sé de experiencia que los montes crían letrados y las cabañas de los pastores encierran filósofos.

-A lo menos, señor -replicó el cabrero-, acogen hombres escarmentados; y para que creáis esta verdad y la toquéis con la mano, aunque parezca que sin ser rogado me convido, si no os enfadáis dello y queréis, señores, un breve espacio prestarme oído atento, os contaré una verdad que acredite lo que ese señor (señalando al cura) ha dicho, y la mía.

A esto respondió don Quijote:

-Por ver que tiene este caso un no sé qué de sombra de aventura de caballería, yo, por mi parte, os oiré, hermano, de muy buena gana, y así lo harán todos estos señores, por lo mucho que tienen de discretos y de ser amigos de curiosas novedades que suspendan, alegren y entretengan los sentidos, como, sin duda, pienso que lo ha de hacer vuestro cuento. Comenzad, pues, amigo, que todos escucharemos.

-Saco la mía -dijo Sancho-; que yo a aquel arroyo me voy con esta empanada, donde pienso hartarme por tres días; porque he oído decir a mi señor don Quijote que el escudero de caballero andante ha de comer, cuando se le ofreciere, hasta no poder más, a causa que se les suele ofrecer entrar acaso por una selva tan intrincada que no aciertan a salir della en seis días; y si el hombre no va hartado, o bien proveídas las alforjas, allí se podrá quedar, como muchas veces se queda, hecho carne momia.

-Tú estás en lo cierto, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-: vete adonde quisieres, y come lo que pudieres; que yo ya estoy satisfecho, y sólo me falta dar al alma su refacción, como se la daré escuchando el cuento deste buen hombre.

-Así las daremos todos a las nuestras -dijo el canónigo.

Y luego, rogó al cabrero que diese principio a lo que prometido había. El cabrero dio dos palmadas sobre el lomo a la cabra, que por los cuernos tenía, diciéndole:

-Recuéstate junto a mí, Manchada, que tiempo nos queda para volver a nuestro apero.

Parece que lo entendió la cabra, porque, en sentándose su dueño, se tendió ella junto a él con mucho sosiego, y, mirándole al rostro, daba a entender que estaba atenta a lo que el cabrero iba diciendo, el cual comenzó su historia desta manera:

## Capítulo LI

*Que trata de lo que contó el cabrero a todos los que llevaban a don Quijote*

-«TRES leguas deste valle está una aldea que, aunque pequeña, es de las más ricas que hay en todos estos contornos; en la cual había un labrador muy honrado, y tanto, que, aunque es anexo al ser rico el ser honrado, más lo era él por la virtud que tenía que por la riqueza que alcanzaba. Mas lo que le hacía más dichoso, según él decía, era tener una hija de tan estremada hermosura, rara discreción, donaire y virtud, que el que la conocía y la miraba se admiraba de ver las estremadas partes con que el cielo y la naturaleza la habían enriquecido. Siendo niña fue hermosa, y siempre fue creciendo en belleza, y en la edad de diez y seis años fue hermosísima. La fama de su belleza se comenzó a estender por todas las circunvecinas aldeas, ¿qué digo yo por las circunvecinas no más, si se extendió a las apartadas ciudades, y aun se entró por las salas de los reyes, y por los oídos de todo género de gente; que, como a cosa rara, o como a imagen de milagros, de todas partes a verla venían? Guardábala su padre, y guardábase ella; que no hay candados, guardas ni cerraduras que mejor guarden a una doncella que las del recato propio.

»La riqueza del padre y la belleza de la hija movieron a muchos, así del pueblo como forasteros, a que por mujer se la pidiesen; mas él, como a quien tocaba disponer de tan rica joya, andaba confuso, sin saber determinarse a quién la entregaría de los infinitos que le importunaban. Y, entre los muchos que tan buen deseo tenían, fui yo uno, a quien dieron muchas y grandes esperanzas de buen suceso conocer que el padre conocía quien yo era, el ser natural del mismo pueblo, limpio en sangre, en la edad floreciente, en la hacienda muy rico y en el ingenio no menos acabado. Con todas estas mismas partes la pidió también otro del mismo pueblo, que fue causa de suspender y poner en balanza la voluntad del padre, a quien parecía que con cualquiera de nosotros estaba su hija bien empleada; y, por salir desta confusión, determinó decírselo a Leandra, que así se llama la rica que en miseria me tiene puesto, advirtiéndole que, pues los dos éramos iguales, era bien dejar a la voluntad de su querida hija el escoger a su gusto: cosa digna de imitar de todos los padres que a sus hijos quieren poner en estado: no digo yo que los dejen escoger en cosas ruines y malas, sino que se las propongan buenas, y de las buenas, que escojan a su gusto. No sé yo el que tuvo Leandra; sólo sé que el padre nos entretuvo a entrambos con la poca edad de su

hija y con palabras generales, que ni le obligaban, ni nos desobligaba tampoco. Llámase mi competidor Anselmo, y yo Eugenio, porque vais con noticia de los nombres de las personas que en esta tragedia se contienen, cuyo fin aún está pendiente; pero bien se deja entender que será desastrado.

»En esta sazón, vino a nuestro pueblo un Vicente de la Rosa, hijo de un pobre labrador del mismo lugar; el cual Vicente venía de las Italías, y de otras diversas partes, de ser soldado. Llevóle de nuestro lugar, siendo muchacho de hasta doce años, un capitán que con su compañía por allí acertó a pasar, y volvió el mozo de allí a otros doce, vestido a la soldadesca, pintado con mil colores, lleno de mil dijes de cristal y sutiles cadenas de acero. Hoy se ponía una gala y mañana otra; pero todas sutiles, pintadas, de poco peso y menos tomo. La gente labradora, que de suyo es maliciosa, y dándole el ocio lugar es la misma malicia, lo notó, y contó punto por punto sus galas y preseas, y halló que los vestidos eran tres, de diferentes colores, con sus ligas y medias; pero él hacía tantos guisados e invenciones dellas, que si no se los contaran, hubiera quien jurara que había hecho muestra de más de diez pares de vestidos y de más de veinte plumajes. Y no parezca impertinencia y demasía esto que de los vestidos voy contando, porque ellos hacen una buena parte en esta historia.

»Sentábase en un poyo que debajo de un gran álamo está en nuestra plaza, y allí nos tenía a todos la boca abierta, pendientes de las hazañas que nos iba contando. No había tierra en todo el orbe que no hubiese visto, ni batalla donde no se hubiese hallado; había muerto más moros que tiene Marruecos y Túnez, y entrado en más singulares desafíos, según él decía, que Gante y Luna, Diego García de Paredes y otros mil que nombraba; y de todos había salido con vitoria, sin que le hubiesen derramado una sola gota de sangre. Por otra parte, mostraba señales de heridas que, aunque no se divisaban, nos hacía entender que eran arcabuzazos dados en diferentes rencuentros y faciones. Finalmente, con una no vista arrogancia, llamaba de vos a sus iguales y a los mismos que le conocían, y decía que su padre era su brazo, su linaje, sus obras, y que debajo de ser soldado, al mismo rey no debía nada. Añadiósele a estas arrogancias ser un poco músico y tocar una guitarra a lo rasgado, de manera que decían algunos que la hacía hablar; pero no pararon aquí sus gracias, que también la tenía de poeta, y así, de cada niñería que pasaba en el pueblo, componía un romance de legua y media de escritura.

»Este soldado, pues, que aquí he pintado, este Vicente de la Rosa, este bravo, este galán, este músico, este poeta fue visto y mirado muchas veces de Leandra, desde una ventana de su casa que tenía la vista a la plaza. Enamoróla el oropel de sus vistosos trajes, encantáronla sus romances, que de cada uno que componía daba veinte traslados, llegaron a sus oídos las hazañas que él de sí mismo había



referido, y, finalmente, que así el diablo lo debía de tener ordenado, ella se vino a enamorar dél, antes que en él naciese presunción de solicitalla. Y, como en los casos de amor no hay ninguno que con más facilidad se cumpla que aquel que tiene de su parte el deseo de la dama, con facilidad se concertaron Leandra y Vicente; y, primero que alguno de sus muchos pretendientes cayesen en la cuenta de su deseo, ya ella le tenía cumplido, habiendo dejado la casa de su querido y amado padre, que madre no la tiene, y ausentándose de la aldea con el soldado, que salió con más triunfo desta empresa que de todas las muchas que él se aplicaba.

»Admiró el suceso a toda el aldea, y aun a todos los que dél noticia tuvieron; yo quedé suspenso, Anselmo, atónito, el padre triste, sus parientes afrentados, solícita la justicia, los cuadrilleros listos; tomáronse los caminos, escudriñáronse los bosques y cuanto había, y, al cabo de tres días, hallaron a la antojadiza Leandra en una cueva de un monte, desnuda en camisa, sin muchos dineros y preciosísimas joyas que de su casa había sacado. Volviéronla a la presencia del lastimado padre; preguntáronle su desgracia; confesó sin apremio que Vicente de la Roca la había engañado, y debajo de su palabra de ser su esposo la persuadió que dejase la casa de su padre; que él la llevaría a la más rica y más viciosa ciudad que había en todo el universo mundo, que era Nápoles; y que ella, mal advertida y peor engañada, le había creído; y, robando a su padre, se le entregó la misma noche que había faltado; y que él la llevó a un áspero monte, y la encerró en aquella cueva donde la habían hallado. Contó también como el soldado, sin quitalle su honor, le robó cuanto tenía, y la dejó en aquella cueva y se fue: suceso que de nuevo puso en admiración a todos.

»Duro se nos hizo de creer la continencia del mozo, pero ella lo afirmó con tantas veras, que fueron parte para que el desconsolado padre se consolase, no haciendo cuenta de las riquezas que le llevaban, pues le habían dejado a su hija con la joya que, si una vez se pierde, no deja esperanza de que jamás se cobre. El mismo día que pareció Leandra la desapareció su padre de nuestros ojos, y la llevó a encerrar en un monesterio de una villa que está aquí cerca, esperando que el tiempo gaste alguna parte de la mala opinión en que su hija se puso. Los pocos años de Leandra sirvieron de disculpa de su culpa, a lo menos con aquellos que no les iba algún interés en que ella fuese mala o buena; pero los que conocían su discreción y mucho entendimiento no atribuyeron a ignorancia su pecado, sino a su desenvoltura y a la natural inclinación de las mujeres, que, por la mayor parte, suele ser desatinada y mal compuesta.

»Encerrada Leandra, quedaron los ojos de Anselmo ciegos, a lo menos sin tener cosa que mirar que contento le diese; los míos en tinieblas, sin luz que a ninguna cosa de gusto les encaminase; con la ausencia de Leandra, crecía

nuestra tristeza, apocábase nuestra paciencia, maldecíamos las galas del soldado y abominábamos del poco recato del padre de Leandra. Finalmente, Anselmo y yo nos concertamos de dejar el aldea y venirnos a este valle, donde él, apacentando una gran cantidad de ovejas suyas propias, y yo un numeroso rebaño de cabras, también mías, pasamos la vida entre los árboles, dando vado a nuestras pasiones, o cantando juntos alabanzas o vituperios de la hermosa Leandra, o suspirando solos y a solas comunicando con el cielo nuestras querellas.

»A imitación nuestra, otros muchos de los pretendientes de Leandra se han venido a estos ásperos montes, usando el mismo ejercicio nuestro; y son tantos, que parece que este sitio se ha convertido en la pastoral Arcadia, según está colmo de pastores y de apriscos, y no hay parte en él donde no se oiga el nombre de la hermosa Leandra. Éste la maldice y la llama antojadiza, varia y deshonesta; aquél la condena por fácil y ligera; tal la absuelve y perdona, y tal la justicia y vitupera; uno celebra su hermosura, otro reniega de su condición, y, en fin, todos la deshonran, y todos la adoran, y de todos se estiende a tanto la locura, que hay quien se queje de desdén sin haberla jamás hablado, y aun quien se lamente y sienta la rabiosa enfermedad de los celos, que ella jamás dio a nadie; porque, como ya tengo dicho, antes se supo su pecado que su deseo. No hay hueco de peña, ni margen de arroyo, ni sombra de árbol que no esté ocupada de algún pastor que sus desventuras a los aires cuente; el eco repite el nombre de Leandra dondequiera que pueda formarse: Leandra resuenan los montes, Leandra murmuran los arroyos, y Leandra nos tiene a todos suspensos y encantados, esperando sin esperanza y temiendo sin saber de qué tememos. Entre estos disparatados, el que muestra que menos y más juicio tiene es mi competidor Anselmo, el cual, teniendo tantas otras cosas de que quejarse, sólo se queja de ausencia; y al son de un rabel, que admirablemente toca, con versos donde muestra su buen entendimiento, cantando se queja. Yo sigo otro camino más fácil, y a mi parecer el más acertado, que es decir mal de la ligereza de las mujeres, de su inconstancia, de su doble trato, de sus promesas muertas, de su fe rompida, y, finalmente, del poco discurso que tienen en saber colocar sus pensamientos e intenciones que tienen.» Y ésta fue la ocasión, señores, de las palabras y razones que dije a esta cabra cuando aquí llegué; que por ser hembra la tengo en poco, aunque es la mejor de todo mi apero. Ésta es la historia que prometí contaros; si he sido en el contarla prolijo, no seré en serviros corto: cerca de aquí tengo mi majada, y en ella tengo fresca leche y muy sabrosísimo queso, con otras varias y sazonadas frutas, no menos a la vista que al gusto agradables.

## Capítulo LII

*De la pendencia que don Quijote tuvo con el cabrero, con la rara aventura de los deceplinantes, a quien dio felice fin a costa de su sudor*

GENERAL gusto causó el cuento del cabrero a todos los que escuchado le habían; especialmente le recibió el canónigo, que con estraña curiosidad notó la manera con que le había contado, tan lejos de parecer rústico cabrero cuan cerca de mostrarse discreto cortesano; y así, dijo que había dicho muy bien el cura en decir que los montes criaban letrados. Todos se ofrecieron a Eugenio; pero el que más se mostró liberal en esto fue don Quijote, que le dijo: -Por cierto, hermano cabrero, que si yo me hallara posibilitado de poder comenzar alguna aventura, que luego luego me pusiera en camino porque vos la tuviéades buena; que yo sacara del monesterio, donde, sin duda alguna, debe de estar contra su voluntad, a Leandra, a pesar de la abadesa y de cuantos quisieran estorbarlo, y os la pusiera en vuestras manos, para que hiciéades della a toda vuestra voluntad y talante, guardando, pero, las leyes de la caballería, que mandan que a ninguna doncella se le sea fecho desaguisado alguno; aunque yo espero en Dios Nuestro Señor que no ha de poder tanto la fuerza de un encantador malicioso, que no pueda más la de otro encantador mejor intencionado, y para entonces os prometo mi favor y ayuda, como me obliga mi profesión, que no es otra si no es favorecer a los desvalidos y menesterosos.

Miróle el cabrero, y, como vio a don Quijote de tan mal pelaje y catadura, admiróse y preguntó al barbero, que cerca de sí tenía: -Señor, ¿quién es este hombre, que tal talle tiene y de tal manera habla?

-¿Quién ha de ser -respondió el barbero-sino el famoso don Quijote de la Mancha, desfacedor de agravios, enderezador de tuertos, el amparo de las doncellas, el asombro de los gigantes y el vencedor de las batallas?

-Eso me semeja -respondió el cabrero-a lo que se lee en los libros de caballeros andantes, que hacían todo eso que de este hombre vuestra merced dice; puesto que para mí tengo, o que vuestra merced se burla, o que este gentil hombre debe de tener vacíos los aposentos de la cabeza.

-Sois un grandísimo bellaco -dijo a esta sazón don Quijote-; y vos sois el vacío y el menguado, que yo estoy más lleno que jamás lo estuvo la muy hideputa puta que os parió.

Y, diciendo y haciendo, arrebató de un pan que junto a sí tenía, y dio con él al

cabrero en todo el rostro, con tanta furia, que le remachó las narices; mas el cabrero, que no sabía de burlas, viendo con cuántas veras le maltrataban, sin tener respeto a la alhombra, ni a los manteles, ni a todos aquellos que comiendo estaban, saltó sobre don Quijote, y, asiéndole del cuello con entrambas manos, no dudara de ahogalle, si Sancho Panza no llegara en aquel punto, y le asiera por las espaldas y diera con él encima de la mesa, quebrando platos, rompiendo tazas y derramando y esparciendo cuanto en ella estaba. Don Quijote, que se vio libre, acudió a subirse sobre el cabrero; el cual, lleno de sangre el rostro, molido a coces de Sancho, andaba buscando a gatas algún cuchillo de la mesa para hacer alguna sanguinolenta venganza, pero estorbábanselo el canónigo y el cura; mas el barbero hizo de suerte que el cabrero cogió debajo de sí a don Quijote, sobre el cual llovió tanto número de mojicones, que del rostro del pobre caballero llovía tanta sangre como del suyo.

Reventaban de risa el canónigo y el cura, saltaban los cuadrilleros de gozo, zuzaban los unos y los otros, como hacen a los perros cuando en pendencia están trabados; sólo Sancho Panza se desesperaba, porque no se podía desasir de un criado del canónigo, que le estorbaba que a su amo no ayudase.

En resolución, estando todos en regocijo y fiesta, sino los dos aporreantes que se carpían, oyeron el son de una trompeta, tan triste que les hizo volver los rostros hacia donde les pareció que sonaba; pero el que más se alborotó de oírle fue don Quijote, el cual, aunque estaba debajo del cabrero, harto contra su voluntad y más que medianamente molido, le dijo: -Hermano demonio, que no es posible que dejes de serlo, pues has tenido valor y fuerzas para sujetar las mías, ruégote que hagamos treguas, no más de por una hora; porque el doloroso son de aquella trompeta que a nuestros oídos llega me parece que a alguna nueva aventura me llama.

El cabrero, que ya estaba cansado de moler y ser molido, le dejó luego, y don Quijote se puso en pie, volviendo asimismo el rostro adonde el son se oía, y vio a deshora que por un recuesto bajaban muchos hombres vestidos de blanco, a modo de diciplinantes.

Era el caso que aquel año habían las nubes negado su rocío a la tierra, y por todos los lugares de aquella comarca se hacían procesiones, rogativas y diciplinas, pidiendo a Dios abriese las manos de su misericordia y les lloviese; y para este efecto la gente de una aldea que allí junto estaba venía en procesión a una devota ermita que en un recuesto de aquel valle había.

Don Quijote, que vio los estraños trajes de los diciplinantes, sin pasarle por la memoria las muchas veces que los había de haber visto, se imaginó que era cosa de aventura, y que a él solo tocaba, como a caballero andante, el acometerla; y confirmóle más esta imaginación pensar que una imagen que traían cubierta de

luto fuese alguna principal señora que llevaban por fuerza aquellos follones y descomedidos malandrines; y, como esto le cayó en las mientes, con gran ligereza arremetió a Rocinante, que paciendo andaba, quitándole del arzón el freno y el adarga, y en un punto le enfrenó, y, pidiendo a Sancho su espada, subió sobre Rocinante y embrazó su adarga, y dijo en alta voz a todos los que presentes estaban: -Agora, valerosa compañía, veredes cuánto importa que haya en el mundo caballeros que profesen la orden de la andante caballería; agora digo que veredes, en la libertad de aquella buena señora que allí va cautiva, si se han de estimar los caballeros andantes.

Y, en diciendo esto, apretó los muslos a Rocinante, porque espuelas no las tenía, y, a todo galope, porque carrera tirada no se lee en toda esta verdadera historia que jamás la diese Rocinante, se fue a encontrar con los diciplinantes, bien que fueran el cura y el canónigo y barbero a detenelle; mas no les fue posible, ni menos le detuvieron las voces que Sancho le daba, diciendo: -¿Adónde va, señor don Quijote? ¿Qué demonios lleva en el pecho, que le incitan a ir contra nuestra fe católica? Advierta, mal haya yo, que aquélla es procesión de diciplinantes, y que aquella señora que llevan sobre la peana es la imagen benditísima de la Virgen sin mancilla; mire, señor, lo que hace, que por esta vez se puede decir que no es lo que sabe.

Fatigóse en vano Sancho, porque su amo iba tan puesto en llegar a los ensabanados y en librar a la señora enlutada, que no oyó palabra; y, aunque la oyera, no volviera, si el rey se lo mandara. Llegó, pues, a la procesión, y paró a Rocinante, que ya llevaba deseo de quietarse un poco, y, con turbada y ronca voz, dijo: -Vosotros, que, quizá por no ser buenos, os encubris los rostros, atended y escuchad lo que deciros quiero.

Los primeros que se detuvieron fueron los que la imagen llevaban; y uno de los cuatro clérigos que cantaban las ledanías, viendo la estraña catadura de don Quijote, la flaqueza de Rocinante y otras circunstancias de risa que notó y descubrió en don Quijote, le respondió diciendo: -Señor hermano, si nos quiere decir algo, dígallo presto, porque se van estos hermanos abriendo las carnes, y no podemos, ni es razón que nos detengamos a oír cosa alguna, si ya no es tan breve que en dos palabras se diga.

-En una lo diré -replicó don Quijote-, y es ésta: que luego al punto dejéis libre a esa hermosa señora, cuyas lágrimas y triste semblante dan claras muestras que la lleváis contra su voluntad y que algún notorio desaguisado le habedes fecho; y yo, que nací en el mundo para desfacer semejantes agravios, no consentiré que un solo paso adelante pase sin darle la deseada libertad que merece.

En estas razones, cayeron todos los que las oyeron que don Quijote debía de ser algún hombre loco, y tomáronse a reír muy de gana; cuya risa fue poner

pólvora a la cólera de don Quijote, porque, sin decir más palabra, sacando la espada, arremetió a las andas. Uno de aquellos que las llevaban, dejando la carga a sus compañeros, salió al encuentro de don Quijote, enarbolando una horquilla o bastón con que sustentaba las andas en tanto que descansaba; y, recibiendo en ella una gran cuchillada que le tiró don Quijote, con que se la hizo dos partes, con el último tercio, que le quedó en la mano, dio tal golpe a don Quijote encima de un hombro, por el mismo lado de la espada, que no pudo cubrir el adarga contra villana fuerza, que el pobre don Quijote vino al suelo muy malparado.

Sancho Panza, que jadeando le iba a los alcances, viéndole caído, dio voces a su moledor que no le diese otro palo, porque era un pobre caballero encantado, que no había hecho mal a nadie en todos los días de su vida. Mas, lo que detuvo al villano no fueron las voces de Sancho, sino el ver que don Quijote no bullía pie ni mano; y así, creyendo que le había muerto, con priesa se alzó la túnica a la cinta, y dio a huir por la campaña como un gamo.

Ya en esto llegaron todos los de la compañía de don Quijote adonde él estaba; y más los de la procesión, que los vieron venir corriendo, y con ellos los cuadrilleros con sus ballestas, temieron algún mal suceso, y hiciéronse todos un remolino alrededor de la imagen; y, alzados los capirotos, empuñando las diciplinas, y los clérigos los ciriales, esperaban el asalto con determinación de defenderse, y aun ofender, si pudiesen, a sus acometedores; pero la fortuna lo hizo mejor que se pensaba, porque Sancho no hizo otra cosa que arrojarle sobre el cuerpo de su señor, haciendo sobre él el más doloroso y risueño llanto del mundo, creyendo que estaba muerto.

El cura fue conocido de otro cura que en la procesión venía, cuyo conocimiento puso en sosiego el concebido temor de los dos escuadrones. El primer cura dio al segundo, en dos razones, cuenta de quién era don Quijote, y así él como toda la turba de los diciplinantes fueron a ver si estaba muerto el pobre caballero, y oyeron que Sancho Panza, con lágrimas en los ojos, decía: - ¡Oh flor de la caballería, que con solo un garrotazo acabaste la carrera de tus tan bien gastados años! ¡Oh honra de tu linaje, honor y gloria de toda la Mancha, y aun de todo el mundo, el cual, faltando tú en él, quedará lleno de malhechores, sin temor de ser castigados de sus malas fechorías! ¡Oh liberal sobre todos los Alejandros, pues por solos ocho meses de servicio me tenías dada la mejor ínsula que el mar ciñe y rodea! ¡Oh humilde con los soberbios y arrogante con los humildes, acometedor de peligros, sufridor de afrentas, enamorado sin causa, imitador de los buenos, azote de los malos, enemigo de los ruines, en fin, caballero andante, que es todo lo que decir se puede!

Con las voces y gemidos de Sancho revivió don Quijote, y la primer palabra que dijo fue: -El que de vos vive ausente, dulcísima Dulcinea, a mayores

miserias que éstas está sujeto. Ayúdame, Sancho amigo, a ponerme sobre el carro encantado, que ya no estoy para oprimir la silla de Rocinante, porque tengo todo este hombro hecho pedazos.

-Eso haré yo de muy buena gana, señor mío -respondió Sancho-, y volvamos a mi aldea en compañía destos señores, que su bien desean, y allí daremos orden de hacer otra salida que nos sea de más provecho y fama.

-Bien dices, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, y será gran prudencia dejar pasar el mal influjo de las estrellas que agora corre.

El canónigo y el cura y barbero le dijeron que haría muy bien en hacer lo que decía; y así, habiendo recibido grande gusto de las simplicidades de Sancho Panza, pusieron a don Quijote en el carro, como antes venía. La procesión volvió a ordenarse y a proseguir su camino; el cabrero se despidió de todos; los cuadrilleros no quisieron pasar adelante, y el cura les pagó lo que se les debía. El canónigo pidió al cura le avisase el suceso de don Quijote, si sanaba de su locura o si proseguía en ella, y con esto tomó licencia para seguir su viaje. En fin, todos se dividieron y apartaron, quedando solos el cura y barbero, don Quijote y Panza, y el bueno de Rocinante, que a todo lo que había visto estaba con tanta paciencia como su amo.

El boyero unció sus bueyes y acomodó a don Quijote sobre un haz de heno, y con su acostumbrada flema siguió el camino que el cura quiso, y a cabo de seis días llegaron a la aldea de don Quijote, adonde entraron en la mitad del día, que acertó a ser domingo, y la gente estaba toda en la plaza, por mitad de la cual atravesó el carro de don Quijote. Acudieron todos a ver lo que en el carro venía, y, cuando conocieron a su compatrioto, quedaron maravillados, y un muchacho acudió corriendo a dar las nuevas a su ama y a su sobrina de que su tío y su señor venía flaco y amarillo, y tendido sobre un montón de heno y sobre un carro de bueyes. Cosa de lástima fue oír los gritos que las dos buenas señoras alzaron, las bofetadas que se dieron, las maldiciones que de nuevo echaron a los malditos libros de caballerías; todo lo cual se renovó cuando vieron entrar a don Quijote por sus puertas.

A las nuevas desta venida de don Quijote, acudió la mujer de Sancho Panza, que ya había sabido que había ido con él sirviéndole de escudero, y, así como vio a Sancho, lo primero que le preguntó fue que si venía bueno el asno. Sancho respondió que venía mejor que su amo.

-Gracias sean dadas a Dios -replicó ella-, que tanto bien me ha hecho; pero contadme agora, amigo: ¿qué bien habéis sacado de vuestras escuderías?, ¿qué saboyana me traéis a mí?, ¿qué zapaticos a vuestros hijos?

-No traigo nada deso -dijo Sancho-, mujer mía, aunque traigo otras cosas de más momento y consideración.

-Deso recibo yo mucho gusto -respondió la mujer-; mostradme esas cosas de más consideración y más momento, amigo mío, que las quiero ver, para que se me alegre este corazón, que tan triste y descontento ha estado en todos los siglos de vuestra ausencia.

-En casa os las mostraré, mujer -dijo Panza-, y por agora estad contenta, que, siendo Dios servido de que otra vez salgamos en viaje a buscar aventuras, vos me veréis presto conde o gobernador de una ínsula, y no de las de por ahí, sino la mejor que pueda hallarse.

-Quiéralo así el cielo, marido mío; que bien lo habemos menester. Mas, decidme: ¿qué es eso de ínsulas, que no lo entiendo?

-No es la miel para la boca del asno -respondió Sancho-; a su tiempo lo verás, mujer, y aun te admirarás de oírte llamar *Señoría* de todos tus vasallos.

-¿Qué es lo que decís, Sancho, de señorías, ínsulas y vasallos? -respondió Juana Panza, que así se llamaba la mujer de Sancho, aunque no eran parientes, sino porque se usa en la Mancha tomar las mujeres el apellido de sus maridos.

-No te acucies, Juana, por saber todo esto tan apriesa; basta que te digo verdad, y cose la boca. Sólo te sabré decir, así de paso, que no hay cosa más gustosa en el mundo que ser un hombre honrado escudero de un caballero andante buscador de aventuras. Bien es verdad que las más que se hallan no salen tan a gusto como el hombre querría, porque de ciento que se encuentran, las noventa y nueve suelen salir aviesas y torcidas. Sólo yo de experiencia, porque de algunas he salido manteado, y de otras molido; pero, con todo eso, es linda cosa esperar los sucesos atravesando montes, escudriñando selvas, pisando peñas, visitando castillos, alojando en ventas a toda discreción, sin pagar, ofrecido sea al diablo, el maravedí.

Todas estas pláticas pasaron entre Sancho Panza y Juana Panza, su mujer, en tanto que el ama y sobrina de don Quijote le recibieron, y le desnudaron, y le tendieron en su antiguo lecho. Mirábalas él con ojos atravesados, y no acababa de entender en qué parte estaba. El cura encargó a la sobrina tuviese gran cuenta con regalar a su tío, y que estuviesen alerta de que otra vez no se les escapase, contando lo que había sido menester para traelle a su casa. Aquí alzaron las dos de nuevo los gritos al cielo; allí se renovaron las maldiciones de los libros de caballerías, allí pidieron al cielo que confundiese en el centro del abismo a los autores de tantas mentiras y disparates. Finalmente, ellas quedaron confusas y temerosas de que se habían de ver sin su amo y tío en el mismo punto que tuviese alguna mejoría; y sí fue como ellas se lo imaginaron.

Pero el autor desta historia, puesto que con curiosidad y diligencia ha buscado los hechos que don Quijote hizo en su tercera salida, no ha podido hallar noticia de ellas, a lo menos por escrituras auténticas; sólo la fama ha guardado, en las



memorias de la Mancha, que don Quijote, la tercera vez que salió de su casa, fue a Zaragoza, donde se halló en unas famosas justas que en aquella ciudad hicieron, y allí le pasaron cosas dignas de su valor y buen entendimiento. Ni de su fin y acabamiento pudo alcanzar cosa alguna, ni la alcanzara ni supiera si la buena suerte no le deparara un antiguo médico que tenía en su poder una caja de plomo, que, según él dijo, se había hallado en los cimientos derribados de una antigua ermita que se renovaba; en la cual caja se habían hallado unos pergaminos escritos con letras góticas, pero en versos castellanos, que contenían muchas de sus hazañas y daban noticia de la hermosura de Dulcinea del Toboso, de la figura de Rocinante, de la fidelidad de Sancho Panza y de la sepultura del mismo don Quijote, con diferentes epitafios y elogios de su vida y costumbres.

Y los que se pudieron leer y sacar en limpio fueron los que aquí pone el fidedigno autor desta nueva y jamás vista historia. El cual autor no pide a los que la leyeren, en premio del inmenso trabajo que le costó inquerir y buscar todos los archivos manchegos, por sacarla a luz, sino que le den el mismo crédito que suelen dar los discretos a los libros de caballerías, que tan validos andan en el mundo; que con esto se tendrá por bien pagado y satisfecho, y se animará a sacar y buscar otras, si no tan verdaderas, a lo menos de tanta invención y pasatiempo.

Las palabras primeras que estaban escritas en el pergamino que se halló en la caja de plomo eran éstas: Los académicos de la Argamasilla, lugar de la Mancha, en vida y muerte del valeroso don Quijote de la Mancha, hoc scripserunt:

El Monicongo, académico de la Argamasilla, a la sepultura de don Quijote  
Epitafio

El calvatuerno que adornó a la Mancha  
de más despojos que Jasón decreta;  
el jüicio que tuvo la veleta  
aguda donde fuera mejor ancha,

el brazo que su fuerza tanto ensancha, 5  
que llegó del Catay hasta Gaeta,  
la musa más horrenda y más discreta  
que grabó versos en la broncínea plancha,

el que a cola dejó los Amadises,  
y en muy poquito a Galaos tuvo, 10  
estribando en su amor y bizarría,

el que hizo callar los Belianises,

aquel que en Rocinante errando anduvo,  
yace debajo desta losa fría.

**Del Paniaguado, académico de la Argamasilla, In laudem Dulcineae del  
Toboso**

Soneto

Esta que veis de rostro amondongado,  
alta de pechos y ademán brioso,  
es Dulcinea, reina del Toboso,  
de quien fue el gran Quijote aficionado.

Pisó por ella el uno y otro lado 5  
de la gran Sierra Negra, y el famoso  
campo de Montiel, hasta el herboso  
llano de Aranjuez, a pie y cansado.

Culpa de Rocinante, ¡oh dura estrella!,  
que esta manchega dama, y este invito 10  
andante caballero, en tiernos años,

ella dejó, muriendo, de ser bella;  
y él, aunque queda en mármores escrito,  
no pudo huir de amor, iras y engaños.

**Del Caprichoso, discretísimo académico de la Argamasilla, en loor de  
Rocinante, caballo de don Quijote de la Mancha**

Soneto

En el soberbio trono diamantino  
que con sangrientas plantas huella Marte,  
frenético, el Manchego su estandarte  
tremola con esfuerzo peregrino.

Cuelga las armas y el acero fino 5  
con que destroza, asuela, raja y parte:  
¡nuevas proezas!, pero inventa el arte  
un nuevo estilo al nuevo paladino.

Y si de su Amadís se precia Gaula,  
por cuyos bravos descendientes Grecia 10  
triunfó mil veces y su fama ensancha,

hoy a Quijote le corona el aula  
do Belona preside, y dél se precia,  
más que Grecia ni Gaula, la alta Mancha.

Nunca sus glorias el olvido mancha, 15  
pues hasta Rocinante, en ser gallardo,  
excede a Brilladoro y a Bayardo.

### **Del Burlador, académico argamasillesco, a Sancho Panza**

#### **Soneto**

Sancho Panza es aquéste, en cuerpo chico,  
pero grande en valor, ¡milagro extraño!  
Escudero el más simple y sin engaño  
que tuvo el mundo, os juro y certifico.

De ser conde no estuvo en un tantico, 5  
si no se conjuraran en su daño  
insolencias y agravios del tacaño  
siglo, que aun no perdonan a un borrico.

Sobre él anduvo -con perdón se miente—  
este manso escudero, tras el manso 10  
caballo Rocinante y tras su dueño.

¡Oh vanas esperanzas de la gente;  
cómo pasáis con prometer descanso,

y al fin paráis en sombra, en humo, en sueño!

**Del Cachidiablo, académico de la Argamasilla, en la sepultura de don Quijote**

Epitafio

Aquí yace el caballero,  
bien molido y mal andante,  
a quien llevó Rocinante  
por uno y otro sendero.

Sancho Panza el majadero   5  
yace también junto a él,  
escudero el más fiel  
que vio el trato de escudero.

**Del Tiquitoc, académico de la Argamasilla, en la sepultura de Dulcinea del Toboso**

Epitafio

Reposa aquí Dulcinea;  
y, aunque de carnes rolliza,  
la volvió en polvo y ceniza  
la muerte espantable y fea.

Fue de castiza ralea,   5  
y tuvo asomos de dama;  
del gran Quijote fue llama,  
y fue gloria de su aldea.

Éstos fueron los versos que se pudieron leer; los demás, por estar carcomida la letra, se entregaron a un académico para que por conjeturas los declarase. Tiénese noticia que lo ha hecho, a costa de muchas vigiliass y mucho trabajo, y que tiene intención de sacallos a luz, con esperanza de la tercera salida de don Quijote.

Forsi altro canterà con miglior plectio.

FINIS

# **EL INGENIOSO CABALLERO DON QUIJOTE DE LA MANCHA**



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## Tasa

Yo, Hernando de Vallejo, escribano de Cámara del Rey nuestro señor, de los que residen en su Consejo, doy fe que, habiéndose visto por los señores dél un libro que compuso Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, intitulado *Don Quijote de la Mancha, Segunda parte*, que con licencia de Su Majestad fue impreso, le tasaron a cuatro maravedís cada pliego en papel, el cual tiene setenta y tres pliegos, que al dicho respeto suma y monta docientos y noventa y dos maravedís, y mandaron que esta tasa se ponga al principio de cada volumen del dicho libro, para que se sepa y entienda lo que por él se ha de pedir y llevar, sin que se exceda en ello en manera alguna, como consta y parece por el auto y decreto original sobre ello dado, y que queda en mi poder, a que me refiero; y de mandamiento de los dichos señores del Consejo y de pedimiento de la parte del dicho Miguel de Cervantes, di esta fee en Madrid, a veinte y uno días del mes de octubre del mil y seiscientos y quince años.

*Hernando de Vallejo.*

#### Fee de erratas

Vi este libro intitulado *Segunda parte de don Quijote de la Mancha*, compuesto por Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, y no hay en él cosa digna de notar que no corresponda a su original. Dada en Madrid, a veinte y uno de octubre, mil y seiscientos y quince.

*El licenciado Francisco Murcia de la Llana.*

#### Aprobación

Por comisión y mandado de los señores del Consejo, he hecho ver el libro contenido en este memorial: no contiene cosa contra la fe ni buenas costumbres, antes es libro de mucho entretenimiento lícito, mezclado de mucha filosofía moral; puédesele dar licencia para imprimirle. En Madrid, a cinco de noviembre de mil seiscientos y quince.

*Doctor Gutierre de Cetina.*

#### Aprobación

Por comisión y mandado de los señores del Consejo, he visto la *Segunda parte de don Quijote de la Mancha*, por Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra: no contiene cosa contra nuestra santa fe católica, ni buenas costumbres, antes, muchas de honesta recreación y apacible divertimiento, que los antiguos juzgaron convenientes a sus repúblicas, pues aun en la severa de los lacedemonios levantaron estatua a la risa, y los de Tesalia la dedicaron fiestas, como lo dice Pausanias, referido de Bosio, libro II *De signis Ecclesiae*, cap. 10, alentando ánimos marchitos y espíritus melancólicos, de que se acordó Tulio en el primero *De legibus*, y el poeta diciendo:

Interpone tuis interdum gaudia curis, lo cual hace el autor mezclando las veras a las burlas, lo dulce a lo provechoso y lo moral a lo faceto, disimulando en el cebo del donaire el anzuelo de la reprehensión, y cumpliendo con el acertado asunto en que pretende la expulsión de los libros de caballerías, pues con su buena diligencia mañosamente alimpiando de su contagiosa dolencia a estos reinos, es obra muy digna de su grande ingenio, honra y lustre de nuestra nación, admiración y invidia de las estrañas. Éste es mi parecer, salvo *etc.* En Madrid, a 17 de marzo de 1615.

*El maestro Josef de Valdivielso.*

### Aprobación

Por comisión del señor doctor Gutierre de Cetina, vicario general desta villa de Madrid, corte de Su Majestad, he visto este libro de la *Segunda parte del ingenioso caballero don Quijote de la Mancha*, por Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, y no hallo en él cosa indigna de un cristiano celo, ni que disuene de la decencia debida a buen ejemplo, ni virtudes morales; antes, mucha erudición y aprovechamiento, así en la continencia de su bien seguido asunto para extirpar los vanos y mentirosos libros de caballerías, cuyo contagio había cundido más de lo que fuera justo, como en la lisura del lenguaje castellano, no adulterado con enfadosa y estudiada afectación, vicio con razón aborrecido de hombres cuerdos; y en la corrección de vicios que generalmente toca, ocasionado de sus agudos discursos, guarda con tanta cordura las leyes de reprehensión cristiana, que aquel que fuere tocado de la enfermedad que pretende curar, en lo dulce y sabroso de sus medicinas gustosamente habrá bebido, cuando menos lo imagine, sin empacho ni asco alguno, lo provechoso de la detestación de su vicio, con que se hallará, que es lo más difícil de conseguirse, gustoso y reprehendido. Ha habido muchos que, por no haber sabido templar ni mezclar a propósito lo útil con lo dulce, han dado con todo su molesto trabajo en tierra, pues no pudiendo imitar a Diógenes en lo filósofo y docto, atrevida, por no decir licenciosa y desalumbradamente, le pretenden imitar en lo cínico, entregándose a maldicientes, inventando casos que no pasaron, para hacer capaz al vicio que tocan de su áspera reprehensión, y por ventura descubren caminos para seguirle, hasta entonces ignorados, con que vienen a quedar, si no reprehensores, a lo menos maestros dél. Hácense odiosos a los bien entendidos, con el pueblo pierden el crédito, si alguno tuvieron, para admitir sus escritos y los vicios que arrojada e imprudentemente quisieren corregir en muy peor estado que antes, que no todas las postemas a un mismo tiempo están dispuestas para admitir las recetas o cauterios; antes, algunos mucho mejor reciben las blandas y suaves medicinas, con cuya aplicación, el atentado y docto médico consigue el fin de resolverlas, término que muchas veces es mejor que no el que se alcanza con el rigor del hierro. Bien diferente han sentido de los escritos de Miguel de Cervantes, así nuestra nación como las estrañas, pues como a milagro desean ver el autor de libros que con general aplauso, así por su decoro y decencia como por la suavidad y blandura de sus discursos, han recebido España, Francia, Italia, Alemania y Flandes. Certifico con verdad que en veinte y cinco de febrero deste año de seiscientos y quince, habiendo ido el ilustrísimo señor don Bernardo de Sandoval y Rojas, cardenal arzobispo de Toledo, mi señor, a pagar la visita que a

Su Ilustrísima hizo el embajador de Francia, que vino a tratar cosas tocantes a los casamientos de sus príncipes y los de España, muchos caballeros franceses, de los que vinieron acompañando al embajador, tan corteses como entendidos y amigos de buenas letras, se llegaron a mí y a otros capellanes del cardenal mi señor, deseosos de saber qué libros de ingenio andaban más validos; y, tocando acaso en éste que yo estaba censurando, apenas oyeron el nombre de Miguel de Cervantes, cuando se comenzaron a hacer lenguas, encareciendo la estimación en que, así en Francia como en los reinos sus confinantes, se tenían sus obras: la *Galatea*, que alguno dellos tiene casi de memoria la primera parte désta, y las *Novelas*. Fueron tantos sus encarecimientos, que me ofrecí llevarles que vieses el autor dellas, que estimaron con mil demostraciones de vivos deseos. Preguntáronme muy por menor su edad, su profesión, calidad y cantidad. Halléme obligado a decir que era viejo, soldado, hidalgo y pobre, a que uno respondió estas formales palabras: «Pues, ¿a tal hombre no le tiene España muy rico y sustentado del erario público?» Acudió otro de aquellos caballeros con este pensamiento y con mucha agudeza, y dijo: «Si necesidad le ha de obligar a escribir, plega a Dios que nunca tenga abundancia, para que con sus obras, siendo él pobre, haga rico a todo el mundo». Bien creo que está, para censura, un poco larga; alguno dirá que toca los límites de lisonjero elogio; mas la verdad de lo que cortamente digo deshace en el crítico la sospecha y en mí el cuidado; además que el día de hoy no se lisonjea a quien no tiene con qué cebar el pico del adulator, que, aunque afectuosa y falsamente dice de burlas, pretende ser remunerado de veras. En Madrid, a veinte y siete de febrero de mil y seiscientos y quince.

*El licenciado Márquez Torres.*

### Privilegio

Por cuanto por parte de vos, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, nos fue fecha relación que habíades compuesto la *Segunda parte de don Quijote de la Mancha*, de la cual hacíades presentación, y, por ser libro de historia agradable y honesta, y haberos costado mucho trabajo y estudio, nos suplicastes os mandásemos dar licencia para le poder imprimir y privilegio por veinte años, o como la nuestra merced fuese; lo cual visto por los del nuestro Consejo, por cuanto en el dicho libro se hizo la diligencia que la premática por nos sobre ello fecha dispone, fue acordado que debíamos mandar dar esta nuestra cédula en la dicha razón, y nos tuvimoslo por bien. Por la cual vos damos licencia y facultad para que, por tiempo y espacio de diez años, cumplidos primeros siguientes, que corran y se cuenten desde el día de la fecha de esta nuestra cédula en adelante, vos, o la persona que para ello vuestro poder hobiere, y no otra alguna, podáis imprimir y vender el dicho libro que desuso se hace mención; y por la presente damos licencia y facultad a cualquier impresor de nuestros reinos que nombráredes para que durante el dicho tiempo le pueda imprimir por el original que en el nuestro Consejo se vio, que va rubricado y firmado al fin de Hernando de Vallejo, nuestro escribano de Cámara, y uno de los que en él residen, con que antes y primero que se venda lo traigáis ante ellos, juntamente con el dicho original, para que se vea si la dicha impresión está conforme a él, o traigáis fe en pública forma cómo, por corretor por nos nombrado, se vio y corrigió la dicha impresión por el dicho original, y más al dicho impresor que así imprimiere el dicho libro no imprima el principio y primer pliego dél, ni entregue más de un solo libro con el original al autor y persona a cuya costa lo imprimiere, ni a otra alguna, para efecto de la dicha corrección y tasa, hasta que antes y primero el dicho libro esté corregido y tasado por los del nuestro Consejo, y estando hecho, y no de otra manera, pueda imprimir el dicho principio y primer pliego, en el cual inmediatamente ponga esta nuestra licencia y la aprobación, tasa y erratas, ni lo podáis vender ni vendáis vos ni otra persona alguna, hasta que esté el dicho libro en la forma susodicha, so pena de caer e incurrir en las penas contenidas en la dicha premática y leyes de nuestros reinos que sobre ello disponen; y más, que durante el dicho tiempo persona alguna sin vuestra licencia no le pueda imprimir ni vender, so pena que el que lo imprimiere y vendiere haya perdido y pierda cualesquiera libros, moldes y aparejos que dél tuviere, y más incurra en pena de cincuenta mil maravedís por cada vez que lo contrario hiciere, de la cual dicha pena sea la tercia parte para nuestra Cámara, y la otra tercia parte para el juez que lo sentenciare, y la otra tercia parte par el que lo denunciare; y más a los del nuestro Consejo, presidentes, oidores de las nuestras Audiencias, alcaldes,

alguaciles de la nuestra Casa y Corte y Chancillerías, y a otras cualesquiera justicias de todas las ciudades, villas y lugares de los nuestros reinos y señoríos, y a cada uno en su jurisdicción, así a los que agora son como a los que serán de aquí adelante, que vos guarden y cumplan esta nuestra cédula y merced, que así vos hacemos, y contra ella no vayan ni pasen en manera alguna, so pena de la nuestra merced y de diez mil maravedís para la nuestra Cámara. Dada en Madrid, a treinta días del mes de marzo de mil y seiscientos y quince años.

Yo, el rey.

Por mandado del rey nuestro señor: *Pedro de Contreras*.

## Prólogo al lector

¡Válame Dios, y con cuánta gana debes de estar esperando ahora, lector ilustre, o quier plebeyo, este prólogo, creyendo hallar en él venganzas, riñas y vituperios del autor del segundo *Don Quijote*; digo de aquel que dicen que se engendró en Tordesillas y nació en Tarragona! Pues en verdad que no te he dar este contento; que, puesto que los agravios despiertan la cólera en los más humildes pechos, en el mío ha de padecer excepción esta regla. Quisieras tú que lo diera del asno, del mentecato y del atrevido, pero no me pasa por el pensamiento: castíguele su pecado, con su pan se lo coma y allá se lo haya. Lo que no he podido dejar de sentir es que me note de viejo y de manco, como si hubiera sido en mi mano haber detenido el tiempo, que no pasase por mí, o si mi manquedad hubiera nacido en alguna taberna, sino en la más alta ocasión que vieron los siglos pasados, los presentes, ni esperan ver los venideros. Si mis heridas no resplandecen en los ojos de quien las mira, son estimadas, a lo menos, en la estimación de los que saben dónde se cobraron; que el soldado más bien parece muerto en la batalla que libre en la fuga; y es esto en mí de manera, que si ahora me propusieran y facilitaran un imposible, quisiera antes haberme hallado en aquella facción prodigiosa que sano ahora de mis heridas sin haberme hallado en ella. Las que el soldado muestra en el rostro y en los pechos, estrellas son que guían a los demás al cielo de la honra, y al de desear la justa alabanza; y hase de advertir que no se escribe con las canas, sino con el entendimiento, el cual suele mejorarse con los años.

He sentido también que me llame invidioso, y que, como a ignorante, me describa qué cosa sea la envidia; que, en realidad de verdad, de dos que hay, yo no conozco sino a la santa, a la noble y bien intencionada; y, siendo esto así, como lo es, no tengo yo de perseguir a ningún sacerdote, y más si tiene por añadidura ser familiar del Santo Oficio; y si él lo dijo por quien parece que lo dijo, engañóse de todo en todo: que del tal adoro el ingenio, admiro las obras y la ocupación continua y virtuosa. Pero, en efecto, le agradezco a este señor autor el decir que mis novelas son más satíricas que ejemplares, pero que son buenas; y no lo pudieran ser si no tuvieran de todo.

Paréceme que me dices que ando muy limitado y que me contengo mucho en los términos de mi modestia, sabiendo que no se ha de añadir aflicción al afligido, y que la que debe de tener este señor sin duda es grande, pues no osa parecer a campo abierto y al cielo claro, encubriendo su nombre, fingiendo su patria, como



si hubiera hecho alguna traición de lesa majestad. Si, por ventura, llegares a conocerle, dile de mi parte que no me tengo por agraviado: que bien sé lo que son tentaciones del demonio, y que una de las mayores es ponerle a un hombre en el entendimiento que puede componer y imprimir un libro, con que gane tanta fama como dineros, y tantos dineros cuanta fama; y, para confirmación desto, quiero que en tu buen donaire y gracia le cuentes este cuento:

«Había en Sevilla un loco que dio en el más gracioso disparate y tema que dio loco en el mundo. Y fue que hizo un cañuto de caña puntiagudo en el fin, y, en cogiendo algún perro en la calle, o en cualquiera otra parte, con el un pie le cogía el suyo, y el otro le alzaba con la mano, y como mejor podía le acomodaba el cañuto en la parte que, soplándole, le ponía redondo como una pelota; y, en teniéndolo desta suerte, le daba dos palmaditas en la barriga, y le soltaba, diciendo a los circunstantes, que siempre eran muchos: “¿Pensarán vuestras mercedes ahora que es poco trabajo hinchar un perro?”»

¿Pensará vuestra merced ahora que es poco trabajo hacer un libro?

Y si este cuento no le cuadrare, dirásle, lector amigo, éste, que también es de loco y de perro:

«Había en Córdoba otro loco, que tenía por costumbre de traer encima de la cabeza un pedazo de losa de mármol, o un canto no muy liviano, y, en topando algún perro descuidado, se le ponía junto, y a plomo dejaba caer sobre él el peso. Amohinábase el perro, y, dando ladridos y aullidos, no paraba en tres calles. Sucedió, pues, que, entre los perros que descargó la carga, fue uno un perro de un bonetero, a quien quería mucho su dueño. Bajó el canto, diole en la cabeza, alzó el grito el molido perro, violó y sintiólo su amo, asió de una vara de medir, y salió al loco y no le dejó hueso sano; y cada palo que le daba decía: “Perro ladrón, ¿a mi podenco? ¿No viste, cruel, que era podenco mi perro?” Y, repitiéndole el nombre de *podenco* muchas veces, envió al loco hecho una alheña. Escarmentó el loco y retiróse, y en más de un mes no salió a la plaza; al cabo del cual tiempo, volvió con su invención y con más carga. Llegábase donde estaba el perro, y, mirándole muy bien de hito en hito, y sin querer ni atreverse a descargar la piedra, decía: “Este es podenco: ¡guarda!” En efeto, todos cuantos perros topaba, aunque fuesen alanos, o gozques, decía que eran podencos; y así, no soltó más el canto.»

Quizá de esta suerte le podrá acontecer a este historiador: que no se atreverá a soltar más la presa de su ingenio en libros que, en siendo malos, son más duros que las peñas.

Dile también que de la amenaza que me hace, que me ha de quitar la ganancia

con su libro, no se me da un ardite, que, acomodándome al entremés famoso de *La Perendenga*, le respondo que me viva el Veinte y cuatro, mi señor, y Cristo con todos. Viva el gran conde de Lemos, cuya cristiandad y liberalidad, bien conocida, contra todos los golpes de mi corta fortuna me tiene en pie, y vívame la suma caridad del ilustrísimo de Toledo, don Bernardo de Sandoval y Rojas, y siquiera no haya emprentas en el mundo, y siquiera se impriman contra mí más libros que tienen letras las *Coplas de Mingo Revulgo*. Estos dos príncipes, sin que los solicite adulación mía ni otro género de aplauso, por sola su bondad, han tomado a su cargo el hacerme merced y favorecerme; en lo que me tengo por más dichoso y más rico que si la fortuna por camino ordinario me hubiera puesto en su cumbre. La honra puédela tener el pobre, pero no el vicioso; la pobreza puede anublar a la nobleza, pero no escurecerla del todo; pero, como la virtud dé alguna luz de sí, aunque sea por los inconvenientes y resquicios de la estrechez, viene a ser estimada de los altos y nobles espíritus, y, por el consiguiente, favorecida.

Y no le digas más, ni yo quiero decirte más a ti, sino advertirte que consideres que esta segunda parte de *Don Quijote* que te ofrezco es cortada del mismo artífice y del mismo paño que la primera, y que en ella te doy a don Quijote dilatado, y, finalmente, muerto y sepultado, porque ninguno se atreva a levantarle nuevos testimonios, pues bastan los pasados y basta también que un hombre honrado haya dado noticia destas discretas locuras, sin querer de nuevo entrarse en ellas: que la abundancia de las cosas, aunque sean buenas, hace que no se estimen, y la carestía, aun de las malas, se estima en algo. Olvídaseme de decirte que esperes el *Persiles*, que ya estoy acabando, y la segunda parte de *Galatea*.

#### Dedicatoria al conde de Lemos

Enviando a Vuestra Excelencia los días pasados mis comedias, antes impresas que representadas, si bien me acuerdo, dije que don Quijote quedaba calzadas las espuelas para ir a besar las manos a Vuestra Excelencia; y ahora digo que se las ha calzado y se ha puesto en camino, y si él allá llega, me parece que habré hecho algún servicio a Vuestra Excelencia, porque es mucha la priesa que de infinitas partes me dan a que le envíe para quitar el hámago y la náusea que ha causado otro don Quijote, que, con nombre de *Segunda parte*, se ha disfrazado y corrido por el orbe; y el que más ha mostrado desearle ha sido el grande emperador de la China, pues en lengua chinesca habrá un mes que me escribió una carta con un propio, pidiéndome, o, por mejor decir, suplicándome se le

enviase, porque quería fundar un colegio donde se leyese la lengua castellana, y quería que el libro que se leyese fuese el de *la historia de don Quijote*. Juntamente con esto, me decía que fuese yo a ser el rector del tal colegio.

Preguntéle al portador si Su Majestad le había dado para mí alguna ayuda de costa. Respondióme que ni por pensamiento. «Pues, hermano -le respondí yo-, vos os podéis volver a vuestra China a las diez, o a las veinte, o a las que venís despachado, porque yo no estoy con salud para ponerme en tan largo viaje; además que, sobre estar enfermo, estoy muy sin dineros, y emperador por emperador, y monarca por monarca, en Nápoles tengo al grande conde de Lemos, que, sin tantos titulillos de colegios ni rectorías, me sustenta, me ampara y hace más merced que la que yo acierto a desear».

Con esto le despedí, y con esto me despido, ofreciendo a Vuestra Excelencia los *Trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, libro a quien daré fin dentro de cuatro meses, Deo volente; el cual ha de ser o el más malo o el mejor que en nuestra lengua se haya compuesto, quiero decir de los de entretenimiento; y digo que me arrepiento de haber dicho *el más malo*, porque, según la opinión de mis amigos, ha de llegar al extremo de bondad posible.

Venga Vuestra Excelencia con la salud que es deseado; que ya estará *Persiles* para besarle las manos, y yo los pies, como criado que soy de Vuestra Excelencia. De Madrid, último de octubre de mil seiscientos y quince.

Criado de Vuestra Excelencia,  
*Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra.*

## Capítulo I

*De lo que el cura y el barbero pasaron con don Quijote cerca de su enfermedad*

CUENTA Cide Hamete Benengeli, en la segunda parte desta historia y tercera salida de don Quijote, que el cura y el barbero se estuvieron casi un mes sin verle, por no renovarle y traerle a la memoria las cosas pasadas; pero no por esto dejaron de visitar a su sobrina y a su ama, encargándolas tuviesen cuenta con regalarle, dándole a comer cosas confortativas y apropiadas para el corazón y el cerebro, de donde procedía, según buen discurso, toda su mala ventura. Las cuales dijeron que así lo hacían, y lo harían, con la voluntad y cuidado posible, porque echaban de ver que su señor por momentos iba dando muestras de estar en su entero juicio; de lo cual recibieron los dos gran contento, por parecerles que habían acertado en haberle traído encantado en el carro de los bueyes, como se contó en la primera parte desta tan grande como puntual historia, en su último capítulo. Y así, determinaron de visitarle y hacer experiencia de su mejoría, aunque tenían casi por imposible que la tuviese, y acordaron de no tocarle en ningún punto de la andante caballería, por no ponerse a peligro de descoser los de la herida, que tan tiernos estaban.

Visitáronle, en fin, y halláronle sentado en la cama, vestida una almilla de bayeta verde, con un bonete colorado toledano; y estaba tan seco y amojamado, que no parecía sino hecho de carne momia. Fueron dél muy bien recibidos, preguntáronle por su salud, y él dio cuenta de sí y de ella con mucho juicio y con muy elegantes palabras; y en el discurso de su plática vinieron a tratar en esto que llaman razón de estado y modos de gobierno, enmendando este abuso y condenando aquél, reformando una costumbre y desterrando otra, haciéndose cada uno de los tres un nuevo legislador, un Licurgo moderno o un Solón flamante; y de tal manera renovaron la república, que no pareció sino que la habían puesto en una fragua, y sacado otra de la que pusieron; y habló don Quijote con tanta discreción en todas las materias que se tocaron, que los dos examinadores creyeron indubitadamente que estaba del todo bueno y en su entero juicio.

Halláronse presentes a la plática la sobrina y ama, y no se hartaban de dar gracias a Dios de ver a su señor con tan buen entendimiento; pero el cura, mudando el propósito primero, que era de no tocarle en cosa de caballerías, quiso hacer de todo en todo experiencia si la sanidad de don Quijote era falsa o

verdadera, y así, de lance en lance, vino a contar algunas nuevas que habían venido de la corte; y, entre otras, dijo que se tenía por cierto que el Turco bajaba con una poderosa armada, y que no se sabía su designio, ni adónde había de descargar tan gran nublado; y, con este temor, con que casi cada año nos toca arma, estaba puesta en ella toda la cristiandad, y Su Majestad había hecho proveer las costas de Nápoles y Sicilia y la isla de Malta. A esto respondió don Quijote:

-Su Majestad ha hecho como prudentísimo guerrero en proveer sus estados con tiempo, porque no le halle desapercebido el enemigo; pero si se tomara mi consejo, aconsejále yo que usara de una prevención, de la cual Su Majestad la hora de agora debe estar muy ajeno de pensar en ella.

Apenas oyó esto el cura, cuando dijo entre sí:

-¡Dios te tenga de su mano, pobre don Quijote: que me parece que te despeñas de la alta cumbre de tu locura hasta el profundo abismo de tu simplicidad!

Mas el barbero, que ya había dado en el mismo pensamiento que el cura, preguntó a don Quijote cuál era la advertencia de la prevención que decía era bien se hiciese; quizá podría ser tal, que se pusiese en la lista de los muchos advertimientos impertinentes que se suelen dar a los príncipes.

-El mío, señor rapador -dijo don Quijote-, no será impertinente, sino perteneciente.

-No lo digo por tanto -replicó el barbero-, sino porque tiene mostrado la experiencia que todos o los más arbitrios que se dan a Su Majestad, o son imposibles, o disparatados, o en daño del rey o del reino.

-Pues el mío -respondió don Quijote- ni es imposible ni disparatado, sino el más fácil, el más justo y el más mañero y breve que puede caber en pensamiento de arbitante alguno.

-Ya tarda en decirle vuestra merced, señor don Quijote -dijo el cura.

-No querría -dijo don Quijote- que le dijese yo aquí agora, y amaneciese mañana en los oídos de los señores consejeros, y se llevase otro las gracias y el premio de mi trabajo.

-Por mí -dijo el barbero-, doy la palabra, para aquí y para delante de Dios, de no decir lo que vuestra merced dijere a rey ni a roque, ni a hombre terrenal, juramento que aprendí del romance del cura que en el prefacio avisó al rey del ladrón que le había robado las cien doblas y la su mula la andariega.

-No sé historias -dijo don Quijote-, pero sé que es bueno ese juramento, en fee de que sé que es hombre de bien el señor barbero.

-Cuando no lo fuera -dijo el cura-, yo le abono y salgo por él, que en este caso no hablará más que un mudo, so pena de pagar lo juzgado y sentenciado.

-Y a vuestra merced, ¿quién le fía, señor cura? -dijo don Quijote.

-Mi profesión -respondió el cura-, que es de guardar secreto.

-¡Cuerpo de tal! -dijo a esta sazón don Quijote-. ¿Hay más, sino mandar Su Majestad por público pregón que se junten en la corte para un día señalado todos los caballeros andantes que vagan por España; que, aunque no viniesen sino media docena, tal podría venir entre ellos, que solo bastase a destruir toda la potestad del Turco? Esténme vuestras mercedes atentos, y vayan conmigo. ¿Por ventura es cosa nueva deshacer un solo caballero andante un ejército de docientos mil hombres, como si todos juntos tuvieran una sola garganta, o fueran hechos de alfenique? Si no, díganme: ¿cuántas historias están llenas destas maravillas? ¡Había, en hora mala para mí, que no quiero decir para otro, de vivir hoy el famoso don Belianís, o alguno de los del innumerable linaje de Amadís de Gaula; que si alguno déstos hoy viviera y con el Turco se afrontara, a fee que no le arrendara la ganancia! Pero Dios mirará por su pueblo, y deparará alguno que, si no tan bravo como los pasados andantes caballeros, a lo menos no les será inferior en el ánimo; y Dios me entiende, y no digo más.

-¡Ay! -dijo a este punto la sobrina-; ¡que me maten si no quiere mi señor volver a ser caballero andante!

A lo que dijo don Quijote:

-Caballero andante he de morir, y baje o suba el Turco cuando él quisiere y cuan poderosamente pudiere; que otra vez digo que Dios me entiende.

A esta sazón dijo el barbero:

-Suplico a vuestras mercedes que se me dé licencia para contar un cuento breve que sucedió en Sevilla, que, por venir aquí como de molde, me da gana de contarle.

Dio la licencia don Quijote, y el cura y los demás le prestaron atención, y él comenzó desta manera:

-«En la casa de los locos de Sevilla estaba un hombre a quien sus parientes habían puesto allí por falta de juicio. Era graduado en cánones por Osuna, pero, aunque lo fuera por Salamanca, según opinión de muchos, no dejara de ser loco. Este tal graduado, al cabo de algunos años de recogimiento, se dio a entender que estaba cuerdo y en su entero juicio, y con esta imaginación escribió al arzobispo, suplicándole encarecidamente y con muy concertadas razones le mandase sacar de aquella miseria en que vivía, pues por la misericordia de Dios había ya cobrado el juicio perdido; pero que sus parientes, por gozar de la parte de su hacienda, le tenían allí, y, a pesar de la verdad, querían que fuese loco hasta la muerte.

»El arzobispo, persuadido de muchos billetes concertados y discretos, mandó a un capellán suyo se informase del retor de la casa si era verdad lo que aquel licenciado le escribía, y que asimesmo hablase con el loco, y que si le pareciese

que tenía juicio, le sacase y pusiese en libertad. Hízolo así el capellán, y el retor le dijo que aquel hombre aún se estaba loco: que, puesto que hablaba muchas veces como persona de grande entendimiento, al cabo disparaba con tantas necedades, que en muchas y en grandes igualaban a sus primeras discreciones, como se podía hacer la experiencia hablándole. Quiso hacerla el capellán, y, poniéndole con el loco, habló con él una hora y más, y en todo aquel tiempo jamás el loco dijo razón torcida ni disparatada; antes, habló tan atentadamente, que el capellán fue forzado a creer que el loco estaba cuerdo; y entre otras cosas que el loco le dijo fue que el retor le tenía ojeriza, por no perder los regalos que sus parientes le hacían porque dijese que aún estaba loco, y con lúcidos intervalos; y que el mayor contrario que en su desgracia tenía era su mucha hacienda, pues, por gozar della sus enemigos, ponían dolo y dudaban de la merced que Nuestro Señor le había hecho en volverle de bestia en hombre. Finalmente, él habló de manera que hizo sospechoso al retor, codiciosos y desalmados a sus parientes, y a él tan discreto que el capellán se determinó a llevársele consigo a que el arzobispo le viese y tocase con la mano la verdad de aquel negocio.

»Con esta buena fee, el buen capellán pidió al retor mandase dar los vestidos con que allí había entrado el licenciado; volvió a decir el retor que mirase lo que hacía, porque, sin duda alguna, el licenciado aún se estaba loco. No sirvieron de nada para con el capellán las prevenciones y advertimientos del retor para que dejase de llevarle; obedeció el retor, viendo ser orden del arzobispo; pusieron al licenciado sus vestidos, que eran nuevos y decentes, y, como él se vio vestido de cuerdo y desnudo de loco, suplicó al capellán que por caridad le diese licencia para ir a despedirse de sus compañeros los locos. El capellán dijo que él le quería acompañar y ver los locos que en la casa había. Subieron, en efeto, y con ellos algunos que se hallaron presentes; y, llegado el licenciado a una jaula adonde estaba un loco furioso, aunque entonces sosegado y quieto, le dijo: “Hermano mío, mire si me manda algo, que me voy a mi casa; que ya Dios ha sido servido, por su infinita bondad y misericordia, sin yo merecerlo, de volverme mi juicio: ya estoy sano y cuerdo; que acerca del poder de Dios ninguna cosa es imposible. Tenga grande esperanza y confianza en Él, que, pues a mí me ha vuelto a mi primero estado, también le volverá a él si en Él confía. Yo tendré cuidado de enviarle algunos regalos que coma, y cómalos en todo caso, que le hago saber que imagino, como quien ha pasado por ello, que todas nuestras locuras proceden de tener los estómagos vacíos y los cerebros llenos de aire. Esfuércese, esfuércese, que el descaecimiento en los infortunios apoca la salud y acarrea la muerte”.

»Todas estas razones del licenciado escuchó otro loco que estaba en otra jaula,

frontero de la del furioso, y, levantándose de una estera vieja donde estaba echado y desnudo en cueros, preguntó a grandes voces quién era el que se iba sano y cuerdo. El licenciado respondió: “Yo soy, hermano, el que me voy; que ya no tengo necesidad de estar más aquí, por lo que doy infinitas gracias a los cielos, que tan grande merced me han hecho”. “Mirad lo que decís, licenciado, no os engañe el diablo -replicó el loco-; sosegad el pie, y estaos quedito en vuestra casa, y ahorraréis la vuelta”. “Yo sé que estoy bueno -replicó el licenciado-, y no habrá para qué tornar a andar estaciones”. “¿Vos bueno? -dijo el loco-: agora bien, ello dirá; andad con Dios, pero yo os voto a Júpiter, cuya majestad yo represento en la tierra, que por solo este pecado que hoy comete Sevilla, en sacaros desta casa y en teneros por cuerdo, tengo de hacer un tal castigo en ella, que quede memoria dél por todos los siglos del los siglos, amén. ¿No sabes tú, licenciadillo menguado, que lo podré hacer, pues, como digo, soy Júpiter Tonante, que tengo en mis manos los rayos abrasadores con que puedo y suelo amenazar y destruir el mundo? Pero con sola una cosa quiero castigar a este ignorante pueblo, y es con no llover en él ni en todo su distrito y contorno por tres enteros años, que se han de contar desde el día y punto en que ha sido hecha esta amenaza en adelante. ¿Tú libre, tú sano, tú cuerdo, y yo loco, y yo enfermo, y yo atado...? Así pienso llover como pensar ahorcarme”.

»A las voces y a las razones del loco estuvieron los circustantes atentos, pero nuestro licenciado, volviéndose a nuestro capellán y asiéndole de las manos, le dijo: “No tenga vuestra merced pena, señor mío, ni haga caso de lo que este loco ha dicho, que si él es Júpiter y no quisiere llover, yo, que soy Neptuno, el padre y el dios de las aguas, lloveré todas las veces que se me antojare y fuere menester”. A lo que respondió el capellán: “Con todo eso, señor Neptuno, no será bien enojar al señor Júpiter: vuestra merced se quede en su casa, que otro día, cuando haya más comodidad y más espacio, volveremos por vuestra merced”. Rióse el retor y los presentes, por cuya risa se medio corrió el capellán; desnudaron al licenciado, quedóse en casa y acabóse el cuento.»

-Pues, ¿éste es el cuento, señor barbero -dijo don Quijote-, que, por venir aquí como de molde, no podía dejar de contarle? ¡Ah, señor rapista, señor rapista, y cuán ciego es aquel que no ve por tela de cedazo! Y ¿es posible que vuestra merced no sabe que las comparaciones que se hacen de ingenio a ingenio, de valor a valor, de hermosura a hermosura y de linaje a linaje son siempre odiosas y mal recibidas? Yo, señor barbero, no soy Neptuno, el dios de las aguas, ni procuro que nadie me tenga por discreto no lo siendo; sólo me fatigo por dar a entender al mundo en el error en que está en no renovar en sí el felicísimo tiempo donde campeaba la orden de la andante caballería. Pero no es merecedora la depravada edad nuestra de gozar tanto bien como el que gozaron las edades



donde los andantes caballeros tomaron a su cargo y echaron sobre sus espaldas la defensa de los reinos, el amparo de las doncellas, el socorro de los huérfanos y pupilos, el castigo de los soberbios y el premio de los humildes. Los más de los caballeros que agora se usan, antes les crujen los damascos, los brocados y otras ricas telas de que se visten, que la malla con que se arman; ya no hay caballero que duerma en los campos, sujeto al rigor del cielo, armado de todas armas desde los pies a la cabeza; y ya no hay quien, sin sacar los pies de los estribos, arrimado a su lanza, sólo procure descabezar, como dicen, el sueño, como lo hacían los caballeros andantes. Ya no hay ninguno que, saliendo deste bosque, entre en aquella montaña, y de allí pise una estéril y desierta playa del mar, las más veces proceloso y alterado, y, hallando en ella y en su orilla un pequeño batel sin remos, vela, mástil ni jarcia alguna, con intrépido corazón se arroje en él, entregándose a las implacables olas del mar profundo, que ya le suben al cielo y ya le bajan al abismo; y él, puesto el pecho a la incontrastable borrasca, cuando menos se cata, se halla tres mil y más leguas distante del lugar donde se embarcó, y, saltando en tierra remota y no conocida, le suceden cosas dignas de estar escritas, no en pergaminos, sino en bronces. Mas agora, ya triunfa la pereza de la diligencia, la ociosidad del trabajo, el vicio de la virtud, la arrogancia de la valentía y la teórica de la práctica de las armas, que sólo vivieron y resplandecieron en las edades del oro y en los andantes caballeros. Si no, díganme: ¿quién más honesto y más valiente que el famoso Amadís de Gaula?; ¿quién más discreto que Palmerín de Inglaterra?; ¿quién más acomodado y manual que Tirante el Blanco?; ¿quién más galán que Lisuarte de Grecia?; ¿quién más acuchillado ni acuchillador que don Belianís?; ¿quién más intrépido que Perión de Gaula, o quién más acometedor de peligros que Felixmarte de Hircania, o quién más sincero que Esplandián?; ¿quién mas arrojado que don Cirongilio de Tracia?; ¿quién más bravo que Rodamonte?; ¿quién más prudente que el rey Sobrino?; ¿quién más atrevido que Reinaldos?; ¿quién más invencible que Roldán?; y ¿quién más gallardo y más cortés que Rugero, de quien decienden hoy los duques de Ferrara, según Turpín en su *Cosmografía*? Todos estos caballeros, y otros muchos que pudiera decir, señor cura, fueron caballeros andantes, luz y gloria de la caballería. Déstos, o tales como éstos, quisiera yo que fueran los de mi arbitrio, que, a serlo, Su Majestad se hallara bien servido y ahorrara de mucho gasto, y el Turco se quedara pelando las barbas, y con esto, no quiero quedar en mi casa, pues no me saca el capellán della; y si su Júpiter, como ha dicho el barbero, no lloviere, aquí estoy yo, que lloveré cuando se me antojare. Digo esto porque sepa el señor Bacía que le entiendo.

-En verdad, señor don Quijote -dijo el barbero-, que no lo dije por tanto, y así me ayude Dios como fue buena mi intención, y que no debe vuestra merced

sentirse.

-Si puedo sentirme o no -respondió don Quijote-, yo me lo sé.

A esto dijo el cura:

-Aun bien que yo casi no he hablado palabra hasta ahora, y no quisiera quedar con un escrúpulo que me roe y escarba la conciencia, nacido de lo que aquí el señor don Quijote ha dicho.

-Para otras cosas más -respondió don Quijote-tiene licencia el señor cura; y así, puede decir su escrúpulo, porque no es de gusto andar con la conciencia escrupulosa.

-Pues con ese beneplácito -respondió el cura-, digo que mi escrúpulo es que no me puedo persuadir en ninguna manera a que toda la caterva de caballeros andantes que vuestra merced, señor don Quijote, ha referido, hayan sido real y verdaderamente personas de carne y hueso en el mundo; antes, imagino que todo es ficción, fábula y mentira, y sueños contados por hombres despiertos, o, por mejor decir, medio dormidos.

-Ése es otro error -respondió don Quijote-en que han caído muchos, que no creen que haya habido tales caballeros en el mundo; y yo muchas veces, con diversas gentes y ocasiones, he procurado sacar a la luz de la verdad este casi común engaño; pero algunas veces no he salido con mi intención, y otras sí, sustentándola sobre los hombros de la verdad; la cual verdad es tan cierta, que estoy por decir que con mis propios ojos vi a Amadís de Gaula, que era un hombre alto de cuerpo, blanco de rostro, bien puesto de barba, aunque negra, de vista entre blanda y rigurosa, corto de razones, tardo en airarse y presto en deponer la ira; y del modo que he delineado a Amadís pudiera, a mi parecer, pintar y descubrir todos cuantos caballeros andantes andan en las historias en el orbe, que, por la aprehensión que tengo de que fueron como sus historias cuentan, y por las hazañas que hicieron y condiciones que tuvieron, se pueden sacar por buena filosofía sus faciones, sus colores y estaturas.

-¿Que tan grande le parece a vuestra merced, mi señor don Quijote -preguntó el barbero-, debía de ser el gigante Morgante?

-En esto de gigantes -respondió don Quijote-hay diferentes opiniones, si los ha habido o no en el mundo; pero la Santa Escritura, que no puede faltar un átomo en la verdad, nos muestra que los hubo, contándonos la historia de aquel filisteazo de Golías, que tenía siete codos y medio de altura, que es una desmesurada grandeza. También en la isla de Sicilia se han hallado canillas y espaldas tan grandes, que su grandeza manifiesta que fueron gigantes sus dueños, y tan grandes como grandes torres; que la geometría saca esta verdad de duda. Pero, con todo esto, no sabré decir con certidumbre qué tamaño tuviese Morgante, aunque imagino que no debió de ser muy alto; y muéveme a ser deste

parecer hallar en la historia donde se hace mención particular de sus hazañas que muchas veces dormía debajo de techado; y, pues hallaba casa donde cupiese, claro está que no era desmesurada su grandeza.

-Así es -dijo el cura.

El cual, gustando de oírle decir tan grandes disparates, le preguntó que qué sentía acerca de los rostros de Reinaldos de Montalbán y de don Roldán, y de los demás Doce Pares de Francia, pues todos habían sido caballeros andantes.

-De Reinaldos -respondió don Quijote-me atrevo a decir que era ancho de rostro, de color bermejo, los ojos bailadores y algo saltados, puntoso y colérico en demasía, amigo de ladrones y de gente perdida. De Roldán, o Rotolando, o Orlando, que con todos estos nombres le nombran las historias, soy de parecer y me afirmo que fue de mediana estatura, ancho de espaldas, algo estevado, moreno de rostro y barbitaheño, velloso en el cuerpo y de vista amenazadora; corto de razones, pero muy comedido y bien criado.

-Si no fue Roldán más gentilhombre que vuestra merced ha dicho -replicó el cura-, no fue maravilla que la señora Angélica la Bella le desdeñase y dejase por la gala, brío y donaire que debía de tener el morillo barbiponiente a quien ella se entregó; y anduvo discreta de adamar antes la blandura de Medoro que la aspereza de Roldán.

-Esa Angélica -respondió don Quijote-, señor cura, fue una doncella destraída, andariega y algo antojadiza, y tan lleno dejó el mundo de sus impertinencias como de la fama de su hermosura: despreció mil señores, mil valientes y mil discretos, y contentóse con un pajecillo barbilucio, sin otra hacienda ni nombre que el que le pudo dar de agradecido la amistad que guardó a su amigo. El gran cantor de su belleza, el famoso Ariosto, por no atreverse, o por no querer cantar lo que a esta señora le sucedió después de su ruin entrega, que no debieron ser cosas demasiadamente honestas, la dejó donde dijo:

Y como del Catay recibió el cetro,  
quizá otro cantará con mejor plectro.

Y, sin duda, que esto fue como profecía; que los poetas también se llaman vates, que quiere decir *adivinos*. Véese esta verdad clara, porque, después acá, un famoso poeta andaluz lloró y cantó sus lágrimas, y otro famoso y único poeta castellano cantó su hermosura.

-Dígame, señor don Quijote -dijo a esta sazón el barbero-, ¿no ha habido algún poeta que haya hecho alguna sátira a esa señora Angélica, entre tantos

como la han alabado?

-Bien creo yo -respondió don Quijote-que si Sacripante o Roldán fueran poetas, que ya me hubieran jabonado a la doncella; porque es propio y natural de los poetas desdeñados y no admitidos de sus damas fingidas -o fingidas, en efeto, de aquéllos a quien ellos escogieron por señoras de sus pensamientos-, vengarse con sátiras y libelos (venganza, por cierto, indigna de pechos generosos), pero hasta agora no ha llegado a mi noticia ningún verso infamatorio contra la señora Angélica, que trujo revuelto el mundo.

-¡Milagro! -dijo el cura.

Y, en esto, oyeron que la ama y la sobrina, que ya habían dejado la conversación, daban grandes voces en el patio, y acudieron todos al ruido.

## Capítulo II

*Que trata de la notable pendencia que Sancho Panza tuvo con la sobrina y ama de don Quijote, con otros sujetos graciosos*

CUENTA la historia que las voces que oyeron don Quijote, el cura y el barbero eran de la sobrina y ama, que las daban diciendo a Sancho Panza, que pugnaba por entrar a ver a don Quijote, y ellas le defendían la puerta:

-¿Qué quiere este mostrenco en esta casa? Idos a la vuestra, hermano, que vos sois, y no otro, el que destrae y sonsaca a mi señor, y le lleva por esos andurriales.

A lo que Sancho respondió:

-Ama de Satanás, el sonsacado, y el distraído, y el llevado por esos andurriales soy yo, que no tu amo; él me llevó por esos mundos, y vosotras os engañáis en la mitad del justo precio: él me sacó de mi casa con engañifas, prometiéndome una ínsula, que hasta ahora la espero.

-Malas ínsulas te ahoguen -respondió la sobrina-, Sancho maldito. Y ¿qué son ínsulas? ¿Es alguna cosa de comer, golosazo, comilón, que tú eres?

-No es de comer -replicó Sancho-, sino de gobernar y regir mejor que cuatro ciudades y que cuatro alcaldes de corte.

-Con todo eso -dijo el ama-, no entraréis acá, saco de maldades y costal de malicias. Id a gobernar vuestra casa y a labrar vuestros pegujares, y dejaos de pretender ínsulas ni ínsulos.

Grande gusto recibían el cura y el barbero de oír el coloquio de los tres; pero don Quijote, temeroso que Sancho se descosiese y desbuchase algún montón de maliciosas necedades, y tocase en puntos que no le estarían bien a su crédito, le llamó, y hizo a las dos que callasen y le dejasen entrar. Entró Sancho, y el cura y el barbero se despidieron de don Quijote, de cuya salud desesperaron, viendo cuán puesto estaba en sus desvariados pensamientos, y cuán embebido en la simplicidad de sus malandantes caballerías; y así, dijo el cura al barbero:

-Vos veréis, compadre, cómo, cuando menos lo pensemos, nuestro hidalgo sale otra vez a volar la ribera.

-No pongo yo duda en eso -respondió el barbero-, pero no me maravillo tanto de la locura del caballero como de la simplicidad del escudero, que tan creído tiene aquello de la ínsula, que creo que no se lo sacarán del casco cuantos desengaños pueden imaginarse.

-Dios los remedie -dijo el cura-, y estemos a la mira: veremos en lo que para esta máquina de disparates de tal caballero y de tal escudero, que parece que los forjaron a los dos en una misma turquesa, y que las locuras del señor, sin las necesidades del criado, no valían un ardite.

-Así es -dijo el barbero-, y holgara mucho saber qué tratarán ahora los dos.

-Yo seguro -respondió el cura- que la sobrina o el ama nos lo cuenta después, que no son de condición que dejarán de escucharlo.

En tanto, don Quijote se encerró con Sancho en su aposento; y, estando solos, le dijo:

-Mucho me pesa, Sancho, que hayas dicho y digas que yo fui el que te saqué de tus casillas, sabiendo que yo no me quedé en mis casas: juntos salimos, juntos fuimos y juntos peregrinamos; una misma fortuna y una misma suerte ha corrido por los dos: si a ti te mantearon una vez, a mí me han molido ciento, y esto es lo que te llevo de ventaja.

-Eso estaba puesto en razón -respondió Sancho-, porque, según vuestra merced dice, más anejas son a los caballeros andantes las desgracias que a sus escuderos.

-Engañaste, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-; según aquello, quando caput dolet, etcétera.

-No entiendo otra lengua que la mía -respondió Sancho.

-Quiero decir -dijo don Quijote- que, cuando la cabeza duele, todos los miembros duelen; y así, siendo yo tu amo y señor, soy tu cabeza, y tú mi parte, pues eres mi criado; y, por esta razón, el mal que a mí me toca, o tocare, a ti te ha de doler, y a mí el tuyo.

-Así había de ser -dijo Sancho-, pero cuando a mí me manteaban como a miembro, se estaba mi cabeza detrás de las bardas, mirándome volar por los aires, sin sentir dolor alguno; y, pues los miembros están obligados a dolerse del mal de la cabeza, había de estar obligada ella a dolerse dellos.

-¿Querrás tú decir agora, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, que no me dolía yo cuando a ti te manteaban? Y si lo dices, no lo digas, ni lo pienses; pues más dolor sentía yo entonces en mi espíritu que tú en tu cuerpo. Pero dejemos esto aparte por agora, que tiempo habrá donde lo ponderemos y pongamos en su punto, y dime, Sancho amigo: ¿qué es lo que dicen de mí por ese lugar? ¿En qué opinión me tiene el vulgo, en qué los hidalgos y en qué los caballeros? ¿Qué dicen de mi valentía, qué de mis hazañas y qué de mi cortesía? ¿Qué se platica del asunto que he tomado de resucitar y volver al mundo la ya olvidada orden caballeresca? Finalmente, quiero, Sancho, me digas lo que acerca desto ha llegado a tus oídos; y esto me has de decir sin añadir al bien ni quitar al mal cosa alguna, que de los vasallos leales es decir la verdad a sus señores en su ser y

figura propia, sin que la adulación la acreciente o otro vano respeto la disminuya; y quiero que sepas, Sancho, que si a los oídos de los príncipes llegase la verdad desnuda, sin los vestidos de la lisonja, otros siglos correrían, otras edades serían tenidas por más de hierro que la nuestra, que entiendo que, de las que ahora se usan, es la dorada. Sírdate este advertimiento, Sancho, para que discreta y bienintencionadamente pongas en mis oídos la verdad de las cosas que supieres de lo que te he preguntado.

-Eso haré yo de muy buena gana, señor mío -respondió Sancho-, con condición que vuestra merced no se ha de enojar de lo que dijere, pues quiere que lo diga en cueros, sin vestirlo de otras ropas de aquellas con que llegaron a mi noticia.

-En ninguna manera me enojaré -respondió don Quijote-. Bien puedes, Sancho, hablar libremente y sin rodeo alguno.

-Pues lo primero que digo -dijo-, es que el vulgo tiene a vuestra merced por grandísimo loco, y a mí por no menos mentecato. Los hidalgos dicen que, no conteniéndose vuestra merced en los límites de la hidalguía, se ha puesto *don* y se ha arremetido a caballero con cuatro cepas y dos yugadas de tierra y con un trapo atrás y otro adelante. Dicen los caballeros que no querrían que los hidalgos se opusiesen a ellos, especialmente aquellos hidalgos escuderiles que dan humo a los zapatos y toman los puntos de las medias negras con seda verde.

-Eso -dijo don Quijote- no tiene que ver conmigo, pues ando siempre bien vestido, y jamás remendado; roto, bien podría ser; y el roto, más de las armas que del tiempo.

-En lo que toca -prosiguió Sancho- a la valentía, cortesía, hazañas y asunto de vuestra merced, hay diferentes opiniones; unos dicen: «loco, pero gracioso»; otros, «valiente, pero desgraciado»; otros, «cortés, pero impertinente»; y por aquí van discurriendo en tantas cosas, que ni a vuestra merced ni a mí nos dejan hueso sano.

-Mira, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-: dondequiera que está la virtud en eminente grado, es perseguida. Pocos o ninguno de los famosos varones que pasaron dejó de ser calumniado de la malicia. Julio César, animosísimo, prudentísimo y valentísimo capitán, fue notado de ambicioso y algún tanto no limpio, ni en sus vestidos ni en sus costumbres. Alejandro, a quien sus hazañas le alcanzaron el renombre de Magno, dicen dél que tuvo sus ciertos puntos de borracho. De Hércules, el de los muchos trabajos, se cuenta que fue lascivo y muelle. De don Galaor, hermano de Amadís de Gaula, se murmura que fue más que demasíadamente rijoso; y de su hermano, que fue llorón. Así que, ¡oh Sancho!, entre las tantas calumnias de buenos, bien pueden pasar las mías, como no sean más de las que has dicho.

-¡Ahí está el toque, cuerpo de mi padre! -replicó Sancho.

-Pues, ¿hay más? -preguntó don Quijote.

-Aún la cola falta por desollar -dijo Sancho-. Lo de hasta aquí son tortas y pan pintado; mas si vuestra merced quiere saber todo lo que hay acerca de las caloñas que le ponen, yo le traeré aquí luego al momento quien se las diga todas, sin que les falte una meaja; que anoche llegó el hijo de Bartolomé Carrasco, que viene de estudiar de Salamanca, hecho bachiller, y, yéndole yo a dar la bienvenida, me dijo que andaba ya en libros la historia de vuestra merced, con nombre del *Ingenioso Hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*; y dice que me mientan a mí en ella con mi mismo nombre de Sancho Panza, y a la señora Dulcinea del Toboso, con otras cosas que pasamos nosotros a solas, que me hice cruces de espantado cómo las pudo saber el historiador que las escribió.

-Yo te aseguro, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, que debe de ser algún sabio encantador el autor de nuestra historia; que a los tales no se les encubre nada de lo que quieren escribir.

-Y ¿cómo -dijo Sancho-si era sabio y encantador, pues (según dice el bachiller Sansón Carrasco, que así se llama el que dicho tengo) que el autor de la historia se llama Cide Hamete Berenjena!

-Ese nombre es de moro -respondió don Quijote.

-Así será -respondió Sancho-, porque por la mayor parte he oído decir que los moros son amigos de berenjenas.

-Tú debes, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, errarte en el sobrenombre de ese Cide, que en árabe quiere decir *señor*.

-Bien podría ser -replicó Sancho-, mas, si vuestra merced gusta que yo le haga venir aquí, iré por él en volandas.

-Harásme mucho placer, amigo -dijo don Quijote-, que me tiene suspenso lo que me has dicho, y no comeré bocado que bien me sepa hasta ser informado de todo.

-Pues yo voy por él -respondió Sancho.

Y, dejando a su señor, se fue a buscar al bachiller, con el cual volvió de allí a poco espacio, y entre los tres pasaron un preciosísimo coloquio.



## Capítulo III

### *Del ridículo razonamiento que pasó entre don Quijote, Sancho Panza y el bachiller Sansón Carrasco*

PENSATIVO además quedó don Quijote, esperando al bachiller Carrasco, de quien esperaba oír las nuevas de sí mismo puestas en libro, como había dicho Sancho; y no se podía persuadir a que tal historia hubiese, pues aún no estaba enjuta en la cuchilla de su espada la sangre de los enemigos que había muerto, y ya querían que anduviesen en estampa sus altas caballerías. Con todo eso, imaginó que algún sabio, o ya amigo o enemigo, por arte de encantamento las habrá dado a la estampa: si amigo, para engrandecerlas y levantarlas sobre las más señaladas de caballero andante; si enemigo, para aniquilarlas y ponerlas debajo de las más viles que de algún vil escudero se hubiesen escrito, puesto - decía entre sí-que nunca hazañas de escuderos se escribieron; y cuando fuese verdad que la tal historia hubiese, siendo de caballero andante, por fuerza había de ser grandilocua, alta, insigne, magnífica y verdadera.

Con esto se consoló algún tanto, pero desconsolóle pensar que su autor era moro, según aquel nombre de Cide; y de los moros no se podía esperar verdad alguna, porque todos son embelecadores, falsarios y quimeristas. Temíase no hubiese tratado sus amores con alguna indecencia, que redundase en menoscabo y perjuicio de la honestidad de su señora Dulcinea del Toboso; deseaba que hubiese declarado su fidelidad y el decoro que siempre la había guardado, menospreciando reinas, emperatrices y doncellas de todas calidades, teniendo a raya los ímpetus de los naturales movimientos; y así, envuelto y revuelto en estas y otras muchas imaginaciones, le hallaron Sancho y Carrasco, a quien don Quijote recibió con mucha cortesía.

Era el bachiller, aunque se llamaba Sansón, no muy grande de cuerpo, aunque muy gran socarrón, de color macilenta, pero de muy buen entendimiento; tendría hasta veinte y cuatro años, carirredondo, de nariz chata y de boca grande, señales todas de ser de condición maliciosa y amigo de donaires y de burlas, como lo mostró en viendo a don Quijote, poniéndose delante dél de rodillas, diciéndole:

-Déme vuestra grandeza las manos, señor don Quijote de la Mancha; que, por el hábito de San Pedro que visto, aunque no tengo otras órdenes que las cuatro primeras, que es vuestra merced uno de los más famosos caballeros andantes que ha habido, ni aun habrá, en toda la redondez de la tierra. Bien haya Cide Hamete

Benengeli, que la historia de vuestras grandezas dejó escritas, y rebién haya el curioso que tuvo cuidado de hacerlas traducir de arábigo en nuestro vulgar castellano, para universal entretenimiento de las gentes.

Hízole levantar don Quijote y dijo:

-Desa manera, ¿verdad es que hay historia mía, y que fue moro y sabio el que la compuso?

-Es tan verdad, señor -dijo Sansón-, que tengo para mí que el día de hoy están impresos más de doce mil libros de la tal historia; si no, dígalo Portugal, Barcelona y Valencia, donde se han impreso; y aun hay fama que se está imprimiendo en Amberes, y a mí se me trasluce que no ha de haber nación ni lengua donde no se traduzga.

-Una de las cosas -dijo a esta sazón don Quijote- que más debe de dar contento a un hombre virtuoso y eminente es verse, viviendo, andar con buen nombre por las lenguas de las gentes, impreso y en stampa. Dije *con buen nombre* porque, siendo al contrario, ninguna muerte se le igualará.

-Si por buena fama y si por buen nombre va -dijo el bachiller-, solo vuestra merced lleva la palma a todos los caballeros andantes; porque el moro en su lengua y el cristiano en la suya tuvieron cuidado de pintarnos muy al vivo la gallardía de vuestra merced, el ánimo grande en acometer los peligros, la paciencia en las adversidades y el sufrimiento, así en las desgracias como en las heridas, la honestidad y continencia en los amores tan platónicos de vuestra merced y de mi señora doña Dulcinea del Toboso.

-Nunca -dijo a este punto Sancho Panza- he oído llamar con *don* a mi señora Dulcinea, sino solamente la *señora Dulcinea del Toboso*, y ya en esto anda errada la historia.

-No es objeción de importancia ésa -respondió Carrasco.

-No, por cierto -respondió don Quijote-; pero dígame vuestra merced, señor bachiller: ¿qué hazañas mías son las que más se ponderan en esa historia?

-En eso -respondió el bachiller-, hay diferentes opiniones, como hay diferentes gustos: unos se atienen a la aventura de los molinos de viento, que a vuestra merced le parecieron Briareos y gigantes; otros, a la de los batanes; éste, a la descripción de los dos ejércitos, que después parecieron ser dos manadas de carneros; aquél encarece la del muerto que llevaban a enterrar a Segovia; uno dice que a todas se aventaja la de la libertad de los galeotes; otro, que ninguna iguala a la de los dos gigantes benitos, con la pendencia del valeroso vizcaíno.

-Dígame, señor bachiller -dijo a esta sazón Sancho-: ¿entra ahí la aventura de los yangüeses, cuando a nuestro buen Rocinante se le antojó pedir cotufas en el golfo?

-No se le quedó nada -respondió Sansón-al sabio en el tintero: todo lo dice y todo lo apunta, hasta lo de las cabriolas que el buen Sancho hizo en la manta.

-En la manta no hice yo cabriolas -respondió Sancho-; en el aire sí, y aun más de las que yo quisiera.

-A lo que yo imagino -dijo don Quijote-, no hay historia humana en el mundo que no tenga sus altibajos, especialmente las que tratan de caballerías, las cuales nunca pueden estar llenas de prósperos sucesos.

-Con todo eso -respondió el bachiller-, dicen algunos que han leído la historia que se holgaran se les hubiera olvidado a los autores della algunos de los infinitos palos que en diferentes encuentros dieron al señor don Quijote.

-Ahí entra la verdad de la historia -dijo Sancho.

-También pudieran callarlos por equidad -dijo don Quijote-, pues las acciones que ni mudan ni alteran la verdad de la historia no hay para qué escribirlas, si han de redundar en menosprecio del señor de la historia. A fee que no fue tan piadoso Eneas como Virgilio le pinta, ni tan prudente Ulises como le describe Homero.

-Así es -replicó Sansón-, pero uno es escribir como poeta y otro como historiador: el poeta puede contar, o cantar las cosas, no como fueron, sino como debían ser; y el historiador las ha de escribir, no como debían ser, sino como fueron, sin añadir ni quitar a la verdad cosa alguna.

-Pues si es que se anda a decir verdades ese señor moro -dijo Sancho-, a buen seguro que entre los palos de mi señor se hallen los míos; porque nunca a su merced le tomaron la medida de las espaldas que no me la tomasen a mí de todo el cuerpo; pero no hay de qué maravillarme, pues, como dice el mismo señor mío, del dolor de la cabeza han de participar los miembros.

-Socarrón sois, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-. A fee que no os falta memoria cuando vos queréis tenerla.

-Cuando yo quisiese olvidarme de los garrotazos que me han dado -dijo Sancho-, no lo consentirán los cardenales, que aún se están frescos en las costillas.

-Callad, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, y no interrumpáis al señor bachiller, a quien suplico pase adelante en decirme lo que se dice de mí en la referida historia.

-Y de mí -dijo Sancho-, que también dicen que soy yo uno de los principales presonajes della.

-Personajes que no *presonajes*, Sancho amigo -dijo Sansón.

-¿Otro reprochador de voquibles tenemos? -dijo Sancho-. Pues ándense a eso, y no acabaremos en toda la vida.

-Mala me la dé Dios, Sancho -respondió el bachiller-, si no sois vos la

segunda persona de la historia; y que hay tal, que precia más oíros hablar a vos que al más pintado de toda ella, puesto que también hay quien diga que anduvistes demasiadamente de crédulo en creer que podía ser verdad el gobierno de aquella ínsula, ofrecida por el señor don Quijote, que está presente.

-Aún hay sol en las bardas -dijo don Quijote-, y, mientras más fuere entrando en edad Sancho, con la experiencia que dan los años, estará más idóneo y más hábil para ser gobernador que no está agora.

-Por Dios, señor -dijo Sancho-, la isla que yo no gobernase con los años que tengo, no la gobernaré con los años de Matusalén. El daño está en que la dicha ínsula se entretiene, no sé dónde, y no en faltarme a mí el caletre para gobernarla.

-Encomendadlo a Dios, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, que todo se hará bien, y quizá mejor de lo que vos pensáis; que no se mueve la hoja en el árbol sin la voluntad de Dios.

-Así es verdad -dijo Sansón-, que si Dios quiere, no le faltarán a Sancho mil islas que gobernar, cuanto más una.

-Gobernador he visto por ahí -dijo Sancho-que, a mi parecer, no llegan a la suela de mi zapato, y, con todo eso, los llaman señoría, y se sirven con plata.

-Ésos no son gobernadores de ínsulas -replicó Sansón-, sino de otros gobiernos más manuales; que los que gobiernan ínsulas, por lo menos han de saber gramática.

-Con la *grama* bien me avendría yo -dijo Sancho-, pero con la *tica*, ni me tiro ni me pago, porque no la entiendo. Pero, dejando esto del gobierno en las manos de Dios, que me eche a las partes donde más de mí se sirva, digo, señor bachiller Sansón Carrasco, que infinitamente me ha dado gusto que el autor de la historia haya hablado de mí de manera que no enfadan las cosas que de mí se cuentan; que a fe de buen escudero que si hubiera dicho de mí cosas que no fueran muy de cristiano viejo, como soy, que nos habían de oír los sordos.

-Eso fuera hacer milagros -respondió Sansón.

-Milagros o no milagros -dijo Sancho-, cada uno mire cómo habla o cómo escribe de las presonas, y no ponga a troche moche lo primero que le viene al magín.

-Una de las tachas que ponen a la tal historia -dijo el bachiller-es que su autor puso en ella una novela intitulada *El curioso impertinente*; no por mala ni por mal razonada, sino por no ser de aquel lugar, ni tiene que ver con la historia de su merced del señor don Quijote.

-Yo apostaré -replicó Sancho-que ha mezclado el hideperro berzas con capachos.

-Ahora digo -dijo don Quijote-que no ha sido sabio el autor de mi historia,

sino algún ignorante hablador, que, a tienta y sin algún discurso, se puso a escribirla, salga lo que saliere, como hacía Orbaneja, el pintor de Úbeda, al cual preguntándole qué pintaba, respondió: «Lo que saliere». Tal vez pintaba un gallo, de tal suerte y tan mal parecido, que era menester que con letras góticas escribiese junto a él: «Éste es gallo». Y así debe de ser de mi historia, que tendrá necesidad de comento para entenderla.

-Eso no -respondió Sansón-, porque es tan clara, que no hay cosa que dificultar en ella: los niños la manosean, los mozos la leen, los hombres la entienden y los viejos la celebran; y, finalmente, es tan trillada y tan leída y tan sabida de todo género de gentes, que, apenas han visto algún rocín flaco, cuando dicen: «Allí va Rocinante». Y los que más se han dado a su letura son los pajes: no hay antecámara de señor donde no se halle un *Don Quijote*: unos le toman si otros le dejan; éstos le embisten y aquéllos le piden. Finalmente, la tal historia es del más gustoso y menos perjudicial entretenimiento que hasta agora se haya visto, porque en toda ella no se descubre, ni por semejas, una palabra deshonesto ni un pensamiento menos que católico.

-A escribir de otra suerte -dijo don Quijote-, no fuera escribir verdades, sino mentiras; y los historiadores que de mentiras se valen habían de ser quemados, como los que hacen moneda falsa; y no sé yo qué le movió al autor a valerse de novelas y cuentos ajenos, habiendo tanto que escribir en los míos: sin duda se debió de atener al refrán: «De paja y de heno...», etcétera. Pues en verdad que en sólo manifestar mis pensamientos, mis suspiros, mis lágrimas, mis buenos deseos y mis acometimientos pudiera hacer un volumen mayor, o tan grande que el que pueden hacer todas las obras del Tostado. En efeto, lo que yo alcanzo, señor bachiller, es que para componer historias y libros, de cualquier suerte que sean, es menester un gran juicio y un maduro entendimiento. Decir gracias y escribir donaires es de grandes ingenios: la más discreta figura de la comedia es la del bobo, porque no lo ha de ser el que quiere dar a entender que es simple. La historia es como cosa sagrada; porque ha de ser verdadera, y donde está la verdad está Dios, en cuanto a verdad; pero, no obstante esto, hay algunos que así componen y arrojan libros de sí como si fuesen buñuelos.

-No hay libro tan malo -dijo el bachiller- que no tenga algo bueno.

-No hay duda en eso -replicó don Quijote-; pero muchas veces acontece que los que tenían méritamente granjeada y alcanzada gran fama por sus escritos, en dándolos a la estampa, la perdieron del todo, o la menoscabaron en algo.

-La causa deso es -dijo Sansón- que, como las obras impresas se miran despacio, fácilmente se veen sus faltas, y tanto más se escudriñan cuanto es mayor la fama del que las compuso. Los hombres famosos por sus ingenios, los grandes poetas, los ilustres historiadores, siempre, o las más veces, son

envidiados de aquellos que tienen por gusto y por particular entretenimiento juzgar los escritos ajenos, sin haber dado algunos propios a la luz del mundo.

-Eso no es de maravillar -dijo don Quijote-, porque muchos teólogos hay que no son buenos para el púlpito, y son bonísimos para conocer las faltas o sobras de los que predicán.

-Todo eso es así, señor don Quijote -dijo Carrasco-, pero quisiera yo que los tales censuradores fueran más misericordiosos y menos escrupulosos, sin atenerse a los átomos del sol clarísimo de la obra de que murmuran; que si aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus, consideren lo mucho que estuvo despierto, por dar la luz de su obra con la menos sombra que pudiese; y quizá podría ser que lo que a ellos les parece mal fuesen lunares, que a las veces acrecientan la hermosura del rostro que los tiene; y así, digo que es grandísimo el riesgo a que se pone el que imprime un libro, siendo de toda imposibilidad imposible componerle tal, que satisfaga y contente a todos los que le leyerén.

-El que de mí trata -dijo don Quijote-, a pocos habrá contentado.

-Antes es al revés; que, como de stultorum infinitus est numerus, infinitos son los que han gustado de la tal historia; y algunos han puesto falta y dolo en la memoria del autor, pues se le olvida de contar quién fue el ladrón que hurtó el rucio a Sancho, que allí no se declara, y sólo se infiere de lo escrito que se le hurtaron, y de allí a poco le vemos a caballo sobre el mismo jumento, sin haber parecido. También dicen que se le olvidó poner lo que Sancho hizo de aquellos cien escudos que halló en la maleta en Sierra Morena, que nunca más los nombra, y hay muchos que desean saber qué hizo dellos, o en qué los gastó, que es uno de los puntos sustanciales que faltan en la obra.

Sancho respondió:

-Yo, señor Sansón, no estoy ahora para ponerme en cuentas ni cuentos; que me ha tomado un desmayo de estómago, que si no le reparo con dos tragos de lo añejo, me pondrá en la espina de Santa Lucía. En casa lo tengo, mi oíslo me aguarda; en acabando de comer, daré la vuelta, y satisfaré a vuestra merced y a todo el mundo de lo que preguntar quisieren, así de la pérdida del jumento como del gasto de los cien escudos.

Y, sin esperar respuesta ni decir otra palabra, se fue a su casa.

Don Quijote pidió y rogó al bachiller se quedase a hacer penitencia con él. Tuvo el bachiller el envite: quedóse, añadióse al ordinario un par de pichones, tratóse en la mesa de caballerías, siguióle el humor Carrasco, acabóse el banquete, durmieron la siesta, volvió Sancho y renovóse la plática pasada.

## Capítulo IV

*Donde Sancho Panza satisface al bachiller Sansón Carrasco de sus dudas y preguntas, con otros sucesos dignos de saberse y de contarse*

VOLVIÓ Sancho a casa de don Quijote, y, volviendo al pasado razonamiento, dijo:

-A lo que el señor Sansón dijo que se deseaba saber quién, o cómo, o cuándo se me hurtó el jumento, respondiéndome digo que la noche misma que, huyendo de la Santa Hermandad, nos entramos en Sierra Morena, después de la aventura sin ventura de los galeotes y de la del difunto que llevaban a Segovia, mi señor y yo nos metimos entre una espesura, adonde mi señor arrimado a su lanza, y yo sobre mi rucio, molidos y cansados de las pasadas refriegas, nos pusimos a dormir como si fuera sobre cuatro colchones de pluma; especialmente yo dormí con tan pesado sueño, que quienquiera que fue tuvo lugar de llegar y suspenderme sobre cuatro estacas que puso a los cuatro lados de la albarda, de manera que me dejó a caballo sobre ella, y me sacó debajo de mí al rucio, sin que yo lo sintiese.

-Eso es cosa fácil, y no acontecimiento nuevo, que lo mesmo le sucedió a Sacripante cuando, estando en el cerco de Albraca, con esa misma invención le sacó el caballo de entre las piernas aquel famoso ladrón llamado Brunelo.

-Amaneció -prosiguió Sancho-, y, apenas me hube estremecido, cuando, faltando las estacas, di conmigo en el suelo una gran caída; miré por el jumento, y no le vi; acudieronme lágrimas a los ojos, y hice una lamentación, que si no la puso el autor de nuestra historia, puede hacer cuenta que no puso cosa buena. Al cabo de no sé cuántos días, viniendo con la señora princesa Micomicona, conocí mi asno, y que venía sobre él en hábito de gitano aquel Ginés de Pasamonte, aquel embustero y grandísimo maleador que quitamos mi señor y yo de la cadena.

-No está en eso el yerro -replicó Sansón-, sino en que, antes de haber parecido el jumento, dice el autor que iba a caballo Sancho en el mesmo rucio.

-A eso -dijo Sancho-, no sé qué responder, sino que el historiador se engañó, o ya sería descuido del impresor.

-Así es, sin duda -dijo Sansón-; pero, ¿qué se hicieron los cien escudos?; ¿deshicieronse?

Respondió Sancho:

-Yo los gasté en pro de mi persona y de la de mi mujer, y de mis hijos, y ellos han sido causa de que mi mujer lleve en paciencia los caminos y carreras que he andado sirviendo a mi señor don Quijote; que si, al cabo de tanto tiempo, volviera sin blanca y sin el jumento a mi casa, negra ventura me esperaba; y si hay más que saber de mí, aquí estoy, que responderé al mismo rey en presona, y nadie tiene para qué meterse en si truje o no truje, si gasté o no gasté; que si los palos que me dieron en estos viajes se hubieran de pagar a dinero, aunque no se tasaran sino a cuatro maravedís cada uno, en otros cien escudos no había para pagarme la mitad; y cada uno meta la mano en su pecho, y no se ponga a juzgar lo blanco por negro y lo negro por blanco; que cada uno es como Dios le hizo, y aun peor muchas veces.

-Yo tendré cuidado -dijo Carrasco-de acusar al autor de la historia que si otra vez la imprimiere, no se le olvide esto que el buen Sancho ha dicho, que será realzarla un buen coto más de lo que ella se está.

-¿Hay otra cosa que enmendar en esa leyenda, señor bachiller? -preguntó don Quijote.

-Sí debe de haber -respondió él-, pero ninguna debe de ser de la importancia de las ya referidas.

-Y por ventura -dijo don Quijote-, ¿promete el autor segunda parte?

-Sí promete -respondió Sansón-, pero dice que no ha hallado ni sabe quién la tiene, y así, estamos en duda si saldrá o no; y así por esto como porque algunos dicen: «Nunca segundas partes fueron buenas», y otros: «De las cosas de don Quijote bastan las escritas», se duda que no ha de haber segunda parte; aunque algunos que son más joviales que saturninos dicen: «Vengan más qui jotadas: embista don Quijote y hable Sancho Panza, y sea lo que fuere, que con eso nos contentamos».

-Y ¿a qué se atiene el autor?

-A que -respondió Sansón-, en hallando que halle la historia, que él va buscando con extraordinarias diligencias, la dará luego a la estampa, llevado más del interés que de darla se le sigue que de otra alabanza alguna.

A lo que dijo Sancho:

-¿Al dinero y al interés mira el autor? Maravilla será que acierte, porque no hará sino harbar, harbar, como sastre en vísperas de pascuas, y las obras que se hacen apriesa nunca se acaban con la perfección que requieren. Atienda ese señor moro, o lo que es, a mirar lo que hace; que yo y mi señor le daremos tanto ripio a la mano en materia de aventuras y de sucesos diferentes, que pueda componer no sólo segunda parte, sino ciento. Debe de pensar el buen hombre, sin duda, que nos dormimos aquí en las pajas; pues ténganos el pie al herrar, y verá del que cosqueamos. Lo que yo sé decir es que si mi señor tomase mi consejo, ya



habíamos de estar en esas campañas deshaciendo agravios y enderezando tuertos, como es uso y costumbre de los buenos andantes caballeros.

No había bien acabado de decir estas razones Sancho, cuando llegaron a sus oídos relinchos de Rocinante; los cuales relinchos tomó don Quijote por felicísimo agüero, y determinó de hacer de allí a tres o cuatro días otra salida; y, declarando su intento al bachiller, le pidió consejo por qué parte comenzaría su jornada; el cual le respondió que era su parecer que fuese al reino de Aragón y a la ciudad de Zaragoza, adonde, de allí a pocos días, se habían de hacer unas solenísimas justas por la fiesta de San Jorge, en las cuales podría ganar fama sobre todos los caballeros aragoneses, que sería ganarla sobre todos los del mundo. Alabóle ser honradísima y valentísima su determinación, y advirtióle que anduviese más atentado en acometer los peligros, a causa que su vida no era suya, sino de todos aquellos que le habían de menester para que los amparase y socorriese en sus desventuras.

-Deso es lo que yo reniego, señor Sansón -dijo a este punto Sancho-, que así acomete mi señor a cien hombres armados como un muchacho goloso a media docena de badeas. ¡Cuerpo del mundo, señor bachiller! Sí, que tiempos hay de acometer y tiempos de retirar; sí, no ha de ser todo «¡Santiago, y cierra, España!» Y más, que yo he oído decir, y creo que a mi señor mismo, si mal no me acuerdo, que en los extremos de cobarde y de temerario está el medio de la valentía; y si esto es así, no quiero que huya sin tener para qué, ni que acometa cuando la demasía pide otra cosa. Pero, sobre todo, aviso a mi señor que si me ha de llevar consigo, ha de ser con condición que él se lo ha de batallar todo, y que yo no he de estar obligado a otra cosa que a mirar por su persona en lo que tocara a su limpieza y a su regalo; que en esto yo le bailaré el agua delante; pero pensar que tengo de poner mano a la espada, aunque sea contra villanos malandrines de hacha y capellina, es pensar en lo escusado. Yo, señor Sansón, no pienso granjear fama de valiente, sino del mejor y más leal escudero que jamás sirvió a caballero andante; y si mi señor don Quijote, obligado de mis muchos y buenos servicios, quisiere darme alguna ínsula de las muchas que su merced dice que se ha de topar por ahí, recibiré mucha merced en ello; y cuando no me la diere, nacido soy, y no ha de vivir el hombre en hoto de otro sino de Dios; y más, que tan bien, y aun quizá mejor, me sabrá el pan desgobernado que siendo gobernador; y ¿sé yo por ventura si en esos gobiernos me tiene aparejada el diablo alguna zancadilla donde tropiece y caiga y me haga las muelas? Sancho nací, y Sancho pienso morir; pero si con todo esto, de buenas a buenas, sin mucha solicitud y sin mucho riesgo, me deparase el cielo alguna ínsula, o otra cosa semejante, no soy tan necio que la desechase; que también se dice:

«Cuando te dieren la vaquilla, corre con la soguilla»; y «Cuando viene el bien, mételo en tu casa».

-Vos, hermano Sancho -dijo Carrasco-, habéis hablado como un catedrático; pero, con todo eso, confiad en Dios y en el señor don Quijote, que os ha de dar un reino, no que una ínsula.

-Tanto es lo de más como lo de menos -respondió Sancho-; aunque sé decir al señor Carrasco que no echara mi señor el reino que me diera en saco roto, que yo he tomado el pulso a mí mismo, y me hallo con salud para regir reinos y gobernar ínsulas, y esto ya otras veces lo he dicho a mi señor.

-Mirad, Sancho -dijo Sansón-, que los oficios mudan las costumbres, y podría ser que viéndoos gobernador no conociédeses a la madre que os parió.

-Eso allá se ha de entender -respondió Sancho-con los que nacieron en las malvas, y no con los que tienen sobre el alma cuatro dedos de enjundia de cristianos viejos, como yo los tengo. ¡No, sino llegaos a mi condición, que sabrá usar de desagradecimiento con alguno!

-Dios lo haga -dijo don Quijote-, y ello dirá cuando el gobierno venga; que ya me parece que le trayo entre los ojos.

Dicho esto, rogó al bachiller que, si era poeta, le hiciese merced de componerle unos versos que tratasen de la despedida que pensaba hacer de su señora Dulcinea del Toboso, y que advirtiese que en el principio de cada verso había de poner una letra de su nombre, de manera que al fin de los versos, juntando las primeras letras, se leyese: *Dulcinea del Toboso*.

El bachiller respondió que, puesto que él no era de los famosos poetas que había en España, que decían que no eran sino tres y medio, que no dejaría de componer los tales metros, aunque hallaba una dificultad grande en su composición, a causa que las letras que contenían el nombre eran diez y siete; y que si hacía cuatro castellanas de a cuatro versos, sobrara una letra; y si de a cinco, a quien llaman décimas o redondillas, faltaban tres letras; pero, con todo eso, procuraría embeber una letra lo mejor que pudiese, de manera que en las cuatro castellanas se incluyese el nombre de Dulcinea del Toboso.

-Ha de ser así en todo caso -dijo don Quijote-; que si allí no va el nombre patente y de manifiesto, no hay mujer que crea que para ella se hicieron los metros.

Quedaron en esto y en que la partida sería de allí a ocho días. Encargó don Quijote al bachiller la tuviese secreta, especialmente al cura y a maese Nicolás, y a su sobrina y al ama, porque no estorbasen su honrada y valerosa determinación. Todo lo prometió Carrasco. Con esto se despidió, encargando a don Quijote que de todos sus buenos o malos sucesos le avisase, habiendo comodidad; y así, se despidieron, y Sancho fue a poner en orden lo necesario

para su jornada.

## Capítulo V

*De la discreta y graciosa plática que pasó entre Sancho Panza y su mujer Teresa Panza, y otros sucesos dignos de felice recordación*

(LLEGANDO a escribir el traductor desta historia este quinto capítulo, dice que le tiene por apócrifo, porque en él habla Sancho Panza con otro estilo del que se podía prometer de su corto ingenio, y dice cosas tan sutiles, que no tiene por posible que él las supiese; pero que no quiso dejar de traducirlo, por cumplir con lo que a su oficio debía; y así, prosiguió diciendo:)

Llegó Sancho a su casa tan regocijado y alegre, que su mujer conoció su alegría a tiro de ballesta; tanto, que la obligó a preguntarle:

-¿Qué traés, Sancho amigo, que tan alegre venís?

A lo que él respondió:

-Mujer mía, si Dios quisiera, bien me holgara yo de no estar tan contento como nuestro.

-No os entiendo, marido -replicó ella-, y no sé qué queréis decir en eso de que os holgáredes, si Dios quisiera, de no estar contento; que, maguer tonta, no sé yo quién recibe gusto de no tenerle.

-Mirad, Teresa -respondió Sancho-: yo estoy alegre porque tengo determinado de volver a servir a mi amo don Quijote, el cual quiere la vez tercera salir a buscar las aventuras; y yo vuelvo a salir con él, porque lo quiere así mi necesidad, junto con la esperanza, que me alegra, de pensar si podré hallar otros cien escudos como los ya gastados, puesto que me entristece el haberme de apartar de ti y de mis hijos; y si Dios quisiera darme de comer a pie enjuto y en mi casa, sin traerme por vericuetos y encrucijadas, pues lo podía hacer a poca costa y no más de quererlo, claro está que mi alegría fuera más firme y valedera, pues que la que tengo va mezclada con la tristeza del dejarte; así que, dije bien que holgara, si Dios quisiera, de no estar contento.

-Mirad, Sancho -replicó Teresa-: después que os hicistes miembro de caballero andante habláis de tan rodeada manera, que no hay quien os entienda.

-Basta que me entienda Dios, mujer -respondió Sancho-, que Él es el entendedor de todas las cosas, y quédese esto aquí; y advertid, hermana, que os conviene tener cuenta estos tres días con el rucio, de manera que esté para armas tomar: dobladle los piensos, requerid la albarda y las demás jarcias, porque no vamos a bodas, sino a rodear el mundo, y a tener dares y tomares con gigantes,

con endriagos y con vestiglos, y a oír silbos, rugidos, bramidos y baladros; y aun todo esto fuera flores de cantueso si no tuviéramos que entender con yangüeses y con moros encantados.

-Bien creo yo, marido -replicó Teresa-, que los escuderos andantes no comen el pan de balde; y así, quedaré rogando a Nuestro Señor os saque presto de tanta mala ventura.

-Yo os digo, mujer -respondió Sancho-, que si no pensase antes de mucho tiempo verme gobernador de una ínsula, aquí me caería muerto.

-Eso no, marido mío -dijo Teresa-: viva la gallina, aunque sea con su pepita; vivid vos, y llévase el diablo cuantos gobiernos hay en el mundo; sin gobierno salistes del vientre de vuestra madre, sin gobierno habéis vivido hasta ahora, y sin gobierno os iréis, o os llevarán, a la sepultura cuando Dios fuere servido. Como ésos hay en el mundo que viven sin gobierno, y no por eso dejan de vivir y de ser contados en el número de las gentes. La mejor salsa del mundo es la hambre; y como ésta no falta a los pobres, siempre comen con gusto. Pero mirad, Sancho: si por ventura os viéredes con algún gobierno, no os olvidéis de mí y de vuestros hijos. Advertid que Sanchico tiene ya quince años cabales, y es razón que vaya a la escuela, si es que su tío el abad le ha de dejar hecho de la Iglesia. Mirad también que Mari Sancha, vuestra hija, no se morirá si la casamos; que me va dando barruntos que desea tanto tener marido como vos deseáis veros con gobierno; y, en fin en fin, mejor parece la hija mal casada que bien abarraganada.

-A buena fe -respondió Sancho- que si Dios me llega a tener algo qué de gobierno, que tengo de casar, mujer mía, a Mari Sancha tan altamente que no la alcancen sino con llamarla señora.

-Eso no, Sancho -respondió Teresa-: casadla con su igual, que es lo más acertado; que si de los zuecos la sacáis a chapines, y de saya parda de catorceno a verdugado y saboyanas de seda, y de una *Marica* y un *tú* a una *doña tal* y *señoría*, no se ha de hallar la mochacha, y a cada paso ha de caer en mil faltas, descubriendo la hilaza de su tela basta y grosera.

-Calla, boba -dijo Sancho-, que todo será usarlo dos o tres años; que después le vendrá el señorío y la gravedad como de molde; y cuando no, ¿qué importa? Séase ella *señoría*, y venga lo que viniere.

-Medíos, Sancho, con vuestro estado -respondió Teresa-; no os queráis alzar a mayores, y advertid al refrán que dice: «Al hijo de tu vecino, límpiale las narices y métele en tu casa». ¡Por cierto, que sería gentil cosa casar a nuestra María con un condazo, o con caballerote que, cuando se le antojase, la pusiese como nueva, llamándola de villana, hija del destripaterrones y de la pelarruecas! ¡No en mis

días, marido! ¡Para eso, por cierto, he criado yo a mi hija! Traed vos dineros, Sancho, y el casarla dejadlo a mi cargo; que ahí está Lope Tocho, el hijo de Juan Tocho, mozo rollizo y sano, y que le conocemos, y sé que no mira de mal ojo a la mochacha; y con éste, que es nuestro igual, estará bien casada, y le tendremos siempre a nuestros ojos, y seremos todos unos, padres y hijos, nietos y yernos, y andará la paz y la bendición de Dios entre todos nosotros; y no casármela vos ahora en esas cortes y en esos palacios grandes, adonde ni a ella la entiendan, ni ella se entienda.

-Ven acá, bestia y mujer de Barrabás -replicó Sancho-: ¿por qué quieres tú ahora, sin qué ni para qué, estorbarme que no case a mi hija con quien me dé nietos que se llamen *señoría*? Mira, Teresa: siempre he oído decir a mis mayores que el que no sabe gozar de la ventura cuando le viene, que no se debe quejar si se le pasa. Y no sería bien que ahora, que está llamando a nuestra puerta, se la cerremos; dejémonos llevar deste viento favorable que nos sopla.

(Por este modo de hablar, y por lo que más abajo dice Sancho, dijo el tradutor desta historia que tenía por apócrifo este capítulo).

-¿No te parece, animalia -prosiguió Sancho-, que será bien dar con mi cuerpo en algún gobierno provechoso que nos saque el pie del lodo? Y cásese a Mari Sancha con quien yo quisiere, y verás cómo te llaman a ti *doña Teresa Panza*, y te sientas en la iglesia sobre alcatifa, almohadas y arambeles, a pesar y despecho de las hidalgas del pueblo. ¡No, sino estaos siempre en un ser, sin crecer ni menguar, como figura de paramento! Y en esto no hablemos más, que Sanchica ha de ser condesa, aunque tú más me digas.

-¿Veis cuanto decís, marido? -respondió Teresa-. Pues, con todo eso, temo que este condado de mi hija ha de ser su perdición. Vos haced lo que quisiéredes, ora la hagáis duquesa o princesa, pero séos decir que no será ello con voluntad ni consentimiento mío. Siempre, hermano, fui amiga de la igualdad, y no puedo ver entonos sin fundamentos. Teresa me pusieron en el bautismo, nombre mondo y escueto, sin añadiduras ni cortapisas, ni arrequives de *dones* ni *donas*; Cascajo se llamó mi padre, y a mí, por ser vuestra mujer, me llaman Teresa Panza, que a buena razón me habían de llamar Teresa Cascajo. Pero allá van reyes do quieren leyes, y con este nombre me contento, sin que me le pongan un *don* encima, que pese tanto que no le pueda llevar, y no quiero dar que decir a los que me vieren andar vestida a lo condesil o a lo de gobernadora, que luego dirán: «¡Mirad qué entonada va la pazpuerca!; ayer no se hartaba de estirar de un copo de estopa, y iba a misa cubierta la cabeza con la falda de la saya, en lugar de manto, y ya hoy va con verdugado, con broches y con entono, como si no la conociésemos». Si Dios me guarda mis siete, o mis cinco sentidos, o los que tengo, no pienso dar ocasión de verme en tal aprieto. Vos, hermano,

idos a ser gobierno o ínsulo, y entonaos a vuestro gusto; que mi hija ni yo, por el siglo de mi madre, que no nos hemos de mudar un paso de nuestra aldea: la mujer honrada, la pierna quebrada, y en casa; y la doncella honesta, el hacer algo es su fiesta. Idos con vuestro don Quijote a vuestras aventuras, y dejadnos a nosotras con nuestras malas venturas, que Dios nos las mejorará como seamos buenas; y yo no sé, por cierto, quién le puso a él *don*, que no tuvieron sus padres ni sus agüelos.

-Ahora digo -replicó Sancho-que tienes algún familiar en ese cuerpo. ¡Válate Dios, la mujer, y qué de cosas has ensartado unas en otras, sin tener pies ni cabeza! ¿Qué tiene que ver el Cascajo, los broches, los refranes y el entono con lo que yo digo? Ven acá, mentecata e ignorante (que así te puedo llamar, pues no entiendes mis razones y vas huyendo de la dicha): si yo dijera que mi hija se arrojara de una torre abajo, o que se fuera por esos mundos, como se quiso ir la infanta doña Urraca, tenías razón de no venir con mi gusto; pero si en dos paletas, y en menos de un abrir y cerrar de ojos, te la chanto un *don* y una *señoría* a cuestras, y te la saco de los rastros, y te la pongo en toldo y en peana, y en un estrado de más almohadas de velludo que tuvieron moros en su linaje los Almohadas de Marruecos, ¿por qué no has de consentir y querer lo que yo quiero?

-¿Sabéis por qué, marido? -respondió Teresa-; por el refrán que dice: «¡Quien te cubre, te descubre!» Por el pobre todos pasan los ojos como de corrida, y en el rico los detienen; y si el tal rico fue un tiempo pobre, allí es el murmurar y el maldecir, y el peor perseverar de los maldicientes, que los hay por esas calles a montones, como enjambres de abejas.

-Mira, Teresa -respondió Sancho-, y escucha lo que agora quiero decirte; quizá no lo habrás oído en todos los días de tu vida, y yo agora no hablo de mío; que todo lo que pienso decir son sentencias del padre predicador que la Cuaresma pasada predicó en este pueblo, el cual, si mal no me acuerdo, dijo que todas las cosas presentes que los ojos están mirando se presentan, están y asisten en nuestra memoria mucho mejor y con más vehemencia que las cosas pasadas.

(Todas estas razones que aquí va diciendo Sancho son las segundas por quien dice el tradutor que tiene por apócrifo este capítulo, que exceden a la capacidad de Sancho. El cual prosiguió diciendo:)

-De donde nace que, cuando vemos alguna persona bien aderezada, y con ricos vestidos compuesta, y con pompa de criados, parece que por fuerza nos mueve y convida a que la tengamos respeto, puesto que la memoria en aquel instante nos represente alguna baja en que vimos a la tal persona; la cual inominia, ahora sea de pobreza o de linaje, como ya pasó, no es, y sólo es lo que vemos presente. Y si éste a quien la fortuna sacó del borrador de su baja (que

por estas mismas razones lo dijo el padre) a la alteza de su prosperidad, fuere bien criado, liberal y cortés con todos, y no se pusiere en cuentos con aquellos que por antigüedad son nobles, ten por cierto, Teresa, que no habrá quien se acuerde de lo que fue, sino que reverencien lo que es, si no fueren los envidiosos, de quien ninguna próspera fortuna está segura.

-Yo no os entiendo, marido -replicó Teresa-: haced lo que quisiéredes, y no me quebréis más la cabeza con vuestras arengas y retóricas. Y si estáis revuelto en hacer lo que decís...

-*Resuelto* has de decir, mujer -dijo Sancho-, y no *revuelto*.

-No os pongáis a disputar, marido, conmigo -respondió Teresa-. Yo hablo como Dios es servido, y no me meto en más dibujos; y digo que si estáis porfiando en tener gobierno, que llevéis con vos a vuestro hijo Sancho, para que desde agora le enseñéis a tener gobierno, que bien es que los hijos hereden y aprendan los oficios de sus padres.

-En teniendo gobierno -dijo Sancho-, enviaré por él por la posta, y te enviaré dineros, que no me faltarán, pues nunca falta quien se los preste a los gobernadores cuando no los tienen; y vístele de modo que disimule lo que es y parezca lo que ha de ser.

-Enviad vos dinero -dijo Teresa-, que yo os lo vistiré como un palmito.

-En efecto, quedamos de acuerdo -dijo Sancho-de que ha de ser condesa nuestra hija.

-El día que yo la viere condesa -respondió Teresa-, ése haré cuenta que la entierro, pero otra vez os digo que hagáis lo que os diere gusto, que con esta carga nacemos las mujeres, de estar obedientes a sus maridos, aunque sean unos porros.

Y, en esto, comenzó a llorar tan de veras como si ya viera muerta y enterrada a Sanchica. Sancho la consoló diciéndole que, ya que la hubiese de hacer condesa, la haría todo lo más tarde que ser pudiese. Con esto se acabó su plática, y Sancho volvió a ver a don Quijote para dar orden en su partida.



## Capítulo VI

*De lo que le pasó a don Quijote con su sobrina y con su ama, y es uno de los importantes capítulos de toda la historia*

EN TANTO que Sancho Panza y su mujer Teresa Cascajo pasaron la impertinente referida plática, no estaban ociosas la sobrina y el ama de don Quijote, que por mil señales iban coligiendo que su tío y señor quería desgarrarse la vez tercera, y volver al ejercicio de su, para ellas, mal andante caballería: procuraban por todas las vías posibles apartarle de tan mal pensamiento, pero todo era predicar en desierto y majar en hierro frío. Con todo esto, entre otras muchas razones que con él pasaron, le dijo el ama:

-En verdad, señor mío, que si vuesa merced no afirma el pie llano y se está quedo en su casa, y se deja de andar por los montes y por los valles como ánima en pena, buscando esas que dicen que se llaman aventuras, a quien yo llamo desdichas, que me tengo de quejar en voz y en grito a Dios y al rey, que pongan remedio en ello.

A lo que respondió don Quijote:

-Ama, lo que Dios responderá a tus quejas yo no lo sé, ni lo que ha de responder Su Majestad tampoco, y sólo sé que si yo fuera rey, me escusara de responder a tanta infinidad de memoriales impertinentes como cada día le dan; que uno de los mayores trabajos que los reyes tienen, entre otros muchos, es el estar obligados a escuchar a todos y a responder a todos; y así, no querría yo que cosas mías le diesen pesadumbre.

A lo que dijo el ama:

-Díganos, señor: en la corte de Su Majestad, ¿no hay caballeros?

-Sí -respondió don Quijote-, y muchos; y es razón que los haya, para adorno de la grandeza de los príncipes y para ostentación de la majestad real.

-Pues, ¿no sería vuesa merced -replicó ella-uno de los que a pie quedo sirviesen a su rey y señor, estándose en la corte?

-Mira, amiga -respondió don Quijote-: no todos los caballeros pueden ser cortesanos, ni todos los cortesanos pueden ni deben ser caballeros andantes: de todos ha de haber en el mundo; y, aunque todos seamos caballeros, va mucha diferencia de los unos a los otros; porque los cortesanos, sin salir de sus aposentos ni de los umbrales de la corte, se pasean por todo el mundo, mirando un mapa, sin costarles blanca, ni padecer calor ni frío, hambre ni sed; pero

nosotros, los caballeros andantes verdaderos, al sol, al frío, al aire, a las inclemencias del cielo, de noche y de día, a pie y a caballo, medimos toda la tierra con nuestros mismos pies; y no solamente conocemos los enemigos pintados, sino en su mismo ser, y en todo trance y en toda ocasión los acometemos, sin mirar en niñerías, ni en las leyes de los desafíos; si lleva, o no lleva, más corta la lanza, o la espada; si trae sobre sí reliquias, o algún engaño encubierto; si se ha de partir y hacer tajadas el sol, o no, con otras ceremonias deste jaez, que se usan en los desafíos particulares de persona a persona, que tú no sabes y yo sí. Y has de saber más: que el buen caballero andante, aunque vea diez gigantes que con las cabezas no sólo tocan, sino pasan las nubes, y que a cada uno le sirven de piernas dos grandísimas torres, y que los brazos semejan árboles de gruesos y poderosos navíos, y cada ojo como una gran rueda de molino y más ardiendo que un horno de vidrio, no le han de espantar en manera alguna; antes con gentil continente y con intrépido corazón los ha de acometer y embestir, y, si fuere posible, vencerlos y desbaratarlos en un pequeño instante, aunque viniesen armados de unas conchas de un cierto pescado que dicen que son más duras que si fuesen de diamantes, y en lugar de espadas trujesen cuchillos tajantes de damasquino acero, o porras ferradas con puntas asimismo de acero, como yo las he visto más de dos veces. Todo esto he dicho, ama mía, porque veas la diferencia que hay de unos caballeros a otros; y sería razón que no hubiese príncipe que no estimase en más esta segunda, o, por mejor decir, primera especie de caballeros andantes, que, según leemos en sus historias, tal ha habido entre ellos que ha sido la salud no sólo de un reino, sino de muchos.

-¡Ah, señor mío! -dijo a esta sazón la sobrina-; advierta vuestra merced que todo eso que dice de los caballeros andantes es fábula y mentira, y sus historias, ya que no las quemasen, merecían que a cada una se le echase un sambenito, o alguna señal en que fuese conocida por infame y por gastadora de las buenas costumbres.

-Por el Dios que me sustenta -dijo don Quijote-, que si no fueras mi sobrina derechamente, como hija de mi misma hermana, que había de hacer un tal castigo en ti, por la blasfemia que has dicho, que sonara por todo el mundo. ¿Cómo que es posible que una rapaza que apenas sabe menear doce palillos de randas se atreva a poner lengua y a censurar las historias de los caballeros andantes? ¿Qué dijera el señor Amadís si lo tal oyera? Pero a buen seguro que él te perdonara, porque fue el más humilde y cortés caballero de su tiempo, y, demás, grande amparador de las doncellas; mas, tal te pudiera haber oído que no te fuera bien dello, que no todos son cortesos ni bien mirados: algunos hay follones y descomedidos. Ni todos los que se llaman caballeros lo son de todo en todo: que unos son de oro, otros de alquimia, y todos parecen caballeros, pero no

todos pueden estar al toque de la piedra de la verdad. Hombres bajos hay que revientan por parecer caballeros, y caballeros altos hay que parece que apostan mueren por parecer hombres bajos; aquéllos se levantan o con la ambición o con la virtud, éstos se abajan o con la flojedad o con el vicio; y es menester aprovecharnos del conocimiento discreto para distinguir estas dos maneras de caballeros, tan parecidos en los nombres y tan distantes en las acciones.

-¡Válame Dios! -dijo la sobrina-. ¡Que sepa vuestra merced tanto, señor tío, que, si fuese menester en una necesidad, podría subir en un púlpito e irse a predicar por esas calles, y que, con todo esto, dé en una ceguera tan grande y en una sandez tan conocida, que se dé a entender que es valiente, siendo viejo, que tiene fuerzas, estando enfermo, y que endereza tuertos, estando por la edad agobiado, y, sobre todo, que es caballero, no lo siendo; porque, aunque lo puedan ser los hidalgos, no lo son los pobres!

-Tienes mucha razón, sobrina, en lo que dices -respondió don Quijote-, y cosas te pudiera yo decir cerca de los linajes, que te admiraran; pero, por no mezclar lo divino con lo humano, no las digo. Mirad, amigas: a cuatro suertes de linajes, y estadme atentas, se pueden reducir todos los que hay en el mundo, que son éstas: unos, que tuvieron principios humildes, y se fueron estendiendo y dilatando hasta llegar a una suma grandeza; otros, que tuvieron principios grandes, y los fueron conservando y los conservan y mantienen en el ser que comenzaron; otros, que, aunque tuvieron principios grandes, acabaron en punta, como pirámide, habiendo disminuido y aniquilado su principio hasta parar en nonada, como lo es la punta de la pirámide, que respeto de su basa o asiento no es nada; otros hay, y éstos son los más, que ni tuvieron principio bueno ni razonable medio, y así tendrán el fin, sin nombre, como el linaje de la gente plebeya y ordinaria. De los primeros, que tuvieron principio humilde y subieron a la grandeza que agora conservan, te sirva de ejemplo la Casa Otomana, que, de un humilde y bajo pastor que le dio principio, está en la cumbre que le vemos. Del segundo linaje, que tuvo principio en grandeza y la conserva sin aumentarla, serán ejemplo muchos príncipes que por herencia lo son, y se conservan en ella, sin aumentarla ni disminuirla, conteniéndose en los límites de sus estados pacíficamente. De los que comenzaron grandes y acabaron en punta hay millares de ejemplos, porque todos los Faraones y Tolomeos de Egipto, los Césares de Roma, con toda la caterva, si es que se le puede dar este nombre, de infinitos príncipes, monarcas, señores, medos, asirios, persas, griegos y bárbaros, todos estos linajes y señoríos han acabado en punta y en nonada, así ellos como los que les dieron principio, pues no será posible hallar agora ninguno de sus decendientes, y si le hallásemos, sería en bajo y humilde estado. Del linaje plebeyo no tengo qué decir, sino que sirve sólo de acrecentar el número de los

que viven, sin que merezcan otra fama ni otro elogio sus grandezas. De todo lo dicho quiero que infiráis, bobas mías, que es grande la confusión que hay entre los linajes, y que solos aquéllos parecen grandes y ilustres que lo muestran en la virtud, y en la riqueza y liberalidad de sus dueños. Dije virtudes, riquezas y liberalidades, porque el grande que fuere vicioso será vicioso grande, y el rico no liberal será un avaro mendigo; que al poseedor de las riquezas no le hace dichoso el tenerlas, sino el gastarlas, y no el gastarlas comoquiera, sino el saberlas bien gastar. Al caballero pobre no le queda otro camino para mostrar que es caballero sino el de la virtud, siendo afable, bien criado, cortés y comedido, y oficioso; no soberbio, no arrogante, no murmurador, y, sobre todo, caritativo; que con dos maravedís que con ánimo alegre dé al pobre se mostrará tan liberal como el que a campana herida da limosna, y no habrá quien le vea adornado de las referidas virtudes que, aunque no le conozca, deje de juzgarle y tenerle por de buena casta, y el no serlo sería milagro; y siempre la alabanza fue premio de la virtud, y los virtuosos no pueden dejar de ser alabados. Dos caminos hay, hijas, por donde pueden ir los hombres a llegar a ser ricos y honrados: el uno es el de las letras; otro, el de las armas. Yo tengo más armas que letras, y nací, según me inclino a las armas, debajo de la influencia del planeta Marte; así que, casi me es forzoso seguir por su camino, y por él tengo de ir a pesar de todo el mundo, y será en balde cansaros en persuadirme a que no quiera yo lo que los cielos quieren, la fortuna ordena y la razón pide, y, sobre todo, mi voluntad desea. Pues con saber, como sé, los innumerables trabajos que son anejos al andante caballería, sé también los infinitos bienes que se alcanzan con ella; y sé que la senda de la virtud es muy estrecha, y el camino del vicio, ancho y espacioso; y sé que sus fines y paraderos son diferentes, porque el del vicio, dilatado y espacioso, acaba en muerte, y el de la virtud, angosto y trabajoso, acaba en vida, y no en vida que se acaba, sino en la que no tendrá fin; y sé, como dice el gran poeta castellano nuestro, que

Por estas asperezas se camina  
de la inmortalidad al alto asiento,  
do nunca arriba quien de allí declina.

-¡Ay, desdichada de mí -dijo la sobrina-, que también mi señor es poeta! Todo lo sabe, todo lo alcanza: yo apostaré que si quisiera ser albañil, que supiera fabricar una casa como una jaula.

-Yo te prometo, sobrina -respondió don Quijote-, que si estos pensamientos

caballerescos no me llevasen tras sí todos los sentidos, que no habría cosa que yo no hiciese, ni curiosidad que no saliese de mis manos, especialmente jaulas y palillos de dientes.

A este tiempo, llamaron a la puerta, y, preguntando quién llamaba, respondió Sancho Panza que él era; y, apenas le hubo conocido el ama, cuando corrió a esconderse por no verle: tanto le aborrecía. Abrióle la sobrina, salió a recibirle con los brazos abiertos su señor don Quijote, y encerráronse los dos en su aposento, donde tuvieron otro coloquio que no le hace ventaja el pasado.

## Capítulo VII

*De lo que pasó don Quijote con su escudero, con otros sucesos famosísimos*

APENAS vio el ama que Sancho Panza se encerraba con su señor, cuando dio en la cuenta de sus tratos; y, imaginando que de aquella consulta había de salir la resolución de su tercera salida y tomando su manto, toda llena de congoja y pesadumbre, se fue a buscar al bachiller Sansón Carrasco, pareciéndole que, por ser bien hablado y amigo fresco de su señor, le podría persuadir a que dejase tan desvariado propósito.

Hallóle paseándose por el patio de su casa, y, viéndole, se dejó caer ante sus pies, trasudando y congojosa. Cuando la vio Carrasco con muestras tan doloridas y sobresaltadas, le dijo:

-¿Qué es esto, señora ama? ¿Qué le ha acontecido, que parece que se le quiere arrancar el alma?

-No es nada, señor Sansón mío, sino que mi amo se sale; ¡sálese sin duda!

-Y ¿por dónde se sale, señora? -preguntó Sansón-. ¿Hásele roto alguna parte de su cuerpo?

-No se sale -respondió ella-, sino por la puerta de su locura. Quiero decir, señor bachiller de mi ánima, que quiere salir otra vez, que con ésta será la tercera, a buscar por ese mundo lo que él llama venturas, que yo no puedo entender cómo les da este nombre. La vez primera nos le volvieron atravesado sobre un jumento, molido a palos. La segunda vino en un carro de bueyes, metido y encerrado en una jaula, adonde él se daba a entender que estaba encantado; y venía tal el triste, que no le conociera la madre que le parió: flaco, amarillo, los ojos hundidos en los últimos camaranchones del cerebro, que, para haberle de volver algún tanto en sí, gasté más de seiscientos huevos, como lo sabe Dios y todo el mundo, y mis gallinas, que no me dejaran mentir.

-Eso creo yo muy bien -respondió el bachiller-; que ellas son tan buenas, tan gordas y tan bien criadas, que no dirán una cosa por otra, si reventasen. En efecto, señora ama: ¿no hay otra cosa, ni ha sucedido otro desmán alguno, sino el que se teme que quiere hacer el señor don Quijote?

-No, señor -respondió ella.

-Pues no tenga pena -respondió el bachiller-, sino váyase en hora buena a su casa, y téngame aderezado de almorzar alguna cosa caliente, y, de camino, vaya rezando la oración de Santa Apolonia si es que la sabe, que yo iré luego allá, y

verá maravillas.

-¡Cuitada de mí! -replicó el ama-; ¿la oración de Santa Apolonia dice vuestra merced que rece?: eso fuera si mi amo lo hubiera de las muelas, pero no lo ha sino de los cascós.

-Yo sé lo que digo, señora ama: váyase y no se ponga a disputar conmigo, pues sabe que soy bachiller por Salamanca, que no hay más que bachillear -respondió Carrasco.

Y con esto, se fue el ama, y el bachiller fue luego a buscar al cura, a comunicar con él lo que se dirá a su tiempo.

En el que estuvieron encerrados don Quijote y Sancho, pasaron las razones que con mucha puntualidad y verdadera relación cuenta la historia.

Dijo Sancho a su amo:

-Señor, ya yo tengo relucida a mi mujer a que me deje ir con vuestra merced adonde quisiere llevarme.

-*Reducida* has de decir, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, que no *relucida*.

-Una o dos veces -respondió Sancho-, si mal no me acuerdo, he suplicado a vuestra merced que no me emiende los vocablos, si es que entiende lo que quiero decir en ellos, y que, cuando no los entienda, diga: «Sancho, o diablo, no te entiendo»; y si yo no me declarare, entonces podrá emendarme; que yo soy tan fácil...

-No te entiendo, Sancho -dijo luego don Quijote-, pues no sé qué quiere decir soy *tan fácil*.

-*Tan fácil* quiere decir -respondió Sancho- soy *tan así*.

-Menos te entiendo agora -replicó don Quijote.

-Pues si no me puede entender -respondió Sancho-, no sé cómo lo diga: no sé más, y Dios sea conmigo.

-Ya, ya caigo -respondió don Quijote-en ello: tú quieres decir que eres tan *dócil*, blando y mañero que tomarás lo que yo te dijere, y pasarás por lo que te enseñare.

-Apostaré yo -dijo Sancho-que desde el emprincipio me caló y me entendió, sino que quiso turbarme por oírme decir otras docientas patochadas.

-Podrá ser -replicó don Quijote-. Y, en efecto, ¿qué dice Teresa?

-Teresa dice -dijo Sancho-que ate bien mi dedo con vuestra merced, y que hablen cartas y callen barbas, porque quien destaja no baraja, pues más vale un toma que dos te daré. Y yo digo que el consejo de la mujer es poco, y el que no le toma es loco.

-Y yo lo digo también -respondió don Quijote-. Decid, Sancho amigo; pasá adelante, que habláis hoy de perlas.

-Es el caso -replicó Sancho-que, como vuestra merced mejor sabe, todos

estamos sujetos a la muerte, y que hoy somos y mañana no, y que tan presto se va el cordero como el carnero, y que nadie puede prometerse en este mundo más horas de vida de las que Dios quisiere darle, porque la muerte es sorda, y, cuando llega a llamar a las puertas de nuestra vida, siempre va depriesa y no la harán detener ni ruegos, ni fuerzas, ni ceptros, ni mitras, según es pública voz y fama, y según nos lo dicen por esos púlpitos.

-Todo eso es verdad -dijo don Quijote-, pero no sé dónde vas a parar.

-Voy a parar -dijo Sancho-en que vuesa merced me señale salario conocido de lo que me ha de dar cada mes el tiempo que le sirviere, y que el tal salario se me pague de su hacienda; que no quiero estar a mercedes, que llegan tarde, o mal, o nunca; con lo mío me ayude Dios. En fin, yo quiero saber lo que gano, poco o mucho que sea, que sobre un huevo pone la gallina, y muchos pocos hacen un mucho, y mientras se gana algo no se pierde nada. Verdad sea que si sucediese, lo cual ni lo creo ni lo espero, que vuesa merced me diese la ínsula que me tiene prometida, no soy tan ingrato, ni llevo las cosas tan por los cabos, que no querré que se aprecie lo que montare la renta de la tal ínsula, y se descuente de mi salario gata por cantidad.

-Sancho amigo -respondió don Quijote-, a las veces, tan buena suele ser una *gata* como una *rata*.

-Ya entiendo -dijo Sancho-: yo apostaré que había de decir *rata*, y no *gata*; pero no importa nada, pues vuesa merced me ha entendido.

-Y tan entendido -respondió don Quijote-que he penetrado lo último de tus pensamientos, y sé al blanco que tiras con las innumerables saetas de tus refranes. Mira, Sancho: yo bien te señalaría salario, si hubiera hallado en alguna de las historias de los caballeros andantes ejemplo que me descubriese y mostrase, por algún pequeño resquicio, qué es lo que solían ganar cada mes, o cada año; pero yo he leído todas o las más de sus historias, y no me acuerdo haber leído que ningún caballero andante haya señalado conocido salario a su escudero. Sólo sé que todos servían a merced, y que, cuando menos se lo pensaban, si a sus señores les había corrido bien la suerte, se hallaban premiados con una ínsula, o con otra cosa equivalente, y, por lo menos, quedaban con título y señoría. Si con estas esperanzas y aditamentos vos, Sancho, gustáis de volver a servirme, sea en buena hora: que pensar que yo he de sacar de sus términos y quicios la antigua usanza de la caballería andante es pensar en lo escusado. Así que, Sancho mío, volveos a vuestra casa, y declarad a vuestra Teresa mi intención; y si ella gustare y vos gustáredes de estar a merced conmigo, bene quidem; y si no, tan amigos como de antes; que si al palomar no le falta cebo, no le faltarán palomas. Y advertid, hijo, que vale más buena esperanza que ruin posesión, y buena queja que mala paga. Hablo de esta manera, Sancho, por daros a entender que también



como vos sé yo arrojar refranes como llovidos. Y, finalmente, quiero decir, y os digo, que si no queréis venir a merced conmigo y correr la suerte que yo corriere, que Dios quede con vos y os haga un santo; que a mí no me faltarán escuderos más obedientes, más solícitos, y no tan empachados ni tan habladores como vos.

Cuando Sancho oyó la firme resolución de su amo se le anubló el cielo y se le cayeron las alas del corazón, porque tenía creído que su señor no se iría sin él por todos los haberes del mundo; y así, estando suspenso y pensativo, entró Sansón Carrasco y la sobrina, deseosos de oír con qué razones persuadía a su señor que no tornarse a buscar las aventuras. Llegó Sansón, socarrón famoso, y, abrazándole como la vez primera y con voz levantada, le dijo:

-¡Oh flor de la andante caballería; oh luz resplandeciente de las armas; oh honor y espejo de la nación española! Plega a Dios todopoderoso, donde más largamente se contiene, que la persona o personas que pusieren impedimento y estorbaren tu tercera salida, que no la hallen en el laberinto de sus deseos, ni jamás se les cumpla lo que mal desearen.

Y, volviéndose al ama, le dijo:

-Bien puede la señora ama no rezar más la oración de Santa Apolonia, que yo sé que es determinación precisa de las esferas que el señor don Quijote vuelva a ejecutar sus altos y nuevos pensamientos, y yo encargaría mucho mi conciencia si no intimase y persuadiese a este caballero que no tenga más tiempo encogida y detenida la fuerza de su valeroso brazo y la bondad de su ánimo valentísimo, porque defrauda con su tardanza el derecho de los tuertos, el amparo de los huérfanos, la honra de las doncellas, el favor de las viudas y el arrimo de las casadas, y otras cosas deste jaez, que tocan, atañen, dependen y son anejas a la orden de la caballería andante. ¡Ea, señor don Quijote mío, hermoso y bravo, antes hoy que mañana se ponga vuestra merced y su grandeza en camino; y si alguna cosa faltare para ponerle en ejecución, aquí estoy yo para suplirla con mi persona y hacienda; y si fuere necesidad servir a tu magnificencia de escudero, lo tendré a felicísima ventura!

A esta sazón, dijo don Quijote, volviéndose a Sancho:

-¿No te dije yo, Sancho, que me habían de sobrar escuderos? Mira quién se ofrece a serlo, sino el inaudito bachiller Sansón Carrasco, perpetuo trastulo y regocijador de los patios de las escuelas salmantenses, sano de su persona, ágil de sus miembros, callado, sufridor así del calor como del frío, así de la hambre como de la sed, con todas aquellas partes que se requieren para ser escudero de un caballero andante. Pero no permita el cielo que, por seguir mi gusto, desjarrete y quiebre la columna de las letras y el vaso de las ciencias, y tronque la palma eminente de las buenas y liberales artes. Quédese el nuevo Sansón en su

patria, y, honrándola, honre juntamente las canas de sus ancianos padres; que yo con cualquier escudero estaré contento, ya que Sancho no se digna de venir conmigo.

-Sí digno -respondió Sancho, enternecido y llenos de lágrimas los ojos; y prosiguió-: No se dirá por mí, señor mío: el pan comido y la compañía deshecha; sí, que no vengo yo de alguna alcurnia desagradecida, que ya sabe todo el mundo, y especialmente mi pueblo, quién fueron los Panzas, de quien yo deciendo, y más, que tengo conocido y calado por muchas buenas obras, y por más buenas palabras, el deseo que vuestra merced tiene de hacerme merced; y si me he puesto en cuentas de tanto más cuanto acerca de mi salario, ha sido por complacer a mi mujer; la cual, cuando toma la mano a persuadir una cosa, no hay mazo que tanto apriete los aros de una cuba como ella aprieta a que se haga lo que quiere; pero, en efeto, el hombre ha de ser hombre, y la mujer, mujer; y, pues yo soy hombre dondequiera, que no lo puedo negar, también lo quiero ser en mi casa, pese a quien pesare; y así, no hay más que hacer, sino que vuestra merced ordene su testamento con su codicilo, en modo que no se pueda revolcar, y pongámonos luego en camino, porque no padezca el alma del señor Sansón, que dice que su conciencia le lita que persuada a vuestra merced a salir vez tercera por ese mundo; y yo de nuevo me ofrezco a servir a vuestra merced fiel y legalmente, tan bien y mejor que cuantos escuderos han servido a caballeros andantes en los pasados y presentes tiempos.

Admirado quedó el bachiller de oír el término y modo de hablar de Sancho Panza; que, puesto que había leído la primera historia de su señor, nunca creyó que era tan gracioso como allí le pintan; pero, oyéndole decir ahora testamento y codicilo que no se pueda *revolcar*, en lugar de testamento y codicilo que no se pueda *revocar*, creyó todo lo que dél había leído, y confirmólo por uno de los más solenes mentecatos de nuestros siglos; y dijo entre sí que tales dos locos como amo y mozo no se habrían visto en el mundo.

Finalmente, don Quijote y Sancho se abrazaron y quedaron amigos, y con parecer y beneplácito del gran Carrasco, que por entonces era su oráculo, se ordenó que de allí a tres días fuese su partida; en los cuales habría lugar de aderezar lo necesario para el viaje, y de buscar una celada de encaje, que en todas maneras dijo don Quijote que la había de llevar. Ofreciósela Sansón, porque sabía no se la negaría un amigo suyo que la tenía, puesto que estaba más oscura por el orín y el moho que clara y limpia por el terso acero.

Las maldiciones que las dos, ama y sobrina, echaron al bachiller no tuvieron cuento: mesaron sus cabellos, arañaron sus rostros, y, al modo de las endechaderas que se usaban, lamentaban la partida como si fuera la muerte de su señor. El designo que tuvo Sansón, para persuadirle a que otra vez saliese, fue

hacer lo que adelante cuenta la historia, todo por consejo del cura y del barbero, con quien él antes lo había comunicado.

En resolución, en aquellos tres días don Quijote y Sancho se acomodaron de lo que les pareció convenirles; y, habiendo aplacado Sancho a su mujer, y don Quijote a su sobrina y a su ama, al anochecer, sin que nadie lo viese, sino el bachiller, que quiso acompañarles media legua del lugar, se pusieron en camino del Toboso: don Quijote sobre su buen Rocinante, y Sancho sobre su antiguo rucio, proveídas las alforjas de cosas tocantes a la bucólica, y la bolsa de dineros que le dio don Quijote para lo que se ofreciese. Abrazóle Sansón, y suplicóle le avisase de su buena o mala suerte, para alegrarse con ésta o entristecerse con aquélla, como las leyes de su amistad pedían. Prometióselo don Quijote, dio Sansón la vuelta a su lugar, y los dos tomaron la de la gran ciudad del Toboso.

## Capítulo VIII

*Donde se cuenta lo que le sucedió a don Quijote yendo a ver su señora Dulcinea del Toboso*

«¡BENDITO sea el poderoso Alá! -dice Hamete Benengeli al comienzo deste octavo capítulo-. ¡Bendito sea Alá!», repite tres veces; y dice que da estas bendiciones por ver que tiene ya en campaña a don Quijote y a Sancho, y que los lectores de su agradable historia pueden hacer cuenta que desde este punto comienzan las hazañas y donaires de don Quijote y de su escudero; persuádeles que se les olviden las pasadas caballerías del ingenioso hidalgo, y pongan los ojos en las que están por venir, que desde agora en el camino del Toboso comienzan, como las otras comenzaron en los campos de Montiel, y no es mucho lo que pide para tanto como él promete; y así prosigue diciendo:

Solos quedaron don Quijote y Sancho, y, apenas se hubo apartado Sansón, cuando comenzó a relinchar Rocinante y a sospirar el rucio, que de entrambos, caballero y escudero, fue tenido a buena señal y por felicísimo agüero; aunque, si se ha de contar la verdad, más fueron los sospiros y rebuznos del rucio que los relinchos del rocín, de donde coligió Sancho que su ventura había de sobrepujar y ponerse encima de la de su señor, fundándose no sé si en astrología judiciaria que él se sabía, puesto que la historia no lo declara; sólo le oyeron decir que, cuando tropezaba o caía, se holgara no haber salido de casa, porque del tropezar o caer no se sacaba otra cosa sino el zapato roto o las costillas quebradas; y, aunque tonto, no andaba en esto muy fuera de camino. Díjole don Quijote:

-Sancho amigo, la noche se nos va entrando a más andar, y con más escuridad de la que habíamos menester para alcanzar a ver con el día al Toboso, adonde tengo determinado de ir antes que en otra aventura me ponga, y allí tomaré la bendición y buena licencia de la sin par Dulcinea, con la cual licencia pienso y tengo por cierto de acabar y dar felice cima a toda peligrosa aventura, porque ninguna cosa desta vida hace más valientes a los caballeros andantes que verse favorecidos de sus damas.

-Yo así lo creo -respondió Sancho-; pero tengo por dificultoso que vuestra merced pueda hablarla ni verse con ella, en parte, a lo menos, que pueda recibir su bendición, si ya no se la echa desde las bardas del corral, por donde yo la vi la vez primera, cuando le llevé la carta donde iban las nuevas de las sandeces y

locuras que vuestra merced quedaba haciendo en el corazón de Sierra Morena.

-¿Bardas de corral se te antojaron aquéllas, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, adonde o por donde viste aquella jamás bastantemente alabada gentileza y hermosura? No debían de ser sino galerías o corredores, o lonjas, o como las llaman, de ricos y reales palacios.

-Todo pudo ser -respondió Sancho-, pero a mí bardas me parecieron, si no es que soy falto de memoria.

-Con todo eso, vamos allá, Sancho -replicó don Quijote-, que como yo la vea, eso se me da que sea por bardas que por ventanas, o por resquicios, o verjas de jardines; que cualquier rayo que del sol de su belleza llegue a mis ojos alumbrará mi entendimiento y fortalecerá mi corazón, de modo que quede único y sin igual en la discreción y en la valentía.

-Pues en verdad, señor -respondió Sancho-, que cuando yo vi ese sol de la señora Dulcinea del Toboso, que no estaba tan claro, que pudiese echar de sí rayos algunos, y debió de ser que, como su merced estaba ahechando aquel trigo que dije, el mucho polvo que sacaba se le puso como nube ante el rostro y se le oscureció.

-¡Que todavía das, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, en decir, en pensar, en creer y en porfiar que mi señora Dulcinea ahechaba trigo, siendo eso un menester y ejercicio que va desviado de todo lo que hacen y deben hacer las personas principales que están constituidas y guardadas para otros ejercicios y entretenimientos, que muestran a tiro de ballesta su principalidad...! Mal se te acuerdan a ti, ¡oh Sancho!, aquellos versos de nuestro poeta donde nos pinta las labores que hacían allá en sus moradas de cristal aquellas cuatro ninfas que del Tajo amado sacaron las cabezas, y se sentaron a labrar en el prado verde aquellas ricas telas que allí el ingenioso poeta nos describe, que todas eran de oro, sirgo y perlas contestas y tejidas. Y desta manera debía de ser el de mi señora cuando tú la viste; sino que la envidia que algún mal encantador debe de tener a mis cosas, todas las que me han de dar gusto trueca y vuelve en diferentes figuras que ellas tienen; y así, temo que, en aquella historia que dicen que anda impresa de mis hazañas, si por ventura ha sido su autor algún sabio mi enemigo, habrá puesto unas cosas por otras, mezclando con una verdad mil mentiras, divirtiéndose a contar otras acciones fuera de lo que requiere la continuación de una verdadera historia. ¡Oh envidia, raíz de infinitos males y carcoma de las virtudes! Todos los vicios, Sancho, traen un no sé qué de deleite consigo, pero el de la envidia no trae sino disgustos, rancores y rabias.

-Eso es lo que yo digo también -respondió Sancho-, y pienso que en esa leyenda o historia que nos dijo el bachiller Carrasco que de nosotros había visto debe de andar mi honra a coche acá, cinchado, y, como dicen, al estricote, aquí y

allí, barriendo las calles. Pues, a fe de bueno, que no he dicho yo mal de ningún encantador, ni tengo tantos bienes que pueda ser envidiado; bien es verdad que soy algo malicioso, y que tengo mis ciertos asomos de bellaco, pero todo lo cubre y tapa la gran capa de la simpleza mía, siempre natural y nunca artificiosa. Y cuando otra cosa no tuviese sino el creer, como siempre creo, firme y verdaderamente en Dios y en todo aquello que tiene y cree la Santa Iglesia Católica Romana, y el ser enemigo mortal, como lo soy, de los judíos, debían los historiadores tener misericordia de mí y tratarme bien en sus escritos. Pero digan lo que quisieren; que desnudo nací, desnudo me hallo: ni pierdo ni gano; aunque, por verme puesto en libros y andar por ese mundo de mano en mano, no se me da un higo que digan de mí todo lo que quisieren.

-Eso me parece, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, a lo que sucedió a un famoso poeta destos tiempos, el cual, habiendo hecho una maliciosa sátira contra todas las damas cortesanas, no puso ni nombró en ella a una dama que se podía dudar si lo era o no; la cual, viendo que no estaba en la lista de las demás, se quejó al poeta, diciéndole que qué había visto en ella para no ponerla en el número de las otras, y que alargase la sátira, y la pusiese en el ensanche; si no, que mirase para lo que había nacido. Hízolo así el poeta, y púsola cual no digan dueñas, y ella quedó satisfecha, por verse con fama, aunque infame. También viene con esto lo que cuentan de aquel pastor que puso fuego y abrasó el templo famoso de Diana, contado por una de las siete maravillas del mundo, sólo porque quedase vivo su nombre en los siglos venideros; y, aunque se mandó que nadie le nombrase, ni hiciese por palabra o por escrito mención de su nombre, porque no consiguiese el fin de su deseo, todavía se supo que se llamaba Eróstrato. También alude a esto lo que sucedió al grande emperador Carlo Quinto con un caballero en Roma. Quiso ver el emperador aquel famoso templo de la Rotunda, que en la antigüedad se llamó el templo de todos los dioses, y ahora, con mejor vocación, se llama de todos los santos, y es el edificio que más entero ha quedado de los que alzó la gentilidad en Roma, y es el que más conserva la fama de la grandiosidad y magnificencia de sus fundadores: él es de hechura de una media naranja, grandísimo en extremo, y está muy claro, sin entrarle otra luz que la que le concede una ventana, o, por mejor decir, claraboya redonda que está en su cima, desde la cual mirando el emperador el edificio, estaba con él y a su lado un caballero romano, declarándole los primores y sutilezas de aquella gran máquina y memorable arquitectura; y, habiéndose quitado de la claraboya, dijo al emperador: «Mil veces, Sacra Majestad, me vino deseo de abrazarme con vuestra Majestad y arrojar me de aquella claraboya abajo, por dejar de mí fama eterna en el mundo». «Yo os agradezco -respondió el emperador-el no haber puesto tan mal pensamiento en efeto, y de aquí adelante no os pondré yo en

ocasión que volváis a hacer prueba de vuestra lealtad; y así, os mando que jamás me habléis, ni estéis donde yo estuviere». Y, tras estas palabras, le hizo una gran merced. Quiero decir, Sancho, que el deseo de alcanzar fama es activo en gran manera. ¿Quién piensas tú que arrojó a Horacio del puente abajo, armado de todas armas, en la profundidad del Tíbre? ¿Quién abrasó el brazo y la mano a Mucio? ¿Quién impelió a Curcio a lanzarse en la profunda sima ardiente que apareció en la mitad de Roma? ¿Quién, contra todos los agüeros que en contra se le habían mostrado, hizo pasar el Rubicón a César? Y, con ejemplos más modernos, ¿quién barrenó los navíos y dejó en seco y aislados los valerosos españoles guiados por el cortesísimo Cortés en el Nuevo Mundo? Todas estas y otras grandes y diferentes hazañas son, fueron y serán obras de la fama, que los mortales desean como premios y parte de la inmortalidad que sus famosos hechos merecen, puesto que los cristianos, católicos y andantes caballeros más habemos de atender a la gloria de los siglos venideros, que es eterna en las regiones etéreas y celestes, que a la vanidad de la fama que en este presente y acabable siglo se alcanza; la cual fama, por mucho que dure, en fin se ha de acabar con el mismo mundo, que tiene su fin señalado. Así, ¡oh Sancho!, que nuestras obras no han de salir del límite que nos tiene puesto la religión cristiana, que profesamos. Hemos de matar en los gigantes a la soberbia; a la envidia, en la generosidad y buen pecho; a la ira, en el reposado continente y quietud del ánimo; a la gula y al sueño, en el poco comer que comemos y en el mucho velar que velamos; a la lujuria y lascivia, en la lealtad que guardamos a las que hemos hecho señoras de nuestros pensamientos; a la pereza, con andar por todas las partes del mundo, buscando las ocasiones que nos puedan hacer y hagan, sobre cristianos, famosos caballeros. Ves aquí, Sancho, los medios por donde se alcanzan los extremos de alabanzas que consigo trae la buena fama.

-Todo lo que vuestra merced hasta aquí me ha dicho -dijo Sancho-lo he entendido muy bien, pero, con todo eso, querría que vuestra merced me sorbiese una duda que agora en este punto me ha venido a la memoria.

-Asolviese quieres decir, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-. Di en buen hora, que yo responderé lo que supiere.

-Dígame, señor -prosiguió Sancho-: esos Julios o Agostos, y todos esos caballeros hazañosos que ha dicho, que ya son muertos, ¿dónde están agora?

-Los gentiles -respondió don Quijote-sin duda están en el infierno; los cristianos, si fueron buenos cristianos, o están en el purgatorio o en el cielo.

-Está bien -dijo Sancho-, pero sepamos ahora: esas sepulturas donde están los cuerpos desos señorazos, ¿tienen delante de sí lámparas de plata, o están adornadas las paredes de sus capillas de muletas, de mortajas, de cabelleras, de piernas y de ojos de cera? Y si desto no, ¿de qué están adornadas?

A lo que respondió don Quijote:

-Los sepulcros de los gentiles fueron por la mayor parte suntuosos templos: las cenizas del cuerpo de Julio César se pusieron sobre una pirámide de piedra de desmesurada grandeza, a quien hoy llaman en Roma *La aguja de San Pedro*; al emperador Adriano le sirvió de sepultura un castillo tan grande como una buena aldea, a quien llamaron Moles Hadriani, que agora es el castillo de Santángel en Roma; la reina Artemisa sepultó a su marido Mausoleo en un sepulcro que se tuvo por una de las siete maravillas del mundo; pero ninguna destas sepulturas ni otras muchas que tuvieron los gentiles se adornaron con mortajas ni con otras ofrendas y señales que mostrasen ser santos los que en ellas estaban sepultados.

-A eso voy -replicó Sancho-. Y dígame agora: ¿cuál es más: resucitar a un muerto, o matar a un gigante?

-La respuesta está en la mano -respondió don Quijote-: más es resucitar a un muerto.

-Cogido le tengo -dijo Sancho-: luego la fama del que resucita muertos, da vista a los ciegos, endereza los cojos y da salud a los enfermos, y delante de sus sepulturas arden lámparas, y están llenas sus capillas de gentes devotas que de rodillas adoran sus reliquias, mejor fama será, para este y para el otro siglo, que la que dejaron y dejaren cuantos emperadores gentiles y caballeros andantes ha habido en el mundo.

-También confieso esa verdad -respondió don Quijote.

-Pues esta fama, estas gracias, estas prerrogativas, como llaman a esto -respondió Sancho-, tienen los cuerpos y las reliquias de los santos que, con aprobación y licencia de nuestra santa madre Iglesia, tienen lámparas, velas, mortajas, muletas, pinturas, cabelleras, ojos, piernas, con que aumentan la devoción y engrandecen su cristiana fama. Los cuerpos de los santos o sus reliquias llevan los reyes sobre sus hombros, besan los pedazos de sus huesos, adornan y enriquecen con ellos sus oratorios y sus más preciados altares...

-¿Qué quieres que infiera, Sancho, de todo lo que has dicho? -dijo don Quijote.

-Quiero decir -dijo Sancho- que nos demos a ser santos, y alcanzaremos más brevemente la buena fama que pretendemos; y advierta, señor, que ayer o antes de ayer, que, según ha poco se puede decir desta manera, canonizaron o beatificaron dos frailecitos descalzos, cuyas cadenas de hierro con que ceñían y atormentaban sus cuerpos se tiene ahora a gran ventura el besarlas y tocarlas, y están en más veneración que está, según dije, la espada de Roldán en la armería del rey, nuestro señor, que Dios guarde. Así que, señor mío, más vale ser humilde frailecito, de cualquier orden que sea, que valiente y andante caballero; mas alcanzan con Dios dos docenas de diciplinas que dos mil lanzadas, ora las



den a gigantes, ora a vestiglos o a endrigos.

-Todo eso es así -respondió don Quijote-, pero no todos podemos ser frailes, y muchos son los caminos por donde lleva Dios a los suyos al cielo: religión es la caballería; caballeros santos hay en la gloria.

-Sí -respondió Sancho-, pero yo he oído decir que hay más frailes en el cielo que caballeros andantes.

-Eso es -respondió don Quijote- porque es mayor el número de los religiosos que el de los caballeros.

-Muchos son los andantes -dijo Sancho.

-Muchos -respondió don Quijote-, pero pocos los que merecen nombre de caballeros.

En estas y otras semejantes pláticas se les pasó aquella noche y el día siguiente, sin acontecerles cosa que de contar fuese, de que no poco le pesó a don Quijote. En fin, otro día, al anochecer, descubrieron la gran ciudad del Toboso, con cuya vista se le alegraron los espíritus a don Quijote y se le entristecieron a Sancho, porque no sabía la casa de Dulcinea, ni en su vida la había visto, como no la había visto su señor; de modo que el uno por verla, y el otro por no haberla visto, estaban alborotados, y no imaginaba Sancho qué había de hacer cuando su dueño le enviase al Toboso. Finalmente, ordenó don Quijote entrar en la ciudad entrada la noche, y, en tanto que la hora se llegaba, se quedaron entre unas encinas que cerca del Toboso estaban, y, llegado el determinado punto, entraron en la ciudad, donde les sucedió cosas que a cosas llegan.

## Capítulo IX

*Donde se cuenta lo que en él se verá*

MEDIA noche era por filo, poco más a menos, cuando don Quijote y Sancho dejaron el monte y entraron en el Toboso. Estaba el pueblo en un sosegado silencio, porque todos sus vecinos dormían y reposaban a pierna tendida, como suele decirse. Era la noche entreclara, puesto que quisiera Sancho que fuera del todo oscura, por hallar en su oscuridad disculpa de su sandez. No se oía en todo el lugar sino ladridos de perros, que atronaban los oídos de don Quijote y turbaban el corazón de Sancho. De cuando en cuando, rebuznaba un jumento, gruñían puercos, mayaban gatos, cuyas voces, de diferentes sonidos, se aumentaban con el silencio de la noche, todo lo cual tuvo el enamorado caballero a mal agüero; pero, con todo esto, dijo a Sancho:

-Sancho, hijo, guía al palacio de Dulcinea: quizá podrá ser que la hallemos despierta.

-¿A qué palacio tengo de guiar, cuerpo del sol -respondió Sancho-, que en el que yo vi a su grandeza no era sino casa muy pequeña?

-Debía de estar retirada, entonces -respondió don Quijote-, en algún pequeño apartamiento de su alcázar, solazándose a solas con sus doncellas, como es uso y costumbre de las altas señoras y princesas.

-Señor -dijo Sancho-, ya que vuestra merced quiere, a pesar mío, que sea alcázar la casa de mi señora Dulcinea, ¿es hora ésta por ventura de hallar la puerta abierta? Y ¿será bien que demos aldabazos para que nos oyan y nos abran, metiendo en alboroto y rumor toda la gente? ¿Vamos por dicha a llamar a la casa de nuestras mancebas, como hacen los abarraganados, que llegan, y llaman, y entran a cualquier hora, por tarde que sea?

-Hallemos primero una por una el alcázar -replicó don Quijote-, que entonces yo te diré, Sancho, lo que será bien que hagamos. Y advierte, Sancho, que yo veo poco, o que aquel bulto grande y sombra que desde aquí se descubre la debe de hacer el palacio de Dulcinea.

-Pues guíe vuestra merced -respondió Sancho-: quizá será así; aunque yo lo veré con los ojos y lo tocaré con las manos, y así lo creeré yo como creer que es ahora de día.

Guió don Quijote, y, habiendo andado como docientos pasos, dio con el bulto que hacía la sombra, y vio una gran torre, y luego conoció que el tal edificio no

era alcázar, sino la iglesia principal del pueblo. Y dijo:

-Con la iglesia hemos dado, Sancho.

-Ya lo veo -respondió Sancho-; y plega a Dios que no demos con nuestra sepultura, que no es buena señal andar por los cimiterios a tales horas, y más, habiendo yo dicho a vuestra merced, si mal no me acuerdo, que la casa desta señora ha de estar en una callejuela sin salida.

-¡Maldito seas de Dios, mentecato! -dijo don Quijote-. ¿Adónde has tú hallado que los alcázares y palacios reales estén edificadas en callejuelas sin salida?

-Señor -respondió Sancho-, en cada tierra su uso: quizá se usa aquí en el Toboso edificar en callejuelas los palacios y edificios grandes; y así, suplico a vuestra merced me deje buscar por estas calles o callejuelas que se me ofrecen: podría ser que en algún rincón topase con ese alcázar, que le vea yo comido de perros, que así nos trae corridos y asendereados.

-Habla con respeto, Sancho, de las cosas de mi señora -dijo don Quijote-, y tengamos la fiesta en paz, y no arrojemos la soga tras el caldero.

-Yo me reportaré -respondió Sancho-; pero, ¿con qué paciencia podré llevar que quiera vuestra merced que de sola una vez que vi la casa de nuestra ama, la haya de saber siempre y hallarla a media noche, no hallándola vuestra merced, que la debe de haber visto millares de veces?

-Tú me harás desesperar, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-. Ven acá, hereje: ¿no te he dicho mil veces que en todos los días de mi vida no he visto a la sin par Dulcinea, ni jamás atravesé los umbrales de su palacio, y que sólo estoy enamorado de oídas y de la gran fama que tiene de hermosa y discreta?

-Ahora lo oigo -respondió Sancho-; y digo que, pues vuestra merced no la ha visto, ni yo tampoco...

-Eso no puede ser -replicó don Quijote-; que, por lo menos, ya me has dicho tú que la viste ahechando trigo, cuando me trujiste la respuesta de la carta que le envié contigo.

-No se atenga a eso, señor -respondió Sancho-, porque le hago saber que también fue de oídas la vista y la respuesta que le truje; porque, así sé yo quién es la señora Dulcinea como dar un puño en el cielo.

-Sancho, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, tiempos hay de burlar, y tiempos donde caen y parecen mal las burlas. No porque yo diga que ni he visto ni hablado a la señora de mi alma has tú de decir también que ni la has hablado ni visto, siendo tan al revés como sabes.

Estando los dos en estas pláticas, vieron que venía a pasar por donde estaban uno con dos mulas, que, por el ruido que hacía el arado, que arrastraba por el suelo, juzgaron que debía de ser labrador, que habría madrugado antes del día a ir a su labranza; y así fue la verdad. Venía el labrador cantando aquel romance

que dicen:

Mala la hubistes, franceses,  
en esa de Roncesvalles.

-Que me maten, Sancho -dijo, en oyéndole, don Quijote-, si nos ha de suceder cosa buena esta noche. ¿No oyes lo que viene cantando ese villano?

-Sí oigo -respondió Sancho-; pero, ¿qué hace a nuestro propósito la caza de Roncesvalles? Así pudiera cantar el romance de Caláinos, que todo fuera uno para sucedernos bien o mal en nuestro negocio.

Llegó, en esto, el labrador, a quien don Quijote preguntó:

-¿Sabréisme decir, buen amigo, que buena ventura os dé Dios, dónde son por aquí los palacios de la sin par princesa doña Dulcinea del Toboso?

-Señor -respondió el mozo-, yo soy forastero y ha pocos días que estoy en este pueblo, sirviendo a un labrador rico en la labranza del campo; en esa casa frontera viven el cura y el sacristán del lugar; entrambos, o cualquier dellos, sabrá dar a vuestra merced razón desa señora princesa, porque tienen la lista de todos los vecinos del Toboso; aunque para mí tengo que en todo él no vive princesa alguna; muchas señoras, sí, principales, que cada una en su casa puede ser princesa.

-Pues entre éstas -dijo don Quijote-debe de estar, amigo, ésta por quien te pregunto.

-Podría ser -respondió el mozo-; y adiós, que ya viene el alba.

Y, dando a sus mulas, no atendió a más preguntas. Sancho, que vio suspenso a su señor y asaz mal contento, le dijo:

-Señor, ya se viene a más andar el día, y no será acertado dejar que nos halle el sol en la calle; mejor será que nos salgamos fuera de la ciudad, y que vuestra merced se embosque en alguna floresta aquí cercana, y yo volveré de día, y no dejaré ostugo en todo este lugar donde no busque la casa, alcázar o palacio de mi señora, y asaz sería de desdichado si no le hallase; y, hallándole, hablaré con su merced, y le diré dónde y cómo queda vuestra merced esperando que le dé orden y traza para verla, sin menoscabo de su honra y fama.

-Has dicho, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, mil sentencias encerradas en el círculo de breves palabras: el consejo que ahora me has dado le apetezco y recibo de bonísima gana. Ven, hijo, y vamos a buscar donde me embosque, que tú volverás, como dices, a buscar, a ver y hablar a mi señora, de cuya discreción y cortesía espero más que milagrosos favores.

Rabiaba Sancho por sacar a su amo del pueblo, porque no averiguase la mentira de la respuesta que de parte de Dulcinea le había llevado a Sierra Morena; y así, dio priesa a la salida, que fue luego, y a dos millas del lugar hallaron una floresta o bosque, donde don Quijote se emboscó en tanto que Sancho volvía a la ciudad a hablar a Dulcinea; en cuya embajada le sucedieron cosas que piden nueva atención y nuevo crédito.

## Capítulo X

*Donde se cuenta la industria que Sancho tuvo para encantar a la señora Dulcinea, y de otros sucesos tan ridículos como verdaderos*

LLEGANDO el autor desta grande historia a contar lo que en este capítulo cuenta, dice que quisiera pasarle en silencio, temeroso de que no había de ser creído, porque las locuras de don Quijote llegaron aquí al término y raya de las mayores que pueden imaginarse, y aun pasaron dos tiros de ballesta más allá de las mayores. Finalmente, aunque con este miedo y recelo, las escribió de la misma manera que él las hizo, sin añadir ni quitar a la historia un átomo de la verdad, sin dársele nada por las objeciones que podían ponerle de mentiroso. Y tuvo razón, porque la verdad adelgaza y no quiebra, y siempre anda sobre la mentira como el aceite sobre el agua.

Y así, prosiguiendo su historia, dice que, así como don Quijote se emboscó en la floresta, encinar o selva junto al gran Toboso, mandó a Sancho volver a la ciudad, y que no volviese a su presencia sin haber primero hablado de su parte a su señora, pidiéndola fuese servida de dejarse ver de su cautivo caballero, y se dignase de echarle su bendición, para que pudiese esperar por ella felicísimos sucesos de todos sus acometimientos y dificultosas empresas. Encargóse Sancho de hacerlo así como se le mandaba, y de traerle tan buena respuesta como le trujo la vez primera.

-Anda, hijo -replicó don Quijote-, y no te turbes cuando te vieres ante la luz del sol de hermosura que vas a buscar. ¡Dichoso tú sobre todos los escuderos del mundo! Ten memoria, y no se te pase della cómo te recibe: si muda las colores el tiempo que la estuvieres dando mi embajada; si se desasosiega y turba oyendo mi nombre; si no cabe en la almohada, si acaso la hallas sentada en el estrado rico de su autoridad; y si está en pie, mírala si se pone ahora sobre el uno, ahora sobre el otro pie; si te repite la respuesta que te diere dos o tres veces; si la muda de blanda en áspera, de aceda en amorosa; si levanta la mano al cabello para componerle, aunque no esté desordenado; finalmente, hijo, mira todas sus acciones y movimientos; porque si tú me los relatares como ellos fueron, sacaré yo lo que ella tiene escondido en lo secreto de su corazón acerca de lo que al fecho de mis amores toca; que has de saber, Sancho, si no lo sabes, que entre los amantes, las acciones y movimientos exteriores que muestran, cuando de sus amores se trata, son certísimos correos que traen las nuevas de lo que allá en lo

interior del alma pasa. Ve, amigo, y guíete otra mejor ventura que la mía, y vuélvate otro mejor suceso del que yo quedo temiendo y esperando en esta amarga soledad en que me dejas.

-Yo iré y volveré presto -dijo Sancho-; y ensanche vuestra merced, señor mío, ese corazoncillo, que le debe de tener agora no mayor que una avellana, y considere que se suele decir que buen corazón quebranta mala ventura, y que donde no hay tocinos, no hay estacas; y también se dice: donde no piensa, salta la liebre. Dígolo porque si esta noche no hallamos los palacios o alcázares de mi señora, agora que es de día los pienso hallar, cuando menos los piense, y hallados, déjenme a mí con ella.

-Por cierto, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, que siempre traes tus refranes tan a pelo de lo que tratamos cuanto me dé Dios mejor ventura en lo que deseo.

Esto dicho, volvió Sancho las espaldas y vareó su rucio, y don Quijote se quedó a caballo, descansando sobre los estribos y sobre el arrimo de su lanza, lleno de tristes y confusas imaginaciones, donde le dejaremos, yéndonos con Sancho Panza, que no menos confuso y pensativo se apartó de su señor que él quedaba; y tanto, que, apenas hubo salido del bosque, cuando, volviendo la cabeza y viendo que don Quijote no parecía, se apeó del jumento, y, sentándose al pie de un árbol, comenzó a hablar consigo mismo y a decirse:

-Sepamos agora, Sancho hermano, adónde va vuesa merced. ¿Va a buscar algún jumento que se le haya perdido? «No, por cierto». Pues, ¿qué va a buscar? «Voy a buscar, como quien no dice nada, a una princesa, y en ella al sol de la hermosura y a todo el cielo junto». Y ¿adónde pensáis hallar eso que decís, Sancho? «¿Adónde? En la gran ciudad del Toboso». Y bien: ¿y de parte de quién la vais a buscar? «De parte del famoso caballero don Quijote de la Mancha, que desfaze los tuertos, y da de comer al que ha sed, y de beber al que ha hambre». Todo eso está muy bien. Y ¿sabéis su casa, Sancho? «Mi amo dice que han de ser unos reales palacios o unos soberbios alcázares». Y ¿habéisla visto algún día por ventura? «Ni yo ni mi amo la hemos visto jamás». Y ¿paréceos que fuera acertado y bien hecho que si los del Toboso supiesen que estáis vos aquí con intención de ir a sonsacarles sus princesas y a desasosegarles sus damas, viniesen y os moliesen las costillas a puros palos, y no os dejasen hueso sano? «En verdad que tendrían mucha razón, cuando no considerasen que soy mandado, y que *mensajero sois, amigo, no merecéis culpa, non*». No os fiéis en eso, Sancho, porque la gente manchega es tan colérica como honrada, y no consiente cosquillas de nadie. Vive Dios que si os huele, que os mando mala ventura. «¡Oxte, puto! ¡Allá darás, rayo! ¡No, sino ándeme yo buscando tres pies al gato por el gusto ajeno! Y más, que así será buscar a Dulcinea por el Toboso como a Marica por Rávena, o al bachiller en Salamanca. ¡El diablo, el diablo me

ha metido a mí en esto, que otro no!»

Este soliloquio pasó consigo Sancho, y lo que sacó dél fue que volvió a decirse:

-Ahora bien, todas las cosas tienen remedio, si no es la muerte, debajo de cuyo yugo hemos de pasar todos, mal que nos pese, al acabar de la vida. Este mi amo, por mil señales, he visto que es un loco de atar, y aun también yo no le quedo en zaga, pues soy más mentecato que él, pues le sigo y le sirvo, si es verdadero el refrán que dice: «Dime con quién andas, decirte he quién eres», y el otro de «No con quien naces, sino con quien paces». Siendo, pues, loco, como lo es, y de locura que las más veces toma unas cosas por otras, y juzga lo blanco por negro y lo negro por blanco, como se pareció cuando dijo que los molinos de viento eran gigantes, y las mulas de los religiosos dromedarios, y las manadas de carneros ejércitos de enemigos, y otras muchas cosas a este tono, no será muy difícil hacerle creer que una labradora, la primera que me topare por aquí, es la señora Dulcinea; y, cuando él no lo crea, juraré yo; y si él jurare, tomaré yo a jurar; y si porfiare, porfiaré yo más, y de manera que tengo de tener la mía siempre sobre el hito, venga lo que viniere. Quizá con esta porfía acabaré con él que no me envíe otra vez a semejantes mensajerías, viendo cuán mal recado le traigo dellas, o quizá pensará, como yo imagino, que algún mal encantador de estos que él dice que le quieren mal la habrá mudado la figura por hacerle mal y daño.

Con esto que pensó Sancho Panza quedó sosegado su espíritu, y tuvo por bien acabado su negocio, y deteniéndose allí hasta la tarde, por dar lugar a que don Quijote pensase que le había tenido para ir y volver del Toboso; y sucedióle todo tan bien que, cuando se levantó para subir en el rucio, vio que del Toboso hacia donde él estaba venían tres labradoras sobre tres pollinos, o pollinas, que el autor no lo declara, aunque más se puede creer que eran borricas, por ser ordinaria caballería de las aldeanas; pero, como no va mucho en esto, no hay para qué detenernos en averiguarlo. En resolución: así como Sancho vio a las labradoras, a paso tirado volvió a buscar a su señor don Quijote, y hallóle suspirando y diciendo mil amorosas lamentaciones. Como don Quijote le vio, le dijo:

-¿Qué hay, Sancho amigo? ¿Podré señalar este día con piedra blanca, o con negra?

-Mejor será -respondió Sancho- que vuesa merced la señale con almagre, como rétulos de cátedras, porque le echen bien de ver los que le vieren.

-De ese modo -replicó don Quijote-, buenas nuevas traes.

-Tan buenas -respondió Sancho-, que no tiene más que hacer vuesa merced sino picar a Rocinante y salir a lo raso a ver a la señora Dulcinea del Toboso, que con otras dos doncellas suyas viene a ver a vuesa merced.



-¡Santo Dios! ¿Qué es lo que dices, Sancho amigo? -dijo don Quijote-. Mira no me engañes, ni quieras con falsas alegrías alegrar mis verdaderas tristezas.

-¿Qué sacaría yo de engañar a vuesa merced -respondió Sancho-, y más estando tan cerca de descubrir mi verdad? Pique, señor, y venga, y verá venir a la princesa, nuestra ama, vestida y adornada, en fin, como quien ella es. Sus doncellas y ella todas son una ascua de oro, todas mazorcas de perlas, todas son diamantes, todas rubíes, todas telas de brocado de más de diez altos; los cabellos, sueltos por las espaldas, que son otros tantos rayos del sol que andan jugando con el viento; y, sobre todo, vienen a caballo sobre tres cananeas remendadas, que no hay más que ver.

-*Hacaneas* querrás decir, Sancho.

-Poca diferencia hay -respondió Sancho- de *cananeas* a *hacaneas*; pero, vengan sobre lo que vinieren, ellas vienen las más galanas señoras que se puedan desear, especialmente la princesa Dulcinea, mi señora, que pasma los sentidos.

-Vamos, Sancho hijo -respondió don Quijote-; y, en albricias destas no esperadas como buenas nuevas, te mando el mejor despojo que ganare en la primera aventura que tuviere, y si esto no te contenta, te mando las crías que este año me dieren las tres yeguas mías, que tú sabes que quedan para parir en el prado concejil de nuestro pueblo.

-A las crías me atengo -respondió Sancho-, porque de ser buenos los despojos de la primera aventura no está muy cierto.

Ya en esto salieron de la selva, y descubrieron cerca a las tres aldeanas. Tendió don Quijote los ojos por todo el camino del Toboso, y como no vio sino a las tres labradoras, turbóse todo, y preguntó a Sancho si las había dejado fuera de la ciudad.

-¿Cómo fuera de la ciudad? -respondió-. ¿Por ventura tiene vuesa merced los ojos en el colodrillo, que no ve que son éstas, las que aquí vienen, resplandecientes como el mismo sol a mediodía?

-Yo no veo, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, sino a tres labradoras sobre tres borricos.

-¡Agora me libre Dios del diablo! -respondió Sancho-. Y ¿es posible que tres *hacaneas*, o como se llaman, blancas como el ampo de la nieve, le parezcan a vuesa merced borricos? ¡Vive el Señor, que me pele estas barbas si tal fuese verdad!

-Pues yo te digo, Sancho amigo -dijo don Quijote-, que es tan verdad que son borricos, o borricas, como yo soy don Quijote y tú Sancho Panza; a lo menos, a mí tales me parecen.

-Calle, señor -dijo Sancho-, no diga la tal palabra, sino despabile esos ojos, y venga a hacer reverencia a la señora de sus pensamientos, que ya llega cerca.

Y, diciendo esto, se adelantó a recibir a las tres aldeanas; y, apeándose del rucio, tuvo del cabestro al jumento de una de las tres labradoras, y, hincando ambas rodillas en el suelo, dijo:

-Reina y princesa y duquesa de la hermosura, vuestra altivez y grandeza sea servida de recibir en su gracia y buen talente al cautivo caballero vuestro, que allí está hecho piedra mármol, todo turbado y sin pulsos de verse ante vuestra magnífica presencia. Yo soy Sancho Panza, su escudero, y él es el asendereado caballero don Quijote de la Mancha, llamado por otro nombre el Caballero de la Triste Figura.

A esta sazón, ya se había puesto don Quijote de hinojos junto a Sancho, y miraba con ojos desencajados y vista turbada a la que Sancho llamaba reina y señora, y, como no descubría en ella sino una moza aldeana, y no de muy buen rostro, porque era carirredonda y chata, estaba suspenso y admirado, sin osar desplegar los labios. Las labradoras estaban asimismo atónitas, viendo aquellos dos hombres tan diferentes hincados de rodillas, que no dejaban pasar adelante a su compañera; pero, rompiendo el silencio la detenida, toda desgraciada y mohína, dijo:

-Apártense nora en tal del camino, y déjenmos pasar, que vamos de priesa.

A lo que respondió Sancho:

-¡Oh princesa y señora universal del Toboso! ¿Cómo vuestro magnánimo corazón no se entenece viendo arrodillado ante vuestra sublimada presencia a la columna y sustento de la andante caballería?

Oyendo lo cual, otra de las dos dijo:

-Mas, ¡jo, que te estrego, burra de mi suegro! ¡Mirad con qué se vienen los señoritos ahora a hacer burla de las aldeanas, como si aquí no supiésemos echar pullas como ellos! Vayan su camino, e déjenmos hacer el nueso, y serles ha sano.

-Levántate, Sancho -dijo a este punto don Quijote-, que ya veo que la Fortuna, de mi mal no harta, tiene tomados los caminos todos por donde pueda venir algún contento a esta ánima mezquina que tengo en las carnes. Y tú, ¡oh extremo del valor que puede desearse, término de la humana gentileza, único remedio deste afligido corazón que te adora!, ya que el maligno encantador me persigue, y ha puesto nubes y cataratas en mis ojos, y para sólo ellos y no para otros ha mudado y transformado tu sin igual hermosura y rostro en el de una labradora pobre, si ya también el mío no le ha cambiado en el de algún vestiglo, para hacerle aborrecible a tus ojos, no dejes de mirarme blanda y amorosamente, echando de ver en esta sumisión y arrodillamiento que a tu contrahecha hermosura hago, la humildad con que mi alma te adora.

-¡Tomá que mi agüelo! -respondió la aldeana-. ¡Amiguita soy yo de oír

resquebrajos! Apártense y déjenmos ir, y agradecérselo hemos.

Apartóse Sancho y dejóla ir, contentísimo de haber salido bien de su enredo.

Apenas se vio libre la aldeana que había hecho la figura de Dulcinea, cuando, picando a su *cananea* con un aguijón que en un palo traía, dio a correr por el prado adelante. Y, como la borrica sentía la punta del aguijón, que le fatigaba más de lo ordinario, comenzó a dar corcovos, de manera que dio con la señora Dulcinea en tierra; lo cual visto por don Quijote, acudió a levantarla, y Sancho a componer y cinchar el albarda, que también vino a la barriga de la pollina. Acomodada, pues, la albarda, y quiriendo don Quijote levantar a su encantada señora en los brazos sobre la jumenta, la señora, levantándose del suelo, le quitó de aquel trabajo, porque, haciéndose algún tanto atrás, tomó una corridica, y, puestas ambas manos sobre las ancas de la pollina, dio con su cuerpo, más ligero que un halcón, sobre la albarda, y quedó a horcajadas, como si fuera hombre; y entonces dijo Sancho:

-¡Vive Roque, que es la señora nuestra ama más ligera que un acotán, y que puede enseñar a subir a la jineta al más diestro cordobés o mejicano! El arzón trasero de la silla pasó de un salto, y sin espuelas hace correr la hacanea como una cebrá. Y no le van en zaga sus doncellas; que todas corren como el viento.

Y así era la verdad, porque, en viéndose a caballo Dulcinea, todas picaron tras ella y dispararon a correr, sin volver la cabeza atrás por espacio de más de media legua. Siguiólas don Quijote con la vista, y, cuando vio que no parecían, volviéndose a Sancho, le dijo:

-Sancho, ¿qué te parece cuán malquisto soy de encantadores? Y mira hasta dónde se estiende su malicia y la ojeriza que me tienen, pues me han querido privar del contento que pudiera darme ver en su ser a mi señora. En efecto, yo nací para ejemplo de desdichados, y para ser blanco y terrero donde tomen la mira y asiesten las flechas de la mala fortuna. Y has también de advertir, Sancho, que no se contentaron estos traidores de haber vuelto y transformado a mi Dulcinea, sino que la transformaron y volvieron en una figura tan baja y tan fea como la de aquella aldeana, y juntamente le quitaron lo que es tan suyo de las principales señoras, que es el buen olor, por andar siempre entre ámbares y entre flores. Porque te hago saber, Sancho, que cuando llegué a subir a Dulcinea sobre su hacanea, según tú dices, que a mí me pareció borrica, me dio un olor de ajos crudos, que me encalabrino y atosigó el alma.

-¡Oh canalla! -gritó a esta sazón Sancho- ¡Oh encantadores aciagos y malintencionados, y quién os viera a todos ensartados por las agallas, como sardinas en lercha! Mucho sabéis, mucho podéis y mucho más hacéis. Bastaros debiera, bellacos, haber mudado las perlas de los ojos de mi señora en agallas alcornoqueñas, y sus cabellos de oro purísimo en cerdas de cola de buey

bermejo, y, finalmente, todas sus faciones de buenas en malas, sin que le tocárades en el olor; que por él siquiera sacáramos lo que estaba encubierto debajo de aquella fea corteza; aunque, para decir verdad, nunca yo vi su fealdad, sino su hermosura, a la cual subía de punto y quilates un lunar que tenía sobre el labio derecho, a manera de bigote, con siete o ocho cabellos rubios como hebras de oro y largos de más de un palmo.

-A ese lunar -dijo don Quijote-, según la correspondencia que tienen entre sí los del rostro con los del cuerpo, ha de tener otro Dulcinea en la tabla del muslo que corresponde al lado donde tiene el del rostro, pero muy luengos para lunares son pelos de la grandeza que has significado.

-Pues yo sé decir a vuestra merced -respondió Sancho-que le parecían allí como nacidos.

-Yo lo creo, amigo -replicó don Quijote-, porque ninguna cosa puso la naturaleza en Dulcinea que no fuese perfecta y bien acabada; y así, si tuviera cien lunares como el que dices, en ella no fueran lunares, sino lunas y estrellas resplandecientes. Pero dime, Sancho: aquella que a mí me pareció albarda, que tú aderezaste, ¿era silla rasa o sillón?

-No era -respondió Sancho-sino silla a la jineta, con una cubierta de campo que vale la mitad de un reino, según es de rica.

-¡Y que no viese yo todo eso, Sancho! -dijo don Quijote-. Ahora torno a decir, y diré mil veces, que soy el más desdichado de los hombres.

Harto tenía que hacer el socarrón de Sancho en disimular la risa, oyendo las sandeces de su amo, tan delicadamente engañado. Finalmente, después de otras muchas razones que entre los dos pasaron, volvieron a subir en sus bestias, y siguieron el camino de Zaragoza, adonde pensaban llegar a tiempo que pudiesen hallarse en unas solenes fiestas que en aquella insigne ciudad cada año suelen hacerse. Pero, antes que allá llegasen, les sucedieron cosas que, por muchas, grandes y nuevas, merecen ser escritas y leídas, como se verá adelante.

## Capítulo XI

*De la estraña aventura que le sucedió al valeroso don Quijote con el carro, o carreta, de Las Cortes de la Muerte*

PENSATIVO además iba don Quijote por su camino adelante, considerando la mala burla que le habían hecho los encantadores volviendo a su señora Dulcinea en la mala figura de la aldeana, y no imaginaba qué remedio tendría para volverla a su ser primero; y estos pensamientos le llevaban tan fuera de sí, que, sin sentirlo, soltó las riendas a Rocinante, el cual, sintiendo la libertad que se le daba, a cada paso se detenía a pacer la verde yerba de que aquellos campos abundaban. De su embelesamiento le volvió Sancho Panza, diciéndole:

-Señor, las tristezas no se hicieron para las bestias, sino para los hombres; pero si los hombres las sienten demasiado, se vuelven bestias: vuestra merced se reporte, y vuelva en sí, y coja las riendas a Rocinante, y avive y despierte, y muestre aquella gallardía que conviene que tengan los caballeros andantes. ¿Qué diablos es esto? ¿Qué descaecimiento es éste? ¿Estamos aquí, o en Francia? Mas que se lleve Satanás a cuantas Dulcineas hay en el mundo, pues vale más la salud de un solo caballero andante que todos los encantos y transformaciones de la tierra.

-Calla, Sancho -respondió don Quijote con voz no muy desmayada-; calla, digo, y no digas blasfemias contra aquella encantada señora, que de su desgracia y desventura yo solo tengo la culpa: de la invidia que me tienen los malos ha nacido su mala andanza.

-Así lo digo yo -respondió Sancho-: quien la vido y la vee ahora, ¿cuál es el corazón que no llora?

-Eso puedes tú decir bien, Sancho -replicó don Quijote-, pues la viste en la entereza cabal de su hermosura, que el encanto no se estendió a turbarte la vista ni a encubrirte su belleza: contra mí solo y contra mis ojos se endereza la fuerza de su veneno. Mas, con todo esto, he caído, Sancho, en una cosa, y es que me pintaste mal su hermosura, porque, si mal no me acuerdo, dijiste que tenía los ojos de perlas, y los ojos que parecen de perlas antes son de besugo que de dama; y, a lo que yo creo, los de Dulcinea deben ser de verdes esmeraldas, rasgados, con dos celestiales arcos que les sirven de cejas; y esas perlas quítalas de los ojos y pásalas a los dientes, que sin duda te trocaste, Sancho, tomando los ojos por los dientes.

-Todo puede ser -respondió Sancho-, porque también me turbó a mí su hermosura como a vuesa merced su fealdad. Pero encomendémoslo todo a Dios, que Él es el sabidor de las cosas que han de suceder en este valle de lágrimas, en este mal mundo que tenemos, donde apenas se halla cosa que esté sin mezcla de maldad, embuste y bellaquería. De una cosa me pesa, señor mío, más que de otras; que es pensar qué medio se ha de tener cuando vuesa merced venza a algún gigante o otro caballero, y le mande que se vaya a presentar ante la hermosura de la señora Dulcinea: ¿adónde la ha de hallar este pobre gigante, o este pobre y mísero caballero vencido? Paréceme que los veo andar por el Toboso hechos unos bausanes, buscando a mi señora Dulcinea, y, aunque la encuentren en mitad de la calle, no la conocerán más que a mi padre.

-Quizá, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, no se estenderá el encantamento a quitar el conocimiento de Dulcinea a los vencidos y presentados gigantes y caballeros; y, en uno o dos de los primeros que yo venza y le envíe, haremos la experiencia si la ven o no, mandándoles que vuelvan a darme relación de lo que acerca desto les hubiere sucedido.

-Digo, señor -replicó Sancho-, que me ha parecido bien lo que vuesa merced ha dicho, y que con ese artificio vendremos en conocimiento de lo que deseamos; y si es que ella a solo vuesa merced se encubre, la desgracia más será de vuesa merced que suya; pero, como la señora Dulcinea tenga salud y contento, nosotros por acá nos avendremos y lo pasaremos lo mejor que pudiéremos, buscando nuestras aventuras y dejando al tiempo que haga de las suyas, que él es el mejor médico destas y de otras mayores enfermedades.

Responder quería don Quijote a Sancho Panza, pero estorbóselo una carreta que salió al través del camino, cargada de los más diversos y estraños personajes y figuras que pudieron imaginarse. El que guiaba las mulas y servía de carretero era un feo demonio. Venía la carreta descubierta al cielo abierto, sin toldo ni zarzo. La primera figura que se ofreció a los ojos de don Quijote fue la de la misma Muerte, con rostro humano; junto a ella venía un ángel con unas grandes y pintadas alas; al un lado estaba un emperador con una corona, al parecer de oro, en la cabeza; a los pies de la Muerte estaba el dios que llaman Cupido, sin venda en los ojos, pero con su arco, carcaj y saetas. Venía también un caballero armado de punta en blanco, excepto que no traía morrión, ni celada, sino un sombrero lleno de plumas de diversas colores; con éstas venían otras personas de diferentes trajes y rostros. Todo lo cual visto de improviso, en alguna manera alborotó a don Quijote y puso miedo en el corazón de Sancho; mas luego se alegró don Quijote, creyendo que se le ofrecía alguna nueva y peligrosa aventura, y con este pensamiento, y con ánimo dispuesto de acometer cualquier peligro, se puso delante de la carreta, y, con voz alta y amenazadora, dijo:

-Carretero, cochero, o diablo, o lo que eres, no tardes en decirme quién eres, a dó vas y quién es la gente que llevas en tu carricoche, que más parece la barca de Carón que carreta de las que se usan.

A lo cual, mansamente, deteniendo el Diablo la carreta, respondió:

-Señor, nosotros somos recitantes de la compañía de Angulo el Malo; hemos hecho en un lugar que está detrás de aquella loma, esta mañana, que es la octava del Corpus, el auto de *Las Cortes de la Muerte*, y hémosle de hacer esta tarde en aquel lugar que desde aquí se parece; y, por estar tan cerca y escusar el trabajo de desnudarnos y volvernos a vestir, nos vamos vestidos con los mismos vestidos que representamos. Aquel mancebo va de Muerte; el otro, de Ángel; aquella mujer, que es la del autor, va de Reina; el otro, de Soldado; aquél, de Emperador, y yo, de Demonio, y soy una de las principales figuras del auto, porque hago en esta compañía los primeros papeles. Si otra cosa vuestra merced desea saber de nosotros, pregúntemelo, que yo le sabré responder con toda puntualidad; que, como soy demonio, todo se me alcanza.

-Por la fe de caballero andante -respondió don Quijote-, que, así como vi este carro, imaginé que alguna grande aventura se me ofrecía; y ahora digo que es menester tocar las apariencias con la mano para dar lugar al desengaño. Andad con Dios, buena gente, y haced vuestra fiesta, y mirad si mandáis algo en que pueda seros de provecho, que lo haré con buen ánimo y buen talante, porque desde mochacho fui aficionado a la carátula, y en mi mocedad se me iban los ojos tras la farándula.

Estando en estas pláticas, quiso la suerte que llegase uno de la compañía, que venía vestido de bojiganga, con muchos cascabeles, y en la punta de un palo traía tres vejigas de vaca hinchadas; el cual moharracho, llegándose a don Quijote, comenzó a esgrimir el palo y a sacudir el suelo con las vejigas, y a dar grandes saltos, sonando los cascabeles, cuya mala visión así alborotó a Rocinante, que, sin ser poderoso a detenerle don Quijote, tomando el freno entre los dientes, dio a correr por el campo con más ligereza que jamás prometieron los huesos de su notomía. Sancho, que consideró el peligro en que iba su amo de ser derribado, saltó del rucio, y a toda priesa fue a valerle; pero, cuando a él llegó, ya estaba en tierra, y junto a él, Rocinante, que, con su amo, vino al suelo: ordinario fin y paradero de las lozanías de Rocinante y de sus atrevimientos.

Mas, apenas hubo dejado su caballería Sancho por acudir a don Quijote, cuando el demonio bailador de las vejigas saltó sobre el rucio, y, sacudiéndole con ellas, el miedo y ruido, más que el dolor de los golpes, le hizo volar por la campaña hacia el lugar donde iban a hacer la fiesta. Miraba Sancho la carrera de su rucio y la caída de su amo, y no sabía a cuál de las dos necesidades acudiría primero; pero, en efecto, como buen escudero y como buen criado, pudo más

con él el amor de su señor que el cariño de su jumento, puesto que cada vez que veía levantar las vejigas en el aire y caer sobre las ancas de su rucio eran para él tártagos y sustos de muerte, y antes quisiera que aquellos golpes se los dieran a él en las niñas de los ojos que en el más mínimo pelo de la cola de su asno. Con esta perpleja tribulación llegó donde estaba don Quijote, harto más maltrecho de lo que él quisiera, y, ayudándole a subir sobre Rocinante, le dijo:

-Señor, el Diablo se ha llevado al rucio.

-¿Qué diablo? -preguntó don Quijote.

-El de las vejigas -respondió Sancho.

-Pues yo le cobraré -replicó don Quijote-, si bien se encerrase con él en los más hondos y oscuros calabozos del infierno. Sígueme, Sancho, que la carreta va despacio, y con las mulas della satisfaré la pérdida del rucio.

-No hay para qué hacer esa diligencia, señor -respondió Sancho-: vuestra merced temple su cólera, que, según me parece, ya el Diablo ha dejado el rucio, y vuelve a la querencia.

Y así era la verdad; porque, habiendo caído el Diablo con el rucio, por imitar a don Quijote y a Rocinante, el Diablo se fue a pie al pueblo, y el jumento se volvió a su amo.

-Con todo eso -dijo don Quijote-, será bien castigar el descomedimiento de aquel demonio en alguno de los de la carreta, aunque sea el mismo emperador.

-Quítese a vuestra merced eso de la imaginación -replicó Sancho-, y tome mi consejo, que es que nunca se tome con farsantes, que es gente favorecida. Recitante he visto yo estar preso por dos muertes y salir libre y sin costas. Sepa vuesa merced que, como son gentes alegres y de placer, todos los favorecen, todos los amparan, ayudan y estiman, y más siendo de aquellos de las compañías reales y de título, que todos, o los más, en sus trajes y compostura parecen unos príncipes.

-Pues con todo -respondió don Quijote-, no se me ha de ir el demonio farsante alabando, aunque le favorezca todo el género humano.

Y, diciendo esto, volvió a la carreta, que ya estaba bien cerca del pueblo. Iba dando voces, diciendo:

-Deteneos, esperad, turba alegre y regocijada, que os quiero dar a entender cómo se han de tratar los jumentos y alimañas que sirven de caballería a los escuderos de los caballeros andantes.

Tan altos eran los gritos de don Quijote, que los oyeron y entendieron los de la carreta; y, juzgando por las palabras la intención del que las decía, en un instante saltó la Muerte de la carreta, y tras ella, el Emperador, el Diablo carretero y el Ángel, sin quedarse la Reina ni el dios Cupido; y todos se cargaron de piedras y se pusieron en ala, esperando recibir a don Quijote en las puntas de sus



guijarros. Don Quijote, que los vio puestos en tan gallardo escuadrón, los brazos levantados con ademán de despedir poderosamente las piedras, detuvo las riendas a Rocinante y púsose a pensar de qué modo los acometería con menos peligro de su persona. En esto que se detuvo, llegó Sancho, y, viéndole en talle de acometer al bien formado escuadrón, le dijo:

-Asaz de locura sería intentar tal empresa: considere vuesa merced, señor mío, que para sopa de arroyo y tente bonete, no hay arma defensiva en el mundo, si no es embutirse y encerrarse en una campana de bronce; y también se ha de considerar que es más temeridad que valentía acometer un hombre solo a un ejército donde está la Muerte, y pelean en persona emperadores, y a quien ayudan los buenos y los malos ángeles; y si esta consideración no le mueve a estarse quedo, muévale saber de cierto que, entre todos los que allí están, aunque parecen reyes, príncipes y emperadores, no hay ningún caballero andante.

-Ahora sí -dijo don Quijote-has dado, Sancho, en el punto que puede y debe mudarme de mi ya determinado intento. Yo no puedo ni debo sacar la espada, como otras veces muchas te he dicho, contra quien no fuere armado caballero. A ti, Sancho, toca, si quieres tomar la venganza del agravio que a tu rucio se le ha hecho, que yo desde aquí te ayudaré con voces y advertimientos saludables.

-No hay para qué, señor -respondió Sancho-, tomar venganza de nadie, pues no es de buenos cristianos tomarla de los agravios; cuanto más, que yo acabaré con mi asno que ponga su ofensa en las manos de mi voluntad, la cual es de vivir pacíficamente los días que los cielos me dieren de vida.

-Pues ésa es tu determinación -replicó don Quijote-, Sancho bueno, Sancho discreto, Sancho cristiano y Sancho sincero, dejemos estas fantasmas y volvamos a buscar mejores y más calificadas aventuras; que yo veo esta tierra de talle, que no han de faltar en ella muchas y muy milagrosas.

Volvió las riendas luego, Sancho fue a tomar su rucio, la Muerte con todo su escuadrón volante volvieron a su carreta y prosiguieron su viaje, y este felice fin tuvo la temerosa aventura de la carreta de la Muerte, gracias sean dadas al saludable consejo que Sancho Panza dio a su amo; al cual, el día siguiente, le sucedió otra con un enamorado y andante caballero, de no menos suspensión que la pasada.

## Capítulo XII

*De la estraña aventura que le sucedió al valeroso don Quijote con el bravo  
Caballero de los Espejos*

LA NOCHE que siguió al día del rencuentro de la Muerte la pasaron don Quijote y su escudero debajo de unos altos y sombrosos árboles, habiendo, a persuasión de Sancho, comido don Quijote de lo que venía en el repuesto del rucio, y entre la cena dijo Sancho a su señor:

-Señor, ¡qué tonto hubiera andado yo si hubiera escogido en albricias los despojos de la primera aventura que vuestra merced acabara, antes que las crías de las tres yeguas! En efecto, en efecto, más vale pájaro en mano que buitre volando.

-Todavía -respondió don Quijote-, si tú, Sancho, me dejaras acometer, como yo quería, te hubieran cabido en despojos, por lo menos, la corona de oro de la Emperatriz y las pintadas alas de Cupido, que yo se las quitara al redropelo y te las pusiera en las manos.

-Nunca los cetros y coronas de los emperadores farsantes -respondió Sancho Panza-fueron de oro puro, sino de oropel o hoja de lata.

-Así es verdad -replicó don Quijote-, porque no fuera acertado que los atavíos de la comedia fueran finos, sino fingidos y aparentes, como lo es la misma comedia, con la cual quiero, Sancho, que estés bien, teniéndola en tu gracia, y por el mismo consiguiente a los que las representan y a los que las componen, porque todos son instrumentos de hacer un gran bien a la república, poniéndonos un espejo a cada paso delante, donde se veen al vivo las acciones de la vida humana, y ninguna comparación hay que más al vivo nos represente lo que somos y lo que habemos de ser como la comedia y los comediantes. Si no, dime: ¿no has visto tú representar alguna comedia adonde se introducen reyes, emperadores y pontífices, caballeros, damas y otros diversos personajes? Uno hace el rufián, otro el embustero, éste el mercader, aquél el soldado, otro el simple discreto, otro el enamorado simple; y, acabada la comedia y desnudándose de los vestidos della, quedan todos los recitantes iguales.

-Sí he visto -respondió Sancho.

-Pues lo mismo -dijo don Quijote-acontece en la comedia y trato deste mundo, donde unos hacen los emperadores, otros los pontífices, y, finalmente, todas cuantas figuras se pueden introducir en una comedia; pero, en llegando al

fin, que es cuando se acaba la vida, a todos les quita la muerte las ropas que los diferenciaban, y quedan iguales en la sepultura.

-¡Brava comparación! -dijo Sancho-, aunque no tan nueva que yo no la haya oído muchas y diversas veces, como aquella del juego del ajedrez, que, mientras dura el juego, cada pieza tiene su particular oficio; y, en acabándose el juego, todas se mezclan, juntan y barajan, y dan con ellas en una bolsa, que es como dar con la vida en la sepultura.

-Cada día, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, te vas haciendo menos simple y más discreto.

-Sí, que algo se me ha de pegar de la discreción de vuestra merced -respondió Sancho-; que las tierras que de suyo son estériles y secas, estercolándolas y cultivándolas, vienen a dar buenos frutos: quiero decir que la conversación de vuestra merced ha sido el estiércol que sobre la estéril tierra de mi seco ingenio ha caído; la cultivación, el tiempo que ha que le sirvo y comunico; y con esto espero de dar frutos de mí que sean de bendición, tales, que no desdigan ni deslicen de los senderos de la buena crianza que vuestra merced ha hecho en el agostado entendimiento mío.

Rióse don Quijote de las afectadas razones de Sancho, y parecióle ser verdad lo que decía de su emienda, porque de cuando en cuando hablaba de manera que le admiraba; puesto que todas o las más veces que Sancho quería hablar de oposición y a lo cortesano, acababa su razón con despenarse del monte de su simplicidad al profundo de su ignorancia; y en lo que él se mostraba más elegante y memorioso era en traer refranes, viniesen o no viniesen a pelo de lo que trataba, como se habrá visto y se habrá notado en el discurso desta historia.

En estas y en otras pláticas se les pasó gran parte de la noche, y a Sancho le vino en voluntad de dejar caer las compuertas de los ojos, como él decía cuando quería dormir, y, desaliñando al rucio, le dio pasto abundoso y libre. No quitó la silla a Rocinante, por ser expreso mandamiento de su señor que, en el tiempo que anduviesen en campaña, o no durmiesen debajo de techado, no desaliñase a Rocinante: antigua usanza establecida y guardada de los andantes caballeros, quitar el freno y colgarle del arzón de la silla; pero, ¿quitar la silla al caballo?, ¡guarda!; y así lo hizo Sancho, y le dio la misma libertad que al rucio, cuya amistad dél y de Rocinante fue tan única y tan trabada, que hay fama, por tradición de padres a hijos, que el autor desta verdadera historia hizo particulares capítulos della; mas que, por guardar la decencia y decoro que a tan heroica historia se debe, no los puso en ella, puesto que algunas veces se descuida deste su prosupuesto, y escribe que, así como las dos bestias se juntaban, acudían a rascarse el uno al otro, y que, después de cansados y satisfechos, cruzaba Rocinante el pescuezo sobre el cuello del rucio (que le sobraba de la otra parte

más de media vara), y, mirando los dos atentamente al suelo, se solían estar de aquella manera tres días; a lo menos, todo el tiempo que les dejaban, o no les compelia la hambre a buscar sustento.

Digo que dicen que dejó el autor escrito que los había comparado en la amistad a la que tuvieron Niso y Euríalo, y Pílates y Orestes; y si esto es así, se podía echar de ver, para universal admiración, cuán firme debió ser la amistad destos dos pacíficos animales, y para confusión de los hombres, que tan mal saben guardarse amistad los unos a los otros. Por esto se dijo:

No hay amigo para amigo:  
las cañas se vuelven lanzas;

y el otro que cantó:  
De amigo a amigo la chinche, *etc.*

Y no le parezca a alguno que anduvo el autor algo fuera de camino en haber comparado la amistad destos animales a la de los hombres, que de las bestias han recibido muchos advertimientos los hombres y aprendido muchas cosas de importancia, como son: de las cigüeñas, el cristel; de los perros, el vómito y el agradecimiento; de las grullas, la vigilancia; de las hormigas, la providencia; de los elefantes, la honestidad, y la lealtad, del caballo.

Finalmente, Sancho se quedó dormido al pie de un alcornoque, y don Quijote dormitando al de una robusta encina; pero, poco espacio de tiempo había pasado, cuando le despertó un ruido que sintió a sus espaldas, y, levantándose con sobresalto, se puso a mirar y a escuchar de dónde el ruido procedía, y vio que eran dos hombres a caballo, y que el uno, dejándose derribar de la silla, dijo al otro:

-Apéate, amigo, y quita los frenos a los caballos, que, a mi parecer, este sitio abunda de yerba para ellos, y del silencio y soledad que han menester mis amorosos pensamientos.

El decir esto y el tenderse en el suelo todo fue a un mismo tiempo; y, al arrojarse, hicieron ruido las armas de que venía armado, manifiesta señal por donde conoció don Quijote que debía de ser caballero andante; y, llegándose a Sancho, que dormía, le trabó del brazo, y con no pequeño trabajo le volvió en su acuerdo, y con voz baja le dijo:

-Hermano Sancho, aventura tenemos.

-Dios nos la dé buena -respondió Sancho-; y ¿adónde está, señor mío, su merced de esa señora aventura?

-¿Adónde, Sancho? -replicó don Quijote-; vuelve los ojos y mira, y verás allí tendido un andante caballero, que, a lo que a mí se me trasluce, no debe de estar demasiadamente alegre, porque le vi arrojar del caballo y tenderse en el suelo con algunas muestras de despecho, y al caer le crujieron las armas.

-Pues ¿en qué halla vuesa merced -dijo Sancho-que ésta sea aventura?

-No quiero yo decir -respondió don Quijote-que ésta sea aventura del todo, sino principio della; que por aquí se comienzan las aventuras. Pero escucha, que, a lo que parece, templando está un laúd o vigüela, y, según escupe y se desembaraza el pecho, debe de prepararse para cantar algo.

-A buena fe que es así -respondió Sancho-, y que debe de ser caballero enamorado.

-No hay ninguno de los andantes que no lo sea -dijo don Quijote-. Y escuchémosle, que por el hilo sacaremos el ovillo de sus pensamientos, si es que canta; que de la abundancia del corazón habla la lengua.

Replicar quería Sancho a su amo, pero la voz del Caballero del Bosque, que no era muy mala ni muy buena, lo estorbó; y, estando los dos atónitos, oyeron que lo que cantó fue este soneto:

-Dadme, señora, un término que siga,  
conforme a vuestra voluntad cortado;  
que será de la mía así estimado,  
que por jamás un punto dél desdiga.

Si gustáis que callando mi fatiga   5  
muera, contadme ya por acabado:  
si queréis que os la cuente en desusado  
modo, haré que el mismo amor la diga.

A prueba de contrarios estoy hecho,  
de blanda cera y de diamante duro,   10  
y a las leyes de amor el alma ajusto.

Blando cual es, o fuerte, ofrezco el pecho:  
entallad o imprimid lo que os dé gusto,  
que de guardarlo eternamente juro.

Con un ¡ay!, arrancado, al parecer, de lo íntimo de su corazón, dio fin a su canto el Caballero del Bosque; y, de allí a un poco, con voz doliente y lastimada, dijo:

-¡Oh la más hermosa y la más ingrata mujer del orbe! ¿Cómo que será posible, serenísima Casildea de Vandalia, que has de consentir que se consuma y acabe en continuas peregrinaciones y en ásperos y duros trabajos este tu cautivo caballero? ¿No basta ya que he hecho que te confiesen por la más hermosa del mundo todos los caballeros de Navarra, todos los leoneses, todos los tartesios, todos los castellanos y, finalmente, todos los caballeros de la Mancha?

-Eso no -dijo a esta sazón don Quijote-, que yo soy de la Mancha y nunca tal he confesado, ni podía ni debía confesar una cosa tan perjudicial a la belleza de mi señora; y este tal caballero ya vees tú, Sancho, que desvaría. Pero, escuchemos: quizá se declarará más.

-Sí hará -replicó Sancho-, que término lleva de quejarse un mes arreo.

Pero no fue así, porque, habiendo entreoído el Caballero del Bosque que hablaban cerca dél, sin pasar adelante en su lamentación, se puso en pie, y dijo con voz sonora y comedida:

-¿Quién va allá? ¿Qué gente? ¿Es por ventura de la del número de los contentos, o la del de los afligidos?

-De los afligidos -respondió don Quijote.

-Pues lléguese a mí -respondió el del Bosque-, y hará cuenta que se llega a la misma tristeza y a la aflicción misma.

Don Quijote, que se vio responder tan tierna y comedidamente, se llegó a él, y Sancho ni más ni menos.

El caballero lamentador asió a don Quijote del brazo, diciendo:

-Sentaos aquí, señor caballero, que para entender que lo sois, y de los que profesan la andante caballería, bástame el haberos hallado en este lugar, donde la soledad y el sereno os hacen compañía, naturales lechos y propias estancias de los caballeros andantes.

A lo que respondió don Quijote:

-Caballero soy, y de la profesión que decís; y, aunque en mi alma tienen su propio asiento las tristezas, las desgracias y las desventuras, no por eso se ha ahuyentado della la compasión que tengo de las ajenas desdichas. De lo que contaste poco ha, colegí que las vuestras son enamoradas, quiero decir, del amor que tenéis a aquella hermosa ingrata que en vuestras lamentaciones nombrastes.

Ya cuando esto pasaban estaban sentados juntos sobre la dura tierra, en buena paz y compañía, como si al romper del día no se hubieran de romper las cabezas.

-Por ventura, señor caballero -preguntó el del Bosque a don Quijote-, ¿sois enamorado?

-Por desventura lo soy -respondió don Quijote-; aunque los daños que nacen de los bien colocados pensamientos, antes se deben tener por gracias que por desdichas.

-Así es la verdad -replicó el del Bosque-, si no nos turbasen la razón y el entendimiento los desdenes, que, siendo muchos, parecen venganzas.

-Nunca fui desdeñado de mi señora -respondió don Quijote.

-No, por cierto -dijo Sancho, que allí junto estaba-, porque es mi señora como una borrega mansa: es más blanda que una manteca.

-¿Es vuestro escudero éste? -preguntó el del Bosque.

-Sí es -respondió don Quijote.

-Nunca he visto yo escudero -replicó el del Bosque-que se atreva a hablar donde habla su señor; a lo menos, ahí está ese mío, que es tan grande como su padre, y no se probará que haya desplegado el labio donde yo hablo.

-Pues a fe -dijo Sancho-, que he hablado yo, y puedo hablar delante de otro tan..., y aun quédese aquí, que es peor meneallo.

El escudero del Bosque asió por el brazo a Sancho, diciéndole:

-Vámonos los dos donde podamos hablar escuderilmente todo cuanto quisiéremos, y dejemos a estos señores amos nuestros que se den de las astas, contándose las historias de sus amores; que a buen seguro que les ha de coger el día en ellas y no las han de haber acabado.

-Sea en buena hora -dijo Sancho-; y yo le diré a vuestra merced quién soy, para que vea si puedo entrar en docena con los más hablantes escuderos.

Con esto se apartaron los dos escuderos, entre los cuales pasó un tan gracioso coloquio como fue grave el que pasó entre sus señores.

## Capítulo XIII

*Donde se prosigue la aventura del Caballero del Bosque, con el discreto, nuevo y suave coloquio que pasó entre los dos escuderos*

DIVIDIDOS estaban caballeros y escuderos: éstos contándose sus vidas, y aquéllos sus amores; pero la historia cuenta primero el razonamiento de los mozos y luego prosigue el de los amos; y así, dice que, apartándose un poco dellos, el del Bosque dijo a Sancho:

-Trabajosa vida es la que pasamos y vivimos, señor mío, estos que somos escuderos de caballeros andantes: en verdad que comemos el pan en el sudor de nuestros rostros, que es una de las maldiciones que echó Dios a nuestros primeros padres.

-También se puede decir -añadió Sancho-que lo comemos en el yelo de nuestros cuerpos; porque, ¿quién más calor y más frío que los miserables escuderos de la andante caballería? Y aun menos mal si comiéramos, pues los duelos, con pan son menos; pero tal vez hay que se nos pasa un día y dos sin desayunarnos, si no es del viento que sopla.

-Todo eso se puede llevar y conllevar -dijo el del Bosque-, con la esperanza que tenemos del premio; porque si demasiadamente no es desgraciado el caballero andante a quien un escudero sirve, por lo menos, a pocos lances se verá premiado con un hermoso gobierno de cualquier ínsula, o con un condado de buen parecer.

-Yo -replicó Sancho-ya he dicho a mi amo que me contento con el gobierno de alguna ínsula; y él es tan noble y tan liberal, que me le ha prometido muchas y diversas veces.

-Yo -dijo el del Bosque-, con un canonicato quedará satisfecho de mis servicios, y ya me le tiene mandado mi amo, y ¡qué tal!

-Debe de ser -dijo Sancho-su amo de vuesa merced caballero a lo eclesiástico, y podrá hacer esas mercedes a sus buenos escuderos; pero el mío es meramente lego, aunque yo me acuerdo cuando le querían aconsejar personas discretas, aunque, a mi parecer mal intencionadas, que procurase ser arzobispo; pero él no quiso sino ser emperador, y yo estaba entonces temblando si le venía en voluntad de ser de la Iglesia, por no hallarme suficiente de tener beneficios por ella; porque le hago saber a vuesa merced que, aunque parezco hombre, soy una bestia para ser de la Iglesia.



-Pues en verdad que lo yerra vuesa merced -dijo el del Bosque-, a causa que los gobiernos insulanos no son todos de buena data. Algunos hay torcidos, algunos pobres, algunos malencónicos, y finalmente, el más erguido y bien dispuesto trae consigo una pesada carga de pensamientos y de incomodidades, que pone sobre sus hombros el desdichado que le cupo en suerte. Harto mejor sería que los que profesamos esta maldita servidumbre nos retirásemos a nuestras casas, y allí nos entretuviésemos en ejercicios más suaves, como si dijésemos, cazando o pescando; que, ¿qué escudero hay tan pobre en el mundo, a quien le falte un rocín, y un par de galgos, y una caña de pescar, con que entretenerse en su aldea?

-A mí no me falta nada deso -respondió Sancho-: verdad es que no tengo rocín, pero tengo un asno que vale dos veces más que el caballo de mi amo. Mala pascua me dé Dios, y sea la primera que viniere, si le trocara por él, aunque me diesen cuatro fanegas de cebada encima. A burla tendrá vuesa merced el valor de mi rucio, que rucio es el color de mi jumento. Pues galgos no me habían de faltar, habiéndolos sobrados en mi pueblo; y más, que entonces es la caza más gustosa cuando se hace a costa ajena.

-Real y verdaderamente -respondió el del Bosque-, señor escudero, que tengo propuesto y determinado de dejar estas borracherías destos caballeros, y retirarme a mi aldea, y criar mis hijitos, que tengo tres como tres orientales perlas.

-Dos tengo yo -dijo Sancho-, que se pueden presentar al Papa en persona, especialmente una muchacha a quien crío para condesa, si Dios fuere servido, aunque a pesar de su madre.

-Y ¿qué edad tiene esa señora que se cría para condesa? -preguntó el del Bosque.

-Quince años, dos más a menos -respondió Sancho-, pero es tan grande como una lanza, y tan fresca como una mañana de abril, y tiene una fuerza de un ganapán.

-Partes son éstas -respondió el del Bosque-no sólo para ser condesa, sino para ser ninfa del verde bosque. ¡Oh hideputa, puta, y qué rejoy debe de tener la bellaca!

A lo que respondió Sancho, algo mohíno:

-Ni ella es puta, ni lo fue su madre, ni lo será ninguna de las dos, Dios quiriendo, mientras yo viviere. Y hállese más comedidamente, que, para haberse criado vuesa merced entre caballeros andantes, que son la misma cortesía, no me parecen muy concertadas esas palabras.

-¡Oh, qué mal se le entiende a vuesa merced -replicó el del Bosque-de achaque de alabanzas, señor escudero! ¿Cómo y no sabe que cuando algún

caballero da una buena lanzada al toro en la plaza, o cuando alguna persona hace alguna cosa bien hecha, suele decir el vulgo: «¡Oh hideputa, puto, y qué bien que lo ha hecho!?» Y aquello que parece vituperio, en aquel término, es alabanza notable; y renegad vos, señor, de los hijos o hijas que no hacen obras que merezcan se les den a sus padres loores semejantes.

-Sí reniego -respondió Sancho-, y dese modo y por esa misma razón podía echar vuestra merced a mí y hijos y a mi mujer toda una putería encima, porque todo cuanto hacen y dicen son extremos dignos de semejantes alabanzas, y para volverlos a ver ruego yo a Dios me saque de pecado mortal, que lo mesmo será si me saca deste peligroso oficio de escudero, en el cual he incurrido segunda vez, cebado y engañado de una bolsa con cien ducados que me hallé un día en el corazón de Sierra Morena, y el diablo me pone ante los ojos aquí, allí, acá no, sino acullá, un talego lleno de doblones, que me parece que a cada paso le toco con la mano, y me abrazo con él, y lo llevo a mi casa, y echo censos, y fundo rentas, y vivo como un príncipe; y el rato que en esto pienso se me hacen fáciles y llevaderos cuantos trabajos padezco con este mentecato de mi amo, de quien sé que tiene más de loco que de caballero.

-Por eso -respondió el del Bosque-dicen que la codicia rompe el saco; y si va a tratar dellos, no hay otro mayor en el mundo que mi amo, porque es de aquellos que dicen: «Cuidados ajenos matan al asno»; pues, porque cobre otro caballero el juicio que ha perdido, se hace el loco, y anda buscando lo que no sé si después de hallado le ha de salir a los hocicos.

-Y ¿es enamorado, por dicha?

-Sí -dijo el del Bosque-: de una tal Casildea de Vandalia, la más cruda y la más asada señora que en todo el orbe puede hallarse; pero no cojea del pie de la crudeza, que otros mayores embustes le gruñen en las entrañas, y ello dirá antes de muchas horas.

-No hay camino tan llano -replicó Sancho-que no tenga algún tropezón o barranco; en otras casas cuecen habas, y en la mía, a calderadas; más acompañados y paniaguados debe de tener la locura que la discreción. Mas si es verdad lo que comúnmente se dice, que el tener compañeros en los trabajos suele servir de alivio en ellos, con vuestra merced podré consolarme, pues sirve a otro amo tan tonto como el mío.

-Tonto, pero valiente -respondió el del Bosque-, y más bellaco que tonto y que valiente.

-Eso no es el mío -respondió Sancho-: digo, que no tiene nada de bellaco; antes tiene una alma como un cántaro: no sabe hacer mal a nadie, sino bien a todos, ni tiene malicia alguna: un niño le hará entender que es de noche en la

mitad del día; y por esta sencillez le quiero como a las telas de mi corazón, y no me amaño a dejarle, por más disparates que haga.

-Con todo eso, hermano y señor -dijo el del Bosque-, si el ciego guía al ciego, ambos van a peligro de caer en el hoyo. Mejor es retirarnos con buen compás de pies, y volvernos a nuestras querencias; que los que buscan aventuras no siempre las hallan buenas.

Escupía Sancho a menudo, al parecer, un cierto género de saliva pegajosa y algo seca; lo cual visto y notado por el caritativo bosqueril escudero, dijo:

-Paréceme que de lo que hemos hablado se nos pegan al paladar las lenguas; pero yo traigo un despegador pendiente del arzón de mi caballo, que es tal como bueno.

Y, levantándose, volvió desde allí a un poco con una gran bota de vino y una empanada de media vara; y no es encarecimiento, porque era de un conejo albar, tan grande que Sancho, al tocarla, entendió ser de algún cabrón, no que de cabrito; lo cual visto por Sancho, dijo:

-Y ¿esto trae vuestra merced consigo, señor?

-Pues ¿qué se pensaba? -respondió el otro-. ¿Soy yo por ventura algún escudero de agua y lana? Mejor repuesto traigo yo en las ancas de mi caballo que lleva consigo cuando va de camino un general.

Comió Sancho sin hacerse de rogar, y tragaba a oscuras bocados de nudos de suelta. Y dijo:

-Vuestra merced sí que es escudero fiel y legal, moliente y corriente, magnífico y grande, como lo muestra este banquete, que si no ha venido aquí por arte de encantamento, parécelo, a lo menos; y no como yo, mezquino y malaventurado, que sólo traigo en mis alforjas un poco de queso, tan duro que pueden descalabrar con ello a un gigante, a quien hacen compañía cuatro docenas de algarrobas y otras tantas de avellanas y nueces, mercedes a la estrechez de mi dueño, y a la opinión que tiene y orden que guarda de que los caballeros andantes no se han de mantener y sustentar sino con frutas secas y con las yerbas del campo.

-Por mi fe, hermano -replicó el del Bosque-, que yo no tengo hecho el estómago a tagarninas, ni a piruétanos, ni a raíces de los montes. Allá se lo hayan con sus opiniones y leyes caballerescas nuestros amos, y coman lo que ellos mandaren. Fiambreras traigo, y esta bota colgando del arzón de la silla, por sí o por no; y es tan devota mía y quiérola tanto, que pocos ratos se pasan sin que la dé mil besos y mil abrazos.

Y, diciendo esto, se la puso en las manos a Sancho, el cual, empinándola, puesta a la boca, estuvo mirando las estrellas un cuarto de hora, y, en acabando de beber, dejó caer la cabeza a un lado, y, dando un gran suspiro, dijo:

-¡Oh hideputa bellaco, y cómo es católico!

-¿Veis ahí -dijo el del Bosque, en oyendo el *hideputa* de Sancho-, cómo habéis alabado este vino llamándole *hideputa*?

-Digo -respondió Sancho-, que confieso que conozco que no es deshonra llamar hijo de puta a nadie, cuando cae debajo del entendimiento de alabarle. Pero dígame, señor, por el siglo de lo que más quiere: ¿este vino es de Ciudad Real?

-¡Bravo mojón! -respondió el del Bosque-. En verdad que no es de otra parte, y que tiene algunos años de ancianidad.

-¡A mí con eso! -dijo Sancho-. No toméis menos, sino que se me fuera a mí por alto dar alcance a su conocimiento. ¿No será bueno, señor escudero, que tenga yo un instinto tan grande y tan natural, en esto de conocer vinos, que, en dándome a oler cualquiera, acierto la patria, el linaje, el sabor, y la dura, y las vueltas que ha de dar, con todas las circunstancias al vino atañederas? Pero no hay de qué maravillarse, si tuve en mi linaje por parte de mi padre los dos más excelentes mojonos que en luengos años conoció la Mancha; para prueba de lo cual les sucedió lo que ahora diré: «Diéronles a los dos a probar del vino de una cuba, pidiéndoles su parecer del estado, cualidad, bondad o malicia del vino. El uno lo probó con la punta de la lengua, el otro no hizo más de llegarlo a las narices. El primero dijo que aquel vino sabía a hierro, el segundo dijo que más sabía a cordobán. El dueño dijo que la cuba estaba limpia, y que el tal vino no tenía adobo alguno por donde hubiese tomado sabor de hierro ni de cordobán. Con todo eso, los dos famosos mojonos se afirmaron en lo que habían dicho. Anduvo el tiempo, vendióse el vino, y al limpiar de la cuba hallaron en ella una llave pequeña, pendiente de una correa de cordobán.» Porque vea vuestra merced si quien viene desta ralea podrá dar su parecer en semejantes causas.

-Por eso digo -dijo el del Bosque- que nos dejemos de andar buscando aventuras; y, pues tenemos hogazas, no busquemos tortas, y volvámonos a nuestras chozas, que allí nos hallará Dios, si Él quiere.

-Hasta que mi amo llegue a Zaragoza, le serviré; que después todos nos entenderemos.

Finalmente, tanto hablaron y tanto bebieron los dos buenos escuderos, que tuvo necesidad el sueño de atarles las lenguas y temprarles la sed, que quitársela fuera imposible; y así, asidos entrambos de la ya casi vacía bota, con los bocados a medio mascar en la boca, se quedaron dormidos, donde los dejaremos por ahora, por contar lo que el Caballero del Bosque pasó con el de la Triste Figura.

## Capítulo XIV

### *Donde se prosigue la aventura del Caballero del Bosque*

ENTRE muchas razones que pasaron don Quijote y el Caballero de la Selva, dice la historia que el del Bosque dijo a don Quijote:

-Finalmente, señor caballero, quiero que sepáis que mi destino, o, por mejor decir, mi elección, me trujo a enamorar de la sin par Casildea de Vandalia. Llámola sin par porque no le tiene, así en la grandeza del cuerpo como en el extremo del estado y de la hermosura. Esta tal Casildea, pues, que voy contando, pagó mis buenos pensamientos y comedidos deseos con hacerme ocupar, como su madrina a Hércules, en muchos y diversos peligros, prometiéndome al fin de cada uno que en el fin del otro llegaría el de mi esperanza; pero así se han ido eslabonando mis trabajos, que no tienen cuento, ni yo sé cuál ha de ser el último que dé principio al cumplimiento de mis buenos deseos. Una vez me mandó que fuese a desafiar a aquella famosa gigantea de Sevilla llamada la Giralda, que es tan valiente y fuerte como hecha de bronce, y, sin mudarse de un lugar, es la más movible y voltaria mujer del mundo. Llegué, vila, y vencíla, y hícela estar queda y a raya, porque en más de una semana no soplaron sino vientos nortes. Vez también hubo que me mandó fuese a tomar en peso las antiguas piedras de los valientes Toros de Guisando, empresa más para encomendarse a ganapanes que a caballeros. Otra vez me mandó que me precipitase y sumiese en la sima de Cabra, peligro inaudito y temeroso, y que le trujese particular relación de lo que en aquella oscura profundidad se encierra. Detuve el movimiento a la Giralda, pesé los Toros de Guisando, despeñéme en la sima y saqué a luz lo escondido de su abismo: y mis esperanzas, muertas que muertas, y sus mandamientos y desdenes, vivos que vivos. En resolución, últimamente me ha mandado que discurra por todas las provincias de España y haga confesar a todos los andantes caballeros que por ellas vagaren que ella sola es la más aventajada en hermosura de cuantas hoy viven, y que yo soy el más valiente y el más bien enamorado caballero del orbe; en cuya demanda he andado ya la mayor parte de España, y en ella he vencido muchos caballeros que se han atrevido a contradecirme. Pero de lo que yo más me precio y ufano es de haber vencido, en singular batalla, a aquel tan famoso caballero don Quijote de la Mancha, y héchole confesar que es más hermosa mi Casildea que su Dulcinea; y en solo este vencimiento hago cuenta que he vencido todos los caballeros del mundo, porque el tal don Quijote

que digo los ha vencido a todos; y, habiéndole yo vencido a él, su gloria, su fama y su honra se ha transferido y pasado a mi persona;

y tanto el vencedor es más honrado,  
cuanto más el vencido es reputado;

así que, ya corren por mi cuenta y son más las innumerables hazañas del ya referido don Quijote.

Admirado quedó don Quijote de oír al Caballero del Bosque, y estuvo mil veces por decirle que mentía, y ya tuvo el mentís en el pico de la lengua; pero reportóse lo mejor que pudo, por hacerle confesar por su propia boca su mentira; y así, sosegadamente le dijo:

-De que vuesa merced, señor caballero, haya vencido a los más caballeros andantes de España, y aun de todo el mundo, no digo nada; pero de que haya vencido a don Quijote de la Mancha, póngolo en duda. Podría ser que fuese otro que le pareciese, aunque hay pocos que le parezcan.

-¿Cómo no? -replicó el del Bosque-. Por el cielo que nos cubre, que peleé con don Quijote, y le vencí y rendí; y es un hombre alto de cuerpo, seco de rostro, estirado y avellanado de miembros, entrecano, la nariz aguileña y algo corva, de bigotes grandes, negros y caídos. Campea debajo del nombre del *Caballero de la Triste Figura*, y trae por escudero a un labrador llamado Sancho Panza; oprime el lomo y rige el freno de un famoso caballo llamado Rocinante, y, finalmente, tiene por señora de su voluntad a una tal Dulcinea del Toboso, llamada un tiempo Aldonza Lorenzo; como la mía, que, por llamarse Casilda y ser de la Andalucía, yo la llamo Casildea de Vandalia. Si todas estas señas no bastan para acreditar mi verdad, aquí está mi espada, que la hará dar crédito a la misma incredulidad.

-Sosegaos, señor caballero -dijo don Quijote-, y escuchad lo que deciros quiero. Habéis de saber que ese don Quijote que decís es el mayor amigo que en este mundo tengo, y tanto, que podré decir que le tengo en lugar de mi misma persona, y que por las señas que dél me habéis dado, tan puntuales y ciertas, no puedo pensar sino que sea el mismo que habéis vencido. Por otra parte, veo con los ojos y toco con las manos no ser posible ser el mismo, si ya no fuese que como él tiene muchos enemigos encantadores, especialmente uno que de ordinario le persigue, no haya alguno dellos tomado su figura para dejarse vencer, por defraudarle de la fama que sus altas caballerías le tienen granjeada y adquirida por todo lo descubierto de la tierra. Y, para confirmación desto, quiero también que sepáis que los tales encantadores sus contrarios no ha más de dos días que transformaron la figura y persona de la hermosa Dulcinea del Toboso

en una aldeana soez y baja, y desta manera habrán transformado a don Quijote; y si todo esto no basta para enteraros en esta verdad que digo, aquí está el mismo don Quijote, que la sustentará con sus armas a pie, o a caballo, o de cualquiera suerte que os agradare.

Y, diciendo esto, se levantó en pie y se empuñó en la espada, esperando qué resolución tomaría el Caballero del Bosque; el cual, con voz asimismo sosegada, respondió y dijo:

-Al buen pagador no le duelen prendas: el que una vez, señor don Quijote, pudo venceros transformado, bien podrá tener esperanza de rendiros en vuestro propio ser. Mas, porque no es bien que los caballeros hagan sus fechos de armas ascuras, como los salteadores y rufianes, esperemos el día, para que el sol vea nuestras obras. Y ha de ser condición de nuestra batalla que el vencido ha de quedar a la voluntad del vencedor, para que haga dél todo lo que quisiere, con tal que sea decente a caballero lo que se le ordenare.

-Soy más que contento desa condición y convenencia -respondió don Quijote.

Y, en diciendo esto, se fueron donde estaban sus escuderos, y los hallaron roncando y en la misma forma que estaban cuando les salteó el sueño. Despertáronlos y mandáronles que tuviesen a punto los caballos, porque, en saliendo el sol, habían de hacer los dos una sangrienta, singular y desigual batalla; a cuyas nuevas quedó Sancho atónito y pasmado, temeroso de la salud de su amo, por las valentías que había oído decir del suyo al escudero del Bosque; pero, sin hablar palabra, se fueron los dos escuderos a buscar su ganado, que ya todos tres caballos y el rucio se habían olido, y estaban todos juntos.

En el camino dijo el del Bosque a Sancho:

-Ha de saber, hermano, que tienen por costumbre los peleantes de la Andalucía, cuando son padrinos de alguna pendencia, no estarse ociosos mano sobre mano en tanto que sus ahijados riñen. Dígolo porque esté advertido que mientras nuestros dueños riñeren, nosotros también hemos de pelear y hacernos astillas.

-Esa costumbre, señor escudero -respondió Sancho-, allá puede correr y pasar con los rufianes y peleantes que dice, pero con los escuderos de los caballeros andantes, ni por pienso. A lo menos, yo no he oído decir a mi amo semejante costumbre, y sabe de memoria todas las ordenanzas de la andante caballería. Cuanto más, que yo quiero que sea verdad y ordenanza expresa el pelear los escuderos en tanto que sus señores pelean; pero yo no quiero cumplirla, sino pagar la pena que estuviere puesta a los tales pacíficos escuderos, que yo aseguro que no pase de dos libras de cera, y más quiero pagar las tales libras, que sé que me costarán menos que las hilas que podré gastar en curarme la cabeza, que ya me la cuento por partida y dividida en dos partes. Hay más: que me imposibilita

el reñir el no tener espada, pues en mi vida me la puse.

-Para eso sé yo un buen remedio -dijo el del Bosque-: yo traigo aquí dos talegas de lienzo, de un mesmo tamaño: tomaréis vos la una, y yo la otra, y riñiremos a talegazos, con armas iguales.

-Desa manera, sea en buena hora -respondió Sancho-, porque antes servirá la tal pelea de despolvorearnos que de herirnos.

-No ha de ser así -replicó el otro-, porque se han de echar dentro de las talegas, porque no se las lleve el aire, media docena de guijarros lindos y pelados, que pesen tanto los unos como los otros, y desta manera nos podremos atalegar sin hacernos mal ni daño.

-¡Mirad, cuerpo de mi padre -respondió Sancho-, qué martas cebollinas, o qué copos de algodón cardado pone en las talegas, para no quedar molidos los cascós y hechos alheña los huesos! Pero, aunque se llenaran de capullos de seda, sepa, señor mío, que no he de pelear: peleen nuestros amos, y allá se lo hayan, y bebamos y vivamos nosotros, que el tiempo tiene cuidado de quitarnos las vidas, sin que andemos buscando apetites para que se acaben antes de llegar su sazón y término y que se cayan de maduras.

-Con todo -replicó el del Bosque-, hemos de pelear siquiera media hora.

-Eso no -respondió Sancho-: no seré yo tan descortés ni tan desagradecido, que con quien he comido y he bebido trabe cuestión alguna, por mínima que sea; cuanto más que, estando sin cólera y sin enojo, ¿quién diablos se ha de amañar a reñir a secas?

-Para eso -dijo el del Bosque- yo daré un suficiente remedio: y es que, antes que comencemos la pelea, yo me llegaré bonitamente a vuestra merced y le daré tres o cuatro bofetadas, que dé con él a mis pies, con las cuales le haré despertar la cólera, aunque esté con más sueño que un lirón.

-Contra ese corte sé yo otro -respondió Sancho-, que no le va en zaga: cogeré yo un garrote, y, antes que vuestra merced llegue a despertarme la cólera, haré yo dormir a garrotazos de tal suerte la suya, que no despierte si no fuere en el otro mundo, en el cual se sabe que no soy yo hombre que me dejen manosear el rostro de nadie; y cada uno mire por el virote, aunque lo más acertado sería dejar dormir su cólera a cada uno, que no sabe nadie el alma de nadie, y tal suele venir por lana que vuelve tresquilado; y Dios bendijo la paz y maldijo las riñas, porque si un gato acosado, encerrado y apretado se vuelve en león, yo, que soy hombre, Dios sabe en lo que podré volverme; y así, desde ahora intimo a vuestra merced, señor escudero, que corra por su cuenta todo el mal y daño que de nuestra pendencia resultare.

-Está bien -replicó el del Bosque-. Amanecerá Dios y medraremos.

En esto, ya comenzaban a gorjear en los árboles mil suertes de pintados



pajarillos, y en sus diversos y alegres cantos parecía que daban la norabuena y saludaban a la fresca aurora, que ya por las puertas y balcones del oriente iba descubriendo la hermosura de su rostro, sacudiendo de sus cabellos un número infinito de líquidas perlas, en cuyo suave licor bañándose las yerbas, parecía asimesmo que ellas brotaban y llovían blanco y menudo aljófár; los sauces destilaban maná sabroso, reíanse las fuentes, murmuraban los arroyos, alegrábanse las selvas y enriquecíanse los prados con su venida. Mas, apenas dio lugar la claridad del día para ver y diferenciar las cosas, cuando la primera que se ofreció a los ojos de Sancho Panza fue la nariz del escudero del Bosque, que era tan grande que casi le hacía sombra a todo el cuerpo. Cuéntase, en efecto, que era de demasiada grandeza, corva en la mitad y toda llena de verrugas, de color amoratado, como de berenjena; bajábale dos dedos más abajo de la boca; cuya grandeza, color, verrugas y encorvamiento así le afeaban el rostro, que, en viéndole Sancho, comenzó a herir de pie y de mano, como niño con alferecía, y propuso en su corazón de dejarse dar docientas bofetadas antes que despertar la cólera para reñir con aquel vestiglo.

Don Quijote miró a su contendor, y hallóle ya puesta y calada la celada, de modo que no le pudo ver el rostro, pero notó que era hombre membrudo, y no muy alto de cuerpo. Sobre las armas traía una sobrevista o casaca de una tela, al parecer, de oro finísimo, sembradas por ella muchas lunas pequeñas de resplandecientes espejos, que le hacían en grandísima manera galán y vistoso; volábanle sobre la celada grande cantidad de plumas verdes, amarillas y blancas; la lanza, que tenía arrimada a un árbol, era grandísima y gruesa, y de un hierro acerado de más de un palmo.

Todo lo miró y todo lo notó don Quijote, y juzgó de lo visto y mirado que el ya dicho caballero debía de ser de grandes fuerzas; pero no por eso temió, como Sancho Panza; antes, con gentil denuedo, dijo al Caballero de los Espejos:

-Si la mucha gana de pelear, señor caballero, no os gasta la cortesía, por ella os pido que alcéis la visera un poco, porque yo vea si la gallardía de vuestro rostro responde a la de vuestra disposición.

-O vencido o vencedor que salgáis desta empresa, señor caballero -respondió el de los Espejos-, os quedará tiempo y espacio demasiado para verme; y si ahora no satisfago a vuestro deseo, es por parecerme que hago notable agravio a la hermosa Casildea de Vandalia en dilatar el tiempo que tardare en alzarme la visera, sin haceros confesar lo que ya sabéis que pretendo.

-Pues, en tanto que subimos a caballo -dijo don Quijote-, bien podéis decirme si soy yo aquel don Quijote que dijistes haber vencido.

-A eso vos respondemos -dijo el de los Espejos- que parecéis, como se parece un huevo a otro, al mismo caballero que yo vencí; pero, según vos decís que le

persiguen encantadores, no osaré afirmar si sois el contenido o no.

-Eso me basta a mí -respondió don Quijote-para que crea vuestro engaño; empero, para sacaros dél de todo punto, vengan nuestros caballos; que, en menos tiempo que el que tardáades en alzaros la visera, si Dios, si mi señora y mi brazo me valen, veré yo vuestro rostro, y vos veréis que no soy yo el vencido don Quijote que pensáis.

Con esto, acortando razones, subieron a caballo, y don Quijote volvió las riendas a Rocinante para tomar lo que convenía del campo, para volver a encontrar a su contrario, y lo mismo hizo el de los Espejos. Pero, no se había apartado don Quijote veinte pasos, cuando se oyó llamar del de los Espejos, y, partiendo los dos el camino, el de los Espejos le dijo:

-Advertid, señor caballero, que la condición de nuestra batalla es que el vencido, como otra vez he dicho, ha de quedar a discreción del vencedor.

-Ya la sé -respondió don Quijote-; con tal que lo que se le impusiere y mandare al vencido han de ser cosas que no salgan de los límites de la caballería.

-Así se entiende -respondió el de los Espejos.

Ofreciéronsele en esto a la vista de don Quijote las estrañas narices del escudero, y no se admiró menos de verlas que Sancho; tanto, que le juzgó por algún monstro, o por hombre nuevo y de aquellos que no se usan en el mundo. Sancho, que vio partir a su amo para tomar carrera, no quiso quedar solo con el narigudo, temiendo que con solo un pasagonzalo con aquellas narices en las suyas sería acabada la pendencia suya, quedando del golpe, o del miedo, tendido en el suelo, y fuese tras su amo, asido a una acción de Rocinante; y, cuando le pareció que ya era tiempo que volviese, le dijo:

-Suplico a vuesa merced, señor mío, que antes que vuelva a encontrarse me ayude a subir sobre aquel alcornoque, de donde podré ver más a mi sabor, mejor que desde el suelo, el gallardo encuentro que vuesa merced ha de hacer con este caballero.

-Antes creo, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, que te quieres encaramar y subir en andamio por ver sin peligro los toros.

-La verdad que diga -respondió Sancho-, las desaforadas narices de aquel escudero me tienen atónito y lleno de espanto, y no me atrevo a estar junto a él.

-Ellas son tales -dijo don Quijote-, que, a no ser yo quien soy, también me asombraran; y así, ven: ayudarte he a subir donde dices.

En lo que se detuvo don Quijote en que Sancho subiese en el alcornoque, tomó el de los Espejos del campo lo que le pareció necesario; y, creyendo que lo mismo habría hecho don Quijote, sin esperar son de trompeta ni otra señal que los avisase, volvió las riendas a su caballo -que no era más ligero ni de mejor parecer que Rocinante-, y, a todo su correr, que era un mediano trote, iba a

encontrar a su enemigo; pero, viéndole ocupado en la subida de Sancho, detuvo las riendas y paróse en la mitad de la carrera, de lo que el caballo quedó agradecidísimo, a causa que ya no podía moverse. Don Quijote, que le pareció que ya su enemigo venía volando, arrimó reciamente las espuelas a las trasijadas ijadas de Rocinante, y le hizo aguijar de manera, que cuenta la historia que esta sola vez se conoció haber corrido algo, porque todas las demás siempre fueron trotes declarados; y con esta no vista furia llegó donde el de los Espejos estaba hincando a su caballo las espuelas hasta los botones, sin que le pudiese mover un solo dedo del lugar donde había hecho estanco de su carrera.

En esta buena sazón y coyuntura halló don Quijote a su contrario embarazado con su caballo y ocupado con su lanza, que nunca, o no acertó, o no tuvo lugar de ponerla en ristre. Don Quijote, que no miraba en estos inconvenientes, a salvamano y sin peligro alguno, encontró al de los Espejos con tanta fuerza, que mal de su grado le hizo venir al suelo por las ancas del caballo, dando tal caída, que, sin mover pie ni mano, dio señales de que estaba muerto.

Apenas le vio caído Sancho, cuando se deslizó del alcornoque y a toda priesa vino donde su señor estaba, el cual, apeándose de Rocinante, fue sobre el de los Espejos, y, quitándole las lazadas del yelmo para ver si era muerto y para que le diese el aire si acaso estaba vivo; y vio... ¿Quién podrá decir lo que vio, sin causar admiración, maravilla y espanto a los que lo oyeren? Vio, dice la historia, el rostro mismo, la misma figura, el mismo aspecto, la misma fisonomía, la misma efigie, la pespetiva misma del bachiller Sansón Carrasco; y, así como la vio, en altas voces dijo:

-¡Acude, Sancho, y mira lo que has de ver y no lo has creer! ¡Aguija, hijo, y advierte lo que puede la magia, lo que pueden los hechiceros y los encantadores!

Llegó Sancho, y, como vio el rostro del bachiller Carrasco, comenzó a hacerse mil cruces y a santiguarse otras tantas. En todo esto, no daba muestras de estar vivo el derribado caballero, y Sancho dijo a don Quijote:

-Soy de parecer, señor mío, que, por sí o por no, vuesa merced hincue y meta la espada por la boca a este que parece el bachiller Sansón Carrasco; quizá matará en él a alguno de sus enemigos los encantadores.

-No dices mal -dijo don Quijote-, porque de los enemigos, los menos.

Y, sacando la espada para poner en efecto el aviso y consejo de Sancho, llegó el escudero del de los Espejos, ya sin las narices que tan feo le habían hecho, y a grandes voces dijo:

-Mire vuesa merced lo que hace, señor don Quijote, que ese que tiene a los pies es el bachiller Sansón Carrasco, su amigo, y yo soy su escudero.

Y, viéndole Sancho sin aquella fealdad primera, le dijo:

-¿Y las narices?

A lo que él respondió:

-Aquí las tengo, en la faldriquera.

Y, echando mano a la derecha, sacó unas narices de pasta y barniz, de máscara, de la manifatura que quedan delineadas. Y, mirándole más y más Sancho, con voz admirativa y grande, dijo:

-¡Santa María, y valme! ¿Éste no es Tomé Cecial, mi vecino y mi compadre?

-Y ¡cómo si lo soy! -respondió el ya desnarigado escudero-: Tomé Cecial soy, compadre y amigo Sancho Panza, y luego os diré los arcaduces, embustes y enredos por donde soy aquí venido; y en tanto, pedid y suplicad al señor vuestro amo que no toque, maltrate, hiera ni mate al caballero de los Espejos, que a sus pies tiene, porque sin duda alguna es el atrevido y mal aconsejado del bachiller Sansón Carrasco, nuestro compatrioto.

En esto, volvió en sí el de los Espejos, lo cual visto por don Quijote, le puso la punta desnuda de su espada encima del rostro, y le dijo:

-Muerto sois, caballero, si no confesáis que la sin par Dulcinea del Toboso se aventaja en belleza a vuestra Casildea de Vandalia; y demás de esto habéis de prometer, si de esta contienda y caída quedárades con vida, de ir a la ciudad del Toboso y presentaros en su presencia de mi parte, para que haga de vos lo que más en voluntad le viniere; y si os dejare en la vuestra, asimismo habéis de volver a buscarme, que el rastro de mis hazañas os servirá de guía que os traiga donde yo estuviere, y a decirme lo que con ella hubiéredes pasado; condiciones que, conforme a las que pusimos antes de nuestra batalla, no salen de los términos de la andante caballería.

-Confieso -dijo el caído caballero-que vale más el zapato descosido y sucio de la señora Dulcinea del Toboso que las barbas mal peinadas, aunque limpias, de Casildea, y prometo de ir y volver de su presencia a la vuestra, y daros entera y particular cuenta de lo que me pedís.

-También habéis de confesar y creer -añadió don Quijote-que aquel caballero que vencistes no fue ni pudo ser don Quijote de la Mancha, sino otro que se le parecía, como yo confieso y creo que vos, aunque parecéis el bachiller Sansón Carrasco, no lo sois, sino otro que le parece, y que en su figura aquí me le han puesto mis enemigos, para que detenga y temple el ímpetu de mi cólera, y para que use blandamente de la gloria del vencimiento.

-Todo lo confieso, juzgo y siento como vos lo creéis, juzgáis y sentís -respondió el derrengado caballero-. Dejadme levantar, os ruego, si es que lo permite el golpe de mi caída, que asaz maltrecho me tiene.

Ayudóle a levantar don Quijote y Tomé Cecial, su escudero, del cual no apartaba los ojos Sancho, preguntándole cosas cuyas respuestas le daban manifiestas señales de que verdaderamente era el Tomé Cecial que decía; mas la

aprehensión que en Sancho había hecho lo que su amo dijo, de que los encantadores habían mudado la figura del Caballero de los Espejos en la del bachiller Carrasco, no le dejaba dar crédito a la verdad que con los ojos estaba mirando. Finalmente, se quedaron con este engaño amo y mozo, y el de los Espejos y su escudero, mohínos y malandantes, se apartaron de don Quijote y Sancho, con intención de buscar algún lugar donde bizmarle y entablarle las costillas. Don Quijote y Sancho volvieron a proseguir su camino de Zaragoza, donde los deja la historia, por dar cuenta de quién era el Caballero de los Espejos y su narigante escudero.

## Capítulo XV

*Donde se cuenta y da noticia de quién era el Caballero de los Espejos y su escudero*

EN ESTREMO contento, ufano y vanaglorioso iba don Quijote por haber alcanzado vitoria de tan valiente caballero como él se imaginaba que era el de los Espejos, de cuya caballeresca palabra esperaba saber si el encantamento de su señora pasaba adelante, pues era forzoso que el tal vencido caballero volviese, so pena de no serlo, a darle razón de lo que con ella le hubiese sucedido. Pero uno pensaba don Quijote y otro el de los Espejos, puesto que por entonces no era otro su pensamiento sino buscar donde bismarse, como se ha dicho.

Dice, pues, la historia que cuando el bachiller Sansón Carrasco aconsejó a don Quijote que volviese a proseguir sus dejadas caballerías, fue por haber entrado primero en bureo con el cura y el barbero sobre qué medio se podría tomar para reducir a don Quijote a que se estuviese en su casa quieto y sosegado, sin que le alborotasen sus mal buscadas aventuras; de cuyo consejo salió, por voto común de todos y parecer particular de Carrasco, que dejasen salir a don Quijote, pues el detenerle parecía imposible, y que Sansón le saliese al camino como caballero andante, y trabase batalla con él, pues no faltaría sobre qué, y le venciese, teniéndolo por cosa fácil, y que fuese pacto y concierto que el vencido quedase a merced del vencedor; y así vencido don Quijote, le había de mandar el bachiller caballero se volviese a su pueblo y casa, y no saliese della en dos años, o hasta tanto que por él le fuese mandado otra cosa; lo cual era claro que don Quijote vencido cumpliría indubitablemente, por no contravenir y faltar a las leyes de la caballería, y podría ser que en el tiempo de su reclusión se le olvidasen sus vanidades, o se diese lugar de buscar a su locura algún conveniente remedio.

Aceptólo Carrasco, y ofreciósele por escudero Tomé Cecial, compadre y vecino de Sancho Panza, hombre alegre y de lucios cascos. Armóse Sansón como queda referido y Tomé Cecial acomodó sobre sus naturales narices las falsas y de máscara ya dichas, porque no fuese conocido de su compadre cuando se viesen; y así, siguieron el mismo viaje que llevaba don Quijote, y llegaron casi a hallarse en la aventura del carro de la Muerte. Y, finalmente, dieron con ellos en el bosque, donde les sucedió todo lo que el prudente ha leído; y si no fuera por los pensamientos extraordinarios de don Quijote, que se dio a entender que el bachiller no era el bachiller, el señor bachiller quedara imposibilitado para

siempre de graduarse de licenciado, por no haber hallado nidos donde pensó hallar pájaros.

Tomé Cecial, que vio cuán mal había logrado sus deseos y el mal paradero que había tenido su camino, dijo al bachiller:

-Por cierto, señor Sansón Carrasco, que tenemos nuestro merecido: con facilidad se piensa y se acomete una empresa, pero con dificultad las más veces se sale della. Don Quijote loco, nosotros cuerdos: él se va sano y riendo, vuesa merced queda molido y triste. Sepamos, pues, ahora, cuál es más loco: ¿el que lo es por no poder menos, o el que lo es por su voluntad?

A lo que respondió Sansón:

-La diferencia que hay entre esos dos locos es que el que lo es por fuerza lo será siempre, y el que lo es de grado lo dejará de ser cuando quisiere.

-Pues así es -dijo Tomé Cecial-, yo fui por mi voluntad loco cuando quise hacerme escudero de vuestra merced, y por la misma quiero dejar de serlo y volverme a mi casa.

-Eso os cumple -respondió Sansón-, porque pensar que yo he de volver a la mía, hasta haber molido a palos a don Quijote, es pensar en lo escusado; y no me llevará ahora a buscarle el deseo de que cobre su juicio, sino el de la venganza; que el dolor grande de mis costillas no me deja hacer más piadosos discursos.

En esto fueron razonando los dos, hasta que llegaron a un pueblo donde fue ventura hallar un algebrista, con quien se curó el Sansón desgraciado. Tomé Cecial se volvió y le dejó, y él quedó imaginando su venganza; y la historia vuelve a hablar dél a su tiempo, por no dejar de regocijarse ahora con don Quijote.

## Capítulo XVI

*De lo que sucedió a don Quijote con un discreto caballero de la Mancha*

CON LA ALEGRÍA, contento y ufanidad que se ha dicho, seguía don Quijote su jornada, imaginándose por la pasada vitoria ser el caballero andante más valiente que tenía en aquella edad el mundo; daba por acabadas y a felice fin conducidas cuantas aventuras pudiesen sucederle de allí adelante; tenía en poco a los encantos y a los encantadores; no se acordaba de los innumerables palos que en el discurso de sus caballerías le habían dado, ni de la pedrada que le derribó la mitad de los dientes, ni del desagradecimiento de los galeotes, ni del atrevimiento y lluvia de estacas de los yangüeses. Finalmente, decía entre sí que si él hallara arte, modo o manera como desencantar a su señora Dulcinea, no invidiara a la mayor ventura que alcanzó o pudo alcanzar el más venturoso caballero andante de los pasados siglos. En estas imaginaciones iba todo ocupado, cuando Sancho le dijo:

-¿No es bueno, señor, que aun todavía traigo entre los ojos las desaforadas narices, y mayores de marca, de mi compadre Tomé Cecial?

-Y ¿crees tú, Sancho, por ventura, que el Caballero de los Espejos era el bachiller Carrasco; y su escudero, Tomé Cecial, tu compadre?

-No sé qué me diga a eso -respondió Sancho-; sólo sé que las señas que me dio de mi casa, mujer y hijos no me las podría dar otro que él mismo; y la cara, quitadas las narices, era la misma de Tomé Cecial, como yo se la he visto muchas veces en mi pueblo y pared en medio de mi misma casa; y el tono de la habla era todo uno.

-Estemos a razón, Sancho -replicó don Quijote-. Ven acá: ¿en qué consideración puede caber que el bachiller Sansón Carrasco viniese como caballero andante, armado de armas ofensivas y defensivas, a pelear conmigo? ¿He sido yo su enemigo por ventura? ¿Hele dado yo jamás ocasión para tenerme ojeriza? ¿Soy yo su rival, o hace él profesión de las armas, para tener invidia a la fama que yo por ellas he ganado?

-Pues, ¿qué diremos, señor -respondió Sancho-, a esto de parecerse tanto aquel caballero, sea el que se fuere, al bachiller Carrasco, y su escudero a Tomé Cecial, mi compadre? Y si ello es encantamento, como vuestra merced ha dicho, ¿no había en el mundo otros dos a quien se parecieran?

-Todo es artificio y traza -respondió don Quijote- de los malignos magos que



me persiguen, los cuales, anteviendo que yo había de quedar vencedor en la contienda, se previnieron de que el caballero vencido mostrase el rostro de mi amigo el bachiller, porque la amistad que le tengo se pusiese entre los filos de mi espada y el rigor de mi brazo, y templase la justa ira de mi corazón, y desta manera quedase con vida el que con embelecocos y falsías procuraba quitarme la mía. Para prueba de lo cual ya sabes, ¡oh Sancho!, por experiencia que no te dejará mentir ni engañar, cuán fácil sea a los encantadores mudar unos rostros en otros, haciendo de lo hermoso feo y de lo feo hermoso, pues no ha dos días que viste por tus mismos ojos la hermosura y gallardía de la sin par Dulcinea en toda su entereza y natural conformidad, y yo la vi en la fealdad y bajeza de una zafia labradora, con cataratas en los ojos y con mal olor en la boca; y más, que el perverso encantador que se atrevió a hacer una transformación tan mala no es mucho que haya hecho la de Sansón Carrasco y la de tu compadre, por quitarme la gloria del vencimiento de las manos. Pero, con todo esto, me consuelo; porque, en fin, en cualquiera figura que haya sido, he quedado vencedor de mi enemigo.

-Dios sabe la verdad de todo -respondió Sancho.

Y como él sabía que la transformación de Dulcinea había sido traza y embelecoco suyo, no le satisfacían las quimeras de su amo; pero no le quiso replicar, por no decir alguna palabra que descubriese su embuste.

En estas razones estaban cuando los alcanzó un hombre que detrás dellos por el mismo camino venía sobre una muy hermosa yegua tordilla, vestido un gabán de paño fino verde, jironado de terciopelo leonado, con una montera del mismo terciopelo; el aderezo de la yegua era de campo y de la jineta, asimismo de morado y verde. Traía un alfanje morisco pendiente de un ancho tahalí de verde y oro, y los borceguíes eran de la labor del tahalí; las espuelas no eran doradas, sino dadas con un barniz verde, tan tersas y bruñidas que, por hacer labor con todo el vestido, parecían mejor que si fuera de oro puro. Cuando llegó a ellos, el caminante los saludó cortésmente, y, picando a la yegua, se pasaba de largo; pero don Quijote le dijo:

-Señor galán, si es que vuestra merced lleva el camino que nosotros y no importa el darse priesa, merced recibiría en que nos fuésemos juntos.

-En verdad -respondió el de la yegua-que no me pasara tan de largo, si no fuera por temor que con la compañía de mi yegua no se alborotara ese caballo.

-Bien puede, señor -respondió a esta sazón Sancho-, bien puede tener las riendas a su yegua, porque nuestro caballo es el más honesto y bien mirado del mundo: jamás en semejantes ocasiones ha hecho vileza alguna, y una vez que se desmandó a hacerla la lastamos mi señor y yo con las setenas. Digo otra vez que puede vuestra merced detenerse, si quisiere; que, aunque se la den entre dos

platos, a buen seguro que el caballo no la arrostre.

Detuvo la rienda el caminante, admirándose de la apostura y rostro de don Quijote, el cual iba sin celada, que la llevaba Sancho como maleta en el arzón delantero de la albarda del rucio; y si mucho miraba el de lo verde a don Quijote, mucho más miraba don Quijote al de lo verde, pareciéndole hombre de chapa. La edad mostraba ser de cincuenta años; las canas, pocas, y el rostro, aguileño; la vista, entre alegre y grave; finalmente, en el traje y apostura daba a entender ser hombre de buenas prendas.

Lo que juzgó de don Quijote de la Mancha el de lo verde fue que semejante manera ni parecer de hombre no le había visto jamás: admiróle la longura de su caballo, la grandeza de su cuerpo, la flaqueza y amarillez de su rostro, sus armas, su ademán y compostura: figura y retrato no visto por luengos tiempos atrás en aquella tierra. Notó bien don Quijote la atención con que el caminante le miraba, y leyóle en la suspensión su deseo; y, como era tan cortés y tan amigo de dar gusto a todos, antes que le preguntase nada, le salió al camino, diciéndole:

-Esta figura que vuesa merced en mí ha visto, por ser tan nueva y tan fuera de las que comúnmente se usan, no me maravillaría yo de que le hubiese maravillado; pero dejaré vuesa merced de estarlo cuando le diga, como le digo, que soy caballero

destos que dicen las gentes  
que a sus aventuras van.

Salí de mi patria, empecé mi hacienda, dejé mi regalo, y entreguéme en los brazos de la Fortuna, que me llevasen donde más fuese servida. Quise resucitar la ya muerta andante caballería, y ha muchos días que, tropezando aquí, cayendo allí, despeñándome acá y levantándome acullá, he cumplido gran parte de mi deseo, socorriendo viudas, amparando doncellas y favoreciendo casadas, huérfanos y pupilos, propio y natural oficio de caballeros andantes; y así, por mis valerosas, muchas y cristianas hazañas he merecido andar ya en estampa en casi todas o las más naciones del mundo. Treinta mil volúmenes se han impreso de mi historia, y lleva camino de imprimirse treinta mil veces de millares, si el cielo no lo remedia. Finalmente, por encerrarlo todo en breves palabras, o en una sola, digo que yo soy don Quijote de la Mancha, por otro nombre llamado el Caballero de la Triste Figura; y, puesto que las propias alabanzas envilecen, esme forzoso decir yo tal vez las mías, y esto se entiende cuando no se halla presente quien las diga; así que, señor gentilhombre, ni este caballo, esta lanza,

ni este escudo, ni escudero, ni todas juntas estas armas, ni la amarillez de mi rostro, ni mi atenuada flaqueza, os podrá admirar de aquí adelante, habiendo ya sabido quién soy y la profesión que hago.

Calló en diciendo esto don Quijote, y el de lo verde, según se tardaba en responderle, parecía que no acertaba a hacerlo; pero de allí a buen espacio le dijo:

-Acertastes, señor caballero, a conocer por mi suspensión mi deseo; pero no habéis acertado a quitarme la maravilla que en mí causa el haberos visto; que, puesto que, como vos, señor, decís, que el saber ya quién sois me lo podría quitar, no ha sido así; antes, agora que lo sé, quedo más suspenso y maravillado. ¿Cómo y es posible que hay hoy caballeros andantes en el mundo, y que hay historias impresas de verdaderas caballerías? No me puedo persuadir que haya hoy en la tierra quien favorezca viudas, ampare doncellas, ni honre casadas, ni socorra huérfanos, y no lo creyera si en vuesa merced no lo hubiera visto con mis ojos. ¡Bendito sea el cielo!, que con esa historia, que vuesa merced dice que está impresa, de sus altas y verdaderas caballerías, se habrán puesto en olvido las innumerables de los fingidos caballeros andantes, de que estaba lleno el mundo, tan en daño de las buenas costumbres y tan en perjuicio y descrédito de las buenas historias.

-Hay mucho que decir -respondió don Quijote-en razón de si son fingidas, o no, las historias de los andantes caballeros.

-Pues, ¿hay quien dude -respondió el Verde-que no son falsas las tales historias?

-Yo lo dudo -respondió don Quijote-, y quédese esto aquí; que si nuestra jornada dura, espero en Dios de dar a entender a vuesa merced que ha hecho mal en irse con la corriente de los que tienen por cierto que no son verdaderas.

Desta última razón de don Quijote tomó barruntos el caminante de que don Quijote debía de ser algún mentecato, y aguardaba que con otras lo confirmase; pero, antes que se divertiesen en otros razonamientos, don Quijote le rogó le dijese quién era, pues él le había dado parte de su condición y de su vida. A lo que respondió el del Verde Gabán:

-Yo, señor Caballero de la Triste Figura, soy un hidalgo natural de un lugar donde iremos a comer hoy, si Dios fuere servido. Soy más que medianamente rico y es mi nombre don Diego de Miranda; paso la vida con mi mujer, y con mis hijos, y con mis amigos; mis ejercicios son el de la caza y pesca, pero no mantengo ni halcón ni galgos, sino algún perdigón manso, o algún hurón atrevido. Tengo hasta seis docenas de libros, cuáles de romance y cuáles de latín, de historia algunos y de devoción otros; los de caballerías aún no han entrado por los umbrales de mis puertas. Hojeo más los que son profanos que los

devotos, como sean de honesto entretenimiento, que deleiten con el lenguaje y admiren y suspendan con la invención, puesto que éstos hay muy pocos en España. Alguna vez como con mis vecinos y amigos, y muchas veces los convido; son mis convites limpios y aseados, y no nada escasos; ni gusto de murmurar, ni consiento que delante de mí se murmure; no escudriño las vidas ajenas, ni soy lince de los hechos de los otros; oigo misa cada día; reparto de mis bienes con los pobres, sin hacer alarde de las buenas obras, por no dar entrada en mi corazón a la hipocresía y vanagloria, enemigos que blandamente se apoderan del corazón más recatado; procuro poner en paz los que sé que están desavenidos; soy devoto de nuestra Señora, y confío siempre en la misericordia infinita de Dios nuestro Señor.

Atentísimo estuvo Sancho a la relación de la vida y entretenimientos del hidalgo; y, pareciéndole buena y santa y que quien la hacía debía de hacer milagros, se arrojó del rucio, y con gran priesa le fue a asir del estribo derecho, y con devoto corazón y casi lágrimas le besó los pies una y muchas veces. Visto lo cual por el hidalgo, le preguntó:

-¿Qué hacéis, hermano? ¿Qué besos son éstos?

-Déjenme besar -respondió Sancho-, porque me parece vuesa merced el primer santo a la jineta que he visto en todos los días de mi vida.

-No soy santo -respondió el hidalgo-, sino gran pecador; vos sí, hermano, que debéis de ser bueno, como vuestra simplicidad lo muestra.

Volvió Sancho a cobrar la albarda, habiendo sacado a plaza la risa de la profunda malencolía de su amo y causado nueva admiración a don Diego. Preguntóle don Quijote que cuántos hijos tenía, y díjole que una de las cosas en que ponían el sumo bien los antiguos filósofos, que carecieron del verdadero conocimiento de Dios, fue en los bienes de la naturaleza, en los de la fortuna, en tener muchos amigos y en tener muchos y buenos hijos.

-Yo, señor don Quijote -respondió el hidalgo-, tengo un hijo, que, a no tenerle, quizá me juzgara por más dichoso de lo que soy; y no porque él sea malo, sino porque no es tan bueno como yo quisiera. Será de edad de diez y ocho años: los seis ha estado en Salamanca, aprendiendo las lenguas latina y griega; y, cuando quise que pasase a estudiar otras ciencias, halléle tan embebido en la de la poesía, si es que se puede llamar ciencia, que no es posible hacerle arrostrar la de las leyes, que yo quisiera que estudiara, ni de la reina de todas, la teología. Quisiera yo que fuera corona de su linaje, pues vivimos en siglo donde nuestros reyes premian altamente las virtuosas y buenas letras; porque letras sin virtud son perlas en el muladar. Todo el día se le pasa en averiguar si dijo bien o mal Homero en tal verso de la *Ilíada*; si Marcial anduvo deshonesto, o no, en tal epigrama; si se han de entender de una manera o otra tales y tales versos de

Virgilio. En fin, todas sus conversaciones son con los libros de los referidos poetas, y con los de Horacio, Persio, Juvenal y Tibulo; que de los modernos romancistas no hace mucha cuenta; y, con todo el mal cariño que muestra tener a la poesía de romance, le tiene agora desvanecidos los pensamientos el hacer una glosa a cuatro versos que le han enviado de Salamanca, y pienso que son de justa literaria.

A todo lo cual respondió don Quijote:

-Los hijos, señor, son pedazos de las entrañas de sus padres, y así, se han de querer, o buenos o malos que sean, como se quieren las almas que nos dan vida; a los padres toca el encaminarlos desde pequeños por los pasos de la virtud, de la buena crianza y de las buenas y cristianas costumbres, para que cuando grandes sean báculo de la vejez de sus padres y gloria de su posteridad; y en lo de forzarles que estudien esta o aquella ciencia no lo tengo por acertado, aunque el persuadirles no será dañoso; y cuando no se ha de estudiar para pane lucrando, siendo tan venturoso el estudiante que le dio el cielo padres que se lo dejen, sería yo de parecer que le dejen seguir aquella ciencia a que más le vieren inclinado; y, aunque la de la poesía es menos útil que deleitable, no es de aquellas que suelen deshonorar a quien las posee. La poesía, señor hidalgo, a mi parecer, es como una doncella tierna y de poca edad, y en todo extremo hermosa, a quien tienen cuidado de enriquecer, pulir y adornar otras muchas doncellas, que son todas las otras ciencias, y ella se ha de servir de todas, y todas se han de autorizar con ella; pero esta tal doncella no quiere ser manoseada, ni traída por las calles, ni publicada por las esquinas de las plazas ni por los rincones de los palacios. Ella es hecha de una alquimia de tal virtud, que quien la sabe tratar la volverá en oro purísimo de inestimable precio; hala de tener, el que la tuviere, a raya, no dejándola correr en torpes sátiras ni en desalmados sonetos; no ha de ser vendible en ninguna manera, si ya no fuere en poemas heroicos, en lamentables tragedias, o en comedias alegres y artificiosas; no se ha de dejar tratar de los truhanes, ni del ignorante vulgo, incapaz de conocer ni estimar los tesoros que en ella se encierran. Y no penséis, señor, que yo llamo aquí vulgo solamente a la gente plebeya y humilde; que todo aquel que no sabe, aunque sea señor y príncipe, puede y debe entrar en número de vulgo. Y así, el que con los requisitos que he dicho tratare y tuviere a la poesía, será famoso y estimado su nombre en todas las naciones políticas del mundo. Y a lo que decís, señor, que vuestro hijo no estima mucho la poesía de romance, doyme a entender que no anda muy acertado en ello, y la razón es ésta: el grande Homero no escribió en latín, porque era griego, ni Virgilio no escribió en griego, porque era latino. En resolución, todos los poetas antiguos escribieron en la lengua que mamaron en la leche, y no fueron a buscar las extranjeras para declarar la alteza de sus

conceptos. Y, siendo esto así, razón sería se estendiese esta costumbre por todas las naciones, y que no se desestimase el poeta alemán porque escribe en su lengua, ni el castellano, ni aun el vizcaíno, que escribe en la suya. Pero vuestro hijo, a lo que yo, señor, imagino, no debe de estar mal con la poesía de romance, sino con los poetas que son meros romancistas, sin saber otras lenguas ni otras ciencias que adornen y despierten y ayuden a su natural impulso; y aun en esto puede haber yerro; porque, según es opinión verdadera, el poeta nace: quieren decir que del vientre de su madre el poeta natural sale poeta; y, con aquella inclinación que le dio el cielo, sin más estudio ni artificio, compone cosas, que hace verdadero al que dijo: est Deus in nobis..., etcétera. También digo que el natural poeta que se ayudare del arte será mucho mejor y se aventajará al poeta que sólo por saber el arte quisiere serlo; la razón es porque el arte no se aventaja a la naturaleza, sino perficiónala; así que, mezcladas la naturaleza y el arte, y el arte con la naturaleza, sacarán un perfetísimo poeta. Sea, pues, la conclusión de mi plática, señor hidalgo, que vuesa merced deje caminar a su hijo por donde su estrella le llama; que, siendo él tan buen estudiante como debe de ser, y habiendo ya subido felicemente el primer escalón de las esencias, que es el de las lenguas, con ellas por sí mismo subirá a la cumbre de las letras humanas, las cuales tan bien parecen en un caballero de capa y espada, y así le adornan, honran y engrandecen, como las mitras a los obispos, o como las garnachas a los peritos jurisconsultos. Riña vuesa merced a su hijo si hiciere sátiras que perjudiquen las honras ajenas, y castíguele, y rómpaselas, pero si hiciere sermones al modo de Horacio, donde reprehenda los vicios en general, como tan elegantemente él lo hizo, alábele: porque lícito es al poeta escribir contra la invidia, y decir en sus versos mal de los envidiosos, y así de los otros vicios, con que no señale persona alguna; pero hay poetas que, a trueco de decir una malicia, se pondrán a peligro que los destierren a las islas de Ponto. Si el poeta fuere casto en sus costumbres, lo será también en sus versos; la pluma es lengua del alma: cuales fueren los conceptos que en ella se engendraren, tales serán sus escritos; y cuando los reyes y príncipes veen la milagrosa ciencia de la poesía en sujetos prudentes, virtuosos y graves, los honran, los estiman y los enriquecen, y aun los coronan con las hojas del árbol a quien no ofende el rayo, como en señal que no han de ser ofendidos de nadie los que con tales coronas veen honrados y adornadas sus sienes.

Admirado quedó el del Verde Gabán del razonamiento de don Quijote, y tanto, que fue perdiendo de la opinión que con él tenía, de ser mentecato. Pero, a la mitad desta plática, Sancho, por no ser muy de su gusto, se había desviado del camino a pedir un poco de leche a unos pastores que allí junto estaban ordeñando unas ovejas; y, en esto, ya volvía a renovar la plática el hidalgo,

satisfecho en extremo de la discreción y buen discurso de don Quijote, cuando, alzando don Quijote la cabeza, vio que por el camino por donde ellos iban venía un carro lleno de banderas reales; y, creyendo que debía de ser alguna nueva aventura, a grandes voces llamó a Sancho que viniese a darle la celada. El cual Sancho, oyéndose llamar, dejó a los pastores, y a toda priesa picó al rucio, y llegó donde su amo estaba, a quien sucedió una espantosa y desatinada aventura.

## Capítulo XVII

*De donde se declaró el último punto y extremo adonde llegó y pudo llegar el inaudito ánimo de don Quijote, con la felicemente acabada aventura de los leones*

CUENTA la historia que cuando don Quijote daba voces a Sancho que le trujese el yelmo, estaba él comprando unos requesones que los pastores le vendían; y, acosado de la mucha priesa de su amo, no supo qué hacer dellos, ni en qué traerlos, y, por no perderlos, que ya los tenía pagados, acordó de echarlos en la celada de su señor, y con este buen recado volvió a ver lo que le quería; el cual, en llegando, le dijo:

-Dame, amigo, esa celada; que yo sé poco de aventuras, o lo que allí descubro es alguna que me ha de necesitar, y me necesita, a tomar mis armas.

El del Verde Gabán, que esto oyó, tendió la vista por todas partes, y no descubrió otra cosa que un carro que hacia ellos venía, con dos o tres banderas pequeñas, que le dieron a entender que el tal carro debía de traer moneda de Su Majestad, y así se lo dijo a don Quijote; pero él no le dio crédito, siempre creyendo y pensando que todo lo que le sucediese habían de ser aventuras y más aventuras, y así, respondió al hidalgo:

-Hombre apercebido, medio combatido: no se pierde nada en que yo me aperciba, que sé por experiencia que tengo enemigos visibles e invisibles, y no sé cuándo, ni adónde, ni en qué tiempo, ni en qué figuras me han de acometer.

Y, volviéndose a Sancho, le pidió la celada; el cual, como no tuvo lugar de sacar los requesones, le fue forzoso dársela como estaba. Tomóla don Quijote, y, sin que echase de ver lo que dentro venía, con toda priesa se la encajó en la cabeza; y, como los requesones se apretaron y exprimieron, comenzó a correr el suero por todo el rostro y barbas de don Quijote, de lo que recibió tal susto, que dijo a Sancho:

-¿Qué será esto, Sancho, que parece que se me ablandan los cascos, o se me derriten los sesos, o que sudo de los pies a la cabeza? Y si es que sudo, en verdad que no es de miedo; sin duda creo que es terrible la aventura que agora quiere sucederme. Dame, si tienes, con que me limpie, que el copioso sudor me ciega los ojos.

Calló Sancho y dióle un paño, y dio con él gracias a Dios de que su señor no hubiese caído en el caso. Limpióse don Quijote y quitóse la celada por ver qué



cosa era la que, a su parecer, le enfriaba la cabeza, y, viendo aquellas gachas blancas dentro de la celada, las llegó a las narices, y en oliéndolas dijo:

-Por vida de mi señora Dulcinea del Toboso, que son requesones los que aquí me has puesto, traidor, bergante y mal mirado escudero.

A lo que, con gran flema y disimulación, respondió Sancho:

-Si son requesones, démelos vuesa merced, que yo me los comeré... Pero cómalos el diablo, que debió de ser el que ahí los puso. ¿Yo había de tener atrevimiento de ensuciar el yelmo de vuesa merced? ¡Hallado le habéis el atrevido! A la fe, señor, a lo que Dios me da a entender, también debo yo de tener encantadores que me persiguen como a hechura y miembro de vuesa merced, y habrán puesto ahí esa inmundicia para mover a cólera su paciencia y hacer que me muela, como suele, las costillas. Pues en verdad que esta vez han dado salto en vago, que yo confío en el buen discurso de mi señor, que habrá considerado que ni yo tengo requesones, ni leche, ni otra cosa que lo valga, y que si la tuviera, antes la pusiera en mi estómago que en la celada.

-Todo puede ser -dijo don Quijote.

Y todo lo miraba el hidalgo, y de todo se admiraba, especialmente cuando, después de haberse limpiado don Quijote cabeza, rostro y barbas y celada, se la encajó; y, afirmándose bien en los estribos, requiriendo la espada y asiendo la lanza, dijo:

-Ahora, venga lo que veniere, que aquí estoy con ánimo de tomarme con el mismo Satanás en persona.

Llegó en esto el carro de las banderas, en el cual no venía otra gente que el carretero, en las mulas, y un hombre sentado en la delantera. Púsose don Quijote delante y dijo:

-¿Adónde vais, hermanos? ¿Qué carro es éste, qué lleváis en él y qué banderas son aquéstras?

A lo que respondió el carretero:

-El carro es mío; lo que va en él son dos bravos leones enjaulados, que el general de Orán envía a la corte, presentados a Su Majestad; las banderas son del rey nuestro señor, en señal que aquí va cosa suya.

-Y ¿son grandes los leones? -preguntó don Quijote.

-Tan grandes -respondió el hombre que iba a la puerta del carro-, que no han pasado mayores, ni tan grandes, de África a España jamás; y yo soy el leonero, y he pasado otros, pero como éstos, ninguno. Son hembra y macho; el macho va en esta jaula primera, y la hembra en la de atrás; y ahora van hambrientos porque no han comido hoy; y así, vuesa merced se desvíe, que es menester llegar presto donde les demos de comer.

A lo que dijo don Quijote, sonriéndose un poco:

-¿Leoncitos a mí? ¿A mí leoncitos, y a tales horas? Pues, ¡por Dios que han de ver esos señores que acá los envían si soy yo hombre que se espanta de leones! Apeaos, buen hombre, y, pues sois el leonero, abrid esas jaulas y echadme esas bestias fuera, que en mitad desta campaña les daré a conocer quién es don Quijote de la Mancha, a despecho y pesar de los encantadores que a mí los envían.

-¡Ta, ta! -dijo a esta sazón entre sí el hidalgo-, dado ha señal de quién es nuestro buen caballero: los requesones, sin duda, le han ablandado los cascos y madurado los sesos.

Llegóse en esto a él Sancho y díjole:

-Señor, por quien Dios es, que vuesa merced haga de manera que mi señor don Quijote no se tome con estos leones, que si se toma, aquí nos han de hacer pedazos a todos.

-Pues, ¿tan loco es vuestro amo -respondió el hidalgo-, que teméis, y creéis que se ha de tomar con tan fieros animales?

-No es loco -respondió Sancho-, sino atrevido.

-Yo haré que no lo sea -replicó el hidalgo.

Y, llegándose a don Quijote, que estaba dando prisa al leonero que abriese las jaulas, le dijo:

-Señor caballero, los caballeros andantes han de acometer las aventuras que prometen esperanza de salir bien dellas, y no aquellas que de en todo la quitan; porque la valentía que se entra en la jurisdicción de la temeridad, más tiene de locura que de fortaleza. Cuanto más, que estos leones no vienen contra vuesa merced, ni lo sueñan: van presentados a Su Majestad, y no será bien detenerlos ni impedirles su viaje.

-Váyase vuesa merced, señor hidalgo -respondió don Quijote-, a entender con su perdigón manso y con su hurón atrevido, y deje a cada uno hacer su oficio. Éste es el mío, y yo sé si vienen a mí, o no, estos señores leones.

Y, volviéndose al leonero, le dijo:

-¡Voto a tal, don bellaco, que si no abris luego luego las jaulas, que con esta lanza os he de coser con el carro!

El carretero, que vio la determinación de aquella armada fantasía, le dijo:

-Señor mío, vuestra merced sea servido, por caridad, dejarme desuncir las mulas y ponerme en salvo con ellas antes que se desenvainen los leones, porque si me las matan, quedaré rematado para toda mi vida; que no tengo otra hacienda sino este carro y estas mulas.

-¡Oh hombre de poca fe! -respondió don Quijote-, apéate y desunce, y haz lo que quisieres, que presto verás que trabajaste en vano y que pudieras ahorrar desta diligencia.

Apeóse el carretero y desunció a gran priesa, y el leonero dijo a grandes voces:

-Séanme testigos cuantos aquí están cómo contra mi voluntad y forzado abro las jaulas y suelto los leones, y de que protesto a este señor que todo el mal y daño que estas bestias hicieren corra y vaya por su cuenta, con más mis salarios y derechos. Vuestras mercedes, señores, se pongan en cobro antes que abra, que yo seguro estoy que no me han de hacer daño.

Otra vez le persuadió el hidalgo que no hiciese locura semejante, que era tentar a Dios acometer tal disparate. A lo que respondió don Quijote que él sabía lo que hacía. Respondióle el hidalgo que lo mirase bien, que él entendía que se engañaba.

-Ahora, señor -replicó don Quijote-, si vuesa merced no quiere ser oyente desta que a su parecer ha de ser tragedia, pique la tordilla y póngase en salvo.

Oído lo cual por Sancho, con lágrimas en los ojos le suplicó desistiese de tal empresa, en cuya comparación habían sido tortas y pan pintado la de los molinos de viento y la temerosa de los batanes, y, finalmente, todas las hazañas que había acometido en todo el discurso de su vida.

-Mire, señor -decía Sancho-, que aquí no hay encanto ni cosa que lo valga; que yo he visto por entre las verjas y resquicios de la jaula una uña de león verdadero, y saco por ella que el tal león, cuya debe de ser la tal uña, es mayor que una montaña.

-El miedo, a lo menos -respondió don Quijote-, te le hará parecer mayor que la mitad del mundo. Retírate, Sancho, y déjame; y si aquí muere, ya sabes nuestro antiguo concierto: acudirás a Dulcinea, y no te digo más.

A éstas añadió otras razones, con que quitó las esperanzas de que no había de dejar de proseguir su desvariado intento. Quisiera el del Verde Gabán oponérsele, pero viose desigual en las armas, y no le pareció cordura tomarse con un loco, que ya se lo había parecido de todo punto don Quijote; el cual, volviendo a dar priesa al leonero y a reiterar las amenazas, dio ocasión al hidalgo a que picase la yegua, y Sancho al rucio, y el carretero a sus mulas, procurando todos apartarse del carro lo más que pudiesen, antes que los leones se desembanastasen.

Lloraba Sancho la muerte de su señor, que aquella vez sin duda creía que llegaba en las garras de los leones; maldecía su ventura, y llamaba menguada la hora en que le vino al pensamiento volver a servirle; pero no por llorar y lamentarse dejaba de aporrear al rucio para que se alejase del carro. Viendo, pues, el leonero que ya los que iban huyendo estaban bien desviados, tornó a requerir y a intimar a don Quijote lo que ya le había requerido e intimado, el cual respondió que lo oía, y que no se curase de más intimaciones y requerimientos,

que todo sería de poco fruto, y que se diese prisa.

En el espacio que tardó el leonero en abrir la jaula primera, estuvo considerando don Quijote si sería bien hacer la batalla antes a pie que a caballo; y, en fin, se determinó de hacerla a pie, temiendo que Rocinante se espantaría con la vista de los leones. Por esto saltó del caballo, arrojó la lanza y embrazó el escudo, y, desenvainando la espada, paso ante paso, con maravilloso denuedo y corazón valiente, se fue a poner delante del carro, encomendándose a Dios de todo corazón, y luego a su señora Dulcinea.

Y es de saber que, llegando a este paso, el autor de esta verdadera historia exclama y dice: «¡Oh fuerte y, sobre todo encarecimiento, animoso don Quijote de la Mancha, espejo donde se pueden mirar todos los valientes del mundo, segundo y nuevo don Manuel de León, que fue gloria y honra de los españoles caballeros! ¿Con qué palabras contaré esta tan espantosa hazaña, o con qué razones la haré creíble a los siglos venideros, o qué alabanzas habrá que no te convengan y cuadren, aunque sean hipérboles sobre todos los hipérboles? Tú a pie, tú solo, tú intrépido, tú magnánimo, con sola una espada, y no de las del perrillo cortadoras, con un escudo no de muy luciente y limpio acero, estás aguardando y atendiendo los dos más fieros leones que jamás criaron las africanas selvas. Tus mismos hechos sean los que te alaben, valeroso manchego, que yo los dejo aquí en su punto por faltarme palabras con que encarecerlos».

Aquí cesó la referida exclamación del autor, y pasó adelante, anudando el hilo de la historia, diciendo que, visto el leonero ya puesto en postura a don Quijote, y que no podía dejar de soltar al león macho, so pena de caer en la desgracia del indignado y atrevido caballero, abrió de par en par la primera jaula, donde estaba, como se ha dicho, el león, el cual pareció de grandeza extraordinaria y de espantable y fea catadura. Lo primero que hizo fue revolverse en la jaula, donde venía echado, y tender la garra, y desperezarse todo; abrió luego la boca y bostezó muy despacio, y, con casi dos palmos de lengua que sacó fuera, se despolvoreó los ojos y se lavó el rostro; hecho esto, sacó la cabeza fuera de la jaula y miró a todas partes con los ojos hechos brasas, vista y ademán para poner espanto a la misma temeridad. Sólo don Quijote lo miraba atentamente, deseando que saltase ya del carro y viniese con él a las manos, entre las cuales pensaba hacerle pedazos.

Hasta aquí llegó el extremo de su jamás vista locura. Pero el generoso león, más comedido que arrogante, no haciendo caso de niñerías, ni de bravatas, después de haber mirado a una y otra parte, como se ha dicho, volvió las espaldas y enseñó sus traseras partes a don Quijote, y con gran flema y remanso se volvió a echar en la jaula. Viendo lo cual don Quijote, mandó al leonero que le diese de palos y le irritase para echarle fuera.

-Eso no haré yo -respondió el leonero-, porque si yo le instigo, el primero a quien hará pedazos será a mí mismo. Vuesa merced, señor caballero, se contente con lo hecho, que es todo lo que puede decirse en género de valentía, y no quiera tentar segunda fortuna. El león tiene abierta la puerta: en su mano está salir, o no salir; pero, pues no ha salido hasta ahora, no saldrá en todo el día. La grandeza del corazón de vuesa merced ya está bien declarada: ningún bravo peleante, según a mí se me alcanza, está obligado a más que a desafiar a su enemigo y esperarle en campaña; y si el contrario no acude, en él se queda la infamia, y el esperante gana la corona del vencimiento.

-Así es verdad -respondió don Quijote-: cierra, amigo, la puerta, y dame por testimonio, en la mejor forma que pudieres, lo que aquí me has visto hacer; conviene a saber: cómo tú abriste al león, yo le esperé, él no salió; volvíle a esperar, volvió a no salir y volvióse acostar. No debo más, y encantos afuera, y Dios ayude a la razón y a la verdad, y a la verdadera caballería; y cierra, como he dicho, en tanto que hago señas a los huidos y ausentes, para que sepan de tu boca esta hazaña.

Hízolo así el leonero, y don Quijote, poniendo en la punta de la lanza el lienzo con que se había limpiado el rostro de la lluvia de los requesones, comenzó a llamar a los que no dejaban de huir ni de volver la cabeza a cada paso, todos en tropa y antecogidos del hidalgo; pero, alcanzando Sancho a ver la señal del blanco paño, dijo:

-Que me maten si mi señor no ha vencido a las fieras bestias, pues nos llama.

Detuviéronse todos, y conocieron que el que hacía las señas era don Quijote; y, perdiendo alguna parte del miedo, poco a poco se vinieron acercando hasta donde claramente oyeron las voces de don Quijote, que los llamaba. Finalmente, volvieron al carro, y, en llegando, dijo don Quijote al carretero:

-Volved, hermano, a uncir vuestras mulas y a proseguir vuestro viaje; y tú, Sancho, dale dos escudos de oro, para él y para el leonero, en recompensa de lo que por mí se han detenido.

-Ésos daré yo de muy buena gana -respondió Sancho-; pero, ¿qué se han hecho los leones? ¿Son muertos, o vivos?

Entonces el leonero, menudamente y por sus pausas, contó el fin de la contienda, exagerando, como él mejor pudo y supo, el valor de don Quijote, de cuya vista el león, acobardado, no quiso ni osó salir de la jaula, puesto que había tenido un buen espacio abierta la puerta de la jaula; y que, por haber él dicho a aquel caballero que era tentar a Dios irritar al león para que por fuerza saliese, como él quería que se irritase, mal de su grado y contra toda su voluntad, había permitido que la puerta se cerrase.

-¿Qué te parece desto, Sancho? -dijo don Quijote-. ¿Hay encantos que valgan

contra la verdadera valentía? Bien podrán los encantadores quitarme la ventura, pero el esfuerzo y el ánimo, será imposible.

Dio los escudos Sancho, unció el carretero, besó las manos el leonero a don Quijote por la merced recebida, y prometióle de contar aquella valerosa hazaña al mismo rey, cuando en la corte se viese.

-Pues, si acaso Su Majestad preguntare quién la hizo, diréisle que *el Caballero de los Leones*, que de aquí adelante quiero que en éste se trueque, cambie, vuelva y mude el que hasta aquí he tenido del *Caballero de la Triste Figura*; y en esto sigo la antigua usanza de los andantes caballeros, que se mudaban los nombres cuando querían, o cuando les venía a cuento.

Siguió su camino el carro, y don Quijote, Sancho y el del Verde Gabán prosiguieron el suyo.

En todo este tiempo no había hablado palabra don Diego de Miranda, todo atento a mirar y a notar los hechos y palabras de don Quijote, pareciéndole que era un cuerdo loco y un loco que tiraba a cuerdo. No había aún llegado a su noticia la primera parte de su historia; que si la hubiera leído, cesara la admiración en que lo ponían sus hechos y sus palabras, pues ya supiera el género de su locura; pero, como no la sabía, ya le tenía por cuerdo y ya por loco, porque lo que hablaba era concertado, elegante y bien dicho, y lo que hacía, disparatado, temerario y tonto. Y decía entre sí:

-¿Qué más locura puede ser que ponerse la celada llena de requesones y darse a entender que le ablandaban los cascos los encantadores? Y ¿qué mayor temeridad y disparate que querer pelear por fuerza con leones?

Destas imaginaciones y deste soliloquio le sacó don Quijote, diciéndole:

-¿Quién duda, señor don Diego de Miranda, que vuestra merced no me tenga en su opinión por un hombre disparatado y loco? Y no sería mucho que así fuese, porque mis obras no pueden dar testimonio de otra cosa. Pues, con todo esto, quiero que vuestra merced advierta que no soy tan loco ni tan menguado como debo de haberle parecido. Bien parece un gallardo caballero, a los ojos de su rey, en la mitad de una gran plaza, dar una lanzada con felice suceso a un bravo toro; bien parece un caballero, armado de resplandecientes armas, pasar la tela en alegres justas delante de las damas, y bien parecen todos aquellos caballeros que en ejercicios militares, o que lo parezcan, entretienen y alegran, y, si se puede decir, honran las cortes de sus príncipes; pero sobre todos éstos parece mejor un caballero andante, que por los desiertos, por las soledades, por las encrucijadas, por las selvas y por los montes anda buscando peligrosas aventuras, con intención de darles dichosa y bien afortunada cima, sólo por alcanzar gloriosa fama y duradera. Mejor parece, digo, un caballero andante, socorriendo a una viuda en algún despoblado, que un cortesano caballero,

requebrando a una doncella en las ciudades. Todos los caballeros tienen sus particulares ejercicios: sirva a las damas el cortesano; autorice la corte de su rey con libreas; sustente los caballeros pobres con el espléndido plato de su mesa; concierte justas, mantenga torneos y muéstrase grande, liberal y magnífico, y buen cristiano, sobre todo, y desta manera cumplirá con sus precisas obligaciones. Pero el andante caballero busque los rincones del mundo; éntrese en los más intrincados laberintos; acometa a cada paso lo imposible; resista en los páramos despoblados los ardientes rayos del sol en la mitad del verano, y en el invierno la dura inclemencia de los vientos y de los yelos; no le asombren leones, ni le espanten vestiglos, ni atemoricen endriagos; que buscar éstos, acometer aquéllos y vencerlos a todos son sus principales y verdaderos ejercicios. Yo, pues, como me cupo en suerte ser uno del número de la andante caballería, no puedo dejar de acometer todo aquello que a mí me pareciere que cae debajo de la jurisdicción de mis ejercicios; y así, el acometer los leones que ahora acometí derechamente me tocaba, puesto que conocí ser temeridad esorbitante, porque bien sé lo que es valentía, que es una virtud que está puesta entre dos extremos viciosos, como son la cobardía y la temeridad; pero menos mal será que el que es valiente toque y suba al punto de temerario, que no que baje y toque en el punto de cobarde; que así como es más fácil venir el pródigo a ser liberal que al avaro, así es más fácil dar el temerario en verdadero valiente que no el cobarde subir a la verdadera valentía; y, en esto de acometer aventuras, créame vuesa merced, señor don Diego, que antes se ha de perder por carta de más que de menos, porque mejor suena en las orejas de los que lo oyen «el tal caballero es temerario y atrevido» que no «el tal caballero es tímido y cobarde».

-Digo, señor don Quijote -respondió don Diego-, que todo lo que vuesa merced ha dicho y hecho va nivelado con el fiel de la misma razón, y que entiendo que si las ordenanzas y leyes de la caballería andante se perdiesen, se hallarían en el pecho de vuesa merced como en su mismo depósito y archivo. Y démonos prisa, que se hace tarde, y lleguemos a mi aldea y casa, donde descansará vuestra merced del pasado trabajo, que si no ha sido del cuerpo, ha sido del espíritu, que suele tal vez redundar en cansancio del cuerpo.

-Tengo el ofrecimiento a gran favor y merced, señor don Diego-respondió don Quijote.

Y, picando más de lo que hasta entonces, serían como las dos de la tarde cuando llegaron a la aldea y a la casa de don Diego, a quien don Quijote llamaba *el Caballero del Verde Gabán*.

## Capítulo XVIII

*De lo que sucedió a don Quijote en el castillo o casa del Caballero del Verde Gabán, con otras cosas extravagantes*

HALLÓ don Quijote ser la casa de don Diego de Miranda ancha como de aldea; las armas, empero, aunque de piedra tosca, encima de la puerta de la calle; la bodega, en el patio; la cueva, en el portal, y muchas tinajas a la redonda, que, por ser del Toboso, le renovaron las memorias de su encantada y transformada Dulcinea; y sospirando, y sin mirar lo que decía, ni delante de quién estaba, dijo:

-¡Oh dulces prendas, por mi mal halladas, dulces y alegres cuando Dios quería!

»¡Oh tobosescas tinajas, que me habéis traído a la memoria la dulce prenda de mi mayor amargura!

Oyóle decir esto el estudiante poeta, hijo de don Diego, que con su madre había salido a recibirle, y madre y hijo quedaron suspensos de ver la estraña figura de don Quijote; el cual, apeándose de Rocinante, fue con mucha cortesía a pedirle las manos para besárselas, y don Diego dijo: -Recebid, señora, con vuestro sólito agrado al señor don Quijote de la Mancha, que es el que tenéis delante, andante caballero y el más valiente y el más discreto que tiene el mundo.

La señora, que doña Cristina se llamaba, le recibió con muestras de mucho amor y de mucha cortesía, y don Quijote se le ofreció con asaz de discretas y comedidas razones. Casi los mismos comedimientos pasó con el estudiante, que, en oyéndole hablar don Quijote, le tuvo por discreto y agudo.

Aquí pinta el autor todas las circunstancias de la casa de don Diego, pintándonos en ellas lo que contiene una casa de un caballero labrador y rico; pero al traductor desta historia le pareció pasar estas y otras semejantes menudencias en silencio, porque no venían bien con el propósito principal de la historia, la cual más tiene su fuerza en la verdad que en las frías digresiones.

Entraron a don Quijote en una sala, desarmóle Sancho, quedó en valones y en jubón de camuza, todo bisunto con la mugre de las armas: el cuello era valona a lo estudiantil, sin almidón y sin randas; los borceguíes eran datilados, y encerados los zapatos. Ciñóse su buena espada, que pendía de un tahalí de lobos marinos; que es opinión que muchos años fue enfermo de los riñones; cubrióse



un herreruelo de buen paño pardo; pero antes de todo, con cinco calderos, o seis, de agua, que en la cantidad de los calderos hay alguna diferencia, se lavó la cabeza y rostro, y todavía se quedó el agua de color de suero, merced a la golosina de Sancho y a la compra de sus negros requesones, que tan blanco pusieron a su amo. Con los referidos atavíos, y con gentil donaire y gallardía, salió don Quijote a otra sala, donde el estudiante le estaba esperando para entretenerle en tanto que las mesas se ponían; que, por la venida de tan noble huésped, quería la señora doña Cristina mostrar que sabía y podía regalar a los que a su casa llegasen.

En tanto que don Quijote se estuvo desarmando, tuvo lugar don Lorenzo, que así se llamaba el hijo de don Diego, de decir a su padre: -¿Quién diremos, señor, que es este caballero que vuesa merced nos ha traído a casa? Que el nombre, la figura, y el decir que es caballero andante, a mí y a mi madre nos tiene suspensos.

-No sé lo que te diga, hijo -respondió don Diego-; sólo te sabré decir que le he visto hacer cosas del mayor loco del mundo, y decir razones tan discretas que borran y deshacen sus hechos: háblale tú, y toma el pulso a lo que sabe, y, pues eres discreto, juzga de su discreción o tontería lo que más puesto en razón estuviere; aunque, para decir verdad, antes le tengo por loco que por cuerdo.

Con esto, se fue don Lorenzo a entretener a don Quijote, como queda dicho, y, entre otras pláticas que los dos pasaron, dijo don Quijote a don Lorenzo: -El señor don Diego de Miranda, padre de vuesa merced, me ha dado noticia de la rara habilidad y sutil ingenio que vuestra merced tiene, y, sobre todo, que es vuesa merced un gran poeta.

-Poeta, bien podrá ser -respondió don Lorenzo-, pero grande, ni por pensamiento. Verdad es que yo soy algún tanto aficionado a la poesía y a leer los buenos poetas, pero no de manera que se me pueda dar el nombre de grande que mi padre dice.

-No me parece mal esa humildad -respondió don Quijote-, porque no hay poeta que no sea arrogante y piense de sí que es el mayor poeta del mundo.

-No hay regla sin excepción -respondió don Lorenzo-, y alguno habrá que lo sea y no lo piense.

-Pocos -respondió don Quijote-; pero dígame vuesa merced: ¿qué versos son los que agora trae entre manos, que me ha dicho el señor su padre que le traen algo inquieto y pensativo? Y si es alguna glosa, a mí se me entiende algo de achaque de glosas, y holgaría saberlos; y si es que son de justa literaria, procure vuestra merced llevar el segundo premio, que el primero siempre se lleva el favor o la gran calidad de la persona, el segundo se le lleva la mera justicia, y el tercero viene a ser segundo, y el primero, a esta cuenta, será el tercero, al modo

de las licencias que se dan en las universidades; pero, con todo esto, gran personaje es el nombre de *primero*.

-Hasta ahora -dijo entre sí don Lorenzo-, no os podré yo juzgar por loco; vamos adelante.

Y díjole:

-Paréceme que vuesa merced ha cursado las escuelas: ¿qué ciencias ha oído?

-La de la caballería andante -respondió don Quijote-, que es tan buena como la de la poesía, y aun dos deditos más.

-No sé qué ciencia sea ésa -replicó don Lorenzo-, y hasta ahora no ha llegado a mi noticia.

-Es una ciencia -replicó don Quijote- que encierra en sí todas o las más ciencias del mundo, a causa que el que la profesa ha de ser jurisperito, y saber las leyes de la justicia distributiva y comutativa, para dar a cada uno lo que es suyo y lo que le conviene; ha de ser teólogo, para saber dar razón de la cristiana ley que profesa, clara y distintamente, adondequiera que le fuere pedido; ha de ser médico y principalmente herbolario, para conocer en mitad de los despoblados y desiertos las yerbas que tienen virtud de sanar las heridas, que no ha de andar el caballero andante a cada triquete buscando quien se las cure; ha de ser astrólogo, para conocer por las estrellas cuántas horas son pasadas de la noche, y en qué parte y en qué clima del mundo se halla; ha de saber las matemáticas, porque a cada paso se le ofrecerá tener necesidad dellas; y, dejando aparte que ha de estar adornado de todas las virtudes teologales y cardinales, decendiendo a otras menudencias, digo que ha de saber nadar como dicen que nadaba el peje Nicolás o Nicolao; ha de saber herrar un caballo y aderezar la silla y el freno; y, volviendo a lo de arriba, ha de guardar la fe a Dios y a su dama; ha de ser casto en los pensamientos, honesto en las palabras, liberal en las obras, valiente en los hechos, sufrido en los trabajos, caritativo con los menesterosos, y, finalmente, mantenedor de la verdad, aunque le cueste la vida el defenderla. De todas estas grandes y mínimas partes se compone un buen caballero andante; porque vea vuesa merced, señor don Lorenzo, si es ciencia mocosa lo que aprende el caballero que la estudia y la profesa, y si se puede igualar a las más estiradas que en los ginasios y escuelas se enseñan.

-Si eso es así -replicó don Lorenzo-, yo digo que se aventaja esa ciencia a todas.

-¿Cómo si es así? -respondió don Quijote.

-Lo que yo quiero decir -dijo don Lorenzo- es que dudo que haya habido, ni que los hay ahora, caballeros andantes y adornados de virtudes tantas.

-Muchas veces he dicho lo que vuelvo a decir ahora -respondió don Quijote-: que la mayor parte de la gente del mundo está de parecer de que no ha habido en

él caballeros andantes; y, por parecerme a mí que si el cielo milagrosamente no les da a entender la verdad de que los hubo y de que los hay, cualquier trabajo que se tome ha de ser en vano, como muchas veces me lo ha mostrado la experiencia, no quiero detenerme agora en sacar a vuesa merced del error que con los muchos tiene; lo que pienso hacer es el rogar al cielo le saque dél, y le dé a entender cuán provechosos y cuán necesarios fueron al mundo los caballeros andantes en los pasados siglos, y cuán útiles fueran en el presente si se usaran; pero triunfan ahora, por pecados de las gentes, la pereza, la ociosidad, la gula y el regalo.

-Escapado se nos ha nuestro huésped -dijo a esta sazón entre sí don Lorenzo-, pero, con todo eso, él es loco bizarro, y yo sería mentecato flojo si así no lo creyese.

Aquí dieron fin a su plática, porque los llamaron a comer. Preguntó don Diego a su hijo qué había sacado en limpio del ingenio del huésped. A lo que él respondió: -No le sacarán del borrador de su locura cuantos médicos y buenos escribanos tiene el mundo: él es un entreverado loco, lleno de lúcidos intervalos.

Fuéronse a comer, y la comida fue tal como don Diego había dicho en el camino que la solía dar a sus convidados: limpia, abundante y sabrosa; pero de lo que más se contentó don Quijote fue del maravilloso silencio que en toda la casa había, que semejaba un monasterio de cartujos. Levantados, pues, los manteles, y dadas gracias a Dios y agua a las manos, don Quijote pidió ahincadamente a don Lorenzo dijese los versos de la justa literaria; a lo que él respondió que, por no parecer de aquellos poetas que cuando les ruegan digan sus versos los niegan y cuando no se los piden los vomitan, -...yo diré mi glosa, de la cual no espero premio alguno, que sólo por ejercitar el ingenio la he hecho.

-Un amigo y discreto -respondió don Quijote- era de parecer que no se había de cansar nadie en glosar versos; y la razón, decía él, era que jamás la glosa podía llegar al texto, y que muchas o las más veces iba la glosa fuera de la intención y propósito de lo que pedía lo que se glosaba; y más, que las leyes de la glosa eran demasiadamente estrechas: que no sufrían interrogantes, ni *dijo*, ni *diré*, ni hacer nombres de verbos, ni mudar el sentido, con otras ataduras y estrechezas con que van atados los que glosan, como vuestra merced debe de saber.

-Verdaderamente, señor don Quijote -dijo don Lorenzo-, que deseo coger a vuestra merced en un mal latín continuado, y no puedo, porque se me desliza de entre las manos como anguila.

-No entiendo -respondió don Quijote- lo que vuestra merced dice ni quiere decir en eso del deslizarme.

-Yo me daré a entender -respondió don Lorenzo-; y por ahora esté vuesa

merced atento a los versos glosados y a la glosa, que dicen desta manera:  
¡Si mi *fue* tornase a *es*, sin esperar más *será*, o viniese el tiempo ya  
de lo que será después...!

### Glosa

Al fin, como todo pasa, se pasó el bien que me dio Fortuna, un tiempo no escasa,  
y nunca me le volvió,

ni abundante, ni por tasa. 5

Siglos ha ya que me vees, Fortuna, puesto a tus pies; vuélveme a ser  
venturoso, que será mi ser dichoso *si mi fue tornase a es*. 10

No quiero otro gusto o gloria, otra palma o vencimiento, otro triunfo, otra  
vitoria, sino volver al contento que es pesar en mi memoria. 15

Si tú me vuelves allá,

Fortuna, templado está

todo el rigor de mi fuego, y más si este bien es luego, *sin esperar más será*.

20

Cosas imposibles pido,

pues volver el tiempo a ser después que una vez ha sido, no hay en la tierra  
poder que a tanto se haya estendido. 25

Corre el tiempo, vuela y va ligero, y no volverá,

y erraría el que pidiese, o que el tiempo ya se fuese, *o volviese el tiempo ya*.

30

Vivo en perpleja vida,

ya esperando, ya temiendo: es muerte muy conocida, y es mucho mejor  
muriendo buscar al dolor salida. 35

A mí me fuera interés

acabar, mas no lo es,

pues, con discurso mejor, me da la vida el temor

*de lo que será después*. 40

En acabando de decir su glosa don Lorenzo, se levantó en pie don Quijote, y,  
en voz levantada, que parecía grito, asiendo con su mano la derecha de don  
Lorenzo, dijo: -¡Viven los cielos donde más altos están, mancebo generoso, que  
sois el mejor poeta del orbe, y que merecéis estar laureado, no por Chipre ni por

Gaeta, como dijo un poeta, que Dios perdone, sino por las academias de Atenas, si hoy vivieran, y por las que hoy viven de París, Bolonia y Salamanca! Plega al cielo que los jueces que os quiten el premio primero, Febo los asaetee y las Musas jamás atraviesen los umbrales de sus casas. Decidme, señor, si sois servido, algunos versos mayores, que quiero tomar de todo en todo el pulso a vuestro admirable ingenio.

¿No es bueno que dicen que se holgó don Lorenzo de verse alabar de don Quijote, aunque le tenía por loco? ¡Oh fuerza de la adulación, a cuánto te extiendes, y cuán dilatados límites son los de tu jurisdicción agradable! Esta verdad acreditó don Lorenzo, pues concedió con la demanda y deseo de don Quijote, diciéndole este soneto a la fábula o historia de Píramo y Tisbe:

### Soneto

El muro rompe la doncella hermosa que de Píramo abrió el gallardo pecho: parte el Amor de Chipre, y va derecho a ver la quiebra estrecha y prodigiosa.

Habla el silencio allí, porque no osa   5  
la voz entrar por tan estrecho estrecho; las almas sí, que amor suele de hecho facilitar la más difícil cosa.

Salió el deseo de compás, y el paso de la imprudente virgen solicita   10  
por su gusto su muerte; ved qué historia: que a entrambos en un punto, ¡oh extraño caso!, los mata, los encubre y resucita una espada, un sepulcro, una memoria.

-¡Bendito sea Dios! -dijo don Quijote habiendo oído el soneto a don Lorenzo-, que entre los infinitos poetas consumidos que hay, he visto un consumado poeta, como lo es vuesa merced, señor mío; que así me lo da a entender el artificio deste soneto.

Cuatro días estuvo don Quijote regaladísimo en la casa de don Diego, al cabo de los cuales le pidió licencia para irse, diciéndole que le agradecía la merced y buen tratamiento que en su casa había recibido; pero que, por no parecer bien que los caballeros andantes se den muchas horas a ocio y al regalo, se quería ir a cumplir con su oficio, buscando las aventuras, de quien tenía noticia que aquella tierra abundaba, donde esperaba entretener el tiempo hasta que llegase el día de las justas de Zaragoza, que era el de su derecha derrota; y que primero había de entrar en la cueva de Montesinos, de quien tantas y tan admirables cosas en aquellos contornos se contaban, sabiendo e inquiriendo asimismo el nacimiento

y verdaderos manantiales de las siete lagunas llamadas comúnmente de Ruidera.

Don Diego y su hijo le alabaron su honrosa determinación, y le dijeron que tomase de su casa y de su hacienda todo lo que en grado le viniese, que le servirían con la voluntad posible; que a ello les obligaba el valor de su persona y la honrosa profesión suya.

Llegóse, en fin, el día de su partida, tan alegre para don Quijote como triste y aciago para Sancho Panza, que se hallaba muy bien con la abundancia de la casa de don Diego, y rehusaba de volver a la hambre que se usa en las florestas, despoblados, y a la estrechez de sus mal proveídas alforjas. Con todo esto, las llenó y colmó de lo más necesario que le pareció; y al despedirse dijo don Quijote a don Lorenzo: -No sé si he dicho a vuesa merced otra vez, y si lo he dicho lo vuelvo a decir, que cuando vuesa merced quisiere ahorrar caminos y trabajos para llegar a la inaccesible cumbre del templo de la Fama, no tiene que hacer otra cosa sino dejar a una parte la senda de la poesía, algo estrecha, y tomar la estrechísima de la andante caballería, bastante para hacerle emperador en daca las pajas.

Con estas razones acabó don Quijote de cerrar el proceso de su locura, y más con las que añadió, diciendo: -Sabe Dios si quisiera llevar conmigo al señor don Lorenzo, para enseñarle cómo se han de perdonar los sujetos, y supeditar y acocear los soberbios, virtudes anejas a la profesión que yo profeso; pero, pues no lo pide su poca edad, ni lo querrán consentir sus loables ejercicios, sólo me contento con advertirle a vuesa merced que, siendo poeta, podrá ser famoso si se guía más por el parecer ajeno que por el propio, porque no hay padre ni madre a quien sus hijos le parezcan feos, y en los que lo son del entendimiento corre más este engaño.

De nuevo se admiraron padre y hijo de las entremetidas razones de don Quijote, ya discretas y ya disparatadas, y del tema y tesón que llevaba de acudir de todo en todo a la busca de sus desventuradas aventuras, que las tenía por fin y blanco de sus deseos. Reiteráronse los ofrecimientos y comedimientos, y, con la buena licencia de la señora del castillo, don Quijote y Sancho, sobre Rocinante y el rucio, se partieron.

## Capítulo XIX

*Donde se cuenta la aventura del pastor enamorado, con otros en verdad  
graciosos sucesos*

POCO trecho se había alongado don Quijote del lugar de don Diego, cuando encontró con dos como clérigos o como estudiantes y con dos labradores que sobre cuatro bestias asnales venían caballeros. El uno de los estudiantes traía, como en portamanteo, en un lienzo de bocací verde envuelto, al parecer, un poco de grana blanca y dos pares de medias de cordellate; el otro no traía otra cosa que dos espadas negras de esgrima, nuevas, y con sus zapatillas. Los labradores traían otras cosas, que daban indicio y señal que venían de alguna villa grande, donde las habían comprado, y las llevaban a su aldea; y así estudiantes como labradores cayeron en la misma admiración en que caían todos aquellos que la vez primera veían a don Quijote, y morían por saber qué hombre fuese aquél tan fuera del uso de los otros hombres.

Saludóles don Quijote, y, después de saber el camino que llevaban, que era el mismo que él hacía, les ofreció su compañía, y les pidió detuviesen el paso, porque caminaban más sus pollinas que su caballo; y, para obligarlos, en breves razones les dijo quién era, y su oficio y profesión, que era de caballero andante que iba a buscar las aventuras por todas las partes del mundo. Díjoles que se llamaba de nombre propio don Quijote de la Mancha, y por el apelativo, *el Caballero de los Leones*. Todo esto para los labradores era hablarles en griego o en jerigonza, pero no para los estudiantes, que luego entendieron la flaqueza del cerebro de don Quijote; pero, con todo eso, le miraban con admiración y con respecto, y uno dellos le dijo:

-Si vuestra merced, señor caballero, no lleva camino determinado, como no le suelen llevar los que buscan las aventuras, vuesa merced se venga con nosotros: verá una de las mejores bodas y más ricas que hasta el día de hoy se habrán celebrado en la Mancha, ni en otras muchas leguas a la redonda.

Preguntóle don Quijote si eran de algún príncipe, que así las ponderaba.

-No son -respondió el estudiante-sino de un labrador y una labradora: él, el más rico de toda esta tierra; y ella, la más hermosa que han visto los hombres. El aparato con que se han de hacer es extraordinario y nuevo, porque se han de celebrar en un prado que está junto al pueblo de la novia, a quien por excelencia llaman Quiteria la hermosa, y el desposado se llama Camacho el rico; ella de

edad de diez y ocho años, y él de veinte y dos; ambos para en uno, aunque algunos curiosos que tienen de memoria los linajes de todo el mundo quieren decir que el de la hermosa Quiteria se aventaja al de Camacho; pero ya no se mira en esto, que las riquezas son poderosas de soldar muchas quiebras. En efecto, el tal Camacho es liberal y hásele antojado de enramar y cubrir todo el prado por arriba, de tal suerte que el sol se ha de ver en trabajo si quiere entrar a visitar las yerbas verdes de que está cubierto el suelo. Tiene asimesmo maheridas danzas, así de espadas como de cascabel menudo, que hay en su pueblo quien los repique y sacuda por extremo; de zapateadores no digo nada, que es un juicio los que tiene muñidos; pero ninguna de las cosas referidas ni otras muchas que he dejado de referir ha de hacer más memorables estas bodas, sino las que imagino que hará en ellas el despechado Basilio. Es este Basilio un zagal vecino del mismo lugar de Quiteria, el cual tenía su casa pared y medio de la de los padres de Quiteria, de donde tomó ocasión el amor de renovar al mundo los ya olvidados amores de Píramo y Tisbe, porque Basilio se enamoró de Quiteria desde sus tiernos y primeros años, y ella fue correspondiendo a su deseo con mil honestos favores, tanto, que se contaban por entretenimiento en el pueblo los amores de los dos niños Basilio y Quiteria. Fue creciendo la edad, y acordó el padre de Quiteria de estorbar a Basilio la ordinaria entrada que en su casa tenía; y, por quitarse de andar receloso y lleno de sospechas, ordenó de casar a su hija con el rico Camacho, no pareciéndole ser bien casarla con Basilio, que no tenía tantos bienes de fortuna como de naturaleza; pues si va a decir las verdades sin invidia, él es el más ágil mancebo que conocemos: gran tirador de barra, luchador estremado y gran jugador de pelota; corre como un gamo, salta más que una cabra y birla a los bolos como por encantamento; canta como una calandria, y toca una guitarra, que la hace hablar, y, sobre todo, juega una espada como el más pintado.

-Por esa sola gracia -dijo a esta sazón don Quijote-, merecía ese mancebo no sólo casarse con la hermosa Quiteria, sino con la misma reina Ginebra, si fuera hoy viva, a pesar de Lanzarote y de todos aquellos que estorbarlo quisieran.

-¡A mi mujer con eso! -dijo Sancho Panza, que hasta entonces había ido callando y escuchando-, la cual no quiere sino que cada uno case con su igual, ateniéndose al refrán que dicen «cada oveja con su pareja». Lo que yo quisiera es que ese buen Basilio, que ya me le voy aficionando, se casara con esa señora Quiteria; que buen siglo hayan y buen poso, iba a decir al revés, los que estorban que se casen los que bien se quieren.

-Si todos los que bien se quieren se hubiesen de casar -dijo don Quijote-, quitaríase la elección y jurisdicción a los padres de casar sus hijos con quien y cuando deben; y si a la voluntad de las hijas quedase escoger los maridos, tal



habría que escogiese al criado de su padre, y tal al que vio pasar por la calle, a su parecer, bizarro y entonado, aunque fuese un desbaratado espadachín; que el amor y la afición con facilidad ciegan los ojos del entendimiento, tan necesarios para escoger estado, y el del matrimonio está muy a peligro de errarse, y es menester gran tiento y particular favor del cielo para acertarle. Quiere hacer uno un viaje largo, y si es prudente, antes de ponerse en camino busca alguna compañía segura y apacible con quien acompañarse; pues, ¿por qué no hará lo mismo el que ha de caminar toda la vida, hasta el paradero de la muerte, y más si la compañía le ha de acompañar en la cama, en la mesa y en todas partes, como es la de la mujer con su marido? La de la propia mujer no es mercaduría que una vez comprada se vuelve, o se trueca o cambia, porque es accidente inseparable, que dura lo que dura la vida: es un lazo que si una vez le echáis al cuello, se vuelve en el nudo gordiano, que si no le corta la guadaña de la muerte, no hay desatarle. Muchas más cosas pudiera decir en esta materia, si no lo estorbara el deseo que tengo de saber si le queda más que decir al señor licenciado acerca de la historia de Basilio.

A lo que respondió el estudiante bachiller, o licenciado, como le llamó don Quijote, que:

-De todo no me queda más que decir sino que desde el punto que Basilio supo que la hermosa Quiteria se casaba con Camacho el rico, nunca más le han visto reír ni hablar razón concertada, y siempre anda pensativo y triste, hablando entre sí mismo, con que da ciertas y claras señales de que se le ha vuelto el juicio: come poco y duerme poco, y lo que come son frutas, y en lo que duerme, si duerme, es en el campo, sobre la dura tierra, como animal bruto; mira de cuando en cuando al cielo, y otras veces clava los ojos en la tierra, con tal embelesamiento, que no parece sino estatua vestida que el aire le mueve la ropa. En fin, él da tales muestras de tener apasionado el corazón, que tememos todos los que le conocemos que el dar el sí mañana la hermosa Quiteria ha de ser la sentencia de su muerte.

-Dios lo hará mejor -dijo Sancho-; que Dios, que da la llaga, da la medicina; nadie sabe lo que está por venir: de aquí a mañana muchas horas hay, y en una, y aun en un momento, se cae la casa; yo he visto llover y hacer sol, todo a un mismo punto; tal se acuesta sano la noche, que no se puede mover otro día. Y díganme, ¿por ventura habrá quien se alabe que tiene echado un clavo a la rodaja de la Fortuna? No, por cierto; y entre el sí y el no de la mujer no me atrevería yo a poner una punta de alfiler, porque no cabría. Denme a mí que Quiteria quiera de buen corazón y de buena voluntad a Basilio, que yo le daré a él un saco de buena ventura: que el amor, según yo he oído decir, mira con unos antojos que hacen parecer oro al cobre, a la pobreza riqueza, y a las lagañas perlas.

-¿Adónde vas a parar, Sancho, que seas maldito? -dijo don Quijote-; que cuando comienzas a ensartar refranes y cuentos, no te puede esperar sino el mismo Judas, que te lleve. Dime, animal, ¿qué sabes tú de clavos, ni de rodajas, ni de otra cosa ninguna?

-¡Oh! Pues si no me entienden -respondió Sancho-, no es maravilla que mis sentencias sean tenidas por disparates. Pero no importa: yo me entiendo, y sé que no he dicho muchas necedades en lo que he dicho; sino que vuesa merced, señor mío, siempre es friscal de mis dichos, y aun de mis hechos.

-Fiscal has de decir -dijo don Quijote-, que no friscal, prevaricador del buen lenguaje, que Dios te confunda.

-No se apunte vuestra merced conmigo -respondió Sancho-, pues sabe que no me he criado en la Corte, ni he estudiado en Salamanca, para saber si añadido o quitado alguna letra a mis vocablos. Sí, que, ¡válgame Dios!, no hay para qué obligar al sayagués a que hable como el toledano, y toledanos puede haber que no las corten en el aire en esto del hablar polido.

-Así es -dijo el licenciado-, porque no pueden hablar tan bien los que se crían en las Tenerías y en Zocodover como los que se pasean casi todo el día por el claustro de la Iglesia Mayor, y todos son toledanos. El lenguaje puro, el propio, el elegante y claro, está en los discretos cortesanos, aunque hayan nacido en Majalahonda: dije discretos porque hay muchos que no lo son, y la discreción es la gramática del buen lenguaje, que se acompaña con el uso. Yo, señores, por mis pecados, he estudiado Cánones en Salamanca, y pícome algún tanto de decir mi razón con palabras claras, llanas y significantes.

-Si no os picáredes más de saber más menear las negras que lleváis que la lengua -dijo el otro estudiante-, vos lleváredes el primero en licencias, como llevastes cola.

-Mirad, bachiller -respondió el licenciado-: vos estáis en la más errada opinión del mundo acerca de la destreza de la espada, teniéndola por vana.

-Para mí no es opinión, sino verdad asentada -replicó Corchuelo-; y si queréis que os lo muestre con la experiencia, espadas traéis, comodidad hay, yo pulsos y fuerzas tengo, que acompañadas de mi ánimo, que no es poco, os harán confesar que yo no me engaño. Apeaos, y usad de vuestro compás de pies, de vuestros círculos y vuestros ángulos y ciencia; que yo espero de haceros ver estrellas a mediodía con mi destreza moderna y zafia, en quien espero, después de Dios, que está por nacer hombre que me haga volver las espaldas, y que no le hay en el mundo a quien yo no le haga perder tierra.

-En eso de volver, o no, las espaldas no me meto -replicó el diestro-; aunque podría ser que en la parte donde la vez primera clavásedes el pie, allí os abriesen la sepultura: quiero decir que allí quedásedes muerto por la despreciada destreza.

-Ahora se verá -respondió Corchuelo.

Y, apeándose con gran presteza de su jumento, tiró con furia de una de las espadas que llevaba el licenciado en el suyo.

-No ha de ser así -dijo a este instante don Quijote-, que yo quiero ser el maestro desta esgrima, y el juez desta muchas veces no averiguada cuestión.

Y, apeándose de Rocinante y asiendo de su lanza, se puso en la mitad del camino, a tiempo que ya el licenciado, con gentil donaire de cuerpo y compás de pies, se iba contra Corchuelo, que contra él se vino, lanzando, como decirse suele, fuego por los ojos. Los otros dos labradores del acompañamiento, sin apearse de sus pollinas, sirvieron de aspetadores en la mortal tragedia. Las cuchilladas, estocadas, altibajos, reveses y mandobles que tiraba Corchuelo eran sin número, más espesas que hígado y más menudas que granizo. Arremetía como un león irritado, pero salíale al encuentro un tapaboca de la zapatilla de la espada del licenciado, que en mitad de su furia le detenía, y se la hacía besar como si fuera reliquia, aunque no con tanta devoción como las reliquias deben y suelen besarse.

Finalmente, el licenciado le contó a estocadas todos los botones de una media sotanilla que traía vestida, haciéndole tiras los faldamentos, como colas de pulpo; derribóle el sombrero dos veces, y cansóle de manera que de despecho, cólera y rabia asió la espada por la empuñadura, y arrojóla por el aire con tanta fuerza, que uno de los labradores asistentes, que era escribano, que fue por ella, dio después por testimonio que la alongó de sí casi tres cuartos de legua; el cual testimonio sirve y ha servido para que se conozca y vea con toda verdad cómo la fuerza es vencida del arte.

Sentóse cansado Corchuelo, y llegándose a él Sancho, le dijo:

-Mía fe, señor bachiller, si vuesa merced toma mi consejo, de aquí adelante no ha de desafiar a nadie a esgrimir, sino a luchar o a tirar la barra, pues tiene edad y fuerzas para ello; que destos a quien llaman *diestros* he oído decir que meten una punta de una espada por el ojo de una aguja.

-Yo me contento -respondió Corchuelo- de haber caído de mi burra, y de que me haya mostrado la experiencia la verdad, de quien tan lejos estaba.

Y, levantándose, abrazó al licenciado, y quedaron más amigos que de antes, y no queriendo esperar al escribano, que había ido por la espada, por parecerle que tardaría mucho; y así, determinaron seguir, por llegar temprano a la aldea de Quiteria, de donde todos eran.

En lo que faltaba del camino, les fue contando el licenciado las excelencias de la espada, con tantas razones demostrativas y con tantas figuras y demostraciones matemáticas, que todos quedaron enterados de la bondad de la ciencia y Corchuelo reducido de su pertinacia.

Era anochecido, pero antes que llegasen les pareció a todos que estaba delante del pueblo un cielo lleno de innumerables y resplandecientes estrellas. Oyeron, asimismo, confusos y suaves sonidos de diversos instrumentos, como de flautas, tamborinos, salterios, albogues, panderos y sonajas; y cuando llegaron cerca vieron que los árboles de una enramada, que a mano habían puesto a la entrada del pueblo, estaban todos llenos de luminarias, a quien no ofendía el viento, que entonces no soplaba sino tan manso que no tenía fuerza para mover las hojas de los árboles. Los músicos eran los regocijadores de la boda, que en diversas cuadrillas por aquel agradable sitio andaban, unos bailando, y otros cantando, y otros tocando la diversidad de los referidos instrumentos. En efecto, no parecía sino que por todo aquel prado andaba corriendo la alegría y saltando el contento.

Otros muchos andaban ocupados en levantar andamios, de donde con comodidad pudiesen ver otro día las representaciones y danzas que se habían de hacer en aquel lugar dedicado para solenizar las bodas del rico Camacho y las exequias de Basilio. No quiso entrar en el lugar don Quijote, aunque se lo pidieron así el labrador como el bachiller; pero él dio por disculpa, bastantísima a su parecer, ser costumbre de los caballeros andantes dormir por los campos y florestas antes que en los poblados, aunque fuese debajo de dorados techos; y con esto, se desvió un poco del camino, bien contra la voluntad de Sancho, viniéndosele a la memoria el buen alojamiento que había tenido en el castillo o casa de don Diego.

## Capítulo XX

*Donde se cuentan las bodas de Camacho el rico, con el suceso de Basilio el pobre*

APENAS la blanca aurora había dado lugar a que el luciente Febo, con el ardor de sus calientes rayos, las líquidas perlas de sus cabellos de oro enjugase, cuando don Quijote, sacudiendo la pereza de sus miembros, se puso en pie y llamó a su escudero Sancho, que aún todavía roncaba; lo cual visto por don Quijote, antes que le despertase, le dijo: -¡Oh tú, bienaventurado sobre cuantos viven sobre la haz de la tierra, pues sin tener invidia ni ser envidiado, duermes con sosegado espíritu, ni te persiguen encantadores, ni sobresaltan encantamientos! Duerme, digo otra vez, y lo diré otras ciento, sin que te tengan en continua vigilia celos de tu dama, ni te desvelen pensamientos de pagar deudas que debas, ni de lo que has de hacer para comer otro día tú y tu pequeña y angustiada familia. Ni la ambición te inquieta, ni la pompa vana del mundo te fatiga, pues los límites de tus deseos no se estienden a más que a pensar tu jumento; que el de tu persona sobre mis hombros le tienes puesto: contrapeso y carga que puso la naturaleza y la costumbre a los señores. Duerme el criado, y está velando el señor, pensando cómo le ha de sustentar, mejorar y hacer mercedes. La congoja de ver que el cielo se hace de bronce sin acudir a la tierra con el conveniente rocío no aflige al criado, sino al señor, que ha de sustentar en la esterilidad y hambre al que le sirvió en la fertilidad y abundancia.

A todo esto no respondió Sancho, porque dormía, ni despertara tan presto si don Quijote con el cuento de la lanza no le hiciera volver en sí. Despertó, en fin, soñoliento y perezoso, y, volviendo el rostro a todas partes, dijo: -De la parte desta enramada, si no me engaño, sale un tufo y olor hartos más de torreznos asados que de juncos y tomillos: bodas que por tales olores comienzan, para mi santiguada que deben de ser abundantes y generosas.

-Acaba, glotón -dijo don Quijote-; ven, iremos a ver estos desposorios, por ver lo que hace el desdeñado Basilio.

-Mas que haga lo que quisiere -respondió Sancho-: no fuera él pobre y casárase con Quiteria. ¿No hay más sino no tener un cuarto y querer alzarse por las nubes? A la fe, señor, yo soy de parecer que el pobre debe de contentarse con lo que hallare, y no pedir cotufas en el golfo. Yo apostaré un brazo que puede Camacho envolver en reales a Basilio; y si esto es así, como debe de ser, bien

boba fuera Quiteria en desechar las galas y las joyas que le debe de haber dado, y le puede dar Camacho, por escoger el tirar de la barra y el jugar de la negra de Basilio. Sobre un buen tiro de barra o sobre una gentil treta de espada no dan un cuartillo de vino en la taberna. Habilidades y gracias que no son vendibles, mas que las tenga el conde Dirlos; pero, cuando las tales gracias caen sobre quien tiene buen dinero, tal sea mi vida como ellas parecen. Sobre un buen cimiento se puede levantar un buen edificio, y el mejor cimiento y zanja del mundo es el dinero.

-Por quien Dios es, Sancho -dijo a esta sazón don Quijote-, que concluyas con tu arenga; que tengo para mí que si te dejasen seguir en las que a cada paso comienzas, no te quedaría tiempo para comer ni para dormir, que todo le gastarías en hablar.

-Si vuestra merced tuviera buena memoria -replicó Sancho-, debiérase acordar de los capítulos de nuestro concierto antes que esta última vez saliésemos de casa: uno dellos fue que me había de dejar hablar todo aquello que quisiese, con que no fuese contra el prójimo ni contra la autoridad de vuesa merced; y hasta agora me parece que no he contravenido contra el tal capítulo.

-Yo no me acuerdo, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, del tal capítulo; y, puesto que sea así, quiero que calles y vengas, que ya los instrumentos que anoche oímos vuelven a alegrar los valles, y sin duda los desposorios se celebrarán en el frescor de la mañana, y no en el calor de la tarde.

Hizo Sancho lo que su señor le mandaba, y, poniendo la silla a Rocinante y la albarda al rucio, subieron los dos, y paso ante paso se fueron entrando por la enramada.

Lo primero que se le ofreció a la vista de Sancho fue, espetado en un asador de un olmo entero, un entero novillo; y en el fuego donde se había de asar ardía un mediano monte de leña, y seis ollas que alrededor de la hoguera estaban no se habían hecho en la común turquesa de las demás ollas, porque eran seis medias tinajas, que cada una cabía un rastro de carne: así embebían y encerraban en sí carneros enteros, sin echarse de ver, como si fueran palominos; las liebres ya sin pellejo y las gallinas sin pluma que estaban colgadas por los árboles para sepultarlas en las ollas no tenían número; los pájaros y caza de diversos géneros eran infinitos, colgados de los árboles para que el aire los enfriase.

Contó Sancho más de sesenta zaques de más de a dos arrobas cada uno, y todos llenos, según después pareció, de generosos vinos; así había rimeros de pan blanquísimo, como los suele haber de montones de trigo en las eras; los quesos, puestos como ladrillos enrejados, formaban una muralla, y dos calderas de aceite, mayores que las de un tinte, servían de freír cosas de masa, que con dos valientes palas las sacaban fritas y las zabullían en otra caldera de preparada

miel que allí junto estaba.

Los cocineros y cocineras pasaban de cincuenta: todos limpios, todos diligentes y todos contentos. En el dilatado vientre del novillo estaban doce tiernos y pequeños lechones, que, cosidos por encima, servían de darle sabor y enternecerle. Las especias de diversas suertes no parecía haberlas comprado por libras, sino por arrobas, y todas estaban de manifiesto en una grande arca. Finalmente, el aparato de la boda era rústico, pero tan abundante que podía sustentar a un ejército.

Todo lo miraba Sancho Panza, y todo lo contemplaba, y de todo se aficionaba: primero le cautivaron y rindieron el deseo las ollas, de quién él tomara de bonísima gana un mediano puchero; luego le aficionaron la voluntad los zaques; y, últimamente, las frutas de sartén, si es que se podían llamar sartenes las tan orondas calderas; y así, sin poderlo sufrir ni ser en su mano hacer otra cosa, se llegó a uno de los solícitos cocineros, y, con corteses y hambrientas razones, le rogó le dejase mojar un mendrugo de pan en una de aquellas ollas. A lo que el cocinero respondió: -Hermano, este día no es de aquellos sobre quien tiene jurisdicción la hambre, merced al rico Camacho. Apeaos y mirad si hay por ahí un cucharón, y espumad una gallina o dos, y buen provecho os hagan.

-No veo ninguno -respondió Sancho.

-Esperad -dijo el cocinero-. ¡Pecador de mí, y qué melindroso y para poco debéis de ser!

Y, diciendo esto, asió de un caldero, y, encajándole en una de las medias tinajas, sacó en él tres gallinas y dos gansos, y dijo a Sancho: -Comed, amigo, y desayunaos con esta espuma, en tanto que se llega la hora del yantar.

-No tengo en qué echarla -respondió Sancho.

-Pues llevaos -dijo el cocinero-la cuchara y todo, que la riqueza y el contento de Camacho todo lo suple.

En tanto, pues, que esto pasaba Sancho, estaba don Quijote mirando cómo, por una parte de la enramada, entraban hasta doce labradores sobre doce hermosísimas yeguas, con ricos y vistosos jaeces de campo y con muchos cascabeles en los petrales, y todos vestidos de regocijo y fiestas; los cuales, en concertado tropel, corrieron no una, sino muchas carreras por el prado, con regocijada algazara y grito, diciendo: -¡Vivan Camacho y Quiteria: él tan rico como ella hermosa, y ella la más hermosa del mundo!

Oyendo lo cual don Quijote, dijo entre sí:

-Bien parece que éstos no han visto a mi Dulcinea del Toboso, que si la hubieran visto, ellos se fueran a la mano en las alabanzas desta su Quiteria.

De allí a poco comenzaron a entrar por diversas partes de la enramada muchas y diferentes danzas, entre las cuales venía una de espadas, de hasta veinte y

cuatro zagales de gallardo parecer y brío, todos vestidos de delgado y blanquísimo lienzo, con sus paños de tocar, labrados de varias colores de fina seda; y al que los guiaba, que era un ligero mancebo, preguntó uno de los de las yeguas si se había herido alguno de los danzantes.

-Por ahora, bendito sea Dios, no se ha herido nadie: todos vamos sanos.

Y luego comenzó a enredarse con los demás compañeros, con tantas vueltas y con tanta destreza que, aunque don Quijote estaba hecho a ver semejantes danzas, ninguna le había parecido tan bien como aquélla.

También le pareció bien otra que entró de doncellas hermosísimas, tan mozas que, al parecer, ninguna bajaba de catorce ni llegaba a diez y ocho años, vestidas todas de palmilla verde, los cabellos parte tranzados y parte sueltos, pero todos tan rubios, que con los del sol podían tener competencia, sobre los cuales traían guirnalda de jazmines, rosas, amaranto y madreselva compuestas. Guiábalas un venerable viejo y una anciana matrona, pero más ligeros y sueltos que sus años prometían. Hacíales el son una gaita zamorana, y ellas, llevando en los rostros y en los ojos a la honestidad y en los pies a la ligereza, se mostraban las mejores bailadoras del mundo.

Tras ésta entró otra danza de artificio y de las que llaman habladas. Era de ocho ninfas, repartidas en dos hileras: de la una hilera era guía el dios Cupido, y de la otra, el Interés; aquél, adornado de alas, arco, aljaba y saetas; éste, vestido de ricas y diversas colores de oro y seda. Las ninfas que al Amor seguían traían a las espaldas, en pargamino blanco y letras grandes, escritos sus nombres: POESÍA era el título de la primera, el de la segunda DISCRECIÓN, el de la tercera BUEN LINAJE, el de la cuarta VALENTÍA; del modo mismo venían señaladas las que al Interés seguían: decía LIBERALIDAD el título de la primera, DÁDIVA el de la segunda, TESORO el de la tercera y el de la cuarta POSESIÓN PACÍFICA. Delante de todos venía un castillo de madera, a quien tiraban cuatro salvajes, todos vestidos de yedra y de cáñamo teñido de verde, tan al natural, que por poco espantaran a Sancho. En la frontera del castillo y en todas cuatro partes de sus cuadros traía escrito: CASTILLO DEL BUEN RECATO. Hacíanles el son cuatro diestros tañedores de tamboril y flauta.

Comenzaba la danza Cupido, y, habiendo hecho dos mudanzas, alzaba los ojos y flechaba el arco contra una doncella que se ponía entre las almenas del castillo, a la cual desta suerte dijo:

-Yo soy el dios poderoso  
en el aire y en la tierra  
y en el ancho mar undoso,  
y en cuanto el abismo encierra  
en su bátraco espantoso.



Nunca conocí qué es miedo;  
todo cuanto quiero puedo,  
aunque quiera lo imposible,  
y en todo lo que es posible  
mando, quito, pongo y vedo.

Acabó la copla, disparó una flecha por lo alto del castillo y retiróse a su puesto. Salió luego el Interés, y hizo otras dos mudanzas; callaron los tamborinos, y él dijo:

-Soy quien puede más que Amor,  
y es Amor el que me guía;  
soy de la estirpe mejor  
que el cielo en la tierra cría,  
más conocida y mayor.  
Soy el Interés, en quien  
pocos suelen obrar bien,  
y obrar sin mí es gran milagro;  
y cual soy te me consagro,  
por siempre jamás, amén.

Retiróse el Interés, y hízose adelante la Poesía; la cual, después de haber hecho sus mudanzas como los demás, puestos los ojos en la doncella del castillo, dijo:

-En dulcísimos conceptos,  
la dulcísima Poesía,  
altos, graves y discretos,  
señora, el alma te envía  
envuelta entre mil sonetos.  
Si acaso no te importuna  
mi porfía, tu fortuna,  
de otras muchas invidiada,  
será por mí levantada  
sobre el cerco de la luna.

Desvióse la Poesía, y de la parte del Interés salió la Liberalidad, y, después de hechas sus mudanzas, dijo:

-Llaman Liberalidad  
al dar que el extremo huye  
de la prodigalidad,  
y del contrario, que arguye  
tibia y floja voluntad.  
Mas yo, por te engrandecer,  
de hoy más, pródiga he de ser;  
que, aunque es vicio, es vicio honrado  
y de pecho enamorado,  
que en el dar se echa de ver.

Deste modo salieron y se retiraron todas las dos figuras de las dos escuadras, y cada uno hizo sus mudanzas y dijo sus versos, algunos elegantes y algunos ridículos, y sólo tomó de memoria don Quijote -que la tenía grande-los ya referidos; y luego se mezclaron todos, haciendo y deshaciendo lazos con gentil donaire y desenvoltura; y cuando pasaba el Amor por delante del castillo, disparaba por alto sus flechas, pero el Interés quebraba en él alcancías doradas.

Finalmente, después de haber bailado un buen espacio, el Interés sacó un bolsón, que le formaba el pellejo de un gran gato romano, que parecía estar lleno de dineros, y, arrojándole al castillo, con el golpe se desencajaron las tablas y se cayeron, dejando a la doncella descubierta y sin defensa alguna. Llegó el Interés con las figuras de su valía, y, echándola una gran cadena de oro al cuello, mostraron prenderla, rendirla y cautivarla; lo cual visto por el Amor y sus valedores, hicieron ademán de quitársela; y todas las demostraciones que hacían eran al son de los tamborinos, bailando y danzando concertadamente. Pusiéronlos en paz los salvajes, los cuales con mucha presteza volvieron a armar y a encajar las tablas del castillo, y la doncella se encerró en él como de nuevo, y con esto se acabó la danza con gran contento de los que la miraban.

Preguntó don Quijote a una de las ninfas que quién la había compuesto y ordenado. Respondióle que un beneficiado de aquel pueblo, que tenía gentil caletre para semejantes invenciones.

-Yo apostaré -dijo don Quijote-que debe de ser más amigo de Camacho que de Basilio el tal bachiller o beneficiado, y que debe de tener más de satírico que de vísperas: ¡bien ha encajado en la danza las habilidades de Basilio y las

riquezas de Camacho!

Sancho Panza, que lo escuchaba todo, dijo:

-El rey es mi gallo: a Camacho me atengo.

-En fin -dijo don Quijote-, bien se parece, Sancho, que eres villano y de aquéllos que dicen: «¡Viva quien vence!»

-No sé de los que soy -respondió Sancho-, pero bien sé que nunca de ollas de Basilio sacaré yo tan elegante espuma como es esta que he sacado de las de Camacho.

Y enseñóle el caldero lleno de gansos y de gallinas, y, asiendo de una, comenzó a comer con mucho donaire y gana, y dijo: -¡A la barba de las habilidades de Basilio!, que tanto vales cuanto tienes, y tanto tienes cuanto vales. Dos linajes solos hay en el mundo, como decía una agüela mía, que son el tener y el no tener, aunque ella al del tener se atenía; y el día de hoy, mi señor don Quijote, antes se toma el pulso al haber que al saber: un asno cubierto de oro parece mejor que un caballo enalbardado. Así que vuelvo a decir que a Camacho me atengo, de cuyas ollas son abundantes espumas gansos y gallinas, liebres y conejos; y de las de Basilio serán, si viene a mano, y aunque no venga sino al pie, aguachirle.

-¿Has acabado tu arenga, Sancho? -dijo don Quijote.

-Habréla acabado -respondió Sancho-, porque veo que vuestra merced recibe pesadumbre con ella; que si esto no se pusiera de por medio, obra había cortada para tres días.

-Plega a Dios, Sancho -replicó don Quijote-, que yo te vea mudo antes que me muera.

-Al paso que llevamos -respondió Sancho-, antes que vuestra merced se muera estaré yo mascando barro, y entonces podrá ser que esté tan mudo que no hable palabra hasta la fin del mundo, o, por lo menos, hasta el día del Juicio.

-Aunque eso así suceda, ¡oh Sancho! -respondió don Quijote-, nunca llegará tu silencio a do ha llegado lo que has hablado, hablas y tienes de hablar en tu vida; y más, que está muy puesto en razón natural que primero llegue el día de mi muerte que el de la tuya; y así, jamás pienso verte mudo, ni aun cuando estés bebiendo o durmiendo, que es lo que puedo encarecer.

-A buena fe, señor -respondió Sancho-, que no hay que fiar en la descarnada, digo, en la muerte, la cual también come cordero como carnero; y a nuestro cura he oído decir que con igual pie pisaba las altas torres de los reyes como las humildes chozas de los pobres. Tiene esta señora más de poder que de melindre: no es nada asquerosa, de todo come y a todo hace, y de toda suerte de gentes, edades y preeminencias hinche sus alforjas. No es segador que duerme las siestas, que a todas horas siega, y corta así la seca como la verde yerba; y no

parece que masca, sino que engulle y traga cuanto se le pone delante, porque tiene hambre canina, que nunca se harta; y, aunque no tiene barriga, da a entender que está hidrópica y sedienta de beber solas las vidas de cuantos viven, como quien se bebe un jarro de agua fría.

-No más, Sancho -dijo a este punto don Quijote-. Tente en buenas, y no te dejes caer; que en verdad que lo que has dicho de la muerte por tus rústicos términos es lo que pudiera decir un buen predicador. Dígote, Sancho que si como tienes buen natural y discreción, pudieras tomar un púlpito en la mano y irte por ese mundo predicando lindezas...

-Bien predica quien bien vive -respondió Sancho-, y yo no sé otras tologías.

-Ni las has menester -dijo don Quijote-; pero yo no acabo de entender ni alcanzar cómo, siendo el principio de la sabiduría el temor de Dios, tú, que temes más a un lagarto que a Él, sabes tanto.

-Juzgue vuesa merced, señor, de sus caballerías -respondió Sancho-, y no se meta en juzgar de los temores o valentías ajenas, que tan gentil temeroso soy yo de Dios como cada hijo de vecino; y déjeme vuestra merced despabilar esta espuma, que lo demás todas son palabras ociosas, de que nos han de pedir cuenta en la otra vida.

Y, diciendo esto, comenzó de nuevo a dar asalto a su caldero, con tan buenos alientos que despertó los de don Quijote, y sin duda le ayudara, si no lo impidiera lo que es fuerza se diga adelante.

## Capítulo XXI

*Donde se prosiguen las bodas de Camacho, con otros gustosos sucesos*

CUANDO estaban don Quijote y Sancho en las razones referidas en el capítulo antecedente, se oyeron grandes voces y gran ruido, y dábanlas y causábanle los de las yeguas, que con larga carrera y grito iban a recibir a los novios, que, rodeados de mil géneros de instrumentos y de invenciones, venían acompañados del cura, y de la parentela de entrambos, y de toda la gente más lucida de los lugares circunvecinos, todos vestidos de fiesta. Y como Sancho vio a la novia, dijo:

-A buena fe que no viene vestida de labradora, sino de garrida palaciega. ¡Pardiez, que según diviso, que las patenas que había de traer son ricos corales, y la palmilla verde de Cuenca es terciopelo de treinta pelos! ¡Y montas que la guarnición es de tiras de lienzo, blanca!, ¡voto a mí que es de raso!; pues, ¡tomadme las manos, adornadas con sortijas de azabache!: no medre yo si no son anillos de oro, y muy de oro, y empedrados con pelras blancas como una cuajada, que cada una debe de valer un ojo de la cara. ¡Oh hideputa, y qué cabellos; que, si no son postizos, no los he visto mas luengos ni más rubios en toda mi vida! ¡No, sino ponedla tacha en el brío y en el talle, y no la comparéis a una palma que se mueve cargada de racimos de dátiles, que lo mesmo parecen los dijes que trae pendientes de los cabellos y de la garganta! Juro en mi ánima que ella es una chapada moza, y que puede pasar por los bancos de Flandes.

Rióse don Quijote de las rústicas alabanzas de Sancho Panza; parecióle que, fuera de su señora Dulcinea del Toboso, no había visto mujer más hermosa jamás. Venía la hermosa Quiteria algo descolorida, y debía de ser de la mala noche que siempre pasan las novias en componerse para el día venidero de sus bodas. Íbanse acercando a un teatro que a un lado del prado estaba, adornado de alfombras y ramos, adonde se habían de hacer los desposorios, y de donde habían de mirar las danzas y las invenciones; y, a la sazón que llegaban al puesto, oyeron a sus espaldas grandes voces, y una que decía:

-Esperaos un poco, gente tan inconsiderada como presurosa.

A cuyas voces y palabras todos volvieron la cabeza, y vieron que las daba un hombre vestido, al parecer, de un sayo negro, jironado de carmesí a llamas. Venía coronado -como se vio luego-con una corona de funesto ciprés; en las manos traía un bastón grande. En llegando más cerca, fue conocido de todos por

el gallardo Basilio, y todos estuvieron suspensos, esperando en qué habían de parar sus voces y sus palabras, temiendo algún mal suceso de su venida en sazón semejante.

Llegó, en fin, cansado y sin aliento; y, puesto delante de los desposados, hincando el bastón en el suelo, que tenía el cuento de una punta de acero, mudada la color, puestos los ojos en Quiteria, con voz tremente y ronca, estas razones dijo:

-Bien sabes, desconocida Quiteria, que conforme a la santa ley que profesamos, que viviendo yo, tú no puedes tomar esposo; y juntamente no ignoras que, por esperar yo que el tiempo y mi diligencia mejorasen los bienes de mi fortuna, no he querido dejar de guardar el decoro que a tu honra convenía; pero tú, echando a las espaldas todas las obligaciones que debes a mi buen deseo, quieres hacer señor de lo que es mío a otro, cuyas riquezas le sirven no sólo de buena fortuna, sino de bonísima ventura. Y para que la tenga colmada, y no como yo pienso que la merece, sino como se la quieren dar los cielos, yo, por mis manos, desharé el imposible o el inconveniente que puede estorbársela, quitándome a mí de por medio. ¡Viva, viva el rico Camacho con la ingrata Quiteria largos y felices siglos, y muera, muera el pobre Basilio, cuya pobreza cortó las alas de su dicha y le puso en la sepultura!

Y, diciendo esto, asió del bastón que tenía hincado en el suelo, y, quedándose la mitad dél en la tierra, mostró que servía de vaina a un mediano estoque que en él se ocultaba; y, puesta la que se podía llamar empuñadura en el suelo, con ligero desenfado y determinado propósito se arrojó sobre él, y en un punto mostró la punta sangrienta a las espaldas, con la mitad del acerada cuchilla, quedando el triste bañado en su sangre y tendido en el suelo, de sus mismas armas traspasado.

Acudieron luego sus amigos a favorecerle, condolidos de su miseria y lastimosa desgracia; y, dejando don Quijote a Rocinante, acudió a favorecerle y le tomó en sus brazos, y halló que aún no había espirado. Quisiéronle sacar el estoque, pero el cura, que estaba presente, fue de parecer que no se le sacasen antes de confesarle, porque el sacársele y el espirar sería todo a un tiempo. Pero, volviendo un poco en sí Basilio, con voz doliente y desmayada dijo:

-Si quisieses, cruel Quiteria, darme en este último y forzoso trance la mano de esposa, aún pensaría que mi temeridad tendría desculpa, pues en ella alcancé el bien de ser tuyo.

El cura, oyendo lo cual, le dijo que atendiese a la salud del alma antes que a los gustos del cuerpo, y que pidiese muy de veras a Dios perdón de sus pecados y de su desesperada determinación. A lo cual replicó Basilio que en ninguna manera se confesaría si primero Quiteria no le daba la mano de ser su esposa:

que aquel contento le adobaría la voluntad y le daría aliento para confesarse.

En oyendo don Quijote la petición del herido, en altas voces dijo que Basilio pedía una cosa muy justa y puesta en razón, y además, muy hacedera, y que el señor Camacho quedaría tan honrado recibiendo a la señora Quiteria viuda del valeroso Basilio como si la recibiera del lado de su padre:

-Aquí no ha de haber más de un sí, que no tenga otro efecto que el pronunciarle, pues el tálamo de estas bodas ha de ser la sepultura.

Todo lo oía Camacho, y todo le tenía suspenso y confuso, sin saber qué hacer ni qué decir; pero las voces de los amigos de Basilio fueron tantas, pidiéndole que consintiese que Quiteria le diese la mano de esposa, porque su alma no se perdiese, partiendo desesperado desta vida, que le movieron, y aun forzaron, a decir que si Quiteria quería dársela, que él se contentaba, pues todo era dilatar por un momento el cumplimiento de sus deseos.

Luego acudieron todos a Quiteria, y unos con ruegos, y otros con lágrimas, y otros con eficaces razones, la persuadían que diese la mano al pobre Basilio; y ella, más dura que un mármol y más sesga que una estatua, mostraba que ni sabía ni podía, ni quería responder palabra; ni la respondiera si el cura no la dijera que se determinase presto en lo que había de hacer, porque tenía Basilio ya el alma en los dientes, y no daba lugar a esperar irresolutas determinaciones.

Entonces la hermosa Quiteria, sin responder palabra alguna, turbada, al parecer triste y pesarosa, llegó donde Basilio estaba, ya los ojos vueltos, el aliento corto y apresurado, murmurando entre los dientes el nombre de Quiteria, dando muestras de morir como gentil, y no como cristiano. Llegó, en fin, Quiteria, y, puesta de rodillas, le pidió la mano por señas, y no por palabras. Desencajó los ojos Basilio, y, mirándola atentamente, le dijo:

-¡Oh Quiteria, que has venido a ser piadosa a tiempo cuando tu piedad ha de servir de cuchillo que me acabe de quitar la vida, pues ya no tengo fuerzas para llevar la gloria que me das en escogermene por tuyo, ni para suspender el dolor que tan apriesa me va cubriendo los ojos con la espantosa sombra de la muerte! Lo que te suplico es, ¡oh fatal estrella mía!, que la mano que me pides y quieres darme no sea por cumplimiento, ni para engañarme de nuevo, sino que confieses y digas que, sin hacer fuerza a tu voluntad, me la entregas y me la das como a tu legítimo esposo; pues no es razón que en un trance como éste me engañes, ni uses de fingimientos con quien tantas verdades ha tratado contigo.

Entre estas razones, se desmayaba, de modo que todos los presentes pensaban que cada desmayo se había de llevar el alma consigo. Quiteria, toda honesta y toda vergonzosa, asiendo con su derecha mano la de Basilio, le dijo:

-Ninguna fuerza fuera bastante a torcer mi voluntad; y así, con la más libre que tengo te doy la mano de legítima esposa, y recibo la tuya, si es que me la das

de tu libre albedrío, sin que la turbe ni contraste la calamidad en que tu discurso acelerado te ha puesto.

-Sí doy -respondió Basilio-, no turbado ni confuso, sino con el claro entendimiento que el cielo quiso darme; y así, me doy y me entrego por tu esposo.

-Y yo por tu esposa -respondió Quiteria-, ahora vivas largos años, ahora te lleven de mis brazos a la sepultura.

-Para estar tan herido este mancebo -dijo a este punto Sancho Panza-, mucho habla; háganle que se deje de requiebros y que atienda a su alma, que, a mi parecer, más la tiene en la lengua que en los dientes.

Estando, pues, asidos de las manos Basilio y Quiteria, el cura, tierno y lloroso, los echó la bendición y pidió al cielo diese buen poso al alma del nuevo desposado; el cual, así como recibió la bendición, con presta ligereza se levantó en pie, y con no vista desenvoltura se sacó el estoque, a quien servía de vaina su cuerpo.

Quedaron todos los circunstantes admirados, y algunos dellos, más simples que curiosos, en altas voces, comenzaron a decir:

-¡Milagro, milagro!

Pero Basilio replicó:

-¡No «milagro, milagro», sino industria, industria!

El cura, desatentado y atónito, acudió con ambas manos a tentar la herida, y halló que la cuchilla había pasado, no por la carne y costillas de Basilio, sino por un cañón hueco de hierro que, lleno de sangre, en aquel lugar bien acomodado tenía; preparada la sangre, según después se supo, de modo que no se helase.

Finalmente, el cura y Camacho, con todos los más circunstantes, se tuvieron por burlados y escarnidos. La esposa no dio muestras de pesarle de la burla; antes, oyendo decir que aquel casamiento, por haber sido engañoso, no había de ser valedero, dijo que ella le confirmaba de nuevo; de lo cual coligieron todos que de consentimiento y sabiduría de los dos se había trazado aquel caso, de lo que quedó Camacho y sus valedores tan corridos que remitieron su venganza a las manos, y, desenvainando muchas espadas, arremetieron a Basilio, en cuyo favor en un instante se desenvainaron casi otras tantas. Y, tomando la delantera a caballo don Quijote, con la lanza sobre el brazo y bien cubierto de su escudo, se hacía dar lugar de todos. Sancho, a quien jamás pluguieron ni solazaron semejantes fechorías, se acogió a las tinajas, donde había sacado su agradable espuma, pareciéndole aquel lugar como sagrado, que había de ser tenido en respeto. Don Quijote, a grandes voces, decía:

-Teneos, señores, teneos, que no es razón toméis venganza de los agravios que el amor nos hace; y advertid que el amor y la guerra son una misma cosa, y así



como en la guerra es cosa lícita y acostumbrada usar de ardides y estratagemas para vencer al enemigo, así en las contiendas y competencias amorosas se tienen por buenos los embustes y marañas que se hacen para conseguir el fin que se desea, como no sean en menoscabo y deshonor de la cosa amada. Quiteria era de Basilio, y Basilio de Quiteria, por justa y favorable disposición de los cielos. Camacho es rico, y podrá comprar su gusto cuando, donde y como quisiere. Basilio no tiene más desta oveja, y no se la ha de quitar alguno, por poderoso que sea; que a los dos que Dios junta no podrá separar el hombre; y el que lo intentare, primero ha de pasar por la punta desta lanza.

Y, en esto, la blandió tan fuerte y tan diestramente, que puso pavor en todos los que no le conocían, y tan intensamente se fijó en la imaginación de Camacho el desdén de Quiteria, que se la borró de la memoria en un instante; y así tuvieron lugar con él las persuasiones del cura, que era varón prudente y bien intencionado, con las cuales quedó Camacho y los de su parcialidad pacíficos y sosegados; en señal de lo cual volvieron las espadas a sus lugares, culpando más a la facilidad de Quiteria que a la industria de Basilio; haciendo discurso Camacho que si Quiteria quería bien a Basilio doncella, también le quisiera casada, y que debía de dar gracias al cielo, más por habérsela quitado que por habérsela dado.

Consolado, pues, y pacífico Camacho y los de su mesnada, todos los de la de Basilio se sosegaron, y el rico Camacho, por mostrar que no sentía la burla, ni la estimaba en nada, quiso que las fiestas pasasen adelante como si realmente se desposara; pero no quisieron asistir a ellas Basilio ni su esposa ni secuaces; y así, se fueron a la aldea de Basilio, que también los pobres virtuosos y discretos tienen quien los siga, honre y ampare, como los ricos tienen quien los lisonjee y acompañe.

Lleváronse consigo a don Quijote, estimándole por hombre de valor y de pelo en pecho. A sólo Sancho se le escureció el alma, por verse imposibilitado de aguardar la espléndida comida y fiestas de Camacho, que duraron hasta la noche; y así, asenderado y triste, siguió a su señor, que con la cuadrilla de Basilio iba, y así se dejó atrás las ollas de Egipto, aunque las llevaba en el alma, cuya ya casi consumida y acabada espuma, que en el caldero llevaba, le representaba la gloria y la abundancia del bien que perdía; y así, congojado y pensativo, aunque sin hambre, sin apearce del rucio, siguió las huellas de Rocinante.

## Capítulo XXII

*Donde se da cuenta de la grande aventura de la cueva de Montesinos, que está en el corazón de la Mancha, a quien dio felice cima el valeroso don Quijote de la Mancha*

GRANDES fueron y muchos los regalos que los desposados hicieron a don Quijote, obligados de las muestras que había dado defendiendo su causa, y al par de la valentía le graduaron la discreción, teniéndole por un Cid en las armas y por un Cicerón en la elocuencia. El buen Sancho se refociló tres días a costa de los novios, de los cuales se supo que no fue traza comunicada con la hermosa Quiteria el herirse fingidamente, sino industria de Basilio, esperando della el mismo suceso que se había visto; bien es verdad que confesó que había dado parte de su pensamiento a algunos de sus amigos, para que al tiempo necesario favoreciesen su intención y abonasen su engaño.

-No se pueden ni deben llamar engaños -dijo don Quijote-los que ponen la mira en virtuosos fines.

Y que el de casarse los enamorados era el fin de más excelencia, advirtiéndole que el mayor contrario que el amor tiene es la hambre y la continua necesidad, porque el amor es todo alegría, regocijo y contento, y más cuando el amante está en posesión de la cosa amada, contra quien son enemigos opuestos y declarados la necesidad y la pobreza; y que todo esto decía con intención de que se dejase el señor Basilio de ejercitar las habilidades que sabe, que, aunque le daban fama, no le daban dineros, y que atendiese a granjear hacienda por medios lícitos e industriosos, que nunca faltan a los prudentes y aplicados.

-El pobre honrado, si es que puede ser honrado el pobre, tiene prenda en tener mujer hermosa, que, cuando se la quitan, le quitan la honra y se la matan. La mujer hermosa y honrada, cuyo marido es pobre, merece ser coronada con laureles y palmas de vencimiento y triunfo. La hermosura, por sí sola, atrae las voluntades de cuantos la miran y conocen, y como a señuelo gustoso se le abaten las águilas reales y los pájaros altaneros; pero si a la tal hermosura se le junta la necesidad y la estrechez, también la embisten los cuervos, los milanos y las otras aves de rapiña; y la que está a tantos encuentros firme bien merece llamarse corona de su marido. Mirad, discreto Basilio -añadió don Quijote-: opinión fue de no sé qué sabio que no había en todo el mundo sino una sola mujer buena, y daba por consejo que cada uno pensase y creyese que aquella sola buena era la

suya, y así viviría contento. Yo no soy casado, ni hasta agora me ha venido en pensamiento serlo; y, con todo esto, me atrevería a dar consejo al que me lo pidiese del modo que había de buscar la mujer con quien se quisiese casar. Lo primero, le aconsejaría que mirase más a la fama que a la hacienda, porque la buena mujer no alcanza la buena fama solamente con ser buena, sino con parecerlo; que mucho más dañan a las honras de las mujeres las desenvolturas y libertades públicas que las maldades secretas. Si traes buena mujer a tu casa, fácil cosa sería conservarla, y aun mejorarla, en aquella bondad; pero si la traes mala, en trabajo te pondrá el enmendarla: que no es muy hacedero pasar de un extremo a otro. Yo no digo que sea imposible, pero téngolo por dificultoso.

Oía todo esto Sancho, y dijo entre sí:

-Este mi amo, cuando yo hablo cosas de meollo y de sustancia suele decir que podría yo tomar un púlpito en las manos y irme por ese mundo adelante predicando lindezas; y yo digo dél que cuando comienza a enhilar sentencias y a dar consejos, no sólo puede tomar púlpito en las manos, sino dos en cada dedo, y andarse por esas plazas a ¿qué quieres boca? ¡Válate el diablo por caballero andante, que tantas cosas sabes! Yo pensaba en mi ánima que sólo podía saber aquello que tocaba a sus caballerías, pero no hay cosa donde no pique y deje de meter su cucharada.

Murmuraba esto algo Sancho, y entreoyóle su señor, y preguntóle:

-¿Qué murmuras, Sancho?

-No digo nada, ni murmuro de nada -respondió Sancho-; sólo estaba diciendo entre mí que quisiera haber oído lo que vuesa merced aquí ha dicho antes que me casara, que quizá dijera yo agora: «El buey suelto bien se lame».

-¿Tan mala es tu Teresa, Sancho? -dijo don Quijote.

-No es muy mala -respondió Sancho-, pero no es muy buena; a lo menos, no es tan buena como yo quisiera.

-Mal haces, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, en decir mal de tu mujer, que, en efecto, es madre de tus hijos.

-No nos debemos nada -respondió Sancho-, que también ella dice mal de mí cuando se le antoja, especialmente cuando está celosa, que entonces súfrala el mismo Satanás.

Finalmente, tres días estuvieron con los novios, donde fueron regalados y servidos como cuerpos de rey. Pidió don Quijote al diestro licenciado le diese una guía que le encaminase a la cueva de Montesinos, porque tenía gran deseo de entrar en ella y ver a ojos vistas si eran verdaderas las maravillas que de ella se decían por todos aquellos contornos. El licenciado le dijo que le daría a un primo suyo, famoso estudiante y muy aficionado a leer libros de caballerías, el cual con mucha voluntad le pondría a la boca de la misma cueva, y le enseñaría

las lagunas de Ruidera, famosas ansimismo en toda la Mancha, y aun en toda España; y díjole que llevaría con él gustoso entretenimiento, a causa que era mozo que sabía hacer libros para imprimir y para dirigirlos a príncipes. Finalmente, el primo vino con una pollina preñada, cuya albarda cubría un gayado tapete o arpillera. Ensilló Sancho a Rocinante y aderezó al rucio, proveyó sus alforjas, a las cuales acompañaron las del primo, asimismo bien proveídas, y, encomendándose a Dios y despidiéndose de todos, se pusieron en camino, tomando la derrota de la famosa cueva de Montesinos.

En el camino preguntó don Quijote al primo de qué género y calidad eran sus ejercicios, su profesión y estudios; a lo que él respondió que su profesión era ser humanista; sus ejercicios y estudios, componer libros para dar a la estampa, todos de gran provecho y no menos entretenimiento para la república; que el uno se intitulaba *el de las libreas*, donde pinta setecientas y tres libreas, con sus colores, motes y cifras, de donde podían sacar y tomar las que quisiesen en tiempo de fiestas y regocijos los caballeros cortesanos, sin andarlas mendigando de nadie, ni lambicando, como dicen, el cerbelo, por sacarlas conformes a sus deseos e intenciones.

-Porque doy al celoso, al desdeñado, al olvidado y al ausente las que les convienen, que les vendrán más justas que pecadoras. Otro libro tengo también, a quien he de llamar *Metamorfóseos, o Ovidio español*, de invención nueva y rara; porque en él, imitando a Ovidio a lo burlesco, pinto quién fue la Giralda de Sevilla y el Ángel de la Madalena, quién el Caño de Vecinguerra, de Córdoba, quiénes los Toros de Guisando, la Sierra Morena, las fuentes de Leganitos y Lavapiés, en Madrid, no olvidándome de la del Piojo, de la del Caño Dorado y de la Priora; y esto, con sus alegorías, metáforas y translaciones, de modo que alegran, suspenden y enseñan a un mismo punto. Otro libro tengo, que le llamo *Suplemento a Virgilio Polidoro*, que trata de la invención de las cosas, que es de grande erudición y estudio, a causa que las cosas que se dejó de decir Polidoro de gran sustancia, las averiguo yo, y las declaro por gentil estilo. Olvidósele a Virgilio de declararnos quién fue el primero que tuvo catarro en el mundo, y el primero que tomó las unciones para curarse del morbo gálico, y yo lo declaro al pie de la letra, y lo autorizo con más de veinte y cinco autores: porque vea vuesa merced si he trabajado bien y si ha de ser útil el tal libro a todo el mundo.

Sancho, que había estado muy atento a la narración del primo, le dijo:

-Dígame, señor, así Dios le dé buena manderecha en la impresión de sus libros: ¿sabríame decir, que sí sabrá, pues todo lo sabe, quién fue el primero que se rascó en la cabeza, que yo para mí tengo que debió de ser nuestro padre Adán?

-Sí sería -respondió el primo-, porque Adán no hay duda sino que tuvo cabeza

y cabellos; y, siendo esto así, y siendo el primer hombre del mundo, alguna vez se rascaría.

-Así lo creo yo -respondió Sancho-; pero dígame ahora: ¿quién fue el primer volteador del mundo?

-En verdad, hermano -respondió el primo-, que no me sabré determinar por ahora, hasta que lo estudie. Yo lo estudiaré, en volviendo adonde tengo mis libros, y yo os satisfaré cuando otra vez nos veamos, que no ha de ser ésta la postrera.

-Pues mire, señor -replicó Sancho-, no tome trabajo en esto, que ahora he caído en la cuenta de lo que le he preguntado. Sepa que el primer volteador del mundo fue Lucifer, cuando le echaron o arrojaron del cielo, que vino volteando hasta los abismos.

-Tienes razón, amigo -dijo el primo.

Y dijo don Quijote:

-Esa pregunta y respuesta no es tuya, Sancho: a alguno las has oído decir.

-Calle, señor -replicó Sancho-, que a buena fe que si me doy a preguntar y a responder, que no acabe de aquí a mañana. Sí, que para preguntar necedades y responder disparates no he menester yo andar buscando ayuda de vecinos.

-Más has dicho, Sancho, de lo que sabes -dijo don Quijote-; que hay algunos que se cansan en saber y averiguar cosas que, después de sabidas y averiguadas, no importan un ardite al entendimiento ni a la memoria.

En estas y otras gustosas pláticas se les pasó aquel día, y a la noche se albergaron en una pequeña aldea, adonde el primo dijo a don Quijote que desde allí a la cueva de Montesinos no había más de dos leguas, y que si llevaba determinado de entrar en ella, era menester proveerse de sogas, para atarse y descolgarse en su profundidad.

Don Quijote dijo que, aunque llegase al abismo, había de ver dónde paraba; y así, compraron casi cien brazas de soga, y otro día, a las dos de la tarde, llegaron a la cueva, cuya boca es espaciosa y ancha, pero llena de cambronerías y cabrahígos, de zarzas y malezas, tan espesas y intrincadas, que de todo en todo la ciegan y encubren. En viéndola, se apearon el primo, Sancho y don Quijote, al cual los dos le ataron luego fortísimamente con las sogas; y, en tanto que le fajaban y ceñían, le dijo Sancho:

-Mire vuestra merced, señor mío, lo que hace: no se quiera sepultar en vida, ni se ponga adonde parezca frasco que le ponen a enfriar en algún pozo. Sí, que a vuestra merced no le toca ni atañe ser el escudriñador desta que debe de ser peor que mazmorra.

-Ata y calla -respondió don Quijote-, que tal empresa como aquésta, Sancho amigo, para mí estaba guardada.

Y entonces dijo la guía:

-Suplico a vuesa merced, señor don Quijote, que mire bien y especule con cien ojos lo que hay allá dentro: quizá habrá cosas que las ponga yo en el libro de mis *Transformaciones*.

-En manos está el pandero que le sabrá bien tañer -respondió Sancho Panza.

Dicho esto y acabada la ligadura de don Quijote -que no fue sobre el arnés, sino sobre el jubón de armar-, dijo don Quijote:

-Inadvertidos hemos andado en no habernos proveído de algún esquilón pequeño, que fuera atado junto a mí en esta misma sogá, con cuyo sonido se entendiera que todavía bajaba y estaba vivo; pero, pues ya no es posible, a la mano de Dios, que me guíe.

Y luego se hincó de rodillas y hizo una oración en voz baja al cielo, pidiendo a Dios le ayudase y le diese buen suceso en aquella, al parecer, peligrosa y nueva aventura, y en voz alta dijo luego:

-¡Oh señora de mis acciones y movimientos, clarísima y sin par Dulcinea del Toboso! Si es posible que lleguen a tus oídos las plegarias y rogaciones deste tu venturoso amante, por tu inaudita belleza te ruego las escuches, que no son otras que rogarte no me niegues tu favor y amparo, ahora que tanto le he menester. Yo voy a despeñarme, a empozarme y a hundirme en el abismo que aquí se me representa, sólo porque conozca el mundo que si tú me favoreces, no habrá imposible a quien yo no acometa y acabe.

Y, en diciendo esto, se acercó a la sima; vio no ser posible descolgarse, ni hacer lugar a la entrada, si no era a fuerza de brazos, o a cuchilladas, y así, poniendo mano a la espada, comenzó a derribar y a cortar de aquellas malezas que a la boca de la cueva estaban, por cuyo ruido y estruendo salieron por ella una infinidad de grandísimos cuervos y grajos, tan espesos y con tanta priesa, que dieron con don Quijote en el suelo; y si él fuera tan agorero como católico cristiano, lo tuviera a mala señal y escusara de encerrarse en lugar semejante.

Finalmente se levantó, y, viendo que no salían más cuervos ni otras aves noturnas, como fueron murciélagos, que asimismo entre los cuervos salieron, dándole sogá el primo y Sancho, se dejó calar al fondo de la caverna espantosa; y, al entrar, echándole Sancho su bendición y haciendo sobre él mil cruces, dijo:

-¡Dios te guíe y la Peña de Francia, junto con la Trinidad de Gaeta, flor, nata y espuma de los caballeros andantes! ¡Allá vas, valentón del mundo, corazón de acero, brazos de bronce! ¡Dios te guíe, otra vez, y te vuelva libre, sano y sin cautela a la luz desta vida que dejas por enterrarte en esta escuridad que buscas!

Casi las mismas plegarias y deprecaciones hizo el primo.

Iba don Quijote dando voces que le diesen sogá y más sogá, y ellos se la daban poco a poco; y cuando las voces, que acanaladas por la cueva salían,

dejaron de oírse, ya ellos tenían descolgadas las cien brazas de sogas, y fueron de parecer de volver a subir a don Quijote, pues no le podían dar más cuerda. Con todo eso, se detuvieron como media hora, al cabo del cual espacio volvieron a recoger la soga con mucha facilidad y sin peso alguno, señal que les hizo imaginar que don Quijote se quedaba dentro; y, creyéndolo así, Sancho lloraba amargamente y tiraba con mucha priesa por desengañarse, pero, llegando, a su parecer, a poco más de las ochenta brazas, sintieron peso, de que en extremo se alegraron. Finalmente, a las diez vieron distintamente a don Quijote, a quien dio voces Sancho, diciéndole:

-Sea vuestra merced muy bien vuelto, señor mío, que ya pensábamos que se quedaba allá para casta.

Pero no respondía palabra don Quijote; y, sacándole del todo, vieron que traía cerrados los ojos, con muestras de estar dormido. Tendiéronle en el suelo y desliáronle, y con todo esto no despertaba; pero tanto le volvieron y revolvieron, sacudieron y menearon, que al cabo de un buen espacio volvió en sí, desperezándose, bien como si de algún grave y profundo sueño despertara; y, mirando a una y otra parte, como espantado, dijo:

-Dios os lo perdone, amigos; que me habéis quitado de la más sabrosa y agradable vida y vista que ningún humano ha visto ni pasado. En efecto, ahora acabo de conocer que todos los contentos desta vida pasan como sombra y sueño, o se marchitan como la flor del campo. ¡Oh desdichado Montesinos! ¡Oh mal ferido Durandarte! ¡Oh sin ventura Belerma! ¡Oh lloroso Guadiana, y vosotras sin dicha hijas de Ruidera, que mostráis en vuestras aguas las que lloraron vuestros hermosos ojos!

Escuchaban el primo y Sancho las palabras de don Quijote, que las decía como si con dolor inmenso las sacara de las entrañas. Suplicáronle les diese a entender lo que decía, y les dijese lo que en aquel infierno había visto.

-¿Infierno le llamáis? -dijo don Quijote-; pues no le llaméis así, porque no lo merece, como luego veréis.

Pidió que le diesen algo de comer, que traía grandísima hambre. Tendieron la arpillera del primo sobre la verde yerba, acudieron a la despensa de sus alforjas, y, sentados todos tres en buen amor y compañía, merendaron y cenaron, todo junto. Levantada la arpillera, dijo don Quijote de la Mancha:

-No se levante nadie, y estadme, hijos, todos atentos.

## Capítulo XXIII

*De las admirables cosas que el estremado don Quijote contó que había visto en la profunda cueva de Montesinos, cuya imposibilidad y grandeza hace que se tenga esta aventura por apócrifa*

LAS CUATRO de la tarde serían cuando el sol, entre nubes cubierto, con luz escasa y templados rayos, dio lugar a don Quijote para que, sin calor y pesadumbre, contase a sus dos clarísimos oyentes lo que en la cueva de Montesinos había visto. Y comenzó en el modo siguiente:

-A obra de doce o catorce estados de la profundidad desta mazmorra, a la derecha mano, se hace una concavidad y espacio capaz de poder caber en ella un gran carro con sus mulas. Éntrale una pequeña luz por unos resquicios o agujeros, que lejos le responden, abiertos en la superficie de la tierra. Esta concavidad y espacio vi yo a tiempo cuando ya iba cansado y mohíno de verme, pendiente y colgado de la sogá, caminar por aquella oscura región abajo, sin llevar cierto ni determinado camino; y así, determiné entrarme en ella y descansar un poco. Di voces, pidiéndoos que no descolgádes más sogá hasta que yo os lo dijese, pero no debistes de oírme. Fui recogiendo la sogá que enviábades, y, haciendo della una rosca o rimero, me senté sobre él, pensativo además, considerando lo que hacer debía para calar al fondo, no teniendo quién me sustentase; y, estando en este pensamiento y confusión, de repente y sin procurarlo, me saltó un sueño profundísimo; y, cuando menos lo pensaba, sin saber cómo ni cómo no, desperté dél y me hallé en la mitad del más bello, ameno y deleitoso prado que puede criar la naturaleza ni imaginar la más discreta imaginación humana. Despabilé los ojos, limpiémelos, y vi que no dormía, sino que realmente estaba despierto; con todo esto, me tenté la cabeza y los pechos, por certificarme si era yo mismo el que allí estaba, o alguna fantasma vana y contrahecha; pero el tacto, el sentimiento, los discursos concertados que entre mí hacía, me certificaron que yo era allí entonces el que soy aquí ahora. Ofrecióseme luego a la vista un real y suntuoso palacio o alcázar, cuyos muros y paredes parecían de transparente y claro cristal fabricados; del cual abriéndose dos grandes puertas, vi que por ellas salía y hacia mí se venía un venerable anciano, vestido con un capuz de bayeta morada, que por el suelo le arrastraba: ceñíale los hombros y los pechos una beca de colegial, de raso verde; cubríale la cabeza una gorra milanésa negra, y la barba, canísima, le pasaba de la cintura; no



traía arma ninguna, sino un rosario de cuentas en la mano, mayores que medianas nueces, y los dieces asimismo como huevos medianos de avestruz; el continente, el paso, la gravedad y la anchísima presencia, cada cosa de por sí y todas juntas, me suspendieron y admiraron. Llegóse a mí, y lo primero que hizo fue abrazarme estrechamente, y luego decirme: «Luengos tiempos ha, valeroso caballero don Quijote de la Mancha, que los que estamos en estas soledades encantados esperamos verte, para que des noticia al mundo de lo que encierra y cubre la profunda cueva por donde has entrado, llamada la cueva de Montesinos: hazaña sólo guardada para ser acometida de tu invencible corazón y de tu ánimo stupendo. Ven conmigo, señor clarísimo, que te quiero mostrar las maravillas que este transparente alcázar solapa, de quien yo soy alcaide y guarda mayor perpetua, porque soy el mismo Montesinos, de quien la cueva toma nombre». Apenas me dijo que era Montesinos, cuando le pregunté si fue verdad lo que en el mundo de acá arriba se contaba: que él había sacado de la mitad del pecho, con una pequeña daga, el corazón de su grande amigo Durandarte y llevádole a la Señora Belerma, como él se lo mandó al punto de su muerte. Respondiome que en todo decían verdad, sino en la daga, porque no fue daga, ni pequeña, sino un puñal buido, más agudo que una lezna.

-Debía de ser -dijo a este punto Sancho-el tal puñal de Ramón de Hoces, el sevillano.

-No sé -prosiguió don Quijote-, pero no sería dese puñalero, porque Ramón de Hoces fue ayer, y lo de Roncesvalles, donde aconteció esta desgracia, ha muchos años; y esta averiguación no es de importancia, ni turba ni altera la verdad y contesto de la historia.

-Así es -respondió el primo-; prosiga vuestra merced, señor don Quijote, que le escucho con el mayor gusto del mundo.

-No con menor lo cuento yo -respondió don Quijote-; y así, digo que el venerable Montesinos me metió en el cristalino palacio, donde en una sala baja, fresquísima sobremodo y toda de alabastro, estaba un sepulcro de mármol, con gran maestría fabricado, sobre el cual vi a un caballero tendido de largo a largo, no de bronce, ni de mármol, ni de jaspe hecho, como los suele haber en otros sepulcros, sino de pura carne y de puros huesos. Tenía la mano derecha (que, a mi parecer, es algo peluda y nervosa, señal de tener muchas fuerzas su dueño) puesta sobre el lado del corazón, y, antes que preguntase nada a Montesinos, viéndome suspenso mirando al del sepulcro, me dijo: «Éste es mi amigo Durandarte, flor y espejo de los caballeros enamorados y valientes de su tiempo; tiénele aquí encantado, como me tiene a mí y a otros muchos y muchas, Merlín, aquel francés encantador que dicen que fue hijo del diablo; y lo que yo creo es que no fue hijo del diablo, sino que supo, como dicen, un punto más que el

diablo. El cómo o para qué nos encantó nadie lo sabe, y ello dirá andando los tiempos, que no están muy lejos, según imagino. Lo que a mí me admira es que sé, tan cierto como ahora es de día, que Durandarte acabó los de su vida en mis brazos, y que después de muerto le saqué el corazón con mis propias manos; y en verdad que debía de pesar dos libras, porque, según los naturales, el que tiene mayor corazón es dotado de mayor valentía del que le tiene pequeño. Pues siendo esto así, y que realmente murió este caballero, ¿cómo ahora se queja y suspira de cuando en cuando, como si estuviese vivo?» Esto dicho, el mísero Durandarte, dando una gran voz, dijo:

«¡Oh, mi primo Montesinos!  
Lo postrero que os rogaba,  
que cuando yo fuere muerto,  
y mi ánima arrancada,  
que llevéis mi corazón  
adonde Belerma estaba,  
sacándomele del pecho,  
ya con puñal, ya con daga».

Oyendo lo cual el venerable Montesinos, se puso de rodillas ante el lastimado caballero, y, con lágrimas en los ojos, le dijo: «Ya, señor Durandarte, carísimo primo mío, ya hice lo que me mandastes en el aciago día de nuestra pérdida: yo os saqué el corazón lo mejor que pude, sin que os dejase una mínima parte en el pecho; yo le limpié con un pañizuelo de puntas; yo partí con él de carrera para Francia, habiéndoo primero puesto en el seno de la tierra, con tantas lágrimas, que fueron bastantes a lavarme las manos y limpiarme con ellas la sangre que tenían, de haberos andado en las entrañas; y, por más señas, primo de mi alma, en el primero lugar que topé, saliendo de Roncesvalles, eché un poco de sal en vuestro corazón, porque no oliese mal, y fuese, si no fresco, a lo menos amojamado, a la presencia de la señora Belerma; la cual, con vos, y conmigo, y con Guadiana, vuestro escudero, y con la dueña Ruidera y sus siete hijas y dos sobrinas, y con otros muchos de vuestros conocidos y amigos, nos tiene aquí encantados el sabio Merlín ha muchos años; y, aunque pasan de quinientos, no se ha muerto ninguno de nosotros: solamente faltan Ruidera y sus hijas y sobrinas, las cuales llorando, por compasión que debió de tener Merlín dellas, las

convirtió en otras tantas lagunas, que ahora, en el mundo de los vivos y en la provincia de la Mancha, las llaman las lagunas de Ruidera; las siete son de los reyes de España, y las dos sobrinas, de los caballeros de una orden santísima, que llaman de San Juan. Guadiana, vuestro escudero, plañendo asimesmo vuestra desgracia, fue convertido en un río llamado de su mismo nombre; el cual, cuando llegó a la superficie de la tierra y vio el sol del otro cielo, fue tanto el pesar que sintió de ver que os dejaba, que se sumergió en las entrañas de la tierra; pero, como no es posible dejar de acudir a su natural corriente, de cuando en cuando sale y se muestra donde el sol y las gentes le vean. Vanle administrando de sus aguas las referidas lagunas, con las cuales y con otras muchas que se llegan, entra pomposo y grande en Portugal. Pero, con todo esto, por dondequiera que va muestra su tristeza y melancolía, y no se precia de criar en sus aguas peces regalados y de estima, sino burdos y desabridos, bien diferentes de los del Tajo dorado; y esto que agora os digo, ¡oh primo mío!, os lo he dicho muchas veces; y, como no me respondéis, imagino que no me dais crédito, o no me oís, de lo que yo recibo tanta pena cual Dios lo sabe. Unas nuevas os quiero dar ahora, las cuales, ya que no sirvan de alivio a vuestro dolor, no os le aumentarán en ninguna manera. Sabed que tenéis aquí en vuestra presencia, y abrid los ojos y veréislo, aquel gran caballero de quien tantas cosas tiene profetizadas el sabio Merlín, aquel don Quijote de la Mancha, digo, que de nuevo y con mayores ventajas que en los pasados siglos ha resucitado en los presentes la ya olvidada andante caballería, por cuyo medio y favor podría ser que nosotros fuésemos desencantados; que las grandes hazañas para los grandes hombres están guardadas». «Y cuando así no sea -respondió el lastimado Durandarte con voz desmayada y baja-, cuando así no sea, ¡oh primo!, digo, paciencia y barajar». Y, volviéndose de lado, tornó a su acostumbrado silencio, sin hablar más palabra. Oyéronse en esto grandes alaridos y llantos, acompañados de profundos gemidos y angustiados sollozos; volví la cabeza, y vi por las paredes de cristal que por otra sala pasaba una procesión de dos hileras de hermosísimas doncellas, todas vestidas de luto, con turbantes blancos sobre las cabezas, al modo turquesco. Al cabo y fin de las hileras venía una señora, que en la gravedad lo parecía, asimismo vestida de negro, con tocas blancas tan tendidas y largas, que besaban la tierra. Su turbante era mayor dos veces que el mayor de alguna de las otras; era cejijunta y la nariz algo chata; la boca grande, pero colorados los labios; los dientes, que tal vez los descubría, mostraban ser ralos y no bien puestos, aunque eran blancos como unas peladas almendras; traía en las manos un lienzo delgado, y entre él, a lo que pude divisar, un corazón de carne momia, según venía seco y amojamado. Díjome Montesinos como toda aquella gente de la procesión eran sirvientes de Durandarte y de Belerma, que

allí con sus dos señores estaban encantados, y que la última, que traía el corazón entre el lienzo y en las manos, era la señora Belerma, la cual con sus doncellas cuatro días en la semana hacían aquella procesión y cantaban, o, por mejor decir, lloraban endechas sobre el cuerpo y sobre el lastimado corazón de su primo; y que si me había parecido algo fea, o no tan hermosa como tenía la fama, era la causa las malas noches y peores días que en aquel encantamento pasaba, como lo podía ver en sus grandes ojeras y en su color quebradiza. «Y no toma ocasión su amarillez y sus ojeras de estar con el mal mensil, ordinario en las mujeres, porque ha muchos meses, y aun años, que no le tiene ni asoma por sus puertas, sino del dolor que siente su corazón por el que de continuo tiene en las manos, que le renueva y trae a la memoria la desgracia de su mal logrado amante; que si esto no fuera, apenas la igualara en hermosura, donaire y brío la gran Dulcinea del Toboso, tan celebrada en todos estos contornos, y aun en todo el mundo». «¡Cepos quedos! -dije yo entonces-, señor don Montesinos: cuente vuesa merced su historia como debe, que ya sabe que toda comparación es odiosa, y así, no hay para qué comparar a nadie con nadie. La sin par Dulcinea del Toboso es quien es, y la señora doña Belerma es quien es, y quien ha sido, y quédese aquí». A lo que él me respondió: «Señor don Quijote, perdóneme vuesa merced, que yo confieso que anduve mal, y no dije bien en decir que apenas igualara la señora Dulcinea a la señora Belerma, pues me bastaba a mí haber entendido, por no sé qué barruntos, que vuesa merced es su caballero, para que me mordiera la lengua antes de compararla sino con el mismo cielo». Con esta satisfacción que me dio el gran Montesinos se quietó mi corazón del sobresalto que recibí en oír que a mi señora la comparaban con Belerma.

-Y aun me maravillo yo -dijo Sancho-de cómo vuestra merced no se subió sobre el vejote, y le molió a coces todos los huesos, y le peló las barbas, sin dejarle pelo en ellas.

-No, Sancho amigo -respondió don Quijote-, no me estaba a mí bien hacer eso, porque estamos todos obligados a tener respeto a los ancianos, aunque no sean caballeros, y principalmente a los que lo son y están encantados; yo sé bien que no nos quedamos a deber nada en otras muchas demandas y respuestas que entre los dos pasamos.

A esta sazón dijo el primo:

-Yo no sé, señor don Quijote, cómo vuestra merced en tan poco espacio de tiempo como ha que está allá bajo, haya visto tantas cosas y hablado y respondido tanto.

-¿Cuánto ha que bajé? -preguntó don Quijote.

-Poco más de una hora -respondió Sancho.

-Eso no puede ser -replicó don Quijote-, porque allá me anocheció y

amaneció, y tornó a anochecer y amanecer tres veces; de modo que, a mi cuenta, tres días he estado en aquellas partes remotas y escondidas a la vista nuestra.

-Verdad debe de decir mi señor -dijo Sancho-, que, como todas las cosas que le han sucedido son por encantamento, quizá lo que a nosotros nos parece un hora, debe de parecer allá tres días con sus noches.

-Así será -respondió don Quijote.

-Y ¿ha comido vuestra merced en todo este tiempo, señor mío? -preguntó el primo.

-No me he desayunado de bocado -respondió don Quijote-, ni aun he tenido hambre, ni por pensamiento.

-Y los encantados, ¿comen? -dijo el primo.

-No comen -respondió don Quijote-, ni tienen escrementos mayores; aunque es opinión que les crecen las uñas, las barbas y los cabellos.

-¿Y duermen, por ventura, los encantados, señor? -preguntó Sancho.

-No, por cierto -respondió don Quijote-; a lo menos, en estos tres días que yo he estado con ellos, ninguno ha pegado el ojo, ni yo tampoco.

-Aquí encaja bien el refrán -dijo Sancho-de dime con quién andas, decirte he quién eres: ándase vuestra merced con encantados ayunos y vigilantes, mirad si es mucho que ni coma ni duerma mientras con ellos anduviere. Pero perdóneme vuestra merced, señor mío, si le digo que de todo cuanto aquí ha dicho, lléveme Dios, que iba a decir el diablo, si le creo cosa alguna.

-¿Cómo no? -dijo el primo-, pues ¿había de mentir el señor don Quijote, que, aunque quisiera, no ha tenido lugar para componer e imaginar tanto millón de mentiras?

-Yo no creo que mi señor miente -respondió Sancho.

-Si no, ¿qué crees? -le preguntó don Quijote.

-Creo -respondió Sancho-que aquel Merlín, o aquellos encantadores que encantaron a toda la chusma que vuestra merced dice que ha visto y comunicado allá bajo, le encajaron en el magín o la memoria toda esa máquina que nos ha contado, y todo aquello que por contar le queda.

-Todo eso pudiera ser, Sancho -replicó don Quijote-, pero no es así, porque lo que he contado lo vi por mis propios ojos y lo toqué con mis mismas manos. Pero, ¿qué dirás cuando te diga yo ahora cómo, entre otras infinitas cosas y maravillas que me mostró Montesinos, las cuales despacio y a sus tiempos te las iré contando en el discurso de nuestro viaje, por no ser todas deste lugar, me mostró tres labradoras que por aquellos amenísimos campos iban saltando y brincando como cabras; y, apenas las hube visto, cuando conocí ser la una la sin par Dulcinea del Toboso, y las otras dos aquellas mismas labradoras que venían con ella, que hablamos a la salida del Toboso? Pregunté a Montesinos si las

conocía, respondiíme que no, pero que él imaginaba que debían de ser algunas señoras principales encantadas, que pocos días había que en aquellos prados habían parecido; y que no me maravillase desto, porque allí estaban otras muchas señoras de los pasados y presentes siglos, encantadas en diferentes y estrañas figuras, entre las cuales conocía él a la reina Ginebra y su dueña Quintañoa, escanciando el vino a Lanzarote,

cuando de Bretaña vino.

Cuando Sancho Panza oyó decir esto a su amo, pensó perder el juicio, o morirse de risa; que, como él sabía la verdad del fingido encanto de Dulcinea, de quien él había sido el encantador y el levantador de tal testimonio, acabó de conocer indubitablemente que su señor estaba fuera de juicio y loco de todo punto; y así, le dijo:

-En mala coyuntura y en peor sazón y en aciago día bajó vuestra merced, caro patrón mío, al otro mundo, y en mal punto se encontró con el señor Montesinos, que tal nos le ha vuelto. Bien se estaba vuestra merced acá arriba con su entero juicio, tal cual Dios se le había dado, hablando sentencias y dando consejos a cada paso, y no agora, contando los mayores disparates que pueden imaginarse.

-Como te conozco, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, no hago caso de tus palabras.

-Ni yo tampoco de las de vuestra merced -replicó Sancho-, siquiera me hiera, siquiera me mate por las que le he dicho, o por las que le pienso decir si en las tuyas no se corrige y enmienda. Pero dígame vuestra merced, ahora que estamos en paz: ¿cómo o en qué conoció a la señora nuestra ama? Y si la habló, ¿qué dijo, y qué le respondió?

-Conocíla -respondió don Quijote-en que trae los mismos vestidos que traía cuando tú me le mostraste. Habléla, pero no me respondió palabra; antes, me volvió las espaldas, y se fue huyendo con tanta priesa, que no la alcanzara una jara. Quise seguirla, y lo hiciera, si no me aconsejara Montesinos que no me cansase en ello, porque sería en balde, y más porque se llegaba la hora donde me convenía volver a salir de la sima. Díjome asimesmo que, andando el tiempo, se me daría aviso cómo habían de ser desencantados él, y Belerma y Durandarte, con todos los que allí estaban; pero lo que más pena me dio, de las que allí vi y noté, fue que, estándome diciendo Montesinos estas razones, se llegó a mí por un lado, sin que yo la viese venir, una de las dos compañeras de la sin ventura Dulcinea, y, llenos los ojos de lágrimas, con turbada y baja voz, me dijo: «Mi

señora Dulcinea del Toboso besa a vuestra merced las manos, y suplica a vuestra merced se la haga de hacerla saber cómo está; y que, por estar en una gran necesidad, asimismo suplica a vuestra merced, cuan encarecidamente puede, sea servido de prestarle sobre este faldellín que aquí traigo, de cotonía, nuevo, media docena de reales, o los que vuestra merced tuviere, que ella da su palabra de volvérselos con mucha brevedad». Suspendióme y admiróme el tal recado, y, volviéndome al señor Montesinos, le pregunté: «¿Es posible, señor Montesinos, que los encantados principales padecen necesidad?» A lo que él me respondió: «Créame vuestra merced, señor don Quijote de la Mancha, que ésta que llaman necesidad adondequiera se usa, y por todo se estiende, y a todos alcanza, y aun hasta los encantados no perdona; y, pues la señora Dulcinea del Toboso envía a pedir esos seis reales, y la prenda es buena, según parece, no hay sino dárselos; que, sin duda, debe de estar puesta en algún grande aprieto». «Prenda, no la tomaré yo -le respondí-, ni menos le daré lo que pide, porque no tengo sino solos cuatro reales»; los cuales le di (que fueron los que tú, Sancho, me diste el otro día para dar limosna a los pobres que topase por los caminos), y le dije: «Decid, amiga mía, a vuesa señora que a mí me pesa en el alma de sus trabajos, y que quisiera ser un Fúcar para remediarlos; y que le hago saber que yo no puedo ni debo tener salud careciendo de su agradable vista y discreta conversación, y que le suplico, cuan encarecidamente puedo, sea servida su merced de dejarse ver y tratar deste su cautivo servidor y asendereado caballero. Diréisle también que, cuando menos se lo piense, oirá decir como yo he hecho un juramento y voto, a modo de aquel que hizo el marqués de Mantua, de vengar a su sobrino Baldovinos, cuando le halló para espirar en mitad de la montiña, que fue de no comer pan a manteles, con las otras zarandajas que allí añadió, hasta vengarle; y así le haré yo de no sosegar, y de andar las siete partidas del mundo, con más puntualidad que las anduvo el infante don Pedro de Portugal, hasta desencantarla». «Todo eso, y más, debe vuestra merced a mi señora», me respondió la doncella. Y, tomando los cuatro reales, en lugar de hacerme una reverencia, hizo una cabriola, que se levantó dos varas de medir en el aire.

-¡Oh santo Dios! -dijo a este tiempo dando una gran voz Sancho-. ¿Es posible que tal hay en el mundo, y que tengan en él tanta fuerza los encantadores y encantamientos, que hayan trocado el buen juicio de mi señor en una tan disparatada locura? ¡Oh señor, señor, por quien Dios es, que vuestra merced mire por sí y vuelva por su honra, y no dé crédito a esas vaciedades que le tienen menguado y descabalado el sentido!

-Como me quieres bien, Sancho, hablas desa manera -dijo don Quijote-; y, como no estás experimentado en las cosas del mundo, todas las cosas que tienen algo de dificultad te parecen imposibles; pero andrà el tiempo, como otra vez he

dicho, y yo te contaré algunas de las que allá abajo he visto, que te harán creer las que aquí he contado, cuya verdad ni admite réplica ni disputa.



## Capítulo XXIV

*Donde se cuentan mil zarandajas tan impertinentes como necesarias al verdadero entendimiento desta grande historia*

DICE el que tradujo esta grande historia del original, de la que escribió su primer autor Cide Hamete Benengeli, que, llegando al capítulo de la aventura de la cueva de Montesinos, en el margen dél estaban escritas, de mano del mismo Hamete, estas mismas razones:

«No me puedo dar a entender, ni me puedo persuadir, que al valeroso don Quijote le pasase puntualmente todo lo que en el antecedente capítulo queda escrito: la razón es que todas las aventuras hasta aquí sucedidas han sido contingibles y verisímiles, pero ésta desta cueva no le hallo entrada alguna para tenerla por verdadera, por ir tan fuera de los términos razonables. Pues pensar yo que don Quijote mintiese, siendo el más verdadero hidalgo y el más noble caballero de sus tiempos, no es posible; que no dijera él una mentira si le asaetaran. Por otra parte, considero que él la contó y la dijo con todas las circunstancias dichas, y que no pudo fabricar en tan breve espacio tan gran máquina de disparates; y si esta aventura parece apócrifa, yo no tengo la culpa; y así, sin afirmarla por falsa o verdadera, la escribo. Tú, lector, pues eres prudente, juzga lo que te pareciere, que yo no debo ni puedo más; puesto que se tiene por cierto que al tiempo de su fin y muerte dicen que se retrató della, y dijo que él la había inventado, por parecerle que convenía y cuadraba bien con las aventuras que había leído en sus historias».

Y luego prosigue, diciendo:

Espantóse el primo, así del atrevimiento de Sancho Panza como de la paciencia de su amo, y juzgó que del contento que tenía de haber visto a su señora Dulcinea del Toboso, aunque encantada, le nacía aquella condición blanda que entonces mostraba; porque, si así no fuera, palabras y razones le dijo Sancho, que merecían molerle a palos; porque realmente le pareció que había andado atrevidillo con su señor, a quien le dijo:

-Yo, señor don Quijote de la Mancha, doy por bien empleadísima la jornada que con vuestra merced he hecho, porque en ella he granjeado cuatro cosas. La primera, haber conocido a vuestra merced, que lo tengo a gran felicidad. La segunda, haber sabido lo que se encierra en esta cueva de Montesinos, con las mutaciones de Guadiana y de las lagunas de Ruidera, que me servirán para el

*Ovidio español* que traigo entre manos. La tercera, entender la antigüedad de los naipes, que, por lo menos, ya se usaban en tiempo del emperador Carlomagno, según puede colegirse de las palabras que vuesa merced dice que dijo Durandarte, cuando, al cabo de aquel grande espacio que estuvo hablando con él Montesinos, él despertó diciendo: «Paciencia y barajar»; y esta razón y modo de hablar no la pudo aprender encantado, sino cuando no lo estaba, en Francia y en tiempo del referido emperador Carlomagno. Y esta averiguación me viene pintiparada para el otro libro que voy componiendo, que es *Suplemento de Virgilio Polidoro, en la invención de las antigüedades*; y creo que en el suyo no se acordó de poner la de los naipes, como la pondré yo ahora, que será de mucha importancia, y más alegando autor tan grave y tan verdadero como es el señor Durandarte. La cuarta es haber sabido con certidumbre el nacimiento del río Guadiana, hasta ahora ignorado de las gentes.

-Vuestra merced tiene razón -dijo don Quijote-, pero querría yo saber, ya que Dios le haga merced de que se le dé licencia para imprimir esos sus libros, que lo dudo, a quién piensa dirigirlos.

-Señores y grandes hay en España a quien puedan dirigirse -dijo el primo.

-No muchos -respondió don Quijote-; y no porque no lo merezcan, sino que no quieren admitirlos, por no obligarse a la satisfacción que parece se debe al trabajo y cortesía de sus autores. Un príncipe conozco yo que puede suplir la falta de los demás, con tantas ventajas que, si me atreviere a decirlas, quizá despertara la envidia en más de cuatro generosos pechos; pero quédese esto aquí para otro tiempo más cómodo, y vamos a buscar a donde recogernos esta noche.

-No lejos de aquí -respondió el primo- está una ermita, donde hace su habitación un ermitaño, que dicen ha sido soldado, y está en opinión de ser un buen cristiano, y muy discreto y caritativo además. Junto con la ermita tiene una pequeña casa, que él ha labrado a su costa; pero, con todo, aunque chica, es capaz de recibir huéspedes.

-¿Tiene por ventura gallinas el tal ermitaño? -preguntó Sancho.

-Pocos ermitaños están sin ellas -respondió don Quijote-, porque no son los que agora se usan como aquellos de los desiertos de Egipto, que se vestían de hojas de palma y comían raíces de la tierra. Y no se entienda que por decir bien de aquéllos no lo digo de aquéstos, sino que quiero decir que al rigor y estrechez de entonces no llegan las penitencias de los de agora; pero no por esto dejan de ser todos buenos; a lo menos, yo por buenos los juzgo; y, cuando todo corra turbio, menos mal hace el hipócrita que se finge bueno que el público pecador.

Estando en esto, vieron que hacia donde ellos estaban venía un hombre a pie, caminando apriesa, y dando varazos a un macho que venía cargado de lanzas y

de alabardas. Cuando llegó a ellos, los saludó y pasó de largo. Don Quijote le dijo:

-Buen hombre, deteneos, que parece que vais con más diligencia que ese macho ha menester.

-No me puedo detener, señor -respondió el hombre-, porque las armas que veis que aquí llevo han de servir mañana; y así, me es forzoso el no detenerme, y a Dios. Pero si quisiéredes saber para qué las llevo, en la venta que está más arriba de la ermita pienso alojar esta noche; y si es que hacéis este mismo camino, allí me hallaréis, donde os contaré maravillas. Y a Dios otra vez.

Y de tal manera aguijó el macho, que no tuvo lugar don Quijote de preguntarle qué maravillas eran las que pensaba decirles; y, como él era algo curioso y siempre le fatigaban deseos de saber cosas nuevas, ordenó que al momento se partiesen y fuesen a pasar la noche en la venta, sin tocar en la ermita, donde quisiera el primo que se quedaran.

Hízose así, subieron a caballo, y siguieron todos tres el derecho camino de la venta, a la cual llegaron un poco antes de anochecer. Dijo el primo a don Quijote que llegasen a ella a beber un trago. Apenas oyó esto Sancho Panza, cuando encaminó el rucio a la ermita, y lo mismo hicieron don Quijote y el primo; pero la mala suerte de Sancho parece que ordenó que el ermitaño no estuviese en casa; que así se lo dijo una sotaermitaño que en la ermita hallaron. Pidiéronle de lo caro; respondió que su señor no lo tenía, pero que si querían agua barata, que se la daría de muy buena gana.

-Si yo la tuviera de agua -respondió Sancho-, pozos hay en el camino, donde la hubiera satisfecho. ¡Ah bodas de Camacho y abundancia de la casa de don Diego, y cuántas veces os tengo de echar menos!

Con esto, dejaron la ermita y picaron hacia la venta; y a poco trecho toparon un mancebito, que delante dellos iba caminando no con mucha priesa; y así, le alcanzaron. Llevaba la espada sobre el hombro, y en ella puesto un bulto o envoltorio, al parecer de sus vestidos; que, al parecer, debían de ser los calzones o greguescos, y herreruelo, y alguna camisa, porque traía puesta una ropilla de terciopelo con algunas vislumbres de raso, y la camisa, de fuera; las medias eran de seda, y los zapatos cuadrados, a uso de corte; la edad llegaría a diez y ocho o diez y nueve años; alegre de rostro, y, al parecer, ágil de su persona. Iba cantando seguidillas, para entretener el trabajo del camino. Cuando llegaron a él, acababa de cantar una, que el primo tomó de memoria, que dicen que decía:

A la guerra me lleva

mi necesidad;  
si tuviera dineros,  
no fuera, en verdad.

El primero que le habló fue don Quijote, diciéndole:

-Muy a la ligera camina vuesa merced, señor galán. Y ¿adónde bueno? Sepamos, si es que gusta decirlo.

A lo que el mozo respondió:

-El caminar tan a la ligera lo causa el calor y la pobreza, y el adónde voy es a la guerra.

-¿Cómo la pobreza? -preguntó don Quijote-; que por el calor bien puede ser.

-Señor -replicó el mancebo-, yo llevo en este envoltorio unos greguescos de terciopelo, compañeros desta ropilla; si los gasto en el camino, no me podré honrar con ellos en la ciudad, y no tengo con qué comprar otros; y, así por esto como por orearme, voy desta manera, hasta alcanzar unas compañías de infantería que no están doce leguas de aquí, donde asentaré mi plaza, y no faltarán bagajes en que caminar de allí adelante hasta el embarcadero, que dicen ha de ser en Cartagena. Y más quiero tener por amo y por señor al rey, y servirle en la guerra, que no a un pelón en la corte.

-Y ¿lleva vuesa merced alguna ventaja por ventura? -preguntó el primo.

-Si yo hubiera servido a algún grande de España, o algún principal personaje -respondió el mozo-, a buen seguro que yo la llevara, que eso tiene el servir a los buenos: que del tinelo suelen salir a ser alférez o capitanes, o con algún buen entretenimiento; pero yo, desventurado, serví siempre a catarriberras y a gente advenediza, de ración y quitación tan mísera y atenuada, que en pagar el almidonar un cuello se consumía la mitad della; y sería tenido a milagro que un paje aventurero alcanzase alguna siquiera razonable ventura.

-Y dígame, por su vida, amigo -preguntó don Quijote-: ¿es posible que en los años que sirvió no ha podido alcanzar alguna librea?

-Dos me han dado -respondió el paje-; pero, así como el que se sale de alguna religión antes de profesar le quitan el hábito y le vuelven sus vestidos, así me volvían a mí los míos mis amos, que, acabados los negocios a que venían a la corte, se volvían a sus casas y recogían las libreas que por sola ostentación habían dado.

-Notable espilorchería, como dice el italiano -dijo don Quijote-; pero, con todo eso, tenga a felice ventura el haber salido de la corte con tan buena intención como lleva; porque no hay otra cosa en la tierra más honrada ni de más

provecho que servir a Dios, primeramente, y luego, a su rey y señor natural, especialmente en el ejercicio de las armas, por las cuales se alcanzan, si no más riquezas, a lo menos, más honra que por las letras, como yo tengo dicho muchas veces; que, puesto que han fundado más mayorazgos las letras que las armas, todavía llevan un no sé qué los de las armas a los de las letras, con un sí sé qué de esplendor que se halla en ellos, que los aventaja a todos. Y esto que ahora le quiero decir llévelo en la memoria, que le será de mucho provecho y alivio en sus trabajos; y es que, aparte la imaginación de los sucesos adversos que le podrán venir, que el peor de todos es la muerte, y como ésta sea buena, el mejor de todos es el morir. Preguntáronle a Julio César, aquel valeroso emperador romano, cuál era la mejor muerte; respondió que la impensada, la de repente y no prevista; y, aunque respondió como gentil y ajeno del conocimiento del verdadero Dios, con todo eso, dijo bien, para ahorrarse del sentimiento humano; que, puesto caso que os maten en la primera facción y refriega, o ya de un tiro de artillería, o volado de una mina, ¿qué importa? Todo es morir, y acabóse la obra; y, según Terencio, más bien parece el soldado muerto en la batalla que vivo y salvo en la huida; y tanto alcanza de fama el buen soldado cuanto tiene de obediencia a sus capitanes y a los que mandarles pueden. Y advertid, hijo, que al soldado mejor le está el oler a pólvora que algalia, y que si la vejez os coge en este honroso ejercicio, aunque sea lleno de heridas y estropeado o cojo, a lo menos no os podrá coger sin honra, y tal, que no os la podrá menoscabar la pobreza; cuanto más, que ya se va dando orden cómo se entretengan y remedien los soldados viejos y estropeados, porque no es bien que se haga con ellos lo que suelen hacer los que ahorran y dan libertad a sus negros cuando ya son viejos y no pueden servir, y, echándolos de casa con título de libres, los hacen esclavos de la hambre, de quien no piensan ahorrarse sino con la muerte. Y por ahora no os quiero decir más, sino que subáis a las ancas deste mi caballo hasta la venta, y allí cenaréis conmigo, y por la mañana seguiréis el camino, que os le dé Dios tan bueno como vuestros deseos merecen.

El paje no aceptó el convite de las ancas, aunque sí el de cenar con él en la venta; y, a esta sazón, dicen que dijo Sancho entre sí:

-¡Válate Dios por señor! Y ¿es posible que hombre que sabe decir tales, tantas y tan buenas cosas como aquí ha dicho, diga que ha visto los disparates imposibles que cuenta de la cueva de Montesinos? Ahora bien, ello dirá.

Y en esto, llegaron a la venta, a tiempo que anohecía, y no sin gusto de Sancho, por ver que su señor la juzgó por verdadera venta, y no por castillo, como solía. No hubieron bien entrado, cuando don Quijote preguntó al ventero por el hombre de las lanzas y alabardas; el cual le respondió que en la caballeriza estaba acomodando el macho. Lo mismo hicieron de sus jumentos el primo y

Sancho, dando a Rocinante el mejor pesebre y el mejor lugar de la caballeriza.

## Capítulo XXV

*Donde se apunta la aventura del rebuzno y la graciosa del titerero, con las memorables adivinanzas del mono adivino*

NO SE LE COCÍA el pan a don Quijote, como suele decirse, hasta oír y saber las maravillas prometidas del hombre condutor de las armas. Fuele a buscar donde el ventero le había dicho que estaba, y hallóle, y díjole que en todo caso le dijese luego lo que le había de decir después, acerca de lo que le había preguntado en el camino. El hombre le respondió:

-Más despacio, y no en pie, se ha de tomar el cuento de mis maravillas: déjeme vuestra merced, señor bueno, acabar de dar recado a mi bestia, que yo le diré cosas que le admiren.

-No quede por eso -respondió don Quijote-, que yo os ayudaré a todo.

Y así lo hizo, ahechándole la cebada y limpiando el pesebre, humildad que obligó al hombre a contarle con buena voluntad lo que le pedía; y, sentándose en un poyo y don Quijote junto a él, teniendo por senado y auditorio al primo, al paje, a Sancho Panza y al ventero, comenzó a decir desta manera:

-«Sabrán vuesas mercedes que en un lugar que está cuatro leguas y media desta venta sucedió que a un regidor dél, por industria y engaño de una muchacha criada suya, y esto es largo de contar, le faltó un asno, y, aunque el tal regidor hizo las diligencias posibles por hallarle, no fue posible. Quince días serían pasados, según es pública voz y fama, que el asno faltaba, cuando, estando en la plaza el regidor perdidoso, otro regidor del mismo pueblo le dijo: “Dadme albricias, compadre, que vuestro jumento ha parecido”. “Yo os las mando y buenas, compadre -respondió el otro-, pero sepamos dónde ha parecido”. “En el monte -respondió el hallador-, le vi esta mañana, sin albarda y sin aparejo alguno, y tan flaco que era una compasión miralle. Quísele antecoger delante de mí y traérosle, pero está ya tan montaraz y tan huraño, que, cuando llegué a él, se fue huyendo y se entró en lo más escondido del monte. Si queréis que volvamos los dos a buscarle, dejadme poner esta borrica en mi casa, que luego vuelvo”. “Mucho placer me haréis -dijo el del jumento-, e yo procuraré pagároslo en la misma moneda”. Con estas circunstancias todas, y de la misma manera que yo lo voy contando, lo cuentan todos aquellos que están enterados en la verdad deste caso. En resolución, los dos regidores, a pie y mano a mano, se fueron al monte, y, llegando al lugar y sitio donde pensaron hallar el asno, no le

hallaron, ni pareció por todos aquellos contornos, aunque más le buscaron. Viendo, pues, que no parecía, dijo el regidor que le había visto al otro: “Mirad, compadre: una traza me ha venido al pensamiento, con la cual sin duda alguna podremos descubrir este animal, aunque esté metido en las entrañas de la tierra, no que del monte; y es que yo sé rebuznar maravillosamente; y si vos sabéis algún tanto, dad el hecho por concluido”. “¿Algún tanto decís, compadre? -dijo el otro-; por Dios, que no dé la ventaja a nadie, ni aun a los mismos asnos”. “Ahora lo veremos -respondió el regidor segundo-, porque tengo determinado que os vais vos por una parte del monte y yo por otra, de modo que le rodeemos y andemos todo, y de trecho en trecho rebuznaréis vos y rebuznaré yo, y no podrá ser menos sino que el asno nos oya y nos responda, si es que está en el monte”. A lo que respondió el dueño del jumento: “Digo, compadre, que la traza es excelente y digna de vuestro gran ingenio”. Y, dividiéndose los dos según el acuerdo, sucedió que casi a un mismo tiempo rebuznaron, y cada uno engañado del rebuzno del otro, acudieron a buscarse, pensando que ya el jumento había parecido; y, en viéndose, dijo el perdidoso: “¿Es posible, compadre, que no fue mi asno el que rebuznó?” “No fue, sino yo”, respondió el otro. “Ahora digo -dijo el dueño-, que de vos a un asno, compadre, no hay alguna diferencia, en cuanto toca al rebuznar, porque en mi vida he visto ni oído cosa más propia”. “Esas alabanzas y encarecimiento -respondió el de la traza-, mejor os atañen y tocan a vos que a mí, compadre; que por el Dios que me crió que podéis dar dos rebuznos de ventaja al mayor y más perito rebuznador del mundo; porque el sonido que tenéis es alto; lo sostenido de la voz, a su tiempo y compás; los dejos, muchos y apresurados, y, en resolución, yo me doy por vencido y os rindo la palma y doy la bandera desta rara habilidad”. “Ahora digo -respondió el dueño-, que me tendré y estimaré en más de aquí adelante, y pensaré que sé alguna cosa, pues tengo alguna gracia; que, puesto que pensara que rebuznaba bien, nunca entendí que llegaba el extremo que decís”. “También diré yo ahora -respondió el segundo-que hay raras habilidades perdidas en el mundo, y que son mal empleadas en aquellos que no saben aprovecharse dellas”. “Las nuestras -respondió el dueño-, si no es en casos semejantes como el que traemos entre manos, no nos pueden servir en otros, y aun en éste plega a Dios que nos sean de provecho”. Esto dicho, se tornaron a dividir y a volver a sus rebuznos, y a cada paso se engañaban y volvían a juntarse, hasta que se dieron por contraseño que, para entender que eran ellos, y no el asno, rebuznasen dos veces, una tras otra. Con esto, doblando a cada paso los rebuznos, rodearon todo el monte sin que el perdido jumento respondiese, ni aun por señas. Mas, ¿cómo había de responder el pobre y mal logrado, si le hallaron en lo más escondido del bosque, comido de lobos? Y, en viéndole, dijo su dueño: “Ya me maravillaba yo de que él no



respondía, pues a no estar muerto, él rebuznara si nos oyera, o no fuera asno; pero, a trueco de haberos oído rebuznar con tanta gracia, compadre, doy por bien empleado el trabajo que he tenido en buscarle, aunque le he hallado muerto”. “En buena mano está, compadre -respondió el otro-, pues si bien canta el abad, no le va en zaga el monacillo”. Con esto, desconsolados y roncós, se volvieron a su aldea, adonde contaron a sus amigos, vecinos y conocidos cuanto les había acontecido en la busca del asno, exagerando el uno la gracia del otro en el rebuznar; todo lo cual se supo y se extendió por los lugares circunvecinos. Y el diablo, que no duerme, como es amigo de sembrar y derramar rencillas y discordia por doquiera, levantando caramillos en el viento y grandes quimeras de nonada, ordenó e hizo que las gentes de los otros pueblos, en viendo a alguno de nuestra aldea, rebuznase, como dándoles en rostro con el rebuzno de nuestros regidores. Dieron en ello los muchachos, que fue dar en manos y en bocas de todos los demonios del infierno, y fue cundiendo el rebuzno de en uno en otro pueblo, de manera que son conocidos los naturales del pueblo del rebuzno, como son conocidos y diferenciados los negros de los blancos; y ha llegado a tanto la desgracia desta burla, que muchas veces con mano armada y formado escuadrón han salido contra los burladores los burlados a darse la batalla, sin poderlo remediar rey ni roque, ni temor ni vergüenza. Yo creo que mañana o esotro día han de salir en campaña los de mi pueblo, que son los del rebuzno, contra otro lugar que está a dos leguas del nuestro, que es uno de los que más nos persiguen; y, por salir bien apercibidos, llevo compradas estas lanzas y alabardas que habéis visto.» Y éstas son las maravillas que dije que os había de contar, y si no os lo han parecido, no sé otras.

Y con esto dio fin a su plática el buen hombre; y, en esto, entró por la puerta de la venta un hombre todo vestido de camuza, medias, greguescos y jubón, y con voz levantada dijo:

-Señor huésped, ¿hay posada? Que viene aquí el mono adivino y el retablo de la libertad de Melisendra.

-¡Cuerpo de tal -dijo el ventero-, que aquí está el señor mase Pedro! Buena noche se nos apareja.

Olvidábaseme de decir como el tal mase Pedro traía cubierto el ojo izquierdo, y casi medio carrillo, con un parche de tafetán verde, señal que todo aquel lado debía de estar enfermo; y el ventero prosiguió, diciendo:

-Sea bien venido vuestra merced, señor mase Pedro. ¿Adónde está el mono y el retablo, que no los veo?

-Ya llegan cerca -respondió el todo camuza-, sino que yo me he adelantado, a saber si hay posada.

-Al mismo duque de Alba se la quitara para dársela al señor mase Pedro -

respondió el ventero-; llegue el mono y el retablo, que gente hay esta noche en la venta que pagará el verle y las habilidades del mono.

-Sea en buen hora -respondió el del parche-, que yo moderaré el precio, y con sola la costa me dará por bien pagado; y yo vuelvo a hacer que camine la carreta donde viene el mono y el retablo.

Y luego se volvió a salir de la venta.

Preguntó luego don Quijote al ventero qué mase Pedro era aquél, y qué retablo y qué mono traía. A lo que respondió el ventero:

-Éste es un famoso titerero, que ha muchos días que anda por esta Mancha de Aragón enseñando un retablo de Melisendra, libertada por el famoso don Gaiferos, que es una de las mejores y más bien representadas historias que de muchos años a esta parte en este reino se han visto. Trae asimismo consigo un mono de la más rara habilidad que se vio entre monos, ni se imaginó entre hombres, porque si le preguntan algo, está atento a lo que le preguntan y luego salta sobre los hombros de su amo, y, llegándosele al oído, le dice la respuesta de lo que le preguntan, y maese Pedro la declara luego; y de las cosas pasadas dice mucho más que de las que están por venir; y, aunque no todas veces acierta en todas, en las más no yerra, de modo que nos hace creer que tiene el diablo en el cuerpo. Dos reales lleva por cada pregunta, si es que el mono responde; quiero decir, si responde el amo por él, después de haberle hablado al oído; y así, se cree que el tal maese Pedro esta riquísimo; y es *hombre galante*, como dicen en Italia y *bon compañero*, y dase la mejor vida del mundo; habla más que seis y bebe más que doce, todo a costa de su lengua y de su mono y de su retablo.

En esto, volvió maese Pedro, y en una carreta venía el retablo, y el mono, grande y sin cola, con las posaderas de fieltro, pero no de mala cara; y, apenas le vio don Quijote, cuando le preguntó:

-Dígame vuestra merced, señor adivino: ¿*qué peje pillamo*? ¿Qué ha de ser de nosotros? Y vea aquí mis dos reales.

Y mandó a Sancho que se los diese a maese Pedro, el cual respondió por el mono, y dijo:

-Señor, este animal no responde ni da noticia de las cosas que están por venir; de las pasadas sabe algo, y de las presentes, algún tanto.

-¡Voto a Rus -dijo Sancho-, no dé yo un ardite porque me digan lo que por mí ha pasado!; porque, ¿quién lo puede saber mejor que yo mismo? Y pagar yo porque me digan lo que sé, sería una gran necedad; pero, pues sabe las cosas presentes, he aquí mis dos reales, y dígame el señor monísimo qué hace ahora mi mujer Teresa Panza, y en qué se entretiene.

No quiso tomar maese Pedro el dinero, diciendo:

-No quiero recibir adelantados los premios, sin que hayan precedido los

servicios.

Y, dando con la mano derecha dos golpes sobre el hombro izquierdo, en un brinco se le puso el mono en él, y, llegando la boca al oído, daba diente con diente muy apriesa; y, habiendo hecho este ademán por espacio de un credo, de otro brinco se puso en el suelo, y al punto, con grandísima priesa, se fue maese Pedro a poner de rodillas ante don Quijote, y, abrazándole las piernas, dijo:

-Estas piernas abrazo, bien así como si abrazara las dos columnas de Hércules, ¡oh resucitador insigne de la ya puesta en olvido andante caballería!; ¡oh no jamás como se debe alabado caballero don Quijote de la Mancha, ánimo de los desmayados, arrimo de los que van a caer, brazo de los caídos, báculo y consuelo de todos los desdichados!

Quedó pasmado don Quijote, absorto Sancho, suspenso el primo, atónito el paje, abobado el del rebuzno, confuso el ventero, y, finalmente, espantados todos los que oyeron las razones del titerero, el cual prosiguió diciendo:

-Y tú, ¡oh buen Sancho Panza!, el mejor escudero y del mejor caballero del mundo, alégrate, que tu buena mujer Teresa está buena, y ésta es la hora en que ella está rastrillando una libra de lino, y, por más señas, tiene a su lado izquierdo un jarro desbocado que cabe un buen porqué de vino, con que se entretiene en su trabajo.

-Eso creo yo muy bien -respondió Sancho-, porque es ella una bienaventurada, y, a no ser celosa, no la trocara yo por la gigante Andandona, que, según mi señor, fue una mujer muy cabal y muy de pro; y es mi Teresa de aquellas que no se dejan mal pasar, aunque sea a costa de sus herederos.

-Ahora digo -dijo a esta sazón don Quijote-, que el que lee mucho y anda mucho, vee mucho y sabe mucho. Digo esto porque, ¿qué persuasión fuera bastante para persuadirme que hay monos en el mundo que adivinen, como lo he visto ahora por mis propios ojos? Porque yo soy el mismo don Quijote de la Mancha que este buen animal ha dicho, puesto que se ha estendido algún tanto en mis alabanzas; pero comoquiera que yo me sea, doy gracias al cielo, que me dotó de un ánimo blando y compasivo, inclinado siempre a hacer bien a todos, y mal a ninguno.

-Si yo tuviera dineros -dijo el paje-, preguntara al señor mono qué me ha de suceder en la peregrinación que llevo.

A lo que respondió maese Pedro, que ya se había levantado de los pies de don Quijote:

-Ya he dicho que esta bestezuela no responde a lo por venir; que si respondiera, no importara no haber dineros; que, por servicio del señor don Quijote, que está presente, dejara yo todos los intereses del mundo. Y agora, porque se lo debo, y por darle gusto, quiero armar mi retablo y dar placer a

cuantos están en la venta, sin paga alguna.

Oyendo lo cual el ventero, alegre sobremanera, señaló el lugar donde se podía poner el retablo, que en un punto fue hecho.

Don Quijote no estaba muy contento con las adivinanzas del mono, por parecerle no ser a propósito que un mono adivinase, ni las de por venir, ni las pasadas cosas; y así, en tanto que maese Pedro acomodaba el retablo, se retiró don Quijote con Sancho a un rincón de la caballeriza, donde, sin ser oídos de nadie, le dijo:

-Mira, Sancho, yo he considerado bien la estraña habilidad deste mono, y hallo por mi cuenta que sin duda este maese Pedro, su amo, debe de tener hecho pacto, tácito o espreso, con el demonio.

-Si el patio es espeso y del demonio -dijo Sancho-, sin duda debe de ser muy sucio patio; pero, ¿de qué provecho le es al tal maese Pedro tener esos patios?

-No me entiendes, Sancho: no quiero decir sino que debe de tener hecho algún concierto con el demonio de que infunda esa habilidad en el mono, con que gane de comer, y después que esté rico le dará su alma, que es lo que este universal enemigo pretende. Y háceme creer esto el ver que el mono no responde sino a las cosas pasadas o presentes, y la sabiduría del diablo no se puede estender a más, que las por venir no las sabe si no es por conjeturas, y no todas veces; que a solo Dios está reservado conocer los tiempos y los momentos, y para Él no hay pasado ni porvenir, que todo es presente. Y, siendo esto así, como lo es, está claro que este mono habla con el estilo del diablo; y estoy maravillado cómo no le han acusado al Santo Oficio, y examinádole y sacádole de cuajo en virtud de quién adivina; porque cierto está que este mono no es astrólogo, ni su amo ni él alzan, ni saben alzar, estas figuras que llaman judiciarias, que tanto ahora se usan en España, que no hay mujercilla, ni paje, ni zapatero de viejo que no presuma de alzar una figura, como si fuera una sota de naipes del suelo, echando a perder con sus mentiras e ignorancias la verdad maravillosa de la ciencia. De una señora sé yo que preguntó a uno destos figureros que si una perrilla de falda pequeña, que tenía, si se empreñaría y pariría, y cuántos y de qué color serían los perros que pariese. A lo que el señor judicario, después de haber alzado la figura, respondió que la perrica se empreñaría, y pariría tres perricos, el uno verde, el otro encarnado y el otro de mezcla, con tal condición que la tal perra se cubriese entre las once y doce del día, o de la noche, y que fuese en lunes o en sábado; y lo que sucedió fue que de allí a dos días se murió la perra de ahíta, y el señor levantador quedó acreditado en el lugar por acertadísimo judicario, como lo quedan todos o los más levantadores.

-Con todo eso, querría -dijo Sancho- que vuestra merced dijese a maese Pedro preguntase a su mono si es verdad lo que a vuestra merced le pasó en la cueva de

Montesinos; que yo para mí tengo, con perdón de vuestra merced, que todo fue embeleco y mentira, o por lo menos, cosas soñadas.

-Todo podría ser -respondió don Quijote-, pero yo haré lo que me aconsejas, puesto que me ha de quedar un no sé qué de escrúpulo.

Estando en esto, llegó maese Pedro a buscar a don Quijote y decirle que ya estaba en orden el retablo; que su merced viniese a verle, porque lo merecía. Don Quijote le comunicó su pensamiento, y le rogó preguntase luego a su mono le dijese si ciertas cosas que había pasado en la cueva de Montesinos habían sido soñadas o verdaderas; porque a él le parecía que tenían de todo. A lo que maese Pedro, sin responder palabra, volvió a traer el mono, y, puesto delante de don Quijote y de Sancho, dijo:

-Mirad, señor mono, que este caballero quiere saber si ciertas cosas que le pasaron en una cueva llamada de Montesinos, si fueron falsas o verdaderas.

Y, haciéndole la acostumbrada señal, el mono se le subió en el hombro izquierdo, y, hablándole, al parecer, en el oído, dijo luego maese Pedro:

-El mono dice que parte de las cosas que vuesa merced vio, o pasó, en la dicha cueva son falsas, y parte verisímiles; y que esto es lo que sabe, y no otra cosa, en cuanto a esta pregunta; y que si vuesa merced quisiere saber más, que el viernes venidero responderá a todo lo que se le preguntare, que por ahora se le ha acabado la virtud, que no le vendrá hasta el viernes, como dicho tiene.

-¿No lo decía yo -dijo Sancho-, que no se me podía asentar que todo lo que vuesa merced, señor mío, ha dicho de los acontecimientos de la cueva era verdad, ni aun la mitad?

-Los sucesos lo dirán, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-; que el tiempo, descubridor de todas las cosas, no se deja ninguna que no las saque a la luz del sol, aunque esté escondida en los senos de la tierra. Y, por ahora, baste esto, y vámonos a ver el retablo del buen maese Pedro, que para mí tengo que debe de tener alguna novedad.

-¿Cómo alguna? -respondió maese Pedro-: sesenta mil encierra en sí este mi retablo; dígoles a vuesa merced, mi señor don Quijote, que es una de las cosas más de ver que hoy tiene el mundo, y operibus credite, et non verbis; y manos a labor, que se hace tarde y tenemos mucho que hacer y que decir y que mostrar.

Obedecieronle don Quijote y Sancho, y vinieron donde ya estaba el retablo puesto y descubierto, lleno por todas partes de candelillas de cera encendidas, que le hacían vistoso y resplandeciente. En llegando, se metió maese Pedro dentro dél, que era el que había de manejar las figuras del artificio, y fuera se puso un muchacho, criado del maese Pedro, para servir de intérprete y declarador de los misterios del tal retablo: tenía una varilla en la mano, con que señalaba las figuras que salían.

Puestos, pues, todos cuantos había en la venta, y algunos en pie, frontero del retablo, y acomodados don Quijote, Sancho, el paje y el primo en los mejores lugares, el trujamán comenzó a decir lo que oirá y verá el que le oyere o viere el capítulo siguiente.

## Capítulo XXVI

*Donde se prosigue la graciosa aventura del titerero, con otras cosas en verdad  
harto buenas*

CALLARON todos, tirios y troyanos; quiero decir, pendientes estaban todos los que el retablo miraban de la boca del declarador de sus maravillas, cuando se oyeron sonar en el retablo cantidad de atabales y trompetas, y dispararse mucha artillería, cuyo rumor pasó en tiempo breve, y luego alzó la voz el muchacho, y dijo:

-Esta verdadera historia que aquí a vuestras mercedes se representa es sacada al pie de la letra de las corónicas francesas y de los romances españoles que andan en boca de las gentes, y de los muchachos, por esas calles. Trata de la libertad que dio el señor don Gaiferos a su esposa Melisendra, que estaba cautiva en España, en poder de moros, en la ciudad de Sansueña, que así se llamaba entonces la que hoy se llama Zaragoza; y vean vuestras mercedes allí cómo está jugando a las tablas don Gaiferos, según aquello que se canta:

Jugando está a las tablas don Gaiferos,  
que ya de Melisendra está olvidado.

Y aquel personaje que allí asoma, con corona en la cabeza y ceptro en las manos, es el emperador Carlomagno, padre putativo de la tal Melisendra, el cual, mohíno de ver el ocio y descuido de su yerno, le sale a reñir; y adviertan con la vehemencia y ahínco que le riñe, que no parece sino que le quiere dar con el ceptro media docena de coscorrones, y aun hay autores que dicen que se los dio, y muy bien dados; y, después de haberle dicho muchas cosas acerca del peligro que corría su honra en no procurar la libertad de su esposa, dicen que le dijo:

«Harto os he dicho: miradlo».

Miren vuestras mercedes también cómo el emperador vuelve las espaldas y

deja despechado a don Gaiferos, el cual ya ven como arroja, impaciente de la cólera, lejos de sí el tablero y las tablas, y pide apriesa las armas, y a don Roldán, su primo, pide prestada su espada Durindana, y cómo don Roldán no se la quiere prestar, ofreciéndole su compañía en la difícil empresa en que se pone; pero el valeroso enojado no lo quiere aceptar; antes, dice que él solo es bastante para sacar a su esposa, si bien estuviese metida en el más hondo centro de la tierra; y, con esto, se entra a armar, para ponerse luego en camino. Vuelvan vuestras mercedes los ojos a aquella torre que allí parece, que se presupone que es una de las torres del alcázar de Zaragoza, que ahora llaman la Aljafería; y aquella dama que en aquel balcón parece, vestida a lo moro, es la sin par Melisendra, que desde allí muchas veces se ponía a mirar el camino de Francia, y, puesta la imaginación en París y en su esposo, se consolaba en su cautiverio. Miren también un nuevo caso que ahora sucede, quizá no visto jamás. ¿No veen aquel moro que callandico y pasito a paso, puesto el dedo en la boca, se llega por las espaldas de Melisendra? Pues miren cómo la da un beso en mitad de los labios, y la priesa que ella se da a escupir, y a limpiárselos con la blanca manga de su camisa, y cómo se lamenta, y se arranca de pesar sus hermosos cabellos, como si ellos tuvieran la culpa del maleficio. Miren también cómo aquel grave moro que está en aquellos corredores es el rey Marsilio de Sansueña; el cual, por haber visto la insolencia del moro, puesto que era un pariente y gran privado suyo, le mandó luego prender, y que le den docientos azotes, llevándole por las calles acostumbradas de la ciudad,

con chilladores delante  
y envaramiento detrás;

y veis aquí donde salen a ejecutar la sentencia, aun bien apenas no habiendo sido puesta en ejecución la culpa; porque entre moros no hay «traslado a la parte», ni «a prueba y estése», como entre nosotros.

-Niño, niño -dijo con voz alta a esta sazón don Quijote-, seguid vuestra historia línea recta, y no os metáis en las curvas o transversales; que, para sacar una verdad en limpio, menester son muchas pruebas y repruebas.

También dijo maese Pedro desde dentro:

-Muchacho, no te metas en dibujos, sino haz lo que ese señor te manda, que será lo más acertado; sigue tu canto llano, y no te metas en contrapuntos, que se suelen quebrar de sotiles.

-Yo lo haré así -respondió el muchacho; y prosiguió, diciendo-: Esta figura



que aquí parece a caballo, cubierta con una capa gascona, es la mesma de don Gaiferos, a quien su esposa, ya vengada del atrevimiento del enamorado moro, con mejor y más sosegado semblante, se ha puesto a los miradores de la torre, y habla con su esposo, creyendo que es algún pasajero, con quien pasó todas aquellas razones y coloquios de aquel romance que dicen:

Caballero, si a Francia ides,  
por Gaiferos preguntad;

las cuales no digo yo ahora, porque de la prolijidad se suele engendrar el fastidio; basta ver cómo don Gaiferos se descubre, y que por los ademanes alegres que Melisendra hace se nos da a entender que ella le ha conocido, y más ahora que vemos se descuelga del balcón, para ponerse en las ancas del caballo de su buen esposo. Mas, ¡ay, sin ventura!, que se le ha asido una punta del faldellín de uno de los hierros del balcón, y está pendiente en el aire, sin poder llegar al suelo. Pero veis cómo el piadoso cielo socorre en las mayores necesidades, pues llega don Gaiferos, y, sin mirar si se rasgará o no el rico faldellín, ase della, y mal su grado la hace bajar al suelo, y luego, de un brinco, la pone sobre las ancas de su caballo, a horcajadas como hombre, y la manda que se tenga fuertemente y le eche los brazos por las espaldas, de modo que los cruce en el pecho, porque no se caiga, a causa que no estaba la señora Melisendra acostumbrada a semejantes caballerías. Veis también cómo los relinchos del caballo dan señales que va contento con la valiente y hermosa carga que lleva en su señor y en su señora. Veis cómo vuelven las espaldas y salen de la ciudad, y alegres y regocijados toman de París la vía. ¡Vais en paz, oh par sin par de verdaderos amantes! ¡Lleguéis a salvamento a vuestra deseada patria, sin que la fortuna ponga estorbo en vuestro felice viaje! ¡Los ojos de vuestros amigos y parientes os vean gozar en paz tranquila los días, que los de Néstor sean, que os quedan de la vida!

Aquí alzó otra vez la voz maese Pedro, y dijo:

-Llaneza, muchacho; no te encumbres, que toda afectación es mala.

No respondió nada el intérprete; antes, prosiguió, diciendo:

-No faltaron algunos ociosos ojos, que lo suelen ver todo, que no viesan la bajada y la subida de Melisendra, de quien dieron noticia al rey Marsilio, el cual mandó luego tocar al arma; y miren con qué priesa, que ya la ciudad se hunde con el son de las campanas que en todas las torres de las mezquitas suenan.

-¡Eso no! -dijo a esta sazón don Quijote:- en esto de las campanas anda muy

impropio maese Pedro, porque entre moros no se usan campanas, sino atabales, y un género de dulzainas que parecen nuestras chirimías; y esto de sonar campanas en Sansueña sin duda que es un gran disparate.

Lo cual oído por maese Pedro, cesó el tocar y dijo:

-No mire vuesa merced en niñerías, señor don Quijote, ni quiera llevar las cosas tan por el cabo que no se le halle. ¿No se representan por ahí, casi de ordinario, mil comedias llenas de mil impropiedades y disparates, y, con todo eso, corren felicísimamente su carrera, y se escuchan no sólo con aplauso, sino con admiración y todo? Prosigue, muchacho, y deja decir; que, como yo llene mi talego, si quiere represente más impropiedades que tiene átomos el sol.

-Así es la verdad -replicó don Quijote.

Y el muchacho dijo:

-Miren cuánta y cuán lucida caballería sale de la ciudad en seguimiento de los dos católicos amantes, cuántas trompetas que suenan, cuántas dulzainas que tocan y cuántos atabales y atambores que retumban. Téname que los han de alcanzar, y los han de volver atados a la cola de su mismo caballo, que sería un horrendo espectáculo.

Viendo y oyendo, pues, tanta morisma y tanto estruendo don Quijote, parecióle ser bien dar ayuda a los que huían; y, levantándose en pie, en voz alta, dijo:

-No consentiré yo en mis días y en mi presencia se le haga superchería a tan famoso caballero y a tan atrevido enamorado como don Gaiferos. ¡Deteneos, mal nacida canalla; no le sigáis ni persigáis; si no, conmigo sois en la batalla!

Y, diciendo y haciendo, desenvainó la espada, y de un brinco se puso junto al retablo, y, con acelerada y nunca vista furia, comenzó a llover cuchilladas sobre la titerera morisma, derribando a unos, descabezando a otros, estropeando a éste, destrozando a aquél, y, entre otros muchos, tiró un altibajo tal, que si maese Pedro no se abaja, se encoge y agazapa, le cercenara la cabeza con más facilidad que si fuera hecha de masa de mazapán. Daba voces maese Pedro, diciendo:

-Deténgase vuesa merced, señor don Quijote, y advierta que estos que derriba, destroza y mata no son verdaderos moros, sino unas figurillas de pasta. ¡Mire, pecador de mí, que me destruye y echa a perder toda mi hacienda!

Mas no por esto dejaba de menudear don Quijote cuchilladas, mandobles, tajos y reveses como llovidos. Finalmente, en menos de dos credos dio con todo el retablo en el suelo, hechas pedazos y desmenuzadas todas sus jarcias y figuras: el rey Marsilio, mal herido, y el emperador Carlomagno, partida la corona y la cabeza en dos partes. Alborotóse el senado de los oyentes, huyóse el mono por los tejados de la ventana, temió el primo, acobardóse el paje, y hasta el mismo Sancho Panza tuvo pavor grandísimo, porque, como él juró después de

pasada la borrasca, jamás había visto a su señor con tan desatinada cólera. Hecho, pues, el general destrozo del retablo, sosegóse un poco don Quijote y dijo:

-Quisiera yo tener aquí delante en este punto todos aquellos que no creen, ni quieren creer, de cuánto provecho sean en el mundo los caballeros andantes: miren, si no me hallara yo aquí presente, qué fuera del buen don Gaiferos y de la hermosa Melisendra; a buen seguro que ésta fuera ya la hora que los hubieran alcanzado estos canes, y les hubieran hecho algún desaguizado. En resolución, ¡viva la andante caballería sobre cuantas cosas hoy viven en la tierra!

-¡Vivan en hora buena -dijo a esta sazón con voz enfermiza maese Pedro-, y muera yo, pues soy tan desdichado que puedo decir con el rey don Rodrigo:

Ayer fui señor de España...  
y hoy no tengo una almena  
que pueda decir que es mía.

No ha media hora, ni aun un mediano momento, que me vi señor de reyes y de emperadores, llenas mis caballerizas y mis cofres y sacos de infinitos caballos y de innumerables galas, y agora me veo desolado y abatido, pobre y mendigo, y, sobre todo, sin mi mono, que a fe que primero que le vuelva a mi poder me han de sudar los dientes; y todo por la furia mal considerada deste señor caballero, de quien se dice que ampara pupilos, y endereza tuertos, y hace otras obras caritativas; y en mí solo ha venido a faltar su intención generosa, que sean benditos y alabados los cielos, allá donde tienen más levantados sus asientos. En fin, el Caballero de la Triste Figura había de ser aquel que había de desfigurar las mías.

Enternecióse Sancho Panza con las razones de maese Pedro, y díjole:

-No llores, maese Pedro, ni te lamentes, que me quiebras el corazón; porque te hago saber que es mi señor don Quijote tan católico y escrupuloso cristiano, que si él cae en la cuenta de que te ha hecho algún agravio, te lo sabrá y te lo querrá pagar y satisfacer con muchas ventajas.

-Con que me pagase el señor don Quijote alguna parte de las hechuras que me ha deshecho, quedaría contento, y su merced aseguraría su conciencia, porque no se puede salvar quien tiene lo ajeno contra la voluntad de su dueño y no lo restituye.

-Así es -dijo don Quijote-, pero hasta ahora yo no sé que tenga nada vuestro, maese Pedro.

-¿Cómo no? -respondió maese Pedro-; y estas reliquias que están por este duro y estéril suelo, ¿quién las esparció y aniquiló, sino la fuerza invencible dese poderoso brazo?, y ¿cúyos eran sus cuerpos sino míos?, y ¿con quién me sustentaba yo sino con ellos?

-Ahora acabo de creer -dijo a este punto don Quijote-lo que otras muchas veces he creído: que estos encantadores que me persiguen no hacen sino ponerme las figuras como ellas son delante de los ojos, y luego me las mudan y truecan en las que ellos quieren. Real y verdaderamente os digo, señores que me oís, que a mí me pareció todo lo que aquí ha pasado que pasaba al pie de la letra: que Melisendra era Melisendra, don Gaiferos don Gaiferos, Marsilio Marsilio, y Carlomagno Carlomagno: por eso se me alteró la cólera, y, por cumplir con mi profesión de caballero andante, quise dar ayuda y favor a los que huían, y con este buen propósito hice lo que habéis visto; si me ha salido al revés, no es culpa mía, sino de los malos que me persiguen; y, con todo esto, deste mi yerro, aunque no ha procedido de malicia, quiero yo mismo condenarme en costas: vea maese Pedro lo que quiere por las figuras deshechas, que yo me ofrezco a pagárselo luego, en buena y corriente moneda castellana.

Inclinósele maese Pedro, diciéndole:

-No esperaba yo menos de la inaudita cristiandad del valeroso don Quijote de la Mancha, verdadero socorredor y amparo de todos los necesitados y menesterosos vagamundos; y aquí el señor ventero y el gran Sancho serán medianeros y apreciadores, entre vuesa merced y mí, de lo que valen o podían valer las ya deshechas figuras.

El ventero y Sancho dijeron que así lo harían, y luego maese Pedro alzó del suelo, con la cabeza menos, al rey Marsilio de Zaragoza, y dijo:

-Ya se ve cuán imposible es volver a este rey a su ser primero; y así, me parece, salvo mejor juicio, que se me dé por su muerte, fin y acabamiento cuatro reales y medio.

-¡Adelante! -dijo don Quijote.

-Pues por esta abertura de arriba abajo -prosiguió maese Pedro, tomando en las manos al partido emperador Carlomagno-, no sería mucho que pidiese yo cinco reales y un cuartillo.

-No es poco -dijo Sancho.

-Ni mucho -replicó el ventero-; médiase la partida y señálensele cinco reales.

-Dénsese todos cinco y cuartillo -dijo don Quijote-, que no está en un cuartillo más a menos la monta desta notable desgracia; y acabe presto maese Pedro, que se hace hora de cenar, y yo tengo ciertos barruntos de hambre.

-Por esta figura -dijo maese Pedro-que está sin narices y un ojo menos, que es de la hermosa Melisendra, quiero, y me pongo en lo justo, dos reales y doce

maravedís.

-Aun ahí sería el diablo -dijo don Quijote-, si ya no estuviese Melisendra con su esposo, por lo menos, en la raya de Francia; porque el caballo en que iban, a mí me pareció que antes volaba que corría; y así, no hay para qué venderme a mí el gato por liebre, presentándome aquí a Melisendra desnarigada, estando la otra, si viene a mano, ahora holgándose en Francia con su esposo a pierna tendida. Ayude Dios con lo suyo a cada uno, señor maese Pedro, y caminemos todos con pie llano y con intención sana. Y prosiga.

Maese Pedro, que vio que don Quijote izquierdeaba y que volvía a su primer tema, no quiso que se le escapase; y así, le dijo:

-Ésta no debe de ser Melisendra, sino alguna de las doncellas que la servían; y así, con sesenta maravedís que me den por ella quedaré contento y bien pagado.

Desta manera fue poniendo precio a otras muchas destrozadas figuras, que después los moderaron los dos jueces árbitros, con satisfacción de las partes, que llegaron a cuarenta reales y tres cuartillos; y, además desto, que luego lo desembolsó Sancho, pidió maese Pedro dos reales por el trabajo de tomar el mono.

-Dáselos, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, no para tomar el mono, sino la mona; y docientos diera yo ahora en albricias a quien me dijera con certidumbre que la señora doña Melisendra y el señor don Gaiferos estaban ya en Francia y entre los suyos.

Ninguno nos lo podrá decir mejor que mi mono -dijo maese Pedro-, pero no habrá diablo que ahora le tome; aunque imagino que el cariño y la hambre le han de forzar a que me busque esta noche, y amanecerá Dios y verémonos.

En resolución, la borrasca del retablo se acabó y todos cenaron en paz y en buena compañía, a costa de don Quijote, que era liberal en todo extremo.

Antes que amaneciese, se fue el que llevaba las lanzas y las alabardas, y ya después de amanecido, se vinieron a despedir de don Quijote el primo y el paje: el uno, para volverse a su tierra; y el otro, a proseguir su camino, para ayuda del cual le dio don Quijote una docena de reales. Maese Pedro no quiso volver a entrar en más dimes ni diretes con don Quijote, a quien él conocía muy bien, y así, madrugó antes que el sol, y, cogiendo las reliquias de su retablo y a su mono, se fue también a buscar sus aventuras. El ventero, que no conocía a don Quijote, tan admirado le tenían sus locuras como su liberalidad. Finalmente, Sancho le pagó muy bien, por orden de su señor, y, despidiéndose dél, casi a las ocho del día dejaron la venta y se pusieron en camino, donde los dejaremos ir; que así conviene para dar lugar a contar otras cosas pertenecientes a la declaración desta famosa historia.

## Capítulo XXVII

*Donde se da cuenta quiénes eran maese Pedro y su mono, con el mal suceso que don Quijote tuvo en la aventura del rebuzno, que no la acabó como él quisiera y como lo tenía pensado*

ENTRA Cide Hamete, coronista desta grande historia, con estas palabras en este capítulo: «Juro como católico cristiano...»; a lo que su traductor dice que el jurar Cide Hamete como católico cristiano, siendo él moro, como sin duda lo era, no quiso decir otra cosa sino que, así como el católico cristiano cuando jura, jura, o debe jurar, verdad, y decirla en lo que dijere, así él la decía, como si jurara como cristiano católico, en lo que quería escribir de don Quijote, especialmente en decir quién era maese Pedro, y quién el mono adivino que traía admirados todos aquellos pueblos con sus adivinanzas.

Dice, pues, que bien se acordará, el que hubiere leído la primera parte desta historia, de aquel Ginés de Pasamonte, a quien, entre otros galeotes, dio libertad don Quijote en Sierra Morena, beneficio que después le fue mal agradecido y peor pagado de aquella gente maligna y mal acostumbrada. Este Ginés de Pasamonte, a quien don Quijote llamaba Ginesillo de Parapilla, fue el que hurtó a Sancho Panza el rucio; que, por no haberse puesto el cómo ni el cuándo en la primera parte, por culpa de los impresores, ha dado en qué entender a muchos, que atribuían a poca memoria del autor la falta de emprenta. Pero, en resolución, Ginés le hurtó, estando sobre él durmiendo Sancho Panza, usando de la traza y modo que usó Brunelo cuando, estando Sacripante sobre Albraca, le sacó el caballo de entre las piernas, y después le cobró Sancho, como se ha contado. Este Ginés, pues, temeroso de no ser hallado de la justicia, que le buscaba para castigarle de sus infinitas bellaquerías y delitos, que fueron tantos y tales, que él mismo compuso un gran volumen contándolos, determinó pasarse al reino de Aragón y cubrirse el ojo izquierdo, acomodándose al oficio de titerero; que esto y el jugar de manos lo sabía hacer por extremo.

Sucedió, pues, que de unos cristianos ya libres que venían de Berbería compró aquel mono, a quien enseñó que, en haciéndole cierta señal, se le subiese en el hombro y le murmurase, o lo pareciese, al oído. Hecho esto, antes que entrase en el lugar donde entraba con su retablo y mono, se informaba en el lugar más cercano, o de quien él mejor podía, qué cosas particulares hubiesen sucedido en el tal lugar, y a qué personas; y, llevándolas bien en la memoria, lo primero que

hacía era mostrar su retablo, el cual unas veces era de una historia, y otras de otra; pero todas alegres y regocijadas y conocidas. Acabada la muestra, proponía las habilidades de su mono, diciendo al pueblo que adivinaba todo lo pasado y lo presente; pero que en lo de por venir no se daba maña. Por la respuesta de cada pregunta pedía dos reales, y de algunas hacía barato, según tomaba el pulso a los preguntantes; y como tal vez llegaba a las casas de quien él sabía los sucesos de los que en ella moraban, aunque no le preguntasen nada por no pagarle, él hacía la seña al mono, y luego decía que le había dicho tal y tal cosa, que venía de molde con lo sucedido. Con esto cobraba crédito inefable, y andábanse todos tras él. Otras veces, como era tan discreto, respondía de manera que las respuestas venían bien con las preguntas; y, como nadie le apuraba ni apretaba a que dijese cómo adivinaba su mono, a todos hacía monas, y llenaba sus esqueros.

Así como entró en la venta, conoció a don Quijote y a Sancho, por cuyo conocimiento le fue fácil poner en admiración a don Quijote y a Sancho Panza, y a todos los que en ella estaban; pero hubiérale de costar caro si don Quijote bajara un poco más la mano cuando cortó la cabeza al rey Marsilio y destruyó toda su caballería, como queda dicho en el antecedente capítulo.

Esto es lo que hay que decir de maese Pedro y de su mono.

Y, volviendo a don Quijote de la Mancha, digo que, después de haber salido de la venta, determinó de ver primero las riberas del río Ebro y todos aquellos contornos, antes de entrar en la ciudad de Zaragoza, pues le daba tiempo para todo el mucho que faltaba desde allí a las justas. Con esta intención siguió su camino, por el cual anduvo dos días sin acontecerle cosa digna de ponerse en escritura, hasta que al tercero, al subir de una loma, oyó un gran rumor de atambores, de trompetas y arcabuces. Al principio pensó que algún tercio de soldados pasaba por aquella parte, y por verlos picó a Rocinante y subió la loma arriba; y cuando estuvo en la cumbre, vio al pie della, a su parecer, más de docientos hombres armados de diferentes suertes de armas, como si dijésemos lanzones, ballestas, partesanas, alabardas y picas, y algunos arcabuces, y muchas rodela. Bajó del recuesto y acercóse al escuadrón, tanto, que distintamente vio las banderas, juzgó de las colores y notó las empresas que en ellas traían, especialmente una que en un estandarte o jirón de raso blanco venía, en el cual estaba pintado muy al vivo un asno como un pequeño sardesco, la cabeza levantada, la boca abierta y la lengua de fuera, en acto y postura como si estuviera rebuznando; alrededor dél estaban escritos de letras grandes estos dos versos:

No rebuznaron en balde  
el uno y el otro alcalde.

Por esta insignia sacó don Quijote que aquella gente debía de ser del pueblo del rebuzno, y así se lo dijo a Sancho, declarándole lo que en el estandarte venía escrito. Díjole también que el que les había dado noticia de aquel caso se había errado en decir que dos regidores habían sido los que rebuznaron; pero que, según los versos del estandarte, no habían sido sino alcaldes. A lo que respondió Sancho Panza:

-Señor, en eso no hay que reparar, que bien puede ser que los regidores que entonces rebuznaron viniesen con el tiempo a ser alcaldes de su pueblo, y así, se pueden llamar con entrambos títulos; cuanto más, que no hace al caso a la verdad de la historia ser los rebuznadores alcaldes o regidores, como ellos una por una hayan rebuznado; porque tan a pique está de rebuznar un alcalde como un regidor.

Finalmente, conocieron y supieron como el pueblo corrido salía a pelear con otro que le corría más de lo justo y de lo que se debía a la buena vecindad.

Fuese llegando a ellos don Quijote, no con poca pesadumbre de Sancho, que nunca fue amigo de hallarse en semejantes jornadas. Los del escuadrón le recogieron en medio, creyendo que era alguno de los de su parcialidad. Don Quijote, alzando la visera, con gentil brío y continente, llegó hasta el estandarte del asno, y allí se le pusieron alrededor todos los más principales del ejército, por verle, admirados con la admiración acostumbrada en que caían todos aquellos que la vez primera le miraban. Don Quijote, que los vio tan atentos a mirarle, sin que ninguno le hablase ni le preguntase nada, quiso aprovecharse de aquel silencio, y, rompiendo el suyo, alzó la voz y dijo:

-Buenos señores, cuan encarecidamente puedo, os suplico que no interrumpáis un razonamiento que quiero haceros, hasta que veáis que os disgusta y enfada; que si esto sucede, con la más mínima señal que me hagáis pondré un sello en mi boca y echaré una mordaza a mi lengua.

-Todos le dijeron que dijese lo que quisiese, que de buena gana le escucharían. Don Quijote, con esta licencia, prosiguió diciendo:

-Yo, señores míos, soy caballero andante, cuyo ejercicio es el de las armas, y cuya profesión la de favorecer a los necesitados de favor y acudir a los menesterosos. Días ha que he sabido vuestra desgracia y la causa que os mueve a tomar las armas a cada paso, para vengaros de vuestros enemigos; y, habiendo discurrido una y muchas veces en mi entendimiento sobre vuestro negocio,



hallo, según las leyes del duelo, que estáis engañados en teneros por afrentados, porque ningún particular puede afrentar a un pueblo entero, si no es retándole de traidor por junto, porque no sabe en particular quién cometió la traición por que le reta. Ejemplo desto tenemos en don Diego Ordóñez de Lara, que retó a todo el pueblo zamorano, porque ignoraba que solo Vellido Dolfos había cometido la traición de matar a su rey; y así, retó a todos, y a todos tocaba la venganza y la respuesta; aunque bien es verdad que el señor don Diego anduvo algo demasiado, y aun pasó muy adelante de los límites del reto, porque no tenía para qué retar a los muertos, a las aguas, ni a los panes, ni a los que estaban por nacer, ni a las otras menudencias que allí se declaran; pero, ¡vaya!, pues cuando la cólera sale de madre, no tiene la lengua padre, ayo ni freno que la corrija. Siendo, pues, esto así, que uno solo no puede afrentar a reino, provincia, ciudad, república ni pueblo entero, queda en limpio que no hay para qué salir a la venganza del reto de la tal afrenta, pues no lo es; porque, ¡bueno sería que se matasen a cada paso los del pueblo de la Reloja con quien se lo llama, ni los cazoleros, berenjeneros, ballenatos, jaboneros, ni los de otros nombres y apellidos que andan por ahí en boca de los muchachos y de gente de poco más a menos! ¡Bueno sería, por cierto, que todos estos insignes pueblos se corriesen y vengasen, y anduviesen contino hechas las espadas sacabuches a cualquier pendencia, por pequeña que fuese! No, no, ni Dios lo permita o quiera. Los varones prudentes, las repúblicas bien concertadas, por cuatro cosas han de tomar las armas y desenvainar las espadas, y poner a riesgo sus personas, vidas y haciendas: la primera, por defender la fe católica; la segunda, por defender su vida, que es de ley natural y divina; la tercera, en defensa de su honra, de su familia y hacienda; la cuarta, en servicio de su rey, en la guerra justa; y si le quisiéremos añadir la quinta, que se puede contar por segunda, es en defensa de su patria. A estas cinco causas, como capitales, se pueden agregar algunas otras que sean justas y razonables, y que obliguen a tomar las armas; pero tomarlas por niñerías y por cosas que antes son de risa y pasatiempo que de afrenta, parece que quien las toma carece de todo razonable discurso; cuanto más, que el tomar venganza injusta, que justa no puede haber alguna que lo sea, va derechamente contra la santa ley que profesamos, en la cual se nos manda que hagamos bien a nuestros enemigos y que amemos a los que nos aborrecen; mandamiento que, aunque parece algo dificultoso de cumplir, no lo es sino para aquellos que tienen menos de Dios que del mundo, y más de carne que de espíritu; porque Jesucristo, Dios y hombre verdadero, que nunca mintió, ni pudo ni puede mentir, siendo legislador nuestro, dijo que su yugo era suave y su carga liviana; y así, no nos había de mandar cosa que fuese imposible el cumplirla. Así que, mis señores, vuestas mercedes están obligados por leyes divinas y humanas

a sosegar-se.

-El diablo me lleve -dijo a esta sazón Sancho entre sí-si este mi amo no es tólogo; y si no lo es, que lo parece como un güevo a otro.

Tomó un poco de aliento don Quijote, y, viendo que todavía le prestaban silencio, quiso pasar adelante en su plática, como pasara si no se pusiere en medio la agudeza de Sancho, el cual, viendo que su amo se detenía, tomó la mano por él, diciendo:

-Mi señor don Quijote de la Mancha, que un tiempo se llamó el Caballero de la Triste Figura y ahora se llama el Caballero de los Leones, es un hidalgo muy atentado, que sabe latín y romance como un bachiller, y en todo cuanto trata y aconseja procede como muy buen soldado, y tiene todas las leyes y ordenanzas de lo que llaman el duelo en la uña; y así, no hay más que hacer sino dejarse llevar por lo que él dijere, y sobre mí si lo erraren; cuanto más, que ello se está dicho que es necedad correrse por sólo oír un rebuzno, que yo me acuerdo, cuando muchacho, que rebuznaba cada y cuando que se me antojaba, sin que nadie me fuese a la mano, y con tanta gracia y propiedad que, en rebuznando yo, rebuznaban todos los asnos del pueblo, y no por eso dejaba de ser hijo de mis padres, que eran honradísimos; y, aunque por esta habilidad era envidiado de más de cuatro de los estirados de mi pueblo, no se me daba dos ardites. Y, porque se vea que digo verdad, esperen y escuchen, que esta ciencia es como la del nadar: que, una vez aprendida, nunca se olvida.

Y luego, puesta la mano en las narices, comenzó a rebuznar tan reciamente, que todos los cercanos valles retumbaron. Pero uno de los que estaban junto a él, creyendo que hacía burla dellos, alzó un varapalo que en la mano tenía, y dióle tal golpe con él, que, sin ser poderoso a otra cosa, dio con Sancho Panza en el suelo. Don Quijote, que vio tan malparado a Sancho, arremetió al que le había dado, con la lanza sobre mano, pero fueron tantos los que se pusieron en medio, que no fue posible vengarle; antes, viendo que llovía sobre él un nublado de piedras, y que le amenazaban mil encaradas ballestas y no menos cantidad de arcabuces, volvió las riendas a Rocinante, y a todo lo que su galope pudo, se salió de entre ellos, encomendándose de todo corazón a Dios, que de aquel peligro le librase, temiendo a cada paso no le entrase alguna bala por las espaldas y le saliese al pecho; y a cada punto recogía el aliento, por ver si le faltaba.

Pero los del escuadrón se contentaron con verle huir, sin tirarle. A Sancho le pusieron sobre su jumento, apenas vuelto en sí, y le dejaron ir tras su amo, no porque él tuviese sentido para regirle; pero el rucio siguió las huellas de Rocinante, sin el cual no se hallaba un punto. Alongado, pues, don Quijote buen trecho, volvió la cabeza y vio que Sancho venía, y atendióle, viendo que ninguno

le seguía.

Los del escuadrón se estuvieron allí hasta la noche, y, por no haber salido a la batalla sus contrarios, se volvieron a su pueblo, regocijados y alegres; y si ellos supieran la costumbre antigua de los griegos, levantarán en aquel lugar y sitio un trofeo.

## Capítulo XXVIII

*De cosas que dice Benengeli que las sabrá quien le leyere, si las lee con atención*

CUANDO el valiente huye, la superchería está descubierta, y es de varones prudentes guardarse para mejor ocasión. Esta verdad se verificó en don Quijote, el cual, dando lugar a la furia del pueblo y a las malas intenciones de aquel indignado escuadrón, puso pies en polvorosa, y, sin acordarse de Sancho ni del peligro en que le dejaba, se apartó tanto cuanto le pareció que bastaba para estar seguro. Seguía Sancho, atravesado en su jumento, como queda referido. Llegó, en fin, ya vuelto en su acuerdo, y al llegar, se dejó caer del rucio a los pies de Rocinante, todo ansioso, todo molido y todo apaleado. Apeóse don Quijote para catarle las heridas; pero, como le hallase sano de los pies a la cabeza, con asaz cólera le dijo:

-¡Tan en hora mala supistes vos rebuznar, Sancho! Y ¿dónde hallastes vos ser bueno el nombrar la sogá en casa del ahorcado? A música de rebuznos, ¿qué contrapunto se había de llevar sino de varapalos? Y dad gracias a Dios, Sancho, que ya que os santiguaron con un palo, no os hicieron el per signum crucis con un alfanje.

-No estoy para responder -respondió Sancho-, porque me parece que hablo por las espaldas. Subamos y apartémonos de aquí, que yo pondré silencio en mis rebuznos, pero no en dejar de decir que los caballeros andantes huyen, y dejan a sus buenos escuderos molidos como alheña, o como cibera, en poder de sus enemigos.

-No huye el que se retira -respondió don Quijote-, porque has de saber, Sancho, que la valentía que no se funda sobre la basa de la prudencia se llama temeridad, y las hazañas del temerario más se atribuyen a la buena fortuna que a su ánimo. Y así, yo confieso que me he retirado, pero no huido; y en esto he imitado a muchos valientes, que se han guardado para tiempos mejores, y desto están las historias llenas, las cuales, por no serte a ti de provecho ni a mí de gusto, no te las refiero ahora.

En esto, ya estaba a caballo Sancho, ayudado de don Quijote, el cual asimismo subió en Rocinante, y poco a poco se fueron a emboscar en una alameda que hasta un cuarto de legua de allí se parecía. De cuando en cuando daba Sancho unos ayes profundísimos y unos gemidos dolorosos; y, preguntándole don

Quijote la causa de tan amargo sentimiento, respondió que, desde la punta del espinazo hasta la nuca del cerebro, le dolía de manera que le sacaba de sentido.

-La causa dese dolor debe de ser, sin duda -dijo don Quijote-, que, como era el palo con que te dieron largo y tendido, te cogió todas las espaldas, donde entran todas esas partes que te duelen; y si más te cogiera, más te doliera.

-¡Por Dios -dijo Sancho-, que vuesa merced me ha sacado de una gran duda, y que me la ha declarado por lindos términos! ¡Cuerpo de mí! ¿Tan encubierta estaba la causa de mi dolor que ha sido menester decirme que me duele todo todo aquello que alcanzó el palo? Si me dolieran los tobillos, aún pudiera ser que se anduviera adivinando el porqué me dolían, pero dolerme lo que me molieron no es mucho adivinar. A la fe, señor nuestro amo, el mal ajeno de pelo cuelga, y cada día voy descubriendo tierra de lo poco que puedo esperar de la compañía que con vuestra merced tengo; porque si esta vez me ha dejado apalear, otra y otras ciento volveremos a los manteamientos de marras y a otras muchacherías, que si ahora me han salido a las espaldas, después me saldrán a los ojos. Harto mejor haría yo, sino que soy un bárbaro, y no haré nada que bueno sea en toda mi vida; harto mejor haría yo, vuelvo a decir, en volverme a mi casa, y a mi mujer, y a mis hijos, y sustentarla y criarlos con lo que Dios fue servido de darme, y no andarme tras vuesa merced por caminos sin camino y por sendas y carreras que no las tienen, bebiendo mal y comiendo peor. Pues, ¡tomadme el dormir! Contad, hermano escudero, siete pies de tierra, y si quisiéredes más, tomad otros tantos, que en vuestra mano está escudillar, y tendeos a todo vuestro buen talante; que quemado vea yo y hecho polvos al primero que dio puntada en la andante caballería, o, a lo menos, al primero que quiso ser escudero de tales tontos como debieron ser todos los caballeros andantes pasados. De los presentes no digo nada, que, por ser vuestra merced uno dellos, los tengo respeto, y porque sé que sabe vuesa merced un punto más que el diablo en cuanto habla y en cuanto piensa.

-Haría yo una buena apuesta con vos, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-: que ahora que vais hablando sin que nadie os vaya a la mano, que no os duele nada en todo vuestro cuerpo. Hablad, hijo mío, todo aquello que os viniere al pensamiento y a la boca; que, a trueco de que a vos no os duela nada, tendré yo por gusto el enfado que me dan vuestras impertinencias. Y si tanto deseáis volveros a vuestra casa con vuestra mujer y hijos, no permita Dios que yo os lo impida; dineros tenéis míos: mirad cuánto ha que esta tercera vez salimos de nuestro pueblo, y mirad lo que podéis y debéis ganar cada mes, y pagaos de vuestra mano.

-Cuando yo servía -respondió Sancho-a Tomé Carrasco, el padre del bachiller Sansón Carrasco, que vuestra merced bien conoce, dos ducados ganaba cada mes, amén de la comida; con vuestra merced no sé lo que puedo ganar, puesto

que sé que tiene más trabajo el escudero del caballero andante que el que sirve a un labrador; que, en resolución, los que servimos a labradores, por mucho que trabajemos de día, por mal que suceda, a la noche cenamos olla y dormimos en cama, en la cual no he dormido después que ha que sirvo a vuestra merced. Si no ha sido el tiempo breve que estuvimos en casa de don Diego de Miranda, y la jira que tuve con la espuma que saqué de las ollas de Camacho, y lo que comí y bebí y dormí en casa de Basilio, todo el otro tiempo he dormido en la dura tierra, al cielo abierto, sujeto a lo que dicen inclemencias del cielo, sustentándome con rajas de queso y mendrugos de pan, y bebiendo aguas, ya de arroyos, ya de fuentes, de las que encontramos por esos andurriales donde andamos.

-Confieso -dijo don Quijote-que todo lo que dices, Sancho, sea verdad. ¿Cuánto parece que os debo dar más de lo que os daba Tomé Carrasco?

-A mi parecer -dijo Sancho-, con dos reales más que vuestra merced añadiese cada mes me tendría por bien pagado. Esto es cuanto al salario de mi trabajo; pero, en cuanto a satisfacerme a la palabra y promesa que vuestra merced me tiene hecha de darme el gobierno de una ínsula, sería justo que se me añadiesen otros seis reales, que por todos serían treinta.

-Está muy bien -replicó don Quijote-; y, conforme al salario que vos os habéis señalado, 25 días ha que salimos de nuestro pueblo: contad, Sancho, rata por cantidad, y mirad lo que os debo, y pagaos, como os tengo dicho, de vuestra mano.

-¡Oh, cuerpo de mí! -dijo Sancho-, que va vuestra merced muy errado en esta cuenta, porque en lo de la promesa de la ínsula se ha de contar desde el día que vuestra merced me la prometió hasta la presente hora en que estamos.

-Pues, ¿qué tanto ha, Sancho, que os la prometí? -dijo don Quijote.

-Si yo mal no me acuerdo -respondió Sancho-, debe de haber más de veinte años, tres días más a menos.

Diose don Quijote una gran palmada en la frente, y comenzó a reír muy de gana, y dijo:

-Pues no anduve yo en Sierra Morena, ni en todo el discurso de nuestras salidas, sino dos meses apenas, y ¿dices, Sancho, que ha veinte años que te prometí la ínsula? Ahora digo que quieres que se consuman en tus salarios el dinero que tienes mío; y si esto es así, y tú gustas dello, desde aquí te lo doy, y buen provecho te haga; que, a trueco de verme sin tan mal escudero, holgaréme de quedarme pobre y sin blanca. Pero dime, prevaricador de las ordenanzas escuderiles de la andante caballería, ¿dónde has visto tú, o leído, que ningún escudero de caballero andante se haya puesto con su señor en tanto más cuánto me habéis de dar cada mes porque os sirva? Éntrate, éntrate, malandrín, follón y vestiglo, que todo lo pareces; éntrate, digo, por el mare magnum de sus historias,

y si hallares que algún escudero haya dicho, ni pensado, lo que aquí has dicho, quiero que me le claves en la frente, y, por añadidura, me hagas cuatro mamonas selladas en mi rostro. Vuelve las riendas, o el cabestro, al rucio, y vuélvete a tu casa, porque un solo paso desde aquí no has de pasar más adelante conmigo. ¡Oh pan mal conocido! ¡Oh promesas mal colocadas! ¡Oh hombre que tiene más de bestia que de persona! ¿Ahora, cuando yo pensaba ponerte en estado, y tal, que a pesar de tu mujer te llamaran señoría, te despides? ¿Ahora te vas, cuando yo venía con intención firme y valedera de hacerte señor de la mejor ínsula del mundo? En fin, como tú has dicho otras veces, no es la miel *etc.* Asno eres, y asno has de ser, y en asno has de parar cuando se te acabe el curso de la vida; que para mí tengo que antes llegará ella a su último término que tú caigas y des en la cuenta de que eres bestia.

Miraba Sancho a don Quijote de en hito en hito, en tanto que los tales vituperios le decía, y compungióse de manera que le vinieron las lágrimas a los ojos, y con voz dolorida y enferma le dijo:

-Señor mío, yo confieso que para ser del todo asno no me falta más de la cola; si vuestra merced quiere ponérmela, yo la daré por bien puesta, y le serviré como jumento todos los días que me quedan de mi vida. Vuestra merced me perdone y se duela de mi mocedad, y advierta que sé poco, y que si hablo mucho, más procede de enfermedad que de malicia; mas, quien yerra y se enmienda, a Dios se encomienda.

-Maravillárame yo, Sancho, si no mezclaras algún refrancico en tu coloquio. Ahora bien, yo te perdono, con que te emiendes, y con que no te muestres de aquí adelante tan amigo de tu interés, sino que procures ensanchar el corazón, y te alientes y animes a esperar el cumplimiento de mis promesas, que, aunque se tarda, no se imposibilita.

Sancho respondió que sí haría, aunque sacase fuerzas de flaqueza.

Con esto, se metieron en la alameda, y don Quijote se acomodó al pie de un olmo, y Sancho al de una haya; que estos tales árboles y otros sus semejantes siempre tienen pies, y no manos. Sancho pasó la noche penosamente, porque el varapalo se hacía más sentir con el sereno. Don Quijote la pasó en sus continuas memorias; pero, con todo eso, dieron los ojos al sueño, y al salir del alba siguieron su camino buscando las riberas del famoso Ebro, donde les sucedió lo que se contará en el capítulo venidero.

## Capítulo XXIX

### *De la famosa aventura del barco encantado*

POR SUS pasos contados y por contar, dos días después que salieron de la alameda, llegaron don Quijote y Sancho al río Ebro, y el verle fue de gran gusto a don Quijote, porque contempló y miró en él la amenidad de sus riberas, la claridad de sus aguas, el sosiego de su curso y la abundancia de sus líquidos cristales, cuya alegre vista renovó en su memoria mil amorosos pensamientos. Especialmente fue y vino en lo que había visto en la cueva de Montesinos; que, puesto que el mono de maese Pedro le había dicho que parte de aquellas cosas eran verdad y parte mentira, él se atenía más a las verdaderas que a las mentirosas, bien al revés de Sancho, que todas las tenía por la misma mentira.

Yendo, pues, desta manera, se le ofreció a la vista un pequeño barco sin remos ni otras jarcias algunas, que estaba atado en la orilla a un tronco de un árbol que en la ribera estaba. Miró don Quijote a todas partes, y no vio persona alguna; y luego, sin más ni más, se apeó de Rocinante y mandó a Sancho que lo mismo hiciese del rucio, y que a entrambas bestias las atase muy bien, juntas, al tronco de un álamo o sauce que allí estaba. Preguntóle Sancho la causa de aquel súbito apeamiento y de aquel ligamiento. Respondió don Quijote:

-Has de saber, Sancho, que este barco que aquí está, derechamente y sin poder ser otra cosa en contrario, me está llamando y convidando a que entre en él, y vaya en él a dar socorro a algún caballero, o a otra necesitada y principal persona, que debe de estar puesta en alguna grande cuita, porque éste es estilo de los libros de las historias caballerescas y de los encantadores que en ellas se entremeten y platican: cuando algún caballero está puesto en algún trabajo, que no puede ser librado dél sino por la mano de otro caballero, puesto que estén distantes el uno del otro dos o tres mil leguas, y aun más, o le arrebatan en una nube o le deparan un barco donde se entre, y en menos de un abrir y cerrar de ojos le llevan, o por los aires, o por la mar, donde quieren y adonde es menester su ayuda; así que, ¡oh Sancho!, este barco está puesto aquí para el mismo efecto; y esto es tan verdad como es ahora de día; y antes que éste se pase, ata juntos al rucio y a Rocinante, y a la mano de Dios, que nos guíe, que no dejaré de embarcarme si me lo pidiesen frailes descalzos.

-Pues así es -respondió Sancho-, y vuestra merced quiere dar a cada paso en estos que no sé si los llame disparates, no hay sino obedecer y bajar la cabeza,



atendiendo al refrán «haz lo que tu amo te manda, y siéntate con él a la mesa»; pero, con todo esto, por lo que toca al descargo de mi conciencia, quiero advertir a vuestra merced que a mí me parece que este tal barco no es de los encantados, sino de algunos pescadores deste río, porque en él se pescan las mejores sabogas del mundo.

Esto decía, mientras ataba las bestias, Sancho, dejándolas a la protección y amparo de los encantadores, con harto dolor de su ánima. Don Quijote le dijo que no tuviese pena del desamparo de aquellos animales, que el que los llevaría a ellos por tan longincuos caminos y regiones tendría cuenta de sustentarlos.

-No entiendo eso de *logicuos* -dijo Sancho-, ni he oído tal vocablo en todos los días de mi vida.

-*Longincuos* -respondió don Quijote-quiere decir *apartados*; y no es maravilla que no lo entiendas, que no estás tú obligado a saber latín, como algunos que presumen que lo saben, y lo ignoran.

-Ya están atados -replicó Sancho-. ¿Qué hemos de hacer ahora?

-¿Qué? -respondió don Quijote-. Santiguarnos y levar ferro; quiero decir, embarcarnos y cortar la amarra con que este barco está atado.

Y, dando un salto en él, siguiéndole Sancho, cortó el cordel, y el barco se fue apartando poco a poco de la ribera; y cuando Sancho se vio obra de dos varas dentro del río, comenzó a temblar, temiendo su perdición; pero ninguna cosa le dio más pena que el oír rozar al rucio y el ver que Rocinante pugnaba por desatarse, y díjole a su señor:

-El rucio rebuzna, condolido de nuestra ausencia, y Rocinante procura ponerse en libertad para arrojarse tras nosotros. ¡Oh carísimos amigos, quedaos en paz, y la locura que nos aparta de vosotros, convertida en desengaño, nos vuelva a vuestra presencia!

Y, en esto, comenzó a llorar tan amargamente que don Quijote, mohíno y colérico, le dijo:

-¿De qué temes, cobarde criatura? ¿De qué lloras, corazón de mantequillas? ¿Quién te persigue, o quién te acosa, ánimo de ratón casero, o qué te falta, menesteroso en la mitad de las entrañas de la abundancia? ¿Por dicha vas caminando a pie y descalzo por las montañas rifeas, sino sentado en una tabla, como un archiduque, por el sesgo curso deste agradable río, de donde en breve espacio saldremos al mar dilatado? Pero ya hemos de haber salido, y caminado, por lo menos, setecientas o ochocientas leguas; y si yo tuviera aquí un astrolabio con que tomar la altura del polo, yo te dijera las que hemos caminado; aunque, o yo sé poco, o ya hemos pasado, o pasaremos presto, por la línea equinocial, que divide y corta los dos contrapuestos polos en igual distancia.

-Y cuando lleguemos a esa leña que vuestra merced dice -preguntó Sancho-,

¿cuánto habremos caminado?

-Mucho -replicó don Quijote-, porque de trecientos y sesenta grados que contiene el globo, del agua y de la tierra, según el cómputo de Ptolomeo, que fue el mayor cosmógrafo que se sabe, la mitad habremos caminado, llegando a la línea que he dicho.

-Por Dios -dijo Sancho-, que vuesa merced me trae por testigo de lo que dice a una gentil persona, puto y gafo, con la añadidura de meón, o meo, o no sé cómo.

Rióse don Quijote de la interpretación que Sancho había dado al nombre y al cómputo y cuenta del cosmógrafo Ptolomeo, y díjole:

-Sabrás, Sancho, que los españoles y los que se embarcan en Cádiz para ir a las Indias Orientales, una de las señales que tienen para entender que han pasado la línea equinocial que te he dicho es que a todos los que van en el navío se les mueren los piojos, sin que les quede ninguno, ni en todo el bajel le hallarán, si le pesan a oro; y así, puedes, Sancho, pasear una mano por un muslo, y si topares cosa viva, saldremos desta duda; y si no, pasado habemos.

-Yo no creo nada deso -respondió Sancho-, pero, con todo, haré lo que vuesa merced me manda, aunque no sé para qué hay necesidad de hacer esas experiencias, pues yo veo con mis mismos ojos que no nos habemos apartado de la ribera cinco varas, ni hemos decantado de donde están las alemañas dos varas, porque allí están Rocinante y el rucio en el propio lugar do los dejamos; y tomada la mira, como yo la tomo ahora, voto a tal que no nos movemos ni andamos al paso de una hormiga.

-Haz, Sancho, la averiguación que te he dicho, y no te cures de otra, que tú no sabes qué cosa sean coluros, líneas, paralelos, zodíacos, clíticas, polos, solsticios, equinocios, planetas, signos, puntos, medidas, de que se compone la esfera celeste y terrestre; que si todas estas cosas supieras, o parte dellas, vieras claramente qué de paralelos hemos cortado, qué de signos visto y qué de imágenes hemos dejado atrás y vamos dejando ahora. Y tórnote a decir que te tientes y pesques, que yo para mí tengo que estás más limpio que un pliego de papel liso y blanco.

Tentóse Sancho, y, llegando con la mano bonitamente y con tiento hacia la corva izquierda, alzó la cabeza y miró a su amo, y dijo:

-O la experiencia es falsa, o no hemos llegado adonde vuesa merced dice, ni con muchas leguas.

-Pues ¿qué? -preguntó don Quijote-, ¿has topado algo?

-¡Y aun algos! -respondió Sancho.

Y, sacudiéndose los dedos, se lavó toda la mano en el río, por el cual sosegadamente se deslizaba el barco por mitad de la corriente, sin que le moviese alguna inteligencia secreta, ni algún encantador escondido, sino el

mismo curso del agua, blando entonces y suave.

En esto, descubrieron unas grandes aceñas que en la mitad del río estaban; y apenas las hubo visto don Quijote, cuando con voz alta dijo a Sancho:

-¿Vees? Allí, ¡oh amigo!, se descubre la ciudad, castillo o fortaleza donde debe de estar algún caballero oprimido, o alguna reina, infanta o princesa malparada, para cuyo socorro soy aquí traído.

-¿Qué diablos de ciudad, fortaleza o castillo dice vuesa merced, señor? -dijo Sancho-. ¿No echa de ver que aquéllas son aceñas que están en el río, donde se muele el trigo?

-Calla, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-; que, aunque parecen aceñas, no lo son; y ya te he dicho que todas las cosas trastruecan y mudan de su ser natural los encantos. No quiero decir que las mudan de en uno en otro ser realmente, sino que lo parece, como lo mostró la experiencia en la transformación de Dulcinea, único refugio de mis esperanzas.

En esto, el barco, entrado en la mitad de la corriente del río, comenzó a caminar no tan lentamente como hasta allí. Los molineros de las aceñas, que vieron venir aquel barco por el río, y que se iba a embocar por el raudal de las ruedas, salieron con presteza muchos dellos con varas largas a detenerle, y, como salían enharinados, y cubiertos los rostros y los vestidos del polvo de la harina, representaban una mala vista. Daban voces grandes, diciendo:

-¡Demonios de hombres! ¿Dónde vais? ¿Venís desesperados? ¿Qué queréis, ahogaros y haceros pedazos en estas ruedas?

-¿No te dije yo, Sancho -dijo a esta sazón don Quijote-, que habíamos llegado donde he de mostrar a dó llega el valor de mi brazo? Mira qué de malandrines y follones me salen al encuentro, mira cuántos vestiglos se me oponen, mira cuántas feas cataduras nos hacen cocos... Pues ¡ahora lo veréis, bellacos!

Y, puesto en pie en el barco, con grandes voces comenzó a amenazar a los molineros, diciéndoles:

-Canalla malvada y peor aconsejada, dejad en su libertad y libre albedrío a la persona que en esa vuestra fortaleza o prisión tenéis oprimida, alta o baja, de cualquiera suerte o calidad que sea, que yo soy don Quijote de la Mancha, llamado el Caballero de los Leones por otro nombre, a quien está reservada por orden de los altos cielos el dar fin felice a esta aventura.

Y, diciendo esto, echó mano a su espada y comenzó a esgrimirla en el aire contra los molineros; los cuales, oyendo y no entendiendo aquellas sandeces, se pusieron con sus varas a detener el barco, que ya iba entrando en el raudal y canal de las ruedas.

Púsose Sancho de rodillas, pidiendo devotamente al cielo le librase de tan manifiesto peligro, como lo hizo, por la industria y presteza de los molineros,

que, oponiéndose con sus palos al barco, le detuvieron, pero no de manera que dejasen de trastornar el barco y dar con don Quijote y con Sancho al través en el agua; pero vínole bien a don Quijote, que sabía nadar como un ganso, aunque el peso de las armas le llevó al fondo dos veces; y si no fuera por los molineros, que se arrojaron al agua y los sacaron como en peso a entrambos, allí había sido Troya para los dos.

Puestos, pues, en tierra, más mojados que muertos de sed, Sancho, puesto de rodillas, las manos juntas y los ojos clavados al cielo, pidió a Dios con una larga y devota plegaria le librase de allí adelante de los atrevidos deseos y acometimientos de su señor.

Llegaron en esto los pescadores dueños del barco, a quien habían hecho pedazos las ruedas de las aceñas; y, viéndole roto, acometieron a desnudar a Sancho, y a pedir a don Quijote se lo pagase; el cual, con gran sosiego, como si no hubiera pasado nada por él, dijo a los molineros y pescadores que él pagaría el barco de bonísima gana, con condición que le diesen libre y sin cautela a la persona o personas que en aquel su castillo estaban oprimidas.

-¿Qué personas o qué castillo dice -respondió uno de los molineros-, hombre sin juicio? ¿Quiéreste llevar por ventura las que vienen a moler trigo a estas aceñas?

-¡Basta! -dijo entre sí don Quijote-. Aquí será predicar en desierto querer reducir a esta canalla a que por ruegos haga virtud alguna. Y en esta aventura se deben de haber encontrado dos valientes encantadores, y el uno estorba lo que el otro intenta: el uno me deparó el barco, y el otro dio conmigo al través. Dios lo remedie, que todo este mundo es máquinas y trazas, contrarias unas de otras. Yo no puedo más.

Y, alzando la voz, prosiguió diciendo, y mirando a las aceñas:

-Amigos, cualesquiera que seáis, que en esa prisión quedáis encerrados, perdonadme; que, por mi desgracia y por la vuestra, yo no os puedo sacar de vuestra cuita. Para otro caballero debe de estar guardada y reservada esta aventura.

En diciendo esto, se concertó con los pescadores, y pagó por el barco cincuenta reales, que los dio Sancho de muy mala gana, diciendo:

-A dos barcadas como éstas, daremos con todo el caudal al fondo.

Los pescadores y molineros estaban admirados, mirando aquellas dos figuras tan fuera del uso, al parecer, de los otros hombres, y no acababan de entender a dó se encaminaban las razones y preguntas que don Quijote les decía; y, teniéndolos por locos, les dejaron y se recogieron a sus aceñas, y los pescadores a sus ranchos. Volvieron a sus bestias, y a ser bestias, don Quijote y Sancho, y este fin tuvo la aventura del encantado barco.

## Capítulo XXX

*De lo que le avino a don Quijote con una bella cazadora*

ASAZ melancólicos y de mal talante llegaron a sus animales caballero y escudero, especialmente Sancho, a quien llegaba al alma llegar al caudal del dinero, pareciéndole que todo lo que dél se quitaba era quitárselo a él de las niñas de sus ojos. Finalmente, sin hablarse palabra, se pusieron a caballo y se apartaron del famoso río, don Quijote sepultado en los pensamientos de sus amores, y Sancho en los de su acrecentamiento, que por entonces le parecía que estaba bien lejos de tenerle; porque, maguer era tonto, bien se le alcanzaba que las acciones de su amo, todas o las más, eran disparates, y buscaba ocasión de que, sin entrar en cuentas ni en despedimientos con su señor, un día se desgarrase y se fuese a su casa. Pero la fortuna ordenó las cosas muy al revés de lo que él temía.

Sucedió, pues, que otro día, al poner del sol y al salir de una selva, tendió don Quijote la vista por un verde prado, y en lo último dél vio gente, y, llegándose cerca, conoció que eran cazadores de altanería. Llegóse más, y entre ellos vio una gallarda señora sobre un palafrén o hacanea blanquísima, adornada de guarniciones verdes y con un sillón de plata. Venía la señora asimismo vestida de verde, tan bizarra y ricamente que la misma bizarría venía transformada en ella. En la mano izquierda traía un azor, señal que dio a entender a don Quijote ser aquélla alguna gran señora, que debía serlo de todos aquellos cazadores, como era la verdad; y así, dijo a Sancho:

-Corre, hijo Sancho, y di a aquella señora del palafrén y del azor que yo, el Caballero de los Leones, besa las manos a su gran fermosura, y que si su grandeza me da licencia, se las iré a besar, y a servirla en cuanto mis fuerzas pudieren y su alteza me mandare. Y mira, Sancho, cómo hablas, y ten cuenta de no encajar algún refrán de los tuyos en tu embajada.

-¡Hallado os le habéis el encajador! -respondió Sancho-. ¡A mí con eso! ¡Sí, que no es ésta la vez primera que he llevado embajadas a altas y crecidas señoras en esta vida!

-Si no fue la que llevaste a la señora Dulcinea -replicó don Quijote-, yo no sé que hayas llevado otra, a lo menos en mi poder.

-Así es verdad -respondió Sancho-, pero al buen pagador no le duelen prendas, y en casa llena presto se guisa la cena; quiero decir que a mí no hay que decirme

ni advertirme de nada, que para todo tengo y de todo se me alcanza un poco.

-Yo lo creo, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-; ve en buena hora, y Dios te guíe.

Partió Sancho de carrera, sacando de su paso al rucio, y llegó donde la bella cazadora estaba, y, apeándose, puesto ante ella de hinojos, le dijo:

-Hermosa señora, aquel caballero que allí se parece, llamado el Caballero de los Leones, es mi amo, y yo soy un escudero suyo, a quien llaman en su casa Sancho Panza. Este tal Caballero de los Leones, que no ha mucho que se llamaba el de la Triste Figura, envía por mí a decir a vuestra grandeza sea servida de darle licencia para que, con su propósito y beneplácito y consentimiento, él venga a poner en obra su deseo, que no es otro, según él dice y yo pienso, que de servir a vuestra encumbrada altanería y fermosura; que en dársela vuestra señoría hará cosa que redunde en su pro, y él recibirá señaladísima merced y contento.

-Por cierto, buen escudero -respondió la señora-, vos habéis dado la embajada vuestra con todas aquellas circunstancias que las tales embajadas piden. Levantaos del suelo, que escudero de tan gran caballero como es el de la Triste Figura, de quien ya tenemos acá mucha noticia, no es justo que esté de hinojos; levantaos, amigo, y decid a vuestro señor que venga mucho en hora buena a servirse de mí y del duque mi marido, en una casa de placer que aquí tenemos.

Levantóse Sancho admirado, así de la hermosura de la buena señora como de su mucha crianza y cortesía, y más de lo que le había dicho que tenía noticia de su señor el Caballero de la Triste Figura, y que si no le había llamado el de los Leones, debía de ser por habersele puesto tan nuevamente. Preguntóle la duquesa, cuyo título aún no se sabe:

-Decidme, hermano escudero: este vuestro señor, ¿no es uno de quien anda impresa una historia que se llama *del ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*, que tiene por señora de su alma a una tal Dulcinea del Toboso?

-El mismo es, señora -respondió Sancho-; y aquel escudero suyo que anda, o debe de andar, en la tal historia, a quien llaman Sancho Panza, soy yo, si no es que me trocaron en la cuna; quiero decir, que me trocaron en la estampa.

-De todo eso me huelgo yo mucho -dijo la duquesa-. Id, hermano Panza, y decid a vuestro señor que él sea el bien llegado y el bien venido a mis estados, y que ninguna cosa me pudiera venir que más contento me diera.

Sancho, con esta tan agradable respuesta, con grandísimo gusto volvió a su amo, a quien contó todo lo que la gran señora le había dicho, levantando con sus rústicos términos a los cielos su mucha fermosura, su gran donaire y cortesía. Don Quijote se gallardeó en la silla, púsose bien en los estribos, acomodóse la visera, arremetió a Rocinante, y con gentil denuedo fue a besar las manos a la duquesa; la cual, haciendo llamar al duque, su marido, le contó, en tanto que don

Quijote llegaba, toda la embajada suya; y los dos, por haber leído la primera parte desta historia y haber entendido por ella el disparatado humor de don Quijote, con grandísimo gusto y con deseo de conocerle le atendían, con propuesto de seguirle el humor y conceder con él en cuanto les dijese, tratándole como a caballero andante los días que con ellos se detuviese, con todas las ceremonias acostumbradas en los libros de caballerías, que ellos habían leído, y aun les eran muy aficionados.

En esto, llegó don Quijote, alzada la visera; y, dando muestras de apearse, acudió Sancho a tenerle el estribo; pero fue tan desgraciado que, al apearse del rucio, se le asió un pie en una sogá del albarda, de tal modo que no fue posible desenredarle, antes quedó colgado dél, con la boca y los pechos en el suelo. Don Quijote, que no tenía en costumbre apearse sin que le tuviesen el estribo, pensando que ya Sancho había llegado a tenersele, descargó de golpe el cuerpo, y llevóse tras sí la silla de Rocinante, que debía de estar mal cinchado, y la silla y él vinieron al suelo, no sin vergüenza suya y de muchas maldiciones que entre dientes echó al desdichado de Sancho, que aún todavía tenía el pie en la corma.

El duque mandó a sus cazadores que acudiesen al caballero y al escudero, los cuales levantaron a don Quijote maltrecho de la caída, y, renqueando y como pudo, fue a hincar las rodillas ante los dos señores; pero el duque no lo consintió en ninguna manera, antes, apeándose de su caballo, fue a abrazar a don Quijote, diciéndole:

-A mí me pesa, señor Caballero de la Triste Figura, que la primera que vuesa merced ha hecho en mi tierra haya sido tan mala como se ha visto; pero descuidos de escuderos suelen ser causa de otros peores sucesos.

-El que yo he tenido en veros, valeroso príncipe -respondió don Quijote-, es imposible ser malo, aunque mi caída no parara hasta el profundo de los abismos, pues de allí me levantara y me sacara la gloria de haberos visto. Mi escudero, que Dios maldiga, mejor desata la lengua para decir malicias que ata y cincha una silla para que esté firme; pero, comoquiera que yo me halle, caído o levantado, a pie o a caballo, siempre estaré al servicio vuestro y al de mi señora la duquesa, digna consorte vuestra, y digna señora de la hermosura y universal princesa de la cortesía.

-¡Pasito, mi señor don Quijote de la Mancha! -dijo el duque-, que adonde está mi señora doña Dulcinea del Toboso no es razón que se alaben otras ferosuras.

Ya estaba a esta sazón libre Sancho Panza del lazo, y, hallándose allí cerca, antes que su amo respondiese, dijo:

-No se puede negar, sino afirmar, que es muy hermosa mi señora Dulcinea del Toboso, pero donde menos se piensa se levanta la liebre; que yo he oído decir que esto que llaman naturaleza es como un alcarrer que hace vasos de barro, y el

que hace un vaso hermoso también puede hacer dos, y tres y ciento; dígolo porque mi señora la duquesa a fee que no va en zaga a mi ama la señora Dulcinea del Toboso.

Volvióse don Quijote a la duquesa y dijo:

-Vuestra grandeza imagine que no tuvo caballero andante en el mundo escudero más hablador ni más gracioso del que yo tengo, y él me sacará verdadero si algunos días quisiere vuestra gran celsitud servirse de mí.

A lo que respondió la duquesa:

-De que Sancho el bueno sea gracioso lo estimo yo en mucho, porque es señal que es discreto; que las gracias y los donaires, señor don Quijote, como vuesa merced bien sabe, no asientan sobre ingenios torpes; y, pues el buen Sancho es gracioso y donairoso, desde aquí le confirmo por discreto.

-Y hablador -añadió don Quijote.

-Tanto que mejor -dijo el duque-, porque muchas gracias no se pueden decir con pocas palabras. Y, porque no se nos vaya el tiempo en ellas, venga el gran Caballero de la Triste Figura...

-De los Leones ha de decir vuestra alteza -dijo Sancho-, que ya no hay Triste Figura, ni figuro.

-Sea el de los Leones -prosiguió el duque-. Digo que venga el señor Caballero de los Leones a un castillo mío que está aquí cerca, donde se le hará el acogimiento que a tan alta persona se debe justamente, y el que yo y la duquesa solemos hacer a todos los caballeros andantes que a él llegan.

Ya en esto, Sancho había aderezado y cinchado bien la silla a Rocinante; y, subiendo en él don Quijote, y el duque en un hermoso caballo, pusieron a la duquesa en medio y encaminaron al castillo. Mandó la duquesa a Sancho que fuese junto a ella, porque gustaba infinito de oír sus discreciones. No se hizo de rogar Sancho, y entretejióse entre los tres, y hizo cuarto en la conversación, con gran gusto de la duquesa y del duque, que tuvieron a gran ventura acoger en su castillo tal caballero andante y tal escudero andado.



## Capítulo XXXI

*Que trata de muchas y grandes cosas*

SUMA era la alegría que llevaba consigo Sancho, viéndose, a su parecer, en privanza con la duquesa, porque se le figuraba que había de hallar en su castillo lo que en la casa de don Diego y en la de Basilio, siempre aficionado a la buena vida; y así, tomaba la ocasión por la melena en esto del regalarse cada y cuando que se le ofrecía.

Cuenta, pues, la historia, que antes que a la casa de placer o castillo llegasen, se adelantó el duque y dio orden a todos sus criados del modo que habían de tratar a don Quijote; el cual, como llegó con la duquesa a las puertas del castillo, al instante salieron dél dos lacayos o palafreneros, vestidos hasta en pies de unas ropas que llaman de levantar, de finísimo raso carmesí, y, cogiendo a don Quijote en brazos, sin ser oído ni visto, le dijeron:

-Vaya la vuestra grandeza a apearse a mi señora la duquesa.

Don Quijote lo hizo, y hubo grandes comedimientos entre los dos sobre el caso; pero, en efecto, venció la porfía de la duquesa, y no quiso decender o bajar del palafrén sino en los brazos del duque, diciendo que no se hallaba digna de dar a tan gran caballero tan inútil carga. En fin, salió el duque a apearse; y al entrar en un gran patio, llegaron dos hermosas doncellas y echaron sobre los hombros a don Quijote un gran mantón de finísima escarlata, y en un instante se coronaron todos los corredores del patio de criados y criadas de aquellos señores, diciendo a grandes voces:

-¡Bien sea venido la flor y la nata de los caballeros andantes!

Y todos, o los más, derramaban pomos de aguas olorosas sobre don Quijote y sobre los duques, de todo lo cual se admiraba don Quijote; y aquél fue el primer día que de todo en todo conoció y creyó ser caballero andante verdadero, y no fantástico, viéndose tratar del mismo modo que él había leído se trataban los tales caballeros en los pasados siglos.

Sancho, desamparando al rucio, se cosió con la duquesa y se entró en el castillo; y, remordiéndole la conciencia de que dejaba al jumento solo, se llegó a una reverenda dueña, que con otras a recibir a la duquesa había salido, y con voz baja le dijo:

-Señora González, o como es su gracia de vuesa merced...

-Doña Rodríguez de Grijalba me llamo -respondió la dueña-. ¿Qué es lo que

mandáis, hermano?

A lo que respondió Sancho:

-Querría que vuesa merced me la hiciese de salir a la puerta del castillo, donde hallará un asno rucio mío; vuesa merced sea servida de mandarle poner, o ponerle, en la caballeriza, porque el pobrecito es un poco medroso, y no se hallará a estar solo en ninguna de las maneras.

-Si tan discreto es el amo como el mozo -respondió la dueña-, ¡medradas estamos! Andad, hermano, mucho de enhoramala para vos y para quien acá os trujo, y tened cuenta con vuestro jumento, que las dueñas desta casa no estamos acostumbradas a semejantes haciendas.

-Pues en verdad -respondió Sancho-que he oído yo decir a mi señor, que es zahorí de las historias, contando aquella de Lanzarote,

cuando de Bretaña vino,  
que damas curaban dél,  
y dueñas del su rocino;

y que en el particular de mi asno, que no le trocara yo con el rocín del señor Lanzarote.

-Hermano, si sois juglar -replicó la dueña-, guardad vuestras gracias para donde lo parezcan y se os paguen, que de mi no podréis llevar sino una higa.

-¡Aun bien -respondió Sancho-que será bien madura, pues no perderá vuesa merced la quínola de sus años por punto menos!

-Hijo de puta -dijo la dueña, toda ya encendida en cólera-, si soy vieja o no, a Dios daré la cuenta, que no a vos, bellaco, harto de ajos.

Y esto dijo en voz tan alta, que lo oyó la duquesa; y, volviendo y viendo a la dueña tan alborotada y tan encarnizados los ojos, le preguntó con quién las había.

-Aquí las he -respondió la dueña-con este buen hombre, que me ha pedido encarecidamente que vaya a poner en la caballeriza a un asno suyo que está a la puerta del castillo, trayéndome por ejemplo que así lo hicieron no sé dónde, que unas damas curaron a un tal Lanzarote, y unas dueñas a su rocino; y, sobre todo, por buen término me ha llamado vieja.

-Eso tuviera yo por afrenta -respondió la duquesa-, más que cuantas pudieran decirme.

Y, hablando con Sancho, le dijo:

-Advertid, Sancho amigo, que doña Rodríguez es muy moza, y que aquellas

tocas más las trae por autoridad y por la usanza que por los años.

-Malos sean los que me quedan por vivir -respondió Sancho-, si lo dije por tanto; sólo lo dije porque es tan grande el cariño que tengo a mi jumento, que me pareció que no podía encomendarle a persona más caritativa que a la señora doña Rodríguez.

Don Quijote, que todo lo oía, le dijo:

-¿Pláticas son éstas, Sancho, para este lugar?

-Señor -respondió Sancho-, cada uno ha de hablar de su menester dondequiera que estuviere; aquí se me acordó del rucio, y aquí hablé dél; y si en la caballeriza se me acordara, allí hablara.

A lo que dijo el duque:

-Sancho está muy en lo cierto, y no hay que culparle en nada; al rucio se le dará recado a pedir de boca, y descuide Sancho, que se le tratará como a su misma persona.

Con estos razonamientos, gustosos a todos sino a don Quijote, llegaron a lo alto y entraron a don Quijote en una sala adornada de telas riquísimas de oro y de brocado; seis doncellas le desarmaron y sirvieron de pajes, todas industriadas y advertidas del duque y de la duquesa de lo que habían de hacer, y de cómo habían de tratar a don Quijote, para que imaginase y viese que le trataban como caballero andante. Quedó don Quijote, después de desarmado, en sus estrechos greguescos y en su jubón de camuza, seco, alto, tendido, con las quijadas, que por de dentro se besaba la una con la otra; figura que, a no tener cuenta las doncellas que le servían con disimular la risa -que fue una de las precisas órdenes que sus señores les habían dado-, reventaran riendo.

Pidiéronle que se dejase desnudar para una camisa, pero nunca lo consintió, diciendo que la honestidad parecía tan bien en los caballeros andantes como la valentía. Con todo, dijo que diesen la camisa a Sancho, y, encerrándose con él en una cuadra donde estaba un rico lecho, se desnudó y vistió la camisa; y, viéndose solo con Sancho, le dijo:

-Dime, truhán moderno y majadero antiguo: ¿parécete bien deshonorar y afrentar a una dueña tan veneranda y tan digna de respeto como aquélla? ¿Tiempos eran aquéllos para acordarte del rucio, o señores son éstos para dejar mal pasar a las bestias, tratando tan elegantemente a sus dueños? Por quien Dios es, Sancho, que te reportes, y que no descubras la hilaza de manera que caigan en la cuenta de que eres de villana y grosera tela tejido. Mira, pecador de ti, que en tanto más es tenido el señor cuanto tiene más honrados y bien nacidos criados, y que una de las ventajas mayores que llevan los príncipes a los demás hombres es que se sirven de criados tan buenos como ellos. ¿No adviertes, angustiado de ti, y malaventurado de mí, que si veen que tú eres un grosero

villano, o un mentecato gracioso, pensarán que yo soy algún echacuervos, o algún caballero de mohatra? No, no, Sancho amigo, huye, huye destos inconvenientes, que quien tropieza en hablador y en gracioso, al primer puntapié cae y da en truhán desgraciado. Enfrena la lengua, considera y rumia las palabras antes que te salgan de la boca, y advierte que hemos llegado a parte donde, con el favor de Dios y valor de mi brazo, hemos de salir mejorados en tercio y quinto en fama y en hacienda.

Sancho le prometió con muchas veras de coserse la boca, o morderse la lengua, antes de hablar palabra que no fuese muy a propósito y bien considerada, como él se lo mandaba, y que descuidase acerca de lo tal, que nunca por él se descubriría quién ellos eran.

Vistióse don Quijote, púsose su tahalí con su espada, echóse el mantón de escarlata a cuestras, púsose una montera de raso verde que las doncellas le dieron, y con este adorno salió a la gran sala, adonde halló a las doncellas puestas en ala, tantas a una parte como a otra, y todas con aderezo de darle aguamanos, la cual le dieron con muchas reverencias y ceremonias.

Luego llegaron doce pajes con el maestresala, para llevarle a comer, que ya los señores le aguardaban. Cogieronle en medio, y, lleno de pompa y majestad, le llevaron a otra sala, donde estaba puesta una rica mesa con solos cuatro servicios. La duquesa y el duque salieron a la puerta de la sala a recibirle, y con ellos un grave eclesiástico, destos que gobiernan las casas de los príncipes; destos que, como no nacen príncipes, no aciertan a enseñar cómo lo han de ser los que lo son; destos que quieren que la grandeza de los grandes se mida con la estrechez de sus ánimos; destos que, queriendo mostrar a los que ellos gobiernan a ser limitados, les hacen ser miserables; destos tales, digo que debía de ser el grave religioso que con los duques salió a recibir a don Quijote. Hiciéronse mil cortesés comedimientos, y, finalmente, cogiendo a don Quijote en medio, se fueron a sentar a la mesa.

Convidó el duque a don Quijote con la cabecera de la mesa, y aunque él lo rehusó, las importunaciones del duque fueron tantas que la hubo de tomar. El eclesiástico se sentó frontero, y el duque y la duquesa a los dos lados.

A todo estaba presente Sancho, embobado y atónito de ver la honra que a su señor aquellos príncipes le hacían; y, viendo las muchas ceremonias y ruegos que pasaron entre el duque y don Quijote para hacerle sentar a la cabecera de la mesa, dijo:

-Si sus mercedes me dan licencia, les contaré un cuento que pasó en mi pueblo acerca de esto de los asientos.

Apenas hubo dicho esto Sancho, cuando don Quijote tembló, creyendo sin duda alguna que había de decir alguna necedad. Miróle Sancho y entendióle, y

dijo:

-No tema vuesa merced, señor mío, que yo me desmande, ni que diga cosa que no venga muy a pelo, que no se me han olvidado los consejos que poco ha vuesa merced me dio sobre el hablar mucho o poco, o bien o mal.

-Yo no me acuerdo de nada, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-; di lo que quisieres, como lo digas presto.

-Pues lo que quiero decir -dijo Sancho-es tan verdad, que mi señor don Quijote, que está presente, no me dejará mentir.

-Por mí -replicó don Quijote-, miente tú, Sancho, cuanto quisieres, que yo no te iré a la mano, pero mira lo que vas a decir.

-Tan mirado y remirado lo tengo, que a buen salvo está el que repica, como se verá por la obra.

-Bien será -dijo don Quijote-que vuestras grandezas manden echar de aquí a este tonto, que dirá mil patochadas.

-Por vida del duque -dijo la duquesa-, que no se ha de apartar de mí Sancho un punto: quiérole yo mucho, porque sé que es muy discreto.

-Discretos días -dijo Sancho-viva vuestra santidad por el buen crédito que de mí tiene, aunque en mí no lo haya. Y el cuento que quiero decir es éste: «Convidó un hidalgo de mi pueblo, muy rico y principal, porque venía de los Álamos de Medina del Campo, que casó con doña Mencía de Quiñones, que fue hija de don Alonso de Marañón, caballero del hábito de Santiago, que se ahogó en la Herradura, por quien hubo aquella pendencia años ha en nuestro lugar, que, a lo que entiendo, mi señor don Quijote se halló en ella, de donde salió herido Tomasillo el Travieso, el hijo de Balbastro el herrero...» ¿No es verdad todo esto, señor nuestro amo? Dígalo, por su vida, porque estos señores no me tengan por algún hablador mentiroso.

-Hasta ahora -dijo el eclesiástico-, más os tengo por hablador que por mentiroso, pero de aquí adelante no sé por lo que os tendré.

-Tú das tantos testigos, Sancho, y tantas señas, que no puedo dejar de decir que debes de decir verdad. Pasa adelante y acorta el cuento, porque llevas camino de no acabar en dos días.

-No ha de acortar tal -dijo la duquesa-, por hacerme a mí placer; antes, le ha de contar de la manera que le sabe, aunque no le acabe en seis días; que si tantos fuesen, serían para mí los mejores que hubiese llevado en mi vida.

-«Digo, pues, señores míos -prosiguió Sancho-, que este tal hidalgo, que yo conozco como a mis manos, porque no hay de mi casa a la suya un tiro de ballesta, convidó un labrador pobre, pero honrado.»

-Adelante, hermano -dijo a esta sazón el religioso-, que camino lleváis de no parar con vuestro cuento hasta el otro mundo.

-A menos de la mitad pararé, si Dios fuere servido -respondió Sancho-. «Y así, digo que, llegando el tal labrador a casa del dicho hidalgo convidador, que buen poso haya su ánima, que ya es muerto, y por más señas dicen que hizo una muerte de un ángel, que yo no me hallé presente, que había ido por aquel tiempo a segar a Tembleque...»

-Por vida vuestra, hijo, que volváis presto de Tembleque, y que, sin enterrar al hidalgo, si no queréis hacer más exequias, acabéis vuestro cuento.

-«Es, pues, el caso -replicó Sancho-que, estando los dos para asentarse a la mesa, que parece que ahora los veo más que nunca...»

Gran gusto recibían los duques del disgusto que mostraba tomar el buen religioso de la dilación y pausas con que Sancho contaba su cuento, y don Quijote se estaba consumiendo en cólera y en rabia.

-«Digo, así -dijo Sancho-, que, estando, como he dicho, los dos para sentarse a la mesa, el labrador porfiaba con el hidalgo que tomase la cabecera de la mesa, y el hidalgo porfiaba también que el labrador la tomase, porque en su casa se había de hacer lo que él mandase; pero el labrador, que presumía de cortés y bien criado, jamás quiso, hasta que el hidalgo, mohíno, poniéndole ambas manos sobre los hombros, le hizo sentar por fuerza, diciéndole: “Sentaos, majagranzas, que adondequiera que yo me siente será vuestra cabecera”.» Y éste es el cuento, y en verdad que creo que no ha sido aquí traído fuera de propósito.

Púsose don Quijote de mil colores, que sobre lo moreno le jaspeaban y se le parecían; los señores disimularon la risa, porque don Quijote no acabase de correrse, habiendo entendido la malicia de Sancho; y, por mudar de plática y hacer que Sancho no prosiguiese con otros disparates, preguntó la duquesa a don Quijote que qué nuevas tenía de la señora Dulcinea, y que si le había enviado aquellos días algunos presentes de gigantes o malandrines, pues no podía dejar de haber vencido muchos. A lo que don Quijote respondió:

-Señora mía, mis desgracias, aunque tuvieron principio, nunca tendrán fin. Gigantes he vencido, y follones y malandrines le he enviado, pero ¿adónde la habían de hallar, si está encantada y vuelta en la más fea labradora que imaginar se puede?

-No sé -dijo Sancho Panza-, a mí me parece la más hermosa criatura del mundo; a lo menos, en la ligereza y en el brincar bien sé yo que no dará ella la ventaja a un volteador; a buena fe, señora duquesa, así salta desde el suelo sobre una borrica como si fuera un gato.

-¿Habéisla visto vos encantada, Sancho? -preguntó el duque.

-Y ¡cómo si la he visto! -respondió Sancho-. Pues, ¿quién diablos sino yo fue el primero que cayó en el achaque del encantorio? ¡Tan encantada está como mi padre!

El eclesiástico, que oyó decir de gigantes, de follones y de encantos, cayó en la cuenta de que aquél debía de ser don Quijote de la Mancha, cuya historia leía el duque de ordinario, y él se lo había reprehendido muchas veces, diciéndole que era disparate leer tales disparates; y, enterándose ser verdad lo que sospechaba, con mucha cólera, hablando con el duque, le dijo:

-Vuestra Excelencia, señor mío, tiene que dar cuenta a Nuestro Señor de lo que hace este buen hombre. Este don Quijote, o don Tonto, o como se llama, imagino yo que no debe de ser tan mentecato como Vuestra Excelencia quiere que sea, dándole ocasiones a la mano para que lleve adelante sus sandeces y vaciedades.

Y, volviendo la plática a don Quijote, le dijo:

-Y a vos, alma de cántaro, ¿quién os ha encajado en el cerebro que sois caballero andante y que vencéis gigantes y prendéis malandrines? Andad en hora buena, y en tal se os diga: volveos a vuestra casa, y criad vuestros hijos, si los tenéis, y curad de vuestra hacienda, y dejad de andar vagando por el mundo, papando viento y dando que reír a cuantos os conocen y no conocen. ¿En dónde, nora tal, habéis vos hallado que hubo ni hay ahora caballeros andantes? ¿Dónde hay gigantes en España, o malandrines en la Mancha, ni Dulcineas encantadas, ni toda la caterva de las simplicidades que de vos se cuentan?

Atento estuvo don Quijote a las razones de aquel venerable varón, y, viendo que ya callaba, sin guardar respeto a los duques, con semblante airado y alborotado rostro, se puso en pie y dijo...

Pero esta respuesta capítulo por sí merece.

## Capítulo XXXII

*De la respuesta que dio don Quijote a su reprehensor, con otros graves y graciosos sucesos*

LEVANTADO, pues, en pie don Quijote, temblando de los pies a la cabeza como azogado, con presurosa y turbada lengua, dijo:

-El lugar donde estoy, y la presencia ante quien me hallo y el respeto que siempre tuve y tengo al estado que vuesa merced profesa tienen y atan las manos de mi justo enojo; y, así por lo que he dicho como por saber que saben todos que las armas de los togados son las mismas que las de la mujer, que son la lengua, entraré con la mía en igual batalla con vuesa merced, de quien se debía esperar antes buenos consejos que infames vituperios. Las reprehensiones santas y bien intencionadas otras circunstancias requieren y otros puntos piden: a lo menos, el haberme reprendido en público y tan ásperamente ha pasado todos los límites de la buena reprehensión, pues las primeras mejor asientan sobre la blandura que sobre la aspereza, y no es bien que, sin tener conocimiento del pecado que se reprehende, llamar al pecador, sin más ni más, mentecato y tonto. Si no, dígame vuesa merced: ¿por cuál de las mentecaterías que en mí ha visto me condena y vitupera, y me manda que me vaya a mi casa a tener cuenta en el gobierno della y de mi mujer y de mis hijos, sin saber si la tengo o los tengo? ¿No hay más sino a troche moche entrarse por las casas ajenas a gobernar sus dueños, y, habiéndose criado algunos en la estrechez de algún pupilaje, sin haber visto más mundo que el que puede contenerse en veinte o treinta leguas de distrito, meterse de rondón a dar leyes a la caballería y a juzgar de los caballeros andantes? ¿Por ventura es asunto vano o es tiempo mal gastado el que se gasta en vagar por el mundo, no buscando los regalos dél, sino las asperezas por donde los buenos suben al asiento de la inmortalidad? Si me tuvieran por tonto los caballeros, los magníficos, los generosos, los altamente nacidos, tuviéralo por afrenta irreparable; pero de que me tengan por sandio los estudiantes, que nunca entraron ni pisaron las sendas de la caballería, no se me da un ardite: caballero soy y caballero he de morir si place al Altísimo. Unos van por el ancho campo de la ambición soberbia; otros, por el de la adulación servil y baja; otros, por el de la hipocresía engañosa, y algunos, por el de la verdadera religión; pero yo, inclinado de mi estrella, voy por la angosta senda de la caballería andante, por cuyo ejercicio desprecio la hacienda, pero no la honra. Yo he satisfecho



agravios, enderezado tuertos, castigado insolencias, vencido gigantes y atropellado vestiglos; yo soy enamorado, no más de porque es forzoso que los caballeros andantes lo sean; y, siéndolo, no soy de los enamorados viciosos, sino de los platónicos continentes. Mis intenciones siempre las enderezo a buenos fines, que son de hacer bien a todos y mal a ninguno; si el que esto entiende, si el que esto obra, si el que desto trata merece ser llamado bobo, díganlo vuestras grandezas, duque y duquesa excelentes.

-¡Bien, por Dios! -dijo Sancho-. No diga más vuestra merced, señor y amo mío, en su abono, porque no hay más que decir, ni más que pensar, ni más que perseverar en el mundo. Y más, que, negando este señor, como ha negado, que no ha habido en el mundo, ni los hay, caballeros andantes, ¿qué mucho que no sepa ninguna de las cosas que ha dicho?

-¿Por ventura -dijo el eclesiástico-sois vos, hermano, aquel Sancho Panza que dicen, a quien vuestro amo tiene prometida una ínsula?

-Sí soy -respondió Sancho-; y soy quien la merece tan bien como otro cualquiera; soy quien «júntate a los buenos y serás uno dellos», y soy yo de aquellos «no con quien naces, sino con quien paces», y de los «quien a buen árbol se arrima, buena sombra le cobija». Yo me he arrimado a buen señor, y ha muchos meses que ando en su compañía, y he de ser otro como él, Dios queriendo; y viva él y viva yo: que ni a él le faltarán imperios que mandar ni a mí ínsulas que gobernar.

-No, por cierto, Sancho amigo -dijo a esta sazón el duque-, que yo, en nombre del señor don Quijote, os mando el gobierno de una que tengo de nones, de no pequeña calidad.

-Híncate de rodillas, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, y besa los pies a Su Excelencia por la merced que te ha hecho.

Hízolo así Sancho; lo cual visto por el eclesiástico, se levantó de la mesa, mohíno además, diciendo:

-Por el hábito que tengo, que estoy por decir que es tan sandio Vuestra Excelencia como estos pecadores. ¡Mirad si no han de ser ellos locos, pues los cuerdos canonizan sus locuras! Quédese Vuestra Excelencia con ellos; que, en tanto que estuvieren en casa, me estaré yo en la mía, y me escusaré de reprehender lo que no puedo remediar.

Y, sin decir más ni comer más, se fue, sin que fuesen parte a detenerle los ruegos de los duques; aunque el duque no le dijo mucho, impedido de la risa que su impertinente cólera le había causado. Acabó de reír y dijo a don Quijote:

-Vuesa merced, señor Caballero de los Leones, ha respondido por sí tan altamente que no le queda cosa por satisfacer deste que, aunque parece agravio, no lo es en ninguna manera; porque, así como no agravian las mujeres, no

agravian los eclesiásticos, como vuesa merced mejor sabe.

-Así es -respondió don Quijote-, y la causa es que el que no puede ser agraviado no puede agraviar a nadie. Las mujeres, los niños y los eclesiásticos, como no pueden defenderse, aunque sean ofendidos, no pueden ser afrentados; porque entre el agravio y la afrenta hay esta diferencia, como mejor Vuestra Excelencia sabe: la afrenta viene de parte de quien la puede hacer, y la hace y la sustenta; el agravio puede venir de cualquier parte, sin que afrente. Sea ejemplo: está uno en la calle descuidado, llegan diez con mano armada, y, dándole de palos, pone mano a la espada y hace su deber, pero la muchedumbre de los contrarios se le opone, y no le deja salir con su intención, que es de vengarse; este tal queda agraviado, pero no afrentado. Y lo mismo confirmará otro ejemplo: está uno vuelto de espaldas, llega otro y dale de palos, y en dándoselos huye y no espera, y el otro le sigue y no alcanza; este que recibió los palos, recibió agravio, mas no afrenta, porque la afrenta ha de ser sustentada. Si el que le dio los palos, aunque se los dio a hurtacordel, pusiera mano a su espada y se estuviera quedo, haciendo rostro a su enemigo, quedara el apaleado agraviado y afrentado juntamente: agraviado, porque le dieron a traición; afrentado, porque el que le dio sustentó lo que había hecho, sin volver las espaldas y a pie quedo. Y así, según las leyes del maldito duelo, yo puedo estar agraviado, mas no afrentado; porque los niños no sienten, ni las mujeres, ni pueden huir, ni tienen para qué esperar, y lo mismo los constituidos en la sacra religión, porque estos tres géneros de gente carecen de armas ofensivas y defensivas; y así, aunque naturalmente estén obligados a defenderse, no lo están para ofender a nadie. Y, aunque poco ha dije que yo podía estar agraviado, agora digo que no, en ninguna manera, porque quien no puede recibir afrenta, menos la puede dar; por las cuales razones yo no debo sentir, ni siento, las que aquel buen hombre me ha dicho; sólo quisiera que esperara algún poco, para darle a entender en el error en que está en pensar y decir que no ha habido, ni los hay, caballeros andantes en el mundo; que si lo tal oyera Amadís, o uno de los infinitos de su linaje, yo sé que no le fuera bien a su merced.

-Eso juro yo bien -dijo Sancho-: cuchillada le hubieran dado que le abrieran de arriba abajo como una granada, o como a un melón muy maduro. ¡Bonitos eran ellos para sufrir semejantes cosquillas! Para mi santiguada, que tengo por cierto que si Reinaldos de Montalbán hubiera oído estas razones al hombrecito, tapaboca le hubiera dado que no hablara más en tres años. ¡No, sino tomárase con ellos y viera cómo escapaba de sus manos!

Perecía de risa la duquesa en oyendo hablar a Sancho, y en su opinión le tenía por más gracioso y por más loco que a su amo; y muchos hubo en aquel tiempo

que fueron deste mismo parecer. Finalmente, don Quijote se sosegó, y la comida se acabó, y, en levantando los manteles, llegaron cuatro doncellas, la una con una fuente de plata, y la otra con un aguamanil, asimismo de plata, y la otra con dos blanquísimas y riquísimas toallas al hombro, y la cuarta descubiertos los brazos hasta la mitad, y en sus blancas manos -que sin duda eran blancas-una redonda pella de jabón napolitano. Llegó la de la fuente, y con gentil donaire y desenvoltura encajó la fuente debajo de la barba de don Quijote; el cual, sin hablar palabra, admirado de semejante ceremonia, creyendo que debía ser usanza de aquella tierra en lugar de las manos lavar las barbas, y así tendió la suya todo cuanto pudo, y al mismo punto comenzó a llover el aguamanil, y la doncella del jabón le manoseó las barbas con mucha priesa, levantando copos de nieve, que no eran menos blancas las jabonaduras, no sólo por las barbas, mas por todo el rostro y por los ojos del obediente caballero, tanto, que se los hicieron cerrar por fuerza.

El duque y la duquesa, que de nada desto eran sabidores, estaban esperando en qué había de parar tan extraordinario lavatorio. La doncella barbera, cuando le tuvo con un palmo de jabonadura, fingió que se le había acabado el agua, y mandó a la del aguamanil fuese por ella, que el señor don Quijote esperaría. Hízolo así, y quedó don Quijote con la más estraña figura y más para hacer reír que se pudiera imaginar.

Mirábanle todos los que presentes estaban, que eran muchos, y como le veían con media vara de cuello, más que medianamente moreno, los ojos cerrados y las barbas llenas de jabón, fue gran maravilla y mucha discreción poder disimular la risa; las doncellas de la burla tenían los ojos bajos, sin osar mirar a sus señores; a ellos les retozaba la cólera y la risa en el cuerpo, y no sabían a qué acudir: o a castigar el atrevimiento de las muchachas, o darles premio por el gusto que recibían de ver a don Quijote de aquella suerte.

Finalmente, la doncella del aguamanil vino, y acabaron de lavar a don Quijote, y luego la que traía las toallas le limpió y le enjugó muy reposadamente; y, haciéndole todas cuatro a la par una grande y profunda inclinación y reverencia, se querían ir; pero el duque, porque don Quijote no cayese en la burla, llamó a la doncella de la fuente, diciéndole:

-Venid y lavadme a mí, y mirad que no se os acabe el agua.

La muchacha, aguda y diligente, llegó y puso la fuente al duque como a don Quijote, y, dándose prisa, le lavaron y jabonaron muy bien, y, dejándole enjuto y limpio, haciendo reverencias se fueron. Después se supo que había jurado el duque que si a él no le lavaran como a don Quijote, había de castigar su desenvoltura, lo cual habían enmendado discretamente con haberle a él jabonado.

Estaba atento Sancho a las ceremonias de aquel lavatorio, y dijo entre sí:

-¡Válame Dios! ¿Si será también usanza en esta tierra lavar las barbas a los escuderos como a los caballeros? Porque, en Dios y en mi ánima que lo he bien menester, y aun que si me las rapasen a navaja, lo tendría a más beneficio.

-¿Qué decís entre vos, Sancho? -preguntó la duquesa.

-Digo, señora -respondió él-, que en las cortes de los otros príncipes siempre he oído decir que en levantando los manteles dan agua a las manos, pero no lejía a las barbas; y que por eso es bueno vivir mucho, por ver mucho; aunque también dicen que el que larga vida vive mucho mal ha de pasar, puesto que pasar por un lavatorio de éstos antes es gusto que trabajo.

-No tengáis pena, amigo Sancho -dijo la duquesa-, que yo haré que mis doncellas os laven, y aun os metan en colada, si fuere menester.

-Con las barbas me contento -respondió Sancho-, por ahora a lo menos, que andando el tiempo, Dios dijo lo que será.

-Mirad, maestresala -dijo la duquesa-, lo que el buen Sancho pide, y cumplidle su voluntad al pie de la letra.

El maestresala respondió que en todo sería servido el señor Sancho, y con esto se fue a comer, y llevó consigo a Sancho, quedándose a la mesa los duques y don Quijote, hablando en muchas y diversas cosas; pero todas tocantes al ejercicio de las armas y de la andante caballería.

La duquesa rogó a don Quijote que le delinease y describiese, pues parecía tener felice memoria, la hermosura y facciones de la señora Dulcinea del Toboso; que, según lo que la famaregonaba de su belleza, tenía por entendido que debía de ser la más bella criatura del orbe, y aun de toda la Mancha. Sospiró don Quijote, oyendo lo que la duquesa le mandaba, y dijo:

-Si yo pudiera sacar mi corazón y ponerle ante los ojos de vuestra grandeza, aquí, sobre esta mesa y en un plato, quitara el trabajo a mi lengua de decir lo que apenas se puede pensar, porque Vuestra Excelencia la viera en él toda retratada; pero, ¿para qué es ponerme yo ahora a delinear y describir punto por punto y parte por parte la hermosura de la sin par Dulcinea, siendo carga digna de otros hombros que de los míos, empresa en quien se debían ocupar los pinceles de Parrasio, de Timantes y de Apeles, y los buriles de Lisipo, para pintarla y grabarla en tablas, en mármoles y en bronces, y la retórica ciceroniana y demostina para alabarla?

-¿Qué quiere decir demostina, señor don Quijote -preguntó la duquesa-, que es vocablo que no le he oído en todos los días de mi vida?

-*Retórica demostina* -respondió don Quijote-es lo mismo que decir *retórica de Demóstenes*, como *ciceroniana*, de Cicerón, que fueron los dos mayores retóricos del mundo.

-Así es -dijo el duque-, y habéis andado deslumbrada en la tal pregunta. Pero, con todo eso, nos daría gran gusto el señor don Quijote si nos la pintase; que a buen seguro que, aunque sea en rasguño y bosquejo, que ella salga tal, que la tengan envidia las más hermosas.

-Sí hiciera, por cierto -respondió don Quijote-, si no me la hubiera borrado de la idea la desgracia que poco ha que le sucedió, que es tal, que más estoy para llorarla que para describirla; porque habrán de saber vuestras grandezas que, yendo los días pasados a besarle las manos, y a recibir su bendición, beneplácito y licencia para esta tercera salida, hallé otra de la que buscaba: halléla encantada y convertida de princesa en labradora, de hermosa en fea, de ángel en diablo, de olorosa en pestífera, de bien hablada en rústica, de reposada en brincadora, de luz en tinieblas, y, finalmente, de Dulcinea del Toboso en una villana de Sayago.

-¡Válame Dios! -dando una gran voz, dijo a este instante el duque-. ¿Quién ha sido el que tanto mal ha hecho al mundo? ¿Quién ha quitado dél la belleza que le alegraba, el donaire que le entretenía y la honestidad que le acreditaba?

-¿Quién? -respondió don Quijote-. ¿Quién puede ser sino algún maligno encantador de los muchos invidiosos que me persiguen? Esta raza maldita, nacida en el mundo para escurecer y aniquilar las hazañas de los buenos, y para dar luz y levantar los fechos de los malos. Perseguido me han encantadores, encantadores me persiguen y encantadores me persiguirán hasta dar conmigo y con mis altas caballerías en el profundo abismo del olvido; y en aquella parte me dañan y hieren donde veen que más lo siento, porque quitarle a un caballero andante su dama es quitarle los ojos con que mira, y el sol con que se alumbra, y el sustento con que se mantiene. Otras muchas veces lo he dicho, y ahora lo vuelvo a decir: que el caballero andante sin dama es como el árbol sin hojas, el edificio sin cimiento y la sombra sin cuerpo de quien se cause.

-No hay más que decir -dijo la duquesa-; pero si, con todo eso, hemos de dar crédito a la historia que del señor don Quijote de pocos días a esta parte ha salido a la luz del mundo, con general aplauso de las gentes, della se colige, si mal no me acuerdo, que nunca vuesa merced ha visto a la señora Dulcinea, y que esta tal señora no es en el mundo, sino que es dama fantástica, que vuesa merced la engendró y parió en su entendimiento, y la pintó con todas aquellas gracias y perfecciones que quiso.

-En eso hay mucho que decir -respondió don Quijote-. Dios sabe si hay Dulcinea o no en el mundo, o si es fantástica o no es fantástica; y éstas no son de las cosas cuya averiguación se ha de llevar hasta el cabo. Ni yo engendré ni parí a mi señora, puesto que la contemplo como conviene que sea una dama que contenga en sí las partes que puedan hacerla famosa en todas las del mundo, como son: hermosa, sin tacha, grave sin soberbia, amorosa con honestidad,

agradecida por cortés, cortés por bien criada, y, finalmente, alta por linaje, a causa que sobre la buena sangre resplandece y campea la hermosura con más grados de perfección que en las hermosas humildemente nacidas.

-Así es -dijo el duque-; pero hame de dar licencia el señor don Quijote para que diga lo que me fuerza a decir la historia que de sus hazañas he leído, de donde se infiere que, puesto que se conceda que hay Dulcinea, en el Toboso o fuera dél, y que sea hermosa en el sumo grado que vuesa merced nos la pinta, en lo de la alteza del linaje no corre parejas con las Orianas, con las Alastrajareas, con las Madásimas, ni con otras deste jaez, de quien están llenas las historias que vuesa merced bien sabe.

-A eso puedo decir -respondió don Quijote-que Dulcinea es hija de sus obras, y que las virtudes adoban la sangre, y que en más se ha de estimar y tener un humilde virtuoso que un vicioso levantado; cuanto más, que Dulcinea tiene un jirón que la puede llevar a ser reina de corona y ceptro; que el merecimiento de una mujer hermosa y virtuosa a hacer mayores milagros se estiende, y, aunque no formalmente, virtualmente tiene en sí encerradas mayores venturas.

-Digo, señor don Quijote -dijo la duquesa-, que en todo cuanto vuestra merced dice va con pie de plomo, y, como suele decirse, con la sonda en la mano; y que yo desde aquí adelante creeré y haré creer a todos los de mi casa, y aun al duque mi señor, si fuere menester, que hay Dulcinea en el Toboso, y que vive hoy día, y es hermosa, y principalmente nacida y merecedora que un tal caballero como es el señor don Quijote la sirva; que es lo más que puedo ni sé encarecer. Pero no puedo dejar de formar un escrúpulo, y tener algún no sé qué de ojeriza contra Sancho Panza: el escrúpulo es que dice la historia referida que el tal Sancho Panza halló a la tal señora Dulcinea, cuando de parte de vuestra merced le llevó una epístola, ahechando un costal de trigo, y, por más señas, dice que era rubión: cosa que me hace dudar en la alteza de su linaje.

A lo que respondió don Quijote:

-Señora mía, sabrá la vuestra grandeza que todas o las más cosas que a mí me suceden van fuera de los términos ordinarios de las que a los otros caballeros andantes acontecen, o ya sean encaminadas por el querer inescrutable de los hados, o ya vengan encaminadas por la malicia de algún encantador envidioso; y, como es cosa ya averiguada que todos o los más caballeros andantes y famosos, uno tenga gracia de no poder ser encantado, otro de ser de tan impenetrables carnes que no pueda ser herido, como lo fue el famoso Roldán, uno de los doce Pares de Francia, de quien se cuenta que no podía ser ferido sino por la planta del pie izquierdo, y que esto había de ser con la punta de un alfiler gordo, y no con otra suerte de arma alguna; y así, cuando Bernardo del Carpio le mató en Roncesvalles, viendo que no le podía llagar con fierro, le levantó del suelo entre

los brazos y le ahogó, acordándose entonces de la muerte que dio Hércules a Anteón, aquel feroz gigante que decían ser hijo de la Tierra. Quiero inferir de lo dicho, que podría ser que yo tuviese alguna gracia destas, no del no poder ser ferido, porque muchas veces la experiencia me ha mostrado que soy de carnes blandas y no nada impenetrables, ni la de no poder ser encantado, que ya me he visto metido en una jaula, donde todo el mundo no fuera poderoso a encerrarme, si no fuera a fuerzas de encantamientos; pero, pues de aquél me libré, quiero creer que no ha de haber otro alguno que me empezca; y así, viendo estos encantadores que con mi persona no pueden usar de sus malas mañas, vénganse en las cosas que más quiero, y quieren quitarme la vida maltratando la de Dulcinea, por quien yo vivo; y así, creo que, cuando mi escudero le llevó mi embajada, se la convirtieron en villana y ocupada en tan bajo ejercicio como es el de ahechar trigo; pero ya tengo yo dicho que aquel trigo ni era rubión ni trigo, sino granos de perlas orientales; y para prueba desta verdad quiero decir a vuestras magnitudes cómo, viniendo poco ha por el Toboso, jamás pude hallar los palacios de Dulcinea; y que otro día, habiéndola visto Sancho, mi escudero, en su misma figura, que es la más bella del orbe, a mí me pareció una labradora tosca y fea, y no nada bien razonada, siendo la discreción del mundo; y, pues yo no estoy encantado, ni lo puedo estar, según buen discurso, ella es la encantada, la ofendida y la mudada, trocada y trastrocada, y en ella se han vengado de mí mis enemigos, y por ella viviré yo en perpetuas lágrimas, hasta verla en su prístino estado. Todo esto he dicho para que nadie repare en lo que Sancho dijo del cernido ni del ahecho de Dulcinea; que, pues a mí me la mudaron, no es maravilla que a él se la cambiasen. Dulcinea es principal y bien nacida, y de los hidalgos linajes que hay en el Toboso, que son muchos, antiguos y muy buenos, a buen seguro que no le cabe poca parte a la sin par Dulcinea, por quien su lugar será famoso y nombrado en los venideros siglos, como lo ha sido Troya por Elena, y España por la Cava, aunque con mejor título y fama. Por otra parte, quiero que entiendan vuestras señorías que Sancho Panza es uno de los más graciosos escuderos que jamás sirvió a caballero andante; tiene a veces unas simplicidades tan agudas, que el pensar si es simple o agudo causa no pequeño contento; tiene malicias que le condenan por bellaco, y descuidos que le confirman por bobo; duda de todo y créelo todo; cuando pienso que se va a despeñar de tonto, sale con unas discreciones, que le levantan al cielo. Finalmente, yo no le trocaría con otro escudero, aunque me diesen de añadidura una ciudad; y así, estoy en duda si será bien enviarle al gobierno de quien vuestra grandeza le ha hecho merced; aunque veo en él una cierta aptitud para esto de gobernar, que atusándole tantico el entendimiento, se saldría con cualquiera gobierno, como el rey con sus alcabalas; y más, que ya por muchas

experiencias sabemos que no es menester ni mucha habilidad ni muchas letras para ser uno gobernador, pues hay por ahí ciento que apenas saber leer, y gobiernan como unos girifaltes; el toque está en que tengan buena intención y deseen acertar en todo; que nunca les faltará quien les aconseje y encamine en lo que han de hacer, como los gobernadores caballeros y no letrados, que sentencian con asesor. Aconsejaríale yo que ni tome cohecho, ni pierda derecho, y otras cosillas que me quedan en el estómago, que saldrán a su tiempo, para utilidad de Sancho y provecho de la ínsula que gobernaré.

A este punto llegaban de su coloquio el duque, la duquesa y don Quijote, cuando oyeron muchas voces y gran rumor de gente en el palacio; y a deshora entró Sancho en la sala, todo asustado, con un cernadero por babador, y tras él muchos mozos, o, por mejor decir, pícaros de cocina y otra gente menuda, y uno venía con un artesoncillo de agua, que en la color y poca limpieza mostraba ser de fregar; seguía y perseguía el de la artesa, y procuraba con toda solicitud ponérsela y encajársela debajo de las barbas, y otro pícaro mostraba querérselas lavar.

-¿Qué es esto, hermanos? -preguntó la duquesa-. ¿Qué es esto? ¿Qué queréis a ese buen hombre? ¿Cómo y no consideráis que está electo gobernador?

A lo que respondió el pícaro barbero:

-No quiere este señor dejarse lavar, como es usanza, y como se la lavó el duque mi señor y el señor su amo.

-Sí quiero -respondió Sancho con mucha cólera-, pero querría que fuese con toallas más limpias, con lejía mas clara y con manos no tan sucias; que no hay tanta diferencia de mí a mi amo, que a él le laven con agua de ángeles y a mí con lejía de diablos. Las usanzas de las tierras y de los palacios de los príncipes tanto son buenas cuanto no dan pesadumbre, pero la costumbre del lavatorio que aquí se usa peor es que de diciplinantes. Yo estoy limpio de barbas y no tengo necesidad de semejantes refrigerios; y el que se llegare a lavarme ni a tocarme a un pelo de la cabeza, digo, de mi barba, hablando con el debido acatamiento, le daré tal puñada que le deje el puño engastado en los cascos; que estas tales ceremonias y jabonaduras más parecen burlas que gasajos de huéspedes.

Perecida de risa estaba la duquesa, viendo la cólera y oyendo las razones de Sancho, pero no dio mucho gusto a don Quijote verle tan mal adeliñado con la jaspeada toalla, y tan rodeado de tantos entretenidos de cocina; y así, haciendo una profunda reverencia a los duques, como que les pedía licencia para hablar, con voz reposada dijo a la canalla:

-¡Hola, señores caballeros! Vuestas mercedes dejen al mancebo, y vuélvanse por donde vinieron, o por otra parte si se les antojare, que mi escudero es limpio tanto como otro, y esas artesillas son para él estrechas y penantes búcaros.



Tomen mi consejo y déjenle, porque ni él ni yo sabemos de achaque de burlas.

Cogióle la razón de la boca Sancho, y prosiguió diciendo:

-¡No, sino lléguese a hacer burla del mostrenco, que así lo sufriré como ahora es de noche! Traigan aquí un peine, o lo que quisieren, y almohácenme estas barbas, y si sacaren dellas cosa que ofenda a la limpieza, que me trasquilen a cruces.

A esta sazón, sin dejar la risa, dijo la duquesa:

-Sancho Panza tiene razón en todo cuanto ha dicho, y la tendrá en todo cuanto dijere: él es limpio, y, como él dice, no tiene necesidad de lavarse; y si nuestra usanza no le contenta, su alma en su palma, cuanto más, que vosotros, ministros de la limpieza, habéis andado demasiadamente de remisos y descuidados, y no sé si diga atrevidos, a traer a tal personaje y a tales barbas, en lugar de fuentes y aguamaniles de oro puro y de alemanas toallas, artesillas y dornajos de palo y rodillas de aparadores. Pero, en fin, sois malos y mal nacidos, y no podéis dejar, como malandrines que sois, de mostrar la ojeriza que tenéis con los escuderos de los andantes caballeros.

Creyeron los apicarados ministros, y aun el maestresala, que venía con ellos, que la duquesa hablaba de veras; y así, quitaron el cernadero del pecho de Sancho, y todos confusos y casi corridos se fueron y le dejaron; el cual, viéndose fuera de aquel, a su parecer, sumo peligro, se fue a hincar de rodillas ante la duquesa y dijo:

-De grandes señoras, grandes mercedes se esperan; esta que la vuestra merced hoy me ha fecho no puede pagarse con menos, si no es con desear verme armado caballero andante, para ocuparme todos los días de mi vida en servir a tan alta señora. Labrador soy, Sancho Panza me llamo, casado soy, hijos tengo y de escudero sirvo: si con alguna destas cosas puedo servir a vuestra grandeza, menos tardaré yo en obedecer que vuestra señoría en mandar.

-Bien parece, Sancho -respondió la duquesa-, que habéis aprendido a ser cortés en la escuela de la misma cortesía; bien parece, quiero decir, que os habéis criado a los pechos del señor don Quijote, que debe de ser la nata de los comedimientos y la flor de las ceremonias, o *cirimonias*, como vos decís. Bien haya tal señor y tal criado: el uno, por norte de la andante caballería; y el otro, por estrella de la escuderil fidelidad. Levantaos, Sancho amigo, que yo satisfaré vuestras cortesías con hacer que el duque mi señor, lo más presto que pudiere, os cumpla la merced prometida del gobierno.

Con esto cesó la plática, y don Quijote se fue a reposar la siesta, y la duquesa pidió a Sancho que, si no tenía mucha gana de dormir, viniese a pasar la tarde con ella y con sus doncellas en una muy fresca sala. Sancho respondió que, aunque era verdad que tenía por costumbre dormir cuatro o cinco horas las

siestas del verano, que, por servir a su bondad, él procuraría con todas sus fuerzas no dormir aquel día ninguna, y vendría obediente a su mandado, y fuese. El duque dio nuevas órdenes como se tratase a don Quijote como a caballero andante, sin salir un punto del estilo como cuentan que se trataban los antiguos caballeros.

## Capítulo XXXIII

*De la sabrosa plática que la duquesa y sus doncellas pasaron con Sancho Panza, digna de que se lea y de que se note*

CUENTA, pues, la historia, que Sancho no durmió aquella siesta, sino que, por cumplir su palabra, vino en comiendo a ver a la duquesa; la cual, con el gusto que tenía de oírle, le hizo sentar junto a sí en una silla baja, aunque Sancho, de puro bien criado, no quería sentarse; pero la duquesa le dijo que se sentase como gobernador y hablase como escudero, puesto que por entrambas cosas merecía el mismo escaño del Cid Ruy Díaz Campeador.

Encogió Sancho los hombros, obedeció y sentóse, y todas las doncellas y dueñas de la duquesa la rodearon, atentas, con grandísimo silencio, a escuchar lo que diría; pero la duquesa fue la que habló primero, diciendo:

-Ahora que estamos solos, y que aquí no nos oye nadie, querría yo que el señor gobernador me asolviese ciertas dudas que tengo, nacidas de la historia que del gran don Quijote anda ya impresa; una de las cuales dudas es que, pues el buen Sancho nunca vio a Dulcinea, digo, a la señora Dulcinea del Toboso, ni le llevó la carta del señor don Quijote, porque se quedó en el libro de memoria en Sierra Morena, cómo se atrevió a fingir la respuesta, y aquello de que la halló ahechando trigo, siendo todo burla y mentira, y tan en daño de la buena opinión de la sin par Dulcinea, y todas que no vienen bien con la calidad y fidelidad de los buenos escuderos.

A estas razones, sin responder con alguna, se levantó Sancho de la silla, y, con pasos quedos, el cuerpo agobiado y el dedo puesto sobre los labios, anduvo por toda la sala levantando los doseles; y luego, esto hecho, se volvió a sentar y dijo:

-Ahora, señora mía, que he visto que no nos escucha nadie de solapa, fuera de los circunstantes, sin temor ni sobresalto responderé a lo que se me ha preguntado, y a todo aquello que se me preguntare; y lo primero que digo es que yo tengo a mi señor don Quijote por loco rematado, puesto que algunas veces dice cosas que, a mi parecer, y aun de todos aquellos que le escuchan, son tan discretas y por tan buen carril encaminadas, que el mismo Satanás no las podría decir mejores; pero, con todo esto, verdaderamente y sin escrúpulo, a mí se me ha asentado que es un mentecato. Pues, como yo tengo esto en el magín, me atrevo a hacerle creer lo que no lleva pies ni cabeza, como fue aquello de la respuesta de la carta, y lo de habrá seis o ocho días, que aún no está en historia;

conviene a saber: lo del encanto de mi señora doña Dulcinea, que le he dado a entender que está encantada, no siendo más verdad que por los cerros de Úbeda.

Rogóle la duquesa que le contase aquel encantamento o burla, y Sancho se lo contó todo del mismo modo que había pasado, de que no poco gusto recibieron los oyentes; y, prosiguiendo en su plática, dijo la duquesa:

-De lo que el buen Sancho me ha contado me anda brincando un escrúpulo en el alma y un cierto susurro llega a mis oídos, que me dice: «Pues don Quijote de la Mancha es loco, menguado y mentecato, y Sancho Panza su escudero lo conoce, y, con todo eso, le sirve y le sigue y va atendido a las vanas promesas tuyas, sin duda alguna debe de ser él más loco y tonto que su amo; y, siendo esto así, como lo es, mal contado te será, señora duquesa, si al tal Sancho Panza le das ínsula que gobierne, porque el que no sabe gobernarse a sí, ¿cómo sabrá gobernar a otros?»

-Par Dios, señora -dijo Sancho-, que ese escrúpulo viene con parto derecho; pero dígame vuesa merced que hable claro, o como quisiere, que yo conozco que dice verdad: que si yo fuera discreto, días ha que había de haber dejado a mi amo. Pero ésta fue mi suerte, y ésta mi malandanza; no puedo más, seguirle tengo: somos de un mismo lugar, he comido su pan, quiérole bien, es agradecido, diome sus pollinos, y, sobre todo, yo soy fiel; y así, es imposible que nos pueda apartar otro suceso que el de la pala y azadón. Y si vuestra altanería no quisiere que se me dé el prometido gobierno, de menos me hizo Dios, y podría ser que el no dármele redundase en pro de mi conciencia; que, maguera tonto, se me entiende aquel refrán de «por su mal le nacieron alas a la hormiga»; y aun podría ser que se fuese más aína Sancho escudero al cielo, que no Sancho gobernador. Tan buen pan hacen aquí como en Francia; y de noche todos los gatos son pardos, y asaz de desdichada es la persona que a las dos de la tarde no se ha desayunado; y no hay estómago que sea un palmo mayor que otro, el cual se puede llenar, como suele decirse, de paja y de heno; y las avechitas del campo tienen a Dios por su proveedor y dispensero; y más calientan cuatro varas de paño de Cuenca que otras cuatro de límiste de Segovia; y al dejar este mundo y meternos la tierra adentro, por tan estrecha senda va el príncipe como el jornalero, y no ocupa más pies de tierra el cuerpo del Papa que el del sacristán, aunque sea más alto el uno que el otro; que al entrar en el hoyo todos nos ajustamos y encogemos, o nos hacen ajustar y encoger, mal que nos pese y a buenas noches. Y torno a decir que si vuestra señoría no me quisiere dar la ínsula por tonto, yo sabré no dárseme nada por discreto; y yo he oído decir que detrás de la cruz está el diablo, y que no es oro todo lo que reluce, y que de entre los bueyes, arados y coyundas sacaron al labrador Wamba para ser rey de España, y de entre los brocados, pasatiempos y riquezas sacaron a Rodrigo para ser comido

de culebras, si es que las trovas de los romances antiguos no mienten.

-Y ¡cómo que no mienten! -dijo a esta sazón doña Rodríguez la dueña, que era una de las escuchantes-: que un romance hay que dice que metieron al rey Rodrigo, vivo vivo, en una tumba llena de sapos, culebras y lagartos, y que de allí a dos días dijo el rey desde dentro de la tumba, con voz doliente y baja:

Ya me comen, ya me comen  
por do más pecado había;

y, según esto, mucha razón tiene este señor en decir que quiere más ser más labrador que rey, si le han de comer sabandijas.

No pudo la duquesa tener la risa, oyendo la simplicidad de su dueña, ni dejó de admirarse en oír las razones y refranes de Sancho, a quien dijo:

-Ya sabe el buen Sancho que lo que una vez promete un caballero procura cumplirlo, aunque le cueste la vida. El duque, mi señor y marido, aunque no es de los andantes, no por eso deja de ser caballero, y así, cumplirá la palabra de la prometida ínsula, a pesar de la envidia y de la malicia del mundo. Está Sancho de buen ánimo, que cuando menos lo piense se verá sentado en la silla de su ínsula y en la de su estado, y empuñará su gobierno, que con otro de brocado de tres altos lo deseche. Lo que yo le encargo es que mire cómo gobierna sus vasallos, advirtiéndole que todos son leales y bien nacidos.

-Eso de gobernarlos bien -respondió Sancho-no hay para qué encargármelo, porque yo soy caritativo de mío y tengo compasión de los pobres; y a quien cuece y amasa, no le hurtes hogaza; y para mi santiguada que no me han de echar dado falso; soy perro viejo, y entiendo todo tus, tus, y sé despabilarme a sus tiempos, y no consiento que me anden musarañas ante los ojos, porque sé dónde me aprieta el zapato: dígoles porque los buenos tendrán conmigo mano y concavidad, y los malos, ni pie ni entrada. Y paréceme a mí que en esto de los gobiernos todo es comenzar, y podría ser que a quince días de gobernador me comiese las manos tras el oficio y supiese más dél que de la labor del campo, en que me he criado.

-Vos tenéis razón razón, Sancho -dijo la duquesa-, que nadie nace enseñado, y de los hombres se hacen los obispos, que no de las piedras. Pero, volviendo a la plática que poco ha tratábamos del encanto de la señora Dulcinea, tengo por cosa cierta y más que averiguada que aquella imaginación que Sancho tuvo de burlar a su señor y darle a entender que la labradora era Dulcinea, y que si su señor no la conocía debía de ser por estar encantada, toda fue invención de alguno de los

encantadores que al señor don Quijote persiguen; porque real y verdaderamente yo sé de buena parte que la villana que dio el brinco sobre la pollina era y es Dulcinea del Toboso, y que el buen Sancho, pensando ser el engañador, es el engañado; y no hay poner más duda en esta verdad que en las cosas que nunca vimos; y sepa el señor Sancho Panza que también tenemos acá encantadores que nos quieren bien, y nos dicen lo que pasa por el mundo, pura y sencillamente, sin enredos ni máquinas; y créame Sancho que la villana brincadora era y es Dulcinea del Toboso, que está encantada como la madre que la parió; y cuando menos nos pensemos, la habemos de ver en su propia figura, y entonces saldrá Sancho del engaño en que vive.

-Bien puede ser todo eso -dijo Sancho Panza-; y agora quiero creer lo que mi amo cuenta de lo que vio en la cueva de Montesinos, donde dice que vio a la señora Dulcinea del Toboso en el mismo traje y hábito que yo dije que la había visto cuando la encanté por solo mi gusto; y todo debió de ser al revés, como vuesa merced, señora mía, dice, porque de mi ruin ingenio no se puede ni debe presumir que fabricase en un instante tan agudo embuste, ni creo yo que mi amo es tan loco que con tan flaca y magra persuasión como la mía creyese una cosa tan fuera de todo término. Pero, señora, no por esto será bien que vuestra bondad me tenga por malévolo, pues no está obligado un porro como yo a taladrar los pensamientos y malicias de los pésimos encantadores: yo fingí aquello por escaparme de las riñas de mi señor don Quijote, y no con intención de ofenderle; y si ha salido al revés, Dios está en el cielo, que juzga los corazones.

-Así es la verdad -dijo la duquesa-; pero dígame agora, Sancho, qué es esto que dice de la cueva de Montesinos, que gustaría saberlo.

Entonces Sancho Panza le contó punto por punto lo que queda dicho acerca de la tal aventura. Oyendo lo cual la duquesa, dijo:

-Deste suceso se puede inferir que, pues el gran don Quijote dice que vio allí a la misma labradora que Sancho vio a la salida del Toboso, sin duda es Dulcinea, y que andan por aquí los encantadores muy listos y demasiadamente curiosos.

-Eso digo yo -dijo Sancho Panza-, que si mi señora Dulcinea del Toboso está encantada, su daño; que yo no me tengo de tomar, yo, con los enemigos de mi amo, que deben de ser muchos y malos. Verdad sea que la que yo vi fue una labradora, y por labradora la tuve, y por tal labradora la juzgué; y si aquélla era Dulcinea, no ha de estar a mi cuenta, ni ha de correr por mí, o sobre ello, morena. No, sino ándense a cada triquete conmigo a dime y direte, «Sancho lo dijo, Sancho lo hizo, Sancho tornó y Sancho volvió», como si Sancho fuese algún quienquiera, y no fuese el mismo Sancho Panza, el que anda ya en libros por ese mundo adelante, según me dijo Sansón Carrasco, que, por lo menos, es persona bachillerada por Salamanca, y los tales no pueden mentir si no es

cuando se les antoja o les viene muy a cuento; así que, no hay para qué nadie se tome conmigo, y pues que tengo buena fama, y, según oí decir a mi señor, que más vale el buen nombre que las muchas riquezas, encájense ese gobierno y verán maravillas; que quien ha sido buen escudero será buen gobernador.

-Todo cuanto aquí ha dicho el buen Sancho -dijo la duquesa-son sentencias catonianas, o, por lo menos, sacadas de las mismas entrañas del mismo Micael Verino, florentibus occidit annis. En fin, en fin, hablando a su modo, debajo de mala capa suele haber buen bebedor.

-En verdad, señora -respondió Sancho-, que en mi vida he bebido de malicia; con sed bien podría ser, porque no tengo nada de hipócrita: bebo cuando tengo gana, y cuando no la tengo y cuando me lo dan, por no parecer o melindroso o malcriado; que a un brindis de un amigo, ¿qué corazón ha de haber tan de mármol que no haga la razón? Pero, aunque las calzo, no las ensucio; cuanto más, que los escuderos de los caballeros andantes, casi de ordinario beben agua, porque siempre andan por florestas, selvas y prados, montañas y riscos, sin hallar una misericordia de vino, si dan por ella un ojo.

-Yo lo creo así -respondió la duquesa-. Y por ahora, váyase Sancho a reposar, que después hablaremos más largo y daremos orden como vaya presto a encajarse, como él dice, aquel gobierno.

De nuevo le besó las manos Sancho a la duquesa, y le suplicó le hiciese merced de que se tuviese buena cuenta con su rucio, porque era la lumbrera de sus ojos.

-¿Qué rucio es éste? -preguntó la duquesa.

-Mi asno -respondió Sancho-, que por no nombrarle con este nombre, le suelo llamar el rucio; y a esta señora dueña le rogué, cuando entré en este castillo, tuviese cuenta con él, y azoróse de manera como si la hubiera dicho que era fea o vieja, debiendo ser más propio y natural de las dueñas pensar jumentos que autorizar las salas. ¡Oh, váleme Dios, y cuán mal estaba con estas señoras un hidalgo de mi lugar!

-Sería algún villano -dijo doña Rodríguez, la dueña-, que si él fuera hidalgo y bien nacido, él las pusiera sobre el cuerno de la luna.

-Agora bien -dijo la duquesa-, no haya más: calle doña Rodríguez y sositéguese el señor Panza, y quédese a mi cargo el regalo del rucio; que, por ser alhaja de Sancho, le pondré yo sobre las niñas de mis ojos.

-En la caballeriza basta que esté -respondió Sancho-, que sobre las niñas de los ojos de vuestra grandeza ni él ni yo somos dignos de estar sólo un momento, y así lo consintiría yo como darme de puñaladas; que, aunque dice mi señor que en las cortesías antes se ha de perder por carta de más que de menos, en las jumentiles y así niñas se ha de ir con el compás en la mano y con medido

término.

-Llévele -dijo la duquesa-Sancho al gobierno, y allá le podrá regalar como quisiere, y aun jubilarle del trabajo.

-No piense vuesa merced, señora duquesa, que ha dicho mucho -dijo Sancho-; que yo he visto ir más de dos asnos a los gobiernos, y que llevase yo el mío no sería cosa nueva.

Las razones de Sancho renovaron en la duquesa la risa y el contento; y, enviándole a reposar, ella fue a dar cuenta al duque de lo que con él había pasado, y entre los dos dieron traza y orden de hacer una burla a don Quijote que fuese famosa y viniese bien con el estilo caballeresco, en el cual le hicieron muchas, tan propias y discretas, que son las mejores aventuras que en esta grande historia se contienen.



## Capítulo XXXIV

*Que cuenta de la noticia que se tuvo de cómo se había de desencantar la sin par Dulcinea del Toboso, que es una de las aventuras más famosas deste libro*

GRANDE era el gusto que recibían el duque y la duquesa de la conversación de don Quijote y de la de Sancho Panza; y, confirmándose en la intención que tenían de hacerles algunas burlas que llevasen vislumbres y apariencias de aventuras, tomaron motivo de la que don Quijote ya les había contado de la cueva de Montesinos, para hacerle una que fuese famosa (pero de lo que más la duquesa se admiraba era que la simplicidad de Sancho fuese tanta que hubiese venido a creer ser verdad infalible que Dulcinea del Toboso estuviese encantada, habiendo sido él mismo el encantador y el embustero de aquel negocio); y así, habiendo dado orden a sus criados de todo lo que habían de hacer, de allí a seis días le llevaron a caza de montería, con tanto aparato de monteros y cazadores como pudiera llevar un rey coronado. Diéronle a don Quijote un vestido de monte y a Sancho otro verde, de finísimo paño; pero don Quijote no se le quiso poner, diciendo que otro día había de volver al duro ejercicio de las armas y que no podía llevar consigo guardarropas ni reposterías. Sancho sí tomó el que le dieron, con intención de venderle en la primera ocasión que pudiese.

Llegado, pues, el esperado día, armóse don Quijote, vistióse Sancho, y, encima de su rucio, que no le quiso dejar aunque le daban un caballo, se metió entre la tropa de los monteros. La duquesa salió bizarramente aderezada, y don Quijote, de puro cortés y comedido, tomó la rienda de su palafrén, aunque el duque no quería consentirlo, y, finalmente, llegaron a un bosque que entre dos altísimas montañas estaba, donde, tomados los puestos, paranzas y veredas, y repartida la gente por diferentes puestos, se comenzó la caza con grande estruendo, grita y vocería, de manera que unos a otros no podían oírse, así por el ladrido de los perros como por el son de las bocinas.

Apeóse la duquesa, y, con un agudo venablo en las manos, se puso en un puesto por donde ella sabía que solían venir algunos jabalíes. Apeóse asimismo el duque y don Quijote, y pusiéronse a sus lados; Sancho se puso detrás de todos, sin apearse del rucio, a quien no osara desamparar, porque no le sucediese algún desmán. Y, apenas habían sentado el pie y puesto en ala con otros muchos criados suyos, cuando, acosado de los perros y seguido de los cazadores, vieron que hacia ellos venía un desmesurado jabalí, crujiendo dientes y colmillos y

arrojando espuma por la boca; y en viéndole, embrazando su escudo y puesta mano a su espada, se adelantó a recibirle don Quijote. Lo mismo hizo el duque con su venablo; pero a todos se adelantara la duquesa, si el duque no se lo estorbara. Sólo Sancho, en viendo al valiente animal, desamparó al rucio y dio a correr cuanto pudo, y, procurando subirse sobre una alta encina, no fue posible; antes, estando ya a la mitad dél, asido de una rama, pugnando subir a la cima, fue tan corto de ventura y tan desgraciado, que se desgajó la rama, y, al venir al suelo, se quedó en el aire, asido de un gancho de la encina, sin poder llegar al suelo. Y, viéndose así, y que el sayo verde se le rasgaba, y pareciéndole que si aquel fiero animal allí allegaba le podía alcanzar, comenzó a dar tantos gritos y a pedir socorro con tanto ahínco, que todos los que le oían y no le veían creyeron que estaba entre los dientes de alguna fiera.

Finalmente, el colmilludo jabalí quedó atravesado de las cuchillas de muchos venablos que se le pusieron delante; y, volviendo la cabeza don Quijote a los gritos de Sancho, que ya por ellos le había conocido, vio pendiente de la encina y la cabeza abajo, y al rucio junto a él, que no le desamparó en su calamidad; y dice Cide Hamete que pocas veces vio a Sancho Panza sin ver al rucio, ni al rucio sin ver a Sancho: tal era la amistad y buena fe que entre los dos se guardaban.

Llegó don Quijote y descolgó a Sancho; el cual, viéndose libre y en el suelo, miró lo desgarrado del sayo de monte, y pesóle en el alma; que pensó que tenía en el vestido un mayorazgo. En esto, atravesaron al jabalí poderoso sobre una acémila, y, cubriéndole con matas de romero y con ramas de mirto, le llevaron, como en señal de vitoriosos despojos, a unas grandes tiendas de campaña que en la mitad del bosque estaban puestas, donde hallaron las mesas en orden y la comida aderezada, tan sumptuosa y grande, que se echaba bien de ver en ella la grandeza y magnificencia de quien la daba. Sancho, mostrando las llagas a la duquesa de su roto vestido, dijo:

-Si esta caza fuera de liebres o de pajarillos, seguro estuviera mi sayo de verse en este extremo. Yo no sé qué gusto se recibe de esperar a un animal que, si os alcanza con un colmillo, os puede quitar la vida; yo me acuerdo haber oído cantar un romance antiguo que dice:

De los osos seas comido,  
como Favila el nombrado.

-Ése fue un rey godo -dijo don Quijote-, que, yendo a caza de montería, le

comió un oso.

-Eso es lo que yo digo -respondió Sancho-: que no querría yo que los príncipes y los reyes se pusiesen en semejantes peligros, a trueco de un gusto que parece que no le había de ser, pues consiste en matar a un animal que no ha cometido delito alguno.

-Antes os engañáis, Sancho -respondió el duque-, porque el ejercicio de la caza de monte es el más conveniente y necesario para los reyes y príncipes que otro alguno. La caza es una imagen de la guerra: hay en ella estratagemas, astucias, insidias para vencer a su salvo al enemigo; padécense en ella fríos grandísimos y calores intolerables; menoscábase el ocio y el sueño, corrobóranse las fuerzas, agilitanse los miembros del que la usa, y, en resolución, es ejercicio que se puede hacer sin perjuicio de nadie y con gusto de muchos; y lo mejor que él tiene es que no es para todos, como lo es el de los otros géneros de caza, excepto el de la volatería, que también es sólo para reyes y grandes señores. Así que, ¡oh Sancho!, mudad de opinión, y, cuando seáis gobernador, ocupaos en la caza y veréis como os vale un pan por ciento.

-Eso no -respondió Sancho-: el buen gobernador, la pierna quebrada y en casa. ¡Bueno sería que viniesen los negociantes a buscarle fatigados y él estuviese en el monte holgándose! ¡Así enhoramala andaría el gobierno! Mía fe, señor, la caza y los pasatiempos más han de ser para los holgazanes que para los gobernadores. En lo que yo pienso entretenerme es en jugar al triunfo envidado las pascuas, y a los bolos los domingos y fiestas; que esas cazas ni cazos no dicen con mi condición ni hacen con mi conciencia.

-Plega a Dios, Sancho, que así sea, porque del dicho al hecho hay gran trecho.

-Haya lo que hubiere -replicó Sancho-, que al buen pagador no le duelen prendas, y más vale al que Dios ayuda que al que mucho madruga, y tripas llevan pies, que no pies a tripas; quiero decir que si Dios me ayuda, y yo hago lo que debo con buena intención, sin duda que gobernaré mejor que un gerifalte. ¡No, sino pónganme el dedo en la boca y verán si aprieto o no!

-¡Maldito seas de Dios y de todos sus santos, Sancho maldito -dijo don Quijote-, y cuándo será el día, como otras muchas veces he dicho, donde yo te vea hablar sin refranes una razón corriente y concertada! Vuestras grandezas dejen a este tonto, señores míos, que les molera las almas, no sólo puestas entre dos, sino entre dos mil refranes, traídos tan a sazón y tan a tiempo cuanto le dé Dios a él la salud, o a mí si los querría escuchar.

-Los refranes de Sancho Panza -dijo la duquesa-, puesto que son más que los del Comendador Griego, no por eso son en menos de estimar, por la brevedad de las sentencias. De mí sé decir que me dan más gusto que otros, aunque sean mejor traídos y con más sazón acomodados.

Con estos y otros entretenidos razonamientos, salieron de la tienda al bosque, y en requerir algunas paranzas, y presto, se les pasó el día y se les vino la noche, y no tan clara ni tan sesga como la sazón del tiempo pedía, que era en la mitad del verano; pero un cierto claroescuro que trujo consigo ayudó mucho a la intención de los duques; y, así como comenzó a anochecer, un poco más adelante del crepúsculo, a deshora pareció que todo el bosque por todas cuatro partes se ardía, y luego se oyeron por aquí y por allí, y por acá y por acullá, infinitas cornetas y otros instrumentos de guerra, como de muchas tropas de caballería que por el bosque pasaba. La luz del fuego, el son de los bélicos instrumentos, casi cegaron y atronaron los ojos y los oídos de los circunstantes, y aun de todos los que en el bosque estaban. Luego se oyeron infinitos lelilíes, al uso de moros cuando entran en las batallas, sonaron trompetas y clarines, retumbaron tambores, resonaron pífaros, casi todos a un tiempo, tan contino y tan apriesa, que no tuviera sentido el que no quedara sin él al son confuso de tantos instrumentos. Pasmóse el duque, suspendióse la duquesa, admiróse don Quijote, tembló Sancho Panza, y, finalmente, aun hasta los mismos sabidores de la causa se espantaron. Con el temor les cogió el silencio, y un postillón que en traje de demonio les pasó por delante, tocando en voz de corneta un hueco y desmesurado cuerno, que un ronco y espantoso son despedía.

-¡Hola, hermano correo! -dijo el duque-, ¿quién sois, adónde vais, y qué gente de guerra es la que por este bosque parece que atraviesa?

A lo que respondió el correo con voz horrisona y desenfadada:

-Yo soy el Diablo; voy a buscar a don Quijote de la Mancha; la gente que por aquí viene son seis tropas de encantadores, que sobre un carro triunfante traen a la sin par Dulcinea del Toboso. Encantada viene con el gallardo francés Montesinos, a dar orden a don Quijote de cómo ha de ser desencantada la tal señora.

-Si vos fuéades diablo, como decís y como vuestra figura muestra, ya hubiérades conocido al tal caballero don Quijote de la Mancha, pues le tenéis delante.

-En Dios y en mi conciencia -respondió el Diablo-que no miraba en ello, porque traigo en tantas cosas divertidos los pensamientos, que de la principal a que venía se me olvidaba.

-Sin duda -dijo Sancho-que este demonio debe de ser hombre de bien y buen cristiano, porque, a no serlo, no jurara *en Dios y en mi conciencia*. Ahora yo tengo para mí que aun en el mismo infierno debe de haber buena gente.

Luego el Demonio, sin apear, encaminando la vista a don Quijote, dijo:

-A ti, el Caballero de los Leones (que entre las garras dellos te vea yo), me envía el desgraciado pero valiente caballero Montesinos, mandándome que de su

parte te diga que le esperes en el mismo lugar que te topare, a causa que trae consigo a la que llaman Dulcinea del Toboso, con orden de darte la que es menester para desencantarla. Y, por no ser para más mi venida, no ha de ser más mi estada: los demonios como yo queden contigo, y los ángeles buenos con estos señores.

Y, en diciendo esto, tocó el desaforado cuerno, y volvió las espaldas y fuese, sin esperar respuesta de ninguno.

Renovóse la admiración en todos, especialmente en Sancho y don Quijote: en Sancho, en ver que, a despecho de la verdad, querían que estuviese encantada Dulcinea; en don Quijote, por no poder asegurarse si era verdad o no lo que le había pasado en la cueva de Montesinos. Y, estando elevado en estos pensamientos, el duque le dijo:

-¿Piensa vuestra merced esperar, señor don Quijote?

-Pues ¿no? -respondió él-. Aquí esperaré intrépido y fuerte, si me viniese a embestir todo el infierno.

-Pues si yo veo otro diablo y oigo otro cuerno como el pasado, así esperaré yo aquí como en Flandes -dijo Sancho.

En esto, se cerró más la noche, y comenzaron a discurrir muchas luces por el bosque, bien así como discurren por el cielo las exhalaciones secas de la tierra, que parecen a nuestra vista estrellas que corren. Oyóse asimismo un espantoso ruido, al modo de aquel que se causa de las ruedas macizas que suelen traer los carros de bueyes, de cuyo chirrío áspero y continuado se dice que huyen los lobos y los osos, si los hay por donde pasan. Añadióse a toda esta tempestad otra que las aumentó todas, que fue que parecía verdaderamente que a las cuatro partes del bosque se estaban dando a un mismo tiempo cuatro rencuentros o batallas, porque allí sonaba el duro estruendo de espantosa artillería, acullá se disparaban infinitas escopetas, cerca casi sonaban las voces de los combatientes, lejos se reiteraban los lililíes agarenos.

Finalmente, las cornetas, los cuernos, las bocinas, los clarines, las trompetas, los tambores, la artillería, los arcabuces, y, sobre todo, el temeroso ruido de los carros, formaban todos juntos un son tan confuso y tan horrendo, que fue menester que don Quijote se valiese de todo su corazón para sufrirle; pero el de Sancho vino a tierra, y dio con él desmayado en las faldas de la duquesa, la cual le recibió en ellas, y a gran prisa mandó que le echasen agua en el rostro. Hízose así, y él volvió en su acuerdo, a tiempo que ya un carro de las rechinantes ruedas llegaba a aquel puesto.

Tirábanle cuatro perezosos bueyes, todos cubiertos de paramentos negros; en cada cuerno traían atada y encendida una grande hacha de cera, y encima del carro venía hecho un asiento alto, sobre el cual venía sentado un venerable viejo,

con una barba más blanca que la misma nieve, y tan luenga que le pasaba de la cintura; su vestidura era una ropa larga de negro bocací, que, por venir el carro lleno de infinitas luces, se podía bien divisar y discernir todo lo que en él venía. Guiábanle dos feos demonios vestidos del mismo bocací, con tan feos rostros, que Sancho, habiéndolos visto una vez, cerró los ojos por no verlos otra. Llegando, pues, el carro a igualar al puesto, se levantó de su alto asiento el viejo venerable, y, puesto en pie, dando una gran voz, dijo:

-Yo soy el sabio Lirgandeo.

Y pasó el carro adelante, sin hablar más palabra. Tras éste pasó otro carro de la misma manera, con otro viejo entronizado; el cual, haciendo que el carro se detuviese, con voz no menos grave que el otro, dijo:

-Yo soy el sabio Alquife, el grande amigo de Urganda la Desconocida.

Y pasó adelante.

Luego, por el mismo continente, llegó otro carro; pero el que venía sentado en el trono no era viejo como los demás, sino hombrón robusto y de mala catadura, el cual, al llegar, levantándose en pie, como los otros, dijo con voz más ronca y más endiablada:

-Yo soy Arcaláus el encantador, enemigo mortal de Amadís de Gaula y de toda su parentela.

Y pasó adelante. Poco desviados de allí hicieron alto estos tres carros, y cesó el enfadoso ruido de sus ruedas, y luego se oyó otro, no ruido, sino un son de una suave y concertada música formado, con que Sancho se alegró, y lo tuvo a buena señal; y así, dijo a la duquesa, de quien un punto ni un paso se apartaba:

-Señora, donde hay música no puede haber cosa mala.

-Tampoco donde hay luces y claridad -respondió la duquesa.

A lo que replicó Sancho:

-Luz da el fuego y claridad las hogueras, como lo vemos en las que nos cercan, y bien podría ser que nos abrasasen, pero la música siempre es indicio de regocijos y de fiestas.

-Ello dirá -dijo don Quijote, que todo lo escuchaba.

Y dijo bien, como se muestra en el capítulo siguiente.

## Capítulo XXXV

*Donde se prosigue la noticia que tuvo don Quijote del desencanto de Dulcinea, con otros admirables sucesos*

AL COMPÁS de la agradable música vieron que hacia ellos venía un carro de los que llaman triunfales tirado de seis mulas pardas, encubiertas, empero, de lienzo blanco, y sobre cada una venía un diciplinante de luz, asimesmo vestido de blanco, con una hacha de cera grande encendida en la mano. Era el carro dos veces, y aun tres, mayor que los pasados, y los lados, y encima dél, ocupaban doce otros diciplinantes albos como la nieve, todos con sus hachas encendidas, vista que admiraba y espantaba juntamente; y en un levantado trono venía sentada una ninfa, vestida de mil velos de tela de plata, brillando por todos ellos infinitas hojas de argentería de oro, que la hacían, si no rica, a lo menos vistosamente vestida. Traía el rostro cubierto con un transparente y delicado cendal, de modo que, sin impedirlo sus lizos, por entre ellos se descubría un hermosísimo rostro de doncella, y las muchas luces daban lugar para distinguir la belleza y los años, que, al parecer, no llegaban a veinte ni bajaban de diez y siete.

Junto a ella venía una figura vestida de una ropa de las que llaman rozagantes, hasta los pies, cubierta la cabeza con un velo negro; pero, al punto que llegó el carro a estar frente a frente de los duques y de don Quijote, cesó la música de las chirimías, y luego la de las arpas y laúdes que en el carro sonaban; y, levantándose en pie la figura de la ropa, la apartó a entrambos lados, y, quitándose el velo del rostro, descubrió patentemente ser la misma figura de la muerte, descarnada y fea, de que don Quijote recibió pesadumbre y Sancho miedo, y los duques hicieron algún sentimiento temeroso. Alzada y puesta en pie esta muerte viva, con voz algo dormida y con lengua no muy despierta, comenzó a decir desta manera: -Yo soy Merlín, aquel que las historias

dicen que tuve por mi padre al diablo  
(mentira autorizada de los tiempos),  
príncipe de la Mágica y monarca  
y archivo de la ciencia zoroástrica, 5  
émulo a las edades y a los siglos  
que solapar pretenden las hazañas  
de los andantes bravos caballeros

a quien yo tuve y tengo gran cariño.  
Y, puesto que es de los encantadores, 10  
de los magos o mágicos contino  
dura la condición, áspera y fuerte,  
la mía es tierna, blanda y amorosa,  
y amiga de hacer bien a todas gentes.

En las cavernas lóbregas de Dite, 15  
donde estaba mi alma entretenida  
en formar ciertos rombos y caracteres,  
llegó la voz doliente de la bella  
y sin par Dulcinea del Toboso.  
Supe su encantamento y su desgracia, 20  
y su trasformación de gentil dama  
en rústica aldeana; condolíme,  
y, encerrando mi espíritu en el hueco

desta espantosa y fiera notomía,  
después de haber revuelto cien mil libros 25  
desta mi ciencia endemoniada y torpe,  
vengo a dar el remedio que conviene  
a tamaño dolor, a mal tamaño.

¡Oh tú, gloria y honor de cuantos visten  
las túnicas de acero y de diamante, 30  
luz y farol, sendero, norte y guía  
de aquellos que, dejando el torpe sueño  
y las ociosas plumas, se acomodan  
a usar el ejercicio intolerable  
de las sangrientas y pesadas armas! 35  
A ti digo ¡oh varón, como se debe  
por jamás alabado!, a ti, valiente  
juntamente y discreto don Quijote,  
de la Mancha esplendor, de España estrella,  
que para recobrar su estado primo 40  
la sin par Dulcinea del Toboso,  
es menester que Sancho, tu escudero,  
se dé tres mil azotes y treientos  
en ambas sus valientes posaderas,



al aire descubiertas, y de modo 45  
que le escuezan, le amarguen y le enfaden.  
Y en esto se resuelven todos cuantos  
de su desgracia han sido los autores,  
y a esto es mi venida, mis señores.

-¡Voto a tal! -dijo a esta sazón Sancho-. No digo yo tres mil azotes, pero así me daré yo tres como tres puñaladas. ¡Válate el diablo por modo de desencantar! ¡Yo no sé qué tienen que ver mis posas con los encantos! ¡Par Dios que si el señor Merlín no ha hallado otra manera como desencantar a la señora Dulcinea del Toboso, encantada se podrá ir a la sepultura!

-Tomaros he yo -dijo don Quijote-, don villano, hartos de ajos, y amarraros he a un árbol, desnudo como vuestra madre os parió; y no digo yo tres mil y trescientos, sino seis mil y seiscientos azotes os daré, tan bien pegados que no se os caigan a tres mil y trescientos tirones. Y no me repliquéis palabra, que os arrancaré el alma.

Oyendo lo cual Merlín, dijo:

-No ha de ser así, porque los azotes que ha de recibir el buen Sancho han de ser por su voluntad, y no por fuerza, y en el tiempo que él quisiere; que no se le pone término señalado; pero permítesele que si él quisiere redimir su vejación por la mitad de este vapulamiento, puede dejar que se los dé ajena mano, aunque sea algo pesada.

-Ni ajena, ni propia, ni pesada, ni por pesar -replicó Sancho-: a mí no me ha de tocar alguna mano. ¿Parí yo, por ventura, a la señora Dulcinea del Toboso, para que paguen mis posas lo que pecaron sus ojos? El señor mi amo sí, que es parte suya, pues la llama a cada paso *mi vida*, *mi alma*, sustento y arrimo suyo, se puede y debe azotar por ella y hacer todas las diligencias necesarias para su desencanto; pero, ¿azotarme yo...? ¡Abernuncio!

Apenas acabó de decir esto Sancho, cuando, levantándose en pie la argentada ninfa que junto al espíritu de Merlín venía, quitándose el sutil velo del rostro, le descubrió tal, que a todos pareció mas que demasiadamente hermoso, y, con un desenfado varonil y con una voz no muy adamada, hablando derechamente con Sancho Panza, dijo: -¡Oh malaventurado escudero, alma de cántaro, corazón de alcornoque, de entrañas guiñeñas y apedernaladas! Si te mandaran, ladrón desuellacaras, que te arrojaras de una alta torre al suelo; si te pidieran, enemigo del género humano, que te comieras una docena de sapos, dos de lagartos y tres de culebras; si te persuadieran a que mataras a tu mujer y a tus hijos con algún truculento y agudo alfanje, no fuera maravilla que te mostraras melindroso y esquivo; pero hacer caso de tres mil y trescientos azotes, que no hay niño de la

doctrina, por ruin que sea, que no se los lleve cada mes, admira, adarva, espanta a todas las entrañas piadosas de los que lo escuchan, y aun las de todos aquellos que lo vinieren a saber con el discurso del tiempo. Pon, ¡oh miserable y endurecido animal!, pon, digo, esos tus ojos de machuelo espantadizo en las niñas destos míos, comparados a rutilantes estrellas, y veráslos llorar hilo a hilo y madeja a madeja, haciendo surcos, carreras y sendas por los hermosos campos de mis mejillas. Muévate, socarrón y malintencionado monstruo, que la edad tan florida mía, que aún se está todavía en el diez y... de los años, pues tengo diez y nueve y no llego a veinte, se consume y marchita debajo de la corteza de una rústica labradora; y si ahora no lo parezco, es merced particular que me ha hecho el señor Merlín, que está presente, sólo porque te entenezca mi belleza; que las lágrimas de una afligida hermosura vuelven en algodón los riscos, y los tigres en ovejas. Date, date en esas carnazas, bestión indómito, y saca de harón ese brío, que a sólo comer y más comer te inclina, y pon en libertad la lisura de mis carnes, la mansedumbre de mi condición y la belleza de mi faz; y si por mí no quieres ablandarte ni reducirte a algún razonable término, hazlo por ese pobre caballero que a tu lado tienes; por tu amo, digo, de quien estoy viendo el alma, que la tiene atravesada en la garganta, no diez dedos de los labios, que no espera sino tu rígida o blanda repuesta, o para salirse por la boca, o para volverse al estómago.

Tentóse, oyendo esto, la garganta don Quijote y dijo, volviéndose al duque: - Por Dios, señor, que Dulcinea ha dicho la verdad, que aquí tengo el alma atravesada en la garganta, como una nuez de ballesta.

-¿Qué decís vos a esto, Sancho? -preguntó la duquesa.

-Digo, señora -respondió Sancho-, lo que tengo dicho: que de los azotes, abrenuncio.

-*Abrenuncio* habéis de decir, Sancho, y no como decís -dijo el duque.

-Déjeme vuestra grandeza -respondió Sancho-, que no estoy agora para mirar en sotilezas ni en letras más a menos; porque me tienen tan turbado estos azotes que me han de dar, o me tengo de dar, que no sé lo que me digo, ni lo que me hago. Pero querría yo saber de la señora mi señora doña Dulcinea del Toboso adónde aprendió el modo de rogar que tiene: viene a pedirme que me abra las carnes a azotes, y llámame alma de cántaro y bestión indómito, con una tiramira de malos nombres, que el diablo los sufra. ¿Por ventura son mis carnes de bronce, o vame a mí algo en que se desencante o no? ¿Qué canasta de ropa blanca, de camisas, de tocadores y de escarpines, aunque no los gasto, trae delante de sí para ablandarme, sino un vituperio y otro, sabiendo aquel refrán que dicen por ahí, que un asno cargado de oro sube ligero por una montaña, y que dádivas quebrantan peñas, y a Dios rogando y con el mazo dando, y que más vale un

«toma» que dos «te daré»? Pues el señor mi amo, que había de traerme la mano por el cerro y halagarme para que yo me hiciese de lana y de algodón cardado, dice que si me coge me amarrará desnudo a un árbol y me doblará la parada de los azotes; y habían de considerar estos lastimados señores que no solamente piden que se azote un escudero, sino un gobernador; como quien dice: «bebe con guindas». Aprendan, aprendan mucho de enhoramala a saber rogar, y a saber pedir, y a tener crianza, que no son todos los tiempos unos, ni están los hombres siempre de un buen humor. Estoy yo ahora reventando de pena por ver mi sayo verde roto, y vienen a pedirme que me azote de mi voluntad, estando ella tan ajena dello como de volverme cacique.

-Pues en verdad, amigo Sancho -dijo el duque-, que si no os ablandáis más que una breva madura, que no habéis de empuñar el gobierno. ¡Bueno sería que yo enviase a mis insulanos un gobernador cruel, de entrañas pedernalinas, que no se doblega a las lágrimas de las afligidas doncellas, ni a los ruegos de discretos, imperiosos y antiguos encantadores y sabios! En resolución, Sancho, o vos habéis de ser azotado, o os han de azotar, o no habéis de ser gobernador.

-Señor -respondió Sancho-, ¿no se me darían dos días de término para pensar lo que me está mejor?

-No, en ninguna manera -dijo Merlín-; aquí, en este instante y en este lugar, ha de quedar asentado lo que ha de ser deste negocio, o Dulcinea volverá a la cueva de Montesinos y a su prístino estado de labradora, o ya, en el ser que está, será llevada a los Elíseos Campos, donde estará esperando se cumpla el número del vúpulo.

-Ea, buen Sancho -dijo la duquesa-, buen ánimo y buena correspondencia al pan que habéis comido del señor don Quijote, a quien todos debemos servir y agradar, por su buena condición y por sus altas caballerías. Dad el sí, hijo, desta azotaina, y váyase el diablo para diablo y el temor para mezquino; que un buen corazón quebranta mala ventura, como vos bien sabéis.

A estas razones respondió con éstas disparatadas Sancho, que, hablando con Merlín, le preguntó: -Dígame vuesa merced, señor Merlín: cuando llegó aquí el diablo correo y dio a mi amo un recado del señor Montesinos, mandándole de su parte que le esperase aquí, porque venía a dar orden de que la señora doña Dulcinea del Toboso se desencantase, y hasta agora no hemos visto a Montesinos, ni a sus semejanzas.

A lo cual respondió Merlín:

-El Diablo, amigo Sancho, es un ignorante y un grandísimo bellaco: yo le envié en busca de vuestro amo, pero no con recado de Montesinos, sino mío, porque Montesinos se está en su cueva entendiendo, o, por mejor decir, esperando su desencanto, que aún le falta la cola por desollar. Si os debe algo, o

tenéis alguna cosa que negociar con él, yo os lo traeré y pondré donde vos más quisiéredes. Y, por agora, acabad de dar el sí desta diciplina, y creedme que os será de mucho provecho, así para el alma como para el cuerpo: para el alma, por la caridad con que la haréis; para el cuerpo, porque yo sé que sois de complexión sanguínea, y no os podrá hacer daño sacaros un poco de sangre.

-Muchos médicos hay en el mundo: hasta los encantadores son médicos - replicó Sancho-; pero, pues todos me lo dicen, aunque yo no me lo veo, digo que soy contento de darme los tres mil y trecientos azotes, con condición que me los tengo de dar cada y cuando que yo quisiere, sin que se me ponga tasa en los días ni en el tiempo; y yo procuraré salir de la deuda lo más presto que sea posible, porque goce el mundo de la hermosura de la señora doña Dulcinea del Toboso, pues, según parece, al revés de lo que yo pensaba, en efecto es hermosa. Ha de ser también condición que no he de estar obligado a sacarme sangre con la diciplina, y que si algunos azotes fueren de mosqueo, se me han de tomar en cuenta. Iten, que si me errare en el número, el señor Merlín, pues lo sabe todo, ha de tener cuidado de contarlos y de avisarme los que me faltan o los que me sobran.

-De las sobras no habrá que avisar -respondió Merlín-, porque, llegando al cabal número, luego quedará de improviso desencantada la señora Dulcinea, y vendrá a buscar, como agradecida, al buen Sancho, y a darle gracias, y aun premios, por la buena obra. Así que no hay de qué tener escrúpulo de las sobras ni de las faltas, ni el cielo permita que yo engañe a nadie, aunque sea en un pelo de la cabeza.

-¡Ea, pues, a la mano de Dios! -dijo Sancho-. Yo consiento en mi mala ventura; digo que yo acepto la penitencia con las condiciones apuntadas.

Apenas dijo estas últimas palabras Sancho, cuando volvió a sonar la música de las chirimías y se volvieron a disparar infinitos arcabuces, y don Quijote se colgó del cuello de Sancho, dándole mil besos en la frente y en las mejillas. La duquesa y el duque y todos los circunstantes dieron muestras de haber recibido grandísimo contento, y el carro comenzó a caminar; y, al pasar, la hermosa Dulcinea inclinó la cabeza a los duques y hizo una gran reverencia a Sancho.

Y ya, en esto, se venía a más andar el alba, alegre y risueña: las florecillas de los campos se descollaban y erguían, y los líquidos cristales de los arroyuelos, murmurando por entre blancas y pardas guijas, iban a dar tributo a los ríos que los esperaban. La tierra alegre, el cielo claro, el aire limpio, la luz serena, cada uno por sí y todos juntos, daban manifiestas señales que el día, que al aurora venía pisando las faldas, había de ser sereno y claro. Y, satisfechos los duques de la caza y de haber conseguido su intención tan discreta y felicemente, se volvieron a su castillo, con prosupuesto de segundar en sus burlas, que para ellos

no había veras que más gusto les diesen.

## Capítulo XXXVI

*Donde se cuenta la estraña y jamás imaginada aventura de la dueña Dolorida, alias de la condesa Trifaldi, con una carta que Sancho Panza escribió a su mujer Teresa Panza*

TENÍA un mayordomo el duque de muy burlesco y desenfadado ingenio, el cual hizo la figura de Merlín y acomodó todo el aparato de la aventura pasada, compuso los versos y hizo que un paje hiciese a Dulcinea. Finalmente, con intervención de sus señores, ordenó otra del más gracioso y estraño artificio que puede imaginarse.

Preguntó la duquesa a Sancho otro día si había comenzado la tarea de la penitencia que había de hacer por el desencanto de Dulcinea. Dijo que sí, y que aquella noche se había dado cinco azotes. Preguntóle la duquesa que con qué se los había dado. Respondió que con la mano.

-Eso -replicó la duquesa-más es darse de palmadas que de azotes. Yo tengo para mí que el sabio Merlín no estará contento con tanta blandura; menester será que el buen Sancho haga alguna diciplina de abrojos, o de las de canelones, que se dejen sentir; porque la letra con sangre entra, y no se ha de dar tan barata la libertad de una tan gran señora como lo es Dulcinea por tan poco precio; y advierta Sancho que las obras de caridad que se hacen tibia y flojamente no tienen mérito ni valen nada.

A lo que respondió Sancho:

-Déme vuestra señoría alguna diciplina o ramal conveniente, que yo me daré con él como no me duela demasiado, porque hago saber a vuesa merced que, aunque soy rústico, mis carnes tienen más de algodón que de esparto, y no será bien que yo me descrie por el provecho ajeno.

-Sea en buena hora -respondió la duquesa-: yo os daré mañana una diciplina que os venga muy al justo y se acomode con la ternura de vuestras carnes, como si fueran sus hermanas propias.

A lo que dijo Sancho:

-Sepa vuestra alteza, señora mía de mi ánima, que yo tengo escrita una carta a mi mujer Teresa Panza, dándole cuenta de todo lo que me ha sucedido después que me aparté della; aquí la tengo en el seno, que no le falta más de ponerle el sobreescrito; querría que vuestra discreción la leyese, porque me parece que va conforme a lo de gobernador, digo, al modo que deben de escribir los

gobernadores.

-¿Y quién la notó? -preguntó la duquesa.

-¿Quién la había de notar sino yo, pecador de mí? -respondió Sancho.

-¿Y escribístesla vos? -dijo la duquesa.

-Ni por pienso -respondió Sancho-, porque yo no sé leer ni escribir, puesto que sé firmar.

-Veámosla -dijo la duquesa-, que a buen seguro que vos mostréis en ella la calidad y suficiencia de vuestro ingenio.

Sacó Sancho una carta abierta del seno, y, tomándola la duquesa, vio que decía desta manera:

### CARTA DE SANCHO PANZA A TERESA PANZA, SU MUJER

Si buenos azotes me daban, bien caballero me iba; si buen gobierno me tengo, buenos azotes me cuesta. Esto no lo entenderás tú, Teresa mía, por ahora; otra vez lo sabrás. Has de saber, Teresa, que tengo determinado que andes en coche, que es lo que hace al caso, porque todo otro andar es andar a gatas. Mujer de un gobernador eres, ¡mira si te roerá nadie los zancajos! Ahí te envío un vestido verde de cazador, que me dio mi señora la duquesa; acomódale en modo que sirva de saya y cuerpos a nuestra hija. Don Quijote, mi amo, según he oído decir en esta tierra, es un loco cuerdo y un mentecato gracioso, y que yo no le voy en zaga. Hemos estado en la cueva de Montesinos, y el sabio Merlín ha echado mano de mí para el desencanto de Dulcinea del Toboso, que por allá se llama Aldonza Lorenzo: con tres mil y trescientos azotes, menos cinco, que me he de dar, quedará desencantada como la madre que la parió. No dirás desto nada a nadie, porque pon lo tuyo en concejo, y unos dirán que es blanco y otros que es negro. De aquí a pocos días me partiré al gobierno, adonde voy con grandísimo deseo de hacer dineros, porque me han dicho que todos los gobernadores nuevos van con este mismo deseo; tomaréle el pulso, y avisaréte si has de venir a estar conmigo o no. El rucio está bueno, y se te encomienda mucho; y no le pienso dejar, aunque me llevaran a ser Gran Turco. La duquesa mi señora te besa mil veces las manos; vuélvele el retorno con dos mil, que no hay cosa que menos cueste ni valga más barata, según dice mi amo, que los buenos comedimientos. No ha sido Dios servido de depararme otra maleta con otros cien escudos, como la de marras, pero no te dé pena, Teresa mía, que en salvo está el que repica, y todo saldrá en la colada del gobierno; sino que me ha dado gran pena que me dicen que si una vez le pruebo, que me tengo de comer las manos tras él; y si así fuese, no me costaría muy barato, aunque los estropeados y mancos ya se tienen

su calonjía en la limosna que piden; así que, por una vía o por otra, tú has de ser rica, de buena ventura. Dios te la dé, como puede, y a mí me guarde para servirte. Deste castillo, a veinte de julio de 1614.

Tu marido el gobernador,

*Sancho Panza.*

En acabando la duquesa de leer la carta, dijo a Sancho:

-En dos cosas anda un poco descaminado el buen gobernador: la una, en decir o dar a entender que este gobierno se le han dado por los azotes que se ha de dar, sabiendo él, que no lo puede negar, que cuando el duque, mi señor, se le prometió, no se soñaba haber azotes en el mundo; la otra es que se muestra en ella muy codicioso, y no querría que orégano fuese, porque la codicia rompe el saco, y el gobernador codicioso hace la justicia desgobernada.

-Yo no lo digo por tanto, señora -respondió Sancho-; y si a vuesa merced le parece que la tal carta no va como ha de ir, no hay sino rasgarla y hacer otra nueva, y podría ser que fuese peor si me lo dejan a mi caletre.

-No, no -replicó la duquesa-, buena está ésta, y quiero que el duque la vea.

Con esto se fueron a un jardín, donde habían de comer aquel día. Mostró la duquesa la carta de Sancho al duque, de que recibió grandísimo contento. Comieron, y después de alzado los manteles, y después de haberse entretenido un buen espacio con la sabrosa conversación de Sancho, a deshora se oyó el son tristísimo de un pífaro y el de un ronco y destemplado tambor. Todos mostraron alborotarse con la confusa, marcial y triste armonía, especialmente don Quijote, que no cabía en su asiento de puro alborotado; de Sancho no hay que decir sino que el miedo le llevó a su acostumbrado refugio, que era el lado o faldas de la duquesa, porque real y verdaderamente el son que se escuchaba era tristísimo y malencólico.

Y, estando todos así suspensos, vieron entrar por el jardín adelante dos hombres vestidos de luto, tan luengo y tendido que les arrastraba por el suelo; éstos venían tocando dos grandes tambores, asimismo cubiertos de negro. A su lado venía el pífaro, negro y pizmiento como los demás. Seguía a los tres un personaje de cuerpo agigantado, amantado, no que vestido, con una negrísima loba, cuya falda era asimismo desaforada de grande. Por encima de la loba le ceñía y atravesaba un ancho tahelí, también negro, de quien pendía un desmesurado alfanje de guarniciones y vaina negra. Venía cubierto el rostro con un trasparente velo negro, por quien se entreparecía una longísima barba, blanca como la nieve. Movía el paso al son de los tambores con mucha gravedad y reposo. En fin, su grandeza, su contoneo, su negrura y su acompañamiento pudiera y pudo suspender a todos aquellos que sin conocerle le miraron.

Llegó, pues, con el espacio y prosopopeya referida a hincarse de rodillas ante



el duque, que en pie, con los demás que allí estaban, le atendía; pero el duque en ninguna manera le consintió hablar hasta que se levantase. Hízolo así el espantajo prodigioso, y, puesto en pie, alzó el antifaz del rostro y hizo patente la más horrenda, la más larga, la más blanca y más poblada barba que hasta entonces humanos ojos habían visto, y luego desencajó y arrancó del ancho y dilatado pecho una voz grave y sonora, y, poniendo los ojos en el duque, dijo:

-Altísimo y poderoso señor, a mí me llaman Trifaldín el de la Barba Blanca; soy escudero de la condesa Trifaldi, por otro nombre llamada la Dueña Dolorida, de parte de la cual traigo a vuestra grandeza una embajada, y es que la vuestra magnificencia sea servida de darla facultad y licencia para entrar a decirle su cuita, que es una de las más nuevas y más admirables que el más cuitado pensamiento del orbe pueda haber pensado. Y primero quiere saber si está en este vuestro castillo el valeroso y jamás vencido caballero don Quijote de la Mancha, en cuya busca viene a pie y sin desayunarse desde el reino de Candaya hasta este vuestro estado, cosa que se puede y debe tener a milagro o a fuerza de encantamento. Ella queda a la puerta desta fortaleza o casa de campo, y no aguarda para entrar sino vuestro beneplácito. Dije.

Y tosió luego y manoseóse la barba de arriba abajo con entrambas manos, y con mucho sosiego estuvo atendiendo la respuesta del duque, que fue:

-Ya, buen escudero Trifaldín de la Blanca Barba, ha muchos días que tenemos noticia de la desgracia de mi señora la condesa Trifaldi, a quien los encantadores la hacen llamar la Dueña Dolorida; bien podéis, estupendo escudero, decirle que entre y que aquí está el valiente caballero don Quijote de la Mancha, de cuya condición generosa puede prometerse con seguridad todo amparo y toda ayuda; y asimismo le podréis decir de mi parte que si mi favor le fuere necesario, no le ha de faltar, pues ya me tiene obligado a dársele el ser caballero, a quien es anejo y concerniente favorecer a toda suerte de mujeres, en especial a las dueñas viudas, menoscabadas y doloridas, cual lo debe estar su señoría.

Oyendo lo cual Trifaldín, inclinó la rodilla hasta el suelo, y, haciendo al pífaros y tambores señal que tocasen, al mismo son y al mismo paso que había entrado, se volvió a salir del jardín, dejando a todos admirados de su presencia y compostura. Y, volviéndose el duque a don Quijote, le dijo:

-En fin, famoso caballero, no pueden las tinieblas de la malicia ni de la ignorancia encubrir y escurecer la luz del valor y de la virtud. Digo esto porque apenas ha seis días que la vuestra bondad está en este castillo, cuando ya os vienen a buscar de lueñas y apartadas tierras, y no en carrozas ni en dromedarios, sino a pie y en ayunas; los tristes, los afligidos, confiados que han de hallar en ese fortísimo brazo el remedio de sus cuitas y trabajos, merced a vuestras grandes hazañas, que corren y rodean todo lo descubierto de la tierra.

-Quisiera yo, señor duque -respondió don Quijote-, que estuviera aquí presente aquel bendito religioso que a la mesa el otro día mostró tener tan mal talante y tan mala ojeriza contra los caballeros andantes, para que viera por vista de ojos si los tales caballeros son necesarios en el mundo: tocara, por lo menos, con la mano que los extraordinariamente afligidos y desconsolados, en casos grandes y en desdichas inormes no van a buscar su remedio a las casas de los letrados, ni a la de los sacristanes de las aldeas, ni al caballero que nunca ha acertado a salir de los términos de su lugar, ni al perezoso cortesano que antes busca nuevas para referirlas y contarlas, que procura hacer obras y hazañas para que otros las cuenten y las escriban; el remedio de las cuitas, el socorro de las necesidades, el amparo de las doncellas, el consuelo de las viudas, en ninguna suerte de personas se halla mejor que en los caballeros andantes, y de serlo yo doy infinitas gracias al cielo, y doy por muy bien empleado cualquier desmán y trabajo que en este tan honroso ejercicio pueda sucederme. Venga esta dueña y pida lo que quisiere, que yo le libraré su remedio en la fuerza de mi brazo y en la intrépida resolución de mi animoso espíritu.

## Capítulo XXXVII

*Donde se prosigue la famosa aventura de la dueña Dolorida*

EN ESTREMO se holgaron el duque y la duquesa de ver cuán bien iba respondiendo a su intención don Quijote, y a esta sazón dijo Sancho:

-No querría yo que esta señora dueña pusiese algún tropiezo a la promesa de mi gobierno, porque yo he oído decir a un boticario toledano que hablaba como un silguero que donde interviniesen dueñas no podía suceder cosa buena. ¡Válame Dios, y qué mal estaba con ellas el tal boticario! De lo que yo saco que, pues todas las dueñas son enfadosas e impertinentes, de cualquiera calidad y condición que sean, ¿qué serán las que son doloridas, como han dicho que es esta condesa Tres Faldas, o Tres Colas?; que en mi tierra faldas y colas, colas y faldas, todo es uno.

-Calla, Sancho amigo -dijo don Quijote-, que, pues esta señora dueña de tan lueños tierras viene a buscarme, no debe ser de aquellas que el boticario tenía en su número, cuanto más que ésta es condesa, y cuando las condesas sirven de dueñas, será sirviendo a reinas y a emperatrices, que en sus casas son señorísimas que se sirven de otras dueñas.

A esto respondió doña Rodríguez, que se halló presente:

-Dueñas tiene mi señora la duquesa en su servicio, que pudieran ser condesas si la fortuna quisiera, pero allá van leyes do quieren reyes; y nadie diga mal de las dueñas, y más de las antiguas y doncellas; que, aunque yo no lo soy, bien se me alcanza y se me trasluce la ventaja que hace una dueña doncella a una dueña viuda; y quien a nosotras trasquiló, las tijeras le quedaron en la mano.

-Con todo eso -replicó Sancho-, hay tanto que trasquilar en las dueñas, según mi barbero, cuanto será mejor no menear el arroz, aunque se pegue.

-Siempre los escuderos -respondió doña Rodríguez-son enemigos nuestros; que, como son duendes de las antesalas y nos veen a cada paso, los ratos que no rezan, que son muchos, los gastan en murmurar de nosotras, desenterrándonos los huesos y enterrándonos la fama. Pues mándoles yo a los leños movibles, que, mal que les pese, hemos de vivir en el mundo, y en las casas principales, aunque muramos de hambre y cubramos con un negro monjil nuestras delicadas o no delicadas carnes, como quien cubre o tapa un muladar con un tapiz en día de procesión. A fe que si me fuera dado, y el tiempo lo pidiera, que yo diera a entender, no sólo a los presentes, sino a todo el mundo, cómo no hay virtud que

no se encierre en una dueña.

-Yo creo -dijo la duquesa-que mi buena doña Rodríguez tiene razón, y muy grande; pero conviene que aguarde tiempo para volver por sí y por las demás dueñas, para confundir la mala opinión de aquel mal boticario, y desarraigar la que tiene en su pecho el gran Sancho Panza.

A lo que Sancho respondió:

-Después que tengo humos de gobernador se me han quitado los váguidos de escudero, y no se me da por cuantas dueñas hay un cabrahígo.

Adelante pasaran con el coloquio dueñesco, si no oyeran que el pífaros y los tambores volvían a sonar, por donde entendieron que la dueña Dolorida entraba. Preguntó la duquesa al duque si sería bien ir a recibirla, pues era condesa y persona principal.

-Por lo que tiene de condesa -respondió Sancho, antes que el duque respondiese-, bien estoy en que vuestras grandezas salgan a recibirla; pero por lo de dueña, soy de parecer que no se muevan un paso.

-¿Quién te mete a ti en esto, Sancho? -dijo don Quijote.

-¿Quién, señor? -respondió Sancho-. Yo me meto, que puedo meterme, como escudero que ha aprendido los términos de la cortesía en la escuela de vuesa merced, que es el más cortés y bien criado caballero que hay en toda la cortesanía; y en estas cosas, según he oído decir a vuesa merced, tanto se pierde por carta de más como por carta de menos; y al buen entendedor, pocas palabras.

-Así es, como Sancho dice -dijo el duque-: veremos el talle de la condesa, y por él tantearemos la cortesía que se le debe.

En esto, entraron los tambores y el pífaros, como la vez primera.

Y aquí, con este breve capítulo, dio fin el autor, y comenzó el otro, siguiendo la misma aventura, que es una de las más notables de la historia.

## Capítulo XXXVIII

*Donde se cuenta la que dio de su mala andanza la dueña Dolorida*

DETRÁS de los tristes músicos comenzaron a entrar por el jardín adelante hasta cantidad de doce dueñas, repartidas en dos hileras, todas vestidas de unos monjiles anchos, al parecer, de anascote batanado, con unas tocas blancas de delgado canequí, tan luengas que sólo el ribete del monjil descubrían. Tras ellas venía la condesa Trifaldi, a quien traía de la mano el escudero Trifaldín de la Blanca Barba, vestida de finísima y negra bayeta por frisar, que, a venir frisada, descubriera cada grano del grandor de un garbanzo de los buenos de Martos. La cola, o falda, o como llamarla quisieren, era de tres puntas, las cuales se sustentaban en las manos de tres pajes, asimesmo vestidos de luto, haciendo una vistosa y matemática figura con aquellos tres ángulos acutos que las tres puntas formaban, por lo cual cayeron todos los que la falda puntiaguda miraron que por ella se debía llamar *la condesa Trifaldi*, como si dijésemos *la condesa de las Tres Faldas*; y así dice Benengeli que fue verdad, y que de su propio apellido se llama la condesa Lobuna, a causa que se criaban en su condado muchos lobos, y que si como eran lobos fueran zorras, la llamaran la condesa Zorruna, por ser costumbre en aquellas partes tomar los señores la denominación de sus nombres de la cosa o cosas en que más sus estados abundan; empero esta condesa, por favorecer la novedad de su falda, dejó el *Lobuna* y tomó el *Trifaldi*.

Venían las doce dueñas y la señora a paso de procesión, cubiertos los rostros con unos velos negros y no transparentes como el de Trifaldín, sino tan apretados que ninguna cosa se traslucían.

Así como acabó de parecer el dueñesco escuadrón, el duque, la duquesa y don Quijote se pusieron en pie, y todos aquellos que la espaciosa procesión miraban. Pararon las doce dueñas y hicieron calle, por medio de la cual la Dolorida se adelantó, sin dejarla de la mano Trifaldín, viendo lo cual el duque, la duquesa y don Quijote, se adelantaron obra de doce pasos a recibirla. Ella, puesta las rodillas en el suelo, con voz antes basta y ronca que sutil y dilicada, dijo:

-Vuestras grandezas sean servidas de no hacer tanta cortesía a este su criado; digo, a esta su criada, porque, según soy de dolorida, no acertaré a responder a lo que debo, a causa que mi estraña y jamás vista desdicha me ha llevado el entendimiento no sé adónde, y debe de ser muy lejos, pues cuanto más le busco menos le hallo.

-Sin él estaría -respondió el duque-, señora condesa, el que no descubriese por vuestra persona vuestro valor, el cual, sin más ver, es merecedor de toda la nata de la cortesía y de toda la flor de las bien criadas ceremonias.

Y, levantándola de la mano, la llevó a asentar en una silla junto a la duquesa, la cual la recibió asimismo con mucho comedimiento.

Don Quijote callaba, y Sancho andaba muerto por ver el rostro de la Trifaldi y de alguna de sus muchas dueñas, pero no fue posible hasta que ellas de su grado y voluntad se descubrieron.

Sosegados todos y puestos en silencio, estaban esperando quién le había de romper, y fue la dueña Dolorida con estas palabras:

-Confiada estoy, señor poderosísimo, hermosísima señora y discretísimos circunstantes, que ha de hallar mi cuitísima en vuestros valerosísimos pechos acogimiento no menos plácido que generoso y doloroso, porque ella es tal, que es bastante a enternecer los mármoles, y a ablandar los diamantes, y a molificar los aceros de los más endurecidos corazones del mundo; pero, antes que salga a la plaza de vuestros oídos, por no decir orejas, quisiera que me hicieran sabidora si está en este gremio, corro y compañía el acendradísimo caballero don Quijote de la Manchísima y su escuderísimo Panza.

-El Panza -antes que otro respondiese, dijo Sancho-aquí esta, y el don Quijotísimo asimismo; y así, podréis, dolorosísima dueñísima, decir lo que quisieridísimis, que todos estamos prontos y aparejadísimos a ser vuestros servidorísimos.

En esto se levantó don Quijote, y, encaminando sus razones a la Dolorida dueña, dijo:

-Si vuestras cuitas, angustiada señora, se pueden prometer alguna esperanza de remedio por algún valor o fuerzas de algún andante caballero, aquí están las mías, que, aunque flacas y breves, todas se emplearán en vuestro servicio. Yo soy don Quijote de la Mancha, cuyo asumpto es acudir a toda suerte de menesterosos, y, siendo esto así, como lo es, no habéis menester, señora, captar benevolencias ni buscar preámbulos, sino, a la llana y sin rodeos, decir vuestros males, que oídos os escuchan que sabrán, si no remediarlos, dolerse dellos.

Oyendo lo cual, la Dolorida dueña hizo señal de querer arrojarle a los pies de don Quijote, y aun se arrojó, y, pugnando por abrazárselos, decía:

-Ante estos pies y piernas me arrojó, ¡oh caballero invicto!, por ser los que son basas y columnas de la andante caballería; estos pies quiero besar, de cuyos pasos pende y cuelga todo el remedio de mi desgracia, ¡oh valeroso andante, cuyas verdaderas fazañas dejan atrás y escurecen las fabulosas de los Amadis, Esplandianes y Belianises!

Y, dejando a don Quijote, se volvió a Sancho Panza, y, asiéndole de las

manos, le dijo:

-¡Oh tú, el más leal escudero que jamás sirvió a caballero andante en los presentes ni en los pasados siglos, más luengo en bondad que la barba de Trifaldín, mi acompañador, que está presente!, bien puedes preciarte que en servir al gran don Quijote sirves en cifra a toda la caterva de caballeros que han tratado las armas en el mundo. Conjúrote, por lo que debes a tu bondad fidelísima, me seas buen intercesor con tu dueño, para que luego favorezca a esta humilísima y desdichadísima condesa.

A lo que respondió Sancho:

-De que sea mi bondad, señoría mía, tan larga y grande como la barba de vuestro escudero, a mí me hace muy poco al caso; barbada y con bigotes tenga yo mi alma cuando desta vida vaya, que es lo que importa, que de las barbas de acá poco o nada me curo; pero, sin esas socaliñas ni plegarias, yo rogaré a mi amo, que sé que me quiere bien, y más agora que me ha menester para cierto negocio, que favorezca y ayude a vuesa merced en todo lo que pudiere. Vuesa merced desembaúle su cuita y cuéntenosla, y deje hacer, que todos nos entenderemos.

Reventaban de risa con estas cosas los duques, como aquellos que habían tomado el pulso a la tal aventura, y alababan entre sí la agudeza y disimulación de la Trifaldi, la cual, volviéndose a sentar, dijo:

-«Del famoso reino de Candaya, que cae entre la gran Trapobana y el mar del Sur, dos leguas más allá del cabo Comorín, fue señora la reina doña Maguncia, viuda del rey Archipiela, su señor y marido, de cuyo matrimonio tuvieron y procrearon a la infanta Antonomasia, heredera del reino, la cual dicha infanta Antonomasia se crió y creció debajo de mi tutela y doctrina, por ser yo la más antigua y la más principal dueña de su madre. Sucedió, pues, que, yendo días y viniendo días, la niña Antonomasia llegó a edad de catorce años, con tan gran perfección de hermosura, que no la pudo subir más de punto la naturaleza. ¡Pues digamos agora que la discreción era mocosa! Así era discreta como bella, y era la más bella del mundo, y lo es, si ya los hados invidiosos y las parcas endurecidas no la han cortado la estambre de la vida. Pero no habrán, que no han de permitir los cielos que se haga tanto mal a la tierra como sería llevarse en agraz el racimo del más hermoso veduño del suelo. De esta hermosura, y no como se debe encarecida de mi torpe lengua, se enamoró un número infinito de príncipes, así naturales como extranjeros, entre los cuales osó levantar los pensamientos al cielo de tanta belleza un caballero particular que en la corte estaba, confiado en su mocedad y en su bizarría, y en sus muchas habilidades y gracias, y facilidad y felicidad de ingenio; porque hago saber a vuestras grandezas, si no lo tienen por enojo, que tocaba una guitarra que la hacía hablar,

y más que era poeta y gran bailarín, y sabía hacer una jaula de pájaros, que solamente a hacerlas pudiera ganar la vida cuando se viera en extrema necesidad, que todas estas partes y gracias son bastantes a derribar una montaña, no que una delicada doncella. Pero toda su gentileza y buen donaire y todas sus gracias y habilidades fueran poca o ninguna parte para rendir la fortaleza de mi niña, si el ladrón desuellacaros no usara del remedio de rendirme a mí primero. Primero quiso el malandrín y desalmado vagamundo granjearme la voluntad y cohecharme el gusto, para que yo, mal alcaide, le entregase las llaves de la fortaleza que guardaba. En resolución: él me aduló el entendimiento y me rindió la voluntad con no sé qué dijes y brincos que me dio, pero lo que más me hizo postrar y dar conmigo por el suelo fueron unas coplas que le oí cantar una noche desde una reja que caía a una callejuela donde él estaba, que, si mal no me acuerdo, decían:

De la dulce mi enemiga  
nace un mal que al alma hiere,  
y, por más tormento, quiere  
que se sienta y no se diga.

Parecióme la trova de perlas, y su voz de almíbar, y después acá, digo, desde entonces, viendo el mal en que caí por estos y otros semejantes versos, he considerado que de las buenas y concertadas repúblicas se habían de desterrar los poetas, como aconsejaba Platón, a lo menos, los lascivos, porque escriben unas coplas, no como las del marqués de Mantua, que entretienen y hacen llorar los niños y a las mujeres, sino unas agudezas que, a modo de blandas espinas, os atraviesan el alma, y como rayos os hieren en ella, dejando sano el vestido. Y otra vez cantó:

Ven, muerte, tan escondida  
que no te sienta venir,  
porque el placer del morir  
no me torne a dar la vida.

Y deste jaez otras coplitas y estrambotes, que cantados encantan y escritos suspenden. Pues, ¿qué cuando se humillan a componer un género de verso que en Candaya se usaba entonces, a quien ellos llamaban seguidillas? Allí era el brincar de las almas, el retozar de la risa, el desasosiego de los cuerpos y,



finalmente, el azogue de todos los sentidos. Y así, digo, señores míos, que los tales trovadores con justo título los debían desterrar a las islas de los Lagartos. Pero no tienen ellos la culpa, sino los simples que los alaban y las bobas que los creen; y si yo fuera la buena dueña que debía, no me habrían de mover sus trasnochados conceptos, ni había de creer ser verdad aquel decir: “Vivo muriendo, ardo en el yelo, tiemblo en el fuego, espero sin esperanza, pártome y quédome”, con otros imposibles desta ralea, de que están sus escritos llenos. Pues, ¿qué cuando prometen el fénix de Arabia, la corona de Aridiana, los caballos del Sol, del Sur las perlas, de Tíbar el oro y de Pancaya el bálsamo? Aquí es donde ellos alargan más la pluma, como les cuesta poco prometer lo que jamás piensan ni pueden cumplir. Pero, ¿dónde me divierto? ¡Ay de mí, desdichada! ¿Qué locura o qué desatino me lleva a contar las ajenas faltas, teniendo tanto que decir de las mías? ¡Ay de mí, otra vez, sin ventura!, que no me rindieron los versos, sino mi simplicidad; no me ablandaron las músicas, sino mi liviandad: mi mucha ignorancia y mi poco advertimiento abrieron el camino y desembarazaron la senda a los pasos de don Clavijo, que éste es el nombre del referido caballero; y así, siendo yo la medianera, él se halló una y muy muchas veces en la estancia de la por mí, y no por él, engañada Antonomasia, debajo del título de verdadero esposo; que, aunque pecadora, no consintiera que sin ser su marido la llegara a la vira de la suela de sus zapatillas. ¡No, no, eso no: el matrimonio ha de ir adelante en cualquier negocio destes que por mí se tratare! Solamente hubo un daño en este negocio, que fue el de la desigualdad, por ser don Clavijo un caballero particular, y la infanta Antonomasia heredera, como ya he dicho, del reino. Algunos días estuvo encubierta y solapada en la sagacidad de mi recato esta maraña, hasta que me pareció que la iba descubriendo a más andar no sé qué hinchazón del vientre de Antonomasia, cuyo temor nos hizo entrar en bureo a los tres, y salió dél que, antes que se saliese a luz el mal recado, don Clavijo pidiese ante el vicario por su mujer a Antonomasia, en fe de una cédula que de ser su esposa la infanta le había hecho, notada por mi ingenio, con tanta fuerza, que las de Sansón no pudieran romperla. Hiciéronse las diligencias, vio el vicario la cédula, tomó el tal vicario la confesión a la señora, confesó de plano, mandóla depositar en casa de un alguacil de corte muy honrado...»

A esta sazón, dijo Sancho:

-También en Candaya hay alguaciles de corte, poetas y seguidillas, por lo que puedo jurar que imagino que todo el mundo es uno. Pero dése vuesa merced priesa, señora Trifaldi, que es tarde y ya me muero por saber el fin desta tan larga historia.

-Sí haré -respondió la condesa.

## Capítulo XXXIX

### *Donde la Trifaldi prosigue su estupenda y memorable historia*

DE CUALQUIERA palabra que Sancho decía, la duquesa gustaba tanto como se desesperaba don Quijote; y, mandándole que callase, la Dolorida prosiguió diciendo:

-«En fin, al cabo de muchas demandas y respuestas, como la infanta se estaba siempre en sus trece, sin salir ni variar de la primera declaración, el vicario sentenció en favor de don Clavijo, y se la entregó por su legítima esposa, de lo que recibió tanto enojo la reina doña Maguncia, madre de la infanta Antonomasia, que dentro de tres días la enterramos.»

-Debió de morir, sin duda -dijo Sancho.

-¡Claro está! -respondió Trifaldín-, que en Candaya no se entierran las personas vivas, sino las muertas.

-Ya se ha visto, señor escudero -replicó Sancho-, enterrar un desmayado creyendo ser muerto, y parecíame a mí que estaba la reina Maguncia obligada a desmayarse antes que a morirse; que con la vida muchas cosas se remedian, y no fue tan grande el disparate de la infanta que obligase a sentirle tanto. Cuando se hubiera casado esa señora con algún paje suyo, o con otro criado de su casa, como han hecho otras muchas, según he oído decir, fuera el daño sin remedio; pero el haberse casado con un caballero tan gentilhomme y tan entendido como aquí nos le han pintado, en verdad en verdad que, aunque fue necedad, no fue tan grande como se piensa; porque, según las reglas de mi señor, que está presente y no me dejará mentir, así como se hacen de los hombres letrados los obispos, se pueden hacer de los caballeros, y más si son andantes, los reyes y los emperadores.

-Razón tienes, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, porque un caballero andante, como tenga dos dedos de ventura, está en potencia propincua de ser el mayor señor del mundo. Pero, pase adelante la señora Dolorida, que a mí se me trasluce que le falta por contar lo amargo desta hasta aquí dulce historia.

-Y ¡cómo si queda lo amargo! -respondió la condesa-, y tan amargo que en su comparación son dulces las tueras y sabrosas las adelfas. «Muerta, pues, la reina, y no desmayada, la enterramos; y, apenas la cubrimos con la tierra y apenas le dimos el último vale, cuando,

quis talia fando temperet a lachrymis?,

puesto sobre un caballo de madera, pareció encima de la sepultura de la reina el gigante Malambruno, primo cormano de Maguncia, que junto con ser cruel era encantador, el cual con sus artes, en venganza de la muerte de su cormana, y por castigo del atrevimiento de don Clavijo, y por despecho de la demasía de Antonomasia, los dejó encantados sobre la misma sepultura: a ella, convertida en una jimia de bronce, y a él, en un espantoso cocodrilo de un metal no conocido, y entre los dos está un padrón, asimismo de metal, y en él escritas en lengua siríaca unas letras que, habiéndose declarado en la candayesca, y ahora en la castellana, encierran esta sentencia: “No cobrarán su primera forma estos dos atrevidos amantes hasta que el valeroso manchego venga conmigo a las manos en singular batalla, que para solo su gran valor guardan los hados esta nunca vista aventura”. Hecho esto, sacó de la vaina un ancho y desmesurado alfanje, y, asiéndome a mí por los cabellos, hizo finta de querer segarme la gola y cortarme cercen la cabeza. Turbéme, pegóseme la voz a la garganta, quedé mohína en todo extremo, pero, con todo, me esforcé lo más que pude, y, con voz tembladora y doliente, le dije tantas y tales cosas, que le hicieron suspender la ejecución de tan riguroso castigo. Finalmente, hizo traer ante sí todas las dueñas de palacio, que fueron estas que están presentes, y, después de haber exagerado nuestra culpa y vituperado las condiciones de las dueñas, sus malas mañas y peores trazas, y cargando a todas la culpa que yo sola tenía, dijo que no quería con pena capital castigarnos, sino con otras penas dilatadas, que nos diesen una muerte civil y continua; y, en aquel mismo momento y punto que acabó de decir esto, sentimos todas que se nos abrían los poros de la cara, y que por toda ella nos punzaban como con puntas de agujas. Acudimos luego con las manos a los rostros, y hallámonos de la manera que ahora veréis.»

Y luego la Dolorida y las demás dueñas alzaron los antifaces con que cubiertas venían, y descubrieron los rostros, todos poblados de barbas, cuáles rubias, cuáles negras, cuáles blancas y cuáles albarrazadas, de cuya vista mostraron quedar admirados el duque y la duquesa, pasmados don Quijote y Sancho, y atónitos todos los presentes.

Y la Trifaldi prosiguió:

-«Desta manera nos castigó aquel follón y malintencionado de Malambruno, cubriendo la blandura y morbidez de nuestros rostros con la aspereza destas cerdas, que pluguiera al cielo que antes con su desmesurado alfanje nos hubiera derribado las testas, que no que nos asombrara la luz de nuestras caras con esta

borra que nos cubre; porque si entramos en cuenta, señores míos (y esto que voy a decir agora lo quisiera decir hechos mis ojos fuentes, pero la consideración de nuestra desgracia, y los mares que hasta aquí han llovido, los tienen sin humor y secos como aristas, y así, lo diré sin lágrimas), digo, pues, que ¿adónde podrá ir una dueña con barbas? ¿Qué padre o qué madre se dolerá della? ¿Quién la dará ayuda? Pues, aun cuando tiene la tez lisa y el rostro martirizado con mil suertes de menjurjes y mudas, apenas halla quien bien la quiera, ¿qué hará cuando descubra hecho un bosque su rostro? ¡Oh dueñas y compañeras mías, en desdichado punto nacimos, en hora menguada nuestros padres nos engendraron!»

Y, diciendo esto, dio muestras de desmayarse.

## Capítulo XL

*De cosas que atañen y tocan a esta aventura y a esta memorable historia*

REAL y verdaderamente, todos los que gustan de semejantes historias como ésta deben de mostrarse agradecidos a Cide Hamete, su autor primero, por la curiosidad que tuvo en contarnos las semínimas della, sin dejar cosa, por menuda que fuese, que no la sacase a luz distintamente: pinta los pensamientos, descubre las imaginaciones, responde a las tácitas, aclara las dudas, resuelve los argumentos; finalmente, los átomos del más curioso deseo manifiesta. ¡Oh autor celeberrimo! ¡Oh don Quijote dichoso! ¡Oh Dulcinea famosa! ¡Oh Sancho Panza gracioso! Todos juntos y cada uno de por sí viváis siglos infinitos, para gusto y general pasatiempo de los vivientes.

Dice, pues, la historia que, así como Sancho vio desmayada a la Dolorida, dijo:

-Por la fe de hombre de bien, juro, y por el siglo de todos mis pasados los Panzas, que jamás he oído ni visto, ni mi amo me ha contado, ni en su pensamiento ha cabido, semejante aventura como ésta. Válgate mil satanases, por no maldecirte por encantador y gigante, Malambruno; y ¿no hallaste otro género de castigo que dar a estas pecadoras sino el de barbarlas? ¿Cómo y no fuera mejor, y a ellas les estuviera más a cuento, quitarles la mitad de las narices de medio arriba, aunque hablaran gangoso, que no ponerles barbas? Apostaré yo que no tienen hacienda para pagar a quien las rape.

-Así es la verdad, señor -respondió una de las doce-, que no tenemos hacienda para mondarnos; y así, hemos tomado algunas de nosotras por remedio ahorrativo de usar de unos pegotes o parches pegajosos, y aplicándolos a los rostros, y tirando de golpe, quedamos rasas y lisas como fondo de mortero de piedra; que, puesto que hay en Candaya mujeres que andan de casa en casa a quitar el vello y a pulir las cejas y hacer otros menjurjes tocantes a mujeres, nosotras las dueñas de mi señora por jamás quisimos admitirlas, porque las más oliscan a terceras, habiendo dejado de ser primas; y si por el señor don Quijote no somos remediadas, con barbas nos llevarán a la sepultura.

-Yo me pelaría las mías -dijo don Quijote- en tierra de moros, si no remediase las vuestras.

A este punto, volvió de su desmayo la Trifaldi y dijo:

-El retintín desa promesa, valeroso caballero, en medio de mi desmayo llegó a

mis oídos, y ha sido parte para que yo dél vuelva y cobre todos mis sentidos; y así, de nuevo os suplico, andante ínclito y señor indomable, vuestra graciosa promesa se convierta en obra.

-Por mí no quedará -respondió don Quijote-: ved, señora, qué es lo que tengo de hacer, que el ánimo está muy pronto para serviros.

-Es el caso -respondió la Dolorida -que desde aquí al reino de Candaya, si se va por tierra, hay cinco mil leguas, dos más a menos; pero si se va por el aire y por la línea recta, hay tres mil y docientas y veinte y siete. Es también de saber que Malambruno me dijo que cuando la suerte me deparase al caballero nuestro libertador, que él le enviaría una cabalgadura harto mejor y con menos malicias que las que son de retorno, porque ha de ser aquel mismo caballo de madera sobre quien llevó el valeroso Pierres robada a la linda Magalona, el cual caballo se rige por una clavija que tiene en la frente, que le sirve de freno, y vuela por el aire con tanta ligereza que parece que los mismos diablos le llevan. Este tal caballo, según es tradición antigua, fue compuesto por aquel sabio Merlín; prestósele a Pierres, que era su amigo, con el cual hizo grandes viajes, y robó, como se ha dicho, a la linda Magalona, llevándola a las ancas por el aire, dejando embobados a cuantos desde la tierra los miraban; y no le prestaba sino a quien él quería, o mejor se lo pagaba; y desde el gran Pierres hasta ahora no sabemos que haya subido alguno en él. De allí le ha sacado Malambruno con sus artes, y le tiene en su poder, y se sirve dél en sus viajes, que los hace por momentos, por diversas partes del mundo, y hoy está aquí y mañana en Francia y otro día en Potosí; y es lo bueno que el tal caballo ni come, ni duerme ni gasta herraduras, y lleva un portante por los aires, sin tener alas, que el que lleva encima puede llevar una taza llena de agua en la mano sin que se le derrame gota, según camina llano y reposado; por lo cual la linda Magalona se holgaba mucho de andar caballera en él.

A esto dijo Sancho:

-Para andar reposado y llano, mi rucio, puesto que no anda por los aires; pero por la tierra, yo le cutiré con cuantos portantes hay en el mundo.

Rieronse todos, y la Dolorida prosiguió:

-Y este tal caballo, si es que Malambruno quiere dar fin a nuestra desgracia, antes que sea media hora entrada la noche, estará en nuestra presencia, porque él me significó que la señal que me daría por donde yo entendiese que había hallado el caballero que buscaba, sería enviarme el caballo, donde fuese con comodidad y presteza.

-Y ¿cuántos caben en ese caballo? -preguntó Sancho.

La Dolorida respondió:

-Dos personas: la una en la silla y la otra en las ancas; y, por la mayor parte,

estas tales dos personas son caballero y escudero, cuando falta alguna robada doncella.

-Querría yo saber, señora Dolorida -dijo Sancho-, qué nombre tiene ese caballo.

-El nombre -respondió la Dolorida-no es como el caballo de Belorofonte, que se llamaba Pegaso, ni como el del Magno Alejandro, llamado Bucéfalo, ni como el del furioso Orlando, cuyo nombre fue Brilladoro, ni menos Bayarte, que fue el de Reinaldos de Montalbán, ni Frontino, como el de Rugero, ni Bootes ni Peritoa, como dicen que se llaman los del Sol, ni tampoco se llama Orelia, como el caballo en que el desdichado Rodrigo, último rey de los godos, entró en la batalla donde perdió la vida y el reino.

-Yo apostaré -dijo Sancho-que, pues no le han dado ninguno desos famosos nombres de caballos tan conocidos, que tampoco le habrán dado el de mi amo, Rocinante, que en ser propio excede a todos los que se han nombrado.

-Así es -respondió la barbada condesa-, pero todavía le cuadra mucho, porque se llama Clavileño el Alígero, cuyo nombre conviene con el ser de leño, y con la clavija que trae en la frente, y con la ligereza con que camina; y así, en cuanto al nombre, bien puede competir con el famoso Rocinante.

-No me descontenta el nombre -replicó Sancho-, pero ¿con qué freno o con qué jáquima se gobierna?

-Ya he dicho -respondió la Trifaldi-que con la clavija, que, volviéndola a una parte o a otra, el caballero que va encima le hace caminar como quiere, o ya por los aires, o ya rastreando y casi barriendo la tierra, o por el medio, que es el que se busca y se ha de tener en todas las acciones bien ordenadas.

-Ya lo querría ver -respondió Sancho-, pero pensar que tengo de subir en él, ni en la silla ni en las ancas, es pedir peras al olmo. ¡Bueno es que apenas puedo tenerme en mi rucio, y sobre un albarda más blanda que la misma seda, y querrían ahora que me tuviese en unas ancas de tabla, sin cojín ni almohada alguna! Pardiez, yo no me pienso moler por quitar las barbas a nadie: cada cual se rape como más le viniere a cuento, que yo no pienso acompañar a mi señor en tan largo viaje. Cuanto más, que yo no debo de hacer al caso para el rapamiento destas barbas como lo soy para el desencanto de mi señora Dulcinea.

-Sí sois, amigo -respondió la Trifaldi-, y tanto, que, sin vuestra presencia, entiendo que no haremos nada.

-¡Aquí del rey! -dijo Sancho-: ¿qué tienen que ver los escuderos con las aventuras de sus señores? ¿Hanse de llevar ellos la fama de las que acaban, y hemos de llevar nosotros el trabajo? ¡Cuerpo de mí! Aun si dijesen los historiadores: «El tal caballero acabó la tal y tal aventura, pero con ayuda de fulano, su escudero, sin el cual fuera imposible el acabarla». Pero, ¡que escriban

a secas: «Don Paralipomenón de las Tres Estrellas acabó la aventura de los seis vestiglos», sin nombrar la persona de su escudero, que se halló presente a todo, como si no fuera en el mundo! Ahora, señores, vuelvo a decir que mi señor se puede ir solo, y buen provecho le haga, que yo me quedaré aquí, en compañía de la duquesa mi señora, y podría ser que cuando volviese hallase mejorada la causa de la señora Dulcinea en tercio y quinto; porque pienso, en los ratos ociosos y desocupados, darme una tanda de azotes que no me la cubra pelo.

-Con todo eso, le habéis de acompañar si fuere necesario, buen Sancho, porque os lo rogarán buenos; que no han de quedar por vuestro inútil temor tan poblados los rostros destas señoras; que, cierto, sería mal caso.

-¡Aquí del rey otra vez! -replicó Sancho-. Cuando esta caridad se hiciera por algunas doncellas recogidas, o por algunas niñas de la doctrina, pudiera el hombre aventurarse a cualquier trabajo, pero que lo sufra por quitar las barbas a dueñas, ¡mal año! Mas que las viese yo a todas con barbas, desde la mayor hasta la menor, y de la más melindrosa hasta la más repulgada.

-Mal estáis con las dueñas, Sancho amigo -dijo la duquesa-: mucho os vais tras la opinión del boticario toledano. Pues a fe que no tenéis razón; que dueñas hay en mi casa que pueden ser ejemplo de dueñas, que aquí está mi doña Rodríguez, que no me dejará decir otra cosa.

-Mas que la diga vuestra excelencia -dijo Rodríguez-, que Dios sabe la verdad de todo, y buenas o malas, barbadadas o lampiñas que seamos las dueñas, también nos parió nuestra madre como a las otras mujeres; y, pues Dios nos echó en el mundo, Él sabe para qué, y a su misericordia me atengo, y no a las barbas de nadie.

-Ahora bien, señora Rodríguez -dijo don Quijote-, y señora Trifaldi y compañía, yo espero en el cielo que mirará con buenos ojos vuestras cuitas, que Sancho hará lo que yo le mandare, ya viniese Clavileño y ya me viese con Malambruno; que yo sé que no habría navaja que con más facilidad rapase a vuestras mercedes como mi espada raparía de los hombros la cabeza de Malambruno; que Dios sufre a los malos, pero no para siempre.

-¡Ay! -dijo a esta sazón la Dolorida-, con benignos ojos miren a vuestra grandeza, valeroso caballero, todas las estrellas de las regiones celestes, e infundan en vuestro ánimo toda prosperidad y valentía para ser escudo y amparo del vituperoso y abatido género dueñesco, abominado de boticarios, murmurado de escuderos y socaliñado de pajes; que mal haya la bellaca que en la flor de su edad no se metió primero a ser monja que a dueña. ¡Desdichadas de nosotras las dueñas, que, aunque vengamos por línea recta, de varón en varón, del mismo Héctor el troyano, no dejaran de echaros un vos nuestras señoras, si pensasen por ello ser reinas! ¡Oh gigante Malambruno, que, aunque eres encantador, eres



certísimo en tus promesas!, envíanos ya al sin par Clavileño, para que nuestra desdicha se acabe, que si entra el calor y estas nuestras barbas duran, ¡guay de nuestra ventura!

Dijo esto con tanto sentimiento la Trifaldi, que sacó las lágrimas de los ojos de todos los circunstantes, y aun arrasó los de Sancho, y propuso en su corazón de acompañar a su señor hasta las últimas partes del mundo, si es que en ello consistiese quitar la lana de aquellos venerables rostros.

## Capítulo XLI

*De la venida de Clavileño, con el fin desta dilatada aventura*

LLEGÓ en esto la noche, y con ella el punto determinado en que el famoso caballo Clavileño viniese, cuya tardanza fatigaba ya a don Quijote, pareciéndole que, pues Malambruno se detenía en enviarle, o que él no era el caballero para quien estaba guardada aquella aventura, o que Malambruno no osaba venir con él a singular batalla. Pero veis aquí cuando a deshora entraron por el jardín cuatro salvajes, vestidos todos de verde yedra, que sobre sus hombros traían un gran caballo de madera. Pusiéronle de pies en el suelo, y uno de los salvajes dijo:

-Suba sobre esta máquina el que tuviere ánimo para ello.

-Aquí -dijo Sancho- yo no subo, porque ni tengo ánimo ni soy caballero.

Y el salvaje prosiguió diciendo:

-Y ocupe las ancas el escudero, si es que lo tiene, y fíese del valeroso Malambruno, que si no fuere de su espada, de ninguna otra, ni de otra malicia, será ofendido; y no hay más que torcer esta clavija que sobre el cuello trae puesta, que él los llevará por los aires adonde los atiende Malambruno; pero, porque la alteza y sublimidad del camino no les cause váguidos, se han de cubrir los ojos hasta que el caballo relinche, que será señal de haber dado fin a su viaje.

Esto dicho, dejando a Clavileño, con gentil continente se volvieron por donde habían venido. La Dolorida, así como vio al caballo, casi con lágrimas dijo a don Quijote:

-Valeroso caballero, las promesas de Malambruno han sido ciertas: el caballo está en casa, nuestras barbas crecen, y cada una de nosotras y con cada pelo dellas te suplicamos nos rapen y tundas, pues no está en más sino en que subas en él con tu escudero y des felice principio a vuestro nuevo viaje.

-Eso haré yo, señora condesa Trifaldi, de muy buen grado y de mejor talante, sin ponerme a tomar cojín, ni calzarme espuelas, por no detenerme: tanta es la gana que tengo de veros a vos, señora, y a todas estas dueñas rasas y mondas.

-Eso no haré yo -dijo Sancho-, ni de malo ni de buen talante, en ninguna manera; y si es que este rapamiento no se puede hacer sin que yo suba a las ancas, bien puede buscar mi señor otro escudero que le acompañe, y estas señoras otro modo de alisarse los rostros; que yo no soy brujo, para gustar de andar por los aires. Y ¿qué dirán mis insulanos cuando sepan que su gobernador se anda paseando por los vientos? Y otra cosa más: que habiendo tres mil y

tantas leguas de aquí a Candaya, si el caballo se cansa o el gigante se enoja, tardaremos en dar la vuelta media docena de años, y ya ni habrá ínsula ni ínsulos en el mundo que me conozan; y, pues se dice comúnmente que en la tardanza va el peligro, y que cuando te dieran la vaquilla acudas con la soguilla, perdónenme las barbas destas señoras, que bien se está San Pedro en Roma; quiero decir que bien me estoy en esta casa, donde tanta merced se me hace y de cuyo dueño tan gran bien espero como es verme gobernador.

A lo que el duque dijo:

-Sancho amigo, la ínsula que yo os he prometido no es movable ni fugitiva: raíces tiene tan hondas, echadas en los abismos de la tierra, que no la arrancarán ni mudarán de donde está a tres tirones; y, pues vos sabéis que sé yo que no hay ninguno género de oficio destos de mayor cantía que no se granjee con alguna suerte de cohecho, cuál más, cuál menos, el que yo quiero llevar por este gobierno es que vais con vuestro señor don Quijote a dar cima y cabo a esta memorable aventura; que ahora volváis sobre Clavileño con la brevedad que su ligereza promete, ora la contraria fortuna os traiga y vuelva a pie, hecho romero, de mesón en mesón y de venta en venta, siempre que volviéredes hallaréis vuestra ínsula donde la dejáis, y a vuestros insulanos con el mismo deseo de recebiros por su gobernador que siempre han tenido, y mi voluntad será la misma; y no pongáis duda en esta verdad, señor Sancho, que sería hacer notorio agravio al deseo que de serviros tengo.

-No más, señor -dijo Sancho-: yo soy un pobre escudero y no puedo llevar a cuestras tantas cortesías; suba mi amo, tápenme estos ojos y encomiéndenme a Dios, y avísenme si cuando vamos por esas altanerías podré encomendarme a Nuestro Señor o invocar los ángeles que me favorezcan.

A lo que respondió Trifaldi:

-Sancho, bien podéis encomendaros a Dios o a quien quisiéredes, que Malambruno, aunque es encantador, es cristiano, y hace sus encantamientos con mucha sagacidad y con mucho tiento, sin meterse con nadie.

-¡Ea, pues -dijo Sancho-, Dios me ayude y la Santísima Trinidad de Gaeta!

-Desde la memorable aventura de los batanes -dijo don Quijote-, nunca he visto a Sancho con tanto temor como ahora, y si yo fuera tan agorero como otros, su pusilanimidad me hiciera algunas cosquillas en el ánimo. Pero llegaos aquí, Sancho, que con licencia destos señores os quiero hablar aparte dos palabras.

Y, apartando a Sancho entre unos árboles del jardín y asiéndole ambas las manos, le dijo:

-Ya vees, Sancho hermano, el largo viaje que nos espera, y que sabe Dios cuándo volveremos dél, ni la comodidad y espacio que nos darán los negocios;

así, querría que ahora te retirases en tu aposento, como que vas a buscar alguna cosa necesaria para el camino, y, en un daga las pajas, te dices, a buena cuenta de los tres mil y trescientos azotes a que estás obligado, siquiera quinientos, que dados te los tendrás, que el comenzar las cosas es tenerlas medio acabadas.

-¡Par Dios -dijo Sancho-, que vuestra merced debe de ser menguado! Esto es como aquello que dicen: «¡en priesa me vees y doncellez me demandas!» ¿Ahora que tengo de ir sentado en una tabla rasa, quiere vuestra merced que me lastime las posas? En verdad en verdad que no tiene vuestra merced razón. Vamos ahora a rapar estas dueñas, que a la vuelta yo le prometo a vuestra merced, como quien soy, de darme tanta priesa a salir de mi obligación, que vuestra merced se contente, y no le digo más.

Y don Quijote respondió:

-Pues con esa promesa, buen Sancho, voy consolado, y creo que la cumplirás, porque, en efecto, aunque tonto, eres hombre verídico.

-No soy verde, sino moreno -dijo Sancho-, pero aunque fuera de mezcla, cumpliera mi palabra.

Y con esto se volvieron a subir en Clavileño, y al subir dijo don Quijote:

-Tapaos, Sancho, y subid, Sancho, que quien de tan lueñes tierras envía por nosotros no será para engañarnos, por la poca gloria que le puede redundar de engañar a quien dél se fía; y, puesto que todo sucediese al revés de lo que imagino, la gloria de haber emprendido esta hazaña no la podrá escurecer malicia alguna.

-Vamos, señor -dijo Sancho-, que las barbas y lágrimas destas señoras las tengo clavadas en el corazón, y no comeré bocado que bien me sepa hasta verlas en su primera lisura. Suba vuesa merced y tápese primero, que si yo tengo de ir a las ancas, claro está que primero sube el de la silla.

-Así es la verdad -replicó don Quijote.

Y, sacando un pañuelo de la faldriquera, pidió a la Dolorida que le cubriese muy bien los ojos, y, habiéndoselos cubierto, se volvió a descubrir y dijo:

-Si mal no me acuerdo, yo he leído en Virgilio aquello del Paladión de Troya, que fue un caballo de madera que los griegos presentaron a la diosa Palas, el cual iba preñado de caballeros armados, que después fueron la total ruina de Troya; y así, será bien ver primero lo que Clavileño trae en su estómago.

-No hay para qué -dijo la Dolorida-, que yo le fío y sé que Malambruno no tiene nada de malicioso ni de traidor; vuesa merced, señor don Quijote, suba sin pavor alguno, y a mi daño si alguno le sucediere.

Parecióle a don Quijote que cualquiera cosa que replicase acerca de su seguridad sería poner en detrimento su valentía; y así, sin más altercar, subió sobre Clavileño y le tentó la clavija, que fácilmente se rodeaba; y, como no tenía

estribos y le colgaban las piernas, no parecía sino figura de tapiz flamenco pintada o tejida en algún romano triunfo. De mal talante y poco a poco llegó a subir Sancho, y, acomodándose lo mejor que pudo en las ancas, las halló algo duras y no nada blandas, y pidió al duque que, si fuese posible, le acomodasen de algún cojín o de alguna almohada, aunque fuese del estrado de su señora la duquesa, o del lecho de algún paje, porque las ancas de aquel caballo más parecían de mármol que de leño.

A esto dijo la Trifaldi que ningún jaez ni ningún género de adorno sufría sobre sí Clavileño; que lo que podía hacer era ponerse a mujeriegas, y que así no sentiría tanto la dureza. Hízolo así Sancho, y, diciendo «a Dios», se dejó vendar los ojos, y, ya después de vendados, se volvió a descubrir, y, mirando a todos los del jardín tiernamente y con lágrimas, dijo que le ayudasen en aquel trance con sendos paternostres y sendas avemarías, porque Dios deparase quien por ellos los dijese cuando en semejantes trances se viesen. A lo que dijo don Quijote:

-Ladrón, ¿estás puesto en la horca por ventura, o en el último término de la vida, para usar de semejantes plegarias? ¿No estás, desalmada y cobarde criatura, en el mismo lugar que ocupó la linda Magalona, del cual decendió, no a la sepultura, sino a ser reina de Francia, si no mienten las historias? Y yo, que voy a tu lado, ¿no puedo ponerme al del valeroso Pierres, que oprimió este mismo lugar que yo ahora oprimo? Cúbrete, cúbrete, animal descorazonado, y no te salga a la boca el temor que tienes, a lo menos en presencia mía.

-Tápenme -respondió Sancho-; y, pues no quieren que me encomiende a Dios ni que sea encomendado, ¿qué mucho que tema no ande por aquí alguna región de diablos que den con nosotros en Peralvillo?

Cubriéronse, y, sintiendo don Quijote que estaba como había de estar, tentó la clavija, y, apenas hubo puesto los dedos en ella, cuando todas las dueñas y cuantos estaban presentes levantaron las voces, diciendo:

-¡Dios te guíe, valeroso caballero!

-¡Dios sea contigo, escudero intrépido!

-¡Ya, ya vais por esos aires, rompiéndolos con más velocidad que una saeta!

-¡Ya comenzáis a suspender y admirar a cuantos desde la tierra os están mirando!

-¡Tente, valeroso Sancho, que te bamboleas! ¡Mira no cayas, que será peor tu caída que la del atrevido mozo que quiso regir el carro del Sol, su padre!

Oyó Sancho las voces, y, apretándose con su amo y ciñiéndole con los brazos, le dijo:

-Señor, ¿cómo dicen éstos que vamos tan altos, si alcanzan acá sus voces, y no parecen sino que están aquí hablando junto a nosotros?

-No repares en eso, Sancho, que, como estas cosas y estas volaterías van fuera de los cursos ordinarios, de mil leguas verás y oirás lo que quisieres. Y no me aprietes tanto, que me derribas; y en verdad que no sé de qué te turbas ni te espantas, que osaré jurar que en todos los días de mi vida he subido en cabalgadura de paso más llano: no parece sino que no nos movemos de un lugar. Destierra, amigo, el miedo, que, en efecto, la cosa va como ha de ir y el viento llevamos en popa.

-Así es la verdad -respondió Sancho-, que por este lado me da un viento tan recio, que parece que con mil fuelles me están soplando.

Y así era ello, que unos grandes fuelles le estaban haciendo aire: tan bien trazada estaba la tal aventura por el duque y la duquesa y su mayordomo, que no le faltó requisito que la dejase de hacer perfecta.

Sintiéndose, pues, soplar don Quijote, dijo:

-Sin duda alguna, Sancho, que ya debemos de llegar a la segunda región del aire, adonde se engendra el granizo, las nieves; los truenos, los relámpagos y los rayos se engendran en la tercera región, y si es que desta manera vamos subiendo, presto daremos en la región del fuego, y no sé yo cómo templar esta clavija para que no subamos donde nos abrasemos.

En esto, con unas estopas ligeras de encenderse y apagarse, desde lejos, pendientes de una caña, les calentaban los rostros. Sancho, que sintió el calor, dijo:

-Que me maten si no estamos ya en el lugar del fuego, o bien cerca, porque una gran parte de mi barba se me ha chamuscado, y estoy, señor, por descubrirme y ver en qué parte estamos.

-No hagas tal -respondió don Quijote-, y acuérdate del verdadero cuento del licenciado Torralba, a quien llevaron los diablos en volandas por el aire, caballero en una caña, cerrados los ojos, y en doce horas llegó a Roma, y se apeó en Torre de Nona, que es una calle de la ciudad, y vio todo el fracaso y asalto y muerte de Borbón, y por la mañana ya estaba de vuelta en Madrid, donde dio cuenta de todo lo que había visto; el cual asimismo dijo que cuando iba por el aire le mandó el diablo que abriese los ojos, y los abrió, y se vio tan cerca, a su parecer, del cuerpo de la luna, que la pudiera asir con la mano, y que no osó mirar a la tierra por no desvanecerse. Así que, Sancho, no hay para qué descubrirnos; que, el que nos lleva a cargo, él dará cuenta de nosotros, y quizá vamos tomando puntas y subiendo en alto para dejarnos caer de una sobre el reino de Candaya, como hace el sacre o neblí sobre la garza para cogerla, por más que se remonte; y, aunque nos parece que no ha media hora que nos partimos del jardín, créeme que debemos de haber hecho gran camino.

-No sé lo que es -respondió Sancho Panza-, sólo sé decir que si la señora

Magallanes o Magalona se contentó destas ancas, que no debía de ser muy tierna de carnes.

Todas estas pláticas de los dos valientes oían el duque y la duquesa y los del jardín, de que recibían extraordinario contento; y, queriendo dar remate a la estraña y bien fabricada aventura, por la cola de Clavileño le pegaron fuego con unas estopas, y al punto, por estar el caballo lleno de cohetes tronadores, voló por los aires, con estraño ruido, y dio con don Quijote y con Sancho Panza en el suelo, medio chamuscados.

En este tiempo ya se habían desaparecido del jardín todo el barbado escuadrón de las dueñas y la Trifaldi y todo, y los del jardín quedaron como desmayados, tendidos por el suelo. Don Quijote y Sancho se levantaron maltrechos, y, mirando a todas partes, quedaron atónitos de verse en el mismo jardín de donde habían partido y de ver tendido por tierra tanto número de gente; y creció más su admiración cuando a un lado del jardín vieron hincada una gran lanza en el suelo y pendiente della y de dos cordones de seda verde un pergamino liso y blanco, en el cual, con grandes letras de oro, estaba escrito lo siguiente:

*El ínclito caballero don Quijote de la Mancha feneció  
y acabó la aventura de la condesa Trifaldi, por  
otro nombre llamada la dueña Dolorida, y compañía,  
con sólo intentarla.  
Malambruno se da por contento y satisfecho a toda  
su voluntad, y las barbas de las dueñas ya quedan  
lisas y mondas, y los reyes don Clavijo y Antonomasia  
en su prístino estado. Y, cuando se  
cumpliere el escuderil vápulo, la blanca paloma se  
verá libre de los pestíferos girifaltes que la persiguen,  
y en brazos de su querido arrullador; que así  
está ordenado por el sabio Merlín, protoencantador  
de los encantadores.*

Habiendo, pues, don Quijote leído las letras del pergamino, claro entendió que del desencanto de Dulcinea hablaban; y, dando muchas gracias al cielo de que con tan poco peligro hubiese acabado tan gran fecho, reduciendo a su pasada tez los rostros de las venerables dueñas, que ya no parecían, se fue adonde el duque y la duquesa aún no habían vuelto en sí, y, trabando de la mano al duque, le dijo:

-¡Ea, buen señor, buen ánimo; buen ánimo, que todo es nada! La aventura es

ya acabada sin daño de barras, como lo muestra claro el escrito que en aquel padrón está puesto.

El duque, poco a poco, y como quien de un pesado sueño recuerda, fue volviendo en sí, y por el mismo tenor la duquesa y todos los que por el jardín estaban caídos, con tales muestras de maravilla y espanto, que casi se podían dar a entender haberles acontecido de veras lo que tan bien sabían fingir de burlas. Leyó el duque el cartel con los ojos medio cerrados, y luego, con los brazos abiertos, fue a abrazar a don Quijote, diciéndole ser el más buen caballero que en ningún siglo se hubiese visto.

Sancho andaba mirando por la Dolorida, por ver qué rostro tenía sin las barbas, y si era tan hermosa sin ellas como su gallarda disposición prometía, pero dijéronle que, así como Clavileño bajó ardiendo por los aires y dio en el suelo, todo el escuadrón de las dueñas, con la Trifaldi, había desaparecido, y que ya iban rapadas y sin cañones. Preguntó la duquesa a Sancho que cómo le había ido en aquel largo viaje. A lo cual Sancho respondió:

-Yo, señora, sentí que íbamos, según mi señor me dijo, volando por la región del fuego, y quise descubrirme un poco los ojos, pero mi amo, a quien pedí licencia para descubrirme, no la consintió; mas yo, que tengo no sé qué briznas de curioso y de desear saber lo que se me estorba y impide, bonitamente y sin que nadie lo viese, por junto a las narices aparté tanto cuanto el pañizuelo que me tapaba los ojos, y por allí miré hacia la tierra, y parecióme que toda ella no era mayor que un grano de mostaza, y los hombres que andaban sobre ella, poco mayores que avellanas; porque se vea cuán altos debíamos de ir entonces.

A esto dijo la duquesa:

-Sancho amigo, mirad lo que decís, que, a lo que parece, vos no visteis la tierra, sino los hombres que andaban sobre ella; y está claro que si la tierra os pareció como un grano de mostaza, y cada hombre como una avellana, un hombre solo había de cubrir toda la tierra.

-Así es verdad -respondió Sancho-, pero, con todo eso, la descubrí por un ladito, y la vi toda.

-Mirad, Sancho -dijo la duquesa-, que por un ladito no se ve el todo de lo que se mira.

-Yo no sé esas miradas -replicó Sancho-: sólo sé que será bien que vuestra señoría entienda que, pues volábamos por encantamento, por encantamento podía yo ver toda la tierra y todos los hombres por doquiera que los mirara; y si esto no se me cree, tampoco creará vuestra merced cómo, descubriéndome por junto a las cejas, me vi tan junto al cielo que no había de mí a él palmo y medio, y por lo que puedo jurar, señora mía, que es muy grande además. Y sucedió que íbamos por parte donde están las siete cabrillas; y en Dios y en mi ánima que,



como yo en mi niñez fui en mi tierra cabrerizo, que así como las vi, ¡me dio una gana de entretenerme con ellas un rato...! Y si no le cumpliera me parece que reventara. Vengo, pues, y tomo, y ¿qué hago? Sin decir nada a nadie, ni a mi señor tampoco, bonita y pasitamente me apeé de Clavileño, y me entretuve con las cabrillas, que son como unos alhelíes y como unas flores, casi tres cuartos de hora, y Clavileño no se movió de un lugar, ni pasó adelante.

-Y, en tanto que el buen Sancho se entretenía con las cabras -preguntó el duque-, ¿en qué se entretenía el señor don Quijote?

A lo que don Quijote respondió:

-Como todas estas cosas y estos tales sucesos van fuera del orden natural, no es mucho que Sancho diga lo que dice. De mí sé decir que ni me descubrí por alto ni por bajo, ni vi el cielo ni la tierra, ni la mar ni las arenas. Bien es verdad que sentí que pasaba por la región del aire, y aun que tocaba a la del fuego; pero que pasásemos de allí no lo puedo creer, pues, estando la región del fuego entre el cielo de la luna y la última región del aire, no podíamos llegar al cielo donde están las siete cabrillas que Sancho dice, sin abrasarnos; y, pues no nos asuramos, o Sancho miente o Sancho sueña.

-Ni miento ni sueño -respondió Sancho-: si no, pregúntenme las señas de las tales cabras, y por ellas verán si digo verdad o no.

-Dígalas, pues, Sancho -dijo la duquesa.

-Son -respondió Sancho-las dos verdes, las dos encarnadas, las dos azules, y la una de mezcla.

-Nueva manera de cabras es ésa -dijo el duque-, y por esta nuestra región del suelo no se usan tales colores; digo, cabras de tales colores.

-Bien claro está eso -dijo Sancho-; sí, que diferencia ha de haber de las cabras del cielo a las del suelo.

-Decidme, Sancho -preguntó el duque-: ¿vistes allá en entre esas cabras algún cabrón?

-No, señor -respondió Sancho-, pero oí decir que ninguno pasaba de los cuernos de la luna.

No quisieron preguntarle más de su viaje, porque les pareció que llevaba Sancho hilo de pasearse por todos los cielos, y dar nuevas de cuanto allá pasaba, sin haberse movido del jardín.

En resolución, éste fue el fin de la aventura de la dueña Dolorida, que dio que reír a los duques, no sólo aquel tiempo, sino el de toda su vida, y que contar a Sancho siglos, si los viviera; y, llegándose don Quijote a Sancho, al oído le dijo:

-Sancho, pues vos queréis que se os crea lo que habéis visto en el cielo, yo quiero que vos me creáis a mí lo que vi en la cueva de Montesinos; y no os digo más.

## Capítulo XLII

*De los consejos que dio don Quijote a Sancho Panza antes que fuese a gobernar la ínsula, con otras cosas bien consideradas*

CON EL FELICE y gracioso suceso de la aventura de la Dolorida, quedaron tan contentos los duques, que determinaron pasar con las burlas adelante, viendo el acomodado sujeto que tenían para que se tuviesen por veras; y así, habiendo dado la traza y órdenes que sus criados y sus vasallos habían de guardar con Sancho en el gobierno de la ínsula prometida, otro día, que fue el que sucedió al vuelo de Clavileño, dijo el duque a Sancho que se adeliñase y compusiese para ir a ser gobernador, que ya sus insulanos le estaban esperando como el agua de mayo. Sancho se le humilló y le dijo:

-Después que bajé del cielo, y después que desde su alta cumbre miré la tierra y la vi tan pequeña, se templó en parte en mí la gana que tenía tan grande de ser gobernador; porque, ¿qué grandeza es mandar en un grano de mostaza, o qué dignidad o imperio el gobernar a media docena de hombres tamaños como avellanas, que, a mi parecer, no había más en toda la tierra? Si vuestra señoría fuese servido de darme una tantica parte del cielo, aunque no fuese más de media legua, la tomaría de mejor gana que la mayor ínsula del mundo.

-Mirad, amigo Sancho -respondió el duque-: yo no puedo dar parte del cielo a nadie, aunque no sea mayor que una uña, que a solo Dios están reservadas esas mercedes y gracias. Lo que puedo dar os doy, que es una ínsula hecha y derecha, redonda y bien proporcionada, y sobremanera fértil y abundosa, donde si vos os sabéis dar maña, podéis con las riquezas de la tierra granjear las del cielo.

-Ahora bien -respondió Sancho-, venga esa ínsula, que yo pugnaré por ser tal gobernador que, a pesar de bellacos, me vaya al cielo; y esto no es por codicia que yo tenga de salir de mis casillas ni de levantarme a mayores, sino por el deseo que tengo de probar a qué sabe el ser gobernador.

-Si una vez lo probáis, Sancho -dijo el duque-, comeréis heis las manos tras el gobierno, por ser dulcísima cosa el mandar y ser obedecido. A buen seguro que cuando vuestro dueño llegue a ser emperador, que lo será sin duda, según van encaminadas sus cosas, que no se lo arranquen comoquiera, y que le duela y le pese en la mitad del alma del tiempo que hubiere dejado de serlo.

-Señor -replicó Sancho-, yo imagino que es bueno mandar, aunque sea a un ható de ganado.

-Con vos me entierren, Sancho, que sabéis de todo -respondió el duque-, y yo espero que seréis tal gobernador como vuestro juicio promete, y quédese esto aquí y advertid que mañana en ese mismo día habéis de ir al gobierno de la ínsula, y esta tarde os acomodarán del traje conveniente que habéis de llevar y de todas las cosas necesarias a vuestra partida.

-Vístanme -dijo Sancho- como quisieren, que de cualquier manera que vaya vestido seré Sancho Panza.

-Así es verdad -dijo el duque-, pero los trajes se han de acomodar con el oficio o dignidad que se profesa, que no sería bien que un jurisperito se vistiese como soldado, ni un soldado como un sacerdote. Vos, Sancho, iréis vestido parte de letrado y parte de capitán, porque en la ínsula que os doy tanto son menester las armas como las letras, y las letras como las armas.

-Letras -respondió Sancho-, pocas tengo, porque aún no sé el A, B, C; pero bástame tener el Christus en la memoria para ser buen gobernador. De las armas manejaré las que me dieren, hasta caer, y Dios delante.

-Con tan buena memoria -dijo el duque-, no podrá Sancho errar en nada.

En esto llegó don Quijote, y, sabiendo lo que pasaba y la celeridad con que Sancho se había de partir a su gobierno, con licencia del duque le tomó por la mano y se fue con él a su estancia, con intención de aconsejarle cómo se había de haber en su oficio.

Entrados, pues, en su aposento, cerró tras sí la puerta, y hizo casi por fuerza que Sancho se sentase junto a él, y con reposada voz le dijo:

-Infinitas gracias doy al cielo, Sancho amigo, de que, antes y primero que yo haya encontrado con alguna buena dicha, te haya salido a ti a recibir y a encontrar la buena ventura. Yo, que en mi buena suerte te tenía librada la paga de tus servicios, me veo en los principios de aventajarme, y tú, antes de tiempo, contra la ley del razonable discurso, te vees premiado de tus deseos. Otros cohechan, importunan, solicitan, madrugan, ruegan, porfían, y no alcanzan lo que pretenden; y llega otro, y sin saber cómo ni cómo no, se halla con el cargo y oficio que otros muchos pretendieron; y aquí entra y encaja bien el decir que hay buena y mala fortuna en las pretensiones. Tú, que para mí, sin duda alguna, eres un porro, sin madrugar ni trasnochar y sin hacer diligencia alguna, con solo el aliento que te ha tocado de la andante caballería, sin más ni más te vees gobernador de una ínsula, como quien no dice nada. Todo esto digo, ¡oh Sancho!, para que no atribuyas a tus merecimientos la merced recebida, sino que des gracias al cielo, que dispone suavemente las cosas, y después las darás a la grandeza que en sí encierra la profesión de la caballería andante. Dispuesto, pues, el corazón a creer lo que te he dicho, está, ¡oh hijo!, atento a este tu Catón, que quiere aconsejarte y ser norte y guía que te encamine y saque a seguro

puerto deste mar proceloso donde vas a engolfarte; que los oficios y grandes cargos no son otra cosa sino un golfo profundo de confusiones. Primeramente, ¡oh hijo!, has de temer a Dios, porque en el temerle está la sabiduría, y siendo sabio no podrás errar en nada. Lo segundo, has de poner los ojos en quien eres, procurando conocerte a ti mismo, que es el más difícil conocimiento que puede imaginarse. Del conocerte saldrá el no hincharte como la rana que quiso igualarse con el buey, que si esto haces, vendrá a ser feos pies de la rueda de tu locura la consideración de haber guardado puercos en tu tierra.

-Así es la verdad -respondió Sancho-, pero fue cuando muchacho; pero después, algo hombrecillo, gansos fueron los que guardé, que no puercos; pero esto paréceme a mí que no hace al caso, que no todos los que gobiernan vienen de casta de reyes.

-Así es verdad -replicó don Quijote-, por lo cual los no de principios nobles deben acompañar la gravedad del cargo que ejercitan con una blanda suavidad que, guiada por la prudencia, los libre de la murmuración maliciosa, de quien no hay estado que se escape. Haz gala, Sancho, de la humildad de tu linaje, y no te desprecies de decir que vienes de labradores; porque, viendo que no te corres, ninguno se pondrá a correrte; y préciate más de ser humilde virtuoso que pecador soberbio. Innumerables son aquellos que, de baja estirpe nacidos, han subido a la suma dignidad pontificia e imperatoria; y desta verdad te pudiera traer tantos ejemplos, que te cansaran. Mira, Sancho: si tomas por medio a la virtud, y te precias de hacer hechos virtuosos, no hay para qué tener envidia a los que los tienen de príncipes y señores, porque la sangre se hereda y la virtud se aquista, y la virtud vale por sí sola lo que la sangre no vale. Siendo esto así, como lo es, que si acaso viniere a verte cuando estés en tu ínsula alguno de tus parientes, no le deseches ni le afrentes; antes le has de acoger, agasajar y regalar, que con esto satisfacerás al cielo, que gusta que nadie se desprecie de lo que él hizo, y corresponderás a lo que debes a la naturaleza bien concertada. Si trujeres a tu mujer contigo (porque no es bien que los que asisten a gobiernos de mucho tiempo estén sin las propias), enséñala, doctrínala y desbástala de su natural rudeza, porque todo lo que suele adquirir un gobernador discreto suele perder y derramar una mujer rústica y tonta. Si acaso enviudares, cosa que puede suceder, y con el cargo mejorares de consorte, no la tomes tal, que te sirva de anzuelo y de caña de pescar, y del no quiero de tu capilla, porque en verdad te digo que de todo aquello que la mujer del juez recibiere ha de dar cuenta el marido en la residencia universal, donde pagará con el cuatro tanto en la muerte las partidas de que no se hubiere hecho cargo en la vida. Nunca te guíes por la ley del encaje, que suele tener mucha cabida con los ignorantes que presumen de agudos. Hallen en ti más compasión las lágrimas del pobre, pero no más justicia, que las

informaciones del rico. Procura descubrir la verdad por entre las promesas y dádivas del rico, como por entre los sollozos e importunidades del pobre. Cuando pudiere y debiere tener lugar la equidad, no cargues todo el rigor de la ley al delincuente, que no es mejor la fama del juez riguroso que la del compasivo. Si acaso doblares la vara de la justicia, no sea con el peso de la dádiva, sino con el de la misericordia. Cuando te sucediere juzgar algún pleito de algún tu enemigo, aparta las mientes de tu injuria y ponlas en la verdad del caso. No te ciegue la pasión propia en la causa ajena, que los yerros que en ella hicieres, las más veces, serán sin remedio; y si le tuvieren, será a costa de tu crédito, y aun de tu hacienda. Si alguna mujer hermosa veniere a pedirte justicia, quita los ojos de sus lágrimas y tus oídos de sus gemidos, y considera de espacio la sustancia de lo que pide, si no quieres que se anegue tu razón en su llanto y tu bondad en sus suspiros. Al que has de castigar con obras no trates mal con palabras, pues le basta al desdichado la pena del suplicio, sin la añadidura de las malas razones. Al culpado que cayere debajo de tu jurisdicción considéralo hombre miserable, sujeto a las condiciones de la depravada naturaleza nuestra, y en todo cuanto fuere de tu parte, sin hacer agravio a la contraria, muéstratele piadoso y clemente, porque, aunque los atributos de Dios todos son iguales, más resplandece y campea a nuestro ver el de la misericordia que el de la justicia. Si estos preceptos y estas reglas sigues, Sancho, serán luengos tus días, tu fama será eterna, tus premios colmados, tu felicidad indecible, casarás tus hijos como quisieres, títulos tendrán ellos y tus nietos, vivirás en paz y beneplácito de las gentes, y en los últimos pasos de la vida te alcanzará el de la muerte, en vejez suave y madura, y cerrarán tus ojos las tiernas y delicadas manos de tus terceros netezuelos. Esto que hasta aquí te he dicho son documentos que han de adornar tu alma; escucha ahora los que han de servir para adorno del cuerpo.

## Capítulo XLIII

### *De los consejos segundos que dio don Quijote a Sancho Panza*

¿QUIÉN oyera el pasado razonamiento de don Quijote que no le tuviera por persona muy cuerda y mejor intencionada? Pero, como muchas veces en el progreso desta grande historia queda dicho, solamente disparaba en tocándole en la caballería, y en los demás discursos mostraba tener claro y desenfadado entendimiento, de manera que a cada paso desacreditaban sus obras su juicio, y su juicio sus obras; pero en ésta destos segundos documentos que dio a Sancho, mostró tener gran donaire, y puso su discreción y su locura en un levantado punto.

Atentísimamente le escuchaba Sancho, y procuraba conservar en la memoria sus consejos, como quien pensaba guardarlos y salir por ellos a buen parto de la preñez de su gobierno. Prosiguió, pues, don Quijote, y dijo:

-En lo que toca a cómo has de gobernar tu persona y casa, Sancho, lo primero que te encargo es que seas limpio, y que te cortes las uñas, sin dejarlas crecer, como algunos hacen, a quien su ignorancia les ha dado a entender que las uñas largas les hermosean las manos, como si aquel escremento y añadidura que se dejan de cortar fuese uña, siendo antes garras de cernícalo lagartijero: puerco y extraordinario abuso. No andes, Sancho, desceñido y flojo, que el vestido descompuesto da indicios de ánimo desmazelado, si ya la descompostura y flojedad no cae debajo de socarronería, como se juzgó en la de Julio César. Toma con discreción el pulso a lo que pudiere valer tu oficio, y si sufriere que des librea a tus criados, dásela honesta y provechosa más que vistosa y bizarra, y repártela entre tus criados y los pobres: quiero decir que si has de vestir seis pajes, viste tres y otros tres pobres, y así tendrás pajes para el cielo y para el suelo; y este nuevo modo de dar librea no la alcanzan los vanagloriosos. No comas ajos ni cebollas, porque no saquen por el olor tu villanería. Anda despacio; habla con reposo, pero no de manera que parezca que te escuchas a ti mismo, que toda afectación es mala. Come poco y cena más poco, que la salud de todo el cuerpo se fragua en la oficina del estómago. Sé templado en el beber, considerando que el vino demasiado ni guarda secreto ni cumple palabra. Ten cuenta, Sancho, de no mascar a dos carrillos, ni de erutar delante de nadie.

-Eso de *erutar* no entiendo -dijo Sancho.

Y don Quijote le dijo:

-*Erutar*, Sancho, quiere decir *regoldar*, y éste es uno de los más torpes vocablos que tiene la lengua castellana, aunque es muy sinificativo; y así, la gente curiosa se ha acogido al latín, y al *regoldar* dice *erutar*, y a los *regüeldos*, *erutaciones*; y, cuando algunos no entienden estos términos, importa poco, que el uso los irá introduciendo con el tiempo, que con facilidad se entiendan; y esto es enriquecer la lengua, sobre quien tiene poder el vulgo y el uso.

-En verdad, señor -dijo Sancho-, que uno de los consejos y avisos que pienso llevar en la memoria ha de ser el de no *regoldar*, porque lo suelo hacer muy a menudo.

-*Erutar*, Sancho, que no *regoldar* -dijo don Quijote.

-*Erutar* diré de aquí adelante -respondió Sancho-, y a fee que no se me olvide.

-También, Sancho, no has de mezclar en tus pláticas la muchedumbre de refranes que sueles; que, puesto que los refranes son sentencias breves, muchas veces los traes tan por los cabellos, que más parecen disparates que sentencias.

-Eso Dios lo puede remediar -respondió Sancho-, porque sé más refranes que un libro, y viénense tantos juntos a la boca cuando hablo, que riñen por salir unos con otros, pero la lengua va arrojando los primeros que encuentra, aunque no vengan a pelo. Mas yo tendré cuenta de aquí adelante de decir los que convengan a la gravedad de mi cargo, que en casa llena presto se guisa la cena, y quien destaja no baraja, y a buen salvo está el que repica, y el dar y el tener seso ha menester.

-¡Eso sí, Sancho! -dijo don Quijote-: ¡encaja, ensarta, enhila refranes, que nadie te va a la mano! ¡Castígame mi madre, y yo trómpogelas! Estoyte diciendo que escuses refranes, y en un instante has echado aquí una letanía dellos, que así cuadran con lo que vamos tratando como por los cerros de Úbeda. Mira, Sancho, no te digo yo que parece mal un refrán traído a propósito, pero cargar y ensartar refranes a troche moche hace la plática desmayada y baja. Cuando subieres a caballo, no vayas echando el cuerpo sobre el arzón postrero, ni lleves las piernas tiesas y tiradas y desviadas de la barriga del caballo, ni tampoco vayas tan flojo que parezca que vas sobre el rucio: que el andar a caballo a unos hace caballeros; a otros, caballerizos. Sea moderado tu sueño, que el que no madruga con el sol, no goza del día; y advierte, ¡oh Sancho!, que la diligencia es madre de la buena ventura, y la pereza, su contraria, jamás llegó al término que pide un buen deseo. Este último consejo que ahora darte quiero, puesto que no sirva para adorno del cuerpo, quiero que le lleves muy en la memoria, que creo que no te será de menos provecho que los que hasta aquí te he dado; y es que jamás te pongas a disputar de linajes, a lo menos, comparándolos entre sí, pues, por fuerza, en los que se comparan uno ha de ser el mejor, y del que abatieres serás aborrecido, y del que levatares en ninguna manera premiado. Tu vestido será calza entera,

ropilla larga, herreruelo un poco más largo; greguescos, ni por pienso, que no les están bien ni a los caballeros ni a los gobernadores. Por ahora, esto se me ha ofrecido, Sancho, que aconsejarte; andará el tiempo, y, según las ocasiones, así serán mis documentos, como tú tengas cuidado de avisarme el estado en que te hallares.

-Señor -respondió Sancho-, bien veo que todo cuanto vuestra merced me ha dicho son cosas buenas, santas y provechosas, pero ¿de qué han de servir, si de ninguna me acuerdo? Verdad sea que aquello de no dejarme crecer las uñas y de casarme otra vez, si se ofreciere, no se me pasará del magín, pero esotros badulaques y enredos y revoltillos, no se me acuerda ni acordará más dellos que de las nubes de antaño, y así, será menester que se me den por escrito, que, puesto que no sé leer ni escribir, yo se los daré a mi confesor para que me los encaje y recapacite cuando fuere menester.

-¡Ah, pecador de mí -respondió don Quijote-, y qué mal parece en los gobernadores el no saber leer ni escribir!; porque has de saber, ¡oh Sancho!, que no saber un hombre leer, o ser zurdo, arguye una de dos cosas: o que fue hijo de padres demasiado de humildes y bajos, o él tan travieso y malo que no pudo entrar en el buen uso ni la buena doctrina. Gran falta es la que llevas contigo, y así, querría que aprendieses a firmar siquiera.

-Bien sé firmar mi nombre -respondió Sancho-, que cuando fui prioste en mi lugar, aprendí a hacer unas letras como de marca de fardo, que decían que decía mi nombre; cuanto más, que fingiré que tengo tullida la mano derecha, y haré que firme otro por mí; que para todo hay remedio, si no es para la muerte; y, teniendo yo el mando y el palo, haré lo que quisiere; cuanto más, que el que tiene el padre alcalde... Y, siendo yo gobernador, que es más que ser alcalde, ¡llegaos, que la dejan ver! No, sino popen y calóñenme, que vendrán por lana y volverán trasquilados; y a quien Dios quiere bien, la casa le sabe; y las necedades del rico por sentencias pasan en el mundo; y, siéndolo yo, siendo gobernador y juntamente liberal, como lo pienso ser, no habrá falta que se me parezca. No, sino haceos miel, y paparos han moscas; tanto vales cuanto tienes, decía una mi agüela, y del hombre arraigado no te verás vengado.

-¡Oh, maldito seas de Dios, Sancho! -dijo a esta sazón don Quijote-. ¡Sesenta mil satanases te lleven a ti y a tus refranes! Una hora ha que los estás ensartando y dándome con cada uno tragos de tormento. Yo te aseguro que estos refranes te han de llevar un día a la horca; por ellos te han de quitar el gobierno tus vasallos, o ha de haber entre ellos comunidades. Dime, ¿dónde los hallas, ignorante, o cómo los aplicas, mentecato, que para decir yo uno y aplicarle bien, sudo y trabajo como si cavase?

-Por Dios, señor nuestro amo -replicó Sancho-, que vuesa merced se queja de



bien pocas cosas. ¿A qué diablos se pudre de que yo me sirva de mi hacienda, que ninguna otra tengo, ni otro caudal alguno, sino refranes y más refranes? Y ahora se me ofrecen cuatro que venían aquí pintiparados, o como peras en tabaque, pero no los diré, porque al buen callar llaman Sancho.

-Ese Sancho no eres tú -dijo don Quijote-, porque no sólo no eres buen callar, sino mal hablar y mal porfiar; y, con todo eso, querría saber qué cuatro refranes te ocurrían ahora a la memoria que venían aquí a propósito, que yo ando recorriendo la mía, que la tengo buena, y ninguno se me ofrece.

-¿Qué mejores -dijo Sancho- que «entre dos muelas cordales nunca pongas tus pulgares», y «a idos de mi casa y qué queréis con mi mujer, no hay responder», y «si da el cántaro en la piedra o la piedra en el cántaro, mal para el cántaro», todos los cuales vienen a pelo? Que nadie se tome con su gobernador ni con el que le manda, porque saldrá lastimado, como el que pone el dedo entre dos muelas cordales, y aunque no sean cordales, como sean muelas, no importa; y a lo que dijere el gobernador no hay que replicar, como al «salíos de mi casa y qué queréis con mi mujer». Pues lo de la piedra en el cántaro un ciego lo verá. Así que, es menester que el que vee la mota en el ojo ajeno, vea la viga en el suyo, porque no se diga por él: «espantóse la muerta de la degollada», y vuestra merced sabe bien que más sabe el necio en su casa que el cuerdo en la ajena.

-Eso no, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, que el necio en su casa ni en la ajena sabe nada, a causa que sobre el aumento de la necedad no asienta ningún discreto edificio. Y dejemos esto aquí, Sancho, que si mal gobernares, tuya será la culpa, y mía la vergüenza; mas consuélome que he hecho lo que debía en aconsejarte con las veras y con la discreción a mí posible: con esto salgo de mi obligación y de mi promesa. Dios te guíe, Sancho, y te gobierne en tu gobierno, y a mí me saque del escrúpulo que me queda que has de dar con toda la ínsula patas arriba, cosa que pudiera yo escusar con descubrir al duque quién eres, diciéndole que toda esa gordura y esa personilla que tienes no es otra cosa que un costal lleno de refranes y de malicias.

-Señor -replicó Sancho-, si a vuestra merced le parece que no soy de pro para este gobierno, desde aquí le suelto, que más quiero un solo negro de la uña de mi alma que a todo mi cuerpo; y así me sustentaré Sancho a secas con pan y cebolla, como gobernador con perdices y capones; y más que, mientras se duerme, todos son iguales, los grandes y los menores, los pobres y los ricos; y si vuestra merced mira en ello, verá que sólo vuestra merced me ha puesto en esto de gobernar: que yo no sé más de gobiernos de ínsulas que un buitre; y si se imagina que por ser gobernador me ha de llevar el diablo, más me quiero ir Sancho al cielo que gobernador al infierno.

-Por Dios, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, que, por solas estas últimas razones que

has dicho, juzgo que mereces ser gobernador de mil ínsulas: buen natural tienes, sin el cual no hay ciencia que valga; encomiéndate a Dios, y procura no errar en la primera intención; quiero decir que siempre tengas intento y firme propósito de acertar en cuantos negocios te ocurrieren, porque siempre favorece el cielo los buenos deseos. Y vámonos a comer, que creo que ya estos señores nos aguardan.

## Capítulo XLIV

*Cómo Sancho Panza fue llevado al gobierno, y de la estraña aventura que en el castillo sucedió a don Quijote*

DICEN que en el propio original desta historia se lee que, llegando Cide Hamete a escribir este capítulo, no le tradujo su intérprete como él le había escrito, que fue un modo de queja que tuvo el moro de sí mismo, por haber tomado entre manos una historia tan seca y tan limitada como esta de don Quijote, por parecerle que siempre había de hablar dél y de Sancho, sin osar estenderse a otras digresiones y episodios más graves y más entretenidos; y decía que el ir siempre atenido el entendimiento, la mano y la pluma a escribir de un solo sujeto y hablar por las bocas de pocas personas era un trabajo incomfortable, cuyo fruto no redundaba en el de su autor, y que, por huir deste inconveniente, había usado en la primera parte del artificio de algunas novelas, como fueron la del *Curioso impertinente* y la del *Capitán cautivo*, que están como separadas de la historia, puesto que las demás que allí se cuentan son casos sucedidos al mismo don Quijote, que no podían dejar de escribirse. También pensó, como él dice, que muchos, llevados de la atención que piden las hazañas de don Quijote, no la darían a las novelas, y pasarían por ellas, o con priesa o con enfado, sin advertir la gala y artificio que en sí contienen, el cual se mostrara bien al descubierto cuando, por sí solas, sin arrimarse a las locuras de don Quijote ni a las sandeces de Sancho, salieran a luz. Y así, en esta segunda parte no quiso ingerir novelas sueltas ni pegadizas, sino algunos episodios que lo pareciesen, nacidos de los mismos sucesos que la verdad ofrece; y aun éstos, limitadamente y con solas las palabras que bastan a declararlos; y, pues se contiene y cierra en los estrechos límites de la narración, teniendo habilidad, suficiencia y entendimiento para tratar del universo todo, pide no se desprecie su trabajo, y se le den alabanzas, no por lo que escribe, sino por lo que ha dejado de escribir.

Y luego prosigue la historia diciendo que, en acabando de comer don Quijote, el día que dio los consejos a Sancho, aquella tarde se los dio escritos, para que él buscase quien se los leyese; pero, apenas se los hubo dado, cuando se le cayeron y vinieron a manos del duque, que los comunicó con la duquesa, y los dos se admiraron de nuevo de la locura y del ingenio de don Quijote; y así, llevando adelante sus burlas, aquella tarde enviaron a Sancho con mucho acompañamiento al lugar que para él había de ser ínsula.

Acaeció, pues, que el que le llevaba a cargo era un mayordomo del duque, muy discreto y muy gracioso -que no puede haber gracia donde no hay discreción-, el cual había hecho la persona de la condesa Trifaldi, con el donaire que queda referido; y con esto, y con ir industriado de sus señores de cómo se había de haber con Sancho, salió con su intento maravillosamente. Digo, pues, que acaeció que, así como Sancho vio al tal mayordomo, se le figuró en su rostro el mismo de la Trifaldi, y, volviéndose a su señor, le dijo: -Señor, o a mí me ha de llevar el diablo de aquí de donde estoy, en justo y en creyente, o vuestra merced me ha de confesar que el rostro deste mayordomo del duque, que aquí está, es el mismo de la Dolorida.

Miró don Quijote atentamente al mayordomo, y, habiéndole mirado, dijo a Sancho: -No hay para qué te lleve el diablo, Sancho, ni en justo ni en creyente, que no sé lo que quieres decir; que el rostro de la Dolorida es el del mayordomo, pero no por eso el mayordomo es la Dolorida; que, a serlo, implicaría contradicción muy grande, y no es tiempo ahora de hacer estas averiguaciones, que sería entrarnos en intrincados laberintos. Créeme, amigo, que es menester rogar a Nuestro Señor muy de veras que nos libre a los dos de malos hechiceros y de malos encantadores.

-No es burla, señor -replicó Sancho-, sino que denantes le oí hablar, y no pareció sino que la voz de la Trifaldi me sonaba en los oídos. Ahora bien, yo callaré, pero no dejaré de andar advertido de aquí adelante, a ver si descubre otra señal que confirme o desfaga mi sospecha.

-Así lo has de hacer, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, y darásme aviso de todo lo que en este caso descubrieres y de todo aquello que en el gobierno te sucediere.

Salió, en fin, Sancho, acompañado de mucha gente, vestido a lo letrado, y encima un gabán muy ancho de chamelote de aguas leonado, con una montera de lo mismo, sobre un macho a la jineta, y detrás dél, por orden del duque, iba el rucio con jaeces y ornamentos jumentiles de seda y flamantes. Volvía Sancho la cabeza de cuando en cuando a mirar a su asno, con cuya compañía iba tan contento que no se trocara con el emperador de Alemaña.

Al despedirse de los duques, les besó las manos, y tomó la bendición de su señor, que se la dio con lágrimas, y Sancho la recibió con pucheritos.

Deja, lector amable, ir en paz y en hora buena al buen Sancho, y espera dos fanegas de risa, que te ha de causar el saber cómo se portó en su cargo, y, en tanto, atiende a saber lo que le pasó a su amo aquella noche; que si con ello no rieres, por lo menos desplegarás los labios con risa de jimia, porque los sucesos de don Quijote, o se han de celebrar con admiración, o con risa.

Cuéntase, pues, que, apenas se hubo partido Sancho, cuando don Quijote sintió su soledad; y si le fuera posible revocarle la comisión y quitarle el

gobierno, lo hiciera. Conoció la duquesa su melancolía, y preguntóle que de qué estaba triste; que si era por la ausencia de Sancho, que escuderos, dueñas y doncellas había en su casa que le servirían muy a satisfacción de su deseo.

-Verdad es, señora mía -respondió don Quijote-, que siento la ausencia de Sancho, pero no es ésa la causa principal que me hace parecer que estoy triste, y, de los muchos ofrecimientos que Vuestra Excelencia me hace, solamente acepto y escojo el de la voluntad con que se me hacen, y, en lo demás, suplico a Vuestra Excelencia que dentro de mi aposento consienta y permita que yo solo sea el que me sirva.

-En verdad -dijo la duquesa-, señor don Quijote, que no ha de ser así: que le han de servir cuatro doncellas de las mías, hermosas como unas flores.

-Para mí -respondió don Quijote- no serán ellas como flores, sino como espinas que me punquen el alma. Así entrarán ellas en mi aposento, ni cosa que lo parezca, como volar. Si es que vuestra grandeza quiere llevar adelante el hacerme merced sin yo merecerla, déjeme que yo me las haya conmigo, y que yo me sirva de mis puertas adentro, que yo ponga una muralla en medio de mis deseos y de mi honestidad; y no quiero perder esta costumbre por la liberalidad que vuestra alteza quiere mostrar conmigo. Y, en resolución, antes dormiré vestido que consentir que nadie me desnude.

-No más, no más, señor don Quijote -replicó la duquesa-. Por mí digo que daré orden que ni aun una mosca entre en su estancia, no que una doncella; no soy yo persona, que por mí se ha de descabalar la decencia del señor don Quijote; que, según se me ha traslucido, la que más campea entre sus muchas virtudes es la de la honestidad. Desnúdese vuesa merced y vístase a sus solas y a su modo, como y cuando quisiere, que no habrá quien lo impida, pues dentro de su aposento hallará los vasos necesarios al menester del que duerme a puerta cerrada, porque ninguna natural necesidad le obligue a que la abra. Viva mil siglos la gran Dulcinea del Toboso, y sea su nombre estendido por toda la redondez de la tierra, pues mereció ser amada de tan valiente y tan honesto caballero, y los benignos cielos infundan en el corazón de Sancho Panza, nuestro gobernador, un deseo de acabar presto sus diciplinas, para que vuelva a gozar el mundo de la belleza de tan gran señora.

A lo cual dijo don Quijote:

-Vuestra altitud ha hablado como quien es, que en la boca de las buenas señoras no ha de haber ninguna que sea mala; y más venturosa y más conocida será en el mundo Dulcinea por haberla alabado vuestra grandeza, que por todas las alabanzas que puedan darle los más elocuentes de la tierra.

-Agora bien, señor don Quijote -replicó la duquesa-, la hora de cenar se llega, y el duque debe de esperar: venga vuesa merced y cenemos, y acostarése

temprano, que el viaje que ayer hizo de Candaya no fue tan corto que no haya causado algún molimiento.

-No siento ninguno, señora -respondió don Quijote-, porque osaré jurar a Vuestra Excelencia que en mi vida he subido sobre bestia más reposada ni de mejor paso que Clavileño; y no sé yo qué le pudo mover a Malambruno para deshacerse de tan ligera y tan gentil cabalgadura, y abrasarla así, sin más ni más.

-A eso se puede imaginar -respondió la duquesa-que, arrepentido del mal que había hecho a la Trifaldi y compañía, y a otras personas, y de las maldades que como hechicero y encantador debía de haber cometido, quiso concluir con todos los instrumentos de su oficio, y, como a principal y que más le traía desasosegado, vagando de tierra en tierra, abrasó a Clavileño; que con sus abrasadas cenizas y con el trofeo del cartel queda eterno el valor del gran don Quijote de la Mancha.

De nuevo nuevas gracias dio don Quijote a la duquesa, y, en cenando, don Quijote se retiró en su aposento solo, sin consentir que nadie entrase con él a servirle: tanto se temía de encontrar ocasiones que le moviesen o forzasen a perder el honesto decoro que a su señora Dulcinea guardaba, siempre puesta en la imaginación la bondad de Amadís, flor y espejo de los andantes caballeros. Cerró tras sí la puerta, y a la luz de dos velas de cera se desnudó, y al descalzarse -¡oh desgracia indigna de tal persona!- se le soltaron, no suspiros, ni otra cosa, que desacreditasen la limpieza de su policía, sino hasta dos docenas de puntos de una media, que quedó hecha celosía. Afligióse en extremo el buen señor, y diera él por tener allí un adarme de seda verde una onza de plata; digo seda verde porque las medias eran verdes.

Aquí exclamó Benengeli, y, escribiendo, dijo «¡Oh pobreza, pobreza! ¡No sé yo con qué razón se movió aquel gran poeta cordobés a llamarte dádiva santa desagradecida!

Yo, aunque moro, bien sé, por la comunicación que he tenido con cristianos, que la santidad consiste en la caridad, humildad, fee, obediencia y pobreza; pero, con todo eso, digo que ha de tener mucho de Dios el que se viniere a contentar con ser pobre, si no es de aquel modo de pobreza de quien dice uno de sus mayores santos: “Tened todas las cosas como si no las tuviédeses”; y a esto llaman pobreza de espíritu; pero tú, segunda pobreza, que eres de la que yo hablo, ¿por qué quieres estrellarte con los hidalgos y bien nacidos más que con la otra gente? ¿Por qué los obligas a dar pantalia a los zapatos, y a que los botones de sus ropillas unos sean de seda, otros de cerdas, y otros de vidro? ¿Por qué sus cuellos, por la mayor parte, han de ser siempre escarolados, y no abiertos con molde?» Y en esto se echará de ver que es antiguo el uso del almidón y de

los cuellos abiertos. Y prosiguió: «¡Miserable del bien nacido que va dando pistos a su honra, comiendo mal y a puerta cerrada, haciendo hipócrita al palillo de dientes con que sale a la calle después de no haber comido cosa que le obligue a limpiárselos! ¡Miserable de aquel, digo, que tiene la honra espantadiza, y piensa que desde una legua se le descubre el remiendo del zapato, el trasudor del sombrero, la hilaza del herreruelo y la hambre de su estómago!»

Todo esto se le renovó a don Quijote en la soltura de sus puntos, pero consolóse con ver que Sancho le había dejado unas botas de camino, que pensó ponerse otro día. Finalmente, él se recostó pensativo y pesaroso, así de la falta que Sancho le hacía como de la irreparable desgracia de sus medias, a quien tomara los puntos, aunque fuera con seda de otra color, que es una de las mayores señales de miseria que un hidalgo puede dar en el discurso de su prolija estrechez. Mató las velas; hacía calor y no podía dormir; levantóse del lecho y abrió un poco la ventana de una reja que daba sobre un hermoso jardín, y, al abrirla, sintió y oyó que andaba y hablaba gente en el jardín. Púsose a escuchar atentamente. Levantaron la voz los de abajo, tanto, que pudo oír estas razones: - No me porfíes, ¡oh Emerencia!, que cante, pues sabes que, desde el punto que este forastero entró en este castillo y mis ojos le miraron, yo no sé cantar, sino llorar; cuanto más, que el sueño de mi señora tiene más de ligero que de pesado, y no querría que nos hallase aquí por todo el tesoro del mundo. Y, puesto caso que durmiese y no despertase, en vano sería mi canto si duerme y no despierta para oírle este nuevo Eneas, que ha llegado a mis regiones para dejarme escarnida.

-No des en eso, Altisidora amiga -respondieron-, que sin duda la duquesa y cuantos hay en esa casa duermen, si no es el señor de tu corazón y el despertador de tu alma, porque ahora sentí que abría la ventana de la reja de su estancia, y sin duda debe de estar despierto; canta, lastimada mía, en tono bajo y suave al son de tu arpa, y, cuando la duquesa nos sienta, le echaremos la culpa al calor que hace.

-No está en eso el punto, ¡oh Emerencia! -respondió la Altisidora-, sino en que no querría que mi canto descubriese mi corazón y fuese juzgada de los que no tienen noticia de las fuerzas poderosas de amor por doncella antojadiza y liviana. Pero venga lo que viniere, que más vale vergüenza en cara que mancilla en corazón.

Y, en esto, sintió tocar una arpa suavísimamente. Oyendo lo cual, quedó don Quijote pasmado, porque en aquel instante se le vinieron a la memoria las infinitas aventuras semejantes a aquélla, de ventanas, rejas y jardines, músicas, requiebros y desvanecimientos que en los sus desvanecidos libros de caballerías había leído. Luego imaginó que alguna doncella de la duquesa estaba dél

enamorada, y que la honestidad la forzaba a tener secreta su voluntad; temió no le rindiese, y propuso en su pensamiento el no dejarse vencer; y, encomendándose de todo buen ánimo y buen talante a su señora Dulcinea del Toboso, determinó de escuchar la música; y, para dar a entender que allí estaba, dio un fingido estornudo, de que no poco se alegraron las doncellas, que otra cosa no deseaban sino que don Quijote las oyese. Recorrida, pues, y afinada la arpa, Altisidora dio principio a este romance: -¡Oh, tú, que estás en tu lecho,

entre sábanas de holanda,  
durmiendo a pierna tendida  
de la noche a la mañana,

caballero el más valiente 5  
que ha producido la Mancha,  
más honesto y más bendito  
que el oro fino de Arabia!

Oye a una triste doncella,  
bien crecida y mal lograda, 10  
que en la luz de tus dos soles  
se siente abrasar el alma.

Tú buscas tus aventuras,  
y ajenas desdichas hallas;  
das las heridas, y niegas 15  
el remedio de sanarlas.

Dime, valeroso joven,  
que Dios prospere tus ansias,  
si te criaste en la Libia,  
o en las montañas de Jaca; 20

si sierpes te dieron leche;  
si, a dicha, fueron tus amas  
la aspereza de las selvas  
y el horror de las montañas.

Muy bien puede Dulcinea, 25  
doncella rolliza y sana,  
preciarse de que ha rendido



a una tigre y fiera brava.

Por esto será famosa  
desde Henares a Jarama, 30  
desde el Tajo a Manzanares,  
desde Pisuerga hasta Arlanza.

Trocáreme yo por ella,  
y diera encima una saya  
de las más gayadas mías, 35  
que de oro le adornan franjas.

¡Oh, quién se viera en tus brazos,  
o si no, junto a tu cama,  
rascándote la cabeza  
y matándote la caspa! 40

Mucho pido, y no soy digna  
de merced tan señalada:  
los pies quisiera traerte,  
que a una humilde esto le basta.

¡Oh, qué de cofias te diera, 45  
qué de escarpines de plata,  
qué de calzas de damasco,  
qué de herreruelos de holanda!

¡Qué de finísimas perlas,  
cada cual como una agalla, 50  
que, a no tener compañeras,  
*Las solas* fueran llamadas!

No mires de tu Tarpeya  
este incendio que me abrasa,  
Nerón manchego del mundo, 55  
ni le avives con tu saña.

Niña soy, pulcela tierna,  
mi edad de quince no pasa:

catorce tengo y tres meses,  
te juro en Dios y en mi ánima. 60

No soy renca, ni soy coja,  
ni tengo nada de manca;  
los cabellos, como lirios,  
que, en pie, por el suelo arrastran.

Y, aunque es mi boca aguileña 65  
y la nariz algo chata,  
ser mis dientes de topacios  
mi belleza al cielo ensalza.

Mi voz, ya ves, si me escuchas,  
que a la que es más dulce iguala, 70  
y soy de disposición  
algo menos que mediana.

Estas y otras gracias mías,  
son despojos de tu aljaba;  
desta casa soy doncella, 75  
y Altisidora me llaman.

Aquí dio fin el canto de la malferida Altisidora, y comenzó el asombro del requerido don Quijote, el cual, dando un gran suspiro, dijo entre sí: -¡Que tengo de ser tan desdichado andante, que no ha de haber doncella que me mire que de mí no se enamore...! ¡Que tenga de ser tan corta de ventura la sin par Dulcinea del Toboso, que no la han de dejar a solas gozar de la incomparable firmeza mía...! ¿Qué la queréis, reinas? ¿A qué la perseguís, emperatrices? ¿Para qué la acosáis, doncellas de a catorce a quince años? Dejad, dejad a la miserable que triunfe, se goce y ufane con la suerte que Amor quiso darle en rendirle mi corazón y entregarle mi alma. Mirad, caterva enamorada, que para sola Dulcinea soy de masa y de alfenique, y para todas las demás soy de pedernal; para ella soy miel, y para vosotras acíbar; para mí sola Dulcinea es la hermosa, la discreta, la honesta, la gallarda y la bien nacida, y las demás, las feas, las necias, las livianas y las de peor linaje; para ser yo suyo, y no de otra alguna, me arrojó la naturaleza al mundo. Llore o cante Altisidora; desespérese Madama, por quien me aporrearón en el castillo del moro encantado, que yo tengo de ser de Dulcinea, cocido o asado, limpio, bien criado y honesto, a pesar de todas las potestades

hechiceras de la tierra.

Y, con esto, cerró de golpe la ventana, y, despechado y pesaroso, como si le hubiera acontecido alguna gran desgracia, se acostó en su lecho, donde le dejaremos por ahora, porque nos está llamando el gran Sancho Panza, que quiere dar principio a su famoso gobierno.

## Capítulo XLV

*De cómo el gran Sancho Panza tomó la posesión de su ínsula, y del modo que comenzó a gobernar*

¡OH PERPETUO descubridor de los antípodas, hacha del mundo, ojo del cielo, meneo dulce de las cantimploras, Timbrio aquí, Febo allí, tirador acá, médico acullá, padre de la Poesía, inventor de la Música: tú que siempre sales, y, aunque lo parece, nunca te pones! A ti digo, ¡oh sol, con cuya ayuda el hombre engendra al hombre!; a ti digo que me favorezcas, y alumbres la escuridad de mi ingenio, para que pueda discurrir por sus puntos en la narración del gobierno del gran Sancho Panza; que sin ti, yo me siento tibio, desmazelado y confuso.

Digo, pues, que con todo su acompañamiento llegó Sancho a un lugar de hasta mil vecinos, que era de los mejores que el duque tenía. Diéronle a entender que se llamaba la ínsula Barataria, o ya porque el lugar se llamaba Baratario, o ya por el barato con que se le había dado el gobierno. Al llegar a las puertas de la villa, que era cercada, salió el regimiento del pueblo a recibirle; tocaron las campanas, y todos los vecinos dieron muestras de general alegría, y con mucha pompa le llevaron a la iglesia mayor a dar gracias a Dios, y luego, con algunas ridículas ceremonias, le entregaron las llaves del pueblo, y le admitieron por perpetuo gobernador de la ínsula Barataria.

El traje, las barbas, la gordura y pequeñez del nuevo gobernador tenía admirada a toda la gente que el busilis del cuento no sabía, y aun a todos los que lo sabían, que eran muchos. Finalmente, en sacándole de la iglesia, le llevaron a la silla del juzgado y le sentaron en ella; y el mayordomo del duque le dijo:

-Es costumbre antigua en esta ínsula, señor gobernador, que el que viene a tomar posesión desta famosa ínsula está obligado a responder a una pregunta que se le hiciere, que sea algo intrincada y dificultosa, de cuya respuesta el pueblo toma y toca el pulso del ingenio de su nuevo gobernador; y así, o se alegra o se entristece con su venida.

En tanto que el mayordomo decía esto a Sancho, estaba él mirando unas grandes y muchas letras que en la pared frontera de su silla estaban escritas; y, como él no sabía leer, preguntó que qué eran aquellas pinturas que en aquella pared estaban. Fuele respondido:

-Señor, allí está escrito y notado el día en que Vuestra Señoría tomó posesión desta ínsula, y dice el epitafio: *Hoy día, a tantos de tal mes y de tal año, tomó la*

*posesión desta ínsula el señor don Sancho Panza, que muchos años la goce.*

-Y ¿a quién llaman don Sancho Panza? -preguntó Sancho.

-A vuestra señoría -respondió el mayordomo-, que en esta ínsula no ha entrado otro Panza sino el que está sentado en esa silla.

-Pues advertid, hermano -dijo Sancho-, que yo no tengo *don*, ni en todo mi linaje le ha habido: Sancho Panza me llaman a secas, y Sancho se llamó mi padre, y Sancho mi agüelo, y todos fueron Panzas, sin añadiduras de *dones* ni *donas*; y yo imagino que en esta ínsula debe de haber más dones que piedras; pero basta: Dios me entiende, y podrá ser que, si el gobierno me dura cuatro días, yo escardaré estos dones, que, por la muchedumbre, deben de enfadar como los mosquitos. Pase adelante con su pregunta el señor mayordomo, que yo responderé lo mejor que supiere, ora se entristezca o no se entristezca el pueblo.

A este instante entraron en el juzgado dos hombres, el uno vestido de labrador y el otro de sastre, porque traía unas tijeras en la mano, y el sastre dijo:

-Señor gobernador, yo y este hombre labrador venimos ante vuestra merced en razón que este buen hombre llegó a mi tienda ayer (que yo, con perdón de los presentes, soy sastre examinado, que Dios sea bendito), y, poniéndome un pedazo de paño en las manos, me preguntó: «Señor, ¿habría en esto paño hartos para hacerme una caperuza?» Yo, tanteando el paño, le respondí que sí; él debióse de imaginar, a lo que yo imagino, e imaginé bien, que sin duda yo le quería hurtar alguna parte del paño, fundándose en su malicia y en la mala opinión de los sastres, y replicóme que mirase si habría para dos; adivinéle el pensamiento y díjele que sí; y él, caballero en su dañada y primera intención, fue añadiendo caperuzas, y yo añadiendo síes, hasta que llegamos a cinco caperuzas, y ahora en este punto acaba de venir por ellas: yo se las doy, y no me quiere pagar la hechura, antes me pide que le pague o vuelva su paño.

-¿Es todo esto así, hermano? -preguntó Sancho.

-Sí, señor -respondió el hombre-, pero hágale vuestra merced que muestre las cinco caperuzas que me ha hecho.

-De buena gana -respondió el sastre.

Y, sacando encontinente la mano debajo del herreruelo, mostró en ella cinco caperuzas puestas en las cinco cabezas de los dedos de la mano, y dijo:

-He aquí las cinco caperuzas que este buen hombre me pide, y en Dios y en mi conciencia que no me ha quedado nada del paño, y yo daré la obra a vista de veedores del oficio.

Todos los presentes se rieron de la multitud de las caperuzas y del nuevo pleito. Sancho se puso a considerar un poco, y dijo:

-Paréceme que en este pleito no ha de haber largas dilaciones, sino juzgar luego a juicio de buen varón; y así, yo doy por sentencia que el sastre pierda las

hechuras, y el labrador el paño, y las caperuzas se lleven a los presos de la cárcel, y no haya más.

Si la sentencia pasada de la bolsa del ganadero movió a admiración a los circunstantes, ésta les provocó a risa; pero, en fin, se hizo lo que mandó el gobernador; ante el cual se presentaron dos hombres ancianos; el uno traía una cañaheja por báculo, y el sin báculo dijo:

-Señor, a este buen hombre le presté días ha diez escudos de oro en oro, por hacerle placer y buena obra, con condición que me los volviese cuando se los pidiese; pasáronse muchos días sin pedírselos, por no ponerle en mayor necesidad de volvérmelos que la que él tenía cuando yo se los presté; pero, por parecerme que se descuidaba en la paga, se los he pedido una y muchas veces, y no solamente no me los vuelve, pero me los niega y dice que nunca tales diez escudos le presté, y que si se los presté, que ya me los ha vuelto. Yo no tengo testigos ni del prestado ni de la vuelta, porque no me los ha vuelto; querría que vuestra merced le tomase juramento, y si jurare que me los ha vuelto, yo se los perdono para aquí y para delante de Dios.

-¿Qué decís vos a esto, buen viejo del báculo? -dijo Sancho.

A lo que dijo el viejo:

-Yo, señor, confieso que me los prestó, y baje vuestra merced esa vara; y, pues él lo deja en mi juramento, yo juraré como se los he vuelto y pagado real y verdaderamente.

Bajó el gobernador la vara, y, en tanto, el viejo del báculo dio el báculo al otro viejo, que se le tuviese en tanto que juraba, como si le embarazara mucho, y luego puso la mano en la cruz de la vara, diciendo que era verdad que se le habían prestado aquellos diez escudos que se le pedían; pero que él se los había vuelto de su mano a la suya, y que por no caer en ello se los volvía a pedir por momentos. Viendo lo cual el gran gobernador, preguntó al acreedor qué respondía a lo que decía su contrario; y dijo que sin duda alguna su deudor debía de decir verdad, porque le tenía por hombre de bien y buen cristiano, y que a él se le debía de haber olvidado el cómo y cuándo se los había vuelto, y que desde allí en adelante jamás le pediría nada. Tornó a tomar su báculo el deudor, y, bajando la cabeza, se salió del juzgado. Visto lo cual Sancho, y que sin más ni más se iba, y viendo también la paciencia del demandante, inclinó la cabeza sobre el pecho, y, poniéndose el índice de la mano derecha sobre las cejas y las narices, estuvo como pensativo un pequeño espacio, y luego alzó la cabeza y mandó que le llamasen al viejo del báculo, que ya se había ido. Trujéronsele, y, en viéndole Sancho, le dijo:

-Dadme, buen hombre, ese báculo, que le he menester.

-De muy buena gana -respondió el viejo-: hele aquí, señor.

Y púsosele en la mano. Tomóle Sancho, y, dándosele al otro viejo, le dijo:

-Andad con Dios, que ya vais pagado.

-¿Yo, señor? -respondió el viejo-. Pues, ¿vale esta cañaheja diez escudos de oro?

-Sí -dijo el gobernador-; o si no, yo soy el mayor porro del mundo. Y ahora se verá si tengo yo caletre para gobernar todo un reino.

Y mandó que allí, delante de todos, se rompiese y abriese la caña. Hízose así, y en el corazón della hallaron diez escudos en oro. Quedaron todos admirados, y tuvieron a su gobernador por un nuevo Salomón.

Preguntáronle de dónde había colegido que en aquella cañaheja estaban aquellos diez escudos, y respondió que de haberle visto dar el viejo que juraba, a su contrario, aquel báculo, en tanto que hacía el juramento, y jurar que se los había dado real y verdaderamente, y que, en acabando de jurar, le tornó a pedir el báculo, le vino a la imaginación que dentro dél estaba la paga de lo que pedían. De donde se podía colegir que los que gobiernan, aunque sean unos tontos, tal vez los encamina Dios en sus juicios; y más, que él había oído contar otro caso como aquél al cura de su lugar, y que él tenía tan gran memoria, que, a no olvidársele todo aquello de que quería acordarse, no hubiera tal memoria en toda la ínsula. Finalmente, el un viejo corrido y el otro pagado, se fueron, y los presentes quedaron admirados, y el que escribía las palabras, hechos y movimientos de Sancho no acababa de determinarse si le tendría y pondría por tonto o por discreto.

Luego, acabado este pleito, entró en el juzgado una mujer asida fuertemente de un hombre vestido de ganadero rico, la cual venía dando grandes voces, diciendo:

-¡Justicia, señor gobernador, justicia, y si no la hallo en la tierra, la iré a buscar al cielo! Señor gobernador de mi ánima, este mal hombre me ha cogido en la mitad dese campo, y se ha aprovechado de mi cuerpo como si fuera trapo mal lavado, y, ¡desdichada de mí!, me ha llevado lo que yo tenía guardado más de veinte y tres años ha, defendiéndolo de moros y cristianos, de naturales y extranjeros; y yo, siempre dura como un alcornoque, conservándome entera como la salamanquesa en el fuego, o como la lana entre las zarzas, para que este buen hombre llegase ahora con sus manos limpias a manosearme.

-Aun eso está por averiguar: si tiene limpias o no las manos este galán -dijo Sancho.

Y, volviéndose al hombre, le dijo qué decía y respondía a la querella de aquella mujer. El cual, todo turbado, respondió:

-Señores, yo soy un pobre ganadero de ganado de cerda, y esta mañana salía deste lugar de vender, con perdón sea dicho, cuatro puercos, que me llevaron de

alcabalas y socaliñas poco menos de lo que ellos valían; volvíame a mi aldea, topé en el camino a esta buena dueña, y el diablo, que todo lo añasca y todo lo cuece, hizo que yogásemos juntos; paguéle lo suficiente, y ella, mal contenta, asió de mí, y no me ha dejado hasta traerme a este puesto. Dice que la forcé, y miente, para el juramento que hago o pienso hacer; y ésta es toda la verdad, sin faltar meaja.

Entonces el gobernador le preguntó si traía consigo algún dinero en plata; él dijo que hasta veinte ducados tenía en el seno, en una bolsa de cuero. Mandó que la sacase y se la entregase, así como estaba, a la querellante; él lo hizo temblando; tomóla la mujer, y, haciendo mil zalemas a todos y rogando a Dios por la vida y salud del señor gobernador, que así miraba por las huérfanas menesterosas y doncellas; y con esto se salió del juzgado, llevando la bolsa asida con entrambas manos, aunque primero miró si era de plata la moneda que llevaba dentro.

Apenas salió, cuando Sancho dijo al ganadero, que ya se le saltaban las lágrimas, y los ojos y el corazón se iban tras su bolsa:

-Buen hombre, id tras aquella mujer y quitadle la bolsa, aunque no quiera, y volved aquí con ella.

Y no lo dijo a tonto ni a sordo, porque luego partió como un rayo y fue a lo que se le mandaba. Todos los presentes estaban suspensos, esperando el fin de aquel pleito, y de allí a poco volvieron el hombre y la mujer más asidos y aferrados que la vez primera: ella la saya levantada y en el regazo puesta la bolsa, y el hombre pugnando por quitársela; mas no era posible, según la mujer la defendía, la cual daba voces diciendo:

-¡Justicia de Dios y del mundo! Mire vuestra merced, señor gobernador, la poca vergüenza y el poco temor deste desalmado, que, en mitad de poblado y en mitad de la calle, me ha querido quitar la bolsa que vuestra merced mandó darme.

-Y ¿háosla quitado? -preguntó el gobernador.

-¿Cómo quitar? -respondió la mujer-. Antes me dejara yo quitar la vida que me quiten la bolsa. ¡Bonita es la niña! ¡Otros gatos me han de echar a las barbas, que no este desventurado y asqueroso! ¡Tenazas y martillos, mazos y escoplos no serán bastantes a sacármela de las uñas, ni aun garras de leones: antes el ánima de en mitad en mitad de las carnes!

-Ella tiene razón -dijo el hombre-, y yo me doy por rendido y sin fuerzas, y confieso que las mías no son bastantes para quitársela, y déjola.

Entonces el gobernador dijo a la mujer:

-Mostrad, honrada y valiente, esa bolsa.

Ella se la dio luego, y el gobernador se la volvió al hombre, y dijo a la



esforzada y no forzada:

-Hermana mía, si el mismo aliento y valor que habéis mostrado para defender esta bolsa le mostrárades, y aun la mitad menos, para defender vuestro cuerpo, las fuerzas de Hércules no os hicieran fuerza. Andad con Dios, y mucho de enhoramala, y no paréis en toda esta ínsula ni en seis leguas a la redonda, so pena de docientos azotes. ¡Andad luego digo, churrillera, desvergonzada y embaidora!

Espantóse la mujer y fuese cabizbaja y mal contenta, y el gobernador dijo al hombre:

-Buen hombre, andad con Dios a vuestro lugar con vuestro dinero, y de aquí adelante, si no le queréis perder, procurad que no os venga en voluntad de yogar con nadie.

El hombre le dio las gracias lo peor que supo, y fuese, y los circunstantes quedaron admirados de nuevo de los juicios y sentencias de su nuevo gobernador. Todo lo cual, notado de su coronista, fue luego escrito al duque, que con gran deseo lo estaba esperando.

Y quédese aquí el buen Sancho, que es mucha la priesa que nos da su amo, alborozado con la música de Altisidora.

## Capítulo XLVI

*Del temeroso espanto cencerril y gatuno que recibió don Quijote en el discurso de los amores de la enamorada Altisidora*

DEJAMOS al gran don Quijote envuelto en los pensamientos que le habían causado la música de la enamorada doncella Altisidora. Acostóse con ellos, y, como si fueran pulgas, no le dejaron dormir ni sosegar un punto, y juntábansele los que le faltaban de sus medias; pero, como es ligero el tiempo, y no hay barranco que le detenga, corrió caballero en las horas, y con mucha presteza llegó la de la mañana. Lo cual visto por don Quijote, dejó las blandas plumas, y, no nada perezoso, se vistió su acamuzado vestido y se calzó sus botas de camino, por encubrir la desgracia de sus medias; arrojóse encima su mantón de escarlata y púsose en la cabeza una montera de terciopelo verde, guarnecida de pasamanos de plata; colgó el tahelí de sus hombros con su buena y tajadora espada, asió un gran rosario que consigo continuo traía, y con gran prosopopeya y contoneo salió a la antesala, donde el duque y la duquesa estaban ya vestidos y como esperándole; y, al pasar por una galería, estaban aposta esperándole Altisidora y la otra doncella su amiga, y, así como Altisidora vio a don Quijote, fingió desmayarse, y su amiga la recogió en sus faldas, y con gran presteza la iba a desabrochar el pecho. Don Quijote, que lo vio, llegándose a ellas, dijo: -Ya sé yo de qué proceden estos accidentes.

-No sé yo de qué -respondió la amiga-, porque Altisidora es la doncella más sana de toda esta casa, y yo nunca la he sentido un ¡ay! en cuanto ha que la conozco, que mal hayan cuantos caballeros andantes hay en el mundo, si es que todos son desagradecidos. Váyase vuesa merced, señor don Quijote, que no volverá en sí esta pobre niña en tanto que vuesa merced aquí estuviere.

A lo que respondió don Quijote:

-Haga vuesa merced, señora, que se me ponga un laúd esta noche en mi aposento, que yo consolaré lo mejor que pudiere a esta lastimada doncella; que en los principios amorosos los desengaños prestos suelen ser remedios calificados.

Y con esto se fue, porque no fuese notado de los que allí le viesan. No se hubo bien apartado, cuando, volviendo en sí la desmayada Altisidora, dijo a su compañera: -Menester será que se le ponga el laúd, que sin duda don Quijote quiere darnos música, y no será mala, siendo suya.

Fueron luego a dar cuenta a la duquesa de lo que pasaba y del laúd que pedía don Quijote, y ella, alegre sobremodo, concertó con el duque y con sus doncellas de hacerle una burla que fuese más risueña que dañosa, y con mucho contento esperaban la noche, que se vino tan apriesa como se había venido el día, el cual pasaron los duques en sabrosas pláticas con don Quijote. Y la duquesa aquel día real y verdaderamente despachó a un paje suyo, que había hecho en la selva la figura encantada de Dulcinea, a Teresa Panza, con la carta de su marido Sancho Panza, y con el lío de ropa que había dejado para que se le enviase, encargándole le trujese buena relación de todo lo que con ella pasase.

Hecho esto, y llegadas las once horas de la noche, halló don Quijote una vihuela en su aposento; templóla, abrió la reja, y sintió que andaba gente en el jardín; y, habiendo recorrido los trastes de la vihuela y afinándola lo mejor que supo, escupió y remondóse el pecho, y luego, con una voz ronquilla, aunque entonada, cantó el siguiente romance, que él mismo aquel día había compuesto: -  
Suelen las fuerzas de amor

sacar de quicio a las almas,  
tomando por instrumento  
la ociosidad descuidada.

Suele el coser y el labrar, 5  
y el estar siempre ocupada,  
ser antídoto al veneno  
de las amorosas ansias.

Las doncellas recogidas  
que aspiran a ser casadas, 10  
la honestidad es la dote  
y voz de sus alabanzas.

Los andantes caballeros,  
y los que en la corte andan,  
requiébranse con las libres, 15  
con las honestas se casan.

Hay amores de levante,  
que entre huéspedes se tratan,  
que llegan presto al poniente,  
porque en el partirse acaban. 20

El amor recién venido,  
que hoy llegó y se va mañana,  
las imágenes no deja  
bien impresas en el alma.

Pintura sobre pintura 25  
ni se muestra ni señala;  
y do hay primera belleza,  
la segunda no hace baza.

Dulcinea del Toboso  
del alma en la tabla rasa 30  
tengo pintada de modo  
que es imposible borrarla.

La firmeza en los amantes  
es la parte más preciada,  
por quien hace amor milagros, 35  
y asimesmo los levanta.

Aquí llegaba don Quijote de su canto, a quien estaban escuchando el duque y la duquesa, Altisidora y casi toda la gente del castillo, cuando de improviso, desde encima de un corredor que sobre la reja de don Quijote a plomo caía, descolgaron un cordel donde venían más de cien cencerros asidos, y luego, tras ellos, derramaron un gran saco de gatos, que asimismo traían cencerros menores atados a las colas. Fue tan grande el ruido de los cencerros y el mayar de los gatos, que, aunque los duques habían sido inventores de la burla, todavía les sobresaltó; y, temeroso, don Quijote quedó pasmado. Y quiso la suerte que dos o tres gatos se entraron por la reja de su estancia, y, dando de una parte a otra, parecía que una región de diablos andaba en ella. Apagaron las velas que en el aposento ardían, y andaban buscando por do escaparse. El descolgar y subir del cordel de los grandes cencerros no cesaba; la mayor parte de la gente del castillo, que no sabía la verdad del caso, estaba suspensa y admirada.

Levantóse don Quijote en pie, y, poniendo mano a la espada, comenzó a tirar estocadas por la reja y a decir a grandes voces: -¡Afuera, malignos encantadores! ¡Afuera, canalla hechiceresca, que yo soy don Quijote de la Mancha, contra quien no valen ni tienen fuerza vuestras malas intenciones!

Y, volviéndose a los gatos que andaban por el aposento, les tiró muchas cuchilladas; ellos acudieron a la reja, y por allí se salieron, aunque uno, viéndose

tan acosado de las cuchilladas de don Quijote, le saltó al rostro y le asió de las narices con las uñas y los dientes, por cuyo dolor don Quijote comenzó a dar los mayores gritos que pudo. Oyendo lo cual el duque y la duquesa, y considerando lo que podía ser, con mucha presteza acudieron a su estancia, y, abriendo con llave maestra, vieron al pobre caballero pugnando con todas sus fuerzas por arrancar el gato de su rostro. Entraron con luces y vieron la desigual pelea; acudió el duque a despartirla, y don Quijote dijo a voces: -¡No me le quite nadie! ¡Déjenme mano a mano con este demonio, con este hechicero, con este encantador, que yo le daré a entender de mí a él quién es don Quijote de la Mancha!

Pero el gato, no curándose destas amenazas, gruñía y apretaba. Mas, en fin, el duque se le desarraigó y le echó por la reja.

Quedó don Quijote acribado el rostro y no muy sanas las narices, aunque muy despechado porque no le habían dejado fenecer la batalla que tan trabada tenía con aquel malandrín encantador. Hicieron traer aceite de Aparicio, y la misma Altisidora, con sus blanquísimas manos, le puso unas vendas por todo lo herido; y, al ponérselas, con voz baja le dijo: -Todas estas malandanzas te suceden, empedernido caballero, por el pecado de tu dureza y pertinacia; y plega a Dios que se le olvide a Sancho tu escudero el azotarse, porque nunca salga de su encanto esta tan amada tuya Dulcinea, ni tú lo goces, ni llegues a tálamo con ella, a lo menos viviendo yo, que te adoro.

A todo esto no respondió don Quijote otra palabra si no fue dar un profundo suspiro, y luego se tendió en su lecho, agradeciendo a los duques la merced, no porque él tenía temor de aquella canalla gatesca, encantadora y cencerruna, sino porque había conocido la buena intención con que habían venido a socorrerle. Los duques le dejaron sosegar, y se fueron, pesarosos del mal suceso de la burla; que no creyeron que tan pesada y costosa le saliera a don Quijote aquella aventura, que le costó cinco días de encerramiento y de cama, donde le sucedió otra aventura más gustosa que la pasada, la cual no quiere su historiador contar ahora, por acudir a Sancho Panza, que andaba muy solícito y muy gracioso en su gobierno.

## Capítulo XLVII

*Donde se prosigue cómo se portaba Sancho Panza en su gobierno*

CUENTA la historia que desde el juzgado llevaron a Sancho Panza a un suntuoso palacio, adonde en una gran sala estaba puesta una real y limpiísima mesa; y, así como Sancho entró en la sala, sonaron chirimías, y salieron cuatro pajes a darle aguamanos, que Sancho recibió con mucha gravedad.

Cesó la música, sentóse Sancho a la cabecera de la mesa, porque no había más de aquel asiento, y no otro servicio en toda ella. Púsose a su lado en pie un personaje, que después mostró ser médico, con una varilla de ballena en la mano. Levantaron una riquísima y blanca toalla con que estaban cubiertas las frutas y mucha diversidad de platos de diversos manjares; uno que parecía estudiante echó la bendición, y un paje puso un babador randado a Sancho; otro que hacía el oficio de maestresala, llegó un plato de fruta delante; pero, apenas hubo comido un bocado, cuando el de la varilla tocando con ella en el plato, se le quitaron de delante con grandísima celeridad; pero el maestresala le llegó otro de otro manjar. Iba a probarle Sancho; pero, antes que llegase a él ni le gustase, ya la varilla había tocado en él, y un paje alzádole con tanta presteza como el de la fruta. Visto lo cual por Sancho, quedó suspenso, y, mirando a todos, preguntó si se había de comer aquella comida como juego de maesecoral. A lo cual respondió el de la vara:

-No se ha de comer, señor gobernador, sino como es uso y costumbre en las otras ínsulas donde hay gobernadores. Yo, señor, soy médico, y estoy asalariado en esta ínsula para serlo de los gobernadores della, y miro por su salud mucho más que por la mía, estudiando de noche y de día, y tanteando la complexión del gobernador, para acertar a curarle cuando cayere enfermo; y lo principal que hago es asistir a sus comidas y cenas, y a dejarle comer de lo que me parece que le conviene, y a quitarle lo que imagino que le ha de hacer daño y ser nocivo al estómago; y así, mandé quitar el plato de la fruta, por ser demasiadamente húmeda, y el plato del otro manjar también le mandé quitar, por ser demasiadamente caliente y tener muchas especies, que acrecientan la sed; y el que mucho bebe mata y consume el húmedo radical, donde consiste la vida.

-Desa manera, aquel plato de perdices que están allí asadas, y, a mi parecer, bien sazonadas, no me harán algún daño.

A lo que el médico respondió:

-Ésas no comerá el señor gobernador en tanto que yo tuviere vida.

-Pues, ¿por qué? -dijo Sancho.

Y el médico respondió:

-Porque nuestro maestro Hipócrates, norte y luz de la medicina, en un aforismo suyo, dice: Omnis saturatio mala, perdices autem pessima. Quiere decir: «Toda hartazgo es mala; pero la de las perdices, malísima».

-Si eso es así -dijo Sancho-, vea el señor doctor de cuantos manjares hay en esta mesa cuál me hará más provecho y cuál menos daño, y déjeme comer dél sin que me le apalee; porque, por vida del gobernador, y así Dios me le deje gozar, que me muero de hambre, y el negarme la comida, aunque le pese al señor doctor y él más me diga, antes será quitarme la vida que aumentármela.

-Vuestra merced tiene razón, señor gobernador -respondió el médico-; y así, es mi parecer que vuestra merced no coma de aquellos conejos guisados que allí están, porque es manjar peliagudo. De aquella ternera, si no fuera asada y en adobo, aún se pudiera probar, pero no hay para qué.

Y Sancho dijo:

-Aquel platonazo que está más adelante vahando me parece que es olla podrida, que por la diversidad de cosas que en las tales ollas podridas hay, no podré dejar de topar con alguna que me sea de gusto y de provecho.

-Absit! -dijo el médico-. Vaya lejos de nosotros tan mal pensamiento: no hay cosa en el mundo de peor mantenimiento que una olla podrida. Allá las ollas podridas para los canónigos, o para los retores de colegios, o para las bodas labradorescas, y déjenos libres las mesas de los gobernadores, donde ha de asistir todo primor y toda atildadura; y la razón es porque siempre y a doquiera y de quienquiera son más estimadas las medicinas simples que las compuestas, porque en las simples no se puede errar y en las compuestas sí, alterando la cantidad de las cosas de que son compuestas; mas lo que yo sé que ha de comer el señor gobernador ahora, para conservar su salud y corroborarla, es un ciento de cañutillos de suplicaciones y unas tajadicas subtiles de carne de membrillo, que le asienten el estómago y le ayuden a la digestión.

Oyendo esto Sancho, se arrimó sobre el espaldar de la silla y miró de hito en hito al tal médico, y con voz grave le preguntó cómo se llamaba y dónde había estudiado. A lo que él respondió:

-Yo, señor gobernador, me llamo el doctor Pedro Recio de Agüero, y soy natural de un lugar llamado Tirteafuera, que está entre Caracuel y Almodóvar del Campo, a la mano derecha, y tengo el grado de doctor por la universidad de Osuna.

A lo que respondió Sancho, todo encendido en cólera:

-Pues, señor doctor Pedro Recio de Mal Agüero, natural de Tirteafuera, lugar

que está a la derecha mano como vamos de Caracuel a Almodóvar del Campo, graduado en Osuna, quíteseme luego delante, si no, voto al sol que tome un garrote y que a garrotazos, comenzando por él, no me ha de quedar médico en toda la ínsula, a lo menos de aquellos que yo entienda que son ignorantes; que a los médicos sabios, prudentes y discretos los pondré sobre mi cabeza y los honraré como a personas divinas. Y vuelvo a decir que se me vaya, Pedro Recio, de aquí; si no, tomaré esta silla donde estoy sentado y se la estrellaré en la cabeza; y pídanmelo en residencia, que yo me descargaré con decir que hice servicio a Dios en matar a un mal médico, verdugo de la república. Y denme de comer, o si no, tómense su gobierno, que oficio que no da de comer a su dueño no vale dos habas.

Alborotóse el doctor, viendo tan colérico al gobernador, y quiso hacer tirteafuera de la sala, sino que en aquel instante sonó una corneta de posta en la calle, y, asomándose el maestresala a la ventana, volvió diciendo:

-Correo viene del duque mi señor; algún despacho debe de traer de importancia.

Entró el correo sudando y asustado, y, sacando un pliego del seno, le puso en las manos del gobernador, y Sancho le puso en las del mayordomo, a quien mandó leyese el sobreescrito, que decía así: *A don Sancho Panza, gobernador de la ínsula Barataria, en su propia mano o en las de su secretario*. Oyendo lo cual, Sancho dijo:

-¿Quién es aquí mi secretario?

Y uno de los que presentes estaban respondió:

-Yo, señor, porque sé leer y escribir, y soy vizcaíno.

-Con esa añadidura -dijo Sancho-, bien podéis ser secretario del mismo emperador. Abrid ese pliego, y mirad lo que dice.

Hízolo así el recién nacido secretario, y, habiendo leído lo que decía, dijo que era negocio para tratarle a solas. Mandó Sancho despejar la sala, y que no quedasen en ella sino el mayordomo y el maestresala, y los demás y el médico se fueron; y luego el secretario leyó la carta, que así decía:

A mi noticia ha llegado, señor don Sancho Panza, que unos enemigos míos y desa ínsula la han de dar un asalto furioso, no sé qué noche; conviene velar y estar alerta, porque no le tomen desapercibido. Sé también, por espías verdaderas, que han entrado en ese lugar cuatro personas disfrazadas para quitaros la vida, porque se temen de vuestro ingenio; abrid el ojo, y mirad quién llega a hablaros, y no comáis de cosa que os presentaren. Yo tendré cuidado de socorremos si os viéredes en trabajo, y en todo haréis como se espera de vuestro entendimiento. Deste lugar, a 16 de agosto, a las cuatro de la mañana.

Vuestro amigo,



*El Duque.*

Quedó atónito Sancho, y mostraron quedarlo asimismo los circunstantes; y, volviéndose al mayordomo, le dijo:

-Lo que agora se ha de hacer, y ha de ser luego, es meter en un calabozo al doctor Recio; porque si alguno me ha de matar, ha de ser él, y de muerte adminícula y pésima, como es la de la hambre.

-También -dijo el maestresala-me parece a mí que vuesa merced no coma de todo lo que está en esta mesa, porque lo han presentado unas monjas, y, como suele decirse, detrás de la cruz está el diablo.

-No lo niego -respondió Sancho-, y por ahora denme un pedazo de pan y obra de cuatro libras de uvas, que en ellas no podrá venir veneno; porque, en efecto, no puedo pasar sin comer, y si es que hemos de estar prontos para estas batallas que nos amenazan, menester será estar bien mantenidos, porque tripas llevan corazón, que no corazón tripas. Y vos, secretario, responded al duque mi señor y decidle que se cumplirá lo que manda como lo manda, sin faltar punto; y daréis de mi parte un besamanos a mi señora la duquesa, y que le suplico no se le olvide de enviar con un propio mi carta y mi lío a mi mujer Teresa Panza, que en ello recibirá mucha merced, y tendré cuidado de servirla con todo lo que mis fuerzas alcanzaren; y de camino podéis encajar un besamanos a mi señor don Quijote de la Mancha, porque vea que soy pan agradecido; y vos, como buen secretario y como buen vizcaíno, podéis añadir todo lo que quisiéredes y más viniere a cuento. Y álcense estos manteles, y denme a mí de comer, que yo me avendré con cuantas espías y matadores y encantadores vinieren sobre mí y sobre mi ínsula.

En esto entró un paje, y dijo:

-Aquí está un labrador negociante que quiere hablar a Vuestra Señoría en un negocio, según él dice, de mucha importancia.

-Estraño caso es éste -dijo Sancho-destos negociantes. ¿Es posible que sean tan necios, que no echen de ver que semejantes horas como éstas no son en las que han de venir a negociar? ¿Por ventura los que gobernamos, los que somos jueces, no somos hombres de carne y de hueso, y que es menester que nos dejen descansar el tiempo que la necesidad pide, sino que quieren que seamos hechos de piedra mármol? Por Dios y en mi conciencia que si me dura el gobierno (que no durará, según se me trasluce), que yo ponga en pretina a más de un negociante. Agora decid a ese buen hombre que entre; pero adviértase primero no sea alguno de los espías, o matador mío.

-No, señor -respondió el paje-, porque parece una alma de cántaro, y yo sé poco, o él es tan bueno como el buen pan.

-No hay que temer -dijo el mayordomo-, que aquí estamos todos.

-¿Sería posible -dijo Sancho-, maestresala, que agora que no está aquí el doctor Pedro Recio, que comiese yo alguna cosa de peso y de sustancia, aunque fuese un pedazo de pan y una cebolla?

-Esta noche, a la cena, se satisfará la falta de la comida, y quedará Vuestra Señoría satisfecho y pagado -dijo el maestresala.

-Dios lo haga -respondió Sancho.

Y, en esto, entró el labrador, que era de muy buena presencia, y de mil leguas se le echaba de ver que era bueno y buena alma. Lo primero que dijo fue:

-¿Quién es aquí el señor gobernador?

-¿Quién ha de ser -respondió el secretario-, sino el que está sentado en la silla?

-Humíllome, pues, a su presencia -dijo el labrador.

Y, poniéndose de rodillas, le pidió la mano para besársela. Negósela Sancho, y mandó que se levantase y dijese lo que quisiese. Hízolo así el labrador, y luego dijo:

-Yo, señor, soy labrador, natural de Miguel Turra, un lugar que está dos leguas de Ciudad Real.

-¡Otro Tirteafuera tenemos! -dijo Sancho-. Decid, hermano, que lo que yo os sé decir es que sé muy bien a Miguel Turra, y que no está muy lejos de mi pueblo.

-Es, pues, el caso, señor -prosiguió el labrador-, que yo, por la misericordia de Dios, soy casado en paz y en haz de la Santa Iglesia Católica Romana; tengo dos hijos estudiantes que el menor estudia para bachiller y el mayor para licenciado; soy viudo, porque se murió mi mujer, o, por mejor decir, me la mató un mal médico, que la purgó estando preñada, y si Dios fuera servido que saliera a luz el parto, y fuera hijo, yo le pusiere a estudiar para doctor, porque no tuviera envidia a sus hermanos el bachiller y el licenciado.

-De modo -dijo Sancho- que si vuestra mujer no se hubiera muerto, o la hubieran muerto, vos no fuéades agora viudo.

-No, señor, en ninguna manera -respondió el labrador.

-¡Medrados estamos! -replicó Sancho-. Adelante, hermano, que es hora de dormir más que de negociar.

-Digo, pues -dijo el labrador-, que este mi hijo que ha de ser bachiller se enamoró en el mismo pueblo de una doncella llamada Clara Perlerina, hija de Andrés Perlerino, labrador riquísimo; y este nombre de Perlerines no les viene de abolengo ni otra alcurnia, sino porque todos los deste linaje son perláticos, y por mejorar el nombre los llaman Perlerines; aunque, si va decir la verdad, la doncella es como una perla oriental, y, mirada por el lado derecho, parece una flor del campo; por el izquierdo no tanto, porque le falta aquel ojo, que se le saltó de viruelas; y, aunque los hoyos del rostro son muchos y grandes, dicen los

que la quieren bien que aquéllos no son hoyos, sino sepulturas donde se sepultan las almas de sus amantes. Es tan limpia que, por no ensuciar la cara, trae las narices, como dicen, arremangadas, que no parece sino que van huyendo de la boca; y, con todo esto, parece bien por extremo, porque tiene la boca grande, y, a no faltarle diez o doce dientes y muelas, pudiera pasar y echar raya entre las más bien formadas. De los labios no tengo qué decir, porque son tan sutiles y delicados que, si se usaran aspar labios, pudieran hacer dellos una madeja; pero, como tienen diferente color de la que en los labios se usa comúnmente, parecen milagrosos, porque son jaspeados de azul y verde y aberenjenado; y perdóneme el señor gobernador si por tan menudo voy pintando las partes de la que al fin al fin ha de ser mi hija, que la quiero bien y no me parece mal.

-Pintad lo que quisiéredes -dijo Sancho-, que yo me voy recreando en la pintura, y si hubiera comido, no hubiera mejor postre para mí que vuestro retrato.

-Eso tengo yo por servir -respondió el labrador-, pero tiempo vendrá en que seamos, si ahora no somos. Y digo, señor, que si pudiera pintar su gentileza y la altura de su cuerpo, fuera cosa de admiración; pero no puede ser, a causa de que ella está agobiada y encogida, y tiene las rodillas con la boca, y, con todo eso, se echa bien de ver que si se pudiera levantar, diera con la cabeza en el techo; y ya ella hubiera dado la mano de esposa a mi bachiller, sino que no la puede estender, que está añudada; y, con todo, en las uñas largas y acanaladas se muestra su bondad y buena hechura.

-Está bien -dijo Sancho-, y haced cuenta, hermano, que ya la habéis pintado de los pies a la cabeza. ¿Qué es lo que queréis ahora? Y venid al punto sin rodeos ni callejuelas, ni retazos ni añadiduras.

-Querría, señor -respondió el labrador-, que vuestra merced me hiciese merced de darme una carta de favor para mi consuegro, suplicándole sea servido de que este casamiento se haga, pues no somos desiguales en los bienes de fortuna, ni en los de la naturaleza; porque, para decir la verdad, señor gobernador, mi hijo es endemoniado, y no hay día que tres o cuatro veces no le atormenten los malignos espíritus; y de haber caído una vez en el fuego, tiene el rostro arrugado como pergamino, y los ojos algo llorosos y manantiales; pero tiene una condición de un ángel, y si no es que se aporrea y se da de puñadas él mismo a sí mismo, fuera un bendito.

-¿Queréis otra cosa, buen hombre? -replicó Sancho.

-Otra cosa querría -dijo el labrador-, sino que no me atrevo a decirlo; pero vaya, que, en fin, no se me ha de podrir en el pecho, pegue o no pegue. Digo, señor, que querría que vuesa merced me diese trecientos o seiscientos ducados para ayuda a la dote de mi bachiller; digo para ayuda de poner su casa, porque,

en fin, han de vivir por sí, sin estar sujetos a las impertinencias de los suegros.

-Mirad si queréis otra cosa -dijo Sancho-, y no la dejéis de decir por empacho ni por vergüenza.

-No, por cierto -respondió el labrador.

Y, apenas dijo esto, cuando, levantándose en pie el gobernador, asió de la silla en que estaba sentado y dijo:

-¡Voto a tal, don patán rústico y mal mirado, que si no os apartáis y ascondéis luego de mi presencia, que con esta silla os rompa y abra la cabeza! Hideputa bellaco, pintor del mismo demonio, ¿y a estas horas te vienes a pedirme seiscientos ducados?; y ¿dónde los tengo yo, hediondo?; y ¿por qué te los había de dar, aunque los tuviera, socarrón y mentecato?; y ¿qué se me da a mí de Miguel Turra, ni de todo el linaje de los Perlerines? ¡Va de mí, digo; si no, por vida del duque mi señor, que haga lo que tengo dicho! Tú no debes de ser de Miguel Turra, sino algún socarrón que, para tentarme, te ha enviado aquí el infierno. Dime, desalmado, aún no ha día y medio que tengo el gobierno, y ¿ya quieres que tenga seiscientos ducados?

Hizo de señas el maestresala al labrador que se saliese de la sala, el cual lo hizo cabizbajo y, al parecer, temeroso de que el gobernador no ejecutase su cólera, que el bellacón supo hacer muy bien su oficio.

Pero dejemos con su cólera a Sancho, y ándese la paz en el corro, y volvamos a don Quijote, que le dejamos vendado el rostro y curado de las gatascas heridas, de las cuales no sanó en ocho días, en uno de los cuales le sucedió lo que Cide Hamete promete de contar con la puntualidad y verdad que suele contar las cosas desta historia, por mínimas que sean.

## Capítulo XLVIII

*De lo que le sucedió a don Quijote con doña Rodríguez, la dueña de la duquesa, con otros acontecimientos dignos de escritura y de memoria eterna*

ADEMÁS estaba mohíno y malencólico el malferido don Quijote, vendado el rostro y señalado, no por la mano de Dios, sino por las uñas de un gato, desdichas anejas a la andante caballería. Seis días estuvo sin salir en público, en una noche de las cuales, estando despierto y desvelado, pensando en sus desgracias y en el perseguimiento de Altisidora, sintió que con una llave abrían la puerta de su aposento, y luego imaginó que la enamorada doncella venía para sobresaltar su honestidad y ponerle en condición de faltar a la fee que guardar debía a su señora Dulcinea del Toboso.

-No -dijo creyendo a su imaginación, y esto, con voz que pudiera ser oída-; no ha de ser parte la mayor hermosura de la tierra para que yo deje de adorar la que tengo grabada y estampada en la mitad de mi corazón y en lo más escondido de mis entrañas, ora estés, señora mía, transformada en cebolluda labradora, ora en ninfa del dorado Tajo, tejiendo telas de oro y sirgo compuestas, ora te tenga Merlín, o Montesinos, donde ellos quisieren; que, adondequiera eres mía, y adoquiera he sido yo, y he de ser, tuyo.

El acabar estas razones y el abrir de la puerta fue todo uno. Púsose en pie sobre la cama, envuelto de arriba abajo en una colcha de raso amarillo, una galocha en la cabeza, y el rostro y los bigotes vendados: el rostro, por los aruños; los bigotes, porque no se le desmayasen y cayesen; en el cual traje parecía la más extraordinaria fantasma que se pudiera pensar.

Clavó los ojos en la puerta, y, cuando esperaba ver entrar por ella a la rendida y lastimada Altisidora, vio entrar a una reverendísima dueña con unas tocas blancas repulgadas y luengas, tanto, que la cubrían y enmantaban desde los pies a la cabeza. Entre los dedos de la mano izquierda traía una media vela encendida, y con la derecha se hacía sombra, porque no le diese la luz en los ojos, a quien cubrían unos muy grandes anteojos. Venía pisando quedito, y movía los pies blandamente.

Miróla don Quijote desde su atalaya, y cuando vio su adeliño y notó su silencio, pensó que alguna bruja o maga venía en aquel traje a hacer en él alguna mala fechoría, y comenzó a santiguarse con mucha priesa. Fuese llegando la visión, y, cuando llegó a la mitad del aposento, alzó los ojos y vio la priesa con

que se estaba haciendo cruces don Quijote; y si él quedó medroso en ver tal figura, ella quedó espantada en ver la suya, porque, así como le vio tan alto y tan amarillo, con la colcha y con las vendas, que le desfiguraban, dio una gran voz, diciendo:

-¡Jesús! ¿Qué es lo que veo?

Y con el sobresalto se le cayó la vela de las manos; y, viéndose a oscuras, volvió las espaldas para irse, y con el miedo tropezó en sus faldas y dio consigo una gran caída. Don Quijote, temeroso, comenzó a decir:

-Conjúrote, fantasma, o lo que eres, que me digas quién eres, y que me digas qué es lo que de mí quieres. Si eres alma en pena, dímelo, que yo haré por ti todo cuanto mis fuerzas alcanzaren, porque soy católico cristiano y amigo de hacer bien a todo el mundo; que para esto tomé la orden de la caballería andante que profeso, cuyo ejercicio aun hasta hacer bien a las ánimas de purgatorio se estiende.

La brumada dueña, que oyó conjurarse, por su temor coligió el de don Quijote, y con voz afligida y baja le respondió:

-Señor don Quijote, si es que acaso vuestra merced es don Quijote, yo no soy fantasma, ni visión, ni alma de purgatorio, como vuestra merced debe de haber pensado, sino doña Rodríguez, la dueña de honor de mi señora la duquesa, que, con una necesidad de aquellas que vuestra merced suele remediar, a vuestra merced vengo.

-Dígame, señora doña Rodríguez -dijo don Quijote-: ¿por ventura viene vuestra merced a hacer alguna tercería? Porque le hago saber que no soy de provecho para nadie, merced a la sin par belleza de mi señora Dulcinea del Toboso. Digo, en fin, señora doña Rodríguez, que, como vuestra merced salve y deje a una parte todo recado amoroso, puede volver a encender su vela, y vuelva, y departiremos de todo lo que más mandare y más en gusto le viniere, salvando, como digo, todo incitativo melindre.

-¿Yo recado de nadie, señor mío? -respondió la dueña-. Mal me conoce vuestra merced; sí, que aún no estoy en edad tan prolongada que me acoja a semejantes niñerías, pues, Dios loado, mi alma me tengo en las carnes, y todos mis dientes y muelas en la boca, amén de unos pocos que me han usurpado unos catarros, que en esta tierra de Aragón son tan ordinarios. Pero espéreme vuestra merced un poco; saldré a encender mi vela, y volveré en un instante a contar mis cuitas, como a remediador de todas las del mundo.

Y, sin esperar respuesta, se salió del aposento, donde quedó don Quijote sosegado y pensativo esperándola; pero luego le sobrevinieron mil pensamientos acerca de aquella nueva aventura, y parecía ser mal hecho y peor pensado

ponerse en peligro de romper a su señora la fee prometida, y decíase a sí mismo:

-¿Quién sabe si el diablo, que es sutil y mañoso, querrá engañarme agora con una dueña, lo que no ha podido con emperatrices, reinas, duquesas, marquesas ni condesas? Que yo he oído decir muchas veces y a muchos discretos que, si él puede, antes os la dará roma que aguileña. Y ¿quién sabe si esta soledad, esta ocasión y este silencio despertará mis deseos que duermen, y harán que al cabo de mis años venga a caer donde nunca he tropezado? Y, en casos semejantes, mejor es huir que esperar la batalla. Pero yo no debo de estar en mi juicio, pues tales disparates digo y pienso; que no es posible que una dueña toquiblanca, larga y antojuna pueda mover ni levantar pensamiento lascivo en el más desalmado pecho del mundo. ¿Por ventura hay dueña en la tierra que tenga buenas carnes? ¿Por ventura hay dueña en el orbe que deje de ser impertinente, fruncida y melindrosa? ¡Afuera, pues, caterva dueñesca, inútil para ningún humano regalo! ¡Oh, cuán bien hacía aquella señora de quien se dice que tenía dos dueñas de bulto con sus antojos y almohadillas al cabo de su estrado, como que estaban labrando, y tanto le servían para la autoridad de la sala aquellas estatuas como las dueñas verdaderas!

Y, diciendo esto, se arrojó del lecho, con intención de cerrar la puerta y no dejar entrar a la señora Rodríguez; mas, cuando la llegó a cerrar, ya la señora Rodríguez volvía, encendida una vela de cera blanca, y cuando ella vio a don Quijote de más cerca, envuelto en la colcha, con las vendas, galocha o becoquín, temió de nuevo, y, retirándose atrás como dos pasos, dijo:

-¿Estamos seguras, señor caballero? Porque no tengo a muy honesta señal haberse vuesa merced levantado de su lecho.

-Eso mesmo es bien que yo pregunte, señora -respondió don Quijote-; y así, pregunto si estaré yo seguro de ser acometido y forzado.

-¿De quién o a quién pedís, señor caballero, esa seguridad? -respondió la dueña.

-A vos y de vos la pido -replicó don Quijote-, porque ni yo soy de mármol ni vos de bronce, ni ahora son las diez del día, sino media noche, y aun un poco más, según imagino, y en una estancia más cerrada y secreta que lo debió de ser la cueva donde el traidor y atrevido Eneas gozó a la hermosa y piadosa Dido. Pero dadme, señora, la mano, que yo no quiero otra seguridad mayor que la de mi continencia y recato, y la que ofrecen esas reverendísimas tocas.

Y, diciendo esto, besó su derecha mano, y le asió de la suya, que ella le dio con las mismas ceremonias.

Aquí hace Cide Hamete un paréntesis, y dice que por Mahoma que diera, por ver ir a los dos así asidos y trabados desde la puerta al lecho, la mejor almalafa de dos que tenía.

Entróse, en fin, don Quijote en su lecho, y quedóse doña Rodríguez sentada en una silla, algo desviada de la cama, no quitándose los antojos ni la vela. Don Quijote se acorruco y se cubrió todo, no dejando más de el rostro descubierto; y, habiéndose los dos sosegado, el primero que rompió el silencio fue don Quijote, diciendo:

-Puede vuesa merced ahora, mi señora doña Rodríguez, descoserse y desbuchar todo aquello que tiene dentro de su cuitado corazón y lastimadas entrañas, que será de mí escuchada con castos oídos, y socorrida con piadosas obras.

-Así lo creo yo -respondió la dueña-, que de la gentil y agradable presencia de vuesa merced no se podía esperar sino tan cristiana respuesta. «Es, pues, el caso, señor don Quijote, que, aunque vuesa merced me vee sentada en esta silla y en la mitad del reino de Aragón, y en hábito de dueña aniquilada y asendereada, soy natural de las Asturias de Oviedo, y de linaje que atraviesan por él muchos de los mejores de aquella provincia; pero mi corta suerte y el descuido de mis padres, que empobrecieron antes de tiempo, sin saber cómo ni cómo no, me trujeron a la corte, a Madrid, donde por bien de paz y por escusar mayores desventuras, mis padres me acomodaron a servir de doncella de labor a una principal señora; y quiero hacer sabidor a vuesa merced que en hacer vainillas y labor blanca ninguna me ha echado el pie adelante en toda la vida. Mis padres me dejaron sirviendo y se volvieron a su tierra, y de allí a pocos años se debieron de ir al cielo, porque eran además buenos y católicos cristianos. Quedé huérfana, y atendida al miserable salario y a las angustiadas mercedes que a las tales criadas se suele dar en palacio; y, en este tiempo, sin que diese yo ocasión a ello, se enamoró de mi un escudero de casa, hombre ya en días, barbudo y apersonado, y, sobre todo, hidalgo como el rey, porque era montañés. No tratamos tan secretamente nuestros amores que no viniesen a noticia de mi señora, la cual, por escusar dimes y diretes, nos casó en paz y en haz de la Santa Madre Iglesia Católica Romana, de cuyo matrimonio nació una hija para rematar con mi ventura, si alguna tenía; no porque yo muriese del parto, que le tuve derecho y en sazón, sino porque desde allí a poco murió mi esposo de un cierto espanto que tuvo, que, a tener ahora lugar para contarle, yo sé que vuestra merced se admirara.»

Y, en esto, comenzó a llorar tiernamente, y dijo:

-Perdóneme vuestra merced, señor don Quijote, que no va más en mi mano, porque todas las veces que me acuerdo de mi mal logrado se me arrasan los ojos de lágrimas. ¡Válame Dios, y con qué autoridad llevaba a mi señora a las ancas de una poderosa mula, negra como el mismo azabache! Que entonces no se usaban coches ni sillas, como agora dicen que se usan, y las señoras iban a las



ancas de sus escuderos. Esto, a lo menos, no puedo dejar de contarle, porque se note la crianza y puntualidad de mi buen marido. «Al entrar de la calle de Santiago, en Madrid, que es algo estrecha, venía a salir por ella un alcalde de corte con dos alguaciles delante, y, así como mi buen escudero le vio, volvió las riendas a la mula, dando señal de volver a acompañarle. Mi señora, que iba a las ancas, con voz baja le decía: “-¿Qué hacéis, desventurado? ¿No veis que voy aquí?” El alcalde, de comedido, detuvo la rienda al caballo y díjole: “-Seguid, señor, vuestro camino, que yo soy el que debo acompañar a mi señora doña Casilda”, que así era el nombre de mi ama. Todavía porfiaba mi marido, con la gorra en la mano, a querer ir acompañando al alcalde, viendo lo cual mi señora, llena de cólera y enojo, sacó un alfiler gordo, o creo que un punzón, del estuche, y clavósele por los lomos, de manera que mi marido dio una gran voz y torció el cuerpo, de suerte que dio con su señora en el suelo. Acudieron dos lacayos suyos a levantarla, y lo mismo hizo el alcalde y los alguaciles; alborotóse la Puerta de Guadalajara, digo, la gente baldía que en ella estaba; vínose a pie mi ama, y mi marido acudió en casa de un barbero diciendo que llevaba pasadas de parte a parte las entrañas. Divulgóse la cortesía de mi esposo, tanto, que los muchachos le corrían por las calles, y por esto y porque él era algún tanto corto de vista, mi señora la duquesa le despidió, de cuyo pesar, sin duda alguna, tengo para mí que se le causó el mal de la muerte. Quedé yo viuda y desamparada, y con hija auestas, que iba creciendo en hermosura como la espuma de la mar. Finalmente, como yo tuviese fama de gran labrandería, mi señora la duquesa, que estaba recién casada con el duque mi señor, quiso traerme consigo a este reino de Aragón y a mi hija ni más ni menos, adonde, yendo días y viniendo días, creció mi hija, y con ella todo el donaire del mundo: canta como una calandria, danza como el pensamiento, baila como una perdida, lee y escribe como un maestro de escuela, y cuenta como un avariento. De su limpieza no digo nada: que el agua que corre no es más limpia, y debe de tener agora, si mal no me acuerdo, diez y seis años, cinco meses y tres días, uno más a menos. En resolución: de esta mi muchacha se enamoró un hijo de un labrador riquísimo que está en una aldea del duque mi señor, no muy lejos de aquí. En efecto, no sé cómo ni cómo no, ellos se juntaron, y, debajo de la palabra de ser su esposo, burló a mi hija, y no se la quiere cumplir; y, aunque el duque mi señor lo sabe, porque yo me he quejado a él, no una, sino muchas veces, y pedídle mande que el tal labrador se case con mi hija, hace orejas de mercader y apenas quiere oírme; y es la causa que, como el padre del burlador es tan rico y le presta dineros, y le sale por fiador de sus trampas por momentos, no le quiere descontentar ni dar pesadumbre en ningún modo.» Querría, pues, señor mío, que vuesa merced tomase a cargo el deshacer este agravio, o ya por ruegos, o ya por armas, pues, según todo el mundo dice,

vuesa merced nació en él para deshacerlos y para enderezar los tuertos y amparar los miserables; y póngasele a vuesa merced por delante la orfandad de mi hija, su gentileza, su mocedad, con todas las buenas partes que he dicho que tiene; que en Dios y en mi conciencia que de cuantas doncellas tiene mi señora, que no hay ninguna que llegue a la suela de su zapato, y que una que llaman Altisidora, que es la que tienen por más desenvuelta y gallarda, puesta en comparación de mi hija, no la llega con dos leguas. Porque quiero que sepa vuesa merced, señor mío, que no es todo oro lo que reluce; porque esta Altisidorilla tiene más de presunción que de hermosura, y más de desenvuelta que de recogida, además que no está muy sana: que tiene un cierto allento cansado, que no hay sufrir el estar junto a ella un momento. Y aun mi señora la duquesa... Quiero callar, que se suele decir que las paredes tienen oídos.

-¿Qué tiene mi señora la duquesa, por vida mía, señora doña Rodríguez? -preguntó don Quijote.

-Con ese conjuro -respondió la dueña-, no puedo dejar de responder a lo que se me pregunta con toda verdad. ¿Vee vuesa merced, señor don Quijote, la hermosura de mi señora la duquesa, aquella tez de rostro, que no parece sino de una espada acicalada y tersa, aquellas dos mejillas de leche y de carmín, que en la una tiene el sol y en la otra la luna, y aquella gallardía con que va pisando y aun despreciando el suelo, que no parece sino que va derramando salud donde pasa? Pues sepa vuesa merced que lo puede agradecer, primero, a Dios, y luego, a dos fuentes que tiene en las dos piernas, por donde se desagua todo el mal humor de quien dicen los médicos que está llena.

-¡Santa María! -dijo don Quijote-. Y ¿es posible que mi señora la duquesa tenga tales desaguaderos? No lo creyera si me lo dijeran frailes descalzos; pero, pues la señora doña Rodríguez lo dice, debe de ser así. Pero tales fuentes, y en tales lugares, no deben de manar humor, sino ámbar líquido. Verdaderamente que ahora acabo de creer que esto de hacerse fuentes debe de ser cosa importante para salud.

Apenas acabó don Quijote de decir esta razón, cuando con un gran golpe abrieron las puertas del aposento, y del sobresalto del golpe se le cayó a doña Rodríguez la vela de la mano, y quedó la estancia como boca de lobo, como suele decirse. Luego sintió la pobre dueña que la asían de la garganta con dos manos, tan fuertemente que no la dejaban gañir, y que otra persona, con mucha presteza, sin hablar palabra, le alzaba las faldas, y con una, al parecer, chinela, le comenzó a dar tantos azotes, que era una compasión; y, aunque don Quijote se la tenía, no se meneaba del lecho, y no sabía qué podía ser aquello, y estábase quedo y callando, y aun temiendo no viniese por él la tanda y tunda azotesca. Y no fue vano su temor, porque, en dejando molida a la dueña los callados

verdugos (la cual no osaba quejarse), acudieron a don Quijote, y, desenvolviéndole de la sábana y de la colcha, le pellizcaron tan a menudo y tan reciamente, que no pudo dejar de defenderse a puñadas, y todo esto en silencio admirable. Duró la batalla casi media hora; saliéronse las fantasmas, recogió doña Rodríguez sus faldas, y, gimiendo su desgracia, se salió por la puerta afuera, sin decir palabra a don Quijote, el cual, doloroso y pellizcado, confuso y pensativo, se quedó solo, donde le dejaremos deseoso de saber quién había sido el perverso encantador que tal le había puesto. Pero ello se dirá a su tiempo, que Sancho Panza nos llama, y el buen concierto de la historia lo pide.

## Capítulo XLIX

*De lo que le sucedió a Sancho Panza rondando su ínsula*

DEJAMOS al gran gobernador enojado y mohíno con el labrador pintor y socarrón, el cual, industriado del mayordomo, y el mayordomo del duque, se burlaban de Sancho; pero él se las tenía tiesas a todos, maguera tonto, bronco y rollizo, y dijo a los que con él estaban, y al doctor Pedro Recio, que, como se acabó el secreto de la carta del duque, había vuelto a entrar en la sala:

-Ahora verdaderamente que entiendo que los jueces y gobernadores deben de ser, o han de ser, de bronce, para no sentir las importunidades de los negociantes, que a todas horas y a todos tiempos quieren que los escuchen y despachen, atendiendo sólo a su negocio, venga lo que viniere; y si el pobre del juez no los escucha y despacha, o porque no puede o porque no es aquél el tiempo diputado para darles audiencia, luego les maldicen y murmuran, y les roen los huesos, y aun les deslindan los linajes. Negociante necio, negociante mentecato, no te apresures; espera sazón y coyuntura para negociar: no vengas a la hora del comer ni a la del dormir, que los jueces son de carne y de hueso y han de dar a la naturaleza lo que naturalmente les pide, si no es yo, que no le doy de comer a la mía, merced al señor doctor Pedro Recio Tirteafuera, que está delante, que quiere que muera de hambre, y afirma que esta muerte es vida, que así se la dé Dios a él y a todos los de su ralea: digo, a la de los malos médicos, que la de los buenos, palmas y lauros merecen.

Todos los que conocían a Sancho Panza se admiraban, oyéndole hablar tan elegantemente, y no sabían a qué atribuirlo, sino a que los oficios y cargos graves, o adoban o entorpecen los entendimientos. Finalmente, el doctor Pedro Recio Agüero de Tirteafuera prometió de darle de cenar aquella noche, aunque excediese de todos los aforismos de Hipócrates. Con esto quedó contento el gobernador, y esperaba con grande ansia llegase la noche y la hora de cenar; y, aunque el tiempo, al parecer suyo, se estaba quedo, sin moverse de un lugar, todavía se llegó por él el tanto deseado, donde le dieron de cenar un salpicón de vaca con cebolla, y unas manos cocidas de ternera algo entrada en días. Entregóse en todo con más gusto que si le hubieran dado francolines de Milán, faisanes de Roma, ternera de Sorrento, perdices de Morón, o gansos de Lavajos; y, entre la cena, volviéndose al doctor, le dijo:

-Mirad, señor doctor: de aquí adelante no os curéis de darme a comer cosas

regaladas ni manjares esquisitos, porque será sacar a mi estómago de sus quicios, el cual está acostumbrado a cabra, a vaca, a tocino, a cecina, a nabos y a cebollas; y, si acaso le dan otros manjares de palacio, los recibe con melindre, y algunas veces con asco. Lo que el maestresala puede hacer es traerme estas que llaman ollas podridas, que mientras más podridas son, mejor huelen, y en ellas puede embaular y encerrar todo lo que él quisiere, como sea de comer, que yo se lo agradeceré y se lo pagaré algún día; y no se burle nadie conmigo, porque o somos o no somos: vivamos todos y comamos en buena paz compañía, pues, cuando Dios amanece, para todos amanece. Yo gobernaré esta ínsula sin perdonar derecho ni llevar cohecho, y todo el mundo traiga el ojo alerta y mire por el virote, porque les hago saber que el diablo está en Cantillana, y que, si me dan ocasión, han de ver maravillas. No, sino haceos miel, y comeros han moscas.

-Por cierto, señor gobernador -dijo el maestresala-, que vuesa merced tiene mucha razón en cuanto ha dicho, y que yo ofrezco en nombre de todos los insulanos desta ínsula que han de servir a vuestra merced con toda puntualidad, amor y benevolencia, porque el suave modo de gobernar que en estos principios vuesa merced ha dado no les da lugar de hacer ni de pensar cosa que en deservicio de vuesa merced redunde.

-Yo lo creo -respondió Sancho-, y serían ellos unos necios si otra cosa hiciesen o pensasen. Y vuelvo a decir que se tenga cuenta con mi sustento y con el de mi rucio, que es lo que en este negocio importa y hace más al caso; y, en siendo hora, vamos a rondar, que es mi intención limpiar esta ínsula de todo género de inmundicia y de gente vagamunda, holgazanes, y mal entretenida; porque quiero que sepáis, amigos, que la gente baldía y perezosa es en la república lo mismo que los zánganos en las colmenas, que se comen la miel que las trabajadoras abejas hacen. Pienso favorecer a los labradores, guardar sus preeminencias a los hidalgos, premiar los virtuosos y, sobre todo, tener respeto a la religión y a la honra de los religiosos. ¿Qué os parece desto, amigos? ¿Digo algo, o quiébrome la cabeza?

-Dice tanto vuesa merced, señor gobernador -dijo el mayordomo-, que estoy admirado de ver que un hombre tan sin letras como vuesa merced, que, a lo que creo, no tiene ninguna, diga tales y tantas cosas llenas de sentencias y de avisos, tan fuera de todo aquello que del ingenio de vuesa merced esperaban los que nos enviaron y los que aquí venimos. Cada día se veen cosas nuevas en el mundo: las burlas se vuelven en veras y los burladores se hallan burlados.

Llegó la noche, y cenó el gobernador, con licencia del señor doctor Recio. Aderezáronse de ronda; salió con el mayordomo, secretario y maestresala, y el coronista que tenía cuidado de poner en memoria sus hechos, y alguaciles y escribanos, tantos que podían formar un mediano escuadrón. Iba Sancho en

medio, con su vara, que no había más que ver, y pocas calles andadas del lugar, sintieron ruido de cuchilladas; acudieron allá, y hallaron que eran dos solos hombres los que reñían, los cuales, viendo venir a la justicia, se estuvieron quedos; y el uno dellos dijo:

-¡Aquí de Dios y del rey! ¿Cómo y que se ha de sufrir que roben en poblado en este pueblo, y que salga a saltar en él en la mitad de las calles?

-Sosegaos, hombre de bien -dijo Sancho-, y contadme qué es la causa desta pendencia, que yo soy el gobernador.

El otro contrario dijo:

-Señor gobernador, yo la diré con toda brevedad. Vuestra merced sabrá que este gentilhombre acaba de ganar ahora en esta casa de juego que está aquí frontero más de mil reales, y sabe Dios cómo; y, hallándome yo presente, juzgué más de una suerte dudosa en su favor, contra todo aquello que me dictaba la conciencia; alzóse con la ganancia, y, cuando esperaba que me había de dar algún escudo, por lo menos, de barato, como es uso y costumbre darle a los hombres principales como yo, que estamos asistentes para bien y mal pasar, y para apoyar sinrazones y evitar pendencias, él embolsó su dinero y se salió de la casa. Yo vine despechado tras él, y con buenas y corteses palabras le he pedido que me diese siquiera ocho reales, pues sabe que yo soy hombre honrado y que no tengo oficio ni beneficio, porque mis padres no me le enseñaron ni me le dejaron, y el socarrón, que no es más ladrón que Caco, ni más fullero que Andradilla, no quería darme más de cuatro reales; ¡porque vea vuestra merced, señor gobernador, qué poca vergüenza y qué poca conciencia! Pero a fee que, si vuesa merced no llegara, que yo le hiciera vomitar la ganancia, y que había de saber con cuántas entraba la romana.

-¿Qué decís vos a esto? -preguntó Sancho.

Y el otro respondió que era verdad cuanto su contrario decía, y no había querido darle más de cuatro reales porque se los daba muchas veces; y los que esperan barato han de ser comedidos y tomar con rostro alegre lo que les dieren, sin ponerse en cuentas con los gananciosos, si ya no supiesen de cierto que son fulleros y que lo que ganan es mal ganado; y que, para señal que él era hombre de bien y no ladrón, como decía, ninguna había mayor que el no haberle querido dar nada; que siempre los fulleros son tributarios de los mirones que los conocen.

-Así es -dijo el mayordomo-. Vea vuestra merced, señor gobernador, qué es lo que se ha de hacer destos hombres.

-Lo que se ha de hacer es esto -respondió Sancho-: vos, ganancioso, bueno, o malo, o indiferente, dad luego a este vuestro acuchillador cien reales, y más, habéis de desembolsar treinta para los pobres de la cárcel; y vos, que no tenéis

oficio ni beneficio y andáis de nones en esta ínsula, tomad luego esos cien reales, y mañana en todo el día salid desta ínsula desterrado por diez años, so pena, si lo quebrantáredes, los cumpláis en la otra vida, colgándoos yo de una picota, o, a lo menos, el verdugo por mi mandado; y ninguno me replique, que le asentaré la mano.

Desembolsó el uno, recibió el otro, éste se salió de la ínsula, y aquél se fue a su casa, y el gobernador quedó diciendo:

-Ahora, yo podré poco, o quitaré estas casas de juego, que a mí se me trasluce que son muy perjudiciales.

-Ésta, a lo menos -dijo un escribano-, no la podrá vuesa merced quitar, porque la tiene un gran personaje, y más es sin comparación lo que él pierde al año que lo que saca de los naipes. Contra otros garitos de menor cantía podrá vuestra merced mostrar su poder, que son los que más daño hacen y más insolencias encubren; que en las casas de los caballeros principales y de los señores no se atreven los famosos fulleros a usar de sus tretas; y, pues el vicio del juego se ha vuelto en ejercicio común, mejor es que se juegue en casas principales que no en la de algún oficial, donde cogen a un desdichado de media noche abajo y le desuellan vivo.

-Agora, escribano -dijo Sancho-, yo sé que hay mucho que decir en eso.

Y, en esto, llegó un corchete que traía asido a un mozo, y dijo:

-Señor gobernador, este mancebo venía hacia nosotros, y, así como columbró la justicia, volvió las espaldas y comenzó a correr como un gamo, señal que debe de ser algún delincuente. Yo partí tras él, y, si no fuera porque tropezó y cayó, no le alcanzara jamás.

-¿Por qué huías, hombre? -preguntó Sancho.

A lo que el mozo respondió:

-Señor, por escusar de responder a las muchas preguntas que las justicias hacen.

-¿Qué oficio tienes?

-Tejedor.

-¿Y qué tejes?

-Hierros de lanzas, con licencia buena de vuestra merced.

-¿Graciosico me sois? ¿De chocarrero os picáis? ¡Está bien! Y ¿adónde íbades ahora?

-Señor, a tomar el aire.

-Y ¿adónde se toma el aire en esta ínsula?

-Adonde sopla.

-¡Bueno: respondéis muy a propósito! Discreto sois, mancebo; pero haced

cuenta que yo soy el aire, y que os soplo en popa, y os encamino a la cárcel. ¡Asilde, hola, y llevadle, que yo haré que duerma allí sin aire esta noche!

-¡Par Dios -dijo el mozo-, así me haga vuestra merced dormir en la cárcel como hacerme rey!

-Pues ¿por qué no te haré yo dormir en la cárcel? -respondió Sancho-. ¿No tengo yo poder para prenderte y soltarte cada y cuando que quisiere?

-Por más poder que vuestra merced tenga -dijo el mozo-, no será bastante para hacerme dormir en la cárcel.

-¿Cómo que no? -replicó Sancho-. Llevalde luego donde verá por sus ojos el desengaño, aunque más el alcaide quiera usar con él de su interesal liberalidad; que yo le pondré pena de dos mil ducados si te deja salir un paso de la cárcel.

-Todo eso es cosa de risa -respondió el mozo-. El caso es que no me harán dormir en la cárcel cuantos hoy viven.

-Dime, demonio -dijo Sancho-, ¿tienes algún ángel que te saque y que te quite los grillos que te pienso mandar echar?

-Ahora, señor gobernador -respondió el mozo con muy buen donaire-, estemos a razón y vengamos al punto. Prosuponga vuestra merced que me manda llevar a la cárcel, y que en ella me echan grillos y cadenas, y que me meten en un calabozo, y se le ponen al alcaide graves penas si me deja salir, y que él lo cumple como se le manda; con todo esto, si yo no quiero dormir, y estarme despierto toda la noche, sin pegar pestaña, ¿será vuestra merced bastante con todo su poder para hacerme dormir, si yo no quiero?

-No, por cierto -dijo el secretario-, y el hombre ha salido con su intención.

-De modo -dijo Sancho- que no dejaréis de dormir por otra cosa que por vuestra voluntad, y no por contravenir a la mía.

-No, señor -dijo el mozo-, ni por pienso.

-Pues andad con Dios -dijo Sancho-; idos a dormir a vuestra casa, y Dios os dé buen sueño, que yo no quiero quitárosle; pero aconséjoos que de aquí adelante no os burléis con la justicia, porque toparéis con alguna que os dé con la burla en los cascós.

Fuese el mozo, y el gobernador prosiguió con su ronda, y de allí a poco vinieron dos corchetes que traían a un hombre asido, y dijeron:

-Señor gobernador, este que parece hombre no lo es, sino mujer, y no fea, que viene vestida en hábito de hombre.

Llegáronle a los ojos dos o tres lanternas, a cuyas luces descubrieron un rostro de una mujer, al parecer, de diez y seis o pocos más años, recogidos los cabellos con una redecilla de oro y seda verde, hermosa como mil perlas. Miráronla de arriba abajo, y vieron que venía con unas medias de seda encarnada, con ligas de tafetán blanco y rapacejos de oro y aljófar; los greguescos eran verdes, de tela de



oro, y una saltaembarca o ropilla de lo mismo, suelta, debajo de la cual traía un jubón de tela finísima de oro y blanco, y los zapatos eran blancos y de hombre. No traía espada ceñida, sino una riquísima daga, y en los dedos, muchos y muy buenos anillos. Finalmente, la moza parecía bien a todos, y ninguno la conoció de cuantos la vieron, y los naturales del lugar dijeron que no podían pensar quién fuese, y los consabidores de las burlas que se habían de hacer a Sancho fueron los que más se admiraron, porque aquel suceso y hallazgo no venía ordenado por ellos; y así, estaban dudosos, esperando en qué pararía el caso.

Sancho quedó pasmado de la hermosura de la moza, y preguntóle quién era, adónde iba y qué ocasión le había movido para vestirse en aquel hábito. Ella, puestos los ojos en tierra con honestísima vergüenza, respondió:

-No puedo, señor, decir tan en público lo que tanto me importaba fuera secreto; una cosa quiero que se entienda: que no soy ladrón ni persona facinorosa, sino una doncella desdichada a quien la fuerza de unos celos ha hecho romper el decoro que a la honestidad se debe.

Oyendo esto el mayordomo, dijo a Sancho:

-Haga, señor gobernador, apartar la gente, porque esta señora con menos empacho pueda decir lo que quisiere.

Mandólo así el gobernador; apartáronse todos, si no fueron el mayordomo, maestresala y el secretario. Viéndose, pues, solos, la doncella prosiguió diciendo:

-«Yo, señores, soy hija de Pedro Pérez Mazorca, arrendador de las lanas deste lugar, el cual suele muchas veces ir en casa de mi padre.»

-Eso no lleva camino -dijo el mayordomo-, señora, porque yo conozco muy bien a Pedro Pérez y sé que no tiene hijo ninguno, ni varón ni hembra; y más, que decís que es vuestro padre, y luego añadís que suele ir muchas veces en casa de vuestro padre.

-Ya yo había dado en ello -dijo Sancho.

-Ahora, señores, yo estoy turbada, y no sé lo que me digo -respondió la doncella-; pero la verdad es que yo soy hija de Diego de la Llana, que todos vuestas mercedes deben de conocer.

-Aún eso lleva camino -respondió el mayordomo-, que yo conozco a Diego de la Llana, y sé que es un hidalgo principal y rico, y que tiene un hijo y una hija, y que después que enviudó no ha habido nadie en todo este lugar que pueda decir que ha visto el rostro de su hija; que la tiene tan encerrada que no da lugar al sol que la vea; y, con todo esto, la fama dice que es en extremo hermosa.

-Así es la verdad -respondió la doncella-, y esa hija soy yo; si la fama miente o no en mi hermosura ya os habréis, señores, desengañado, pues me habéis visto.

Y, en esto, comenzó a llorar tiernamente; viendo lo cual el secretario, se llegó

al oído del maestresala y le dijo muy paso:

-Sin duda alguna que a esta pobre doncella le debe de haber sucedido algo de importancia, pues en tal traje, y a tales horas, y siendo tan principal, anda fuera de su casa.

-No hay dudar en eso -respondió el maestresala-; y más, que esa sospecha la confirman sus lágrimas.

Sancho la consoló con las mejores razones que él supo, y le pidió que sin temor alguno les dijese lo que le había sucedido; que todos procurarían remediarlo con muchas veras y por todas las vías posibles.

-«Es el caso, señores -respondió ella-, que mi padre me ha tenido encerrada diez años ha, que son los mismos que a mi madre come la tierra. En casa dicen misa en un rico oratorio, y yo en todo este tiempo no he visto que el sol del cielo de día, y la luna y las estrellas de noche, ni sé qué son calles, plazas, ni templos, ni aun hombres, fuera de mi padre y de un hermano mío, y de Pedro Pérez el arrendador, que, por entrar de ordinario en mi casa, se me antojó decir que era mi padre, por no declarar el mío. Este encerramiento y este negarme el salir de casa, siquiera a la iglesia, ha muchos días y meses que me trae muy desconsolada; quisiera yo ver el mundo, o, a lo menos, el pueblo donde nací, pareciéndome que este deseo no iba contra el buen decoro que las doncellas principales deben guardar a sí mismas. Cuando oía decir que corrían toros y jugaban cañas, y se representaban comedias, preguntaba a mi hermano, que es un año menor que yo, que me dijese qué cosas eran aquéllas y otras muchas que yo no he visto; él me lo declaraba por los mejores modos que sabía, pero todo era encenderme más el deseo de verlo. Finalmente, por abreviar el cuento de mi perdición, digo que yo rogué y pedí a mi hermano, que nunca tal pidiera ni tal rogara...»

Y tornó a renovar el llanto. El mayordomo le dijo:

-Prosiga vuestra merced, señora, y acabe de decirnos lo que le ha sucedido, que nos tienen a todos suspensos sus palabras y sus lágrimas.

-Pocas me quedan por decir -respondió la doncella-, aunque muchas lágrimas sí que llorar, porque los mal colocados deseos no pueden traer consigo otros descuentos que los semejantes.

Habíase sentado en el alma del maestresala la belleza de la doncella, y llegó otra vez su lanterna para verla de nuevo; y parecióle que no eran lágrimas las que lloraba, sino aljófar o rocío de los prados, y aun las subía de punto y las llegaba a perlas orientales, y estaba deseando que su desgracia no fuese tanta como daban a entender los indicios de su llanto y de sus suspiros. Desesperábase el gobernador de la tardanza que tenía la moza en dilatar su historia, y díjole que acabase de tenerlos más suspensos, que era tarde y faltaba mucho que andar del

pueblo. Ella, entre interrotos sollozos y mal formados suspiros, dijo:

-«No es otra mi desgracia, ni mi infortunio es otro sino que yo rogué a mi hermano que me vistiese en hábitos de hombre con uno de sus vestidos y que me sacase una noche a ver todo el pueblo, cuando nuestro padre durmiese; él, importunado de mis ruegos, condecidió con mi deseo, y, poniéndome este vestido y él vistiéndose de otro mío, que le está como nacido, porque él no tiene pelo de barba y no parece sino una doncella hermosísima, esta noche, debe de haber una hora, poco más o menos, nos salimos de casa; y, guiados de nuestro mozo y desbaratado discurso, hemos rodeado todo el pueblo, y cuando queríamos volver a casa, vimos venir un gran tropel de gente, y mi hermano me dijo: “Hermana, ésta debe de ser la ronda: aligera los pies y pon alas en ellos, y vente tras mí corriendo, porque no nos conozcan, que nos será mal contado”. Y, diciendo esto, volvió las espaldas y comenzó, no digo a correr, sino a volar; yo, a menos de seis pasos, caí, con el sobresalto, y entonces llegó el ministro de la justicia que me trujo ante vuestras mercedes, adonde, por mala y antojadiza, me veo avergonzada ante tanta gente.»

-¿En efecto, señora -dijo Sancho-, no os ha sucedido otro desmán alguno, ni celos, como vos al principio de vuestro cuento dijistes, no os sacaron de vuestra casa?

-No me ha sucedido nada, ni me sacaron celos, sino sólo el deseo de ver mundo, que no se extendía a más que a ver las calles de este lugar.

Y acabó de confirmar ser verdad lo que la doncella decía llegar los corchetes con su hermano preso, a quien alcanzó uno dellos cuando se huyó de su hermana. No traía sino un faldellín rico y una mantellina de damasco azul con pasamanos de oro fino, la cabeza sin toca ni con otra cosa adornada que con sus mismos cabellos, que eran sortijas de oro, según eran rubios y enrizados. Apartáronse con el gobernador, mayordomo y maestresala, y, sin que lo oyese su hermana, le preguntaron cómo venía en aquel traje, y él, con no menos vergüenza y empacho, contó lo mismo que su hermana había contado, de que recibió gran gusto el enamorado maestresala. Pero el gobernador les dijo:

-Por cierto, señores, que ésta ha sido una gran rapacería, y para contar esta necedad y atrevimiento no eran menester tantas largas, ni tantas lágrimas y suspiros; que con decir: «Somos fulano y fulana, que nos salimos a espaciar de casa de nuestros padres con esta invención, sólo por curiosidad, sin otro designio alguno», se acabara el cuento, y no gemidicos, y lloramicos, y darle.

-Así es la verdad -respondió la doncella-, pero sepan vuesas mercedes que la turbación que he tenido ha sido tanta, que no me ha dejado guardar el término que debía.

-No se ha perdido nada -respondió Sancho-. Vamos, y dejaremos a vuesas

mercedes en casa de su padre; quizá no los habrá echado menos. Y, de aquí adelante, no se muestren tan niños, ni tan deseosos de ver mundo, que la doncella honrada, la pierna quebrada, y en casa; y la mujer y la gallina, por andar se pierden aína; y la que es deseosa de ver, también tiene deseo de ser vista. No digo más.

El mancebo agradeció al gobernador la merced que quería hacerles de volverlos a su casa, y así, se encaminaron hacia ella, que no estaba muy lejos de allí. Llegaron, pues, y, tirando el hermano una china a una reja, al momento bajó una criada, que los estaba esperando, y les abrió la puerta, y ellos se entraron, dejando a todos admirados, así de su gentileza y hermosura como del deseo que tenían de ver mundo, de noche y sin salir del lugar; pero todo lo atribuyeron a su poca edad.

Quedó el maestresala traspasado su corazón, y propuso de luego otro día pedírsela por mujer a su padre, teniendo por cierto que no se la negaría, por ser él criado del duque; y aun a Sancho le vinieron deseos y barruntos de casar al mozo con Sanchica, su hija, y determinó de ponerlo en plática a su tiempo, dándose a entender que a una hija de un gobernador ningún marido se le podía negar.

Con esto, se acabó la ronda de aquella noche, y de allí a dos días el gobierno, con que se destroncaron y borraron todos sus designios, como se verá adelante.

## Capítulo L

*Donde se declara quién fueron los encantadores y verdugos que azotaron a la dueña y pellizcaron y arañaron a don Quijote, con el suceso que tuvo el paje que llevó la carta a Teresa Sancho, mujer de Sancho Panza*

DICE Cide Hamete, puntualísimo escudriñador de los átomos desta verdadera historia, que al tiempo que doña Rodríguez salió de su aposento para ir a la estancia de don Quijote, otra dueña que con ella dormía lo sintió, y que, como todas las dueñas son amigas de saber, entender y oler, se fue tras ella, con tanto silencio, que la buena Rodríguez no lo echó de ver; y, así como la dueña la vio entrar en la estancia de don Quijote, porque no faltase en ella la general costumbre que todas las dueñas tienen de ser chismosas, al momento lo fue a poner en pico a su señora la duquesa, de cómo doña Rodríguez quedaba en el aposento de don Quijote.

La duquesa se lo dijo al duque, y le pidió licencia para que ella y Altisidora viniesen a ver lo que aquella dueña quería con don Quijote; el duque se la dio, y las dos, con gran tiento y sosiego, paso ante paso, llegaron a ponerse junto a la puerta del aposento, y tan cerca, que oían todo lo que dentro hablaban; y, cuando oyó la duquesa que Rodríguez había echado en la calle el Aranjuez de sus fuentes, no lo pudo sufrir, ni menos Altisidora; y así, llenas de cólera y deseosas de venganza, entraron de golpe en el aposento, y acrebillaron a don Quijote y vapularon a la dueña del modo que queda contado; porque las afrentas que van derechas contra la hermosura y presunción de las mujeres, despierta en ellas en gran manera la ira y enciende el deseo de vengarse.

Contó la duquesa al duque lo que le había pasado, de lo que se holgó mucho, y la duquesa, prosiguiendo con su intención de burlarse y recibir pasatiempo con don Quijote, despachó al paje que había hecho la figura de Dulcinea en el concierto de su desencanto -que tenía bien olvidado Sancho Panza con la ocupación de su gobierno-a Teresa Panza, su mujer, con la carta de su marido, y con otra suya, y con una gran sarta de corales ricos presentados.

Dice, pues, la historia, que el paje era muy discreto y agudo, y, con deseo de servir a sus señores, partió de muy buena gana al lugar de Sancho; y, antes de entrar en él, vio en un arroyo estar lavando cantidad de mujeres, a quien preguntó si le sabrían decir si en aquel lugar vivía una mujer llamada Teresa Panza, mujer de un cierto Sancho Panza, escudero de un caballero llamado don

Quijote de la Mancha, a cuya pregunta se levantó en pie una mozuela que estaba lavando, y dijo:

-Esa Teresa Panza es mi madre, y ese tal Sancho, mi señor padre, y el tal caballero, nuestro amo.

-Pues venid, doncella -dijo el paje-, y mostradme a vuestra madre, porque le traigo una carta y un presente del tal vuestro padre.

-Eso haré yo de muy buena gana, señor mío -respondió la moza, que mostraba ser de edad de catorce años, poco más a menos.

Y, dejando la ropa que lavaba a otra compañera, sin tocarse ni calzarse, que estaba en piernas y desgredada, saltó delante de la cabalgadura del paje, y dijo:

-Venga vuesa merced, que a la entrada del pueblo está nuestra casa, y mi madre en ella, con harta pena por no haber sabido muchos días ha de mi señor padre.

-Pues yo se las llevo tan buenas -dijo el paje-que tiene que dar bien gracias a Dios por ellas.

Finalmente, saltando, corriendo y brincando, llegó al pueblo la muchacha, y, antes de entrar en su casa, dijo a voces desde la puerta:

-Salga, madre Teresa, salga, salga, que viene aquí un señor que trae cartas y otras cosas de mi buen padre.

A cuyas voces salió Teresa Panza, su madre, hilando un copo de estopa, con una saya parda. Parecía, según era de corta, que se la habían cortado por vergonzoso lugar, con un corpezuelo asimismo pardo y una camisa de pechos. No era muy vieja, aunque mostraba pasar de los cuarenta, pero fuerte, tiesa, nervuda y avellanada; la cual, viendo a su hija, y al paje a caballo, le dijo:

-¿Qué es esto, niña? ¿Qué señor es éste?

-Es un servidor de mi señora doña Teresa Panza -respondió el paje.

Y, diciendo y haciendo, se arrojó del caballo y se fue con mucha humildad a poner de hinojos ante la señora Teresa, diciendo:

-Déme vuestra merced sus manos, mi señora doña Teresa, bien así como mujer legítima y particular del señor don Sancho Panza, gobernador propio de la ínsula Barataria.

-¡Ay, señor mío, quítese de ahí; no haga eso -respondió Teresa-, que yo no soy nada palaciega, sino una pobre labradora, hija de un estripaterrones y mujer de un escudero andante, y no de gobernador alguno!

-Vuesa merced -respondió el paje-es mujer dignísima de un gobernador archidignísimo; y, para prueba desta verdad, reciba vuesa merced esta carta y este presente.

Y sacó al instante de la faldriquera una sarta de corales con extremos de oro, y se la echó al cuello y dijo:

-Esta carta es del señor gobernador, y otra que traigo y estos corales son de mi señora la duquesa, que a vuestra merced me envía.

Quedó pasmada Teresa, y su hija ni más ni menos, y la muchacha dijo:

-Que me maten si no anda por aquí nuestro señor amo don Quijote, que debe de haber dado a padre el gobierno o condado que tantas veces le había prometido.

-Así es la verdad -respondió el paje-: que, por respeto del señor don Quijote, es ahora el señor Sancho gobernador de la ínsula Barataria, como se verá por esta carta.

-Léamela vuesa merced, señor gentilhomme -dijo Teresa-, porque, aunque yo sé hilar, no sé leer migaja.

-Ni yo tampoco -añadió Sanchica-; pero espérenme aquí, que yo iré a llamar quien la lea, ora sea el cura mismo, o el bachiller Sansón Carrasco, que vendrán de muy buena gana, por saber nuevas de mi padre.

-No hay para qué se llame a nadie, que yo no sé hilar, pero sé leer, y la leeré.

Y así, se la leyó toda, que, por quedar ya referida, no se pone aquí; y luego sacó otra de la duquesa, que decía desta manera:

Amiga Teresa:

Las buenas partes de la bondad y del ingenio de vuestro marido Sancho me movieron y obligaron a pedir a mi marido el duque le diese un gobierno de una ínsula, de muchas que tiene. Tengo noticia que gobierna como un girifalte, de lo que yo estoy muy contenta, y el duque mi señor, por el consiguiente; por lo que doy muchas gracias al cielo de no haberme engañado en haberle escogido para el tal gobierno; porque quiero que sepa la señora Teresa que con dificultad se halla un buen gobernador en el mundo, y tal me haga a mí Dios como Sancho gobierna.

Ahí le envío, querida mía, una sarta de corales con extremos de oro; yo me holgara que fuera de perlas orientales, pero quien te da el hueso, no te querría ver muerta: tiempo vendrá en que nos conozcamos y nos comuniquemos, y Dios sabe lo que será. Encomiéndeme a Sanchica, su hija, y dígale de mi parte que se apareje, que la tengo de casar altamente cuando menos lo piense.

Dícenme que en ese lugar hay bellotas gordas: envíeme hasta dos docenas, que las estimaré en mucho, por ser de su mano, y escríbame largo, avisándome de su salud y de su bienestar; y si hubiere menester alguna cosa, no tiene que hacer más que boquear: que su boca será medida, y Dios me la guarde. Deste lugar.

Su amiga, que bien la quiere,

*La Duquesa.*

-¡Ay -dijo Teresa en oyendo la carta-, y qué buena y qué llana y qué humilde

señora! Con estas tales señoras me entierren a mí, y no las hidalgas que en este pueblo se usan, que piensan que por ser hidalgas no las ha de tocar el viento, y van a la iglesia con tanta fantasía como si fuesen las mismas reinas, que no parece sino que tienen a deshonra el mirar a una labradora; y veis aquí donde esta buena señora, con ser duquesa, me llama amiga, y me trata como si fuera su igual, que igual la vea yo con el más alto campanario que hay en la Mancha. Y, en lo que toca a las bellotas, señor mío, yo le enviaré a su señoría un celemín, que por gordas las pueden venir a ver a la mira y a la maravilla. Y por ahora, Sanchica, atiende a que se regale este señor: pon en orden este caballo, y saca de la caballeriza güevos, y corta tocino adunia, y démosle de comer como a un príncipe, que las buenas nuevas que nos ha traído y la buena cara que él tiene lo merece todo; y, en tanto, saldré yo a dar a mis vecinas las nuevas de nuestro contento, y al padre cura y a maese Nicolás el barbero, que tan amigos son y han sido de tu padre.

-Sí haré, madre -respondió Sanchica-; pero mire que me ha de dar la mitad desa sarta; que no tengo yo por tan boba a mi señora la duquesa, que se la había de enviar a ella toda.

-Todo es para ti, hija -respondió Teresa-, pero déjamela traer algunos días al cuello, que verdaderamente parece que me alegra el corazón.

-También se alegrarán -dijo el paje-cuando vean el lío que viene en este portamanteo, que es un vestido de paño finísimo que el gobernador sólo un día llevó a caza, el cual todo le envía para la señora Sanchica.

-Que me viva él mil años -respondió Sanchica-, y el que lo trae, ni más ni menos, y aun dos mil, si fuere necesidad.

Salióse en esto Teresa fuera de casa, con las cartas, y con la sarta al cuello, y iba tañendo en las cartas como si fuera en un pandero; y, encontrándose acaso con el cura y Sansón Carrasco, comenzó a bailar y a decir:

-¡A fee que agora que no hay pariente pobre! ¡Gobiernito tenemos! ¡No, sino tómese conmigo la más pintada hidalga, que yo la pondré como nueva!

-¿Qué es esto, Teresa Panza? ¿Qué locuras son éstas, y qué papeles son éstos?

-No es otra la locura sino que éstas son cartas de duquesas y de gobernadores, y estos que traigo al cuello son corales finos; las avemarías y los padres nuestros son de oro de martillo, y yo soy gobernadora.

-De Dios en ayuso, no os entendemos, Teresa, ni sabemos lo que os decís.

-Ahí lo podrán ver ellos -respondió Teresa.

Y dioles las cartas. Leyólas el cura de modo que las oyó Sansón Carrasco, y Sansón y el cura se miraron el uno al otro, como admirados de lo que habían leído; y preguntó el bachiller quién había traído aquellas cartas. Respondió Teresa que se viniesen con ella a su casa y verían el mensajero, que era un



mancebo como un pino de oro, y que le traía otro presente que valía más de tanto. Quitóle el cura los corales del cuello, y mirólos y remirólos, y, certificándose que eran finos, tornó a admirarse de nuevo, y dijo:

-Por el hábito que tengo, que no sé qué me diga ni qué me piense de estas cartas y destos presentes: por una parte, veo y toco la fineza de estos corales, y por otra, leo que una duquesa envía a pedir dos docenas de bellotas.

-¡Aderézame esas medidas! -dijo entonces Carrasco-. Agora bien, vamos a ver al portador deste pliego, que dél nos informaremos de las dificultades que se nos ofrecen.

Hiciéronlo así, y volvióse Teresa con ellos. Hallaron al paje cribando un poco de cebada para su cabalgadura, y a Sanchica cortando un torrezno para empedrarle con güevos y dar de comer al paje, cuya presencia y buen adorno contentó mucho a los dos; y, después de haberle saludado cortésmente, y él a ellos, le preguntó Sansón les dijese nuevas así de don Quijote como de Sancho Panza; que, puesto que habían leído las cartas de Sancho y de la señora duquesa, todavía estaban confusos y no acababan de atinar qué sería aquello del gobierno de Sancho, y más de una ínsula, siendo todas o las más que hay en el mar Mediterráneo de Su Majestad. A lo que el paje respondió:

-De que el señor Sancho Panza sea gobernador, no hay que dudar en ello; de que sea ínsula o no la que gobierna, en eso no me entremeto, pero basta que sea un lugar de más de mil vecinos; y, en cuanto a lo de las bellotas, digo que mi señora la duquesa es tan llana y tan humilde, que no -decía él-enviar a pedir bellotas a una labradora, pero que le acontecía enviar a pedir un peine prestado a una vecina suya. Porque quiero que sepan vuestras mercedes que las señoras de Aragón, aunque son tan principales, no son tan puntuosas y levantadas como las señoras castellanas; con más llaneza tratan con las gentes.

Estando en la mitad destas pláticas, saltó Sanchica con un halda de güevos, y preguntó al paje:

-Dígame, señor: ¿mi señor padre trae por ventura calzas atacadas después que es gobernador?

-No he mirado en ello -respondió el paje-, pero sí debe de traer.

-¡Ay Dios mío -replicó Sanchica-, y que será de ver a mi padre con pedorreras! ¿No es bueno sino que desde que nací tengo deseo de ver a mi padre con calzas atacadas?

-Como con esas cosas le verá vuestra merced si vive -respondió el paje-. Par Dios, términos lleva de caminar con papahígo, con solos dos meses que le dure el gobierno.

Bien echaron de ver el cura y el bachiller que el paje hablaba socarronamente, pero la fineza de los corales y el vestido de caza que Sancho enviaba lo deshacía

todo; que ya Teresa les había mostrado el vestido. Y no dejaron de reírse del deseo de Sanchica, y más cuando Teresa dijo:

-Señor cura, eche cata por ahí si hay alguien que vaya a Madrid, o a Toledo, para que me compre un verdugado redondo, hecho y derecho, y sea al uso y de los mejores que hubiere; que en verdad en verdad que tengo de honrar el gobierno de mi marido en cuanto yo pudiere, y aun que si me enoja, me tengo de ir a esa corte, y echar un coche, como todas; que la que tiene marido gobernador muy bien le puede traer y sustentar.

-Y ¡cómo, madre! -dijo Sanchica-. Pluguiese a Dios que fuese antes hoy que mañana, aunque dijese los que me vieses ir sentada con mi señora madre en aquel coche: «¡Mirad la tal por cual, hija del harto de ajos, y cómo va sentada y tendida en el coche, como si fuera una papesa!» Pero pisen ellos los lodos, y ándeme yo en mi coche, levantados los pies del suelo. ¡Mal año y mal mes para cuantos murmuradores hay en el mundo, y ándeme yo caliente, y ríase la gente! ¿Digo bien, madre mía?

-Y ¡cómo que dices bien, hija! -respondió Teresa-. Y todas estas venturas, y aun mayores, me las tiene profetizadas mi buen Sancho, y verás tú, hija, cómo no para hasta hacerme condesa: que todo es comenzar a ser venturosas; y, como yo he oído decir muchas veces a tu buen padre, que así como lo es tuyo lo es de los refranes, cuando te dieren la vaquilla, corre con soguilla: cuando te dieren un gobierno, cógele; cuando te dieren un condado, agárrale, y cuando te hicieren tus, tus, con alguna buena dádiva, envásala. ¡No, sino dormíos, y no respondáis a las venturas y buenas dichas que están llamando a la puerta de vuestra casa!

-Y ¿qué se me da a mí -añadió Sanchica- que diga el que quisiere cuando me vea entonada y fantasiosa: «Viose el perro en bragas de cerro...», y lo demás?

Oyendo lo cual el cura, dijo:

-Yo no puedo creer sino que todos los deste linaje de los Panzas nacieron cada uno con un costal de refranes en el cuerpo: ninguno dellos he visto que no los derrame a todas horas y en todas las pláticas que tienen.

-Así es la verdad -dijo el paje-, que el señor gobernador Sancho a cada paso los dice, y, aunque muchos no vienen a propósito, todavía dan gusto, y mi señora la duquesa y el duque los celebran mucho.

-¿Que todavía se afirma vuestra merced, señor mío -dijo el bachiller-, ser verdad esto del gobierno de Sancho, y de que hay duquesa en el mundo que le envíe presentes y le escriba? Porque nosotros, aunque tocamos los presentes y hemos leído las cartas, no lo creemos, y pensamos que ésta es una de las cosas de don Quijote, nuestro compatriota, que todas piensa que son hechas por encantamento; y así, estoy por decir que quiero tocar y palpar a vuestra merced, por ver si es embajador fantástico o hombre de carne y hueso.

-Señores, yo no sé más de mí -respondió el paje-sino que soy embajador verdadero, y que el señor Sancho Panza es gobernador efectivo, y que mis señores duque y duquesa pueden dar, y han dado, el tal gobierno; y que he oído decir que en él se porta valentísimamente el tal Sancho Panza; si en esto hay encantamento o no, vuestras mercedes lo disputen allá entre ellos, que yo no sé otra cosa, para el juramento que hago, que es por vida de mis padres, que los tengo vivos y los amo y los quiero mucho.

-Bien podrá ello ser así -replicó el bachiller-, pero dubitat Augustinus.

-Dude quien dudare -respondió el paje-, la verdad es la que he dicho, y esta que ha de andar siempre sobre la mentira, como el aceite sobre el agua; y si no, operibus credite, et non verbis: véngase alguno de vuestras mercedes conmigo, y verán con los ojos lo que no creen por los oídos.

-Esa ida a mí toca -dijo Sanchica-: lléveme vuestra merced, señor, a las ancas de su rocín, que yo iré de muy buena gana a ver a mi señor padre.

-Las hijas de los gobernadores no han de ir solas por los caminos, sino acompañadas de carrozas y literas y de gran número de sirvientes.

-Par Dios -respondió Sancha-, tan bien me vaya yo sobre una pollina como sobre un coche. ¡Hallado la habéis la melindrosa!

-Calla, mochacha -dijo Teresa-, que no sabes lo que te dices, y este señor está en lo cierto: que tal el tiempo, tal el tiento; cuando Sancho, Sancha, y cuando gobernador, señora, y no sé si diga algo.

-Más dice la señora Teresa de lo que piensa -dijo el paje-; y denme de comer y despáchenme luego, porque pienso volverme esta tarde.

A lo que dijo el cura:

-Vuestra merced se vendrá a hacer penitencia conmigo, que la señora Teresa más tiene voluntad que alhajas para servir a tan buen huésped.

Rehusólo el paje; pero, en efecto, lo hubo de conceder por su mejora, y el cura le llevó consigo de buena gana, por tener lugar de preguntarle de espacio por don Quijote y sus hazañas.

El bachiller se ofreció de escribir las cartas a Teresa de la respuesta, pero ella no quiso que el bachiller se metiese en sus cosas, que le tenía por algo burlón; y así, dio un bollo y dos huevos a un monacillo que sabía escribir, el cual le escribió dos cartas, una para su marido y otra para la duquesa, notadas de su mismo caletre, que no son las peores que en esta grande historia se ponen, como se verá adelante.

## Capítulo LI

*Del progreso del gobierno de Sancho Panza, con otros sucesos tales como buenos*

AMANECIÓ el día que se siguió a la noche de la ronda del gobernador, la cual el maestresala pasó sin dormir, ocupado el pensamiento en el rostro, brío y belleza de la disfrazada doncella; y el mayordomo ocupó lo que della faltaba en escribir a sus señores lo que Sancho Panza hacía y decía, tan admirado de sus hechos como de sus dichos: porque andaban mezcladas sus palabras y sus acciones, con asomos discretos y tontos.

Levantóse, en fin, el señor gobernador, y, por orden del doctor Pedro Recio, le hicieron desayunar con un poco de conserva y cuatro tragos de agua fría, cosa que la trocara Sancho con un pedazo de pan y un racimo de uvas; pero, viendo que aquello era más fuerza que voluntad, pasó por ello, con harto dolor de su alma y fatiga de su estómago, haciéndole creer Pedro Recio que los manjares pocos y delicados avivaban el ingenio, que era lo que más convenía a las personas constituidas en mandos y en oficios graves, donde se han de aprovechar no tanto de las fuerzas corporales como de las del entendimiento.

Con esta sofistería padecía hambre Sancho, y tal, que en su secreto maldecía el gobierno y aun a quien se le había dado; pero, con su hambre y con su conserva, se puso a juzgar aquel día, y lo primero que se le ofreció fue una pregunta que un forastero le hizo, estando presentes a todo el mayordomo y los demás acólitos, que fue:

-Señor, un caudaloso río dividía dos términos de un mismo señorío (y esté vuestra merced atento, porque el caso es de importancia y algo dificultoso). Digo, pues, que sobre este río estaba una puente, y al cabo della, una horca y una como casa de audiencia, en la cual de ordinario había cuatro jueces que juzgaban la ley que puso el dueño del río, de la puente y del señorío, que era en esta forma: «Si alguno pasare por esta puente de una parte a otra, ha de jurar primero adónde y a qué va; y si jurare verdad, déjenle pasar; y si dijere mentira, muera por ello ahorcado en la horca que allí se muestra, sin remisión alguna». Sabida esta ley y la rigurosa condición della, pasaban muchos, y luego en lo que juraban se echaba de ver que decían verdad, y los jueces los dejaban pasar libremente. Sucedió, pues, que, tomando juramento a un hombre, juró y dijo que para el juramento que hacía, que iba a morir en aquella horca que allí estaba, y no a otra

cosa. Repararon los jueces en el juramento y dijeron: «Si a este hombre le dejamos pasar libremente, mintió en su juramento, y, conforme a la ley, debe morir; y si le ahorcamos, él juró que iba a morir en aquella horca, y, habiendo jurado verdad, por la misma ley debe ser libre». Pídesse a vuestra merced, señor gobernador, qué harán los jueces del tal hombre; que aun hasta agora están dudosos y suspensos. Y, habiendo tenido noticia del agudo y elevado entendimiento de vuestra merced, me enviaron a mí a que suplicase a vuestra merced de su parte diese su parecer en tan intrincado y dudoso caso.

A lo que respondió Sancho:

-Por cierto que esos señores jueces que a mí os envían lo pudieran haber escusado, porque yo soy un hombre que tengo más de mostrenco que de agudo; pero, con todo eso, repetidme otra vez el negocio de modo que yo le entienda: quizá podría ser que diese en el hito.

Volvió otra y otra vez el preguntante a referir lo que primero había dicho, y Sancho dijo:

-A mi parecer, este negocio en dos paletas le declararé yo, y es así: el tal hombre jura que va a morir en la horca, y si muere en ella, juró verdad, y por la ley puesta merece ser libre y que pase la puente; y si no le ahorcan, juró mentira, y por la misma ley merece que le ahorquen.

-Así es como el señor gobernador dice -dijo el mensajero-; y cuanto a la entereza y entendimiento del caso, no hay más que pedir ni que dudar.

-Digo yo, pues, agora -replicó Sancho- que deste hombre aquella parte que juró verdad la dejen pasar, y la que dijo mentira la ahorquen, y desta manera se cumplirá al pie de la letra la condición del pasaje.

-Pues, señor gobernador -replicó el preguntador-, será necesario que el tal hombre se divida en partes, en mentirosa y verdadera; y si se divide, por fuerza ha de morir, y así no se consigue cosa alguna de lo que la ley pide, y es de necesidad espresa que se cumpla con ella.

-Venid acá, señor buen hombre -respondió Sancho-; este pasajero que decís, o yo soy un porro, o él tiene la misma razón para morir que para vivir y pasar la puente; porque si la verdad le salva, la mentira le condena igualmente; y, siendo esto así, como lo es, soy de parecer que digáis a esos señores que a mí os enviaron que, pues están en un fil las razones de condenarle o asolverle, que le dejen pasar libremente, pues siempre es alabado más el hacer bien que mal, y esto lo diera firmado de mi nombre, si supiera firmar; y yo en este caso no he hablado de mí, sino que se me vino a la memoria un precepto, entre otros muchos que me dio mi amo don Quijote la noche antes que viniese a ser gobernador desta ínsula: que fue que, cuando la justicia estuviese en duda, me decantase y acogiese a la misericordia; y ha querido Dios que agora se me

acordase, por venir en este caso como de molde.

-Así es -respondió el mayordomo-, y tengo para mí que el mismo Licurgo, que dio leyes a los lacedemonios, no pudiera dar mejor sentencia que la que el gran Panza ha dado. Y acábase con esto la audiencia desta mañana, y yo daré orden como el señor gobernador coma muy a su gusto.

-Eso pido, y barras derechas -dijo Sancho-: denme de comer, y lluevan casos y dudas sobre mí, que yo las despabilaré en el aire.

Cumplió su palabra el mayordomo, pareciéndole ser cargo de conciencia matar de hambre a tan discreto gobernador; y más, que pensaba concluir con él aquella misma noche haciéndole la burla última que traía en comisión de hacerle.

Sucedió, pues, que, habiendo comido aquel día contra las reglas y aforismos del doctor Tirteafuera, al levantar de los manteles, entró un correo con una carta de don Quijote para el gobernador. Mandó Sancho al secretario que la leyese para sí, y que si no viniese en ella alguna cosa digna de secreto, la leyese en voz alta. Hízolo así el secretario, y, repasándola primero, dijo:

-Bien se puede leer en voz alta, que lo que el señor don Quijote escribe a vuestra merced merece estar estampado y escrito con letras de oro, y dice así:

#### CARTA DE DON QUIJOTE DE LA MANCHA A SANCHE PANZA, GOBERNADOR DE LA ÍNSULA BARATARIA

Cuando esperaba oír nuevas de tus descuidos e impertinencias, Sancho amigo, las oí de tus discreciones, de que di por ello gracias particulares al cielo, el cual del estiércol sabe levantar los pobres, y de los tontos hacer discretos. Dícneme que gobiernas como si fueses hombre, y que eres hombre como si fueses bestia, según es la humildad con que te tratas; y quiero que adviertas, Sancho, que muchas veces conviene y es necesario, por la autoridad del oficio, ir contra la humildad del corazón; porque el buen adorno de la persona que está puesta en graves cargos ha de ser conforme a lo que ellos piden, y no a la medida de lo que su humilde condición le inclina. Vístete bien, que un palo compuesto no parece palo. No digo que traigas dijes ni galas, ni que siendo juez te vistas como soldado, sino que te adornes con el hábito que tu oficio requiere, con tal que sea limpio y bien compuesto.

Para ganar la voluntad del pueblo que gobiernas, entre otras has de hacer dos cosas: la una, ser bien criado con todos, aunque esto ya otra vez te lo he dicho; y la otra, procurar la abundancia de los mantenimientos; que no hay cosa que más fatigue el corazón de los pobres que la hambre y la carestía.

No hagas muchas pragmáticas; y si las hicieres, procura que sean buenas, y, sobre todo, que se guarden y cumplan; que las pragmáticas que no se guardan, lo

mismo es que si no lo fuesen; antes dan a entender que el príncipe que tuvo discreción y autoridad para hacerlas, no tuvo valor para hacer que se guardasen; y las leyes que atemorizan y no se ejecutan, vienen a ser como la viga, rey de las ranas: que al principio las espantó, y con el tiempo la menospreciaron y se subieron sobre ella.

Sé padre de las virtudes y padrastro de los vicios. No seas siempre riguroso, ni siempre blando, y escoge el medio entre estos dos extremos, que en esto está el punto de la discreción. Visita las cárceles, las carnicerías y las plazas, que la presencia del gobernador en lugares tales es de mucha importancia: consuela a los presos, que esperan la brevedad de su despacho; es coco a los carniceros, que por entonces igualan los pesos, y es espantajo a las plaseras, por la misma razón. No te muestres, aunque por ventura lo seas -lo cual yo no creo-, codicioso, mujeriego ni glotón; porque, en sabiendo el pueblo y los que te tratan tu inclinación determinada, por allí te darán batería, hasta derribarte en el profundo de la perdición.

Mira y remira, pasa y repasa los consejos y documentos que te di por escrito antes que de aquí partieses a tu gobierno, y verás como hallas en ellos, si los guardas, una ayuda de costa que te sobrelleve los trabajos y dificultades que a cada paso a los gobernadores se les ofrecen. Escribe a tus señores y muéstrateles agradecido, que la ingratitud es hija de la soberbia, y uno de los mayores pecados que se sabe, y la persona que es agradecida a los que bien le han hecho, da indicio que también lo será a Dios, que tantos bienes le hizo y de continuo le hace.

La señora duquesa despachó un propio con tu vestido y otro presente a tu mujer Teresa Panza; por momentos esperamos respuesta.

Yo he estado un poco mal dispuesto de un cierto gateamiento que me sucedió no muy a cuento de mis narices; pero no fue nada, que si hay encantadores que me maltraten, también los hay que me defiendan.

Avísame si el mayordomo que está contigo tuvo que ver en las acciones de la Trifaldi, como tú sospechaste, y de todo lo que te sucediere me irás dando aviso, pues es tan corto el camino; cuanto más, que yo pienso dejar presto esta vida ociosa en que estoy, pues no nací para ella.

Un negocio se me ha ofrecido, que creo que me ha de poner en desgracia destos señores; pero, aunque se me da mucho, no se me da nada, pues, en fin en fin, tengo de cumplir antes con mi profesión que con su gusto, conforme a lo que suele decirse: amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas. Dígote este latín porque me doy a entender que, después que eres gobernador, lo habrás aprendido. Y a Dios, el cual te guarde de que ninguno te tenga lástima.

Tu amigo,

*Don Quijote de la Mancha.*

Oyó Sancho la carta con mucha atención, y fue celebrada y tenida por discreta de los que la oyeron; y luego Sancho se levantó de la mesa, y, llamando al secretario, se encerró con él en su estancia, y, sin dilatarlo más, quiso responder luego a su señor don Quijote, y dijo al secretario que, sin añadir ni quitar cosa alguna, fuese escribiendo lo que él le dijese, y así lo hizo; y la carta de la respuesta fue del tenor siguiente:

CARTA DE SANCHO PANZA A DON QUIJOTE DE LA MANCHA

La ocupación de mis negocios es tan grande que no tengo lugar para rascarme la cabeza, ni aun para cortarme las uñas; y así, las traigo tan crecidas cual Dios lo remedie. Digo esto, señor mío de mi alma, porque vuesa merced no se espante si hasta agora no he dado aviso de mi bien o mal estar en este gobierno, en el cual tengo más hambre que cuando andábamos los dos por las selvas y por los despoblados.

Escribióme el duque, mi señor, el otro día, dándome aviso que habían entrado en esta ínsula ciertas espías para matarme, y hasta agora yo no he descubierto otra que un cierto doctor que está en este lugar asalariado para matar a cuantos gobernadores aquí vinieren: llámase el doctor Pedro Recio, y es natural de Tirteafuera: ¡porque vea vuesa merced qué nombre para no temer que he de morir a sus manos! Este tal doctor dice él mismo de sí mismo que él no cura las enfermedades cuando las hay, sino que las previene, para que no vengán; y las medecinas que usa son dieta y más dieta, hasta poner la persona en los huesos mondos, como si no fuese mayor mal la flaqueza que la calentura. Finalmente, él me va matando de hambre, y yo me voy muriendo de despecho, pues cuando pensé venir a este gobierno a comer caliente y a beber frío, y a recrear el cuerpo entre sábanas de holanda, sobre colchones de pluma, he venido a hacer penitencia, como si fuera ermitaño; y, como no la hago de mi voluntad, pienso que, al cabo al cabo, me ha de llevar el diablo.

Hasta agora no he tocado derecho ni llevado cohecho, y no puedo pensar en qué va esto; porque aquí me han dicho que los gobernadores que a esta ínsula suelen venir, antes de entrar en ella, o les han dado o les han prestado los del pueblo muchos dineros, y que ésta es ordinaria usanza en los demás que van a gobiernos, no solamente en éste.

Anoche, andando de ronda, topé una muy hermosa doncella en traje de varón y un hermano suyo en hábito de mujer; de la moza se enamoró mi maestresala, y la escogió en su imaginación para su mujer, según él ha dicho, y yo escogí al



mozo para mi yerno; hoy los dos pondremos en plática nuestros pensamientos con el padre de entrambos, que es un tal Diego de la Llana, hidalgo y cristiano viejo cuanto se quiere.

Yo visito las plazas, como vuestra merced me lo aconseja, y ayer hallé una tendera que vendía avellanas nuevas, y averigüéle que había mezclado con una hanega de avellanas nuevas otra de viejas, vanas y podridas; apliquélas todas para los niños de la doctrina, que las sabrían bien distinguir, y sentenciéla que por quince días no entrase en la plaza. Hanme dicho que lo hice valerosamente; lo que sé decir a vuestra merced es que es fama en este pueblo que no hay gente más mala que las placentas, porque todas son desvergonzadas, desalmadas y atrevidas, y yo así lo creo, por las que he visto en otros pueblos.

De que mi señora la duquesa haya escrito a mi mujer Teresa Panza y enviándole el presente que vuestra merced dice, estoy muy satisfecho, y procuraré de mostrarme agradecido a su tiempo: bésele vuestra merced las manos de mi parte, diciendo que digo yo que no lo ha echado en saco roto, como lo verá por la obra.

No querría que vuestra merced tuviese trabacuentas de disgusto con esos mis señores, porque si vuestra merced se enoja con ellos, claro está que ha de redundar en mi daño, y no será bien que, pues se me da a mí por consejo que sea agradecido, que vuestra merced no lo sea con quien tantas mercedes le tiene hechas y con tanto regalo ha sido tratado en su castillo.

Aquello del gateado no entiendo, pero imagino que debe de ser alguna de las malas fechorías que con vuestra merced suelen usar los malos encantadores; yo lo sabré cuando nos veamos.

Quisiera enviarle a vuestra merced alguna cosa, pero no sé qué envíe, si no es algunos cañutos de jeringas, que para con vejigas los hacen en esta ínsula muy curiosos; aunque si me dura el oficio, yo buscaré qué enviar de haldas o de mangas.

Si me escribiere mi mujer Teresa Panza, pague vuestra merced el porte y envíeme la carta, que tengo grandísimo deseo de saber del estado de mi casa, de mi mujer y de mis hijos. Y con esto, Dios libre a vuestra merced de mal intencionados encantadores, y a mí me saque con bien y en paz deste gobierno, que lo dudo, porque le pienso dejar con la vida, según me trata el doctor Pedro Recio.

Criado de vuestra merced,  
*Sancho Panza, el Gobernador.*

Cerró la carta el secretario y despachó luego al correo; y, juntándose los burladores de Sancho, dieron orden entre sí cómo despacharle del gobierno; y aquella tarde la pasó Sancho en hacer algunas ordenanzas tocantes al buen

gobierno de la que él imaginaba ser ínsula, y ordenó que no hubiese regatones de los bastimentos en la república, y que pudiesen meter en ella vino de las partes que quisiesen, con aditamento que declarasen el lugar de donde era, para ponerle el precio según su estimación, bondad y fama, y el que lo aguase o le mudase el nombre, perdiese la vida por ello.

Moderó el precio de todo calzado, principalmente el de los zapatos, por parecerle que corría con exorbitancia; puso tasa en los salarios de los criados, que caminaban a rienda suelta por el camino del interese; puso gravísimas penas a los que cantasen cantares lascivos y descompuestos, ni de noche ni de día. Ordenó que ningún ciego cantase milagro en coplas si no trujese testimonio auténtico de ser verdadero, por parecerle que los más que los ciegos cantan son fingidos, en perjuicio de los verdaderos. Hizo y creó un alguacil de pobres, no para que los persiguiese, sino para que los examinase si lo eran, porque a la sombra de la manquedad fingida y de la llaga falsa andan los brazos ladrones y la salud borracha. En resolución: él ordenó cosas tan buenas que hasta hoy se guardan en aquel lugar, y se nombran *Las constituciones del gran gobernador Sancho Panza*.

## Capítulo LII

*Donde se cuenta la aventura de la segunda dueña Dolorida, o Angustiada, llamada por otro nombre doña Rodríguez*

CUENTA Cide Hamete que estando ya don Quijote sano de sus aruños, le pareció que la vida que en aquel castillo tenía era contra toda la orden de caballería que profesaba, y así, determinó de pedir licencia a los duques para partirse a Zaragoza, cuyas fiestas llegaban cerca, adonde pensaba ganar el arnés que en las tales fiestas se conquista.

Y, estando un día a la mesa con los duques, y comenzando a poner en obra su intención y pedir la licencia, veis aquí a deshora entrar por la puerta de la gran sala dos mujeres, como después pareció, cubiertas de luto de los pies a la cabeza, y la una dellas, llegándose a don Quijote, se le echó a los pies tendida de largo a largo, la boca cosida con los pies de don Quijote, y daba unos gemidos tan tristes, tan profundos y tan dolorosos, que puso en confusión a todos los que la oían y miraban; y, aunque los duques pensaron que sería alguna burla que sus criados querían hacer a don Quijote, todavía, viendo con el ahínco que la mujer suspiraba, gemía y lloraba, los tuvo dudosos y suspensos, hasta que don Quijote, compasivo, la levantó del suelo y hizo que se descubriese y quitase el manto de sobre la faz llorosa.

Ella lo hizo así, y mostró ser lo que jamás se pudiera pensar, porque descubrió el rostro de doña Rodríguez, la dueña de casa, y la otra enlutada era su hija, la burlada del hijo del labrador rico. Admiráronse todos aquellos que la conocían, y más los duques que ninguno; que, puesto que la tenían por boba y de buena pasta, no por tanto que viniese a hacer locuras. Finalmente, doña Rodríguez, volviéndose a los señores, les dijo:

-Vuestas excelencias sean servidos de darme licencia que yo departa un poco con este caballero, porque así conviene para salir con bien del negocio en que me ha puesto el atrevimiento de un mal intencionado villano.

El duque dijo que él se la daba, y que departiese con el señor don Quijote cuanto le viniese en deseo. Ella, enderezando la voz y el rostro a don Quijote, dijo:

-Días ha, valeroso caballero, que os tengo dada cuenta de la sinrazón y alevosía que un mal labrador tiene fecha a mi muy querida y amada hija, que es esta desdichada que aquí está presente, y vos me habedes prometido de volver

por ella, enderezándole el tuerto que le tienen fecho, y agora ha llegado a mi noticia que os queredes partir deste castillo, en busca de las buenas venturas que Dios os depare; y así, querría que, antes que os escurriésedes por esos caminos, desafiásedes a este rústico indómito, y le hiciésedes que se casase con mi hija, en cumplimiento de la palabra que le dio de ser su esposo, antes y primero que yogase con ella; porque pensar que el duque mi señor me ha de hacer justicia es pedir peras al olmo, por la ocasión que ya a vuesa merced en puridad tengo declarada. Y con esto, Nuestro Señor dé a vuesa merced mucha salud, y a nosotras no nos desampare.

A cuyas razones respondió don Quijote, con mucha gravedad y prosopopeya:

-Buena dueña, templad vuestras lágrimas, o, por mejor decir, enjugadlas y ahorrad de vuestros suspiros, que yo tomo a mi cargo el remedio de vuestra hija, a la cual le hubiera estado mejor no haber sido tan fácil en creer promesas de enamorados, las cuales, por la mayor parte, son ligeras de prometer y muy pesadas de cumplir; y así, con licencia del duque mi señor, yo me partiré luego en busca dese desalmado mancebo, y le hallaré, y le desafiaré, y le mataré cada y cuando que se escusare de cumplir la prometida palabra; que el principal asunto de mi profesión es perdonar a los humildes y castigar a los soberbios; quiero decir: acorrer a los miserables y destruir a los rigurosos.

-No es menester -respondió el duque-que vuesa merced se ponga en trabajo de buscar al rústico de quien esta buena dueña se queja, ni es menester tampoco que vuesa merced me pida a mí licencia para desafiarme; que yo le doy por desafiado, y tomo a mi cargo de hacerle saber este desafío, y que le acete, y venga a responder por sí a este mi castillo, donde a entrambos daré campo seguro, guardando todas las condiciones que en tales actos suelen y deben guardarse, guardando igualmente su justicia a cada uno, como están obligados a guardarla todos aquellos príncipes que dan campo franco a los que se combaten en los términos de sus señoríos.

-Pues con ese seguro y con buena licencia de vuestra grandeza -replicó don Quijote-, desde aquí digo que por esta vez renuncio a mi hidalguía, y me allano y ajusto con la llaneza del dañador, y me hago igual con él, habilitándole para poder combatir conmigo; y así, aunque ausente, le desafío y repto, en razón de que hizo mal en defraudar a esta pobre, que fue doncella y ya por su culpa no lo es, y que le ha de cumplir la palabra que le dio de ser su legítimo esposo, o morir en la demanda.

Y luego, descalzándose un guante, le arrojó en mitad de la sala, y el duque le alzó, diciendo que, como ya había dicho, él acetaba el tal desafío en nombre de su vasallo, y señalaba el plazo de allí a seis días; y el campo, en la plaza de aquel castillo; y las armas, las acostumbradas de los caballeros: lanza y escudo, y arnés

tranzado, con todas las demás piezas, sin engaño, superchería o superstición alguna, examinadas y vistas por los jueces del campo.

-Pero, ante todas cosas, es menester que esta buena dueña y esta mala doncella pongan el derecho de su justicia en manos del señor don Quijote; que de otra manera no se hará nada, ni llegará a debida ejecución el tal desafío.

-Yo sí pongo -respondió la dueña.

-Y yo también -añadió la hija, toda llorosa y toda vergonzosa y de mal talante.

Tomado, pues, este apuntamiento, y habiendo imaginado el duque lo que había de hacer en el caso, las enlutadas se fueron, y ordenó la duquesa que de allí adelante no las tratasen como a sus criadas, sino como a señoras aventureras que venían a pedir justicia a su casa; y así, les dieron cuarto aparte y las sirvieron como a forasteras, no sin espanto de las demás criadas, que no sabían en qué había de parar la sandez y desenvoltura de doña Rodríguez y de su malandante hija.

Estando en esto, para acabar de regocijar la fiesta y dar buen fin a la comida, veis aquí donde entró por la sala el paje que llevó las cartas y presentes a Teresa Panza, mujer del gobernador Sancho Panza, de cuya llegada recibieron gran contento los duques, deseosos de saber lo que le había sucedido en su viaje; y, preguntádoselo, respondió el paje que no lo podía decir tan en público ni con breves palabras: que sus excelencias fuesen servidos de dejarlo para a solas, y que entretanto se entretuviesen con aquellas cartas. Y, sacando dos cartas, las puso en manos de la duquesa. La una decía en el sobreescrito: *Carta para mi señora la duquesa tal, de no sé dónde*, y la otra: *A mi marido Sancho Panza, gobernador de la ínsula Barataria, que Dios prospere más años que a mí*. No se le cocía el pan, como suele decirse, a la duquesa hasta leer su carta, y abriéndola y leído para sí, y viendo que la podía leer en voz alta para que el duque y los circunstantes la oyesen, leyó desta manera:

### CARTA DE TERESA PANZA A LA DUQUESA

Mucho contento me dio, señora mía, la carta que vuesa grandeza me escribió, que en verdad que la tenía bien deseada. La sarta de corales es muy buena, y el vestido de caza de mi marido no le va en zaga. De que vuestra señoría haya hecho gobernador a Sancho, mi consorte, ha recibido mucho gusto todo este lugar, puesto que no hay quien lo crea, principalmente el cura, y mase Nicolás el barbero, y Sansón Carrasco el bachiller; pero a mí no se me da nada; que, como ello sea así, como lo es, diga cada uno lo que quisiere; aunque, si va a decir verdad, a no venir los corales y el vestido, tampoco yo lo creyera, porque en este

pueblo todos tienen a mi marido por un porro, y que, sacado de gobernar un hato de cabras, no pueden imaginar para qué gobierno pueda ser bueno. Dios lo haga, y lo encamine como vea que lo han menester sus hijos.

Yo, señora de mi alma, estoy determinada, con licencia de vuesa merced, de meter este buen día en mi casa, yéndome a la corte a tenderme en un coche, para quebrar los ojos a mil envidiosos que ya tengo; y así, suplico a vuesa excelencia mande a mi marido me envíe algún dinerillo, y que sea algo qué, porque en la corte son los gastos grandes: que el pan vale a real, y la carne, la libra, a treinta maravedís, que es un juicio; y si quisiere que no vaya, que me lo avise con tiempo, porque me están bullendo los pies por ponerme en camino; que me dicen mis amigas y mis vecinas que, si yo y mi hija andamos orondas y pomposas en la corte, vendrá a ser conocido mi marido por mí más que yo por él, siendo forzoso que pregunten muchos: «¿Quién son estas señoras deste coche?» Y un criado mío responder: «La mujer y la hija de Sancho Panza, gobernador de la ínsula Barataria»; y desta manera será conocido Sancho, y yo seré estimada, y a Roma por todo.

Pésame, cuanto pesarme puede, que este año no se han cogido bellotas en este pueblo; con todo eso, envío a vuesa alteza hasta medio celemín, que una a una las fui yo a coger y a escoger al monte, y no las hallé más mayores; yo quisiera que fueran como huevos de avestruz.

No se le olvide a vuestra pomposidad de escribirme, que yo tendré cuidado de la respuesta, avisando de mi salud y de todo lo que hubiere que avisar deste lugar, donde quedo rogando a Nuestro Señor guarde a vuestra grandeza, y a mí no olvide. Sancha, mi hija, y mi hijo besan a vuestra merced las manos.

La que tiene más deseo de ver a vuestra señoría que de escribirla, su criada,  
*Teresa Panza.*

Grande fue el gusto que todos recibieron de oír la carta de Teresa Panza, principalmente los duques, y la duquesa pidió parecer a don Quijote si sería bien abrir la carta que venía para el gobernador, que imaginaba debía de ser bonísima. Don Quijote dijo que él la abriría por darles gusto, y así lo hizo, y vio que decía desta manera:

#### CARTA DE TERESA PANZA A SANCHO PANZA SU MARIDO

Tu carta recibí, Sancho mío de mi alma, y yo te prometo y juro como católica cristiana que no faltaron dos dedos para volverme loca de contento. Mira, hermano: cuando yo llegué a oír que eres gobernador, me pensé allí caer muerta de puro gozo, que ya sabes tú que dicen que así mata la alegría súbita como el

dolor grande. A Sanchica, tu hija, se le fueron las aguas sin sentirlo, de puro contento. El vestido que me enviaste tenía delante, y los corales que me envió mi señora la duquesa al cuello, y las cartas en las manos, y el portador dellas allí presente, y, con todo eso, creía y pensaba que era todo sueño lo que veía y lo que tocaba; porque, ¿quién podía pensar que un pastor de cabras había de venir a ser gobernador de ínsulas? Ya sabes tú, amigo, que decía mi madre que era menester vivir mucho para ver mucho: dígolo porque pienso ver más si vivo más; porque no pienso parar hasta verte arrendador o alcabalero, que son oficios que, aunque lleva el diablo a quien mal los usa, en fin en fin, siempre tienen y manejan dineros. Mi señora la duquesa te dirá el deseo que tengo de ir a la corte; mírate en ello, y avísame de tu gusto, que yo procuraré honrarte en ella andando en coche.

El cura, el barbero, el bachiller y aun el sacristán no pueden creer que eres gobernador, y dicen que todo es embeleco, o cosas de encantamento, como son todas las de don Quijote tu amo; y dice Sansón que ha de ir a buscarte y a sacarte el gobierno de la cabeza, y a don Quijote la locura de los cascos; yo no hago sino reírme, y mirar mi sarta, y dar traza del vestido que tengo de hacer del tuyo a nuestra hija.

Unas bellotas envié a mi señora la duquesa; yo quisiera que fueran de oro. Envíame tú algunas sarta de perlas, si se usan en esa ínsula.

Las nuevas deste lugar son que la Berrueca casó a su hija con un pintor de mala mano, que llegó a este pueblo a pintar lo que saliese; mandóle el Concejo pintar las armas de Su Majestad sobre las puertas del Ayuntamiento, pidió dos ducados, diéronselos adelantados, trabajó ocho días, al cabo de los cuales no pintó nada, y dijo que no acertaba a pintar tantas baratijas; volvió el dinero, y, con todo eso, se casó a título de buen oficial; verdad es que ya ha dejado el pincel y tomado el azada, y va al campo como gentilhombre. El hijo de Pedro de Lobo se ha ordenado de grados y corona, con intención de hacerse clérigo; súpolo Minguilla, la nieta de Mingo Silvato, y hale puesto demanda de que la tiene dada palabra de casamiento; malas lenguas quieren decir que ha estado encinta dél, pero él lo niega a pies juntillas.

Hogaño no hay aceitunas, ni se halla una gota de vinagre en todo este pueblo. Por aquí pasó una compañía de soldados; lleváronse de camino tres mozas deste pueblo; no te quiero decir quién son: quizá volverán, y no faltará quien las tome por mujeres, con sus tachas buenas o malas.

Sanchica hace puntas de randas; gana cada día ocho maravedís horros, que los va echando en una alcancía para ayuda a su ajuar; pero ahora que es hija de un gobernador, tú le darás la dote sin que ella lo trabaje. La fuente de la plaza se secó; un rayo cayó en la picota, y allí me las den todas.

Espero respuesta desta y la resolución de mi ida a la corte; y, con esto, Dios te me guarde más años que a mí o tantos, porque no querría dejarte sin mí en este mundo.

Tu mujer,

*Teresa Panza.*

Las cartas fueron solenizadas, reídas, estimadas y admiradas; y, para acabar de echar el sello, llegó el correo, el que traía la que Sancho enviaba a don Quijote, que asimesmo se leyó públicamente, la cual puso en duda la sandez del gobernador.

Retiróse la duquesa, para saber del paje lo que le había sucedido en el lugar de Sancho, el cual se lo contó muy por estenso, sin dejar circunstancia que no refiriese; diole las bellotas, y más un queso que Teresa le dio, por ser muy bueno, que se aventajaba a los de Tronchón. Recibiólo la duquesa con grandísimo gusto, con el cual la dejaremos, por contar el fin que tuvo el gobierno del gran Sancho Panza, flor y espejo de todos los insulanos gobernadores.



## Capítulo LIII

### *Del fatigado fin y remate que tuvo el gobierno de Sancho Panza*

«PENSAR que en esta vida las cosas della han de durar siempre en un estado es pensar en lo escusado; antes parece que ella anda todo en redondo, digo, a la redonda: la primavera sigue al verano, el verano al estío, el estío al otoño, y el otoño al invierno, y el invierno a la primavera, y así torna a andarse el tiempo con esta rueda continua; sola la vida humana corre a su fin ligera más que el tiempo, sin esperar renovarse si no es en la otra, que no tiene términos que la limiten». Esto dice Cide Hamete, filósofo mahomético; porque esto de entender la ligereza e inestabilidad de la vida presente, y de la duración de la eterna que se espera, muchos sin lumbre de fe, sino con la luz natural, lo han entendido; pero aquí, nuestro autor lo dice por la presteza con que se acabó, se consumió, se deshizo, se fue como en sombra y humo el gobierno de Sancho.

El cual, estando la séptima noche de los días de su gobierno en su cama, no harto de pan ni de vino, sino de juzgar y dar pareceres y de hacer estatutos y pragmáticas, cuando el sueño, a despecho y pesar de la hambre, le comenzaba a cerrar los párpados, oyó tan gran ruido de campanas y de voces, que no parecía sino que toda la ínsula se hundía. Sentóse en la cama, y estuvo atento y escuchando, por ver si daba en la cuenta de lo que podía ser la causa de tan grande alboroto; pero no sólo no lo supo, pero, añadiéndose al ruido de voces y campanas el de infinitas trompetas y atambores, quedó más confuso y lleno de temor y espanto; y, levantándose en pie, se puso unas chinelas, por la humedad del suelo, y, sin ponerse sobrerropa de levantar, ni cosa que se pareciese, salió a la puerta de su aposento, a tiempo cuando vio venir por unos corredores más de veinte personas con hachas encendidas en las manos y con las espadas desenvainadas, gritando todos a grandes voces:

-¡Arma, arma, señor gobernador, arma!; que han entrado infinitos enemigos en la ínsula, y somos perdidos si vuestra industria y valor no nos socorre.

Con este ruido, furia y alboroto llegaron donde Sancho estaba, atónito y embelesado de lo que oía y veía; y, cuando llegaron a él, uno le dijo:

-¡Ármese luego vuestra señoría, si no quiere perderse y que toda esta ínsula se pierda!

-¿Qué me tengo de armar -respondió Sancho-, ni qué sé yo de armas ni de socorros? Estas cosas mejor será dejarlas para mi amo don Quijote, que en dos

paletas las despachará y pondrá en cobro; que yo, pecador fui a Dios, no se me entiende nada destas priesas.

-¡Ah, señor gobernador! -dijo otro-. ¿Qué relente es ése? Ármese vuesa merced, que aquí le traemos armas ofensivas y defensivas, y salga a esa plaza, y sea nuestra guía y nuestro capitán, pues de derecho le toca el serlo, siendo nuestro gobernador.

-Ármenme norabuena -replicó Sancho.

Y al momento le trujeron dos paveses, que venían proveídos dellos, y le pusieron encima de la camisa, sin dejarle tomar otro vestido, un pavés delante y otro detrás, y, por unas concavidades que traían hechas, le sacaron los brazos, y le liaron muy bien con unos cordeles, de modo que quedó emparedado y entablado, derecho como un huso, sin poder doblar las rodillas ni menearse un solo paso. Pusiéronle en las manos una lanza, a la cual se arrimó para poder tenerse en pie. Cuando así le tuvieron, le dijeron que caminase, y los guiase y animase a todos; que, siendo él su norte, su lanterna y su lucero, tendrían buen fin sus negocios.

-¿Cómo tengo de caminar, desventurado yo -respondió Sancho-, que no puedo jugar las choquezuelas de las rodillas, porque me lo impiden estas tablas que tan cosidas tengo con mis carnes? Lo que han de hacer es llevarme en brazos y ponerme, atravesado o en pie, en algún postigo, que yo le guardaré, o con esta lanza o con mi cuerpo.

-Ande, señor gobernador -dijo otro-, que más el miedo que las tablas le impiden el paso; acabe y menéese, que es tarde, y los enemigos crecen, y las voces se aumentan y el peligro carga.

Por cuyas persuaciones y vituperios probó el pobre gobernador a moverse, y fue dar consigo en el suelo tan gran golpe, que pensó que se había hecho pedazos. Quedó como galápago encerrado y cubierto con sus conchas, o como medio tocino metido entre dos artesas, o bien así como barca que da al través en la arena; y no por verle caído aquella gente burladora le tuvieron compasión alguna; antes, apagando las antorchas, tornaron a reforzar las voces, y a reiterar el ¡arma! con tan gran priesa, pasando por encima del pobre Sancho, dándole infinitas cuchilladas sobre los paveses, que si él no se recogiera y encogiera, metiendo la cabeza entre los paveses, lo pasara muy mal el pobre gobernador, el cual, en aquella estrechez recogido, sudaba y trasudaba, y de todo corazón se encomendaba a Dios que de aquel peligro le sacase.

Unos tropezaban en él, otros caían, y tal hubo que se puso encima un buen espacio, y desde allí, como desde atalaya, gobernaba los ejércitos, y a grandes voces decía:

-¡Aquí de los nuestros, que por esta parte cargan más los enemigos! ¡Aquel

portillo se guarde, aquella puerta se cierre, aquellas escalas se tranquilen! ¡Vengan alcancías, pez y resina en calderas de aceite ardiendo! ¡Trinchéense las calles con colchones!

En fin, él nombraba con todo ahínco todas las baratijas e instrumentos y pertrechos de guerra con que suele defenderse el asalto de una ciudad, y el molido Sancho, que lo escuchaba y sufría todo, decía entre sí:

-¡Oh, si mi Señor fuese servido que se acabase ya de perder esta ínsula, y me viese yo o muerto o fuera desta grande angustia!

Oyó el cielo su petición, y, cuando menos lo esperaba, oyó voces que decían:

-¡Vitoria, vitoria! ¡Los enemigos van de vencida! ¡Ea, señor gobernador, levántese vuesa merced y venga a gozar del vencimiento y a repartir los despojos que se han tomado a los enemigos, por el valor dese invencible brazo!

-Levántenme -dijo con voz doliente el dolorido Sancho.

Ayudáronle a levantar, y, puesto en pie, dijo:

-El enemigo que yo hubiere vencido quiero que me le claven en la frente. Yo no quiero repartir despojos de enemigos, sino pedir y suplicar a algún amigo, si es que le tengo, que me dé un trago de vino, que me seco, y me enjague este sudor, que me hago agua.

Limpiáronle, trujéronle el vino, desliáronle los paveses, sentóse sobre su lecho y desmayóse del temor, del sobresalto y del trabajo. Ya les pesaba a los de la burla de habérsela hecho tan pesada; pero el haber vuelto en sí Sancho les templó la pena que les había dado su desmayo. Preguntó qué hora era, respondiéronle que ya amanecía. Calló, y, sin decir otra cosa, comenzó a vestirse, todo sepultado en silencio, y todos le miraban y esperaban en qué había de parar la priesa con que se vestía. Vistióse, en fin, y poco a poco, porque estaba molido y no podía ir mucho a mucho, se fue a la caballeriza, siguiéndole todos los que allí se hallaban, y, llegándose al rucio, le abrazó y le dio un beso de paz en la frente, y, no sin lágrimas en los ojos, le dijo:

-Venid vos acá, compañero mío y amigo mío, y conllevador de mis trabajos y miserias: cuando yo me avenía con vos y no tenía otros pensamientos que los que me daban los cuidados de remendar vuestros aparejos y de sustentar vuestro corpezuelo, dichas eran mis horas, mis días y mis años; pero, después que os dejé y me subí sobre las torres de la ambición y de la soberbia, se me han entrado por el alma adentro mil miserias, mil trabajos y cuatro mil desasosiegos.

Y, en tanto que estas razones iba diciendo, iba asimesmo enalbardando el asno, sin que nadie nada le dijese. Enalbardado, pues, el rucio, con gran pena y pesar subió sobre él, y, encaminando sus palabras y razones al mayordomo, al secretario, al maestresala y a Pedro Recio el doctor, y a otros muchos que allí presentes estaban, dijo:

-Abrid camino, señores míos, y dejadme volver a mi antigua libertad; dejadme que vaya a buscar la vida pasada, para que me resucite de esta muerte presente. Yo no nací para ser gobernador, ni para defender ínsulas ni ciudades de los enemigos que quisieren acometerlas. Mejor se me entiende a mí de arar y cavar, podar y ensarmentar las viñas, que de dar leyes ni de defender provincias ni reinos. Bien se está San Pedro en Roma: quiero decir, que bien se está cada uno usando el oficio para que fue nacido. Mejor me está a mí una hoz en la mano que un cetro de gobernador; más quiero hartarme de gazpachos que estar sujeto a la miseria de un médico impertinente que me mate de hambre; y más quiero recostarme a la sombra de una encina en el verano y arroparme con un zamarro de dos pelos en el invierno, en mi libertad, que acostarme con la sujeción del gobierno entre sábanas de Holanda y vestirme de martas cebollinas. Vuestras mercedes se queden con Dios, y digan al duque mi señor que, desnudo nací, desnudo me hallo: ni pierdo ni gano; quiero decir, que sin blanca entré en este gobierno y sin ella salgo, bien al revés de como suelen salir los gobernadores de otras ínsulas. Y apártense: déjenme ir, que me voy a bizmar; que creo que tengo brumadas todas las costillas, merced a los enemigos que esta noche se han paseado sobre mí.

-No ha de ser así, señor gobernador -dijo el doctor Recio-, que yo le daré a vuesa merced una bebida contra caídas y molimientos, que luego le vuelva en su prístina entereza y vigor; y, en lo de la comida, yo prometo a vuesa merced de enmendarme, dejándole comer abundantemente de todo aquello que quisiere.

-¡Tarde piache! -respondió Sancho-. Así dejaré de irme como volverme turco. No son estas burlas para dos veces. Por Dios que así me quede en éste, ni admita otro gobierno, aunque me le diesen entre dos platos, como volar al cielo sin alas. Yo soy del linaje de los Panzas, que todos son testarudos, y si una vez dicen nones, nones han de ser, aunque sean pares, a pesar de todo el mundo. Quédense en esta caballeriza las alas de la hormiga, que me levantaron en el aire para que me comiesen vencejos y otros pájaros, y volvámonos a andar por el suelo con pie llano, que, si no le adornaren zapatos picados de cordobán, no le faltarán alpargatas toscas de cuerda. Cada oveja con su pareja, y nadie tienda más la pierna de cuanto fuere larga la sábana; y déjenme pasar, que se me hace tarde.

A lo que el mayordomo dijo:

-Señor gobernador, de muy buena gana dejáramos ir a vuesa merced, puesto que nos pesará mucho de perderle, que su ingenio y su cristiano proceder obligan a desearle; pero ya se sabe que todo gobernador está obligado, antes que se ausente de la parte donde ha gobernado, dar primero residencia: déla vuesa merced de los diez días que ha que tiene el gobierno, y váyase a la paz de Dios.

-Nadie me la puede pedir -respondió Sancho-, si no es quien ordenare el

duque mi señor; yo voy a verme con él, y a él se la daré de molde; cuanto más que, saliendo yo desnudo, como salgo, no es menester otra señal para dar a entender que he gobernado como un ángel.

-Par Dios que tiene razón el gran Sancho -dijo el doctor Recio-, y que soy de parecer que le dejemos ir, porque el duque ha de gustar infinito de verle.

Todos vinieron en ello, y le dejaron ir, ofreciéndole primero compañía y todo aquello que quisiese para el regalo de su persona y para la comodidad de su viaje. Sancho dijo que no quería más de un poco de cebada para el rucio y medio queso y medio pan para él; que, pues el camino era tan corto, no había menester mayor ni mejor repostería. Abrazáronle todos, y él, llorando, abrazó a todos, y los dejó admirados, así de sus razones como de su determinación tan resoluta y tan discreta.

## Capítulo LIV

*Que trata de cosas tocantes a esta historia, y no a otra alguna*

RESOLVIÉRONSE el duque y la duquesa de que el desafío que don Quijote hizo a su vasallo, por la causa ya referida, pasase adelante; y, puesto que el mozo estaba en Flandes, adonde se había ido huyendo, por no tener por suegra a doña Rodríguez, ordenaron de poner en su lugar a un lacayo gascón, que se llamaba Tosilos, industriándole primero muy bien de todo lo que había de hacer.

De allí a dos días dijo el duque a don Quijote como desde allí a cuatro vendría su contrario, y se presentaría en el campo, armado como caballero, y sustentaría como la doncella mentía por mitad de la barba, y aun por toda la barba entera, si se afirmaba que él le hubiese dado palabra de casamiento. Don Quijote recibió mucho gusto con las tales nuevas, y se prometió a sí mismo de hacer maravillas en el caso, y tuvo a gran ventura habérsele ofrecido ocasión donde aquellos señores pudiesen ver hasta dónde se extendía el valor de su poderoso brazo; y así, con alborozo y contento, esperaba los cuatro días, que se le iban haciendo, a la cuenta de su deseo, cuatrocientos siglos.

Dejémoslos pasar nosotros, como dejamos pasar otras cosas, y vamos a acompañar a Sancho, que entre alegre y triste venía caminando sobre el rucio a buscar a su amo, cuya compañía le agradaba más que ser gobernador de todas las ínsulas del mundo.

Sucedió, pues, que, no habiéndose alongado mucho de la ínsula del su gobierno -que él nunca se puso a averiguar si era ínsula, ciudad, villa o lugar la que gobernaba-, vio que por el camino por donde él iba venían seis peregrinos con sus bordones, de estos extranjeros que piden la limosna cantando, los cuales, en llegando a él, se pusieron en ala, y, levantando las voces todos juntos, comenzaron a cantar en su lengua lo que Sancho no pudo entender, si no fue una palabra que claramente pronunciaba *limosna*, por donde entendió que era limosna la que en su canto pedían; y como él, según dice Cide Hamete, era caritativo además, sacó de sus alforjas medio pan y medio queso, de que venía proveído, y dióselo, diciéndoles por señas que no tenía otra cosa que darles. Ellos lo recibieron de muy buena gana, y dijeron:

-¡Guelte! ¡Guelte!

-No entiendo -respondió Sancho-qué es lo que me pedís, buena gente.

Entonces uno de ellos sacó una bolsa del seno y mostrósela a Sancho, por

donde entendió que le pedían dineros; y él, poniéndose el dedo pulgar en la garganta y estendiendo la mano arriba, les dio a entender que no tenía ostugo de moneda, y, picando al rucio, rompió por ellos; y, al pasar, habiéndole estado mirando uno dellos con mucha atención, arremetió a él, echándole los brazos por la cintura; en voz alta y muy castellana, dijo:

-¡Válame Dios! ¿Qué es lo que veo? ¿Es posible que tengo en mis brazos al mi caro amigo, al mi buen vecino Sancho Panza? Sí tengo, sin duda, porque yo ni duermo, ni estoy ahora borracho.

Admiróse Sancho de verse nombrar por su nombre y de verse abrazar del extranjero peregrino, y, después de haberle estado mirando sin hablar palabra, con mucha atención, nunca pudo conocerle; pero, viendo su suspensión el peregrino, le dijo:

-¿Cómo, y es posible, Sancho Panza hermano, que no conoces a tu vecino Ricote el morisco, tendero de tu lugar?

Entonces Sancho le miró con más atención y comenzó a rafigurarle, y, finalmente, le vino a conocer de todo punto, y, sin apearse del jumento, le echó los brazos al cuello, y le dijo:

-¿Quién diablos te había de conocer, Ricote, en ese traje de moharracho que traes? Dime: ¿quién te ha hecho franchote, y cómo tienes atrevimiento de volver a España, donde si te cogen y conocen tendrás harta mala ventura?

-Si tú no me descubres, Sancho -respondió el peregrino-, seguro estoy que en este traje no habrá nadie que me conozca; y apartémonos del camino a aquella alameda que allí parece, donde quieren comer y reposar mis compañeros, y allí comerás con ellos, que son muy apacible gente. Yo tendré lugar de contarte lo que me ha sucedido después que me partí de nuestro lugar, por obedecer el bando de Su Majestad, que con tanto rigor a los desdichados de mi nación amenazaba, según oíste.

Hízolo así Sancho, y, hablando Ricote a los demás peregrinos, se apartaron a la alameda que se parecía, bien desviados del camino real. Arrojaron los bordones, quitáronse las mucetas o esclavinas y quedaron en pelota, y todos ellos eran mozos y muy gentileshombres, excepto Ricote, que ya era hombre entrado en años. Todos traían alforjas, y todas, según pareció, venían bien proveídas, a lo menos, de cosas incitativas y que llaman a la sed de dos leguas.

Tendiéronse en el suelo, y, haciendo manteles de las yerbas, pusieron sobre ellas pan, sal, cuchillos, nueces, rajas de queso, huesos mondos de jamón, que si no se dejaban mascar, no defendían el ser chupados. Pusieron asimismo un manjar negro que dicen que se llama *cavial*, y es hecho de huevos de pescados, gran despertador de la colambre. No faltaron aceitunas, aunque secas y sin adobo alguno, pero sabrosas y entretenidas. Pero lo que más campeó en el campo de

aquel banquete fueron seis botas de vino, que cada uno sacó la suya de su alforja; hasta el buen Ricote, que se había transformado de morisco en alemán o en tudesco, sacó la suya, que en grandeza podía competir con las cinco.

Comenzaron a comer con grandísimo gusto y muy de espacio, saboreándose con cada bocado, que le tomaban con la punta del cuchillo, y muy poquito de cada cosa, y luego, al punto, todos a una, levantaron los brazos y las botas en el aire; puestas las bocas en su boca, clavados los ojos en el cielo, no parecía sino que ponían en él la puntería; y desta manera, meneando las cabezas a un lado y a otro, señales que acreditaban el gusto que recebían, se estuvieron un buen espacio, trasegando en sus estómagos las entrañas de las vasijas.

Todo lo miraba Sancho, y de ninguna cosa se dolía; antes, por cumplir con el refrán, que él muy bien sabía, de «cuando a Roma fueres, haz como vieres», pidió a Ricote la bota, y tomó su puntería como los demás, y no con menos gusto que ellos.

Cuatro veces dieron lugar las botas para ser empinadas; pero la quinta no fue posible, porque ya estaban más enjutas y secas que un esparto, cosa que puso mustia la alegría que hasta allí habían mostrado. De cuando en cuando, juntaba alguno su mano derecha con la de Sancho, y decía:

*-Español y tudesqui, tuto uno: bon compañero.*

Y Sancho respondía:

*-Bon compañero, jura Di!*

Y disparaba con una risa que le duraba un hora, sin acordarse entonces de nada de lo que le había sucedido en su gobierno; porque sobre el rato y tiempo cuando se come y bebe, poca jurisdicción suelen tener los cuidados. Finalmente, el acabársele el vino fue principio de un sueño que dio a todos, quedándose dormidos sobre las mismas mesas y manteles; solos Ricote y Sancho quedaron alerta, porque habían comido más y bebido menos; y, apartando Ricote a Sancho, se sentaron al pie de una haya, dejando a los peregrinos sepultados en dulce sueño; y Ricote, sin tropezar nada en su lengua morisca, en la pura castellana le dijo las siguientes razones:

-«Bien sabes, ¡oh Sancho Panza, vecino y amigo mío!, como el pregón y bando que Su Majestad mandó publicar contra los de mi nación puso terror y espanto en todos nosotros; a lo menos, en mí le puso de suerte que me parece que antes del tiempo que se nos concedía para que hiciésemos ausencia de España, ya tenía el rigor de la pena ejecutado en mi persona y en la de mis hijos. Ordené, pues, a mi parecer como prudente, bien así como el que sabe que para tal tiempo le han de quitar la casa donde vive y se provee de otra donde mudarse; ordené, digo, de salir yo solo, sin mi familia, de mi pueblo, y ir a buscar donde llevarla con comodidad y sin la priesa con que los demás salieron; porque bien



vi, y vieron todos nuestros ancianos, que aquellos pregones no eran sólo amenazas, como algunos decían, sino verdaderas leyes, que se habían de poner en ejecución a su determinado tiempo; y forzábame a creer esta verdad saber yo los ruines y disparatados intentos que los nuestros tenían, y tales, que me parece que fue inspiración divina la que movió a Su Majestad a poner en efecto tan gallarda resolución, no porque todos fuésemos culpados, que algunos había cristianos firmes y verdaderos; pero eran tan pocos que no se podían oponer a los que no lo eran, y no era bien criar la sierpe en el seno, teniendo los enemigos dentro de casa. Finalmente, con justa razón fuimos castigados con la pena del destierro, blanda y suave al parecer de algunos, pero al nuestro, la más terrible que se nos podía dar. Doquiera que estamos lloramos por España, que, en fin, nacimos en ella y es nuestra patria natural; en ninguna parte hallamos el acogimiento que nuestra desventura desea, y en Berbería, y en todas las partes de África, donde esperábamos ser recibidos, acogidos y regalados, allí es donde más nos ofenden y maltratan. No hemos conocido el bien hasta que le hemos perdido; y es el deseo tan grande, que casi todos tenemos de volver a España, que los más de aquellos, y son muchos, que saben la lengua como yo, se vuelven a ella, y dejan allá sus mujeres y sus hijos desamparados: tanto es el amor que la tienen; y agora conozco y experimento lo que suele decirse: que es dulce el amor de la patria. Salí, como digo, de nuestro pueblo, entré en Francia, y, aunque allí nos hacían buen acogimiento, quise verlo todo. Pasé a Italia y llegué a Alemania, y allí me pareció que se podía vivir con más libertad, porque sus habitantes no miran en muchas delicadezas: cada uno vive como quiere, porque en la mayor parte della se vive con libertad de conciencia. Dejé tomada casa en un pueblo junto a Augusta; juntéme con estos peregrinos, que tienen por costumbre de venir a España muchos dellos, cada año, a visitar los santuarios della, que los tienen por sus Indias, y por certísima granjería y conocida ganancia. Ándanla casi toda, y no hay pueblo ninguno de donde no salgan comidos y bebidos, como suele decirse, y con un real, por lo menos, en dineros, y al cabo de su viaje salen con más de cien escudos de sobra que, trocados en oro, o ya en el hueco de los bordones, o entre los remiendos de las esclavinas, o con la industria que ellos pueden, los sacan del reino y los pasan a sus tierras, a pesar de las guardas de los puestos y puertos donde se registran. Ahora es mi intención, Sancho, sacar el tesoro que dejé enterrado, que por estar fuera del pueblo lo podré hacer sin peligro y escribir o pasar desde Valencia a mi hija y a mi mujer, que sé que está en Argel, y dar traza como traerlas a algún puerto de Francia, y desde allí llevarlas a Alemania, donde esperaremos lo que Dios quisiere hacer de nosotros; que, en resolución, Sancho, yo sé cierto que la Ricota mi hija y Francisca Ricota, mi mujer, son católicas cristianas, y, aunque yo no lo soy tanto, todavía tengo

más de cristiano que de moro, y ruego siempre a Dios me abra los ojos del entendimiento y me dé a conocer cómo le tengo de servir. Y lo que me tiene admirado es no saber por qué se fue mi mujer y mi hija antes a Berbería que a Francia, adonde podía vivir como cristiana.»

A lo que respondió Sancho:

-Mira, Ricote, eso no debió estar en su mano, porque las llevó Juan Tiopieyo, el hermano de tu mujer; y, como debe de ser fino moro, fuese a lo más bien parado, y séte decir otra cosa: que creo que vas en balde a buscar lo que dejaste encerrado; porque tuvimos nuevas que habían quitado a tu cuñado y tu mujer muchas perlas y mucho dinero en oro que llevaban por registrar.

-Bien puede ser eso -replicó Ricote-, pero yo sé, Sancho, que no tocaron a mi encierro, porque yo no les descubrí dónde estaba, temeroso de algún desmán; y así, si tú, Sancho, quieres venir conmigo y ayudarme a sacarlo y a encubrirlo, yo te daré docientos escudos, con que podrás remediar tus necesidades, que ya sabes que sé yo que las tienes muchas.

-Yo lo hiciera -respondió Sancho-, pero no soy nada codicioso; que, a serlo, un oficio dejé yo esta mañana de las manos, donde pudiera hacer las paredes de mi casa de oro, y comer antes de seis meses en platos de plata; y, así por esto como por parecerme haría traición a mi rey en dar favor a sus enemigos, no fuera contigo, si como me prometes docientos escudos, me dieras aquí de contado cuatrocientos.

-Y ¿qué oficio es el que has dejado, Sancho? -preguntó Ricote.

-He dejado de ser gobernador de una ínsula -respondió Sancho-, y tal, que a buena fee que no hallen otra como ella a tres tirones.

-¿Y dónde está esa ínsula? -preguntó Ricote.

-¿Adónde? -respondió Sancho-. Dos leguas de aquí, y se llama la ínsula Barataria.

-Calla, Sancho -dijo Ricote-, que las ínsulas están allá dentro de la mar; que no hay ínsulas en la tierra firme.

-¿Cómo no? -replicó Sancho-. Dígote, Ricote amigo, que esta mañana me partí della, y ayer estuve en ella gobernando a mi placer, como un sagitario; pero, con todo eso, la he dejado, por parecerme oficio peligroso el de los gobernadores.

-Y ¿qué has ganado en el gobierno? -preguntó Ricote.

-He ganado -respondió Sancho- el haber conocido que no soy bueno para gobernar, si no es un hato de ganado, y que las riquezas que se ganan en los tales gobiernos son a costa de perder el descanso y el sueño, y aun el sustento; porque en las ínsulas deben de comer poco los gobernadores, especialmente si tienen médicos que miren por su salud.

-Yo no te entiendo, Sancho -dijo Ricote-, pero paréceme que todo lo que dices es disparate; que, ¿quién te había de dar a ti ínsulas que gobernases? ¿Faltaban hombres en el mundo más hábiles para gobernadores que tú eres? Calla, Sancho, y vuelve en ti, y mira si quieres venir conmigo, como te he dicho, a ayudarme a sacar el tesoro que dejé escondido; que en verdad que es tanto, que se puede llamar tesoro, y te daré con que vivas, como te he dicho.

-Ya te he dicho, Ricote -replicó Sancho-, que no quiero; conténtate que por mí no serás descubierto, y prosigue en buena hora tu camino, y déjame seguir el mío; que yo sé que lo bien ganado se pierde, y lo malo, ello y su dueño.

-No quiero porfiar, Sancho -dijo Ricote-, pero dime: ¿hallástete en nuestro lugar, cuando se partió dél mi mujer, mi hija y mi cuñado?

-Sí hallé -respondió Sancho-, y séte decir que salió tu hija tan hermosa que salieron a verla cuantos había en el pueblo, y todos decían que era la más bella criatura del mundo. Iba llorando y abrazaba a todas sus amigas y conocidas, y a cuantos llegaban a verla, y a todos pedía la encomendasen a Dios y a Nuestra Señora su madre; y esto, con tanto sentimiento, que a mí me hizo llorar, que no suelo ser muy llorón. Y a fee que muchos tuvieron deseo de esconderla y salir a quitársela en el camino; pero el miedo de ir contra el mandado del rey los detuvo. Principalmente se mostró más apasionado don Pedro Gregorio, aquel mancebo mayorazgo rico que tú conoces, que dicen que la quería mucho, y después que ella se partió, nunca más él ha parecido en nuestro lugar, y todos pensamos que iba tras ella para robarla; pero hasta ahora no se ha sabido nada.

-Siempre tuve yo mala sospecha -dijo Ricote- de que ese caballero adamaba a mi hija; pero, fiado en el valor de mi Ricota, nunca me dio pesadumbre el saber que la quería bien; que ya habrás oído decir, Sancho, que las moriscas pocas o ninguna vez se mezclaron por amores con cristianos viejos, y mi hija, que, a lo que yo creo, atendía a ser más cristiana que enamorada, no se curaría de las solicitudes de ese señor mayorazgo.

-Dios lo haga -replicó Sancho-, que a entrambos les estaría mal. Y déjame partir de aquí, Ricote amigo, que quiero llegar esta noche adonde está mi señor don Quijote.

-Dios vaya contigo, Sancho hermano, que ya mis compañeros se rebullen, y también es hora que prosigamos nuestro camino.

Y luego se abrazaron los dos, y Sancho subió en su rucio, y Ricote se arrimó a su bordón, y se apartaron.

## Capítulo LV

*De cosas sucedidas a Sancho en el camino, y otras que no hay más que ver*

EL HABERSE detenido Sancho con Ricote no le dio lugar a que aquel día llegase al castillo del duque, puesto que llegó media legua dél, donde le tomó la noche, algo oscura y cerrada; pero, como era verano, no le dio mucha pesadumbre; y así, se apartó del camino con intención de esperar la mañana; y quiso su corta y desventurada suerte que, buscando lugar donde mejor acomodarse, cayeron él y el rucio en una honda y escurísima sima que entre unos edificios muy antiguos estaba, y al tiempo del caer, se encomendó a Dios de todo corazón, pensando que no había de parar hasta el profundo de los abismos. Y no fue así, porque a poco más de tres estados dio fondo el rucio, y él se halló encima dél, sin haber recibido lisió ni daño alguno.

Tentóse todo el cuerpo, y recogió el aliento, por ver si estaba sano o agujereado por alguna parte; y, viéndose bueno, entero y católico de salud, no se hartaba de dar gracias a Dios Nuestro Señor de la merced que le había hecho, porque sin duda pensó que estaba hecho mil pedazos. Tentó asimismo con las manos por las paredes de la sima, por ver si sería posible salir della sin ayuda de nadie; pero todas las halló rasas y sin asidero alguno, de lo que Sancho se congojó mucho, especialmente cuando oyó que el rucio se quejaba tierna y dolorosamente; y no era mucho, ni se lamentaba de vicio, que, a la verdad, no estaba muy bien parado.

-¡Ay -dijo entonces Sancho Panza-, y cuán no pensados sucesos suelen suceder a cada paso a los que viven en este miserable mundo! ¿Quién dijera que el que ayer se vio entronizado gobernador de una ínsula, mandando a sus sirvientes y a sus vasallos, hoy se había de ver sepultado en una sima, sin haber persona alguna que le remedie, ni criado ni vasallo que acuda a su socorro? Aquí habremos de perecer de hambre yo y mi jumento, si ya no nos morimos antes, él de molido y quebrantado, y yo de pesaroso. A lo menos, no seré yo tan venturoso como lo fue mi señor don Quijote de la Mancha cuando decendió y bajó a la cueva de aquel encantado Montesinos, donde halló quien le regalase mejor que en su casa, que no parece sino que se fue a mesa puesta y a cama hecha. Allí vio él visiones hermosas y apacibles, y yo veré aquí, a lo que creo, sapos y culebras. ¡Desdichado de mí, y en qué han parado mis locuras y fantasías! De aquí sacarán mis huesos, cuando el cielo sea servido que me

descubran, mondos, blancos y raídos, y los de mi buen rucio con ellos, por donde quizá se echará de ver quién somos, a lo menos de los que tuvieren noticia que nunca Sancho Panza se apartó de su asno, ni su asno de Sancho Panza. Otra vez digo: ¡miserables de nosotros, que no ha querido nuestra corta suerte que muriésemos en nuestra patria y entre los nuestros, donde ya que no hallara remedio nuestra desgracia, no faltara quien dello se doliera, y en la hora última de nuestro pasamiento nos cerrara los ojos! ¡Oh compañero y amigo mío, qué mal pago te he dado de tus buenos servicios! Perdóname y pide a la fortuna, en el mejor modo que supieres, que nos saque deste miserable trabajo en que estamos puestos los dos; que yo prometo de ponerte una corona de laurel en la cabeza, que no parezcas sino un laureado poeta, y de darte los piensos doblados.

Desta manera se lamentaba Sancho Panza, y su jumento le escuchaba sin responderle palabra alguna: tal era el aprieto y angustia en que el pobre se hallaba. Finalmente, habiendo pasado toda aquella noche en miserables quejas y lamentaciones, vino el día, con cuya claridad y resplandor vio Sancho que era imposible de toda imposibilidad salir de aquel pozo sin ser ayudado, y comenzó a lamentarse y dar voces, por ver si alguno le oía; pero todas sus voces eran dadas en desierto, pues por todos aquellos contornos no había persona que pudiese escucharle, y entonces se acabó de dar por muerto.

Estaba el rucio boca arriba, y Sancho Panza le acomodó de modo que le puso en pie, que apenas se podía tener; y, sacando de las alforjas, que también habían corrido la misma fortuna de la caída, un pedazo de pan, lo dio a su jumento, que no le supo mal, y díjole Sancho, como si lo entendiera:

-Todos los duelos con pan son buenos.

En esto, descubrió a un lado de la sima un agujero, capaz de caber por él una persona, si se agobiaba y encogía. Acudió a él Sancho Panza, y, agazapándose, se entró por él y vio que por de dentro era espacioso y largo, y púdolo ver, porque por lo que se podía llamar techo entraba un rayo de sol que lo descubría todo. Vio también que se dilataba y alargaba por otra concavidad espaciosa; viendo lo cual, volvió a salir adonde estaba el jumento, y con una piedra comenzó a desmoronar la tierra del agujero, de modo que en poco espacio hizo lugar donde con facilidad pudiese entrar el asno, como lo hizo; y, cogiéndole del cabestro, comenzó a caminar por aquella gruta adelante, por ver si hallaba alguna salida por otra parte. A veces iba a oscuras, y a veces sin luz, pero ninguna vez sin miedo.

-¡Válame Dios todopoderoso! -decía entre sí-. Esta que para mí es desventura, mejor fuera para aventura de mi amo don Quijote. Él sí que tuviera estas profundidades y mazmorras por jardines floridos y por palacios de Galiana, y

esperara salir de esta escuridad y estrechez a algún florido prado; pero yo, sin ventura, falto de consejo y menoscabado de ánimo, a cada paso pienso que debajo de los pies de improviso se ha de abrir otra sima más profunda que la otra, que acabe de tragarme. ¡Bien vengas mal, si vienes solo!

Desta manera y con estos pensamientos le pareció que habría caminado poco más de media legua, al cabo de la cual descubrió una confusa claridad, que pareció ser ya de día, y que por alguna parte entraba, que daba indicio de tener fin abierto aquel, para él, camino de la otra vida.

Aquí le deja Cide Hamete Benengeli, y vuelve a tratar de don Quijote, que, alborozado y contento, esperaba el plazo de la batalla que había de hacer con el robador de la honra de la hija de doña Rodríguez, a quien pensaba enderezar el tuerto y desaguizado que malamente le tenían fecho.

Sucedió, pues, que, saliéndose una mañana a imponerse y ensayarse en lo que había de hacer en el trance en que otro día pensaba verse, dando un repelón o arremetida a Rocinante, llegó a poner los pies tan junto a una cueva, que, a no tirarle fuertemente las riendas, fuera imposible no caer en ella. En fin, le detuvo y no cayó, y, llegándose algo más cerca, sin apearse, miró aquella hondura; y, estándola mirando, oyó grandes voces dentro; y, escuchando atentamente, pudo perceber y entender que el que las daba decía:

-¡Ah de arriba! ¿Hay algún cristiano que me escuche, o algún caballero caritativo que se duela de un pecador enterrado en vida, o un desdichado desgobernado gobernador?

Parecióle a don Quijote que oía la voz de Sancho Panza, de que quedó suspenso y asombrado, y, levantando la voz todo lo que pudo, dijo:

-¿Quién está allá bajo? ¿Quién se queja?

-¿Quién puede estar aquí, o quién se ha de quejar -respondieron-, sino el asendereado de Sancho Panza, gobernador, por sus pecados y por su mala andanza, de la ínsula Baratara, escudero que fue del famoso caballero don Quijote de la Mancha?

Oyendo lo cual don Quijote, se le dobló la admiración y se le acrecentó el pasmo, viniéndosele al pensamiento que Sancho Panza debía de ser muerto, y que estaba allí penando su alma, y llevado desta imaginación dijo:

-Conjúrote por todo aquello que puedo conjurarte como católico cristiano, que me digas quién eres; y si eres alma en pena, dime qué quieres que haga por ti; que, pues es mi profesión favorecer y acorrer a los necesitados deste mundo, también lo seré para acorrer y ayudar a los menesterosos del otro mundo, que no pueden ayudarse por sí propios.

-Desa manera -respondieron-, vuestra merced que me habla debe de ser mi señor don Quijote de la Mancha, y aun en el órgano de la voz no es otro, sin

duda.

-Don Quijote soy -replicó don Quijote-, el que profeso socorrer y ayudar en sus necesidades a los vivos y a los muertos. Por eso dime quién eres, que me tienes atónito; porque si eres mi escudero Sancho Panza, y te has muerto, como no te hayan llevado los diablos, y, por la misericordia de Dios, estés en el purgatorio, sufragios tiene nuestra Santa Madre la Iglesia Católica Romana bastantes a sacarte de las penas en que estás, y yo, que lo solicitaré con ella, por mi parte, con cuanto mi hacienda alcanzare; por eso, acaba de declararte y dime quién eres.

-¡Voto a tal! -respondieron-, y por el nacimiento de quien vuesa merced quisiere, juro, señor don Quijote de la Mancha, que yo soy su escudero Sancho Panza, y que nunca me he muerto en todos los días de mi vida; sino que, habiendo dejado mi gobierno por cosas y causas que es menester más espacio para decirlas, anoche caí en esta sima donde yago, el rucio conmigo, que no me dejará mentir, pues, por más señas, está aquí conmigo.

Y hay más: que no parece sino que el jumento entendió lo que Sancho dijo, porque al momento comenzó a rebuznar, tan recio, que toda la cueva retumbaba.

-¡Famoso testigo! -dijo don Quijote-. El rebuzno conozco como si le pariera, y tu voz oigo, Sancho mío. Espérame; iré al castillo del duque, que está aquí cerca, y traeré quien te saque desta sima, donde tus pecados te deben de haber puesto.

-Vaya vuesa merced -dijo Sancho-, y vuelva presto, por un solo Dios, que ya no lo puedo llevar el estar aquí sepultado en vida, y me estoy muriendo de miedo.

Dejóle don Quijote, y fue al castillo a contar a los duques el suceso de Sancho Panza, de que no poco se maravillaron, aunque bien entendieron que debía de haber caído por la correspondencia de aquella gruta que de tiempos inmemoriales estaba allí hecha; pero no podían pensar cómo había dejado el gobierno sin tener ellos aviso de su venida. Finalmente, como dicen, llevaron sogas y maromas; y, a costa de mucha gente y de mucho trabajo, sacaron al rucio y a Sancho Panza de aquellas tinieblas a la luz del sol. Viole un estudiante, y dijo:

-Desta manera habían de salir de sus gobiernos todos los malos gobernadores, como sale este pecador del profundo del abismo: muerto de hambre, descolorido, y sin blanca, a lo que yo creo.

Oyólo Sancho, y dijo:

-Ocho días o diez ha, hermano murmurador, que entré a gobernar la ínsula que me dieron, en los cuales no me vi harto de pan siquiera un hora; en ellos me han perseguido médicos, y enemigos me han brumado los güesos; ni he tenido lugar de hacer cohechos, ni de cobrar derechos; y, siendo esto así, como lo es, no

merecía yo, a mi parecer, salir de esta manera; pero el hombre pone y Dios dispone, y Dios sabe lo mejor y lo que le está bien a cada uno; y cual el tiempo, tal el tiento; y nadie diga «desta agua no beberé», que adonde se piensa que hay tocinos, no hay estacas; y Dios me entiende, y basta, y no digo más, aunque pudiera.

-No te enojés, Sancho, ni recibas pesadumbre de lo que oyes, que será nunca acabar: ven tú con segura conciencia, y digan lo que dijeren; y es querer atar las lenguas de los maldicientes lo mismo que querer poner puertas al campo. Si el gobernador sale rico de su gobierno, dicen dél que ha sido un ladrón, y si sale pobre, que ha sido un para poco y un mentecato.

-A buen seguro -respondió Sancho- que por esta vez antes me han de tener por tonto que por ladrón.

En estas pláticas llegaron, rodeados de muchachos y de otra mucha gente, al castillo, adonde en unos corredores estaban ya el duque y la duquesa esperando a don Quijote y a Sancho, el cual no quiso subir a ver al duque sin que primero no hubiese acomodado al rucio en la caballeriza, porque decía que había pasado muy mala noche en la posada; y luego subió a ver a sus señores, ante los cuales, puesto de rodillas, dijo:

-Yo, señores, porque lo quiso así vuestra grandeza, sin ningún merecimiento mío, fui a gobernar vuestra ínsula Barataria, en la cual entré desnudo, y desnudo me hallo: ni pierdo, ni gano. Si he gobernado bien o mal, testigos he tenido delante, que dirán lo que quisieren. He declarado dudas, sentenciado pleitos, siempre muerto de hambre, por haberlo querido así el doctor Pedro Recio, natural de Tirteafuera, médico insulano y gobernadoresco. Acometiéronnos enemigos de noche, y, habiéndonos puesto en grande aprieto, dicen los de la ínsula que salieron libres y con vitoria por el valor de mi brazo, que tal salud les dé Dios como ellos dicen verdad. En resolución, en este tiempo yo he tanteado las cargas que trae consigo, y las obligaciones, el gobernar, y he hallado por mi cuenta que no las podrán llevar mis hombros, ni son peso de mis costillas, ni flechas de mi aljaba; y así, antes que diese conmigo al través el gobierno, he querido yo dar con el gobierno al través, y ayer de mañana dejé la ínsula como la hallé: con las mismas calles, casas y tejados que tenía cuando entré en ella. No he pedido prestado a nadie, ni metí dome en granjerías; y, aunque pensaba hacer algunas ordenanzas provechosas, no hice ninguna, temeroso que no se habían de guardar: que es lo mismo hacerlas que no hacerlas. Salí, como digo, de la ínsula sin otro acompañamiento que el de mi rucio; caí en una sima, víneme por ella adelante, hasta que, esta mañana, con la luz del sol, vi la salida, pero no tan fácil que, a no depararme el cielo a mi señor don Quijote, allí me quedara hasta la fin del mundo. Así que, mis señores duque y duquesa, aquí está vuestro gobernador



Sancho Panza, que ha granjeado en solos diez días que ha tenido el gobierno a conocer que no se le ha de dar nada por ser gobernador, no que de una ínsula, sino de todo el mundo; y, con este presupuesto, besando a vuestras mercedes los pies, imitando al juego de los muchachos, que dicen «Salta tú, y dámela tú», doy un salto del gobierno, y me paso al servicio de mi señor don Quijote; que, en fin, en él, aunque como el pan con sobresalto, hártome, a lo menos, y para mí, como yo esté hartó, eso me hace que sea de zanahorias que de perdices.

Con esto dio fin a su larga plática Sancho, temiendo siempre don Quijote que había de decir en ella millares de disparates; y, cuando le vio acabar con tan pocos, dio en su corazón gracias al cielo, y el duque abrazó a Sancho, y le dijo que le pesaba en el alma de que hubiese dejado tan presto el gobierno; pero que él haría de suerte que se le diese en su estado otro oficio de menos carga y de más provecho. Abrazóle la duquesa asimismo, y mandó que le regalasen, porque daba señales de venir mal molido y peor parado.

## Capítulo LVI

*De la descomunal y nunca vista batalla que pasó entre don Quijote de la Mancha y el lacayo Tosilos, en la defensa de la hija de la dueña doña Rodríguez*

NO QUEDARON arrepentidos los duques de la burla hecha a Sancho Panza del gobierno que le dieron; y más, que aquel mismo día vino su mayordomo, y les contó punto por punto, todas casi, las palabras y acciones que Sancho había dicho y hecho en aquellos días, y finalmente les encareció el asalto de la ínsula, y el miedo de Sancho, y su salida, de que no pequeño gusto recibieron.

Después desto, cuenta la historia que se llegó el día de la batalla aplazada, y, habiendo el duque una y muy muchas veces advertido a su lacayo Tosilos cómo se había de avenir con don Quijote para vencerle sin matarle ni herirle, ordenó que se quitasen los hierros a las lanzas, diciendo a don Quijote que no permitía la cristiandad, de que él se preciaba, que aquella batalla fuese con tanto riesgo y peligro de las vidas, y que se contentase con que le daba campo franco en su tierra, puesto que iba contra el decreto del Santo Concilio, que prohíbe los tales desafíos, y no quisiese llevar por todo rigor aquel trance tan fuerte.

Don Quijote dijo que Su Excelencia dispusiese las cosas de aquel negocio como más fuese servido; que él le obedecería en todo. Llegado, pues, el temeroso día, y habiendo mandado el duque que delante de la plaza del castillo se hiciese un espacioso cadahalso, donde estuviesen los jueces del campo y las dueñas, madre y hija, demandantes, había acudido de todos los lugares y aldeas circunvecinas infinita gente, a ver la novedad de aquella batalla; que nunca otra tal no habían visto, ni oído decir en aquella tierra los que vivían ni los que habían muerto.

El primero que entró en el campo y estacada fue el maestro de las ceremonias, que tanteó el campo, y le paseó todo, porque en él no hubiese algún engaño, ni cosa encubierta donde se tropezase y cayese; luego entraron las dueñas y se sentaron en sus asientos, cubiertas con los mantos hasta los ojos y aun hasta los pechos, con muestras de no pequeño sentimiento. Presente don Quijote en la estacada, de allí a poco, acompañado de muchas trompetas, asomó por una parte de la plaza, sobre un poderoso caballo, hundiéndola toda, el grande lacayo Tosilos, calada la visera y todo encambronado, con unas fuertes y lucientes armas. El caballo mostraba ser frisón, ancho y de color tordillo; de cada mano y pie le pendía una arroba de lana.

Venía el valeroso combatiente bien informado del duque su señor de cómo se había de portar con el valeroso don Quijote de la Mancha, advertido que en ninguna manera le matase, sino que procurase huir el primer encuentro por escusar el peligro de su muerte, que estaba cierto si de lleno en lleno le encontrase. Paseó la plaza, y, llegando donde las dueñas estaban, se puso algún tanto a mirar a la que por esposo le pedía. Llamó el maese de campo a don Quijote, que ya se había presentado en la plaza, y junto con Tosilos habló a las dueñas, preguntándoles si consentían que volviese por su derecho don Quijote de la Mancha. Ellas dijeron que sí, y que todo lo que en aquel caso hiciese lo daban por bien hecho, por firme y por valedero.

Ya en este tiempo estaban el duque y la duquesa puestos en una galería que caía sobre la estacada, toda la cual estaba coronada de infinita gente, que esperaba ver el riguroso trance nunca visto. Fue condición de los combatientes que si don Quijote vencía, su contrario se había de casar con la hija de doña Rodríguez; y si él fuese vencido, quedaba libre su contendor de la palabra que se le pedía, sin dar otra satisfacción alguna.

Partióles el maestro de las ceremonias el sol, y puso a los dos cada uno en el puesto donde habían de estar. Sonaron los atambores, llenó el aire el son de las trompetas, temblaba debajo de los pies la tierra; estaban suspensos los corazones de la mirante turba, temiendo unos y esperando otros el bueno o el mal suceso de aquel caso. Finalmente, don Quijote, encomendándose de todo su corazón a Dios Nuestro Señor y a la señora Dulcinea del Toboso, estaba aguardando que se le diese señal precisa de la arremetida; empero, nuestro lacayo tenía diferentes pensamientos: no pensaba él sino en lo que agora diré:

Parece ser que, cuando estuvo mirando a su enemiga, le pareció la más hermosa mujer que había visto en toda su vida, y el niño ceguezuelo, a quien suelen llamar de ordinario Amor por esas calles, no quiso perder la ocasión que se le ofreció de triunfar de una alma lacayuna y ponerla en la lista de sus trofeos; y así, llegándose a él bonitamente, sin que nadie le viese, le envasó al pobre lacayo una flecha de dos varas por el lado izquierdo, y le pasó el corazón de parte a parte; y púdolo hacer bien al seguro, porque el Amor es invisible, y entra y sale por do quiere, sin que nadie le pida cuenta de sus hechos.

Digo, pues, que, cuando dieron la señal de la arremetida, estaba nuestro lacayo transportado, pensando en la hermosura de la que ya había hecho señora de su libertad, y así, no atendió al son de la trompeta, como hizo don Quijote, que, apenas la hubo oído, cuando arremetió, y, a todo el correr que permitía Rocinante, partió contra su enemigo; y, viéndole partir su buen escudero Sancho, dijo a grandes voces:

-¡Dios te guíe, nata y flor de los andantes caballeros! ¡Dios te dé la vitoria,

pues llevas la razón de tu parte!

Y, aunque Tosilos vio venir contra sí a don Quijote, no se movió un paso de su puesto; antes, con grandes voces, llamó al maese de campo, el cual venido a ver lo que quería, le dijo:

-Señor, ¿esta batalla no se hace porque yo me case, o no me case, con aquella señora?

-Así es -le fue respondido.

-Pues yo -dijo el lacayo-soy temeroso de mi conciencia, y pondría en gran cargo si pasase adelante en esta batalla; y así, digo que yo me doy por vencido y que quiero casarme luego con aquella señora.

Quedó admirado el maese de campo de las razones de Tosilos; y, como era uno de los sabidores de la máquina de aquel caso, no le supo responder palabra. Detúvose don Quijote en la mitad de su carrera, viendo que su enemigo no le acometía. El duque no sabía la ocasión porque no se pasaba adelante en la batalla, pero el maese de campo le fue a declarar lo que Tosilos decía, de lo que quedó suspenso y colérico en extremo.

En tanto que esto pasaba, Tosilos se llegó adonde doña Rodríguez estaba, y dijo a grandes voces:

-Yo, señora, quiero casarme con vuestra hija, y no quiero alcanzar por pleitos ni contiendas lo que puedo alcanzar por paz y sin peligro de la muerte.

Oyó esto el valeroso don Quijote, y dijo:

-Pues esto así es, yo quedo libre y suelto de mi promesa: cásenle en hora buena, y, pues Dios Nuestro Señor se la dio, San Pedro se la bendiga.

El duque había bajado a la plaza del castillo, y, llegándose a Tosilos, le dijo:

-¿Es verdad, caballero, que os dais por vencido, y que, instigado de vuestra temerosa conciencia, os queréis casar con esta doncella?

-Sí, señor -respondió Tosilos.

-Él hace muy bien -dijo a esta sazón Sancho Panza-, porque lo que has de dar al mur, dalo al gato, y sacarte ha de cuidado.

Íbase Tosilos desenlazando la celada, y rogaba que apriesa le ayudasen, porque le iban faltando los espíritus del aliento, y no podía verse encerrado tanto tiempo en la estrechez de aquel aposento. Quitáronse apriesa, y quedó descubierto y patente su rostro de lacayo. Viendo lo cual doña Rodríguez y su hija, dando grandes voces, dijeron:

-¡Éste es engaño, engaño es éste! ¡A Tosilos, el lacayo del duque mi señor, nos han puesto en lugar de mi verdadero esposo! ¡Justicia de Dios y del Rey, de tanta malicia, por no decir bellaquería!

-No vos acuitéis, señoras -dijo don Quijote-, que ni ésta es malicia ni es bellaquería; y si la es, y no ha sido la causa el duque, sino los malos

encantadores que me persiguen, los cuales, invidiosos de que yo alcanzase la gloria deste vencimiento, han convertido el rostro de vuestro esposo en el de este que decís que es lacayo del duque. Tomad mi consejo, y, a pesar de la malicia de mis enemigos, casaos con él, que sin duda es el mismo que vos deseáis alcanzar por esposo.

El duque, que esto oyó, estuvo por romper en risa toda su cólera, y dijo:

-Son tan extraordinarias las cosas que suceden al señor don Quijote que estoy por creer que este mi lacayo no lo es; pero usemos deste ardid y maña: dilatemos el casamiento quince días, si quieren, y tengamos encerrado a este personaje que nos tiene dudosos, en los cuales podría ser que volviese a su prístina figura; que no ha de durar tanto el rancor que los encantadores tienen al señor don Quijote, y más, yéndoles tan poco en usar estos embelecocos y transformaciones.

-¡Oh señor! -dijo Sancho-, que ya tienen estos malandrines por uso y costumbre de mudar las cosas, de unas en otras, que tocan a mi amo. Un caballero que venció los días pasados, llamado el de los Espejos, le volvieron en la figura del bachiller Sansón Carrasco, natural de nuestro pueblo y grande amigo nuestro, y a mi señora Dulcinea del Toboso la han vuelto en una rústica labradora; y así, imagino que este lacayo ha de morir y vivir lacayo todos los días de su vida.

A lo que dijo la hija de Rodríguez:

-Séase quien fuere este que me pide por esposa, que yo se lo agradezco; que más quiero ser mujer legítima de un lacayo que no amiga y burlada de un caballero, puesto que el que a mí me burló no lo es.

En resolución, todos estos cuentos y sucesos pararon en que Tosilos se recogiese, hasta ver en qué paraba su transformación; aclamaron todos la vitoria por don Quijote, y los más quedaron tristes y melancólicos de ver que no se habían hecho pedazos los tan esperados combatientes, bien así como los mochachos quedan tristes cuando no sale el ahorcado que esperan, porque le ha perdonado, o la parte, o la justicia. Fuese la gente, volviéronse el duque y don Quijote al castillo, encerraron a Tosilos, quedaron doña Rodríguez y su hija contentísimas de ver que, por una vía o por otra, aquel caso había de parar en casamiento, y Tosilos no esperaba menos.

## Capítulo LVII

*Que trata de cómo don Quijote se despidió del duque, y de lo que le sucedió con la discreta y desenvuelta Altisidora, doncella de la duquesa*

YA LE PARECIÓ a don Quijote que era bien salir de tanta ociosidad como la que en aquel castillo tenía; que se imaginaba ser grande la falta que su persona hacía en dejarse estar encerrado y perezoso entre los infinitos regalos y deleites que como a caballero andante aquellos señores le hacían, y parecíale que había de dar cuenta estrecha al cielo de aquella ociosidad y encerramiento; y así, pidió un día licencia a los duques para partirse. Diéronsele, con muestras de que en gran manera les pesaba de que los dejase. Dio la duquesa las cartas de su mujer a Sancho Panza, el cual lloró con ellas, y dijo: -¿Quién pensara que esperanzas tan grandes como las que en el pecho de mi mujer Teresa Panza engendraron las nuevas de mi gobierno habían de parar en volverme yo agora a las arrastradas aventuras de mi amo don Quijote de la Mancha? Con todo esto, me contento de ver que mi Teresa correspondió a ser quien es, enviando las bellotas a la duquesa; que, a no habérselas enviado, quedando yo pesaroso, se mostrara ella desagradecida. Lo que me consuela es que esta dádiva no se le puede dar nombre de cohecho, porque ya tenía yo el gobierno cuando ella las envió, y está puesto en razón que los que reciben algún beneficio, aunque sea con niñerías, se muestren agradecidos. En efecto, yo entré desnudo en el gobierno y salgo desnudo dél; y así, podré decir con segura conciencia, que no es poco: «Desnudo nací, desnudo me hallo: ni pierdo ni gano».

Esto pasaba entre sí Sancho el día de la partida; y, saliendo don Quijote, habiéndose despedido la noche antes de los duques, una mañana se presentó armado en la plaza del castillo. Mirábanle de los corredores toda la gente del castillo, y asimismo los duques salieron a verle. Estaba Sancho sobre su rucio, con sus alforjas, maleta y repuesto, contentísimo, porque el mayordomo del duque, el que fue la Trifaldi, le había dado un bolsico con docientos escudos de oro, para suplir los menesteres del camino, y esto aún no lo sabía don Quijote.

Estando, como queda dicho, mirándole todos, a deshora, entre las otras dueñas y doncellas de la duquesa, que le miraban, alzó la voz la desenvuelta y discreta Altisidora, y en son lastimero dijo: -Escucha, mal caballero; detén un poco las riendas; no fatigues las ijadas de tu mal regida bestia.

Mira, falso, que no huyas 5  
de alguna serpiente fiera, sino de una corderilla que está muy lejos de oveja.  
Tú has burlado, monstruo horrendo, la más hermosa doncella 10  
que Dïana vio en sus montes, que Venus miró en sus selvas.  
*Cruel Vireno, fugitivo Eneas,*  
*Barrabás te acompañe; allá te avengas.*

Tú llevas, ¡llevar impío!, 15  
en las garras de tus cerras las entrañas de una humilde, como enamorada,  
tierna.

Llévaste tres tocadores, y unas ligas, de unas piernas 20  
que al mármol puro se igualan en lisas, blancas y negras.  
Llévaste dos mil suspiros, que, a ser de fuego, pudieran abrasar a dos mil  
Troyas, 25  
si dos mil Troyas hubiera.  
*Cruel Vireno, fugitivo Eneas,*  
*Barrabás te acompañe; allá te avengas.*

De ese Sancho, tu escudero, las entrañas sean tan tercas 30  
y tan duras, que no salga de su encanto Dulcinea.  
De la culpa que tú tienes lleve la triste la pena; que justos por pecadores 35  
tal vez pagan en mi tierra.  
Tus más finas aventuras en desventuras se vuelvan, en sueños tus  
pasatiempos, en olvidos tus firmezas. 40  
*Cruel Vireno, fugitivo Eneas,*  
*Barrabás te acompañe; allá te avengas.*

Seas tenido por falso desde Sevilla a Marchena, desde Granada hasta Loja, 45  
de Londres a Inglaterra.  
Si jugares al reinado, los cientos, o la primera, los reyes huyan de ti; ases ni  
sietes no veas. 50

Si te cortares los callos, sangre las heridas viertan, y quédente los raigones si  
te sacares las muelas.  
*Cruel Vireno, fugitivo Eneas,* 55  
*Barrabás te acompañe; allá te avengas.*

En tanto que, de la suerte que se ha dicho, se quejaba la lastimada Altisidora,

la estuvo mirando don Quijote, y, sin responderla palabra, volviendo el rostro a Sancho, le dijo: -Por el siglo de tus pasados, Sancho mío, te conjuro que me digas una verdad. Dime, ¿llevas por ventura los tres tocadores y las ligas que esta enamorada doncella dice?

A lo que Sancho respondió: -Los tres tocadores sí llevo; pero las ligas, como por los cerros de Úbeda.

Quedó la duquesa admirada de la desenvoltura de Altisidora, que, aunque la tenía por atrevida, graciosa y desenvuelta, no en grado que se atreviera a semejantes desenvolturas; y, como no estaba advertida desta burla, creció más su admiración. El duque quiso reforzar el donaire, y dijo: -No me parece bien, señor caballero, que, habiendo recibido en este mi castillo el buen acogimiento que en él se os ha hecho, os hayáis atrevido a llevaros tres tocadores, por lo menos, si por lo más las ligas de mi doncella; indicios son de mal pecho y muestras que no corresponden a vuestra fama. Volvedle las ligas; si no, yo os desafío a mortal batalla, sin tener temor que malandrines encantadores me vuelvan ni muden el rostro, como han hecho en el de Tosilos mi lacayo, el que entró con vos en batalla.

-No quiera Dios -respondió don Quijote-que yo desenvaine mi espada contra vuestra ilustrísima persona, de quien tantas mercedes he recibido; los tocadores volveré, porque dice Sancho que los tiene; las ligas es imposible, porque ni yo las he recibido ni él tampoco; y si esta vuestra doncella quisiere mirar sus escondrijos, a buen seguro que las halle. Yo, señor duque, jamás he sido ladrón, ni lo pienso ser en toda mi vida, como Dios no me deje de su mano. Esta doncella habla, como ella dice, como enamorada, de lo que yo no le tengo culpa; y así, no tengo de qué pedirle perdón ni a ella ni a Vuestra Excelencia, a quien suplico me tenga en mejor opinión, y me dé de nuevo licencia para seguir mi camino.

-Déosle Dios tan bueno -dijo la duquesa-, señor don Quijote, que siempre oigamos buenas nuevas de vuestras fechorías. Y andad con Dios; que, mientras más os detenéis, más aumentáis el fuego en los pechos de las doncellas que os miran; y a la mía yo la castigaré de modo, que de aquí adelante no se desmande con la vista ni con las palabras.

-Una no más quiero que me escuches, ¡oh valeroso don Quijote! -dijo entonces Altisidora-; y es que te pido perdón del latrocinio de las ligas, porque, en Dios y en mi ánima que las tengo puestas, y he caído en el descuido del que yendo sobre el asno, le buscaba.

-¿No lo dije yo? -dijo Sancho-. ¡Bonico soy yo para encubrir hurtos! Pues, a quererlos hacer, de paleta me había venido la ocasión en mi gobierno.

Abajó la cabeza don Quijote y hizo reverencia a los duques y a todos los



circunstantes, y, volviendo las riendas a Rocinante, siguiéndole Sancho sobre el rucio, se salió del castillo, enderezando su camino a Zaragoza.

## Capítulo LVIII

*Que trata de cómo menudearon sobre don Quijote aventuras tantas, que no se daban vagar unas a otras*

CUANDO don Quijote se vio en la campaña rasa, libre y desembarazado de los requiebros de Altisidora, le pareció que estaba en su centro, y que los espíritus se le renovaban para proseguir de nuevo el asunto de sus caballerías, y, volviéndose a Sancho, le dijo:

-La libertad, Sancho, es uno de los más preciosos dones que a los hombres dieron los cielos; con ella no pueden igualarse los tesoros que encierra la tierra ni el mar encubre; por la libertad, así como por la honra, se puede y debe aventurar la vida, y, por el contrario, el cautiverio es el mayor mal que puede venir a los hombres. Digo esto, Sancho, porque bien has visto el regalo, la abundancia que en este castillo que dejamos hemos tenido; pues en mitad de aquellos banquetes sazonados y de aquellas bebidas de nieve, me parecía a mí que estaba metido entre las estrechezas de la hambre, porque no lo gozaba con la libertad que lo gozara si fueran míos; que las obligaciones de las recompensas de los beneficios y mercedes recibidas son ataduras que no dejan campear al ánimo libre. ¡Venturoso aquél a quien el cielo dio un pedazo de pan, sin que le quede obligación de agradecerlo a otro que al mismo cielo!

-Con todo eso -dijo Sancho- que vuesa merced me ha dicho, no es bien que se quede sin agradecimiento de nuestra parte docientos escudos de oro que en una bolsilla me dio el mayordomo del duque, que como píctima y confortativo la llevo puesta sobre el corazón, para lo que se ofreciere; que no siempre hemos de hallar castillos donde nos regalen, que tal vez toparemos con algunas ventas donde nos apaleen.

En estos y otros razonamientos iban los andantes, caballero y escudero, cuando vieron, habiendo andado poco más de una legua, que encima de la yerba de un pradillo verde, encima de sus capas, estaban comiendo hasta una docena de hombres, vestidos de labradores. Junto a sí tenían unas como sábanas blancas, con que cubrían alguna cosa que debajo estaba; estaban empinadas y tendidas, y de trecho a trecho puestas. Llegó don Quijote a los que comían, y, saludándolos primero cortésmente, les preguntó que qué era lo que aquellos lienzos cubrían. Uno dellos le respondió:

-Señor, debajo destos lienzos están unas imágenes de relieve y entabladura que

han de servir en un retablo que hacemos en nuestra aldea; llevámoslas cubiertas, porque no se desfloren, y en hombros, porque no se quiebren.

-Si sois servidos -respondió don Quijote-, holgaría de verlas, pues imágenes que con tanto recato se llevan, sin duda deben de ser buenas.

-Y ¡cómo si lo son! -dijo otro-. Si no, dígalo lo que cuesta: que en verdad que no hay ninguna que no esté en más de cincuenta ducados; y, porque vea vuestra merced esta verdad, espere vuestra merced, y verla ha por vista de ojos.

Y, levantándose, dejó de comer y fue a quitar la cubierta de la primera imagen, que mostró ser la de San Jorge puesto a caballo, con una serpiente enroscada a los pies y la lanza atravesada por la boca, con la fiereza que suele pintarse. Toda la imagen parecía una ascua de oro, como suele decirse. Viéndola don Quijote, dijo:

-Este caballero fue uno de los mejores andantes que tuvo la milicia divina: llamóse don San Jorge, y fue además defensor de doncellas. Veamos esta otra.

Descubrióla el hombre, y pareció ser la de San Martín puesto a caballo, que partía la capa con el pobre; y, apenas la hubo visto don Quijote, cuando dijo:

-Este caballero también fue de los aventureros cristianos, y creo que fue más liberal que valiente, como lo puedes echar de ver, Sancho, en que está partiendo la capa con el pobre y le da la mitad; y sin duda debía de ser entonces invierno, que, si no, él se la diera toda, según era de caritativo.

-No debió de ser eso -dijo Sancho-, sino que se debió de atener al refrán que dicen: que para dar y tener, seso es menester.

Rióse don Quijote y pidió que quitasen otro lienzo, debajo del cual se descubrió la imagen del Patrón de las Españas a caballo, la espada ensangrentada, atropellando moros y pisando cabezas; y, en viéndola, dijo don Quijote:

-Éste sí que es caballero, y de las escuadras de Cristo; éste se llama don San Diego Matamoros, uno de los más valientes santos y caballeros que tuvo el mundo y tiene agora el cielo.

Luego descubrieron otro lienzo, y pareció que encubría la caída de San Pablo del caballo abajo, con todas las circunstancias que en el retablo de su conversión suelen pintarse. Cuando le vido tan al vivo, que dijeran que Cristo le hablaba y Pablo respondía.

-Éste -dijo don Quijote- fue el mayor enemigo que tuvo la Iglesia de Dios Nuestro Señor en su tiempo, y el mayor defensor suyo que tendrá jamás: caballero andante por la vida, y santo a pie quedo por la muerte, trabajador incansable en la viña del Señor, doctor de las gentes, a quien sirvieron de escuelas los cielos y de catedrático y maestro que le enseñase el mismo Jesucristo.

No había más imágenes, y así, mandó don Quijote que las volviesen a cubrir, y dijo a los que las llevaban:

-Por buen agüero he tenido, hermanos, haber visto lo que he visto, porque estos santos y caballeros profesaron lo que yo profeso, que es el ejercicio de las armas; sino que la diferencia que hay entre mí y ellos es que ellos fueron santos y pelearon a lo divino, y yo soy pecador y peleo a lo humano. Ellos conquistaron el cielo a fuerza de brazos, porque el cielo padece fuerza, y yo hasta agora no sé lo que conquisto a fuerza de mis trabajos; pero si mi Dulcinea del Toboso saliese de los que padece, mejorándose mi ventura y adobándoseme el juicio, podría ser que encaminase mis pasos por mejor camino del que llevo.

-Dios lo oiga y el pecado sea sordo -dijo Sancho a esta ocasión.

Admiráronse los hombres, así de la figura como de las razones de don Quijote, sin entender la mitad de lo que en ellas decir quería. Acabaron de comer, cargaron con sus imágenes, y, despidiéndose de don Quijote, siguieron su viaje.

Quedó Sancho de nuevo como si jamás hubiera conocido a su señor, admirado de lo que sabía, pareciéndole que no debía de haber historia en el mundo ni suceso que no lo tuviese cifrado en la uña y clavado en la memoria, y díjole:

-En verdad, señor nuestramo, que si esto que nos ha sucedido hoy se puede llamar aventura, ella ha sido de las más suaves y dulces que en todo el discurso de nuestra peregrinación nos ha sucedido: della habemos salido sin palos y sobresalto alguno, ni hemos echado mano a las espadas, ni hemos batido la tierra con los cuerpos, ni quedamos hambrientos. Bendito sea Dios, que tal me ha dejado ver con mis propios ojos.

-Tú dices bien, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, pero has de advertir que no todos los tiempos son unos, ni corren de una misma suerte, y esto que el vulgo suele llamar comúnmente agüeros, que no se fundan sobre natural razón alguna, del que es discreto han de ser tenidos y juzgar por buenos acontecimientos. Levántase uno destos agoreros por la mañana, sale de su casa, encuéntrase con un fraile de la orden del bienaventurado San Francisco, y, como si hubiera encontrado con un grifo, vuelve las espaldas y vuélvese a su casa. Derrámasele al otro Mendoza la sal encima de la mesa, y derrámasele a él la melancolía por el corazón, como si estuviese obligada la naturaleza a dar señales de las venideras desgracias con cosas tan de poco momento como las referidas. El discreto y cristiano no ha de andar en puntillos con lo que quiere hacer el cielo. Llega Cipión a África, tropieza en saltando en tierra, tiénenlo por mal agüero sus soldados; pero él, abrazándose con el suelo, dijo: «No te me podrás huir, África, porque te tengo asida y entre mis brazos». Así que, Sancho, el haber encontrado con estas imágenes ha sido para mí felicísimo acontecimiento.

-Yo así lo creo -respondió Sancho-, y querría que vuestra merced me dijese qué es la causa por que dicen los españoles cuando quieren dar alguna batalla, invocando aquel San Diego Matamoros: «¡Santiago, y cierra, España!» ¿Está por ventura España abierta, y de modo que es menester cerrarla, o qué ceremonia es ésta?

-Simplicísimo eres, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-; y mira que este gran caballero de la cruz bermeja háselo dado Dios a España por patrón y amparo suyo, especialmente en los rigurosos trances que con los moros los españoles han tenido; y así, le invocan y llaman como a defensor suyo en todas las batallas que acometen, y muchas veces le han visto visiblemente en ellas, derribando, atropellando, destruyendo y matando los agarenos escuadrones; y desta verdad te pudiera traer muchos ejemplos que en las verdaderas historias españolas se cuentan.

Mudó Sancho plática, y dijo a su amo:

-Maravillado estoy, señor, de la desenvoltura de Altisidora, la doncella de la duquesa: bravamente la debe de tener herida y traspasada aquel que llaman Amor, que dicen que es un rapaz ceguezuelo que, con estar lagañoso, o, por mejor decir, sin vista, si toma por blanco un corazón, por pequeño que sea, le acierta y traspasa de parte a parte con sus flechas. He oído decir también que en la vergüenza y recato de las doncellas se despuntan y embotan las amorosas saetas, pero en esta Altisidora más parece que se aguzan que despuntan.

-Advierte, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, que el amor ni mira respetos ni guarda términos de razón en sus discursos, y tiene la misma condición que la muerte: que así acomete los altos alcázares de los reyes como las humildes chozas de los pastores, y cuando toma entera posesión de una alma, lo primero que hace es quitarle el temor y la vergüenza; y así, sin ella declaró Altisidora sus deseos, que engendraron en mi pecho antes confusión que lástima.

-¡Crueldad notoria! -dijo Sancho-. ¡Desagradecimiento inaudito! Yo de mí sé decir que me rindiera y avasallara la más mínima razón amorosa suya. ¡Hideputa, y qué corazón de mármol, qué entrañas de bronce y qué alma de argamasa! Pero no puedo pensar qué es lo que vio esta doncella en vuestra merced que así la rindiese y avasallase: qué gala, qué brío, qué donaire, qué rostro, que cada cosa por sí destas, o todas juntas, le enamoraron; que en verdad en verdad que muchas veces me paro a mirar a vuestra merced desde la punta del pie hasta el último cabello de la cabeza, y que veo más cosas para espantar que para enamorar; y, habiendo yo también oído decir que la hermosura es la primera y principal parte que enamora, no teniendo vuestra merced ninguna, no sé yo de qué se enamoró la pobre.

-Advierte, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, que hay dos maneras de

hermosura: una del alma y otra del cuerpo; la del alma campea y se muestra en el entendimiento, en la honestidad, en el buen proceder, en la liberalidad y en la buena crianza, y todas estas partes caben y pueden estar en un hombre feo; y cuando se pone la mira en esta hermosura, y no en la del cuerpo, suele nacer el amor con ímpetu y con ventajas. Yo, Sancho, bien veo que no soy hermoso, pero también conozco que no soy disforme; y bástale a un hombre de bien no ser monstruo para ser bien querido, como tenga los dotes del alma que te he dicho.

En estas razones y pláticas se iban entrando por una selva que fuera del camino estaba, y a deshora, sin pensar en ello, se halló don Quijote enredado entre unas redes de hilo verde, que desde unos árboles a otros estaban tendidas; y, sin poder imaginar qué pudiese ser aquello, dijo a Sancho:

-Paréceme, Sancho, que esto destas redes debe de ser una de las más nuevas aventuras que pueda imaginar. Que me maten si los encantadores que me persiguen no quieren enredarme en ellas y detener mi camino, como en venganza de la riguridad que con Altisidora he tenido. Pues mándoles yo que, aunque estas redes, si como son hechas de hilo verde fueran de durísimos diamantes, o más fuertes que aquélla con que el celoso dios de los herreros enredó a Venus y a Marte, así la rompiera como si fuera de juncos marinos o de hilachas de algodón.

Y, queriendo pasar adelante y romperlo todo, al improviso se le ofrecieron delante, saliendo de entre unos árboles, dos hermosísimas pastoras; a lo menos, vestidas como pastoras, sino que los pellicos y sayas eran de fino brocado, digo, que las sayas eran riquísimos faldellines de tabí de oro. Traían los cabellos sueltos por las espaldas, que en rubios podían competir con los rayos del mismo sol; los cuales se coronaban con dos guirnaldas de verde laurel y de rojo amaranto tejidas. La edad, al parecer, ni bajaba de los quince ni pasaba de los diez y ocho.

Vista fue ésta que admiró a Sancho, suspendió a don Quijote, hizo parar al sol en su carrera para verlas, y tuvo en maravilloso silencio a todos cuatro. En fin, quien primero habló fue una de las dos zagalas, que dijo a don Quijote:

-Detened, señor caballero, el paso, y no rompáis las redes, que no para daño vuestro, sino para nuestro pasatiempo, ahí están tendidas; y, porque sé que nos habéis de preguntar para qué se han puesto y quién somos, os lo quiero decir en breves palabras. En una aldea que está hasta dos leguas de aquí, donde hay mucha gente principal y muchos hidalgos y ricos, entre muchos amigos y parientes se concertó que con sus hijos, mujeres y hijas, vecinos, amigos y parientes, nos viniésemos a holgar a este sitio, que es uno de los más agradables de todos estos contornos, formando entre todos una nueva y pastoril Arcadia, vistiéndonos las doncellas de zagalas y los mancebos de pastores. Traemos

estudiadas dos églogas, una del famoso poeta Garcilaso, y otra del excelentísimo Camoes, en su misma lengua portuguesa, las cuales hasta agora no hemos representado. Ayer fue el primero día que aquí llegamos; tenemos entre estos ramos plantadas algunas tiendas, que dicen se llaman de campaña, en el margen de un abundoso arroyo que todos estos prados fertiliza; tendimos la noche pasada estas redes de estos árboles para engañar los simples pajarillos, que, ojeados con nuestro ruido, vinieren a dar en ellas. Si gustáis, señor, de ser nuestro huésped, seréis agasajado liberal y cortésmente; porque por agora en este sitio no ha de entrar la pesadumbre ni la melancolía.

Calló y no dijo más. A lo que respondió don Quijote:

-Por cierto, hermosísima señora, que no debió de quedar más suspenso ni admirado Anteón cuando vio al improviso bañarse en las aguas a Diana, como yo he quedado atónito en ver vuestra belleza. Alabo el asunto de vuestros entretenimientos, y el de vuestros ofrecimientos agradezco; y, si os puedo servir, con seguridad de ser obedecidas me lo podéis mandar; porque no es ésta la profesión mía, sino de mostrarme agradecido y bienhechor con todo género de gente, en especial con la principal que vuestras personas representa; y, si como estas redes, que deben de ocupar algún pequeño espacio, ocuparan toda la redondez de la tierra, buscara yo nuevos mundos por do pasar sin romperlas; y porque deis algún crédito a esta mi exageración, ved que os lo promete, por lo menos, don Quijote de la Mancha, si es que ha llegado a vuestros oídos este nombre.

-¡Ay, amiga de mi alma -dijo entonces la otra zagala-, y qué ventura tan grande nos ha sucedido! ¿Ves este señor que tenemos delante? Pues hágote saber que es el más valiente, y el más enamorado, y el más comedido que tiene el mundo, si no es que nos miente y nos engaña una historia que de sus hazañas anda impresa y yo he leído. Yo apostaré que este buen hombre que viene consigo es un tal Sancho Panza, su escudero, a cuyas gracias no hay ningunas que se le igualen.

-Así es la verdad -dijo Sancho-: que yo soy ese gracioso y ese escudero que vuestra merced dice, y este señor es mi amo, el mismo don Quijote de la Mancha historiado y referido.

-¡Ay! -dijo la otra-. Supliquémosle, amiga, que se quede; que nuestros padres y nuestros hermanos gustarán infinito dello, que también he oído yo decir de su valor y de sus gracias lo mismo que tú me has dicho, y, sobre todo, dicen dél que es el más firme y más leal enamorado que se sabe, y que su dama es una tal Dulcinea del Toboso, a quien en toda España la dan la palma de la hermosura.

-Con razón se la dan -dijo don Quijote-, si ya no lo pone en duda vuestra sin igual belleza. No os canséis, señoras, en detenerme, porque las precisas

obligaciones de mi profesión no me dejan reposar en ningún cabo.

Llegó, en esto, adonde los cuatro estaban un hermano de una de las dos pastoras, vestido asimismo de pastor, con la riqueza y galas que a las de las zagalas correspondía; contáronle ellas que el que con ellas estaba era el valeroso don Quijote de la Mancha, y el otro, su escudero Sancho, de quien tenía él ya noticia, por haber leído su historia. Ofreciósele el gallardo pastor, pidióle que se viniese con él a sus tiendas; húbolo de conceder don Quijote, y así lo hizo.

Llegó, en esto, el ojeo, llenáronse las redes de pajarillos diferentes que, engañados de la color de las redes, caían en el peligro de que iban huyendo. Juntáronse en aquel sitio más de treinta personas, todas bizarramente de pastores y pastoras vestidas, y en un instante quedaron enteradas de quiénes eran don Quijote y su escudero, de que no poco contento recibieron, porque ya tenían dél noticia por su historia. Acudieron a las tiendas, hallaron las mesas puestas, ricas, abundantes y limpias; honraron a don Quijote dándole el primer lugar en ellas; mirábanle todos, y admirábanse de verle.

Finalmente, alzados los manteles, con gran reposo alzó don Quijote la voz, y dijo:

-Entre los pecados mayores que los hombres cometen, aunque algunos dicen que es la soberbia, yo digo que es el desagradecimiento, ateniéndome a lo que suele decirse: que de los desagradecidos está lleno el infierno. Este pecado, en cuanto me ha sido posible, he procurado yo huir desde el instante que tuve uso de razón; y si no puedo pagar las buenas obras que me hacen con otras obras, pongo en su lugar los deseos de hacerlas, y cuando éstos no bastan, las publico; porque quien dice y publica las buenas obras que recibe, también las recompensara con otras, si pudiera; porque, por la mayor parte, los que reciben son inferiores a los que dan; y así, es Dios sobre todos, porque es dador sobre todos y no pueden corresponder las dádivas del hombre a las de Dios con igualdad, por infinita distancia; y esta estrechez y cortedad, en cierto modo, la suple el agradecimiento. Yo, pues, agradecido a la merced que aquí se me ha hecho, no pudiendo corresponder a la misma medida, conteniéndome en los estrechos límites de mi poderío, ofrezco lo que puedo y lo que tengo de mi cosecha; y así, digo que sustentaré dos días naturales en mitad de ese camino real que va a Zaragoza, que estas señoras zagalas contrahechas que aquí están son las más hermosas doncellas y más corteses que hay en el mundo, excetado sólo a la sin par Dulcinea del Toboso, única señora de mis pensamientos, con paz sea dicho de cuantos y cuantas me escuchan.

Oyendo lo cual, Sancho, que con grande atención le había estado escuchando, dando una gran voz, dijo:



-¿Es posible que haya en el mundo personas que se atrevan a decir y a jurar que este mi señor es loco? Digan vuestras mercedes, señores pastores: ¿hay cura de aldea, por discreto y por estudiante que sea, que pueda decir lo que mi amo ha dicho, ni hay caballero andante, por más fama que tenga de valiente, que pueda ofrecer lo que mi amo aquí ha ofrecido?

Volvióse don Quijote a Sancho, y, encendido el rostro y colérico, le dijo:

-¿Es posible, ¡oh Sancho!, que haya en todo el orbe alguna persona que diga que no eres tonto, aforrado de lo mismo, con no sé qué ribetes de malicioso y de bellaco? ¿Quién te mete a ti en mis cosas, y en averiguar si soy discreto o majadero? Calla y no me repliques, sino ensilla, si está desensillado Rocinante: vamos a poner en efecto mi ofrecimiento, que, con la razón que va de mi parte, puedes dar por vencidos a todos cuantos quisieren contradecirla.

Y, con gran furia y muestras de enojo, se levantó de la silla, dejando admirados a los circunstantes, haciéndoles dudar si le podían tener por loco o por cuerdo. Finalmente, habiéndole persuadido que no se pusiese en tal demanda, que ellos daban por bien conocida su agradecida voluntad y que no eran menester nuevas demostraciones para conocer su ánimo valeroso, pues bastaban las que en la historia de sus hechos se referían, con todo esto, salió don Quijote con su intención; y, puesto sobre Rocinante, abrazando su escudo y tomando su lanza, se puso en la mitad de un real camino que no lejos del verde prado estaba. Siguióle Sancho sobre su rucio, con toda la gente del pastoral rebaño, deseosos de ver en qué paraba su arrogante y nunca visto ofrecimiento.

Puesto, pues, don Quijote en mitad del camino -como os he dicho-, hirió el aire con semejantes palabras:

-¡Oh vosotros, pasajeros y viandantes, caballeros, escuderos, gente de a pie y de a caballo que por este camino pasáis, o habéis de pasar en estos dos días siguientes! Sabed que don Quijote de la Mancha, caballero andante, está aquí puesto para defender que a todas las hermosuras y cortesías del mundo exceden las que se encierran en las ninfas habitadoras destos prados y bosques, dejando a un lado a la señora de mi alma Dulcinea del Toboso. Por eso, el que fuere de parecer contrario, acuda, que aquí le espero.

Dos veces repitió estas mismas razones, y dos veces no fueron oídas de ningún aventurero; pero la suerte, que sus cosas iba encaminando de mejor en mejor, ordenó que de allí a poco se descubriese por el camino muchedumbre de hombres de a caballo, y muchos dellos con lanzas en las manos, caminando todos apiñados, de tropel y a gran priesa. No los hubieron bien visto los que con don Quijote estaban, cuando, volviendo las espaldas, se apartaron bien lejos del camino, porque conocieron que si esperaban les podía suceder algún peligro; sólo don Quijote, con intrépido corazón, se estuvo quedo, y Sancho Panza se

escudó con las ancas de Rocinante.

Llegó el tropel de los lanceros, y uno dellos, que venía más delante, a grandes voces comenzó a decir a don Quijote:

-¡Apártate, hombre del diablo, del camino, que te harán pedazos estos toros!

-¡Ea, canalla -respondió don Quijote-, para mí no hay toros que valgan, aunque sean de los más bravos que cría Jarama en sus riberas! Confesad, malandrines, así a carga cerrada, que es verdad lo que yo aquí he publicado; si no, conmigo sois en batalla.

No tuvo lugar de responder el vaquero, ni don Quijote le tuvo de desviarse, aunque quisiera; y así, el tropel de los toros bravos y el de los mansos cabestros, con la multitud de los vaqueros y otras gentes que a encerrar los llevaban a un lugar donde otro día habían de correrse, pasaron sobre don Quijote, y sobre Sancho, Rocinante y el rucio, dando con todos ellos en tierra, echándole a rodar por el suelo. Quedó molido Sancho, espantado don Quijote, aporreado el rucio y no muy católico Rocinante; pero, en fin, se levantaron todos, y don Quijote, a gran prisa, tropezando aquí y cayendo allí, comenzó a correr tras la vacada, diciendo a voces:

-¡Deteneos y esperad, canalla malandrina, que un solo caballero os espera, el cual no tiene condición ni es de parecer de los que dicen que al enemigo que huye, hacerle la puente de plata!

Pero no por eso se detuvieron los apresurados corredores, ni hicieron más caso de sus amenazas que de las nubes de antaño. Detúvole el cansancio a don Quijote, y, más enojado que vengado, se sentó en el camino, esperando a que Sancho, Rocinante y el rucio llegasen. Llegaron, volvieron a subir amo y mozo, y, sin volver a despedirse de la Arcadia fingida o contrahecha, y con más vergüenza que gusto, siguieron su camino.

## Capítulo LIX

*Donde se cuenta del extraordinario suceso, que se puede tener por aventura,  
que le sucedió a don Quijote*

AL POLVO y al cansancio que don Quijote y Sancho sacaron del descomedimiento de los toros, socorrió una fuente clara y limpia que entre una fresca arboleda hallaron, en el margen de la cual, dejando libres, sin jáquima y freno, al rucio y a Rocinante, los dos asendereados amo y mozo se sentaron. Acudió Sancho a la repostería de su alforjas, y dellas sacó de lo que él solía llamar condumio; enjuagóse la boca, lavóse don Quijote el rostro, con cuyo refrigerio cobraron aliento los espíritus desalentados. No comía don Quijote, de puro pesaroso, ni Sancho no osaba tocar a los manjares que delante tenía, de puro comedido, y esperaba a que su señor hiciese la salva; pero, viendo que, llevado de sus imaginaciones, no se acordaba de llevar el pan a la boca, no abrió la suya, y, atropellando por todo género de crianza, comenzó a embaular en el estómago el pan y queso que se le ofrecía.

-Come, Sancho amigo -dijo don Quijote-, sustenta la vida, que más que a mí te importa, y déjame morir a mí a manos de mis pensamientos y a fuerzas de mis desgracias. Yo, Sancho, nací para vivir muriendo, y tú para morir comiendo; y, porque veas que te digo verdad en esto, considérame impreso en historias, famoso en las armas, comedido en mis acciones, respetado de príncipes, solicitado de doncellas; al cabo al cabo, cuando esperaba palmas, triunfos y coronas, granjeadas y merecidas por mis valerosas hazañas, me he visto esta mañana pisado y acoceado y molido de los pies de animales inmundos y soeces. Esta consideración me embota los dientes, entorpece las muelas, y entomece las manos, y quita de todo en todo la gana del comer, de manera que pienso dejarme morir de hambre: muerte la más cruel de las muertes.

-Desa manera -dijo Sancho, sin dejar de mascar apriesa-no aprobará vuestra merced aquel refrán que dicen: «muera Marta, y muera harta». Yo, a lo menos, no pienso matarme a mí mismo; antes pienso hacer como el zapatero, que tira el cuero con los dientes hasta que le hace llegar donde él quiere; yo tiraré mi vida comiendo hasta que llegue al fin que le tiene determinado el cielo; y sepa, señor, que no hay mayor locura que la que toca en querer desesperarse como vuestra merced, y créame, y después de comido, échese a dormir un poco sobre los colchones verdes destas yerbas, y verá como cuando despierte se halla algo más

aliviado.

Hízolo así don Quijote, pareciéndole que las razones de Sancho más eran de filósofo que de mentecato, y díjole:

-Si tú, ¡oh Sancho!, quisieses hacer por mí lo que yo ahora te diré, serían mis alivios más ciertos y mis pesadumbres no tan grandes; y es que, mientras yo duermo, obedeciendo tus consejos, tú te desviases un poco lejos de aquí, y con las riendas de Rocinante, echando al aire tus carnes, te dieses trecientos o cuatrocientos azotes a buena cuenta de los tres mil y tantos que te has de dar por el desencanto de Dulcinea; que es lástima no pequeña que aquella pobre señora esté encantada por tu descuido y negligencia.

-Hay mucho que decir en eso -dijo Sancho-. Durmamos, por ahora, entrambos, y después, Dios dijo lo que será. Sepa vuestra merced que esto de azotarse un hombre a sangre fría es cosa recia, y más si caen los azotes sobre un cuerpo mal sustentado y peor comido: tenga paciencia mi señora Dulcinea, que, cuando menos se cate, me verá hecho una criba, de azotes; y hasta la muerte, todo es vida; quiero decir que aún yo la tengo, junto con el deseo de cumplir con lo que he prometido.

Agradeciéndoselo don Quijote, comió algo, y Sancho mucho, y echáronse a dormir entrambos, dejando a su albedrío y sin orden alguna pacer del abundosa yerba de que aquel prado estaba lleno a los dos continuos compañeros y amigos Rocinante y el rucio. Despertaron algo tarde, volvieron a subir y a seguir su camino, dándose prisa para llegar a una venta que, al parecer, una legua de allí se descubría. Digo que era venta porque don Quijote la llamó así, fuera del uso que tenía de llamar a todas las ventas castillos.

Llegaron, pues, a ella; preguntaron al huésped si había posada. Fueles respondido que sí, con toda la comodidad y regalo que pudiera hallar en Zaragoza. Apeáronse y recogió Sancho su repostería en un aposento, de quien el huésped le dio la llave; llevó las bestias a la caballeriza, echóles sus piensos, salió a ver lo que don Quijote, que estaba sentado sobre un poyo, le mandaba, dando particulares gracias al cielo de que a su amo no le hubiese parecido castillo aquella venta.

Llegóse la hora del cenar; recogieron a su estancia; preguntó Sancho al huésped que qué tenía para darles de cenar, a lo que el huésped respondió que su boca sería medida; y así, que pidiese lo que quisiese: que de las pajaricas del aire, de las aves de la tierra y de los pescados del mar estaba proveída aquella venta.

-No es menester tanto -respondió Sancho-, que con un par de pollos que nos asen tendremos lo suficiente, porque mi señor es delicado y come poco, y yo no soy tragantón en demasía.

Respondióle el huésped que no tenía pollos, porque los milanos los tenían asolados.

-Pues mande el señor huésped -dijo Sancho-asar una polla que sea tierna.

-¿Polla? ¡Mi padre! -respondió el huésped-. En verdad en verdad que envié ayer a la ciudad a vender más de cincuenta; pero, fuera de pollas, pida vuestra merced lo que quisiere.

-Desa manera -dijo Sancho-, no faltará ternera o cabrito.

-En casa, por ahora -respondió el huésped-, no lo hay, porque se ha acabado; pero la semana que viene lo habrá de sobra.

-¡Medrados estamos con eso! -respondió Sancho-. Yo pondré que se vienen a resumirse todas estas faltas en las sobras que debe de haber de tocino y huevos.

-¡Por Dios -respondió el huésped-, que es gentil relente el que mi huésped tiene!, pues hele dicho que ni tengo pollas ni gallinas, y ¿quiere que tenga huevos? Discurra, si quisiere, por otras delicadezas, y déjese de pedir gallinas.

-Resolvámonos, cuerpo de mí -dijo Sancho-, y dígame finalmente lo que tiene, y déjese de discurrimientos, señor huésped.

Dijo el ventero:

-Lo que real y verdaderamente tengo son dos uñas de vaca que parecen manos de ternera, o dos manos de ternera que parecen uñas de vaca; están cocidas con sus garbanzos, cebollas y tocino, y la hora de ahora están diciendo: «¡Coméme! ¡Coméme!»

-Por mías las marco desde aquí -dijo Sancho-; y nadie las toque, que yo las pagaré mejor que otro, porque para mí ninguna otra cosa pudiera esperar de más gusto, y no se me daría nada que fuesen manos, como fuesen uñas.

-Nadie las tocará -dijo el ventero-, porque otros huéspedes que tengo, de puro principales, traen consigo cocinero, dispensero y repostería.

-Si por principales va -dijo Sancho-, ninguno más que mi amo; pero el oficio que él trae no permite despensas ni botillerías: ahí nos tendemos en mitad de un prado y nos hartamos de bellotas o de nísperos.

Esta fue la plática que Sancho tuvo con el ventero, sin querer Sancho pasar adelante en responderle; que ya le había preguntado qué oficio o qué ejercicio era el de su amo.

Llegóse, pues, la hora del cenar, recogióse a su estancia don Quijote, trujo el huésped la olla, así como estaba, y sentóse a cenar muy de propósito. Parece ser que en otro aposento que junto al de don Quijote estaba, que no le dividía más que un sutil tabique, oyó decir don Quijote:

-Por vida de vuestra merced, señor don Jerónimo, que en tanto que trae la cena leamos otro capítulo de la segunda parte de *Don Quijote de la Mancha*.

Apenas oyó su nombre don Quijote, cuando se puso en pie, y con oído alerta

escuchó lo que dél trataban, y oyó que el tal don Jerónimo referido respondió:

-¿Para qué quiere vuestra merced, señor don Juan, que leamos estos disparates? Y el que hubiere leído la primera parte de la historia de don Quijote de la Mancha no es posible que pueda tener gusto en leer esta segunda.

-Con todo eso -dijo el don Juan-, será bien leerla, pues no hay libro tan malo que no tenga alguna cosa buena. Lo que a mí en éste más desplace es que pinta a don Quijote ya desenamorado de Dulcinea del Toboso.

Oyendo lo cual don Quijote, lleno de ira y de despecho, alzó la voz y dijo:

-Quienquiera que dijere que don Quijote de la Mancha ha olvidado, ni puede olvidar, a Dulcinea del Toboso, yo le haré entender con armas iguales que va muy lejos de la verdad; porque la sin par Dulcinea del Toboso ni puede ser olvidada, ni en don Quijote puede caber olvido: su blasón es la firmeza, y su profesión, el guardarla con suavidad y sin hacerse fuerza alguna.

-¿Quién es el que nos responde? -respondieron del otro aposento.

-¿Quién ha de ser -respondió Sancho-sino el mismo don Quijote de la Mancha, que hará bueno cuanto ha dicho, y aun cuanto dijere?; que al buen pagador no le duelen prendas.

Apenas hubo dicho esto Sancho, cuando entraron por la puerta de su aposento dos caballeros, que tales lo parecían, y uno dellos echando los brazos al cuello de don Quijote, le dijo:

-Ni vuestra presencia puede desmentir vuestro nombre, ni vuestro nombre puede no acreditar vuestra presencia: sin duda, vos, señor, sois el verdadero don Quijote de la Mancha, norte y lucero de la andante caballería, a despecho y pesar del que ha querido usurpar vuestro nombre y aniquilar vuestras hazañas, como lo ha hecho el autor deste libro que aquí os entrego.

Y, poniéndole un libro en las manos, que traía su compañero, le tomó don Quijote, y, sin responder palabra, comenzó a hojearle, y de allí a un poco se le volvió, diciendo:

-En esto poco que he visto he hallado tres cosas en este autor dignas de reprehensión. La primera es algunas palabras que he leído en el prólogo; la otra, que el lenguaje es aragonés, porque tal vez escribe sin artículos, y la tercera, que más le confirma por ignorante, es que yerra y se desvía de la verdad en lo más principal de la historia; porque aquí dice que la mujer de Sancho Panza mi escudero se llama Mari Gutiérrez, y no llama tal, sino Teresa Panza; y quien en esta parte tan principal yerra, bien se podrá temer que yerra en todas las demás de la historia.

A esto dijo Sancho:

-¡Donosa cosa de historiador! ¡Por cierto, bien debe de estar en el cuento de nuestros sucesos, pues llama a Teresa Panza, mi mujer, Mari Gutiérrez! Torne a

tomar el libro, señor, y mire si ando yo por ahí y si me ha mudado el nombre.

-Por lo que he oído hablar, amigo -dijo don Jerónimo-, sin duda debéis de ser Sancho Panza, el escudero del señor don Quijote.

-Sí soy -respondió Sancho-, y me precio dello.

-Pues a fe -dijo el caballero-que no os trata este autor moderno con la limpieza que en vuestra persona se muestra: píntaos comedor, y simple, y no nada gracioso, y muy otro del Sancho que en la primera parte de la historia de vuestro amo se describe.

-Dios se lo perdone -dijo Sancho-. Dejárame en mi rincón, sin acordarse de mí, porque quien las sabe las tañe, y bien se está San Pedro en Roma.

Los dos caballeros pidieron a don Quijote se pasase a su estancia a cenar con ellos, que bien sabían que en aquella venta no había cosas pertenecientes para su persona. Don Quijote, que siempre fue comedido, condecendió con su demanda y cenó con ellos; quedóse Sancho con la olla con mero mixto imperio; sentóse en cabecera de mesa, y con él el ventero, que no menos que Sancho estaba de sus manos y de sus uñas aficionado.

En el discurso de la cena preguntó don Juan a don Quijote qué nuevas tenía de la señora Dulcinea del Toboso: si se había casado, si estaba parida o preñada, o si, estando en su entereza, se acordaba -guardando su honestidad y buen decoro- de los amorosos pensamientos del señor don Quijote. A lo que él respondió:

-Dulcinea se está entera, y mis pensamientos, más firmes que nunca; las correspondencias, en su sequedad antigua; su hermosura, en la de una soez labradora transformada.

Y luego les fue contando punto por punto el encanto de la señora Dulcinea, y lo que le había sucedido en la cueva de Montesinos, con la orden que el sabio Merlín le había dado para desencantarla, que fue la de los azotes de Sancho.

Sumo fue el contento que los dos caballeros recibieron de oír contar a don Quijote los estraños sucesos de su historia, y así quedaron admirados de sus disparates como del elegante modo con que los contaba. Aquí le tenían por discreto, y allí se les deslizaba por mentecato, sin saber determinarse qué grado le darían entre la discreción y la locura.

Acabó de cenar Sancho, y, dejando hecho equis al ventero, se pasó a la estancia de su amo; y, en entrando, dijo:

-Que me maten, señores, si el autor deste libro que vuestas mercedes tienen quiere que no comamos buenas migas juntos; yo querría que, ya que me llama comilón, como vuestas mercedes dicen, no me llamase también borracho.

-Sí llama -dijo don Jerónimo-, pero no me acuerdo en qué manera, aunque sé que son malsonantes las razones, y además, mentirosas, según yo echo de ver en la fisonomía del buen Sancho que está presente.

-Créanme vuestas mercedes -dijo Sancho-que el Sancho y el don Quijote de esa historia deben de ser otros que los que andan en aquella que compuso Cide Hamete Benengeli, que somos nosotros: mi amo, valiente, discreto y enamorado; y yo, simple gracioso, y no comedor ni borracho.

-Yo así lo creo -dijo don Juan-; y si fuera posible, se había de mandar que ninguno fuera osado a tratar de las cosas del gran don Quijote, si no fuese Cide Hamete, su primer autor, bien así como mandó Alejandro que ninguno fuese osado a retratarle sino Apeles.

-Retráteme el que quisiere -dijo don Quijote-, pero no me maltrate; que muchas veces suele caerse la paciencia cuando la cargan de injurias.

-Ninguna -dijo don Juan-se le puede hacer al señor don Quijote de quien él no se pueda vengar, si no la repara en el escudo de su paciencia, que, a mi parecer, es fuerte y grande.

En estas y otras pláticas se pasó gran parte de la noche; y, aunque don Juan quisiera que don Quijote leyera más del libro, por ver lo que discantaba, no lo pudieron acabar con él, diciendo que él lo daba por leído y lo confirmaba por todo necio, y que no quería, si acaso llegase a noticia de su autor que le había tenido en sus manos, se alegrase con pensar que le había leído; pues de las cosas obscenas y torpes, los pensamientos se han de apartar, cuanto más los ojos. Preguntáronle que adónde llevaba determinado su viaje. Respondió que a Zaragoza, a hallarse en las justas del arnés, que en aquella ciudad suelen hacerse todos los años. Díjole don Juan que aquella nueva historia contaba como don Quijote, sea quien se quisiere, se había hallado en ella en una sortija, falta de invención, pobre de letras, pobrísima de libreas, aunque rica de simplicidades.

-Por el mismo caso -respondió don Quijote-, no pondré los pies en Zaragoza, y así sacaré a la plaza del mundo la mentira dese historiador moderno, y echarán de ver las gentes como yo no soy el don Quijote que él dice.

-Hará muy bien -dijo don Jerónimo-; y otras justas hay en Barcelona, donde podrá el señor don Quijote mostrar su valor.

-Así lo pienso hacer -dijo don Quijote-; y vuestas mercedes me den licencia, pues ya es hora para irme al lecho, y me tengan y pongan en el número de sus mayores amigos y servidores.

-Y a mí también -dijo Sancho-: quizá seré bueno para algo.

Con esto se despidieron, y don Quijote y Sancho se retiraron a su aposento, dejando a don Juan y a don Jerónimo admirados de ver la mezcla que había hecho de su discreción y de su locura; y verdaderamente creyeron que éstos eran los verdaderos don Quijote y Sancho, y no los que describía su autor aragonés.

Madrugó don Quijote, y, dando golpes al tabique del otro aposento, se despidió de sus huéspedes. Pagó Sancho al ventero magníficamente, y



aconsejóle que alabase menos la provisión de su venta, o la tuviese más proveída.

## Capítulo LX

### *De lo que sucedió a don Quijote yendo a Barcelona*

ERA FRESCA la mañana, y daba muestras de serlo asimesmo el día en que don Quijote salió de la venta, informándose primero cuál era el más derecho camino para ir a Barcelona sin tocar en Zaragoza: tal era el deseo que tenía de sacar mentiroso aquel nuevo historiador que tanto decían que le vituperaba.

Sucedió, pues, que en más de seis días no le sucedió cosa digna de ponerse en escritura, al cabo de los cuales, yendo fuera de camino, le tomó la noche entre unas espesas encinas o alcornoques; que en esto no guarda la puntualidad Cide Hamete que en otras cosas suele.

Apeáronse de sus bestias amo y mozo, y, acomodándose a los troncos de los árboles, Sancho, que había merendado aquel día, se dejó entrar de rondón por las puertas del sueño; pero don Quijote, a quien desvelaban sus imaginaciones mucho más que la hambre, no podía pegar sus ojos; antes iba y venía con el pensamiento por mil géneros de lugares. Ya le parecía hallarse en la cueva de Montesinos; ya ver brincar y subir sobre su pollina a la convertida en labradora Dulcinea; ya que le sonaban en los oídos las palabras del sabio Merlín que le referían las condiciones y diligencias que se habían de hacer y tener en el desencanto de Dulcinea. Desesperábase de ver la flojedad y caridad poca de Sancho su escudero, pues, a lo que creía, solos cinco azotes se había dado, número desigual y pequeño para los infinitos que le faltaban; y desto recibió tanta pesadumbre y enojo, que hizo este discurso:

-Si nudo gordiano cortó el Magno Alejandro, diciendo: «Tanto monta cortar como desatar», y no por eso dejó de ser universal señor de toda la Asia, ni más ni menos podría suceder ahora en el desencanto de Dulcinea, si yo azotase a Sancho a pesar suyo; que si la condición deste remedio está en que Sancho reciba los tres mil y tantos azotes, ¿qué se me da a mí que se los dé él, o que se los dé otro, pues la sustancia está en que él los reciba, lleguen por do llegaren?

Con esta imaginación se llegó a Sancho, habiendo primero tomado las riendas de Rocinante, y acomodádaslas en modo que pudiese azotarle con ellas, comenzóle a quitar las cintas, que es opinión que no tenía más que la delantera, en que se sustentaban los greguescos; pero, apenas hubo llegado, cuando Sancho despertó en todo su acuerdo, y dijo:

-¿Qué es esto? ¿Quién me toca y desencinta?

-Yo soy -respondió don Quijote-, que vengo a suplir tus faltas y a remediar mis trabajos: véngote a azotar, Sancho, y a descargar, en parte, la deuda a que te obligaste. Dulcinea perece; tú vives en descuido; yo muero deseando; y así, desatácate por tu voluntad, que la mía es de darte en esta soledad, por lo menos, dos mil azotes.

-Eso no -dijo Sancho-; vuesa merced se esté quedo; si no, por Dios verdadero que nos han de oír los sordos. Los azotes a que yo me obligué han de ser voluntarios, y no por fuerza, y ahora no tengo gana de azotarme; basta que doy a vuesa merced mi palabra de vapularme y mosquearme cuando en voluntad me viniere.

-No hay dejarlo a tu cortesía, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, porque eres duro de corazón, y, aunque villano, blando de carnes.

Y así, procuraba y pugnaba por desenlazarle. Viendo lo cual Sancho Panza, se puso en pie, y, arremetiendo a su amo, se abrazó con él a brazo partido, y, echándole una zancadilla, dio con él en el suelo boca arriba; púsole la rodilla derecha sobre el pecho, y con las manos le tenía las manos, de modo que ni le dejaba rodear ni alentar. Don Quijote le decía:

-¿Cómo, traidor? ¿Contra tu amo y señor natural te desmandas? ¿Con quien te da su pan te atreves?

-Ni quito rey, ni pongo rey -respondió Sancho-, sino ayúdome a mí, que soy mi señor. Vuesa merced me prometa que se estará quedo, y no tratará de azotarme por agora, que yo le dejaré libre y desembarazado; donde no,

aquí morirás, traidor,  
enemigo de doña Sancha.

Prometióselo don Quijote, y juró por vida de sus pensamientos no tocarle en el pelo de la ropa, y que dejaría en toda su voluntad y albedrío el azotarse cuando quisiese.

Levantóse Sancho, y desvióse de aquel lugar un buen espacio; y, yendo a arrimarse a otro árbol, sintió que le tocaban en la cabeza, y, alzando las manos, topó con dos pies de persona, con zapatos y calzas. Tembló de miedo; acudió a otro árbol, y sucedióle lo mismo. Dio voces llamando a don Quijote que le favoreciese. Hízolo así don Quijote, y, preguntándole qué le había sucedido y de qué tenía miedo, le respondió Sancho que todos aquellos árboles estaban llenos de pies y de piernas humanas. Tentólos don Quijote, y cayó luego en la cuenta de lo que podía ser, y díjole a Sancho:

-No tienes de qué tener miedo, porque estos pies y piernas que tientas y no vees, sin duda son de algunos forajidos y bandoleros que en estos árboles están ahorcados; que por aquí los suele ahorcar la justicia cuando los coge, de veinte en veinte y de treinta en treinta; por donde me doy a entender que debo de estar cerca de Barcelona.

Y así era la verdad como él lo había imaginado.

Al parecer alzaron los ojos, y vieron los racimos de aquellos árboles, que eran cuerpos de bandoleros. Ya, en esto, amanecía, y si los muertos los habían espantado, no menos los atribularon más de cuarenta bandoleros vivos que de improviso les rodearon, diciéndoles en lengua catalana que estuviesen quedos, y se detuviesen, hasta que llegase su capitán.

Hallóse don Quijote a pie, su caballo sin freno, su lanza arrimada a un árbol, y, finalmente, sin defensa alguna; y así, tuvo por bien de cruzar las manos e inclinar la cabeza, guardándose para mejor sazón y coyuntura.

Acudieron los bandoleros a espulgar al rucio, y a no dejarle ninguna cosa de cuantas en las alforjas y la maleta traía; y avínole bien a Sancho que en una ventrera que tenía ceñida venían los escudos del duque y los que habían sacado de su tierra, y, con todo eso, aquella buena gente le escardara y le mirara hasta lo que entre el cuero y la carne tuviera escondido, si no llegara en aquella sazón su capitán, el cual mostró ser de hasta edad de treinta y cuatro años, robusto, más que de mediana proporción, de mirar grave y color morena. Venía sobre un poderoso caballo, vestida la acerada cota, y con cuatro pistoletas -que en aquella tierra se llaman pedreñales-a los lados. Vio que sus escuderos, que así llaman a los que andan en aquel ejercicio, iban a despojar a Sancho Panza; mandóles que no lo hiciesen, y fue luego obedecido; y así se escapó la ventrera. Admiróle ver lanza arrimada al árbol, escudo en el suelo, y a don Quijote armado y pensativo, con la más triste y melancólica figura que pudiera formar la misma tristeza. Llegóse a él diciéndole:

-No estéis tan triste, buen hombre, porque no habéis caído en las manos de algún cruel Osiris, sino en las de Roque Guinart, que tienen más de compasivas que de rigurosas.

-No es mi tristeza -respondió don Quijote-haber caído en tu poder, ¡oh valeroso Roque, cuya fama no hay límites en la tierra que la encierren!, sino por haber sido tal mi descuido, que me hayan cogido tus soldados sin el freno, estando yo obligado, según la orden de la andante caballería, que profeso, a vivir continuo alerta, siendo a todas horas centinela de mí mismo; porque te hago saber, ¡oh gran Roque!, que si me hallaran sobre mi caballo, con mi lanza y con mi escudo, no les fuera muy fácil rendirme, porque yo soy don Quijote de la Mancha, aquel que de sus hazañas tiene lleno todo el orbe.

Luego Roque Guinart conoció que la enfermedad de don Quijote tocaba más en locura que en valentía, y, aunque algunas veces le había oído nombrar, nunca tuvo por verdad sus hechos, ni se pudo persuadir a que semejante humor reinase en corazón de hombre; y holgóse en extremo de haberle encontrado, para tocar de cerca lo que de lejos dél había oído; y así, le dijo:

-Valeroso caballero, no os despechéis ni tengáis a siniestra fortuna ésta en que os halláis, que podía ser que en estos tropiezos vuestra torcida suerte se enderezase; que el cielo, por estraños y nunca vistos rodeos, de los hombres no imaginados, suele levantar los caídos y enriquecer los pobres.

Ya le iba a dar las gracias don Quijote, cuando sintieron a sus espaldas un ruido como de tropel de caballos, y no era sino un solo, sobre el cual venía a toda furia un mancebo, al parecer de hasta veinte años, vestido de damasco verde, con pasamanos de oro, greguescos y saltaembarca, con sombrero terciado, a la valona, botas enceradas y justas, espuelas, daga y espada doradas, una escopeta pequeña en las manos y dos pistolas a los lados. Al ruido volvió Roque la cabeza y vio esta hermosa figura, la cual, en llegando a él, dijo:

-En tu busca venía, ¡oh valeroso Roque!, para hallar en ti, si no remedio, a lo menos alivio en mi desdicha; y, por no tenerte suspenso, porque sé que no me has conocido, quiero decirte quién soy: y soy Claudia Jerónima, hija de Simón Forte, tu singular amigo y enemigo particular de Clauquel Torrellas, que asimismo lo es tuyo, por ser uno de los de tu contrario bando; y ya sabes que este Torrellas tiene un hijo que don Vicente Torrellas se llama, o, a lo menos, se llamaba no ha dos horas. Éste, pues, por abreviar el cuento de mi desventura, te diré en breves palabras la que me ha causado. Viome, requebróme, escuchéle, enamoréme, a hurto de mi padre; porque no hay mujer, por retirada que esté y recatada que sea, a quien no le sobre tiempo para poner en ejecución y efecto sus atropellados deseos. Finalmente, él me prometió de ser mi esposo, y yo le di la palabra de ser suya, sin que en obras pasásemos adelante. Supe ayer que, olvidado de lo que me debía, se casaba con otra, y que esta mañana iba a desposarse, nueva que me turbó el sentido y acabó la paciencia; y, por no estar mi padre en el lugar, le tuve yo de ponerme en el traje que vees, y apresurando el paso a este caballo, alcancé a don Vicente obra de una legua de aquí; y, sin ponerme a dar quejas ni a oír disculpas, le disparé estas escopetas, y, por añadidura, estas dos pistolas; y, a lo que creo, le debí de encerrar más de dos balas en el cuerpo, abriéndole puertas por donde envuelta en su sangre saliese mi honra. Allí le dejo entre sus criados, que no osaron ni pudieron ponerse en su defensa. Vengo a buscarte para que me pases a Francia, donde tengo parientes con quien viva, y asimesmo a rogarte defiendas a mi padre, porque los muchos de don Vicente no se atrevan a tomar en él desaforada venganza.

Roque, admirado de la gallardía, bizarría, buen talle y suceso de la hermosa Claudia, le dijo:

-Ven, señora, y vamos a ver si es muerto tu enemigo, que después veremos lo que más te importare.

Don Quijote, que estaba escuchando atentamente lo que Claudia había dicho y lo que Roque Guinart respondió, dijo:

-No tiene nadie para qué tomar trabajo en defender a esta señora, que lo tomo yo a mi cargo: denme mi caballo y mis armas, y espérenme aquí, que yo iré a buscar a ese caballero, y, muerto o vivo, le haré cumplir la palabra prometida a tanta belleza.

-Nadie dude de esto -dijo Sancho-, porque mi señor tiene muy buena mano para casamentero, pues no ha muchos días que hizo casar a otro que también negaba a otra doncella su palabra; y si no fuera porque los encantadores que le persiguen le mudaron su verdadera figura en la de un lacayo, ésta fuera la hora que ya la tal doncella no lo fuera.

Roque, que atendía más a pensar en el suceso de la hermosa Claudia que en las razones de amo y mozo, no las entendió; y, mandando a sus escuderos que volviesen a Sancho todo cuanto le habían quitado del rucio, mandándoles asimesmo que se retirasen a la parte donde aquella noche habían estado alojados, y luego se partió con Claudia a toda priesa a buscar al herido, o muerto, don Vicente. Llegaron al lugar donde le encontró Claudia, y no hallaron en él sino recién derramada sangre; pero, tendiendo la vista por todas partes, descubrieron por un recuesto arriba alguna gente, y diéronse a entender, como era la verdad, que debía ser don Vicente, a quien sus criados, o muerto o vivo, llevaban, o para curarle, o para enterrarle; diéronse priesa a alcanzarlos, que, como iban de espacio, con facilidad lo hicieron.

Hallaron a don Vicente en los brazos de sus criados, a quien con cansada y debilitada voz rogaba que le dejasen allí morir, porque el dolor de las heridas no consentía que más adelante pasase.

Arrojáronse de los caballos Claudia y Roque, llegó a él, temieron los criados la presencia de Roque, y Claudia se turbó en ver la de don Vicente; y así, entre enternecida y rigurosa, se llegó a él, y asiéndole de las manos, le dijo:

-Si tú me dieras éstas, conforme a nuestro concierto, nunca tú te vieras en este paso.

Abrió los casi cerrados ojos el herido caballero, y, conociendo a Claudia, le dijo:

-Bien veo, hermosa y engañada señora, que tú has sido la que me has muerto: pena no merecida ni debida a mis deseos, con los cuales, ni con mis obras, jamás quise ni supe ofenderte.

-Luego, ¿no es verdad -dijo Claudia-que ibas esta mañana a desposarte con Leonora, la hija del rico Balvastro?

-No, por cierto -respondió don Vicente-; mi mala fortuna te debió de llevar estas nuevas, para que, celosa, me quitases la vida, la cual, pues la dejo en tus manos y en tus brazos, tengo mi suerte por venturosa. Y, para asegurarte desta verdad, aprieta la mano y recíbeme por esposo, si quisieres, que no tengo otra mayor satisfacción que darte del agravio que piensas que de mí has recibido.

Apretóle la mano Claudia, y apretósele a ella el corazón, de manera que sobre la sangre y pecho de don Vicente se quedó desmayada, y a él le tomó un mortal parasismo. Confuso estaba Roque, y no sabía qué hacerse. Acudieron los criados a buscar agua que echarles en los rostros, y trujéronla, con que se los bañaron. Volvió de su desmayo Claudia, pero no de su parasismo don Vicente, porque se le acabó la vida. Visto lo cual de Claudia, habiéndose enterado que ya su dulce esposo no vivía, rompió los aires con suspiros, hirió los cielos con quejas, maltrató sus cabellos, entregándolos al viento, afeó su rostro con sus propias manos, con todas las muestras de dolor y sentimiento que de un lastimado pecho pudieran imaginarse.

-¡Oh cruel e inconsiderada mujer -decía-, con qué facilidad te moviste a poner en ejecución tan mal pensamiento! ¡Oh fuerza rabiosa de los celos, a qué desesperado fin conducís a quien os da acogida en su pecho! ¡Oh esposo mío, cuya desdichada suerte, por ser prenda mía, te ha llevado del tálamo a la sepultura!

Tales y tan tristes eran las quejas de Claudia, que sacaron las lágrimas de los ojos de Roque, no acostumbrados a verterlas en ninguna ocasión. Lloraban los criados, desmayábase a cada paso Claudia, y todo aquel circuito parecía campo de tristeza y lugar de desgracia. Finalmente, Roque Guinart ordenó a los criados de don Vicente que llevasen su cuerpo al lugar de su padre, que estaba allí cerca, para que le diesen sepultura. Claudia dijo a Roque que querría irse a un monasterio donde era abadesa una tía suya, en el cual pensaba acabar la vida, de otro mejor esposo y más eterno acompañada. Alabóle Roque su buen propósito, ofreciósele de acompañarla hasta donde quisiese, y de defender a su padre de los parientes y de todo el mundo, si ofenderle quisiese. No quiso su compañía Claudia, en ninguna manera, y, agradeciendo sus ofrecimientos con las mejores razones que supo, se despidió dél llorando. Los criados de don Vicente llevaron su cuerpo, y Roque se volvió a los suyos, y este fin tuvieron los amores de Claudia Jerónima. Pero, ¿qué mucho, si tejieron la trama de su lamentable historia las fuerzas invencibles y rigurosas de los celos?

Halló Roque Guinart a sus escuderos en la parte donde les había ordenado, y a don Quijote entre ellos, sobre Rocinante, haciéndoles una plática en que les

persuadía dejasen aquel modo de vivir tan peligroso, así para el alma como para el cuerpo; pero, como los más eran gascones, gente rústica y desbaratada, no les entraba bien la plática de don Quijote. Llegado que fue Roque, preguntó a Sancho Panza si le habían vuelto y restituido las alhajas y preseas que los suyos del rucio le habían quitado. Sancho respondió que sí, sino que le faltaban tres tocadores, que valían tres ciudades.

-¿Qué es lo que dices, hombre? -dijo uno de los presentes-, que yo los tengo, y no valen tres reales.

-Así es -dijo don Quijote-, pero estímalo mi escudero en lo que ha dicho, por habérmelos dado quien me los dio.

Mandóselos volver al punto Roque Guinart, y, mandando poner los suyos en ala, mandó traer allí delante todos los vestidos, joyas, y dineros, y todo aquello que desde la última repartición habían robado; y, haciendo brevemente el tanteo, volviendo lo no repartible y reduciéndolo a dineros, lo repartió por toda su compañía, con tanta legalidad y prudencia que no pasó un punto ni defraudó nada de la justicia distributiva. Hecho esto, con lo cual todos quedaron contentos, satisfechos y pagados, dijo Roque a don Quijote:

-Si no se guardase esta puntualidad con éstos, no se podría vivir con ellos.

A lo que dijo Sancho:

-Según lo que aquí he visto, es tan buena la justicia, que es necesaria que se use aun entre los mismos ladrones.

Oyólo un escudero, y enarboló el mocho de un arcabuz, con el cual, sin duda, le abriera la cabeza a Sancho, si Roque Guinart no le diera voces que se detuviese. Pasmóse Sancho, y propuso de no descoser los labios en tanto que entre aquella gente estuviese.

Llegó, en esto, uno o algunos de aquellos escuderos que estaban puestos por centinelas por los caminos para ver la gente que por ellos venía y dar aviso a su mayor de lo que pasaba, y éste dijo:

-Señor, no lejos de aquí, por el camino que va a Barcelona, viene un gran tropel de gente.

A lo que respondió Roque:

-¿Has echado de ver si son de los que nos buscan, o de los que nosotros buscamos?

-No, sino de los que buscamos -respondió el escudero.

-Pues salid todos -replicó Roque-, y traédmelos aquí luego, sin que se os escape ninguno.

Hiciéronlo así, y, quedándose solos don Quijote, Sancho y Roque, aguardaron a ver lo que los escuderos traían; y, en este entretanto, dijo Roque a don Quijote:

-Nueva manera de vida le debe de parecer al señor don Quijote la nuestra,



nuevas aventuras, nuevos sucesos, y todos peligrosos; y no me maravillo que así le parezca, porque realmente le confieso que no hay modo de vivir más inquieto ni más sobresaltado que el nuestro. A mí me han puesto en él no sé qué deseos de venganza, que tienen fuerza de turbar los más sosegados corazones; yo, de mi natural, soy compasivo y bien intencionado; pero, como tengo dicho, el querer vengarme de un agravio que se me hizo, así da con todas mis buenas inclinaciones en tierra, que persevero en este estado, a despecho y pesar de lo que entiendo; y, como un abismo llama a otro y un pecado a otro pecado, hanse eslabonado las venganzas de manera que no sólo las mías, pero las ajenas tomo a mi cargo; pero Dios es servido de que, aunque me veo en la mitad del laberinto de mis confusiones, no pierdo la esperanza de salir dél a puerto seguro.

Admirado quedó don Quijote de oír hablar a Roque tan buenas y concertadas razones, porque él se pensaba que, entre los de oficios semejantes de robar, matar y saltar no podía haber alguno que tuviese buen discurso, y respondióle:

-Señor Roque, el principio de la salud está en conocer la enfermedad y en querer tomar el enfermo las medicinas que el médico le ordena: vuestra merced está enfermo, conoce su dolencia, y el cielo, o Dios, por mejor decir, que es nuestro médico, le aplicará medicinas que le sanen, las cuales suelen sanar poco a poco y no de repente y por milagro; y más, que los pecadores discretos están más cerca de enmendarse que los simples; y, pues vuestra merced ha mostrado en sus razones su prudencia, no hay sino tener buen ánimo y esperar mejoría de la enfermedad de su conciencia; y si vuestra merced quiere ahorrar camino y ponerse con facilidad en el de su salvación, véngase conmigo, que yo le enseñaré a ser caballero andante, donde se pasan tantos trabajos y desventuras que, tomándolas por penitencia, en dos paletas le pondrán en el cielo.

Rióse Roque del consejo de don Quijote, a quien, mudando plática, contó el trágico suceso de Claudia Jerónima, de que le pesó en extremo a Sancho, que no le había parecido mal la belleza, desenvoltura y brío de la moza.

Llegaron, en esto, los escuderos de la presa, trayendo consigo dos caballeros a caballo, y dos peregrinos a pie, y un coche de mujeres con hasta seis criados, que a pie y a caballo las acompañaban, con otros dos mozos de mulas que los caballeros traían. Cogieronlos los escuderos en medio, guardando vencidos y vencedores gran silencio, esperando a que el gran Roque Guinart hablase, el cual preguntó a los caballeros que quién eran y adónde iban, y qué dinero llevaban. Uno dellos le respondió:

-Señor, nosotros somos dos capitanes de infantería española; tenemos nuestras compañías en Nápoles y vamos a embarcarnos en cuatro galeras, que dicen están en Barcelona con orden de pasar a Sicilia; llevamos hasta docientos o trecientos escudos, con que, a nuestro parecer, vamos ricos y contentos, pues la estrechez

ordinaria de los soldados no permite mayores tesoros.

Preguntó Roque a los peregrinos lo mismo que a los capitanes; fuele respondido que iban a embarcarse para pasar a Roma, y que entre entrambos podían llevar hasta sesenta reales. Quiso saber también quién iba en el coche, y adónde, y el dinero que llevaban; y uno de los de a caballo dijo:

-Mi señora doña Guiomar de Quiñones, mujer del regente de la Vicaría de Nápoles, con una hija pequeña, una doncella y una dueña, son las que van en el coche; acompañámosla seis criados, y los dineros son seiscientos escudos.

-De modo -dijo Roque Guinart-, que ya tenemos aquí novecientos escudos y sesenta reales; mis soldados deben de ser hasta sesenta; mírese a cómo le cabe a cada uno, porque yo soy mal contador.

Oyendo decir esto los salteadores, levantaron la voz, diciendo:

-¡Viva Roque Guinart muchos años, a pesar de los lladres que su perdición procuran!

Mostraron afligirse los capitanes, entristeciéndose la señora regenta, y no se holgaron nada los peregrinos, viendo la confiscación de sus bienes. Túvolos así un rato suspensos Roque, pero no quiso que pasase adelante su tristeza, que ya se podía conocer a tiro de arcabuz, y, volviéndose a los capitanes, dijo:

-Vuestas mercedes, señores capitanes, por cortesía, sean servidos de prestarme sesenta escudos, y la señora regenta ochenta, para contentar esta escuadra que me acompaña, porque el abad, de lo que canta yanta, y luego puédense ir su camino libre y desembarazadamente, con un salvoconduto que yo les daré, para que, si toparen otras de algunas escuadras mías que tengo divididas por estos contornos, no les hagan daño; que no es mi intención de agraviar a soldados ni a mujer alguna, especialmente a las que son principales.

Infinitas y bien dichas fueron las razones con que los capitanes agradecieron a Roque su cortesía y liberalidad, que, por tal la tuvieron, en dejarles su mismo dinero. La señora doña Guiomar de Quiñones se quiso arrojar del coche para besar los pies y las manos del gran Roque, pero él no lo consintió en ninguna manera; antes le pidió perdón del agravio que le hacía, forzado de cumplir con las obligaciones precisas de su mal oficio. Mandó la señora regenta a un criado suyo diese luego los ochenta escudos que le habían repartido, y ya los capitanes habían desembolsado los sesenta. Iban los peregrinos a dar toda su miseria, pero Roque les dijo que se estuviesen quedos, y volviéndose a los suyos, les dijo:

-Destos escudos dos tocan a cada uno, y sobran veinte: los diez se den a estos peregrinos, y los otros diez a este buen escudero, porque pueda decir bien de esta aventura.

Y, trayéndole aderezo de escribir, de que siempre andaba proveído, Roque les dio por escrito un salvoconduto para los mayores de sus escuadras, y,

despidiéndose dellos, los dejó ir libres, y admirados de su nobleza, de su gallarda disposición y extraño proceder, teniéndole más por un Alejandro Magno que por ladrón conocido. Uno de los escuderos dijo en su lengua gascona y catalana:

-Este nuestro capitán más es para frade que para bandolero: si de aquí adelante quisiere mostrarse liberal séalo con su hacienda y no con la nuestra.

No lo dijo tan paso el desventurado que dejase de oírlo Roque, el cual, echando mano a la espada, le abrió la cabeza casi en dos partes, diciéndole:

-Desta manera castigo yo a los deslenguados y atrevidos.

Pasmáronse todos, y ninguno le osó decir palabra: tanta era la obediencia que le tenían.

Apartóse Roque a una parte y escribió una carta a un su amigo, a Barcelona, dándole aviso como estaba consigo el famoso don Quijote de la Mancha, aquel caballero andante de quien tantas cosas se decían; y que le hacía saber que era el más gracioso y el más entendido hombre del mundo, y que de allí a cuatro días, que era el de San Juan Bautista, se le pondría en mitad de la playa de la ciudad, armado de todas sus armas, sobre Rocinante, su caballo, y a su escudero Sancho sobre un asno, y que diese noticia desto a sus amigos los Niarros, para que con él se solazasen; que él quisiera que carecieran deste gusto los Cadells, sus contrarios, pero que esto era imposible, a causa que las locuras y discreciones de don Quijote y los donaires de su escudero Sancho Panza no podían dejar de dar gusto general a todo el mundo. Despachó estas cartas con uno de sus escuderos, que, mudando el traje de bandolero en el de un labrador, entró en Barcelona y la dio a quien iba.

## Capítulo LXI

*De lo que le sucedió a don Quijote en la entrada de Barcelona, con otras cosas que tienen más de lo verdadero que de lo discreto*

TRES DÍAS y tres noches estuvo don Quijote con Roque, y si estuviera trecientos años, no le faltara qué mirar y admirar en el modo de su vida: aquí amanecían, acullá comían; unas veces huían, sin saber de quién, y otras esperaban, sin saber a quién. Dormían en pie, interrompiendo el sueño, mudándose de un lugar a otro. Todo era poner espías, escuchar centinelas, soplar las cuerdas de los arcabuces, aunque traían pocos, porque todos se servían de pedreñales. Roque pasaba las noches apartado de los suyos, en partes y lugares donde ellos no pudiesen saber dónde estaba; porque los muchos bandos que el visorrey de Barcelona había echado sobre su vida le traían inquieto y temeroso, y no se osaba fiar de ninguno, temiendo que los mismos suyos, o le habían de matar, o entregar a la justicia: vida, por cierto, miserable y enfadosa.

En fin, por caminos desusados, por atajos y sendas encubiertas, partieron Roque, don Quijote y Sancho con otros seis escuderos a Barcelona. Llegaron a su playa la víspera de San Juan en la noche, y, abrazando Roque a don Quijote y a Sancho, a quien dio los diez escudos prometidos, que hasta entonces no se los había dado, los dejó, con mil ofrecimientos que de la una a la otra parte se hicieron.

Volvióse Roque; quedóse don Quijote esperando el día, así, a caballo, como estaba, y no tardó mucho cuando comenzó a descubrirse por los balcones del Oriente la faz de la blanca aurora, alegrando las yerbas y las flores, en lugar de alegrar el oído; aunque al mismo instante alegraron también el oído el son de muchas chirimías y atabales, ruido de cascabeles, «¡trapa, trapa, aparta, aparta!» de corredores, que, al parecer, de la ciudad salían. Dio lugar la aurora al sol, que, un rostro mayor que el de una rodela, por el más bajo horizonte, poco a poco, se iba levantando.

Tendieron don Quijote y Sancho la vista por todas partes: vieron el mar, hasta entonces dellos no visto; parecióles espaciosísimo y largo, harto más que las lagunas de Ruidera, que en la Mancha habían visto; vieron las galeras que estaban en la playa, las cuales, abatiendo las tiendas, se descubrieron llenas de flámulas y gallardetes, que tremolaban al viento y besaban y barrían el agua; dentro sonaban clarines, trompetas y chirimías, que cerca y lejos llenaban el aire

de suaves y belicosos acentos. Comenzaron a moverse y a hacer modo de escaramuza por las sosegadas aguas, correspondiéndoles casi al mismo modo infinitos caballeros que de la ciudad sobre hermosos caballos y con vistosas libreas salían. Los soldados de las galeras disparaban infinita artillería, a quien respondían los que estaban en las murallas y fuertes de la ciudad, y la artillería gruesa con espantoso estruendo rompía los vientos, a quien respondían los cañones de crujía de las galeras. El mar alegre, la tierra jocunda, el aire claro, sólo tal vez turbio del humo de la artillería, parece que iba infundiendo y engendrando gusto súbito en todas las gentes.

No podía imaginar Sancho cómo pudiesen tener tantos pies aquellos bultos que por el mar se movían. En esto, llegaron corriendo, con grita, lililíes y algazara, los de las libreas adonde don Quijote suspenso y atónito estaba, y uno dellos, que era el avisado de Roque, dijo en alta voz a don Quijote:

-Bien sea venido a nuestra ciudad el espejo, el farol, la estrella y el norte de toda la caballería andante, donde más largamente se contiene. Bien sea venido, digo, el valeroso don Quijote de la Mancha: no el falso, no el ficticio, no el apócrifo que en falsas historias estos días nos han mostrado, sino el verdadero, el legal y el fiel que nos describió Cide Hamete Benengeli, flor de los historiadores.

No respondió don Quijote palabra, ni los caballeros esperaron a que la respondiese, sino, volviéndose y revolviéndose con los demás que los seguían, comenzaron a hacer un revuelto caracol al derredor de don Quijote; el cual, volviéndose a Sancho, dijo:

-Éstos bien nos han conocido: yo apostaré que han leído nuestra historia y aun la del aragonés recién impresa.

Volvió otra vez el caballero que habló a don Quijote, y díjole:

-Vuesa merced, señor don Quijote, se venga con nosotros, que todos somos sus servidores y grandes amigos de Roque Guinart.

A lo que don Quijote respondió:

-Si cortesías engendran cortesías, la vuestra, señor caballero, es hija o parienta muy cercana de las del gran Roque. Llevadme do quisiéredes, que yo no tendré otra voluntad que la vuestra, y más si la queréis ocupar en vuestro servicio.

Con palabras no menos comedidas que éstas le respondió el caballero, y, encerrándole todos en medio, al son de las chirimías y de los atabales, se encaminaron con él a la ciudad, al entrar de la cual, el malo, que todo lo malo ordena, y los muchachos, que son más malos que el malo, dos dellos traviesos y atrevidos se entraron por toda la gente, y, alzando el uno de la cola del rucio y el otro la de Rocinante, les pusieron y encajaron sendos manojos de aliagas. Sintieron los pobres animales las nuevas espuelas, y, apretando las colas,

aumentaron su disgusto, de manera que, dando mil corcovos, dieron con sus dueños en tierra. Don Quijote, corrido y afrentado, acudió a quitar el plumaje de la cola de su matalote, y Sancho, el de su rucio. Quisieran los que guiaban a don Quijote castigar el atrevimiento de los muchachos, y no fue posible, porque se encerraron entre más de otros mil que los seguían.

Volvieron a subir don Quijote y Sancho; con el mismo aplauso y música llegaron a la casa de su guía, que era grande y principal, en fin, como de caballero rico; donde le dejaremos por agora, porque así lo quiere Cide Hamete.

## Capítulo LXII

*Que trata de la aventura de la cabeza encantada, con otras niñerías que no pueden dejar de contarse*

DON ANTONIO Moreno se llamaba el huésped de don Quijote, caballero rico y discreto, y amigo de holgarse a lo honesto y afable, el cual, viendo en su casa a don Quijote, andaba buscando modos como, sin su perjuicio, sacase a plaza sus locuras; porque no son burlas las que duelen, ni hay pasatiempos que valgan si son con daño de tercero. Lo primero que hizo fue hacer desarmar a don Quijote y sacarle a vistas con aquel su estrecho y acamuzado vestido -como ya otras veces le hemos descrito y pintado-a un balcón que salía a una calle de las más principales de la ciudad, a vista de las gentes y de los muchachos, que como a mona le miraban. Corrieron de nuevo delante dél los de las libreas, como si para él solo, no para alegrar aquel festivo día, se las hubieran puesto; y Sancho estaba contentísimo, por parecerle que se había hallado, sin saber cómo ni cómo no, otras bodas de Camacho, otra casa como la de don Diego de Miranda y otro castillo como el del duque.

Comieron aquel día con don Antonio algunos de sus amigos, honrando todos y tratando a don Quijote como a caballero andante, de lo cual, hueco y pomposo, no cabía en sí de contento. Los donaires de Sancho fueron tantos, que de su boca andaban como colgados todos los criados de casa y todos cuantos le oían. Estando a la mesa, dijo don Antonio a Sancho:

-Acá tenemos noticia, buen Sancho, que sois tan amigo de manjar blanco y de albondiguillas, que, si os sobran, las guardáis en el seno para el otro día.

-No, señor, no es así -respondió Sancho-, porque tengo más de limpio que de goloso, y mi señor don Quijote, que está delante, sabe bien que con un puño de bellotas, o de nueces, nos solemos pasar entrambos ocho días. Verdad es que si tal vez me sucede que me den la vaquilla, corro con la soguilla; quiero decir que como lo que me dan, y uso de los tiempos como los hallo; y quienquiera que hubiere dicho que yo soy comedor aventajado y no limpio, téngase por dicho que no acierta; y de otra manera dijera esto si no mirara a las barbas honradas que están a la mesa.

-Por cierto -dijo don Quijote-, que la parsimonia y limpieza con que Sancho come se puede escribir y grabar en láminas de bronce, para que quede en

memoria eterna de los siglos venideros. Verdad es que, cuando él tiene hambre, parece algo tragón, porque come apriesa y masca a dos carrillos; pero la limpieza siempre la tiene en su punto, y en el tiempo que fue gobernador aprendió a comer a lo melindroso: tanto, que comía con tenedor las uvas y aun los granos de la granada.

-¡Cómo! -dijo don Antonio-. ¿Gobernador ha sido Sancho?

-Sí -respondió Sancho-, y de una ínsula llamada la Barataria. Diez días la goberné a pedir de boca; en ellos perdí el sosiego, y aprendí a despreciar todos los gobiernos del mundo; salí huyendo della, caí en una cueva, donde me tuve por muerto, de la cual salí vivo por milagro.

Contó don Quijote por menudo todo el suceso del gobierno de Sancho, con que dio gran gusto a los oyentes.

Levantados los manteles, y tomando don Antonio por la mano a don Quijote, se entró con él en un apartado aposento, en el cual no había otra cosa de adorno que una mesa, al parecer de jaspe, que sobre un pie de lo mismo se sostenía, sobre la cual estaba puesta, al modo de las cabezas de los emperadores romanos, de los pechos arriba, una que semejaba ser de bronce. Paseóse don Antonio con don Quijote por todo el aposento, rodeando muchas veces la mesa, después de lo cual dijo:

-Agora, señor don Quijote, que estoy enterado que no nos oye y escucha alguno, y está cerrada la puerta, quiero contar a vuestra merced una de las más raras aventuras, o, por mejor decir, novedades que imaginarse pueden, con condición que lo que a vuestra merced dijere lo ha de depositar en los últimos retretes del secreto.

-Así lo juro -respondió don Quijote-, y aun le echaré una losa encima, para más seguridad; porque quiero que sepa vuestra merced, señor don Antonio -que ya sabía su nombre-, que está hablando con quien, aunque tiene oídos para oír, no tiene lengua para hablar; así que, con seguridad puede vuestra merced trasladar lo que tiene en su pecho en el mío y hacer cuenta que lo ha arrojado en los abismos del silencio.

-En fee de esa promesa -respondió don Antonio-, quiero poner a vuestra merced en admiración con lo que viere y oyere, y darme a mí algún alivio de la pena que me causa no tener con quien comunicar mis secretos, que no son para fiarse de todos.

Suspenso estaba don Quijote, esperando en qué habían de parar tantas prevenciones. En esto, tomándole la mano don Antonio, se la paseó por la cabeza de bronce y por toda la mesa, y por el pie de jaspe sobre que se sostenía, y luego dijo:

-Esta cabeza, señor don Quijote, ha sido hecha y fabricada por uno de los



mayores encantadores y hechiceros que ha tenido el mundo, que creo era polaco de nación y discípulo del famoso Escotillo, de quien tantas maravillas se cuentan; el cual estuvo aquí en mi casa, y por precio de mil escudos que le di, labró esta cabeza, que tiene propiedad y virtud de responder a cuantas cosas al oído le preguntaren. Guardó rumbos, pintó caracteres, observó astros, miró puntos, y, finalmente, la sacó con la perfección que veremos mañana, porque los viernes está muda, y hoy, que lo es, nos ha de hacer esperar hasta mañana. En este tiempo podrá vuestra merced prevenirse de lo que querrá preguntar, que por experiencia sé que dice verdad en cuanto responde.

Admirado quedó don Quijote de la virtud y propiedad de la cabeza, y estuvo por no creer a don Antonio; pero, por ver cuán poco tiempo había para hacer la experiencia, no quiso decirle otra cosa sino que le agradecía el haberle descubierto tan gran secreto. Salieron del aposento, cerró la puerta don Antonio con llave, y fuéronse a la sala, donde los demás caballeros estaban. En este tiempo les había contado Sancho muchas de las aventuras y sucesos que a su amo habían acontecido.

Aquella tarde sacaron a pasear a don Quijote, no armado, sino de rúa, vestido un balandrán de paño leonado, que pudiera hacer sudar en aquel tiempo al mismo yelo. Ordenaron con sus criados que entretuviesen a Sancho de modo que no le dejasen salir de casa. Iba don Quijote, no sobre Rocinante, sino sobre un gran macho de paso llano, y muy bien aderezado. Pusiéronle el balandrán, y en las espaldas, sin que lo viese, le cosieron un pargamino, donde le escribieron con letras grandes: *Éste es don Quijote de la Mancha*. En comenzando el paseo, llevaba el rétulo los ojos de cuantos venían a verle, y como leían: *Éste es don Quijote de la Mancha*, admirábase don Quijote de ver que cuantos le miraban le nombraban y conocían; y, volviéndose a don Antonio, que iba a su lado, le dijo:

-Grande es la prerrogativa que encierra en sí la andante caballería, pues hace conocido y famoso al que la profesa por todos los términos de la tierra; si no, mire vuestra merced, señor don Antonio, que hasta los muchachos desta ciudad, sin nunca haberme visto, me conocen.

-Así es, señor don Quijote -respondió don Antonio-, que, así como el fuego no puede estar escondido y encerrado, la virtud no puede dejar de ser conocida, y la que se alcanza por la profesión de las armas resplandece y campea sobre todas las otras.

Acaeció, pues, que, yendo don Quijote con el aplauso que se ha dicho, un castellano que leyó el rétulo de las espaldas, alzó la voz, diciendo:

-¡Válgate el diablo por don Quijote de la Mancha! ¿Cómo que hasta aquí has llegado, sin haberte muerto los infinitos palos que tienes a cuestras? Tu eres loco, y si lo fueras a solas y dentro de las puertas de tu locura, fuera menos mal; pero

tienes propiedad de volver locos y mentecatos a cuantos te tratan y comunican; si no, mírenlo por estos señores que te acompañan. Vuélvete, mentecato, a tu casa, y mira por tu hacienda, por tu mujer y tus hijos, y déjate destas vaciedades que te carcomen el seso y te desnatan el entendimiento.

-Hermano -dijo don Antonio-, seguid vuestro camino, y no deis consejos a quien no os los pide. El señor don Quijote de la Mancha es muy cuerdo, y nosotros, que le acompañamos, no somos necios; la virtud se ha de honrar dondequiera que se hallare, y andad en hora mala, y no os metáis donde no os llaman.

-Pardiez, vuesa merced tiene razón -respondió el castellano-, que aconsejar a este buen hombre es dar coces contra el aguijón; pero, con todo eso, me da muy gran lástima que el buen ingenio que dicen que tiene en todas las cosas este mentecato se le desagüe por la canal de su andante caballería; y la enhoramala que vuesa merced dijo, sea para mí y para todos mis descendientes si de hoy más, aunque viviese más años que Matusalén, diere consejo a nadie, aunque me lo pida.

Apartóse el consejero; siguió adelante el paseo; pero fue tanta la priesa que los muchachos y toda la gente tenía leyendo el rétulo, que se le hubo de quitar don Antonio, como que le quitaba otra cosa.

Llegó la noche, volviéronse a casa; hubo sarao de damas, porque la mujer de don Antonio, que era una señora principal y alegre, hermosa y discreta, convidó a otras sus amigas a que viniesen a honrar a su huésped y a gustar de sus nunca vistas locuras. Vinieron algunas, cenóse espléndidamente y comenzóse el sarao casi a las diez de la noche. Entre las damas había dos de gusto pícaro y burlonas, y, con ser muy honestas, eran algo descompuestas, por dar lugar que las burlas alegrasen sin enfado. Éstas dieron tanta priesa en sacar a danzar a don Quijote, que le molieron, no sólo el cuerpo, pero el ánima. Era cosa de ver la figura de don Quijote, largo, tendido, flaco, amarillo, estrecho en el vestido, desairado, y, sobre todo, no nada ligero. Requebrábanle como a hurto las damiselas, y él, también como a hurto, las desdeñaba; pero, viéndose apretar de requiebros, alzó la voz y dijo:

-Fugite, partes adversae!: dejadme en mi sosiego, pensamientos mal venidos. Allá os avenid, señoras, con vuestros deseos, que la que es reina de los míos, la sin par Dulcinea del Toboso, no consiente que ningunos otros que los suyos me avasallen y rindan.

Y, diciendo esto, se sentó en mitad de la sala, en el suelo, molido y quebrantado de tan bailador ejercicio. Hizo don Antonio que le llevasen en peso a su lecho, y el primero que asió dél fue Sancho, diciéndole:

-¡Nora en tal, señor nuestro amo, lo habéis bailado! ¿Pensáis que todos los valientes son danzadores y todos los andantes caballeros bailarines? Digo que si lo pensáis, que estáis engañado; hombre hay que se atreverá a matar a un gigante antes que hacer una cabriola. Si hubiérades de zapatear, yo supliría vuestra falta, que zapateo como un girifalte; pero en lo del danzar, no doy puntada.

Con estas y otras razones dio que reír Sancho a los del sarao, y dio con su amo en la cama, arrojándole para que sudase la frialdad de su baile.

Otro día le pareció a don Antonio ser bien hacer la experiencia de la cabeza encantada, y con don Quijote, Sancho y otros dos amigos, con las dos señoras que habían molido a don Quijote en el baile, que aquella propia noche se habían quedado con la mujer de don Antonio, se encerró en la estancia donde estaba la cabeza. Contóles la propiedad que tenía, encargóles el secreto y díjoles que aquél era el primero día donde se había de probar la virtud de la tal cabeza encantada; y si no eran los dos amigos de don Antonio, ninguna otra persona sabía el busilis del encanto, y aun si don Antonio no se le hubiera descubierto primero a sus amigos, también ellos cayeran en la admiración en que los demás cayeron, sin ser posible otra cosa: con tal traza y tal orden estaba fabricada.

El primero que se llegó al oído de la cabeza fue el mismo don Antonio, y díjole en voz sumisa, pero no tanto que de todos no fuese entendida:

-Dime, cabeza, por la virtud que en ti se encierra: ¿qué pensamientos tengo yo ahora?

Y la cabeza le respondió, sin mover los labios, con voz clara y distinta, de modo que fue de todos entendida, esta razón:

-Yo no juzgo de pensamientos.

Oyendo lo cual, todos quedaron atónitos, y más viendo que en todo el aposento ni al derredor de la mesa no había persona humana que responder pudiese.

-¿Cuántos estamos aquí? -tornó a preguntar don Antonio.

Y fuele respondido por el propio tenor, paso:

-Estáis tú y tu mujer, con dos amigos tuyos, y dos amigas della, y un caballero famoso llamado don Quijote de la Mancha, y un su escudero que Sancho Panza tiene por nombre.

¡Aquí sí que fue el admirarse de nuevo, aquí sí que fue el erizarse los cabellos a todos de puro espanto! Y, apartándose don Antonio de la cabeza, dijo:

-Esto me basta para darme a entender que no fui engañado del que te me vendió, ¡cabeza sabia, cabeza habladora, cabeza respondona y admirable cabeza! Llegue otro y pregúntele lo que quisiere.

Y, como las mujeres de ordinario son presurosas y amigas de saber, la primera que se llegó fue una de las dos amigas de la mujer de don Antonio, y lo que le

preguntó fue:

-Dime, cabeza, ¿qué haré yo para ser muy hermosa?

Y fuele respondido:

-Sé muy honesta.

-No te pregunto más -dijo la preguntanta.

Llegó luego la compañera, y dijo:

-Querría saber, cabeza, si mi marido me quiere bien, o no.

Y respondiéronle:

-Mira las obras que te hace, y echarlo has de ver.

Apartóse la casada diciendo:

-Esta respuesta no tenía necesidad de pregunta, porque, en efecto, las obras que se hacen declaran la voluntad que tiene el que las hace.

Luego llegó uno de los dos amigos de don Antonio, y preguntóle:

-¿Quién soy yo?

Y fuele respondido:

-Tú lo sabes.

-No te pregunto eso -respondió el caballero-, sino que me digas si me conoces tú.

-Sí conozco -le respondieron-, que eres don Pedro Noriz.

-No quiero saber más, pues esto basta para entender, ¡oh cabeza!, que lo sabes todo.

Y, apartándose, llegó el otro amigo y preguntóle:

-Dime, cabeza, ¿qué deseos tiene mi hijo el mayorazgo?

-Ya yo he dicho -le respondieron- que yo no juzgo de deseos, pero, con todo eso, te sé decir que los que tu hijo tiene son de enterrarte.

-Eso es -dijo el caballero-: lo que veo por los ojos, con el dedo lo señalo.

Y no preguntó más. Llegóse la mujer de don Antonio, y dijo:

-Yo no sé, cabeza, qué preguntarte; sólo querría saber de ti si gozaré muchos años de buen marido.

Y respondiéronle:

-Sí gozarás, porque su salud y su templanza en el vivir prometen muchos años de vida, la cual muchos suelen acortar por su destemplanza.

Llegóse luego don Quijote, y dijo:

-Dime tú, el que respondes: ¿fue verdad o fue sueño lo que yo cuento que me pasó en la cueva de Montesinos? ¿Serán ciertos los azotes de Sancho mi escudero? ¿Tendrá efecto el desencanto de Dulcinea?

-A lo de la cueva -respondieron- hay mucho que decir: de todo tiene; los azotes de Sancho irán de espacio, el desencanto de Dulcinea llegará a debida ejecución.

-No quiero saber más -dijo don Quijote-; que como yo vea a Dulcinea

desencantada, haré cuenta que vienen de golpe todas las venturas que acertare a desear.

El último preguntante fue Sancho, y lo que preguntó fue:

-¿Por ventura, cabeza, tendré otro gobierno? ¿Saldré de la estrechez de escudero? ¿Volveré a ver a mi mujer y a mis hijos?

A lo que le respondieron:

-Gobernarás en tu casa; y si vuelves a ella, verás a tu mujer y a tus hijos; y, dejando de servir, dejarás de ser escudero.

-¡Bueno, par Dios! -dijo Sancho Panza-. Esto yo me lo dijera: no dijera más el profeta Perogrullo.

-Bestia -dijo don Quijote-, ¿qué quieres que te respondan? ¿No basta que las respuestas que esta cabeza ha dado correspondan a lo que se le pregunta?

-Sí basta -respondió Sancho-, pero quisiera yo que se declarara más y me dijera más.

Con esto se acabaron las preguntas y las respuestas, pero no se acabó la admiración en que todos quedaron, excepto los dos amigos de don Antonio, que el caso sabían. El cual quiso Cide Hamete Benengeli declarar luego, por no tener suspenso al mundo, creyendo que algún hechicero y extraordinario misterio en la tal cabeza se encerraba; y así, dice que don Antonio Moreno, a imitación de otra cabeza que vio en Madrid, fabricada por un estampero, hizo ésta en su casa, para entretenerse y suspender a los ignorantes; y la fábrica era de esta suerte: la tabla de la mesa era de palo, pintada y barnizada como jaspe, y el pie sobre que se sostenía era de lo mismo, con cuatro garras de águila que dél salían, para mayor firmeza del peso. La cabeza, que parecía medalla y figura de emperador romano, y de color de bronce, estaba toda hueca, y ni más ni menos la tabla de la mesa, en que se encajaba tan justamente, que ninguna señal de juntura se parecía. El pie de la tabla era ansimesmo hueco, que respondía a la garganta y pechos de la cabeza, y todo esto venía a responder a otro aposento que debajo de la estancia de la cabeza estaba. Por todo este hueco de pie, mesa, garganta y pechos de la medalla y figura referida se encaminaba un cañón de hoja de lata, muy justo, que de nadie podía ser visto. En el aposento de abajo correspondiente al de arriba se ponía el que había de responder, pegada la boca con el mismo cañón, de modo que, a modo de cerbatana, iba la voz de arriba abajo y de abajo arriba, en palabras articuladas y claras; y de esta manera no era posible conocer el embuste. Un sobrino de don Antonio, estudiante agudo y discreto, fue el respondiente; el cual, estando avisado de su señor tío de los que habían de entrar con él en aquel día en el aposento de la cabeza, le fue fácil responder con presteza y puntualidad a la primera pregunta; a las demás respondió por conjeturas, y, como discreto, discretamente. Y dice más Cide Hamete: que hasta

diez o doce días duró esta maravillosa máquina; pero que, divulgándose por la ciudad que don Antonio tenía en su casa una cabeza encantada, que a cuantos le preguntaban respondía, temiendo no llegase a los oídos de las despiertas centinelas de nuestra Fe, habiendo declarado el caso a los señores inquisidores, le mandaron que lo deshiciese y no pasase más adelante, porque el vulgo ignorante no se escandalizase; pero en la opinión de don Quijote y de Sancho Panza, la cabeza quedó por encantada y por respondona, más a satisfacción de don Quijote que de Sancho.

Los caballeros de la ciudad, por complacer a don Antonio y por agasajar a don Quijote y dar lugar a que descubriese sus sandeces, ordenaron de correr sortija de allí a seis días; que no tuvo efecto por la ocasión que se dirá adelante. Diole gana a don Quijote de pasear la ciudad a la llana y a pie, temiendo que, si iba a caballo, le habían de perseguir los mochachos, y así, él y Sancho, con otros dos criados que don Antonio le dio, salieron a pasearse.

Sucedió, pues, que, yendo por una calle, alzó los ojos don Quijote, y vio escrito sobre una puerta, con letras muy grandes: *Aquí se imprimen libros*; de lo que se contentó mucho, porque hasta entonces no había visto emprenta alguna, y deseaba saber cómo fuese. Entró dentro, con todo su acompañamiento, y vio tirar en una parte, corregir en otra, componer en ésta, enmendar en aquélla, y, finalmente, toda aquella máquina que en las emprentas grandes se muestra. Llegábase don Quijote a un cajón y preguntaba qué era aquéllo que allí se hacía; dábanle cuenta los oficiales, admirábase y pasaba adelante. Llegó en otras a uno, y preguntóle qué era lo que hacía. El oficial le respondió:

-Señor, este caballero que aquí está -y enseñóle a un hombre de muy buen talle y parecer y de alguna gravedad-ha traducido un libro toscano en nuestra lengua castellana, y estoyle yo componiendo, para darle a la estampa.

-¿Qué título tiene el libro? -preguntó don Quijote.

-A lo que el autor respondió:

-Señor, el libro, en toscano, se llama *Le bagatele*.

-Y ¿qué responde le bagatele en nuestro castellano? -preguntó don Quijote.

-*Le bagatele* -dijo el autor-es como si en castellano dijésemos los *juguetes*; y, aunque este libro es en el nombre humilde, contiene y encierra en sí cosas muy buenas y sustanciales.

-Yo -dijo don Quijote-sé algún tanto de el toscano, y me precio de cantar algunas estancias del Ariosto. Pero dígame vuesa merced, señor mío, y no digo esto porque quiero examinar el ingenio de vuestra merced, sino por curiosidad no más: ¿ha hallado en su escritura alguna vez nombrar *piñata*?

-Sí, muchas veces -respondió el autor.

-Y ¿cómo la traduce vuestra merced en castellano? -preguntó don Quijote.

-¿Cómo la había de traducir -replicó el autor-, sino diciendo *olla*?

-¡Cuerpo de tal -dijo don Quijote-, y qué adelante está vuesa merced en el toscano idioma! Yo apostaré una buena apuesta que adonde diga en el toscano *piache*, dice vuesa merced en el castellano *place*; y adonde diga *più*, dice *más*, y el su declara con *arriba*, y el giù con *abajo*.

-Sí declaro, por cierto -dijo el autor-, porque ésas son sus propias correspondencias.

-Osaré yo jurar -dijo don Quijote- que no es vuesa merced conocido en el mundo, enemigo siempre de premiar los floridos ingenios ni los loables trabajos. ¡Qué de habilidades hay perdidas por ahí! ¡Qué de ingenios arrinconados! ¡Qué de virtudes menospreciadas! Pero, con todo esto, me parece que el traducir de una lengua en otra, como no sea de las reinas de las lenguas, griega y latina, es como quien mira los tapices flamencos por el revés, que, aunque se veen las figuras, son llenas de hilos que las escurecen, y no se veen con la lisura y tez de la haz; y el traducir de lenguas fáciles, ni arguye ingenio ni elocución, como no le arguye el que traslada ni el que copia un papel de otro papel. Y no por esto quiero inferir que no sea loable este ejercicio del traducir; porque en otras cosas peores se podría ocupar el hombre, y que menos provecho le trujesen. Fuera desta cuenta van los dos famosos traductores: el uno, el doctor Cristóbal de Figueroa, en su *Pastor Fido*, y el otro, don Juan de Jáuriguí, en su *Aminta*, donde felizmente ponen en duda cuál es la traducción o cuál el original. Pero dígame vuestra merced: este libro, ¿imprímese por su cuenta, o tiene ya vendido el privilegio a algún librero?

-Por mi cuenta lo imprimo -respondió el autor-, y pienso ganar mil ducados, por lo menos, con esta primera impresión, que ha de ser de dos mil cuerpos, y se han de despachar a seis reales cada uno, en daca las pajas.

-¡Bien está vuesa merced en la cuenta! -respondió don Quijote-. Bien parece que no sabe las entradas y salidas de los impresores, y las correspondencias que hay de unos a otros; yo le prometo que, cuando se vea cargado de dos mil cuerpos de libros, vea tan molido su cuerpo, que se espante, y más si el libro es un poco avieso y no nada picante.

-Pues, ¿qué? -dijo el autor-. ¿Quiere vuesa merced que se lo dé a un librero, que me dé por el privilegio tres maravedís, y aún piensa que me hace merced en dármelos? Yo no imprimo mis libros para alcanzar fama en el mundo, que ya en él soy conocido por mis obras: provecho quiero, que sin él no vale un cuatrín la buena fama.

-Dios le dé a vuesa merced buena manderecha -respondió don Quijote.

Y pasó adelante a otro cajón, donde vio que estaban corrigiendo un pliego de un libro que se intitulaba *Luz del alma*; y, en viéndole, dijo:

-Estos tales libros, aunque hay muchos deste género, son los que se deben imprimir, porque son muchos los pecadores que se usan, y son menester infinitas luces para tantos desalumbrados.

Pasó adelante y vio que asimesmo estaban corrigiendo otro libro; y, preguntando su título, le respondieron que se llamaba la *Segunda parte del Ingenioso Hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*, compuesta por un tal vecino de Tordesillas.

-Ya yo tengo noticia deste libro -dijo don Quijote-, y en verdad y en mi conciencia que pensé que ya estaba quemado y hecho polvos, por impertinente; pero su San Martín se le llegará, como a cada puerco, que las historias fingidas tanto tienen de buenas y de deleitables cuanto se llegan a la verdad o la semejanza della, y las verdaderas tanto son mejores cuanto son más verdaderas.

Y, diciendo esto, con muestras de algún despecho, se salió de la emprenta. Y aquel mismo día ordenó don Antonio de llevarle a ver las galeras que en la playa estaban, de que Sancho se regocijó mucho, a causa que en su vida las había visto. Avisó don Antonio al cuatralbo de las galeras como aquella tarde había de llevar a verlas a su huésped el famoso don Quijote de la Mancha, de quien ya el cuatralbo y todos los vecinos de la ciudad tenían noticia; y lo que le sucedió en ellas se dirá en el siguiente capítulo.



## Capítulo LXIII

*De lo mal que le avino a Sancho Panza con la visita de las galeras, y la nueva aventura de la hermosa morisca*

GRANDES eran los discursos que don Quijote hacía sobre la respuesta de la encantada cabeza, sin que ninguno dellos diese en el embuste, y todos paraban con la promesa, que él tuvo por cierto, del desencanto de Dulcinea. Allí iba y venía, y se alegraba entre sí mismo, creyendo que había de ver presto su cumplimiento; y Sancho, aunque aborrecía el ser gobernador, como queda dicho, todavía deseaba volver a mandar y a ser obedecido; que esta mala ventura trae consigo el mando, aunque sea de burlas.

En resolución, aquella tarde don Antonio Moreno, su huésped, y sus dos amigos, con don Quijote y Sancho, fueron a las galeras. El cuatralbo, que estaba avisado de su buena venida, por ver a los dos tan famosos Quijote y Sancho, apenas llegaron a la marina, cuando todas las galeras abatieron tienda, y sonaron las chirimías; arrojaron luego el esquife al agua, cubierto de ricos tapetes y de almohadas de terciopelo carmesí, y, en poniendo que puso los pies en él don Quijote, disparó la capitana el cañón de crujía, y las otras galeras hicieron lo mismo, y, al subir don Quijote por la escala derecha, toda la chusma le saludó como es usanza cuando una persona principal entra en la galera, diciendo: «¡Hu, hu, hu!» tres veces. Diole la mano el general, que con este nombre le llamaremos, que era un principal caballero valenciano; abrazó a don Quijote, diciéndole:

-Este día señalaré yo con piedra blanca, por ser uno de los mejores que pienso llevar en mi vida, habiendo visto al señor don Quijote de la Mancha: tiempo y señal que nos muestra que en él se encierra y cifra todo el valor del andante caballería.

Con otras no menos corteses razones le respondió don Quijote, alegre sobremanera de verse tratar tan a lo señor. Entraron todos en la popa, que estaba muy bien aderezada, y sentáronse por los bandines, pasóse el cómitre en crujía, y dio señal con el pito que la chusma hiciese fuera ropa, que se hizo en un instante. Sancho, que vio tanta gente en cueros, quedó pasmado, y más cuando vio hacer tienda con tanta priesa, que a él le pareció que todos los diablos andaban allí trabajando; pero esto todo fueron tortas y pan pintado para lo que ahora diré. Estaba Sancho sentado sobre el estanterol, junto al espalder de la mano derecha,

el cual ya avisado de lo que había de hacer, asió de Sancho, y, levantándole en los brazos, toda la chusma puesta en pie y alerta, comenzando de la derecha banda, le fue dando y volteando sobre los brazos de la chusma de banco en banco, con tanta priesa, que el pobre Sancho perdió la vista de los ojos, y sin duda pensó que los mismos demonios le llevaban, y no pararon con él hasta volverle por la siniestra banda y ponerle en la popa. Quedó el pobre molido, y jadeando, y trasudando, sin poder imaginar qué fue lo que sucedido le había.

Don Quijote, que vio el vuelo sin alas de Sancho, preguntó al general si eran ceremonias aquéllas que se usaban con los primeros que entraban en las galeras; porque si acaso lo fuese, él, que no tenía intención de profesar en ellas, no quería hacer semejantes ejercicios, y que votaba a Dios que, si alguno llegaba a asirle para voltearle, que le había de sacar el alma a puntillazos; y, diciendo esto, se levantó en pie y empuñó la espada.

A este instante abatieron tienda, y con grandísimo ruido dejaron caer la entena de alto abajo. Pensó Sancho que el cielo se desencajaba de sus quicios y venía a dar sobre su cabeza; y, agobiándola, lleno de miedo, la puso entre las piernas. No las tuvo todas consigo don Quijote; que también se estremeció y encogió de hombros y perdió la color del rostro. La chusma izó la entena con la misma priesa y ruido que la habían amainado, y todo esto, callando, como si no tuvieran voz ni aliento. Hizo señal el cómitre que zarpasen el ferro, y, saltando en mitad de la crujía con el corbacho o rebenque, comenzó a mosquear las espaldas de la chusma, y a largarse poco a poco a la mar. Cuando Sancho vio a una moverse tantos pies colorados, que tales pensó él que eran los remos, dijo entre sí:

-Éstas sí son verdaderamente cosas encantadas, y no las que mi amo dice. ¿Qué han hecho estos desdichados, que así los azotan, y cómo este hombre solo, que anda por aquí silbando, tiene atrevimiento para azotar a tanta gente? Ahora yo digo que éste es infierno, o, por lo menos, el purgatorio.

Don Quijote, que vio la atención con que Sancho miraba lo que pasaba, le dijo:

-¡Ah Sancho amigo, y con qué brevedad y cuán a poca costa os podíades vos, si quisiédeses, desnudar de medio cuerpo arriba, y ponerlos entre estos señores, y acabar con el desencanto de Dulcinea! Pues con la miseria y pena de tantos, no sentiríades vos mucho la vuestra; y más, que podría ser que el sabio Merlín tomase en cuenta cada azote déstos, por ser dados de buena mano, por diez de los que vos finalmente os habéis de dar.

Preguntar quería el general qué azotes eran aquéllos, o qué desencanto de Dulcinea, cuando dijo el marinero:

-Señal hace Monjuí de que hay bajel de remos en la costa por la banda del poniente.

Esto oído, saltó el general en la crujía, y dijo:

-¡Ea hijos, no se nos vaya! Algún bergantín de cosarios de Argel debe de ser éste que la atalaya nos señala.

Llegáronse luego las otras tres galeras a la capitana, a saber lo que se les ordenaba. Mandó el general que las dos saliesen a la mar, y él con la otra iría tierra a tierra, porque ansí el bajel no se les escaparía. Apretó la chusma los remos, impeliendo las galeras con tanta furia, que parecía que volaban. Las que salieron a la mar, a obra de dos millas descubrieron un bajel, que con la vista le marcaron por de hasta catorce o quince bancos, y así era la verdad; el cual bajel, cuando descubrió las galeras, se puso en caza, con intención y esperanza de escaparse por su ligereza; pero avínole mal, porque la galera capitana era de los más ligeros bajeles que en la mar navegaban, y así le fue entrando, que claramente los del bergantín conocieron que no podían escaparse; y así, el arráez quisiera que dejaran los remos y se entregaran, por no irritar a enojo al capitán que nuestras galeras regía. Pero la suerte, que de otra manera lo guiaba, ordenó que, ya que la capitana llegaba tan cerca que podían los del bajel oír las voces que desde ella les decían que se rindiesen, dos *toraquís*, que es como decir dos turcos borrachos, que en el bergantín venían con estos doce, dispararon dos escopetas, con que dieron muerte a dos soldados que sobre nuestras arrumbadas venían. Viendo lo cual, juró el general de no dejar con vida a todos cuantos en el bajel tomase, y, llegando a embestir con toda furia, se le escapó por debajo de la palamenta. Pasó la galera adelante un buen trecho; los del bajel se vieron perdidos, hicieron vela en tanto que la galera volvía, y de nuevo, a vela y a remo, se pusieron en caza; pero no les aprovechó su diligencia tanto como les dañó su atrevimiento, porque, alcanzándoles la capitana a poco más de media milla, les echó la palamenta encima y los cogió vivos a todos.

Llegaron en esto las otras dos galeras, y todas cuatro con la presa volvieron a la playa, donde infinita gente los estaba esperando, deseosos de ver lo que traían. Dio fondo el general cerca de tierra, y conoció que estaba en la marina el virrey de la ciudad. Mandó echar el esquife para traerle, y mandó amainar la entena para ahorcar luego al arráez y a los demás turcos que en el bajel había cogido, que serían hasta treinta y seis personas, todos gallardos, y los más, escopeteros turcos. Preguntó el general quién era el arráez del bergantín y fuele respondido por uno de los cautivos, en lengua castellana, que después pareció ser renegado español:

-Este mancebo, señor, que aquí vees es nuestro arráez.

Y mostróle uno de los más bellos y gallardos mozos que pudiera pintar la humana imaginación. La edad, al parecer, no llegaba a veinte años. Preguntóle el general:

-Dime, mal aconsejado perro, ¿quién te movió a matarme mis soldados, pues veías ser imposible el escaparte? ¿Ese respeto se guarda a las capitanas? ¿No sabes tú que no es valentía la temeridad? Las esperanzas dudosas han de hacer a los hombres atrevidos, pero no temerarios.

Responder quería el arráez; pero no pudo el general, por entonces, oír la respuesta, por acudir a recibir al virrey, que ya entraba en la galera, con el cual entraron algunos de sus criados y algunas personas del pueblo.

-¡Buena ha estado la caza, señor general! -dijo el virrey.

-Y tan buena -respondió el general-cual la verá Vuestra Excelencia agora colgada de esta entena.

-¿Cómo así? -replicó el virrey.

-Porque me han muerto -respondió el general-, contra toda ley y contra toda razón y usanza de guerra, dos soldados de los mejores que en estas galeras venían, y yo he jurado de ahorcar a cuantos he cautivado, principalmente a este mozo, que es el arráez del bergantín.

Y enseñóle al que ya tenía atadas las manos y echado el cordel a la garganta, esperando la muerte.

Miróle el virrey, y, viéndole tan hermoso, y tan gallardo, y tan humilde, dándole en aquel instante una carta de recomendación su hermosura, le vino deseo de excusar su muerte; y así, le preguntó:

-Dime, arráez, ¿eres turco de nación, o moro, o renegado?

A lo cual el mozo respondió, en lengua asimesmo castellana:

-Ni soy turco de nación, ni moro, ni renegado.

-Pues, ¿qué eres? -replicó el virrey.

-Mujer cristiana -respondió el mancebo.

-¿Mujer y cristiana, y en tal traje y en tales pasos? Más es cosa para admirarla que para creerla.

-Suspended -dijo el mozo-, ¡oh señores!, la ejecución de mi muerte, que no se perderá mucho en que se dilate vuestra venganza en tanto que yo os cuente mi vida.

¿Quién fuera el de corazón tan duro que con estas razones no se ablandara, o, a lo menos, hasta oír las que el triste y lastimado mancebo decir quería? El general le dijo que dijese lo que quisiese, pero que no esperase alcanzar perdón de su conocida culpa. Con esta licencia, el mozo comenzó a decir desta manera:

-«De aquella nación más desdichada que prudente, sobre quien ha llovido estos días un mar de desgracias, nací yo, de moriscos padres engendrada. En la corriente de su desventura fui yo por dos tíos míos llevada a Berbería, sin que me aprovechase decir que era cristiana, como, en efecto, lo soy, y no de las fingidas ni aparentes, sino de las verdaderas y católicas. No me valió, con los

que tenían a cargo nuestro miserable destierro, decir esta verdad, ni mis tíos quisieron creerla; antes la tuvieron por mentira y por invención para quedarme en la tierra donde había nacido, y así, por fuerza más que por grado, me trujeron consigo. Tuve una madre cristiana y un padre discreto y cristiano, ni más ni menos; mamé la fe católica en la leche; criéme con buenas costumbres; ni en la lengua ni en ellas jamás, a mi parecer, di señales de ser morisca. Al par y al paso destas virtudes, que yo creo que lo son, creció mi hermosura, si es que tengo alguna; y, aunque mi recato y mi encerramiento fue mucho, no debió de ser tanto que no tuviese lugar de verme un mancebo caballero, llamado don Gaspar Gregorio, hijo mayorazgo de un caballero que junto a nuestro lugar otro suyo tiene. Cómo me vio, cómo nos hablamos, cómo se vio perdido por mí y cómo yo no muy ganada por él, sería largo de contar, y más en tiempo que estoy temiendo que, entre la lengua y la garganta, se ha de atravesar el riguroso cordel que me amenaza; y así, sólo diré cómo en nuestro destierro quiso acompañarme don Gregorio. Mezclóse con los moriscos que de otros lugares salieron, porque sabía muy bien la lengua, y en el viaje se hizo amigo de dos tíos míos que consigo me traían; porque mi padre, prudente y prevenido, así como oyó el primer bando de nuestro destierro, se salió del lugar y se fue a buscar alguno en los reinos estraños que nos acogiese. Dejó encerradas y enterradas, en una parte de quien yo sola tengo noticia, muchas perlas y piedras de gran valor, con algunos dineros en cruzados y doblones de oro. Mandóme que no tocase al tesoro que dejaba en ninguna manera, si acaso antes que él volviese nos desterraban. Hícelo así, y con mis tíos, como tengo dicho, y otros parientes y allegados pasamos a Berbería; y el lugar donde hicimos asiento fue en Argel, como si le hiciéramos en el mismo infierno. Tuvo noticia el rey de mi hermosura, y la fama se la dio de mis riquezas, que, en parte, fue ventura mía. Llamóme ante sí, preguntóme de qué parte de España era y qué dineros y qué joyas traía. Díjele el lugar, y que las joyas y dineros quedaban en él enterrados, pero que con facilidad se podrían cobrar si yo misma volviese por ellos. Todo esto le dije, temerosa de que no le cegase mi hermosura, sino su codicia. Estando conmigo en estas pláticas, le llegaron a decir cómo venía conmigo uno de los más gallardos y hermosos mancebos que se podía imaginar. Luego entendí que lo decían por don Gaspar Gregorio, cuya belleza se deja atrás las mayores que encarecer se pueden. Turbéme, considerando el peligro que don Gregorio corría, porque entre aquellos bárbaros turcos en más se tiene y estima un mochacho o mancebo hermoso que una mujer, por bellísima que sea. Mandó luego el rey que se le trujesen allí delante para verle, y preguntóme si era verdad lo que de aquel mozo le decían. Entonces yo, casi como prevenida del cielo, le dije que sí era; pero que le hacía saber que no era varón, sino mujer como yo, y que le suplicaba me la dejase ir a

vestir en su natural traje, para que de todo en todo mostrase su belleza y con menos empacho pareciese ante su presencia. Díjome que fuese en buena hora, y que otro día hablaríamos en el modo que se podía tener para que yo volviese a España a sacar el escondido tesoro. Hablé con don Gaspar, contéle el peligro que corría el mostrar ser hombre; vestíle de mora, y aquella mesma tarde le truje a la presencia del rey, el cual, en viéndole, quedó admirado y hizo disignio de guardarla para hacer presente della al Gran Señor; y, por huir del peligro que en el serrallo de sus mujeres podía tener y temer de sí mismo, la mandó poner en casa de unas principales moras que la guardasen y la sirviesen, adonde le llevaron luego. Lo que los dos sentimos (que no puedo negar que no le quiero) se deje a la consideración de los que se apartan si bien se quieren. Dio luego traza el rey de que yo volviese a España en este bergantín y que me acompañasen dos turcos de nación, que fueron los que mataron vuestros soldados. Vino también conmigo este renegado español -señalando al que había hablado primero-, del cual sé yo bien que es cristiano encubierto y que viene con más deseo de quedarse en España que de volver a Berbería; la demás chusma del bergantín son moros y turcos, que no sirven de más que de bogar al remo. Los dos turcos, codiciosos e insolentes, sin guardar el orden que traíamos de que a mí y a este renegado en la primer parte de España, en hábito de cristianos, de que venimos proveídos, nos echasen en tierra, primero quisieron barrer esta costa y hacer alguna presa, si pudiesen, temiendo que si primero nos echaban en tierra, por algún accidente que a los dos nos sucediese, podríamos descubrir que quedaba el bergantín en la mar, y si acaso hubiese galeras por esta costa, los tomasen. Anoche descubrimos esta playa, y, sin tener noticia destas cuatro galeras, fuimos descubiertos, y nos ha sucedido lo que habéis visto. En resolución: don Gregorio queda en hábito de mujer entre mujeres, con manifiesto peligro de perderse, y yo me veo atadas las manos, esperando, o, por mejor decir, temiendo perder la vida, que ya me cansa.» Éste es, señores, el fin de mi lamentable historia, tan verdadera como desdichada; lo que os ruego es que me dejéis morir como cristiana, pues, como ya he dicho, en ninguna cosa he sido culpante de la culpa en que los de mi nación han caído.

Y luego calló, preñados los ojos de tiernas lágrimas, a quien acompañaron muchas de los que presentes estaban. El virrey, tierno y compasivo, sin hablarle palabra, se llegó a ella y le quitó con sus manos el cordel que las hermosas de la mora ligaba.

En tanto, pues, que la morisca cristiana su peregrina historia trataba, tuvo clavados los ojos en ella un anciano peregrino que entró en la galera cuando entró el virrey; y, apenas dio fin a su plática la morisca, cuando él se arrojó a sus pies, y, abrazado dellos, con interrumpidas palabras de mil sollozos y suspiros, le

dijo:

-¡Oh Ana Félix, desdichada hija mía! Yo soy tu padre Ricote, que volvía a buscarte por no poder vivir sin ti, que eres mi alma.

A cuyas palabras abrió los ojos Sancho, y alzó la cabeza (que inclinada tenía, pensando en la desgracia de su paseo), y, mirando al peregrino, conoció ser el mismo Ricote que topó el día que salió de su gobierno, y confirmóse que aquélla era su hija, la cual, ya desatada, abrazó a su padre, mezclando sus lágrimas con las suyas; el cual dijo al general y al virrey:

-Ésta, señores, es mi hija, más desdichada en sus sucesos que en su nombre. Ana Félix se llama, con el sobrenombre de Ricote, famosa tanto por su hermosura como por mi riqueza. Yo salí de mi patria a buscar en reinos estraños quien nos albergase y recogiese, y, habiéndole hallado en Alemania, volví en este hábito de peregrino, en compañía de otros alemanes, a buscar mi hija y a desenterrar muchas riquezas que dejé escondidas. No hallé a mi hija; hallé el tesoro, que conmigo traigo, y agora, por el estraño rodeo que habéis visto, he hallado el tesoro que más me enriquece, que es a mi querida hija. Si nuestra poca culpa y sus lágrimas y las mías, por la integridad de vuestra justicia, pueden abrir puertas a la misericordia, usadla con nosotros, que jamás tuvimos pensamiento de ofenderos, ni convenimos en ningún modo con la intención de los nuestros, que justamente han sido desterrados.

Entonces dijo Sancho:

-Bien conozco a Ricote, y sé que es verdad lo que dice en cuanto a ser Ana Félix su hija; que en esotras zarandajas de ir y venir, tener buena o mala intención, no me entremeto.

Admirados del estraño caso todos los presentes, el general dijo:

-Una por una vuestras lágrimas no me dejarán cumplir mi juramento: vivid, hermosa Ana Félix, los años de vida que os tiene determinados el cielo, y lleven la pena de su culpa los insolentes y atrevidos que la cometieron.

Y mandó luego ahorcar de la entena a los dos turcos que a sus dos soldados habían muerto; pero el virrey le pidió encarecidamente no los ahorcase, pues más locura que valentía había sido la suya. Hizo el general lo que el virrey le pedía, porque no se ejecutan bien las venganzas a sangre helada. Procuraron luego dar traza de sacar a don Gaspar Gregorio del peligro en que quedaba. Ofreció Ricote para ello más de dos mil ducados que en perlas y en joyas tenía. Diéronse muchos medios, pero ninguno fue tal como el que dio el renegado español que se ha dicho, el cual se ofreció de volver a Argel en algún barco pequeño, de hasta seis bancos, armado de remeros cristianos, porque él sabía dónde, cómo y cuándo podía y debía desembarcar, y asimismo no ignoraba la casa donde don Gaspar quedaba. Dudaron el general y el virrey el fiarse del

renegado, ni confiar de los cristianos que habían de bogar el remo; fióle Ana Félix, y Ricote, su padre, dijo que salía a dar el rescate de los cristianos, si acaso se perdiesen.

Firmados, pues, en este parecer, se desembarcó el virrey, y don Antonio Moreno se llevó consigo a la morisca y a su padre, encargándole el virrey que los regalase y acariciase cuanto le fuese posible; que de su parte le ofrecía lo que en su casa hubiese para su regalo. Tanta fue la benevolencia y caridad que la hermosura de Ana Félix infundió en su pecho.



## Capítulo LXIV

*Que trata de la aventura que más pesadumbre dio a don Quijote de cuantas hasta entonces le habían sucedido*

LA MUJER de don Antonio Moreno cuenta la historia que recibió grandísimo contento de ver a Ana Félix en su casa. Recibióla con mucho agrado, así enamorada de su belleza como de su discreción, porque en lo uno y en lo otro era estremada la morisca, y toda la gente de la ciudad, como a campana tañida, venían a verla.

Dijo don Quijote a don Antonio que el parecer que habían tomado en la libertad de don Gregorio no era bueno, porque tenía más de peligroso que de conveniente, y que sería mejor que le pusiesen a él en Berbería con sus armas y caballo; que él le sacaría a pesar de toda la morisma, como había hecho don Gaiferos a su esposa Melisendra.

-Advierta vuesa merced -dijo Sancho, oyendo esto-que el señor don Gaiferos sacó a su esposa de tierra firme y la llevó a Francia por tierra firme; pero aquí, si acaso sacamos a don Gregorio, no tenemos por dónde traerle a España, pues está la mar en medio.

-Para todo hay remedio, si no es para la muerte -respondió don Quijote-; pues, llegando el barco a la marina, nos podremos embarcar en él, aunque todo el mundo lo impida.

-Muy bien lo pinta y facilita vuestra merced -dijo Sancho-, pero del dicho al hecho hay gran trecho, y yo me atengo al renegado, que me parece muy hombre de bien y de muy buenas entrañas.

Don Antonio dijo que si el renegado no saliese bien del caso, se tomaría el espediente de que el gran don Quijote pasase en Berbería.

De allí a dos días partió el renegado en un ligero barco de seis remos por banda, armado de valentísima chusma; y de allí a otros dos se partieron las galeras a Levante, habiendo pedido el general al visorrey fuese servido de avisarle de lo que sucediese en la libertad de don Gregorio y en el caso de Ana Félix; quedó el visorrey de hacerlo así como se lo pedía.

Y una mañana, saliendo don Quijote a pasearse por la playa armado de todas sus armas, porque, como muchas veces decía, ellas eran sus arreos, y su descanso el pelear, y no se hallaba sin ellas un punto, vio venir hacía él un caballero, armado asimismo de punta en blanco, que en el escudo traía pintada

una luna resplandeciente; el cual, llegándose a trecho que podía ser oído, en altas voces, encaminando sus razones a don Quijote, dijo:

-Insigne caballero y jamás como se debe alabado don Quijote de la Mancha, yo soy el Caballero de la Blanca Luna, cuyas inauditas hazañas quizá te le habrán traído a la memoria. Vengo a contender contigo y a probar la fuerza de tus brazos, en razón de hacerte conocer y confesar que mi dama, sea quien fuere, es sin comparación más hermosa que tu Dulcinea del Toboso; la cual verdad si tú la confiesas de llano en llano, escusarás tu muerte y el trabajo que yo he de tomar en dártela; y si tú peleares y yo te venciere, no quiero otra satisfacción sino que, dejando las armas y absteniéndote de buscar aventuras, te recojas y retires a tu lugar por tiempo de un año, donde has de vivir sin echar mano a la espada, en paz tranquila y en provechoso sosiego, porque así conviene al aumento de tu hacienda y a la salvación de tu alma; y si tú me vencieres, quedará a tu discreción mi cabeza, y serán tuyos los despojos de mis armas y caballo, y pasará a la tuya la fama de mis hazañas. Mira lo que te está mejor, y respóndeme luego, porque hoy todo el día traigo de término para despachar este negocio.

Don Quijote quedó suspenso y atónito, así de la arrogancia del Caballero de la Blanca Luna como de la causa por que le desafiaba; y con reposo y ademán severo le respondió:

-Caballero de la Blanca Luna, cuyas hazañas hasta agora no han llegado a mi noticia, yo osaré jurar que jamás habéis visto a la ilustre Dulcinea; que si visto la hubiéradades, yo sé que procurarades no ponerlos en esta demanda, porque su vista os desengañara de que no ha habido ni puede haber belleza que con la suya comparar se pueda; y así, no diciéndoos que mentís, sino que no acertáis en lo propuesto, con las condiciones que habéis referido, aceto vuestro desafío, y luego, porque no se pase el día que traéis determinado; y sólo exceto de las condiciones la de que se pase a mí la fama de vuestras hazañas, porque no sé cuáles ni qué tales sean: con las mías me contento, tales cuales ellas son. Tomad, pues, la parte del campo que quisiéredes, que yo haré lo mesmo, y a quien Dios se la diere, San Pedro se la bendiga.

Habían descubierto de la ciudad al Caballero de la Blanca Luna, y díchoselo al visorrey que estaba hablando con don Quijote de la Mancha. El visorrey, creyendo sería alguna nueva aventura fabricada por don Antonio Moreno, o por otro algún caballero de la ciudad, salió luego a la playa con don Antonio y con otros muchos caballeros que le acompañaban, a tiempo cuando don Quijote volvía las riendas a Rocinante para tomar del campo lo necesario.

Viendo, pues, el visorrey que daban los dos señales de volverse a encontrar, se puso en medio, preguntándoles qué era la causa que les movía a hacer tan de improviso batalla. El Caballero de la Blanca Luna respondió que era precedencia

de hermosura, y en breves razones le dijo las mismas que había dicho a don Quijote, con la acetación de las condiciones del desafío hechas por entrambas partes. Llegóse el visorrey a don Antonio, y preguntóle paso si sabía quién era el tal Caballero de la Blanca Luna, o si era alguna burla que querían hacer a don Quijote. Don Antonio le respondió que ni sabía quién era, ni si era de burlas ni de veras el tal desafío. Esta respuesta tuvo perplejo al visorrey en si les dejaría o no pasar adelante en la batalla; pero, no pudiéndose persuadir a que fuese sino burla, se apartó diciendo:

-Señores caballeros, si aquí no hay otro remedio sino confesar o morir, y el señor don Quijote está en sus trece y vuestra merced el de la Blanca Luna en sus catorce, a la mano de Dios, y dense.

Agradeció el de la Blanca Luna con corteses y discretas razones al visorrey la licencia que se les daba, y don Quijote hizo lo mesmo; el cual, encomendándose al cielo de todo corazón y a su Dulcinea -como tenía de costumbre al comenzar de las batallas que se le ofrecían-, tornó a tomar otro poco más del campo, porque vio que su contrario hacía lo mesmo, y, sin tocar trompeta ni otro instrumento bélico que les diese señal de arremeter, volvieron entrambos a un mesmo punto las riendas a sus caballos; y, como era más ligero el de la Blanca Luna, llegó a don Quijote a dos tercios andados de la carrera, y allí le encontró con tan poderosa fuerza, sin tocarle con la lanza (que la levantó, al parecer, de propósito), que dio con Rocinante y con don Quijote por el suelo una peligrosa caída. Fue luego sobre él, y, poniéndole la lanza sobre la visera, le dijo:

-Vencido sois, caballero, y aun muerto, si no confesáis las condiciones de nuestro desafío.

Don Quijote, molido y aturdido, sin alzarse la visera, como si hablara dentro de una tumba, con voz debilitada y enferma, dijo:

-Dulcinea del Toboso es la más hermosa mujer del mundo, y yo el más desdichado caballero de la tierra, y no es bien que mi flaqueza defraude esta verdad. Aprieta, caballero, la lanza, y quítame la vida, pues me has quitado la honra.

-Eso no haré yo, por cierto -dijo el de la Blanca Luna-: viva, viva en su entereza la fama de la hermosura de la señora Dulcinea del Toboso, que sólo me contento con que el gran don Quijote se retire a su lugar un año, o hasta el tiempo que por mí le fuere mandado, como concertamos antes de entrar en esta batalla.

Todo esto oyeron el visorrey y don Antonio, con otros muchos que allí estaban, y oyeron asimismo que don Quijote respondió que como no le pidiese cosa que fuese en perjuicio de Dulcinea, todo lo demás cumpliría como caballero puntual y verdadero.

Hecha esta confesión, volvió las riendas el de la Blanca Luna, y, haciendo mesura con la cabeza al visorrey, a medio galope se entró en la ciudad.

Mandó el visorrey a don Antonio que fuese tras él, y que en todas maneras supiese quién era. Levantaron a don Quijote, descubriéronle el rostro y halláronle sin color y trasudando. Rocinante, de puro malparado, no se pudo mover por entonces. Sancho, todo triste, todo apesarado, no sabía qué decirse ni qué hacerse: parecíale que todo aquel suceso pasaba en sueños y que toda aquella máquina era cosa de encantamento. Veía a su señor rendido y obligado a no tomar armas en un año; imaginaba la luz de la gloria de sus hazañas escurecida, las esperanzas de sus nuevas promesas deshechas, como se deshace el humo con el viento. Temía si quedaría o no contrecto Rocinante, o deslocado su amo; que no fuera poca ventura si deslocado quedara. Finalmente, con una silla de manos, que mandó traer el visorrey, le llevaron a la ciudad, y el visorrey se volvió también a ella, con deseo de saber quién fuese el Caballero de la Blanca Luna, que de tan mal talante había dejado a don Quijote.

## Capítulo LXV

*Donde se da noticia quién era el de la Blanca Luna, con la libertad de Don Gregorio, y de otros sucesos*

SIGUIÓ don Antonio Moreno al Caballero de la Blanca Luna, y siguiéronle también, y aun persiguiéronle, muchos muchachos, hasta que le cerraron en un mesón dentro de la ciudad. Entró el don Antonio con deseo de conocerle; salió un escudero a recibirle y a desarmarle; encerróse en una sala baja, y con él don Antonio, que no se le cocía el pan hasta saber quién fuese. Viendo, pues, el de la Blanca Luna que aquel caballero no le dejaba, le dijo:

-Bien sé, señor, a lo que venís, que es a saber quién soy; y, porque no hay para qué negároslo, en tanto que este mi criado me desarma os lo diré, sin faltar un punto a la verdad del caso. Sabed, señor, que a mí me llaman el bachiller Sansón Carrasco; soy del mismo lugar de don Quijote de la Mancha, cuya locura y sandez mueve a que le tengamos lástima todos cuantos le conocemos, y entre los que más se la han tenido he sido yo; y, creyendo que está su salud en su reposo y en que se esté en su tierra y en su casa, di traza para hacerle estar en ella; y así, habrá tres meses que le salí al camino como caballero andante, llamándome el Caballero de los Espejos, con intención de pelear con él y vencerle, sin hacerle daño, poniendo por condición de nuestra pelea que el vencido quedase a discreción del vencedor; y lo que yo pensaba pedirle, porque ya le juzgaba por vencido, era que se volviese a su lugar y que no saliese dél en todo un año, en el cual tiempo podría ser curado; pero la suerte lo ordenó de otra manera, porque él me venció a mí y me derribó del caballo, y así, no tuvo efecto mi pensamiento: él prosiguió su camino, y yo me volví, vencido, corrido y molido de la caída, que fue además peligrosa; pero no por esto se me quitó el deseo de volver a buscarle y a vencerle, como hoy se ha visto. Y como él es tan puntual en guardar las órdenes de la andante caballería, sin duda alguna guardará la que le he dado, en cumplimiento de su palabra. Esto es, señor, lo que pasa, sin que tenga que deciros otra cosa alguna; suplícoos no me descubráis ni le digáis a don Quijote quién soy, porque tengan efecto los buenos pensamientos míos y vuelva a cobrar su juicio un hombre que le tiene bonísimo, como le dejan las sandeces de la caballería.

-¡Oh señor -dijo don Antonio-, Dios os perdone el agravio que habéis hecho a todo el mundo en querer volver cuerdo al más gracioso loco que hay en él! ¿No

veis, señor, que no podrá llegar el provecho que cause la cordura de don Quijote a lo que llega el gusto que da con sus desvaríos? Pero yo imagino que toda la industria del señor bachiller no ha de ser parte para volver cuerdo a un hombre tan rematadamente loco; y si no fuese contra caridad, diría que nunca sane don Quijote, porque con su salud, no solamente perdemos sus gracias, sino las de Sancho Panza, su escudero, que cualquiera dellas puede volver a alegrar a la misma melancolía. Con todo esto, callaré, y no le diré nada, por ver si salgo verdadero en sospechar que no ha de tener efecto la diligencia hecha por el señor Carrasco.

El cual respondió que ya una por una estaba en buen punto aquel negocio, de quien esperaba feliz suceso. Y, habiéndose ofrecido don Antonio de hacer lo que más le mandase, se despidió dél; y, hecho liar sus armas sobre un macho, luego al mismo punto, sobre el caballo con que entró en la batalla, se salió de la ciudad aquel mismo día y se volvió a su patria, sin sucederle cosa que obligue a contarla en esta verdadera historia.

Contó don Antonio al visorrey todo lo que Carrasco le había contado, de lo que el visorrey no recibió mucho gusto, porque en el recogimiento de don Quijote se perdía el que podían tener todos aquellos que de sus locuras tuviesen noticia.

Seis días estuvo don Quijote en el lecho, marrido, triste, pensativo y mal acondicionado, yendo y viniendo con la imaginación en el desdichado suceso de su vencimiento. Consolábale Sancho, y, entre otras razones, le dijo:

-Señor mío, alce vuestra merced la cabeza y alégrese, si puede, y dé gracias al cielo que, ya que le derribó en la tierra, no salió con alguna costilla quebrada; y, pues sabe que donde las dan las toman, y que no siempre hay tocinos donde hay estacas, dé una higa al médico, pues no le ha menester para que le cure en esta enfermedad: volvámonos a nuestra casa y dejémonos de andar buscando aventuras por tierras y lugares que no sabemos; y si bien se considera, yo soy aquí el más perdidoso, aunque es vuestra merced el más mal parado. Yo, que dejé con el gobierno los deseos de ser más gobernador, no dejé la gana de ser conde, que jamás tendrá efecto si vuesa merced deja de ser rey, dejando el ejercicio de su caballería; y así, vienen a volverse en humo mis esperanzas.

-Calla, Sancho, pues ves que mi reclusión y retirada no ha de pasar de un año; que luego volveré a mis honrados ejercicios, y no me ha de faltar reino que gane y algún condado que darte.

-Dios lo oiga -dijo Sancho-, y el pecado sea sordo, que siempre he oído decir que más vale buena esperanza que ruin posesión.

En esto estaban cuando entró don Antonio, diciendo con muestras de grandísimo contento:

-¡Albricias, señor don Quijote, que don Gregorio y el renegado que fue por él está en la playa! ¿Qué digo en la playa? Ya está en casa del visorrey, y será aquí al momento.

Alegróse algún tanto don Quijote, y dijo:

-En verdad que estoy por decir que me holgara que hubiera sucedido todo al revés, porque me obligara a pasar en Berbería, donde con la fuerza de mi brazo diera libertad no sólo a don Gregorio, sino a cuantos cristianos cautivos hay en Berbería. Pero, ¿qué digo, miserable? ¿No soy yo el vencido? ¿No soy yo el derribado? ¿No soy yo el que no puede tomar arma en un año? Pues, ¿qué prometo? ¿De qué me alabo, si antes me conviene usar de la rueca que de la espada?

-Déjese deso, señor -dijo Sancho-: viva la gallina, aunque con su pepita, que hoy por ti y mañana por mí; y en estas cosas de encuentros y porrazos no hay tomarles tiento alguno, pues el que hoy cae puede levantarse mañana, si no es que se quiere estar en la cama; quiero decir que se deje desmayar, sin cobrar nuevos bríos para nuevas pependencias. Y levántese vuestra merced agora para recibir a don Gregorio, que me parece que anda la gente alborotada, y ya debe de estar en casa.

Y así era la verdad; porque, habiendo ya dado cuenta don Gregorio y el renegado al visorrey de su ida y vuelta, deseoso don Gregorio de ver a Ana Félix, vino con el renegado a casa de don Antonio; y, aunque don Gregorio, cuando le sacaron de Argel, fue con hábitos de mujer, en el barco los trocó por los de un cautivo que salió consigo; pero en cualquiera que viniera, mostrara ser persona para ser codiciada, servida y estimada, porque era hermoso sobremanera, y la edad, al parecer, de diez y siete o diez y ocho años. Ricote y su hija salieron a recibirle: el padre con lágrimas y la hija con honestidad. No se abrazaron unos a otros, porque donde hay mucho amor no suele haber demasiada desenvoltura. Las dos bellezas juntas de don Gregorio y Ana Félix admiraron en particular a todos juntos los que presentes estaban. El silencio fue allí el que habló por los dos amantes, y los ojos fueron las lenguas que descubrieron sus alegres y honestos pensamientos.

Contó el renegado la industria y medio que tuvo para sacar a don Gregorio; contó don Gregorio los peligros y aprietos en que se había visto con las mujeres con quien había quedado, no con largo razonamiento, sino con breves palabras, donde mostró que su discreción se adelantaba a sus años. Finalmente, Ricote pagó y satisfizo liberalmente así al renegado como a los que habían bogado al remo. Reincorporóse y redujose el renegado con la Iglesia, y, de miembro podrido, volvió limpio y sano con la penitencia y el arrepentimiento.

De allí a dos días trató el visorrey con don Antonio qué modo tendrían para

que Ana Félix y su padre quedasen en España, pareciéndoles no ser de inconveniente alguno que quedasen en ella hija tan cristiana y padre, al parecer, tan bien intencionado. Don Antonio se ofreció venir a la corte a negociarlo, donde había de venir forzosamente a otros negocios, dando a entender que en ella, por medio del favor y de las dádivas, muchas cosas dificultosas se acaban.

-No -dijo Ricote, que se halló presente a esta plática-hay que esperar en favores ni en dádivas, porque con el gran don Bernardino de Velasco, conde de Salazar, a quien dio Su Majestad cargo de nuestra expulsión, no valen ruegos, no promesas, no dádivas, no lástimas; porque, aunque es verdad que él mezcla la misericordia con la justicia, como él ve que todo el cuerpo de nuestra nación está contaminado y podrido, usa con él antes del cauterio que abrasa que del ungüento que molifica; y así, con prudencia, con sagacidad, con diligencia y con miedos que pone, ha llevado sobre sus fuertes hombros a debida ejecución el peso desta gran máquina, sin que nuestras industrias, estratagemas, solicitudes y fraudes hayan podido deslumbrar sus ojos de Argos, que continuo tiene alerta, porque no se le quede ni encubra ninguno de los nuestros, que, como raíz escondida, que con el tiempo venga después a brotar, y a echar frutos venenosos en España, ya limpia, ya desembarazada de los temores en que nuestra muchedumbre la tenía. ¡Heroica resolución del gran Filipo Tercero, y inaudita prudencia en haberla encargado al tal don Bernardino de Velasco!

-Una por una, yo haré, puesto allá, las diligencias posibles, y haga el cielo lo que más fuere servido -dijo don Antonio-. Don Gregorio se irá conmigo a consolar la pena que sus padres deben tener por su ausencia; Ana Félix se quedará con mi mujer en mi casa, o en un monasterio, y yo sé que el señor visorrey gustará se quede en la suya el buen Ricote, hasta ver cómo yo negocio.

El visorrey consintió en todo lo propuesto, pero don Gregorio, sabiendo lo que pasaba, dijo que en ninguna manera podía ni quería dejar a doña Ana Félix; pero, teniendo intención de ver a sus padres, y de dar traza de volver por ella, vino en el decretado concierto. Quedóse Ana Félix con la mujer de don Antonio, y Ricote en casa del visorrey.

Llegóse el día de la partida de don Antonio, y el de don Quijote y Sancho, que fue de allí a otros dos; que la caída no le concedió que más presto se pusiese en camino. Hubo lágrimas, hubo suspiros, desmayos y sollozos al despedirse don Gregorio de Ana Félix. Ofrecióle Ricote a don Gregorio mil escudos, si los quería; pero él no tomó ninguno, sino solos cinco que le prestó don Antonio, prometiendo la paga dellos en la corte. Con esto, se partieron los dos, y don Quijote y Sancho después, como se ha dicho: don Quijote desarmado y de camino, Sancho a pie, por ir el rucio cargado con las armas.



## Capítulo LXVI

*Que trata de lo que verá el que lo leyere, o lo oirá el que lo escuchare leer*

AL SALIR de Barcelona, volvió don Quijote a mirar el sitio donde había caído, y dijo:

-¡Aquí fue Troya! ¡Aquí mi desdicha, y no mi cobardía, se llevó mis alcanzadas glorias; aquí usó la fortuna conmigo de sus vueltas y revueltas; aquí se escurecieron mis hazañas; aquí, finalmente, cayó mi ventura para jamás levantarse!

Oyendo lo cual Sancho, dijo:

-Tan de valientes corazones es, señor mío, tener sufrimiento en las desgracias como alegría en las prosperidades; y esto lo juzgo por mí mismo, que si cuando era gobernador estaba alegre, agora que soy escudero de a pie, no estoy triste; porque he oído decir que esta que llaman por ahí Fortuna es una mujer borracha y antojadiza, y, sobre todo, ciega, y así, no ve lo que hace, ni sabe a quién derriba, ni a quién ensalza.

-Muy filósofo estás, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, muy a lo discreto hablas: no sé quién te lo enseña. Lo que te sé decir es que no hay fortuna en el mundo, ni las cosas que en él suceden, buenas o malas que sean, vienen acaso, sino por particular providencia de los cielos, y de aquí viene lo que suele decirse: que cada uno es artífice de su ventura. Yo lo he sido de la mía, pero no con la prudencia necesaria, y así, me han salido al gallarín mis presunciones; pues debiera pensar que al poderoso grandor del caballo del de la Blanca Luna no podía resistir la flaqueza de Rocinante. Atrevíme en fin, hice lo que puede, derribáronme, y, aunque perdí la honra, no perdí, ni puedo perder, la virtud de cumplir mi palabra. Cuando era caballero andante, atrevido y valiente, con mis obras y con mis manos acreditaba mis hechos; y agora, cuando soy escudero pedestre, acreditaré mis palabras cumpliendo la que di de mi promesa. Camina, pues, amigo Sancho, y vamos a tener en nuestra tierra el año del noviciado, con cuyo encerramiento cobraremos virtud nueva para volver al nunca de mí olvidado ejercicio de las armas.

-Señor -respondió Sancho-, no es cosa tan gustosa el caminar a pie, que me mueva e incite a hacer grandes jornadas. Dejemos estas armas colgadas de algún árbol, en lugar de un ahorcado, y, ocupando yo las espaldas del rucio, levantados los pies del suelo, haremos las jornadas como vuestra merced las pidiere y

midiere; que pensar que tengo de caminar a pie y hacerlas grandes es pensar en lo escusado.

-Bien has dicho, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-: cuélguense mis armas por trofeo, y al pie dellas, o alrededor dellas, grabaremos en los árboles lo que en el trofeo de las armas de Roldán estaba escrito:

## NADIE LAS MUEVA

### QUE ESTAR NO PUEDA CON ROLDÁN A PRUEBA.

-Todo eso me parece de perlas -respondió Sancho-; y, si no fuera por la falta que para el camino nos había de hacer Rocinante, también fuera bien dejarle colgado.

-¡Pues ni él ni las armas -replicó don Quijote-quiero que se ahorquen, porque no se diga que a buen servicio, mal galardón!

-Muy bien dice vuestra merced -respondió Sancho-, porque, según opinión de discretos, la culpa del asno no se ha de echar a la albarda; y, pues deste suceso vuestra merced tiene la culpa, castíguese a sí mismo, y no revienten sus iras por las ya rotas y sangrientas armas, ni por las mansedumbres de Rocinante, ni por la blandura de mis pies, queriendo que caminen más de lo justo.

En estas razones y pláticas se les pasó todo aquel día, y aun otros cuatro, sin sucederles cosa que estorbase su camino; y al quinto día, a la entrada de un lugar, hallaron a la puerta de un mesón mucha gente, que, por ser fiesta, se estaba allí solazando. Cuando llegaba a ellos don Quijote, un labrador alzó la voz diciendo:

-Alguno destos dos señores que aquí vienen, que no conocen las partes, dirá lo que se ha de hacer en nuestra apuesta.

-Sí diré, por cierto -respondió don Quijote-, con toda rectitud, si es que alcanzo a entenderla.

-«Es, pues, el caso -dijo el labrador-, señor bueno, que un vecino deste lugar, tan gordo que pesa once arrobas, desafió a correr a otro su vecino, que no pesa más que cinco. Fue la condición que habían de correr una carrera de cien pasos con pesos iguales; y, habiéndole preguntado al desafiador cómo se había de igualar el peso, dijo que el desafiado, que pesa cinco arrobas, se pusiese seis de hierro a cuestras, y así se igualarían las once arrobas del flaco con las once del gordo.»

-Eso no -dijo a esta sazón Sancho, antes que don Quijote respondiese-. Y a mí,

que ha pocos días que salí de ser gobernador y juez, como todo el mundo sabe, toca averiguar estas dudas y dar parecer en todo pleito.

-Responde en buen hora -dijo don Quijote-, Sancho amigo, que yo no estoy para dar migas a un gato, según traigo alborotado y trastornado el juicio.

Con esta licencia, dijo Sancho a los labradores, que estaban muchos alrededor dél la boca abierta, esperando la sentencia de la suya:

-Hermanos, lo que el gordo pide no lleva camino, ni tiene sombra de justicia alguna; porque si es verdad lo que se dice, que el desafiado puede escoger las armas, no es bien que éste las escoja tales que le impidan ni estorben el salir vencedor; y así, es mi parecer que el gordo desafiador se escamonde, monde, entresaque, pula y atilde, y saque seis arrobas de sus carnes, de aquí o de allí de su cuerpo, como mejor le pareciere y estuviere; y desta manera, quedando en cinco arrobas de peso, se igualará y ajustará con las cinco de su contrario, y así podrán correr igualmente.

-¡Voto a tal -dijo un labrador que escuchó la sentencia de Sancho-que este señor ha hablado como un bendito y sentenciado como un canónigo! Pero a buen seguro que no ha de querer quitarse el gordo una onza de sus carnes, cuanto más seis arrobas.

-Lo mejor es que no corran -respondió otro-, porque el flaco no se muela con el peso, ni el gordo se descarne; y échese la mitad de la apuesta en vino, y llevemos estos señores a la taberna de lo caro, y sobre mí la capa cuando llueva.

-Yo, señores -respondió don Quijote-, os lo agradezco, pero no puedo detenerme un punto, porque pensamientos y sucesos tristes me hacen parecer descortés y caminar más que de paso.

Y así, dando de las espuelas a Rocinante, pasó adelante, dejándolos admirados de haber visto y notado así su estraña figura como la discreción de su criado, que por tal juzgaron a Sancho. Y otro de los labradores dijo:

-Si el criado es tan discreto, ¡cuál debe de ser el amo! Yo apostaré que si van a estudiar a Salamanca, que a un tris han de venir a ser alcaldes de corte; que todo es burla, sino estudiar y más estudiar, y tener favor y ventura; y cuando menos se piensa el hombre, se halla con una vara en la mano o con una mitra en la cabeza.

Aquella noche la pasaron amo y mozo en mitad del campo, al cielo raso y descubierto; y otro día, siguiendo su camino, vieron que hacia ellos venía un hombre de a pie, con unas alforjas al cuello y una azcona o chuzo en la mano, propio talle de correo de a pie; el cual, como llegó junto a don Quijote, adelantó el paso, y medio corriendo llegó a él, y, abrazándole por el muslo derecho, que no alcanzaba a más, le dijo, con muestras de mucha alegría:

-¡Oh mi señor don Quijote de la Mancha, y qué gran contento ha de llegar al corazón de mi señor el duque cuando sepa que vuestra merced vuelve a su

castillo, que todavía se está en él con mi señora la duquesa!

-No os conozco, amigo -respondió don Quijote-, ni sé quién sois, si vos no me lo decís.

-Yo, señor don Quijote -respondió el correo-, soy Tosilos, el lacayo del duque mi señor, que no quise pelear con vuestra merced sobre el casamiento de la hija de doña Rodríguez.

-¡Válame Dios! -dijo don Quijote-. ¿Es posible que sois vos el que los encantadores mis enemigos transformaron en ese lacayo que decís, por defraudarme de la honra de aquella batalla?

-Calle, señor bueno -replicó el cartero-, que no hubo encanto alguno ni mudanza de rostro ninguna: tan lacayo Tosilos entré en la estacada como Tosilos lacayo salí della. Yo pensé casarme sin pelear, por haberme parecido bien la moza, pero sucedióme al revés mi pensamiento, pues, así como vuestra merced se partió de nuestro castillo, el duque mi señor me hizo dar cien palos por haber contravenido a las ordenanzas que me tenía dadas antes de entrar en la batalla, y todo ha parado en que la muchacha es ya monja, y doña Rodríguez se ha vuelto a Castilla, y yo voy ahora a Barcelona, a llevar un pliego de cartas al virrey, que le envía mi amo. Si vuestra merced quiere un traguito, aunque caliente, puro, aquí llevo una calabaza llena de lo caro, con no sé cuántas rajitas de queso de Tronchón, que servirán de llamativo y despertador de la sed, si acaso está durmiendo.

-Quiero el envite -dijo Sancho-, y échese el resto de la cortesía, y escancie el buen Tosilos, a despecho y pesar de cuantos encantadores hay en las Indias.

-En fin -dijo don Quijote-, tú eres, Sancho, el mayor glotón del mundo y el mayor ignorante de la tierra, pues no te persuades que este correo es encantado, y este Tosilos contrahecho. Quédate con él y hártate, que yo me iré adelante poco a poco, esperándote a que vengas.

Rióse el lacayo, desenvainó su calabaza, desalforjó sus rajas, y, sacando un panecillo, él y Sancho se sentaron sobre la yerba verde, y en buena paz compañía despabilaron y dieron fondo con todo el repuesto de las alforjas, con tan buenos alientos, que lamieron el pliego de las cartas, sólo porque olía a queso. Dijo Tosilos a Sancho:

-Sin duda este tu amo, Sancho amigo, debe de ser un loco.

-¿Cómo debe? -respondió Sancho-. No debe nada a nadie, que todo lo paga, y más cuando la moneda es locura. Bien lo veo yo, y bien se lo digo a él; pero, ¿qué aprovecha? Y más agora que va rematado, porque va vencido del Caballero de la Blanca Luna.

Rogóle Tosilos le contase lo que le había sucedido, pero Sancho le respondió que era descortesía dejar que su amo le esperase; que otro día, si se encontrasen,

habría lugar para ello. Y, levantándose, después de haberse sacudido el sayo y las migajas de las barbas, antecogió al rucio, y, diciendo «a Dios», dejó a Tosilos y alcanzó a su amo, que a la sombra de un árbol le estaba esperando.

## Capítulo LXVII

*De la resolución que tomó don Quijote de hacerse pastor y seguir la vida del campo, en tanto que se pasaba el año de su promesa, con otros sucesos en verdad gustosos y buenos*

SI MUCHOS pensamientos fatigaban a don Quijote antes de ser derribado, muchos más le fatigaron después de caído. A la sombra del árbol estaba, como se ha dicho, y allí, como moscas a la miel, le acudían y picaban pensamientos: unos iban al desencanto de Dulcinea y otros a la vida que había de hacer en su forzosa retirada. Llegó Sancho y alabóle la liberal condición del lacayo Tosilos.

-¿Es posible -le dijo don Quijote-que todavía, ¡oh Sancho!, pienses que aquél sea verdadero lacayo? Parece que se te ha ido de las mientes haber visto a Dulcinea convertida y transformada en labradora, y al Caballero de los Espejos en el bachiller Carrasco, obras todas de los encantadores que me persiguen. Pero dime ahora: ¿preguntaste a ese Tosilos que dices qué ha hecho Dios de Altisidora: si ha llorado mi ausencia, o si ha dejado ya en las manos del olvido los enamorados pensamientos que en mi presencia la fatigaban?

-No eran -respondió Sancho-los que yo tenía tales que me diesen lugar a preguntar boberías. ¡Cuerpo de mí!, señor, ¿está vuestra merced ahora en términos de inquirir pensamientos ajenos, especialmente amorosos?

-Mira, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, mucha diferencia hay de las obras que se hacen por amor a las que se hacen por agradecimiento. Bien puede ser que un caballero sea desamorado, pero no puede ser, hablando en todo rigor, que sea desagradecido. Quísome bien, al parecer, Altisidora; diome los tres tocadores que sabes, lloró en mi partida, maldíjome, vituperóme, quejóse, a despecho de la vergüenza, públicamente: señales todas de que me adoraba, que las iras de los amantes suelen parar en maldiciones. Yo no tuve esperanzas que darle, ni tesoros que ofrecerle, porque las mías las tengo entregadas a Dulcinea, y los tesoros de los caballeros andantes son, como los de los duendes, aparentes y falsos, y sólo puedo darle estos acuerdos que della tengo, sin perjuicio, pero, de los que tengo de Dulcinea, a quien tú agravias con la remisión que tienes en azotarte y en castigar esas carnes, que vea yo comidas de lobos, que quieren guardarse antes para los gusanos que para el remedio de aquella pobre señora.

-Señor -respondió Sancho-, si va a decir la verdad, yo no me puedo persuadir que los azotes de mis posaderas tengan que ver con los desencantos de los

encantados, que es como si dijésemos: «Si os duele la cabeza, untaos las rodillas». A lo menos, yo osaré jurar que en cuantas historias vuesa merced ha leído que tratan de la andante caballería no ha visto algún desencantado por azotes; pero, por sí o por no, yo me los daré, cuando tenga gana y el tiempo me dé comodidad para castigarme.

-Dios lo haga -respondió don Quijote-, y los cielos te den gracia para que caigas en la cuenta y en la obligación que te corre de ayudar a mi señora, que lo es tuya, pues tú eres mío.

En estas pláticas iban siguiendo su camino, cuando llegaron al mismo sitio y lugar donde fueron atropellados de los toros. Reconoció don Quijote; dijo a Sancho: -Éste es el prado donde topamos a las bizarras pastoras y gallardos pastores que en él querían renovar e imitar a la pastoral Arcadia, pensamiento tan nuevo como discreto, a cuya imitación, si es que a ti te parece bien, quería, ¡oh Sancho!, que nos convirtiésemos en pastores, siquiera el tiempo que tengo de estar recogido. Yo compraré algunas ovejas, y todas las demás cosas que al pastoral ejercicio son necesarias, y llamándome yo *el pastor Quijotiz*, y tú *el pastor Pancino*, nos andaremos por los montes, por las selvas y por los prados, cantando aquí, endechando allí, bebiendo de los líquidos cristales de las fuentes, o ya de los limpios arroyuelos, o de los caudalosos ríos. Daránnos con abundantísima mano de su dulcísimo fruto las encinas, asiento los troncos de los durísimos alcornoques, sombra los sauces, olor las rosas, alfombras de mil colores matizadas los estendidos prados, aliento el aire claro y puro, luz la luna y las estrellas, a pesar de la escuridad de la noche, gusto el canto, alegría el lloro, Apolo versos, el amor conceptos, con que podremos hacernos eternos y famosos, no sólo en los presentes, sino en los venideros siglos.

-Pardiez -dijo Sancho-, que me ha cuadrado, y aun esquinado, tal género de vida; y más, que no la ha de haber aún bien visto el bachiller Sansón Carrasco y maese Nicolás el barbero, cuando la han de querer seguir, y hacerse pastores con nosotros; y aun quiera Dios no le venga en voluntad al cura de entrar también en el aprisco, según es de alegre y amigo de holgarse.

-Tú has dicho muy bien -dijo don Quijote-; y podrá llamarse el bachiller Sansón Carrasco, si entra en el pastoral gremio, como entrará sin duda, *el pastor Sansonino*, o ya *el pastor Carrascón*; el barbero Nicolás se podrá llamar *Miculoso*, como ya el antiguo Boscán se llamó *Nemoroso*; al cura no sé qué nombre le pongamos, si no es algún derivativo de su nombre, llamándole *el pastor Curiambro*. Las pastoras de quien hemos de ser amantes, como entre peras podremos escoger sus nombres; y, pues el de mi señora cuadra así al de pastora como al de princesa, no hay para qué cansarme en buscar otro que mejor le venga; tú, Sancho, pondrás a la tuya el que quisieres.

-No pienso -respondió Sancho-ponerle otro alguno sino el de *Teresona*, que le vendrá bien con su gordura y con el propio que tiene, pues se llama Teresa; y más, que, celebrándola yo en mis versos, vengo a descubrir mis castos deseos, pues no ando a buscar pan de trastrigo por las casas ajenas. El cura no será bien que tenga pastora, por dar buen ejemplo; y si quisiere el bachiller tenerla, su alma en su palma.

-¡Válame Dios -dijo don Quijote-, y qué vida nos hemos de dar, Sancho amigo! ¡Qué de churumbelas han de llegar a nuestros oídos, qué de gaitas zamoranas, qué de tamborines, y qué de sonajas, y qué de rabeles! Pues, ¡qué si destas diferencias de músicas resuena la de los albogues! Allí se verá casi todos los instrumentos pastorales.-¿Qué son albogues -preguntó Sancho-, que ni los he oído nombrar, ni los he visto en toda mi vida?

-Albogues son -respondió don Quijote-unas chapas a modo de candeleros de azófar, que, dando una con otra por lo vacío y hueco, hace un son, si no muy agradable ni armónico, no descontenta, y viene bien con la rusticidad de la gaita y del tamborín; y este nombre *albogues* es morisco, como lo son todos aquellos que en nuestra lengua castellana comienzan en *al*, conviene a saber: *almohaza*, *almorzar*, *alhombra*, *alguacil*, *alhucema*, *almacén*, *alcancía*, y otros semejantes, que deben ser pocos más; y solos tres tiene nuestra lengua que son moriscos y acaban en *i*, y son: *borceguí*, *zaquizamí* y *maravedí*. *Alhelí* y *alfaquí*, tanto por el *al* primero como por el *i* en que acaban, son conocidos por arábigos. Esto te he dicho, de paso, por habérmelo reducido a la memoria la ocasión de haber nombrado *albogues*; y hanos de ayudar mucho al parecer en perfección este ejercicio el ser yo algún tanto poeta, como tú sabes, y el serlo también en extremo el bachiller Sansón Carrasco. Del cura no digo nada; pero yo apostaré que debe de tener sus puntas y collares de poeta; y que las tenga también maese Nicolás, no dudo en ello, porque todos, o los más, son guitarristas y copleros. Yo me quejaré de ausencia; tú te alabarás de firme enamorado; el pastor Carrascón, de desdeñado; y el cura Curiambro, de lo que él más puede servirse, y así, andará la cosa que no haya más que desear.

A lo que respondió Sancho:

-Yo soy, señor, tan desgraciado que temo no ha de llegar el día en que en tal ejercicio me vea. ¡Oh, qué polidas cucharas tengo de hacer cuando pastor me vea! ¡Qué de migas, qué de natas, qué de guirnalda y qué de zarandajas pastoriles, que, puesto que no me granjeen fama de discreto, no dejarán de granjearme la de ingenioso! Sanchica mi hija nos llevará la comida al hato. Pero, ¡guarda!, que es de buen parecer, y hay pastores más maliciosos que simples, y no querría que fuese por lana y volviese trasquilada; y también suelen andar los amores y los no buenos deseos por los campos como por las ciudades, y por las



pastorales chozas como por los reales palacios, y, quitada la causa se quita el pecado; y ojos que no veen, corazón que no quiebra; y más vale salto de mata que ruego de hombres buenos.

-No más refranes, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, pues cualquiera de los que has dicho basta para dar a entender tu pensamiento; y muchas veces te he aconsejado que no seas tan pródigo en refranes y que te vayas a la mano en decirlos; pero paréceme que es predicar en desierto, y «castígame mi madre, y yo trómpogelas».

-Paréceme -respondió Sancho-que vuesa merced es como lo que dicen: «Dijo la sartén a la caldera: Quítate allá ojinegra». Estáme reprehendiendo que no diga yo refranes, y ensártalos vuesa merced de dos en dos.

-Mira, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-: yo traigo los refranes a propósito, y vienen cuando los digo como anillo en el dedo; pero tráelos tan por los cabellos, que los arrastras, y no los guías; y si no me acuerdo mal, otra vez te he dicho que los refranes son sentencias breves, sacadas de la experiencia y especulación de nuestros antiguos sabios; y el refrán que no viene a propósito, antes es disparate que sentencia. Pero dejémonos desto, y, pues ya viene la noche, retirémonos del camino real algún trecho, donde pasaremos esta noche, y Dios sabe lo que será mañana.

Retiráronse, cenaron tarde y mal, bien contra la voluntad de Sancho, a quien se le representaban las estrechezas de la andante caballería usadas en las selvas y en los montes, si bien tal vez la abundancia se mostraba en los castillos y casas, así de don Diego de Miranda como en las bodas del rico Camacho, y de don Antonio Moreno; pero consideraba no ser posible ser siempre de día ni siempre de noche, y así, pasó aquélla durmiendo, y su amo velando.

## Capítulo LXVIII

### *De la cerdosa aventura que le aconteció a don Quijote*

ERA LA NOCHE algo oscura, puesto que la luna estaba en el cielo, pero no en parte que pudiese ser vista: que tal vez la señora Diana se va a pasear a los antípodas, y deja los montes negros y los valles oscuros. Cumplió don Quijote con la naturaleza durmiendo el primer sueño, sin dar lugar al segundo; bien al revés de Sancho, que nunca tuvo segundo, porque le duraba el sueño desde la noche hasta la mañana, en que se mostraba su buena complexión y pocos cuidados. Los de don Quijote le desvelaron de manera que despertó a Sancho y le dijo:

-Maravillado estoy, Sancho, de la libertad de tu condición: yo imagino que eres hecho de mármol, o de duro bronce, en quien no cabe movimiento ni sentimiento alguno. Yo velo cuando tú duermes, yo lloro cuando cantas, yo me desmayo de ayuno cuanto tú estás perezoso y desalentado de puro hartado. De buenos criados es conllevar las penas de sus señores y sentir sus sentimientos, por el bien parecer siquiera. Mira la serenidad desta noche, la soledad en que estamos, que nos convida a entremeter alguna vigilia entre nuestro sueño. Levántate, por tu vida, y desvíate algún trecho de aquí, y con buen ánimo y denuedo agradecido date trecientos o cuatrocientos azotes a buena cuenta de los del desencanto de Dulcinea; y esto rogando te lo suplico, que no quiero venir contigo a los brazos, como la otra vez, porque sé que los tienes pesados. Después que te hayas dado, pasaremos lo que resta de la noche cantando, yo mi ausencia y tú tu firmeza, dando desde agora principio al ejercicio pastoral que hemos de tener en nuestra aldea.

-Señor -respondió Sancho-, no soy yo religioso para que desde la mitad de mi sueño me levante y me discipline, ni menos me parece que del extremo del dolor de los azotes se pueda pasar al de la música. Vuesa merced me deje dormir y no me apriete en lo del azotarme; que me hará hacer juramento de no tocarme jamás al pelo del sayo, no que al de mis carnes.

-¡Oh alma endurecida! ¡Oh escudero sin piedad! ¡Oh pan mal empleado y mercedes mal consideradas las que te he hecho y pienso de hacerte! Por mí te has visto gobernador, y por mí te vees con esperanzas propincuas de ser conde, o tener otro título equivalente, y no tardará el cumplimiento de ellas más de cuanto tarde en pasar este año; que yo post tenebras spero lucem.

-No entiendo eso -replico Sancho-; sólo entiendo que, en tanto que duermo, ni tengo temor, ni esperanza, ni trabajo ni gloria; y bien haya el que inventó el sueño, capa que cubre todos los humanos pensamientos, manjar que quita la hambre, agua que ahuyenta la sed, fuego que calienta el frío, frío que templa el ardor, y, finalmente, moneda general con que todas las cosas se compran, balanza y peso que iguala al pastor con el rey y al simple con el discreto. Sola una cosa tiene mala el sueño, según he oído decir, y es que se parece a la muerte, pues de un dormido a un muerto hay muy poca diferencia.

-Nunca te he oído hablar, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, tan elegantemente como ahora, por donde vengo a conocer ser verdad el refrán que tú algunas veces sueles decir: «No con quien naces, sino con quien paces».

-¡Ah, pesia tal -replicó Sancho-, señor nuestro amo! No soy yo ahora el que ensarta refranes, que también a vuestra merced se le caen de la boca de dos en dos mejor que a mí, sino que debe de haber entre los míos y los suyos esta diferencia: que los de vuestra merced vendrán a tiempo y los míos a deshora; pero, en efecto, todos son refranes.

En esto estaban, cuando sintieron un sordo estruendo y un áspero ruido, que por todos aquellos valles se extendía. Levantóse en pie don Quijote y puso mano a la espada, y Sancho se agazapó debajo del rucio, poniéndose a los lados el lío de las armas, y la albarda de su jumento, tan temblando de miedo como alborotado don Quijote. De punto en punto iba creciendo el ruido, y, llegándose cerca a los dos temerosos; a lo menos, al uno, que al otro, ya se sabe su valentía.

Es, pues, el caso que llevaban unos hombres a vender a una feria más de seiscientos puercos, con los cuales caminaban a aquellas horas, y era tanto el ruido que llevaban y el gruñir y el bufar, que ensordecieron los oídos de don Quijote y de Sancho, que no advirtieron lo que ser podía. Llegó de tropel la estendida y gruñidora piara, y, sin tener respeto a la autoridad de don Quijote, ni a la de Sancho, pasaron por cima de los dos, deshaciendo las trincheas de Sancho, y derribando no sólo a don Quijote, sino llevando por añadidura a Rocinante. El tropel, el gruñir, la presteza con que llegaron los animales inmundos, puso en confusión y por el suelo a la albarda, a las armas, al rucio, a Rocinante, a Sancho y a don Quijote.

Levantóse Sancho como mejor pudo, y pidió a su amo la espada, diciéndole que quería matar media docena de aquellos señores y descomedidos puercos, que ya había conocido que lo eran. Don Quijote le dijo:

-Déjalos estar, amigo, que esta afrenta es pena de mi pecado, y justo castigo del cielo es que a un caballero andante vencido le coman adivas, y le piquen avispas y le hollen puercos.

-También debe de ser castigo del cielo -respondió Sancho- que a los escuderos

de los caballeros vencidos los puncen moscas, los coman piojos y les embista la hambre. Si los escuderos fuéramos hijos de los caballeros a quien servimos, o parientes suyos muy cercanos, no fuera mucho que nos alcanzara la pena de sus culpas hasta la cuarta generación; pero, ¿qué tienen que ver los Panzas con los Quijotes? Ahora bien: tornémonos a acomodar y durmamos lo poco que queda de la noche, y amanecerá Dios y medraremos.

-Duerme tú, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, que naciste para dormir; que yo, que nací para velar, en el tiempo que falta de aquí al día, daré rienda a mis pensamientos, y los desfogaré en un madrigalete, que, sin que tú lo sepas, anoche compuse en la memoria.

-A mí me parece -respondió Sancho-que los pensamientos que dan lugar a hacer coplas no deben de ser muchos. Vuesa merced coplee cuanto quisiere, que yo dormiré cuanto pudiere.

Y luego, tomando en el suelo cuanto quiso, se acurrucó y durmió a sueño suelto, sin que fianzas, ni deudas, ni dolor alguno se lo estorbase. Don Quijote, arrimado a un tronco de una haya o de un alcornoque -que Cide Hamete Benengeli no distingue el árbol que era-, al son de sus mismos suspiros, cantó de esta suerte:

-Amor, cuando yo pienso  
en el mal que me das, terrible y fuerte,  
voy corriendo a la muerte,  
pensando así acabar mi mal inmenso;

mas, en llegando al paso  
que es puerto en este mar de mi tormento,  
tanta alegría siento,  
que la vida se esfuerza y no le paso.

Así el vivir me mata,  
que la muerte me torna a dar la vida.  
¡Oh condición no oída,  
la que conmigo muerte y vida trata!

Cada verso déstos acompañaba con muchos suspiros y no pocas lágrimas, bien como aquél cuyo corazón tenía traspasado con el dolor del vencimiento y con la ausencia de Dulcinea.

Llegóse en esto el día, dio el sol con sus rayos en los ojos a Sancho, despertó y esperezóse, sacudiéndose y estirándose los perezosos miembros; miró el

destrozo que habían hecho los puercos en su repostería, y maldijo la piara y aun más adelante. Finalmente, volvieron los dos a su comenzado camino, y al declinar de la tarde vieron que hacia ellos venían hasta diez hombres de a caballo y cuatro o cinco de a pie. Sobresaltóse el corazón de don Quijote y azoróse el de Sancho, porque la gente que se les llegaba traía lanzas y adargas y venía muy a punto de guerra. Volvióse don Quijote a Sancho, y díjole:

-Si yo pudiera, Sancho, ejercitar mis armas, y mi promesa no me hubiera atado los brazos, esta máquina que sobre nosotros viene la tuviera yo por tortas y pan pintado, pero podría ser fuese otra cosa de la que tememos.

Llegaron, en esto, los de a caballo, y arbolando las lanzas, sin hablar palabra alguna rodearon a don Quijote y se las pusieron a las espaldas y pechos, amenazándole de muerte. Uno de los de a pie, puesto un dedo en la boca, en señal de que callase, asió del freno de Rocinante y le sacó del camino; y los demás de a pie, antecogiendo a Sancho y al rucio, guardando todos maravilloso silencio, siguieron los pasos del que llevaba a don Quijote, el cual dos o tres veces quiso preguntar adónde le llevaban o qué querían; pero, apenas comenzaba a mover los labios, cuando se los iban a cerrar con los hierros de las lanzas; y a Sancho le acontecía lo mismo, porque, apenas daba muestras de hablar, cuando uno de los de a pie, con un aguijón, le punzaba, y al rucio ni más ni menos como si hablar quisiera. Cerró la noche, apresuraron el paso, creció en los dos presos el miedo, y más cuando oyeron que de cuando en cuando les decían:

-¡Caminad, trogloditas!

-¡Callad, bárbaros!

-¡Pagad, antropófagos!

-¡No os quejéis, scitas, ni abráis los ojos, Polifemos matadores, leones carniceros!

Y otros nombres semejantes a éstos, con que atormentaban los oídos de los miserables amo y mozo. Sancho iba diciendo entre sí:

-¿Nosotros tortolitas? ¿Nosotros barberos ni estropajos? ¿Nosotros perritas, a quien dicen cita, cita? No me contentan nada estos nombres: a mal viento va esta parva; todo el mal nos viene junto, como al perro los palos, y ¡ojalá parase en ellos lo que amenaza esta aventura tan desventurada!

Iba don Quijote embelesado, sin poder atinar con cuantos discursos hacía qué serían aquellos nombres llenos de vituperios que les ponían, de los cuales sacaba en limpio no esperar ningún bien y temer mucho mal. Llegaron, en esto, un hora casi de la noche, a un castillo, que bien conoció don Quijote que era el del duque, donde había poco que habían estado.

-¡Váleme Dios! -dijo, así como conoció la estancia-y ¿qué será esto? Sí que en esta casa todo es cortesía y buen comedimiento, pero para los vencidos el bien se

vuelve en mal y el mal en peor.

Entraron al patio principal del castillo, y viéronle aderezado y puesto de manera que les acrecentó la admiración y les dobló el miedo, como se verá en el siguiente capítulo.

## Capítulo LXIX

*Del más raro y más nuevo suceso que en todo el discurso desta grande historia avino a don Quijote*

APEÁRONSE los de a caballo, y, junto con los de a pie, tomando en peso y arrebatadamente a Sancho y a don Quijote, los entraron en el patio, alrededor del cual ardían casi cien hachas, puestas en sus blandones, y, por los corredores del patio, más de quinientas luminarias; de modo que, a pesar de la noche, que se mostraba algo oscura, no se echaba de ver la falta del día. En medio del patio se levantaba un túmulo como dos varas del suelo, cubierto todo con un grandísimo dosel de terciopelo negro, alrededor del cual, por sus gradas, ardían velas de cera blanca sobre más de cien candeleros de plata; encima del cual túmulo se mostraba un cuerpo muerto de una tan hermosa doncella, que hacía parecer con su hermosura hermosa a la misma muerte. Tenía la cabeza sobre una almohada de brocado, coronada con una guirnalda de diversas y odoríferas flores tejida, las manos cruzadas sobre el pecho, y, entre ellas, un ramo de amarilla y vencedora palma.

A un lado del patio estaba puesto un teatro, y en dos sillas sentados dos personajes, que, por tener coronas en la cabeza y ceptros en las manos, daban señales de ser algunos reyes, ya verdaderos o ya fingidos. Al lado deste teatro, adonde se subía por algunas gradas, estaban otras dos sillas, sobre las cuales los que trujeron los presos sentaron a don Quijote y a Sancho, todo esto callando y dándoles a entender con señales a los dos que asimismo callasen; pero, sin que se lo señalaran, callaron ellos, porque la admiración de lo que estaban mirando les tenía atadas las lenguas.

Subieron, en esto, al teatro, con mucho acompañamiento, dos principales personajes, que luego fueron conocidos de don Quijote ser el duque y la duquesa, sus huéspedes, los cuales se sentaron en dos riquísimas sillas, junto a los dos que parecían reyes. ¿Quién no se había de admirar con esto, añadiéndose a ello haber conocido don Quijote que el cuerpo muerto que estaba sobre el túmulo era el de la hermosa Altisidora?

Al subir el duque y la duquesa en el teatro, se levantaron don Quijote y Sancho y les hicieron una profunda humillación, y los duques hicieron lo mismo, inclinando algún tanto las cabezas.

Salió, en esto, de través un ministro, y, llegando a Sancho, le echó una ropa

de bocacé negro encima, toda pintada con llamas de fuego, y, quitándole la caperuza, le puso en la cabeza una coraza, al modo de las que sacan los penitenciados por el Santo Oficio; y díjole al oído que no descosiese los labios, porque le echarían una mordaza, o le quitarían la vida. Mirábase Sancho de arriba abajo, veíase ardiendo en llamas, pero como no le quemaban, no las estimaba en dos ardites. Quitóse la coraza, viola pintada de diablos, volviósela a poner, diciendo entre sí:

-Aún bien, que ni ellas me abrasan ni ellos me llevan.

Mirábale también don Quijote, y, aunque el temor le tenía suspensos los sentidos, no dejó de reírse de ver la figura de Sancho. Comenzó, en esto, a salir, al parecer, debajo del túmulo un son sumiso y agradable de flautas, que, por no ser impedido de alguna humana voz, porque en aquel sitio el mismo silencio guardaba silencio a sí mismo, se mostraba blando y amoroso. Luego hizo de sí improvisa muestra, junto a la almohada del, al parecer, cadáver, un hermoso mancebo vestido a lo romano, que, al son de una arpa, que él mismo tocaba, cantó con suavísima y clara voz estas dos estancias:

-En tanto que en sí vuelve Altisidora,  
muerta por la crueldad de don Quijote,  
y en tanto que en la corte encantadora

se vistieren las damas de picote,  
y en tanto que a sus dueñas mi señora 5  
vistiere de bayeta y de anascote,  
cantaré su belleza y su desgracia,  
con mejor plectro que el cantor de Tracia.

Y aun no se me figura que me toca  
aqueste oficio solamente en vida; 10  
mas, con la lengua muerta y fría en la boca,  
pienso mover la voz a ti debida.  
Libre mi alma de su estrecha roca,  
por el estigio lago conducida,  
celebrándote irá, y aquel sonido 15  
hará parar las aguas del olvido.

-No más -dijo a esta sazón uno de los dos que parecían reyes-: no más, cantor divino; que sería proceder en infinito representarnos ahora la muerte y las gracias de la sin par Altisidora, no muerta, como el mundo ignorante piensa, sino



viva en las lenguas de la Fama, y en la pena que para volverla a la perdida luz ha de pasar Sancho Panza, que está presente; y así, ¡oh tú, Radamanto, que conmigo juzgas en las cavernas lóbregas de Lite!, pues sabes todo aquello que en los inescrutables hados está determinado acerca de volver en sí esta doncella, dilo y decláralo luego, porque no se nos dilate el bien que con su nueva vuelta esperamos.

Apenas hubo dicho esto Minos, juez y compañero de Radamanto, cuando, levantándose en pie Radamanto, dijo:

-¡Ea, ministros de esta casa, altos y bajos, grandes y chicos, acudid unos tras otros y sellad el rostro de Sancho con veinte y cuatro mamonas, y doce pellizcos y seis alfilerazos en brazos y lomos, que en esta ceremonia consiste la salud de Altisidora!

Oyendo lo cual Sancho Panza, rompió el silencio, y dijo:

-¡Voto a tal, así me deje yo sellar el rostro ni manosearme la cara como volverme moro! ¡Cuerpo de mí! ¿Qué tiene que ver manosearme el rostro con la resurrección desta doncella? Regostóse la vieja a los bledos. Encantan a Dulcinea, y azótanme para que se desencante; muérese Altisidora de males que Dios quiso darle, y hanla de resucitar hacerme a mí veinte y cuatro mamonas, y acribarme el cuerpo a alfilerazos y acardenalarme los brazos a pellizcos. ¡Esas burlas, a un cuñado, que yo soy perro viejo, y no hay conmigo tus, tus!

-¡Morirás! -dijo en alta voz Radamanto-. Ablándate, tigre; humíllate, Nembrot soberbio, y sufre y calla, pues no te piden imposibles. Y no te metas en averiguar las dificultades deste negocio: mamonado has de ser, acrebillado te has de ver, pellizcado has de gemir. ¡Ea, digo, ministros, cumplid mi mandamiento; si no, por la fe de hombre de bien, que habéis de ver para lo que nacistes!

Parecieron, en esto, que por el patio venían, hasta seis dueñas en procesión, una tras otra, las cuatro con antojos, y todas levantadas las manos derechas en alto, con cuatro dedos de muñecas de fuera, para hacer las manos más largas, como ahora se usa. No las hubo visto Sancho, cuando, bramando como un toro, dijo:

-Bien podré yo dejarme manosear de todo el mundo, pero consentir que me toquen dueñas, ¡eso no! Gatéenme el rostro, como hicieron a mi amo en este mesmo castillo; traspásenme el cuerpo con puntas de dagas buidas; atenácenme los brazos con tenazas de fuego, que yo lo llevaré en paciencia, o serviré a estos señores; pero que me toquen dueñas no lo consentiré, si me llevase el diablo.

Rompió también el silencio don Quijote, diciendo a Sancho:

-Ten paciencia, hijo, y da gusto a estos señores, y muchas gracias al cielo por haber puesto tal virtud en tu persona, que con el martirio della desencantes los

encantados y resucites los muertos.

Ya estaban las dueñas cerca de Sancho, cuando él, más blando y más persuadido, poniéndose bien en la silla, dio rostro y barba a la primera, la cual la hizo una mamona muy bien sellada, y luego una gran reverencia.

-¡Menos cortesía; menos mudas, señora dueña -dijo Sancho-; que por Dios que traéis las manos oliendo a vinagrillo!

Finalmente, todas las dueñas le sellaron, y otra mucha gente de casa le pellizcaron; pero lo que él no pudo sufrir fue el punzamiento de los alfileres; y así, se levantó de la silla, al parecer mohíno, y, asiendo de una hacha encendida que junto a él estaba, dio tras las dueñas, y tras todos su verdugos, diciendo:

-¡Afuera, ministros infernales, que no soy yo de bronce, para no sentir tan extraordinarios martirios!

En esto, Altisidora, que debía de estar cansada por haber estado tanto tiempo supina, se volvió de un lado; visto lo cual por los circunstantes, casi todos a una voz dijeron:

-¡Viva es Altisidora! ¡Altisidora vive!

Mandó Radamanto a Sancho que depusiese la ira, pues ya se había alcanzado el intento que se procuraba.

Así como don Quijote vio rebullir a Altisidora, se fue a poner de rodillas delante de Sancho, diciéndole:

-Agora es tiempo, hijo de mis entrañas, no que escudero mío, que te des algunos de los azotes que estás obligado a dar por el desencanto de Dulcinea. Ahora, digo, que es el tiempo donde tienes sazónada la virtud, y con eficacia de obrar el bien que de ti se espera.

A lo que respondió Sancho:

-Esto me parece argado sobre argado, y no miel sobre hojuelas. Bueno sería que tras pellizcos, mamonas y alfilerazos viniesen ahora los azotes. No tienen más que hacer sino tomar una gran piedra, y atármela al cuello, y dar conmigo en un pozo, de lo que a mí no pesaría mucho, si es que para curar los males ajenos tengo yo de ser la vaca de la boda. Déjenme; si no, por Dios que lo arroje y lo eche todo a trece, aunque no se venda.

Ya en esto, se había sentado en el túmulo Altisidora, y al mismo instante sonaron las chirimías, a quien acompañaron las flautas y las voces de todos, que aclamaban:

-¡Viva Altisidora! ¡Altisidora viva!

Levantáronse los duques y los reyes Minos y Radamanto, y todos juntos, con don Quijote y Sancho, fueron a recibir a Altisidora y a bajarla del túmulo; la cual, haciendo de la desmayada, se inclinó a los duques y a los reyes, y, mirando de través a don Quijote, le dijo:

-Dios te lo perdone, desamorado caballero, pues por tu crueldad he estado en el otro mundo, a mi parecer, más de mil años; y a ti, ¡oh el más compasivo escudero que contiene el orbe!, te agradezco la vida que poseo. Dispón desde hoy más, amigo Sancho, de seis camisas más que te mando para que hagas otras seis para ti; y, si no son todas sanas, a lo menos son todas limpias.

Besóle por ello las manos Sancho, con la coraza en la mano y las rodillas en el suelo. Mandó el duque que se la quitasen, y le volviesen su caperuza, y le pusiesen el sayo, y le quitasen la ropa de las llamas. Suplicó Sancho al duque que le dejasen la ropa y mitra, que las quería llevar a su tierra, por señal y memoria de aquel nunca visto suceso. La duquesa respondió que sí dejarían, que ya sabía él cuán grande amiga suya era. Mandó el duque despejar el patio, y que todos se recogiesen a sus estancias, y que a don Quijote y a Sancho los llevasen a las que ellos ya se sabían.

## Capítulo LXX

*Que sigue al de sesenta y nueve, y trata de cosas no escusadas para la claridad desta historia*

DURMIÓ Sancho aquella noche en una carriola, en el mesmo aposento de don Quijote, cosa que él quisiera escusarla, si pudiera, porque bien sabía que su amo no le había de dejar dormir a preguntas y a respuestas, y no se hallaba en disposición de hablar mucho, porque los dolores de los martirios pasados los tenía presentes, y no le dejaban libre la lengua, y viniérale más a cuento dormir en una choza solo, que no en aquella rica estancia acompañado. Salióle su temor tan verdadero y su sospecha tan cierta, que, apenas hubo entrado su señor en el lecho, cuando dijo:

-¿Qué te parece, Sancho, del suceso desta noche? Grande y poderosa es la fuerza del desdén desamorado, como por tus mismos ojos has visto muerta a Altisidora, no con otras saetas, ni con otra espada, ni con otro instrumento bélico, ni con venenos mortíferos, sino con la consideración del rigor y el desdén con que yo siempre la he tratado.

-Muriérase ella en hora buena cuanto quisiera y como quisiera -respondió Sancho-, y dejárame a mí en mi casa, pues ni yo la enamoré ni la desdeñé en mi vida. Yo no sé ni puedo pensar cómo sea que la salud de Altisidora, doncella más antojadiza que discreta, tenga que ver, como otra vez he dicho, con los martirios de Sancho Panza. Agora sí que vengo a conocer clara y distintamente que hay encantadores y encantos en el mundo, de quien Dios me libre, pues yo no me sé librar; con todo esto, suplico a vuestra merced me deje dormir y no me pregunte más, si no quiere que me arroje por una ventana abajo.

-Duerme, Sancho amigo -respondió don Quijote-, si es que te dan lugar los alfilerazos y pellizcos recibidos, y las mamonas hechas.

-Ningún dolor -replicó Sancho-llegó a la afrenta de las mamonas, no por otra cosa que por habérmelas hecho dueña, que confundidas sean; y torno a suplicar a vuesa merced me deje dormir, porque el sueño es alivio de las miserias de los que las tienen despiertas.

-Sea así -dijo don Quijote-, y Dios te acompañe.

Durmiéronse los dos, y en este tiempo quiso escribir y dar cuenta Cide Hamete, autor desta grande historia, qué les movió a los duques a levantar el edificio de la máquina referida. Y dice que, no habiéndosele olvidado al

bachiller Sansón Carrasco cuando el Caballero de los Espejos fue vencido y derribado por don Quijote, cuyo vencimiento y caída borró y deshizo todos sus designios, quiso volver a probar la mano, esperando mejor suceso que el pasado; y así, informándose del paje que llevó la carta y presente a Teresa Panza, mujer de Sancho, adónde don Quijote quedaba, buscó nuevas armas y caballo, y puso en el escudo la blanca luna, llevándolo todo sobre un macho, a quien guiaba un labrador, y no Tomé Cecial, su antiguo escudero, porque no fuese conocido de Sancho ni de don Quijote.

Llegó, pues, al castillo del duque, que le informó el camino y derrota que don Quijote llevaba, con intento de hallarse en las justas de Zaragoza. Díjole asimismo las burlas que le había hecho con la traza del desencanto de Dulcinea, que había de ser a costa de las posaderas de Sancho. En fin, dio cuenta de la burla que Sancho había hecho a su amo, dándole a entender que Dulcinea estaba encantada y transformada en labradora, y cómo la duquesa su mujer había dado a entender a Sancho que él era el que se engañaba, porque verdaderamente estaba encantada Dulcinea; de que no poco se rió y admiró el bachiller, considerando la agudeza y simplicidad de Sancho, como del extremo de la locura de don Quijote.

Pidióle el duque que si le hallase, y le venciese o no, se volviese por allí a darle cuenta del suceso. Hízolo así el bachiller; partióse en su busca, no le halló en Zaragoza, pasó adelante y sucedióle lo que queda referido.

Volvióse por el castillo del duque y contóselo todo, con las condiciones de la batalla, y que ya don Quijote volvía a cumplir, como buen caballero andante, la palabra de retirarse un año en su aldea, en el cual tiempo podía ser, dijo el bachiller, que sanase de su locura; que ésta era la intención que le había movido a hacer aquellas transformaciones, por ser cosa de lástima que un hidalgo tan bien entendido como don Quijote fuese loco. Con esto, se despidió del duque, y se volvió a su lugar, esperando en él a don Quijote, que tras él venía.

De aquí tomó ocasión el duque de hacerle aquella burla: tanto era lo que gustaba de las cosas de Sancho y de don Quijote; y haciendo tomar los caminos cerca y lejos del castillo por todas las partes que imaginó que podría volver don Quijote, con muchos criados suyos de a pie y de a caballo, para que por fuerza o de grado le trujesen al castillo, si le hallasen. Halláronle, dieron aviso al duque, el cual, ya prevenido de todo lo que había de hacer, así como tuvo noticia de su llegada, mandó encender las hachas y las luminarias del patio y poner a Altisidora sobre el túmulo, con todos los aparatos que se han contado, tan al vivo, y tan bien hechos, que de la verdad a ellos había bien poca diferencia.

Y dice más Cide Hamete: que tiene para sí ser tan locos los burladores como los burlados, y que no estaban los duques dos dedos de parecer tontos, pues tanto ahínco ponían en burlarse de dos tontos.

Los cuales, el uno durmiendo a sueño suelto, y el otro velando a pensamientos desatados, les tomó el día y la gana de levantarse; que las ociosas plumas, ni vencido ni vencedor, jamás dieron gusto a don Quijote.

Altisidora -en la opinión de don Quijote, vuelta de muerte a vida-, siguiendo el humor de sus señores, coronada con la misma guirnalda que en el túmulo tenía, y vestida una tunicela de tafetán blanco, sembrada de flores de oro, y sueltos los cabellos por las espaldas, arrimada a un báculo de negro y finísimo ébano, entró en el aposento de don Quijote, con cuya presencia turbado y confuso, se encogió y cubrió casi todo con las sábanas y colchas de la cama, muda la lengua, sin que acertase a hacerle cortesía ninguna. Sentóse Altisidora en una silla, junto a su cabecera, y, después de haber dado un gran suspiro, con voz tierna y debilitada le dijo:

-Cuando las mujeres principales y las recatadas doncellas atropellan por la honra, y dan licencia a la lengua que rompa por todo inconveniente, dando noticia en público de los secretos que su corazón encierra, en estrecho término se hallan. Yo, señor don Quijote de la Mancha, soy una destas, apretada, vencida y enamorada; pero, con todo esto, sufrida y honesta; tanto que, por serlo tanto, reventó mi alma por mi silencio y perdí la vida. Dos días ha que con la consideración del rigor con que me has tratado,

¡Oh más duro que mármol a mis quejas,

empedernido caballero!, he estado muerta, o, a lo menos, juzgada por tal de los que me han visto; y si no fuera porque el Amor, condoliéndose de mí, depositó mi remedio en los martirios deste buen escudero, allá me quedara en el otro mundo.

-Bien pudiera el Amor -dijo Sancho-depositarlos en los de mi asno, que yo se lo agradeciera. Pero dígame, señora, así el cielo la acomode con otro más blando amante que mi amo: ¿qué es lo que vio en el otro mundo? ¿Qué hay en el infierno? Porque quien muere desesperado, por fuerza ha de tener aquel paradero.

-La verdad que os diga -respondió Altisidora-, yo no debí de morir del todo, pues no entré en el infierno; que, si allá entrara, una por una no pudiera salir dél, aunque quisiera. La verdad es que llegué a la puerta, adonde estaban jugando hasta una docena de diablos a la pelota, todos en calzas y en jubón, con valonas guarnecidas con puntas de randas flamencas, y con unas vueltas de lo mismo, que les servían de puños, con cuatro dedos de brazo de fuera, porque pareciesen

las manos más largas, en las cuales tenían unas palas de fuego; y lo que más me admiró fue que les servían, en lugar de pelotas, libros, al parecer, llenos de viento y de borra, cosa maravillosa y nueva; pero esto no me admiró tanto como el ver que, siendo natural de los jugadores el alegrarse los gananciosos y entristecerse los que pierden, allí en aquel juego todos gruñían, todos regañaban y todos se maldecían.

-Eso no es maravilla -respondió Sancho-, porque los diablos, jueguen o no jueguen, nunca pueden estar contentos, ganen o no ganen.

-Así debe de ser -respondió Altisidora-; mas hay otra cosa que también me admira, quiero decir me admiró entonces, y fue que al primer voleo no quedaba pelota en pie, ni de provecho para servir otra vez; y así, menudeaban libros nuevos y viejos, que era una maravilla. A uno dellos, nuevo, flamante y bien encuadernado, le dieron un papirotazo que le sacaron las tripas y le esparcieron las hojas. Dijo un diablo a otro: «Mirad qué libro es éste». Y el diablo le respondió: «Ésta es la *Segunda parte de la historia de don Quijote de la Mancha*, no compuesta por Cide Hamete, su primer autor, sino por un aragonés, que él dice ser natural de Tordesillas». «Quitádmele de ahí -respondió el otro diablo-, y metedle en los abismos del infierno: no le vean más mis ojos». «¿Tan malo es?», respondió el otro. «Tan malo -replicó el primero-, que si de propósito yo mismo me pusiera a hacerle peor, no acertara». Prosiguieron su juego, peloteando otros libros, y yo, por haber oído nombrar a don Quijote, a quien tanto adamo y quiero, procuré que se me quedase en la memoria esta visión.

-Visión debió de ser, sin duda -dijo don Quijote-, porque no hay otro yo en el mundo, y ya esa historia anda por acá de mano en mano, pero no para en ninguna, porque todos la dan del pie. Yo no me he alterado en oír que ando como cuerpo fantástico por las tinieblas del abismo, ni por la claridad de la tierra, porque no soy aquel de quien esa historia trata. Si ella fuere buena, fiel y verdadera, tendrá siglos de vida; pero si fuere mala, de su parto a la sepultura no será muy largo el camino.

Iba Altisidora a proseguir en quejarse de don Quijote, cuando le dijo don Quijote:

-Muchas veces os he dicho, señora, que a mí me pesa de que hayáis colocado en mí vuestros pensamientos, pues de los míos antes pueden ser agradecidos que remediados; yo nací para ser de Dulcinea del Toboso, y los hados, si los hubiera, me dedicaron para ella; y pensar que otra alguna hermosura ha de ocupar el lugar que en mi alma tiene es pensar lo imposible. Suficiente desengaño es éste para que os retiréis en los límites de vuestra honestidad, pues nadie se puede obligar a lo imposible.

Oyendo lo cual Altisidora, mostrando enojarse y alterarse, le dijo:

-¡Vive el Señor, don bacallao, alma de almirez, cuesco de dátíl, más terco y duro que villano rogado cuando tiene la suya sobre el hito, que si arremeto a vos, que os tengo de sacar los ojos! ¿Pensáis por ventura, don vencido y don molido a palos, que yo me he muerto por vos? Todo lo que habéis visto esta noche ha sido fingido; que no soy yo mujer que por semejantes camellos había de dejar que me doliese un negro de la uña, cuanto más morirme.

-Eso creo yo muy bien -dijo Sancho-, que esto del morirse los enamorados es cosa de risa: bien lo pueden ellos decir, pero hacer, créalo Judas.

Estando en estas pláticas, entró el músico, cantor y poeta que había cantado las dos ya referidas estancias, el cual, haciendo una gran reverencia a don Quijote, dijo:

-Vuestra merced, señor caballero, me cuente y tenga en el número de sus mayores servidores, porque ha muchos días que le soy muy aficionado, así por su fama como por sus hazañas.

Don Quijote le respondió:

-Vuestra merced me diga quién es, porque mi cortesía responda a sus merecimientos.

El mozo respondió que era el músico y panegírico de la noche antes.

-Por cierto -replicó don Quijote-, que vuestra merced tiene estremada voz, pero lo que cantó no me parece que fue muy a propósito; porque, ¿qué tienen que ver las estancias de Garcilaso con la muerte desta señora?

-No se maraville vuestra merced deso -respondió el músico-, que ya entre los intonsos poetas de nuestra edad se usa que cada uno escriba como quisiere, y hurte de quien quisiere, venga o no venga a pelo de su intento, y ya no hay necesidad que canten o escriban que no se atribuya a licencia poética.

Responder quisiera don Quijote, pero estorbáronlo el duque y la duquesa, que entraron a verle, entre los cuales pasaron una larga y dulce plática, en la cual dijo Sancho tantos donaires y tantas malicias, que dejaron de nuevo admirados a los duques, así con su simplicidad como con su agudeza. Don Quijote les suplicó le diesen licencia para partirse aquel mismo día, pues a los vencidos caballeros, como él, más les convenía habitar una zahúrda que no reales palacios. Diéronsele de muy buena gana, y la duquesa le preguntó si quedaba en su gracia Altisidora. Él le respondió:

-Señora mía, sepa Vuestra Señoría que todo el mal desta doncella nace de ociosidad, cuyo remedio es la ocupación honesta y continua. Ella me ha dicho aquí que se usan randas en el infierno; y, pues ella las debe de saber hacer, no las deje de la mano, que, ocupada en menear los palillos, no se menearán en su imaginación la imagen o imágenes de lo que bien quiere; y ésta es la verdad, éste mi parecer y éste es mi consejo.



-Y el mío -añadió Sancho-, pues no he visto en toda mi vida randera que por amor se haya muerto; que las doncellas ocupadas más ponen sus pensamientos en acabar sus tareas que en pensar en sus amores. Por mí lo digo, pues, mientras estoy cavando, no me acuerdo de mi oíslo; digo, de mi Teresa Panza, a quien quiero más que a las pestañas de mis ojos.

-Vos decís muy bien, Sancho -dijo la duquesa-, y yo haré que mi Altisidora se ocupe de aquí adelante en hacer alguna labor blanca, que la sabe hacer por extremo.

-No hay para qué, señora -respondió Altisidora-, usar dese remedio, pues la consideración de las crueldades que conmigo ha usado este malandrín mostrenco me le borrarán de la memoria sin otro artificio alguno. Y, con licencia de vuestra grandeza, me quiero quitar de aquí, por no ver delante de mis ojos ya no su triste figura, sino su fea y abominable catadura.

-Eso me parece -dijo el duque-a lo que suele decirse:

Porque aquel que dice injurias,  
cerca está de perdonar.

Hizo Altisidora muestra de limpiarse las lágrimas con un pañuelo, y, haciendo reverencia a sus señores, se salió del aposento.

-Mándote yo -dijo Sancho-, pobre doncella, mándote, digo, mala ventura, pues las has habido con una alma de esparto y con un corazón de encina. ¡A fee que si las hubieras conmigo, que otro gallo te cantara!

Acabóse la plática, vistióse don Quijote, comió con los duques, y partióse aquella tarde.

## Capítulo LXXI

*De lo que a don Quijote le sucedió con su escudero Sancho yendo a su aldea*

IBA EL VENCIDO y asendereado don Quijote pensativo además por una parte, y muy alegre por otra. Causaba su tristeza el vencimiento; y la alegría, el considerar en la virtud de Sancho, como lo había mostrado en la resurrección de Altisidora, aunque con algún escrúpulo se persuadía a que la enamorada doncella fuese muerta de veras. No iba nada Sancho alegre, porque le entristecía ver que Altisidora no le había cumplido la palabra de darle las camisas; y, yendo y viniendo en esto, dijo a su amo:

-En verdad, señor, que soy el más desgraciado médico que se debe de hallar en el mundo, en el cual hay físicos que, con matar al enfermo que curan, quieren ser pagados de su trabajo, que no es otro sino firmar una cedula de algunas medicinas, que no las hace él, sino el boticario, y cátao cantusado; y a mí, que la salud ajena me cuesta gotas de sangre, mamonas, pellizcos, alfilerazos y azotes, no me dan un ardite. Pues yo les voto a tal que si me traen a las manos otro algún enfermo, que, antes que le cure, me han de untar las mías; que el abad de donde canta yanta, y no quiero creer que me haya dado el cielo la virtud que tengo para que yo la comunique con otros de bóbilis, bóbilis.

-Tú tienes razón, Sancho amigo -respondió don Quijote-, y halo hecho muy mal Altisidora en no haberte dado las prometidas camisas; y, puesto que tu virtud es gratis data, que no te ha costado estudio alguno, más que estudio es recibir martirios en tu persona. De mí te sé decir que si quisieras paga por los azotes del desencanto de Dulcinea, ya te la hubiera dado tal como buena; pero no sé si vendrá bien con la cura la paga, y no quería que impidiese el premio a la medicina. Con todo eso, me parece que no se perderá nada en probarlo: mira, Sancho, el que quieres, y azótate luego, y págate de contado y de tu propia mano, pues tienes dineros míos.

A cuyos ofrecimientos abrió Sancho los ojos y las orejas de un palmo, y dio consentimiento en su corazón a azotarse de buena gana; y dijo a su amo:

-Agora bien, señor, yo quiero disponerme a dar gusto a vuestra merced en lo que desea, con provecho mío; que el amor de mis hijos y de mi mujer me hace que me muestre interesado. Dígame vuestra merced: ¿cuánto me dará por cada azote que me diere?

-Si yo te hubiera de pagar, Sancho -respondió don Quijote-, conforme lo que

merece la grandeza y calidad deste remedio, el tesoro de Venecia, las minas del Potosí fueran poco para pagarte; toma tú el tanto a lo que llevas mío, y pon el precio a cada azote.

-Ellos -respondió Sancho-son tres mil y trecientos y tantos; de ellos me he dado hasta cinco: quedan los demás; entren entre los tantos estos cinco, y vengamos a los tres mil y trecientos, que a cuartillo cada uno, que no llevaré menos si todo el mundo me lo mandase, montan tres mil y trecientos cuartillos, que son los tres mil, mil y quinientos medios reales, que hacen setecientos y cincuenta reales; y los trecientos hacen ciento y cincuenta medios reales, que vienen a hacer setenta y cinco reales, que, juntándose a los setecientos y cincuenta, son por todos ochocientos y veinte y cinco reales. Éstos desfalcaré yo de los que tengo de vuestra merced, y entraré en mi casa rico y contento, aunque bien azotado; porque no se toman truchas..., y no digo más.

-¡Oh Sancho bendito! ¡Oh Sancho amable -respondió don Quijote-, y cuán obligados hemos de quedar Dulcinea y yo a servirte todos los días que el cielo nos diere de vida! Si ella vuelve al ser perdido, que no es posible sino que vuelva, su desdicha habrá sido dicha, y mi vencimiento, felicísimo triunfo. Y mira, Sancho, cuándo quieres comenzar la disciplina, que porque la abrevies te añado cien reales.

-¿Cuándo? -replicó Sancho-. Esta noche, sin falta. Procure vuestra merced que la tengamos en el campo, al cielo abierto, que yo me abriré mis carnes.

Llegó la noche, esperada de don Quijote con la mayor ansia del mundo, pareciéndole que las ruedas del carro de Apolo se habían quebrado, y que el día se alargaba más de lo acostumbrado, bien así como acontece a los enamorados, que jamás ajustan la cuenta de sus deseos. Finalmente, se entraron entre unos amenos árboles que poco desviados del camino estaban, donde, dejando vacías la silla y albarda de Rocinante y el rucio, se tendieron sobre la verde yerba y cenaron del repuesto de Sancho; el cual, haciendo del cabestro y de la jáquima del rucio un poderoso y flexible azote, se retiró hasta veinte pasos de su amo, entre unas hayas. Don Quijote, que le vio ir con denuedo y con brío, le dijo:

-Mira, amigo, que no te hagas pedazos; da lugar que unos azotes aguarden a otros; no quieras apresurarte tanto en la carrera, que en la mitad della te falte el aliento; quiero decir que no te des tan recio que te falte la vida antes de llegar al número deseado. Y, porque no pierdas por carta de más ni de menos, yo estaré desde aparte contando por este mi rosario los azotes que te dieres. Favorézcate el cielo conforme tu buena intención merece.

-Al buen pagador no le duelen prendas -respondió Sancho-: yo pienso darme de manera que, sin matarme, me duela; que en esto debe de consistir la sustancia deste milagro.

Desnudóse luego de medio cuerpo arriba, y, arrebatando el cordel, comenzó a darse, y comenzó don Quijote a contar los azotes.

Hasta seis o ocho se habría dado Sancho, cuando le pareció ser pesada la burla y muy barato el precio della, y, deteniéndose un poco, dijo a su amo que se llamaba a engaño, porque merecía cada azote de aquéllos ser pagado a medio real, no que a cuartillo.

-Prosigue, Sancho amigo, y no desmayes -le dijo don Quijote-, que yo doblo la parada del precio.

-Dese modo -dijo Sancho-, ¡a la mano de Dios, y lluevan azotes!

Pero el socarrón dejó de dárselos en las espaldas, y daba en los árboles, con unos suspiros de cuando en cuando, que parecía que con cada uno dellos se le arrancaba el alma. Tierna la de don Quijote, temeroso de que no se le acabase la vida, y no consiguiese su deseo por la imprudencia de Sancho, le dijo:

-Por tu vida, amigo, que se quede en este punto este negocio, que me parece muy áspera esta medicina, y será bien dar tiempo al tiempo; que no se ganó Zamora en un hora. Más de mil azotes, si yo no he contado mal, te has dado: bastan por agora; que el asno, hablando a lo grosero, sufre la carga, mas no la sobrecarga.

-No, no, señor -respondió Sancho-, no se ha de decir por mí: «a dineros pagados, brazos quebrados». Apártese vuestra merced otro poco y déjeme dar otros mil azotes siquiera, que a dos levadas déstas habremos cumplido con esta partida, y aún nos sobrará ropa.

-Pues tú te hallas con tan buena disposición -dijo don Quijote-, el cielo te ayude, y pégate, que yo me aparto.

Volvió Sancho a su tarea con tanto denuedo, que ya había quitado las cortezas a muchos árboles: tal era la riguridad con que se azotaba; y, alzando una vez la voz, y dando un desaforado azote en una haya, dijo:

-¡Aquí morirás, Sansón, y cuantos con él son!

Acudió don Quijote luego al son de la lastimada voz y del golpe del riguroso azote, y, asiendo del torcido cabestro que le servía de corbacho a Sancho, le dijo:

-No permita la suerte, Sancho amigo, que por el gusto mío pierdas tú la vida, que ha de servir para sustentar a tu mujer y a tus hijos: espere Dulcinea mejor coyuntura, que yo me contendré en los límites de la esperanza propincua, y esperaré que cobres fuerzas nuevas, para que se concluya este negocio a gusto de todos.

-Pues vuestra merced, señor mío, lo quiere así -respondió Sancho-, sea en buena hora, y écheme su ferreruelo sobre estas espaldas, que estoy sudando y no querría resfriarme; que los nuevos diciplinantes corren este peligro.

Hízolo así don Quijote, y, quedándose en pelota, abrigó a Sancho, el cual se durmió hasta que le despertó el sol, y luego volvieron a proseguir su camino, a quien dieron fin, por entonces, en un lugar que tres leguas de allí estaba. Apeáronse en un mesón, que por tal le reconoció don Quijote, y no por castillo de cava honda, torres, rastrillos y puente levadiza; que, después que le vencieron, con más juicio en todas las cosas discurría, como agora se dirá. Alojáronle en una sala baja, a quien servían de guadameciles unas sargas viejas pintadas, como se usan en las aldeas. En una dellas estaba pintada de malísima mano el robo de Elena, cuando el atrevido huésped se la llevó a Menalao, y en otra estaba la historia de Dido y de Eneas, ella sobre una alta torre, como que hacía señas con una media sábana al fugitivo huésped, que por el mar, sobre una fragata o bergantín, se iba huyendo.

Notó en las dos historias que Elena no iba de muy mala gana, porque se reía a socapa y a lo socarrón; pero la hermosa Dido mostraba verter lágrimas del tamaño de nueces por los ojos. Viendo lo cual don Quijote, dijo:

-Estas dos señoras fueron desdichadísimas, por no haber nacido en esta edad, y yo sobre todos desdichado en no haber nacido en la suya: encontrara a aquestos señores, ni fuera abrasada Troya, ni Cartago destruida, pues con sólo que yo matara a Paris se escusaran tantas desgracias.

-Yo apostaré -dijo Sancho-que antes de mucho tiempo no ha de haber bodegón, venta ni mesón, o tienda de barbero, donde no ande pintada la historia de nuestras hazañas. Pero querría yo que la pintasen manos de otro mejor pintor que el que ha pintado a éstas.

-Tienes razón, Sancho -dijo don Quijote-, porque este pintor es como Orbaneja, un pintor que estaba en Úbeda; que, cuando le preguntaban qué pintaba, respondía: «Lo que saliere»; y si por ventura pintaba un gallo, escribía debajo: «Éste es gallo», porque no pensasen que era zorra. Desta manera me parece a mí, Sancho, que debe de ser el pintor o escritor, que todo es uno, que sacó a luz la historia deste nuevo don Quijote que ha salido: que pintó o escribió lo que saliere; o habrá sido como un poeta que andaba los años pasados en la corte, llamado Mauleón, el cual respondía de repente a cuanto le preguntaban; y, preguntándole uno que qué quería decir Deum de Deo, respondió: «Dé donde diere». Pero, dejando esto aparte, dime si piensas, Sancho, darte otra tanda esta noche, y si quieres que sea debajo de techado, o al cielo abierto.

-Pardiez, señor -respondió Sancho-, que para lo que yo pienso darme, eso se me da en casa que en el campo; pero, con todo eso, querría que fuese entre árboles, que parece que me acompañan y me ayudan a llevar mi trabajo maravillosamente.

-Pues no ha de ser así, Sancho amigo -respondió don Quijote-, sino que para

que tomes fuerzas, lo hemos de guardar para nuestra aldea, que, a lo más tarde, llegaremos allá después de mañana.

Sancho respondió que hiciese su gusto, pero que él quisiera concluir con brevedad aquel negocio a sangre caliente y cuando estaba picado el molino, porque en la tardanza suele estar muchas veces el peligro; y a Dios rogando y con el mazo dando, y que más valía un «toma» que dos «te daré», y el pájaro en la mano que el buitre volando.

-No más refranes, Sancho, por un solo Dios -dijo don Quijote-, que parece que te vuelves al sicut erat; habla a lo llano, a lo liso, a lo no intricado, como muchas veces te he dicho, y verás como te vale un pan por ciento.

-No sé qué mala ventura es esta mía -respondió Sancho-, que no sé decir razón sin refrán, ni refrán que no me parezca razón; pero yo me emendaré, si pudiere.

Y, con esto, cesó por entonces su plática.

## Capítulo LXXII

### *De cómo don Quijote y Sancho llegaron a su aldea*

TODO aquel día, esperando la noche, estuvieron en aquel lugar y mesón don Quijote y Sancho: el uno, para acabar en la campaña rasa la tanda de su disciplina, y el otro, para ver el fin della, en el cual consistía el de su deseo. Llegó en esto al mesón un caminante a caballo, con tres o cuatro criados, uno de los cuales dijo al que el señor dellos parecía:

-Aquí puede vuestra merced, señor don Álvaro Tarfe, pasar hoy la siesta: la posada parece limpia y fresca.

Oyendo esto don Quijote, le dijo a Sancho:

-Mira, Sancho: cuando yo hojeé aquel libro de la segunda parte de mi historia, me parece que de pasada topé allí este nombre de don Álvaro Tarfe.

-Bien podrá ser -respondió Sancho-. Dejémosle apearse, que después se lo preguntaremos.

El caballero se apeó, y, frontero del aposento de don Quijote, la huéspeda le dio una sala baja, enjaezada con otras pintadas sargas, como las que tenía la estancia de don Quijote. Púsose el recién venido caballero a lo de verano, y, saliéndose al portal del mesón, que era espacioso y fresco, por el cual se paseaba don Quijote, le preguntó:

-¿Adónde bueno camina vuestra merced, señor gentilhomme?

Y don Quijote le respondió:

-A una aldea que está aquí cerca, de donde soy natural. Y vuestra merced, ¿dónde camina?

-Yo, señor -respondió el caballero-, voy a Granada, que es mi patria.

-¡Y buena patria! -replicó don Quijote-. Pero, dígame vuestra merced, por cortesía, su nombre, porque me parece que me ha de importar saberlo más de lo que buenamente podré decir.

-Mi nombre es don Álvaro Tarfe -respondió el huésped.

A lo que replicó don Quijote:

-Sin duda alguna pienso que vuestra merced debe de ser aquel don Álvaro Tarfe que anda impreso en la *Segunda parte de la historia de don Quijote de la Mancha*, recién impresa y dada a la luz del mundo por un autor moderno.

-El mismo soy -respondió el caballero-, y el tal don Quijote, sujeto principal de la tal historia, fue grandísimo amigo mío, y yo fui el que le sacó de su tierra,

o, a lo menos, le moví a que viniese a unas justas que se hacían en Zaragoza, adonde yo iba; y, en verdad en verdad que le hice muchas amistades, y que le quité de que no le palmease las espaldas el verdugo, por ser demasiadamente atrevido.

-Y, dígame vuestra merced, señor don Álvaro, ¿parezco yo en algo a ese tal don Quijote que vuestra merced dice?

-No, por cierto -respondió el huésped-: en ninguna manera.

-Y ese don Quijote -dijo el nuestro-, ¿traía consigo a un escudero llamado Sancho Panza?

-Sí traía -respondió don Álvaro-; y, aunque tenía fama de muy gracioso, nunca le oí decir gracia que la tuviese.

-Eso creo yo muy bien -dijo a esta sazón Sancho-, porque el decir gracias no es para todos, y ese Sancho que vuestra merced dice, señor gentilhombre, debe de ser algún grandísimo bellaco, frión y ladrón juntamente, que el verdadero Sancho Panza soy yo, que tengo más gracias que llovidas; y si no, haga vuestra merced la experiencia, y ándese tras de mí, por los menos un año, y verá que se me caen a cada paso, y tales y tantas que, sin saber yo las más veces lo que me digo, hago reír a cuantos me escuchan; y el verdadero don Quijote de la Mancha, el famoso, el valiente y el discreto, el enamorado, el desfacedor de agravios, el tutor de pupilos y huérfanos, el amparo de las viudas, el matador de las doncellas, el que tiene por única señora a la sin par Dulcinea del Toboso, es este señor que está presente, que es mi amo; todo cualquier otro don Quijote y cualquier otro Sancho Panza es burlería y cosa de sueño.

-¡Por Dios que lo creo! -respondió don Álvaro-, porque más gracias habéis dicho vos, amigo, en cuatro razones que habéis hablado, que el otro Sancho Panza en cuantas yo le oí hablar, que fueron muchas. Más tenía de comilón que de bien hablado, y más de tonto que de gracioso, y tengo por sin duda que los encantadores que persiguen a don Quijote el bueno han querido perseguirme a mí con don Quijote el malo. Pero no sé qué me diga; que osaré yo jurar que le dejo metido en la casa del Nuncio, en Toledo, para que le curen, y agora remanece aquí otro don Quijote, aunque bien diferente del mío.

-Yo -dijo don Quijote-no sé si soy bueno, pero sé decir que no soy el malo; para prueba de lo cual quiero que sepa vuesa merced, mi señor don Álvaro Tarfe, que en todos los días de mi vida no he estado en Zaragoza; antes, por haberme dicho que ese don Quijote fantástico se había hallado en las justas desa ciudad, no quise yo entrar en ella, por sacar a las barbas del mundo su mentira; y así, me pasé de claro a Barcelona, archivo de la cortesía, albergue de los extranjeros, hospital de los pobres, patria de los valientes, venganza de los ofendidos y correspondencia grata de firmes amistades, y, en sitio y en belleza, única. Y,



aunque los sucesos que en ella me han sucedido no son de mucho gusto, sino de mucha pesadumbre, los llevo sin ella, sólo por haberla visto. Finalmente, señor don Álvaro Tarfe, yo soy don Quijote de la Mancha, el mismo que dice la fama, y no ese desventurado que ha querido usurpar mi nombre y honrarse con mis pensamientos. A vuestra merced suplico, por lo que debe a ser caballero, sea servido de hacer una declaración ante el alcalde deste lugar, de que vuestra merced no me ha visto en todos los días de su vida hasta agora, y de que yo no soy el don Quijote impreso en la segunda parte, ni este Sancho Panza mi escudero es aquél que vuestra merced conoció.

-Eso haré yo de muy buena gana -respondió don Álvaro-, puesto que cause admiración ver dos don Quijotes y dos Sanchos a un mismo tiempo, tan conformes en los nombres como diferentes en las acciones; y vuelvo a decir y me afirmo que no he visto lo que he visto, ni ha pasado por mí lo que ha pasado.

-Sin duda -dijo Sancho- que vuestra merced debe de estar encantado, como mi señora Dulcinea del Toboso, y pluguiera al cielo que estuviera su desencanto de vuestra merced en darme otros tres mil y tantos azotes como me doy por ella, que yo me los diera sin interés alguno.

-No entiendo eso de azotes -dijo don Álvaro.

Y Sancho le respondió que era largo de contar, pero que él se lo contaría si acaso iban un mesmo camino.

Llegóse en esto la hora de comer; comieron juntos don Quijote y don Álvaro. Entró acaso el alcalde del pueblo en el mesón, con un escribano, ante el cual alcalde pidió don Quijote, por una petición, de que a su derecho convenía de que don Álvaro Tarfe, aquel caballero que allí estaba presente, declarase ante su merced como no conocía a don Quijote de la Mancha, que asimismo estaba allí presente, y que no era aquél que andaba impreso en una historia intitulada: *Segunda parte de don Quijote de la Mancha*, compuesta por un tal de Avellaneda, natural de Tordesillas. Finalmente, el alcalde proveyó jurídicamente; la declaración se hizo con todas las fuerzas que en tales casos debían hacerse, con lo que quedaron don Quijote y Sancho muy alegres, como si les importara mucho semejante declaración y no mostrara claro la diferencia de los dos don Quijotes y la de los dos Sanchos sus obras y sus palabras. Muchas de cortesías y ofrecimientos pasaron entre don Álvaro y don Quijote, en las cuales mostró el gran manchego su discreción, de modo que desengañó a don Álvaro Tarfe del error en que estaba; el cual se dio a entender que debía de estar encantado, pues tocaba con la mano dos tan contrarios don Quijotes.

Llegó la tarde, partiéronse de aquel lugar, y a obra de media legua se apartaban dos caminos diferentes, el uno que guiaba a la aldea de don Quijote, y el otro el que había de llevar don Álvaro. En este poco espacio le contó don

Quijote la desgracia de su vencimiento y el encanto y el remedio de Dulcinea, que todo puso en nueva admiración a don Álvaro, el cual, abrazando a don Quijote y a Sancho, siguió su camino, y don Quijote el suyo, que aquella noche la pasó entre otros árboles, por dar lugar a Sancho de cumplir su penitencia, que la cumplió del mismo modo que la pasada noche, a costa de las cortezas de las hayas, harto más que de sus espaldas, que las guardó tanto, que no pudieran quitar los azotes una mosca, aunque la tuviera encima.

No perdió el engañado don Quijote un solo golpe de la cuenta, y halló que con los de la noche pasada era tres mil y veinte y nueve. Parece que había madrugado el sol a ver el sacrificio, con cuya luz volvieron a proseguir su camino, tratando entre los dos del engaño de don Álvaro y de cuán bien acordado había sido tomar su declaración ante la justicia, y tan auténticamente.

Aquel día y aquella noche caminaron sin sucederles cosa digna de contarse, si no fue que en ella acabó Sancho su tarea, de que quedó don Quijote contento sobremodo, y esperaba el día, por ver si en el camino topaba ya desencantada a Dulcinea su señora; y, siguiendo su camino, no topaba mujer ninguna que no iba a reconocer si era Dulcinea del Toboso, teniendo por infalible no poder mentir las promesas de Merlín.

Con estos pensamientos y deseos subieron una cuesta arriba, desde la cual descubrieron su aldea, la cual, vista de Sancho, se hincó de rodillas y dijo:

-Abre los ojos, deseada patria, y mira que vuelve a ti Sancho Panza, tu hijo, si no muy rico, muy bien azotado. Abre los brazos y recibe también tu hijo don Quijote, que si viene vencido de los brazos ajenos, viene vencedor de sí mismo; que, según él me ha dicho, es el mayor vencimiento que desearse puede. Dineros llevo, porque si buenos azotes me daban, bien caballero me iba.

-Déjate desas sandeces -dijo don Quijote-, y vamos con pie derecho a entrar en nuestro lugar, donde daremos vado a nuestras imaginaciones, y la traza que en la pastoral vida pensamos ejercitar.

Con esto, bajaron de la cuesta y se fueron a su pueblo.

## Capítulo LXXIII

*De los agüeros que tuvo don Quijote al entrar de su aldea, con otros sucesos que adornan y acreditan esta grande historia*

A la entrada del cual, según dice Cide Hamete, vio don Quijote que en las eras del lugar estaban riñendo dos mochachos, y el uno dijo al otro:

-No te canses Periquillo, que no la has de ver en todos los días de tu vida.

Oyólo don Quijote, y dijo a Sancho:

-¿No adviertes, amigo, lo que aquel mochacho ha dicho: «no la has de ver en todos los días de tu vida»?

-Pues bien, ¿qué importa -respondió Sancho- que haya dicho eso el mochacho?

-¿Qué? -replicó don Quijote-. ¿No vees tú que, aplicando aquella palabra a mi intención, quiere significar que no tengo de ver más a Dulcinea?

Queríale responder Sancho, cuando se lo estorbó ver que por aquella campaña venía huyendo una liebre, seguida de muchos galgos y cazadores, la cual, temerosa, se vino a recoger y a agazapar debajo de los pies del rucio. Cogióla Sancho a mano salva y presentósele a don Quijote, el cual estaba diciendo:

-Malum signum! Malum signum! Liebre huye, galgos la siguen: ¡Dulcinea no parece!

-Estraño es vuesa merced -dijo Sancho-. Presupongamos que esta liebre es Dulcinea del Toboso y estos galgos que la persiguen son los malandrines encantadores que la transformaron en labradora: ella huye, yo la cojo y la pongo en poder de vuesa merced, que la tiene en sus brazos y la regala: ¿qué mala señal es ésta, ni qué mal agüero se puede tomar de aquí?

Los dos mochachos de la pendencia se llegaron a ver la liebre, y al uno dellos preguntó Sancho que por qué reñían. Y fuele respondido por el que había dicho «no la verás más en toda tu vida», que él había tomado al otro mochacho una jaula de grillos, la cual no pensaba volvérsela en toda su vida. Sacó Sancho cuatro cuartos de la faltriquera y dióselos al mochacho por la jaula, y púsosela en las manos a don Quijote, diciendo:

-He aquí, señor, rompidos y desbaratados estos agüeros, que no tienen que ver más con nuestros sucesos, según que yo imagino, aunque tonto, que con las nubes de antaño. Y si no me acuerdo mal, he oído decir al cura de nuestro pueblo que no es de personas cristianas ni discretas mirar en estas niñerías; y aun vuesa

merced mismo me lo dijo los días pasados, dándome a entender que eran tontos todos aquellos cristianos que miraban en agüeros. Y no es menester hacer hincapié en esto, sino pasemos adelante y entremos en nuestra aldea.

Llegaron los cazadores, pidieron su liebre, y dióselo don Quijote; pasaron adelante, y, a la entrada del pueblo, toparon en un pradecillo rezando al cura y al bachiller Carrasco. Y es de saber que Sancho Panza había echado sobre el rucio y sobre el lío de las armas, para que sirviese de repostero, la túnica de bocacé pintada de llamas de fuego que le vistieron en el castillo del duque la noche que volvió en sí Altisidora. Acomodóle también la coraza en la cabeza, que fue la más nueva transformación y adorno con que se vio jamás jumento en el mundo.

Fueron luego conocidos los dos del cura y del bachiller, que se vinieron a ellos con los brazos abiertos. Apeóse don Quijote y abrazólos estrechamente; y los mochachos, que son linceos no escusados, divisaron la coraza del jumento y acudieron a verle, y decían unos a otros:

-Venid, mochachos, y veréis el asno de Sancho Panza más galán que Mingo, y la bestia de don Quijote más flaca hoy que el primer día.

Finalmente, rodeados de mochachos y acompañados del cura y del bachiller, entraron en el pueblo, y se fueron a casa de don Quijote, y hallaron a la puerta della al ama y a su sobrina, a quien ya habían llegado las nuevas de su venida. Ni más ni menos se las habían dado a Teresa Panza, mujer de Sancho, la cual, desgredada y medio desnuda, trayendo de la mano a Sanchica, su hija, acudió a ver a su marido; y, viéndole no tan bien adeliñado como ella se pensaba que había de estar un gobernador, le dijo:

-¿Cómo venís así, marido mío, que me parece que venís a pie y despeado, y más traéis semejanza de desgobernado que de gobernador?

-Calla, Teresa -respondió Sancho-, que muchas veces donde hay estacas no hay tocinos, y vámonos a nuestra casa, que allá oirás maravillas. Dineros traigo, que es lo que importa, ganados por mi industria y sin daño de nadie.

-Traed vos dinero, mi buen marido -dijo Teresa-, y sean ganados por aquí o por allí, que, comoquiera que los hayáis ganado, no habréis hecho usanza nueva en el mundo.

Abrazó Sanchica a su padre, y preguntóle si traía algo, que le estaba esperando como el agua de mayo; y, asíéndole de un lado del cinto, y su mujer de la mano, tirando su hija al rucio, se fueron a su casa, dejando a don Quijote en la suya, en poder de su sobrina y de su ama, y en compañía del cura y del bachiller.

Don Quijote, sin guardar términos ni horas, en aquel mismo punto se apartó a solas con el bachiller y el cura, y en breves razones les contó su vencimiento, y la obligación en que había quedado de no salir de su aldea en un año, la cual

pensaba guardar al pie de la letra, sin traspasarla en un átomo, bien así como caballero andante, obligado por la puntualidad y orden de la andante caballería, y que tenía pensado de hacerse aquel año pastor, y entretenerse en la soledad de los campos, donde a rienda suelta podía dar vado a sus amorosos pensamientos, ejercitándose en el pastoral y virtuoso ejercicio; y que les suplicaba, si no tenían mucho que hacer y no estaban impedidos en negocios más importantes, quisiesen ser sus compañeros; que él compraría ovejas y ganado suficiente que les diese nombre de pastores; y que les hacía saber que lo más principal de aquel negocio estaba hecho, porque les tenía puestos los nombres, que les vendrían como de molde. Díjole el cura que los dijese. Respondió don Quijote que él se había de llamar *el pastor Quijotiz*; y el bachiller, *el pastor Carrascón*; y el cura, *el pastor Curambro*; y Sancho Panza, *el pastor Pancino*.

Pasmáronse todos de ver la nueva locura de don Quijote; pero, porque no se les fuese otra vez del pueblo a sus caballerías, esperando que en aquel año podría ser curado, concedieron con su nueva intención, y aprobaron por discreta su locura, ofreciéndosele por compañeros en su ejercicio.

-Y más -dijo Sansón Carrasco-, que, como ya todo el mundo sabe, yo soy celeberrimo poeta y a cada paso compondré versos pastoriles, o cortesanos, o como más me viniere a cuento, para que nos entretengamos por esos andurriales donde habemos de andar; y lo que más es menester, señores míos, es que cada uno escoja el nombre de la pastora que piensa celebrar en sus versos, y que no dejemos árbol, por duro que sea, donde no la retule y grave su nombre, como es uso y costumbre de los enamorados pastores.

-Eso está de molde -respondió don Quijote-, puesto que yo estoy libre de buscar nombre de pastora fingida, pues está ahí la sin par Dulcinea del Toboso, gloria de estas riberas, adorno de estos prados, sustento de la hermosura, nata de los donaires, y, finalmente, sujeto sobre quien puede asentar bien toda alabanza, por hipérbole que sea.

-Así es verdad -dijo el cura-, pero nosotros buscaremos por ahí pastoras mañeruelas, que si no nos cuadraren, nos esquinen.

A lo que añadió Sansón Carrasco:

-Y cuando faltaren, darémosles los nombres de las estampadas e impresas, de quien está lleno el mundo: Fílicas, Amarilis, Dianas, Fléridas, Galateas y Belisardas; que, pues las venden en las plazas, bien las podemos comprar nosotros y tenerlas por nuestras. Si mi dama, o, por mejor decir, mi pastora, por ventura se llamare Ana, la celebraré debajo del nombre de *Anarda*; y si Francisca, la llamaré yo *Francenia*; y si Lucía, *Lucinda*, que todo se sale allá; y Sancho Panza, si es que ha de entrar en esta cofadría, podrá celebrar a su mujer Teresa Panza con nombre de *Teresaina*.

Rióse don Quijote de la aplicación del nombre, y el cura le alabó infinito su honesta y honrada resolución, y se ofreció de nuevo a hacerle compañía todo el tiempo que le vacase de atender a sus forzosas obligaciones. Con esto, se despidieron dél, y le rogaron y aconsejaron tuviese cuenta con su salud, con regalarse lo que fuese bueno.

Quiso la suerte que su sobrina y el ama oyeron la plática de los tres; y, así como se fueron, se entraron entrambas con don Quijote, y la sobrina le dijo:

-¿Qué es esto, señor tío? ¿Ahora que pensábamos nosotras que vuestra merced volvía a reducirse en su casa, y pasar en ella una vida quieta y honrada, se quiere meter en nuevos laberintos, haciéndose

Pastorcillo, tú que vienes,  
pastorcico, tú que vas?

Pues en verdad que está ya duro el alcacel para zampoñas.

A lo que añadió el ama:

Y ¿podrá vuestra merced pasar en el campo las siestas del verano, los serenos del invierno, el aullido de los lobos? No, por cierto, que éste es ejercicio y oficio de hombres robustos, curtidos y criados para tal ministerio casi desde las fajas y mantillas. Aun, mal por mal, mejor es ser caballero andante que pastor. Mire, señor, tome mi consejo, que no se le doy sobre estar harta de pan y vino, sino en ayunas, y sobre cincuenta años que tengo de edad: estése en su casa, atienda a su hacienda, confiese a menudo, favorezca a los pobres, y sobre mi ánimo si mal le fuere.

-Callad, hijas -les respondió don Quijote-, que yo sé bien lo que me cumple. Llevadme al lecho, que me parece que no estoy muy bueno, y tened por cierto que, ahora sea caballero andante o pastor por andar, no dejaré siempre de acudir a lo que hubiéredes menester, como lo veréis por la obra.

Y las buenas hijas -que lo eran sin duda ama y sobrina-le llevaron a la cama, donde le dieron de comer y regalaron lo posible.

## Capítulo LXXIV

*De cómo don Quijote cayó malo, y del testamento que hizo, y su muerte*

COMO las cosas humanas no sean eternas, yendo siempre en declinación de sus principios hasta llegar a su último fin, especialmente las vidas de los hombres, y como la de don Quijote no tuviese privilegio del cielo para detener el curso de la suya, llegó su fin y acabamiento cuando él menos lo pensaba; porque, o ya fuese de la melancolía que le causaba el verse vencido, o ya por la disposición del cielo, que así lo ordenaba, se le arraigó una calentura que le tuvo seis días en la cama, en los cuales fue visitado muchas veces del cura, del bachiller y del barbero, sus amigos, sin quitársele de la cabecera Sancho Panza, su buen escudero.

Éstos, creyendo que la pesadumbre de verse vencido y de no ver cumplido su deseo en la libertad y desencanto de Dulcinea le tenía de aquella suerte, por todas las vías posibles procuraban alegrarle, diciéndole el bachiller que se animase y levantase, para comenzar su pastoral ejercicio, para el cual tenía ya compuesta una égloga, que mal año para cuantas Sanazaro había compuesto, y que ya tenía comprados de su propio dinero dos famosos perros para guardar el ganado: el uno llamado Barcino, y el otro Butrón, que se los había vendido un ganadero del Quintanar. Pero no por esto dejaba don Quijote sus tristezas.

Llamaron sus amigos al médico, tomóle el pulso, y no le contentó mucho, y dijo que, por sí o por no, atendiese a la salud de su alma, porque la del cuerpo corría peligro. Oyólo don Quijote con ánimo sosegado, pero no lo oyeron así su ama, su sobrina y su escudero, los cuales comenzaron a llorar tiernamente, como si ya le tuvieran muerto delante. Fue el parecer del médico que melancolías y desabrimientos le acababan. Rogó don Quijote que le dejaran solo, porque quería dormir un poco. Hiciéronlo así y durmió de un tirón, como dicen, más de seis horas; tanto, que pensaron el ama y la sobrina que se había de quedar en el sueño. Despertó al cabo del tiempo dicho, y, dando una gran voz, dijo:

-¡Bendito sea el poderoso Dios, que tanto bien me ha hecho! En fin, sus misericordias no tienen límite, ni las abrevian ni impiden los pecados de los hombres.

Estuvo atenta la sobrina a las razones del tío, y parecióle más concertadas que él solía decirlas, a lo menos, en aquella enfermedad, y preguntóle:

-¿Qué es lo que vuestra merced dice, señor? ¿Tenemos algo de nuevo? ¿Qué

misericordias son éstas, o qué pecados de los hombres?

-Las misericordias -respondió don Quijote-, sobrina, son las que en este instante ha usado Dios conmigo, a quien, como dije, no las impiden mis pecados. Yo tengo juicio ya, libre y claro, sin las sombras caliginosas de la ignorancia, que sobre él me pusieron mi amarga y continua leyenda de los detestables libros de las caballerías. Ya conozco sus disparates y sus embelecocos, y no me pesa sino que este desengaño ha llegado tan tarde, que no me deja tiempo para hacer alguna recompensa, leyendo otros que sean luz del alma. Yo me siento, sobrina, a punto de muerte; querría hacerla de tal modo, que diese a entender que no había sido mi vida tan mala que dejase renombre de loco, que, puesto que lo he sido, no querría confirmar esta verdad en mi muerte. Llámame, amiga, a mis buenos amigos: el cura, al bachiller Sansón Carrasco y a maese Nicolás, el barbero, que quiero confesarme y hacer mi testamento.

Pero de este trabajo se escusó la sobrina con la entrada de los tres. Apenas los vio don Quijote, cuando dijo:

-Dadme albricias, buenos señores, de que ya yo no soy don Quijote de la Mancha, sino Alonso Quijano, a quien mis costumbres me dieron renombre de *Bueno*. Ya soy enemigo de Amadís de Gaula y de toda la infinita caterva de su linaje, ya me son odiosas todas las historias profanas del andante caballería, ya conozco mi necedad y el peligro en que me pusieron haberlas leído, ya, por misericordia de Dios, escarmentando en cabeza propia, las abomino.

Cuando esto le oyeron decir los tres, creyeron, sin duda, que alguna nueva locura le había tomado. Y Sansón le dijo:

-¿Ahora, señor don Quijote, que tenemos nueva que está desencantada la señora Dulcinea, sale vuestra merced con eso? Y ¿agora que estamos tan a pique de ser pastores, para pasar cantando la vida, como unos príncipes, quiere vuesa merced hacerse ermitaño? Calle, por su vida, vuelva en sí, y déjese de cuentos.

-Los de hasta aquí -replicó don Quijote-, que han sido verdaderos en mi daño, los ha de volver mi muerte, con ayuda del cielo, en mi provecho. Yo, señores, siento que me voy muriendo a toda priesa; déjense burlas aparte, y tráiganme un confesor que me confiese y un escribano que haga mi testamento, que en tales trances como éste no se ha de burlar el hombre con el alma; y así, suplico que, en tanto que el señor cura me confiesa, vayan por el escribano.

Miráronse unos a otros, admirados de las razones de don Quijote, y, aunque en duda, le quisieron creer; y una de las señales por donde conjeturaron se moría fue el haber vuelto con tanta facilidad de loco a cuerdo, porque a las ya dichas razones añadió otras muchas tan bien dichas, tan cristianas y con tanto concierto, que del todo les vino a quitar la duda, y a creer que estaba cuerdo.

Hizo salir la gente el cura, y quedóse solo con él, y confesóle.



El bachiller fue por el escribano, y de allí a poco volvió con él y con Sancho Panza; el cual Sancho, que ya sabía por nuevas del bachiller en qué estado estaba su señor, hallando a la ama y a la sobrina llorosas, comenzó a hacer pucheros y a derramar lágrimas. Acabóse la confesión, y salió el cura, diciendo:

-Verdaderamente se muere, y verdaderamente está cuerdo Alonso Quijano el Bueno; bien podemos entrar para que haga su testamento.

Estas nuevas dieron un terrible empujón a los ojos preñados de ama, sobrina y de Sancho Panza, su buen escudero, de tal manera, que los hizo reventar las lágrimas de los ojos y mil profundos suspiros del pecho; porque, verdaderamente, como alguna vez se ha dicho, en tanto que don Quijote fue Alonso Quijano el Bueno, a secas, y en tanto que fue don Quijote de la Mancha, fue siempre de apacible condición y de agradable trato, y por esto no sólo era bien querido de los de su casa, sino de todos cuantos le conocían.

Entró el escribano con los demás, y, después de haber hecho la cabeza del testamento y ordenado su alma don Quijote, con todas aquellas circunstancias cristianas que se requieren, llegando a las mandas, dijo:

-Ítem, es mi voluntad que de ciertos dineros que Sancho Panza, a quien en mi locura hice mi escudero, tiene, que, porque ha habido entre él y mí ciertas cuentas, y dares y tomares, quiero que no se le haga cargo dellos, ni se le pida cuenta alguna, sino que si sobrare alguno, después de haberse pagado de lo que le debo, el restante sea suyo, que será bien poco, y buen provecho le haga; y, si como estando yo loco fui parte para darle el gobierno de la ínsula, pudiera agora, estando cuerdo, darle el de un reino, se le diera, porque la sencillez de su condición y fidelidad de su trato lo merece.

Y, volviéndose a Sancho, le dijo:

-Perdóname, amigo, de la ocasión que te he dado de parecer loco como yo, haciéndote caer en el error en que yo he caído, de que hubo y hay caballeros andantes en el mundo.

-¡Ay! -respondió Sancho, llorando-: no se muera vuestra merced, señor mío, sino tome mi consejo y viva muchos años, porque la mayor locura que puede hacer un hombre en esta vida es dejarse morir, sin más ni más, sin que nadie le mate, ni otras manos le acaben que las de la melancolía. Mire no sea perezoso, sino levántese desahogada cama, y vámonos al campo vestidos de pastores, como tenemos concertado: quizá tras de alguna mata hallaremos a la señora doña Dulcinea desencantada, que no haya más que ver. Si es que se muere de pesar de verse vencido, écheme a mí la culpa, diciendo que por haber yo cinchado mal a Rocinante le derribaron; cuanto más, que vuestra merced habrá visto en sus libros de caballerías ser cosa ordinaria derribarse unos caballeros a otros, y el que es vencido hoy ser vencedor mañana.

-Así es -dijo Sansón-, y el buen Sancho Panza está muy en la verdad destos casos.

-Señores -dijo don Quijote-, vámonos poco a poco, pues ya en los nidos de antaño no hay pájaros hogaño: yo fui loco, y ya soy cuerdo; fui don Quijote de la Mancha, y soy agora, como he dicho, Alonso Quijano el Bueno. Pueda con vuestras mercedes mi arrepentimiento y mi verdad volverme a la estimación que de mí se tenía, y prosiga adelante el señor escribano.

»Ítem, mando toda mi hacienda, a puerta cerrada, a Antonia Quijana, mi sobrina, que está presente, habiendo sacado primero de lo más bien parado della lo que fuere menester para cumplir las mandas que dejo hechas; y la primera satisfacción que se haga quiero que sea pagar el salario que debo del tiempo que mi ama me ha servido, y más veinte ducados para un vestido. Dejo por mis albaceas al señor cura y al señor bachiller Sansón Carrasco, que están presentes.

»Ítem, es mi voluntad que si Antonia Quijana, mi sobrina, quisiere casarse, se case con hombre de quien primero se haya hecho información que no sabe qué cosas sean libros de caballerías; y, en caso que se averiguare que lo sabe, y, con todo eso, mi sobrina quisiere casarse con él, y se casare, pierda todo lo que le he mandado, lo cual puedan mis albaceas distribuir en obras pías a su voluntad.

»Ítem, suplico a los dichos señores mis albaceas que si la buena suerte les trujere a conocer al autor que dicen que compuso una historia que anda por ahí con el título de *Segunda parte de las hazañas de don Quijote de la Mancha*, de mi parte le pidan, cuan encarecidamente ser pueda, perdone la ocasión que sin yo pensarlo le di de haber escrito tantos y tan grandes disparates como en ella escribe, porque parto desta vida con escrúpulo de haberle dado motivo para escribirlos.

Cerró con esto el testamento, y, tomándole un desmayo, se tendió de largo a largo en la cama. Alborotáronse todos y acudieron a su remedio, y en tres días que vivió después deste donde hizo el testamento, se desmayaba muy a menudo. Andaba la casa alborotada; pero, con todo, comía la sobrina, brindaba el ama, y se regocijaba Sancho Panza; que esto del heredar algo borra o templea en el heredero la memoria de la pena que es razón que deje el muerto.

En fin, llegó el último de don Quijote, después de recibidos todos los sacramentos, y después de haber abominado con muchas y eficaces razones de los libros de caballerías. Hallóse el escribano presente, y dijo que nunca había leído en ningún libro de caballerías que algún caballero andante hubiese muerto en su lecho tan sosegadamente y tan cristiano como don Quijote; el cual, entre compasiones y lágrimas de los que allí se hallaron, dio su espíritu: quiero decir que se murió.

Viendo lo cual el cura, pidió al escribano le diese por testimonio como Alonso

Quijano el Bueno, llamado comúnmente don Quijote de la Mancha, había pasado desta presente vida y muerto naturalmente; y que el tal testimonio pedía para quitar la ocasión de algún otro autor que Cide Hamete Benengeli le resucitase falsamente, y hiciese inacabables historias de sus hazañas.

Este fin tuvo el Ingenioso Hidalgo de la Mancha, cuyo lugar no quiso poner Cide Hamete puntualmente, por dejar que todas las villas y lugares de la Mancha contendiesen entre sí por ahijársele y tenérsele por suyo, como contendieron las siete ciudades de Grecia por Homero.

Déjanse de poner aquí los llantos de Sancho, sobrina y ama de don Quijote, los nuevos epitafios de su sepultura, aunque Sansón Carrasco le puso éste:

Yace aquí el Hidalgo fuerte  
que a tanto extremo llegó  
de valiente, que se advierte  
que la muerte no triunfó  
de su vida con su muerte. 5

Tuvo a todo el mundo en poco;  
fue el espantajo y el coco  
del mundo, en tal coyuntura,  
que acreditó su ventura  
morir cuerdo y vivir loco. 10

Y el prudentísimo Cide Hamete dijo a su pluma:

-Aquí quedarás, colgada desta espetera y deste hilo de alambre, ni sé si bien cortada o mal tajada péñola mía, adonde vivirás luengos siglos, si presuntuosos y malandrines historiadores no te descuelgan para profanarte. Pero, antes que a ti lleguen, les puedes advertir, y decirles en el mejor modo que pudieres:

«¡Tate, tate, folloncicos!  
De ninguno sea tocada;  
porque esta impresa, buen rey,  
para mí estaba guardada.

Para mí sola nació don Quijote, y yo para él; él supo obrar y yo escribir; solos

los dos somos para en uno, a despecho y pesar del escritor fingido y tordesillesco que se atrevió, o se ha de atrever, a escribir con pluma de avestruz grosera y mal deliñada las hazañas de mi valeroso caballero, porque no es carga de sus hombros ni asunto de su resfriado ingenio; a quien advertirás, si acaso llegas a conocerle, que deje reposar en la sepultura los cansados y ya podridos huesos de don Quijote, y no le quiera llevar, contra todos los fueros de la muerte, a Castilla la Vieja, haciéndole salir de la fuesa donde real y verdaderamente yace tendido de largo a largo, imposibilitado de hacer tercera jornada y salida nueva; que, para hacer burla de tantas como hicieron tantos andantes caballeros, bastan las dos que él hizo, tan a gusto y beneplácito de las gentes a cuya noticia llegaron, así en éstos como en los estraños reinos». Y con esto cumplirás con tu cristiana profesión, aconsejando bien a quien mal te quiere, y yo quedaré satisfecho y ufano de haber sido el primero que gozó el fruto de sus escritos enteramente, como deseaba, pues no ha sido otro mi deseo que poner en aborrecimiento de los hombres las fingidas y disparatadas historias de los libros de caballerías, que, por las de mi verdadero don Quijote, van ya tropezando, y han de caer del todo, sin duda alguna. Vale.

FIN

# LOS TRABAJOS DE PERSILES Y SIGISMUNDA



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## Tasa

Yo, Jerónimo Núñez de León, escribano de Cámara del rey nuestro señor, de los que en su Consejo residen, doy fee que, habiéndose visto por los señores dél un libro intitulado *Historia de los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, compuesto por Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, que con licencia de los dichos señores fue impreso, tasaron cada pliego de los del dicho libro a cuatro maravedís, y parece tener cincuenta y ocho pliegos, que al dicho respeto son docientos y treinta y dos maravedís, y a este precio mandaron se vendiese, y no a más, y que esta tasa se ponga al principio de cada libro de los que se imprimieren. E, para que de ello conste, de mandamiento de los dichos señores del Consejo, y de pedimiento de la parte del dicho Miguel de Cervantes, doy esta fee. En Madrid, a veinte y tres de diciembre de mil y seiscientos y diez y seis años.

*Gerónimo Núñez de León.*

Tiene cincuenta y ocho pliegos, que, a cuatro maravedís, monta seis reales y veinte y ocho maravedís.

Fee de erratas

Este libro, intitulado *Historia de los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, corresponde con su original. Dada en Madrid, a quince días del mes de diciembre de mil y seiscientos y diez y seis años.

*El licenciado Murcia de la Llana.*

## El rey

Por cuanto por parte de vos, doña Catalina de Salazar, viuda de Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, nos fue fecha relación que el dicho Miguel de Cervantes había dejado compuesto un libro intitulado *Los trabajos de Persiles*, en que había puesto mucho estudio y trabajo, y nos suplicastes os mandásemos dar licencia para le poder imprimir, y privilegio por veinte años, o como la nuestra merced fuese, lo cual visto por los del nuestro Consejo, y como por su mandado se hicieron las diligencias que la premática por nos últimamente fecha sobre la impresión de los libros dispone, fue acordado que debíamos mandar dar esta nuestra cédula para vos en la dicha razón, y nos tuvimoslo por bien. Por lo cual os damos licencia y facultad para que por tiempo de diez años, primeros siguientes que corran y se cuenten desde el día de la fecha della, vos o la persona que vuestro poder hubiere, y no otro alguno, podáis imprimir y vender el dicho libro, que desuso se hace mención, por el original que en el nuestro Consejo se vio, que va rubricado y firmado al fin de Gerónimo Núñez de León, nuestro escribano de Cámara, de los que en él residen, con que, antes que se venda, lo traigáis ante ellos juntamente con el dicho original, para que se vea si la dicha impresión está conforme a él, y traigáis fee en pública forma en cómo por corretor por nos nombrado se vio y corrigió la dicha impresión por su original. Y mandamos al impresor que imprimiere el dicho libro, no imprima el principio y primer pliego, ni entregue más de un solo libro con el original al autor, o persona a cuya costa se imprimiere, y no otro alguno, para efeto de la dicha corrección y tasa, hasta que primero el dicho libro esté corregido y tasado por los del nuestro Consejo. Y, estando así, y no de otra manera, pueda imprimir el dicho libro, principio y primer pliego, en el cual seguidamente se ponga esta licencia y privilegio, y la aprobación, tasa y erratas, so pena de caer e incurrir en las penas contenidas en la premática y leyes de nuestros reinos que sobre ello disponen. Y mandamos que, durante el tiempo de los dichos diez años, persona alguna, sin vuestra licencia, no le pueda imprimir ni vender, so pena que, el que lo imprimiere haya perdido y pierda todos y cualesquier libros, moldes y aparejos que del dicho libro tuviere; y más, incurra en pena de cincuenta mil maravedís, la cual dicha pena sea la tercia parte para la nuestra Cámara, y la otra tercia parte para el juez que lo sentenciare, y la otra tercia parte para la persona que lo denunciare. Y mandamos a los del nuestro Consejo, presidentes y oidores de las nuestras Audiencias, alcaldes, alguaciles de la nuestra Casa y Corte, y Chancillerías, y a todos los corregidores, asistentes, gobernadores, alcaldes mayores y ordinarios, y otros jueces y justicias cualesquier, de todas las

ciudades, villas y lugares de los nuestros reinos y señoríos, que vos guarden y cumplan esta nuestra cédula, y contra su tenor y forma no vayan ni pasen en manera alguna. Fecha en San Lorenzo, a veinte y cuatro días del mes de setiembre de mil y seiscientos y diez y seis años.

Yo, el rey.

Por mandado del rey nuestro señor: *Pedro de Contreras*.

#### Aprobación

Por mandado de Vuesa Alteza he visto el libro de *Los trabajos de Persiles*, de Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, ilustre hijo de nuestra nación, y padre ilustre de tantos buenos hijos con que dichosamente la enobleció, y no hallo en él cosa contra nuestra santa fe católica y buenas costumbres; antes, muchas de honesta y apacible recreación, y por él se podría decir lo que San Jerónimo de Orígenes por el comentario sobre los *Cantares*: cum in omnibus omnes, in hoc seipsum superavit Origenes, pues, de cuantos nos dejó escritos, ninguno es más ingenioso, más culto ni más entretenido. En fin, cisne de su buena vejez, casi entre los aprietos de la muerte, cantó este parto de su venerando ingenio. Este es mi parecer. Salvo, etc. En Madrid, a nueve de setiembre de mil y seiscientos y diez y seis años.

*El Maestro Joseph de Valdivieso.*

De don Francisco de Urbina a Miguel de Cervantes,  
*insigne y cristiano ingenio de nuestros tiempos, a quien llevaron los terceros de San Francisco a enterrar con la cara descubierta, como a tercero que era*

### Epitafio

Caminante, el peregrino Cervantes aquí se encierra; su cuerpo cubre la tierra, no su nombre, que es divino.

En fin, hizo su camino; 5

pero su fama no es muerta, ni sus obras, prenda cierta de que pudo a la partida, desde ésta a la eterna vida, ir la cara descubierta. 10

A el sepulcro de Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, ingenio cristiano, por Luis  
Francisco Calderón

## Soneto

En este, ¡oh caminante!, mármol breve, urna funesta, si no excelsa pira, cenizas de un ingenio santas mira, que olvido y tiempo a despreciar se atreve.

No tantas en su orilla arenas mueve 5  
glorioso el Tajo, cuantas hoy admira lenguas la suya, por quien grata aspira a el lauro España que a su nombre debe.

Lucientes de sus libros gracias fueron, con dulce suspensión, su estilo grave, 10  
religiosa invención, moral decoro.

A cuyo ingenio los de España dieron la sólida opinión que el mundo sabe, y a el cuerpo, ofrenda de perpetuo lloro.

A don Pedro Fernández de Castro,  
*conde de Lemos, de Andrade, de Villalba; marqués de Sarriá, gentilhombre de la Cámara de su Majestad, presidente del Consejo Supremo de Italia, comendador de la Encomienda de la Zarza, de la Orden de Alcántara*  
Aquellas coplas antiguas, que fueron en su tiempo celebradas, que comienzan:  
*Puesto ya el pie en el estribo,*

quisiera yo no vinieran tan a pelo en esta mi epístola, porque casi con las mismas palabras la puedo comenzar, diciendo:  
*Puesto ya el pie en el estribo,*  
*con las ansias de la muerte,*  
*gran señor, ésta te escribo.*

Ayer me dieron la Estremaunción y hoy escribo ésta. El tiempo es breve, las ansias crecen, las esperanzas menguan, y, con todo esto, llevo la vida sobre el deseo que tengo de vivir, y quisiera yo ponerle coto hasta besar los pies a Vuesa Excelencia; que podría ser fuese tanto el contento de ver a Vuesa Excelencia bueno en España, que me volviese a dar la vida. Pero si está decretado que la haya de perder, cúmplase la voluntad de los cielos, y por lo menos sepa Vuesa Excelencia este mi deseo, y sepa que tuvo en mí un tan aficionado criado de servirle que quiso pasar aun más allá de la muerte, mostrando su intención. Con todo esto, como en profecía me alegro de la llegada de Vuesa Excelencia,

regocíjome de verle señalar con el dedo, y realégrome de que salieron verdaderas mis esperanzas, dilatadas en la fama de las bondades de Vuesa Excelencia. Todavía me quedan en el alma ciertas reliquias y asomos de *Las semanas del jardín*, y del famoso *Bernardo*. Si a dicha, por buena ventura mía, que ya no sería ventura, sino milagro, me diese el cielo vida, las verá, y con ellas fin de *La Galatea*, de quien sé está aficionado Vuesa Excelencia. Y, con estas obras, continuando mi deseo, guarde Dios a Vuesa Excelencia como puede. De Madrid, a diez y nueve de abril de mil y seiscientos y diez y seis años.

*Criado de Vuesa Excelencia, Miguel de Cervantes.*

## Prólogo

Sucedió, pues, lector amantísimo, que, viniendo otros dos amigos y yo del famoso lugar de Esquivias, por mil causas famoso, una por sus ilustres linajes y otra por sus ilustrísimos vinos, sentí que a mis espaldas venía picando con gran priesa uno que, al parecer, traía deseo de alcanzarnos, y aun lo mostró dándonos voces que no picásemos tanto. Esperámosle, y llegó sobre una borrica un estudiante pardal, porque todo venía vestido de pardo, antiparas, zapato redondo y espada con contera, valona bruñida y con trenzas iguales; verdad es, no traía más de dos, porque se le venía a un lado la valona por momentos, y él traía sumo trabajo y cuenta de enderezarla.

Llegando a nosotros dijo:

-¡Vuestas mercedes van a alcanzar algún oficio o prebenda a la corte, pues allá está su Ilustrísima de Toledo y su Majestad, ni más ni menos, según la priesa con que caminan?; que en verdad que a mi burra se le ha cantado el víctor de caminante más de una vez.

A lo cual respondió uno de mis compañeros:

-El rocín del señor Miguel de Cervantes tiene la culpa desto, porque es algo qué pasilargo.

Apenas hubo oído el estudiante el nombre de Cervantes, cuando, apeándose de su cabalgadura, cayéndosele aquí el cojín y allí el portamanteo, que con toda esta autoridad caminaba, arremetió a mí, y, acudiendo asirme de la mano izquierda, dijo:

-¡Sí, sí; éste es el manco sano, el famoso todo, el escritor alegre, y, finalmente, el regocijo de las musas!

Yo, que en tan poco espacio vi el grande encomio de mis alabanzas, parecióme ser descortesía no corresponder a ellas. Y así, abrazándole por el cuello, donde le eché a perder de todo punto la valona, le dije:

-Ese es un error donde han caído muchos aficionados ignorantes. Yo, señor, soy Cervantes, pero no el regocijo de las musas, ni ninguno de las demás baratijas que ha dicho vuesa merced; vuelva a cobrar su burra y suba, y caminemos en buena conversación lo poco que nos falta del camino.

Hízolo así el comedido estudiante, tuvimos algún tanto más las riendas, y con paso asentado seguimos nuestro camino, en el cual se trató de mi enfermedad, y el buen estudiante me desahució al momento, diciendo:

-Esta enfermedad es de hidropesía, que no la sanará toda el agua del mar



Océano que dulcemente se bebiese. Vuesa merced, señor Cervantes, ponga tasa al beber, no olvidándose de comer, que con esto sanará sin otra medicina alguna.

-Eso me han dicho muchos -respondí yo-, pero así puedo dejar de beber a todo mi beneplácito, como si para sólo eso hubiera nacido. Mi vida se va acabando, y, al paso de las efeméridas de mis pulsos, que, a más tardar, acabarán su carrera este domingo, acabaré yo la de mi vida. En fuerte punto ha llegado vuesa merced a conocerme, pues no me queda espacio para mostrarme agradecido a la voluntad que vuesa merced me ha mostrado.

En esto, llegamos a la puente de Toledo, y yo entré por ella, y él se apartó a entrar por la de Segovia.

Lo que se dirá de mi suceso, tendrá la fama cuidado, mis amigos gana de decilla, y yo mayor gana de escuchalla.

Tornéle a abrazar, volvióseme ofrecer, picó a su burra, y dejóme tan mal dispuesto como él iba caballero en su burra, a quien había dado gran ocasión a mi pluma para escribir donaires; pero no son todos los tiempos unos: tiempo vendrá, quizá, donde, anudando este roto hilo, diga lo que aquí me falta, y lo que sé convenía.

¡Adiós, gracias; adiós, donaires; adiós, regocijados amigos; que yo me voy muriendo, y deseando veros presto contentos en la otra vida!

*Libro primero de la Historia de los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*

## Capítulo primero

VOCES daba el bárbaro Corsicurbo a la estrecha boca de una profunda mazmorra, antes sepultura que prisión de muchos cuerpos vivos que en ella estaban sepultados; y, aunque su terrible y espantoso estruendo cerca y lejos se escuchaba, de nadie eran entendidas articuladamente las razones que pronunciaba, sino de la miserable Cloelia, a quien sus desventuras en aquella profundidad tenían encerrada.

-Haz, ¡oh Cloelia! -decía el bárbaro-, que así como está, ligadas las manos atrás, salga acá arriba, atado a esa cuerda que descuelgo, aquel mancebo que habrá dos días que te entregamos; y mira bien si, entre las mujeres de la pasada presa, hay alguna que merezca nuestra compañía y gozar de la luz del claro cielo que nos cubre y del aire saludable que nos rodea.

Descolgó en esto una gruesa cuerda de cáñamo, y, de allí a poco espacio, él y otros cuatro bárbaros tiraron hacia arriba, en la cual cuerda, ligado por debajo de los brazos, sacaron asido fuertemente a un mancebo, al parecer de hasta diez y nueve o veinte años, vestido de lienzo basto, como marinero, pero hermoso sobre todo encarecimiento.

Lo primero que hicieron los bárbaros fue requerir las esposas y cordeles con que a las espaldas traía ligadas las manos. Luego le sacudieron los cabellos, que, como infinitos anillos de puro oro, la cabeza le cubrían. Limpiáronle el rostro, que cubierto de polvo tenía, y descubrió una tan maravillosa hermosura, que suspendió y enterneció los pechos de aquellos que para ser sus verdugos le llevaban.

No mostraba el gallardo mozo en su semblante género de aflicción alguna; antes, con ojos al parecer alegres, alzó el rostro, y miró al cielo por todas partes, y con voz clara y no turbada lengua dijo:

-Gracias os hago, ¡oh inmensos y piadosos cielos!, de que me habéis traído a morir adonde vuestra luz vea mi muerte, y no adonde estos oscuros calabozos, de donde agora salgo, de sombras caliginosas la cubran. Bien querría yo no morir desesperado, a lo menos, porque soy cristiano; pero mis desdichas son tales, que me llaman y casi fuerzan a desearlo.

Ninguna destas razones fue entendida de los bárbaros, por ser dichas en diferente lenguaje que el suyo; y así, cerrando primero la boca de la mazmorra con una gran piedra y cogiendo al mancebo sin desatarle, entre los cuatro llegaron con él a la marina, donde tenían una balsa de maderos, y atados unos

con otros con fuertes bejucos y flexibles mimbres. Este artificio les servía, como luego pareció, de bajel en que pasaban a otra isla, que no dos millas o tres de allí se parecía.

Saltaron luego en los maderos, y pusieron en medio dellos sentado al prisionero, y luego uno de los bárbaros asió de un grandísimo arco que en la balsa estaba; y, poniendo en él una desmesurada flecha, cuya punta era de pedernal, con mucha presteza le flechó, y, encarando al mancebo, le señaló por su blanco, dando señales y muestras de que ya le quería pasar el pecho. Los bárbaros que quedaban asieron de tres palos gruesos, cortados a manera de remos, y el uno se puso a ser timonero, y los dos a encaminar la balsa a la otra isla.

El hermoso mozo, que por instantes esperaba y temía el golpe de la flecha amenazadora, encogía los hombros, apretaba los labios, enarcaba las cejas, y, con silencio profundo, dentro en su corazón pedía al cielo, no que le librase de aquel tan cercano como cruel peligro, sino que le diese ánimo para sufrirlo. Viendo lo cual el bárbaro flechero, y sabiendo que no había de ser aquel el género de muerte con que le habían de quitar la vida, hallando la belleza del mozo piedad en la dureza de su corazón, no quiso darle dilatada muerte, teniéndole siempre encarada la flecha al pecho; y así, arrojó de sí el arco, y, llegándose a él, por señas, como mejor pudo, le dio a entender que no quería matarle.

En esto estaban, cuando los maderos llegaron a la mitad del estrecho que las dos islas formaban, en el cual de improviso se levantó una borrasca, que, sin poder remediallo los inexpertos marineros, los leños de la balsa se desligaron y dividieron en partes, quedando en la una, que sería de hasta seis maderos compuesta, el mancebo, que de otra muerte que de ser anegado, tan poco había que estaba temeroso. Levantaron remolinos las aguas, pelearon entre sí los contrapuestos vientos, anegáronse los bárbaros, salieron los leños del atado prisionero al mar abierto, pasábanle las olas por cima, no solamente impidiéndole ver el cielo, pero negándole el poder pedirle tuviese compasión de su desventura. Y sí tuvo, pues las continuas y furiosas ondas, que a cada punto le cubrían, no le arrancaron de los leños, y se le llevaron consigo a su abismo; que, como llevaba atadas las manos a las espaldas, ni podía asirse, ni usar de otro remedio alguno.

Desta manera que se ha dicho salió a lo raso del mar, que se mostró algún tanto sosegado y tranquilo al volver una punta de la isla, adonde los leños milagrosamente se encaminaron y del furioso mar se defendieron. Sentóse el fatigado joven, y, tendiendo la vista a todas partes, casi junto a él descubrió un navío que en aquel redoso del alterado mar, como en seguro puerto, se reparaba.

Descubrieron asimismo los del navío los maderos y el bulto que sobre ellos venía; y, por certificarse qué podía ser aquello, echaron el esquiife al agua y llegaron a verlo, y, hallando allí al tan desfigurado como hermoso mancebo, con diligencia y lástima le pasaron a su navío, dando con el nuevo hallazgo admiración a cuantos en él estaban.

Subió el mozo en brazos ajenos, y, no pudiendo tenerse en sus pies de puro flaco -porque había tres días que no había comido-y de puro molido y maltratado de las olas, dio consigo un gran golpe sobre la cubierta del navío, el capitán del cual, con ánimo generoso y compasión natural, mandó que le socorriesen. Acudieron luego unos a quitarle las ataduras, otros a traer conservas y odoríferos vinos, con cuyos remedios volvió en sí, como de muerte a vida, el desmayado mozo, el cual, poniendo los ojos en el capitán, cuya gentileza y rico traje le llevó tras sí la vista y aun la lengua, y le dijo:

-Los piadosos cielos te paguen, piadoso señor, el bien que me has hecho, que mal se pueden llevar las tristezas del ánimo, si no se esfuerzan los descaecimientos del cuerpo. Mis desdichas me tienen de manera que no te puedo hacer ninguna recompensa deste beneficio, si no es con el agradecimiento. Y si se sufre que un pobre afligido pueda decir de sí mismo alguna alabanza, yo sé que en ser agradecido ninguno en el mundo me podrá llevar alguna ventaja.

Y en esto probó a levantarse para ir a besarle los pies, mas la flaqueza no se lo permitió, porque tres veces lo probó y otras tantas volvió a dar consigo en el suelo. Viendo lo cual el capitán, mandó que le llevasen debajo de cubierta y le echasen en dos traspontines, y que, quitándole los mojados vestidos, le vistiesen otros enjutos y limpios, y le hiciesen descansar y dormir. Hízose lo que el capitán mandó. Obedeció, callando, el mozo, y en el capitán creció la admiración de nuevo, viéndolo levantar en pie, con la gallarda disposición que tenía, y luego le comenzó a fatigar el deseo de saber dél, lo más presto que pudiese, quién era, cómo se llamaba y de qué causas había nacido el efeto que en tanta estrechez le había puesto. Pero, excediendo su cortesía a su deseo, quiso que primero se acudiese a su debilidad, que cumplir la voluntad suya.

## Capítulo segundo del libro primero

REPOSANDO dejaron los ministros de la nave al mancebo, en cumplimiento de lo que su señor les había mandado. Pero, como le acosaban varios y tristes pensamientos, no podía el sueño tomar posesión de sus sentidos, ni menos lo consintieron unos congojosos suspiros y unas angustiadas lamentaciones que a sus oídos llegaron, a su parecer, salidos de entre unas tablas de otro apartamiento que junto al suyo estaba. Y, poniéndose con grande atención a escucharlas, oyó que decían:

-¡En triste y menguado signo mis padres me engendraron, y en no benigna estrella mi madre me arrojó a la luz del mundo! ¡Y bien digo arrojó, porque nacimiento como el mío, antes se puede decir arrojar que nacer! Libre pensé yo que gozara de la luz del sol en esta vida, pero engañóme mi pensamiento, pues me veo a pique de ser vendida por esclava: desventura a quien ninguna puede compararse.

-¡Oh tú, quienquiera que seas! -dijo a esta sazón el mancebo-. Si es, como decirse suele, que las desgracias y trabajos cuando se comunican suelen aliviarse, llégate aquí, y, por entre los espacios descubiertos destas tablas, cuéntame los tuyos; que si en mí no hallares alivio, hallarás quien dellos se compadezca.

-Escucha, pues -le fue respondido-, que en las más breves razones te contaré las sinrazones que la fortuna me ha hecho. Pero querría saber primero a quién las cuento. Dime si eres, por ventura, un mancebo que poco ha hallaron medio muerto en unos maderos que dicen sirven de barcos a unos bárbaros que están en esta isla, donde hemos dado fondo, reparándonos de la borrasca que se ha levantado.

-El mismo soy -respondió el mancebo.

-Pues ¿quién eres? -preguntó la persona que hablaba.

-Dijératelo, si no quisiera que primero me obligaras con contarme tu vida, que por las palabras que poco ha que te oí decir, imagino que no debe de ser tan buena como quisieras.

A lo que le respondieron:

-Escucha, que en cifra te diré mis males. «El capitán y señor deste navío se llama Arnaldo, es hijo heredero del rey de Dinamarca, a cuyo poder vino por diferentes y estraños acontecimientos una principal doncella, a quien yo tuve por señora, a mi parecer, de tanta hermosura que entre las que hoy viven en el

mundo, y entre aquellas que puede pintar en la imaginación el más agudo entendimiento, puede llevar la ventaja. Su discreción iguala a su belleza, y sus desdichas a su discreción y a su hermosura. Su nombre es Auristela. Sus padres, de linaje de reyes y de riquísimo estado.

»Ésta, pues, a quien todas estas alabanzas vienen cortas, se vio vendida, y comprada de Arnaldo, y con tanto ahínco y con tantas veras la amó y la ama que mil veces de esclava la quiso hacer su señora, admitiéndola por su legítima esposa; y esto con voluntad del rey, padre de Arnaldo, que juzgó que las raras virtudes y gentileza de Auristela mucho más que ser reina merecían. Pero ella se defendía, diciendo no ser posible romper un voto que tenía hecho de guardar virginidad toda su vida, y que no pensaba quebrarle en ninguna manera, si bien la solicitasen promesas o la amenazasen muertes. Pero no por esto ha dejado Arnaldo de entretener sus esperanzas con dudosas imaginaciones, arrimándolas a la variación de los tiempos y a la mudable condición de las mujeres, hasta que sucedió que, andando mi señora Auristela por la ribera del mar, solazándose, no como esclava, sino como reina, llegaron unos bajeles de cosarios, y la robaron y llevaron no se sabe adónde.

»El príncipe Arnaldo, imaginando que estos cosarios eran los mismos que la primera vez se la vendieron (los cuales cosarios andan por todos estos mares, ínsulas y riberas, robando o comprando las más hermosas doncellas que hallan, para traellas por granjería a vender a esta ínsula, donde dicen que estamos, la cual es habitada de unos bárbaros, gente indómita y cruel, los cuales tienen entre sí por cosa inviolable y cierta, persuadidos, o ya del demonio o ya de un antiguo hechicero a quien ellos tienen por sapientísimo varón, que de entre ellos ha de salir un rey que conquiste y gane gran parte del mundo; este rey que esperan no saben quién ha de ser, y para saberlo, aquel hechicero les dio esta orden: que sacrificasen todos los hombres que a su ínsula llegasen, de cuyos corazones, digo de cada uno de por sí, hiciesen polvos y los diesen a beber a los bárbaros más principales de la ínsula, con expresa orden que, el que los pasase sin torcer el rostro ni dar muestras de que le sabía mal, le alzasen por su rey; pero no ha de ser éste el que conquiste el mundo, sino un hijo suyo. También les mandó que tuviesen en la isla todas las doncellas que pudiesen o comprar o robar, y que la más hermosa dellas se la entregasen luego al bárbaro, cuya sucesión valerosa prometía la bebida de los polvos. Estas doncellas, compradas o robadas, son bien tratadas de ellos, que sólo en esto muestran no ser bárbaros, y las que compran, son a subidísimos precios, que los pagan en pedazos de oro sin cuño y en preciosísimas perlas, de que los mares de las riberas destas islas abundan: y a esta causa, llevados deste interés y ganancia, muchos se han hecho cosarios y mercaderes).

»Arnaldo, pues, que, como te he dicho, ha imaginado que en esta isla podría ser que estuviese Auristela, mitad de su alma sin la cual no puede vivir, ha ordenado, para certificarse desta duda, de venderme a mí a los bárbaros, porque, quedando yo entre ellos, sirva de espía de saber lo que desea, y no espera otra cosa sino que el mar se amanse, para hacer escala y concluir su venta. Mira, pues, si con razón me quejo, pues la ventura que me aguarda es venir a vivir entre bárbaros, que de mi hermosura no me puedo prometer venir a ser reina, especialmente si la corta suerte hubiese traído a esta tierra a mi señora, la sin par Auristela. De esta causa nacieron los suspiros que me has oído, y destos temores las quejas que me atormentan.»

Calló, en diciendo esto, y al mancebo se le atravesó un ñudo en la garganta; pegó la boca con las tablas, que humedeció con copiosas lágrimas, y al cabo de un pequeño espacio le preguntó si, por ventura, tenía algunos barruntos de que Arnaldo hubiese gozado de Auristela, o ya de que Auristela, por estar en otra parte prendada, desdeñase a Arnaldo, y no admitiese tan gran dádiva como la de un reino, porque a él le parecía que tal vez las leyes del gusto humano tienen más fuerza que las de la religión.

Respondióle que, aunque ella imaginaba que el tiempo había podido dar a Auristela ocasión de querer bien a un tal Periandro, que la había sacado de su patria (caballero generoso, dotado de todas las partes que le podían hacer amable de todos aquellos que le conociesen), nunca se le había oído nombrar en las continuas quejas que de sus desgracias daba al cielo, ni en otro modo alguno.

Preguntóle si conocía ella a aquel Periandro que decía.

Díjole que no, sino que por relación sabía ser el que llevó a su señora, a cuyo servicio ella había venido después que Periandro, por un extraño acontecimiento, la había dejado.

En esto estaban, cuando de arriba llamaron a Taurisa -que éste era el nombre de la que sus desgracias había contado-, la cual, oyéndose llamar, dijo:

-Sin duda alguna el mar está manso, y la borrasca quieta, pues me llaman para hacer de mí la desdichada entrega. A Dios te queda, quienquiera que seas, y los cielos te libren de ser entregado para que los polvos de tu abrasado corazón testifiquen esta vanidad e impertinente profecía; que también estos insolentes moradores desta ínsula buscan corazones que abrasar, como doncellas que guardar para lo que procuran.

Apartáronse. Subió Taurisa a la cubierta. Quedó el mancebo pensativo, y pidió que le diesen de vestir, que quería levantarse. Trujéronle un vestido de damasco verde, cortado al modo del que él había traído de lienzo. Subió arriba. Recibióle Arnaldo con agradable semblante. Sentóle junto a sí. Vistieron a Taurisa rica y gallardamente, al modo que suelen vestirse las ninfas de las aguas, o las

amadríades de los montes. En tanto que esto se hacía con admiración del mozo, Arnaldo le contó todos sus amores y sus intentos, y aun le pidió consejo de lo que haría, y le preguntó si los medios que ponía para saber de Auristela iban bien encaminados.

El mozo, que del razonamiento que había tenido con Taurisa y de lo que Arnaldo le contaba tenía el alma llena de mil imaginaciones y sospechas, discurriendo con velocísimo curso del entendimiento lo que podía suceder si acaso Auristela entre aquellos bárbaros se hallase, le respondió:

-Señor, yo no tengo edad para saberte aconsejar, pero tengo voluntad que me mueve a servirte, que la vida que me has dado con el recibimiento y mercedes que me has hecho me obligan a emplearla en tu servicio. Mi nombre es Periandro, de nobilísimos padres nacido, y al par de mi nobleza corre mi desventura y mis desgracias, las cuales por ser tantas no conceden ahora lugar para contártelas. Esa Auristela que buscas es una hermana mía que también yo ando buscando, que, por varios acontecimientos, ha un año que nos perdimos. Por el nombre y por la hermosura que me encareces conozco sin duda que es mi perdida hermana, que daría por hallarla, no sólo la vida que poseo, sino el contento que espero recibir de haberla hallado, que es lo más que puedo encarecer. Y así, como tan interesado en este hallazgo, voy escogiendo, entre otros muchos medios que en la imaginación fabrico, éste, que, aunque venga a ser con más peligro de mi vida, será más cierto y más breve. Tú, señor Arnaldo, ¿estás determinado de vender esta doncella a estos bárbaros, para que, estando en su poder, vea si está en el suyo Auristela, de que te podrás informar volviendo otra vez a vender otra doncella a los mismos bárbaros, y a Taurisa no le faltará modo, o dará señales si está o no Auristela con las demás que para el efeto que se sabe los bárbaros guardan, y con tanta solicitud compran?

-Así es la verdad -dijo Arnaldo-, y he escogido antes a Taurisa que a otra, de cuatro que van en el navío para el mismo efeto, porque Taurisa la conoce, que ha sido su doncella.

-Todo eso está muy bien pensado -dijo Periandro-, pero yo soy de parecer que ninguna persona hará esa diligencia tan bien como yo, pues mi edad, mi rostro, el interés que se me sigue, juntamente con el conocimiento que tengo de Auristela, me está incitando a aconsejarme que tome sobre mis hombros esta empresa. Mira, señor, si vienes en este parecer, y no lo dilates, que, en los casos arduos y dificultosos, en un mismo punto han de andar el consejo y la obra.

Cuadráronle a Arnaldo las razones de Periandro, y, sin reparar en algunos inconvenientes que se le ofrecían, las puso en obra, y de muchos y ricos vestidos de que venía proveído por si hallaba a Auristela, vistió a Periandro, que quedó, al parecer, la más gallarda y hermosa mujer que hasta entonces los ojos humanos



habían visto, pues si no era la hermosura de Auristela, ninguna otra podía igualársele. Los del navío quedaron admirados; Taurisa, atónita; el príncipe, confuso; el cual, a no pensar que era hermano de Auristela, el considerar que era varón le traspasara el alma con la dura lanza de los celos, cuya punta se atreve a entrar por las del más agudo diamante: quiero decir que los celos rompen toda seguridad y recato, aunque dél se armen los pechos enamorados. Finalmente, hecho el metamorfosis de Periandro, se hicieron un poco a la mar, para que de todo en todo de los bárbaros fuesen descubiertos.

La priesa con que Arnaldo quiso saber de Auristela no consintió en que preguntase primero a Periandro quién eran él y su hermana, y por qué trances habían venido al miserable en que le había hallado; que todo esto, según buen discurso, había de preceder a la confianza que dél hacía. Pero, como es propia condición de los amantes ocupar los pensamientos antes en buscar los medios de alcanzar el fin de su deseo que en otras curiosidades, no le dio lugar a que preguntase lo que fuera bien que supiera, y lo que supo después cuando no le estuvo bien el saberlo.

Alongados, pues, un tanto de la isla, como se ha dicho, adornaron la nave con flámulas y gallardetes, que ellos azotando el aire y ellas besando las aguas, hermosísima vista hacían. El mar tranquilo, el cielo claro, el son de las chirimías y de otros instrumentos, tan bélicos como alegres, suspendían los ánimos; y los bárbaros, que de no muy lejos lo miraban, quedaron más suspensos, y en un momento coronaron la ribera, armados de arcos y saetas de la grandeza que otra vez se ha dicho.

Poco menos de una milla llegaba la nave a la isla, cuando, disparando toda la artillería, que traía mucha y gruesa, arrojó el esquife al agua, y, entrando en él Arnaldo, Taurisa y Periandro, y otros seis marineros, pusieron en una lanza un lienzo blanco, señal de que venían de paz, como es costumbre casi en todas las naciones de la tierra. Y lo que en ésta les sucedió se cuenta en el capítulo que se sigue.

## Capítulo tercero del primer libro

COMO se iba acercando el barco a la ribera, se iban apiñando los bárbaros, cada uno deseoso de saber, primero que viese, lo que en él venía; y, en señal que lo recibirían de paz, y no de guerra, sacaron muchos lienzos y los campearon por el aire, tiraron infinitas flechas al viento, y, con increíble ligereza, saltaban algunos de unas partes en otras.

No pudo llegar el barco a bordas con la tierra, por ser la mar baja, que en aquellas partes crece y mengua como en las nuestras; pero los bárbaros, hasta cantidad de veinte, se entraron a pie por la mojada arena, y llegaron a él casi a tocarse con las manos. Traían sobre los hombros a una mujer bárbara, pero de mucha hermosura, la cual, antes que otro alguno hablase, dijo en lengua polaca:

-A vosotros, quienquiera que seáis, pide nuestro príncipe, o por mejor decir, nuestro gobernador, que le digáis quién sois, a qué venís y qué es lo que buscáis. Si por ventura traéis alguna doncella que vender, se os será muy bien pagada, pero si son otras mercancías las vuestras, no las hemos menester, porque en esta nuestra isla, merced al cielo, tenemos todo lo necesario para la vida humana, sin tener necesidad de salir a otra parte a buscarlo.

Entendióla muy bien Arnaldo, y preguntóle si era bárbara de nación, o si acaso era de las compradas en aquella isla. A lo que le respondió:

-Respóndeme tú a lo que he preguntado, que estos mis amos no gustan que en otras pláticas me dilate, sino en aquellas que hacen al caso para su negocio.

Oyendo lo cual Arnaldo, respondió:

-Nosotros somos naturales del reino de Dinamarca, usamos el oficio de mercaderes y de cosarios, trocamos lo que podemos, vendemos lo que nos compran y despachamos lo que hurtamos; y, entre otras presas que a nuestras manos han venido, ha sido la de esta doncella -y señaló a Periandro-, la cual, por ser una de las más hermosas, o por mejor decir, la más hermosa del mundo, os la traemos a vender, que ya sabemos el efeto para que las compran en esta isla; y si es que ha de salir verdadero el vaticinio que vuestros sabios han dicho, bien podéis esperar desta sin igual belleza y disposición gallarda que os dará hijos hermosos y valientes.

Oyendo esto algunos de los bárbaros, preguntaron a la bárbara les dijese lo que decía. Díjolo ella, y al momento se partieron cuatro dellos, y fueron -a lo que pareció-a dar aviso a su gobernador. En este espacio que volvían, preguntó Arnaldo a la bárbara si tenían algunas mujeres compradas en la isla, y si había

alguna entre ellas de belleza tanta que pudiese igualar a la que ellos traían para vender.

-No -dijo la bárbara-, porque, aunque hay muchas, ninguna dellas se me iguala, porque, en efeto, yo soy una de las desdichadas para ser reina destos bárbaros, que sería la mayor desventura que me pudiese venir.

Volvieron los que habían ido a la tierra, y con ellos otros muchos y su príncipe, que lo mostró ser en el rico adorno que traía.

Habíase echado sobre el rostro un delgado y trasparente velo Periandro, por no dar de improviso, como rayo, con la luz de sus ojos en los de aquellos bárbaros, que con grandísima atención le estaban mirando.

Habló el gobernador con la bárbara, de que resultó que ella dijo a Arnaldo que su príncipe decía que mandase alzar el velo a su doncella. Hízose así. Levantóse en pie Periandro, descubrió el rostro, alzó los ojos al cielo, mostró dolerse de su ventura, estendió los rayos de sus dos soles a una y otra parte, que, encontrándose con los del bárbaro capitán, dieron con él en tierra (a lo menos, así lo dio a entender el hincarse de rodillas, como se hincó, adorando a su modo en la hermosa imagen, que pensaba ser mujer); y, hablando con la bárbara, en pocas razones concertó la venta, y dio por ella todo lo que quiso pedir Arnaldo, sin replicar palabra alguna.

Partieron todos los bárbaros a la isla; en un instante volvieron con infinitos pedazos de oro, y con luengas sargas de finísimas perlas, que sin cuenta y a montón confuso se las entregaron a Arnaldo, el cual luego, tomando de la mano a Periandro, le entregó al bárbaro, y dijo a la intérprete dijese a su dueño que dentro de pocos días volvería a venderle otra doncella, si no tan hermosa, a lo menos tal que pudiese merecer ser comprada.

Abrazó Periandro a todos los que en el barco venían, casi preñados los ojos de lágrimas, que no le nacían de corazón afeminado, sino de la consideración de los rigurosos trances que por él habían pasado.

Hizo señal Arnaldo a la nave que disparase la artillería, y el bárbaro a los suyos que tocasen sus instrumentos, y en un instante atronó el cielo la artillería, y la música de los bárbaros llenaron los aires de confusos y diferentes sonos. Con este aplauso, llevado en hombros de los bárbaros, puso los pies en tierra Periandro; llegó a su nave Arnaldo y los que con él venían, quedando concertado entre Periandro y Arnaldo que, si el viento no le forzase, procuraría no desviarse de la isla sino lo que bastase para no ser de ella descubierto, y volver a ella a vender, si fuese necesario, a Taurisa, que, con la seña que Periandro le hiciese, se sabría el sí o el no del hallazgo de Auristela; y, en caso que no estuviese en la isla, no faltaría traza para libertar a Periandro, aunque fuese moviendo guerra a los bárbaros con todo su poder y el de sus amigos.

## Capítulo cuarto del libro primero

ENTRE los que vinieron a concertar la compra de la doncella, vino con el capitán un bárbaro, llamado Bradamiro, de los más valientes y más principales de toda la isla, menospreciador de toda ley, arrogante sobre la misma arrogancia, y atrevido tanto como él mismo, porque no se halla con quién compararlo.

Éste, pues, desde el punto que vio a Periandro, creyendo ser mujer, como todos lo creyeron, hizo disinio en su pensamiento de escogerla para sí, sin esperar a que las leyes del vaticinio se probasen o cumpliesen.

Así como puso los pies en la ínsula Periandro, muchos bárbaros, a porfía, le tomaron en hombros, y, con muestras de infinita alegría, le llevaron a una gran tienda que, entre otras muchas pequeñas, en un apacible y deleitoso prado estaban puestas, todas cubiertas de pieles de animales, cuáles domésticos, cuáles selváticos. La bárbara que había servido de intérprete de la compra y venta no se le quitaba del lado, y con palabras y en lenguaje que él no entendía le consolaba.

Ordenó luego el gobernador que pasasen a la ínsula de la prisión, y trajesen de ella algún varón, si le hubiese, para hacer la prueba de su engañosa esperanza. Fue obedecido al punto, y al mismo instante tendieron por el suelo pieles curtidas, olorosas, limpias y lisas, de animales, para que de manteles sirviesen, sobre las cuales arrojaron y tendieron sin concierto ni policía alguna, diversos géneros de frutas secas; y, sentándose él y algunos de los principales bárbaros que allí estaban, comenzó a comer y a convidar por señas a Periandro que lo mismo hiciese. Sólo se quedó en pie Bradamiro, arrimado a su arco, clavados los ojos en la que pensaba ser mujer. Rogóle el gobernador se sentase, pero no quiso obedecerle; antes, dando un gran suspiro, volvió las espaldas, y se salió de la tienda.

En esto, llegó un bárbaro, que dijo al capitán que, al tiempo que habían llegado él y otros cuatro para pasar a la prisión, llegó a la marina una balsa, la cual traía un varón y a la mujer guardiana de la mazmorra, cuyas nuevas pusieron fin a la comida; y, levantándose el capitán, con todos los que allí estaban, acudió a ver la balsa. Quiso acompañarle Periandro, de lo que él fue muy contento.

Cuando llegaron, ya estaban en tierra el prisionero y la custodia. Miró atentamente Periandro, por ver si por ventura conocía al desdichado a quien su corta suerte había puesto en el mismo extremo en que él se había visto, pero no pudo verle el rostro de lleno en lleno, a causa que tenía inclinada la cabeza, y,

como de industria, parecía que no dejaba verse de nadie; pero no dejó de conocer a la mujer que decían ser guardiana de la prisión, cuya vista y conocimiento le suspendió el alma y le alborotó los sentidos, porque claramente, y sin poner duda en ello, conoció ser Cloelia, ama de su querida Auristela. Quisiéramos hablar, pero no se atrevió, por no entender si acertaría o no en ello; y, así reprimiendo su deseo como sus labios, estuvo esperando en lo que pararía semejante acontecimiento.

El gobernador, con deseo de apresurar sus pruebas y dar felice compañía a Periandro, mandó que al momento se sacrificase aquel mancebo, de cuyo corazón se hiciesen los polvos de la ridícula y engañosa prueba.

Asieron al momento del mancebo muchos bárbaros; sin más ceremonias que atarle un lienzo por los ojos, le hicieron hincar de rodillas, atándole por atrás las manos, el cual, sin hablar palabra, como un manso cordero, esperaba el golpe que le había de quitar la vida. Visto lo cual por la antigua Cloelia, alzó la voz, y, con más aliento que de sus muchos años se esperaba, comenzó a decir:

-Mira, oh gran gobernador, lo que haces, porque ese varón que mandas sacrificar no lo es, ni puede aprovechar ni servir en cosa alguna a tu intención, porque es la más hermosa mujer que puede imaginarse. Habla, hermosísima Auristela, y no permitas, llevada de la corriente de tus desgracias, que te quiten la vida, poniendo tasa a la providencia de los cielos, que te la pueden guardar y conservar, para que felicemente la goces.

A estas razones, los crueles bárbaros detuvieron el golpe, que ya ya la sombra del cuchillo se señalaba en la garganta del arrodillado. Mandó el capitán desatarle y dar libertad a las manos y luz a los ojos; y, mirándole con atención, le pareció ver el más hermoso rostro de mujer que hubiese visto, y juzgó, aunque bárbaro, que si no era el de Periandro, ninguno otro en el mundo podría igualársele.

¿Qué lengua podrá decir, o qué pluma escribir, lo que sintió Periandro cuando conoció ser Auristela la condenada y la libre? Quitósele la vista de los ojos, cubriósele el corazón, y con pasos torcidos y flojos fue a abrazarse con Auristela, a quien dijo, teniéndola estrechamente entre sus brazos:

-¡Oh querida mitad de mi alma, oh firme columna de mis esperanzas, oh prenda, que no sé si diga por mi bien o por mi mal hallada, aunque no será sino por bien, pues de tu vista no puede proceder mal ninguno! Ves aquí a tu hermano Periandro.

Y esta razón dijo con voz tan baja que de nadie pudo ser oída, y prosiguió diciendo:

-Vive, señora y hermana mía, que en esta isla no hay muerte para las mujeres, y no quieras tú para contigo ser más cruel que sus moradores; confía en los

cielos, que, pues te han librado hasta aquí de los infinitos peligros en que te debes de haber visto, te librarán de los que se pueden temer de aquí adelante.

-¡Ay, hermano! -respondió Auristela (que era la misma que por varón pensaba ser sacrificada)-. ¡Ay, hermano! -replicó otra vez-, ¡y cómo creo que éste en que nos hallamos ha de ser el último trance que de nuestras desventuras puede temerse! Suerte dichosa ha sido el hallarte, pero desdichada ser en tal lugar y en semejante traje.

Lloraban entrambos, cuyas lágrimas vio el bárbaro Bradamiro; y, creyendo que Periandro las vertía del dolor de la muerte de aquél, que pensó ser su conocido, pariente o amigo, determinó de libertarle, aunque se pusiese a romper por todo inconveniente. Y así, llegándose a los dos, asió de la una mano a Auristela y de la otra a Periandro, y, con semblante amenazador y ademán soberbio, en alta voz dijo:

-Ninguno sea osado, si es que estima en algo su vida, de tocar a estos dos, aun en un solo cabello. Esta doncella es mía, porque yo la quiero, y este hombre ha de ser libre, porque ella lo quiere.

Apenas hubo dicho esto, cuando el bárbaro gobernador, indignado e impaciente sobremanera, puso una grande y aguda flecha en el arco, y, desviándole de sí cuanto pudo estenderse el brazo izquierdo, puso la empulgüera con el derecho junto al diestro oído, y disparó la flecha con tan buen tino y con tanta furia que en un instante llegó a la boca de Bradamiro, y se la cerró, quitándole el movimiento de la lengua y sacándole el alma, con que dejó admirados, atónitos y suspensos a cuantos allí estaban.

Pero no hizo tan a su salvo el tiro, tan atrevido como certero, que no recibiese por el mismo estilo la paga de su atrevimiento; porque un hijo de Corsicurbo, el bárbaro que se ahogó en el pasaje de Periandro, pareciéndole ser más ligeros sus pies que las flechas de su arco, en dos brincos se puso junto al capitán, y, alzando el brazo, le envainó en el pecho un puñal, que, aunque de piedra, era más fuerte y agudo que si de acero forjado fuera.

Cerró el capitán en sempiterna noche los ojos, y dio con su muerte venganza a la de Bradamiro, alborotó los pechos y los corazones de los parientes de entrambos, puso las armas en las manos de todos, y en un instante, incitados de la venganza y cólera, comenzaron a enviar muertes en las flechas de unas partes a otras. Acabadas las flechas, como no se acabaron las manos ni los puñales, arremetieron los unos a los otros, sin respetar el hijo al padre ni el hermano al hermano; antes, como si de muchos tiempos atrás fueran enemigos mortales por muchas injurias recibidas, con las uñas se despedazaban y con los puñales se herían sin haber quién los pusiese en paz.

Entre estas flechas, entre estas heridas, entre estos golpes y entre estas

muertes, estaban juntos la antigua Cloelia, la doncella intérprete, Periandro y Auristela, todos apiñados, y todos llenos de confusión y de miedo.

En mitad desta furia, llevados en vuelo algunos bárbaros, de los que debían de ser de la parcialidad de Bradamiro, se desviaron de la contienda y fueron a poner fuego a una selva, que estaba allí cerca, como a hacienda del gobernador. Comenzaron a arder los árboles y a favorecer la ira el viento, que, aumentando las llamas y el humo, todos temieron ser ciegos y abrasados.

Llegábase la noche, que, aunque fuera clara, se escureciera, cuanto más siendo oscura y tenebrosa. Los gemidos de los que morían, las voces de los que amenazaban, los estallidos del fuego, no en los corazones de los bárbaros ponían miedo alguno, porque estaban ocupados con la ira y la venganza; poníanle, sí, en los de los miserables apiñados, que no sabían qué hacerse, adónde irse o cómo valerse; y, en esta sazón tan confusa, no se olvidó el cielo de socorrerles por tan estraña novedad que la tuvieron por milagro.

Ya casi cerraba la noche, y, como se ha dicho, oscura y temerosa, y solas las llamas de la abrasada selva daban luz bastante para divisar las cosas, cuando un bárbaro mancebo se llegó a Periandro, y, en lengua castellana, que dél fue bien entendida, le dijo:

-Sígueme, hermosa doncella, y di que hagan lo mismo las personas que contigo están, que yo os pondré en salvo, si los cielos me ayudan.

No le respondió palabra Periandro, sino hizo que Auristela, Cloelia y la intérprete se animasen y le siguiesen; y así, pisando muertos y hollando armas, siguieron al joven bárbaro que les guiaba. Llevaban las llamas de la ardiente selva a las espaldas, que les servían de viento que el paso les aligerase. Los muchos años de Cloelia y los pocos de Auristela no permitían que al paso de su guía tendiesen el suyo. Viendo lo cual el bárbaro, robusto y de fuerzas, asió de Cloelia y se la echó al hombro, y Periandro hizo lo mismo de Auristela; la intérprete, menos tierna, más animosa, con varonil brío los seguía. Desta manera, cayendo y levantando, como decirse suele, llegaron a la marina, y, habiendo andado como una milla por ella hacia la banda del norte, se entró el bárbaro por una espaciosa cueva, en quien la saca del mar entraba y salía. Pocos pasos anduvieron por ella, torciéndose a una y otra parte, estrechándose en una y alargándose en otra, ya agazapados, ya inclinados, ya agobiados al suelo, y ya en pie y derechos, hasta que salieron, a su parecer, a un campo raso, pues les pareció que podían libremente enderezarse, que así se lo dijo su guiador, no pudiendo verlo ellos por la escuridad de la noche, y porque las luces de los encendidos montes, que entonces con más rigor ardían, allí llegar no podían.

-¡Bendito sea Dios -dijo el bárbaro en la misma lengua castellana- que nos ha traído a este lugar, que, aunque en él se puede temer algún peligro, no será de

muerte!

En esto, vieron que hacia ellos venía corriendo una gran luz, bien así como cometa, o por mejor decir exhalación que por el aire camina. Esperáranla con temor, si el bárbaro no dijera:

-Este es mi padre, que viene a recebirme.

Periandro, que aunque no muy despiertamente sabía hablar la lengua castellana, le dijo:

-El cielo te pague, ¡oh ángel humano!, o quienquiera que seas, el bien que nos has hecho, que, aunque no sea otro que el dilatar nuestra muerte, lo tenemos por singular beneficio.

Llegó en esto la luz, que la traía uno, al parecer bárbaro, cuyo aspecto la edad de poco más de cincuenta años le señalaba. Llegando, puso la luz en tierra, que era un grueso palo de tea, y a brazos abiertos se fue a su hijo, a quien preguntó en castellano que qué le había sucedido, que con tal compañía volvía.

-Padre -respondió el mozo-vamos a nuestro rancho, que hay muchas cosas que decir y muchas más que pensar. La isla se abrasa, casi todos los moradores della quedan hechos ceniza o medio abrasados; estas pocas reliquias que aquí veis, por impulso del cielo las he hurtado a las llamas y al filo de los bárbaros puñales. Vamos, señor, como tengo dicho, a nuestro rancho, para que la caridad de mi madre y de mi hermana se muestre y ejercite en acariciar a estos mis cansados y temerosos huéspedes.

Guió el padre, siguiéronle todos, animóse Cloelia, pues caminó a pie, no quiso dejar Periandro la hermosa carga que llevaba, por no ser posible que le diese pesadumbre, siendo Auristela único bien suyo en la tierra.

Poco anduvieron, cuando llegaron a una altísima peña, al pie de la cual descubrieron un anchísimo espacio o cueva, a quien servían de techo y de paredes las mismas peñas. Salieron con teas encendidas en las manos dos mujeres vestidas al traje bárbaro: la una muchacha de hasta quince años, y la otra hasta treinta; ésta hermosa, pero la muchacha hermosísima.

La una dijo:

-¡Ay, padre y hermano mío!

Y la otra no dijo más sino:

-Seáis bien venido, regalado hijo de mi alma.

La intérprete estaba admirada de oír hablar en aquella parte, y a mujeres que parecían bárbaras, otra lengua de aquélla que en la isla se acostumbraba; y, cuando les iba a preguntar qué misterio tenía saber ellas aquel lenguaje, lo estorbó mandar el padre a su esposa y a su hija que aderezasen con lanudas pieles el suelo de la inculta cueva. Ellas le obedecieron, arrojando a las paredes las teas; en un instante, solícitas y diligentes, sacaron de otra cueva que más



adentro se hacía, pieles de cabras y ovejas y de otros animales, con que quedó el suelo adornado, y se reparó el frío que comenzaba a fatigarles.

## Capítulo quinto

*De la cuenta que dio de sí el bárbaro español a sus nuevos huéspedes*

PRESTA y breve fue la cena; pero, por cenarla sin sobresalto, la hizo sabrosa. Renovaron las teas, y, aunque quedó ahumado el aposento, quedó caliente. Las vajillas que en la cena sirvieron, ni fueron de plata ni de Pisa: las manos de la bárbara y bárbaro pequeños fueron los platos, y unas cortezas de árboles, un poco más agradables que de corcho, fueron los vasos. Quedóse Candia lejos, y sirvió en su lugar agua pura, limpia y frigidísima.

Quedóse dormida Cloelia, porque los luengos años más amigos son del sueño que de otra cualquiera conversación, por gustosa que sea. Acomodóla la bárbara grande en el segundo apartamento, haciéndole de pieles así colchones como frazadas; volvió a sentarse con los demás, a quien el español dijo en lengua castellana desta manera:

-Puesto que estaba en razón que yo supiera primero, señores míos, algo de vuestra hacienda y sucesos, antes que os dijera los míos, quiero, por obligaros, que los sepáis, porque los vuestros no se me encubran después que los míos hubiéredes oído.

«Yo, según la buena suerte quiso, nací en España, en una de las mejores provincias de ella. Echáronme al mundo padres medianamente nobles; criáronme como ricos. Llegué a las puertas de la gramática, que son aquéllas por donde se entra a las demás ciencias. Inclínome mi estrella, si bien en parte a las letras, mucho más a las armas. No tuve amistad en mis verdes años ni con Ceres ni con Baco; y así, en mí siempre estuvo Venus fría. Llevado, pues, de mi inclinación natural, dejé mi patria, y fuime a la guerra que entonces la majestad del César Carlo Quinto hacía en Alemania contra algunos potentados de ella. Fueme Marte favorable, alcancé nombre de buen soldado, honróme el Emperador, tuve amigos, y, sobre todo, aprendí a ser liberal y bien criado, que estas virtudes se aprenden en la escuela del Marte cristiano. Volví a mi patria honrado y rico, con propósito de estarme en ella algunos días gozando de mis padres, que aun vivían, y de los amigos que me esperaban. Pero esta que llaman Fortuna, que yo no sé lo que se sea, envidiosa de mi sosiego, volviendo la rueda que dicen que tiene, me derribó de su cumbre, adonde yo pensé que estaba puesto, al profundo de la miseria en que me veo, tomando por instrumento para hacerlo a un caballero, hijo segundo de un titulado que junto a mi lugar el de su estado tenía.

»Éste, pues, vino a mi pueblo a ver unas fiestas. Estando en la plaza en una rueda o corro de hidalgos y caballeros, donde yo también hacía número, volviéndose a mí, con ademán arrogante y risueño, me dijo: "Bravo estáis, señor Antonio: mucho le ha aprovechado la plática de Flandes y de Italia, porque en verdad que está bizarro. Y sepa el buen Antonio que yo le quiero mucho". Yo le respondí: "Porque yo soy aquel Antonio, beso a vuesa señoría las manos mil veces por la merced que me hace. En fin, vuesa señoría hace como quien es en honrar a sus compatriotas y servidores; pero, con todo eso, quiero que vuesa señoría entienda que las galas yo me las llevé de mi tierra a Flandes, y con la buena crianza nací del vientre de mi madre. Ansí que, por esto, ni merezco ser alabado ni vituperado; y, con todo, bueno o malo que yo sea, soy muy servidor de vuesa señoría, a quien suplico me honre, como merecen mis buenos deseos". Un hidalgo que estaba a mi lado, grande amigo mío, me dijo, y no tan bajo que no lo pudo oír el caballero: "Mirad, amigo Antonio, cómo habláis, que al señor don Fulano no le llamamos acá señoría". A lo que respondió el caballero, antes que yo respondiese: "El buen Antonio habla bien, porque me trata al modo de Italia, donde en lugar de merced dicen señoría". "Bien sé -dije yo- los usos y las ceremonias de cualquiera buena crianza, y el llamar a vuesa señoría, señoría, no es al modo de Italia, sino porque entiendo que el que me ha de llamar vos ha de ser señoría, a modo de España; y yo, por ser hijo de mis obras y de padres hidalgos, merezco el merced de cualquier señoría, y quien otra cosa dijere (y esto echando mano a mi espada) está muy lejos de ser bien criado".

»Y, diciendo y haciendo, le di dos cuchilladas en la cabeza muy bien dadas, con que le turbé de manera que no supo lo que le había acontecido, ni hizo cosa en su desagravio que fuese de provecho, y yo sustenté la ofensa, estándome quedo con mi espada desnuda en la mano. Pero, pasándosele la turbación, puso mano a su espada, y con gentil brío procuró vengar su injuria. Mas yo no le dejé poner en efeto su honrada determinación, ni a él la sangre que le corría de la cabeza, de una de las dos heridas. Alborotáronse los circunstantes, pusieron mano contra mí, retiréme a casa de mis padres, contéles el caso, y, advertidos del peligro en que estaba, me proveyeron de dineros y de un buen caballo, aconsejándome a que me pusiese en cobro, porque me había granjeado muchos, fuertes y poderosos enemigos. Hícelo ansí, y en dos días pisé la raya de Aragón, donde respiré algún tanto de mi no vista priesa. En resolución, con poco menos diligencia me puse en Alemania, donde volví a servir al Emperador. Allí me avisaron que mi enemigo me buscaba, con otros muchos, para matarme del modo que pudiese. Temí este peligro, como era razón que lo temiese; volvíme a España, porque no hay mejor asilo que el que promete la casa del mismo enemigo; vi a mis padres de noche, tornáronme a proveer de dineros y joyas, con

que vine a Lisboa, y me embarqué en una nave que estaba con las velas en alto para partirse en Inglaterra, en la cual iban algunos caballeros ingleses, que habían venido, llevados de su curiosidad, a ver a España; y, habiéndola visto toda, o por lo menos las mejores ciudades della, se volvían a su patria.

»Sucedió, pues, que yo me revolví sobre una cosa de poca importancia con un marinero inglés, a quien fue forzoso darle un bofetón; llamó este golpe la cólera de los demás marineros y de toda la chusma de la nave, que comenzaron a tirarme todos los instrumentos arrojadizos que les vinieron a las manos. Retiréme al castillo de popa, y tomé por defensa a uno de los caballeros ingleses, poniéndome a sus espaldas, cuya defensa me valió de modo que no perdí luego la vida. Los demás caballeros sosegaron la turba, pero fue con condición que me arrojasen a la mar, o que me diesen el esquife o barquilla de la nave, en que me volviese a España, o adonde el cielo me llevase.

»Hízose así: diéronme la barca proveída con dos barriles de agua, uno de manteca y alguna cantidad de bizcocho. Agradecí a mis valedores la merced que me hacían, entré en la barca con solos dos remos, alargóse la nave, vino la noche oscura, halléme solo en la mitad de la inmensidad de aquellas aguas, sin tomar otro camino que aquel que le concedía el no contrastar contra las olas ni contra el viento. Alcé los ojos al cielo, encomendéme a Dios con la mayor devoción que pude, miré al norte, por donde distinguí el camino que hacía, pero no supe el paraje en que estaba. Seis días y seis noches anduve desta manera, confiando más en la benignidad de los cielos que en la fuerza de mis brazos, los cuales, ya cansados y sin vigor alguna del continuo trabajo, abandonaron los remos, que quité de los escálamos y los puse dentro la barca, para servirme dellos cuando el mar lo consintiese o las fuerzas me ayudasen.

»Tendíme de largo a largo de espaldas en la barca, cerré los ojos y en lo secreto de mi corazón no quedó santo en el cielo a quien no llamase en mi ayuda. Y en mitad deste aprieto, y en medio desta necesidad -cosa dura de creer-, me sobrevino un sueño tan pesado que, borrándome de los sentidos el sentimiento, me quedé dormido (tales son las fuerzas de lo que pide y ha menester nuestra naturaleza); pero allá en el sueño me representaba la imaginación mil géneros de muertes espantosas, pero todas en el agua, y en algunas dellas me parecía que me comían lobos y despedazaban fieras, de modo que, dormido y despierto, era una muerte dilatada mi vida.

»Deste no apacible sueño me despertó con sobresalto una furiosa ola del mar, que, pasando por cima de la barca, la llenó de agua. Reconocí el peligro; volví, como mejor pude, el mar al mar; torné a valerme de los remos, que ninguna cosa me aprovecharon. Vi que el mar se ensoberbecía, azotado y herido de un viento ábrego, que en aquellas partes parece que más que en otros mares muestra su

poderío. Vi que era simpleza oponer mi débil barca a su furia, y, con mis flacas y desmayadas fuerzas, a su rigor. Y así, torné a recoger los remos, y a dejar correr la barca por donde las olas y el viento quisiesen llevarla. Reiteré plegarias, añadí promesas, aumenté las aguas del mar con las que derramaba de mis ojos, no de temor de la muerte, que tan cercana se me mostraba, sino por el de la pena que mis malas obras merecían. Finalmente, no sé a cabo de cuántos días y noches que anduve vagamundo por el mar, siempre más inquieto y alterado, me vine a hallar junto a una isla despoblada de gente humana, aunque llena de lobos, que por ella a manadas discurrían. Lleguéme al abrigo de una peña, que en la ribera estaba, sin osar saltar en tierra por temor de los animales que había visto. Comí del bizcocho ya remojado, que la necesidad y la hambre no reparan en nada. Llegó la noche, menos oscura que había sido la pasada; pareció que el mar se sosegaba, y prometía más quietud el venidero día; miré al cielo, vi las estrellas con aspecto de prometer bonanza en las aguas y sosiego en el aire.

»Estando en esto, me pareció, por entre la dudosa luz de la noche, que la peña que me servía de puerto se coronaba de los mismos lobos que en la marina había visto, y que uno dellos -como es la verdad-me dijo en voz clara y distinta, y en mi propia lengua: "Español, hazte a lo largo, y busca en otra parte tu ventura, si no quieres en ésta morir hecho pedazos por nuestras uñas y dientes; y no preguntes quién es el que esto te dice, sino da gracias al cielo de que has hallado piedad entre las mismas fieras".

»Si quedé espantado o no, a vuestra consideración lo dejo; pero no fue bastante la turbación mía para dejar de poner en obra el consejo que se me había dado. Apreté los escalamos, até los remos, esforcé los brazos y salí al mar descubierto. Mas, como suele acontecer que las desdichas y aflicciones turban la memoria de quien las padece, no os podré decir cuántos fueron los días que anduve por aquellos mares, tragando, no una, sino mil muertes a cada paso, hasta que, arrebatada mi barca en los brazos de una terrible borrasca, me hallé en esta isla, donde di al través con ella, en la misma parte y lugar adonde está la boca de la cueva por donde aquí entrastes. Llegó la barca a dar casi en seco por la cueva adentro, pero volvíala a sacar la resaca; viendo yo lo cual, me arrojé della, y, clavando las uñas en la arena, no di lugar a que la resaca al mar me volviese. Y, aunque con la barca me llevaba el mar la vida, pues me quitaba la esperanza de cobrarla, holgué de mudar género de muerte, y quedarme en tierra: que, como se dilate la vida, no se desmaya la esperanza.»

A este punto llegaba el bárbaro español, que este título le daba sus traje, cuando en la estancia más adentro, donde habían dejado a Cloelia, se oyeron tiernos gemidos y sollozos. Acudieron al instante con luces Auristela, Periandro y todos los demás a ver qué sería, y hallaron que Cloelia, arrimadas las espaldas

a la peña, sentada en las pieles, tenía los ojos clavados en el cielo, y casi quebrados.

Llegóse a ella Auristela, y, a voces compasivas y dolorosas, le dijo:

-¿Qué es esto, ama mía? ¿Cómo; y es posible que me queréis dejar en esta soledad y a tiempo que más he menester valirme de vuestros consejos?

Volvió en sí algún tanto Cloelia, y, tomando la mano de Auristela, le dijo:

-Ves ahí, hija de mi alma, lo que tengo tuyo. Yo quisiera que mi vida durara hasta que la tuya se viera en el sosiego que merece; pero si no lo permite el cielo, mi voluntad se ajusta con la suya, y de la mejor que es en mi mano le ofrezco mi vida. Lo que te ruego es, señora mía, que, cuando la buena suerte quisiere -que sí querrá-que te veas en tu estado, y mis padres aún fueren vivos, o alguno de mis parientes, les digas cómo yo muero cristiana en la fe de Jesucristo, y en la que tiene, que es la misma, la santa Iglesia católica romana. Y no te digo más, porque no puedo.

Esto dicho, y muchas veces pronunciando el nombre de Jesús, cerró los ojos en tenebrosa noche, a cuyo espectáculo también cerró los suyos Auristela, con un profundo desmayo. Hiciéronse fuentes los de Periandro y ríos los de todos los circunstantes. Acudió Periandro a socorrer a Auristela, la cual, vuelta en sí, acrecentó las lágrimas y comenzó sospiros nuevos, y dijo razones que movieran a lástima a las piedras. Ordenóse que otro día la sepultasen, y, quedando en guarda del cuerpo muerto la doncella bárbara y su hermano, los demás se fueron a reposar lo poco que de la noche les faltaba.

## Capítulo sexto

*Donde el bárbaro español prosigue su historia*

TARDÓ aquel día en mostrarse al mundo, al parecer, más de lo acostumbrado, a causa que el humo y pavesas del incendio de la isla, que aún duraba, impedía que los rayos del sol por aquella parte no pasasen a la tierra.

Mandó el bárbaro español a su hijo que saliese de aquel sitio, como otras veces solía, y se informase de lo que en la isla pasaba.

Con alborotado sueño pasaron los demás aquella noche, porque el dolor y sentimiento de la muerte de su ama Cloelia no consintió que Auristela dormiese, y el no dormir de Auristela tuvo en continua vigilia a Periandro, el cual con Auristela salió al raso de aquel sitio, y vio que era hecho y fabricado de la naturaleza como si la industria y el arte le hubieran compuesto. Era redondo, cercado de altísimas y peladas peñas, y, a su parecer, tanteó que bojaba poco más de una legua, todo lleno de árboles silvestres, que ofrecían frutos, si bien ásperos, comestibles a lo menos. Estaba crecida la yerba, porque las muchas aguas que de las peñas salían las tenían en perpetua verdura; todo lo cual le admiraba y suspendía.

Y llegó en esto el bárbaro español, y dijo:

-Venid, señores, y daremos sepultura a la difunta, y fin a mi comenzada historia.

Hiciéronlo así, y enterraron a Cloelia en lo hueco de una peña, cubriéndola con tierra y con otras peñas menores. Auristela le rogó que le pusiese una cruz encima, para señal de que aquel cuerpo había sido cristiano. El español respondió que él traería una gran cruz que en su estancia tenía, y la pondría encima de aquella sepultura. Diéronle todos el último vale; renovó el llanto Auristela, cuyas lágrimas sacaron al momento las de los ojos de Periandro.

En tanto, pues, que el mozo bárbaro volvía, se volvieron todos a encerrar en el cóncavo de la peña donde habían dormido, por defenderse del frío que con rigor amenazaba. Y, habiéndose sentado en las blandas pieles, pidió el bárbaro silencio, y prosiguió su cuento en esta forma:

-«Cuando me dejó la barca en que venía en la arena, y la mar tornó a cobrarla -ya dije que con ella se me fue la esperanza de la libertad, pues aun ahora no la tengo de cobrarla-, entré aquí dentro, vi este sitio y parecióme que la naturaleza le había hecho y formado para ser teatro donde se representase la tragedia de mis

desgracias. Admiróme el no ver gente alguna, sino algunas cabras monteses y animales pequeños de diversos géneros. Rodeé todo el sitio, hallé esta cueva cavada en estas peñas, y señaléla para mi morada. Finalmente, habiéndolo rodeado todo, volví a la entrada, que aquí me había conducido, por ver si oía voz humana o descubría quién me dijese en qué parte estaba; y la buena suerte y los piadosos cielos, que aún del todo no me tenían olvidado, me depararon una muchacha bárbara de hasta edad de quince años, que por entre las peñas, riscos y escollos de la marina, pintadas conchas y apetitoso marisco andaba buscando.

»Pasmóse viéndome, pegáronsele los pies en la arena, soltó las cogidas conchuelas, y derramósele el marisco; y, cogiéndola entre mis brazos sin decirle palabra, ni ella a mí tampoco, me entré por la cueva adelante y la truje a este mismo lugar donde agora estamos. Púsela en el suelo, beséle las manos, halaguéle el rostro con las mías, y hice todas las señas y demostraciones que pude para mostrarme blando y amoroso con ella. Ella, pasado aquel primer espanto, con atentísimos ojos me estuvo mirando, y con las manos me tocaba todo el cuerpo, y de cuando en cuando, ya perdido el miedo, se reía y me abrazaba; y, sacando del seno una manera de pan hecho a su modo, que no era de trigo, me lo puso en la boca, y en su lengua me habló, y, a lo que después acá he sabido, en lo que decía me rogaba que comiese. Yo lo hice así porque lo había bien menester. Ella me asió por la mano, y me llevó a aquel arroyo que allí está, donde ansimismo, por señas, me rogó que bebiese. Yo no me hartaba de mirarla, pareciéndome antes ángel del cielo que bárbara de la tierra. Volví a la entrada de la cueva, y allí, con señas y con palabras, que ella no entendía, le supliqué, como si ella las entendiera, que volviese a verme. Con esto la abracé de nuevo, y ella, simple y piadosa, me besó en la frente, y me hizo claras y ciertas señas de que volvería a verme. Hecho esto, torné a pisar este sitio, y a requerir y probar la fruta de que algunos árboles estaban cargados, y hallé nueces y avellanas y algunas peras silvestres. Di gracias a Dios del hallazgo, y alenté las desmayadas esperanzas de mi remedio. Pasé aquella noche en este mismo lugar, esperé el día, y en él esperé también la vuelta de mi bárbara hermosa, de quien comencé a temer y a recelar que me había de descubrir y entregarme a los bárbaros, de quien imaginé estar llena esta isla; pero sacóme deste temor el verla volver algo entrado el día, bella como el sol, mansa como una cordera, no acompañada de bárbaros que me prendiesen, sino cargada de bastimentos que me sustentasen.»

Aquí llegaba de su historia el español gallardo, cuando llegó el que había ido a saber lo que en la isla pasaba, el cual dijo que casi toda estaba abrasada, y todos o los más de los bárbaros muertos, unos a hierro y otros a fuego, y que si algunos había vivos, eran los que en algunas balsas de maderos se habían entrado al mar por huir en el agua el fuego de la tierra; que bien podían salir de allí, y pasear la



isla por la parte que el fuego les diese licencia, y que cada uno pensase qué remedio se tomaría para escapar de aquella tierra maldita; que por allí cerca había otras islas de gente menos bárbara habitadas; que quizá, mudando de lugar, mudarían de ventura.

-Sosiégate, hijo, un poco, que estoy dando cuenta a estos señores de mis sucesos, y no me falta mucho, aunque mis desgracias son infinitas.

-No te canses, señor mío -dijo la bárbara grande-, en referirlos tan por estenso, que podrá ser que te canses, o que canses. Déjame a mí que cuente lo que queda, a lo menos hasta este punto en que estamos.

-Soy contento -respondió el español-, porque me le dará muy grande el ver cómo las relatas.

-«Es, pues, el caso -replicó la bárbara-que mis muchas entradas y salidas en este lugar le dieron bastante para que de mí y de mi esposo naciesen esta muchacha y este niño. Llamo esposo a este señor, porque, antes que me conociese del todo, me dio palabra de serlo, al modo que él dice que se usa entre verdaderos cristianos. Hame enseñado su lengua, y yo a él la mía, y en ella ansimismo me enseñó la ley católica cristiana. Diome agua de bautismo en aquel arroyo, aunque no con las ceremonias que él me ha dicho que en su tierra se acostumbran. Declaróme su fe como él la sabe, la cual yo asenté en mi alma y en mi corazón, donde le he dado el crédito que he podido darle. Creo en la Santísima Trinidad, Dios Padre, Dios Hijo y Dios Espíritu Santo, tres personas distintas, y que todas tres son un solo Dios verdadero, y que, aunque es Dios el Padre, y Dios el Hijo, y Dios el Espíritu Santo, no son tres dioses distintos y apartados, sino un solo Dios verdadero. Finalmente, creo todo lo que tiene y cree la santa Iglesia católica romana, regida por el Espíritu Santo y gobernada por el Sumo Pontífice, vicario y visorrey de Dios en la tierra, sucesor legítimo de San Pedro, su primer pastor después de Jesucristo, primero y universal pastor de su esposa la Iglesia. Díjome grandezas de la siempre Virgen María, reina de los cielos y señora de los ángeles y nuestra, tesoro del Padre, relicario del Hijo y amor del Espíritu Santo, amparo y refugio de los pecadores. Con éstas me ha enseñado otras cosas, que no las digo por parecerme que las dichas bastan para que entendáis que soy católica cristiana. Yo, simple y compasiva, le entregué un alma rústica, y él (merced a los cielos) me la ha vuelta discreta y cristiana. Entreguéle mi cuerpo, no pensando que en ello ofendía a nadie, y deste entrego resultó haberle dado dos hijos, como los que aquí veis, que acrecientan el número de los que alaban al Dios verdadero. En veces le truje alguna cantidad de oro, de lo que abunda esta isla, y algunas perlas que yo tengo guardadas, esperando el día, que ha de ser tan dichoso, que nos saque desta prisión y nos lleve adonde con libertad y certeza, y sin escrúpulo, seamos unos de los del

rebaño de Cristo, en quien adoro en aquella cruz que allí veis.» Esto que he dicho me pareció a mí era lo que le faltaba por decir a mi señor Antonio -que así se llamaba el español bárbaro. El cual dijo:

-Dices verdad, Ricla mía -que éste era el propio nombre de la bárbara.

Con cuya variable historia admiraron a los presentes, y despertaron mil alabanzas que les dieron, y mil buenas esperanzas que les anunciaron, especialmente Auristela, que quedó aficionadísima a las dos bárbaras, madre y hija.

El mozo bárbaro, que también, como su padre, se llamaba Antonio, dijo a esta sazón no ser bien estarse allí ociosos, sin dar traza y orden cómo salir de aquel encerramiento, porque si el fuego de la isla, que a más andar ardía, sobrepujase las altas sierras, o traídas del viento cayesen en aquel sitio, todos se abrasarían.

-Dices verdad, hijo -respondió el padre.

-Soy de parecer -dijo Ricla-que aguardemos dos días, porque de una isla que está tan cerca desta que algunas veces, estando el sol claro y el mar tranquilo, alcanzó la vista a verla, della vienen a ésta sus moradores a vender y a trocar lo que tienen con lo que tenemos, y a trueco por trueco. Yo saldré de aquí, y, pues ya no hay nadie que me escuche o que me impida, pues ni oyen ni impiden los muertos, concertaré que me vendan una barca, por el precio que quisieren, que la he menester para escaparme con mis hijos y mi marido, que encerrados en una cueva tengo de la riguridad del fuego. Pero quiero que sepáis que estas barcas son fabricadas de madera, y cubiertas de cueros fuertes de animales, bastantes a defender que no entre agua por los costados; pero, a lo que he visto y notado, nunca ellos navegan sino con mar sosegado, y no traen aquellos lienzos que he visto que traen otras barcas que suelen llegar a nuestras riberas a vender doncellas o varones para la vana superstición que habréis oído decir que en esta isla ha muchos tiempos que se acostumbra, por donde vengo a entender que estas tales barcas no son buenas para fiarlas del mar grande, y de las borrascas y tormentas que dicen que suceden a cada paso.

A lo que añadió Periandro:

-¿No ha usado el señor Antonio deste remedio en tantos años como ha que está aquí encerrado?

-No -respondió Ricla-, porque no me han dado lugar los muchos ojos que miran, para poder concertarme con los dueños de las barcas, y por no poder hallar excusa que dar para la compra.

-Así es -dijo Antonio-, y no por no fiarme de la debilidad de los bajeles; pero, agora que me ha dado el cielo este consejo, pienso tomarle, y mi hermosa Ricla estará atenta a ver cuando vengan los mercaderes de la otra isla; y, sin reparar en precio, comprará una barca con todo el necesario matalotaje, diciendo que la

quiere para lo que tiene dicho.

En resolución, todos vinieron en este parecer, y, saliendo de aquel lugar, quedaron admirados de ver el estrago que el fuego había hecho y las armas. Vieron mil diferentes géneros de muertes, de quien la cólera, sinrazón y enojo suelen ser inventores. Vieron, asimismo, que los bárbaros que habían quedado vivos, reuniéndose a sus balsas, desde lejos estaban mirando el riguroso incendio de su patria, y algunos se habían pasado a la isla que servía de prisión a los cautivos. Quisiera Auristela que pasaran a la isla, a ver si en la oscura mazmorra quedaban algunos; pero no fue menester, porque vieron venir una balsa, y en ella hasta veinte personas, cuyo traje dio a entender ser los miserables que en la mazmorra estaban. Llegaron a la marina, besaron la tierra y casi dieron muestras de adorar el fuego, por haberles dicho el bárbaro que los sacó del calabozo oscuro, que la isla se abrasaba, y que ya no tenían que temer a los bárbaros.

Fueron recibidos de los libres amigablemente, y consolados en la mejor manera que les fue posible. Algunos contaron sus miserias, y otros las dejaron en silencio, por no hallar palabras para decirlas. Ricla se admiró de que hubiese habido bárbaro tan piadoso que los sacase, y de que no hubiesen pasado a la isla de la prisión parte de aquellos que a las balsas se habían recogido.

Uno de los prisioneros dijo que el bárbaro que los había libertado, en lengua italiana les había dicho todo el suceso miserable de la abrasada isla, aconsejándoles que pasaran a ella a satisfacerse de sus trabajos con el oro y perlas que en ella hallarían, y que él vendría en otra balsa, que allá quedaba, a tenerles compañía, y a dar traza en su libertad. Los sucesos que contaron fueron tan diferentes, tan extraños y tan desdichados, que unos les sacaban las lágrimas a los ojos y otros la risa del pecho.

En esto, vieron venir hacia la isla hasta seis barcas de aquellas de quien Ricla había dado noticia; hicieron escala, pero no sacaron mercadería alguna, por no parecer bárbaro que la comprase. Concertó Ricla todas las barcas con las mercancías, sin tener intención de llevarlas. No quisieron venderle sino las cuatro, porque les quedasen dos para volverse. Hízose el precio con liberalidad notable, sin que en él hubiese tanto más cuanto. Fue Ricla a su cueva, y, en pedazos de oro no acuñado, como se ha dicho, pagó todo lo que quisieron. Dieron dos barcas a los que habían salido de la mazmorra, y en otras dos se embarcaron, en la una todos los bastimentos que pudieron recoger, con cuatro personas de las recién libres, y en la otra se entraron Auristela, Periandro, Antonio el padre y Antonio el hijo, con la hermosa Ricla y la discreta Transila, y la gallarda Constanza, hija de Ricla y de Antonio. Quiso Auristela ir a despedirse de los huesos de su querida Cloelia; acompañáronla todos; lloró sobre la

sepultura, y, entre lágrimas de tristeza y entre muestras de alegría, volvieron a embarcarse, habiendo primero en la marina hincándose de rodillas y suplicado al cielo, con tierna y devota oración, les diese felice viaje y los enseñase el camino que tomarían.

Sirvió la barca de Periandro de capitana, a quien siguieron los demás, y, al tiempo que querían dar los remos al agua, porque velas no las tenían, llegó a la orilla del mar un bárbaro gallardo, que a grandes voces, en lengua toscana, dijo:

-Si por ventura sois cristianos los que vais en esas barcas, recoged a este que lo es y por el verdadero Dios os lo suplica.

Uno de las otras barcas dijo:

-Este bárbaro, señores, es el que nos sacó de la mazmorra. Si queréis corresponder a la bondad que parece que tenéis -y esto encaminando su plática a los de la barca primera-, bien será que le paguéis el bien que nos hizo con el que le hacéis recogién-dole en nuestra compañía.

Oyendo lo cual Periandro, le mandó llegase su barca a tierra y le recogiese en la que llevaba los bastimentos. Hecho esto, alzaron las voces con alegres acentos, y, tomando los remos en las manos, dieron alegre principio a su viaje.

## Capítulo séptimo del primer libro

CUATRO millas, poco más o menos, habrían navegado las cuatro barcas, cuando descubrieron una poderosa nave, que, con todas las velas tendidas y viento en popa, parecía que venía a embestirles. Periandro dijo, habiéndola visto:

-Sin duda, este navío debe de ser el de Arnaldo, que vuelve a saber de mi suceso, y tuviéralo yo por muy bueno agora no verle.

Había ya contado Periandro a Auristela todo lo que con Arnaldo le había pasado, y lo que entre los dos dejaron concertado. Turbóse Auristela, que no quisiera volver al poder de Arnaldo, de quien había dicho, aunque breve y sucintamente, lo que en un año que estuvo en su poder le había acontecido. No quisiera ver juntos a los dos amantes, que, puesto que Arnaldo estaría seguro con el fingido hermanazgo suyo y de Periandro, todavía el temor de que podía ser descubierto el parentesco la fatigaba, y más que ¿quién le quitaría a Periandro no estar celoso, viendo a los ojos tan poderoso contrario?; que no hay discreción que valga, ni amorosa fee que asegure al enamorado pecho, cuando por su desventura entran en él celosas sospechas. Pero de todas éstas le aseguró el viento, que volvió en un instante el soplo, que daba de lleno y en popa a las velas en contrario, de modo que a vista suya y en un momento breve dejó la nave derribar las velas de alto abajo, y en otro instante, casi invisible, las izaron y levantaron hasta las gavias, y la nave comenzó a correr en popa por el contrario rumbo que venía, alongándose de las barcas con toda priesa. Respiró Auristela, cobró nuevo aliento Periandro; pero los demás que en las barcas iban quisieran mudarlas, entrándose en la nave, que por su grandeza, más seguridad de las vidas y más felice viaje pudiera prometerles.

En menos de dos horas se les encubrió la nave, a quien quisieran seguir si pudieran; mas no les fue posible, ni pudieron hacer otra cosa que encaminarse a una isla, cuyas altas montañas, cubiertas de nieve, hacían parecer que estaban cerca, distando de allí más de seis leguas. Cerraba la noche algo oscura, picaba el viento largo y en popa, que fue alivio a los brazos, que, volviendo a tomar los remos, se dieron priesa a tomar la isla.

La media noche sería, según el tanteo que el bárbaro Antonio hizo del norte y de las guardas, cuando llegaron a ella, y por herir blandamente las aguas en la orilla, y ser la resaca de poca consideración, dieron con las barcas en tierra, y a fuerza de brazos las vararon.

Era la noche fría de tal modo, que les obligó a buscar reparos para el yelo,

pero no hallaron ninguno. Ordenó Periandro que todas las mujeres se entrasen en la barca capitana, y, apiñándose en ella, con la compañía y estrechez, templasen el frío. Hízose así; y los hombres hicieron cuerpo de guarda a la barca, paseándose como centinelas de una parte a otra, esperando el día para descubrir en qué parte estaban, porque no pudieron saber por entonces si era o no despoblada la isla; y, como es cosa natural que los cuidados destierran el sueño, ninguno de aquella cuidadosa compañía pudo cerrar los ojos, lo cual visto por el bárbaro Antonio, dijo al bárbaro italiano que, para entretener el tiempo y no sentir tanto la pesadumbre de la mala noche, fuese servido de entretenerles, contándoles los sucesos de su vida, porque no podían dejar de ser peregrinos y raros, pues en tal traje y en tal lugar le habían puesto.

-Haré yo eso de muy buena gana -respondió el bárbaro italiano-, aunque temo que por ser mis desgracias tantas, tan nuevas y tan extraordinarias, no me habéis de dar crédito alguno.

A lo que dijo Periandro:

-En las que a nosotros nos han sucedido, nos hemos ensayado y dispuesto a creer cuantas nos contaren, puesto que tengan más de lo imposible que de lo verdadero.

-Lleguémonos aquí -respondió el bárbaro-, al borde desta barca donde están estas señoras; quizá alguna, al son de la voz de mi cuento, se quedará dormida, y quizá alguna, desterrando el sueño, se mostrará compasiva: que es alivio al que cuenta sus desventuras ver o oír que hay quien se duela dellas.

-A lo menos por mí -respondió Ricla de dentro de la barca-, y a pesar del sueño, tengo lágrimas que ofrecer a la compasión de vuestra corta suerte, del largo tiempo de vuestras fatigas.

Casi lo mismo dijo Auristela; y así, todos rodearon la barca, y con atento oído estuvieron escuchando lo que el que parecía bárbaro decía, el cual comenzó su historia desta manera:

## Capítulo octavo

### *Donde Rutilio da cuenta de su vida*

-«MI NOMBRE es Rutilio; mi patria, Sena, una de las más famosas ciudades de Italia; mi oficio, maestro de danzar, único en él, y venturoso si yo quisiera. Había en Sena un caballero rico, a quien el cielo dio una hija más hermosa que discreta, a la cual trató de casar su padre con un caballero florentín; y, por entregársela adornada de gracias adquiridas, ya que las del entendimiento le faltaban, quiso que yo la enseñase a danzar; que la gentileza, gallardía y disposición del cuerpo en los bailes honestos más que en otros pasos se señalan, y a las damas principales les está muy bien saberlos, para las ocasiones forzosas que les pueden suceder. Entré a enseñarla los movimientos del cuerpo, pero movíla los del alma, pues, como no discreta, como he dicho, rindió la suya a la mía, y la suerte, que de corriente larga traía encaminadas mis desgracias, hizo que, para que los dos nos gozásemos, yo la sacase de en casa de su padre y la llevase a Roma. Pero, como el amor no da baratos sus gustos, y los delitos llevan a las espaldas el castigo (pues siempre se teme), en el camino nos prendieron a los dos, por la diligencia que su padre puso en buscarnos. Su confesión y la mía, que fue decir que yo llevaba a mi esposa y ella se iba con su marido, no fue bastante para no agravar mi culpa: tanto, que obligó al juez, movió y convenció a sentenciarme a muerte. Apartáronme en la prisión con los ya condenados a ella por otros delitos no tan honrados como el mío. Visitóme en el calabozo una mujer, que decían estaba presa por *fatucherie*, que en castellano se llaman *hechiceras*, que la alcaidesa de la cárcel había hecho soltar de las prisiones y llevádola a su aposento, a título de que con yerbas y palabras había de curar a una hija suya de una enfermedad que los médicos no acertaban a curarla.

»Finalmente, por abreviar mi historia, pues no hay razonamiento que, aunque sea bueno, siendo largo lo parezca, viéndome yo atado, y con el cordel a la garganta, sentenciado al suplicio, sin orden ni esperanza de remedio, di el sí a lo que la hechicera me pidió, de ser su marido, si me sacaba de aquel trabajo. Díjome que no tuviese pena, que aquella misma noche del día que sucedió esta plática, ella rompería las cadenas y los cepos, y, a pesar de otro cualquier impedimento, me pondría en libertad, y en parte donde no me pudiesen ofender mis enemigos, aunque fuesen muchos y poderosos. Túvela, no por hechicera, sino por ángel que enviaba el cielo para mi remedio. Esperé la noche, y en la

mitad de su silencio llegó a mí, y me dijo que asiese de la punta de una caña que me puso en la mano, diciéndome la siguiese. Turbéme algún tanto; pero como el interés era tan grande, moví los pies para seguirla, y hallélos sin grillos y sin cadenas, y las puertas de toda la prisión de par en par abiertas, y los prisioneros y guardas en profundísimo sueño sepultados.

»En saliendo a la calle, tendió en el suelo mi guiadora un manto, y, mandándome que pusiese los pies en él, me dijo que tuviese buen ánimo, que por entonces dejase mis devociones. Luego vi mala señal, luego conocí que quería llevarme por los aires, y aunque, como cristiano bien enseñado, tenía por burla todas estas hechicerías -como es razón que se tengan-, todavía el peligro de la muerte, como ya he dicho, me dejó atropellar por todo; y, en fin, puse los pies en la mitad del manto, y ella ni más ni menos, murmurando unas razones que yo no pude entender, y el manto comenzó a levantarse en el aire, y yo comencé a temer poderosamente, y en mi corazón no tuvo santo la letanía a quien no llamase en mi ayuda. Ella debió de conocer mi miedo, y presentir mis rogativas, y volvíome a mandar que las dejase. "¡Desdichado de mí! -dije-; ¿qué bien puedo esperar, si se me niega el pedirle a Dios, de quien todos los bienes vienen?"

»En resolución, cerré los ojos y dejéme llevar de los diablos, que no son otras las postas de las hechiceras, y, al parecer, cuatro horas o poco más había volado, cuando me hallé al crepúsculo del día en una tierra no conocida. Tocó el manto el suelo, y mi guiadora me dijo: "En parte estás, amigo Rutilio, que todo el género humano no podrá ofenderte". Y, diciendo esto, comenzó a abrazarme no muy honestamente. Apartéla de mí con los brazos, y, como mejor pude, divisé que la que me abrazaba era una figura de lobo, cuya visión me heló el alma, me turbó los sentidos y dio con mi mucho ánimo al través. Pero, como suele acontecer que en los grandes peligros la poca esperanza de vencerlos saca del ánimo desesperadas fuerzas, las pocas mías me pusieron en la mano un cuchillo, que acaso en el seno traía, y con furia y rabia se le hiqué por el pecho a la que pensé ser loba, la cual, cayendo en el suelo, perdió aquella fea figura, y hallé muerta y corriendo sangre a la desventurada encantadora.

»Considerad, señores, cuál quedaría yo, en tierra no conocida y sin persona que me guiase. Estuve esperando el día muchas horas, pero nunca acababa de llegar, ni por los horizontes se descubría señal de que el sol viniese. Apartéme de aquel cadáver, porque me causaba horror y espanto el tenerle cerca de mí. Volví muy a menudo los ojos al cielo, contemplaba el movimiento de las estrellas y parecíame, según el curso que habían hecho, que ya había de ser de día.

»Estando en esta confusión, oí que venía hablando, por junto de donde estaba, alguna gente, y así fue verdad. Y, saliéndoles al encuentro, les pregunté en mi



lengua toscana que me dijese qué tierra era aquella; y uno de ellos, asimismo en italiano, me respondió: "Esta tierra es Noruega; pero, ¿quién eres tú, que lo preguntas, y en lengua que en estas partes hay muy pocos que la entiendan?" "Yo soy -respondí-un miserable, que por huir de la muerte he venido a caer en sus manos". Y en breves razones le di cuenta de mi viaje, y aun de la muerte de la hechicera. Mostró condolerse el que me hablaba, y díjome: "Puedes, buen hombre, dar infinitas gracias al cielo por haberte librado del poder destas maléficas hechiceras, de las cuales hay mucha abundancia en estas setentrionales partes. Cuéntase dellas que se convierten en lobos, así machos como hembras, porque de entrambos géneros hay maléficos y encantadores. Cómo esto pueda ser yo lo ignoro, y como cristiano que soy católico no lo creo, pero la experiencia me muestra lo contrario. Lo que puedo alcanzar es que todas estas transformaciones son ilusiones del demonio, y permisión de Dios y castigo de los abominables pecados deste maldito género de gente".

»Preguntéle qué hora podría ser, porque me parecía que la noche se alargaba, y el día nunca venía. Respondióme que en aquellas partes remotas se repartía el año en cuatro tiempos: tres meses había de noche oscura, sin que el sol pareciese en la tierra en manera alguna; y tres meses había de crepúsculo del día, sin que bien fuese noche ni bien fuese día; otros tres meses había de día claro continuado, sin que el sol se escondiese, y otros tres de crepúsculo de la noche; y que la sazón en que estaban era la del crepúsculo del día: así que, esperar la claridad del sol por entonces era esperanza vana, y que también lo sería esperar yo volver a mi tierra tan presto, si no fuese cuando llegase la sazón del día grande, en la cual parten navíos de estas partes a Inglaterra, Francia y España con algunas mercancías. Preguntóme si tenía algún oficio en que ganar de comer, mientras llegaba tiempo de volverme a mi tierra. Díjele que era bailarín y grande hombre de hacer cabriolas, y que sabía jugar de manos sutilísimamente. Rióse de gana el hombre, y me dijo que aquellos ejercicios o oficios (o como llamarlos quisiese) no corrían en Noruega ni en todas aquellas partes. Preguntóme si sabría oficio de orífice. Díjele que tenía habilidad para aprender lo que me enseñase. "Pues veníos, hermano, conmigo, aunque primero será bien que demos sepultura a esta miserable".

»Hicímoslo así, y llevóme a una ciudad, donde toda la gente andaba por las calles con palos de tea encendidos en las manos, negociando lo que les importaba. Preguntéle en el camino que cómo o cuándo había venido a aquella tierra, y que si era verdaderamente italiano. Respondió que uno de sus pasados abuelos se había casado en ella, viniendo de Italia a negocios que le importaban, y a los hijos que tuvo les enseñó su lengua, y de uno en otro se extendió por todo su linaje, hasta llegar a él, que era uno de sus cuartos nietos. "Y así, como vecino

y morador tan antiguo, llevado de la afición de mis hijos y mujer, me he quedado hecho carne y sangre entre esta gente, sin acordarme de Italia ni de los parientes que allá dijeron mis padres que tenían".

»Contar yo ahora la casa donde entré, la mujer e hijos que hallé, y criados (que tenía muchos), el gran caudal, el recibimiento y agasajo que me hicieron, sería proceder en infinito: basta decir, en suma, que yo aprendí su oficio, y en pocos meses ganaba de comer por mi trabajo. En este tiempo se llegó el de llegar el día grande, y mi amo y maestro -que así le puedo llamar-ordenó de llevar gran cantidad de su mercancía a otras islas por allí cercanas y a otras bien apartadas. Fuime con él, así por curiosidad como por vender algo que ya tenía de caudal, en el cual viaje vi cosas dignas de admiración y espanto, y otras de risa y contento; noté costumbres, advertí en ceremonias no vistas y de ninguna otra gente usadas. En fin, a cabo de dos meses, corrimos una borrasca que nos duró cerca de cuarenta días, al cabo de los cuales dimos en esta isla, de donde hoy salimos, entre unas peñas, donde nuestro bajel se hizo pedazos, y ninguno de los que en él venían quedó vivo, sino yo.

## Capítulo nono

*Donde Rutilio prosigue la historia de su vida*

»LO primero que se me ofreció a la vista, antes que viese otra cosa alguna, fue un bárbaro pendiente y ahorcado de un árbol, por donde conocí que estaba en tierra de bárbaros salvajes, y luego el miedo me puso delante mil géneros de muertes; y, no sabiendo qué hacerme, alguna o todas juntas las temía y las esperaba. En fin, como la necesidad, según se dice, es maestra de sutilizar el ingenio, di en un pensamiento harto extraordinario, y fue que descolgué al bárbaro del árbol, y, habiéndome desnudado de todos mis vestidos, que enterré en la arena, me vestí de los suyos, que me vinieron bien, pues no tenían otra hechura que ser de pieles de animales, no cosidos ni cortados a medida, sino ceñidos por el cuerpo, como lo habéis visto. Para disimular la lengua, y que por ella no fuese conocido por extranjero, me fingí mudo y sordo, y con esta industria me entré por la isla adentro, saltando y haciendo cabriolas en el aire.

»A poco trecho descubrí una gran cantidad de bárbaros, los cuales me rodearon, y en su lengua unos y otros, con gran priesa me preguntaron -a lo que después acá he entendido-quién era, cómo me llamaba, adónde venía y adónde iba. Respondíles con callar y hacer todas las señales de mudo más aparentes que pude, y luego reiteraba los saltos y menudeaba las cabriolas. Salíme de entre ellos, siguiéronme los muchachos, que no me dejaban adonde quiera que iba. Con esta industria pasé por bárbaro y por mudo, y los muchachos, por verme saltar y hacer gestos, me daban de comer de lo que tenían. Desta manera he pasado tres años entre ellos, y aun pasara todos los de mi vida, sin ser conocido. Con la atención y curiosidad noté su lengua, y aprendí mucha parte de ella, supe la profecía que de la duración de su reino tenía profetizada un antiguo y sabio bárbaro, a quien ellos daban gran crédito. He visto sacrificar algunos varones para hacer la experiencia de su cumplimiento, y he visto comprar algunas doncellas para el mismo efeto, hasta que sucedió el incendio de la isla, que vosotros, señores, habéis visto. Guardéme de las llamas; fui a dar aviso a los prisioneros de la mazmorra, donde vosotros sin duda habréis estado; vi estas barcas, acudí a la marina; hallaron en vuestros generosos pechos lugar mis ruegos; recogístesme en ellas, por lo que os doy infinitas gracias, y agora espero en la del cielo, que, pues nos sacó de tanta miseria a todos, nos ha de dar en este que pretendemos felicísimo viaje.»

Aquí dio fin Rutilio a su plática, con que dejó admirados y contentos a los oyentes.

Llegóse el día áspero, turbio y con señales de nieve muy ciertas. Dióle Auristela a Periandro lo que Cloelia le había dado la noche que murió, que fueron dos pelotas de cera, que la una, como se vio, cubría una cruz de diamantes, tan rica que no acertaron a estimarla, por no agraviar su valor; y la otra, dos perlas redondas, asimismo de inestimable precio. Por estas joyas vinieron en conocimiento de que Auristela y Periandro eran gente principal, puesto que mejor declaraba esta verdad su gentil disposición y agradable trato.

El bárbaro Antonio, viniendo el día, se entró un poco por la isla, pero no descubrió otra cosa que montañas y sierras de nieve; y, volviendo a las barcas, dijo que la isla era despoblada, y que convenía partirse de allí luego a buscar otra parte donde recogerse del frío que amenazaba y proveerse de los mantenimientos que presto le harían falta.

Echaron con presteza las barcas al agua, embarcáronse todos, y pusieron las proas en otra isla, que no lejos de allí se descubría. En esto, yendo navegando, con el espacio que podían prometer dos remos, que no llevaba más cada barca, oyeron que de la una de las otras dos salía una voz blanda, suave, de manera que les hizo estar atentos a escuchalla. Notaron, especialmente el bárbaro Antonio el padre, que notó que lo que se cantaba era en lengua portuguesa, que él sabía muy bien. Calló la voz, y de allí a poco volvió a cantar en castellano, y no a otro tono de instrumentos que al de remos que sesgamente por el tranquilo mar las barcas impelían; y notó que lo que cantaron fue esto:

Mar sesgo, viento largo, estrella clara,  
camino, aunque no usado, alegre y cierto,  
al hermoso, al seguro, al capaz puerto  
llevan la nave vuestra, única y rara.

En Scilas ni en Caribdis no repara, 5  
ni en peligro que el mar tenga encubierto,  
siguiendo su derrota al descubierto,  
que limpia honestidad su curso para.

Con todo, si os faltare la esperanza  
del llegar a este puerto, no por eso 10  
giréis las velas, que será simpleza.

Que es enemigo amor de la mudanza,

y nunca tuvo próspero suceso  
el que no se quilata en la firmeza.

La bárbara Ricla dijo, en callando la voz:

-Despacio debe de estar y ocioso el cantor que en semejante tiempo da su voz a los vientos.

Pero no lo juzgaron así Periandro y Auristela, porque le tuvieron por más enamorado que ocioso al que cantado había; que los enamorados fácilmente reconcilian los ánimos, y traban amistad con los que conocen que padecen su misma enfermedad. Y así, con licencia de los demás que en su barca venían, aunque no fuera menester pedirla, hizo que el cantor se pasase a su barca, así por gozar de cerca de su voz como saber de sus sucesos, porque persona que en tales tiempos cantaba, o sentía mucho o no tenía sentimiento alguno.

Juntáronse las barcas, pasó el músico a la de Periandro, y todos los della le hicieron agradable recogida. En entrando el músico, en medio portugués y en medio castellano, dijo:

-Al cielo y a vosotros, señores, y a mi voz agradezco esta mudanza y esta mejora de navío, aunque creo que con mucha brevedad le dejaré libre de la carga de mi cuerpo, porque las penas que siento en el alma me van dando señales de que tengo la vida en sus últimos términos.

-Mejor lo hará el cielo -respondió Periandro-, que, pues yo soy vivo, no habrá trabajos que puedan matar a alguno.

-No sería esperanza aquella -dijo a esta sazón Auristela-a que pudiesen contrastar y derribar infortunios, pues, así como la luz resplandece más en las tinieblas, así la esperanza ha de estar más firme en los trabajos; que el desesperarse en ellos es acción de pechos cobardes, y no hay mayor pusilanimidad ni bajeza que entregarse el trabajado -por más que lo sea-a la desesperación.

-El alma ha de estar -dijo Periandro-el un pie en los labios y el otro en los dientes, si es que hablo con propiedad, y no ha de dejar de esperar su remedio, porque sería agraviar a Dios, que no puede ser agraviado, poniendo tasa y coto a sus infinitas misericordias.

-Todo es así -respondió el músico-, y yo lo creo, a despecho y pesar de las experiencias que en el discurso de mi vida en mis muchos males tengo hechas.

No por estas pláticas dejaban de bogar, de modo que, antes de anochecer, con dos horas, llegaron a una isla también despoblada, aunque no de árboles, porque tenía muchos y llenos de fruto, que, aunque pasado de sazón y seco, se dejaba comer.

Saltaron todos en tierra, en la cual vararon las barcas, y con gran priesa se

dieron a desgajar árboles y hacer una gran barraca para defenderse aquella noche del frío; hicieron asimismo fuego, ludiendo dos secos palos, el uno con el otro (artificio tan sabido como usado); y, como todos trabajaban, en un punto se vio levantada la pobre máquina, donde se recogieron todos, supliendo con mucho fuego la incomodidad del sitio, pareciéndoles aquella choza dilatado alcázar. Satisfacieron la hambre, y acomodáranse a dormir luego, si el deseo que Periandro tenía de saber el suceso del músico no lo estorbara, porque le rogó, si era posible, les hiciese sabidores de sus desgracias, pues no podían ser venturas las que en aquellas partes le habían traído.

Era cortés el cantor, y así, sin hacerse de rogar, dijo:

## Capítulo diez

### *De lo que contó el enamorado portugués*

-CON MÁS breves razones de las que sean posibles, daré fin a mi cuento, con darle al de mi vida, si es que tengo de dar crédito a cierto sueño que la pasada noche me turbó el alma.

«Yo, señores, soy portugués de nación, noble en sangre, rico en los bienes de fortuna y no pobre en los de naturaleza. Mi nombre es Manuel de Sosa Coitiño; mi patria, Lisboa, y mi ejercicio el de soldado. Junto a las casas de mis padres, casi pared en medio, estaba la de otro caballero del antiguo linaje de los Pereiras, el cual tenía sola una hija, única heredera de sus bienes, que eran muchos, báculo y esperanza de la prosperidad de sus padres; la cual, por el linaje, por la riqueza y por la hermosura, era deseada de todos los mejores del reino de Portugal. Y yo, que, como más vecino de su casa, tenía más comodidad de verla, la miré, la conocí y la adoré con una esperanza más dudosa que cierta, de que podría ser viniese a ser mi esposa; y, por ahorrar de tiempo, y por entender que con ella habían de valer poco requiebros, promesas ni dádivas, determiné de que un pariente mío se la pidiese a sus padres para esposa mía, pues ni en el linaje, ni en la hacienda, ni aun en la edad, diferenciábamos en nada.

»La respuesta que trujo fue que su hija Leonora aún no estaba en edad de casarse; que dejase pasar dos años, que le daba la palabra de no disponer de su hija en todo aquel tiempo sin hacerme sabidor dello. Llevé este primer golpe en los hombros de mi paciencia y en el escudo de la esperanza, pero no dejé por esto de servirla públicamente a sombra de mi honesta pretensión, que luego se supo por toda la ciudad; pero ella, retirada en la fortaleza de su prudencia y en los retretes de su recato, con honestidad y licencia de sus padres, admitía mis servicios, y daba a entender que, si no los agradecía con otros, por lo menos no los desestimaba.

»Sucedió que, en este tiempo, mi rey me envió por capitán general a una de las fuerzas que tiene en Berbería, oficio de calidad y de confianza. Llegóse el día de mi partida, y, pues en él no llegó el de mi muerte, no hay ausencia que mate ni dolor que consuma. Hablé a su padre, hícele que me volviese a dar la palabra de la espera de los dos años; túvome lástima, porque era discreto, y consintió que me despidiese de su mujer y de su hija Leonor, la cual, en compañía de su madre, salió a verme a una sala, y salieron con ella la honestidad, la gallardía y

el silencio. Pasméme cuando vi tan cerca de mí tanta hermosura; quise hablar, y anudóseme la voz a la garganta y pegóseme al paladar la lengua, y ni supe ni pude hacer otra cosa que callar y dar con mi silencio indicio de mi turbación, la cual vista por el padre, que era tan cortés como discreto, se abrazó conmigo, y dijo: "Nunca, señor Manuel de Sosa, los días de partida dan licencia a la lengua que se desmande, y puede ser que este silencio hable en su favor de vuesa merced más que alguna otra retórica. Vuesa merced vaya a ejercer su cargo, y vuelva en buen punto, que yo no faltaré ninguno en lo que tocare a servirle. Leonora, mi hija, es obediente, y mi mujer desea darme gusto, y yo tengo el deseo que he dicho; que con estas tres cosas, me parece que puede esperar vuesa merced buen suceso en lo que desea". Estas palabras todas me quedaron en la memoria y en el alma impresas de tal manera que no se me han olvidado, ni se me olvidarán en tanto que la vida me durare. Ni la hermosa Leonora ni su madre me dijeron palabra, ni yo pude, como he dicho, decir alguna.

»Partíme a Berbería; ejercité mi cargo, con satisfacción de mi rey, dos años; volví a Lisboa, hallé que la fama y hermosura de Leonora había salido ya de los límites de la ciudad y del reino, y estendídose por Castilla y otras partes, de las cuales venían embajadas de príncipes y señores que la pretendían por esposa; pero, como ella tenía la voluntad tan sujeta a la de sus padres, no miraba si era o no solicitada. En fin, viendo yo pasado el término de los dos años, volví a suplicar a su padre me la diese por esposa.

»¡Ay de mí, que no es posible que me detenga en estas circunstancias, porque a las puertas de mi vida está llamando la muerte, y temo que no me ha de dar espacio para contar mis desventuras; que, si así fuese, no las tendría yo por tales!

»Finalmente, un día me avisaron que, para un domingo venidero, me entregarían a mi deseada Leonora, cuya nueva faltó poco para no quitarme la vida de contento. Convidé a mis parientes, llamé a mis amigos, hice galas, envié presentes, con todos los requisitos que pudiesen mostrar ser yo el que me casaba y Leonora la que había de ser mi esposa. Llegóse este día, y yo fui acompañado de todo lo mejor de la ciudad a un monasterio de monjas que se llama de la Madre de Dios, adonde me dijeron que mi esposa, desde el día antes, me esperaba; que había sido su gusto que en aquel monasterio se celebrase su desposorio, con licencia del arzobispo de la ciudad.»

Detúvose algún tanto el lastimado caballero, como para tomar aliento de proseguir su plática, y luego dijo:

-«Llegué al monasterio, que real y pomposamente estaba adornado. Salieron a recebirme casi toda la gente principal del reino, que allí aguardándome estaba, con infinitas señoras de la ciudad, de las más principales. Hundíase el templo de música, así de voces como de instrumentos, y en esto salió por la puerta del



claustro la sin par Leonora, acompañada de la priora y de otras muchas monjas, vestida de raso blanco acuchillado con saya entera a lo castellano, tomadas las cuchilladas con ricas y gruesas perlas. Venía forrada la saya en tela de oro verde; traía los cabellos sueltos por las espaldas, tan rubios que deslumbraban los del sol, y tan luengos que casi besaban la tierra; la cintura, collar y anillos que traía, opiniones hubo que valían un reino. Torno a decir que salió tan bella, tan costosa, tan gallarda y tan ricamente compuesta y adornada, que causó invidia en las mujeres y admiración en los hombres. De mí sé decir que quedé tal con su vista, que me hallé indigno de merecerla, por parecerme que la agraviaba, aunque yo fuera el emperador del mundo.

»Estaba hecho un modo de teatro en mitad del cuerpo de la iglesia, donde desenfadadamente, y sin que nadie lo empachase, se había de celebrar nuestro desposorio. Subió en él primero la hermosa doncella, donde al descubierto mostró su gallardía y gentileza. Pareció a todos los ojos que la miraban lo que suele parecer la bella aurora al despuntar del día, o lo que dicen las antiguas fábulas que parecía la casta Diana en los bosques, y algunos creo que hubo tan discretos que no la acertaron a comparar sino a sí misma. Subí yo al teatro, pensando que subía a mi cielo, y, puesto de rodillas ante ella, casi di demostración de adorarla. Alzóse una voz en el templo, procedida de otras muchas, que decía: "Vivid felices y luengos años en el mundo, ¡oh dichosos y bellísimos amantes! Coronen presto hermosísimos hijos vuestra mesa, y a largo andar se dilate vuestro amor en vuestros nietos; no sepan los rabiosos celos ni las dudosas sospechas la morada de vuestros pechos; ríndase la invidia a vuestros pies, y la buena fortuna no acierte a salir de vuestra casa".

»Todas estas razones y deprecaciones santas me colmaban el alma de contento, viendo con qué gusto general llevaba el pueblo mi ventura. En esto, la hermosa Leonora me tomó por la mano, y, así en pie como estábamos, alzando un poco la voz, me dijo: "Bien sabéis, señor Manuel de Sosa, cómo mi padre os dio palabra que no dispondría de mi persona en dos años, que se habían de contar desde el día que me pedistes fuese yo vuestra esposa; y también, si mal no me acuerdo, os dije yo, viéndome acosada de vuestra solicitud y obligada de los infinitos beneficios que me habéis hecho, más por vuestra cortesía que por mis merecimientos, que yo no tomaría otro esposo en la tierra sino a vos. Esta palabra mi padre os la ha cumplido, como habéis visto, y yo os quiero cumplir la mía, como veréis. Y así, porque sé que los engaños, aunque sean honrosos y provechosos, tienen un no sé qué de traición cuando se dilatan y entretienen, quiero, del que os parecerá que os he hecho, sacaros en este instante. Yo, señor mío, soy casada, y en ninguna manera, siendo mi esposo vivo, puedo casarme con otro. Yo no os dejo por ningún hombre de la tierra, sino por uno del cielo,

que es Jesucristo, Dios y hombre verdadero: Él es mi esposo; a Él le di la palabra primero que a vos; a Él sin engaño y de toda mi voluntad, y a vos con disimulación y sin firmeza alguna. Yo confieso que para escoger esposo en la tierra ninguno os pudiera igualar, pero, habiéndole de escoger en el cielo, ¿quién como Dios? Si esto os parece traición o descomedido trato, dadme la pena que quisiéredes y el nombre que se os antojare, que no habrá muerte, promesa o amenaza que me aparte del crucificado esposo mío".

»Calló, y al mismo punto la priora y las otras monjas comenzaron a desnudarla y a cortarle la preciosa madeja de sus cabellos. Yo enmudecí; y, por no dar muestra de flaqueza, tuve cuenta con reprimir las lágrimas que me venían a los ojos, y, hincándome otra vez de rodillas ante ella, casi por fuerza la besé la mano, y ella, cristianamente compasiva, me echó los brazos al cuello; alcéme en pie, y, alzando la voz de modo que todos me oyesen, dije: "Maria optimam partem elegit". Y, diciendo esto, me bajé del teatro, y, acompañado de mis amigos, me volví a mi casa, adonde, yendo y viniendo con la imaginación en este extraño suceso, vine casi a perder el juicio, y ahora por la misma causa vengo a perder la vida.»

Y, dando un gran suspiro, se le salió el alma y dio consigo en el suelo.

## Capítulo onceno del primer libro

ACUDIÓ con presteza Periandro a verle, y halló que había espirado de todo punto, dejando a todos confusos y admirados del triste y no imaginado suceso.

-Con este sueño -dijo a esta sazón Auristela-se ha escusado este caballero de contarnos qué le sucedió en la pasada noche, los trances por donde vino a tan desastrado término y a la prisión de los bárbaros, que sin duda debían de ser casos tan desesperados como peregrinos.

A lo que añadió el bárbaro Antonio:

-Por maravilla hay desdichado sólo que lo sea en sus desventuras. Compañeros tienen las desgracias, y por aquí o por allí, siempre son grandes, y entonces lo dejan de ser cuando acaban con la vida del que las padece.

Dieron luego orden de enterralle como mejor pudieron; sirvióle de mortaja su mismo vestido, de tierra la nieve y de cruz la que le hallaron en el pecho en un escapulario, que era la de Christus, por ser caballero de su hábito; y no fuera menester hallarle esta honrosa señal para enterarse de su nobleza, pues las habían dado bien claras su grave presencia y razonar discreto. No faltaron lágrimas que le acompañasen, porque la compasión hizo su oficio, y las sacó de todos los ojos de los circunstantes.

Amaneció en esto, volvieron las barcas al agua, pareciéndoles que el mar les esperaba sosegado y blando, y, entre tristes y alegres, entre temor y esperanza, siguieron su camino, sin llevar parte cierta adonde encaminalle.

Están todos aquellos mares casi cubiertos de islas, todas o las más despobladas; y las que tienen gente, es rústica y medio bárbara, de poca urbanidad y de corazones duros e insolentes; y, con todo esto, deseaban topar alguna que los acogiese, porque imaginaban que no podían ser tan crueles sus moradores, que no lo fuesen más las montañas de nieve y los duros y ásperos riscos de las que atrás dejaban.

Diez días más navegaron sin tomar puerto, playa o abrigo alguno, dejando a entrambas partes, diestra y siniestra, islas pequeñas que no prometían estar pobladas de gente, puesta la mira en una gran montaña que a la vista se les ofrecía, y pugnaban con todas sus fuerzas llegar a ella con la mayor brevedad que pudiesen, porque ya sus barcas hacían agua y los bastimentos, a más andar, iban faltando. En fin, más con la ayuda del cielo, como se debe creer, que con las de sus brazos, llegaron a la deseada isla, y vieron andar dos personas por la marina, a quien con grandes voces preguntó Transila qué tierra era aquélla, quién

la gobernaba y si era de cristianos católicos.

Respondiéronle, en lengua que ella entendió, que aquella isla se llamaba Golandia, y que era de católicos, puesto que estaba despoblada, por ser tan poca la gente que tenía que no ocupaba más de una casa, que servía de mesón a la gente que llegaba a un puerto detrás de un peñón, que señaló con la mano. «Y si vosotros, quienquiera que seáis, queréis repararos de algunas faltas, seguidnos con la vista, que nosotros os pondremos en el puerto».

Dieron gracias a Dios los de las barcas, y siguieron por la mar a los que los guiaban por la tierra, y, al volver del peñón que les habían señalado, vieron un abrigo que podía llamarse puerto, y en él hasta diez o doce bajeles, dellos chicos, dellos medianos y dellos grandes; y fue grande la alegría que de verlos recibieron, pues les daba esperanza de mudar de navíos, y seguridad de caminar con certeza a otras partes.

Llegaron a tierra; salieron así gente de los navíos como del mesón a recibirles; saltó en tierra, en hombros de Periandro y de los dos bárbaros, padre e hijo, la hermosa Auristela, vestida con el vestido y adorno con que fue Periandro vendido a los bárbaros por Arnaldo. Salió con ella la gallarda Transila, y la bella bárbara Constanza con Ricla, su madre, y todos los demás de las barcas acompañaron este escuadrón gallardo.

De tal manera causó admiración, espanto y asombro la bellísima escuadra en los de la mar y la tierra, que todos se postraron en el suelo y dieron muestras de adorar a Auristela. Mirábanla callando, y con tanto respeto que no acertaban a mover las lenguas por no ocuparse en otra cosa que en mirar. La hermosa Transila, como ya había hecho experiencia de que entendían su lengua, fue la primera que rompió el silencio, diciéndoles:

-A vuestro hospedaje nos ha traído la nuestra, hasta hoy, contraria fortuna. En nuestro traje y en nuestra mansedumbre echaréis de ver que antes buscamos paz que guerra, porque no hacen batalla las mujeres ni los varones afligidos. Acogednos, señores, en vuestro hospedaje y en vuestros navíos, que las barcas que aquí nos han conducido, aquí dejan el atrevimiento y la voluntad de tornar otra vez a entregarse a la inestabilidad del mar. Si aquí se cambia por oro o por plata lo necesario que se busca, con facilidad y abundancia seréis recompensados de lo que nos diéredes, que, por subidos precios que lo vendáis, lo recibiremos como si fuese dado.

Uno -¡milagro extraño!- que parecía ser de la gente de los navíos, en lengua española respondió:

-De corto entendimiento fuera, hermosa señora, el que dudara la verdad que dices; que, puesto que la mentira se disimula, y el daño se disfraza con la máscara de la verdad y del bien, no es posible que haya tenido lugar de acogerse

a tan gran belleza como la vuestra. El patrón deste hospedaje es cortesísimo, y todos los destas naves ni más ni menos. Mirad si os da más gusto volveros a ellas o entrar en el hospedaje, que en ellas y en él seréis recibidos y tratados como vuestra presencia merece.

Entonces, viendo el bárbaro Antonio, o oyendo, por mejor decir, hablar su lengua, dijo:

-Pues el cielo nos ha traído a parte que suene en mis oídos la dulce lengua de mi nación, casi tengo ya por cierto el fin de mis desgracias. Vamos, señores, al hospedaje, y, en reposando algún tanto, daremos orden en volver a nuestro camino con más seguridad que la que hasta aquí hemos traído.

En esto, un grumete que estaba en lo alto de una gavia, dijo a voces en lengua inglesa:

-Un navío se descubre, que, con tendidas velas y mar y viento en popa, viene la vuelta deste abrigo.

Alborotáronse todos, y, en el mismo lugar donde estaban, sin moverse un paso, se pusieron a esperar el bajel, que tan cerca se descubría; y, cuando estuvo junto, vieron que las hinchadas velas las atravesaban unas cruces rojas, y conocieron que en una bandera que traía en el peñolo de la mayor gavia venían pintadas las armas de Inglaterra.

Disparó, en llegando, dos piezas de gruesa artillería, y luego hasta obra de veinte arcabuces. De la tierra les fue hecha señal de paz y de alegres voces, porque no tenían artillería con que responderle.

## Capítulo doce del primer libro

*Donde se cuenta de qué parte y quién eran los que venían en el navío*

HECHA, como se ha dicho, la salva de entrambas partes, así del navío como de la tierra, al momento echaron áncoras los de la nave, y arrojaron el esquife al agua, en el cual el primero que saltó, después de cuatro marineros que le adornaron con tapetes y asieron de los remos, fue un anciano varón, al parecer de edad de sesenta años, vestido de una ropa de terciopelo negro que le llegaba a los pies, forrada en felpa negra y ceñida con una de las que llaman colonias de seda; en la cabeza traía un sombrero alto y puntiagudo, asimismo, al parecer, de felpa. Tras él bajó al esquife un gallardo y brioso mancebo, de poco más edad de veinte y cuatro años, vestido a lo marinero, de terciopelo negro, una espada dorada en las manos y una daga en la cinta. Luego, como si los arrojaran, echaron de la nave al esquife un hombre lleno de cadenas y una mujer con él enredada y presa con las cadenas mismas: él de hasta cuarenta años de edad y ella de más de cincuenta; él brioso y despechado, y ella malencólica y triste. Impelieron el esquife los marineros. En un instante llegaron a tierra, adonde en sus hombros, y en los de otros soldados arcabuceros que en el barco venían, sacaron a tierra al viejo y al mozo, y a los dos prisioneros.

Transila, que, como los demás, había estado atentísima mirando los que en el esquife venían, volviéndose a Auristela, le dijo:

-Por tu vida, señora, que me cubras el rostro con ese velo que traes atado al brazo, porque, o yo tengo poco conocimiento, o son algunos de los que vienen en este barco personas que yo conozco y me conocen.

Hízolo así Auristela, y en esto llegaron los de la barca a juntarse con ellos, y todos se hicieron bien criados recibimientos.

Fuese derecho el anciano de la felpa a Transila, diciendo:

-Si mi ciencia no me engaña, y la fortuna no me desfavorece, próspera habrá sido la mía con este hallazgo.

Y, diciendo y haciendo, alzó el velo del rostro de Transila, y se quedó desmayado en sus brazos, que ella se los ofreció y se los puso, porque no diese en tierra.

Sin duda se puede creer que este caso de tanta novedad y tan no esperado puso en admiración a los circunstantes, y más cuando le oyeron decir a Transila:

-¡Oh padre de mi alma! ¿Qué venida es ésta? ¿Quién trae a vuestras

venerables canas y a vuestros cansados años por tierras tan apartadas de la vuestra?

-¿Quién le ha de traer -dijo a esta sazón el brioso mancebo-sino el buscar la ventura que sin vos le faltaba? Él y yo, dulcísima señora y esposa mía, venimos buscando el norte que nos ha de guiar adonde hallemos el puerto de nuestro descanso. Pero, pues ya, gracias sean dadas a los cielos, le habemos hallado, haz, señora, que vuelva en sí tu padre Mauricio, y consiente que de su alegría reciba yo parte, recibéndole a él como a padre y a mí como a tu legítimo esposo.

Volvió en sí Mauricio, y sucedióle en su desmayo Transila. Acudió Auristela a su remedio, pero no osó llegar a ella Ladislao (que éste era el nombre de su esposo), por guardar el honesto decoro que a Transila se le debía; pero, como los desmayos que suceden de alegres y no pensados acontecimientos, o quitan la vida en un instante o no duran mucho, fue pequeño espacio el en que estuvo Transila desmayada.

El dueño de aquel mesón o hospedaje dijo:

-Venid, señores, todos adonde, con más comodidad y menos frío del que aquí hace, os deis cuenta de vuestros sucesos.

Tomaron su consejo y fuéronse al mesón, y hallaron que era capaz de alojar una flota. Los dos encadenados se fueron por su pie, ayudándoles a llevar sus hierros los arcabuceros, que, como en guarda, con ellos venían. Acudieron a sus naves algunos, y con tanta priesa como buena voluntad trujeron dellas los regalos que tenían. Hízose lumbré, pusieron las mesas, y, sin tratar entonces de otra cosa, satisficieron todos la hambre, más con muchos géneros de pescados que con carnes, porque no sirvió otra que la de muchos pájaros que se crían en aquellas partes, de tan estraña manera que, por ser rara y peregrina, me obliga a que aquí la cuente: «Híncanse unos palos en la orilla de la mar y entre los escollos donde las aguas llegan, los cuales palos, de allí a poco tiempo, todo aquello que cubre el agua se convierte en dura piedra, y lo que queda fuera del agua se pudre y se corrompe, de cuya corrupción se engendra un pequeño pajarillo que, volando a la tierra, se hace grande, y tan sabroso de comer que es uno de los mejores manjares que se usan; y donde hay más abundancia dellos es en las provincias de Ibernía y de Irlanda, el cual pájaro se llama barnaclas.»

El deseo que tenían todos de saber los sucesos de los recién llegados les hacía parecer larga la comida, la cual acabada, el anciano Mauricio dio una gran palmada en la mesa, como dando señal de pedir que con atención le escuchasen. Enmudecieron todos, y el silencio les selló los labios, y la curiosidad les abrió los oídos; viendo lo cual, Mauricio soltó la voz en tales razones:

-«En una isla, de siete que están circunvecinas a la de Ibernía, nació yo, y tuvo principio mi linaje, tan antiguo, bien como aquel que es de los Mauricios, que en

decir este apellido le encarezco todo lo que puedo. Soy cristiano católico, y no de aquellos que andan mendigando la fee verdadera entre opiniones. Mis padres me criaron en los estudios, así de las armas como de las letras -si se puede decir que las armas se estudian-. He sido aficionado a la ciencia de la astrología judiciaria, en la cual he alcanzado famoso nombre. Caséme, en teniendo edad para tomar estado, con una hermosa y principal mujer de mi ciudad, de la cual tuve esta hija que está aquí presente. Seguí las costumbres de mi patria, a lo menos en cuanto a las que parecían ser niveladas con la razón, y en las que no, con apariencias fingidas mostraba seguirlas, que tal vez la disimulación es provechosa. Creció esta muchacha a mi sombra porque le faltó la de su madre, a dos años después de nacida, y a mí me faltó el arrimo de mi vejez, y me sobró el cuidado de criar la hija; y, por salir dél, que es carga difícil de llevar de cansados y ancianos hombros, en llegando a casi edad de darle esposo, en que le diese arrimo y compañía, lo puse en efeto, y el que le escogí fue este gallardo mancebo que tengo a mi lado, que se llama Ladislao, tomando consentimiento primero de mi hija, por parecerme acertado y aun conveniente que los padres casen a sus hijas con su beneplácito y gusto, pues no les dan compañía por un día, sino por todos aquellos que les durare la vida; y, de no hacer esto ansí, se han seguido, siguen y seguirán millares de inconvenientes, que los más suelen parar en desastrados sucesos.

»Es, pues, de saber que en mi patria hay una costumbre, entre muchas malas, la peor de todas; y es que, concertado el matrimonio y llegado el día de la boda, en una casa principal, para esto diputada, se juntan los novios y sus hermanos, si los tienen, con todos los parientes más cercanos de entrambas partes, y con ellos el regimiento de la ciudad, los unos para testigos y los otros para verdugos, que así los puedo y debo llamar. Está la desposada en un rico apartamento, esperando lo que no sé cómo pueda decirlo sin que la vergüenza no me turbe la lengua. Está esperando, digo, a que entren los hermanos de su esposo, si los tiene, y algunos de sus parientes más cercanos, de uno en uno, a coger las flores de su jardín y a manosear los ramilletes que ella quisiera guardar intactos para su marido: costumbre bárbara y maldita que va contra todas las leyes de la honestidad y del buen decoro; porque, ¿qué dote puede llevar más rico una doncella, que serlo, ni qué limpieza puede ni debe agradar más al esposo que la que la mujer lleva a su poder en su entereza? La honestidad siempre anda acompañada con la vergüenza, y la vergüenza con la honestidad. Y si la una o la otra comienzan a desmoronarse y a perderse, todo el edificio de la hermosura dará en tierra, y será tenido en precio bajo y asqueroso. Muchas veces había yo intentado de persuadir a mi pueblo dejase esta prodigiosa costumbre; pero, apenas lo intentaba, cuando se me daba en la boca con mil amenazas de muerte,



donde vine a verificar aquel antiguo adagio que vulgarmente se dice: que la costumbre es otra naturaleza, y el mudarla se siente como la muerte.

»Finalmente, mi hija se encerró en el retraimiento dicho, y estuvo esperando su perdición; y, cuando quería ya entrar un hermano de su esposo a dar principio al torpe trato, veis aquí donde veo salir con una lanza terciada en las manos, a la gran sala donde toda la gente estaba, a Transila, hermosa como el sol, brava como una leona y airada como una tigre.»

Aquí llegaba de su historia el anciano Mauricio, escuchándole todos con la atención posible, cuando, revistiéndosele a Transila el mismo espíritu que tuvo al tiempo que se vio en el mismo acto y ocasión que su padre contaba, levantándose en pie, con lengua a quien suele turbar la cólera, con el rostro hecho brasa y los ojos fuego, en efeto, con ademán que la pudiera hacer menos hermosa, si es que los accidentes tienen fuerzas de menoscabar las grandes hermosuras, quitándole a su padre las palabras de la boca, dijo las del siguiente capítulo.

## Capítulo trece

*Donde Transila prosigue la historia a quien su padre dio principio*

-«SALÍ -dijo Transila-, como mi padre ha dicho, a la gran sala, y, mirando a todas partes, en alta y colérica voz dije: "Haceos adelante vosotros, aquellos cuyas deshonestas y bárbaras costumbres van contra las que guarda cualquier bien ordenada república. Vosotros, digo, más lascivos que religiosos, que, con apariencia y sombra de ceremonias vanas, queréis cultivar los ajenos campos sin licencia de sus legítimos dueños. Veisme aquí, gente mal perdida y peor aconsejada: venid, venid, que la razón, puesta en la punta desta lanza, defenderá mi partido y quitará las fuerzas a vuestros malos pensamientos, tan enemigos de la honestidad y de la limpieza". Y, en diciendo esto, salté en mitad de la turba; y, rompiendo por ella, salí a la calle, acompañada de mi mismo enojo, y llegué a la marina, donde, cifrando mil discursos que en aquel tiempo hice en uno, me arrojé en un pequeño barco que sin duda me deparó el cielo. Asiendo de dos pequeños remos, me alargué de la tierra todo lo que pude; pero, viendo que se daban prisa a seguirme en otros muchos barcos, más bien parados y de mayores fuerzas impelidos, y que no era posible escaparme, solté los remos, y volví a tomar mi lanza, con intención de esperarles y dejar llevarme a su poder, si no perdiendo la vida, vengando primero en quien pudiese mi agravio.

»Vuelvo a decir otra vez que el cielo, conmovido de mi desgracia, avivó el viento y llevó el barco, sin impelerle los remos, el mar adentro, hasta que llegó a una corriente o raudal que le arrebató como en peso, y le llevó más adentro, quitando la esperanza a los que tras mí venían de alcanzarme, que no se aventuraron a entrarse en la desenfrenada corriente que por aquella parte el mar llevaba.»

-Así es verdad -dijo a esta sazón su esposo Ladislao-, porque, como me llevabas el alma, no pude dejar de seguirte. «Sobrevino la noche, y perdímoste de vista, y aun perdimos la esperanza de hallarte viva, si no fuese en las lenguas de la fama, que desde aquel punto tomó a su cargo el celebrar tal hazaña por siglos eternos.»

-«Es, pues, el caso -prosiguió Transila-que aquella noche un viento, que de la mar soplabá, me trujo a la tierra, y en la marina hallé unos pescadores que benignamente me recogieron y albergaron, y aun me ofrecieron marido, si no le tenía, y creo sin aquellas condiciones de quien yo iba huyendo; pero la codicia

humana, que reina y tiene su señorío aun entre las peñas y riscos del mar y en los corazones duros y campestres, se entró aquella noche en los pechos de aquellos rústicos pescadores, y acordaron entre sí que, pues de todos era la presa que en mí tenían, y que no podía ser dividida en partes para poder repartirme, que me vendiesen a unos cosarios que aquella tarde habían descubierto no lejos de sus pesquerías.

»Bien pudiera yo ofrecerles mayor precio del que ellos pudieran pedir a los cosarios, pero no quise tomar ocasión de recibir bien alguno de ninguno de mi bárbara patria; y así, al amanecer, habiendo llegado allí los piratas, me vendieron, no sé por cuánto, habiéndome primero despojado de las joyas que llevaba de desposada. Lo que sé decir es que me trataron los cosarios con mejor término que mis ciudadanos, y me dijeron que no fuese malencólica, porque no me llevaban para ser esclava, sino para esperar ser reina y aun señora de todo el universo, si ya no mentían ciertas profecías de los bárbaros de aquella isla, de quien tanto se hablaba por el mundo.

»De cómo llegué, del recibimiento que los bárbaros me hicieron, de cómo aprendí su lengua en este tiempo que ha que falté de vuestra presencia, de sus ritos y ceremonias y costumbres, del vano supuesto de sus profecías, y del hallazgo destos señores con quien vengo, y del incendio de la isla, que ya queda abrasada, y de nuestra libertad, diré otra vez, que por agora basta lo dicho, y quiero dar lugar a que mi padre me diga qué ventura le ha traído a dármele tan buena cuando menos la esperaba.»

Aquí dio fin Transila a su plática, teniendo a todos colgados de la suavidad de su lengua, y admirados del extremo de su hermosura, que después de la de Auristela ninguna se le igualaba.

Mauricio, su padre, entonces, dijo:

-Ya sabes, hermosa Transila, querida hija, cómo en mis estudios y ejercicios, entre otros muchos gustosos y loables, me llevaron tras sí los de la astrología judiciaria, como aquellos que, cuando aciertan, cumplen el natural deseo que todos los hombres tienen de saber, no sólo lo pasado y presente, sino lo por venir. Viéndote, pues, perdida, noté el punto, observé los astros, miré el aspecto de los planetas, señalé los sitios y casas necesarias para que respondiese mi trabajo a mi deseo, porque ninguna ciencia, en cuanto a ciencia, engaña: el engaño está en quien no la sabe, principalmente la del astrología, por la velocidad de los cielos, que se lleva tras sí todas las estrellas, las cuales no influyen en este lugar lo que en aquél, ni en aquél lo que en éste; y así, el astrólogo judiciario, si acierta alguna vez en sus juicios, es por arrimarse a lo más probable y a lo más experimentado, y el mejor astrólogo del mundo, puesto que muchas veces se engaña, es el demonio, porque no solamente juzga de lo por

venir por la ciencia que sabe, sino también por las premisas y conjeturas; y, como ha tanto tiempo que tiene experiencia de los casos pasados y tanta noticia de los presentes, con facilidad se arroja a juzgar de los por venir, lo que no tenemos los aprendices desta ciencia, pues hemos de juzgar siempre a tienta y con poca seguridad. Con todo eso, alcancé que tu perdición había de durar dos años, y que te había de cobrar este día y en esta parte, para remozar mis canas y para dar gracias a los cielos del hallazgo de mi tesoro, alegrando mi espíritu con tu presencia, puesto que sé que ha de ser a costa de algunos sobresaltos; que, por la mayor parte, las buenas andanzas no vienen sin el contrapeso de desdichas, las cuales tienen jurisdicción y un modo de licencia de entrarse por los buenos sucesos, para darnos a entender que ni el bien es eterno, ni el mal durable.

-Los cielos serán servidos -dijo a esta sazón Auristela, que había gran tiempo que callaba-de darnos próspero viaje, pues nos le promete tan buen hallazgo.

La mujer prisionera, que había estado escuchando con grande atención el razonamiento de Transila, se puso en pie, a pesar de sus cadenas y al de la fuerza que le hacía para que no se levantase el que con ella venía preso, y, con voz levantada, dijo:

## Capítulo catorce del primer libro

*Donde se declara quién eran los que tan aherrojados venían*

-SI ES QUE los afligidos tienen licencia para hablar ante los venturosos, concédaseme a mí por esta vez, donde la brevedad de mis razones templará el fastidio que tuviéredes de escuchallas. Haste quejado -dijo, volviéndose a Transila-, señora doncella, de la bárbara costumbre de los de tu ciudad, como si lo fuera aliviar el trabajo a los menesterosos y quitar la carga a los flacos; sí, que no es error, por bueno que sea un caballo, pasearle la carrera primero que se ponga en él, ni va contra la honestidad el uso y costumbre si en él no se pierde la honra, y se tiene por acertado lo que no lo parece; sí, que mejor gobernará el timón de una nave el que hubiere sido marinero, que no el que sale de las escuelas de la tierra para ser piloto: la experiencia en todas las cosas es la mejor maestra de las artes; y así, mejor te fuera entrar experimentada en la compañía de tu esposo que rústica e inculta.

Apenas oyó esta razón última el hombre que consigo venía atado, cuando dijo, poniéndole el puño cerrado junto al rostro, amenazándola:

-¡Oh Rosamunda, o por mejor decir, rosa inmunda!, porque munda ni lo fuiste, ni lo eres, ni lo serás en tu vida, si vivieses más años que los mismos tiempos; y así, no me maravillo de que te parezca mal la honestidad ni el buen recato a que están obligadas las honradas doncellas.

«Sabed, señores -mirando a todos los circunstantes, prosiguió-, que esta mujer que aquí veis, atada como loca y libre como atrevida, es aquella famosa Rosamunda, dama que ha sido concubina y amiga del rey de Inglaterra, de cuyas impúdicas costumbres hay largas historias y longísimas memorias entre todas las gentes del mundo. Ésta mandó al rey, y por añadidura a todo el reino; puso leyes, quitó leyes, levantó caídos viciosos y derribó levantados virtuosos. Cumplió sus gustos tan torpe como públicamente, en menoscabo de la autoridad del rey, y en muestra de sus torpes apetitos, que fueron tantas las muestras, y tan torpes y tantos sus atrevimientos, que, rompiendo los lazos de diamantes y las redes de bronce con que tenía ligado el corazón del rey, le movieron a apartarla de sí y a menospreciarla en el mismo grado que la había tenido en precio. Cuando ésta estaba en la cumbre de su rueda, y tenía asida por la guedeja a la fortuna, vivía yo despechado y con deseos de mostrar al mundo cuán mal estaban empleados los de mi rey y señor natural. Tengo un cierto espíritu satírico y maldiciente, una

pluma veloz y una lengua libre; deléitanme las maliciosas agudezas, y, por decir una, perderé yo, no sólo un amigo, pero cien mil vidas. No me ataban la lengua prisiones, ni enmudecían destierros, ni atemorizaban amenazas, ni enmendaban castigos. Finalmente, a entrambos a dos llegó el día de nuestra última paga: a ésta mandó el rey que nadie en toda la ciudad, ni en todos sus reinos y señoríos le diese, ni dado ni por dineros, otro algún sustento que pan y agua, y que a mí junto con ella nos trajesen a una de las muchas islas que por aquí hay, que fuese despoblada, y aquí nos dejaran: pena que para mí ha sido más mala que quitarme la vida, porque, la que con ella paso, es peor que la muerte.»

-Mira, Clodio -dijo a esta sazón Rosamunda-, cuán mal me hallo yo en tu compañía, que mil veces me ha venido al pensamiento de arrojarme en la profundidad del mar, y si lo he dejado de hacer, es por no llevarte conmigo, que si en el infierno pudiera estar sin ti, se me aliviaran las penas. Yo confieso que mis torpezas han sido muchas, pero han caído sobre sujeto flaco y poco discreto; mas las tuyas han cargado sobre varoniles hombros y sobre discreción experimentada, sin sacar de ellas otra ganancia que una delectación más ligera que la menuda paja que en volubles remolinos revuelve el viento. Tú has lastimado mil ajenas honras, has aniquilado ilustres créditos, has descubierto secretos escondidos y contaminado linajes claros; haste atrevido a tu rey, a tus ciudadanos, a tus amigos y a tus mismos parientes; y, en son de decir gracias, te has desgraciado con todo el mundo. Bien quisiera yo que quisiera el rey que, en pena de mis delitos, acabara con otro género de muerte la vida en mi tierra, y no con el de las heridas que a cada paso me da tu lengua, de la cual tal vez no están seguros los cielos ni los santos.

-Con todo eso -dijo Clodio-, jamás me ha acusado la conciencia de haber dicho alguna mentira.

-A tener tú conciencia -dijo Rosamunda- de las verdades que has dicho, tenías harto de que acusarte; que no todas las verdades han de salir en público, ni a los ojos de todos.

-Sí -dijo a esta sazón Mauricio-; sí, que tiene razón Rosamunda, que las verdades de las culpas cometidas en secreto, nadie ha de ser osado de sacarlas en público, especialmente las de los reyes y príncipes que nos gobiernan; sí, que no toca a un hombre particular reprehender a su rey y señor, ni sembrar en los oídos de sus vasallos las faltas de su príncipe, porque esto no será causa de enmendarle, sino de que los suyos no le estimen; y si la corrección ha de ser fraterna entre todos, ¿por qué no ha de gozar deste privilegio el príncipe?, ¿por qué le han de decir públicamente y en el rostro sus defetos?; que tal vez la reprehensión pública y mal considerada suele endurecer la condición del que la recibe, y volverle antes pertinaz que blando; y, como es forzoso que la

reprehensión caiga sobre culpas verdaderas o imaginadas, nadie quiere que le reprehendan en público; y así, dignamente, los satíricos, los maldicientes, los malintencionados son desterrados y echados de sus casas, sin honra y con vituperio, sin que les quede otra alabanza que llamarse agudos sobre bellacos, y bellacos sobre agudos; y es como lo que suele decirse: la traición contenta, pero el traidor enfada. Y hay más: que las honras que se quitan por escrito, como vuelan y pasan de gente en gente, no se pueden reducir a restitución, sin la cual no se perdonan los pecados.

-Todo lo sé -respondió Clodio-, pero si quieren que no hable o escriba, córtenme la lengua y las manos, y aun entonces pondré la boca en las entrañas de la tierra, y daré voces como pudiere, y tendré esperanza que de allí salgan las cañas del rey Midas.

-Ahora bien -dijo a esta sazón Ladislao-, háganse estas paces: casemos a Rosamunda con Clodio; quizá con la bendición del sacramento del matrimonio y con la discreción de entrambos, mudando de estado, mudarán de vida.

-Aun bien -dijo Rosamunda-, que tengo aquí un cuchillo con que podré hacer una o dos puertas en mi pecho, por donde salga el alma, que ya tengo casi puesta en los dientes, en sólo haber oído este tan desastrado y desatinado casamiento.

-Yo no me mataré -dijo Clodio-, porque, aunque soy murmurador y maldiciente, el gusto que recibo de decir mal, cuando lo digo bien, es tal, que quiero vivir, porque quiero decir mal. Verdad es que pienso guardar la cara a los príncipes, porque ellos tienen largos brazos, y alcanzan adonde quieren y a quien quieren, y ya la experiencia me ha mostrado que no es bien ofender a los poderosos, y la caridad cristiana enseña que por el príncipe bueno se ha de rogar al cielo por su vida y por su salud, y por el malo, que le mejore y enmiende.

-Quien todo eso sabe -dijo el bárbaro Antonio-cerca está de enmendarse. No hay pecado tan grande, ni vicio tan apoderado que con el arrepentimiento no se borre o quite del todo. La lengua maldiciente es como espada de dos filos, que corta hasta los huesos, o como rayo del cielo, que sin romper la vaina, rompe y desmenuza el acero que cubre; y, aunque las conversaciones y entretenimientos se hacen sabrosos con la sal de la murmuración, todavía suelen tener los dejos las más veces amargos y desabridos. Es tan ligera la lengua como el pensamiento, y si son malas las preñeces de los pensamientos, las empeoran los partos de la lengua. Y, como sean las palabras como las piedras que se sueltan de la mano, que no se pueden revocar ni volver a la parte donde salieron hasta que han hecho su efeto, pocas veces el arrepentirse de habellas dicho menoscaba la culpa del que las dijo; aunque ya tengo dicho que un buen arrepentimiento es la mejor medicina que tienen las enfermedades del alma.

## Capítulo quince del primer libro desta grande historia

EN ESTO estaban, cuando entró un marinero en el hospedaje, diciendo a voces:

-Un bajel grande viene con las velas tendidas encaminado a este puerto, y hasta agora no he descubierto señal que me dé a entender de qué parte sea.

Apenas dijo esto, cuando llegó a sus oídos el son horrible de muchas piezas de artillería que el bajel disparó al entrar del puerto, todas limpias y sin bala alguna, señal de paz y no de guerra; de la misma manera le respondió el bajel de Mauricio y toda la arcabucería de los soldados que en él venían.

Al momento, todos los que estaban en el hospedaje salieron a la marina; y, en viendo Periandro el bajel recién llegado, conoció ser el de Arnaldo, príncipe de Dinamarca, de que no recibió contento alguno, antes se le revolvieron las entrañas, y el corazón le comenzó a dar saltos en el pecho. Los mismos accidentes y sobresaltos recibió en el suyo Auristela, como aquella que por larga experiencia sabía la voluntad que Arnaldo le tenía, y no podía acomodar su corazón a pensar cómo podría ser que las voluntades de Arnaldo y Periandro se aviniesen bien, sin que la rigurosa y desesperada flecha de los celos no les atrevesase las almas.

Ya estaba Arnaldo en el esquife de la nave, y ya llegaba a la orilla, cuando se adelantó Periandro a recebille; pero Auristela no se movió del lugar donde primero puso el pie, y aun quisiera que allí se le hincaran en el suelo y se volvieran en torcidas raíces, como se volvieron los de la hija de Peneo, cuando el ligero corredor Apolo la seguía. Arnaldo, que vio a Periandro, le conoció; y, sin esperar que los suyos le sacasen en hombros a tierra, de un salto que dio desde la popa del esquife, se puso en ella y en los brazos de Periandro, que con ellos abiertos le recibió. Y Arnaldo le dijo:

-Si yo fuese tan venturoso, amigo Periandro, que contigo hallase a tu hermana Auristela, ni tendría mal que temer ni otro bien mayor que esperar.

-Conmigo está, valeroso señor -respondió Periandro-, que los cielos, atentos a favorecer tus virtuosos y honestos pensamientos, te la han guardado con la entereza que también ella por sus buenos deseos merece.

Ya en esto se había comunicado por la nueva gente, y por la que en la tierra estaba, quién era el príncipe que en la nave venía; y todavía estaba Auristela como estatua, sin voz, inamovible, y junto a ella la hermosa Transila, y las dos, al parecer, bárbaras, Ricla y Constanza.

Llegó Arnaldo, y, puesto de hinojos ante Auristela, le dijo:



-Seas bien hallada, norte por donde se guían mis honestos pensamientos, y estrella fija que me lleva al puerto donde han de tener reposo mis buenos deseos.

A todo esto no respondió palabra Auristela, antes le vinieron las lágrimas a los ojos, que comenzaron a bañar sus rosadas mejillas. Confuso Arnaldo de tal accidente, no supo determinarse si de pesar o de alegría podía proceder semejante acontecimiento. Mas Periandro, que todo lo notaba y en cualquier movimiento de Auristela tenía puestos los ojos, sacó a Arnaldo de duda, diciéndole:

-Señor, el silencio y las lágrimas de mi hermana nacen de admiración y de gusto: la admiración, del verte en parte tan no esperada; y las lágrimas, del gusto de haberte visto; ella es agradecida, como lo deben ser las bien nacidas, y conoce las obligaciones en que la has puesto de servirte con las mercedes y limpio tratamiento que siempre le has hecho.

Fuéronse con esto al hospedaje, volvieron a colmarse las mesas de manjares, llenáronse de regocijo los pechos, porque se llenaron las tazas de generosos vinos, que, cuando se trasiegan por la mar de un cabo a otro, se mejoran de manera que no hay néctar que se les iguale. Esta segunda comida se hizo por respeto del príncipe Arnaldo.

Contó Periandro al príncipe lo que le sucedió en la isla bárbara, con la libertad de Auristela, con todos los sucesos y puntos que hasta aquí se han contado, con que se suspendió Arnaldo, y de nuevo se alegraron y admiraron todos los presentes.

## Capítulo diez y seis del primer libro de Persiles y Sigismunda

EN ESTO, el patrón del hospedaje dijo:

-No sé si diga que me pesa de la bonanza que prometen en el mar las señales del cielo: el sol se pone claro y limpio, cerca ni lejos no se descubre celaje alguno, las olas hieren la tierra blanda y suavemente, y las aves salen al mar a espaciarse; que todos estos son indicios de serenidad firme y duradera, cosa que ha de obligar a que me dejen solo tan honrados huéspedes como la fortuna a mi hospedaje ha traído.

-Así será -dijo Mauricio-, que, puesto que vuestra noble compañía se ha de tener por agradable y cara, el deseo de volver a nuestras patrias no consiente que mucho tiempo la gocemos. De mí sé decir que esta noche a la primera guarda me pienso hacer a la vela, si con mi parecer viene el de mi piloto y el de estos señores soldados que en el navío vienen.

A lo que añadió Arnaldo:

-Siempre la pérdida del tiempo no se puede cobrar, y la que se pierde en la navegación es irremediable.

En efeto, entre todos los que en el puerto estaban, quedó de acuerdo que en aquella noche fuesen de partida la vuelta de Inglaterra, a quien todos iban encaminados.

Levantóse Arnaldo de la mesa, y, asiendo de la mano a Periandro, le sacó fuera del hospedaje, donde a solas y sin ser oído de nadie, le dijo:

-No es posible, Periandro amigo, sino que tu hermana Auristela te habrá dicho la voluntad que, en dos años que estuvo en poder del rey mi padre, le mostré: tan ajustada con sus honestos deseos, que jamás me salieron palabras a la boca que pudiesen turbar sus castos intentos. Nunca quise saber más de su hacienda de aquello que ella quiso decirme, pintándola en mi imaginación, no como persona ordinaria y de bajo estado, sino como a reina de todo el mundo, porque su honestidad, su gravedad, su discreción tan en extremo estremada no me daba lugar a que otra cosa pensase. Mil veces me le ofrecí por su esposo, y esto con voluntad de mi padre, y aun me parecía que era corto mi ofrecimiento. Respondióme siempre que hasta verse en la ciudad de Roma, adonde iba a cumplir un voto, no podía disponer de su persona. Jamás me quiso decir su calidad ni la de sus padres, ni yo, como ya he dicho, le importuné me la dijese, pues ella sola, por sí misma, sin que traiga dependencia de otra alguna nobleza,

merece, no solamente la corona de Dinamarca, sino de toda la monarquía de la tierra. Todo esto te he dicho, Periandro, para que, como varón de discurso y entendimiento, consideres que no es muy baja la ventura que está llamando a las puertas de tu comodidad y la de tu hermana, a quien desde aquí me ofrezco por su esposo, y prometo de cumplir este ofrecimiento cuando ella quisiere y adonde quisiere: aquí, debajo destos pobres techos, o en los dorados de la famosa Roma. Y asimismo te ofrezco de contenerme en los límites de la honestidad y buen decoro, si bien viese consumirme en los ahíncos y deseos que trae consigo la concupiscencia desenfrenada, y la esperanza propincua, que suele fatigar más que la apartada.

Aquí dio fin a su plática Arnaldo, y estuvo atentísimo a lo que Periandro había de responderle, que fue:

-Bien conozco, valeroso príncipe Arnaldo, la obligación en que yo y mi hermana te estamos por las mercedes que hasta aquí nos has hecho, y por la que agora de nuevo nos haces: a mí, por ofrecerte por mi hermano, y a ella, por esposo; pero, aunque parezca locura que dos miserables peregrinos desterrados de su patria no admitan luego luego el bien que se les ofrece, te sé decir no ser posible el recibirle, como es posible el agradecerle: mi hermana y yo vamos, llevados del destino y de la elección, a la santa ciudad de Roma, y, hasta vernos en ella, parece que no tenemos ser alguno, ni libertad para usar de nuestro albedrío. Si el cielo nos llevare a pisar la santísima tierra y adorar sus reliquias santas, quedaremos en disposición de disponer de nuestras hasta agora impedidas voluntades, y entonces será la mía toda empleada en servirte. Séte decir también, que si llegares al cumplimiento de tu buen deseo, llegarás a tener una esposa de ilustrísimo linaje nacida, y un hermano que lo sea mejor que cuñado; y, entre las muchas mercedes que entrambos a dos hemos recibido, te suplico me hagas a mí una, y es que no me preguntes más de nuestra hacienda y de nuestra vida, porque no me obligues a que sea mentiroso, inventando quimeras que decirte, mentirosas y falsas, por no poder contarte las verdaderas de nuestra historia.

-Dispón de mí -respondió Arnaldo-, hermano mío, a toda tu voluntad y gusto, haciendo cuenta que yo soy cera y tú el sello que has de imprimir en mí lo que quisieres; y si te parece, sea nuestra partida esta noche a Inglaterra, que de allí fácilmente pasaremos a Francia y a Roma, en cuyo viaje, y del modo que quisiéredes, pienso acompañaros si dello gustáredes.

Aunque le pesó a Periandro deste último ofrecimiento, le admitió, esperando en el tiempo y en la dilación, que tal vez mejora los sucesos; y, abrazándose los dos cuñados en esperanza, se volvieron al hospedaje a dar traza en su partida.

Había visto Auristela cómo Arnaldo y Periandro habían salido juntos, y estaba

temerosa del fin que podía tener el de su plática; y, puesto que conocía la modestia en el príncipe Arnaldo y la mucha discreción de Periandro, mil géneros de temores la sobresalteaban, pareciéndole que, como el amor de Arnaldo igualaba a su poder, podía remitir a la fuerza sus ruegos; que tal vez en los pechos de los desdeñados amantes se convierte la paciencia en rabia y la cortesía en descomedimiento. Pero, cuando los vio venir tan sosegados y pacíficos, cobró casi los perdidos espíritus.

Clodio, el maldiciente, que ya había sabido quién era Arnaldo, se le echó a los pies, y le suplicó le mandase quitar la cadena y apartar de la compañía de Rosamunda. Mauricio le contó luego la condición, la culpa y la pena de Clodio y la de Rosamunda. Movido a compasión dellos, hizo, por un capitán que los traía a su cargo, que los desherrasen y se los entregasen, que él tomaba a su cargo alcanzarles perdón de su rey, por ser su grande amigo.

Viendo lo cual, el maldiciente Clodio dijo:

-Si todos los señores se ocupasen en hacer buenas obras, no habría quien se ocupase en decir mal dellos; pero, ¿por qué ha de esperar el que obra mal que digan bien dél? Y si las obras virtuosas y bien hechas son calumniadas de la malicia humana, ¿por qué no lo serán las malas? ¿Por qué ha de esperar el que siembra cizaña y maldad, dé buen fruto su cosecha? Llévame contigo, ¡oh príncipe!, y verás cómo pongo sobre el cerco de la luna tus alabanzas.

-No, no -respondió Arnaldo-, no quiero que me alabes por las obras que en mí son naturales; y más, que la alabanza tanto es buena cuanto es bueno el que la dice, y tanto es mala cuanto es vicioso y malo el que alaba; que si la alabanza es premio de la virtud, si el que alaba es virtuoso, es alabanza; y si vicioso, vituperio.

## Capítulo diez y siete del primer libro

*Da cuenta Arnaldo del suceso de Taurisa*

CON GRAN deseo estaba Auristela de saber lo que Arnaldo y Periandro pasaron en la plática que tuvieron fuera del hospedaje, y aguardaba comodidad para preguntárselo a Periandro, y para saber de Arnaldo qué se había hecho su doncella Taurisa.

Y, como si Arnaldo le adivinara los pensamientos, le dijo:

-Las desgracias que has pasado, hermosa Auristela, te habrán llevado de la memoria las que tenías en obligación de acordarte dellas, entre las cuales querría que hubiesen borrado de ella a mí mismo, que, con sola la imaginación de pensar que algún tiempo he estado en ella, viviría contento, pues no puede haber olvido de aquello de quien no se ha tenido acuerdo. El olvido presente cae sobre la memoria del acuerdo pasado; pero, comoquiera que sea, acuérdesete de mí o no te acuerdes, de todo lo que hicieres estoy contento; que los cielos, que me han destinado para ser tuyo, no me dejan hacer otra cosa: mi albedrío lo es para obedecerte. Tu hermano Periandro me ha contado muchas de las cosas que después que te robaron de mi reino te han sucedido: unas me han admirado, otras supendido, y éstas y aquéllas espantado. Veo, asimismo, que tienen fuerza las desgracias para borrar de la memoria algunas obligaciones que parecen forzosas: ni me has preguntado por mi padre, ni por Taurisa, tu doncella; a él dejé yo bueno y con deseo de que te buscara y te hallara, a ella la traje conmigo, con intención de venderla a los bárbaros, para que sirviese de espía y viese si la fortuna te había llevado a su poder. De cómo vino al mío tu hermano Periandro, ya él te lo habrá contado, y el concierto que entre los dos hicimos; y, aunque muchas veces he probado volver a la isla Bárbara, los vientos contrarios no me han dejado, y ahora volvía con la misma intención y con el mismo deseo, el cual me ha cumplido el cielo con bienes de tantas ventajas, como son de tenerte en mi presencia, alivio universal de mis cuidados. Taurisa, tu doncella, habrá dos días que la entregué a dos caballeros amigos míos, que encontré en medio dese mar, que en un poderoso navío iban a Irlanda, a causa que Taurisa iba muy mala y con poca seguridad de la vida; y, como este navío en que yo ando más se puede llamar de cosario que de hijo de rey, viendo que en él no había regalos ni medicinas, que piden los enfermos, se la entregué para que la llevasen a Irlanda y la entregasen a su príncipe, que la regalase, curase y guardase, hasta que yo

mismo fuese por ella. Hoy he dejado apuntado con tu hermano Periandro que nos partamos mañana, o ya para Inglaterra, o ya para España o Francia, que, a doquiera que arribemos, tendremos segura comodidad para poner en efeto los honestos pensamientos que tu hermano me ha dicho que tienes; y yo en este entretanto llevaré sobre los hombros de mi paciencia mis esperanzas, sustentadas con el arrimo de tu buen entendimiento. Con todo esto, te ruego, señora, y te suplico que mires si con nuestro parecer viene y ajusta el tuyo, que, si algún tanto disuena, no le pondremos en ejecución.

-Yo no tengo otra voluntad -respondió Auristela-sino la de mi hermano Periandro, ni él, pues es discreto, querrá salir un punto de la tuya.

-Pues si así es -replicó Arnaldo-, no quiero mandar, sino obedecer, porque no digan que por la calidad de mi persona me quiero alzar con el mando a mayores.

Esto fue lo que pasó a Arnaldo con Auristela, la cual se lo contó todo a Periandro. Y aquella noche Arnaldo, Periandro, Mauricio, Ladislao y los dos capitanes del navío inglés, con todos los que salieron de la isla bárbara, entraron en consejo, y ordenaron su partida en la forma siguiente:

## Capítulo diez y ocho del primer libro

*Donde Mauricio sabe por la astrología un mal suceso que les avino en el mar*

EN LA NAVE donde vinieron Mauricio y Ladislao, los capitanes y soldados que trajeron a Rosamunda y a Clodio, se embarcaron todos aquellos que salieron de la mazmorra y prisión de la isla Bárbara, y en el navío de Arnaldo se acomodaron Mauricio, Transila, Ricla y Constanza, y los dos Antonios, padre y hijo; Ladislao, Mauricio y Transila, sin consentir Arnaldo que se quedasen en tierra Clodio y Rosamunda; Rutilio se acomodó con Arnaldo.

Hicieron agua aquella noche, recogiendo y comprando del huésped todos los bastimentos que pudieron; y, habiendo mirado los puntos más convenientes para su partida, dijo Mauricio que si la buena suerte les escapaba de una mala que les amenazaba muy propincua, tendría buen suceso su viaje; y que el tal peligro, puesto que era de agua, no había de suceder, si sucediese, por borrasca ni tormenta del mar ni de tierra, sino por una traición mezclada y aun forjada del todo de deshonestos y lascivos deseos. Periandro, que siempre andaba sobresaltado con la compañía de Arnaldo, vino a temer si aquella traición había de ser fabricada por el príncipe para alzarse con la hermosa Auristela, pues la había de llevar en su navío; pero opúsose a todo este mal pensamiento la generosidad de su ánimo, y no quiso creer lo que temía, por parecerle que, en los pechos de los valerosos príncipes, no deben hallar acogida alguna las traiciones; pero no por esto dejó de pedir y rogar a Mauricio mirase muy bien de qué parte les podía venir el daño que les amenazaba. Mauricio respondió que no lo sabía, puesto que le tenía por cierto, aunque templaba su rigor con que ninguno de los que en él se hallasen había de perder la vida, sino el sosiego y la quietud, y habían de ver rompidos la mitad de sus disinius, sus más bien encaminadas esperanzas. A lo que Periandro le replicó que detuviesen algunos días la partida: quizá con la tardanza del tiempo se mudarían o se templarían los influjos rigurosos de las estrellas.

-No -replicó Mauricio-, mejor es arrojarnos en las manos deste peligro, pues no llega a quitar la vida, que no intentar otro camino que nos lleve a perderla.

-Ea, pues -dijo Periandro-, echada está la suerte, partamos en buen hora, y haga el cielo lo que ordenado tiene, pues nuestra diligencia no lo puede escusar.

Satisfizo Arnaldo al huésped magníficamente con muchos dones el buen hospedaje, y unos en unos navíos, y otros en otros, cada cual según y como vio

que más le convenía, dejó el puerto desembarazado y se hizo a la vela. Salió el navío de Arnaldo adornado de ligeras flámulas y banderetas, y de pintados y vistosos gallardetes. Al zarpar los hierros y tirar las áncoras, disparó así la gruesa como la menuda artillería, rompieron los aires los sonos de las chirimías y los de otros instrumentos músicos y alegres, oyéronse las voces de los que decían, reiterándolo a menudo:

-¡Buen viaje! ¡Buen viaje!

A todo esto, no alzaba la cabeza de sobre el pecho la hermosa Auristela, que, casi como présaga del mal que le había de venir, iba pensativa. Mirábala Periandro y remirábala Arnaldo, teniéndola cada uno hecha blanco de sus ojos, fin de sus pensamientos y principio de sus alegrías. Acabóse el día; entróse la noche clara, serena, despejando un aire blando los celajes, que parece que se iban a juntar si los dejasen.

Puso los ojos en el cielo Mauricio, y de nuevo tornó a mirar en su imaginación las señales de la figura que había levantado, y de nuevo confirmó el peligro que les amenazaba, pero nunca supo atinar de qué parte les vendría. Con esta confusión y sobresalto se quedó dormido encima de la cubierta de la nave, y, de allí a poco, despertó despavorido, diciendo a grandes voces:

-¡Traición, traición, traición! ¡Despierta, príncipe Arnaldo, que los tuyos nos matan!

A cuyas voces se levantó Arnaldo, que no dormía, puesto que estaba echado junto a Periandro en la misma cubierta, y dijo:

-¿Qué has, amigo Mauricio? ¿Quién nos ofende, o quién nos mata? ¿Todos los que en este navío vamos, no somos amigos? ¿No son todos los más vasallos y criados míos? ¿El cielo no está claro y sereno, el mar tranquilo y blando, y el bajel, sin tocar en escollo ni en bajío, no navega? ¿Hay alguna rémora que nos detenga? Pues si no hay nada desto, ¿de qué temes, que así con tus sobresaltos nos atemorizas?

-No sé -replicó Mauricio-. Haz, señor, que bajen los búzanos a la sentina, que si no es sueño, a mí me parece que nos vamos anegando.

No hubo bien acabado esta razón, cuando cuatro o seis marineros se dejaron calar al fondo del navío y le requirieron todo, porque eran famosos buzanos, y no hallaron costura alguna por donde entrase agua al navío; y, vueltos a la cubierta, dijeron que el navío iba sano y entero, y que el agua de la sentina estaba turbia y hedionda, señal clara de que no entraba agua nueva en la nave.

-Así debe de ser -dijo Mauricio-, sino que yo, como viejo, en quien el temor tiene su asiento de ordinario, hasta los sueños me espantan; y plega a Dios que este mi sueño lo sea, que yo me holgaría de parecer viejo temeroso antes que verdadero judicario.



Arnaldo le dijo:

-Sosegaos, buen Mauricio, porque vuestros sueños le quitan a estas señoras.

-Yo lo haré así, si puedo -respondió Mauricio.

Y, tornándose a echar sobre la cubierta, quedó el navío lleno de muy sosegado silencio, en el cual Rutilio, que iba sentado al pie del árbol mayor, convidado de la serenidad de la noche, de la comodidad del tiempo, o de la voz, que la tenía estremada, al son del viento, que dulcemente hería en las velas, en su propia lengua toscana, comenzó a cantar esto, que, vuelto en lengua española, así decía:

Huye el rigor de la invencible mano,  
advertido, y enciérrese en el arca  
de todo el mundo el general monarca  
con las reliquias del linaje humano.

El dilatado asilo, el soberano 5  
lugar rompe los fueros de la Parca,

que entonces, fiera y licenciosa, abarca  
cuanto alienta y respira el aire vano.

Vense en la excelsa máquina encerrarse  
el león y el cordero, y, en segura 10  
paz, la paloma al fiero halcón unida;

sin ser milagro, lo discorde amarse,  
que en el común peligro y desventura  
la natural inclinación se olvida.

El que mejor entendió lo que cantó Rutilio fue el bárbaro Antonio, el cual le dijo asimismo:

-Bien canta Rutilio, y si por ventura es suyo el soneto que ha cantado, no es mal poeta, aunque ¿cómo lo puede ser bueno un oficial? Pero no digo bien, que yo me acuerdo haber visto en mi patria, España, poetas de todos los oficios.

Esto dijo en voz que la oyó Mauricio, el príncipe y Periandro, que no dormían. Y Mauricio dijo:

-Posible cosa es que un oficial sea poeta, porque la poesía no está en las manos, sino en el entendimiento, y tan capaz es el alma del sastre para ser poeta como la de un maese de campo; porque las almas todas son iguales y de una

misma masa en sus principios criadas y formadas por su Hacedor; y, según la caja y temperamento del cuerpo donde las encierra, así parecen ellas más o menos discretas, y atienden y se aficionan a saber las ciencias, artes o habilidades a que las estrellas más las inclinan; pero más principalmente y propia se dice que el poeta nascitur. Así que, no hay qué admirar de que Rutilio sea poeta, aunque haya sido maestro de danzar.

-Y tan grande -replicó Antonio-que ha hecho cabriolas en el aire más arriba de las nubes.

-Así es -respondió Rutilio, que todo esto estaba escuchando-, que yo las hice casi junto al cielo, cuando me trajo caballero en el manto aquella hechicera desde Toscana, mi patria, hasta Noruega, donde la maté, que se había convertido en figura de loba, como ya otras veces he contado.

-Eso de convertirse en lobas y lobos algunas gentes destas setentrionales es un error grandísimo -dijo Mauricio-, aunque admitido de muchos.

-Pues, ¿cómo es esto -dijo Arnaldo-que comúnmente se dice y se tiene por cierto que en Inglaterra andan por los campos manadas de lobos, que de gentes humanas se han convertido en ellos?

-Eso -respondió Mauricio-no puede ser en Inglaterra, porque en aquella isla templada y fertilísima no sólo no se crían lobos, pero ninguno otro animal nocivo: como si dijésemos serpientes, víboras, sapos, arañas y escorpiones; antes es cosa llana y manifiesta que si algún animal ponzoñoso traen de otras partes a Inglaterra, en llegando a ella muere; y si de la tierra desta isla llevan a otra parte a alguna tierra y cercan con ella a alguna víbora, no osa ni puede salir del cerco que la aprisiona y rodea, hasta quedar muerta. Lo que se ha de entender desto de convertirse en lobos es que hay una enfermedad a quien llaman los médicos manía lupina, que es de calidad que al que la padece le parece que se ha convertido en lobo, y aulla como lobo, y se juntan con otros heridos del mismo mal, y andan en manadas por los campos y por los montes, ladrando ya como perros, o ya aullando como lobos; despedazan los árboles, matan a quien encuentran y comen la carne cruda de los muertos, y hoy día sé yo que hay en la isla de Sicilia, que es la mayor del mar Mediterráneo, gentes deste género, a quien los sicilianos llaman *lobos menar*, los cuales, antes que les dé tan pestífera enfermedad, lo sienten, y dicen a los que están junto a ellos que se aparten y huyan dellos, o que los aten o encierren, porque si no se guardan, los hacen pedazos a bocados y los desmenuzan, si pueden, con las uñas, dando terribles y espantosos ladridos. Y es esto tanta verdad que, entre los que se han de casar, se hace información bastante de que ninguno dellos es tocado desta enfermedad; y si después, andando el tiempo, la experiencia muestra lo contrario, se dirime el matrimonio. También es opinión de Plinio, según lo escribe en el lib. 8, cap. 22,

que entre los árcades hay un género de gente, la cual, pasando un lago, cuelga los vestidos que lleva de una encina, y se entra desnudo la tierra dentro, y se junta con la gente que allí halla de su linaje en figura de lobos, y está con ellos nueve años, al cabo de los cuales vuelve a pasar el lago, y cobra su perdida figura; pero todo esto se ha de tener por mentira, y si algo hay, pasa en la imaginación y no realmente.

-No sé -dijo Rutilio-, lo que sé es que maté la loba y hallé muerta a mis pies la hechicera.

-Todo eso puede ser -replicó Mauricio-, porque la fuerza de los hechizos de los maléficos y encantadores, que los hay, nos hace ver una cosa por otra; y quede desde aquí asentado que no hay gente alguna que mude en otra su primer naturaleza.

-Gusto me ha dado grande -dijo Arnaldo-el saber esta verdad, porque también yo era uno de los crédulos deste error; y lo mismo debe de ser lo que las fábulas cuentan de la conversión en cuervo del rey Artus de Inglaterra, tan creída de aquella discreta nación, que se abstienen de matar cuervos en toda la isla.

-No sé -respondió Mauricio-de dónde tomó principio esa fábula tan creída como mal imaginada.

En esto fueron razonando casi toda la noche, y al despuntar del día dijo Clodio, que hasta allí había estado oyendo y callando:

-Yo soy un hombre a quien no se le da por averiguar estas cosas un dinero. ¿Qué se me da a mí que haya lobos hombres, o no, o que los reyes anden en figuras de cuervos o de águilas? Aunque, si se hubiesen de convertir en aves, antes querría que fuesen en palomas que en milanos.

-Paso, Clodio, no digas mal de los reyes, que me parece que te quieres dar algún filo a la lengua para cortarles el crédito.

-No -respondió Clodio-, que el castigo me ha puesto una mordaza en la boca, o por mejor decir, en la lengua, que no consiente que la mueva; y así, antes pienso de aquí adelante reventar callando que alegrarme hablando. Los dichos agudos, las murmuraciones dilatadas, si a unos alegran, a otros entristecen. Contra el callar no hay castigo ni respuesta. Vivir quiero en paz los días que me quedan de la vida a la sombra de tu generoso amparo, puesto que por momentos me fatigan ciertos ímpetus maliciosos que me hacen bailar la lengua en la boca, y malográrseme entre los dientes más de cuatro verdades que andan por salir a la plaza del mundo. ¡Sírvasse Dios con todo!

A lo que dijo Auristela:

-De estimar es, ¡oh Clodio!, el sacrificio que haces al cielo de tu silencio.

Rosamunda, que era una de las llegadas a la conversación, volviéndose a Auristela, dijo:

-El día que Clodio fuere callado, seré yo buena, porque en mí la torpeza, y en él la murmuración, son naturales, puesto que más esperanza puedo yo tener de enmendarme que no él, porque la hermosura se envejece con los años, y, faltando la belleza, menguan los torpes deseos, pero sobre la lengua del maldiciente no tiene jurisdicción el tiempo. Y así, los ancianos murmuradores hablan más cuanto más viejos, porque han visto más, y todos los gustos de los otros sentidos los han cifrado y recogido a la lengua.

-Todo es malo -dijo Transila-: cada cual por su camino va a parar a su perdición.

-El que nosotros ahora hacemos -dijo Ladislao-, próspero y felice ha de ser, según el viento se muestra favorable y el mar tranquilo.

-Así se mostraba esta pasada noche -dijo la bárbara Constanza-, pero el sueño del señor Mauricio nos puso en confusión, y alborotó tanto que ya yo pensé que nos había sorbido el mar a todos.

-En verdad, señora -respondió Mauricio-, que si yo no estuviera enseñado en la verdad católica, y me acordara de lo que dice Dios en el *Levítico*: «No seáis agoreros, ni deis crédito a los sueños», porque no a todos es dado el entenderlos, que me atreviera a juzgar del sueño que me puso en tan gran sobresalto, el cual, según a mi parecer, no me vino por algunas de las causas de donde suelen proceder los sueños, que, cuando no son revelaciones divinas o ilusiones del demonio, proceden, o de los muchos manjares que suben vapores al cerebro, con que turban el sentido común, o ya de aquello que el hombre trata más de día. Ni el sueño que a mí me turbó cae debajo de la observación de la astrología, porque sin guardar puntos ni observar astros, señalar rumbos ni mirar imágenes, me pareció ver visiblemente que en un gran palacio de madera, donde estábamos todos los que aquí vamos, llovían rayos del cielo que le abrían todo, y por las bocas que hacían descargaban las nubes, no sólo un mar, sino mil mares de agua; de tal manera que, creyendo que me iba anegando, comencé a dar voces y a hacer los mismos ademanes que suele hacer el que se anega; y aun no estoy tan libre deste temor que no me queden algunas reliquias en el alma; y, como sé que no hay más cierta astrología que la prudencia, de quien nacen los acertados discursos, ¿qué mucho que, yendo navegando en un navío de madera, tema rayos del cielo, nubes del aire y aguas de la mar? Pero lo que más me confunde y suspende es que, si algún daño nos amenaza, no ha de ser de ningún elemento que destinada y precisamente se disponga a ello, sino de una traición, forjada, como ya otra vez he dicho, en algunos lascivos pechos.

-No me puedo persuadir -dijo a esta sazón Arnaldo- que entre los que van por el mar navegando puedan entremeterse las blanduras de Venus ni los apetitos de su torpe hijo: al casto amor bien se le permite andar entre los peligros de la

muerte, guardándose para mejor vida.

Esto dijo Arnaldo, por dar a entender a Auristela y a Periandro, y a todos aquellos que sus deseos conocían, cuán ajustados iban sus movimientos con los de la razón.

Y prosiguió diciendo:

-El príncipe, justa razón es que viva seguro entre sus vasallos, que el temor de las traiciones nace de la injusta vida del príncipe.

-Así es -respondió Mauricio-, y aun es bien que así sea. Pero dejemos pasar este día, que si él da lugar a que llegue la noche sin sobresaltarnos, yo pediré y las daré albricias del buen suceso.

Iba el sol a esta sazón a ponerse en los brazos de Tetis, y el mar se estaba con el mismo sosiego que hasta allí había tenido; soplaba favorable el viento; por parte ninguna se descubrían celajes que turbasen los marineros; el cielo, la mar, el viento, todos juntos y cada uno de por sí, prometían felicísimo viaje, cuando el prudente Mauricio dijo en voz turbada y alta:

-¡Sin duda nos anegamos! ¡Anegámonos sin duda!

## Capítulo diez y nueve del primero libro

*Donde se da cuenta de lo que dos soldados hicieron, y la división de Periandro y Auristela*

A CUYAS voces respondió Arnaldo:

-¿Cómo es esto? ¡Oh gran Mauricio! ¿Qué aguas nos sorben o qué mares nos tragan? ¿Qué olas nos embisten?

La respuesta que le dieron a Arnaldo fue ver salir debajo de la cubierta a un marinero despavorido, echando agua por la boca y por los ojos, diciendo con palabras turbadas y mal compuestas:

-Todo este navío se ha abierto por muchas partes, el mar se ha entrado en él tan a rienda suelta que presto le veréis sobre esta cubierta. Cada uno atienda a su salud y a la conservación de la vida. Acógete, ¡oh príncipe Arnaldo!, al esquife o a la barca, y lleva contigo las prendas que más estimas, antes que tomen entera posesión dellas estas amargas aguas.

Estancó en esto el navío, sin poderse mover, por el peso de las aguas, de quien ya estaba lleno. Amainó el piloto todas las velas de golpe, y todos, sobresaltados y temerosos, acudieron a buscar su remedio: el príncipe y Periandro fueron al esquife, y, arrojándole al mar, pusieron en él a Auristela, Transila, Ricla y a la bárbara Constanza, entre las cuales, viendo que no se acordaban della, se arrojó Rosamunda, y tras ella mandó Arnaldo entrase Mauricio.

En este tiempo andaban dos soldados descolgando la barca que al costado del navío venía asida, y el uno dellos, viendo que el otro quería ser el primero que entrase dentro, sacando un puñal de la cinta, se le envainó en el pecho, diciendo a voces:

-Pues nuestra culpa ha sido fabricada tan sin provecho, esta pena te sirva a ti de castigo y a mí de escarmiento; a lo menos el poco tiempo que me queda de vida.

Y, diciendo esto, sin querer aprovecharse del acogimiento que la barca les ofrecía, desesperadamente se arrojó al mar, diciendo a voces y con mal articuladas palabras:

-Oye, ¡oh Arnaldo!, la verdad que te dice este traidor, que en tal punto es bien que la diga: yo y aquel a quien me viste pasar el pecho por muchas partes abrimos y taladramos este navío, con intención de gozar de Auristela y de Transila, reconociéndolas en el esquife; pero, habiendo visto yo haber salido mi

disinio contrario de mi pensamiento, a mi compañero quité la vida y a mí me doy la muerte.

Y con esta última palabra se dejó ir al fondo de las aguas, que le estorbaron la respiración del aire y le sepultaron en perpetuo silencio. Y, aunque todos andaban confusos y ocupados, buscando, como se ha dicho, en el común peligro algún remedio, no dejó de oír las razones Arnaldo del desesperado, y él y Periandro acudieron a la barca; y, habiendo, antes que entrasen en ella, ordenado que entrase en el esquife Antonio el mozo, sin acordarse de recoger algún bastimento, él, Ladislao, Antonio el padre, Periandro y Clodio se entraron en la barca, y fueron a abordar con el esquife, que algún tanto se había apartado del navío, sobre el cual ya pasaban las aguas, y no se parecía dél sino el árbol mayor, como en señal que allí estaba sepultado.

Llegóse en esto la noche, sin que la barca pudiese alcanzar al esquife, desde el cual daba voces Auristela, llamando a su hermano Periandro, que la respondía, reiterando muchas veces su para él dulcísimo nombre. Transila y Ladislao hacían lo mismo, y encontrábanse en los aires las voces de «dulcísimo esposo mío» y «amada esposa mía», donde se rompían sus disinios y se deshacían sus esperanzas, con la imposibilidad de no poder juntarse, a causa que la noche se cubría de escuridad y los vientos comenzaron a soplar de partes diferentes. En resolución, la barca se apartó del esquife, y, como más ligera y menos cargada, voló por donde el mar y el viento quisieron llevarla; el esquife, más con la pesadumbre que con la carga de los que en él iban, se quedó, como si aposta quisieran que no navegara. Pero, cuando la noche cerró con más escuridad que al principio, comenzaron a sentir de nuevo la desgracia sucedida: viéronse en mar no conocida, amenazados de todas las inclemencias del cielo, y faltos de la comodidad que les podía ofrecer la tierra; el esquife, sin remos y sin bastimentos, y la hambre sólo detenida de la pesadumbre que sintieron.

Mauricio, que había quedado por patrón y por marinero del esquife, ni tenía con qué ni sabía cómo guialle; antes, según los llantos, gemidos y suspiros de los que en él iban, podía temer que ellos mismos le anegarían; miraba las estrellas, y, aunque no parecían de todo en todo, algunas que por entre la escuridad se mostraban le daban indicio de venidera serenidad, pero no le mostraban en qué parte se hallaba.

No consintió el sentimiento que el sueño aliviase su angustia, porque se les pasó la noche velando, y se vino el día, no a más andar, como dicen, sino para más penar, porque con él descubrieron por todas partes el mar cerca y lejos, por ver si topaban los ojos con la barca que les llevaba las almas, o algún otro bajel que les prometiese ayuda y socorro en su necesidad; pero no descubrieron otra cosa que una isla a su mano izquierda, que juntamente los alegró y los

entristeció: nació la alegría de ver cerca la tierra, y la tristeza, de la imposibilidad de poder llegar a ella, si ya el viento no los llevase. Mauricio era el que más confiaba de la salud de todos, por haber hallado, como se ha dicho, en la figura que como judicario había levantado, que aquel suceso no amenazaba muerte, sino descomodidades casi mortales.

Finalmente, el favor de los cielos se mezcló con los vientos, que poco a poco llevaron el esquife a la isla, y les dio lugar de tomarle en la tierra en una espaciosa playa no acompañada de gente alguna, sino de mucha cantidad de nieve que toda la cubría. Miserables son y temerosas las fortunas del mar, pues los que las padecen se huelgan de trocarlas con las mayores que en la tierra se les ofrezcan. La nieve de la desierta playa les pareció blanda arena, y la soledad compañía. Unos en brazos de otros desembarcaron: el mozo Antonio fue el Atlante de Auristela y de Transila, en cuyos hombros también desembarcaron Rosamunda y Mauricio, y todos se recogieron al abrigo de un peñón que no lejos de la playa se mostraba, habiendo antes, como mejor pudieron, varado el esquife en tierra, poniendo en él, después de en Dios, su esperanza.

Antonio, considerando que la hambre había de hacer su oficio y que ella había de ser bastante a quitarles las vidas, aprestó su arco, que siempre de las espaldas le colgaba, y dijo que él quería ir a descubrir la tierra, por ver si hallaba gente en ella o alguna caza que socorriese su necesidad. Vinieron todos con su parecer; y así, se entró con ligero paso por la isla, pisando, no tierra, sino nieve tan dura, por estar helada, que le parecía pisar sobre pedernales. Siguióle, sin que él lo echase de ver, la torpe Rosamunda, sin ser impedida de los demás, que creyeron que alguna natural necesidad la forzaba a dejallos. Volvió la cabeza Antonio a tiempo y en lugar donde nadie los podía ver, y, viendo junto a sí a Rosamunda, le dijo:

-La cosa de que menos necesidad tengo, en esta que agora padecemos, es la de tu compañía. ¿Qué quieres, Rosamunda? Vuélvete, que ni tú tienes armas con que matar género de caza alguna, ni yo podré acomodar el paso a esperarte. ¿Qué me sigues?

-¡Oh inesperto mozo -respondió la mujer torpe-, y cuán lejos estás de conocer la intención con que te sigo y la deuda que me debes!

Y en esto se llegó junto a él, y prosiguió diciendo:

-Ves aquí, ¡oh nuevo cazador, más hermoso que Apolo!, otra nueva Dafne que no te huye, sino que te sigue. No mires que ya a mi belleza la marchita el rigor de la edad, ligera siempre, sino considera en mí a la que fue Rosamunda, domadora de las cervices de los reyes y de la libertad de los más esentos hombres. Yo te adoro, generoso joven, y aquí, entre estos yelos y nieves, el amoroso fuego me está haciendo ceniza el corazón. Gocémonos, y tenme por



tuya, que yo te llevaré a parte donde llenes las manos de tesoros, para ti, sin duda alguna, de mí recogidos y guardados si llegamos a Inglaterra, donde mil bandos de muerte tienen amenazada mi vida. Escondido te llevaré adonde te entregues en más oro que tuvo Midas y en más riquezas que acumuló Craso.

Aquí dio fin a su plática, pero no al movimiento de sus manos, que arremetieron a detener las de Antonio, que de sí las apartaba, y entre esta tan honesta como torpe contienda decía Antonio:

-¡Detente, oh arpía! ¡No turbes ni afees las limpias mesas de Fineo! ¡No fuerces, oh bárbara egipcia, ni incites la castidad y limpieza deste que no es tu esclavo! ¡Tarázate la lengua, sierpe maldita, no pronuncies con deshonestas palabras lo que tienes escondido en tus deshonestos deseos! ¡Mira el poco lugar que nos queda desde este punto al de la muerte, que nos está amenazando con la hambre y con la incertidumbre de la salida deste lugar, que, puesto que fuera cierta, con otra intención la acompañara que con la que me has descubierto! ¡Desvíate de mí y no me sigas, que castigaré tu atrevimiento y publicaré tu locura! Si te vuelves, mudaré propósito, y pondré en silencio tu desvergüenza; si no me dejas, te quitaré la vida.

Oyendo lo cual la lasciva Rosamunda, se le cubrió el corazón, de manera que no dio lugar a suspiros, a ruegos ni a lágrimas. Dejóla Antonio, sagaz y advertido. Volvióse Rosamunda, y él siguió su camino; pero no halló en él cosa que le asegurase, porque las nieves eran muchas y los caminos ásperos, y la gente ninguna. Y, advirtiéndole que si adelante pasaba, podía perder el camino de vuelta, se volvió a juntar con la compañía; alzaron todos las manos al cielo, y pusieron los ojos en la tierra, como admirados de su desventura. A Mauricio dijeron que volvieran al mar el esquife, pues no era posible remediarse en la imposibilidad y soledad de la isla.

## Capítulo veinte

### *De un notable caso que sucedió en la Isla Nevada*

A POCO tiempo que pasó el día, desde lejos vieron venir una nave gruesa que les levantó las esperanzas de tener remedio. Amainó las velas, y pareció que se dejaba detener las áncoras, y con diligencia presta arrojaron el esquife a la mar, y se vinieron a la playa, donde ya los tristes se arrojaban al esquife. Auristela dijo que sería bien que aguardasen los que venían, por saber quién eran.

Llegó el esquife de la nave y encalló en la fría nieve, y saltaron en ella dos, al parecer, gallardos y fuertes mancebos, de estremada disposición y brío, los cuales sacaron encima de sus hombros a una hermosísima doncella, tan sin fuerzas y tan desmayada, que parecía que no le daba lugar para llegar a tocar la tierra. Llamaron a voces los que estaban ya embarcados en el otro esquife, y les suplicaron que se desembarcasen a ser testigos de un suceso que era menester que los tuviese. Respondió Mauricio que no había remos para encaminar el esquife, si no les prestaban los del suyo. Los marineros con los suyos guiaron los del otro esquife, y volvieron a pisar la nieve; luego los valientes jóvenes asieron de dos tablachinas, con que cubrieron los pechos, y con dos cortadoras espadas en los brazos saltaron de nuevo en tierra. Auristela, llena de sobresalto y temor, casi con certidumbre de algún nuevo mal, acudió a ver la desmayada y hermosa doncella, y lo mismo hicieron todos los demás.

Los caballeros dijeron:

-Esperad, señores, y estad atentos a lo que queremos deciros.

-Este caballero y yo -dijo el uno-tenemos concertado de pelear por la posesión de esa enferma doncella que ahí veis; la muerte ha de dar la sentencia en favor del otro, sin que haya otro medio alguno que ataje en ninguna manera nuestra amorosa pendencia, si ya no es que ella, de su voluntad, ha de escoger cuál de nosotros dos ha de ser su esposo, con que hará envainar nuestras espadas y sosegar nuestros espíritus. Lo que pedimos es que no estorbéis en manera alguna nuestra porfía, la cual lleváramos hasta el cabo, sin tener temor que nadie nos la estorbara, si no os hubiéramos menester para que miráades. Si estas soledades pueden ofrecer algún remedio para dilatar siquiera la vida de esa doncella, que es tan poderosa para acabar las nuestras, la priesa que nos obliga a dar conclusión a nuestro negocio no nos da lugar para preguntaros por agora quién sois ni cómo estáis en este lugar tan solo, y tan sin remos, que no los tenéis, según parece,

para desviaros desta isla tan sola, que aun de animales no es habitada.

Mauricio les respondió que no saldrían un punto de lo que querían; y luego echaron los dos mano a las espadas, sin querer que la enferma doncella declarase primero su voluntad, remitiendo antes su pendencia a las armas que a los deseos de la dama. Arremetieron el uno contra el otro, y, sin mirar reglas, movimientos, entradas, salidas y compases, a los primeros golpes el uno quedó pasado el corazón de parte a parte, y el otro abierta la cabeza por medio; éste le concedió el cielo tanto espacio de vida que le tuvo de llegar a la doncella y juntar su rostro con el suyo, diciéndole:

-¡Vencí, señora; mía eres! Y, aunque ha de durar poco el bien de poseerte, el pensar que un solo instante te podré tener por mía, me tengo por el más venturoso hombre del mundo. Recibe, señora, esta alma, que envuelta en estos últimos alientos te envío; dales lugar en tu pecho, sin que pidas licencia a tu honestidad, pues el nombre de esposo a todo esto da licencia.

La sangre de la herida bañó el rostro de la dama, la cual estaba tan sin sentido que no respondió palabra. Los dos marineros que habían guiado el esquife de la nave saltaron en tierra, y fueron con presteza a requerir, así al muerto de la estocada como al herido en la cabeza, el cual, puesta su boca con la de su tan caramente comprada esposa, envió su alma a los aires y dejó caer el cuerpo sobre la tierra.

Auristela, que todas estas acciones había estado mirando, antes de descubrir y mirar atentamente el rostro de la enferma señora, llegó de propósito a mirarla, y, limpiándole la sangre que había llovido del muerto enamorado, conoció ser su doncella Taurisa, la que lo había sido al tiempo que ella estuvo en poder del príncipe Arnaldo, que le había dicho la dejaba en poder de dos caballeros que la llevasen a Irlanda, como queda dicho. Auristela quedó suspensa, quedó atónita, quedó más triste que la tristeza misma, y más cuando vino a conocer que la hermosa Taurisa estaba sin vida.

-¡Ay -dijo a esta sazón-, con qué prodigiosas señales me va mostrando el cielo mi desventura, que si se rematara con acabarse mi vida, pudiera llamarla dichosa; que los males que tienen fin en la muerte, como no se dilaten y entretengan, hacen dichosa la vida! ¿Qué red barredera es ésta con que cogen los cielos todos los caminos de mi descanso? ¿Qué imposibles son estos que descubro a cada paso de mi remedio? Mas, pues aquí son escusados los llantos y son de ningún provecho los gemidos, demos el tiempo que he de gastar en ellos por ahora a la piedad, y enterremos los muertos, y no congoje yo por mi parte los vivos.

Y luego pidió a Mauricio pidiese a los marineros del esquife volviesen al navío por instrumentos para hacer las sepulturas. Hízolo así Mauricio, y fue a la

nave con intención de concertarse con el piloto o capitán que hubiese para que los sacase de aquella isla y los llevase adondequiera que fuesen. En este entretanto, tuvieron lugar Auristela y Transila de acomodar a Taurisa para enterralla, y la piedad y honestidad cristiana no consintió que la desnudasen.

Volvió Mauricio con los instrumentos, habiendo negociado todo aquello que quiso. Hízose la sepultura de Taurisa; pero los marineros no quisieron, como católicos, que se hiciese ninguna a los muertos en el desafío. Rosamunda, que, después que volvió de haber declarado su mal pensamiento al bárbaro Antonio, nunca había alzado los ojos del suelo, que sus pecados se los tenían aterrados, al tiempo que iban a sepultar a Taurisa, levantando el rostro, dijo:

-Si os preciáis, señores, de caritativos, y si anda en vuestros pechos al par la justicia y la misericordia, usad destas dos virtudes conmigo. Yo desde el punto que tuve uso de razón, no la tuve, porque siempre fui mala: con los años verdes y con la hermosura mucha, con la libertad demasiada y con la riqueza abundante, se fueron apoderando de mí los vicios de tal manera que han sido y son en mí como accidentes inseparables. Ya sabéis, como yo alguna vez he dicho, que he tenido el pie sobre las cervices de los reyes, y he traído a la mano que he querido las voluntades de los hombres; pero el tiempo, salteador y robador de la humana belleza de las mujeres, se entró por la mía tan sin yo pensarlo que primero me he visto fea que desengañada. Mas, como los vicios tienen asiento en el alma, que no envejece, no quieren dejarme; y, como yo no les hago resistencia, sino que me dejo ir con la corriente de mis gustos, heme ido ahora con el que me da el ver siquiera a este bárbaro muchacho, el cual, aunque le he descubierto mi voluntad, no corresponde a la mía, que es de fuego, con la suya, que es de helada nieve. Véome despreciada y aborrecida, en lugar de estimada y bien querida: golpes que no se pueden resistir con poca paciencia y con mucho deseo. Ya ya la muerte me va pisando las faldas, y estiende la mano para alcanzarme de la vida; por lo que veis que debe la bondad del pecho que la tiene al miserable que se le encomienda, os suplico que cubráis mi fuego con yelo y me enterréis en esa sepultura; que, puesto que mezcléis mis lascivos huesos con los de esa casta doncella, no los contaminarán; que las reliquias buenas siempre lo son dondequiera que estén.

Y, volviéndose al mozo Antonio, prosiguió:

-Y tú, arrogante mozo, que agora tocas o estás para tocar los márgenes y rayas del deleite, pide al cielo que te encamine de modo que ni te solicite edad larga, ni marchita belleza; y si yo he ofendido tus recientes oídos, que así los puedo llamar, con mis inadvertidas y no castas palabras, perdóname, que los que piden perdón en este trance, por cortesía siquiera merecen ser, si no perdonados, a lo menos escuchados.

Esto diciendo, dio un suspiro envuelto en un mortal desmayo.

## Capítulo veinte y uno del primer libro de Los Trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda

-YO NO SÉ -dijo Mauricio a esta sazón-qué quiere este que llaman amor por estas montañas, por estas soledades y riscos, por entre estas nieves y yelos, dejándose allá los Pafos, Gnidos, las Cipres, los Elíseos Campos, de quien huye la hambre y no llega incomodidad alguna. En el corazón sosegado, en el ánimo quieto tiene el amor deleitable su morada, que no en las lágrimas ni en los sobresaltos.

Auristela, Transila, Constanza y Ricla quedaron atónitas del suceso, y con callar le admiraron, y, finalmente, con no pocas lágrimas enterraron a Taurisa; y, después de haber vuelto Rosamunda del pesado desmayo, se recogieron y embarcaron en el esquife de la nave, donde fueron bien recibidos y regalados de los que en ella estaban, satisfaciendo luego todos la hambre que les aquejaba; sólo Rosamunda, que estaba tal, que por momentos llamaba a las puertas de la muerte. Alzaron velas, lloraron algunos los capitanes muertos, y instituyeron luego uno que lo fuese de todos, y siguieron su viaje, sin llevar parte conocida donde le encaminasen, porque era de cosarios, y no irlandeses, como a Arnaldo le habían dicho, sino de una isla rebelada contra Inglaterra.

Mauricio, malcontento de aquella compañía, siempre iba temiendo algún revés de su acelerada costumbre y mal modo de vivir; y, como viejo y experimentado en las cosas del mundo, no le cabía el corazón en el pecho, temiendo que la mucha hermosura de Auristela, la gallardía y buen parecer de su hija Transila, los pocos años y nuevo traje de Constanza no despertasen en aquellos cosarios algún mal pensamiento. Servíales de Argos el mozo Antonio, de lo que sirvió el pastor de Anfriso. Eran los ojos de los dos centinelas no dormidas, pues por sus cuartos la hacían a las mansas y hermosas ovejuelas que debajo de su solicitud y vigilancia se amparaban.

Rosamunda, con los continuos desdenes, vino a enflaquecer de manera que una noche la hallaron en una cámara del navío sepultada en perpetuo silencio. Harto habían llorado, mas no dejaron de sentir su muerte, compasiva y cristianamente. Sirvióla el ancho mar de sepultura, donde no tuvo harta agua para apagar el fuego que causó en su pecho el gallardo Antonio, el cual y todos rogaron muchas veces a los cosarios que los llevasen de una vez a Irlanda, o a Ibernía, si ya no quisiesen a Inglaterra o Escocia. Pero ellos respondían que, hasta haber hecho una buena y rica presa, no habían de tocar en tierra alguna, si

ya no fuese a hacer agua o a tomar bastimentos necesarios. La bárbara Ricla bien comprara a pedazos de oro que los llevaran a Inglaterra, pero no osaba descubrirlos, porque no se los robasen antes que se los pidiesen. Dioles el capitán estancia aparte, y acomodóles de manera que les aseguró de la insolencia que podían temer de los soldados.

Desta manera anduvieron casi tres meses por el mar de unas partes a otras; ya tocaban en una isla, ya en otra, y ya se salían al mar descubierto, propia costumbre de cosarios, que buscan su ganancia. Las veces que había calma y el mar sosegado no les dejaba navegar, el nuevo capitán del navío se iba a entretener a la estancia de sus pasajeros, y con pláticas discretas y cuentos graciosos, pero siempre honestos, los entretenía, y Mauricio hacía lo mismo. Auristela, Transila, Ricla y Constanza más se ocupaban en pensar en la ausencia de las mitades de su alma que en escuchar al capitán ni a Mauricio. Con todo esto, estuvieron un día atentas a la historia que en este siguiente capítulo se cuenta que el capitán les dijo.

## Capítulo veinte y dos

*Donde el capitán da cuenta de las grandes fiestas que acostumbraba a hacer en su reino el rey Policarpo*

-«UNA DE LAS ISLAS que están junto a la de Ibernía me dio el cielo por patria; es tan grande que toma nombre de reino, el cual no se hereda ni viene por sucesión de padre a hijo: sus moradores le eligen a su beneplácito, procurando siempre que sea el más virtuoso y mejor hombre que en él se hallara; y sin intervenir de por medio ruegos o negociaciones, y sin que los soliciten promesas ni dádivas, de común consentimiento de todos sale el rey y toma el cetro absoluto del mando, el cual le dura mientras le dura la vida o mientras no se empeora en ella. Y, con esto, los que no son reyes procuran ser virtuosos para serlo, y los que lo son, pugnan serlo más, para no dejar de ser reyes. Con esto se cortan las alas a la ambición, se atierra la codicia, y, aunque la hipocresía suele andar lista, a largo andar se le cae la máscara y queda sin el alcanzado premio; con esto los pueblos viven quietos, campea la justicia y resplandece la misericordia, despáchanse con brevedad los memoriales de los pobres, y los que dan los ricos, no por serlo son mejor despachados; no agobian la vara de la justicia las dádivas, ni la carne y sangre de los parentescos; todas las negociaciones guardan sus puntos y andan en sus quicios; finalmente, reino es donde se vive sin temor de los insolentes y donde cada uno goza lo que es suyo.

»Esta costumbre, a mi parecer justa y santa, puso el cetro del reino en las manos de Policarpo, varón insigne y famoso, así en las armas como en las letras, el cual tenía, cuando vino a ser rey, dos hijas de estremada belleza, la mayor llamada Policarpa y la menor Sinforosa; no tenían madre, que no les hizo falta, cuando murió, sino en la compañía: que sus virtudes y agradables costumbres eran ayas de sí mismas, dando maravilloso ejemplo a todo el reino. Con estas buenas partes, así ellas como el padre, se hacían amables, se estimaban de todos. Los reyes, por parecerles que la malencolía en los vasallos suele despertar malos pensamientos, procuran tener alegre el pueblo y entretenido con fiestas públicas, y a veces con ordinarias comedias; principalmente solenizaban el día que fueron asumptos al reino, con hacer que se renovasen los juegos que los gentiles llamaban olímpicos, en el mejor modo que podían. Señalaban premio a los corredores, honraban a los diestros, coronaban a los tiradores y subían al cielo de la alabanza a los que derribaban a otros en la tierra.



»Hacíase este espectáculo junto a la marina, en una espaciosa playa, a quien quitaban el sol infinita cantidad de ramos entretejidos, que la dejaban a la sombra; ponían en la mitad un suntuoso teatro, en el cual sentado el rey y la real familia, miraban los apacibles juegos. Llegóse un día destos, y Policarpo procuró aventajarse en magnificencia y grandeza en solenizarle sobre todos cuantos hasta allí se habían hecho. Y, cuando ya el teatro estaba ocupado con su persona y con los mejores del reino, y cuando ya los instrumentos bélicos y los apacibles querían dar señal que las fiestas se comenzasen, y cuando ya cuatro corredores, mancebos ágiles y sueltos, tenían los pies izquierdos delante y los derechos alzados, que no les impedía otra cosa el soltarse a la carrera, sino soltar una cuerda que les servía de raya y de señal, que, en soltándola, habían de volar a un término señalado, donde habían de dar fin a su carrera; digo que en este tiempo vieron venir por la mar un barco que le blanqueaban los costados el ser recién despalmado, y le facilitaban el romper del agua seis remos que de cada banda traía, impelidos de doce, al parecer, gallardos mancebos de dilatadas espaldas y pechos y de nervudos brazos. Venían vestidos de blanco todos, si no el que guiaba el timón, que venía de encarnado como marinero. Llegó con furia el barco a la orilla, y el encallar en ella y el saltar todos los que en él venían en tierra fue una misma cosa. Mandó Policarpo que no saliesen a la carrera, hasta saber qué gente era aquélla y a lo que venía, puesto que imaginó que debían de venir a hallarse en las fiestas y a probar su gallardía en los juegos. El primero que se adelantó a hablar al rey fue el que servía de timonero, mancebo de poca edad, cuyas mejillas desembarazadas y limpias mostraban ser de nieve y de grana; los cabellos, anillos de oro; y cada una parte de las del rostro tan perfecta, y todas juntas tan hermosas, que formaban un compuesto admirable; luego la hermosa presencia del mozo arrebató la vista, y aun los corazones, de cuantos le miraron, y yo desde luego le quedé aficionadísimo.

»Lo que dijo al rey: "Señor, estos mis compañeros y yo, habiendo tenido noticia destos juegos, venimos a servirte y hallarnos en ellos, y no de lejas tierras, sino desde una nave que dejamos en la isla Scinta, que no está lejos de aquí; y, como el viento no hizo a nuestro propósito para encaminar aquí la nave, nos aprovechamos de esta barca y de los remos, y de la fuerza de nuestros brazos. Todos somos nobles y deseosos de ganar honra, y, por la que debes hacer, como rey que eres, a los extranjeros que a tu presencia llegan, te suplicamos nos concedas licencia para mostrar, o nuestras fuerzas, o nuestros ingenios, en honra y provecho nuestro y gusto tuyo". "Por cierto -respondió Policarpo-, agraciado joven, que vos pedís lo que queréis con tanta gracia y cortesía que sería cosa injusta el negároslo. Honrad mis fiestas en lo que quisiéredes, dejadme a mí el cargo de premiároslo; que, según vuestra gallarda

presencia muestra, poca esperanza dejáis a ninguno de alcanzar los primeros premios".

»Dobló la rodilla el hermoso mancebo y inclinó la cabeza en señal de crianza y agradecimiento, y en dos brincos se puso ante la cuerda que detenía a los cuatro ligeros corredores; sus doce compañeros se pusieron a un lado a ser espectadores de la carrera. Sonó una trompeta, soltaron la cuerda y arrojáronse al vuelo los cinco; pero aún no habrían dado veinte pasos, cuando con más de seis se les aventajó el recién venido, y a los treinta ya los llevaba de ventaja más de quince; finalmente, se los dejó a poco más de la mitad del camino, como si fueran estatuas inmovibles, con admiración de todos los circunstantes, especialmente de Sinforosa, que le seguía con la vista, así corriendo como estando quedo, porque la belleza y agilidad del mozo era bastante para llevar tras sí las voluntades, no sólo los ojos de cuantos le miraban. Noté yo esto, porque tenía los míos atentos a mirar a Policarpa, objeto dulce de mis deseos, y, de camino, miraba los movimientos de Sinforosa. Comenzó luego la envidia a apoderarse de los pechos de los que se habían de probar en los juegos, viendo con cuánta facilidad se había llevado el extranjero el precio de la carrera.

»Fue el segundo certamen el de la esgrima: tomó el ganancioso la espada negra, con la cual, a seis que le salieron, cada uno de por sí, les cerró las bocas, mosqueó las narices, les selló los ojos y les santiguó las cabezas, sin que a él le tocasen, como decirse suele, un pelo de la ropa. Alzó la voz el pueblo, y de común consentimiento le dieron el premio primero. Luego se acomodaron otros seis a la lucha, donde con mayor gallardía dio de sí muestra el mozo; descubrió sus dilatadas espaldas, sus anchos y fortísimos pechos, y los nervios y músculos de sus fuertes brazos, con los cuales, y con destreza y maña increíble, hizo que las espaldas de los seis luchadores, a despecho y pesar suyo, quedasen impresas en la tierra.

»Asió luego de una pesada barra que estaba hincada en el suelo, porque le dijeron que era el tirarla el cuarto certamen; sompesóla, y, haciendo de señas a la gente que estaba delante para que le diesen lugar donde el tiro cupiese, tomando la barra por la una punta, sin volver el brazo atrás, la impelió con tanta fuerza que, pasando los límites de la marina, fue menester que el mar se los diese, en el cual bien adentro quedó sepultada la barra. Esta monstruosidad, notada de sus contrarios, les desmayó los bríos, y no osaron probarse en la contienda.

»Pusiéronle luego la ballesta en las manos y algunas flechas, y mostráronle un árbol muy alto y muy liso, al cabo del cual estaba hincada una media lanza, y en ella, de un hilo, estaba asida una paloma, a la cual habían de tirar no más de un tiro los que en aquel certamen quisiesen probarse. Uno que presumía de certero se adelantó y tomó la mano -creo yo-, pensando derribar la paloma antes que

otro; tiró, y clavó su flecha casi en el fin de la lanza, del cual golpe azorada la paloma se levantó en el aire; y luego otro, no menos presumido que el primero, tiró con tan gentil certería que rompió el hilo donde estaba asida la paloma, que, suelta y libre del lazo que la detenía, entregó su libertad al viento y batió las alas con priesa. Pero el ya acostumbrado a ganar los primeros premios disparó su flecha, y, como si mandara lo que había de hacer y ella tuviera entendimiento para obedecerle, así lo hizo, pues, dividiendo el aire con un rasgado y tendido silbo, llegó a la paloma y le pasó el corazón de parte a parte, quitándole a un mismo punto el vuelo y la vida. Renováronse con esto las voces de los presentes y las alabanzas del extranjero, el cual en la carrera, en la esgrima, en la lucha, en la barra y en el tirar de la ballesta, y entre otras muchas pruebas que no cuento, con grandísimas ventajas se llevó los primeros premios, quitando el trabajo a sus compañeros de probarse en ellas.

»Cuando se acabaron los juegos, sería el crepúsculo de la noche; y, cuando el rey Policarpo quería levantarse de su asiento con los jueces que con él estaban para premiar al vencedor mancebo, vio que, puesto de rodillas ante él, le dijo: "Nuestra nave quedó sola y desamparada, la noche cierra algo oscura, los premios que puedo esperar, que por ser de tu mano se deben estimar en lo posible, quiero, ¡oh gran señor!, que los dilates hasta otro tiempo, que con más espacio y comodidad pienso volver a servirte". Abrazóle el rey, preguntóle su nombre, y dijo que se llamaba Periandro. Quitóse en esto la bella Sinforosa una guirnalda de flores con que adornaba su hermosísima cabeza, y la puso sobre la del gallardo mancebo, y con honesta gracia le dijo al ponérsela: "Cuando mi padre sea tan venturoso de que volváis a verle, veréis cómo no vendréis a servirle, sino a ser servido".»

## Capítulo veinte y tres

*De lo que sucedió a la celosa Auristela cuando supo que su hermano Periandro era el que había ganado los premios del certamen*

¡OH PODEROSA fuerza de los celos! ¡Oh enfermedad, que te pegas al alma de tal manera que sólo te despegas con la vida! ¡Oh hermosísima Auristela! ¡Detente: no te precipites a dar lugar en tu imaginación a esta rabiosa dolencia! Pero, ¿quién podrá tener a raya los pensamientos, que suelen ser tan ligeros y sutiles que, como no tienen cuerpo, pasan las murallas, traspasan los pechos y veen lo más escondido de las almas?

Esto se ha dicho porque, en oyendo pronunciar Auristela el nombre de Periandro, su hermano, y habiendo oído antes las alabanzas de Sinforosa y el favor que en ponerle la guirnalda le había hecho, rindió el sufrimiento a las sospechas y entregó la paciencia a los gemidos, y, dando un gran suspiro y abrazándose con Transila, dijo:

-Querida amiga mía, ruega al cielo que, sin haberse perdido tu esposo Ladislao, se pierda mi hermano Periandro. ¿No le ves en la boca deste valeroso capitán, honrado como vencedor, coronado como valeroso, atento más a los favores de una doncella que a los cuidados que le debían dar los destierros y pasos desta su hermana? ¿Ándase buscando palmas y trofeos por las tierras ajenas, y déjase entre los riscos y entre las peñas y entre las montañas que suele levantar la mar alterada, a esta su hermana, que por su consejo y por su gusto no hay peligro de muerte donde no se halle?

Estas razones escuchaba atentísimamente el capitán del navío, y no sabía qué conclusión sacar de ellas. Sólo paró en decir, pero no dijo nada, porque en un instante y en un momentáneo punto le arrebató la palabra de la boca un viento, que se levantó tan súbito y tan recio que le hizo poner en pie, sin responder a Auristela, y dando voces a los marineros que amainasen las velas y las templasen y asegurasen. Acudió toda la gente a la faena; comenzó la nave a volar en popa, con mar tendido y largo por donde el viento quiso llevarla.

Recogióse Mauricio con los de su compañía a su estancia, por dejar hacer libremente su oficio a los marineros. Allí preguntó Transila a Auristela qué sobresalto era aquel que tal la había puesto, que a ella le había parecido haberle causado el haber oído nombrar el nombre de Periandro, y no sabía por qué las alabanzas y buenos sucesos de un hermano pudiesen dar pesadumbre.

-¡Ay amiga! -respondió Auristela-, de tal manera estoy obligada a tener en perpetuo silencio una peregrinación que hago, que hasta darle fin, aunque primero llegue el de la vida, soy forzada a guardarle. En sabiendo quién soy, que sí sabrás si el cielo quiere, verás las disculpas de mis sobresaltos; sabiendo la causa de do nacen, verás castos pensamientos acometidos, pero no turbados; verás desdichas sin ser buscadas, y laberintos que, por venturas no imaginadas, han tenido salida de sus enredos. ¿Ves cuán grande es el nudo del parentesco de un hermano?, pues sobre éste tengo yo otro mayor con Periandro. ¿Ves ansimismo cuán propio es de los enamorados ser celosos?, pues con más propiedad tengo yo celos de mi hermano. Este capitán, amiga, ¿no exageró la hermosura de Sinforosa?; y ella, al coronar las sienes de Periandro, ¿no le miró? Sí, sin duda. ¿Y mi hermano, no es del valor y de la belleza que tú has visto?, ¿pues qué mucho que haya despertado en el pensamiento de Sinforosa alguno que le haga olvidar de su hermana?

-Advierte, señora -respondió Transila-, que todo cuanto el capitán ha contado sucedió antes de la prisión de la ínsula Bárbara, y que después acá os habéis visto y comunicado, donde habrás hallado que ni él tiene amor a nadie, ni cuida de otra cosa que de darte gusto; y no creo yo que las fuerzas de los celos lleguen a tanto que alcancen a tenerlos una hermana de un su hermano.

-Mira, hija Transila -dijo Mauricio-, que las condiciones de amor son tan diferentes como injustas, y sus leyes tan muchas como variables; procura ser tan discreta que no apures los pensamientos ajenos, ni quieras saber más de nadie de aquello que quisiere decirte: la curiosidad en los negocios propios se puede sutilizar y atildar, pero en los ajenos, que no nos importan, ni por pensamiento.

Esto que oyó Auristela a Mauricio la hizo tener cuenta con su discreción y con su lengua, porque la de Transila, poco necia, llevaba camino de hacerle sacar a plaza toda su historia.

Amansó en tanto el viento, sin haber dado lugar a que los marineros temiesen ni los pasajeros se alborotasen. Volvió el capitán a verlos y a proseguir su historia, por haber quedado cuidadoso del sobresalto que Auristela tomó oyendo el nombre de Periandro.

Deseaba Auristela volver a la plática pasada, y saber del capitán si los favores que Sinforosa había hecho a Periandro se estendieron a más que coronarle; y así, se lo preguntó modestamente y con recato de no dar a entender su pensamiento. Respondió el capitán que Sinforosa no tuvo lugar de hacer más merced, que así se han de llamar los favores de las damas, a Periandro, aunque, a pesar de la bondad de Sinforosa, a él le fatigaban ciertas imaginaciones que tenía de que no estaba muy libre de tener en la suya a Periandro, porque siempre que, después de partido, se hablaba de las gracias de Periandro, ella las subía y las levantaba

sobre los cielos, y, por haberle ella mandado que saliese en un navío a buscar a Periandro y le hiciese volver a ver a su padre, confirmaba más sus sospechas.

-¿Cómo? ¿Y es posible -dijo Auristela-que las grandes señoras, las hijas de los reyes, las levantadas sobre el trono de la fortuna, se han de humillar a dar indicios de que tienen los pensamientos en humildes sujetos colocados? Y, siendo verdad, como lo es, que la grandeza y majestad no se aviene bien con el amor, antes son repugnantes entre sí el amor y la grandeza, hase de seguir que Sinforosa, reina, hermosa y libre, no se había de cautivar de la primera vista de un no conocido mozo, cuyo estado no prometía ser grande el venir guiando un timón de una barca con doce compañeros desnudos, como lo son todos los que gobiernan los remos.

-Calla, hija Auristela -dijo Mauricio-, que en ningunas otras acciones de la naturaleza se veen mayores milagros ni más continuos que en las del amor, que por ser tantos y tales los milagros, se pasan en silencio y no se echa de ver en ellos, por extraordinarios que sean: el amor junta los cetros con los cayados, la grandeza con la bajeza, hace posible lo imposible, iguala diferentes estados y viene a ser poderoso como la muerte. Ya sabes tú, señora, y sé yo muy bien, la gentileza, la gallardía y el valor de tu hermano Periandro, cuyas partes forman un compuesto de singular hermosura; y es privilegio de la hermosura rendir las voluntades y atraer los corazones de cuantos la conocen, y cuanto la hermosura es mayor y más conocida, es más amada y estimada. Así que, no sería milagro que Sinforosa, por principal que sea, ame a tu hermano, porque no le amaría como a Periandro a secas, sino como a hermoso, como a valiente, como a diestro, como a ligero, como a sujeto donde todas las virtudes están recogidas y cifradas.

-¿Que Periandro es hermano desta señora? -dijo el capitán.

-Sí -respondió Transila-, por cuya ausencia ella vive en perpetua tristeza, y todos nosotros, que la queremos bien, y a él le conocimos en llanto y amargura.

Luego le contaron todo lo sucedido del naufragio de la nave de Arnaldo, la división del esquife y de la barca, con todo aquello que fue bastante para darle a entender lo sucedido hasta el punto en que estaban.

En el cual punto deja el autor el primer libro desta grande historia, y pasa al segundo, donde se contarán cosas que, aunque no pasan de la verdad, sobrepujan a la imaginación, pues apenas pueden caber en la más sutil y dilatada sus acontecimientos.

Fin del primer libro de *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*

*Libro segundo de Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*

## Capítulo primero

*Donde se cuenta cómo el navío se volcó con todos los que dentro dél iban*

PARECE que el autor desta historia sabía más de enamorado que de historiador, porque casi este primer capítulo de la entrada del segundo libro le gasta todo en una definición de celos, ocasionados de los que mostró tener Auristela por lo que le contó el capitán del navío; pero en esta traducción, que lo es, se quita por prolija y por cosa en muchas partes referida y ventilada, y se viene a la verdad del caso, que fue que, cambiándose el viento y enmarañándose las nubes, cerró la noche oscura y tenebrosa, y los truenos, dando por mensajeros a los relámpagos, tras quien se siguen, comenzaron a turbar los marineros y a deslumbrar la vista de todos los de la nave, y comenzó la borrasca con tanta furia que no pudo ser prevenida de la diligencia y arte de los marineros; y así, a un mismo tiempo les cogió la turbación y la tormenta. Pero no por esto dejó cada uno de acudir a su oficio, y a hacer la faena que vieron ser necesaria, si no para escusar la muerte, para dilatar la vida; que los atrevidos que de unas tablas la fían, la sustentan cuanto pueden, hasta poner su esperanza en un madero que acaso la tormenta desclavó de la nave, con el cual se abrazan, y tienen a gran ventura tan duros abrazos.

Mauricio se abrazó con Transila, su hija, Antonio con Ricla y con Constanza, su madre y hermana; sola la desgraciada Auristela quedó sin arrimo, sino el que le ofrecía su congoja, que era el de la muerte, a quien ella de buena gana se entregara, si lo permitiera la cristiana y católica religión que con muchas veras procuraba guardar; y así, se recogió entre ellos, y, hechos un nudo, o por mejor decir, un ovillo, se dejaron calar casi hasta la postrera parte del navío, por escusar el ruido espantoso de los truenos, y la interpolada luz de los relámpagos, y el confuso estruendo de los marineros; y, en aquella semejanza del limbo, se escusaron de no verse unas veces tocar el cielo con las manos, levantándose el navío sobre las mismas nubes, y otras veces barrer la gavia las arenas del mar profundo. Esperaban la muerte cerrados los ojos, o por mejor decir, la temían sin verla: que la figura de la muerte, en cualquier traje que venga, es espantosa, y la que coge a un desapercibido en todas sus fuerzas y salud, es formidable.

La tormenta creció de manera que agotó la ciencia de los marineros, la solicitud del capitán y, finalmente, la esperanza de remedio en todos. Ya no se oían voces que mandaban hágase esto o aquello, sino gritos de plegarias y votos



que se hacían y a los cielos se enviaban; y llegó a tanto esta miseria y estrechez que Transila no se acordaba de Ladislao, Auristela de Periandro; que uno de los efectos poderosos de la muerte es borrar de la memoria todas las cosas de la vida, y, pues llega a hacer que no se sienta la pasión celosa, téngase por dicho que puede lo imposible. No había allí reloj de arena que distinguiese las horas, ni aguja que señalase el viento, ni buen tino que atinase el lugar donde estaban. Todo era confusión, todo era grita, todo suspiros y todo plegarias. Desmayó el capitán, abandonáronse los marineros, rindiéronse las humanas fuerzas, y poco a poco el desmayo llamó al silencio, que ocupó las voces de los más de los míseros que se quejaban.

Atrevióse el mar insolente a pasearse por cima de la cubierta del navío, y aun a visitar las más altas gavias, las cuales también ellas, casi como en venganza de su agravio, besaron las arenas de su profundidad. Finalmente, al parecer del día - si se puede llamar día el que no trae consigo claridad alguna-, la nave se estuvo queda y estancó, sin moverse a parte alguna, que es uno de los peligros, fuera del de anegarse, que le puede suceder a un bajel; finalmente, combatida de un huracán furioso, como si la volvieran con algún artificio, puso la gavia mayor en la hondura de las aguas y la quilla descubrió a los cielos, quedando hecha sepultura de cuantos en ella estaban.

¡Adiós, castos pensamientos de Auristela; adiós, bien fundados disinius; sosegaos, pasos tan honrados como santos, no esperéis otros mauseolos ni otras pirámides ni agujas que las que os ofrecen esas mal breadas tablas! Y vos, ¡oh Transila!, ejemplo claro de honestidad, en los brazos de vuestro discreto y anciano padre podéis celebrar las bodas, si no con vuestro esposo Ladislao, a lo menos con la esperanza, que ya os habrá conducido a mejor tálamo. Y tú, ¡oh Ricla!, cuyos deseos te llevaban a tu descanso, recoge en tus brazos a Antonio y a Constanza, tus hijos, y ponlos en la presencia del que agora te ha quitado la vida para mejorártela en el cielo.

En resolución, el volcar de la nave y la certeza de la muerte de los que en ella iban puso las razones referidas en la pluma del autor desta grande y lastimosa historia, y ansimismo puso las que se oirán en el siguiente capítulo.

## Capítulo segundo del segundo libro

*Donde se cuenta un extraño suceso*

PARECE que el volcar de la nave volcó, o por mejor decir, turbó el juicio del autor de esta historia, porque a este segundo capítulo le dio cuatro o cinco principios, casi como dudando qué fin en él tomaría. En fin, se resolvió, diciendo que las dichas y las desdichas suelen andar tan juntas, que tal vez no hay medio que las divida; andan el pesar y el placer tan apareados, que es simple el triste que se desespera y el alegre que se confía, como lo da fácilmente a entender este extraño suceso.

Sepultóse la nave, como queda dicho, en las aguas; quedaron los muertos sepultados sin tierra, deshiciéronse sus esperanzas, quedando imposibilitado su remedio; pero los piadosos cielos, que de muy atrás toman la corriente de remediar nuestras desventuras, ordenaron que la nave, llevada poco a poco de las olas, ya mansas y recogidas, a la orilla del mar diese en una playa, que por entonces su apacibilidad y mansedumbre podía servir de seguro puerto; y no lejos estaba un puerto capacísimo de muchos bajeles, en cuyas aguas, como en espejos claros, se estaba mirando una ciudad populosa, que por una alta loma sus vistosos edificios levantaba.

Vieron los de la ciudad el bulto de la nave, y creyeron ser el de alguna ballena o de otro gran pescado que con la borrasca pasada había dado al través. Salió infinita gente a verlo, y, certificándose ser navío, lo dijeron al rey Policarpo, que era el señor de aquella ciudad, el cual, acompañado de muchos y de sus dos hermosas hijas, Policarpa y Sinforosa, salió también, y ordenó que con cabestrantes, con tornos y con barcas, con que hizo rodear toda la nave, la tirasen y encaminasen al puerto.

Saltaron algunos encima del buco, y dijeron al rey que dentro dél sonaban golpes, y aun casi se oían voces de vivos.

Un anciano caballero que se halló junto al rey, le dijo:

-Yo me acuerdo, señor, haber visto en el mar Mediterráneo, en la ribera de Génova, una galera de España que, por hacer el car con la vela, se volcó, como está agora este bajel, quedando la gavia en la arena y la quilla al cielo; y, antes que la volviesen o enderezasen, habiendo primero oído rumor, como en éste se oye, aserraron el bajel por la quilla, haciendo un buco capaz de ver lo que dentro estaba; y el entrar la luz dentro y el salir por él el capitán de la misma galera y

otros cuatro compañeros suyos fue todo uno. Yo vi esto, y está escrito este caso en muchas historias españolas, y aun podría ser viniesen agora las personas que segunda vez nacieron al mundo del vientre desta galera; y si aquí sucediese lo mismo, no se ha de tener a milagro, sino a misterio; que los milagros suceden fuera del orden de la naturaleza, y los misterios son aquellos que parecen milagros y no lo son, sino casos que acontecen raras veces.

-Pues ¿a qué aguardamos? -dijo el rey-: siérrese luego el buco, y veamos este misterio, que si este vientre vomita vivos, yo lo tendré por milagro.

Grande fue la priesa que se dieron a serrar el bajel, y grande el deseo que todos tenían de ver el parto. Abrióse, en fin, una gran concavidad, que descubrió muertos muertos y vivos que lo parecían; metió uno el brazo, y asió de una doncella que el palparle el corazón daba señales de tener vida; otros hicieron lo mismo, y cada uno sacó su presa, y algunos, pensando sacar vivos, sacaban muertos; que no todas veces los pescadores son dichosos. Finalmente, dándoles el aire y la luz a los medio vivos, respiraron y cobraron aliento; limpiáronse los rostros, fregáronse los ojos, estiraron los brazos, y, como quien despierta de un pesado sueño, miraron a todas partes; y hallóse Auristela en los brazos de Arnaldo, Transila en los de Clodio, Ricla y Constanza en los de Rutilio y Antonio el padre, y Antonio el hijo en los de ninguno, porque se salió por sí mismo, y lo mismo hizo Mauricio.

Arnaldo quedó más atónito y suspenso que los resucitados, y más muerto que los muertos. Miróle Auristela, y, no conociéndole, la primera palabra que le dijo fue -que ella fue la primera que rompió el silencio de todos:

-¿Por ventura, hermano, está entre esta gente la bellísima Sinforosa?

-¡Santos cielos! ¿Qué es esto? -dijo entre sí Arnaldo-. ¿Qué memorias de Sinforosa son éstas, en tiempo que no es razón que se tenga acuerdo de otra cosa que de dar gracias al cielo por las recibidas mercedes?

Pero, con todo esto, la respondió y dijo que sí estaba, y le preguntó que cómo la conocía, porque Arnaldo ignoraba lo que Auristela con el capitán del navío, que le contó los triunfos de Periandro, había pasado, y no pudo alcanzar la causa por la cual Auristela preguntaba por Sinforosa; que si la alcanzara, quizá dijera que la fuerza de los celos es tan poderosa y tan sutil que se entra y mezcla con el cuchillo de la misma muerte, y va a buscar al alma enamorada en los últimos trances de la vida.

Ya después que pasó algún tanto el pavor en los resucitados, que así pueden llamarse, y la admiración en los vivos que los sacaron, y el discurso en todos dio lugar a la razón, confusamente unos a otros se preguntaban cómo los de la tierra estaban allí y los del navío venían allí. Policarpo, en esto, viendo que el navío al abrirle la boca se le había llenado de agua, en el lugar del aire que tenía, mandó

llevarle a jorro al puerto, y que con artificios le sacasen a tierra, lo cual se hizo con mucha presteza.

Salieron asimismo a tierra toda la gente que ocupaba la quilla del navío, que fueron recibidos del rey Policarpo y de sus hijas, y de todos los principales ciudadanos, con tanto gusto como admiración; pero lo que más les puso en ella, principalmente a Sinforosa, fue ver la incomparable hermosura de Auristela; fue también a la parte de esta admiración la belleza de Transila, y el gallardo y nuevo traje, pocos años y gallardía de la bárbara Constanza, de quien no desdecía el buen parecer y donaire de Ricla, su madre; y, por estar la ciudad cerca, sin prevenirse de quien los llevase, fueron todos a pie a ella.

Ya en este tiempo había llegado Periandro a hablar a su hermana Auristela, Ladislao a Transila, y el bárbaro padre a su mujer y a su hija, y los unos a los otros se fueron dando cuenta de sus sucesos. Sola Auristela, ocupada toda en mirar a Sinforosa, callaba. Pero, en fin, habló a Periandro, y le dijo:

-¿Por ventura, hermano, esta hermosísima doncella que aquí va es Sinforosa, la hija del rey Policarpo?

-Ella es -respondió Periandro-, sujeto donde tienen su asiento la belleza y la cortesía.

-Muy cortés debe de ser -respondió Auristela-, porque es muy hermosa.

-Aunque no lo fuera tanto -respondió Periandro-, las obligaciones que yo la tengo me obligaran, ¡oh querida hermana mía!, a que me lo pareciera.

-Si por obligaciones va, y vos por ellas encarecéis las hermosuras, la mía os ha de parecer la mayor de la tierra, según os tengo obligado.

-Con las cosas divinas -replicó Periandro- no se han de comparar las humanas; las hipérboles alabanzas, por más que lo sean, han de parar en puntos limitados: decir que una mujer es más hermosa que un ángel es encarecimiento de cortesía, pero no de obligación; sola en ti, dulcísima hermana mía, se quiebran reglas y cobran fuerzas de verdad los encarecimientos que se dan a tu hermosura.

-Si mis trabajos y mis desasosiegos, ¡oh hermano mío!, no turbaran la mía, quizá creyera ser verdaderas las alabanzas que de ella dices, pero yo espero en los piadosos cielos que algún día ha de reducir a sosiego mi desasosiego y a bonanza mi tormenta, y, en este entretanto, con el encarecimiento que puedo, te suplico que no te quiten ni borren de la memoria lo que me debes otras ajenas hermosuras, ni otras obligaciones, que en la mía y en las mías podrás satisfacer el deseo y llenar el vacío de tu voluntad, si miras que, juntando a la belleza de mi cuerpo, tal cual ella es, a la de mi alma, hallarás un compuesto de hermosura que te satisfaga.

Confuso iba Periandro oyendo las razones de Auristela: juzgábala celosa, cosa nueva para él, por tener por larga experiencia conocido que la discreción de

Auristela jamás se atrevió a salir de los límites de la honestidad, jamás su lengua se movió a declarar sino honestos y castos pensamientos, jamás le dijo palabra que no fuese digna de decirse a un hermano en público y en secreto.

Iba Arnaldo invidioso de Periandro, Ladislao alegre con su esposa Transila; Mauricio, con su hija y yerno, Antonio el grande con su mujer y hijos, Rutilio con el hallazgo de todos, y el maldiciente Clodio con la ocasión que se le ofrecía de contar, dondequiera que se hallase, la grandeza de tan extraño suceso. Llegaron a la ciudad, y el liberal Policarpo honró a sus huéspedes real y magníficamente, y a todos los mandó alojar en su palacio, aventajándose en el tratamiento de Arnaldo, que ya sabía que era el heredero de Dinamarca, y que los amores de Auristela le habían sacado de su reino; y, así como vio la belleza de Auristela, halló su peregrinación en el pecho de Policarpo disculpa.

Casi en su mismo cuarto, Policarpa y Sinforosa alojaron a Auristela, de la cual no quitaba la vista Sinforosa, dando gracias al cielo de haberla hecho no amante, sino hermana de Periandro; y, así por su estremada belleza como por el parentesco tan estrecho que con Periandro tenía, la adoraba y no sabía un punto desviarse de ella; desmenuzábale sus acciones, notábale las palabras, ponderaba su donaire, hasta el sonido y órgano de la voz le daba gusto. Auristela casi por el mismo modo y con los mismos afectos miraba a Sinforosa, aunque en las dos eran diferentes las intenciones: Auristela miraba con celos, y Sinforosa con sencilla benevolencia.

Algunos días estuvieron en la ciudad descansando de los trabajos pasados, y, dando traza de volver Arnaldo a Dinamarca, o adonde Auristela y Periandro quisieran, mostrando, como siempre lo mostraba, no tener otra voluntad que la de los dos hermanos. Clodio, que con ociosidad y vista curiosa había mirado los movimientos de Arnaldo, y cuán oprimido le tenía el cuello el amoroso yugo, un día que se halló solo con él le dijo:

-Yo, que siempre los vicios de los príncipes he reprehendido en público, sin guardar el debido decoro que a su grandeza se debe, sin temer el daño que nace del decir mal, quiero agora, sin tu licencia, decirte en secreto lo que te suplico con paciencia me escuches; que lo que se dice aconsejando, en la intención halla disculpa lo que no agrada.

Confuso estaba Arnaldo, no sabiendo en qué iban a parar las prevenciones del razonamiento de Clodio, y, por saberlo, determinó de escuchalle; y así, le dijo que dijese lo que quisiese, y Clodio con este salvoconduto prosiguió diciendo:

-Tú, señor, amas a Auristela; mal dije amas, adoras, dijera mejor; y, según he sabido, no sabes más de su hacienda, ni de quién es, que aquello que ella ha querido decirte, que no te ha dicho nada. Hasla tenido en tu poder más de dos años, en los cuales has hecho, según se ha de creer, las diligencias posibles por

enternecer su dureza, amansar su rigor y rendir su voluntad a la tuya por los medios honestísimos y eficaces del matrimonio, y en la misma entereza se está hoy que el primero día que la solicitaste, de donde arguyo que, cuanto a ti te sobra de paciencia, le falta a ella de conocimiento; y has de considerar que algún gran misterio encierra desechar una mujer un reino y un príncipe que merece ser amado. Misterio también encierra ver una doncella vagamunda, llena de recato de encubrir su linaje, acompañada de un mozo que, como dice que lo es, podría no ser su hermano, de tierra en tierra, de isla en isla, sujeta a las inclemencias del cielo y a las borrascas de la tierra, que suelen ser peores que las del mar alborotado. De los bienes que reparten los cielos entre los mortales, los que más se han de estimar son los de la honra, a quien se posponen los de la vida; los gustos de los discretos hanse de medir con la razón, y no con los mismos gustos.

Aquí llegaba Clodio, mostrando querer proseguir con un filosófico y grave razonamiento, cuando entró Periandro y le hizo callar con su llegada, a pesar de su deseo y aun de el de Arnaldo, que quisiera escucharle. Entraron asimismo Mauricio, Ladislao y Transila, y con ellos Auristela, arrimada al hombro de Sinforosa, mal dispuesta, de modo que fue menester llevarla al lecho, causando con su enfermedad tales sobresaltos y temores en los pechos de Periandro y Arnaldo que, a no encubrillos con discreción, también tuvieran necesidad de los médicos como Auristela.

## Capítulo tercero del segundo libro

APENAS supo Policarpo la indisposición de Auristela, cuando mandó llamar sus médicos, que la visitasen; y, como los pulsos son lenguas que declaran la enfermedad que se padece, hallaron en los de Auristela que no era del cuerpo su dolencia, sino del alma. Pero antes que ellos conoció su enfermedad Periandro, y Arnaldo la entendió en parte, y Clodio mejor que todos. Ordenaron los médicos que en ninguna manera la dejaran sola, y que procurasen entretenerla y divertirla con música, si ella quisiese, o con otros algunos alegres entretenimientos. Tomó Sinforosa a su cargo su salud, y ofrecióle su compañía a todas horas, ofrecimiento no de mucho gusto para Auristela, porque quisiera no tener tan a la vista la causa que pensaba ser de su enfermedad, de la cual no pensaba sanar, porque estaba determinada de no decillo; que su honestidad le ataba la lengua, su valor se oponía a su deseo.

Finalmente, despejaron todos la estancia donde estaba, y quedáronse solas con ella Sinforosa y Policarpo, a quien con ocasión bastante despidió Sinforosa; y, apenas se vio sola con Auristela, cuando, poniendo su boca con la suya y apretándole reciamente las manos, con ardientes suspiros, pareció que quería trasladar su alma en el cuerpo de Auristela, afectos que de nuevo la turbaron, y así le dijo: -¿Qué es esto, señora mía, que estas muestras me dan a entender que estáis más enferma que yo, y más lastimada el alma que la mía? Mirad si os puedo servir en algo, que para hacerlo, aunque está la carne enferma, tengo sana la voluntad.

-Dulce amiga mía -respondió Sinforosa-, cuanto puedo agradezco tu ofrecimiento, y con la misma voluntad con que te obligas te respondo, sin que en esta parte tengan alguna comedimientos fingidos ni tibias obligaciones. Yo, hermana mía, que con este nombre has de ser llamada, en tanto que la vida me durare, amo, quiero bien, adoro. ¿Díjelo? No, que la vergüenza, y el ser quien soy, son mordazas de mi lengua; pero, ¿tengo de morir callando? ¿Ha de sanar mi enfermedad por milagro? ¿Es, por ventura, capaz de palabras el silencio? ¿Han de tener dos recatados y vergonzosos ojos virtud y fuerza para declarar los pensamientos infinitos de un alma enamorada?

Esto iba diciendo Sinforosa con tantas lágrimas y con tantos suspiros, que movieron a Auristela a enjugarle los ojos y a abrazarla y a decirla: -No se te mueran, ¡oh apasionada señora!, las palabras en la boca. Despide de ti por algún pequeño espacio la confusión y el empacho, y hazme tu secretaria; que los males

comunicados, si no alcanzan sanidad, alcanzan alivio. Si tu pasión es amorosa, como lo imagino, sin duda bien sé que eres de carne, aunque pareces de alabastro, y bien sé que nuestras almas están siempre en continuo movimiento, sin que puedan dejar de estar atentas a querer bien a algún sujeto, a quien las estrellas las inclinan, que no se ha de decir que las fuerzan. Dime, señora, a quién quieres, a quién amas y a quién adoras; que, como no des en el disparate de amar a un toro, ni en el que dio el que adoró el plátano, como sea hombre el que, según tu dices, adoras, no me causará espanto ni maravilla. Mujer soy como tú; mis deseos tengo, y hasta ahora por honra del alma no me han salido a la boca, que bien pudiera, como señales de la calentura; pero al fin habrán de romper por inconvenientes y por imposibles, y, siquiera en mi testamento, procuraré que se sepa la causa de mi muerte.

Estábala mirando Sinforosa. Cada palabra que decía la estimaba como si fuera sentencia salida por la boca de un oráculo.

-¡Ay, señora -dijo-, y cómo creo que los cielos te han traído por tan extraño rodeo que parece milagro a esta tierra, condolidos de mi dolor y lastimados de mi lástima! Del vientre oscuro de la nave te volvieron a la luz del mundo, para que mi escuridad tuviese luz, y mis deseos salida de la confusión en que están; y así, por no tenerme ni tenerte más suspensa, sabrás que a esta isla llegó tu hermano Periandro.

Y sucesivamente le contó del modo que había llegado, los triunfos que alcanzó, los contrarios que venció y los premios que ganó, del modo que ya queda contado. Díjole también cómo las gracias de su hermano Periandro habían despertado en ella un modo de deseo, que no llegaba a ser amor, sino benevolencia; pero que después, con la soledad y ociosidad, yendo y viniendo el pensamiento a contemplar sus gracias, el amor se le fue pintando, no como hombre particular, sino como a un príncipe; que si no lo era, merecía serlo. «Esta pintura me la grabó en el alma, y yo inadvertida dejé que me la grabase, sin hacerle resistencia alguna; y así, poco a poco vine a quererle, a amarle y aun a adorarle, como he dicho».

Más dijera Sinforosa si no volviera Policarpa, deseosa de entretener a Auristela, cantando al son de una arpa que en las manos traía. Enmudeció Sinforosa, quedó perdida Auristela, pero el silencio de la una y el perdimiento de la otra no fueron parte para que dejasen de prestar atentos oídos a la sin par en música Policarpa, que desta manera comenzó a cantar en su lengua lo que después dijo el bárbaro Antonio que en la castellana decía: Cintia, si desengaños no son parte

para cobrar la libertad perdida,  
da riendas al dolor, suelta la vida,



que no es valor ni es honra el no quejarte.

Y el generoso ardor que, parte a parte, 5  
tiene tu libre voluntad rendida,  
será de tu silencio el homicida  
cuando pienses por él eternizarte.

Salga con la doliente ánima fuera  
la enferma voz, que es fuerza y es cordura 10  
decir la lengua lo que al alma toca.

Quejándote, sabrá el mundo siquiera  
cuán grande fue de amor tu calentura,  
pues salieron señales a la boca.

Ninguno como Sinforosa entendió los versos de Policarpa, la cual era sabidora de todos su deseos; y, puesto que tenía determinado de sepultarlos en las tinieblas del silencio, quiso aprovecharse del consejo de su hermana, diciendo a Auristela sus pensamientos, como ya se los había comenzado a decir. Muchas veces se quedaba Sinforosa con Auristela, dando a entender que más por cortés que por su gusto propio la acompañaba. En fin, una vez tornando a anudar la plática pasada, le dijo: -Óyeme otra vez, señora mía, y no te cansen mis razones, que las que me bullen en el alma no dejan sosegar la lengua. Reventaré si no las digo, y este temor, a pesar de mi crédito, hará que sepas que muero por tu hermano, cuyas virtudes, de mí conocidas, llevaron tras sí mis enamorados deseos; y, sin entremeterme en saber quién son sus padres, la patria o riquezas, ni el punto en que le ha levantado la fortuna, solamente atiendo a la mano liberal con que la naturaleza le ha enriquecido. Por sí solo le quiero, por sí solo le amo, y por sí solo le adoro; y por ti sola, y por quien eres, te suplico que, sin decir mal de mis precipitados pensamientos, me hagas el bien que pudieres. Innumerables riquezas me dejó mi madre en su muerte, sin sabiduría de mi padre; hija soy de un rey que, puesto que sea por elección, en fin, es rey; la edad, ya la ves; la hermosura no se te encubre que, tal cual es, ya que no merezca ser estimada, no merece ser aborrecida. Dame, señora, a tu hermano por esposo; daréte yo a mí misma por hermana, repartiré contigo mis riquezas, procuraré darte esposo, que después, y aun antes de los días de mi padre, le elijan por rey los de este reino; y, cuando esto no pueda ser, mis tesoros podrán comprar otros reinos.

Teníale a Auristela de las manos Sinforosa, bañándoselas en lágrimas, en tanto que estas tiernas razones la decía. Acompañábale en ellas Auristela,

juzgando en sí misma cuáles y cuántos suelen ser los aprietos de un corazón enamorado; y, aunque se le representaba en Sinforosa una enemiga, la tenía lástima; que un generoso pecho no quiere vengarse cuando puede, cuanto más que Sinforosa no la había ofendido en cosa alguna que la obligase a venganza: su culpa era la suya, sus pensamientos los mismos que ella tenía, su intención la que a ella traía desatinada; finalmente, no podía culparla, sin que ella primero no quedase convencida del mismo delito. Lo que procuró apurar fue si la había favorecido alguna vez, aunque fuese en cosas leves, o si con la lengua o con los ojos había descubierto su amorosa voluntad a su hermano.

Sinforosa la respondió que jamás había tenido atrevimiento de alzar los ojos a mirar a Periandro, sino con el recato que a ser quien era debía, y que al paso de sus ojos había andado el recato de su lengua.

-Bien creo eso -respondió Auristela-, pero, ¿es posible que él no ha dado muestras de quererte? Sí habrá, porque no le tengo por tan de piedra que no le enternezca y ablande una belleza tal como la tuya; y así, soy de parecer que, antes que yo rompa esta dificultad, procures tú hablarle, dándole ocasión para ello con algún honesto favor; que tal vez los impensados favores despiertan y encienden los más tibios y descuidados pechos; que si una vez él responde a tu deseo, seráme fácil a mí hacerle que de todo en todo le satisfaga. Todos los principios, amiga, son dificultosos, y en los de amor dificultosísimos; no te aconsejo yo que te deshonestes ni te precipites; que los favores que hacen las doncellas a los que aman, por castos que sean, no lo parecen, y no se ha de aventurar la honra por el gusto; pero, con todo esto, puede mucho la discreción, y el amor, sutil maestro de encaminar los pensamientos, a los más turbados ofrece lugar y coyuntura de mostrarlos sin menoscabo de su crédito.

## Capítulo cuarto del segundo libro

*Donde se prosigue la historia y amores de Sinforosa*

ATENTA estaba la enamorada Sinforosa a las discretas razones de Auristela, y, no respondiendo a ellas, sino volviendo a anudar las del pasado razonamiento, le dijo:

-Mira, amiga y señora, hasta dónde llegó el amor que engendró en mi pecho el valor que conocí en tu hermano, que hice que un capitán de la guarda de mi padre le fuese a buscar y le trajese por fuerza o de grado a mi presencia, y el navío en que se embarcó es el mismo en que tú llegaste, porque en él, entre los muertos, le han hallado sin vida.

-Así debe de ser -respondió Auristela-, que él me contó gran parte de lo que tú me has dicho, de modo que ya yo tenía noticia, aunque algo confusa, de tus pensamientos, los cuales, si es posible, quiero que sosiegues hasta que se los descubras a mi hermano, o hasta que yo tome a cargo tu remedio, que será luego que me descubras lo que con él te hubiere sucedido; que ni a ti te faltará lugar para hablarle, ni a mí tampoco.

De nuevo volvió Sinforosa a agradecer a Auristela su ofrecimiento y de nuevo volvió Auristela a tenerla lástima.

En tanto que entre las dos esto pasaba, se las había Arnaldo con Clodio, que moría por turbar o por deshacer los amorosos pensamientos de Arnaldo; y, hallándole solo, si solo se puede hallar quien tiene ocupada el alma de amorosos deseos, le dijo:

-El otro día te dije, señor, la poca seguridad que se puede tener de la voluble condición de las mujeres, y que Auristela, en efeto, es mujer, aunque parece un ángel, y que Periandro es hombre, aunque sea su hermano; y no por esto quiero decir que engendres en tu pecho alguna mala sospecha, sino que críes algún discreto recato. Y si por ventura te dieran lugar de que discurras por el camino de la razón, quiero que tal vez consideres quién eres, la soledad de tu padre, la falta que haces a tus vasallos, la contingencia en que te pones de perder tu reino, que es la misma en que está la nave donde falta el piloto que la gobierne. Mira que los reyes están obligados a casarse, no con la hermosura, sino con el linaje; no con la riqueza, sino con la virtud, por la obligación que tienen de dar buenos sucesores a sus reinos. Desmengua y apoca el respeto que se debe al príncipe el verle cojear en la sangre, y no basta decir que la grandeza de rey es en sí tan

poderosa que iguala consigo misma la bajeza de la mujer que escogiere. El caballo y la yegua de casta generosa y conocida prometen crías de valor admirable, más que las no conocidas y de baja estirpe. Entre la gente común tiene lugar de mostrarse poderoso el gusto, pero no le ha de tener entre la noble. Así que, ¡oh señor mío!, o te vuelve a tu reino, o procura con el recato no dejar engañarte. Y perdona este atrevimiento, que, ya que tengo fama de maldiciente y murmurador, no la quiero tener de malintencionado; debajo de tu amparo me traes, al escudo de tu valor se ampara mi vida, con tu sombra no temo las inclemencias del cielo, que ya con mejores estrellas parece que va mejorando mi condición, hasta aquí depravada.

-Yo te agradezco, ¡oh Clodio! -dijo Arnaldo-, el buen consejo que me has dado, pero no consiente ni permite el cielo que le reciba. Auristela es buena, Periandro es su hermano, y yo no quiero creer otra cosa, porque ella ha dicho que lo es; que para mí cualquiera cosa que dijere ha de ser verdad. Yo la adoro sin disputas, que el abismo casi infinito de su hermosura lleva tras sí el de mis deseos, que no pueden parar sino en ella, y por ella he tenido, tengo y he de tener vida; así que, Clodio, no me aconsejes más, porque tus palabras se llevarán los vientos, y mis obras te mostrarán cuán vanos serán para conmigo tus consejos.

Encogió los hombros Clodio, bajó la cabeza y apartóse de su presencia, con propósito de no servir más de consejero, porque el que lo ha de ser requiere tener tres calidades: la primera, autoridad; la segunda, prudencia, y la tercera, ser llamado.

Estas revoluciones, trazas y máquinas amorosas andaban en el palacio de Policarpo y en los pechos de los confusos amantes: Auristela celosa, Sinforosa enamorada, Periandro turbado y Arnaldo pertinaz; Mauricio haciendo disinius de volver a su patria contra la voluntad de Transila, que no quería volver a la presencia de gente tan enemiga del buen decoro como la de su tierra; Ladislao, su esposo, no osaba ni quería contradecirla; Antonio, el padre, moría por verse con sus hijos y mujer en España, y Rutilio en Italia, su patria. Todos deseaban, pero a ninguno se le cumplían sus deseos: condición de la naturaleza humana, que, puesto que Dios la crió perfecta, nosotros, por nuestra culpa, la hallamos siempre falta, la cual falta siempre la ha de haber mientras no dejáremos de desear.

Sucedió, pues, que casi de industria dio lugar Sinforosa a que Periandro se viese solo con Auristela, deseosa que se diese principio a tratar de su causa y a la vista de su pleito, en cuya sentencia consistía la de su vida o muerte.

Las primeras palabras que Auristela dijo a Periandro, fueron:

-Esta nuestra peregrinación, hermano y señor mío, tan llena de trabajos y sobresaltos, tan amenazadora de peligros, cada día y cada momento me hace

temer los de la muerte, y querría que diésemos traza de asegurar la vida, sosegándola en una parte, y ninguna hallo tan buena como ésta donde estamos; que aquí se te ofrecen riquezas en abundancia, no en promesas, sino en verdad, y mujer noble y hermosísima en todo extremo, digna, no de que te ruegue, como te ruega, sino de que tú la ruegues, la pidas y la procures.

En tanto que Auristela esto decía, la miraba Periandro con tanta atención que no movía las pestañas de los ojos; corría muy apriesa con el discurso de su entendimiento para hallar adónde podrían ir encaminadas aquellas razones; pero, pasando adelante con ellas, Auristela le sacó de su confusión, diciendo:

-Digo, hermano, que con este nombre te he de llamar en cualquier estado que tomes; digo que Sinforosa te adora, y te quiere por esposo; dice que tiene riquezas increíbles, y yo digo que tiene creíble hermosura; digo creíble, porque es tal, que no ha menester que exageraciones la levanten ni hipérboles la engrandezcan; y, en lo que he echado de ver, es de condición blanda, de ingenio agudo y de proceder tan discreto como honesto. Con todo esto que te he dicho, no dejo de conocer lo mucho que mereces, por ser quien eres; pero, según los casos presentes, no te estará mal esta compañía. Fuera estamos de nuestra patria, tú perseguido de tu hermano, y yo de mi corta suerte; nuestro camino a Roma, cuanto más le procuramos, más se dificulta y alarga; mi intención no se muda, pero tiembla, y no querría que entre temores y peligros me saltease la muerte, y así, pienso acabar la vida en religión, y querría que tú la acabases en buen estado.

Aquí dio fin Auristela a su razonamiento, y principio a unas lágrimas que desdecían y borran todo cuanto había dicho. Sacó los brazos honestamente fuera de la colcha, tendiéndolos por el lecho, y volvió la cabeza a la parte contraria de donde estaba Periandro, el cual, viendo estos extremos y habiendo oído sus palabras, sin ser poderoso a otra cosa, se le quitó la vista de los ojos, se le añudó la garganta y se le trabó la lengua, y dio consigo en el suelo de rodillas, y arrimó la cabeza al lecho. Volvió Auristela la suya, y, viéndole desmayado, le puso la mano en el rostro y le enjugó las lágrimas, que, sin que él lo sintiese, hilo a hilo le bañaban las mejillas.

## Capítulo quinto del segundo libro

*De lo que pasó entre el rey Policarpo y su hija Sinforosa*

EFETOS vemos en la naturaleza de quien ignoramos las causas: adormécense o entorpécense a uno los dientes de ver cortar con un cuchillo un paño, tiembla tal vez un hombre de un ratón, y yo le he visto temblar de ver cortar un rábano, y a otro he visto levantarse de una mesa de respeto por ver poner unas aceitunas. Si se pregunta la causa, no hay saber decirla, y los que más piensan que aciertan a decilla, es decir que las estrellas tienen cierta antipatía con la complexión de aquel hombre, que le inclina o mueve a hacer aquellas acciones, temores y espantos, viendo las cosas sobredichas y otras semejantes que a cada paso vemos.

Una de las difiniciones del hombre es decir que es animal risible, porque sólo el hombre se ríe, y no otro ningún animal; y yo digo que también se puede decir que es animal llorable, animal que llora; y, ansí como por la mucha risa se descubre el poco entendimiento, por el mucho llorar el poco discurso. Por tres cosas es lícito que llore el varón prudente: la una, por haber pecado; la segunda, por alcanzar perdón dél; la tercera, por estar celoso: las demás lágrimas no dicen bien en un rostro grave.

Veamos, pues, desmayado a Periandro, y ya que no llore de pecador ni arrepentido, llore de celoso, que no faltará quien disculpe sus lágrimas, y aun las enjuge, como hizo Auristela, la cual, con más artificio que verdad, le puso en aquel estado. Volvió en fin en sí, y, sintiendo pasos en la estancia, volvió la cabeza, y vio a sus espaldas a Ricla y a Constanza, que entraban a ver a Auristela, que lo tuvo a buena suerte; que, a dejarle solo, no hallara palabras con que responder a su señora, y así se fue a pensarlas y a considerar en los consejos que le había dado.

Estaba también Sinforosa con deseo de saber qué auto se había proveído en la audiencia de amor, en la primera vista de su pleito, y sin duda que fuera la primera que entrara a ver a Auristela, y no Ricla y Constanza; pero estorbóselo llegar un recado de su padre el rey, que la mandaba ir a su presencia luego y sin escusa alguna. Obedecióle, fue a verle, y hallóle retirado y solo. Hízola Policarpo sentar junto a sí, y, al cabo de algún espacio que estuvo callando, con voz baja, como que se recataba de que no le oyesen, la dijo:

-Hija, puesto que tus pocos años no están obligados a sentir qué cosa sea esto

que llaman amor, ni los muchos míos estén ya sujetos a su jurisdicción, todavía tal vez sale de su curso la naturaleza, y se abrasan las niñas verdes, y se secan y consumen los viejos ancianos.

Cuando esto oyó Sinforosa, imaginó, sin duda, que su padre sabía sus deseos; pero con todo eso calló, y no quiso interrromperle hasta que más se declarase; y, en tanto que él se declaraba, a ella le estaba palpitando el corazón en el pecho.

Siguió, pues, su padre, diciendo:

-Después, ¡oh hija mía!, que me faltó tu madre, me acogí a la sombra de tus regalos, cubríme con tu amparo, gobernéme por tus consejos, y he guardado como has visto las leyes de la viudez con toda puntualidad y recato, tanto por el crédito de mi persona como por guardar la fe católica que profeso; pero, después que han venido estos nuevos huéspedes a nuestra ciudad, se ha desconcertado el reloj de mi entendimiento, se ha turbado el curso de mi buena vida, y, finalmente, he caído desde la cumbre de mi presunción discreta hasta el abismo bajo de no sé qué deseos, que si los callo me matan y si los digo me deshonoran. No más suspensión, hija; no más silencio, amiga; no más; y si quieres que más haya, sea el decirte que muero por Auristela. El calor de su hermosura tierna ha encendido los huesos de mi edad madura; en las estrellas de sus ojos han tomado lumbre los míos, ya oscuros; la gallardía de su persona ha alentado la flojedad de la mía. Querría, si fuese posible, a ti y a tu hermana daros una madrastra, que su valor disculpe el dárosela. Si tú vienes con mi parecer, no se me dará nada del qué dirán, y, cuando por ésta, si pareciere locura, me quitaren el reino, reine yo en los brazos de Auristela, que no habrá monarca en el mundo que se me iguale. Es mi intención, hija, que tú se la digas, y alcances de ella el sí que tanto me importa, que, a lo que creo, no se le hará muy dificultoso el darle, si con su discreción recompensa y contrapone mi autoridad a mis años y mi riqueza a los suyos. Bueno es ser reina, bueno es mandar, gusto dan las honras, y no todos los pasatiempos se cifran en los casamientos iguales. En albricias del sí que me has de traer de esta embajada que llevas, te mando una mejora en tu suerte, que si eres discreta, como lo eres, no has de acertar a desearla mejor. Mira, cuatro cosas ha de procurar tener y sustentar el hombre principal; y son: buena mujer, buena casa, buen caballo y buenas armas. Las dos primeras, tan obligada está la mujer a procurallas como el varón, y aun más, porque no ha de levantar la mujer al marido, sino el marido a la mujer. Las majestades, las grandezas altas, no las aniquilan los casamientos humildes, porque en casándose igualan consigo a sus mujeres; así que, séase Auristela quien fuere, que siendo mi esposa será reina, y su hermano Periandro mi cuñado, el cual, dándotelo yo por esposo y honrándole con título de mi cuñado, vendrás tu también a ser estimada, tanto por ser su esposa como por ser mi hija.

-Pues ¿cómo sabes tú, señor -dijo Sinforosa-, que no es Periandro casado; y, ya que no lo sea, quiera serlo conmigo?

-De que no lo sea -respondió el rey-me lo da a entender el verle andar peregrinando por estrañas tierras, cosa que lo estorban los casamientos grandes; de que lo quiera ser tuyo me lo certifica y asegura su discreción, que es mucha, y caerá en la cuenta de lo que contigo gana; y, pues la hermosura de su hermana la hace ser reina, no será mucho que la tuya le haga tu esposo.

Con estas últimas palabras y con esta grande promesa, paladeó el rey la esperanza de Sinforosa, y saboreóle el gusto de sus deseos; y así, sin ir contra los de su padre, prometió ser casamentera, y admitió las albricias de lo que no tenía negociado. Sólo le dijo que mirase lo que hacía en darle por esposo a Periandro, que, puesto que sus habilidades acreditaban su valor, todavía sería bueno no arrojarse sin que primero la experiencia y el trato de algunos días le asegurase; y diera ella, porque en aquel punto se le dieran por esposo, todo el bien que acertara a desearse en este mundo los siglos que tuviera de vida; que las doncellas virtuosas y principales, uno dice la lengua y otro piensa el corazón.

Esto pasaron Policarpo y su hija, y en otra estancia se movió otra conversación y plática entre Rutilio y Clodio. Era Clodio, como se ha visto en lo que de su vida y costumbres queda escrito, hombre malicioso sobre discreto, de donde le nacía ser gentil maldiciente: que el tonto y simple, ni sabe murmurar ni maldecir; y, aunque no es bien decir bien mal, como ya otra vez se ha dicho, con todo esto alaban al maldiciente discreto; que la agudeza maliciosa no hay conversación que no la ponga en punto y dé sabor, como la sal a los manjares, y por lo menos al maldiciente agudo, si le vituperan y condenan por perjudicial, no dejan de absolverle y alabarle por discreto.

Este, pues, nuestro murmurador, a quien su lengua desterró de su patria en compañía de la torpe y viciosa Rosamunda, habiendo dado igual pena el rey de Inglaterra a su maliciosa lengua como a la torpeza de Rosamunda, hallándose solo con Rutilio, le dijo:

-Mira, Rutilio, necio es, y muy necio, el que, descubriendo un secreto a otro, le pide encarecidamente que le calle, porque le importa la vida en que lo que le dice no se sepa. Digo yo agora: ven acá, descubridor de tus pensamientos y derramador de tus secretos: si a ti, con importarte la vida, como dices, los descubres al otro a quien se los dices, que no le importa nada el descubrirlos, ¿cómo quieres que los cierre y recoja debajo de la llave del silencio? ¿Qué mayor seguridad puedes tomar de que no se sepa lo que sabes, sino no decillo? Todo esto sé, Rutilio, y con todo esto me salen a la lengua y a la boca ciertos pensamientos, que rabian porque los ponga en voz y los arroje en las plazas,



antes que se me pudran en el pecho o reviente con ellos. Ven acá, Rutilio, ¿qué hace aquí este Arnaldo, siguiendo el cuerpo de Auristela, como si fuese su misma sombra, dejando su reino a la discreción de su padre, viejo y quizá caduco, perdiéndose aquí, anegándose allí, llorando acá, suspirando acullá, lamentándose amargamente de la fortuna que él mismo se fabrica? ¿Qué diremos desta Auristela y deste su hermano, mozos vagamundos, encubridores de su linaje, quizá por poner en duda si son o no principales?; que el que está ausente de su patria, donde nadie le conoce, bien puede darse los padres que quisiere, y, con la discreción y artificio, parecer en sus costumbres que son hijos del sol y de la luna. No niego yo que no sea virtud digna de alabanza mejorarse cada uno, pero ha de ser sin perjuicio de tercero. El honor y la alabanza son premios de la virtud, que siendo firme y sólida se le deben, mas no se le debe a la ficticia y hipócrita. ¿Quién puede ser este luchador, este esgrimidor, este corredor y saltador, este Ganimedes, este lindo, este aquí vendido, acullá comprado, este Argos de esta ternera de Auristela, que apenas nos la deja mirar por brújula; que ni sabemos ni hemos podido saber deste par, tan sin par en hermosura, de dónde vienen ni a dó van? Pero lo que más me fatiga de ellos es que, por los once cielos que dicen que hay, te juro, Rutilio, que no me puedo persuadir que sean hermanos, y que, puesto que lo sean, no puedo juzgar bien de que ande tan junta esta hermandad por mares, por tierras, por desiertos, por campañas, por hospedajes y mesones. Lo que gastan sale de las alforjas, saquillos y repuestos llenos de pedazos de oro de las bárbaras Ricla y Constanza. Bien veo que aquella cruz de diamantes y aquellas dos perlas que trae Auristela valen un gran tesoro, pero no son prendas que se cambian ni truecan por menudo; pues pensar que siempre han de hallar reyes que los hospeden y príncipes que los favorezcan, es hablar en lo escusado. Pues, ¿qué diremos, Rutilio, ahora, de la fantasía de Transila y de la astrología de su padre: ella que revienta de valiente, y él que se precia de ser el mayor judiciario del mundo? Yo apostaré que Ladislao, su esposo de Transila, tomara ahora estar en su patria, en su casa y en su reposo, aunque pasara por el estatuto y condición de los de su tierra, y no verse en la ajena, a la discreción del que quisiere darles lo que han menester. Y este nuestro bárbaro español, en cuya arrogancia debe estar cifrada la valentía del orbe, yo pondré que si el cielo le lleva a su patria, que ha de hacer corrillos de gente, mostrando a su mujer y a sus hijos envueltos en sus pellejos, pintando la isla bárbara en un lienzo, y señalando con una vara el lugar do estuvo encerrado quince años, la mazmorra de los prisioneros y la esperanza inútil y ridícula de los bárbaros, y el incendio no pensado de la isla: bien así como hacen los que, libres de la esclavitud turquesca, con las cadenas al hombro, habiéndolas quitado de los pies, cuentan sus desventuras con lastimeras voces y humildes plegarias

en tierra de cristianos. Pero esto pase, que, aunque parezca que cuentan imposibles, a mayores peligros está sujeta la condición humana, y los de un desterrado, por grandes que sean, pueden ser creederos.

-¿Adónde vas a parar, ¡oh Clodio!? -dijo Rutilio.

-Voy a parar -respondió Clodio-en decir de ti que mal podrás usar tu oficio en estas regiones, donde sus moradores no danzan ni tienen otros pasatiempos sino lo que les ofrece Baco en sus tazas risueño y en sus bebidas lascivo; pararé también en mí, que, habiendo escapado de la muerte por la benignidad del cielo y por la cortesía de Arnaldo, ni al cielo doy gracias ni a Arnaldo tampoco; antes querría procurar que, aunque fuese a costa de su desdicha, nosotros enmendásemos nuestra ventura. Entre los pobres pueden durar las amistades, porque la igualdad de la fortuna sirve de eslabonar los corazones; pero entre los ricos y los pobres no puede haber amistad duradera, por la desigualdad que hay entre la riqueza y la pobreza.

-Filósofo estás, Clodio -replicó Rutilio-, pero yo no puedo imaginar qué medio podremos tomar para mejorar, como dices, nuestra suerte, si ella comenzó a no ser buena desde nuestro nacimiento. Yo no soy tan letrado como tú, pero bien alcanzo que, los que nacen de padres humildes, si no los ayuda demasiado el cielo, ellos por sí solos pocas veces se levantan adonde sean señalados con el dedo, si la virtud no les da la mano. Pero a ti, ¿quién te la ha de dar, si la mayor que tienes es decir mal de la misma virtud? ¿Y a mí, quién me ha de levantar, pues, cuando más lo procure, no podré subir más de lo que se alza una cabriola? Yo danzador, tú murmurador; yo condenado a la horca en mi patria, tú desterrado de la tuya por maldiciente: mira qué bien podremos esperar que nos mejore.

Suspendióse Clodio con las razones de Rutilio, con cuya suspensión dio fin a este capítulo el autor desta grande historia.

## Capítulo sexto del segundo libro

TODOS tenían con quien comunicar sus pensamientos: Policarpo con su hija, y Clodio con Rutilio; sólo el suspenso Periandro los comunicaba consigo mismo; que le engendraron tantas las razones de Auristela, que no sabía a cuál acudir que le aliviase su pesadumbre.

-¡Válame Dios! ¿Qué es esto? -decía entre sí mismo-. ¿Ha perdido el juicio Auristela? ¡Ella mi casamentera! ¿Cómo es posible que haya dado al olvido nuestros conciertos? ¿Qué tengo yo que ver con Sinforosa? ¿Qué reinos ni qué riquezas me pueden a mí obligar a que deje a mi hermana Sigismunda, si no es dejando de ser yo Persiles?

En pronunciando esta palabra, se mordió la lengua, y miró a todas partes a ver si alguno le escuchaba, y, asegurándose que no, prosiguió diciendo:

-Sin duda, Auristela está celosa; que los celos se engendran, entre los que bien se quieren, del aire que pasa, del sol que toca, y aun de la tierra que pisa. ¡Oh señora mía, mira lo que haces, no hagas agravio a tu valor ni a tu belleza, ni me quites a mí la gloria de mis firmes pensamientos, cuya honestidad y firmeza me va labrando una inestimable corona de verdadero amante! Hermosa, rica y bien nacida es Sinforosa, pero, en tu comparación, es fea, es pobre y de linaje humilde. Considera, señora, que el amor nace y se engendra en nuestros pechos, o por elección o por destino: el que por destino, siempre está en su punto; el que por elección, puede crecer o menguar, según pueden menguar o crecer las causas que nos obligan y mueven a querernos; y, siendo esta verdad tan verdad como lo es, hallo que mi amor no tiene términos que le encierre, ni palabras que le declare: casi puedo decir que desde las mantillas y fajas de mi niñez te quise bien, y aquí pongo yo la razón del destino; con la edad y con el uso de la razón fue creciendo en mí el conocimiento, y fueron creciendo en ti las partes que te hicieron amable; vilas, contemplélas, conocílas, grabélas en mi alma, y de la tuya y la mía hice un compuesto tan uno y tan solo, que estoy por decir que tendrá mucho que hacer la muerte en dividirlo. Deja, pues, bien mío, Sinforosas; no me ofrezcas ajenas hermosuras, ni me convides con imperios ni monarquías, ni dejes que suene en mis oídos el dulce nombre de hermano con que me llamas. Todo esto que estoy diciendo entre mí, quisiera decírtelo a ti por los mismos términos con que lo voy fraguando en mi imaginación, pero no será posible, porque la luz de tus ojos, y más si me miran airados, ha de turbar mi vista y enmudecer mi lengua. Mejor será escribírtelo en un papel, porque las razones

serán siempre unas, y las podrás ver muchas veces, viendo siempre en ellas una verdad misma, una fe confirmada, y un deseo loable y digno de ser creído; y así, determino de escribirte.

Quietóse con esto algún tanto, pareciéndole que con más advertido discurso pondría su alma en la pluma que en la lengua.

Dejemos escribiendo a Periandro, y vamos a oír lo que dice Sinforosa a Auristela; la cual Sinforosa, con deseo de saber lo que Periandro había respondido a Auristela, procuró verse con ella a solas, y darle de camino noticia de la intención de su padre, creyendo que, apenas se la habría declarado, cuando alcanzase el sí de su cumplimiento, puesta en pensar que pocas veces se desprecian las riquezas ni los señoríos, especialmente de las mujeres, que por naturaleza las más son codiciosas, como las más son altivas y soberbias.

Cuando Auristela vio a Sinforosa, no le plugo mucho su llegada, porque no tenía qué responderle, por no haber visto más a Periandro; pero Sinforosa, antes de tratar de su causa, quiso tratar de la de su padre, imaginándose que con aquellas nuevas que a Auristela llevaba, tan dignas de dar gusto, la tendría de su parte, en quien pensaba estar el todo de su buen suceso. Y así, le dijo:

-Sin duda alguna, bellísima Auristela, que los cielos te quieren bien, porque me parece que quieren llover sobre ti venturas y más venturas. Mi padre, el rey, te adora, y conmigo te envía a decir que quiere ser tu esposo, y en albricias del sí que le has de dar y yo se le he de llevar, me ha prometido a Periandro por esposo. Ya, señora, eres reina, ya Periandro es mío, ya las riquezas te sobran, y si tus gustos en las canas de mi padre no te sobraren, sobrarte han en los del mando y en los de los vasallos, que estarán continuo atentos a tu servicio. Mucho te he dicho, amiga y señora mía, y mucho has de hacer por mí, que de un gran valor no se puede esperar menos que un grande agradecimiento. Comience en nosotras a verse en el mundo dos cuñadas que se quieren bien, y dos amigas que sin doblez se amen, que sí verán, si tu discreción no se olvida de sí misma. Y dime agora, qué es lo que respondió tu hermano a lo que de mí le dijiste, que estoy confiada de la buena respuesta, porque bien simple sería el que no recibiese tus consejos como de un oráculo.

A lo que respondió Auristela:

-Mi hermano Periandro es agradecido, como principal caballero, y es discreto, como andante peregrino: que el ver mucho y el leer mucho aviva los ingenios de los hombres. Mis trabajos y los de mi hermano nos van leyendo en cuánto debemos estimar el sosiego, y, pues que el que nos ofreces es tal, sin duda imagino que le habremos de admitir; pero hasta ahora no me ha respondido nada Periandro, ni sé de su voluntad cosa que pueda alentar tu esperanza ni desmayarla. Da, ¡oh bella Sinforosa!, algún tiempo al tiempo, y déjanos

considerar el bien de tus promesas, porque, puestas en obra, sepamos estimarlas. Las obras que no se han de hacer más de una vez, si se yerran, no se pueden enmendar en la segunda, pues no la tienen, y el casamiento es una destas acciones; y así, es menester que se considere bien antes que se haga, puesto que los términos desta consideración los doy por pasados, y hallo que tú alcanzarás tus deseos, y yo admitiré tus promesas y consejos. Y vete, hermana, y haz llamar de mi parte a Periandro, que quiero saber dél alegres nuevas que decirte, y aconsejarme con él de lo que me conviene, como con hermano mayor, a quien debo tener respeto y obediencia.

Abrazóla Sinforosa, y dejóla, por hacer venir a Periandro a que la viese. El cual, en este tiempo, encerrado y solo, había tomado la pluma, y de muchos principios que en un papel borró y tornó a escribir, quitó y añadió, en fin salió con uno que se dice decía desta manera:

No he osado fiar de mi lengua lo que de mi pluma, ni aun della fío algo, pues no puede escribir cosa que sea de momento el que por instantes está esperando la muerte. Ahora vengo a conocer que no todos los discretos saben aconsejar en todos los casos; aquellos, sí, que tienen experiencia en aquellos sobre quien se les pide el consejo. Perdóname, que no admito el tuyo por parecerme, o que no me conoces o que te has olvidado de ti misma; vuelve, señora, en ti, y no te haga una vana presunción celosa salir de los límites de la gravedad y peso de tu raro entendimiento. Considera quién eres, y no se te olvide de quien yo soy, y verás en ti el término del valor que puede desearse, y en mí el amor y la firmeza que puede imaginarse; y, firmándote en esta consideración discreta, no temas que ajenas hermosuras me enciendan, ni imagines que a tu incomparable virtud y belleza otra alguna se anteponga. Sigamos nuestro viaje, cumplamos nuestro voto, y quédense aparte celos infructuosos y mal nacidas sospechas. La partida desta tierra solicitaré con toda diligencia y brevedad, porque me parece que, en salir della, saldré del infierno de mi tormento a la gloria de verte sin celos.

Esto fue lo que escribió Periandro, y lo que dejó en limpio al cabo de haber hecho seis borradores; y, doblando el papel, se fue a ver a Auristela, de cuya parte ya le habían llamado.

## Capítulo séptimo del segundo libro

Dividido en dos partes

RUTILIO y Clodio, aquellos dos que querían enmendar su humilde fortuna, confiados el uno de su ingenio y el otro de su poca vergüenza, se imaginaron merecedores, el uno de Policarpa y el otro de Auristela; a Rutilio le contentó mucho la voz y el donaire de Policarpa, y a Clodio la sin igual belleza de Auristela; y andaban buscando ocasión cómo descubrir sus pensamientos, sin que les viniese mal por declararlos: que es bien que tema un hombre bajo y humilde que se atreve a decir a una mujer principal lo que no había de atreverse a pensarlo siquiera. Pero tal vez acontece que la desenvoltura de una poco honesta, aunque principal señora, da motivo a que un hombre humilde y bajo ponga en ella los ojos y le declare sus pensamientos. Ha de ser anejo a la mujer principal el ser grave, el ser compuesta y recatada, sin que por esto sea soberbia, desabrida y descuidada; tanto ha de parecer más humilde y más grave una mujer cuanto es más señora. Pero en estos dos caballeros y nuevos amantes, no nacieron sus deseos de las desenvolturas y poca gravedad de sus señoras; pero, nazcan de do nacieren, Rutilio, en fin, escribió un papel a Policarpa y Clodio a Auristela, del tenor que se sigue:

### RUTILIO A POLICARPA

Señora, yo soy extranjero, y, aunque te diga grandezas de mi linaje, como no tengo testigos que las confirmen, quizá no hallarán crédito en tu pecho; aunque, para confirmación de que soy ilustre en linaje, basta que he tenido atrevimiento de decirte que te adoro. Mira qué pruebas quieres que haga para confirmarte en esta verdad, que a ti estará el pedir las y a mí el hacerlas; y, pues te quiero para esposa, imagina que deseo como quien soy y que merezco como deseo: que de altos espíritus es aspirar a las cosas altas. Dame siquiera con los ojos respuesta deste papel, que en la blandura o rigor de tu vista veré la sentencia de mi muerte o de mi vida.

Cerró el papel Rutilio con intención de dársele a Policarpa, arrimándose al parecer de los que dicen: «Díselo tú una vez, que no faltará quien se lo acuerde ciento.» Mostróselo primero a Clodio, y Clodio le mostró a él otro que para Auristela tenía escrito, que es éste que se sigue:

## CLODIO A AURISTELA

Unos entran en la red amorosa con el cebo de la hermosura, otros con los del donaire y gentileza, otros con los del valor que consideran en la persona a quien determinan rendir su voluntad; pero yo por diferente manera he puesto mi garganta a su yugo, mi cerviz a su coyunda, mi voluntad a sus fueros y mis pies a sus grillos, que ha sido por la de la lástima: que ¿cuál es el corazón de piedra que no la tendrá, hermosa señora, de verte vendida y comprada, y en tan estrechos pasos puesta, que has llegado al último de la vida por momentos? El yerro y despiadado acero ha amenazado tu garganta, el fuego ha abrasado las ropas de tus vestidos, la nieve tal vez te ha tenido yerta, y la hambre enflaquecida, y de amarilla tez cubiertas las rosas de tus mejillas, y, finalmente, el agua te ha sorbido y vomitado. Y estos trabajos no sé con qué fuerzas los llevas, pues no te las pueden dar las pocas de un rey vagamundo, y que te sigue por sólo el interés de gozarte, ni las de tu hermano, si lo es, son tantas que te puedan alentar en tus miserias. No fíes, señora, de promesas remotas, y arrímate a las esperanzas propincuas, y escoge un modo de vida que te asegure la que el cielo quisiere darte. Mozo soy, habilidad tengo para saber vivir en los más últimos rincones de la tierra; yo daré traza cómo sacarte desta y librarte de las importunaciones de Arnaldo, y, sacándote deste Egipto, te llevaré a la tierra de promisión, que es España o Francia o Italia, ya que no puedo vivir en Inglaterra, dulce y amada patria mía; y sobre todo me ofrezco a ser tu esposo, y desde luego te aceto por mi esposa.

Habiendo oído Rutilio el papel de Clodio, dijo:

-Verdaderamente, nosotros estamos faltos de juicio, pues nos queremos persuadir que podemos subir al cielo sin alas, pues las que nos da nuestra pretensión son las de la hormiga. Mira, Clodio, yo soy de parecer que rasguemos estos papeles, pues no nos ha forzado a escribirlos ninguna fuerza amorosa, sino una ociosa y baldía voluntad, porque el amor ni nace ni puede crecer si no es al arrimo de la esperanza, y, faltando ella, falta él de todo punto. Pues, ¿por qué queremos aventurarnos a perder y no a ganar en esta empresa?; que el declararla y el ver a nuestras gargantas arrimado el cordel o el cuchillo ha de ser todo uno; demás que, por mostrarnos enamorados, habremos de parecer, sobre desagradecidos, traidores. ¿Tú no ves la distancia que hay de un maestro de danzar, que enmendó su oficio con aprender el de platero, a una hija de un rey, y la que hay de un desterrado murmurador a la que desecha y menosprecia reinos? Mordámonos la lengua, y llegue nuestro arrepentimiento a do ha llegado nuestra

necedad. A lo menos este mi papel se dará primero al fuego o al viento que a Policarpa.

-Haz tú lo que quisieres del tuyo -respondió Clodio-, que el mío, aunque no le dé a Auristela, le pienso guardar por honra de mi ingenio; aunque temo que, si no se le doy, toda la vida me ha de morder la conciencia de haber tenido este arrepentimiento, porque el tentar no todas las veces daña.

Estas razones pasaron entre los dos fingidos amantes, y atrevidos y necios de veras.

Llegóse, en fin, el punto de hablar a solas Periandro con Auristela, y entró a verla con intención de darle el papel que había escrito; pero, así como la vio, olvidándose de todos los discursos y disculpas que llevaba prevenidas, le dijo:

-Señora, mírame bien, que yo soy Periandro, que fui el que fue Persiles, y soy el que tú quieres que sea Periandro. El nudo con que están atadas nuestras voluntades nadie le puede desatar sino la muerte; y, siendo esto así, ¿de qué te sirve darme consejos tan contrarios a esta verdad? Por todos los cielos, y por ti misma, más hermosa que ellos, te ruego que no nombres más a Sinforosa, ni imagines que su belleza ni sus tesoros han de ser parte a que yo olvide las minas de tus virtudes y la hermosura incomparable tuya, así del cuerpo como del alma. Esta mía, que respira por la tuya, te ofrezco de nuevo, no con mayores ventajas que aquellas con que te la ofrecí la vez primera que mis ojos te vieron, porque no hay cláusula que añadir a la obligación en que quedé de servirte el punto que en mis potencias se imprimió el conocimiento de tus virtudes. Procura, señora, tener salud, que yo procuraré la salida de esta tierra, y dispondré lo mejor que pudiere nuestro viaje: que, aunque Roma es el cielo de la tierra, no está puesta en el cielo, y no habrá trabajos ni peligros que nos nieguen del todo el llegar a ella, puesto que los haya para dilatar el camino; tente al tronco y a las ramas de tu mucho valor, y no imagines que ha de haber en el mundo quien se le oponga.

En tanto que Periandro esto decía, le estaba mirando Auristela con ojos tiernos y con lágrimas de celos y compasión nacidas; pero, en fin, haciendo efeto en su alma las amorosas razones de Periandro, dio lugar a la verdad que en ellas venía encerrada, y respondióle seis o ocho palabras, que fueron:

-Sin hacerme fuerza, dulce amado, te creo; confiada te pido que con brevedad salgamos desta tierra, que en otra quizá convaleceré de la enfermedad celosa que en este lecho me tiene.

-Si yo hubiera dado, señora -respondió Periandro-, alguna ocasión a tu enfermedad, llevara en paciencia tus quejas, y en mis disculpas hallaras tú el remedio de tus lástimas; pero, como no te he ofendido, no tengo de qué disculparme. Por quien eres, te suplico que alegres los corazones de los que te conocen, y sea brevemente, pues, faltando la ocasión de tu enfermedad, no hay



para qué nos mates con ella. Pondré en efeto lo que me mandas: saldremos desta tierra con la brevedad posible.

-¿Sabes cuánto te importa, Periandro? -respondió Auristela-. Pues has de saber que me van lisonjeando promesas y apretando dádivas; y no como quiera, que por lo menos me ofrecen este reino. Policarpo, el rey, quiere ser mi esposo; hámelo enviado a decir con Sinforosa, su hija, y ella, con el favor que piensa tener en mí, siendo su madrastra, quiere que seas su esposo. Si esto puede ser, tú lo sabes, y si estamos en peligro, considéralo, y, conforme a esto, aconséjate con tu discreción, y busca el remedio que nuestra necesidad pide; y perdóname, que la fuerza de las sospechas han sido las que me han forzado a ofenderte, pero estos yerros fácilmente los perdona el amor.

-Dél se dice -replicó Periandro-que no puede estar sin celos, los cuales, cuando de débiles y flacas ocasiones nacen, le hacen crecer, sirviendo de espuelas a la voluntad, que, de puro confiada, se entibia, o a lo menos, parece que se desmaya; y, por lo que debes a tu buen entendimiento, te ruego que de aquí adelante me mires, no con mejores ojos, pues no los puede haber en el mundo tales como los tuyos, sino con voluntad más llana y menos puntuosa, no levantando algún descuido mío, más pequeño que un grano de mostaza, a ser monte que llegue a los cielos, llegando a los celos; y en lo demás, con tu buen juicio entretén al rey y a Sinforosa, que no la ofenderás en fingir palabras que se encaminan a conseguir buenos deseos; y queda en paz, no engendre en algún mal pecho alguna mala sospecha nuestra larga plática.

Con esto la dejó Periandro, y, al salir de la estancia, encontró con Clodio y Rutilio: Rutilio acabando de romper el papel que había escrito a Policarpa, y Clodio doblando el suyo para ponérselo en el seno; Rutilio arrepentido de su loco pensamiento, y Clodio satisfecho de su habilidad y ufano de su atrevimiento; pero andará el tiempo y llegará el punto donde diera él, por no haberle escrito, la mitad de la vida, si es que las vidas pueden partirse.

## Capítulo séptimo del segundo libro

ANDABA el rey Policarpo alborozado con sus amorosos pensamientos, y deseoso además de saber la resolución de Auristela, tan confiado y tan seguro que había de corresponder a lo que deseaba, que ya consigo mismo trazaba las bodas, concertaba las fiestas, inventaba las galas, y aun hacía mercedes en esperanza del venidero matrimonio; pero, entre todos estos disinius, no tomaba el pulso a su edad, ni igualaba con discreción la disparidad que hay de diez y siete años a setenta; y, cuando fueran sesenta, es también grande la distancia: ansí halagan y lisonjean los lascivos deseos las voluntades, así engañan los gustos imaginados a los grandes entendimientos, así tiran y llevan tras sí las blandas imaginaciones a los que no se resisten en los encuentros amorosos.

Con diferentes pensamientos estaba Sinforosa, que no se aseguraba de su suerte, por ser cosa natural que quien mucho desea, mucho teme; y las cosas que podían poner alas a su esperanza, como eran su valor, su linaje y hermosura, esas mismas se las cortaban, por ser propio de los amantes rendidos pensar siempre que no tienen partes que merezcan ser amadas de los que bien quieren. Andan el amor y el temor tan apareados que, a doquiera que volváis la cara, los veréis juntos; y no es soberbio el amor, como algunos dicen, sino humilde, agradable y manso; y tanto, que suele perder de su derecho por no dar a quien bien quiere pesadumbre; y más, que, como todo amante tiene en sumo precio y estima la cosa que ama, huye de que de su parte nazca alguna ocasión de perderla.

Todo esto, con mejores discursos que su padre, consideraba la bella Sinforosa, y, entre temor y esperanza puesta, fue a ver a Auristela, y a saber della lo que esperaba y temía. En fin se vio Sinforosa con Auristela, y sola, que era lo que ella más deseaba; y era tanto el deseo que tenía de saber las nuevas de su buena o mala andanza que, así como entró a verla, sin que la hablase palabra, se la puso a mirar ahincadamente, por ver si en los movimientos de su rostro le daba señales de su vida o muerte.

Entendióla Auristela, y a media risa, quiero decir, con muestras alegres, le dijo:

-Llegaos, señora, que a la raíz del árbol de vuestra esperanza no ha puesto el temor segur para cortar. Bien es verdad que vuestro bien y el mío se han de dilatar algún tanto, pero en fin llegarán, porque, aunque hay inconvenientes que suelen impedir el cumplimiento de los justos deseos, no por eso ha de tener la desesperación fuerzas para no esperalle. Mi hermano dice que el conocimiento que

tiene de tu valor y hermosura, no solamente le obliga, pero que le fuerza a quererte, y tiene a bien y a merced particular la que le haces en querer ser suya; pero, antes que venga a tan dichosa posesión, ha menester defraudar las esperanzas que el príncipe Arnaldo tiene de que yo he de ser su esposa; y sin duda lo fuera yo, si el serlo tú de mi hermano no lo estorbara; que has de saber, hermana mía, que así puedo vivir yo sin Periandro como puede vivir un cuerpo sin alma: allí tengo de vivir donde él viviere, él es el espíritu que me mueve y el alma que me anima; y, siendo esto así, si él se casa en esta tierra contigo, ¿cómo podré yo vivir en la de Arnaldo en ausencia de mi hermano? Para escusar este desmán que me amenaza, ordena que nos vamos con él a su reino, desde el cual le pediremos licencia para ir a Roma a cumplir un voto, cuyo cumplimiento nos sacó de nuestra tierra; y está claro, como la experiencia me lo ha mostrado, que no ha de salir un punto de mi voluntad. Puestos, pues, en nuestra libertad, fácil cosa será dar la vuelta a esta isla, donde, burlando sus esperanzas, veamos el fin de las nuestras, yo casándome con tu padre, y mi hermano contigo.

A lo que respondió Sinforosa:

-No sé, hermana, con qué palabras podré encarecer la merced que me has hecho con las que me has dicho; y así, la dejaré en su punto, porque no sé cómo explicarlo; pero esto que ahora decirte quiero, recíbelo antes por advertimiento que por consejo: ahora estás en esta tierra y en poder de mi padre, que te podrá y querrá defender de todo el mundo, y no será bien que se ponga en contingencia la seguridad de tu posesión; no le ha de ser posible a Arnaldo llevaros por fuerza a ti y a tu hermano, y hable de ser forzoso, si no querer, a lo menos consentir lo que mi padre quisiere, que le tiene en su reino y en su casa. Asegúrame tú, ¡oh hermana!, que tienes voluntad de ser mi señora, siendo esposa de mi padre, y que tu hermano no se ha de desdeñar de ser mi señor y esposo, que yo te daré llanas todas las dificultades e inconvenientes que para llegar a este efecto pueda poner Arnaldo.

A lo que respondió Auristela:

-Los varones prudentes, por los casos pasados y por los presentes, juzgan los que están por venir. A hacernos fuerza pública o secreta tu padre en nuestra detención, ha de irritar y despertar la cólera de Arnaldo, que, en fin, es rey poderoso, a lo menos lo es más que tu padre, y los reyes burlados y engañados fácilmente se acomodan a vengarse; y así, en lugar de haber recibido con nuestro parentesco gusto, recibiríades daño, trayéndoos la guerra a vuestras mismas casas. Y si dijeres que este temor se ha de tener siempre, ora nos quedemos aquí, ora volvamos después, considerando que nunca los cielos aprietan tanto los males que no dejen alguna luz con que se descubra la de su remedio, soy de parecer que nos vamos con Arnaldo, y que tú misma, con tu

discreción y aviso, solicites nuestra partida; que en esto solicitarás y abreviarás nuestra vuelta, y aquí, si no en reinos tan grandes como los de Arnaldo, a lo menos en paz más segura, gozaré yo de la prudencia de tu padre, y tú de la gentileza y bondad de mi hermano, sin que se dividan y aparten nuestras almas.

Oyendo las cuales razones, Sinforosa, loca de contento, se abalanzó a Auristela, y le echó los brazos al cuello, midiéndole la boca y los ojos con sus hermosos labios. En esto, vieron entrar por la sala a los dos, al parecer, bárbaros, padre y hijo, y a Ricla y Constanza, y luego tras ellos entraron Mauricio, Ladislao y Transila, deseosos de ver y hablar a Auristela, y saber en qué punto estaba su enfermedad, que los tenía a ellos sin salud. Despidióse Sinforosa más alegre y más engañada que cuando había entrado: que los corazones enamorados creen con mucha facilidad aun las sombras de las promesas de su gusto. El anciano Mauricio, después de haber pasado con Auristela las ordinarias preguntas y respuestas que suelen pasar entre los enfermos y los que los visitan, dijo:

-Si los pobres, aunque mendigos, suelen llevar con pesadumbre el verse desterrados o ausentes de su patria, donde no dejaron sino los terrones que los sustentaban, ¿qué sentirán los ausentes que dejaron en su tierra los bienes que de la fortuna pudieran prometerse? Digo esto, señora, porque mi edad, que con presurosos pasos me va acercando al último fin, me hace desear verme en mi patria, adonde mis amigos, mis parientes y mis hijos me cierren los ojos y me den el último vale. Este bien y merced conseguiremos todos cuantos aquí estamos, pues todos somos extranjeros y ausentes, y todos, a lo que creo, tenemos en nuestras patrias lo que no hallaremos en las ajenas. Si tú, señora, quisieres solicitar nuestra partida, o a lo menos teniendo por bien que nosotros la procuremos, puesto que no será posible el dejarte, porque tu generosa condición y rara hermosura, acompañada de la discreción, que admira, es la piedra imán de nuestras voluntades.

-A lo menos -dijo a esta sazón Antonio el padre-, de la mía y de las de mi mujer y hijos, lo es de suerte que primero dejaré la vida que dejar la compañía de la señora Auristela, si es que ella no se desdeña de la nuestra.

-Yo os agradezco, señores -respondió Auristela-, el deseo que me habéis mostrado; y, aunque no está en mi mano corresponder a él como debía, todavía haré que le pongan en efeto el príncipe Arnaldo y mi hermano Periandro, sin que sea parte mi enfermedad, que ya es salud, a impedirle. En tanto, pues, que llega el felice día y punto de nuestra partida, ensanchad los corazones y no deis lugar que reine en ellos la malencolía, ni penséis en peligros venideros: que, pues el cielo de tantos nos ha sacado, sin que otros nos sobrevengan, nos llevará a nuestras dulces patrias; que los males que no tienen fuerzas para acabar la vida,

no la han de tener para acabar la paciencia.

Admirados quedaron todos de la respuesta de Auristela, porque en ella se descubrió su corazón piadoso y su discreción admirable. Entró en este instante el rey Policarpo, alegre sobremanera, porque ya había sabido de Sinforosa, su hija, las prometidas esperanzas del cumplimiento de sus entre castos y lascivos deseos; que los ímpetus amorosos que suelen parecer en los ancianos se cubren y disfrazan con la capa de la hipocresía; que no hay hipócrita, si no es conocido por tal, que dañe a nadie sino a sí mismo, y los viejos, con la sombra del matrimonio, disimulan sus depravados apetitos. Entraron con el rey Arnaldo y Periandro, y, dándole el parabién a Auristela de la mejoría, mandó el rey que, aquella noche, en señal de la merced que del cielo todos en la mejoría de Auristela habían recibido, se hiciesen luminarias en la ciudad, y fiestas y regocijos ocho días continuos. Periandro lo agradeció como hermano de Auristela, y Arnaldo como amante que pretendía ser su esposo.

Regocijábase Policarpo allá entre sí mismo en considerar cuán suavemente se iba engañando Arnaldo, el cual, admirado con la mejoría de Auristela, sin que supiese los disinios de Policarpo, buscaba modos de salir de su ciudad, pues tanto cuanto más se dilataba su partida, tanto más, a su parecer, se alongaba el cumplimiento de su deseo. Mauricio, también deseoso de volver a su patria, acudió a su ciencia, y halló en ella que grandes dificultades habían de impedir su partida. Comunicólas con Arnaldo y Periandro, que ya habían sabido los intentos de Sinforosa y Policarpo, que les puso en mucho cuidado, por saber cierto, cuando el amoroso deseo se apodera de los pechos poderosos, suele romper por cualquiera dificultad, hasta llegar al fin de ellos: no se miran respetos, ni se cumplen palabras, ni guardan obligaciones. Y así, no había para qué fiarse en las pocas o ninguna en que Policarpo les estaba.

En resolución, quedaron los tres de acuerdo que Mauricio buscase un bajel, de muchos que en el puerto estaban, que los llevase a Inglaterra secretamente, que para embarcarse no faltaría modo conveniente, y que, en este entretanto, no mostrase ninguno señales de que tenían noticia de los disinios de Policarpo. Todo esto se comunicó con Auristela, la cual aprobó su parecer, y entró en nuevos cuidados de mirar por su salud y por la de todos.

## Capítulo octavo del segundo libro

*Da Clodio el papel a Auristela; Antonio, el bárbaro, le mata por yerro*

DICE la historia que llegó a tanto la insolencia, o por mejor decir, la desvergüenza de Clodio, que tuvo atrevimiento de poner en las manos de Auristela el desvergonzado papel que la había escrito, engañada con que le dijo que eran unos versos devotos, dignos de ser leídos y estimados.

Abrió Auristela el papel, y pudo con ella tanto la curiosidad que no dio lugar al enojo para dejalle de leer hasta el cabo. Leyóle en fin, y, volviéndole a cerrar, puestos los ojos en Clodio, y no echando por ellos rayos de amorosa luz, como las más veces solía, sino centellas de rabioso fuego, le dijo:

-Quítateme de delante, hombre maldito y desvergonzado: que si la culpa deste tu atrevido disparate entendiera que había nacido de algún descuido mío, que menoscabara mi crédito y mi honra, en mí misma castigara tu atrevimiento, el cual no ha de quedar sin castigo, si ya entre tu locura y mi paciencia no se pone el tenerte lástima.

Quedó atónito Clodio, y diera él por no haberse atrevido la mitad de la vida, como ya se ha dicho. Rodeáronle luego el alma mil temores, y no se daba más término de vida que lo que tardasen en saber su bellaquería Arnaldo o Periandro; y, sin replicar palabra, bajó los ojos, volvió las espaldas y dejó sola a Auristela, cuya imaginación ocupó un temor, no vano, sino muy puesto en razón, de que Clodio, desesperado, había de dar en traidor, aprovechándose de los intentos de Policarpo, si acaso a su noticia viniese, y determinó darla de aquel caso a Periandro y Arnaldo.

Sucedió en este tiempo que, estando Antonio el mozo solo en su aposento, entró a deshora una mujer en él, de hasta cuarenta años de edad, que, con el brío y donaire, debía de encubrir otros diez, vestida, no al uso de aquella tierra, sino al de España; y, aunque Antonio no conocía de usos, sino de los que había visto en los de la bárbara isla donde se había criado y nacido, bien conoció ser extranjera de aquella tierra. Levantóse Antonio a recibirla cortésmente, porque no era tan bárbaro que no fuese bien criado. Sentáronse, y la dama -si en tantos años de edad es justo se le dé este nombre-, después de haber estado atenta mirando el rostro de Antonio, dijo:

-Parecerte ha novedad, ¡oh mancebo!, esta mi venida a verte, porque no debes de estar en uso de ser visitado de mujeres, habiéndote criado, según he sabido,

en la isla Bárbara, y no entre bárbaros, sino entre riscos y peñas, de las cuales, si como sacaste la belleza y brío que tienes, has sacado también la dureza en las entrañas, la blandura de las mías temo que no me ha de ser de provecho. No te desvíes, sositégate y no te alborotes, que no está hablando contigo algún monstruo ni persona que quiera decirte ni aconsejarte cosas que vayan fuera de la naturaleza humana; mira que te hablo español, que es la lengua que tú sabes, cuya conformidad suele engendrar amistad entre los que no se conocen.

«Mi nombre es Cenotia, soy natural de España, nacida y criada en Alhama, ciudad del reino de Granada; conocida por mi nombre en todos los de España, y aun entre otros muchos, porque mi habilidad no consiente que mi nombre se encubra, haciéndome conocida mis obras. Salí de mi patria, habrá cuatro años, huyendo de la vigilancia que tienen los mastines veladores que en aquel reino tienen del católico rebaño. Mi estirpe es agarena; mis ejercicios, los de Zoroastes, y en ellos soy única. ¿Ves este sol que nos alumbró? Pues sí, para señal de lo que puedo, quieres que le quite los rayos y le asombre con nubes, pídemelo, que haré que a esta claridad suceda en un punto oscura noche; o ya si quisieres ver temblar la tierra, pelear los vientos, alterarse el mar, encontrarse los montes, bramar las fieras, o otras espantosas señales que nos representen la confusión del caos primero, pídelo, que tú quedarás satisfecho y yo acreditada. Has de saber ansimismo que en aquella ciudad de Alhama siempre ha habido alguna mujer de mi nombre, la cual, con el apellido de Cenotia, hereda esta ciencia, que no nos enseña a ser hechiceras, como algunos nos llaman, sino a ser encantadoras y magas, nombres que nos vienen más al propio. Las que son hechiceras, nunca hacen cosa que para alguna cosa sea de provecho: ejercitan sus burlerías con cosas, al parecer, de burlas, como son habas mordidas, agujas sin puntas, alfileres sin cabeza, y cabellos cortados en crecientes o menguantes de luna; usan de caracteres que no entienden, y si algo alcanzan, tal vez, de lo que pretenden, es, no en virtud de sus simplicidades, sino porque Dios permite, para mayor condenación suya, que el demonio las engañe. Pero nosotras, las que tenemos nombre de magas y de encantadoras, somos gente de mayor cuantía; tratamos con las estrellas, contemplamos el movimiento de los cielos, sabemos la virtud de las yerbas, de las plantas, de las piedras, de las palabras, y, juntando lo activo a lo pasivo, parece que hacemos milagros, y nos atrevemos a hacer cosas tan estupendas que causan admiración a las gentes, de donde nace nuestra buena o mala fama: buena, si hacemos bien con nuestra habilidad; mala, si hacemos mal con ella. Pero, como la naturaleza parece que nos inclina antes al mal que al bien, no podemos tener tan a raya los deseos que no se deslicen a procurar el mal ajeno; que, ¿quién quitará al airado y ofendido que no se venga? ¿Quién al amante desdeñado que no quiera, si puede, reducir a ser

querido del que le aborrece? Puesto que en mudar las voluntades, sacarlas de su quicio, como esto es ir contra el libre albedrío, no hay ciencia que lo pueda, ni virtud de yerbas que lo alcancen.»

A todo esto que la española Cenotia decía, la estaba mirando Antonio con deseo grande de saber qué suma tendría tan larga cuenta.

Pero la Cenotia prosiguió diciendo:

-«Dígame, en fin, bárbaro discreto, que la persecución de los que llaman inquisidores en España, me arrancó de mi patria; que, cuando se sale por fuerza della, antes se puede llamar arrancada que salida. Vine a esta isla por estraños rodeos, por infinitos peligros, casi siempre como si estuvieran cerca, volviendo la cabeza atrás, pensando que me mordían las faldas los perros, que aun hasta aquí temo; dime presto a conocer al rey antecesor de Policarpo, hice algunas maravillas, con que dejé maravillado al pueblo; procuré hacer vendible mi ciencia, tan en mi provecho que tengo juntos más de treinta mil escudos en oro; y, estando atenta a esta ganancia, he vivido castamente, sin procurar otro algún deleite, ni le procurara, si mi buena o mi mala fortuna no te hubieran traído a esta tierra, que en tu mano está darme la suerte que quisieres.» Si te parezco fea, yo haré de modo que me juzgues por hermosa; si son pocos treinta mil escudos que te ofrezco, alarga tu deseo y ensancha los sacos de la codicia y los senos, y comienza desde luego a contar cuantos dineros acertares a desear. Para tu servicio sacaré las perlas que encubren las conchas del mar, rendiré y traeré a tus manos las aves que rompen el aire, haré que te ofrezcan sus frutos las plantas de la tierra, haré que brote del abismo lo más precioso que en él se encierra, haréte invencible en todo, blando en la paz, temido en la guerra; en fin, enmendaré tu suerte de manera que seas siempre envidiado y no envidioso. Y, en cambio destos bienes que te he dicho, no te pido que seas mi esposo, sino que me recibas por tu esclava: que, para ser tu esclava, no es menester que me tengas voluntad como para ser esposa, y, como yo sea tuya, en cualquier modo que lo sea, viviré contenta. Comienza, pues, ¡oh generoso mancebo!, a mostrarte prudente, mostrándote agradecido: mostrarte has prudente, si antes que me agradezcas estos deseos, quisieres hacer experiencia de mis obras; y, en señal de que así lo harás, alégrame el alma ahora con darme alguna señal de paz, dándome a tocar tu valerosa mano.

Y, diciendo esto, se levantó para ir a abrazarle.

Antonio, viendo lo cual, lleno de confusión, como si fuera la más retirada doncella del mundo, y como si enemigos combatieran el castillo de su honestidad, se puso a defenderle, y, levantándose, fue a tomar su arco, que siempre o le traía consigo o le tenía junto a sí; y, poniendo en él una flecha, hasta veinte pasos desviado de la Cenotia, le encaró la flecha. No le contentó mucho a



la enamorada dama la postura amenazadora de muerte de Antonio, y, por huir el golpe, desvió el cuerpo, y pasó la flecha volando por junto a la garganta (en esto más bárbaro Antonio de lo que parecía en su traje). Pero no fue el golpe de la flecha en vano, porque a este instante entraba por la puerta de la estancia el maldiciente Clodio, que le sirvió de blanco, y le pasó la boca y la lengua, y le dejó la vida en perpetuo silencio: castigo merecido a sus muchas culpas. Volvió la Cenotia la cabeza, vio el mortal golpe que había hecho la flecha, temió la segunda, y, sin aprovecharse de lo mucho que con su ciencia se prometía, llena de confusión y de miedo, tropezando aquí y cayendo allí, salió del aposento, con intención de vengarse del cruel y desamorado mozo.

## Capítulo nueve del segundo libro

NO LE QUEDÓ sabrosa la mano a Antonio del golpe que había hecho; que, aunque acertó errando, como no sabía las culpas de Clodio y había visto la de la Cenotia, quisiera haber sido mejor certero. Llegóse a Clodio por ver si le quedaban algunas reliquias de vida, y vio que todas se las había llevado la muerte; cayó en la cuenta de su yerro, y túvose verdaderamente por bárbaro. Entró en esto su padre, y, viendo la sangre y el cuerpo muerto de Clodio, conoció por la flecha que aquel golpe había sido hecho por la mano de su hijo. Preguntóselo, y respondióle que sí; quiso saber la causa, y también se la dijo.

Admiróse el padre; lleno de indignación le dijo:

-Ven acá, bárbaro, si a los que te aman y te quieren procuras quitar la vida, ¿qué harás a los que te aborrecen? Si tanto presumes de casto y honesto, defiende tu castidad y honestidad con el sufrimiento; que los peligros semejantes no se remedian con las armas, ni con esperar los encuentros, sino con huir de ellos. Bien parece que no sabes lo que le sucedió a aquel mancebo hebreo que dejó la capa en manos de la lasciva señora que le solicitaba. Dejaras tú, ignorante, esa tosca piel que traes vestida, y ese arco con que presumes vencer a la misma valentía; no le armaras contra la blandura de una mujer rendida, que, cuando lo está, rompe por cualquier inconveniente que a su deseo se oponga. Si con esta condición pasas adelante en el discurso de tu vida, por bárbaro serás tenido hasta que la acabes, de todos los que te conocieren. No digo yo que ofendas a Dios en ningún modo, sino que reprehendas, y no castigues, a las que quisieren turbar tus honestos pensamientos; y aparéjate para más de una batalla, que la verdura de tus años y el gallardo brío de tu persona con muchas batallas te amenazan; y no pienses que has de ser siempre solicitado, que alguna vez solicitarás, y, sin alcanzar tus deseos, te alcanzará la muerte en ellos.

Escuchaba Antonio a su padre, los ojos puestos en el suelo, tan vergonzoso como arrepentido. Y lo que le respondió fue:

-No mires, señor, lo que hice, y pésame de haberlo hecho. Procuraré enmendarme de aquí adelante, de modo que no parezca bárbaro por riguroso, ni lascivo por manso. Dése orden de enterrar a Clodio, y de hacerle la satisfacción más conveniente que ser pudiere.

Ya en esto había volado por el palacio la muerte de Clodio, pero no la causa de ella, porque la encubrió la enamorada Cenotia, diciendo sólo que, sin saber por qué, el bárbaro mozo le había muerto.

Llegó esta nueva a los oídos de Auristela, que aún se tenía el papel de Clodio en las manos, con intención de mostrársele a Periandro o a Arnaldo, para que castigasen su atrevimiento; pero, viendo que el cielo había tomado a su cargo el castigo, rompió el papel, y no quiso que saliesen a luz las culpas de los muertos: consideración tan prudente como cristiana. Y, bien que Policarpo se alborotó con el suceso, teniéndose por ofendido de que nadie en su casa vengase sus injurias, no quiso averiguar el caso, sino remitióselo al príncipe Arnaldo, el cual, a ruego de Auristela y al de Transila, perdonó a Antonio y mandó enterrar a Clodio, sin averiguar la culpa de su muerte, creyendo ser verdad lo que Antonio decía, que por yerro le había muerto, sin descubrir los pensamientos de Cenotia, porque a él no le tuviesen de todo en todo por bárbaro.

Pasó el rumor del caso, enterraron a Clodio, quedó Auristela vengada, como si en su generoso pecho albergara género de venganza alguna, así como albergaba en el de la Cenotia, que bebía, como dicen, los vientos, imaginando cómo vengarse del cruel flechero, el cual de allí a dos días se sintió mal dispuesto, y cayó en la cama con tanto descaecimiento que los médicos dijeron que se le acababa la vida, sin conocer de qué enfermedad. Lloraba Ricla, su madre, y su padre Antonio tenía de dolor el corazón consumido; no se podía alegrar Auristela, ni Mauricio; Ladislao y Transila sentían la misma pesadumbre; viendo lo cual Policarpo, acudió a su consejera Cenotia, y le rogó procurase algún remedio a la enfermedad de Antonio, la cual, por no conocerla los médicos, ellos no sabían hallarle. Ella le dio buenas esperanzas, asegurándole que de aquella enfermedad no moriría, pero que convenía dilatar algún tanto la cura. Creyóla Policarpo, como si se lo dijera un oráculo.

De todos estos sucesos no le pesaba mucho a Sinforosa, viendo que por ellos se detendría la partida de Periandro, en cuya vista tenía librado el alivio de su corazón: que, puesto que deseaba que se partiese, pues no podía volver si no se partía, tanto gusto le daba el verle que no quisiera que se partiera.

Llegó una sazón y coyuntura donde Policarpo y sus dos hijas, Arnaldo, Periandro y Auristela, Mauricio, Ladislao y Transila, y Rutilio, que después que escribió el billete a Policarpo, aunque le había roto, de arrepentido andaba triste y pensativo, bien así como el culpado, que piensa que cuantos le miran son sabidores de su culpa; digo que la compañía de los ya nombrados se halló en la estancia del enfermo Antonio, a quien todos fueron a visitar, a pedimiento de Auristela, que ansí a él como a sus padres los estimaba y quería mucho, obligada del beneficio que el mozo bárbaro le había hecho cuando los sacó del fuego de la isla, y la llevó al serrallo de su padre; y más que, como en las comunes desventuras se reconcilian los ánimos y se traban las amistades, por haber sido tantas las que en compañía de Ricla y de Constanza y de los dos Antonios había

pasado, ya no solamente por obligación, mas por elección y destino los amaba.

Estando, pues, juntos, como se ha dicho, un día Sinforosa rogó encarecidamente a Periandro les contase algunos sucesos de su vida; especialmente se holgaría de saber de dónde venía la primera vez que llegó a aquella isla, cuando ganó los premios de todos los juegos y fiestas que aquel día se hicieron, en memoria de haber sido el de la elección de su padre. A lo que Periandro respondió que sí haría, si se le permitiese comenzar el cuento de su historia, y no del mismo principio, porque éste no lo podía decir ni descubrir a nadie, hasta verse en Roma con Auristela, su hermana.

Todos le dijeron que hiciese su gusto, que de cualquier cosa que él dijese le recibirían; y el que más contento sintió fue Arnaldo, creyendo descubrir, por lo que Periandro dijese, algo que descubriese quién era. Con este salvoconduto, Periandro dijo desta manera:

## Capítulo décimo del segundo libro

### *Cuenta Periandro el suceso de su viaje*

-«EL PRINCIPIO y preámbulo de mi historia, ya que queréis, señores, que os la cuente, quiero que sea éste: que nos contempléis a mi hermana y a mí, con una anciana ama suya, embarcados en una nave, cuyo dueño, en el lugar de parecer mercader, era un gran cosario. Las riberas de una isla barríamos; quiero decir que íbamos tan cerca de ella que distintamente conocíamos, no solamente los árboles, pero sus diferencias. Mi hermana, cansada de haber andado algunos días por el mar, deseó salir a recrearse a la tierra; pidióselo al capitán, y, como sus ruegos tienen siempre fuerza de mandamiento, consintió el capitán en el de su ruego, y en la pequeña barca de la nave, con sólo un marinero, nos echó en tierra a mí y a mi hermana y a Cloelia, que éste era el nombre de su ama. Al tomar tierra, vio el marinero que un pequeño río por una pequeña boca entraba a dar al mar su tributo; hacíanle sombra por una y otra ribera gran cantidad de verdes y hojosos árboles, a quien servían de cristalinos espejos sus transparentes aguas. Rogámosle se entrase por el río, pues la amenidad del sitio nos convidaba. Hízolo así, y comenzó a subir por el río arriba, y, habiendo perdido de vista la nave, soltando los remos, se detuvo y dijo: "Mirad, señores, del modo que habéis de hacer este viaje, y haced cuenta que esta pequeña barca que ahora os lleva es vuestro navío, porque no habéis de volver más al que en la mar os queda aguardando, si ya esta señora no quiere perder la honra, y vos, que decís que sois su hermano, la vida". Díjome, en fin, que el capitán del navío quería deshonorar a mi hermana y darme a mí la muerte, y que atendiésemos a nuestro remedio, que él nos seguiría y acompañaría en todo lugar y en todo acontecimiento. Si nos turbamos con esta nueva, júzguelo el que estuviere acostumbrado a recibirlas malas de los bienes que espera. Agradecíle el aviso, y ofrecíle la recompensa cuando nos viésemos en más felice estado. "Aun bien -dijo Cloelia-que traigo conmigo las joyas de mi señora".

»Y, aconsejándonos los cuatro de lo que hacer debíamos, fue parecer del marinero que nos entrásemos el río adentro: quizá descubriríamos algún lugar que nos defendiese, si acaso los de la nave viniesen a buscarnos. "Mas no vendrán -dijo-, porque no hay gente en todas estas islas que no piense ser cosarios todos cuantos surcan estas riberas, y, en viendo la nave o naves, luego toman las armas para defenderse; y, si no es con asaltos nocturnos y secretos,

nunca salen medrados los cosarios".

»Parecióme bien su consejo; tomé yo el un remo, y ayudéle a llevar el trabajo. Subimos por el río arriba, y, habiendo andado como dos millas, llegó a nuestros oídos el son de muchos y varios instrumentos formado, y luego se nos ofreció a la vista una selva de árboles movibles, que de la una ribera a la otra ligeramente cruzaban. Llegamos más cerca y conocimos ser barcas enramadas lo que parecían árboles, y que el son le formaban los instrumentos que tañían los que en ellas iban. Apenas nos hubieron descubierto, cuando se vinieron a nosotros y rodearon nuestro barco por todas partes. Levantóse en pie mi hermana, y, echándose sus hermosos cabellos a las espaldas, tomados por la frente con una cinta leonada o listón que le dio su ama, hizo de sí casi divina e improvisa muestra; que, como después supe, por tal la tuvieron todos los que en las barcas venían, los cuales a voces, como dijo el marinero, que las entendía, decían: "¿Qué es esto? ¿Qué deidad es esta que viene a visitarnos y a dar el parabién al pescador Carino y a la sin par Selviana de sus felicísimas bodas?" Luego dieron cabo a nuestra barca, y nos llevaron a desembarcar no lejos del lugar donde nos habían encontrado.

»Apenas pusimos los pies en la ribera, cuando un escuadrón de pescadores, que así lo mostraban ser en su traje, nos rodearon, y uno por uno, llenos de admiración y reverencia, llegaron a besar las orillas del vestido de Auristela, la cual, a pesar del temor que la congojaba de las nuevas que la habían dado, se mostró a aquel punto tan hermosa, que yo disculpo el error de aquellos que la tuvieron por divina.

»Poco desviados de la ribera, vimos un tálamo en gruesos troncos de sabina sustentado, cubierto de verde juncia, y oloroso con diversas flores, que servían de alcatifas al suelo; vimos ansimismo levantarse de unos asientos dos mujeres y dos hombres, ellas mozas y ellos gallardos mancebos: la una hermosa sobremanera, y la otra fea sobremanera; el uno gallardo y gentilhomme, y el otro no tanto; y todos cuatro se pusieron de rodillas ante Auristela, y el más gentilhomme dijo: "¡Oh tú, quienquiera que seas, que no puedes ser sino cosa del cielo!; mi hermano y yo, con el extremo a nuestras fuerzas posible, te agradecemos esta merced que nos haces, honrando nuestras pobres y ya de hoy más ricas bodas. Ven, señora, y si en lugar de los palacios de cristal, que en el profundo mar dejas, como una de sus habitadoras, hallares en nuestros ranchos las paredes de conchas y los tejados de mimbres, o por mejor decir, las paredes de mimbres y los tejados de conchas, hallarás, por lo menos, los deseos de oro, y las voluntades de perlas para servirte. Y hago esta comparación, que parece impropia, porque no hallo cosa mejor que el oro, ni más hermosa que las perlas". Inclínose a abrazarle Auristela, confirmando con su gravedad, cortesía y

hermosura la opinión que della tenían.

»El pescador menos gallardo se apartó a dar orden a la demás turba a que levantasen las voces en alabanzas de la recién venida extranjera, y que tocasen todos los instrumentos en señal de regocijo. Las dos pescadoras, fea y hermosa, con sumisión humilde, besaron las manos a Auristela, y ella las abrazó cortés y amigablemente. El marinero, contentísimo del suceso, dio cuenta a los pescadores del navío que en el mar quedaba, diciéndoles que era de cosarios, de quien se temía que habían de venir por aquella doncella, que era una principal señora, hija de reyes: que, para mover los corazones a su defensa, le pareció ser necesario levantar este testimonio a mi hermana. Apenas entendieron esto, cuando dejaron los instrumentos regocijados y acudieron a los bélicos, que tocaron "¡arma, arma!" por entrambas riberas.

»Llegó en esto la noche, recogímonos al mismo rancho de los desposados, pusiéronse centinelas hasta la misma boca del río, cebáronse las nasas, tendiéronse las redes y acomodáronse los anzuelos: todo con intención de regalar y servir a sus nuevos huéspedes; y, por más honrarlos, los dos recién desposados no quisieron aquella noche pasarla con sus esposas, sino dejar los ranchos solos a ellas y a Auristela y a Cloelia, y que ellos, con sus amigos, conmigo y con el marinero, se les hiciese guarda y centinela. Y, aunque sobraba la claridad del cielo, por la que ofrecía la de la creciente luna, y en la tierra ardían las hogueras que el nuevo regocijo había encendido, quisieron los desposados que cenásemos en el campo los varones, y dentro del rancho las mujeres. Hízose así, y fue la cena tan abundante que pareció que la tierra se quiso aventajar al mar, y el mar a la tierra, en ofrecer la una sus carnes y la otra sus pescados.

»Acabada la cena, Carino me tomó por la mano, y, paseándose conmigo por la ribera, después de haber dado muestras de tener apasionada el alma, con sollozos y con suspiros, me dijo: "Por tener milagrosa esta tu llegada a tal sazón y tal coyuntura, que con ella has dilatado mis bodas, tengo por cierto que mi mal ha de tener remedio mediante tu consejo; y ansí, aunque me tengas por loco, y por hombre de mal conocimiento y de peor gusto, quiero que sepas que, de aquellas dos pescadoras que has visto, la una fea y la otra hermosa, a mí me ha cabido en suerte de que sea mi esposa la más bella, que tiene por nombre Selviana; pero no sé qué te diga, ni sé qué disculpa dar de la culpa que tengo, ni del yerro que hago. Yo adoro a Leoncia, que es la fea, sin poder ser parte a hacer otra cosa. Con todo esto, te quiero decir una verdad, sin que me engañe en creerla: que a los ojos de mi alma, por las virtudes que en la de Leoncia descubro, ella es la más hermosa mujer del mundo; y hay más en esto: que de Solercio, que es el nombre del otro desposado, tengo más de un barrunto que muere por Selviana. De modo que nuestras cuatro voluntades están trocadas, y esto ha sido por querer

todos cuatro obedecer a nuestros padres y a nuestros parientes, que han concertado estos matrimonios. Y no puedo yo pensar en qué razón se consiente que la carga que ha de durar toda la vida se la eche el hombre sobre sus hombros, no por el suyo, sino por el gusto ajeno; y, aunque esta tarde habíamos de dar el consentimiento y el sí del cautiverio de nuestras voluntades, no por industria, sino por ordenación del cielo, que así lo quiero creer, se estorbó con vuestra venida, de modo que aún nos queda tiempo para enmendar nuestra ventura; y para esto te pido consejo, pues, como extranjero, y no parcial de ninguno, sabrás aconsejarme, porque tengo determinado que, si no se descubre alguna senda que me lleve a mi remedio, de ausentarme destas riberas, y no parecer en ellas en tanto que la vida me durare: ora mis padres se enojen, o mis parientes me riñan, o mis amigos se enfaden".

»Atentamente le estuve escuchando, y de improviso me vino a la memoria su remedio, y a la lengua estas mismas palabras: "No hay para qué te ausentes, amigo; a lo menos, no ha de ser antes que yo hable con mi hermana Auristela, que es aquella hermosísima doncella que has visto. Ella es tan discreta que parece que tiene entendimiento divino, como tiene hermosura divina".

»Con esto nos volvimos a los ranchos, y yo conté a mi hermana todo lo que con el pescador había pasado, y ella halló en su discreción el modo como sacar verdaderas mis palabras y el contento de todos; y fue que, apartándose con Leoncia y Selviana a una parte, les dijo: "Sabed, amigas, que de hoy más lo habéis de ser verdaderas mías, que juntamente con este buen parecer que el cielo me ha dado, me dotó de un entendimiento perspicaz y agudo, de tal modo que, viendo el rostro de una persona, le leo el alma y le adivino los pensamientos. Para prueba desta verdad, os presentaré a vosotras por testigos: tú, Leoncia, mueres por Carino, y tú, Selviana, por Solercio; la virginal vergüenza os tiene mudas, pero por mi lengua se romperá vuestro silencio, y por mi consejo, que, sin duda alguna será admitido, se igualarán vuestros deseos. Callad y dejadme hacer, que o yo no tendré discreción, o vosotras tendréis felice fin en vuestros deseos". Ellas, sin responder palabra, sino con besarla infinitas veces las manos y abrazándola estrechamente, confirmaron ser verdad cuanto había dicho, especialmente en lo de sus trocadas aficiones.

»Pasóse la noche, vino el día, cuya alborada fue regocijadísima, porque con nuevos y verdes ramos parecieron adornadas las barcas de los pescadores; sonaron los instrumentos con nuevos y alegres sonos; alzaron las voces todos, con que se aumentó la alegría; salieron los desposados para irse a poner en el tálamo donde habían estado el día de antes; vistiéronse Selviana y Leoncia de nuevas ropas de boda. Mi hermana, de industria, se aderezó y compuso con los mismos vestidos que tenía, y, con ponerse una cruz de diamantes sobre su



hermosa frente y unas perlas en sus orejas (joyas de tanto valor que hasta ahora nadie les ha sabido dar su justo precio, como lo veréis cuando os las enseñe), mostró ser imagen sobre el mortal curso levantada. Llevaba asidas de las manos a Selviana y a Leoncia, y, puesta encima del teatro, donde el tálamo estaba, llamó y hizo llegar junto a sí a Carino y a Solercio. Carino llegó temblando y confuso de no saber lo que yo había negociado, y, estando ya el sacerdote a punto para darles las manos y hacer las católicas ceremonias que se usan, mi hermana hizo señales que la escuchasen. Luego se estendió un mudo silencio por toda la gente, tan callado que apenas los aires se movían. Viéndose, pues, prestar grato oído de todos, dijo en alta y sonora voz: "Esto quiere el cielo". Y, tomando por la mano a Selviana, se la entregó a Solercio, y, asiendo de la de Leoncia, se la dio a Carino. "Esto, señores -prosiguió mi hermana-, es, como ya he dicho, ordenación del cielo, y gusto no accidental, sino propio destos venturosos desposados, como lo muestra la alegría de sus rostros y el sí que pronuncian sus lenguas". Abrazáronse los cuatro, con cuya señal todos los circunstantes aprobaron su truco, y confirmaron, como ya he dicho, ser sobrenatural el entendimiento y belleza de mi hermana, pues así había trocado aquellos casi hechos casamientos con sólo mandarlo.

»Celebróse la fiesta, y luego salieron de entre las barcas del río cuatro despalmadas, vistosas por las diversas colores con que venían pintadas, y los remos, que eran seis de cada banda, ni más ni menos; las banderetas, que venían muchas por los filaretos, ansimismo eran de varios colores; los doce remeros de cada una venían vestidos de blanquísimo y delgado lienzo, de aquel mismo modo que yo vine cuando entré la vez primera en esta isla. Luego conocí que querían las barcas correr el palio, que se mostraba puesto en el árbol de otra barca, desviada de las cuatro como tres carreras de caballo. Era el palio de tafetán verde listado de oro, vistoso y grande, pues alcanzaba a besar y aun a pasearse por las aguas. El rumor de la gente y el son de los instrumentos era tan grande que no se dejaba entender lo que mandaba el capitán del mar, que en otra pintada barca venía. Apartáronse las enramadas barcas a una y otra parte del río, dejando un espacio llano en medio, por donde las cuatro competidoras barcas volasen, sin estorbar la vista a la infinita gente que desde el tálamo y desde ambas riberas estaba atenta a mirarlas; y, estando ya los bogadores asidos de las manillas de los remos, descubiertos los brazos, donde se parecían los gruesos nervios, las anchas venas y los torcidos músculos, atendían la señal de la partida, impacientes por la tardanza, y fogosos, bien así como lo suele estar el generoso can de Irlanda cuando su dueño no le quiere soltar de la traílla a hacer la presa que a la vista se le muestra.

»Llegó, en fin, la señal esperada, y a un mismo tiempo arrancaron todas cuatro

barcas, que no por el agua, sino por el viento parecía que volaban: una dellas, que llevaba por insignia un vendado Cupido, se adelantó de las demás casi tres cuerpos de la misma barca, cuya ventaja dio esperanza a todos cuantos la miraban de que ella sería la primera que llegase a ganar el deseado premio; otra, que venía tras ella, iba alentando sus esperanzas, confiada en el tesón durísimo de sus remeros; pero, viendo que la primera en ningún modo desmayaba, estuvieron por soltar los remos sus bogadores. Pero son diferentes los fines y acontecimientos de las cosas de aquello que se imagina, porque, aunque es ley que, los combates y contiendas, que ninguno de los que miran favorezca a ninguna de las partes con señales, con voces o con otro algún género que parezca que pueda servir de aviso al combatiente, viendo la gente de la ribera que la barca de la insignia de Cupido se aventajaba tanto a las demás, sin mirar a leyes, creyendo que ya la victoria era suya, dijeron a voces muchos: "¡Cupido vence! ¡El Amor es invencible!" A cuyas voces, por escuchallas, parece que aflojaron un tanto los remeros del Amor.

»Aprovechóse de esta ocasión la segunda barca, que detrás de la del Amor venía, la cual traía por insignia al Interés en figura de un gigante pequeño, pero muy ricamente aderezado, y impelió los remos con tanta fuerza que llegó a igualarse el Interés con el Amor, y, arrimándosele a un costado, le hizo pedazos todos los remos de la diestra banda, habiendo primero la del Interés recogido los suyos y pasado adelante, dejando burladas las esperanzas de los que primero habían cantado la victoria por el Amor; y volvieron a decir: "¡El Interés vence! ¡El Interés vence!"

»La barca tercera traía por insignia a la Diligencia, en figura de una mujer desnuda, llena de alas por todo el cuerpo; que, a traer trompeta en las manos, antes pareciera Fama que Diligencia. Viendo el buen suceso del Interés, alentó su confianza, y sus remeros se esforzaron de modo que llegaron a igualar con el Interés; pero, por el mal gobierno del timonero, se embarazó con las dos barcas primeras, de modo que los unos ni los otros remos fueron de provecho. Viendo lo cual la postrera, que traía por insignia a la Buena Fortuna, cuando estaba desmayada y casi para dejar la empresa, viendo el intricado enredo de las demás barcas, desviándose algún tanto de ellas por no caer en el mismo embarazo, apretó, como decirse suele, los puños y, deslizándose por un lado, pasó delante de todas. Cambiáronse los gritos de los que miraban, cuyas voces sirvieron de aliento a su bogadores, que, embebidos en el gusto de verse mejorados, les parecía que si los que quedaban atrás entonces les llevaran la misma ventaja, no dudaran de alcanzarlos ni de ganar el premio, como lo ganaron, más por ventura que por ligereza.

»En fin, la Buena Fortuna fue la que la tuvo buena entonces, y la mía de agora

no lo sería si yo adelante pasase con el cuento de mis muchos y estraños sucesos.» Y así, os ruego, señores, dejemos esto en este punto, que esta noche le daré fin, si es posible que le puedan tener mis desventuras.

Esto dijo Periandro a tiempo que al enfermo Antonio le tomó un terrible desmayo; viendo lo cual su padre, casi como adevino de dónde procedía, los dejó a todos, y se fue, como después parecerá, a buscar a la Cenotia, con la cual le sucedió lo que se dirá en el siguiente capítulo.

## Capítulo once del segundo libro

PARÉCEME que si no se arrimara la paciencia al gusto que tenían Arnaldo y Policarpo de mirar a Auristela, y Sinforosa de ver a Periandro, ya la hubieran perdido escuchando su larga plática, de quien juzgaron Mauricio y Ladislao que había sido algo larga y traída no muy a propósito, pues, para contar sus desgracias propias, no había para qué contar los placeres ajenos. Con todo eso, les dio gusto y quedaron con él, esperando oír el fin de su historia, por el donaire siquiera y buen estilo con que Periandro la contaba.

Halló Antonio el padre a la Cenotia, que buscaba en la cámara del rey por lo menos; y, en viéndola, puesta una desenvainada daga en las manos, con cólera española y discurso ciego arremetió a ella, diciéndola (la asió del brazo izquierdo y levantando la daga en alto, la dijo):

-Dame, ¡oh hechicera!, a mi hijo vivo y sano, y luego; si no, haz cuenta que el punto de tu muerte ha llegado. Mira si tienes su vida envuelta en algún envoltorio de agujas sin ojos o de alfileres sin cabezas; mira, ¡oh pérfida!, si la tienes escondida en algún quicio de puerta o en alguna otra parte que sólo tú la sabes.

Pasmóse Cenotia, viendo que la amenazaba una daga desnuda en las manos de un español colérico, y, temblando, le prometió de darle la vida y salud de su hijo; y aun le prometiera de darle la salud de todo el mundo, si se la pidiera: de tal manera se le había entrado el temor en el alma.

Y así, le dijo:

-Suéltame, español, y envaina tu acero, que los que tiene tu hijo le han conducido al término en que está; y, pues sabes que las mujeres somos naturalmente vengativas, y más cuando nos llama a la venganza el desdén y el menosprecio, no te maravilles si la dureza de tu hijo me ha endurecido el pecho. Aconséjale que se humane de aquí adelante con los rendidos, y no menosprecie a los que piedad le pidieren, y vete en paz, que mañana estará tu hijo en disposición de levantarse bueno y sano.

-Cuando así no sea -respondió Antonio-, ni a mí me faltará industria para hallarte, ni cólera para quitarte la vida.

Y con esto la dejó, y ella quedó tan entregada al miedo que, olvidándose de todo agravio, sacó del quicio de una puerta los hechizos que había preparado para consumir la vida poco a poco del riguroso mozo, que con los de su donaire y gentileza la tenía rendida.

Apenas hubo sacado la Cenotia sus endemoniados preparamentos de la puerta, cuando salió la salud perdida de Antonio a plaza, cobrando en su rostro las primeras colores, los ojos vista alegre y las desmayadas fuerzas esforzado brío, de lo que recibieron general contento cuantos le conocían.

Y, estando con él a solas, su padre le dijo:

-En todo cuanto quiero agora decirte, ¡oh hijo!, quiero advertirte que adviertas que se encaminan mis razones a aconsejarte que no ofendas a Dios en ninguna manera; y bien habrás echado de ver esto en quince o diez y seis años que ha que te enseñó la ley que mis padres me enseñaron, que es la católica, la verdadera y en la que se han de salvar y se han salvado todos los que han entrado hasta aquí y han de entrar de aquí adelante en el reino de los cielos. Esta santa ley nos enseña que no estamos obligados a castigar a los que nos ofenden, sino a aconsejarlos la enmienda de sus delitos: que el castigo toca al juez y la reprehensión a todos, como sea con las condiciones que después te diré. Cuando te convidaren a hacer ofensas que redunden en deservicio de Dios, no tienes para qué armar el arco, ni disparar flechas, ni decir injuriosas palabras: que, con no recibir el consejo y apartarte de la ocasión, quedarás vencedor en la pelea, y libre y seguro de verte otra vez en el trance que ahora te has visto. La Cenotia te tenía hechizado, y con hechizos de tiempo señalado, poco a poco, en menos de diez días perdieras la vida si Dios y mi buena diligencia no lo hubiera estorbado; y vente conmigo, porque alegres a todos tus amigos con tu vista, y escuchemos los sucesos de Periandro, que los ha de acabar de contar esta noche.

Prometióle Antonio a su padre de poner en obra todos sus consejos, con el ayuda de Dios, a pesar de todas las persuaciones y lazos que contra su honestidad le armasen.

La Cenotia, en esto, corrida, afrentada y lastimada de la soberbia desamorada del hijo, y de la temeridad y cólera del padre, quiso por mano ajena vengar su agravio, sin privarse de la presencia de su desamorado bárbaro; y, con este pensamiento y resuelta determinación, se fue al rey Policarpo y le dijo:

-Ya sabes, señor, cómo, después que vine a tu casa y a tu servicio, siempre he procurado no apartarme en él con la solicitud posible; sabes también, fiado en la verdad que de mí tienes conocida, que me tienes hecha archivo de tus secretos, y sabes, como prudente, que en los casos propios, y más si se ponen de por medio deseos amorosos, suelen errarse los discursos que, al parecer, van más acertados; y por esto querría que, en el que ahora tienes hecho de dejar ir libremente a Arnaldo y a toda su compañía, vas fuera de toda razón y de todo término. Dime: si no puedes presente rendir a Auristela, ¿cómo la rendirás ausente?; ¿y cómo querrá ella cumplir su palabra, volviendo a tomar por esposo a un varón anciano, que en efeto lo eres, que las verdades que uno conoce de sí mismo no nos

pueden engañar, teniéndose ella de su mano a Periandro, que podría ser que no fuese su hermano, y a Arnaldo, príncipe mozo y que no la quiere para menos que para ser su esposa? No dejes, señor, que la ocasión que agora se te ofrece te vuelva la calva en lugar de la guedeja, y puedes tomar ocasión de detenerlos, de querer castigar la insolencia y atrevimiento que tuvo este monstruo bárbaro que viene en su compañía de matar en tu misma casa a aquel que dicen que se llamaba Clodio; que si así lo haces, alcanzarás fama que alberga en tu pecho, no el favor, sino la justicia.

Estaba escuchando Policarpo atentísimamente a la maliciosa Cenotia, que con cada palabra que le decía le atravesaba, como si fuera con agudos clavos, el corazón; y luego luego quisiera correr a poner en efeto sus consejos. Ya le parecía ver a Auristela en brazos de Periandro, no como en los de su hermano, sino como en los de su amante; ya se la contemplaba con la corona en la cabeza del reino de Dinamarca, y que Arnaldo hacía burla de sus amorosos disinios. En fin, la rabia de la endemoniada enfermedad de los celos se le apoderó del alma en tal manera, que estuvo por dar voces y pedir venganza de quien en ninguna cosa le había ofendido. Pero, viendo la Cenotia cuán sazonado le tenía, y cuán prompto para ejecutar todo aquello que más le quisiese aconsejar, le dijo que se sosegase por entonces, y que esperasen a que aquella noche acabase de contar Periandro su historia, porque el tiempo se le diese de pensar lo que más convenía.

Agradecióselo Policarpo, y ella, cruel y enamorada, daba trazas en su pensamiento cómo cumpliese el deseo del rey y el suyo. Llegó en esto la noche; juntáronse a conversación como la vez pasada; volvió Periandro a repetir algunas palabras antes dichas, para que viniese con concierto a anudar el hilo de su historia, que la había dejado en el certamen de las barcas.

## Capítulo doce del segundo libro

*Prosigue Periandro su agradable historia y el robo de Auristela*

LA QUE CON más gusto escuchaba a Periandro era la bella Sinforosa, estando pendiente de sus palabras como con las cadenas que salían de la boca de Hércules: tal era la gracia y donaire con que Periandro contaba sus sucesos. Finalmente, los volvió anudar, como se ha dicho, prosiguiendo desta manera:

-«Al Amor, al Interés y a la Diligencia dejó atrás la Buena Fortuna, que sin ella vale poco la diligencia, no es de provecho el interés, ni el amor puede usar de sus fuerzas. La fiesta de mis pescadores, tan regocijada como pobre, excedió a las de los triunfos romanos: que tal vez en la llaneza y en la humildad suelen esconderse los regocijos más aventajados. Pero, como las venturas humanas estén por la mayor parte pendientes de hilos delgados, y los de la mudanza fácilmente se quiebran y desbaratan, como se quebraron las de mis pescadores, y se retorcieron y fortificaron mis desgracias, aquella noche la pasamos todos en una isla pequeña que en la mitad del río se hacía, convidados del verde sitio y apacible lugar. Holgábanse los desposados, que, sin muestras de parecer que lo eran, con honestidad y diligencia de dar gusto a quien se le había dado tan grande, poniéndolos en aquel deseado y venturoso estado; y así, ordenaron que en aquella isla del río se renovasen las fiestas y se continuasen por tres días.

»La sazón del tiempo, que era la del verano; la comodidad del sitio, el resplandor de la luna, el susurro de las fuentes, la fruta de los árboles, el olor de las flores, cada cosa destas de por sí, y todas juntas, convidaban a tener por acertado el parecer de que allí estuviésemos el tiempo que las fiestas durasen. Pero, apenas nos habíamos reducido a la isla, cuando, de entre un pedazo de bosque que en ella estaba, salieron hasta cincuenta salteadores armados a la ligera, bien como aquellos que quieren robar y huir, todo a un mismo punto; y, como los descuidados acometidos suelen ser vencidos con su mismo descuido, casi sin ponernos en defensa, turbados con el sobresalto, antes nos pusimos a mirar que acometer a los ladrones, los cuales, como hambrientos lobos, arremetieron al rebaño de las simples ovejas, y se llevaron, si no en la boca, en los brazos, a mi hermana Auristela, a Cloelia, su ama, y a Selviana y a Leoncia, como si solamente vinieran a ofendellas, porque se dejaron muchas otras mujeres a quien la naturaleza había dotado de singular hermosura.

»Yo, a quien el estraño caso más colérico que suspenso me puso, me arrojé

tras los salteadores, los seguí con los ojos y con las voces, afrentándolos como si ellos fueran capaces de sentir afrentas, solamente para irritarlos a que mis injurias les moviesen a volver a tomar venganza de ellas; pero ellos, atentos a salir con su intento, o no oyeron o no quisieron vengarse, y así, se desaparecieron; y luego los desposados y yo, con algunos de los principales pescadores, nos juntamos, como suele decirse, a consejo, sobre qué haríamos para enmendar nuestro yerro y cobrar nuestras prendas. Uno dijo: "No es posible sino que alguna nave de salteadores está en la mar, y en parte donde con facilidad ha echado esta gente en tierra, quizá sabidores de nuestra junta y de nuestras fiestas. Si esto es así, como sin duda lo imagino, el mejor remedio es que salgan algunos barcos de los nuestros y les ofrezcan todo el rescate que por la presa quisieren, sin detenerse en el tanto más cuanto: que las prendas de esposas hasta las mismas vidas de sus mismos esposos merecen en rescate". "Yo seré -dije entonces-el que haré esa diligencia; que, para conmigo, tanto vale la prenda de mi hermana como si fuera la vida de todos los del mundo". Lo mismo dijeron Carino y Solercio: ellos llorando en público y yo muriendo en secreto.

»Cuando tomamos esta resolución comenzaba anochecer, pero, con todo eso, nos entramos en un barco los desposados y yo con seis remeros; pero, cuando salimos al mar descubierto, había acabado de cerrar la noche, por cuya escuridad no vimos bajel alguno. Determinamos de esperar el venidero día, por ver si con la claridad descubríamos algún navío, y quiso la suerte que descubriésemos dos: el uno que salía del abrigo de la tierra y el otro que venía a tomarla. Conocí que el que dejaba la tierra era el mismo de quien habíamos salido a la isla, así en las banderas como en las velas, que venían cruzadas con una cruz roja. Los que venían de fuera las traían verdes, y los unos y los otros eran cosarios. Pues, como yo imaginé que el navío que salía de la isla era el de los salteadores de la presa, hice poner en una lanza una bandera blanca de seguro; vine arrimando al costado del navío, para tratar del rescate, llevando cuidado de que no me prendiese. Asomóse el capitán al borde, y, cuando quise alzar la voz para hablarle, puedo decir que me la turbó y suspendió y cortó en la mitad del camino un espantoso trueno que formó el disparar de un tiro de artillería de la nave de fuera, en señal que desafiaba a la batalla al navío de tierra. Al mismo punto le fue respondido con otro no menos poderoso, y en un instante se comenzaron a cañonear las dos naves, como si fueran de dos conocidos y irritados enemigos.

»Desvióse nuestro barco de en mitad de la furia, y desde lejos estuvimos mirando la batalla; y, habiendo jugado la artillería casi una hora, se aferraron los dos navíos con una no vista furia. Los del navío de fuera, o más venturosos, o por mejor decir, más valientes, saltaron en el navío de tierra, y en un instante desembarazaron toda la cubierta, quitando la vida a sus enemigos, sin dejar a



ninguno con ella. Viéndose, pues, libres de sus ofensores, se dieron a saquear el navío de las cosas más preciosas que tenía, que por ser de cosarios no era mucho, aunque en mi estimación eran las mejores del mundo, porque se llevaron de las primeras a mi hermana, a Selviana, a Leoncia y a Cloelia, con que enriquecieron su nave, pareciéndoles que en la hermosura de Auristela llevaban un precioso y nunca visto rescate. Quise llegar con mi barca a hablar con el capitán de los vencedores, pero, como mi ventura andaba siempre en los aires, uno de tierra sopló y hizo apartar el navío. No pude llegar a él, ni ofrecer imposibles por el rescate de la presa, y así, fue forzoso el volvernos, sin ninguna esperanza de cobrar nuestra pérdida; y, por no ser otra la derrota que el navío llevaba que aquella que el viento le permitía, no podimos por entonces juzgar el camino que haría, ni señal que nos diese a entender quiénes fuesen los vencedores, para juzgar siquiera, sabiendo su patria, las esperanzas de nuestro remedio. Él voló, en fin, por el mar adelante, y nosotros, desmayados y tristes, nos entramos en el río, donde todos los barcos de los pescadores nos estaban esperando.

»No sé si os diga, señores, lo que es forzoso deciros: un cierto espíritu se entró entonces en mi pecho, que, sin mudarme el ser, me pareció que le tenía más que de hombre; y así, levantándome en pie sobre la barca, hice que la rodeasen todas las demás y estuviesen atentos a estas o otras semejantes razones que les dije: "La baja fortuna jamás se enmendó con la ociosidad ni con la pereza; en los ánimos encogidos nunca tuvo lugar la buena dicha; nosotros mismos nos fabricamos nuestra ventura, y no hay alma que no sea capaz de levantarse a su asiento; los cobardes, aunque nazcan ricos, siempre son pobres, como los avaros mendigos. Esto os digo, ¡oh amigos míos!, para moveros y incitaros a que mejoréis vuestra suerte, y a que dejéis el pobre ajuar de unas redes y de unos estrechos barcos, y busquéis los tesoros que tiene en sí encerrados el generoso trabajo; llamo generoso al trabajo del que se ocupa en cosas grandes. Si suda el cavador rompiendo la tierra, y apenas saca premio que le sustente más que un día, sin ganar fama alguna, ¿por qué no tomará en lugar de la azada una lanza, y, sin temor del sol ni de todas las inclemencias del cielo, procurará ganar con el sustento fama que le engrandezca sobre los demás hombres? La guerra, así como es madrastra de los cobardes, es madre de los valientes, y los premios que por ella se alcanzan se pueden llamar ultramundanos. ¡Ea, pues, amigos, juventud valerosa, poned los ojos en aquel navío que se lleva las caras prendas de vuestros parientes, encerrándonos en estotro, que en la ribera nos dejaron, casi, a lo que creo, por ordenación del cielo! Vamos tras él y hagámonos piratas, no codiciosos, como son los demás, sino justicieros, como lo seremos nosotros. A todos se nos entiende el arte de la marinería; bastimentos hallaremos en el navío

con todo lo necesario a la navegación, porque sus contrarios no le despojaron más que de las mujeres; y si es grande el agravio que hemos recibido, grandísima es la ocasión que para vengarle se nos ofrece. Sígame, pues, el que quisiere, que yo os suplico, y Carino y Solercio os lo ruegan, que bien sé que no me han de dejar en esta valerosa empresa".

»Apenas hube acabado de decir estas razones, cuando se oyó un murmúreo por todas las barcas, procedido de que unos con otros se aconsejaban de lo que harían; y entre todos salió una voz que dijo: "Embárcate, generoso huésped, y sé nuestro capitán y nuestra guía, que todos te seguiremos".

»Esta tan improvisa resolución de todos me sirvió de felice auspicio, y, por temer que la dilación de poner en obra mi buen pensamiento no les diese ocasión de madurar su discurso, me adelanté con mi barco, al cual siguieron otros casi cuarenta. Llegué a reconocer el navío, entré dentro, escudriñéle todo, miré lo que tenía y lo que le faltaba, y hallé todo lo que me pudo pedir el deseo que fuese necesario para el viaje. Aconsejéles que ninguno volviese a tierra, por quitar la ocasión de que el llanto de las mujeres y el de los queridos hijos no fuese parte para dejar de poner en efeto resolución tan gallarda. Todos lo hicieron así, y desde allí se despidieron con la imaginación de sus padres, hijos y mujeres: ¡caso extraño, y que ha menester que la cortesía ayude a darle crédito! Ninguno volvió a tierra, ni se acomodó de más vestidos de aquellos con que había entrado en el navío, en el cual, sin repartir los oficios, todos servían de marineros y de pilotos, excepto yo, que fui nombrado por capitán por gusto de todos. Y, encomendándome a Dios, comencé luego a ejercer mi oficio, y lo primero que mandé fue desembarazar el navío de los muertos que habían sido en la pasada refriega y limpiarle de la sangre de que estaba lleno; ordené que se buscasen todas las armas, así ofensivas como defensivas, que en él había, y, repartiéndolas entre todos, di a cada uno la que a mi parecer mejor le estaba; requerí los bastimentos, y, conforme a la gente, tanteé para cuántos días serían bastantes, poco más a menos. Hecho esto, y hecha oración al cielo, suplicándole encaminase nuestro viaje y favoreciese nuestros tan honrados pensamientos, mandé izar las velas, que aún se estaban atadas a las entenas, y que las diéramos al viento, que, como se ha dicho, sopla de la tierra, y, tan alegres como atrevidos y tan atrevidos como confiados, comenzamos a navegar por la misma derrota que nos pareció que llevaba el navío de la presa.» Veisme aquí, señores que me estáis escuchando, hecho pescador y casamentero rico con mi querida hermana y pobre sin ella, robado de salteadores, y subido al grado de capitán contra ellos; que las vueltas de mi fortuna no tienen un punto donde paren, ni términos que las encierren.

-No más -dijo a esta sazón Arnaldo-; no más, Periandro amigo; que, puesto

que tú no te canses de contar tus desgracias, a nosotros nos fatiga el oírlas, por ser tantas.

A lo que respondió Periandro:

-Yo, señor Arnaldo, soy hecho como esto que se llama lugar, que es donde todas las cosas caben, y no hay ninguna fuera del lugar, y en mí le tienen todas las que son desgraciadas, aunque, por haber hallado a mi hermana Auristela, las juzgo por dichosas; que el mal que se acaba sin acabar la vida, no lo es.

A esto dijo Transila:

-Yo por mí digo, Periandro, que no entiendo esa razón; sólo entiendo que le será muy grande, si no cumplís el deseo que todos tenemos de saber los sucesos de vuestra historia, que me va pareciendo ser tales que han de dar ocasión a muchas lenguas que las cuenten y muchas injuriosas plumas que la escriban. Suspensa me tiene el veros capitán de salteadores (juzgué merecer este nombre vuestros pescadores valientes), y estaré esperando, también suspensa, cuál fue la primera hazaña que hicistes, y la aventura primera con que encontrastes.

-Esta noche, señora -respondió Periandro-, daré fin, si fuere posible, al cuento, que aún, hasta agora, se está en sus principios.

Quedando todos de acuerdo que aquella noche volviesen a la misma plática, por entonces dio fin Periandro a la suya.

## Capítulo trece del segundo libro

*Da cuenta Periandro de un notable caso que le sucedió en el mar*

LA SALUD del enhechizado Antonio volvió su gallardía a su primera entereza, y con ella se volvieron a renovar en Cenotia sus mal nacidos deseos, los cuales también renovaron en su corazón los temores de verse de él ausente: que los desahuciados de tener en sus males remedio, nunca acaban de desengañarse que lo están, en tanto que veen presente la causa de donde nacen. Y así, procuraba, con todas las trazas que podía imaginar su agudo entendimiento, de que no saliesen de la ciudad ninguno de aquellos huéspedes; y así, volvió a aconsejar a Policarpo que en ninguna manera dejase sin castigo el atrevimiento del bárbaro homicida, y que, por lo menos, ya que no le diese la pena conforme al delito, le debía prender y castigarle siquiera con amenazas, dando lugar que el favor se opusiese por entonces a la justicia, como tal vez se suele hacer en más importantes ocasiones.

No la quiso tomar Policarpo en la que este consejo le ofrecía, diciendo a la Cenotia que era agraviar la autoridad del príncipe Arnaldo, que debajo de su amparo le traía, y enfadar a su querida Auristela, que como a su hermano le trataba; y más, que aquel delito fue accidental y forzoso, y nacido más de desgracia que de malicia; y más, que no tenía parte que le pidiese, y que todos cuantos le conocían afirmaban que aquella pena era condigna de su culpa, por ser el mayor maldiciente que se conocía.

-¿Cómo es esto, señor -replicó la Cenotia-, que, habiendo quedado el otro día entre nosotros de acuerdo de prenderle, con cuya ocasión la tomases de detener a Auristela, ahora estás tan lejos de tomarle? Ellos se te irán, ella no volverá, tú llorarás entonces tu perplejidad y tu mal discurso, a tiempo cuando ni te aprovechen las lágrimas, ni enmendar en la imaginación lo que ahora con nombre de piadoso quieres hacer. Las culpas que comete el enamorado en razón de cumplir su deseo no lo son, en razón de que no es suyo, ni es él el que las comete, sino el amor, que manda su voluntad. Rey eres, y de los reyes las injusticias y rigores son bautizadas con nombre de severidad. Si prendes a este mozo, darás lugar a la justicia; y soltándole, a la misericordia; y en lo uno y en lo otro confirmarás el nombre que tienes de bueno.

Desta manera aconsejaba la Cenotia a Policarpo, el cual, a solas y en todo lugar, iba y venía con el pensamiento en el caso, sin saber resolverse de qué

modo podía detener a Auristela sin ofender a Arnaldo, de cuyo valor y poder era razón temiese; pero, en medio de estas consideraciones, y en el de las que tenía Sinforosa, que, por no estar tan recatada ni tan cruel como la Cenotia, deseaba la partida de Periandro, por entrar en la esperanza de la vuelta, se llegó el término de que Periandro volviese a proseguir su historia, que la siguió en esta manera:

-«Ligera volaba mi nave por donde el viento quería llevarla, sin que se le opusiese a su camino la voluntad de ninguno de los que íbamos en ella, dejando todos en el albedrío de la fortuna nuestro viaje, cuando desde lo alto de la gavia vimos caer a un marinero, que, antes que llegase a la cubierta del navío, quedó suspenso de un cordel que traía anudado a la garganta. Llegué con priesa y cortésele, con que estorbé no se le acertase la vida. Quedó como muerto, y estuvo fuera de sí casi dos horas, al cabo de las cuales volvió en sí, y preguntándole la causa de su desesperación, dijo: "Dos hijos tengo, el uno de tres y el otro de cuatro años, cuya madre no pasa de los veinte y dos y cuya pobreza pasa de lo posible, pues sólo se sustentaba del trabajo de estas manos; y, estando yo ahora encima de aquella gavia, volví los ojos al lugar donde los dejaba, y, casi como si alcanzara a verlos, los vi hincados de rodillas, las manos levantadas al cielo, rogando a Dios por la vida de su padre, y llamándome con palabras tiernas; vi ansimismo llorar a su madre, dándome nombres de cruel sobre todos los hombres. Esto imaginé con tan gran vehemencia que me fuerza a decir que lo vi, para no poner duda en ello. Y el ver que esta nave vuela y me aparta dellos, y que no sé dónde vamos, y la poca o ninguna obligación que me obligó a entrar en ella, me trastornó el sentido, y la desesperación me puso este cordel en las manos, y yo le di a mi garganta, por acabar en un punto los siglos de pena que me amenazaba".

»Este suceso movió a lástima a cuantos le escuchábamos, y, habiéndole consolado y casi asegurado que presto daríamos la vuelta contentos y ricos, le pusimos dos hombres de guarda que le estorbasen volver a poner en ejecución su mal intento, y así le dejamos; y yo, porque este suceso no despertase en la imaginación de alguno de los demás el querer imitarle, les dije que "la mayor cobardía del mundo era el matarse, porque el homicida de sí mismo es señal que le falta el ánimo para sufrir los males que teme; y ¿qué mayor mal puede venir a un hombre que la muerte?; y, siendo esto así, no es locura el dilatarla: con la vida se enmiendan y mejoran las malas suertes, y con la muerte desesperada no sólo no se acaban y se mejoran, pero se empeoran y comienzan de nuevo. Digo esto, compañeros míos, porque no os asombre el suceso que habéis visto deste nuestro desesperado: que aun hoy comenzamos a navegar, y el ánimo me está diciendo que nos aguardan y esperan mil felices sucesos".

»Todos dieron la voz a uno para responder por todos, el cual desta manera

dijo: "Valeroso capitán, en las cosas que mucho se consideran, siempre se hallan muchas dificultades, y en los hechos valerosos que se acometen, alguna parte se ha de dar a la razón y muchas a la ventura; y en la buena que hemos tenido en haberte elegido por nuestro capitán, vamos seguros y confiados de alcanzar los buenos sucesos que dices. Quédense nuestras mujeres, quédense nuestros hijos, lloren nuestros ancianos padres, visite la pobreza a todos; que los cielos, que sustentan los gusarapos del agua, tendrán cuidado de sustentar los hombres de la tierra. Manda, señor, izar las velas; pon centinelas en las gavia por ver si descubren en qué podamos mostrar que, no temerarios, sino atrevidos, son los que aquí vamos a servirte".

»Agradéciles la respuesta, hice izar todas las velas, y, habiendo navegado aquel día, al amanecer del siguiente, la centinela de la gavia mayor dijo a grandes voces: "¡Navío!, ¡navío!" Preguntáronle qué derrota llevaba, y que de qué tamaño parecía. Respondió que era tan grande como el nuestro, y que le teníamos por la proa. "Alto, pues -dije-, amigos, tomad las armas en las manos, y mostrad con éstos, si son cosarios, el valor que os ha hecho dejar vuestras redes". Hice luego cargar las velas, y en poco más de dos horas descubrimos y alcanzamos el navío, al cual embestimos de golpe, y, sin hallar defensa alguna, saltaron en él más de cuarenta de mis soldados, que no tuvieron en quien ensangrentar las espadas, porque solamente traía algunos marineros y gente de servicio; y, mirándolo bien todo, hallaron en un apartamiento puestos en un cepo de hierro por la garganta, desviados uno de otro casi dos varas, a un hombre de muy buen parecer y a una mujer más que medianamente hermosa; y en otro aposento hallaron, tendido en un rico lecho, a un venerable anciano, de tanta autoridad que obligó su presencia a que todos leuviésemos respeto. No se movió del lecho, porque no podía; pero, levantándose un poco, alzó la cabeza y dijo: "Envainad, señores, vuestras espadas, que en este navío no hallaréis ofensores en quien ejercitarlas; y si la necesidad os hace y fuerza a usar este oficio de buscar vuestra ventura a costa de las ajenas, a parte habéis llegado que os hará dichosos, no porque en este navío haya riquezas ni alhajas que os enriquezcan, sino porque yo voy en él, que soy Leopoldio, el rey de los dánaos".

»Este nombre de rey me avivó el deseo de saber qué sucesos habían traído a un rey estar tan solo y tan sin defensa alguna. Lleguéme a él, y preguntéle si era verdad lo que decía, porque, aunque su grave presencia prometía serlo, el poco aparato con que navegaba hacía poner en duda el creerle. "Manda, señor -respondió el anciano-, que esta gente se sosiegue, y escúchame un poco, que en breves razones te contaré cosas grandes". Sosegáronse mis compañeros, y ellos y yo estuvimos atentos a lo que decir quería, que fue esto: "El cielo me hizo rey del reino de Dána, que heredé de mis padres, que también fueron reyes y lo

heredaron de sus pasados, sin haberles introducido a serlo la tiranía, ni otra negociación alguna. Caséme en mi mocedad con una mujer mi igual; murióse, sin dejarme sucesión alguna. Corrió el tiempo, y muchos años me contuve en los límites de una honesta viudez; pero, al fin, por culpa mía, que de los pecados que se cometen nadie ha de echar la culpa a otro, sino a sí mismo; digo que, por culpa mía, tropecé y caí en la de enamorarme de una dama de mi mujer, que, a ser ella la que debía, hoy fuera el día que fuera reina, y no se viera atada y puesta en un cepo, como ya debéis de haber visto. Ésta, pues, pareciéndole no ser injusto anteponer los rizos de un criado mío a mis canas, se envolvió con él, y no solamente tuvo gusto de quitarme la honra, sino que procuró, junto con ella, quitarme la vida, maquinando contra mi persona con tan estrañas trazas, con tales embustes y rodeos, que, a no ser avisado con tiempo, mi cabeza estuviera fuera de mis hombros en una escarpia al viento, y las suyas coronadas del reino de Dánae. Finalmente, yo descubrí sus intentos a tiempo, cuando ellos también tuvieron noticia de que yo lo sabía. Una noche, en un pequeño navío que estaba con las velas en alto para partirse, por huir del castigo de su culpa y de la indignación de mi furia, se embarcaron. Súpelo, volé a la marina en las alas de mi cólera, y hallé que habría veinte horas que habían dado las suyas al viento; y yo, ciego del enojo y turbado con el deseo de la venganza, sin hacer algún prudente discurso, me embarqué en este navío y los seguí, no con autoridad y aparato de rey, sino como particular enemigo. Hallélos a cabo de diez días en una isla que llaman del Fuego; cogílos y descuidados, y, puestos en ese cepo que habréis visto, los llevaba a Dánae, para darles, por justicia y procesos fulminados, la debida pena a su delito. Esta es pura verdad, los delincuentes ahí están, que, aunque no quieran, la acreditan. Yo soy el rey de Dánae, que os prometo cien mil monedas de oro, no porque las traiga aquí, sino porque os doy mi palabra de ponéros las y enviáros las donde quisiéredes, para cuya seguridad, si no basta mi palabra, llevadme con vosotros en vuestro navío y dejad que en este mío, ya vuestro, vaya alguno de los míos a Dánae, y traiga este dinero donde le ordenáredes. Y no tengo más que deciros".

»Mirábanse mis compañeros unos a otros, y diéronme la vez de responder por todos, aunque no era menester, pues yo, como capitán, lo podía y debía hacer. Con todo esto, quise tomar parecer con Carino y con Solercio y con algunos de los demás, porque no entendiesen que me quería alzar de hecho con el mando que de su voluntad ellos tenían dado; y así, la respuesta que di al rey fue decirle: "Señor, a los que aquí venimos, no nos puso la necesidad las armas en las manos, ni ninguno otro deseo que de ambiciosos tenga semejanza; buscando vamos ladrones, a castigar vamos salteadores y a destruir piratas; y, pues tú estás tan lejos de ser persona deste género, segura está tu vida de nuestras armas;

antes, si has menester que con ellas te sirvamos, ninguna cosa habrá que nos lo impida; y, aunque agradecemos la rica promesa de tu rescate, soltamos la promesa, que, pues no estás cautivo, no estás obligado al cumplimiento de ella. Sigue en paz tu camino, y, en recompensa que vas de nuestro encuentro mejor de lo que pensaste, te suplicamos perdones a tus ofensores; que la grandeza del rey algún tanto resplandece más en ser misericordiosos que justicieros". Quisiérase humillar Leopoldio a mis pies, pero no lo consintió ni mi cortesía ni su enfermedad. Pedíle me diese alguna pólvora si llevaba, y partiese con nosotros de sus bastimentos, lo cual se hizo al punto. Aconsejéle, asimismo, que si no perdonaba a sus dos enemigos, los dejase en mi navío, que yo los pondría en parte donde no la tuviesen más de ofenderle. Dijo que sí haría, porque la presencia del ofensor suele renovar la injuria en el ofendido. Ordené que luego nos volviésemos a nuestro navío con la pólvora y bastimentos que el rey partió con nosotros; y, queriendo pasar a los dos prisioneros, ya sueltos y libres del pesado cepo, no dio lugar un recio viento que de improviso se levantó, de modo que apartó los dos navíos, sin dejar que otra vez se juntasen. Desde el borde de mi nave me despedí del rey a voces, y él, en los brazos de los suyos, salió de su lecho y se despidió de nosotros. Y yo me despido agora, porque la segunda hazaña me fuerza a descansar para entrar en ella.»



## Capítulo catorce del segundo libro

A TODOS dio general gusto de oír el modo con que Periandro contaba su estraña peregrinación, si no fue a Mauricio, que, llegándose al oído de Transila, su hija, le dijo:

-Paréceme, Transila, que con menos palabras y más sucintos discursos pudiera Periandro contar los de su vida, porque no había para qué detenerse en decirnos tan por estenso las fiestas de las barcas, ni aun los casamientos de los pescadores; porque los episodios que para ornato de las historias se ponen no han de ser tan grandes como la misma historia; pero yo, sin duda, creo que Periandro nos quiere mostrar la grandeza de su ingenio y la elegancia de sus palabras.

-Así debe de ser -respondió Transila-, pero lo que yo sé decir es que, ora se dilate o se sucinte en lo que dice, todo es bueno y todo da gusto.

Pero ninguno le recebía mayor, como ya creo que otra vez se ha dicho, como Sinforosa, que cada palabra que Periandro decía, así le regalaba el alma que la sacaba de sí misma. Los revueltos pensamientos de Policarpo no le dejaban estar muy atento a los razonamientos de Periandro, y quisiera que no le quedara más que decir, porque le dejara a él más que hacer; que las esperanzas propincuas de alcanzar el bien que se desea fatigan mucho más que las remotas y apartadas.

Y era tanto el deseo que Sinforosa tenía de oír el fin de la historia de Periandro, que solicitó el volverse a juntar otro día, en el cual Periandro prosiguió su cuento en esta forma:

-«Contemplad, señores, a mis marineros, compañeros y soldados, más ricos de fama que de oro, y a mí con algunas sospechas de que no les hubiese parecido bien mi liberalidad; y, puesto que nació tan de su voluntad como de la mía, en la libertad de Leopoldio, como no son todas unas las condiciones de los hombres, bien podía yo temer no estuviesen todos contentos, y que les pareciese que sería difícil recompensar la pérdida de cien mil monedas de oro, que tantas eran las que prometió Leopoldio por su rescate; y esta consideración me movió a decirles: "Amigos míos, nadie esté triste por la perdida ocasión de alcanzar el gran tesoro que nos ofreció el rey, porque os hago saber que una onza de buena fama vale más que una libra de perlas; y esto no lo puede saber sino el que comienza a gustar de la gloria que da el tener buen nombre. El pobre a quien la virtud enriquece suele llegar a ser famoso, como el rico, si es vicioso, puede venir y viene a ser infame; la liberalidad es una de las más agradables virtudes,

de quien se engendra la buena fama; y es tan verdad esto que no hay liberal mal puesto, como no hay avaro que no lo sea".

»Más iba a decir, pareciéndome que me daban todos tan gratos oídos como mostraban sus alegres semblantes, cuando me quitó las palabras de la boca el descubrir un navío que, no lejos del nuestro, a orza por delante de nosotros pasaba. Hice tocar a arma, y dile caza con todas las velas tendidas y en breve rato me le puse a tiro de cañón; y, disparando uno sin bala, en señal de que amainase, lo hizo así, soltando las velas de alto abajo. Llegando más cerca, vi en él uno de los más estraños espectáculos del mundo: vi que, pendientes de las entenas y de las jarcias, venían más de cuarenta hombres ahorcados; admiróme el caso, y, abordando con el navío, saltaron mis soldados en él, sin que nadie se lo defendiese. Hallaron la cubierta llena de sangre y de cuerpos de hombres semivivos, unos con las cabezas partidas, y otros con las manos cortadas; tal vomitando sangre, y tal vomitando el alma; éste gimiendo dolorosamente, y aquél gritando sin paciencia alguna. Esta mortandad y fracaso daba señales de haber sucedido sobremesa, porque los manjares nadaban entre la sangre, y los vasos mezclados con ella guardaban el olor del vino. En fin, pisando muertos y hollando heridos, pasaron los míos adelante, y en el castillo de popa hallaron puestas en escuadrón hasta doce hermosísimas mujeres, y delante dellas una, que mostraba ser su capitana, armada de un coselete blanco, y tan terso y limpio que pudiera servir de espejo, a quererse mirar en él; traía puesta la gola, pero no las escarcelas ni los brazaletes; el morrión sí, que era de hechura de una enroscada sierpe, a quien adornaban infinitas y diversas piedras de colores varios; tenía un venablo en las manos, tachonado de arriba abajo con clavos de oro, con una gran cuchilla de agudo y luciente acero forjada, con que se mostraba tan briosa y tan gallarda que bastó a detener su vista la furia de mis soldados, que con admirada atención se pusieron a mirarla.

»Yo, que de mi nave la estaba mirando, por verla mejor, pasé a su navío, a tiempo cuando ella estaba diciendo: "Bien creo, ¡oh soldados!, que os pone más admiración que miedo este pequeño escuadrón de mujeres que a la vista se os ofrece, el cual, después de la venganza que hemos tomado de nuestros agravios, no hay cosa que pueda engendrar en nosotras temor alguno. Embestid, si venís sedientos de sangre, y derramad la nuestra quitándonos las vidas; que, como no nos quitéis las honras, las daremos por bien empleadas. Sulpicia es mi nombre, sobrina soy de Cratilo, rey de Bituania; casóme mi tío con el gran Lampidio, tan famoso por linaje como rico de los bienes de naturaleza y de los de la fortuna. Íbamos los dos a ver al rey mi tío, con la seguridad que nos podía ofrecer ir entre nuestros vasallos y criados, todos obligados por las buenas obras que siempre les hicimos; pero la hermosura y el vino, que suelen trastornar los más vivos

entendimientos, les borró las obligaciones de la memoria, y en su lugar les puso los gustos de la lascivia. Anoche bebieron de modo que les sepultó en profundo sueño, y algunos medio dormidos acudieron a poner las manos en mi esposo, y, quitándole la vida, dieron principio a su abominable intento. Pero, como es cosa natural defender cada uno su vida, nosotras, por morir vengadas siquiera, nos pusimos en defensa, aprovechándonos del poco tiento y borrachez con que nos acometían, y con algunas armas que les quitamos, y con cuatro criados que, libres del humo de Baco, nos acudieron, hicimos en ellos lo que muestran esos muertos que están sobre esa cubierta; y, pasando adelante con nuestra venganza, hemos hecho que esos árboles y esas entenas produzcan el fruto que de ellas veis pendiente: cuarenta son los ahorcados, y si fueran cuarenta mil, también murieran, porque su poca o ninguna defensa, y nuestra cólera, a toda esta crueldad, si por ventura lo es, se extendía. Riqueza traigo que poder repartir, aunque mejor diría que vosotros podáis tomar; solo puedo añadir que os las entregaré de buena gana. Tomadlas, señores, y no toquéis en nuestras honras, pues con ellas antes quedaréis infames que ricos".

»Parecieronme tan bien las razones de Sulpicia que, puesto que yo fuera verdadero cosario, me ablandara. Uno de mis pescadores dijo a este punto: "¡Que me maten si no se nos ofrece aquí hoy otro rey Leopoldio, con quien nuestro valeroso capitán muestre su general condición! ¡Ea, señor Periandro: vaya libre Sulpicia, que nosotros no queremos más de la gloria de haber vencido nuestros naturales apetitos!" "Así será -respondí yo-, pues vosotros, amigos, lo queréis; y entended que obras tales nunca las deja el cielo sin buena paga, como a las que son malas sin castigo. Despojad esos árboles de tan mal fruto, y limpiad esa cubierta, y entregad a esas señoras, junto con la libertad, la voluntad de servir las".

»Púsose en efeto mi mandamiento, y, llena de admiración y de espanto, se me humilló Sulpicia, la cual, como persona que no acertaba a saber lo que le había sucedido, tampoco acertaba a responderme, y lo que hizo fue mandar a una de sus damas le hiciese traer los cofres de sus joyas y de sus dineros. Hízolo así la dama, y en un instante, como aparecidos o llovidos del cielo, me pusieron delante cuatro cofres llenos de joyas y dineros. Abriólos Sulpicia, y hizo muestra de aquel tesoro a los ojos de mis pescadores, cuyo resplandor quizá, y aun sin quizá, cegó en algunos la intención que de ser liberales tenían, porque hay mucha diferencia de dar lo que se posee y se tiene en las manos, a dar lo que está en esperanzas de poseerse. Sacó Sulpicia un rico collar de oro, resplandeciente por las ricas piedras que en él venían engastadas, y diciendo: "Toma, capitán valeroso, esta prenda rica, no por otra cosa que por serlo la voluntad con que se te ofrece: dádiva es de una pobre viuda, que ayer se vio en la cumbre de la buena

fortuna, por verse en poder de su esposo, y hoy se vee sujeta a la discreción destos soldados que te rodean, entre los cuales puedes repartir estos tesoros, que, según se dice, tienen fuerzas para quebrantar las peñas". A lo que yo respondí: "Dádivas de tan gran señora se han de estimar como si fuesen mercedes". Y, tomando el collar, me volví a mis soldados y les dije: "Esta joya es ya mía, soldados y amigos míos, y así puedo disponer de ella como cosa propia, cuyo precio, por ser a mi parecer inestimable, no conviene que se dé a uno solo. Tómeme y guárdele el que quisiere, que, en hallando quien le compre, se dividirá el precio entre todos, y quédese sin tocar lo que la gran Sulpicia os ofrece, porque vuestra fama quede con este hecho frizando con el cielo". A lo que uno respondió: "Quisiéramos, ¡oh buen capitán!, que no nos hubieras prevenido con el consejo que nos has dado, porque vieras que de nuestra voluntad correspondíamos a la tuya. Vuelve el collar a Sulpicia: la fama que nos prometes, no hay collar que la ciña ni límite que la contenga". Quedé contentísimo de la respuesta de mis soldados, y Sulpicia admirada de su poca codicia.

»Finalmente, ella me pidió que le diese doce soldados de los míos, que le sirviesen de guarda y de marineros, para llevar su nave a Bituania. Hízose así, contentísimos los doce que escogí sólo por saber que iban a hacer bien. Proveyónos Sulpicia de generosos vinos y de muchas conservas, de que carecíamos. Soplabá el viento próspero para el viaje de Sulpicia y para el nuestro, que no llevaba determinado paradero. Despedímonos de ella; supo mi nombre, y el de Carino y Solercio, y, dándonos a los tres sus brazos, con los ojos abrazó a todos los demás. Ella llorando lágrimas de placer y tristeza nacidas (de tristeza por la muerte de su esposo, de alegría por verse libre de las manos que pensó ser de salteadores), nos dividimos y apartamos.

»Olvidaba de deciros cómo volví el collar a Sulpicia, y ella le recibió a fuerza de mis importunaciones, y casi tuvo a afrenta que le estimase yo en tan poco que se le volviese.

»Entré en consulta con los míos sobre qué derrota tomaríamos, y concluyóse que la que el viento llevase, pues por ella habían de caminar los demás navíos que por el mar navegasen, o, por lo menos, si el viento no hiciese a su propósito, harían bordos hasta que les viniese a cuento. Llegó en esto la noche, clara y serena, y yo, llamando a un pescador marinero que nos servía de maestro y piloto, me senté en el castillo de popa, y con ojos atentos me puse a mirar el cielo.»

-Apostaré -dijo a esta sazón Mauricio a Transila, su hija-que se pone agora Periandro a describirnos toda la celeste esfera, como si importase mucho a lo que va contando el declararnos los movimientos del cielo. Yo, por mí, deseando

estoy que acabe, porque el deseo que tengo de salir de esta tierra no da lugar a que me entretenga ni ocupe en saber cuáles son fijas o cuáles erráticas estrellas; cuanto más, que yo sé de sus movimientos más de lo que él me puede decir.

En tanto que Mauricio y Transila esto con sumisa voz hablaban, cobró aliento Periandro para proseguir su historia en esta forma:

## Capítulo quince del segundo libro

-«COMENZABA a tomar posesión el sueño y el silencio de los sentidos de mis compañeros, y yo me acomodaba a preguntar al que estaba conmigo muchas cosas de las necesarias para saber usar el arte de la marinería, cuando, de improviso, comenzaron a llover, no gotas, sino nubes enteras de agua sobre la nave, de modo que no parecía sino que el mar todo se había subido a la región del viento, y desde allí se dejaba descolgar sobre el navío. Alborotámonos todos, y puestos en pie, mirando a todas partes, por unas vimos el cielo claro, sin dar muestras de borrasca alguna, cosa que nos puso en miedo y en admiración. En esto, el que estaba conmigo dijo: "Sin duda alguna, esta lluvia procede de la que derraman por las ventanas que tienen más abajo de los ojos aquellos monstruosos pescados que se llaman *náufragos*; y si esto es así, en gran peligro estamos de perdernos: menester es disparar toda la artillería, con cuyo ruido se espantan". En esto, vi alzar y poner en el navío un cuello como de serpiente terrible, que, arrebatando un marinero, se le engulló y tragó de improviso, sin tener necesidad de mascarle. "Náufragos son -dijo el piloto-; disparemos con balas o sin ellas, que el ruido y no el golpe, como tengo dicho, es el que ha de librarnos".

»Traía el miedo confusos y agazapados los marineros, que no osaban levantarse en pie, por no ser arrebatados de aquellos vestiglos; con todo eso, se dieron prisa a disparar la artillería, y a dar voces unos, y acudir otros a la bomba para volver el agua al agua. Tendimos todas las velas, y, como si huyéramos de alguna gruesa armada de enemigos, huimos el sobre estante peligro, que fue el mayor en que hasta entonces nos habíamos visto. Otro día, al crepúsculo de la noche, nos hallamos en la ribera de una isla no conocida por ninguno de nosotros, y, con disinio de hacer agua en ella, quisimos esperar el día sin apartarnos de su ribera. Amainamos las velas, arrojamos las áncoras y entregamos al reposo y al sueño los trabajados cuerpos, de quien el sueño tomó posesión blanda y suavemente.

»En fin, nos desembarcamos todos, y pisamos la amenísima ribera, cuya arena, vaya fuera todo encarecimiento, la formaban granos de oro y de menudas perlas. Entrando más adentro, se nos ofrecieron a la vista prados cuyas yerbas no eran verdes por ser yerbas, sino por ser esmeraldas, en el cual verdor las tenían, no cristalinas aguas, como suele decirse, sino corrientes de líquidos diamantes formados, que, cruzando por todo el prado, sierpes de cristal parecían. Descubrimos luego una selva de árboles de diferentes géneros, tan hermosos que

nos suspendieron las almas y alegraron los sentidos; de algunos pendían ramos de rubíes, que parecían guindas, o guindas que parecían granos de rubíes; de otros pendían camuesas, cuyas mejillas, la una era de rosa, la otra de finísimo topacio; en aquél se mostraban las peras, cuyo olor era de ámbar y cuyo color de los que se forma en el cielo cuando el sol se traspone. En resolución, todas las frutas de quien tenemos noticia estaban allí en su sazón, sin que las diferencias del año las estorbasen: todo allí era primavera, todo verano, todo estío sin pesadumbre, y todo otoño agradable, con extremo increíble. Satisfacía a todos nuestros cinco sentidos lo que mirábamos: a los ojos, con la belleza y la hermosura; a los oídos, con el ruido manso de las fuentes y arroyos, y con el son de los infinitos pajarillos, que con no aprendidas voces formado, los cuales, saltando de árbol en árbol y de rama en rama, parecía que en aquel distrito tenían cautiva su libertad y que no querían ni acertaban a cobrarla; al olfato, con el olor que de sí despedían las yerbas, las flores y los frutos; al gusto, con la prueba que hicimos de la suavidad dellos; al tacto, con tenerlos en las manos, con que nos parecía tener en ellas las perlas del Sur, los diamantes de las Indias y el oro del Tíbar.»

-Pésame -dijo a esta sazón Ladislao a su suegro Mauricio-que se haya muerto Clodio; que a fee que le había dado bien que decir Periandro en lo que va diciendo.

-Callad, señor -dijo Transila, su esposa-, que, por más que digáis, no podréis decir que no prosigue bien su cuento Periandro.

El cual, como se ha dicho, cuando algunas razones se entremetían de los circunstantes, él tomaba aliento para proseguir en las suyas; que, cuando son largas, aunque sean buenas, antes enfadan que alegran.

«No es nada lo que hasta aquí he dicho -prosiguió Periandro-, porque, a lo que resta por decir, falta entendimiento que lo perciba, y aun cortesías que lo crean. Volved, señores, los ojos, y haced cuenta que veis salir del corazón de una peña, como nosotros lo vimos, sin que la vista nos pudiese engañar; digo que vimos salir de la abertura de una peña, primero un suavísimo son, que hirió nuestros oídos y nos hizo estar atentos, de diversos instrumentos de música formado; luego salió un carro, que no sabré decir de qué materia, aunque diré su forma, que era de una nave rota que escapaba de alguna gran borrasca; tirábanla doce poderosísimos jimios, animales lascivos. Sobre el carro venía una hermosísima dama, vestida de una rozagante ropa de varias y diversas colores adornada, coronada de amarillas y amargas adelfas. Venía arrimada a un bastón negro, y en él fija una tablachina o escudo, donde venían estas letras: Sensualidad. Tras ella salieron otras muchas hermosas mujeres, con diferentes instrumentos en las manos, formando una música, ya alegre y ya triste, pero todas singularmente

regocijadas.

»Todos mis compañeros y yo estábamos atónitos, como si fuéramos estatuas sin voz, de dura piedra formados. Llegóse a mí la Sensualidad, y con voz entre airada y suave me dijo: "Costarte ha, generoso mancebo, el ser mi enemigo, si no la vida, a lo menos el gusto". Y, diciendo esto, pasó adelante, y las doncellas de la música arrebataron, que así se puede decir, siete o ocho de mis marineros, y se los llevaron consigo, y volvieron a entrarse, siguiendo a su señora, por la abertura de la peña. Volvíme yo entonces a los míos para preguntarles qué les parecía de lo que habían visto, pero estorbólo otra voz o voces que llegaron a nuestros oídos, bien diferentes que las pasadas, porque eran más suaves y regaladas; y formábanlas un escuadrón de hermosísimas, al parecer, doncellas, y, según la guía que traían, éranlo sin duda, porque venía delante mi hermana Auristela, que, a no tocarme tanto, gastara algunas palabras en alabanza de su más que humana hermosura. ¿Qué me pidieran a mí entonces que no diera, en albricias de tan rico hallazgo? Que, a pedirme la vida, no la negara, si no fuera por no perder el bien tan sin pensarlo hallado.

»Traía mi hermana a sus dos lados dos doncellas, de las cuales la una me dijo: "La Continencia y la Pudicicia, amigas y compañeras, acompañamos perpetuamente a la Castidad, que en figura de tu querida hermana Auristela hoy ha querido disfrazarse, ni la dejaremos hasta que con dichoso fin le dé a sus trabajos y peregrinaciones en la alma ciudad de Roma". Entonces yo, a tan felices nuevas atento, y de tan hermosa vista admirado, y de tan nuevo y extraño acontecimiento por su grandeza y por su novedad mal seguro, alcé la voz para mostrar con la lengua la gloria que en el alma tenía, y, queriendo decir: "¡oh únicas consoladoras de mi alma; oh ricas prendas por mi bien halladas, dulces y alegres en éste y en otro cualquier tiempo!", fue tanto el ahínco que puse en decir esto, que rompí el sueño, y la visión hermosa desapareció, y yo me hallé en mi navío con todos los míos, sin que faltase alguno de ellos.»

A lo que dijo Constanza:

-¿Luego, señor Periandro, dormíades?

-Sí -respondió-; porque todos mis bienes son soñados.

-En verdad -replicó Constanza-, que ya quería preguntar a mi señora Auristela adónde había estado el tiempo que no había parecido.

-De tal manera -respondió Auristela- ha contado su sueño mi hermano, que me iba haciendo dudar si era verdad o no lo que decía.

A lo que añadió Mauricio:

-Esas son fuerzas de la imaginación, en quien suelen representarse las cosas con tanta vehemencia que se aprehenden de la memoria, de manera que quedan en ella, siendo mentiras, como si fueran verdades.



A todo esto callaba Arnaldo, y consideraba los afectos y demostraciones con que Periandro contaba su historia, y de ninguno dellos podía sacar en limpio las sospechas que en su alma había infundido el ya muerto maldiciente Clodio, de no ser Auristela y Periandro verdaderos hermanos.

Con todo eso, dijo:

-Prosigue, Periandro, tu cuento, sin repetir sueños, porque los ánimos trabajados siempre los engendran muchos y confusos, y porque la sin par Sinforosa está esperando que llegues a decir de dónde venías la primera vez que a esta isla llegaste, de donde saliste coronado de vencedor de las fiestas que por la elección de su padre cada año en ella se hacen.

-El gusto de lo que soñé -respondió Periandro-me hizo no advertir de cuán poco fruto son las digresiones en cualquiera narración, cuando ha de ser sucinta y no dilatada.

Callaba Policarpo, ocupando la vista en mirar a Auristela y el pensamiento en pensar en ella; y así, para él importaba muy poco, o nada, que callase o que hablase Periandro, el cual, advertido ya de que algunos se cansaban de su larga plática, determinó de proseguirla abreviándola y siguiéndola en las menos palabras que pudiese. Y así, dijo:

## Capítulo diez y seis del segundo libro

*Prosigue Periandro su historia*

-«DESPERTÉ del sueño, como he dicho. Tomé consejo con mis compañeros qué derrota tomaríamos, y salió decretado que por donde el viento nos llevase; que, pues íbamos en busca de cosarios, los cuales nunca navegan contra viento, era cierto el hallarlos. Y había llegado a tanto mi simpleza, que pregunté a Carino y a Solercio si habían visto a sus esposas en compañía de mi hermana Auristela cuando yo la vi soñando. Riéronse de mi pregunta y obligáronme y aun forzáronme a que les contase mi sueño.

»Dos meses anduvimos por el mar sin que nos sucediese cosa de consideración alguna, puesto que le escombramos de más de sesenta navíos de cosarios, que, por serlo verdaderos, adjudicamos sus robos a nuestro navío y le llenamos de innumerables despojos, con que mis compañeros iban alegres, y no les pesaba de haber trocado el oficio de pescadores en el de piratas, porque ellos no eran ladrones sino de ladrones, ni robaban sino lo robado.

»Sucedió, pues, que un porfiado viento nos salteó una noche, que, sin dar lugar a que amainásemos algún tanto o templásemos las velas, en aquel término que las halló, las tendió y acosó de modo que, como he dicho, más de un mes navegamos por una misma derrota; tanto que, tomando mi piloto el altura del polo, donde nos tomó el viento, y tanteando las leguas que hacíamos por hora, y los días que habíamos navegado, hallamos ser cuatrocientas leguas poco más o menos. Volvió el piloto a tomar la altura, y vio que estaba debajo del Norte, en el paraje de Noruega, y, con voz grande y mayor tristeza, dijo: "Desdichados de nosotros, que si el viento no nos concede a dar la vuelta para seguir otro camino, en éste se acabará el de nuestra vida, porque estamos en el mar Glacial; digo, en el mar helado, y si aquí nos saltea el hielo, quedaremos empedrados en estas aguas". Apenas hubo dicho esto, cuando sentimos que el navío tocaba por los lados y por la quilla como en movibles peñas, por donde se conoció que ya el mar se comenzaba a helar, cuyos montes de hielo, que por de dentro se formaban, impedían el movimiento del navío. Amainamos de golpe, porque, topando en ellos, no se abriese, y en todo aquel día y aquella noche se congelaron las aguas tan duramente y se apretaron de modo que, cogiéndonos en medio, dejaron al navío engastado en ellas, como lo suele estar la piedra en el anillo. Casi como en un instante comenzó el hielo a entumecer los cuerpos y a

entristecer nuestras almas, y, haciendo el miedo su oficio, considerando el manifiesto peligro, no nos dimos más días de vida que los que pudiese sustentar el bastimento que en el navío hubiese, en el cual bastimento desde aquel punto se puso tasa, y se repartió por orden, tan miserable y estrechamente que desde luego comenzó a matarnos la hambre. Tendimos la vista por todas partes, y no topamos con ella en cosa que pudiese alentar nuestra esperanza, si no fue con un bulto negro, que a nuestro parecer estaría de nosotros seis o ocho millas; pero luego imaginamos que debía de ser algún navío a quien la común desgracia de hielo tenía aprisionado.

»Este peligro sobrepuja y se adelanta a los infinitos en que de perder la vida me he visto, porque un miedo dilatado y un temor no vencido fatiga más el alma que una repentina muerte: que en el acabar súbito se ahorran los miedos y los temores que la muerte trae consigo, que suelen ser tan malos como la misma muerte. Ésta, pues, que nos amenazaba tan hambrienta como larga, nos hizo tomar una resolución, si no desesperada, temeraria por lo menos, y fue que consideramos que si los bastimentos se nos acababan, el morir de hambre era la más rabiosa muerte que puede caber en la imaginación humana; y así, determinamos de salirnos del navío y caminar por encima del yelo, y ir a ver si, en el que se parecía, habría alguna cosa de que aprovecharnos, o ya de grado o ya por fuerza.

»Púsose en obra nuestro pensamiento, y en un instante vieron las aguas sobre sí formado, con pies enjutos, un escuadrón pequeño, pero de valentísimos soldados; y, siendo yo la guía, resbalando, cayendo y levantando, llegamos al otro navío, que lo era casi tan grande como el nuestro. Había gente en él que, puesta sobre el borde, adivinando la intención de nuestra venida, a voces comenzó uno a decirnos: "¿A qué venís, gente desesperada? ¿Qué buscáis? ¿Venís, por venturas, a apresurar nuestra muerte y a morir con nosotros? ¡Volveos a vuestro navío, y si os faltan bastimentos, roed las jarcias y encerrad en vuestros estómagos los embreados leños, si es posible! Porque, pensar que os hemos de dar acogida será pensamiento vano y contra los preceptos de la caridad, que ha de comenzar de sí mismo. Dos meses dicen que suele durar este yelo que nos detiene; para quince días tenemos sustento: si es bien que le repartamos con vosotros, a vuestra consideración lo dejo". A lo que yo le respondí: "En los apretados peligros, toda razón se atropella, no hay respeto que valga, ni buen término que se guarde. Acogednos en vuestro navío de grado, y juntaremos en él el bastimento que en el nuestro queda, y comámoslo amigablemente, antes que la precisa necesidad nos haga mover las armas y usar de la fuerza". Esto le respondí yo, creyendo no decían verdad en la cantidad del bastimento que señalaban. Pero ellos, viéndose superiores y aventajados en el

puesto, no temieron nuestras amenazas ni admitieron nuestros ruegos, antes arremetieron a las armas y se pusieron en orden de defenderse. Los nuestros, a quien la desesperación, de valientes hizo valentísimos, añadiendo a la temeridad nuevos bríos, arremetieron al navío, y casi sin recibir herida le entraron y le ganaron, y alzóse una voz entre nosotros que a todos les quitásemos la vida, por ahorrar de balas y de estómagos por donde se fuese el bastimento que en el navío hallásemos.

»Yo fui de parecer contrario, y, quizá por tenerle bueno, en esto nos socorrió el cielo, como después diré; aunque primero quiero deciros que este navío era el de los cosarios que habían robado a mi hermana y a las dos recién desposadas pescadoras. Apenas le hube reconocido, cuando dije a voces: "¿Adónde tenéis, ladrones, nuestras almas? ¿Adónde están las vidas que nos robastes? ¿Qué habéis hecho de mi hermana Auristela y de las dos, Selviana y Leoncia, partes mitades de los corazones de mis buenos amigos Carino y Solercio?" A lo que uno me respondió: "Esas mujeres pescadoras que dices las vendió nuestro capitán, que ya es muerto, a Arnaldo, príncipe de Dinamarca".»

-Así es la verdad -dijo a esta sazón Arnaldo-, que yo compré a Auristela y a Cloelia, su ama, y a otras dos hermosísimas doncellas, de unos piratas que me las vendieron, y no por el precio que ellas merecían.

-¡Válame Dios -dijo Rutilio en esto-, y por qué rodeos y con qué eslabones se viene a engarzar la peregrina historia tuya, oh Periandro!

-Por lo que debes al deseo que todos tenemos de servirte -añadió Sinforosa-, que abrevies tu cuento, ¡oh historiador tan verdadero como gustoso!

-Sí haré -respondió Periandro-, si es posible que grandes cosas en breves términos puedan encerrarse.

## Capítulo diez y siete del segundo libro

TODA ESTA tardanza del cuento de Periandro se declaraba tan en contrario del gusto de Policarpo, que ni podía estar atento para escucharle, ni le daba lugar a pensar maduramente lo que debía hacer para quedarse con Auristela. Sin perjuicio de la opinión que tenía de generoso y de verdadero, ponderaba la calidad de sus huéspedes, entre los cuales se le ponía delante Arnaldo, príncipe de Dinamarca, no por elección, sino por herencia; descubría en el modo de proceder de Periandro, en su gentileza y brío, algún gran personaje, y en la hermosura de Auristela el de alguna gran señora. Quisiera buenamente lograr sus deseos a pie llano, sin rodeos ni invenciones, cubriendo toda dificultad y todo parecer contrario con el velo del matrimonio; que, puesto que su mucha edad no lo permitía, todavía podía disimularlo, porque en cualquier tiempo es mejor casarse que abrasarse.

Acuciaba y solicitaba sus pensamientos los que solicitaban y aquejaban a la embaidora Cenotia, con la cual se concertó que, antes de dar otra audiencia a Periandro, se pusiese en efeto su disinio; que fue que de allí a dos noches tocasen un arma fingida en la ciudad y se pegase fuego al palacio por tres o cuatro partes, de modo que obligase a los que en él asistían a ponerse en cobro, donde era forzoso que interviniese la confusión y el alboroto, en medio del cual previno gente que robasen al bárbaro mozo Antonio y a la hermosa Auristela, y asimismo ordenó a Policarpa, su hija, que, conmovida de lástima cristiana, avisase a Arnaldo y a Periandro el peligro que les amenazaba, sin descubrirles el robo, sino mostrándoles el modo de salvarse, que era que acudiesen a la marina, donde en el puerto hallarían una saetía que los acogiese.

Llegóse la noche, y, a las tres horas della, comenzó el arma, que puso en confusión y alboroto a toda la gente de la ciudad. Comenzó a resplandecer el fuego, en cuyo ardor se aumentaba el que Policarpo en su pecho tenía. Acudió su hija, no alborotada, sino con reposo, a dar noticia a Arnaldo y a Periandro de los disinios de su traidor y enamorado padre, que se estendían a quedarse con Auristela y con el bárbaro mozo, sin quedar con indicios que le infamasen. Oyendo lo cual, Arnaldo y Periandro llamaron a Auristela, a Mauricio, Transila, Ladislao, a los bárbaros padre y hijo, a Ricla, a Constanza y a Rutilio, y, agradeciendo a Policarpa su aviso, se hicieron todos un montón, y, puestos delante los varones, siguiendo el consejo de Policarpa, hallaron paso desembarazado hasta el puerto, y segura embarcación en la saetía, cuyo piloto y

marineros estaban avisados y cohechados de Policarpo, que, en el mismo punto que aquella gente que, al parecer, huida se embarcase, se hiciesen al mar, y no parasen con ella hasta Inglaterra, o hasta otra parte más lejos de aquella isla.

Entre la confusa gritería y el continuo vocear ¡al arma, al arma!; entre los estallidos del fuego abrasador, que, como si supiera que tenía licencia del dueño de aquellos palacios para que los abrasase, andaba encubierto Policarpo, mirando si salía cierto el robo de Auristela, y asimismo solicitaba el de Antonio la hechicera Cenotia; pero, viendo que se habían embarcado todos, sin quedar ninguno, como la verdad se lo decía y el alma se lo pronosticaba, acudió a mandar que todos los baluartes, y todos los navíos que estaban en el puerto, disparasen la artillería contra el navío de los que en él huían, con lo cual de nuevo se aumentó el estruendo, y el miedo discurrió por los ánimos de todos los moradores de la ciudad, que no sabían qué enemigos los asaltaban, o qué intempestivos acontecimientos les acometían.

En esto, la enamorada Sinforosa, ignorante del caso, puso el remedio en sus pies y sus esperanzas en su inocencia, y, con pasos desconcertados y temerosos, se subió a una alta torre de palacio, a su parecer, parte segura del fuego que lo demás del palacio iba consumiendo. Acertó a encerrarse con ella su hermana Policarpa, que le contó, como si lo hubiera visto, la huida de sus huéspedes, cuyas nuevas quitaron el sentido a Sinforosa, y en Policarpa pusieron el arrepentimiento de haberlas dado. Amanecía en esto el alba, risueña para todos los que con ella esperaban descubrir la causa o causas de la presente calamidad, y en el pecho de Policarpo anochecía la noche de la mayor tristeza que pudiera imaginarse; mordíase las manos Cenotia, y maldecía su engañadora ciencia y las promesas de sus malditos maestros; sola Sinforosa se estaba aún en su desmayo, y sola su hermana lloraba su desgracia, sin descuidarse de hacerle los remedios que ella podía para hacerla volver en su acuerdo. Volvió en fin, tendió la vista por el mar; vio volar la saetía donde iba la mitad de su alma, o la mejor parte della; y, como si fuera otra engañada y nueva Dido, que de otro fugitivo Eneas se quejaba, enviando suspiros al cielo, lágrimas a la tierra y voces al aire, dijo estas o otras semejantes razones:

-¡Oh hermoso huésped, venido por mi mal a estas riberas, no engañador, por cierto, que aún no he sido yo tan dichosa que me dijese palabras amorosas para engañarme! Amaina esas velas, o témplalas algún tanto, para que se dilate el tiempo de que mis ojos vean ese navío, cuya vista, sólo porque vas en él, me consuela. Mira, señor, que huyes de quien te sigue, que te alejas de quien te busca y das muestras de que aborreces a quien te adora; hija soy de un rey, y me contento con ser esclava tuya; y, si no tengo hermosura que pueda satisfacer a tus ojos, tengo deseos que puedan llenar los vacíos de los mejores que el amor

tiene. No repares en que se abraza toda esta ciudad, que si vuelves, habrá servido este incendio de luminarias por la alegría de tu vuelta. Riquezas tengo, acelerado fugitivo mío, y puestas en parte donde no las hallará el fuego, aunque más las busque, porque las guarda el cielo para ti solo.

A esta sazón, volvió a hablar con su hermana, y le dijo:

-¿No te parece, hermana mía, que ha amainado algún tanto las velas? ¿No te parece que no camina tanto? ¡Ay, Dios! ¿Si se habrá arrepentido? ¡Ay, Dios, si la rémora de mi voluntad le detiene el navío!

-¡Ay, hermana! -respondió Policarpa-, no te engañes, que los deseos y los engaños suelen andar juntos. El navío vuela, sin que le detenga la rémora de tu voluntad, como tú dices, sino que le impele el viento de tus muchos suspiros.

Salteólas en esto el rey, su padre, que quiso ver de la alta torre también, como su hija, no la mitad, sino toda su alma, que se le ausentaba, aunque ya no se descubría.

Los hombres que tomaron a su cargo encender el fuego del palacio le tuvieron también de apagarle. Supieron los ciudadanos la causa del alboroto, y el mal nacido deseo de su rey Policarpo, y los embustes y consejos de la hechicera Cenotia, y aquel mismo día le depusieron del reino y colgaron a Cenotia de una entena. Sinforosa y Policarpa fueron respetadas como quien eran, y la ventura que tuvieron fue tal, que correspondió a sus merecimientos; pero no en modo que Sinforosa alcanzase el fin felice de sus deseos, porque la suerte de Periandro mayores venturas le tenía guardadas.

Los del navío, viéndose todos juntos y todos libres, no se hartaban de dar gracias al cielo de su buen suceso. De ellos supieron otra vez los traidores disinius de Policarpo, pero no les parecieron tan traidores que no hallase en ellos disculpa el haber sido por el amor forjados: disculpa bastante de mayores yerros, que, cuando ocupa a un alma la pasión amorosa, no hay discurso con que acierte, ni razón que no atropelle.

Hacíales el tiempo claro, y, aunque el viento era largo, estaba el mar tranquilo. Llevaban la mira de su viaje puesta en Inglaterra, adonde pensaban tomar el disinio que más les conviniese, y con tanto sosiego navegaban que no les sobresaltaba ningún recelo ni miedo de ningún suceso adverso.

Tres días duró la apacibilidad del mar, y tres días sopló próspero el viento, hasta que al cuarto, a poner del sol, se comenzó a turbar el viento y a desasosegarse el mar, y el recelo de alguna gran borrasca comenzó a turbar a los marineros: que la inconstancia de nuestras vidas y la del mar simbolizan en no prometer seguridad ni firmeza alguna largo tiempo. Pero quiso la buena suerte que, cuando les apretaba este temor, descubriesen cerca de sí una isla, que luego de los marineros fue conocida, y dijeron que se llamaba la de las Ermitas, de que

no poco se alegraron, porque en ella sabían que estaban dos calas capaces de guarecerse en ellas de todos vientos más de veinte navíos; tales, en fin, que pudieran servir de abrigados puertos.

Dijeron también que en una de las ermitas servía de ermitaño un caballero principal francés, llamado Renato, y en la otra ermita servía de ermitaña una señora francesa, llamada Eusebia, cuya historia de los dos era la más peregrina que se hubiese visto.

El deseo de saberla y el de repararse de la tormenta, si viniese, hizo a todos que encaminasen allá la proa. Hízose así, con tanto acertamiento que dieron luego con una de las calas, donde dieron fondo, sin que nadie se lo impidiese; y, estando informado Arnaldo de que en la isla no había otra persona alguna que la del ermitaño y ermitaña referidos, por dar contento a Auristela y a Transila, que fatigadas del mar venían, con parecer de Mauricio, Ladislao, Rutilio y Periandro, mandó echar el esquife al agua, y que saliesen todos a tierra a pasar la noche en sosiego, libres de los vaivenes del mar. Y, aunque se hizo así, fue parecer del bárbaro Antonio que él y su hijo, y Ladislao y Rutilio, se quedasen en el navío guardándole, pues la fee de sus marineros, poco experimentada, no les debía asegurar de modo que se fiasen dellos. Y, en efeto, los que se quedaron en el navío fueron los dos Antonios, padre y hijo, con todos los marineros, que la mejor tierra para ellos es las tablas embreadas de sus naves: mejor les huele la pez, la brea y la resina de sus navíos, que a la demás gente las rosas, las flores y los amarantos de los jardines.

A la sombra de una peña, los de la tierra se repararon del viento, y, a la claridad de mucha lumbre que de ramas cortadas en un instante hicieron, se defendieron del frío, y, ya como acostumbrados a pasar muchas veces calamidades semejantes, pasaron la desta noche sin pesadumbre alguna; y más con el alivio que Periandro les causó con volver, por ruego de Transila, a proseguir su historia, que, puesto que él lo rehusaba, añadiendo ruegos Arnaldo, Ladislao y Mauricio, ayudándoles Auristela, la ocasión y el tiempo, la hubo de proseguir en esta forma:



## Capítulo diez y ocho del segundo libro

-«SI ES VERDAD, como lo es, ser dulcísima cosa contar en tranquilidad la tormenta, y en la paz presente los peligros de la pasada guerra, y en la salud la enfermedad padecida, dulce me ha de ser a mí agora contar mis trabajos en este sosiego; que, puesto que no puedo decir que estoy libre de ellos todavía, según han sido grandes y muchos, puedo afirmar que estoy en descanso, por ser condición de la humana suerte que, cuando los bienes comienzan a crecer, parece que unos se van llamando a otros, y que no tienen fin donde parar, y los males por el mismo consiguiente. Los trabajos que yo hasta aquí he padecido, imagino que han llegado al último paradero de la miserable fortuna, y que es forzoso que declinen: que, cuando en el extremo de los trabajos no sucede el de la muerte, que es el último de todos, ha de seguirse la mudanza, no de mal a mal, sino de mal a bien, y de bien a más bien; y éste en que estoy, teniendo a mi hermana conmigo, verdadera y precisa causa de todos mis males y mis bienes, me asegura y promete que tengo de llegar a la cumbre de los más felices que acierte a desearme. Y así, con este dichoso pensamiento, digo que quedé en la nave de mis contrarios, ya rendidos, donde supe, como ya he dicho, la venta que habían hecho de mi hermana y de las dos recién desposadas pescadoras, y de Cloelia, al príncipe Arnaldo, que aquí está presente.

»En tanto que los míos andaban escudriñando y tanteando los bastimentos que había en el empedrado navío, a deshora y de improviso, de la parte de tierra descubrimos que sobre los hielos caminaba un escuadrón de armada gente, de más de cuatro mil personas formado. Dejónos más helados que el mismo mar vista semejante, aprestando las armas, más por muestra de ser hombres, que con pensamiento de defenderse. Caminaban sobre solo un pie, dándose con el derecho sobre el calcaño izquierdo, con que se impelían y resbalaban sobre el mar grandísimo trecho, y luego, volviendo a reiterar el golpe, tornaban a resbalar otra gran pieza de camino; y desta suerte, en un instante fueron con nosotros y nos rodearon por todas partes; y uno de ellos, que, como después supe, era el capitán de todos, llegándose cerca de nuestro navío a trecho que pudo ser oído, asegurando la paz con un paño blanco que volteaba sobre el brazo, en lengua polaca, con voz clara dijo: "Cratilo, rey de Bituania y señor destos mares, tiene por costumbre de requerirlos con gente armada, y sacar de ellos los navíos que del hielo están detenidos, a lo menos la gente y la mercancía que tuvieren, por cuyo beneficio se paga con tomarla por suya. Si vosotros gustáredes de acetar

este partido sin defenderos, gozaréis de las vidas y de la libertad, que no se os ha de cautivar en ningún modo; miradlo, y si no, aparejaos a defenderos de nuestras armas, continuo vencedoras". Contentóme la brevedad y la resolución del que nos hablaba. Respondíle que me dejase tomar parecer con nosotros mismos, y fue el que mis pescadores me dieron decir que el fin de todos los males, y el mayor de ellos, era el acabar la vida, la cual se había de sustentar por todos los medios posibles, como no fuesen por los de la infamia; y que, pues en los partidos que nos ofrecían no intervenía ninguna, y del perder la vida estábamos tan ciertos como dudosos de la defensa, sería bien rendirnos, y dar lugar a la mala fortuna que entonces nos perseguía, pues podría ser que nos guardase para mejor ocasión. Casi esta misma respuesta di al capitán del escuadrón, y al punto, más con apariencia de guerra que con muestras de paz, arremetieron al navío, y en un instante le desvalijaron todo, y trasladaron cuanto en él había, hasta la misma artillería y jarcias, a unos cueros de bueyes que sobre el hielo tendieron; liándolos por encima, aseguraron poderlos llevar, tirándolos con cuerdas, sin que se perdiese cosa alguna. Robaron ansimismo lo que hallaron en el otro nuestro navío, y, poniéndonos a nosotros sobre otras pieles, alzando una alegre vocería, nos tiraron y nos llevaron a tierra, que debía de estar desde el lugar del navío como veinte millas. Paréceme a mí que debía de ser cosa de ver, caminar tanta gente por cima de las aguas a pie enjuto, sin usar allí el cielo alguno de sus milagros. En fin, aquella noche llegamos a la ribera, de la cual no salimos hasta otro día por la mañana, que la vimos coronada de infinito número de gente, que a ver la presa de los helados y yertos habían venido.

»Venía entre ellos, sobre un hermoso caballo, el rey Cratilo, que, por las insignias reales con que se adornaba, conocimos ser quien era; venía a su lado, asimismo a caballo, una hermosísima mujer, armada de unas armas blancas, a quien no podían acabar de encubrir un velo negro con que venían cubiertas. Llevóme tras sí la vista, tanto su buen parecer como la gallardía del rey Cratilo; y, mirándola con atención, conocí ser la hermosa Sulpicia, a quien la cortesía de mis compañeros, pocos días había, habían dado la libertad que entonces gozaba. Acudió el rey a ver los rendidos, y, llevándome el capitán asido de la mano, le dijo: "En este solo mancebo, ¡oh valeroso rey Cratilo!, me parece que te presento la más rica presa que en razón de persona humana hasta agora humanos ojos han visto". "¡Santos cielos! -dijo a esta sazón la hermosa Sulpicia, arrojándose del caballo al suelo-, o yo no tengo vista en los ojos, o es éste mi libertador Periandro". Y el decir esto y añudarme el cuello con sus brazos fue todo uno, cuyas estrañas y amorosas muestras obligaron también a Cratilo a que del caballo se arrojase, y con las mismas señales de alegría me recibiese. Entonces la desmayada esperanza de algún buen suceso estaba lejos de los pechos de mis

pescadores; pero, cobrando aliento en las muestras alegres con que vieron recebirme, les hizo brotar por los ojos el contento y por las bocas las gracias que dieron a Dios del no esperado beneficio; que ya le contaban, no por beneficio, sino por singular y conocida merced.

»Sulpicia dijo a Cratilo: "Este mancebo es un sujeto donde tiene su asiento la suma cortesía y su albergue la misma liberalidad; y, aunque yo tengo hecha esta experiencia, quiero que tu discreción la acredite, sacando por su gallarda presencia (y en esto bien se ve que hablaba como agradecida, y aun como engañada) en limpio esta verdad que te digo. Éste fue el que me dio libertad después de la muerte de mi marido; éste el que no despreció mis tesoros, sino el que no los quiso; éste fue el que, después de recibidas mis dádivas, me las volvió mejoradas, con el deseo de dármelas mayores, si pudiera; éste fue, en fin, el que, acomodándose, o por mejor decir, haciendo acomodar a su gusto el de sus soldados, dándome doce que me acompañasen, me tiene ahora en tu presencia". Yo entonces, a lo que creo, rojo el rostro con las alabanzas, o ya aduladoras o demasiadas, que de mí oía, no supe más que hincarme de rodillas ante Cratilo, pidiéndole las manos, que no me las dio para besárselas, sino para levantarme del suelo.

»En este entretanto, los doce pescadores que habían venido en guarda de Sulpicia, andaban entre la demás gente buscando a sus compañeros, abrazándose unos a otros; y, llenos de contento y regocijo, se contaban sus buenas y malas suertes: los del mar esageraban su hiel, y los de la tierra sus riquezas. "A mí -decía el uno-me ha dado Sulpicia esta cadena de oro". "A mí -decía otro-esta joya, que vale por dos de esas cadenas". "A mí -replicaba éste-me dio tanto dinero". Y aquél repetía: "Más me ha dado a mí en este solo anillo de diamantes, que a todos vosotros juntos".

»A todas estas pláticas puso silencio un gran rumor que se levantó entre la gente, causado del que hacía un poderosísimo caballo bárbaro, a quien dos valientes lacayos traían del freno, sin poderse averiguar con él. Era de color morcillo, pintado todo de moscas blancas, que sobremanera le hacían hermoso; venía en pelo, porque no consentía ensillarse sino del mismo rey; pero no le guardaba este respeto después de puesto encima, no siendo bastantes a detenerle mil montes de embarazos que ante él se pusieran, de lo que el rey estaba tan pesaroso que diera una ciudad a quien sus malos siniestros le quitara. Todo esto me contó el rey breve y sucintamente, y yo me resolví con mayor brevedad a hacer lo que agora os diré.»

Aquí llegaba Periandro con su plática, cuando, a un lado de la peña donde estaban recogidos los del navío, oyó Arnaldo un ruido como de pasos de persona que hacia ellos se encaminaba. Levantóse en pie, puso mano a su espada, y, con

esforzado denuedo, estuvo esperando el suceso. Calló asimismo Periandro, y las mujeres con miedo, y los varones con ánimo, especialmente Periandro, atendían lo que sería. Y, a la escasa luz de la luna, que cubierta de nubes no dejaba verse, vieron que hacia ellos venían dos bultos que no pudieran diferenciar lo que eran, si uno de ellos con voz clara no dijera:

-No os alborote, señores, quienquiera que seáis, nuestra improvisa llegada, pues sólo venimos a servirlos. Esta estancia que tenéis, desierta y sola, la podéis mejorar, si quisiéredes, en la nuestra, que en la cima desta montaña está puesta; luz y lumbre hallaréis en ella, y manjares, que, si no delicados y costosos, son por lo menos necesarios y de gusto.

Yo le respondí:

-¿Sois, por ventura, Renato y Eusebia, los limpios y verdaderos amantes en quien la fama ocupa sus lenguas, diciendo el bien que en ellos se encierra?

-Si dijérades los desdichados -respondió el bulto-, acertárades en ello; pero, en fin, nosotros somos los que decís, y los que os ofrecemos con voluntad sincera el acogimiento que puede daros nuestra estrechez.

Arnaldo fue de parecer que se tomase el consejo que se les ofrecía, pues el rigor del tiempo que amenazaba les obligaba a ello. Levantáronse todos, y siguiendo a Renato y a Eusebia, que les sirvieron de guías, llegaron a la cumbre de una montañuela, donde vieron dos ermitas, más cómodas para pasar la vida en su pobreza que para alegrar la vista con su rico adorno. Entraron dentro, y, en la que parecía algo mayor, hallaron luces que de dos lámparas procedían, con que podían distinguir los ojos lo que dentro estaba, que era un altar con tres devotas imágenes: la una, del Autor de la vida, ya muerto y crucificado; la otra, de la Reina de los cielos y de la señora de la alegría, triste y puesta en pie del que tiene los pies sobre todo el mundo; y la otra, del amado discípulo que vio más, estando durmiendo, que vieron cuantos ojos tiene el cielo en sus estrellas. Hincáronse de rodillas, y, hecha la debida oración con devoto respeto, les llevó Renato a una estancia que estaba junto a la ermita, a quien se entraba por una puerta que junto al altar se hacía. Finalmente, pues las menudencias no piden ni sufren relaciones largas, se dejarán de contar las que allí pasaron, ansí de la pobre cena como del estrecho regalo, que sólo se alargaba en la bondad de los ermitaños, de quien se notaron los pobres vestidos, la edad, que tocaba en los márgenes de la vejez; la hermosura de Eusebia, donde todavía resplandecían las muestras de haber sido rara en todo extremo. Auristela, Transila y Constanza se quedaron en aquella estancia, a quien sirvieron de camas secas espadañas con otras yerbas, más para dar gusto al olfato que a otro sentido alguno. Los hombres se acomodaron en la ermita, en diferentes puestos, tan fríos como duros y tan duros como fríos.

Corrió el tiempo como suele, voló la noche, y amaneció el día claro y sereno; descubrióse la mar, tan cortés y bien criada que parecía que estaba convidando a que la gozasen volviéndose a embarcar; y sin duda alguna se hiciera así si el piloto de la nave no subiera a decir que no se fiasen de las muestras del tiempo, que, puesto que prometían serenidad tranquila, los efectos habían de ser muy contrarios. Salió con su parecer, pues todos se atuvieron a él; que, en el arte de la marinería, más sabe el más simple marinero que el mayor letrado del mundo. Dejaron sus herbosos lechos las damas, y los varones su duras piedras, y salieron a ver desde aquella cumbre la amenidad de la pequeña isla, que sólo podía bojar hasta doce millas, pero tan llena de árboles frutíferos, tan fresca por muchas aguas, tan agradable por las yerbas verdes, y tan olorosa por las flores, que en un igual grado y a un mismo tiempo podía satisfacer a todos cinco sentidos.

Pocas horas se había entrado por el día, cuando los dos venerables ermitaños llamaron a sus huéspedes, y, tendiendo dentro de la ermita verdes y secas espadañas, formaron sobre el suelo una agradable alfombra, quizá más vistosa que las que suelen adornar los palacios de los reyes. Luego tendieron sobre ella diversidad de frutas, así verdes como secas, y pan no tan reciente que no semejase bizcocho, coronando la mesa asimismo de vasos de corcho con maestría labrados, de fríos y líquidos cristales llenos. El adorno, las frutas, las puras y limpias aguas, que, a pesar de la parda color de los corchos, mostraban su claridad, y la necesidad juntamente, obligó a todos, y aun les forzó, por mejor decir, a que alrededor de la mesa se sentasen. Hiciéronlo así, y, después de la tan breve como sabrosa comida, Arnaldo suplicó a Renato que les contase su historia y la causa que a la estrechez de tan pobre vida le había conducido. El cual, como era caballero, a quien es aneja siempre la cortesía, sin que segunda vez se lo pidiesen, desta manera comenzó el cuento de su verdadera historia:

## Capítulo diez y nueve del segundo libro

*Cuenta Renato la ocasión que tuvo para irse a la isla de las Ermitas*

-«CUANDO los trabajos pasados se cuentan en prosperidades presentes, suele ser mayor el gusto que se recibe en contarlos, que fue el pesar que se recibió en sufrirlos. Esto no podré decir de los míos, pues no los cuento fuera de la borrasca, sino en mitad de la tormenta. Nací en Francia; engendraronme padres nobles, ricos y bien intencionados, criéme en los ejercicios de caballero; medí mis pensamientos con mi estado; pero, con todo eso, me atreví a ponerlos en la señora Eusebia, dama de la reina en Francia, a quien sólo con los ojos la di a entender que la adoraba, y ella, o ya descuidada o no advertida, ni con sus ojos ni con su lengua me dio a entender que me entendía; y, aunque el disfavor y los desdenes suelen matar al amor en sus principios, faltándole el arrimo de la esperanza, con quien suele crecer, en mí fue al contrario, porque del silencio de Eusebia tomaba alas mi esperanza con que subir hasta el cielo de merecerla. Pero la invidia, o la demasiada curiosidad de Libsomi, caballero asimismo francés, no menos rico que noble, alcanzó a saber mis pensamientos, y, sin ponerlos en el punto que debía, me tuvo más invidia que lástima, habiendo de ser al contrario; porque hay dos males en el amor que llegan a todo extremo: el uno es querer y no ser querido; el otro, querer y ser aborrecido; y a este mal no se iguala el de la ausencia, ni el de los celos.

»En resolución, sin haber yo ofendido a Libsomi, un día se fue al rey y le dijo cómo yo tenía trato ilícito con Eusebia, en ofensa de la majestad real y contra la ley que debía guardar como caballero, cuya verdad la acreditaría con sus armas, porque no quería que le mostrase la pluma, ni otros testigos, por no turbar la decencia de Eusebia, a quien una y mil veces acusaba de impúdica y mal intencionada. Con esta información alborotado el rey, me mandó llamar, y me contó lo que Libsomi de mí le había contado; disculpé mi inocencia, volví por la honra de Eusebia; y, por el más comedido medio que pude, desmentí a mi enemigo. Remitióse la prueba a las armas; no quiso el rey darnos campo en ninguna tierra de su reino, por no ir contra la ley católica, que los prohíbe; diónosle una de las ciudades libres de Alemania; llegóse el día de la batalla; pareció en el puesto, con las armas que se habían señalado, que eran espada y rodela, sin otro artificio alguno; hicieron los padrinos y los jueces las ceremonias que en tales casos se acostumbra; partiéronnos el sol, y dejáronnos. Entré yo

confiado y animoso, por saber indubitavelmente que llevaba la razón conmigo y la verdad de mi parte. De mi contrario, bien sé yo que entró animoso, y más soberbio y arrogante que seguro de su conciencia. ¡Oh soberanos cielos! ¡Oh juicios de Dios inescrutables! Yo hice lo que pude; yo puse mis esperanzas en Dios y en la limpieza de mis no ejecutados deseos; sobre mí no tuvo poder el miedo, ni la debilidad de los brazos, ni la puntualidad de los movimientos; y, con todo eso y no saber decir el cómo, me hallé tendido en el suelo, y la punta de la espada de mi enemigo puesta sobre mis ojos, amenazándome de presta y inevitable muerte. "Aprieta -dije yo entonces-, ¡oh más venturoso que valiente vencedor mío!, esta punta de espada, y sácame el alma, pues tan mal ha sabido defender su cuerpo; no esperes a que me rinda, que no ha de confesar mi lengua la culpa que no tengo. Pecados sí tengo yo que merecen mayores castigos, pero no quiero añadirles este de levantarme testimonio a mí mismo; y así, más quiero morir con honra que vivir deshonorado". "Si no te rindes, Renato -respondió mi contrario-, esta punta llegará hasta el cerebro, y hará que con tu sangre firmes y confirmes mi verdad y tu pecado".

»Llegaron en esto los jueces, y tomáronme por muerto, y dieron a mi enemigo el lauro de la vitoria. Sacáronle del campo en hombros de sus amigos, y a mí me dejaron solo, en poder del quebranto y de la confusión, con más tristeza que heridas, y no con tanto dolor como yo pensaba; pues no fue bastante a quitarme la vida, ya que no me la quitó la espada de mi enemigo. Recogióronme mis criados; volvíme a la patria; ni en el camino ni en ella tenía atrevimiento para alzar los ojos al cielo, que me parecía que sobre sus párpados cargaba el peso de la deshonra y la pesadumbre de la infamia; de los amigos que me hablaban, pensaba que me ofendían; el claro cielo para mí estaba cubierto de obscuras tinieblas; ni un corrillo acaso se hacía en las calles, de los vecinos del pueblo, de quien no pensase que sus pláticas no naciesen de mi deshonra; finalmente, yo me hallé tan apretado de mis melancolías, pensamientos y confusas imaginaciones, que, por salir dellas, o a lo menos aliviarlas, o acabar con la vida, determiné salir de mi patria; y, renunciando mi hacienda en otro hermano menor que tengo, en un navío, con algunos de mis criados, quise desterrarme y venir a estas setentrionales partes a buscar lugar donde no me alcanzase la infamia de mi infame vencimiento y donde el silencio sepultase mi nombre.

»Hallé esta isla acaso; contentóme el sitio, y con el ayuda de mis criados levanté esta ermita y encerréme en ella. Despedílos; diles orden que cada un año viniesen a verme, para que enterrasen mis huesos. El amor que me tenían, las promesas que les hice y los dones que les di les obligaron a cumplir mis ruegos, que no los quiero llamar mandamientos. Fuéronse, y dejáronme entregado a mi soledad, donde hallé tan buena compañía en estos árboles, en estas yerbas y

plantas, en estas claras fuentes, en estos bulliciosos y frescos arroyuelos, que de nuevo me tuve lástima a mí mismo de no haber sido vencido muchos tiempos antes, pues con aquel trabajo hubiera venido antes al descanso de gozallos. ¡Oh soledad alegre, compañía de los tristes! ¡Oh silencio, voz agradable a los oídos, donde llegas, sin que la adulación ni la lisonja te acompañen! ¡Oh qué de cosas dijera, señores, en alabanza de la santa soledad y del sabroso silencio! Pero estórbamelo el deciros primero cómo dentro de un año volvieron mis criados y trujeron consigo a mi adorada Eusebia, que es esta señora ermitaña que veis presente, a quien mis criados dijeron en el término que yo quedaba, y ella, agradecida a mis deseos y condolida de mi infamia, quiso, ya que no en la culpa, serme compañera en la pena, y, embarcándose con ellos, dejó su patria y padres, sus regalos y sus riquezas, y lo más que dejó fue la honra, pues la dejó al vano discurso del vulgo, casi siempre engañado, pues con su huida confirmaba su yerro y el mío.

»Recebía como ella esperaba que yo la recibiese, y la soledad y la hermosura, que habían de encender nuestros comenzados deseos, hicieron el efeto contrario, merced al cielo y a la honestidad suya. Dímonos las manos de legítimos esposos, enterramos el fuego en la nieve, y en paz y en amor, como dos estatuas movibles, ha que vivimos en este lugar casi diez años, en los cuales no se ha pasado ninguno en que mis criados no vuelvan a verme, proveyéndome de algunas cosas que en esta soledad es forzoso que me falten. Traen alguna vez consigo algún religioso que nos confiese; tenemos en la ermita suficientes ornamentos para celebrar los divinos oficios; dormimos aparte, comemos juntos, hablamos del cielo, menospreciamos la tierra, y, confiados en la misericordia de Dios, esperamos la vida eterna.»

Con esto dio fin a su plática Renato, y con esto dio ocasión a que todos los circunstantes se admirasen de su suceso, no porque les pareciese nuevo dar castigos el cielo contra la esperanza de los pensamientos humanos, pues se sabe que por una de dos causas vienen los que parecen males a las gentes: a los malos por castigo, y a los buenos por mejora; y en el número de los buenos pusieron a Renato, con el cual gastaron algunas palabras de consuelo, y ni más ni menos con Eusebia, que se mostró prudente en los agradecimientos y consolada en su estado.

-¡Oh vida solitaria! -dijo a esta sazón Rutilio, que, sepultado en silencio, había estado escuchando la historia de Renato-. ¡Oh vida solitaria -dijo-, santa, libre y segura, que infunde el cielo en las regaladas imaginaciones! ¡Quién te amara, quién te abrazara, quién te escogiera, y quién, finalmente, te gozara!

-Dices bien -dijo Mauricio-, amigo Rutilio, pero esas consideraciones han de caer sobre grandes sujetos; porque no nos ha de causar maravilla que un rústico



pastor se retire a la soledad del campo, ni nos ha de admirar que un pobre, que en la ciudad muere de hambre, se recoja a la soledad donde no le ha de faltar el sustento. Modos hay de vivir que los sustenta la ociosidad y la pereza, y no es pequeña pereza dejar yo el remedio de mis trabajos en las ajenas, aunque misericordiosas manos. Si yo viera a un Aníbal cartaginés encerrado en una ermita, como vi a un Carlos V cerrado en un monasterio, suspendiérame y admirárame; pero que se retire un plebeyo, que se recoja un pobre, ni me admira ni me suspende; fuera va deste cuento Renato, que le trujeron a estas soledades, no la pobreza, sino la fuerza que nació de su buen discurso. Aquí tiene en la carestía abundancia, y en la soledad compañía, y el no tener más que perder le hace vivir más seguro.

A lo que añadió Periandro:

-Si, como tengo pocos, tuviera muchos años, en trances y ocasiones me ha puesto mi fortuna que tuviera por suma felicidad que la soledad me acompañara, y en la sepultura del silencio se sepultara mi nombre; pero no me dejan resolver mis deseos, ni mudar de vida la priesa que me da el caballo de Cratilo, en quien quedé de mi historia.

Todos se alegraron oyendo esto, por ver que quería Periandro volver a su tantas veces comenzado y no acabado cuento, que fue así:

## Capítulo veinte del segundo libro

*Cuenta lo que le sucedió con el caballo tan estimado de Cratilo como famoso*

-«LA GRANDEZA, la ferocidad y la hermosura del caballo que os he descrito tenían tan enamorado a Cratilo, y tan deseoso de verle manso, como a mí de mostrar que deseaba servirle, pareciéndome que el cielo me presentaba ocasión para hacerme agradable a los ojos de quien por señor tenía, y a poder acreditar con algo las alabanzas que la hermosa Sulpicia de mí al rey había dicho.

»Y así, no tan maduro como presuroso, fui donde estaba el caballo y subí en él sin poner el pie en el estribo, pues no le tenía, y arremetí con él, sin que el freno fuese parte para detenerle, y llegué a la punta de una peña que sobre la mar pendía; y, apretándole de nuevo las piernas, con tan mal grado suyo como gusto mío, le hice volar por el aire y dar con entrambos en la profundidad del mar; y en la mitad del vuelo me acordé que, pues el mar estaba helado, me había de hacer pedazos con el golpe, y tuve mi muerte y la suya por cierta. Pero no fue así, porque el cielo, que para otras cosas que él sabe me debe de tener guardado, hizo que las piernas y los brazos del poderoso caballo resistiesen el golpe, sin recibir yo otro daño que haberme sacudido de sí el caballo y echado a rodar, resbalando por gran espacio. Ninguno hubo en la ribera que no pensase y creyese que yo quedaba muerto; pero, cuando me vieron levantar en pie, aunque tuvieron el suceso a milagro, juzgaron a locura mi atrevimiento.»

Duro se le hizo a Mauricio el terrible salto del caballo tan sin lisión: que quisiera él, por lo menos, que se hubiera quebrado tres o cuatro piernas, porque no dejara Periandro tan a la cortesía de los que le escuchaban la creencia de tan desaforado salto; pero el crédito que todos tenían de Periandro les hizo no pasar adelante con la duda del no creerle: que, así como es pena del mentiroso que cuando diga verdad no se le crea, así es gloria del bien acreditado el ser creído cuando diga mentira. Y, como no pudieron estorbar los pensamientos de Mauricio la plática de Periandro, prosiguió la suya diciendo:

-«Volví a la ribera con el caballo, volví asimismo a subir en él, y, por los mismos pasos que primero, le incité a saltar segunda vez; pero no fue posible, porque, puesto en la punta de la levantada peña, hizo tanta fuerza por no arrojarle que puso las ancas en el suelo, y rompió las riendas, quedándose clavado en la tierra. Cubrióse luego de un sudor de pies a cabeza, tan lleno de miedo que le volvió de león en cordero y de animal indomable en generoso

caballo, de manera que los muchachos se atrevieron a monosearle, y los caballerizos del rey, enjaezándole, subieron en él y le corrieron con seguridad, y él mostró su ligereza y su bondad, hasta entonces jamás vista; de lo que el rey quedó contentísimo y Sulpicia alegre, por ver que mis obras habían respondido a sus palabras.

»Tres meses estuvo en su rigor el yelo, y éstos se tardaron en acabar un navío que el rey tenía comenzado para correr en conveniente tiempo aquellos mares, limpiándolos de cosarios, enriqueciéndose con sus robos. En este entretanto le hice algunos servicios en la caza, donde me mostré sagaz y experimentado, y gran sufridor de trabajos; porque ningún ejercicio corresponde así al de la guerra como el de la caza, a quien es anejo el cansancio, la sed y la hambre, y aun a veces la muerte. La liberalidad de la hermosa Sulpicia se mostró conmigo y con los míos estremada, y la cortesía de Cratilo le corrió parejas. Los doce pescadores que trujo consigo Sulpicia estaban ya ricos, y los que conmigo se perdieron estaban ganados. Acabóse el navío, mandó el rey aderezarle y pertrecharle de todas las cosas necesarias largamente, y luego me hizo capitán dél a toda mi voluntad, sin obligarme a que hiciese cosa más de aquella que fuese de mi gusto. Y, después de haberle besado las manos por tan gran beneficio, le dije que me diese licencia de ir a buscar a mi hermana Auristela, de quien tenía noticia que estaba en poder del rey de Dinamarca. Cratilo me la dio para todo aquello que quisiese hacer, diciéndome que a más le tenía obligado mi buen término, hablando como rey, a quien es anejo tanto el hacer mercedes como la afabilidad, y, si se puede decir, la buena crianza. Esta tuvo Sulpicia en todo extremo, acompañándola con la liberalidad, con la cual, ricos y contentos, yo y los míos nos embarcamos, sin que quedase ninguno.

»La primer derrota que tomamos fue a Dinamarca, donde creí hallar a mi hermana, y lo que hallé fueron nuevas de que, de la ribera del mar, a ella y a otras doncellas las habían robado cosarios. Renováronse mis trabajos, y comenzaron de nuevo mis lástimas, a quien acompañaron las de Carino y Solercio, los cuales creyeron que en la desgracia de mi hermana y en su prisión se debía de comprender la de sus esposas.»

-Sospecharon bien -dijo a esta sazón Arnaldo.

Y, prosiguiendo, Periandro dijo:

-«Barrimos todos los mares, rodeamos todas o las más islas destos contornos, preguntando siempre por nuevas de mi hermana, pareciéndome a mí, con paz sea dicho de todas las hermosas del mundo, que la luz de su rostro no podía estar encubierta por ser oscuro el lugar donde estuviese, y que la suma discreción suya había de ser el hilo que la sacase de cualquier laberinto. Prendimos cosarios, soltamos prisioneros, restituimos haciendas a sus dueños, alzámonos con las mal

ganadas de otros; y con esto, colmando nuestro navío de mil diferentes bienes de fortuna, quisieron los míos volver a sus redes y a sus casas y a los brazos de sus hijos, imaginando Carino y Solercio ser posible hallar a sus esposas en su tierra, ya que en las ajenas no las hallaban.

»Antes desto, llegamos a aquella isla, que, a lo que creo, se llama Scinta, donde supimos las fiestas de Policarpo, y a todos nos vino voluntad de hallarnos en ellas. No pudo llegar nuestra nave, por ser el viento contrario; y así, en traje de marineros bogadores, nos entramos en aquel barco luengo, como ya queda dicho. Allí gané los premios, allí fui coronado por vencedor de todas las contiendas, y de allí tomó ocasión Sinforosa de desear saber quien yo era, como se vio por las diligencias que para ello hizo.

»Vuelto al navío y resueltos los míos de dejarme, los rogué que me dejaran el barco, como en premio de los trabajos que con ellos había pasado. Dejéronmele, y aun me dejaron el navío, si yo le quisiera, diciéndome que si me dejaban solo, no era otra la ocasión sino porque les parecía ser sólo mi deseo, y tan imposible de alcanzarle como lo había mostrado la experiencia en las diligencias que habíamos hecho para conseguirle. En resolución, con seis pescadores que quisieron seguirme, llevados del premio que les di y del que les ofrecí, abrazando a mis amigos, me embarqué y puse la proa en la Isla Bárbara, de cuyos moradores sabía ya la costumbre y la falsa profecía que los tenía engañados, la cual no os refiero porque sé que la sabéis.

»Di al través en aquella isla, fui preso y llevado donde estaban los vivos enterrados; sacáronme otro día para ser sacrificado; sucedió la tormenta del mar; desbaratáronse los leños que servían de barcas; salí al mar ancho en un pedazo dellas, con cadenas que me rodeaban el cuello y esposas que me ataban las manos; caí en las misericordias del príncipe Arnaldo, que está presente, por cuya orden entré en la isla para ser espía que investigase si estaba en ella mi hermana, no sabiendo que yo fuese hermano de Auristela, la cual otro día vino en traje de varón a ser sacrificada. Conocíla, dolióme su dolor, previne su muerte con decir que era hembra, como ya lo había dicho Cloelia, su ama, que la acompañaba; y el modo como allí las dos vinieron, ella lo dirá cuando quisiere. Lo que en la isla nos sucedió ya lo sabéis; y, con esto y con lo que a mi hermana le queda por decir, quedaréis satisfechos de casi todo aquello que acertare a pedir os el deseo en la certeza de nuestros sucesos.»

## Capítulo ventiuno del segundo libro

NO SÉ SI tenga por cierto, de manera que ose afirmar, que Mauricio y algunos de los más oyentes se holgaron de que Periandro pusiese fin en su plática, porque las más veces, las que son largas, aunque sean de importancia, suelen ser desabridas. Este pensamiento pudo tener Auristela, pues no quiso acreditarle con comenzar por entonces la historia de sus acontecimientos; que, puesto que habían sido pocos desde que fue robada de poder de Arnaldo hasta que Periandro la halló en la Isla Bárbara, no quiso añadirlos hasta mejor coyuntura; ni, aunque quisiera, tuviera lugar para hacerlo, porque se lo estorbara una nave que vieron venir por alta mar encaminada a la isla, con todas las velas tendidas, de modo que en breve rato llegó a una de las calas de la isla, y luego fue de Renato conocida, el cual dijo:

-Esta es, señores, la nave donde mis criados y mis amigos suelen visitarme algunas veces.

Ya en esto hecha la zaloma y arrojado el esquife al agua, se llenó de gente, que salió a la ribera, donde ya estaban para recibirle Renato y todos los que con él estaban. Hasta veinte serían los desembarcados, entre los cuales salió uno de gentil presencia, que mostró ser señor de todos los demás, el cual, apenas vio a Renato, cuando con los brazos abiertos se vino a él, diciéndole:

-Abrázame, hermano, en albricias de que te traigo las mejores nuevas que pudieras desear.

Abrázole Renato, porque conoció ser su hermano Sinibaldo, a quien dijo:

-Ningunas nuevas me pueden ser más agradables, ¡oh hermano mío!, que ver tu presencia; que, puesto que en el siniestro estado en que me veo ninguna alegría sería bien que me alegrase, el verte pasa adelante y tiene excepción en la común regla de mi desgracia.

Sinibaldo se volvió luego a abrazar a Eusebia, y le dijo:

-Dadme también vos los brazos, señora, que también me debéis las albricias de las nuevas que traigo, las cuales no será bien dilatarlas, porque no se dilate más vuestra pena. Sabed, señores, que vuestro enemigo es muerto de una enfermedad, que, habiendo estado seis días antes que muriese sin habla, se la dio el cielo seis horas antes que despidiese el alma, en el cual espacio, con muestras de un grande arrepentimiento, confesó la culpa en que había caído de haberos acusado falsamente; confesó su envidia, declaró su malicia, y, finalmente, hizo todas las demostraciones bastantes a manifestar su pecado. Puso en los secretos

juicios de Dios el haber salido vencedora su maldad contra la bondad vuestra, y no sólo se contentó con decirlo, sino que quiso que quedase por instrumento público esta verdad; la cual sabida por el rey, también por público instrumento os volvió vuestra honra y os declaró a ti, ¡oh, hermano!, por vencedor, y a Eusebia por honesta y limpia, y ordenó que fuédeses buscados, y que, hallados, os llevasen a su presencia para recompensaros con su magnanimidad y grandeza las estrechezas en que os debéis de haber visto. Si éstas son nuevas dignas de que os den gusto, a vuestra buena consideración lo dejo.

-Son tales -dijo entonces Arnaldo-, que no hay acrecentamiento de vida que las aventaje, ni posesión de no esperadas riquezas que las lleguen; porque la honra perdida y vuelta a cobrar con extremo, no tiene bien alguno la tierra que se le iguale. Gocéisle luengos años, señor Renato, y gócele en vuestra compañía la sin par Eusebia, yedra de vuestro muro, olmo de vuestra yedra, espejo de vuestro gusto, y ejemplo de bondad y agradecimiento.

Este mismo parabién, aunque con palabras diferentes, les dieron todos, y luego pasaron a preguntarle por nuevas de lo que en Europa pasaba y en otras partes de la tierra, de quien ellos por andar en el mar tenían poca noticia.

Sinibaldo respondió que de lo que más se trataba era de la calamidad en que estaba puesto por el rey de los dánaos, Leopoldio, el rey antiguo de Dinamarca, y por otros allegados que a Leopoldio favorecían. Contó asimismo cómo se murmuraba que por la ausencia de Arnaldo, príncipe heredero de Dinamarca, estaba su padre tan a pique de perderse, del cual príncipe decían que, cual mariposa, se iba tras la luz de unos bellos ojos de una su prisionera, tan no conocida por linaje que no se sabía quién fuesen sus padres. Contó con esto guerras del de Transilvania, movimientos del Turco, enemigo común del género humano; dio nuevas de la gloriosa muerte de Carlos V, rey de España y emperador romano, terror de los enemigos de la Iglesia y asombro de los secuaces de Mahoma. Dijo asimismo otras cosas más menudas, que unas alegraron y otras suspendieron, y las unas y las otras dieron gusto a todos, si no fue al pensativo Arnaldo, que desde el punto que oyó la opresión de su padre, puso los ojos en el suelo y la mano en la mejilla, y, al cabo de un buen espacio que así estuvo, quitó los ojos de la tierra, y, poniéndolos en el cielo, exclamando en voz alta, dijo:

-¡Oh amor, oh honra, oh compasión paterna, y cómo me apretáis el alma! Perdóname, amor, que no porque me aparto te dejo; espérame, ¡oh honra!, que no porque tenga amor dejaré de seguirte; consuélate, ¡oh padre!, que ya vuelvo; esperadme, vasallos, que el amor nunca hizo ninguno cobarde, ni lo he de ser yo en defenderos, pues soy el mejor y el más bien enamorado del mundo. Para la sin par Auristela quiero ir a ganar lo que es mío, y para poder merecer, por ser

rey, lo que no merezco por ser amante: que el amante pobre, si la ventura a manos llenas no le favorece, casi no es posible que llegue a felice fin su deseo. Rey la quiero pretender, rey la he de servir, amante la he de adorar; y si con todo esto no la pudiere merecer, culparé más a mi suerte que a su conocimiento.

Todos los circunstantes quedaron suspensos oyendo las razones de Arnaldo; pero el que más lo quedó de todos fue Sinibaldo, a quien Mauricio había dicho cómo aquél era el príncipe de Dinamarca, y aquélla, mostrándole a Auristela, la prisionera que decían que le traía rendido. Puso algo más, de propósito, los ojos en Auristela Sinibaldo, y luego juzgó a discreción la que en Arnaldo parecía locura, porque la belleza de Auristela, como otras veces se ha dicho, era tal, que cautivaba los corazones de cuantos la miraban, y hallaban en ella disculpa todos los errores que por ella se hicieran.

Es, pues, el caso que aquel mismo día se concertó que Renato y Eusebia se volviesen a Francia, llevando en su navío a Arnaldo para dejalle en su reino, el cual quiso llevar consigo a Mauricio y a Transila, su hija, y a Ladislao, su yerno, y que en el navío de la huida, prosiguiendo su viaje, fuesen a España Periandro, los dos Antonios, Auristela, Ricla y la hermosa Constanza. Rutilio, viendo este repartimiento, estuvo esperando a qué parte le echarían; pero, antes que la declarasen, puesto de rodillas ante Renato, le suplicó le hiciese heredero de sus alhajas y le dejase en aquella isla, siquiera para que no faltase en ella quien encendiese el farol que guiase a los perdidos navegantes; porque él quería acabar bien la vida, hasta entonces mala. Reforzaron todos su cristiana petición, y el buen Renato, que era tan cristiano como liberal, le concedió todo cuanto pedía, diciéndole que quisiera que fueran de importancia las cosas que le dejaba, puesto que eran todas las necesarias para cultivar la tierra y pasar la vida humana, a lo que añadió Arnaldo que él le prometía, si se viese pacífico en su reino, de enviarle cada un año un bajel que le socorriese. A todos hizo señales de besar los pies Rutilio, y todos le abrazaron, y los más dellos lloraron de ver la santa resolución del nuevo ermitaño; que, aunque la nuestra no se enmiende, siempre da gusto ver enmendar la ajena vida, si no es que llega a tanto la protervidad nuestra, que querríamos ser el abismo que a otros abismos llamase.

Dos días tardaron en disponerse y acomodarse para seguir cada uno su viaje, y, al punto de la partida, hubo cortesés comedimientos, especialmente entre Arnaldo, Periandro y Auristela; y, aunque entre ellos se mezclaron amorosas razones, todas fueron honestas y comedidas, pues no alborotaron el pecho de Periandro. Lloró Transila, no tuvo enjutos los ojos Mauricio, ni lo estuvieron los de Ladislao; gimió Ricla, enternecióse Constanza, y su padre y su hermano también se mostraron tiernos. Andaba Rutilio de unos en otros, ya vestido con los hábitos de ermitaño de Renato, despidiéndose déstos y de aquéllos,

mezclando sollozos y lágrimas todo a un tiempo.

Finalmente, convidándoles el sosegado tiempo, y un viento que podía servir a diferentes viajes, se embarcaron y le dieron las velas, y Rutilio mil bendiciones, puesto en lo alto de las ermitas.

Y aquí dio fin a este segundo libro el autor desta peregrina historia.



## Capítulo primero del libro tercero

COMO están nuestras almas siempre en continuo movimiento, y no pueden parar ni sosegar sino en su centro, que es Dios, para quien fueron criadas, no es maravilla que nuestros pensamientos se muden: que éste se tome, aquél se deje, uno se prosiga y otro se olvide; y el que más cerca anduviere de su sosiego, ése será el mejor, cuando no se mezcle con error de entendimiento.

Esto se ha dicho en disculpa de la ligereza que mostró Arnaldo en dejar en un punto el deseo que tanto tiempo había mostrado de servir a Auristela; pero no se puede decir que le dejó, sino que le entretuvo, en tanto que el de la honra, que sobrepuja al de todas las acciones humanas, se apoderó de su alma. El cual deseo se le declaró Arnaldo a Periandro una noche antes de la partida, hablándole aparte en la isla de las Ermitas. Allí le suplicó -que quien pide lo que ha menester, no ruega, sino suplica-que mirase por su hermana Auristela, y que la guardase para reina de Dinamarca; y que, aunque la ventura no se le mostrase a él buena en cobrar su reino, y en tan justa demanda perdiese la vida, se estimase Auristela por viuda de un príncipe, y, como tal, supiese escoger esposo, puesto que ya él sabía y muchas veces lo había dicho, que por sí sola, sin tener dependencia de otra grandeza alguna, merecía ser señora del mayor reino del mundo, no que del de Dinamarca. Periandro le respondió que le agradecía su buen deseo, y que él tendría cuidado de mirar por ella como por cosa que tanto le tocaba y que tan bien le venía. Ninguna destas razones dijo Periandro a Auristela, porque las alabanzas que se dan a la persona amada, halas de decir el amante como propias, y no como que se dicen de persona ajena. No ha de enamorar el amante con las gracias de otro; tuyas han de ser las que mostrare a su dama; si no canta bien, no le traiga quien la cante; si no es demasiado gentilhombre, no se acompañe con Ganimedes; y, finalmente, soy de parecer que las faltas que tuviere, no las enmiende con ajenas sobras. Estos consejos no se dan a Periandro, que de los bienes de la naturaleza se llevaba la gala, y en los de la fortuna era inferior a pocos.

En esto iban las naves con un mismo viento, por diferentes caminos, que éste es uno de los que parecen misterios en el arte de la navegación; iban rompiendo, como digo, no claros cristales, sino azules; mostrábase el mar colchado, porque el viento, tratándole con respeto, no se atrevía a tocarle a más de la superficie, y la nave suavemente le besaba los labios, y se dejaba resbalar por él con tanta ligereza que apenas parecía que le tocaba. Desta suerte, y con la misma

tranquilidad y sosiego, navegaron diez y siete días sin ser necesario subir ni bajar, ni llegar a templar las velas, cuya felicidad en los que navegan, si no tuviese por descuentos el temor de borrascas venideras, no había gusto con que igualalle.

Al cabo destos o pocos más días, al amanecer de uno, dijo un grumete que desde la gavia mayor iba descubriendo la tierra:

-¡Albricias, señores, albricias pido y albricias merezco! ¡Tierra! ¡Tierra! Aunque mejor diría ¡cielo!, ¡cielo!, porque sin duda estamos en el paraje de la famosa Lisboa.

Cuyas nuevas sacaron de los ojos de todos tiernas y alegres lágrimas, especialmente de Ricla, de los dos Antonios y de su hija Constanza, porque les pareció que ya habían llegado a la tierra de promisión que tanto deseaban.

Echóle los brazos Antonio al cuello, diciéndole:

-Agora sabrás, bárbara mía, del modo que has de servir a Dios, con otra relación más copiosa, aunque no diferente, de la que yo te he hecho; agora verás los ricos templos en que es adorado; verás juntamente las católicas ceremonias con que se sirve, y notarás cómo la caridad cristiana está en su punto. Aquí, en esta ciudad, verás cómo son verdugos de la enfermedad muchos hospitales que la destruyen, y el que en ellos pierde la vida, envuelto en la eficacia de infinitas indulgencias, gana la del cielo. Aquí el amor y la honestidad se dan las manos, y se pasean juntos, la cortesía no deja que se le llegue la arrogancia, y la braveza no consiente que se le acerque la cobardía. Todos sus moradores son agradables, son corteses, son liberales y son enamorados, porque son discretos. La ciudad es la mayor de Europa y la de mayores tratos; en ella se descargan las riquezas del Oriente, y desde ella se reparten por el universo; su puerto es capaz, no sólo de naves que se puedan reducir a número, sino de selvas movibles de árboles que los de las naves forman; la hermosura de las mujeres admira y enamora; la bizarría de los hombres pasma, como ellos dicen; finalmente, ésta es la tierra que da al cielo santo y copiosísimo tributo.

-No digas más -dijo a esta sazón Periandro-; deja, Antonio, algo para nuestros ojos, que las alabanzas no lo han de decir todo: algo ha de quedar para la vista, para que con ella nos admiremos de nuevo, y así, creciendo el gusto por puntos, vendrá a ser mayor en sus extremos.

Contentísima estaba Auristela de ver que se le acercaba la hora de poner pie en tierra firme, sin andar de puerto en puerto y de isla en isla, sujeta a la inconstancia del mar y a la movable voluntad de los vientos; y más cuando supo que desde allí a Roma podía ir a pie enjuto, sin embarcarse otra vez si no quisiese.

Mediodía sería cuando llegaron a Sangián, donde se registró el navío, y donde

el castellano del castillo, y los que con él entraron en la nave, se admiraron de la hermosura de Auristela, de la gallardía de Periandro, del traje bárbaro de los dos Antonios, del buen aspecto de Ricla y de la agradable belleza de Constanza. Supieron ser extranjeros, y que iban peregrinando a Roma. Satisfizo Periandro a los marineros, que los habían traído magníficamente, con el oro que sacó Ricla de la Isla Bárbara, ya vuelto en moneda corriente en la isla de Policarpo. Los marineros quisieron llegar a Lisboa a granjearlo con alguna mercancía.

El castellano de Sangián envió al gobernador de Lisboa, que entonces era el arzobispo de Braga, por ausencia del rey, que no estaba en la ciudad, de la nueva venida de los extranjeros y de la sin par belleza de Auristela, añadiendo la de Constanza, que con el traje de bárbara no solamente no la encubría, pero la realzaba; exageróle asimismo la gallarda disposición de Periandro, y juntamente la discreción de todos, que no bárbaros, sino cortesanos parecían.

Llegó el navío a la ribera de la ciudad, y en la de Belén se desembarcaron, porque quiso Auristela, enamorada y devota de la fama de aquel santo monasterio, visitarle primero, y adorar en él al verdadero Dios libre y desembarazadamente, sin las torcidas ceremonias de su tierra. Había salido a la marina infinita gente a ver los extranjeros desembarcados en Belén; corrieron allá todos por ver la novedad, que siempre se lleva tras sí los deseos y los ojos.

Ya salía de Belén el nuevo escuadrón de la nueva hermosura: Ricla, medianamente hermosa, pero estremadamente a lo bárbaro vestida; Constanza, hermosísima y rodeada de pieles; Antonio el padre, brazos y piernas desnudas, pero con pieles de lobos cubierto lo demás del cuerpo; Antonio el hijo iba del mismo modo, pero con el arco en la mano y la aljaba de las saetas a las espaldas; Periandro, con casaca de terciopelo verde y calzones de lo mismo, a lo marinero, un bonete estrecho y puntiagudo en la cabeza, que no le podía cubrir las sortijas de oro que sus cabellos formaban; Auristela traía toda la gala del setentrión en el vestido, la más bizarra gallardía en el cuerpo y la mayor hermosura del mundo en el rostro. En efeto, todos juntos y cada uno de por sí, causaban espanto y maravilla a quien los miraba; pero sobre todos campeaba la sin par Auristela y el gallardo Periandro.

Llegaron por tierra a Lisboa, rodeados de plebeya y de cortesana gente; lleváronlos al gobernador, que, después de admirado de verlos, no se cansaba de preguntarles quiénes eran, de dónde venían y adónde iban. A lo que respondió Periandro, que ya traía estudiada la respuesta que había de dar a semejantes preguntas, viendo que se la habían de hacer muchas veces: cuando quería o le parecía que convenía, relataba su historia a lo largo, encubriendo siempre sus padres, de modo que, satisfaciendo a los que le preguntaban, en breves razones cifraba, si no toda, a lo menos gran parte de su historia. Mandólos el visorrey

alojar en uno de los mejores alojamientos de la ciudad, que acertó a ser la casa de un magnífico caballero portugués, donde era tanta la gente que concurría para ver a Auristela, de quien sola había salido la fama de lo que había que ver en todos, que fue parecer de Periandro mudasen los trajes de bárbaros en los de peregrinos, porque la novedad de los que traían era la causa principal de ser tan seguidos, que ya parecían perseguidos del vulgo; además, que para el viaje que ellos llevaban de Roma, ninguno le venía más a cuento. Hízose así, y de allí a dos días se vieron peregrinamente peregrinos.

Acaeció, pues, que al salir un día de casa, un hombre portugués se arrojó a los pies de Periandro, llamándole por su nombre, y, abrazándole por las piernas, le dijo:

-¿Qué ventura es ésta, señor Periandro, que la des a esta tierra con tu presencia? No te admires en ver que te nombro por tu nombre, que uno soy de aquellos veinte que cobraron libertad en la abrasada isla Bárbara, donde tú la tenías perdida; halléme a la muerte de Manuel de Sosa Cuitiño, el caballero portugués; apartéme de ti y de los tuyos en el hospedaje donde llegó Mauricio y Ladislao en busca de Transila, esposa del uno y hija del otro; trújome la buena suerte a mi patria; conté aquí a sus parientes la enamorada muerte; creyéronla, y, aunque yo no se la afirmara de vista, la creyeran, por tener casi en costumbre el morir de amores los portugueses; un hermano suyo, que heredó su hacienda, ha hecho sus obsequias, y en una capilla de su linaje, le puso en una piedra de mármol blanco, como si debajo della estuviera enterrado, un epitafio que quiero que vengáis a ver todos, así como estáis, porque creo que os ha de agradar por discreto y por gracioso.

Por las palabras, bien conoció Periandro que aquel hombre decía verdad; pero, por el rostro, no se acordaba haberle visto en su vida. Con todo eso, se fueron al templo que decía, y vieron la capilla y la losa sobre la cual estaba escrito en lengua portuguesa este epitafio, que leyó casi en castellano Antonio el padre, que decía así:

AQUÍ YACE VIVA LA MEMORIA DEL YA MUERTO  
MANUEL DE SOSA COITIÑO, CABALLERO PORTUGUÉS,  
QUE, A NO SER PORTUGUÉS, AÚN FUERA VIVO.  
NO MURIÓ A LAS MANOS DE NINGÚN CASTELLANO,  
SINO A LAS DEL AMOR, QUE TODO LO PUEDE;  
PROCURA SABER SU VIDA Y ENVIDIARÁS SU MUERTE,  
PASAJERO.

Vio Periandro que había tenido razón el portugués de alabarle el epitafio, en el escribir de los cuales tiene gran primor la nación portuguesa. Preguntó Auristela al portugués qué sentimiento había hecho la monja, dama del muerto, de la muerte de su amante, el cual la respondió que, dentro de pocos días que la supo, pasó desta a mejor vida, o ya por la estrechez de la que hacía siempre, o ya por el sentimiento del no pensado suceso.

Desde allí se fueron en casa de un famoso pintor, donde ordenó Periandro que, en un lienzo grande, le pintase todos los más principales casos de su historia: a un lado pintó la Isla Bárbara ardiendo en llamas, y allí junto la isla de la prisión, y un poco más desviado, la balsa o enmaderamiento donde le halló Arnaldo cuando le llevó a su navío; en otra parte estaba la isla Nevada, donde el enamorado portugués perdió la vida; luego la nave que los soldados de Arnaldo taladraron; allí junto pintó la división del esquife y de la barca; allí se mostraba el desafío de los amantes de Taurisa y su muerte; acá estaban serrando por la quilla la nave que había servido de sepultura a Auristela y a los que con ella venían; acullá estaba la agradable isla donde vio en sueños Periandro los dos escuadrones de virtudes y vicios; y allí, junto la nave, donde los peces Náufragos pescaron a los dos marineros y les dieron en su vientre sepultura. No se olvidó de que pintase verse empedrados en el mar helado, el asalto y combate del navío, ni el entregarse a Cratilo; pintó asimismo la temeraria carrera del poderoso caballo, cuyo espanto, de león, le hizo cordero; que los tales con un asombro se amansan; pintó, como en resguño y en estrecho espacio, las fiestas de Policarpo, coronándose a sí mismo por vencedor en ellas; resolutamente, no quedó paso principal en que no hiciese labor en su historia, que allí no pintase, hasta poner la ciudad de Lisboa y su desembarcación en el mismo traje en que habían venido; también se vio en el mismo lienzo arder la isla de Policarpo, a Clodio traspasado con la saeta de Antonio y a Cenotia colgada de una entena; pintóse también la isla de las Ermitas, y a Rutilio con apariencias de santo. Este lienzo se hacía de una recopilación que les escusaba de contar su historia por menudo, porque Antonio el mozo declaraba las pinturas y los sucesos cuando le apretaban a que los dijese. Pero, en lo que más se aventajó el pintor famoso, fue en el retrato de Auristela, en quien decían se había mostrado a saber pintar una hermosa figura, puesto que la dejaba agraviada, pues a la belleza de Auristela, si no era llevado de pensamiento divino, no había pincel humano que alcanzase.

Diez días estuvieron en Lisboa, todos los cuales gastaron en visitar los templos y en encaminar sus almas por la derecha senda de su salvación, al cabo de los cuales, con licencia del visorrey y con patentes verdaderas y firmes de quiénes eran y adónde iban, se despidieron del caballero portugués, su huésped, y del hermano del enamorado, Alberto, de quien recibieron grandes caricias y

beneficios, y se pusieron en camino de Castilla. Y esta partida fue menester hacerla de noche, temerosos que si de día la hicieran, la gente que les seguiría la estorbara, puesto que la mudanza del traje había hecho ya que amainase la admiración.

## Capítulo segundo del tercer libro

*Peregrinos. Su viaje por España. Sucédenles nuevos y estraños casos*

PEDÍAN los tiernos años de Auristela, y los más tiernos de Constanza, con los entreverados de Ricla, coches, estruendo y aparato para el largo viaje en que se ponían; pero la devoción de Auristela, que había prometido de ir a pie hasta Roma, desde la parte do llegase en tierra firme, llevó tras sí las demás devociones; y todos de un parecer, así varones como hembras, votaron el viaje a pie, añadiendo, si fuese necesario, mendigar de puerta en puerta. Con esto cerró la del dar Ricla, y Periandro se escusó de no disponer de la cruz de diamantes que Auristela traía, guardándola con las inestimables perlas para mejor ocasión. Solamente compraron un bagaje que sobrellevase las cargas que no pudieran sufrir las espaldas; acomodáronse de bordones, que servían de arrimo y defensa, y de vainas de unos agudos estoques. Con este cristiano y humilde aparato salieron de Lisboa, dejándola sola sin su belleza, y pobre sin la riqueza de su discreción, como lo mostraron los infinitos corrillos de gente que en ella se hicieron, donde la fama no trataba de otra cosa sino del extremo de discreción y belleza de los peregrinos extranjeros.

Desta manera, acomodándose a sufrir el trabajo de hasta dos o tres leguas de camino cada día, llegaron a Badajoz, donde ya tenía el Corregidor castellano nuevas de Lisboa, cómo por allí habían de pasar los nuevos peregrinos, los cuales, entrando en la ciudad, acertaron a alojarse en un mesón do se alojaba una compañía de famosos recitantes, los cuales aquella misma noche habían de dar la muestra para alcanzar la licencia de representar en público, en casa del Corregidor. Pero, apenas vieron el rostro de Auristela y el de Constanza, cuando les sobresaltó lo que solía sobresaltar a todos aquellos que primeramente las veían, que era admiración y espanto.

Pero ninguno puso tan en punto el maravillarse, como fue el ingenio de un poeta, que de propósito con los recitantes venía, así para enmendar y remendar comedias viejas, como para hacerlas de nuevo: ejercicio más ingenioso que honrado y más de trabajo que de provecho. Pero la excelencia de la poesía es tan limpia como el agua clara, que a todo lo no limpio aprovecha; es como el sol, que pasa por todas las cosas inmundas sin que se le pegue nada; es habilidad, que tanto vale cuanto se estima; es un rayo que suele salir de donde está encerrado, no abrasando, sino alumbrando; es instrumento acordado que

dulcemente alegra los sentidos, y, al paso del deleite, lleva consigo la honestidad y el provecho. Digo, en fin, que este poeta, a quien la necesidad había hecho trocar los Parnasos con los mesones y las Castalias y las Aganipes con los charcos y arroyos de los caminos y ventas, fue el que más se admiró de la belleza de Auristela, y al momento la marcó en su imaginación y la tuvo por más que buena para ser comedianta, sin reparar si sabía o no la lengua castellana. Contentóle el talle, dióle gusto el brío, y en un instante la vistió en su imaginación en hábito corto de varón; desnudóla luego y vistióla de ninfa, y casi al mismo punto la envistió de la majestad de reina, sin dejar traje de risa o de gravedad de que no la vistiese, y en todas se le representó grave, alegre, discreta, aguda, y sobremanera honesta: extremos que se acomodan mal en una farsanta hermosa.

¡Válame Dios, y con cuánta facilidad discurre el ingenio de un poeta y se arroja a romper por mil imposibles! ¡Sobre cuán flacos cimientos levanta grandes quimeras! Todo se lo halla hecho, todo fácil, todo llano, y esto de manera que las esperanzas le sobran cuando la ventura le falta, como lo mostró este nuestro moderno poeta cuando vio descoger acaso el lienzo donde venían pintados los trabajos de Periandro. Allí se vio él en el mayor que en su vida se había visto, por venirle a la imaginación un grandísimo deseo de componer de todos ellos una comedia; pero no acertaba en qué nombre le pondría: si le llamaría *comedia*, o *tragedia*, o *tragicomedia*, porque si sabía el principio, ignoraba el medio y el fin, pues aun todavía iban corriendo las vidas de Periandro y de Auristela, cuyos fines habían de poner nombre a lo que dellos se representase. Pero lo que más le fatigaba era pensar cómo podría encajar un lacayo consejero y gracioso en el mar y entre tantas islas, fuego y nieves; y, con todo esto, no se desesperó de hacer la comedia y de encajar el tal lacayo, a pesar de todas las reglas de la poesía y a despecho del arte cómico. Y, en tanto que en esto iba y venía, tuvo lugar de hablar a Auristela y de proponerle su deseo y de aconsejarla cuán bien la estaría si se hiciese recitanta. Díjole que, a dos salidas al teatro, le lloverían minas de oro a cuestras, porque los príncipes de aquella edad eran como hechos de alquimia, que llegada al oro, es oro, y llegada al cobre, es cobre; pero que, por la mayor parte, rendían su voluntad a las ninfas de los teatros, a las diosas enteras y a las semideas, a las reinas de estudio y a las fregonas de apariencia; díjole que si alguna fiesta real acertase a hacerse en su tiempo, que se diese por cubierta de faldellines de oro, porque todas o las más libreas de los caballeros habían de venir a su casa rendidas a besarle los pies; representóle el gusto de los viajes, y el llevarse tras sí dos o tres disfrazados caballeros que la servirían tan de criados como de amantes; y, sobre todo, encarecía y puso sobre las nubes la excelencia y la honra que le darían en



encargarle las primeras figuras. En fin, le dijo que si en alguna cosa se verificaba la verdad de un antiguo refrán castellano, era en las hermosas farsantas, donde la honra y provecho cabían en un saco.

Auristela le respondió que no había entendido palabra de cuantas le había dicho, porque bien se veía que ignoraba la lengua castellana, y que, puesto que la supiera, sus pensamientos eran otros, que tenían puesta la mira en otros ejercicios, si no tan agradables, a lo menos más convenientes. Desesperóse el poeta con la resoluta respuesta de Auristela; miróse a los pies de su ignorancia, y deshizo la rueda de su vanidad y locura.

Aquella noche fueron a dar la muestra en casa del Corregidor, el cual, como hubiese sabido que la hermosa junta peregrina estaba en la ciudad, los envió a buscar y a convidar viniesen a su casa a ver la comedia, y a recibir en ella muestras del deseo que tenía de servirles, por las que de su valor le habían escrito de Lisboa. Acetólo Periandro, con parecer de Auristela y de Antonio el padre, a quien obedecían como a su mayor. Juntas estaban muchas damas de la ciudad con la Corregidora, cuando entraron Auristela, Ricla y Constanza, con Periandro y los dos Antonios, admirando, suspendiendo, alborotando la vista de los presentes, que a sentir tales efetos les forzaba la sin par bizarría de los nuevos peregrinos, los cuales, acrecentando con su humildad y buen parecer la benevolencia de los que los recibieron, dieron lugar a que les diesen casi el más honrado en la fiesta, que fue la representación de la fábula de *Céfalo y de Pocris*, cuando ella, celosa más de lo que debía, y él, con menos discurso que fuera necesario, disparó el dardo que a ella le quitó la vida y a él el gusto para siempre. El verso tocó los extremos de bondad posibles, como compuesto, según se dijo, por Juan de Herrera de Gamboa, a quien por mal nombre llamaron el Maganto, cuyo ingenio tocó asimismo las más altas rayas de la poética esfera. Acabada la comedia, desmenuzaron las damas la hermosura de Auristela parte por parte, y hallaron todas un todo a quien dieron por nombre Perfección sin tacha, y los varones dijeron lo mismo de la gallardía de Periandro, y de recudida se alabó también la belleza de Constanza y la bizarría de su hermano Antonio. Tres días estuvieron en la ciudad, donde en ellos mostró el Corregidor ser caballero liberal, y tener la Corregidora condición de reina, según fueron las dádivas y presentes que hizo a Auristela y a los demás peregrinos, los cuales, mostrándose agradecidos y obligados, prometieron de tener cuenta de darla de sus sucesos, de dondequiera que estuviesen.

Partidos, pues, de Badajoz, se encaminaron a nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, y, habiendo andado tres días y en ellos cinco leguas, les tomó la noche en un monte poblado de infinitas encinas y de otros rústicos árboles. Tenía suspenso el cielo el curso y sazón del tiempo en la balanza igual de los dos equinoccios: ni el calor

fatigaba, ni el frío ofendía, y, a necesidad, tan bien se podía pasar la noche en el campo como en el aldea; y a esta causa, y por estar lejos un pueblo, quiso Auristela que se quedasen en unas majadas de pastores boyeros que a los ojos se les ofrecieron. Hízose lo que Auristela quiso, y, apenas habían entrado por el bosque docientos pasos, cuando se cerró la noche con tanta escuridad que los detuvo, y les hizo mirar atentamente la lumbre de los boyeros, porque su resplandor les sirviese de norte para no errar el camino. Las tinieblas de la noche, y un ruido que sintieron, les detuvo el paso y hizo que Antonio el mozo se apercibiese de su arco, perpetuo compañero suyo. Llegó en esto un hombre a caballo, cuyo rostro no vieron, el cual les dijo:

-¿Sois desta tierra, buena gente?

-No, por cierto -respondió Periandro-, sino de bien lejos della; peregrinos extranjeros somos que vamos a Roma, y primero a Guadalupe.

-Sí, que también -dijo el de a caballo-hay en las extranjeras tierras caridad y cortesía, también hay almas compasivas dondequiera.

-¿Pues no? -respondió Antonio-. Mirad, señor, quienquiera que seáis, si habéis menester algo de nosotros, y veréis cómo sale verdadera vuestra imaginación.

-Tomad -dijo, pues, el caballero-, tomad, señores, esta cadena de oro, que debe de valer docientos escudos, y tomad asimismo esta prenda, que no debe de tener precio, a lo menos yo no se le hallo, y darle heis en la ciudad de Trujillo a uno de dos caballeros que en ella y en todo el mundo son bien conocidos: llámase el uno don Francisco Pizarro y el otro don Juan de Orellana; ambos mozos, ambos libres, ambos ricos y ambos en todo extremo.

Y, en esto, puso en las manos de Ricla, que como mujer compasiva se adelantó a tomarlo, una criatura que ya comenzaba a llorar, envuelta ni se supo por entonces si en ricos o en pobres paños.

-Y diréis a cualquiera dellos que la guarden, que presto sabrán quién es, y las desdichas que a ser dichoso le habrán llevado, si llega a su presencia. Y perdonadme, que mis enemigos me siguen, los cuales, si aquí llegaren y preguntaren si me habéis visto, diréis que no, pues os importa poco el decir esto; o si ya os pareciere mejor, decid que por aquí pasaron tres o cuatro hombres de a caballo, que iban diciendo: «¡A Portugal! ¡A Portugal!» Y a Dios quedad, que no puedo detenerme; que, puesto que el miedo pone espuelas, más agudas las pone la honra.

Y, arrimando las que traía al caballo, se apartó como un rayo dellos; pero, casi al mismo punto, volvió el caballero y dijo:

-No está bautizado.

Y tornó a seguir su camino.

Veis aquí a nuestros peregrinos, a Ricla con la criatura en los brazos, a Periandro con la cadena al cuello, a Antonio el mozo sin dejar de tener flechado el arco, y al padre en postura de desenvainar el estoque, que de bordón le servía, y a Auristela confusa y atónita del extraño suceso, y a todos juntos admirados del extraño acontecimiento, cuya salida fue por entonces que aconsejó Auristela que, como mejor pudiesen, llegasen a la majada de los boyeros, donde podría ser hallasen remedios para sustentar aquella recién nacida criatura, que, por su pequeñez y la debilidad de su llanto, mostraba ser de pocas horas nacida. Hízose así; y apenas llegaron a la majada de los pastores, a costa de muchos tropiezos y caídas, cuando, antes que los peregrinos les preguntasen si eran servidos de darles alojamiento aquella noche, llegó a la majada una mujer llorando, triste, pero no reciamente, porque mostraba en sus gemidos que se esforzaba a no dejar salir la voz del pecho. Venía medio desnuda, pero las ropas que la cubrían eran de rica y principal persona. La lumbre y luz de las hogueras, a pesar de la diligencia que ella hacía para encubrirse el rostro, la descubrieron, y vieron ser tan hermosa como niña, y tan niña como hermosa, puesto que Ricla, que sabía más de edades, la juzgó por de diez y seis a diez y siete años.

Preguntáronle los pastores si la seguía alguien, o si tenía otra necesidad que pidiese presto remedio. A lo que respondió la dolorosa muchacha:

-Lo primero, señores, que habéis de hacer, es ponerme debajo de la tierra; quiero decir, que me encubráis de modo que no me halle quien me buscare. Lo segundo, que me deis algún sustento, porque desmayos me van acabando la vida.

-Nuestra diligencia -dijo un pastor viejo-mostrará que tenemos caridad.

Y, aguijando con presteza a un hueco de un árbol que en una valiente encina se hacía, puso en él algunas pieles blandas de ovejas y cabras, que entre el ganado mayor se criaban; hizo un modo de lecho, bastante por entonces a suplir aquella necesidad precisa; tomó luego a la mujer en los brazos y encerróla en el hueco, adonde le dio lo que pudo, que fueron sopas en leche, y le dieran vino, si ella quisiera beberlo; colgó luego delante del hueco otras pieles, como para enjugarse.

Ricla, viendo hecho esto, habiendo conjeturado que aquélla, sin duda, debía de ser la madre de la criatura que ella tenía, se llegó al pastor caritativo, diciéndole:

-No pongáis, buen señor, término a vuestra caridad, y usalda con esta criatura que tengo en los brazos, antes que perezca de hambre.

Y en breves razones le contó cómo se le habían dado.

Respondióla el pastor a la intención, y no a sus razones, llamando a uno de los demás pastores, a quien mandó que, tomando aquella criatura, la llevase al aprisco de las cabras y hiciese de modo como de alguna dellas tomase el pecho.

Apenas hubo hecho esto, y tan apenas que casi se oían los últimos acentos del llanto de la criatura, cuando llegaron a la majada un tropel de hombres a caballo, preguntando por la mujer desmayada y por el caballero de la criatura; pero, como no les dieron nuevas ni noticia de lo que pedían, pasaron con estraña priesa adelante, de que no poco se alegraron sus remediadores. Y aquella noche pasaron con más comodidad que los peregrinos pensaron, y con más alegría de los ganaderos, por verse tan bien acompañados.

## Capítulo tercero del tercer libro

### *La doncella encerrada en el árbol: de quién era*

PREÑADA estaba la encina -digámoslo así-; preñadas estaban las nubes, cuya escuridad la puso en los ojos de los que por la prisionera del árbol preguntaron; pero al compasivo pastor, que era mayoral del hato, ninguna cosa le pudo turbar para que dejase de acudir a proveer lo que fuese necesario al recibimiento de sus huéspedes: la criatura tomó los pechos de la cabra; la encerrada, el rústico sustento; y los peregrinos, el nuevo y agradable hospedaje.

Quisieron todos saber luego qué causas habían traído allí a la lastimada y al parecer fugitiva, y a la desamparada criatura; pero fue parecer de Auristela que no le preguntasen nada hasta el venidero día, porque los sobresaltos no suelen dar licencia a la lengua, aun a que cuente venturas alegres, cuanto más desdichas tristes; y, puesto que el anciano pastor visitaba a menudo el árbol, no preguntaba nada al depósito que tenía, sino solamente por su salud; y fuele respondido que, aunque tenía mucha ocasión para no tenerla, le sobraría como ella se viese libre de los que la buscaban, que era su padre y hermanos. Cubrióla y encubrióla el pastor, y dejóla, y volvióse a los peregrinos, que aquella noche la pasaron con más claridad de las hogueras y fuegos de los pastores que con aquélla que ella les concedía; y, antes que el cansancio les obligase a entregar los sentidos al sueño, quedó concertado que el pastor que había llevado la criatura a procurar que las cabras fuesen sus amas, la llevase y entregase a una hermana del anciano ganadero, que, casi dos leguas de allí, en una pequeña aldea, vivía. Diéronle que llevase la cadena, con orden de darla a criar en la misma aldea, diciendo ser de otra algo apartada. Todo esto se hizo así, con que se aseguraron y apercibieron a desmentir las espías, si acaso volviesen, o viniesen otras de nuevo, a buscar los perdidos; a lo menos, los que perdidos parecían. En tratar desto y en satisfacer la hambre y en un breve rato que se apoderó de sus ojos el sueño y de sus lenguas el silencio, se pasó el de la noche, y se vino a más andar el día, alegre para todos, si no para la temerosa que, encerrada en el árbol, apenas osaba ver del sol la claridad hermosa.

Con todo eso, habiendo puesto primero, cerca y lejos del rebaño, de trecho en trecho, centinelas que avisasen si alguna gente venía, la sacaron del árbol para que le diese el aire, y para saber della lo que deseaban; y con la luz del día vieron que la de su rostro era admirable, de modo que puso en duda a cuál

darían, della y de Constanza, después de Auristela, el segundo lugar de hermosa; porque dondequiera se llevó el primero Auristela, a quien no quiso dar igual la naturaleza.

Muchas preguntas le hicieron y muchos ruegos precedieron antes, todos encaminados a que su suceso les contase, y ella, de puro cortés y agradecida, pidiendo licencia a su flaqueza, con aliento debilitado así comenzó a decir:

-Puesto, señores, que, en lo que deciros quiero, tengo de descubrir faltas que me han de hacer perder el crédito de honrada, todavía quiero más parecer cortés por obedeceros, que desagradecida por no contentaros. «Mi nombre es Feliciano de la Voz; mi patria, una villa no lejos de este lugar; mis padres son nobles mucho más que ricos; y mi hermosura, en tanto que no ha estado tan marchita como agora, ha sido de algunos estimada y celebrada. Junto a la villa que me dio el cielo por patria vivía un hidalgo riquísimo, cuyo trato y cuyas muchas virtudes le hacían ser caballero en la opinión de las gentes. Éste tiene un hijo que desde agora muestra ser tan heredero de las virtudes de su padre, que son muchas, como de su hacienda, que es infinita. Vivía, ansimismo, en la misma aldea un caballero con otro hijo suyo, más nobles que ricos, en una tan honrada medianía, que ni los humillaba ni los ensoberbecía. Con este segundo mancebo noble ordenaron mi padre y dos hermanos que tengo de casarme, echando a las espaldas los ruegos con que me pedía por esposa el rico hidalgo; pero yo, a quien los cielos guardaban para esta desventura en que me veo, y para otras en que pienso verme, me di por esposa al rico, y yo me le entregué por suya a hurto de mi padre y de mis hermanos, que madre no la tengo, por mayor desgracia mía. Vímonos muchas veces solos y juntos, que para semejantes casos nunca la ocasión vuelve las espaldas; antes, en la mitad de las imposibilidades, ofrece su guedeja.

»Destas juntas y destos hurtos amorosos se acortó mi vestido y creció mi infamia, si es que se puede llamar infamia la conversación de los desposados amantes. En este tiempo, sin hacerme sabidora, concertaron mi padre y hermanos de casarme con el mozo noble; con tanto deseo de efetuarlo que anoche le trajeron a casa, acompañado de dos cercanos parientes suyos, con propósito de que luego luego nos diésemos las manos. Sobresaltéme cuando vi entrar a Luis Antonio (que éste es el nombre del mancebo noble), y más me admiré cuando mi padre me dijo que me entrase en mi aposento y me aderezase algo más de lo ordinario, porque en aquel punto había de dar la mano de esposa a Luis Antonio. Dos días había que había entrado en los términos que la naturaleza pide en los partos, y, con el sobresalto y no esperada nueva, quedé como muerta; y, diciendo entraba a aderezarme a mi aposento, me arrojé en los

brazos de una mi doncella, depositaria de mis secretos, a quien dije, hechos fuentes mis ojos: "¡Ay, Leonora mía, y cómo creo que es llegado el fin de mis días! Luis Antonio está en esa antesala, esperando que yo salga a darle la mano de esposa. Mira si es este trance riguroso, y la más apretada ocasión en que pueda verse una mujer desdichada. Pásame, hermana mía, si tienes con qué, este pecho; salga primero mi alma destas carnes, que no la desvergüenza de mi atrevimiento. ¡Ay, amiga mía, que me muero, que se me acaba la vida!" Y, diciendo esto, y dando un gran suspiro, arrojé una criatura en el suelo, cuyo nunca visto caso suspendió a mi doncella, y a mí me cegó el discurso de manera que, sin saber qué hacer, estuve esperando a que mi padre o mis hermanos entrasen, y, en lugar de sacarme a desposar, me sacasen a la sepultura.»

Aquí llegaba Feliciano de su cuento, cuando vieron que las centinelas que habían puesto para asegurarse hacían señal de que venía gente, y con diligencia no vista, el pastor anciano quería volver a depositar a Feliciano en el árbol, seguro asilo de su desgracia; pero, habiendo vuelto las centinelas a decir que se asegurasen, porque un tropel de gente que habían visto, cruzaba por otro camino, todos se aseguraron, y Feliciano de la Voz volvió a su cuento, diciendo:

-«Considerad, señores, el apretado peligro en que me vi anoche: el desposado en la sala, esperándome, y el adúltero, si así se puede decir, en un jardín de mi casa, atendiéndome para hablarme, ignorante del estrecho en que yo estaba, y de la venida de Luis Antonio; yo, sin sentido, por el no esperado suceso; mi doncella turbada, con la criatura en los brazos; mi padre y hermanos dándome priesa que saliese a los desdichados desposorios. Aprieto fue éste que pudiera derribar a más gallardos entendimientos que el mío, y oponerse a toda buena razón y buen discurso. No sé qué os diga más, sino que sentí, estando sin sentido, que entró mi padre, diciendo: "Acaba, muchacha; sal comoquiera que estuvieres, que tu hermosura suplirá tu desnudez y te servirá de riquísimas galas". Dióle, a lo que creo, en esto, a los oídos el llanto de la criatura, que mi doncella, a lo que imagino, debía de ir a poner en cobro, o a dársela a Rosanio, que este es el nombre del que yo quise escoger por esposo. Alborotóse mi padre, y con una vela en la mano me miró el rostro, y coligió por mi semblante, mi sobresalto y mi desmayo. Volvióle a herir en los oídos el eco del llanto de la criatura, y, echando mano a la espada, fue siguiendo adonde la voz le llevaba. El resplandor del cuchillo me dio en la turbada vista, y el miedo en la mitad del alma; y, como sea natural cosa el desear conservar la vida cada uno, del temor de perderla salió en mí el ánimo de remediarla; y, apenas hubo mi padre vuelto las espaldas, cuando yo, así como estaba, bajé por un caracol a unos aposentos bajos de mi casa, y de ellos con facilidad me puse en la calle, y de la calle en el campo, y del campo en no sé qué camino; y, finalmente, aguijada del miedo y solicitada

del temor, como si tuviera alas en los pies, caminé más de lo que prometía mi flaqueza. Mil veces estuve para arrojarme en el camino de algún ribazo, que me acabara con acabarme la vida, y otras tantas estuve por sentarme o tenderme en el suelo, y dejarme hallar de quien me buscara; pero, alentándome la luz de vuestras cabañas, procuré llegar a ellas a buscar descanso a mi cansancio, y si no remedio, algún alivio a mi desdicha. Y así llegué como me vistes, y así me hallo como me veo, merced a vuestra caridad y cortesía. Esto es, señores míos, lo que os puedo contar de mi historia, cuyo fin dejo al cielo, y le remito en la tierra a vuestros buenos consejos.»

Aquí dio fin a su plática la lastimada Feliciano de la Voz, con que puso en los oyentes admiración y lástima en un mismo grado. Periandro contó luego el hallazgo de la criatura, la dádiva de la cadena, con todo aquello que le había sucedido con el caballero que se la dio.

-¡Ay! -dijo Feliciano-. ¿Si es por ventura esa prenda mía? ¿Y si es Rosanio el que la trajo? Y si yo la viese, si no por el rostro, pues nunca le he visto, quizá por los paños en que viene envuelta sacaría a luz la verdad de las tinieblas de mi confusión; porque mi doncella, no apercibida, ¿en qué la podía envolver, sino en paños que estuviesen en el aposento, que fuesen de mí conocidos? Y, cuando esto no sea, quizá la sangre hará su oficio, y por ocultos sentimientos le dará a entender lo que me toca.

A lo que respondió el pastor:

-La criatura está ya en mi aldea en poder de una hermana y de una sobrina mía; yo haré que ellas mismas nos la traigan hoy aquí, donde podrás, hermosa Feliciano, hacer las esperiencias que deseas. En tanto, sosiega, señora, el espíritu, que mis pastores y este árbol servirán de nubes que se opongan a los ojos que te buscaren.



## Capítulo cuarto del tercero libro

-PARÉCEME hermano mío -dijo Auristela a Periandro-, que los trabajos y los peligros no solamente tienen jurisdicción en el mar, sino en toda la tierra; que las desgracias e infortunios, así se encuentran sobre los levantados sobre los montes como con los escondidos en sus rincones. Esta que llaman Fortuna, de quien yo he oído hablar algunas veces, de la cual se dice que quita y da los bienes cuando, como y a quien quiere, sin duda alguna debe de ser ciega y antojadiza, pues, a nuestro parecer, levanta los que habían de estar por el suelo, y derriba los que están sobre los montes de la luna. No sé, hermano, lo que me voy diciendo, pero sé que quiero decir que no es mucho que nos admire ver a esta señora, que dice que se llama Feliciano de la Voz, que apenas la tiene para contar sus desgracias. Contéplola yo pocas horas ha en su casa, acompañada de su padre, hermanos y criados, esperando poner con sagacidad remedio a sus arrojados deseos; y agora puedo decir que la veo escondida en lo hueco de un árbol, temiendo los mosquitos del aire, y aun las lombrices de la tierra. Bien es verdad que la suya no es caída de príncipes, pero es un caso que puede servir de ejemplo a las recogidas doncellas que le quisieren dar bueno de sus vidas. Todo esto me mueve a suplicarte, ¡oh hermano!, mires por mi honra, que, desde el punto que salí del poder de mi padre y del de tu madre, la deposité en tus manos; y, aunque la experiencia, con certidumbre grandísima, tiene acreditada tu bondad, así en la soledad de los desiertos como en la compañía de las ciudades, todavía temo que la mudanza de las horas no mude los que de suyo son fáciles pensamientos. A ti te va; mi honra es la tuya; un solo deseo nos gobierna y una misma esperanza nos sustenta; el camino en que nos hemos puesto es largo, pero no hay ninguno que no se acabe, como no se le oponga la pereza y la ociosidad; ya los cielos, a quien doy mil gracias por ello, nos ha traído a España sin la compañía peligrosa de Arnaldo; ya podemos tender los pasos seguros de naufragios, de tormentas y de salteadores, porque, según la fama que, sobre todas las regiones del mundo, de pacífica y de santa tiene ganada España, bien nos podemos prometer seguro viaje.

-¡Oh hermana -respondió Periandro-, y cómo por puntos vas mostrando los estremados de tu discreción! Bien veo que temes como mujer y que te animas como discreta. Yo quisiera, por aquietar tus bien nacidos recelos, buscar nuevas experiencias que me acreditaran contigo; que, puesto que las hechas pueden convertir el temor en esperanza, y la esperanza en firme seguridad, y desde luego

en posesión alegre, quisiera que nuevas ocasiones me acreditaran. En el rancho destos pastores no nos queda qué hacer, ni en el caso de Feliciano podemos servir más que de compadecernos de ella; procuremos llevar esta criatura a Trujillo, como nos lo encargó el que con ella nos dio la cadena, al parecer, por paga.

En esto estaban los dos, cuando llegó el pastor anciano con su hermana y con la criatura, que había enviado por ella a la aldea, por ver si Feliciano la reconocía, como ella lo había pedido. Lleváronse, miróla y remiróla, quitóle las fajas; pero en ninguna cosa pudo conocer ser la que había parido, ni aun, lo que más es de considerar, el natural cariño no le movía los pensamientos a reconocer el niño; que era varón el recién nacido.

-No -decía Feliciano-, no son estas las mantillas que mi doncella tenía diputadas para envolver lo que de mí naciese, ni esta cadena -que se la enseñaron-la vi yo jamás en poder de Rosanio. De otra debe ser esta prenda, que no mía; que, a serlo, no fuera yo tan venturosa, teniéndola una vez perdida, tornar a cobrarla; aunque yo oí decir muchas veces a Rosanio que tenía amigos en Trujillo; pero de ninguno me acuerdo el nombre.

-Con todo eso -dijo el pastor-, que, pues el que dio la criatura mandó que la llevasen a Trujillo, sospecho que el que la dio a estos peregrinos fue Rosanio, y así, soy de parecer, si es que en ello os hago algún servicio, que mi hermana, con la criatura y con otros dos destos mis pastores, se ponga en camino de Trujillo, a ver si la reciben alguno de esos dos caballeros a quien va dirigida.

A lo que Feliciano respondió con sollozos y con arrojarle a los pies del pastor, abrazándolos estrechamente: señales que la dieron de que aprobaba su parecer. Todos los peregrinos le aprobaron asimismo, y con darle la cadena lo facilitaron todo.

Sobre una de las bestias del hato se acomodó la hermana del pastor, que estaba recién parida, como se ha dicho, con orden que se pasase por su aldea, y dejase en cobro su criatura, y con la otra se partiese a Trujillo; que los peregrinos, que iban a Guadalupe, con más espacio la seguirían. Todo se hizo como lo pensaron, y luego, porque la necesidad del caso no admitía tardanza alguna.

Feliciano callaba, y con silencio se mostraba agradecida a los que tan de veras sus cosas tomaban a su cargo. Añadióse a todo esto que Feliciano, habiendo sabido cómo los peregrinos iban a Roma, aficionada a la hermosura y discreción de Auristela, a la cortesía de Periandro, a la amorosa conversación de Constanza y de Ricla, su madre, y al agradable trato de los dos Antonios, padre y hijo (que todo lo miró, notó y ponderó en aquel poco espacio que los había comunicado), y lo principal por volver las espaldas a la tierra donde quedaba enterrada su

honra, pidió que consigo la llevasen como peregrina a Roma; que, pues había sido peregrina en culpas, quería procurar serlo en gracias, si el cielo se las concedía, en que con ellos la llevasen. Apenas descubrió su pensamiento, cuando Auristela acudió a satisfacer su deseo, compasiva y deseosa de sacar a Felicianita de entre los sobresaltos y miedos que la perseguían. Sólo dificultó el ponerla en camino estando tan recién parida, y así se lo dijo; pero el anciano pastor dijo que no había más diferencia del parto de una mujer que del de una res, y que, así como la res, sin otro regalo alguno, después de su parto, se quedaba a las inclemencias del cielo, así la mujer podía, sin otro regalo alguno, acudir a sus ejercicios; sino que el uso había introducido entre las mujeres los regalos y todas aquellas prevenciones que suelen hacer con las recién paridas.

-Yo seguro -dijo más- que cuando Eva parió el primer hijo, que no se echó en el lecho, ni se guardó del aire, ni usó de los melindres que ahora se usan en los partos. Esforzaos, señora Felicianita, y seguid vuestro intento, que desde aquí le apruebo casi por santo, pues es tan cristiano.

A lo que añadió Auristela:

-No quedará por falta de hábito de peregrina, que mi cuidado me hizo hacer dos cuando hice éste, el cual daré yo a la señora Felicianita de la Voz, con condición que me diga qué misterio tiene el llamarse de la Voz, si ya no es el de su apellido.

-No me le ha dado -respondió Felicianita- mi linaje, sino el ser común opinión de todos cuantos me han oído cantar, que tengo la mejor voz del mundo: tanto que por excelencia me llaman comúnmente Felicianita de la Voz; y, a no estar en tiempo más de gemir que de cantar, con facilidad os mostrara esta verdad; pero si los tiempos se mejoran y dan lugar a que mis lágrimas se enjuguen, yo cantaré, si no canciones alegres, a lo menos endechas tristes, que cantándolas encanten y llorándolas alegren.

Por esto que Felicianita dijo, nació en todos un deseo de oírla cantar luego luego, pero no osaron rogárselo, porque, como ella había dicho, los tiempos no lo permitían. Otro día se despojó Felicianita de los vestidos no necesarios que traía, y se cubrió con los que le dio Auristela de peregrina; quitóse un collar de perlas y dos sortijas; que si los adornos son parte para acreditar calidades, estas piezas pudieran acreditarla de rica y noble. Tomólas Ricla, como tesorera general de la hacienda de todos, y quedó Felicianita segunda peregrina, como primera Auristela, y tercera Constanza, aunque este parecer se dividió en pareceres, y algunos le dieron el segundo lugar a Constanza, que el primero no hubo hermosura en aquella edad que a la de Auristela se le quitase.

Apenas se vio Felicianita el nuevo hábito, cuando le nacieron alientos nuevos y deseos de ponerse en camino. Conoció esto Auristela, y, con consentimiento de

todos, despidiéndose del pastor caritativo y de los demás de la majada, se encaminaron a Cáceres, hurtando el cuerpo con su acostumbrado paso al cansancio; y si alguna vez alguna de las mujeres le tenía, le suplía el bagaje, donde iba el repuesto, o ya el margen de algún arroyuelo o fuente do se sentaban, o la verdura de algún prado que a dulce reposo las convidaba; y así, andaban a una con ellos el reposo y el cansancio, junto con la pereza y la diligencia: la pereza, en caminar poco; la diligencia, en caminar siempre. Pero, como por la mayor parte nunca los buenos deseos llegan a fin dichoso sin estorbos que los impidan, quiso el cielo que el de este hermoso escuadrón, que, aunque dividido en todos, era sólo uno en la intención, fuese impedido con el estorbo que agora oiréis.

Dábales asiento la verde yerba de un deleitoso pradecillo; refrescábales los rostros el agua clara y dulce de un pequeño arroyuelo que por entre las yerbas corría; servíanles de muralla y de reparo muchas zarzas y cambroneras, que casi por todas partes los rodeaba: sitio agradable y necesario para su descanso, cuando, de improviso, rompiendo por las intrincadas matas, vieron salir al verde sitio un mancebo vestido de camino, con una espada hincada por las espaldas, cuya punta le salía al pecho. Cayó de ojos, y al caer dijo:

-¡Dios sea conmigo!

Y el fin desta palabra y el arrancársele el alma fue todo a un tiempo; y, aunque todos con el estraño espectáculo se levantaron alborotados, el que primero llegó a socorrerle fue Periandro, y, por hallarle ya muerto, se atrevió a sacar la espada. Los dos Antonios saltaron las zarzas, por ver si verían quién hubiese sido el cruel y alevoso homicida; que, por ser la herida por las espaldas, se mostraba que traidoras manos la habían hecho. No vieron a nadie, volviéronse a los demás, y la poca edad del muerto y su gallardo talle y parecer les acrecentó la lástima. Miráronle todo, y halláronle, debajo de una ropilla de terciopelo pardo, sobre el jubón puesta una cadena de cuatro vueltas de menudos eslabones de oro, de la cual pendía un devoto crucifijo, asimismo de oro; allá entre el jubón y la camisa le hallaron, dentro de una caja de ébano ricamente labrada, un hermosísimo retrato de mujer, pintado en la lisa tabla, alrededor del cual, de menudísima y clara letra, vieron que traía escritos estos versos:

Yela, enciende, mira y habla:  
¡milagros de hermosura,  
que tenga vuestra figura  
tanta fuerza en una tabla!

Por estos versos conjeturó Periandro, que los leyó primero, que de causa amorosa debía de haber nacido su muerte. Miráronle las faldriqueras y escudriñáronle todos, pero no hallaron cosa que les diese indicio de quién era. Y, estando haciendo este escrutinio, parecieron, como si fueran llovidos, cuatro hombres con ballestas armadas, por cuyas insignias conoció luego Antonio el padre que eran cuadrilleros de la Santa Hermandad, uno de los cuales dijo a voces:

-¡Teneos, ladrones, homicidas y salteadores! ¡No le acabéis de despojar, que a tiempo sois venidos en que os llevaremos adonde paguéis vuestro pecado!

-Eso no, bellacos -respondió Antonio el mozo-: aquí no hay ladrón ninguno, porque todos somos enemigos de los que lo son.

-Bien se os parece, por cierto -replicó el cuadrillero-, el hombre muerto, sus despojos en vuestro poder, y su sangre en vuestras manos, que sirve de testigos vuestra maldad. Ladrones sois, salteadores sois, homicidas sois; y, como tales ladrones, salteadores y homicidas, presto pagaréis vuestros delitos, sin que os valga la capa de virtud cristiana con que procuráis encubrir vuestras maldades, vistiéndoos de peregrinos.

A esto le dio respuesta Antonio el mozo con poner una flecha en su arco y pasarle con ella un brazo, puesto que quisiera pasarle de parte a parte el pecho. Los demás cuadrilleros, o escarmentados del golpe, o por hacer la prisión más al seguro, volvieron las espaldas, y, entre huyendo y esperando, a grandes voces apellidaron:

-¡Aquí de la Santa Hermandad! ¡Favor a la Santa Hermandad!

Y mostróse ser santa la hermandad que apellidaban, porque en un instante, como por milagro, se juntaron más de veinte cuadrilleros, los cuales, encarando sus ballestas y sus saetas a los que no se defendían, los prendieron y aprisionaron, sin respetar la belleza de Auristela ni las demás peregrinas, y con el cuerpo del muerto los llevaron a Cáceres, cuyo Corregidor era un caballero del hábito de Santiago, el cual, viendo el muerto y el cuadrillero herido, y la información de los demás cuadrilleros, con el indicio de ver ensangrentado a Periandro, con el parecer de su teniente, quisiera luego ponerlos a cuestión de tormento, puesto que Periandro se defendía con la verdad, mostrándole en su favor los papeles que para seguridad de su viaje y licencia de su camino había tomado en Lisboa. Mostróle asimismo el lienzo de la pintura de su suceso, que la relató y declaró muy bien Antonio el mozo, cuyas pruebas hicieron poner en opinión la ninguna culpa que los peregrinos tenían. Ricla, la tesorera, que sabía muy poco o nada de la condición de escribanos y procuradores, ofreció a uno, de

secreto, que andaba allí en público, dando muestras de ayudarles, no sé qué cantidad de dineros porque tomase a cargo su negocio. Lo echó a perder del todo, porque, en oliendo los sátrapas de la pluma que tenían lana los peregrinos, quisieron trasquilarlos, como es uso y costumbre, hasta los huesos, y sin duda alguna fuera así, si las fuerzas de la inocencia no permitiera el cielo que sobrepujaran a las de la malicia.

Fue el caso, pues, que un huésped, o mesonero del lugar, habiendo visto el cuerpo muerto que habían traído y reconocídole muy bien, se fue al Corregidor y le dijo:

-Señor, este hombre que han traído muerto los cuadrilleros, ayer de mañana partió de mi casa, en compañía de otro, al parecer, caballero. Poco antes que se partiese, se encerró conmigo en mi aposento, y con recato me dijo: «Señor huésped, por lo que debéis a ser cristiano, os ruego que, si yo no vuelvo por aquí dentro de seis días, abráis este papel que os doy, delante de la justicia». Y, diciendo esto, me dio éste que entrego a vuesa merced, donde imagino que debe de venir alguna cosa que toque a este tan extraño suceso.

Tomó el papel el Corregidor, y, abriéndole, vio que en él estaban escritas estas mismas razones:

Yo, don Diego de Parraces, salí de la corte de su Majestad tal día (y venía puesto el día), en compañía de don Sebastián de Soranzo, mi pariente, que me pidió que le acompañase en cierto viaje donde le iba la honra y la vida. Yo, por no querer hacer verdaderas ciertas sospechas falsas que de mí tenía, fiándome en mi inocencia, di lugar a su malicia, y acompañéle. Creo que me lleva a matar; si esto sucediere, y mi cuerpo se hallare, sépase que me mataron a traición, y que morí sin culpa.

Y firmaba: DON DIEGO DE PARRACES.

Este papel, a toda diligencia, despachó el Corregidor a Madrid, donde con la justicia se hicieron las diligencias posibles buscando al matador, el cual llegó a su casa la misma noche que le buscaban; y, entreoyendo el caso, sin apearse de la cabalgadura, volvió las riendas, y nunca más pareció. Quedóse el delito sin castigo, el muerto se quedó por muerto, quedaron libres los prisioneros, y la cadena que tenía Ricla se deseslabonó para gastos de justicia; el retrato se quedó para gustos de los ojos del Corregidor, satisfízose la herida del cuadrillero, volvió Antonio el mozo a relatar el lienzo, y, dejando admirado al pueblo y habiendo estado en él todo este tiempo de las averiguaciones Felicianas de la Voz en el lecho, fingiendo estar enferma, por no ser vista, se partieron la vuelta de Guadalupe, cuyo camino entretuvieron tratando del caso extraño, y deseando que sucediese ocasión donde se cumpliese el deseo que tenían de oír cantar a

Feliciano, la cual sí cantará, pues no hay dolor que no se mitigue con el tiempo o se acabe con acabar la vida; pero, por guardar ella a su desgracia el decoro que a sí misma debía, sus cantos eran llores, y su voz gemidos. Éstos se aplacaron un tanto con haber topado en el camino la hermana del compasivo pastor, que volvía de Trujillo, donde dijo que dejaba el niño en poder de don Francisco Pizarro y de don Juan de Orellana, los cuales habían conjeturado no poder ser de otro aquella criatura sino de su amigo Rosanio, según el lugar donde le hallaron, pues por todos aquellos contornos no tenían ellos algún conocido que aventurase a fiarse de ellos.

-Sea, en fin, lo que fuere -dijo la labradora-, dijeron ellos, que no ha de quedar defraudado de sus buenos pensamientos el que se ha fiado de nosotros. Así que, señores, el niño queda en Trujillo en poder de los que he dicho; si algo me queda que hacer por serviros, aquí estoy con la cadena, que aún no me he deshecho de ella, pues la que me pone a la voluntad el ser yo cristiana, me enlaza y me obliga a más que la de oro.

A lo que respondió Feliciano que la gozase muchos años, sin que se le ofreciese necesidad de deshacella, pues las ricas prendas de los pobres no permanecen largo tiempo en sus casas, porque, o se empeñan, para no quitarse, o se venden, para nunca volverlas a comprar.

La labradora se despidió aquí, le dieron mil encomiendas para su hermano y los demás pastores, y nuestros peregrinos llegaron poco a poco a las santísimas tierras de Guadalupe.

## Capítulo quinto del tercero libro

APENAS hubieron puesto los pies los devotos peregrinos en una de las dos entradas que guían al valle que forman y cierran las altísimas sierras de Guadalupe, cuando, con cada paso que daban, nacían en sus corazones nuevas ocasiones de admirarse; pero allí llegó la admiración a su punto, cuando vieron el grande y suntuoso monasterio, cuyas murallas encierran la santísima imagen de la emperadora de los cielos; la santísima imagen, otra vez, que es libertad de los cautivos, lima de sus hierros y alivio de sus pasiones; la santísima imagen que es salud de las enfermedades, consuelo de los afligidos, madre de los huérfanos y reparo de las desgracias. Entraron en su templo, y donde pensaron hallar por sus paredes, pendientes por adorno, las púrpuras de Tiro, los damascos de Siria, los brocados de Milán, hallaron en lugar suyo muletas que dejaron los cojos, ojos de cera que dejaron los ciegos, brazos que colgaron los mancos, mortajas de que se desnudaron los muertos, todos después de haber caído en el suelo de las miserias, ya vivos, ya sanos, ya libres y ya contentos, merced a la larga misericordia de la Madre de las misericordias, que en aquel pequeño lugar hace campear a su benditísimo Hijo con el escuadrón de sus infinitas misericordias. De tal manera hizo aprehensión estos milagrosos adornos en los corazones de los devotos peregrinos, que volvieron los ojos a todas las partes del templo, y les parecía ver venir por el aire volando los cautivos envueltos en sus cadenas a colgarlas de las santas murallas, y a los enfermos arrastrar las muletas, y a los muertos mortajas, buscando lugar donde ponerlas, porque ya en el sacro templo no cabían: tan grande es la suma que las paredes ocupan.

Esta novedad, no vista hasta entonces de Periandro ni de Auristela, ni menos de Ricla, de Constanza ni de Antonio, los tenía como asombrados, y no se hartaban de mirar lo que veían, ni de admirar lo que imaginaban; y así, con devotas y cristianas muestras, hincados de rodillas, se pusieron a adorar a Dios Sacramentado y a suplicar a su santísima Madre que, en crédito y honra de aquella imagen, fuese servida de mirar por ellos. Pero lo que más es de ponderar fue que, puesta de hinojos y las manos puestas y junto al pecho, la hermosa Feliciano de la Voz, lloviendo tiernas lágrimas, con sosegado semblante, sin mover los labios ni hacer otra demostración ni movimiento que diese señal de ser viva criatura, soltó la voz a los vientos, y levantó el corazón al cielo, y cantó unos versos que ella sabía de memoria, los cuales dio después por escrito, con que suspendió los sentidos de cuantos la escuchaban, y acreditó las alabanzas



que ella misma de su voz había dicho, y satisfizo de todo en todo los deseos que sus peregrinos tenían de escucharla.

Cuatro estancias había cantado, cuando entraron por la puerta del templo unos forasteros, a quien la devoción y la costumbre puso luego de rodillas, y la voz de Feliciano, que todavía cantaba, puso también en admiración; y uno de ellos que de anciana edad parecía, volviéndose a otro que estaba a su lado, y díjole: -O aquella voz es de algún ángel de los confirmados en gracia, o es de mi hija Feliciano de la Voz.

-¿Quién lo duda? -respondió el otro-. Ella es, y la que no será, si no yerra el golpe éste mi brazo.

Y, diciendo esto, echó mano a una daga, y, con descompasados pasos, perdido el color y turbado el sentido, se fue hacia donde Feliciano estaba.

El venerable anciano se arrojó tras él, y le abrazó por las espaldas, diciéndole: -No es éste, ¡oh hijo!, teatro de miserias ni lugar de castigos. Da tiempo al tiempo, que, pues no se nos puede huir esta traidora, no te precipites, y, pensando castigar el ajeno delito, te echas sobre ti la pena de la culpa propia.

Estas razones y alboroto selló la boca de Feliciano y alborotó a los peregrinos y a todos cuantos en el templo estaban, los cuales no fueron parte para que su padre y hermano de Feliciano no la sacasen del templo a la calle, donde, en un instante, se juntó casi toda la gente del pueblo con la justicia, que se la quitó a los que parecían más verdugos que hermano y padre. Estando en esta confusión, el padre dando voces por su hija, y su hermano por su hermana, y la justicia defendiéndola hasta saber el caso, por una parte de la plaza entraron hasta seis de a caballo, que los dos de ellos fueron luego conocidos de todos, por ser el uno don Francisco Pizarro y el otro don Juan de Orellana, los cuales, llegándose al tumulto de la gente, y con ellos otro caballero que con un velo de tafetán negro traía cubierto el rostro, preguntaron la causa de aquellas voces. Fúeles respondido que no se sabía otra cosa sino que la justicia quería defender aquella peregrina a quien querían matar dos hombres que decían ser su hermano y su padre.

Esto estaban oyendo don Francisco Pizarro y don Juan de Orellana, cuando el caballero embozado, arrojándose del caballo abajo sobre quien venía, poniendo mano a su espada y descubriéndose el rostro, se puso al lado de Feliciano y a grandes voces dijo: -En mí, en mí debéis, señores, tomar la enmienda del pecado de Feliciano, vuestra hija, si es tan grande que merezca muerte el casarse una doncella contra la voluntad de sus padres. Feliciano es mi esposa, y yo soy Rosanio, como veis, no de tan poca calidad que no merezca que me deis por concierto lo que yo supe escoger por industria. Noble soy, de cuya nobleza os podré presentar por testigos; riquezas tengo que la sustentan, y no será bien que

lo que he ganado por ventura me lo quite Luis Antonio por vuestro gusto. Y si os parece que os he hecho ofensa de haber llegado a este punto de teneros por señores sin sabiduría vuestra, perdonadme, que las fuerzas poderosas de amor suelen turbar los ingenios más entendidos, y el veros yo tan inclinados a Luis Antonio me hizo no guardar el decoro que se os debía, de lo cual otra vez os pido perdón.

Mientras Rosanio esto decía, Feliciano estaba pegada con él, teniéndole asido por la pretina con la mano, toda temblando, toda temerosa, y toda triste y toda hermosa juntamente. Pero, antes que su padre y hermano respondiesen palabra, don Francisco Pizarro se abrazó con su padre y don Juan de Orellana con su hermano, que eran sus grandes amigos.

Don Francisco dijo al padre:

-¿Dónde está vuestra discreción, señor don Pedro Tenorio? ¿Cómo, y es posible que vos mismo queráis fabricar vuestra ofensa? ¿No veis que estos agravios, antes que la pena traen las disculpas consigo? ¿Qué tiene Rosanio que no merezca a Feliciano, o qué le quedará a Feliciano de aquí adelante si pierde a Rosanio?

Casi estas mismas o semejantes razones decía don Juan de Orellana a su hermano, añadiendo más, porque le dijo: -Señor don Sancho, nunca la cólera prometió buen fin de sus ímpetus: ella es pasión del ánimo, y el ánimo apasionado pocas veces acierta en lo que emprende. Vuestra hermana supo escoger buen marido; tomar venganza de que no se guardaron las debidas ceremonias y respetos, no será bien hecho, porque os pondréis a peligro de derribar y echar por tierra todo el edificio de vuestro sosiego. Mirad, señor don Sancho, que tengo una prenda vuestra en mi casa: un sobrino os tengo, que no le podréis negar si no os negáis a vos mismo: tanto es lo que os parece.

La respuesta que dio el padre a don Francisco fue llegarse a su hijo don Sancho y quitalle la daga de las manos, y luego fue a abrazar a Rosanio, el cual, dejándose derribar a los pies del que ya conoció ser su suegro, se los besó mil veces. Arrodillóse también ante su padre Feliciano, derramó lágrimas, envió suspiros, vinieron desmayos. La alegría discurrió por todos los circunstantes; ganó fama de prudente el padre, de prudente el hijo, y los amigos de discretos y bien hablados. Llevólos el Corregidor a su casa, regalólos el prior del santo monasterio abundantísimamente; visitaron las reliquias los peregrinos, que son muchas, santísimas y ricas; confesaron sus culpas, recibieron los sacramentos, y en este tiempo, que fue el de tres días, envió don Francisco por el niño que le había llevado la labradora, que era el mismo que Rosanio dio a Periandro la noche que le dio la cadena, el cual era tan lindo que el abuelo, puesta en olvido toda injuria, dijo viéndole: -¡Que mil bienes haya la madre que te parió y el

padre que te engendró!

Y, tomándole en sus brazos, tiernamente le bañó el rostro con lágrimas, y se las enjugó con besos y las limpió con sus canas.

Pidió Auristela a Feliciano le diese el traslado de los versos que había cantado delante de la santísima imagen, al cual respondió que solamente había cantado cuatro estancias, y que todas eran doce, dignas de ponerse en la memoria. Y así, las escribió, que eran éstas: Antes que de la mente eterna fuera

saliesen los espíritus alados,  
y antes que la veloz o tarda esfera  
tuviese movimientos señalados,  
y antes que aquella escuridad primera 5  
los cabellos del sol viese dorados,  
fabricó para sí Dios una casa  
de santísima, y limpia y pura masa.

Los altos y fortísimos cimientos,  
sobre humildad profunda se fundaron; 10  
y, mientras más a la humildad atentos,  
más la fábrica regia levantaron.  
Pasó la tierra, pasó el mar; los vientos  
atrás, como más bajos, se quedaron,  
el fuego pasa, y con igual fortuna 15  
debajo de sus pies tiene la luna.

De fee son los pilares, de esperanza;

los muros desta fábrica bendita  
ciñe la caridad, por quien se alcanza  
duración, como Dios, siempre infinita; 20  
su recreo se aumenta en su templanza,  
su prudencia, los grados facilita  
del bien que ha de gozar, por la grandeza  
de su mucha justicia y fortaleza.

Adornan este alcázar soberano 25  
profundos pozos, perenales fuentes,  
huertos cerrados, cuyo fruto sano  
es bendición y gloria de las gentes;  
están a la siniestra y diestra mano

cipreses altos, palmas eminentes, 30  
altos cedros, clarísimos espejos  
que dan lumbre de gracia cerca y lejos.

El cinamomo, el plátano y la rosa  
de Hiericó se halla en sus jardines  
con aquella color, y aun más hermosa, 35  
de los más abrasados querubines.  
Del pecado la sombra tenebrosa,  
ni llega, ni se acerca a sus confines:  
todo es luz, todo es gloria, todo es cielo,  
este edificio que hoy se muestra al suelo. 40

De Salomón el templo se nos muestra  
hoy, con la perfección a Dios posible,  
donde no se oyó golpe que la diestra  
mano diese a la obra conveniente;  
hoy, haciendo de sí gloriosa muestra, 45  
salió la luz del sol inaccesible;  
hoy nuevo resplandor ha dado al día  
la clarísima estrella de María.

Antes que el sol, la estrella hoy da su lumbre:  
prodigiosa señal, pero tan buena, 50  
que, sin guardar de agüeros la costumbre,  
deja el alma de gozo y bienes llena.  
Hoy la humildad se vio puesta en la cumbre;  
hoy comenzó a romperse la cadena  
del hierro antiguo, y sale al mundo aquella 55  
prudentísima Ester, que el sol más bella.

Niña de Dios, por nuestro bien nacida;  
tierna, pero tan fuerte que la frente,  
en soberbia maldad endurecida,  
quebrantasteis de la infernal serpiente. 60  
Brinco de Dios, de nuestra muerte vida,  
pues vos fuistes el medio conveniente,  
que redujo a pacífica concordia  
de Dios y el hombre la mortal discordia.

La justicia y la paz hoy se han juntado 65  
en vos, Virgen santísima, y con gusto  
el dulce beso de la paz se han dado,  
arra y señal del venidero Augusto.  
Del claro amanecer, del sol sagrado,  
sois la primera aurora; sois del justo 70  
gloria; del pecador, firme esperanza;  
de la borrasca antigua, la bonanza.

Sois la paloma que ab eterno fuistes  
llamada desde el cielo, sois la esposa  
que al sacro Verbo limpia carne distes, 75  
por quien de Adán la culpa fue dichosa;  
sois el brazo de Dios, que detuvistes  
de Abrahán la cuchilla rigurosa,  
y para el sacrificio verdadero

nos distes el mansísimo Cordero. 80

Creced, hermosa planta, y dad el fruto  
presto en sazón, por quien el alma espera  
cambiar en ropa rozagante el luto  
que la gran culpa le vistió primera.  
De aquel inmenso y general tributo 85  
la paga conveniente y verdadera  
en vos se ha de fraguar: creed, Señora,  
que sois universal remediadora.

Ya en las empíreas sacrosantas salas  
el paraninfo alígero se apresta, 90  
o casi mueve las doradas alas,  
para venir con la embajada honesta:  
que el olor de virtud que de ti exhalas,  
Virgen bendita, sirve de recuesta  
y apremio, a que se vea en ti muy presto 95  
del gran poder de Dios echado el resto.

Estos fueron los versos que comenzó a cantar Feliciano, y los que dio por

escrito después, que fueron de Auristela más estimados que entendidos.

En resolución, las paces de los desavenidos se hicieron; Feliciano, esposo, padre y hermano, se volvieron a su lugar, dejando orden a don Francisco Pizarro y don Juan de Orellana les enviasen el niño. Pero no quiso Feliciano pasar el disgusto que da el esperar, y así, se le llevó consigo, con cuyo suceso quedaron todos alegres.

## Capítulo sexto del tercero libro

CUATRO días se estuvieron los peregrinos en Guadalupe, en los cuales comenzaron a ver las grandezas de aquel santo monasterio. Digo comenzaron, porque de acabarlas de ver es imposible. Desde allí se fueron a Trujillo, adonde asimismo fueron agasajados de los dos nobles caballeros don Francisco Pizarro y don Juan de Orellana, y allí de nuevo refirieron el suceso de Feliciano, y ponderaron, al par de su voz, su discreción y el buen proceder de su hermano y de su padre, exagerando Auristela los cortesos ofrecimientos que Feliciano le había hecho al tiempo de su partida.

La ida de Trujillo fue de allí a dos días la vuelta de Talavera, donde hallaron que se preparaba para celebrar la gran fiesta de la Monda, que trae su origen de muchos años antes que Cristo naciese, reducida por los cristianos a tan buen punto y término, que si entonces se celebraba en honra de la diosa Venus por la gentilidad, ahora se celebra en honra y alabanza de la Virgen de las vírgines. Quisieran esperar a verla; pero, por no dar más espacio a su espacio, pasaron adelante, y se quedaron sin satisfacer su deseo.

Seis leguas se habrían alongado de Talavera, cuando delante de sí vieron que caminaba una peregrina, tan peregrina que iba sola, y escusóles el darla voces a que se detuviese el haberse ella sentado sobre la verde yerba de un pradecillo, o ya convidada del ameno sitio, o ya obligada del cansancio.

Llegaron a ella, y hallaron ser de tal talle, que nos obliga a describirle: la edad, al parecer, salía de los términos de la mocedad y tocaba en las márgenes de la vejez; el rostro daba en rostro, porque la vista de un lince no alcanzara a verle las narices, porque no las tenía sino tan chatas y llanas que con unas pinzas no le pudieran asir una brizna de ellas; los ojos les hacían sombra, porque más salían fuera de la cara que ella; el vestido era una esclavina rota, que le besaba los calcañares, sobre la cual traía una muceta, la mitad guarnecida de cuero, que por roto y despedazado no se podía distinguir si de cordobán o si de badana fuese; ceñíase con un cordón de esparto, tan abultado y poderoso que más parecía gúmena de galera que cordón de peregrina; las tocas eran bastas, pero limpias y blancas; cubríale la cabeza un sombrero viejo, sin cordón ni toquilla, y los pies unos alpargates rotos, y ocupábale la mano un bordón hecho a manera de cayado, con una punta de acero al fin; pendíale del lado izquierdo una calabaza de más que mediana estatura, y apesgábale el cuello un rosario, cuyos padrenuestros eran mayores que algunas bolas de las con que juegan los

muchachos al argolla. En efeto, toda ella era rota y toda penitente, y, como después se echó de ver, toda de mala condición.

Saludáronla en llegando, y ella les volvió las saludes con la voz que podía prometer la chatedad de sus narices, que fue más gangosa que suave. Preguntáronla adónde iba, y qué peregrinación era la suya, y, diciendo y haciendo, convidados, como ella, del ameno sitio, se le sentaron a la redonda, dejaron pacer el bagaje que les servía de recámara, de despensa y botillería, y, satisfaciendo a la hambre, alegremente la convidaron, y ella, respondiendo a la pregunta que la habían hecho, dijo:

-Mi peregrinación es la que usan algunos peregrinos: quiero decir que siempre es la que más cerca les viene a cuento para disculpar su ociosidad; y así, me parece que será bien deciros que por ahora voy a la gran ciudad de Toledo, a visitar a la devota imagen del Sagrario, y desde allí me iré al Niño de la Guardia, y, dando una punta, como halcón noruego, me entretendré con la santa Verónica de Jaén, hasta hacer tiempo de que llegue el último domingo de abril, en cuyo día se celebra en las entrañas de Sierra Morena, tres leguas de la ciudad de Andújar, la fiesta de Nuestra Señora de la Cabeza, que es una de las fiestas que en todo lo descubierto de la tierra se celebra; tal es, según he oído decir, que ni las pasadas fiestas de la gentilidad, a quien imita la de la Monda de Talavera, no le han hecho ni le pueden hacer ventaja. Bien quisiera yo, si fuera posible, sacarla de la imaginación, donde la tengo fija, y pintáros la con palabras, y ponéros la delante de la vista, para que, comprendiéndola, viéades la mucha razón que tengo de alabáros la; pero esta es carga para otro ingenio no tan estrecho como el mío. En el rico palacio de Madrid, morada de los reyes, en una galería, está retratada esta fiesta con la puntualidad posible: allí está el monte, o por mejor decir, peñasco, en cuya cima está el monasterio que deposita en sí una santa imagen, llamada de la Cabeza, que tomó el nombre de la peña donde habita, que antiguamente se llamó el Cabezo, por estar en la mitad de un llano libre y desembarazado, solo y señero de otros montes ni peñas que le rodeen, cuya altura será de hasta un cuarto de legua, y cuyo circuito debe de ser de poco más de media. En este espacioso y ameno sitio tiene su asiento, siempre verde y apacible, por el humor que le comunican las aguas del río Jándula, que de paso, como en reverencia, le besa las faldas. El lugar, la peña, la imagen, los milagros, la infinita gente que acude de cerca y lejos, el solemne día que he dicho, le hacen famoso en el mundo y célebre en España sobre cuantos lugares las más estendidas memorias se acuerdan.

Suspensos quedaron los peregrinos de la relación de la nueva, aunque vieja, peregrina, y casi les comenzó a bullir en el alma la gana de irse con ella a ver tantas maravillas; pero, la que llevaban de acabar su camino no dio lugar a que



nuevos deseos lo impidiesen.

-Desde allí -prosiguió la peregrina-, no sé qué viaje será el mío, aunque sé que no me ha de faltar donde ocupe la ociosidad y entretenga el tiempo, como lo hacen, como ya he dicho, algunos peregrinos que se usan.

A lo que dijo Antonio el padre:

-Paréceme, señora peregrina, que os da en el rostro la peregrinación.

-Eso no -respondió ella-, que bien sé que es justa, santa y loable, y que siempre la ha habido y la ha de haber en el mundo, pero estoy mal con los malos peregrinos, como son los que hacen granjería de la santidad, y ganancia infame de la virtud loable; con aquellos, digo, que saltean la limosna de los verdaderos pobres. Y no digo más, aunque pudiera.

En esto, por el camino real que junto a ellos estaba, vieron venir un hombre a caballo, que, llegando a igualar con ellos, al quitarles el sombrero para saludarles y hacerles cortesía, habiendo puesto la cabalgadura, como después pareció, la mano en un hoyo, dio consigo y con su dueño al través una gran caída. Acudieron todos luego a socorrer al caminante, que pensaron hallar muy malparado. Arrendó Antonio el mozo la cabalgadura, que era un poderoso macho, y al dueño le abrigaron lo mejor que pudieron, y le socorrieron con el remedio más ordinario que en tales casos se usa, que fue darle a beber un golpe de agua; y, hallando que su mal no era tanto como pensaban, le dijeron que bien podía volver a subir y a seguir su camino, el cual hombre les dijo:

-Quizá, señores peregrinos, ha permitido la suerte que yo haya caído en este llano para poder levantarme de los riscos donde la imaginación me tiene puesta el alma. «Yo, señores, aunque no queráis saberlo, quiero que sepáis que soy extranjero, y de nación polaco; muchacho salí de mi tierra, y vine a España, como a centro de los extranjeros y a madre común de las naciones; serví a españoles, aprendí la lengua castellana de la manera que veis que la hablo, y, llevado del general deseo que todos tienen de ver tierras, vine a Portugal a ver la gran ciudad de Lisboa, y la misma noche que entré en ella, me sucedió un caso que, si le creyéredes, haréis mucho, y si no, no importa nada, puesto que la verdad ha de tener siempre su asiento, aunque sea en sí misma.»

Admirados quedaron Periandro y Auristela, y los demás compañeros, de la improvisa y concertada narración del caído caminante; y, con gusto de escucharle, le dijo Periandro que prosiguiese en lo que decir quería, que todos le darían crédito, porque todos eran corteses y en las cosas del mundo experimentados. Alentado con esto, el caminante prosiguió diciendo:

-«Digo que la primera noche que entré en Lisboa, yendo por una de sus principales calles, o *rúas*, como ellos las llaman, por mejorar de posada, que no me había parecido bien una donde me había apeado, al pasar de un lugar

estrecho y no muy limpio, un embozado portugués con quien encontré, me desvió de sí con tanta fuerza que tuve necesidad de arrimarme al suelo. Despertó el agravio la cólera, remití mi venganza a mi espada, puse mano, púsola el portugués con gallardo brío y desenvoltura, y la ciega noche y la fortuna más ciega a la luz de mi mejor suerte, sin saber yo adónde, encaminó la punta de mi espada a la vista de mi contrario, el cual, dando de espaldas, dio el cuerpo al suelo y el alma adonde Dios se sabe. Luego me representó el temor lo que había hecho, pasméme, puse en el huir mi remedio; quise huir, pero no sabía adónde, mas el rumor de la gente, que me pareció que acudía, me puso alas en los pies, y, con pasos desconcertados, volví la calle abajo, buscando donde esconderme o adonde tener lugar de limpiar mi espada, porque si la justicia me cogiese no me hallase con manifiestos indicios de mi delito. Yendo, pues, así, ya del temor desmayado, vi una luz en una casa principal, y arrojéme a ella sin saber con qué disinio. Hallé una sala baja abierta y muy bien aderezada; alargué el paso y entré en otra cuadra, también bien aderezada; y, llevado de la luz que en otra cuadra parecía, hallé en un rico lecho echada una señora que, alborotada, sentándose en él, me preguntó quién era, qué buscaba, y adónde iba, y quién me había dado licencia de entrar hasta allí con tan poco respeto. Yo le respondí: "Señora, a tantas preguntas no os puedo responder, sino sólo con deciros que soy un hombre extranjero, que, a lo que creo, dejo muerto a otro en esa calle, más por su desgracia y su soberbia que por mi culpa. Suplícoos, por Dios y por quien sois, que me escapéis del rigor de la justicia, que pienso que me viene siguiendo". "¿Sois castellano?", me preguntó en su lengua portuguesa. "No, señora -le respondí yo-, sino forastero, y bien lejos de esta tierra". "Pues, aunque fuéades mil veces castellano -replicó ella-, os librara yo si pudiera, y os libraré si puedo. Subid por cima deste lecho, y entraos debajo deste tapiz, y entraos en un hueco que aquí hallaréis; y no os mováis, que si la justicia viniere, me tendrá respeto y creará lo que yo quisiere decirles".

»Dice luego lo que me mandó, alcé el tapiz, hallé el hueco, estrechéme en él, recogí el aliento y comencé a encomendarme a Dios lo mejor que pude; y, estando en esta confusa aflicción, entró un criado de casa, diciendo casi a gritos: "Señora, a mi señor don Duarte han muerto, aquí le traen pasado de una estocada de parte a parte por el ojo derecho, y no se sabe el matador, ni la ocasión de la pendencia, en la cual apenas se oyeron los golpes de las espadas: solamente hay un muchacho que dice que vio entrar un hombre huyendo en esta casa". "Ese debe de ser el matador, sin duda -respondió la señora-, y no podrá escaparse. ¡Cuántas veces temía yo, ay desdichada, ver que traían a mi hijo sin vida, porque de su arrogante proceder no se podían esperar sino desgracias!" En esto, en hombros de otros cuatro entraron al muerto, y le tendieron en el suelo, delante de

los ojos de la afligida madre, la cual con voz lamentable comenzó a decir: "¡Ay, venganza, y cómo estás llamando a las puertas del alma! Pero no consiente que responda a tu gusto el que yo tengo de guardar mi palabra. ¡Ay, con todo esto, dolor, que me aprietas mucho!"

»Considerad, señores, cuál estaría mi corazón oyendo las apretadas razones de la madre, a quien la presencia del muerto hijo me parecía a mí que le ponían en las manos mil géneros de muertes con que de mí se vengase: que bien estaba claro que había de imaginar que yo era el matador de su hijo. Pero, ¿qué podía yo hacer entonces, sino callar y esperar en la misma desesperación? Y más cuando entró en el aposento la justicia, que con comedimiento dijo a la señora: "Guiados por la voz de un muchacho, que dice que se entró en esta casa el homicida deste caballero, nos hemos atrevido a entrar en ella". Entonces yo abrí los oídos, y estuve atento a las respuestas que daría la afligida madre, la cual respondió, llena el alma de generoso ánimo y de piedad cristiana: "Si ese tal hombre ha entrado en esta casa, no a lo menos en esta estancia; por allá le pueden buscar, aunque plegue a Dios que no le hallen, porque mal se remedia una muerte con otra, y más cuando las injurias no proceden de malicia".

»Volvióse la justicia a buscar la casa, y volvieron en mí los espíritus que me habían desamparado. Mandó la señora quitar delante de sí el cuerpo muerto del hijo, y que le amortajasen y desde luego diesen orden en su sepultura; mandó asimismo que la dejaran sola, porque no estaba para recibir consuelos y pésames de infinitos que venían a dárselos, así de parientes como de amigos y conocidos. Hecho esto, llamó a una doncella suya, que, a lo que pareció, debió de ser de la que más se fiaba; y, habiéndola hablado al oído, la despidió, mandándole cerrase tras sí la puerta. Ella lo hizo así, y la señora, sentándose en el lecho, tentó el tapiz; y, a lo que pienso, me puso las manos sobre el corazón, el cual, palpitando aprieta, daba indicios del temor que le cercaba. Ella, viendo lo cual, me dijo con baja y lastimada voz: "Hombre, quienquiera que seas, ya ves que me has quitado el aliento de mi pecho, la luz de mis ojos, y finalmente la vida que me sustentaba; pero, porque entiendo que ha sido sin culpa tuya, quiero que se oponga mi palabra a mi venganza; y así, en cumplimiento de la promesa que te hice de librarte cuando aquí entraste, has de hacer lo que ahora te diré: ponte las manos en el rostro, porque si yo me descuido en abrir los ojos, no me obligues a que te conozca, y sal de ese encerramiento y sigue a una mi doncella, que ahora vendrá aquí, la cual te pondrá en la calle y te dará cien escudos de oro con que facilites tu remedio. No eres conocido, no tienes ningún indicio que te manifieste: sosiega el pecho, que el alboroto demasiado suele descubrir el delincuente".

»En esto, volvió la doncella; yo salí detrás del paño, cubierto el rostro con la

mano, y, en señal de agradecimiento, hincado de rodillas besé el pie de la cama muchas veces, y luego seguí los de la doncella, que, asimismo callando, me asió del brazo, y por la puerta falsa de un jardín, a oscuras, me puso en la calle.

»En viéndome en ella, lo primero que hice fue limpiar la espada, y con sosegado paso salí acaso a una calle principal, de donde reconocí mi posada, y me entré en ella, como si por mí no hubiera pasado ni próspero suceso ni adverso. Contóme el huésped la desgracia del recién muerto caballero, y así exageró la grandeza de su linaje como la arrogancia de su condición, de la cual se creía la habría granjeado algún enemigo secreto que a semejante término le hubiese conducido. Pasé aquella noche dando gracias a Dios de las recibidas mercedes, y ponderando el valeroso y nunca visto ánimo cristiano y admirable proceder de doña Guiomar de Sosa, que así supe se llamaba mi bienhechora. Salí por la mañana al río, y hallé en él un barco lleno de gente, que se iba a embarcar en una gran nave que en Sangián estaba de partida para las Islas Orientales; volvíme a mi posada, vendí a mi huésped la cabalgadura, y, cerrando todos mis discursos en el puño, volví al río y al barco, y otro día me hallé en el gran navío fuera del puerto, dadas las velas al viento, siguiendo el camino que se deseaba.

»Quince años he estado en las Indias, en los cuales, sirviendo de soldado con valentísimos portugueses, me han sucedido cosas de que quizá pudieran hacer una gustosa y verdadera historia, especialmente de las hazañas de la en aquellas partes invencible nación portuguesa, dignas de perpetua alabanza en los presentes y venideros siglos. Allí granjeé algún oro y algunas perlas, y cosas más de valor que de bulto, con las cuales y con la ocasión de volverse mi general a Lisboa, volví a ella, y de allí me puse en camino para volverme a mi patria, determinando ver primero todas las mejores y más principales ciudades de España. Reducí a dineros mis riquezas, y a pólizas los que me pareció ser necesario para mi camino, que fue el que primero intenté venir a Madrid, donde estaba recién venida la corte del gran Felipe Tercero; pero ya mi suerte, cansada de llevar la nave de mi ventura con próspero viento por el mar de la vida humana, quiso que diese en un bajío que la destrozase toda; y así, hizo que, en llegando una noche a Talavera, un lugar que no está lejos de aquí, me apeé en un mesón, que no me sirvió de mesón, sino de sepultura, pues en él hallé la de mi honra.

»¡Oh fuerzas poderosas de amor; de amor, digo, inconsiderado, presuroso y lascivo y mal intencionado, y con cuánta facilidad atropellas disinios buenos, intentos castos, proposiciones discretas! Digo, pues, que, estando en este mesón, entró en él acaso una doncella de hasta diez y seis años, a lo menos a mí no me pareció de más, puesto que después supe que tenía veinte y dos. Venía en cuerpo y en tranzado, vestida de paño, pero limpísima, y al pasar junto a mí me pareció

que olía a un prado lleno de flores por el mes de mayo, cuyo olor en mis sentidos dejó atrás las aromas de Arabia; llegóse la cual a un mozo del mesón, y, hablándole al oído, alzó una gran risa, y, volviendo las espaldas, salió del mesón, y se entró en una casa frontera. El mozo mesonero corrió tras ella, y no la pudo alcanzar, si no fue con una cox que le dio en las espaldas, que la hizo entrar cayendo de ojos en su casa. Esto vio otra moza del mismo mesón, y llena de cólera dijo al mozo: "¡Por Dios, Alonso, que lo haces mal: que no merece Luisa que la santigües a coces!" "Como ésas le daré yo, si vivo -respondió el Alonso-. Calla, Martina amiga, que a estas mocitas sobresalientes, no solamente es menester ponerles la mano, sino los pies y todo". Y con esto nos dejó solos a mí y a Martina, a la cual le pregunté que qué Luisa era aquélla, y si era casada o no. "No es casada -respondió Martina-, pero serálo presto con este mozo Alonso que habéis visto; y, en fe de los tratos que andan entre los padres della y los dél, de esposa, se atreve Alonso a molella a coces todas las veces que se le antoja, aunque muy pocas son sin que ella las merezca; porque, si va a decir la verdad, señor huésped, la tal Luisa es algo atrevidilla, y algún tanto libre y descompuesta. Harto se lo he dicho yo, mas no aprovecha: no dejará de seguir su gusto si la sacan los ojos; pues, en verdad en verdad, que una de las mejores dotes que puede llevar una doncella es la honestidad, que buen siglo haya la madre que me parió, que fue persona que no me dejó ver la calle ni aun por un agujero, cuanto más salir al umbral de la puerta: sabía bien, como ella decía, que la mujer y la gallina, etc." "Dígame, señora Martina -le repliqué yo-: ¿cómo de la estrechez de ese noviciado vino a hacer profesión en la anchura de un mesón?" "Hay mucho que decir en eso -dijo Martina-, y aun yo tuviera más que decir de estas menudencias, si el tiempo lo pidiera o el dolor que traigo en el alma lo permitiera".»

## Capítulo sétimo del tercero libro

CON ATENCIÓN escuchaban los peregrinos el peregrino, cuando del polaco ya deseaban saber qué dolor traía en el alma, como sabían el que debía de tener en el cuerpo. A quien dijo Periandro:

-Contad, señor, lo que quisiéredes y con las menudencias que quisiéredes, que muchas veces el contarlas suele acrecentar gravedad al cuento; que no parece mal estar en la mesa de un banquete, junto a un faisán bien aderezado, un plato de una fresca, verde y sabrosa ensalada. La salsa de los cuentos es la propiedad del lenguaje en cualquiera cosa que se diga. Así que, señor, seguid vuestra historia, contad de Alonso y de Martina, acocead a vuestro gusto a Luisa, casalda o no la caséis, séase ella libre y desenvuelta como un cernícalo, que el toque no está en sus desenvolturas, sino en sus sucesos, según lo hallo yo en mi astrología.

-Digo, pues, señores -respondió el polaco-, que, usando de esa buena licencia, no me quedará cosa en el tintero que no la ponga en la plana de vuestro juicio. «Con todo el que entonces tenía, que no debía de ser mucho, fui y vine una y muchas veces aquella noche a pensar en el donaire, en la gracia y en la desenvoltura de la sin par, a mi parecer, ni sé si la llame vecina moza o conocida de mi huésped. Hice mil disignios, fabriqué mil torres de viento, caséme, tuve hijos y di dos higas al qué dirán; y, finalmente, me resolví de dejar el primer intento de mi jornada y quedarme en Talavera, casado con la diosa Venus, que no menos hermosa me pareció la muchacha, aunque acoceada por el mozo del mesonero. Pasóse aquella noche, tomé el pulso a mi gusto, y halléle tal, que, a no casarme con ella, en poco espacio de tiempo había de perder, perdiendo el gusto, la vida, que ya había depositado en los ojos de mi labradora. Y, atropellando por todo género de inconvenientes, determiné de hablar a su padre, pidiéndosela por mujer. Enseñéle mis perlas, manifestéle mis dineros, díjele alabanzas de mi ingenio y de mi industria, no sólo para conservarlos, sino para aumentarlos; y, con estas razones y con el alarde que le había hecho de mis bienes, vino más blando que un guante a condecender con mi deseo, y más cuando vio que yo no reparaba en dote, pues con sola la hermosura de su hija me tenía por pagado, contento y satisfecho deste concierto.

»Quedó Alonso despechado; Luisa, mi esposa, rostrituerta; como lo dieron a entender los sucesos que de allí a quince días acontecieron, con dolor mío y vergüenza suya, que fueron acomodarse mi esposa con algunas joyas y dineros

míos, con los cuales, y con ayuda de Alonso, que le puso alas en la voluntad y en los pies, desapareció de Talavera dejándome burlado y arrepentido, y dando ocasión al pueblo a que de su inconstancia y bellaquería en corrillos hablasen. Hízome el agravio acudir a la venganza, pero no hallé en quién tomarla sino en mí propio, que con un lazo estuve mil veces por ahorcarme; pero la suerte, que quizá para satisfacerme de los agravios que me tiene hechos me guarda, ha ordenado que mis enemigos hayan parecido presos en la cárcel de Madrid, de donde he sido avisado que vaya a ponerles la demanda y a seguir mi justicia; y así, voy con voluntad determinada de sacar con su sangre las manchas de mi honra, y, con quitarles las vidas, quitar de sobre mis hombros la pesada carga de su delito, que me trae aterrado y consumido. ¡Vive Dios, que han de morir! ¡Vive Dios, que me he de vengar! ¡Vive Dios, que ha de saber el mundo que no sé disimular agravios, y más los que son tan dañosos que se entran hasta las médulas del alma! A Madrid voy. Ya estoy mejor de mi caída. No hay sino ponerme a caballo, y guárdense de mí hasta los mosquitos del aire, y no me lleguen a los oídos ni ruegos de frailes, ni llantos de personas devotas, ni promesas de bien intencionados corazones, ni dádivas de ricos, ni imperios ni mandamientos de grandes, ni toda la caterva que suele proceder a semejantes acciones: que mi honra ha de andar sobre su delito como el aceite sobre el agua.»

Y, diciendo esto, se iba a levantar muy ligero, para volver a subir y a seguir su viaje; viendo lo cual Periandro, asiéndole del brazo, le detuvo, y le dijo:

-Vos, señor, ciego de vuestra cólera, no echáis de ver que vais a dilatar y a estender vuestra deshonra. Hasta agora no estáis más deshonorado de entre los que os conocen en Talavera, que deben de ser bien pocos, y agora vais a serlo de los que os conocerán en Madrid; queréis ser como el labrador que crió la víbora serpiente en el seno todo el invierno, y, por merced del cielo, cuando llegó el verano, donde ella pudiera aprovecharse de su ponzoña, no la halló porque se había ido; el cual, sin agradecer esta merced al cielo, quiso irla a buscar y volverla a anidar en su casa y en su seno, no mirando ser suma prudencia no buscar el hombre lo que no le está bien hallar, y a lo que comúnmente se dice, que, al enemigo que huye, la puente de plata, y el mayor que el hombre tiene suele decirse que es la mujer propia. Pero esto debe de ser en otras religiones que en la cristiana, entre las cuales los matrimonios son una manera de concierto y conveniencia, como lo es el de alquilar una casa o otra alguna heredad; pero en la religión católica, el casamiento es sacramento que sólo se desata con la muerte, o con otras cosas que son más duras que la misma muerte, las cuales pueden escusar la cohabitación de los dos casados, pero no deshacer el nudo con que ligados fueron. ¿Qué pensáis que os sucederá cuando la justicia os entregue a vuestros enemigos, atados y rendidos, encima de un teatro público, a la vista de

infinitas gentes, y a vos blandiendo el cuchillo encima del cadahalso, amenazando el segarles las gargantas, como si pudiera su sangre limpiar, como vos decís, vuestra honra? ¿Qué os puede suceder, como digo, sino hacer más público vuestro agravio? Porque las venganzas castigan, pero no quitan las culpas; y las que en estos casos se cometen, como la enmienda no proceda de la voluntad, siempre se están en pie, y siempre están vivas en las memorias de las gentes, a lo menos, en tanto que vive el agraviado. Así que, señor, volved en vos, y, dando lugar a la misericordia, no corráis tras la justicia. Y no os aconsejo por esto a que perdonéis a vuestra mujer, para volvella a vuestra casa, que a esto no hay ley que os obligue; lo que os aconsejo es que la dejéis, que es el mayor castigo que podréis darle. Vivid lejos della, y viviréis; lo que no haréis estando juntos, porque moriréis continuo. La ley del repudio fue muy usada entre los romanos; y, puesto que sería mayor caridad perdonarla, recogerla, sufrirla y aconsejarla, es menester tomar el pulso a la paciencia y poner en un punto estremado a la discreción, de la cual pocos se pueden fiar en esta vida, y más cuando la contrastan inconvenientes tantos y tan pesados. Y, finalmente, quiero que consideréis que vais a hacer un pecado mortal en quitarles las vidas, que no se ha de cometer por todas las ganancias que la honra del mundo ofrezca.

Atento estuvo a estas razones de Periandro el colérico polaco; y, mirándole de hito en hito, respondió:

-Tu, señor, has hablado sobre tus años: tu discreción se adelanta a tus días, y la madurez de tu ingenio a tu verde edad; un ángel te ha movido la lengua, con la cual has ablandado mi voluntad, pues ya no es otra la que tengo si no es la de volverme a mi tierra a dar gracias al cielo por la merced que me has hecho. Ayúdame a levantar, que si la cólera me volvió las fuerzas, no es bien que me las quite mi bien considerada paciencia.

-Eso haremos todos de muy buena gana -dijo Antonio el padre.

Y, ayudándole a subir en el macho, abrazándoles a todos primero, dijo que quería volver a Talavera a cosas que a su hacienda tocaban, y que desde Lisboa volvería por la mar a su patria. Díjoles su nombre, que se llamaba Ortel Banedre, que respondía en castellano Martín Banedre; y, ofreciéndoseles de nuevo a su servicio, volvió las riendas hacia Talavera, dejando a todos admirados de sus sucesos y del buen donaire con que los había contado.

Aquella noche la pasaron los peregrinos en aquel mismo lugar, y, de allí a dos días, en compañía de la antigua peregrina, llegaron a la Sagra de Toledo, y a vista del celebrado Tajo, famoso por sus arenas y claro por sus líquidos cristales.



## Capítulo octavo del tercero libro

NO ES LA fama del río Tajo tal que la cierren límites, ni la ignoren las más remotas gentes del mundo; que a todos se estiende y a todos se manifiesta, y en todos hace nacer un deseo de conocerle; y, como es uso de los setentrionales ser toda la gente principal versada en la lengua latina y en los antiguos poetas, éralo asimismo Periandro, como uno de los más principales de aquella nación; y, así por esto como por haber mostrádole a la luz del mundo aquellos días las famosas obras del jamás alabado como se debe poeta Garcilaso de la Vega, y haberlas él visto, leído, mirado y admirado, así como vio al claro río, dijo:

-No diremos: «Aquí dio fin a su cantar Salicio», sino: «Aquí dio principio a su cantar Salicio; aquí sobrepujó en sus églogas a sí mismo; aquí resonó su zampoña, a cuyo son se detuvieron las aguas deste río, no se movieron las hojas de los árboles, y, parándose los vientos, dieron lugar a que la admiración de su canto fuese de lengua en lengua y de gente en gentes por todas las de la tierra». ¡Oh venturosas, pues, cristalinas aguas, doradas arenas! ¡Qué digo yo doradas, antes de puro oro nacidas! Recoged a este pobre peregrino, que, como desde lejos os adora, os piensa reverenciar desde cerca.

Y, poniendo la vista en la gran ciudad de Toledo, fue esto lo que dijo:

-¡Oh peñascosa pesadumbre, gloria de España y luz de sus ciudades, en cuyo seno han estado guardadas por infinitos siglos las reliquias de los valientes godos, para volver a resucitar su muerta gloria y a ser claro espejo y depósito de católicas ceremonias! ¡Salve, pues, oh ciudad santa, y da lugar que en ti le tengan éstos que venimos a verte!

Esto dijo Periandro, que lo dijera mejor Antonio el padre, si tan bien como él lo supiera; porque las lecciones de los libros muchas veces hacen más cierta experiencia de las cosas, que no la tienen los mismos que las han visto, a causa que el que lee con atención, repara una y muchas veces en lo que va leyendo, y el que mira sin ella no repara en nada, y con esto excede la lección a la vista.

Casi en este mismo instante resonó en sus oídos el son de infinitos y alegres instrumentos que por los valles que la ciudad rodean se estendían, y vieron venir hacia donde ellos estaban escuadrones no armados de infantería, sino montones de doncellas, sobre el mismo sol hermosas, vestidas a lo villano, llenas de sartos y patenas los pechos, en quien los corales y la plata tenían su lugar y asiento, con más gala que las perlas y el oro, que aquella vez se hurtó de los pechos y se acogió a los cabellos, que todos eran luengos y rubios como el mismo oro;

venían, aunque sueltos por las espaldas, recogidos en la cabeza con verdes guirnaldas de olorosas flores. Campeó aquel día y en ellas, antes la palmilla de Cuenca que el damasco de Milán y el raso de Florencia. Finalmente, la rusticidad de sus galas se aventajaba a las más ricas de la corte, porque si en ellas se mostraba la honesta medianía, se descubría asimismo la estremada limpieza: todas eran flores, todas rosas, todas donaire, y todas juntas componían un honesto movimiento, aunque de diferentes bailes formado, el cual movimiento era incitado del son de los diferentes instrumentos ya referidos.

Alrededor de cada escuadrón andaban por de fuera, de blanquísimo lienzo vestidos y con paños labrados rodeadas las cabezas, muchos zagales, o ya sus parientes, o ya sus conocidos, o ya vecinos de sus mismos lugares: uno tocaba el tamboril y la flauta, otro el salterio, éste las sonajas y aquél los albogues. Y de todos estos sones redundaba uno solo, que alegraba con la concordancia, que es el fin de la música.

Y, al pasar uno destos escuadrones o junta de bailadoras doncellas por delante de los peregrinos, uno, que a lo que después pareció era el alcalde del pueblo, asió a una de aquellas doncellas del brazo, y, mirándola muy bien de arriba abajo, con voz alterada y de mal talante la dijo:

-¡Ah, Tozuelo, Tozuelo, y qué de poca vergüenza os acompaña! ¿Bailes son éstos para ser profanados? ¿Fiestas son éstas para no llevarlas sobre las niñas de los ojos? No sé yo cómo consienten los cielos semejantes maldades. Si esto ha sido con sabiduría de mi hija Clementa Cobeña, ¡por Dios que nos han de oír los sordos!

Apenas acabó de decir esta palabra el alcalde, cuando llegó otro alcalde y le dijo:

-Pedro Cobeño, si os oyesen los sordos, sería hacer milagros. Contentaos con que nosotros nos oigamos a nosotros, y sepamos en qué os ha ofendido mi hijo Tozuelo, que si él ha dilinquido contra vos, justicia soy yo que le podré y sabré castigar.

A lo que respondió Cobeño:

-El delinquimiento ya se vee, pues siendo varón va vestido de hembra; y no de hembra comoquiera, sino de doncella de su Majestad, en sus fiestas; porque veáis, alcalde Tozuelo, si es mocosa la culpa. Ténome que mi hija Cobeña anda por aquí, porque estos vestidos de vuestro hijo me parecen suyos, y no querría que el diablo hiciese de las suyas, y, sin nuestra sabiduría, los juntase sin las bendiciones de la Iglesia; que ya sabéis que estos casorios hechos a hurtadillas, por la mayor parte pararon en mal, y dan de comer a los de la audiencia clerical, que es muy carera.

A esto respondió por Tozuelo una doncella labradora, de muchas que se

pararon a oír la plática:

-Si va a decir la verdad, señores alcaldes, tan marida es Mari Cobeña de Tozuelo, y él marido della, como lo es mi madre de mi padre y mi padre de mi madre. Ella está en cinta, y no está para danzar ni bailar. Cásenlos, y váyase el diablo para malo, y a quien Dios se la dio, San Pedro se la bendiga.

-¡Par Dios, hija! -respondió Tozuelo-. Vos decís muy bien: entrambos son iguales; no es más cristiano viejo el uno que el otro; las riquezas se pueden medir con una misma vara.

-Agora bien -replicó Cobeño-, llamen aquí a mi hija, que ella lo deslindará todo, que no es nada muda.

Vino Cobeña, que no estaba lejos, y lo primero que dijo fue:

-Ni yo he sido la primera, ni seré la postrera que haya tropezado y caído en estos barrancos: Tozuelo es mi esposo, y yo su esposa, y perdonen Dios a entrambos, cuando nuestros padres no quisieren.

-Eso sí, hija -dijo su padre-: ¡La vergüenza por los cerros de Úbeda, antes que en la cara! Pero, pues esto está ya hecho, bien será que el alcalde Tozuelo se sirva de que este caso pase adelante, pues vosotros no le habéis querido dejar atrás.

-¡Par diez -dijo la doncella primera-, que el señor alcalde Cobeño ha hablado como un viejo! Dense estos niños las manos, si es que no se las han dado hasta agora, y queden para en uno, como lo manda la Santa Iglesia Nuestra Madre, y vamos con nuestro baile al olmo, que no se ha de estorbar nuestra fiesta por niñerías.

Vino Tozuelo con el parecer de la moza, diéronse las manos los donceles, acabóse el pleito y pasó el baile adelante: que si con esta verdad se acabaran todos los pleitos, secas y peladas estuvieran las solícitas plumas de los escribanos.

Quedaron Periandro, Auristela y los demás peregrinos contentísimos de haber visto la pendencia de los dos amantes, y admirados de ver la hermosura de las labradoras doncellas, que parecía, todas a una mano, que eran principio, medio y fin de la humana belleza.

No quiso Periandro que entrasen en Toledo, porque así se lo pidió Antonio el padre, a quien aguijaba el deseo que tenía de ver a su patria y a sus padres, que no estaban lejos, diciendo que para ver las grandezas de aquella ciudad, convenía más tiempo que el que su priesa les ofrecía. Por esta misma razón, tampoco quisieron pasar por Madrid, donde a la sazón estaba la corte, temiendo algún estorbo que su camino les impidiese. Confirmóles en este parecer la antigua peregrina, diciéndoles que andaban en la corte ciertos pequeños, que tenían fama de ser hijos de grandes; que, aunque pájaros noveles, se abatían al señuelo de

cualquiera mujer hermosa, de cualquiera calidad que fuese: que el amor antojadizo no busca calidades, sino hermosura.

A lo que añadió Antonio el padre:

-Desa manera será menester que usemos de la industria que usan las grullas, cuando, mudando regiones, pasan por el monte Limabo, en el cual las están aguardando unas aves de rapiña para que les sirvan de pasto; pero ellas, previniendo este peligro, pasan de noche, y llevan una piedra cada una en la boca, para que les impida el canto y escusen de ser sentidas; cuanto más que, la mejor industria que podemos tener es seguir la ribera deste famoso río, y, dejando la ciudad a mano derecha, guardando para otro tiempo el verla, nos vamos a Ocaña, y desde allí al Quintanar de la Orden, que es mi patria.

Viendo la peregrina el disignio del viaje que había hecho Antonio, dijo que ella quería seguir el suyo, que le venía más a cuento. La hermosa Ricla le dio dos monedas de oro en limosna, y la peregrina se despidió de todos, cortés y agradecida.

Nuestros peregrinos pasaron por Aranjuez, cuya vista, por ser en tiempo de primavera, en un mismo punto les puso la admiración y la alegría; vieron de iguales y estendidas calles, a quien servían de espaldas y arrimos los verdes y infinitos árboles: tan verdes, que las hacían parecer de finísimas esmeraldas; vieron la junta, los besos y abrazos que se daban los dos famosos ríos Henares y Tajo; contemplaron sus sierras de agua; admiraron el concierto de sus jardines y de la diversidad de sus flores; vieron sus estanques, con más peces que arenas, y sus esquisitos frutales, que por aliviar el peso a los árboles tendían las ramas por el suelo; finalmente, Periandro tuvo por verdadera la fama que deste sitio por todo el mundo se esparcía.

Desde allí fueron a la villa de Ocaña, donde supo Antonio que sus padres vivían, y se informó de otras cosas que le alegraron, como luego se dirá.

## Capítulo nono del tercer libro

CON LOS AIRES de su patria se regocijaron los espíritus de Antonio, y con el visitar a Nuestra Señora de Esperanza, a todos se les alegró el alma. Ricla y sus dos hijos se alborozaron con el pensamiento de que habían de ver presto, ella a sus suegros, y ellos a sus abuelos, de quien ya se había informado Antonio que vivían, a pesar del sentimiento que la ausencia de su hijo les había causado: supo asimismo cómo su contrario había heredado el estado de su padre, y que había muerto en amistad de su padre de Antonio, a causa que, con infinitas pruebas, nacidas de la intrincada seta del duelo, se había averiguado que no fue afrenta la que Antonio le hizo, porque las palabras que en la pendencia pasaron fueron con la espada desnuda, y la luz de las armas quita la fuerza a las palabras, y las que se dicen con las espadas desnudas no afrentan, puesto que agravian; y así, el que quiere tomar venganza dellas, no se ha de entender que satisface su afrenta, sino que castiga su agravio, como se mostrará en este ejemplo. Prosupongamos que yo digo una verdad manifiesta; respóndeme un desalumbrado que miento y mentiré todas las veces que lo dijere, y, poniendo mano a la espada, sustenta aquella desmentida; yo, que soy el desmentido, no tengo necesidad de volver por la verdad que dije, la cual no puede ser desmentida en ninguna manera, pero tengo necesidad de castigar el poco respeto que se me tuvo; de modo que el desmentido, desta suerte, puede entrar en campo con otro, sin que se le ponga por objeción que está afrentado, y que no puede entrar en campo con nadie hasta que se satisfaga, porque, como tengo dicho, es grande la diferencia que hay entre agravio y afrenta.

En efeto, digo que supo Antonio la amistad de su padre y de su contrario, y que, pues ellos habían sido amigos, se habría bien mirado su causa. Con estas buenas nuevas, con más sosiego y más contento, se puso otro día en camino con sus camaradas, a quien contó todo aquello que de su negocio sabía, y que un hermano del que pensó ser su enemigo le había heredado y quedado en la misma amistad con su padre que su hermano el muerto. Fue parecer de Antonio que ninguno saliese de su orden, porque pensaba darse a conocer a su padre, no de improviso, sino por algún rodeo que le aumentase el contento de hacerle conocido, advirtiéndole que tal vez mata una súbita alegría como suele matar un improviso pesar.

De allí a tres días llegaron, al crepúsculo de la noche, a su lugar y a la casa de su padre, el cual, con su madre, según después pareció, estaba sentado a la puerta

de la calle, tomando, como dicen, el fresco, por ser el tiempo de los calurosos del verano. Llegaron todos juntos, y el primero que habló fue Antonio a su mismo padre:

-¿Hay por ventura, señor, en este lugar hospital de peregrinos?

-Según es cristiana la gente que le habita -respondió su padre-, todas las casas dél son hospital de peregrinos, y, cuando otra no hubiera, esta mía, según su capacidad, sirviera por todas: prendas tengo yo por esos mundos adelante, que no sé si andarán agora buscando quien las acoja.

-¿Por ventura, señor -replicó Antonio-, este lugar no se llama el Quintanar de la Orden, y en él no viven un apellido de unos hidalgos que se llaman Villaseñores? Dígolo, porque he conocido yo un tal Villaseñor, bien lejos desta tierra, que si él estuviera en ésta, no nos faltara posada a mí ni a mis camaradas.

-¿Y cómo se llamaba, hijo -dijo su madre-, ese Villaseñor que decís?

-Llamábase Antonio -replicó Antonio-, y su padre, según me acuerdo, me dijo se llamaba Diego de Villaseñor.

-¡Ay, señor -dijo la madre, levantándose de donde estaba-, que ese Antonio es mi hijo, que por cierta desgracia ha al pie de diez y seis años que falta desta tierra! Comprado le tengo a lágrimas, pesado a suspiros y granjeado con oraciones. ¡Plegue a Dios que mis ojos le vean antes que descubra la noche de la eterna sombra! Decidme -dijo-: ¿Ha mucho que le vistes? ¿Ha mucho que le dejastes? ¿Tiene salud? ¿Piensa volver a su patria? ¿Acuérdase de sus padres, a quien podrá venir a ver, pues no hay enemigos que se lo impidan, que ya no son sino amigos los que le hicieron desterrar de su tierra?

Todas estas razones escuchaba el anciano padre de Antonio, y, llamando a grandes voces a sus criados, les mandó encender luces y que metiesen dentro de casa a aquellos honrados peregrinos; y, llegándose a su no conocido hijo, le abrazó estrechamente, diciéndole:

-Por vos sólo, señor, sin que otras nuevas os hiciesen el aposento, os le diera yo en mi casa, llevado de la costumbre que tengo de agasajar en ella a todos cuantos peregrinos por aquí pasan; pero agora, con las regocijadas nuevas que me habéis dado, ensancharé la voluntad, y sobrepujarán los servicios que os hiciere a mis mismas fuerzas.

En esto, ya los sirvientes habían encendido luces, y guiando los peregrinos dentro de la casa, y, en mitad de un gran patio que tenía, salieron dos hermosas y honestas doncellas, hermanas de Antonio, que habían nacido después de su ausencia, las cuales, viendo la hermosura de Auristela y la gallardía de Constanza, su sobrina, con el buen parecer de Ricla, su cuñada, no se hartaban de besarlas y de bendecirlas; y, cuando esperaban que sus padres entrasen dentro de casa con el nuevo huésped, vieron entrar con ellos un confuso montón de

gente, que traían en hombros, sobre una silla sentado, un hombre como muerto, que luego supieron ser el conde que había heredado al enemigo que solía ser de su tío.

El alboroto de la gente, la confusión de sus padres, el cuidado de recibir los nuevos huéspedes, las turbó de manera que no sabían a quién acudir ni a quién preguntar la causa de aquel alboroto. Los padres de Antonio acudieron al conde, herido de una bala por las espaldas, que en una revuelta que dos compañías de soldados, que estaban en el pueblo alojadas, habían tenido con los del lugar, y le habían pasado por las espaldas el pecho; el cual, viéndose herido, mandó a sus criados que le trujesen en casa de Diego de Villaseñor, su amigo, y el traerle fue a tiempo que comenzaba a hospedar a su hijo, a su nuera y a sus dos nietos, y a Periandro y a Auristela, la cual, asiendo de las manos a las hermanas de Antonio, les pidió que la quitasen de aquella confusión y la llevasen a algún aposento donde nadie la viese. Hiciéronlo ellas así, siempre admirándose de nuevo de la sin par belleza de Auristela.

Constanza, a quien la sangre del parentesco bullía en el alma, ni quería ni podía apartarse de sus tías, que todas eran de una misma edad y casi de una igual hermosura. Lo mismo le aconteció al mancebo Antonio, el cual, olvidado de los respetos de la buena crianza y de la obligación del hospedaje, se atrevió, honesto y regocijado, a abrazar a una de sus tías, viendo lo cual un criado de casa, le dijo:

-¡Por vida del señor peregrino, que tenga quedas las manos, que el señor desta casa no es hombre de burlas; si no, a fee que se las haga tener quedas, a despecho de su desvergonzado atrevimiento!

-¡Por Dios, hermano -respondió Antonio-, que es muy poco lo que he hecho para lo que pienso hacer, si el cielo favorece mis deseos, que no son otros que servir a estas señoras y a todos los desta casa!

Ya en esto habían acomodado al conde herido en un rico lecho, y llamado a dos cirujanos que le tomasen la sangre y mirasen la herida, los cuales declararon ser mortal, sin que por vía humana tuviese remedio alguno.

Estaba todo el pueblo puesto en arma contra los soldados, que en escuadrón formado se habían salido al campo, y esperaban si fuesen acometidos del pueblo, dándoles la batalla. Valía poco para ponerlos en paz la solicitud y la prudencia de los capitanes, ni la diligencia cristiana de los sacerdotes y religiosos del pueblo, el cual, por la mayor parte, se alborota de livianas ocasiones, y crece bien así como van creciendo las olas del mar de blando viento movidas, hasta que, tomando el regañón el blando soplo del céfiro, le mezcla con su huracán y las levanta al cielo; el cual, dándose prisa a entrar el día, la prudencia de los capitanes hizo marchar a sus soldados a otra parte, y los del pueblo se quedaron en sus límites, a pesar del rigor y mal ánimo que contra los soldados tenían

concebido.

En fin, por términos y pausas espaciosas, con sobresaltos agudos, poco a poco vino Antonio a descubrirse a sus padres, haciéndoles presente de sus nietos y de su nuera, cuya presencia sacó lágrimas de los ojos de los viejos, y la belleza de Auristela y gallardía de Periandro les sacó el pasmo al rostro y la admiración a todos los sentidos.

Este placer, tan grande como imprevisto; esta llegada de sus hijos, tan no esperada, se la aguó, turbó y casi deshizo la desgracia del conde, que por momentos iba empeorando. Con todo eso, le hizo presente de sus hijos, y de nuevo le hizo ofrecimiento de su casa y de cuanto en ella había que para su salud fuese conveniente; porque, aunque quisiera moverse y llevarle a la de su estado, no fuera posible: tales eran las pocas esperanzas que se tenían de su salud.

No se quitaban de la cabecera del conde, obligadas de su natural condición, Auristela y Constanza, que, con la compasión cristiana y solicitud posible, eran sus enfermeras, puesto que iban contra el parecer de los cirujanos, que ordenaban le dejasen solo, o a lo menos no acompañado de mujeres. Pero la disposición del cielo, que, con causas a nosotros secretas, ordena y dispone las cosas de la tierra, ordenó y quiso que el conde llegase al último de su vida; y un día, antes que della se despidiese, cierto ya de que no podía vivir, llamó a Diego de Villaseñor, y, quedándose con él solo, le dijo desta manera:

-Yo salí de mi casa con intención de ir a Roma este año, en el cual el sumo Pontífice ha abierto las arcas del tesoro de la Iglesia, y comunicádonos, como en año santo, las infinitas gracias que en él suelen ganarse. Iba a la ligera, más como peregrino pobre que como caballero rico; entré en este pueblo; hallé trabada una pendencia, como ya, señor, habéis visto, entre los soldados que en él estaban alojados y entre los vecinos dél; mezcléme en ella, y, por reparar las ajenas vidas, he venido a perder la mía, porque esta herida que a traición, si así se puede decir, me dieron, me la va quitando por momentos. No sé quién me la dio, porque las pendencias del vulgo traen consigo a la misma confusión. No me pesa de mi muerte, si no es por las que ha de costar, si por justicia o por venganza quisiere castigarse. Con todo esto, por hacer lo que en mí es, y todo aquello que de mi parte puedo, como caballero y cristiano, digo que perdono a mi matador y a todos aquéllos que con él tuvieron culpa; y es mi voluntad, asimismo, de mostrar que soy agradecido al bien que en vuestra casa me habéis hecho, y la muestra que he de dar deste agradecimiento no será así comoquiera, sino con el más alto extremo que pueda imaginarse. En esos dos baúles que ahí están, donde llevaba recogida mi recámara, creo que van hasta veinte mil ducados en oro y en joyas, que no ocupan mucho lugar; y, si como esta cantidad es poca, fuera la grande que encierra las entrañas de Potosí, hiciera della lo



mismo que desta hacer quiero. Tomalda, señor, en vida, o haced que la tome la señora doña Constanza, vuestra nieta, que yo se lo doy en arras y para su dote; y más, que le pienso dar esposo de mi mano, tal que, aunque presto quede viuda, quede viuda honradísima, juntamente con quedar doncella honrada. Llamadla aquí, y traed quien me despose con ella; que su valor, su cristiandad, su hermosura, merecían hacerla señora del universo. No os admire, señor, lo que oís, creed lo que os digo, que no será novedad disparatada casarse un título con una doncella hijadalgo, en quien concurren todas las virtuosas partes que pueden hacer a una mujer famosa. Esto quiere el cielo, a esto me inclina mi voluntad; por lo que debéis al ser discreto, que no lo estorbe la vuestra. Id luego, y, sin replicar palabra, traed quien me despose con vuestra nieta, y quien haga las escrituras tan firmes, así de la entrega destas joyas y dineros, y de la mano que de esposo la he de dar, que no haya calumnia que la deshaga.

Pasmóse a estas razones Villaseñor, y creyó sin duda alguna que el conde había perdido el juicio, y que la hora de su muerte era llegada, pues en tal punto, por la mayor parte, o se dicen grandes sentencias o se hacen grandes disparates; y así, lo que le respondió fue:

-Señor, yo espero en Dios que tendréis salud, y entonces con ojos más claros, y sin que algún dolor os turbe los sentidos, podréis ver las riquezas que dais y la mujer que escogéis; mi nieta no es vuestra igual, o a lo menos no está en potencia propincua, sino muy remota, de merecer ser vuestra esposa, y yo no soy tan codicioso que quiera comprar esta honra que queréis hacerme, con lo que dirá el vulgo, casi siempre mal intencionado, del cual ya me parece que dice que os tuve en mi casa, que os trastorné el sentido y que por vías de la solicitud codiciosa os hice hacer esto.

-Diga lo que quisiere -dijo el conde-; que si el vulgo siempre se engaña, también quedará engañado en lo que de vos pensare.

-Alto, pues -dijo Villaseñor-: no quiero ser tan ignorante que no quiera abrir a la buena suerte que está llamando a las puertas de mi casa.

Y con esto se salió del aposento, y comunicó lo que el conde le había dicho con su mujer, con sus nietos, y con Periandro y Auristela, los cuales fueron de parecer que, sin perder punto, asiesen a la ocasión por los cabellos que les ofrecía, y trujesen quien llevase al cabo aquel negocio.

Hízose así, y en menos de dos horas ya estaba Costanza desposada con el conde, y los dineros y joyas en su posesión, con todas las circunstancias y revalidaciones que fueron posible hacerse. No hubo músicas en el desposorio, sino llantos y gemidos, porque la vida del conde se iba acabando por momentos. Finalmente, otro día después del desposorio, recibidos todos los sacramentos, murió el conde en los brazos de su esposa la condesa Costanza, la cual,

cubriéndose la cabeza con un velo negro, hincada de rodillas y levantando los ojos al cielo, comenzó a decir:

-Yo hago voto...

Pero, apenas dijo esta palabra, cuando Auristela le dijo:

-¿Qué voto queréis hacer, señora?

-De ser monja -respondió la condesa.

-Sedlo, y no le hagáis -replicó Auristela-, que las obras de servir a Dios no han de ser precipitadas, ni que parezcan que las mueven accidentes, y éste de la muerte de vuestro esposo, quizá os hará prometer lo que después, o no podréis, o no querréis cumplir. Dejad en las manos de Dios y en las vuestras vuestra voluntad, que así vuestra discreción, como la de vuestros padres y hermanos, os sabrá aconsejar y encaminar en lo que mejor os estuviere. Y dése agora orden de enterrar vuestro marido, y confiad en Dios, que quien os hizo condesa tan sin pensarlo os sabrá y querrá dar otro título que os honre y os engrandezca con más duración que el presente.

Rindióse a este parecer la condesa, y, dando trazas al entierro del conde, llegó un su hermano menor, a quien ya habían ido las nuevas a Salamanca, donde estudiaba. Lloró la muerte de su hermano, pero enjugáronle presto las lágrimas el gusto de la herencia del estado. Supo el hecho; abrazó a su cuñada; no contradijo a ninguna cosa; depositó a su hermano para llevarle después a su lugar; partióse a la corte para pedir justicia contra los matadores; anduvo el pleito; degollaron a los capitanes y castigaron muchos de los del pueblo; quedóse Costanza con las arras y el título de condesa; apercibióse Periandro para seguir su viaje, a quien no quisieron acompañar Antonio el padre, ni Ricla, su mujer, cansados de tantas peregrinaciones, que no cansaron a Antonio el hijo, ni a la nueva condesa, que no fue posible dejar la compañía de Auristela ni de Periandro.

A todo esto, nunca había mostrado a su abuelo el lienzo donde venía pintada su historia. Enseñósele un día Antonio, y dijo que faltaba allí de pintar los pasos por donde Auristela había venido a la Isla Bárbara, cuando se vieron ella y Periandro en los trocados trajes: ella en el de varón, y él en el de hembra (metamorfosis bien extraño), a lo que Auristela dijo que en pocas razones lo diría. Que fue que, cuando la robaron los piratas de las riberas de Dinamarca a ella, Cloelia y a las dos pescadoras, vinieron a una isla despoblada a repartir la presa entre ellos, y «no pudiéndose hacer el repartimiento con igualdad, uno de los más principales se contentó con que por su parte le diesen mi persona, y aun añadió dádivas para igualar la demasía. Entré en su poder sola, sin tener quien en mi desventura me acompañase; que de las miserias suele ser alivio la compañía; éste me vistió en hábitos de varón, temeroso que en los de mujer no me solicitase

el viento; muchos días anduve con él peregrinando por diversas partes, y sirviéndole en todo aquello que a mi honestidad no ofendía; finalmente, un día llegamos a la Isla Bárbara, donde de improviso fuimos presos de los bárbaros, y él quedó muerto en la refriega de mi prisión, y yo fui traída a la cueva de los prisioneros, donde hallé a mi amada Cloelia, que por otros no menos desventurados pasos allí había sido traída, la cual me contó la condición de los bárbaros, la vana superstición que guardaban, y el asunto ridículo y falso de su profecía. Díjome asimismo, que tenía barruntos de que mi hermano Periandro había estado en aquella sima, a quien no había podido hablar por la priesa que los bárbaros se daban a sacarle para ponerle en el sacrificio»; y que había querido acompañarle para certificarse de la verdad, pues se hallaba en hábitos de hombre; y que, así, rompiendo por las persuasiones de Cloelia, que se lo estorbaban, salió con su intento, y se entregó de toda su voluntad para ser sacrificada de los bárbaros, persuadiéndose ser bien de una vez acabar la vida, que no de tantas gustar la muerte, con traerla a peligro de perderla por momentos; y que no tenía más que decir, pues sabían lo que desde aquel punto le había sucedido.

Bien quisiera el anciano Villaseñor que todo esto se añadiera al lienzo, pero todos fueron de parecer que no solamente no se añadiese, sino que aun lo pintado se borrarse, porque tan grandes y tan no vistas cosas no eran para andar en lienzos débiles, sino en láminas de bronce escritas, y en las memorias de las gentes grabadas.

Con todo eso, quiso Villaseñor quedarse con el lienzo, siquiera por ver los bien sacados retratos de sus nietos y la sin igual hermosura y gallardía de Auristela y Periandro.

Algunos días se pasaron poniendo en orden su partida para Roma, deseosos de ver cumplidos los votos de su promesa. Quedóse Antonio el padre y no quiso quedarse Antonio el hijo, ni menos la nueva condesa; que, como queda dicho, la afición que a Auristela tenía la llevara no solamente a Roma, sino al otro mundo, si para allá se pudiera hacer viaje en compañía. Llegóse el día de la partida, donde hubo tiernas lágrimas y apretados abrazos y dolientes suspiros, especialmente de Ricla, que en ver partir a sus hijos se le partía el alma. Echóles su bendición su abuelo a todos, que la bendición de los ancianos parece que tiene prerrogativa de mejorar los sucesos. Llevaron consigo a uno de los criados de casa, para que los sirviese en el camino, y, puestos en él, dejaron soledades en su casa y padres, y en compañía, entre alegre y triste, siguieron su viaje.

## Capítulo décimo del tercero libro

LAS PEREGRINACIONES largas siempre traen consigo diversos acontecimientos, y, como la diversidad se compone de cosas diferentes, es forzoso que los casos lo sean. Bien nos lo muestra esta historia, cuyos acontecimientos nos cortan su hilo, poniéndonos en duda dónde será bien anudarle; porque no todas las cosas que suceden son buenas para contadas, y podrían pasar sin serlo y sin quedar menoscabada la historia: acciones hay que, por grandes, deben de callarse, y otras que, por bajas, no deben decirse; puesto que es excelencia de la historia que cualquiera cosa que en ella se escriba puede pasar, al sabor de la verdad que trae consigo; lo que no tiene la fábula, a quien conviene guisar sus acciones con tanta puntualidad y gusto, y con tanta verisimilitud que, a despecho y pesar de la mentira, que hace disonancia en el entendimiento, forme una verdadera armonía.

Aprovechándome, pues, desta verdad, digo que el hermoso escuadrón de los peregrinos, prosiguiendo su viaje, llegó a un lugar, no muy pequeño ni muy grande, de cuyo nombre no me acuerdo, y en mitad de la plaza dél, por quien forzosamente habían de pasar, vieron mucha gente junta, todos atentos mirando y escuchando a dos mancebos que, en traje de recién rescatados de cautivos, estaban declarando las figuras de un pintado lienzo que tenían tendido en el suelo; parecía que se habían descargado de dos pesadas cadenas que tenían junto a sí, insignias y relatoras de su pesada desventura; y uno dellos, que debía de ser de hasta venticuatro años, con voz clara y en todo extremo esperta lengua, crujiendo de cuando en cuando un corbacho, o, por mejor decir, azote, que en la mano tenía, le sacudía de manera que penetraba los oídos y ponía los estallidos en el cielo: bien así como hace el cochero que, castigando o amenazando sus caballos, hace resonar su látigo por los aires.

Entre los que la larga plática escuchaban, estaban los dos alcaldes del pueblo, ambos ancianos, pero no tanto el uno como el otro.

Por donde comenzó su arenga el libre cautivo, fue diciendo:

-«Ésta, señores, que aquí veis pintada, es la ciudad de Argel, gomía y tarasca de todas las riberas del mar Mediterráneo, puesto universal de cosarios, y amparo y refugio de ladrones, que, deste pequenuelo puerto que aquí va pintado, salen con sus bajeles a inquietar el mundo, pues se atreven a pasar el plus ultra de las columnas de Hércules, y a acometer y robar las apartadas islas, que, por estar rodeadas del inmenso mar Océano, pensaban estar seguras, a lo menos de

los bajeles turquescos. Este bajel que aquí veis reducido a pequeño, porque lo pide así la pintura, es una galeota de ventidós bancos, cuyo dueño y capitán es el turco que en la crujía va en pie, con un brazo en la mano, que cortó a aquel cristiano que allí veis, para que le sirva de rebenque y azote a los demás cristianos que van amarrados a sus bancos, temeroso no le alcancen estas cuatro galeras que aquí veis, que le van entrando y dando caza. Aquel cautivo primero del primer banco, cuyo rostro le disfigura la sangre que se le ha pegado de los golpes del brazo muerto, soy yo, que servía de espalder en esta galeota, y el otro que está junto a mí, es este mi compañero, no tan sangriento porque fue menos apaleado. Escuchad, señores, y estad atentos: quizá la aprehensión deste lastimero cuento os llevará a los oídos las amenazadoras y vituperosas voces que ha dado este perro de Dragut (que así se llamaba el arráez de la galeota: cosario tan famoso como cruel, y tan cruel como Falaris o Busiris, tiranos de Sicilia); a lo menos, a mí me suena ahora el *rospeni*, el *manahora* y el *denimaniyoc*, que con coraje endiablado va diciendo; que todas estas son palabras y razones turquescas, encaminadas a la deshonra y vituperio de los cautivos cristianos: llámanlos de judíos, hombres de poco valor, de fee negra y de pensamientos viles, y, para mayor horror y espanto, con los brazos muertos azotan los cuerpos vivos.»

Parece ser que uno de los dos alcaldes había estado cautivo en Argel mucho tiempo, el cual con baja voz dijo a su compañero:

-Este cautivo, hasta ahora parece que va diciendo verdad, y que en lo general no es cautivo falso; pero yo le examinaré en lo particular, y veremos cómo da la cuerda; porque quiero que sepáis que yo iba dentro desta galeota, y no me acuerdo de haberle conocido por espalder della, sino fue a un Alonso Moclín, natural de Vélez Málaga.

Y, volviéndose al cautivo, le dijo:

-Decidme, amigo, ¿cúyas eran las galeras que os daban caza, y si conseguistes por ellas la libertad deseada?

-Las galeras -respondió el cautivo-eran de don Sancho de Leiva; la libertad no la conseguimos, porque no nos alcanzaron; tuvimosla después, porque nos alzamos con una galeota, que desde Sargel iba a Argel cargada de trigo; venimos a Orán con ella, y desde allí a Málaga, de donde mi compañero y yo nos pusimos en camino de Italia, con intención de servir a su Majestad, que Dios guarde, en el ejercicio de la guerra.

-Decidme, amigos -replicó el alcalde-, ¿cautivastes juntos? ¿Llevaron os a Argel del primer boleto, o a otra parte de Berbería?

-No cautivamos juntos -respondió el otro cautivo-, porque yo cautive junto a

Alicante, en un navío de lanas que pasaba a Génova; mi compañero, en los Percheles de Málaga, adonde era pescador. Conocímonos en Tetuán, dentro de una mazmorra; hemos sido amigos y corrido una misma fortuna mucho tiempo; y, para diez o doce cuartos que apenas nos han ofrecido de limosna sobre el lienzo, mucho nos aprieta el señor alcalde.

-No mucho, señor galán -replicó el alcalde-, que aún no están dadas todas las vueltas de la mancuerna. Escúcheme y dígame: ¿cuántas puertas tiene Argel, y cuántas fuentes y cuántos pozos de agua dulce?

-La pregunta es boba -respondió el primer cautivo-: tantas puertas tiene como tiene casas, y tantas fuentes que yo no las sé, y tantos pozos que no los he visto, y los trabajos que yo en él he pasado me han quitado la memoria de mí mismo; y si el señor alcalde quiere ir contra la caridad cristiana, recogeremos los cuartos y alzaremos la tienda, y adiós, ahó, que tan buen pan hacen aquí como en Francia.

Entonces el alcalde llamó a un hombre de los que estaban en el corro, que al parecer servía de pregonero en el lugar, y tal vez de verdugo, cuando se ofrecía, y díjole:

-Gil Berrueco, id a la plaza, y traedme aquí luego los primeros dos asnos que topáredes, que por vida del Rey nuestro señor, que han de pasear las calles en ellos estos dos señores cautivos, que con tanta libertad quieren usurpar la limosna de los verdaderos pobres, contándonos mentiras y embelecocos, estando sanos como una manzana y con más fuerzas para tomar una azada en la mano que no un corbacho para dar estallidos en seco. Yo he estado en Argel cinco años esclavo, y sé que no me dais señas dél en ninguna cosa de cuantas habéis dicho.

-¡Cuerpo del mundo! -respondió el cautivo-. ¿Es posible que ha de querer el señor alcalde que seamos ricos de memoria, siendo tan pobres de dineros, y que por una niñería que no importa tres ardites, quiera quitar la honra a dos tan insignes estudiantes como nosotros, y juntamente quitar a su Majestad dos valientes soldados, que íbamos a esas Italías y a esos Flandes a romper, a destrozar, a herir y a matar los enemigos de la santa fe católica que topáramos? Porque, si va a decir verdad, que en fin es hija de Dios, quiero que sepa el señor alcalde que nosotros no somos cautivos, sino estudiantes de Salamanca, y, en la mitad y en lo mejor de nuestros estudios, nos vino gana de ver mundo y de saber a qué sabía la vida de la guerra, como sabíamos el gusto de la vida de la paz. Para facilitar y poner en obra este deseo, acertaron a pasar por allí unos cautivos, que también lo debían de ser falsos, como nosotros ahora; les compramos este lienzo, y nos informamos de algunas cosas de las de Argel, que nos pareció ser bastantes y necesarias para acreditar nuestro embeleco; vendimos nuestros libros y nuestras alhajas a menos precio, y, cargados con esta mercadería, hemos

llegado hasta aquí. Pensamos pasar adelante, si es que el señor alcalde no manda otra cosa.

-Lo que pienso hacer es -replicó el alcalde-, daros cada cien azotes, y en lugar de la pica que vais a arrastrar en Flandes, poneros un remo en las manos que le cimbréis en el agua en las galeras, con quien quizá haréis más servicio a su Majestad que con la pica.

-¿Querráse -replicó el mozo hablador-mostrar agora el señor alcalde ser un legislador de Atenas, y que la riguridad de su oficio llegue a los oídos de los señores del Consejo, donde, acreditándole con ellos, le tengan por severo y justiciero, y le cometan negocios de importancia, donde muestre su severidad y su justicia? Pues sepa el señor alcalde que summum ius summa iniuria.

-Mirad cómo habláis, hermano -replicó el segundo alcalde-, que aquí no hay justicia con lujuria: que todos los alcaldes deste lugar han sido, son y serán limpios y castos como el pelo de la masa; y hablad menos, que os será sano.

Volvió en esto el pregonero, y dijo:

-Señor alcalde, yo no he topado en la plaza asnos ningunos, sino a los dos regidores Berrueco y Crespo, que andan en ella paseándose.

-Por asnos os envíe yo, majadero, que no por regidores; pero volved y traeldos acá por sí o por no, que quiero que se hallen presentes al pronunciar desta sentencia, que ha de ser sin embargo, y no ha de quedar por falta de asnos: que, gracias sean dadas al cielo, hartos hay en este lugar.

-No le tendrá vuesa merced, señor alcalde, en el cielo -replicó el mozo-, si pasa adelante con esa reguridad. Por quien Dios es, que vuesa merced considere que no hemos robado tanto que podemos dar a censo, ni fundar ningún mayorazgo; apenas granjeamos el mísero sustento con nuestra industria, que no deja de ser trabajosa, como lo es la de los oficiales y jornaleros. Mis padres no nos enseñaron oficio alguno, y así, nos es forzoso que remitamos a la industria lo que habíamos de remitir a las manos, si tuviéramos oficio. Castíguense los que cohechan, los escaladores de casas, los salteadores de caminos, los testigos falsos por dineros, los mal entretenidos en la república, los ociosos y baldíos en ella, que no sirven de otra cosa que de acrecentar el número de los perdidos, y dejen a los míseros que van su camino derecho a servir a su Majestad con la fuerza de sus brazos y con la agudeza de sus ingenios; porque no hay mejores soldados que los que se trasplantan de la tierra de los estudios en los campos de la guerra: ninguno salió de estudiante para soldado, que no lo fuese por extremo, porque, cuando se avienen y se juntan las fuerzas con el ingenio y el ingenio con las fuerzas, hacen un compuesto milagroso, con quien Marte se alegra, la paz se sustenta y la república se engrandece.

Admirado estaba Periandro y todos los más de los circunstantes, así de las

razones del mozo como de la velocidad con que hablaba, el cual, prosiguiendo, dijo:

-Espúlguenos el señor alcalde, mírenos y remírenos, y haga escrutinio de las costuras de nuestros vestidos, y si en todo nuestro poder hallare seis reales, no sólo nos mande dar ciento, sino seis cuentos de azotes. Veamos, pues, si la adquisición de tan pequeña cantidad de intereses merece ser castigada con afrentas y martirizada con galeras; y así, otra vez digo que el señor alcalde se remire en esto, no se arroje y precipite apasionadamente a hacer lo que, después de hecho, quizá le causará pesadumbre. Los jueces discretos castigan, pero no toman venganza de los delitos; los prudentes y los piadosos, mezclan la equidad con la justicia, y entre el rigor y la clemencia dan luz de su buen entendimiento.

-Por Dios -dijo el segundo alcalde-, que este mancebo ha hablado bien, aunque ha hablado mucho, y que no solamente no tengo de consentir que los azoten, sino que los tengo de llevar a mi casa y ayudarles para su camino, con condición que le lleven derecho, sin andar surcando la tierra de una en otras partes; porque, si así lo hiciesen, más parecerían viciosos que necesitados.

Ya el primer alcalde, manso y piadoso, blando y compasivo, dijo:

-No quiero que vayan a vuestra casa, sino a la mía, donde les quiero dar una lición de las cosas de Argel, tal, que de aquí adelante ninguno les coja en mal latín, en cuanto a su fingida historia.

Los cautivos se lo agradecieron, los circunstantes alabaron su honrada determinación, y los peregrinos recibieron contento del buen despacho del negocio.

Volvióse el primer alcalde a Periandro, y dijo:

-¿Vosotros, señores peregrinos, traéis algún lienzo que enseñarnos? ¿Traéis otra historia que hacernos creer por verdadera, aunque la haya compuesto la misma mentira?

No respondió nada Periandro, porque vio que Antonio sacaba del seno las patentes, licencias y despachos que llevaban para seguir su viaje; el cual los puso en manos del alcalde, diciéndole:

-Por estos papeles podrá ver vuesa merced quién somos y adónde vamos, los cuales no era menester presentallos, porque ni pedimos limosna, ni tenemos necesidad de pedilla; y así, como a caminantes libres, nos podían dejar pasar libremente.

Tomó el alcalde los papeles, y, porque no sabía leer, se los dio a su compañero, que tampoco lo sabía, y así pararon en manos del escribano, que, pasando los ojos por ellos brevemente, se los volvió a Antonio, diciendo:

-Aquí, señores alcaldes, tanto valor hay en la bondad destos peregrinos como hay grandeza en su hermosura. Si aquí quisieren hacer noche, mi casa les servirá



de mesón, y mi voluntad de alcázar donde se recojan.

Volvióle las gracias Periandro; quedáronse allí aquella noche por ser algo tarde, donde fueron agasajados en casa del escribano con amor, con abundancia y con limpieza.

## Capítulo once del tercer libro

LLEGÓSE el día, y con él los agradecimientos del hospedaje; y, puestos en camino, al salir del lugar, toparon con los cautivos falsos, que dijeron que iban industriados del alcalde, de modo que de allí adelante no los podían coger en mentira acerca de las cosas de Argel.

-Que tal vez -dijo el uno; digo el que hablaba más que el otro-, tal vez -dijo-se hurta con autoridad y aprobación de la justicia; quiero decir que alguna vez los malos ministros della se hacen a una con los delincuentes, para que todos coman.

Llegaron todos juntos donde un camino se dividía en dos: los cautivos tomaron el de Cartagena, y los peregrinos el de Valencia. Los cuales otro día, al salir de la aurora, que por los balcones del oriente se asomaba, barriendo el cielo de las estrellas y aderezando el camino por donde el sol había de hacer su acostumbrada carrera, Bartolomé, que así creo se llamaba el guiador del bagaje, viendo salir el sol tan alegre y regocijado, bordando las nubes de los cielos con diversas colores, de manera que no se podía ofrecer otra cosa más alegre y más hermosa a la vista, y con rústica discreción, dijo:

-Verdad debió de decir el predicador que predicaba los días pasados en nuestro pueblo, cuando dijo que los cielos y la tierra anunciaban y declaraban las grandezas del Señor. Pardiez, que, si yo no conociera a Dios por lo que me han enseñado mis padres y los sacerdotes y ancianos de mi lugar, le viniera a rastrear y conocer, viendo la inmensa grandeza destos cielos, que me dicen que son muchos, o, a lo menos, que llegan a once, y por la grandeza deste sol que nos alumbra, que, con no parecer mayor que una rodela, es muchas veces mayor que toda la tierra; y más que, con ser tan grande, afirman que es tan ligero que camina en venticuatro horas más de trecientas mil leguas. La verdad que sea: yo no creo nada desto, pero dícenlo tantos hombres de bien que, aunque hago fuerza al entendimiento, lo creo. Pero de lo que más me admiro es que debajo de nosotros hay otras gentes, a quien llaman antípodas, sobre cuyas cabezas, los que andamos acá arriba, traemos puestos los pies, cosa que me parece imposible: que, para tan gran carga como la nuestra, fuera menester que tuvieran ellos las cabezas de bronce.

Rióse Periandro de la rústica astrología del mozo, y díjole:

-Buscar querría razones acomodadas, ¡oh Bartolomé!, para darte a entender el error en que estás y la verdadera postura del mundo, para lo cual era menester tomar muy de atrás sus principios; pero, acomodándome con tu ingenio, habré de

coartar el mío y decirte sola una cosa, y es que quiero que entiendas por verdad infalible que la tierra es centro del cielo; llamo centro un punto indivisible a quien todas las líneas de su circunferencia van a parar; tampoco me parece que has de entender esto; y así, dejando estos términos, quiero que te contentes con saber que toda la tierra tiene por alto el cielo, y en cualquier parte della donde los hombres estén, han de estar cubiertos con el cielo; así que, como a nosotros el cielo que ves nos cubre, asimismo cubre a los antípodas, que dicen, sin estorbo alguno, y como naturalmente lo ordenó la naturaleza, mayordoma del verdadero Dios, criador del cielo y de la tierra.

No se descontentó el mozo de oír las razones de Periandro, que también dieron gusto a Auristela, a la condesa y a su hermano.

Con estas y otras cosas iba enseñando y entreteniendo el camino Periandro, cuando a sus espaldas llegó un carro acompañado de seis arcabuceros a pie, y uno que venía a caballo con una escopeta pendiente del arzón delantero, llegándose a Periandro, dijo:

-Si, por ventura, señores peregrinos, lleváis en este repuesto alguna conserva de regalo, que yo creo que sí debéis de llevar, porque vuestra gallarda presencia, más de caballeros ricos que de pobres peregrinos os señala; si la lleváis, dádmela, para socorrer con ella a un desmayado muchacho que va en aquel carro, condenado a galeras por dos años, con otros doce soldados, que, por haberse hallado en la muerte de un conde los días pasados, van condenados al remo, y sus capitanes, por más culpados, creo que están sentenciados a degollar en la corte.

No pudo tener a esta razón las lágrimas la hermosa Costanza, porque en ella se le representó la muerte de su breve esposo; pero, pudiendo más su cristiandad que el deseo de su venganza, acudió al bagaje y sacó una caja de conserva, y, acudiendo al carro, preguntó:

-¿Quién es aquí el desmayado?

A lo que respondió uno de los soldados:

-Allí va echado en aquel rincón, untado el rostro con el sebo del timón del carro, porque no quiere que parezca hermosa la muerte, cuando él se muera, que será bien presto, según está pertinaz en no querer comer bocado.

A estas razones alzó el rostro el untado mozo, y, alzándose de la frente un roto sombrero que toda se la cubría, se mostró feo y sucio a los ojos de Constanza; y, alargando la mano para tomar la caja, la tomó diciendo:

-¡Dios os lo pague, señora!

Volvió a encajar el sombrero, y volvió a su melancolía y a arrinconarse en el rincón donde esperaba la muerte. Otras algunas razones pasaron los peregrinos con las guardas del carro, que se acabaron con apartarse por diferentes caminos.

De allí a algunos días, llegó nuestro hermoso escuadrón a un lugar de moriscos, que estaba puesto como una legua de la marina, en el reino de Valencia. Hallaron en él, no mesón en que albergarse, sino todas las casas del lugar con agradable hospicio los convidaban. Viendo lo cual Antonio, dijo:

-Yo no sé quién dice mal desta gente, que todos me parecen unos santos.

-Con palmas -dijo Periandro-recibieron al Señor en Jerusalén los mismos que de allí a pocos días le pusieron en una cruz. Agora bien, a Dios y a la ventura, como decirse suele, acetemos el convite que nos hace este buen viejo, que con su casa nos convida.

Y era así verdad, que un anciano morisco, casi por fuerza, asiéndolos por las esclavinas, los metió en casa, y dio muestras de agasajarlos, no morisca, sino cristianamente.

Salió a servirlos una hija suya, vestida en traje morisco, y en él tan hermosa que las más gallardas cristianas tuvieran a ventura el parecerla: que en las gracias que naturaleza reparte, tan bien suele favorecer a las bárbaras de Citia como a las ciudadanas de Toledo. Ésta, pues, hermosa y mora, en lengua aljamiada, asiendo a Costanza y a Auristela de las manos, se encerró con ellas en una sala baja, y, estando solas, sin soltarles las manos, recatadamente miró a todas partes, temerosa de ser escuchada; y, después que hubo asegurado el miedo que mostraba, las dijo:

-¡Ay, señoras, y cómo habéis venido como mansas y simples ovejas al matadero! ¿Veis este viejo, que con vergüenza digo que es mi padre, veisle tan agasajador vuestro? Pues sabed que no pretende otra cosa sino ser vuestro verdugo. Esta noche se han de llevar en peso, si así se puede decir, diez y seis bajeles de cosarios berberiscos a toda la gente de este lugar con todas sus haciendas, sin dejar en él cosa que les mueva a volver a buscarla. Piensan estos desventurados que en Berbería está el gusto de sus cuerpos y la salvación de sus almas, sin advertir que, de muchos pueblos que allá se han pasado casi enteros, ninguno hay que dé otras nuevas sino de arrepentimiento, el cual les viene juntamente con las quejas de su daño. Los moros de Berbería pregonan glorias de aquella tierra, al sabor de las cuales corren los moriscos de ésta, y dan en los lazos de su desventura. Si queréis estorbar la vuestra y conservar la libertad en que vuestros padres os engendraron, salid luego de esta casa, y acogedlos a la iglesia, que en ella hallaréis quien os ampare, que es el cura; que sólo él y el escribano son en este lugar cristianos viejos. Hallaréis también allí al jadraque Jarife, que es un tío mío, moro sólo en el nombre, y en las obras cristiano. Contaldes lo que pasa, y decid que os lo dijo Rafala, que con esto seréis creídos y amparados; y no lo echéis en burla, si no queréis que las veras os desengañen a vuestra costa; que no hay mayor engaño que venir el desengaño tarde.

El susto, las acciones, con que Rafala esto decía, se asentó en las almas de Auristela y de Constanza, de manera que fue creída y no le respondieron otra cosa que fuese más que agradecimientos.

Llamaron luego a Periandro y a Antonio, y, contándoles lo que pasaba, sin tomar ocasión aparente, se salieron de la casa con todo lo que tenían. Bartolomé, que quisiera más descansar que mudar de posada, pesóle de la mudanza; pero en efeto obedeció a sus señores. Llegaron a la iglesia, donde fueron bien recibidos del cura y del jadraque, a quien contaron lo que Rafala les había dicho.

El cura dijo:

-Muchos días ha, señores, que nos dan sobresalto con la venida de esos bajeles de Berbería, y, aunque es costumbre suya hacer estas entradas, la tardanza de ésta me tenía ya algo descuidado. Entrad, hijos, que buena torre tenemos y buenas y ferradas puertas la iglesia: que, si no es muy de propósito, no pueden ser derribadas ni abrasadas.

-¡Ay -dijo a esta sazón el jadraque-, si han de ver mis ojos, antes que se cierren, libre esta tierra destas espinas y malezas que la oprimen! ¡Ay, cuándo llegará el tiempo que tiene profetizado un abuelo mío, famoso en el astrología, donde se verá España de todas partes entera y maciza en la religión cristiana, que ella sola es el rincón del mundo donde está recogida y venerada la verdadera verdad de Cristo! Morisco soy, señores, y ojalá que negarlo pudiera, pero no por esto dejo de ser cristiano; que las divinas gracias las da Dios a quien Él es servido, el cual tiene por costumbre, como vosotros mejor sabéis, de hacer salir su sol sobre los buenos y los malos, y llover sobre los justos y los injustos. Digo, pues, que este mi abuelo dejó dicho que, cerca de estos tiempos, reinaría en España un rey de la casa de Austria, en cuyo ánimo cabría la dificultosa resolución de desterrar los moriscos de ella, bien así como el que arroja de su seno la serpiente que le está royendo las entrañas, o bien así como quien aparta la neguilla del trigo, o escarda o arranca la mala yerba de los sembrados. Ven ya, ¡oh venturoso mozo y rey prudente!, y pon en ejecución el gallardo decreto de este destierro, sin que se te oponga el temor que ha de quedar esta tierra desierta y sin gente, y el de que no será bien la que en efeto está en ella bautizada; que, aunque éstos sean temores de consideración, el efeto de tan grande obra los hará vanos, mostrando la esperiencia dentro de poco tiempo, que, con los nuevos cristianos viejos que esta tierra se poblare, se volverá a fertilizar y a poner en mucho mejor punto que agora tiene. Tendrán sus señores, si no tantos y tan humildes vasallos, serán los que tuvieren católicos, con cuyo amparo estarán estos caminos seguros, y la paz podrá llevar en las manos las riquezas, sin que los salteadores se las lleven.

Esto dicho, cerraron bien las puertas, fortaleciéronlas con los bancos de los

asientos, subiéronse a la torre, alzaron una escalera levadiza, llevóse el cura consigo el Santísimo Sacramento en su relicario, proveyéronse de piedras, armaron dos escopetas, dejó el bagaje mondo y desnudo a la puerta de la iglesia Bartolomé el mozo, y encerróse con sus amos; y todos con ojo alerta, y manos listas y con ánimos determinados, estuvieron esperando el asalto, de quien avisados estaban por la hija del morisco.

Pasó la media noche, que la midió por las estrellas el cura; tendía los ojos por todo el mar que desde allí se parecía, y no había nube que con la luz de la luna se pareciese, que no pensase sino que fuesen los bajeles turquescos, y, aguijando a las campanas, comenzó a repicallas tan apriesa y tan recio que todos aquellos valles y todas aquellas riberas retumbaban, a cuyo son los atajadores de aquellas marinas se juntaron y las corrieron todas; pero no aprovechó su diligencia para que los bajeles no llegasen a la ribera y echasen la gente en tierra.

La del lugar, que los esperaba cargados con sus más ricas y mejores alhajas, adonde fueron recibidos de los turcos con grande grande grita y algazara, al son de muchas dulzainas y de otros instrumentos, que, puesto que eran bélicos, eran regocijados; pegaron fuego al lugar, y asimismo a las puertas de la iglesia, no para esperar a entrarla, sino por hacer el mal que pudiesen; dejaron a Bartolomé a pie, porque le dejarretaron el bagaje; derribaron una cruz de piedra que estaba a la salida del pueblo, llamando a grandes voces el nombre de Mahoma; se entregaron a los turcos, ladrones pacíficos y deshonestos públicos.

Desde la lengua del agua, como dicen, comenzaron a sentir la pobreza que les amenazaba su mudanza, y la deshonor en que ponían a sus mujeres y a sus hijos. Muchas veces, y quizá algunas no en vano, dispararon Antonio y Periandro las escopetas; muchas piedras arrojó Bartolomé, y todas a la parte donde había dejado el bagaje, y muchas flechas el jadraque; pero muchas más lágrimas echaron Auristela y Constanza, pidiendo a Dios, que presente tenían, que de tan manifiesto peligro los librase, y ansimismo que no ofendiese el fuego a su templo, el cual no ardió, no por milagro, sino porque las puertas eran de hierro y porque fue poco el fuego que se les aplicó.

Poco faltaba para llegar el día, cuando los bajeles, cargados con la presa, se hicieron al mar, alzando regocijados lilíes y tocando infinitos atabales y dulzainas, y en esto vieron venir dos personas corriendo hacia la iglesia, la una de la parte de la marina, y la otra de la de la tierra, que, llegando cerca, conoció el jadraque que la una era su sobrina Rafala, que, con una cruz de caña en las manos, venía diciendo a voces:

-¡Cristiana, cristiana y libre, y libre por la gracia y misericordia de Dios!

La otra conocieron ser el escribano, que acaso aquella noche estaba fuera del lugar, y al son del arma de las campanas venía a ver el suceso, que lloró, no por

la pérdida de sus hijos y de su mujer, que allí no los tenía, sino por la de su casa, que halló robada y abrasada.

Dejaron entrar el día, y que los bajeles se alargasen y que los atajadores tuviesen lugar de asegurar la costa, y entonces bajaron de la torre y abrieron la iglesia, donde entró Rafala, bañado con alegres lágrimas el rostro, y, acrecentando con su sobresalto su hermosura, hizo oración a las imágenes, y luego se abrazó con su tío, besando primero las manos al cura. El escribano ni adoró, ni besó las manos a nadie, porque le tenía ocupada el alma el sentimiento de la pérdida de su hacienda.

Pasó el sobresalto, volvieron los espíritus de los retraídos a su lugar, y el jadraque, cobrando aliento nuevo, volviendo a pensar en la profecía de su abuelo, casi como lleno de celestial espíritu, dijo:

-¡Ea, mancebo generoso! ¡Ea, rey invencible! ¡Atropella, rompe, desbarata todo género de inconvenientes y déjanos a España tersa, limpia y desembarazada desta mi mala casta, que tanto la asombra y menoscaba! ¡Ea, consejero tan prudente como ilustre, nuevo Atlante del peso de esta Monarquía, ayuda y facilita con tus consejos a esta necesaria transmigración; llénense estos mares de tus galeras cargadas del inútil peso de la generación agarena; vayan arrojadas a las contrarias riberas las zarzas, las malezas y las otras yerbas que estorban el crecimiento de la fertilidad y abundancia cristiana! Que si los pocos hebreos que pasaron a Egipto multiplicaron tanto, que en su salida se contaron más de seiscientas mil familias, ¿qué se podrá temer de éstos, que son más y viven más holgadamente? No los esquilman las religiones, no los entresacan las Indias, no los quintan las guerras; todos se casan, todos o los más engendran, de do se sigue y se infiere que su multiplicación y aumento ha de ser innumerable. ¡Ea, pues, vuelvo a decir; vayan, vayan, señor, y deja la taza de tu reino resplandeciente como el sol y hermosa como el cielo!

Dos días estuvieron en aquel lugar los peregrinos, volviendo a enterarse en lo que les faltaba, y Bartolomé se acomodó de bagaje. Los peregrinos agradecieron al cura su buen acogimiento, y alabaron los buenos pensamientos del jadraque, y, abrazando a Rafala, se despidieron de todos y siguieron su camino.

## Capítulo doce del tercero libro

EN EL CUAL se fueron entreteniendo en contar el pasado peligro, el buen ánimo del jadraque, la valentía del cura, el celo de Rafala, de la cual se les olvidó de saber cómo se había escapado de poder de los turcos que asaltaron la tierra, aunque bien consideraron que con el alboroto, ella se habría escondido en parte que tuviese lugar después de volver a cumplir su deseo, que era de vivir y morir cristiana.

Cerca de Valencia llegaron, en la cual no quisieron entrar por escusar las ocasiones del detenerse; pero no faltó quien les dijo la grandeza de su sitio, la excelencia de sus moradores, la amenidad de sus contornos, y, finalmente, todo aquello que la hace hermosa y rica sobre todas las ciudades, no sólo de España, sino de toda Europa; y principalmente les alabaron la hermosura de las mujeres y su estremada limpieza y graciosa lengua, con quien sola la portuguesa puede competir en ser dulce y agradable.

Determinaron de alargar sus jornadas, aunque fuese a costa de su cansancio, por llegar a Barcelona, adonde tenían noticia habían de tocar unas galeras, en quien pensaban embarcarse, sin tocar en Francia, hasta Génova. Y, al salir de Villarreal, hermosa y amenísima villa, de través, dentre una espesura de árboles, les salió al encuentro una zagala o pastora valenciana, vestida a lo del campo, limpia como el sol, y hermosa como él y como la luna, la cual, en su graciosa lengua, sin hablarles alguna palabra primero, y sin hacerles ceremonia de comedimiento alguno, dijo:

-¿Señores, pedirlos he o darlos he?

A lo que respondió Periandro:

-Hermosa zagala, si son celos, ni los pidas ni los des, porque si los pides, menoscabas tu estimación, y si los das, tu crédito; y si es que el que te ama tiene entendimiento, conociendo tu valor, te estimará y querrá bien, y si no le tiene, ¿para qué quieres que te quiera?

-Bien has dicho -respondió la villana.

Y, diciendo adiós, volvió las espaldas y se entró en la espesura de los árboles, dejándolos admirados con su pregunta, con su presteza y con su hermosura.

Otras algunas cosas les sucedieron en el camino de Barcelona, no de tanta importancia que merezcan escritura, si no fue el ver desde lejos las santísimas montañas de Monserrate, que adoraron con devoción cristiana, sin querer subir a ellas, por no detenerse.



Llegaron a Barcelona a tiempo cuando llegaban a su playa cuatro galeras españolas, que, disparando y haciendo salva a la ciudad con gruesa artillería, arrojaron cuatro esquifes al agua, el uno de ellos adornado con ricas alcatifas de Levante y cojines de carmesí, en el cual venía, como después pareció, una hermosa mujer de poca edad, ricamente vestida, con otra señora anciana y dos doncellas hermosas y honestamente aderezadas.

Salió infinita gente de la ciudad, como es costumbre, así a ver las galeras como a la gente que de ellas desembarcaba, y la curiosidad de nuestros peregrinos llegó tan cerca de los esquifes, que casi pudieran dar la mano a la dama que de ellos desembarcaba, la cual, poniendo los ojos en todos, especialmente en Constanza, después de haber desembarcado, dijo:

-Llegaos acá, hermosa peregrina, que os quiero llevar conmigo a la ciudad, donde pienso pagaros una deuda que os debo, de quien vos creo que tenéis poca noticia; vengan asimismo vuestras camaradas, porque no ha de haber cosa que obligue a dejar tan buena compañía.

-La vuestra, a lo que se ve -respondió Constanza-, es de tanta importancia que carecería de entendimiento quien no la acetase. Vamos donde quisiéredes, que mis camaradas me seguirán, que no están acostumbrados a dejarme.

Asió la señora de la mano a Constanza, y, acompañada de muchos caballeros que salieron de la ciudad a recibirla, y de otra gente principal de las galeras, se encaminaron a la ciudad, en cuyo espacio de camino Constanza no quitaba los ojos de ella, sin poder reducir a la memoria haberla visto en tiempo alguno.

Aposentáronla en una casa principal, a ella y a las que con ella desembarcaron, y no fue posible que dejase ir a los peregrinos a otra parte; con los cuales, así como tuvo comodidad para ello, pasó esta plática:

-«Sacaros quiero, señores, de la admiración en que, sin duda, os debe tener el ver que con particular cuidado procuro serviros; y así, os digo que a mí me llaman Ambrosia Agustina, cuyo nacimiento fue en una ciudad de Aragón, y cuyo hermano es don Bernardo Agustín, cuatralbo de estas galeras que están en la playa. Contarino de Arbolánchez, caballero del hábito de Alcántara, en ausencia de mi hermano, y a hurto del recato de mis parientes, se enamoró de mí; y yo, llevada de mi estrella, o por mejor decir, de mi fácil condición, viendo que no perdía nada en ello, con título de esposa, le hice señor de mi persona y de mis pensamientos; y el mismo día que le di la mano, recibió él, de la de su Majestad, una carta, en que le mandaba viniese luego al punto a conducir un tercio que bajaba de Lombardía a Génova, de infantería española, a la isla de Malta, sobre la cual se pensaba bajaba el turco. Obedeció Contarino con tanta puntualidad lo que se le mandaba que no quiso coger los frutos del matrimonio con sobresalto, y, sin tener cuenta con mis lágrimas, el recibir la carta y el

partirse todo fue uno. Parecióme que el cielo se había caído sobre mí, y que entre él y la tierra me habían apretado el corazón y cogido el alma.

»Pocos días pasaron cuando, añadiendo yo imaginaciones a imaginaciones y deseos a deseos, vine a poner en efeto uno, cuyo cumplimiento, así como me quitó la honra por entonces, pudiera también quitarme la vida. Ausentéme de mi casa, sin sabiduría de ninguno de ella, y, en hábitos de hombre, que fueron los que tomé de un pajecillo, asenté por criado de un atambor de una compañía que estaba en un lugar, pienso que ocho leguas del mío. En pocos días toqué la caja tan bien como mi amo; aprendí a ser chocarrero, como lo son los que usan tal oficio; juntóse otra compañía con la nuestra, y ambas a dos se encaminaron a Cartagena a embarcarse en estas cuatro galeras de mi hermano, en las cuales fue mi disinio pasar a Italia a buscar a mi esposo, de cuya noble condición esperé que no afearía mi atrevimiento, ni culparía mi deseo, el cual me tenía tan ciega que no reparé en el peligro a que me ponía de ser conocida, si me embarcaba en las galeras de mi hermano. Mas, como los pechos enamorados no hay inconvenientes que no atropellen, ni dificultades por quien no rompan, ni temores que se le opongan, toda escabrosidad hice llana, venciendo miedos y esperando aun en la misma desesperación; pero, como los sucesos de las cosas hacen mudar los primeros intentos en ellas, el mío, más mal pensado que fundado, me puso en el término que agora oiréis.

»Los soldados de las compañías de aquellos capitanes que os he dicho trabaron una cruel pendencia con la gente de un pueblo de la Mancha, sobre los alojamientos, de la cual salió herido de muerte un caballero que decían ser conde de no sé qué estado. Vino un pesquisidor de la corte, prendió los capitanes, descarreáronse los soldados, y, con todo eso, prendió a algunos, y entre ellos a mí, desdichada, que ninguna culpa tenía; condenólos a galeras por dos años al remo; y a mí también, como por añadidura, me tocó la misma suerte. En vano me lamenté de mi desventura, viendo cuán en vano se habían fabricado mis disinios. Quisiera darme la muerte, pero el temor de ir a otra peor vida me embotó el cuchillo en la mano y me quitó la soga del cuello; lo que hice fue enlodarme el rostro, afeándole cuanto pude, y encerréme en un carro donde nos metieron, con intención de llorar tanto y de comer tan poco, que las lágrimas y la hambre hiciesen lo que la soga y el hierro no habían hecho. Llegamos a Cartagena, donde aún no habían llegado las galeras; pusiéronnos en la casa del rey bien guardados, y allí estuvimos, no esperando, sino temiendo nuestra desgracia. No sé, señores, si os acordaréis de un carro que topasteis junto a una venta, en el cual esta hermosa peregrina -señalando a Constanza-socorrió con una caja de conserva a un desmayado delincuente.»

-Sí acuerdo -respondió Constanza.

-Pues sabed que yo era -dijo la señora Ambrosia-el que socorristeis. Por entre las esteras del carro os miré a todos, y me admiré de todos, porque vuestra gallarda disposición no puede dejar de admirar, si se mira.

«En efeto, las galeras llegaron con la presa de un bergantín de moros que las dos habían tomado en el camino; el mismo día aherrojaron en ellas a los soldados, desnudándolos del traje que traían y vistiéndoles el de remeros: transformación triste y dolorosa, pero llevadera; que la pena que no acaba la vida, la costumbre de padecerla la hace fácil. Llegaron a mí para desnudarme; hizo el cómitre que me lavasen el rostro, porque yo no tenía aliento para levantar los brazos; miróme el barbero que limpia la chusma y dijo: "Pocas navajas gastaré yo con esta barba; no sé yo para qué nos envían acá a este muchacho de alfeñique, como si fuesen nuestras galeras de melcocha y sus remeros de alcorza. Y ¿qué culpas cometiste tú, rapaz, que mereciesen esta pena? Sin duda alguna, creo que el raudal y corriente de otros ajenos delitos te han conducido a este término". Y, encaminando su plática al cómitre, le dijo: "En verdad, patrón, que me parece que sería bien dejar a que sirviese este muchacho en la popa a nuestro general con una manilla al pie, porque no vale para el remo dos ardites".

»Estas pláticas y la consideración de mi suceso, que parece que entonces se estremó en apretarme el alma, me apretó el corazón de manera que me desmayé y quedé como muerta. Dicen que volví en mí a cabo de cuatro horas, en el cual tiempo se me hicieron muchos remedios para que volviese; y lo que más sintiera yo, si tuviera sentido, fue que debieron de enterarse que yo no era varón, sino hembra. Volví de mi parasismo, y lo primero con quien topó la vista fue con los rostros de mi hermano y de mi esposo, que entre sus brazos me tenían. No sé yo cómo en aquel punto la sombra de la muerte no cubrió mis ojos; no sé yo cómo la lengua no se me pegó al paladar; sólo sé que no supe lo que me dije, aunque sentí que mi hermano dijo: "¿Qué traje es éste, hermana mía?" Y mi esposo dijo: "¿Qué mudanza es ésta, mitad de mi alma, que si tu bondad no estuviera tan de parte de tu honra, yo hiciera luego que trocaras este traje con el de la mortaja?" "¿Vuestra esposa es ésta? -dijo mi hermano a mi esposo-. Tan nuevo me parece este suceso, como me parece el de verla a ella en este traje; verdad es que, si esto es verdad, bastante recompensa sería a la pena que me causa el ver así a mi hermana".

»A este punto, habiendo yo recobrado parte de mis perdidos espíritus, me acuerdo que dije: "Hermano mío, yo soy Ambrosia Agustina, tu hermana, y soy ansimismo la esposa del señor Contarino de Arbolánchez. El amor y tu ausencia, ¡oh hermano!, me le dieron por marido, el cual, sin gozarme, me dejó; yo, atrevida, arrojada y mal considerada, en este traje que me veis le vine a buscar". Y con esto les conté toda la historia que de mí habéis oído, y mi suerte, que por

puntos se iba, a más andar, mejorando, hizo que me diesen crédito y me tuviesen lástima. Contáronme cómo a mi esposo le habían cautivado moros con una de dos chalupas, donde se había embarcado para ir a Génova, y que el cobrar la libertad había sido el día antes al anochecer, sin que le diese lugar el tiempo de haberse visto con mi hermano, sino al punto que me halló desmayada: suceso cuya novedad le podía quitar el crédito, pero todo es así como lo he dicho. En estas galeras pasaba esta señora que viene conmigo y con estas sus dos nietas a Italia, donde su hijo, en Sicilia, tiene el patrimonio real a su cargo. Vistiéronme estos que traigo, que son sus vestidos, y mi marido y mi hermano, alegres y contentos, nos han sacado hoy a tierra para espaciarnos, y para que los muchos amigos que tienen en esta ciudad se alegren con ellos. Si vosotros, señores, vais a Roma, yo haré que mi hermano os ponga en el más cercano puerto de ella. La caja de conserva os la pagaré con llevaros en la mía hasta adonde mejor os esté; y, cuando yo no pasara a Italia, en fee de mi ruego os llevará mi hermano.» Ésta es, amigos míos, mi historia: si se os hiciere dura de creer, no me maravillaría, puesto que la verdad bien puede enfermar, pero no morir del todo. Y, pues que comúnmente se dice que el creer es cortesía, en la vuestra, que debe de ser mucha, deposito mi crédito.

Aquí dio fin la hermosa Agustina a su razonamiento, y aquí comenzó la admiración de los oyentes a subirse de punto; aquí comenzaron a desmenuzarse las circunstancias del caso, y también los abrazos de Constanza y Auristela que a la bella Ambrosia dieron, la cual, por ser así voluntad de su marido, hubo de volverse a su tierra, porque, por hermosa que sea, es embarazosa la compañía de la mujer en la guerra.

Aquella noche se alteró el mar de modo que fue forzoso alargarse las galeras de la playa, que en aquella parte es de continuo mal segura. Los cortesés catalanes, gente enojada, terrible y pacífica, suave; gente que con facilidad da la vida por la honra, y por defenderlas entrambas se adelantan a sí mismos, que es como adelantarse a todas las naciones del mundo, visitaron y regalaron todo lo posible a la señora Ambrosia Agustina, a quien dieron las gracias, después que volvieron, su hermano y su esposo.

Auristela, escarmentada con tantas esperiencias como había hecho de las borrascas del mar, no quiso embarcarse en las galeras, sino irse por Francia, pues estaba pacífica.

Ambrosia se volvió a Aragón. Las galeras siguieron su viaje, y los peregrinos el suyo, entrándose por Perpiñán en Francia.

## Capítulo trece del tercero libro

POR LA PARTE de Perpiñán quiso tocar la primera de Francia nuestra escuadra, a quien dio que hablar el suceso de Ambrosia muchos días, en la cual fueron disculpa sus pocos años de sus muchos yerros, y juntamente halló en el amor que a su esposo tenía perdón de su atrevimiento. En fin, ella se volvió, como queda dicho, a su patria. Las galeras siguieron su viaje, y el suyo nuestros peregrinos, los cuales, llegando a Perpiñán, pararon en un mesón, a cuya gran puerta estaba puesta una mesa y alrededor de ella mucha gente, mirando jugar a dos hombres a los dados, sin que otro alguno jugase.

Parecióles a los peregrinos ser novedad que mirasen tantos y jugasen tan pocos. Preguntó Periandro la causa, y fuele respondido que, de los que jugaban, el perdidoso perdía la libertad, y se hacía prenda del rey para bogar el remo seis meses; y el que ganaba, ganaba veinte ducados que los ministros del rey habían dado al perdidoso para que probase en el juego su ventura.

Uno de los dos que jugaba la probó, y no le supo bien, porque la perdió, y al momento le pusieron en una cadena; y al que la ganó, le quitaron otra que para seguridad de que no huiría, si perdía, le tenían puesta: ¡miserable juego y miserable suerte, donde no son iguales la pérdida y la ganancia!

Estando en esto, vieron llegar al mesón gran golpe de gente, entre la cual venía un hombre, en cuerpo, de gentil parecer, rodeado de cinco o seis criaturas, de edad de cuatro a siete años; venía junto a él una mujer amargamente llorando, con un lienzo de dineros en la mano, la cual, con lastimada voz, venía diciendo:

-Tomad, señores, vuestros dineros, y volvedme a mi marido, pues no el vicio, sino la necesidad, le hizo tomar este dinero. Él no se ha jugado, sino vendido, porque quiere a costa de su trabajo sustentarme a mí y a sus hijos: ¡amargo sustento y amarga comida para mí y para ellos!

-Callad, señora -dijo el hombre-, y gastad ese dinero, que yo le desquitaré con la fuerza de mis brazos, que todavía se amañarán antes a domeñar un remo que un azadón; no quise ponerme en aventura de perderlos, jugándolos, por no perder, juntamente con mi libertad, vuestro sustento.

Casi no dejaba oír el llanto de los muchachos esta dolorida plática que entre marido y mujer pasaba. Los ministros que le traían les dijeron que enjugasen las lágrimas, que si lloraran cuantas cabían en el mar, no serían bastantes a darle la libertad que había perdido.

Prevalecían en su llanto los muchachos, diciendo a su padre:

-Señor, no nos deje, porque nos moriremos todos si se va.

El nuevo y extraño caso enterneció las entrañas de nuestros peregrinos, especialmente las de la tesorera Constanza, y todos se movieron a rogar a los ministros de aquel cargo fuesen contentos de tomar su dinero, haciendo cuenta que aquel hombre no había sido en el mundo, y que les conmoviese a no dejar viuda a una mujer, ni huérfanos a tantos niños. En fin, tanto supieron decir, y tanto quisieron rogar, que el dinero volvió a poder de sus dueños, y la mujer cobró su marido y los niños a su padre.

La hermosa Constanza, rica después de condesa, más cristiana que bárbara, con parecer de su hermano Antonio, dio a los pobres perdidos, con que se cobraron, cincuenta escudos de oro; y así, se volvieron tan contentos como libres, agradeciendo al cielo y a los peregrinos la tan no vista como no esperada limosna.

Otro día pisaron la tierra de Francia, y, pasando por Lengüadoc, entraron en la Provenza, donde en otro mesón hallaron tres damas francesas de tan estremada hermosura que, a no ser Auristela en el mundo, pudieran aspirar a la palma de la belleza. Parecían señoras de grande estado, según el aparato con que se servían; las cuales, viendo los peregrinos, así les admiró la gallardía de Periandro y de Antonio como la sin igual belleza de Auristela y de Costanza. Llegáronlas a sí, y habláronlas con alegre rostro y cortés comedimiento; preguntáronlas quién eran, en lengua castellana, porque conocieron ser españolas las peregrinas, y en Francia ni varón ni mujer deja de aprender la lengua castellana.

En tanto que las señoras esperaban la respuesta de Auristela, a quien se encaminaban sus preguntas, se desvió Periandro a hablar con un criado, que le pareció ser de las ilustres francesas; preguntóle quién eran y adónde iban, y él le respondió, diciendo:

-El duque de Nemurs, que es uno de los que llaman «de la sangre» en este reino, es un caballero bizarro y muy discreto, pero muy amigo de su gusto. Es recién heredado, y ha prosupuesto de no casarse por ajena voluntad, sino por la suya, aunque se le ofrezca aumento de estado y de hacienda, y aunque vaya contra el mandamiento de su rey; porque dice que los reyes bien pueden dar la mujer a quien quisieren de sus vasallos, pero no el gusto de recebilla. Con esta fantasía, locura o discreción, o como mejor debe llamarse, ha enviado a algunos criados suyos a diversas partes de Francia a buscar alguna mujer que, después de ser principal, sea hermosa, para casarse con ella, sin que reparen en hacienda, porque él se contenta con que la dote sea su calidad y su hermosura. Supo la de estas tres señoras, y envióme a mí, que le sirvo, para que las viese y las hiciese retratar de un famoso pintor que envió conmigo. Todas tres son libres, y todas de

poca edad, como habéis visto; la mayor, que se llama Deleasir, es discreta en extremo, pero pobre; la mediana, que Belarminia se llama, es bizarra y de gran donaire, y rica medianamente; la más pequeña, cuyo nombre es Feliz Flora, hace gran ventaja a las dos en ser rica. Ellas también han sabido el deseo del duque, y querrían, según a mí se me ha traslucido, ser cada una la venturosa de alcanzarle por esposo; y, con ocasión de ir a Roma a ganar el jubileo de este año, que es como el centésimo que se usaba, han salido de su tierra y quieren pasar por París y verse con el duque, fiadas en el quizá que trae consigo la buena esperanza. Pero después, señores peregrinos, que aquí entrastes, he determinado de llevar un presente a mi amo que borre del pensamiento todas y cualesquier esperanzas que estas señoras en el suyo hubieren fabricado; porque le pienso llevar el retrato de esta vuestra peregrina, única y general señora de la humana belleza; y si ella fuese tan principal como es hermosa, los criados de mi amo no tendrían más que hacer, ni el duque más que desear. Decidme, por vida vuestra, señor, si es casada esta peregrina, cómo se llama y qué padres la engendraron.

A lo que, temblando, respondió Periandro:

-Su nombre es Auristela, su viaje a Roma, sus padres nunca ella los ha dicho; y de que sea libre os aseguro, porque lo sé sin duda alguna; pero hay otra cosa en ello: que es tan libre y tan señora de su voluntad, que no la rendirá a ningún príncipe de la tierra, porque dice que la tiene rendida al que lo es del cielo. Y, para enteraros en que sepáis ser verdad todo lo que os he dicho, sabed que yo soy su hermano y el que sabe lo escondido de sus pensamientos; así que no os servirá de nada el retratalla, sino de alborotar el ánimo de vuestro señor, si acaso quisiese atropellar por el inconveniente de la bajeza de mis padres.

-Con todo eso -respondió el otro-, tengo de llevar su retrato, siquiera por curiosidad y porque se dilate por Francia este nuevo milagro de hermosura.

Con esto se despidieron, y Periandro quiso partirse luego de aquel lugar, por no dársele al pintor para retratar a Auristela. Bartolomé volvió luego a aderezar el bagaje y a no estar bien con Periandro, por la priesa que daba a la partida.

El criado del duque, viendo que Periandro quería partirse luego, se llegó a él y le dijo:

-Bien quisiera, señor, rogaros que os detuviéades un poco en este lugar, siquiera hasta la noche, porque mi pintor con comodidad y de espacio pudiera sacar el retrato del rostro de vuestra hermana; pero bien os podéis ir a la paz de Dios, porque el pintor me ha dicho que, de sola una vez que la ha visto, la tiene tan aprehendida en la imaginación que la pintará a sus solas tan bien como si siempre la estuviera mirando.

Maldijo Periandro entre sí la rara habilidad del pintor; pero no dejó por esto de partirse, despidiéndose luego de las tres gallardas francesas, que abrazaron a

Auristela y a Constanza estrechamente y les ofrecieron de llevarlas hasta Roma en su compañía, si dello gustaban.

Auristela se lo agradeció con las más corteses palabras que supo, diciéndoles que su voluntad obedecía a la de su hermano Periandro, y que así, no podían detenerse ella ni Constanza, pues Antonio, hermano de Constanza, y el suyo se iban.

Y, con esto, se partieron, y de allí a seis días llegaron a un lugar de la Provenza, donde les sucedió lo que se dirá en el siguiente capítulo.



## Capítulo catorce del tercero libro

LA HISTORIA, la poesía y la pintura simbolizan entre sí, y se parecen tanto que, cuando escribes historia, pintas, y cuando pintas, compones. No siempre va en un mismo peso la historia, ni la pintura pinta cosas grandes y magníficas, ni la poesía conversa siempre por los cielos. Bajezas admite la historia; la pintura, hierbas y retamas en sus cuadros; y la poesía tal vez se realza cantando cosas humildes.

Esta verdad nos la muestra bien Bartolomé, bagajero del escuadrón peregrino: el tal, tal vez habla y es escuchado en nuestra historia. Éste, revolviendo en su imaginación el cuento del que vendió su libertad por sustentar a sus hijos, una vez dijo, hablando con Periandro:

-Grande debe de ser, señor, la fuerza que obliga a los padres a sustentar a sus hijos; si no, dígalo aquel hombre que no quiso jugarse por no perderse, sino empeñarse por sustentar a su pobre familia. La libertad, según yo he oído decir, no debe de ser vendida por ningún dinero, y éste la vendió por tan poco, que lo llevaba la mujer en la mano. Acuérdomé también de haber oído decir a mis mayores que, llevando a ahorcar a un hombre anciano, y ayudándole los sacerdotes a bien morir, les dijo:

-Vuestas mercedes se sosieguen, y déjenme morir de espacio, que, aunque es terrible este paso en que me veo, muchas veces me he visto en otros más terribles.

Preguntáronle cuáles eran.

Respondióles que el amanecer Dios, y el rodealle seis hijos pequeños pidiéndole pan y no teniéndolo para dárselo; «la cual necesidad me puso la gonzúa en la mano y fieltros en los pies, con que facilité mis hurtos, no viciosos, sino necesitados». Estas razones llegaron a los oídos del señor que le había sentenciado al suplicio, que fueron parte para volver la justicia en misericordia y la culpa en gracia.

A lo que respondió Periandro:

-El hacer el padre por su hijo es hacer por sí mismo, porque mi hijo es otro yo, en el cual se dilata y se continúa el ser del padre; y, así como es cosa natural y forzosa el hacer cada uno por sí mismo, así lo es el hacer por sus hijos. Lo que no es tan natural ni tan forzoso hacer los hijos por los padres, porque el amor que el padre tiene a su hijo deciendo, y el decender es caminar sin trabajo; y el amor del hijo con el padre aciende y sube, que es caminar cuesta arriba, de donde ha

nacido aquel refrán: «un padre para cien hijos, antes que cien hijos para un padre».

Con estas pláticas y otras entretenían el camino por Francia, la cual es tan poblada, tan llana y apacible, que a cada paso se hallan casas de placer, adonde los señores de ellas están casi todo el año, sin que se les dé algo por estar en las villas ni en las ciudades.

A una de éstas llegaron nuestros viandantes, que estaba un poco desviada del camino real. Era la hora de mediodía, herían los rayos del sol derechamente a la tierra, entraba el calor, y la sombra de una gran torre de la casa les convidó que allí esperasen a pasar la siesta, que con calor riguroso amenazaba.

El solícito Bartolomé desembarazó el bagaje, y, tendiendo un tapete en el suelo, se sentaron todos a la redonda, y de los manjares, de quien tenía cuidado de hacer Bartolomé su repuesto, satisficieron la hambre, que ya comenzaba a fatigarles. Pero, apenas habían alzado las manos para llevarlo a la boca, cuando, alzando Bartolomé los ojos, dijo a grandes voces:

-Apartaos, señores, que no sé quién baja volando del cielo, y no será bien que os coja debajo.

Alzaron todos la vista, y vieron bajar por el aire una figura, que, antes que distinguiesen lo que era, ya estaba en el suelo junto casi a los pies de Periandro. La cual figura era de una mujer hermosísima, que, habiendo sido arrojada desde lo alto de la torre, sirviéndole de campana y de alas sus mismos vestidos, la puso de pies y en el suelo sin daño alguno: cosa posible sin ser milagro. Dejola el suceso atónita y espantada, como lo quedaron los que volar la habían visto. Oyeron en la torre gritos, que los daba otra mujer que, abrazada con un hombre, que parecía que pugnaban por derribarse el uno al otro.

-¡Socorro, socorro! -decía la mujer-. ¡Socorro, señores, que este loco quiere despeñarme de aquí abajo!

La mujer voladora, vuelta algún tanto en sí, dijo:

-Si hay alguno que se atreva a subir por aquella puerta -señalándoles una que al pie de la torre estaba-, libraré de peligro mortal a mis hijos y a otras gentes flacas que allí arriba están.

Periandro, impelido de la generosidad de su ánimo, se entró por la puerta, y a poco rato le vieron en la cumbre de la torre abrazado con el hombre, que mostraba ser loco, del cual, quitándole un cuchillo de las manos, procuraba defenderse; pero la suerte, que quería concluir con la tragedia de su vida, ordenó que entrambos a dos viniesen al suelo, cayendo al pie de la torre: el loco, pasado el pecho con el cuchillo que Periandro en la mano traía, y Periandro, vertiendo por los ojos, narices y boca cantidad de sangre; que, como no tuvo vestidos anchos que le sustentasen, hizo el golpe su efeto y dejóle casi sin vida.

Auristela, que así le vio, creyendo indubitavelmente que estaba muerto, se arrojó sobre él, y, sin respeto alguno, puesta la boca con la suya, esperaba a recoger en sí alguna reliquia, si del alma le hubiese quedado; pero, aunque le hubiera quedado, no pudiera recibirla, porque los traspillados dientes le negaron la entrada. Constanza, dando lugar a la pasión, no le pudo dar a mover el paso para ir a socorrerla, y quedóse en el mismo sitio donde la halló el golpe, pegada los pies al suelo, como si fueran de raíces, o como si ella fuera estatua de duro mármol formada. Antonio, su hermano, acudió a apartar los semivivos y a dividir los que ya pensaba ser cadáveres. Sólo Bartolomé fue el que mostró con los ojos el grave dolor que en el alma sentía, llorando amargamente.

Estando todos en la amarga aflicción que he dicho, sin que hasta entonces ninguna lengua hubiese publicado su sentimiento, vieron que hacia ellos venía un gran tropel de gente, la cual, desde el camino real, había visto el vuelo de los caídos, y venían a ver el suceso. Y era el tropel que venía las hermosas damas francesas, Deleasir, Belarminia y Feliz Flora. Luego como llegaron, conocieron a Auristela y a Periandro, como a aquellos que por su singular belleza quedaban impresos en la imaginación del que una vez los miraba. Apenas la compasión les había hecho apearse para socorrer, si fuese posible, la desventura que miraban, cuando fueron asaltados de seis o ocho hombres armados, que por las espaldas les acometieron.

Este asalto puso en las manos de Antonio su arco y sus flechas, que siempre las tenía a punto, o ya para ofender o ya para defenderse. Uno de los armados, con descortés movimiento, asió a Feliz Flora del brazo y la puso en el arzón delantero de su silla, y dijo, volviéndose a los demás compañeros:

-Esto es hecho. Ésta me basta. Demos la vuelta.

Antonio, que nunca se pagó de descortesías, pospuesto todo temor, puso una flecha en el arco, tendió cuanto pudo el brazo izquierdo, y con la derecha estiró la cuerda hasta que llegó al diestro oído, de modo que las dos puntas y extremos del arco casi se juntaron; y, tomando por blanco el robador de Feliz Flora, disparó tan derechamente la flecha que, sin tocar a Feliz Flora, sino en una parte del velo con que se cubría la cabeza, pasó al salteador el pecho de parte a parte. Acudió a su venganza uno de sus compañeros, y, sin dar lugar a que otra vez Antonio el arco armase, le dio una herida en la cabeza, tal, que dio con él en el suelo más muerto que vivo. Visto lo cual de Constanza, dejó de ser estatua y corrió a socorrer a su hermano: que el parentesco calienta la sangre que suele helarse en la mayor amistad, y lo uno y lo otro son indicios y señales de demasiado amor.

Ya en esto habían salido de la casa gente armada, y los criados de las tres damas, apercebidos de piedras (digo los que no tenían armas), se pusieron en

defensa de su señora. Los salteadores, que vieron muerto a su capitán, y que según los defensores acudían podían ganar poco en aquella empresa, especialmente considerando ser locura aventurar las vidas por quien ya no podía premiarlas, volvieron las espaldas y dejaron el campo solo.

Hasta aquí, de esta batalla pocos golpes de espada hemos oído, pocos instrumentos bélicos han sonado; el sentimiento que por los muertos suelen hacer los vivos no ha salido a romper los aires; las lenguas, en amargo silencio tienen depositadas sus quejas; sólo algunos ayes entre roncros gemidos andan envueltos, especialmente en los pechos de las lastimadas Auristela y Constanza, cada cual abrazada con su hermano, sin poder aprovecharse de las quejas con que se alivian los lastimados corazones. Pero, en fin, el cielo, que tenía determinado de no dejarlas morir tan apriesa y tan sin quejarse, les despegó las lenguas, que al paladar pegadas tenían, y la de Auristela prorrumpió en razones semejantes:

-No sé yo, desdichada, cómo busco aliento en un muerto, o cómo, ya que le tuviese, puedo sentirle, si estoy tan sin él que ni sé si hablo ni si respiro. ¡Ay, hermano, y qué caída ha sido ésta, que así ha derribado mis esperanzas, como que la grandeza de vuestro linaje no se hubiera opuesto a vuestra desventura! Mas, ¿cómo podía ella ser grande, si vos no lo fuéades? En los montes más levantados caen los rayos, y, adonde hallan más resistencia, hacen más daño. Monte érades vos, pero monte humilde, que con las sombras de vuestra industria y de vuestra discreción os encubríades a los ojos de las gentes. Ventura íbades a buscar en la mía, pero la muerte ha atajado el paso, encaminando el mío a la sepultura. ¡Cuán cierta la tendrá la reina, vuestra madre, cuando a sus oídos llegue vuestra no pensada muerte! ¡Ay de mí, otra vez sola y en tierra ajena, bien así como verde yedra a quien ha faltado su verdadero arrimo!

Estas palabras de reina, de montes y grandezas, tenían atentos los oídos de los circunstantes que les escuchaban, y aumentóles la admiración las que también decía Constanza, que en sus faldas tenía a su malherido hermano, apretándole la herida y tomándole la sangre la compasiva Feliz Flora, que, con un lienzo suyo, blandamente se la exprimía, obligada de haberla el herido librado de su deshonra.

-¡Ay, digo -decía-, amparo mío!, ¿de qué ha servido haberme levantado la fortuna a título de señora, si me había de derribar al de desdichada? Volved, hermano, en vos, si queréis que yo vuelva en mí, o si no, haced, ¡oh piadosos cielos!, que una misma suerte nos cierre los ojos, y una misma sepultura nos cubra los cuerpos: que el bien que sin pensar me había venido, no podía traer otro descuento que la presteza de acabarse.

Con esto se quedó desmayada, y Auristela ni más ni menos, de modo que tan muertas parecían ellas y aun más que los heridos.

La dama que cayó de la torre, causa principal de la caída de Periandro, mandó a sus criados, que ya habían venido muchos de la casa, que le llevasen al lecho del conde Domicio, su señor; mandó también llevar a Domicio, su marido, para dar orden en sepultalle. Bartolomé tomó en brazos a su señor Antonio; a Constanza se las dio Feliz Flora; y a Auristela, Belarminia y Deleasir. Y, en escuadrón doloroso y con amargos pasos, se encaminaron a la casi real casa.

## Capítulo quince del tercero libro

POCO APROVECHABAN las discretas razones que las tres damas francesas daban a las dos lastimadas Constanza y Auristela, porque en las recientes desventuras no hallan lugar consolatorias persuasiones: el dolor y el desastre que de repente sucede, no de improviso admite consolación alguna, por discreta que sea; la postema duele, mientras no se ablanda, y el ablandarse requiere tiempo, hasta que llegue el de abrirse. Y así, mientras se llora, mientras se gime, mientras se tiene delante quien mueva al sentimiento a quejas y a suspiros, no es discreción demasiada acudir al remedio con agudas medicinas. Llore, pues, algún tanto más Auristela, gima algún espacio más Constanza, y cierren entrambas los oídos a toda consolación, en tanto que la hermosa Claricia nos cuenta la causa de la locura de Domicio, su esposo, que fue, según ella dijo a las damas francesas, que, antes que Domicio con ella se desposase, andaba enamorado de una parienta suya, la cual tuvo casi indubitables esperanzas de casarse con él.

-«Salióle en blanco la suerte, para que ella -dijo Claricia-la tuviese siempre negra. Porque, disimulando Lorena -que así se llamaba la parienta de Domicio-el enojo que había recibido del casamiento de mi esposo, dio en regalarle con muchos y diversos presentes, puesto que más bizarros y de buen parecer que costosos, entre los cuales le envió una vez, bien así como envió la falsa Deyanira la camisa a Hércules, digo que le envió unas camisas, ricas por el lienzo, y por la labor vistosas. Apenas se puso una, cuando perdió los sentidos, y estuvo dos días como muerto, puesto que luego se la quitaron, imaginando que una esclava de Lorena, que estaba en opinión de maga, la habría hechizado. Volvió a la vida mi esposo, pero con sentidos tan turbados y tan trocados que ninguna acción hacía que no fuese de loco; y no de loco manso, sino de cruel, furioso y desatinado: tanto, que era necesario tenerle en cadenas.»

Y que aquel día, estando ella en aquella torre, se había soltado el loco de las prisiones, y, viniendo a la torre, la había echado por las ventanas abajo, a quien el cielo socorrió con la anchura de sus vestidos, o, por mejor decir, con la acostumbrada misericordia de Dios, que mira por los inocentes. Dijo cómo aquel peregrino había subido a la torre a librar a una doncella a quien el loco quería derribar al suelo, tras la cual también despeñara a otros dos pequeños hijos que en la torre estaban. Pero el suceso fue tan contrario que el conde y el peregrino se estrellaron en la dura tierra: el conde, herido de una mortal herida, y el

peregrino, con un cuchillo en la mano, que al parecer se le había quitado a Domicio, cuya herida era tal, que no fuera menester servir de añadidura para quitarle la vida, pues bastaba la caída.

En esto, Periandro estaba sin sentido en el lecho, adonde acudieron maestros a curarle y a concertarle los deslocados huesos. Diéronle bebidas apropiadas al caso, halláronle pulsos y algún tanto de conocimiento de las personas que alrededor de sí tenía; especialmente de Auristela, a quien con voz desmayada, que apenas podía entenderse, dijo:

-Hermana, yo muero en la fe católica cristiana y en la de quererte bien.

Y no habló ni pudo hablar más palabra por entonces.

Tomaron la sangre a Antonio, y, tentándole los cirujanos la herida, pidieron albricias a su hermana de que era más grande que mortal, y de que presto tendría salud con ayuda del cielo. Dióselas Feliz Flora, adelantándose a Constanza, que se las iba a dar, y aun se las dio, y los cirujanos las tomaron de entrambas, por no ser nada escrupulosos.

Un mes o poco más estuvieron los enfermos curándose, sin querer dejarlos las señoras francesas: tanta fue la amistad que trabaron y el gusto que sintieron de la discreta conversación de Auristela y de Constanza, y de los dos sus hermanos. Especialmente Feliz Flora, que no acertaba a quitarse de la cabecera de Antonio, amándole con un tan comedido amor que no se extendía a más que a ser benevolencia, y a ser como agradecimiento del bien que dél había recibido, cuando su saeta la libró de las manos de Rubertino; que, según Feliz Flora contaba, era un caballero, señor de un castillo que cerca de otro suyo ella tenía, el cual Rubertino, llevado, no de perfecto, sino de vicioso amor, había dado en seguirla y perseguirla, y en rogarla le diese la mano de esposa; pero que ella por mil experiencias, y por la fama, que pocas veces miente, había conocido ser Rubertino de áspera y cruel condición, y de mudable y antojadiza voluntad, y no había querido condescender con su demanda. Y que imaginaba que, acosado de sus desdenes, habría salido al camino a roballa y a hacer de ella por fuerza lo que la voluntad no había podido. Pero que la flecha de Antonio había cortado todos sus crueles y mal fabricados disinius, y esto le movía a mostrarse agradecida.

Todo esto que Feliz Flora dijo pasó así, sin faltar punto; y, cuando se llegó el de la sanidad de los enfermos, y sus fuerzas comenzaron a dar muestras della, volvieron a renovarse sus deseos, a lo menos los de volver a su camino, y así lo pusieron por obra, acomodándose de todas las cosas necesarias, sin que, como está dicho, quisiesen las señoras francesas dejar a los peregrinos, a quien ya trataban con admiración y con respeto, porque las razones del llanto de Auristela les habían hecho concebir en sus ánimos que debían de ser grandes señores: que tal vez la majestad suele cubrirse de buriel y la grandeza vestirse de humildad.

En efeto, con perplejos pensamientos los miraban: el pobre acompañamiento suyo les hacía tener en estima de condición mediana; el brío de sus personas y la belleza de sus rostros levantaba su calidad al cielo; y así, entre el sí y el no, andaba dudosa.

Ordenaron las damas francesas que fuesen todos a caballo, porque la caída de Periandro no consentía que se fiase de sus pies. Feliz Flora, agradecida al golpe de Antonio el bárbaro, no sabía quitarle de su lado, y, tratando del atrevimiento de Rubertino, a quien dejaban muerto y enterrado, y de la estraña historia del conde Domicio, a quien las joyas de su prima, juntamente con quitarle el juicio, le habían quitado la vida, y del vuelo milagroso de su mujer, más para ser admirado que creído, llegaron a un río que se vadeaba con algún trabajo.

Periandro fue de parecer que se buscase la puente, pero todos los demás no vinieron en él; y, bien así como cuando al represado rebaño de mansas ovejas, puestas en lugar estrecho, hace camino la una, a quien las demás al momento siguen, Belarminia se arrojó al agua, a quien todos siguieron, sin quitarse del lado de Auristela Periandro, ni del de Feliz Flora Antonio, llevando también junto a sí a su hermana Constanza.

Ordenó, pues, la suerte que no fuese buena la de Feliz Flora, porque la corriente del agua le desvaneció la cabeza de modo que, sin poder tenerse, dio consigo en mitad de la corriente, tras quien se abalanzó con no creída presteza el cortés Antonio, y sobre sus hombros, como a otra nueva Europa, la puso en la seca arena de la contraria ribera. Ella, viendo el presto beneficio, le dijo:

-Muy cortés eres, español.

A quien Antonio respondió:

-Si mis cortesías no nacieran de tus peligros, estimáralas en algo; pero, como nacen de ellos, antes me descontentan que alegran.

Pasó, en fin, el, como he dicho otras veces, hermoso escuadrón, y llegaron al anochecer a una casería, que junto con serlo era mesón, en el cual se alojaron a toda su voluntad.

Y lo que en él les sucedió nuevo estilo y nuevo capítulo pide.



## Capítulo diez y seis del tercero libro

COSAS y casos suceden en el mundo, que si la imaginación, antes de suceder, pudiera hacer que así sucedieran, no acertara a trazarlos; y así, muchos, por la rareza con que acontecen, pasan plaza de apócrifos, y no son tenidos por tan verdaderos como lo son; y así, es menester que les ayuden juramentos, o a lo menos el buen crédito de quien los cuenta, aunque yo digo que mejor sería no contarlos, según lo aconsejan aquellos antiguos versos castellanos que dicen:

Las cosas de admiración  
no las digas ni las cuentes,  
que no saben todas gentes  
cómo son.

La primera persona con quien encontró Constanza fue con una moza de gentil parecer, de hasta veinte y dos años, vestida a la española, limpia y aseadamente, la cual, llegándose a Constanza, le dijo en lengua castellana:

-¡Bendito sea Dios, que veo gente, si no de mi tierra, a lo menos de mi nación: España! ¡Bendito sea Dios, digo otra vez, que oiré decir vuesa merced, y no señoría, hasta los mozos de cocina!

-Desa manera -respondió Constanza-, ¿vos, señora, española debéis de ser?

-¡Y cómo si lo soy! -respondió ella-; y aun de la mejor tierra de Castilla.

-¿De cuál? -replicó Constanza.

-De Talavera de la Reina -respondió ella.

Apenas hubo dicho esto, cuando a Constanza le vinieron barruntos que debía de ser la esposa de Ortel Banedre, el polaco, que por adúltera quedaba presa en Madrid, cuyo marido, persuadido de Periandro, la había dejado presa y ídose a su tierra, y en un instante fabricó en su imaginación un montón de cosas, que, puestas en efeto, le sucedieron casi como las había pensado.

Tomóla por la mano, y fuese donde estaba Auristela, y, apartándola aparte con Periandro, les dijo:

-Señores, vosotros estáis dudosos de que si la ciencia que yo tengo de adivinar es falsa o verdadera, la cual ciencia no se acredita con decir las cosas que están por venir, porque sólo Dios las sabe, y si algún humano las acierta, es acaso, o por algunas premisas a quien la experiencia de otras semejantes tiene

acreditadas. Si yo os dijese cosas pasadas que no hubiesen llegado ni pudiesen llegar a mi noticia, ¿qué diríades? ¿Queréislo ver? Esta buena hija que tenemos delante es de Talavera de la Reina, que se casó con un extranjero polaco, que se llamaba, si mal no me acuerdo, Ortel Banedre, a quien ella ofendió con alguna desenvoltura con un mozo de mesón que vivía frontero de su casa, la cual, llevada de sus ligeros pensamientos y en los brazos de sus pocos años, se salió de casa de sus padres con el referido mozo, y fue presa en Madrid con el adúltero, donde debe de haber pasado muchos trabajos, así en la prisión como en el haber llegado hasta aquí; que quiero que ella nos los cuente, porque, aunque yo los adivine, ella nos los contará con más puntualidad y con más gracia.

-¡Ay, cielos santos! -dijo la moza-. ¿Y quién es esta señora que me ha leído mis pensamientos? ¿Quién es esta adivina que así sabe la desvergonzada historia de mi vida? Yo, señora, soy esa adúltera, soy esa presa y soy la condenada a destierro de diez años, porque no tuve parte que me siguiese, y soy la que aquí estoy en poder de un soldado español que va a Italia, comiendo el pan con dolor, y pasando la vida, que por momentos me hace desear la muerte. Mi amigo, el primero, murió en la cárcel. Éste, que no sé en qué número ponga, me socorrió en ella, de donde me sacó, y, como he dicho, me lleva por esos mundos con gusto suyo y con pesar mío: que no soy tan tonta que no conozca el peligro en que traigo el alma en este vagamundo estado. Por quien Dios es, señores, pues sois españoles, pues sois cristianos, y, pues sois principales, según lo da a entender vuestra presencia, que me saquéis del poder deste español, que será como sacarme de las garras de los leones.

Admirados quedaron Periandro y Auristela de la discreción sagaz de Constanza; y, concediendo con ella, la reforzaron y acreditaron, y aun se movieron a favorecer con todas sus fuerzas a la perdida moza, la cual dijo que el español soldado no iba siempre con ella, sino una jornada adelante o atrás, por deslumbrar a la justicia.

-Todo eso está muy bien -dijo Periandro-, y aquí daremos traza en vuestro remedio; que la que ha sabido adivinar vuestra vida pasada, también sabrá acomodaros en la venidera. Sed vos buena, que sin el cimiento de la bondad no se puede cargar ninguna cosa que lo parezca; no os desviéis por agora de nosotros, que vuestra edad y vuestro rostro son los mayores contrarios que podéis tener en las tierras estrañas.

Lloró la moza, enterneciéndose Constanza, y Auristela mostró los mismos sentimientos, con que obligó a Periandro a que el remedio de la moza buscase.

En esto estaban, cuando llegó Bartolomé y dijo:

-Señores, acudid a ver la más estraña visión que habréis visto en vuestra vida.

Dijo esto tan asustado y tan como espantado que, pensando ir a ver alguna

maravilla estraña, le siguieron, y, en un apartamento algo desviado de aquel donde estaban alojados los peregrinos y damas, vieron, por entre unas esteras, un aposento todo cubierto de luto, cuya lóbrega escuridad no les dejó ver particularmente lo que en él había. Y, estándole así mirando, llegó un hombre anciano, todo asimismo cubierto de luto, el cual les dijo:

-Señores, de aquí a dos horas, que habrá entrado una de la noche, si gustáis de ver a la señora Ruperta sin que ella os vea, yo haré que la veáis, cuya vista os dará ocasión de que os admiréis, así de su condición como de su hermosura.

-Señor -respondió Periandro-, este nuestro criado que aquí está nos convidó a que viniésemos a ver una maravilla, y hasta ahora no hemos visto otra que la de este aposento cubierto de luto, que no es maravilla ninguna.

-Si volvéis a la hora que digo -respondió el enlutado-, tendréis de qué maravillaros, porque habréis de saber que en este aposento se aloja la señora Ruperta, mujer que fue, apenas hace un año, del conde Lamberto de Escocia, cuyo matrimonio a él le costó la vida y a ella verse en términos de perderla cada paso, a causa que Claudino Rubicón, caballero de los principales de Escocia, a quien las riquezas y el linaje hicieron soberbio, y la condición algo enamorado, quiso bien a mi señora, siendo doncella, de la cual, si no fue aborrecido, a lo menos fue desdeñado, como lo mostró el casarse con el conde mi señor. Esta presta resolución de mi señora la bautizó Rubicón, en deshonra y menosprecio suyo, como si la hermosa Ruperta no hubiera tenido padres que se lo mandaran y obligaciones precisas que le obligaran a ello, junto con ser más acertado ajustarse las edades entre los que se casan: que, si puede ser, siempre los años del esposo con el número de diez han de llevar ventaja a los de la mujer, o con algunos más, porque la vejez los alcance en un mismo tiempo. Era Rubicón varón viudo y que tenía hijo de casi veinte y un años, gentilhomme en extremo, y de mejores condiciones que el padre; tanto que, si él se hubiera opuesto a la cátedra de mi señora, hoy viviera mi señor el conde y mi señora estuviera más alegre. «Sucedió, pues, que, yendo mi señora Ruperta a holgarse con su esposo a una villa suya, acaso y sin pensar, en un despoblado, encontramos a Rubicón con muchos criados suyos que le acompañaban. Vio a mi señora, y su vista despertó el agravio que a su parecer se le había hecho; y fue de suerte que en lugar del amor nació la ira, y de la ira el deseo de hacer pesar a mi señora; y, como las venganzas de los que bien se han querido sobrepujan a las ofensas hechas, Rubicón, despechado, impaciente y atrevido, desenvainando la espada, corrió al conde mi señor, que estaba inocente deste caso, sin que tuviese lugar de prevenirse del daño que no temía; y, envainándosela en el pecho, dijo: "Tú me pagarás lo que no me debes; y si esta es crueldad, mayor la usó tu esposa para conmigo, pues no una vez sola, sino cien mil, me quitan la vida sus desdenes".

»A todo esto me hallé yo presente; oí las palabras, y vi con mis ojos y tenté con las manos la herida; escuché los llantos de mi señora, que penetraron los cielos; volvimos a dar sepultura al conde, y, al enterrarle, por orden de mi señora, se le cortó la cabeza, que en pocos días, con cosas que se le aplicaron, quedó descarnada y en solamente los huesos; mandóla mi señora poner en una caja de plata, sobre la cual puestas sus manos, hizo este juramento. Pero olvídaseme por decir cómo el cruel Rubicón, o ya por menosprecio, o ya por más crueldad, o quizá con la turbación descuidado, se dejó la espada envainada en el pecho de mi señor, cuya sangre aun hasta agora muestra estar casi reciente en ella. Digo, pues, que dijo estas palabras: "Yo, la desdichada Ruperta, a quien han dado los cielos sólo nombre de hermosa, hago juramento al cielo, puestas las manos sobre estas dolorosas reliquias, de vengar la muerte de mi esposo con mi poder y con mi industria, si bien aventurase en ello una y mil veces esta miserable vida que tengo, sin que me espanten trabajos, sin que me falten ruegos hechos a quien pueda favorecerme; y, en tanto que no llegare a efecto este mi justo, si no cristiano, deseo, juro que mi vestido será negro, mis aposentos lóbregos, mis manteles tristes y mi compañía la misma soledad. A la mesa estarán presentes estas reliquias, que me atormenten el alma; esta cabeza que me diga, sin lengua, que vengue su agravio; esta espada, en cuya no enjuta sangre me parece que veo a la que, alterando la mía, no me deje sosegar hasta vengarme".

»Esto dicho, parece que templó sus continuas lágrimas, y dio algún vado a sus dolientes suspiros. Hase puesto en camino de Roma para pedir en Italia a sus príncipes favor y ayuda contra el matador de su esposo, que aun todavía la amenaza, quizá temeroso; que suele ofender un mosquito más de lo que puede favorecer un águila.» Esto, señores, veréis, como he dicho, de aquí a dos horas; y si no os dejare admirados, o yo no habré sabido contarlos, o vosotros tendréis el corazón de mármol.

Aquí dio fin a su plática el enlutado escudero, y los peregrinos, sin ver a Ruperta, desde luego se comenzaron a admirar del caso.

## Capítulo diez y siete del tercer libro

LA IRA, según se dice, es una revolución de la sangre que está cerca del corazón, la cual se altera en el pecho con la vista del objeto que agravia, y tal vez con la memoria; tiene por último fin y paradero suyo la venganza, que, como la tome el agraviado, sin razón o con ella, sosiega.

Esto nos lo dará a entender la hermosa Ruperta, agraviada y airada, y con tanto deseo de vengarse de su contrario que, aunque sabía que era ya muerto, dilataba su cólera por todos sus decendientes, sin querer dejar, si pudiera, vivo ninguno dellos; que la cólera de la mujer no tiene límite.

Llegóse la hora de que la fueron a ver los peregrinos, sin que ella los viese, y viéronla hermosa en todo extremo, con blanquísimas tocas, que desde la cabeza casi le llegaban a los pies, sentada delante de una mesa, sobre la cual tenía la cabeza de su esposo en la caja de plata, la espada con que le habían quitado la vida y una camisa que ella se imaginaba que aún no estaba enjuta de la sangre de su esposo. Todas estas insignias dolorosas despertaron su ira, la cual no tenía necesidad que nadie la despertase, porque nunca dormía; levantóse en pie, y, puesta la mano derecha sobre la cabeza del marido, comenzó a hacer y a revalidar el voto y juramento que dijo el enlutado escudero. Llovían lágrimas de sus ojos, bastantes a bañar las reliquias de su pasión; arrancaba suspiros del pecho, que condensaban el aire cerca y lejos; añadía al ordinario juramento razones que le agravaban, y tal vez parecía que arrojaba por los ojos, no lágrimas, sino fuego, y por la boca, no suspiros, sino humo: tan sujeta la tenía su pasión y el deseo de vengarse. ¿Veisla llorar, veisla suspirar, veisla no estar en sí, veisla blandir la espada matadora, veisla besar la camisa ensangrentada, y que rompe las palabras con sollozos?; pues esperad no más de hasta la mañana, y veréis cosas que os den sujeto para hablar en ellas mil siglos, si tantos tuviédes de vida.

En mitad de la fuga de su dolor estaba Ruperta, y casi en los umbrales de su gusto, porque mientras se amenaza descansa el amenazador, cuando se llegó a ella uno de sus criados, como si se llegara una sombra negra, según venía cargado de luto, y en mal pronunciadas palabras le dijo:

-Señora, Croriano el galán, el hijo de tu enemigo, se acaba de apeaar agora con algunos criados. Mira si quieres encubrirte, o si quieres que te conozca, o lo que sería bien que hagas, pues tienes lugar para pensarlo.

-Que no me conozca -respondió Ruperta-; y avisad a todos mis criados que

por descuido no me nombren, ni por cuidado me descubran.

Y, esto diciendo, recogió sus prendas, y mandó cerrar el aposento y que ninguno entrase a hablalla.

Volviéronse los peregrinos al suyo, quedó ella sola y pensativa, y no sé cómo se supo que había hablado a solas estas o otras semejantes razones:

-Advierte, ¡oh Ruperta!, que los piadosos cielos te han traído a las manos, como simple víctima al sacrificio, al alma de tu enemigo; que los hijos, y más los únicos, pedazos del alma son de los padres. ¡Ea, Ruperta! Olvídate de que eres mujer, y si no quieres olvidarte desto, mira que eres mujer, y agraviada. La sangre de tu marido te está dando voces, y en aquella cabeza sin lengua te está diciendo: «¡Venganza, dulce esposa mía, que me mataron sin culpa!» Sí, que no espantó la braveza de Holofernes a la humildad de Judit; verdad es que la causa suya fue muy diferente de la mía: ella castigó a un enemigo de Dios, y yo quiero castigar a un enemigo que no sé si lo es mío; a ella le puso el hierro en las manos el amor de su patria, y a mí me le pone el de mi esposo. Pero, ¿para qué hago yo tan disparatadas comparaciones? ¿Qué tengo que hacer más, sino cerrar los ojos y envainar el acero en el pecho deste mozo, que tanto será mi venganza mayor cuanto fuere menor su culpa? Alcance yo renombre de vengadora, y venga lo que viniere. Los deseos que se quieren cumplir no reparan en inconvenientes, aunque sean mortales: cumpla yo el mío, y tenga la salida por mi misma muerte.

Esto dicho, dio traza y orden en cómo aquella noche se encerrase en la estancia de Croriano, donde le dio fácil entrada un criado suyo, traidor por dádivas, aunque él no pensó sino que hacía un gran servicio a su amo, llevándole al lecho una tan hermosa mujer como Ruperta; la cual, puesta en parte donde no pudo ser vista ni sentida, ofreciendo su suerte al disponer del cielo, sepultada en maravilloso silencio, estuvo esperando la hora de su contento, que le tenía puesto en la de la muerte de Croriano. Llevó, para ser instrumento del cruel sacrificio, un agudo cuchillo, que, por ser arma mañera y no embarazosa, le pareció ser más a propósito; llevó asimismo una lanterna bien cerrada, en la cual ardía una vela de cera; recogió los espíritus de manera que apenas osaba enviar la respiración al aire. ¿Qué no hace una mujer enojada?; ¿qué montes de dificultades no atropella en sus disignios?; ¿qué inormes crueldades no le parecen blandas y pacíficas? No más, porque lo que en este caso se podía decir es tanto que será mejor dejarlo en su punto, pues no se han de hallar palabras con que encarecerlo.

Llegóse, en fin, la hora; acostóse Croriano; durmióse, con el cansancio del camino, y entregóse, sin pensamiento de su muerte, al de su reposo. Con atentos oídos estaba escuchando Ruperta si daba alguna señal Croriano de que durmiese, y aseguráronla que dormía, así el tiempo que había pasado desde que se acostó hasta entonces, como algunos dilatados alientos que no los dan sino los

dormidos; viendo lo cual, sin santiguarse ni invocar ninguna deidad que la ayudase, abrió la lanterna, con que quedó claro el aposento, y miró dónde pondría los pies, para que, sin tropezar, la llevasen al lecho.

La bella matadora, dulce enojada, verdugo agradable: ejecuta tu ira, satisface tu enojo, borra y quita del mundo tu agravio, que delante tienes en quien puedes hacerlo; pero mira, ¡oh hermosa Ruperta!, si quieres, que no mires a ese hermoso Cupido que vas a descubrir, que se deshará en un punto toda la máquina de tus pensamientos.

Llegó, en fin, y, temblándole la mano, descubrió el rostro de Croriano, que profundamente dormía, y halló en él la propiedad del escudo de Medusa, que la convirtió en mármol: halló tanta hermosura que fue bastante a hacerle caer el cuchillo de la mano, y a que diese lugar la consideración del inorme caso que cometer quería; vio que la belleza de Croriano, como hace el sol a la niebla, ahuyentaba las sombras de la muerte que darle quería, y en un instante no le escogió para víctima del cruel sacrificio, sino para holocausto santo de su gusto.

-¡Ay -dijo entre sí-, generoso mancebo, y cuán mejor eres tú para ser mi esposo que para ser objeto de mi venganza! ¿Qué culpa tienes tú de la que cometió tu padre, y qué pena se ha de dar a quien no tiene culpa? Gózate, gózate, joven ilustre, y quédese en mi pecho mi venganza y mi crueldad encerrada, que, cuando se sepa, mejor nombre me dará el ser piadosa que vengativa.

Esto diciendo, ya turbada y arrepentida, se le cayó la lanterna de las manos sobre el pecho de Croriano, que despertó con el ardor de la vela. Hallóse a oscuras; quiso Ruperta salirse de la estancia, y no acertó, por donde dio voces Croriano, tomó su espada y saltó del lecho, y, andando por el aposento, topó con Ruperta, que toda temblando le dijo:

-No me mates, ¡oh Croriano!, puesto que soy una mujer que no ha una hora que quise y pude matarte, y ahora me veo en términos de rogarte que no me quites la vida.

En esto, entraron sus criados al rumor, con luces, y vio Croriano y conoció a la bellísima viuda, como quien vee a la resplandeciente luna de nubes blancas rodeada.

-¿Qué es esto, señora Ruperta? -le dijo-. ¿Son los pasos de la venganza los que hasta aquí os han traído, o queréis que os pague yo los desafueros que mi padre os hizo? Que este cuchillo que aquí veo, ¿qué otra señal es, sino de que habéis venido a ser verdugo de mi vida? Mi padre es ya muerto, y los muertos no pueden dar satisfacción de los agravios que dejan hechos. Los vivos sí que pueden recompensarlos; y así, yo, que represento ahora la persona de mi padre, quiero recompensaros la ofensa que él os hizo lo mejor que pudiese y supiere. Pero dejadme primero honestamente tocaros, que quiero ver si sois fantasma que aquí

ha venido o a matarme, o a engañarme, o a mejorar mi suerte.

-Empeórese la mía -respondió Ruperta- (si es que halla modo el cielo como empeorarla), si entré este día pasado en este mesón con alguna memoria tuya. Veniste tú a él; no te vi cuando entraste; oí tu nombre, el cual despertó mi cólera y me movió a la venganza; concerté con un criado tuyo que me encerrase esta noche en este aposento; hícele que callase, sellándole la boca con algunas dádivas; entré en él, apercebíme deste cuchillo y acrecenté el deseo de quitarte la vida; sentí que dormías, salí de donde estaba, y a la luz de una lanterna que conmigo traía te descubrí y vi tu rostro, que me movió a respeto y a reverencia, de manera que los filos del cuchillo se embotaron, el deseo de mi venganza se deshizo, cayóseme la vela de las manos, despertóte su fuego, diste voces, quedé yo confusa, de donde ha sucedido lo que has visto. Yo no quiero más venganzas ni más memorias de agravios: vive en paz, que yo quiero ser la primera que haga mercedes por ofensas, si ya lo son el perdonarte la culpa que no tienes.

-Señora -respondió Croriano-, mi padre quiso casarse contigo, tú no quisiste; él, despechado, mató a tu esposo: murióse llevando al otro mundo esta ofensa; yo he quedado, como parte tan suya, para hacer bien por su alma; si quieres que te entregue la mía, recíbeme por tu esposo, si ya, como he dicho, no eres fantasma que me engañas; que las grandes venturas que vienen de improviso siempre traen consigo alguna sospecha.

-Dame esos brazos -respondió Ruperta-, y verás, señor, cómo este mi cuerpo no es fantástico, y que el alma que en él te entrego es sencilla, pura y verdadera.

Testigos fueron destos abrazos, y de las manos que por esposos se dieron, los criados de Croriano, que habían entrado con las luces. Triunfó aquella noche la blanda paz desta dura guerra, volvióse el campo de la batalla en tálamo de desposorio; nació la paz de la ira; de la muerte, la vida, y del disgusto, el contento. Amaneció el día, y halló a los recién desposados cada uno en los brazos del otro.

Levantáronse los peregrinos con deseo de saber qué habría hecho la lastimada Ruperta con la venida del hijo de su enemigo, de cuya historia estaban ya bien informados. Salió el rumor del nuevo desposorio, y, haciendo de los cortesanos, entraron a dar los parabienes a los novios, y al entrar en el aposento vieron salir del de Ruperta el anciano escudero que su historia les había contado, cargado con la caja donde iba la calavera de su primero esposo, y con la camisa y espada que tantas veces había renovado las lágrimas de Ruperta; y dijo que lo llevaba adonde no renovasen otra vez, en las glorias presentes, pasadas desventuras. Murmuró de la facilidad de Ruperta, y en general, de todas las mujeres, y el menor vituperio que dellas dijo fue llamarlas antojadizas.

Levantáronse los novios antes que entrasen los peregrinos, regocijáronse los



criados, así de Ruperta como de Croriano, y volvióse aquel mesón en alcázar real, digno de tan altos desposorios.

En fin, Periandro y Auristela, Constanza y Antonio, su hermano, hablaron a los desposados y se dieron parte de sus vidas; a lo menos, la que convenía que se diese.

## Capítulo diez y ocho del tercer libro

EN ESTO estaban, cuando entró por la puerta del mesón un hombre, cuya larga y blanca barba más de ochenta años le daba de edad; venía vestido ni como peregrino, ni como religioso, puesto que lo uno y lo otro parecía; traía la cabeza descubierta, rasa y calva en el medio, y por los lados, luengas y blanquísimas canas le pendían; sustentaba el agobiado cuerpo sobre un retorcido cayado que de báculo le servía. En efeto, todo él y todas las partes representaban un venerable anciano digno de todo respeto, al cual apenas hubo visto la dueña del mesón, cuando, hincándose ante él de rodillas, le dijo:

-Contaré yo este día, padre Soldino, entre los venturosos de mi vida, pues he merecido verte en mi casa: que nunca vienes a ella sino para bien mío.

Y, volviéndose a los circunstantes, prosiguió diciendo:

-Este montón de nieve y esta estatua de mármol blanco que se mueve, que aquí veis, señores, es la del famoso Soldino, cuya fama no sólo en Francia, sino en todas partes de la tierra se estiende.

-No me alabéis, buena señora -respondió el anciano-, que tal vez la buena fama se engendra de la mala mentira. No la entrada, sino la salida, hace a los hombres venturosos. La virtud que tiene por remate el vicio, no es virtud, sino vicio. Pero, con todo esto, quiero acreditarme con vos en la opinión que de mí tenéis. Mirad hoy por vuestra casa, porque destas bodas y destos regocijos que en ella se preparan se ha de engendrar un fuego que casi toda la consuma.

A lo que dijo Croriano, hablando con Ruperta, su esposa:

-Éste, sin duda, debe de ser mágico o adivino, pues predice lo por venir.

Entreoyó esta razón el anciano, y respondió:

-No soy mago ni adivino, sino judiciario, cuya ciencia, si bien se sabe, casi enseña a adivinar. Creedme, señores, por esta vez siquiera, y dejad esta estancia, y vamos a la mía, que en una cercana selva que hay aquí os dará, si no tan capaz, más seguro alojamiento.

Apenas hubo dicho esto, cuando entró Bartolomé, criado de Antonio, y dijo a voces:

-Señores, las cocinas se abrasan, porque, en la infinita leña que junto a ellas estaba, se ha encendido tal fuego que muestra no poder apagarle todas las aguas del mar.

Tras esta voz acudieron las de otros criados, y comenzaron a acreditarlas los estallidos del fuego.

La verdad tan manifiesta acreditó las palabras de Soldino; y, asiendo en brazos Periandro a Auristela, sin querer ir primero a averiguar si el fuego se podía atajar o no, dijo a Soldino:

-Señor, guíanos a tu estancia, que el peligro desta ya está manifiesto.

Lo mismo hizo Antonio con su hermana Constanza y con Feliz Flora, la dama francesa, a quien siguieron Deleasir y Belarminia; y la moza arrepentida de Talavera se asió del cinto de Bartolomé y él del cabestro de su bagaje, y todos juntos, con los desposados y con la huéspedea, que conocía bien las adivinanzas de Soldino, le siguieron, aunque con tardo paso los guiaba.

La demás gente del mesón, que no habían estado presentes a las razones de Soldino, quedaron ocupados en matar el fuego; pero presto su furor les dio a entender que trabajaban en vano, ardiendo la casa todo aquel día; que, a cogerles el fuego de noche, fuera milagro escapar alguno que contara su furia.

Llegaron, en fin, a la selva, donde hallaron una ermita no muy grande, dentro de la cual vieron una puerta que parecía serlo de una cueva oscura.

Antes de entrar en la ermita, dijo Soldino a todos los que le habían seguido:

-Estos árboles con su apacible sombra os servirán de dorados techos, y la yerba deste amenísimo prado, si no de muy blandas, a lo menos de muy blancas camas. Yo llevaré conmigo a mi cueva a estos señores, porque les conviene, y no porque los mejore en la estancia.

Y luego llamó a Periandro, a Auristela, a Constanza, a las tres damas francesas, a Ruperta, a Antonio y a Croriano; y, dejando otra mucha gente fuera, se encerró con éstos en la cueva, cerrando tras sí la puerta de la ermita y la de la cueva.

Viéndose, pues, Bartolomé y la de Talavera no ser de los escogidos ni llamados de Soldino, o ya de despecho, o ya llevados de su ligera condición, se concertaron los dos, viendo ser tan para en uno, de dejar Bartolomé a sus amos, y la moza a sus arrepentimientos; y así, aliviaron el bagaje de dos hábitos de peregrinos, y la moza a caballo y el galán a pie, dieron cantonada, ella a sus compasivas señoras, y él a sus honrados dueños, llevando en la intención de ir también a Roma, como iban todos.

Otra vez se ha dicho que no todas las acciones no verisímiles ni probables se han de contar en las historias, porque si no se les da crédito, pierden su valor; pero al historiador no le conviene más de decir la verdad, parézcalo o no lo parezca. Con esta máxima, pues, el que escribió esta historia dice que Soldino, con todo aquel escuadrón de damas y caballeros, bajó por las gradas de la oscura cueva, y a menos de ochenta gradas se descubrió el cielo luciente y claro, y se vieron unos amenos y tendidos prados que entretenían la vista y alegraban las almas. Y, haciendo Soldino rueda de los que con él habían bajado, les dijo:

-Señores, esto no es encantamento, y esta cueva por donde aquí hemos venido, no sirve sino de atajo para llegar desde allá arriba a este valle que veis, que una legua de aquí tiene más fácil, más llana y más apacible entrada. Yo levanté aquella ermita, y con mis brazos y con mi continuo trabajo cavé la cueva, y hice mío este valle, cuyas aguas y cuyos frutos con prodigalidad me sustentan. Aquí, huyendo de la guerra, hallé la paz; la hambre que en ese mundo de allá arriba, si así se puede decir, tenía, halló aquí a la hartura; aquí, en lugar de los príncipes y monarcas que mandan el mundo, a quien yo servía, he hallado a estos árboles mudos, que, aunque altos y pomposos, son humildes; aquí no suena en mis oídos el desdén de los emperadores, el enfado de sus ministros; aquí no veo dama que me desdeñe, ni criado que mal me sirva; aquí soy yo señor de mí mismo; aquí tengo mi alma en mi palma, y aquí por vía recta encamino mis pensamientos y mis deseos al cielo; aquí he dado fin al estudio de las matemáticas, he contemplado el curso de las estrellas y el movimiento del sol y de la luna; aquí he hallado causas para alegrarme y causas para entristecerme que aún están por venir, que serán tan ciertas, según yo pienso, que corren parejas con la misma verdad. Ahora, ahora, como presente, veo quitar la cabeza a un valiente pirata un valeroso mancebo de la casa de Austria nacido. ¡Oh, si le viédeses, como yo le veo, arrastrando estandartes por el agua, bañando con menosprecio sus medias lunas, pelando sus lenguas colas de caballos, abrasando bajeles, despedazando cuerpos y quitando vidas! Pero, ¡ay de mí!, que me hace entristecer otro coronado joven, tendido en la seca arena, de mil moras lanzas atravesado, el uno nieto y el otro hijo del rayo espantoso de la guerra, jamás como se debe alabado Carlos V, a quien yo serví muchos años y sirviera hasta que la vida se me acabara, si no lo estorbara el querer mudar la milicia mortal en la divina. Aquí estoy, donde sin libros, con sola la experiencia que he adquirido con el tiempo de mi soledad, te digo, ¡oh Croriano! -y en saber yo tu nombre sin haberte visto jamás me acredite contigo-, que gozarás de tu Ruperta largos años; y a ti, Periandro, te aseguro buen suceso de tu peregrinación; tu hermana Auristela no lo será presto, y no porque ha de perder la vida con brevedad; a ti, ¡oh Constanza!, subirás de condesa a duquesa, y tu hermano Antonio, al grado que su valor merece. Estas señoras francesas, aunque no consigan los deseos que ahora tienen, conseguirán otros que las honren y contenten. El haber pronosticado el fuego, el saber vuestros nombres sin haberos visto jamás, las muertes que he dicho que he visto antes que vengan, os podrán mover si queréis a creerme; y más cuando halléis ser verdad que vuestro mozo Bartolomé, con el bagaje y con la moza castellana, se ha ido y os ha dejado a pie: no le sigáis, porque no le alcanzaréis; la moza es más del suelo que del cielo, y quiere seguir su inclinación a despecho y pesar de vuestros consejos. Español soy, que me

obliga a ser cortés y a ser verdadero; con la cortesía os ofrezco cuanto estos prados me ofrecen, y con la verdad a la experiencia de todo cuanto os he dicho. Si os maravillare de ver a un español en esta ajena tierra, advertid que hay sitios y lugares en el mundo saludables más que otros, y éste en que estamos lo es para mí más que ninguno. Las alquerías, caserías y lugares que hay por estos contornos, las habitan gentes católicas y santas. Cuando conviene, recibo los sacramentos, y busco lo que no pueden ofrecer los campos para pasar la humana vida. Ésta es la que tengo, de la cual pienso salir a la siempre duradera. Y por agora no más, sino vámonos arriba: daremos sustento a los cuerpos, como aquí abajo le hemos dado a las almas.

## Capítulo diez y nueve del tercero libro

ADEREZÓSE la pobre más que limpia comida, aunque fue muy limpia cosa, no muy nueva para los cuatro peregrinos, que se acordaron entonces de la Isla Bárbara y de la de las Ermitas, donde quedó Rutilio, y adonde ellos comieron de los ya sazonados, y ya no, frutos de los árboles; también se les vino a la memoria la profecía falsa de los isleños y las muchas de Mauricio, con las moriscas del jadraque, y, últimamente, las del español Soldino. Parecíales que andaban rodeados de adivinanzas y metidos hasta el alma en la judiciaria astrología, que, a no ser acreditada con la experiencia, con dificultad le dieran crédito.

Acabóse la breve comida, salió Soldino con todos los que con él estaban al camino, para despedirse dellos, y en él echaron menos a la moza castellana y a Bartolomé el del bagaje, cuya falta no dio poca pesadumbre a los cuatro, porque les faltaba el dinero y la repostería. Mostró congojarse Antonio, y quiso adelantarse a buscarle, porque bien se imaginó que la moza le llevaba, o él llevaba a la moza, o por mejor decir, el uno se llevaba al otro; pero Soldino le dijo que no tuviese pena, ni se moviese a buscarlos, porque otro día volvería su criado arrepentido del hurto, y entregaría cuanto había llevado. Creyeron, y así no curó Antonio de buscarle, y más, que Feliz Flora ofreció a Antonio de prestarle cuanto hubiese menester para su gusto y el de sus compañeros desde allí a Roma, a cuya liberal oferta se mostró Antonio agradecido lo posible, y aun se ofreció de darle prenda que cupiese en el puño, y en el valor pasase de cincuenta mil ducados; y esto fue pensando de darle una de las dos perlas de Auristela, que, con la cruz de diamantes guardadas, siempre consigo las traía. No se atrevió Feliz Flora a creer la cantidad del valor de la prenda; pero atrevióse a volver a hacer el ofrecimiento hecho.

Estando en esto, vieron venir por el camino y pasar por delante dellos hasta ocho personas a caballo, entre las cuales iba una mujer sentada en un rico sillón y sobre una mula, vestida de camino, toda de verde, hasta el sombrero, que con ricas y varias plumas azotaba el aire, con un antifaz, asimismo verde, cubierto el rostro. Pasaron por delante dellos, y con bajar las cabezas, sin hablar palabra alguna, los saludaron y pasaron de largo; los del camino tampoco hablaron palabra, y al mismo modo les saludaron. Quedábase atrás uno de los de la compañía, y, llegándose a ellos, pidió por cortesía un poco de agua; diéronsela y preguntáronle qué gente era la que iba allí delante, y qué dama la de lo verde.

A lo que el caminante respondió:

-El que allí delante va es el señor Alejandro Castrucho, gentilhombre capuano, y uno de los ricos varones, no sólo de Capua, sino de todo el reino de Nápoles; la dama es su sobrina, la señora Isabela Castrucho, que nació en España, donde deja enterrado a su padre, por cuya muerte su tío la lleva a casar a Capua, y, a lo que yo creo, no muy contenta.

-Eso será -respondió el escudero enlutado de Ruperta-no porque va a casarse, sino porque el camino es largo; que yo para mí tengo, que no hay mujer que no desee enterarse con la mitad que le falta, que es la del marido.

-No sé esas filosofías -respondió el caminante-; sólo sé que va triste, y la causa ella se la sabe. Y a Dios quedad, que es mucha la ventaja que mis dueños me llevan.

Y, picando apriesa, se les fue de la vista; y ellos, despidiéndose de Soldino, le abrazaron y le dejaron.

Olvidábase de decir cómo Soldino había aconsejado a las damas francesas que siguiesen el camino derecho de Roma, sin torcerle para entrar en París, porque así les convenía. Este consejo fue para ellas como si se le dijera un oráculo; y así, con parecer de los peregrinos, determinaron de salir de Francia por el Delfinado, y, atravesando el Piamonte y el estado de Milán, ver a Florencia y luego a Roma.

Tanteado, pues, este camino, con propósito de alargar algún tanto más las jornadas que hasta allí, caminaron; y otro día, al romper del alba, vieron venir hacia ellos al tenido por ladrón, Bartolomé el bagajero, detrás de su bagaje, y él vestido como peregrino.

Todos gritaron, cuando le conocieron, y los más le preguntaron qué huida había sido la suya, qué traje aquel y qué vuelta aquella.

A lo que él, hincado de rodillas delante de Constanza, casi llorando, respondió a todos:

-Mi huida no sé cómo fue; mi traje ya veis que es de peregrino; mi vuelta es a restituir lo que quizá, y aun sin quizá, en vuestras imaginaciones me tenía confirmado por ladrón; aquí, señora Constanza, viene el bagaje, con todo aquello que en él estaba, excepto dos vestidos de peregrinos, que el uno es éste que yo traigo, y el otro queda haciendo romera a la ramera de Talavera, que doy yo al diablo al amor y al bellaco que me lo enseñó; y es lo peor que le conozco, y determino ser soldado debajo de su bandera, porque no siento fuerzas que se opongan a las que hace el gusto con los que poco saben. Écheme vuesa merced su bendición, y déjeme volver, que me espera Luisa, y advierta que vuelvo sin blanca, fiado en el donaire de mi moza más que en la ligereza de mis manos, que nunca fueron ladronas, ni lo serán, si Dios me guarda el juicio, si viviese mil siglos.

Muchas razones le dijo Periandro para estorbarle su mal propósito; muchas le dijo Auristela y muchas más Constanza y Antonio; pero todo fue, como dicen, dar voces al viento y predicar en desierto. Limpióse Bartolomé sus lágrimas, dejó su bagaje, volvió las espaldas y partió en un vuelo, dejando a todos admirados de su amor y de su simpleza.

Antonio, viéndole partir tan de carrera, puso una flecha en su arco, que jamás la disparó en vano, con intención de atravesarle de parte a parte y sacarle del pecho el amor y la locura; mas Feliz Flora, que pocas veces se le apartaba del lado, le trabó del arco, diciéndole:

-Déjale, Antonio, que harta mala ventura lleva en ir a poder y a sujetarse al yugo de una mujer loca.

-Bien dices, señora -respondió Antonio-; y, pues tú le das la vida, ¿quién ha de ser poderoso a quitársela?

Finalmente, muchos días caminaron sin sucederles cosa digna de ser contada.

Entraron en Milán, admiróles la grandeza de la ciudad, su infinita riqueza, sus oros, que allí no solamente hay oro, sino oros; sus bélicas herrerías, que no parece sino que allí ha pasado las suyas Vulcano; la abundancia infinita de sus frutos, la grandeza de sus templos, y, finalmente, la agudeza del ingenio de sus moradores.

Oyeron decir a un huésped suyo que lo más que había que ver en aquella ciudad era la Academia de los Entronados, que estaba adornada de eminentísimos académicos, cuyos sutiles entendimientos daban que hacer a la fama a todas horas y por todas las partes del mundo. Dijo también que aquel día era de academia, y que se había de disputar en ella si podía haber amor sin celos.

-Sí puede -dijo Periandro-; y, para probar esta verdad, no es menester gastar mucho tiempo.

-Yo -replicó Auristela- no sé qué es amor, aunque sé lo que es querer bien.

A lo que dijo Belarminia:

-No entiendo ese modo de hablar, ni la diferencia que hay entre amor y querer bien.

-Ésta -replicó Auristela-: querer bien puede ser sin causa vehemente que os mueva la voluntad, como se puede querer a una criada que os sirve o a una estatua o pintura que bien os parece o que mucho os agrada; y éstas no dan celos, ni los pueden dar; pero aquello que dicen que se llama amor, que es una vehemente pasión del ánimo, como dicen, ya que no dé celos, puede dar temores que lleguen a quitar la vida, del cual temor a mí me parece que no puede estar libre el amor en ninguna manera.

-Mucho has dicho, señora -respondió Periandro-, porque no hay ningún amante que esté en posesión de la cosa amada, que no tema el perderla; no hay



ventura tan firme que tal vez no dé vaivenes; no hay clavo tan fuerte que pueda detener la rueda de la fortuna; y si el deseo que nos lleva a acabar presto nuestro camino no lo estorbara, quizá mostrara yo hoy en la academia que puede haber amor sin celos, pero no sin temores.

Cesó esta plática. Estuvieron cuatro días en Milán, en los cuales comenzaron a ver sus grandezas, porque acabarlas de ver no dieran tiempo cuatro años. Partiéronse de allí, y llegaron a Luca, ciudad pequeña, pero hermosa y libre, que debajo de las alas del imperio y de España se descuella, y mira esenta a las ciudades de los príncipes que la desean; allí, mejor que en otra parte ninguna, son bien vistos y recibidos los españoles, y es la causa que en ella no mandan ellos, sino ruegan, y como en ella no hacen estancia de más de un día, no dan lugar a mostrar su condición, tenida por arrogante.

Aquí aconteció a nuestros pasajeros una de las más estrañas aventuras que se han contado en todo el discurso deste libro.

## Capítulo veinte del tercero libro

LAS POSADAS de Luca son capaces para alojar una compañía de soldados, en una de las cuales se alojó nuestro escuadrón, siendo guiado de las guardas de las puertas de la ciudad, que se los entregaron al huésped por cuenta, porque a la mañana, o cuando se partiesen, la había de dar dellos. Al entrar vio la señora Ruperta que salía un médico -que tal le pareció en el traje-diciendo a la huéspeda de la casa -que también le pareció no podía ser otra:

-Yo, señora, no me acabo de desengañar si esta doncella está loca o endemoniada, y, por no errar, digo que está endemoniada y loca; y, con todo eso, tengo esperanza de su salud, si es que su tío no se da prisa a partirse.

-¡Ay, Jesús! -dijo Ruperta-. ¿Y en casa de endemoniados y locos nos apeamos? En verdad, en verdad, que si se toma mi parecer, no hemos de poner los pies dentro.

A lo que dijo la huéspeda:

-Sin escrúpulo puede vuesa señoría -que éste es el merced de Italia-apearse, porque de cien leguas se podía venir a ver lo que está en esta posada.

Apeáronse todos, y Auristela y Constanza, que habían oído las razones de la huéspeda, le preguntaron qué había en aquella posada que tanto encarecía el verla.

-Vénganse conmigo -respondió la huéspeda-, y verán lo que verán, y dirán lo que yo digo.

Guió, y siguiéronla, donde vieron echada en un lecho dorado a una hermosísima muchacha, de edad, al parecer, de diez y seis o diez y siete años; tenía los brazos aspadados y atados con unas vendas a los balaustres de la cabecera del lecho, como que le querían estorbar el moverlos a ninguna parte; dos mujeres, que debían de servirla de enfermeras, andaban buscándole las piernas para atárselas también, a lo que la enferma dijo:

-Basta que se me aten los brazos, que todo lo demás las ataduras de mi honestidad lo tiene ligado.

Y, volviéndose a las peregrinas, con levantada voz dijo:

-¡Figuras del cielo!, ¡ángeles de carne!, sin duda creo que venís a darme salud, porque de tan hermosa presencia y de tan cristiana visita no se puede esperar otra cosa. Por lo que debéis a ser quien sois, que sois mucho, que mandéis que me desaten, que con cuatro o cinco bocados que me dé en el brazo, quedará harta y no me haré más mal, porque no estoy tan loca como parezco, ni el que me

atormenta es tan cruel que dejará que me muerda.

-¡Pobre de ti, sobrina -dijo un anciano que había entrado en el aposento-, y cuál te tiene ése que dices que no ha de dejar que te muerdas! Encomiéndate a Dios, Isabela, y procura comer, no de tus hermosas carnes, sino de lo que te diere este tu tío, que bien te quiere. Lo que cría el aire, lo que mantiene el agua, lo que sustenta la tierra, te traeré: que tu mucha hacienda y mi voluntad mucha te lo ofrece todo.

La doliente moza respondió:

-Déjenme sola con estos ángeles; quizá mi enemigo el demonio huirá de mí por no estar con ellos.

Y, señalando con la cabeza que se quedasen con ella Auristela, Constanza, Ruperta y Feliz Flora, dijo que los demás se saliesen, como se hizo con voluntad, y aun con ruegos de su anciano y lastimado tío, del cual supieron ser aquella la gentil dama de lo verde que, al salir de la cueva del sabio español, habían visto pasar por el camino, que el criado que se quedó atrás les dijo que se llamaba Isabela Castrucha, y que se iba a casar al reino de Nápoles.

Apenas se vio sola la enferma, cuando, mirando a todas partes, dijo que mirasen si había otra persona en el aposento que aumentase el número de los que ella dijo que se quedasen. Mirólo Ruperta, y escudriñólo todo, y aseguró no haber otra persona que ellos. Con esta seguridad, sentóse Isabela como pudo en el lecho, y, dando muestras de que quería hablar de propósito, rompió la voz con un tan grande suspiro, que pareció que con él se le arrancaba el alma; el fin del cual fue tenderse otra vez en el lecho, y quedar desmayada, con señales tan de muerte que obligó a los circunstantes a dar voces pidiendo un poco de agua para bañar el rostro de Isabela, que a más andar se iba al otro mundo.

Entró el mísero tío, llevando una cruz en la una mano, y en la otra un hisopo bañado en agua bendita; entraron asimismo con él dos sacerdotes, que, creyendo ser el demonio quien la fatigaba, pocas veces se apartaban della; entró asimismo la huéspeda con el agua; rociáronle el rostro, y volvió en sí diciendo:

-Escusadas son por agora estas prevenciones; yo saldré presto; pero no ha de ser cuando vosotros quisiéredes, sino cuando a mí me parezca, que será cuando viniere a esta ciudad Andrea Marulo, hijo de Juan Bautista Marulo, caballero desta ciudad, el cual Andrea agora está estudiando en Salamanca, bien descuidado destos sucesos.

Todas estas razones acabaron de confirmar en los oyentes la opinión que tenían de estar Isabela endemoniada, porque no podían pensar cómo pudiese saber ella Juan Bautista Marulo quién fuese, y su hijo Andrea; y no faltó quien fuese luego a decir al ya nombrado Juan Bautista Marulo lo que la bella endemoniada dél y de su hijo había dicho.

Tornó a pedir que la dejaran sola con los que antes había escogido; dijéronle los sacerdotes los Evangelios, y hicieron su gusto, llevándole todos de la señal que había dado quedaría, cuando el demonio la dejase, libre; que indubitablemente la juzgaron por endemoniada.

Feliz Flora hizo de nuevo la pesquisa de la estancia, y, cerrando la puerta della, dijo a la enferma:

-Solos estamos; mira, señora, lo que quieres.

-Lo que quiero es -respondió Isabela-que me quiten estas ligaduras; que, aunque son blandas, me fatigan, porque me impiden.

Hiciéronlo así con mucha diligencia, y, sentándose Isabela en el lecho, asió de la una mano a Auristela y de la otra a Ruperta, y hizo que Constanza y Feliz Flora se sentasen junto a ella en el mismo lecho; y así, apiñadas en un hermoso montón, con voz baja y lágrimas en los ojos, dijo:

-«Yo, señoras, soy la infelice Isabela Castrucha, cuyos padres me dieron nobleza, la fortuna, hacienda, y los cielos, algún tanto de hermosura. Nacieron mis padres en Capua, pero engendraronme en España, donde nací, y me crié en casa deste mi tío que aquí está, que en la corte del emperador la tenía. ¡Válame Dios, y para qué tomo yo tan de atrás la corriente de mis desventuras! Estando, pues, yo en casa deste mi tío, ya huérfana de mis padres, que a él me dejaron encomendada y por tutor mío, llegó a la corte un mozo, a quien yo vi en una iglesia, y le miré tan de propósito... (y no os parezca esto, señoras, desenvoltura, que no parecerá, si consideráredes que soy mujer); digo que le miré en la iglesia de tal modo que en casa no podía estar sin mirarle, porque quedó su presencia tan impresa en mi alma que no la podía apartar de mi memoria. Finalmente, no me faltaron medios para entender quién él era, y la calidad de su persona, y qué hacía en la corte o dónde iba, y lo que saqué en limpio fue que se llamaba Andrea Marulo, hijo de Juan Bautista Marulo, caballero desta ciudad, más noble que rico, y que iba a estudiar a Salamanca. En seis días que allí estuvo, tuve orden de escribirle quién yo era y la mucha hacienda que tenía, y que de mi hermosura se podía certificar, viéndome en la iglesia; escribíle, asimismo, que entendía que este mi tío me quería casar con un primo mío, porque la hacienda se quedase en casa, hombre no de mi gusto, ni de mi condición, como es verdad; díjele asimismo que la ocasión en mí le ofrecía sus cabellos, que los tomase, y que no diese lugar en no hacello al arrepentimiento, y que no tomase de mi facilidad ocasión para no estimarme.

»Respondió, después de haberme visto no sé cuántas veces en la iglesia, que por mi persona sola, sin los adornos de la nobleza y de la riqueza, me hiciera señora del mundo si pudiera, y que me suplicaba durase firme algún tiempo en mi amorosa intención, a lo menos hasta que él dejase en Salamanca a un amigo

suyo, que con él desta ciudad había partido a seguir el estudio. Respondíle que sí haría, porque en mí no era el amor importuno, ni indiscreto, que presto nace y presto se muere. Dejóme entonces por honrado, pues no quiso faltar a su amigo, y con lágrimas, como enamorado, que yo se las vi verter, pasando por mi calle, el día que se partió sin dejarme y yo me fui con él sin partirme.

»Otro día... (¿Quién podrá creer esto? ¡Qué de rodeos tienen las desgracias para alcanzar más presto a los desdichados!) Digo, que otro día concertó mi tío que volviésemos a Italia, y, sin poderme excusar ni valerme el fingirme enferma, porque el pulso y la color me hacían sana, mi tío no quiso creer que de enferma, sino de mal contenta del casamiento, buscaba trazas para no partirme. En este tiempo le tuve para escribir a Andrea de lo que me había sucedido, y que era forzoso el partirme; pero que yo procuraría pasar por esta ciudad, donde pensaba fingirme endemoniada, y dar lugar con esta traza a que él le tuviese de dejar a Salamanca y venir a Luca, adonde, a pesar de mi tío, y aun de todo el mundo, sería mi esposo; así que, en su diligencia estaba mi ventura y aun la suya, si quería mostrarse agradecido. Si las cartas llegaron a sus manos, que sí debieron de llegar, porque los portes las hacen ciertas, antes de tres días ha de estar aquí. Yo, por mi parte, he hecho lo que he podido; una legión de demonios tengo en el cuerpo, que lo mismo es tener una onza de amor en el alma, cuando la esperanza desde lejos la anda haciendo cocos.»

Ésta es, señoras mías, mi historia; ésta, mi locura; ésta, mi enfermedad; mis amorosos pensamientos son los demonios que me atormentan; paso hambre, porque espero hartura, pero, con todo eso, la desconfianza me persigue, porque, como dicen en Castilla: «a los desdichados se les suelen helar las migas entre la boca y la mano». Haced, señoras, de modo que acreditéis mi mentira y fortalezcáis mis discursos, haciendo con mi tío que, puesto que yo no sane, no me ponga en camino por algunos días: quizá permitirá el cielo que llegue el de mi contento con la venida de Andrea.

No habrá para qué preguntar si se admiraron o no los oyentes de la historia de Isabela, pues la historia misma se trae consigo la admiración, para ponerla en las almas de los que la escuchan.

Ruperta, Auristela, Constanza y Feliz Flora le ofrecieron de fortalecer sus disignios, y de no partirse de aquel lugar hasta ver el fin dellos, pues, a buena razón, no podía tardar mucho.

## Capítulo ventiuno del tercero libro

PRIESA se daba la hermosa Isabela Castrucha a revalidar su demonio, y priesa se daban las cuatro, ya sus amigas, a fortalecer su enfermedad, afirmando con todas las razones que podían de que verdaderamente era el demonio el que hablaba en su cuerpo: porque se vea quién es el amor, pues hace parecer endemoniados a los amantes.

Estando en esto, que sería casi al anochecer, volvió el médico a hacer la segunda visita, y acaso trujo con él a Juan Bautista Marulo, padre de Andrea el enamorado, y, al entrar del aposento de la enferma, dijo:

-Vea vuesa merced, señor Juan Bautista Marulo, la lástima desta doncella, y si merece que en su cuerpo de ángel se ande espaciando el demonio; pero una esperanza nos consuela, y es que nos ha dicho que presto saldrá de aquí, y dará por señal de su salida la venida del señor Andrea, vuestro hijo, que por instantes aguarda.

-Así me lo han dicho -respondió el señor Juan Bautista-, y holgaríame yo que cosas mías fuesen paraninfos de tan buenas nuevas.

-Gracias a Dios y a mi diligencia -dijo Isabela-, que si no fuera por mí, él se estuviera agora quedo en Salamanca, haciendo lo que Dios se sabe. Créame el señor Juan Bautista, que está presente, que tiene un hijo más hermoso que santo, y menos estudiante que galán; que mal hayan las galas y las atildaduras de los mancebos, que tanto daño hacen en la república, y mal hayan juntamente las espuelas que no son de rodaja, y los acicates que no son puntiagudos, y las mulas de alquiler que no se aventajan a las postas.

Con éstas fue ensartando otras razones equívocas; conviene a saber, de dos sentidos, que de una manera las entendían sus secretarias y de otra los demás circunstantes. Ellas las interpretaban verdaderamente, y los demás, como desconcertados disparates.

-¿Dónde vistes vos, señora -dijo Marulo-, a mi hijo Andrea? ¿Fue en Madrid o en Salamanca?

-No fue sino en Illescas -dijo Isabela-, cogiendo guindas la mañana de San Juan, al tiempo que alboreaba; mas, si va a decir verdad, que es milagro que yo la diga, siempre le veo y siempre le tengo en el alma.

-Aun bien -replicó Marulo-, que esté mi hijo cogiendo guindas y no espulgándose, que es más propio de los estudiantes.

-Los estudiantes que son caballeros -respondió Isabela-, de pura fantasía pocas

veces se espulgan, pero muchas se rascan; que estos animalejos, que se usan en el mundo tan de ordinario, son tan atrevidos que así se entran por las calzas de los príncipes como por las frazadas de los hospitales.

-Todo lo sabes, malino -dijo el médico-; bien parece que eres viejo.

Y esto, encaminando su razón al demonio que pensaba que tenía Isabela en el cuerpo.

Estando en esto, que no parece sino que el mismo Satanás lo ordenaba, entró el tío de Isabela con muestras de grandísima alegría, diciendo:

-¡Albricias, sobrina mía; albricias, hija de mi alma; que ya ha llegado el señor Andrea Marulo, hijo del señor Juan Bautista, que está presente! ¡Ea, dulce esperanza mía, cúmplenos la que nos has dado de que has de quedar libre en viéndole! ¡Ea, demonio maldito, vade retro, exi foras, sin que llesves pensamiento de volver a esta estancia, por más barrida y escombrada que la veas!

-Venga, venga -replicó Isabela-ese putativo Ganimedes, ese contrahecho Adonis, y déme la mano de esposo, libre, sano y sin cautela; que yo le he estado aquí aguardando más firme que roca puesta a las ondas del mar, que la tocan, mas no la mueven.

Entró, de camino, Andrea Marulo, a quien ya en casa de su padre le habían dicho la enfermedad de la extranjera Isabela, y de cómo le esperaba para darle por señal de la salida del demonio. El mozo, que era discreto y estaba prevenido, por las cartas que Isabela le envió a Salamanca, de lo que había de hacer si la alcanzaba en Luca, sin quitarse las espuelas, acudió a la posada de Isabela, y entró por su estancia como atontado y loco, diciendo:

-¡Afuera, afuera, afuera; aparta, aparta, aparta; que entra el valeroso Andrea, cuadrillero mayor de todo el infierno, si es que no basta de una escuadra!

Con este alboroto y voces casi quedaron admirados los mismos que sabían la verdad del caso, tanto que dijo el médico, y aun su mismo padre:

-Tan demonio es éste como el que tiene Isabela.

Y su tío dijo:

-Esperábamos a este mancebo para nuestro bien, y creo que ha venido para nuestro mal.

-Sosiégate, hijo, sosiégate -dijo su padre-; que parece que estás loco.

-¿No lo ha de estar -dijo Isabela-, si me vee a mí? ¿No soy yo, por ventura, el centro donde reposan sus pensamientos? ¿No soy yo el blanco donde asestan sus deseos?

-Sí, por cierto -dijo Andrea-; sí, que vos sois señora de mi voluntad, descanso de mi trabajo y vida de mi muerte. Dadme la mano de ser mi esposa, señora mía, y sacadme de la esclavitud en que me veo a la libertad de verme debajo de vuestro yugo; dadme la mano, digo otra vez, bien mío, y alzadme de la humildad

de ser Andrea Marulo a la alteza de ser esposo de Isabela Castrucho. Vayan de aquí fuera los demonios que quisieren estorbar tan sabroso nudo, y no procuren los hombres apartar lo que Dios junta.

-Tú dices bien, señor Andrea -replicó Isabela-; y, sin que aquí intervengan trazas, máquinas ni embelecocos, dame esa mano de esposo y recíbeme por tuya.

Tendió la mano Andrea, y, en aquel instante, alzó la voz Auristela y dijo:

-Bien se la puede dar, que para en uno son.

Pasmado y atónito, tendió también la mano su tío de Isabela y trabó de la de Andrea, y dijo:

-¿Qué es esto, señores? ¿Úsase en este pueblo que se case un diablo con otro?

-Que no -dijo el médico-; que esto debe de ser burlando, para que el diablo se vaya, porque no es posible que este caso que va sucediendo pueda ser prevenido por entendimiento humano.

-Con todo eso -dijo el tío de Isabela-, quiero saber de la boca de entrambos qué lugar le daremos a este casamiento: el de la verdad o el de la burla.

-El de la verdad -respondió Isabela-, porque ni Andrea Marulo está loco ni yo endemoniada. Yo le quiero y escojo por mi esposo, si es que él me quiere y me escoge por su esposa.

-No loco ni endemoniado, sino con mi juicio entero, tal cual Dios ha sido servido de darme.

Y, diciendo esto, tomó la mano de Isabela, y ella le dio la suya, y con dos síes quedaron indubitavelmente casados.

-¿Qué es esto? -dijo Castrucho-; ¿otra vez? ¡Aquí de Dios! ¿Cómo, y es posible que así se deshonren las canas deste viejo?

-No las puede deshonrar -dijo el padre de Andrea-ninguna cosa mía. Yo soy noble, y si no demasiadamente rico, no tan pobre que haya menester a nadie. No entro ni salgo en este negocio; sin mi sabiduría se han casado los muchachos: que en los pechos enamorados, la discreción se adelanta a los años, y si las más veces los mozos en sus acciones disparan, muchas aciertan; y, cuando aciertan, aunque sea acaso, exceden con muchas ventajas a las más consideradas. Pero mírese, con todo eso, si lo que aquí ha pasado puede pasar adelante, porque si se puede deshacer, las riquezas de Isabela no han de ser parte para que yo procure la mejora de mi hijo.

Dos sacerdotes que se hallaron presentes dijeron que era válido el matrimonio, supuesto que, si con parecer de locos le habían comenzado, con parecer de verdaderamente cuerdos le habían confirmado.

-Y de nuevo le confirmamos -dijo Andrea.

Y lo mismo dijo Isabela.

Oyendo lo cual su tío, se le cayeron las alas del corazón y la cabeza sobre el



pecho; y, dando un profundo suspiro, vuelto los ojos en blanco, dio muestras de haberle sobrevenido un mortal parasismo.

Lleváronle sus criados al lecho, levantóse del suyo Isabela, llevóla Andrea a casa de su padre, como a su esposa, y de allí a dos días entraron por la puerta de una iglesia un niño, hermano de Andrea Marulo, a bautizar; Isabela y Andrea a casarse, y a enterrar el cuerpo de su tío, porque se vean cuán estraños son los sucesos desta vida: unos a un mismo punto se bautizan, otros se casan y otros se entierran. Con todo eso, se puso luto Isabela, porque ésta que llaman muerte mezcla los tálamos con las sepulturas y las galas con los lutos.

Cuatro días más estuvieron en Luca nuestros peregrinos y la escuadra de nuestros pasajeros, que fueron regalados de los desposados y del noble Juan Bautista Marulo.

Y aquí dio fin nuestro autor al tercero libro desta historia.

*Libro cuarto de Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda, historia setentrional*

## Capítulo primero del cuarto libro

DISPUTÓSE entre nuestra peregrina escuadra, no una, sino muchas veces, si el casamiento de Isabela Castrucha, con tantas máquinas fabricado, podía ser valedero, a lo que Periandro muchas veces dijo que sí; cuanto más, que no les tocaba a ellos la averiguación de aquel caso. Pero lo que a él le había descontentado, era la junta del bautismo, casamiento y la sepultura, y la ignorancia del médico, que no atinó con la traza de Isabela ni con el peligro de su tío. Unas veces trataban en esto, y otras en referir los peligros que por ellos habían pasado.

Andaban Croriano y Ruperta, su esposa, atentísimos inquirendo quién fuesen Periandro y Auristela, Antonio y Constanza, lo que no hacían por saber quién fuesen las tres damas francesas, que, desde el punto que las vieron, fueron dellos conocidas. Con esto, a más que medianas jornadas, llegaron a Acupendente, lugar cercano a Roma, a la entrada de la cual villa, adelantándose un poco Periandro y Auristela de los demás, sin temor que nadie los escuchase ni oyese, Periandro habló a Auristela desta manera:

-Bien sabes, ¡oh señora!, que las causas que nos movieron a salir de nuestra patria y a dejar nuestro regalo fueron tan justas como necesarias. Ya los aires de Roma nos dan en el rostro; ya las esperanzas que nos sustentan nos bullen en las almas; ya ya hago cuenta que me veo en la dulce posesión esperada. Mira, señora, que será bien que des una vuelta a tus pensamientos, y, escudriñando tu voluntad, mires si estás en la entereza primera, o si lo estarás después de haber cumplido tu voto, de lo que yo no dudo, porque tu real sangre no se engendró entre promesas mentirosas, ni entre dobladas trazas. De mí te sé decir, ¡oh hermosa Sigismunda!, que este Periandro que aquí ves es el Persiles que en la casa del rey mi padre viste. Aquel, digo, que te dio palabra de ser tu esposo en los alcázares de su padre, y te la cumplirá en los desiertos de Libia, si allí la contraria fortuna nos llevase.

Íbale mirando Auristela atentísimamente, maravillada de que Periandro dudase de su fe, y así le dijo:

-Sola una voluntad, ¡oh Persiles!, he tenido en toda mi vida, y ésa habrá dos años que te la entregué, no forzada, sino de mi libre albedrío; la cual tan entera y firme está agora como el primer día que te hice señor della; la cual, si es posible que se aumente, se ha aumentado y crecido entre los muchos trabajos que hemos pasado. De que tú estés firme en la tuya me mostraré tan agradecida que, en

cumpliendo mi voto, haré que se vuelvan en posesión tus esperanzas. Pero dime, ¿qué haremos después que una misma coyunda nos ate y un mismo yugo oprima nuestros cuellos? Lejos nos hallamos de nuestras tierras, no conocidos de nadie en las ajenas, sin arrimo que sustente la yedra de nuestras incomodidades. No digo esto porque me falte el ánimo de sufrir todas las del mundo, como esté contigo, sino dígolo porque cualquiera necesidad tuya me ha de quitar la vida. Hasta aquí, o poco menos de hasta aquí, padecía mi alma en sí sola; pero de aquí adelante padeceré en ella y en la tuya, aunque he dicho mal en partir estas dos almas, pues no son más que una.

-Mira, señora -respondió Periandro-, como no es posible que ninguno fabrique su fortuna, puesto que dicen que cada uno es el artífice della desde el principio hasta el cabo, así yo no puedo responderte agora lo que haremos después que la buena suerte nos ajunte. Rómpase agora el inconveniente de nuestra división, que, después de juntos, campos hay en la tierra que nos sustenten y chozas que nos recojan, y hatos que nos encubran; que a gozarse dos almas que son una, como tú has dicho, no hay contentos con que igualarse, ni dorados techos que mejor nos alberguen. No nos faltará medio para que mi madre, la reina, sepa dónde estamos, ni a ella le faltará industria para socorrernos; y, en tanto, esa cruz de diamantes que tienes y esas dos perlas inestimables comenzarán a darnos ayudas, sino que temo que al deshacernos dellas se ha de deshacer nuestra máquina; porque, ¿cómo se ha de creer que prendas de tanto valor se encubran debajo de una esclavina?

Y, por venir dándoles alcance la demás compañía, cesó su plática, que fue la primera que habían hablado en cosas de su gusto, porque la mucha honestidad de Auristela jamás dio ocasión a Periandro a que en secreto la hablase; y, con este artificio y seguridad notable, pasaron la plaza de hermanos entre todos cuantos hasta allí los habían conocido. Solamente en el desalmado y ya muerto Clodio pasó la malicia tan adelante que llegó a sospechar la verdad.

Aquella noche llegaron una jornada antes de Roma, y en un mesón, adonde siempre les solía acontecer maravillas, les aconteció ésta, si es que así puede llamarse.

Estando todos sentados a una mesa, la cual la solicitud del huésped y la diligencia de sus criados tenían abundantemente proveída, de un aposento del mesón salió un gallardo peregrino con unas escribanías sobre el brazo izquierdo, y un cartapacio en la mano; y, habiendo hecho a todos la debida cortesía, en lengua castellana dijo:

-Este traje de peregrino que visto, el cual trae consigo la obligación de que pida limosna el que lo trae, me obliga a que os la pida, y tan aventajada y tan nueva que, sin darme joya alguna, ni prendas que lo valgan, me habéis de hacer

rico. Yo, señores, soy un hombre curioso: sobre la mitad de mi alma predomina Marte, y sobre la otra mitad Mercurio y Apolo. Algunos años me he dado al ejercicio de la guerra, y algunos otros, y los más maduros, en el de las letras. En los de la guerra he alcanzado algún buen nombre, y por los de las letras he sido algún tanto estimado. Algunos libros he impreso, de los ignorantes non condenados por malos, ni de los discretos han dejado de ser tenidos por buenos. Y como la necesidad, según se dice, es maestra de avivar los ingenios, este mío, que tiene un no sé qué de fantástico e inventivo, ha dado en una imaginación algo peregrina y nueva, y es que a costa ajena quiero sacar un libro a la luz, cuyo trabajo sea, como he dicho, ajeno, y el provecho mío. El libro se ha de llamar *Flor de aforismos peregrinos*; conviene a saber, sentencias sacadas de la misma verdad, en esta forma: cuando en el camino o en otra parte topo alguna persona cuya experiencia muestre ser de ingenio y de prendas, le pido me escriba en este cartapacio algún dicho agudo, si es que le sabe, o alguna sentencia que lo parezca, y de esta manera tengo ajuntados más de trecientos aforismos, todos dignos de saberse y de imprimirse, y no en nombre mío, sino de su mismo autor, que lo firmó de su nombre, después de haberlo dicho. Ésta es la limosna que pido, y la que estimaré sobre todo el oro del mundo.

-Dadnos, señor español -respondió Periandro-, alguna muestra de lo que pedís, por quien nos guíemos, que en lo demás, seréis servido como nuestros ingenios lo alcanzaren.

-Esta mañana -respondió el español- llegaron aquí y pasaron de largo un peregrino y una peregrina españoles, a los cuales, por ser españoles, declaré mi deseo, y ella me dijo que pusiese de mi mano -porque no sabía escribir- esta razón: *Más quiero ser mala con esperanza de ser buena, que buena con propósito de ser mala*; y díjome que firmase: LA PEREGRINA DE TALAVERA. Tampoco sabía escribir el peregrino, y me dijo que escribiese: *No hay carga más pesada que la mujer liviana*; y firmé por él: BARTOLOMÉ EL MANCHEGO. Deste modo son los aforismos que pido; y los que espero desta gallarda compañía serán tales, que realcen a los demás, y les sirvan de adorno y de esmalte.

-El caso está entendido -respondió Croriano-; y por mí -tomando la pluma al peregrino y el cartapacio- quiero comenzar a salir desta obligación y escribo: *Más hermoso parece el soldado muerto en la batalla que sano en la huida*.

Y firmó: CRORIANO. Luego tomó la pluma Periandro y escribió: *Dichoso es el soldado que, cuando está peleando, sabe que le está mirando su príncipe*; y firmó. Sucedióle el bárbaro Antonio, y escribió: *La honra que se alcanza por la guerra, como se graba en láminas de bronce y con puntas de acero, es más firme que las demás honras*; y firmóse: ANTONIO EL BÁRBARO.

Y, como allí no había más hombres, rogó el peregrino que también aquellas damas escribiesen, y fue la primera que escribió Ruperta, y dijo: *La hermosura que se acompaña con la honestidad es hermosura, y la que no, no es más de un buen parecer*; y firmó. Segundóla Auristela, y, tomando la pluma, dijo: *La mejor dote que puede llevar la mujer principal es la honestidad, porque la hermosura y la riqueza el tiempo la gasta o la fortuna la deshace*; y firmó. A quien siguió Constanza, escribiendo: *No por el suyo, sino por el parecer ajeno ha de escoger la mujer el marido*; y firmó. Feliz Flora escribió también, y dijo: *A mucho obligan las leyes de la obediencia forzosa, pero a mucho más las fuerzas del gusto*; y firmó. Y, siguiendo Belarminia, dijo: *La mujer ha de ser como el armiño, dejándose antes prender que enlodarse*; y firmó. La última que escribió fue la hermosa Deleasir, y dijo: *Sobre todas las acciones de esta vida tiene imperio la buena o la mala suerte, pero más sobre los casamientos*.

Esto fue lo que escribieron nuestras damas y nuestros peregrinos, de lo que el español quedó agradecido y contento; y, preguntándole Periandro si sabía algún aforismo de memoria, de los que tenía allí escritos, le dijese; a lo que respondió que sólo uno diría, que le había dado gran gusto por la firma del que lo había escrito, que decía: *No desees, y serás el más rico hombre del mundo*; y la firma decía: DIEGO DE RATOS, CORCOVADO, ZAPATERO DE VIEJO EN TORDESILLAS, LUGAR EN CASTILLA LA VIEJA, JUNTO A VALLADOLID.

-¡Por Dios -dijo Antonio-, que la firma está larga y tendida, y que el aforismo es el más breve y compendioso que puede imaginarse!; porque está claro que lo que se desea es lo que falta, y el que no desea no tiene falta de nada, y así, será el más rico del mundo.

Algunos otros aforismos dijo el español, que hicieron sabrosa la conversación y la cena.

Sentóse el peregrino con ellos, y en el discurso de la cena dijo:

-No daré el privilegio de este mi libro a ningún librero de Madrid, si me da por él dos mil ducados; que allí no hay ninguno que no quiera los privilegios de balde, o, a lo menos, por tan poco precio que no le luzga al autor del libro. Verdad es que tal vez suelen comprar un privilegio y imprimir un libro con quien piensan enriquecer, y pierden en él el trabajo y la hacienda, pero el de estos aforismos, escrito se lleva en la frente la bondad y la ganancia.

## Capítulo segundo del cuarto libro

BIEN PODÍA intitular el libro del peregrino español *Historia peregrina sacada de diversos autores*, y dijera verdad, según habían sido y iban siendo los que la componían; y no les dio poco que reír la firma de Diego de Ratos, el zapatero de viejo, y aun también les dio que pensar el dicho de Bartolomé el Manchego, que dijo *que no había carga más pesada que la mujer liviana*, señal que le debía de pesar ya la que llevaba en la moza de Talavera.

En esto fueron hablando otro día que dejaron al español, moderno y nuevo autor de nuevos y esquisitos libros, y aquel mismo día vieron a Roma, alegrándoles las almas, de cuya alegría redundaba salud en los cuerpos. Alborozáronse los corazones de Periandro y de Auristela, viéndose tan cerca del fin de su deseo; los de Croriano y Ruperta y los de las tres damas francesas ansimismo, por el buen suceso que prometía el fin próspero de su viaje, entrando a la parte de este gusto los de Constanza y Antonio.

Heríales el sol por cenit, a cuya causa, puesto que está más apartado de la tierra que en ninguna otra sazón del día, hiere con más calor y vehemencia; y, habiéndoles convidado una cercana selva que a su mano derecha se descubría, determinaron de pasar en ella el rigor de la siesta que les amenazaba, y aun quizá la noche, pues les quedaba lugar demasiado para entrar el día siguiente en Roma.

Hiciéronlo así, y, mientras más entraban por la selva adelante, la amenidad del sitio, las fuentes que de entre las hierbas salían, los arroyos que por ella cruzaban, les iban confirmando en su mismo propósito. Tanto habían entrado en ella, cuanto, volviendo los ojos, vieron que estaban ya encubiertos a los que por el real camino pasaban; y, haciéndoles la variedad de los sitios variar en la imaginación cuál escogerían, según eran todos buenos y apacibles, alzó acaso los ojos Auristela, y vio pendiente de la rama de un verde sauce un retrato, del grandor de una cuartilla de papel, pintado en una tabla no más, del rostro de una hermosísima mujer; y, reparando un poco en él, conoció claramente ser su rostro el del retrato, y, admirada y suspensa, se le enseñó a Periandro.

A este mismo instante dijo Croriano que todas aquellas hierbas manaban sangre, y mostró los pies en caliente sangre teñidos.

El retrato, que luego descolgó Periandro, y la sangre que mostraba Croriano, los tuvo confusos a todos y en deseo de buscar así el dueño del retrato como el de la sangre. No podía pensar Auristela quién, dónde o cuándo pudiese haber sido sacado su rostro, ni se acordaba Periandro que el criado del duque de

Nemurs le había dicho que el pintor que sacaba los de las tres francesas damas, sacaría también el de Auristela, con no más de haberla visto; que si de esto él se acordara, con facilidad diera en la cuenta de lo que no alcanzaba.

El rastro que siguieron de la sangre llevó a Croriano y a Antonio, que le seguían, hasta ponerlos entre unos espesos árboles que allí cerca estaban, donde vieron al pie de uno un gallardo peregrino sentado en el suelo, puestas las manos casi sobre el corazón y todo lleno de sangre: vista que les turbó en gran manera, y más cuando, llegándose a él Croriano, le alzó el rostro, que sobre los pechos tenía derribado y lleno de sangre, y, limpiándosele con un lienzo, conoció, sin duda alguna, ser el herido el duque de Nemurs; que no bastó el diferente traje en que le hallaba para dejar de conocerle: tanta era la amistad que con él tenía.

El duque herido, o a lo menos el que parecía ser el duque, sin abrir los ojos, que con la sangre los tenía cerrados, con mal pronunciadas palabras dijo:

-Bien hubieras hecho, ¡oh quienquiera que seas, enemigo mortal de mi descanso!, si hubieras alzado un poco más la mano, y dádome en mitad del corazón, que allí sí que hallaras el retrato más vivo y más verdadero que el que me hiciste quitar del pecho y colgar en el árbol, porque no me sirviese de reliquias y de escudo en nuestra batalla.

Hallóse Constanza en este hallazgo, y, como naturalmente era de condición tierna y compasiva, acudió a mirarle la herida y a tomarle la sangre, antes que a tener cuenta con las lastimosas palabras que decía. Casi otro tanto le sucedió a Periandro y a Auristela, porque la misma sangre les hizo pasar adelante a buscar el origen de donde procedía, y hallaron entre unos verdes y crecidos juncos tendido otro peregrino, cubierto casi todo de sangre, excepto el rostro, que descubierto y limpio tenía; y así, sin tener necesidad de limpiársele, ni de hacer diligencias para conocerle, conocieron ser el príncipe Arnaldo, que más desmayado que muerto estaba.

La primera señal que dio de vida fue probarse a levantar, diciendo:

-No le llevarás, traidor, porque el retrato es mío, por ser el de mi alma; tú le has robado, y, sin haberte yo ofendido en cosa, me quieres quitar la vida.

Temblando estaba Auristela con la no pensada vista de Arnaldo; y, aunque las obligaciones que le tenía la impelían a que a él se llegase, no osaba, por la presencia de Periandro, el cual, tan obligado como cortés, asió de las manos del príncipe, y, con voz no muy alta, por no descubrir lo que quizá el príncipe querría que se callase, le dijo:

-Volved en vos, señor Arnaldo, y veréis que estáis en poder de vuestros mayores amigos, y que no os tiene tan desamparado el cielo que no os podáis prometer mejora de vuestra suerte. Abrid los ojos, digo, y veréis a vuestro amigo Periandro y a vuestra obligada Auristela, tan deseosos de servirlos como siempre.

Contadnos vuestra desgracia y todos vuestros sucesos, y prometeos de nosotros todo cuanto nuestra industria y fuerzas alcanzaren. Decidnos si estáis herido, y quién os hirió y en qué parte, para que luego se procure vuestro remedio.

Abrió en esto los ojos Arnaldo, y, conociendo a los dos que delante tenía, como pudo, que fue con mucho trabajo, se arrojó a los pies de Auristela, puesto que abrazado también a los de Periandro (que hasta en aquel punto guardó el decoro a la honestidad de Auristela), en la cual puestos los ojos, dijo:

-No es posible que no seas tú, señora, la verdadera Auristela, y no imagen suya, porque no tendría ningún espíritu licencia ni ánimo para ocultarse debajo de apariencia tan hermosa. Auristela eres, sin duda, y yo, también sin ella, soy aquel Arnaldo que siempre ha deseado servirte; en tu busca vengo, porque si no es parando en ti, que eres mi centro, no tendrá sosiego el alma mía.

En el tiempo que esto pasaba, ya habían dicho a Croriano y a los demás el hallazgo del otro peregrino, y que daba también señales de estar mal herido. Oyendo lo cual Constanza, habiendo tomado ya la sangre al duque, acudió a ver lo que había menester el segundo herido, y, cuando conoció ser Arnaldo, quedó atónita y confusa, y, supliendo su discreción su sobresalto, sin entrar en otras razones, le dijo le descubriese sus heridas, a lo que Arnaldo respondió con señalarle con la mano derecha el brazo izquierdo, señal de que allí tenía la herida. Desnudóle luego Constanza, y hallósele por la parte superior atravesado de parte a parte; tomóle luego la sangre, que aún corría, y dijo a Periandro cómo el otro herido que allí estaba era el duque de Nemurs; y que convenía llevarlos al pueblo más cercano, donde fuesen curados, porque el mayor peligro que tenían era la falta de la sangre.

Al oír Arnaldo el nombre del duque, se estremeció todo, y dio lugar a que los fríos celos se entrasen hasta el alma por las calientes venas, casi vacías de sangre; y así, dijo, sin mirar lo que decía:

-Alguna diferencia hay de un duque a un rey; pero en el estado del uno ni del otro, ni aun en el de todos los monarcas del mundo, cabe el merecer a Auristela.

Y añadió y dijo:

-No me lleven adonde llevaren al duque, que la presencia de los agraviadores no ayuda nada a las enfermedades de los agraviados.

Dos criados traía consigo Arnaldo, y otros dos el duque, los cuales, por orden de sus señores, los habían dejado allí solos, y ellos se habían adelantado a un lugar allí cercano, para tenerles aderezado alojamiento cada uno de por sí, porque aún no se conocían.

-Miren también -dijo Arnaldo-si en un árbol de estos que están aquí a la redonda, está pendiente un retrato de Auristela, sobre quien ha sido la batalla que entre mí y el duque hemos pasado. Quítese, déseme, porque me cuesta mucha



sangre y de derecho es mío.

Casi esto mismo estaba diciendo el duque a Ruperta y a Croriano y a los demás que con él estaban; pero a todos satisfizo Periandro, diciendo que él le tenía en su poder como en depósito, y que le volvería en mejor coyuntura a cuyo fuese.

-¿Es posible -dijo Arnaldo-que se puede poner en duda la verdad de que el retrato sea mío? ¿No sabe ya el cielo que desde el punto que vi el original le trasladé en mi alma? Pero téngale mi hermano Periandro, que en su poder no tendrán entrada los celos, las iras y las soberbias de sus pretendientes; y llévenme de aquí, que me desmayo.

Luego acomodaron en que pudiesen ir los dos heridos, cuya vertida sangre, más que la profundidad de las heridas, les iba poco a poco quitando la vida; y así, los llevaron al lugar donde sus criados les tenían el mejor alojamiento que pudieron, y hasta entonces no había conocido el duque ser el príncipe Arnaldo su contrario.

## Capítulo tercero del cuarto libro

INVIDIOSAS y corridas estaban las tres damas francesas de ver que en la opinión del duque estaba estimado el retrato de Auristela mucho más que ninguno de los suyos, que el criado que envió a retratarlas, como se ha dicho, les dijo que consigo los traía, entre otras joyas de mucha estima, pero que en el de Auristela idolatraba: razones y desengaño que las lastimó las almas; que nunca las hermosas reciben gusto, sino mortal pesadumbre, de que otras hermosuras iguallen a las suyas, ni aun que se les compare; porque la verdad, que comúnmente se dice, de que toda comparación es odiosa, en la de la belleza viene a ser odiosísima, sin que amistades, parentescos, calidades y grandezas se opongan al rigor desta maldita envidia, que así puede llamarse la que encendía las comparadas hermosuras.

Dijo ansimismo que, viniendo el duque, su señor, desde París, buscando a la peregrina Auristela, enamorado de su retrato, aquella mañana se había sentado al pie de un árbol con el retrato en las manos; así hablaba con el muerto como con el original vivo, y que, estando así, había llegado el otro peregrino tan paso por las espaldas, que pudo bien oír lo que el duque con el retrato hablaba, «sin que yo y otro compañero mío lo pudiésemos estorbar, porque estábamos algo desviados. En fin, corrimos a advertir al duque que le escuchaban; volvió el duque la cabeza y vio al peregrino, el cual, sin hablar palabra, lo primero que hizo fue arremeter al retrato y quitársele de las manos al duque, que, como le cogió de sobresalto, no tuvo lugar de defenderle como él quisiera; y lo que le dijo fue, a lo menos lo que yo pude entender: "Salteador de celestiales prendas, no profanes con tus sacrílegas manos la que en ellas tienes. Deja esa tabla donde está pintada la hermosura del cielo, así porque no la mereces como por ser ella mía". "Eso no -respondió el otro peregrino-, y si desta verdad no puedo darte testigos, remitiré su falta a los filos de mi estoque, que en este bordón traigo oculto. Yo sí que soy el verdadero poseedor desta incomparable belleza, pues en tierras bien remotas de la que ahora estamos la compré con mis tesoros y la adoré con mi alma, y he servido a su original con mi solicitud y con mis trabajos".

»El duque, entonces, volviéndose a nosotros, nos mandó, con imperiosas razones, los dejásemos solos, y que viniésemos a este lugar, donde le esperásemos, sin tener osadía de volver solamente el rostro a mirarles. Lo mismo mandó el otro peregrino a los dos que con él llegaron, que, según parece,

también son sus criados. Con todo esto, hurté algún tanto la obediencia a su mandamiento, y la curiosidad me hizo volver los ojos, y vi que el otro peregrino colgaba el retrato de un árbol, no porque puntualmente lo viese, sino porque lo conjeturé, viendo que luego, desenvainando del bordón que tenía un estoque, o a lo menos una arma que lo parecía, acometió a mi señor, el cual le salió a recibir con otro estoque, que yo sé que en el bordón traía.

»Los criados de entrambos quisimos volver a despartir la contienda, pero yo fui de contrario parecer, diciéndoles que, pues era igual y entre dos solos, sin temor ni sospecha de ser ayudados de nadie, que los dejásemos y siguiésemos nuestro camino, pues en obedecerles no errábamos, y en volver, quizá sí. Ahora sea lo que fuere, pues no sé si el buen consejo o la cobardía nos emperezó los pies y nos ató las manos, o si la lumbre de los estoques, hasta entonces aún no sangrientos, nos cegó los ojos, que no acertábamos a ver el camino que había desde allí al lugar de la pendencia, sino el que había al de éste adonde ahora estamos. Llegamos aquí, hicimos el alojamiento con prisa, y con más animoso discurso volvíamos a ver lo que había hecho la suerte de nuestros dueños. Hallámoslos cual habéis visto, donde si vuestra llegada no los socorriera, bien sin provecho había sido la nuestra.»

Esto dijo el criado, y esto escucharon las damas, y esto sintieron de manera como si fueran amantes verdaderas del duque; y, al mismo instante, se deshizo en la imaginación de cada una la quimera y máquina, si alguna había hecho o levantado, de casarse con el duque; que ninguna cosa quita o borra el amor más presto de la memoria que el desdén en los principios de su nacimiento; que el desdén en los principios del amor tiene la misma fuerza que tiene la hambre en la vida humana: a la hambre y al sueño se rinde la valentía, y al desdén los más gustosos deseos. Verdad es que esto suele ser en los principios, que, después que el amor ha tomado larga y entera posesión del alma, los desdenes y desengaños le sirven de espuelas, para que con más ligereza corra a poner en efeto sus pensamientos.

Curáronse los heridos, y dentro de ocho días estuvieron para ponerse en camino y llegar a Roma, de donde habían venido cirujanos a verlos.

En este tiempo, supo el duque cómo su contrario era príncipe heredero del reino de Dinamarca, y supo ansimismo la intención que tenía de escogerla por esposa. Esta verdad calificó en él sus pensamientos, que eran los mismos que los de Arnaldo. Parecióle que la que era estimada para reina, lo podía ser para duquesa; pero entre estos pensamientos, entre estos discursos y imaginaciones, se mezclaban los celos, de manera que le amargaban el gusto y le turbaban el sosiego. En fin, se llegó el día de su partida, y el duque y Arnaldo, cada uno por su parte, entró en Roma, sin darse a conocer a nadie; y los demás peregrinos de

nuestra compañía, llegando a la vista della, desde un alto montecillo la descubrieron, y, hincados de rodillas, como a cosa sacra, la adoraron, cuando de entre ellos salió una voz de un peregrino, que no conocieron, que, con lágrimas en los ojos, comenzó a decir desta manera:

-¡Oh grande, oh poderosa, oh sacrosanta,  
alma ciudad de Roma! A ti me inclino,

devoto, humilde y nuevo peregrino,  
a quien admira ver belleza tanta.

Tu vista, que a tu fama se adelanta, 5  
al ingenio suspende, aunque divino,  
de aquél que a verte y adorarte vino  
con tierno afecto y con desnuda planta.

La tierra de tu suelo, que contemplo  
con la sangre de mártires mezclada, 10  
es la reliquia universal del suelo.

No hay parte en ti que no sirva de ejemplo  
de santidad, así como trazada  
de la ciudad de Dios al gran modelo.

Cuando acabó de decir este soneto, el peregrino se volvió a los circunstantes, diciendo:

-Habrá pocos años que llegó a esta santa ciudad un poeta español, enemigo mortal de sí mismo y deshonor de su nación, el cual hizo y compuso un soneto en vituperio desta insigne ciudad y de sus ilustres habitantes. Pero la culpa de su lengua pagara su garganta, si le cogieran. Yo, no como poeta, sino como cristiano, casi como en descuento de su cargo, he compuesto el que habéis oído.

Rogóle Periandro que le repitiese, hízolo así, alabáronsele mucho, bajaron del recuesto, pasaron por los prados de Madama, entraron en Roma por la puerta del Pópulo, besando primero una y muchas veces los umbrales y márgenes de la entrada de la ciudad santa, antes de la cual llegaron dos judíos a uno de los criados de Croriano, y le preguntaron si toda aquella escuadra de gente tenía estancia conocida y preparada donde alojarse; si no, que ellos se la darían tal, que pudiesen en ella alojarse príncipes.

-Porque habéis de saber, señor -dijeron-, que nosotros somos judíos: yo me

llamo Zabulón, y mi compañero Abiud; tenemos por oficio adornar casas de todo lo necesario, según y como es la calidad del que quiere habitarlas, y allí llega su adorno donde llega el precio que se quiere pagar por ellas.

A lo que el criado respondió:

-Otro compañero mío desde ayer está en Roma con intención que tenga preparado el alojamiento, conforme a la calidad de mi amo y de todos aquellos que aquí vienen.

-Que me maten -dijo Abiud-, si no es éste el francés que ayer se contentó con la casa de nuestro compañero Manasés, que la tiene aderezada como casa real.

-Vamos, pues, adelante -dijo el criado de Croriano-, que mi compañero debe de estar por aquí esperando a ser nuestra guía, y, cuando la casa que tuviere no fuere tal, nos encomendaremos a la que nos diere el señor Zabulón.

Con esto pasaron adelante, y a la entrada de la ciudad vieron los judíos a Manasés, su compañero, y con él al criado de Croriano, por donde vinieron en conocimiento que la posada que los judíos habían pintado era la rica de Manasés; y así, alegres y contentos, guiaron a nuestros peregrinos, que estaba junto al arco de Portugal.

Apenas entraron las francesas damas en la ciudad, cuando se llevaron tras sí los ojos de casi todo el pueblo, que, por ser día de estación, estaba llena aquella calle de Nuestra Señora del Pópulo de infinita gente; pero la admiración que comenzó a entrar poco a poco en los que a las damas francesas miraban, se acabó de entrar mucho a mucho en los corazones de los que vieron a la sin par Auristela y a la gallarda Constanza, que a su lado iba, bien así como van por iguales paralelos dos lucientes estrellas por el cielo.

Tales iban que dijo un romano que, a lo que se cree, debía de ser poeta:

-Yo apostaré que la diosa Venus, como en los tiempos pasados, vuelve a esta ciudad a ver las reliquias de su querido Eneas. Por Dios, que hace mal el señor gobernador de no mandar que se cubra el rostro desta movable imagen. ¿Quiere, por ventura, que los discretos se admiren, que los tiernos se deshagan y que los necios idolatren?

Con estas alabanzas, tan hipérboles como no necesarias, pasa adelante el gallardo escuadrón; llegó al alojamiento de Manasés, bastante para alojar a un poderoso príncipe y a un mediano ejército.

## Capítulo cuarto del cuarto libro

ESTENDIÓSE aquel mismo día la llegada de las damas francesas por toda la ciudad, con el gallardo escuadrón de los peregrinos; especialmente se divulgó la desigual hermosura de Auristela, encareciéndola, si no como ella era, a lo menos cuanto podían las lenguas de los más discretos ingenios. Al momento se coronó la casa de los nuestros de mucha gente, que los llevaba la curiosidad y el deseo de ver tanta belleza junta, según se había publicado. Llegó esto a tanto extremo, que desde la calle pedían a voces se asomasen a las ventanas las damas y las peregrinas, que, reposando, no querían dejar verse; especialmente clamaban por Auristela, pero no fue posible que se dejase ver ninguna dellas.

Entre la demás gente que llegó a la puerta, llegaron Arnaldo y el duque, con sus hábitos de peregrinos, y, apenas se hubo visto el uno al otro, cuando a entrambos les temblaron las piernas y les palpitaron los pechos. Conociólos Periandro desde la ventana, díjoselo a Croriano, y los dos juntos bajaron a la calle, para estorbar en cuanto pudiesen la desgracia que podían temer de dos tan celosos amantes.

Periandro se pasó con Arnaldo, y Croriano con el duque, y lo que Arnaldo dijo a Periandro fue:

-Uno de los cargos mayores que Auristela me tiene es el sufrimiento que tengo, consintiendo que este caballero francés, que dicen ser el duque de Nemurs, esté como en posesión del retrato de Auristela, que, puesto que está en tu poder, parece que es con voluntad suya, pues yo no le tengo en el mío. Mira, amigo Periandro, esta enfermedad que los amantes llaman celos, que la llaman mejor desesperación rabiosa, entran a la parte con ella la invidia y el menosprecio, y, cuando una vez se apodera del alma enamorada, no hay consideración que la sosiegue, ni remedio que la valga; y, aunque son pequeñas las causas que la engendran, los efectos que hace son tan grandes que por lo menos quitan el seso, y por lo más menos la vida; que mejor es al amante celoso el morir desesperado, que vivir con celos; y el que fuere amante verdadero no ha de tener atrevimiento para pedir celos a la cosa amada; y, puesto que llegue a tanta perfección que no los pida, no puede dejarlos de pedir a sí mismo; digo, a su misma ventura, de la cual es imposible vivir seguro, porque las cosas de mucho precio y valor tienen en continuo temor al que las posee, o al que las ama, de perderlas, y esta es una pasión que no se aparta del alma enamorada, como accidente inseparable. Aconséjote, ¡oh amigo Periandro!, si es que puede dar

consejo quien no le tiene para sí, que consideres que soy rey y que quiero bien, y que por mil experiencias estás satisfecho y enterado de que cumpliré con las obras cuanto con palabras he prometido, de recibir a la sin para Auristela, tu hermana, sin otra dote que la grande que ella tiene en su virtud y hermosura, y que no quiero averiguar la nobleza de su linaje, pues está claro que no había de negar naturaleza los bienes de la fortuna a quien tantos dio de sí misma. Nunca en humildes sujetos, o pocas veces, hace su asiento virtudes grandes, y la belleza del cuerpo muchas veces es indicio de la belleza del alma; y, para reducirme a un término, sólo te digo lo que otras veces te he dicho: que adoro Auristela, ora sea de linaje del cielo, ora de los ínfimos de la tierra; y, pues ya está en Roma, adonde ella ha librado mis esperanzas, sé tú, ¡oh hermano mío!, parte para que me las cumpla, que desde aquí parto mi corona y mi reino contigo, y no permitas que yo muera escarnido deste duque ni menospreciado de la que adoro.

A todas estas razones, ofrecimientos y promesas respondió Periandro diciendo:

-Si mi hermana tuviera culpa en las causas que este duque ha dado a tu enojo, si no la castigara, a lo menos la riñera: que para ella fuera un gran castigo; pero, como sé que no la tiene, no tengo qué responderte. En esto de haber librado tus esperanzas en su venida a esta ciudad, como no sé a dó llegan las que te ha dado, no sé qué responderte. De los ofrecimientos que me haces y me has hecho, estoy tan agradecido como me obliga el ser tú el que los haces, y yo a quien se hacen; porque, con humildad sea dicho, ¡oh valeroso Arnaldo!, quizá esta pobre muceta de peregrino sirve de nube, que, por pequeña que sea, suele quitar los rayos al sol. Y por ahora sosiégate, que ayer llegamos a Roma, y no es posible que en tan breve espacio se hayan fabricado discursos, dado trazas y levantado quimeras que reduzgan nuestras acciones a los felices fines que deseamos. Huye, en cuanto te fuere posible, de encontrarte con el duque, porque un amante desdeñado y flaco de esperanzas suele tomar ocasión del despecho para fabricarlas, aunque sea en daño de lo que bien quiere.

Arnaldo le prometió que así lo haría, y le ofreció prendas y dineros para sustentar la autoridad y el gasto, así el suyo como el de las damas francesas.

Diferente fue la plática que tuvo Croriano con el duque, pues toda se resolvió en que había de cobrar el retrato de Auristela, o había de confesar Arnaldo no tener parte en él; pidió también a Croriano fuese intercesor con Auristela le recibiese por esposo, pues su estado no era inferior al de Arnaldo, ni en la sangre le hacía ventaja ninguna de las más ilustres de Europa; en fin, él se mostró algo arrogante y algo celoso, como quien tan enamorado estaba. Croriano se lo ofreció ansimismo, y quedó darle la respuesta que dijese Auristela, al proponerle la ventura que se le ofrecía de recibirle por esposo.

## Capítulo quinto del cuarto libro

DESTA manera los dos contrarios celosos y amantes, cuyas esperanzas tenían fundadas en el aire, se despidieron, el uno de Periandro y el otro de Croriano, quedando, ante todas cosas, de reprimir sus ímpetus y disimular sus agravios, a lo menos hasta tanto que Auristela se declarase, de la cual cada uno esperaba que había de ser en su favor, pues al ofrecimiento de un reino y al de un estado tan rico como el del duque, bien se podía pensar que había de titubear cualquier firmeza, y mudarse el propósito de escoger otra vida, por ser muy natural el amarse las grandezas y apetecerse la mejoría de los estados; especialmente suele ser este deseo más vivo en las mujeres.

De todo esto estaba bien descuidada Auristela, pues todos sus pensamientos, por entonces, no se extendían a más que de enterarse en las verdades que a la salvación de su alma convenían; que, por haber nacido en partes tan remotas y en tierras adonde la verdadera fe católica no está en el punto tan perfecto como se requiere, tenía necesidad de acrisolarla en su verdadera oficina.

Al apartarse Periandro de Arnaldo, llegó a él un hombre español y le dijo:

-Según traigo las señas, si es que vuesa merced es español, para vuesa merced viene esta carta.

Púsole una en las manos cerrada, cuyo sobreescrito decía: AL ILUSTRE SEÑOR ANTONIO DE VILLASEÑOR, POR OTRO NOMBRE LLAMADO EL BÁRBARO.

Preguntóle Periandro que quién le había dado aquella carta. Respondióle el portador que un español que estaba preso en la cárcel, que llaman Torre de Nona, y por lo menos condenado a ahorcar por homicida, él y otra su amiga, mujer hermosa llamada *la Talaverana*.

Conoció Periandro los nombres y casi adivinó sus culpas, y respondió:

-Esta carta no es para mí, sino para este peregrino que hacia acá viene.

Y fue porque en aquel instante llegó Antonio, a quien Periandro dio la carta, y, apartándose los dos a una parte, la abrió y vio que así decía:

Quien en mal anda, en mal para; de dos pies, aunque el uno esté sano, si el otro está cojo, tal vez cojea; que las malas compañías no pueden enseñar buenas costumbres. La que yo trabé con la Talaverana, que no debiera, me tiene a mí y a ella sentenciados de remate para la horca. El hombre que la sacó de España la halló aquí, en Roma, en mi compañía; recibió pesadumbre dello, asentóle la mano en mi presencia, y yo, que no soy amigo de burlas, ni de recibir agravios,



sino de quitarlos, volví por la moza, y a puros palos maté a su agraviador. Estando en la fuga de esta pendencia, llegó otro peregrino, que por el mismo estilo comenzó a tomarme la medida de las espaldas; dice la moza que conoció que el que me apaleaba era un su marido, de nación polaco, con quien se había casado en Talavera; y, temiéndose que, en acabando conmigo, había de comenzar por ella, porque le tenía agraviado, no hizo más de echar mano a un cuchillo, de dos que traía consigo siempre en la vaina, y, llegándose a él bonitamente, se le clavó por los riñones, haciéndole tales heridas que no tuvieran necesidad de maestro. En efeto, el amigo a palos y el marido a puñaladas, en un instante concluyeron la carrera mortal de su vida.

Prendiéronnos al mismo punto y trajéronnos a esta cárcel, donde quedamos muy contra nuestra voluntad; tomáronnos la confesión; confesamos nuestro delito, porque no le podíamos negar, y con esto ahorramos el tormento, que aquí llaman tortura. Sustancióse el proceso, dándose más prisa a ello de la que quisiéramos; ya está concluso, y nosotros sentenciados a destierro sino que es desta vida para la otra. Digo, señor, que estamos sentenciados a ahorcar, de lo que está tan pesarosa la Talaverana que no lo puede llevar en paciencia, la cual besa a vuesa merced las manos y a mi señora Constanza y del señor Periandro, y a mi señora Auristela, y dice que ella se holgara de estar libre para ir a besárselas a vuestas mercedes a sus casas. Dice también que si la sin par Auristela pone haldas en cinta y quiere tomar a su cargo nuestra libertad, que le será fácil; porque ¿qué pedirá su grande hermosura que no lo alcance, aunque la pida a la dureza misma? Y añade más, y es que si vuestas mercedes no pudieren alcanzar el perdón, a lo menos procuren alcanzar el lugar de la muerte, y que, como ha de ser en Roma, sea en España; porque está informada la moza, que aquí no llevan los ahorcados con la autoridad conveniente, porque van a pie y apenas los ve nadie; y así, apenas hay quien les rece una Avemaría, especialmente si son españoles los que ahorcan; y ella querría, si fuese posible, morir en su tierra y entre los suyos, donde no faltaría algún pariente que de compasión le cerrase los ojos. Yo también digo lo mismo, porque soy amigo de acomodarme a la razón, porque estoy tan mohíno en esta cárcel que, a trueco de escusar la pesadumbre que me dan las chinches en ella, tomaría por buen partido que me sacasen a ahorcar mañana.

Y advierto a vuesa merced, señor mío, que los jueces desta tierra no desdicen nada de los de España: todos son corteses y amigos de dar y recibir cosas justas, y que, cuando no hay parte que solicite la justicia, no dejan de llegarse a la misericordia, la cual, si reina en todos los valerosos pechos de vuestas mercedes, que sí debe de reinar, sujeto hay en nosotros en que se muestre, pues estamos en tierra ajena, presos en la cárcel, comidos de chinches y de otros animales

inmundos, que son muchos por pequeños y enfadan como si fuesen grandes; y, sobre todo, nos tienen ya en cueros y en la quinta esencia de la necesidad solicitadores, procuradores y escribanos, de quien Dios Nuestro Señor nos libre por su infinita bondad. Amén.

Aguardando la respuesta quedamos, con tanto deseo de recibirla buena como le tienen los cigoñinos en la torre, esperando el sustento de sus madres.

Y firmaba: EL DESDICHADO BARTOLOMÉ MANCHEGO.

En extremo dio la carta gusto a los dos que la habían leído, y en extremo les fatigó su aflicción; y luego, diciéndole al que la había llevado dijese al preso que se consolase y tuviese esperanza de su remedio, porque Auristela y todos ellos, con todo aquello que dádivas y promesas pudiesen, le procurarían; y al punto fabricaron las diligencias que habían de hacerse.

La primera fue que Croriano hablase al embajador de Francia, que era su pariente y amigo, para que no se ejecutase la pena tan presto, y diese lugar el tiempo a que le tuviesen los ruegos y las solicitudes; determinó también Antonio de escribir otra carta, en respuesta de la suya, a Bartolomé, con que de nuevo se renovase el gusto que les había dado la suya; pero, comunicando este pensamiento con Auristela y con su hermana Constanza, fueron las dos de parecer que no se la escribiese, porque a los afligidos no se ha de añadir aflicción, y podría ser que tomasen las burlas por veras y se afligiesen con ellas.

Lo que hicieron, dejar todo el cargo de aquella negociación sobre los hombros y diligencia de Croriano, y en las de Ruperta, su esposa, que se lo rogó ahincadamente, y en seis días ya estaban en la calle Bartolomé y la Talaverana: que, adonde interviene el favor y las dádivas, se allanan los riscos y se deshacen las dificultades.

En este tiempo, le tuvo Auristela de informarse de todo aquello que a ella le parecía que le faltaba por saber de la fe católica; a lo menos, de aquello que en su patria escuramente se platicaba. Halló con quien comunicar su deseo por medio de los penitenciaros, con quien hizo su confesión entera, verdadera y llana, y quedó enseñada y satisfecha de todo lo que quiso, porque los tales penitenciaros, en la mejor forma que pudieron, le declararon todos los principales y más convenientes misterios de nuestra fe.

Comenzaron desde la invidia y soberbia de Lucifer, y de su caída con la tercera parte de las estrellas, que cayeron con él en los abismos; caída que dejó vacas y vacías las sillas del cielo, que las perdieron los ángeles malos por su necia culpa. Declaráronle el medio que Dios tuvo para llenar estos asientos, criando al hombre, cuya alma es capaz de la gloria que los ángeles malos perdieron. Discurrieron por la verdad de la creación del hombre y del mundo, y por el misterio sagrado y amoroso de la Encarnación, y, con razones sobre la

razón misma, bosquejaron el profundísimo misterio de la Santísima Trinidad. Contaron cómo convino que la segunda persona de las tres, que es la del Hijo, se hiciese hombre, para que, como hombre, Dios pagase por el hombre, y Dios pudiese pagar como Dios, cuya unión hipostática sólo podía ser bastante para dejar a Dios satisfecho de la culpa infinita cometida, que Dios infinitamente se había de satisfacer, y el hombre, finito por sí, no podía, y Dios, en sí solo, era incapaz de padecer; pero, juntos los dos, llegó el caudal a ser infinito, y así lo fue la paga.

Mostráronle la muerte de Cristo, los trabajos de su vida desde que se mostró en el pesebre hasta que se puso en la cruz. Exageráronle la fuerza y eficacia de los sacramentos, y señalaron con el dedo la segunda tabla de nuestro naufragio, que es la penitencia, sin la cual no hay abrir la senda del cielo, que suele cerrar el pecado. Mostráronle asimismo a Jesucristo, Dios vivo, sentado a la diestra del Padre, estando tan vivo y entero como en el cielo, sacramentado en la tierra, cuya santísima presencia no la puede dividir ni apartar ausencia alguna, porque uno de los mayores atributos de Dios, que todos son iguales, es el estar en todo lugar, por potencia, por esencia y por presencia. Aseguráronle infaliblemente la venida deste Señor a juzgar el mundo sobre las nubes del cielo, y asimismo la estabilidad y firmeza de su Iglesia, contra quien pueden poco las puertas, o por mejor decir, las fuerzas del infierno. Trataron del poder del Sumo Pontífice, visorrey de Dios en la tierra y llavero del cielo. Finalmente, no les quedó por decir cosa que vieron que convenía para darse a entender, y para que Auristela y Periandro los entendiesen.

Estas liciones así alegraron sus almas, que las sacó de sí mismas, y se las llevó a que paseasen los cielos, porque sólo en ellos pusieron sus pensamientos.

## Capítulo sexto del cuarto libro

CON OTROS ojos se miraron de allí adelante Auristela y Periandro, a lo menos con otros ojos miraba Periandro a Auristela, pareciéndole que ya ella había cumplido el voto que la trajo a Roma, y que podía, libre y desembarazadamente, recibirle por esposo.

Pero si medio gentil, amaba Auristela la honestidad, después de catequizada, la adoraba, no porque viese iba contra ella en casarse, sino por no dar indicios de pensamientos blandos, sin que precediesen antes o fuerzas, o ruegos. También estaba mirando si por alguna parte le descubría el cielo alguna luz que le mostrase lo que había de hacer después de casada, porque pensar volver a su tierra lo tenía por temeridad y por disparate, a causa que el hermano de Periandro, que la tenía destinada para ser su esposa, quizá viendo burladas sus esperanzas, tomaría en ella y en su hermano Periandro venganza de su agravio. Estos pensamientos y temores la traían algo flaca y algo pensativa.

Las damas francesas visitaron los templos y anduvieron las estaciones con pompa y majestad, porque Croriano, como se ha dicho, era pariente del embajador de Francia, y no les faltó cosa que para mostrar ilustre decoro fuese necesaria, llevando siempre consigo Auristela y a Constanza, y ninguna vez salían de casa que no las seguía casi la mitad del pueblo de Roma. Y sucedió que, pasando un día por una calle que se llama Bancos, vieron en una pared della un retrato entero, de pies a cabeza, de una mujer que tenía una corona en la cabeza, aunque partida por medio la corona, y a los pies un mundo, sobre el cual estaba puesta, y, apenas la hubieron visto, cuando conocieron ser el rostro de Auristela, tan al vivo dibujado que no les puso en duda de conocerla.

Preguntó Auristela, admirada, cuyo era aquel retrato, y si se vendía acaso. Respondióle el dueño (que, según después se supo, era un famoso pintor) que él vendía aquel retrato, pero no sabía de quién fuese; sólo sabía que otro pintor, su amigo, se le había hecho copiar en Francia, el cual le había dicho ser de una doncella extranjera que en hábitos de peregrina pasaba a Roma.

-¿Qué significa -respondió Auristela-haberla pintado con corona en la cabeza, y los pies sobre aquella esfera, y más, estando la corona partida?

-Eso, señora -dijo el dueño-, son fantasías de pintores, o caprichos, como los llaman; quizá quieren decir que esta doncella merece llevar la corona de hermosura, que ella va hollando en aquel mundo; pero yo quiero decir que dice

que vos, señora, sois su original, y que merecéis corona entera, y no mundo pintado, sino real y verdadero.

-¿Qué pedís por el retrato? -preguntó Constanza.

A lo que respondió el dueño:

-Dos peregrinos están aquí, que el uno dellos me ha ofrecido mil escudos de oro, y el otro dice que no le dejará por ningún dinero. Yo no he concluido la venta, por parecerme que se están burlando, porque la esorbitancia del ofrecimiento me hace estar en duda.

-Pues no lo estéis -replicó Constanza-, que esos dos peregrinos, si son los que yo imagino, bien pueden doblar el precio y pagaros a toda vuestra satisfacción.

Las damas francesas, Ruperta, Croriano y Periandro quedaron atónitos de ver la verdadera imagen del rostro de Auristela en el del retrato. Cayó la gente que el retrato miraba en que parecía al de Auristela, y poco a poco comenzó a salir una voz, que todos y cada uno de por sí afirmaba:

-Este retrato que se vende es el mismo de esta peregrina que va en este coche; ¿para qué queremos ver al traslado, sino al original?

Y así, comenzaron a rodear el coche, que los caballos no podían ir adelante ni volver atrás, por lo cual dijo Periandro:

-Auristela, hermana, cúbrase el rostro con algún velo, porque tanta luz ciega, y no nos deja ver por dónde caminamos.

Hízolo así Auristela, y pasaron adelante; pero no por esto dejó de seguirlos mucha gente, que esperaban a que se quitase el velo, para verla como deseaban. Apenas se hubo quitado de allí el coche, cuando se llegó al dueño del retrato Arnaldo en sus hábitos de peregrino y dijo:

-Yo soy el que os ofrecí los mil escudos por este retrato. Si le queréis dar, traedle, y venidos conmigo, que yo os los daré luego de oro en oro.

A lo que otro peregrino, que era el duque de Nemurs, dijo:

-No reparéis, hermano, en precio, sino veníos conmigo y proponed en vuestra imaginación el que quisiéredes, que yo os le daré luego de contado.

-Señores -respondió el pintor-, concertaos los dos en cuál le ha de llevar, que yo no me desconcertaré en el precio, puesto que pienso que antes me habéis de pagar con el deseo que con la obra.

A estas pláticas estaba atenta mucha gente, esperando en qué había de parar aquella compra: porque ver ofrecer millaradas de ducados, a dos, al parecer, pobres peregrinos, parecíales cosa de burla.

En esto, dijo el dueño:

-El que le quisiere, déme señal, y guíe, que yo ya le descuelgo para llevárselo.

Oyendo lo cual, Arnaldo puso la mano en el seno, y sacó una cadena de oro, con una joya de diamantes que de ella pendía, y dijo:

-Tomad esta cadena, que, con esta joya, vale más de dos mil escudos, y traedme el retrato.

-Esta vale diez mil -dijo el duque, dándole una de diamantes al dueño del retrato-, y traédmele a mi casa.

-¡Santo Dios! -dijo uno de los circunstantes-, ¿qué retrato puede ser éste, qué hombres éstos y qué joyas éstas? Cosa de encantamento parece aquesta; por eso os aviso, hermano pintor, que deis un toque a la cadena y hagáis experiencia de la fineza de las piedras, antes que deis vuestra hacienda: que podría ser que la cadena y las joyas fuesen falsas, porque el encarecimiento que de su valor han hecho, bien se puede sospechar.

Enojáronse los príncipes; pero, por no echar más en la calle sus pensamientos, consintieron en que el dueño del retrato se enterase en la verdad del valor de las joyas.

Andaba revuelta toda la gente de Bancos: unos admirando el retrato, otros preguntando quién fuesen los peregrinos, otros mirando las joyas, y todos atentos, esperando en quién había de quedar con el retrato, porque les parecía que estaban de parecer los dos peregrinos de no dejarle por ningún precio; diérale el dueño por mucho menos de lo que le ofrecían, si se le dejaran vender libremente. Pasó en esto por Bancos el gobernador de Roma, oyó el murmurio de la gente, preguntó la causa, vio el retrato, y vio las joyas; y, pareciéndole ser prendas de más que de ordinarios peregrinos, esperando descubrir algún secreto, las hizo depositar y llevar el retrato a su casa, y prender a los peregrinos. Quedóse el pintor confuso, viendo menoscabadas sus esperanzas, y su hacienda en poder de la justicia, donde jamás entró alguna, que si saliese, fuese con aquel lustre con que había entrado. Acudió el pintor a buscar a Periandro, y a contarle todo el suceso de la venta y del temor que tenía no se quedase el gobernador con el retrato, el cual, de un pintor que le había retratado en Portugal de su original, le había él comprado en Francia, cosa que le pareció a Periandro posible, por haber sacado otros muchos en el tiempo que Auristela estuvo en Lisboa. Con todo eso, le ofreció por él cien escudos, con que quedase a su riesgo el cobrar. Contentóse el pintor, y, aunque fue tan grande la baja de ciento a mil, le tuvo por bien vendido y mejor pagado.

Aquella tarde, juntándose con otros españoles peregrinos, fue a andar las siete iglesias, entre los cuales peregrinos acertó a encontrarse con el poeta que dijo el soneto al descubrirse Roma; conociéronse, y abrazáronse, y preguntáronse de sus vidas y sucesos. El poeta peregrino le dijo que el día antes le había sucedido una cosa digna de contarse por admirable; y fue que, habiendo tenido noticia de que un monseñor clérigo de la cámara, curioso y rico, tenía un museo el más extraordinario que había en el mundo, porque no tenía figuras de personas que

efectivamente hubiesen sido ni entonces lo fuesen, sino unas tablas preparadas para pintarse en ellas los personajes ilustres que estaban por venir, especialmente los que habían de ser en los venideros siglos poetas famosos, entre las cuales tablas había visto dos, que en el principio de ellas estaba escrito en la una TORCUATO TASSO, y más abajo un poco decía *Jerusalén libertada*; en la otra estaba escrito ZÁRATE, y más abajo *Cruz y Constantino*.

Preguntéle al que me las enseñaba qué significaban aquellos nombres. Respondióme que se esperaba que presto se había de descubrir en la tierra la luz de un poeta que se había de llamar Torcuato Tasso, el cual había de cantar Jerusalén recuperada, con el más heroico y agradable plectro que hasta entonces ningún poeta hubiese cantado, y que casi luego le había de suceder un español, llamado Francisco López Duarte, cuya voz había de llenar las cuatro partes de la tierra, y cuya armonía había de suspender los corazones de las gentes, contando la invención de la Cruz de Cristo, con las guerras del emperador Constantino: poema verdaderamente heroico y religioso, y digno del nombre de poema.

A lo que replicó Periandro:

-Duro se me hace de creer que de tan atrás se tome el cargo de aderezar las tablas donde se hayan de pintar los que están por venir, que en efeto en esta ciudad, cabeza del mundo, están otras maravillas de mayor admiración. Y ¿habrá otras tablas aderezadas para más poetas venideros? -preguntó Periandro.

-Sí -respondió el peregrino-, pero no quise detenerme a leer los títulos, contentándome con los dos primeros; pero así a bulto miré tantos, que me doy a entender que la edad, cuando éstos vengan, que, según me dijo el que me guiaba, no puede tardar, ha de ser grandísima la cosecha de todo género de poetas. Encamínelo Dios como él fuere más servido.

-Por lo menos -respondió Periandro-, el año que es abundante de poesía suele serlo de hambre; porque dámele poeta, y dártele he pobre, si ya la naturaleza no se adelanta a hacer milagros; y síguese la consecuencia: hay muchos poetas, luego hay muchos pobres; hay muchos pobres, luego caro es el año.

En esto iban hablando el peregrino y Periandro, cuando llegó a ellos Zabulón el judío, y dijo a Periandro que aquella tarde le quería llevar a ver a Hipólita la Ferraresa, que era una de las más hermosas mujeres de Roma, y aun de toda Italia. Respondióle Periandro que iría de muy buena gana, lo cual no le respondiera si, como le informó de la hermosura, le informara de la calidad de su persona; porque la alteza de la honestidad de Periandro no se abalanzaba ni abatía a cosas bajas, por hermosas que fuesen: que en esto la naturaleza había hecho iguales y formado en una misma turquesa a él y a Auristela, de la cual se recató para ir a ver a Hipólita, a quien el judío le llevó más por engaño que por voluntad; que tal vez la curiosidad hace tropezar y caer de ojos al más honesto

recato.



## Capítulo séptimo del cuarto libro

CON LA BUENA crianza, con los ricos ornamentos de la persona y con los aderezos y pompa de la casa se cubren muchas faltas; porque no es posible que la buena crianza ofenda, ni el rico ornato enfade, ni el aderezo de la casa no contente.

Todo esto tenía Hipólita, dama cortesana, que en riquezas podía competir con la antigua Flora, y en cortesía, con la misma buena crianza. No era posible que fuese estimada en poco de quien la conocía, porque con la hermosura encantaba, con la riqueza se hacía estimar y con la cortesía, si así se puede decir, se hacía adorar. Cuando el amor se viste de estas tres calidades, rompe los corazones de bronce, abre las bolsas de hierro y rinde las voluntades de mármol; y más si a estas tres cosas se les añade el engaño y la lisonja, atributos convenientes para las que quieren mostrar a la luz del mundo sus donaires. ¿Hay, por ventura, entendimiento tan agudo en el mundo que, estando mirando una de estas hermosas que pinto, dejando a una parte las de su belleza, se ponga a discurrir las de su humilde trato? La hermosura en parte ciega y en parte alumbraba: tras la que ciega corre el gusto, tras la que alumbraba el pensar en la enmienda.

Ninguna de estas cosas consideró Periandro al entrar en casa de Hipólita. Pero, como tal vez sobre descuidados cimientos suele levantar amor sus máquinas, ésta sin pensamiento alguno se fabricó, no sobre la voluntad de Periandro, sino en la de Hipólita; que, con estas damas que suelen llamar del vicio, no es menester trabajar mucho para dar con ellas donde se arrepientan sin arrepentirse.

Ya había visto Hipólita a Periandro en la calle, y ya le había hecho movimientos en el alma su bizarría, su gentileza, y, sobre todo, el pensar que era español, de cuya condición se prometía dádivas imposibles y concertados gustos; y estos pensamientos los había comunicado con Zabulón, y rogándole se lo trajese a casa, la cual tenía tan aderezada, tan limpia y tan compuesta, que más parecía que esperaba ser tálamo de bodas que acogimiento de peregrinos.

Tenía la señora Hipólita -que con este nombre la llamaban en Roma, como si lo fuera- un amigo llamado Pirro Calabrés, hombre acuchillador, impaciente, facinoroso, cuya hacienda libraba en los filos de su espada, en la agilidad de sus manos y en los engaños de Hipólita, que muchas veces con ellos alcanzaba lo que quería, sin rendirse a nadie; pero en lo que más Pirro aumentaba su vida, era en la diligencia de sus pies, que lo estimaba en más que las manos y de lo que él

más se preciaba era de traer siempre asombrada a Hipólita en cualquiera condición que se le mostrase, ora fuese amorosa, ora fuese áspera; que nunca les falta a estas palomas duendas milanos que las persigan, ni pájaros que las despedacen: ¡miserable trato de esta mundana y simple gente!

Digo, pues, que este caballero, que no tenía de serlo más que el nombre, se halló en casa de Hipólita, al tiempo que entraron en ella el judío y Periandro. Apartóle aparte Hipólita y díjole:

-Vete con Dios, amigo, y llévate esta cadena de oro de camino, que este peregrino me envió con Zabulón esta mañana.

-Mira lo que haces, Hipólita -respondió Pirro-, que, a lo que se me trasluce, este peregrino es español, y soltar él de su mano, sin haber tocado la tuya, esta cadena, que debe de valer cien escudos, gran cosa me parece, y mil temores me sobresaltan.

-Llévate tú, ¡oh Pirro!, la cadena, y déjame a mí el cargo de sustentarla y de no volverla, a pesar de todas sus españolerías.

Tomó la cadena, que le dio Hipólita, Pirro, que para el efeto la había hecho comprar aquella mañana, y, sellándole la boca con ella, más que de paso le hizo salir de casa.

Luego Hipólita, libre y desembarazada de su corma, suelta de sus grillos, se llegó a Periandro, y, sin desenfado y con donaire, lo primero que hizo fue echarle los brazos al cuello, diciéndole:

-En verdad que tengo de ver si son tan valientes los españoles como tienen la fama.

Cuando Periandro vio aquella desenvoltura, creyó que toda la casa se le había caído a cuestras; y, poniéndole la mano delante el pecho a Hipólita, la detuvo y la apartó de sí, y le dijo:

-Estos hábitos que visto, señora Hipólita, no permiten ser profanados, o a lo menos yo no lo permitiré en ninguna manera; y los peregrinos, aunque sean españoles, no están obligados a ser valientes cuando no les importa; pero mirad vos, señora, en qué queréis que muestre mi valor, sin que a los dos perjudique, y seréis obedecida sin replicaros en nada.

-Paréceme -respondió Hipólita-, señor peregrino, que ansí lo sois en el alma como en el cuerpo; pero, pues, según decís que haréis lo que os dijere, como a ninguno de los dos perjudique, entraos conmigo en esta cuadra, que os quiero enseñar una lonja y un camarín mío.

A lo que respondió Periandro:

-Aunque soy español, soy algún tanto medroso, y más os temo a vos sola que a un ejército de enemigos. Haced que nos haga otro la guía y llevadme do quisiéredes.

Llamó Hipólita a dos doncellas suyas y a Zabulón el judío, que a todo se halló presente, y mandólas que guiasen a la lonja.

Abrieron la sala, y a lo que después Periandro dijo, estaba la más bien aderezada que pudiese tener algún príncipe rico y curioso en el mundo. Parrasio, Polignoto, Apeles, Ceuxis y Timantes tenían allí lo perfecto de sus pinceles, comprado con los tesoros de Hipólita, acompañados de los del devoto Rafael de Urbino y de los del divino Micael Angelo: riquezas donde las de un gran príncipe deben y pueden mostrarse. Los edificios reales, los alcázares soberbios, los templos magníficos y las pinturas valientes son propias y verdaderas señales de la magnanimidad y riqueza de los príncipes, prendas, en efeto, contra quien el tiempo apresura sus alas y apresta su carrera, como a émulas suyas, que a su despecho están mostrando la magnificencia de los pasados siglos.

¡Oh Hipólita, sólo buena por esto! Si entre tantos retratos que tienes, tuvieras uno de tu buen trato, y dejaras en el suyo a Periandro, que, asombrado, atónito y confuso andaba mirando en qué había de parar la abundancia que en la lonja veía en una limpísima mesa, que de cabo a cabo la tomaba la música que de diversos géneros de pájaros en riquísimas jaulas estaban, haciendo una confusa, pero agradable armonía.

En fin, a él le pareció que todo cuanto había oído decir de los Huertos Hespérides, de los de la maga Falerina, de los Pensiles famosos, ni de todos los otros que por fama fuesen conocidos en el mundo, no llegaban al adorno de aquella sala y de aquella lonja. Pero, como él andaba con el corazón sobresaltado, que bien haya su honestidad, que se le aprensaba entre dos tablas, no se le mostraban las cosas como ellas eran; antes, cansado de ver cosas de tanto deleite, y enfadado de ver que todas ellas se encaminaban contra su gusto, dando de mano a la cortesía, probó a salirse de la lonja, y se saliera si Hipólita no se lo estorbara, de manera que le fue forzoso mostrar con las manos ásperas palabras algo descorteses. Trabó de la esclavina de Periandro, y, abriéndole el jubón, le descubrió la cruz de diamantes que de tantos peligros hasta allí había escapado, y así deslumbró la vista a Hipólita como el entendimiento, la cual, viendo que se le iba, a despecho de su blanda fuerza, dio en un pensamiento, que si le supiera revalidar y apoyar algún tanto mejor, no le fuera bien dello a Periandro; el cual, dejando la esclavina en poder de la nueva egipcia, sin sombrero, sin bordón, sin ceñidor ni esclavina, se puso en la calle: que el vencimiento de tales batallas consiste más en el huir que en el esperar. Púsose ella asimismo a la ventana, y a grandes voces comenzó a apellidar la gente de la calle, diciendo:

-¡Ténganme a ese ladrón, que, entrando en mi casa como humano, me ha

robado una prenda divina que vale una ciudad!

Acertaron a estar en la calle dos de la guarda del Pontífice, que dicen pueden prender en fragante, y, como la voz era de ladrón, facilitaron su dudosa potestad y prendieron a Periandro; echáronle mano al pecho, y, quitándole la cruz, le santiguaron con poca decencia: paga que da la justicia a los nuevos delincuentes, aunque no se les averigüe el delito.

Viéndose, pues, Periandro puesto en cruz, sin su cruz, dijo a los tudescos, en su misma lengua, que él no era ladrón, sino persona principal, y que aquella cruz era suya, y que viesen que su riqueza no la podía hacer de Hipólita, y que les rogaba le llevasen ante el gobernador, que él esperaba con brevedad averiguar la verdad de aquel caso. Ofrecióles dineros, y con esto y con habelles hablado en su lengua, con que se reconcilian los ánimos que no se conocen, los tudescos no hicieron caso de Hipólita; y así, llevaron a Periandro delante del gobernador, viendo lo cual Hipólita, se quitó de la ventana, y, casi arañándose el rostro, dijo a sus criadas:

-¡Ay, hermanas, y qué necia he andado! A quien pensaba regalar, he lastimado; a quien pensaba servir, he ofendido; preso va por ladrón el que lo ha sido de mi alma; ¡mirad qué caricias, mirad qué halagos son hacer prender al libre y disfamar al honrado!

Y luego les contó cómo llevaban preso al peregrino dos de la guarda del Papa. Mandó asimismo que la aderezasen luego el coche, que quería ir en su seguimiento y disculpalle, porque no podía sufrir su corazón verse herir en las mismas niñas de sus ojos, y que antes quería parecer testimoñera que cruel; que de la crueldad no tendría disculpa, y del testimonio sí, echando la culpa al amor, que por mil disparates descubre y manifiesta sus deseos, y hace mal a quien bien quiere.

Cuando ella llegó en casa del gobernador, le halló con la cruz en las manos, examinando a Periandro sobre el caso; el cual, como vio a Hipólita, dijo al gobernador:

-Esta señora que aquí viene ha dicho que esa cruz que vuesa merced tiene yo se la he robado, y yo diré que es verdad, cuando ella dijere de qué es la cruz, qué valor tiene y cuántos diamantes la componen; porque si no es que se lo dicen los ángeles o alguno otro espíritu que lo sepa, ella no lo puede saber, porque no la ha visto sino en mi pecho, y una vez sola.

-¿Qué dice la señora Hipólita a esto? -dijo el gobernador.

Y esto cubriendo la cruz, porque no tomase las señas della.

La cual respondió:

-Con decir que estoy enamorada, ciega y loca, quedará este peregrino disculpado y yo esperando la pena que el señor gobernador quisiere darme por

mi amoroso delito.

Y le contó punto por punto lo que con Periandro le había pasado, de lo que se admiró el gobernador, antes del atrevimiento que del amor de Hipólita: que de semejantes sujetos son propios los lascivos disparates. Afeóle el caso, pidió a Periandro la perdonase, dióle por libre, y volvióle la cruz, sin que en aquella causa se escribiese letra alguna, que no fue ventura poca.

Quisiera saber el gobernador quién eran los peregrinos que habían dado las joyas en prendas del retrato de Auristela, y asimismo quién era él y quién Auristela.

A lo que respondió Periandro:

-El retrato es de Auristela, mi hermana; los peregrinos pueden tener joyas mucho más ricas; esta cruz es mía; y, cuando me dé el tiempo lugar, y la necesidad me fuerce, diré quién soy; que el decirlo agora no está en mi voluntad, sino en la de mi hermana. El retrato que vuesa merced tiene ya se lo tengo comprado al pintor por precio conveniente, sin que en la compra hayan intervenido pujas, que se fundan más en rancor y en fantasía que en razón.

El gobernador dijo que él se quería quedar con él por el tanto, por añadir con él a Roma cosa que aventajase a las de los más excelentes pintores que la hacían famosa.

-Yo se le doy a vuesa merced -respondió Periandro-, por parecerme que, en darle tal dueño, le doy la honra posible.

Agradecióselo el gobernador, y aquel día dio por libres a Arnaldo y a el duque, y les volvió sus joyas, y él se quedó con el retrato, porque estaba puesto en razón que se había de quedar con algo.

## Capítulo octavo del cuarto libro

MÁS CONFUSA que arrepentida volvió Hipólita a su casa; pensativa además y además enamorada: que, aunque es verdad que en los principios de los amores los desdenes suelen ser parte para acabarlos, los que usó con ella Periandro le avivaron más los deseos. Parecíale a ella que no había de ser tan de bronce un peregrino que no se ablandase con los regalos que pensaba hacerle; pero, hablando consigo, se dijo a sí misma:

-Si este peregrino fuera pobre, no trujera consigo cruz tan rica, cuyos muchos y ricos diamantes sirven de claro sobrescrito de su riqueza: de modo que la fuerza desta roca no se ha de tomar por hambre; otros ardides y mañas son menester para rendirla. ¿No sería posible que este mozo tuviese en otra parte ocupada el alma? ¿No sería posible que esta Auristela no fuese su hermana? ¿No sería posible que las finezas de los desdenes que usa conmigo los quisiese asentar y poner en cargo a Auristela? ¡Válame Dios, que me parece que en este punto he hallado el de mi remedio! ¡Alto! ¡Muera Auristela! Descúbrase este encantamento; a lo menos, veamos el sentimiento que este montaraz corazón hace; pongamos siquiera en plática este disignio; enferme Auristela; quitemos su sol delante de los ojos de Periandro; veamos si, faltando la hermosura, causa primera de adonde el amor nace, falta también el mismo amor: que podría ser que, dando yo lo que a éste le quitare, quitándole a Auristela, viniese a reducirse a tener más blandos pensamientos; por lo menos, probarlo tengo, ateniéndome a lo que se dice: que no daña el tentar las cosas que descubren algún rastro de provecho.

Con estos pensamientos algo consolada, llegó a su casa, donde halló a Zabulón, con quien comunicó todo su disignio, confiada en que tenía una mujer de la mayor fama de hechicera que había en Roma, pidiéndole, habiendo antes precedido dádivas y promesas, hiciese con ella, no que mudase la voluntad de Periandro, pues sabía que esto era imposible, sino que enfermase la salud de Auristela; y, con limitado término, si fuese menester, le quitase la vida. Esto dijo Zabulón ser cosa fácil al poder y sabiduría de su mujer. Recibió no sé cuánto por primera paga, y prometió que desde otro día comenzaría la quiebra de la salud de Auristela.

No solamente Hipólita satisfizo a Zabulón, sino amenazóle asimismo; y a un judío dádivas o amenazas le hacen prometer y aun hacer imposibles.

Periandro contó a Croriano, Ruperta, a Auristela y a las tres damas francesas,

a Antonio y a Constanza su prisión, los amores de Hipólita y la dádiva que había hecho del retrato de Auristela al gobernador.

No le contentó nada a Auristela los amores de la cortesana, porque ya había oído decir que era una de las más hermosas mujeres de Roma, de las más libres, de las más ricas y más discretas, y las musarañas de los celos, aunque no sea más de una, y sea más pequeña que un mosquito, el miedo la representa en el pensamiento de un amante mayor que el monte Olimpo; y cuando la honestidad ata la lengua de modo que no puede quejarse, da tormento al alma con las ligaduras del silencio, de modo que a cada paso anda buscando salidas para dejar la vida del cuerpo. Según otra vez se ha dicho, ningún otro remedio tienen los celos que oír disculpas; y, cuando éstas no se admiten, no hay que hacer caso de la vida, la cual perdiera Auristela mil veces, antes que formar una queja de la fee de Periandro.

Aquella noche fue la primera vez que Bartolomé y la Talaverana fueron a visitar a sus señores, no libres, aunque ya lo estaban de la cárcel, sino atados con más duros grillos, que eran los del matrimonio, pues se habían casado; que la muerte del polaco puso en libertad a Luisa, y a él le trujo su destino a venir peregrino a Roma. Antes de llegar a su patria halló en Roma a quien no traía intención de buscar, acordándose de los consejos que en España le había dado Periandro, pero no pudo estorbar su destino, aunque no le fabricó por su voluntad.

Aquella noche, asimismo, visitó Arnaldo a todas aquellas señoras, y dio cuenta de algunas cosas que en el volver a buscarles, después que apaciguó la guerra de su patria, le habían sucedido. Contó cómo llegó a la isla de las Ermitas, donde no había hallado a Rutilio, sino a otro ermitaño en su lugar, que le dijo que Rutilio estaba en Roma; dijo, asimismo, que había tocado en la isla de los pescadores, y hallado en ella libres, sanas y contentas a las desposadas y a los demás que con Periandro, según ellos dijeron, se habían embarcado; contó cómo supo de oídas que Policarpa era muerta, y Sinforosa no había querido casarse; dijo cómo se tornaba a poblar la Isla Bárbara, confirmándose sus moradores en la creencia de su falsa profecía; advirtió cómo Mauricio y Ladislao, su yerno, con su hija Transila, habían dejado su patria y pasádose a vivir más pacíficamente a Inglaterra; dijo también cómo había estado con Leopoldio, rey de los dáneos, después de acabada la guerra, el cual se había casado por dar sucesión a su reino, y que había perdonado a los dos traidores que llevaba presos cuando Periandro y sus pescadores le encontraron, de quien mostró estar muy agradecido, por el buen término y cortesía que con él tuvieron; y, entre los nombres que le era forzoso nombrar en su discurso, tal vez tocaba con el de los padres de Periandro, y tal con los de Auristela, con que les sobresaltaba los

corazones y les traía a la memoria así grandezas como desgracias.

Dijo que en Portugal, especialmente en Lisboa, eran en suma estimación tenidos sus retratos; contó asimismo la fama que dejaban en Francia, en todo aquel camino, la hermosura de Constanza y de aquellas señoras damas francesas; dijo cómo Croriano había granjeado opinión de generoso y de discreto en haber escogido a la sin par Ruperta por esposa; dijo, asimismo, cómo en Luca se hablaba mucho en la sagacidad de Isabela Castrucho, y en los breves amores de Andrea Marulo, a quien con el demonio fingido trujo el cielo a vivir vida de ángeles; contó cómo se tenía por milagro la caída de Periandro, y cómo dejaba en el camino a un mancebo peregrino, poeta, que no quiso adelantarse con él, por venirse despacio, componiendo una comedia de los sucesos de Periandro y Auristela, que los sabía de memoria por un lienzo que había visto en Portugal, donde se habían pintado, y que traía intención firmísima de casarse con Auristela, si ella quisiese.

Agradecióle Auristela su buen propósito, y aun desde allí le ofreció darle para un vestido, si acaso llegase roto: que un deseo de un buen poeta toda buena paga merece.

Dijo también que había estado en casa de la señora Constanza y Antonio, y que sus padres y abuelos estaban buenos y sólo fatigados de la pena que tenían de no saber de la salud de sus hijos, deseando volviese la señora Constanza a ser esposa del conde, su cuñado, que quería seguir la discreta elección de su hermano, o ya por no dar los veinte mil ducados, o ya por el merecimiento de Constanza, que era lo más cierto, de que no poco se alegraron todos, especialmente Periandro y Auristela, que como a sus hermanos los querían.

Desta plática de Arnaldo, se engendraron en los pechos de los oyentes nuevas sospechas de que Periandro y Auristela debían de ser grandes personajes, porque, de tratar de casamientos de condes y de millaradas de ducados, no podían nacer sino sospechas illustres y grandes.

Contó también cómo había encontrado en Francia a Renato, el caballero francés vencido en la batalla contra derecho, y libre y vitorioso por la conciencia de su enemigo. En efeto, pocas cosas quedaron de las muchas que en el galán progreso desta historia se han contado, en quien él se hubiese hallado, pues que allí no las volviese a traer a la memoria, trayendo también la que tenía de quedarse con el retrato de Auristela, que tenía Periandro contra la voluntad del duque y contra la suya, puesto que dijo que, por no dar enojo a Periandro, disimularía su agravio.

-Ya le hubiera yo deshecho -respondió Periandro-, volviendo, señor Arnaldo, el retrato, si entendiera fuera vuestro. La ventura y su diligencia se le dieron al duque; vos se le quitastes por fuerza; y así, no tenéis de qué quejaros. Los



amantes están obligados a no juzgar sus causas por la medida de sus deseos, que tal vez no los han de satisfacer, por acomodarse con la razón, que otra cosa les manda; pero yo haré de manera que, no quedando vos, señor Arnaldo, contento, el duque quede satisfecho, y será con que mi hermana Auristela se quede con el retrato, pues es más suyo que de otro alguno.

Satisfízole a Arnaldo el parecer de Periandro, y ni más ni menos a Auristela. Con esto cesó la plática; y otro día por la mañana comenzaron a obrar en Auristela los hechizos, los venenos, los encantos y las malicias de la Iulia, mujer de Zabulón.

## Capítulo nono del cuarto libro

NO SE ATREVIÓ la enfermedad a acometer rostro a rostro a la belleza de Auristela, temerosa no espantase tanto la hermosura la fealdad suya; y así, la acometió por las espaldas, dándole en ellas unos calosfríos, al amanecer, que no la dejaron levantar aquel día; luego luego, se le quitó la gana de comer, y comenzó la viveza de sus ojos a amortiguarse, y el desmayo, que con el tiempo suele llegar a los enfermos, sembró en un punto por todos los sentidos de Auristela, haciendo el mismo efeto en los de Periandro, que luego se alborotaron y temieron todos los males posibles, especialmente lo que temen los poco venturosos.

No había dos horas que estaba enferma, y ya se le parecían cárdenas las encarnadas rosas de sus mejillas, verde el carmín de sus labios, y topacios las perlas de sus dientes; hasta los cabellos le pareció que habían mudado color, estrecháronse las manos, y casi mudado el asiento y encaje natural de su rostro. Y no por esto le parecía menos hermosa, porque no la miraba en el lecho que yacía, sino en el alma, donde la tenía retratada. Llegaban a sus oídos, a lo menos llegaron de allí a dos días, sus palabras, entre débiles acentos formadas, y pronunciadas con turbada lengua. Asustáronse las señoras francesas, y el cuidado de atender a la salud de Auristela fue de tal modo que tuvieron necesidad de tenerle de sí mismas.

Llamáronse médicos, escogiéronse los mejores, a lo menos los de mejor fama; que la buena opinión califica la acertada medicina, y así suele haber médicos venturosos como soldados bien afortunados; la buena suerte y la buena dicha, que todo es uno, también puede llegar a la puerta del miserable en un saco de sayal como en un escaparate de plata. Pero ni en plata ni en lana no llegaba ninguna a las puertas de Auristela, de lo que discretamente se desesperaban los dos hermanos Antonio y Constanza.

Esto era al revés en el duque, que, como el amor que tenía en el pecho se había engendrado de la hermosura de Auristela, así como la tal hermosura iba faltando en ella, iba en él faltando el amor, el cual muchas raíces ha de haber echado en el alma, para tener fuerzas de llegar hasta el margen de la sepultura con la cosa amada. Feísima es la muerte, y quien más a ella se llega es la dolencia; y amar las cosas feas parece cosa sobrenatural y digna de tenerse por milagro.

Auristela, en fin, iba enflaqueciendo por momentos, y quitando las esperanzas

de su salud a cuantos la conocían. Sólo Periandro era el solo, sólo el firme, sólo el enamorado, sólo aquel que con intrépido pecho se oponía a la contraria fortuna y a la misma muerte, que en la de Auristela le amenazaba.

Quince días esperó el duque de Nemurs, a ver si Auristela mejoraba, y en todos ellos no hubo ninguno que a los médicos no consultase de la salud de Auristela, y ninguno se la aseguró, porque no sabían la causa precisa de su dolencia; viendo lo cual el duque y que las damas francesas no hacían dél caso alguno, viendo también que el ángel de luz de Auristela se había vuelto el de tinieblas, fingiendo algunas causas que, si no del todo, en parte le disculpaban, un día, llegándose a Auristela en el lecho donde enferma estaba, delante de Periandro, le dijo:

-Pues la ventura me ha sido tan contraria, hermosa señora, que no me ha dejado conseguir el deseo que tenía de recebirte por mi legítima esposa, antes que la desesperación me traiga a términos de perder el alma, como me ha traído en los de perder la vida, quiero por otro camino probar mi ventura, porque sé cierto que no tengo de tener ninguna buena, aunque la procure; y así, sucediéndome el mal que no procuro, vendré a perderme y a morir desdichado, y no desesperado. Mi madre me llama; tiéneme prevenida esposa; obedecerla quiero, y entretener el tiempo del camino tanto que halle la muerte lugar de acometerme, pues ha de hallar en mi alma las memorias de tu hermosura y de tu enfermedad, y quiera Dios que no diga las de tu muerte.

Dieron sus ojos muestra de algunas lágrimas. No pudo responderle Auristela, o no quiso, por no errar en la respuesta delante de Periandro. Lo más que hizo fue poner la mano debajo de su almohada, y sacar su retrato y volvérselo al duque, el cual le besó las manos por tan gran merced; pero, alargando la suya Periandro, se le tomó, y le dijo:

-Si dello no disgustas, ¡oh gran señor!, por lo que bien quieres, te suplico me le prestes, porque yo pueda cumplir una palabra que tengo dada, que, sin ser en perjuicio tuyo, será grandemente en el mío si no lo cumplo.

Volviósele el duque, con grandes ofrecimientos de poner por él la hacienda, la vida y la honra, y más, si más pudiese, y desde allí se dividió de los dos hermanos, con pensamiento de no verlos más en Roma. Discreto amante, y el primero quizá que haya sabido aprovecharse de las guedejas que la ocasión le ofrecía.

Todas estas cosas pudieran despertar a Arnaldo, para que considerara cuán menoscabadas estaban sus esperanzas, y cuán a pique de acabar con toda la máquina de sus peregrinaciones, pues, como se ha dicho, la muerte casi había pisado las ropas a Auristela, y estuvo muy determinado de acompañar al duque, si no en su camino, a lo menos en su propósito, volviéndose a Dinamarca; mas el

amor, y su generoso pecho, no dieron lugar a que dejase a Periandro sin consuelo y a su hermana Auristela en los postreros límites de la vida, a quien visitó, y de nuevo hizo ofrecimientos, con determinación de aguardar a que el tiempo mejorase los sucesos, a pesar de todas las sospechas que le sobrevenían.

## Capítulo diez del cuarto libro

CONTENTÍSIMA estaba Hipólita de ver que las artes de la cruel Julia tan en daño de la salud de Auristela se mostraban, porque en ocho días la pusieron tan otra de lo que ser solía, que ya no la conocían sino por el órgano de la voz; cosa que tenía suspensos a los médicos y admirados a cuantos la conocían. Las señoras francesas atendían a su salud con tanto cuidado como si fueran sus queridas hermanas, especialmente Feliz Flora, que con particular afición la quería.

Llegó a tanto el mal de Auristela que, no conteniéndose en los términos de su jurisdicción, pasó a la de sus vecinos, y, como ninguno lo era tanto como Periandro, el primero con quien encontró fue con él, no porque el veneno y maleficios de la perversa judía obrasen en él derechamente, y con particular asistencia, como en Auristela, para quien estaban hechos, sino porque la pena que él sentía de la enfermedad de Auristela era tanta, que causaba en él el mismo efeto que en Auristela, y así se iba enflaqueciendo, que comenzaron todos a dudar de la vida suya como de la de Auristela.

Viendo lo cual Hipólita, y que ella misma se mataba con los filos de su espada, adivinando con el dedo de dónde procedía el mal de Periandro, procuró darle remedio, dándosele a Auristela, la cual, ya flaca, ya descolorida, parecía que estaba llamando su vida a las aldabas de las puertas de la muerte; y, creyendo sin duda, que por momentos la abrirían, quiso abrir y preparar la salida a su alma por la carrera de los sacramentos, bien como ya instruida en la verdad católica; y así, haciendo las diligencias necesarias, con la mayor devoción que pudo, dio muestras de sus buenos pensamientos, acreditó la integridad de sus costumbres, dio señales de haber aprendido bien lo que en Roma la habían enseñado, y, resignándose en las manos de Dios, sosegó su espíritu y puso en olvido reinos, regalos y grandezas.

Hipólita, pues, habiendo visto, como está ya dicho, que muriéndose Auristela moría también Periandro, acudió a la judía a pedirle que templase el rigor de los hechizos que consumían a Auristela, o los quitase del todo: que no quería ella ser inventora de quitar con un golpe solo tres vidas, pues muriendo Auristela, moría Periandro, y, muriendo Periandro, ella también quedaría sin vida. Hízolo así la judía, como si estuviera en su mano la salud o la enfermedad ajena, o como si no dependieran todos los males que llaman de pena de la voluntad de Dios, como no dependen los males de culpa; pero Dios, obligándole, si así se puede decir,

por nuestros mismos pecados, para castigo dellos, permite que pueda quitar la salud ajena esta que llaman hechicería, con que lo hacen las hechiceras; sin duda ha él permitido, usando mezclas y venenos, que con tiempo limitado quitan la vida a la persona que quieren, sin que tenga remedio de escusar este peligro, porque le ignora, y no se sabe de dónde procede la causa de tan mortal efeto; así que, para guarecer destos males, la gran misericordia de Dios ha de ser la maestra, la que ha de aplicar la medicina.

Comenzó, pues, Auristela a dejar de empeorar, que fue señal de su mejoría; comenzó el sol de su belleza a dar señales y vislumbres de que volvía a amanecer en el cielo de su rostro; volvieron a despuntar las rosas en sus mejillas y la alegría en sus ojos; ajuntáronse las sombras de su melancolía; volvió a enterarse el órgano suave de su voz; afinóse el carmín de sus labios; compitió con el marfil la blancura de sus dientes, que volvieron a ser perlas, como antes lo eran; en fin, en poco espacio de tiempo volvió a ser toda hermosa, toda bellísima, toda agradable y toda contenta, y estos mismos efetos redundaron en Periandro, y en las damas francesas y en los demás: Croriano y Ruperta, Antonio y su hermana Constanza, cuya alegría o tristeza caminaba al paso de la de Auristela, la cual, dando gracias al cielo por la merced y regalos que le iba haciendo, así en la enfermedad como en la salud, un día llamó a Periandro, y, estando solos por cuidado y de industria, desta manera le dijo:

-Hermano mío, pues ha querido el cielo que con este nombre tan dulce y tan honesto ha dos años que te he nombrado, sin dar licencia al gusto o al descuido para que de otra suerte te llamase, que tan honesta y tan agradable no fuese, querría que esta felicidad pasase adelante, y que solos los términos de la vida la pusiesen término: que tanto es una ventura buena cuanto es duradera, y tanto es duradera cuanto es honesta. Nuestras almas, como tú bien sabes, y como aquí me han enseñado, siempre están en continuo movimiento y no pueden parar sino en Dios, como en su centro. En esta vida los deseos son infinitos, y unos se encadenan de otros, y se eslabonan, y van formando una cadena que tal vez llega al cielo, y tal se sume en el infierno. Si te pareciere, hermano, que este lenguaje no es mío, y que va fuera de la enseñanza que me han podido enseñar mis pocos años y mi remota crianza, advierte que en la tabla rasa de mi alma ha pintado la experiencia y escrito mayores cosas; principalmente ha puesto que en sólo conocer y ver a Dios está la suma gloria, y todos los medios que para este fin se encaminan son los buenos, son los santos, son los agradables, como son los de la caridad, de la honestidad y el de la virginidad. Yo, a lo menos, así lo entiendo, y, juntamente con entenderlo así, entiendo que el amor que me tienes es tan grande que querrás lo que yo quisiere. Heredera soy de un reino, y ya tú sabes la causa por que mi querida madre me envió en casa de los reyes tus padres, por

asegurarme de la grande guerra de que se temía; desta venida se causó el de venirme yo contigo, tan sujeta a tu voluntad, que no he salido della un punto; tú has sido mi padre, tú mi hermano, tú mi sombra, tú mi amparo y, finalmente, tú mi ángel de guarda, y tú mi enseñador y mi maestro, pues me has traído a esta ciudad, donde he llegado a ser cristiana como debo. Querría agora, si fuese posible, irme al cielo, sin rodeos, sin sobresaltos y sin cuidados, y esto no podrá ser si tú no me dejas la parte que yo misma te he dado, que es la palabra y la voluntad de ser tu esposa. Déjame, señor, la palabra, que yo procuraré dejar la voluntad, aunque sea por fuerza: que, para alcanzar tan gran bien como es el cielo, todo cuanto hay en la tierra se ha de dejar, hasta los padres y los esposos. Yo no te quiero dejar por otro; por quien te dejo es por Dios, que te dará a sí mismo, cuya recompensa infinitamente excede a que me dejes por él. Una hermana tengo pequeña, pero tan hermosa como yo, si es que se puede llamar hermosa la mortal belleza; con ella te podrás casar, y alcanzar el reino que a mí me toca, y con esto, haciendo felices mis deseos, no quedarán defraudados del todo los tuyos. ¿Qué inclinas la cabeza, hermano? ¿A qué pones los ojos en el suelo? ¿Desagradante estas razones? ¿Parécete descaminados mis deseos? Dímelo, respóndeme; por lo menos, sepa yo tu voluntad; quizá templaré la mía, y buscaré alguna salida a tu gusto, que en algo con el mío se conforme.

Con grandísimo silencio estuvo escuchando Periandro a Auristela, y en un breve instante formó en su imaginación millares de discursos, que todos venieron a parar en el peor que para él pudiera ser, porque imaginó que Auristela le aborrecía, porque aquel mudar de vida no era sino porque a él se le acabara la suya, pues bien debía saber que, en dejando ella de ser su esposa, él no tenía para qué vivir en el mundo; y fue y vino con esta imaginación con tanto ahínco que, sin responder palabra a Auristela, se levantó de donde estaba sentado, y, con ocasión de salir a recibir a Feliz Flora y a la señora Constanza, que entraban en el aposento, se salió dél y dejó a Auristela, no sé si diga arrepentida, pero sé que quedó pensativa y confusa.

## Capítulo once del cuarto libro

LAS AGUAS en estrecho vaso encerradas, mientras más priesa se dan a salir, más despacio se derraman, porque las primeras, impelidas de las segundas, se detienen, y unas o otras se niegan el paso, hasta que hace camino la corriente y se desagua.

Lo mismo acontece en las razones que concibe el entendimiento de un lastimado amante, que, acudiendo tal vez todas juntas a la lengua, las unas a las otras impiden, y no sabe el discurso con cuáles se dé primero a entender su imaginación; y así, muchas veces, callando, dice más de lo que querría.

Mostróse esto en la poca cortesía que hizo Periandro a los que entraron a ver a Auristela, el cual lleno de discursos, preñado de conceptos, colmado de imaginaciones, desdeñado y desengañado, se salió del aposento de Auristela, sin saber, ni querer, ni poder responder palabra alguna a las muchas que ella le había dicho. Llegaron a ella Antonio y su hermana, y halláronla como persona que acaba de despertar de un pesado sueño, y que entre sí estaba diciendo con palabras distintas y claras:

-Mal hecho; pero, ¿qué importa? ¿No es mejor que mi hermano sepa mi intención? ¿No es mejor que yo deje con tiempo los caminos torcidos y las dudosas sendas, y tienda el paso por los atajos llanos, que con distinción clara nos están mostrando el felice paradero de nuestra jornada? Yo confieso que la compañía de Periandro no me ha de estorbar de ir al cielo; pero también siento que iré más presto sin ella; sí, que más me debo yo a mí que no a otro, y al interese del cielo y de gloria se ha de posponer los del parentesco, cuanto más, que yo no tengo ninguno con Periandro.

-Advierte -dijo a esta sazón Constanza-, hermana Auristela, que vas descubriendo cosas que podrían ser parte que, desterrando nuestras sospechas, a ti te dejasen confusa. Si no es tu hermano Periandro, mucha es la conversación que con él tienes; y si lo es, no hay para qué te escandalices de su compañía.

Acabó a esta sazón de volver en sí Auristela, y, oyendo lo que Constanza le decía, quiso enmendar su descuido; pero no acertó, pues para soldar una mentira, por muchas se atropellan, y siempre queda la verdad en duda, aunque más viva la sospecha.

-No sé, hermana -dijo Auristela-, lo que me he dicho, ni sé si Periandro es mi hermano o si no; lo que te sabré decir es que es mi alma, por lo menos: por él vivo, por él respiro, por él me muevo y por él me sustento, conteniéndome, con



todo esto, en los términos de la razón, sin dar lugar a ningún vario pensamiento, ni a no guardar todo honesto decoro, bien así como le debe guardar una mujer principal a un tan principal hermano.

-No te entiendo, señora Auristela -la dijo a esta sazón Antonio-, pues de tus razones tanto alcanzo ser tu hermano Periandro, como si no lo fuese. Dinos ya quién es y quién eres, si es que puedes decillo; que agora sea tu hermano o no lo sea, por lo menos no podéis negar ser principales, y en nosotros, digo en mí y en mi hermana Constanza, no está tan en niñez la experiencia que nos admire ningún caso que nos contares; que, puesto que ayer salimos de la Isla Bárbara, los trabajos que has visto que hemos pasado han sido nuestros maestros en muchas cosas, y, por pequeña muestra que se nos dé, sacamos el hilo de los más arduos negocios, especialmente en los que son de amores, que parece que los tales consigo mismo traen la declaración. ¿Qué mucho que Periandro no sea tu hermano, y qué mucho que tú seas su legítima esposa? ¿Y qué mucho, otra vez, que con honesto y casto decoro os hayáis mostrado hasta aquí limpios al cielo y honestísimos a los ojos de los que os han visto? No todos los amores son precipitados ni atrevidos, ni todos los amantes han puesto la mira de su gusto en gozar a sus amadas, sino con las potencias de su alma; y, siendo esto así, señora mía, otra vez te suplico nos digas quién eres y quién es Periandro, el cual, según le vi salir de aquí, él lleva un volcán en los ojos y una mordaza en la lengua.

-¡Ay, desdichada -replicó Auristela-, y cuán mejor me hubiera sido que me hubiera entregado al silencio eterno, pues, callando, escusara la mordaza que dices que lleva en su lengua! Indiscretas somos las mujeres, mal sufridas y peor calladas; mientras callé, en sosiego estuvo mi alma; hablé, y perdí; y, para acabarle de perder, y para que juntamente se acabe la tragedia de mi vida, quiero que sepáis vosotros, pues el cielo os hizo verdaderos hermanos, que no lo es mío Periandro, ni menos es mi esposo ni mi amante; a lo menos, de aquéllos que, corriendo por la carrera de su gusto, procuran parar sobre la honra de sus amadas. Hijo de rey es; hija y heredera de un reino soy; por la sangre somos iguales; por el estado, alguna ventaja le hago; por la voluntad, ninguna; y, con todo esto, nuestras intenciones se responden, y nuestros deseos, con honestísimo efeto, se están mirando; sola la ventura es la que turba y confunde nuestras intenciones, y la que por fuerza hace que esperemos en ella. Y, porque el nudo que lleva a la garganta Periandro me aprieta la mía, no os quiero decir más por agora, señores, sino suplicaros me ayudéis a buscallo, que, pues él tuvo licencia para irse sin la mía, no querrá volver sin ser buscado.

-Levanta, pues -dijo Constanza-, y vamos a buscallo, que los lazos con que amor liga a los amantes, no los deja alejar de lo que bien quieren. Ven, que presto le hallaremos, presto le verás y más presto llegarás a tu contento. Si

quieres tener un poco los escrúpulos que te rodean, dales de mano y dala de esposa a Periandro; que, igualándole contigo, pondrás silencio a cualquiera murmuración.

Levantóse Auristela, y, en compañía de Feliz Flora, Constanza y Antonio, salieron a buscar a Periandro; y, como ya en la opinión de los tres era reina, con otros ojos la miraban, y con otro respeto la servían.

Periandro, en tanto que era buscado, procuraba alejarse de quien le buscaba; salió de Roma a pie, y solo, si ya no se tiene por compañía la soledad amarga, los suspiros tristes y los continuos sollozos: que éstos y las varias imaginaciones no le dejaban un punto.

-¡Ay! -iba diciendo entre sí-, hermosísima Sigismunda, reina por naturaleza, bellísima por privilegio y por merced de la misma naturaleza, discreta sobremodo, y sobremanera agradable, y ¡cuán poco te costaba, oh señora, el tenerme por hermano, pues mis tratos y pensamientos jamás desmintieran la verdad de serlo, aunque la misma malicia lo quisiera averiguar, aunque en sus trazas se desvelara! Si quieres que te lleven al cielo sola y señora, sin que tus acciones dependan de otro que de Dios y de ti misma, sea en buen hora; pero quisiera que advirtieras que no sin escrúpulo de pecado puedes ponerte en el camino que deseas. Sin ser mi homicida, dejaras, ¡oh señora!, a cargo del silencio y del engaño tus pensamientos, y no me los declararas a tiempo que habías de arrancar con las raíces de mi amor mi alma, la cual, por ser tan tuya, te dejo a toda tu voluntad, y de la mía me destierro; quédate en paz, bien mío, y conoce que el mayor que te puedo hacer es dejarte.

Llegóse la noche en esto, y, apartándose un poco del camino, que era el de Nápoles, oyó el sonido de un arroyo que por entre unos árboles corría, a la margen del cual, arrojándose de golpe en el suelo, puso en silencio la lengua, pero no dio treguas a sus suspiros.

## Capítulo doce del cuarto libro

*Donde se dice quién eran Periandro y Auristela*

PARECE que el bien y el mal distan tan poco el uno del otro, que son como dos líneas concurrentes, que, aunque parten de apartados y diferentes principios, acaban en un punto.

Sollozando estaba Periandro, en compañía del manso arroyuelo y de la clara luz de la noche; hacíanle los árboles compañía, y un aire blando y fresco le enjugaba las lágrimas; llevábale la imaginación Auristela, y la esperanza de tener remedio de sus males el viento, cuando llegó a sus oídos una voz extranjera que, escuchándola con atención, vio que era en lenguaje de su patria, sin poder distinguir si murmuraba o si cantaba; y la curiosidad le llevó cerca, y, cuando lo estuvo, oyó que eran dos personas las que no cantaban ni murmuraban, sino que en plática corriente estaban razonando; pero lo que más le admiró fue que hablasen en lengua de Noruega, estando tan apartados della; acomodóse detrás de un árbol de tal forma que él y el árbol hacían una misma sombra, recogió el aliento, y la primera razón que llegó a sus oídos fue:

-No tienes, señor, para qué persuadirme de que en dos mitades se parte el día entero de Noruega, porque yo he estado en ella algún tiempo, donde me llevaron mis desgracias, y sé que la mitad del año se lleva la noche y la otra mitad el día. El que sea esto así, yo lo sé; el porqué sea así, ignoro.

A lo que respondió:

-Si llegamos a Roma, con una esfera te haré tocar con la mano la causa dese maravilloso efeto, tan natural en aquel clima como lo es en éste ser el día y la noche de venticuatro horas. «También te he dicho cómo en la última parte de Noruega, casi debajo del polo Ártico, está la isla que se tiene por última en el mundo, a lo menos por aquella parte, cuyo nombre es Tile, a quien Virgilio llamó Tule en aquellos versos que dicen, en el libro I, *Georg.*:

...Ac tua nautae

numina sola colant: tibi serviat ultima Thule;

que *Tule*, en griego, es lo mismo que *Tile* en latín. Esta isla es tan grande, o poco menos, que Inglaterra, rica y abundante de todas las cosas necesarias para

la vida humana. Más adelante, debajo del mismo norte, como trecientas leguas de Tile, está la isla llamada Frislanda, que habrá cuatrocientos años que se descubrió a los ojos de las gentes, tan grande que tiene nombre de reino, y no pequeño. De Tile es rey y señor Magsimino, hijo de la reina Eustoquia, cuyo padre no ha muchos meses que pasó desta a mejor vida, el cual dejó dos hijos, que el uno es el Magsimino que te he dicho, que es el heredero del reino, y el otro, un generoso mozo llamado Persiles, rico de los bienes de la naturaleza sobre todo extremo, y querido de su madre sobre todo encarecimiento; y no sé yo con cuál poderte encarecer las virtudes deste Persiles, y así, quédense en su punto, que no será bien que con mi corto ingenio las menoscabe; que, puesto que el amor que le tengo, por haber sido su ayo y criádole desde niño, me pudiera llevar a decir mucho, todavía será mejor callar, por no quedar corto.»

Esto escuchaba Periandro, y luego cayó en la cuenta que el que le alababa no podía ser otro que Seráfido, un ayo suyo, y que, asimismo, el que le escuchaba era Rutilio, según la voz y las palabras que de cuando en cuando respondía. Si se admiró o no, a la buena consideración lo dejó; y más cuando Seráfido, que era el mismo que había imaginado Periandro, oyó que dijo:

-«Eusebia, reina de Frislanda, tenía dos hijas de estremada hermosura, principalmente la mayor, llamada Sigismunda (que la menor llamábase Eusebia, como su madre), donde naturaleza cifró toda la hermosura que por todas las partes de la tierra tiene repartida, a la cual, no sé yo con qué disignio, tomando ocasión de que la querían hacer guerra ciertos enemigos suyos, la envió a Tile en poder de Eustoquia, para que seguramente, y sin los sobresaltos de la guerra, en su casa se criase, puesto que yo para mí tengo que no fue esta la ocasión principal de envialla, sino para que el príncipe Magsimino se enamorase della y la recibiese por su esposa: que de las estremadas bellezas se puede esperar que vuelvan en cera los corazones de mármol, y junten en uno los extremos que entre sí están más apartados.

»A lo menos, si esta mi sospecha no es verdadera, no me la podrá averiguar la experiencia, porque sé que el príncipe Magsimino muere por Sigismunda, la cual, a la sazón que llegó a Tile, no estaba en la isla Magsimino, a quien su madre la reina envió el retrato de la doncella y la embajada de su madre, y él respondió que la regalasen y la guardasen para su esposa. Respuesta que sirvió de flecha que atravesó las entrañas de mi hijo Persiles, que este nombre le adquirió la crianza que en él hice. Desde que la oyó no supo oír cosas de su gusto, perdió los bríos de su juventud, y, finalmente, encerró en el honesto silencio todas las acciones que le hacían memorable y bien querido de todos, y sobre todo vino a perder la salud y a entregarse en los brazos de la desesperación de ella.

»Visitáronle médicos; como no sabían la causa de su mal, no acertaban con su remedio: que, como no muestran los pulsos el dolor de las almas, es dificultoso y casi imposible entender la enfermedad que en ellas asiste. La madre, viendo morir a su hijo, sin saber quién le mataba, una y muy muchas veces le preguntó le descubriese su dolencia, pues no era posible sino que él supiese la causa, pues sentía los efetos. Tanto pudieron estas persuasiones, tanto las solicitudes de la doliente madre, que, vencida la pertinacia o la firmeza de Persiles, le vino a decir cómo él moría por Sigismunda, y que tenía determinado de dejarse morir antes que ir contra el decoro que a su hermano se le debía, cuya declaración resucitó en la reina su muerta alegría, y dio esperanzas a Persiles de remediarle, si bien se atropellase el gusto de Magsimino, pues, por conservar la vida, mayores respetos se han de posponer que el enojo de un hermano.

»Finalmente, Eustoquia habló a Sigismunda, encareciéndole lo que se perdía en perder la vida Persiles, sujeto donde todas las gracias del mundo tenían su asiento, bien al revés del de Magsimino, a quien la aspereza de sus costumbres en algún modo le hacían aborrecible. Levantóle en esto algo más testimonios de los que debiera, y subió de punto, con los hipérboles que pudo, las bondades de Persiles.

»Sigismunda, muchacha, sola y persuadida, lo que respondió fue que ella no tenía voluntad alguna, ni tenía otra consejera que la aconsejase, sino a su misma honestidad; que, como ésta se guardase, dispusiesen a su voluntad della. Abrazóla la reina, contó su respuesta a Persiles, y entre los dos concertaron que se ausentasen de la isla antes que su hermano viniese, a quien darían por disculpa, cuando no la hallase, que había hecho voto de venir a Roma, a enterarse en ella de la fe católica, que en aquellas partes setentrionales andaba algo de quiebra, jurándole primero Persiles que en ninguna manera iría en dicho ni en hecho contra su honestidad. Y así, colmándoles de joyas y de consejos, los despidió la reina, la cual después me contó todo lo que hasta aquí te he contado.

»Dos años, poco más, tardó en venir el príncipe Magsimino a su reino, que anduvo ocupado en la guerra que siempre tenía con sus enemigos; preguntó por Sigismunda, y el no hallarla fue hallar su desasosiego. Supo su viaje, y al momento se partió en su busca, si bien confiado de la bondad de su hermano, temeroso pero de los recelos, que por maravilla se apartan de los amantes.

»Como su madre supo su determinación, me llamó aparte, y me encargó la salud, la vida y la honra de su hijo, y me mandó me adelantase a buscarle y a darle noticia de que su hermano le buscaba. Partióse el príncipe Magsimino en dos gruesísimas naves, y, entrando por el estrecho hercúleo, con diferentes tiempos y diversas borrascas, llegó a la isla de Tinacria, y desde allí a la gran ciudad de Parténope, y agora queda no lejos de aquí, en un lugar llamado

Terrachina, último de los de Nápoles y primero de los de Roma; queda enfermo, porque le ha cogido esto que llaman mutación, que le tiene a punto de muerte. Yo, desde Lisboa, donde me desembarqué, traigo noticia de Persiles y Sigismunda, porque no pueden ser otros una peregrina y un peregrino, de quien la fama viene pregonando tan grande estruendo de hermosura, que si no son Persiles y Sigismunda, deben de ser ángeles humanados.»

-Si como los nombras -respondió el que escuchaba a Seráfido-Persiles y Sigismunda, los nombraras Periandro y Auristela, pudiera darte nueva certísima dellos, porque ha muchos días que los conozco, en cuya compañía he pasado muchos trabajos.

Y luego le comenzó a contar los de la Isla Bárbara, con otros algunos, en tanto que se venía el día y en tanto que Periandro, porque allí no le hallasen, los dejó solos y volvió a buscar a Auristela, para contar la venida de su hermano, y tomar consejo de lo que debían de hacer para huir de su indignación, teniendo a milagro haber sido informado en tan remoto lugar de aquel caso. Y así, lleno de nuevos pensamientos, volvió a los ojos de su contrita Auristela, ya las esperanzas casi perdidas de alcanzar su deseo.

## Capítulo trece del cuarto libro

ENTRETIÉNESE el dolor y el sentimiento de las recién dadas heridas en la cólera y en la sangre caliente, que, después de fría, fatiga de manera que rinde la paciencia del que las sufre. Lo mismo acontece en las pasiones del alma: que, en dando el tiempo lugar y espacio para considerar en ellas, fatigan hasta quitar la vida.

Dijo su voluntad Auristela a Periandro, cumplió con su deseo, y, satisfecha de haberle declarado, esperaba su cumplimiento, confiada en la rendida voluntad de Periandro, el cual, como se ha dicho, librando la respuesta en su silencio, se salió de Roma, y le sucedió lo que se ha contado. Conoció a Rutilio, el cual contó a su ayo Seráfido toda la historia de la Isla Bárbara, con las sospechas que tenía de que Auristela y Periandro fuesen Sigismunda y Persiles; díjole asimismo que, sin duda, los hallarían en Roma, a quien, desde que los conoció, venían encaminados con la disimulación y cubierta de ser hermanos; preguntó muchísimas veces a Seráfido la condición de las gentes de aquellas islas remotas, de donde era rey Magsimino y reina la sin par Auristela.

Volvióle a repetir Seráfido cómo la isla de Tile o Tule, que agora vulgarmente se llama Islanda, era la última de aquellos mares setentrionales, puesto que «un poco más adelante está otra isla, como te he dicho, llamada Frislanda, que descubrió Nicolás Zeno, veneciano, el año de mil y treientos y ochenta, tan grande como Sicilia, ignorada hasta entonces de los antiguos, de quien es reina Eusebia, madre de Sigismunda, que yo busco. Hay otra isla, asimismo poderosa y casi siempre llena de nieve, que se llama Groenlanda, a una punta de la cual está fundado un monasterio debajo del título de Santo Tomás, en el cual hay religiosos de cuatro naciones: españoles, franceses, toscanos y latinos; enseñan sus lenguas a la gente principal de la isla, para que, en saliendo della, sean entendidos por doquiera que fueren. Está, como he dicho, la isla sepultada en nieve, y encima de una montañuela está una fuente, cosa maravillosa y digna de que se sepa, la cual derrama y vierte de sí tanta abundancia de agua, y tan caliente, que llega al mar, y, por muy gran espacio dentro dél, no solamente le desniega, pero le calienta de modo que se recogen en aquella parte increíble infinidad de diversos pescados, de cuya pesca se mantiene el monasterio y toda la isla, que de allí saca sus rentas y provechos. Esta fuente engendra asimismo unas piedras conglutinadas, de las cuales se hace un betún pegajoso, con el cual se fabrican las casas como si fuesen de duro mármol. Otras cosas te pudiera

decir -dijo Seráfido a Rutilio-destas islas, que ponen en duda su crédito, pero en efeto son verdaderas».

Todo esto, que no oyó Periandro, lo contó después Rutilio, que, ayudado de la noticia que dellas Periandro tenía, muchos las pusieron en el verdadero punto que merecían. Llegó en esto el día, y hallóse Periandro junto a la iglesia y templo, magnífico y casi el mayor de la Europa, de San Pablo, y vio venir hacia sí alguna gente en montón, a caballo y a pie; y, llegando cerca, conoció que los que venían eran Auristela, Feliz Flora, Constanza y Antonio, su hermano, y asimismo Hipólita, que, habiendo sabido la ausencia de Periandro, no quiso dejar a que otra llevase las albricias de su hallazgo, y así, siguió los pasos de Auristela, encaminados por la noticia que dellos dio la mujer de Zabulón el judío, bien como aquella que tenía amistad con quien no la tiene con nadie.

Llegó en fin Periandro al hermoso escuadrón, saludó a Auristela, notóle el semblante del rostro, y halló más mansa su riguridad y más blandos sus ojos. Contó luego públicamente lo que aquella noche le había pasado con Seráfido, su ayo, y con Rutilio; dijo cómo su hermano el príncipe Magsimino quedaba en Terrachina, enfermo de la mutación, y con propósito de venirse a curar a Roma, y con autoridad disfrazada y nombre trocado a buscarlos; pidió consejo a Auristela y a los demás de lo que haría, porque de la condición de su hermano el príncipe no podía esperar ningún blando acogimiento.

Pasmóse Auristela con las no esperadas nuevas; desaparecieron en un punto, así las esperanzas de guardar su integridad y buen propósito, como de alcanzar por más llano camino la compañía de su querido Periandro.

Todos los demás circunstantes discurrieron en su imaginación qué consejo darían a Periandro, y la primera que salió con el suyo, aunque no se le pidieron, fue la rica y enamorada Hipólita, que le ofreció de llevarle a Nápoles con su hermana Auristela, y gastar con ellos cien mil y más ducados que su hacienda valía. Oyó este ofrecimiento Pirro el Calabrés, que allí estaba, que fue lo mismo que oír la sentencia irremisible de su muerte: que en los rufianes no engendra celos el desdén, sino el interés; y, como éste se perdía con los cuidados de Hipólita, por momentos iba tomando la desesperación posesión de su alma, en la cual iba atesorando odio mortal contra Periandro, cuya gentileza y gallardía, aunque era tan grande, como se ha dicho, a él le parecía mucho mayor, porque es propia condición del celoso parecerle magníficas y grandes las acciones de sus rivales.

Agradeció Periandro a Hipólita, pero no admitió su generoso ofrecimiento. Los demás no tuvieron lugar de aconsejarle nada, porque llegaron en aquel instante Rutilio y Seráfido, y entrambos a dos, apenas hubieron visto a Periandro, cuando corrieron a echarse a sus pies, porque la mudanza del hábito



no le pudo mudar la de su gentileza. Teníale abrazado Rutilio por la cintura y Seráfido por el cuello; lloraba Rutilio de placer y Seráfido de alegría.

Todos los circunstantes estaban atentos mirando el extraño y gozoso recibimiento. Sólo en el corazón de Pirro andaba la melancolía, atenaceándole con tenazas más ardiendo que si fueran de fuego; y llegó a tanto extremo el dolor que sintió de ver engrandecido y honrado a Periandro que, sin mirar lo que hacía, o quizá mirándolo muy bien, metió mano a su espada, y por entre los brazos de Seráfido se la metió a Periandro por el hombro derecho, con tal furia y fuerza que le salió la punta por el izquierdo, atravesándole, poco menos que al soslayo, de parte a parte.

La primera que vio el golpe fue Hipólita, y la primera que gritó fue su voz, diciendo:

-¡Ay, traidor, enemigo mortal mío, y cómo has quitado la vida a quien no merecía perderla para siempre!

Abrió los brazos Seráfido, soltóle Rutilio, calientes ya en su derramada sangre, y cayó Periandro en los de Auristela, la cual, faltándole la voz a la garganta, el aliento a los suspiros y las lágrimas a los ojos, se le cayó la cabeza sobre el pecho y los brazos a una y a otra parte.

Este golpe, más mortal en la apariencia que en el efeto, suspendió los ánimos de los circunstantes y les robó la color de los rostros, dibujándoles la muerte en ellos, que ya, por la falta de la sangre, a más andar se entraba por la vida de Periandro, cuya falta amenazaba a todos el último fin de sus días; a lo menos, Auristela la tenía entre los dientes, y la quería escupir de los labios.

Seráfido y Antonio arremetieron a Pirro, y, a despecho de su fiereza y fuerzas, le asieron y, con gente que se llegó, le enviaron a la prisión; y el gobernador, de allí a cuatro días, le mandó llevar a la horca por incorregible y asasino, cuya muerte dio la vida a Hipólita, que vivió desde allí adelante.

## Capítulo catorce del cuarto libro

ES TAN POCA la seguridad con que se gozan los humanos gozos, que nadie se puede prometer en ellos un mínimo punto de firmeza.

Auristela, arrepentida de haber declarado su pensamiento a Periandro, volvió a buscarle alegre, por pensar que en su mano y en su arrepentimiento estaba el volver a la parte que quisiese la voluntad de Periandro, porque se imaginaba ser ella el clavo de la rueda de su fortuna y la esfera del movimiento de sus deseos. Y no estaba engañada, pues ya los traía Periandro en disposición de no salir de los de Auristela.

Pero, ¡mirad los engaños de la variable fortuna! Auristela, en tan pequeño instante como se ha visto, se vee otra de lo que antes era: pensaba reír, y está llorando; pensaba vivir, y ya se muere; creía gozar de la vista de Periandro, y ofrécese a los ojos la del príncipe Magsimino, su hermano, que, con muchos coches y grande acompañamiento, entraba en Roma por aquel camino de Terrachina, y, llevándole la vista el escuadrón de gente que rodeaba al herido Periandro, llegó su coche a verlo, y salió a recibirle Seráfido, diciéndole:

-¡Oh príncipe Magsimino, y qué malas albricias espero de las nuevas que pienso darte! Este herido que ves en los brazos desta hermosa doncella, es tu hermano Persiles, y ella es la sin par Sigismunda, hallada de tu diligencia a tiempo tan áspero, y en sazón tan rigurosa, que te han quitado la ocasión de regalarlos y te han puesto en la de llevarlos a la sepultura.

-No irán solos -respondió Magsimino-, que yo les haré compañía, según vengo.

Y, sacando la cabeza fuera del coche, conoció a su hermano, aunque tinto y lleno de la sangre de la herida; conoció asimismo a Sigismunda por entre la perdida color de su rostro, porque el sobresalto, que le turbó sus colores, no le afeó sus facciones: hermosa era Sigismunda antes de su desgracia, pero hermosísima estaba después de haber caído en ella; que tal vez los accidentes del dolor suelen acrecentar la belleza.

Dejóse caer del coche sobre los brazos de Sigismunda, ya no Auristela, sino la reina de Frislanda, y, en su imaginación, también reina de Tile; que estas mudanzas tan estrañas caen debajo del poder de aquella que comúnmente es llamada Fortuna, que no es otra cosa sino un firme disponer del cielo.

Habíase partido Magsimino con intención de llegar a Roma a curarse con

mejores médicos que los de Terrachina, los cuales le pronosticaron que antes que en Roma entrase le había de saltar la muerte (en esto más verdaderos y experimentados que en saber curarle). Verdad es que el mal que causa la mutación, pocos le saben curar.

En efeto, frontero del templo de San Pablo, en mitad de la campaña rasa, la fea muerte salió al encuentro al gallardo Persiles y le derribó en tierra, y enterró a Magsimino, el cual, viéndose a punto de muerte, con la mano derecha asió la izquierda de su hermano y se la llegó a los ojos, y con su izquierda le asió de la derecha y se la juntó con la de Sigismunda, y con voz turbada y aliento mortal y cansado dijo:

-De vuestra honestidad, verdaderos hijos y hermanos míos, creo que entre vosotros está por saber esto. Aprieta, ¡oh hermano!, estos párpados y ciérrame estos ojos en perpetuo sueño, y con esotra mano aprieta la de Sigismunda, y séllala con el sí que quiero que le des de esposo, y sean testigos de este casamiento la sangre que estás derramando y los amigos que te rodean. El reino de tus padres te queda; el de Sigismunda heredas; procura tener salud, y góceslos años infinitos.

Estas palabras, tan tiernas, tan alegres y tan tristes, avivaron los espíritus de Persiles, y, obedeciendo al mandamiento de su hermano, apretándole la muerte, con la mano le cerró los ojos, y con la lengua, entre triste y alegre, pronunció el sí, y le dio de ser su esposo a Sigismunda.

Hizo el sentimiento de la improvisa y dolorosa muerte en los presentes su efeto, y comenzaron a ocupar los suspiros el aire y a regar las lágrimas el suelo.

Recogieron el cuerpo muerto de Magsimino y lleváronle a San Pablo; y, el medio vivo de Persiles, en el coche del muerto, le volvieron a curar a Roma, donde no hallaron a Belarminia ni a Deleasir, que se habían ya ido a Francia con el duque.

Mucho sintió Arnaldo el nuevo y extraño casamiento de Sigismunda; muchísimo le pesó de que se hubiesen mal logrado tantos años de servicio, de buenas obras hechas, en orden a gozar pacífico de su sin igual belleza; y lo que más le tarazaba el alma eran las no creídas razones del maldiciente Clodio, de quien él, a su despecho, hacía tan manifiesta prueba. Confuso, atónito y espantado, estuvo por irse sin hablar palabra a Persiles y Sigismunda; mas, considerando ser reyes, y la disculpa que tenían, y que sola esta ventura estaba guardada para él, determinó de ir a verles, y así lo hizo. Fue muy bien recebido, y para que del todo no pudiese estar quejoso, le ofrecieron a la infanta Eusebia para su esposa, hermana de Sigismunda, a quien él acetó de buena gana; y se fuera luego con ellos, si no fuera por pedir licencia a su padre; que en los casamientos graves, y en todos, es justo se ajuste la voluntad de los hijos con la

de los padres. Asistió a la cura de la herida de su cuñado en esperanza, y, dejándole sano, se fue a ver a su padre y prevenir fiestas para la entrada de su esposa.

Feliz Flora determinó de casarse con Antonio el Bárbaro, por no atreverse a vivir entre los parientes del que había muerto Antonio. Croriano y Ruperta, acabada su romería, se volvieron a Francia, llevando bien qué contar del suceso de la fingida Auristela. Bartolomé el manchego y la castellana Luisa se fueron a Nápoles, donde se dice que acabaron mal, porque no vivieron bien.

Persiles depositó a su hermano en San Pablo, recogió a todos sus criados, volvió a visitar los templos de Roma, acarició a Constanza, a quien Sigismunda dio la cruz de diamantes y la acompañó hasta dejarla casada con el conde su cuñado. Y, habiendo besado los pies al Pontífice, sosegó su espíritu y cumplió su voto, y vivió en compañía de su esposo Persiles hasta que bisnietos le alargaron los días, pues los vio en su larga y feliz posteridad.

FIN

## **Novela cortas**

# NOVELAS EJEMPLARES



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## Tasa

Yo, Hernando de Vallejo, escribano de Cámara del Rey nuestro señor, de los que residen en su Consejo, doy fe que, habiéndose visto por los señores dél un libro, que con su licencia fue impreso, intitulado *Novelas ejemplares*, compuesto por Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, le tasaron a cuatro maravedís el pliego, el cual tiene setenta y un pliegos y medio, que al dicho precio suma y monta docientos y ochenta y seis maravedís en papel; y mandaron que a este precio, y no más, se venda, y que esta tasa se ponga al principio de cada volumen del dicho libro, para que se sepa y entienda lo que por él se ha de pedir y llevar, como consta y parece por el auto y decreto que está y queda en mi poder, a que me refiero.

Y para que dello conste, de mandamiento de los dichos señores del Consejo, y pedimiento de la parte del dicho Miguel de Cervantes, di esta fe, en la villa de Madrid, a doce días del mes de agosto de mil y seiscientos y trece años.

*Hernando de Vallejo.*

Monta ocho reales y catorce maravedís en papel.



## Censura

Vea este libro el padre presentado Fr. Juan Bautista, de la orden de la Santísima Trinidad, y dígame si tiene cosa contra la fe o buenas costumbres, y si será justo imprimirse.

Fecho en Madrid, a 2 de julio de 1612.

*El doctor Cetina.*

## Aprobación

Por comisión del señor doctor Gutierre de Cetina, vicario general por el ilustrísimo cardenal D. Bernardo de Sandoval y Rojas, en Corte, he visto y leído las doce *Novelas ejemplares*, compuestas por Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra; y, supuesto que es sentencia llana del angélico doctor Santo Tomás que la eutropelia es virtud, la que consiste en un entretenimiento honesto, juzgo que la verdadera eutropelia está en estas novelas, porque entretienen con su novedad, enseñan con sus ejemplos a huir vicios y seguir virtudes, y el autor cumple con su intento, con que da honra a nuestra lengua castellana, y avisa a las repúblicas de los daños que de algunos vicios se siguen, con otras muchas comodidades; y así, me parece se le puede y debe dar la licencia que pide, salvo &c.

En este convento de la Santísima Trinidad, calle de Atocha, en 9 de julio de 1612.

*El padre presentado Fr. Juan Bautista.*

## Aprobación

Por comisión y mandado de los señores del Consejo de su Majestad, he hecho ver este libro de *Novelas ejemplares*, y no contiene cosa contra la fe ni buenas costumbres, antes con semejantes argumentos nos pretende enseñar su autor cosas de importancia, y el cómo nos hemos de haber en ellas; y este fin tienen los que escriben novelas y fábulas; y así, me parece se puede dar licencia para imprimir. En Madrid, a nueve de julio de mil y seiscientos y doce.

*El doctor Cetina.*

### Aprobación

Por comisión de vuestra Alteza, he visto el libro intitulado *Novelas ejemplares*, de Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, y no hallo en él cosa contra la fe y buenas costumbres, por donde no se pueda imprimir; antes hallo en él cosas de mucho entretenimiento para los curiosos lectores, y avisos y sentencias de mucho provecho, y que proceden de la fecundidad del ingenio de su autor, que no lo muestra en éste menos que en los demás que ha sacado a luz.

En este Monasterio de la Santísima Trinidad, en ocho de agosto de mil y seiscientos y doce.

*Fray Diego de Hortigosa.*

### Aprobación

Por comisión de los señores del Supremo Consejo de Aragón, vi un libro intitulado *Novelas ejemplares*, de honestísimo entretenimiento, su autor Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, y no sólo no hallo en él cosa escrita en ofensa de la religión cristiana y perjuicio de las buenas costumbres, antes bien confirma el dueño desta obra la justa estimación que en España y fuera della se hace de su claro ingenio, singular en la invención y copioso en el lenguaje, que con lo uno y lo otro enseña y admira, dejando desta vez concluidos con la abundancia de sus palabras a los que, siendo émulos de la lengua española, la culpan de corta y niegan su fertilidad; y así, se debe imprimir: tal es mi parecer.

En Madrid, a treinta y uno de julio de mil y seiscientos y trece.

*Alonso Gerónimo de Salas Barbadillo.*

## El rey

Por cuanto por parte de vos, Miguel de Cervantes, nos fue fecha relación que habíades compuesto un libro intitulado *Novelas ejemplares*, de honestísimo entretenimiento, donde se mostraba la alteza y fecundidad de la lengua castellana, que os había costado mucho trabajo el componerle, y nos suplicastes os mandásemos dar licencia y facultad para le poder imprimir, y privilegio por el tiempo que fuésemos servido, o como la nuestra merced fuese; lo cual, visto por los del nuestro Consejo, por cuanto en el dicho libro se hizo la diligencia que la pragmática por nos sobre ello fecha dispone, fue acordado que debíamos mandar dar esta nuestra cédula en la dicha razón, y nos tuvimoslo por bien. Por la cual vos damos licencia y facultad para que, por tiempo y espacio de diez años cumplidos primeros siguientes, que corran y se cuenten desde el día de la fecha desta nuestra cédula en adelante, vos, o la persona que para ello vuestro poder hubiere, y no otra alguna, podáis imprimir y vender el dicho libro, que desuso se hace mención. Y por la presente damos licencia y facultad a cualquier impresor destos nuestros reinos que nombráredes, para que durante el dicho tiempo lo pueda imprimir por el original que en el nuestro Consejo se vio, que va rubricado, y firmado al fin, de Antonio de Olmedo, nuestro Escribano de Cámara, y uno de los que en el nuestro Consejo residen, con que antes que se venda le traigáis ante ellos, juntamente con el dicho original, para que se vea si la dicha impresión está conforme a él, o traigáis fee en pública forma, como por corrector por nos nombrado se vio y corrigió la dicha impresión por el dicho original. Y mandamos al impresor que ansí imprimiere el dicho libro, no imprima el principio y primer pliego dél, ni entregue más de un solo libro con el original al autor y persona a cuya costa lo imprimiere, ni a otra alguna, para efecto de la dicha corrección y tasa, hasta que, antes y primero, el dicho libro esté corregido y tasado por los del nuestro Consejo. Y estando hecho, y no de otra manera, pueda imprimir el dicho principio y primer pliego, en el cual, inmediatamente, se ponga esta nuestra licencia, y la aprobación, tasa y erratas; ni lo podáis vender ni vendáis vos, ni otra persona alguna, hasta que esté el dicho libro en la forma susodicha, so pena de caer e incurrir en las penas contenidas en la dicha pragmática y leyes de nuestros reinos que sobre ello disponen. Y mandamos que durante el dicho tiempo persona alguna, sin vuestra licencia, no lo pueda imprimir ni vender, so pena que, el que lo imprimiere y vendiere haya perdido y pierda cualesquier libros, moldes y aparejos que dél tuviere, y más incurra en pena de cincuenta mil maravedís por cada vez que lo contrario hiciere. De la cual dicha pena sea la tercia parte para nuestra Cámara, y la otra tercia

parte para el juez que lo sentenciare, y la otra tercia parte para el que lo denunciare. Y mandamos a los del nuestro Consejo, presidente y oidores de las nuestras Audiencias, alcaldes, alguaciles de la nuestra Casa y Corte y Chancillerías, y otras cualesquier justicias de todas las ciudades, villas y lugares destos nuestros reinos y señoríos, y a cada uno dellos, ansí a los que agora son como a los que serán de aquí adelante, que vos guarden y cumplan esta nuestra cédula y merced, que ansí vos hacemos, y contra ella no vayan, ni pasen, ni consientan ir, ni pasar en manera alguna, so pena de la nuestra merced y de diez mil maravedís para la nuestra Cámara. Fecha en Madrid, a veinte y dos días del mes de noviembre de mil y seiscientos y doce años.

Yo, el rey.

Por mandado del rey nuestro señor: *Jorge de Tovar*.

#### Privilegio de Aragón

Nos, Don Felipe, por la gracia de Dios Rey de Castilla, de Aragón, de León, de las dos Sicilias, de Jerusalén, de Portugal, de Hungría, de Dalmacia, de Croacia, de Navarra, de Granada, de Toledo, de Valencia, de Galicia, de Mallorca, de Sevilla, de Cerdeña, de Córdoba, de Córcega, de Murcia, de Jaén, de los Algarbes, de Algecira, de Gibraltar, de las Islas de Canaria, de las Indias Orientales y Occidentales, Islas y Tierrafirme del mar Océano; Archiduque de Austria; Duque de Borgoña, de Bravante, de Milán, de Atenas y Neopatria, Conde de Abspurg, de Flandes, de Tyrol, de Barcelona, de Rosellón y Cerdaña, Marqués de Oristán y Conde de Goceano. Por cuanto por parte de vos, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, nos ha sido hecha relación que con vuestra industria y trabajo habéis compuesto un libro intitulado *Novelas ejemplares*, de honestísimo entretenimiento, el cual es muy útil y provechoso, y le deseáis imprimir en los nuestros reinos de la Corona de Aragón, suplicándonos fuésemos servido de haceros merced de licencia para ello. E nos, teniendo consideración a lo sobredicho, y que ha sido el dicho libro reconocido por persona experta en letras, y por ella aprobado, para que os resulte dello alguna utilidad, y, por la común, lo habemos tenido por bien. Por ende, con tenor de las presentes, de nuestra cierta ciencia y real autoridad, deliberadamente y consulta, damos licencia, permiso y facultad a vos, Miguel de Cervantes, que, por tiempo de diez años, contaderos desde el día de la data de las presentes en adelante, vos, o la persona o personas que vuestro poder tuvieren, y no otro alguno, podáis y puedan hacer imprimir y vender el dicho libro de las *Novelas ejemplares*, de honestísimo entretenimiento, en los dichos nuestros reinos de la Corona de Aragón, prohibiendo y vedando expresamente que ningunas otras personas lo puedan hacer por todo el dicho

tiempo, sin vuestra licencia, permiso y voluntad, ni le puedan entrar en los dichos reinos, para vender, de otros adonde se hubiere imprimido. Y si, después de publicadas las presentes, hubiere alguno o algunos que durante el dicho tiempo intentaren de imprimir o vender el dicho libro, ni meterlos impresos para vender, como dicho es, incurran en pena de quinientos florines de oro de Aragón, dividideros en tres partes; a saber: es una para nuestros cofres reales; otra, para vos, el dicho Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra; y otra, para el acusador. Y, demás de la dicha pena, si fuere impresor, pierda los moldes y libros que así hubiere imprimido, mandando con el mismo tenor de las presentes a cualesquier lugartenientes y capitanes generales, regentes la Cancellaría, regente el oficio, y portants veces de nuestro general gobernador, alguaciles, vergueros, porteros y otros cualesquier oficiales y ministros nuestros, mayores y menores, en los dichos nuestros reinos y señoríos constituidos y constituideros, y a sus lugartenientes y regentes los dichos oficios, so incurrimento de nuestra ira e indignación y pena de mil florines de oro de Aragón de bienes del que lo contrario hiciere exigideros, y a nuestros reales cofres aplicaderos, que la presente nuestra licencia y prohibición, y todo lo en ella contenido, os tengan guardar, tener, guardar y cumplir hagan, sin contradicción alguna, y no permitan ni den lugar a que sea hecho lo contrario en manera alguna, si, demás de nuestra ira e indignación, en la pena susodicha desean no incurrir. En testimonio de lo cual, mandamos despachar las presentes, con nuestro sello real común en el dorso selladas. *Datt.* en San Lorenzo el Real, a nueve días del mes de agosto, año del nacimiento de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, mil y seiscientos y trece.

Yo, el rey.

Dominus rex mandavit mihi D. Francisco Gassol, visa per Roig Vicecancellarium, Comitem generalem Thesaurarium, Guardiola, Fontanet, Martínez & Pérez Manrique, regentes Cancellariam.

## Prólogo al lector

Quisiera yo, si fuera posible, lector amantísimo, escusarme de escribir este prólogo, porque no me fue tan bien con el que puse en mi *Don Quijote*, que quedase con gana de segundar con éste. Desto tiene la culpa algún amigo, de los muchos que en el discurso de mi vida he granjeado, antes con mi condición que con mi ingenio; el cual amigo bien pudiera, como es uso y costumbre, grabarme y esculpirme en la primera hoja deste libro, pues le diera mi retrato el famoso don Juan de Jáurigui, y con esto quedara mi ambición satisfecha, y el deseo de algunos que querrían saber qué rostro y talle tiene quien se atreve a salir con tantas invenciones en la plaza del mundo, a los ojos de las gentes, poniendo debajo del retrato:

Éste que veis aquí, de rostro aguileño, de cabello castaño, frente lisa y desembarazada, de alegres ojos y de nariz corva, aunque bien proporcionada; las barbas de plata, que no ha veinte años que fueron de oro, los bigotes grandes, la boca pequeña, los dientes ni menudos ni crecidos, porque no tiene sino seis, y éstos mal acondicionados y peor puestos, porque no tienen correspondencia los unos con los otros; el cuerpo entre dos extremos, ni grande, ni pequeño, la color viva, antes blanca que morena; algo cargado de espaldas, y no muy ligero de pies; éste digo que es el rostro del autor de *La Galatea* y de *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, y del que hizo el *Viaje del Parnaso*, a imitación del de César Caporal Perusino, y otras obras que andan por ahí descarriadas y, quizá, sin el nombre de su dueño. Llámase comúnmente Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra. Fue soldado muchos años, y cinco y medio cautivo, donde aprendió a tener paciencia en las adversidades. Perdió en la batalla naval de Lepanto la mano izquierda de un arcabuzazo, herida que, aunque parece fea, él la tiene por hermosa, por haberla cobrado en la más memorable y alta ocasión que vieron los pasados siglos, ni esperan ver los venideros, militando debajo de las vencedoras banderas del hijo del rayo de la guerra, Carlo Quinto, de felice memoria.

Y cuando a la deste amigo, de quien me quejo, no ocurrieran otras cosas de las dichas que decir de mí, yo me levantara a mí mismo dos docenas de testimonios, y se los dijera en secreto, con que estendiera mi nombre y acreditara mi ingenio. Porque pensar que dicen puntualmente la verdad los tales elogios es disparate, por no tener punto preciso ni determinado las alabanzas ni los vituperios.

En fin, pues ya esta ocasión se pasó, y yo he quedado en blanco y sin figura, será forzoso valerme por mi pico, que, aunque tartamudo, no lo será para decir

verdades, que, dichas por señas, suelen ser entendidas. Y así, te digo otra vez, lector amable, que destas novelas que te ofrezco, en ningún modo podrás hacer pepitoria, porque no tienen pies, ni cabeza, ni entrañas, ni cosa que les parezca; quiero decir que los requiebros amorosos que en algunas hallarás, son tan honestos, y tan medidos con la razón y discurso cristiano, que no podrán mover a mal pensamiento al descuidado o cuidadoso que las leyere.

Heles dado nombre de *ejemplares*, y si bien lo miras, no hay ninguna de quien no se pueda sacar algún ejemplo provechoso; y si no fuera por no alargar este sujeto, quizá te mostrara el sabroso y honesto fruto que se podría sacar, así de todas juntas como de cada una de por sí. Mi intento ha sido poner en la plaza de nuestra república una mesa de trucos, donde cada uno pueda llegar a entretenerse, sin daño de barras; digo, sin daño del alma ni del cuerpo, porque los ejercicios honestos y agradables antes aprovechan que dañan.

Sí, que no siempre se está en los templos, no siempre se ocupan los oratorios, no siempre se asiste a los negocios, por calificados que sean. Horas hay de recreación, donde el afligido espíritu descanse. Para este efeto se plantan las alamedas, se buscan las fuentes, se allanan las cuevas y se cultivan con curiosidad los jardines. Una cosa me atreveré a decirte: que si por algún modo alcanzara que la lección destas novelas pudiera inducir a quien las leyera a algún mal deseo o pensamiento, antes me cortara la mano con que las escribí que sacarlas en público. Mi edad no está ya para burlarse con la otra vida, que al cincuenta y cinco de los años gano por nueve más y por la mano.

A esto se aplicó mi ingenio, por aquí me lleva mi inclinación, y más, que me doy a entender, y es así, que yo soy el primero que he novelado en lengua castellana, que las muchas novelas que en ella andan impresas todas son traducidas de lenguas extranjeras, y éstas son mías propias, no imitadas ni hurtadas: mi ingenio las engendró, y las parió mi pluma, y van creciendo en los brazos de la estampa. Tras ellas, si la vida no me deja, te ofrezco los *Trabajos de Persiles*, libro que se atreve a competir con Heliodoro, si ya por atrevido no sale con las manos en la cabeza; y primero verás, y con brevedad dilatadas, las hazañas de don Quijote y donaires de Sancho Panza, y luego las *Semanas del jardín*. Mucho prometo con fuerzas tan pocas como las mías, pero ¿quién pondrá rienda a los deseos? Sólo esto quiero que consideres: que, pues yo he tenido osadía de dirigir estas novelas al gran Conde de Lemos, algún misterio tienen escondido que las levanta.

No más, sino que Dios te guarde y a mí me dé paciencia para llevar bien el mal que han de decir de mí más de cuatro sotiles y almidonados. Vale.

*A don Pedro Fernández de Castro*

*Conde de Lemos, de Andrade y de Villalba, marqués de Sarriá, gentilhombre de la Cámara de Su Majestad, virrey, gobernador y capitán general del reino de Nápoles, comendador de la Encomienda de la Zarza de la Orden de Alcántara*

En dos errores, casi de ordinario, caen los que dedican sus obras a algún príncipe. El primero es que en la carta que llaman *dedicatoria*, que ha de ser breve y sucinta, muy de propósito y espacio, ya llevados de la verdad o de la lisonja, se dilatan en ella en traerle a la memoria, no sólo las hazañas de sus padres y abuelos, sino las de todos sus parientes, amigos y bienhechores. Es el segundo decirles que las ponen debajo de su protección y amparo, porque las lenguas maldicientes y murmuradoras no se atrevan a morderlas y lacerarlas. Yo, pues, huyendo destos dos inconvenientes, paso en silencio aquí las grandezas y títulos de la antigua y Real Casa de Vuestra Excelencia, con sus infinitas virtudes, así naturales como adquiridas, dejándolas a que los nuevos Fidas y Lisipos busquen mármoles y bronce adonde grabarlas y esculpir las, para que sean émulas a la duración de los tiempos. Tampoco suplico a Vuestra Excelencia reciba en su tutela este libro, porque sé que si él no es bueno, aunque le ponga debajo de las alas del Hipogrifo de Astolfo y a la sombra de la clava de Hércules, no dejarán los Zoilos, los Cínicos, los Aretinos y los Bernias de darse un filo en su vituperio, sin guardar respecto a nadie. Sólo suplico que advierta Vuestra Excelencia que le envíe, como quien no dice nada, doce cuentos, que, a no haberse labrado en la oficina de mi entendimiento, presumieran ponerse al lado de los más pintados. Tales cuales son, allá van, y yo quedo aquí contentísimo, por parecerme que voy mostrando en algo el deseo que tengo de servir a Vuestra Excelencia como a mi verdadero señor y bienhechor mío. Guarde Nuestro Señor, &c. De Madrid, a catorce de julio de mil y seiscientos y trece.

Criado de Vuestra Excelencia,  
*Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra.*



## Poemas laudatorios

Del marqués de Alcañices, a Miguel de Cervantes

### Soneto

Si en el moral ejemplo y dulce aviso, Cervantes, de la diestra grave lira, en docta  
frasis el concepto mira  
el lector retratado un paraíso;

mira mejor que con el arte quiso  
vuestro ingenio sacar de la mentira la verdad, cuya llama sólo aspira  
a lo que es voluntario hacer preciso.

Al asunto ofrecidas las memorias  
dedica el tiempo, que en tan breve suma caben todos sucintos los extremos;

y es noble calidad de vuestras glorias, que el uno se le deba a vuestra pluma, y  
el otro a las grandezas del de Lemos.

De Fernando Bermúdez y Carvajal, camarero del duque de Sesa, a Miguel de  
Cervantes

Hizo la memoria clara  
de aquel Dédalo ingenioso,  
el laberinto famoso,  
obra peregrina y rara;  
mas si tu nombre alcanzara  
Creta en su monstruo cruel,  
le diera al bronce y pincel,  
cuando, en términos distintos,  
viera en doce laberintos  
mayor ingenio que en él;  
y si la naturaleza,  
en la mucha variedad  
enseña mayor beldad,

más artificio y belleza,  
celebre con más presteza,  
Cervantes, raro y sutil,  
aqueste florido abril,  
cuya variedad admira  
la fama veloz, que mira  
en él variedades mil.

De don Fernando de Lodeña, a Miguel de Cervantes

Soneto

Dejad, Nereidas, del albergue umbroso las piezas de cristales fabricadas, de la  
espuma ligera mal techadas,  
si bien guarnidas de coral precioso;  
salid del sitio ameno y deleitoso,  
Dríades de las selvas no tocadas,  
y vosotras, ¡oh Musas celebradas!,  
dejad las fuentes del licor copioso;  
todas juntas traed un ramo solo  
del árbol en quien Dafne convertida, al rubio dios mostró tanta dureza,  
que, cuando no lo fuera para Apolo, hoy se hiciera laurel, por ver ceñida a  
Miguel de Cervantes la cabeza.

De Juan de Solís Mejía, Gentilhombre cortesano, a los lectores

Soneto

¡Oh tú, que aquestas fábulas leíste: si lo secreto dellas contemplaste,  
verás que son de la verdad engaste, que por tu gusto tal disfraz se viste!

Bien, Cervantes insigne, conociste  
la humana inclinación, cuando mezclaste lo dulce con lo honesto, y lo  
templaste tan bien que plato al cuerpo y alma hiciste.

Rica y pomposa vas, filosofía;

ya, dotrina moral, con este traje  
no habrá quien de ti burle o te desprecie.

Si agora te faltare compañía,  
jamás esperes del mortal linaje  
que tu virtud y tus grandezas precie.

## La Gitanilla

PARECE que los gitanos y gitanas solamente nacieron en el mundo para ser ladrones: nacen de padres ladrones, críanse con ladrones, estudian para ladrones y, finalmente, salen con ser ladrones corrientes y molientes a todo ruedo; y la gana del hurtar y el hurtar son en ellos como accidentes inseparables, que no se quitan sino con la muerte.

Una, pues, desta nación, gitana vieja, que podía ser jubilada en la ciencia de Caco, crió una muchacha en nombre de nieta suya, a quien puso nombre Preciosa, y a quien enseñó todas sus gitanerías y modos de embelecocos y trazas de hurtar. Salió la tal Preciosa la más única bailadora que se hallaba en todo el gitanismo, y la más hermosa y discreta que pudiera hallarse, no entre los gitanos, sino entre cuantas hermosas y discretas pudiera pregonar la fama. Ni los soles, ni los aires, ni todas las inclemencias del cielo, a quien más que otras gentes están sujetos los gitanos, pudieron deslustrar su rostro ni curtir las manos; y lo que es más, que la crianza tosca en que se criaba no descubría en ella sino ser nacida de mayores prendas que de gitana, porque era en extremo cortés y bien razonada. Y, con todo esto, era algo desenvuelta, pero no de modo que descubriese algún género de deshonestidad; antes, con ser aguda, era tan honesta, que en su presencia no osaba alguna gitana, vieja ni moza, cantar cantares lascivos ni decir palabras no buenas. Y, finalmente, la abuela conoció el tesoro que en la nieta tenía; y así, determinó el águila vieja sacar a volar su aguilucho y enseñarle a vivir por sus uñas.

Salió Preciosa rica de villancicos, de coplas, seguidillas y zarabandas, y de otros versos, especialmente de romances, que los cantaba con especial donaire. Porque su taimada abuela echó de ver que tales juguetes y gracias, en los pocos años y en la mucha hermosura de su nieta, habían de ser felicísimos atractivos e incentivos para acrecentar su caudal; y así, se los procuró y buscó por todas las vías que pudo, y no faltó poeta que se los diese: que también hay poetas que se acomodan con gitanos, y les venden sus obras, como los hay para ciegos, que les fingen milagros y van a la parte de la ganancia. De todo hay en el mundo, y esto de la hambre tal vez hace arrojar los ingenios a cosas que no están en el mapa.

Crióse Preciosa en diversas partes de Castilla, y, a los quince años de su edad, su abuela putativa la volvió a la Corte y a su antiguo rancho, que es adonde ordinariamente le tienen los gitanos, en los campos de Santa Bárbara, pensando en la Corte vender su mercadería, donde todo se compra y todo se vende. Y la

primera entrada que hizo Preciosa en Madrid fue un día de Santa Ana, patrona y abogada de la villa, con una danza en que iban ocho gitanas, cuatro ancianas y cuatro muchachas, y un gitano, gran bailarín, que las guiaba. Y, aunque todas iban limpias y bien aderezadas, el aseo de Preciosa era tal, que poco a poco fue enamorando los ojos de cuantos la miraban. De entre el son del tamborín y castañetas y fuga del baile salió un rumor que encarecía la belleza y donaire de la gitanilla, y corrían los muchachos a verla y los hombres a mirarla. Pero cuando la oyeron cantar, por ser la danza cantada, ¡allí fue ello! Allí sí que cobró aliento la fama de la gitanilla, y de común consentimiento de los diputados de la fiesta, desde luego le señalaron el premio y joya de la mejor danza; y cuando llegaron a hacerla en la iglesia de Santa María, delante de la imagen de Santa Ana, después de haber bailado todas, tomó Preciosa unas sonajas, al son de las cuales, dando en redondo largas y ligerísimas vueltas, cantó el romance siguiente:

-Árbol preciosísimo  
que tardó en dar fruto  
años que pudieron  
cubrirle de luto,

y hacer los deseos  
del consorte puros,

contra su esperanza  
no muy bien seguros;

de cuyo tardarse  
nació aquel disgusto  
que lanzó del templo  
al varón más justo;  
santa tierra estéril,



que al cabo produjo

toda la abundancia  
que sustenta el mundo;  
casa de moneda,

do se forjó el cuño  
que dio a Dios la forma  
que como hombre tuvo;

madre de una hija

en quien quiso y pudo

mostrar Dios grandezas  
sobre humano curso.

Por vos y por ella  
sois, Ana, el refugio

do van por remedio  
nuestros infortunios.  
En cierta manera,  
tenéis, no lo dudo,  
sobre el Nieto, imperio  
piadoso y justo.

A ser comunera  
del alcázar sumo,



fueran mil parientes  
con vos de consuno.  
¡Qué hija, y qué nieto,  
y qué yerno! Al punto,  
a ser causa justa,  
cantárades triunfos.  
Pero vos, humilde,

fuistes el estudio

donde vuestra Hija  
hizo humildes cursos;  
y agora a su lado,  
a Dios el más junto,  
gozáis de la alteza  
que apenas barrunto.

El cantar de Preciosa fue para admirar a cuantos la escuchaban. Unos decían: «¡Dios te bendiga la muchacha!». Otros: «¡Lástima es que esta mozuela sea gitana! En verdad, en verdad, que merecía ser hija de un gran señor». Otros había más groseros, que decían: «¡Dejen crecer a la rapaza, que ella hará de las suyas! ¡A fe que se va añudando en ella gentil red barredera para pescar corazones!» Otro, más humano, más basto y más modorro, viéndola andar tan ligera en el baile, le dijo: «¡A ello, hija, a ello! ¡Andad, amores, y pisad el polvito atán menudito!» Y ella respondió, sin dejar el baile: «¡Y pisarélo yo atán menudó!»

Acabáronse las vísperas y la fiesta de Santa Ana, y quedó Preciosa algo cansada, pero tan celebrada de hermosa, de aguda y de discreta y de bailadora, que a corrillos se hablaba della en toda la Corte. De allí a quince días, volvió a Madrid con otras tres muchachas, con sonajas y con un baile nuevo, todas apercebidas de romances y de cantarcillos alegres, pero todos honestos; que no consentía Preciosa que las que fuesen en su compañía cantasen cantares descompuestos, ni ella los cantó jamás, y muchos miraron en ello y la tuvieron en mucho.

Nunca se apartaba della la gitana vieja, hecha su Argos, temerosa no se la despabilasen y traspusiesen; llamábala nieta, y ella la tenía por abuela. Pusiéronse a bailar a la sombra en la calle de Toledo, y de los que las venían siguiendo se hizo luego un gran corro; y, en tanto que bailaban, la vieja pedía limosna a los circunstantes, y llovían en ella ochavos y cuartos como piedras a tablado; que también la hermosura tiene fuerza de despertar la caridad dormida.

Acabado el baile, dijo Preciosa:

-Si me dan cuatro cuartos, les cantaré un romance yo sola, lindísimo en extremo, que trata de cuando la Reina nuestra señora Margarita salió a misa de parida en Valladolid y fue a San Llorente; dígoles que es famoso, y compuesto por un poeta de los del número, como capitán del batallón.

Apenas hubo dicho esto, cuando casi todos los que en la rueda estaban dijeron a voces:

-¡Cántale, Preciosa, y ves aquí mis cuatro cuartos!

Y así granizaron sobre ella cuartos, que la vieja no se daba manos a cogerlos. Hecho, pues, su agosto y su vendimia, repicó Preciosa sus sonajas y, al tono correntío y loquesco, cantó el siguiente romance:

-Salió a misa de parida  
la mayor reina de Europa,  
en el valor y en el nombre  
rica y admirable joya.  
Como los ojos se lleva,

se lleva las almas todas

de cuantos miran y admiran  
su devoción y su pompa.  
Y, para mostrar que es parte  
del cielo en la tierra toda,  
a un lado lleva el sol de Austria,  
al otro, la tierna Aurora.

A sus espaldas le sigue

un Lucero que a deshora  
salió, la noche del día  
que el cielo y la tierra lloran.  
Y si en el cielo hay estrellas  
que lucientes carros forman,



en otros carros su cielo  
vivas estrellas adornan.  
Aquí el anciano Saturno  
la barba pule y remoja,  
y, aunque es tardo, va ligero;  
que el placer cura la gota.  
El dios parlero va en lenguas

lisonjeras y amorosas,  
y Cupido en cifras varias,  
que rubíes y perlas bordan.  
Allí va el furioso Marte

en la persona curiosa  
de más de un gallardo joven,  
que de su sombra se asombra.  
Junto a la casa del Sol  
va Júpiter; que no hay cosa  
difícil a la privanza  
fundada en prudentes obras.  
Va la Luna en las mejillas  
de una y otra humana diosa;  
Venus casta, en la belleza  
de las que este cielo forman.  
Pequeñuelos Ganimedes  
cruzan, van, vuelven y tornan

por el cinto tachonado  
de esta esfera milagrosa.  
Y, para que todo admire  
y todo asombre, no hay cosa

que de liberal no pase  
hasta el extremo de pródiga.  
Milán con sus ricas telas  
allí va en vista curiosa;  
las Indias con sus diamantes,  
y Arabia con sus aromas.

Con los mal intencionados  
va la envidia mordedora,  
y la bondad en los pechos  
de la lealtad española.  
La alegría universal,  
huyendo de la congoja,  
calles y plazas discurre,  
  
descompuesta y casi loca.

A mil mudas bendiciones  
abre el silencio la boca,

y repiten los muchachos  
lo que los hombres entonan.  
Cuál dice: «Fecunda vid,  
crece, sube, abraza y toca

el olmo felice tuyo  
que mil siglos te haga sombra  
para gloria de ti misma,  
para bien de España y honra,  
para arrimo de la Iglesia,  
para asombro de Mahoma».  
Otra lengua clama y dice:  
«Vivas, ¡oh blanca paloma!,  
que nos has de dar por crías  
águilas de dos coronas,



para ahuyentar de los aires  
las de rapiña furiosas;

para cubrir con sus alas  
a las virtudes medrosas».   
Otra, más discreta y grave,  
más aguda y más curiosa  
dice, vertiendo alegría  
por los ojos y la boca:  
«Esta perla que nos diste,  
nácar de Austria, única y sola,  
¡qué de máquinas que rompe!,  
¡qué de disignios que corta!,  
¡qué de esperanzas que infunde!,  
¡qué de deseos mal logra!,  
¡qué de temores aumenta!,  
¡qué de preñados aborta!»  
En esto, se llegó al templo

del Fénix santo que en Roma  
fue abrasado, y quedó vivo  
en la fama y en la gloria.  
A la imagen de la vida,  
a la del cielo Señora,  
a la que por ser humilde  
las estrellas pisa agora,  
a la Madre y Virgen junto,  
a la Hija y a la Esposa  
de Dios, hincada de hinojos,  
Margarita así razona:  
«Lo que me has dado te doy,  
mano siempre dadivosa;  
que a do falta el favor tuyo,  
siempre la miseria sobra.

Las primicias de mis frutos  
te ofrezco, Virgen hermosa:  
tales cuales son las mira,  
recibe, ampara y mejora.  
A su padre te encomiendo,  
que, humano Atlante, se encorva

al peso de tantos reinos  
y de climas tan remotas.  
Sé que el corazón del Rey  
en las manos de Dios mora,  
y sé que puedes con Dios  
cuanto quieres piadosa».   
Acabada esta oración,

otra semejante entonan

himnos y voces que muestran  
que está en el suelo la Gloria.

Acabados los oficios  
con reales ceremonias,

volvió a su punto este cielo  
y esfera maravillosa.

Apenas acabó Preciosa su romance, cuando del ilustre auditorio y grave senado que la oía, de muchas se formó una voz sola que dijo:

-¡Torna a cantar, Preciosica, que no faltarán cuartos como tierra!

Más de docientas personas estaban mirando el baile y escuchando el canto de las gitanas, y en la fuga dél acertó a pasar por allí uno de los tinientes de la villa, y, viendo tanta gente junta, preguntó qué era; y fuele respondido que estaban escuchando a la gitanilla hermosa, que cantaba. Llegóse el tiniente, que era curioso, y escuchó un rato, y, por no ir contra su gravedad, no escuchó el romance hasta la fin; y, habiéndole parecido por todo extremo bien la gitanilla, mandó a un paje suyo dijese a la gitana vieja que al anochecer fuese a su casa con las gitanillas, que quería que las oyese doña Clara, su mujer. Hízolo así el paje, y la vieja dijo que sí iría.

Acabaron el baile y el canto, y mudaron lugar; y en esto llegó un paje muy bien aderezado a Preciosa, y, dándole un papel doblado, le dijo:

-Preciosica, canta el romance que aquí va, porque es muy bueno, y yo te daré otros de cuando en cuando, con que cobres fama de la mejor romancera del mundo.

-Eso aprenderé yo de muy buena gana -respondió Preciosa-; y mire, señor, que no me deje de dar los romances que dice, con tal condición que sean honestos; y si quisiere que se los pague, concertémonos por docenas, y docena cantada y docena pagada; porque pensar que le tengo de pagar adelantado es pensar lo imposible.

-Para papel, siquiera, que me dé la señora Preciosica -dijo el paje-, estaré contento; y más, que el romance que no saliere bueno y honesto, no ha de entrar en cuenta.

-A la mía quede el escogerlos -respondió Preciosa.

Y con esto, se fueron la calle adelante, y desde una reja llamaron unos caballeros a las gitanas. Asomóse Preciosa a la reja, que era baja, y vio en una sala muy bien aderezada y muy fresca muchos caballeros que, unos paseándose y otros jugando a diversos juegos, se entretenían.

-¿Quiérenme dar barato, cenores? -dijo Preciosa (que, como gitana, hablaba

ceceoso, y esto es artificio en ellas, que no naturaleza).

A la voz de Preciosa y a su rostro, dejaron los que jugaban el juego y el paseo los paseantes; y los unos y los otros acudieron a la reja por verla, que ya tenían noticia della, y dijeron: -Entren, entren las gitanillas, que aquí les daremos barato.

-Caro sería ello -respondió Preciosa-si nos pellizcacen.

-No, a fe de caballeros -respondió uno-; bien puedes entrar, niña, segura, que nadie te tocará a la vira de tu zapato; no, por el hábito que traigo en el pecho.

Y púsose la mano sobre uno de Calatrava.

-Si tú quieres entrar, Preciosa -dijo una de las tres gitanillas que iban con ella-, entra en hora buena; que yo no pienso entrar adonde hay tantos hombres.

-Mira, Cristina -respondió Preciosa-: de lo que te has de guardar es de un hombre solo y a solas, y no de tantos juntos; porque antes el ser muchos quita el miedo y el recelo de ser ofendidas. Advierte, Cristinica, y está cierta de una cosa: que la mujer que se determina a ser honrada, entre un ejército de soldados lo puede ser. Verdad es que es bueno huir de las ocasiones, pero han de ser de las secretas y no de las públicas.

-Entremos, Preciosa -dijo Cristina-, que tú sabes más que un sabio.

Animólas la gitana vieja, y entraron; y apenas hubo entrado Preciosa, cuando el caballero del hábito vio el papel que traía en el seno, y llegándose a ella se le tomó, y dijo Preciosa: -¡Y no me le tome, señor, que es un romance que me acaban de dar ahora, que aún no le he leído!

-Y ¿sabes tú leer, hija? -dijo uno.

-Y escribir -respondió la vieja-; que a mi nieta hela criado yo como si fuera hija de un letrado.

Abrió el caballero el papel y vio que venía dentro dél un escudo de oro, y dijo:

-En verdad, Preciosa, que trae esta carta el porte dentro; toma este escudo que en el romance viene.

-¡Basta! -dijo Preciosa-, que me ha tratado de pobre el poeta, pues cierto que es más milagro darme a mí un poeta un escudo que yo recibirle; si con esta añadidura han de venir sus romances, traslade todo el *Romancero general* y envíemelos uno a uno, que yo les tentaré el pulso, y si vinieren duros, seré yo blanda en recibillos.

Admirados quedaron los que oían a la gitánica, así de su discreción como del donaire con que hablaba.

-Lea, señor -dijo ella-, y lea alto; veremos si es tan discreto ese poeta como es liberal.

Y el caballero leyó así:



-Gitana, que de hermosa  
te pueden dar parabienes:  
por lo que de piedra tienes  
te llama el mundo Preciosa.

Desta verdad me asegura  
esto, como en ti verás;  
que no se apartan jamás  
la esquiveza y la hermosura.

Si como en valor subido  
vas creciendo en arrogancia,

no le arriendo la ganancia  
a la edad en que has nacido;  
que un basilisco se cría  
en ti, que mate mirando,  
y un imperio que, aunque blando,  
nos parezca tiranía.  
Entre pobres y aduares,  
¿cómo nació tal belleza?

O ¿cómo crió tal pieza  
el humilde Manzanares?  
Por esto será famoso

al par del Tajo dorado

y por Preciosapreciado  
más que el Ganges caudaloso.  
Dices la buenaventura,  
y dasla mala contino;  
que no van por un camino  
tu intención y tu hermosura.

Porque en el peligro fuerte

de mirarte o contemplarte  
tu intención va a desculparte,  
y tu hermosura a dar muerte.



Dicen que son hechiceras  
todas las de tu nación,

pero tus hechizos son  
de más fuerzas y más veras;

pues por llevar los despojos  
de todos cuantos te ven,  
haces, ¡oh niña!, que estén  
tus hechizos en tus ojos.  
En sus fuerzas te adelantas,  
pues bailando nos admiras,  
y nos matas si nos miras,  
y nos encantas si cantas.  
De cien mil modos hechizas:  
hables, calles, cantes, mires;  
o te acerques, o retires,  
el fuego de amor atizas.  
Sobre el más esento pecho  
tienes mando y señorío,  
de lo que es testigo el mío,  
de tu imperio satisfecho.

Preciosa joya de amor,

esto humildemente escribe  
el que por ti muere y vive,  
pobre, aunque humilde amador.

-En «pobre» acaba el último verso -dijo a esta sazón Preciosa-: ¡mala señal! Nunca los enamorados han de decir que son pobres, porque a los principios, a mi parecer, la pobreza es muy enemiga del amor.

-¿Quién te enseña eso, rapaza? -dijo uno.

-¿Quién me lo ha de enseñar? -respondió Preciosa-. ¿No tengo yo mi alma en mi cuerpo? ¿No tengo ya quince años? Y no soy manca, ni renca, ni estropeada del entendimiento. Los ingenios de las gitanas van por otro norte que los de las demás gentes: siempre se adelantan a sus años; no hay gitano necio, ni gitana lerda; que, como el sustentar su vida consiste en ser agudos, astutos y embusteros, despabilan el ingenio a cada paso, y no dejan que críe moho en ninguna manera. ¿Veen estas muchachas, mis compañeras, que están callando y parecen bobas? Pues éntrenles el dedo en la boca y tíntenlas las cordales, y verán lo que verán. No hay muchacha de doce que no sepa lo que de veinte y cinco, porque tienen por maestros y preceptores al diablo y al uso, que les enseña en una hora lo que habían de aprender en un año.

Con esto que la gitanilla decía, tenía suspensos a los oyentes, y los que jugaban le dieron barato, y aun los que no jugaban. Cogió la hucha de la vieja treinta reales, y más rica y más alegre que una Pascua de Flores, antecogió sus corderas y fuese en casa del señor teniente, quedando que otro día volvería con su manada a dar contento aquellos tan liberales señores.

Ya tenía aviso la señora doña Clara, mujer del señor teniente, cómo habían de ir a su casa las gitanillas, y estábanlas esperando como el agua de mayo ella y sus doncellas y dueñas, con las de otra señora vecina suya, que todas se juntaron para ver a Preciosa. Y apenas hubieron entrado las gitanas, cuando entre las demás resplandeció Preciosa como la luz de una antorcha entre otras luces menores. Y así, corrieron todas a ella: unas la abrazaban, otras la miraban, éstas la bendecían, aquéllas la alababan. Doña Clara decía: -¡Éste sí que se puede decir cabello de oro! ¡Éstos sí que son ojos de esmeraldas!

La señora su vecina la desmenuzaba toda, y hacía pepitoria de todos sus miembros y coyunturas. Y, llegando a alabar un pequeño hoyo que Preciosa tenía en la barba, dijo: -¡Ay, qué hoyo! En este hoyo han de tropezar cuantos ojos le miraren.

Oyó esto un escudero de brazo de la señora doña Clara, que allí estaba, de

lengua barba y largos años, y dijo:

-¿Ése llama vuesa merced hoyo, señora mía? Pues yo sé poco de hoyos, o ése no es hoyo, sino sepultura de deseos vivos. ¡Por Dios, tan linda es la gitanilla que hecha de plata o de alcorza no podría ser mejor! ¿Sabes decir la buenaventura, niña?

-De tres o cuatro maneras -respondió Preciosa.

-¿Y eso más? -dijo doña Clara-. Por vida del tiniente, mi señor, que me la has de decir, niña de oro, y niña de plata, y niña de perlas, y niña de carbuncos, y niña del cielo, que es lo más que puedo decir.

-Denle, denle la palma de la mano a la niña, y con qué haga la cruz -dijo la vieja-, y verán qué de cosas les dice; que sabe más que un doctor de melecina.

Echó mano a la faldriquera la señora tenienta, y halló que no tenía blanca. Pidió un cuarto a sus criadas, y ninguna le tuvo, ni la señora vecina tampoco. Lo cual visto por Preciosa, dijo: -Todas las cruces, en cuanto cruces, son buenas; pero las de plata o de oro son mejores; y el señalar la cruz en la palma de la mano con moneda de cobre, sepan vuestas mercedes que menoscaba la buenaventura, a lo menos la mía; y así, tengo afición a hacer la cruz primera con algún escudo de oro, o con algún real de a ocho, o, por lo menos, de a cuatro, que soy como los sacristanes: que cuando hay buena ofrenda, se regocijan.

-Donaire tienes, niña, por tu vida -dijo la señora vecina.

Y, volviéndose al escudero, le dijo:

-Vos, señor Contreras, ¿tendréis a mano algún real de a cuatro? Dádmele, que, en viniendo el doctor, mi marido, os le volveré.

-Sí tengo -respondió Contreras-, pero téngole empeñado en veinte y dos maravedís que cené anoche. Dénmelos, que yo iré por él en volandas.

-No tenemos entre todas un cuarto -dijo doña Clara-, ¿y pedís veinte y dos maravedís? Andad, Contreras, que siempre fuistes impertinente.

Una doncella de las presentes, viendo la esterilidad de la casa, dijo a Preciosa:

-Niña, ¿hará algo al caso que se haga la cruz con un dedal de plata?

-Antes -respondió Preciosa-, se hacen las cruces mejores del mundo con dedales de plata, como sean muchos.

-Uno tengo yo -replicó la doncella-; si éste basta, hele aquí, con condición que también se me ha de decir a mí la buenaventura.

-¿Por un dedal tantas buenasventuras? -dijo la gitana vieja-. Nieta, acaba presto, que se hace noche.

Tomó Preciosa el dedal y la mano de la señora tenienta, y dijo:

-Hermosita, hermosa,  
la de las manos de plata,  
más te quiere tu marido  
que el Rey de las Alpujarras.  
Eres paloma sin hiel,

pero a veces eres brava  
como leona de Orán,  
o como tigre de Ocaña.  
Pero en un tras, en un tris,  
el enojo se te pasa,  
y quedas como alfinique,  
o como cordera mansa.

Riñes mucho y comes poco:  
algo celosita andas;  
que es juguetón el tiniente,  
y quiere arrimar la vara.  
Cuando doncella, te quiso  
uno de una buena cara;  
que mal hayan los terceros,  
que los gustos desbaratan.  
Si a dicha tú fueras monja,  
hoy tu convento mandarás,

porque tienes de abadesa  
más de cuatrocientas rayas.  
No te lo quiero decir...;  
pero poco importa, vaya:  
enviudarás, y otra vez,  
y otras dos, serás casada.  
No llores, señora mía;



que no siempre las gitanas  
decimos el *Evangelio*;  
no llores, señora, acaba.

Como te mueras primero  
que el señor tiniente, basta  
para remediar el daño  
de la viudez que amenaza.  
Has de heredar, y muy presto,  
hacienda en mucha abundancia;  
tendrás un hijo canónigo,  
la iglesia no se señala;  
de Toledo no es posible.

Una hija rubia y blanca  
tendrás, que si es religiosa,  
también vendrá a ser perlada.  
Si tu esposo no se muere  
dentro de cuatro semanas,

verásle corregidor  
de Burgos o Salamanca.  
Un lunar tienes, ¡qué lindo!  
¡Ay Jesús, qué luna clara!  
¡Qué sol, que allá en los antípodas  
oscuros valles aclara!  
Más de dos ciegos por verle  
dieran más de cuatro blancas.  
¡Agora sí es la risica!  
¡Ay, que bien haya esa gracia!  
Guárdate de las caídas,  
principalmente de espaldas,

que suelen ser peligrosas  
en las principales damas.  
Cosas hay más que decirte;  
si para el viernes me aguardas,  
las oirás, que son de gusto,  
y algunas hay de desgracias.

Acabó su buenaventura Preciosa, y con ella encendió el deseo de todas las circunstantes en querer saber la suya; y así se lo rogaron todas, pero ella las remitió para el viernes venidero, prometiéndole que tendrían reales de plata para hacer las cruces.

En esto vino el señor tiniente, a quien contaron maravillas de la gitanilla; él las hizo bailar un poco, y confirmó por verdaderas y bien dadas las alabanzas que a Preciosa habían dado; y, poniendo la mano en la faldriquera, hizo señal de querer darle algo, y, habiéndola espulgado, y sacudido, y rascado muchas veces, al cabo sacó la mano vacía y dijo: -¡Por Dios, que no tengo blanca! Dadle vos, doña Clara, un real a Preciosica, que yo os le daré después.

-¡Bueno es eso, señor, por cierto! ¡Sí, ahí está el real de manifiesto! No hemos tenido entre todas nosotras un cuarto para hacer la señal de la cruz, ¿y quiere que tengamos un real?

-Pues dadle alguna valoncica vuestra, o alguna cosita; que otro día nos volverá a ver Preciosa, y la regalaremos mejor.

A lo cual dijo doña Clara:

-Pues, porque otra vez venga, no quiero dar nada ahora a Preciosa.

Antes, si no me dan nada -dijo Preciosa-, nunca más volveré acá. Mas sí volveré, a servir a tan principales señores, pero trairé tragado que no me han de dar nada, y ahorraréme la fatiga del esperallo. Coheche vuesa merced, señor tiniente; coheche y tendrá dineros, y no haga usos nuevos, que morirá de hambre. Mire, señora: por ahí he oído decir (y, aunque moza, entiendo que no son buenos dichos) que de los oficios se ha de sacar dineros para pagar las condenaciones de las residencias y para pretender otros cargos.

-Así lo dicen y lo hacen los desalmados -replicó el teniente-, pero el juez que da buena residencia no tendrá que pagar condenación alguna, y el haber usado bien su oficio será el valedor para que le den otro.

-Habla vuesa merced muy a lo santo, señor teniente -respondió Preciosa;- ándese a eso y cortarémosle de los harapos para reliquias.

-Mucho sabes, Preciosa -dijo el tiniente-. Calla, que yo daré traza que sus

Majestades te vean, porque eres pieza de reyes.

-Querránme para truhana -respondió Preciosa-, y yo no lo sabré ser, y todo irá perdido. Si me quisiesen para discreta, aún llevarme hían, pero en algunos palacios más medran los truhanes que los discretos. Yo me hallo bien con ser gitana y pobre, y corra la suerte por donde el cielo quisiere.

-Ea, niña -dijo la gitana vieja-, no hables más, que has hablado mucho, y sabes más de lo que yo te he enseñado. No te asotiles tanto, que te despuntarás; habla de aquello que tus años permiten, y no te metas en altanerías, que no hay ninguna que no amenace caída.

-¡El diablo tienen estas gitanas en el cuerpo! -dijo a esta sazón el tiniente.

Despidiéronse las gitanas, y, al irse, dijo la doncella del dedal:

-Preciosa, dime la buenaventura, o vuélveme mi dedal, que no me queda con qué hacer labor.

-Señora doncella -respondió Preciosa-, haga cuenta que se la he dicho y provéase de otro dedal, o no haga vainillas hasta el viernes, que yo volveré y le diré más venturas y aventuras que las que tiene un libro de caballerías.

Fuéronse y juntáronse con las muchas labradoras que a la hora de las avermarías suelen salir de Madrid para volverse a sus aldeas; y entre otras vuelven muchas, con quien siempre se acompañaban las gitanas, y volvían seguras; porque la gitana vieja vivía en continuo temor no le salteasen a su Preciosa.

Sucedió, pues, que la mañana de un día que volvían a Madrid a coger la garrama con las demás gitanillas, en un valle pequeño que está obra de quinientos pasos antes que se llegue a la villa, vieron un mancebo gallardo y ricamente aderezado de camino. La espada y daga que traía eran, como decirse suele, una ascua de oro; sombrero con rico cintillo y con plumas de diversas colores adornado. Repararon las gitanas en viéndole, y pusiéronsele a mirar muy de espacio, admiradas de que a tales horas un tan hermoso mancebo estuviese en tal lugar, a pie y solo.

Él se llegó a ellas, y, hablando con la gitana mayor, le dijo:

-Por vida vuestra, amiga, que me hagáis placer que vos y Preciosa me oyáis aquí aparte dos palabras, que serán de vuestro provecho.

-Como no nos desviemos mucho, ni nos tardemos mucho, sea en buen hora -respondió la vieja.

Y, llamando a Preciosa, se desviaron de las otras obra de veinte pasos; y así, en pie, como estaban, el mancebo les dijo:

-Yo vengo de manera rendido a la discreción y belleza de Preciosa, que después de haberme hecho mucha fuerza para escusar llegar a este punto, al cabo he quedado más rendido y más imposibilitado de escusallo. Yo, señoras mías

(que siempre os he de dar este nombre, si el cielo mi pretensión favorece), soy caballero, como lo puede mostrar este hábito -y, apartando el herreruelo, descubrió en el pecho uno de los más calificados que hay en España-; soy hijo de Fulano -que por buenos respectos aquí no se declara su nombre-; estoy debajo de su tutela y amparo, soy hijo único, y el que espera un razonable mayorazgo. Mi padre está aquí en la Corte pretendiendo un cargo, y ya está consultado, y tiene casi ciertas esperanzas de salir con él. Y, con ser de la calidad y nobleza que os he referido, y de la que casi se os debe ya de ir trasluciendo, con todo eso, quisiera ser un gran señor para levantar a mi grandeza la humildad de Preciosa, haciéndola mi igual y mi señora. Yo no la pretendo para burlalla, ni en las veras del amor que la tengo puede caber género de burla alguna; sólo quiero servirla del modo que ella más gustare: su voluntad es la mía. Para con ella es de cera mi alma, donde podrá imprimir lo que quisiere; y para conservarlo y guardarlo no será como impreso en cera, sino como esculpido en mármoles, cuya dureza se opone a la duración de los tiempos. Si creéis esta verdad, no admitirá ningún desmayo mi esperanza; pero si no me creéis, siempre me tendrá temeroso vuestra duda. Mi nombre es éste -y díjosele-; el de mi padre ya os le he dicho. La casa donde vive es en tal calle, y tiene tales y tales señas; vecinos tiene de quien podréis informaros, y aun de los que no son vecinos también, que no es tan oscura la calidad y el nombre de mi padre y el mío, que no le sepan en los patios de palacio, y aun en toda la Corte. Cien escudos traigo aquí en oro para daros en arra y señal de lo que pienso daros, porque no ha de negar la hacienda el que da el alma.

En tanto que el caballero esto decía, le estaba mirando Preciosa atentamente, y sin duda que no le debieron de parecer mal ni sus razones ni su talle; y, volviéndose a la vieja, le dijo: -Perdóneme, abuela, de que me tomo licencia para responder a este tan enamorado señor.

-Responde lo que quisieres, nieta -respondió la vieja-, que yo sé que tienes discreción para todo.

Y Preciosa dijo:

-Yo, señor caballero, aunque soy gitana pobre y humildemente nacida, tengo un cierto espiritallo fantástico acá dentro, que a grandes cosas me lleva. A mí ni me mueven promesas, ni me desmoronan dádivas, ni me inclinan sumisiones, ni me espantan finezas enamoradas; y, aunque de quince años (que, según la cuenta de mi abuela, para este San Miguel los haré), soy ya vieja en los pensamientos y alcanzo más de aquello que mi edad promete, más por mi buen natural que por la experiencia. Pero, con lo uno o con lo otro, sé que las pasiones amorosas en los recién enamorados son como ímpetus indiscretos que hacen salir a la voluntad de sus quicios; la cual, atropellando inconvenientes, desatinadamente se arroja tras

su deseo, y, pensando dar con la gloria de sus ojos, da con el infierno de sus pesadumbres. Si alcanza lo que desea, mengua el deseo con la posesión de la cosa deseada, y quizá, abriéndose entonces los ojos del entendimiento, se ve ser bien que se aborrezca lo que antes se adoraba. Este temor engendra en mí un recato tal, que ningunas palabras creo y de muchas obras dudo. Una sola joya tengo, que la estimo en más que a la vida, que es la de mi entereza y virginidad, y no la tengo de vender a precio de promesas ni dádivas, porque, en fin, será vendida, y si puede ser comprada, será de muy poca estima; ni me la han de llevar trazas ni embelecocos: antes pienso irme con ella a la sepultura, y quizá al cielo, que ponerla en peligro que quimeras y fantasías soñadas la embistan o manoseen. Flor es la de la virginidad que, a ser posible, aun con la imaginación no había de dejar ofenderse. Cortada la rosa del rosal, ¡con qué brevedad y facilidad se marchita! Éste la toca, aquél la huele, el otro la deshoja, y, finalmente, entre las manos rústicas se deshace. Si vos, señor, por sola esta prenda venís, no la habéis de llevar sino atada con las ligaduras y lazos del matrimonio; que si la virginidad se ha de inclinar, ha de ser a este santo yugo, que entonces no sería perderla, sino emplearla en ferias que felices ganancias prometen. Si quisiéredes ser mi esposo, yo lo seré vuestra, pero han de preceder muchas condiciones y averiguaciones primero. Primero tengo de saber si sois el que decís; luego, hallando esta verdad, habéis de dejar la casa de vuestros padres y la habéis de trocar con nuestros ranchos; y, tomando el traje de gitano, habéis de cursar dos años en nuestras escuelas, en el cual tiempo me satisfaré yo de vuestra condición, y vos de la mía; al cabo del cual, si vos os contentáredes de mí, y yo de vos, me entregaré por vuestra esposa; pero hasta entonces tengo de ser vuestra hermana en el trato, y vuestra humilde en serviros. Y habéis de considerar que en el tiempo deste noviciado podría ser que cobrásedes la vista, que ahora debéis de tener perdida, o, por lo menos, turbada, y viésedes que os convenía huir de lo que ahora seguís con tanto ahínco. Y, cobrando la libertad perdida, con un buen arrepentimiento se perdona cualquier culpa. Si con estas condiciones queréis entrar a ser soldado de nuestra milicia, en vuestra mano está, pues, faltando alguna dellas, no habéis de tocar un dedo de la mía.

Pasmóse el mozo a las razones de Preciosa, y púsose como embelesado, mirando al suelo, dando muestras que consideraba lo que responder debía. Viendo lo cual Preciosa, tornó a decirle: -No es este caso de tan poco momento, que en los que aquí nos ofrece el tiempo pueda ni deba resolverse. Volveos, señor, a la villa, y considerad de espacio lo que viéredes que más os convenga, y en este mismo lugar me podéis hablar todas las fiestas que quisiéredes, al ir o venir de Madrid.

A lo cual respondió el gentilhombre:

-Cuando el cielo me dispuso para quererte, Preciosa mía, determiné de hacer por ti cuanto tu voluntad acertase a pedirme, aunque nunca cupo en mi pensamiento que me habías de pedir lo que me pides; pero, pues es tu gusto que el mío al tuyo se ajuste y acomode, cuéntame por gitano desde luego, y haz de mí todas las experiencias que más quisieres; que siempre me has de hallar el mismo que ahora te signifíco. Mira cuándo quieres que mude el traje, que yo querría que fuese luego; que, con ocasión de ir a Flandes, engañaré a mis padres y sacaré dineros para gastar algunos días, y serán hasta ocho los que podré tardar en acomodar mi partida. A los que fueren conmigo yo los sabré engañar de modo que salga con mi determinación. Lo que te pido es (si es que ya puedo tener atrevimiento de pedirte y suplicarte algo) que, si no es hoy, donde te puedes informar de mi calidad y de la de mis padres, que no vayas más a Madrid; porque no querría que algunas de las demasiadas ocasiones que allí pueden ofrecerse me saltease la buena ventura que tanto me cuesta.

-Eso no, señor galán -respondió Preciosa-: sepa que conmigo ha de andar siempre la libertad desenfadada, sin que la ahogue ni turbe la pesadumbre de los celos; y entienda que no la tomaré tan demasiada, que no se eche de ver desde bien lejos que llega mi honestidad a mi desenvoltura; y en el primero cargo en que quiero estaros es en el de la confianza que habéis de hacer de mí. Y mirad que los amantes que entran pidiendo celos, o son simples o confiados.

-Satanás tienes en tu pecho, muchacha -dijo a esta sazón la gitana vieja-: ¡mira que dices cosas que no las diría un colegial de Salamanca! Tú sabes de amor, tú sabes de celos, tú de confianzas: ¿cómo es esto?, que me tienes loca, y te estoy escuchando como a una persona espiritada, que habla latín sin saberlo.

-Calle, abuela -respondió Preciosa-, y sepa que todas las cosas que me oye son nonada, y son de burlas, para las muchas que de más veras me quedan en el pecho.

Todo cuanto Preciosa decía y toda la discreción que mostraba era añadir leña al fuego que ardía en el pecho del enamorado caballero. Finalmente, quedaron en que de allí a ocho días se verían en aquel mismo lugar, donde él vendría a dar cuenta del término en que sus negocios estaban, y ellas habrían tenido tiempo de informarse de la verdad que les había dicho. Sacó el mozo una bolsilla de brocado, donde dijo que iban cien escudos de oro, y dióselos a la vieja; pero no quería Preciosa que los tomase en ninguna manera, a quien la gitana dijo: -Calla, niña, que la mejor señal que este señor ha dado de estar rendido es haber entregado las armas en señal de rendimiento; y el dar, en cualquiera ocasión que sea, siempre fue indicio de generoso pecho. Y acuérdate de aquel refrán que dice: «Al cielo rogando, y con el mazo dando». Y más, que no quiero yo que por mí pierdan las gitanas el nombre que por luengos siglos tienen adquerido de



codiciosas y aprovechadas. ¿Cien escudos quieres tú que deseche, Preciosa, y de oro en oro, que pueden andar cosidos en el alforza de una saya que no valga dos reales, y tenerlos allí como quien tiene un juro sobre las yerbas de Estremadura? Y si alguno de nuestros hijos, nietos o parientes cayere, por alguna desgracia, en manos de la justicia, ¿habrá favor tan bueno que llegue a la oreja del juez y del escribano como destos escudos, si llegan a sus bolsas? Tres veces por tres delitos diferentes me he visto casi puesta en el asno para ser azotada, y de la una me libró un jarro de plata, y de la otra una sarta de perlas, y de la otra cuarenta reales de a ocho que había trocado por cuartos, dando veinte reales más por el cambio. Mira, niña, que andamos en oficio muy peligroso y lleno de tropiezos y de ocasiones forzosas, y no hay defensas que más presto nos amparen y socorran como las armas invencibles del gran Filipo: no hay pasar adelante de su *Plus ultra*. Por un doblón de dos caras se nos muestra alegre la triste del procurador y de todos los ministros de la muerte, que son arpías de nosotras, las pobres gitanas, y más precian pelarnos y desollarnos a nosotras que a un salteador de caminos; jamás, por más rotas y desastradas que nos vean, nos tienen por pobres; que dicen que somos como los jubones de los gabachos de Belmonte: rotos y grasientos, y llenos de doblones.

-Por vida suya, abuela, que no diga más; que lleva término de alegar tantas leyes, en favor de quedarse con el dinero, que agote las de los emperadores: quédese con ellos, y buen provecho le hagan, y plega a Dios que los entierre en sepultura donde jamás tornen a ver la claridad del sol, ni haya necesidad que la vean. A estas nuestras compañeras será forzoso darles algo, que ha mucho que nos esperan, y ya deben de estar enfadadas.

-Así verán ellas -replicó la vieja-moneda déstas, como veen al Turco agora. Este buen señor verá si le ha quedado alguna moneda de plata, o cuartos, y los repartirá entre ellas, que con poco quedarán contentas.

-Sí traigo -dijo el galán.

Y sacó de la faldriquera tres reales de a ocho, que repartió entre las tres gitanillas, con que quedaron más alegres y más satisfechas que suele quedar un autor de comedias cuando, en competencia de otro, le suelen retular por la esquinas: «Víctor, Víctor».

En resolución, concertaron, como se ha dicho, la venida de allí a ocho días, y que se había de llamar, cuando fuese gitano, Andrés Caballero; porque también había gitanos entre ellos deste apellido.

No tuvo atrevimiento Andrés (que así le llamaremos de aquí adelante) de abrazar a Preciosa; antes, enviándole con la vista el alma, sin ella, si así decirse puede, las dejó y se entró en Madrid; y ellas, contentísimas, hicieron lo mismo. Preciosa, algo aficionada, más con benevolencia que con amor, de la gallarda

disposición de Andrés, ya deseaba informarse si era el que había dicho. Entró en Madrid, y, a pocas calles andadas, encontró con el paje poeta de las coplas y el escudo; y cuando él la vio, se llegó a ella, diciendo: -Vengas en buen hora, Preciosa: ¿leíste por ventura las coplas que te di el otro día?

A lo que Preciosa respondió:

-Primero que le responda palabra, me ha de decir una verdad, por vida de lo que más quiere.

-Conjuro es ése -respondió el paje-que, aunque el decirla me costase la vida, no la negaré en ninguna manera.

-Pues la verdad que quiero que me diga -dijo Preciosa-es si por ventura es poeta.

-A serlo -replicó el paje-, forzosamente había de ser por ventura. Pero has de saber, Preciosa, que ese nombre de poeta muy pocos le merecen; y así, yo no lo soy, sino un aficionado a la poesía. Y para lo que he menester, no voy a pedir ni a buscar versos ajenos: los que te di son míos, y éstos que te doy agora también; mas no por esto soy poeta, ni Dios lo quiera.

-¿Tan malo es ser poeta? -replicó Preciosa.

-No es malo -dijo el paje-, pero el ser poeta a solas no lo tengo por muy bueno. Hase de usar de la poesía como de una joya preciosísima, cuyo dueño no la trae cada día, ni la muestra a todas gentes, ni a cada paso, sino cuando convenga y sea razón que la muestre. La poesía es una bellísima doncella, casta, honesta, discreta, aguda, retirada, y que se contiene en los límites de la discreción más alta. Es amiga de la soledad, las fuentes la entretienen, los prados la consuelan, los árboles la desenojan, las flores la alegran, y, finalmente, deleita y enseña a cuantos con ella comunican.

-Con todo eso -respondió Preciosa-, he oído decir que es pobrísima y que tiene algo de mendiga.

-Antes es al revés -dijo el paje-, porque no hay poeta que no sea rico, pues todos viven contentos con su estado: filosofía que la alcanzan pocos. Pero, ¿qué te ha movido, Preciosa, a hacer esta pregunta?

-Hame movido -respondió Preciosa-porque, como yo tengo a todos o los más poetas por pobres, causóme maravilla aquel escudo de oro que me distes entre vuestros versos envuelto; mas agora que sé que no sois poeta, sino aficionado de la poesía, podría ser que fuédeses rico, aunque lo dudo, a causa que por aquella parte que os toca de hacer coplas se ha de desaguar cuanta hacienda tuviéredes; que no hay poeta, según dicen, que sepa conservar la hacienda que tiene ni granjear la que no tiene.

-Pues yo no soy dósos -replicó el paje-: versos hago, y no soy rico ni pobre; y sin sentirlo ni descontarlo, como hacen los ginoveses sus convites, bien puedo

dar un escudo, y dos, a quien yo quisiere. Tomad, preciosa perla, este segundo papel y este escudo segundo que va en él, sin que os pongáis a pensar si soy poeta o no; sólo quiero que penséis y creáis que quien os da esto quisiera tener para daros las riquezas de Midas.

Y, en esto, le dio un papel; y, tentándole Preciosa, halló que dentro venía el escudo, y dijo:

-Este papel ha de vivir muchos años, porque trae dos almas consigo: una, la del escudo, y otra, la de los versos, que siempre vienen llenos de *almas* y *corazones*. Pero sepa el señor paje que no quiero tantas almas conmigo, y si no saca la una, no haya miedo que reciba la otra; por poeta le quiero, y no por dadivoso, y desta manera tendremos amistad que dure; pues más aún puede faltar un escudo, por fuerte que sea, que la hechura de un romance.

-Pues así es -replicó el paje-que quieres, Preciosa, que yo sea pobre por fuerza, no deseches el alma que en ese papel te envió, y vuélveme el escudo; que, como le toques con la mano, le tendré por reliquia mientras la vida me durare.

Sacó Preciosa el escudo del papel, y quedóse con el papel, y no le quiso leer en la calle. El paje se despidió, y se fue contentísimo, creyendo que ya Preciosa quedaba rendida, pues con tanta afabilidad le había hablado.

Y, como ella llevaba puesta la mira en buscar la casa del padre de Andrés, sin querer detenerse a bailar en ninguna parte, en poco espacio se puso en la calle do estaba, que ella muy bien sabía; y, habiendo andado hasta la mitad, alzó los ojos a unos balcones de hierro dorados, que le habían dado por señas, y vio en ella a un caballero de hasta edad de cincuenta años, con un hábito de cruz colorada en los pechos, de venerable gravedad y presencia; el cual, apenas también hubo visto la gitanilla, cuando dijo: -Subid, niñas, que aquí os darán limosna.

A esta voz acudieron al balcón otros tres caballeros, y entre ellos vino el enamorado Andrés, que, cuando vio a Preciosa, perdió la color y estuvo a punto de perder los sentidos: tanto fue el sobresalto que recibió con su vista. Subieron las gitanillas todas, sino la grande, que se quedó abajo para informarse de los criados de las verdades de Andrés.

Al entrar las gitanillas en la sala, estaba diciendo el caballero anciano a los demás:

-Ésta debe de ser, sin duda, la gitanilla hermosa que dicen que anda por Madrid.

-Ella es -replicó Andrés-, y sin duda es la más hermosa criatura que se ha visto.

-Así lo dicen -dijo Preciosa, que lo oyó todo en entrando-, pero en verdad que se deben de engañar en la mitad del justo precio. Bonita, bien creo que lo soy;

pero tan hermosa como dicen, ni por pienso.

-¡Por vida de don Juanico, mi hijo, -dijo el anciano-, que aún sois más hermosa de lo que dicen, linda gitana!

-Y ¿quién es don Juanico, su hijo? -preguntó Preciosa.

-Ese galán que está a vuestro lado -respondió el caballero.

-En verdad que pensé -dijo Preciosa-que juraba vuestra merced por algún niño de dos años: ¡mirad qué don Juanico, y qué brinco! A mi verdad, que pudiera ya estar casado, y que, según tiene unas rayas en la frente, no pasarán tres años sin que lo esté, y muy a su gusto, si es que desde aquí allá no se le pierde o se le trueca.

-¡Basta! -dijo uno de los presentes-; ¿qué sabe la gitanilla de rayas?

En esto, las tres gitanillas que iban con Preciosa, todas tres se arrimaron a un rincón de la sala, y, cosiéndose las bocas unas con otras, se juntaron por no ser oídas. Dijo la Cristina: -Muchachas, éste es el caballero que nos dio esta mañana los tres reales de a ocho.

-Así es la verdad -respondieron ellas-, pero no se lo mentemos, ni le digamos nada, si él no nos lo mienta; ¿qué sabemos si quiere encubrirse?

En tanto que esto entre las tres pasaba, respondió Preciosa a lo de las rayas:

-Lo que veo con los ojos, con el dedo lo adivino. Yo sé del señor don Juanico, sin rayas, que es algo enamorado, impetuoso y acelerado, y gran prometededor de cosas que parecen imposibles; y plega a Dios que no sea mentiroso, que sería lo peor de todo. Un viaje ha de hacer ahora muy lejos de aquí, y uno piensa el bayo y otro el que le ensilla; el hombre pone y Dios dispone; quizá pensará que va a Óñez y dará en Gamboa.

A esto respondió don Juan:

-En verdad, gitana, que has acertado en muchas cosas de mi condición, pero en lo de ser mentiroso vas muy fuera de la verdad, porque me precio de decirla en todo acontecimiento. En lo del viaje largo has acertado, pues, sin duda, siendo Dios servido, dentro de cuatro o cinco días me partiré a Flandes, aunque tú me amenazas que he de torcer el camino, y no querría que en él me sucediese algún desmán que lo estorbase.

-Calle, señorito -respondió Preciosa-, y encomiéndose a Dios, que todo se hará bien; y sepa que yo no sé nada de lo que digo, y no es maravilla que, como hablo mucho y a bulto, acierte en alguna cosa, y yo querría acertar en persuadirte a que no te partieses, sino que sosegases el pecho y te estuvieses con tus padres, para darles buena vejez; porque no estoy bien con estas idas y venidas a Flandes, principalmente los mozos de tan tierna edad como la tuya. Déjate crecer un poco, para que puedas llevar los trabajos de la guerra; cuanto más, que harta

guerra tienes en tu casa: hartos combates amorosos te sobresaltan el pecho. Sosiega, sosiega, alborotadito, y mira lo que haces primero que te cases, y danos una limosnita por Dios y por quien tú eres; que en verdad que creo que eres bien nacido. Y si a esto se junta el ser verdadero, yo cantaré la gala al vencimiento de haber acertado en cuanto te he dicho.

-Otra vez te he dicho, niña -respondió el don Juan que había de ser Andrés Caballero-, que en todo aciertas, sino en el temor que tienes que no debo de ser muy verdadero; que en esto te engañas, sin alguna duda. La palabra que yo doy en el campo, la cumpliré en la ciudad y adonde quiera, sin serme pedida, pues no se puede preciar de caballero quien toca en el vicio de mentiroso. Mi padre te dará limosna por Dios y por mí; que en verdad que esta mañana di cuanto tenía a unas damas, que a ser tan lisonjeras como hermosas, especialmente una dellas, no me arriendo la ganancia.

Oyendo esto Cristina, con el recato de la otra vez, dijo a las demás gitanas:

-¡Ay, niñas, que me maten si no lo dice por los tres reales de a ocho que nos dio esta mañana!

-No es así -respondió una de las dos-, porque dijo que eran damas, y nosotras no lo somos; y, siendo él tan verdadero como dice, no había de mentir en esto.

-No es mentira de tanta consideración -respondió Cristina-la que se dice sin perjuicio de nadie, y en provecho y crédito del que la dice. Pero, con todo esto, veo que no nos dan nada, ni nos mandan bailar.

Subió en esto la gitana vieja, y dijo:

-Nieta, acaba, que es tarde y hay mucho que hacer y más que decir.

-Y ¿qué hay, abuela? -preguntó Preciosa-. ¿Hay hijo o hija?

-Hijo, y muy lindo -respondió la vieja-. Ven, Preciosa, y oirás verdaderas maravillas.

-¡Plega a Dios que no muera de sobreparto! -dijo Preciosa.

-Todo se mirará muy bien -replicó la vieja-; cuanto más, que hasta aquí todo ha sido parto derecho, y el infante es como un oro.

-¿Ha parido alguna señora? -preguntó el padre de Andrés Caballero.

-Sí, señor -respondió la gitana-, pero ha sido el parto tan secreto, que no le sabe sino Preciosa y yo, y otra persona; y así, no podemos decir quién es.

-Ni aquí lo queremos saber -dijo uno de los presentes-, pero desdichada de aquella que en vuestras lenguas deposita su secreto, y en vuestra ayuda pone su honra.

-No todas somos malas -respondió Preciosa-: quizá hay alguna entre nosotras que se precia de secreta y de verdadera, tanto cuanto el hombre más estirado que hay en esta sala; y vámonos, abuela, que aquí nos tienen en poco; pues en verdad que no somos ladronas ni rogamos a nadie.

-No os enojéis, Preciosa -dijo el padre-; que, a lo menos de vos, imagino que no se puede presumir cosa mala, que vuestro buen rostro os acredita y sale por fiador de vuestras buenas obras. Por vida de Preciosita, que bailéis un poco con vuestras compañeras; que aquí tengo un doblón de oro de a dos caras, que ninguna es como la vuestra, aunque son de dos reyes.

Apenas hubo oído esto la vieja, cuando dijo:

-Ea, niñas, haldas en cinta, y dad contento a estos señores.

Tomó las sonajas Preciosa, y dieron sus vueltas, hicieron y deshicieron todos sus lazos con tanto donaire y desenvoltura, que tras los pies se llevaban los ojos de cuantos las miraban, especialmente los de Andrés, que así se iban entre los pies de Preciosa, como si allí tuvieran el centro de su gloria. Pero turbósele la suerte de manera que se la volvió en infierno; y fue el caso que en la fuga del baile se le cayó a Preciosa el papel que le había dado el paje, y, apenas hubo caído, cuando le alzó el que no tenía buen concepto de las gitanas, y, abriéndole al punto, dijo: -¡Bueno; sonetico tenemos! Cese el baile, y escúchenle; que, según el primer verso, en verdad que no es nada necio.

Pesóle a Preciosa, por no saber lo que en él venía, y rogó que no le leyesen, y que se le volviesen; y todo el ahínco que en esto ponía eran espuelas que apremiaban el deseo de Andrés para oírle. Finalmente, el caballero le leyó en alta voz, y era éste:

-Cuando Preciosa el panderete toca  
y hiere el dulce son los aires vanos,  
perlas son que derrama con las manos;  
flores son que despide de la boca.

Suspensa el alma, y la cordura loca,  
queda a los dulces actos sobrehumanos,  
que, de limpios, de honestos y de sanos,  
su fama al cielo levantado toca.

Colgadas del menor de sus cabellos  
mil almas lleva, y a sus plantas tiene  
amor rendidas una y otra flecha.

Ciega y alumbra con sus soles bellos,  
su imperio amor por ellos le mantiene,  
y aún más grandezas de su ser sospecha.

-¡Por Dios -dijo el que leyó el soneto-, que tiene donaire el poeta que le

escribió!

-No es poeta, señor, sino un paje muy galán y muy hombre de bien -dijo Preciosa.

(Mirad lo que habéis dicho, Preciosa, y lo que vais a decir; que ésas no son alabanzas del paje, sino lanzas que traspasan el corazón de Andrés, que las escucha. ¿Queréislo ver, niña? Pues volved los ojos y veréisle desmayado encima de la silla, con un trasudor de muerte; no penséis, doncella, que os ama tan de burlas Andrés que no le hieran y sobresalten el menor de vuestros descuidos. Llegaos a él en hora buena, y decilde algunas palabras al oído, que vayan derechas al corazón y le vuelvan de su desmayo. ¡No, sino andaos a traer sonetos cada día en vuestra alabanza, y veréis cuál os le ponen!) Todo esto pasó así como se ha dicho: que Andrés, en oyendo el soneto, mil celosas imaginaciones le sobresaltaron. No se desmayó, pero perdió la color de manera que, viéndole su padre, le dijo: -¿Qué tienes, don Juan, que parece que te vas a desmayar, según se te ha mudado el color?

-Espérense -dijo a esta sazón Preciosa-: déjenmele decir unas ciertas palabras al oído, y verán como no se desmaya.

Y, llegándose a él, le dijo, casi sin mover los labios:

-¡Gentil ánimo para gitano! ¿Cómo podréis, Andrés, sufrir el tormento de toca, pues no podéis llevar el de un papel?

Y, haciéndole media docena de cruces sobre el corazón, se apartó dél; y entonces Andrés respiró un poco, y dio a entender que las palabras de Preciosa le habían aprovechado.

Finalmente, el doblón de dos caras se le dieron a Preciosa, y ella dijo a sus compañeras que le trocaría y repartiría con ellas hidalgamente. El padre de Andrés le dijo que le dejase por escrito las palabras que había dicho a don Juan, que las quería saber en todo caso. Ella dijo que las diría de muy buena gana, y que entendiesen que, aunque parecían cosa de burla, tenían gracia especial para preservar el mal del corazón y los vaguidos de cabeza, y que las palabras eran:

-«Cabecita, cabecita,  
tente en ti, no te resbales,

y apareja dos puntales  
de la paciencia bendita.



Solicita

la bonita  
confiancita;

no te inclines  
a pensamientos ruines;  
verás cosas  
que toquen en milagrosas,

Dios delante  
y San Cristóbal gigante».

»Con la mitad destas palabras que le digan, y con seis cruces que le hagan sobre el corazón a la persona que tuviere vaguidos de cabeza -dijo Preciosa-, quedará como una manzana.

Cuando la gitana vieja oyó el ensalmo y el embuste, quedó pasmada; y más lo quedó Andrés, que vio que todo era invención de su agudo ingenio. Quedáronse con el soneto, porque no quiso pedirle Preciosa, por no dar otro tártago a Andrés; que ya sabía ella, sin ser enseñada, lo que era dar sustos y martelos, y sobresaltos celosos a los rendidos amantes.

Despidiéronse las gitanas, y, al irse, dijo Preciosa a don Juan:

-Mire, señor, cualquiera día desta semana es próspero para partidas, y ninguno es aciago; apesure el irse lo más presto que pudiere, que le aguarda una vida ancha, libre y muy gustosa, si quiere acomodarse a ella.

-No es tan libre la del soldado, a mi parecer -respondió don Juan-, que no tenga más de sujeción que de libertad; pero, con todo esto, haré como viere.

-Más veréis de lo que pensáis -respondió Preciosa-, y Dios os lleve y traiga con bien, como vuestra buena presencia merece.

Con estas últimas palabras quedó contento Andrés, y las gitanas se fueron contentísimas.

Trocaron el doblón, repartiéronle entre todas igualmente, aunque la vieja guardiana llevaba siempre parte y media de lo que se juntaba, así por la mayoría, como por ser ella el aguja por quien se guiaban en el maremagno de sus bailes, donaires, y aun de sus embustes.

Llegóse, en fin, el día que Andrés Caballero se apareció una mañana en el primer lugar de su aparecimiento, sobre una mula de alquiler, sin criado alguno. Halló en él a Preciosa y a su abuela, de las cuales conocido, le recibieron con mucho gusto. Él les dijo que le guiasen al rancho antes que entrase el día y con él se descubriesen las señas que llevaba, si acaso le buscasen. Ellas, que, como advertidas, vinieron solas, dieron la vuelta, y de allí a poco rato llegaron a sus barracas.

Entró Andrés en la una, que era la mayor del rancho, y luego acudieron a verle diez o doce gitanos, todos mozos y todos gallardos y bien hechos, a quien ya la vieja había dado cuenta del nuevo compañero que les había de venir, sin tener necesidad de encomendarles el secreto; que, como ya se ha dicho, ellos le guardan con sagacidad y puntualidad nunca vista. Echaron luego ojo a la mula, y

dijo uno dellos: -Ésta se podrá vender el jueves en Toledo.

-Eso no -dijo Andrés-, porque no hay mula de alquiler que no sea conocida de todos los mozos de mulas que trajinan por España.

-Par Dios, señor Andrés -dijo uno de los gitanos-, que, aunque la mula tuviera más señales que las que han de preceder al día tremendo, aquí la transformáramos de manera que no la conociera la madre que la parió ni el dueño que la ha criado.

-Con todo eso -respondió Andrés-, por esta vez se ha de seguir y tomar el parecer mío. A esta mula se ha de dar muerte, y ha de ser enterrada donde aun los huesos no parezcan.

-¡Pecado grande! -dijo otro gitano-: ¿a una inocente se ha de quitar la vida? No diga tal el buen Andrés, sino haga una cosa: mírela bien agora, de manera que se le queden estampadas todas sus señales en la memoria, y déjenmela llevar a mí; y si de aquí a dos horas la conociere, que me lardeen como a un negro fugitivo.

-En ninguna manera consentiré -dijo Andrés-que la mula no muera, aunque más me aseguren su transformación. Yo temo ser descubierto si a ella no la cubre la tierra. Y, si se hace por el provecho que de venderla puede seguirse, no vengo tan desnudo a esta cofradía, que no pueda pagar de entrada más de lo que valen cuatro mulas.

-Pues así lo quiere el señor Andrés Caballero -dijo otro gitano-, muera la sin culpa; y Dios sabe si me pesa, así por su mocedad, pues aún no ha cerrado (cosa no usada entre mulas de alquiler), como porque debe ser andariega, pues no tiene costras en las ijadas, ni llagas de la espuela.

Dilatóse su muerte hasta la noche, y en lo que quedaba de aquel día se hicieron las ceremonias de la entrada de Andrés a ser gitano, que fueron: desembarazaron luego un rancho de los mejores del aduar, y adornáronle de ramos y juncia; y, sentándose Andrés sobre un medio alcornoque, pusieronle en las manos un martillo y unas tenazas, y, al son de dos guitarras que dos gitanos tañían, le hicieron dar dos cabriolas; luego le desnudaron un brazo, y con una cinta de seda nueva y un garrote le dieron dos vueltas blandamente.

A todo se halló presente Preciosa y otras muchas gitanas, viejas y mozas; que las unas con maravilla, otras con amor, le miraban; tal era la gallarda disposición de Andrés, que hasta los gitanos le quedaron aficionadísimos.

Hechas, pues, las referidas ceremonias, un gitano viejo tomó por la mano a Preciosa, y, puesto delante de Andrés, dijo:

-Esta muchacha, que es la flor y la nata de toda la hermosura de las gitanas que sabemos que viven en España, te la entregamos, ya por esposa o ya por amiga, que en esto puedes hacer lo que fuere más de tu gusto, porque la libre y

ancha vida nuestra no está sujeta a melindres ni a muchas ceremonias. Mírala bien, y mira si te agrada, o si vees en ella alguna cosa que te descontente; y si la vees, escoge entre las doncellas que aquí están la que más te contentare; que la que escogieres te daremos; pero has de saber que una vez escogida, no la has de dejar por otra, ni te has de empachar ni entremeter, ni con las casadas ni con las doncellas. Nosotros guardamos inviolablemente la ley de la amistad: ninguno solicita la prenda del otro; libres vivimos de la amarga pestilencia de los celos. Entre nosotros, aunque hay muchos incestos, no hay ningún adulterio; y, cuando le hay en la mujer propia, o alguna bellaquería en la amiga, no vamos a la justicia a pedir castigo: nosotros somos los jueces y los verdugos de nuestras esposas o amigas; con la misma facilidad las matamos, y las enterramos por las montañas y desiertos, como si fueran animales nocivos; no hay pariente que las venga, ni padres que nos pidan su muerte. Con este temor y miedo ellas procuran ser castas, y nosotros, como ya he dicho, vivimos seguros. Pocas cosas tenemos que no sean comunes a todos, excepto la mujer o la amiga, que queremos que cada una sea del que le cupo en suerte. Entre nosotros así hace divorcio la vejez como la muerte; el que quisiere puede dejar la mujer vieja, como él sea mozo, y escoger otra que corresponda al gusto de sus años. Con estas y con otras leyes y estatutos nos conservamos y vivimos alegres; somos señores de los campos, de los sembrados, de las selvas, de los montes, de las fuentes y de los ríos. Los montes nos ofrecen leña de balde; los árboles, frutas; las viñas, uvas; las huertas, hortaliza; las fuentes, agua; los ríos, peces, y los vedados, caza; sombra, las peñas; aire fresco, las quiebras; y casas, las cuevas. Para nosotros las inclemencias del cielo son oreos, refrigerio las nieves, baños la lluvia, músicas los truenos y hachas los relámpagos. Para nosotros son los duros terreros colchones de blandas plumas: el cuero curtido de nuestros cuerpos nos sirve de arnés impenetrable que nos defiende; a nuestra ligereza no la impiden grillos, ni la detienen barrancos, ni la contrastan paredes; a nuestro ánimo no le tuercen cordeles, ni le menoscaban garruchas, ni le ahogan tocas, ni le doman potros. Del sí al no no hacemos diferencia cuando nos conviene: siempre nos preciamos más de mártires que de confesores. Para nosotros se crían las bestias de carga en los campos, y se cortan las faldriqueras en las ciudades. No hay águila, ni ninguna otra ave de rapiña, que más presto se abalance a la presa que se le ofrece, que nosotros nos abalanzamos a las ocasiones que algún interés nos señalen; y, finalmente, tenemos muchas habilidades que felice fin nos prometen; porque en la cárcel cantamos, en el potro callamos, de día trabajamos y de noche hurtamos; o, por mejor decir, avisamos que nadie viva descuidado de mirar dónde pone su hacienda. No nos fatiga el temor de perder la honra, ni nos desvela la ambición de acrecentarla; ni sustentamos bandos, ni madrugamos a

dar memoriales, ni acompañar magnates, ni a solicitar favores. Por dorados techos y suntuosos palacios estimamos estas barracas y movibles ranchos; por cuadros y países de Flandes, los que nos da la naturaleza en esos levantados riscos y nevadas peñas, tendidos prados y espesos bosques que a cada paso a los ojos se nos muestran. Somos astrólogos rústicos, porque, como casi siempre dormimos al cielo descubierto, a todas horas sabemos las que son del día y las que son de la noche; vemos cómo arrincona y barre la aurora las estrellas del cielo, y cómo ella sale con su compañera el alba, alegrando el aire, enfriando el agua y humedeciendo la tierra; y luego, tras ellas, el sol, dorando cumbres (como dijo el otro poeta) y rizando montes: ni tememos quedar helados por su ausencia cuando nos hiere a soslayo con sus rayos, ni quedar abrasados cuando con ellos particularmente nos toca; un mismo rostro hacemos al sol que al yelo, a la esterilidad que a la abundancia. En conclusión, somos gente que vivimos por nuestra industria y pico, y sin entremeternos con el antiguo refrán: «Iglesia, o mar, o casa real»; tenemos lo que queremos, pues nos contentamos con lo que tenemos. Todo esto os he dicho, generoso mancebo, porque no ignoréis la vida a que habéis venido y el trato que habéis de profesar, el cual os he pintado aquí en borrón; que otras muchas e infinitas cosas iréis descubriendo en él con el tiempo, no menos dignas de consideración que las que habéis oído.

Calló, en diciendo esto el elocuente y viejo gitano, y el novicio dijo que se holgaba mucho de haber sabido tan loables estatutos, y que él pensaba hacer profesión en aquella orden tan puesta en razón y en políticos fundamentos; y que sólo le pesaba no haber venido más presto en conocimiento de tan alegre vida, y que desde aquel punto renunciaba la profesión de caballero y la vanagloria de su ilustre linaje, y lo ponía todo debajo del yugo, o, por mejor decir, debajo de las leyes con que ellos vivían, pues con tan alta recompensa le satisfacían el deseo de servirlos, entregándole a la divina Preciosa, por quien él dejaría coronas e imperios, y sólo los desearía para servirla.

A lo cual respondió Preciosa:

-Puesto que estos señores legisladores han hallado por sus leyes que soy tuya, y que por tuya te me han entregado, yo he hallado por la ley de mi voluntad, que es la más fuerte de todas, que no quiero serlo si no es con las condiciones que antes que aquí vinieses entre los dos concertamos. Dos años has de vivir en nuestra compañía primero que de la mía goces, porque tú no te arrepientas por ligero, ni yo quede engañada por presurosa. Condiciones rompen leyes; las que te he puesto sabes: si las quisieres guardar, podrá ser que sea tuya y tú seas mío; y donde no, aún no es muerta la mula, tus vestidos están enteros, y de tus dineros no te falta un ardite; la ausencia que has hecho no ha sido aún de un día; que de lo que dél falta te puedes servir y dar lugar que consideres lo que más te

conviene. Estos señores bien pueden entregarte mi cuerpo; pero no mi alma, que es libre y nació libre, y ha de ser libre en tanto que yo quisiere. Si te quedas, te estimaré en mucho; si te vuelves, no te tendré en menos; porque, a mi parecer, los ímpetus amorosos corren a rienda suelta, hasta que encuentran con la razón o con el desengaño; y no querría yo que fueses tú para conmigo como es el cazador, que, en alcanzado la liebre que sigue, la coge y la deja por correr tras otra que le huye. Ojos hay engañados que a la primera vista tan bien les parece el oropel como el oro, pero a poco rato bien conocen la diferencia que hay de lo fino a lo falso. Esta mi hermosura que tú dices que tengo, que la estimas sobre el sol y la encareces sobre el oro, ¿qué sé yo si de cerca te parecerá sombra, y tocada, cairás en que es de alquimia? Dos años te doy de tiempo para que tantees y ponderes lo que será bien que escojas o será justo que deseches; que la prenda que una vez comprada nadie se puede deshacer della, sino con la muerte, bien es que haya tiempo, y mucho, para miralla y remiralla, y ver en ella las faltas o las virtudes que tiene; que yo no me rijo por la bárbara e insolente licencia que estos mis parientes se han tomado de dejar las mujeres, o castigarlas, cuando se les antoja; y, como yo no pienso hacer cosa que llame al castigo, no quiero tomar compañía que por su gusto me deseche.

-Tienes razón, ¡oh Preciosa! -dijo a este punto Andrés-; y así, si quieres que asegure tus temores y menoscabe tus sospechas, jurándote que no saldré un punto de las órdenes que me pusieres, mira qué juramento quieres que haga, o qué otra seguridad puedo darte, que a todo me hallarás dispuesto.

-Los juramentos y promesas que hace el cautivo porque le den libertad, pocas veces se cumplen con ella -dijo Preciosa-; y así son, según pienso, los del amante: que, por conseguir su deseo, prometerá las alas de Mercurio y los rayos de Júpiter, como me prometió a mí un cierto poeta, y juraba por la laguna Estigia. No quiero juramentos, señor Andrés, ni quiero promesas; sólo quiero remitirlo todo a la experiencia deste noviciado, y a mí se me quedará el cargo de guardarme, cuando vos le tuviéredes de ofenderme.

-Sea así -respondió Andrés-. Sola una cosa pido a estos señores y compañeros míos, y es que no me fuercen a que hurte ninguna cosa por tiempo de un mes siquiera; porque me parece que no he de acertar a ser ladrón si antes no preceden muchas liciones.

-Calla, hijo -dijo el gitano viejo-, que aquí te industriaremos de manera que salgas un águila en el oficio; y cuando le sepas, has de gustar dél de modo que te comas las manos tras él. ¡Ya es cosa de burla salir vacío por la mañana y volver cargado a la noche al rancho!

-De azotes he visto yo volver a algunos dósos vacíos -dijo Andrés.

-No se toman truchas, etcétera -replicó el viejo-: todas las cosas desta vida



están sujetas a diversos peligros, y las acciones del ladrón al de las galeras, azotes y horca; pero no porque corra un navío tormenta, o se anega, han de dejar los otros de navegar. ¡Bueno sería que porque la guerra come los hombres y los caballos, dejase de haber soldados! Cuanto más, que el que es azotado por justicia, entre nosotros, es tener un hábito en las espaldas, que le parece mejor que si le trujese en los pechos, y de los buenos. El toque está en no acabar acoceando el aire en la flor de nuestra juventud y a los primeros delitos; que el mosqueo de las espaldas, ni el apalear el agua en las galeras, no lo estimamos en un cacao. Hijo Andrés, reposad ahora en el nido debajo de nuestras alas, que a su tiempo os sacaremos a volar, y en parte donde no volváis sin presa; y lo dicho dicho: que os habéis de lamer los dedos tras cada hurto.

-Pues, para recompensar -dijo Andrés-lo que yo podía hurtar en este tiempo que se me da de venia, quiero repartir docientos escudos de oro entre todos los del rancho.

Apenas hubo dicho esto, cuando arremetieron a él muchos gitanos; y, levantándole en los brazos y sobre los hombros, le cantaban el «¡Víctor, víctor!», y el «¡grande Andrés!», añadiendo: «¡Y viva, viva Preciosa, amada prenda suya!» Las gitanas hicieron lo mismo con Preciosa, no sin envidia de Cristina y de otras gitanillas que se hallaron presentes; que la envidia tan bien se aloja en los aduares de los bárbaros y en las chozas de pastores, como en palacios de príncipes, y esto de ver medrar al vecino que me parece que no tiene más méritos que yo, fatiga.

Hecho esto, comieron lautamente; repartióse el dinero prometido con equidad y justicia; renováronse las alabanzas de Andrés, subieron al cielo la hermosura de Preciosa. Llegó la noche, acocotaron la mula y enterráronla de modo que quedó seguro Andrés de ser por ella descubierto; y también enterraron con ella sus alhajas, como fueron silla y freno y cinchas, a uso de los indios, que sepultan con ellos sus más ricas preases.

De todo lo que había visto y oído y de los ingenios de los gitanos quedó admirado Andrés, y con propósito de seguir y conseguir su empresa, sin entrometerse nada en sus costumbres; o, a lo menos, escusarlo por todas las vías que pudiese, pensando exentarse de la jurisdicción de obedecellos en las cosas injustas que le mandasen, a costa de su dinero.

Otro día les rogó Andrés que mudasen de sitio y se alejasen de Madrid, porque temía ser conocido si allí estaba. Ellos dijeron que ya tenían determinado irse a los montes de Toledo, y desde allí correr y garramar toda la tierra circunvecina. Levantaron, pues, el rancho y diéronle a Andrés una pollina en que fuese, pero él no la quiso, sino irse a pie, sirviendo de lacayo a Preciosa, que sobre otra iba: ella contentísima de ver cómo triunfaba de su gallardo escudero, y

él ni más ni menos, de ver junto a sí a la que había hecho señora de su albedrío.

¡Oh poderosa fuerza deste que llaman dulce dios de la amargura (título que le ha dado la ociosidad y el descuido nuestro), y con qué veras nos avasallas, y cuán sin respecto nos tratas! Caballero es Andrés, y mozo de muy buen entendimiento, criado casi toda su vida en la Corte y con el regalo de sus ricos padres; y desde ayer acá ha hecho tal mudanza, que engañó a sus criados y a sus amigos, defraudó las esperanzas que sus padres en él tenían; dejó el camino de Flandes, donde había de ejercitar el valor de su persona y acrecentar la honra de su linaje, y se vino a postrarse a los pies de una muchacha, y a ser su lacayo; que, puesto que hermosísima, en fin, era gitana: privilegio de la hermosura, que trae al redopelo y por la melena a sus pies a la voluntad más esenta.

De allí a cuatro días llegaron a una aldea dos leguas de Toledo, donde asentaron su aduar, dando primero algunas prendas de plata al alcalde del pueblo, en fianzas de que en él ni en todo su término no hurtarían ninguna cosa. Hecho esto, todas las gitanas viejas, y algunas mozas, y los gitanos, se esparcieron por todos los lugares, o, a lo menos, apartados por cuatro o cinco leguas de aquel donde habían asentado su real. Fue con ellos Andrés a tomar la primera lición de ladrón; pero, aunque le dieron muchas en aquella salida, ninguna se le asentó; antes, correspondiendo a su buena sangre, con cada hurto que sus maestros hacían se le arrancaba a él el alma; y tal vez hubo que pagó de su dinero los hurtos que sus compañeros había hecho, conmovido de las lágrimas de sus dueños; de lo cual los gitanos se desesperaban, diciéndole que era contravenir a sus estatutos y ordenanzas, que prohibían la entrada a la caridad en sus pechos, la cual, en teniéndola, habían de dejar de ser ladrones, cosa que no les estaba bien en ninguna manera.

Viendo, pues, esto Andrés, dijo que él quería hurtar por sí solo, sin ir en compañía de nadie; porque para huir del peligro tenía ligereza, y para cometelle no le faltaba el ánimo; así que, el premio o el castigo de lo que hurtase quería que fuese suyo.

Procuraron los gitanos disuadirle deste propósito, diciéndole que le podrían suceder ocasiones donde fuese necesaria la compañía, así para acometer como para defenderse, y que una persona sola no podía hacer grandes presas. Pero, por más que dijeron, Andrés quiso ser ladrón solo y señero, con intención de apartarse de la cuadrilla y comprar por su dinero alguna cosa que pudiese decir que la había hurtado, y deste modo cargar lo que menos pudiese sobre su conciencia.

Usando, pues, desta industria, en menos de un mes trujo más provecho a la compañía que trujeron cuatro de los más estirados ladrones della; de que no poco se holgaba Preciosa, viendo a su tierno amante tan lindo y tan despejado ladrón.

Pero, con todo eso, estaba temerosa de alguna desgracia; que no quisiera ella verle en afrenta por todo el tesoro de Venecia, obligada a tenerle aquella buena voluntad por los muchos servicios y regalos que su Andrés le hacía.

Poco más de un mes se estuvieron en los términos de Toledo, donde hicieron su agosto, aunque era por el mes de setiembre, y desde allí se entraron en Estremadura, por ser tierra rica y caliente. Pasaba Andrés con Preciosa honestos, discretos y enamorados coloquios, y ella poco a poco se iba enamorando de la discreción y buen trato de su amante; y él, del mismo modo, si pudiera crecer su amor, fuera creciendo: tal era la honestidad, discreción y belleza de su Preciosa. A doquiera que llegaban, él se llevaba el precio y las apuestas de corredor y de saltar más que ninguno; jugaba a los bolos y a la pelota estremadamente; tiraba la barra con mucha fuerza y singular destreza. Finalmente, en poco tiempo voló su fama por toda Estremadura, y no había lugar donde no se hablase de la gallarda disposición del gitano Andrés Caballero y de sus gracias y habilidades; y al par desta fama corría la de la hermosura de la gitanilla, y no había villa, lugar ni aldea donde no los llamasen para regocijar las fiestas votivas suyas, o para otros particulares regocijos. Desta manera, iba el aduar rico, próspero y contento, y los amantes gozosos con sólo mirarse.

Sucedió, pues, que, teniendo el aduar entre unas encinas, algo apartado del camino real, oyeron una noche, casi a la mitad della, ladrar sus perros con mucho ahínco y más de lo que acostumbraban; salieron algunos gitanos, y con ellos Andrés, a ver a quién ladraban, y vieron que se defendía dellos un hombre vestido de blanco, a quien tenían dos perros asido de una pierna; llegaron y quitáronle, y uno de los gitanos le dijo: -¿Quién diablos os trujo por aquí, hombre, a tales horas y tan fuera de camino? ¿Venís a hurtar por ventura? Porque en verdad que habéis llegado a buen puerto.

-No vengo a hurtar -respondió el mordido-, ni sé si vengo o no fuera de camino, aunque bien veo que vengo descaminado. Pero decidme, señores, ¿está por aquí alguna venta o lugar donde pueda recogerme esta noche y curarme de las heridas que vuestros perros me han hecho?

-No hay lugar ni venta donde podamos encaminaros -respondió Andrés-; mas, para curar vuestras heridas y alojaros esta noche, no os faltará comodidad en nuestros ranchos. Veníos con nosotros, que, aunque somos gitanos, no lo parecemos en la caridad.

-Dios la use con vosotros -respondió el hombre-; y llevadme donde quisiéredes, que el dolor desta pierna me fatiga mucho.

Llegóse a él Andrés y otro gitano caritativo (que aun entre los demonios hay unos peores que otros, y entre muchos malos hombres suele haber algún bueno), y entre los dos le llevaron. Hacía la noche clara con la luna, de manera que

puieron ver que el hombre era mozo de gentil rostro y talle; venía vestido todo de lienzo blanco, y atravesada por las espaldas y ceñida a los pechos una como camisa o talega de lienzo. Llegaron a la barraca o toldo de Andrés, y con presteza encendieron lumbre y luz, y acudió luego la abuela de Preciosa a curar el herido, de quien ya le habían dado cuenta. Tomó algunos pelos de los perros, friólos en aceite, y, lavando primero con vino dos mordeduras que tenía en la pierna izquierda, le puso los pelos con el aceite en ellas y encima un poco de romero verde mascado; lióselo muy bien con paños limpios y santiguóle las heridas y díjole: -Dormid, amigo, que, con el ayuda de Dios, no será nada.

En tanto que curaban al herido, estaba Preciosa delante, y estúvole mirando ahincadamente, y lo mismo hacía él a ella, de modo que Andrés echó de ver en la atención con que el mozo la miraba; pero echólo a que la mucha hermosura de Preciosa se llevaba tras sí los ojos. En resolución, después de curado el mozo, le dejaron solo sobre un lecho hecho de heno seco, y por entonces no quisieron preguntarle nada de su camino ni de otra cosa.

Apenas se apartaron dél, cuando Preciosa llamó a Andrés aparte y le dijo:

-¿Acuérdate, Andrés, de un papel que se me cayó en tu casa cuando bailaba con mis compañeras, que, según creo, te dio un mal rato?

-Sí acuerdo -respondió Andrés-, y era un soneto en tu alabanza, y no malo.

-Pues has de saber, Andrés -replicó Preciosa-, que el que hizo aquel soneto es ese mozo mordido que dejamos en la choza; y en ninguna manera me engaño, porque me habló en Madrid dos o tres veces, y aun me dio un romance muy bueno. Allí andaba, a mi parecer, como paje; mas no de los ordinarios, sino de los favorecidos de algún príncipe; y en verdad te digo, Andrés, que el mozo es discreto, y bien razonado, y sobremanera honesto, y no sé qué pueda imaginar desta su venida y en tal traje.

-¿Qué puedes imaginar, Preciosa? -respondió Andrés-. Ninguna otra cosa sino que la misma fuerza que a mí me ha hecho gitano le ha hecho a él parecer molinero y venir a buscarte. ¡Ah, Preciosa, Preciosa, y cómo se va descubriendo que te quieres preciar de tener más de un rendido! Y si esto es así, acábame a mí primero y luego matarás a este otro, y no quieras sacrificarnos juntos en las aras de tu engaño, por no decir de tu belleza.

-¡Válame Dios -respondió Preciosa-, Andrés, y cuán delicado andas, y cuán de un sutil cabello tienes colgadas tus esperanzas y mi crédito, pues con tanta facilidad te ha penetrado el alma la dura espada de los celos! Dime, Andrés: si en esto hubiera artificio o engaño alguno, ¿no supiera yo callar y encubrir quién era este mozo? ¿Soy tan necia, por ventura, que te había de dar ocasión de poner en duda mi bondad y buen término? Calla, Andrés, por tu vida, y mañana procura sacar del pecho deste tu asombro adónde va, o a lo que viene. Podría ser que

estuviese engañada tu sospecha, como yo no lo estoy de que sea el que he dicho. Y, para más satisfacción tuya, pues ya he llegado a términos de satisfacerte, de cualquiera manera y con cualquiera intención que ese mozo venga, despídele luego y haz que se vaya, pues todos los de nuestra parcialidad te obedecen, y no habrá ninguno que contra tu voluntad le quiera dar acogida en su rancho; y, cuando esto así no suceda, yo te doy mi palabra de no salir del mío, ni dejarme ver de sus ojos, ni de todos aquellos que tú quisieres que no me vean. Mira, Andrés, no me pesa a mí de verte celoso, pero pesarme ha mucho si te veo indiscreto.

-Como no me veas loco, Preciosa -respondió Andrés-, cualquiera otra demostración será poca o ninguna para dar a entender adónde llega y cuánto fatiga la amarga y dura presunción de los celos. Pero, con todo eso, yo haré lo que me mandas, y sabré, si es que es posible, qué es lo que este señor paje poeta quiere, dónde va, o qué es lo que busca; que podría ser que por algún hilo que sin cuidado muestre, sacase yo todo el ovillo con que temo viene a enredarme.

-Nunca los celos, a lo que imagino -dijo Preciosa-, dejan el entendimiento libre para que pueda juzgar las cosas como ellas son. Siempre miran los celosos con antojos de allende, que hacen las cosas pequeñas, grandes; los enanos, gigantes, y las sospechas, verdades. Por vida tuya y por la mía, Andrés, que procedas en esto, y en todo lo que tocara a nuestros conciertos, cuerda y discretamente; que si así lo hicieres, sé que me has de conceder la palma de honesta y recatada, y de verdadera en todo extremo.

Con esto se despidió de Andrés, y él se quedó esperando el día para tomar la confesión al herido, llena de turbación el alma y de mil contrarias imaginaciones. No podía creer sino que aquel paje había venido allí atraído de la hermosura de Preciosa; porque piensa el ladrón que todos son de su condición. Por otra parte, la satisfacción que Preciosa le había dado le parecía ser de tanta fuerza, que le obligaba a vivir seguro y a dejar en las manos de su bondad toda su ventura.

Llegóse el día, visitó al mordido; preguntóle cómo se llamaba y adónde iba, y cómo caminaba tan tarde y tan fuera de camino; aunque primero le preguntó cómo estaba, y si se sentía sin dolor de las mordeduras. A lo cual respondió el mozo que se hallaba mejor y sin dolor alguno, y de manera que podía ponerse en camino. A lo de decir su nombre y adónde iba, no dijo otra cosa sino que se llamaba Alonso Hurtado, y que iba a Nuestra Señora de la Peña de Francia a un cierto negocio, y que por llegar con brevedad caminaba de noche, y que la pasada había perdido el camino, y acaso había dado con aquel aduar, donde los perros que le guardaban le habían puesto del modo que había visto.

No le pareció a Andrés legítima esta declaración, sino muy bastarda, y de nuevo volvieron a hacerle cosquillas en el alma sus sospechas; y así, le dijo: -

Hermano, si yo fuera juez y vos hubiérades caído debajo de mi jurisdicción por algún delito, el cual pidiera que se os hicieran las preguntas que yo os he hecho, la respuesta que me habéis dado obligara a que os apretara los cordeles. Yo no quiero saber quién sois, cómo os llamáis o adónde vais; pero adviértoos que, si os conviene mentir en este vuestro viaje, mintáis con más apariencia de verdad. Decís que vais a la Peña de Francia, y dejáisla a la mano derecha, más atrás deste lugar donde estamos bien treinta leguas; camináis de noche por llegar presto, y vais fuera de camino por entre bosques y encinares que no tienen sendas apenas, cuanto más caminos. Amigo, levantaos y aprended a mentir, y andad en hora buena. Pero, por este buen aviso que os doy, ¿no me diréis una verdad? (que sí diréis, pues tan mal sabéis mentir). Decidme: ¿sois por ventura uno que yo he visto muchas veces en la Corte, entre paje y caballero, que tenía fama de ser gran poeta; uno que hizo un romance y un soneto a una gitanilla que los días pasados andaba en Madrid, que era tenida por singular en la belleza? Decídmelo, que yo os prometo por la fe de caballero gitano de guardaros el secreto que vos viéredes que os conviene. Mirad que negarme la verdad, de que no sois el que yo digo, no llevaría camino, porque este rostro que yo veo aquí es el que vi en Madrid. Sin duda alguna que la gran fama de vuestro entendimiento me hizo muchas veces que os mirase como a hombre raro e insigne, y así se me quedó en la memoria vuestra figura, que os he venido a conocer por ella, aun puesto en el diferente traje en que estáis agora del en que yo os vi entonces. No os turbéis; animaos, y no penséis que habéis llegado a un pueblo de ladrones, sino a un asilo que os sabrá guardar y defender de todo el mundo. Mirad, yo imagino una cosa, y si es así como la imagino, vos habéis topado con vuestra buena suerte en haber encontrado conmigo. Lo que imagino es que, enamorado de Preciosa, aquella hermosa gitana a quien hicisteis los versos, habéis venido a buscarla, por lo que yo no os tendré en menos, sino en mucho más; que, aunque gitano, la experiencia me ha mostrado adónde se estiende la poderosa fuerza de amor, y las transformaciones que hace hacer a los que coge debajo de su jurisdicción y mando. Si esto es así, como creo que sin duda lo es, aquí está la gitana.

-Sí, aquí está, que yo la vi anoche -dijo el mordido; razón con que Andrés quedó como difunto, pareciéndole que había salido al cabo con la confirmación de sus sospechas-. Anoche la vi -tornó a referir el mozo-, pero no me atreví a decirle quién era, porque no me convenía.

-Desa manera -dijo Andrés-, vos sois el poeta que yo he dicho.

-Sí soy -replicó el mancebo-; que no lo puedo ni lo quiero negar. Quizá podía ser que donde he pensado perderme hubiese venido a ganarme, si es que hay fidelidad en las selvas y buen acogimiento en los montes.

-Hayle, sin duda -respondió Andrés-, y entre nosotros, los gitanos, el mayor

secreto del mundo. Con esta confianza podéis, señor, descubrirme vuestro pecho, que hallaréis en el mío lo que veréis, sin doblez alguno. La gitanilla es parienta mía, y está sujeta a lo que quisiere hacer della; si la quisiéredes por esposa, yo y todos sus parientes gustaremos dello; y si por amiga, no usaremos de ningún melindre, con tal que tengáis dineros, porque la codicia por jamás sale de nuestros ranchos.

-Dineros traigo -respondió el mozo-: en estas mangas de camisa que traigo ceñida por el cuerpo vienen cuatrocientos escudos de oro.

Éste fue otro susto mortal que recibió Andrés, viendo que el traer tanto dinero no era sino para conquistar o comprar su prenda; y, con lengua ya turbada, dijo: - Buena cantidad es ésta; no hay sino descubriros, y manos a labor, que la muchacha, que no es nada boba, verá cuán bien le está ser vuestra.

-¡Ay amigo! -dijo a esta sazón el mozo-, quiero que sepáis que la fuerza que me ha hecho mudar de traje no es la de amor, que vos decís, ni de desear a Preciosa, que hermosas tiene Madrid que pueden y saben robar los corazones y rendir las almas tan bien y mejor que las más hermosas gitanas, puesto que confieso que la hermosura de vuestra parienta a todas las que yo he visto se aventaja. Quien me tiene en este traje, a pie y mordido de perros, no es amor, sino desgracia mía.

Con estas razones que el mozo iba diciendo, iba Andrés cobrando los espíritus perdidos, pareciéndole que se encaminaban a otro paradero del que él se imaginaba; y deseoso de salir de aquella confusión, volvió a reforzarle la seguridad con que podía descubrirse; y así, él prosiguió diciendo: -«Yo estaba en Madrid en casa de un título, a quien servía no como a señor, sino como a pariente. Éste tenía un hijo, único heredero suyo, el cual, así por el parentesco como por ser ambos de una edad y de una condición misma, me trataba con familiaridad y amistad grande. Sucedió que este caballero se enamoró de una doncella principal, a quien él escogiera de bonísima gana para su esposa, si no tuviera la voluntad sujeta, como buen hijo, a la de sus padres, que aspiraban a casarle más altamente; pero, con todo eso, la servía a hurto de todos los ojos que pudieran, con las lenguas, sacar a la plaza sus deseos; solos los míos eran testigos de sus intentos. Y una noche, que debía de haber escogido la desgracia para el caso que ahora os diré, pasando los dos por la puerta y calle desta señora, vimos arimados a ella dos hombres, al parecer, de buen talle. Quiso reconocerlos mi pariente, y apenas se encaminó hacia ellos, cuando echaron con mucha ligereza mano a las espadas y a dos broqueles, y se vinieron a nosotros, que hicimos lo mismo, y con iguales armas nos acometimos. Duró poco la pendencia, porque no duró mucho la vida de los dos contrarios, que, de dos estocadas que guiaron los celos de mi pariente y la defensa que yo le hacía, las

perdieron (caso extraño y pocas veces visto). Triunfando, pues, de lo que no quisiéramos, volvimos a casa, y, secretamente, tomando todos los dineros que podimos, nos fuimos a San Jerónimo, esperando el día, que descubriese lo sucedido y las presunciones que se tenían de los matadores. Supimos que de nosotros no había indicio alguno, y aconsejáronnos los prudentes religiosos que nos volviésemos a casa, y que no diésemos ni despertásemos con nuestra ausencia alguna sospecha contra nosotros. Y, ya que estábamos determinados de seguir su parecer, nos avisaron que los señores alcaldes de Corte habían preso en su casa a los padres de la doncella y a la misma doncella, y que entre otros criados a quien tomaron la confesión, una criada de la señora dijo cómo mi pariente paseaba a su señora de noche y de día; y que con este indicio habían acudido a buscarnos, y, no hallándonos, sino muchas señales de nuestra fuga, se confirmó en toda la Corte ser nosotros los matadores de aquellos dos caballeros, que lo eran, y muy principales. Finalmente, con parecer del conde mi pariente, y del de los religiosos, después de quince días que estuvimos escondidos en el monasterio, mi camarada, en hábito de fraile, con otro fraile se fue la vuelta de Aragón, con intención de pasarse a Italia, y desde allí a Flandes, hasta ver en qué paraba el caso. Yo quise dividir y apartar nuestra fortuna, y que no corriese nuestra suerte por una misma derrota; seguí otro camino diferente del suyo, y, en hábito de mozo de fraile, a pie, salí con un religioso, que me dejó en Talavera; desde allí aquí he venido solo y fuera de camino, hasta que anoche llegué a este encinal, donde me ha sucedido lo que habéis visto. Y si pregunté por el camino de la Peña de Francia, fue por responder algo a lo que se me preguntaba; que en verdad que no sé dónde cae la Peña de Francia, puesto que sé que está más arriba de Salamanca.»

-Así es verdad -respondió Andrés-, y ya la dejáis a mano derecha, casi veinte leguas de aquí; porque veáis cuán derecho camino llevábades si allá fuéades.

-El que yo pensaba llevar -replicó el mozo-no es sino a Sevilla; que allí tengo un caballero ginovés, grande amigo del conde mi pariente, que suele enviar a Génova gran cantidad de plata, y llevo disignio que me acomode con los que la suelen llevar, como uno dellos; y con esta estratagema seguramente podré pasar hasta Cartagena, y de allí a Italia, porque han de venir dos galeras muy presto a embarcar esta plata. Ésta es, buen amigo, mi historia: mirad si puedo decir que nace más de desgracia pura que de amores aguados. Pero si estos señores gitanos quisiesen llevarme en su compañía hasta Sevilla, si es que van allá, yo se lo pagaría muy bien; que me doy a entender que en su compañía iría más seguro, y no con el temor que llevo.

-Sí llevarán -respondió Andrés-; y si no fuéredes en nuestro aduar, porque hasta ahora no sé si va al Andalucía, iréis en otro que creo que habemos de topar



dentro de dos días, y con darles algo de lo que lleváis, facilitaréis con ellos otros imposibles mayores.

Dejóle Andrés, y vino a dar cuenta a los demás gitanos de lo que el mozo le había contado y de lo que pretendía, con el ofrecimiento que hacía de la buena paga y recompensa. Todos fueron de parecer que se quedase en el aduar. Sólo Preciosa tuvo el contrario, y la abuela dijo que ella no podía ir a Sevilla, ni a sus contornos, a causa que los años pasados había hecho una burla en Sevilla a un gorrero llamado Triguillos, muy conocido en ella, al cual le había hecho meter en una tinaja de agua hasta el cuello, desnudo en carnes, y en la cabeza puesta una corona de ciprés, esperando el filo de la media noche para salir de la tinaja a cavar y sacar un gran tesoro que ella le había hecho creer que estaba en cierta parte de su casa. Dijo que, como oyó el buen gorrero tocar a maitines, por no perder la coyuntura, se dio tanta priesa a salir de la tinaja que dio con ella y con él en el suelo, y con el golpe y con los cascos se magulló las carnes, derramóse el agua y él quedó nadando en ella, y dando voces que se ahogaba. Acudieron su mujer y sus vecinos con luces, y halláronle haciendo efectos de nadador, soplando y arrastrando la barriga por el suelo, y meneando brazos y piernas con mucha priesa, y diciendo a grandes voces: «¡Socorro, señores, que me ahogo!»; tal le tenía el miedo, que verdaderamente pensó que se ahogaba. Abrazáronse con él, sacáronle de aquel peligro, volvió en sí, contó la burla de la gitana, y, con todo eso, cavó en la parte señalada más de un estado en hondo, a pesar de todos cuantos le decían que era embuste mío; y si no se lo estorbara un vecino suyo, que tocaba ya en los cimientos de su casa, él diera con entrambas en el suelo, si le dejaran cavar todo cuanto él quisiera. Súpose este cuento por toda la ciudad, y hasta los muchachos le señalaban con el dedo y contaban su credulidad y mi embuste.

Esto contó la gitana vieja, y esto dio por excusa para no ir a Sevilla. Los gitanos, que ya sabían de Andrés Caballero que el mozo traía dineros en cantidad, con facilidad le acogieron en su compañía y se ofrecieron de guardarle y encubrirle todo el tiempo que él quisiese, y determinaron de torcer el camino a mano izquierda y entrarse en la Mancha y en el reino de Murcia.

Llamaron al mozo y diéronle cuenta de lo que pensaban hacer por él; él se lo agradeció y dio cien escudos de oro para que los repartiesen entre todos. Con esta dádiva quedaron más blandos que unas martas; sólo a Preciosa no contentó mucho la quedada de don Sancho, que así dijo el mozo que se llamaba; pero los gitanos se le mudaron en el de Clemente, y así le llamaron desde allí adelante. También quedó un poco torcido Andrés, y no bien satisfecho de haberse quedado Clemente, por parecerle que con poco fundamento había dejado sus primeros designios. Mas Clemente, como si le leyera la intención, entre otras

cosas le dijo que se holgaba de ir al reino de Murcia, por estar cerca de Cartagena, adonde si viniesen galeras, como él pensaba que habían de venir, pudiese con facilidad pasar a Italia. Finalmente, por traelle más ante los ojos y mirar sus acciones y escudriñar sus pensamientos, quiso Andrés que fuese Clemente su camarada, y Clemente tuvo esta amistad por gran favor que se le hacía. Andaban siempre juntos, gastaban largo, llovían escudos, corrían, saltaban, bailaban y tiraban la barra mejor que ninguno de los gitanos, y eran de las gitanas más que medianamente queridos, y de los gitanos en todo extremo respetados.

Dejaron, pues, a Estremadura y entráronse en la Mancha, y poco a poco fueron caminando al reino de Murcia. En todas las aldeas y lugares que pasaban había desafíos de pelota, de esgrima, de correr, de saltar, de tirar la barra y de otros ejercicios de fuerza, maña y ligereza, y de todos salían vencedores Andrés y Clemente, como de solo Andrés queda dicho. Y en todo este tiempo, que fueron más de mes y medio, nunca tuvo Clemente ocasión, ni él la procuró, de hablar a Preciosa, hasta que un día, estando juntos Andrés y ella, llegó él a la conversación, porque le llamaron, y Preciosa le dijo: -Desde la vez primera que llegaste a nuestro aduar te conocí, Clemente, y se me vinieron a la memoria los versos que en Madrid me diste; pero no quise decir nada, por no saber con qué intención venías a nuestras estancias; y, cuando supe tu desgracia, me pesó en el alma, y se aseguró mi pecho, que estaba sobresaltado, pensando que como había don Joanes en el mundo, y que se mudaban en Andreses, así podía haber don Sanchos que se mudasen en otros nombres. Háblote desta manera porque Andrés me ha dicho que te ha dado cuenta de quién es y de la intención con que se ha vuelto gitano -y así era la verdad; que Andrés le había hecho sabidor de toda su historia, por poder comunicar con él sus pensamientos-. Y no pienses que te fue de poco provecho el conocerte, pues por mi respecto y por lo que yo de ti dije, se facilitó el acogerte y admitirte en nuestra compañía, donde plega a Dios te suceda todo el bien que acertes a desearte. Este buen deseo quiero que me pagues en que no afees a Andrés la bajeza de su intento, ni le pintes cuán mal le está perseverar en este estado; que, puesto que yo imagino que debajo de los candados de mi voluntad está la suya, todavía me pesaría de verle dar muestras, por mínimas que fuesen, de algún arrepentimiento.

A esto respondió Clemente:

-No pienses, Preciosa única, que don Juan con ligereza de ánimo me descubrió quién era: primero le conocí yo, y primero me descubrieron sus ojos sus intentos; primero le dije yo quién era, y primero le adiviné la prisión de su voluntad que tú señalas; y él, dándome el crédito que era razón que me diese, fió de mi secreto el suyo, y él es buen testigo si alabé su determinación y escogido empleo; que no

soy, ¡oh Preciosa!, de tan corto ingenio que no alcance hasta dónde se estienden las fuerzas de la hermosura; y la tuya, por pasar de los límites de los mayores extremos de belleza, es disculpa bastante de mayores yerros, si es que deben llamarse yerros los que se hacen con tan forzosas causas. Agradézcote, señora, lo que en mi crédito dijiste, y yo pienso pagártelo en desear que estos enredos amorosos salgan a fines felices, y que tú goces de tu Andrés, y Andrés de su Preciosa, en conformidad y gusto de sus padres, porque de tan hermosa junta veamos en el mundo los más bellos renuevos que pueda formar la bien intencionada naturaleza. Esto desearé yo, Preciosa, y esto le diré siempre a tu Andrés, y no cosa alguna que le divierta de sus bien colocados pensamientos.

Con tales afectos dijo las razones pasadas Clemente, que estuvo en duda Andrés si las había dicho como enamorado o como comedido; que la infernal enfermedad celosa es tan delicada, y de tal manera, que en los átomos del sol se pega, y de los que tocan a la cosa amada se fatiga el amante y se desespera. Pero, con todo esto, no tuvo celos confirmados, más fiado de la bondad de Preciosa que de la ventura suya, que siempre los enamorados se tienen por infelices en tanto que no alcanzan lo que desean. En fin, Andrés y Clemente eran camaradas y grandes amigos, asegurándolo todo la buena intención de Clemente y el recato y prudencia de Preciosa, que jamás dio ocasión a que Andrés tuviese della celos.

Tenía Clemente sus puntas de poeta, como lo mostró en los versos que dio a Preciosa, y Andrés se picaba un poco, y entrambos eran aficionados a la música. Sucedió, pues, que, estando el aduar alojado en un valle cuatro leguas de Murcia, una noche, por entretenerse, sentados los dos, Andrés al pie de un alcornoque, Clemente al de una encina, cada uno con una guitarra, convidados del silencio de la noche, comenzando Andrés y respondiendo Clemente, cantaron estos versos:

## ANDRÉS

Mira, Clemente, el estrellado velo  
con que esta noche fría  
compite con el día,  
de luces bellas adornando el cielo;  
y en esta semejanza,  
si tanto tu divino ingenio alcanza,

aquel rostro figura  
donde asiste el extremo de hermosura.

CLEMENTE

Donde asiste el extremo de hermosura,

y adonde la Preciosa

honestidad hermosa  
con todo extremo de bondad se apura,  
en un sujeto cabe,  
que no hay humano ingenio que le alabe,  
si no toca en divino,  
en alto, en raro, en grave y peregrino.

ANDRÉS

En alto, en raro, en grave y peregrino  
estilo nunca usado,  
al cielo levantado,  
por dulce al mundo y sin igual camino,  
tu nombre, ¡oh gitanilla!,  
causando asombro, espanto y maravilla,

la fama yo quisiera  
que le llevara hasta la octava esfera.



CLEMENTE

Que le llevara hasta la octava esfera  
fuera decente y justo,  
dando a los cielos gusto,  
cuando el son de su nombre allá se oyera,  
y en la tierra causara,  
por donde el dulce nombre resonara,  
música en los oídos

paz en las almas, gloria en los sentidos.

ANDRÉS

Paz en las almas, gloria en los sentidos

se siente cuando canta  
la sirena, que encanta  
y adormece a los más apercebidos;  
y tal es mi Preciosa,  
que es lo menos que tiene ser hermosa:  
dulce regalo mío,  
corona del donaire, honor del brío.

## CLEMENTE

Corona del donaire, honor del brío  
eres, bella gitana,  
frescor de la mañana,  
céfiro blando en el ardiente estío;

rayo con que Amor ciego  
convierte el pecho más de nieve en fuego;  
fuerza que así la hace,  
que blandamente mata y satisface.

Señales iban dando de no acabar tan presto el libre y el cautivo, si no sonara a sus espaldas la voz de Preciosa, que las suyas había escuchado. Suspendiólos el oírla, y, sin moverse, prestándola maravillosa atención, la escucharon. Ella (o no sé si de improviso, o si en algún tiempo los versos que cantaba le compusieron), con estremada gracia, como si para responderles fueran hechos, cantó los siguientes:

-En esta empresa amorosa,  
donde el amor entretengo,

por mayor ventura tengo  
ser honesta que hermosa.  
La que es más humilde planta,  
si la subida endereza,

por gracia o naturaleza  
a los cielos se levanta.  
En este mi bajo cobre,

siendo honestidad su esmalte,  
no hay buen deseo que falte  
ni riqueza que no sobre.

No me causa alguna pena  
no quererme o no estimarme;

que yo pienso fabricarme  
mi suerte y ventura buena.  
Haga yo lo que en mí es,  
que a ser buena me encamine,  
y haga el cielo y determine  
lo que quisiere después.



Quiero ver si la belleza  
tiene tal prerrogativa,  
que me encumbre tan arriba,  
que aspire a mayor alteza.  
Si las almas son iguales,  
podrá la de un labrador

igualarse por valor  
con las que son imperiales.  
De la mía lo que siento  
me sube al grado mayor,

porque majestad y amor  
no tienen un mismo asiento.

Aquí dio fin Preciosa a su canto, y Andrés y Clemente se levantaron a recebilla. Pasaron entre los tres discretas razones, y Preciosa descubrió en las suyas su discreción, su honestidad y su agudeza, de tal manera que en Clemente halló disculpa la intención de Andrés, que aún hasta entonces no la había hallado, juzgando más a mocedad que a cordura su arrojada determinación.

Aquella mañana se levantó el aduar y se fueron a alojar en un lugar de la jurisdicción de Murcia, tres leguas de la ciudad, donde le sucedió a Andrés una desgracia que le puso en punto de perder la vida. Y fue que, después de haber dado en aquel lugar algunos vasos y prendas de plata en fianzas, como tenían de costumbre, Preciosa y su abuela y Cristina, con otras dos gitanillas y los dos, Clemente y Andrés, se alojaron en un mesón de una viuda rica, la cual tenía una hija de edad de diez y siete o diez y ocho años, algo más desenvuelta que hermosa; y, por más señas, se llamaba Juana Carducha. Ésta, habiendo visto bailar a las gitanas y gitanos, la tomó el diablo, y se enamoró de Andrés tan fuertemente que propuso de decírselo y tomarle por marido, si él quisiese, aunque a todos sus parientes les pesase; y así, buscó coyuntura para decírselo, y hallóla en un corral donde Andrés había entrado a requerir dos pollinos. Llegóse a él, y con priesa, por no ser vista, le dijo: -Andrés -que ya sabía su nombre-, yo soy doncella y rica; que mi madre no tiene otro hijo sino a mí, y este mesón es suyo; y amén desto tiene muchos majuelos y otros dos pares de casas. Hasme parecido bien: si me quieres por esposa, a ti está; respóndeme presto, y si eres discreto, quédate y verás qué vida nos damos.

Admirado quedó Andrés de la resolución de la Carducha, y con la presteza que ella pedía le respondió:

-Señora doncella, yo estoy apalabrado para casarme, y los gitanos no nos casamos sino con gitanas; guárdela Dios por la merced que me quería hacer, de quien yo no soy digno.

No estuvo en dos dedos de caerse muerta la Carducha con la aceda respuesta de Andrés, a quien replicara si no viera que entraban en el corral otras gitanas. Salióse corrida y asendereada, y de buena gana se vengara si pudiera. Andrés, como discreto, determinó de poner tierra en medio y desviarse de aquella ocasión que el diablo le ofrecía; que bien leyó en los ojos de la Carducha que sin los lazos matrimoniales se le entregara a toda su voluntad, y no quiso verse pie a pie y solo en aquella estacada; y así, pidió a todos los gitanos que aquella noche

se partiesen de aquel lugar. Ellos, que siempre le obedecían, lo pusieron luego por obra, y, cobrando sus fianzas aquella tarde, se fueron.

La Carducha, que vio que en irse Andrés se le iba la mitad de su alma, y que no le quedaba tiempo para solicitar el cumplimiento de sus deseos, ordenó de hacer quedar a Andrés por fuerza, ya que de grado no podía. Y así, con la industria, sagacidad y secreto que su mal intento le enseñó, puso entre las alhajas de Andrés, que ella conoció por suyas, unos ricos corales y dos patenas de plata, con otros brincos suyos; y, apenas habían salido del mesón, cuando dio voces, diciendo que aquellos gitanos le llevaban robadas sus joyas, a cuyas voces acudió la justicia y toda la gente del pueblo.

Los gitanos hicieron alto, y todos juraban que ninguna cosa llevaban hurtada, y que ellos harían patentes todos los sacos y repuestos de su aduar. Desto se congojó mucho la gitana vieja, temiendo que en aquel escrutinio no se manifestasen los dijes de la Preciosa y los vestidos de Andrés, que ella con gran cuidado y recato guardaba; pero la buena de la Carducha lo remedió con mucha brevedad todo, porque al segundo envoltorio que miraron dijo que preguntasen cuál era el de aquel gitano gran bailador, que ella le había visto entrar en su aposento dos veces, y que podría ser que aquél las llevase. Entendió Andrés que por él lo decía y, riéndose, dijo: -Señora doncella, ésta es mi recámara y éste es mi pollino; si vos halláredes en ella ni en él lo que os falta, yo os lo pagaré con las setenas, fuera de sujetarme al castigo que la ley da a los ladrones.

Acudieron luego los ministros de la justicia a desvalijar el pollino, y a pocas vueltas dieron con el hurto, de que quedó tan espantado Andrés y tan absorto, que no pareció sino estatua, sin voz, de piedra dura.

-¿No sospeché yo bien? -dijo a esta sazón la Carducha-. ¡Mirad con qué buena cara se encubre un ladrón tan grande!

El alcalde, que estaba presente, comenzó a decir mil injurias a Andrés y a todos los gitanos, llamándolos de públicos ladrones y salteadores de caminos. A todo callaba Andrés, suspenso e imaginativo, y no acababa de caer en la traición de la Carducha. En esto se llegó a él un soldado bizarro, sobrino del alcalde, diciendo: -¿No veis cuál se ha quedado el gitanico podrido de hurtar? Apostaré yo que hace melindres y que niega el hurto, con habérsele cogido en las manos; que bien haya quien no os echa en galeras a todos. ¡Mirad si estuviera mejor este bellaco en ellas, sirviendo a su Majestad, que no andarse bailando de lugar en lugar y hurtando de venta en monte! A fe de soldado, que estoy por darle una bofetada que le derribe a mis pies.

Y, diciendo esto, sin más ni más, alzó la mano y le dio un bofetón tal, que le hizo volver de su embelesamiento, y le hizo acordar que no era Andrés Caballero, sino don Juan, y caballero; y, arremetiendo al soldado con mucha

presteza y más cólera, le arrancó su misma espada de la vaina y se la envainó en el cuerpo, dando con él muerto en tierra.

Aquí fue el gritar del pueblo, aquí el amohinarse el tío alcalde, aquí el desmayarse Preciosa y el turbarse Andrés de verla desmayada; aquí el acudir todos a las armas y dar tras el homicida. Creció la confusión, creció la grita, y, por acudir Andrés al desmayo de Preciosa, dejó de acudir a su defensa; y quiso la suerte que Clemente no se hallase al desastrado suceso, que con los bagajes había ya salido del pueblo. Finalmente, tantos cargaron sobre Andrés, que le prendieron y le aherrojaron con dos muy gruesas cadenas. Bien quisiera el alcalde ahorcarle luego, si estuviera en su mano, pero hubo de remitirle a Murcia, por ser de su jurisdicción. No le llevaron hasta otro día, y en el que allí estuvo, pasó Andrés muchos martirios y vituperios que el indignado alcalde y sus ministros y todos los del lugar le hicieron. Prendió el alcalde todos los más gitanos y gitanas que pudo, porque los más huyeron, y entre ellos Clemente, que temió ser cogido y descubierto.

Finalmente, con la sumaria del caso y con una gran cáfila de gitanos, entraron el alcalde y sus ministros con otra mucha gente armada en Murcia, entre los cuales iba Preciosa, y el pobre Andrés, ceñido de cadenas, sobre un macho y con esposas y piede amigo. Salió toda Murcia a ver los presos, que ya se tenía noticia de la muerte del soldado. Pero la hermosura de Preciosa aquel día fue tanta, que ninguno la miraba que no la bendecía, y llegó la nueva de su belleza a los oídos de la señora corregidora, que por curiosidad de verla hizo que el corregidor, su marido, mandase que aquella gitana no entrase en la cárcel, y todos los demás sí. Y a Andrés le pusieron en un estrecho calabozo, cuya escuridad, y la falta de la luz de Preciosa, le trataron de manera que bien pensó no salir de allí sino para la sepultura. Llevaron a Preciosa con su abuela a que la corregidora la viese, y, así como la vio, dijo: -Con razón la alaban de hermosa.

Y, llegándola a sí, la abrazó tiernamente, y no se hartaba de mirarla, y preguntó a su abuela que qué edad tendría aquella niña.

-Quince años -respondió la gitana-, dos meses más a menos.

-Esos tuviera agora la desdichada de mi Costanza. ¡Ay, amigas, que esta niña me ha renovado mi desventura! -dijo la corregidora.

Tomó en esto Preciosa las manos de la corregidora, y, besándoselas muchas veces, se las bañaba con lágrimas y le decía:

-Señora mía, el gitano que está preso no tiene culpa, porque fue provocado: llamáronle ladrón, y no lo es; diéronle un bofetón en su rostro, que es tal que en él se descubre la bondad de su ánimo. Por Dios y por quien vos sois, señora, que le hagáis guardar su justicia, y que el señor corregidor no se dé prisa a ejecutar en él el castigo con que las leyes le amenazan; y si algún agrado os ha dado mi

hermosura, entretenedla con entretener el preso, porque en el fin de su vida está el de la mía. Él ha de ser mi esposo, y justos y honestos impedimentos han estorbado que aun hasta ahora no nos habemos dado las manos. Si dineros fueren menester para alcanzar perdón de la parte, todo nuestro aduar se venderá en pública almoneda, y se dará aún más de lo que pidieren. Señora mía, si sabéis qué es amor, y algún tiempo le tuvistes, y ahora le tenéis a vuestro esposo, doleos de mí, que amo tierna y honestamente al mío.

En todo el tiempo que esto decía, nunca la dejó las manos, ni apartó los ojos de mirarla atentísimamente, derramando amargas y piadosas lágrimas en mucha abundancia. Asimismo, la corregidora la tenía a ella asida de las suyas, mirándola ni más ni menos, con no menor ahínco y con no más pocas lágrimas. Estando en esto, entró el corregidor, y, hallando a su mujer y a Preciosa tan llorosas y tan encadenadas, quedó suspenso, así de su llanto como de la hermosura. Preguntó la causa de aquel sentimiento, y la respuesta que dio Preciosa fue soltar las manos de la corregidora y asirse de los pies del corregidor, diciéndole: -¡Señor, misericordia, misericordia! ¡Si mi esposo muere, yo soy muerta! Él no tiene culpa; pero si la tiene, déseme a mí la pena, y si esto no puede ser, a lo menos entreténgase el pleito en tanto que se procuran y buscan los medios posibles para su remedio; que podrá ser que al que no pecó de malicia le enviase el cielo la salud de gracia.

Con nueva suspensión quedó el corregidor de oír las discretas razones de la gitanilla, y que ya, si no fuera por no dar indicios de flaqueza, le acompañara en sus lágrimas.

En tanto que esto pasaba, estaba la gitana vieja considerando grandes, muchas y diversas cosas; y, al cabo de toda esta suspensión y imaginación, dijo: -Espérenme vuestras mercedes, señores míos, un poco, que yo haré que estos llantos se conviertan en risa, aunque a mí me cueste la vida.

Y así, con ligero paso, se salió de donde estaba, dejando a los presentes confusos con lo que dicho había. En tanto, pues, que ella volvía, nunca dejó Preciosa las lágrimas ni los ruegos de que se entretuviese la causa de su esposo, con intención de avisar a su padre que viniese a entender en ella. Volvió la gitana con un pequeño cofre debajo del brazo, y dijo al corregidor que con su mujer y ella se entrasen en un aposento, que tenía grandes cosas que decirles en secreto. El corregidor, creyendo que algunos hurtos de los gitanos quería descubrirle, por tenerle propicio en el pleito del preso, al momento se retiró con ella y con su mujer en su recámara, adonde la gitana, hincándose de rodillas ante los dos, les dijo: -Si las buenas nuevas que os quiero dar, señores, no merecieren alcanzar en albricias el perdón de un gran pecado mío, aquí estoy para recibir el castigo que quisiéredes darme; pero antes que le confiese quiero que me digáis,

señores, primero, si conocéis estas joyas.

Y, descubriendo un cofrecico donde venían las de Preciosa, se le puso en las manos al corregidor, y, en abriéndole, vio aquellos dijes pueriles; pero no cayó en lo que podían significar. Mirólos también la corregidora, pero tampoco dio en la cuenta; sólo dijo: -Estos son adornos de alguna pequeña criatura.

-Así es la verdad -dijo la gitana-; y de qué criatura sean lo dice ese escrito que está en ese papel doblado.

Abrióle con priesa el corregidor y leyó que decía:

Llamábase la niña doña Constanza de Azevedo y de Meneses; su madre, doña Guiomar de Meneses, y su padre, don Fernando de Azevedo, caballero del hábito de Calatrava. Desparecía día de la Ascensión del Señor, a las ocho de la mañana, del año de mil y quinientos y noventa y cinco. Traía la niña puestos estos brincos que en este cofre están guardados.

Apenas hubo oído la corregidora las razones del papel, cuando reconoció los brincos, se los puso a la boca, y, dándoles infinitos besos, se cayó desmayada. Acudió el corregidor a ella, antes que a preguntar a la gitana por su hija, y, habiendo vuelto en sí, dijo: -Mujer buena, antes ángel que gitana, ¿adónde está el dueño, digo la criatura cuyos eran estos dijes?

-¿Adónde, señora? -respondió la gitana-. En vuestra casa la tenéis: aquella gitanica que os sacó las lágrimas de los ojos es su dueño, y es sin duda alguna vuestra hija; que yo la hurté en Madrid de vuestra casa el día y hora que ese papel dice.

Oyendo esto la turbada señora, soltó los chapines, y desalada y corriendo salió a la sala adonde había dejado a Preciosa, y hallóla rodeada de sus doncellas y criadas, todavía llorando. Arremetió a ella, y, sin decirle nada, con gran priesa le desabrochó el pecho y miró si tenía debajo de la teta izquierda una señal pequeña, a modo de lunar blanco, con que había nacido, y hallóle ya grande, que con el tiempo se había dilatado. Luego, con la misma celeridad, la descalzó, y descubrió un pie de nieve y de marfil, hecho a torno, y vio en él lo que buscaba, que era que los dos dedos últimos del pie derecho se trababan el uno con el otro por medio con un poquito de carne, la cual, cuando niña, nunca se la habían querido cortar por no darle pesadumbre. El pecho, los dedos, los brincos, el día señalado del hurto, la confesión de la gitana y el sobresalto y alegría que habían recibido sus padres cuando la vieron, con toda verdad confirmaron en el alma de la corregidora ser Preciosa su hija. Y así, cogiéndola en sus brazos, se volvió con ella adonde el corregidor y la gitana estaban.

Iba Preciosa confusa, que no sabía a qué efeto se habían hecho con ella aquellas diligencias; y más, viéndose llevar en brazos de la corregidora, y que le daba de un beso hasta ciento. Llegó, en fin, con la preciosa carga doña Guiomar

a la presencia de su marido, y, trasladándola de sus brazos a los del corregidor, le dijo: -Recebid, señor, a vuestra hija Costanza, que ésta es sin duda; no lo dudéis, señor, en ningún modo, que la señal de los dedos juntos y la del pecho he visto; y más, que a mí me lo está diciendo el alma desde el instante que mis ojos la vieron.

-No lo dudo -respondió el corregidor, teniendo en sus brazos a Preciosa-, que los mismos efectos han pasado por la mía que por la vuestra; y más, que tantas puntualidades juntas, ¿cómo podían suceder, si no fuera por milagro?

Toda la gente de casa andaba absorta, preguntando unos a otros qué sería aquello, y todos daban bien lejos del blanco; que, ¿quién había de imaginar que la gitanilla era hija de sus señores? El corregidor dijo a su mujer y a su hija, y a la gitana vieja, que aquel caso estuviese secreto hasta que él le descubriese; y asimismo dijo a la vieja que él la perdonaba el agravio que le había hecho en hurtarle el alma, pues la recompensa de habérsela vuelto mayores albricias recibía; y que sólo le pesaba de que, sabiendo ella la calidad de Preciosa, la hubiese desposado con un gitano, y más con un ladrón y homicida.

-¡Ay! -dijo a esto Preciosa-, señor mío, que ni es gitano ni ladrón, puesto que es matador; pero fue lo del que le quitó la honra, y no pudo hacer menos de mostrar quién era y matarle.

-¿Cómo que no es gitano, hija mía? -dijo doña Guiomar.

Entonces la gitana vieja contó brevemente la historia de Andrés Caballero, y que era hijo de don Francisco de Cárcamo, caballero del hábito de Santiago, y que se llamaba don Juan de Cárcamo; asimismo del mismo hábito, cuyos vestidos ella tenía, cuando los mudó en los de gitano. Contó también el concierto que entre Preciosa y don Juan estaba hecho, de aguardar dos años de aprobación para desposarse o no. Puso en su punto la honestidad de entrambos y la agradable condición de don Juan.

Tanto se admiraron desto como del hallazgo de su hija, y mandó el corregidor a la gitana que fuese por los vestidos de don Juan. Ella lo hizo así, y volvió con otro gitano, que los trujo.

En tanto que ella iba y volvía, hicieron sus padres a Preciosa cien mil preguntas, a quien respondió con tanta discreción y gracia que, aunque no la hubieran reconocido por hija, los enamorara. Preguntáronla si tenía alguna afición a don Juan. Respondió que no más de aquella que le obligaba a ser agradecida a quien se había querido humillar a ser gitano por ella; pero que ya no se extendería a más el agradecimiento de aquello que sus señores padres quisiesen.

-Calla, hija Preciosa -dijo su padre-, que este nombre de Preciosa quiero que se te quede, en memoria de tu pérdida y de tu hallazgo; que yo, como tu padre,



tomo a cargo el ponerte en estado que no desdiga de quién eres.

Suspiró oyendo esto Preciosa, y su madre (como era discreta, entendió que suspiraba de enamorada de don Juan) dijo a su marido:

-Señor, siendo tan principal don Juan de Cárcamo como lo es, y queriendo tanto a nuestra hija, no nos estaría mal dársela por esposa.

Y él respondió:

-Aun hoy la habemos hallado, ¿y ya queréis que la perdamos? Gocémosla algún tiempo; que, en casándola, no será nuestra, sino de su marido.

-Razón tenéis, señor -respondió ella-, pero dad orden de sacar a don Juan, que debe de estar en algún calabozo.

-Sí estará -dijo Preciosa-; que a un ladrón, matador y, sobre todo, gitano, no le habrán dado mejor estancia.

-Yo quiero ir a verle, como que le voy a tomar la confesión -respondió el corregidor-, y de nuevo os encargo, señora, que nadie sepa esta historia hasta que yo lo quiera.

Y, abrazando a Preciosa, fue luego a la cárcel y entró en el calabozo donde don Juan estaba, y no quiso que nadie entrase con él. Hallóle con entrambos pies en un cepo y con las esposas a las manos, y que aún no le habían quitado el piede amigo. Era la estancia oscura, pero hizo que por arriba abriesen una lumbrera, por donde entraba luz, aunque muy escasa; y, así como le vio, le dijo: -¿Cómo está la buena pieza? ¡Que así tuviera yo atraillados cuantos gitanos hay en España, para acabar con ellos en un día, como Nerón quisiera con Roma, sin dar más de un golpe! Sabed, ladrón puntoso, que yo soy el corregidor desta ciudad, y vengo a saber, de mí a vos, si es verdad que es vuestra esposa una gitanilla que viene con vosotros.

Oyendo esto Andrés, imaginó que el corregidor se debía de haber enamorado de Preciosa; que los celos son de cuerpos sutiles y se entran por otros cuerpos sin romperlos, apartarlos ni dividirlos; pero, con todo esto, respondió: -Si ella ha dicho que yo soy su esposo, es mucha verdad; y si ha dicho que no lo soy, también ha dicho verdad, porque no es posible que Preciosa diga mentira.

-¿Tan verdadera es? -respondió el corregidor-. No es poco serlo, para ser gitana. Ahora bien, mancebo, ella ha dicho que es vuestra esposa, pero que nunca os ha dado la mano. Ha sabido que, según es vuestra culpa, habéis de morir por ella; y hame pedido que antes de vuestra muerte la despose con vos, porque se quiere honrar con quedar viuda de un tan gran ladrón como vos.

-Pues hágalo vuesa merced, señor corregidor, como ella lo suplica; que, como yo me despose con ella, iré contento a la otra vida, como parta ésta con nombre de ser suyo.

-¡Mucho la debéis de querer! -dijo el corregidor.

-Tanto -respondió el preso-, que, a poderlo decir, no fuera nada. En efeto, señor corregidor, mi causa se concluya: yo maté al que me quiso quitar la honra; yo adoro a esa gitana, moriré contento si muero en su gracia, y sé que no nos ha de faltar la de Dios, pues entrambos habremos guardado honestamente y con puntualidad lo que nos prometimos.

-Pues esta noche enviaré por vos -dijo el corregidor-, y en mi casa os desposaréis con Preciosica, y mañana a mediodía estaréis en la horca, con lo que yo habré cumplido con lo que pide la justicia y con el deseo de entrambos.

Agradecióselo Andrés, y el corregidor volvió a su casa y dio cuenta a su mujer de lo que con don Juan había pasado, y de otras cosas que pensaba hacer.

En el tiempo que él faltó dio cuenta Preciosa a su madre de todo el discurso de su vida, y de cómo siempre había creído ser gitana y ser nieta de aquella vieja; pero que siempre se había estimado en mucho más de lo que de ser gitana se esperaba. Preguntóle su madre que le dijese la verdad: si quería bien a don Juan de Cárcamo. Ella, con vergüenza y con los ojos en el suelo, le dijo que por haberse considerado gitana, y que mejoraba su suerte con casarse con un caballero de hábito y tan principal como don Juan de Cárcamo, y por haber visto por experiencia su buena condición y honesto trato, alguna vez le había mirado con ojos aficionados; pero que, en resolución, ya había dicho que no tenía otra voluntad de aquella que ellos quisiesen.

Llegóse la noche, y, siendo casi las diez, sacaron a Andrés de la cárcel, sin las esposas y el piedeamigo, pero no sin una gran cadena que desde los pies todo el cuerpo le ceñía. Llegó dese modo, sin ser visto de nadie, sino de los que le traían, en casa del corregidor, y con silencio y recato le entraron en un aposento, donde le dejaron solo. De allí a un rato entró un clérigo y le dijo que se confesase, porque había de morir otro día. A lo cual respondió Andrés: -De muy buena gana me confesaré, pero ¿cómo no me desposan primero? Y si me han de desposar, por cierto que es muy malo el tálamo que me espera.

Doña Guiomar, que todo esto sabía, dijo a su marido que eran demasiados los sustos que a don Juan daba; que los moderase, porque podría ser perdiese la vida con ellos. Parecióle buen consejo al corregidor, y así entró a llamar al que le confesaba, y díjole que primero habían de desposar al gitano con Preciosa, la gitana, y que después se confesaría, y que se encomendase a Dios de todo corazón, que muchas veces suele llover sus misericordias en el tiempo que están más secas las esperanzas.

En efeto, Andrés salió a una sala donde estaban solamente doña Guiomar, el corregidor, Preciosa y otros dos criados de casa. Pero, cuando Preciosa vio a don Juan ceñido y aherrojado con tan gran cadena, descolorido el rostro y los ojos con muestra de haber llorado, se le cubrió el corazón y se arrimó al brazo de su

madre, que junto a ella estaba, la cual, abrazándola consigo, le dijo: -Vuelve en ti, niña, que todo lo que vees ha de redundar en tu gusto y provecho.

Ella, que estaba ignorante de aquello, no sabía cómo consolarse, y la gitana vieja estaba turbada, y los circunstantes, colgados del fin de aquel caso.

El corregidor dijo:

-Señor tiniente cura, este gitano y esta gitana son los que vuesa merced ha de desposar.

-Eso no podré yo hacer si no preceden primero las circunstancias que para tal caso se requieren. ¿Dónde se han hecho las amonestaciones? ¿Adónde está la licencia de mi superior, para que con ellas se haga el desposorio?

-Inadvertencia ha sido mía -respondió el corregidor-, pero yo haré que el vicario la dé.

-Pues hasta que la vea -respondió el tiniente cura-, estos señores perdonen.

Y, sin replicar más palabra, porque no sucediese algún escándalo, se salió de casa y los dejó a todos confusos.

-El padre ha hecho muy bien -dijo a esta sazón el corregidor-, y podría ser fuese providencia del cielo ésta, para que el suplicio de Andrés se dilate; porque, en efeto, él se ha de desposar con Preciosa y han de preceder primero las amonestaciones, donde se dará tiempo al tiempo, que suele dar dulce salida a muchas amargas dificultades; y, con todo esto, quería saber de Andrés, si la suerte encaminase sus sucesos de manera que sin estos sustos y sobresaltos se hallase esposo de Preciosa, si se tendría por dichoso, ya siendo Andrés Caballero, o ya don Juan de Cárcamo.

Así como oyó Andrés nombrarse por su nombre, dijo:

-Pues Preciosa no ha querido contenerse en los límites del silencio y ha descubierto quién soy, aunque esa buena dicha me hallara hecho monarca del mundo, la tuviera en tanto que pusiera término a mis deseos, sin osar desear otro bien sino el del cielo.

-Pues, por ese buen ánimo que habéis mostrado, señor don Juan de Cárcamo, a su tiempo haré que Preciosa sea vuestra legítima consorte, y agora os la doy y entrego en esperanza por la más rica joya de mi casa, y de mi vida, y de mi alma; y estimadla en lo que decís, porque en ella os doy a doña Costanza de Meneses, mi única hija, la cual, si os iguala en el amor, no os desdice nada en el linaje.

Atónito quedó Andrés viendo el amor que le mostraban, y en breves razones doña Guiomar contó la pérdida de su hija y su hallazgo, con las certísimas señas que la gitana vieja había dado de su hurto; con que acabó don Juan de quedar atónito y suspenso, pero alegre sobre todo encarecimiento. Abrazó a sus suegros, llamólos padres y señores suyos, besó las manos a Preciosa, que con lágrimas le pedía las suyas.

Rompióse el secreto, salió la nueva del caso con la salida de los criados que habían estado presentes; el cual sabido por el alcalde, tío del muerto, vio tomados los caminos de su venganza, pues no había de tener lugar el rigor de la justicia para ejecutarla en el yerno del corregidor.

Vistióse don Juan los vestidos de camino que allí había traído la gitana; volviéronse las prisiones y cadenas de hierro en libertad y cadenas de oro; la tristeza de los gitanos presos, en alegría, pues otro día los dieron en fiado. Recibió el tío del muerto la promesa de dos mil ducados, que le hicieron porque bajase de la querella y perdonase a don Juan, el cual, no olvidándose de su camarada Clemente, le hizo buscar; pero no le hallaron ni supieron dél, hasta que desde allí a cuatro días tuvo nuevas ciertas que se había embarcado en una de dos galeras de Génova que estaban en el puerto de Cartagena, y ya se habían partido.

Dijo el corregidor a don Juan que tenía por nueva cierta que su padre, don Francisco de Cárcamo, estaba proveído por corregidor de aquella ciudad, y que sería bien esperalle, para que con su beneplácito y consentimiento se hiciesen las bodas. Don Juan dijo que no saldría de lo que él ordenase, pero que, ante todas cosas, se había de desposar con Preciosa. Concedió licencia el arzobispo para que con sola una amonestación se hiciese. Hizo fiestas la ciudad, por ser muy bienquisto el corregidor, con luminarias, toros y cañas el día del desposorio; quedóse la gitana vieja en casa, que no se quiso apartar de su nieta Preciosa.

Llegaron las nuevas a la Corte del caso y casamiento de la gitanilla; supo don Francisco de Cárcamo ser su hijo el gitano y ser la Preciosa la gitanilla que él había visto, cuya hermosura disculpó con él la liviandad de su hijo, que ya le tenía por perdido, por saber que no había ido a Flandes; y más, porque vio cuán bien le estaba el casarse con hija de tan gran caballero y tan rico como era don Fernando de Azevedo. Dio priesa a su partida, por llegar presto a ver a sus hijos, y dentro de veinte días ya estaba en Murcia, con cuya llegada se renovaron los gustos, se hicieron las bodas, se contaron las vidas, y los poetas de la ciudad, que hay algunos, y muy buenos, tomaron a cargo celebrar el estraño caso, juntamente con la sin igual belleza de la gitanilla. Y de tal manera escribió el famoso licenciado Pozo, que en sus versos durará la fama de la Preciosa mientras los siglos duraren.

Olvidábaseme de decir cómo la enamorada mesonera descubrió a la justicia no ser verdad lo del hurto de Andrés el gitano, y confesó su amor y su culpa, a quien no respondió pena alguna, porque en la alegría del hallazgo de los desposados se enterró la venganza y resucitó la clemencia.

## El amante liberal

-¡OH LAMENTABLES ruinas de la desdichada Nicosia, apenas enjutas de la sangre de vuestros valerosos y mal afortunados defensores! Si como carecéis de sentido, le tuviérades ahora, en esta soledad donde estamos, pudiéramos lamentar juntas nuestras desgracias, y quizá el haber hallado compañía en ellas aliviara nuestro tormento. Esta esperanza os puede haber quedado, mal derribados torreones, que otra vez, aunque no para tan justa defensa como la en que os derribaron, os podéis ver levantados. Mas yo, desdichado, ¿qué bien podré esperar en la miserable estrechez en que me hallo, aunque vuelva al estado en que estaba antes deste en que me veo? Tal es mi desdicha, que en la libertad fui sin ventura, y en el cautiverio ni la tengo ni la espero.

Estas razones decía un cautivo cristiano, mirando desde un recuesto las murallas derribadas de la ya perdida Nicosia; y así hablaba con ellas, y hacía comparación de sus miserias a las suyas, como si ellas fueran capaces de entenderle: propia condición de afligidos, que, llevados de sus imaginaciones, hacen y dicen cosas ajenas de toda razón y buen discurso.

En esto, salió de un pabellón o tienda, de cuatro que estaban en aquella campaña puestas, un turco, mancebo de muy buena disposición y gallardía, y, llegándose al cristiano, le dijo:

-Apostaría yo, Ricardo amigo, que te traen por estos lugares tus continuos pensamientos.

-Sí traen -respondió Ricardo (que éste era el nombre del cautivo)-; mas, ¿qué aprovecha, si en ninguna parte a do voy hallo tregua ni descanso en ellos, antes me los han acrecentado estas ruinas que desde aquí se descubren?

-Por las de Nicosia dirás -dijo el turco.

-Pues ¿por cuáles quieres que diga -repitió Ricardo-, si no hay otras que a los ojos por aquí se ofrezcan?

-Bien tendrás que llorar -replicó el turco-, si en esas contemplaciones entras, porque los que vieron habrá dos años a esta nombrada y rica isla de Chipre en su tranquilidad y sosiego, gozando sus moradores en ella de todo aquello que la felicidad humana puede conceder a los hombres, y ahora los ve o contempla, o desterrados della o en ella cautivos y miserables, ¿cómo podrá dejar de no dolerse de su calamidad y desventura? Pero dejemos estas cosas, pues no llevan remedio, y vengamos a las tuyas, que quiero ver si le tienen; y así, te ruego, por lo que debes a la buena voluntad que te he mostrado, y por lo que te obliga el ser

entrambos de una misma patria y habernos criado en nuestra niñez juntos, que me digas qué es la causa que te trae tan demasiadamente triste; que, puesto caso que sola la del cautiverio es bastante para entristecer el corazón más alegre del mundo, todavía imagino que de más atrás traen la corriente tus desgracias. Porque los generosos ánimos, como el tuyo, no suelen rendirse a las comunes desdichas tanto que den muestras de extraordinarios sentimientos; y háceme creer esto el saber yo que no eres tan pobre que te falte para dar cuanto pidieren por tu rescate, ni estás en las torres del mar Negro, como cautivo de consideración, que tarde o nunca alcanza la deseada libertad. Así que, no habiéndote quitado la mala suerte las esperanzas de verte libre, y, con todo esto, verte rendido a dar miserables muestras de tu desventura, no es mucho que imagine que tu pena procede de otra causa que de la libertad que perdiste; la cual causa te suplico me digas, ofreciéndote cuanto puedo y valgo; quizá para que yo te sirva ha traído la fortuna este rodeo de haberme hecho vestir deste hábito que aborrezco. Ya sabes, Ricardo, que es mi amo el cadí desta ciudad (que es lo mismo que ser su obispo). Sabes también lo mucho que vale y lo mucho que con él puedo. Juntamente con esto, no ignoras el deseo encendido que tengo de no morir en este estado que parece que profeso, pues, cuando más no pueda, tengo de confesar y publicar a voces la fe de Jesucristo, de quien me apartó mi poca edad y menos entendimiento, puesto que sé que tal confesión me ha de costar la vida; que, a trueco de no perder la del alma, daré por bien empleado perder la del cuerpo. De todo lo dicho quiero que infieras y que consideres que te puede ser de algún provecho mi amistad, y que, para saber qué remedios o alivios puede tener tu desdicha, es menester que me la cuentes, como ha menester el médico la relación del enfermo, asegurándote que la depositaré en lo más escondido del silencio.

A todas estas razones estuvo callando Ricardo; y, viéndose obligado dellas y de la necesidad, le respondió con éstas:

-Si así como has acertado, ¡oh amigo Mahamut! -que así se llamaba el turco-, en lo que de mi desdicha imaginas, acertaras en su remedio, tuviera por bien perdida mi libertad, y no trocara mi desgracia con la mayor ventura que imaginarse pudiera; mas yo sé que ella es tal, que todo el mundo podrá saber bien la causa de donde procede, mas no habrá en él persona que se atreva, no sólo a hallarle remedio, pero ni aun alivio. Y, para que quedes satisfecho desta verdad, te la contaré en las menos razones que pudiere. Pero, antes que entre en el confuso laberinto de mis males, quiero que me digas qué es la causa que Hazán Bajá, mi amo, ha hecho plantar en esta campaña estas tiendas y pabellones antes de entrar en Nicosia, donde viene proveído por virrey, o por bajá, como los turcos llaman a los virreyes.

-Yo te satisfaré brevemente -respondió Mahamut-; y así, has de saber que es costumbre entre los turcos que los que van por virreyes de alguna provincia no entran en la ciudad donde su antecesor habita hasta que él salga della y deje hacer libremente al que viene la residencia; y, en tanto que el bajá nuevo la hace, el antiguo se está en la campaña esperando lo que resulta de sus cargos, los cuales se le hacen sin que él pueda intervenir a valerse de sobornos ni amistades, si ya primero no lo ha hecho. Hecha, pues, la residencia, se la dan al que deja el cargo en un pergamino cerrado y sellado, y con ella se presenta a la Puerta del Gran Señor, que es como decir en la Corte, ante el Gran Consejo del Turco; la cual vista por el visirbajá, y por los otros cuatro bajaes menores, como si dijésemos ante el presidente del Real Consejo y oidores, o le premian o le castigan, según la relación de la residencia; puesto que si viene culpado, con dineros rescata y escusa el castigo; si no viene culpado y no le premian, como sucede de ordinario, con dádivas y presentes alcanza el cargo que más se le antoja, porque no se dan allí los cargos y oficios por merecimientos, sino por dineros: todo se vende y todo se compra. Los proveedores de los cargos roban los proveídos en ellos y los desuellan; deste oficio comprado sale la sustancia para comprar otro que más ganancia promete. Todo va como digo, todo este imperio es violento, señal que prometía no ser durable; pero, a lo que yo creo, y así debe de ser verdad, le tienen sobre sus hombros nuestros pecados; quiero decir los de aquellos que descaradamente y a rienda suelta ofenden a Dios, como yo hago: ¡Él se acuerde de mí por quien Él es! Por la causa que he dicho, pues, tu amo, Hazán Bajá, ha estado en esta campaña cuatro días, y si el de Nicosia no ha salido, como debía, ha sido por haber estado muy malo; pero ya está mejor y saldrá hoy o mañana, sin duda alguna, y se ha de alojar en unas tiendas que están detrás deste recuesto, que tú no has visto, y tu amo entrará luego en la ciudad. Y esto es lo que hay que saber de lo que me preguntaste.

-Escucha, pues -dijo Ricardo-; mas no sé si podré cumplir lo que antes dije, que en breves razones te contaría mi desventura, por ser ella tan larga y desmedida, que no se puede medir con razón alguna; con todo esto, haré lo que pudiere y lo que el tiempo diere lugar. Y así, te pregunto primero si conoces en nuestro lugar de Trápana una doncella a quien la fama daba nombre de la más hermosa mujer que había en toda Sicilia. Una doncella, digo, por quien decían todas las curiosas lenguas, y afirmaban los más raros entendimientos, que era la de más perfecta hermosura que tuvo la edad pasada, tiene la presente y espera tener la que está por venir; una por quien los poetas cantaban que tenía los cabellos de oro, y que eran sus ojos dos resplandecientes soles, y sus mejillas purpúreas rosas, sus dientes perlas, sus labios rubíes, su garganta alabastro; y que sus partes con el todo, y el todo con sus partes, hacían una maravillosa y

concertada armonía, esparciendo naturaleza sobre todo una suavidad de colores tan natural y perfecta, que jamás pudo la envidia hallar cosa en que ponerle tacha. Que ¿es posible, Mahamut, que ya no me has dicho quién es y cómo se llama? Sin duda creo, o que no me oyes, o que, cuando en Trápana estabas, carecías de sentido.

-En verdad, Ricardo -respondió Mahamut-, que si la que has pintado con tantos extremos de hermosura no es Leonisa, la hija de Rodolfo Florencio, no sé quién sea; que ésta sola tenía la fama que dices.

-Ésa es, ¡oh Mahamut! -respondió Ricardo-; ésa es, amigo, la causa principal de todo mi bien y de toda mi desventura; ésa es, que no la perdida libertad, por quien mis ojos han derramado, derraman y derramarán lágrimas sin cuento, y la por quien mis suspiros encienden el aire cerca y lejos, y la por quien mis razones cansan al cielo que las escucha y a los oídos que las oyen; ésa es por quien tú me has juzgado por loco o, por lo menos, por de poco valor y menos ánimo; esta Leonisa, para mí leona y mansa cordera para otro, es la que me tiene en este miserable estado. «Porque has de saber que desde mis tiernos años, o a lo menos desde que tuve uso de razón, no sólo la amé, mas la adoré y serví con tanta solicitud como si no tuviera en la tierra ni en el cielo otra deidad a quien sirviese ni adorase. Sabían sus deudos y sus padres mis deseos, y jamás dieron muestra de que les pesase, considerando que iban encaminados a fin honesto y virtuoso; y así, muchas veces sé yo que se lo dijeron a Leonisa, para disponerle la voluntad a que por su esposo me recibiese. Mas ella, que tenía puestos los ojos en Cornelio, el hijo de Ascanio Rótulo, que tú bien conoces (mancebo galán, atildado, de blandas manos y rizos cabellos, de voz meliflua y de amorosas palabras, y, finalmente, todo hecho de ámbar y de alfeñique, guarnecido de telas y adornado de brocados), no quiso ponerlos en mi rostro, no tan delicado como el de Cornelio, ni quiso agradecer siquiera mis muchos y continuos servicios, pagando mi voluntad con desdeñarme y aborrecerme; y a tanto llegó el extremo de amarla, que tomara por partido dichoso que me acabara a pura fuerza de desdenes y desagradecimientos, con que no diera descubiertos, aunque honestos, favores a Cornelio. ¡Mira, pues, si llegándose a la angustia del desdén y aborrecimiento, la mayor y más cruel rabia de los celos, cuál estaría mi alma de dos tan mortales pestes combatida! Disimulaban los padres de Leonisa los favores que a Cornelio hacía, creyendo, como estaba en razón que creyesen, que atraído el mozo de su incomparable y bellísima hermosura, la escogería por su esposa, y en ello granjearían yerno más rico que conmigo; y bien pudiera ser, si así fuera, pero no le alcanzaran, sin arrogancia sea dicho, de mejor condición que la mía, ni de más altos pensamientos, ni de más conocido valor que el mío. Sucedió, pues, que, en el discurso de mi pretensión, alcancé a saber que un día



del mes pasado de mayo, que éste de hoy hace un año, tres días y cinco horas, Leonisa y sus padres, y Cornelio y los suyos, se iban a solazar con toda su parentela y criados al jardín de Ascanio, que está cercano a la marina, en el camino de las salinas.»

-Bien lo sé -dijo Mahamut-; pasa adelante, Ricardo, que más de cuatro días tuve en él, cuando Dios quiso, más de cuatro buenos ratos.

-«Súpelo -replicó Ricardo-, y, al mismo instante que lo supe, me ocupó el alma una furia, una rabia y un infierno de celos, con tanta vehemencia y rigor, que me sacó de mis sentidos, como lo verás por lo que luego hice, que fue irme al jardín donde me dijeron que estaban, y hallé a la más de la gente solazándose, y debajo de un nogal sentados a Cornelio y a Leonisa, aunque desviados un poco. Cuál ellos quedaron de mi vista, no lo sé; de mí sé decir que quedé tal con la suya, que perdí la de mis ojos, y me quedé como estatua sin voz ni movimiento alguno. Pero no tardó mucho en despertar el enojo a la cólera, y la cólera a la sangre del corazón, y la sangre a la ira, y la ira a las manos y a la lengua. Puesto que las manos se ataron con el respecto, a mi parecer, debido al hermoso rostro que tenía delante, pero la lengua rompió el silencio con estas razones: "Contenta estarás, ¡oh enemiga mortal de mi descanso!, en tener con tanto sosiego delante de tus ojos la causa que hará que los míos vivan en perpetuo y doloroso llanto. Llégate, llégate, cruel, un poco más, y enrede tu yedra a ese inútil tronco que te busca; peina o ensortija aquellos cabellos de ese tu nuevo Ganimedes, que tibiamente te solicita. Acaba ya de entregarte a los banderizos años dese mozo en quien contemplas, porque, perdiendo yo la esperanza de alcanzarte, acabe con ella la vida que aborrezco. ¿Piensas, por ventura, soberbia y mal considerada doncella, que contigo sola se han de romper y faltar las leyes y fueros que en semejantes casos en el mundo se usan? ¿Piensas, quiero decir, que este mozo, altivo por su riqueza, arrogante por su gallardía, inexperto por su edad poca, confiado por su linaje, ha de querer, ni poder, ni saber guardar firmeza en sus amores, ni estimar lo inestimable, ni conocer lo que conocen los maduros y experimentados años? No lo pienses, si lo piensas, porque no tiene otra cosa buena el mundo, sino hacer sus acciones siempre de una misma manera, porque no se engañe nadie sino por su propia ignorancia. En los pocos años está la inconstancia mucha; en los ricos, la soberbia; la vanidad, en los arrogantes, y en los hermosos, el desdén; y en los que todo esto tienen, la necedad, que es madre de todo mal suceso. Y tú, ¡oh mozo!, que tan a tu salvo piensas llevar el premio, más debido a mis buenos deseos que a los ociosos tuyos, ¿por qué no te levantas de ese estrado de flores donde yaces y vienes a sacarme el alma, que tanto la tuya aborrece? Y no porque me ofendas en lo que haces, sino porque no sabes estimar el bien que la ventura

te concede; y véese claro que le tienes en poco, en que no quieres moverte a defendelle por no ponerte a riesgo de descomponer la afeitada compostura de tu galán vestido. Si esa tu reposada condición tuviera Aquiles, bien seguro estuviera Ulises de no salir con su empresa, aunque más le mostrara resplandecientes armas y acerados alfanjes. Vete, vete, y recreáte entre las doncellas de tu madre, y allí ten cuidado de tus cabellos y de tus manos, más despiertas a devanar blando sirgo que a empuñar la dura espada".

»A todas estas razones jamás se levantó Cornelio del lugar donde le hallé sentado, antes se estuvo quedo, mirándome como embelesado, sin moverse; y a las levantadas voces con que le dije lo que has oído, se fue llegando la gente que por la huerta andaba, y se pusieron a escuchar otros más impropios que a Cornelio dije; el cual, tomando ánimo con la gente que acudió, porque todos o los más eran sus parientes, criados o allegados, dio muestras de levantarse; mas, antes que se pusiese en pie, puse mano a mi espada y acometíle, no sólo a él, sino a todos cuantos allí estaban. Pero, apenas vio Leonisa relucir mi espada, cuando le tomó un recio desmayo, cosa que me puso en mayor coraje y mayor despecho. Y no te sabré decir si los muchos que me acometieron atendían no más de a defenderse, como quien se defiende de un loco furioso, o si fue mi buena suerte y diligencia, o el cielo, que para mayores males quería guardarme; porque, en efeto, herí siete o ocho de los que hallé más a mano. A Cornelio le valió su buena diligencia, pues fue tanta la que puso en los pies huyendo, que se escapó de mis manos.

»Estando en este tan manifiesto peligro, cercado de mis enemigos, que ya como ofendidos procuraban vengarse, me socorrió la ventura con un remedio que fuera mejor haber dejado allí la vida, que no, restaurándola por tan no pensado camino, venir a perderla cada hora mil y mil veces. Y fue que de improviso dieron en el jardín mucha cantidad de turcos de dos galeotas de cosarios de Biserta, que en una cala, que allí cerca estaba, habían desembarcado, sin ser sentidos de las centinelas de las torres de la marina, ni descubiertos de los corredores o atajadores de la costa. Cuando mis contrarios los vieron, dejándome solo, con presta celeridad se pusieron en cobro: de cuantos en el jardín estaban, no pudieron los turcos cautivar más de a tres personas y a Leonisa, que aún se estaba desmayada. A mí me cogieron con cuatro disformes heridas, vengadas antes por mi mano con cuatro turcos, que de otras cuatro dejé sin vida tendidos en el suelo. Este asalto hicieron los turcos con su acostumbrada diligencia, y, no muy contentos del suceso, se fueron a embarcar, y luego se hicieron a la mar, y a vela y remo en breve espacio se pusieron en la Fabiana. Hicieron reseña por ver qué gente les faltaba; y, viendo que los muertos eran cuatro soldados de aquellos que ellos llaman leventes, y de los mejores y más estimados que traían, quisieron

tomar en mí la venganza; y así, mandó el arráez de la capitana bajar la entena para ahorcarme.

»Todo esto estaba mirando Leonisa, que ya había vuelto en sí; y, viéndose en poder de los cosarios, derramaba abundancia de hermosas lágrimas, y, torciendo sus manos delicadas, sin hablar palabra, estaba atenta a ver si entendía lo que los turcos decían. Mas uno de los cristianos del remo le dijo en italiano como el arráez mandaba ahorcar a aquel cristiano, señalándome a mí, porque había muerto en su defensa cuatro de los mejores soldados de las galeotas. Lo cual oído y entendido por Leonisa (la vez primera que se mostró para mí piadosa), dijo al cautivo que dijese a los turcos que no me ahorcasen, porque perderían un gran rescate, y que les rogaba volviesen a Trápana, que luego me rescatarían. Ésta, digo, fue la primera y aun será la última caridad que usó conmigo Leonisa, y todo para mayor mal mío. Oyendo, pues, los turcos lo que el cautivo les decía, le creyeron, y mudóles el interés la cólera. Otro día por la mañana, alzando bandera de paz, volvieron a Trápana; aquella noche la pasé con el dolor que imaginarse puede, no tanto por el que mis heridas me causaban, cuanto por imaginar el peligro en que la cruel enemiga mía entre aquellos bárbaros estaba.

»Llegados, pues, como digo, a la ciudad, entró en el puerto la una galeota y la otra se quedó fuera; coronóse luego todo el puerto y la ribera toda de cristianos, y el lindo de Cornelio desde lejos estaba mirando lo que en la galeota pasaba. Acudió luego un mayordomo mío a tratar de mi rescate, al cual dije que en ninguna manera tratase de mi libertad, sino de la de Leonisa, y que diese por ella todo cuanto valía mi hacienda; y más, le ordené que volviese a tierra y dijese a sus padres de Leonisa que le dejasen a él tratar de la libertad de su hija, y que no se pusiesen en trabajo por ella. Hecho esto, el arráez principal, que era un renegado griego llamado Yzuf, pidió por Leonisa seis mil escudos, y por mí cuatro mil, añadiendo que no daría el uno sin el otro. Pidió esta gran suma, según después supe, porque estaba enamorado de Leonisa, y no quisiera él rescatalla, sino darle al arráez de la otra galeota, con quien había de partir las presas que se hiciesen por mitad, a mí, en precio de cuatro mil escudos y mil en dinero, que hacían cinco mil, y quedarse con Leonisa por otros cinco mil. Y ésta fue la causa por que nos apreció a los dos en diez mil escudos. Los padres de Leonisa no ofrecieron de su parte nada, ateniéndose a la promesa que de mi parte mi mayordomo les había hecho, ni Cornelio movió los labios en su provecho; y así, después de muchas demandas y respuestas, concluyó mi mayordomo en dar por Leonisa cinco mil y por mí tres mil escudos.

»Aceptó Yzuf este partido, forzado de las persuasiones de su compañero y de lo que todos sus soldados le decían; mas, como mi mayordomo no tenía junta tanta cantidad de dineros, pidió tres días de término para juntarlos, con intención

de malbaratar mi hacienda hasta cumplir el rescate. Holgóse desto Yzuf, pensando hallar en este tiempo ocasión para que el concierto no pasase adelante; y, volviéndose a la isla de la Fabiana, dijo que llegado el término de los tres días volvería por el dinero. Pero la ingrata fortuna, no cansada de maltratarme, ordenó que estando desde lo más alto de la isla puesta a la guarda una centinela de los turcos, bien dentro a la mar descubrió seis velas latinas, y entendió, como fue verdad, que debían ser, o la escuadra de Malta, o algunas de las de Sicilia. Bajó corriendo a dar la nueva, y en un pensamiento se embarcaron los turcos, que estaban en tierra, cuál guisando de comer, cuál lavando su ropa; y, zarpando con no vista presteza, dieron al agua los remos y al viento las velas, y, puestas las proas en Berbería, en menos de dos horas perdieron de vista las galeras; y así, cubiertos con la isla y con la noche, que venía cerca, se aseguraron del miedo que habían cobrado.

»A tu buena consideración dejo, ¡oh Mahamut amigo!, que consideres cuál iría mi ánimo en aquel viaje, tan contrario del que yo esperaba; y más cuando otro día, habiendo llegado las dos galeotas a la isla de la Pantanalea, por la parte del mediodía, los turcos saltaron en tierra a hacer leña y carne, como ellos dicen; y más, cuando vi que los arráeces saltaron en tierra y se pusieron a hacer las partes de todas las presas que habían hecho. Cada acción destas fue para mí una dilatada muerte. Viniendo, pues, a la partición mía y de Leonisa, Yzuf dio a Fetala (que así se llamaba el arráez de la otra galeota) seis cristianos, los cuatro para el remo, y dos muchachos hermosísimos, de nación corsos, y a mí con ellos, por quedarse con Leonisa, de lo cual se contentó Fetala. Y, aunque estuve presente a todo esto, nunca pude entender lo que decían, aunque sabía lo que hacían, ni entendiera por entonces el modo de la partición si Fetala no se llegara a mí y me dijera en italiano: "Cristiano, ya eres mío; en dos mil escudos de oro te me han dado; si quisieres libertad, has de dar cuatro mil, si no, acá morir". Preguntéle si era también suya la cristiana; díjome que no, sino que Yzuf se quedaba con ella, con intención de volverla mora y casarse con ella. Y así era la verdad, porque me lo dijo uno de los cautivos del remo, que entendía bien el turquesco, y se lo había oído tratar a Yzuf y a Fetala. Díjele a mi amo que hiciese de modo como se quedase con la cristiana, y que le daría por su rescate solo diez mil escudos de oro en oro. Respondióme no ser posible, pero que haría que Yzuf supiese la gran suma que él ofrecía por la cristiana; quizá, llevado del interese, mudaría de intención y la rescataría. Hízolo así, y mandó que todos los de su galeota se embarcasen luego, porque se quería ir a Trípol de Berbería, de donde él era. Yzuf, asimismo, determinó irse a Biserta; y así, se embarcaron con la misma priesa que suelen cuando descubren o galeras de quien temer, o bajeles a quien robar. Movióles a darse priesa, por parecerles que el tiempo mudaba con

muestras de borrasca.

»Estaba Leonisa en tierra, pero no en parte que yo la pudiese ver, si no fue que al tiempo del embarcarnos llegamos juntos a la marina. Llevábala de la mano su nuevo amo y su más nuevo amante, y al entrar por la escala que estaba puesta desde tierra a la galeota, volvió los ojos a mirarme, y los míos, que no se quitaban della, la miraron con tan tierno sentimiento y dolor que, sin saber cómo, se me puso una nube ante ellos que me quitó la vista, y sin ella y sin sentido alguno di conmigo en el suelo. Lo mismo, me dijeron después, que había sucedido a Leonisa, porque la vieron caer de la escala a la mar, y que Yzuf se había echado tras della y la sacó en brazos. Esto me contaron dentro de la galeota de mi amo, donde me habían puesto sin que yo lo sintiese; mas, cuando volví de mi desmayo y me vi solo en la galeota, y que la otra, tomando otra derrota, se apartaba de nosotros, llevándose consigo la mitad de mi alma, o, por mejor decir, toda ella, cubrióseme el corazón de nuevo, y de nuevo maldije mi ventura y llamé a la muerte a voces; y eran tales los sentimientos que hacía, que mi amo, enfadado de oírme, con un grueso palo me amenazó que, si no callaba, me maltrataría. Reprimí las lágrimas, recogí los suspiros, creyendo que con la fuerza que les hacía reventarían por parte que abriesen puerta al alma, que tanto deseaba desamparar este miserable cuerpo; mas la suerte, aún no contenta de haberme puesto en tan encogido estrecho, ordenó de acabar con todo, quitándome las esperanzas de todo mi remedio; y fue que en un instante se declaró la borrasca que ya se temía, y el viento que de la parte de mediodía soplaba y nos embestía por la proa, comenzó a reforzar con tanto brío, que fue forzoso volverle la popa y dejar correr el bajel por donde el viento quería llevarle.

»Llevaba designio el arraéz de despuntar la isla y tomar abrigo en ella por la banda del norte, mas sucedióle al revés su pensamiento, porque el viento cargó con tanta furia que, todo lo que habíamos navegado en dos días, en poco más de catorce horas nos vimos a seis millas o siete de la propia isla de donde habíamos partido, y sin remedio alguno íbamos a embestir en ella, y no en alguna playa, sino en unas muy levantadas peñas que a la vista se nos ofrecían, amenazando de inevitable muerte a nuestras vidas. Vimos a nuestro lado la galeota de nuestra conserva, donde estaba Leonisa, y a todos sus turcos y cautivos remeros haciendo fuerza con los remos para entretenerse y no dar en las peñas. Lo mismo hicieron los de la nuestra, con más ventaja y esfuerzo, a lo que pareció, que los de la otra, los cuales, cansados del trabajo y vencidos del tesón del viento y de la tormenta, soltando los remos, se abandonaron y se dejaron ir a vista de nuestros ojos a embestir en las peñas, donde dio la galeota tan grande golpe que toda se hizo pedazos. Comenzaba a cerrar la noche, y fue tamaña la grita de los que se

perdían y el sobresalto de los que en nuestro bajel temían perderse, que ninguna cosa de las que nuestro arráez mandaba se entendía ni se hacía; sólo se atendía a no dejar los remos de las manos, tomando por remedio volver la proa al viento y echar las dos áncoras a la mar, para entretener con esto algún tiempo la muerte, que por cierta tenían. Y, aunque el miedo de morir era general en todos, en mí era muy al contrario, porque con la esperanza engañosa de ver en el otro mundo a la que había tan poco que déste se había partido, cada punto que la galeota tardaba en anegarse o en embestir en las peñas, era para mí un siglo de más penosa muerte. Las levantadas olas, que por encima del bajel y de mi cabeza pasaban, me hacían estar atento a ver si en ellas venía el cuerpo de la desdichada Leonisa.

»No quiero detenerme ahora, ¡oh Mahamut!, en contarte por menudo los sobresaltos, los temores, las ansias, los pensamientos que en aquella luenga y amarga noche tuve y pasé, por no ir contra lo que primero propuse de contarte brevemente mi desventura. Basta decirte que fueron tantos y tales que, si la muerte viniera en aquel tiempo, tuviera bien poco que hacer en quitarme la vida.

»Vino el día con muestras de mayor tormenta que la pasada, y hallamos que el bajel había virado un gran trecho, habiéndose desviado de las peñas un buen trecho, y llegádose a una punta de la isla; y, viéndose tan a pique de doblarla, turcos y cristianos, con nueva esperanza y fuerzas nuevas, al cabo de seis horas doblamos la punta, y hallamos más blando el mar y más sosegado, de modo que más fácilmente nos aprovechamos de los remos, y, abrigados con la isla, tuvieron lugar los turcos de saltar en tierra para ir a ver si había quedado alguna reliquia de la galeota que la noche antes dio en las peñas; mas aún no quiso el cielo concederme el alivio que esperaba tener de ver en mis brazos el cuerpo de Leonisa; que, aunque muerto y despedazado, holgara de verle, por romper aquel imposible que mi estrella me puso de juntarme con él, como mis buenos deseos merecían; y así, rogué a un renegado que quería desembarcarse que le buscase y viese si la mar lo había arrojado a la orilla. Pero, como ya he dicho, todo esto me negó el cielo, pues al mismo instante tornó a embravecerse el viento, de manera que el amparo de la isla no fue de algún provecho. Viendo esto Fetala, no quiso contrastar contra la fortuna, que tanto le perseguía, y así, mandó poner el trinquete al árbol y hacer un poco de vela; volvió la proa a la mar y la popa al viento; y, tomando él mismo el cargo del timón, se dejó correr por el ancho mar, seguro que ningún impedimento le estorbaría su camino. Iban los remos igualados en la crujía y toda la gente sentada por los bancos y ballesteras, sin que en toda la galeota se descubriese otra persona que la del cómitre, que por más seguridad suya se hizo atar fuertemente al estanterol. Volaba el bajel con tanta ligereza que, en tres días y tres noches, pasando a la vista de Trápana, de Melazo

y de Palermo, embocó por el faro de Micina, con maravilloso espanto de los que iban dentro y de aquellos que desde la tierra los miraban.

»En fin, por no ser tan prolijo en contar la tormenta como ella lo fue en su porfía, digo que cansados, hambrientos y fatigados con tan largo rodeo, como fue bajar casi toda la isla de Sicilia, llegamos a Trípol de Berbería, adonde a mi amo (antes de haber hecho con sus levantes la cuenta del despojo, y dádoles lo que les tocaba, y su quinto al rey, como es costumbre) le dio un dolor de costado tal, que dentro de tres días dio con él en el infierno. Púsose luego el rey de Trípol en toda su hacienda, y el alcaide de los muertos que allí tiene el Gran Turco (que, como sabes, es heredero de los que no le dejan en su muerte); estos dos tomaron toda la hacienda de Fetala, mi amo, y yo cupe a éste, que entonces era virrey de Trípol; y de allí a quince días le vino la patente de virrey de Chipre, con el cual he venido hasta aquí sin intento de rescatarme, porque él me ha dicho muchas veces que me rescate, pues soy hombre principal, como se lo dijeron los soldados de Fetala, jamás he acudido a ello, antes le he dicho que le engañaron los que le dijeron grandezas de mi posibilidad. Y si quieres, Mahamut, que te diga todo mi pensamiento, has de saber que no quiero volver a parte donde por alguna vía pueda tener cosa que me consuele, y quiero que, juntándose a la vida del cautiverio, los pensamientos y memorias que jamás me dejan de la muerte de Leonisa vengan a ser parte para que yo no la tenga jamás de gusto alguno. Y si es verdad que los continuos dolores forzosamente se han de acabar o acabar a quien los padece, los míos no podrán dejar de hacello, porque pienso darles rienda de manera que, a pocos días, den alcance a la miserable vida que tan contra mi voluntad sostengo.

»Éste es, ¡oh Mahamut hermano!, el triste suceso mío; ésta es la causa de mis suspiros y de mis lágrimas; mira tú ahora y considera si es bastante para sacarlos de lo profundo de mis entrañas y para engendrarlos en la sequedad de mi lastimado pecho. Leonisa murió, y con ella mi esperanza; que, puesto que la que tenía, ella viviendo, se sustentaba de un delgado cabello, todavía, todavía...»

Y en este «todavía» se le pegó la lengua al paladar, de manera que no pudo hablar más palabra ni detener las lágrimas, que, como suele decirse, hilo a hilo le corrían por el rostro, en tanta abundancia, que llegaron a humedecer el suelo. Acompañóle en ellas Mahamut; pero, pasándose aquel parasismo, causado de la memoria renovada en el amargo cuento, quiso Mahamut consolar a Ricardo con las mejores razones que supo; mas él se las atajó, diciéndole:

-Lo que has de hacer, amigo, es aconsejarme qué haré yo para caer en desgracia de mi amo, y de todos aquellos con quien yo comunicare; para que, siendo aborrecido dél y dellos, los unos y los otros me maltraten y persigan de suerte que, añadiendo dolor a dolor y pena a pena, alcance con brevedad lo que

deseo, que es acabar la vida.

-Ahora he hallado ser verdadero -dijo Mahamut-, lo que suele decirse: que lo que se sabe sentir se sabe decir, puesto que algunas veces el sentimiento enmudece la lengua; pero, comoquiera que ello sea, Ricardo, ora llegue tu dolor a tus palabras, ora ellas se le aventajen, siempre has de hallar en mí un verdadero amigo, o para ayuda o para consejo; que, aunque mis pocos años y el desatino que he hecho en vestirme este hábito están dando voces que de ninguna destas dos cosas que te ofrezco se puede fiar ni esperar alguna, yo procuraré que no salga verdadera esta sospecha, ni pueda tenerse por cierta tal opinión. Y, puesto que tú no quieras ni ser aconsejado ni favorecido, no por eso dejaré de hacer lo que te conviniera, como suele hacerse con el enfermo, que pide lo que no le dan y le dan lo que le conviene. No hay en toda esta ciudad quien pueda ni valga más que el cadí, mi amo, ni aun el tuyo, que viene por visorrey della, ha de poder tanto; y, siendo esto así, como lo es, yo puedo decir que soy el que más puede en la ciudad, pues puedo con mi patrón todo lo que quiero. Digo esto, porque podría ser dar traza con él para que vinieses a ser suyo, y, estando en mi compañía, el tiempo nos dirá lo que habemos de hacer, así para consolarte, si quisieres o pudieres tener consuelo, y a mí para salir desta a mejor vida, o, a lo menos, a parte donde la tenga más segura cuando la deje.

-Yo te agradezco -respondió Ricardo-, Mahamut, la amistad que me ofreces, aunque estoy cierto que, con cuanto hicieres, no has de poder cosa que en mi provecho resulte. Pero dejemos ahora esto y vamos a las tiendas, porque, a lo que veo, sale de la ciudad mucha gente, y sin duda es el antiguo virrey que sale a estarse en la campaña, por dar lugar a mi amo que entre en la ciudad a hacer la residencia.

-Así es -dijo Mahamut-; ven, pues, Ricardo, y verás las ceremonias con que se reciben; que sé que gustarás de verlas.

-Vamos en buena hora -dijo Ricardo-; quizá te habré menester si acaso el guardián de los cautivos de mi amo me ha echado menos, que es un renegado, corso de nación y de no muy piadosas entrañas.

Con esto dejaron la plática, y llegaron a las tiendas a tiempo que llegaba el antiguo bajá, y el nuevo le salía a recibir a la puerta de la tienda.

Venía acompañado Alí Bajá (que así se llamaba el que dejaba el gobierno) de todos los jenízaros que de ordinario están de presidio en Nicosia, después que los turcos la ganaron, que serían hasta quinientos. Venían en dos alas o hileras, los unos con escopetas y los otros con alfanjes desnudos. Llegaron a la puerta del nuevo bajá Hazán, la rodearon todos, y Alí Bajá, inclinando el cuerpo, hizo reverencia a Hazán, y él con menos inclinación le saludó. Luego se entró Alí en el pabellón de Hazán, y los turcos le subieron sobre un poderoso caballo



ricamente aderezado, y, trayéndole a la redonda de las tiendas y por todo un buen espacio de la campaña, daban voces y gritos, diciendo en su lengua: «¡Viva, viva Solimán sultán, y Hazán Bajá en su nombre!» Repitieron esto muchas veces, reforzando las voces y los alaridos, y luego le volvieron a la tienda, donde había quedado Alí Bajá, el cual, con el cadí y Hazán, se encerraron en ella por espacio de una hora solos. Dijo Mahamut a Ricardo que se habían encerrado a tratar de lo que convenía hacer en la ciudad cerca de las obras que Alí dejaba comenzadas. De allí a poco tiempo salió el cadí a la puerta de la tienda, y dijo a voces en lengua turquesca, arábica y griega, que todos los que quisiesen entrar a pedir justicia, o otra cosa contra Alí Bajá, podrían entrar libremente; que allí estaba Hazán Bajá, a quien el Gran Señor enviaba por virrey de Chipre, que les guardaría toda razón y justicia. Con esta licencia, los jenízaros dejaron desocupada la puerta de la tienda y dieron lugar a que entrasen los que quisiesen. Mahamut hizo que entrase con él Ricardo, que, por ser esclavo de Hazán, no se le impidió la entrada.

Entraron a pedir justicia, así griegos cristianos como algunos turcos, y todos de cosas de tan poca importancia, que las más despachó el cadí sin dar traslado a la parte, sin autos, demandas ni respuestas; que todas las causas, si no son las matrimoniales, se despachan en pie y en un punto, más a juicio de buen varón que por ley alguna. Y entre aquellos bárbaros, si lo son en esto, el cadí es el juez competente de todas las causas, que las abrevia en la uña y las sentencia en un soplo, sin que haya apelación de su sentencia para otro tribunal.

En esto entró un chاوز, que es como alguacil, y dijo que estaba a la puerta de la tienda un judío que traía a vender una hermosísima cristiana; mandó el cadí que le hiciese entrar, salió el chاوز, y volvió a entrar luego, y con él un venerable judío, que traía de la mano a una mujer vestida en hábito berberisco, tan bien aderezada y compuesta que no lo pudiera estar tan bien la más rica mora de Fez ni de Marruecos, que en aderezarse llevan la ventaja a todas las africanas, aunque entren las de Argel con sus perlas tantas. Venía cubierto el rostro con un tafetán carmesí; por las gargantas de los pies, que se descubrían, parecían dos carcajes (que así se llaman las manillas en arábigo), al parecer de puro oro; y en los brazos, que asimismo por una camisa de cendal delgado se descubrían o traslucían, traía otros carcajes de oro sembrados de muchas perlas; en resolución, en cuanto el traje, ella venía rica y gallardamente aderezada.

Admirados desta primera vista el cadí y los demás bajaes, antes que otra cosa dijese ni preguntase, mandaron al judío que hiciese que se quitase el antifaz la cristiana. Hízolo así, y descubrió un rostro que así deslumbró los ojos y alegró los corazones de los circunstantes, como el sol que, por entre cerradas nubes, después de mucha escuridad, se ofrece a los ojos de los que le desean: tal era la

belleza de la cautiva cristiana, y tal su brío y su gallardía. Pero en quien con más efeto hizo impresión la maravillosa luz que había descubierto, fue en el lastimado Ricardo, como en aquel que mejor que otro la conocía, pues era su cruel y amada Leonisa, que tantas veces y con tantas lágrimas por él había sido tenida y llorada por muerta.

Quedó a la improvisa vista de la singular belleza de la cristiana traspasado y rendido el corazón de Alí, y en el mismo grado y con la misma herida se halló el de Hazán, sin quedarse esento de la amorosa llaga el del cadí, que, más suspenso que todos, no sabía quitar los ojos de los hermosos de Leonisa. Y, para encarecer las poderosas fuerzas de amor, se ha de saber que en aquel mismo punto nació en los corazones de los tres una, a su parecer, firme esperanza de alcanzarla y de gozarla; y así, sin querer saber el cómo, ni el dónde, ni el cuándo había venido a poder del judío, le preguntaron el precio que por ella quería.

El codicioso judío respondió que cuatro mil doblas, que vienen a ser dos mil escudos; mas, apenas hubo declarado el precio, cuando Alí Bajá dijo que él los daba por ella, y que fuese luego a contar el dinero a su tienda. Empero Hazán Bajá, que estaba de parecer de no dejarla, aunque aventurase en ello la vida, dijo:

-Yo asimismo doy por ella las cuatro mil doblas que el judío pide, y no las diera ni me pusiera a ser contrario de lo que Alí ha dicho si no me forzara lo que él mismo dirá que es razón que me obligue y fuerce, y es que esta gentil esclava no pertenece para ninguno de nosotros, sino para el Gran Señor solamente; y así, digo que en su nombre la compro: veamos ahora quién será el atrevido que me la quite.

-Yo seré -replicó Alí-, porque para el mismo efeto la compro, y estáme a mí más a cuento hacer al Gran Señor este presente, por la comodidad de llevarla luego a Constantinopla, granjeando con él la voluntad del Gran Señor; que, como hombre que quedo, Hazán, como tú vees, sin cargo alguno, he menester buscar medios de tenelle, de lo que tú estás seguro por tres años, pues hoy comienzas a mandar y a gobernar este riquísimo reino de Chipre. Así que, por estas razones y por haber sido yo el primero que ofrecí el precio por la cautiva, está puesto en razón, ¡oh Hazán!, que me la dejes.

-Tanto más es de agradecerme a mí -respondió Hazán-el procurarla y enviarla al Gran Señor, cuanto lo hago sin moverme a ello interés alguno; y, en lo de la comodidad de llevarla, una galeota armaré con sola mi chusma y mis esclavos que la lleve.

Azoróse con estas razones Alí, y, levantándose en pie, empuñó el alfanje, diciendo:

-Siendo, ¡oh Hazán!, mis intentos unos, que es presentar y llevar esta cristiana al Gran Señor, y, habiendo sido yo el comprador primero, está puesto en razón y

en justicia que me la dejes a mí; y, cuando otra cosa pensares, este alfanje que empuño defenderá mi derecho y castigará tu atrevimiento.

El cadí, que a todo estaba atento, y que no menos que los dos ardía, temeroso de quedar sin la cristiana, imaginó cómo poder atajar el gran fuego que se había encendido, y, juntamente, quedarse con la cautiva, sin dar alguna sospecha de su dañada intención; y así, levantándose en pie, se puso entre los dos, que ya también lo estaban, y dijo:

-Sosiégate, Hazán, y tú, Alí, estáte quedo; que yo estoy aquí, que sabré y podré componer vuestras diferencias de manera que los dos consigáis vuestros intentos, y el Gran Señor, como deseáis, sea servido.

A las palabras del cadí obedecieron luego; y aun si otra cosa más dificultosa les mandara, hicieran lo mismo: tanto es el respecto que tienen a sus canas los de aquella dañada secta. Prosiguió, pues, el cadí, diciendo:

-Tú dices, Alí, que quieres esta cristiana para el Gran Señor, y Hazán dice lo mismo; tú alegas que por ser el primero en ofrecer el precio ha de ser tuya; Hazán te lo contradice; y, aunque él no sabe fundar su razón, yo hallo que tiene la misma que tú tienes, y es la intención, que sin duda debió de nacer a un mismo tiempo que la tuya, en querer comprar la esclava para el mismo efeto; sólo le llevaste tú la ventaja en haberte declarado primero, y esto no ha de ser parte para que de todo en todo quede defraudado su buen deseo; y así, me parece ser bien concertaros en esta forma: que la esclava sea de entrambos; y, pues el uso della ha de quedar a la voluntad del Gran Señor, para quien se compró, a él toca disponer della; y, en tanto, pagarás tú, Hazán, dos mil doblas, y Alí otras dos mil, y quedaráse la cautiva en poder mío para que en nombre de entrambos yo la envíe a Constantinopla, porque no quede sin algún premio, siquiera por haberme hallado presente; y así, me ofrezco de enviarla a mi costa, con la autoridad y decencia que se debe a quien se envía, escribiendo al Gran Señor todo lo que aquí ha pasado y la voluntad que los dos habéis mostrado a su servicio.

No supieron, ni pudieron, ni quisieron contradecirle los dos enamorados turcos; y, aunque vieron que por aquel camino no conseguían su deseo, hubieron de pasar por el parecer del cadí, formando y criando cada uno allá en su ánimo una esperanza que, aunque dudosa, les prometía poder llegar al fin de sus encendidos deseos. Hazán, que se quedaba por virrey en Chipre, pensaba dar tantas dádivas al cadí que, vencido y obligado, le diese la cautiva; Alí imaginó de hacer un hecho que le aseguró salir con lo que deseaba. Y, teniendo por cierto cada cual su designio, vinieron con facilidad en lo que el cadí quiso, y, de consentimiento y voluntad de los dos, se la entregaron luego, y luego pagaron al judío cada uno dos mil doblas. Dijo el judío que no la había de dar con los

vestidos que tenía, porque valían otras dos mil doblas; y así era la verdad, a causa que en los cabellos, que parte por las espaldas sueltos traía y parte atados y enlazados por la frente, se parecían algunas hileras de perlas que con estremada gracia se enredaban con ellos. Las manillas de los pies y manos asimismo venían llenas de gruesas perlas. El vestido era una almalafa de raso verde, toda bordada y llena de trencillas de oro. En fin, les pareció a todos que el judío anduvo corto en el precio que pidió por el vestido, y el cadí, por no mostrarse menos liberal que los dos bajaes, dijo que él quería pagarle, porque de aquella manera se presentase al Gran Señor la cristiana. Tuviéronlo por bien los dos competidores, creyendo cada uno que todo había de venir a su poder.

Falta ahora por decir lo que sintió Ricardo de ver andar en almoneda su alma, y los pensamientos que en aquel punto le vinieron, y los temores que le sobresaltaron, viendo que el haber hallado a su querida prenda era para más perderla; no sabía darse a entender si estaba dormiendo o despierto, no dando crédito a sus mismos ojos de lo que veían, porque le parecía cosa imposible ver tan impensadamente delante dellos a la que pensaba que para siempre los había cerrado. Llegóse en esto a su amigo Mahamut y díjole:

-¿No la conoces, amigo?

-No la conozco -dijo Mahamut.

-Pues has de saber -replicó Ricardo- que es Leonisa.

-¿Qué es lo que dices, Ricardo? -dijo Mahamut.

-Lo que has oído -dijo Ricardo.

-Pues calla y no la descubras -dijo Mahamut-, que la ventura va ordenando que la tengas buena y próspera, porque ella va a poder de mi amo.

-¿Parécete -dijo Ricardo- que será bien ponerme en parte donde pueda ser visto?

-No -dijo Mahamut- porque no la sobresaltes o te sobresaltes, y no vengas a dar indicio de que la conoces ni que la has visto; que podría ser que redundase en perjuicio de mi designio.

-Seguiré tu parecer -respondió Ricardo.

Y así, anduvo huyendo de que sus ojos se encontrasen con los de Leonisa, la cual tenía los suyos, en tanto que esto pasaba, clavados en el suelo, derramando algunas lágrimas. Llegóse el cadí a ella, y, asiéndola de la mano, se la entregó a Mahamut, mandándole que la llevase a la ciudad y se la entregase a su señora Halima, y le dijese la tratase como a esclava del Gran Señor. Hízolo así Mahamut y dejó sólo a Ricardo, que con los ojos fue siguiendo a su estrella hasta que se le encubrió con la nube de los muros de Nicosia. Llegóse al judío y preguntóle que adónde había comprado, o en qué modo había venido a su poder aquella cautiva cristiana. El judío le respondió que en la isla de la Pantanalea la

había comprado a unos turcos que allí habían dado al través; y, queriendo proseguir adelante, lo estorbó el venirle a llamar de parte de los bajaes, que querían preguntarle lo que Ricardo deseaba saber; y con esto se despidió dél.

En el camino que había desde las tiendas a la ciudad, tuvo lugar Mahamut de preguntar a Leonisa, en lengua italiana, que de qué lugar era. La cual le respondió que de la ciudad de Trápana. Preguntóle asimismo Mahamut si conocía en aquella ciudad a un caballero rico y noble que se llamaba Ricardo. Oyendo lo cual Leonisa, dio un gran suspiro y dijo:

-Sí conozco, por mi mal.

-¿Cómo por vuestro mal? -dijo Mahamut.

-Porque él me conoció a mí por el suyo y por mi desventura -respondió Leonisa.

-¿Y, por ventura -preguntó Mahamut-, conocistes también en la misma ciudad a otro caballero de gentil disposición, hijo de padres muy ricos, y él por su persona muy valiente, muy liberal y muy discreto, que se llamaba Cornelio?

-También le conozco -respondió Leonisa-, y podré decir más por mi mal que no a Ricardo. Mas, ¿quién sois vos, señor, que los conocéis y por ellos me preguntáis?

-Soy -dijo Mahamut-natural de Palermo, que por varios accidentes estoy en este traje y vestido, diferente del que yo solía traer, y conózcolos porque no ha muchos días que entrambos estuvieron en mi poder, que a Cornelio le cautivaron unos moros de Trípol de Berbería y le vendieron a un turco que le trujo a esta isla, donde vino con mercancías, porque es mercader de Rodas, el cual fiaba de Cornelio toda su hacienda.

-Bien se la sabrá guardar -dijo Leonisa-, porque sabe guardar muy bien la suya; pero decidme, señor, ¿cómo o con quién vino Ricardo a esta isla?

-Vino -respondió Mahamut-con un cosario que le cautivó estando en un jardín de la marina de Trápana, y con él dijo que habían cautivado a una doncella que nunca me quiso decir su nombre. Estuvo aquí algunos días con su amo, que iba a visitar el sepulcro de Mahoma, que está en la ciudad de Almedina, y al tiempo de la partida cayó Ricardo muy enfermo y indispuesto, que su amo me lo dejó, por ser de mi tierra, para que le curase y tuviese cargo dél hasta su vuelta, o que si por aquí no volviese, se le enviase a Constantinopla, que él me avisaría cuando allá estuviese. Pero el cielo lo ordenó de otra manera, pues el sin ventura de Ricardo, sin tener accidente alguno, en pocos días se acabaron los de su vida, siempre llamando entre sí a una Leonisa, a quien él me había dicho que quería más que a su vida y a su alma; la cual Leonisa me dijo que en una galeota que había dado al través en la isla de la Pantanalea se había ahogado, cuya muerte siempre lloraba y siempre plañía, hasta que le trujo a término de perder la vida,

que yo no le sentí enfermedad en el cuerpo, sino muestras de dolor en el alma.

-Decidme, señor, -replicó Leonisa-, ese mozo que decís, en las pláticas que trató con vos (que, como de una patria, debieron ser muchas), ¿nombró alguna vez a esa Leonisa con todo el modo con que a ella y a Ricardo cautivaron?

-Sí nombró -dijo Mahamut-, y me preguntó si había aportado por esta isla una cristiana dese nombre, de tales y tales señas, a la cual holgaría de hallar para rescatarla, si es que su amo se había ya desengañado de que no era tan rica como él pensaba, aunque podía ser que por haberla gozado la tuviese en menos; que, como no pasasen de trecientos o cuatrocientos escudos, él los daría de muy buena gana por ella, porque un tiempo la había tenido alguna afición.

-Bien poca debía de ser -dijo Leonisa-, pues no pasaba de cuatrocientos escudos; más liberal es Ricardo, y más valiente y comedido; Dios perdone a quien fue causa de su muerte, que fui yo, que yo soy la sin ventura que él lloró por muerta; y sabe Dios si holgara de que él fuera vivo para pagarle con el sentimiento, que viera que tenía de su desgracia el que él mostró de la mía. Yo, señor, como ya os he dicho, soy la poco querida de Cornelio y la bien llorada de Ricardo, que, por muy muchos y varios casos, he venido a este miserable estado en que me veo; y, aunque es tan peligroso, siempre, por favor del cielo, he conservado en él la entereza de mi honor, con la cual vivo contenta en mi miseria. Ahora, ni sé donde estoy, ni quién es mi dueño, ni adónde han de dar conmigo mis contrarios hados, por lo cual os ruego, señor, siquiera por la sangre que de cristiano tenéis, me aconsejéis en mis trabajos; que, puesto que el ser muchos me han hecho algo advertida, sobrevienen cada momento tantos y tales, que no sé cómo me he de avenir con ellos.

A lo cual respondió Mahamut que él haría lo que pudiese en servirla, aconsejándola y ayudándola con su ingenio y con sus fuerzas; advirtiéndola de la diferencia que por su causa habían tenido los dos bajaes, y cómo quedaba en poder del cadí, su amo, para llevarla presentada al Gran Turco Selín a Constantinopla; pero que, antes que esto tuviese efeto, tenía esperanza en el verdadero Dios, en quien él creía, aunque mal cristiano, que lo había de disponer de otra manera, y que la aconsejaba se hubiese bien con Halima, la mujer del cadí, su amo, en cuyo poder había de estar hasta que la enviasen a Constantinopla, advirtiéndola de la condición de Halima; y con ésas le dijo otras cosas de su provecho, hasta que la dejó en su casa y en poder de Halima, a quien dijo el recaudo de su amo.

Recibióla bien la mora por verla tan bien aderezada y tan hermosa. Mahamut se volvió a las tiendas a contar a Ricardo lo que con Leonisa le había pasado; y, hallándole, se lo contó todo punto por punto, y, cuando llegó al del sentimiento que Leonisa había hecho cuando le dijo que era muerto, casi se le vinieron las

lágrimas a los ojos. Díjole cómo había fingido el cuento del cautiverio de Cornelio, por ver lo que ella sentía; advirtiéndole la tibieza y la malicia con que de Cornelio había hablado; todo lo cual fue píctima para el afligido corazón de Ricardo, el cual dijo a Mahamut:

-Acuérdome, amigo Mahamut, de un cuento que me contó mi padre, que ya sabes cuán curioso fue, y oíste cuánta honra le hizo el Emperador Carlos Quinto, a quien siempre sirvió en honrosos cargos de la guerra. Digo que me contó que, cuando el Emperador estuvo sobre Túnez, y la tomó con la fuerza de la Goleta, estando un día en la campaña y en su tienda, le trujeron a presentar una mora por cosa singular en belleza, y que al tiempo que se la presentaron entraban algunos rayos del sol por unas partes de la tienda y daban en los cabellos de la mora, que con los mismos del sol en ser rubios competían: cosa nueva en las moras, que siempre se precian de tenerlos negros. Contaba que en aquella ocasión se hallaron en la tienda, entre otros muchos, dos caballeros españoles: el uno era andaluz y el otro era catalán, ambos muy discretos y ambos poetas; y, habiéndola visto el andaluz, comenzó con admiración a decir unos versos que ellos llaman coplas, con unas consonancias o consonantes dificultosos, y, parando en los cinco versos de la copla, se detuvo sin darle fin ni a la copla ni a la sentencia, por no ofrecérsele tan de improviso los consonantes necesarios para acabarla; mas el otro caballero, que estaba a su lado y había oído los versos, viéndole suspenso, como si le hurtara la media copla de la boca, la prosiguió y acabó con las mismas consonancias. Y esto mismo se me vino a la memoria cuando vi entrar a la hermosísima Leonisa por la tienda del bajá, no solamente escureciendo los rayos del sol si la tocaran, sino a todo el cielo con sus estrellas.

-Paso, no más -dijo Mahamut-; detente, amigo Ricardo, que a cada paso temo que has de pasar tanto la raya en las alabanzas de tu bella Leonisa que, dejando de parecer cristiano, parezcas gentil. Dime, si quieres, esos versos o coplas, o como los llamas, que después hablaremos en otras cosas que sean de más gusto, y aun quizá de más provecho.

-En buen hora -dijo Ricardo-; y vuélvete a advertir que los cinco versos dijo el uno y los otros cinco el otro, todos de improviso; y son éstos:

Como cuando el sol asoma  
por una montaña baja  
y de súbito nos toma,  
y con su vista nos doma  
nuestra vista y la relaja;  
como la piedra balaja,  
que no consiente carcoma,  
tal es el tu rostro, Aja,  
dura lanza de Mahoma,  
que las mis entrañas raja.

-Bien me suenan al oído -dijo Mahamut-, y mejor me suena y me parece que estés para decir versos, Ricardo, porque el decirlos o el hacerlos requieren ánimos de ánimos desapasionados.

-También se suelen -respondió Ricardo-llorar endechas, como cantar himnos, y todo es decir versos; pero, dejando esto aparte, dime qué piensas hacer en nuestro negocio, que, puesto que no entendí lo que los bajaes trataron en la tienda, en tanto que tú llevaste a Leonisa, me lo contó un renegado de mi amo, veneciano, que se halló presente y entiende bien la lengua turquesca; y lo que es menester ante todas cosas es buscar traza cómo Leonisa no vaya a mano del Gran Señor.

-Lo primero que se ha de hacer -respondió Mahamut-es que tú vengas a poder de mi amo; que, esto hecho, después nos aconsejaremos en lo que más nos conviniere.

En esto, vino el guardián de los cautivos cristianos de Hazán, y llevó consigo a Ricardo. El cadí volvió a la ciudad con Hazán, que en breves días hizo la residencia de Alí y se la dio cerrada y sellada, para que se fuese a Constantinopla. Él se fue luego, dejando muy encargado al cadí que con brevedad enviase la cautiva, escribiendo al Gran Señor de modo que le aprovechase para sus pretensiones. Prometióselo el cadí con traidoras entrañas, porque las tenía hechas ceniza por la cautiva. Ido Alí lleno de falsas esperanzas, y quedando Hazán no vacío de ellas, Mahamut hizo de modo que Ricardo vino a poder de su amo. Íbanse los días, y el deseo de ver a Leonisa apretaba tanto a Ricardo, que no alcanzaba un punto de sosiego. Mudóse Ricardo el nombre en el de Mario, porque no llegase el suyo a oídos de Leonisa antes que él la viese; y el verla era muy dificultoso, a causa que los moros son en extremo celosos y encubren de todos los hombres los rostros de sus mujeres, puesto que en



mostrarse ellas a los cristianos no se les hace de mal; quizá debe de ser que, por ser cautivos, no los tienen por hombres cabales.

Avino, pues, que un día la señora Halima vio a su esclavo Mario, y tan visto y tan mirado fue, que se le quedó grabado en el corazón y fijo en la memoria; y, quizá poco contenta de los abrazos flojos de su anciano marido, con facilidad dio lugar a un mal deseo, y con la misma dio cuenta dél a Leonisa, a quien ya quería mucho por su agradable condición y proceder discreto, y tratábala con mucho respecto, por ser prenda del Gran Señor. Díjole cómo el cadí había traído a casa un cautivo cristiano, de tan gentil donaire y parecer, que a sus ojos no había visto más lindo hombre en toda su vida, y que decían que era chilibí (que quiere decir caballero) y de la misma tierra de Mahamut, su renegado, y que no sabía cómo darle a entender su voluntad, sin que el cristiano la tuviese en poco por habérsela declarado. Preguntóle Leonisa cómo se llamaba el cautivo, y díjole Halima que se llamaba Mario; a lo cual replicó Leonisa:

-Si él fuera caballero y del lugar que dicen, yo le conociera, más dese nombre Mario no hay ninguno en Trápana; pero haz, señora, que yo le vea y hable, que te diré quién es y lo que dél se puede esperar.

-Así será -dijo Halima-, porque el viernes, cuando esté el cadí haciendo la zalá en la mezquita, le haré entrar acá dentro, donde le podrás hablar a solas; y si te pareciere darle indicios de mi deseo, haráslo por el mejor modo que pudieres.

Esto dijo Halima a Leonisa, y no habían pasado dos horas cuando el cadí llamó a Mahamut y a Mario, y, con no menos eficacia que Halima había descubierto su pecho a Leonisa, descubrió el enamorado viejo el suyo a sus dos esclavos, pidiéndoles consejo en lo que haría para gozar de la cristiana y cumplir con el Gran Señor, cuya ella era, diciéndoles que antes pensaba morir mil veces que entregalla una al Gran Turco. Con tales afectos decía su pasión el religioso moro, que la puso en los corazones de sus dos esclavos, que todo lo contrario de lo que él pensaba pensaban. Quedó puesto entre ellos que Mario, como hombre de su tierra, aunque había dicho que no la conocía, tomase la mano en solicitarla y en declararle la voluntad suya; y, cuando por este modo no se pudiese alcanzar, que usaría el de la fuerza, pues estaba en su poder. Y, esto hecho, con decir que era muerta, se escusarían de enviarla a Constantinopla.

Contentísimo quedó el cadí con el parecer de sus esclavos, y, con la imaginada alegría, ofreció desde luego libertad a Mahamut, mandándole la mitad de su hacienda después de sus días; asimismo prometió a Mario, si alcanzaba lo que quería, libertad y dineros con que volviese a su tierra rico, honrado y contento. Si él fue liberal en prometer, sus cautivos fueron pródigos ofreciéndole de alcanzar la luna del cielo, cuanto más a Leonisa, como él diese comodidad de hablarla.

-Ésa daré yo a Mario cuanta él quisiere -respondió el cadí-, porque haré que Halima se vaya en casa de sus padres, que son griegos cristianos, por algunos días; y, estando fuera, mandaré al portero que deje entrar a Mario dentro de casa todas las veces que él quisiere, y diré a Leonisa que bien podrá hablar con su paisano cuando le diere gusto.

Desta manera comenzó a volver el viento de la ventura de Ricardo, soplando en su favor, sin saber lo que hacían sus mismos amos.

Tomado, pues, entre los tres este apuntamiento, quien primero le puso en plática fue Halima, bien así como mujer, cuya naturaleza es fácil y arrojadiza para todo aquello que es de su gusto. Aquel mismo día dijo el cadí a Halima que cuando quisiese podría irse a casa de sus padres a holgarse con ellos los días que gustase. Pero, como ella estaba alborozada con las esperanzas que Leonisa le había dado, no sólo no se fuera a casa de sus padres, sino al fingido paraíso de Mahoma no quisiera irse; y así, le respondió que por entonces no tenía tal voluntad, y que cuando ella la tuviese lo diría, mas que había de llevar consigo a la cautiva cristiana.

-Eso no -replicó el cadí-, que no es bien que la prenda del Gran Señor sea vista de nadie; y más, que se le ha de quitar que converse con cristianos, pues sabéis que, en llegando a poder del Gran Señor, la han de encerrar en el serrallo y volverla turca, quiera o no quiera.

-Como ella ande conmigo -replicó Halima-, no importa que esté en casa de mis padres, ni que comunique con ellos, que más comunico yo, y no dejo por eso de ser buena turca; y más, que lo más que pienso estar en su casa serán hasta cuatro o cinco días, porque el amor que os tengo no me dará licencia para estar tanto ausente y sin veros.

No la quiso replicar el cadí, por no darle ocasión de engendrar alguna sospecha de su intención.

Llegóse en esto el viernes, y él se fue a la mezquita, de la cual no podía salir en casi cuatro horas; y, apenas le vio Halima apartado de los umbrales de casa, cuando mandó llamar a Mario; mas no le dejaba entrar un cristiano corso que servía de portero en la puerta del patio, si Halima no le diera voces que le dejase; y así, entró confuso y temblando, como si fuera a pelear con un ejército de enemigos.

Estaba Leonisa del mismo modo y traje que cuando entró en la tienda del Bajá, sentada al pie de una escalera grande de mármol que a los corredores subía. Tenía la cabeza inclinada sobre la palma de la mano derecha y el brazo sobre las rodillas, los ojos a la parte contraria de la puerta por donde entró Mario, de manera que, aunque él iba hacia la parte donde ella estaba, ella no le veía. Así como entró Ricardo, paseó toda la casa con los ojos, y no vio en toda

ella sino un mudo y sosegado silencio, hasta que paró la vista donde Leonisa estaba. En un instante, al enamorado Ricardo le sobrevinieron tantos pensamientos, que le suspendieron y alegraron, considerándose veinte pasos, a su parecer, o poco más, desviado de su felicidad y contento: considerábase cautivo, y a su gloria en poder ajeno. Estas cosas revolviendo entre sí mismo, se movía poco a poco, y, con temor y sobresalto, alegre y triste, temeroso y esforzado, se iba llegando al centro donde estaba el de su alegría, cuando a deshora volvió el rostro Leonisa, y puso los ojos en los de Mario, que atentamente la miraba. Mas, cuando la vista de los dos se encontraron, con diferentes efectos dieron señal de lo que sus almas habían sentido. Ricardo se paró y no pudo echar pie adelante; Leonisa, que por la relación de Mahamut tenía a Ricardo por muerto, y el verle vivo tan no esperadamente, llena de temor y espanto, sin quitar dél los ojos ni volver las espaldas, volvió atrás cuatro o cinco escalones, y, sacando una pequeña cruz del seno, la besaba muchas veces, y se santiguó infinitas, como si alguna fantasma o otra cosa del otro mundo estuviera mirando.

Volvió Ricardo de su embelesamiento, y conoció, por lo que Leonisa hacía, la verdadera causa de su temor, y así le dijo:

-A mí me pesa, ¡oh hermosa Leonisa!, que no hayan sido verdad las nuevas que de mi muerte te dio Mahamut, porque con ella escusara los temores que ahora tengo de pensar si todavía está en su ser y entereza el rigor que continuo has usado conmigo. Sosiégate, señora, y baja, y si te atreves a hacer lo que nunca hiciste, que es llegarte a mí, llega y verás que no soy cuerpo fantástico: Ricardo soy, Leonisa; Ricardo, el de tanta ventura cuanta tú quisieres que tenga.

Púsose Leonisa en esto el dedo en la boca, por lo cual entendió Ricardo que era señal de que callase o hablase más quedo; y, tomando algún poco de ánimo, se fue llegando a ella en distancia que pudo oír estas razones:

-Habla paso, Mario, que así me parece que te llamas ahora, y no trates de otra cosa de la que yo te tratare; y advierte que podría ser que el habernos oído fuese parte para que nunca nos volviésemos a ver. Halima, nuestra ama, creo que nos escucha, la cual me ha dicho que te adora; hame puesto por intercesora de su deseo. Si a él quisieres corresponder, aprovecharte ha más para el cuerpo que para el alma; y, cuando no quieras, es forzoso que lo finjas, siquiera porque yo te lo ruego y por lo que merecen deseos de mujer declarados.

A esto respondió Ricardo:

-Jamás pensé ni pude imaginar, hermosa Leonisa, que cosa que me pidieras trujera consigo imposible de cumplirla, pero la que me pides me ha desengañado. ¿Es por ventura la voluntad tan ligera que se pueda mover y llevar donde quisieren llevarla, o estarle ha bien al varón honrado y verdadero fingir en

cosas de tanto peso? Si a ti te parece que alguna destas cosas se debe o puede hacer, haz lo que más gustares, pues eres señora de mi voluntad; mas ya sé que también me engañas en esto, pues jamás la has conocido, y así no sabes lo que has de hacer della. Pero, a trueco que no digas que en la primera cosa que me mandaste dejaste de ser obedecida, yo perderé del derecho que debo a ser quien soy, y satisfaré tu deseo y el de Halima fingidamente, como dices, si es que se ha de granjear con esto el bien de verte; y así, finge tú las respuestas a tu gusto, que desde aquí las firma y confirma mi fingida voluntad. Y, en pago desto que por ti hago (que es lo más que a mi parecer podré hacer, aunque de nuevo te dé el alma que tantas veces te he dado), te ruego que brevemente me digas cómo escapaste de las manos de los cosarios y cómo veniste a las del judío que te vendió.

-Más espacio -respondió Leonisa-pide el cuento de mis desgracias, pero, con todo eso, te quiero satisfacer en algo. «Sabrás, pues, que, a cabo de un día que nos apartamos, volvió el bajel de Yzuf con un recio viento a la misma isla de la Pantanalea, donde también vimos a vuestra galeota; pero la nuestra, sin poderlo remediar, embistió en las peñas. Viendo, pues, mi amo tan a los ojos su perdición, vació con gran presteza dos barriles que estaban llenos de agua, tapólos muy bien, y atólos con cuerdas el uno con el otro; púsome a mí entre ellos, desnudóse luego, y, tomando otro barril entre los brazos, se ató con un cordel el cuerpo, y con el mismo cordel dio cabo a mis barriles, y con grande ánimo se arrojó a la mar, llevándome tras sí. Yo no tuve ánimo para arrojarme, que otro turco me impelió y me arrojó tras Yzuf, donde caí sin ningún sentido, ni volví en mí hasta que me hallé en tierra en brazos de dos turcos, que vuelta la boca al suelo me tenían, derramando gran cantidad de agua que había bebido. Abrí los ojos, atónita y espantada, y vi a Yzuf junto a mí, hecha la cabeza pedazos; que, según después supe, al llegar a tierra dio con ella en las peñas, donde acabó la vida. Los turcos asimismo me dijeron que, tirando de la cuerda, me sacaron a tierra casi ahogada; solas ocho personas se escaparon de la desdichada galeota.

»Ocho días estuvimos en la isla, guardándome los turcos el mismo respecto que si fuera su hermana, y aun más. Estábamos escondidos en una cueva, temerosos ellos que no bajasen de una fuerza de cristianos que está en la isla y los cautivasen; sustentáronse con el bizcocho mojado que la mar echó a la orilla, de lo que llevaban en la galeota, lo cual salían a coger de noche. Ordenó la suerte, para mayor mal mío, que la fuerza estuviese sin capitán, que pocos días había que era muerto, y en la fuerza no había sino veinte soldados; esto se supo de un muchacho que los turcos cautivaron, que bajó de la fuerza a coger conchas a la marina. A los ocho días llegó a aquella costa un bajel de moros, que ellos llaman caramuzales; viéronle los turcos, y salieron de donde estaban, y, haciendo

señas al bajel, que estaba cerca de tierra, tanto que conoció ser turcos los que los llamaban, ellos contaron sus desgracias, y los moros los recibieron en su bajel, en el cual venía un judío, riquísimo mercader, y toda la mercancía del bajel, o la más, era suya; era de barraganes y alquiceles y de otras cosas que de Berbería se llevaban a Levante. En el mismo bajel los turcos se fueron a Trípol, y en el camino me vendieron al judío, que dio por mí dos mil doblas, precio excesivo, si no le hiciera liberal el amor que el judío me descubrió.

»Dejando, pues, los turcos en Trípol, tornó el bajel a hacer su viaje, y el judío dio en solicitarme descaradamente; yo le hice la cara que merecían sus torpes deseos. Viéndose, pues, desesperado de alcanzarlos, determinó de deshacerse de mí en la primera ocasión que se le ofreciese. Y, sabiendo que los dos bajaes, Alí y Hazán, estaban en aquesta isla, donde podía vender su mercadería tan bien como en Xío, en quien pensaba venderla, se vino aquí con intención de venderme a alguno de los dos bajaes, y por eso me vistió de la manera que ahora me vees, por aficionarles la voluntad a que me comprasen. He sabido que me ha comprado este cadí para llevarme a presentar al Gran Turco, de que no estoy poco temerosa. Aquí he sabido de tu fingida muerte, y séte decir, si lo quieres creer, que me pesó en el alma y que te tuve más envidia que lástima; y no por quererte mal, que ya que soy desamorada, no soy ingrata ni desconocida, sino porque habías acabado con la tragedia de tu vida.»

-No dices mal, señora -respondió Ricardo-, si la muerte no me hubiera estorbado el bien de volver a verte; que ahora en más estimo este instante de gloria que gozo en mirarte, que otra ventura, como no fuera la eterna, que en la vida o en la muerte pudiera asegurarme mi deseo. El que tiene mi amo el cadí, a cuyo poder he venido por no menos varios accidentes que los tuyos, es el mismo para contigo que para conmigo lo es el de Halima. Hame puesto a mí por intérprete de sus pensamientos; acepté la empresa, no por darle gusto, sino por el que granjeaba en la comodidad de hablarte, porque veas, Leonisa, el término a que nuestras desgracias nos han traído: a ti a ser medianera de un imposible, que en lo que me pides conoces; a mí a serlo también de la cosa que menos pensé, y de la que daré por no alcanzalla la vida, que ahora estimo en lo que vale la alta ventura de verte.

-No sé qué te diga, Ricardo -replicó Leonisa-, ni qué salida se tome al laberinto donde, como dices, nuestra corta ventura nos tiene puestos. Sólo sé decir que es menester usar en esto lo que de nuestra condición no se puede esperar, que es el fingimiento y engaño; y así, digo que de ti daré a Halima algunas razones que antes la entretengan que desesperen. Tú de mí podrás decir al cadí lo que para seguridad de mi honor y de su engaño vieres que más convenga; y, pues yo pongo mi honor en tus manos, bien puedes creer dél que le

tengo con la entereza y verdad que podían poner en duda tantos caminos como he andado, y tantos combates como he sufrido. El hablarnos será fácil y a mí será de grandísimo gusto el hacello, con presupuesto que jamás me has de tratar cosa que a tu declarada pretensión pertenezca, que en la hora que tal hicieres, en la misma me despediré de verte, porque no quiero que pienses que es de tan pocos quilates mi valor, que ha de hacer con él la cautividad lo que la libertad no pudo: como el oro tengo de ser, con el favor del cielo, que mientras más se acrisola, queda con más pureza y más limpio. Conténtate con que he dicho que no me dará, como solía, fastidio tu vista, porque te hago saber, Ricardo, que siempre te tuve por desabrido y arrogante, y que presumías de ti algo más de lo que debías. Confieso también que me engañaba, y que podría ser que hacer ahora la experiencia me pusiese la verdad delante de los ojos el desengaño; y, estando desengañada, fuese, con ser honesta, más humana. Vete con Dios, que temo no nos haya escuchado Halima, la cual entiende algo de la lengua cristiana, a lo menos de aquella mezcla de lenguas que se usa, con que todos nos entendemos.

-Dices muy bien, señora -respondió Ricardo-, y agradézcote infinito el desengaño que me has dado, que le estimo en tanto como la merced que me haces en dejar verte; y, como tú dices, quizá la experiencia te dará a entender cuán llana es mi condición y cuán humilde, especialmente para adorarte; y sin que tú pusieras término ni raya a mi trato, fuera él tan honesto para contigo que no acertaras a desearle mejor. En lo que toca a entretener al cadí, vive descuidada; haz tú lo mismo con Halima, y entiende, señora, que después que te he visto ha nacido en mí una esperanza tal, que me asegura que presto hemos de alcanzar la libertad deseada. Y, con esto, quédate con Dios, que otra vez te contaré los rodeos por donde la fortuna me trujo a este estado, después que de ti me aparté, o, por mejor decir, me apartaron.

Con esto, se despidieron, y quedó Leonisa contenta y satisfecha del llano proceder de Ricardo, y él contentísimo de haber oído una palabra de la boca de Leonisa sin aspereza.

Estaba Halima cerrada en su aposento, rogando a Mahoma trujese Leonisa buen despacho de lo que le había encomendado. El cadí estaba en la mezquita recompensando con los suyos los deseos de su mujer, teniéndolos solícitos y colgados de la respuesta que esperaba oír de su esclavo, a quien había dejado encargado hablase a Leonisa, pues para poderlo hacer le daría comodidad Mahamut, aunque Halima estuviese en casa. Leonisa acrecentó en Halima el torpe deseo y el amor, dándole muy buenas esperanzas que Mario haría todo lo que pidiese; pero que había de dejar pasar primero dos lunes, antes que concediese con lo que deseaba él mucho más que ella; y este tiempo y término

pedía, a causa que hacía una plegaria y oración a Dios para que le diese libertad. Contentóse Halima de la disculpa y de la relación de su querido Ricardo, a quien ella diera libertad antes del término devoto, como él concediera con su deseo; y así, rogó a Leonisa le rogase dispensase con el tiempo y acortase la dilación, que ella le ofrecía cuanto el cadí pidiese por su rescate.

Antes que Ricardo respondiese a su amo, se aconsejó con Mahamut de qué le respondería; y acordaron entre los dos que le desearasen y le aconsejasen que lo más presto que pudiese la llevase a Constantinopla, y que en el camino, o por grado o por fuerza, alcanzaría su deseo; y que, para el inconveniente que se podía ofrecer de cumplir con el Gran Señor, sería bueno comprar otra esclava, y en el viaje fingir o hacer de modo como Leonisa cayese enferma, y que una noche echarían la cristiana comprada a la mar, diciendo que era Leonisa, la cautiva del Gran Señor, que se había muerto; y que esto se podía hacer y se haría en modo que jamás la verdad fuese descubierta, y él quedase sin culpa con el Gran Señor y con el cumplimiento de su voluntad; y que, para la duración de su gusto, después se daría traza conveniente y más provechosa. Estaba tan ciego el mísero y anciano cadí que, si otros mil disparates le dijeran, como fueran encaminados a cumplir sus esperanzas, todos los creyera; cuanto más, que le pareció que todo lo que le decían llevaba buen camino y prometía próspero suceso; y así era la verdad, si la intención de los dos consejeros no fuera levantarse con el bajel y darle a él la muerte en pago de sus locos pensamientos. Ofreciósele al cadí otra dificultad, a su parecer mayor de las que en aquel caso se le podía ofrecer; y era pensar que su mujer Halima no le había de dejar ir a Constantinopla si no la llevaba consigo; pero presto la facilitó, diciendo que en cambio de la cristiana que habían de comprar para que muriese por Leonisa, serviría Halima, de quien deseaba librarse más que de la muerte.

Con la misma facilidad que él lo pensó, con la misma se lo concedieron Mahamut y Ricardo; y, quedando firmes en esto, aquel mismo día dio cuenta el cadí a Halima del viaje que pensaba hacer a Constantinopla a llevar la cristiana al Gran Señor, de cuya liberalidad esperaba que le hiciese Gran Cadí del Cairo o de Constantinopla. Halima le dijo que le parecía muy bien su determinación, creyendo que se dejaría a Ricardo en casa; mas, cuando el cadí le certificó que le había de llevar consigo y a Mahamut también, tornó a mudar de parecer y a desaconsejarle lo que primero le había aconsejado. En resolución, concluyó que si no la llevaba consigo, no pensaba dejarle ir en ninguna manera. Contentóse el cadí de hacer lo que ella quería, porque pensaba sacudir presto de su cuello aquella para él tan pesada carga.

No se descuidaba en este tiempo Hazán Bajá de solicitar al cadí le entregase la esclava, ofreciéndole montes de oro, y habiéndole dado a Ricardo de balde, cuyo

rescate apreciaba en dos mil escudos; facilitábale la entrega con la misma industria que él se había imaginado de hacer muerta la cautiva cuando el Gran Turco enviase por ella. Todas estas dádivas y promesas aprovecharon con el cadí no más de ponerle en la voluntad que abreviase su partida. Y así, solicitado de su deseo y de las importunaciones de Hazán, y aun de las de Halima, que también fabricaba en el aire vanas esperanzas, dentro de veinte días aderezó un bergantín de quince bancos, y le armó de buenas boyas, moros y de algunos cristianos griegos. Embarcó en él toda su riqueza, y Halima no dejó en su casa cosa de momento, y rogó a su marido que la dejase llevar consigo a sus padres, para que viesen a Constantinopla. Era la intención de Halima la misma que la de Mahamut: hacer con él y con Ricardo que en el camino se alzasen con el bergantín; pero no les quiso declarar su pensamiento hasta verse embarcada, y esto con voluntad de irse a tierra de cristianos, y volverse a lo que primero había sido, y casarse con Ricardo, pues era de creer que, llevando tantas riquezas consigo y volviéndose cristiana, no dejaría de tomarla por mujer.

En este tiempo habló otra vez Ricardo con Leonisa y le declaró toda su intención, y ella le dijo la que tenía Halima, que con ella había comunicado; encomendáronse los dos el secreto, y, encomendándose a Dios, esperaban el día de la partida, el cual llegado, salió Hazán acompañándolos hasta la marina con todos sus soldados, y no los dejó hasta que se hicieron a la vela, ni aun quitó los ojos del bergantín hasta perderle de vista; y parece que el aire de los suspiros que el enamorado moro arrojaba impelía con mayor fuerza las velas que le apartaban y llevaban el alma. Mas como aquel a quien el amor había tanto tiempo que sosegar no le dejaba, pensando en lo que había de hacer para no morir a manos de sus deseos, puso luego por obra lo que con largo discurso y resoluta determinación tenía pensado; y así, en un bajel de diez y siete bancos, que en otro puerto había hecho armar, puso en él cincuenta soldados, todos amigos y conocidos suyos, y a quien él tenía obligados con muchas dádivas y promesas, y dioles orden que saliesen al camino y tomasen el bajel del cadí y sus riquezas, pasando a cuchillo cuantos en él iban, si no fuese a Leonisa la cautiva; que a ella sola quería por despojo aventajado a los muchos haberes que el bergantín llevaba; ordenóles también que le echasen a fondo, de manera que ninguna cosa quedase que pudiese dar indicio de su perdición. La codicia del saco les puso alas en los pies y esfuerzo en el corazón, aunque bien vieron cuán poca defensa habían de hallar en los del bergantín, según iban desarmados y sin sospecha de semejante acontecimiento.

Dos días había ya que el bergantín caminaba, que al cadí se le hicieron dos siglos, porque luego en el primero quisiera poner en efeto su determinación; mas aconsejaronle sus esclavos que convenía primero hacer de suerte que Leonisa



cayese mala, para dar color a su muerte, y que esto había de ser con algunos días de enfermedad. Él no quisiera sino decir que había muerto de repente, y acabar presto con todo, y despachar a su mujer y aplacar el fuego que las entrañas poco a poco le iba consumiendo; pero, en efeto, hubo de condecender con el parecer de los dos.

Ya en esto había Halima declarado su intento a Mahamut y a Ricardo, y ellos estaban en ponerlo por obra al pasar de las cruces de Alejandría, o al entrar de los castillos de la Natolia. Pero fue tanta la priesa que el cadí les daba, que se ofrecieron de hacerlo en la primera comodidad que se les ofreciese. Y un día, al cabo de seis que navegaban y que ya le parecía al cadí que bastaba el fingimiento de la enfermedad de Leonisa, importunó a sus esclavos que otro día concluyesen con Halima, y la arrojasen al mar amortajada, diciendo ser la cautiva del Gran Señor.

Amaneciendo, pues, el día en que, según la intención de Mahamut y de Ricardo, había de ser el cumplimiento de sus deseos, o del fin de sus días, descubrieron un bajel que a vela y remo les venía dando caza. Temieron fuese de cosarios cristianos, de los cuales, ni los unos ni los otros podían esperar buen suceso; porque, de serlo, se temía ser los moros cautivos, y los cristianos, aunque quedasen con libertad, quedarían desnudos y robados; pero Mahamut y Ricardo con la libertad de Leonisa y de la de entrambos se contentaran; con todo esto que se imaginaban, temían la insolencia de la gente cosaria, pues jamás la que se da a tales ejercicios, de cualquiera ley o nación que sea, deja de tener un ánimo cruel y una condición insolente. Pusiéronse en defensa, sin dejar los remos de las manos y hacer todo cuanto pudiesen; pero pocas horas tardaron que vieron que les iban entrando, de modo que en menos de dos se les pusieron a tiro de cañón. Viendo esto, amainaron, soltaron los remos, tomaron las armas y los esperaron, aunque el cadí dijo que no temiesen, porque el bajel era turquesco, y que no les haría daño alguno. Mandó poner luego una banderita blanca de paz en el peñol de la popa, por que le viesen los que, ya ciegos y codiciosos, venían con gran furia a embestir el mal defendido bergantín. Volvió, en esto, la cabeza Mahamut y vio que de la parte de poniente venía una galeota, a su parecer de veinte bancos, y díjoselo al cadí; y algunos cristianos que iban al remo dijeron que el bajel que se descubría era de cristianos; todo lo cual les dobló la confusión y el miedo, y estaban suspensos sin saber lo que harían, temiendo y esperando el suceso que Dios quisiese darles.

Paréceme que diera el cadí en aquel punto por hallarse en Nicosia toda la esperanza de su gusto: tanta era la confusión en que se hallaba, aunque le quitó presto della el bajel primero, que sin respecto de las banderas de paz ni de lo que a su religión debían, embistieron con el del cadí con tanta furia, que estuvo poco

en echarle a fondo. Luego conoció el cadí los que le acometían, y vio que eran soldados de Nicosia y adivinó lo que podía ser, y dióse por perdido y muerto; y si no fuera que los soldados se dieron antes a robar que a matar, ninguno quedara con vida. Mas, cuando ellos andaban más encendidos y más atentos en su robo, dio un turco voces diciendo:

-¡Arma, soldados!, que un bajel de cristianos nos embiste.

Y así era la verdad, porque el bajel que descubrió el bergantín del cadí venía con insignias y banderas cristianescas, el cual llegó con toda furia a embestir el bajel de Hazán; pero, antes que llegase, preguntó uno desde la proa en lengua turquesca que qué bajel era aquél. Respondiéronle que era de Hazán Bajá, virrey de Chipre.

-¿Pues cómo -replicó el turco-, siendo vosotros mosolimanos, embestís y robáis a ese bajel, que nosotros sabemos que va en él el cadí de Nicosia?

A lo cual respondieron que ellos no sabían otra cosa más de que al bajel les había ordenado le tomasen, y que ellos, como sus soldados y obedientes, habían hecho su mandamiento.

Satisfecho de lo que saber quería, el capitán del segundo bajel, que venía a la cristianesca, dejóle embestir al de Hazán, y acudió al del cadí, y a la primera rociada mató más de diez turcos de los que dentro estaban, y luego le entró con grande ánimo y presteza; mas, apenas hubieron puesto los pies dentro, cuando el cadí conoció que el que le embestía no era cristiano, sino Alí Bajá, el enamorado de Leonisa, el cual, con el mismo intento que Hazán, había estado esperando su venida, y, por no ser conocido, había hecho vestidos a sus soldados como cristianos, para que con esta industria fuese más cubierto su hurto. El cadí, que conoció las intenciones de los amantes y traidores, comenzó a grandes voces a decir su maldad, diciendo:

-¿Qué es esto, traidor Alí Bajá? ¿Cómo, siendo tú mosolimán (que quiere decir turco), me salteas como cristiano? Y vosotros, traidores soldados de Hazán, ¿qué demonio os ha movido a acometer tan grande insulto? ¿Cómo, por cumplir el apetito lascivo del que aquí os envía, queréis ir contra vuestro natural señor?

A estas palabras suspendieron todos las armas, y unos a otros se miraron y se conocieron, porque todos habían sido soldados de un mismo capitán y militado debajo de una bandera; y, confundiéndose con las razones del cadí y con su mismo maleficio, ya se les embotaron los filos de los alfanjes y se les desamayaron los ánimos. Sólo Alí cerró los ojos y los oídos a todo, y arremetiendo al cadí, le dio una tal cuchillada en la cabeza que, si no fuera por la defensa que hicieron cien varas de toca con que venía ceñida, sin duda se la partiera por medio; pero, con todo, le derribó entre los bancos del bajel, y al caer dijo el cadí:

-¡Oh cruel renegado, enemigo de mi profeta! ¿Y es posible que no ha de haber quien castigue tu crueldad y tu grande insolencia? ¿Cómo, maldito, has osado poner las manos y las armas en tu cadí, y en un ministro de Mahoma?

Estas palabras añadieron fuerza a fuerza a las primeras, las cuales oídas de los soldados de Hazán, y movidos de temor que los soldados de Alí les habían de quitar la presa, que ya ellos por suya tenían, determinaron de ponerlo todo en aventura; y, comenzando uno y siguiéndole todos, dieron en los soldados de Alí con tanta priesa, rancor y brío, que en poco espacio los pararon tales, que, aunque eran muchos más que ellos, los redujeron a número pequeño; pero los que quedaron, volviendo sobre sí, vengaron a sus compañeros, no dejando de los de Hazán apenas cuatro con vida, y éstos muy malheridos.

Estábanlos mirando Ricardo y Mahamut, que de cuando en cuando sacaban la cabeza por el escutillón de la cámara de popa, por ver en qué paraba aquella grande herrería que sonaba; y, viendo cómo los turcos estaban casi todos muertos, y los vivos malheridos, y cuán fácilmente se podía dar cabo de todos, llamó a Mahamut y a dos sobrinos de Halima, que ella había hecho embarcar consigo para que ayudasen a levantar el bajel, y con ellos y con su padre, tomando alfanjes de los muertos, saltaron en crujía; y, apellidando «¡libertad, libertad!», y ayudados de las buenas boyas, cristianos griegos, con facilidad y sin recibir herida, los degollaron a todos; y, pasando sobre la galeota de Alí, que sin defensa estaba, la rindieron y ganaron con cuanto en ella venía. De los que en el segundo encuentro murieron, fue de los primeros Alí Bajá, que un turco, en venganza del cadí, le mató a cuchilladas.

Diéronse luego todos, por consejo de Ricardo, a pasar cuantas cosas había de precio en su bajel y en el de Hazán a la galeota de Alí, que era bajel mayor y acomodado para cualquier cargo o viaje, y ser los remeros cristianos, los cuales, contentos con la alcanzada libertad y con muchas cosas que Ricardo repartió entre todos, se ofrecieron de llevarle hasta Trápana, y aun hasta el cabo del mundo si quisiese. Y, con esto, Mahamut y Ricardo, llenos de gozo por el buen suceso, se fueron a la mora Halima y le dijeron que, si quería volverse a Chipre, que con las buenas boyas le armarían su mismo bajel, y le darían la mitad de las riquezas que había embarcado; mas ella, que en tanta calamidad aún no había perdido el cariño y amor que a Ricardo tenía, dijo que quería irse con ellos a tierra de cristianos, de lo cual sus padres se holgaron en extremo.

El cadí volvió en su acuerdo, y le curaron como la ocasión les dio lugar, a quien también dijeron que escogiese una de dos: o que se dejase llevar a tierra de cristianos, o volverse en su mismo bajel a Nicosia. Él respondió que, ya que la fortuna le había traído a tales términos, les agradecía la libertad que le daban, y que quería ir a Constantinopla a quejarse al Gran Señor del agravio que de

Hazán y de Alí había recibido; mas, cuando supo que Halima le dejaba y se quería volver cristiana, estuvo en poco de perder el juicio. En resolución, le armaron su mismo bajel y le proveyeron de todas las cosas necesarias para su viaje, y aun le dieron algunos cequíes de los que habían sido suyos; y, despidiéndose de todos con determinación de volverse a Nicosia, pidió antes que se hiciese a la vela que Leonisa le abrazase, que aquella merced y favor sería bastante para poner en olvido toda su desventura. Todos suplicaron a Leonisa diese aquel favor a quien tanto la quería, pues en ello no iría contra el decoro de su honestidad. Hizo Leonisa lo que le rogaron, y el cadí le pidió le pusiese las manos sobre la cabeza, porque él llevase esperanzas de sanar de su herida; en todo le contentó Leonisa. Hecho esto y habiendo dado un barreno al bajel de Hazán, favoreciéndoles un levante fresco que parecía que llamaba las velas para entregarse en ellas, se las dieron, y en breves horas perdieron de vista al bajel del cadí, el cual, con lágrimas en los ojos, estaba mirando cómo se llevaban los vientos su hacienda, su gusto, su mujer y su alma.

Con diferentes pensamientos de los del cadí navegaban Ricardo y Mahamut; y así, sin querer tocar en tierra en ninguna parte, pasaron a la vista de Alejandría de golfo lanzado, y, sin amainar velas, y sin tener necesidad de aprovecharse de los remos, llegaron a la fuerte isla del Corfú, donde hicieron agua, y luego, sin detenerse, pasaron por los infamados riscos Acroceraunos; y desde lejos, al segundo día, descubrieron a Paquino, promontorio de la fertilísima Tinacria, a vista de la cual y de la insigne isla de Malta volaron, que no con menos ligereza navegaba el dichoso leño.

En resolución, bajando la isla, de allí a cuatro días descubrieron la Lampadosa, y luego la isla donde se perdieron, con cuya vista Leonisa se estremeció toda, viniéndole a la memoria el peligro en que en ella se había visto. Otro día vieron delante de sí la deseada y amada patria; renovóse la alegría en sus corazones, alborotáronse sus espíritus con el nuevo contento, que es uno de los mayores que en esta vida se puede tener, llegar después de luengo cautiverio salvo y sano a la patria. Y al que a éste se le puede igualar, es el que se recibe de la vitoria alcanzada de los enemigos.

Habíase hallado en la galeota una caja llena de banderetas y flámulas de diversas colores de sedas, con las cuales hizo Ricardo adornar la galeota. Poco después de amanecer sería, cuando se hallaron a menos de una legua de la ciudad, y, bogando a cuarteles, y alzando de cuando en cuando alegres voces y gritos, se iban llegando al puerto, en el cual en un instante pareció infinita gente del pueblo; que, habiendo visto cómo aquel bien adornado bajel tan de espacio se llegaba a tierra, no quedó gente en toda la ciudad que dejase de salir a la marina.

En este entretanto había Ricardo pedido y suplicado a Leonisa que se adornase y vistiese de la misma manera que cuando entró en la tienda de los bajaes, porque quería hacer una graciosa burla a sus padres. Hízolo así, y, añadiendo galas a galas, perlas a perlas, y belleza a belleza, que suele acrecentarse con el contento, se vistió de modo que de nuevo causó admiración y maravilla. Vistióse asimismo Ricardo a la turquesca, y lo mismo hizo Mahamut y todos los cristianos del remo, que para todos hubo en los vestidos de los turcos muertos. Cuando llegaron al puerto serían las ocho de la mañana, que tan serena y clara se mostraba, que parecía que estaba atenta mirando aquella alegre entrada. Antes de entrar en el puerto, hizo Ricardo disparar las piezas de la galeota, que eran un cañón de crujía y dos falconetes; respondió la ciudad con otras tantas.

Estaba toda la gente confusa, esperando llegase el bizarro bajel; pero, cuando vieron de cerca que era turquesco, porque se divisaban los blancos turbantes de los que moros parecían, temerosos y con sospecha de algún engaño, tomaron las armas y acudieron al puerto todos los que en la ciudad son de milicia, y la gente de a caballo se tendió por toda la marina; de todo lo cual recibieron gran contento los que poco a poco se fueron llegando hasta entrar en el puerto, dando fondo junto a tierra y arrojando en ella la plancha, soltando a una los remos, todos, uno a uno, como en procesión, salieron a tierra, la cual con lágrimas de alegría besaron una y muchas veces, señal clara que dio a entender ser cristianos que con aquel bajel se habían alzado. A la postre de todos salieron el padre y madre de Halima, y sus dos sobrinos, todos, como está dicho, vestidos a la turquesca; hizo fin y remate la hermosa Leonisa, cubierto el rostro con un tafetán carmesí. Traíanla en medio Ricardo y Mahamut, cuyo espectáculo llevó tras sí los ojos de toda aquella infinita multitud que los miraba.

En llegando a tierra, hicieron como los demás, besándola postrados por el suelo. En esto, llegó a ellos el capitán y gobernador de la ciudad, que bien conoció que eran los principales de todos; mas, apenas hubo llegado, cuando conoció a Ricardo, y corrió con los brazos abiertos y con señales de grandísimo contento a abrazarle. Llegaron con el gobernador Cornelio y su padre, y los de Leonisa con todos sus parientes, y los de Ricardo, que todos eran los más principales de la ciudad. Abrazó Ricardo al gobernador y respondió a todos los parabienes que le daban; trabó de la mano a Cornelio, el cual, como le conoció y se vio asido dél, perdió la color del rostro, y casi comenzó a temblar de miedo, y, teniendo asimismo de la mano a Leonisa, dijo:

-Por cortesía os ruego, señores, que, antes que entremos en la ciudad y en el templo a dar las debidas gracias a Nuestro Señor de las grandes mercedes que en nuestra desgracia nos ha hecho, me escuchéis ciertas razones que deciros quiero.

A lo cual el gobernador respondió que dijese lo que quisiese, que todos le

escucharían con gusto y con silencio.

Rodeáronle luego todos los más de los principales; y él, alzando un poco la voz, dijo desta manera:

-Bien se os debe acordar, señores, de la desgracia que algunos meses ha en el jardín de las Salinas me sucedió con la pérdida de Leonisa; también no se os habrá caído de la memoria la diligencia que yo puse en procurar su libertad, pues, olvidándome del mío, ofrecí por su rescate toda mi hacienda (aunque ésta, que al parecer fue liberalidad, no puede ni debe redundar en mi alabanza, pues la daba por el rescate de mi alma). Lo que después acá a los dos ha sucedido requiere para más tiempo otra sazón y coyuntura, y otra lengua no tan turbada como la mía; baste deciros por ahora que, después de varios y estraños acaescimientos, y después de mil perdidas esperanzas de alcanzar remedio de nuestras desdichas, el piadoso cielo, sin ningún merecimiento nuestro, nos ha vuelto a la deseada patria, cuanto llenos de contento, colmados de riquezas; y no nace dellas ni de la libertad alcanzada el sin igual gusto que tengo, sino del que imagino que tiene ésta en paz y en guerra dulce enemiga mía, así por verse libre, como por ver, como vee, el retrato de su alma; todavía me alegro de la general alegría que tienen los que me han sido compañeros en la miseria. Y, aunque las desventuras y tristes acontecimientos suelen mudar las condiciones y aniquilar los ánimos valerosos, no ha sido así con el verdugo de mis buenas esperanzas; porque, con más valor y entereza que buenamente decirse puede, ha pasado el naufragio de sus desdichas y los encuentros de mis ardientes cuanto honestas importunaciones; en lo cual se verifica que mudan el cielo, y no las costumbres, los que en ellas tal vez hicieron asiento. De todo esto que he dicho quiero inferir que yo le ofrecí mi hacienda en rescate, y le di mi alma en mis deseos; di traza en su libertad y aventuré por ella, más que por la mía, la vida; y de todos éstos que, en otro sujeto más agradecido, pudieran ser cargos de algún momento, no quiero yo que lo sean; sólo quiero lo sea éste en que te pongo ahora.

Y, diciendo esto, alzó la mano y con honesto comedimiento quitó el antifaz del rostro de Leonisa, que fue como quitarse la nube que tal vez cubre la hermosa claridad del sol, y prosiguió diciendo:

-Vees aquí, ¡oh Cornelio!, te entrego la prenda que tú debes de estimar sobre todas las cosas que son dignas de estimarse; y vees aquí tú, ¡hermosa Leonisa!, te doy al que tú siempre has tenido en la memoria. Ésta sí quiero que se tenga por liberalidad, en cuya comparación dar la hacienda, la vida y la honra no es nada. Recíbela, ¡oh venturoso mancebo!; recíbela, y si llega tu conocimiento a tanto que llegue a conocer valor tan grande, estímate por el más venturoso de la tierra. Con ella te daré asimismo todo cuanto me tocara de parte en lo que a todos el cielo nos ha dado, que bien creo que pasará de treinta mil escudos. De

todo puedes gozar a tu sabor con libertad, quietud y descanso; y plega al cielo que sea por luengos y felices años. Yo, sin ventura, pues quedo sin Leonisa, gusto de quedar pobre, que a quien Leonisa le falta, la vida le sobra.

Y en diciendo esto calló, como si al paladar se le hubiera pegado la lengua; pero, desde allí a un poco, antes que ninguno hablase, dijo:

-¡Válame Dios, y cómo los apretados trabajos turban los entendimientos! Yo, señores, con el deseo que tengo de hacer bien, no he mirado lo que he dicho, porque no es posible que nadie pueda mostrarse liberal de lo ajeno: ¿qué jurisdicción tengo yo en Leonisa para darla a otro? O, ¿cómo puedo ofrecer lo que está tan lejos de ser mío? Leonisa es suya, y tan suya que, a faltarle sus padres, que felices años vivan, ningún opósito tuviera a su voluntad; y si se pudieran poner las obligaciones que como discreta debe de pensar que me tiene, desde aquí las borro, las cancelo y doy por ningunas; y así, de lo dicho me desdigo, y no doy a Cornelio nada, pues no puedo; sólo confirmo la manda de mi hacienda hecha a Leonisa, sin querer otra recompensa sino que tenga por verdaderos mis honestos pensamientos, y que crea dellos que nunca se encaminaron ni miraron a otro punto que el que pide su incomparable honestidad, su grande valor e infinita hermosura.

Calló Ricardo, en diciendo esto; a lo cual Leonisa respondió en esta manera:

-Si algún favor, ¡oh Ricardo!, imaginas que yo hice a Cornelio en el tiempo que tú andabas de mí enamorado y celoso, imagina que fue tan honesto como guiado por la voluntad y orden de mis padres, que, atentos a que le moviesen a ser mi esposo, permitían que se los diese; si quedas desto satisfecho, bien lo estarás de lo que de mí te ha mostrado la experiencia cerca de mi honestidad y recato. Esto digo por darte a entender, Ricardo, que siempre fui mía, sin estar sujeta a otro que a mis padres, a quien ahora humildemente, como es razón, suplico me den licencia y libertad para disponer la que tu mucha valentía y liberalidad me ha dado.

Sus padres dijeron que se la daban, porque fiaban de su discreción que usaría della de modo que siempre redundase en su honra y en su provecho.

-Pues con esa licencia -prosiguió la discreta Leonisa-, quiero que no se me haga de mal mostrarme desenvuelta, a trueque de no mostrarme desagradecida; y así, ¡oh valiente Ricardo!, mi voluntad, hasta aquí recatada, perpleja y dudosa, se declara en favor tuyo; porque sepan los hombres que no todas las mujeres son ingratas, mostrándome yo siquiera agradecida. Tuya soy, Ricardo, y tuya será hasta la muerte, si ya otro mejor conocimiento no te mueve a negar la mano que de mi esposo te pido.

Quedó como fuera de sí a estas razones Ricardo, y no supo ni pudo responder con otras a Leonisa, que con hincarse de rodillas ante ella y besarle las manos,

que le tomó por fuerza muchas veces, bañándoselas en tiernas y amorosas lágrimas. Derramólas Cornelio de pesar, y de alegría los padres de Leonisa, y de admiración y de contento todos los circunstantes. Hallóse presente el obispo o arzobispo de la ciudad, y con su bendición y licencia los llevó al templo, y, dispensando en el tiempo, los desposó en el mismo punto. Derramóse la alegría por toda la ciudad, de la cual dieron muestra aquella noche infinitas luminarias, y otros muchos días la dieron muchos juegos y regocijos que hicieron los parientes de Ricardo y de Leonisa. Reconciliáronse con la iglesia Mahamut y Halima, la cual, imposibilitada de cumplir el deseo de verse esposa de Ricardo, se contentó con serlo de Mahamut. A sus padres y a los sobrinos de Halima dio la liberalidad de Ricardo, de las partes que le cupieron del despojo, suficientemente con que viviesen. Todos, en fin, quedaron contentos, libres y satisfechos; y la fama de Ricardo, saliendo de los términos de Sicilia, se extendió por todos los de Italia y de otras muchas partes, debajo del nombre del *amante liberal*; y aún hasta hoy dura en los muchos hijos que tuvo en Leonisa, que fue ejemplo raro de discreción, honestidad, recato y hermosura.



## Rinconete y Cortadillo

EN LA VENTA del Molinillo, que está puesta en los fines de los famosos campos de Alcudia, como vamos de Castilla a la Andalucía, un día de los calurosos del verano, se hallaron en ella acaso dos muchachos de hasta edad de catorce a quince años: el uno ni el otro no pasaban de diez y siete; ambos de buena gracia, pero muy descosidos, rotos y maltratados; capa, no la tenían; los calzones eran de lienzo y las medias de carne. Bien es verdad que lo enmendaban los zapatos, porque los del uno eran alpargates, tan traídos como llevados, y los del otro picados y sin suelas, de manera que más le servían de cormas que de zapatos. Traía el uno montera verde de cazador, el otro un sombrero sin toquilla, bajo de copa y ancho de falda. A la espalda y ceñida por los pechos, traía el uno una camisa de color de camuza, encerrada y recogida toda en una manga; el otro venía escueto y sin alforjas, puesto que en el seno se le parecía un gran bulto, que, a lo que después pareció, era un cuello de los que llaman valones, almidonado con grasa, y tan deshilado de roto, que todo parecía hilachas. Venían en él envueltos y guardados unos naipes de figura ovada, porque de ejercitarlos se les habían gastado las puntas, y porque durasen más se las cercenaron y los dejaron de aquel talle. Estaban los dos quemados del sol, las uñas caireladas y las manos no muy limpias; el uno tenía una media espada, y el otro un cuchillo de cachas amarillas, que los suelen llamar vaqueros.

Saliéronse los dos a sestear en un portal, o cobertizo, que delante de la venta se hace; y, sentándose frontero el uno del otro, el que parecía de más edad dijo al más pequeño:

-¿De qué tierra es vuesa merced, señor gentilhombre, y para adónde bueno camina?

-Mi tierra, señor caballero -respondió el preguntado-, no la sé, ni para dónde camino, tampoco.

-Pues en verdad -dijo el mayor- que no parece vuesa merced del cielo, y que éste no es lugar para hacer su asiento en él; que por fuerza se ha de pasar adelante.

-Así es -respondió el mediano-, pero yo he dicho verdad en lo que he dicho, porque mi tierra no es mía, pues no tengo en ella más de un padre que no me tiene por hijo y una madrastra que me trata como alnado; el camino que llevo es a la ventura, y allí le daría fin donde hallase quien me diese lo necesario para pasar esta miserable vida.

-Y ¿sabe vuesa merced algún oficio? -preguntó el grande.

Y el menor respondió:

-No sé otro sino que corro como una liebre, y salto como un gamo y corto de tijera muy delicadamente.

-Todo eso es muy bueno, útil y provechoso -dijo el grande-, porque habrá sacristán que le dé a vuesa merced la ofrenda de Todos Santos, porque para el Jueves Santo le corte florones de papel para el monumento.

-No es mi corte desamano -respondió el menor-, sino que mi padre, por la misericordia del cielo, es sastre y calcetero, y me enseñó a cortar antiparas, que, como vuesa merced bien sabe, son medias calzas con avampiés, que por su propio nombre se suelen llamar polainas; y córtolas tan bien, que en verdad que me podría examinar de maestro, sino que la corta suerte me tiene arrinconado.

-Todo eso y más acontece por los buenos -respondió el grande-, y siempre he oído decir que las buenas habilidades son las más perdidas, pero aún edad tiene vuesa merced para enmendar su ventura. Mas, si yo no me engaño y el ojo no me miente, otras gracias tiene vuesa merced secretas, y no las quiere manifestar.

-Sí tengo -respondió el pequeño-, pero no son para en público, como vuesa merced ha muy bien apuntado.

A lo cual replicó el grande:

-Pues yo le sé decir que soy uno de los más secretos mozos que en gran parte se puedan hallar; y, para obligar a vuesa merced que descubra su pecho y descanse conmigo, le quiero obligar con descubrirle el mío primero; porque imagino que no sin misterio nos ha juntado aquí la suerte, y pienso que habemos de ser, déste hasta el último día de nuestra vida, verdaderos amigos. «Yo, señor hidalgo, soy natural de la Fuenfrida, lugar conocido y famoso por los ilustres pasajeros que por él de continuo pasan; mi nombre es Pedro del Rincón; mi padre es persona de calidad, porque es ministro de la Santa Cruzada: quiero decir que es bulero, o buldero, como los llama el vulgo. Algunos días le acompañé en el oficio, y le aprendí de manera, que no daría ventaja en echar las bulas al que más presumiese en ello. Pero, habiéndome un día aficionado más al dinero de las bulas que a las mismas bulas, me abracé con un talego y di conmigo y con él en Madrid, donde con las comodidades que allí de ordinario se ofrecen, en pocos días saqué las entrañas al talego y le dejé con más dobleces que pañizuelo de desposado. Vino el que tenía a cargo el dinero tras mí, prendiéronme, tuve poco favor, aunque, viendo aquellos señores mi poca edad, se contentaron con que me arrimasen al aldabilla y me mosqueasen las espaldas por un rato, y con que saliese desterrado por cuatro años de la Corte. Tuve paciencia, encogí los hombros, sufrí la tanda y mosqueo, y salí a cumplir mi destierro, con tanta priesa, que no tuve lugar de buscar cabalgaduras. Tomé de mis alhajas las que

pude y las que me parecieron más necesarias, y entre ellas saqué estos naipes -y a este tiempo descubrió los que se han dicho, que en el cuello traía-, con los cuales he ganado mi vida por los mesones y ventas que hay desde Madrid aquí, jugando a la veintiuna;» y, aunque vuesa merced los vee tan astrosos y maltratados, usan de una maravillosa virtud con quien los entiende, que no alzarán que no quede un as debajo. Y si vuesa merced es versado en este juego, verá cuánta ventaja lleva el que sabe que tiene cierto un as a la primera carta, que le puede servir de un punto y de once; que con esta ventaja, siendo la veintiuna envidada, el dinero se queda en casa. Fuera desto, aprendí de un cocinero de un cierto embajador ciertas tretas de quínolas y del parar, a quien también llaman el andaboba; que, así como vuesa merced se puede examinar en el corte de sus antiparas, así puedo yo ser maestro en la ciencia vilhanesca. Con esto voy seguro de no morir de hambre, porque, aunque llegue a un cortijo, hay quien quiera pasar tiempo jugando un rato. Y desto hemos de hacer luego la experiencia los dos: armemos la red, y veamos si cae algún pájaro destos arrieros que aquí hay; quiero decir que jugaremos los dos a la veintiuna, como si fuese de veras; que si alguno quisiere ser tercero, él será el primero que deje la pecunia.

-Sea en buen hora -dijo el otro-, y en merced muy grande tengo la que vuesa merced me ha hecho en darme cuenta de su vida, con que me ha obligado a que yo no le encubra la mía, que, diciéndola más breve, es ésta: «yo nací en el piadoso lugar puesto entre Salamanca y Medina del Campo; mi padre es sastre, enseñóme su oficio, y de corte de tiseras, con mi buen ingenio, salté a cortar bolsas. Enfadóme la vida estrecha del aldea y el desamorado trato de mi madrastra. Dejé mi pueblo, vine a Toledo a ejercitar mi oficio, y en él he hecho maravillas; porque no pende relicario de toca ni hay faldriquera tan escondida que mis dedos no visiten ni mis tiseras no corten, aunque le estén guardando con ojos de Argos. Y, en cuatro meses que estuve en aquella ciudad, nunca fui cogido entre puertas, ni sobresaltado ni corrido de corchetes, ni soplado de ningún cañuto. Bien es verdad que habrá ocho días que una espía doble dio noticia de mi habilidad al Corregidor, el cual, aficionado a mis buenas partes, quisiera verme; mas yo, que, por ser humilde, no quiero tratar con personas tan graves, procuré de no verme con él, y así, salí de la ciudad con tanta priesa, que no tuve lugar de acomodarme de cabalgaduras ni blancas, ni de algún coche de retorno, o por lo menos de un carro.»

-Eso se borre -dijo Rincón-; y, pues ya nos conocemos, no hay para qué aquesas grandezas ni altiveces: confesemos llanamente que no teníamos blanca, ni aun zapatos.

-Sea así -respondió Diego Cortado, que así dijo el menor que se llamaba-; y, pues nuestra amistad, como vuesa merced, señor Rincón, ha dicho, ha de ser

perpetua, comencémosla con santas y loables ceremonias.

Y, levantándose, Diego Cortado abrazó a Rincón y Rincón a él tierna y estrechamente, y luego se pusieron los dos a jugar a la veintiuna con los ya referidos naipes, limpios de polvo y de paja, mas no de grasa y malicia; y, a pocas manos, alzaba tan bien por el as Cortado como Rincón, su maestro.

Salió en esto un arriero a refrescarse al portal, y pidió que quería hacer tercio. Acogieronle de buena gana, y en menos de media hora le ganaron doce reales y veinte y dos maravedís, que fue darle doce lanzadas y veinte y dos mil pesadumbres. Y, creyendo el arriero que por ser muchachos no se lo defenderían, quiso quitalles el dinero; mas ellos, poniendo el uno mano a su media espada y el otro al de las cachas amarillas, le dieron tanto que hacer, que, a no salir sus compañeros, sin duda lo pasara mal.

A esta sazón, pasaron acaso por el camino una tropa de caminantes a caballo, que iban a sestar a la venta del Alcalde, que está media legua más adelante, los cuales, viendo la pendencia del arriero con los dos muchachos, los apaciguaron y les dijeron que si acaso iban a Sevilla, que se viniesen con ellos.

-Allá vamos -dijo Rincón-, y serviremos a vuestas mercedes en todo cuanto nos mandaren.

Y, sin más detenerse, saltaron delante de las mulas y se fueron con ellos, dejando al arriero agraviado y enojado, y a la ventera admirada de la buena crianza de los pícaros, que les había estado oyendo su plática sin que ellos advirtiesen en ello. Y, cuando dijo al arriero que les había oído decir que los naipes que traían eran falsos, se pelaba las barbas, y quisiera ir a la venta tras ellos a cobrar su hacienda, porque decía que era grandísima afrenta, y caso de menos valer, que dos muchachos hubiesen engañado a un hombrazo tan grande como él. Sus compañeros le detuvieron y aconsejaron que no fuese, siquiera por no publicar su inhabilidad y simpleza. En fin, tales razones le dijeron, que, aunque no le consolaron, le obligaron a quedarse.

En esto, Cortado y Rincón se dieron tan buena maña en servir a los caminantes, que lo más del camino los llevaban a las ancas; y, aunque se les ofrecían algunas ocasiones de tentar las valijas de sus medios amos, no las admitieron, por no perder la ocasión tan buena del viaje de Sevilla, donde ellos tenían grande deseo de verse.

Con todo esto, a la entrada de la ciudad, que fue a la oración y por la puerta de la Aduana, a causa del registro y almojarifazgo que se paga, no se pudo contener Cortado de no cortar la valija o maleta que a las ancas traía un francés de la camarada; y así, con el de sus cachas le dio tan larga y profunda herida, que se parecían patentemente las entrañas, y sutilmente le sacó dos camisas buenas, un reloj de sol y un librito de memoria, cosas que cuando las vieron no les dieron

mucho gusto; y pensaron que, pues el francés llevaba a las ancas aquella maleta, no la había de haber ocupado con tan poco peso como era el que tenían aquellas preseas, y quisieran volver a darle otro tiento; pero no lo hicieron, imaginando que ya lo habrían echado menos y puesto en recaudo lo que quedaba.

Habíanse despedido antes que el salto hiciesen de los que hasta allí los habían sustentado, y otro día vendieron las camisas en el malbaratillo que se hace fuera de la puerta del Arenal, y dellas hicieron veinte reales. Hecho esto, se fueron a ver la ciudad, y admiróles la grandeza y sumptuosidad de su mayor iglesia, el gran concurso de gente del río, porque era en tiempo de cargazón de flota y había en él seis galeras, cuya vista les hizo suspirar, y aun temer el día que sus culpas les habían de traer a morar en ellas de por vida. Echaron de ver los muchos muchachos de la esportilla que por allí andaban; informáronse de uno dellos qué oficio era aquél, y si era de mucho trabajo, y de qué ganancia.

Un muchacho asturiano, que fue a quien le hicieron la pregunta, respondió que el oficio era descansado y de que no se pagaba alcabala, y que algunos días salía con cinco y con seis reales de ganancia, con que comía y bebía y triunfaba como cuerpo de rey, libre de buscar amo a quien dar fianzas y seguro de comer a la hora que quisiese, pues a todas lo hallaba en el más mínimo bodegón de toda la ciudad.

No les pareció mal a los dos amigos la relación del asturianillo, ni les descontentó el oficio, por parecerles que venía como de molde para poder usar el suyo con cubierta y seguridad, por la comodidad que ofrecía de entrar en todas las casas; y luego determinaron de comprar los instrumentos necesarios para usalle, pues lo podían usar sin examen. Y, preguntándole al asturiano qué habían de comprar, les respondió que sendos costales pequeños, limpios o nuevos, y cada uno tres espuestas de palma, dos grandes y una pequeña, en las cuales se repartía la carne, pescado y fruta, y en el costal, el pan; y él les guió donde lo vendían, y ellos, del dinero de la galima del francés, lo compraron todo, y dentro de dos horas pudieran estar graduados en el nuevo oficio, según les ensayaban las esportillas y asentaban los costales. Avisóles su adalid de los puestos donde habían de acudir: por las mañanas, a la Carnicería y a la plaza de San Salvador; los días de pescado, a la Pescadería y a la Costanilla; todas las tardes, al río; los jueves, a la Feria.

Toda esta lición tomaron bien de memoria, y otro día bien de mañana se plantaron en la plaza de San Salvador; y, apenas hubieron llegado, cuando los rodearon otros mozos del oficio, que, por lo flamante de los costales y espuestas, vieron ser nuevos en la plaza; hiciéronles mil preguntas, y a todas respondían con discreción y mesura. En esto, llegaron un medio estudiante y un soldado, y, convidados de la limpieza de las espuestas de los dos novatos, el que parecía

estudiante llamó a Cortado, y el soldado a Rincón.

-En nombre sea de Dios -dijeron ambos.

-Para bien se comience el oficio -dijo Rincón-, que vuesa merced me estrena, señor mío.

A lo cual respondió el soldado:

-La estrena no será mala, porque estoy de ganancia y soy enamorado, y tengo de hacer hoy banquete a unas amigas de mi señora.

-Pues cargue vuesa merced a su gusto, que ánimo tengo y fuerzas para llevarme toda esta plaza, y aun si fuere menester que ayude a guisarlo, lo haré de muy buena voluntad.

Contentóse el soldado de la buena gracia del mozo, y díjole que si quería servir, que él le sacaría de aquel abatido oficio. A lo cual respondió Rincón que, por ser aquel día el primero que le usaba, no le quería dejar tan presto, hasta ver, a lo menos, lo que tenía de malo y bueno; y, cuando no le contentase, él daba su palabra de servirle a él antes que a un canónigo.

Rióse el soldado, cargóle muy bien, mostróle la casa de su dama, para que la supiese de allí adelante y él no tuviese necesidad, cuando otra vez le enviase, de acompañarle. Rincón prometió fidelidad y buen trato. Diole el soldado tres cuartos, y en un vuelo volvió a la plaza, por no perder coyuntura; porque también desta diligencia les advirtió el asturiano, y de que cuando llevasen pescado menudo (conviene a saber: albuces, o sardinas o acedías), bien podían tomar algunas y hacerles la salva, siquiera para el gasto de aquel día; pero que esto había de ser con toda sagacidad y advertimiento, porque no se perdiese el crédito, que era lo que más importaba en aquel ejercicio.

Por presto que volvió Rincón, ya halló en el mismo puesto a Cortado. Llegóse Cortado a Rincón, y preguntóle que cómo le había ido. Rincón abrió la mano y mostróle los tres cuartos. Cortado entró la suya en el seno y sacó una bolsilla, que mostraba haber sido de ámbar en los pasados tiempos; venía algo hinchada, y dijo:

-Con ésta me pagó su reverencia del estudiante, y con dos cuartos; mas tomadla vos, Rincón, por lo que puede suceder.

Y, habiéndosela ya dado secretamente, veis aquí do vuelve el estudiante trasudando y turbado de muerte; y, viendo a Cortado, le dijo si acaso había visto una bolsa de tales y tales señas, que, con quince escudos de oro en oro y con tres reales de a dos y tantos maravedís en cuartos y en ochavos, le faltaba, y que le dijese si la había tomado en el entretanto que con él había andado comprando. A lo cual, con estraño disimulo, sin alterarse ni mudarse en nada, respondió Cortado:

-Lo que yo sabré decir desa bolsa es que no debe de estar perdida, si ya no es

que vuesa merced la puso a mal recaudo.

-¡Eso es ello, pecador de mí -respondió el estudiante-: que la debí de poner a mal recaudo, pues me la hurtaron!

-Lo mismo digo yo -dijo Cortado-; pero para todo hay remedio, si no es para la muerte, y el que vuesa merced podrá tomar es, lo primero y principal, tener paciencia; que de menos nos hizo Dios y un día viene tras otro día, y donde las dan las toman; y podría ser que, con el tiempo, el que llevó la bolsa se viniese a arrepentir y se la volviese a vuesa merced sahumada.

-El sahumero le perdonaríamos -respondió el estudiante.

Y Cortado prosiguió diciendo:

-Cuanto más, que cartas de descomuni3n hay, paulinas, y buena diligencia, que es madre de la buena ventura; aunque, a la verdad, no quisiera yo ser el llevador de tal bolsa; porque, si es que vuesa merced tiene alguna orden sacra, parecerme hía a mí que había cometido alg3n grande incesto, o sacrilegio.

-Y ¡cómo que ha cometido sacrilegio! -dijo a esto el adolorido estudiante-; que, puesto que yo no soy sacerdote, sino sacristán de unas monjas, el dinero de la bolsa era del tercio de una capellanía, que me dio a cobrar un sacerdote amigo mío, y es dinero sagrado y bendito.

-Con su pan se lo coma -dijo Rinc3n a este punto-; no le arriendo la ganancia; día de juicio hay, donde todo saldrá en la colada, y entonces se verá qui3n fue Callejas y el atrevido que se atrevió a tomar, hurtar y menoscabar el tercio de la capellanía. Y ¿cuánto renta cada año? Dígame, se3or sacristán, por su vida.

-¡Renta la puta que me parió! ¡Y estoy yo agora para decir lo que renta! -respondió el sacristán con alg3n tanto de demasiada cólera-. Decidme, hermanos, si sabéis algo; si no, quedad con Dios, que yo la quiero hacer pregonar.

-No me parece mal remedio ese -dijo Cortado-, pero advierta vuesa merced no se le olviden las señas de la bolsa, ni la cantidad puntualmente del dinero que va en ella; que si yerra en un ardite, no parecerá en días del mundo, y esto le doy por hado.

-No hay que temer deso -respondió el sacristán-, que lo tengo más en la memoria que el tocar de las campanas: no me erraré en un átomo.

Sacó, en esto, de la faldriquera un pañuelo randado para limpiarse el sudor, que llovía de su rostro como de alquitara; y, apenas le hubo visto Cortado, cuando le marcó por suyo. Y, habiéndose ido el sacristán, Cortado le siguió y le alcanzó en las Gradass, donde le llamó y le retiró a una parte; y allí le comenzó a decir tantos disparates, al modo de lo que llaman bernardinas, cerca del hurto y hallazgo de su bolsa, dándole buenas esperanzas, sin concluir jamás razón que comenzase, que el pobre sacristán estaba embelesado escuchándole. Y, como no

acababa de entender lo que le decía, hacía que le replicase la razón dos y tres veces.

Estáble mirando Cortado a la cara atentamente y no quitaba los ojos de sus ojos. El sacristán le miraba de la misma manera, estando colgado de sus palabras. Este tan grande embelesamiento dio lugar a Cortado que concluyese su obra, y sutilmente le sacó el pañuelo de la faldriquera; y, despidiéndose dél, le dijo que a la tarde procurase de verle en aquel mismo lugar, porque él traía entre ojos que un muchacho de su mismo oficio y de su mismo tamaño, que era algo ladroncillo, le había tomado la bolsa, y que él se obligaba a saberlo, dentro de pocos o de muchos días.

Con esto se consoló algo el sacristán, y se despidió de Cortado, el cual se vino donde estaba Rincón, que todo lo había visto un poco apartado dél; y más abajo estaba otro mozo de la esportilla, que vio todo lo que había pasado y cómo Cortado daba el pañuelo a Rincón; y, llegándose a ellos, les dijo:

-Díganme, señores galanes: ¿voacedes son de mala entrada, o no?

-No entendemos esa razón, señor galán -respondió Rincón.

-¿Qué no entrevan, señores murcios? -respondió el otro.

-Ni somos de Teba ni de Murcia -dijo Cortado-. Si otra cosa quiere, díjala; si no, váyase con Dios.

-¿No lo entienden? -dijo el mozo-. Pues yo se lo daré a entender, y a beber, con una cuchara de plata; quiero decir, señores, si son vuestas mercedes ladrones. Mas no sé para qué les pregunto esto, pues sé ya que lo son; mas díganme: ¿cómo no han ido a la aduana del señor Monipodio?

-¿Págase en esta tierra almojarifazgo de ladrones, señor galán? -dijo Rincón.

-Si no se paga -respondió el mozo-, a lo menos regístranse ante el señor Monipodio, que es su padre, su maestro y su amparo; y así, les aconsejo que vengan conmigo a darle la obediencia, o si no, no se atrevan a hurtar sin su señal, que les costará caro.

-Yo pensé -dijo Cortado-que el hurtar era oficio libre, horro de pecho y alcabala; y que si se paga, es por junto, dando por fiadores a la garganta y a las espaldas. Pero, pues así es, y en cada tierra hay su uso, guardemos nosotros el ésta, que, por ser la más principal del mundo, será el más acertado de todo él. Y así, puede vuesa merced guiarnos donde está ese caballero que dice, que ya yo tengo barruntos, según lo que he oído decir, que es muy calificado y generoso, y además hábil en el oficio.

-¡Y cómo que es calificado, hábil y suficiente! -respondió el mozo-. Eslo tanto, que en cuatro años que ha que tiene el cargo de ser nuestro mayor y padre no han padecido sino cuatro en el *finibusterrae*, y obra de treinta envesados y de



sesenta y dos en gurapas.

-En verdad, señor -dijo Rincón-, que así entendemos esos nombres como volar.

-Comencemos a andar, que yo los iré declarando por el camino -respondió el mozo-, con otros algunos, que así les conviene saberlos como el pan de la boca.

Y así, les fue diciendo y declarando otros nombres, de los que ellos llaman germanescos o de la germanía, en el discurso de su plática, que no fue corta, porque el camino era largo; en el cual dijo Rincón a su guía:

-¿Es vuesa merced, por ventura, ladrón?

-Sí -respondió él-, para servir a Dios y a las buenas gentes, aunque no de los muy cursados; que todavía estoy en el año del noviciado.

A lo cual respondió Cortado:

-Cosa nueva es para mí que haya ladrones en el mundo para servir a Dios y a la buena gente.

A lo cual respondió el mozo:

-Señor, yo no me meto en tologías; lo que sé es que cada uno en su oficio puede alabar a Dios, y más con la orden que tiene dada Monipodio a todos sus ahijados.

-Sin duda -dijo Rincón-, debe de ser buena y santa, pues hace que los ladrones sirvan a Dios.

-Es tan santa y buena -replicó el mozo-, que no sé yo si se podrá mejorar en nuestro arte. Él tiene ordenado que de lo que hurtáremos demos alguna cosa o limosna para el aceite de la lámpara de una imagen muy devota que está en esta ciudad, y en verdad que hemos visto grandes cosas por esta buena obra; porque los días pasados dieron tres ansias a un cuatrero que había murciado dos roznos, y con estar flaco y cuartanario, así las sufrió sin cantar como si fueran nada. Y esto atribuimos los del arte a su buena devoción, porque sus fuerzas no eran bastantes para sufrir el primer desconcierto del verdugo. Y, porque sé que me han de preguntar algunos vocablos de los que he dicho, quiero curarme en salud y decírselo antes que me lo pregunten. Sepan voacedes que *cuatrero* es ladrón de bestias; *ansia* es el tormento; *rosnos*, los asnos, hablando con perdón; *primer desconcierto* es las primeras vueltas de cordel que da el verdugo. Tenemos más: que rezamos nuestro rosario, repartido en toda la semana, y muchos de nosotros no hurtamos el día del viernes, ni tenemos conversación con mujer que se llame María el día del sábado.

-De perlas me parece todo eso -dijo Cortado-; pero dígame vuesa merced: ¿hácese otra restitución o otra penitencia más de la dicha?

-En eso de restituir no hay que hablar -respondió el mozo-, porque es cosa imposible, por las muchas partes en que se divide lo hurtado, llevando cada uno

de los ministros y contrayentes la suya; y así, el primer hurtador no puede restituir nada; cuanto más, que no hay quien nos mande hacer esta diligencia, a causa que nunca nos confesamos; y si sacan cartas de excomunión, jamás llegan a nuestra noticia, porque jamás vamos a la iglesia al tiempo que se leen, si no es los días de jubileo, por la ganancia que nos ofrece el concurso de la mucha gente.

-Y ¿con sólo eso que hacen, dicen esos señores -dijo Cortadillo-que su vida es santa y buena?

-Pues ¿qué tiene de malo? -replicó el mozo-. ¿No es peor ser hereje o renegado, o matar a su padre y madre, o ser solomico?

-Sodomita querrá decir vuesa merced -respondió Rincón.

-Eso digo -dijo el mozo.

-Todo es malo -replicó Cortado-. Pero, pues nuestra suerte ha querido que entremos en esta cofradía, vuesa merced alargue el paso, que muero por verme con el señor Monipodio, de quien tantas virtudes se cuentan.

-Presto se les cumplirá su deseo -dijo el mozo-, que ya desde aquí se descubre su casa. Vuelas mercedes se queden a la puerta, que yo entraré a ver si está desocupado, porque éstas son las horas cuando él suele dar audiencia.

-En buena sea -dijo Rincón.

Y, adelantándose un poco el mozo, entró en una casa no muy buena, sino de muy mala apariencia, y los dos se quedaron esperando a la puerta. Él salió luego y los llamó, y ellos entraron, y su guía les mandó esperar en un pequeño patio ladrillado, y de puro limpio y aljimiado parecía que vertía carmín de lo más fino. Al un lado estaba un banco de tres pies y al otro un cántaro desbocado con un jarrillo encima, no menos falto que el cántaro; a otra parte estaba una estera de enea, y en el medio un tiesto, que en Sevilla llaman maceta, de albahaca.

Miraban los mozos atentamente las alhajas de la casa, en tanto que bajaba el señor Monipodio; y, viendo que tardaba, se atrevió Rincón a entrar en una sala baja, de dos pequeñas que en el patio estaban, y vio en ella dos espadas de esgrima y dos broqueles de corcho, pendientes de cuatro clavos, y una arca grande sin tapa ni cosa que la cubriese, y otras tres esteras de enea tendidas por el suelo. En la pared frontera estaba pegada a la pared una imagen de Nuestra Señora, destas de mala estampa, y más abajo pendía una esportilla de palma, y, encajada en la pared, una almofía blanca, por do coligió Rincón que la esportilla servía de cepo para limosna, y la almofía de tener agua bendita, y así era la verdad.

Estando en esto, entraron en la casa dos mozos de hasta veinte años cada uno, vestidos de estudiantes; y de allí a poco, dos de la esportilla y un ciego; y, sin hablar palabra ninguno, se comenzaron a pasear por el patio. No tardó mucho,

cuando entraron dos viejos de bayeta, con antojos que los hacían graves y dignos de ser respectados, con sendos rosarios de sonadoras cuentas en las manos. Tras ellos entró una vieja halduda, y, sin decir nada, se fue a la sala; y, habiendo tomado agua bendita, con grandísima devoción se puso de rodillas ante la imagen, y, a cabo de una buena pieza, habiendo primero besado tres veces el suelo y levantados los brazos y los ojos al cielo otras tantas, se levantó y echó su limosna en la esportilla, y se salió con los demás al patio. En resolución, en poco espacio se juntaron en el patio hasta catorce personas de diferentes trajes y oficios. Llegaron también de los postreros dos bravos y bizarros mozos, de bigotes largos, sombreros de grande falda, cuellos a la valona, medias de color, ligas de gran balumba, espadas de más de marca, sendos pistolettes cada uno en lugar de dagas, y sus broqueles pendientes de la pretina; los cuales, así como entraron, pusieron los ojos de través en Rincón y Cortado, a modo de que los estrañaban y no conocían. Y, llegándose a ellos, les preguntaron si eran de la cofradía. Rincón respondió que sí, y muy servidores de sus mercedes.

Llegóse en esto la sazón y punto en que bajó el señor Monipodio, tan esperado como bien visto de toda aquella virtuosa compañía. Parecía de edad de cuarenta y cinco a cuarenta y seis años, alto de cuerpo, moreno de rostro, cejijunto, barbinegro y muy espeso; los ojos, hundidos. Venía en camisa, y por la abertura de delante descubría un bosque: tanto era el vello que tenía en el pecho. Traía cubierta una capa de bayeta casi hasta los pies, en los cuales traía unos zapatos enchancletados, cubríanle las piernas unos zaragüelles de lienzo, anchos y largos hasta los tobillos; el sombrero era de los de la hampa, campanudo de copa y tendido de falda; atravesábale un tahalí por espalda y pechos a do colgaba una espada ancha y corta, a modo de las del perrillo; las manos eran cortas, pelosas, y los dedos gordos, y las uñas hembras y remachadas; las piernas no se le parecían, pero los pies eran descomunales de anchos y juanetudos. En efeto, él representaba el más rústico y disforme bárbaro del mundo. Bajó con él la guía de los dos, y, trabádoles de las manos, los presentó ante Monipodio, diciéndole:

-Éstos son los dos buenos mancebos que a vuesa merced dije, mi sor Monipodio: vuesa merced los desamine y verá como son dignos de entrar en nuestra congregación.

-Eso haré yo de muy buena gana -respondió Monipodio.

Olvidábaseme de decir que, así como Monipodio bajó, al punto, todos los que aguardándole estaban le hicieron una profunda y larga reverencia, excepto los dos bravos, que, a medio magate, como entre ellos se dice, le quitaron los capelos, y luego volvieron a su paseo por una parte del patio, y por la otra se paseaba Monipodio, el cual preguntó a los nuevos el ejercicio, la patria y padres.

A lo cual Rincón respondió:

-El ejercicio ya está dicho, pues venimos ante vuesa merced; la patria no me parece de mucha importancia decilla, ni los padres tampoco, pues no se ha de hacer información para recibir algún hábito honroso.

A lo cual respondió Monipodio:

-Vos, hijo mío, estáis en lo cierto, y es cosa muy acertada encubrir eso que decís; porque si la suerte no corriere como debe, no es bien que quede asentado debajo de signo de escribano, ni en el libro de las entradas: «Fulano, hijo de Fulano, vecino de tal parte, tal día le ahorcaron, o le azotaron», o otra cosa semejante, que, por lo menos, suena mal a los buenos oídos; y así, torno a decir que es provechoso documento callar la patria, encubrir los padres y mudar los propios nombres; aunque para entre nosotros no ha de haber nada encubierto, y sólo ahora quiero saber los nombres de los dos.

Rincón dijo el suyo y Cortado también.

-Pues, de aquí adelante -respondió Monipodio-, quiero y es mi voluntad que vos, Rincón, os llaméis Rinconete, y vos, Cortado, Cortadillo, que son nombres que asientan como de molde a vuestra edad y a nuestras ordenanzas, debajo de las cuales cae tener necesidad de saber el nombre de los padres de nuestros cofrades, porque tenemos de costumbre de hacer decir cada año ciertas misas por las ánimas de nuestros difuntos y bienhechores, sacando el estupendo para la limosna de quien las dice de alguna parte de lo que se garbea; y estas tales misas, así dichas como pagadas, dicen que aprovechan a las tales ánimas por vía de naufragio, y caen debajo de nuestros bienhechores: el procurador que nos defiende, el guro que nos avisa, el verdugo que nos tiene lástima, el que, cuando alguno de nosotros va huyendo por la calle y detrás le van dando voces: «¡Al ladrón, al ladrón! ¡Deténganle, deténganle!», uno se pone en medio y se opone al raudal de los que le siguen, diciendo: «¡Déjenle al cuitado, que harta mala ventura lleva! ¡Allá se lo haya; castíguele su pecado!» Son también bienhechoras nuestras las socorridas, que de su sudor nos socorren, ansí en la trena como en las guras; y también lo son nuestros padres y madres, que nos echan al mundo, y el escribano, que si anda de buena, no hay delito que sea culpa ni culpa a quien se dé mucha pena; y, por todos estos que he dicho, hace nuestra hermandad cada año su adversario con la mayor popa y solenidad que podemos.

-Por cierto -dijo Rinconete, ya confirmado con este nombre-, que es obra digna del altísimo y profundísimo ingenio que hemos oído decir que vuesa merced, señor Monipodio, tiene. Pero nuestros padres aún gozan de la vida; si en ella les alcanzáremos, daremos luego noticia a esta felicísima y abogada confraternidad, para que por sus almas se les haga ese naufragio o tormenta, o ese adversario que vuesa merced dice, con la solenidad y pompa acostumbrada; si ya no es que se hace mejor con popa y soledad, como también apuntó vuesa

merced en sus razones.

-Así se hará, o no quedará de mí pedazo -replicó Monipodio.

Y, llamando a la guía, le dijo:

-Ven acá, Ganchuelo: ¿están puestas las postas?

-Sí -dijo la guía, que Ganchuelo era su nombre-: tres centinelas quedan avizorando, y no hay que temer que nos cojan de sobresalto.

-Volviendo, pues, a nuestro propósito -dijo Monipodio-, querría saber, hijos, lo que sabéis, para daros el oficio y ejercicio conforme a vuestra inclinación y habilidad.

-Yo -respondió Rinconete-sé un poquito de floreo de Vilhán; entiéndeseme el retén; tengo buena vista para el humillo; juego bien de la sola, de las cuatro y de las ocho; no se me va por pies el raspadillo, verrugueta y el colmillo; éntrome por la boca de lobo como por mi casa, y atreveríame a hacer un tercio de chanza mejor que un tercio de Nápoles, y a dar un astillazo al más pintado mejor que dos reales prestados.

-Principios son -dijo Monipodio-, pero todas éstas son flores de cantueso viejas, y tan usadas que no hay principiante que no las sepa, y sólo sirven para alguno que sea tan blanco que se deje matar de media noche abajo; pero andará el tiempo y vernos hemos: que, asentando sobre ese fundamento media docena de liciones, yo espero en Dios que habéis de salir oficial famoso, y aun quizá maestro.

-Todo será para servir a vuesa merced y a los señores cofrades -respondió Rinconete.

-Y vos, Cortadillo, ¿qué sabéis? -preguntó Monipodio.

-Yo -respondió Cortadillo-sé la treta que dicen mete dos y saca cinco, y sé dar tiento a una faldriquera con mucha puntualidad y destreza.

-¿Sabéis más? -dijo Monipodio.

-No, por mis grandes pecados -respondió Cortadillo.

-No os aflijáis, hijo -replicó Monipodio-, que a puerto y a escuela habéis llegado donde ni os anegaréis ni dejaréis de salir muy bien aprovechado en todo aquello que más os conviniere. Y en esto del ánimo, ¿cómo os va, hijos?

-¿Cómo nos ha de ir -respondió Rinconete-sino muy bien? Ánimo tenemos para acometer cualquiera empresa de las que tocaren a nuestro arte y ejercicio.

-Está bien -replicó Monipodio-, pero querría yo que también le tuviédeses para sufrir, si fuese menester, media docena de ansias sin desplegar los labios y sin decir esta boca es mía.

-Ya sabemos aquí -dijo Cortadillo-, señor Monipodio, qué quiere decir ansias, y para todo tenemos ánimo; porque no somos tan ignorantes que no se nos alcance que lo que dice la lengua paga la gorja; y harta merced le hace el cielo al

hombre atrevido, por no darle otro título, que le deja en su lengua su vida o su muerte, ¡como si tuviese más letras un *no* que un *sí*!

-¡Alto, no es menester más! -dijo a esta sazón Monipodio-. Digo que sola esa razón me convence, me obliga, me persuade y me fuerza a que desde luego asentéis por cofrades mayores y que se os sobrelleve el año del noviciado.

-Yo soy dese parecer -dijo uno de los bravos.

Y a una voz lo confirmaron todos los presentes, que toda la plática habían estado escuchando, y pidieron a Monipodio que desde luego les concediese y permitiese gozar de las inmunidades de su cofradía, porque su presencia agradable y su buena plática lo merecía todo. Él respondió que, por dalles contento a todos, desde aquel punto se las concedía, y advirtiéndoles que las estimasen en mucho, porque eran no pagar media nata del primer hurto que hiciesen; no hacer oficios menores en todo aquel año, conviene a saber: no llevar recaudo de ningún hermano mayor a la cárcel, ni a la casa, de parte de sus contribuyentes; piar el turco puro; hacer banquete cuando, como y adonde quisieren, sin pedir licencia a su mayoral; entrar a la parte, desde luego, con lo que entrujasen los hermanos mayores, como uno dellos, y otras cosas que ellos tuvieron por merced señaladísima, y los demás, con palabras muy comedidas, las agradecieron mucho.

Estando en esto, entró un muchacho corriendo y desalentado, y dijo:

-El alguacil de los vagabundos viene encaminado a esta casa, pero no trae consigo gurullada.

-Nadie se alborote -dijo Monipodio-, que es amigo y nunca viene por nuestro daño. Sosiéguese, que yo le saldré a hablar.

Todos se sosegaron, que ya estaban algo sobresaltados, y Monipodio salió a la puerta, donde halló al alguacil, con el cual estuvo hablando un rato, y luego volvió a entrar Monipodio y preguntó:

-¿A quién le cupo hoy la plaza de San Salvador?

-A mí -dijo el de la guía.

-Pues ¿cómo -dijo Monipodio-no se me ha manifestado una bolsilla de ámbar que esta mañana en aquel paraje dio al traste con quince escudos de oro y dos reales de a dos y no sé cuántos cuartos?

-Verdad es -dijo la guía-que hoy faltó esa bolsa, pero yo no la he tomado, ni puedo imaginar quién la tomase.

-¡No hay levas conmigo! -replicó Monipodio-. ¡La bolsa ha de parecer, porque la pide el alguacil, que es amigo y nos hace mil placeres al año!

Tornó a jurar el mozo que no sabía della. Comenzóse a encolerizar Monipodio, de manera que parecía que fuego vivo lanzaba por los ojos, diciendo:

-¡Nadie se burle con quebrantar la más mínima cosa de nuestra orden, que le costará la vida! Manifiéstese la cica; y si se encubre por no pagar los derechos, yo le daré enteramente lo que le toca y pondré lo demás de mi casa; porque en todas maneras ha de ir contento el alguacil.

Tornó de nuevo a jurar el mozo y a maldecirse, diciendo que él no había tomado tal bolsa ni vístola de sus ojos; todo lo cual fue poner más fuego a la cólera de Monipodio, y dar ocasión a que toda la junta se alborotase, viendo que se rompían sus estatutos y buenas ordenanzas.

Viendo Rinconete, pues, tanta disensión y alboroto, parecióle que sería bien sosegalle y dar contento a su mayor, que reventaba de rabia; y, aconsejándose con su amigo Cortadillo, con parecer de entrambos, sacó la bolsa del sacristán y dijo:

-Cese toda cuestión, mis señores, que ésta es la bolsa, sin faltarle nada de lo que el alguacil manifiesta; que hoy mi camarada Cortadillo le dio alcance, con un pañuelo que al mismo dueño se le quitó por añadidura.

Luego sacó Cortadillo el pañizuelo y lo puso de manifiesto; viendo lo cual, Monipodio dijo:

-Cortadillo el Bueno, que con este título y renombre ha de quedar de aquí adelante, se quede con el pañuelo y a mi cuenta se quede la satisfacción deste servicio; y la bolsa se ha de llevar el alguacil, que es de un sacristán pariente suyo, y conviene que se cumpla aquel refrán que dice: «No es mucho que a quien te da la gallina entera, tú des una pierna della». Más disimula este buen alguacil en un día que nosotros le podremos ni solemos dar en ciento.

De común consentimiento aprobaron todos la hidalguía de los dos modernos y la sentencia y parecer de su mayoral, el cual salió a dar la bolsa al alguacil; y Cortadillo se quedó confirmado con el renombre de Bueno, bien como si fuera don Alonso Pérez de Guzmán el Bueno, que arrojó el cuchillo por los muros de Tarifa para degollar a su único hijo.

Al volver, que volvió, Monipodio, entraron con él dos mozas, afeitados los rostros, llenos de color los labios y de albayalde los pechos, cubiertas con medios mantos de anascote, llenas de desenfado y desvergüenza: señales claras por donde, en viéndolas Rinconete y Cortadillo, conocieron que eran de la casa llana; y no se engañaron en nada. Y, así como entraron, se fueron con los brazos abiertos, la una a Chiquiznaque y la otra a Maniferro, que éstos eran los nombres de los dos bravos; y el de Maniferro era porque traía una mano de hierro, en lugar de otra que le habían cortado por justicia. Ellos las abrazaron con grande regocijo, y les preguntaron si traían algo con que mojar la canal maestra.

-Pues, ¿había de faltar, diestro mío? -respondió la una, que se llamaba la

Gananciosa-. No tardará mucho a venir Silbatillo, tu trainel, con la canasta de colar atestada de lo que Dios ha sido servido.

Y así fue verdad, porque al instante entró un muchacho con una canasta de colar cubierta con una sábana.

Alegráronse todos con la entrada de Silbato, y al momento mandó sacar Monipodio una de las esteras de enea que estaban en el aposento, y tenderla en medio del patio. Y ordenó, asimismo, que todos se sentasen a la redonda; porque, en cortando la cólera, se trataría de lo que más conviniese. A esto, dijo la vieja que había rezado a la imagen:

-Hijo Monipodio, yo no estoy para fiestas, porque tengo un vaguido de cabeza, dos días ha, que me trae loca; y más, que antes que sea mediodía tengo de ir a cumplir mis devociones y poner mis candelicas a Nuestra Señora de las Aguas y al Santo Crucifijo de Santo Agustín, que no lo dejaría de hacer si nevase y ventiscase. A lo que he venido es que anoche el Renegado y Centopiés llevaron a mi casa una canasta de colar, algo mayor que la presente, llena de ropa blanca; y en Dios y en ni ánima que venía con su cernada y todo, que los pobretes no debieron de tener lugar de quitalla, y venían sudando la gota tan gorda, que era una compasión verlos entrar ijadeando y corriendo agua de sus rostros, que parecían unos angelicos. Dijéronme que iban en seguimiento de un ganadero que había pesado ciertos carneros en la Carnicería, por ver si le podían dar un tientito en un grandísimo gato de reales que llevaba. No desembanastaron ni contaron la ropa, fiados en la entereza de mi conciencia; y así me cumpla Dios mis buenos deseos y nos libre a todos de poder de justicia, que no he tocado a la canasta, y que se está tan entera como cuando nació.

-Todo se le cree, señora madre -respondió Monipodio-, y estése así la canasta, que yo iré allá, a boca de sorna, y haré cala y cata de lo que tiene, y daré a cada uno lo que le tocare, bien y fielmente, como tengo de costumbre.

-Sea como vos lo ordenáredes, hijo -respondió la vieja-; y, porque se me hace tarde, dadme un traguillo, si tenéis, para consolar este estómago, que tan desmayado anda de continuo.

-Y ¡qué tal lo beberéis, madre mía! -dijo a esta sazón la Escalanta, que así se llamaba la compañera de la Gananciosa.

Y, descubriendo la canasta, se manifestó una bota a modo de cuero, con hasta dos arrobas de vino, y un corcho que podría caber sosegadamente y sin apremio hasta una azumbre; y, llenándole la Escalanta, se le puso en las manos a la devotísima vieja, la cual, tomándole con ambas manos y habiéndole soplado un poco de espuma, dijo:

-Mucho echaste, hija Escalanta, pero Dios dará fuerzas para todo.

Y, aplicándosele a los labios, de un tirón, sin tomar aliento, lo trasegó del



corcho al estómago, y acabó diciendo:

-De Guadalcanal es, y aun tiene un es no es de yeso el señorico. Dios te consuele, hija, que así me has consolado; sino que temo que me ha de hacer mal, porque no me he desayunado.

-No hará, madre -respondió Monipodio-, porque es trasañejo.

-Así lo espero yo en la Virgen -respondió la vieja.

Y añadió:

-Mirad, niñas, si tenéis acaso algún cuarto para comprar las candelicas de mi devoción, porque, con la priesa y gana que tenía de venir a traer las nuevas de la canasta, se me olvidó en casa la escarcela.

-Yo sí tengo, señora Pipota -(que éste era el nombre de la buena vieja) respondió la Gananciosa-; tome, ahí le doy dos cuartos: del uno le ruego que compre una para mí, y se la ponga al señor San Miguel; y si puede comprar dos, ponga la otra al señor San Blas, que son mis abogados. Quisiera que pusiera otra a la señora Santa Lucía, que, por lo de los ojos, también le tengo devoción, pero no tengo trocado; mas otro día habrá donde se cumpla con todos.

-Muy bien harás, hija, y mira no seas miserable; que es de mucha importancia llevar la persona las candelas delante de sí antes que se muera, y no aguardar a que las pongan los herederos o albaceas.

-Bien dice la madre Pipota -dijo la Escalanta.

Y, echando mano a la bolsa, le dio otro cuarto y le encargó que pusiese otras dos candelicas a los santos que a ella le pareciesen que eran de los más aprovechados y agradecidos. Con esto, se fue la Pipota, diciéndoles:

-Holgaos, hijos, ahora que tenéis tiempo; que vendrá la vejez y lloraréis en ella los ratos que perdistes en la mocedad, como yo los lloro; y encomendadme a Dios en vuestras oraciones, que yo voy a hacer lo mismo por mí y por vosotros, porque Él nos libre y conserve en nuestro trato peligroso, sin sobresaltos de justicia.

Y con esto, se fue.

Ida la vieja, se sentaron todos alrededor de la estera, y la Gananciosa tendió la sábana por manteles; y lo primero que sacó de la cesta fue un grande haz de rábanos y hasta dos docenas de naranjas y limones, y luego una cazuela grande llena de tajadas de bacallao frito. Manifestó luego medio queso de Flandes, y una olla de famosas aceitunas, y un plato de camarones, y gran cantidad de cangrejos, con su llamativo de alcaparrones ahogados en pimientos, y tres hogazas blanquísimas de Gandul. Serían los del almuerzo hasta catorce, y ninguno dellos dejó de sacar su cuchillo de cachas amarillas, si no fue Rinconete, que sacó su media espada. A los dos viejos de bayeta y a la guía tocó el escanciar con el corcho de colmena. Mas, apenas habían comenzado a dar

asalto a las naranjas, cuando les dio a todos gran sobresalto los golpes que dieron a la puerta. Mandóles Monipodio que se sosegasen, y, entrando en la sala baja y descolgando un broquel, puesto mano a la espada, llegó a la puerta y con voz hueca y espantosa preguntó:

-¿Quién llama?

Respondieron de fuera:

-Yo soy, que no es nadie, señor Monipodio: Tagarete soy, centinela desta mañana, y vengo a decir que viene aquí Juliana la Cariharta, toda desgredada y llorosa, que parece haberle sucedido algún desastre.

En esto llegó la que decía, sollozando, y, sintiéndola Monipodio, abrió la puerta, y mandó a Tagarete que se volviese a su posta y que de allí adelante avisase lo que viese con menos estruendo y ruido. Él dijo que así lo haría. Entró la Cariharta, que era una moza del jaez de las otras y del mismo oficio. Venía descabellada y la cara llena de tolondrones, y, así como entró en el patio, se cayó en el suelo desmayada. Acudieron a socorrerla la Gananciosa y la Escalanta, y, desabrochándola el pecho, la hallaron toda denegrida y como magullada. Echáronle agua en el rostro, y ella volvió en sí, diciendo a voces:

-¡La justicia de Dios y del Rey venga sobre aquel ladrón desuellacaros, sobre aquel cobarde bajamanero, sobre aquel pícaro lendroso, que le he quitado más veces de la horca que tiene pelos en las barbas! ¡Desdichada de mí! ¡Mirad por quién he perdido y gastado mi mocedad y la flor de mis años, sino por un bellaco desalmado, facinoroso e incorregible!

-Sosiégate, Cariharta -dijo a esta sazón Monipodio-, que aquí estoy yo que te haré justicia. Cuéntanos tu agravio, que más estarás tú en contarle que yo en hacerte vengada; dime si has habido algo con tu respecto; que si así es y quieres venganza, no has menester más que boquear.

-¿Qué respecto? -respondió Juliana-. Respectada me vea yo en los infiernos, si más lo fuere de aquel león con las ovejas y cordero con los hombres. ¿Con aquél había yo de comer más pan a manteles, ni yacer en uno? Primero me vea yo comida de adivas estas carnes, que me ha parado de la manera que ahora veréis.

Y, alzándose al instante las faldas hasta la rodilla, y aun un poco más, las descubrió llenas de cardenales.

-Desta manera -prosiguió-me ha parado aquel ingrato del Repolido, debiéndome más que a la madre que le parió. Y ¿por qué pensáis que lo ha hecho? ¡Montas, que le di yo ocasión para ello! No, por cierto, no lo hizo más sino porque, estando jugando y perdiendo, me envió a pedir con Cabrillas, su trainel, treinta reales, y no le envié más de veinte y cuatro, que el trabajo y afán con que yo los había ganado ruego yo a los cielos que vaya en descuento de mis pecados. Y, en pago desta cortesía y buena obra, creyendo él que yo le sisaba

algo de la cuenta que él allá en su imaginación había hecho de lo que yo podía tener, esta mañana me sacó al campo, detrás de la Güerta del Rey, y allí, entre unos olivares, me desnudó, y con la petrina, sin escusar ni recoger los hierros, que en malos grillos y hierros le vea yo, me dio tantos azotes que me dejó por muerta. De la cual verdadera historia son buenos testigos estos cardenales que miráis.

Aquí tornó a levantar las voces, aquí volvió a pedir justicia, y aquí se la prometió de nuevo Monipodio y todos los bravos que allí estaban. La Gananciosa tomó la mano a consolalla, diciéndole que ella diera de muy buena gana una de las mejores preseas que tenía porque le hubiera pasado otro tanto con su querido.

-Porque quiero -dijo-que sepas, hermana Cariharta, si no lo sabes, que a lo que se quiere bien se castiga; y cuando estos bellacones nos dan, y azotan y acocean, entonces nos adoran; si no, confiésame una verdad, por tu vida: después que te hubo Repolido castigado y brumado, ¿no te hizo alguna caricia?

-¿Cómo una? -respondió la llorosa-. Cien mil me hizo, y diera él un dedo de la mano porque me fuera con él a su posada; y aun me parece que casi se le saltaron las lágrimas de los ojos después de haberme molido.

-No hay dudar en eso -replicó la Gananciosa-. Y lloraría de pena de ver cuál te había puesto; que en estos tales hombres, y en tales casos, no han cometido la culpa cuando les viene el arrepentimiento; y tú verás, hermana, si no viene a buscarte antes que de aquí nos vamos, y a pedirte perdón de todo lo pasado, rindiéndosete como un cordero.

-En verdad -respondió Monipodio-que no ha de entrar por estas puertas el cobarde envesado, si primero no hace una manifiesta penitencia del cometido delito. ¿Las manos había él de ser osado ponerlas en el rostro de la Cariharta, ni en sus carnes, siendo persona que puede competir en limpieza y ganancia con la misma Gananciosa que está delante, que no lo puedo más encarecer?

-¡Ay! -dijo a esta sazón la Juliana-. No diga vuesa merced, señor Monipodio, mal de aquel maldito, que con cuan malo es, le quiero más que a las telas de mi corazón, y hanme vuelto el alma al cuerpo las razones que en su abono me ha dicho mi amiga la Gananciosa, y en verdad que estoy por ir a buscarle.

-Eso no harás tú por mi consejo -replicó la Gananciosa-, porque se estenderá y ensanchará y hará tretas en ti como en cuerpo muerto. Sosiégate, hermana, que antes de mucho le verás venir tan arrepentido como he dicho; y si no viniere, escribirémosle un papel en coplas que le amargue.

-Eso sí -dijo la Cariharta-, que tengo mil cosas que escribirle.

-Yo seré el secretario cuando sea menester -dijo Monipodio-; y, aunque no soy nada poeta, todavía, si el hombre se arremanga, se atreverá a hacer dos

millares de coplas en daga las pajas, y, cuando no salieren como deben, yo tengo un barbero amigo, gran poeta, que nos hinchirá las medidas a todas horas; y en la de agora acabemos lo que teníamos comenzado del almuerzo, que después todo se andará.

Fue contenta la Juliana de obedecer a su mayor; y así, todos volvieron a su *gaudeamus*, y en poco espacio vieron el fondo de la canasta y las heces del cuero. Los viejos bebieron *sine fine*; los mozos *adunia*; las señoras, los *quiries*. Los viejos pidieron licencia para irse. Dióselo luego Monipodio, encargándoles viniesen a dar noticia con toda puntualidad de todo aquello que vieses ser útil y conveniente a la comunidad. Respondieron que ellos se lo tenían bien en cuidado y fuéronse.

Rinconete, que de suyo era curioso, pidiendo primero perdón y licencia, preguntó a Monipodio que de qué servían en la cofradía dos personajes tan canos, tan graves y apersonados. A lo cual respondió Monipodio que aquéllos, en su germanía y manera de hablar, se llamaban avispones, y que servían de andar de día por toda la ciudad avisando en qué casas se podía dar tiento de noche, y en seguir los que sacaban dinero de la Contratación o Casa de la Moneda, para ver dónde lo llevaban, y aun dónde lo ponían; y, en sabiéndolo, tanteaban la groseza del muro de la tal casa y diseñaban el lugar más conveniente para hacer los guzpátaros -que son agujeros-para facilitar la entrada. En resolución, dijo que era la gente de más o de tanto provecho que había en su hermandad, y que de todo aquello que por su industria se hurtaba llevaban el quinto, como Su Majestad de los tesoros; y que, con todo esto, eran hombres de mucha verdad, y muy honrados, y de buena vida y fama, temerosos de Dios y de sus conciencias, que cada día oían misa con estraña devoción.

-Y hay dellos tan comedidos, especialmente estos dos que de aquí se van agora, que se contentan con mucho menos de lo que por nuestros aranceles les toca. Otros dos que hay son palanquines, los cuales, como por momentos mudan casas, saben las entradas y salidas de todas las de la ciudad, y cuáles pueden ser de provecho y cuáles no.

-Todo me parece de perlas -dijo Rinconete-, y querría ser de algún provecho a tan famosa cofradía.

-Siempre favorece el cielo a los buenos deseos -dijo Monipodio.

Estando en esta plática, llamaron a la puerta; salió Monipodio a ver quién era, y, preguntándolo, respondieron:

-Abra voacé, sor Monipodio, que el Repolido soy.

Oyó esta voz Cariharta y, alzando al cielo la suya, dijo:

-No le abra vuesa merced, señor Monipodio; no le abra a ese marinero de Tarpeya, a este tigre de Ocaña.

No dejó por esto Monipodio de abrir a Repolido; pero, viendo la Cariharta que le abría, se levantó corriendo y se entró en la sala de los broqueles, y, cerrando tras sí la puerta, desde dentro, a grandes voces decía:

-Quítenmele de delante a ese gesto de por demás, a ese verdugo de inocentes, asombrador de palomas duendas.

Maniferro y Chiquiznaque tenían a Repolido, que en todas maneras quería entrar donde la Cariharta estaba; pero, como no le dejaban, decía desde afuera:

-¡No haya más, enojada mía; por tu vida que te sosiegues, ansí te veas casada!

-¿Casada yo, malino? -respondió la Cariharta-. ¡Mirá en qué tecla toca! ¡Ya quisieras tú que lo fuera contigo, y antes lo sería yo con una sotomía de muerte que contigo!

-¡Ea, boba -replicó Repolido-, acabemos ya, que es tarde, y mire no se ensanche por verme hablar tan manso y venir tan rendido! Porque, ¡vive el Dador, si se me sube la cólera al campanario, que sea peor la recaída que la caída! Humíllese, y humillémonos todos, y no demos de comer al diablo.

-Y aun de cenar le daría yo -dijo la Cariharta-, porque te llevase donde nunca más mis ojos te vieses.

-¿No os digo yo? -dijo Repolido-. ¡Por Dios que voy oliendo, señora trinquete, que lo tengo de echar todo a doce, aunque nunca se venda!

A esto dijo Monipodio:

-En mi presencia no ha de haber demasías: la Cariharta saldrá, no por amenazas, sino por amor mío, y todo se hará bien; que las riñas entre los que bien se quieren son causa de mayor gusto cuando se hacen las paces. ¡Ah Juliana! ¡Ah niña! ¡Ah Cariharta mía! Sal acá fuera por mi amor, que yo haré que el Repolido te pida perdón de rodillas.

-Como él eso haga -dijo la Escalanta-, todas seremos en su favor y en rogar a Juliana salga acá fuera.

-Si esto ha de ir por vía de rendimiento que güela a menoscabo de la persona -dijo el Repolido-, no me rendiré a un ejército formado de esguízaros; mas si es por vía de que la Cariharta gusta dello, no digo yo hincarme de rodillas, pero un clavo me hincaré por la frente en su servicio.

Riyéronse desto Chiquiznaque y Maniferro, de lo cual se enojó tanto el Repolido, pensando que hacían burla dél, que dijo con muestras de infinita cólera:

-Cualquiera que se riere o se pensare reír de lo que la Cariharta, o contra mí, o yo contra ella hemos dicho o dijéremos, digo que miente y mentirá todas las veces que se riere, o lo pensare, como ya he dicho.

Miráronse Chiquiznaque y Maniferro de tan mal garbo y talle, que advirtió Monipodio que pararía en un gran mal si no lo remediaba; y así, poniéndose

luego en medio dellos, dijo:

-No pase más adelante, caballeros; cesen aquí palabras mayores, y desháganse entre los dientes; y, pues las que se han dicho no llegan a la cintura, nadie las tome por sí.

-Bien seguros estamos -respondió Chiquiznaque-que no se dijeron ni dirán semejantes monitorios por nosotros; que, si se hubiera imaginado que se decían, en manos estaba el pandero que lo supiera bien tañer.

-También tenemos acá pandero, sor Chiquiznaque -replicó el Repolido-, y también, si fuere menester, sabremos tocar los cascabeles, y ya he dicho que el que se huelga, miente; y quien otra cosa pensare, sígame, que con un palmo de espada menos hará el hombre que sea lo dicho dicho.

Y, diciendo esto, se iba a salir por la puerta afuera. Estábalo escuchando la Cariharta, y, cuando sintió que se iba enojado, salió diciendo:

-¡Ténganle no se vaya, que hará de las suyas! ¿No veen que va enojado, y es un Judas Macarelo en esto de la valentía? ¡Vuelve acá, valentón del mundo y de mis ojos!

Y, cerrando con él, le asió fuertemente de la capa, y, acudiendo también Monipodio, le detuvieron. Chiquiznaque y Maniferro no sabían si enojarse o si no, y estuviéronse quedos esperando lo que Repolido haría; el cual, viéndose rogar de la Cariharta y de Monipodio, volvió diciendo:

-Nunca los amigos han de dar enojo a los amigos, ni hacer burla de los amigos, y más cuando veen que se enojan los amigos.

-No hay aquí amigo -respondió Maniferro-que quiera enojar ni hacer burla de otro amigo; y, pues todos somos amigos, dense las manos los amigos.

A esto dijo Monipodio:

-Todos voacedes han hablado como buenos amigos, y como tales amigos se den las manos de amigos.

Diéronselas luego, y la Escalanta, quitándose un chapín, comenzó a tañer en él como en un pandero; la Gananciosa tomó una escoba de palma nueva, que allí se halló acaso, y, rascándola, hizo un son que, aunque ronco y áspero, se concertaba con el del chapín. Monipodio rompió un plato y hizo dos tejoletas, que, puestas entre los dedos y repicadas con gran ligereza, llevaba el contrapunto al chapín y a la escoba.

Espantáronse Rinconete y Cortadillo de la nueva invención de la escoba, porque hasta entonces nunca la habían visto. Conociólo Maniferro y díjoles:

-¿Admíranse de la escoba? Pues bien hacen, pues música más presta y más sin pesadumbre, ni más barata, no se ha inventado en el mundo; y en verdad que oí decir el otro día a un estudiante que ni el Negrofeo, que sacó a la Arauz del infierno; ni el Marión, que subió sobre el delfín y salió del mar como si viniera

caballero sobre una mula de alquiler; ni el otro gran músico que hizo una ciudad que tenía cien puertas y otros tantos postigos, nunca inventaron mejor género de música, tan fácil de aprender, tan manera de tocar, tan sin trastes, clavijas ni cuerdas, y tan sin necesidad de templarse; y aun voto a tal, que dicen que la inventó un galán desta ciudad, que se pica de ser un Héctor en la música.

-Eso creo yo muy bien -respondió Rinconete-, pero escuchemos lo que quieren cantar nuestros músicos, que parece que la Gananciosa ha escupido, señal de que quiere cantar.

Y así era la verdad, porque Monipodio le había rogado que cantase algunas seguidillas de las que se usaban; mas la que comenzó primero fue la Escalanta, y con voz sutil y quebradiza cantó lo siguiente:

Por un sevillano, rufo a lo valón,  
tengo socarrado todo el corazón.

Siguió la Gananciosa cantando:

Por un morenico de color verde,  
¿cuál es la fogosa que no se pierde?

Y luego Monipodio, dándose gran prisa al meneo de sus tejoletas, dijo:

Riñen dos amantes, hácese la paz:  
si el enojo es grande, es el gusto más.

No quiso la Cariharta pasar su gusto en silencio, porque, tomando otro chapín, se metió en danza, y acompañó a las demás diciendo:

Detente, enojado, no me azotes más;  
que si bien lo miras, a tus carnes das.

-Cántese a lo llano -dijo a esta sazón Repolido-, y no se toquen estorias pasadas, que no hay para qué: lo pasado sea pasado, y tómese otra vereda, y basta.

Talle llevaban de no acabar tan presto el comenzado cántico, si no sintieran que llamaban a la puerta apriesa; y con ella salió Monipodio a ver quién era, y la centinela le dijo cómo al cabo de la calle había asomado el alcalde de la justicia, y que delante dél venían el Tordillo y el Cernícalo, corchetes neutrales. Oyéronlo los de dentro, y alborotáronse todos de manera que la Cariharta y la Escalanta se calzaron sus chapines al revés, dejó la escoba la Gananciosa, Monipodio sus tejoletas, y quedó en turbado silencio toda la música, enmudeció Chiquiznaque, pasmóse Repolido y suspendióse Maniferro; y todos, cuál por una y cuál por otra parte, desaparecieron, subiéndose a las azoteas y tejados, para escaparse y pasar por ellos a otra calle. Nunca ha disparado arcabuz a deshora, ni trueno repentino espantó así a banda de descuidadas palomas, como puso en alboroto y espanto a toda aquella recogida compañía y buena gente la nueva de la venida del alcalde de la justicia. Los dos novicios, Rinconete y Cortadillo, no sabían qué hacerse, y estuviéronse quedos, esperando ver en qué paraba aquella repentina borrasca, que no paró en más de volver la centinela a decir que el alcalde se había pasado de largo, sin dar muestra ni resabio de mala sospecha alguna.

Y, estando diciendo esto a Monipodio, llegó un caballero mozo a la puerta, vestido, como se suele decir, de barrio; Monipodio le entró consigo, y mandó llamar a Chiquiznaque, a Maniferro y al Repolido, y que de los demás no bajase alguno. Como se habían quedado en el patio, Rinconete y Cortadillo pudieron oír toda la plática que pasó Monipodio con el caballero recién venido, el cual dijo a Monipodio que por qué se había hecho tan mal lo que le había encomendado. Monipodio respondió que aún no sabía lo que se había hecho; pero que allí estaba el oficial a cuyo cargo estaba su negocio, y que él daría muy buena cuenta de sí.

Bajó en esto Chiquiznaque, y preguntóle Monipodio si había cumplido con la obra que se le encomendó de la cuchillada de a catorce.

-¿Cuál? -respondió Chiquiznaque-. ¿Es la de aquel mercader de la Encrucijada?



-Ésa es -dijo el caballero.

-Pues lo que en eso pasa -respondió Chiquiznaque-es que yo le aguardé anoche a la puerta de su casa, y él vino antes de la oración; lleguéme cerca dél, marquéle el rostro con la vista, y vi que le tenía tan pequeño que era imposible de toda imposibilidad caber en él cuchillada de catorce puntos; y, hallándome imposibilitado de poder cumplir lo prometido y de hacer lo que llevaba en mi destrucción...

-*Instrucción* querrá vuesa merced decir -dijo el caballero-, que no *destrucción*.

-Eso quise decir -respondió Chiquiznaque-. Digo que, viendo que en la estrechez y poca cantidad de aquel rostro no cabían los puntos propuestos, porque no fuese mi ida en balde, di la cuchillada a un lacayo suyo, que a buen seguro que la pueden poner por mayor de marca.

-Más quisiera -dijo el caballero-que se la hubiera dado al amo una de a siete, que al criado la de a catorce. En efeto, conmigo no se ha cumplido como era razón, pero no importa; poca mella me harán los treinta ducados que dejé en señal. Beso a vuestas mercedes las manos.

Y, diciendo esto, se quitó el sombrero y volvió las espaldas para irse; pero Monipodio le asió de la capa de mezcla que traía puesta, diciéndole:

-Voacé se detenga y cumpla su palabra, pues nosotros hemos cumplido la nuestra con mucha honra y con mucha ventaja: veinte ducados faltan, y no ha de salir de aquí voacé sin darlos, o prendas que lo valgan.

-Pues, ¿a esto llama vuesa merced cumplimiento de palabra -respondió el caballero-: dar la cuchillada al mozo, habiéndose de dar al amo?

-¡Qué bien está en la cuenta el señor! -dijo Chiquiznaque-. Bien parece que no se acuerda de aquel refrán que dice: «Quien bien quiere a Beltrán, bien quiere a su can».

-¿Pues en qué modo puede venir aquí a propósito ese refrán? -replicó el caballero.

-¿Pues no es lo mismo -prosiguió Chiquiznaque-decir: «Quien mal quiere a Beltrán, mal quiere a su can»? Y así, Beltrán es el mercader, voacé le quiere mal, su lacayo es su can; y dando al can se da a Beltrán, y la deuda queda líquida y trae aparejada ejecución; por eso no hay más sino pagar luego sin apercibimiento de remate.

-Eso juro yo bien -añadió Monipodio-, y de la boca me quitaste, Chiquiznaque amigo, todo cuanto aquí has dicho; y así, voacé, señor galán, no se meta en puntillos con sus servidores y amigos, sino tome mi consejo y pague luego lo trabajado; y si fuere servido que se le dé otra al amo, de la cantidad que pueda llevar su rostro, haga cuenta que ya se la están curando.

-Como eso sea -respondió el galán-, de muy entera voluntad y gana pagaré la

una y la otra por entero.

-No dude en esto -dijo Monipodio-más que en ser cristiano; que Chiquiznaque se la dará pintiparada, de manera que parezca que allí se le nació.

-Pues con esa seguridad y promesa -respondió el caballero-, recíbase esta cadena en prendas de los veinte ducados atrasados y de cuarenta que ofrezco por la venidera cuchillada. Pesa mil reales, y podría ser que se quedase rematada, porque traigo entre ojos que serán menester otros catorce puntos antes de mucho.

Quitóse, en esto, una cadena de vueltas menudas del cuello y dióselo a Monipodio, que al color y al peso bien vio que no era de alquimia. Monipodio la recibió con mucho contento y cortesía, porque era en extremo bien criado; la ejecución quedó a cargo de Chiquiznaque, que sólo tomó término de aquella noche. Fuese muy satisfecho el caballero, y luego Monipodio llamó a todos los ausentes y azorados. Bajaron todos, y, poniéndose Monipodio en medio dellos, sacó un libro de memoria que traía en la capilla de la capa y dióselo a Rinconete que leyese, porque él no sabía leer. Abrióle Rinconete, y en la primera hoja vio que decía:

## MEMORIA DE LAS CUCHILLADAS QUE SE HAN DE DAR ESTA SEMANA

*La primera, al mercader de la encrucijada: vale cincuenta escudos. Están recibidos treinta a buena cuenta. Secutor, Chiquiznaque.*

-No creo que hay otra, hijo -dijo Monipodio-; pasá adelante y mirá donde dice: MEMORIA DE PALOS.

Volvió la hoja Rinconete, y vio que en otra estaba escrito:

## MEMORIA DE PALOS

Y más abajo decía:

*Al bodegonero de la Alfalfa, doce palos de mayor cuantía a escudo cada uno. Están dados a buena cuenta ocho. El término, seis días. Secutor, Maniferro.*

-Bien podía borrarse esa partida -dijo Maniferro-, porque esta noche traeré finiquito della.

-¿Hay más, hijo? -dijo Monipodio.

-Sí, otra -respondió Rinconete-, que dice así:

*Al sastre corcovado que por mal nombre se llama el Silguero, seis palos de mayor cuantía, a pedimiento de la dama que dejó la gargantilla. Secutor, el Desmochado.*

-Maravillado estoy -dijo Monipodio-cómo todavía está esa partida en ser. Sin duda alguna debe de estar mal dispuesto el Desmochado, pues son dos días pasados del término y no ha dado puntada en esta obra.

-Yo le topé ayer -dijo Maniferro-, y me dijo que por haber estado retirado por enfermo el Corcovado no había cumplido con su débito.

-Eso creo yo bien -dijo Monipodio-, porque tengo por tan buen oficial al Desmochado, que, si no fuera por tan justo impedimento, ya él hubiera dado al cabo con mayores empresas. ¿Hay más, mocito?

-No señor -respondió Rinconete.

-Pues pasad adelante -dijo Monipodio-, y mirad donde dice: MEMORIAL DE AGRAVIOS COMUNES.

Pasó adelante Rinconete, y en otra hoja halló escrito:

MEMORIAL DE AGRAVIOS COMUNES.

CONVIENE A SABER: REDOMAZOS, UNTOS DE MIERA,  
CLAVAZÓN DE SAMBENITOS Y CUERNOS, MATRACAS,  
ESPANTOS, ALBOROTOS Y CUCHILLADAS FINGIDAS,  
PUBLICACIÓN DE NIBELOS, ETC.

-¿Qué dice más abajo? -dijo Monipodio.

-Dice -dijo Rinconete-:

*Unto de miera en la casa...*

-No se lea la casa, que ya yo sé dónde es -respondió Monipodio-, y yo soy el *tuáutem* y esecutor desa niñería, y están dados a buena cuenta cuatro escudos, y el principal es ocho.

-Así es la verdad -dijo Rinconete-, que todo eso está aquí escrito; y aun más abajo dice:

*Clavazón de cuernos.*

-Tampoco se lea -dijo Monipodio-la casa, ni adónde; que basta que se les haga el agravio, sin que se diga en público; que es gran cargo de conciencia. A lo menos, más querría yo clavar cien cuernos y otros tantos sambenitos, como se me pagase mi trabajo, que decillo sola una vez, aunque fuese a la madre que me parió.

-El esecutor desto es -dijo Rinconete-el Narigueta.

-Ya está eso hecho y pagado -dijo Monipodio-. Mirad si hay más, que si mal no me acuerdo, ha de haber ahí un espanto de veinte escudos; está dada la mitad, y el ejecutor es la comunidad toda, y el término es todo el mes en que estamos; y cumplirás al pie de la letra, sin que falte una tilde, y será una de las mejores cosas que hayan sucedido en esta ciudad de muchos tiempos a esta parte. Dadme el libro, mancebo, que yo sé que no hay más, y sé también que anda muy flaco el oficio; pero tras este tiempo vendrá otro y habrá que hacer más de lo que quisiéremos; que no se mueve la hoja sin la voluntad de Dios, y no hemos de hacer nosotros que se vengue nadie por fuerza; cuanto más, que cada uno en su causa suele ser valiente y no quiere pagar las hechuras de la obra que él se puede hacer por sus manos.

-Así es -dijo a esto el Repolido-. Pero mire vuesa merced, señor Monipodio, lo que nos ordena y manda, que se va haciendo tarde y va entrando el calor más que de paso.

-Lo que se ha de hacer -respondió Monipodio-es que todos se vayan a sus puestos, y nadie se mude hasta el domingo, que nos juntaremos en este mismo lugar y se repartirá todo lo que hubiere caído, sin agraviar a nadie. A Rinconete *el Bueno* y a Cortadillo se les da por distrito, hasta el domingo, desde la Torre del Oro, por defuera de la ciudad, hasta el postigo del Alcázar, donde se puede trabajar a sentadillas con sus flores; que yo he visto a otros, de menos habilidad que ellos, salir cada día con más de veinte reales en menudos, amén de la plata, con una baraja sola, y ésa con cuatro naipes menos. Este distrito os enseñará Ganchoso; y, aunque os estendáis hasta San Sebastián y San Telmo, importa poco, puesto que es justicia mera mista que nadie se entre en pertenencia de nadie.

Besáronle la mano los dos por la merced que se les hacía, y ofreciéronse a hacer su oficio bien y fielmente, con toda diligencia y recato.

Sacó, en esto, Monipodio un papel doblado de la capilla de la capa, donde estaba la lista de los cofrades, y dijo a Rinconete que pusiese allí su nombre y el de Cortadillo; mas, porque no había tintero, le dio el papel para que lo llevase, y en el primer boticario los escribiese, poniendo: *Rinconete y Cortadillo, cofrades: noviciado, ninguno; Rinconete, floreo; Cortadillo, bajón; y el día, mes y año, callando padres y patria.*

Estando en esto, entró uno de los viejos avispones y dijo:

-Vengo a decir a vuestras mercedes cómo ahora, ahora, topé en Gradas a Lobillo el de Málaga, y dícame que viene mejorado en su arte de tal manera, que con naipe limpio quitará el dinero al mismo Satanás; y que por venir maltratado no viene luego a registrarse y a dar la sálita obediencia; pero que el domingo será aquí sin falta.

-Siempre se me asentó a mí -dijo Monipodio-que este Lobillo había de ser único en su arte, porque tiene las mejores y más acomodadas manos para ello que se pueden desear; que, para ser uno buen oficial en su oficio, tanto ha menester los buenos instrumentos con que le ejercita, como el ingenio con que le aprende.

-También topé -dijo el viejo-en una casa de posadas, en la calle de Tintores, al Judío, en hábito de clérigo, que se ha ido a posar allí por tener noticia que dos peruleros viven en la misma casa, y querría ver si pudiese trabar juego con ellos, aunque fuese de poca cantidad, que de allí podría venir a mucha. Dice también que el domingo no faltará de la junta y dará cuenta de su persona.

-Ese Judío también -dijo Monipodio-es gran sacre y tiene gran conocimiento. Días ha que no le he visto, y no lo hace bien. Pues a fe que si no se enmienda, que yo le deshaga la corona; que no tiene más órdenes el ladrón que las tiene el turco, ni sabe más latín que mi madre. ¿Hay más de nuevo?

-No -dijo el viejo-; a lo menos que yo sepa.

-Pues sea en buen hora -dijo Monipodio-. Voacedes tomen esta miseria -y repartió entre todos hasta cuarenta reales-, y el domingo no falte nadie, que no faltará nada de lo corrido.

Todos le volvieron las gracias. Tornáronse a abrazar Repolido y la Cariharta, la Escalanta con Maniferro y la Gananciosa con Chiquiznaque, concertando que aquella noche, después de haber alzado de obra en la casa, se viesen en la de la Pipota, donde también dijo que iría Monipodio, al registro de la canasta de colar, y que luego había de ir a cumplir y borrar la partida de la miera. Abrazó a Rinconete y a Cortadillo, y, echándolos su bendición, los despidió, encargándoles que no tuviesen jamás posada cierta ni de asiento, porque así convenía a la salud de todos. Acompañólos Ganchoso hasta enseñarles sus puestos, acordándoles que no faltasen el domingo, porque, a lo que creía y pensaba, Monipodio había de leer una lición de posición acerca de las cosas concernientes a su arte. Con esto, se fue, dejando a los dos compañeros admirados de lo que habían visto.

Era Rinconete, aunque muchacho, de muy buen entendimiento, y tenía un buen natural; y, como había andado con su padre en el ejercicio de las bulas, sabía algo de buen lenguaje, y dábale gran risa pensar en los vocablos que había oído a Monipodio y a los demás de su compañía y bendita comunidad, y más cuando por decir *per modum sufragii* había dicho *per modo de naufragio*; y que sacaban el *estupendo*, por decir *estipendio*, de lo que se garbeaba; y cuando la Cariharta dijo que era Repolido como un *marinero de Tarpeya* y un tigre de *Ocaña*, por decir *Hircania*, con otras mil impertinencias (especialmente le cayó en gracia cuando dijo que el trabajo que había pasado en ganar los veinte y

cuatro reales lo recibiese el cielo en descuento de sus pecados) a éstas y a otras peores semejantes; y, sobre todo, le admiraba la seguridad que tenían y la confianza de irse al cielo con no faltar a sus devociones, estando tan llenos de hurtos, y de homicidios y de ofensas a Dios. Y reíase de la otra buena vieja de la Pipota, que dejaba la canasta de colar hurtada, guardada en su casa y se iba a poner las candelillas de cera a las imágenes, y con ello pensaba irse al cielo calzada y vestida. No menos le suspendía la obediencia y respecto que todos tenían a Monipodio, siendo un hombre bárbaro, rústico y desalmado. Consideraba lo que había leído en su libro de memoria y los ejercicios en que todos se ocupaban. Finalmente, exageraba cuán descuidada justicia había en aquella tan famosa ciudad de Sevilla, pues casi al descubierto vivía en ella gente tan perniciosa y tan contraria a la misma naturaleza; y propuso en sí de aconsejar a su compañero no durasen mucho en aquella vida tan perdida y tan mala, tan inquieta, y tan libre y disoluta. Pero, con todo esto, llevado de sus pocos años y de su poca experiencia, pasó con ella adelante algunos meses, en los cuales le sucedieron cosas que piden más luenga escritura; y así, se deja para otra ocasión contar su vida y milagros, con los de su maestro Monipodio, y otros sucesos de aquéllos de la infame academia, que todos serán de grande consideración y que podrán servir de ejemplo y aviso a los que las leyeren.

## La española inglesa

ENTRE los despojos que los ingleses llevaron de la ciudad de Cádiz, Clotaldo, un caballero inglés, capitán de una escuadra de navíos, llevó a Londres una niña de edad de siete años, poco más o menos; y esto contra la voluntad y sabiduría del conde de Leste, que con gran diligencia hizo buscar la niña para volvérsela a sus padres, que ante él se quejaron de la falta de su hija, pidiéndole que, pues se contentaba con las haciendas y dejaba libres las personas, no fuesen ellos tan desdichados que, ya que quedaban pobres, quedasen sin su hija, que era la lumbré de sus ojos y la más hermosa criatura que había en toda la ciudad.

Mandó el conde echar bando por toda su armada que, so pena de la vida, volviese la niña cualquiera que la tuviese; mas ningunas penas ni temores fueron bastantes a que Clotaldo la obedeciese; que la tenía escondida en su nave, aficionado, aunque cristianamente, a la incomparable hermosura de Isabel, que así se llamaba la niña. Finalmente, sus padres se quedaron sin ella, tristes y desconsolados, y Clotaldo, alegre sobremodo, llegó a Londres y entregó por riquísimo despojo a su mujer a la hermosa niña.

Quiso la buena suerte que todos los de la casa de Clotaldo eran católicos secretos, aunque en lo público mostraban seguir la opinión de su reina. Tenía Clotaldo un hijo llamado Ricaredo, de edad de doce años, enseñado de sus padres a amar y temer a Dios y a estar muy entero en las verdades de la fe católica. Catalina, la mujer de Clotaldo, noble, cristiana y prudente señora, tomó tanto amor a Isabel que, como si fuera su hija, la criaba, regalaba e industriaba; y la niña era de tan buen natural, que con facilidad aprendía todo cuanto le enseñaban. Con el tiempo y con los regalos, fue olvidando los que sus padres verdaderos le habían hecho; pero no tanto que dejase de acordarse y de suspirar por ellos muchas veces; y, aunque iba aprendiendo la lengua inglesa, no perdía la española, porque Clotaldo tenía cuidado de traerle a casa secretamente españoles que hablasen con ella. Desta manera, sin olvidar la suya, como está dicho, hablaba la lengua inglesa como si hubiera nacido en Londres.

Después de haberle enseñado todas las cosas de labor que puede y debe saber una doncella bien nacida, la enseñaron a leer y escribir más que medianamente; pero en lo que tuvo extremo fue en tañer todos los instrumentos que a una mujer son lícitos, y esto con toda perfección de música, acompañándola con una voz que le dio el cielo, tan estremada que encantaba cuando cantaba.

Todas estas gracias, adquiridas y puestas sobre la natural suya, poco a poco fueron encendiendo el pecho de Ricaredo, a quien ella, como a hijo de su señor, quería y servía. Al principio le salteó amor con un modo de agradarse y complacerse de ver la sin igual belleza de Isabel, y de considerar sus infinitas virtudes y gracias, amándola como si fuera su hermana, sin que sus deseos saliesen de los términos honrados y virtuosos. Pero, como fue creciendo Isabel, que ya cuando Ricaredo ardía tenía doce años, aquella benevolencia primera y aquella complacencia y agrado de mirarla se volvió en ardentísimos deseos de gozarla y de poseerla: no porque aspirase a esto por otros medios que por los de ser su esposo, pues de la incomparable honestidad de Isabela (que así la llamaban ellos) no se podía esperar otra cosa, ni aun él quisiera esperarla, aunque pudiera, porque la noble condición suya, y la estimación en que a Isabela tenía, no consentían que ningún mal pensamiento echase raíces en su alma.

Mil veces determinó manifestar su voluntad a sus padres, y otras tantas no aprobó su determinación, porque él sabía que le tenían dedicado para ser esposo de una muy rica y principal doncella escocesa, asimismo secreta cristiana como ellos. Y estaba claro, según él decía, que no habían de querer dar a una esclava (si este nombre se podía dar a Isabela) lo que ya tenían concertado de dar a una señora. Y así, perplejo y pensativo, sin saber qué camino tomar para venir al fin de su buen deseo, pasaba una vida tal, que le puso a punto de perderla. Pero, pareciéndole ser gran cobardía dejarse morir sin intentar algún género de remedio a su dolencia, se animó y esforzó a declarar su intento a Isabela.

Andaban todos los de casa tristes y alborotados por la enfermedad de Ricaredo, que de todos era querido, y de sus padres con el extremo posible, así por no tener otro, como porque lo merecía su mucha virtud y su gran valor y entendimiento. No le acertaban los médicos la enfermedad, ni él osaba ni quería descubrísela. En fin, puesto en romper por las dificultades que él se imaginaba, un día que entró Isabela a servirle, viéndola sola, con desmayada voz y lengua turbada le dijo:

-Hermosa Isabela, tu valor, tu mucha virtud y grande hermosura me tienen como me vees; si no quieres que deje la vida en manos de las mayores penas que pueden imaginarse, responde el tuyo a mi buen deseo, que no es otro que el de recebirte por mi esposa a hurto de mis padres, de los cuales temo que, por no conocer lo que yo conozco que mereces, me han de negar el bien que tanto me importa. Si me das la palabra de ser mía, yo te la doy, desde luego, como verdadero y católico cristiano, de ser tuyo; que, puesto que no llegue a gozarte, como no llegaré, hasta que con bendición de la Iglesia y de mis padres sea, aquel imaginar que con seguridad eres mía será bastante a darme salud y a mantenerme alegre y contento hasta que llegue el felice punto que deseo.



En tanto que esto dijo Ricaredo, estuvo escuchándole Isabela, los ojos bajos, mostrando en aquel punto que su honestidad se igualaba a su hermosura, y a su mucha discreción su recato. Y así, viendo que Ricaredo callaba, honesta, hermosa y discreta, le respondió desta suerte:

-Después que quiso el rigor o la clemencia del cielo, que no sé a cuál destos extremos lo atribuya, quitarme a mis padres, señor Ricaredo, y darme a los vuestros, agradecida a las infinitas mercedes que me han hecho, determiné que jamás mi voluntad saliese de la suya; y así, sin ella tendría no por buena, sino por mala fortuna la inestimable merced que queréis hacerme. Si con su sabiduría fuere yo tan venturosa que os merezca, desde aquí os ofrezco la voluntad que ellos me dieren; y, en tanto que esto se dilatase o no fuere, entretengan vuestros deseos saber que los míos serán eternos y limpios en desearos el bien que el cielo puede daros.

Aquí puso silencio Isabela a sus honestas y discretas razones, y allí comenzó la salud de Ricaredo, y comenzaron a revivir las esperanzas de sus padres, que en su enfermedad muertas estaban.

Despidiéronse los dos cortésmente: él, con lágrimas en los ojos; ella, con admiración en el alma de ver tan rendida a su amor la de Ricaredo, el cual, levantado del lecho, al parecer de sus padres por milagro, no quiso tenerles más tiempo ocultos sus pensamientos. Y así, un día se los manifestó a su madre, diciéndole en el fin de su plática, que fue larga, que si no le casaban con Isabela, que el negársela y darle la muerte era todo una misma cosa. Con tales razones, con tales encarecimientos subió al cielo las virtudes de Isabela Ricaredo, que le pareció a su madre que Isabela era la engañada en llevar a su hijo por esposo. Dio buenas esperanzas a su hijo de disponer a su padre a que con gusto viniese en lo que ya ella también venía; y así fue; que, diciendo a su marido las mismas razones que a ella había dicho su hijo, con facilidad le movió a querer lo que tanto su hijo deseaba, fabricando excusas que impidiesen el casamiento que casi tenía concertado con la doncella de Escocia.

A esta sazón tenía Isabela catorce y Ricaredo veinte años; y, en esta tan verde y tan florida edad, su mucha discreción y conocida prudencia los hacía ancianos. Cuatro días faltaban para llegarse aquél en el cual sus padres de Ricaredo querían que su hijo inclinase el cuello al yugo santo del matrimonio, teniéndose por prudentes y dichosísimos de haber escogido a su prisionera por su hija, teniendo en más la dote de sus virtudes que la mucha riqueza que con la escocesa se les ofrecía. Las galas estaban ya a punto, los parientes y los amigos convidados, y no faltaba otra cosa sino hacer a la reina sabidora de aquel concierto; porque, sin su voluntad y consentimiento, entre los de ilustre sangre, no se efetúa casamiento alguno; pero no dudaron de la licencia, y así, se

detuvieron en pedirla.

Digo, pues, que, estando todo en este estado, cuando faltaban los cuatro días hasta el de la boda, una tarde turbó todo su regocijo un ministro de la reina que dio un recaudo a Clotaldo: que su Majestad mandaba que otro día por la mañana llevasen a su presencia a su prisionera, la española de Cádiz. Respondióle Clotaldo que de muy buena gana haría lo que su Majestad le mandaba. Fuese el ministro, y dejó llenos los pechos de todos de turbación, de sobresalto y miedo.

-¡Ay -decía la señora Catalina-, si sabe la reina que yo he criado a esta niña a la católica, y de aquí viene a inferir que todos los desta casa somos cristianos! Pues si la reina le pregunta qué es lo que ha aprendido en ocho años que ha que es prisionera, ¿qué ha de responder la cuitada que no nos condene, por más discreción que tenga?

Oyendo lo cual Isabela, le dijo:

-No le dé pena alguna, señora mía, ese temor, que yo confío en el cielo que me ha de dar palabras en aquel instante, por su divina misericordia, que no sólo no os condenen, sino que redunden en provecho vuestro.

Temblaba Ricaredo, casi como adivino de algún mal suceso. Clotaldo buscaba modos que pudiesen dar ánimo a su mucho temor, y no los hallaba sino en la mucha confianza que en Dios tenía y en la prudencia de Isabela, a quien encomendó mucho que, por todas las vías que pudiese escusase el condenallos por católicos; que, puesto que estaban prompts con el espíritu a recibir martirio, todavía la carne enferma rehusaba su amarga carrera. Una y muchas veces le aseguró Isabela estuviesen seguros que por su causa no sucedería lo que temían y sospechaban, porque, aunque ella entonces no sabía lo que había de responder a las preguntas que en tal caso le hiciesen, tenía tan viva y cierta esperanza que había de responder de modo que, como otra vez había dicho, sus respuestas les sirviesen de abono.

Discurrieron aquella noche en muchas cosas, especialmente en que si la reina supiera que eran católicos, no les enviara recaudo tan manso, por donde se podía inferir que sólo quería ver a Isabela, cuya sin igual hermosura y habilidades habría llegado a sus oídos, como a todos los de la ciudad. Pero ya en no habérsela presentado se hallaban culpados, de la cual culpa hallaron sería bien disculparse con decir que desde el punto que entró en su poder la escogieron y señalaron para esposa de su hijo Ricaredo. Pero también en esto se culpaban, por haber hecho el casamiento sin licencia de la reina, aunque esta culpa no les pareció digna de gran castigo.

Con esto se consolaron, y acordaron que Isabela no fuese vestida humildemente, como prisionera, sino como esposa, pues ya lo era de tan principal esposo como su hijo. Resueltos en esto, otro día vistieron a Isabela a la

española, con una saya entera de raso verde, acuchillada y forrada en rica tela de oro, tomadas las cuchilladas con unas eses de perlas, y toda ella bordada de riquísimas perlas; collar y cintura de diamantes, y con abanico a modo de las señoras damas españolas; sus mismos cabellos, que eran muchos, rubios y largos, entretejidos y sembrados de diamantes y perlas, le sirvían de tocado. Con este adorno riquísimo y con su gallarda disposición y milagrosa belleza, se mostró aquel día a Londres sobre una hermosa carroza, llevando colgados de su vista las almas y los ojos de cuantos la miraban. Iban con ella Clotaldo y su mujer y Ricaredo en la carroza, y a caballo muchos ilustres parientes suyos. Toda esta honra quiso hacer Clotaldo a su prisionera, por obligar a la reina la tratase como a esposa de su hijo.

Llegados, pues, a palacio, y a una gran sala donde la reina estaba, entró por ella Isabela, dando de sí la más hermosa muestra que pudo caber en una imaginación. Era la sala grande y espaciosa, y a dos pasos se quedó el acompañamiento y se adelantó Isabela; y, como quedó sola, pareció lo mismo que parece la estrella o exhalación que por la región del fuego en serena y sosegada noche suele moverse, o bien ansí como rayo del sol que al salir del día por entre dos montañas se descubre. Todo esto pareció, y aun cometa que pronosticó el incendio de más de un alma de los que allí estaban, a quien Amor abrasó con los rayos de los hermosos soles de Isabela; la cual, llena de humildad y cortesía, se fue a poner de hinojos ante la reina, y, en lengua inglesa, le dijo:

-Dé Vuestra Majestad las manos a esta su sierva, que, desde hoy más, se tendrá por señora, pues ha sido tan venturosa que ha llegado a ver la grandeza vuestra.

Estúvola la reina mirando por un buen espacio, sin hablarle palabra, pareciéndole, como después dijo a su camarera, que tenía delante un cielo estrellado, cuyas estrellas eran las muchas perlas y diamantes que Isabela traía; su bello rostro y sus ojos, el sol y la luna, y toda ella una nueva maravilla de hermosura. Las damas que estaban con la reina quisieran hacerse todas ojos, porque no les quedase cosa por mirar en Isabela: cuál acababa la viveza de sus ojos, cuál la color del rostro, cuál la gallardía del cuerpo y cuál la dulzura de la habla; y tal hubo que, de pura envidia, dijo:

-Buena es la española, pero no me contenta el traje.

Después que pasó algún tanto la suspensión de la reina, haciendo levantar a Isabela, le dijo:

-Habladme en español, doncella, que yo le entiendo bien y gustaré dello.

Y, volviéndose a Clotaldo, dijo:

-Clotaldo, agravio me habéis hecho en tenerme este tesoro tantos años ha encubierto; mas él es tal, que os haya movido a codicia: obligado estáis a

restituírmele, porque de derecho es mío.

-Señora -respondió Clotaldo-, mucha verdad es lo que Vuestra Majestad dice: confieso mi culpa, si lo es haber guardado este tesoro a que estuviese en la perfección que convenía para parecer ante los ojos de Vuestra Majestad; y, ahora que lo está, pensaba traerle mejorado, pidiendo licencia a Vuestra Majestad para que Isabela fuese esposa de mi hijo Ricaredo, y daros, alta Majestad, en los dos, todo cuanto puedo daros.

-Hasta el nombre me contenta -respondió la reina-: no le faltaba más sino llamarse Isabela la española, para que no me quedase nada de perfección que desear en ella. Pero advertid, Clotaldo, que sé que sin mi licencia la teníades prometida a vuestro hijo.

-Así es verdad, señora -respondió Clotaldo-, pero fue en confianza que los muchos y relevados servicios que yo y mis pasados tenemos hechos a esta corona alcanzarían de Vuestra Majestad otras mercedes más dificultosas que las desta licencia; cuanto más, que aún no está desposado mi hijo.

-Ni lo estará -dijo la reina-con Isabela hasta que por sí mismo lo merezca. Quiero decir que no quiero que para esto le aprovechen vuestros servicios ni de sus pasados: él por sí mismo se ha de disponer a servirme y a merecer por sí esta prenda, que ya la estimo como si fuese mi hija.

Apenas oyó esta última palabra Isabela, cuando se volvió a hincar de rodillas ante la reina, diciéndole en lengua castellana:

-Las desgracias que tales descuentos traen, serenísima señora, antes se han de tener por dichas que por desventuras. Ya Vuestra Majestad me ha dado nombre de hija: sobre tal prenda, ¿qué males podré temer o qué bienes no podré esperar?

Con tanta gracia y donaire decía cuanto decía Isabela, que la reina se le aficionó en extremo y mandó que se quedase en su servicio, y se la entregó a una gran señora, su camarera mayor, para que la enseñase el modo de vivir suyo.

Ricaredo, que se vio quitar la vida en quitarle a Isabela, estuvo a pique de perder el juicio; y así, temblando y con sobresalto, se fue a poner de rodillas ante la reina, a quien dijo:

-Para servir yo a Vuestra Majestad no es menester incitarme con otros premios que con aquellos que mis padres y mis pasados han alcanzado por haber servido a sus reyes; pero, pues Vuestra Majestad gusta que yo la sirva con nuevos deseos y pretensiones, querría saber en qué modo y en qué ejercicio podré mostrar que cumplo con la obligación en que Vuestra Majestad me pone.

-Dos navíos -respondió la reina-están para partirse en corso, de los cuales he hecho general al barón de Lansac: del uno dellos os hago a vos capitán, porque la sangre de do venís me asegura que ha de suplir la falta de vuestros años. Y advertid a la merced que os hago, pues os doy ocasión en ella a que,

correspondiendo a quien sois, sirviendo a vuestra reina, mostréis el valor de vuestro ingenio y de vuestra persona, y alcancéis el mejor premio que a mi parecer vos mismo podéis acertar a desearos. Yo misma os seré guarda de Isabela, aunque ella da muestras que su honestidad será su más verdadera guarda. Id con Dios, que, pues vais enamorado, como imagino, grandes cosas me prometo de vuestras hazañas. Felice fuera el rey batallador que tuviera en su ejército diez mil soldados amantes que esperaran que el premio de sus vitorias había de ser gozar de sus amadas. Levantaos, Ricaredo, y mirad si tenéis o queréis decir algo a Isabela, porque mañana ha de ser vuestra partida.

Besó las manos Ricaredo a la reina, estimando en mucho la merced que le hacía, y luego se fue a hincar de rodillas ante Isabela; y, queriéndola hablar, no pudo, porque se le puso un nudo en la garganta que le ató la lengua y las lágrimas acudieron a los ojos, y él acudió a disimularlas lo más que le fue posible. Pero, con todo esto, no se pudieron encubrir a los ojos de la reina, pues dijo:

-No os afrentéis, Ricaredo, de llorar, ni os tengáis en menos por haber dado en este trance tan tiernas muestras de vuestro corazón: que una cosa es pelear con los enemigos y otra despedirse de quien bien se quiere. Abrazad, Isabela, a Ricaredo y dadle vuestra bendición, que bien lo merece su sentimiento.

Isabela, que estaba suspensa y atónita de ver la humildad y dolor de Ricaredo, que como a su esposo le amaba, no entendió lo que la reina le mandaba, antes comenzó a derramar lágrimas, tan sin pensar lo que hacía, y tan sesga y tan sin movimiento alguno, que no parecía sino que lloraba una estatua de alabastro. Estos afectos de los dos amantes, tan tiernos y tan enamorados, hicieron verter lágrimas a muchos de los circunstantes; y, sin hablar más palabra Ricaredo, y sin le haber hablado alguna a Isabela, haciendo Clotaldo y los que con él venían reverencia a la reina, se salieron de la sala, llenos de compasión, de despecho y de lágrimas.

Quedó Isabela como huérfana que acaba de enterrar sus padres, y con temor que la nueva señora quisiese que mudase las costumbres en que la primera la había criado. En fin, se quedó, y de allí a dos días Ricaredo se hizo a la vela, combatido, entre otros muchos, de dos pensamientos que le tenían fuera de sí: era el uno considerar que le convenía hacer hazañas que le hiciesen merecedor de Isabela; y el otro, que no podía hacer ninguna, si había de responder a su católico intento, que le impedía no desenvainar la espada contra católicos; y si no la desenvainaba, había de ser notado de cristiano o de cobarde, y todo esto redundaba en perjuicio de su vida y en obstáculo de su pretensión.

Pero, en fin, determinó de posponer al gusto de enamorado el que tenía de ser católico, y en su corazón pedía al cielo le deparase ocasiones donde, con ser

valiente, cumpliese con ser cristiano, dejando a su reina satisfecha y a Isabela merecida.

Seis días navegaron los dos navíos con próspero viento, siguiendo la derrota de las islas Terceras, paraje donde nunca faltan o naves portuguesas de las Indias orientales o algunas derrotadas de las occidentales. Y, al cabo de los seis días, les dio de costado un reciísimo viento (que en el mar océano tiene otro nombre que en el Mediterráneo, donde se llama mediodía), el cual viento fue tan durable y tan recio que, sin dejarles tomar las islas, les fue forzoso correr a España; y, junto a su costa, a la boca del estrecho de Gibraltar, descubrieron tres navíos: uno poderoso y grande, y los dos pequeños. Arribó la nave de Ricaredo a su capitán, para saber de su general si quería embestir a los tres navíos que se descubrían; y, antes que a ella llegase, vio poner sobre la gavia mayor un estandarte negro, y, llegándose más cerca, oyó que tocaban en la nave clarines y trompetas roncadas: señales claras o que el general era muerto o alguna otra principal persona de la nave. Con este sobresalto llegaron a poderse hablar, que no lo habían hecho después que salieron del puerto. Dieron voces de la nave capitana, diciendo que el capitán Ricaredo pasase a ella, porque el general la noche antes había muerto de una apoplejía. Todos se entristecieron, si no fue Ricaredo, que le alegró, no por el daño de su general, sino por ver que quedaba él libre para mandar en los dos navíos, que así fue la orden de la reina: que, faltando el general, lo fuese Ricaredo; el cual con presteza se pasó a la capitana, donde halló que unos lloraban por el general muerto y otros se alegraban con el vivo.

Finalmente, los unos y los otros le dieron luego la obediencia y le aclamaron por su general con breves ceremonias, no dando lugar a otra cosa dos de los tres navíos que habían descubierto, los cuales, desviándose del grande, a las dos naves se venían.

Luego conocieron ser galeras, y turquescas, por las medias lunas que en las banderas traían, de que recibió gran gusto Ricaredo, pareciéndole que aquella presa, si el cielo se la concediese, sería de consideración, sin haber ofendido a ningún católico. Las dos galeras turquescas llegaron a reconocer los navíos ingleses, los cuales no traían insignias de Inglaterra, sino de España, por desmentir a quien llegase a reconocerlos, y no los tuviese por navíos de cosarios. Creyeron los turcos ser naves derrotadas de las Indias y que con facilidad las rendirían. Fuéronse entrando poco a poco, y de industria los dejó llegar Ricaredo hasta tenerlos a gusto de su artillería, la cual mandó disparar a tan buen tiempo, que con cinco balas dio en la mitad de una de las galeras, con tanta furia, que la abrió por medio toda. Dio luego a la banda, y comenzó a irse a pique sin poderse remediar. La otra galera, viendo tan mal suceso, con mucha priesa le dio cabo, y

le llevó a poner debajo del costado del gran navío; pero Ricaredo, que tenía los suyos prestos y ligeros, y que salían y entraban como si tuvieran remos, mandando cargar de nuevo toda la artillería, los fue siguiendo hasta la nave, lloviendo sobre ellos infinidad de balas. Los de la galera abierta, así como llegaron a la nave, la desampararon, y con priesa y celeridad procuraban acogerse a la nave. Lo cual visto por Ricaredo y que la galera sana se ocupaba con la rendida, cargó sobre ella con sus dos navíos, y, sin dejarla rodear ni valerse de los remos, la puso en estrecho: que los turcos se aprovecharon ansimismo del refugio de acogerse a la nave, no para defenderse en ella, sino por escapar las vidas por entonces. Los cristianos de quien venían armadas las galeras, arrancando las branzas y rompiendo las cadenas, mezclados con los turcos, también se acogieron a la nave; y, como iban subiendo por su costado, con la arcabucería de los navíos los iban tirando como a blanco; a los turcos no más, que a los cristianos mandó Ricaredo que nadie los tirase. Desta manera, casi todos los más turcos fueron muertos, y los que en la nave entraron, por los cristianos que con ellos se mezclaron, aprovechándose de sus mismas armas, fueron hechos pedazos: que la fuerza de los valientes, cuando caen, se pasa a la flaqueza de los que se levantan. Y así, con el calor que les daba a los cristianos pensar que los navíos ingleses eran españoles, hicieron por su libertad maravillas. Finalmente, habiendo muerto casi todos los turcos, algunos españoles se pusieron a borde del navío, y a grandes voces llamaron a los que pensaban ser españoles entrasen a gozar el premio del vencimiento.

Preguntóles Ricaredo en español que qué navío era aquél. Respondiéronle que era una nave que venía de la India de Portugal, cargada de especería, y con tantas perlas y diamantes, que valía más de un millón de oro, y que con tormenta había arribado a aquella parte, toda destruida y sin artillería, por haberla echado a la mar la gente, enferma y casi muerta de sed y de hambre; y que aquellas dos galeras, que eran del cosario Arnaúte Mamí, el día antes la habían rendido, sin haberse puesto en defensa; y que, a lo que habían oído decir, por no poder pasar tanta riqueza a sus dos bajeles, la llevaban a jorro para meterla en el río de Larache, que estaba allí cerca.

Ricaredo les respondió que si ellos pensaban que aquellos dos navíos eran españoles, se engañaban; que no eran sino de la señora reina de Inglaterra, cuya nueva dio que pensar y que temer a los que la oyeron, pensando, como era razón que pensasen, que de un lazo habían caído en otro. Pero Ricaredo les dijo que no temiesen algún daño, y que estuviesen ciertos de su libertad, con tal que no se pusiesen en defensa.

-Ni es posible ponernos en ella -respondieron-, porque, como se ha dicho, este navío no tiene artillería ni nosotros armas; así que, nos es forzoso acudir a la

gentileza y liberalidad de vuestro general; pues será justo que quien nos ha librado del insufrible cautiverio de los turcos lleve adelante tan gran merced y beneficio, pues le podrá hacer famoso en todas las partes, que serán infinitas, donde llegare la nueva desta memorable vitoria y de su liberalidad, más de nosotros esperada que temida.

No le parecieron mal a Ricaredo las razones del español; y, llamando a consejo los de su navío, les preguntó cómo haría para enviar todos los cristianos a España sin ponerse a peligro de algún siniestro suceso, si el ser tantos les daba ánimo para levantarse. Pareceres hubo que los hiciese pasar uno a uno a su navío, y, así como fuesen entrando debajo de cubierta, matarle, y desta manera matarlos a todos, y llevar la gran nave a Londres, sin temor ni cuidado alguno.

A esto respondió Ricaredo:

-Pues que Dios nos ha hecho tan gran merced en darnos tanta riqueza, no quiero corresponderle con ánimo cruel y desagradecido, ni es bien que lo que puedo remediar con la industria lo remedie con la espada. Y así, soy de parecer que ningún cristiano católico muera: no porque los quiero bien, sino porque me quiero a mí muy bien, y querría que esta hazaña de hoy ni a mí ni a vosotros, que en ella me habéis sido compañeros, nos diese, mezclado con el nombre de valientes, el renombre de crueles: porque nunca dijo bien la crueldad con la valentía. Lo que se ha de hacer es que toda la artillería de un navío destes se ha de pasar a la gran nave portuguesa, sin dejar en el navío otras armas ni otra cosa más del bastimento, y no lejando la nave de nuestra gente, la llevaremos a Inglaterra, y los españoles se irán a España.

Nadie osó contradecir lo que Ricaredo había propuesto, y algunos le tuvieron por valiente y magnánimo y de buen entendimiento; otros le juzgaron en sus corazones por más católico que debía. Resuelto, pues, en esto Ricaredo, pasó con cincuenta arcabuceros a la nave portuguesa, todos alerta y con las cuerdas encendidas. Halló en la nave casi trecientas personas, de las que habían escapado de las galeras. Pidió luego el registro de la nave, y respondióle aquel mismo que desde el borde le habló la vez primera, que el registro le había tomado el cosario de los bajeles, que con ellos se había ahogado. Al instante puso el torno en orden, y, acostando su segundo bajel a la gran nave, con maravillosa presteza y con fuerza de fortísimos cabestrantes, pasaron la artillería del pequeño bajel a la mayor nave. Luego, haciendo una breve plática a los cristianos, les mandó pasar al bajel desembarazado, donde hallaron bastimento en abundancia para más de un mes y para más gente; y, así como se iban embarcando, dio a cada uno cuatro escudos de oro españoles, que hizo traer de su navío, para remediar en parte su necesidad cuando llegasen a tierra: que estaba tan cerca, que las altas montañas de Abala y Calpe desde allí se parecían. Todos le dieron infinitas gracias por la



merced que les hacía, y el último que se iba a embarcar fue aquel que por los demás había hablado, el cual le dijo:

-Por más ventura tuviera, valeroso caballero, que me llevaras contigo a Inglaterra, que no que me enviaras a España; porque, aunque es mi patria y no habrá sino seis días que della partí, no he de hallar en ella otra cosa que no sea de ocasiones de tristezas y soledades mías.

«Sabrás, señor, que en la pérdida de Cádiz, que sucedió habrá quince años, perdí una hija que los ingleses debieron de llevar a Inglaterra, y con ella perdí el descanso de mi vejez y la luz de mis ojos; que, después que no la vieron, nunca han visto cosa que de su gusto sea. El grave descontento en que me dejó su pérdida y la de la hacienda, que también me faltó, me pusieron de manera que ni más quise ni más pude ejercitar la mercancia, cuyo trato me había puesto en opinión de ser el más rico mercader de toda la ciudad. Y así era la verdad, pues fuera del crédito, que pasaba de muchos centenares de millares de escudos, valía mi hacienda dentro de las puertas de mi casa más de cincuenta mil ducados; todo lo perdí, y no hubiera perdido nada, como no hubiera perdido a mi hija. Tras esta general desgracia y tan particular mía, acudió la necesidad a fatigarme, hasta tanto que, no pudiéndola resistir, mi mujer y yo, que es aquella triste que allí está sentada, determinamos irnos a las Indias, común refugio de los pobres generosos. Y, habiéndonos embarcado en un navío de aviso seis días ha, a la salida de Cádiz dieron con el navío estos dos bajeles de cosarios, y nos cautivaron, donde se renovó nuestra desgracia y se confirmó nuestra desventura. Y fuera mayor si los cosarios no hubieran tomado aquella nave portuguesa, que los entretuvo hasta haber sucedido lo que él había visto.»

Preguntóles Ricaredo cómo se llamaba su hija. Respondióle que Isabel. Con esto acabó de confirmarse Ricaredo en lo que ya había sospechado, que era que el que se lo contaba era el padre de su querida Isabela. Y, sin darle algunas nuevas della, le dijo que de muy buena gana llevaría a él y a su mujer a Londres, donde podría ser hallasen nuevas de la que deseaban. Hízolos pasar luego a su capitana, poniendo marineros y guardas bastantes en la nao portuguesa.

Aquella noche alzaron velas, y se dieron prisa a apartarse de las costas de España, porque el navío de los cautivos libres, entre los cuales también iban hasta veinte turcos, a quien también Ricaredo dio libertad, por mostrar que más por su buena condición y generoso ánimo se mostraba liberal, que por forzarle amor que a los católicos tuviese. Rogó a los españoles que en la primera ocasión que se ofreciese diesen entera libertad a los turcos, que ansimismo se le mostraron agradecidos.

El viento, que daba señales de ser próspero y largo, comenzó a calmar un tanto, cuya calma levantó gran tormenta de temor en los ingleses, que culpaban a

Ricaredo y a su liberalidad, diciéndole que los libres podían dar aviso en España de aquel suceso, y que si acaso había galeones de armada en el puerto, podían salir en su busca y ponerlos en aprieto y en término de perderse. Bien conocía Ricaredo que tenían razón, pero, venciéndolos a todos con buenas razones, los sosegó; pero más los quietó el viento, que volvió a refrescar de modo que, dándole todas las velas, sin tener necesidad de acanallas ni aun de templallas, dentro de nueve días se hallaron a la vista de Londres; y, cuando en él, victorioso, volvieron, habría treinta que dél faltaban.

No quiso Ricaredo entrar en el puerto con muestras de alegría, por la muerte de su general; y así, mezcló las señales alegres con las tristes: unas veces sonaban clarines regocijados; otras, trompetas roncadas; unas tocaban los atambores, alegres y sobresaltadas armas, a quien con señas tristes y lamentables respondían los pífaros; de una gavia colgaba, puesta al revés, una bandera de medias lunas sembrada; en otra se veía un luengo estandarte de tafetán negro, cuyas puntas besaban el agua. Finalmente, con estos tan contrarios extremos entró en el río de Londres con su navío, porque la nave no tuvo fondo en él que la sufriese; y así, se quedó en la mar a lo largo.

Estas tan contrarias muestras y señales tenían suspenso el infinito pueblo que desde la ribera les miraba. Bien conocieron por algunas insignias que aquel navío menor era la capitana del barón de Lansac, mas no podían alcanzar cómo el otro navío se hubiese cambiado con aquella poderosa nave que en la mar se quedaba; pero sacólos desta duda haber saltado en el esquife, armado de todas armas, ricas y resplandecientes, el valeroso Ricaredo, que a pie, sin esperar otro acompañamiento que aquel de un innumerable vulgo que le seguía, se fue a palacio, donde ya la reina, puesta a unos corredores, estaba esperando le trujesen la nueva de los navíos.

Estaba con la reina, con las otras damas, Isabela, vestida a la inglesa, y parecía tan bien como a la castellana. Antes que Ricaredo llegase, llegó otro que dio las nuevas a la reina de cómo Ricaredo venía. Alborozas Isabela oyendo el nombre de Ricaredo, y en aquel instante temió y esperó malos y buenos sucesos de su venida.

Era Ricaredo alto de cuerpo, gentilhomme y bien proporcionado. Y, como venía armado de peto, espaldar, gola y brazaletes y escarcelas, con unas armas milanesas de once vistas, grabadas y doradas, parecía en extremo bien a cuantos le miraban; no le cubría la cabeza morrión alguno, sino un sombrero de gran falda, de color leonado con mucha diversidad de plumas terciadas a la valona; la espada, ancha; los tiros, ricos; las calzas, a la esguízara. Con este adorno y con el paso brioso que llevaba, algunos hubo que le compararon a Marte, dios de la batallas, y otros, llevados de la hermosura de su rostro, dicen que le compararon

a Venus, que, para hacer alguna burla a Marte, de aquel modo se había disfrazado. En fin, él llegó ante la reina; puesto de rodillas, le dijo:

-Alta Majestad, en fuerza de vuestra ventura y en consecución de mi deseo, después de haber muerto de una apoplejía el general de Lansac, quedando yo en su lugar, merced a la liberalidad vuestra, me deparó la suerte dos galeras turquescas que llevaban remolcando aquella gran nave que allí se parece. Acometila, pelearon vuestros soldados como siempre, echáronse a fondo los bajeles de los cosarios; en el uno de los nuestros, en vuestro real nombre, di libertad a los cristianos que del poder de los turcos escaparon; sólo truje conmigo a un hombre y a una mujer españoles, que por su gusto quisieron venir a ver la grandeza vuestra. Aquella nave es de las que vienen de la India de Portugal, la cual por tormenta vino a dar en poder de los turcos, que con poco trabajo, o, por mejor decir, sin ninguno, la rindieron; y, según dijeron algunos portugueses de los que en ella venían, pasa de un millón de oro el valor de la especería y otras mercancías de perlas y diamantes que en ella vienen. A ninguna cosa se ha tocado, ni los turcos habían llegado a ella, porque todo lo dedicó el cielo, y yo lo mandé guardar, para Vuestra Majestad, que con una joya sola que se me dé, quedaré en deuda de otras diez naves, la cual joya ya Vuestra Majestad me la tiene prometida, que es a mi buena Isabela. Con ella quedaré rico y premiado, no sólo deste servicio, cual él se sea, que a Vuestra Majestad he hecho, sino de otros muchos que pienso hacer por pagar alguna parte del todo casi infinito que en esta joya Vuestra Majestad me ofrece.

-Levantaos, Ricaredo -respondió la reina-, y creedme que si por precio os hubiera de dar a Isabela, según yo la estimo, no la peteretes pagar ni con lo que trae esa nave ni con lo que queda en las Indias. Deslayo porque os la prometí, y porque ella es digna de vos y vos lo sois della. Vuestro valor solo la merece. Si vos habéis guardado las joyas de la nave para mí, yo os he guardado la joya vuestra para vos; y, aunque os parezca que no hago mucho en volveros lo que es vuestro, yo sé que os hago mucha merced en ello; que las prendas que se compran a deseos y tienen su estimación en el alma del comprador, aquello valen que vale una alma: que no hay precio en la tierra con que aprecialla. Isabela es vuestra, veisla allí; cuando quisiéredes podéis tomar su entera posesión, y creo será con su gusto, porque es discreta y sabrá ponderar la amistad que le hacéis, que no la quiero llamar merced, sino amistad, porque me quiero alzar con el nombre de que yo sola puedo hacerle mercedes. Idos a descansar y venidme a ver mañana, que quiero más particularmente oír vuestras hazañas; y traedme esos dos que decís que de su voluntad han querido venir a verme, que se lo quiero agradecer.

Besóle las manos Ricaredo por las muchas mercedes que le hacía. Entróse la

reina en una sala, y las damas rodearon a Ricaredo; y una dellas, que había tomado grande amistad con Isabela, llamada la señora Tansi, tenida por la más discreta, desenvuelta y graciosa de todas, dijo a Ricaredo:

-¿Qué es esto, señor Ricaredo, qué armas son éstas? ¿Pensábadles por ventura que veníades a pelear con vuestros enemigos? Pues en verdad que aquí todas somos vuestras amigas, si no es la señora Isabela, que, como española, está obligada a no teneros buena voluntad.

-Acuérdese ella, señora Tansi, de tenerme alguna, que como yo esté en su memoria -dijo Ricaredo-, yo sé que la voluntad será buena, pues no puede caber en su mucho valor y entendimiento y rara hermosura la fealdad de ser desagradecida

A lo cual respondió Isabela:

-Señor Ricaredo, pues he de ser vuestra, a vos está tomar de mí toda la satisfacción que quisiéredes para recompensaros de las alabanzas que me habéis dado y de las mercedes que pensáis hacerme.

Estas y otras honestas razones pasó Ricaredo con Isabela y con las damas, entre las cuales había una doncella de pequeña edad, la cual no hizo sino mirar a Ricaredo mientras allí estuvo. Alzábale las escarcelas, por ver qué traía debajo dellas, tentábale la espada y con simplicidad de niña quería que las armas le sirviesen de espejo, llegándose a mirar de muy cerca en ellas; y, cuando se hubo ido, volviéndose a las damas, dijo:

-Ahora, señoras, yo imagino que debe de ser cosa hermosísima la guerra, pues aun entre mujeres parecen bien los hombres armados.

-¡Y cómo si parecen! -respondió la señora Tansi-; si no, mirad, a Ricaredo, que no parece sino que el sol se ha bajado a la tierra y en aquel hábito va caminando por la calle.

Riieron todas del dicho de la doncella y de la disparatada semejanza de Tansi, y no faltaron murmuradores que tuvieron por impertinencia el haber venido armado Ricaredo a palacio, puesto que halló disculpa en otros, que dijeron que, como soldado, lo pudo hacer para mostrar su gallarda bizarría.

Fue Ricaredo de sus padres, amigos, parientes y conocidos con muestras de entrañable amor recibido. Aquella noche se hicieron generales alegrías en Londres por su buen suceso. Ya los padres de Isabela estaban en casa de Clotaldo, a quien Ricaredo había dicho quién eran, pero que no les diesen nueva ninguna de Isabela hasta que él mismo se la diese. Este aviso tuvo la señora Catalina, su madre, y todos los criados y criadas de su casa. Aquella misma noche, con muchos bajeles, lanchas y barcos, y con no menos ojos que lo miraban, se comenzó a descargar la gran nave, que en ocho días no acabó de dar la mucha pimienta y otras riquísimas mercaderías que en su vientre encerradas

tenía.

El día que siguió a esta noche fue Ricaredo a palacio, llevando consigo al padre y madre de Isabela, vestidos de nuevo a la inglesa, diciéndoles que la reina quería verlos. Llegaron todos donde la reina estaba en medio de sus damas, esperando a Ricaredo, a quien quiso lisonjear y favorecer con tener junto a sí a Isabela, vestida con aquel mismo vestido que llevó la vez primera, mostrándose no menos hermosa ahora que entonces. Los padres de Isabela quedaron admirados y suspensos de ver tanta grandeza y bizarría junta. Pusieron los ojos en Isabela, y no la conocieron, aunque el corazón, presagio del bien que tan cerca tenían, les comenzó a saltar en el pecho, no con sobresalto que les entristeciese, sino con un no sé qué de gusto, que ellos no acertaban a entendelle. No consintió la reina que Ricaredo estuviese de rodillas ante ella; antes, le hizo levantar y sentar en una silla rasa, que para sólo esto allí puesta tenían: inusitada merced, para la altiva condición de la reina; y alguno dijo a otro:

-Ricaredo no se sienta hoy sobre la silla que le han dado, sino sobre la pimienta que él trujo.

Otro acudió y dijo:

-Ahora se verifica lo que comúnmente se dice, que dádivas quebrantan peñas, pues las que ha traído Ricaredo han ablandado el duro corazón de nuestra reina.

Otro acudió y dijo:

-Ahora que está tan bien ensillado, más de dos se atreverán a correrle.

En efeto, de aquella nueva honra que la reina hizo a Ricaredo tomó ocasión la envidia para nacer en muchos pechos de aquéllos que mirándole estaban; porque no hay merced que el príncipe haga a su privado que no sea una lanza que atraviesa el corazón del envidioso.

Quiso la reina saber de Ricaredo menudamente cómo había pasado la batalla con los bajeles de los cosarios. Él la contó de nuevo, atribuyendo la vitoria a Dios y a los brazos valerosos de sus soldados, encareciéndolos a todos juntos y particularizando algunos hechos de algunos que más que los otros se habían señalado, con que obligó a la reina a hacer a todos merced, y en particular a los particulares; y, cuando llegó a decir la libertad que en nombre de su Majestad había dado a los turcos y cristianos, dijo:

-Aquella mujer y aquel hombre que allí están, señalando a los padres de Isabela, son los que dije ayer a Vuestra Majestad que, con deseo de ver vuestra grandeza, encarecidamente me pidieron los trujese conmigo. Ellos son de Cádiz, y de lo que ellos me han contado, y de lo que en ellos he visto y notado, sé que son gente principal y de valor.

Mandóles la reina que se llegasen cerca. Alzó los ojos Isabela a mirar los que decían ser españoles, y más de Cádiz, con deseo de saber si por ventura conocían

a sus padres. Así como Isabela alzó los ojos, los puso en ella su madre y detuvo el paso para mirarla más atentamente, y en la memoria de Isabela se comenzaron a despertar unas confusas noticias que le querían dar a entender que en otro tiempo ella había visto aquella mujer que delante tenía. Su padre estaba en la misma confusión, sin osar determinarse a dar crédito a la verdad que sus ojos le mostraban. Ricaredo estaba atentísimo a ver los afectos y movimientos que hacían las tres dudosas y perplejas almas, que tan confusas estaban entre el sí y el no de conocerse. Conoció la reina la suspensión de entrambos, y aun el desasosiego de Isabela, porque la vio trasudar y levantar la mano muchas veces a componerse el cabello.

En esto, deseaba Isabela que hablase la que pensaba ser su madre: quizá los oídos la sacarían de la duda en que sus ojos la habían puesto. La reina dijo a Isabela que en lengua española dijese a aquella mujer y a aquel hombre le dijese qué causa les había movido a no querer gozar de la libertad que Ricaredo les había dado, siendo la libertad la cosa más amada, no sólo de la gente de razón, mas aun de los animales que carecen della.

Todo esto preguntó Isabela a su madre, la cual, sin responderle palabra, desatentadamente y medio tropezando, se llegó a Isabela y, sin mirar a respecto, temores ni miramientos cortesanos, alzó la mano a la oreja derecha de Isabela, y descubrió un lunar negro que allí tenía, la cual señal acabó de certificar su sospecha. Y, viendo claramente ser Isabela su hija, abrazándose con ella, dio una gran voz, diciendo:

-¡Oh, hija de mi corazón! ¡Oh, prenda cara del alma mía!

Y, sin poder pasar adelante, se cayó desmayada en los brazos de Isabela.

Su padre, no menos tierno que prudente, dio muestras de su sentimiento no con otras palabras que con derramar lágrimas, que sesgamente su venerable rostro y barbas le bañaron. Juntó Isabela su rostro con el de su madre, y, volviendo los ojos a su padre, de tal manera le miró, que le dio a entender el gusto y el descontento que de verlos allí su alma tenía. La reina, admirada de tal suceso, dijo a Ricaredo:

-Yo pienso, Ricaredo, que en vuestra discreción se han ordenado estas vistas, y no se os diga que han sido acertadas, pues sabemos que así suele matar una súbita alegría como mata una tristeza.

Y, diciendo esto, se volvió a Isabela y la apartó de su madre, la cual, habiéndole echado agua en el rostro, volvió en sí; y, estando un poco más en su acuerdo, puesta de rodillas delante de la reina, le dijo:

-Perdone Vuestra Majestad mi atrevimiento, que no es mucho perder los sentidos con la alegría del hallazgo desta amada prenda.

Respondióle la reina que tenía razón, sirviéndole de intérprete, para que lo

entendiese, Isabela; la cual, de la manera que se ha contado, conoció a sus padres, y sus padres a ella, a los cuales mandó la reina quedar en palacio, para que de espacio pudiesen ver y hablar a su hija y regocijarse con ella; de lo cual Ricaredo se holgó mucho, y de nuevo pidió a la reina le cumpliese la palabra que le había dado de dársela, si es que acaso la merecía; y, de no merecerla, le suplicaba desde luego le mandase ocupar en cosas que le hiciesen digno de alcanzar lo que deseaba. Bien entendió la reina que estaba Ricaredo satisfecho de sí mismo y de su mucho valor, que no había necesidad de nuevas pruebas para calificarle; y así, le dijo que de allí a cuatro días le entregaría a Isabela, haciendo a los dos la honra que a ella fuese posible. Con esto se despidió Ricaredo, contentísimo con la esperanza propincua que llevaba de tener en su poder a Isabela sin sobresalto de perderla, que es el último deseo de los amantes.

Corrió el tiempo, y no con la ligereza que él quisiera: que los que viven con esperanzas de promesas venideras siempre imaginan que no vuela el tiempo, sino que anda sobre los pies de la pereza misma. Pero en fin llegó el día, no donde pensó Ricaredo poner fin a sus deseos, sino de hallar en Isabela gracias nuevas que le moviesen a quererla más, si más pudiese. Mas en aquel breve tiempo, donde él pensaba que la nave de su buena fortuna corría con próspero viento hacia el deseado puerto, la contraria suerte levantó en su mar tal tormenta, que mil veces temió anegarle.

Es, pues, el caso que la camarera mayor de la reina, a cuyo cargo estaba Isabela, tenía un hijo de edad de veinte y dos años, llamado el conde Arnesto. Hacíanle la grandeza de su estado, la alteza de su sangre, el mucho favor que su madre con la reina tenía...; hacíanle, digo, estas cosas más de lo justo arrogante, altivo y confiado. Este Arnesto, pues, se enamoró de Isabela tan encendidamente, que en la luz de los ojos de Isabela tenía abrasada el alma; y aunque, en el tiempo que Ricaredo había estado ausente, con algunas señales le había descubierto su deseo, nunca de Isabela fue admitido. Y, puesto que la repugnancia y los desdenes en los principios de los amores suelen hacer desistir de la empresa a los enamorados, en Arnesto obraron lo contrario los muchos y conocidos desdenes que le dio Isabela, porque con su celo ardía y con su honestidad se abrasaba. Y como vio que Ricaredo, según el parecer de la reina, tenía merecida a Isabela, y que en tan poco tiempo se la había de entregar por mujer, quiso desesperarse; pero, antes que llegase a tan infame y tan cobarde remedio, habló a su madre, diciéndole pidiese a la reina le diese a Isabela por esposa; donde no, que pensase que la muerte estaba llamando a las puertas de su vida. Quedó la camarera admirada de las razones de su hijo; y, como conocía la aspereza de su arrojada condición y la tenacidad con que se le pegaban los deseos en el alma, temió que sus amores habían de parar en algún infelice

suceso. Con todo eso, como madre, a quien es natural desear y procurar el bien de sus hijos, prometió al suyo de hablar a la reina: no con esperanza de alcanzar della el imposible de romper su palabra, sino por no dejar de intentar, como en salir desahuciada, los últimos remedios.

Y, estando aquella mañana Isabela vestida, por orden de la reina, tan ricamente que no se atreve la pluma a contarlo, y habiéndole echado la misma reina al cuello una sarta de perlas de las mejores que traía la nave, que las apreciaron en veinte mil ducados, y puéstole un anillo de un diamante, que se apreció en seis mil escudos, y estando alborozadas las damas por la fiesta que esperaban del cercano desposorio, entró la camarera mayor a la reina, y de rodillas le suplicó suspendiese el desposorio de Isabela por otros dos días; que, con esta merced sola que su Majestad le hiciese, se tendría por satisfecha y pagada de todas las mercedes que por sus servicios merecía y esperaba.

Quiso saber la reina primero por qué le pedía con tanto ahínco aquella suspensión, que tan derechamente iba contra la palabra que tenía dada a Ricaredo; pero no se la quiso dar la camarera hasta que le hubo otorgado que haría lo que le pedía: tanto deseo tenía la reina de saber la causa de aquella demanda. Y así, después que la camarera alcanzó lo que por entonces deseaba, contó a la reina los amores de su hijo, y cómo temía que si no le daban por mujer a Isabela, o se había de desesperar, o hacer algún hecho escandaloso; y que si había pedido aquellos dos días, era por dar lugar a su Majestad pensase qué medio sería a propósito y conveniente para dar a su hijo remedio.

La reina respondió que si su real palabra no estuviera de por medio, que ella hallara salida a tan cerrado laberinto, pero que no la quebrantaría, ni defraudaría las esperanzas de Ricaredo, por todo el interés del mundo. Esta respuesta dio la camarera a su hijo, el cual, sin detenerse un punto, ardiendo en amor y en celos, se armó de todas armas, y sobre un fuerte y hermoso caballo se presentó ante la casa de Clotaldo, y a grandes voces pidió que se asomase Ricaredo a la ventana, el cual a aquella sazón estaba vestido de galas de desposado y a punto para ir a palacio con el acompañamiento que tal acto requería; mas, habiendo oído las voces, y siéndole dicho quién las daba y del modo que venía, con algún sobresalto se asomó a una ventana; y como le vio Arnesto, dijo:

-Ricaredo, estáme atento a lo que decirte quiero: la reina mi señora te mandó fueses a servirla y a hacer hazañas que te hiciesen merecedor de la sin par Isabela. Tú fuiste, y volviste cargadas las naves de oro, con el cual piensas haber comprado y merecido a Isabela. Y, aunque la reina mi señora te la ha prometido, ha sido creyendo que no hay ninguno en su corte que mejor que tú la sirva, ni quien con mejor título merezca a Isabela, y en esto bien podrá ser se haya engañado; y así, llegándome a esta opinión, que yo tengo por verdad averiguada,



digo que ni tú has hecho cosas tales que te hagan merecer a Isabela, ni ninguna podrás hacer que a tanto bien te levanten; y, en razón de que no la mereces, si quisieres contradecirme, te desafío a todo trance de muerte.

Calló el conde, y desta manera le respondió Ricaredo:

-En ninguna manera me toca salir a vuestro desafío, señor conde, porque yo confieso, no sólo que no merezco a Isabela, sino que no la merece ninguno de los que hoy viven en el mundo. Así que, confesando yo lo que vos decís, otra vez digo que no me toca vuestro desafío; pero yo le acepto por el atrevimiento que habéis tenido en desafiarme.

Con esto se quitó de la ventana, y pidió apriesa sus armas. Alborotáronse sus parientes y todos aquellos que para ir a palacio habían venido a acompañarle. De la mucha gente que había visto al conde Arnesto armado, y le había oído las voces del desafío, no faltó quien lo fue a contar a la reina, la cual mandó al capitán de su guarda que fuese a prender al conde. El capitán se dio tanta prisa, que llegó a tiempo que ya Ricaredo salía de su casa, armado con las armas con que se había desembarcado, puesto sobre un hermoso caballo.

Cuando el conde vio al capitán, luego imaginó a lo que venía, y determinó de no dejar prenderse, y, alzando la voz contra Ricaredo, dijo:

-Ya vees, Ricaredo, el impedimento que nos viene. Si tuvieres gana de castigarme, tú me buscarás; y, por la que yo tengo de castigarte, también te buscaré; y, pues dos que se buscan fácilmente se hallan, dejemos para entonces la ejecución de nuestros deseos.

-Soy contento -respondió Ricaredo.

En esto, llegó el capitán con toda su guarda, y dijo al conde que fuese preso en nombre de su Majestad. Respondió el conde que sí daba; pero no para que le llevasen a otra parte que a la presencia de la reina. Contentóse con esto el capitán, y, cogiéndole en medio de la guarda, le llevó a palacio ante la reina, la cual ya de su camarera estaba informada del amor grande que su hijo tenía a Isabela, y con lágrimas había suplicado a la reina perdonase al conde, que, como mozo y enamorado, a mayores yerros estaba sujeto.

Llegó Arnesto ante la reina, la cual, sin entrar con él en razones, le mandó quitar la espada y llevasen preso a una torre.

Todas estas cosas atormentaban el corazón de Isabela y de sus padres, que tan presto veían turbado el mar de su sosiego. Aconsejó la camarera a la reina que para sosegar el mal que podía suceder entre su parentela y la de Ricaredo, que se quitase la causa de por medio, que era Isabela, enviándola a España, y así cesarían los efetos que debían de temerse; añadiendo a estas razones decir que Isabela era católica, y tan cristiana que ninguna de sus persuasiones, que habían sido muchas, la habían podido torcer en nada de su católico intento. A lo cual

respondió la reina que por eso la estimaba en más, pues tan bien sabía guardar la ley que sus padres la habían enseñado; y que en lo de enviarla a España no tratase, porque su hermosa presencia y sus muchas gracias y virtudes le daban mucho gusto; y que, sin duda, si no aquel día, otro se la había de dar por esposa a Ricaredo, como se lo tenía prometido.

Con esta resolución de la reina, quedó la camarera tan desconsolada que no le replicó palabra; y, pareciéndole lo que ya le había parecido, que si no era quitando a Isabela de por medio, no había de haber medio alguno que la rigurosa condición de su hijo ablandase ni redujese a tener paz con Ricaredo, determinó de hacer una de las mayores crueldades que pudo caber jamás en pensamiento de mujer principal, y tanto como ella lo era. Y fue su determinación matar con tósigo a Isabela; y, como por la mayor parte sea la condición de las mujeres ser prestas y determinadas, aquella misma tarde atosigó a Isabela en una conserva que le dio, forzándola que la tomase por ser buena contra las ansias de corazón que sentía.

Poco espacio pasó después de haberla tomado, cuando a Isabela se le comenzó a hinchar la lengua y la garganta, y a ponérsele denegridos los labios, y a enronquecerse la voz, turbársele los ojos y apretársele el pecho: todas conocidas señales de haberle dado veneno. Acudieron las damas a la reina, contándole lo que pasaba y certificándole que la camarera había hecho aquel mal recaudo. No fue menester mucho para que la reina lo creyese, y así, fue a ver a Isabela, que ya casi estaba espirando. Mandó llamar la reina con priesa a sus médicos, y, en tanto que tardaban, la hizo dar cantidad de polvos de unicornio, con otros muchos antídotos que los grandes príncipes suelen tener prevenidos para semejantes necesidades. Vinieron los médicos, y esforzaron los remedios y pidieron a la reina hiciese decir a la camarera qué género de veneno le había dado, porque no se dudaba que otra persona alguna sino ella la hubiese avenenado. Ella lo descubrió, y con esta noticia los médicos aplicaron tantos remedios y tan eficaces, que con ellos y con el ayuda de Dios quedó Isabela con vida, o a lo menos con esperanza de tenerla.

Mandó la reina prender a su camarera y encerrarla en un aposento estrecho de palacio, con intención de castigarla como su delito merecía, puesto que ella se disculpaba diciendo que en matar a Isabela hacía sacrificio al cielo, quitando de la tierra a una católica, y con ella la ocasión de las pependencias de su hijo.

Estas tristes nuevas oídas de Ricaredo, le pusieron en términos de perder el juicio: tales eran las cosas que hacía y las lastimeras razones con que se quejaba. Finalmente, Isabela no perdió la vida, que el quedar con ella la naturaleza lo comutó en dejarla sin cejas, pestañas y sin cabello; el rostro hinchado, la tez perdida, los cueros levantados y los ojos lagrimosos. Finalmente, quedó tan fea

que, como hasta allí había parecido un milagro de hermosura, entonces parecía un monstruo de fealdad. Por mayor desgracia tenían los que la conocían haber quedado de aquella manera que si la hubiera muerto el veneno. Con todo esto, Ricaredo se la pidió a la reina, y le suplicó se la dejase llevar a su casa, porque el amor que la tenía pasaba del cuerpo al alma; y que si Isabela había perdido su belleza, no podía haber perdido sus infinitas virtudes.

-Así es -dijo la reina-, lleváosla, Ricaredo, y haced cuenta que lleváis una riquísima joya encerrada en una caja de madera tosca; Dios sabe si quisiera dárosela como me la entregastes, pero, pues no es posible, perdonadme: quizá el castigo que diere a la cometidora de tal delito satisfará en algo el deseo de la venganza.

Muchas cosas dijo Ricaredo a la reina desculpando a la camarera y suplicándola la perdonase, pues las disculpas que daba eran bastantes para perdonar mayores insultos. Finalmente, le entregaron a Isabela y a sus padres, y Ricaredo los llevó a su casa; digo a la de sus padres. A las ricas perlas y al diamante, añadió otras joyas la reina, y otros vestidos tales, que descubrieron el mucho amor que a Isabela tenía, la cual duró dos meses en su fealdad, sin dar indicio alguno de poder reducirse a su primera hermosura; pero, al cabo deste tiempo, comenzó a caérsele el cuero y a descubrirse su hermosa tez.

En este tiempo, los padres de Ricaredo, pareciéndoles no ser posible que Isabela en sí volviese, determinaron enviar por la doncella de Escocia, con quien primero que con Isabela tenían concertado de casar a Ricaredo; y esto sin que él lo supiese, no dudando que la hermosura presente de la nueva esposa hiciese olvidar a su hijo la ya pasada de Isabela, a la cual pensaban enviar a España con sus padres, dándoles tanto haber y riquezas, que recompensasen sus pasadas pérdidas. No pasó mes y medio cuando, sin sabiduría de Ricaredo, la nueva esposa se le entró por las puertas, acompañada como quien ella era, y tan hermosa que, después de la Isabela que solía ser, no había otra tan bella en toda Londres. Sobresaltóse Ricaredo con la improvisa vista de la doncella, y temió que el sobresalto de su venida había de acabar la vida a Isabela; y así, para templar este temor, se fue al lecho donde Isabela estaba, y hallóla en compañía de sus padres, delante de los cuales dijo:

-Isabela de mi alma: mis padres, con el grande amor que me tienen, aún no bien enterados del mucho que yo te tengo, han traído a casa una doncella escocesa, con quien ellos tenían concertado de casarme antes que yo conociese lo que vales. Y esto, a lo que creo, con intención que la mucha belleza desta doncella borre de mi alma la tuya, que en ella estampada tengo. Yo, Isabela, desde el punto que te quise fue con otro amor de aquel que tiene su fin y paradero en el cumplimiento del sensual apetito; que, puesto que tu corporal

hermosura me cautivó los sentidos, tus infinitas virtudes me aprisionaron el alma, de manera que, si hermosa te quise, fea te adoro; y, para confirmar esta verdad, dame esa mano.

Y, dándole ella la derecha y asiéndola él con la suya, prosiguió diciendo:

-Por la fe católica que mis cristianos padres me enseñaron, la cual si no está en la entereza que se requiere, por aquélla juro que guarda el Pontífice romano, que es la que yo en mi corazón confieso, creo y tengo, y por el verdadero Dios que nos está oyendo, te prometo, ¡oh Isabela, mitad de mi alma!, de ser tu esposo, y lo soy desde luego si tú quieres levantarme a la alteza de ser tuyo.

Quedó suspensa Isabela con las razones de Ricaredo, y sus padres atónitos y pasmados. Ella no supo qué decir, ni hacer otra cosa que besar muchas veces la mano de Ricaredo y decirle, con voz mezclada con lágrimas, que ella le aceptaba por suyo y se entregaba por su esclava. Besóla Ricaredo en el rostro feo, no habiendo tenido jamás atrevimiento de llegarse a él cuando hermoso.

Los padres de Isabela solenizaron con tiernas y muchas lágrimas las fiestas del desposorio. Ricaredo les dijo que él dilataría el casamiento de la escocesa, que ya estaba en casa, del modo que después verían; y, cuando su padre los quisiese enviar a España a todos tres, no lo rehusasen, sino que se fuesen y le aguardasen en Cádiz o en Sevilla dos años, dentro de los cuales les daba su palabra de ser con ellos, si el cielo tanto tiempo le concedía de vida; y que si deste término pasase, tuviese por cosa certísima que algún grande impedimento, o la muerte, que era lo más cierto, se había opuesto a su camino.

Isabela le respondió que no solos dos años le aguardaría, sino todos aquéllos de su vida, hasta estar enterada que él no la tenía, porque en el punto que esto supiese, sería el mismo de su muerte. Con estas tiernas palabras, se renovaron las lágrimas en todos, y Ricaredo salió a decir a sus padres cómo en ninguna manera se casaría ni daría la mano a su esposa la escocesa, sin haber primero ido a Roma a asegurar su conciencia. Tales razones supo decir a ellos y a los parientes que habían venido con Clisterna, que así se llamaba la escocesa, que, como todos eran católicos, fácilmente las creyeron, y Clisterna se contentó de quedar en casa de su suegro hasta que Ricaredo volviese, el cual pidió de término un año.

Esto así puesto y concertado, Clotaldo dijo a Ricaredo cómo determinaba enviar a España a Isabela y a sus padres, si la reina le daba licencia: quizá los aires de la patria apresurarían y facilitarían la salud que ya comenzaba a tener. Ricaredo, por no dar indicio de sus designios, respondió tibiamente a su padre que hiciese lo que mejor le pareciese; sólo le suplicó que no quitase a Isabela ninguna cosa de las riquezas que la reina le había dado. Prometióselo Clotaldo, y aquel mismo día fue a pedir licencia a la reina, así para casar a su hijo con Clisterna, como para enviar a Isabela y a sus padres a España. De todo se

contentó la reina, y tuvo por acertada la determinación de Clotaldo. Y aquel mismo día, sin acuerdo de letrados y sin poner a su camarera en tela de juicio, la condenó en que no sirviese más su oficio y en diez mil escudos de oro para Isabela; y al conde Arnesto, por el desafío, le desterró por seis años de Inglaterra. No pasaron cuatro días, cuando ya Arnesto se puso a punto de salir a cumplir su destierro y los dineros estuvieron juntos. La reina llamó a un mercader rico, que habitaba en Londres y era francés, el cual tenía correspondencia en Francia, Italia y España, al cual entregó los diez mil escudos, y le pidió cédulas para que se los entregasen al padre de Isabela en Sevilla o en otra playa de España. El mercader, descontados sus intereses y ganancias, dijo a la reina que las daría ciertas y seguras para Sevilla, sobre otro mercader francés, su correspondiente, en esta forma: que él escribiría a París para que allí se hiciesen las cédulas por otro correspondiente suyo, a causa que rezasen las fechas de Francia y no de Inglaterra, por el contrabando de la comunicación de los dos reinos, y que bastaba llevar una letra de aviso suya sin fecha, con sus contraseñas, para que luego diese el dinero el mercader de Sevilla, que ya estaría avisado del de París.

En resolución, la reina tomó tales seguridades del mercader, que no dudó de no ser cierta la partida; y, no contenta con esto, mandó llamar a un patrón de una nave flamenca, que estaba para partirse otro día a Francia, a sólo tomar en algún puerto della testimonio para poder entrar en España, a título de partir de Francia y no de Inglaterra; al cual pidió encarecidamente llevase en su nave a Isabela y a sus padres, y con toda seguridad y buen tratamiento los pusiese en un puerto de España, el primero a do llegase.

El patrón, que deseaba contentar a la reina, dijo que sí haría, y que los pondría en Lisboa, Cádiz o Sevilla. Tomados, pues, los recaudos del mercader, envió la reina a decir a Clotaldo no quitase a Isabela todo lo que ella la había dado, así de joyas como de vestidos. Otro día, vino Isabela y sus padres a despedirse de la reina, que los recibió con mucho amor. Dioles la reina la carta del mercader y otras muchas dádivas, así de dineros como de otras cosas de regalo para el viaje. Con tales razones se lo agradeció Isabela, que de nuevo dejó obligada a la reina para hacerle siempre mercedes. Despidióse de las damas, las cuales, como ya estaba fea, no quisieran que se partiera, viéndose libres de la envidia que a su hermosura tenían, y contentas de gozar de sus gracias y discreciones. Abrazó la reina a los tres, y, encomendándolos a la buena ventura y al patrón de la nave, y pidiendo a Isabela la avisase de su buena llegada a España, y siempre de su salud, por la vía del mercader francés, se despidió de Isabela y de sus padres, los cuales aquella misma tarde se embarcaron, no sin lágrimas de Clotaldo y de su mujer y de todos los de su casa, de quien era en todo extremo bien querida. No se

halló a esta despedida presente Ricaredo, que por no dar muestras de tiernos sentimientos, aquel día hizo con unos amigos suyos le llevasen a caza. Los regalos que la señora Catalina dio a Isabela para el viaje fueron muchos, los abrazos infinitos, las lágrimas en abundancia, las encomiendas de que la escribiese sin número, y los agradecimientos de Isabela y de sus padres correspondieron a todo; de suerte que, aunque llorando, los dejaron satisfechos.

Aquella noche se hizo el bajel a la vela; y, habiendo con próspero viento tocado en Francia y tomado en ella los recados necesarios para poder entrar en España, de allí a treinta días entró por la barra de Cádiz, donde se desembarcaron Isabela y sus padres; y, siendo conocidos de todos los de la ciudad, los recibieron con muestras de mucho contento. Recibieron mil parabienes del hallazgo de Isabela y de la libertad que habían alcanzado, así de los moros que los habían cautivado (habiendo sabido todo su suceso de los cautivos que dio libertad la liberalidad de Ricaredo), como de la que habían alcanzado de los ingleses.

Ya Isabela en este tiempo comenzaba a dar grandes esperanzas de volver a cobrar su primera hermosura. Poco más de un mes estuvieron en Cádiz, restaurando los trabajos de la navegación, y luego se fueron a Sevilla por ver si salía cierta la paga de los diez mil ducados que, librados sobre el mercader francés, traían. Dos días después de llegar a Sevilla le buscaron, y le hallaron y le dieron la carta del mercader francés de la ciudad de Londres. Él la reconoció, y dijo que hasta que de París le viniesen las letras y carta de aviso no podía dar el dinero; pero que por momentos aguardaba el aviso.

Los padres de Isabela alquilaron una casa principal, frontero de Santa Paula, por ocasión que estaba monja en aquel santo monasterio una sobrina suya, única y estremada en la voz, y así por tenerla cerca como por haber dicho Isabela a Ricaredo que, si viniese a buscarla, la hallaría en Sevilla y le diría su casa su prima la monja de Santa Paula, y que para conocella no había menester más de preguntar por la monja que tenía la mejor voz en el monasterio, porque estas señas no se le podían olvidar. Otros cuarenta días tardaron de venir los avisos de París; y, a dos que llegaron, el mercader francés entregó los diez mil ducados a Isabela, y ella a sus padres; y con ellos y con algunos más que hicieron vendiendo algunas de las muchas joyas de Isabela, volvió su padre a ejercitar su oficio de mercader, no sin admiración de los que sabían sus grandes pérdidas.

En fin, en pocos meses fue restaurando su perdido crédito, y la belleza de Isabela volvió a su ser primero, de tal manera que, en hablando de hermosas, todos daban el lauro a *la española inglesa*; que, tanto por este nombre como por su hermosura, era de toda la ciudad conocida. Por la orden del mercader francés de Sevilla, escribieron Isabela y sus padres a la reina de Inglaterra su llegada, con los agradecimientos y sumisiones que requerían las muchas mercedes della

recebidas. Asimismo, escribieron a Clotaldo y a su señora Catalina, llamándolos Isabela padres, y sus padres, señores. De la reina no tuvieron respuesta, pero de Clotaldo y de su mujer sí, donde les daban el parabién de la llegada a salvo, y los avisaban cómo su hijo Ricaredo, otro día después que ellos se hicieron a la vela, se había partido a Francia, y de allí a otras partes, donde le convenía a ir para seguridad de su conciencia, añadiendo a éstas otras razones y cosas de mucho amor y de muchos ofrecimientos. A la cual carta respondieron con otra no menos cortés y amorosa que agradecida.

Luego imaginó Isabela que el haber dejado Ricaredo a Inglaterra sería para venirla a buscar a España; y, alentada con esta esperanza, vivía la más contenta del mundo, y procuraba vivir de manera que, cuando Ricaredo llegase a Sevilla, antes le diese en los oídos la fama de sus virtudes que el conocimiento de su casa. Pocas o ninguna vez salía de su casa, si no para el monasterio; no ganaba otros jubileos que aquellos que en el monasterio se ganaban. Desde su casa y desde su oratorio andaba con el pensamiento los viernes de Cuaresma la santísima estación de la cruz, y los siete venideros del Espíritu Santo. Jamás visitó el río, ni pasó a Triana, ni vio el común regocijo en el campo de Tablada y puerta de Jerez el día, si le hace claro, de San Sebastián, celebrado de tanta gente, que apenas se puede reducir a número. Finalmente, no vio regocijo público ni otra fiesta en Sevilla: todo lo libraba en su recogimiento y en sus oraciones y buenos deseos esperando a Ricaredo. Este su grande retraimiento tenía abrasados y encendidos los deseos, no sólo de los pisaverdes del barrio, sino de todos aquellos que una vez la hubiesen visto: de aquí nacieron músicas de noche en su calle y carreras de día. Deste no dejar verse y desearlo muchos crecieron las alhajas de las terceras, que prometieron mostrarse primas y únicas en solicitar a Isabela; y no faltó quien se quiso aprovechar de lo que llaman hechizos, que no son sino embustes y disparates. Pero a todo esto estaba Isabela como roca en mitad del mar, que la tocan, pero no la mueven las olas ni los vientos.

Año y medio era ya pasado cuando la esperanza propincua de los dos años por Ricaredo prometidos comenzó con más ahínco que hasta allí a fatigar el corazón de Isabela. Y, cuando ya le parecía que su esposo llegaba y que le tenía ante los ojos, y le preguntaba qué impedimentos le habían detenido tanto; cuando ya llegaban a sus oídos las disculpas de su esposo, y cuando ya ella le perdonaba y le abrazaba, y como a mitad de su alma le recibía, llegó a sus manos una carta de la señora Catalina, fecha en Londres cincuenta días había; venía en lengua inglesa, pero, leyéndola en español, vio que así decía:

Hija de mi alma: bien conociste a Guillarte, el paje de Ricaredo. Éste se fue con él al viaje, que por otra te avisé, que Ricaredo a Francia y a otras partes

había hecho el segundo día de tu partida. Pues este mismo Guillarte, a cabo de diez y seis meses que no habíamos sabido de mi hijo, entró ayer por nuestra puerta con nuevas que el conde Arnesto había muerto a traición en Francia a Ricaredo. Considera, hija, cuál quedaríamos su padre y yo y su esposa con tales nuevas; tales, digo, que aun no nos dejaron poner en duda nuestra desventura. Lo que Clotaldo y yo te rogamos otra vez, hija de mi alma, es que encomiendes muy de veras a Dios la de Ricaredo, que bien merece este beneficio el que tanto te quiso como tú sabes. También pedirás a Nuestro Señor nos dé a nosotros paciencia y buena muerte, a quien nosotros también pediremos y suplicaremos te dé a ti y a tus padres largos años de vida.

Por la letra y por la firma, no le quedó que dudar a Isabela para no creer la muerte de su esposo. Conocía muy bien al paje Guillarte, y sabía que era verdadero y que de suyo no habría querido ni tenía para qué fingir aquella muerte; ni menos su madre, la señora Catalina, la habría fingido, por no importarle nada enviarle nuevas de tanta tristeza. Finalmente, ningún discurso que hizo, ninguna cosa que imaginó, le pudo quitar del pensamiento no ser verdadera la nueva de su desventura.

Acabada de leer la carta, sin derramar lágrimas ni dar señales de doloroso sentimiento, con sesgo rostro y, al parecer, con sosegado pecho, se levantó de un estrado donde estaba sentada y se entró en un oratorio; y, hincándose de rodillas ante la imagen de un devoto crucifijo, hizo voto de ser monja, pues lo podía ser teniéndose por viuda. Sus padres disimularon y encubrieron con discreción la pena que les había dado la triste nueva, por poder consolar a Isabela en la amarga que sentía; la cual, casi como satisfecha de su dolor, templándole con la santa y cristiana resolución que había tomado, ella consolaba a sus padres, a los cuales descubrió su intento, y ellos le aconsejaron que no le pusiese en ejecución hasta que pasasen los dos años que Ricaredo había puesto por término a su venida; que con esto se confirmaría la verdad de la muerte de Ricaredo, y ella con más seguridad podía mudar de estado. Ansí lo hizo Isabela, y los seis meses y medio que quedaban para cumplirse los dos años, los pasó en ejercicios de religiosa y en concertar la entrada del monasterio, habiendo elegido el de Santa Paula, donde estaba su prima.

Pasóse el término de los dos años y llegóse el día de tomar el hábito, cuya nueva se extendió por la ciudad; y de los que conocían de vista a Isabela, y de aquéllos que por sola su fama, se llenó el monasterio y la poca distancia que dél a la casa de Isabela había. Y, convidando su padre a sus amigos y aquéllos a otros, hicieron a Isabela uno de los más honrados acompañamientos que en semejantes actos se había visto en Sevilla. Hallóse en él el asistente, y el provisor de la Iglesia y vicario del arzobispo, con todas las señoras y señores de



título que había en la ciudad: tal era el deseo que en todos había de ver el sol de la hermosura de Isabela, que tantos meses se les había eclipsado. Y, como es costumbre de las doncellas que van a tomar el hábito ir lo posible galanas y bien compuestas, como quien en aquel punto echa el resto de la bizarría y se descarta della, quiso Isabela ponerse la más bizarra que le fue posible; y así, se vistió con aquel vestido mismo que llevó cuando fue a ver la reina de Inglaterra, que ya se ha dicho cuán rico y cuán vistoso era. Salieron a luz las perlas y el famoso diamante, con el collar y cintura, que asimismo era de mucho valor.

Con este adorno y con su gallardía, dando ocasión para que todos alabasen a Dios en ella, salió Isabela de su casa a pie, que el estar tan cerca del monasterio escusó los coches y carrozas. El concurso de la gente fue tanto, que les pesó de no haber entrado en los coches, que no les daban lugar de llegar al monasterio. Unos bendecían a sus padres, otros al cielo, que de tanta hermosura la había dotado; unos se empinaban por verla; otros, habiéndola visto una vez, corrían adelante por verla otra; y el que más solícito se mostró en esto, y tanto que muchos echaron de ver en ello, fue un hombre vestido en hábito de los que vienen rescatados de cautivos, con una insignia de la Trinidad en el pecho, en señal que han sido rescatados por la limosna de sus redemptores. Este cautivo, pues, al tiempo que ya Isabela tenía un pie dentro de la portería del convento, donde habían salido a recibirla, como es uso, la priora y las monjas con la cruz, a grandes voces dijo:

-¡Detente, Isabela, detente!; que mientras yo fuere vivo no puedes tú ser religiosa.

A estas voces, Isabela y sus padres volvieron los ojos, y vieron que, hendiendo por toda la gente, hacia ellos venía aquel cautivo; que, habiéndosele caído un bonete azul redondo que en la cabeza traía, descubrió una confusa madeja de cabellos de oro ensortijados, y un rostro como el carmín y como la nieve, colorado y blanco: señales que luego le hicieron conocer y juzgar por extranjero de todos. En efeto, cayendo y levantando, llegó donde Isabela estaba; y, asiéndola de la mano, le dijo:

-¿Conócesme, Isabela? Mira que yo soy Ricaredo, tu esposo.

-Sí conozco -dijo Isabela-, si ya no eres fantasma que viene a turbar mi reposo.

Sus padres le asieron y atentamente le miraron, y en resolución conocieron ser Ricaredo el cautivo; el cual, con lágrimas en los ojos, hincando las rodillas delante de Isabela, le suplicó que no impidiese la estrañeza del traje en que estaba su buen conocimiento, ni estorbase su baja fortuna que ella no correspondiese a la palabra que entre los dos se habían dado. Isabela, a pesar de la impresión que en su memoria había hecho la carta de su madre de Ricaredo,

dándole nuevas de su muerte, quiso dar más crédito a sus ojos y a la verdad que presente tenía; y así, abrazándose con el cautivo, le dijo:

-Vos, sin duda, señor mío, sois aquel que sólo podrá impedir mi cristiana determinación. Vos, señor, sois sin duda la mitad de mi alma, pues sois mi verdadero esposo; estampado os tengo en mi memoria y guardado en mi alma. Las nuevas que de vuestra muerte me escribió mi señora, y vuestra madre, ya que no me quitaron la vida, me hicieron escoger la de la religión, que en este punto quería entrar a vivir en ella. Mas, pues Dios con tan justo impedimento muestra querer otra cosa, ni podemos ni conviene que por mi parte se impida. Venid, señor, a la casa de mis padres, que es vuestra, y allí os entregaré mi posesión por los términos que pide nuestra santa fe católica.

Todas estas razones oyeron los circunstantes, y el asistente, y vicario, y provisor del arzobispo; y de oírlas se admiraron y suspendieron, y quisieron que luego se les dijese qué historia era aquélla, qué extranjero aquél y de qué casamiento trataban. A todo lo cual respondió el padre de Isabela, diciendo que aquella historia pedía otro lugar y algún término para decirse. Y así, suplicaba a todos aquellos que quisiesen saberla, diesen la vuelta a su casa, pues estaba tan cerca; que allí se la contarían de modo que con la verdad quedasen satisfechos, y con la grandeza y estrañeza de aquel suceso admirados. En esto, uno de los presentes alzó la voz, diciendo:

-Señores, este mancebo es un gran cosario inglés, que yo le conozco; y es aquel que habrá poco más de dos años tomó a los cosarios de Argel la nave de Portugal que venía de las Indias. No hay duda sino que es él, que yo le conozco, porque él me dio libertad y dineros para venirme a España, y no sólo a mí, sino a otros treientos cautivos.

Con estas razones se alborotó la gente y se avivó el deseo que todos tenían de saber y ver la claridad de tan intrincadas cosas. Finalmente, la gente más principal, con el asistente y aquellos dos señores eclesiásticos, volvieron a acompañar a Isabela a su casa, dejando a las monjas tristes, confusas y llorando por lo que perdían en no tener en su compañía a la hermosa Isabela; la cual, estando en su casa, en una gran sala della hizo que aquellos señores se sentasen. Y, aunque Ricaredo quiso tomar la mano en contar su historia, todavía le pareció que era mejor fiarlo de la lengua y discreción de Isabela, y no de la suya, que no muy expertamente hablaba la lengua castellana.

Callaron todos los presentes; y, teniendo las almas pendientes de las razones de Isabela, ella así comenzó su cuento; el cual le reduzgo yo a que dijo todo aquello que, desde el día que Clotaldo la robó de Cádiz, hasta que entró y volvió a él, le había sucedido, contando asimismo la batalla que Ricaredo había tenido con los turcos, la liberalidad que había usado con los cristianos, la palabra que

entrambos a dos se habían dado de ser marido y mujer, la promesa de los dos años, las nuevas que había tenido de su muerte: tan ciertas a su parecer, que la pusieron en el término que habían visto de ser religiosa. Engrandeció la liberalidad de la reina, la cristiandad de Ricaredo y de sus padres, y acabó con decir que dijese Ricaredo lo que le había sucedido después que salió de Londres hasta el punto presente, donde le veían con hábito de cautivo y con una señal de haber sido rescatado por limosna.

-Así es -dijo Ricaredo-, y en breves razones sumaré los inmensos trabajos míos:

«Después que me partí de Londres, por escusar el casamiento que no podía hacer con Clisterna, aquella doncella escocesa católica con quien ha dicho Isabela que mis padres me querían casar, llevando en mi compañía a Guillarte, aquel paje que mi madre escribe que llevó a Londres las nuevas de mi muerte, atravesando por Francia, llegué a Roma, donde se alegró mi alma y se fortaleció mi fe. Besé los pies al Sumo Pontífice, confesé mis pecados con el mayor penitenciario; absolvióme dellos, y diome los recaudos necesarios que diesen fe de mi confesión y penitencia y de la reducción que había hecho a nuestra universal madre la Iglesia. Hecho esto, visité los lugares tan santos como innumerables que hay en aquella ciudad santa; y de dos mil escudos que tenía en oro, di los mil y seiscientos a un cambio, que me los libró en esta ciudad sobre un tal Roqui Florentín. Con los cuatrocientos que me quedaron, con intención de venir a España, me partí para Génova, donde había tenido nuevas que estaban dos galeras de aquella señoría de partida para España.

»Llegué con Guillarte, mi criado, a un lugar que se llama Aquapendente, que, viniendo de Roma a Florencia, es el último que tiene el Papa, y en una hostería o posada, donde me apeé, hallé al conde Arnesto, mi mortal enemigo, que con cuatro criados disfrazado y encubierto, más por ser curioso que por ser católico, entiendo que iba a Roma. Creí sin duda que no me había conocido. Encerréme en un aposento con mi criado, y estuve con cuidado y con determinación de mudarme a otra posada en cerrando la noche. No lo hice así, porque el descuido grande que yo pensé que tenían el conde y sus criados, me aseguró que no me habían conocido. Cené en mi aposento, cerré la puerta, apercibí mi espada, encomendéme a Dios y no quise acostarme. Durmióse mi criado, y yo sobre una silla me quedé medio dormido; mas, poco después de la media noche, me despertaron, para hacerme dormir el eterno sueño, cuatro pistoletes que, como después supe, dispararon contra mí el conde y sus criados; y, dejándome por muerto, teniendo ya a punto los caballos, se fueron, diciendo al huésped de la posada que me enterrase, porque era hombre principal; y, con esto, se fueron.

»Mi criado, según dijo después el huésped, despertó al ruido, y con el miedo

se arrojó por una ventana que caía a un patio; y, diciendo "¡desventurado de mí, que han muerto a mi señor!", se salió del mesón; y debió de ser con tal miedo, que no debió de parar hasta Londres, pues él fue el que llevó las nuevas de mi muerte. Subieron los de la hostería y halláronme atravesado con cuatro balas y con muchos perdigones; pero todas por partes, que de ninguna fue mortal la herida. Pedí confesión y todos los sacramentos como católico cristiano; diéronmelos, curáronme, y no estuve para ponerme en camino en dos meses; al cabo de los cuales vine a Génova, donde no hallé otro pasaje, sino en dos falugas que fletamos yo y otros dos principales españoles: la una para que fuese delante descubriendo, y la otra donde nosotros fuésemos.

»Con esta seguridad nos embarcamos, navegando tierra a tierra con intención de no engolfarnos; pero, llegando a un paraje que llaman las Tres Marías, que es en la costa de Francia, yendo nuestra primera faluga descubriendo, a deshora salieron de una cala dos galeotas turquescas; y, tomándonos la una la mar y la otra la tierra, cuando íbamos a embestir en ella, nos cortaron el camino y nos cautivaron. En entrando en la galeota, nos desnudaron hasta dejarnos en carnes. Despojaron las falugas de cuanto llevaban, y dejáronlas embestir en tierra sin echallas a fondo, diciendo que aquéllas les servirían otra vez de traer otra galima, que con este nombre llaman ellos a los despojos que de los cristianos toman. Bien se me podrá creer si digo que sentí en el alma mi cautiverio, y sobre todo la pérdida de los recaudos de Roma, donde en una caja de lata los traía, con la cédula de los mil y seiscientos ducados; mas la buena suerte quiso que viniese a manos de un cristiano cautivo español, que las guardó; que si vinieran a poder de los turcos, por lo menos había de dar por mi rescate lo que rezaba la cédula, que ellos averiguaran cómo era.

»Trujéronnos a Argel, donde hallé que estaban rescatando los padres de la Santísima Trinidad. Háblelos, díjeles quién era, y, movidos de caridad, aunque yo era extranjero, me rescataron en esta forma: que dieron por mí trecientos ducados, los ciento luego y los docientos cuando volviese el bajel de la limosna a rescatar al padre de la redención, que se quedaba en Argel empeñado en cuatro mil ducados, que había gastado más de los que traía. Porque a toda esta misericordia y liberalidad se estiende la caridad destos padres, que dan su libertad por la ajena, y se quedan cautivos por rescatar los cautivos. Por añadidura del bien de mi libertad, hallé la caja perdida con los recaudos y la cédula. Mostrésela al bendito padre que me había rescatado, y ofrecíle quinientos ducados más de los de mi rescate para ayuda de su empeño.

»Casi un año se tardó en volver la nave de la limosna; y lo que en este año me pasó, a poderlo contar ahora, fuera otra nueva historia. Sólo diré que fui conocido de uno de los veinte turcos que di libertad con los demás cristianos ya

referidos, y fue tan agradecido y tan hombre de bien, que no quiso descubrirme; porque, a conocerme los turcos por aquél que había echado a fondo sus dos bajeles, y quitádoles de las manos la gran nave de la India, o me presentaran al Gran Turco o me quitaran la vida; y de presentarme al Gran Señor redundara no tener libertad en mi vida. Finalmente, el padre redemptor vino a España conmigo y con otros cincuenta cristianos rescatados. En Valencia hicimos la procesión general, y desde allí cada uno se partió donde más le plugo, con las insignias de su libertad, que son estos habiticos. Hoy llegué a esta ciudad, con tanto deseo de ver a Isabela, mi esposa, que, sin detenerme a otra cosa, pregunté por este monasterio, donde me habían de dar nuevas de mi esposa. Lo que en él me ha sucedido ya se ha visto. Lo que queda por ver son estos recaudos, para que se pueda tener por verdadera mi historia, que tiene tanto de milagrosa como de verdadera.»

Y luego, en diciendo esto, sacó de una caja de lata los recaudos que decía, y se los puso en manos del provisor, que los vio junto con el señor asistente; y no halló en ellos cosa que le hiciese dudar de la verdad que Ricaredo había contado. Y, para más confirmación della, ordenó el cielo que se hallase presente a todo esto el mercader Florentín, sobre quien venía la cédula de los mil y seiscientos ducados, el cual pidió que le mostrasen la cédula; y, mostrándosela, la reconoció y la aceptó para luego, porque él muchos meses había que tenía aviso desta partida. Todo esto fue añadir admiración a admiración y espanto a espanto. Ricaredo dijo que de nuevo ofrecía los quinientos ducados que había prometido. Abrazó el asistente a Ricaredo y a sus padres de Isabela y a ella, ofreciéndoselos a todos con corteses razones. Lo mismo hicieron los dos señores eclesiásticos, y rogaron a Isabela que pusiese toda aquella historia por escrito, para que la leyese su señor el arzobispo; y ella lo prometió.

El grande silencio que todos los circunstantes habían tenido, escuchando el extraño caso, se rompió en dar alabanzas a Dios por sus grandes maravillas; y, dando desde el mayor hasta el más pequeño el parabién a Isabela, a Ricaredo y a sus padres, los dejaron; y ellos suplicaron al asistente honrase sus bodas, que de allí a ocho días pensaban hacerlas. Holgó de hacerlo así el asistente, y, de allí a ocho días, acompañado de los más principales de la ciudad, se halló en ellas.

Por estos rodeos y por estas circunstancias, los padres de Isabela cobraron su hija y restauraron su hacienda; y ella, favorecida del cielo y ayudada de sus muchas virtudes, a despecho de tantos inconvenientes, halló marido tan principal como Ricaredo, en cuya compañía se piensa que aún hoy vive en las casas que alquilaron frontero de Santa Paula, que después las compraron de los herederos de un hidalgo burgalés que se llamaba Hernando de Cifuentes.

Esta novela nos podría enseñar cuánto puede la virtud, y cuánto la hermosura,

pues son bastantes juntas, y cada una de por sí, a enamorar aun hasta los mismos enemigos; y de cómo sabe el cielo sacar, de las mayores adversidades nuestras, nuestros mayores provechos.

## El licenciado Vidriera

PASEÁNDOSE dos caballeros estudiantes por las riberas de Tormes, hallaron en ellas, debajo de un árbol durmiendo, a un muchacho de hasta edad de once años, vestido como labrador. Mandaron a un criado que le despertase; despertó y preguntáronle de adónde era y qué hacía durmiendo en aquella soledad. A lo cual el muchacho respondió que el nombre de su tierra se le había olvidado, y que iba a la ciudad de Salamanca a buscar un amo a quien servir, por sólo que le diese estudio. Preguntáronle si sabía leer; respondió que sí, y escribir también.

-Desa manera -dijo uno de los caballeros-, no es por falta de memoria habérsete olvidado el nombre de tu patria.

-Sea por lo que fuere -respondió el muchacho-; que ni el della ni del de mis padres sabrá ninguno hasta que yo pueda honrarlos a ellos y a ella.

-Pues, ¿de qué suerte los piensas honrar? -preguntó el otro caballero.

-Con mis estudios -respondió el muchacho-, siendo famoso por ellos; porque yo he oído decir que de los hombres se hacen los obispos.

Esta respuesta movió a los dos caballeros a que le recibiesen y llevasen consigo, como lo hicieron, dándole estudio de la manera que se usa dar en aquella universidad a los criados que sirven. Dijo el muchacho que se llamaba Tomás Rodaja, de donde infirieron sus amos, por el nombre y por el vestido, que debía de ser hijo de algún labrador pobre. A pocos días le vistieron de negro, y a pocas semanas dio Tomás muestras de tener raro ingenio, sirviendo a sus amos con tanta fidelidad, puntualidad y diligencia que, con no faltar un punto a sus estudios, parecía que sólo se ocupaba en servirlos. Y, como el buen servir del siervo mueve la voluntad del señor a tratarle bien, ya Tomás Rodaja no era criado de sus amos, sino su compañero.

Finalmente, en ocho años que estuvo con ellos, se hizo tan famoso en la universidad, por su buen ingenio y notable habilidad, que de todo género de gentes era estimado y querido. Su principal estudio fue de leyes; pero en lo que más se mostraba era en letras humanas; y tenía tan felice memoria que era cosa de espanto, e ilustrábala tanto con su buen entendimiento, que no era menos famoso por él que por ella.

Sucedió que se llegó el tiempo que sus amos acabaron sus estudios y se fueron a su lugar, que era una de las mejores ciudades de la Andalucía. Lleváronse consigo a Tomás, y estuvo con ellos algunos días; pero, como le fatigasen los deseos de volver a sus estudios y a Salamanca (que enhechiza la voluntad de

volver a ella a todos los que de la apacibilidad de su vivienda han gustado), pidió a sus amos licencia para volverse. Ellos, cortesés y liberales, se la dieron, acomodándole de suerte que con lo que le dieron se pudiera sustentar tres años.

Despidióse dellos, mostrando en sus palabras su agradecimiento, y salió de Málaga (que ésta era la patria de sus señores); y, al bajar de la cuesta de la Zambra, camino de Antequera, se topó con un gentilhombre a caballo, vestido bizarramente de camino, con dos criados también a caballo. Juntóse con él y supo cómo llevaba su mismo viaje. Hicieron camarada, departieron de diversas cosas, y a pocos lances dio Tomás muestras de su raro ingenio, y el caballero las dio de su bizarria y cortesano trato, y dijo que era capitán de infantería por Su Majestad, y que su alférez estaba haciendo la compañía en tierra de Salamanca.

Alabó la vida de la soldadesca; pintóle muy al vivo la belleza de la ciudad de Nápoles, las holguras de Palermo, la abundancia de Milán, los festines de Lombardía, las espléndidas comidas de las hosterías; dibujóle dulce y puntualmente el *aconcha*, *patrón*; *pasa acá*, *manigoldo*; *venga la macarela*, *li polastri e li macarroni*. Puso las alabanzas en el cielo de la vida libre del soldado y de la libertad de Italia; pero no le dijo nada del frío de las centinelas, del peligro de los asaltos, del espanto de las batallas, de la hambre de los cercos, de la ruina de la minas, con otras cosas deste jaez, que algunos las toman y tienen por añadiduras del peso de la soldadesca, y son la carga principal della. En resolución, tantas cosas le dijo, y tan bien dichas, que la discreción de nuestro Tomás Rodaja comenzó a titubear y la voluntad a aficionarse a aquella vida, que tan cerca tiene la muerte.

El capitán, que don Diego de Valdivia se llamaba, contentísimo de la buena presencia, ingenio y desenvoltura de Tomás, le rogó que se fuese con él a Italia, si quería, por curiosidad de verla; que él le ofrecía su mesa y aun, si fuese necesario, su bandera, porque su alférez la había de dejar presto.

Poco fue menester para que Tomás tuviese el envite, haciendo consigo en un instante un breve discurso de que sería bueno ver a Italia y Flandes y otras diversas tierras y países, pues las luengas peregrinaciones hacen a los hombres discretos; y que en esto, a lo más largo, podía gastar tres o cuatro años, que, añadidos a los pocos que él tenía, no serían tantos que impidiesen volver a sus estudios. Y, como si todo hubiera de suceder a la medida de su gusto, dijo al capitán que era contento de irse con él a Italia; pero había de ser condición que no se había de sentar debajo de bandera, ni poner en lista de soldado, por no obligarse a seguir su bandera; y, aunque el capitán le dijo que no importaba ponerse en lista, que ansí gozaría de los socorros y pagas que a la compañía se diesen, porque él le daría licencia todas las veces que se la pidiese.

-Eso sería -dijo Tomás- ir contra mi conciencia y contra la del señor capitán; y



así, más quiero ir suelto que obligado.

-Conciencia tan escrupulosa -dijo don Diego-, más es de religioso que de soldado; pero, comoquiera que sea, ya somos camaradas.

Llegaron aquella noche a Antequera, y en pocos días y grandes jornadas se pusieron donde estaba la compañía, ya acabada de hacer, y que comenzaba a marchar la vuelta de Cartagena, alojándose ella y otras cuatro por los lugares que le venían a mano. Allí notó Tomás la autoridad de los comisarios, la incomodidad de algunos capitanes, la solicitud de los aposentadores, la industria y cuenta de los pagadores, las quejas de los pueblos, el rescatar de las boletas, las insolencias de los bisoños, las pendencias de los huéspedes, el pedir bagajes más de los necesarios, y, finalmente, la necesidad casi precisa de hacer todo aquello que notaba y mal le parecía.

Habíase vestido Tomás de papagayo, renunciando los hábitos de estudiante, y púsose a lo de Dios es Cristo, como se suele decir. Los muchos libros que tenía los redujo a unas *Horas de Nuestra Señora* y un *Garcilaso* sin comento, que en las dos faldriqueras llevaba. Llegaron más presto de lo que quisieran a Cartagena, porque la vida de los alojamientos es ancha y varia, y cada día se topan cosas nuevas y gustosas.

Allí se embarcaron en cuatro galeras de Nápoles, y allí notó también Tomás Rodaja la estraña vida de aquellas marítimas casas, adonde lo más del tiempo maltratan las chinches, roban los forzados, enfadan los marineros, destruyen los ratones y fatigan las maretas. Pusiéronle temor las grandes borrascas y tormentas, especialmente en el golfo de León, que tuvieron dos; que la una los echó en Córcega y la otra los volvió a Tolón, en Francia. En fin, trasnochados, mojados y con ojeras, llegaron a la hermosa y bellísima ciudad de Génova; y, desembarcándose en su recogido mandrache, después de haber visitado una iglesia, dio el capitán con todas sus camaradas en una hostería, donde pusieron en olvido todas las borrascas pasadas con el presente *gaudeamus*.

Allí conocieron la suavidad del Treviano, el valor del Montefrascón, la fuerza del Asperino, la generosidad de los dos griegos Candia y Soma, la grandeza del de las Cinco Viñas, la dulzura y apacibilidad de la señora Guarnacha, la rusticidad de la Chéntola, sin que entre todos estos señores osase parecer la bajeza del Romanesco. Y, habiendo hecho el huésped la reseña de tantos y tan diferentes vinos, se ofreció de hacer parecer allí, sin usar de tropelía, ni como pintados en mapa, sino real y verdaderamente, a Madrigal, Coca, Alaejos, y a la imperial más que Real Ciudad, recámara del dios de la risa; ofreció a Esquivias, a Alanís, a Cazalla, Guadalcanal y la Membrilla, sin que se le olvidase de Ribadavia y de Descargamaría. Finalmente, más vinos nombró el huésped, y más les dio, que pudo tener en sus bodegas el mismo Baco.

Admiráronle también al buen Tomás los rubios cabellos de las ginovesas, y la gentileza y gallarda disposición de los hombres; la admirable belleza de la ciudad, que en aquellas peñas parece que tiene las casas engastadas como diamantes en oro. Otro día se desembarcaron todas las compañías que habían de ir al Piamonte; pero no quiso Tomás hacer este viaje, sino irse desde allí por tierra a Roma y a Nápoles, como lo hizo, quedando de volver por la gran Venecia y por Loreto a Milán y al Piamonte, donde dijo don Diego de Valdivia que le hallaría si ya no los hubiesen llevado a Flandes, según se decía.

Despidióse Tomás del capitán de allí a dos días, y en cinco llegó a Florencia, habiendo visto primero a Luca, ciudad pequeña, pero muy bien hecha, y en la que, mejor que en otras partes de Italia, son bien vistos y agasajados los españoles. Contentóle Florencia en extremo, así por su agradable asiento como por su limpieza, sumptuosos edificios, fresco río y apacibles calles. Estuvo en ella cuatro días, y luego se partió a Roma, reina de las ciudades y señora del mundo. Visitó sus templos, adoró sus reliquias y admiró su grandeza; y, así como por las uñas del león se viene en conocimiento de su grandeza y ferocidad, así él sacó la de Roma por sus despedazados mármoles, medias y enteras estatuas, por sus rotos arcos y derribadas termas, por sus magníficos pórticos y anfiteatros grandes; por su famoso y santo río, que siempre llena sus márgenes de agua y las beatifica con las infinitas reliquias de cuerpos de mártires que en ellas tuvieron sepultura; por sus puentes, que parece que se están mirando unas a otras, que con sólo el nombre cobran autoridad sobre todas las de las otras ciudades del mundo: la vía Apia, la Flaminia, la Julia, con otras deste jaez. Pues no le admiraba menos la división de sus montes dentro de sí misma: el Celio, el Quirinal y el Vaticano, con los otros cuatro, cuyos nombres manifiestan la grandeza y majestad romana. Notó también la autoridad del Colegio de los Cardenales, la majestad del Sumo Pontífice, el concurso y variedad de gentes y naciones. Todo lo miró, y notó y puso en su punto. Y, habiendo andado la estación de las siete iglesias, y confesándose con un penitenciario, y besado el pie a Su Santidad, lleno de *agnusdeis* y cuentas, determinó irse a Nápoles; y, por ser tiempo de mutación, malo y dañoso para todos los que en él entran o salen de Roma, como hayan caminado por tierra, se fue por mar a Nápoles, donde a la admiración que traía de haber visto a Roma añadió la que le causó ver a Nápoles, ciudad, a su parecer y al de todos cuantos la han visto, la mejor de Europa y aun de todo el mundo.

Desde allí se fue a Sicilia, y vio a Palermo, y después a Micina; de Palermo le pareció bien el asiento y belleza, y de Micina, el puerto, y de toda la isla, la abundancia, por quien propiamente y con verdad es llamada granero de Italia. Volvióse a Nápoles y a Roma, y de allí fue a Nuestra Señora de Loreto, en cuyo

santo templo no vio paredes ni murallas, porque todas estaban cubiertas de muletas, de mortajas, de cadenas, de grillos, de esposas, de cabelleras, de medios bultos de cera y de pinturas y retablos, que daban manifiesto indicio de las innumerables mercedes que muchos habían recibido de la mano de Dios, por intercesión de su divina Madre, que aquella sacrosanta imagen suya quiso engrandecer y autorizar con muchedumbre de milagros, en recompensa de la devoción que le tienen aquellos que con semejantes doseles tienen adornados los muros de su casa. Vio el mismo aposento y estancia donde se relató la más alta embajada y de más importancia que vieron y no entendieron todos los cielos, y todos los ángeles y todos los moradores de las moradas sempiternas.

Desde allí, embarcándose en Ancona, fue a Venecia, ciudad que, a no haber nacido Colón en el mundo, no tuviera en él semejante: merced al cielo y al gran Hernando Cortés, que conquistó la gran Méjico, para que la gran Venecia tuviese en alguna manera quien se le opusiese. Estas dos famosas ciudades se parecen en las calles, que son todas de agua: la de Europa, admiración del mundo antiguo; la de América, espanto del mundo nuevo. Parecióle que su riqueza era infinita, su gobierno prudente, su sitio inexpugnable, su abundancia mucha, sus contornos alegres, y, finalmente, toda ella en sí y en sus partes digna de la fama que de su valor por todas las partes del orbe se estiende, dando causa de acreditar más esta verdad la máquina de su famoso Arsenal, que es el lugar donde se fabrican las galeras, con otros bajeles que no tienen número.

Por poco fueran los de Calipso los regalos y pasatiempos que halló nuestro curioso en Venecia, pues casi le hacían olvidar de su primer intento. Pero, habiendo estado un mes en ella, por Ferrara, Parma y Plasencia volvió a Milán, oficina de Vulcano, ojeriza del reino de Francia; ciudad, en fin, de quien se dice que puede decir y hacer, haciéndola magnífica la grandeza suya y de su templo y su maravillosa abundancia de todas las cosas a la vida humana necesarias. Desde allí se fue a Aste, y llegó a tiempo que otro día marchaba el tercio a Flandes.

Fue muy bien recibido de su amigo el capitán, y en su compañía y camarada pasó a Flandes, y llegó a Amberes, ciudad no menos para maravillar que las que había visto en Italia. Vio a Gante, y a Bruselas, y vio que todo el país se disponía a tomar las armas, para salir en campaña el verano siguiente.

Y, habiendo cumplido con el deseo que le movió a ver lo que había visto, determinó volverse a España y a Salamanca a acabar sus estudios; y como lo pensó lo puso luego por obra, con pesar grandísimo de su camarada, que le rogó, al tiempo del despedirse, le avisase de su salud, llegada y suceso. Prometióselo así como lo pedía, y, por Francia, volvió a España, sin haber visto a París, por estar puesta en armas. En fin, llegó a Salamanca, donde fue bien recibido de sus amigos, y, con la comodidad que ellos le hicieron, prosiguió sus estudios hasta

graduarse de licenciado en leyes.

Sucedió que en este tiempo llegó a aquella ciudad una dama de todo rumbo y manejo. Acudieron luego a la añagaza y reclamo todos los pájaros del lugar, sin quedar *vademécum* que no la visitase. Dijéronle a Tomás que aquella dama decía que había estado en Italia y en Flandes, y, por ver si la conocía, fue a visitarla, de cuya visita y vista quedó ella enamorada de Tomás. Y él, sin echar de ver en ello, si no era por fuerza y llevado de otros, no quería entrar en su casa. Finalmente, ella le descubrió su voluntad y le ofreció su hacienda. Pero, como él atendía más a sus libros que a otros pasatiempos, en ninguna manera respondía al gusto de la señora; la cual, viéndose desdeñada y, a su parecer, aborrecida y que por medios ordinarios y comunes no podía conquistar la roca de la voluntad de Tomás, acordó de buscar otros modos, a su parecer más eficaces y bastantes para salir con el cumplimiento de sus deseos. Y así, aconsejada de una morisca, en un membrillo toledano dio a Tomás unos destos que llaman hechizos, creyendo que le daba cosa que le forzase la voluntad a quererla: como si hubiese en el mundo yerbas, encantos ni palabras suficientes a forzar el libre albedrío; y así, las que dan estas bebidas o comidas amatorias se llaman *veneficios*; porque no es otra cosa lo que hacen sino dar veneno a quien las toma, como lo tiene mostrado la experiencia en muchas y diversas ocasiones.

Comió en tan mal punto Tomás el membrillo, que al momento comenzó a herir de pie y de mano como si tuviera alfilería, y sin volver en sí estuvo muchas horas, al cabo de las cuales volvió como atontado, y dijo con lengua turbada y tartamuda que un membrillo que había comido le había muerto, y declaró quién se le había dado. La justicia, que tuvo noticia del caso, fue a buscar la malhechora; pero ya ella, viendo el mal suceso, se había puesto en cobro y no pareció jamás.

Seis meses estuvo en la cama Tomás, en los cuales se secó y se puso, como suele decirse, en los huesos, y mostraba tener turbados todos los sentidos. Y, aunque le hicieron los remedios posibles, sólo le sanaron la enfermedad del cuerpo, pero no de lo del entendimiento, porque quedó sano, y loco de la más estraña locura que entre las locuras hasta entonces se había visto. Imagínese el desdichado que era todo hecho de vidrio, y con esta imaginación, cuando alguno se llegaba a él, daba terribles voces pidiendo y suplicando con palabras y razones concertadas que no se le acercasen, porque le quebrarían; que real y verdaderamente él no era como los otros hombres: que todo era de vidrio de pies a cabeza.

Para sacarle desta estraña imaginación, muchos, sin atender a sus voces y rogativas, arremetieron a él y le abrazaron, diciéndole que advirtiese y mirase cómo no se quebraba. Pero lo que se granjeaba en esto era que el pobre se

echaba en el suelo dando mil gritos, y luego le tomaba un desmayo del cual no volvía en sí en cuatro horas; y cuando volvía, era renovando las plegarias y rogativas de que otra vez no le llegasen. Decía que le hablasen desde lejos y le preguntasen lo que quisiesen, porque a todo les respondería con más entendimiento, por ser hombre de vidrio y no de carne: que el vidrio, por ser de materia sutil y delicada, obraba por ella el alma con más promptitud y eficacia que no por la del cuerpo, pesada y terrestre.

Quisieron algunos experimentar si era verdad lo que decía; y así, le preguntaron muchas y difíciles cosas, a las cuales respondió espontáneamente con grandísima agudeza de ingenio: cosa que causó admiración a los más letrados de la Universidad y a los profesores de la medicina y filosofía, viendo que en un sujeto donde se contenía tan extraordinaria locura como era el pensar que fuese de vidrio, se encerrase tan grande entendimiento que respondiese a toda pregunta con propiedad y agudeza.

Pidió Tomás le diesen alguna funda donde pusiese aquel vaso quebradizo de su cuerpo, porque al vestirse algún vestido estrecho no se quebrase; y así, le dieron una ropa parda y una camisa muy ancha, que él se vistió con mucho tiento y se ciñó con una cuerda de algodón. No quiso calzarse zapatos en ninguna manera, y el orden que tuvo para que le diesen de comer, sin que a él llegasen, fue poner en la punta de una vara una vasera de orinal, en la cual le ponían alguna cosa de fruta de las que la sazón del tiempo ofrecía. Carne ni pescado, no lo quería; no bebía sino en fuente o en río, y esto con las manos; cuando andaba por las calles iba por la mitad dellas, mirando a los tejados, temeroso no le cayese alguna teja encima y le quebrase. Los veranos dormía en el campo al cielo abierto, y los inviernos se metía en algún mesón, y en el pajar se enterraba hasta la garganta, diciendo que aquélla era la más propia y más segura cama que podían tener los hombres de vidrio. Cuando tronaba, temblaba como un azogado, y se salía al campo y no entraba en poblado hasta haber pasado la tempestad.

Tuviéronle encerrado sus amigos mucho tiempo; pero, viendo que su desgracia pasaba adelante, determinaron de condecender con lo que él les pedía, que era le dejasen andar libre; y así, le dejaron, y él salió por la ciudad, causando admiración y lástima a todos los que le conocían.

Cercáronle luego los muchachos; pero él con la vara los detenía, y les rogaba le hablasen apartados, porque no se quebrase; que, por ser hombre de vidrio, era muy tierno y quebradizo. Los muchachos, que son la más traviesa generación del mundo, a despecho de sus ruegos y voces, le comenzaron a tirar trapos, y aun piedras, por ver si era de vidrio, como él decía. Pero él daba tantas voces y hacía tales extremos, que movía a los hombres a que riñesen y castigasen a los muchachos porque no le tirasen.

Mas un día que le fatigaron mucho se volvió a ellos, diciendo:

-¿Qué me queréis, muchachos, porfiados como moscas, sucios como chinches, atrevidos como pulgas? ¿Soy yo, por ventura, el monte Testacho de Roma, para que me tiréis tantos tiestos y tejas?

Por oírle reñir y responder a todos, le seguían siempre muchos, y los muchachos tomaron y tuvieron por mejor partido antes oírle que tiralle.

Pasando, pues, una vez por la ropería de Salamanca, le dijo una ropera:

-En mi ánima, señor Licenciado, que me pesa de su desgracia; pero, ¿qué haré, que no puedo llorar?

Él se volvió a ella, y muy mesurado le dijo:

*-Filiae Hierusalem, plorate super vos et super filios vestros.*

Entendió el marido de la ropera la malicia del dicho y díjole:

-Hermano licenciado Vidriera (que así decía él que se llamaba), más tenéis de bellaco que de loco.

-No se me da un ardite -respondió él-, como no tenga nada de necio.

Pasando un día por la casa llana y venta común, vio que estaban a la puerta della muchas de sus moradoras, y dijo que eran bagajes del ejército de Satanás que estaban alojados en el mesón del infierno.

Preguntóle uno que qué consejo o consuelo daría a un amigo suyo que estaba muy triste porque su mujer se le había ido con otro.

A lo cual respondió:

-Dile que dé gracias a Dios por haber permitido le llevasen de casa a su enemigo.

-Luego, ¿no irá a buscarla? -dijo el otro.

-¡Ni por pienso! -replicó Vidriera-; porque sería el hallarla hallar un perpetuo y verdadero testigo de su deshonra.

-Ya que eso sea así -dijo el mismo-, ¿qué haré yo para tener paz con mi mujer?

Respondióle:

-Dale lo que hubiere menester; déjala que mande a todos los de su casa, pero no sufras que ella te mande a ti.

Díjole un muchacho:

-Señor licenciado Vidriera, yo me quiero desgarrar de mi padre porque me azota muchas veces.

Y respondióle:

-Advierte, niño, que los azotes que los padres dan a los hijos honran, y los del verdugo afrentan.

Estando a la puerta de una iglesia, vio que entraba en ella un labrador de los que siempre blasonan de cristianos viejos, y detrás dél venía uno que no estaba

en tan buena opinión como el primero; y el Licenciado dio grandes voces al labrador, diciendo:

-Esperad, Domingo, a que pase el Sábado.

De los maestros de escuela decía que eran dichosos, pues trataban siempre con ángeles; y que fueran dichosísimos si los angelitos no fueran mocosos.

Otro le preguntó que qué le parecía de las alcahuetas. Respondió que no lo eran las apartadas, sino las vecinas.

Las nuevas de su locura y de sus respuestas y dichos se extendió por toda Castilla; y, llegando a noticia de un príncipe, o señor, que estaba en la Corte, quiso enviar por él, y encargóselo a un caballero amigo suyo, que estaba en Salamanca, que se lo enviase; y, topándole el caballero un día, le dijo:

-Sepa el señor licenciado Vidriera que un gran personaje de la Corte le quiere ver y envía por él.

A lo cual respondió:

-Vuesa merced me escuse con ese señor, que yo no soy bueno para palacio, porque tengo vergüenza y no sé lisonjear.

Con todo esto, el caballero le envió a la Corte, y para traerle usaron con él desta invención: pusieronle en unas árguenas de paja, como aquéllas donde llevan el vidrio, igualando los tercios con piedras, y entre paja puestos algunos vidrios, porque se diese a entender que como vaso de vidrio le llevaban. Llegó a Valladolid; entró de noche y desembanastáronle en la casa del señor que había enviado por él, de quien fue muy bien recibido, diciéndole:

-Sea muy bien venido el señor licenciado Vidriera. ¿Cómo ha ido en el camino? ¿Cómo va de salud?

A lo cual respondió:

-Ningún camino hay malo, como se acabe, si no es el que va a la horca. De salud estoy neutral, porque están encontrados mis pulsos con mi cerebro.

Otro día, habiendo visto en muchas alcándaras muchos neblíes y azores y otros pájaros de volatería, dijo que la caza de altanería era digna de príncipes y de grandes señores; pero que advirtiesen que con ella echaba el gusto censo sobre el provecho a más de dos mil por uno. La caza de liebres dijo que era muy gustosa, y más cuando se cazaba con galgos prestados.

El caballero gustó de su locura y dejóle salir por la ciudad, debajo del amparo y guarda de un hombre que tuviese cuenta que los muchachos no le hiciesen mal; de los cuales y de toda la Corte fue conocido en seis días, y a cada paso, en cada calle y en cualquiera esquina, respondía a todas las preguntas que le hacían; entre las cuales le preguntó un estudiante si era poeta, porque le parecía que tenía ingenio para todo.

A lo cual respondió:

-Hasta ahora no he sido tan necio ni tan venturoso.

-No entiendo eso de necio y venturoso -dijo el estudiante.

Y respondió Vidriera:

-No he sido tan necio que diese en poeta malo, ni tan venturoso que haya merecido serlo bueno.

Preguntóle otro estudiante que en qué estimación tenía a los poetas. Respondió que a la ciencia, en mucha; pero que a los poetas, en ninguna. Replicáronle que por qué decía aquello. Respondió que del infinito número de poetas que había, eran tan pocos los buenos, que casi no hacían número; y así, como si no hubiese poetas, no los estimaba; pero que admiraba y reverenciaba la ciencia de la poesía porque encerraba en sí todas las demás ciencias: porque de todas se sirve, de todas se adorna, y pule y saca a luz sus maravillosas obras, con que llena el mundo de provecho, de deleite y de maravilla.

Añadió más:

-Yo bien sé en lo que se debe estimar un buen poeta, porque se me acuerda de aquellos versos de Ovidio que dicen:

*Cum ducum fuerant olim Regnumque poeta:  
premiaque antiqui magna tulere chori.  
Sanctaque maiestas, et erat venerabile nomen  
vatibus; et large saepe dabantur opes.*

»Y menos se me olvida la alta calidad de los poetas, pues los llama Platón intérpretes de los dioses, y dellos dice Ovidio:

*Est Deus in nobis, agitante calescimus illo.*

»Y también dice:

*At sacri vates, et Divum cura vocamus.*

»Esto se dice de los buenos poetas; que de los malos, de los churrulleros, ¿qué se ha de decir, sino que son la idiotez y la arrogancia del mundo?

Y añadió más:



-¡Qué es ver a un poeta destos de la primera impresión cuando quiere decir un soneto a otros que le rodean, las salvas que les hace diciendo: «Vuestas mercedes escuchen un sonetillo que anoche a cierta ocasión hice, que, a mi parecer, aunque no vale nada, tiene un no sé qué de bonito!» Y en esto tuerce los labios, pone en arco las cejas y se rasca la faldriquera, y de entre otros mil papeles mugrientos y medio rotos, donde queda otro millar de sonetos, saca el que quiere relatar, y al fin le dice con tono melifluo y alfenicado. Y si acaso los que le escuchan, de socarrones o de ignorantes, no se le alaban, dice: «O vuestas mercedes no han entendido el soneto, o yo no le he sabido decir; y así, será bien recitarle otra vez y que vuestas mercedes le presten más atención, porque en verdad en verdad que el soneto lo merece». Y vuelve como primero a recitarle con nuevos ademanes y nuevas pausas. Pues, ¿qué es verlos censurar los unos a los otros? ¿Qué diré del ladrar que hacen los cachorros y modernos a los mastinazos antiguos y graves? ¿Y qué de los que murmuran de algunos ilustres y excelentes sujetos, donde resplandece la verdadera luz de la poesía; que, tomándola por alivio y entretenimiento de sus muchas y graves ocupaciones, muestran la divinidad de sus ingenios y la alteza de sus conceptos, a despecho y pesar del circunspecto ignorante que juzga de lo que no sabe y aborrece lo que no entiende, y del que quiere que se estime y tenga en precio la necedad que se sienta debajo de doseles y la ignorancia que se arrima a los sitios?»

Otra vez le preguntaron qué era la causa de que los poetas, por la mayor parte, eran pobres. Respondió que porque ellos querían, pues estaba en su mano ser ricos, si se sabían aprovechar de la ocasión que por momentos traían entre las manos, que eran las de sus damas, que todas eran riquísimas en extremo, pues tenían los cabellos de oro, la frente de plata bruñida, los ojos de verdes esmeraldas, los dientes de marfil, los labios de coral y la garganta de cristal transparente, y que lo que lloraban eran líquidas perlas; y más, que lo que sus plantas pisaban, por dura y estéril tierra que fuese, al momento producía jazmines y rosas; y que su aliento era de puro ámbar, almizcle y algalia; y que todas estas cosas eran señales y muestras de su mucha riqueza. Estas y otras cosas decía de los malos poetas, que de los buenos siempre dijo bien y los levantó sobre el cuerno de la luna.

Vio un día en la acera de San Francisco unas figuras pintadas de mala mano, y dijo que los buenos pintores imitaban a naturaleza, pero que los malos la vomitaban.

Arrimóse un día con grandísimo tiento, porque no se quebrase, a la tienda de un librero, y díjole:

-Este oficio me contentara mucho si no fuera por una falta que tiene.

Preguntóle el librero se la dijese. Respondióle:

-Los melindres que hacen cuando compran un privilegio de un libro, y de la burla que hacen a su autor si acaso le imprime a su costa; pues, en lugar de mil y quinientos, imprimen tres mil libros, y, cuando el autor piensa que se venden los suyos, se despachan los ajenos.

Acaeció este mismo día que pasaron por la plaza seis azotados; y, diciendo el pregón: «Al primero, por ladrón», dio grandes voces a los que estaban delante dél, diciéndoles:

-¡Apartaos, hermanos, no comience aquella cuenta por alguno de vosotros!

Y cuando el pregonero llegó a decir: «Al trasero...», dijo:

-Aquel debe de ser el fiador de los muchachos.

Un muchacho le dijo:

-Hermano Vidriera, mañana sacan a azotar a una alcagüeta.

Respondióle:

-Si dijeras que sacaban a azotar a un alcagüete, entendiera que sacaban a azotar un coche.

Hallóse allí uno destos que llevan sillas de manos, y díjole:

-De nosotros, Licenciado, ¿no tenéis qué decir?

-No -respondió Vidriera-, sino que sabe cada uno de vosotros más pecados que un confesor; más es con esta diferencia: que el confesor los sabe para tenerlos secretos, y vosotros para publicarlos por las tabernas.

Oyó esto un mozo de mulas, porque de todo género de gente le estaba escuchando contino, y díjole:

-De nosotros, señor Redoma, poco o nada hay que decir, porque somos gente de bien y necesaria en la república.

A lo cual respondió Vidriera:

-La honra del amo descubre la del criado. Según esto, mira a quién sirves y verás cuán honrado eres: mozos sois vosotros de la más ruin canalla que sustenta la tierra. Una vez, cuando no era de vidrio, caminé una jornada en una mula de alquiler tal, que le conté ciento y veinte y una tachas, todas capitales y enemigas del género humano. Todos los mozos de mulas tienen su punta de rufianes, su punta de cacos, y su es no es de truhanes. Si sus amos (que así llaman ellos a los que llevan en sus mulas) son boquimuelles, hacen más suertes en ellos que las que echaron en esta ciudad los años pasados: si son extranjeros, los roban; si estudiantes, los maldicen; y si religiosos, los reniegan; y si soldados, los tiemblan. Estos, y los marineros y carreteros y arrieros, tienen un modo de vivir extraordinario y sólo para ellos: el carretero pasa lo más de la vida en espacio de vara y media de lugar, que poco más debe de haber del yugo de las mulas a la boca del carro; canta la mitad del tiempo y la otra mitad reniega; y en decir: «Háganse a zaga» se les pasa otra parte; y si acaso les queda por sacar alguna

rueda de algún atolladero, más se ayudan de dos pésetes que de tres mulas. Los marineros son gente gentil, inurbana, que no sabe otro lenguaje que el que se usa en los navíos; en la bonanza son diligentes y en la borrasca perezosos; en la tormenta mandan muchos y obedecen pocos; su Dios es su arca y su rancho, y su pasatiempo ver mareados a los pasajeros. Los arrieros son gente que ha hecho divorcio con las sábanas y se ha casado con las enjalmas; son tan diligentes y presurosos que, a trueco de no perder la jornada, perderán el alma; su música es la del mortero; su salsa, la hambre; sus maitines, levantarse a dar sus piensos; y sus misas, no oír ninguna.

Cuando esto decía, estaba a la puerta de un boticario, y, volviéndose al dueño, le dijo:

-Vuesa merced tiene un saludable oficio, si no fuese tan enemigo de sus candiles.

-¿En qué modo soy enemigo de mis candiles? -preguntó el boticario.

Y respondió Vidriera:

-Esto digo porque, en faltando cualquiera aceite, la suple la del candil que está más a mano; y aún tiene otra cosa este oficio bastante a quitar el crédito al más acertado médico del mundo.

Preguntándole por qué, respondió que había boticario que, por no decir que faltaba en su botica lo que recetaba el médico, por las cosas que le faltaban ponía otras que a su parecer tenían la misma virtud y calidad, no siendo así; y con esto, la medicina mal compuesta obraba al revés de lo que había de obrar la bien ordenada.

Preguntóle entonces uno que qué sentía de los médicos, y respondió esto:

-*Honora medicum propter necessitatem, etenim creavit eum Altissimus. A Deo enim est omnis medela, et a rege accipiet donationem. Disciplina medici exaltavit caput illius, et in conspectu magnatum collaudabitur. Altissimus de terra creavit medicinam, et vir prudens non abhorrebit illam.* Esto dice -dijo-el *Eclesiástico* de la medicina y de los buenos médicos, y de los malos se podría decir todo al revés, porque no hay gente más dañosa a la república que ellos. El juez nos puede torcer o dilatar la justicia; el letrado, sustentar por su interés nuestra injusta demanda; el mercader, chuparnos la hacienda; finalmente, todas las personas con quien de necesidad tratamos nos pueden hacer algún daño; pero quitarnos la vida, sin quedar sujetos al temor del castigo, ninguno. Sólo los médicos nos pueden matar y nos matan sin temor y a pie quedo, sin desenvainar otra espada que la de un *récipe*. Y no hay descubrirse sus delictos, porque al momento los meten debajo de la tierra. Acuérdaseme que cuando yo era hombre de carne, y no de vidrio como agora soy, que a un médico destos de segunda

clase le despidió un enfermo por curarse con otro, y el primero, de allí a cuatro días, acertó a pasar por la botica donde receptaba el segundo, y preguntó al boticario que cómo le iba al enfermo que él había dejado, y que si le había receptado alguna purga el otro médico. El boticario le respondió que allí tenía una recepta de purga que el día siguiente había de tomar el enfermo. Dijo que se la mostrase, y vio que al fin della estaba escrito: *Sumat dilúculo*; y dijo: «Todo lo que lleva esta purga me contenta, si no es este *dilúculo*, porque es húmido demasiadamente».

Por estas y otras cosas que decía de todos los oficios, se andaban tras él, sin hacerle mal y sin dejarle sosegar; pero, con todo esto, no se pudiera defender de los muchachos si su guardián no le defendiera. Preguntóle uno qué haría para no tener envidia a nadie. Respondióle:

-Duerme; que todo el tiempo que durmieres serás igual al que envidias.

Otro le preguntó qué remedio tendría para salir con una comisión que había dos años que la pretendía. Y díjole:

-Parte a caballo y a la mira de quien la lleva, y acompañaile hasta salir de la ciudad, y así saldrás con ella.

Pasó acaso una vez por delante donde él estaba un juez de comisión que iba de camino a una causa criminal, y llevaba mucha gente consigo y dos alguaciles; preguntó quién era, y, como se lo dijeron, dijo:

-Yo apostaré que lleva aquel juez víboras en el seno, pistoletes en la cinta y rayos en las manos, para destruir todo lo que alcanzare su comisión. Yo me acuerdo haber tenido un amigo que, en una comisión criminal que tuvo, dio una sentencia tan exorbitante, que excedía en muchos quilates a la culpa de los delincuentes. Preguntéle que por qué había dado aquella tan cruel sentencia y hecho tan manifiesta injusticia. Respondióme que pensaba otorgar la apelación, y que con esto dejaba campo abierto a los señores del Consejo para mostrar su misericordia, moderando y poniendo aquella su rigurosa sentencia en su punto y debida proporción. Yo le respondí que mejor fuera haberla dado de manera que les quitara de aquel trabajo, pues con esto le tuvieran a él por juez recto y acertado.

En la rueda de la mucha gente que, como se ha dicho, siempre le estaba oyendo, estaba un conocido suyo en hábito de letrado, al cual otro le llamó *Señor Licenciado*; y, sabiendo Vidriera que el tal a quien llamaron licenciado no tenía ni aun título de bachiller, le dijo:

-Guardaos, compadre, no encuentren con vuestro título los frailes de la redención de cautivos, que os le llevarán por mostrenco.

A lo cual dijo el amigo:

-Tratémonos bien, señor Vidriera, pues ya sabéis vos que soy hombre de altas

y de profundas letras.

Respondióle Vidriera:

-Ya yo sé que sois un Tántalo en ellas, porque se os van por altas y no las alcanzáis de profundas.

Estando una vez arrimado a la tienda de un sastre, viole que estaba mano sobre mano, y díjole:

-Sin duda, señor maeso, que estáis en camino de salvación.

-¿En qué lo veis? -preguntó el sastre.

-¿En qué lo veo? -respondió Vidriera-. Véolo en que, pues no tenéis qué hacer, no tendréis ocasión de mentir.

Y añadió:

-Desdichado del sastre que no miente y cose las fiestas; cosa maravillosa es que casi en todos los deste oficio apenas se hallará uno que haga un vestido justo, habiendo tantos que los hagan pecadores.

De los zapateros decía que jamás hacían, conforme a su parecer, zapato malo; porque si al que se le calzaban venía estrecho y apretado, le decían que así había de ser, por ser de galanes calzar justo, y que en trayéndolos dos horas vendrían más anchos que alpargates; y si le venían anchos, decían que así habían de venir, por amor de la gota.

Un muchacho agudo que escribía en un oficio de Provincia le apretaba mucho con preguntas y demandas, y le traía nuevas de lo que en la ciudad pasaba, porque sobre todo discantaba y a todo respondía. Éste le dijo una vez:

-Vidriera, esta noche se murió en la cárcel un banco que estaba condenado ahorcar.

A lo cual respondió:

-Él hizo bien a darse prisa a morir antes que el verdugo se sentara sobre él.

En la acera de San Francisco estaba un corro de ginoveses; y, pasando por allí, uno dellos le llamó, diciéndole:

-Lléguese acá el señor Vidriera y cuéntenos un cuento.

Él respondió:

-No quiero, porque no me le paséis a Génova.

Topó una vez a una tendera que llevaba delante de sí una hija suya muy fea, pero muy llena de dijes, de galas y de perlas; y díjole a la madre:

-Muy bien habéis hecho en empedralla, porque se pueda pasear.

De los pasteleros dijo que había muchos años que jugaban a la dobladilla, sin que les llevasen a la pena, porque habían hecho el pastel de a dos de a cuatro, el de a cuatro de a ocho, y el de a ocho de a medio real, por sólo su albedrío y beneplácito.

De los titereros decía mil males: decía que era gente vagamunda y que trataba

con indecencia de las cosas divinas, porque con las figuras que mostraban en sus retratos volvían la devoción en risa, y que les acontecía envasar en un costal todas o las más figuras del Testamento Viejo y Nuevo y sentarse sobre él a comer y beber en los bodegones y tabernas. En resolución, decía que se maravillaba de cómo quien podía no les ponía perpetuo silencio en sus retablos, o los desterraba del reino.

Acertó a pasar una vez por donde él estaba un comediante vestido como un príncipe, y, en viéndole, dijo:

-Yo me acuerdo haber visto a éste salir al teatro enharinado el rostro y vestido un zamarro del revés; y, con todo esto, a cada paso fuera del tablado, jura a fe de hijodalgo.

-Débelo de ser -respondió uno-, porque hay muchos comediantes que son muy bien nacidos y hijosdalgo.

-Así será verdad -replicó Vidriera-, pero lo que menos ha menester la farsa es personas bien nacidas; galanes sí, gentileshombres y de espeditas lenguas. También sé decir dellos que en el sudor de su cara ganan su pan con inllevable trabajo, tomando continuo de memoria, hechos perpetuos gitanos, de lugar en lugar y de mesón en venta, desvelándose en contentar a otros, porque en el gusto ajeno consiste su bien propio. Tienen más, que con su oficio no engañan a nadie, pues por momentos sacan su mercadería a pública plaza, al juicio y a la vista de todos. El trabajo de los autores es increíble, y su cuidado, extraordinario, y han de ganar mucho para que al cabo del año no salgan tan empeñados, que les sea forzoso hacer pleito de acreedores. Y, con todo esto, son necesarios en la república, como lo son las florestas, las alamedas y las vistas de recreación, y como lo son las cosas que honestamente recrean.

Decía que había sido opinión de un amigo suyo que el que servía a una comedianta, en sola una servía a muchas damas juntas, como era a una reina, a una ninfa, a una diosa, a una fregona, a una pastora, y muchas veces caía la suerte en que serviese en ella a un paje y a un lacayo: que todas estas y más figuras suele hacer una farsanta.

Preguntóle uno que cuál había sido el más dichoso del mundo. Respondió que *Nemo*; porque *Nemo novit Patrem, Nemo sine crimine vivit, Nemo sua sorte contentus, Nemo ascendit in coelum*.

De los diestros dijo una vez que eran maestros de una ciencia o arte que cuando la habían menester no la sabían, y que tocaban algo en presumptuosos, pues querían reducir a demostraciones matemáticas, que son infalibles, los movimientos y pensamientos coléricos de sus contrarios. Con los que se teñían las barbas tenía particular enemistad; y, riñendo una vez delante dél dos hombres, que el uno era portugués, éste dijo al castellano, asiéndose de las

barbas, que tenía muy teñidas:

-¡*Por istas barbas que teño no rostro...!*

A lo cual acudió Vidriera:

-¡*Ollay, home, naon digáis teño, sino tiño!*

Otro traía las barbas jaspeadas y de muchas colores, culpa de la mala tinta; a quien dijo Vidriera que tenía las barbas de muladar overo. A otro, que traía las barbas por mitad blancas y negras, por haberse descuidado, y los cañones crecidos, le dijo que procurase de no porfiar ni reñir con nadie, porque estaba aparejado a que le dijese que mentía por la mitad de la barba.

Una vez contó que una doncella discreta y bien entendida, por acudir a la voluntad de sus padres, dio el sí de casarse con un viejo todo cano, el cual la noche antes del día del desposorio se fue, no al río Jordán, como dicen las viejas, sino a la redomilla del agua fuerte y plata, con que renovó de manera su barba, que la acostó de nieve y la levantó de pez. Llegóse la hora de darse las manos, y la doncella conoció por la pinta y por la tinta la figura, y dijo a sus padres que le diesen el mismo esposo que ellos le habían mostrado, que no quería otro. Ellos le dijeron que aquel que tenía delante era el mismo que le habían mostrado y dado por esposo. Ella replicó que no era, y trujo testigos cómo el que sus padres le dieron era un hombre grave y lleno de canas; y que, pues el presente no las tenía, no era él, y se llamaba a engaño. Atúvose a esto, corrióse el teñido y deshízose el casamiento.

Con las dueñas tenía la misma ojeriza que con los escabechados: decía maravillas de su *permafoy*, de las mortajas de sus tocas, de sus muchos melindres, de sus escrúpulos y de su extraordinaria miseria. Amohinábanle sus flaquezas de estómago, su vaguidos de cabeza, su modo de hablar, con más repulgos que sus tocas; y, finalmente, su inutilidad y sus vainillas.

Uno le dijo:

-¿Qué es esto, señor licenciado, que os he oído decir mal de muchos oficios y jamás lo habéis dicho de los escribanos, habiendo tanto que decir?

A lo cual respondió:

-Aunque de vidrio, no soy tan frágil que me deje ir con la corriente del vulgo, las más veces engañado. Paréceme a mí que la gramática de los murmuradores y el *la, la, la* de los que cantan son los escribanos; porque, así como no se puede pasar a otras ciencias, si no es por la puerta de la gramática, y como el músico primero murmura que canta, así, los maldicientes, por donde comienzan a mostrar la malignidad de sus lenguas es por decir mal de los escribanos y alguaciles y de los otros ministros de la justicia, siendo un oficio el del escribano sin el cual andaría la verdad por el mundo a sombra de tejados, corrida y maltratada; y así, dice el *Eclesiástico: In manu Dei potestas hominis est, et super*

*faciem scribe imponet honorem.* Es el escribano persona pública, y el oficio del juez no se puede ejercitar cómodamente sin el suyo. Los escribanos han de ser libres, y no esclavos, ni hijos de esclavos: legítimos, no bastardos ni de ninguna mala raza nacidos. Juran de secreto fidelidad y que no harán escritura usuraria; que ni amistad ni enemistad, provecho o daño les moverá a no hacer su oficio con buena y cristiana conciencia. Pues si este oficio tantas buenas partes requiere, ¿por qué se ha de pensar que de más de veinte mil escribanos que hay en España se lleve el diablo la cosecha, como si fuesen cepas de su majuelo? No lo quiero creer, ni es bien que ninguno lo crea; porque, finalmente, digo que es la gente más necesaria que había en las repúblicas bien ordenadas, y que si llevaban demasiados derechos, también hacían demasiados tuertos, y que destos dos extremos podía resultar un medio que les hiciese mirar por el virote.

De los alguaciles dijo que no era mucho que tuviesen algunos enemigos, siendo su oficio, o prenderte, o sacarte la hacienda de casa, o tenerte en la suya en guarda y comer a tu costa. Tachaba la negligencia e ignorancia de los procuradores y solicitadores, comparándolos a los médicos, los cuales, que sane o no sane el enfermo, ellos llevan su propina, y los procuradores y solicitadores, lo mismo, salgan o no salgan con el pleito que ayudan.

Preguntóle uno cuál era la mejor tierra. Respondió que la temprana y agradecida. Replicó el otro:

-No pregunto eso, sino que cuál es mejor lugar: ¿Valladolid o Madrid?

Y respondió:

-De Madrid, los extremos; de Valladolid, los medios.

-No lo entiendo -repitió el que se lo preguntaba.

Y dijo:

-De Madrid, cielo y suelo; de Valladolid, los entresuelos.

Oyó Vidriera que dijo un hombre a otro que, así como había entrado en Valladolid, había caído su mujer muy enferma, porque la había probado la tierra.

A lo cual dijo Vidriera:

-Mejor fuera que se la hubiera comido, si acaso es celosa.

De los músicos y de los correos de a pie decía que tenían las esperanzas y las suertes limitadas, porque los unos la acababan con llegar a serlo de a caballo, y los otros con alcanzar a ser músicos del rey. De las damas que llaman cortesanas decía que todas, o las más, tenían más de cortesanas que de sanas.

Estando un día en una iglesia vio que traían a enterrar a un viejo, a bautizar a un niño y a velar una mujer, todo a un mismo tiempo, y dijo que los templos eran campos de batalla, donde los viejos acaban, los niños vencen y las mujeres triunfan.



Picábale una vez una avispa en el cuello, y no se la osaba sacudir por no quebrarse; pero, con todo eso, se quejaba. Preguntóle uno que cómo sentía aquella avispa, si era su cuerpo de vidrio. Y respondió que aquella avispa debía de ser murmuradora, y que las lenguas y picos de los murmuradores eran bastantes a desmoronar cuerpos de bronce, no que de vidrio.

Pasando acaso un religioso muy gordo por donde él estaba, dijo uno de sus oyentes:

-De hético no se puede mover el padre.

Enojóse Vidriera, y dijo:

-Nadie se olvide de lo que dice el Espíritu Santo: *Nolite tangere christos meos*.

Y, subiéndose más en cólera, dijo que mirasen en ello, y verían que de muchos santos que de pocos años a esta parte había canonizado la Iglesia y puesto en el número de los bienaventurados, ninguno se llamaba el capitán don Fulano, ni el secretario don Tal de don Tales, ni el Conde, Marqués o Duque de tal parte, sino fray Diego, fray Jacinto, fray Raimundo, todos frailes y religiosos; porque las religiones son los Aranjueces del cielo, cuyos frutos, de ordinario, se ponen en la mesa de Dios.

Decía que las lenguas de los murmuradores eran como las plumas del águila: que roen y menoscaban todas las de las otras aves que a ellas se juntan. De los gariteros y tahúres decía milagros: decía que los gariteros eran públicos prevaricadores, porque, en sacando el barato del que iba haciendo suertes, deseaban que perdiese y pasase el naípe adelante, porque el contrario las hiciese y él cobrase sus derechos. Alababa mucho la paciencia de un tahúr, que estaba toda una noche jugando y perdiendo, y con ser de condición colérico y endemoniado, a trueco de que su contrario no se alzase, no descosía la boca, y sufría lo que un mártir de Barrabás. Alababa también las conciencias de algunos honrados gariteros que ni por imaginación consentían que en su casa se jugase otros juegos que polla y cientos; y con esto, a fuego lento, sin temor y nota de malsines, sacaban al cabo del mes más barato que los que consentían los juegos de estocada, del reparolo, siete y llevar, y pinta en la del punto.

En resolución, él decía tales cosas que, si no fuera por los grandes gritos que daba cuando le tocaban o a él se arrimaban, por el hábito que traía, por la estrechez de su comida, por el modo con que bebía, por el no querer dormir sino al cielo abierto en el verano y el invierno en los pajares, como queda dicho, con que daba tan claras señales de su locura, ninguno pudiera creer sino que era uno de los más cuerdos del mundo.

Dos años o poco más duró en esta enfermedad, porque un religioso de la Orden de San Jerónimo, que tenía gracia y ciencia particular en hacer que los mudos entendiesen y en cierta manera hablasen, y en curar locos, tomó a su

cargo de curar a Vidriera, movido de caridad; y le curó y sanó, y volvió a su primer juicio, entendimiento y discurso. Y, así como le vio sano, le vistió como letrado y le hizo volver a la Corte, adonde, con dar tantas muestras de cuerdo como las había dado de loco, podía usar su oficio y hacerse famoso por él.

Hízolo así; y, llamándose el licenciado Rueda, y no Rodaja, volvió a la Corte, donde, apenas hubo entrado, cuando fue conocido de los muchachos; mas, como le vieron en tan diferente hábito del que solía, no le osaron dar grita ni hacer preguntas; pero seguíanle y decían unos a otros:

-¿Este no es el loco Vidriera? ¡A fe que es él! Ya viene cuerdo. Pero tan bien puede ser loco bien vestido como mal vestido; preguntémosle algo, y salgamos desta confusión.

Todo esto oía el licenciado y callaba, y iba más confuso y más corrido que cuando estaba sin juicio.

Pasó el conocimiento de los muchachos a los hombres; y, antes que el licenciado llegase al patio de los Consejos, llevaba tras de sí más de docientas personas de todas suertes. Con este acompañamiento, que era más que de un catedrático, llegó al patio, donde le acabaron de circundar cuantos en él estaban. Él, viéndose con tanta turba a la redonda, alzó la voz y dijo:

-Señores, yo soy el licenciado Vidriera, pero no el que solía: soy ahora el licenciado Rueda; sucesos y desgracias que acontecen en el mundo, por permisión del cielo, me quitaron el juicio, y las misericordias de Dios me le han vuelto. Por las cosas que dicen que dije cuando loco, podéis considerar las que diré y haré cuando cuerdo. Yo soy graduado en leyes por Salamanca, adonde estudié con pobreza y adonde llevé segundo en licencias: de do se puede inferir que más la virtud que el favor me dio el grado que tengo. Aquí he venido a este gran mar de la Corte para abogar y ganar la vida; pero si no me dejáis, habré venido a bogar y granjear la muerte. Por amor de Dios que no hagáis que el seguirme sea perseguirme, y que lo que alcancé por loco, que es el sustento, lo pierda por cuerdo. Lo que solíades preguntarme en las plazas, preguntádmelo ahora en mi casa, y veréis que el que os respondía bien, según dicen, de improviso, os responderá mejor de pensado.

Escucháronle todos y dejáronle algunos. Volvióse a su posada con poco menos acompañamiento que había llevado.

Salió otro día y fue lo mismo; hizo otro sermón y no sirvió de nada. Perdía mucho y no ganaba cosa; y, viéndose morir de hambre, determinó de dejar la Corte y volverse a Flandes, donde pensaba valerse de las fuerzas de su brazo, pues no se podía valer de las de su ingenio.

Y, poniéndolo en efeto, dijo al salir de la Corte:

-¡Oh Corte, que alargas las esperanzas de los atrevidos pretendientes, y

acortas las de los virtuosos encogidos, sustentas abundantemente a los truhanes desvergonzados y matas de hambre a los discretos vergonzosos!

Esto dijo y se fue a Flandes, donde la vida que había comenzado a eternizar por las letras la acabó de eternizar por las armas, en compañía de su buen amigo el capitán Valdivia, dejando fama en su muerte de prudente y valentísimo soldado.

## La fuerza de la sangre

UNA NOCHE de las calurosas del verano, volvían de recrearse del río en Toledo un anciano hidalgo con su mujer, un niño pequeño, una hija de edad de diez y seis años y una criada. La noche era clara; la hora, las once; el camino, solo, y el paso, tardo, por no pagar con cansancio la pensión que traen consigo las holguras que en el río o en la vega se toman en Toledo.

Con la seguridad que promete la mucha justicia y bien inclinada gente de aquella ciudad, venía el buen hidalgo con su honrada familia, lejos de pensar en desastre que sucederles pudiese. Pero, como las más de las desdichas que vienen no se piensan, contra todo su pensamiento, les sucedió una que les turbó la holgura y les dio que llorar muchos años.

Hasta veinte y dos tendría un caballero de aquella ciudad a quien la riqueza, la sangre ilustre, la inclinación torcida, la libertad demasiada y las compañías libres, le hacían hacer cosas y tener atrevimientos que desdecían de su calidad y le daban renombre de atrevido. Este caballero, pues (que por ahora, por buenos respetos, encubriendo su nombre, le llamaremos con el de Rodolfo), con otros cuatro amigos suyos, todos mozos, todos alegres y todos insolentes, bajaba por la misma cuesta que el hidalgo subía.

Encontráronse los dos escuadrones: el de las ovejas con el de los lobos; y, con deshonesta desenvoltura, Rodolfo y sus camaradas, cubiertos los rostros, miraron los de la madre, y de la hija y de la criada. Alborotóse el viejo y reprochóles y afeóles su atrevimiento. Ellos le respondieron con muecas y burla, y, sin desmandarse a más, pasaron adelante. Pero la mucha hermosura del rostro que había visto Rodolfo, que era el de Leocadia, que así quieren que se llamase la hija del hidalgo, comenzó de tal manera a imprimírsele en la memoria, que le llevó tras sí la voluntad y despertó en él un deseo de gozarla a pesar de todos los inconvenientes que sucederle pudiesen. Y en un instante comunicó su pensamiento con sus camaradas, y en otro instante se resolvieron de volver y robarla, por dar gusto a Rodolfo; que siempre los ricos que dan en liberales hallan quien canonicen sus desafueros y califique por buenos sus malos gustos. Y así, el nacer el mal propósito, el comunicarle y el aprobarle y el determinarse de robar a Leocadia y el robarla, casi todo fue en un punto.

Pusiéronse los pañizuelos en los rostros, y, desenvainadas las espadas, volvieron, y a pocos pasos alcanzaron a los que no habían acabado de dar gracias a Dios, que de las manos de aquellos atrevidos les había librado.

Arremetió Rodolfo con Leocadia, y, cogiéndola en brazos, dio a huir con ella, la cual no tuvo fuerzas para defenderse, y el sobresalto le quitó la voz para quejarse, y aun la luz de los ojos, pues, desmayada y sin sentido, ni vio quién la llevaba, ni adónde la llevaban. Dio voces su padre, gritó su madre, lloró su hermanico, arañóse la criada; pero ni las voces fueron oídas, ni los gritos escuchados, ni movió a compasión el llanto, ni los araños fueron de provecho alguno, porque todo lo cubría la soledad del lugar y el callado silencio de la noche, y las crueles entrañas de los malhechores.

Finalmente, alegres se fueron los unos y tristes se quedaron los otros. Rodolfo llegó a su casa sin impedimento alguno, y los padres de Leocadia llegaron a la suya lastimados, afligidos y desesperados: ciegos, sin los ojos de su hija, que eran la lumbré de los suyos; solos, porque Leocadia era su dulce y agradable compañía; confusos, sin saber si sería bien dar noticia de su desgracia a la justicia, temerosos no fuesen ellos el principal instrumento de publicar su deshonor. Veíanse necesitados de favor, como hidalgos pobres. No sabían de quién quejarse, sino de su corta ventura. Rodolfo, en tanto, sagaz y astuto, tenía ya en su casa y en su aposento a Leocadia; a la cual, puesto que sintió que iba desmayada cuando la llevaba, la había cubierto los ojos con un pañuelo, porque no viese las calles por donde la llevaba, ni la casa ni el aposento donde estaba; en el cual, sin ser visto de nadie, a causa que él tenía un cuarto aparte en la casa de su padre, que aún vivía, y tenía de su estancia la llave y las de todo el cuarto (inadvertencia de padres que quieren tener sus hijos recogidos), antes que de su desmayo volviese Leocadia, había cumplido su deseo Rodolfo; que los ímpetus no castos de la mocedad pocas veces o ninguna reparan en comodidades y requisitos que más los inciten y levanten. Ciego de la luz del entendimiento, a oscuras robó la mejor prenda de Leocadia; y, como los pecados de la sensualidad por la mayor parte no tiran más allá la barra del término del cumplimiento dellos, quisiera luego Rodolfo que de allí se desapareciera Leocadia, y le vino a la imaginación de ponella en la calle, así desmayada como estaba. Y, yéndolo a poner en obra, sintió que volvía en sí, diciendo:

-¿Adónde estoy, desdichada? ¿Qué oscuridad es ésta, qué tinieblas me rodean? ¿Estoy en el limbo de mi inocencia o en el infierno de mis culpas? ¡Jesús!, ¿quién me toca? ¿Yo en cama, yo lastimada? ¿Escúchasme, madre y señora mía? ¿Oyesme, querido padre? ¡Ay sin ventura de mí!, que bien advierto que mis padres no me escuchan y que mis enemigos me tocan; venturosa sería yo si esta oscuridad durase para siempre, sin que mis ojos volviesen a ver la luz del mundo, y que este lugar donde ahora estoy, cualquiera que él se fuese, sirviese de sepultura a mi honra, pues es mejor la deshonor que se ignora que la honra que está puesta en opinión de las gentes. Ya me acuerdo (¡que nunca yo me

acordara!) que ha poco que venía en la compañía de mis padres; ya me acuerdo que me saltaron, ya me imagino y veo que no es bien que me vean las gentes. ¡Oh tú, cualquiera que seas, que aquí estás conmigo (y en esto tenía asido de las manos a Rodolfo), si es que tu alma admite género de ruego alguno, te ruego que, ya que has triunfado de mi fama, triunfes también de mi vida! ¡Quítamela al momento, que no es bien que la tenga la que no tiene honra! ¡Mira que el rigor de la crueldad que has usado conmigo en ofenderme se templará con la piedad que usarás en matarme; y así, en un mismo punto, vendrás a ser cruel y piadoso!

Confuso dejaron las razones de Leocadia a Rodolfo; y, como mozo poco experimentado, ni sabía qué decir ni qué hacer, cuyo silencio admiraba más a Leocadia, la cual con las manos procuraba desengañarse si era fantasma o sombra la que con ella estaba. Pero, como tocaba cuerpo y se le acordaba de la fuerza que se le había hecho, viniendo con sus padres, caía en la verdad del cuento de su desgracia. Y con este pensamiento tornó a añudar las razones que los muchos sollozos y suspiros habían interrumpido, diciendo:

-Atrevido mancebo, que de poca edad hacen tus hechos que te juzgue, yo te perdono la ofensa que me has hecho con sólo que me prometas y jures que, como la has cubierto con esta escuridad, la cubrirás con perpetuo silencio sin decirla a nadie. Poca recompensa te pido de tan grande agravio, pero para mí será la mayor que yo sabré pedirte ni tú querrás darme. Advierte en que yo nunca he visto tu rostro, ni quiero vértelo; porque, ya que se me acuerde de mi ofensa, no quiero acordarme de mi ofensor ni guardar en la memoria la imagen del autor de mi daño. Entre mí y el cielo pasarán mis quejas, sin querer que las oiga el mundo, el cual no juzga por los sucesos las cosas, sino conforme a él se le asienta en la estimación. No sé cómo te digo estas verdades, que se suelen fundar en la experiencia de muchos casos y en el discurso de muchos años, no llegando los míos a diez y siete; por do me doy a entender que el dolor de una misma manera ata y desata la lengua del afligido: unas veces exagerando su mal, para que se le crean, otras veces no diciéndole, porque no se le remedien. De cualquiera manera, que yo calle o hable, creo que he de moverte a que me creas o que me remedies, pues el no creerme será ignorancia, y el no remediarme, imposible de tener algún alivio. No quiero desesperarme, porque te costará poco el dármele; y es éste: mira, no aguardes ni confíes que el discurso del tiempo temple la justa saña que contra ti tengo, ni quieras amontonar los agravios: mientras menos me gozares, y habiéndome ya gozado, menos se encenderán tus malos deseos. Haz cuenta que me ofendiste por accidente, sin dar lugar a ningún buen discurso; yo la haré de que no nací en el mundo, o que si nací, fue para ser desdichada. Ponme luego en la calle, o a lo menos junto a la iglesia mayor, porque desde allí bien sabré volverme a mi casa; pero también has de jurar de no

seguirme, ni saberla, ni preguntarme el nombre de mis padres, ni el mío, ni de mis parientes, que, a ser tan ricos como nobles, no fueran en mí tan desdichados. Respóndeme a esto; y si temes que te pueda conocer en la habla, hágote saber que, fuera de mi padre y de mi confesor, no he hablado con hombre alguno en mi vida, y a pocos he oído hablar con tanta comunicación que pueda distinguirles por el sonido de la habla.

La respuesta que dio Rodolfo a las discretas razones de la lastimada Leocadia no fue otra que abrazarla, dando muestras que quería volver a confirmar en él su gusto y en ella su deshonra. Lo cual visto por Leocadia, con más fuerzas de las que su tierna edad prometían, se defendió con los pies, con las manos, con los dientes y con la lengua, diciéndole:

-Haz cuenta, traidor y desalmado hombre, quienquiera que seas, que los despojos que de mí has llevado son los que podiste tomar de un tronco o de una columna sin sentido, cuyo vencimiento y triunfo ha de redundar en tu infamia y menosprecio. Pero el que ahora pretendes no le has de alcanzar sino con mi muerte. Desmayada me pisaste y aniquilaste; mas, ahora que tengo bríos, antes podrás matarme que vencerme: que si ahora, despierta, sin resistencia concediese con tu abominable gusto, podrías imaginar que mi desmayo fue fingido cuando te atreviste a destruirme.

Finalmente, tan gallarda y porfiadamente se resistió Leocadia, que las fuerzas y los deseos de Rodolfo se enflaquecieron; y, como la insolencia que con Leocadia había usado no tuvo otro principio que de un ímpetu lascivo, del cual nunca nace el verdadero amor, que permanece, en lugar del ímpetu, que se pasa, queda, si no el arrepentimiento, a lo menos una tibia voluntad de segundalle. Frío, pues, y cansado Rodolfo, sin hablar palabra alguna, dejó a Leocadia en su cama y en su casa; y, cerrando el aposento, se fue a buscar a sus camaradas para aconsejarse con ellos de lo que hacer debía.

Sintió Leocadia que quedaba sola y encerrada; y, levantándose del lecho, anduvo todo el aposento, tentando las paredes con las manos, por ver si hallaba puerta por do irse o ventana por do arrojar. Halló la puerta, pero bien cerrada, y topó una ventana que pudo abrir, por donde entró el resplandor de la luna, tan claro, que pudo distinguir Leocadia los colores de unos damascos que el aposento adornaban. Vio que era dorada la cama, y tan ricamente compuesta que más parecía lecho de príncipe que de algún particular caballero. Contó las sillas y los escritorios; notó la parte donde la puerta estaba, y, aunque vio pendientes de las paredes algunas tablas, no pudo alcanzar a ver las pinturas que contenían. La ventana era grande, guarnecida y guardada de una gruesa reja; la vista caía a un jardín que también se cerraba con paredes altas; dificultades que se opusieron a la intención que de arrojar a la calle tenía. Todo lo que vio y notó de la

capacidad y ricos adornos de aquella estancia le dio a entender que el dueño della debía de ser hombre principal y rico, y no comoquiera, sino aventajadamente. En un escritorio, que estaba junto a la ventana, vio un crucifijo pequeño, todo de plata, el cual tomó y se le puso en la manga de la ropa, no por devoción ni por hurto, sino llevada de un discreto designio suyo. Hecho esto, cerró la ventana como antes estaba y volvióse al lecho, esperando qué fin tendría el mal principio de su suceso.

No habría pasado, a su parecer, media hora, cuando sintió abrir la puerta del aposento y que a ella se llegó una persona; y, sin hablarle palabra, con un pañuelo le vendó los ojos, y tomándola del brazo la sacó fuera de la estancia, y sintió que volvía a cerrar la puerta. Esta persona era Rodolfo, el cual, aunque había ido a buscar a sus camaradas, no quiso hallarlas, pareciéndole que no le estaba bien hacer testigos de lo que con aquella doncella había pasado; antes, se resolvió en decirles que, arrepentido del mal hecho y movido de sus lágrimas, la había dejado en la mitad del camino. Con este acuerdo volvió tan presto a poner a Leocadia junto a la iglesia mayor, como ella se lo había pedido, antes que amaneciese y el día le estorbase de echalla, y le forzase a tenerla en su aposento hasta la noche venidera, en el cual espacio de tiempo ni él quería volver a usar de sus fuerzas ni dar ocasión a ser conocido. Llevóla, pues, hasta la plaza que llaman de Ayuntamiento; y allí, en voz trocada y en lengua medio portuguesa y castellana, le dijo que seguramente podía irse a su casa, porque de nadie sería seguida; y, antes que ella tuviese lugar de quitarse el pañuelo, ya él se había puesto en parte donde no pudiese ser visto.

Quedó sola Leocadia, quitóse la venda, reconoció el lugar donde la dejaron. Miró a todas partes, no vio a persona; pero, sospechosa que desde lejos la siguiesen, a cada paso se detenía, dándolos hacia su casa, que no muy lejos de allí estaba. Y, por desmentir las espías, si acaso la seguían, se entró en una casa que halló abierta, y de allí a poco se fue a la suya, donde halló a sus padres atónitos y sin desnudarse, y aun sin tener pensamiento de tomar descanso alguno.

Cuando la vieron, corrieron a ella con brazos abiertos, y con lágrimas en los ojos la recibieron. Leocadia, llena de sobresalto y alboroto, hizo a sus padres que se tirasen con ella aparte, como lo hicieron; y allí, en breves palabras, les dio cuenta de todo su desastrado suceso, con todas las circunstancias dél y de la ninguna noticia que traía del salteador y robador de su honra. Díjoles lo que había visto en el teatro donde se representó la tragedia de su desventura: la ventana, el jardín, la reja, los escritorios, la cama, los damascos; y a lo último les mostró el crucifijo que había traído, ante cuya imagen se renovaron las lágrimas, se hicieron deprecaciones, se pidieron venganzas y desearon milagrosos



castigos. Dijo ansimismo que, aunque ella no deseaba venir en conocimiento de su ofensor, que si a sus padres les parecía ser bien conocelle, que por medio de aquella imagen podrían, haciendo que los sacristanes dijesen en los púlpitos de todas las parroquias de la ciudad, que el que hubiese perdido tal imagen la hallaría en poder del religioso que ellos señalasen; y que ansí, sabiendo el dueño de la imagen, se sabría la casa y aun la persona de su enemigo.

A esto replicó el padre:

-Bien habías dicho, hija, si la malicia ordinaria no se opusiera a tu discreto discurso, pues está claro que esta imagen hoy, en este día, se ha de echar menos en el aposento que dices, y el dueño della ha de tener por cierto que la persona que con él estuvo se la llevó; y, de llegar a su noticia que la tiene algún religioso, antes ha de servir de conocer quién se la dio al tal que la tiene, que no de declarar el dueño que la perdió, porque puede hacer que venga por ella otro a quien el dueño haya dado las señas. Y, siendo esto ansí, antes quedaremos confusos que informados; puesto que podamos usar del mismo artificio que sospechamos, dándola al religioso por tercera persona. Lo que has de hacer, hija, es guardarla y encomendarte a ella; que, pues ella fue testigo de tu desgracia, permitirá que haya juez que vuelva por tu justicia. Y advierte, hija, que más lastima una onza de deshonra pública que una arroba de infamia secreta. Y, pues puedes vivir honrada con Dios en público, no te pene de estar deshonrada contigo en secreto: la verdadera deshonra está en el pecado, y la verdadera honra en la virtud; con el dicho, con el deseo y con la obra se ofende a Dios; y, pues tú, ni en dicho, ni en pensamiento, ni en hecho le has ofendido, tente por honrada, que yo por tal te tendré, sin que jamás te mire sino como verdadero padre tuyo.

Con estas prudentes razones consoló su padre a Leocadia, y, abrazándola de nuevo su madre, procuró también consolarla. Ella gimió y lloró de nuevo, y se redujo a cubrir la cabeza, como dicen, y a vivir recogidamente debajo del amparo de sus padres, con vestido tan honesto como pobre.

Rodolfo, en tanto, vuelto a su casa, echando menos la imagen del crucifijo, imaginó quién podía haberla llevado; pero no se le dio nada, y, como rico, no hizo cuenta dello, ni sus padres se la pidieron cuando de allí a tres días, que él se partió a Italia, entregó por cuenta a una camarera de su madre todo lo que en el aposento dejaba.

Muchos días había que tenía Rodolfo determinado de pasar a Italia; y su padre, que había estado en ella, se lo persuadía, diciéndole que no eran caballeros los que solamente lo eran en su patria, que era menester serlo también en las ajenas. Por estas y otras razones, se dispuso la voluntad de Rodolfo de cumplir la de su padre, el cual le dio crédito de muchos dineros para Barcelona, Génova, Roma y Nápoles; y él, con dos de sus camaradas, se partió luego,

goloso de lo que había oído decir a algunos soldados de la abundancia de las hosterías de Italia y Francia, y de la libertad que en los alojamientos tenían los españoles. Sonábale bien aquel *Eco li buoni polastri, picioni, presuto e salcie*, con otros nombres deste jaez, de quien los soldados se acuerdan cuando de aquellas partes vienen a éstas y pasan por la estrechez e incomodidades de las ventas y mesones de España. Finalmente, él se fue con tan poca memoria de lo que con Leocadia le había sucedido, como si nunca hubiera pasado.

Ella, en este entretanto, pasaba la vida en casa de sus padres con el recogimiento posible, sin dejar verse de persona alguna, temerosa que su desgracia se la habían de leer en la frente. Pero a pocos meses vio serle forzoso hacer por fuerza lo que hasta allí de grado hacía. Vio que le convenía vivir retirada y escondida, porque se sintió preñada: suceso por el cual las en algún tanto olvidadas lágrimas volvieron a sus ojos, y los suspiros y lamentos comenzaron de nuevo a herir los vientos, sin ser parte la discreción de su buena madre a consolalla. Voló el tiempo, y llegóse el punto del parto, y con tanto secreto, que aun no se osó fiar de la partera; usurpando este oficio la madre, dio a la luz del mundo un niño de los hermosos que pudieran imaginarse. Con el mismo recato y secreto que había nacido, le llevaron a una aldea, donde se crió cuatro años, al cabo de los cuales, con nombre de sobrino, le trujo su abuela a su casa, donde se criaba, si no muy rica, a lo menos muy virtuosamente.

Era el niño (a quien pusieron nombre Luis, por llamarse así su abuelo), de rostro hermoso, de condición mansa, de ingenio agudo, y, en todas las acciones que en aquella edad tierna podía hacer, daba señales de ser de algún noble padre engendrado; y de tal manera su gracia, belleza y discreción enamoraron a sus abuelos, que vinieron a tener por dicha la desdicha de su hija por haberles dado tal nieto. Cuando iba por la calle, llovían sobre él millares de bendiciones: unos bendecían su hermosura, otros la madre que lo había parido, éstos el padre que le engendró, aquéllos a quien tan bien criado le criaba. Con este aplauso de los que le conocían y no conocían, llegó el niño a la edad de siete años, en la cual ya sabía leer latín y romance y escribir formada y muy buena letra; porque la intención de sus abuelos era hacerle virtuoso y sabio, ya que no le podían hacer rico; como si la sabiduría y la virtud no fuesen las riquezas sobre quien no tienen jurisdicción los ladrones, ni la que llaman Fortuna.

Sucedió, pues, que un día que el niño fue con un recaudo de su abuela a una parienta suya, acertó a pasar por una calle donde había carrera de caballeros. Púsose a mirar, y, por mejorarse de puesto, pasó de una parte a otra, a tiempo que no pudo huir de ser atropellado de un caballo, a cuyo dueño no fue posible detenerle en la furia de su carrera. Pasó por encima dél, y dejóle como muerto, tendido en el suelo, derramando mucha sangre de la cabeza. Apenas esto hubo

sucedido, cuando un caballero anciano que estaba mirando la carrera, con no vista ligereza se arrojó de su caballo y fue donde estaba el niño; y, quitándole de los brazos de uno que ya le tenía, le puso en los suyos, y, sin tener cuenta con sus canas ni con su autoridad, que era mucha, a paso largo se fue a su casa, ordenando a sus criados que le dejasen y fuesen a buscar un cirujano que al niño curase. Muchos caballeros le siguieron, lastimados de la desgracia de tan hermoso niño, porque luego salió la voz que el atropellado era Luisico, el sobrino del tal caballero, nombrando a su abuelo. Esta voz corrió de boca en boca hasta que llegó a los oídos de sus abuelos y de su encubierta madre; los cuales, certificados bien del caso, como desatinados y locos, salieron a buscar a su querido; y por ser tan conocido y tan principal el caballero que le había llevado, muchos de los que encontraron les dijeron su casa, a la cual llegaron a tiempo que ya estaba el niño en poder del cirujano.

El caballero y su mujer, dueños de la casa, pidieron a los que pensaron ser sus padres que no llorasen ni alzasen la voz a quejarse, porque no le sería al niño de ningún provecho. El cirujano, que era famoso, habiéndole curado con grandísimo tiento y maestría, dijo que no era tan mortal la herida como él al principio había temido. En la mitad de la cura volvió Luis a su acuerdo, que hasta allí había estado sin él, y alegróse en ver a sus tíos, los cuales le preguntaron llorando que cómo se sentía. Respondió que bueno, sino que le dolía mucho el cuerpo y la cabeza. Mandó el médico que no hablasen con él, sino que le dejasen reposar. Hízose así, y su abuelo comenzó a agradecer al señor de la casa la gran caridad que con su sobrino había usado. A lo cual respondió el caballero que no tenía qué agradecerle, porque le hacía saber que, cuando vio al niño caído y atropellado, le pareció que había visto el rostro de un hijo suyo, a quien él quería tiernamente, y que esto le movió a tomarle en sus brazos y traerle a su casa, donde estaría todo el tiempo que la cura durase, con el regalo que fuese posible y necesario. Su mujer, que era una noble señora, dijo lo mismo y hizo aun más encarecidas promesas.

Admirados quedaron de tanta cristiandad los abuelos, pero la madre quedó más admirada; porque, habiendo con las nuevas del cirujano sosegádose algún tanto su alborotado espíritu, miró atentamente el aposento donde su hijo estaba, y claramente, por muchas señales, conoció que aquella era la estancia donde se había dado fin a su honra y principio a su desventura; y, aunque no estaba adornada de los damascos que entonces tenía, conoció la disposición della, vio la ventana de la reja que caía al jardín; y, por estar cerrada a causa del herido, preguntó si aquella ventana respondía a algún jardín, y fuele respondido que sí; pero lo que más conoció fue que aquélla era la misma cama que tenía por tumba de su sepultura; y más, que el propio escritorio, sobre el cual estaba la imagen

que había traído, se estaba en el mismo lugar.

Finalmente, sacaron a luz la verdad de todas sus sospechas los escalones, que ella había contado cuando la sacaron del aposento tapados los ojos (digo los escalones que había desde allí a la calle, que con advertencia discreta contó). Y, cuando volvió a su casa, dejando a su hijo, los volvió a contar y halló cabal el número. Y, confiriendo unas señales con otras, de todo punto certificó por verdadera su imaginación, de la cual dio por estenso cuenta a su madre, que, como discreta, se informó si el caballero donde su nieto estaba había tenido o tenía algún hijo. Y halló que el que llamamos Rodolfo lo era, y que estaba en Italia; y, tanteando el tiempo que le dijeron que había faltado de España, vio que eran los mismos siete años que el nieto tenía.

Dio aviso de todo esto a su marido, y entre los dos y su hija acordaron de esperar lo que Dios hacía del herido, el cual dentro de quince días estuvo fuera de peligro y a los treinta se levantó; en todo el cual tiempo fue visitado de la madre y de la abuela, y regalado de los dueños de la casa como si fuera su mismo hijo. Y algunas veces, hablando con Leocadia doña Estefanía, que así se llamaba la mujer del caballero, le decía que aquel niño parecía tanto a un hijo suyo que estaba en Italia, que ninguna vez le miraba que no le pareciese ver a su hijo delante. Destas razones tomó ocasión de decirle una vez, que se halló sola con ella, las que con acuerdo de sus padres había determinado de decille, que fueron éstas o otras semejantes:

-El día, señora, que mis padres oyeron decir que su sobrino estaba tan malparado, creyeron y pensaron que se les había cerrado el cielo y caído todo el mundo auestas. Imaginaron que ya les faltaba la lumbre de sus ojos y el báculo de su vejez, faltándoles este sobrino, a quien ellos quieren con amor de tal manera, que con muchas ventajas excede al que suelen tener otros padres a sus hijos. Mas, como decirse suele, que cuando Dios da la llaga da la medicina, la halló el niño en esta casa, y yo en ella el acuerdo de unas memorias que no las podré olvidar mientras la vida me durare. Yo, señora, soy noble porque mis padres lo son y lo han sido todos mis antepasados, que, con una medianía de los bienes de fortuna, han sustentado su honra felizmente dondequiera que han vivido.

Admirada y suspensa estaba doña Estefanía, escuchando las razones de Leocadia, y no podía creer, aunque lo veía, que tanta discreción pudiese encerrarse en tan pocos años, puesto que, a su parecer, la juzgaba por de veinte, poco más a menos. Y, sin decirle ni replicarle palabra, esperó todas las que quiso decirle, que fueron aquellas que bastaron para contarle la travesura de su hijo, la deshonra suya, el robo, el cubrirle los ojos, el traerla a aquel aposento, las señales en que había conocido ser aquel mismo que sospechaba. Para cuya

confirmación sacó del pecho la imagen del crucifijo que había llevado, a quien dijo:

-Tú, Señor, que fuiste testigo de la fuerza que se me hizo, sé juez de la enmienda que se me debe hacer. De encima de aquel escritorio te llevé con propósito de acordarte siempre mi agravio, no para pedirte venganza dél, que no la pretendo, sino para rogarte me diceses algún consuelo con que llevar en paciencia mi desgracia.

»Este niño, señora, con quien habéis mostrado el extremo de vuestra caridad, es vuestro verdadero nieto. Permisi6n fue del cielo el haberle atropellado, para que, trayéndole a vuestra casa, hallase yo en ella, como espero que he de hallar, si no el remedio que mejor convenga, y cuando no con mi desventura, a lo menos el medio con que pueda sobrellevalla.

Diciendo esto, abrazada con el crucifijo, cayó desmayada en los brazos de Estefanía, la cual, en fin, como mujer y noble, en quien la compasi6n y misericordia suele ser tan natural como la crueldad en el hombre, apenas vio el desmayo de Leocadia, cuando juntó su rostro con el suyo, derramando sobre él tantas lágrimas que no fue menester esparcirle otra agua encima para que Leocadia en sí volviese.

Estando las dos desta manera, acertó a entrar el caballero marido de Estefanía, que traía a Luisico de la mano; y, viendo el llanto de Estefanía y el desmayo de Leocadia, preguntó a gran priesa le dijesen la causa de do procedía. El niño abrazaba a su madre por su prima y a su abuela por su bienhechora, y asimismo preguntaba por qué lloraban.

-Grandes cosas, señor, hay que deciros -respondió Estefanía a su marido-, cuyo remate se acabará con deciros que hagáis cuenta que esta desmayada es hija vuestra y este niño vuestro nieto. Esta verdad que os digo me ha dicho esta niña, y la ha confirmado y confirma el rostro deste niño, en el cual entrambos habemos visto el de nuestro hijo.

-Si más no os declaráis, señora, yo no os entiendo -replicó el caballero.

En esto volvió en sí Leocadia, y, abrazada del crucifijo, parecía estar convertida en un mar de llanto. Todo lo cual tenía puesto en gran confusi6n al caballero, de la cual salió contándole su mujer todo aquello que Leocadia le había contado; y él lo creyó, por divina permisi6n del cielo, como si con muchos y verdaderos testigos se lo hubieran probado. Consoló y abrazó a Leocadia, besó a su nieto, y aquel mismo día despacharon un correo a Nápoles, avisando a su hijo se viniese luego, porque le tenían concertado casamiento con una mujer hermosa sobremanera y tal cual para él convenía. No consintieron que Leocadia ni su hijo volviesen más a la casa de sus padres, los cuales, contentísimos del buen suceso de su hija, daban sin cesar infinitas gracias a Dios por ello.

Llegó el correo a Nápoles, y Rodolfo, con la golosina de gozar tan hermosa mujer como su padre le significaba, de allí a dos días que recibió la carta, ofreciéndosele ocasión de cuatro galeras que estaban a punto de venir a España, se embarcó en ellas con sus dos camaradas, que aún no le habían dejado, y con próspero suceso en doce días llegó a Barcelona, y de allí, por la posta, en otros siete se puso en Toledo y entró en casa de su padre, tan galán y tan bizarro, que los extremos de la gala y de la bizarría estaban en él todos juntos.

Alegráronse sus padres con la salud y bienvenida de su hijo. Suspendióse Leocadia, que de parte escondida le miraba, por no salir de la traza y orden que doña Estefanía le había dado. Las camaradas de Rodolfo quisieran irse a sus casas luego, pero no lo consintió Estefanía por haberlos menester para su designio. Estaba cerca la noche cuando Rodolfo llegó, y, en tanto que se aderezaba la cena, Estefanía llamó aparte las camaradas de su hijo, creyendo, sin duda alguna, que ellos debían de ser los dos de los tres que Leocadia había dicho que iban con Rodolfo la noche que la robaron, y con grandes ruegos les pidió le dijese si se acordaban que su hijo había robado a una mujer tal noche, tanto años había; porque el saber la verdad desto importaba la honra y el sosiego de todos sus parientes. Y con tales y tantos encarecimientos se lo supo rogar, y de tal manera les asegurar que de descubrir este robo no les podía suceder daño alguno, que ellos tuvieron por bien de confesar ser verdad que una noche de verano, yendo ellos dos y otro amigo con Rodolfo, robaron en la misma que ella señalaba a una muchacha, y que Rodolfo se había venido con ella, mientras ellos detenían a la gente de su familia, que con voces la querían defender, y que otro día les había dicho Rodolfo que la había llevado a su casa; y sólo esto era lo que podían responder a lo que les preguntaban.

La confesión destos dos fue echar la llave a todas las dudas que en tal caso le podían ofrecer; y así, determinó de llevar al cabo su buen pensamiento, que fue éste: poco antes que se sentasen a cenar, se entró en un aposento a solas su madre con Rodolfo, y, poniéndole un retrato en las manos, le dijo:

-Yo quiero, Rodolfo hijo, darte una gustosa cena con mostrarte a tu esposa: éste es su verdadero retrato, pero quíerote advertir que lo que le falta de belleza le sobra de virtud; es noble y discreta y medianamente rica, y, pues tu padre y yo te la hemos escogido, asegúrate que es la que te conviene.

Atentamente miró Rodolfo el retrato, y dijo:

-Si los pintores, que ordinariamente suelen ser pródigos de la hermosura con los rostros que retratan, lo han sido también con éste, sin duda creo que el original debe de ser la misma fealdad. A la fe, señora y madre mía, justo es y bueno que los hijos obedezcan a sus padres en cuanto les mandaren; pero también es conveniente, y mejor, que los padres den a sus hijos el estado de que

más gustaren. Y, pues el del matrimonio es nudo que no le desata sino la muerte, bien será que sus lazos sean iguales y de unos mismos hilos fabricados. La virtud, la nobleza, la discreción y los bienes de la fortuna bien pueden alegrar el entendimiento de aquel a quien le cupieron en suerte con su esposa; pero que la fealdad della alegre los ojos del esposo, paréceme imposible. Mozo soy, pero bien se me entiende que se compadece con el sacramento del matrimonio el justo y debido deleite que los casados gozan, y que si él falta, cojea el matrimonio y desdice de su segunda intención. Pues pensar que un rostro feo, que se ha de tener a todas horas delante de los ojos, en la sala, en la mesa y en la cama, pueda deleitar, otra vez digo que lo tengo por casi imposible. Por vida de vuesa merced, madre mía, que me dé compañera que me entretenga y no enfade; porque, sin torcer a una o a otra parte, igualmente y por camino derecho llevemos ambos a dos el yugo donde el cielo nos pusiere. Si esta señora es noble, discreta y rica, como vuesa merced dice, no le faltará esposo que sea de diferente humor que el mío: unos hay que buscan nobleza, otros discreción, otros dineros y otros hermosura; y yo soy destos últimos. Porque la nobleza, gracias al cielo y a mis pasados y a mis padres, que me la dejaron por herencia; discreción, como una mujer no sea necia, tonta o boba, bástale que ni por aguda despunte ni por boba no aproveche; de las riquezas, también las de mis padres me hacen no estar temeroso de venir a ser pobre. La hermosura busco, la belleza quiero, no con otra dote que con la de la honestidad y buenas costumbres; que si esto trae mi esposa, yo serviré a Dios con gusto y daré buena vejez a mis padres.

Contentísima quedó su madre de las razones de Rodolfo, por haber conocido por ellas que iba saliendo bien con su designio. Respondióle que ella procuraría casarle conforme su deseo, que no tuviese pena alguna, que era fácil deshacerse los conciertos que de casarle con aquella señora estaban hechos. Agradecióselo Rodolfo, y, por ser llegada la hora de cenar, se fueron a la mesa. Y, habiéndose ya sentado a ella el padre y la madre, Rodolfo y sus dos camaradas, dijo doña Estefanía al descuido:

-¡Pecadora de mí, y qué bien que trato a mi huésped! Andad vos -dijo a un criado-, decid a la señora doña Leocadia que, sin entrar en cuentas con su mucha honestidad, nos venga a honrar esta mesa, que los que a ella están todos son mis hijos y sus servidores.

Todo esto era traza suya, y de todo lo que había de hacer estaba avisada y advertida Leocadia. Poco tardó en salir Leocadia y dar de sí la improvisa y más hermosa muestra que pudo dar jamás compuesta y natural hermosura.

Venía vestida, por ser invierno, de una saya entera de terciopelo negro, llovida de botones de oro y perlas, cintura y collar de diamantes. Sus mismos cabellos, que eran luengos y no demasadamente rubios, le servían de adorno y tocas, cuya

invención de lazos y rizos y vislumbres de diamantes que con ellas se entretejían, turbaban la luz de los ojos que los miraban. Era Leocadia de gentil disposición y brío; traía de la mano a su hijo, y delante della venían dos doncellas, alumbrándola con dos velas de cera en dos candeleros de plata.

Levantáronse todos a hacerla reverencia, como si fuera a alguna cosa del cielo que allí milagrosamente se había aparecido. Ninguno de los que allí estaban embebecidos mirándola parece que, de atónitos, no acertaron a decirle palabra. Leocadia, con airosa gracia y discreta crianza, se humilló a todos; y, tomándola de la mano Estefanía la sentó junto a sí, frontero de Rodolfo. Al niño sentaron junto a su abuelo.

Rodolfo, que desde más cerca miraba la incomparable belleza de Leocadia, decía entre sí: «Si la mitad desta hermosura tuviera la que mi madre me tiene escogida por esposa, tuviérame yo por el más dichoso hombre del mundo. ¡Válame Dios! ¿Qué es esto que veo? ¿Es por ventura algún ángel humano el que estoy mirando?» Y en esto, se le iba entrando por los ojos a tomar posesión de su alma la hermosa imagen de Leocadia, la cual, en tanto que la cena venía, viendo también tan cerca de sí al que ya quería más que a la luz de los ojos, con que alguna vez a hurto le miraba, comenzó a revolver en su imaginación lo que con Rodolfo había pasado. Comenzaron a enflaquecerse en su alma las esperanzas que de ser su esposo su madre le había dado, temiendo que a la cortedad de su ventura habían de corresponder las promesas de su madre. Consideraba cuán cerca estaba de ser dichosa o sin dicha para siempre. Y fue la consideración tan intensa y los pensamientos tan revueltos, que le apretaron el corazón de manera que comenzó a sudar y a perderse de color en un punto, sobreviniéndole un desmayo que le forzó a reclinar la cabeza en los brazos de doña Estefanía, que, como ansí la vio, con turbación la recibió en ellos.

Sobresaltáronse todos, y, dejando la mesa, acudieron a remediarla. Pero el que dio más muestras de sentirlo fue Rodolfo, pues por llegar presto a ella tropezó y cayó dos veces. Ni por desabrocharla ni echarla agua en el rostro volvía en sí; antes, el levantado pecho y el pulso, que no se le hallaban, iban dando precisas señales de su muerte; y las criadas y criados de casa, como menos considerados, dieron voces y la publicaron por muerta. Estas amargas nuevas llegaron a los oídos de los padres de Leocadia, que para más gustosa ocasión los tenía doña Estefanía escondidos. Los cuales, con el cura de la parroquia, que ansimismo con ellos estaba, rompiendo el orden de Estefanía, salieron a la sala.

Llegó el cura presto, por ver si por algunas señales daba indicios de arrepentirse de sus pecados, para absolverla dellos; y donde pensó hallar un desmayado halló dos, porque ya estaba Rodolfo, puesto el rostro sobre el pecho de Leocadia. Diole su madre lugar que a ella llegase, como a cosa que había de



ser suya; pero, cuando vio que también estaba sin sentido, estuvo a pique de perder el suyo, y le perdiera si no viera que Rodolfo tornaba en sí, como volvió, corrido de que le hubiesen visto hacer tan estremados estremos.

Pero su madre, casi como adivina de lo que su hijo sentía, le dijo:

-No te corras, hijo, de los estremos que has hecho, sino córrete de los que no hicieres cuando sepas lo que no quiero tenerte más encubierto, puesto que pensaba dejarlo hasta más alegre coyuntura. Has de saber, hijo de mi alma, que esta desmayada que en los brazos tengo es tu verdadera esposa: llamo verdadera porque yo y tu padre te la teníamos escogida, que la del retrato es falsa.

Cuando esto oyó Rodolfo, llevado de su amoroso y encendido deseo, y quitándole el nombre de esposo todos los estorbos que la honestidad y decencia del lugar le podían poner, se abalanzó al rostro de Leocadia, y, juntando su boca con la della, estaba como esperando que se le saliese el alma para darle acogida en la suya. Pero, cuando más las lágrimas de todos por lástima crecían, y por dolor las voces se aumentaban, y los cabellos y barbas de la madre y padre de Leocadia arrancados venían a menos, y los gritos de su hijo penetraban los cielos, volvió en sí Leocadia, y con su vuelta volvió la alegría y el contento que de los pechos de los circunstantes se había ausentado.

Hallóse Leocadia entre los brazos de Rodolfo, y quisiera con honesta fuerza desasirse dellos; pero él le dijo:

-No, señora, no ha de ser así. No es bien que punéis por apartaros de los brazos de aquel que os tiene en el alma.

A esta razón acabó de todo en todo de cobrar Leocadia sus sentidos, y acabó doña Estefanía de no llevar más adelante su determinación primera, diciendo al cura que luego luego desposase a su hijo con Leocadia. Él lo hizo así, que por haber sucedido este caso en tiempo cuando con sola la voluntad de los contrayentes, sin las diligencias y prevenciones justas y santas que ahora se usan, quedaba hecho el matrimonio, no hubo dificultad que impidiese el desposorio. El cual hecho, déjese a otra pluma y a otro ingenio más delicado que el mío el contar la alegría universal de todos los que en él se hallaron: los abrazos que los padres de Leocadia dieron a Rodolfo, las gracias que dieron al cielo y a sus padres, los ofrecimientos de las partes, la admiración de las camaradas de Rodolfo, que tan impensadamente vieron la misma noche de su llegada tan hermoso desposorio, y más cuando supieron, por contarle delante de todos doña Estefanía, que Leocadia era la doncella que en su compañía su hijo había robado, de que no menos suspenso quedó Rodolfo. Y, por certificarse más de aquella verdad, preguntó a Leocadia le dijese alguna señal por donde viniese en conocimiento entero de lo que no dudaba, por parecerles que sus padres lo tendrían bien averiguado. Ella respondió:

-Cuando yo recordé y volví en mí de otro desmayo, me hallé, señor, en vuestros brazos sin honra; pero yo lo doy por bien empleado, pues, al volver del que ahora he tenido, ansimismo me hallé en los brazos de entonces, pero honrada. Y si esta señal no basta, baste la de una imagen de un crucifijo que nadie os la pudo hurtar sino yo, si es que por la mañana le echastes menos y si es el mismo que tiene mi señora.

-Vos lo sois de mi alma, y lo seréis los años que Dios ordenare, bien mío.

Y, abrazándola de nuevo, de nuevo volvieron las bendiciones y parabienes que les dieron.

Vino la cena, y vinieron músicos que para esto estaban prevenidos. Viose Rodolfo a sí mismo en el espejo del rostro de su hijo; lloraron sus cuatro abuelos de gusto; no quedó rincón en toda la casa que no fuese visitado del júbilo, del contento y de la alegría. Y, aunque la noche volaba con sus ligeras y negras alas, le parecía a Rodolfo que iba y caminaba no con alas, sino con muletas: tan grande era el deseo de verse a solas con su querida esposa.

Llegóse, en fin, la hora deseada, porque no hay fin que no le tenga. Fuéronse a acostar todos, quedó toda la casa sepultada en silencio, en el cual no quedará la verdad deste cuento, pues no lo consentirán los muchos hijos y la ilustre descendencia que en Toledo dejaron, y agora viven, estos dos venturosos desposados, que muchos y felices años gozaron de sí mismos, de sus hijos y de sus nietos, permitido todo por el cielo y por *la fuerza de la sangre*, que vio derramada en el suelo el valeroso, ilustre y cristiano abuelo de Luisico.

## El celoso extremeño

NO HA MUCHOS años que de un lugar de Estremadura salió un hidalgo, nacido de padres nobles, el cual, como un otro Pródigo, por diversas partes de España, Italia y Flandes anduvo gastando así los años como la hacienda; y, al fin de muchas peregrinaciones, muertos ya sus padres y gastado su patrimonio, vino a parar a la gran ciudad de Sevilla, donde halló ocasión muy bastante para acabar de consumir lo poco que le quedaba. Viéndose, pues, tan falto de dineros, y aun no con muchos amigos, se acogió al remedio a que otros muchos perdidos en aquella ciudad se acogen, que es el pasarse a las Indias, refugio y amparo de los desesperados de España, iglesia de los alzados, salvoconduto de los homicidas, pala y cubierta de los jugadores (a quien llaman *ciertos* los peritos en el arte), ñagaza general de mujeres libres, engaño común de muchos y remedio particular de pocos.

En fin, llegado el tiempo en que una flota se partía para Tierrafirme, acomodándose con el almirante della, aderezó su matalotaje y su mortaja de esparto; y, embarcándose en Cádiz, echando la bendición a España, zarpó la flota, y con general alegría dieron las velas al viento, que blando y próspero soplabá, el cual en pocas horas les encubrió la tierra y les descubrió las anchas y espaciosas llanuras del gran padre de las aguas, el mar Océano.

Iba nuestro pasajero pensativo, revolviendo en su memoria los muchos y diversos peligros que en los años de su peregrinación había pasado, y el mal gobierno que en todo el discurso de su vida había tenido; y sacaba de la cuenta que a sí mismo se iba tomando una firme resolución de mudar manera de vida, y de tener otro estilo en guardar la hacienda que Dios fuese servido de darle, y de proceder con más recato que hasta allí con las mujeres.

La flota estaba como en calma cuando pasaba consigo esta tormenta Felipe de Carrizales, que éste es el nombre del que ha dado materia a nuestra novela. Tornó a soplar el viento, impeliendo con tanta fuerza los navíos, que no dejó a nadie en sus asientos; y así, le fue forzoso a Carrizales dejar sus imaginaciones, y dejarse llevar de solos los cuidados que el viaje le ofrecía; el cual viaje fue tan próspero que, sin recibir algún revés ni contraste, llegaron al puerto de Cartagena. Y, por concluir con todo lo que no hace a nuestro propósito, digo que la edad que tenía Filipo cuando pasó a las Indias sería de cuarenta y ocho años; y en veinte que en ellas estuvo, ayudado de su industria y diligencia, alcanzó a tener más de ciento y cincuenta mil pesos ensayados.

Viéndose, pues, rico y próspero, tocado del natural deseo que todos tienen de volver a su patria, pospuestos grandes intereses que se le ofrecían, dejando el Pirú, donde había granjeado tanta hacienda, trayéndola toda en barras de oro y plata, y registrada, por quitar inconvenientes, se volvió a España. Desembarcó en Sanlúcar; llegó a Sevilla, tan lleno de años como de riquezas; sacó sus partidas sin zozobras; buscó sus amigos: hallólos todos muertos; quiso partirse a su tierra, aunque ya había tenido nuevas que ningún pariente le había dejado la muerte. Y si cuando iba a Indias, pobre y menesteroso, le iban combatiendo muchos pensamientos, sin dejarle sosegar un punto en mitad de las ondas del mar, no menos ahora en el sosiego de la tierra le combatían, aunque por diferente causa: que si entonces no dormía por pobre, ahora no podía sosegar de rico; que tan pesada carga es la riqueza al que no está usado a tenerla ni sabe usar della, como lo es la pobreza al que continuo la tiene. Cuidados acarrea el oro y cuidados la falta dél; pero los unos se remedian con alcanzar alguna mediana cantidad, y los otros se aumentan mientras más parte se alcanzan.

Contemplaba Carrizales en sus barras, no por miserable, porque en algunos años que fue soldado aprendió a ser liberal, sino en lo que había de hacer dellas, a causa que tenerlas en ser era cosa infrutuosa, y tenerlas en casa, cebo para los codiciosos y despertador para los ladrones.

Habíase muerto en él la gana de volver al inquieto trato de las mercancías, y parecíale que, conforme a los años que tenía, le sobraban dineros para pasar la vida, y quisiera pasarla en su tierra y dar en ella su hacienda a tributo, pasando en ella los años de su vejez en quietud y sosiego, dando a Dios lo que podía, pues había dado al mundo más de lo que debía. Por otra parte, consideraba que la estrechez de su patria era mucha y la gente muy pobre, y que el irse a vivir a ella era ponerse por blanco de todas las importunidades que los pobres suelen dar al rico que tienen por vecino, y más cuando no hay otro en el lugar a quien acudir con sus miserias. Quisiera tener a quien dejar sus bienes después de sus días, y con este deseo tomaba el pulso a su fortaleza, y parecíale que aún podía llevar la carga del matrimonio; y, en viniéndole este pensamiento, le sobresaltaba un tan gran miedo, que así se le desbarataba y deshacía como hace a la niebla el viento; porque de su natural condición era el más celoso hombre del mundo, aun sin estar casado, pues con sólo la imaginación de serlo le comenzaban a ofender los celos, a fatigar las sospechas y a sobresaltar las imaginaciones; y esto con tanta eficacia y vehemencia, que de todo en todo propuso de no casarse.

Y, estando resuelto en esto, y no lo estando en lo que había de hacer de su vida, quiso su suerte que, pasando un día por una calle, alzase los ojos y viese a una ventana puesta una doncella, al parecer de edad de trece a catorce años, de

tan agradable rostro y tan hermosa que, sin ser poderoso para defenderse, el buen viejo Carrizales rindió la flaqueza de sus muchos años a los pocos de Leonora, que así era el nombre de la hermosa doncella. Y luego, sin más detenerse, comenzó a hacer un gran montón de discursos; y, hablando consigo mismo, decía:

-Esta muchacha es hermosa, y a lo que muestra la presencia desta casa, no debe de ser rica; ella es niña, sus pocos años pueden asegurar mis sospechas; casarme he con ella; encerraréla y haréla a mis mañas, y con esto no tendrá otra condición que aquella que yo le enseñare. Y no soy tan viejo que pueda perder la esperanza de tener hijos que me hereden. De que tenga dote o no, no hay para qué hacer caso, pues el cielo me dio para todos; y los ricos no han de buscar en sus matrimonios hacienda, sino gusto: que el gusto alarga la vida, y los disgustos entre los casados la acortan. Alto, pues: echada está la suerte, y ésta es la que el cielo quiere que yo tenga.

Y así hecho este soliloquio, no una vez, sino ciento, al cabo de algunos días habló con los padres de Leonora, y supo como, aunque pobres, eran nobles; y, dándoles cuenta de su intención y de la calidad de su persona y hacienda, les rogó le diesen por mujer a su hija. Ellos le pidieron tiempo para informarse de lo que decía, y que él también le tendría para enterarse ser verdad lo que de su nobleza le habían dicho. Despidiéronse, informáronse las partes, y hallaron ser así lo que entrambos dijeron; y, finalmente, Leonora quedó por esposa de Carrizales, habiéndola dotado primero en veinte mil ducados: tal estaba de abrasado el pecho del celoso viejo. El cual, apenas dio el sí de esposo, cuando de golpe le embistió un tropel de rabiosos celos, y comenzó sin causa alguna a temblar y a tener mayores cuidados que jamás había tenido. Y la primera muestra que dio de su condición celosa fue no querer que sastre alguno tomase la medida a su esposa de los muchos vestidos que pensaba hacerle; y así, anduvo mirando cuál otra mujer tendría, poco más a menos, el talle y cuerpo de Leonora, y halló una pobre, a cuya medida hizo hacer una ropa, y, probándosela su esposa, halló que le venía bien; y por aquella medida hizo los demás vestidos, que fueron tantos y tan ricos, que los padres de la desposada se tuvieron por más que dichosos en haber acertado con tan buen yerno, para remedio suyo y de su hija. La niña estaba asombrada de ver tantas galas, a causa que las que ella en su vida se había puesto no pasaban de una saya de raja y una ropilla de tafetán.

La segunda señal que dio Filipo fue no querer juntarse con su esposa hasta tenerla puesta casa aparte, la cual aderezó en esta forma: compró una en doce mil ducados, en un barrio principal de la ciudad, que tenía agua de pie y jardín con muchos naranjos; cerró todas las ventanas que miraban a la calle y dioles vista al cielo, y lo mismo hizo de todas las otras de casa. En el portal de la calle,

que en Sevilla llaman *casapuerta*, hizo una caballeriza para una mula, y encima della un pajar y apartamiento donde estuviese el que había de curar della, que fue un negro viejo y eunuco; levantó las paredes de las azuteas de tal manera, que el que entraba en la casa había de mirar al cielo por línea recta, sin que pudiesen ver otra cosa; hizo torno que de la casapuerta respondía al patio.

Compró un rico menaje para adornar la casa, de modo que por tapicerías, estrados y doseles ricos mostraba ser de un gran señor. Compró, asimismo, cuatro esclavas blancas, y herrólas en el rostro, y otras dos negras bozales. Concertóse con un despensero que le trujese y comprase de comer, con condición que no durmiese en casa ni entrase en ella sino hasta el torno, por el cual había de dar lo que trujese. Hecho esto, dio parte de su hacienda a censo, situada en diversas y buenas partes, otra puso en el banco, y quedóse con alguna, para lo que se le ofreciese. Hizo, asimismo, llave maestra para toda la casa, y encerró en ella todo lo que suele comprarse en junto y en sus sazones, para la provisión de todo el año; y, teniéndolo todo así aderezado y compuesto, se fue a casa de sus suegros y pidió a su mujer, que se la entregaron no con pocas lágrimas, porque les pareció que la llevaban a la sepultura.

La tierna Leonora aún no sabía lo que la había acontecido; y así, llorando con sus padres, les pidió su bendición, y, despidiéndose dellos, rodeada de sus esclavas y criadas, asida de la mano de su marido, se vino a su casa; y, en entrando en ella, les hizo Carrizales un sermón a todas, encargándoles la guarda de Leonora y que por ninguna vía ni en ningún modo dejasen entrar a nadie de la segunda puerta adentro, aunque fuese al negro eunuco. Y a quien más encargó la guarda y regalo de Leonora fue a una dueña de mucha prudencia y gravedad, que recibió como para aya de Leonora, y para que fuese superintendente de todo lo que en la casa se hiciese, y para que mandase a las esclavas y a otras dos doncellas de la misma edad de Leonora, que para que se entretuviese con las de sus mismos años asimismo había recibido. Prometióles que las trataría y regalaría a todas de manera que no sintiesen su encerramiento, y que los días de fiesta, todos, sin faltar ninguno, irían a oír misa; pero tan de mañana, que apenas tuviese la luz lugar de verlas. Prometiéronle las criadas y esclavas de hacer todo aquello que les mandaba, sin pesadumbre, con prompta voluntad y buen ánimo. Y la nueva esposa, encogiendo los hombros, bajó la cabeza y dijo que ella no tenía otra voluntad que la de su esposo y señor, a quien estaba siempre obediente.

Hecha esta prevención y recogido el buen estremeño en su casa, comenzó a gozar como pudo los frutos del matrimonio, los cuales a Leonora, como no tenía experiencia de otros, ni eran gustosos ni desabridos; y así, pasaba el tiempo con su dueña, doncellas y esclavas, y ellas, por pasarle mejor, dieron en ser golosas,

y pocos días se pasaban sin hacer mil cosas a quien la miel y el azúcar hacen sabrosas. Sobrábales para esto en grande abundancia lo que habían menester, y no menos sobraba en su amo la voluntad de dárselo, pareciéndole que con ello las tenía entretenidas y ocupadas, sin tener lugar donde ponerse a pensar en su encerramiento.

Leonora andaba a lo igual con sus criadas, y se entretenía en lo mismo que ellas, y aun dio con su simplicidad en hacer muñecas y en otras niñerías, que mostraban la llaneza de su condición y la terneza de sus años; todo lo cual era de grandísima satisfacción para el celoso marido, pareciéndole que había acertado a escoger la vida mejor que se la supo imaginar, y que por ninguna vía la industria ni la malicia humana podía perturbar su sosiego. Y así, sólo se desvelaba en traer regalos a su esposa y en acordarle le pidiese todos cuantos le viniesen al pensamiento, que de todos sería servida. Los días que iba a misa, que, como está dicho, era entre dos luces, venían sus padres y en la iglesia hablaban a su hija, delante de su marido, el cual les daba tantas dádivas que, aunque tenían lástima a su hija por la estrechez en que vivía, la templaban con las muchas dádivas que Carrizales, su liberal yerno, les daba.

Levantábase de mañana y aguardaba a que el despensero viniese, a quien de la noche antes, por una cédula que ponían en el torno, le avisaban lo que había de traer otro día; y, en viniendo el despensero, salía de casa Carrizales, las más veces a pie, dejando cerradas las dos puertas, la de la calle y la de en medio, y entre las dos quedaba el negro. Íbase a sus negocios, que eran pocos, y con brevedad daba la vuelta; y, encerrándose, se entretenía en regalar a su esposa y acariciar a sus criadas, que todas le querían bien, por ser de condición llana y agradable, y, sobre todo, por mostrarse tan liberal con todas.

Desta manera pasaron un año de noviciado y hicieron profesión en aquella vida, determinándose de llevarla hasta el fin de las suyas: y así fuera si el sagaz perturbador del género humano no lo estorbara, como ahora oiréis.

Dígame ahora el que se tuviere por más discreto y recatado qué más prevenciones para su seguridad podía haber hecho el anciano Felipo, pues aun no consintió que dentro de su casa hubiese algún animal que fuese varón. A los ratones della jamás los persiguió gato, ni en ella se oyó ladrido de perro: todos eran del género femenino. De día pensaba, de noche no dormía; él era la ronda y centinela de su casa y el Argos de lo que bien quería. Jamás entró hombre de la puerta adentro del patio. Con sus amigos negociaba en la calle. Las figuras de los paños que sus salas y cuadras adornaban, todas eran hembras, flores y boscajes. Toda su casa olía a honestidad, recogimiento y recato: aun hasta en las consejas que en las largas noches del invierno en la chimenea sus criadas contaban, por estar él presente, en ninguna ningún género de lascivia se descubría. La plata de

las canas del viejo, a los ojos de Leonora, parecían cabellos de oro puro, porque el amor primero que las doncellas tienen se les imprime en el alma como el sello en la cera. Su demasiada guarda le parecía advertido recato: pensaba y creía que lo que ella pasaba pasaban todas las recién casadas. No se desmandaban sus pensamientos a salir de las paredes de su casa, ni su voluntad deseaba otra cosa más de aquella que la de su marido quería; sólo los días que iba a misa veía las calles, y esto era tan de mañana que, si no era al volver de la iglesia, no había luz para mirallas.

No se vio monasterio tan cerrado, ni monjas más recogidas, ni manzanas de oro tan guardadas; y con todo esto, no pudo en ninguna manera prevenir ni excusar de caer en lo que recelaba; a lo menos, en pensar que había caído.

Hay en Sevilla un género de gente ociosa y holgazana, a quien comúnmente suelen llamar gente de barrio. Éstos son los hijos de vecino de cada colación, y de los más ricos della; gente baldía, atildada y meliflua, de la cual y de su traje y manera de vivir, de su condición y de las leyes que guardan entre sí, había mucho que decir; pero por buenos respetos se deja.

Uno destos galanes, pues, que entre ellos es llamado *virote* (mozo soltero, que a los recién casados llaman *mantones*), asestó a mirar la casa del recatado Carrizales; y, viéndola siempre cerrada, le tomó gana de saber quién vivía dentro; y con tanto ahínco y curiosidad hizo la diligencia, que de todo en todo vino a saber lo que deseaba. Supo la condición del viejo, la hermosura de su esposa y el modo que tenía en guardarla; todo lo cual le encendió el deseo de ver si sería posible expunar, por fuerza o por industria, fortaleza tan guardada. Y, comunicándolo con dos virotes y un mantón, sus amigos, acordaron que se pudiese por obra; que nunca para tales obras faltan consejeros y ayudadores.

Dificultaban el modo que se tendría para intentar tan dificultosa hazaña; y, habiendo entrado en bureo muchas veces, convinieron en esto: que, fingiendo Loaysa, que así se llamaba el virote, que iba fuera de la ciudad por algunos días, se quitase de los ojos de sus amigos, como lo hizo; y, hecho esto, se puso unos calzones de lienzo limpio y camisa limpia; pero encima se puso unos vestidos tan rotos y remendados, que ningún pobre en toda la ciudad los traía tan astrosos. Quitóse un poco de barba que tenía, cubrióse un ojo con un parche, vendóse una pierna estrechamente, y, arrimándose a dos muletas, se convirtió en un pobre tullido: tal, que el más verdadero estropeado no se le igualaba.

Con este talle se ponía cada noche a la oración a la puerta de la casa de Carrizales, que ya estaba cerrada, quedando el negro, que Luis se llamaba, cerrado entre las dos puertas. Puesto allí Loaysa, sacaba una guitarrilla algo grasienta y falta de algunas cuerdas, y, como él era algo músico, comenzaba a



tañer algunos sones alegres y regocijados, mudando la voz por no ser conocido. Con esto, se daba prisa a cantar romances de moros y moras, a la loquesca, con tanta gracia, que cuantos pasaban por la calle se ponían a escucharle; y siempre, en tanto que cantaba, estaba rodeado de muchachos; y Luis, el negro, poniendo los oídos por entre las puertas, estaba colgado de la música del virote, y diera un brazo por poder abrir la puerta y escucharle más a su placer: tal es la inclinación que los negros tienen a ser músicos. Y, cuando Loaysa quería que los que le escuchaban le dejaran, dejaba de cantar y recogía su guitarra, y, acogiéndose a sus muletas, se iba.

Cuatro o cinco veces había dado música al negro (que por solo él la daba), pareciéndole que, por donde se había de comenzar a desmoronar aquel edificio, había y debía ser por el negro; y no le salió vano su pensamiento, porque, llegándose una noche, como solía, a la puerta, comenzó a templar su guitarra, y sintió que el negro estaba ya atento; y, llegándose al quicio de la puerta, con voz baja, dijo:

-¿Será posible, Luis, darme un poco de agua, que perezco de sed y no puedo cantar?

-No -dijo el negro-, porque no tengo la llave desta puerta, ni hay agujero por donde pueda dárosela.

-Pues, ¿quién tiene la llave? -preguntó Loaysa.

-Mi amo -respondió el negro-, que es el más celoso hombre del mundo. Y si él supiese que yo estoy ahora aquí hablando con nadie, no sería más mi vida. Pero, ¿quién sois vos que me pedís el agua?

-Yo -respondió Loaysa-soy un pobre estropeado de una pierna, que gano mi vida pidiendo por Dios a la buena gente; y, juntamente con esto, enseño a tañer a algunos morenos y a otra gente pobre; y ya tengo tres negros, esclavos de tres veinticuatro, a quien he enseñado de modo que pueden cantar y tañer en cualquier baile y en cualquier taberna, y me lo han pagado muy rebién.

-Harto mejor os lo pagara yo -dijo Luis-a tener lugar de tomar lición; pero no es posible, a causa que mi amo, en saliendo por la mañana, cierra la puerta de la calle, y cuando vuelve hace lo mismo, dejándome emparedado entre dos puertas.

-¡Por Dios!, Luis -replicó Loaysa, que ya sabía el nombre del negro-, que si vos diédeses traza a que yo entrase algunas noches a daros lición, en menos de quince días os sacaría tan diestro en la guitarra, que pudiédeses tañer sin vergüenza alguna en cualquiera esquina; porque os hago saber que tengo grandísima gracia en el enseñar, y más, que he oído decir que vos tenéis muy buena habilidad; y, a lo que siento y puedo juzgar por el órgano de la voz, que es atiplada, debéis de cantar muy bien.

-No canto mal -respondió el negro-; pero, ¿qué aprovecha?, pues no sé tonada

alguna, si no es la de *La Estrella de Venus* y la de *Por un verde prado*, y aquélla que ahora se usa que dice:

A los hierros de una reja  
la turbada mano asida...

-Todas ésas son aire -dijo Loaysa-para las que yo os podría enseñar, porque sé todas las del moro Abindarráez, con las de su dama Jarifa, y todas las que se cantan de la historia del gran sofí Tomunibeyo, con las de la zarabanda a lo divino, que son tales, que hacen pasmar a los mismos portugueses; y esto enseño con tales modos y con tanta facilidad que, aunque no os deis prisa a aprender, apenas habréis comido tres o cuatro moyos de sal, cuando ya os veáis músico corriente y moliente en todo género de guitarra.

A esto suspiró el negro y dijo:

-¿Qué aprovecha todo eso, si no sé cómo meteros en casa?

-Buen remedio -dijo Loaysa-: procurad vos tomar las llaves a vuestro amo, y yo os daré un pedazo de cera, donde las imprimiréis de manera que queden señaladas las guardas en la cera; que, por la afición que os he tomado, yo haré que un cerrajero amigo mío haga las llaves, y así podré entrar dentro de noche y enseñaros mejor que al Preste Juan de las Indias, porque veo ser gran lástima que se pierda una tal voz como la vuestra, faltándole el arrimo de la guitarra; que quiero que sepáis, hermano Luis, que la mejor voz del mundo pierde de sus quilates cuando no se acompaña con el instrumento, ora sea de guitarra o clavicímbano, de órganos o de arpa; pero el que más a vuestra voz le conviene es el instrumento de la guitarra, por ser el más mañero y menos costoso de los instrumentos.

-Bien me parece eso -replicó el negro-; pero no puede ser, pues jamás entran las llaves en mi poder, ni mi amo las suelta de la mano de día, y de noche duermen debajo de su almohada.

-Pues haced otra cosa, Luis -dijo Loaysa-, si es que tenéis gana de ser músico consumado; que si no la tenéis, no hay para qué cansarme en aconsejaros.

-¡Y cómo si tengo gana! -replicó Luis-. Y tanta, que ninguna cosa dejaré de hacer, como sea posible salir con ella, a trueco de salir con ser músico.

-Pues así es -dijo el virote-, yo os daré por entre estas puertas, haciendo vos lugar quitando alguna tierra del quicio; digo que os daré unas tenazas y un

martillo, con que podáis de noche quitar los clavos de la cerradura de loba con mucha facilidad, y con la misma volveremos a poner la chapa, de modo que no se eche de ver que ha sido desclavada; y, estando yo dentro, encerrado con vos en vuestro pajar, o adonde dormís, me daré tal priesa a lo que tengo de hacer, que vos veáis aun más de lo que os he dicho, con aprovechamiento de mi persona y aumento de vuestra suficiencia. Y de lo que hubiéremos de comer no tengáis cuidado, que yo llevaré matalotaje para entrambos y para más de ocho días; que discípulos tengo yo y amigos que no me dejarán mal pasar.

-De la comida -replicó el negro-no habrá de qué temer, que, con la ración que me da mi amo y con los relieves que me dan las esclavas, sobrará comida para otros dos. Venga ese martillo y tenazas que decís, que yo haré por junto a este quicio lugar por donde quepa, y le volveré a cubrir y tapar con barro; que, puesto que dé algunos golpes en quitar la chapa, mi amo duerme tan lejos desta puerta, que será milagro, o gran desgracia nuestra, si los oye.

-Pues, a la mano de Dios -dijo Loaysa-: que de aquí a dos días tendréis, Luis, todo lo necesario para poner en ejecución nuestro virtuoso propósito; y advertid en no comer cosas flemosas, porque no hacen ningún provecho, sino mucho daño a la voz.

-Ninguna cosa me enronquece tanto -respondió el negro-como el vino, pero no me lo quitaré yo por todas cuantas voces tiene el suelo.

-No digo tal -dijo Loaysa-, ni Dios tal permita. Bebed, hijo Luis, bebed, y buen provecho os haga, que el vino que se bebe con medida jamás fue causa de daño alguno.

-Con medida lo bebo -replicó el negro-: aquí tengo un jarro que cabe una azumbre justa y cabal; éste me llenan las esclavas, sin que mi amo lo sepa, y el dispensero, a solapo, me trae una botilla, que también cabe justas dos azumbres, con que se suplen las faltas del jarro.

-Digo -dijo Loaysa-que tal sea mi vida como eso me parece, porque la seca garganta ni gruñe ni canta.

-Andad con Dios -dijo el negro-; pero mirad que no dejéis de venir a cantar aquí las noches que tardáredes en traer lo que habéis de hacer para entrar acá dentro, que ya me comen los dedos por verlos puestos en la guitarra.

-Y ¡cómo si vendré! -replicó Loaysa-. Y aun con tonadicas nuevas.

-Eso pido -dijo Luis-; y ahora no me dejéis de cantar algo, porque me vaya a acostar con gusto; y, en lo de la paga, entienda el señor pobre que le he de pagar mejor que un rico.

-No reparo en eso -dijo Loaysa-; que, según yo os enseñaré, así me pagaréis, y por ahora escuchad esta tonadilla, que cuando esté dentro veréis milagros.

-Sea en buen hora -respondió el negro.

Y, acabado este largo coloquio, cantó Loaysa un romancito agudo, con que dejó al negro tan contento y satisfecho, que ya no veía la hora de abrir la puerta.

Apenas se quitó Loaysa de la puerta, cuando, con más ligereza que el traer de sus muletas prometía, se fue a dar cuenta a sus consejeros de su buen comienzo, adivino del buen fin que por él esperaba. Hallólos y contó lo que con el negro dejaba concertado, y otro día hallaron los instrumentos, tales que rompían cualquier clavo como si fuera de palo.

No se descuidó el virote de volver a dar música al negro, ni menos tuvo descuido el negro en hacer el agujero por donde cupiese lo que su maestro le diese, cubriéndolo de manera que, a no ser mirado con malicia y sospechosamente, no se podía caer en el agujero.

La segunda noche le dio los instrumentos Loaysa, y Luis probó sus fuerzas; y, casi sin poner alguna, se halló rompidos los clavos y con la chapa de la cerradura en las manos: abrió la puerta y recogió dentro a su Orfeo y maestro; y, cuando le vio con sus dos muletas, y tan andrajoso y tan fajada su pierna, quedó admirado. No llevaba Loaysa el parche en el ojo, por no ser necesario, y, así como entró, abrazó a su buen discípulo y le besó en el rostro, y luego le puso una gran bota de vino en las manos, y una caja de conserva y otras cosas dulces, de que llevaba unas alforjas bien proveídas. Y, dejando las muletas, como si no tuviera mal alguno, comenzó a hacer cabriolas, de lo cual se admiró más el negro, a quien Loaysa dijo:

-Sabed, hermano Luis, que mi cojera y estropeamiento no nace de enfermedad, sino de industria, con la cual gano de comer pidiendo por amor de Dios, y ayudándome della y de mi música paso la mejor vida del mundo, en el cual todos aquellos que no fueren industriosos y tracistas morirán de hambre; y esto lo veréis en el discurso de nuestra amistad.

-Ello dirá -respondió el negro-; pero demos orden de volver esta chapa a su lugar, de modo que no se eche de ver su mudanza.

-En buen hora -dijo Loaysa.

Y, sacando clavos de sus alforjas, asentaron la cerradura de suerte que estaba tan bien como de antes, de lo cual quedó contentísimo el negro; y, subiéndose Loaysa al aposento que en el pajar tenía el negro, se acomodó lo mejor que pudo.

Encendió luego Luis un torzal de cera y, sin más aguardar, sacó su guitarra Loaysa; y, tocándola baja y suavemente, suspendió al pobre negro de manera que estaba fuera de sí escuchándole. Habiendo tocado un poco, sacó de nuevo colación y diola a su discípulo; y, aunque con dulce, bebió con tan buen talante de la bota, que le dejó más fuera de sentido que la música. Pasado esto, ordenó que luego tomase lición Luis, y, como el pobre negro tenía cuatro dedos de vino

sobre los sesos, no acertaba traste; y, con todo eso, le hizo creer Loaysa que ya sabía por lo menos dos tonadas; y era lo bueno que el negro se lo creía, y en toda la noche no hizo otra cosa que tañer con la guitarra destemplada y sin las cuerdas necesarias.

Durmieron lo poco que de la noche les quedaba, y, a obra de las seis de la mañana, bajó Carrizales y abrió la puerta de en medio, y también la de la calle, y estuvo esperando al dispensero, el cual vino de allí a un poco, y, dando por el torno la comida se volvió a ir, y llamó al negro, que bajase a tomar cebada para la mula y su ración; y, en tomándola, se fue el viejo Carrizales, dejando cerradas ambas puertas, sin echar de ver lo que en la de la calle se había hecho, de que no poco se alegraron maestro y discípulo.

Apenas salió el amo de casa, cuando el negro arrebató la guitarra y comenzó a tocar de tal manera que todas las criadas le oyeron, y por el torno le preguntaron:

-¿Qué es esto, Luis? ¿De cuándo acá tienes tú guitarra, o quién te la ha dado?

-¿Quién me la ha dado? -respondió Luis-. El mejor músico que hay en el mundo, y el que me ha de enseñar en menos de seis días más de seis mil sonos.

-Y ¿dónde está ese músico? -preguntó la dueña.

-No está muy lejos de aquí -respondió el negro-; y si no fuera por vergüenza y por el temor que tengo a mi señor, quizá os le enseñara luego, y a fe que os holgásedes de verle.

-Y ¿adónde puede él estar que nosotras le podamos ver -replicó la dueña-, si en esta casa jamás entró otro hombre que nuestro dueño?

-Ahora bien -dijo el negro-, no os quiero decir nada hasta que veáis lo que yo sé y él me ha enseñado en el breve tiempo que he dicho.

-Por cierto -dijo la dueña-que, si no es algún demonio el que te ha de enseñar, que yo no sé quién te pueda sacar músico con tanta brevedad.

-Andad -dijo el negro-, que lo oiréis y lo veréis algún día.

-No puede ser eso -dijo otra doncella-, porque no tenemos ventanas a la calle para poder ver ni oír a nadie.

-Bien está -dijo el negro-; que para todo hay remedio si no es para escusar la muerte; y más si vosotras sabéis o queréis callar.

-¡Y cómo que callaremos, hermano Luis! -dijo una de las esclavas-. Callaremos más que si fuésemos mudas; porque te prometo, amigo, que me muero por oír una buena voz, que después que aquí nos emparedaron, ni aun el canto de los pájaros habemos oído.

Todas estas pláticas estaba escuchando Loaysa con grandísimo contento, pareciéndole que todas se encaminaban a la consecución de su gusto, y que la buena suerte había tomado la mano en guiarlas a la medida de su voluntad.

Despidiéronse las criadas con prometerles el negro que, cuando menos se

pensasen, las llamaría a oír una muy buena voz; y, con temor que su amo volviese y le hallase hablando con ellas, las dejó y se recogió a su estancia y clausura. Quisiera tomar lición, pero no se atrevió a tocar de día, porque su amo no le oyese, el cual vino de allí a poco espacio, y, cerrando las puertas según su costumbre, se encerró en casa. Y, al dar aquel día de comer por el torno al negro, dijo Luis a una negra que se lo daba, que aquella noche, después de dormido su amo, bajasen todas al torno a oír la voz que les había prometido, sin falta alguna. Verdad es que antes que dijese esto había pedido con muchos ruegos a su maestro fuese contento de cantar y tañer aquella noche al torno, porque él pudiese cumplir la palabra que había dado de hacer oír a las criadas una voz estremada, asegurándole que sería en extremo regalado de todas ellas. Algo se hizo de rogar el maestro de hacer lo que él más deseaba; pero al fin dijo que haría lo que su buen discípulo pedía, sólo por darle gusto, sin otro interés alguno. Abrazóle el negro y diole un beso en el carrillo, en señal del contento que le había causado la merced prometida; y aquel día dio de comer a Loaysa tan bien como si comiera en su casa, y aun quizá mejor, pues pudiera ser que en su casa le faltara.

Llegóse la noche, y en la mitad della, o poco menos, comenzaron a cecear en el torno, y luego entendió Luis que era la cáfila, que había llegado; y, llamando a su maestro, bajaron del pajar, con la guitarra bien encordada y mejor templada. Preguntó Luis quién y cuántas eran las que escuchaban. Respondiéronle que todas, sino su señora, que quedaba durmiendo con su marido, de que le pesó a Loaysa; pero, con todo eso, quiso dar principio a su disignio y contentar a su discípulo; y, tocando mansamente la guitarra, tales sones hizo que dejó admirado al negro y suspenso el rebaño de las mujeres que le escuchaba.

Pues, ¿qué diré de lo que ellas sintieron cuando le oyeron tocar el *Pésame dello* y acabar con el endemoniado son de la zarabanda, nuevo entonces en España? No quedó vieja por bailar, ni moza que no se hiciese pedazos, todo a la sorda y con silencio extraño, poniendo centinelas y espías que avisasen si el viejo despertaba. Cantó asimismo Loaysa coplillas de la seguida, con que acabó de echar el sello al gusto de las escuchantes, que ahincadamente pidieron al negro les dijese quién era tan milagroso músico. El negro les dijo que era un pobre mendigante: el más galán y gentil hombre que había en toda la pobrería de Sevilla. Rogáronle que hiciese de suerte que ellas le viesan, y que no le dejase ir en quince días de casa, que ellas le regalarían muy bien y darían cuanto hubiese menester. Preguntáronle qué modo había tenido para meterle en casa. A esto no les respondió palabra; a lo demás dijo que, para poderle ver, hiciesen un agujero pequeño en el torno, que después lo taparían con cera; y que, a lo de tenerle en casa, que él lo procuraría.

Hablólas también Loaysa, ofreciéndoseles a su servicio, con tan buenas razones, que ellas echaron de ver que no salían de ingenio de pobre mendigante. Rogáronle que otra noche viniese al mismo puesto; que ellas harían con su señora que bajase a escucharle, a pesar del ligero sueño de su señor, cuya ligereza no nacía de sus muchos años, sino de sus muchos celos. A lo cual dijo Loaysa que si ellas gustaban de oírle sin sobresalto del viejo, que él les daría unos polvos que le echasen en el vino, que le harían dormir con pesado sueño más tiempo del ordinario.

-¡Jesús, valme -dijo una de las doncellas-, y si eso fuese verdad, qué buena ventura se nos habría entrado por las puertas, sin sentillo y sin merecello! No serían ellos polvos de sueño para él, sino polvos de vida para todas nosotras y para la pobre de mi señora Leonora, su mujer, que no la deja a sol ni a sombra, ni la pierde de vista un solo momento. ¡Ay, señor mío de mi alma, traiga esos polvos: así Dios le dé todo el bien que desea! Vaya y no tarde; tráigalos, señor mío, que yo me ofrezco a mezclarlos en el vino y a ser la escanciadora; y pluguiese a Dios que durmiese el viejo tres días con sus noches, que otros tantos tendríamos nosotras de gloria.

-Pues yo los trairé -dijo Loaysa-; y son tales, que no hacen otro mal ni daño a quien los toma si no es provocarle a sueño pesadísimo.

Todas le rogaron que los trujese con brevedad, y, quedando de hacer otra noche con una barrena el agujero en el torno, y de traer a su señora para que le viese y oyese, se despidieron; y el negro, aunque era casi el alba, quiso tomar lición, la cual le dio Loaysa, y le hizo entender que no había mejor oído que el suyo en cuantos discípulos tenía: y no sabía el pobre negro, ni lo supo jamás, hacer un cruzado.

Tenían los amigos de Loaysa cuidado de venir de noche a escuchar por entre las puertas de la calle, y ver si su amigo les decía algo, o si había menester alguna cosa; y, haciendo una señal que dejaron concertada, conoció Loaysa que estaban a la puerta, y por el agujero del quicio les dio breve cuenta del buen término en que estaba su negocio, pidiéndoles encarecidamente buscasen alguna cosa que provocase a sueño, para dárselo a Carrizales; que él había oído decir que había unos polvos para este efeto. Dijéronle que tenían un médico amigo que les daría el mejor remedio que supiese, si es que le había; y, animándole a proseguir la empresa y prometiéndole de volver la noche siguiente con todo recaudo, apriesa se despidieron.

Vino la noche, y la banda de las palomas acudió al reclamo de la guitarra. Con ellas vino la simple Leonora, temerosa y temblando de que no despertase su marido; que, aunque ella, vencida deste temor, no había querido venir, tantas cosas le dijeron sus criadas, especialmente la dueña, de la suavidad de la música

y de la gallarda disposición del músico pobre (que, sin haberle visto, le alababa y le subía sobre Absalón y sobre Orfeo), que la pobre señora, convencida y persuadida dellas, hubo de hacer lo que no tenía ni tuviera jamás en voluntad. Lo primero que hicieron fue barrenar el torno para ver al músico, el cual no estaba ya en hábitos de pobre, sino con unos calzones grandes de tafetán leonado, anchos a la marineresca; un jubón de lo mismo con trencillas de oro, y una montera de raso de la misma color, con cuello almidonado con grandes puntas y encaje; que de todo vino proveído en las alforjas, imaginando que se había de ver en ocasión que le conviniese mudar de traje.

Era mozo y de gentil disposición y buen parecer; y, como había tanto tiempo que todas tenían hecha la vista a mirar al viejo de su amo, parecióles que miraban a un ángel. Poníase una al agujero para verle, y luego otra; y porque le pudiesen ver mejor, andaba el negro paseándole el cuerpo de arriba abajo con el torzal de cera encendido. Y, después que todas le hubieron visto, hasta las negras bozales, tomó Loaysa la guitarra, y cantó aquella noche tan estremadamente, que las acabó de dejar suspensas y atónitas a todas, así a la vieja como a las mozas; y todas rogaron a Luis diese orden y traza cómo el señor su maestro entrase allá dentro, para oírle y verle de más cerca, y no tan por brújula como por el agujero, y sin el sobresalto de estar tan apartadas de su señor, que podía cogerlas de sobresalto y con el hurto en las manos; lo cual no sucedería así si le tuviesen escondido dentro.

A esto contradijo su señora con muchas veras, diciendo que no se hiciese la tal cosa ni la tal entrada, porque le pesaría en el alma, pues desde allí le podían ver y oír a su salvo y sin peligro de su honra.

-¿Qué honra? -dijo la dueña-. ¡El Rey tiene harta! Estése vuesa merced encerrada con su Matusalén y déjenos a nosotras holgar como pudiéremos. Cuanto más, que este señor parece tan honrado que no querrá otra cosa de nosotras más de lo que nosotras quisiéremos.

-Yo, señoras mías -dijo a esto Loaysa-, no vine aquí sino con intención de servir a todas vuestas mercedes con el alma y con la vida, condolido de su no vista clausura y de los ratos que en este estrecho género de vida se pierden. Hombre soy yo, por vida de mi padre, tan sencillo, tan manso y de tan buena condición, y tan obediente, que no haré más de aquello que se me mandare; y si cualquiera de vuestas mercedes dijere: «Maestro, siéntese aquí; maestro, pásese allí; echaos acá, pasaos acullá», así lo haré, como el más doméstico y enseñado perro que salta por el Rey de Francia.

-Si eso ha de ser así -dijo la ignorante Leonora-, ¿qué medio se dará para que entre acá dentro el señor maeso?

-Bueno -dijo Loaysa-: vuestas mercedes pugnen por sacar en cera la llave desta



puerta de en medio, que yo haré que mañana en la noche venga hecha otra, tal que nos pueda servir.

-En sacar esa llave -dijo una doncella-, se sacan las de toda la casa, porque es llave maestra.

-No por eso será peor -replicó Loaysa.

-Así es verdad -dijo Leonora-; pero ha de jurar este señor, primero, que no ha de hacer otra cosa cuando esté acá dentro sino cantar y tañer cuando se lo mandaren, y que ha de estar encerrado y quedito donde le pusiéremos.

-Sí juro -dijo Loaysa.

-No vale nada ese juramento -respondió Leonora-; que ha de jurar por vida de su padre, y ha de jurar la cruz y besalla que lo veamos todas.

-Por vida de mi padre juro, -dijo Loaysa-, y por esta señal de cruz, que la beso con mi boca sucia.

Y, haciendo la cruz con dos dedos, la besó tres veces.

Esto hecho, dijo otra de las doncellas:

-Mire, señor, que no se le olvide aquello de los polvos, que es el *tuáutem* de todo.

Con esto cesó la plática de aquella noche, quedando todos muy contentos del concierto. Y la suerte, que de bien en mejor encaminaba los negocios de Loaysa, trujo a aquellas horas, que eran dos después de la medianoche, por la calle a sus amigos; los cuales, haciendo la señal acostumbrada, que era tocar una trompa de París, Loaysa los habló y les dio cuenta del término en que estaba su pretensión, y les pidió si traían los polvos o otra cosa, como se la había pedido, para que Carrizales durmiese. Díjoles, asimismo, lo de la llave maestra. Ellos le dijeron que los polvos, o un ungüento, vendría la siguiente noche, de tal virtud que, untados los pulsos y las sienes con él, causaba un sueño profundo, sin que dél se pudiese despertar en dos días, si no era lavándose con vinagre todas las partes que se habían untado; y que se les diese la llave en cera, que asimismo la harían hacer con facilidad. Con esto se despidieron, y Loaysa y su discípulo durmieron lo poco que de la noche les quedaba, esperando Loaysa con gran deseo la venidera, por ver si se le cumplía la palabra prometida de la llave. Y, puesto que el tiempo parece tardío y perezoso a los que en él esperan, en fin, corre a las parejas con el mismo pensamiento, y llega el término que quiere, porque nunca para ni sosiega.

Vino, pues, la noche y la hora acostumbrada de acudir al torno, donde vinieron todas las criadas de casa, grandes y chicas, negras y blancas, porque todas estaban deseosas de ver dentro de su serrallo al señor músico; pero no vino Leonora, y, preguntando Loaysa por ella, le respondieron que estaba acostada

con su velado, el cual tenía cerrada la puerta del aposento donde dormía con llave, y después de haber cerrado se la ponía debajo de la almohada; y que su señora les había dicho que, en durmiéndose el viejo, haría por tomarle la llave maestra y sacarla en cera, que ya llevaba preparada y blanda, y que de allí a un poco habían de ir a requerirla por una gatera.

Maravillado quedó Loaysa del recato del viejo, pero no por esto se le desmayó el deseo. Y, estando en esto, oyó la trompa de París; acudió al puesto; halló a sus amigos, que le dieron un botecico de ungüento de la propiedad que le habían significado; tomólo Loaysa y díjoles que esperasen un poco, que les daría la muestra de la llave; volvióse al torno y dijo a la dueña, que era la que con más ahínco mostraba desear su entrada, que se lo llevase a la señora Leonora, diciéndole la propiedad que tenía, y que procurase untar a su marido con tal tiento, que no lo sintiese, y que vería maravillas. Hízolo así la dueña, y, llegándose a la gatera, halló que estaba Leonora esperando tendida en el suelo de largo a largo, puesto el rostro en la gatera. Llegó la dueña, y, tendiéndose de la misma manera, puso la boca en el oído de su señora, y con voz baja le dijo que traía el ungüento y de la manera que había de probar su virtud. Ella tomó el ungüento, y respondió a la dueña como en ninguna manera podía tomar la llave a su marido, porque no la tenía debajo de la almohada, como solía, sino entre los dos colchones y casi debajo de la mitad de su cuerpo; pero que dijese al maeso que si el ungüento obraba como él decía, con facilidad sacarían la llave todas las veces que quisiesen, y así no sería necesario sacarla en cera. Dijo que fuese a decirlo luego y volviese a ver lo que el ungüento obraba, porque luego luego le pensaba untar a su velado.

Bajó la dueña a decirlo al maeso Loaysa, y él despidió a sus amigos, que esperando la llave estaban. Temblando y pasito, y casi sin osar despedir el aliento de la boca, llegó Leonora a untar los pulsos del celoso marido, y asimismo le untó las ventanas de las narices; y cuando a ellas le llegó, le parecía que se estremecía, y ella quedó mortal, pareciéndole que la había cogido en el hurto. En efeto, como mejor pudo, le acabó de untar todos los lugares que le dijeron ser necesarios, que fue lo mismo que haberle embalsamado para la sepultura.

Poco espacio tardó el alopiado ungüento en dar manifiestas señales de su virtud, porque luego comenzó a dar el viejo tan grandes ronquidos, que se pudieran oír en la calle: música, a los oídos de su esposa, más acordada que la del maeso de su negro. Y, aún mal segura de lo que veía, se llegó a él y le estremeció un poco, y luego más, y luego otro poquito más, por ver si despertaba; y a tanto se atrevió, que le volvió de una parte a otra sin que despertase. Como vio esto, se fue a la gatera de la puerta y, con voz no tan baja

como la primera, llamó a la dueña, que allí la estaba esperando, y le dijo:

-Dame albricias, hermana, que Carrizales duerme más que un muerto.

-Pues, ¿a qué aguardas a tomar la llave, señora? -dijo la dueña-. Mira que está el músico aguardándola más ha de una hora.

-Espera, hermana, que ya voy por ella -respondió Leonora.

Y, volviendo a la cama, metió la mano por entre los colchones y sacó la llave de en medio dellos sin que el viejo lo sintiese; y, tomándola en sus manos, comenzó a dar brincos de contento, y sin más esperar abrió la puerta y la presentó a la dueña, que la recibió con la mayor alegría del mundo.

Mandó Leonora que fuese a abrir al músico, y que le trujese a los corredores, porque ella no osaba quitarse de allí, por lo que podía suceder; pero que, ante todas cosas, hiciese que de nuevo ratificase el juramento que había hecho de no hacer más de lo que ellas le ordenasen, y que, si no le quisiese confirmar y hacer de nuevo, en ninguna manera le abriesen.

-Así será -dijo la dueña-; y a fe que no ha de entrar si primero no jura y rejura y besa la cruz seis veces.

-No le pongas tasa -dijo Leonora-: bésela él y sean las veces que quisiere; pero mira que jure la vida de sus padres y por todo aquello que bien quiere, porque con esto estaremos seguras y nos hartaremos de oírle cantar y tañer, que en mi ánima que lo hace delicadamente; y anda, no te detengas más, porque no se nos pase la noche en pláticas.

Alzóse las faldas la buena dueña, y con no vista ligereza se puso en el torno, donde estaba toda la gente de casa esperándola; y, habiéndoles mostrado la llave que traía, fue tanto el contento de todas, que la alzaron en peso, como a catredático, diciendo: «¡Viva, viva!»; y más, cuando les dijo que no había necesidad de contrahacer la llave, porque, según el untado viejo dormía, bien se podían aprovechar de la de casa todas las veces que la quisiesen.

-¡Ea, pues, amiga -dijo una de las doncellas-, ábrase esa puerta y entre este señor, que ha mucho que aguarda, y démonos un verde de música que no haya más que ver!

-Más ha de haber que ver -replicó la dueña-; que le hemos de tomar juramento, como la otra noche.

-Él es tan bueno -dijo una de las esclavas-, que no reparará en juramentos.

Abrió en esto la dueña la puerta, y, teniéndola entreabierta, llamó a Loaysa, que todo lo había estado escuchando por el agujero del torno; el cual, llegándose a la puerta, quiso entrarse de golpe; mas, poniéndole la dueña la mano en el pecho, le dijo:

-Sabrá vuesa merced, señor mío, que, en Dios y en mi conciencia, todas las que estamos dentro de las puertas desta casa somos doncellas como las madres

que nos parieron, excepto mi señora; y, aunque yo debo de parecer de cuarenta años, no teniendo treinta cumplidos, porque les faltan dos meses y medio, también lo soy, mal pecado; y si acaso parezco vieja, corrimientos, trabajos y desabrimientos echan un cero a los años, y a veces dos, según se les antoja. Y, siendo esto ansí, como lo es, no sería razón que, a trueco de oír dos, o tres, o cuatro cantares, nos pusiésemos a perder tanta virginidad como aquí se encierra; porque hasta esta negra, que se llama Guiomar, es doncella. Así que, señor de mi corazón, vuesa merced nos ha de hacer, primero que entre en nuestro reino, un muy solene juramento de que no ha de hacer más de lo que nosotras le ordenáremos; y si le parece que es mucho lo que se le pide, considere que es mucho más lo que se aventura. Y si es que vuesa merced viene con buena intención, poco le ha de doler el jurar, que al buen pagador no le duelen prendas.

-Bien y rebién ha dicho la señora Marialonso -dijo una de las doncellas-; en fin, como persona discreta y que está en las cosas como se debe; y si es que el señor no quiere jurar, no entre acá dentro.

A esto dijo Guiomar, la negra, que no era muy ladina:

-Por mí, mas que nunca jura, entre con todo diablo; que, aunque más jura, si acá estás, todo olvida.

Oyó con gran sosiego Loaysa la arenga de la señora Marialonso, y con grave reposo y autoridad respondió:

-Por cierto, señoras hermanas y compañeras mías, que nunca mi intento fue, es, ni será otro que daros gusto y contento en cuanto mis fuerzas alcanzaren; y así, no se me hará cuesta arriba este juramento que me piden; pero quisiera yo que se fiara algo de mi palabra, porque dada de tal persona como yo soy, era lo mismo que hacer una obligación guarentigia; y quiero hacer saber a vuesa merced que debajo del sayal hay ál, y que debajo de mala capa suele estar un buen bebedor. Mas, para que todas estén seguras de mi buen deseo, determino de jurar como católico y buen varón; y así, juro por la intemerata eficacia, donde más santa y largamente se contiene, y por las entradas y salidas del santo Líbano monte, y por todo aquello que en su prohemio encierra la verdadera historia de Carlomagno, con la muerte del gigante Fierabrás, de no salir ni pasar del juramento hecho y del mandamiento de la más mínima y desechada destas señoras, so pena que si otra cosa hiciere o quisiere hacer, desde ahora para entonces y desde entonces para ahora, lo doy por nulo y no hecho ni valedero.

Aquí llegaba con su juramento el buen Loaysa, cuando una de las dos doncellas, que con atención le había estado escuchando, dio una gran voz diciendo:

-¡Este sí que es juramento para enternecer las piedras! ¡Mal haya yo si más quiero que jures, pues con sólo lo jurado podías entrar en la misma sima de

Cabra!

Y, asiéndole de los gregüescos, le metió dentro, y luego todas las demás se le pusieron a la redonda. Luego fue una a dar las nuevas a su señora, la cual estaba haciendo centinela al sueño de su esposo; y, cuando la mensajera le dijo que ya subía el músico, se alegró y se turbó en un punto, y preguntó si había jurado. Respondióle que sí, y con la más nueva forma de juramento que en su vida había visto.

-Pues si ha jurado -dijo Leonora-, asido le tenemos. ¡Oh, qué avisada que anduve en hacelle que jurase!

En esto, llegó toda la caterva junta, y el músico en medio, alumbrándolos el negro y Guiomar la negra. Y, viendo Loaysa a Leonora, hizo muestras de arrojársele a los pies para besarle las manos. Ella, callando y por señas, le hizo levantar, y todas estaban como mudas, sin osar hablar, temerosas que su señor las oyese; lo cual considerado por Loaysa, les dijo que bien podían hablar alto, porque el ungüento con que estaba untado su señor tenía tal virtud que, fuera de quitar la vida, ponía a un hombre como muerto.

-Así lo creo yo -dijo Leonora-; que si así no fuera, ya él hubiera despertado veinte veces, según le hacen de sueño ligero sus muchas indisposiciones; pero, después que le unté, ronca como un animal.

-Pues eso es así -dijo la dueña-, vámonos a aquella sala frontera, donde podremos oír cantar aquí al señor y regocijarnos un poco.

-Vamos -dijo Leonora-; pero quédese aquí Guiomar por guarda, que nos avise si Carrizales despierta.

A lo cual respondió Guiomar:

-¡Yo, negra, quedo; blancas, van! ¡Dios perdone a todas!

Quedóse la negra; fuéronse a la sala, donde había un rico estrado, y, cogiendo al señor en medio, se sentaron todas. Y, tomando la buena Marialonso una vela, comenzó a mirar de arriba abajo al bueno del músico, y una decía: «¡Ay, qué copete que tiene tan lindo y tan rizado!» Otra: «¡Ay, qué blancura de dientes! ¡Mal año para piñones mondados, que más blancos ni más lindos sean!» Otra: «¡Ay, qué ojos tan grandes y tan rasgados! Y, por el siglo de mi madre, que son verdes; que no parecen sino que son de esmeraldas!» Ésta alababa la boca, aquélla los pies, y todas juntas hicieron dél una menuda anatomía y pepitoria. Sola Leonora callaba y le miraba, y le iba pareciendo de mejor talle que su velado.

En esto, la dueña tomó la guitarra, que tenía el negro, y se la puso en las manos de Loaysa, rogándole que la tocara y que cantara unas coplillas que entonces andaban muy validas en Sevilla, que decían:

Madre, la mi madre,  
guardas me ponéis.

Cumplióle Loaysa su deseo. Levantáronse todas y se comenzaron a hacer pedazos bailando. Sabía la dueña las coplas, y cantólas con más gusto que buena voz; y fueron éstas:

Madre, la mi madre,  
guardas me ponéis;  
*que si yo no me guardo,*  
*no me guardaréis.*

Dicen que está escrito,  
y con gran razón,  
ser la privación  
causa de apetito;

crece en infinito  
encerrado amor;

por eso es mejor  
que no me encerréis;  
*que si yo, etc.*



Si la voluntad  
por sí no se guarda,  
no la harán guarda  
miedo o calidad;  
romperá, en verdad,  
por la misma muerte,

hasta hallar la suerte  
que vos no entendéis;  
*que si yo, etc.*

Quien tiene costumbre  
de ser amorosa,

como mariposa  
se irá tras su lumbre,

aunque muchedumbre  
de guardas le pongan,  
y aunque más propongan  
de hacer lo que hacéis;  
*que si yo, etc.*

Es de tal manera  
la fuerza amorosa,  
que a la más hermosa  
la vuelve en quimera;  
el pecho de cera,  
de fuego la gana,

las manos de lana,  
de fieltro los pies;  
*que si yo no me guardo,*  
*mal me guardaréis.*

Al fin llegaban de su canto y baile el corro de las mozas, guiado por la buena dueña, cuando llegó Guiomar, la centinela, toda turbada, hiriendo de pie y de mano como si tuviera alferecía; y, con voz entre ronca y baja, dijo:

-¡Despierto señor, señora; y, señora, despierto señor, y levantas y viene!

Quien ha visto banda de palomas estar comiendo en el campo, sin miedo, lo que ajenas manos sembraron, que al furioso estrépito de disparada escopeta se azora y levanta, y, olvidada del pasto, confusa y atónita, cruza por los aires, tal se imagine que quedó la banda y corro de las bailadoras, pasmadas y temerosas, oyendo la no esperada nueva que Guiomar había traído; y, procurando cada una su disculpa y todas juntas su remedio, cuál por una y cuál por otra parte, se fueron a esconder por los desvanes y rincones de la casa, dejando solo al músico; el cual, dejando la guitarra y el canto, lleno de turbación, no sabía qué hacerse.

Torcía Leonora sus hermosas manos; abofeteábase el rostro, aunque blandamente, la señora Marialonso. En fin, todo era confusión, sobresalto y miedo. Pero la dueña, como más astuta y reportada, dio orden que Loaysa se entrase en un aposento suyo, y que ella y su señora se quedarían en la sala, que no faltaría excusa que dar a su señor si allí las hallase.

Escondióse luego Loaysa, y la dueña se puso atenta a escuchar si su amo venía; y, no sintiendo rumor alguno, cobró ánimo, y poco a poco, paso ante paso, se fue llegando al aposento donde su señor dormía y oyó que roncaba como primero; y, asegurada de que dormía, alzó las faldas y volvió corriendo a pedir albricias a su señora del sueño de su amo, la cual se las mandó de muy entera voluntad.

No quiso la buena dueña perder la coyuntura que la suerte le ofrecía de gozar, primero que todas, las gracias que ésta se imaginaba que debía tener el músico; y así, diciéndole a Leonora que esperase en la sala, en tanto que iba a llamarlo, la dejó y se entró donde él estaba, no menos confuso que pensativo, esperando las

nuevas de lo que hacía el viejo untado. Maldecía la falsedad del ungüento, y quejábase de la credulidad de sus amigos y del poco advertimiento que había tenido en no hacer primero la experiencia en otro antes de hacerla en Carrizales.

En esto, llegó la dueña y le aseguró que el viejo dormía a más y mejor; sosegó el pecho y estuvo atento a muchas palabras amorosas que Marialonso le dijo, de las cuales coligió la mala intención suya, y propuso en sí de ponerla por anzuelo para pescar a su señora. Y, estando los dos en sus pláticas, las demás criadas, que estaban escondidas por diversas partes de la casa, una de aquí y otra de allí, volvieron a ver si era verdad que su amo había despertado; y, viendo que todo estaba sepultado en silencio, llegaron a la sala donde habían dejado a su señora, de la cual supieron el sueño de su amo; y, preguntándole por el músico y por la dueña, les dijo dónde estaban, y todas, con el mismo silencio que habían traído, se llegaron a escuchar por entre las puertas lo que entrambos trataban.

No faltó de la junta Guiomar, la negra; el negro sí, porque, así como oyó que su amo había despertado, se abrazó con su guitarra y se fue a esconder en su pajar, y, cubierto con la manta de su pobre cama, sudaba y trasudaba de miedo; y, con todo eso, no dejaba de tentar las cuerdas de la guitarra: tanta era (encomendado él sea a Satanás) la afición que tenía a la música.

Entreoyeron las mozas los requiebros de la vieja, y cada una le dijo el nombre de las Pascuas: ninguna la llamó vieja que no fuese con su epíteto y adjetivo de hechicera y de barbuda, de antojadiza y de otros que por buen respecto se callan; pero lo que más risa causara a quien entonces las oyera eran las razones de Guiomar, la negra, que por ser portuguesa y no muy ladina, era extraña la gracia con que la vituperaba. En efeto, la conclusión de la plática de los dos fue que él condecendería con la voluntad della, cuando ella primero le entregase a toda su voluntad a su señora.

Cuesta arriba se le hizo a la dueña ofrecer lo que el músico pedía; pero, a trueco de cumplir el deseo que ya se le había apoderado del alma y de los huesos y médulas del cuerpo, le prometiera los imposibles que pudieran imaginarse. Dejóle y salió a hablar a su señora; y, como vio su puerta rodeada de todas las criadas, les dijo que se recogiesen a sus aposentos, que otra noche habría lugar para gozar con menos o con ningún sobresalto del músico, que ya aquella noche el alboroto les había agitado el gusto.

Bien entendieron todas que la vieja se quería quedar sola, pero no pudieron dejar de obedecerla, porque las mandaba a todas. Fuéronse las criadas y ella acudió a la sala a persuadir a Leonora acudiese a la voluntad de Loaysa, con una larga y tan concertada arenga, que pareció que de muchos días la tenía estudiada. Encarecióle su gentileza, su valor, su donaire y sus muchas gracias. Pintóle de

cuánto más gusto le serían los abrazos del amante mozo que los del marido viejo, asegurándole el secreto y la duración del deleite, con otras cosas semejantes a éstas, que el demonio le puso en la lengua, llenas de colores retóricos, tan demostrativos y eficaces, que movieran no sólo el corazón tierno y poco advertido de la simple e incauta Leonora, sino el de un endurecido mármol. ¡Oh dueñas, nacidas y usadas en el mundo para perdición de mil recatadas y buenas intenciones! ¡Oh, luengas y repulgadas tocas, escogidas para autorizar las salas y los estrados de señoras principales, y cuán al revés de lo que debíades usáis de vuestro casi ya forzoso oficio! En fin, tanto dijo la dueña, tanto persuadió la dueña, que Leonora se rindió, Leonora se engañó y Leonora se perdió, dando en tierra con todas las prevenciones del discreto Carrizales, que dormía el sueño de la muerte de su honra.

Tomó Marialonso por la mano a su señora, y, casi por fuerza, preñados de lágrimas los ojos, la llevó donde Loaysa estaba; y, echándoles la bendición con una risa falsa de demonio, cerrando tras sí la puerta, los dejó encerrados, y ella se puso a dormir en el estrado, o, por mejor decir, a esperar su contento de recudida. Pero, como el desvelo de las pasadas noches la venciese, se quedó dormida en el estrado.

Bueno fuera en esta sazón preguntar a Carrizales, a no saber que dormía, que adónde estaban sus advertidos recatos, sus recelos, sus advertimientos, sus persuaciones, los altos muros de su casa, el no haber entrado en ella, ni aun en sombra, alguien que tuviese nombre de varón, el torno estrecho, las gruesas paredes, las ventanas sin luz, el encerramiento notable, la gran dote en que a Leonora había dotado, los regalos continuos que la hacía, el buen tratamiento de sus criadas y esclavas; el no faltar un punto a todo aquello que él imaginaba que habían menester, que podían desear... Pero ya queda dicho que no había que preguntárselo, porque dormía más de aquello que fuera menester; y si él lo oyera y acaso respondiera, no podía dar mejor respuesta que encoger los hombros y enarcar las cejas y decir: «¡Todo aque-so derribó por los fundamentos la astucia, a lo que yo creo, de un mozo holgazán y vicioso, y la malicia de una falsa dueña, con la inadvertencia de una muchacha rogada y persuadida!» Libre Dios a cada uno de tales enemigos, contra los cuales no hay escudo de prudencia que defienda ni espada de recato que corte.

Pero, con todo esto, el valor de Leonora fue tal, que, en el tiempo que más le convenía, le mostró contra las fuerzas villanas de su astuto engañador, pues no fueron bastantes a vencerla, y él se cansó en balde, y ella quedó vencedora y entrambos dormidos. Y, en esto, ordenó el cielo que, a pesar del ungüento, Carrizales despertase, y, como tenía de costumbre, tentó la cama por todas partes; y, no hallando en ella a su querida esposa, saltó de la cama des-pavorido y



atónito, con más ligereza y desnudo que sus muchos años prometían. Y cuando en el aposento no halló a su esposa, y le vio abierto y que le faltaba la llave de entre los colchones, pensó perder el juicio. Pero, reportándose un poco, salió al corredor, y de allí, andando pie ante pie por no ser sentido, llegó a la sala donde la dueña dormía; y, viéndola sola, sin Leonora, fue al aposento de la dueña, y, abriendo la puerta muy quedo, vio lo que nunca quisiera haber visto, vio lo que diera por bien empleado no tener ojos para verlo: vio a Leonora en brazos de Loaysa, durmiendo tan a sueño suelto como si en ellos obrara la virtud del ungüento y no en el celoso anciano.

Sin pulsos quedó Carrizales con la amarga vista de lo que miraba; la voz se le pegó a la garganta, los brazos se le cayeron de desmayo, y quedó hecho una estatua de mármol frío; y, aunque la cólera hizo su natural oficio, avivándole los casi muertos espíritus, pudo tanto el dolor, que no le dejó tomar aliento. Y, con todo eso, tomara la venganza que aquella grande maldad requería si se hallara con armas para poder tomarla; y así, determinó volverse a su aposento a tomar una daga y volver a sacar las manchas de su honra con sangre de sus dos enemigos, y aun con toda aquella de toda la gente de su casa. Con esta determinación honrosa y necesaria volvió, con el mismo silencio y recato que había venido, a su estancia, donde le apretó el corazón tanto el dolor y la angustia que, sin ser poderoso a otra cosa, se dejó caer desmayado sobre el lecho.

Llegóse en esto el día, y cogió a los nuevos adúlteros enlazados en la red de sus brazos. Despertó Marialonso y quiso acudir por lo que, a su parecer, le tocaba; pero, viendo que era tarde, quiso dejarlo para la venidera noche. Alborotóse Leonora, viendo tan entrado el día, y maldijo su descuido y el de la maldita dueña; y las dos, con sobresaltados pasos, fueron donde estaba su esposo, rogando entre dientes al cielo que le hallasen todavía roncando; y, cuando le vieron encima de la cama callando, creyeron que todavía obraba la untura, pues dormía, y con gran regocijo se abrazaron la una a la otra. Llegóse Leonora a su marido, y asiéndole de un brazo le volvió de un lado a otro, por ver si despertaba sin ponerles en necesidad de lavarle con vinagre, como decían era menester para que en sí volviese. Pero con el movimiento volvió Carrizales de su desmayo, y, dando un profundo suspiro, con una voz lamentable y desmayada dijo:

-¡Desdichado de mí, y a qué tristes términos me ha traído mi fortuna!

No entendió bien Leonora lo que dijo su esposo; mas, como le vio despierto y que hablaba, admirada de ver que la virtud del ungüento no duraba tanto como habían significado, se llegó a él, y, poniendo su rostro con el suyo, teniéndole estrechamente abrazado, le dijo:

-¿Qué tenéis, señor mío, que me parece que os estáis quejando?

Oyó la voz de la dulce enemiga suya el desdichado viejo, y, abriendo los ojos desencasadamente, como atónito y embelesado, los puso en ella, y con grande ahínco, sin mover pestaña, la estuvo mirando una gran pieza, al cabo de la cual le dijo:

-Hacedme placer, señora, que luego luego enviéis a llamar a vuestros padres de mi parte, porque siento no sé qué en el corazón que me da grandísima fatiga, y temo que brevemente me ha de quitar la vida, y querríalos ver antes que me muriese.

Sin duda creyó Leonora ser verdad lo que su marido le decía, pensando antes que la fortaleza del ungüento, y no lo que había visto, le tenía en aquel trance; y, respondiéndole que haría lo que la mandaba, mandó al negro que luego al punto fuese a llamar a sus padres, y, abrazándose con su esposo, le hacía las mayores caricias que jamás le había hecho, preguntándole qué era lo que sentía, con tan tiernas y amorosas palabras, como si fuera la cosa del mundo que más amaba. Él la miraba con el embelesamiento que se ha dicho, siéndole cada palabra o caricia que le hacía una lanzada que le atravesaba el alma.

Ya la dueña había dicho a la gente de casa y a Loaysa la enfermedad de su amo, encareciéndoles que debía de ser de momento, pues se le había olvidado de mandar cerrar las puertas de la calle cuando el negro salió a llamar a los padres de su señora; de la cual embajada asimismo se admiraron, por no haber entrado ninguno dellos en aquella casa después que casaron a su hija.

En fin, todos andaban callados y suspensos, no dando en la verdad de la causa de la indisposición de su amo; el cual, de rato en rato, tan profunda y dolorosamente suspiraba, que con cada suspiro parecía arrancársele el alma.

Lloraba Leonora por verle de aquella suerte, y reíase él con una risa de persona que estaba fuera de sí, considerando la falsedad de sus lágrimas.

En esto, llegaron los padres de Leonora, y, como hallaron la puerta de la calle y la del patio abiertas y la casa sepultada en silencio y sola, quedaron admirados y con no pequeño sobresalto. Fueron al aposento de su yerno y halláronle, como se ha dicho, siempre clavados los ojos en su esposa, a la cual tenía asida de las manos, derramando los dos muchas lágrimas: ella, con no más ocasión de verlas derramar a su esposo; él, por ver cuán fingidamente ella las derramaba.

Así como sus padres entraron, habló Carrizales, y dijo:

-Siéntense aquí vuestas mercedes, y todos los demás dejen desocupado este aposento, y sólo quede la señora Marialonso.

Hiciéronlo así; y, quedando solos los cinco, sin esperar que otro hablase, con sosegada voz, limpiándose los ojos, desta manera dijo Carrizales:

-Bien seguro estoy, padres y señores míos, que no será menester traerlos

testigos para que me creáis una verdad que quiero deciros. Bien se os debe acordar (que no es posible se os haya caído de la memoria) con cuánto amor, con cuán buenas entrañas, hace hoy un año, un mes, cinco días y nueve horas que me entregastes a vuestra querida hija por legítima mujer mía. También sabéis con cuánta liberalidad la doté, pues fue tal la dote, que más de tres de su misma calidad se pudieran casar con opinión de ricas. Asimismo, se os debe acordar la diligencia que puse en vestirla y adornarla de todo aquello que ella se acertó a desear y yo alcancé a saber que le convenía. Ni más ni menos habéis visto, señores, cómo, llevado de mi natural condición y temeroso del mal de que, sin duda, he de morir, y experimentado por mi mucha edad en los estraños y varios acaescimientos del mundo, quise guardar esta joya, que yo escogí y vosotros me distes, con el mayor recato que me fue posible. Alcé las murallas desta casa, quité la vista a las ventanas de la calle, doblé las cerraduras de las puertas, púsele torno como a monasterio; desterré perpetuamente della todo aquello que sombra o nombre de varón tuviese. Dile criadas y esclavas que la sirviesen, ni les negué a ellas ni a ella cuanto quisieron pedirme; hícela mi igual, comuniquéle mis más secretos pensamientos, entreguéla toda mi hacienda. Todas éstas eran obras para que, si bien lo considerara, yo viviera seguro de gozar sin sobresalto lo que tanto me había costado y ella procurara no darme ocasión a que ningún género de temor celoso entrara en mi pensamiento. Mas, como no se puede prevenir con diligencia humana el castigo que la voluntad divina quiere dar a los que en ella no ponen del todo en todo sus deseos y esperanzas, no es mucho que yo quede defraudado en las mías, y que yo mismo haya sido el fabricante del veneno que me va quitando la vida. Pero, porque veo la suspensión en que todos estáis, colgados de las palabras de mi boca, quiero concluir los largos preámbulos desta plática con deciros en una palabra lo que no es posible decirse en millares dellas. Digo, pues, señores, que todo lo que he dicho y hecho ha parado en que esta madrugada hallé a ésta, nacida en el mundo para perdición de mi sosiego y fin de mi vida (y esto, señalando a su esposa), en los brazos de un gallardo mancebo, que en la estancia desta pestífera dueña ahora está encerrado.

Apenas acabó estas últimas palabras Carrizales, cuando a Leonora se le cubrió el corazón, y en las mismas rodillas de su marido se cayó desmayada. Perdió la color Marialonso, y a las gargantas de los padres de Leonora se les atravesó un nudo que no les dejaba hablar palabra. Pero, prosiguiendo adelante Carrizales, dijo:

-La venganza que pienso tomar desta afrenta no es, ni ha de ser, de las que ordinariamente suelen tomarse, pues quiero que, así como yo fui estremado en lo que hice, así sea la venganza que tomaré, tomándola de mí mismo como del más culpado en este delito; que debiera considerar que mal podían estar ni

compadecerse en uno los quince años desta muchacha con los casi ochenta míos. Yo fui el que, como el gusano de seda, me fabriqué la casa donde muriese, y a ti no te culpo, ¡oh niña mal aconsejada! (y, diciendo esto, se inclinó y besó el rostro de la desmayada Leonora). No te culpo, digo, porque persuaciones de viejas taimadas y requiebros de mozos enamorados fácilmente vencen y triunfan del poco ingenio que los pocos años encierran. Mas, porque todo el mundo vea el valor de los quilates de la voluntad y fe con que te quise, en este último trance de mi vida quiero mostrarlo de modo que quede en el mundo por ejemplo, si no de bondad, al menos de simplicidad jamás oída ni vista; y así, quiero que se traiga luego aquí un escribano, para hacer de nuevo mi testamento, en el cual mandaré doblar la dote a Leonora y le rogaré que, después de mis días, que serán bien breves, disponga su voluntad, pues lo podrá hacer sin fuerza, a casarse con aquel mozo, a quien nunca ofendieron las canas deste lastimado viejo; y así verá que, si viviendo jamás salí un punto de lo que pude pensar ser su gusto, en la muerte hago lo mismo, y quiero que le tenga con el que ella debe de querer tanto. La demás hacienda mandaré a otras obras pías; y a vosotros, señores míos, dejaré con que podáis vivir honradamente lo que de la vida os queda. La venida del escribano sea luego, porque la pasión que tengo me aprieta de manera que, a más andar, me va acortando los pasos de la vida.

Esto dicho, le sobrevino un terrible desmayo, y se dejó caer tan junto de Leonora, que se juntaron los rostros: ¡estraño y triste espectáculo para los padres, que a su querida hija y a su amado yerno miraban! No quiso la mala dueña esperar a las reprehensiones que pensó le darían los padres de su señora; y así, se salió del aposento y fue a decir a Loaysa todo lo que pasaba, aconsejándole que luego al punto se fuese de aquella casa, que ella tendría cuidado de avisarle con el negro lo que sucediese, pues ya no había puertas ni llaves que lo impidiesen. Admiróse Loaysa con tales nuevas, y, tomando el consejo, volvió a vestirse como pobre, y fuese a dar cuenta a sus amigos del extraño y nunca visto suceso de sus amores.

En tanto, pues, que los dos estaban transportados, el padre de Leonora envió a llamar a un escribano amigo suyo, el cual vino a tiempo que ya habían vuelto hija y yerno en su acuerdo. Hizo Carrizales su testamento en la manera que había dicho, sin declarar el yerro de Leonora, más de que por buenos respectos le pedía y rogaba se casase, si acaso él muriese, con aquel mancebo que él la había dicho en secreto. Cuando esto oyó Leonora, se arrojó a los pies de su marido y, saltándole el corazón en el pecho, le dijo:

-Vivid vos muchos años, mi señor y mi bien todo, que, puesto caso que no estáis obligado a creerme ninguna cosa de las que os dijere, sabed que no os he ofendido sino con el pensamiento.

Y, comenzando a disculparse y a contar por extenso la verdad del caso, no pudo mover la lengua y volvió a desmayarse. Abrazóla así desmayada el lastimado viejo; abrazáronla sus padres; lloraron todos tan amargamente, que obligaron y aun forzaron a que en ellas les acompañase el escribano que hacía el testamento, en el cual dejó de comer a todas las criadas de casa, horras las esclavas y el negro, y a la falsa de Marialonso no le mandó otra cosa que la paga de su salario; mas, sea lo que fuere, el dolor le apretó de manera que al seteno día le llevaron a la sepultura.

Quedó Leonora viuda, llorosa y rica; y cuando Loaysa esperaba que cumplierse lo que ya él sabía que su marido en su testamento dejaba mandado, vio que dentro de una semana se entró monja en uno de los más recogidos monasterios de la ciudad. Él, despechado y casi corrido, se pasó a las Indias. Quedaron los padres de Leonora tristísimos, aunque se consolaron con lo que su yerno les había dejado y mandado por su testamento. Las criadas se consolaron con lo mismo, y las esclavas y esclavo con la libertad; y la malvada de la dueña, pobre y defraudada de todos sus malos pensamientos.

Y yo quedé con el deseo de llegar al fin deste suceso: ejemplo y espejo de lo poco que hay que fiar de llaves, tornos y paredes cuando queda la voluntad libre; y de lo menos que hay que confiar de verdes y pocos años, si les andan al oído exhortaciones destas dueñas de monjil negro y tendido, y tocas blancas y luengas. Sólo no sé qué fue la causa que Leonora no puso más ahínco en disculparse, y dar a entender a su celoso marido cuán limpia y sin ofensa había quedado en aquel suceso; pero la turbación le ató la lengua, y la priesa que se dio a morir su marido no dio lugar a su disculpa.

## La ilustre fregona

EN BURGOS, ciudad ilustre y famosa, no ha muchos años que en ella vivían dos caballeros principales y ricos: el uno se llamaba don Diego de Carriazo y el otro don Juan de Avendaño. El don Diego tuvo un hijo, a quien llamó de su mismo nombre, y el don Juan otro, a quien puso don Tomás de Avendaño. A estos dos caballeros mozos, como quien han de ser las principales personas deste cuento, por escusar y ahorrar letras, les llamaremos con solos los nombres de Carriazo y de Avendaño.

Trece años, o poco más, tendría Carriazo cuando, llevado de una inclinación picaresca, sin forzarle a ello algún mal tratamiento que sus padres le hiciesen, sólo por su gusto y antojo, se desgarró, como dicen los muchachos, de casa de sus padres, y se fue por ese mundo adelante, tan contento de la vida libre, que, en la mitad de las incomodidades y miserias que trae consigo, no echaba menos la abundancia de la casa de su padre, ni el andar a pie le cansaba, ni el frío le ofendía, ni el calor le enfadaba. Para él todos los tiempos del año le eran dulce y templada primavera; tan bien dormía en parvas como en colchones; con tanto gusto se soterraba en un pajar de un mesón, como si se acostara entre dos sábanas de holanda. Finalmente, él salió tan bien con el asunto de pícaro, que pudiera leer cátedra en la facultad al famoso de Alfarache.

En tres años que tardó en parecer y volver a su casa, aprendió a jugar a la taba en Madrid, y al rentoy en las Ventillas de Toledo, y a presa y pinta en pie en las barbacanas de Sevilla; pero, con serle anejo a este género de vida la miseria y estrechez, mostraba Carriazo ser un príncipe en sus cosas: a tiro de escopeta, en mil señales, descubría ser bien nacido, porque era generoso y bien partido con sus camaradas. Visitaba pocas veces las ermitas de Baco, y, aunque bebía vino, era tan poco que nunca pudo entrar en el número de los que llaman desgraciados, que, con alguna cosa que beban demasiada, luego se les pone el rostro como si se le hubiesen jalbegado con bermellón y almagre. En fin, en Carriazo vio el mundo un pícaro virtuoso, limpio, bien criado y más que medianamente discreto. Pasó por todos los grados de pícaro hasta que se graduó de maestro en las almadrabas de Zahara, donde es el *finibusterra* de la picaresca.

¡Oh pícaros de cocina, sucios, gordos y lucios; pobres fingidos, tullidos falsos, cicateruelos de Zocodover y de la plaza de Madrid, vistosos oracioneros, esportilleros de Sevilla, mandilejos de la hampa, con toda la caterva innumerable que se encierra debajo deste nombre *pícaro*!, bajad el toldo, amainad el brío, no

os llaméis pícaros si no habéis cursado dos cursos en la academia de la pesca de los atunes. ¡Allí, allí, que está en su centro el trabajo junto con la poltronería! Allí está la suciedad limpia, la gordura rolliza, la hambre prompta, la hartura abundante, sin disfraz el vicio, el juego siempre, las pendencias por momentos, las muertes por puntos, las pullas a cada paso, los bailes como en bodas, las seguidillas como en estampa, los romances con estribos, la poesía sin acciones. Aquí se canta, allí se reniega, acullá se riñe, acá se juega, y por todo se hurta. Allí campea la libertad y luce el trabajo; allí van o envían muchos padres principales a buscar a sus hijos y los hallan; y tanto sienten sacarlos de aquella vida como si los llevaran a dar la muerte.

Pero toda esta dulzura que he pintado tiene un amargo acíbar que la amarga, y es no poder dormir sueño seguro, sin el temor de que en un instante los trasladan de Zahara a Berbería. Por esto, las noches se recogen a unas torres de la marina, y tienen sus atajadores y centinelas, en confianza de cuyos ojos cierran ellos los suyos, puesto que tal vez ha sucedido que centinelas y atajadores, pícaros, mayores, barcos y redes, con toda la turbamulta que allí se ocupa, han anochecido en España y amanecido en Tetuán. Pero no fue parte este temor para que nuestro Carriazo dejase de acudir allí tres veranos a darse buen tiempo. El último verano le dijo tan bien la suerte, que ganó a los naipes cerca de setecientos reales, con los cuales quiso vestirse y volverse a Burgos, y a los ojos de su madre, que habían derramado por él muchas lágrimas. Despidióse de sus amigos, que los tenía muchos y muy buenos; prometiéndoles que el verano siguiente sería con ellos, si enfermedad o muerte no lo estorbaba. Dejó con ellos la mitad de su alma, y todos sus deseos entregó a aquellas secas arenas, que a él le parecían más frescas y verdes que los Campos Elíseos. Y, por estar ya acostumbrado de caminar a pie, tomó el camino en la mano, y sobre dos alpargates, se llegó desde Zahara hasta Valladolid cantando *Tres ánades, madre*.

Estúvose allí quince días para reformar la color del rostro, sacándola de mulata a flamenca, y para trastejarse y sacarse del borrador de pícaro y ponerse en limpio de caballero. Todo esto hizo según y como le dieron comodidad quinientos reales con que llegó a Valladolid; y aun dellos reservó ciento para alquilar una mula y un mozo, con que se presentó a sus padres honrado y contento. Ellos le recibieron con mucha alegría, y todos sus amigos y parientes vinieron a darles el parabién de la buena venida del señor don Diego de Carriazo, su hijo. Es de advertir que, en su peregrinación, don Diego mudó el nombre de Carriazo en el de Urdiales, y con este nombre se hizo llamar de los que el suyo no sabían.

Entre los que vinieron a ver el recién llegado, fueron don Juan de Avendaño y su hijo don Tomás, con quien Carriazo, por ser ambos de una misma edad y

vecinos, trabó y confirmó una amistad estrechísima. Contó Carriazo a sus padres y a todos mil magníficas y luengas mentiras de cosas que le habían sucedido en los tres años de su ausencia; pero nunca tocó, ni por pienso, en las almadrabas, puesto que en ellas tenía de continuo puesta la imaginación: especialmente cuando vio que se llegaba el tiempo donde había prometido a sus amigos la vuelta. Ni le entretenía la caza, en que su padre le ocupaba, ni los muchos, honestos y gustosos convites que en aquella ciudad se usan le daban gusto: todo pasatiempo le cansaba, y a todos los mayores que se le ofrecían anteponía el que había recibido en las almadrabas.

Avendaño, su amigo, viéndole muchas veces melancólico e imaginativo, fiado en su amistad, se atrevió a preguntarle la causa, y se obligó a remediarla, si pudiese y fuese menester, con su sangre misma. No quiso Carriazo tenérsela encubierta, por no hacer agravio a la grande amistad que profesaban; y así, le contó punto por punto la vida de la jábega, y cómo todas sus tristezas y pensamientos nacían del deseo que tenía de volver a ella; pintósela de modo que Avendaño, cuando le acabó de oír, antes alabó que vituperó su gusto.

En fin, el de la plática fue disponer Carriazo la voluntad de Avendaño de manera que determinó de irse con él a gozar un verano de aquella felicísima vida que le había descrito, de lo cual quedó sobremodo contento Carriazo, por parecerle que había ganado un testigo de abono que calificase su baja determinación. Trazaron, ansimismo, de juntar todo el dinero que pudiesen; y el mejor modo que hallaron fue que de allí a dos meses había de ir Avendaño a Salamanca, donde por su gusto tres años había estado estudiando las lenguas griega y latina, y su padre quería que pasase adelante y estudiase la facultad que él quisiese, y que del dinero que le diese habría para lo que deseaban.

En este tiempo, propuso Carriazo a su padre que tenía voluntad de irse con Avendaño a estudiar a Salamanca. Vino su padre con tanto gusto en ello que, hablando al de Avendaño, ordenaron de ponerles juntos casa en Salamanca, con todos los requisitos que pedían ser hijos suyos.

Llegóse el tiempo de la partida; proveyéronles de dineros y enviaron con ellos un ayo que los gobernase, que tenía más de hombre de bien que de discreto. Los padres dieron documentos a sus hijos de lo que habían de hacer y de cómo se habían de gobernar para salir aprovechados en la virtud y en las ciencias, que es el fruto que todo estudiante debe pretender sacar de sus trabajos y vigiliass, principalmente los bien nacidos. Mostráronse los hijos humildes y obedientes; lloraron las madres; recibieron la bendición de todos; pusiéronse en camino con mulas propias y con dos criados de casa, amén del ayo, que se había dejado crecer la barba porque diese autoridad a su cargo.

En llegando a la ciudad de Valladolid, dijeron al ayo que querían estarse en



aquel lugar dos días para verle, porque nunca le habían visto ni estado en él. Reprehendiólos mucho el ayo, severa y ásperamente, la estada, diciéndoles que los que iban a estudiar con tanta priesa como ellos no se habían de detener una hora a mirar niñerías, cuanto más dos días, y que él formaría escrúpulo si los dejaba detener un solo punto, y que se partiesen luego, y si no, que sobre eso, morena.

Hasta aquí se extendía la habilidad del señor ayo, o mayordomo, como más nos diere gusto llamarle. Los mancebitos, que tenían ya hecho su agosto y su vendimia, pues habían ya robado cuatrocientos escudos de oro que llevaba su mayor, dijeron que sólo los dejase aquel día, en el cual querían ir a ver la fuente de Argales, que la comenzaban a conducir a la ciudad por grandes y espaciosos acueductos. En efeto, aunque con dolor de su ánima, les dio licencia, porque él quisiera escusar el gasto de aquella noche y hacerle en Valdeastillas, y repartir las diez y ocho leguas que hay desde Valdeastillas a Salamanca en dos días, y no las veinte y dos que hay desde Valladolid; pero, como uno piensa el bayo y otro el que le ensilla, todo le sucedió al revés de lo que él quisiera.

Los mancebos, con solo un criado y a caballo en dos muy buenas y caseras mulas, salieron a ver la fuente de Argales, famosa por su antigüedad y sus aguas, a despecho del Caño Dorado y de la reverenda Priora, con paz sea dicho de Leganitos y de la estremadísima fuente Castellana, en cuya competencia pueden callar Corpa y la Pizarra de la Mancha. Llegaron a Argales, y cuando creyó el criado que sacaba Avendaño de las bolsas del cojín alguna cosa con que beber, vio que sacó una carta cerrada, diciéndole que luego al punto volviese a la ciudad y se la diese a su ayo, y que en dándosela les esperase en la puerta del Campo.

Obedeció el criado, tomó la carta, volvió a la ciudad, y ellos volvieron las riendas y aquella noche durmieron en Mojados, y de allí a dos días en Madrid; y en otros cuatro se vendieron las mulas en pública plaza, y hubo quien les fiase por seis escudos de prometido, y aun quien les diese el dinero en oro por sus cabales. Vistiéronse a lo payo, con capotillos de dos haldas, zahones o zaragüelles y medias de paño pardo. Roperero hubo que por la mañana les compró sus vestidos y a la noche los había mudado de manera que no los conociera la propia madre que los había parido. Puestos, pues, a la ligera y del modo que Avendaño quiso y supo, se pusieron en camino de Toledo *ad pedem literae* y sin espadas; que también el ropero, aunque no atañía a su menester, se las había comprado.

Dejémoslos ir, por ahora, pues van contentos y alegres, y volvamos a contar lo que el ayo hizo cuando abrió la carta que el criado le llevó y halló que decía desta manera:

Vuesa merced será servido, señor Pedro Alonso, de tener paciencia y dar la vuelta a Burgos, donde dirá a nuestros padres que, habiendo nosotros sus hijos, con madura consideración, considerado cuán más propias son de los caballeros las armas que las letras, habemos determinado de trocar a Salamanca por Bruselas y a España por Flandes. Los cuatrocientos escudos llevamos; las mulas pensamos vender. Nuestra hidalga intención y el largo camino es bastante disculpa de nuestro yerro, aunque nadie le juzgará por tal si no es cobarde. Nuestra partida es ahora; la vuelta será cuando Dios fuere servido, el cual guarde a vuesa merced como puede y estos sus menores discípulos deseamos.

De la fuente de Argales, puesto ya el pie en el estribo para caminar a Flandes.  
*Carriazo y Avendaño.*

Quedó Pedro Alonso suspenso en leyendo la epístola y acudió presto a su valija, y el hallarla vacía le acabó de confirmar la verdad de la carta; y luego al punto, en la mula que le había quedado, se partió a Burgos a dar las nuevas a sus amos con toda presteza, porque con ella pusiesen remedio y diesen traza de alcanzar a sus hijos. Pero destas cosas no dice nada el autor desta novela, porque, así como dejó puesto a caballo a Pedro Alonso, volvió a contar de lo que les sucedió a Avendaño y a Carriazo a la entrada de Illescas, diciendo que al entrar de la puerta de la villa encontraron dos mozos de mulas, al parecer andaluces, en calzones de lienzo anchos, jubones acuchillados de anjeo, sus coletos de ante, dagas de ganchos y espadas sin tiros; al parecer, el uno venía de Sevilla y el otro iba a ella. El que iba estaba diciendo al otro:

-Si no fueran mis amos tan adelante, todavía me detuviera algo más a preguntarte mil cosas que deseo saber, porque me has maravillado mucho con lo que has contado de que el conde ha ahorcado a Alonso Genís y a Ribera, sin querer otorgarles la apelación.

-¡Oh pecador de mí! -replicó el sevillano-. Armóles el conde zancadilla y cogiólos debajo de su jurisdicción, que eran soldados, y por contrabando se aprovechó dellos, sin que la Audiencia se los pudiese quitar. Sábetelo, amigo, que tiene un Bercebú en el cuerpo este conde de Puñonrostro, que nos mete los dedos de su puño en el alma. Barrida está Sevilla y diez leguas a la redonda de jácara; no para ladrón en sus contornos. Todos le temen como al fuego, aunque ya se suena que dejará presto el cargo de Asistente, porque no tiene condición para verse a cada paso en dimes ni diretes con los señores de la Audiencia.

-¡Vivan ellos mil años -dijo el que iba a Sevilla-, que son padres de los miserables y amparo de los desdichados! ¡Cuántos pobretes están mascando barro no más de por la cólera de un juez absoluto, de un corregidor, o mal informado o bien apasionado! Más veen muchos ojos que dos: no se apodera tan presto el veneno de la injusticia de muchos corazones como se apodera de uno

solo.

-Predicador te has vuelto -dijo el de Sevilla-, y, según llevas la retahíla, no acabarás tan presto, y yo no te puedo aguardar; y esta noche no vayas a posar donde sueles, sino en la posada del Sevillano, porque verás en ella la más hermosa fregona que se sabe. Marinilla, la de la venta Tejada, es asco en su comparación; no te digo más sino que hay fama que el hijo del Corregidor bebe los vientos por ella. Uno desos mis amos que allá van jura que, al volver que vuelva al Andalucía, se ha de estar dos meses en Toledo y en la misma posada, sólo por hartarse de mirarla. Ya le dejo yo en señal un pellizco, y me llevo en contracambio un gran torniscón. Es dura como un mármol, y zahareña como villana de Sayago, y áspera como una ortiga; pero tiene una cara de pascua y un rostro de buen año: en una mejilla tiene el sol y en la otra la luna; la una es hecha de rosas y la otra de claveles, y en entrambas hay también azucenas y jazmines. No te digo más, sino que la veas, y verás que no te he dicho nada, según lo que te pudiera decir, acerca de su hermosura. En las dos mulas rucias que sabes que tengo mías, la dotara de buena gana, si me la quisieran dar por mujer; pero yo sé que no me la darán, que es joya para un arcipreste o para un conde. Y otra vez torno a decir que allá lo verás. Y adiós, que me mudo.

Con esto se despidieron los dos mozos de mulas, cuya plática y conversación dejó mudos a los dos amigos que escuchado la habían, especialmente Avendaño, en quien la simple relación que el mozo de mulas había hecho de la hermosura de la fregona despertó en él un intenso deseo de verla. También le despertó en Carriazo; pero no de manera que no desease más llegar a sus almadrabas que detenerse a ver las pirámides de Egipto, o otra de las siete maravillas, o todas juntas.

En repetir las palabras de los mozos, y en remedar y contrahacer el modo y los ademanes con que las decían, entretuvieron el camino hasta Toledo; y luego, siendo la guía Carriazo, que ya otra vez había estado en aquella ciudad, bajando por la Sangre de Cristo, dieron con la posada del Sevillano; pero no se atrevieron a pedirla allí, porque su traje no lo pedía.

Era ya anochecido, y, aunque Carriazo importunaba a Avendaño que fuesen a otra parte a buscar posada, no le pudo quitar de la puerta de la del Sevillano, esperando si acaso parecía la tan celebrada fregona. Entrábase la noche y la fregona no salía; desesperábase Carriazo, y Avendaño se estaba quedado; el cual, por salir con su intención, con excusa de preguntar por unos caballeros de Burgos que iban a la ciudad de Sevilla, se entró hasta el patio de la posada; y, apenas hubo entrado, cuando de una sala que en el patio estaba vio salir una moza, al parecer de quince años, poco más o menos, vestida como labradora, con una vela encendida en un candelero.

No puso Avendaño los ojos en el vestido y traje de la moza, sino en su rostro, que le parecía ver en él los que suelen pintar de los ángeles. Quedó suspenso y atónito de su hermosura, y no acertó a preguntarle nada: tal era su suspensión y embelesamiento. La moza, viendo aquel hombre delante de sí, le dijo:

-¿Qué busca, hermano? ¿Es por ventura criado de alguno de los huéspedes de casa?

-No soy criado de ninguno, sino vuestro -respondió Avendaño, todo lleno de turbación y sobresalto.

La moza, que de aquel modo se vio responder, dijo:

-Vaya, hermano, norabuena, que las que servimos no hemos menester criados. Y, llamando a su señor, le dijo:

-Mire, señor, lo que busca este mancebo.

Salió su amo y preguntóle qué buscaba. Él respondió que a unos caballeros de Burgos que iban a Sevilla, uno de los cuales era su señor, el cual le había enviado delante por Alcalá de Henares, donde había de hacer un negocio que les importaba; y que junto con esto le mandó que se viniese a Toledo y le esperase en la posada del Sevillano, donde vendría a apearse; y que pensaba que llegaría aquella noche o otro día a más tardar. Tan buen color dio Avendaño a su mentira, que a la cuenta del huésped pasó por verdad, pues le dijo:

-Quédese, amigo, en la posada, que aquí podrá esperar a su señor hasta que venga.

-Muchas mercedes, señor huésped -respondió Avendaño-; y mande vuesa merced que se me dé un aposento para mí y un compañero que viene conmigo, que está allí fuera, que dineros traemos para pagarlo tan bien como otro.

-En buen hora -respondió el huésped.

Y, volviéndose a la moza, dijo:

-Costancica, di a Argüello que lleve a estos galanes al aposento del rincón y que les eche sábanas limpias.

-Sí haré, señor -respondió Costanza, que así se llamaba la doncella.

Y, haciendo una reverencia a su amo, se les quitó delante, cuya ausencia fue para Avendaño lo que suele ser al caminante ponerse el sol y sobrevenir la noche lóbrega y oscura. Con todo esto, salió a dar cuenta a Carriazo de lo que había visto y de lo que dejaba negociado; el cual por mil señales conoció cómo su amigo venía herido de la amorosa pestilencia; pero no le quiso decir nada por entonces, hasta ver si lo merecía la causa de quien nacían las extraordinarias alabanzas y grandes hipérboles con que la belleza de Costanza sobre los mismos cielos levantaba.

Entraron, en fin, en la posada, y la Argüello, que era una mujer de hasta cuarenta y cinco años, superintendente de las camas y aderezo de los aposentos,

los llevó a uno que ni era de caballeros ni de criados, sino de gente que podía hacer medio entre los dos extremos. Pidieron de cenar; respondiéndoles Argüello que en aquella posada no daban de comer a nadie, puesto que guisaban y aderezaban lo que los huéspedes traían de fuera comprado; pero que bodegones y casas de estado había cerca, donde sin escrúpulo de conciencia podían ir a cenar lo que quisiesen.

Tomaron los dos el consejo de Argüello, y dieron con sus cuerpos en un bodega, donde Carriazo cenó lo que le dieron y Avendaño lo que con él llevaba: que fueron pensamientos e imaginaciones. Lo poco o nada que Avendaño comía admiraba mucho a Carriazo. Por enterarse del todo de los pensamientos de su amigo, al volverse a la posada, le dijo:

-Conviene que mañana madruguem, porque antes que entre la calor estemos ya en Orgaz.

-No estoy en eso -respondió Avendaño-, porque pienso antes que desta ciudad me parta ver lo que dicen que hay famoso en ella, como es el Sagrario, el artificio de Juanelo, las Vistillas de San Agustín, la Huerta del Rey y la Vega.

-Norabuena -respondió Carriazo-: eso en dos días se podrá ver.

-En verdad que lo he de tomar de espacio, que no vamos a Roma a alcanzar alguna vacante.

-¡Ta, ta! -replicó Carriazo-. A mí me maten, amigo, si no estáis vos con más deseo de quedaros en Toledo que de seguir nuestra comenzada romería.

-Así es la verdad -respondió Avendaño-; y tan imposible será apartarme de ver el rostro desta doncella, como no es posible ir al cielo sin buenas obras.

-¡Gallardo encarecimiento -dijo Carriazo-y determinación digna de un tan generoso pecho como el vuestro! ¡Bien cuadra un don Tomás de Avendaño, hijo de don Juan de Avendaño (caballero, lo que es bueno; rico, lo que basta; mozo, lo que alegra; discreto, lo que admira), con enamorado y perdido por una fregona que sirve en el mesón del Sevillano!

-Lo mismo me parece a mí que es -respondió Avendaño-considerar un don Diego de Carriazo, hijo del mismo, caballero del hábito de Alcántara el padre, y el hijo a pique de heredarle con su mayorazgo, no menos gentil en el cuerpo que en el ánimo, y con todos estos generosos atributos, verle enamorado, ¿de quién, si pensáis? ¿De la reina Ginebra? No, por cierto, sino de la almadraba de Zahara, que es más fea, a lo que creo, que un miedo de santo Antón.

-¡Pata es la traviesa, amigo! -respondió Carriazo-; por los filos que te herí me has muerto; quédese aquí nuestra pendencia, y vámonos a dormir, y amanecerá Dios y medraremos.

-Mira, Carriazo, hasta ahora no has visto a Costanza; en viéndola, te doy licencia para que me digas todas las injurias o reprehensiones que quisieres.

-Ya sé yo en qué ha de parar esto -dijo Carriazo.

-¿En qué? -replicó Avendaño.

-En que yo me iré con mi almadraba, y tú te quedarás con tu fregona -dijo Carriazo.

-No seré yo tan venturoso -dijo Avendaño.

-Ni yo tan necio -respondió Carriazo-que, por seguir tu mal gusto, deje de conseguir el bueno mío.

En estas pláticas llegaron a la posada, y aun se les pasó en otras semejantes la mitad de la noche. Y, habiendo dormido, a su parecer, poco más de una hora, los despertó el son de muchas chirimías que en la calle sonaban. Sentáronse en la cama y estuvieron atentos, y dijo Carriazo:

-Apostaré que es ya de día y que debe de hacerse alguna fiesta en un monasterio de Nuestra Señora del Carmen que esta aquí cerca, y por eso tocan estas chirimías.

-No es eso -respondió Avendaño-, porque no ha tanto que dormimos que pueda ser ya de día.

Estando en esto, sintieron llamar a la puerta de su aposento, y, preguntando quién llamaba, respondieron de fuera diciendo:

-Mancebos, si queréis oír una brava música, levantaos y asomaos a una reja que sale a la calle, que está en aquella sala frontera, que no hay nadie en ella.

Levantáronse los dos, y cuando abrieron no hallaron persona ni supieron quién les había dado el aviso; mas, porque oyeron el son de una arpa, creyeron ser verdad la música; y así en camisa, como se hallaron, se fueron a la sala, donde ya estaban otros tres o cuatro huéspedes puestos a las rejas; hallaron lugar, y de allí a poco, al son de la arpa y de una vihuela, con maravillosa voz, oyeron cantar este soneto, que no se le pasó de la memoria a Avendaño:

Raro, humilde sujeto, que levantas  
a tan excelsa cumbre la belleza,  
que en ella se excedió naturaleza  
a sí misma, y al cielo la adelantas;

si hablas, o si ríes, o si cantas,

si muestras mansedumbre o aspereza  
(efeto sólo de tu gentileza),  
las potencias del alma nos encantas.

Para que pueda ser más conocida  
la sin par hermosura que contiene  
y la alta honestidad de que blasonas,

deja el servir, pues debes ser servida  
de cuantos veen sus manos y sus sienes  
resplandecer por cetros y coronas.

No fue menester que nadie les dijese a los dos que aquella música se daba por Costanza, pues bien claro lo había descubierto el soneto, que sonó de tal manera en los oídos de Avendaño, que diera por bien empleado, por no haberle oído, haber nacido sordo y estarlo todos los días de la vida que le quedaba, a causa que desde aquel punto la comenzó a tener tan mala como quien se halló traspasado el corazón de la rigurosa lanza de los celos. Y era lo peor que no sabía de quién debía o podía tenerlos. Pero presto le sacó deste cuidado uno de los que a la reja estaban, diciendo:

-¡Que tan simple sea este hijo del corregidor, que se ande dando músicas a una fregona...! Verdad es que ella es de las más hermosas muchachas que yo he visto, y he visto muchas; mas no por esto había de solicitarla con tanta publicidad.

A lo cual añadió otro de los de la reja:

-Pues en verdad que he oído yo decir por cosa muy cierta que así hace ella cuenta dél como si no fuese nadie: apostaré que se está ella agora durmiendo a sueño suelto detrás de la cama de su ama, donde dicen que duerme, sin acordársele de músicas ni canciones.

-Así es la verdad -replicó el otro-, porque es la más honesta doncella que se sabe; y es maravilla que, con estar en esta casa de tanto tráfico y donde hay cada día gente nueva, y andar por todos los aposentos, no se sabe della el menor desmán del mundo.

Con esto que oyó, Avendaño tornó a revivir y a cobrar aliento para poder escuchar otras muchas cosas, que al son de diversos instrumentos los músicos cantaron, todas encaminadas a Costanza, la cual, como dijo el huésped, se estaba durmiendo sin ningún cuidado.

Por venir el día, se fueron los músicos, despidiéndose con las chirimías.

Avendaño y Carriazo se volvieron a su aposento, donde durmió el que pudo hasta la mañana, la cual venida, se levantaron los dos, entrambos con deseo de ver a Costanza; pero el deseo del uno era deseo curioso, y el del otro deseo enamorado. Pero a entrambos se los cumplió Costanza, saliendo de la sala de su amo tan hermosa, que a los dos les pareció que todas cuantas alabanzas le había dado el mozo de mulas eran cortas y de ningún encarecimiento.

Su vestido era una saya y corpiños de paño verde, con unos ribetes del mismo paño. Los corpiños eran bajos, pero la camisa alta, plegado el cuello, con un cabezón labrado de seda negra, puesta una gargantilla de estrellas de azabache sobre un pedazo de una columna de alabastro, que no era menos blanca su garganta; ceñida con un cordón de San Francisco, y de una cinta pendiente, al lado derecho, un gran manojito de llaves. No traía chinelas, sino zapatos de dos suelas, colorados, con unas calzas que no se le parecían sino cuanto por un perfil mostraban también ser coloradas. Traía tranzados los cabellos con unas cintas blancas de hiladillo; pero tan largo el tranzado, que por las espaldas le pasaba de la cintura; el color salía de castaño y tocaba en rubio; pero, al parecer, tan limpio, tan igual y tan peinado, que ninguno, aunque fuera de hebras de oro, se le pudiera comparar. Pendíanle de las orejas dos calabacillas de vidrio que parecían perlas; los mismos cabellos le servían de garbín y de tocas.

Cuando salió de la sala se persignó y santiguó, y con mucha devoción y sosiego hizo una profunda reverencia a una imagen de Nuestra Señora que en una de las paredes del patio estaba colgada; y, alzando los ojos, vio a los dos, que mirándola estaban, y, apenas los hubo visto, cuando se retiró y volvió a entrar en la sala, desde la cual dio voces a Argüello que se levantara.

Resta ahora por decir qué es lo que le pareció a Carriazo de la hermosura de Costanza, que de lo que le pareció a Avendaño ya está dicho, cuando la vio la vez primera. No digo más, sino que a Carriazo le pareció tan bien como a su compañero, pero enamoróle mucho menos; y tan menos, que quisiera no anochechar en la posada, sino partirse luego para sus almadrabas.

En esto, a las voces de Costanza salió a los corredores la Argüello, con otras dos mocetonas, también criadas de casa, de quien se dice que eran gallegas; y el haber tantas lo requería la mucha gente que acude a la posada del Sevillano, que es una de las mejores y más frecuentadas que hay en Toledo. Acudieron también los mozos de los huéspedes a pedir cebada; salió el huésped de casa a dársela, maldiciendo a sus mozas, que por ellas se le había ido un mozo que la solía dar con muy buena cuenta y razón, sin que le hubiese hecho menos, a su parecer, un solo grano. Avendaño, que oyó esto, dijo:

-No se fatigue, señor huésped, déme el libro de la cuenta, que los días que hubiere de estar aquí yo la tendré tan buena en dar la cebada y paja que pidieren,



que no eche menos al mozo que dice que se le ha ido.

-En verdad que os lo agradezca, mancebo -respondió el huésped-, porque yo no puedo atender a esto, que tengo otras muchas cosas a que acudir fuera de casa. Bajad; daros he el libro, y mirad que estos mozos de mulas son el mismo diablo y hacen trampantojos un celemín de cebada con menos conciencia que si fuese de paja.

Bajó al patio Avendaño y entregóse en el libro, y comenzó a despachar celemines como agua, y a asentarlos por tan buena orden que el huésped, que lo estaba mirando, quedó contento; y tanto, que dijo:

-Pluguiese a Dios que vuestro amo no viniese y que a vos os diese gana de quedaros en casa, que a fe que otro gallo os cantase, porque el mozo que se me fue vino a mi casa, habrá ocho meses, roto y flaco, y ahora lleva dos pares de vestidos muy buenos y va gordo como una nutria. Porque quiero que sepáis, hijo, que en esta casa hay muchos provechos, amén de los salarios.

-Si yo me quedase -replicó Avendaño-no repararía mucho en la ganancia; que con cualquiera cosa me contentaría a trueco de estar en esta ciudad, que me dicen que es la mejor de España.

-A lo menos -respondió el huésped- de las mejores y más abundantes que hay en ella; mas otra cosa nos falta ahora, que es buscar quien vaya por agua al río; que también se me fue otro mozo que, con un asno que tengo famoso, me tenía rebosando las tinajas y hecha un lago de agua la casa. Y una de las causas por que los mozos de mulas se huelgan de traer sus amos a mi posada es por la abundancia de agua que hallan siempre en ella; porque no llevan su ganado al río, sino dentro de casa beben las cabalgaduras en grandes barreños.

Todo esto estaba oyendo Carriazo; el cual, viendo que ya Avendaño estaba acomodado y con oficio en casa, no quiso él quedarse a buenas noches; y más, que consideró el gran gusto que haría a Avendaño si le seguía el humor; y así, dijo al huésped:

-Venga el asno, señor huésped, que tan bien sabré yo cinchalle y cargalle, como sabe mi compañero asentar en el libro su mercancía.

-Sí -dijo Avendaño-, mi compañero Lope Asturiano servirá de traer agua como un príncipe, y yo le fío.

La Argüello, que estaba atenta desde el corredor a todas estas pláticas, oyendo decir a Avendaño que él fiaba a su compañero, dijo:

-Dígame, gentilhomme, ¿y quién le ha de fiar a él? Que en verdad que me parece que más necesidad tiene de ser fiado que de ser fiador.

-Calla, Argüello -dijo el huésped-, no te metas donde no te llaman; yo los fío a entrambos, y, por vida de vosotras, que no tengáis dares ni tomares con los mozos de casa, que por vosotras se me van todos.

-Pues qué -dijo otra moza-, ¿ya se quedan en casa estos mancebos? Para mi santiguada, que si yo fuera camino con ellos, que nunca les fiara la bota.

-Déjese de chocarrerías, señora Gallega -respondió el huésped-, y haga su hacienda, y no se entremeta con los mozos, que la moleré a palos.

-¡Por cierto, sí! -replicó la Gallega-. ¡Mirad qué joyas para codiciallas! Pues en verdad que no me ha hallado el señor mi amo tan juguetona con los mozos de la casa, ni de fuera, para tenerme en la mala piñón que me tiene: ellos son bellacos y se van cuando se les antoja, sin que nosotras les demos ocasión alguna. ¡Bonica gente es ella, por cierto, para tener necesidad de appetites que les inciten a dar un madrugón a sus amos cuando menos se percatan!

-Mucho habláis, Gallega hermana -respondió su amo-; punto en boca, y atended a lo que tenéis a vuestro cargo.

Ya en esto tenía Carriazo enjaezado el asno; y, subiendo en él de un brinco, se encaminó al río, dejando a Avendaño muy alegre de haber visto su gallarda resolución.

He aquí: tenemos ya -en buena hora se cuente-a Avendaño hecho mozo del mesón, con nombre de Tomás Pedro, que así dijo que se llamaba, y a Carriazo, con el de Lope Asturiano, hecho aguador: transformaciones dignas de anteponerse a las del narigudo poeta.

A malas penas acabó de entender la Argüello que los dos se quedaban en casa, cuando hizo designio sobre el Asturiano, y le marcó por suyo, determinándose a regalarle de suerte que, aunque él fuese de condición esquiva y retirada, le volviese más blando que un guante. El mismo discurso hizo la Gallega melindrosa sobre Avendaño; y, como las dos, por trato y conversación, y por dormir juntas, fuesen grandes amigas, al punto declaró la una a la otra su determinación amorosa, y desde aquella noche determinaron de dar principio a la conquista de sus dos desapasionados amantes. Pero lo primero que advirtieron fue en que les habían de pedir que no las habían de pedir celos por cosas que las viesan hacer de sus personas, porque mal pueden regalar las mozas a los de dentro si no hacen tributarios a los de fuera de casa. «Callad, hermanos -decían ellas (como si los tuvieran presentes y fueran ya sus verdaderos mancebos o amancebados)-; callad y tapaos los ojos, y dejad tocar el pandero a quien sabe y que guíe la danza quien la entiende, y no habrá par de canónigos en esta ciudad más regalados que vosotros lo seréis destas tributarias vuestras».

Estas y otras razones desta sustancia y jaez dijeron la Gallega y la Argüello; y, en tanto, caminaba nuestro buen Lope Asturiano la vuelta del río, por la cuesta del Carmen, puestos los pensamientos en sus almadrabas y en la súbita mutación de su estado. O ya fuese por esto, o porque la suerte así lo ordenase, en un paso

estrecho, al bajar de la cuesta, encontró con un asno de un aguador que subía cargado; y, como él descendía y su asno era gallardo, bien dispuesto y poco trabajado, tal encuentro dio al cansado y flaco que subía, que dio con él en el suelo; y, por haberse quebrado los cántaros, se derramó también el agua, por cuya desgracia el aguador antiguo, despechado y lleno de cólera, arremetió al aguador moderno, que aún se estaba caballero; y, antes que se desenvolviese y hubiese apeado, le había pegado y asentado una docena de palos tales, que no le supieron bien al Asturiano.

Apeóse, en fin; pero con tan malas entrañas, que arremetió a su enemigo, y, asiéndole con ambas manos por la garganta, dio con él en el suelo; y tal golpe dio con la cabeza sobre una piedra, que se la abrió por dos partes, saliendo tanta sangre que pensó que le había muerto.

Otros muchos aguadores que allí venían, como vieron a su compañero tan malparado, arremetieron a Lope, yuviéronle asido fuertemente, gritando:

-¡Justicia, justicia; que este aguador ha muerto a un hombre!

Y, a vuelta destas razones y gritos, le molían a mojicones y a palos. Otros acudieron al caído, y vieron que tenía hendida la cabeza y que casi estaba espirando. Subieron las voces de boca en boca por la cuesta arriba, y en la plaza del Carmen dieron en los oídos de un alguacil; el cual, con dos corchetes, con más ligereza que si volara, se puso en el lugar de la pendencia, a tiempo que ya el herido estaba atravesado sobre su asno, y el de Lope asido, y Lope rodeado de más de veinte aguadores, que no le dejaban rodear, antes le brumaban las costillas de manera que más se pudiera temer de su vida que de la del herido, según menudeaban sobre él los puños y las varas aquellos vengadores de la ajena injuria.

Llegó el alguacil, apartó la gente, entregó a sus corchetes al Asturiano, y antecogiendo a su asno y al herido sobre el suyo, dio con ellos en la cárcel, acompañado de tanta gente y de tantos muchachos que le seguían, que apenas podía hender por las calles.

Al rumor de la gente, salió Tomás Pedro y su amo a la puerta de casa, a ver de qué procedía tanta grita, y descubrieron a Lope entre los dos corchetes, lleno de sangre el rostro y la boca; miró luego por su asno el huésped, y viole en poder de otro corchete que ya se les había juntado. Preguntó la causa de aquellas prisiones; fuele respondida la verdad del suceso; pesóle por su asno, temiendo que le había de perder, o a lo menos hacer más costas por cobrarle que él valía.

Tomás Pedro siguió a su compañero, sin que le dejasen llegar a hablarle una palabra: tanta era la gente que lo impedía, y el recato de los corchetes y del alguacil que le llevaba. Finalmente, no le dejó hasta verle poner en la cárcel, y en un calabozo, con dos pares de grillos, y al herido en la enfermería, donde se

halló a verle curar, y vio que la herida era peligrosa, y mucho, y lo mismo dijo el cirujano.

El alguacil se llevó a su casa los dos asnos, y más cinco reales de a ocho que los corchetes habían quitado a Lope.

Volvióse a la posada lleno de confusión y de tristeza; halló al que ya tenía por amo con no menos pesadumbre que él traía, a quien dijo de la manera que quedaba su compañero, y del peligro de muerte en que estaba el herido, y del suceso de su asno. Díjole más: que a su desgracia se le había añadido otra de no menor fastidio; y era que un grande amigo de su señor le había encontrado en el camino, y le había dicho que su señor, por ir muy de priesa y ahorrar dos leguas de camino, desde Madrid había pasado por la barca de Azeca, y que aquella noche dormía en Orgaz; y que le había dado doce escudos que le diese, con orden de que se fuese a Sevilla, donde le esperaba.

-Pero no puede ser así -añadió Tomás-, pues no será razón que yo deje a mi amigo y camarada en la cárcel y en tanto peligro. Mi amo me podrá perdonar por ahora; cuanto más, que él es tan bueno y honrado, que dará por bien cualquier falta que le hiciere, a trueco que no la haga a mi camarada. Vuesa merced, señor amo, me la haga de tomar este dinero y acudir a este negocio; y, en tanto que esto se gasta, yo escribiré a mi señor lo que pasa, y sé que me enviará dineros que basten a sacarnos de cualquier peligro.

Abrió los ojos de un palmo el huésped, alegre de ver que, en parte, iba saneando la pérdida de su asno. Tomó el dinero y consoló a Tomás, diciéndole que él tenía personas en Toledo de tal calidad, que valían mucho con la justicia: especialmente una señora monja, parienta del Corregidor, que le mandaba con el pie; y que una lavandera del monasterio de la tal monja tenía una hija que era grandísima amiga de una hermana de un fraile muy familiar y conocido del confesor de la dicha monja, la cual lavandera lavaba la ropa en casa. «Y, como ésta pida a su hija, que sí pedirá, hable a la hermana del fraile que hable a su hermano que hable al confesor, y el confesor a la monja y la monja guste de dar un billete (que será cosa fácil) para el corregidor, donde le pida encarecidamente mire por el negocio de Tomás, sin duda alguna se podrá esperar buen suceso. Y esto ha de ser con tal que el aguador no muera, y con que no falte ungüento para untar a todos los ministros de la justicia, porque si no están untados, gruñen más que carretas de bueyes».

En gracia le cayó a Tomás los ofrecimientos del favor que su amo le había hecho, y los infinitos y revueltos arcaduces por donde le había derivado; y, aunque conoció que antes lo había dicho de socarrón que de inocente, con todo eso, le agradeció su buen ánimo y le entregó el dinero, con promesa que no faltaría mucho más, según él tenía la confianza en su señor, como ya le había

dicho.

La Argüello, que vio atraillado a su nuevo cuyo, acudió luego a la cárcel a llevarle de comer; mas no se le dejaron ver, de que ella volvió muy sentida y malcontenta; pero no por esto disistió de su buen propósito.

En resolución, dentro de quince días estuvo fuera de peligro el herido, y a los veinte declaró el cirujano que estaba del todo sano; y ya en este tiempo había dado traza Tomás cómo le viniesen cincuenta escudos de Sevilla, y, sacándolos él de su seno, se los entregó al huésped con cartas y cédula fingida de su amo; y, como al huésped le iba poco en averiguar la verdad de aquella correspondencia, cogía el dinero, que por ser en escudos de oro le alegraba mucho.

Por seis ducados se apartó de la querella el herido; en diez, y en el asno y las costas, sentenciaron al Asturiano. Salió de la cárcel, pero no quiso volver a estar con su compañero, dándole por disculpa que en los días que había estado preso le había visitado la Argüello y requerídole de amores: cosa para él de tanta molestia y enfado, que antes se dejara ahorcar que corresponder con el deseo de tan mala hembra; que lo que pensaba hacer era, ya que él estaba determinado de seguir y pasar adelante con su propósito, comprar un asno y usar el oficio de aguador en tanto que estuviesen en Toledo; que, con aquella cubierta, no sería juzgado ni preso por vagamundo, y que, con sola una carga de agua, se podía andar todo el día por la ciudad a sus anchuras, mirando bobas.

-Antes mirarás hermosas que bobas en esta ciudad, que tiene fama de tener las más discretas mujeres de España, y que andan a una su discreción con su hermosura; y si no, míralo por Costancica, de cuyas sobras de belleza puede enriquecer no sólo a las hermosas desta ciudad, sino a las de todo el mundo.

-Paso, señor Tomás -replicó Lope-: vámonos poquito a poquito en esto de las alabanzas de la señora fregona, si no quiere que, como le tengo por loco, le tenga por hereje.

-¿Fregona has llamado a Costanza, hermano Lope? -respondió Tomás-. Dios te lo perdone y te traiga a verdadero conocimiento de tu yerro.

-Pues ¿no es fregona? -replicó el Asturiano.

-Hasta ahora le tengo por ver fregar el primer plato.

-No importa -dijo Lope- no haberle visto fregar el primer plato, si le has visto fregar el segundo y aun el centésimo.

-Yo te digo, hermano -replicó Tomás-, que ella no friega ni entiende en otra cosa que en su labor, y en ser guarda de la plata labrada que hay en casa, que es mucha.

-Pues ¿cómo la llaman por toda la ciudad -dijo Lope- *la fregona ilustre*, si es que no friega? Mas sin duda debe de ser que, como friega plata, y no loza, la dan nombre de *ilustre*. Pero, dejando esto aparte, dime, Tomás: ¿en qué estado están

tus esperanzas?

-En el de perdición -respondió Tomás-, porque, en todos estos días que has estado preso, nunca la he podido hablar una palabra, y, a muchas que los huéspedes le dicen, con ninguna otra cosa responde que con bajar los ojos y no desplegar los labios; tal es su honestidad y su recato, que no menos enamora con su recogimiento que con su hermosura. Lo que me trae alcanzado de paciencia es saber que el hijo del corregidor, que es mozo brioso y algo atrevido, muere por ella y la solicita con músicas; que pocas noches se pasan sin dársela, y tan al descubierto, que en lo que cantan la nombran, la alaban y la solenizan. Pero ella no las oye, ni desde que anochece hasta la mañana no sale del aposento de su ama, escudo que no deja que me pase el corazón la dura saeta de los celos.

-Pues ¿qué piensas hacer con el imposible que se te ofrece en la conquista desta Porcia, desta Minerva y desta nueva Penélope, que en figura de doncella y de fregona te enamora, te acobarda y te desvanece?

-Haz la burla que de mí quisieres, amigo Lope, que yo sé que estoy enamorado del más hermoso rostro que pudo formar naturaleza, y de la más incomparable honestidad que ahora se puede usar en el mundo. Costanza se llama, y no Porcia, Minerva o Penélope; en un mesón sirve, que no lo puedo negar, pero, ¿qué puedo yo hacer, si me parece que el destino con oculta fuerza me inclina, y la elección con claro discurso me mueve a que la adore? Mira, amigo: no sé cómo te diga -prosiguió Tomás- de la manera con que amor el bajo sujeto desta fregona, que tú llamas, me le encumbra y levanta tan alto, que viéndole no le vea, y conociéndole le desconozca. No es posible que, aunque lo procuro, pueda un breve término contemplar, si así se puede decir, en la bajeza de su estado, porque luego acuden a borrar este pensamiento su belleza, su donaire, su sosiego, su honestidad y recogimiento, y me dan a entender que, debajo de aquella rústica corteza, debe de estar encerrada y escondida alguna mina de gran valor y de merecimiento grande. Finalmente, sea lo que se fuere, yo la quiero bien; y no con aquel amor vulgar con que a otras he querido, sino con amor tan limpio, que no se estiende a más que a servir y a procurar que ella me quiera, pagándome con honesta voluntad lo que a la mía, también honesta, se debe.

A este punto, dio una gran voz el Asturiano y, como exclamando, dijo:

-¡Oh amor platónico! ¡Oh fregona ilustre! ¡Oh felicísimos tiempos los nuestros, donde vemos que la belleza enamora sin malicia, la honestidad enciende sin que abrase, el donaire da gusto sin que incite, la bajeza del estado humilde obliga y fuerza a que le suban sobre la rueda de la que llaman Fortuna! ¡Oh pobres atunes míos, que os pasáis este año sin ser visitados deste tan enamorado y aficionado vuestro! Pero el que viene yo haré la enmienda, de

manera que no se quejen de mí los mayores de las mis deseadas almadrabas.

A esto dijo Tomás:

-Ya veo, Asturiano, cuán al descubierto te burlas de mí. Lo que podías hacer es irte norabuena a tu pesquería, que yo me quedaré en mi caza, y aquí me hallarás a la vuelta. Si quisieres llevarte contigo el dinero que te toca, luego te lo daré; y ve en paz, y cada uno siga la senda por donde su destino le guiare.

-Por más discreto te tenía -replicó Lope-; y ¿tú no ves que lo que digo es burlando? Pero, ya que sé que tú hablas de veras, de veras te serviré en todo aquello que fuere de tu gusto. Una cosa sola te pido, en recompensa de las muchas que pienso hacer en tu servicio: y es que no me pongas en ocasión de que la Argüello me requiebre ni solicite; porque antes romperé con tu amistad que ponerme a peligro de tener la suya. Vive Dios, amigo, que habla más que un relator y que le huele el aliento a rasuras desde una legua: todos los dientes de arriba son postizos, y tengo para mí que los cabellos son cabellera; y, para adobar y suplir estas faltas, después que me descubrió su mal pensamiento, ha dado en afeitarse con albayalde, y así se jalbega el rostro, que no parece sino mascarón de yeso puro.

-Todo eso es verdad -replicó Tomás-, y no es tan mala la Gallega que a mí me martiriza. Lo que se podrá hacer es que esta noche sola estés en la posada, y mañana comprarás el asno que dices y buscarás dónde estar; y así huirás los encuentros de Argüello, y yo quedaré sujeto a los de la Gallega y a los irreparables de los rayos de la vista de mi Costanza.

En esto se convinieron los dos amigos y se fueron a la posada, adonde de la Argüello fue con muestras de mucho amor recibido el Asturiano. Aquella noche hubo un baile a la puerta de la posada, de muchos mozos de mulas que en ella y en las convecinas había. El que tocó la guitarra fue el Asturiano; las bailadoras, amén de las dos gallegas y de la Argüello, fueron otras tres mozas de otra posada. Juntáronse muchos embozados, con más deseo de ver a Costanza que el baile, pero ella no pareció ni salió a verle, con que dejó burlados muchos deseos.

De tal manera tocaba la guitarra Lope, que decían que la hacía hablar. Pidiéronle las mozas, y con más ahínco la Argüello, que cantase algún romance; él dijo que, como ellas le bailasen al modo como se canta y baila en las comedias, que le cantarían, y que, para que no lo errasen, que hiciesen todo aquello que él dijese cantando y no otra cosa.

Había entre los mozos de mulas bailarines, y entre las mozas ni más ni menos. Mondó el pecho Lope, escupiendo dos veces, en el cual tiempo pensó lo que diría; y, como era de presto, fácil y lindo ingenio, con una felicísima corriente, de improviso comenzó a cantar desta manera:

Salga la hermosa Argüello,  
moza una vez, y no más;  
y, haciendo una reverencia,  
dé dos pasos hacia atrás.



De la mano la arrebate  
el que llaman Barrabás:  
andaluz mozo de mulas,  
canónigo del Compás.

De las dos mozas gallegas

que en esta posada están,  
salga la más carigorda  
en cuerpo y sin devantal.  
Engarráfela Torote,  
y todos cuatro a la par,  
con mudanzas y meneos,  
den principio a un contrapás.

Todo lo que iba cantando el Asturiano hicieron al pie de la letra ellos y ellas; mas, cuando llegó a decir que diesen principio a un contrapás, respondió Barrabás, que así le llamaban por mal nombre al bailarín mozo de mulas:

-Hermano músico, mire lo que canta y no moteje a naide de mal vestido, porque aquí no hay naide con trapos, y cada uno se viste como Dios le ayuda.

El huésped, que oyó la ignorancia del mozo, le dijo:

-Hermano mozo, *contrapás* es un baile extranjero, y no motejo de mal vestidos.

-Si eso es -replicó el mozo-, no hay para qué nos metan en dibujos: toquen sus zarabandas, chaconas y folías al uso, y escudillen como quisieren, que aquí hay presonas que les sabrán llenar las medidas hasta el gollete.

El Asturiano, sin replicar palabra, prosiguió su canto diciendo:

Entren, pues, todas las ninfas  
y los ninfos que han de entrar,  
que el baile de la chacona  
es más ancho que la mar.  
Requieran las castañetas  
y bájense a refregar

las manos por esa arena  
o tierra del muladar.  
Todos lo han hecho muy bien,  
no tengo qué les rectar;

santígüense, y den al diablo  
dos higas de su higueral.

Escupan al hideputa  
por que nos deje holgar,

puesto que de la chacona  
nunca se suele apartar.  
Cambio el son, divina Argüello,  
más bella que un hospital;  
pues eres mi nueva musa,  
tu favor me quieras dar.  
*El baile de la chacona  
encierra la vida bona.*

Hállase allí el ejercicio  
que la salud acomoda,

sacudiendo de los miembros  
a la pereza poltrona.  
Bulle la risa en el pecho  
de quien baila y de quien toca,  
del que mira y del que escucha  
baile y música sonora.  
Vierten azogue los pies,  
derrítese la persona  
y con gusto de sus dueños  
las mulillas se descorchan.  
El brío y la ligereza  
en los viejos se remoza,  
y en los mancebos se ensalza  
y sobremodo se entona.  
*Que el baile de la chacona  
encierra la vida bona.*

¡Qué de veces ha intentado  
aquesta noble señora,  
con la alegre zarabanda,  
el pésame y perra mora,

entrarse por los resquicios

de las casas religiosas



a inquietar la honestidad  
que en las santas celdas mora!  
¡Cuántas fue vituperada  
de los mismos que la adoran!

Porque imagina el lascivo  
y al que es necio se le antoja,  
*que el baile de chacona*  
*encierra la vida bona.*

Esta indiana amulatada,

de quien la fama pregonaba  
que ha hecho más sacrilegios  
e insultos que hizo Aroba;  
ésta, a quien es tributaria  
la turba de las fregonas,

la caterva de los pajes  
y de lacayos las tropas,  
dice, jura y no revienta,  
que, a pesar de la persona  
del soberbio zambapalo,  
ella es la flor de la olla,  
*y que sola la chacona  
encierra la vida bona.*

En tanto que Lope cantaba, se hacían rajas bailando la turbamulta de los mulantes y fregatrices del baile, que llegaban a doce; y, en tanto que Lope se acomodaba a pasar adelante cantando otras cosas de más tomo, sustancia y consideración de las cantadas, uno de los muchos embozados que el baile miraban dijo, sin quitarse el embozo:

-¡Calla, borracho! ¡Calla, cuero! ¡Calla, odrina, poeta de viejo, músico falso!

Tras esto, acudieron otros, diciéndole tantas injurias y muecas, que Lope tuvo por bien de callar; pero los mozos de mulas lo tuvieron tan mal, que si no fuera por el huésped, que con buenas razones los sosegó, allí fuera la de Mazagatos; y aun con todo eso, no dejaron de menear las manos si a aquel instante no llegara la justicia y los hiciera recoger a todos.

Apenas se habían retirado, cuando llegó a los oídos de todos los que en el barrio despiertos estaban una voz de un hombre que, sentado sobre una piedra, frontero de la posada del Sevillano, cantaba con tan maravillosa y suave armonía, que los dejó suspensos y les obligó a que le escuchasen hasta el fin. Pero el que más atento estuvo fue Tomás Pedro, como aquel a quien más le tocaba, no sólo el oír la música, sino entender la letra, que para él no fue oír canciones, sino cartas de excomunión que le acongojaban el alma; porque lo que el músico cantó fue este romance:

¿Dónde estás, que no pareces,  
esfera de la hermosura,

belleza a la vida humana  
de divina compostura?  
Cielo impíreo, donde amor  
tiene su estancia segura;  
primer mueble, que arrebató  
tras sí todas las venturas;  
lugar cristalino, donde

transparentes aguas puras  
enfrian de amor las llamas,  
las acrecientan y apuran;  
nuevo hermoso firmamento,  
donde dos estrellas juntas,  
sin tomar la luz prestada,  
al cielo y al suelo alumbran;  
alegría que se opone

a las tristezas confusas

del padre que da a sus hijos  
en su vientre sepultura;

humildad que se resiste  
de la alteza con que encumbran  
el gran Jove, a quien influye  
su benignidad, que es mucha.  
Red invisible y sutil,



que pone en prisiones duras  
al adúltero guerrero  
que de las batallas triunfa;  
cuarto cielo y sol segundo,  
que el primero deja a oscuras  
cuando acaso deja verse:  
que el verle es caso y ventura;  
grave embajador, que hablas  
con tan estraña cordura,  
que persuades callando,  
aún más de lo que procuras;

del segundo cielo tienes  
no más que la hermosura,  
y del primero, no más  
que el resplandor de la luna;  
esta esfera sois, Costanza,  
puesta, por corta fortuna,  
en lugar que, por indigno,  
vuestras venturas deslumbra.  
Fabricad vos vuestra suerte,

consintiendo se reduzga  
la entereza a trato al uso,  
la esquividad a blandura.  
Con esto veréis, señora,

que envidian vuestra fortuna  
las soberbias por linaje;  
las grandes por hermosura.

Si queréis ahorrar camino,  
la más rica y la más pura  
voluntad en mí os ofrezco  
que vio amor en alma alguna.

El acabar estos últimos versos y el llegar volando dos medios ladrillos fue todo uno; que, si como dieron junto a los pies del músico le dieran en mitad de la cabeza, con facilidad le sacaran de los cascos la música y la poesía. Asombróse el pobre, y dio a correr por aquella cuesta arriba con tanta priesa, que no le alcanzara un galgo. ¡Infelice estado de los músicos, murciégalos y lechuzos, siempre sujetos a semejantes lluvias y desmanes!

A todos los que escuchado habían la voz del apedreado, les pareció bien; pero a quien mejor, fue a Tomás Pedro, que admiró la voz y el romance; mas quisiera él que de otra que Costanza naciera la ocasión de tantas músicas, puesto que a sus oídos jamás llegó ninguna. Contrario deste parecer fue Barrabás, el mozo de mulas, que también estuvo atento a la música; porque, así como vio huir al músico, dijo:

-¡Allá irás, mentecato, trovador de Judas, que pulgas te coman los ojos! Y ¿quién diablos te enseñó a cantar a una fregona cosas de esferas y de cielos, llamándola lunes y martes, y de ruedas de Fortuna? Dijérasla, noramala para ti y para quien le hubiere parecido bien tu trova, que es tiesa como un espárrago, entonada como un plumaje, blanca como una leche, honesta como un fraile novicio, melindrosa y zahareña como una mula de alquiler, y más dura que un pedazo de argamasa; que, como esto le dijeras, ella lo entendiera y se holgara; pero llamarla embajador, y red, y moble, y alteza y bajeza, más es para decirlo a un niño de la dotrina que a una fregona. Verdaderamente que hay poetas en el mundo que escriben trovas que no hay diablo que las entienda. Yo, a lo menos, aunque soy Barrabás, éstas que ha cantado este músico de ninguna manera las entrevo: ¡miren qué hará Costancica! Pero ella lo hace mejor; que se está en su cama haciendo burla del mismo Preste Juan de las Indias. Este músico, a lo menos, no es de los del hijo del Corregidor, que aquéllos son muchos, y una vez que otra se dejan entender; pero éste, ¡voto a tal que me deja mohíno!

Todos los que escucharon a Barrabás recibieron gran gusto, y tuvieron su

censura y parecer por muy acertado.

Con esto, se acostaron todos; y, apenas estaba sosegada la gente, cuando sintió Lope que llamaban a la puerta de su aposento muy paso. Y, preguntando quién llamaba, fuele respondido con voz baja:

-La Argüello y la Gallega somos: ábrannos que mos morimos de frío.

-Pues en verdad -respondió Lope-que estamos en la mitad de los caniculares.

-Déjate de gracias, Lope -replicó la Gallega-: levántate y abre, que venimos hechas unas archiduquesas.

-¿Archiduquesas y a tal hora? -respondió Lope-. No creo en ellas; antes entiendo que sois brujas, o unas grandísimas bellacas: idos de ahí luego; si no, por vida de..., hago juramento que si me levanto, que con los hierros de mi pretina os tengo de poner las posaderas como unas amapolas.

Ellas, que se vieron responder tan acerbamente, y tan fuera de aquello que primero se imaginaron, temieron la furia del Asturiano; y, defraudadas sus esperanzas y borrados sus designios, se volvieron tristes y malaventuradas a sus lechos; aunque, antes de apartarse de la puerta, dijo la Argüello, poniendo los hocicos por el agujero de la llave:

-No es la miel para la boca del asno.

Y con esto, como si hubiera dicho una gran sentencia y tomado una justa venganza, se volvió, como se ha dicho, a su triste cama.

Lope, que sintió que se habían vuelto, dijo a Tomás Pedro, que estaba despierto:

-Mirad, Tomás: ponedme vos a pelear con dos gigantes, y en ocasión que me sea forzoso desquijarar por vuestro servicio media docena o una de leones, que yo lo haré con más facilidad que beber una taza de vino; pero que me pongáis en necesidad que me tome a brazo partido con la Argüello, no lo consentiré si me asaeteen. ¡Mirad qué doncellas de Dinamarca nos había ofrecido la suerte esta noche! Ahora bien, amanecerá Dios y medraremos.

-Ya te he dicho, amigo -respondió Tomás-, que puedes hacer tu gusto, o ya en irte a tu romería, o ya en comprar el asno y hacerte aguador, como tienes determinado.

-En lo de ser aguador me afirmo -respondió Lope-. Y durmamos lo poco que queda hasta venir el día, que tengo esta cabeza mayor que una cuba, y no estoy para ponerme ahora a departir contigo.

Durmiéronse; vino el día, levantáronse, y acudió Tomás a dar cebada y Lope se fue al mercado de las bestias, que es allí junto, a comprar un asno que fuese tal como bueno.

Sucedió, pues, que Tomás, llevado de sus pensamientos y de la comodidad que le daba la soledad de las siestas, había compuesto en algunas unos versos

amorosos y escrítolos en el mismo libro do tenía la cuenta de la cebada, con intención de sacarlos aparte en limpio y romper o borrar aquellas hojas. Pero, antes que esto hiciese, estando él fuera de casa y habiéndose dejado el libro sobre el cajón de la cebada, le tomó su amo, y, abriéndole para ver cómo estaba la cuenta, dio con los versos, que leídos le turbaron y sobresaltaron. Fuese con ellos a su mujer, y, antes que se los leyese, llamó a Costanza; y, con grandes encarecimientos, mezclados con amenazas, le dijo le dijese si Tomás Pedro, el mozo de la cebada, la había dicho algún requiebro, o alguna palabra descompuesta o que diese indicio de tenerla afición. Costanza juró que la primera palabra, en aquella o en otra materia alguna, estaba aún por hablarla, y que jamás, ni aun con los ojos, le había dado muestras de pensamiento malo alguno.

Creyéronla sus amos, por estar acostumbrados a oírla siempre decir verdad en todo cuanto le preguntaban. Dijéronla que se fuese de allí, y el huésped dijo a su mujer:

-No sé qué me diga desto. Habréis de saber, señora, que Tomás tiene escritas en este libro de la cebada unas coplas que me ponen mala espina que está enamorado de Costancica.

-Veamos las coplas -respondió la mujer-, que yo os diré lo que en eso debe de haber.

-Así será, sin duda alguna -replicó su marido-; que, como sois poeta, luego daréis en su sentido.

-No soy poeta -respondió la mujer-, pero ya sabéis vos que tengo buen entendimiento y que sé rezar en latín las cuatro oraciones.

-Mejor haríades de rezallas en romance: que ya os dijo vuestro tío el clérigo que decíades mil gazafatones cuando rezábades en latín y que no rezábades nada.

-Esa flecha, de la ahijada de su sobrina ha salido, que está envidiosa de verme tomar las *Horas* de latín en la mano yirme por ellas como por viña vendimiada.

-Sea como vos quisiéredes -respondió el huésped-. Estad atenta, que las coplas son éstas:

¿Quién de amor venturas halla?

El que calla.

¿Quién triunfa de su aspereza?

La firmeza.

¿Quién da alcance a su alegría?

La porfía.

Dese modo, bien podría

esperar dichosa palma  
si en esta empresa mi alma  
calla, está firme y porfía.

¿Con quién se sustenta amor?

Con favor.

¿Y con qué mengua su furia?

Con la injuria.

¿Antes con desdenes crece?

Desfallece.

Claro en esto se parece  
que mi amor será inmortal,  
pues la causa de mi mal  
ni injuria ni favorece.

Quien desespera, ¿qué espera?  
Muerte entera.  
Pues, ¿qué muerte el mal remedia?  
La que es media.  
Luego, ¿bien será morir?  
Mejor sufrir.  
Porque se suele decir,  
y esta verdad se reciba,



que tras la tormenta esquivada  
suele la calma venir.

¿Descubriré mi pasión?

En ocasión.

¿Y si jamás se me da?

Sí hará.

Llegará la muerte en tanto.

Llegue a tanto  
tu limpia fe y esperanza,  
que, en sabiéndolo Costanza,  
convierta en risa tu llanto.

-¿Hay más? -dijo la huéspeda.

-No -respondió el marido-; pero, ¿qué os parece destos versos?

-Lo primero -dijo ella-, es menester averiguar si son de Tomás.

-En eso no hay que poner duda -replicó el marido-, porque la letra de la cuenta de la cebada y la de las coplas toda es una, sin que se pueda negar.

-Mirad, marido -dijo la huéspeda-: a lo que yo veo, puesto que las coplas nombran a Costancica, por donde se puede pensar que se hicieron para ella, no por eso lo habemos de afirmar nosotros por verdad, como si se los viéramos escribir; cuanto más, que otras Costanzas que la nuestra hay en el mundo; pero, ya que sea por ésta, ahí no le dice nada que la deshonne ni la pide cosa que le importe. Estemos a la mira y avisemos a la muchacha, que si él está enamorado della, a buen seguro que él haga más coplas y que procure dárse las.

-¿No sería mejor -dijo el marido-quitarnos desos cuidados y echarle de casa?

-Eso -respondió la huéspeda-en vuestra mano está; pero en verdad que, según vos decís, el mozo sirve de manera que sería conciencia el despedille por tan liviana ocasión.

-Ahora bien -dijo el marido-, estaremos alerta, como vos decís, y el tiempo nos dirá lo que habemos de hacer.

Quedaron en esto, y tornó a poner el huésped el libro donde le había hallado. Volvió Tomás ansioso a buscar su libro, hallóle, y porque no le diese otro sobresalto, trasladó las coplas y rasgó aquellas hojas, y propuso de aventurarse a descubrir su deseo a Costanza en la primera ocasión que se le ofreciese. Pero, como ella andaba siempre sobre los estribos de su honestidad y recato, a ninguno daba lugar de miralla, cuanto más de ponerse a pláticas con ella; y, como había tanta gente y tantos ojos de ordinario en la posada, aumentaba más la dificultad de hablarla, de que se desesperaba el pobre enamorado.

Mas, habiendo salido aquel día Costanza con una toca ceñida por las mejillas, y dicho a quien se lo preguntó que por qué se la había puesto, que tenía un gran dolor de muelas, Tomás, a quien sus deseos avivaban el entendimiento, en un instante discurrió lo que sería bueno que hiciese, y dijo:

-Señora Costanza, yo le daré una oración en escrito, que a dos veces que la rece se le quitará como con la mano su dolor.

-Norabuena -respondió Costanza-; que yo la rezaré, porque sé leer.

-Ha de ser con condición -dijo Tomás-que no la ha de mostrar a nadie, porque

la estimo en mucho, y no será bien que por saberla muchos se menosprecie.

-Yo le prometo -dijo Costanza-, Tomás, que no la dé a nadie; y démela luego, porque me fatiga mucho el dolor.

-Yo la trasladaré de la memoria -respondió Tomás-y luego se la daré.

Estas fueron las primeras razones que Tomás dijo a Costanza, y Costanza a Tomás, en todo el tiempo que había que estaba en casa, que ya pasaban de veinte y cuatro días. Retiróse Tomás y escribió la oración, y tuvo lugar de dársela a Costanza sin que nadie lo viese; y ella, con mucho gusto y más devoción, se entró en un aposento a solas, y abriendo el papel vio que decía desta manera:

Señora de mi alma:

Yo soy un caballero natural de Burgos; si alcanzo de días a mi padre, heredo un mayorazgo de seis mil ducados de renta. A la fama de vuestra hermosura, que por muchas leguas se estiende, dejé mi patria, mudé vestido, y en el traje que me veis vine a servir a vuestro dueño; si vos lo quisiéredes ser mío, por los medios que más a vuestra honestidad convengan, mirad qué pruebas queréis que haga para enteraros desta verdad; y, enterada en ella, siendo gusto vuestro, seré vuestro esposo y me tendré por el más bien afortunado del mundo. Sólo, por ahora, os pido que no echéis tan enamorados y limpios pensamientos como los míos en la calle; que si vuestro dueño los sabe y no los cree, me condenará a destierro de vuestra presencia, que sería lo mismo que condenarme a muerte. Dejadme, señora, que os vea hasta que me creáis, considerando que no merece el riguroso castigo de no veros el que no ha cometido otra culpa que adoraros. Con los ojos podréis responderme, a hurto de los muchos que siempre os están mirando; que ellos son tales, que airados matan y piadosos resucitan.

En tanto que Tomás entendió que Costanza se había ido a leer su papel, le estuvo palpitando el corazón, temiendo y esperando, o ya la sentencia de su muerte o la restauración de su vida. Salió en esto Costanza, tan hermosa, aunque rebozada, que si pudiera recibir aumento su hermosura con algún accidente, se pudiera juzgar que el sobresalto de haber visto en el papel de Tomás otra cosa tan lejos de la que pensaba había acrecentado su belleza. Salió con el papel entre las manos hecho menudas piezas, y dijo a Tomás, que apenas se podía tener en pie:

-Hermano Tomás, ésta tu oración más parece hechicería y embuste que oración santa; y así, yo no la quiero creer ni usar della, y por eso la he rasgado, porque no la vea nadie que sea más crédula que yo. Aprende otras oraciones más fáciles, porque ésta será imposible que te sea de provecho.

En diciendo esto, se entró con su ama, y Tomás quedó suspenso, pero algo consolado, viendo que en solo el pecho de Costanza quedaba el secreto de su deseo; pareciéndole que, pues no había dado cuenta dél a su amo, por lo menos

no estaba en peligro de que le echasen de casa. Parecióle que en el primero paso que había dado en su pretensión había atropellado por mil montes de inconvenientes, y que, en las cosas grandes y dudosas, la mayor dificultad está en los principios.

En tanto que esto sucedió en la posada, andaba el Asturiano comprando el asno donde los vendían; y, aunque halló muchos, ninguno le satisfizo, puesto que un gitano anduvo muy solícito por encajalle uno que más caminaba por el azogue que le había echado en los oídos que por ligereza suya; pero lo que contentaba con el paso desagradaba con el cuerpo, que era muy pequeño y no del grandor y talle que Lope quería, que le buscaba suficiente para llevarle a él por añadidura, ora fuesen vacíos o llenos los cántaros.

Llegóse a él en esto un mozo y díjole al oído:

-Galán, si busca bestia cómoda para el oficio de aguador, yo tengo un asno aquí cerca, en un prado, que no le hay mejor ni mayor en la ciudad; y aconséjole que no compre bestia de gitanos, porque, aunque parezcan sanas y buenas, todas son falsas y llenas de dolamas; si quiere comprar la que le conviene, véngase conmigo y calle la boca.

Creyóle el Asturiano y díjole que guiase adonde estaba el asno que tanto encarecía. Fuéronse los dos mano a mano, como dicen, hasta que llegaron a la Huerta del Rey, donde a la sombra de una azuda hallaron muchos aguadores, cuyos asnos pacían en un prado que allí cerca estaba. Mostró el vendedor su asno, tal que le hinchó el ojo al Asturiano, y de todos los que allí estaban fue alabado el asno de fuerte, de caminador y comedor sobremanera. Hicieron su concierto, y, sin otra seguridad ni información, siendo corredores y medianeros los demás aguadores, dio diez y seis ducados por el asno, con todos los adherentes del oficio.

Hizo la paga real en escudos de oro. Diéronle el parabién de la compra y de la entrada en el oficio, y certificáronle que había comprado un asno dichosísimo, porque el dueño que le dejaba, sin que se le mancasse ni matase, había ganado con él en menos tiempo de un año, después de haberse sustentado a él y al asno honradamente, dos pares de vestidos y más aquellos diez y seis ducados, con que pensaba volver a su tierra, donde le tenían concertado un casamiento con una media parienta suya.

Amén de los corredores del asno, estaban otros cuatro aguadores jugando a la primera, tendidos en el suelo, sirviéndoles de bufete la tierra y de sobremesa sus capas. Púsose el Asturiano a mirarlos y vio que no jugaban como aguadores, sino como arcedianos, porque tenía de resto cada uno más de cien reales en cuartos y en plata. Llegó una mano de echar todos el resto, y si uno no diera partido a otro, él hiciera mesa gallega. Finalmente, a los dos en aquel resto se les

acabó el dinero y se levantaron; viendo lo cual el vendedor del asno, dijo que si hubiera cuarto, que él jugara, porque era enemigo de jugar en tercio. El Asturiano, que era de propiedad del azúcar, que jamás gastó menestra, como dice el italiano, dijo que él haría cuarto. Sentáronse luego, anduvo la cosa de buena manera; y, queriendo jugar antes el dinero que el tiempo, en poco rato perdió Lope seis escudos que tenía; y, viéndose sin blanca, dijo que si le querían jugar el asno, que él le jugaría. Acetáronle el envite, y hizo de resto un cuarto del asno, diciendo que por cuartos quería jugarle. Díjole tan mal, que en cuatro restos consecutivamente perdió los cuatro cuartos del asno, y ganóselos el mismo que se le había vendido; y, levantándose para volverse a entregarse en él, dijo el Asturiano que advirtiesen que él solamente había jugado los cuatro cuartos del asno, pero la cola, que se la diesen y se le llevasen norabuena.

Causóles risa a todos la demanda de la cola, y hubo letrados que fueron de parecer que no tenía razón en lo que pedía, diciendo que cuando se vende un carnero o otra res alguna no se saca ni quita la cola, que con uno de los cuartos traseros ha de ir forzosamente. A lo cual replicó Lope que los carneros de Berbería ordinariamente tienen cinco cuartos, y que el quinto es de la cola; y, cuando los tales carneros se cuarteán, tanto vale la cola como cualquier cuarto; y que a lo de ir la cola junto con la res que se vende viva y no se cuarteá, que lo concedía; pero que la suya no fue vendida, sino jugada, y que nunca su intención fue jugar la cola, y que al punto se la volviesen luego con todo lo a ella anejo y concerniente, que era desde la punta del cerebro, contada la osamenta del espinazo, donde ella tomaba principio y decendía, hasta parar en los últimos pelos della.

-Dadme vos -dijo uno-que ello sea así como decís y que os la den como la pedís, y sentaos junto a lo que del asno queda.

-¡Pues así es! -replicó Lope-. Venga mi cola; si no, por Dios que no me lleven el asno si bien viniesen por él cuantos aguadores hay en el mundo; y no piensen que por ser tantos los que aquí están me han de hacer superchería, porque soy yo un hombre que me sabré llegar a otro hombre y meterle dos palmos de daga por las tripas sin que sepa de quién, por dónde o cómo le vino; y más, que no quiero que me paguen la cola rata por cantidad, sino que quiero que me la den en ser y la corten del asno como tengo dicho.

Al ganancioso y a los demás les pareció no ser bien llevar aquel negocio por fuerza, porque juzgaron ser de tal brío el Asturiano, que no consentiría que se la hiciesen; el cual, como estaba hecho al trato de las almadrabas, donde se ejercita todo género de rumbo y jácara y de extraordinarios juramentos y boatos, voleó allí el capelo y empuñó un puñal que debajo del capotillo traía, y púsose en tal postura, que infundió temor y respecto en toda aquella aguadora compañía.

Finalmente, uno dellos, que parecía de más razón y discurso, los concertó en que se echase la cola contra un cuarto del asno a una quínola o a dos y pasante. Fueron contentos, ganó la quínola Lope; picóse el otro, echó el otro cuarto, y a otras tres manos quedó sin asno. Quiso jugar el dinero; no quería Lope, pero tanto le porfiaron todos, que lo hubo de hacer, con que hizo el viaje del desposado, dejándole sin un solo maravedí; y fue tanta la pesadumbre que desto recibió el perdidoso, que se arrojó en el suelo y comenzó a darse de calabazadas por la tierra. Lope, como bien nacido y como liberal y compasivo, le levantó y le volvió todo el dinero que le había ganado y los diez y seis ducados del asno, y aun de los que él tenía repartió con los circunstantes, cuya estraña liberalidad pasmó a todos; y si fueran los tiempos y las ocasiones del Tamorlán, le alzarán por rey de los aguadores.

Con grande acompañamiento volvió Lope a la ciudad, donde contó a Tomás lo sucedido, y Tomás asimismo le dio cuenta de sus buenos sucesos. No quedó taberna, ni bodegón, ni junta de pícaros donde no se supiese el juego del asno, el esquite por la cola y el brío y la liberalidad del Asturiano. Pero, como la mala bestia del vulgo, por la mayor parte, es mala, maldita y maldiciente, no tomó de memoria la liberalidad, brío y buenas partes del gran Lope, sino solamente la cola. Y así, apenas hubo andado dos días por la ciudad echando agua, cuando se vio señalar de muchos con el dedo, que decían: «Este es el aguador de la cola». Estuvieron los muchachos atentos, supieron el caso; y, no había asomado Lope por la entrada de cualquiera calle, cuando por toda ella le gritaban, quién de aquí y quién de allí: «¡Asturiano, daca la cola! ¡Daca la cola, Asturiano!» Lope, que se vio asaetear de tantas lenguas y con tantas voces, dio en callar, creyendo que en su mucho silencio se anegara tanta insolencia. Mas ni por éstas, pues mientras más callaba, más los muchachos gritaban; y así, probó a mudar su paciencia en cólera, y apeándose del asno dio a palos tras los muchachos, que fue afinar el polvorín y ponerle fuego, y fue otro cortar las cabezas de la serpiente, pues en lugar de una que quitaba, apaleando a algún muchacho, nacían en el mismo instante, no otras siete, sino setecientas, que con mayor ahínco y menudeo le pedían la cola. Finalmente, tuvo por bien de retirarse a una posada que había tomado fuera de la de su compañero, por huir de la Argüello, y de estarse en ella hasta que la influencia de aquel mal planeta pasase, y se borrara de la memoria de los muchachos aquella demanda mala de la cola que le pedían.

Seis días se pasaron sin que saliese de casa, si no era de noche, que iba a ver a Tomás y a preguntarle del estado en que se hallaba; el cual le contó que, después que había dado el papel a Costanza, nunca más había podido hablarla una sola palabra; y que le parecía que andaba más recatada que solía, puesto que una vez tuvo lugar de llegar a hablarla, y, viéndolo ella, le había dicho antes que llegase:

"Tomás, no me duele nada; y así, ni tengo necesidad de tus palabras ni de tus oraciones: conténtate que no te acuso a la Inquisición, y no te canses"; pero que estas razones las dijo sin mostrar ira en los ojos ni otro desabrimiento que pudiera dar indicio de reguridad alguna. Lope le contó a él la priesa que le daban los muchachos, pidiéndole la cola porque él había pedido la de su asno, con que hizo el famoso esquite. Aconsejóle Tomás que no saliese de casa, a lo menos sobre el asno, y que si saliese, fuese por calles solas y apartadas; y que, cuando esto no bastase, bastaría dejar el oficio, último remedio de poner fin a tan poco honesta demanda. Preguntóle Lope si había acudido más la Gallega. Tomás dijo que no, pero que no dejaba de sobornarle la voluntad con regalos y presentes de lo que hurtaba en la cocina a los huéspedes. Retiróse con esto a su posada Lope, con determinación de no salir della en otros seis días, a lo menos con el asno.

Las once serían de la noche cuando, de improviso y sin pensarlo, vieron entrar en la posada muchas varas de justicia, y al cabo el Corregidor. Alborotóse el huésped y aun los huéspedes; porque, así como los cometas cuando se muestran siempre causan temores de desgracias e infortunios, ni más ni menos la justicia, cuando de repente y de tropel se entra en una casa, sobresalta y atemoriza hasta las conciencias no culpadas. Entróse el Corregidor en una sala y llamó al huésped de casa, el cual vino temblando a ver lo que el señor Corregidor quería. Y, así como le vio el Corregidor, le preguntó con mucha gravedad:

-¿Sois vos el huésped?

-Sí señor -respondió él-, para lo que vuesa merced me quisiere mandar.

Mandó el Corregidor que saliesen de la sala todos los que en ella estaban, y que le dejasen solo con el huésped. Hiciéronlo así; y, quedándose solos, dijo el Corregidor al huésped:

-Huésped, ¿qué gente de servicio tenéis en esta vuestra posada?

-Señor -respondió él-, tengo dos mozas gallegas, y una ama y un mozo que tiene cuenta con dar la cebada y paja.

-¿No más? -replicó el Corregidor.

-No señor -respondió el huésped.

-Pues decidme, huésped -dijo el Corregidor-, ¿dónde está una muchacha que dicen que sirve en esta casa, tan hermosa que por toda la ciudad la llaman *la ilustre fregona*; y aun me han llegado a decir que mi hijo don Periquito es su enamorado, y que no hay noche que no le da músicas?

-Señor -respondió el huésped-, esa *fregona ilustre* que dicen es verdad que está en esta casa, pero ni es mi criada ni deja de serlo.

-No entiendo lo que decís, huésped, en eso de ser y no ser vuestra criada la fregona.

-Yo he dicho bien -añadió el huésped-; y si vuesa merced me da licencia, le

diré lo que hay en esto, lo cual jamás he dicho a persona alguna.

-Primero quiero ver a la fregona que saber otra cosa; llamadla acá -dijo el Corregidor.

Asomóse el huésped a la puerta de la sala y dijo:

-¡Oíslo, señora: haced que entre aquí Costancica!

Cuando la huéspeda oyó que el Corregidor llamaba a Costanza, turbóse y comenzó a torcerse las manos, diciendo:

-¡Ay desdichada de mí! ¡El Corregidor a Costanza y a solas! Algún gran mal debe de haber sucedido, que la hermosura desta muchacha trae encantados los hombres.

Costanza, que lo oía, dijo:

-Señora, no se congoje, que yo iré a ver lo que el señor Corregidor quiere; y si algún mal hubiere sucedido, esté segura vuesa merced que no tendré yo la culpa.

Y, en esto, sin aguardar que otra vez la llamasen, tomó una vela encendida sobre un candelero de plata, y, con más vergüenza que temor, fue donde el Corregidor estaba.

Así como el Corregidor la vio, mandó al huésped que cerrase la puerta de la sala; lo cual hecho, el Corregidor se levantó, y, tomando el candelero que Costanza traía, llegándole la luz al rostro, la anduvo mirando toda de arriba abajo; y, como Costanza estaba con sobresalto, habíasele encendido la color del rostro, y estaba tan hermosa y tan honesta, que al Corregidor le pareció que estaba mirando la hermosura de un ángel en la tierra; y, después de haberla bien mirado, dijo:

-Huésped, ésta no es joya para estar en el bajo engaste de un mesón; desde aquí digo que mi hijo Periquito es discreto, pues tan bien ha sabido emplear sus pensamientos. Digo, doncella, que no solamente os pueden y deben llamar *ilustre*, sino ilustrísima; pero estos títulos no habían de caer sobre el nombre de fregona, sino sobre el de una duquesa.

-No es fregona, señor -dijo el huésped-, que no sirve de otra cosa en casa que de traer las llaves de la plata, que por la bondad de Dios tengo alguna, con que se sirven los huéspedes honrados que a esta posada vienen.

-Con todo eso -dijo el Corregidor-, digo, huésped, que ni es decente ni conviene que esta doncella esté en un mesón. ¿Es parienta vuestra, por ventura?

-Ni es mi parienta ni es mi criada; y si vuesa merced gustare de saber quién es, como ella no esté delante, oirá vuesa merced cosas que, juntamente con darle gusto, le admiren.

-Sí gustaré -dijo el Corregidor-; y sálgase Costancica allá fuera, y prométase de mí lo que de su mismo padre pudiera prometerse; que su mucha honestidad y hermosura obligan a que todos los que la vieren se ofrezcan a su servicio.



No respondió palabra Costanza, sino con mucha mesura hizo una profunda reverencia al Corregidor y salióse de la sala; y halló a su ama desalada esperándola, para saber della qué era lo que el Corregidor la quería. Ella le contó lo que había pasado, y cómo su señor quedaba con él para contalle no sé qué cosas que no quería que ella las oyese. No acabó de sosegarse la huéspeda, y siempre estuvo rezando hasta que se fue el Corregidor y vio salir libre a su marido; el cual, en tanto que estuvo con el Corregidor, le dijo:

-«Hoy hacen, señor, según mi cuenta, quince años, un mes y cuatro días que llegó a esta posada una señora en hábito de peregrina, en una litera, acompañada de cuatro criados de a caballo y de dos dueñas y una doncella, que en un coche venían. Traía asimismo dos acémilas cubiertas con dos ricos reposteros, y cargadas con una rica cama y con aderezos de cocina. Finalmente, el aparato era principal y la peregrina representaba ser una gran señora; y, aunque en la edad mostraba ser de cuarenta o pocos más años, no por eso dejaba de parecer hermosa en todo extremo. Venía enferma y descolorida, y tan fatigada que mandó que luego luego le hiciesen la cama, y en esta misma sala se la hicieron sus criados. Preguntáronme cuál era el médico de más fama desta ciudad. Díjeles que el doctor de la Fuente. Fueron luego por él, y él vino luego; comunicó a solas con él su enfermedad; y lo que de su plática resultó fue que mandó el médico que se le hiciese la cama en otra parte y en lugar donde no le diesen ningún ruido. Al momento la mudaron a otro aposento que está aquí arriba apartado, y con la comodidad que el doctor pedía. Ninguno de los criados entraban donde su señora, y solas las dos dueñas y la doncella la servían.

»Yo y mi mujer preguntamos a los criados quién era la tal señora y cómo se llamaba, de adónde venía y adónde iba; si era casada, viuda o doncella, y por qué causa se vestía aquel hábito de peregrina. A todas estas preguntas, que le hicimos una y muchas veces, no hubo alguno que nos respondiese otra cosa sino que aquella peregrina era una señora principal y rica de Castilla la Vieja, y que era viuda y que no tenía hijos que la heredasen; y que, porque había algunos meses que estaba enferma de hidropesía, había ofrecido de ir a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en romería, por la cual promesa iba en aquel hábito. En cuanto a decir su nombre, traían orden de no llamarla sino la señora peregrina.

»Esto supimos por entonces; pero a cabo de tres días que, por enferma, la señora peregrina se estaba en casa, una de las dueñas nos llamó a mí y a mi mujer de su parte; fuimos a ver lo que quería, y, a puerta cerrada y delante de sus criadas, casi con lágrimas en los ojos, nos dijo, creo que estas mismas razones: "Señores míos, los cielos me son testigos que sin culpa mía me hallo en el riguroso trance que ahora os diré. Yo estoy preñada, y tan cerca del parto, que ya los dolores me van apretando. Ninguno de los criados que vienen conmigo saben

mi necesidad ni desgracia; a estas mis mujeres ni he podido ni he querido encubrírselo. Por huir de los maliciosos ojos de mi tierra, y porque esta hora no me tomase en ella, hice voto de ir a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe; ella debe de haber sido servida que en esta vuestra casa me tome el parto; a vosotros está ahora el remediarme y acudirme, con el secreto que merece la que su honra pone en vuestras manos. La paga de la merced que me hiciéredes, que así quiero llamarla, si no respondiere al gran beneficio que espero, responderá, a lo menos, a dar muestra de una voluntad muy agradecida; y quiero que comiencen a dar muestras de mi voluntad estos ducientos escudos de oro que van en este bolsillo". Y, sacando debajo de la almohada de la cama un bolsillo de aguja, de oro y verde, se le puso en las manos de mi mujer; la cual, como simple y sin mirar lo que hacía, porque estaba suspensa y colgada de la peregrina, tomó el bolsillo, sin responderle palabra de agradecimiento ni de comedimiento alguno. Yo me acuerdo que le dije que no era menester nada de aquello: que no éramos personas que por interés, más que por caridad, nos movíamos a hacer bien cuando se ofrecía. Ella prosiguió, diciendo: "Es menester, amigos, que busquéis donde llevar lo que pariere luego luego, buscando también mentiras que decir a quien lo entregáredes; que por ahora será en la ciudad, y después quiero que se lleve a una aldea. De lo que después se hubiere de hacer, siendo Dios servido de alumbrarme y de llevarme a cumplir mi voto, cuando de Guadalupe vuelva lo sabréis, porque el tiempo me habrá dado lugar de que piense y escoja lo mejor que me convenga. Partera no la he menester, ni la quiero: que otros partos más honrados que he tenido me aseguran que, con sola la ayuda destas mis criadas, facilitaré sus dificultades y ahorraré de un testigo más de mis sucesos".

»Aquí dio fin a su razonamiento la lastimada peregrina y principio a un copioso llanto, que en parte fue consolado por las muchas y buenas razones que mi mujer, ya vuelta en más acuerdo, le dijo. Finalmente, yo salí luego a buscar donde llevar lo que pariese, a cualquier hora que fuese; y, entre las doce y la una de aquella misma noche, cuando toda la gente de casa estaba entregada al sueño, la buena señora parió una niña, la más hermosa que mis ojos hasta entonces habían visto, que es esta misma que vuesa merced acaba de ver ahora. Ni la madre se quejó en el parto ni la hija nació llorando: en todos había sosiego y silencio maravilloso, y tal cual convenía para el secreto de aquel extraño caso. Otros seis días estuvo en la cama, y en todos ellos venía el médico a visitarla, pero no porque ella le hubiese declarado de qué procedía su mal; y las medicinas que le ordenaba nunca las puso en ejecución, porque sólo pretendió engañar a sus criados con la visita del médico. Todo esto me dijo ella misma, después que se vio fuera de peligro, y a los ocho días se levantó con el mismo bulto, o con otro que se parecía a aquel con que se había echado.

»Fue a su romería y volvió de allí a veinte días, ya casi sana, porque poco a poco se iba quitando del artificio con que después de parida se mostraba hídrica. Cuando volvió, estaba ya la niña dada a criar por mi orden, con nombre de mi sobrina, en una aldea dos leguas de aquí. En el bautismo se le puso por nombre Costanza, que así lo dejó ordenado su madre; la cual, contenta de lo que yo había hecho, al tiempo de despedirse me dio una cadena de oro, que hasta agora tengo, de la cual quitó seis trozos, los cuales dijo que trairía la persona que por la niña viniese. También cortó un blanco pergamino a vueltas y a ondas, a la traza y manera como cuando se enclavijan las manos y en los dedos se escribiese alguna cosa, que estando enclavijados los dedos se puede leer, y después de apartadas las manos queda dividida la razón, porque se dividen las letras; que, en volviendo a enclavijar los dedos, se juntan y corresponden de manera que se pueden leer continuamente: digo que el un pergamino sirve de alma del otro, y encajados se leerán, y divididos no es posible, si no es adivinando la mitad del pergamino; y casi toda la cadena quedó en mi poder, y todo lo tengo, esperando el contraseña hasta ahora, puesto que ella me dijo que dentro de dos años enviaría por su hija, encargándome que la criase no como quien ella era, sino del modo que se suele criar una labradora. Encargóme también que si por algún suceso no le fuese posible enviar tan presto por su hija, que, aunque creciese y llegase a tener entendimiento, no la dijese del modo que había nacido, y que la perdonase el no decirme su nombre ni quién era, que lo guardaba para otra ocasión más importante. En resolución, dándome otros cuatrocientos escudos de oro y abrazando a mi mujer con tiernas lágrimas, se partió, dejándonos admirados de su discreción, valor, hermosura y recato.

»Costanza se crió en el aldea dos años, y luego la truje conmigo, y siempre la he traído en hábito de labradora, como su madre me lo dejó mandado. Quince años, un mes y cuatro días ha que aguardo a quien ha de venir por ella, y la mucha tardanza me ha consumido la esperanza de ver esta venida; y si en este año en que estamos no vienen, tengo determinado de prohijalla y darle toda mi hacienda, que vale más de seis mil ducados, Dios sea bendito.

»Resta ahora, señor Corregidor, decir a vuesa merced, si es posible que yo sepa decirlas, las bondades y las virtudes de Costancica. Ella, lo primero y principal, es devotísima de Nuestra Señora: confiesa y comulga cada mes; sabe escribir y leer; no hay mayor randera en Toledo; canta a la almohadilla como unos ángeles; en ser honesta no hay quien la iguale. Pues en lo que toca a ser hermosa, ya vuesa merced lo ha visto. El señor don Pedro, hijo de vuesa merced, en su vida la ha hablado; bien es verdad que de cuando en cuando le da alguna música, que ella jamás escucha. Muchos señores, y de título, han posado en esta posada, y apostado, por hartarse de verla, han detenido su camino muchos días;

pero yo sé bien que no habrá ninguno que con verdad se pueda alabar que ella le haya dado lugar de decirle una palabra sola ni acompañada.» Esta es, señor, la verdadera historia de *la ilustre fregona*, que no friega, en la cual no he salido de la verdad un punto.

Calló el huésped y tardó un gran rato el Corregidor en hablarle: tan suspenso le tenía el suceso que el huésped le había contado. En fin, le dijo que le trujese allí la cadena y el pergamino, que quería verlo. Fue el huésped por ello, y, trayéndoselo, vio que era así como le había dicho; la cadena era de trozos, curiosamente labrada; en el pergamino estaban escritas, una debajo de otra, en el espacio que había de hinchir el vacío de la otra mitad, estas letras: E T E L S N V D D R; por las cuales letras vio ser forzoso que se juntasen con las de la mitad del otro pergamino para poder ser entendidas. Tuvo por discreta la señal del conocimiento, y juzgó por muy rica a la señora peregrina que tal cadena había dejado al huésped; y, teniendo en pensamiento de sacar de aquella posada la hermosa muchacha cuando hubiese concertado un monasterio donde llevarla, por entonces se contentó de llevar sólo el pergamino, encargando al huésped que si acaso viniesen por Costanza, le avisase y diese noticia de quién era el que por ella venía, antes que le mostrase la cadena, que dejaba en su poder. Con esto se fue tan admirado del cuento y suceso de *la ilustre fregona* como de su incomparable hermosura.

Todo el tiempo que gastó el huésped en estar con el Corregidor, y el que ocupó Costanza cuando la llamaron, estuvo Tomás fuera de sí, combatida el alma de mil varios pensamientos, sin acertar jamás con ninguno de su gusto; pero cuando vio que el Corregidor se iba y que Costanza se quedaba, respiró su espíritu y volviéronle los pulsos, que ya casi desamparado le tenían. No osó preguntar al huésped lo que el Corregidor quería, ni el huésped lo dijo a nadie sino a su mujer, con que ella también volvió en sí, dando gracias a Dios que de tan grande sobresalto la había librado.

El día siguiente, cerca de la una, entraron en la posada, con cuatro hombres de a caballo, dos caballeros ancianos de venerables presencias, habiendo primero preguntado uno de dos mozos que a pie con ellos venían si era aquélla la posada del Sevillano; y, habiéndole respondido que sí, se entraron todos en ella. Apeáronse los cuatro y fueron a apearse a los dos ancianos: señal por lo que se conoció que aquellos dos eran señores de los seis. Salió Costanza con su acostumbrada gentileza a ver los nuevos huéspedes, y, apenas la hubo visto uno de los dos ancianos, cuando dijo al otro:

-Yo creo, señor don Juan, que hemos hallado todo aquello que venimos a buscar.

Tomás, que acudió a dar recado a las cabalgaduras, conoció luego a dos

criados de su padre, y luego conoció a su padre y al padre de Carriazo, que eran los dos ancianos a quien los demás respetaban; y, aunque se admiró de su venida, consideró que debían de ir a buscar a él y a Carriazo a las almadrabas: que no habría faltado quien les hubiese dicho que en ellas, y no en Flandes, los hallarían. Pero no se atrevió a dejarse conocer en aquel traje; antes, aventurándolo todo, puesta la mano en el rostro, pasó por delante dellos, y fue a buscar a Costanza, y quiso la buena suerte que la hallase sola; y, apriesa y con lengua turbada, temeroso que ella no le daría lugar para decirle nada, le dijo:

-Costanza, uno destos dos caballeros ancianos que aquí han llegado ahora es mi padre, que es aquel que oyes llamar don Juan de Avendaño; infórmate de sus criados si tiene un hijo que se llama don Tomás de Avendaño, que soy yo, y de aquí podrás ir coligiendo y averiguando que te he dicho verdad en cuanto a la calidad de mi persona, y que te la diré en cuanto de mi parte te tengo ofrecido; y quédate a Dios, que hasta que ellos se vayan no pienso volver a esta casa.

No le respondió nada Costanza, ni él aguardó a que le respondiese; sino, volviéndose a salir, cubierto como había entrado, se fue a dar cuenta a Carriazo de cómo sus padres estaban en la posada. Dio voces el huésped a Tomás que viniese a dar cebada; pero, como no pareció, diola él mismo. Uno de los dos ancianos llamó aparte a una de las dos mozas gallegas, y preguntóle cómo se llamaba aquella muchacha hermosa que habían visto, y que si era hija o parienta del huésped o huéspeda de casa. La Gallega le respondió:

-La moza se llama Costanza; ni es parienta del huésped ni de la huéspeda, ni sé lo que es; sólo digo que la doy a la mala landre, que no sé qué tiene que no deja hacer baza a ninguna de las mozas que estamos en esta casa. ¡Pues en verdad que tenemos nuestras faciones como Dios nos las puso! No entra huésped que no pregunte luego quién es la hermosa, y que no diga: «Bonita es, bien parece, a fe que no es mala; mal año para las más pintadas; nunca peor me la depare la fortuna». Y a nosotras no hay quien nos diga: «¿Qué tenéis ahí, diablos, o mujeres, o lo que sois?»

-Luego esta niña, a esa cuenta -replicó el caballero-, debe de dejarse manosear y requebrar de los huéspedes.

-¡Sí! -respondió la Gallega-: ¡tenedle el pie al herrar! ¡Bonita es la niña para eso! Par Dios, señor, si ella se dejara mirar siquiera, manara en oro; es más áspera que un erizo; es una tragaavemarías; labrando está todo el día y rezando. Para el día que ha de hacer milagros quisiera yo tener un cuento de renta. Mi ama dice que trae un silencio pegado a las carnes; ¡tome qué, mi padre!

Contentísimo el caballero de lo que había oído a la Gallega, sin esperar a que le quitasen las espuelas, llamó al huésped; y, retirándose con él aparte en una sala, le dijo:

-Yo, señor huésped, vengo a quitaros una prenda mía que ha algunos años que tenéis en vuestro poder; para quitárosla os traigo mil escudos de oro, y estos trozos de cadena y este pergamino.

Y, diciendo esto, sacó los seis de la señal de la cadena que él tenía.

Asimismo conoció el pergamino, y, alegre sobremanera con el ofrecimiento de los mil escudos, respondió:

-Señor, la prenda que queréis quitar está en casa; pero no están en ella la cadena ni el pergamino con que se ha de hacer la prueba de la verdad que yo creo que vuesa merced trata; y así, le suplico tenga paciencia, que yo vuelvo luego.

Y al momento fue a avisar al Corregidor de lo que pasaba, y de cómo estaban dos caballeros en su posada que venían por Costanza.

Acababa de comer el Corregidor, y, con el deseo que tenía de ver el fin de aquella historia, subió luego a caballo y vino a la posada del Sevillano, llevando consigo el pergamino de la muestra. Y, apenas hubo visto a los dos caballeros cuando, abiertos los brazos, fue a abrazar al uno, diciendo:

-¡Válame Dios! ¿Qué buena venida es ésta, señor don Juan de Avendaño, primo y señor mío?

El caballero le abrazó asimismo, diciéndole:

-Sin duda, señor primo, habrá sido buena mi venida, pues os veo, y con la salud que siempre os deseo. Abrazad, primo, a este caballero, que es el señor don Diego de Carriazo, gran señor y amigo mío.

-Ya conozco al señor don Diego -respondió el Corregidor-, y le soy muy servidor.

Y, abrazándose los dos, después de haberse recibido con grande amor y grandes cortesías, se entraron en una sala, donde se quedaron solos con el huésped, el cual ya tenía consigo la cadena, y dijo:

-Ya el señor Corregidor sabe a lo que vuesa merced viene, señor don Diego de Carriazo; vuesa merced saque los trozos que faltan a esta cadena, y el señor Corregidor sacará el pergamino que está en su poder, y hagamos la prueba que ha tantos años que espero a que se haga.

-Desa manera -respondió don Diego-, no habrá necesidad de dar cuenta de nuevo al señor Corregidor de nuestra venida, pues bien se verá que ha sido a lo que vos, señor huésped, habréis dicho.

-Algo me ha dicho; pero mucho me quedó por saber. El pergamino, hele aquí.

Sacó don Diego el otro, y juntando las dos partes se hicieron una, y a las letras del que tenía el huésped, que, como se ha dicho, eran E T E L S N V D D R, respondían en el otro pergamino éstas: S A S A E A L E R A E A, que todas juntas decían: ESTA ES LA SEÑAL VERDADERA. Cotejéronse luego los

trozos de la cadena y hallaron ser las señas verdaderas.

-¡Esto está hecho! -dijo el Corregidor-. Resta ahora saber, si es posible, quién son los padres desta hermosísima prenda.

-El padre -respondió don Diego-yo lo soy; la madre ya no vive: basta saber que fue tan principal que pudiera yo ser su criado. Y, porque como se encubre su nombre no se encubra su fama, ni se culpe lo que en ella parece manifiesto error y culpa conocida, se ha de saber que la madre desta prenda, siendo viuda de un gran caballero, se retiró a vivir a una aldea suya; y allí, con recato y con honestidad grandísima, pasaba con sus criados y vasallos una vida sosegada y quieta. Ordenó la suerte que un día, yendo yo a caza por el término de su lugar, quise visitarla, y era la hora de siesta cuando llegué a su alcázar: que así se puede llamar su gran casa; dejé el caballo a un criado mío; subí sin topar a nadie hasta el mismo aposento donde ella estaba durmiendo la siesta sobre un estrado negro. Era por extremo hermosa, y el silencio, la soledad, la ocasión, despertaron en mí un deseo más atrevido que honesto; y, sin ponerme a hacer discretos discursos, cerré tras mí la puerta, y, llegándome a ella, la desperté; y, teniéndola asida fuertemente, le dije: «Vuesa merced, señora mía, no grite, que las voces que diere serán pregoneras de su deshonra: nadie me ha visto entrar en este aposento; que mi suerte, para que la tenga bonísima en gozaros, ha llovido sueño en todos vuestros criados, y cuando ellos acudan a vuestras voces no podrán más que quitarme la vida, y esto ha de ser en vuestro mismos brazos, y no por mi muerte dejará de quedar en opinión vuestra fama». Finalmente, yo la gocé contra su voluntad y a pura fuerza mía: ella, cansada, rendida y turbada, o no pudo o no quiso hablarme palabra, y yo, dejándola como atontada y suspensa, me volví a salir por los mismos pasos donde había entrado, y me vine a la aldea de otro amigo mío, que estaba dos leguas de la suya. Esta señora se mudó de aquel lugar a otro, y, sin que yo jamás la viese, ni lo procurase, se pasaron dos años, al cabo de los cuales supe que era muerta; y podrá haber veinte días que, con grandes encarecimientos, escribiéndome que era cosa que me importaba en ella el contento y la honra, me envió a llamar un mayordomo desta señora. Fui a ver lo que me quería, bien lejos de pensar en lo que me dijo; halléle a punto de muerte, y, por abreviar razones, en muy breves me dijo cómo al tiempo que murió su señora le dijo todo lo que conmigo le había sucedido, y cómo había quedado preñada de aquella fuerza; y que, por encubrir el bulto, había venido en romería a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, y cómo había parido en esta casa una niña, que se había de llamar Costanza. Diome las señas con que la hallaría, que fueron las que habéis visto de la cadena y pergamino. Y diome ansimismo treinta mil escudos de oro, que su señora dejó para casar a su hija. Díjome ansimismo que el no habérmelos dado luego, como su señora había muerto, ni declarádome lo que

ella encomendó a su confianza y secreto, había sido por pura codicia y por poderse aprovechar de aquel dinero; pero que ya que estaba a punto de ir a dar cuenta a Dios, por descargo de su conciencia me daba el dinero y me avisaba adónde y cómo había de hallar mi hija. Recebí el dinero y las señales, y, dando cuenta desto al señor don Juan de Avendaño, nos pusimos en camino desta ciudad.

A estas razones llegaba don Diego, cuando oyeron que en la puerta de la calle decían a grandes voces:

-Díganle a Tomás Pedro, el mozo de la cebada, cómo llevan a su amigo el Asturiano preso; que acuda a la cárcel, que allí le espera.

A la voz de cárcel y de preso, dijo el Corregidor que entrase el preso y el alguacil que le llevaba. Dijeron al alguacil que el Corregidor, que estaba allí, le mandaba entrar con el preso; y así lo hubo de hacer.

Venía el Asturiano todos los dientes bañados en sangre, y muy malparado y muy bien asido del alguacil; y, así como entró en la sala, conoció a su padre y al de Avendaño. Turbóse, y, por no ser conocido, con un paño, como que se limpiaba la sangre, se cubrió el rostro. Preguntó el Corregidor que qué había hecho aquel mozo, que tan malparado le llevaban. Respondió el alguacil que aquel mozo era un aguador que le llamaban el Asturiano, a quien los muchachos por las calles decían: «¡Daca la cola, Asturiano: daca la cola!»; y luego, en breves palabras, contó la causa porque le pedían la tal cola, de que no rieron poco todos. Dijo más: que, saliendo por la puente de Alcántara, dándole los muchachos priesa con la demanda de la cola, se había apeado del asno, y, dando tras todos, alcanzó a uno, a quien dejaba medio muerto a palos; y que, queriéndole prender, se había resistido, y que por eso iba tan malparado.

Mandó el Corregidor que se descubriese el rostro; y, porfiando a no querer descubrirse, llegó el alguacil y quitóle el pañuelo, y al punto le conoció su padre, y dijo todo alterado:

-Hijo don Diego, ¿cómo estás desta manera? ¿Qué traje es éste? ¿Aún no se te han olvidado tus picardías?

Hincó las rodillas Carriazo y fuese a poner a los pies de su padre, que, con lágrimas en los ojos, le tuvo abrazado un buen espacio. Don Juan de Avendaño, como sabía que don Diego había venido con don Tomás, su hijo, preguntóle por él, a lo cual respondió que don Tomás de Avendaño era el mozo que daba cebada y paja en aquella posada. Con esto que el Asturiano dijo se acabó de apoderar la admiración en todos los presentes, y mandó el Corregidor al huésped que trujese allí al mozo de la cebada.

-Yo creo que no está en casa -respondió el huésped-, pero yo le buscaré.

Y así, fue a buscallo.



Preguntó don Diego a Carriazo que qué transformaciones eran aquéllas, y qué les había movido a ser él aguador y don Tomás mozo de mesón. A lo cual respondió Carriazo que no podía satisfacer a aquellas preguntas tan en público; que él respondería a solas.

Estaba Tomás Pedro escondido en su aposento, para ver desde allí, sin ser visto, lo que hacían su padre y el de Carriazo. Teníale suspenso la venida del Corregidor y el alboroto que en toda la casa andaba. No faltó quien le dijese al huésped como estaba allí escondido; subió por él, y más por fuerza que por grado le hizo bajar; y aun no bajara si el mismo Corregidor no saliera al patio y le llamara por su nombre, diciendo:

-Baje vuesa merced, señor pariente, que aquí no le aguardan osos ni leones.

Bajó Tomás, y, con los ojos bajos y sumisión grande, se hincó de rodillas ante su padre, el cual le abrazó con grandísimo contento, a fuer del que tuvo el padre del Hijo Pródigo cuando le cobró de perdido.

Ya en esto había venido un coche del Corregidor, para volver en él, pues la gran fiesta no permitía volver a caballo. Hizo llamar a Costanza, y, tomándola de la mano, se la presentó a su padre, diciendo:

-Recebid, señor don Diego, esta prenda y estimalda por la más rica que acertáades a desear. Y vos, hermosa doncella, besad la mano a vuestro padre y dad gracias a Dios, que con tan honrado suceso ha enmedado, subido y mejorado la bajeza de vuestro estado.

Costanza, que no sabía ni imaginaba lo que le había acontecido, toda turbada y temblando, no supo hacer otra cosa que hincarse de rodillas ante su padre; y, tomándole las manos, se las comenzó a besar tiernamente, bañándose las con infinitas lágrimas que por sus hermosísimos ojos derramaba.

En tanto que esto pasaba, había persuadido el Corregidor a su primo don Juan que se viniesen todos con él a su casa; y, aunque don Juan lo rehusaba, fueron tantas las persuasiones del Corregidor, que lo hubo de conceder; y así, entraron en el coche todos. Pero, cuando dijo el Corregidor a Costanza que entrase también en el coche, se le anubló el corazón, y ella y la huéspeda se asieron una a otra y comenzaron a hacer tan amargo llanto, que quebraba los corazones de cuantos le escuchaban. Decía la huéspeda:

-¿Cómo es esto, hija de mi corazón, que te vas y me dejas? ¿Cómo tienes ánimo de dejar a esta madre, que con tanto amor te ha criado?

Costanza lloraba y la respondía con no menos tiernas palabras. Pero el Corregidor, enternecido, mandó que asimismo la huéspeda entrase en el coche, y que no se apartase de su hija, pues por tal la tenía, hasta que saliese de Toledo. Así, la huéspeda y todos entraron en el coche, y fueron a casa del Corregidor,

donde fueron bien recibidos de su mujer, que era una principal señora. Comieron regalada y sumptuosamente, y después de comer contó Carriazo a su padre cómo por amor de Costanza don Tomás se había puesto a servir en el mesón, y que estaba enamorado de tal manera della, que, sin que le hubiera descubierto ser tan principal, como era siendo su hija, la tomara por mujer en el estado de fregona. Vistió luego la mujer del Corregidor a Costanza con unos vestidos de una hija que tenía de la misma edad y cuerpo de Costanza; y si parecía hermosa con los de labradora, con los cortesanos parecía cosa del cielo: tan bien la cuadraban, que daba a entender que desde que nació había sido señora y usado los mejores trajes que el uso trae consigo.

Pero, entre tantos alegres, no pudo faltar un triste, que fue don Pedro, el hijo del Corregidor, que luego se imaginó que Costanza no había de ser suya; y así fue la verdad, porque, entre el Corregidor y don Diego de Carriazo y don Juan de Avendaño, se concertaron en que don Tomás se casase con Costanza, dándole su padre los treinta mil escudos que su madre le había dejado, y el aguador don Diego de Carriazo casase con la hija del Corregidor, y don Pedro, el hijo del Corregidor, con una hija de don Juan de Avendaño; que su padre se ofrecía a traer dispensación del parentesco.

Destá manera quedaron todos contentos, alegres y satisfechos, y la nueva de los casamientos y de la ventura de *la fregona ilustre* se extendió por la ciudad; y acudía infinita gente a ver a Costanza en el nuevo hábito, en el cual tan señora se mostraba como se ha dicho. Vieron al mozo de la cebada, Tomás Pedro, vuelto en don Tomás de Avendaño y vestido como señor; notaron que Lope Asturiano era muy gentilhomme después que había mudado vestido y dejado el asno y las aguaderas; pero, con todo eso, no faltaba quien, en el medio de su pompa, cuando iba por la calle, no le pidiese la cola.

Un mes se estuvieron en Toledo, al cabo del cual se volvieron a Burgos don Diego de Carriazo y su mujer, su padre, y Costanza con su marido don Tomás, y el hijo del Corregidor, que quiso ir a ver su parienta y esposa. Quedó el Sevillano rico con los mil escudos y con muchas joyas que Costanza dio a su señora; que siempre con este nombre llamaba a la que la había criado.

Dio ocasión la historia de *la fregona ilustre* a que los poetas del dorado Tajo ejercitasen sus plumas en solenizar y en alabar la sin par hermosura de Costanza, la cual aún vive en compañía de su buen mozo de mesón; y Carriazo, ni más ni menos, con tres hijos, que, sin tomar el estilo del padre ni acordarse si hay almadrabas en el mundo, hoy están todos estudiando en Salamanca; y su padre, apenas vee algún asno de aguador, cuando se le representa y viene a la memoria el que tuvo en Toledo; y teme que, cuando menos se cate, ha de remanecer en alguna sátira el «¡Daca la cola, Asturiano! ¡Asturiano, daca la cola!»

## Las dos doncellas

CINCO leguas de la ciudad de Sevilla, está un lugar que se llama Castiblanco; y, en uno de muchos mesones que tiene, a la hora que anohecía, entró un caminante sobre un hermoso cuartago, extranjero. No traía criado alguno, y, sin esperar que le tuviesen el estribo, se arrojó de la silla con gran ligereza.

Acudió luego el huésped, que era hombre diligente y de recado; mas no fue tan presto que no estuviese ya el caminante sentado en un poyo que en el portal había, desabrochándose muy apriesa los botones del pecho, y luego dejó caer los brazos a una y a otra parte, dando manifiesto indicio de desmayarse. La huéspeda, que era caritativa, se llegó a él, y, rociándole con agua el rostro, le hizo volver en su acuerdo, y él, dando muestras que le había pesado de que así le hubiesen visto, se volvió a abrochar, pidiendo que le diesen luego un aposento donde se recogiese, y que, si fuese posible, fuese solo.

Díjole la huéspeda que no había más de uno en toda la casa, y que tenía dos camas, y que era forzoso, si algún huésped acudiese, acomodarle en la una. A lo cual respondió el caminante que él pagaría los dos lechos, viniese o no huésped alguno; y, sacando un escudo de oro, se le dio a la huéspeda, con condición que a nadie diese el lecho vacío.

No se descontentó la huéspeda de la paga; antes, se ofreció de hacer lo que le pedía, aunque el mismo deán de Sevilla llegase aquella noche a su casa. Preguntóle si quería cenar, y respondió que no; mas que sólo quería que se tuviese gran cuidado con su cuartago. Pidió la llave del aposento, y, llevando consigo unas bolsas grandes de cuero, se entró en él y cerró tras sí la puerta con llave, y aun, a lo que después pareció, arrimó a ella dos sillas.

Apenas se hubo encerrado, cuando se juntaron a consejo el huésped y la huéspeda, y el mozo que daba la cebada, y otros dos vecinos que acaso allí se hallaron; y todos trataron de la grande hermosura y gallarda disposición del nuevo huésped, concluyendo que jamás tal belleza habían visto.

Tanteáronle la edad y se resolvieron que tendría de diez y seis a diez y siete años. Fueron y vinieron y dieron y tomaron, como suele decirse, sobre qué podía haber sido la causa del desmayo que le dio; pero, como no la alcanzaron, quedáronse con la admiración de su gentileza.

Fuéronse los vecinos a sus casas, y el huésped a pensar el cuartago, y la huéspeda a aderezar algo de cenar por si otros huéspedes viniesen. Y no tardó mucho cuando entró otro de poca más edad que el primero y no de menos

gallardía; y, apenas le hubo visto la huéspeda, cuando dijo:

-¡Válame Dios!, ¿y qué es esto? ¿Vienen, por ventura, esta noche a posar ángeles a mi casa?

-¿Por qué dice eso la señora huéspeda? -dijo el caballero.

-No lo digo por nada, señor -respondió la mesonera-; sólo digo que vuesa merced no se apee, porque no tengo cama que darle, que dos que tenía las ha tomado un caballero que está en aquel aposento, y me las ha pagado entrambas, aunque no había menester más de la una sola, porque nadie le entre en el aposento; y, es que debe de gustar de la soledad; y, en Dios y en mi ánima que no sé yo por qué, que no tiene él cara ni disposición para esconderse, sino para que todo el mundo le vea y le bendiga.

-¿Tan lindo es, señora huéspeda? -replicó el caballero.

-¡Y cómo si es lindo! -dijo ella-; y aun más que relindo.

-Ten aquí, mozo -dijo a esta sazón el caballero-; que, aunque duerma en el suelo tengo de ver hombre tan alabado.

Y, dando el estribo a un mozo de mulas que con él venía, se apeó y hizo que le diesen luego de cenar, y así fue hecho. Y, estando cenando, entró un alguacil del pueblo (como de ordinario en los lugares pequeños se usa) y sentóse a conversación con el caballero en tanto que cenaba; y no dejó, entre razón y razón, de echar abajo tres cubiletes de vino, y de roer una pechuga y una cadera de perdiz que le dio el caballero. Y todo se lo pagó el alguacil con preguntarle nuevas de la Corte y de las guerras de Flandes y bajada del Turco, no olvidándose de los sucesos del Trasilvano, que Nuestro Señor guarde.

El caballero cenaba y callaba, porque no venía de parte que le pudiese satisfacer a sus preguntas. Ya en esto, había acabado el mesonero de dar recado al cuartago, y sentóse a hacer tercio en la conversación y a probar de su mismo vino no menos tragos que el alguacil; y a cada trago que envasaba volvía y derribaba la cabeza sobre el hombro izquierdo, y alababa el vino, que le ponía en las nubes, aunque no se atrevía a dejarle mucho en ellas por que no se aguase. De lance en lance, volvieron a las alabanzas del huésped encerrado, y contaron de su desmayo y encerramiento, y de que no había querido cenar cosa alguna. Ponderaron el aparato de las bolsas, y la bondad del cuartago y del vestido vistoso que de camino traía: todo lo cual requería no venir sin mozo que le sirviese. Todas estas exageraciones pusieron nuevo deseo de verle, y rogó al mesonero hiciese de modo como él entrase a dormir en la otra cama y le daría un escudo de oro. Y, puesto que la codicia del dinero acabó con la voluntad del mesonero de dársela, halló ser imposible, a causa que estaba cerrado por de dentro y no se atrevía a despertar al que dentro dormía, y que también tenía pagados los dos lechos. Todo lo cual facilitó el alguacil diciendo:

-Lo que se podrá hacer es que yo llamaré a la puerta, diciendo que soy la justicia, que por mandado del señor alcalde traigo a aposentar a este caballero a este mesón, y que, no habiendo otra cama, se le manda dar aquélla. A lo cual ha de replicar el huésped que se le hace agravio, porque ya está alquilada y no es razón quitarla al que la tiene. Con esto quedará el mesonero desculpado y vuesa merced conseguirá su intento.

A todos les pareció bien la traza del alguacil, y por ella le dio el deseoso cuatro reales.

Púsose luego por obra; y, en resolución, mostrando gran sentimiento, el primer huésped abrió a la justicia, y el segundo, pidiéndole perdón del agravio que al parecer se le había hecho, se fue acostar en el lecho desocupado. Pero ni el otro le respondió palabra, ni menos se dejó ver el rostro, porque apenas hubo abierto cuando se fue a su cama, y, vuelta la cara a la pared, por no responder, hizo que dormía. El otro se acostó, esperando cumplir por la mañana su deseo, cuando se levantasen.

Eran las noches de las perezosas y largas de diciembre, y el frío y el cansancio del camino forzaba a procurar pasarlas con reposo; pero, como no le tenía el huésped primero, a poco más de la media noche, comenzó a suspirar tan amargamente que con cada suspiro parecía despedírsele el alma; y fue de tal manera que, aunque el segundo dormía, hubo de despertar al lastimero son del que se quejaba. Y, admirado de los sollozos con que acompañaba los suspiros, atentamente se puso a escuchar lo que al parecer entre sí murmuraba. Estaba la sala oscura y las camas bien desviadas; pero no por esto dejó de oír, entre otras razones, éstas, que, con voz debilitada y flaca, el lastimado huésped primero decía:

-¡Ay sin ventura! ¿Adónde me lleva la fuerza incontrastable de mis hados? ¿Qué camino es el mío, o qué salida espero tener del intricado laberinto donde me hallo? ¡Ay pocos y mal experimentados años, incapaces de toda buena consideración y consejo! ¿Qué fin ha de tener esta no sabida peregrinación mía? ¡Ay honra menospreciada; ay amor mal agradecido; ay respetos de honrados padres y parientes atropellados, y ay de mí una y mil veces, que tan a rienda suelta me dejé llevar de mi deseos! ¡Oh palabras fingidas, que tan de veras me obligastes a que con obras os respondiese! Pero, ¿de quién me quejo, cuitada? ¿Yo no soy la que quise engañarme? ¿No soy yo la que tomó el cuchillo con sus misma manos, con que corté y eché por tierra mi crédito, con el que de mi valor tenían mis ancianos padres? ¡Oh fementido Marco Antonio! ¿Cómo es posible que en las dulces palabras que me decías viniese mezclada la hiel de tus descortesías y desdenes? ¿Adónde estás, ingrato; adónde te fuiste, desconocido? Respóndeme, que te hablo; espérame, que te sigo; susténtame, que descaezco;

págame, que me debes; socórreme, pues por tantas vías te tengo obligado.

Calló, en diciendo esto, dando muestra en los ayes y suspiros que no dejaban los ojos de derramar tiernas lágrimas. Todo lo cual, con sosegado silencio, estuvo escuchando el segundo huésped, coligiendo por las razones que había oído que, sin duda alguna, era mujer la que se quejaba: cosa que le avivó más el deseo de conocella, y estuvo muchas veces determinado de irse a la cama de la que creía ser mujer; y hubiéralo hecho si en aquella sazón no le sintiera levantar: y, abriendo la puerta de la sala, dio voces al huésped de casa que le ensillase el cuartago, porque quería partirse. A lo cual, al cabo de un buen rato que el mesonero se dejó llamar, le respondió que se sosegase, porque aún no era pasada la media noche, y que la oscuridad era tanta, que sería temeridad ponerse en camino. Quietóse con esto, y, volviendo a cerrar la puerta, se arrojó en la cama de golpe, dando un recio suspiro.

Parecióle al que escuchaba que sería bien hablarle y ofrecerle para su remedio lo que de su parte podía, por obligarle con esto a que se descubriese y su lastimera historia le contase; y así le dijo:

-Por cierto, señor gentilhombre, que si los suspiros que habéis dado y las palabras que habéis dicho no me hubieran movido a condolerme del mal de que os quejáis, entendiera que carecía de natural sentimiento, o que mi alma era de piedra y mi pecho de bronce duro; y si esta compasión que os tengo y el presupuesto que en mí ha nacido de poner mi vida por vuestro remedio, si es que vuestro mal le tiene, merece alguna cortesía en recompensa, ruégoos que la uséis conmigo declarándome, sin encubrirme cosa, la causa de vuestro dolor.

-Si él no me hubiera sacado de sentido -respondió el que se quejaba-, bien debiera yo de acordarme que no estaba solo en este aposento, y así hubiera puesto más freno a mi lengua y más tregua a mis suspiros; pero, en pago de haberme faltado la memoria en parte donde tanto me importaba tenerla, quiero hacer lo que me pedís, porque, renovando la amarga historia de mis desgracias, podría ser que el nuevo sentimiento me acabase. Mas, si queréis que haga lo que me pedís, habéisme de prometer, por la fe que me habéis mostrado en el ofrecimiento que me habéis hecho y por quien vos sois (que, a lo que en vuestras palabras mostráis, prometéis mucho), que, por cosas que de mí oyáis en lo que os dijere, no os habéis de mover de vuestro lecho ni venir al mío, ni preguntarme más de aquello que yo quisiere deciros; porque si al contrario desto hiciéredes, en el punto que os sienta mover, con una espada que a la cabecera tengo, me pasaré el pecho.

Esotro, que mil imposibles prometiera por saber lo que tanto deseaba, le respondió que no saldría un punto de lo que le había pedido, afirmándoselo con mil juramentos.

-Con ese seguro, pues -dijo el primero-, yo haré lo que hasta ahora no he hecho, que es dar cuenta de mi vida a nadie; y así, escuchad: «Habéis de saber, señor, que yo, que en esta posada entré, como sin duda os habrán dicho, en traje de varón, soy una desdichada doncella: a lo menos una que lo fue no ha ocho días y lo dejó de ser por inadvertida y loca, y por creerse de palabras compuestas y afeitadas de fermentidos hombres. Mi nombre es Teodosia; mi patria, un principal lugar desta Andalucía, cuyo nombre callo (porque no os importa a vos tanto el saberlo como a mí el encubrirlo); mis padres son nobles y más que medianamente ricos, los cuales tuvieron un hijo y una hija: él para descanso y honra suya, y ella para todo lo contrario. A él enviaron a estudiar a Salamanca; a mí me tenían en su casa, adonde me criaban con el recogimiento y recato que su virtud y nobleza pedían; y yo, sin pesadumbre alguna, siempre les fui obediente, ajustando mi voluntad a la suya sin discrepar un solo punto, hasta que mi suerte menguada, o mi mucha demasía, me ofreció a los ojos un hijo de un vecino nuestro, más rico que mis padres y tan noble como ellos.

»La primera vez que le miré no sentí otra cosa que fuese más de una complacencia de haberle visto; y no fue mucho, porque su gala, gentileza, rostro y costumbres eran de los alabados y estimados del pueblo, con su rara discreción y cortesía. Pero, ¿de qué me sirve alabar a mi enemigo ni ir alargando con razones el suceso tan desgraciado mío, o, por mejor decir, el principio de mi locura? Digo, en fin, que él me vio una y muchas veces desde una ventana que frontero de otra mía estaba. Desde allí, a lo que me pareció, me envió el alma por los ojos; y los míos, con otra manera de contento que el primero, gustaron de miralle, y aun me forzaron a que creyese que eran puras verdades cuanto en sus ademanes y en su rostro leía. Fue la vista la intercesora y medianera de la habla, la habla de declarar su deseo, su deseo de encender el mío y de dar fe al suyo. Llegóse a todo esto las promesas, los juramentos, las lágrimas, los suspiros y todo aquello que, a mi parecer, puede hacer un firme amador para dar a entender la entereza de su voluntad y la firmeza de su pecho. Y en mí, desdichada (que jamás en semejantes ocasiones y trances me había visto), cada palabra era un tiro de artillería que derribaba parte de la fortaleza de mi honra; cada lágrima era un fuego en que se abrasaba mi honestidad; cada suspiro, un furioso viento que el incendio aumentaba, de tal suerte que acabó de consumir la virtud que hasta entonces aún no había sido tocada; y, finalmente, con la promesa de ser mi esposo, a pesar de sus padres, que para otra le guardaban, di con todo mi recogimiento en tierra; y, sin saber cómo, me entregué en su poder a hurto de mis padres, sin tener otro testigo de mi desatino que un paje de Marco Antonio, que éste es el nombre del inquietador de mi sosiego. Y, apenas hubo tomado de mí la posesión que quiso, cuando de allí a dos días desapareció del pueblo, sin

que sus padres ni otra persona alguna supiesen decir ni imaginar dónde había ido.

»Cual yo quedé, dígallo quien tuviere poder para decirlo, que yo no sé ni supe más de sentillo. Castigué mis cabellos, como si ellos tuvieran la culpa de mi yerro; martiricé mi rostro, por parecerme que él había dado toda la ocasión a mi desventura; maldije mi suerte, acusé mi presta determinación, derramé muchas e infinitas lágrimas, vime casi ahogada entre ellas y entre los suspiros que de mi lastimado pecho salían; quejéme en silencio al cielo, discurrí con la imaginación, por ver si descubría algún camino o senda a mi remedio, y la que hallé fue vestirme en hábito de hombre y ausentarme de la casa de mis padres, yirme a buscar a este segundo engañador Eneas, a este cruel y fementido Vireno, a este defraudador de mis buenos pensamientos y legítimas y bien fundadas esperanzas.

»Y así, sin ahondar mucho en mis discursos, ofreciéndome la ocasión un vestido de camino de mi hermano y un cuartago de mi padre, que yo ensillé, una noche escurísima me salí de casa con intención de ir a Salamanca, donde, según después se dijo, creían que Marco Antonio podía haber venido, porque también es estudiante y camarada del hermano mío que os he dicho. No dejé, asimismo de sacar cantidad de dineros en oro para todo aquello que en mi impensado viaje pueda sucederme. Y lo que más me fatiga es que mis padres me han de seguir y hallar por las señas del vestido y del cuartago que traigo; y, cuando esto no tema, temo a mi hermano, que está en Salamanca, del cual, si soy conocida, ya se puede entender el peligro en que está puesta mi vida; porque, aunque él escuche mis disculpas, el menor punto de su honor pasa a cuantas yo pudiere darle.

»Con todo esto, mi principal determinación es, aunque pierda la vida, buscar al desalmado de mi esposo: que no puede negar el serlo sin que le desmientan las prendas que dejó en mi poder, que son una sortija de diamantes con unas cifras que dicen: ES MARCO ANTONIO ESPOSO DE TEODOSIA. Si le hallo, sabré dél qué halló en mí que tan presto le movió a dejarme; y, en resolución, haré que me cumpla la palabra y fe prometida, o le quitaré la vida, mostrándome tan presta a la venganza como fui fácil al dejar agraviarme; porque la nobleza de la sangre que mis padres me han dado va despertando en mí bríos que me prometen o ya remedio, o ya venganza de mi agravio.» Esta es, señor caballero, la verdadera y desdichada historia que deseábades saber, la cual será bastante disculpa de los suspiros y palabras que os despertaron. Lo que os ruego y suplico es que, ya que no podáis darme remedio, a lo menos me deis consejo con que pueda huir los peligros que me contrastan, y templar el temor que tengo de ser hallada, y facilitar los modos que he de usar para conseguir lo que tanto deseo y he menester.



Un gran espacio de tiempo estuvo sin responder palabra el que había estado escuchando la historia de la enamorada Teodosia; y tanto, que ella pensó que estaba dormido y que ninguna cosa le había oído; y, para certificarse de lo que sospechaba, le dijo:

-¿Dormís, señor? Y no sería malo que durmiédeses, porque el apasionado que cuenta sus desdichas a quien no las siente, bien es que causen en quien las escucha más sueño que lástima.

-No duermo -respondió el caballero-; antes, estoy tan despierto y siento tanto vuestra desventura, que no sé si diga que en el mismo grado me aprieta y duele que a vos misma; y por esta causa el consejo que me pedís, no sólo ha de parar en aconsejaros, sino en ayudaros con todo aquello que mis fuerzas alcanzaren; que, puesto que en el modo que habéis tenido en contarme vuestro suceso se ha mostrado el raro entendimiento de que sois dotada, y que conforme a esto os debió de engañar más vuestra voluntad rendida que las persuaciones de Marco Antonio, todavía quiero tomar por disculpa de vuestro yerro vuestros pocos años, en los cuales no cabe tener experiencia de los muchos engaños de los hombres. Sosegad, señora, y dormid, si podéis, lo poco que debe de quedar de la noche; que, en viniendo el día, nos aconsejaremos los dos y veremos qué salida se podrá dar a vuestro remedio.

Agradecióselo Teodosia lo mejor que supo, y procuró reposar un rato por dar lugar a que el caballero durmiese, el cual no fue posible sosegar un punto; antes, comenzó a volcarse por la cama y a suspirar de manera que le fue forzoso a Teodosia preguntarle qué era lo que sentía, que si era alguna pasión a quien ella pudiese remediar, lo haría con la voluntad misma que él a ella se le había ofrecido. A esto respondió el caballero:

-Puesto que sois vos, señora, la que causa el desasosiego que en mí habéis sentido, no sois vos la que podáis remedialle; que, a serlo, no tuviera yo pena alguna.

No pudo entender Teodosia adónde se encaminaban aquellas confusas razones; pero todavía sospechó que alguna pasión amorosa le fatigaba, y aun pensó ser ella la causa; y era de sospechar y de pensar, pues la comodidad del aposento, la soledad y la escuridad, y el saber que era mujer, no fuera mucho haber despertado en él algún mal pensamiento. Y, temerosa desto, se vistió con grande priesa y con mucho silencio, y se ciñó su espada y daga; y, de aquella manera, sentada sobre la cama, estuvo esperando el día, que de allí a poco espacio dio señal de su venida, con la luz que entraba por los muchos lugares y entradas que tienen los aposentos de los mesones y ventas. Y lo mismo que Teodosia había hecho el caballero; y, apenas vio estrellado el aposento con la luz del día, cuando se levantó de la cama diciendo:

-Levantaos, señora Teodosia, que yo quiero acompañaros en esta jornada, y no dejaros de mi lado hasta que como legítimo esposo tengáis en el vuestro a Marco Antonio, o que él o yo perdamos las vidas; y aquí veréis la obligación y voluntad en que me ha puesto vuestra desgracia.

Y, diciendo esto, abrió las ventanas y puertas del aposento.

Estaba Teodosia deseando ver la claridad, para ver con la luz qué talle y parecer tenía aquel con quien había estado hablando toda la noche. Mas, cuando le miró y le conoció, quisiera que jamás hubiera amanecido, sino que allí en perpetua noche se le hubieran cerrado los ojos; porque, apenas hubo el caballero vuelto los ojos a mirarla (que también deseaba verla), cuando ella conoció que era su hermano, de quien tanto se temía, a cuya vista casi perdió la de sus ojos, y quedó suspensa y muda y sin color en el rostro; pero, sacando del temor esfuerzo y del peligro discreción, echando mano a la daga, la tomó por la punta y se fue a hincar de rodillas delante de su hermano, diciendo con voz turbada y temerosa:

-Toma, señor y querido hermano mío, y haz con este hierro el castigo del que he cometido, satisfaciendo tu enojo, que para tan grande culpa como la mía no es bien que ninguna misericordia me valga. Yo confieso mi pecado, y no quiero que me sirva de disculpa mi arrepentimiento: sólo te suplico que la pena sea de suerte que se estienda a quitarme la vida y no la honra; que, puesto que yo la he puesto en manifiesto peligro, ausentándome de casa de mis padres, todavía quedará en opinión si el castigo que me dieres fuere secreto.

Mirábala su hermano, y, aunque la soltura de su atrevimiento le incitaba a la venganza, las palabras tan tiernas y tan eficaces con que manifestaba su culpa le ablandaron de tal suerte las entrañas, que, con rostro agradable y semblante pacífico, la levantó del suelo y la consoló lo mejor que pudo y supo, diciéndole, entre otras razones, que por no hallar castigo igual a su locura le suspendía por entonces; y, así por esto como por parecerle que aún no había cerrado la fortuna de todo en todo las puertas a su remedio, quería antes procurársele por todas las vías posibles, que no tomar venganza del agravio que de su mucha liviandad en él redundaba.

Con estas razones volvió Teodosia a cobrar los perdidos espíritus; tornó la color a su rostro y revivieron sus casi muertas esperanzas. No quiso más don Rafael (que así se llamaba su hermano) tratarle de su suceso: sólo le dijo que mudase el nombre de Teodosia en Teodoro y que diesen luego la vuelta a Salamanca los dos juntos a buscar a Marco Antonio, puesto que él imaginaba que no estaba en ella, porque siendo su camarada le hubiera hablado; aunque podía ser que el agravio que le había hecho le enmudeciese y le quitase la gana de verle. Remitióse el nuevo Teodoro a lo que su hermano quiso. Entró en esto el huésped, al cual ordenaron que les diese algo de almorzar, porque querían

partirse luego.

Entre tanto que el mozo de mulas ensillaba y el almuerzo venía, entró en el mesón un hidalgo que venía de camino, que de don Rafael fue conocido luego. Conocióale también Teodoro, y no osó salir del aposento por no ser visto. Abrazáronse los dos, y preguntó don Rafael al recién venido qué nuevas había en su lugar. A lo cual respondió que él venía del Puerto de Santa María, adonde dejaba cuatro galeras de partida para Nápoles, y que en ellas había visto embarcado a Marco Antonio Adorno, el hijo de don Leonardo Adorno; con las cuales nuevas se holgó don Rafael, pareciéndole que, pues tan sin pensar había sabido nuevas de lo que tanto le importaba, era señal que tendría buen fin su suceso. Rogóle a su amigo que trocase con el cuartago de su padre (que él muy bien conocía) la mula que él traía, no diciéndole que venía, sino que iba a Salamanca, y que no quería llevar tan buen cuartago en tan largo camino. El otro, que era comedido y amigo suyo, se contentó del trueco y se encargó de dar el cuartago a su padre. Almorzaron juntos, y Teodoro solo; y, llegado el punto de partirse, el amigo tomó el camino de Cazalla, donde tenía una rica heredad.

No partió don Rafael con él, que por hurtarle el cuerpo le dijo que le convenía volver aquel día a Sevilla; y, así como le vio ido, estando en orden las cabalgaduras, hecha la cuenta y pagado al huésped, diciendo adiós, se salieron de la posada, dejando admirados a cuantos en ella quedaban de su hermosura y gentil disposición, que no tenía para hombre menor gracia, brío y compostura don Rafael que su hermana belleza y donaire.

Luego en saliendo, contó don Rafael a su hermana las nuevas que de Marco Antonio le habían dado, y que le parecía que con la diligencia posible caminasen la vuelta de Barcelona, donde de ordinario suelen parar algún día las galeras que pasan a Italia o vienen a España, y que si no hubiesen llegado, podían esperarlas, y allí sin duda hallarían a Marco Antonio. Su hermana le dijo que hiciese todo aquello que mejor le pareciese, porque ella no tenía más voluntad que la suya.

Dijo don Rafael al mozo de mulas que consigo llevaba que tuviese paciencia, porque le convenía pasar a Barcelona, asegurándole la paga a todo su contento del tiempo que con él anduviese. El mozo, que era de los alegres del oficio y que conocía que don Rafael era liberal, respondió que hasta el cabo del mundo le acompañaría y serviría. Preguntó don Rafael a su hermana qué dineros llevaba. Respondió que no los tenía contados, y que no sabía más de que en el escritorio de su padre había metido la mano siete o ocho veces y sacádola llena de escudos de oro; y, según aquello, imaginó don Rafael que podía llevar hasta quinientos escudos, que con otros docientos que él tenía y una cadena de oro que llevaba, le pareció no ir muy desacomodado; y más, persuadiéndose que había de hallar en Barcelona a Marco Antonio.

Con esto, se dieron prisa a caminar sin perder jornada, y, sin acaescerles desmán o impedimento alguno, llegaron a dos leguas de un lugar que está nueve de Barcelona, que se llama Igualada. Habían sabido en el camino cómo un caballero, que pasaba por embajador a Roma, estaba en Barcelona esperando las galeras, que aún no habían llegado, nueva que les dio mucho contento. Con este gusto caminaron hasta entrar en un bosquecillo que en el camino estaba, del cual vieron salir un hombre corriendo y mirando atrás, como espantado. Púsosele don Rafael delante, diciéndole:

-¿Por qué huís, buen hombre, o qué cosa os ha acontecido, que con muestras de tanto miedo os hace parecer tan ligero?

-¿No queréis que corra apriesa y con miedo -respondió el hombre-, si por milagro me he escapado de una compañía de bandoleros que queda en ese bosque?

-¡Malo! -dijo el mozo de mulas-. ¡Malo, vive Dios! ¿Bandoleritos a estas horas? Para mi santiguada, que ellos nos pongan como nuevos.

-No os congojéis, hermano -replicó el del bosque-, que ya los bandoleros se han ido y han dejado atados a los árboles deste bosque más de treinta pasajeros, dejándolos en camisa; a sólo un hombre dejaron libre para que desatase a los demás después que ellos hubiesen traspuesto una montañuela que le dieron por señal.

-Si eso es -dijo Calvete, que así se llamaba el mozo de mulas-, seguros podemos pasar, a causa que al lugar donde los bandoleros hacen el salto no vuelven por algunos días, y puedo asegurar esto como aquel que ha dado dos veces en sus manos y sabe de molde su usanza y costumbres.

-Así es -dijo el hombre.

Lo cual oído por don Rafael, determinó pasar adelante; y no anduvieron mucho cuando dieron en los atados, que pasaban de cuarenta, que los estaba desatando el que dejaron suelto. Era extraño espectáculo el verlos: unos desnudos del todo, otros vestidos con los vestidos astrosos de los bandoleros; unos llorando de verse robados, otros riendo de ver los extraños trajes de los otros; éste contaba por menudo lo que le llevaban, aquél decía que le pesaba más de una caja de *agnus* que de Roma traía que de otras infinitas cosas que llevaban. En fin, todo cuanto allí pasaba eran llantos y gemidos de los miserables despojados. Todo lo cual miraban, no sin mucho dolor, los dos hermanos, dando gracias al cielo que de tan grande y tan cercano peligro los había librado. Pero lo que más compasión les puso, especialmente a Teodoro, fue ver al tronco de una encina atado un muchacho de edad al parecer de diez y seis años, con sola la camisa y unos calzones de lienzo, pero tan hermoso de rostro que forzaba y movía a todos que le mirasen.

Apeóse Teodoro a desatarle, y él le agradeció con muy corteses razones el beneficio; y, por hacérsele mayor, pidió a Calvete, el mozo de mulas, le prestase su capa hasta que en el primer lugar comprasen otra para aquel gentil mancebo. Diola Calvete, y Teodoro cubrió con ella al mozo, preguntándole de dónde era, de dónde venía y adónde caminaba.

A todo esto estaba presente don Rafael, y el mozo respondió que era del Andalucía y de un lugar que, en nombrándole, vieron que no distaba del suyo sino dos leguas. Dijo que venía de Sevilla, y que su designio era pasar a Italia a probar ventura en el ejercicio de las armas, como otros muchos españoles acostumbraban; pero que la suerte suya había salido azar con el mal encuentro de los bandoleros, que le llevaban una buena cantidad de dineros, y tales vestidos, que no se compraran tan buenos con trecientos escudos; pero que, con todo eso, pensaba proseguir su camino, porque no venía de casta que se le había de helar al primer mal suceso el calor de su fervoroso deseo.

Las buenas razones del mozo, junto con haber oído que era tan cerca de su lugar, y más con la carta de recomendación que en su hermosura traía, pusieron voluntad en los dos hermanos de favorecerle en cuanto pudiesen. Y, repartiendo entre los que más necesidad, a su parecer, tenían algunos dineros, especialmente entre frailes y clérigos, que había más de ocho, hicieron que subiese el mancebo en la mula de Calvete; y, sin detenerse más, en poco espacio se pusieron en Igualada, donde supieron que las galeras el día antes habían llegado a Barcelona, y que de allí a dos días se partirían, si antes no les forzaba la poca seguridad de la playa.

Estas nuevas hicieron que la mañana siguiente madrugasen antes que el sol, puesto que aquella noche no la durmieron toda, sino con más sobresalto de los dos hermanos que ellos se pensaron, causado de que, estando a la mesa, y con ellos el mancebo que habían desatado, Teodoro puso ahincadamente los ojos en su rostro, y, mirándole algo curiosamente, le pareció que tenía las orejas horadadas; y, en esto y en un mirar vergonzoso que tenía, sospechó que debía de ser mujer, y deseaba acabar de cenar para certificarse a solas de su sospecha. Y entre la cena le preguntó don Rafael que cuyo hijo era, porque él conocía toda la gente principal de su lugar, si era aquel que había dicho. A lo cual respondió el mancebo que era hijo de don Enrique de Cárdenas, caballero bien conocido. A esto dijo don Rafael que él conocía bien a don Enrique de Cárdenas, pero que sabía y tenía por cierto que no tenía hijo alguno; mas que si lo había dicho por no descubrir sus padres, que no importaba y que nunca más se lo preguntaría.

-Verdad es -replicó el mozo-que don Enrique no tiene hijos, pero tiénelos un hermano suyo que se llama don Sancho.

-Ése tampoco -respondió don Rafael-tiene hijos, sino una hija sola, y aun

dicen que es de las más hermosas doncellas que hay en la Andalucía, y esto no lo sé más de por fama; que, aunque muchas veces he estado en su lugar, jamás la he visto.

-Todo lo que, señor, decís es verdad -respondió el mancebo-, que don Sancho no tiene más de una hija, pero no tan hermosa como su fama dice; y si yo dije que era hijo de don Enrique, fue porque me tuviédeses, señores, en algo, pues no lo soy sino de un mayordomo de don Sancho, que ha muchos años que le sirve, y yo nací en su casa; y, por cierto enojo que di a mi padre, habiéndole tomado buena cantidad de dineros, quise venirme a Italia, como os he dicho, y seguir el camino de la guerra, por quien vienen, según he visto, a hacerse ilustres aun los de oscuro linaje.

Todas estas razones y el modo con que las decía notaba atentamente Teodoro, y siempre se iba confirmando en su sospecha.

Acabóse la cena, alzaron los manteles; y, en tanto que don Rafael se desnudaba, habiéndole dicho lo que del mancebo sospechaba, con su parecer y licencia se apartó con el mancebo a un balcón de una ancha ventana que a la calle salía, y, en él puestos los dos de pechos, Teodoro así comenzó a hablar con el mozo:

-Quisiera, señor Francisco -que así había dicho él que se llamaba-, haberos hecho tantas buenas obras, que os obligaran a no negarme cualquiera cosa que pudiera o quisiera pedir; pero el poco tiempo que ha que os conozco no ha dado lugar a ello. Podría ser que en el que está por venir conociédeses lo que merece mi deseo, y si al que ahora tengo no gustáredes de satisfacer, no por eso dejaré de ser vuestro servidor, como lo soy también, que antes que os le descubra sepáis que, aunque tengo tan pocos años como los vuestros, tengo más experiencia de las cosas del mundo que ellos prometen, pues con ella he venido a sospechar que vos no sois varón, como vuestro traje lo muestra, sino mujer, y tan bien nacida como vuestra hermosura publica, y quizá tan desdichada como lo da a entender la mudanza del traje, pues jamás tales mudanzas son por bien de quien las hace. Si es verdad lo que sospecho, decídmelo, que os juro, por la fe de caballero que profeso, de ayudaros y serviros en todo aquello que pudiere. De que no seáis mujer no me lo podéis negar, pues por las ventanas de vuestras orejas se ve esta verdad bien clara; y habéis andado descuidada en no cerrar y disimular esos agujeros con alguna cera encarnada, que pudiera ser que otro tan curioso como yo, y no tan honrado, sacara a luz lo que vos tan mal habéis sabido encubrir. Digo que no dudéis de decirme quién sois, con presupuesto que os ofrezco mi ayuda; yo os aseguro el secreto que quisiéredes que tenga.

Con grande atención estaba el mancebo escuchando lo que Teodoro le decía; y, viendo que ya callaba, antes que le respondiese palabra, le tomó las manos y,

llegándoselas a la boca, se las besó por fuerza, y aun se las bañó con gran cantidad de lágrimas que de sus hermosos ojos derramaba; cuyo extraño sentimiento le causó en Teodoro de manera que no pudo dejar de acompañarle en ellas (propia y natural condición de mujeres principales, enternecerse de los sentimientos y trabajos ajenos); pero, después que con dificultad retiró sus manos de la boca del mancebo, estuvo atenta a ver lo que le respondía; el cual, dando un profundo gemido, acompañado de muchos suspiros, dijo:

-No quiero ni puedo negaros, señor, que vuestra sospecha no haya sido verdadera: mujer soy, y la más desdichada que echaron al mundo las mujeres, y, pues las obras que me habéis hecho y los ofrecimientos que me hacéis me obligan a obedeceros en cuanto me mandáredes, escuchad, que yo os diré quién soy, si ya no os cansa oír ajenas desventuras.

-En ellas viva yo siempre -replicó Teodoro-si no llegue el gusto de saberlas a la pena que me darán el ser vuestras, que ya las voy sintiendo como propias mías.

Y, tornándole a abrazar y a hacer nuevos y verdaderos ofrecimientos, el mancebo, algo más sosegado, comenzó a decir estas razones:

-«En lo que toca a mi patria, la verdad he dicho; en lo que toca a mis padres, no la dije, porque don Enrique no lo es, sino mi tío, y su hermano don Sancho mi padre: que yo soy la hija desventurada que vuestro hermano dice que don Sancho tiene tan celebrada de hermosa, cuyo engaño y desengaño se echa de ver en la ninguna hermosura que tengo. Mi nombre es Leocadia; la ocasión de la mudanza de mi traje oiréis ahora.

»Dos leguas de mi lugar está otro de los más ricos y nobles de la Andalucía, en el cual vive un principal caballero que trae su origen de los nobles y antiguos Adornos de Génova. Éste tiene un hijo que, si no es que la fama se adelanta en sus alabanzas, como en las mías, es de los gentiles hombres que desearse pueden. Éste, pues, así por la vecindad de los lugares como por ser aficionado al ejercicio de la caza, como mi padre, algunas veces venía a mi casa y en ella se estaba cinco o seis días; que todos, y aun parte de las noches, él y mi padre las pasaban en el campo. Desta ocasión tomó la fortuna, o el amor, o mi poca advertencia, la que fue bastante para derribarme de la alteza de mis buenos pensamientos a la bajeza del estado en que me veo, pues, habiendo mirado, más de aquello que fuera lícito a una recatada doncella, la gentileza y discreción de Marco Antonio, y considerado la calidad de su linaje y la mucha cantidad de los bienes que llaman de fortuna que su padre tenía, me pareció que si le alcanzaba por esposo, era toda la felicidad que podía caber en mi deseo. Con este pensamiento le comencé a mirar con más cuidado, y debió de ser sin duda con más descuido, pues él vino a caer en que yo le miraba, y no quiso ni le fue

menester al traidor otra entrada para entrarse en el secreto de mi pecho y robarme las mejores prendas de mi alma.

»Mas no sé para qué me pongo a contaros, señor, punto por punto las menudencias de mis amores, pues hacen tan poco al caso, sino deciros de una vez lo que él con muchas de solicitud granjeó conmigo: que fue que, habiéndome dado su fe y palabra, debajo de grandes y, a mi parecer, firmes y cristianos juramentos de ser mi esposo, me ofrecí a que hiciese de mí todo lo que quisiese. Pero, aún no bien satisfecha de sus juramentos y palabras, porque no se las llevase el viento, hice que las escribiese en una cédula, que él me dio firmada de su nombre, con tantas circunstancias y fuerzas escrita que me satisfizo. Recebida la cédula, di traza cómo una noche viniese de su lugar al mío y entrase por las paredes de un jardín a mi aposento, donde sin sobresalto alguno podía coger el fruto que para él solo estaba destinado. Llegóse, en fin, la noche por mí tan deseada...»

Hasta este punto había estado callando Teodoro, teniendo pendiente el alma de las palabras de Leocadia, que con cada una dellas le traspasaba el alma, especialmente cuando oyó el nombre de Marco Antonio y vio la peregrina hermosura de Leocadia, y consideró la grandeza de su valor con la de su rara discreción: que bien lo mostraba en el modo de contar su historia. Mas, cuando llegó a decir: «Llegó la noche por mí deseada», estuvo por perder la paciencia, y, sin poder hacer otra cosa, le saltó la razón, diciendo:

-Y bien; así como llegó esa felicísima noche, ¿qué hizo? ¿Entró, por dicha? ¿Gozástele? ¿Confirmó de nuevo la cédula? ¿Quedó contento en haber alcanzado de vos lo que decís que era suyo? ¿Súpolo vuestro padre, o en qué pararon tan honestos y sabios principios?

-Pararon -dijo Leocadia-en ponerme de la manera que veis, porque no le gocé, ni me gozó, ni vino al concierto señalado.

Respiró con estas razones Teodosia y detuvo los espíritus, que poco a poco la iban dejando, estimulados y apretados de la rabiosa pestilencia de los celos, que a más andar se le iban entrando por los huesos y médulas, para tomar entera posesión de su paciencia; mas no la dejó tan libre que no volviese a escuchar con sobresalto lo que Leocadia prosiguió diciendo:

-«No solamente no vino, pero de allí a ocho días supe por nueva cierta que se había ausentado de su pueblo y llevado de casa de sus padres a una doncella de su lugar, hija de un principal caballero, llamada Teodosia: doncella de estremada hermosura y de rara discreción; y por ser de tan nobles padres se supo en mi pueblo el robo, y luego llegó a mis oídos, y con él la fría y temida lanza de los celos, que me pasó el corazón y me abrasó el alma en fuego tal, que en él se hizo ceniza mi honra y se consumió mi crédito, se secó mi paciencia y se acabó mi



cordura. ¡Ay de mí, desdichada!, que luego se me figuró en la imaginación Teodosia más hermosa que el sol y más discreta que la discreción misma, y, sobre todo, más venturosa que yo, sin ventura. Leí luego las razones de la cédula, vilas firmes y valederas y que no podían faltar en la fe que publicaban; y, aunque a ellas, como a cosa sagrada, se acogiera mi esperanza, en cayendo en la cuenta de la sospechosa compañía que Marco Antonio llevaba consigo, daba con todas ellas en el suelo. Maltraté mi rostro, arranqué mis cabellos, maldije mi suerte; y lo que más sentía era no poder hacer estos sacrificios a todas horas, por la forzosa presencia de mi padre.

»En fin, por acabar de quejarme sin impedimento, o por acabar la vida, que es lo más cierto, determiné dejar la casa de mi padre. Y, como para poner por obra un mal pensamiento parece que la ocasión facilita y allana todos los inconvenientes, sin temer alguno, hurté a un paje de mi padre sus vestidos y a mi padre mucha cantidad de dineros; y una noche, cubierta con su negra capa, salí de casa y a pie caminé algunas leguas y llegué a un lugar que se llama Osuna, y, acomodándome en un carro, de allí a dos días entré en Sevilla: que fue haber entrado en la seguridad posible para no ser hallada, aunque me buscasen. Allí compré otros vestidos y una mula, y, con unos caballeros que venían a Barcelona con priesa, por no perder la comodidad de unas galeras que pasaban a Italia, caminé hasta ayer, que me sucedió lo que ya habréis sabido de los bandoleros, que me quitaron cuanto traía, y entre otras cosas la joya que sustentaba mi salud y aliviaba la carga de mis trabajos, que fue la cédula de Marco Antonio, que pensaba con ella pasar a Italia, y, hallando a Marco Antonio, presentársela por testigo de su poca fe, y a mí por abono de mi mucha firmeza, y hacer de suerte que me cumpliese la promesa. Pero, juntamente con esto, he considerado que con facilidad negará las palabras que en un papel están escritas el que niega las obligaciones que debían estar grabadas en el alma, que claro está que si él tiene en su compañía a la sin par Teodosia, no ha de querer mirar a la desdichada Leocadia; aunque con todo esto pienso morir, o ponerme en la presencia de los dos, para que mi vista les turbe su sosiego. No piense aquella enemiga de mi descanso gozar tan a poca costa lo que es mío; yo la buscaré, yo la hallaré, y yo la quitaré la vida si puedo.»

-Pues ¿qué culpa tiene Teodosia -dijo Teodoro-, si ella quizá también fue engañada de Marco Antonio, como vos, señora Leocadia, lo habéis sido?

-¿Puede ser eso así -dijo Leocadia-, si se la llevó consigo? Y, estando juntos los que bien se quieren, ¿qué engaño puede haber? Ninguno, por cierto: ellos están contentos, pues están juntos, ora estén, como suele decirse, en los remotos y abrasados desiertos de Libia o en los solos y apartados de la helada Scitia. Ella le goza, sin duda, sea donde fuere, y ella sola ha de pagar lo que he sentido hasta

que le halle.

-Podía ser que os engañásedes -replico Teodosia-; que yo conozco muy bien a esa enemiga vuestra que decís y sé de su condición y recogimiento: que nunca ella se aventuraría a dejar la casa de sus padres, ni acudir a la voluntad de Marco Antonio; y, cuando lo hubiese hecho, no conociéndoo ni sabiendo cosa alguna de lo que con él teníades, no os agravió en nada, y donde no hay agravio no viene bien la venganza.

-Del recogimiento -dijo Leocadia-no hay que tratarme; que tan recogida y tan honesta era yo como cuantas doncellas hallarse pudieran, y con todo eso hice lo que habéis oído. De que él la llevase no hay duda, y de que ella no me haya agraviado, mirándolo sin pasión, yo lo confieso. Mas el dolor que siento de los celos me la representa en la memoria bien así como espada que atravesada tengo por mitad de las entrañas, y no es mucho que, como a instrumento que tanto me lastima, le procure arrancar dellas y hacerle pedazos; cuanto más, que prudencia es apartar de nosotros las cosas que nos dañan, y es natural cosa aborrecer las que nos hacen mal y aquellas que nos estorban el bien.

-Sea como vos decís, señora Leocadia -respondió Teodosia-; que, así como veo que la pasión que sentís no os deja hacer más acertados discursos, veo que no estáis en tiempo de admitir consejos saludables. De mí os sé decir lo que ya os he dicho, que os he de ayudar y favorecer en todo aquello que fuere justo y yo pudiere; y lo mismo os prometo de mi hermano, que su natural condición y nobleza no le dejarán hacer otra cosa. Nuestro camino es a Italia; si gustáredes venir con nosotros, ya poco más a menos sabéis el trato de nuestra compañía. Lo que os ruego es me deis licencia que diga a mi hermano lo que sé de vuestra hacienda, para que os trate con el comedimiento y respecto que se os debe, y para que se obligue a mirar por vos como es razón. Junto con esto, me parece no ser bien que mudéis de traje; y si en este pueblo hay comodidad de vestiros, por la mañana os compraré los vestidos mejores que hubiere y que más os convengan, y, en lo demás de vuestras pretensiones, dejad el cuidado al tiempo, que es gran maestro de dar y hallar remedio a los casos más desesperados.

Agradeció Leocadia a Teodosia, que ella pensaba ser Teodoro, sus muchos ofrecimientos, y dióle licencia de decir a su hermano todo lo que quisiese, suplicándole que no la desamparase, pues veía a cuántos peligros estaba puesta si por mujer fuese conocida. Con esto, se despidieron y se fueron a acostar: Teodosia al aposento de su hermano y Leocadia a otro que junto dél estaba.

No se había aún dormido don Rafael, esperando a su hermana, por saber lo que le había pasado con el que pensaba ser mujer; y, en entrando, antes que se acostase, se lo preguntó; la cual, punto por punto, le contó todo cuanto Leocadia le había dicho: cuya hija era, sus amores, la cédula de Marco Antonio y la

intención que llevaba. Admiróse don Rafael y dijo a su hermana:

-Si ella es la que dice, séos decir, hermana, que es de las más principales de su lugar, y una de las más nobles señoras de toda la Andalucía. Su padre es bien conocido del nuestro, y la fama que ella tenía de hermosa corresponde muy bien a lo que ahora vemos en su rostro. Y lo que desto me parece es que debemos andar con recato, de manera que ella no hable primero con Marco Antonio que nosotros; que me da algún cuidado la cédula que dice que le hizo, puesto que la haya perdido; pero sosegaos y acostaos, hermana, que para todo se buscará remedio.

Hizo Teodosia lo que su hermano la mandaba en cuanto al acostarse, mas en lo de sosegar no fue en su mano, que ya tenía tomada posesión de su alma la rabiosa enfermedad de los celos. ¡Oh, cuánto más de lo que ella era se le representaba en la imaginación la hermosura de Leocadia y la deslealtad de Marco Antonio! ¡Oh, cuántas veces leía o fingía leer la cédula que la había dado! ¡Qué de palabras y razones la añadía, que la hacían cierta y de mucho efecto! ¡Cuántas veces no creyó que se le había perdido, y cuántas imaginó que sin ella Marco Antonio no dejara de cumplir su promesa, sin acordarse de lo que a ella estaba obligado!

Pasósele en esto la mayor parte de la noche sin dormir sueño. Y no la pasó con más descanso don Rafael, su hermano; porque, así como oyó decir quién era Leocadia, así se le abrasó el corazón en su amor, como si de mucho antes para el mismo efecto la hubiera comunicado; que esta fuerza tiene la hermosura, que en un punto, en un momento, lleva tras sí el deseo de quien la mira y la conoce; y, cuando descubre o promete alguna vía de alcanzarse y gozarse, enciende con poderosa vehemencia el alma de quien la contempla: bien así del modo y facilidad con que se enciende la seca y dispuesta pólvora con cualquiera centella que la toca.

No la imaginaba atada al árbol, ni vestida en el roto traje de varón, sino en el suyo de mujer y en casa de sus padres, ricos y de tan principal y rico linaje como ellos eran. No detenía ni quería detener el pensamiento en la causa que la había traído a que la conociese. Deseaba que el día llegase para proseguir su jornada y buscar a Marco Antonio, no tanto para hacerle su cuñado como para estorbar que no fuese marido de Leocadia; y ya le tenían el amor y el celo de manera que tomara por buen partido ver a su hermana sin el remedio que le procuraba, y a Marco Antonio sin vida, a trueco de no verse sin esperanza de alcanzar a Leocadia; la cual esperanza ya le iba prometiendo felice suceso en su deseo, o ya por el camino de la fuerza, o por el de los regalos y buenas obras, pues para todo le daba lugar el tiempo y la ocasión.

Con esto que él a sí mismo se prometía, se sosegó algún tanto; y de allí a poco

se dejó venir el día, y ellos dejaron las camas; y, llamando don Rafael al huésped, le preguntó si había comodidad en aquel pueblo para vestir a un paje a quien los bandoleros habían desnudado. El huésped dijo que él tenía un vestido razonable que vender; trújole y vínole bien a Leocadia; pagóle don Rafael, y ella se le vistió y se ciñó una espada y una daga, con tanto donaire y brío que, en aquel mismo traje, suspendió los sentidos de don Rafael y dobló los celos en Teodosia. Ensilló Calvete, y a las ocho del día partieron para Barcelona, sin querer subir por entonces al famoso monasterio de Monserrat, dejándolo para cuando Dios fuese servido de volverlos con más sosiego a su patria.

No se podrá contar buenamente los pensamientos que los dos hermanos llevaban, ni con cuán diferentes ánimos los dos iban mirando a Leocadia, deseándola Teodosia la muerte y don Rafael la vida, entrambos celosos y apasionados. Teodosia buscando tachas que ponerla, por no desmayar en su esperanza; don Rafael hallándole perfecciones, que de punto en punto le obligaban a más amarla. Con todo esto, no se descuidaron de darse prisa, de modo que llegaron a Barcelona poco antes que el sol se pusiese.

Admiróles el hermoso sitio de la ciudad y la estimaron por flor de las bellas ciudades del mundo, honra de España, temor y espanto de los circunvecinos y apartados enemigos, regalo y delicia de sus moradores, amparo de los extranjeros, escuela de la caballería, ejemplo de lealtad y satisfacción de todo aquello que de una grande, famosa, rica y bien fundada ciudad puede pedir un discreto y curioso deseo.

En entrando en ella, oyeron grandísimo ruido, y vieron correr gran tropel de gente con grande alboroto; y, preguntando la causa de aquel ruido y movimiento, les respondieron que la gente de las galeras que estaban en la playa se había revuelto y trabado con la de la ciudad. Oyendo lo cual, don Rafael quiso ir a ver lo que pasaba, aunque Calvete le dijo que no lo hiciese, por no ser cordura irse a meter en un manifiesto peligro; que él sabía bien cuán mal libraban los que en tales pependencias se metían, que eran ordinarias en aquella ciudad cuando a ella llegaban galeras. No fue bastante el buen consejo de Calvete para estorbar a don Rafael la ida; y así, le siguieron todos. Y, en llegando a la marina, vieron muchas espadas fuera de las vainas y mucha gente acuchillándose sin piedad alguna. Con todo esto, sin apearse, llegaron tan cerca, que distintamente veían los rostros de los que peleaban, porque aún no era puesto el sol.

Era infinita la gente que de la ciudad acudía, y mucha la que de las galeras se desembarcaba, puesto que el que las traía a cargo, que era un caballero valenciano llamado don Pedro Viqué, desde la popa de la galera capitana amenazaba a los que se habían embarcado en los esquifes para ir a socorrer a los suyos. Mas, viendo que no aprovechaban sus voces ni sus amenazas, hizo volver

las proas de las galeras a la ciudad y disparar una pieza sin bala (señal de que si no se apartasen, otra no iría sin ella).

En esto, estaba don Rafael atentamente mirando la cruel y bien trabada riña, y vio y notó que de parte de los que más se señalaban de las galeras lo hacía gallardamente un mancebo de hasta veinte y dos o pocos más años, vestido de verde, con un sombrero de la misma color adornado con un rico trencillo, al parecer de diamantes; la destreza con que el mozo se combatía y la bizarría del vestido hacía que volviesen a mirarle todos cuantos la pendencia miraban; y de tal manera le miraron los ojos de Teodosia y de Leocadia, que ambas a un mismo punto y tiempo dijeron:

-¡Válame Dios: o yo no tengo ojos, o aquel de lo verde es Marco Antonio!

Y, en diciendo esto, con gran ligereza saltaron de las mulas, y, poniendo mano a sus dagas y espadas, sin temor alguno se entraron por mitad de la turba y se pusieron la una a un lado y la otra al otro de Marco Antonio (que él era el mancebo de lo verde que se ha dicho).

-No temáis -dijo así como llegó Leocadia-, señor Marco Antonio, que a vuestro lado tenéis quien os hará escudo con su propia vida por defender la vuestra.

-¿Quién lo duda? -replicó Teodosia-, estando yo aquí?

Don Rafael, que vio y oyó lo que pasaba, las siguió asimismo y se puso de su parte. Marco Antonio, ocupado en ofender y defenderse, no advirtió en las razones que las dos le dijeron; antes, cebado en la pelea, hacía cosas al parecer increíbles. Pero, como la gente de la ciudad por momentos crecía, fueles forzoso a los de las galeras retirarse hasta meterse en el agua. Retirábase Marco Antonio de mala gana, y a su mismo compás se iban retirando a sus lados las dos valientes y nuevas Bradamante y Marfisa, o Hipólita y Pantasilea.

En esto, vino un caballero catalán de la famosa familia de los Cardonas, sobre un poderoso caballo, y, poniéndose en medio de las dos partes, hacía retirar los de la ciudad, los cuales le tuvieron respecto en conociéndole. Pero algunos desde lejos tiraban piedras a los que ya se iban acogiendo al agua; y quiso la mala suerte que una acertase en la sien a Marco Antonio, con tanta furia que dio con él en el agua, que ya le daba a la rodilla; y, apenas Leocadia le vio caído, cuando se abrazó con él y le sostuvo en sus brazos, y lo mismo hizo Teodosia. Estaba don Rafael un poco desviado, defendiéndose de las infinitas piedras que sobre él llovían, y, queriendo acudir al remedio de su alma y al de su hermana y cuñado, el caballero catalán se le puso delante, diciéndole:

-Sosegaos, señor, por lo que debéis a buen soldado, y hacedme merced de poneros a mi lado, que yo os libraré de la insolencia y demasía deste desmandado vulgo.

-¡Ah, señor! -respondió don Rafael-; ¡dejadme pasar, que veo en gran peligro puestas las cosas que en esta vida más quiero!

Dejóle pasar el caballero, mas no llegó tan a tiempo que ya no hubiesen recogido en el esquife de la galera capitana a Marco Antonio y a Leocadia, que jamás le dejó de los brazos; y, queriéndose embarcar con ellos Teodosia, o ya fuese por estar cansada, o por la pena de haber visto herido a Marco Antonio, o por ver que se iba con él su mayor enemiga, no tuvo fuerzas para subir en el esquife; y sin duda cayera desmayada en el agua si su hermano no llegara a tiempo de socorrerla, el cual no sintió menor pena, de ver que con Marco Antonio se iba Leocadia, que su hermana había sentido (que ya también él había conocido a Marco Antonio). El caballero catalán, aficionado de la gentil presencia de don Rafael y de su hermana (que por hombre tenía), los llamó desde la orilla y les rogó que con él se viniesen; y ellos, forzados de la necesidad y temerosos de que la gente, que aún no estaba pacífica, les hiciese algún agravio, hubieron de aceptar la oferta que se les hacía.

El caballero se apeó, y, tomándolos a su lado, con la espada desnuda pasó por medio de la turba alborotada, rogándoles que se retirasen; y así lo hicieron. Miró don Rafael a todas partes por ver si vería a Calvete con las mulas y no le vio, a causa que él, así como ellos se apearon, las antecogió y se fue a un mesón donde solía posar otras veces.

Llegó el caballero a su casa, que era una de las principales de la ciudad, y preguntando a don Rafael en cuál galera venía, le respondió que en ninguna, pues había llegado a la ciudad al mismo punto que se comenzaba la pendencia, y que, por haber conocido en ella al caballero que llevaron herido de la pedrada en el esquife, se había puesto en aquel peligro, y que le suplicaba diese orden como sacasen a tierra al herido, que en ello le importaba el contento y la vida.

-Eso haré yo de buena gana -dijo el caballero-, y sé que me le dará seguramente el general, que es principal caballero y pariente mío.

Y, sin detenerse más, volvió a la galera y halló que estaban curando a Marco Antonio, y la herida que tenía era peligrosa, por ser en la sien izquierda y decir el cirujano ser de peligro; alcanzó con el general se le diese para curarle en tierra, y, puesto con gran tiento en el esquife, le sacaron, sin quererle dejar Leocadia, que se embarcó con él como en seguimiento del norte de su esperanza. En llegando a tierra, hizo el caballero traer de su casa una silla de manos donde le llevasen. En tanto que esto pasaba, había enviado don Rafael a buscar a Calvete, que en el mesón estaba con cuidado de saber lo que la suerte había hecho de sus amos; y cuando supo que estaban buenos, se alegró en extremo y vino adonde don Rafael estaba.

En esto, llegaron el señor de la casa, Marco Antonio y Leocadia, y a todos

alojó en ella con mucho amor y magnificencia. Ordenó luego como se llamase un cirujano famoso de la ciudad para que de nuevo curase a Marco Antonio. Vino, pero no quiso curarle hasta otro día, diciendo que siempre los cirujanos de los ejércitos y armadas eran muy experimentados, por los muchos heridos que a cada paso tenían entre las manos, y así, no convenía curarle hasta otro día. Lo que ordenó fue le pusiesen en un aposento abrigado, donde le dejasen sosegar.

Llegó en aquel instante el cirujano de las galeras y dio cuenta al de la ciudad de la herida, y de cómo la había curado y del peligro que de la vida, a su parecer, tenía el herido, con lo cual se acabó de enterar el de la ciudad que estaba bien curado; y ansimismo, según la relación que se le había hecho, exageró el peligro de Marco Antonio.

Oyeron esto Leocadia y Teodosia con aquel sentimiento que si oyeran la sentencia de su muerte; mas, por no dar muestras de su dolor, le reprimieron y callaron, y Leocadia determinó de hacer lo que le pareció convenir para satisfacción de su honra. Y fue que, así como se fueron los cirujanos, se entró en el aposento de Marco Antonio, y, delante del señor de la casa, de don Rafael, Teodosia y de otras personas, se llegó a la cabecera del herido, y, asiéndole de la mano, le dijo estas razones:

-No estáis en tiempo, señor Marco Antonio Adorno, en que se puedan ni deban gastar con vos muchas palabras; y así, sólo querría que me oyédes algunas que convienen, si no para la salud de vuestro cuerpo, convendrán para la de vuestra alma; y para decíros las es menester que me deis licencia y me advirtáis si estáis con sujeto de escucharme; que no sería razón que, habiendo yo procurado desde el punto que os conocí no salir de vuestro gusto, en este instante, que le tengo por el postrero, seros causa de pesadumbre.

A estas razones abrió Marco Antonio los ojos y los puso atentamente en el rostro de Leocadia, y, habiéndola casi conocido, más por el órgano de la voz que por la vista, con voz debilitada y doliente le dijo:

-Decid, señor, lo que quisiéredes, que no estoy tan al cabo que no pueda escucharos, ni esa voz me es tan desagradable que me cause fastidio el oírla.

Atentísima estaba a todo este coloquio Teodosia, y cada palabra que Leocadia decía era una aguda saeta que le atravesaba el corazón, y aun el alma de don Rafael, que asimismo la escuchaba. Y, prosiguiendo Leocadia, dijo:

-Si el golpe de la cabeza, o, por mejor decir, el que a mí me han dado en el alma, no os ha llevado, señor Marco Antonio, de la memoria la imagen de aquella que poco tiempo ha que vos decíades ser vuestra gloria y vuestro cielo, bien os debéis acordar quién fue Leocadia, y cuál fue la palabra que le distes firmada en una cédula de vuestra mano y letra; ni se os habrá olvidado el valor de sus padres, la entereza de su recato y honestidad y la obligación en que le

estáis, por haber acudido a vuestro gusto en todo lo que quisistes. Si esto no se os ha olvidado, aunque me veáis en este traje tan diferente, conoceréis con facilidad que yo soy Leocadia, que, temerosa que nuevos accidentes y nuevas ocasiones no me quitasen lo que tan justamente es mío, así como supe que de vuestro lugar os habíades partido, atropellando por infinitos inconvenientes, determiné seguiros en este hábito, con intención de buscaros por todas las partes de la tierra hasta hallaros. De lo cual no os debéis maravillar, si es que alguna vez habéis sentido hasta dónde llegan las fuerzas de un amor verdadero y la rabia de una mujer engañada. Algunos trabajos he pasado en esta mi demanda, todos los cuales los juzgo y tengo por descanso, con el descuento que han traído de veros; que, puesto que estéis de la manera que estáis, si fuere Dios servido de llevaros ésta a mejor vida, con hacer lo que debéis a quien sois antes de la partida, me juzgaré por más que dichosa, prometiéndoo, como os prometo, de darme tal vida después de vuestra muerte, que bien poco tiempo se pase sin que os siga en esta última y forzosa jornada. Y así, os ruego primeramente por Dios, a quien mis deseos y intentos van encaminados, luego por vos, que debéis mucho a ser quien sois, últimamente por mí, a quien debéis más que a otra persona del mundo, que aquí luego me recibáis por vuestra legítima esposa, no permitiendo haga la justicia lo que con tantas veras y obligaciones la razón os persuade.

No dijo más Leocadia, y todos los que en la sala estaban guardaron un maravilloso silencio en tanto que estuvo hablando, y con el mismo silencio esperaban la respuesta de Marco Antonio, que fue ésta:

-No puedo negar, señora, el conoceros, que vuestra voz y vuestro rostro no consentirán que lo niegue. Tampoco puedo negar lo mucho que os debo ni el gran valor de vuestros padres, junto con vuestra incomparable honestidad y recogimiento. Ni os tengo ni os tendré en menos por lo que habéis hecho en venirme a buscar en traje tan diferente del vuestro; antes, por esto os estimo y estimaré en el mayor grado que ser pueda; pero, pues mi corta suerte me ha traído a término, como vos decís, que creo que será el postrero de mi vida, y son los semejantes trances los apurados de las verdades, quiero deciros una verdad que, si no os fuere ahora de gusto, podría ser que después os fuese de provecho. Confieso, hermosa Leocadia, que os quise bien y me quisistes, y juntamente con esto confieso que la cédula que os hice fue más por cumplir con vuestro deseo que con el mío; porque, antes que la firmase, con muchos días, tenía entregada mi voluntad y mi alma a otra doncella de mi mismo lugar, que vos bien conocéis, llamada Teodosia, hija de tan nobles padres como los vuestros; y si a vos os di cédula firmada de mi mano, a ella le di la mano firmada y acreditada con tales obras y testigos, que quedé imposibilitado de dar mi libertad a otra



persona en el mundo. Los amores que con vos tuve fueron de pasatiempo, sin que dellos alcanzase otra cosa sino las flores que vos sabéis, las cuales no os ofendieron ni pueden ofender en cosa alguna. Lo que con Teodosia me pasó fue alcanzar el fruto que ella pudo darme y yo quise que me diese, con fe y seguro de ser su esposo, como lo soy. Y si a ella y a vos os dejé en un mismo tiempo, a vos suspensa y engañada, y a ella temerosa y, a su parecer, sin honra, hícelo con poco discurso y con juicio de mozo, como lo soy, creyendo que todas aquellas cosas eran de poca importancia, y que las podía hacer sin escrúpulo alguno, con otros pensamientos que entonces me vinieron y solicitaron lo que quería hacer, que fue venirme a Italia y emplear en ella algunos de los años de mi juventud, y después volver a ver lo que Dios había hecho de vos y de mi verdadera esposa. Mas, doliéndose de mí el cielo, sin duda creo que ha permitido ponerme de la manera que me veis, para que, confesando estas verdades, nacidas de mis muchas culpas, pague en esta vida lo que debo, y vos quedéis desengañada y libre para hacer lo que mejor os pareciere. Y si en algún tiempo Teodosia supiere mi muerte, sabrá de vos y de los que están presentes cómo en la muerte le cumplí la palabra que le di en la vida. Y si en el poco tiempo que de ella me queda, señora Leocadia, os puedo servir en algo, decídmelo; que, como no sea recebiros por esposa, pues no puedo, ninguna otra cosa dejaré de hacer que a mí sea posible por daros gusto.

En tanto que Marco Antonio decía estas razones, tenía la cabeza sobre el codo, y en acabándolas dejó caer el brazo, dando muestras que se desmayaba. Acudió luego don Rafael y, abrazándole estrechamente, le dijo:

-Volved en vos, señor mío, y abrazad a vuestro amigo y a vuestro hermano, pues vos queréis que lo sea. Conoced a don Rafael, vuestro camarada, que será el verdadero testigo de vuestra voluntad y de la merced que a su hermana queréis hacer con admitirla por vuestra.

Volvió en sí Marco Antonio y al momento conoció a don Rafael, y, abrazándole estrechamente y besándole en el rostro, le dijo:

-Ahora digo, hermano y señor mío, que la suma alegría que he recibido en veros no puede traer menos descuento que un pesar grandísimo; pues se dice que tras el gusto se sigue la tristeza; pero yo daré por bien empleada cualquiera que me viniere, a trueco de haber gustado del contento de veros.

-Pues yo os le quiero hacer más cumplido -replicó don Rafael-con presentaros esta joya, que es vuestra amada esposa.

Y, buscando a Teodosia, la halló llorando detrás de toda la gente, suspensa y atónita entre el pesar y la alegría por lo que veía y por lo que había oído decir. Asíóla su hermano de la mano, y ella, sin hacer resistencia, se dejó llevar donde él quiso; que fue ante Marco Antonio, que la conoció y se abrazó con ella,

llorando los dos tiernas y amorosas lágrimas.

Admirados quedaron cuantos en la sala estaban, viendo tan extraño acontecimiento. Mirábanse unos a otros sin hablar palabra, esperando en qué habrían de parar aquellas cosas. Mas la desengañada y sin ventura Leocadia, que vio por sus ojos lo que Marco Antonio hacía, y vio al que pensaba ser hermano de don Rafael en brazos del que tenía por su esposo, viendo junto con esto burlados sus deseos y perdidas sus esperanzas, se hurtó de los ojos de todos (que atentos estaban mirando lo que el enfermo hacía con el paje que abrazado tenía) y se salió de la sala o aposento, y en un instante se puso en la calle, con intención de irse desesperada por el mundo o adonde gentes no la vieses; mas, apenas había llegado a la calle, cuando don Rafael la echó menos, y, como si le faltara el alma, preguntó por ella, y nadie le supo dar razón dónde se había ido. Y así, sin esperar más, desesperado salió a buscarla, y acudió adonde le dijeron que posaba Calvete, por si había ido allá a procurar alguna cabalgadura en que irse; y, no hallándola allí, andaba como loco por las calles buscándola y de unas partes a otras; y, pensando si por ventura se había vuelto a las galeras, llegó a la marina, y un poco antes que llegase oyó que a grandes voces llamaban desde tierra el esquife de la capitana, y conoció que quien las daba era la hermosa Leocadia, la cual, recelosa de algún desmán, sintiendo pasos a sus espaldas, empuñó la espada y esperó apercebida que llegase don Rafael, a quien ella luego conoció, y le pesó de que la hubiese hallado, y más en parte tan sola; que ya ella había entendido, por más de una muestra que don Rafael le había dado, que no la quería mal, sino tan bien que tomara por buen partido que Marco Antonio la quisiera otro tanto.

¿Con qué razones podré yo decir ahora las que don Rafael dijo a Leocadia, declarándole su alma, que fueron tantas y tales que no me atrevo a escribirlas? Mas, pues es forzoso decir algunas, las que entre otras le dijo fueron éstas:

-Si con la ventura que me falta me faltase ahora, ¡oh hermosa Leocadia!, el atrevimiento de descubriros los secretos de mi alma, quedaría enterrada en los senos del perpetuo olvido la más enamorada y honesta voluntad que ha nacido ni puede nacer en un enamorado pecho. Pero, por no hacer este agravio a mi justo deseo (véngame lo que viniere), quiero, señora, que advirtáis, si es que os da lugar vuestro arrebatado pensamiento, que en ninguna cosa se me aventaja Marco Antonio, si no es en el bien de ser de vos querido. Mi linaje es tan bueno como el suyo, y en los bienes que llaman de fortuna no me hace mucha ventaja; en los de naturaleza no conviene que me alabe, y más si a los ojos vuestros no son de estima. Todo esto digo, apasionada señora, porque toméis el remedio y el medio que la suerte os ofrece en el extremo de vuestra desgracia. Ya veis que Marco Antonio no puede ser vuestro porque el cielo le hizo de mi hermana, y el

mismo cielo, que hoy os ha quitado a Marco Antonio, os quiere hacer recompensa conmigo, que no deseo otro bien en esta vida que entregarme por esposo vuestro. Mirad que el buen suceso está llamando a las puertas del malo que hasta ahora habéis tenido, y no penséis que el atrevimiento que habéis mostrado en buscar a Marco Antonio ha de ser parte para que no os estime y tenga en lo que mereciéades, si nunca le hubiérades tenido, que en la hora que quiero y determino igualarme con vos, eligiéndoo por perpetua señora mía, en aquella misma se me ha de olvidar, y ya se me ha olvidado, todo cuanto en esto he sabido y visto; que bien sé que las fuerzas que a mí me han forzado a que tan de rondón y a rienda suelta me disponga a adoraros y a entregarme por vuestro, esas mismas os han traído a vos al estado en que estáis, y así no habrá necesidad de buscar disculpa donde no ha habido yerro alguno.

Callando estuvo Leocadia a todo cuanto don Rafael le dijo, sino que de cuando en cuando daba unos profundos suspiros, salidos de lo íntimo de sus entrañas. Tuvo atrevimiento don Rafael de tomarle una mano, y ella no tuvo esfuerzo para estorbárselo; y así, besándosela muchas veces, le decía:

-Acabad, señora de mi alma, de serlo del todo a vista destos estrellados cielos que nos cubren, y deste sosegado mar que nos escucha, y destas bañadas arenas que nos sustentan. Dadme ya el sí, que sin duda conviene tanto a vuestra honra como a mi contento. Vuélvoos a decir que soy caballero, como vos sabéis, y rico, y que os quiero bien (que es lo que más habéis de estimar), y que en cambio de hallaros sola y en traje que desdice mucho del de vuestra honra, lejos de la casa de vuestros padres y parientes, sin persona que os acuda a lo que menester hubiéredes y sin esperanza de alcanzar lo que buscábades, podéis volver a vuestra patria en vuestro propio, honrado y verdadero traje, acompañada de tan buen esposo como el que vos supistes escogeros; rica, contenta, estimada y servida, y aun loada de todos aquellos a cuya noticia llegaren los sucesos de vuestra historia. Si esto es así, como lo es, no sé en qué estáis dudando; acabad (que otra vez os lo digo) de levantarme del suelo de mi miseria al cielo de mereceros, que en ello haréis por vos misma, y cumpliréis con las leyes de la cortesía y del buen conocimiento, mostrándoos en un mismo punto agradecida y discreta.

-Ea, pues -dijo a esta sazón la dudosa Leocadia-, pues así lo ha ordenado el cielo, y no es en mi mano ni en la de viviente alguno oponerse a lo que Él determinado tiene, hágase lo que Él quiere y vos queréis, señor mío; y sabe el mismo cielo con la vergüenza que vengo a condescender con vuestra voluntad, no porque no entienda lo mucho que en obedeceros gano, sino porque temo que, en cumpliendo vuestro gusto, me habéis de mirar con otros ojos de los que quizá hasta agora, mirándome, os han engañado. Mas sea como fuere, que, en fin, el

nombre de ser mujer legítima de don Rafael de Villavicencio no se podía perder, y con este título solo viviré contenta. Y si las costumbres que en mí viéredes, después de ser vuestra, fueren parte para que me estiméis en algo, daré al cielo las gracias de haberme traído por tan estraños rodeos y por tantos males a los bienes de ser vuestra. Dadme, señor don Rafael, la mano de ser mío, y veis aquí os la doy de ser vuestra, y sirvan de testigos los que vos decís: el cielo, la mar, las arenas y este silencio, sólo interrumpido de mis suspiros y de vuestros ruegos.

Diciendo esto, se dejó abrazar y le dio la mano, y don Rafael le dio la suya, celebrando el noturno y nuevo desposorio solas las lágrimas que el contento, a pesar de la pasada tristeza, sacaba de sus ojos. Luego se volvieron a casa del caballero, que estaba con grandísima pena de su falta; y lo mismo tenían Marco Antonio y Teodosia, los cuales ya por mano de clérigo estaban desposados, que a persuasión de Teodosia (temerosa que algún contrario accidente no le turbase el bien que había hallado), el caballero envió luego por quien los desposase; de modo que, cuando don Rafael y Leocadia entraron y don Rafael contó lo que con Leocadia le había sucedido, así les aumentó el gozo como si ellos fueran sus cercanos parientes, que es condición natural y propia de la nobleza catalana saber ser amigos y favorecer a los extranjeros que dellos tienen necesidad alguna.

El sacerdote, que presente estaba, ordenó que Leocadia mudase el hábito y se vistiese en el suyo; y el caballero acudió a ello con presteza, vistiendo a las dos de dos ricos vestidos de su mujer, que era una principal señora, del linaje de los Granolleques, famoso y antiguo en aquel reino. Avisó al cirujano, quien por caridad se dolía del herido, como hablaba mucho y no le dejaban solo, el cual vino y ordenó lo que primero: que fue que le dejasen en silencio. Pero Dios, que así lo tenía ordenado, tomando por medio e instrumento de sus obras (cuando a nuestros ojos quiere hacer alguna maravilla) lo que la misma naturaleza no alcanza, ordenó que el alegría y poco silencio que Marco Antonio había guardado fuese parte para mejorarle, de manera que otro día, cuando le curaron, le hallaron fuera de peligro; y de allí a catorce se levantó tan sano que, sin temor alguno, se pudo poner en camino.

Es de saber que en el tiempo que Marco Antonio estuvo en el lecho hizo voto, si Dios le sanase, de ir en romería a pie a Santiago de Galicia, en cuya promesa le acompañaron don Rafael, Leocadia y Teodosia, y aun Calvete, el mozo de mulas (obra pocas veces usada de los de oficios semejantes). Pero la bondad y llaneza que había conocido en don Rafael le obligó a no dejarle hasta que volviese a su tierra; y, viendo que habían de ir a pie como peregrinos, envió las mulas a Salamanca, con la que era de don Rafael, que no faltó con quien

enviarlas.

Llegóse, pues, el día de la partida, y, acomodados de sus esclavinas y de todo lo necesario, se despidieron del liberal caballero que tanto les había favorecido y agasajado, cuyo nombre era don Sancho de Cardona, ilustrísimo por sangre y famoso por su persona. Ofreciéronsele todos de guardar perpetuamente ellos y sus decendientes (a quien se lo dejarían mandado), la memoria de las mercedes tan singulares dél recibidas, para agradecerles siquiera, ya que no pudiesen servirlos. Don Sancho los abrazó a todos, diciéndoles que de su natural condición nacía hacer aquellas obras, o otras que fuesen buenas, a todos los que conocía o imaginaba ser hidalgos castellanos.

Reiteráronse dos veces los abrazos, y con alegría mezclada con algún sentimiento triste se despidieron; y, caminando con la comodidad que permitía la delicadeza de las dos nuevas peregrinas, en tres días llegaron a Monserrat; y, estando allí otros tantos, haciendo lo que a buenos y católicos cristianos debían, con el mismo espacio volvieron a su camino, y sin sucederles revés ni desmán alguno llegaron a Santiago. Y, después de cumplir su voto con la mayor devoción que pudieron, no quisieron dejar el hábito de peregrinos hasta entrar en sus casas, a las cuales llegaron poco a poco, descansados y contentos; mas, antes que llegasen, estando a vista del lugar de Leocadia (que, como se ha dicho, era una legua del de Teodosia), desde encima de un recuesto los descubrieron a entrambos, sin poder encubrir las lágrimas que el contento de verlos les trujo a los ojos, a lo menos a las dos desposadas, que con su vista renovaron la memoria de los pasados sucesos.

Descubríase desde la parte donde estaban un ancho valle que los dos pueblos dividía, en el cual vieron, a la sombra de un olivo, un dispuesto caballero sobre un poderoso caballo, con una blanquísima adarga en el brazo izquierdo y una gruesa y larga lanza terciada en el derecho; y, mirándole con atención, vieron que asimismo por entre unos olivares venían otros dos caballeros con las mismas armas y con el mismo donaire y apostura, y de allí a poco vieron que se juntaron todos tres; y, habiendo estado un pequeño espacio juntos, se apartaron, y uno de los que a lo último habían venido, se apartó con el que estaba primero debajo del olivo; los cuales, poniendo las espuelas a los caballos, arremetieron el uno al otro con muestras de ser mortales enemigos, comenzando a tirarse bravos y diestros botes de lanza, ya hurtando los golpes, ya recogiénolos en las adargas con tanta destreza que daban bien a entender ser maestros en aquel ejercicio. El tercero los estaba mirando sin moverse de un lugar; mas, no pudiendo don Rafael sufrir estar tan lejos, mirando aquella tan reñida y singular batalla, a todo correr bajó del recuesto, siguiéndole su hermana y su esposa, y en poco espacio se puso junto a los dos combatientes, a tiempo que ya los dos caballeros andaban

algo heridos; y, habiéndosele caído al uno el sombrero y con él un casco de acero, al volver el rostro conoció don Rafael ser su padre, y Marco Antonio conoció que el otro era el suyo. Leocadia, que con atención había mirado al que no se combatía, conoció que era el padre que la había engendrado, de cuya vista todos cuatro suspensos, atónitos y fuera de sí quedaron; pero, dando el sobresalto lugar al discurso de la razón, los dos cuñados, sin detenerse, se pusieron en medio de los que peleaban, diciendo a voces:

-No más, caballeros, no más, que los que esto os piden y suplican son vuestros propios hijos. Yo soy Marco Antonio, padre y señor mío -decía Marco Antonio-; yo soy aquel por quien, a lo que imagino, están vuestras canas venerables puestas en este riguroso trance. Templad la furia y arrojad la lanza, o volvedla contra otro enemigo, que el que tenéis delante ya de hoy más ha de ser vuestro hermano.

Casi estas mismas razones decía don Rafael a su padre, a las cuales se detuvieron los caballeros, y atentamente se pusieron a mirar a los que se las decían; y volviendo la cabeza vieron que don Enrique, el padre de Leocadia, se había apeado y estaba abrazado con el que pensaban ser peregrino; y era que Leocadia se había llegado a él, y, dándosele a conocer, le rogó que pusiese en paz a los que se combatían, contándole en breves razones cómo don Rafael era su esposo y Marco Antonio lo era de Teodosia.

Oyendo esto su padre, se apeó, y la tenía abrazada, como se ha dicho; pero, dejándola, acudió a ponerlos en paz, aunque no fue menester, pues ya los dos habían conocido a sus hijos y estaban en el suelo,teniéndolos abrazados, llorando todos lágrimas de amor y de contento nacidas. Juntáronse todos y volvieron a mirar a sus hijos, y no sabían qué decirse. Atentábanles los cuerpos, por ver si eran fantásticos, que su improvisa llegada esta y otras sospechas engendraba; pero, desengañados algún tanto, volvieron a las lágrimas y a los abrazos.

Y en esto, asomó por el mismo valle gran cantidad de gente armada, de a pie y de a caballo, los cuales venían a defender al caballero de su lugar; pero, como llegaron y los vieron abrazados de aquellos peregrinos, y preñados los ojos de lágrimas, se apearon y admiraron, estando suspensos, hasta tanto que don Enrique les dijo brevemente lo que Leocadia su hija le había contado.

Todos fueron a abrazar a los peregrinos, con muestras de contento tales que no se pueden encarecer. Don Rafael de nuevo contó a todos, con la brevedad que el tiempo requería, todo el suceso de sus amores, y de cómo venía casado con Leocadia, y su hermana Teodosia con Marco Antonio: nuevas que de nuevo causaron nueva alegría. Luego, de los mismos caballos de la gente que llegó al

socorro tomaron los que hubieron menester para los cinco peregrinos, y acordaron de irse al lugar de Marco Antonio, ofreciéndoles su padre de hacer allí las bodas de todos; y con este parecer se partieron, y algunos de los que se habían hallado presentes se adelantaron a pedir albricias a los parientes y amigos de los desposados.

En el camino supieron don Rafael y Marco Antonio la causa de aquella pendencia, que fue que el padre de Teodosia y el de Leocadia habían desafiado al padre de Marco Antonio, en razón de que él había sido sabidor de los engaños de su hijo; y, habiendo venido los dos y hallándole solo, no quisieron combatirse con alguna ventaja, sino uno a uno, como caballeros, cuya pendencia parara en la muerte de uno o en la de entrambos si ellos no hubieran llegado.

Dieron gracias a Dios los cuatro peregrinos del suceso felice. Y otro día después que llegaron, con real y espléndida magnificencia y sumptuoso gasto, hizo celebrar el padre de Marco Antonio las bodas de su hijo y Teodosia y las de don Rafael y de Leocadia. Los cuales luengos y felices años vivieron en compañía de sus esposas, dejando de sí ilustre generación y decendencia, que hasta hoy dura en estos dos lugares, que son de los mejores de la Andalucía, y si no se nombran es por guardar el decoro a *las dos doncellas*, a quien quizá las lenguas maldicientes, o neciamente escrupulosas, les harán cargo de la ligereza de sus deseos y del súbito mudar de trajes; a los cuales ruego que no se arrojen a vituperar semejantes libertades, hasta que miren en sí, si alguna vez han sido tocados destas que llaman flechas de Cupido; que en efeto es una fuerza, si así se puede llamar, incontrastable, que hace el apetito a la razón.

Calvete, el mozo de mulas, se quedó con la que don Rafael había enviado a Salamanca, y con otras muchas dádivas que los dos desposados le dieron; y los poetas de aquel tiempo tuvieron ocasión donde emplear sus plumas, exagerando la hermosura y los sucesos de las dos tan atrevidas cuanto honestas doncellas, sujeto principal deste extraño suceso.

## La señora Cornelia

DON ANTONIO de Isunza y don Juan de Gamboa, caballeros principales, de una edad, muy discretos y grandes amigos, siendo estudiantes en Salamanca, determinaron de dejar sus estudios por irse a Flandes, llevados del hervor de la sangre moza y del deseo, como decirse suele, de ver mundo, y por parecerles que el ejercicio de las armas, aunque arma y dice bien a todos, principalmente asienta y dice mejor en los bien nacidos y de ilustre sangre.

Llegaron, pues, a Flandes a tiempo que estaban las cosas en paz, o en conciertos y tratos de tenerla presto. Recibieron en Amberes cartas de sus padres, donde les escribieron el grande enojo que habían recebido por haber dejado sus estudios sin avisárselo, para que hubieran venido con la comodidad que pedía el ser quien eran. Finalmente, conociendo la pesadumbre de sus padres, acordaron de volverse a España, pues no había qué hacer en Flandes; pero, antes de volverse, quisieron ver todas las más famosas ciudades de Italia; y, habiéndolas visto todas, pararon en Bolonia, y, admirados de los estudios de aquella insigne universidad, quisieron en ella proseguir los suyos. Dieron noticia de su intento a sus padres, de que se holgaron infinito, y lo mostraron con proveerles magníficamente y de modo que mostrasen en su tratamiento quién eran y qué padres tenían; y, desde el primero día que salieron a las escuelas, fueron conocidos de todos por caballeros, galanes, discretos y bien criados.

Tendría don Antonio hasta veinte y cuatro años, y don Juan no pasaba de veinte y seis. Y adornaban esta buena edad con ser muy gentiles hombres, músicos, poetas, diestros y valientes: partes que los hacían amables y bien queridos de cuantos los comunicaban.

Tuvieron luego muchos amigos, así estudiantes españoles, de los muchos que en aquella universidad cursaban, como de los mismos de la ciudad y de los extranjeros. Mostrábanse con todos liberales y comedidos, y muy ajenos de la arrogancia que dicen que suelen tener los españoles. Y, como eran mozos y alegres, no se desgustaban de tener noticia de las hermosas de la ciudad; y, aunque había muchas señoras, doncellas y casadas, con gran fama de ser honestas y hermosas, a todas se aventajaba la señora Cornelia Bentibolli, de la antigua y generosa familia de los Bentibollis, que un tiempo fueron señores de Bolonia.

Era Cornelia hermosísima en extremo, y estaba debajo de la guarda y amparo de Lorenzo Bentibolli, su hermano, honradísimo y valiente caballero, huérfanos



de padre y madre; que, aunque los dejaron solos, los dejaron ricos, y la riqueza es grande alivio de orfanidad.

Era el recato de Cornelia tanto, y la solicitud de su hermano tanta en guardarla, que ni ella se dejaba ver ni su hermano consentía que la vieses. Esta fama traían deseosos a don Juan y a don Antonio de verla, aunque fuera en la iglesia; pero el trabajo que en ello pusieron fue en balde, y el deseo, por la imposibilidad, cuchillo de la esperanza, fue menguando. Y así, con sólo el amor de sus estudios y el entretenimiento de algunas honestas mocedades, pasaban una vida tan alegre como honrada. Pocas veces salían de noche, y si salían, iban juntos y bien armados.

Sucedió, pues, que, habiendo de salir una noche, dijo don Antonio a don Juan que él se quería quedar a rezar ciertas devociones; que se fuese, que luego le seguiría.

-No hay para qué -dijo don Juan-, que yo os aguardaré, y si no saliéremos esta noche, importa poco.

-No, por vida vuestra -replicó don Antonio-: salid a coger el aire, que yo seré luego con vos, si es que vais por donde solemos ir.

-Haced vuestro gusto -dijo don Juan-: quedaos en buena hora; y si saliéredes, las mismas estaciones andaré esta noche que las pasadas.

Fuese don Juan y quedóse don Antonio. Era la noche entre oscura, y la hora, las once; y, habiendo andado dos o tres calles, y viéndose solo y que no tenía con quién hablar, determinó volverse a casa; y, poniéndolo en efeto, al pasar por una calle que tenía portales sustentados en mármoles oyó que de una puerta le ceceaban. La escuridad de la noche y la que causaban los portales no le dejaban atinar al ceceo. Detúvose un poco, estuvo atento, y vio entreabrir una puerta; llegóse a ella y oyó una voz baja que dijo:

-¿Sois por ventura Fabio?

Don Juan, por sí o por no, respondió:

-Sí.

-Pues tomad -respondieron de dentro-; y ponedlo en cobro y volved luego, que importa.

Alargó la mano don Juan y topó un bulto, y, queriéndolo tomar, vio que eran menester las dos manos, y así le hubo de asir con entrambas; y, apenas se le dejaron en ellas, cuando le cerraron la puerta, y él se halló cargado en la calle y sin saber de qué. Pero casi luego comenzó a llorar una criatura, al parecer recién nacida, a cuyo lloro quedó don Juan confuso y suspenso, sin saber qué hacerse ni qué corte dar en aquel caso; porque, en volver a llamar a la puerta, le pareció que podía correr algún peligro cuya era la criatura, y, en dejarla allí, la criatura misma; pues el llevarla a su casa, no tenía en ella quién la remediase, ni él

conocía en toda la ciudad persona adonde poder llevarla. Pero, viendo que le habían dicho que la pusiese en cobro y que volviese luego, determinó de traerla a su casa y dejarla en poder de una ama que los servía, y volver luego a ver si era menester su favor en alguna cosa, puesto que bien había visto que le habían tenido por otro y que había sido error darle a él la criatura.

Finalmente, sin hacer más discursos, se vino a casa con ella, a tiempo que ya don Antonio no estaba en ella. Entróse en un aposento y llamó al ama, descubrió la criatura y vio que era la más hermosa que jamás hubiese visto. Los paños en que venía envuelta mostraban ser de ricos padres nacida. Desenvolvióla el ama y hallaron que era varón.

-Menester es -dijo don Juan-dar de mamar a este niño, y ha de ser desta manera: que vos, ama, le habéis de quitar estas ricas mantillas y ponerle otras más humildes, y, sin decir que yo le he traído, la habéis de llevar en casa de una partera, que las tales siempre suelen dar recado y remedio a semejantes necesidades. Llevaréis dineros con que la dejéis satisfecha y daréisle los padres que quisiéredes, para encubrir la verdad de haberlo yo traído.

Respondió el ama que así lo haría, y don Juan, con la priesa que pudo, volvió a ver si le ceceaban otra vez; pero, un poco antes que llegase a la casa adonde le habían llamado, oyó gran ruido de espadas, como de mucha gente que se acuchillaba. Estuvo atento y no sintió palabra alguna; la herrería era a la sorda, y, a la luz de las centellas que las piedras heridas de las espadas levantaban, casi pudo ver que eran muchos los que a uno solo acometían, y confirmóse en esta verdad oyendo decir:

-¡Ah traidores, que sois muchos, y yo solo! Pero con todo eso no os ha de valer vuestra superchería.

Oyendo y viendo lo cual don Juan, llevado de su valeroso corazón, en dos brincos se puso al lado, y, metiendo mano a la espada y a un broquel que llevaba, dijo al que defendía, en lengua italiana, por no ser conocido por español:

-No temáis, que socorro os ha venido que no os faltará hasta perder la vida; menead los puños, que traidores pueden poco, aunque sean muchos.

A estas razones respondió uno de los contrarios:

-Mientes, que aquí no hay ningún traidor; que el querer cobrar la honra perdida, a toda demasía da licencia.

No le habló más palabras, porque no les daba lugar a ello la priesa que se daban a herirse los enemigos, que al parecer de don Juan debían de ser seis. Apretaron tanto a su compañero, que de dos estocadas que le dieron a un tiempo en los pechos dieron con él en tierra. Don Juan creyó que le habían muerto, y, con ligereza y valor extraño, se puso delante de todos y los hizo arredrar a fuerza de una lluvia de cuchilladas y estocadas. Pero no fuera bastante su diligencia

para ofender y defenderse, si no le ayudara la buena suerte con hacer que los vecinos de la calle sacasen lumbres a las ventanas y a grandes voces llamasen a la justicia: lo cual visto por los contrarios, dejaron la calle, y, a espaldas vueltas, se ausentaron.

Ya en esto, se había levantado el caído, porque las estocadas hallaron un peto como de diamante en que toparon. Habíasele caído a don Juan el sombrero en la refriega, y buscándole, halló otro que se puso acaso, sin mirar si era el suyo o no. El caído se llegó a él y le dijo:

-Señor caballero, quienquiera que seáis, yo confieso que os debo la vida que tengo, la cual, con lo que valgo y puedo, gastaré a vuestro servicio. Hacedme merced de decirme quién sois y vuestro nombre, para que yo sepa a quién tengo de mostrarme agradecido.

A lo cual respondió don Juan:

-No quiero ser descortés, ya que soy desinteresado. Por hacer, señor, lo que me pedís, y por daros gusto solamente, os digo que soy un caballero español y estudiante en esta ciudad; si el nombre os importara saberlo, os le dijera; mas, por si acaso os quisiéredes servir de mí en otra cosa, sabed que me llamo don Juan de Gamboa.

-Mucha merced me habéis hecho -respondió el caído-; pero yo, señor don Juan de Gamboa, no quiero deciros quién soy ni mi nombre, porque he de gustar mucho de que lo sepáis de otro que de mí, y yo tendré cuidado de que os hagan sabidor dello.

Habíale preguntado primero don Juan si estaba herido, porque le había visto dar dos grandes estocadas, y habíale respondido que un famoso peto que traía puesto, después de Dios, le había defendido; pero que, con todo eso, sus enemigos le acabaran si él no se hallara a su lado. En esto, vieron venir hacia ellos un bulto de gente, y don Juan dijo:

-Si éstos son los enemigos que vuelven, apercebíos, señor, y haced como quien sois.

-A lo que yo creo, no son enemigos, sino amigos los que aquí vienen.

Y así fue la verdad, porque los que llegaron, que fueron ocho hombres, rodearon al caído y hablaron con él pocas palabras, pero tan calladas y secretas que don Juan no las pudo oír. Volvió luego el defendido a don Juan y díjole:

-A no haber venido estos amigos, en ninguna manera, señor don Juan, os dejara hasta que acabárades de ponerme en salvo; pero ahora os suplico con todo encarecimiento que os vais y me dejéis, que me importa.

Hablando esto, se tentó la cabeza y vio que estaba sin sombrero, y, volviéndose a los que habían venido, pidió que le diesen un sombrero, que se le había caído el suyo. Apenas lo hubo dicho, cuando don Juan le puso el que había

hallado en la cabeza. Tentóle el caído y, volviéndosele a don Juan, dijo:

-Este sombrero no es mío; por vida del señor don Juan, que se le lleve por trofeo desta refriega; y guárdele, que creo que es conocido.

Diéronle otro sombrero al defendido, y don Juan, por cumplir lo que le había pedido, pasando otros algunos, aunque breves, comedimientos, le dejó sin saber quién era, y se vino a su casa, sin querer llegar a la puerta donde le habían dado la criatura, por parecerle que todo el barrio estaba despierto y alborotado con la pendencia.

Sucedió, pues, que, volviéndose a su posada, en la mitad del camino encontró con don Antonio de Isunza, su camarada; y, conociéndose, dijo don Antonio:

-Volved conmigo, don Juan, hasta aquí arriba, y en el camino os contaré un extraño cuento que me ha sucedido, que no le habréis oído tal en toda vuestra vida.

-Como esos cuentos os podré contar yo -respondió don Juan-; pero vamos donde queréis y contadme el vuestro.

Guió don Antonio y dijo:

-«Habéis de saber que, poco más de una hora después que salistes de casa, salí a buscaros, y no treinta pasos de aquí vi venir, casi a encontrarme, un bulto negro de persona, que venía muy aguijando; y, llegándose cerca, conocí ser mujer en el hábito largo, la cual, con voz interrumpida de sollozos y de suspiros, me dijo: "¿Por ventura, señor, sois extranjero o de la ciudad?" "Estranjero soy y español", respondí yo. Y ella: "Gracias al cielo, que no quiere que muera sin sacramentos". "¿Venís herida, señora -reliqué yo-, o traéis algún mal de muerte?". "Podría ser que el que traigo lo fuese, si presto no se me da remedio; por la cortesía que siempre suele reinar en los de vuestra nación, os suplico, señor español, que me saquéis destas calles y me llevéis a vuestra posada con la mayor priesa que pudiéredes; que allá, si gustáredes dello, sabréis el mal que llevo y quién soy, aunque sea a costa de mi crédito". Oyendo lo cual, pareciéndome que tenía necesidad de lo que pedía, sin replicarla más, la así de la mano y por calles desviadas la llevé a la posada. Abrióme Santisteban el paje, hícele que se retirase, y sin que él la viese la llevé a mi estancia, y ella en entrando se arrojó encima de mi lecho desmayada. Lleguéme a ella y descubríla el rostro, que con el manto traía cubierto, y descubrí en él la mayor belleza que humanos ojos han visto; será a mi parecer de edad de diez y ocho años, antes menos que más. Quedé suspenso de ver tal extremo de belleza; acudí a echarle un poco de agua en el rostro, con que volvió en sí suspirando tiernamente, y lo primero que me dijo fue: "¿Conocéisme, señor?" "No -respondí yo-, ni es bien que yo haya tenido ventura de haber conocido tanta hermosura". "Desdichada de aquella -respondió ella-a quien se la da el cielo para mayor desgracia suya; pero,

señor, no es tiempo éste de alabar hermosuras, sino de remediar desdichas. Por quien sois, que me dejéis aquí encerrada y no permitáis que ninguno me vea, y volved luego al mismo lugar que me topastes y mirad si riñe alguna gente, y no favorezcáis a ninguno de los que riñeren, sino poned paz, que cualquier daño de las partes ha de resultar en acrecentar el mío". Déjola encerrada y vengo a poner en paz esta pendencia.»

-¿Tenéis más que decir, don Antonio? -preguntó don Juan.

-¿Pues no os parece que he dicho hartó? -respondió don Antonio-. Pues he dicho que tengo debajo de llave y en mi aposento la mayor belleza que humanos ojos han visto.

-El caso es extraño, sin duda -dijo don Juan-, pero oíd el mío.

Y luego le contó todo lo que le había sucedido, y cómo la criatura que le habían dado estaba en casa en poder de su ama, y la orden que le había dejado de mudarle las ricas mantillas en pobres y de llevarle adonde le criasen o a lo menos socorriesen la presente necesidad. Y dijo más: que la pendencia que él venía a buscar ya era acabada y puesta en paz, que él se había hallado en ella; y que, a lo que él imaginaba, todos los de la riña debían de ser gentes de prendas y de gran valor.

Quedaron entrambos admirados del suceso de cada uno y con priesa se volvieron a la posada, por ver lo que había menester la encerrada. En el camino dijo don Antonio a don Juan que él había prometido a aquella señora que no la dejaría ver de nadie, ni entraría en aquel aposento sino él solo, en tanto que ella no gustase de otra cosa.

-No importa nada -respondió don Juan-, que no faltará orden para verla, que ya lo deseo en extremo, según me la habéis alabado de hermosa.

Llegaron en esto, y, a la luz que sacó uno de tres pajes que tenían, alzó los ojos don Antonio al sombrero que don Juan traía, y viole resplandeciente de diamantes; quitósele, y vio que las luces salían de muchos que en un cintillo riquísimo traía. Miráronle y remiráronle entrambos, y concluyeron que, si todos eran finos, como parecían, valía más de doce mil ducados. Aquí acabaron de conocer ser gente principal la de la pendencia, especialmente el socorrido de don Juan, de quien se acordó haberle dicho que trujese el sombrero y le guardase, porque era conocido. Mandaron retirar los pajes y don Antonio abrió su aposento, y halló a la señora sentada en la cama, con la mano en la mejilla, derramando tiernas lágrimas. Don Juan, con el deseo que tenía de verla, se asomó a la puerta tanto cuanto pudo entrar la cabeza, y al punto la lumbre de los diamantes dio en los ojos de la que lloraba, y, alzándolos, dijo:

-Entrad, señor duque, entrad; ¿para qué me queréis dar con tanta escaseza el bien de vuestra vista?

A esto dijo don Antonio:

-Aquí, señora, no hay ningún duque que se escuse de veros.

-¿Cómo no? -replicó ella-. El que allí se asomó ahora es el duque de Ferrara, que mal le puede encubrir la riqueza de su sombrero.

-En verdad, señora, que el sombrero que vistes no le trae ningún duque; y si queréis desengañaros con ver quién le trae, dadle licencia que entre.

-Entre enhorabuena -dijo ella-, aunque si no fuese el duque, mis desdichas serían mayores.

Todas estas razones había oído don Juan, y, viendo que tenía licencia de entrar, con el sombrero en la mano entró en el aposento, y, así como se le puso delante y ella conoció no ser quien decía el del rico sombrero, con voz turbada y lengua presurosa, dijo:

-¡Ay, desdichada de mí! Señor mío, decidme luego, sin tenerme más suspensa: ¿conocéis el dueño dese sombrero? ¿Dónde le dejastes o cómo vino a vuestro poder? ¿Es vivo por ventura, o son éstas las nuevas que me envía de su muerte? ¡Ay, bien mío!, ¿qué sucesos son éstos? ¡Aquí veo tus prendas, aquí me veo sin ti encerrada y en poder que, a no saber que es de gentiles hombres españoles, el temor de perder mi honestidad me hubiera quitado la vida!

-Sosegaos señora -dijo don Juan-, que ni el dueño deste sombrero es muerto ni estáis en parte donde se os ha de hacer agravio alguno, sino serviros con cuanto las fuerzas nuestras alcanzaren, hasta poner las vidas por defenderos y ampararos; que no es bien que os salga vana la fe que tenéis de la bondad de los españoles; y, pues nosotros lo somos y principales (que aquí viene bien ésta que parece arrogancia), estad segura que se os guardará el decoro que vuestra presencia merece.

-Así lo creo yo -respondió ella-; pero con todo eso, decidme, señor: ¿cómo vino a vuestro poder ese rico sombrero, o adónde está su dueño, que, por lo menos, es Alfonso de Este, duque de Ferrara?

Entonces don Juan, por no tenerla más suspensa, le contó cómo le había hallado en una pendencia, y en ella había favorecido y ayudado a un caballero que, por lo que ella decía, sin duda debía de ser el duque de Ferrara, y que en la pendencia había perdido el sombrero y hallado aquél, y que aquel caballero le había dicho que le guardase, que era conocido, y que la refriega se había concluido sin quedar herido el caballero ni él tampoco; y que, después de acabada, había llegado gente que al parecer debían de ser criados o amigos del que él pensaba ser el duque, el cual le había pedido le dejase y se viniese, «mostrándose muy agradecido al favor que yo le había dado».

-De manera, señora mía, que este rico sombrero vino a mi poder por la manera que os he dicho, y su dueño, si es el duque, como vos decís, no ha una hora que

le dejé bueno, sano y salvo; sea esta verdad parte para vuestro consuelo, si es que le tendréis con saber del buen estado del duque.

-Para que sepáis, señores, si tengo razón y causa para preguntar por él, estadme atentos y escuchad la, no sé si diga, mi desdichada historia.

Todo el tiempo en que esto pasó le entretuvo el ama en paladear al niño con miel y en mudarle las mantillas de ricas en pobres; y, ya que lo tuvo todo aderezado, quiso llevarla en casa de una partera, como don Juan se lo dejó ordenado, y, al pasar con ella por junto a la estancia donde estaba la que quería comenzar su historia, lloró la criatura de modo que lo sintió la señora; y, levantándose en pie, púsose atentamente a escuchar, y oyó más distintamente el llanto de la criatura y dijo:

-Señores míos, ¿qué criatura es aquella, que parece recién nacida?

Don Juan respondió:

-Es un niño que esta noche nos han echado a la puerta de casa y va el ama a buscar quién le dé de mamar.

-Traíganmele aquí, por amor de Dios -dijo la señora-, que yo haré esa caridad a los hijos ajenos, pues no quiere el cielo que la haga con los propios.

Llamó don Juan al ama y tomóle el niño, y entrósele a la que le pedía y púsosele en los brazos, diciendo:

-Veis aquí, señora, el presente que nos han hecho esta noche; y no ha sido éste el primero, que pocos meses se pasan que no hallamos a los quicios de nuestras puertas semejantes hallazgos.

Tomóle ella en los brazos y miróle atentamente, así el rostro como los pobres aunque limpios paños en que venía envuelto, y luego, sin poder tener las lágrimas, se echó la toca de la cabeza encima de los pechos, para poder dar con honestidad de mamar a la criatura, y, aplicándosela a ellos, juntó su rostro con el suyo, y con la leche le sustentaba y con las lágrimas le bañaba el rostro; y desta manera estuvo sin levantar el suyo tanto espacio cuanto el niño no quiso dejar el pecho. En este espacio guardaban todos cuatro silencio; el niño mamaba, pero no era así, porque las recién paridas no pueden dar el pecho; y así, cayendo en la cuenta la que se lo daba, se le volvió a don Juan, diciendo:

-En balde me he mostrado caritativa: bien parezco nueva en estos casos. Haced, señor, que a este niño le paladeen con un poco de miel, y no consintáis que a estas horas le lleven por las calles. Dejad llegar el día, y antes que le lleven vuélvanmele a traer, que me consuelo en verle.

Volvió el niño don Juan al ama y ordenóle le entretuviese hasta el día, y que le pusiese las ricas mantillas con que le había traído, y que no le llevase sin primero decírselo. Y volviendo a entrar, y estando los tres solos, la hermosa dijo:

-Si queréis que hable, dadme primero algo que coma, que me desmayo, y

tengo bastante ocasión para ello.

Acudió prestamente don Antonio a un escritorio y sacó dél muchas conservas, y de algunas comió la desmayada, y bebió un vidrio de agua fría, con que volvió en sí; y, algo sosegada, dijo:

-Sentaos, señores, y escuchadme.

Hiciéronlo ansí, y ella, recogiéndose encima del lecho y abrigándose bien con las faldas del vestido, dejó descolgar por las espaldas un velo que en la cabeza traía, dejando el rostro esento y descubierto, mostrando en él el mismo de la luna, o, por mejor decir, del mismo sol, cuando más hermoso y más claro se muestra. Llovíanle líquidas perlas de los ojos, y limpiábaselas con un lienzo blanquísimo y con unas manos tales, que entre ellas y el lienzo fuera de buen juicio el que supiera diferenciar la blancura. Finalmente, después de haber dado muchos suspiros y después de haber procurado sosegar algún tanto el pecho, con voz algo doliente y turbada, dijo:

-«Yo, señores, soy aquella que muchas veces habréis, sin duda alguna, oído nombrar por ahí, porque la fama de mi belleza, tal cual ella es, pocas lenguas hay que no la publiquen. Soy, en efeto, Cornelia Bentibolli, hermana de Lorenzo Bentibolli, que con deciros esto quizá habré dicho dos verdades: la una, de mi nobleza; la otra, de mi hermosura. De pequeña edad quedé huérfana de padre y madre, en poder de mi hermano, el cual desde niña puso en mi guarda al recato mismo, puesto que más confiaba de mi honrada condición que de la solicitud que ponía en guardarme.

»Finalmente, entre paredes y entre soledades, acompañadas no más que de mis criadas, fui creciendo, y juntamente conmigo crecía la fama de mi gentileza, sacada en público de los criados y de aquellos que en secreto me trataban y de un retrato que mi hermano mandó hacer a un famoso pintor, para que, como él decía, no quedase sin mí el mundo, ya que el cielo a mejor vida me llevase. Pero todo esto fuera poca parte para apresurar mi perdición si no sucediera venir el duque de Ferrara a ser padrino de unas bodas de una prima mía, donde me llevó mi hermano con sana intención y por honra de mi parienta. Allí miré y fui vista; allí, según creo, rendí corazones, avasallé voluntades: allí sentí que daban gusto las alabanzas, aunque fuesen dadas por lisonjeras lenguas; allí, finalmente, vi al duque y él me vio a mí, de cuya vista ha resultado verme ahora como me veo. No os quiero decir, señores, porque sería proceder en infinito, los términos, las trazas, y los modos por donde el duque y yo venimos a conseguir, al cabo de dos años, los deseos que en aquellas bodas nacieron, porque ni guardas, ni recatos, ni honrosas amonestaciones, ni otra humana diligencia fue bastante para estorbar el juntarnos: que en fin hubo de ser debajo de la palabra que él me dio de ser mi esposo, porque sin ella fuera imposible rendir la roca de la valerosa y honrada



presunción mía. Mil veces le dije que públicamente me pidiese a mi hermano, pues no era posible que me negase; y que no había que dar disculpas al vulgo de la culpa que le pondrían de la desigualdad de nuestro casamiento, pues no desmentía en nada la nobleza del linaje Bentibolli a la suya Estense. A esto me respondió con escusas, que yo las tuve por bastantes y necesarias, y, confiada como rendida, creí como enamorada y entreguéme de toda mi voluntad a la suya por intercesión de una criada mía, más blanda a las dádivas y promesas del duque que lo que debía a la confianza que de su fidelidad mi hermano hacía.

»En resolución, a cabo de pocos días, me sentí preñada; y, antes que mis vestidos manifestasen mis libertades, por no darles otro nombre, me fingí enferma y malencólica, y hice con mi hermano me trujese en casa de aquella mi prima de quien había sido padrino el duque. Allí le hice saber en el término en que estaba, y el peligro que me amenazaba y la poca seguridad que tenía de mi vida, por tener barruntos de que mi hermano sospechaba mi desenvoltura. Quedó de acuerdo entre los dos que en entrando en el mes mayor se lo avisase: que él vendría por mí con otros amigos suyos y me llevaría a Ferrara, donde en la sazón que esperaba se casaría públicamente conmigo.

»Esta noche en que estamos fue la del concierto de su venida, y esta misma noche, estándole esperando, sentí pasar a mi hermano con otros muchos hombres, al parecer armados, según les crujían las armas, de cuyo sobresalto de imprevisto me sobrevino el parto, y en un instante parí un hermoso niño. Aquella criada mía, sabidora y medianera de mis hechos, que estaba ya prevenida para el caso, envolvió la criatura en otros paños que no los que tiene la que a vuestra puerta echaron; y, saliendo a la puerta de la calle, la dio, a lo que ella dijo, a un criado del duque. Yo, desde allí a un poco, acomodándome lo mejor que pude, según la presente necesidad, salí de la casa, creyendo que estaba en la calle el duque, y no lo debiera hacer hasta que él llegara a la puerta; mas el miedo que me había puesto la cuadrilla armada de mi hermano, creyendo que ya esgrimía su espada sobre mi cuello, no me dejó hacer otro mejor discurso; y así, desatentada y loca, salí donde me sucedió lo que habéis visto; y, aunque me veo sin hijo y sin esposo y con temor de peores sucesos, doy gracias al cielo, que me ha traído a vuestro poder, de quien me prometo todo aquello que de la cortesía española puedo prometerme, y más de la vuestra, que la sabréis realzar por ser tan nobles como parecéis.»

Diciendo esto, se dejó caer del todo encima del lecho, y, acudiendo los dos a ver si se desmayaba, vieron que no, sino que amargamente lloraba, y díjole don Juan:

-Si hasta aquí, hermosa señora, yo y don Antonio, mi camarada, os teníamos compasión y lástima por ser mujer, ahora, que sabemos vuestra calidad, la

lástima y compasión pasa a ser obligación precisa de serviros. Cobrad ánimo y no desmayéis; y, aunque no acostumbrada a semejantes casos, tanto más mostraréis quién sois cuanto más con paciencia supiéredes llevarlos. Creed, señora, que imagino que estos tan estraños sucesos han de tener un felice fin: que no han de permitir los cielos que tanta belleza se goce mal y tan honestos pensamientos se malogren. Acostaos, señora, y curad de vuestra persona, que lo habéis menester; que aquí entrará una criada nuestra que os sirva, de quien podéis hacer la misma confianza que de nuestras personas: tan bien sabrá tener en silencio vuestras desgracias como acudir a vuestras necesidades.

-Tal es la que tengo, que a cosas más dificultosas me obliga -respondió ella-. Entre, señor, quien vos quisiéredes, que, encaminada por vuestra parte, no puedo dejar de tenerla muy buena en la que menester hubiere; pero, con todo eso, os suplico que no me vean más que vuestra criada.

-Así será -respondió don Antonio.

Y dejándola sola se salieron, y don Juan dijo al ama que entrase dentro y llevase la criatura con los ricos paños, si se los había puesto. El ama dijo que sí, y que ya estaba de la misma manera que él la había traído. Entró el ama, advertida de lo que había de responder a lo que acerca de aquella criatura la señora que hallaría allí dentro le preguntase.

En viéndola Cornelia, le dijo:

-Vengáis en buen hora, amiga mía; dadme esa criatura y llegadme aquí esa vela.

Hízolo así el ama, y, tomando el niño Cornelia en sus brazos, se turbó toda y le miró ahincadamente, y dijo al ama:

-Decidme, señora, ¿este niño y el que me trajistes o me trujeron poco ha es todo uno?

-Sí señora -respondió el ama.

-Pues ¿cómo trae tan trocadas las mantillas? -replicó Cornelia-. En verdad, amiga, que me parece o que éstas son otras mantillas, o que ésta no es la misma criatura.

-Todo podía ser -respondió el ama.

-Pecadora de mí -dijo Cornelia-, ¿cómo todo podía ser? ¿Cómo es esto, ama mía?; que el corazón me revienta en el pecho hasta saber este truco. Decídmelo, amiga, por todo aquello que bien queréis. Digo que me digáis de dónde habéis habido estas tan ricas mantillas, porque os hago saber que son mías, si la vista no me miente o la memoria no se acuerda. Con estas mismas o otras semejantes entregué yo a mi doncella la prenda querida de mi alma: ¿quién se las quitó? ¡Ay, desdichada! Y ¿quién las trujo aquí? ¡Ay, sin ventura!

Don Juan y don Antonio, que todas estas quejas escuchaban, no quisieron que

más adelante pasase en ellas, ni permitieron que el engaño de las trocadas mantillas más la tuviese en pena; y así, entraron, y don Juan le dijo:

-Esas mantillas y ese niño son cosa vuestra, señora Cornelia.

Y luego le contó punto por punto cómo él había sido la persona a quien su doncella había dado el niño, y de cómo le había traído a casa, con la orden que había dado al ama del truco de las mantillas y la ocasión por que lo había hecho; aunque, después que le contó su parto, siempre tuvo por cierto que aquél era su hijo, y que si no se lo había dicho, había sido porque, tras el sobresalto del estar en duda de conocerle, sobreviniese la alegría de haberle conocido.

Allí fueron infinitas las lágrimas de alegría de Cornelia, infinitos los besos que dio a su hijo, infinitas las gracias que rindió a sus favorecedores, llamándolos ángeles humanos de su guarda y otros títulos que de su agradecimiento daban notoria muestra. Dejéronla con el ama, encomendándola mirase por ella y la sirviese cuanto fuese posible, advirtiéndola en el término en que estaba, para que acudiese a su remedio, pues ella, por ser mujer, sabía más de aquel menester que no ellos.

Con esto, se fueron a reposar lo que faltaba de la noche, con intención de no entrar en el aposento de Cornelia si no fuese o que ella los llamase o a necesidad precisa. Vino el día y el ama trujo a quien secretamente y a escuras diese de mamar al niño, y ellos preguntaron por Cornelia. Dijo el ama que reposaba un poco. Fuéronse a las escuelas, y pasaron por la calle de la pendencia y por la casa de donde había salido Cornelia, por ver si era ya pública su falta o si se hacían corrillos della; pero en ningún modo sintieron ni oyeron cosa ni de la riña ni de la ausencia de Cornelia. Con esto, oídas sus lecciones, se volvieron a su posada.

Llamólos Cornelia con el ama, a quien respondieron que tenían determinado de no poner los pies en su aposento, para que con más decoro se guardase el que a su honestidad se debía; pero ella replicó con lágrimas y con ruegos que entrasen a verla, que aquél era el decoro más conveniente, si no para su remedio, a lo menos para su consuelo. Hiciéronlo así, y ella los recibió con rostro alegre y con mucha cortesía; pidióles le hiciesen merced de salir por la ciudad y ver si oían algunas nuevas de su atrevimiento. Respondiéronle que ya estaba hecha aquella diligencia con toda curiosidad, pero que no se decía nada.

En esto, llegó un paje, de tres que tenían, a la puerta del aposento, y desde fuera dijo:

-A la puerta está un caballero con dos criados que dice se llama Lorenzo Bentibolli, y busca a mi señor don Juan de Gamboa.

A este recado cerró Cornelia ambos puños y se los puso en la boca, y por entre ellos salió la voz baja y temerosa, y dijo:

-¡Mi hermano, señores; mi hermano es ése! Sin duda debe de haber sabido que estoy aquí, y viene a quitarme la vida. ¡Socorro, señores, y amparo!

-Sosegaos, señora -le dijo don Antonio-, que en parte estáis y en poder de quien no os dejará hacer el menor agravio del mundo. Acudid vos, señor don Juan, y mirad lo que quiere ese caballero, y yo me quedaré aquí a defender, si menester fuere, a Cornelia.

Don Juan, sin mudar semblante, bajó abajo, y luego don Antonio hizo traer dos pistoletas armadas, y mandó a los pajes que tomasen sus espadas y estuviesen apercebidos.

El ama, viendo aquellas prevenciones, temblaba; Cornelia, temerosa de algún mal suceso, tremía; solos don Antonio y don Juan estaban en sí y muy bien puestos en lo que habían de hacer. En la puerta de la calle halló don Juan a don Lorenzo, el cual, en viendo a don Juan, le dijo:

-Suplico a V. S. -que ésta es la merced de Italia-me haga merced de venirse conmigo a aquella iglesia que está allí frontero, que tengo un negocio que comunicar con V. S. en que me va la vida y la honra.

-De muy buena gana -respondió don Juan-vamos, señor, donde quisiéredes.

Dicho esto, mano a mano se fueron a la iglesia; y, sentándose en un escaño y en parte donde no pudiesen ser oídos, Lorenzo habló primero y dijo:

-«Yo, señor español, soy Lorenzo Bentibolli, si no de los más ricos, de los más principales desta ciudad. Ser esta verdad tan notoria servirá de disculpa del alabarme yo propio. Quedé huérfano algunos años ha, y quedó en mi poder una mi hermana: tan hermosa, que a no tocarme tanto quizá os la alabara de manera que me faltaran encarecimientos por no poder ningunos corresponder del todo a su belleza. Ser yo honrado y ella muchacha y hermosa me hacían andar solícito en guardarla; pero todas mis prevenciones y diligencias las ha defraudado la voluntad arrojada de mi hermana Cornelia, que éste es su nombre.

»Finalmente, por acortar, por no cansaros, éste que pudiera ser cuento largo, digo que el duque de Ferrara, Alfonso de Este, con ojos de lince venció a los de Argos, derribó y triunfo de mi industria venciendo a mi hermana, y anoche me la llevó y sacó de casa de una parienta nuestra, y aun dicen que recién parida. Anoche lo supe y anoche le salí a buscar, y creo que le hallé y acuchillé; pero fue socorrido de algún ángel, que no consintió que con su sangre sacase la mancha de mi agravio. Hame dicho mi parienta, que es la que todo esto me ha dicho, que el duque engañó a mi hermana, debajo de palabra de recibirla por mujer. Esto yo no lo creo, por ser desigual el matrimonio en cuanto a los bienes de fortuna, que en los de naturaleza el mundo sabe la calidad de los Bentibollis de Bolonia. Lo que creo es que él se atuvo a lo que se atienen los poderosos que quieren atropellar una doncella temerosa y recatada, poniéndole a la vista el dulce

nombre de esposo, haciéndola creer que por ciertos respectos no se desposa luego: mentiras aparentes de verdades, pero falsas y malintencionadas.» Pero sea lo que fuere, yo me veo sin hermana y sin honra, puesto que todo esto hasta agora por mi parte lo tengo puesto debajo de la llave del silencio, y no he querido contar a nadie este agravio hasta ver si le puedo remediar y satisfacer en alguna manera; que las infamias mejor es que se presuman y sospechen que no que se sepan de cierto y distintamente, que entre el sí y el no de la duda, cada uno puede inclinarse a la parte que más quisiere, y cada una tendrá sus valedores. Finalmente, yo tengo determinado de ir a Ferrara y pedir al mismo duque la satisfacción de mi ofensa, y si la negare, desafiarle sobre el caso; y esto no ha de ser con escuadrones de gente, pues no los puedo ni formar ni sustentar, sino de persona a persona, para lo cual querría el ayuda de la vuestra y que me acompañásedes en este camino, confiado en que lo haréis por ser español y caballero, como ya estoy informado; y por no dar cuenta a ningún pariente ni amigo mío, de quien no espero sino consejos y disuasiones, y de vos puedo esperar los que sean buenos y honrosos, aunque rompan por cualquier peligro. Vos, señor, me habéis de hacer merced de venir conmigo, que, llevando un español a mi lado, y tal como vos me parecéis, haré cuenta que llevo en mi guarda los ejércitos de Jerjes. Mucho os pido, pero a más obliga la deuda de responder a lo que la fama de vuestra nación pregona.

-No más, señor Lorenzo -dijo a esta sazón don Juan (que hasta allí, sin interrumpirle palabra, le había estado escuchando)-, no más, que desde aquí me constituyo por vuestro defensor y consejero, y tomo a mi cargo la satisfacción o venganza de vuestro agravio; y esto no sólo por ser español, sino por ser caballero y serlo vos tan principal como habéis dicho, y como yo sé y como todo el mundo sabe. Mirad cuándo queréis que sea nuestra partida; y sería mejor que fuese luego, porque el hierro se ha de labrar mientras estuviere encendido, y el ardor de la cólera acrecienta el ánimo, y la injuria reciente despierta la venganza.

Levantóse Lorenzo y abrazó apretadamente a don Juan, y dijo:

-A tan generoso pecho como el vuestro, señor don Juan, no es menester moverle con ponerle otro interés delante que el de la honra que ha de ganar en este hecho, la cual desde aquí os la doy si salimos felicemente deste caso, y por añadidura os ofrezco cuanto tengo, puedo y valgo. La ida quiero que sea mañana, porque hoy pueda prevenir lo necesario para ella.

-Bien me parece -dijo don Juan-; y dadme licencia, señor Lorenzo, que yo pueda dar cuenta deste hecho a un caballero, camarada mía, de cuyo valor y silencio os podéis prometer harto más que del mío.

-Pues vos, señor don Juan, según decís, habéis tomado mi honra a vuestro cargo, disponed della como quisiéredes, y decid della lo que quisiéredes y a

quien quisiéredes, cuanto más que camarada vuestra, ¿quién puede ser que muy bueno no sea?

Con esto se abrazaron y despidieron, quedando que otro día por la mañana le enviaría a llamar para que fuera de la ciudad se pusiesen a caballo y siguiesen disfrazados su jornada.

Volvió don Juan, y dio cuenta a don Antonio y a Cornelia de lo que con Lorenzo había pasado y el concierto que quedaba hecho.

-¡Válame Dios! -dijo Cornelia-; grande es, señor, vuestra cortesía y grande vuestra confianza. ¿Cómo, y tan presto os habéis arrojado a emprender una hazaña llena de inconvenientes? ¿Y qué sabéis vos, señor, si os lleva mi hermano a Ferrara o a otra parte? Pero dondequiera que os llevare, bien podéis hacer cuenta que va con vos la fidelidad misma, aunque yo, como desdichada, en los átomos del sol tropiezo, de cualquier sombra temo; y ¿no queréis que tema, si está puesta en la respuesta del duque mi vida o mi muerte, y qué sé yo si responderá tan atentadamente que la cólera de mi hermano se contenga en los límites de su discreción? Y, cuando salga, ¿paréceos que tiene flaco enemigo? Y ¿no os parece que los días que tardáredes he de quedar colgada, temerosa y suspensa, esperando las dulces o amargas nuevas del suceso? ¿Quiero yo tan poco al duque o a mi hermano que de cualquiera de los dos no tema las desgracias y las sienta en el alma?

-Mucho discurrís y mucho teméis, señora Cornelia -dijo don Juan-; pero dad lugar entre tantos miedos a la esperanza y fiad en Dios, en mi industria y buen deseo, que habéis de ver con toda felicidad cumplido el vuestro. La ida de Ferrara no se escusa, ni el dejar de ayudar yo a vuestro hermano tampoco. Hasta agora no sabemos la intención del duque, ni tampoco si él sabe vuestra falta; y todo esto se ha de saber de su boca, y nadie se lo podrá preguntar como yo. Y entended, señora Cornelia, que la salud y contento de vuestro hermano y el del duque llevo puestos en las niñas de mis ojos; yo miraré por ellos como por ellas.

-Si así os da el cielo, señor don Juan -respondió Cornelia-, poder para remediar como gracia para consolar, en medio destos mis trabajos me cuento por bien afortunada. Ya querría veros ir y volver, por más que el temor me aflija en vuestra ausencia o la esperanza me suspenda.

Don Antonio aprobó la determinación de don Juan y le alabó la buena correspondencia que en él había hallado la confianza de Lorenzo Bentibolli. Díjole más: que él quería ir a acompañarlos, por lo que podía suceder.

-Eso no -dijo don Juan-: así porque no será bien que la señora Cornelia quede sola, como porque no piense el señor Lorenzo que me quiero valer de esfuerzos ajenos.

-El mío es el vuestro mismo -replicó don Antonio-; y así, aunque sea desconocido y desde lejos, os tengo de seguir, que la señora Cornelia sé que gustará dello, y no queda tan sola que le falte quien la sirva, la guarde y acompañe.

A lo cual Cornelia dijo:

-Gran consuelo será para mí, señores, si sé que vais juntos, o a lo menos de modo que os favorezcáis el uno al otro si el caso lo pidiere; y, pues al que vais a mí se me semeja ser de peligro, hacedme merced, señores, de llevar estas reliquias con vosotros.

Y, diciendo esto, sacó del seno una cruz de diamantes de inestimable valor y un *agnus* de oro tan rico como la cruz. Miraron los dos las ricas joyas, y apreciáronlas aún más que lo que habían apreciado el cintillo; pero volviéronselas, no queriendo tomarlas en ninguna manera, diciendo que ellos llevarían reliquias consigo, si no tan bien adornadas, a lo menos en su calidad tan buenas. Pesóle a Cornelia el no aceptarlas, pero al fin hubo de estar a lo que ellos querían.

El ama tenía gran cuidado de regalar a Cornelia, y, sabiendo la partida de sus amos (de que le dieron cuenta, pero no a lo que iban ni adónde iban), se encargó de mirar por la señora, cuyo nombre aún no sabía, de manera que sus mercedes no hiciesen falta. Otro día, bien de mañana, ya estaba Lorenzo a la puerta, y don Juan de camino con el sombrero del cintillo, a quien adornó de plumas negras y amarillas, y cubrió el cintillo con una toquilla negra. Despidióse de Cornelia, la cual, imaginando que tenía a su hermano tan cerca, estaba tan temerosa que no acertó a decir palabra a los dos, que della se despidieron.

Salió primero don Juan, y con Lorenzo se fue fuera de la ciudad, y en una huerta algo desviada hallaron dos muy buenos caballos, con dos mozos que de diestro los tenían. Subieron en ellos y, los mozos delante, por sendas y caminos desusados caminaron a Ferrara. Don Antonio sobre un cuartago suyo, y otro vestido y disimulado, los seguía, pero parecióle que se recataban dél, especialmente Lorenzo; y así, acordó de seguir el camino derecho de Ferrara, con seguridad que allí los encontraría.

Apenas hubieron salido de la ciudad, cuando Cornelia dio cuenta al ama de todos sus sucesos, y de cómo aquel niño era suyo y del duque de Ferrara, con todos los puntos que hasta aquí se han contado tocantes a su historia, no encubriéndole cómo el viaje que llevaban sus señores era a Ferrara, acompañando a su hermano, que iba a desafiar al duque Alfonso. Oyendo lo cual el ama (como si el demonio se lo mandara, para intricar, estorbar o dilatar el remedio de Cornelia), dijo:

-¡Ay señora de mi alma! ¿Y todas esas cosas han pasado por vos y estáis os

aquí descuidada y a pierna tendida? O no tenéis alma, o tenéisla tan desmazalada que no siente. ¿Cómo, y pensáis vos por ventura que vuestro hermano va a Ferrara? No lo penséis, sino pensad y creed que ha querido llevar a mis amos de aquí y ausentarlos desta casa para volver a ella y quitaros la vida, que lo podrá hacer como quien bebe un jarro de agua. Mirá debajo de qué guarda y amparo quedamos, sino en la de tres pajes, que harto tienen ellos que hacer en rascarse la sarna de que están llenos que en meterse en dibujos; a lo menos, de mí sé decir que no tendré ánimo para esperar el suceso y ruina que a esta casa amenaza. ¡El señor Lorenzo, italiano, y que se fíe de españoles, y les pida favor y ayuda; para mi ojo si tal crea! -y diose ella misma una higa-; si vos, hija mía, quisiédeses tomar mi consejo, yo os le daría tal que os luciese.

Pasmada, atónita y confusa estaba Cornelia oyendo las razones del ama, que las decía con tanto ahínco y con tantas muestras de temor, que le pareció ser todo verdad lo que le decía, y quizá estaban muertos don Juan y don Antonio, y que su hermano entraba por aquellas puertas y la cosía a puñaladas; y así, le dijo:

-¿Y qué consejo me daríades vos, amiga, que fuese saludable y que previniese la sobrestante desventura?

-Y cómo que le daré, tal y tan bueno que no pueda mejorarse -dijo el ama-. Yo, señora, he servido a un *piovano*; a un cura, digo, de una aldea que está dos millas de Ferrara; es una persona santa y buena, y que hará por mí todo lo que yo le pidiere, porque me tiene obligación más que de amo. Vámonos allá, que yo buscaré quien nos lleve luego, y la que viene a dar de mamar al niño es mujer pobre y se irá con nosotras al cabo del mundo. Y ya, señora, que presupongamos que has de ser hallada, mejor será que te hallen en casa de un sacerdote de misa, viejo y honrado, que en poder de dos estudiantes, mozos y españoles; que los tales, como yo soy buen testigo, no desechan ripio. Y agora, señora, como estás mala, te han guardado respecto; pero si sanas y convaleces en su poder, Dios lo podrá remediar, porque en verdad que si a mí no me hubieran guardado mis repulsas, desdenes y enterezas, ya hubieran dado conmigo y con mi honra al traste; porque no es todo oro lo que en ellos reluce: uno dicen y otro piensan; pero hanlo habido conmigo, que soy taimada y sé dó me aprieta el zapato; y sobre todo soy bien nacida, que soy de los Cribelos de Milán, y tengo el punto de la honra diez millas más allá de las nubes. Y en esto se podrá echar de ver, señora mía, las calamidades que por mí han pasado, pues con ser quien soy, he venido a ser *masara* de españoles, a quien ellos llaman *ama*; aunque a la verdad no tengo de qué quejarme de mis amos, porque son unos benditos, como no estén enojados, y en esto parecen vizcaínos, como ellos dicen que lo son. Pero quizá para consigo serán gallegos, que es otra nación, según es fama, algo menos puntual y bien mirada que la vizcaína.



En efeto, tantas y tales razones le dijo, que la pobre Cornelia se dispuso a seguir su parecer; y así, en menos de cuatro horas, disponiéndolo el ama y consintiéndolo ella, se vieron dentro de una carroza las dos y la ama del niño, y, sin ser sentidas de los pajes, se pusieron en camino para la aldea del cura; y todo esto se hizo a persuasión del ama y con sus dineros, porque había poco que la habían pagado sus señores un año de su sueldo, y así no fue menester empeñar una joya que Cornelia le daba. Y, como habían oído decir a don Juan que él y su hermano no habían de seguir el camino derecho de Ferrara, sino por sendas apartadas, quisieron ellas seguir el derecho, y poco a poco, por no encontrarse con ellos; y el dueño de la carroza se acomodó al paso de la voluntad de ellas porque le pagaron al gusto de la suya.

Dejémoslas ir, que ellas van tan atrevidas como bien encaminadas, y sepamos qué les sucedió a don Juan de Gamboa y al señor Lorenzo Bentibolli; de los cuales se dice que en el camino supieron que el duque no estaba en Ferrara, sino en Bolonia. Y así, dejando el rodeo que llevaban, se vinieron al camino real, o a la *estrada* maestra, como allá se dice, considerando que aquélla había de traer el duque cuando de Bolonia volviese. Y, a poco espacio que en ella habían entrado, habiendo tendido la vista hacia Bolonia por ver si por él alguno venía, vieron un tropel de gente de a caballo; y entonces dijo don Juan a Lorenzo que se desviase del camino, porque si acaso entre aquella gente viniese el duque, le quería hablar allí antes que se encerrase en Ferrara, que estaba poco distante. Hízolo así Lorenzo, y aprobó el parecer de don Juan.

Así como se apartó Lorenzo, quitó don Juan la toquilla que encubría el rico cintillo, y esto no sin falta de discreto discurso, como él después lo dijo. En esto, llegó la tropa de los caminantes, y entre ellos venía una mujer sobre una pía, vestida de camino y el rostro cubierto con una mascarilla, o por mejor encubrirse, o por guardarse del sol y del aire. Paró el caballo don Juan en medio del camino, y estuvo con el rostro descubierto a que llegasen los caminantes; y, en llegando cerca, el talle, el brío, el poderoso caballo, la bizarría del vestido y las luces de los diamantes llevaron tras sí los ojos de cuantos allí venían: especialmente los del duque de Ferrara, que era uno dellos, el cual, como puso los ojos en el cintillo, luego se dio a entender que el que le traía era don Juan de Gamboa, el que le había librado en la pendencia; y tan de veras aprehendió esta verdad que, sin hacer otro discurso, arremetió su caballo hacia don Juan diciendo:

-No creo que me engañaré en nada, señor caballero, si os llamo don Juan de Gamboa, que vuestra gallarda disposición y el adorno dese capelo me lo están diciendo.

-Así es la verdad -respondió don Juan-, porque jamás supe ni quise encubrir

mi nombre; pero decidme, señor, quién sois, por que yo no caiga en alguna descortesía.

-Eso será imposible -respondió el duque-, que para mí tengo que no podéis ser descortés en ningún caso. Con todo eso os digo, señor don Juan, que yo soy el duque de Ferrara y el que está obligado a serviros todos los días de su vida, pues no ha cuatro noches que vos se la distes.

No acabó de decir esto el duque cuando don Juan, con estraña ligereza, saltó del caballo y acudió a besar los pies del duque; pero, por presto que llegó, ya el duque estaba fuera de la silla, de modo que le acabó de apearse en brazos don Juan. El señor Lorenzo, que desde algo lejos miraba estas ceremonias, no pensando que lo eran de cortesía, sino de cólera, arremetió su caballo; pero en la mitad del repelón le detuvo, porque vio abrazados muy estrechamente al duque y a don Juan, que ya había conocido al duque. El duque, por cima de los hombros de don Juan, miró a Lorenzo y conociólo, de cuyo conocimiento algún tanto se sobresaltó, y así como estaba abrazado preguntó a don Juan si Lorenzo Bentibolli, que allí estaba, venía con él o no. A lo cual don Juan respondió:

-Apartémonos algo de aquí y contaréle a Vuestra Excelencia grandes cosas.

Hízolo así el duque y don Juan le dijo:

-Señor, Lorenzo Bentibolli, que allí veis, tiene una queja de vos no pequeña: dice que habrá cuatro noches que le sacastes a su hermana, la señora Cornelia, de casa de una prima suya, y que la habéis engañado y deshonorado, y quiere saber de vos qué satisfacción le pensáis hacer, para que él vea lo que le conviene. Pidióme que fuese su valedor y medianero; yo se lo ofrecí, porque, por los barruntos que él me dio de la pendencia, conocí que vos, señor, érades el dueño deste cintillo, que por liberalidad y cortesía vuestra quisistes que fuese mío; y, viendo que ninguno podía hacer vuestras partes mejor que yo, como ya he dicho, le ofrecí mi ayuda. Querría yo agora, señor, me dijédes lo que sabéis acerca deste caso y si es verdad lo que Lorenzo dice.

-¡Ay amigo! -respondió el duque-, es tan verdad que no me atrevería a negarla aunque quisiese; yo no he engañado ni sacado a Cornelia, aunque sé que falta de la casa que dice; no la he engañado, porque la tengo por mi esposa; no la he sacado, porque no sé della; si públicamente no celebré mis desposorios, fue porque aguardaba que mi madre (que está ya en lo último) pasase ésta a mejor vida, que tiene deseo que sea mi esposa la señora Livia, hija del duque de Mantua, y por otros inconvenientes quizá más eficaces que los dichos, y no conviene que ahora se digan. Lo que pasa es que la noche que me socorristes la había de traer a Ferrara, porque estaba ya en el mes de dar a luz la prenda que ordenó el cielo que en ella depositase; o ya fuese por la riña, o ya por mi descuido, cuando llegué a su casa hallé que salía della la secretaria de nuestros

conciertos. Preguntéle por Cornelia, díjome que ya había salido, y que aquella noche había parido un niño, el más bello del mundo, y que se le había dado a un Fabio, mi criado. La doncella es aquella que allí viene; el Fabio está aquí, y el niño y Cornelia no parecen. Yo he estado estos dos días en Bolonia, esperando y escudriñando oír algunas nuevas de Cornelia, pero no he sentido nada.

-Dese modo, señor -dijo don Juan-, cuando Cornelia y vuestro hijo pareciesen, ¿no negaréis ser vuestra esposa y él vuestro hijo?

-No, por cierto; porque, aunque me precio de caballero, más me precio de cristiano; y más, que Cornelia es tal que merece ser señora de un reino. Pareciese ella, y viva o muera mi madre, que el mundo sabrá que si supe ser amante, supe la fe que di en secreto guardarla en público.

-Luego, ¿bien diréis -dijo don Juan- lo que a mí me habéis dicho a vuestro hermano el señor Lorenzo?

-Antes me pesa -respondió el duque- de que tarde tanto en saberlo.

Al instante hizo don Juan de señas a Lorenzo, que se apease y viniese donde ellos estaban, como lo hizo, bien ajeno de pensar la buena nueva que le esperaba. Adelantóse el duque a recibirle con los brazos abiertos, y la primera palabra que le dijo fue llamarle hermano.

Apenas supo Lorenzo responder a salutación tan amorosa ni a tan cortés recibimiento; y, estando así suspenso, antes que hablase palabra, don Juan le dijo:

-El duque, señor Lorenzo, confiesa la conversación secreta que ha tenido con vuestra hermana, la señora Cornelia. Confiesa asimismo que es su legítima esposa, y que, como lo dice aquí, lo dirá públicamente cuando se ofreciere. Concede, asimismo, que fue ha cuatro noches a sacarla de casa de su prima para traerla a Ferrara y aguardar coyuntura de celebrar sus bodas, que las ha dilatado por justísimas causas que me ha dicho. Dice, asimismo, la pendencia que con vos tuvo, y que cuando fue por Cornelia encontró con Sulpicia, su doncella, que es aquella mujer que allí viene, de quien supo que Cornelia no había una hora que había parido, y que ella dio la criatura a un criado del duque, y que luego Cornelia, creyendo que estaba allí el duque, había salido de casa medrosa, porque imaginaba que ya vos, señor Lorenzo, sabíades sus tratos. Sulpicia no dio el niño al criado del duque, sino a otro en su cambio. Cornelia no parece, él se culpa de todo, y dice que, cada y cuando que la señora Cornelia parezca, la recibirá como a su verdadera esposa. Mirad, señor Lorenzo, si hay más que decir ni más que desear si no es el hallazgo de las dos tan ricas como desgraciadas prendas.

A esto respondió el señor Lorenzo, arrojándose a los pies del duque, que porfiaba por levantarlo:

-De vuestra cristiandad y grandeza, serenísimo señor y hermano mío, no podíamos mi hermana y yo esperar menor bien del que a entrambos nos hacéis: a ella, en igualarla con vos, y a mí, en ponerme en el número de vuestro.

Ya en esto se le arrasaban los ojos de lágrimas, y al duque lo mismo, enternecidos, el uno, con la pérdida de su esposa, y el otro, con el hallazgo de tan buen cuñado; pero consideraron que parecía flaqueza dar muestras con lágrimas de tanto sentimiento, las reprimieron y volvieron a encerrar en los ojos, y los de don Juan, alegres, casi les pedían las albricias de haber parecido Cornelia y su hijo, pues los dejaba en su misma casa.

En esto estaban, cuando se descubrió don Antonio de Isunza, que fue conocido de don Juan en el cuartago desde algo lejos; pero cuando llegó cerca se paró y vio los caballos de don Juan y de Lorenzo, que los mozos tenían de diestro y acullá desviados. Conoció a don Juan y a Lorenzo, pero no al duque, y no sabía qué hacerse, si llegaría o no adonde don Juan estaba. Llegándose a los criados del duque, les preguntó si conocían aquel caballero que con los otros dos estaba, señalando al duque. Fuele respondido ser el duque de Ferrara, con que quedó más confuso y menos sin saber qué hacerse, pero sacóle de su perplejidad don Juan, llamándole por su nombre. Apeóse don Antonio, viendo que todos estaban a pie, y llegóse a ellos; recibióle el duque con mucha cortesía, porque don Juan le dijo que era su camarada. Finalmente, don Juan contó a don Antonio todo lo que con el duque le había sucedido hasta que él llegó. Alegróse en extremo don Antonio, y dijo a don Juan:

-¿Por qué, señor don Juan, no acabáis de poner la alegría y el contento destos señores en su punto, pidiendo las albricias del hallazgo de la señora Cornelia y de su hijo?

-Si vos no llegarades, señor don Antonio, yo las pidiera; pero pedidlas vos, que yo seguro que os las den de muy buena gana.

Como el duque y Lorenzo oyeron tratar del hallazgo de Cornelia y de albricias, preguntaron qué era aquello.

-¿Qué ha de ser -respondió don Antonio-sino que yo quiero hacer un personaje en esta trágica comedia, y ha de ser el que pide las albricias del hallazgo de la señora Cornelia y de su hijo, que quedan en mi casa?

Y luego les contó punto por punto todo lo que hasta aquí se ha dicho, de lo cual el duque y el señor Lorenzo recibieron tanto placer y gusto, que don Lorenzo se abrazó con don Juan y el duque con don Antonio. El duque prometió todo su estado en albricias, y el señor Lorenzo su hacienda, su vida y su alma. Llamaron a la doncella que entregó a don Juan la criatura, la cual, habiendo conocido a Lorenzo, estaba temblando. Preguntáronle si conocería al hombre a quien había dado el niño; dijo que no, sino que ella le había preguntado si era

Fabio, y él había respondido que sí, y con esta buena fe se le había entregado.

-Así es la verdad -respondió don Juan-; y vos, señora, cerrastes la puerta luego, y me dijistes que la pusiese en cobro y diese luego la vuelta.

-Así es, señor -respondió la doncella llorando.

Y el duque dijo:

-Ya no son menester lágrimas aquí, sino júbilos y fiestas. El caso es que yo no tengo de entrar en Ferrara, sino dar la vuelta luego a Bolonia, porque todos estos contentos son en sombra hasta que los haga verdaderos la vista de Cornelia.

Y sin más decir, de común consentimiento, dieron la vuelta a Bolonia.

Adelantóse don Antonio para apercebir a Cornelia, por no sobresaltarla con la improvisa llegada del duque y de su hermano; pero, como no la halló ni los pajes le supieron decir nuevas della, quedó el más triste y confuso hombre del mundo; y, como vio que faltaba el ama, imaginó que por su industria faltaba Cornelia. Los pajes le dijeron que faltó el ama el mismo día que ellos habían faltado, y que la Cornelia por quien preguntaba nunca ellos la vieron. Fuera de sí quedó don Antonio con el no pensado caso, temiendo que quizá el duque los tendría por mentirosos o embusteros, o quizá imaginaría otras peores cosas que redundasen en perjuicio de su honra y del buen crédito de Cornelia. En esta imaginación estaba, cuando entraron el duque, y don Juan y Lorenzo, que por calles desusadas y encubiertas, dejando la demás gente fuera de la ciudad, llegaron a la casa de don Juan, y hallaron a don Antonio sentado en una silla, con la mano en la mejilla y con una color de muerto.

Preguntóle don Juan qué mal tenía y adónde estaba Cornelia.

Respondió don Antonio:

-¿Qué mal queréis que no tenga? Pues Cornelia no parece, que con el ama que le dejamos para su compañía, el mismo día que de aquí faltamos, faltó ella.

Poco le faltó al duque para espirar, y a Lorenzo para desesperarse, oyendo tales nuevas. Finalmente, todos quedaron turbados, suspensos e imaginativos. En esto, se llegó un paje a don Antonio y al oído le dijo:

-Señor, Santisteban, el paje del señor don Juan, desde el día que vuesas mercedes se fueron, tiene una mujer muy bonita encerrada en su aposento, y yo creo que se llama Cornelia, que así la he oído llamar.

Alborotóse de nuevo don Antonio, y más quisiera que no hubiera parecido Cornelia, que sin duda pensó que era la que el paje tenía escondida, que no que la hallaran en tal lugar. Con todo eso no dijo nada, sino callando se fue al aposento del paje, y halló cerrada la puerta y que el paje no estaba en casa. Llegóse a la puerta y dijo con voz baja:

-Abrid, señora Cornelia, y salid a recibir a vuestro hermano y al duque vuestro esposo, que vienen a buscaros.

Respondiéronle de dentro:

-¿Hacen burla de mí? Pues en verdad que no soy tan fea ni tan desechada que no podían buscarme duques y condes, y eso se merece la presona que trata con pajes.

Por las cuales palabra entendió don Antonio que no era Cornelia la que respondía. Estando en esto, vino Santisteban el paje, y acudió luego a su aposento, y, hallando allí a don Antonio, que pedía que le trujesen las llaves que había en casa, por ver si alguna hacía a la puerta, el paje, hincado de rodillas y con la llave en la mano, le dijo:

-El ausencia de vuestas mercedes, y mi bellaquería, por mejor decir, me hizo traer una mujer estas tres noches a estar conmigo. Suplico a vuesa merced, señor don Antonio de Isunza, así oiga buenas nuevas de España, que si no lo sabe mi señor don Juan de Gamboa que no se lo diga, que yo la echaré al momento.

-Y ¿cómo se llama la tal mujer? -preguntó don Antonio.

-Llámase Cornelia -respondió el paje.

El paje que había descubierto la celada, que no era muy amigo de Santisteban, ni se sabe si simplemente o con malicia, bajó donde estaban el duque, don Juan y Lorenzo, diciendo:

-Tómame el paje, por Dios, que le han hecho gormar a la señora Cornelia; escondidita la tenía; a buen seguro que no quisiera él que hubieran venido los señores para alargar más el *gaudeamus* tres o cuatro días más.

Oyó esto Lorenzo y preguntóle:

-¿Qué es lo que decís, gentilhombre? ¿Dónde está Cornelia?

-Arriba -respondió el paje.

Apenas oyó esto el duque, cuando como un rayo subió la escalera arriba a ver a Cornelia, que imaginó que había parecido, y dio luego con el aposento donde estaba don Antonio, y, entrando, dijo:

-¿Dónde está Cornelia, adónde está la vida de la vida mía?

-Aquí está Cornelia -respondió una mujer que estaba envuelta en una sábana de la cama y cubierto el rostro, y prosiguió diciendo:- ¡Váلامos Dios! ¿Es éste algún buey de hurto? ¿Es cosa nueva dormir una mujer con un paje, para hacer tantos milagrones?

Lorenzo, que estaba presente, con despecho y cólera tiró de un cabo de la sábana y descubrió una mujer moza y no de mal parecer, la cual, de vergüenza, se puso las manos delante del rostro y acudió a tomar sus vestidos, que le servían de almohada, porque la cama no la tenía, y en ellos vieron que debía de ser alguna pícara de las perdidas del mundo.

Preguntóle el duque que si era verdad que se llamaba Cornelia; respondió que sí y que tenía muy honrados parientes en la ciudad, y que nadie dijese «desta

agua no beberé». Quedó tan corrido el duque, que casi estuvo por pensar si hacían los españoles burla dél; pero, por no dar lugar a tan mala sospecha, volvió las espaldas, y, sin hablar palabra, siguiéndole Lorenzo, subieron en sus caballos y se fueron, dejando a don Juan y a don Antonio hartos más corridos que ellos iban; y determinaron de hacer las diligencias posibles y aun imposibles en buscar a Cornelia, y satisfacer al duque de su verdad y buen deseo. Despidieron a Santisteban por atrevido, y echaron a la pícara Cornelia, y en aquel punto se les vino a la memoria que se les había olvidado de decir al duque las joyas del *agnus* y la cruz de diamantes que Cornelia les había ofrecido, pues con estas señas creería que Cornelia había estado en su poder y que si faltaba, no había estado en su mano. Salieron a decirle esto, pero no le hallaron en casa de Lorenzo, donde creyeron que estaría. A Lorenzo sí, el cual les dijo que, sin detenerse un punto, se había vuelto a Ferrara, dejándole orden de buscar a su hermana.

Dijéronle lo que iban a decirle, pero Lorenzo les dijo que el duque iba muy satisfecho de su buen proceder, y que entrambos habían echado la falta de Cornelia a su mucho miedo, y que Dios sería servido de que pareciese, pues no había de haber tragado la tierra al niño y al ama y a ella. Con esto se consolaron todos y no quisieron hacer la inquisición de buscalla por bandos públicos, sino por diligencias secretas, pues de nadie sino de su prima se sabía su falta; y entre los que no sabían la intención del duque correría riesgo el crédito de su hermana si la pregonasen, y ser gran trabajo andar satisfaciendo a cada uno de las sospechas que una vehemente presunción les infunde.

Siguió su viaje el duque, y la buena suerte, que iba disponiendo su ventura, hizo que llegase a la aldea del cura, donde ya estaban Cornelia, el niño y su ama y la consejera; y ellas le habían dado cuenta de su vida y pedídole consejo de lo que harían.

Era el cura grande amigo del duque, en cuya casa, acomodada a lo de clérigo rico y curioso, solía el duque venirse desde Ferrara muchas veces, y desde allí salía a caza, porque gustaba mucho, así de la curiosidad del cura como de su donaire, que le tenía en cuanto decía y hacía. No se alborotó por ver al duque en su casa, porque, como se ha dicho, no era la vez primera; pero descontentóle verle venir triste, porque luego echó de ver que con alguna pasión traía ocupado el ánimo.

Entreoyó Cornelia que el duque de Ferrara estaba allí y turbóse en extremo, por no saber con qué intención venía; torcíase las manos y andaba de una parte a otra, como persona fuera de sentido. Quisiera hablar Cornelia al cura, pero estaba entreteniendo al duque y no tenía lugar de hablarle.

El duque le dijo:

-Yo vengo, padre mío, tristísimo, y no quiero hoy entrar en Ferrara, sino ser

vuestro huésped; decid a los que vienen conmigo que pasen a Ferrara y que sólo se quede Fabio.

Hízolo así el buen cura, y luego fue a dar orden cómo regalar y servir al duque; y con esta ocasión le pudo hablar Cornelia, la cual, tomándole de las manos, le dijo:

-¡Ay, padre y señor mío! Y ¿qué es lo que quiere el duque? Por amor de Dios, señor, que le dé algún toque en mi negocio, y procure descubrir y tomar algún indicio de su intención; en efeto, guíelo como mejor le pareciere y su mucha discreción le aconsejare.

A esto le respondió el cura:

-El duque viene triste; hasta agora no me ha dicha la causa. Lo que se ha de hacer es que luego se aderece ese niño muy bien, y ponedle, señora, las joyas todas que tuviéredes, principalmente las que os hubiere dado el duque, y dejadme hacer, que yo espero en el cielo que hemos de tener hoy un buen día.

Abrázole Cornelia y besóle la mano, y retiróse a aderezar y componer el niño. El cura salió a entretener al duque en tanto que se hacía hora de comer, y en el discurso de su plática preguntó el cura al duque si era posible saberse la causa de su melancolía, porque sin duda de una legua se echaba de ver que estaba triste.

-Padre -respondió el duque-, claro está que las tristezas del corazón salen al rostro; en los ojos se lee la relación de lo que está en el alma, y lo que peor es, que por ahora no puedo comunicar mi tristeza con nadie.

-Pues en verdad, señor -respondió el cura-, que si estuviérades para ver cosas de gusto, que os enseñara yo una, que tengo para mí que os le causara y grande.

-Simple sería -respondió el duque-aquél que, ofreciéndole el alivio de su mal, no quisiese recibirle. Por vida mía, padre, que me mostréis eso que decís, que debe de ser alguna de vuestras curiosidades, que para mí son todas de grandísimo gusto.

Levantóse el cura y fue donde estaba Cornelia, que ya tenía adornado a su hijo y puéstole las ricas joyas de la cruz y del *agnus*, con otras tres piezas preciosísimas, todas dadas del duque a Cornelia; y, tomando al niño entre sus brazos, salió adonde el duque estaba, y, diciéndole que se levantara y se llegase a la claridad de una ventana, quitó al niño de sus brazos y le puso en los del duque, el cual, cuando miró y reconoció las joyas y vio que eran las mismas que él había dado a Cornelia, quedó atónito; y, mirando ahincadamente al niño, le pareció que miraba su mismo retrato, y lleno de admiración preguntó al cura cuya era aquella criatura, que en su adorno y aderezo parecía hijo de algún príncipe.

-No sé -respondió el cura-; sólo sé que habrá no sé cuántas noches que aquí me le trujo un caballero de Bolonia, y me encargó mirase por él y le criase, que



era hijo de un valeroso padre y de una principal y hermosísima madre. También vino con el caballero una mujer para dar leche al niño, a quien he yo preguntado si sabe algo de los padres desta criatura, y responde que no sabe palabra; y en verdad que si la madre es tan hermosa como el ama, que debe de ser la más hermosa mujer de Italia.

-¿No la veríamos? -preguntó el duque.

-Sí, por cierto -respondió el cura-; veníos, señor, conmigo, que si os suspende el adorno y la belleza desa criatura, como creo que os ha suspendido, el mismo efeto entiendo que ha de hacer la vista de su ama.

Quísole tomar la criatura el cura al duque, pero él no la quiso dejar, antes la apretó en sus brazos y le dio muchos besos. Adelantóse el cura un poco, y dijo a Cornelia que saliese sin turbación alguna a recebir al duque. Hízolo así Cornelia, y con el sobresalto le salieron tales colores al rostro, que sobre el modo mortal la hermosearon. Pasmóse el duque cuando la vio, y ella, arrojándose a sus pies, se los quiso besar. El duque, sin hablar palabra, dio el niño al cura, y, volviendo las espaldas, se salió con gran priesa del aposento. Lo cual visto por Cornelia, volviéndose al cura, dijo:

-¡Ay señor mío! ¿Si se ha espantado el duque de verme? ¿Si me tiene aborrecida? ¿Si le he parecido fea? ¿Si se le han olvidado las obligaciones que me tiene? ¿No me hablará siquiera una palabra? ¿Tanto le cansaba ya su hijo que así le arrojó de sus brazos?

A todo lo cual no respondía palabra el cura, admirado de la huida del duque, que así le pareció, que fuese huida antes que otra cosa; y no fue sino que salió a llamar a Fabio y decirle:

-Corre, Fabio amigo, y a toda diligencia vuelve a Bolonia y di que al momento Lorenzo Bentibolli y los dos caballeros españoles, don Juan de Gamboa y don Antonio de Isunza, sin poner escusa alguna, vengan luego a esta aldea. Mira, amigo, que vuelas y no te vengas sin ellos, que me importa la vida el verlos.

No fue perezoso Fabio, que luego puso en efeto el mandamiento de su señor.

El duque volvió luego a donde Cornelia estaba derramando hermosas lágrimas. Cogióla el duque en sus brazos, y, añadiendo lágrimas a lágrimas, mil veces le bebió el aliento de la boca, teniéndoles el contento atadas las lenguas. Y así, en silencio honesto y amoroso, se gozaban los dos felices amantes y esposos verdaderos.

El ama del niño y la Cribela, por lo menos como ella decía, que por entre las puertas de otro aposento habían estado mirando lo que entre el duque y Cornelia pasaba, de gozo se daban de calabazadas por las paredes, que no parecía sino que habían perdido el juicio. El cura daba mil besos al niño, que tenía en sus brazos, y, con la mano derecha, que desocupó, no se hartaba de echar bendiciones a los

dos abrazados señores. El ama del cura, que no se había hallado presente al grave caso por estar ocupada aderezando la comida, cuando la tuvo en su punto, entró a llamarlos que se sentasen a la mesa. Esto apartó los estrechos abrazos, y el duque desembarazó al cura del niño y le tomó en sus brazos, y en ellos le tuvo todo el tiempo que duró la limpia y bien sazónada, más que sumptuosa comida; y, en tanto que comían, dio cuenta Cornelia de todo lo que le había sucedido hasta venir a aquella casa por consejo de la ama de los dos caballeros españoles, que la habían servido, amparado y guardado con el más honesto y puntual decoro que pudiera imaginarse. El duque le contó asimismo a ella todo lo que por él había pasado hasta aquel punto. Halláronse presentes las dos amas, y hallaron en el duque grandes ofrecimientos y promesas. En todos se renovó el gusto con el felice fin del suceso, y sólo esperaban a colmarle y a ponerle en el estado mejor que acertara a desearse con la venida de Lorenzo, de don Juan y don Antonio, los cuales de allí a tres días vinieron desalados y deseosos por saber si alguna nueva sabía el duque de Cornelia; que Fabio, que los fue a llamar, no les pudo decir ninguna cosa de su hallazgo, pues no la sabía.

Saliólos a recibir el duque una sala antes de donde estaba Cornelia, y esto sin muestras de contento alguno, de que los recién venidos se entristecieron. Hízolos sentar el duque, y él se sentó con ellos, y, encaminando su plática a Lorenzo, le dijo:

-Bien sabéis, señor Lorenzo Bentibolli, que yo jamás engañé a vuestra hermana, de lo que es buen testigo el cielo y mi conciencia. Sabéis asimismo la diligencia con que la he buscado y el deseo que he tenido de hallarla para casarme con ella, como se lo tengo prometido. Ella no parece y mi palabra no ha de ser eterna. Yo soy mozo, y no tan experto en las cosas del mundo, que no me deje llevar de las que me ofrece el deleite a cada paso. La misma afición que me hizo prometer ser esposo de Cornelia me llevó también a dar antes que a ella palabra de matrimonio a una labradora desta aldea, a quien pensaba dejar burlada por acudir al valor de Cornelia, aunque no acudiera a lo que la conciencia me pedía, que no fuera pequeña muestra de amor. Pero, pues nadie se casa con mujer que no parece, ni es cosa puesta en razón que nadie busque la mujer que le deja, por no hallar la prenda que le aborrece, digo que veáis, señor Lorenzo, qué satisfacción puedo daros del agravio que no os hice, pues jamás tuve intención de hacérosle, y luego quiero que me deis licencia para cumplir mi primera palabra y desposarme con la labradora, que ya está dentro desta casa.

En tanto que el duque esto decía, el rostro de Lorenzo se iba mudando de mil colores, y no acertaba a estar sentado de una manera en la silla: señales claras que la cólera le iba tomando posesión de todos sus sentidos. Lo mismo pasaba por don Juan y por don Antonio, que luego propusieron de no dejar salir al

duque con su intención aunque le quitasen la vida. Leyendo, pues, el duque en sus rostros sus intenciones, dijo:

-Sosegaos, señor Lorenzo, que, antes que me respondáis palabra, quiero que la hermosura que veréis en la que quiero recibir por mi esposa os obligue a darme la licencia que os pido; porque es tal y tan estremada, que de mayores yerros será disculpa.

Esto dicho, se levantó y entró donde Cornelia estaba riquísimamente adornada, con todas la joyas que el niño tenía y muchas más. Cuando el duque volvió las espaldas, se levantó don Juan, y, puestas ambas manos en los dos brazos de la silla donde estaba sentado Lorenzo, al oído le dijo:

-Por Santiago de Galicia, señor Lorenzo, y por la fe de cristiano y de caballero que tengo, que así deje yo salir con su intención al duque como volverme moro. ¡Aquí, aquí y en mis manos ha de dejar la vida, o ha de cumplir la palabra que a la señora Cornelia, vuestra hermana, tiene dada, o a lo menos nos ha de dar tiempo de buscarla, y hasta que de cierto se sepa que es muerta, él no ha de casarse!

-Yo estoy dese parecer mismo -respondió Lorenzo.

-Pues del mismo estará mi camarada don Antonio -replicó don Juan.

En esto, entró por la sala adelante Cornelia, en medio del cura y del duque, que la traía de la mano, detrás de los cuales venían Sulpicia, la doncella de Cornelia, que el duque había enviado por ella a Ferrara, y las dos amas, del niño y la de los caballeros.

Cuando Lorenzo vio a su hermana, y la acabó de rafigurar y conocer, que al principio la imposibilidad, a su parecer, de tal suceso no le dejaba enterar en la verdad, tropezando en sus mismos pies, fue a arrojarle a los brazos del duque, que le levantó y le puso en los brazos de su hermana; quiero decir que su hermana le abrazó con las muestras de alegría posibles. Don Juan y don Antonio dijeron al duque que había sido la más discreta y más sabrosa burla del mundo. El duque tomó al niño, que Sulpicia traía, y dándosele a Lorenzo le dijo:

-Recebid, señor hermano, a vuestro sobrino y mi hijo, y ved si queréis darme licencia que me case con esta labradora, que es la primera a quien he dado palabra de casamiento.

Sería nunca acabar contar lo que respondió Lorenzo, lo que preguntó don Juan, lo que sintió don Antonio, el regocijo del cura, la alegría de Sulpicia, el contento de la consejera, el júbilo del ama, la admiración de Fabio y, finalmente, el general contento de todos.

Luego el cura los desposó, siendo su padrino don Juan de Gamboa; y entre todos se dio traza que aquellos desposorios estuviesen secretos, hasta ver en qué paraba la enfermedad que tenía muy al cabo a la duquesa su madre, y que en

tanto la señora Cornelia se volviese a Bolonia con su hermano. Todo se hizo así; la duquesa murió, Cornelia entró en Ferrara, alegrando al mundo con su vista, los lutos se volvieron en galas, las amas quedaron ricas, Sulpicia por mujer de Fabio, don Antonio y don Juan contentísimos de haber servido en algo al duque, el cual les ofreció dos primas suyas por mujeres con riquísima dote. Ellos dijeron que los caballeros de la nación vizcaína por la mayor parte se casaban en su patria; y que no por menosprecio, pues no era posible, sino por cumplir su loable costumbre y la voluntad de sus padres, que ya los debían de tener casados, no aceptaban tan ilustre ofrecimiento.

El duque admitió su disculpa, y, por modos honestos y honrosos, y buscando ocasiones lícitas, les envió muchos presentes a Bolonia, y algunos tan ricos y enviados a tan buena sazón y coyuntura, que, aunque pudieran no admitirse, por no parecer que recibían paga, el tiempo en que llegaban lo facilitaba todo: especialmente los que les envió al tiempo de su partida para España, y los que les dio cuando fueron a Ferrara a despedirse dél; ya hallaron a Cornelia con otras dos criaturas hembras, y al duque más enamorado que nunca. La duquesa dio la cruz de diamantes a don Juan y el *agnus* a don Antonio, que, sin ser poderosos a hacer otra cosa, las recibieron.

Llegaron a España y a su tierra, adonde se casaron con ricas, principales y hermosas mujeres, y siempre tuvieron correspondencia con el duque y la duquesa y con el señor Lorenzo Bentibolli, con grandísimo gusto de todos.

## El casamiento engañoso

SALÍA del Hospital de la Resurrección, que está en Valladolid, fuera de la Puerta del Campo, un soldado que, por servirle su espada de báculo y por la flaqueza de sus piernas y amarillez de su rostro, mostraba bien claro que, aunque no era el tiempo muy caluroso, debía de haber sudado en veinte días todo el humor que quizá granjeó en una hora. Iba haciendo pinitos y dando traspiés, como convaleciente; y, al entrar por la puerta de la ciudad, vio que hacia él venía un su amigo, a quien no había visto en más de seis meses; el cual, santiguándose como si viera alguna mala visión, llegándose a él, le dijo:

-¿Qué es esto, señor alférez Campuzano? ¿Es posible que está vuesa merced en esta tierra? ¡Como quien soy que le hacía en Flandes, antes terciando allá la pica que arrastrando aquí la espada! ¿Qué color, qué flaqueza es ésta?

A lo cual respondió Campuzano:

-A lo si estoy en esta tierra o no, señor licenciado Peralta, el verme en ella le responde; a las demás preguntas no tengo qué decir, sino que salgo de aquel hospital de sudar catorce cargas de bubas que me echó a cuestras una mujer que escogí por mía, que non debiera.

-¿Luego casóse vuesa merced? -replicó Peralta.

-Sí, señor -respondió Campuzano.

-Sería por amores -dijo Peralta-, y tales casamientos traen consigo aparejada la ejecución del arrepentimiento.

-No sabré decir si fue por amores -respondió el alférez-, aunque sabré afirmar que fue por dolores, pues de mi casamiento, o cansamiento, saqué tantos en el cuerpo y en el alma, que los del cuerpo, para entretenerlos, me cuestan cuarenta sudores, y los del alma no hallo remedio para aliviarlos siquiera. Pero, porque no estoy para tener largas pláticas en la calle, vuesa merced me perdone; que otro día con más comodidad le daré cuenta de mis sucesos, que son los más nuevos y peregrinos que vuesa merced habrá oído en todos los días de su vida.

-No ha de ser así -dijo el licenciado-, sino que quiero que venga conmigo a mi posada, y allí haremos penitencia juntos; que la olla es muy de enfermo, y, aunque está tasada para dos, un pastel suplirá con mi criado; y si la convalecencia lo sufre, unas lonjas de jamón de Rute nos harán la salva, y, sobre todo, la buena voluntad con que lo ofrezco, no sólo esta vez, sino todas las que vuesa merced quisiere.

Agradecióselo Campuzano y aceptó el convite y los ofrecimientos.

Fueron a San Llorente, oyeron misa, llevóle Peralta a su casa, dióle lo prometido y ofrecióselo de nuevo, y pidióle, en acabando de comer, le contase los sucesos que tanto le había encarecido. No se hizo de rogar Campuzano; antes, comenzó a decir desta manera:

-«Bien se acordará vuesa merced, señor licenciado Peralta, como yo hacía en esta ciudad camarada con el capitán Pedro de Herrera, que ahora está en Flandes.»

-Bien me acuerdo -respondió Peralta.

-«Pues un día -prosiguió Campuzano-que acabábamos de comer en aquella posada de la Solana, donde vivíamos, entraron dos mujeres de gentil parecer con dos criadas: la una se puso a hablar con el capitán en pie, arrimados a una ventana; y la otra se sentó en una silla junto a mí, derribado el manto hasta la barba, sin dejar ver el rostro más de aquello que concedía la raridad del manto; y, aunque le supliqué que por cortesía me hiciese merced de descubrirse, no fue posible acabarlo con ella, cosa que me encendió más el deseo de verla. Y, para acrecentarle más, o ya fuese de industria o acaso, sacó la señora una muy blanca mano con muy buenas sortijas. Estaba yo entonces bizarrísimo, con aquella gran cadena que vuesa merced debió de conocerme, el sombrero con plumas y cintillo, el vestido de colores, a fuer de soldado, y tan gallardo, a los ojos de mi locura, que me daba a entender que las podía matar en el aire. Con todo esto, le rogué que se descubriese, a lo que ella me respondió: "No seáis importuno: casa tengo, haced a un paje que me siga; que, aunque yo soy más honrada de lo que prometo esta respuesta, todavía, a trueco de ver si responde vuestra discreción a vuestra gallardía, holgaré de que me veáis". Beséle las manos por la grande merced que me hacía, en pago de la cual le prometí montes de oro. Acabó el capitán su plática; ellas se fueron, siguiólas un criado mío. Díjome el capitán que lo que la dama le quería era que le llevase unas cartas a Flandes a otro capitán, que decía ser su primo, aunque él sabía que no era sino su galán.

»Yo quedé abrasado con las manos de nieve que había visto, y muerto por el rostro que deseaba ver; y así, otro día, guiándome mi criado, dióseme libre entrada. Hallé una casa muy bien aderezada y una mujer de hasta treinta años, a quien conocí por las manos. No era hermosa en extremo, pero éralo de suerte que podía enamorar comunicada, porque tenía un tono de habla tan suave que se entraba por los oídos en el alma. Pasé con ella luengos y amorosos coloquios, blasoné, hendí, rajé, ofrecí, prometí y hice todas las demostraciones que me pareció ser necesarias para hacerme bienquisto con ella. Pero, como ella estaba hecha a oír semejantes o mayores ofrecimientos y razones, parecía que les daba atento oído antes que crédito alguno. Finalmente, nuestra plática se pasó en

flores cuatro días que continué en visitalla, sin que llegase a coger el fruto que deseaba.

»En el tiempo que la visité, siempre hallé la casa desembarazada, sin que viese visiones en ella de parientes fingidos ni de amigos verdaderos; servíala una moza más taimada que simple. Finalmente, tratando mis amores como soldado que está en víspera de mudar, apuré a mi señora doña Estefanía de Caicedo (que éste es el nombre de la que así me tiene) y respondíome: "Señor alférez Campuzano, simplicidad sería si yo quisiese venderme a vuesa merced por santa: pecadora he sido, y aún ahora lo soy, pero no de manera que los vecinos me murmuren ni los apartados me noten. Ni de mis padres ni de otro pariente heredé hacienda alguna, y con todo esto vale el menaje de mi casa, bien validos, dos mil y quinientos escudos; y éstos en cosas que, puestas en almoneda, lo que se tardare en ponellas se tardará en convertirse en dineros. Con esta hacienda busco marido a quien entregarme y a quien tener obediencia; a quien, juntamente con la enmienda de mi vida, le entregaré una increíble solicitud de regalarle y servirle; porque no tiene príncipe cocinero más goloso ni que mejor sepa dar el punto a los guisados que le sé dar yo, cuando, mostrando ser casera, me quiero poner a ello. Sé ser mayordomo en casa, moza en la cocina y señora en la sala; en efeto, sé mandar y sé hacer que me obedezcan. No desperdicio nada y allego mucho; mi real no vale menos, sino mucho más cuando se gasta por mi orden. La ropa blanca que tengo, que es mucha y muy buena, no se sacó de tiendas ni lenceros; estos pulgares y los de mis criadas la hilaron; y si pudiera tejerse en casa, se tejiera. Digo estas alabanzas mías porque no acarrear vituperio cuando es forzosa la necesidad de decirlas. Finalmente, quiero decir que yo busco marido que me ampare, me mande y me honre, y no galán que me sirva y me vitupere. Si vuesa merced gustare de aceptar la prenda que se le ofrece, aquí estoy moliente y corriente, sujeta a todo aquello que vuesa merced ordenare, sin andar en venta, que es lo mismo andar en lenguas de casamenteros, y no hay ninguno tan bueno para concertar el todo como las mismas partes".

»Yo, que tenía entonces el juicio, no en la cabeza, sino en los carcañares, haciéndoseme el deleite en aquel punto mayor de lo que en la imaginación le pintaba, y ofreciéndoseme tan a la vista la cantidad de hacienda, que ya la contemplaba en dineros convertida, sin hacer otros discursos de aquellos a que daba lugar el gusto, que me tenía echados grillos al entendimiento, le dije que yo era el venturoso y bien afortunado en haberme dado el cielo, casi por milagro, tal compañera, para hacerla señora de mi voluntad y de mi hacienda, que no era tan poca que no valiese, con aquella cadena que traía al cuello y con otras joyuelas que tenía en casa, y con deshacerme de algunas galas de soldado, más de dos mil ducados, que juntos con los dos mil y quinientos suyos, era suficiente cantidad

para retirarnos a vivir a una aldea de donde yo era natural y adonde tenía algunas raíces; hacienda tal que, sobrellevada con el dinero, vendiendo los frutos a su tiempo, nos podía dar una vida alegre y descansada.

»En resolución, aquella vez se concertó nuestro desposorio, y se dio traza cómo los dos hiciésemos información de solteros, y en los tres días de fiesta que vinieron luego juntos en una Pascua se hicieron las amonestaciones, y al cuarto día nos desposamos, hallándose presentes al desposorio dos amigos míos y un mancebo que ella dijo ser primo suyo, a quien yo me ofrecí por pariente con palabras de mucho comedimiento, como lo habían sido todas las que hasta entonces a mi nueva esposa había dado, con intención tan torcida y traidora que la quiero callar; porque, aunque estoy diciendo verdades, no son verdades de confesión, que no pueden dejar de decirse.

»Mudó mi criado el baúl de la posada a casa de mi mujer; encerré en él, delante della, mi magnífica cadena; mostréle otras tres o cuatro, si no tan grandes, de mejor hechura, con otros tres o cuatro cintillos de diversas suertes; hícele patentes mis galas y mis plumas, y entreguéle para el gasto de casa hasta cuatrocientos reales que tenía. Seis días gocé del pan de la boda, espaciándome en casa como el yerno ruin en la del suegro rico. Pisé ricas alhombros, ahajé sábanas de holanda, alumbréme con candeleros de plata; almorzaba en la cama, levantábame a las once, comía a las doce y a las dos sesteaba en el estrado; bailábanme doña Estefanía y la moza el agua delante. Mi mozo, que hasta allí le había conocido perezoso y lerdo, se había vuelto un corzo. El rato que doña Estefanía faltaba de mi lado, la habían de hallar en la cocina, toda solícita en ordenar guisados que me despertasen el gusto y me avivasen el apetito. Mis camisas, cuellos y pañuelos eran un nuevo Aranjuez de flores, según olían, bañados en la agua de ángeles y de azahar que sobre ellos se derramaba.

»Pasáronse estos días volando, como se pasan los años, que están debajo de la jurisdicción del tiempo; en los cuales días, por verme tan regalado y tan bien servido, iba mudando en buena la mala intención con que aquel negocio había comenzado. Al cabo de los cuales, una mañana, que aún estaba con doña Estefanía en la cama, llamaron con grandes golpes a la puerta de la calle. Asomóse la moza a la ventana y, quitándose al momento, dijo: "¡Oh, que sea ella la bien venida! ¿Han visto, y cómo ha venido más presto de lo que escribió el otro día?" "¿Quién es la que ha venido, moza?", le pregunté. "¿Quién?", respondió ella. "Es mi señora doña Clementa Bueso, y viene con ella el señor don Lope Meléndez de Almendárez, con otros dos criados, y Hortigosa, la dueña que llevó consigo". "¡Corre, moza, bien haya yo, y ábrelos!", dijo a este punto doña Estefanía; "y vos, señor, por mi amor que no os alborotéis ni respondáis por mí a ninguna cosa que contra mí oyéredes". "Pues ¿quién ha de deciros cosa que



os ofenda, y más estando yo delante? Decidme: ¿qué gente es ésta?, que me parece que os ha alborotado su venida". "No tengo lugar de responderos", dijo doña Estefanía: "sólo sabed que todo lo que aquí pasare es fingido y que tira a cierto designio y efeto que después sabréis".

»Y, aunque quisiera replicarle a esto, no me dio lugar la señora doña Clementa Bueso, que se entró en la sala, vestida de raso verde prensado, con muchos pasamanos de oro, capotillo de lo mismo y con la misma guarnición, sombrero con plumas verdes, blancas y encarnadas, y con rico cintillo de oro, y con un delgado velo cubierta la mitad del rostro. Entró con ella el señor don Lope Meléndez de Almendárez, no menos bizarro que ricamente vestido de camino. La dueña Hortigosa fue la primera que habló, diciendo: "¡Jesús! ¿Qué es esto? ¿Ocupado el lecho de mi señora doña Clementa, y más con ocupación de hombre? ¡Milagros veo hoy en esta casa! ¡A fe que se ha ido bien del pie a la mano la señora doña Estefanía, fiada en la amistad de mi señora!" "Yo te lo prometo, Hortigosa", replicó doña Clementa; "pero yo me tengo la culpa. ¡Que jamás escarmiente yo en tomar amigas que no lo saben ser si no es cuando les viene a cuento!" A todo lo cual respondió doña Estefanía: "No reciba vuesa merced pesadumbre, mi señora doña Clementa Bueso, y entienda que no sin misterio vee lo que vee en esta su casa: que, cuando lo sepa, yo sé que quedará desculpada y vuesa merced sin ninguna queja".

»En esto, ya me había puesto yo en calzas y en jubón; y, tomándome doña Estefanía por la mano, me llevó a otro aposento, y allí me dijo que aquella su amiga quería hacer una burla a aquel don Lope que venía con ella, con quien pretendía casarse; y que la burla era darle a entender que aquella casa y cuanto estaba en ella era todo suyo, de lo cual pensaba hacerle carta de dote; y que hecho el casamiento se le daba poco que se descubriese el engaño, fiada en el grande amor que el don Lope la tenía. "Y luego se me volverá lo que es mío, y no se le tendrá a mal a ella, ni a otra mujer alguna, de que procure buscar marido honrado, aunque sea por medio de cualquier embuste".

»Yo le respondí que era grande extremo de amistad el que quería hacer, y que primero se mirase bien en ello, porque después podría ser tener necesidad de valerse de la justicia para cobrar su hacienda. Pero ella me respondió con tantas razones, representando tantas obligaciones que la obligaban a servir a doña Clementa, aun en cosas de más importancia, que, mal de mi grado y con remordimiento de mi juicio, hube de condecender con el gusto de doña Estefanía, asegurándome ella que solos ocho días podía durar el embuste, los cuales estaríamos en casa de otra amiga suya. Acabámonos de vestir ella y yo, y luego, entrándose a despedir de la señora doña Clementa Bueso y del señor don Lope Meléndez de Almendárez, hizo a mi criado que se cargase el baúl y que la

siguiese, a quien yo también seguí, sin despedirme de nadie.

»Paró doña Estefanía en casa de una amiga suya, y, antes que entrásemos dentro, estuvo un buen espacio hablando con ella, al cabo del cual salió una moza y dijo que entrásemos yo y mi criado. Llevónos a un aposento estrecho, en el cual había dos camas tan juntas que parecían una, a causa que no había espacio que las dividiese, y las sábanas de entrambas se besaban. En efeto, allí estuvimos seis días, y en todos ellos no se pasó hora que no tuviésemos pendencia, diciéndole la necedad que había hecho en haber dejado su casa y su hacienda, aunque fuera a su misma madre.

»En esto, iba yo y venía por momentos; tanto, que la huésped de casa, un día que doña Estefanía dijo que iba a ver en qué término estaba su negocio, quiso saber de mí qué era la causa que me movía a reñir tanto con ella, y qué cosa había hecho que tanto se la afeaba, diciéndole que había sido necedad notoria más que amistad perfeta. Contéle todo el cuento, y cuando llegué a decir que me había casado con doña Estefanía, y la dote que trujo y la simplicidad que había hecho en dejar su casa y hacienda a doña Clementa, aunque fuese con tan sana intención como era alcanzar tan principal marido como don Lope, se comenzó a santiguar y a hacerse cruces con tanta priesa, y con tanto "¡Jesús, Jesús, de la mala hembra!", que me puso en gran turbación; y al fin me dijo: "Señor alférez, no sé si voy contra mi conciencia en descubriros lo que me parece que también la cargaría si lo callase; pero, a Dios y a ventura, sea lo que fuere, ¡viva la verdad y muera la mentira! La verdad es que doña Clementa Bueso es la verdadera señora de la casa y de la hacienda de que os hicieron la dote; la mentira es todo cuanto os ha dicho doña Estefanía: que ni ella tiene casa, ni hacienda, ni otro vestido del que trae puesto. Y el haber tenido lugar y espacio para hacer este embuste fue que doña Clementa fue a visitar unos parientes suyos a la ciudad de Plasencia, y de allí fue a tener novenas en Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, y en este entretanto dejó en su casa a doña Estefanía, que mirase por ella, porque, en efeto, son grandes amigas; aunque, bien mirado, no hay que culpar a la pobre señora, pues ha sabido granjear a una tal persona como la del señor alférez por marido".

»Aquí dio fin a su plática y yo di principio a desesperarme, y sin duda lo hiciera si tantico se descuidara el ángel de mi guarda en socorrerme, acudiendo a decirme en el corazón que mirase que era cristiano y que el mayor pecado de los hombres era el de la desesperación, por ser pecado de demonios. Esta consideración o buena inspiración me conhortó algo; pero no tanto que dejase de tomar mi capa y espada y salir a buscar a doña Estefanía, con prosupuesto de hacer en ella un ejemplar castigo; pero la suerte, que no sabré decir si mis cosas empeoraba o mejoraba, ordenó que en ninguna parte donde pensé hallar a doña

Estefanía la hallase. Fuime a San Llorente, encomendéme a Nuestra Señora, sentéme sobre un escaño, y con la pesadumbre me tomó un sueño tan pesado, que no despertara tan presto si no me despertaran.

»Fui lleno de pensamientos y congojas a casa de doña Clementa, y halléla con tanto reposo como señora de su casa; no le osé decir nada, porque estaba el señor don Lope delante. Volví en casa de mi huéspeda, que me dijo haber contado a doña Estefanía como yo sabía toda su maraña y embuste; y que ella le preguntó qué semblante había yo mostrado con tal nueva, y que le había respondido que muy malo, y que, a su parecer, había salido yo con mala intención y con peor determinación a buscarla. Díjome, finalmente, que doña Estefanía se había llevado cuanto en el baúl tenía, sin dejarme en él sino un solo vestido de camino. ¡Aquí fue ello! ¡Aquí me tuvo de nuevo Dios de su mano! Fui a ver mi baúl, y halléle abierto y como sepultura que esperaba cuerpo difunto, y a buena razón había de ser el mío, si yo tuviera entendimiento para saber sentir y ponderar tamaña desgracia.»

-Bien grande fue -dijo a esta sazón el licenciado Peralta-haberse llevado doña Estefanía tanta cadena y tanto cintillo; que, como suele decirse, todos los duelos..., etc.

-Ninguna pena me dio esa falta -respondió el alférez-, pues también podré decir: «Pensóse don Simueque que me engañaba con su hija la tuerta, y por el Dío, contrechó soy de un lado».

-No sé a qué propósito puede vuesa merced decir eso -respondió Peralta.

-El propósito es -respondió el alférez-de que toda aquella balumba y aparato de cadenas, cintillos y brincos podía valer hasta diez o doce escudos.

-Eso no es posible -replicó el licenciado-; porque la que el señor alférez traía al cuello mostraba pesar más de docientos ducados.

-Así fuera -respondió el alférez-si la verdad respondiera al parecer; pero como no es todo oro lo que reluce, las cadenas, cintillos, joyas y brincos, con sólo ser de alquimia se contentaron; pero estaban tan bien hechas, que sólo el toque o el fuego podía descubrir su malicia.

-Desa manera -dijo el licenciado-, entre vuesa merced y la señora doña Estefanía, pata es la traviesa.

-Y tan pata -respondió el alférez-, que podemos volver a barajar; pero el daño está, señor licenciado, en que ella se podrá deshacer de mis cadenas y yo no de la falsía de su término; y en efeto, mal que me pese, es prenda mía.

-Dad gracias a Dios, señor Campuzano -dijo Peralta-, que fue prenda con pies, y que se os ha ido, y que no estáis obligado a buscarla.

-Así es -respondió el alférez-; pero, con todo eso, sin que la busque, la hallo siempre en la imaginación, y, adondequiera que estoy, tengo mi afrenta presente.

-No sé qué responderos -dijo Peralta-, si no es traeros a la memoria dos versos de Petrarca, que dicen:

*Ché, qui prende diclete di far fiode;  
Non si de lamentar si altri l'ingana.*

Que responden en nuestro castellano: «Que el que tiene costumbre y gusto de engañar a otro no se debe quejar cuando es engañado».

-Yo no me quejo -respondió el alférez-, sino lastímome: que el culpado no por conocer su culpa deja de sentir la pena del castigo. Bien veo que quise engañar y fui engañado, porque me hirieron por mis propios filos; pero no puedo tener tan a raya el sentimiento que no me queje de mí mismo. «Finalmente, por venir a lo que hace más al caso a mi historia (que este nombre se le puede dar al cuento de mis sucesos), digo que supe que se había llevado a doña Estefanía el primo que dije que se halló a nuestros desposorios, el cual de luengos tiempos atrás era su amigo a todo ruego. No quise buscarla, por no hallar el mal que me faltaba. Mudé posada y mudé el pelo dentro de pocos días, porque comenzaron a pelárseme las cejas y las pestañas, y poco a poco me dejaron los cabellos, y antes de edad me hice calvo, dándome una enfermedad que llaman *lupicia*, y por otro nombre más claro, la *pelarela*. Halléme verdaderamente hecho pelón, porque ni tenía barbas que peinar ni dineros que gastar. Fue la enfermedad caminando al paso de mi necesidad, y, como la pobreza atropella a la honra, y a unos lleva a la horca y a otros al hospital, y a otros les hace entrar por las puertas de sus enemigos con ruegos y sumisiones (que es una de las mayores miserias que puede suceder a un desdichado), por no gastar en curarme los vestidos que me habían de cubrir y honrar en salud, llegado el tiempo en que se dan los sudores en el Hospital de la Resurrección, me entré en él, donde he tomado cuarenta sudores. Dicen que quedaré sano si me guardo: espada tengo, lo demás Dios lo remedie.»

Ofreciósele de nuevo el licenciado, admirándose de las cosas que le había contado.

-Pues de poco se maravilla vuesa merced, señor Peralta -dijo el alférez-; que otros sucesos me quedan por decir que exceden a toda imaginación, pues van fuera de todos los términos de naturaleza: no quiera vuesa merced saber más, sino que son de suerte que doy por bien empleadas todas mis desgracias, por haber sido parte de haberme puesto en el hospital, donde vi lo que ahora diré, que es lo que ahora ni nunca vuesa merced podrá creer, ni habrá persona en el mundo que lo crea.

Todos estos preámbulos y encarecimientos que el alférez hacía, antes de

contar lo que había visto, encendían el deseo de Peralta de manera que, con no menores encarecimientos, le pidió que luego luego le dijese las maravillas que le quedaban por decir.

-Ya vuesa merced habrá visto -dijo el alférez-dos perros que con dos lanternas andan de noche con los hermanos de la Capacha, alumbrándoles cuando piden limosna.

-Sí he visto -respondió Peralta.

-También habrá visto o oído vuesa merced -dijo el alférez-lo que dellos se cuenta: que si acaso echan limosna de las ventanas y se cae en el suelo, ellos acuden luego a alumbrar y a buscar lo que se cae, y se paran delante de las ventanas donde saben que tienen costumbre de darles limosna; y, con ir allí con tanta mansedumbre que más parecen corderos que perros, en el hospital son unos leones, guardando la casa con grande cuidado y vigilancia.

-Yo he oído decir -dijo Peralta-que todo es así, pero eso no me puede ni debe causar maravilla.

-Pues lo que ahora diré dellos es razón que la cause, y que, sin hacerse cruces, ni alegar imposibles ni dificultades, vuesa merced se acomode a creerlo; y es que yo oí y casi vi con mis ojos a estos dos perros, que el uno se llama Cipión y el otro Berganza, estar una noche, que fue la penúltima que acabé de sudar, echados detrás de mi cama en unas esteras viejas; y, a la mitad de aquella noche, estando a oscuras y desvelado, pensando en mis pasados sucesos y presentes desgracias, oí hablar allí junto, y estuve con atento oído escuchando, por ver si podía venir en conocimiento de los que hablaban y de lo que hablaban; y a poco rato vine a conocer, por lo que hablaban, los que hablaban, y eran los dos perros, Cipión y Berganza.

Apenas acabó de decir esto Campuzano, cuando, levantándose el licenciado, dijo:

-Vuesa merced quede mucho en buen hora, señor Campuzano, que hasta aquí estaba en duda si creería o no lo que de su casamiento me había contado; y esto que ahora me cuenta de que oyó hablar los perros me ha hecho declarar por la parte de no creelle ninguna cosa. Por amor de Dios, señor alférez, que no cuente estos disparates a persona alguna, si ya no fuere a quien sea tan su amigo como yo.

-No me tenga vuesa merced por tan ignorante -replicó Campuzano-que no entienda que, si no es por milagro, no pueden hablar los animales; que bien sé que si los tordos, picazas y papagayos hablan, no son sino las palabras que aprenden y toman de memoria, y por tener la lengua estos animales cómoda para poder pronunciarlas; mas no por esto pueden hablar y responder con discurso concertado, como estos perros hablaron; y así, muchas veces, después que los oí,

yo mismo no he querido dar crédito a mí mismo, y he querido tener por cosa soñada lo que realmente estando despierto, con todos mis cinco sentidos, tales cuales nuestro Señor fue servido dármelos, oí, escuché, noté y, finalmente, escribí, sin faltar palabra, por su concierto; de donde se puede tomar indicio bastante que mueva y persuada a creer esta verdad que digo. Las cosas de que trataron fueron grandes y diferentes, y más para ser tratadas por varones sabios que para ser dichas por bocas de perros. Así que, pues yo no las pude inventar de mí, a mi pesar y contra mi opinión, vengo a creer que no soñaba y que los perros hablaban.

-¡Cuerpo de mí! -replicó el licenciado-. ¡Si se nos ha vuelto el tiempo de Maricastaña, cuando hablaban las calabazas, o el de Isopo, cuando departía el gallo con la zorra y unos animales con otros!

-Uno dellos sería yo, y el mayor -replicó el alférez-, si creyese que ese tiempo ha vuelto; y aun también lo sería si dejase de creer lo que oí y lo que vi, y lo que me atreveré a jurar con juramento que obligue y aun fuerce, a que lo crea la misma incredulidad. Pero, puesto caso que me haya engañado, y que mi verdad sea sueño, y el porfiarla disparate, ¿no se holgará vuesa merced, señor Peralta, de ver escritas en un coloquio las cosas que estos perros, o sean quien fueren, hablaron?

-Como vuesa merced -replicó el licenciado- no se canse más en persuadirme que oyó hablar a los perros, de muy buena gana oiré ese coloquio, que por ser escrito y notado del buen ingenio del señor alférez, ya le juzgo por bueno.

-Pues hay en esto otra cosa -dijo el alférez-: que, como yo estaba tan atento y tenía delicado el juicio, delicada, sutil y desocupada la memoria (merced a las muchas pasas y almendras que había comido), todo lo tomé de coro; y, casi por las mismas palabras que había oído, lo escribí otro día, sin buscar colores retóricas para adornarlo, ni qué añadir ni quitar para hacerle gustoso. No fue una noche sola la plática, que fueron dos consecutivamente, aunque yo no tengo escrita más de una, que es la vida de Berganza; y la del compañero Cipión pienso escribir (que fue la que se contó la noche segunda) cuando viere, o que ésta se crea, o, a lo menos, no se desprecie. El coloquio traigo en el seno; púselo en forma de coloquio por ahorrar de *dijo Cipión, respondió Berganza*, que suele alargar la escritura.

Y, en diciendo esto, sacó del pecho un cartapacio y le puso en las manos del licenciado, el cual le tomó riyéndose, y como haciendo burla de todo lo que había oído y de lo que pensaba leer.

-Yo me recuesto -dijo el alférez- en esta silla en tanto que vuesa merced lee, si quiere, esos sueños o disparates, que no tienen otra cosa de bueno si no es el poderlos dejar cuando enfaden.

-Haga vuesa merced su gusto -dijo Peralta-, que yo con brevedad me despediré desta letura.

Recostóse el alférez, abrió el licenciado el cartapacio, y en el principio vio que estaba puesto este título:

### Novela del coloquio de los perros

El acabar el *Coloquio* el licenciado y el despertar el alférez fue todo a un tiempo; y el licenciado dijo:

-Aunque este coloquio sea fingido y nunca haya pasado, paréceme que está tan bien compuesto que puede el señor alférez pasar adelante con el segundo.

-Con ese parecer -respondió el alférez-me animaré y disporné a escribirle, sin ponerme más en disputas con vuesa merced si hablaron los perros o no.

A lo que dijo el licenciado:

-Señor alférez, no volvamos más a esa disputa. Yo alcanzo el artificio del *Coloquio* y la invención, y basta. Vámonos al Espolón a recrear los ojos del cuerpo, pues ya he recreado los del entendimiento.

-Vamos -dijo el alférez.

Y, con esto, se fueron.

## El coloquio de los perros

*NOVELA Y COLOQUIO QUE PASÓ ENTRE CIPIÓN Y BERGANZA,  
PERROS DEL HOSPITAL DE LA RESURECCIÓN,  
QUE ESTÁ EN LA CIUDAD DE VALLADOLID,  
FUERA DE LA PUERTA DEL CAMPO,  
A QUIEN COMÚNMENTE LLAMAN  
«LOS PERROS DE MAHUDES»*

CIPIÓN.- Berganza amigo, dejemos esta noche el Hospital en guarda de la confianza y retirémonos a esta soledad y entre estas esteras, donde podremos gozar sin ser sentidos desta no vista merced que el cielo en un mismo punto a los dos nos ha hecho.

BERGANZA.- Cipión hermano, óyote hablar y sé que te hablo, y no puedo creerlo, por parecerme que el hablar nosotros pasa de los términos de naturaleza.

CIPIÓN.- Así es la verdad, Berganza; y viene a ser mayor este milagro en que no solamente hablamos, sino en que hablamos con discurso, como si fuéramos capaces de razón, estando tan sin ella que la diferencia que hay del animal bruto al hombre es ser el hombre animal racional, y el bruto, irracional.

BERGANZA.- Todo lo que dices, Cipión, entiendo, y el decirlo tú y entenderlo yo me causa nueva admiración y nueva maravilla. Bien es verdad que, en el discurso de mi vida, diversas y muchas veces he oído decir grandes prerrogativas nuestras: tanto, que parece que algunos han querido sentir que tenemos un natural distinto, tan vivo y tan agudo en muchas cosas, que da indicios y señales de faltar poco para mostrar que tenemos un no sé qué de entendimiento capaz de discurso.

CIPIÓN.- Lo que yo he oído alabar y encarecer es nuestra mucha memoria, el agradecimiento y gran fidelidad nuestra; tanto, que nos suelen pintar por símbolo de la amistad; y así, habrás visto (si has mirado en ello) que en las sepulturas de alabastro, donde suelen estar las figuras de los que allí están enterrados, cuando son marido y mujer, ponen entre los dos, a los pies, una figura de perro, en señal



que se guardaron en la vida amistad y fidelidad inviolable.

BERGANZA.- Bien sé que ha habido perros tan agradecidos que se han arrojado con los cuerpos difuntos de sus amos en la misma sepultura. Otros han estado sobre las sepulturas donde estaban enterrados sus señores sin apartarse dellas, sin comer, hasta que se les acababa la vida. Sé también que, después del elefante, el perro tiene el primer lugar de parecer que tiene entendimiento; luego, el caballo, y el último, la jimia.

CIPIÓN.- Ansí es, pero bien confesarás que ni has visto ni oído decir jamás que haya hablado ningún elefante, perro, caballo o mona; por donde me doy a entender que este nuestro hablar tan de improviso cae debajo del número de aquellas cosas que llaman portentos, las cuales, cuando se muestran y parecen, tiene averiguado la experiencia que alguna calamidad grande amenaza a las gentes.

BERGANZA.- Desdicha manera, no haré yo mucho en tener por señal portentosa lo que oí decir los días pasados a un estudiante, pasando por Alcalá de Henares.

CIPIÓN.- ¿Qué le oíste decir?

BERGANZA.- Que de cinco mil estudiantes que cursaban aquel año en la Universidad, los dos mil oían Medicina.

CIPIÓN.- Pues, ¿qué vienes a inferir deso?

BERGANZA.- Infiero, o que estos dos mil médicos han de tener enfermos que curar (que sería harta plaga y mala ventura), o ellos se han de morir de hambre.

CIPIÓN.- Pero, sea lo que fuere, nosotros hablamos, sea portento o no; que lo que el cielo tiene ordenado que suceda, no hay diligencia ni sabiduría humana que lo pueda prevenir; y así, no hay para qué ponernos a disputar nosotros cómo o por qué hablamos; mejor será que este buen día, o buena noche, la metamos en nuestra casa; y, pues la tenemos tan buena en estas esteras y no sabemos cuánto durará esta nuestra ventura, sepamos aprovecharnos della y hablemos toda esta noche, sin dar lugar al sueño que nos impida este gusto, de mí por largos tiempos deseado.

BERGANZA.- Y aun de mí, que desde que tuve fuerzas para roer un hueso tuve deseo de hablar, para decir cosas que depositaba en la memoria; y allí, de antiguas y muchas, o se enmohecían o se me olvidaban. Empero, ahora, que tan sin pensarlo me veo enriquecido deste divino don de la habla, pienso gozarle y aprovecharme dél lo más que pudiere, dándome prisa a decir todo aquello que se me acordare, aunque sea atropellada y confusamente, porque no sé cuándo me volverán a pedir este bien, que por prestado tengo.

CIPIÓN.- Sea ésta la manera, Berganza amigo: que esta noche me cuentes tu vida y los trances por donde has venido al punto en que ahora te hallas, y si mañana en la noche estuviéremos con habla, yo te contaré la mía; porque mejor será gastar el tiempo en contar las propias que en procurar saber las ajenas vidas.

BERGANZA.- Siempre, Cipión, te he tenido por discreto y por amigo; y ahora más que nunca, pues como amigo quieres decirme tus sucesos y saber los míos, y como discreto has repartido el tiempo donde podamos manifestarlos. Pero advierte primero si nos oye alguno.

CIPIÓN.- Ninguno, a lo que creo, puesto que aquí cerca está un soldado tomando sudores; pero en esta sazón más estará para dormir que para ponerse a escuchar a nadie.

BERGANZA.- Pues si puedo hablar con ese seguro, escucha; y si te cansare lo que te fuere diciendo, o me reprehende o manda que calle.

CIPIÓN.- Habla hasta que amanezca, o hasta que seamos sentidos; que yo te escucharé de muy buena gana, sin impedirte sino cuando viere ser necesario.

BERGANZA.- «Paréceme que la primera vez que vi el sol fue en Sevilla y en su Matadero, que está fuera de la Puerta de la Carne; por donde imaginara (si no fuera por lo que después te diré) que mis padres debieron de ser alanos de aquellos que crían los ministros de aquella confusión, a quien llaman jiferos. El primero que conocí por amo fue uno llamado Nicolás el Romo, mozo robusto, doblado y colérico, como lo son todos aquellos que ejercitan la jifería. Este tal Nicolás me enseñaba a mí y a otros cachorros a que, en compañía de alanos viejos, arremetiésemos a los toros y les hiciésemos presa de las orejas. Con mucha facilidad salí un águila en esto.»

CIPIÓN.- No me maravillo, Berganza; que, como el hacer mal viene de

natural cosecha, fácilmente se aprende el hacerle.

BERGANZA.- ¿Qué te diría, Cipión hermano, de lo que vi en aquel Matadero y de las cosas exorbitantes que en él pasan? Primero, has de presuponer que todos cuantos en él trabajan, desde el menor hasta el mayor, es gente ancha de conciencia, desalmada, sin temer al Rey ni a su justicia; los más, amancebados; son aves de rapiña carniceras: mantiéñense ellos y sus amigas de lo que hurtan. Todas las mañanas que son días de carne, antes que amanezca, están en el Matadero gran cantidad de mujercillas y muchachos, todos con talegas, que, viniendo vacías, vuelven llenas de pedazos de carne, y las criadas con criadillas y lomos medio enteros. No hay res alguna que se mate de quien no lleve esta gente diezmos y primicias de lo más sabroso y bien parado. Y, como en Sevilla no hay obligado de la carne, cada uno puede traer la que quisiere; y la que primero se mata, o es la mejor, o la de más baja postura, y con este concierto hay siempre mucha abundancia. Los dueños se encomiendan a esta buena gente que he dicho, no para que no les hurten (que esto es imposible), sino para que se moderen en las tajadas y socaliñas que hacen en las reses muertas, que las escamondan y podan como si fuesen sauces o parras. Pero ninguna cosa me admiraba más ni me parecía peor que el ver que estos jiferos con la misma facilidad matan a un hombre que a una vaca; por quítame allá esa paja, a dos por tres meten un cuchillo de cachas amarillas por la barriga de una persona, como si acocotasen un toro. Por maravilla se pasa día sin pendencias y sin heridas, y a veces sin muertes; todos se pican de valientes, y aun tienen sus puntas de rufianes; no hay ninguno que no tenga su ángel de guarda en la plaza de San Francisco, granjeado con lomos y lenguas de vaca. Finalmente, oí decir a un hombre discreto que tres cosas tenía el Rey por ganar en Sevilla: la calle de la Caza, la Costanilla y el Matadero.

CIPIÓN.- Si en contar las condiciones de los amos que has tenido y las faltas de sus oficios te has de estar, amigo Berganza, tanto como esta vez, menester será pedir al cielo nos conceda la habla siquiera por un año, y aun temo que, al paso que llevas, no llegarás a la mitad de tu historia. Y quírote advertir de una cosa, de la cual verás la experiencia cuando te cuente los sucesos de mi vida; y es que los cuentos unos encierran y tienen la gracia en ellos mismos, otros en el modo de contarlos (quiero decir que algunos hay que, aunque se cuenten sin preámbulos y ornamentos de palabras, dan contento); otros hay que es menester vestirlos de palabras, y con demostraciones del rostro y de las manos, y con mudar la voz, se hacen algo de nonada, y de flojos y desmayados se vuelven agudos y gustosos; y no se te olvide este advertimiento, para aprovecharte dél en

lo que te queda por decir.

BERGANZA.- Yo lo haré así, si pudiere y si me da lugar la grande tentación que tengo de hablar; aunque me parece que con grandísima dificultad me podré ir a la mano.

CIPIÓN.- Vete a la lengua, que en ella consisten los mayores daños de la humana vida.

BERGANZA.- «Digo, pues, que mi amo me enseñó a llevar una espuerta en la boca y a defenderla de quien quitármela quisiese. Enseñóme también la casa de su amiga, y con esto se escusó la venida de su criada al Matadero, porque yo le llevaba las madrugadas lo que él había hurtado las noches. Y un día que, entre dos luces, iba yo diligente a llevarle la porción, oí que me llamaban por mi nombre desde una ventana; alcé los ojos y vi una moza hermosa en extremo; detúveme un poco, y ella bajó a la puerta de la calle, y me tornó a llamar. Lleguéme a ella, como si fuera a ver lo que me quería, que no fue otra cosa que quitarme lo que llevaba en la cesta y ponerme en su lugar un chapín viejo. Entonces dije entre mí: "La carne se ha ido a la carne". Díjome la moza, en habiéndome quitado la carne: "Andad Gavilán, o como os llamáis, y decid a Nicolás el Romo, vuestro amo, que no se fíe de animales, y que del lobo un pelo, y ése de la espuerta". Bien pudiera yo volver a quitar lo que me quitó, pero no quise, por no poner mi boca jifera y sucia en aquellas manos limpias y blancas.»

CIPIÓN.- Hiciste muy bien, por ser prerrogativa de la hermosura que siempre se le tenga respeto.

BERGANZA.- «Así lo hice yo; y así, me volví a mi amo sin la porción y con el chapín. Parecióle que volví presto, vio el chapín, imaginó la burla, sacó uno de cachas y tiróme una puñalada que, a no desviarme, nunca tú oyeras ahora este cuento, ni aun otros muchos que pienso contarte. Puse pies en polvorosa, y, tomando el camino en las manos y en los pies, por detrás de San Bernardo, me fui por aquellos campos de Dios adonde la fortuna quisiese llevarme.

»Aquella noche dormí al cielo abierto, y otro día me deparó la suerte un hato o rebaño de ovejas y carneros. Así como le vi, creí que había hallado en él el centro de mi reposo, pareciéndome ser propio y natural oficio de los perros guardar ganado, que es obra donde se encierra una virtud grande, como es amparar y defender de los poderosos y soberbios los humildes y los que poco pueden. Apenas me hubo visto uno de tres pastores que el ganado guardaban,

cuando diciendo "¡To, to!" me llamó; y yo, que otra cosa no deseaba, me llegué a él bajando la cabeza y meneando la cola. Trújome la mano por el lomo, abríome la boca, escupióme en ella, miróme las presas, conoció mi edad, y dijo a otros pastores que yo tenía todas las señales de ser perro de casta. Llegó a este instante el señor del ganado sobre una yegua rucia a la jineta, con lanza y adarga: que más parecía atajador de la costa que señor de ganado. Preguntó el pastor: "¿Qué perro es éste, que tiene señales de ser bueno?" "Bien lo puede vuesa merced creer -respondió el pastor-, que yo le he cotejado bien y no hay señal en él que no muestre y prometa que ha de ser un gran perro. Ahora se llegó aquí y no sé cuyo sea, aunque sé que no es de los rebaños de la redonda". "Pues así es -respondió el señor-, ponle luego el collar de Leoncillo, el perro que se murió, y denle la ración que a los demás, y acarícialo, porque tome cariño al hato y se quede en él". En diciendo esto, se fue; y el pastor me puso luego al cuello unas carlancas llenas de puntas de acero, habiéndome dado primero en un dornajo gran cantidad de sopas en leche. Y, asimismo, me puso nombre, y me llamó Barcino.

»Vime harto y contento con el segundo amo y con el nuevo oficio; mostréme solícito y diligente en la guarda del rebaño, sin apartarme dél sino las siestas, que me iba a pasarlas o ya a la sombra de algún árbol, o de algún ribazo o peña, o a la de alguna mata, a la margen de algún arroyo de los muchos que por allí corrían. Y estas horas de mi sosiego no las pasaba ociosas, porque en ellas ocupaba la memoria en acordarme de muchas cosas, especialmente en la vida que había tenido en el Matadero, y en la que tenía mi amo y todos los como él, que están sujetos a cumplir los gustos impertinentes de sus amigos.»

¡Oh, qué de cosas te pudiera decir ahora de las que aprendí en la escuela de aquella jifera dama de mi amo! Pero habrélas de callar, porque no me tengas por largo y por murmurador.

CIPIÓN.- Por haber oído decir que dijo un gran poeta de los antiguos que era difícil cosa el no escribir sátiras, consentiré que murmures un poco de luz y no de sangre; quiero decir que señales y no hieras ni des mate a ninguno en cosa señalada: que no es buena la murmuración, aunque haga reír a muchos, si mata a uno; y si puedes agradar sin ella, te tendré por muy discreto.

BERGANZA.- Yo tomaré tu consejo, y esperaré con gran deseo que llegue el tiempo en que me cuentes tus sucesos; que de quien tan bien sabe conocer y enmendar los defetos que tengo en contar los míos, bien se puede esperar que contará los suyos de manera que enseñen y deleiten a un mismo punto.

«Pero, anudando el roto hilo de mi cuento, digo que en aquel silencio y

soledad de mis siestas, entre otras cosas, consideraba que no debía de ser verdad lo que había oído contar de la vida de los pastores; a lo menos, de aquellos que la dama de mi amo leía en unos libros cuando yo iba a su casa, que todos trataban de pastores y pastoras, diciendo que se les pasaba toda la vida cantando y tañendo con gaitas, zampoñas, rabeles y chirumbelas, y con otros instrumentos extraordinarios. Deteníame a oírla leer, y leía cómo el pastor de Anfriso cantaba estremada y divinamente, alabando a la sin par Belisarda, sin haber en todos los montes de Arcadia árbol en cuyo tronco no se hubiese sentado a cantar, desde que salía el sol en los brazos de la Aurora hasta que se ponía en los de Tetis; y aun después de haber tendido la negra noche por la faz de la tierra sus negras y oscuras alas, él no cesaba de sus bien cantadas y mejor lloradas quejas. No se le quedaba entre renglones el pastor Elicio, más enamorado que atrevido, de quien decía que, sin atender a sus amores ni a su ganado, se entraba en los cuidados ajenos. Decía también que el gran pastor de Fílida, único pintor de un retrato, había sido más confiado que dichoso. De los desmayos de Sireno y arrepentimiento de Diana decía que daba gracias a Dios y a la sabia Felicia, que con su agua encantada deshizo aquella máquina de enredos y aclaró aquel laberinto de dificultades. Acordábame de otros muchos libros que deste jaez la había oído leer, pero no eran dignos de traerlos a la memoria.»

CIPIÓN.- Aprovechándote vas, Berganza, de mi aviso: murmura, pica y pasa, y sea tu intención limpia, aunque la lengua no lo parezca.

BERGANZA.- En estas materias nunca tropieza la lengua si no cae primero la intención; pero si acaso por descuido o por malicia murmurare, responderé a quien me reprehendiere lo que respondió Mauleón, poeta tonto y académico de burla de la Academia de los Imitadores, a uno que le preguntó que qué quería decir *Deum de Deo*; y respondió que «dé donde diere».

CIPIÓN.- Esa fue respuesta de un simple; pero tú, si eres discreto o lo quieres ser, nunca has de decir cosa de que debas dar disculpa. Di adelante.

BERGANZA.- «Digo que todos los pensamientos que he dicho, y muchos más, me causaron ver los diferentes tratos y ejercicios que mis pastores, y todos los demás de aquella marina, tenían de aquellos que había oído leer que tenían los pastores de los libros; porque si los míos cantaban, no eran canciones acordadas y bien compuestas, sino un "Cata el lobo dó va, Juanica" y otras cosas semejantes; y esto no al son de chirumbelas, rabeles o gaitas, sino al que hacía el dar un cayado con otro o al de algunas tejuelas puestas entre los dedos; y no con

voces delicadas, sonoras y admirables, sino con voces roncadas, que, solas o juntas, parecía, no que cantaban, sino que gritaban o gruñían. Lo más del día se les pasaba espulgándose o remendando sus abarcas; ni entre ellos se nombraban Amarilis, Fíldas, Galateas y Dianas, ni había Lisardos, Lausos, Jacintos ni Riselos; todos eran Antones, Domingos, Pablos o Llorentes; por donde vine a entender lo que pienso que deben de creer todos: que todos aquellos libros son cosas soñadas y bien escritas para entretenimiento de los ociosos, y no verdad alguna; que, a serlo, entre mis pastores hubiera alguna reliquia de aquella felicísima vida, y de aquellos amenos prados, espaciosas selvas, sagrados montes, hermosos jardines, arroyos claros y cristalinas fuentes, y de aquellos tan honestos cuanto bien declarados requiebros, y de aquel desmayarse aquí el pastor, allí la pastora, acullá resonar la zampoña del uno, acá el caramillo del otro.»

CIPIÓN.- Basta, Berganza; vuelve a tu senda y camina.

BERGANZA.- Agradézcotelo, Cipión amigo; porque si no me avisaras, de manera se me iba calentando la boca, que no parara hasta pintarte un libro entero destos que me tenían engañado; pero tiempo vendrá en que lo diga todo con mejores razones y con mejor discurso que ahora.

CIPIÓN.- Mírate a los pies y desharás la rueda, Berganza; quiero decir que mires que eres un animal que carece de razón, y si ahora muestras tener alguna, ya hemos averiguado entre los dos ser cosa sobrenatural y jamás vista.

BERGANZA.- Eso fuera ansí si yo estuviera en mi primera ignorancia; mas ahora que me ha venido a la memoria lo que te había de haber dicho al principio de nuestra plática, no sólo no me maravillo de lo que hablo, pero espántome de lo que dejo de hablar.

CIPIÓN.- Pues ¿ahora no puedes decir lo que ahora se te acuerda?

BERGANZA.- Es una cierta historia que me pasó con una grande hechicera, discípula de la Camacha de Montilla.

CIPIÓN.- Digo que me la cuentes antes que pases más adelante en el cuento de tu vida.

BERGANZA.- Eso no haré yo, por cierto, hasta su tiempo: ten paciencia y

escucha por su orden mis sucesos, que así te darán más gusto, si ya no te fatiga querer saber los medios antes de los principios.

CIPIÓN.- Sé breve, y cuenta lo que quisieres y como quisieres.

BERGANZA.- «Digo, pues, que yo me hallaba bien con el oficio de guardar ganado, por parecerme que comía el pan de mi sudor y trabajo, y que la ociosidad, raíz y madre de todos los vicios, no tenía que ver conmigo, a causa que si los días holgaba, las noches no dormía, dándonos asaltos a menudo y tocándonos a arma los lobos; y, apenas me habían dicho los pastores "¡al lobo, Barcino!", cuando acudía, primero que los otros perros, a la parte que me señalaban que estaba el lobo: corría los valles, escudriñaba los montes, desentrañaba las selvas, saltaba barrancos, cruzaba caminos, y a la mañana volvía al hato, sin haber hallado lobo ni rastro dél, anhelando, cansado, hecho pedazos y los pies abiertos de los garranchos; y hallaba en el hato, o ya una oveja muerta, o un carnero degollado y medio comido del lobo. Desesperábame de ver de cuán poco servía mi mucho cuidado y diligencia. Venía el señor del ganado; salían los pastores a recibirle con las pieles de la res muerta; culpaba a los pastores por negligentes, y mandaba castigar a los perros por perezosos: llovían sobre nosotros palos, y sobre ellos reprehensiones; y así, viéndome un día castigado sin culpa, y que mi cuidado, ligereza y braveza no eran de provecho para coger el lobo, determiné de mudar estilo, no desviándome a buscarle, como tenía de costumbre, lejos del rebaño, sino estarme junto a él; que, pues el lobo allí venía, allí sería más cierta la presa.

»Cada semana nos tocaban a rebato, y en una escurísima noche tuve yo vista para ver los lobos, de quien era imposible que el ganado se guardase. Agachéme detrás de una mata, pasaron los perros, mis compañeros, adelante, y desde allí oteé, y vi que dos pastores asieron de un carnero de los mejores del aprisco, y le mataron de manera que verdaderamente pareció a la mañana que había sido su verdugo el lobo. Pasméme, quedé suspenso cuando vi que los pastores eran los lobos y que despedazaban el ganado los mismos que le habían de guardar. Al punto, hacían saber a su amo la presa del lobo, dábanle el pellejo y parte de la carne, y comíanse ellos lo más y lo mejor. Volvía a reñirles el señor, y volvía también el castigo de los perros. No había lobos, menguaba el rebaño; quisiera yo descubriello, hallábame mudo. Todo lo cual me traía lleno de admiración y de congoja. "¡Válame Dios! -decía entre mí-, ¿quién podrá remediar esta maldad? ¿Quién será poderoso a dar a entender que la defensa ofende, que las centinelas duermen, que la confianza roba y el que os guarda os mata?"»



CIPIÓN.- Y decías muy bien, Berganza, porque no hay mayor ni más sutil ladrón que el doméstico, y así, mueren muchos más de los confiados que de los recatados; pero el daño está en que es imposible que puedan pasar bien las gentes en el mundo si no se fía y se confía. Mas quédese aquí esto, que no quiero que parezcamos predicadores. Pasa adelante.

BERGANZA.- «Paso adelante, y digo que determiné dejar aquel oficio, aunque parecía tan bueno, y escoger otro donde por hacerle bien, ya que no fuese remunerado, no fuese castigado. Volvíme a Sevilla, y entré a servir a un mercader muy rico.»

CIPIÓN.- ¿Qué modo tenías para entrar con amo? Porque, según lo que se usa, con gran dificultad el día de hoy halla un hombre de bien señor a quien servir. Muy diferentes son los señores de la tierra del Señor del cielo: aquéllos, para recibir un criado, primero le espulgan el linaje, examinan la habilidad, le marcan la apostura, y aun quieren saber los vestidos que tiene; pero, para entrar a servir a Dios, el más pobre es más rico; el más humilde, de mejor linaje; y, con sólo que se disponga con limpieza de corazón a querer servirle, luego le manda poner en el libro de sus gajes, señalándoselos tan aventajados que, de muchos y de grandes, apenas pueden caber en su deseo.

BERGANZA.- Todo eso es predicar, Cipión amigo.

CIPIÓN.- Así me lo parece a mí; y así, callo.

BERGANZA.- A lo que me preguntaste del orden que tenía para entrar con amo, digo que ya tú sabes que la humildad es la basa y fundamento de todas virtudes, y que sin ella no hay alguna que lo sea. Ella allana inconvenientes, vence dificultades, y es un medio que siempre a gloriosos fines nos conduce; de los enemigos hace amigos, templada la cólera de los airados y menoscaba la arrogancia de los soberbios; es madre de la modestia y hermana de la templanza; en fin, con ella no pueden atravesar triunfo que les sea de provecho los vicios, porque en su blandura y mansedumbre se embotan y despuntan las flechas de los pecados.

«Désta, pues, me aprovechaba yo cuando quería entrar a servir en alguna casa, habiendo primero considerado y mirado muy bien ser casa que pudiese mantener y donde pudiese entrar un perro grande. Luego arrimábame a la puerta, y cuando, a mi parecer, entraba algún forastero, le ladraba, y cuando venía el señor bajaba la cabeza y, moviendo la cola, me iba a él, y con la lengua le limpiaba los

zapatos. Si me echaban a palos, sufríalos, y con la misma mansedumbre volvía a hacer halagos al que me apaleaba, que ninguno secundaba, viendo mi porfía y mi noble término. Desta manera, a dos porfías me quedaba en casa: servía bien, queríanme luego bien, y nadie me despidió, si no era que yo me despidiese, o, por mejor decir, me fuese; y tal vez hallé amo que éste fuera el día que yo estuviera en su casa, si la contraria suerte no me hubiera perseguido.»

CIPIÓN.- De la misma manera que has contado entraba yo con los amos que tuve, y parece que nos leímos los pensamientos.

BERGANZA.- Como en esas cosas nos hemos encontrado, si no me engaño, y yo te las diré a su tiempo, como tengo prometido; y ahora escucha lo que me sucedió después que dejé el ganado en poder de aquellos perdidos.

«Volvíme a Sevilla, como dije, que es amparo de pobres y refugio de desechados, que en su grandeza no sólo caben los pequeños, pero no se echan de ver los grandes. Arriméme a la puerta de una gran casa de un mercader, hice mis acostumbradas diligencias, y a pocos lances me quedé en ella. Recibiéronme para tenerme atado detrás de la puerta de día y suelto de noche; servía con gran cuidado y diligencia; ladraba a los forasteros y gruñía a los que no eran muy conocidos; no dormía de noche, visitando los corrales, subiendo a los terrados, hecho universal centinela de la mía y de las casas ajenas. Agradóse tanto mi amo de mi buen servicio, que mandó que me tratasen bien y me diesen ración de pan y los huesos que se levantasen o arrojasen de su mesa, con las sobras de la cocina, a lo que yo me mostraba agradecido, dando infinitos saltos cuando veía a mi amo, especialmente cuando venía de fuera; que eran tantas las muestras de regocijo que daba y tantos los saltos, que mi amo ordenó que me desatasen y me dejasen andar suelto de día y de noche. Como me vi suelto, corrí a él, rodeéle todo, sin osar llegarle con las manos, acordándome de la fábula de Isopo, cuando aquel asno, tan asno que quiso hacer a su señor las mismas caricias que le hacía una perrilla regalada suya, que le granjearon ser molido a palos. Parecióme que en esta fábula se nos dio a entender que las gracias y donaires de algunos no están bien en otros.»

Apode el truhán, juegue de manos y voltee el histrión, rebuzne el pícaro, imite el canto de los pájaros y los diversos gestos y acciones de los animales y los hombres el hombre bajo que se hubiere dado a ello, y no lo quiera hacer el hombre principal, a quien ninguna habilidad destas le puede dar crédito ni nombre honroso.

CIPIÓN.- Basta; adelante, Berganza, que ya estás entendido.

BERGANZA.- ¡Ojalá que como tú me entiendes me entendiesen aquellos por quien lo digo; que no sé qué tengo de buen natural, que me pesa infinito cuando veo que un caballero se hace chocarrero y se precia que sabe jugar los cubiletes y las agallas, y que no hay quien como él sepa bailar la chacona! Un caballero conozco yo que se alababa que, a ruegos de un sacristán, había cortado de papel treinta y dos florones para poner en un monumento sobre paños negros, y destas cortaduras hizo tanto caudal, que así llevaba a sus amigos a verlas como si los llevara a ver las banderas y despojos de enemigos que sobre la sepultura de sus padres y abuelos estaban puestas.

«Este mercader, pues, tenía dos hijos, el uno de doce y el otro de hasta catorce años, los cuales estudiaban gramática en el estudio de la Compañía de Jesús; iban con autoridad, con ayo y con pajes, que les llevaban los libros y aquel que llaman *vademécum*. El verlos ir con tanto aparato, en sillas si hacía sol, en coche si llovía, me hizo considerar y reparar en la mucha llaneza con que su padre iba a la Lonja a negociar sus negocios, porque no llevaba otro criado que un negro, y algunas veces se desmandaba a ir en un machuelo aun no bien aderezado.»

CIPIÓN.- Has de saber, Berganza, que es costumbre y condición de los mercaderes de Sevilla, y aun de las otras ciudades, mostrar su autoridad y riqueza, no en sus personas, sino en las de sus hijos; porque los mercaderes son mayores en su sombra que en sí mismos. Y, como ellos por maravilla atienden a otra cosa que a sus tratos y contratos, trátanse modestamente; y, como la ambición y la riqueza muere por manifestarse, revienta por sus hijos, y así los tratan y autorizan como si fuesen hijos de algún príncipe; y algunos hay que les procuran títulos, y ponerles en el pecho la marca que tanto distingue la gente principal de la plebeya.

BERGANZA.- Ambición es, pero ambición generosa, la de aquel que pretende mejorar su estado sin perjuicio de tercero.

CIPIÓN.- Pocas o ninguna vez se cumple con la ambición que no sea con daño de tercero.

BERGANZA.- Ya hemos dicho que no hemos de murmurar.

CIPIÓN.- Sí, que yo no murmuro de nadie.

BERGANZA.- Ahora acabo de confirmar por verdad lo que muchas veces he

oído decir. Acaba un maldiciente murmurador de echar a perder diez linajes y de caluniar veinte buenos, y si alguno le reprehende por lo que ha dicho, responde que él no ha dicho nada, y que si ha dicho algo, no lo ha dicho por tanto, y que si pensara que alguno se había de agraviar, no lo dijera. A la fe, Cipión, mucho ha de saber, y muy sobre los estribos ha de andar el que quisiere sustentar dos horas de conversación sin tocar los límites de la murmuración; porque yo veo en mí que, con ser un animal, como soy, a cuatro razones que digo, me acuden palabras a la lengua como mosquitos al vino, y todas maliciosas y murmurantes; por lo cual vuelvo a decir lo que otra vez he dicho: que el hacer y decir mal lo heredamos de nuestros primeros padres y lo mamamos en la leche. Vese claro en que, apenas ha sacado el niño el brazo de las fajas, cuando levanta la mano con muestras de querer vengarse de quien, a su parecer, le ofende; y casi la primera palabra articulada que habla es llamar puta a su ama o a su madre.

CIPIÓN.- Así es verdad, y yo confieso mi yerro y quiero que me le perdonen, pues te he perdonado tantos. Echemos pelillos a la mar, como dicen los muchachos, y no murmuremos de aquí adelante; y sigue tu cuento, que le dejaste en la autoridad con que los hijos del mercader tu amo iban al estudio de la Compañía de Jesús.

BERGANZA.- A Él me encomiendo en todo acontecimiento; y, aunque el dejar de murmurar lo tengo por dificultoso, pienso usar de un remedio que oí decir que usaba un gran jurador, el cual, arrepentido de su mala costumbre, cada vez que después de su arrepentimiento juraba, se daba un pellizco en el brazo, o besaba la tierra, en pena de su culpa; pero, con todo esto, juraba. Así yo, cada vez que fuere contra el precepto que me has dado de que no murmure y contra la intención que tengo de no murmurar, me morderé el pico de la lengua de modo que me duela y me acuerde de mi culpa para no volver a ella.

CIPIÓN.- Tal es ese remedio, que si usas dél espero que te has de morder tantas veces que has de quedar sin lengua, y así, quedarás imposibilitado de murmurar.

BERGANZA.- A lo menos, yo haré de mi parte mis diligencias, y supla las faltas el cielo.

«Y así, digo que los hijos de mi amo se dejaron un día un cartapacio en el patio, donde yo a la sazón estaba; y, como estaba enseñado a llevar la esportilla del jifero mi amo, así del *vademécum* y fuime tras ellos, con intención de no soltalle hasta el estudio. Sucedióme todo como lo deseaba: que mis amos, que

me vieron venir con el *vademécum* en la boca, asido sotilmente de las cintas, mandaron a un paje me le quitase; mas yo no lo consentí ni le solté hasta que entré en el aula con él, cosa que causó risa a todos los estudiantes. Lleguéme al mayor de mis amos, y, a mi parecer, con mucha crianza se le puse en las manos, y quedéme sentado en cuclillas a la puerta del aula, mirando de hito en hito al maestro que en la cátedra leía. No sé qué tiene la virtud, que, con alcanzárseme a mí tan poco o nada della, luego recibí gusto de ver el amor, el término, la solicitud y la industria con que aquellos benditos padres y maestros enseñaban a aquellos niños, enderezando las tiernas varas de su juventud, porque no torciesen ni tomasen mal siniestro en el camino de la virtud, que juntamente con las letras les mostraban. Consideraba cómo los reñían con suavidad, los castigaban con misericordia, los animaban con ejemplos, los incitaban con premios y los sobrellevaban con cordura; y, finalmente, cómo les pintaban la fealdad y horror de los vicios y les dibujaban la hermosura de las virtudes, para que, aborrecidos ellos y amadas ellas, consiguiesen el fin para que fueron criados.»

CIPIÓN.- Muy bien dices, Berganza; porque yo he oído decir desa bendita gente que para repúblicos del mundo no los hay tan prudentes en todo él, y para guidores y adalides del camino del cielo, pocos les llegan. Son espejos donde se mira la honestidad, la católica dotrina, la singular prudencia, y, finalmente, la humildad profunda, basa sobre quien se levanta todo el edificio de la bienaventuranza.

BERGANZA.- Todo es así como lo dices.

«Y, siguiendo mi historia, digo que mis amos gustaron de que les llevase siempre el *vademécum*, lo que hice de muy buena voluntad; con lo cual tenía una vida de rey, y aun mejor, porque era descansada, a causa que los estudiantes dieron en burlarse conmigo, y domesticquéme con ellos de tal manera, que me metían la mano en la boca y los más chiquillos subían sobre mí. Arrojan los bonetes o sombreros, y yo se los volvía a la mano limpiamente y con muestras de grande regocijo. Dieron en darme de comer cuanto ellos podían, y gustaban de ver que, cuando me daban nueces o avellanas, las partía como mona, dejando las cáscaras y comiendo lo tierno. Tal hubo que, por hacer prueba de mi habilidad, me trujo en un pañuelo gran cantidad de ensalada, la cual comí como si fuera persona. Era tiempo de invierno, cuando campean en Sevilla los molletes y mantequillas, de quien era tan bien servido, que más de dos Antonios se empeñaron o vendieron para que yo almorzase. Finalmente, yo pasaba una vida de estudiante sin hambre y sin sarna, que es lo más que se puede encarecer para decir que era buena; porque si la sarna y la hambre no fuesen tan unas con los

estudiantes, en las vidas no habría otra de más gusto y pasatiempo, porque corren parejas en ella la virtud y el gusto, y se pasa la mocedad aprendiendo y holgándose.

»Desta gloria y desta quietud me vino a quitar una señora que, a mi parecer, llaman por ahí razón de estado; que, cuando con ella se cumple, se ha de descumplir con otras razones muchas. Es el caso que aquellos señores maestros les pareció que la media hora que hay de lición a lición la ocupaban los estudiantes, no en repasar las liciones, sino en holgarse conmigo; y así, ordenaron a mis amos que no me llevasen más al estudio. Obedecieron, volviéronme a casa y a la antigua guarda de la puerta, y, sin acordarse señor el viejo de la merced que me había hecho de que de día y de noche anduviese suelto, volví a entregar el cuello a la cadena y el cuerpo a una esterilla que detrás de la puerta me pusieron.»

¡Ay, amigo Cipión, si supieses cuán dura cosa es de sufrir el pasar de un estado felice a un desdichado! Mira: cuando las miserias y desdichas tienen larga la corriente y son continuas, o se acaban presto, con la muerte, o la continuación dellas hace un hábito y costumbre en padecellas, que suele en su mayor rigor servir de alivio; mas, cuando de la suerte desdichada y calamitosa, sin pensarlo y de improviso, se sale a gozar de otra suerte próspera, venturosa y alegre, y de allí a poco se vuelve a padecer la suerte primera y a los primeros trabajos y desdichas, es un dolor tan riguroso que si no acaba la vida, es por atormentarla más viviendo.

«Digo, en fin, que volví a mi ración perruna y a los huesos que una negra de casa me arrojaba, y aun éstos me deztaban dos gatos romanos; que, como sueltos y ligeros, érales fácil quitarme lo que no caía debajo del distrito que alcanzaba mi cadena.»

Cipión hermano, así el cielo te conceda el bien que desees, que, sin que te enfades, me dejes ahora filosofar un poco; porque si dejase de decir las cosas que en este instante me han venido a la memoria de aquellas que entonces me ocurrieron, me parece que no sería mi historia cabal ni de fruto alguno.

CIPIÓN.- Advierte, Berganza, no sea tentación del demonio esa gana de filosofar que dices te ha venido, porque no tiene la murmuración mejor velo para paliar y encubrir su maldad disoluta que darse a entender el murmurador que todo cuanto dice son sentencias de filósofos, y que el decir mal es reprehensión y el descubrir los defetos ajenos buen celo. Y no hay vida de ningún murmurante que, si la consideras y escudriñas, no la halles llena de vicios y de insolencias. Y debajo de saber esto, filosofea ahora cuanto quisieres.

BERGANZA.- Seguro puedes estar, Cipión, de que más murmure, porque así lo tengo prosupuesto.

«Es, pues, el caso, que como me estaba todo el día ocioso y la ociosidad sea madre de los pensamientos, di en repasar por la memoria algunos latines que me quedaron en ella de muchos que oí cuando fui con mis amos al estudio, con que, a mi parecer, me hallé algo más mejorado de entendimiento, y determiné, como si hablar supiera, aprovecharme dellos en las ocasiones que se me ofreciesen; pero en manera diferente de la que se suelen aprovechar algunos ignorantes.»

Hay algunos romancistas que en las conversaciones disparan de cuando en cuando con algún latín breve y compendioso, dando a entender a los que no lo entienden que son grandes latinos, y apenas saben declinar un nombre ni conjugar un verbo.

CIPIÓN.- Por menor daño tengo ése que el que hacen los que verdaderamente saben latín, de los cuales hay algunos tan imprudentes que, hablando con un zapatero o con un sastre, arrojan latines como agua.

BERGANZA.- Deso podremos inferir que tanto peca el que dice latines delante de quien los ignora, como el que los dice ignorándolos.

CIPIÓN.- Pues otra cosa puedes advertir, y es que hay algunos que no les escusa el ser latinos de ser asnos.

BERGANZA.- Pues ¿quién lo duda? La razón está clara, pues cuando en tiempo de los romanos hablaban todos latín, como lengua materna suya, algún majadero habría entre ellos, a quien no escusaría el hablar latín dejar de ser necio.

CIPIÓN.- Para saber callar en romance y hablar en latín, discreción es menester, hermano Berganza.

BERGANZA.- Así es, porque también se puede decir una necedad en latín como en romance, y yo he visto letrados tontos, y gramáticos pesados, y romancistas vareteados con sus listas de latín, que con mucha facilidad pueden enfadar al mundo, no una sino muchas veces.

CIPIÓN.- Dejemos esto, y comienza a decir tus filosofías.

BERGANZA.- Ya las he dicho: éstas son que acabo de decir.

CIPIÓN.- ¿Cuáles?

BERGANZA.- Estas de los latines y romances, que yo comencé y tú acabaste.

CIPIÓN.- ¿Al murmurar llamas filosofar? ¡Así va ello! Canoniza, canoniza, Berganza, a la maldita plaga de la murmuración, y dale el nombre que quisieres, que ella dará a nosotros el de cínicos, que quiere decir perros murmuradores; y por tu vida que calles ya y sigas tu historia.

BERGANZA.- ¿Cómo la tengo de seguir si callo?

CIPIÓN.- Quiero decir que la sigas de golpe, sin que la hagas que parezca pulpo, según la vas añadiendo colas.

BERGANZA.- Habla con propiedad: que no se llaman colas las del pulpo.

CIPIÓN.- Ése es el error que tuvo el que dijo que no era torpeza ni vicio nombrar las cosas por sus propios nombres, como si no fuese mejor, ya que sea forzoso nombrarlas, decirlas por circunloquios y rodeos que templen la asquerosidad que causa el oírlos por sus mismos nombres. Las honestas palabras dan indicio de la honestidad del que las pronuncia o las escribe.

BERGANZA.- Quiero creerte; «y digo que, no contenta mi fortuna de haberme quitado de mis estudios y de la vida que en ellos pasaba, tan regocijada y compuesta, y haberme puesto atraillado tras de una puerta, y de haber trocado la liberalidad de los estudiantes en la mezquinidad de la negra, ordenó de sobresaltarme en lo que ya por quietud y descanso tenía.»

Mira, Cipión, ten por cierto y averiguado, como yo lo tengo, que al desdichado las desdichas le buscan y le hallan, aunque se esconda en los últimos rincones de la tierra.

«Dígoles porque la negra de casa estaba enamorada de un negro, asimismo esclavo de casa, el cual negro dormía en el zaguán, que es entre la puerta de la calle y la de en medio, detrás de la cual yo estaba; y no se podían juntar sino de noche, y para esto habían hurtado o contrahecho las llaves; y así, las más de las noches bajaba la negra, y, tapándome la boca con algún pedazo de carne o queso, abría al negro, con quien se daba buen tiempo, facilitándole mi silencio, y a costa de muchas cosas que la negra hurtaba. Algunos días me estragaron la conciencia las dádivas de la negra, pareciéndome que sin ellas se me apretarían



las ijadas y daría de mastín en galgo. Pero, en efeto, llevado de mi buen natural, quise responder a lo que a mi amo debía, pues tiraba sus gajes y comía su pan, como lo deben hacer no sólo los perros honrados, a quien se les da renombre de agradecidos, sino todos aquellos que sirven.»

CIPIÓN.- Esto sí, Berganza, quiero que pase por filosofía, porque son razones que consisten en buena verdad y en buen entendimiento; y adelante y no hagas sogas, por no decir cola, de tu historia.

BERGANZA.- Primero te quiero rogar me digas, si es que lo sabes, qué quiere decir *filosofía*; que, aunque yo la nombro, no sé lo que es; sólo me doy a entender que es cosa buena.

CIPIÓN.- Con brevedad te la diré. Este nombre se compone de dos nombres griegos, que son *filos* y *sofía*; *filos* quiere decir amor, y *sofía*, la ciencia; así que *filosofía* significa «amor de la ciencia», y *filósofo*, «amador de la ciencia».

BERGANZA.- Mucho sabes, Cipión. ¿Quién diablos te enseñó a ti nombres griegos?

CIPIÓN.- Verdaderamente, Berganza, que eres simple, pues desto haces caso; porque éstas son cosas que las saben los niños de la escuela, y también hay quien presume saber la lengua griega sin saberla, como la latina ignorándola.

BERGANZA.- Eso es lo que yo digo, y quisiera que a estos tales los pusieran en una prensa, y a fuerza de vueltas les sacaran el jugo de lo que saben, porque no anduviesen engañando el mundo con el oropel de sus gregüescos rotos y sus latines falsos, como hacen los portugueses con los negros de Guinea.

CIPIÓN.- Ahora sí, Berganza, que te puedes morder la lengua, y tarazármela yo, porque todo cuanto decimos es murmurar.

BERGANZA.- Sí, que no estoy obligado a hacer lo que he oído decir que hizo uno llamado Corondas, tirio, el cual puso ley que ninguno entrase en el ayuntamiento de su ciudad con armas, so pena de la vida. Descuidóse desto, y otro día entró en el cabildo ceñida la espada; advirtiéronselo y, acordándose de la pena por él puesta, al momento desenvainó su espada y se pasó con ella el pecho, y fue el primero que puso y quebrantó la ley y pagó la pena. Lo que yo dije no fue poner ley, sino prometer que me mordería la lengua cuando

murmurase; pero ahora no van las cosas por el tenor y rigor de las antiguas: hoy se hace una ley y mañana se rompe, y quizá conviene que así sea. Ahora promete uno de enmendarse de sus vicios, y de allí a un momento cae en otros mayores. Una cosa es alabar la disciplina y otra el darse con ella, y, en efeto, del dicho al hecho hay gran trecho. Muérdase el diablo, que yo no quiero morderme ni hacer finezas detrás de una estera, donde de nadie soy visto que pueda alabar mi honrosa determinación.

CIPIÓN.- Según eso, Berganza, si tú fueras persona, fueras hipócrita, y todas las obras que hicieras fueran aparentes, fingidas y falsas, cubiertas con la capa de la virtud, sólo porque te alabaran, como todos los hipócritas hacen.

BERGANZA.- No sé lo que entonces hiciera; esto sé que quiero hacer ahora: que es no morderme, quedándome tantas cosas por decir que no sé cómo ni cuándo podré acabarlas; y más, estando temeroso que al salir del sol nos hemos de quedar a oscuras, faltándonos la habla.

CIPIÓN.- Mejor lo hará el cielo. Sigue tu historia y no te desvíes del camino carretero con impertinentes digresiones; y así, por larga que sea, la acabarás presto.

BERGANZA.- «Digo, pues, que, habiendo visto la insolencia, ladronicio y deshonestidad de los negros, determiné, como buen criado, estorbarlo, por los mejores medios que pudiese; y pude tan bien, que salí con mi intento. Bajaba la negra, como has oído, a refocilarse con el negro, fiada en que me enmudecían los pedazos de carne, pan o queso que me arrojaba...»

¡Mucho pueden las dádivas, Cipión!

CIPIÓN.- Mucho. No te diviertas, pasa adelante.

BERGANZA.- Acuérdomme que cuando estudiaba oí decir al preceptor un refrán latino, que ellos llaman adagio, que decía: *Habet bovem in lingua*.

CIPIÓN.- ¡Oh, que en hora mala hayáis encajado vuestro latín! ¿Tan presto se te ha olvidado lo que poco ha dijimos contra los que entremeten latines en las conversaciones de romance?

BERGANZA.- Este latín viene aquí de molde; que has de saber que los atenienses usaban, entre otras, de una moneda sellada con la figura de un buey, y

cuando algún juez dejaba de decir o hacer lo que era razón y justicia, por estar cohechado, decían: «Este tiene el buey en la lengua».

CIPIÓN.- La aplicación falta.

BERGANZA.- ¿No está bien clara, si las dádivas de la negra me tuvieron muchos días mudo, que ni quería ni osaba ladrarla cuando bajaba a verse con su negro enamorado? Por lo que vuelvo a decir que pueden mucho las dádivas.

CIPIÓN.- Ya te he respondido que pueden mucho, y si no fuera por no hacer ahora una larga digresión, con mil ejemplos probara lo mucho que las dádivas pueden; mas quizá lo diré, si el cielo me concede tiempo, lugar y habla para contarte mi vida.

BERGANZA.- Dios te dé lo que desees, y escucha.

«Finalmente, mi buena intención rompió por las malas dádivas de la negra; a la cual, bajando una noche muy oscura a su acostumbrado pasatiempo, arremetí sin ladrar, porque no se alborotasen los de casa, y en un instante le hice pedazos toda la camisa y le arranqué un pedazo de muslo: burla que fue bastante a tenerla de veras más de ocho días en la cama, fingiendo para con sus amos no sé qué enfermedad. Sanó, volvió otra noche, y yo volví a la pelea con mi perra, y, sin morderla, la arañé todo el cuerpo como si la hubiera cardado como manta. Nuestras batallas eran a la sorda, de las cuales salía siempre vencedor, y la negra, malparada y peor contenta. Pero sus enojos se parecían bien en mi pelo y en mi salud: alzóseme con la ración y los huesos, y los míos poco a poco iban señalando los nudos del espinazo. Con todo esto, aunque me quitaron el comer, no me pudieron quitar el ladrar. Pero la negra, por acabarme de una vez, me trujo una esponja frita con manteca; conocí la maldad; vi que era peor que comer zarazas, porque a quien la come se le hincha el estómago y no sale dél sin llevarse tras sí la vida. Y, pareciéndome ser imposible guardarme de las asechanzas de tan indignados enemigos, acordé de poner tierra en medio, quitándomeles delante de los ojos.

»Halléme un día suelto, y sin decir adiós a ninguno de casa, me puse en la calle, y a menos de cien pasos me deparó la suerte al alguacil que dije al principio de mi historia, que era grande amigo de mi amo Nicolás el Romo; el cual, apenas me hubo visto, cuando me conoció y me llamó por mi nombre; también le conocí yo y, al llamarme, me llegué a él con mis acostumbradas ceremonias y caricias. Asíome del cuello y dijo a dos corchetes suyos: "Éste es famoso perro de ayuda, que fue de un grande amigo mío; llevémosle a casa".

Holgáronse los corchetes, y dijeron que si era de ayuda a todos sería de provecho. Quisieron asirme para llevarme, y mi amo dijo que no era menester asirme, que yo me iría, porque le conocía.

»Háseme olvidado decirte que las carlanças con puntas de acero que saqué cuando me desgarré y ausenté del ganado me las quitó un gitano en una venta, y ya en Sevilla andaba sin ellas; pero el alguacil me puso un collar tachonado todo de latón morisco.»

Considera, Cipión, ahora esta rueda variable de la fortuna mía: ayer me vi estudiante y hoy me vees corchete.

CIPIÓN.- Así va el mundo, y no hay para qué te pongas ahora a esagerar los vaivenes de fortuna, como si hubiera mucha diferencia de ser mozo de un jifero a serlo de un corchete. No puedo sufrir ni llevar en paciencia oír las quejas que dan de la fortuna algunos hombres que la mayor que tuvieron fue tener premisas y esperanzas de llegar a ser escuderos. ¡Con qué maldiciones la maldicen! ¡Con cuántos improperios la deshonran! Y no por más de que porque piense el que los oye que de alta, próspera y buena ventura han venido a la desdichada y baja en que los miran.

BERGANZA.- Tienes razón; «y has de saber que este alguacil tenía amistad con un escribano, con quien se acompañaba; estaban los dos amancebados con dos mujercillas, no de poco más a menos, sino de menos en todo; verdad es que tenían algo de buenas caras, pero mucho de desenfado y de taimería putesca. Éstas les servían de red y de anzuelo para pescar en seco, en esta forma: vestíanse de suerte que por la pinta descubrían la figura, y a tiro de arcabuz mostraban ser damas de la vida libre; andaban siempre a caza de extranjeros, y, cuando llegaba la vendeja a Cádiz y a Sevilla, llegaba la huella de su ganancia, no quedando bretón con quien no embistiesen; y, en cayendo el grasiento con alguna destas limpias, avisaban al alguacil y al escribano adónde y a qué posada iban, y, en estando juntos, les daban asalto y los prendían por amancebados; pero nunca los llevaban a la cárcel, a causa que los extranjeros siempre redimían la vejación con dineros.

»Sucedió, pues, que la Colindres, que así se llamaba la amiga del alguacil, pescó un bretón unto y bisunto; concertó con él cena y noche en su posada; dio el cañuto a su amigo; y, apenas se habían desnudado, cuando el alguacil, el escribano, dos corchetes y yo dimos con ellos. Alborotáronse los amantes; esageró el alguacil el delito; mandólos vestir a toda priesa para llevarlos a la cárcel; afligióse el bretón; terció, movido de caridad, el escribano, y a puros ruegos redujo la pena a solos cien reales. Pidió el bretón unos follados de

camuza que había puesto en una silla a los pies de la cama, donde tenía dineros para pagar su libertad, y no parecieron los follados, ni podían parecer; porque, así como yo entré en el aposento, llegó a mis narices un olor de tocino que me consoló todo; descubríle con el olfato, y halléle en una faldriquera de los follados. Digo que hallé en ella un pedazo de jamón famoso, y, por gozarle y poderle sacar sin rumor, saqué los follados a la calle, y allí me entregué en el jamón a toda mi voluntad, y cuando volví al aposento hallé que el bretón daba voces diciendo en lenguaje adúltero y bastardo, aunque se entendía, que le volviesen sus calzas, que en ellas tenía cincuenta *escuti d'oro in oro*. Imaginó el escribano o que la Colindres o los corchetes se los habían robado; el alguacil pensó lo mismo; llamólos aparte, no confesó ninguno, y diéronse al diablo todos. Viendo yo lo que pasaba, volví a la calle donde había dejado los follados, para volverlos, pues a mí no me aprovechaba nada el dinero; no los hallé, porque ya algún venturoso que pasó se los había llevado. Como el alguacil vio que el bretón no tenía dinero para el cohecho, se desesperaba, y pensó sacar de la huéspeda de casa lo que el bretón no tenía; llamóla, y vino medio desnuda, y como oyó las voces y quejas del bretón, y a la Colindres desnuda y llorando, al alguacil en cólera y al escribano enojado y a los corchetes despabilando lo que hallaban en el aposento, no le plugo mucho. Mandó el alguacil que se cubriese y se viniese con él a la cárcel, porque consentía en su casa hombres y mujeres de mal vivir. ¡Aquí fue ello! Aquí sí que fue cuando se aumentaron las voces y creció la confusión; porque dijo la huéspeda: "Señor alguacil y señor escribano, no conmigo tretas, que entrevo toda costura; no conmigo dijes ni poleos: callen la boca y váyanse con Dios; si no, por mi santiguada que arroje el bodegón por la ventana y que saque a plaza toda la chirinola desta historia; que bien conozco a la señora Colindres y sé que ha muchos meses que es su cobertor el señor alguacil; y no hagan que me aclare más, sino vuélvase el dinero a este señor, y quedemos todos por buenos; porque yo soy mujer honrada y tengo un marido con su carta de ejecutoria, y con *a perpenan rei de memoria*, con sus colgaderos de plomo, Dios sea loado, y hago este oficio muy limpiamente y sin daño de barras. El arancel tengo clavado donde todo el mundo le vea; y no conmigo cuentos, que, por Dios, que sé despolvorearme. ¡Bonita soy yo para que por mi orden entren mujeres con los huéspedes! Ellos tienen las llaves de sus aposentos, y yo no soy quince, que tengo de ver tras siete paredes".

»Pasmados quedaron mis amos de haber oído la arenga de la huéspeda y de ver cómo les leía la historia de sus vidas; pero, como vieron que no tenían de quién sacar dinero si della no, porfiaban en llevarla a la cárcel. Quejábase ella al cielo de la sinrazón y justicia que la hacían, estando su marido ausente y siendo tan principal hidalgo. El bretón bramaba por sus cincuenta *escuti*. Los corchetes

porfiaban que ellos no habían visto los follados, ni Dios permitiese lo tal. El escribano, por lo callado, insistía al alguacil que mirase los vestidos de la Colindres, que le daba sospecha que ella debía de tener los cincuenta *escuti*, por tener de costumbre visitar los escondrijos y faldriqueras de aquellos que con ella se envolvían. Ella decía que el bretón estaba borracho y que debía de mentir en lo del dinero. En efeto, todo era confusión, gritos y juramentos, sin llevar modo de apaciguarse, ni se apaciguaran si al instante no entrara en el aposento el teniente de asistente, que, viniendo a visitar aquella posada, las voces le llevaron adonde era la grita. Preguntó la causa de aquellas voces; la huéspeda se la dio muy por menudo: dijo quién era la ninfa Colindres, que ya estaba vestida; publicó la pública amistad suya y del alguacil; echó en la calle sus tretas y modo de robar; disculpóse a sí misma de que con su consentimiento jamás había entrado en su casa mujer de mala sospecha; canonizóse por santa y a su marido por un bendito, y dio voces a una moza que fuese corriendo y trujese de un cofre la carta ejecutoria de su marido, para que la viese el señor tiniente, diciéndole que por ella echaría de ver que mujer de tan honrado marido no podía hacer cosa mala; y que si tenía aquel oficio de casa de camas, era a no poder más: que Dios sabía lo que le pesaba, y si quisiera ella tener alguna renta y pan cotidiano para pasar la vida, que tener aquel ejercicio. El teniente, enfadado de su mucho hablar y presumir de ejecutoria, le dijo: "Hermana camera, yo quiero creer que vuestro marido tiene carta de hidalguía con que vos me confeséis que es hidalgo mesonero". "Y con mucha honra -respondió la huéspeda-. Y ¿qué linaje hay en el mundo, por bueno que sea, que no tenga algún dime y direte?" "Lo que yo os digo, hermana, es que os cubráis, que habéis de venir a la cárcel". La cual nueva dio con ella en el suelo; arañóse el rostro; alzó el grito; pero, con todo eso, el teniente, demasiadamente severo, los llevó a todos a la cárcel; conviene a saber: al bretón, a la Colindres y a la huéspeda. Después supe que el bretón perdió sus cincuenta *escuti*, y más diez, en que le condenaron en las costas; la huéspeda pagó otro tanto, y la Colindres salió libre por la puerta afuera. Y el mismo día que la soltaron pescó a un marinero, que pagó por el bretón, con el mismo embuste del soplo; porque veas, Cipión, cuántos y cuán grandes inconvenientes nacieron de mi golosina.»

CIPIÓN.- Mejor dijeras de la bellaquería de tu amo.

BERGANZA.- Pues escucha, que aún más adelante tiraban la barra, puesto que me pesa de decir mal de alguaciles y de escribanos.

CIPIÓN.- Sí, que decir mal de uno no es decirlo de todos; sí, que muchos y

muy muchos escribanos hay buenos, fieles y legales, y amigos de hacer placer sin daño de tercero; sí, que no todos entretienen los pleitos, ni avisan a las partes, ni todos llevan más de sus derechos, ni todos van buscando e inquiriendo las vidas ajenas para ponerlas en tela de juicio, ni todos se aúnan con el juez para «háceme la barba y hacerte he el copete», ni todos los alguaciles se conciertan con los vagamundos y fulleros, ni tienen todos las amigas de tu amo para sus embustes. Muchos y muy muchos hay hidalgos por naturaleza y de hidalgas condiciones; muchos no son arrojados, insolentes, ni mal criados, ni rateros, como los que andan por los mesones midiendo las espadas a los extranjeros, y, hallándolas un pelo más de la marca, destruyen a sus dueños. Sí, que no todos como prenden sueltan, y son jueces y abogados cuando quieren.

BERGANZA.- «Más alto picaba mi amo; otro camino era el suyo; presumía de valiente y de hacer prisiones famosas; sustentaba la valentía sin peligro de su persona, pero a costa de su bolsa. Un día acometió en la Puerta de Jerez él solo a seis famosos rufianes, sin que yo le pudiese ayudar en nada, porque llevaba con un freno de cordel impedida la boca (que así me traía de día, y de noche me le quitaba). Quedé maravillado de ver su atrevimiento, su brío y su desnudo; así se entraba y salía por las seis espadas de los rufos como si fueran varas de mimbre; era cosa maravillosa ver la ligereza con que acometía, las estocadas que tiraba, los reparos, la cuenta, el ojo alerta porque no le tomasen las espaldas. Finalmente, él quedó en mi opinión y en la de todos cuantos la pendencia miraron y supieron por un nuevo Rodamonte, habiendo llevado a sus enemigos desde la Puerta de Jerez hasta los mármoles del Colegio de Mase Rodrigo, que hay más de cien pasos. Dejólos encerrados, y volvió a coger los trofeos de la batalla, que fueron tres vainas, y luego se las fue a mostrar al asistente, que, si mal no me acuerdo, lo era entonces el licenciado Sarmiento de Valladares, famoso por la destrucción de La Saucedá. Miraban a mi amo por las calles do pasaba, señalándole con el dedo, como si dijeran: "Aquél es el valiente que se atrevió a reñir solo con la flor de los bravos de la Andalucía". En dar vueltas a la ciudad, para dejarse ver, se pasó lo que quedaba del día, y la noche nos halló en Triana, en una calle junto al Molino de la Pólvora; y, habiendo mi amo avizorado (como en la jácara se dice) si alguien le veía, se entró en una casa, y yo tras él, y hallamos en un patio a todos los jayanes de la pendencia, sin capas ni espadas, y todos desabrochados; y uno, que debía de ser el huésped, tenía un gran jarro de vino en la una mano y en la otra una copa grande de taberna, la cual, colmándola de vino generoso y espumante, brindaba a toda la compañía. Apenas hubieron visto a mi amo, cuando todos se fueron a él con los brazos abiertos, y todos le brindaron, y él hizo la razón a todos, y aun la hiciera a otros

tantos si le fuera algo en ello, por ser de condición afable y amigo de no enfadar a nadie por pocas cosas.

»Quererte yo contar ahora lo que allí se trató, la cena que cenaron, las peleas que se contaron, los hurtos que se refirieron, las damas que de su trato se calificaron y las que se reprobaron, las alabanzas que los unos a los otros se dieron, los bravos ausentes que se nombraron, la destreza que allí se puso en su punto, levantándose en mitad de la cena a poner en práctica las tretas que se les ofrecían, esgrimiendo con las manos, los vocablos tan exquisitos de que usaban; y, finalmente, el talle de la persona del huésped, a quien todos respetaban como a señor y padre, sería meterme en un laberinto donde no me fuese posible salir cuando quisiese.

»Finalmente, vine a entender con toda certeza que el dueño de la casa, a quien llamaban Monipodio, era encubridor de ladrones y pala de rufianes, y que la gran pendencia de mi amo había sido primero concertada con ellos, con las circunstancias del retirarse y de dejar las vainas, las cuales pagó mi amo allí, luego, de contado, con todo cuanto Monipodio dijo que había costado la cena, que se concluyó casi al amanecer, con mucho gusto de todos. Y fue su postre dar soplo a mi amo de un rufián forastero que, nuevo y flamante, había llegado a la ciudad; debía de ser más valiente que ellos, y de envidia le soplaron. Prendióle mi amo la siguiente noche, desnudo en la cama: que si vestido estuviera, yo vi en su talle que no se dejara prender tan a mansalva. Con esta prisión que sobrevino sobre la pendencia, creció la fama de mi cobarde, que lo era mi amo más que una liebre, y a fuerza de meriendas y tragos sustentaba la fama de ser valiente, y todo cuanto con su oficio y con sus inteligencias granjeaba se le iba y desaguaba por la canal de la valentía.

»Pero ten paciencia, y escucha ahora un cuento que le sucedió, sin añadir ni quitar de la verdad una tilde. Dos ladrones hurtaron en Antequera un caballo muy bueno; trujéronle a Sevilla, y para venderle sin peligro usaron de un ardid que, a mi parecer, tiene del agudo y del discreto. Fuéronse a posar a posadas diferentes, y el uno se fue a la justicia y pidió por una petición que Pedro de Losada le debía cuatrocientos reales prestados, como parecía por una cédula firmada de su nombre, de la cual hacía presentación. Mandó el tiniente que el tal Losada reconociese la cédula, y que si la reconociese, le sacasen prendas de la cantidad o le pusiesen en la cárcel; tocó hacer esta diligencia a mi amo y al escribano su amigo; llevóles el ladrón a la posada del otro, y al punto reconoció su firma y confesó la deuda, y señaló por prenda de la ejecución el caballo, el cual visto por mi amo, le creció el ojo; y le marcó por suyo si acaso se vendiese. Dio el ladrón por pasados los términos de la ley, y el caballo se puso en venta y se remató en quinientos reales en un tercero que mi amo echó de manga para que



se le comprase. Valía el caballo tanto y medio más de lo que dieron por él. Pero, como el bien del vendedor estaba en la brevedad de la venta, a la primer postura remató su mercaduría. Cobró el un ladrón la deuda que no le debían, y el otro la carta de pago que no había menester, y mi amo se quedó con el caballo, que para él fue peor que el Seyano lo fue para sus dueños. Mondaron luego la haza los ladrones, y, de allí a dos días, después de haber trastejado mi amo las guarniciones y otras faltas del caballo, pareció sobre él en la plaza de San Francisco, más hueco y pomposo que aldeano vestido de fiesta. Diéronle mil parabienes de la buena compra, afirmándole que valía ciento y cincuenta ducados como un huevo un maravedí; y él, volteando y revolviendo el caballo, representaba su tragedia en el teatro de la referida plaza. Y, estando en sus caracoles y rodeos, llegaron dos hombres de buen talle y de mejor ropaje, y el uno dijo: "¡Vive Dios, que éste es Piedehierro, mi caballo, que ha pocos días que me le hurtaron en Antequera!". Todos los que venían con él, que eran cuatro criados, dijeron que así era la verdad: que aquél era Piedehierro, el caballo que le habían hurtado. Pasmóse mi amo, querellóse el dueño, hubo pruebas, y fueron las que hizo el dueño tan buenas, que salió la sentencia en su favor y mi amo fue desposeído del caballo. Súpose la burla y la industria de los ladrones, que por manos e intervención de la misma justicia vendieron lo que habían hurtado, y casi todos se holgaban de que la codicia de mi amo le hubiese rompido el saco.

»Y no paró en esto su desgracia; que aquella noche, saliendo a rondar el mismo asistente, por haberle dado noticia que hacia los barrios de San Julián andaban ladrones, al pasar de una encrucijada vieron pasar un hombre corriendo, y dijo a este punto el asistente, asiéndome por el collar y zuzándome: "¡Al ladrón, Gavilán! ¡Ea, Gavilán, hijo, al ladrón, al ladrón!" Yo, a quien ya tenían cansado las maldades de mi amo, por cumplir lo que el señor asistente me mandaba sin discrepar en nada, arremetí con mi propio amo, y sin que pudiese valerse, di con él en el suelo; y si no me le quitaran, yo hiciera a más de a cuatro vengados; quitáronme con mucha pesadumbre de entrambos. Quisieran los corchetes castigarme, y aun matarme a palos, y lo hicieran si el asistente no les dijera: "No le toque nadie, que el perro hizo lo que yo le mandé".

»Entendióse la malicia, y yo, sin despedirme de nadie, por un agujero de la muralla salí al campo, y antes que amaneciese me puse en Mairena, que es un lugar que está cuatro leguas de Sevilla. Quiso mi buena suerte que hallé allí una compañía de soldados que, según oí decir, se iban a embarcar a Cartagena. Estaban en ella cuatro rufianes de los amigos de mi amo, y el atambor era uno que había sido corchete y gran chocarrero, como lo suelen ser los más atambores. Conociéronme todos y todos me hablaron; y así, me preguntaban por mi amo como si les hubiera de responder; pero el que más afición me mostró fue

el atambor, y así, determiné de acomodarme con él, si él quisiese, y seguir aquella jornada, aunque me llevase a Italia o a Flandes; porque me parece a mí, y aun a ti te debe parecer lo mismo, que, puesto que dice el refrán "quien necio es en su villa, necio es en Castilla", el andar tierras y comunicar con diversas gentes hace a los hombres discretos.»

CIPIÓN.- Es eso tan verdad, que me acuerdo haber oído decir a un amo que tuve de bonísimo ingenio que al famoso griego llamado Ulises le dieron renombre de prudente por sólo haber andado muchas tierras y comunicado con diversas gentes y varias naciones; y así, alabo la intención que tuviste de irte donde te llevasen.

BERGANZA.- «Es, pues, el caso que el atambor, por tener con qué mostrar más sus chacorrerías, comenzó a enseñarme a bailar al son del atambor y a hacer otras monerías, tan ajenas de poder aprenderlas otro perro que no fuera yo como las oirás cuando te las diga.

»Por acabarse el distrito de la comisión, se marchaba poco a poco; no había comisario que nos limitase; el capitán era mozo, pero muy buen caballero y gran cristiano; el alférez no hacía muchos meses que había dejado la Corte y el tinelo; el sargento era matrero y sagaz y grande arriero de compañías, desde donde se levantan hasta el embarcadero. Iba la compañía llena de rufianes churrulleros, los cuales hacían algunas insolencias por los lugares do pasábamos, que redundaban en maldecir a quien no lo merecía. Infelicidad es del buen príncipe ser culpado de sus súbditos por la culpa de sus súbditos, a causa que los unos son verdugos de los otros, sin culpa del señor; pues, aunque quiera y lo procure no puede remediar estos daños, porque todas o las más cosas de la guerra traen consigo aspereza, riguridad y desconveniencia.

»En fin, en menos de quince días, con mi buen ingenio y con la diligencia que puso el que había escogido por patrón, supe saltar por el Rey de Francia y a no saltar por la mala tabernera. Enseñóme a hacer corvetas como caballo napolitano y a andar a la redonda como mula de atahona, con otras cosas que, si yo no tuviera cuenta en no adelantarme a mostrarlas, pusiera en duda si era algún demonio en figura de perro el que las hacía. Púsome nombre del "perro sabio", y no habíamos llegado al alojamiento cuando, tocando su atambor, andaba por todo el lugar pregonando que todas las personas que quisiesen venir a ver las maravillosas gracias y habilidades del perro sabio en tal casa o en tal hospital las mostraban, a ocho o a cuatro maravedís, según era el pueblo grande o chico. Con estos encarecimientos no quedaba persona en todo el lugar que no me fuese a ver, y ninguno había que no saliese admirado y contento de haberme visto.

Triunfaba mi amo con la mucha ganancia, y sustentaba seis camaradas como unos reyes. La codicia y la envidia despertó en los rufianes voluntad de hurtarme, y andaban buscando ocasión para ello: que esto del ganar de comer holgando tiene muchos aficionados y golosos; por esto hay tantos titereros en España, tantos que muestran retablos, tantos que venden alfileres y coplas, que todo su caudal, aunque le vendiesen todo, no llega a poderse sustentar un día; y, con esto, los unos y los otros no salen de los bodegones y tabernas en todo el año; por do me doy a entender que de otra parte que de la de sus oficios sale la corriente de sus borracheras. Toda esta gente es vagamunda, inútil y sin provecho; esponjas del vino y gorgojos del pan.»

CIPIÓN.- No más, Berganza; no volvamos a lo pasado: sigue, que se va la noche, y no querría que al salir del sol quedásemos a la sombra del silencio.

BERGANZA.- Tenle y escucha.

«Como sea cosa fácil añadir a lo ya inventado, viendo mi amo cuán bien sabía imitar el corcel napolitano, hízome unas cubiertas de guadamacé y una silla pequeña, que me acomodó en las espaldas, y sobre ella puso una figura liviana de un hombre con una lancilla de correr sortija, y enseñóme a correr derechamente a una sortija que entre dos palos ponía; y el día que había de correrla pregonaba que aquel día corría sortija el perro sabio y hacía otras nuevas y nunca vistas galanterías, las cuales de mi santiscario, como dicen, las hacía por no sacar mentiroso a mi amo.

»Llegamos, pues, por nuestras jornadas contadas a Montilla, villa del famoso y gran cristiano Marqués de Priego, señor de la casa de Aguilar y de Montilla. Alojaron a mi amo, porque él lo procuró, en un hospital; echó luego el ordinario bando, y, como ya la fama se había adelantado a llevar las nuevas de las habilidades y gracias del perro sabio, en menos de una hora se llenó el patio de gente. Alegróse mi amo viendo que la cosecha iba de guilla, y mostróse aquel día chacorrero en demasía. Lo primero en que comenzaba la fiesta era en los saltos que yo daba por un aro de cedazo, que parecía de cuba: conjurábame por las ordinarias preguntas, y cuando él bajaba una varilla de membrillo que en la mano tenía, era señal del salto; y cuando la tenía alta, de que me estuviese quedo. El primer conjuro deste día (memorable entre todos los de mi vida) fue decirme: "Ea, Gavilán amigo, salta por aquel viejo verde que tú conoces que se escabecha las barbas; y si no quieres, salta por la pompa y el aparato de doña Pimpinela de Plafagonia, que fue compañera de la moza gallega que servía en Valdeastillas. ¿No te cuadra el conjuro, hijo Gavilán? Pues salta por el bachiller Pasillas, que se firma licenciado sin tener grado alguno. ¡Oh, perezoso estás!

¿Por qué no saltas? Pero ya entiendo y alcanzo tus marrullerías: ahora salta por el licor de Esquivias, famoso al par del de Ciudad Real, San Martín y Ribadavia". Bajó la varilla y salté yo, y noté sus malicias y malas entrañas.

»Volvióse luego al pueblo y en voz alta dijo: "No piense vuesa merced, senado valeroso, que es cosa de burla lo que este perro sabe: veinte y cuatro piezas le tengo enseñadas que por la menor dellas volaría un gavilán; quiero decir que por ver la menor se pueden caminar treinta leguas. Sabe bailar la zarabanda y chacona mejor que su inventora misma; bébese una azumbre de vino sin dejar gota; entona un *sol fa mi* retan bien como un sacristán; todas estas cosas, y otras muchas que me quedan por decir, las irán viendo vuestas mercedes en los días que estuviere aquí la compañía; y por ahora dé otro salto nuestro sabio, y luego entraremos en lo grueso". Con esto suspendió el auditorio, que había llamado senado, y les encendió el deseo de no dejar de ver todo lo que yo sabía.

»Volvióse a mí mi amo y dijo: "Volved, hijo Gavilán, y con gentil agilidad y destreza deshaced los saltos que habéis hecho; pero ha de ser a devoción de la famosa hechicera que dicen que hubo en este lugar". Apenas hubo dicho esto, cuando alzó la voz la hospitalera, que era una vieja, al parecer, de más de sesenta años, diciendo: "¡Bellaco, charlatán, embaidor y hijo de puta, aquí no hay hechicera alguna! Si lo decís por la Camacha, ya ella pagó su pecado, y está donde Dios se sabe; si lo decís por mí, chacorrero, ni yo soy ni he sido hechicera en mi vida; y si he tenido fama de haberlo sido, merced a los testigos falsos, y a la ley del encaje, y al juez arrojadizo y mal informado, ya sabe todo el mundo la vida que hago en penitencia, no de los hechizos que no hice, sino de otros muchos pecados: otros que como pecadora he cometido. Así que, socarrón tamborilero, salid del hospital: si no, por vida de mi santiguada que os haga salir más que de paso". Y, con esto, comenzó a dar tantos gritos y a decir tantas y tan atropelladas injurias a mi amo, que le puso en confusión y sobresalto; finalmente, no dejó que pasase adelante la fiesta en ningún modo. No le pesó a mi amo del alboroto, porque se quedó con los dineros y aplazó para otro día y en otro hospital lo que en aquél había faltado. Fuese la gente maldiciendo a la vieja, añadiendo al nombre de hechicera el de bruja, y el de barbuda sobre vieja. Con todo esto, nos quedamos en el hospital aquella noche; y, encontrándome la vieja en el corral solo, me dijo: "¿Eres tú, hijo Montiel? ¿Eres tú, por ventura, hijo?". Alcé la cabeza y miréla muy de espacio; lo cual visto por ella, con lágrimas en los ojos se vino a mí y me echó los brazos al cuello, y si la dejara me besara en la boca; pero tuve asco y no lo consentí.»

CIPIÓN.- Bien hiciste, porque no es regalo, sino tormento, el besar ni dejar

besarse de una vieja.

BERGANZA.- Esto que ahora te quiero contar te lo había de haber dicho al principio de mi cuento, y así escusáramos la admiración que nos causó el vernos con habla.

«Porque has de saber que la vieja me dijo: "Hijo Montiel, vente tras mí y sabrás mi aposento, y procura que esta noche nos veamos a solas en él, que yo dejaré abierta la puerta; y sabe que tengo muchas cosas que decirte de tu vida y para tu provecho". Bajé yo la cabeza en señal de obedecerla, por lo cual ella se acabó de enterar en que yo era el perro Montiel que buscaba, según después me lo dijo. Quedé atónito y confuso, esperando la noche, por ver en lo que paraba aquel misterio, o prodigio, de haberme hablado la vieja; y, como había oído llamarla de hechicera, esperaba de su vista y habla grandes cosas. Llegóse, en fin, el punto de verme con ella en su aposento, que era oscuro, estrecho y bajo, y solamente claro con la débil luz de un candil de barro que en él estaba; atizóle la vieja, y sentóse sobre una arquilla, y llegóme junto a sí, y, sin hablar palabra, me volvió a abrazar, y yo volví a tener cuenta con que no me besase. Lo primero que me dijo fue: »"Bien esperaba yo en el cielo que, antes que estos mis ojos se cerrasen con el último sueño, te había de ver, hijo mío; y, ya que te he visto, venga la muerte y lléveme desta cansada vida. Has de saber, hijo, que en esta villa vivió la más famosa hechicera que hubo en el mundo, a quien llamaron la Camacha de Montilla; fue tan única en su oficio, que las Eritos, las Circes, las Medeias, de quien he oído decir que están las historias llenas, no la igualaron. Ella congelaba las nubes cuando quería, cubriendo con ellas la faz del sol, y cuando se le antojaba volvía sereno el más turbado cielo; traía los hombres en un instante de lejos tierras, remediaba maravillosamente las doncellas que habían tenido algún descuido en guardar su entereza, cubría a las viudas de modo que con honestidad fuesen deshonestas, descasaba las casadas y casaba las que ella quería. Por diciembre tenía rosas frescas en su jardín y por enero segaba trigo. Esto de hacer nacer berros en una artesa era lo menos que ella hacía, ni el hacer ver en un espejo, o en la uña de una criatura, los vivos o los muertos que le pedían que mostrase. Tuvo fama que convertía los hombres en animales, y que se había servido de un sacristán seis años, en forma de asno, real y verdaderamente, lo que yo nunca he podido alcanzar cómo se haga, porque lo que se dice de aquellas antiguas magas, que convertían los hombres en bestias, dicen los que más saben que no era otra cosa sino que ellas, con su mucha hermosura y con sus halagos, atraían los hombres de manera a que las quisiesen bien, y los sujetaban de suerte, sirviéndose dellos en todo cuanto querían, que parecían bestias. Pero en ti, hijo mío, la experiencia me muestra lo contrario: que

sé que eres persona racional y te veo en semejanza de perro, si ya no es que esto se hace con aquella ciencia que llaman tropelía, que hace parecer una cosa por otra. Sea lo que fuere, lo que me pesa es que yo ni tu madre, que fuimos discípulas de la buena Camacha, nunca llegamos a saber tanto como ella; y no por falta de ingenio, ni de habilidad, ni de ánimo, que antes nos sobraba que faltaba, sino por sobra de su malicia, que nunca quiso enseñarnos las cosas mayores, porque las reservaba para ella.

»"Tu madre, hijo, se llamó la Montiela, que después de la Camacha fue famosa; yo me llamo la Cañizares, si ya no tan sabia como las dos, a lo menos de tan buenos deseos como cualquiera dellas. Verdad es que el ánimo que tu madre tenía de hacer y entrar en un cerco y encerrarse en él con una legión de demonios, no le hacía ventaja la misma Camacha. Yo fui siempre algo medrosilla; con conjurar media legión me contentaba, pero, con paz sea dicho de entrambas, en esto de conficionar las unturas con que las brujas nos untamos, a ninguna de las dos diera ventaja, ni la daré a cuantas hoy siguen y guardan nuestras reglas. Que has de saber, hijo, que como yo he visto y veo que la vida, que corre sobre las ligeras alas del tiempo, se acaba, he querido dejar todos los vicios de la hechicería, en que estaba engolfada muchos años había, y sólo me he quedado con la curiosidad de ser bruja, que es un vicio dificultosísimo de dejar. Tu madre hizo lo mismo: de muchos vicios se apartó, muchas buenas obras hizo en esta vida, pero al fin murió bruja; y no murió de enfermedad alguna, sino de dolor de que supo que la Camacha, su maestra, de envidia que la tuvo porque se le iba subiendo a las barbas en saber tanto como ella (o por otra pendenzuela de celos, que nunca pude averiguar), estando tu madre preñada y llegándose la hora del parto, fue su comadre la Camacha, la cual recibió en sus manos lo que tu madre parió, y mostróle que había parido dos perritos; y, así como los vio, dijo: '¡Aquí hay maldad, aquí hay bellaquería!'. 'Pero, hermana Montiela, tu amiga soy; yo encubriré este parto, y atiende tú a estar sana, y haz cuenta que esta tu desgracia queda sepultada en el mismo silencio; no te dé pena alguna este suceso, que ya sabes tú que puedo yo saber que si no es con Rodríguez, el ganapán tu amigo, días ha que no tratas con otro; así que, este perruno parto de otra parte viene y algún misterio contiene'. Admiradas quedamos tu madre y yo, que me hallé presente a todo, del extraño suceso. La Camacha se fue y se llevó los cachorros; yo me quedé con tu madre para asistir a su regalo, la cual no podía creer lo que le había sucedido.

»"Llegóse el fin de la Camacha, y, estando en la última hora de su vida, llamó a tu madre y le dijo como ella había convertido a sus hijos en perros por cierto enojo que con ella tuvo; pero que no tuviese pena, que ellos volverían a su ser cuando menos lo pensasen; mas que no podía ser primero que ellos por sus

mismos ojos viesen lo siguiente:

Volverán en su forma verdadera

cuando vieren con presta diligencia  
derribar los soberbios levantados,  
y alzar a los humildes abatidos,  
con poderosa mano para hacello.

»"Esto dijo la Camacha a tu madre al tiempo de su muerte, como ya te he dicho. Tomólo tu madre por escrito y de memoria, y yo lo fijé en la mía para si sucediese tiempo de poderlo decir a alguno de vosotros; y, para poder conoceros, a todos los perros que veo de tu color los llamo con el nombre de tu madre, no por pensar que los perros han de saber el nombre, sino por ver si respondían a ser llamados tan diferentemente como se llaman los otros perros. Y esta tarde, como te vi hacer tantas cosas y que te llaman el *perro sabio*, y también como alzaste la cabeza a mirarme cuando te llamé en el corral, he creído que tú eres hijo de la Montiel, a quien con grandísimo gusto doy noticia de tus sucesos y del modo con que has de cobrar tu forma primera; el cual modo quisiera yo que fuera tan fácil como el que se dice de Apuleyo en *El asno de oro*, que consistía en sólo comer una rosa. Pero este tuyo va fundado en acciones ajenas y no en tu diligencia. Lo que has de hacer, hijo, es encomendarte a Dios allá en tu corazón, y espera que éstas, que no quiero llamarlas profecías, sino adivinanzas, han de suceder presto y prósperamente; que, pues la buena de la Camacha las dijo, sucederán sin duda alguna, y tú y tu hermano, si es vivo, os veréis como deseáis.

»"De lo que a mí me pesa es que estoy tan cerca de mi acabamiento que no tendré lugar de verlo. Muchas veces he querido preguntar a mi cabrón qué fin tendrá vuestro suceso, pero no me he atrevido, porque nunca a lo que le preguntamos responde a derechas, sino con razones torcidas y de muchos sentidos. Así que, a este nuestro amo y señor no hay que preguntarle nada, porque con una verdad mezcla mil mentiras; y, a lo que yo he colegido de sus respuestas, él no sabe nada de lo por venir ciertamente, sino por conjeturas. Con todo esto, nos trae tan engañadas a las que somos brujas, que, con hacernos mil burlas, no le podemos dejar. Vamos a verle muy lejos de aquí, a un gran campo, donde nos juntamos infinidad de gente, brujos y brujas, y allí nos da de comer desabridamente, y pasan otras cosas que en verdad y en Dios y en mi ánima que no me atrevo a contarlas, según son sucias y asquerosas, y no quiero ofender tus castas orejas. Hay opinión que no vamos a estos convites sino con la fantasía, en la cual nos representa el demonio las imágenes de todas aquellas cosas que después contamos que nos han sucedido. Otros dicen que no, sino que verdaderamente vamos en cuerpo y en ánima; y entrambas opiniones tengo para



mí que son verdaderas, puesto que nosotras no sabemos cuándo vamos de una o de otra manera, porque todo lo que nos pasa en la fantasía es tan intensamente que no hay diferenciarlo de cuando vamos real y verdaderamente. Algunas experiencias desto han hecho los señores inquisidores con algunas de nosotras que han tenido presas, y pienso que han hallado ser verdad lo que digo.

»"Quisiera yo, hijo, apartarme deste pecado, y para ello he hecho mis diligencias: heme acogido a ser hospitalera; curo a los pobres, y algunos se mueren que me dan a mí la vida con lo que me mandan o con lo que se les queda entre los remiendos, por el cuidado que yo tengo de espulgarlos los vestidos. Rezo poco y en público, murmuro mucho y en secreto. Vame mejor con ser hipócrita que con ser pecadora declarada: las apariencias de mis buenas obras presentes van borrando en la memoria de los que me conocen las malas obras pasadas. En efeto, la santidad fingida no hace daño a ningún tercero, sino al que la usa. Mira, hijo Montiel, este consejo te doy: que seas bueno en todo cuanto pudieres; y si has de ser malo, procura no parecerlo en todo cuanto pudieres. Bruja soy, no te lo niego; bruja y hechicera fue tu madre, que tampoco te lo puedo negar; pero las buenas apariencias de las dos podían acreditarlos en todo el mundo. Tres días antes que muriese habíamos estado las dos en un valle de los Montes Perineos en una gran gira, y, con todo eso, cuando murió fue con tal sosiego y reposo, que si no fueron algunos visajes que hizo un cuarto de hora antes que rindiese el alma, no parecía sino que estaba en aquélla como en un tálamo de flores. Llevaba atravesados en el corazón sus dos hijos, y nunca quiso, aun en el artículo de la muerte, perdonar a la Camacha: tal era ella de entera y firme en sus cosas. Yo le cerré los ojos y fui con ella hasta la sepultura; allí la dejé para no verla más, aunque no tengo perdida la esperanza de verla antes que me muera, porque se ha dicho por el lugar que la han visto algunas personas andar por los cimiterios y encrucijadas en diferentes figuras, y quizá alguna vez la toparé yo, y le preguntaré si manda que haga alguna cosa en descargo de su conciencia".

»Cada cosa destas que la vieja me decía en alabanza de la que decía ser mi madre era una lanzada que me atravesaba el corazón, y quisiera arremeter a ella y hacerla pedazos entre los dientes; y si lo dejé de hacer fue porque no le tomase la muerte en tan mal estado. Finalmente, me dijo que aquella noche pensaba untarse para ir a uno de sus usados convites, y que cuando allá estuviese pensaba preguntar a su dueño algo de lo que estaba por sucederme. Quisiérale yo preguntar qué unturas eran aquellas que decía, y parece que me leyó el deseo, pues respondió a mi intención como si se lo hubiera preguntado, pues dijo: »"Este ungüento con que las brujas nos untamos es compuesto de jugos de yerbas en todo extremo fríos, y no es, como dice el vulgo, hecho con la sangre de

los niños que ahogamos. Aquí pudieras también preguntarme qué gusto o provecho saca el demonio de hacernos matar las criaturas tiernas, pues sabe que, estando bautizadas, como inocentes y sin pecado, se van al cielo, y él recibe pena particular con cada alma cristiana que se le escapa; a lo que no te sabré responder otra cosa sino lo que dice el refrán: 'que tal hay que se quiebra dos ojos porque su enemigo se quiebre uno'; y por la pesadumbre que da a sus padres matándoles los hijos, que es la mayor que se puede imaginar. Y lo que más le importa es hacer que nosotras cometamos a cada paso tan cruel y perverso pecado; y todo esto lo permite Dios por nuestros pecados, que sin su permisión yo he visto por experiencia que no puede ofender el diablo a una hormiga; y es tan verdad esto que, rogándole yo una vez que destruyese una viña de un mi enemigo, me respondió que ni aun tocar a una hoja della no podía, porque Dios no quería; por lo cual podrás venir a entender, cuando seas hombre, que todas las desgracias que vienen a las gentes, a los reinos, a las ciudades y a los pueblos: las muertes repentinas, los naufragios, las caídas, en fin, todos los males que llaman de daño, vienen de la mano del Altísimo y de su voluntad permitente; y los daños y males que llaman de culpa vienen y se causan por nosotros mismos. Dios es impecable, de do se infiere que nosotros somos autores del pecado, formándole en la intención, en la palabra y en la obra; todo permitiéndolo Dios, por nuestros pecados, como ya he dicho.

»"Dirás tú ahora, hijo, si es que acaso me entiendes, que quién me hizo a mí teóloga, y aun quizá dirás entre ti: '¡Cuerpo de tal con la puta vieja! ¿Por qué no deja de ser bruja, pues sabe tanto, y se vuelve a Dios, pues sabe que está más prompto a perdonar pecados que a permitirlos?' A esto te respondo, como si me lo preguntaras, que la costumbre del vicio se vuelve en naturaleza; y éste de ser brujas se convierte en sangre y carne, y en medio de su ardor, que es mucho, trae un frío que pone en el alma tal, que la resfría y entorpece aun en la fe, de donde nace un olvido de sí misma, y ni se acuerda de los temores con que Dios la amenaza ni de la gloria con que la convida; y, en efeto, como es pecado de carne y de deleites, es fuerza que amortigüe todos los sentidos, y los embelese y absorte, sin dejarlos usar sus oficios como deben; y así, quedando el alma inútil, floja y desmazalada, no puede levantar la consideración siquiera a tener algún buen pensamiento; y así, dejándose estar sumida en la profunda sima de su miseria, no quiere alzar la mano a la de Dios, que se la está dando, por sola su misericordia, para que se levante. Yo tengo una destas almas que te he pintado: todo lo veo y todo lo entiendo, y como el deleite me tiene echados grillos a la voluntad, siempre he sido y seré mala.

»"Pero dejemos esto y volvamos a lo de las unturas; y digo que son tan frías, que nos privan de todos los sentidos en untándonos con ellas, y quedamos

tendidas y desnudas en el suelo, y entonces dicen que en la fantasía pasamos todo aquello que nos parece pasar verdaderamente. Otras veces, acabadas de untar, a nuestro parecer, mudamos forma, y convertidas en gallos, lechuzas o cuervos, vamos al lugar donde nuestro dueño nos espera, y allí cobramos nuestra primera forma y gozamos de los deleites que te dejo de decir, por ser tales, que la memoria se escandaliza en acordarse dellos, y así, la lengua huye de contarlos; y, con todo esto, soy bruja, y cubro con la capa de la hipocresía todas mis muchas faltas. Verdad es que si algunos me estiman y honran por buena, no faltan muchos que me dicen, no dos dedos del oído, el nombre de las fiestas, que es el que les imprimió la furia de un juez colérico que en los tiempos pasados tuvo que ver conmigo y con tu madre, depositando su ira en las manos de un verdugo que, por no estar sobornado, usó de toda su plena potestad y rigor con nuestras espaldas. Pero esto ya pasó, y todas las cosas se pasan; las memorias se acaban, las vidas no vuelven, las lenguas se cansan, los sucesos nuevos hacen olvidar los pasados. Hospitalera soy, buenas muestras doy de mi proceder, buenos ratos me dan mis unturas, no soy tan vieja que no pueda vivir un año, puesto que tengo setenta y cinco; y, ya que no puedo ayunar, por la edad, ni rezar, por los vaguidos, ni andar romerías, por la flaqueza de mis piernas, ni dar limosna, porque soy pobre, ni pensar en bien, porque soy amiga de murmurar, y para haberlo de hacer es forzoso pensarlo primero, así que siempre mis pensamientos han de ser malos, con todo esto, sé que Dios es bueno y misericordioso y que Él sabe lo que ha de ser de mí, y basta; y quédese aquí esta plática, que verdaderamente me entristece. Ven, hijo, y verásme untar, que todos los duelos con pan son buenos, el buen día, meterle en casa, pues mientras se ríe no se llora; quiero decir que, aunque los gustos que nos da el demonio son aparentes y falsos, todavía nos parecen gustos, y el deleite mucho mayor es imaginado que gozado, aunque en los verdaderos gustos debe de ser al contrario".

»Levantóse, en diciendo esta larga arenga, y, tomando el candil, se entró en otro aposentillo más estrecho; seguía, combatido de mil varios pensamientos y admirado de lo que había oído y de lo que esperaba ver. Colgó la Cañizares el candil de la pared y con mucha priesa se desnudó hasta la camisa; y, sacando de un rincón una olla vidriada, metió en ella la mano, y, murmurando entre dientes, se untó desde los pies a la cabeza, que tenía sin toca. Antes que se acabase de untar me dijo que, ora se quedase su cuerpo en aquel aposento sin sentido, ora desapareciese dél, que no me espantase, ni dejase de aguardar allí hasta la mañana, porque sabría las nuevas de lo que me quedaba por pasar hasta ser hombre. Díjele bajando la cabeza que sí haría, y con esto acabó su untura y se tendió en el suelo como muerta. Llegué mi boca a la suya y vi que no respiraba

poco ni mucho.»

Una verdad te quiero confesar, Cipión amigo: que me dio gran temor verme encerrado en aquel estrecho aposento con aquella figura delante, la cual te la pintaré como mejor supiere.

«Ella era larga de más de siete pies; toda era notomía de huesos, cubiertos con una piel negra, vellosa y curtida; con la barriga, que era de badana, se cubría las partes deshonestas, y aun le colgaba hasta la mitad de los muslos; las tetas semejaban dos vejigas de vaca secas y arrugadas; denegridos los labios, traspillados los dientes, la nariz corva y entablada, desencasados los ojos, la cabeza desgredada, la mejillas chupadas, angosta la garganta y los pechos sumidos; finalmente, toda era flaca y endemoniada. Púseme de espacio a mirarla y apriesa comenzó a apoderarse de mí el miedo, considerando la mala visión de su cuerpo y la peor ocupación de su alma. Quise morderla, por ver si volvía en sí, y no hallé parte en toda ella que el asco no me lo estorbase; pero, con todo esto, la así de un carcaño y la saqué arrastrando al patio; mas ni por esto dio muestras de tener sentido. Allí, con mirar el cielo y verme en parte ancha, se me quitó el temor; a lo menos, se templó de manera que tuve ánimo de esperar a ver en lo que paraba la ida y vuelta de aquella mala hembra, y lo que me contaba de mis sucesos. En esto me preguntaba yo a mí mismo: "¿quién hizo a esta mala vieja tan discreta y tan mala? ¿De dónde sabe ella cuáles son males de daño y cuáles de culpa? ¿Cómo entiende y habla tanto de Dios, y obra tanto del diablo? ¿Cómo peca tan de malicia, no escusándose con ignorancia?"

»En estas consideraciones se pasó la noche y se vino el día, que nos halló a los dos en mitad del patio: ella no vuelta en sí y a mí junto a ella, en cuclillas, atento, mirando su espantosa y fea catadura. Acudió la gente del hospital, y, viendo aquel retablo, unos decían: "Ya la bendita Cañizares es muerta; mirad cuán disfigurada y flaca la tenía la penitencia"; otros, más considerados, la tomaron el pulso, y vieron que le tenía, y que no era muerta, por do se dieron a entender que estaba en éxtasis y arrobada, de puro buena. Otros hubo que dijeron: "Esta puta vieja sin duda debe de ser bruja, y debe de estar untada; que nunca los santos hacen tan deshonestos arrobos, y hasta ahora, entre los que la conocemos, más fama tiene de bruja que de santa". Curiosos hubo que se llegaron a hincarle alfileres por las carnes, desde la punta hasta la cabeza: ni por eso recordaba la dormilona, ni volvió en sí hasta las siete del día; y, como se sintió acribada de los alfileres, y mordida de los carcañares, y magullada del arrastramiento fuera de su aposento, y a vista de tantos ojos que la estaban mirando, creyó, y creyó la verdad, que yo había sido el autor de su deshonra; y así, arremetió a mí, y, echándome ambas manos a la garganta, procuraba ahogarme diciendo: "¡Oh bellaco, desagradecido, ignorante y malicioso! ¿Y es

éste el pago que merecen las buenas obras que a tu madre hice y de las que te pensaba hacer a ti?" Yo, que me vi en peligro de perder la vida entre las uñas de aquella fiera arpía, sacudíme, y, asiéndole de las luengas faldas de su vientre, la zamarreé y arrastré por todo el patio; ella daba voces que la librasen de los dientes de aquel maligno espíritu.

»Con estas razones de la mala vieja, creyeron los más que yo debía de ser algún demonio de los que tienen ojeriza continua con los buenos cristianos, y unos acudieron a echarme agua bendita, otros no osaban llegar a quitarme, otros daban voces que me conjurasen; la vieja gruñía, yo apretaba los dientes, crecía la confusión, y mi amo, que ya había llegado al ruido, se desesperaba oyendo decir que yo era demonio. Otros, que no sabían de exorcismos, acudieron a tres o cuatro garrotes, con los cuales comenzaron a santiguarme los lomos; escocióme la burla, solté la vieja, y en tres saltos me puse en la calle, y en pocos más salí de la villa, perseguido de una infinidad de muchachos, que iban a grandes voces diciendo: "¡Apártense que rabia el perro sabio!"; otros decían: "¡No rabia, sino que es demonio en figura de perro!" Con este molimiento, a campana herida salí del pueblo, siguiéndome muchos que indubitavelmente creyeron que era demonio, así por las cosas que me habían visto hacer como por las palabras que la vieja dijo cuando despertó de su maldito sueño.

»Dime tanta priesa a huir y a quitarme delante de sus ojos, que creyeron que me había desaparecido como demonio: en seis horas anduve doce leguas, y llegué a un rancho de gitanos que estaba en un campo junto a Granada. Allí me reparé un poco, porque algunos de los gitanos me conocieron por el perro sabio, y con no pequeño gozo me acogieron y escondieron en una cueva, porque no me hallasen si fuese buscado; con intención, a lo que después entendí, de ganar conmigo como lo hacía el atambor mi amo. Veinte días estuve con ellos, en los cuales supe y noté su vida y costumbres, que por ser notables es forzoso que te las cuente.»

CIPIÓN.- Antes, Berganza, que pases adelante, es bien que reparemos en lo que te dijo la bruja, y averigüemos si puede ser verdad la grande mentira a quien das crédito. Mira, Berganza, grandísimo disparate sería creer que la Camacha mudase los hombres en bestias y que el sacristán en forma de jumento la serviese los años que dicen que la sirvió. Todas estas cosas y las semejantes son embelecos, mentiras o apariencias del demonio; y si a nosotros nos parece ahora que tenemos algún entendimiento y razón, pues hablamos siendo verdaderamente perros, o estando en su figura, ya hemos dicho que éste es caso portentoso y jamás visto, y que, aunque le tocamos con las manos, no le tenemos de dar crédito hasta tanto que el suceso dél nos muestre lo que

conviene que creamos. ¿Quiéreslo ver más claro? Considera en cuán vanas cosas y en cuán tontos puntos dijo la Camacha que consistía nuestra restauración; y aquellas que a ti te deben parecer profecías no son sino palabras de consejas o cuentos de viejas, como aquellos del caballo sin cabeza y de la varilla de virtudes, con que se entretienen al fuego las dilatadas noches del invierno; porque, a ser otra cosa, ya estaban cumplidas, si no es que sus palabras se han de tomar en un sentido que he oído decir se llama alegórico, el cual sentido no quiere decir lo que la letra suena, sino otra cosa que, aunque diferente, le haga semejanza; y así, decir:

Volverán a su forma verdadera

cuando vieren con presta diligencia  
derribar los soberbios levantados,  
y alzar a los humildes abatidos,  
por mano poderosa para hacello,

tomándolo en el sentido que he dicho, paréceme que quiere decir que cobraremos nuestra forma cuando viéremos que los que ayer estaban en la cumbre de la rueda de la fortuna, hoy están hollados y abatidos a los pies de la desgracia, y tenidos en poco de aquellos que más los estimaban. Y, asimismo, cuando viéremos que otros que no ha dos horas que no tenían deste mundo otra parte que servir en él de número que acrecentase el de las gentes, y ahora están tan encumbrados sobre la buena dicha que los perdemos de vista; y si primero no parecían por pequeños y encogidos, ahora no los podemos alcanzar por grandes y levantados. Y si en esto consistiera volver nosotros a la forma que dices, ya lo hemos visto y lo vemos a cada paso; por do me doy a entender que no en el sentido alegórico, sino en el literal, se han de tomar los versos de la Camacha; ni tampoco en éste consiste nuestro remedio, pues muchas veces hemos visto lo que dicen y nos estamos tan perros como vees; así que, la Camacha fue burladora falsa, y la Cañizares embustera, y la Montiel tonta, maliciosa y bellaca, con perdón sea dicho, si acaso es nuestra madre de entrambos, o tuya, que yo no la quiero tener por madre. Digo, pues, que el verdadero sentido es un juego de bolos, donde con presta diligencia derriban los que están en pie y vuelven a alzar los caídos, y esto por la mano de quien lo puede hacer. Mira, pues, si en el discurso de nuestra vida habremos visto jugar a los bolos, y si hemos visto por esto haber vuelto a ser hombres, si es que lo somos.

BERGANZA.- Digo que tienes razón, Cipión hermano, y que eres más discreto de lo que pensaba; y de lo que has dicho vengo a pensar y creer que todo lo que hasta aquí hemos pasado y lo que estamos pasando es sueño, y que somos perros; pero no por esto dejemos de gozar deste bien de la habla que tenemos y de la excelencia tan grande de tener discurso humano todo el tiempo que pudiéremos; y así, no te canse el oírme contar lo que me pasó con los gitanos que me escondieron en la cueva.

CIPIÓN.- De buena gana te escucho, por obligarte a que me escuches cuando te cuente, si el cielo fuere servido, los sucesos de mi vida.

BERGANZA.- «La que tuve con los gitanos fue considerar en aquel tiempo sus muchas malicias, sus embaimientos y embustes, los hurtos en que se ejercitan, así gitanas como gitanos, desde el punto casi que salen de las mantillas y saben andar. ¿Vees la multitud que hay dellos esparcida por España? Pues todos se conocen y tienen noticia los unos de los otros, y trasiegan y trasponen los hurtos éstos en aquéllos y los de aquéllos en éstos. Dan la obediencia, mejor que a su rey, a uno que llaman *Conde*, al cual, y a todos los que dél suceden, tienen el sobrenombre de Maldonado; y no porque vengan del apellido deste noble linaje, sino porque un paje de un caballero deste nombre se enamoró de una gitana, la cual no le quiso conceder su amor si no se hacía gitano y la tomaba por mujer. Hízolo así el paje, y agradó tanto a los demás gitanos, que le alzaron por señor y le dieron la obediencia; y, como en señal de vasallaje, le acuden con parte de los hurtos que hacen, como sean de importancia.

»Ocúpanse, por dar color a su ociosidad, en labrar cosas de hierro, haciendo instrumentos con que facilitan sus hurtos; y así, los verás siempre traer a vender por las calles tenazas, barrenas, martillos; y ellas, trébedes y badiles. Todas ellas son parteras, y en esto llevan ventaja a las nuestras, porque sin costa ni adherentes sacan sus partos a luz, y lavan las criaturas con agua fría en naciendo; y, desde que nacen hasta que mueren, se curten y muestran a sufrir las inclemencias y rigores del cielo; y así, verás que todos son alentados, volteadores, corredores y bailadores. Cásanse siempre entre ellos, porque no salgan sus malas costumbres a ser conocidas de otros; ellas guardan el decoro a sus maridos, y pocas hay que les ofendan con otros que no sean de su generación. Cuando piden limosna, más la sacan con invenciones y chocarrerías que con devociones; y, a título que no hay quien se fíe dellas, no sirven y dan en ser holgazanas. Y pocas o ninguna vez he visto, si mal no me acuerdo, ninguna gitana a pie de altar comulgando, puesto que muchas veces he entrado en las iglesias.

»Son sus pensamientos imaginar cómo han de engañar y dónde han de hurtar; confieren sus hurtos y el modo que tuvieron en hacellos; y así, un día contó un gitano delante de mí a otros un engaño y hurto que un día había hecho a un labrador, y fue que el gitano tenía un asno rabón, y en el pedazo de la cola que tenía sin cerdas le ingirió otra peluda, que parecía ser suya natural. Sacóle al mercado, comprósele un labrador por diez ducados, y, en habiéndosele vendido y cobrado el dinero, le dijo que si quería comprarle otro asno hermano del mismo, y tan bueno como el que llevaba, que se le vendería por más buen precio. Respondióle el labrador que fuese por él y le trujese, que él se le compraría, y que en tanto que volviese llevaría el comprado a su posada. Fuese el labrador, siguióle el gitano, y sea como sea, el gitano tuvo maña de hurtar al labrador el



asno que le había vendido, y al mismo instante le quitó la cola postiza y quedó con la suya pelada. Mudóle la albarda y jáquima, y atrevióse a ir a buscar al labrador para que se le comprase, y hallóle antes que hubiese echado menos el asno primero, y a pocos lances compró el segundo. Fuésele a pagar a la posada, donde halló menos la bestia a la bestia; y, aunque lo era mucho, sospechó que el gitano se le había hurtado, y no quería pagarle. Acudió el gitano por testigos, y trujo a los que habían cobrado la alcabala del primer jumento, y juraron que el gitano había vendido al labrador un asno con una cola muy larga y muy diferente del asno segundo que vendía. A todo esto se halló presente un alguacil, que hizo las partes del gitano con tantas veras que el labrador hubo de pagar el asno dos veces. Otros muchos hurtos contaron, y todos, o los más, de bestias, en quien son ellos graduados y en lo que más se ejercitan. Finalmente, ella es mala gente, y, aunque muchos y muy prudentes jueces han salido contra ellos, no por eso se enmiendan.

»A cabo de veinte días, me quisieron llevar a Murcia; pasé por Granada, donde ya estaba el capitán, cuyo atambor era mi amo. Como los gitanos lo supieron, me encerraron en un aposento del mesón donde vivían; oíles decir la causa, no me pareció bien el viaje que llevaban, y así, determiné soltarme, como lo hice; y, saliéndome de Granada, di en una huerta de un morisco, que me acogió de buena voluntad, y yo quedé con mejor, pareciéndome que no me querría para más de para guardarle la huerta: oficio, a mi cuenta, de menos trabajo que el de guardar ganado. Y, como no había allí altercar sobre tanto más cuanto al salario, fue cosa fácil hallar el morisco criado a quien mandar y yo amo a quien servir. Estuve con él más de un mes, no por el gusto de la vida que tenía, sino por el que me daba saber la de mi amo, y por ella la de todos cuantos moriscos viven en España.»

¡Oh cuántas y cuáles cosas te pudiera decir, Cipión amigo, desta morisca canalla, si no temiera no poderlas dar fin en dos semanas! Y si las hubiera de particularizar, no acabara en dos meses; mas, en efeto, habré de decir algo; y así, oye en general lo que yo vi y noté en particular desta buena gente.

Por maravilla se hallará entre tantos uno que crea derechamente en la sagrada ley cristiana; todo su intento es acuñar y guardar dinero acuñado, y para conseguirle trabajan y no comen; en entrando el real en su poder, como no sea sencillo, le condenan a cárcel perpetua y a escuridad eterna; de modo que, ganando siempre y gastando nunca, llegan y amontonan la mayor cantidad de dinero que hay en España. Ellos son su hucha, su polilla, sus picazas y sus comadreas; todo lo llegan, todo lo esconden y todo lo tragan. Considérese que ellos son muchos y que cada día ganan y esconden, poco o mucho, y que una calentura lenta acaba la vida como la de un tabardillo; y, como van creciendo, se

van aumentando los escondedores, que crecen y han de crecer en infinito, como la experiencia lo muestra. Entre ellos no hay castidad, ni entran en religión ellos ni ellas: todos se casan, todos multiplican, porque el vivir sobriamente aumenta las causas de la generación. No los consume la guerra, ni ejercicio que demasiadamente los trabaje; róbannos a pie quedo, y con los frutos de nuestras heredades, que nos revenden, se hacen ricos. No tienen criados, porque todos lo son de sí mismos; no gastan con sus hijos en los estudios, porque su ciencia no es otra que la del robarnos. De los doce hijos de Jacob que he oído decir que entraron en Egipto, cuando los sacó Moisés de aquel cautiverio, salieron seiscientos mil varones, sin niños y mujeres. De aquí se podrá inferir lo que multiplicarán las déstos, que, sin comparación, son en mayor número.

CIPIÓN.- Buscado se ha remedio para todos los daños que has apuntado y bosquejado en sombra: que bien sé que son más y mayores los que callas que los que cuentas, y hasta ahora no se ha dado con el que conviene; pero celadores prudentísimos tiene nuestra república que, considerando que España cría y tiene en su seno tantas víboras como moriscos, ayudados de Dios, hallarán a tanto daño cierta, presta y segura salida. Di adelante.

BERGANZA.- «Como mi amo era mezquino, como lo son todos los de su casta, sustentábame con pan de mijo y con algunas sobras de zahínas, común sustento suyo; pero esta miseria me ayudó a llevar el cielo por un modo tan extraño como el que ahora oirás.

»Cada mañana, juntamente con el alba, amanecía sentado al pie de un granado, de muchos que en la huerta había, un mancebo, al parecer estudiante, vestido de bayeta, no tan negra ni tan peluda que no pareciese parda y tundida. Ocupábase en escribir en un cartapacio y de cuando en cuando se daba palmadas en la frente y se mordía las uñas, estando mirando al cielo; y otras veces se ponía tan imaginativo, que no movía pie ni mano, ni aun las pestañas: tal era su embelesamiento. Una vez me llegué junto a él, sin que me echase de ver; oíle murmurar entre dientes, y al cabo de un buen espacio dio una gran voz, diciendo: "¡Vive el Señor, que es la mejor octava que he hecho en todos los días de mi vida!" Y, escribiendo apriesa en su cartapacio, daba muestras de gran contento; todo lo cual me dio a entender que el desdichado era poeta. Hícele mis acostumbradas caricias, por asegurarle de mi mansedumbre; echéme a sus pies, y él, con esta seguridad, prosiguió en sus pensamientos y tornó a rascarse la cabeza y a sus arrobos, y a volver a escribir lo que había pensado. Estando en esto, entró en la huerta otro mancebo, galán y bien aderezado, con unos papeles en la mano, en los cuales de cuando en cuando leía. Llegó donde estaba el

primero y díjole: "¿Habéis acabado la primera jornada?" "Ahora le di fin -respondió el poeta-, la más gallardamente que imaginarse puede". "¿De qué manera?", preguntó el segundo. "Désta -respondió el primero-: Sale Su Santidad del Papa vestido de pontifical, con doce cardenales, todos vestidos de morado, porque cuando sucedió el caso que cuenta la historia de mi comedia era tiempo de *mutatio caparum*, en el cual los cardenales no se visten de rojo, sino de morado; y así, en todas maneras conviene, para guardar la propiedad, que estos mis cardenales salgan de morado; y éste es un punto que hace mucho al caso para la comedia; y a buen seguro dieran en él, y así hacen a cada paso mil impertinencias y disparates. Yo no he podido errar en esto, porque he leído todo el ceremonial romano, por sólo acertar en estos vestidos". "Pues ¿de dónde queréis vos -replicó el otro-que tenga mi autor vestidos morados para doce cardenales?" "Pues si me quita uno tan sólo -respondió el poeta-, así le daré yo mi comedia como volar. ¡Cuerpo de tal! ¿Esta apariencia tan grandiosa se ha de perder? Imaginad vos desde aquí lo que parecerá en un teatro un Sumo Pontífice con doce graves cardenales y con otros ministros de acompañamiento que forzosamente han de traer consigo. ¡Vive el cielo, que sea uno de los mayores y más altos espectáculos que se haya visto en comedia, aunque sea la del *Ramillete de Daraja*!"

»Aquí acabé de entender que el uno era poeta y el otro comediante. El comediante aconsejó al poeta que cercenase algo de los cardenales, si no quería imposibilitar al autor el hacer la comedia. A lo que dijo el poeta que le agradeciesen que no había puesto todo el cónclave que se halló junto al acto memorable que pretendía traer a la memoria de las gentes en su felicísima comedia. Rióse el recitante y dejóle en su ocupación por irse a la suya, que era estudiar un papel de una comedia nueva. El poeta, después de haber escrito algunas coplas de su magnífica comedia, con mucho sosiego y espacio sacó de la faldriquera algunos mendrugos de pan y obra de veinte pasas, que, a mi parecer, entiendo que se las conté, y aun estoy en duda si eran tantas, porque juntamente con ellas hacían bulto ciertas migajas de pan que las acompañaban. Sopló y apartó las migajas, y una a una se comió las pasas y los palillos, porque no le vi arrojar ninguno, ayudándolas con los mendrugos, que morados con la borra de la faldriquera, parecían mohosos, y eran tan duros de condición que, aunque él procuró enternecerlos, paseándolos por la boca una y muchas veces, no fue posible moverlos de su terquedad; todo lo cual redundó en mi provecho, porque me los arrojó, diciendo: "¡To, to! Toma, que buen provecho te hagan". "¡Mirad -dije entre mí-qué néctar o ambrosía me da este poeta, de los que ellos dicen que se mantienen los dioses y su Apolo allá en el cielo!" En fin, por la mayor parte, grande es la miseria de los poetas, pero mayor era mi necesidad, pues me obligó

a comer lo que él desechaba. En tanto que duró la composición de su comedia, no dejó de venir a la huerta ni a mí me faltaron mendrugos, porque los repartía conmigo con mucha liberalidad, y luego nos íbamos a la noria, donde, yo de bruces y él con un cangilón, satisfacíamos la sed como unos monarcas. Pero faltó el poeta y sobró en mí la hambre tanto, que determiné dejar al morisco y entrarme en la ciudad a buscar ventura, que la halla el que se muda.

»Al entrar de la ciudad vi que salía del famoso monasterio de San Jerónimo mi poeta, que como me vio se vino a mí con los brazos abiertos, y yo me fui a él con nuevas muestras de regocijo por haberle hallado. Luego, al instante comenzó a desembaular pedazos de pan, más tiernos de los que solía llevar a la huerta, y a entregarlos a mis dientes sin repasarlos por los suyos: merced que con nuevo gusto satisfizo mi hambre. Los tiernos mendrugos, y el haber visto salir a mi poeta del monasterio dicho, me pusieron en sospecha de que tenía las musas vergonzantes, como otros muchos las tienen.

»Encaminóse a la ciudad, y yo le seguí con determinación de tenerle por amo si él quisiese, imaginando que de las sobras de su castillo se podía mantener mi real; porque no hay mayor ni mejor bolsa que la de la caridad, cuyas liberales manos jamás están pobres; y así, no estoy bien con aquel refrán que dice: "Más da el duro que el desnudo", como si el duro y avaro diese algo, como lo da el liberal desnudo, que, en efeto, da el buen deseo cuando más no tiene. De lance en lance, paramos en la casa de un autor de comedias que, a lo que me acuerdo, se llamaba Angulo el Malo, ... de otro Angulo, no autor, sino representante, el más gracioso que entonces tuvieron y ahora tienen las comedias. Juntóse toda la compañía a oír la comedia de mi amo, que ya por tal le tenía; y, a la mitad de la jornada primera, uno a uno y dos a dos, se fueron saliendo todos, excepto el autor y yo, que servíamos de oyentes. La comedia era tal, que, con ser yo un asno en esto de la poesía, me pareció que la había compuesto el mismo Satanás, para total ruina y perdición del mismo poeta, que ya iba tragando saliva, viendo la soledad en que el auditorio le había dejado; y no era mucho, si el alma, présaga, le decía allá dentro la desgracia que le estaba amenazando, que fue volver todos los recitantes, que pasaban de doce, y, sin hablar palabra, asieron de mi poeta, y si no fuera porque la autoridad del autor, llena de ruegos y voces, se puso de por medio, sin duda le mantearan. Quedé yo del caso pasmado; el autor, desabrido; los farsantes, alegres, y el poeta, mohíno; el cual, con mucha paciencia, aunque algo torcido el rostro, tomó su comedia, y, encerrándosela en el seno, medio murmurando, dijo: "No es bien echar las margaritas a los puercos". Y con esto se fue con mucho sosiego.

»Yo, de corrido, ni pude ni quise seguirle; y acertélo, a causa que el autor me

hizo tantas caricias que me obligaron a que con él me quedase, y en menos de un mes salí grande entremesista y gran farsante de figuras mudas. Pusiéronme un freno de orillos y enseñáronme a que arremetiese en el teatro a quien ellos querían; de modo que, como los entremeses solían acabar por la mayor parte en palos, en la compañía de mi amo acababan en zuzarme, y yo derribaba y atropellaba a todos, con que daba que reír a los ignorantes y mucha ganancia a mi dueño.»

¡Oh Cipión, quién te pudiera contar lo que vi en ésta y en otras dos compañías de comediantes en que anduve! Mas, por no ser posible reducirlo a narración sucinta y breve, lo habré de dejar para otro día, si es que ha de haber otro día en que nos comuniquemos ¿Vees cuán larga ha sido mi plática? ¿Vees mis muchos y diversos sucesos? ¿Consideras mis caminos y mis amos tantos? Pues todo lo que has oído es nada, comparado a lo que te pudiera contar de lo que noté, averigüé y vi desta gente: su proceder, su vida, sus costumbres, sus ejercicios, su trabajo, su ociosidad, su ignorancia y su agudeza, con otras infinitas cosas: unas para decirse al oído y otras para aclamallas en público, y todas para hacer memoria dellas y para desengaño de muchos que idolatran en figuras fingidas y en bellezas de artificio y de transformación.

CIPIÓN.- Bien se me trasluce, Berganza, el largo campo que se te descubría para dilatar tu plática, y soy de parecer que la dejes para cuento particular y para sosiego no sobresaltado.

BERGANZA.- Sea así, y escucha.

«Con una compañía llegué a esta ciudad de Valladolid, donde en un entremés me dieron una herida que me llegó casi al fin de la vida; no pude vengarme, por estar enfrenado entonces, y después, a sangre fría, no quise: que la venganza pensada arguye crueldad y mal ánimo. Cansóme aquel ejercicio, no por ser trabajo, sino porque veía en él cosas que juntamente pedían enmienda y castigo; y, como a mí estaba más el sentillo que el remediallo, acordé de no verlo; y así, me acogí a sagrado, como hacen aquellos que dejan los vicios cuando no pueden ejercitallos, aunque más vale tarde que nunca. Digo, pues, que, viéndote una noche llevar la linterna con el buen cristiano Mahudes, te consideré contento y justa y santamente ocupado; y lleno de buena envidia quise seguir tus pasos, y con esta loable intención me puse delante de Mahudes, que luego me eligió para tu compañero y me trujo a este hospital. Lo que en él me ha sucedido no es tan poco que no haya menester espacio para contallo, especialmente lo que oí a cuatro enfermos que la suerte y la necesidad trujo a este hospital, y a estar todos cuatro juntos en cuatro camas apareadas.»

Perdóname, porque el cuento es breve, y no sufre dilación, y viene aquí de molde.

CIPIÓN.- Sí perdono. Concluye, que, a lo que creo, no debe de estar lejos el día.

BERGANZA.- «Digo que en las cuatro camas que están al cabo desta enfermería, en la una estaba un alquimista, en la otra un poeta, en la otra un matemático y en la otra uno de los que llaman arbitristas.»

CIPIÓN.- Ya me acuerdo haber visto a esa buena gente.

BERGANZA.- «Digo, pues, que una siesta de las del verano pasado, estando cerradas las ventanas y yo cogiendo el aire debajo de la cama del uno dellos, el poeta se comenzó a quejar lastimosamente de su fortuna, y, preguntándole el matemático de qué se quejaba, respondió que de su corta suerte. "¿Cómo, y no será razón que me queje -prosiguió-, que, habiendo yo guardado lo que Horacio manda en su *Poética*, que no salga a luz la obra que, después de compuesta, no hayan pasado diez años por ella, y que tenga yo una de veinte años de ocupación y doce de pasante, grande en el sujeto, admirable y nueva en la invención, grave en el verso, entretenida en los episodios, maravillosa en la división, porque el principio responde al medio y al fin, de manera que constituyen el poema alto, sonoro, heroico, deleitable y sustancioso; y que, con todo esto, no hallo un príncipe a quien dirigirle? Príncipe, digo, que sea inteligente, liberal y magnánimo. ¡Mísera edad y depravado siglo nuestro!" "¿De qué trata el libro?", preguntó el alquimista. Respondió el poeta: "Trata de lo que dejó de escribir el Arzobispo Turpín del Rey Artús de Inglaterra, con otro suplemento de la *Historia de la demanda del Santo Brial*, y todo en verso heroico, parte en octavas y parte en verso suelto; pero todo esdrújulamente, digo en esdrújulos de nombres sustantivos, sin admitir verbo alguno". "A mí -respondió el alquimista- poco se me entiende de poesía; y así, no sabré poner en su punto la desgracia de que vuesa merced se queja, puesto que, aunque fuera mayor, no se igualaba a la mía, que es que, por faltarme instrumento, o un príncipe que me apoye y me dé a la mano los requisitos que la ciencia de la alquimia pide, no estoy ahora manando en oro y con más riquezas que los Midas, que los Crasos y Cresos". "¿Ha hecho vuesa merced -dijo a esta sazón el matemático-, señor alquimista, la experiencia de sacar plata de otros metales?" "Yo -respondió el alquimista- no la he sacado hasta agora, pero realmente sé que se saca, y a mí no me faltan dos meses para acabar la piedra filosofal, con que se puede hacer plata y oro de las

mismas piedras". "Bien han exagerado vuesas mercedes sus desgracias -dijo a esta sazón el matemático-; pero, al fin, el uno tiene libro que dirigir y el otro está en potencia propincua de sacar la piedra filosofal; más, ¿qué diré yo de la mía, que es tan sola que no tiene dónde arrimarse? Veinte y dos años ha que ando tras hallar el punto fijo, y aquí lo dejo y allí lo tomo; y, pareciéndome que ya lo he hallado y que no se me puede escapar en ninguna manera, cuando no me cato, me hallo tan lejos dél, que me admiro. Lo mismo me acaece con la cuadratura del círculo: que he llegado tan al remate de hallarla, que no sé ni puedo pensar cómo no la tengo ya en la faldriquera; y así, es mi pena semejable a las de Tántalo, que está cerca del fruto y muere de hambre, y propincuo al agua y perece de sed. Por momentos pienso dar en la coyuntura de la verdad, y por minutos me hallo tan lejos della, que vuelvo a subir el monte que acabé de bajar, con el canto de mi trabajo auestas, como otro nuevo Sísifo".

»Había hasta este punto guardado silencio el arbitrista, y aquí le rompió diciendo: "Cuatro quejosos tales que lo pueden ser del Gran Turco ha juntado en este hospital la pobreza, y reniego yo de oficios y ejercicios que ni entretienen ni dan de comer a sus dueños. Yo, señores, soy arbitrista, y he dado a Su Majestad en diferentes tiempos muchos y diferentes arbitrios, todos en provecho suyo y sin daño del reino; y ahora tengo hecho un memorial donde le suplico me señale persona con quien comunique un nuevo arbitrio que tengo: tal, que ha de ser la total restauración de sus empeños; pero, por lo que me ha sucedido con otros memoriales, entiendo que éste también ha de parar en el carnero. Mas, porque vuesas mercedes no me tengan por mentecapto, aunque mi arbitrio quede desde este punto público, le quiero decir, que es éste: Hase de pedir en Cortes que todos los vasallos de Su Majestad, desde edad de catorce a sesenta años, sean obligados a ayunar una vez en el mes a pan y agua, y esto ha de ser el día que se escogiere y señalare, y que todo el gasto que en otros condumios de fruta, carne y pescado, vino, huevos y legumbres que han de gastar aquel día, se reduzga a dinero, y se dé a Su Majestad, sin defraudalle un ardite, so cargo de juramento; y con esto, en veinte años queda libre de socaliñas y desempeñado. Porque si se hace la cuenta, como yo la tengo hecha, bien hay en España más de tres millones de personas de la dicha edad, fuera de los enfermos, más viejos o más muchachos, y ninguno déstos dejará de gastar, y esto contado al menorete, cada día real y medio; y yo quiero que sea no más de un real, que no puede ser menos, aunque coma alholvas. Pues ¿paréceles a vuesas mercedes que sería barro tener cada mes tres millones de reales como ahechados? Y esto antes sería provecho que daño a los ayunantes, porque con el ayuno agradarían al cielo y servirían a su Rey; y tal podría ayunar que le fuese conveniente para su salud. Este es arbitrio limpio de polvo y de paja, y podría coger por parroquias, sin costa de

comisarios, que destruyen la república". Ríyéronse todos del arbitrio y del arbitrante, y él también se riyó de sus disparates; y yo quedé admirado de haberlos oído y de ver que, por la mayor parte, los de semejantes humores venían a morir en los hospitales.»

CIPIÓN.- Tienes razón, Berganza. Mira si te queda más que decir.

BERGANZA.- Dos cosas no más, con que daré fin a mi plática, que ya me parece que viene el día.

«Yendo una noche mi mayor a pedir limosna en casa del corregidor desta ciudad, que es un gran caballero y muy gran cristiano, hallámosle solo; y parecióme a mí tomar ocasión de aquella soledad para decirle ciertos advertimientos que había oído decir a un viejo enfermo deste hospital, acerca de cómo se podía remediar la perdición tan notoria de las mozas vagamundas, que por no servir dan en malas, y tan malas, que pueblan los veranos todos los hospitales de los perdidos que las siguen: plaga intolerable y que pedía presto y eficaz remedio. Digo que, queriendo decírselo, alcé la voz, pensando que tenía habla, y en lugar de pronunciar razones concertadas ladré con tanta priesa y con tan levantado tono que, enfadado el corregidor, dio voces a sus criados que me echasen de la sala a palos; y un lacayo que acudió a la voz de su señor, que fuera mejor que por entonces estuviera sordo, asió de una cantimplora de cobre que le vino a la mano, y diómela tal en mis costillas, que hasta ahora guardo las reliquias de aquellos golpes.»

CIPIÓN.- Y ¿quéjaste deso, Berganza?

BERGANZA.- Pues ¿no me tengo de quejar, si hasta ahora me duele, como he dicho, y si me parece que no merecía tal castigo mi buena intención?

CIPIÓN.- Mira, Berganza, nadie se ha de meter donde no le llaman, ni ha de querer usar del oficio que por ningún caso le toca. Y has de considerar que nunca el consejo del pobre, por bueno que sea, fue admitido, ni el pobre humilde ha de tener presunción de aconsejar a los grandes y a los que piensan que se lo saben todo. La sabiduría en el pobre está asombrada; que la necesidad y miseria son las sombras y nubes que la escurecen, y si acaso se descubre, la juzgan por tontedad y la tratan con menosprecio.

BERGANZA.- Tienes razón, y, escarmentando en mi cabeza, de aquí adelante seguiré tus consejos.



«Entré asimismo otra noche en casa de una señora principal, la cual tenía en los brazos una perrilla destas que llaman de falda, tan pequeña que la pudiera esconder en el seno; la cual, cuando me vio, saltó de los brazos de su señora y arremetió a mí ladrando, y con tan gran denuedo, que no paró hasta morderme de una pierna. Volvíla a mirar con respecto y con enojo, y dije entre mí: "Si yo os cogiera, animalejo ruin, en la calle, o no hiciera caso de vos o os hiciera pedazos entre los dientes". Consideré en ella que hasta los cobardes y de poco ánimo son atrevidos e insolentes cuando son favorecidos, y se adelantan a ofender a los que valen más que ellos.»

CIPIÓN.- Una muestra y señal desa verdad que dices nos dan algunos hombrecillos que a la sombra de sus amos se atreven a ser insolentes; y si acaso la muerte o otro accidente de fortuna derriba el árbol donde se arriman, luego se descubre y manifiesta su poco valor; porque, en efeto, no son de más quilates sus prendas que los que les dan sus dueños y valedores. La virtud y el buen entendimiento siempre es una y siempre es uno: desnudo o vestido, solo o acompañado. Bien es verdad que puede padecer acerca de la estimación de las gentes, mas no en la realidad verdadera de lo que merece y vale. Y, con esto, pongamos fin a esta plática, que la luz que entra por estos resquicios muestra que es muy entrado el día, y esta noche que viene, si no nos ha dejado este grande beneficio de la habla, será la mía, para contarte mi vida.

BERGANZA.- Sea ansí, y mira que acudas a este mismo puesto.

## Teatro

## EL TRATO DE ARGEL



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## Jornada primera

Interlocutores:

AURELIO.

FÁTIMA, *criada de Zahara.*

ZAHARA, *ama de Aurelio.*

YZUF, *amo de Aurelio.*

AURELIO ¡Triste y miserable estado!

¡Triste esclavitud amarga,  
donde es la pena tan larga  
cuan corto el bien y abreviado!

¡Oh purgatorio en la vida, 5  
infierno puesto en el mundo,  
mal que no tiene segundo,  
estrecho do no hay salida!

¡Cifra de cuanto dolor  
se reparte en los dolores, 10  
daño que entre los mayores  
se ha de tener por mayor!

¡Necesidad increíble,  
muerte creíble y palpable,  
trato mísero intratable, 15  
mal visible e invisible!

¡Toque que nuestra paciencia  
descubre si es valerosa;  
pobre vida trabajosa,  
retrato de penitencia! 20

Cállese aquí este tormento,  
que, según me es enemigo,  
no llegará cuanto digo  
a un punto de lo que siento.

Pondérase mi dolor 25  
con decir, bañado en lloros,  
que mi cuerpo está entre moros  
y el alma en poder de Amor.

Del cuerpo y alma es mi pena:  
el cuerpo ya veis cual va, 30  
mi alma rendida está  
a la amorosa cadena.

Pensé yo que no tenía  
Amor poder entre esclavos,  
pero en mí sus recios clavos 35  
muestran más su gallardía.

¿Qué buscas en la miseria,  
Amor, de gente cautiva?  
Déjala que muera o viva  
con su pobreza y laceria. 40

¿No ves que el hilo se corta  
desa tu amorosa estambre,  
aquí con sed o con hambre,  
a la larga o a la corta?

Mas creo que no has querido 45  
olvidarme en este estrecho,  
que has visto sano mi pecho,  
aunque tan roto el vestido.

Desde agora claro entiendo  
que el poder que en ti se encierra 50  
abrazo el cielo y la tierra,  
y más que no comprendo.

Una cosa te pidiera,  
si en esa tu condición  
una sombra de razón 55  
por entre mil sombras viera;  
y es que, pues fuiste la causa  
de acabarme y destruirme,  
que en el contino herirme  
hagas un momento pausa. 60

Yo no te pido que salgas  
de mi pecho, pues no puedes;  
antes, te pido que quedes,  
y en este trance me valgas.

Mira que se me apareja 65  
una muy fiera batalla,  
y que no he de atropellalla

si tu consejo me deja.

Del lugar do me pusiste,  
me procuran derribar; 70  
pero, ¿quién podrá bajar  
lo que tú una vez subiste?

Ya viene Zahara y su arenga;  
¡ay, enfadosa porfía;  
cómo que me falta el día 75  
antes que la noche venga!

¡Valedme, Silvia, bien mío,  
que, si vos me dais ayuda,  
de guerra más ardua y cruda  
llevar la palma confío! 80

*(Entra agora ZAHARA, ama de AURELIO, y FÁTIMA, criada de ZAHARA.)*

ZAHARA ¡Aurelio!

AURELIO Señora mía...

ZAHARA Si tú por tal me tuvieras,  
a fe que luego hicieras  
lo que ruega mi porfía.

AURELIO Lo que tú quieres yo quiero, 85  
porque al fin te soy esclavo.

ZAHARA Esas palabras alabo,  
mas tus obras vitupero.

AURELIO ¿Cuál ha sido por mí hecha  
que en ella no te complaces? 90

ZAHARA Aquellas que no me haces  
me tienen mal satisfecha.

AURELIO Señora, no puedo más;  
por agua me parto luego.

ZAHARA Otra agua pide mi fuego, 95  
que no la que tú traerás.  
No te vayas; está quedo.

AURELIO De leña hay falta en la casa.

ZAHARA Basta la que a mí me abrasa.

AURELIO Mi amo...

ZAHARA No tengas miedo. 100

AURELIO Déjame, señora, ir,  
no venga Yzuf, mi señor.

ZAHARA Quien queda con tanto amor,  
mal te dejará partir.

AURELIO No hay para qué más porfíes, 105  
señora: déjame ya.



ZAHARA Aurelio, llégate acá.

AURELIO Mejor es que te desvíes.

ZAHARA ¿Ansí, Aurelio, me despides?

AURELIO Antes te hago favor, 110  
si con el compás de honor  
lo compasas y lo mides.  
¿No miras que soy cristiano  
con suerte y desdicha mala?

ZAHARA El amor todo lo iguala: 115  
dame por señor la mano.

FÁTIMA Zahara, señora mía,  
dígate que me ha admirado  
mirar en lo que ha parado  
tu altivez y fantasía. 120  
Ver, por cierto, es gentil cosa,  
y digna de ser notada,  
de un cristiano enamorada  
una mora tan hermosa.  
Y lo que más llega al cabo 125  
tu afición tan sin medida,  
es mirarte estar rendida  
a un cristiano que es tu esclavo.  
¡Y monta que corresponde  
el perro a lo que le quieres! 130  
Perdóname; frágil eres.

ZAHARA ¿Dónde vas?

FÁTIMA Bien sé yo adonde.

ZAHARA Dulce amiga verdadera,  
lo que dices no lo niego;  
mas ¿qué haré?, que amor es fuego 135  
y mi voluntad es cera.

Y, puesto que el daño veo  
y el fin do habré de parar,  
imposible es contrastar  
las fuerzas de mi deseo. 140

Vuelve tu lengua e intento  
a combatir esta roca,  
que no será gloria poca  
gozar de su vencimiento.

FÁTIMA Quiero en esto complacerte, 145  
pues al fin puedes mandarme.  
Cristiano, vuelve a mirarme,  
que no es mi rostro de muerte.

AURELIO Más que muerte me causáis  
con vuestros inducimientos. 150  
Dejadme con mis tormentos,  
porque en vano trabajáis.

FÁTIMA ¿No ves cómo se retira  
el perro en su pundo nor?  
Así entiende él del amor 155  
como el asno de la lira.

AURELIO ¿Cómo queréis que yo entienda  
de amor en esta cadena?

ZAHARA Eso no te cause pena,  
que luego se hará la enmienda: 160  
las dos te la quitaremos.

AURELIO Muy mejor será dejalla;  
que no quiero con quitalla,  
pasar de un extremo a extremos.

ZAHARA ¿A qué extremos pasarás? 165

AURELIO Quitando al cuerpo este hierro,  
cairé en otro mayor hierro,  
que al alma fatigue más.

FÁTIMA ¿Almas tenéis los cristianos?

AURELIO Sí, y tan ricas y estremadas 170  
cuanto por Dios rescatadas.

FÁTIMA ¡Que son pensamientos vanos!

Pero si almas tenéis,  
de diamante es su valor,  
pues en la fragua de amor 175  
muy más os endurecéis.

Aurelio, ¡resolución!  
Ten cuenta en lo que te digo:  
no quieras ser tan amigo  
de tu obstinada opinión. 180

Ya te ves sin libertad,  
entre hierros apretado,  
pobre, desnudo, cansado,

lleno de necesidad,  
    subjeto a mil desventuras, 185  
a palos, a bofetones,  
a mazmorras, a prisiones,  
donde estás contino a oscuras.

    Libertad se te promete;  
los hierros se quitarán, 190  
y después te vestirán.  
No hay temor de oscuro brete.

    Cuzcuz, pan blanco a comer,  
gallinas en abundancia,  
y aun habrá vino de Francia 195  
si vino quieres beber.

    No te pido lo imposible,  
ni trabajos demasiados,  
sino blandos, regalados,  
dulces lo más que es posible. 200

    Goza de la coyuntura  
que se te ríe delante;  
no hagas del ignorante,  
pues muestras tener cordura.

    Mira tu señora Zahara 205  
y lo mucho que merece:  
mira que al sol escurece  
la luz de su rostro clara.

    Contempla su juventud,  
su riqueza, nombre y fama; 210  
mira bien que agora llama  
a tu puerta la salud.

    Considera el interés  
que en hacer esto te toca,  
que hay mil que pondrían la boca 215  
donde tú pondrás los pies.

AURELIO   ¿Has dicho, Fátima?

FÁTIMA Sí.

AURELIO¿Quieres que responda yo?

FÁTIMAResponde.

AURELIODigo que no.

ZAHARA¡Ay, Alá! ¿Qué es lo que oí? 220

AURELIO Yo digo que no conviene  
pedirme lo que pedís,  
porque muy poco advertís  
el peligro que contiene.

FÁTIMA ¿Qué peligro puede haber, 225  
quiriéndolo tu señora?

AURELIOLa ofensa que, siendo mora,  
a Mahoma viene a hacer.

ZAHARA ¡Déjame a mí con Mahoma,  
que agora no es mi señor, 230  
porque soy sierva de Amor,  
que el alma subjeta y doma!  
¡Echa ya el pecho por tierra  
y levantarte he a mi cielo!

AURELIOSeñora, tengo un recelo 235  
que me consume y atierra.

FÁTIMA ¿De qué te recelas? Di.

AURELIO Señora, de que no veo  
ningún camino o rodeo  
como complacerte a ti. 240

En mi ley no se recibe  
hacer yo lo que me ordenas;  
antes, con muy graves penas  
y amenazas lo prohíbe;  
y aun si bautismo tuvieras, 245  
siendo, como eres, casada,  
fuera cosa harto escusada  
si tal cosa me pidieras.

Por eso yo determino  
antes morir que hacer 250  
lo que pide tu querer,  
y en esto estaré contino.

ZAHARA Aurelio, ¿estás en tu seso?

AURELIO Y aun por estar tan en él  
soy para vos tan cruel. 255

ZAHARA ¡Ay, desdichado suceso!  
¿Que es posible que tan poco  
valgan mis ruegos contigo?

FÁTIMA Sin duda que este enemigo  
es muy cuerdo, o es muy loco. 260  
¡Perro! ¿Tanta fantasía?  
¿Pensáis que hablamos de veras?  
¡Antes de mal rayo mueras  
primero que pase el día!  
¡Ruín sin razón ni compás, 265

nacido de vil canalla!  
¿Pensábades ya triunfalla,  
perrazo, sin más ni más?

Comigo las has de haber,  
y de modo que te aviso 270  
que dirá el que nunca quiso:  
«¡Más le valiera querer!»

No estés, Zahara, descontenta,  
deja el remedio en mi mano,  
que a este perro cristiano 275  
yo le haré que se arrepienta.

ZAHARA No es bien que por mal se lleve.

FÁTIMANi aun bien llevado por bien.

ZAHARACese, Aurelio, tu desdén.

FÁTIMACon eso el perro se atreve. 280

Ven, señora, al aposento;  
que, en esta pena crecida,  
o yo perderé la vida,  
o tú ternás tu contento.

*(Sálense las dos y queda AURELIO solo.)*

AURELIO ¡Padre del cielo, en cuya fuerte diestra 285  
está el gobierno de la tierra y cielo,  
cuyo poder acá y allá se muestra  
con amoroso, justo y sancto celo,  
Si tu luz, si tu mano no me adiestra  
a salir deste caos, temo y recelo 290  
que, como el cuerpo está en prisión esquiva,

también el alma ha de quedar cautiva!

En Vos, Virgen Santísima María,  
entre Dios y los hombres medianera,  
de mi mar incierto cierta guía, 295  
virgen entre las vírgenes primera;  
en Vos, Virgen y Madre, en Vos confía  
mi alma, que sin Vos en nadie espera,  
que la habéis de guiar con vuestra lumbre  
deste hondo valle a la más alta cumbre. 300

Bien sé que no merezco que se acuerde  
vuestra eterna memoria de mi daño,  
porque tengo en el alma fresco y verde  
el dulce fructo del amor extraño;  
mas vuestra alta clemencia, que no pierde 305  
oportunidad de hacer bien, mi mal tamaño  
remedie, que ya estoy casi perdido,  
de Scila y de Caribdis combatido.

Si el cuerpo esclavo está, está libre el alma,  
puesto que Silvia tiene parte en ella, 310  
y la amorosa trunfadora palma  
ha de llevar sola mi Silvia della.  
Ponga Zahara su amor, póngale en calma,  
que mi firmeza no hay pensar rompella,  
y aquello que a mi Dios y a Silvia debo, 315  
me hace que aun mirarla no me atrevo.

¿Dó estás, Silvia hermosa? ¿Qué destino,  
qué fuerza insana de implacable hado  
el curso de aquel próspero camino  
tan sin causa y razón nos ha cortado? 320  
¡Oh estrella, oh suerte, oh fortuna, oh signo!,  
si alguno de vosotros ha causado  
tanta perdición, desde aquí digo  
que mil cuentos de veces le maldigo.

Yo moriré por lo que al alma toca, 325  
antes que hacer lo que mi ama quiere;  
firme he de estar cual bien fundada roca  
que en torno el viento, el mar combate y hiere.  
Que sea mi vida mucha, o que sea poca,  
importa poco; sólo el que bien muere 330



puede decir que tiene larga vida,  
y el que mal, una muerte sin medida.

*(Éntrase AURELIO, y sale SAYAVEDRA, soldado cativo; LEONARDO, cativo, y SEBASTIÁN, muchacho cativo, a su tiempo.)*

SAYAVEDRA En la veloz carrera, apresuradas  
las horas del ligero tiempo veo,  
contra mí con el cielo conjuradas. 335

Queda atrás la esperanza, y no el deseo,  
y así la vida dél, la muerte della,  
el daño, el mal aunmentan que poseo.

¡Ay dura, inicua, inexorable estrella,  
cómo de los cabellos me has traído 340  
al terrible dolor que me atropella!

LEONARDO El llanto en tales tiempos es perdido,  
pues si llorando el cielo se ablandara,  
ya le hubieran mis lágrimas movido.

A la triste fortuna alegre cara 345  
debe mostrar el pecho generoso:  
que a cualquier mal, buen ánimo repara.

SAYAVEDRA El cuello enflaquecido al trabajoso  
yugo de esclavitud amarga puesto,  
bien ves que a cuerpo y alma es peligroso; 350  
y más aquel que tiene prosupuesto  
de dejarse morir antes que pase  
un punto el modo del vivir honesto.

LEONARDO Si acaso yo tus obras imitase,  
forzoso me sería que al momento 355  
en brazos de la hambre me entregase.

Bien sé que en el cativo no hay contento;

mas no quiero crecer yo mi fatiga,  
tiniendo en ella siempre el pensamiento.

A mi patrona tengo por amiga; 360  
trátame cual me ves: huelgo y paseo;  
«cautivo soy», el que quisiere diga.

SAYAVEDRA Triunfa, Leonardo, y goza ese trofeo;  
que, si por ser cautivo le hermoseas,  
yo sé que es torpe, desgraciado y feo. 365

LEONARDO Amigo Sayavedra, si te arreas  
de ser predicador, ésta no es tierra  
do alcanzarás el fructo que desees.

Déjate deso y escucha de la guerra  
que el gran Filipo hace nueva cierta, 370  
y un poco la pasión de ti destierra.

Dicen que una fragata de Biserta  
llegó esta noche allí con un cativo  
que ha dado vida a mi esperanza muerta.

Quitóle libertad el hado esquivo, 375  
de Málaga pasando a Barcelona;  
cativóle Mamí, cosario esquivo.

En su manera muestra ser persona  
de calidad, y que es ejercitado  
en el duro ejercicio de Belona. 380

Dice el número cierto que ha pasado  
de soldados a España forasteros,  
sin los tres tercios nuestros que han bajado;

los príncipes, señores, caballeros,  
que a servir a Filipo van de gana; 385  
los naturales y los extranjeros,

y la muestra hermosísima lozana  
que en Badajoz hacer el rey pretende  
de la pujanza de la Unión Cristiana.

Dice con esto que ninguno entiende 390  
el disinio del rey, y el hablar desto,  
al grande y al pequeño se defiende.

SAYAVEDRA Rompeos ya, cielos, y llovednos presto  
el librador de nuestra amarga guerra  
si ya en el suelo no le tenéis puesto. 395

Cuando llegué cativo y vi esta tierra  
tan nombrada en el mundo, que en su seno  
tantos piratas cubre, acoge y cierra,  
no pude al llanto detener el freno,  
que, a pesar mío, sin saber lo que era, 400  
me vi el marchito rostro de agua lleno.

Ofrecióse a mis ojos la ribera  
y el monte donde el grande Carlo tuvo  
levantada en el aire su bandera,  
y el mar que tanto esfuerzo no sostuvo, 405  
pues, movido de envidia de su gloria,  
airado entonces más que nunca estuvo.

Estas cosas volviendo en mi memoria,  
las lágrimas trujeran a los ojos,  
forzados de desgracia tan notoria. 410

Pero si el alto Cielo en darme enojos  
no está con mi ventura conjurado,  
y aquí no lleva muerte mis despojos,  
cuando me vea en más seguro estado,  
o si la suerte o si el favor me ayuda 415  
a verme ante Filipo arrodillado,

mi lengua balbuciente y casi muda  
pienso mover en la real presencia,  
de adulación y de mentir desnuda,  
diciendo: «Alto señor, cuya potencia 420  
sujetas trae las bárbaras naciones  
al desabrido yugo de obediencia:

a quien los negros indios con sus dones  
reconocen honesto vasallaje,  
trayendo el oro acá de sus rincones; 425  
despierte en tu real pecho coraje  
la desvergüenza con que una bicoca  
aspira de contino a hacerte ultraje.

Su gente es mucha, mas su fuerza es poca,

desnuda, mal armada, que no tiene 430  
en su defensa fuerte muro o roca.

Cada uno mira si tu Armada viene,  
para dar a los pies el cargo y cura  
de conservar la vida que sostiene.

De la esquiva prisión, amarga y dura, 435  
adonde mueren quince mil cristianos,  
tienes la llave de su cerradura.

Todos, cual yo, de allá, puestas las manos,  
las rodillas por tierra, sollozando,  
cerrados de tormentos inhumanos, 440

poderoso señor, t'están rogando  
vuelvas los ojos de misericordia  
a los suyos, que están siempre llorando;

y, pues te deja agora la discordia  
que tanto te ha oprimido y fatigado, 445  
y Amor en darte sigue la concordia,

haz, ¡oh buen rey!, que sea por ti acabado  
lo que con tanta audacia y valor tanto  
fue por tu amado padre comenzado.

El sólo ver que vas pondrá un espanto 450  
en la bárbara gente, que adivino  
ya desde aquí su pérdida y quebranto».

¿Quién duda que el real pecho benigno  
no se muestre, oyendo la tristeza  
donde están estos míseros contino? 455

Mas, ¡ay, cómo se muestra la bajeza  
de mi tan rudo ingenio, pues pretende  
hablar tan bajo ante tan alta alteza!

Mas la ocasión es tal, que me defiende.  
Pero a todo silencio poner quiero, 460  
que creo que mi plática te ofende,  
y al trabajo he de ir adonde muero.

*(Aquí entra SEBASTIÁN, muchacho, en hábito de esclavo.)*

SEBASTIÁN ¿Hase visto tal maldad?

¿Hay tierra tan sin concordia,  
do falta misericordia 465  
y sobra la crueldad?

¿Dónde se hallará disculpa  
de maldad tan insolente:  
que pague el que es inocente  
por el que tiene la culpa? 470

¡Oh cielos! ¿Qué es lo que he visto?  
¡Éste sí que es pueblo injusto,  
donde se tiene por gusto  
matar los siervos de Cristo!

¡Oh España, patria querida!, 475  
mira cuál es nuestra suerte,  
que si allá das justa muerte,  
quitas acá justa vida.

LEONARDO Sebastián, dinos qué tienes,  
que hablas razones tales. 480

SEBASTIÁN Una infinidad de males  
y una penuria de bienes.

LEONARDO En ser, como eres, esclavo  
se encierra todo dolor.

SEBASTIÁN Otra pena muy mayor 485  
me tiene a mí tan al cabo.

SAYAVEDRA ¿De dónde puede causarse  
la pena que dices brava?

SEBASTIÁN De una vida que hoy se acaba  
para jamás acabarse. 490

«Ya sabés que aquí en Argel  
se supo cómo en Valencia  
murió por justa sentencia  
un morisco de Sargel;  
digo que en Sargel vivía, 495  
puesto que era de Aragón,  
y, al olor de su nación,  
pasó el perro en Berbería;  
y aquí cosario se hizo,  
con tan prestas crueles manos, 500  
que con sangre de cristianos  
la suya bien satisfizo.

Andando en corso fue preso,  
y, como fue conocido,  
fue en la Inquisición metido, 505  
do le formaron proceso;  
y allí se le averiguó  
cómo, siendo batizado,  
de Cristo había renegado  
y en África se pasó, 510  
y que, por su industria y manos,  
traidores tratos esquivos,  
habían sido cautivos  
más de seiscientos cristianos;  
y, como se le probaron 515  
tantas maldades y errores,  
los justos inquisidores  
al fuego le condenaron.

Súpose del moro acá,  
y la muerte que le dieron, 520  
porque luego la escribieron  
los moriscos que hay allá.

La triste nueva sabida  
de los parientes del muerto,  
juran y hacen concierto 525  
de dar al fuego otra vida.

Buscaron luego un cristiano  
para pagar este escote,  
y halláronle sacerdote,

y de nación valenciano. 530

Prendieron éste a gran priesa  
para ejecutar su hecho,  
porque vieron que en el pecho  
traía la cruz de Montesa,

y esta señal de victoria 535  
que le cupo en buena suerte,  
si le dio en el suelo muerte,  
en el cielo le dio gloria;

porque estos ciegos sin luz,  
que en él tal señal han visto, 540  
pensando matar a Cristo,  
matan al que trae su cruz.

De su amo lo compraron,  
y, aunque eran pobres, a un punto  
el dinero todo junto 545  
de limosna lo allegaron.

En nuestro pueblo cristiano,  
por Dios se pide a la gente,  
para sanar al doliente,  
no para matar al sano; 550  
mas entre esta descreída  
gente y maldito lugar,  
no piden para sanar,  
mas para quitar la vida.

Hoy en poder de sayones 555  
he visto al siervo de Dios,  
no sólo puesto entre dos,  
sino entre dos mil sayones.

Iba el sacerdote justo  
entre injusta gente puesto, 560  
marchito y humilde el gesto,  
a morir por Dios con gusto.

En darle penas dobladas  
todo el pueblo se desvela:  
cual sus blancas canas pela, 565  
cual le da mil bofetadas.

Las manos que a Dios tuvieron  
mil veces, hoy son tenidas

de dos sogas retorcidas  
con que atrás se las asieron; 570  
al yugo de otro cordel,  
puesto el cuello humilde lleva,  
haciendo seis moros prueba  
cuánto pueden tirar dél.

A ningún lado miraba 575  
que descubra un solo amigo:  
que todo el pueblo enemigo  
en torno le rodeaba.

Con voluntad tan dañada  
procuran su pena y lloro, 580  
que se tuvo por mal moro  
quien no le dio bofetada.

A la marina llegaron  
con la víctima inocente,  
do con barbaria insolente 585  
a un áncora le ligaron.

Dos áncoras a una mano  
vi yo allí en contrario celo:  
una, de hierro, en el suelo;  
otra, de fe, en el cristiano. 590

Y, la una a la otra asida,  
la de hierro se convierte  
a dar cruda y presta muerte;  
la de fe, a dar larga vida.

Ved si es bien contrario el celo 595  
de las dos en esta guerra:  
la una en el suelo afierra;  
la otra se ase del cielo;

y, aunque corra tal fortuna  
que espante al cuerpo y al alma, 600  
como si estuviera en calma,  
no hay desasirse la una.

Sin hierro al hierro ligado,  
el siervo de Dios se hallaba,  
y en su cuerpo atado estaba 605  
espíritu desatado.

El cuerpo no se rodea,



que le ata más de un cordel;  
mas el espíritu dél  
todos los cielos pasea. 610

La canalla, que se enseña  
a hacer nueva crueldad,  
trujo luego cantidad  
de seca y humosa leña,  
y una espaciosa corona 615  
hicieron luego con ella,  
dejando encerrada en ella  
la sancta humilde persona;  
y, aunque no tienen sosiego  
hasta verle ya espirar, 620  
para más le atormentar,  
encienden lejos el fuego.

Quieren, como el cocinero  
que a su oficio más mirase,  
que se ase y no se abrase 625  
la carne de aquel cordero.

Sube el humo al aire vano,  
y a veces le da en los ojos;  
quema el fuego los despojos  
que le vienen más a mano; 630  
vase arrugando el vestido  
con el calor violento,  
y el fuego, poco contento,  
busca lo más escondido.

Esperad, simple cordero, 635  
que esta ardiente llama insana,  
si os ha quemado la lana,  
os quiere abrasar el cuero.

Combátenle fuegos dos:  
el uno, humano y visible; 640  
el otro, sancto invisible,  
que es fuego de amor de Dios.

Yo no sé a cuál más debía,  
puesto que a los dos pagaba:  
al que el cuerpo le abrasaba 645  
o al que el alma le encendía.

Los que estaban a miralle,  
la ira así les pervierte,  
que mueren por darle muerte  
y entretiénense en matalle. 650

Y, en medio deste tormento,  
no movió el sancto varón  
la lengua a formar razón  
que fuese de sentimiento;  
antes dicen, y yo he visto, 655  
que, si alguna vez hablaba,  
en el aire resonaba  
el eco o nombre de Cristo;  
y cuando en el agonía  
última el triste se vio, 660  
cinco o seis veces llamó  
la Virgen Sancta María.

Al fuego el aire le atiza,  
y con tal ardor revuelve,  
que poco a poco resuelve 665  
el sancto cuerpo en ceniza.

Mas, ya que morir le vieron,  
tantas piedras le tiraron,  
que las piedras acabaron  
lo que las llamas no hicieron. 670

¡Oh Santisteban segundo,  
que me asegura tu celo  
que miraste abierto el cielo  
en tu muerte desde el mundo!

Queda el cuerpo en la marina, 675  
quemado y apedreado;  
el alma el vuelo ha tomado  
hacia la región divina.

Queda el moro muy gozoso  
del injusto y crudo hecho; 680  
el turco está satisfecho;  
el cristiano, temeroso.»

Yo he venido a referiros  
lo que no pudistes ver,  
si os lo ha dejado entender 685

mis lágrimas y suspiros.

SAYAVEDRA Deja el llanto, amigo, ya;  
que no es bien que se haga duelo  
por los que se van al cielo,  
sino por quien queda acá: 690  
que, aunque parece ofendida  
a humanos ojos su suerte,  
el acabar con tal muerte  
es comenzar mejor vida.

Mide por otro nivel 695  
tu llanto, que no hay paciencia  
que las muertes de Valencia  
se venguen acá en Argel.

Muéstrase allá la justicia  
en castigar la maldad; 700  
muestra acá la crueldad  
cuánto puede la injusticia.

SEBASTIÁN En tan amarga querella,  
¿quién detendrá los gemidos?  
Ellos con culpa punidos; 705  
nosotros, muertos sin ella.

LEONARDO Bastábanos ser cautivos,  
sin temer más desconciertos,  
pues si allá queman los muertos,  
abrasan acá los vivos. 710

Usa Valencia otros modos  
en castigar renegados,  
no en público sentenciados:  
¡mueran a tósico todos!

Mas un moro viene acá: 715  
no estemos juntos aquí;  
Sayavedra, por allí,

tú, Sebastián, por allá.

## Segunda jornada

YZUF y AURELIO.

YZUF Trecientos escudos di,  
Aurelio, por la doncella.  
Esto di al turco, que a ella  
alma y vida le rendí;  
y es poco, según es bella. 5

Vendiómela de aburrido,  
que dice que no ha podido,  
mientras la tuvo en poder,  
en ningún modo atraer  
al amoroso partido. 10

Púsela en casa de un moro,  
sin osarla traer acá,  
y allí está donde ella está  
todo mi bien y tesoro,  
y la gloria que amor da. 15

Allí se ve la bondad  
junto con la crueldad  
mayor que se vio en la tierra;  
y juntas, sin hacer guerra,  
belleza y honestidad. 20

No pueden prometimientos  
ablandar su duro pecho.  
Veme en lágrimas deshecho,  
y ofrece siempre a los vientos  
cuantos servicios la he hecho. 25

No echa de ver su ventura,  
ni cómo el dolor me apura  
poco a poco suspirando;  
antes, cuando yo más blando,  
entonces ella más dura. 30

A casa quiero traella

y reclinar en tu mano  
mi gozo más soberano:  
quizá tú podrás movella,  
siendo, como ella, cristiano; 35  
y desde aquí te prometo  
que, si conduces a efecto  
mi amorosa voluntad,  
de darte la libertad  
y serte amigo perfecto. 40

AURELIO En todo lo que quisieres,  
he, señor, de complacerte,  
por ser tu esclavo y por verte  
que melindres de mujeres  
te tengan de aquesa suerte. 45  
¿De qué nación es la dama  
que te enciende en esa llama  
sin mirar a su interés?

YZUFEspañola dicen que es.

AURELIO¿Y el nombre?

YZUFSilvia se llama. 50

AURELIO ¿Silvia? Una Silvia venía  
adonde yo cautivé,  
y, según que la miré,  
no en tanto allá se tenía.

YZUFÉsa es: yo la compré. 55

AURELIO Si ella es, yo sé decir

que es hermosa sin mentir,  
y que no es tan cruda altiva,  
que su condición esquivada  
a ninguno hace morir. 60

Traéla a casa, señor, luego,  
y ten las riendas al miedo;  
y tú verás, si yo puedo,  
cómo a mis manos y ruego  
amaina el casto desnudo. 65

YZUF Yo voy; y, mientras se ordena  
su venida, por estrena  
del contento que me has dado,  
yo diré a mi renegado  
que te quite esa cadena. 70

*(Vase YZUF y queda AURELIO solo.)*

AURELIO ¿Qué es esto, cielos? ¿Qué he oído?  
¿Es mi Silvia? Silvia es, cierto.  
¿Es posible, oh hado incierto,  
que he de ver quien me ha tenido  
vivo en muerte, en vida muerto? 75

Ésta es mi Silvia, a quien llamo,  
a quien quiero y a quien amo  
más que a todo lo del suelo.  
¡Gracias hago y doy al cielo,  
que a los dos ha dado un amo! 80

Tregua tendrán mis enojos  
entre tanta desventura,  
pues, por estraña ventura,  
vendrán a mirar mis ojos  
tu sin igual hermosura. 85

Y si della está rendido  
mi amo, está conocido  
que quien la supo mirar

es imposible escapar  
de preso o de malherido. 90

Y, pues que con tales bríos  
él descubre sus amores,  
si nos vemos, sus dolores  
se callarán y los míos  
te diré, que son mayores. 95

Y, mientras pudiere ver  
tu hermosura y gentil ser,  
templaré mi desconsuelo,  
hasta que disponga el cielo  
de entrambos lo que ha de ser. 100

*(Vase AURELIO, y entran mercaderes moros, primero y segundo; y padre y madre y dos hijos cautivos. Un pregonero; MAMÍ, soldado cosario.)*

MERCADER En fin, Aydar, ¿que en Cerdeña  
habéis hecho la galima?

MAMÍSÍ; y aun no de poca estima,  
según se vio en la reseña.

MERCADER 2.º Dícenos que os dieron caza 105  
de Nápoles las galeras.

MAMÍSÍ dieron, mas no de veras,  
que el peso las embaraza.

El ladrón que va a hurtar,  
para no dar en el lazo, 110  
ha de ir muy sin embarazo  
para huir, para alcanzar.

Las galeras de cristianos,  
sabad, si no lo sabéis,  
que tienen falta de pies 115



y que no les sobran manos;  
y esto lo causa que van  
tan llenas de mercancías,  
que, si bogasen dos días,  
un pontón no tomarán. 120

Nosotros, a la ligera,  
listos, vivos como el fuego,  
y, en dándonos caza, luego  
pico al viento y ropa fuera,  
las obras muertas abajo, 125  
árbol y entena en crujía,  
y así hacemos nuestra vía  
contra el viento sin trabajo;  
y el soldado más lucido,  
el más flaco y más membrudo, 130  
luego se muestra desnudo  
y del bogavante asido.

Pero allá tiene la honra  
el cristiano en tal extremo,  
que asir en un trance el remo 135  
le parece que es deshonra;  
y, mientras ellos allá  
en sus trece están honrados,  
nosotros, dellos cargados,  
venimos sin honra acá. 140

MERCADER 1.º Esa honra y ese engaño  
nunca salga de su pecho,  
pues nuestro mayor provecho  
nace de su propio daño.

Un mozo de poca edad 145  
destos sardos comprar quiero.

MAMÍYa los trae el pregonero  
vendiendo por la ciudad.

MERCADER 2.º ¿Hay españoles entre ellos?

MAMÍ Sí hay; que también tomamos 150  
una nave, y allí hallamos  
hasta viente y cuatro dellos.

*(Entra el pregonero, con el padre y la madre y los dos muchachos y un niño de teta a los pechos.)*

PREGONERO ¿Hay quien compre los perritos,  
y el viejo, que es el perrazo,  
y la vieja y su embarazo? 155  
Pues, ¡a fe que son bonitos!  
Déste me dan ciento y dos;  
déste docientos me dan;  
pero no los llevarán.  
¡Pasá acá, perrazo, vos! 160

HIJO ¿Qué es esto, madre? ¿Por dicha  
véndennos aquestos moros?

MADRE Sí, hijo; que sus tesoros  
los crece nuestra desdicha.

PREGONERO ¿Hay quien a comprar acierte 165  
el niño y la madre junto?

MADRE ¡Oh amargo y terrible punto,  
más terrible que la muerte!

PADRE ¡Sosegad, señora, el pecho;  
que si mi Dios ha ordenado 170

ponernos en este estado,  
Él sabe por qué lo ha hecho!

MADRE Destos hijos tengo pena,  
que no sé por dónde han de ir.

PADREDejad, señora, cumplir 175  
lo que el alto cielo ordena.

MERCADER 1.º ¿Qué han de dar déste, decí?

PREGONEROCiento y dos escudos dan.

MERCADER ¿Por ciento y diez darlo han?

PREGONERONo, si no pasáis de ahí. 180

MERCADER ¿Está sano?

PREGONEROSano está.

MERCADER *Ábrele la boca.*

Abre; no tengas temor.

HIJO¡No me la saque, señor;  
que ella misma se cairá!

MERCADER ¿Piensa que sacalle quiero 185  
el rapaz alguna muela?

HIJO ¡Paso, señor, no me duela;  
tenga, quedo, que me muero!

MERCADER 2.º Destotro, ¿cuánto dan dél?

PREGONERO Docientos escudos dan. 190

MERCADER 2.º ¿Y por cuánto le darán?

PREGONERO Trecientos piden por él.

MERCADER 1.º Si te compro, ¿serás bueno?

HIJO Aunque vos no me compréis,  
seré bueno.

MERCADER 2.º ¿Serlo heis? 195

HIJO Ya lo soy, sin ser ajeno.

MERCADER 1.º Por éste doy ciento y treinta.

PREGONERO Vuestro es: venga el dinero.

MERCADER 1.º En casa dároslo quiero.

MADRE El corazón me revienta. 200

MERCADER 1.º Comprad, compañero, esotro.  
Ven, niño, vente a holgar.

HIJO No, señor; no he de dejar  
mi madre por ir con otro.

MADRE Ve, hijo, que ya no eres 205  
sino del que te ha comprado.

HIJO ¡Ay, madre! ¿Habéisme dejado?

MADRE ¡Ay, cielo, cuán crudo eres!

MORO Anda, rapaz, ven conmigo.

HIJO Vámonos juntos, hermano. 210

HERMANO No puedo, ni está en mi mano.

PADRE El cielo vaya contigo.

MADRE ¡Oh, mi bien y mi alegría,  
no se olvide de ti Dios!

HIJO ¿Dónde me llevan sin vos, 215

padre mío y madre mía?

MADRE ¿Quieres que hable, señor,  
a mi hijo aun no un momento?  
Dame este breve contento,  
pues es eterno el dolor. 220

MORO Cuanto quisieres le di,  
pues será la vez postrera.

MADRESÍ, pues ésta es la primera  
que en este trance me vi.

HIJO Tenedme con vos aquí, 225  
madre, que voy no sé dónde.

MADRELa ventura se te asconde,  
hijo, pues yo te parí.

Hase escurecido el cielo,  
turbado los elementos, 230  
conjurado mar y vientos  
todos en tu desconsuelo

No conoces tu desdicha,  
aunque estás bien dentro della,  
puesto que el no conocella 235  
lo puedes tener a dicha.

Lo que te ruego, alma mía,  
pues el verte se me impide,  
es que nunca se te olvide  
rezar el Avemaría; 240

que esta reina de bondad,  
de virtud y gracia llena,  
ha de limar tu cadena  
y volver tu libertad.

MORO ¡Mirad la perra cristiana 245  
qué consejo da al muchacho!  
¡Sí que no estaba él borracho  
como tú, sin seso, vana!

HIJO Madre, al fin, ¿que no me quedo?  
¿Que me llevan estos moros? 250

MADRE Contigo van mis tesoros.

HIJO A fe que me ponen miedo.

MADRE Más miedo me queda a mí  
de verte ir donde vas,  
que nunca te acordarás 255  
de Dios, de ti, ni de mí;  
porque esos tus tiernos años,  
¿qué prometen sino aquesto,  
entre inicua gente puesto,  
fabricadora de engaños? 260

PREGONERO ¡Calla, vieja y mala pieza,  
si no quieres, por más mengua,  
que lo que dice tu lengua  
que lo pague la cabeza!  
¿Destro hay quien me dé mas? 265  
Que es mas bello y más lozano  
que no es el otro su hermano.

MERCADER 2.º ¡Sus!, ¿en cuánto le darás?

PREGONERO ¿No os he dicho que trecientos  
escudos de oro por cuenta? 270

MERCADER 2.º ¿Quies docientos y cincuenta?

PREGONERO Es dar voces a los vientos.

MERCADER 2.º Enamorado me ha  
el donaire del garzón;  
yo los doy en conclusión. 275

PREGONERO Dinero o señal me da.

MERCADER 2.º Cómo te llamas me di.

HIJO Señor, Francisco me llamo.

MERCADER 2.º Pues que has mudado de amo,  
muda el Francisco en Mamí. 280

HIJO ¿Para qué es mudar el nombre,  
si no ha de mudar la fe?

MERCADER 2.º Eso agora no lo sé.

HIJO No hay castigo que me asombre.

MERCADER 2.º Alto, venidos tras mí. 285



HIJO ¡Amados padres, adiós!

PADRE ¡El mismo vaya con vos!

MADRE ¡Francisco!

MERCADER 2.º No, no: Mamí.

HIJO Eso no, señor patrón:  
Francisco me has de llamar. 290

MERCADER 2.º El palo os hará trocar  
el nombre y aun la intención.

HIJO Pues me aparta el hado insano  
de vos, señor, ¿qué mandáis?

PADRESólo, hijo, que viváis 295  
como bueno y fiel cristiano.

MADRE Hijo, no las amenazas,  
no los gustos y regalos,  
no los azotes y palos,  
no los conciertos y trazas, 300  
no todo cuanto tesoro  
cubre el suelo, el cielo visto,  
te mueva a dejar a Cristo  
por seguir al pueblo moro.

HIJO En mí se verá, si puedo, 305

y mi buen Jesús me ayuda,  
cómo en mi alma no muda  
la fe, la promesa o miedo.

PREGONERO ¡Oh, qué cristiano se muestra  
el rapaz! Pues ¡yo os prometo 310  
que alcéis con sancto aprieto  
la flecha y la mano diestra!

Estos rapaces cristianos,  
al principio muchos lloros,  
y luego se hacen moros 315  
mejor que los más ancianos.

*(Sálense, y entran YZUF y SILVIA.)*

YZUF Dejad, Silvia, el llanto agora;  
poned tregua al ansia brava,  
que no os compré para esclava,  
sino para ser señora. 320

Mirad que imagino y creo  
que vuestra gran desventura,  
para daros más ventura  
ha traído este rodeo.

Con vos Fortuna en su ley 325  
no usa de nuevas leyes:  
que esclavos se han visto reyes,  
aunque vos sois más que rey.

Limpiad los húmedos ojos,  
que sujetan cuanto miran, 330  
y, al tiempo que se retiran,  
llevan de almas los despojos;

y no cubra el blanco velo  
esa divina hermosura,  
que es como la nieve pura, 335  
que impide la luz del cielo.

SILVIA Esme ya tan natural,  
señor, el llanto y tormento,  
que, si me deja un momento,  
lo tengo por mayor mal; 340  
y, aunque así estoy, estaré  
alegre al obedeceros,  
pues distes tantos dineros  
por mí sin saber por qué;  
que, si acaso lo habéis hecho 345  
pensando sacar de mí  
gran rescate, desde aquí  
se apoca vuestro provecho;  
porque os prometo, señor,  
que de miseria y pobreza 350  
tengo cuanto de riqueza,  
si la riqueza es dolor;  
y de dolor soy tan rica,  
cuanto, por darme pasión,  
este caudal la ocasión 355  
por puntos le multiplica.

YZUF Silvia, vives engañada:  
que yo no quiero de ti  
sino que quieras de mí  
ser servida y respectada; 360  
que el provecho que yo espero,  
Silvia, de haberte comprado,  
es ver tu rostro estremado  
y no doblar el dinero;  
que el Amor, que se mejora 365  
en mostrar su fuerza brava,  
me ha hecho esclavo de mi esclava,  
esclava que es mi señora;  
y quedo tan satisfecho  
de perder la libertad, 370  
que alabo la crueldad  
deste crudo y nuevo hecho.  
Y, porque lo que aquí digo

lo entiendas, Silvia, mejor,  
nunca me llames señor, 375  
sino siervo o caro amigo.

SILVIA Aunque tamaña mudanza  
hace fortuna en mi estado,  
no creo se me ha olvidado  
el término de crianza. 380

Bien sé cómo he de llamarte,  
y sé que es de obligación  
que en lo que fuera razón  
procure de contentarte.

YZUF Tu habla tan comedida, 385  
tu donaire, gracia y ser,  
claro me dan a entender  
que eres, Silvia, bien nacida;  
y, aunque pudiera esperar  
de ti un rescate crecido, 390  
a tal término he venido,  
que tú me has de rescatar.

Mas, en tanto que a la clara  
veas cuanto hago por ti,  
ven, Silvia, vente tras mí: 395  
verás a tu ama Zahara.

SILVIA Vamos, señor, en buen hora.

YZUF Silvia, no tanto «señor»,  
pues mi ventura y amor  
os ha hecho a vos mi señora. 400

*(Sale ZAHARA.)*

ZAHARA Seáis, Yzuf, bien llegado.  
¿Cúya es la esclava rumía?

SILVIAVuestra soy, señora mía.

YZUFVerdad es: yo la he comprado.

ZAHARA Por cierto, la compra es bella 405  
si cual hermosa es honesta.  
Decid, señor, ¿cuánto os cuesta?

YZUFDado he mil doblas por ella.

ZAHARA ¿Espera ser rescatada?

YZUFDe muy rica tiene fama. 410

ZAHARA¿Su nombre?

YZUFSilvia se llama.

ZAHARA¿Es doncella o es casada?

SILVIA Casada soy y doncella.

ZAHARA¿Cómo es eso, Silvia? Di.

SILVIA Señora, ello es así, 415  
que así lo quiso mi estrella.

El cielo me dio marido,  
no para que le gozase,  
sino para que quedase  
yo perdida y él perdido. 420

*(Aquí entra un moro diciendo:)*

MORO Yzuf, a llamarte envía  
apriesa el rey nuestro, Azán.

YZUF ¿Dónde está agora?

MORO En Duán,  
metido en grande agonía.

Amet, jenízar agá, 425  
y los bolucos bajíes,  
y también los debajíes  
y oldajes están allá.

Hanse juntado a consejo  
sobre que es averiguado 430  
que el rey de España ha juntado  
de guerra grande aparejo.

Dicen que va a Portugal,  
mas ténese no sea maña;  
y es bien que tema su saña 435  
Argel, que le hace más mal.

En la guerra hay mil ensayos  
de fraude y de astucia llenos:  
acullá suenan los truenos  
y acá disparan los rayos. 440

YZUF Vamos: quel cielo, que toma

por suya nuestra defensa,  
a España hará, con su ofensa,  
sujeta y sierva a Mahoma.

Y vos, señora, ordenad 445  
a Silvia lo que ha de hacer;  
y vos, Silvia, a su querer  
sujetad la voluntad.

*(Vanse los dos, y quedan SILVIA y ZAHARA solas.)*

ZAHARA Cristiana, di: ¿de adónde eres?  
¿Eres pobre, o eres rica? 450  
¿De suerte ensalzada, o chica?  
No me lo niegues, si quieres,  
porque soy, cual tú, mujer,  
y no de entrañas tan duras  
que tus tristes desventuras 455  
no me hayan de enternecer.

SILVIA Señora, soy de Granada,  
y de suerte así abatida,  
cual lo muestra el ser vendida  
a cada paso y comprada. 460  
Dicen que fui rica un tiempo,  
pero toda mi riqueza  
se ha vuelto en mayor pobreza  
y ha pasado con el tiempo.

ZAHARA ¿Has algún tiempo tenido 465  
enamorado deseo?

SILVIA Al estado en que me veo,  
el crudo Amor me ha traído.

ZAHARA ¿Fuiste acaso bien querida?

SILVIAFuilo; y quise con ventaja 470  
tal, que apenas la mortaja  
borrará fe tan subida.

ZAHARA ¿Fuiste querida primero,  
o empezó el amor de ti?

SILVIAPrimero querida fui 475  
del que quise, querré y quiero.

ZAHARA ¿Es mozo?

SILVIAY aun gentilhombre.

ZAHARA¿Es cristiano?

SILVIA Pues ¡qué!, ¿moro?  
¡No sale de su decoro  
quien ha de cristiano el nombre! 480

ZAHARA ¿Y es pecado querer bien  
a un moro?

SILVIA Yo no sé nada;  
sé que es cosa reprobada,  
y a cristianas no está bien.

ZAHARA ¿Y querer mora a cristiano? 485



SILVIA Eso tú mejor lo entiendes.

ZAHARA ¡Ay, Silvia, cómo me ofendes  
y me lastimas temprano!

SILVIA ¿Yo, mi señora? ¿En qué suerte?

ZAHARA Escucha y te lo diré; 490  
que, en oyéndome, bien sé  
que vendrás de mí a dolerte.

«Has de saber, ¡oh Silvia!, que estos días  
partieron deste puerto con buen tiempo  
doce bajeles, de cosarios todos, 495  
y con próspero viento caminaron  
la vuelta de las islas de Cerdeña;  
y allí, en las calas, vueltas y revueltas,  
y puntas que la mar hace y la tierra,  
se fueron a esconder, estando alerta 500  
si algún bajel de Génova o de España,  
o de otra nación, con que no fuese  
francesa, por el mar se descubría.  
En esto, un bravo viento se levanta,  
que maestral se llama, cuya furia 505  
dicen los marineros que es tan fuerte,  
que las tupidas velas y las jarcias  
del más recio navío y más armado  
no pueden resistirla, y es forzoso  
acudir al abrigo más cercano, 510  
si su rigor acaso lo concede.  
Las levantadas ondas, el ruido  
del atrevido viento detenía  
los cosarios bajeles en las calas,  
sin dejarles salir al mar abierto; 515  
y en otra parte, con furor insano,

mostrando su braveza fatigaba  
una galera de cristiana gente  
y de riquezas llena, que, corriendo  
por el hinchado mar sin remo alguno, 520  
venía a su albedrío, temerosa  
de ser sorbida de las bravas ondas;  
pero después, a cabo de tres días,  
del recio mar y viento contrastada,  
descubrió tierra, y fue el descubrimiento 525  
de su mayor dolor y desventura,  
porque a la misma isla de San Pedro  
vino a parar, adonde recogidos  
estaban los bajeles enemigos,  
los cuales, de la presa cudiciosos, 530  
salen, y de furor bélico armados,  
la galera acometen destrozada  
y de solos deseos defendida.  
Una pelota pasa en el momento  
al capitán el pecho, y a su lado 535  
del lusitano fuerte, muerto cae  
un caballero ilustre valenciano.  
El robo, las riquezas, los cativos  
que los turcos hallaron en el seno  
de la triste galera me ha contado 540  
un cristiano que allí perdió la dulce  
y amada libertad, para quitarla  
a quien quiere rendirse a su rendido.»  
Este cristiano, Silvia, este cristiano;  
este cristiano es, Silvia, quien me tiene 545  
fuera del ser que a moras es debido,  
fuera de mi contento y alegría,  
fuera de todo gusto, y estoy fuera,  
que es lo peor, de todo mi sentido.  
Compróme mi marido, y está en casa; 550  
y, puesto que con lágrimas y ruegos,  
con sospiros, ternezas y con dádivas,  
procuro de ablandar su duro pecho,  
al mío, que contino es blanda cera,  
el suyo se me muestra de diamante; 555

ansí que, Silvia, hermana, como has dicho  
que al cristiano no es lícito dé gusto  
en cosas del amor a mora alguna,  
tus razones me tienen ofendida,  
y con aquesas mesmas se defiende 560  
Aurelio, a quien ha hecho tan cristiano  
el cielo para darme a mí la muerte.

SILVIA¿Aurelio dices que por nombre tiene,  
señora, ese cristiano?

ZAHARAAnsí se llama.

SILVIALa galera que dices, según creo, 565  
se llamaba San Pablo, y era nueva  
y de la sacra religión de Malta.  
Yo en ella me perdí, y aun imagino  
que conozco a ese Aurelio, y es un mozo  
de rostro hermoso y de nación hispana. 570

ZAHARASin duda has acertado, ¡ay, Silvia mía!  
¿Quién es este enemigo de mi gloria?  
¿Es caballero, o rústico villano?  
Que todo lo parece en su apostura  
y dura condición: el talle ilustre, 575  
de la ciudad; la condición, del monte.

SILVIAA mí, pobre escudero me parece,  
según en la galera se trataba;  
que de su hacienda no sé más, señora.

ZAHARANi yo sé qué te diga, ¡oh Silvia, Silvia!, 580  
sino que a tal extremo soy venida,

que le tengo de amar, sea quien se fuere.  
Sólo te ruego que procures, Silvia,  
de ablandar esta tigre y fiera hircana,  
y atraerla con dulces sentimientos 585  
a que sienta la pena que padece  
esta mísera esclava de su esclavo;  
y si esto, Silvia, haces, yo te juro  
por todo el Alcorán de buscar modo  
cómo con brevedad alegre vuelvas 590  
al patrio dulce suelo deseado.

SILVIA Deja, señora, al cargo a Silvia dello,  
que tu verás lo que mi industria hace  
por gusto tuyo y por provecho mío.

(AURELIO, *solo*.)

AURELIO ¡Oh sancta edad, por nuestro mal pasada, 595  
a quien nuestros antiguos le pusieron  
el dulce nombre de la Edad dorada!  
¡Cuán seguros y libres discurrieron  
la redondez del suelo los que en ella  
la caduca mortal vida vivieron! 600  
No sonaba en los aires la querella  
del mísero cautivo, cuando alzaba  
la voz a maldecir su dura estrella.  
Entonces libertad dulce reinaba  
y el nombre odioso de la servidumbre 605  
en ningunos oídos resonaba.  
Pero, después que sin razón, sin lumbre,  
ciegos de la avaricia, los mortales,  
cargados de terrena pesadumbre,  
descubrieron los rubios minerales 610  
del oro que en la tierra se escondía,  
ocasión principal de nuestros males,  
este que menos oro poseía,

envidioso de aquel que, con más maña,  
más riquezas en uno recogía, 615

sembró la cruda y la mortal cizaña  
del robo, de la fraude y del engaño,  
del cambio injusto y trato con maraña.

Mas con ninguno hizo mayor daño  
que con la hambrienta, despiadada guerra, 620  
que al natural destruye y al estraño.

Ésta consume, abrasa, y echa por tierra,  
los reinos, los imperios populosos,  
y la paz hermosísima destierra,  
y sus fieros ministros, codiciosos 625  
más del rubio metal que de otra cosa,  
turban nuestros contentos y reposos.

Y, en la sangrienta guerra peligrosa,  
pudiendo con el filo de la espada  
acabar nuestra vida temerosa, 630

la guardan de prisiones rodeada,  
por ver si prometemos por librilla  
nuestra pobre riqueza mal lograda.

Y así, puede el que es pobre y que se halla  
puesto entre esta canalla al daño cierto 635  
su libertad a Dios encomendalla,

o contarse, viviendo, ya por muerto,  
como el que en rota nave y mar airado  
se halla solo, sin saber dó hay puerto.

Y no tengo por menos desdichado 640  
al que tiene con qué y el modo ignora  
cómo llegar al punto deseado,

porque esta gente, do bondad no mora,  
no dio jamás palabra que cumpliese,  
como falsa, sin ley, sin fe y traidora. 645

Guardará por su dios al interese,  
y do éste no interviene, no se espere  
que por sola virtud bondad hiciese.

Aquí en diverso traje veo que muere  
el ministro de Dios, y por su oficio 650  
más abatido es, peor se quiere,  
y el mancebo cristiano al torpe vicio

es dedicado desta gente perra,  
do consiste su gloria y ejercicio.  
¡Oh cielo santo! ¡Oh dulce, amada tierra! 655  
¡Oh Silvia! ¡Oh gloria de mi pensamiento!  
¿Quién de tu alegre vista me destierra?  
Pero, si no me engaño, pasos siento.  
Yzuf, mi amo, es éste que aquí viene.  
¡Cuán ajeno de sí le trae el tormento! 660

YZUF Quien con amor amargo se entretiene,  
y al duro yugo de su servidumbre  
el flaco cuello ya inclinado tiene,  
si del cielo no viene nueva lumbre  
que aquella ceguedad de los sentidos 665  
con claros rayos de razón alumbre,  
todos estos remedios son perdidos;  
que al fin irán por tierra derribados  
los amigos consejos más sabidos.  
Más viejos y más pláticos soldados 670  
tiene el rey a su mando y su servicio;  
déjeme a mí, que tengo otros cuidados;  
mejor será que el trabajoso oficio  
de reparar los fosos y muralla  
entregue al que de Amor aún es novicio; 675  
que yo más cruda y más fiera batalla  
espero a cada paso, ¡ay suerte dura!,  
que teme el alma y ha de atropellalla.  
¡Oh Silvia, reina de la hermosura!,  
por vos a los oficios doy de mano 680  
que pudieran honrarme y dar ventura.  
Pero, ¿qué es lo que he dicho? ¡Oh ciego insano!  
¿No vale más gozar de aquellos ojos,  
que ser señor del áureo suelo hispano?  
Tu beldad, Silvia, adoro aquí de hinojos. 685

*(AURELIO vuelve y, hallándole de rodillas, le dice:)*

AURELIO ¿Son éstos los despojos, señor mío,  
que el gran cuidado mío te procura?  
Por cierto que es locura averiguada  
mostrar tan derribada la esperanza.  
Ten, señor, confianza; espera un poco, 690  
que das muestras de loco en lo que haces.

YZUF Poco me satisfaces y contentas,  
si consolarme tientes con razones.  
¿Has visto las faciones de mi diosa?

AURELIO Señor, no he visto cosa. ¿Es ya venida? 695  
Si lo es, retraída está allá dentro.

YZUF Sí está, y aun en el centro de mi pecho.

AURELIO Ten cierto tu provecho desde hoy más.

YZUF Vamos, y verla has, y ten cuidado  
de lo que te he rogado, Aurelio amigo. 700

AURELIO El cielo será dello buen testigo.

*(Vanse, y sale FÁTIMA sola.)*

FÁTIMA El esperado punto es ya llegado  
que pide la no vista hechicería  
para poder domar el no domado  
pecho, que domará la ciencia mía. 705  
Por la región del cielo, el estrellado  
carro lleva la noche obscura y fría,  
y la ocasión me llama do haré cosas

horrendas, estupendas, espantosas.

El cabello dorado al aire suelto 710  
tiene de estar, y el cuerpo desceñido,  
descalzo el pie derecho, el rostro vuelto  
al mar adonde el sol se ha zabullido;  
al brazo este sartal será revuelto  
de las piedras preñadas que en el nido 715  
del águila se hallan, y esta cuerda  
con mi intención la virtud suya acuerda.

Aquestas cinco cañas, que cortadas  
fueron en luna llena por mi mano,  
en esta misma forma acomodadas, 720  
lo que quiero harán fácil y llano;  
también estas cabezas, arrancadas  
del jáculo, serpiente, en el verano  
ardiente allá en la Libia, me aprovechan,  
y aun estos granos si en el suelo se echan. 725

Esta carne, quitada de la frente  
del ternecillo potro cuando nace,  
cuya virtud rarísima, excelente,  
en todo a mi deseo satisface,  
envuelta en esta yerba, a quien el diente 730  
tocó del corderillo cuando pace,  
hará que Aurelio venga cual cordero  
mansísimo y humilde a lo que quiero.

Esta figura, que de cera es hecha,  
en el nombre de Aurelio fabricada, 735  
será con blanda mano y dura flecha,  
por medio el corazón atravesada.  
Quedará luego Zahara satisfecha  
de aquella voluntad desordenada,  
y el helado cristiano vendrá luego 740  
ardiendo en amoroso y dulce fuego.

A vosotros, ¡oh justos Radamanto  
y Minos!, que con leyes inmutables  
en los oscuros reinos del espanto  
regís las almas tristes miserables; 745  
si acaso tiene fuerza el ronco canto  
o mormurio de versos detestables,



por ellos os conjuro, ruego y pido  
ablandéis este pecho endurecido.

¡Rápida, Ronca, Run, Raspe, Riforme, 750  
Gandulandín, Clifet, Pantasilonte,  
ladrante tragador, falso triforme,  
herbárico pastífero del monte,  
Herebo, engendrador del rostro enorme  
de todo fiero dios, a punto ponte 755  
y ven sin detenerte a mi presencia,  
si no desprecias la zoroastra ciencia!

*(Sale un DEMONIO y dice:)*

DEMONIO La fuerza incontrastable de tus versos  
y mormurios perversos me han traído  
del reino del olvido a obedecerte; 760  
mas, ¡oh mora!, quel verte en esta empresa  
infinito me pesa, porque entiendo  
que es ir tiempo perdiendo.

FÁTIMA¿Por qué causa?

DEMONIOPon al conjuro pausa, y al momento  
satisfaré tu intento en lo que pides, 765  
si acaso tú te mides y acomodas  
a mis palabras todas y consejos.  
Todos tus aparejos son en vano,  
porque un pecho cristiano, que se arrima  
a Cristo, en poco estima hechicerías. 770  
Por muy diversas vías te conviene  
atraerle a que pene por tu amiga.

FÁTIMA¿Ansí questa fatiga no aprovecha?

DEMONIO En balde ha sido hecha. Mas escucha,  
que con presteza mucha y sin rodeo 775  
cumplirás tu deseo en este modo:  
en el infierno todo no hay quien haga  
más cruda y fiera plaga entre cristianos,  
aunque muestren más sanos corazones  
y limpias intenciones, que es la dura 780  
necesidad que apura la paciencia;  
no tiene resistencia esta pasión;  
la otra es la ocasión. Si estas dos vienen  
y con Aurelio tienen estrechez,  
verás a su braveza derribada 785  
y en blandura tornada, y con sosiego,  
regalarse en el fuego de Cupido.

FÁTIMA Pues esas dos te pido que me invíes,  
y que no te desvíes desta empresa.

DEMONIO Tu mandado se hará con toda priesa. 790

*(Vanse.)*

## Tercera jornada

*Salen dos esclavos y dos muchachillos moros, que les salen diciendo estas palabras, que se usan decir en Argel: «Joan, o Juan, non rescatar, non fugir. Don Juan no venir; acá morir, perro, acá morir; don Juan no venir; acá, morir».*

ESCLAVO 1.º ¡Bien decís, perros; bien decís, traidores!  
Que si don Juan el valeroso de Austria  
gozara del vital amado aliento,  
a sólo él, a sola su ventura,  
la destrucción de vuestra infame tierra 5  
guardara el justo y piadoso cielo.  
Mas no le mereció gozar el mundo;  
antes, en pena de tan graves culpas  
como en él se comenten, quiso el hado  
cortar el hilo de su dulce vida 10  
y arrebatár el alma el alto cielo.

MUCHACHOS; Don Juan no venir; acá morir!

ESCLAVO 2.º; Si él acaso viniera, yo sé cierto  
que huyérades vosotros, gente infame!

MUCHACHOS; Don Juan no venir; acá morir! 15

ESCLAVO 1.º; Tú morirás, y no podrás huirte  
del duro cativeño del infierno!

MUCHACHOS; Don Juan no venir; acá morir!

ESCLAVO 2.ºVendrá su hermano, el ínclito Filipo,  
el cual, sin duda, ya venido hubiera 20  
si la cerviz indómita y erguida  
del luterano Flandes no ofendiese  
tan sin vergüenza a su real corona.

MUCHACHOS¡Acá morir!

ESCLAVO 1.ºPrimero espero ver puestas por tierra 25  
estas flacas murallas, y este nido  
y cueva de ladrones abrasado,  
pena que justamente le es debida  
a sus continos y nefandos vicios.

ESCLAVO 2.ºSerá nunca acabar si respondemos; 30  
déjalos ya, Pedro Álvarez, amigo,  
que ellos se cansarán, y dime agora  
si todavía piensas de huirte.

ESCLAVO 1.º¡Y cómo!

ESCLAVO 2.º¿En qué manera?

ESCLAVO 1.º¿En qué manera?  
Por tierra, pues no puedo de otra suerte. 35

ESCLAVO 2.º¡Difícultosa empresa, cierto, emprendes!

ESCLAVO 1.ºPues, ¿qué quieres que haga? Dime, hermano;

que mis ancianos padres, que son muertos,  
y un hermano que tengo se ha entregado  
en la hacienda y bienes que dejaron, 40  
el cual es tan avaro, que, aunque sabe  
la esclavitud amarga que padezco,  
no quiere dar, para librarme della,  
un real de mi mismo patrimonio.  
Como esto considero, y veo que tengo 45  
un amo tan cruel como tú sabes,  
y que piensa que yo soy caballero,  
y que no hay modo que limosna alguna  
llegue a dar el dinero que él me pide,  
y la insufrible vida que padezco, 50  
de hambre, desnudez, cansancio y frío,  
determino morir antes huyendo,  
que vivir una vida tan mezquina.

ESCLAVO 2.º ¿Has hecho la mochila?

ESCLAVO 1.º Sí, ya tengo  
casi diez libras de bizcocho bueno. 55

ESCLAVO 2.º ¿Pues hay desde aquí a Orán sesenta leguas  
y no piensas llevar más de diez libras?

ESCLAVO 1.º No, porque tengo hecha ya una pasta  
de harina y huevos, y con miel mezclada,  
y cocida muy bien, la cual me dicen 60  
que da muy poco della gran sustento;  
y si esto me faltare, algunas yerbas  
pienso comer con sal, que también llevo.

ESCLAVO 2.º ¿Zapatos llevas?

ESCLAVO 1.º Sí, tres pares buenos.

ESCLAVO 2.º ¿Sabes bien el camino?

ESCLAVO 1.º ¡Ni por pienso! 65

ESCLAVO 2.º Pues, ¿cómo piensas ir?

ESCLAVO 1.º Por la marina;  
que agora, como es tiempo de verano,  
los alárabes todos a la sierra  
se retiran, buscando el fresco viento.

ESCLAVO 2.º ¿Llevas algunas señas por do entiendas 70  
cuál es de Orán la deseada tierra?

ESCLAVO 1.º Sí llevo, y sé que he de pasar primero  
dos ríos: uno del Bates nombrado,  
río del azafrán, que está aquí junto;  
otro, el de Hiqueznaque, que es más lejos. 75  
Cerca de Mostagán, y a man derecha,  
está una levantada y grande cuesta,  
que dicen que se llama el Cerro Gordo,  
y puesto encima della se descubre  
frente por frente un monte, que es la Silla, 80  
que sobre Orán levanta la cabeza.

ESCLAVO 2.º ¿Caminarás de noche?

ESCLAVO 1.º ¿Quién lo duda?

ESCLAVO 2.º ¿Por montañas, por riscos, por honduras  
te atreves a pasar, en las tinieblas  
de la cerrada noche, sin camino 85  
ni senda que te guíe adonde quieres?  
¡Oh libertad, y cuánto eres amada!  
Amigo dulce, el cielo sancto haga  
salir con buen suceso tu trabajo.  
Dios te acompañe.

ESCLAVO 1.º Y Él vaya contigo. 90

(AURELIO y SILVIA.)

AURELIO Dádome ha la Fortuna por descuento  
de todo mi trabajo, Silvia mía,  
la gloria de mirarte y el contento.  
Mi pena será vuelta en alegría  
de hoy más, pues que te veo, Silvia amada, 95  
y mi cerrada noche en claro día.

SILVIA Yo soy, mi bien, la bien afortunada,  
pues que torno a gozar de tu presencia,  
de lo que estaba ya desconfiada.

AURELIO ¿Cómo os ha ido, esposa, en esta ausencia, 100  
en poder desta gente que no alcanza  
razón, virtud, valor, almas, conciencia?

SILVIA Como he tenido y tengo la esperanza  
puesta en el Hacedor de tierra y cielo  
con cristiana y segura confianza, 105  
por su bondad, aun tengo el casto velo  
guardado, y con su ayuda sancta espero  
no tener de mancharle algún recelo.

AURELIO   Sabrás, esposa dulce, que el artero  
y vengativo Amor ha salteado   110  
con áspero rigor, airado y fiero,  
    el pecho de mi ama, y le ha llagado  
de una llaga incurable, pues le tiene  
deste pecho, que es tuyo, enamorado,  
    y a doquiera que voy conmigo viene;   115  
y, según que la mora me declara,  
con el solo mirarme se entretiene.

SILVIA   Todo ese cuento ya me ha dicho Zahara,  
y me ha pedido que yo a ti te pida  
no quieras desdeñarla así a la clara.   120  
    También no pasa menos triste vida  
Yzuf, nuestro amo, que también me adora,  
con fe que, a lo que creo, no es fingida.

AURELIO   ¡Oh pobre moro!

SILVIA; Oh desdichada mora!

AURELIO; Cómo enviáis en vano al vano viento   125  
vuestros vanos suspiros de hora en hora!  
    También me ha dicho Yzuf todo su intento  
y me ha rogado que yo a vos os ruegue  
algún alivio deis a su tormento.  
    Mas antes con airada furia llegue   130  
una saeta que me pase el pecho,  
y esta alma de las carnes se despegue,  
    que tan a costa mía su provecho  
y tan en daño vuestro procurase,  
aunque él quede de mí mal satisfecho.   135



SILVIA Si en este caso, Aurelio, nos bastase  
mostrar a éstos voluntad trocada,  
sin que el daño adelante más pasase,  
tendríalo por cosa yo acertada,  
porque deste fingir se granjearía 140  
el no estorbarnos nuestra vista amada.

Dirás a Zahara que por causa mía  
no te muestras tan áspero, y yo al moro  
diré que mucho puede tu porfía;  
y, guardando los dos este decoro 145  
con discreción podremos fácilmente  
apacar con el vernos nuestro lloro.

AURELIO El parecer que has dado es excelente,  
y haráse cual lo ordenas, y entre tanto,  
quizá se aplacará el hado inclemente. 150

Yo escribiré a mi padre en el quebranto  
en que estamos los dos; tú, Silvia, puedes  
escribir a los tuyos otro tanto.

Y, porque a veces tienen las paredes,  
según se dice, oídos, Silvia mía, 155  
agradeciendo al cielo estas mercedes,  
pasemos esta plática a otro día.

(OCASIÓN, NECESIDAD, AURELIO, ZAHARA y FÁTIMA. *Sale primero la OCASIÓN y la NECESIDAD.*)

OCASIÓN Necesidad, fiel ejecutora  
de cualquiera delicto que te ofrece  
la pública ocasión o la secreta, 160  
ya ves cuán apremiadas y forzadas  
del Herebo infernal habemos sido,  
para venir a combatir la roca  
del pecho encastillado de un cristiano,  
que está rebelde y muestra que no teme 165  
del niño y ciego dios la grande fuerza.

Es menester que tú le solicites  
y te le muestres, siempre a todas horas,  
en el comer, y en el vestir y en todas  
las cosas que pensare o pretendiere. 170  
Yo, por mi parte, de continuo pienso  
ponérmele delante y la melena  
de mis pocos cabellos ofrecerle,  
y detenerme un rato, porque pueda  
asirme della, cosa poco usada 175  
de mi ligera condición y presta.

NECESIDAD Bien puedes, Ocasión, estar segura  
que yo haré por mi parte maravillas  
si tu favor y ayuda no me falta.  
Pero ves, aquí viene el indomable; 180  
aprecíbete, hermana, y derribemos  
la vana presunción deste cristiano.

*(Sale AURELIO.)*

AURELIO ¿Que no ha de ser posible, pobre Aurelio,  
el defenderte desta mora infame,  
que por tantos caminos te persigue? 185  
Sí será, sí, si no me niega el cielo  
el favor que hasta aquí no me ha negado.  
De mil astucias usa y de mil mañas  
para traerme a su lascivo intento:  
ya me regala, ya me vitupera, 190  
ya me da de comer en abundancia,  
ya me mata de hambre y de miseria.

NECESIDAD Grande es, por cierto, Aurelio, la que tienes.

AURELIO Grande necesidad, cierto, padezco.

NECESIDAD Rotos traes los zapatos y vestido. 195

AURELIO Zapatos y vestidos tengo rotos.

NECESIDAD En un pellejo duermes, y en el suelo.

AURELIO En el suelo me acuesto en un pellejo.

NECESIDAD Corta traes la camisa, sucia y rota.

AURELIO Sucia, corta camisa y rota traigo. 200

OCASIÓN Pues yo sé, si quisieses, que hallarías  
ocasión de salir dese trabajo.

AURELIO Pues yo sé, si quisiese, que podría  
salir desta miseria a poca costa.

OCASIÓN Con no más de querer a tu ama Zahara, 205  
o con dar muestras sólo de quererla.

AURELIO Con no más de querer bien a mi ama,  
o fingir que la quiero, me bastaba.  
Mas, ¿quién podrá fingir lo que no quiere?

NECESIDAD Necesidad te fuerza a que lo hagas. 210

AURELIO Necesidad me fuerza a que lo haga.

OCASIÓN ¡Oh, cuán rica que es Zahara y cuán hermosa!

AURELIO ¡Cuán hermosa y cuán rica que es mi ama!

NECESIDAD Y liberal, que hace mucho al caso,  
que te dará a montón lo que quisieres. 215

AURELIO Y, siendo liberal y enamorada,  
daráme todo cuanto le pidiere.

OCASIÓN Extraña es la ocasión que se te ofrece.

AURELIO Extraña es la ocasión que se me ofrece,  
mas no podrá torcer mi hidalga sangre 220  
de lo que es justo y a sí misma debe.

OCASIÓN ¿Quién tiene de saber lo que tú haces?  
Y un pecado secreto, aunque sea grave,  
cerca tiene el remedio y la disculpa.

AURELIO ¿Quién tiene de saber lo que yo hago? 225  
Y una secreta culpa no merece  
la pena que a la pública le es dada.

OCASIÓN Y más, que la ocasión mil ocasiones  
te ofrecerá secretas y escondidas.

AURELIOY más, que a cada paso se me ofrecen 230  
secretas ocasiones infinitas.  
¡Cerrar quiero con una! ¡Aurelio, paso,  
que no es de caballero lo que piensas,  
sino de mal cristiano, descuidado  
de lo que a Cristo y a su sangre debe! 235

NECESIDADMisericordia tuvo y tiene Cristo  
con que perdona siempre las ofensas  
que por necesidad pura le hacen.

AURELIOPero bien sabe Dios que aquí me fuerza  
pura necesidad, y esto reciba 240  
el cielo por disculpa de mi culpa.

OCASIÓNAgora es tiempo, Aurelio; agora puedes  
asir a la ocasión por los cabellos.  
¡Mira cuán linda, dulce y amorosa  
la mora hermosa viene a tu mandado! 245

*(Sale ZAHARA.)*

ZAHARAAurelio, ¿solo estás?

AURELIO¡Y acompañado!

ZAHARA¿De quién?

AURELIODe un amoroso pensamiento.

ZAHARA¿Quién es la causa? Di.

AURELIO Si te la digo,  
podría ser que ya no me llamasen  
riguroso, cruel, desamorado. 250

NECESIDAD ¡Obrando va tu fuerza, compañera!

OCASIÓN ¿Pues no ha de obrar? Escucha en lo que para.

ZAHARA Si eso así fuese, Aurelio, dichosísima  
sería mi ventura, y tú serías  
no menos venturoso, dulce Aurelio. 255  
Y, porque más de espacio y más a solas  
me puedas descubrir tu pensamiento,  
sígueme, Aurelio, agora que se ofrece  
la ocasión de no estar Yzuf en casa.

AURELIO Sí seguiré, señora; que ya es tiempo 260  
de obedecerte, pues que soy tu esclavo.

NECESIDAD Por tierra va, Ocasión, el fundamento  
del bizarro cristiano. ¡Ya se rinde!

OCASIÓN ¡Tales combates juntas le hemos dado!  
Entrémonos con Zahara en su aposento, 265  
y allí de nuevo, cuando Aurelio entrare,  
tornaremos a darle tientos nuevos.

*(Éntranse, y queda AURELIO solo.)*

AURELIO Aurelio, ¿dónde vas? ¿Para dó mueves

el vagaroso paso? ¿Quién te guía?  
¿Con tan poco temor de Dios te atreves 270  
a contentar tu loca fantasía?  
Las ocasiones fáciles y leves  
que el lascivo regalo al alma envía  
tienen de persuadirte y derribarte  
y al vano y torpe amor blando entregarte. 275  
¿Es éste el levantado pensamiento  
y el propósito firme que tenías  
de no ofender a Dios, aunque en tormento  
acabases tus cortos, tristes días?  
¿Tan presto has ofrecido y dado al viento 280  
las justas, amorosas fantasías,  
y ocupas la memoria de otras vanas,  
inhonestas, infames y livianas?  
¡Vaya lejos de mí el intento vano!  
¡Afuera, pensamiento malnacido! 285  
¡Que el lazo enredador de amor insano,  
de otro más limpio amor será rompido!  
¡Cristiano soy, y he de vivir cristiano;  
y, aunque a términos tristes conducido,  
dádivas o promesa, astucia o arte, 290  
no harán que un punto de mi Dios me aparte!

*(Sale FRANCISCO, el muchacho hermano del niño que vendieron en la segunda jornada, y dice:)*

FRANCISCO ¿Has visto, Aurelio, a mi hermano?

AURELIO ¿Dices a Juanico?

FRANCISCO Sí.

AURELIO Poquito habrá que le vi.

FRANCISCO ¡Oh sancto Dios soberano! 295

AURELIO ¿Padeces algún tormento,  
Francisco?

FRANCISCO Sí; una fatiga  
que no sé como la diga,  
aunque sé cómo la siento;  
y no quieras saber más, 300  
para entender mi cuidado,  
sino que mi hermano ha dado  
el ánima a Satanás.

AURELIO ¿Ha renegado, por dicha?

FRANCISCO ¿Dicha llamas renegar? 305  
Si él lo viene a efectuar,  
ello será por desdicha.  
Ha dado ya la palabra  
de ser moro, y este intento  
en su tierno pensamiento 310  
con regalos siempre labra.

AURELIO Vesle, Francisco, a do asoma.  
¡Bizarro viene, por cierto!

FRANCISCO Estos vestidos le han muerto:  
que él ¿qué sabe qué es Mahoma? 315

AURELIO Vengáis norabuena, Juan.



JUAN¿No saben ya que me llamo...

AURELIO¿Cómo?

JUAN...así como mi amo?

FRANCISCO¿En qué modo?

JUANSolimán.

FRANCISCO ¡Tósigo fuera mejor, 320  
que envenenara aquel hombre  
que así te ha mudado el nombre!  
¿Qué es lo que dices, traidor?

JUAN Perro, poquito de aqueso,  
que se lo diré a mi amo. 325  
¿Porque Solimán me llamo,  
me amenaza? ¡Bueno es eso!

FRANCISCO ¡Abrázame, dulce hermano!

JUAN¿Hermano? ¿De cuándo acá?  
¡Apártase el perro allá; 330  
no me toque con la mano!

FRANCISCO¿Por qué conviertes en lloro  
mi contento, hermano mío?

JUANÉse es grande desvarío.  
¿Hay más gusto que ser moro? 335

Mira este galán vestido,  
que mi amo me le ha dado,  
y otro tengo de brocado,  
más bizarro y más polido.

Alcuzcuz como sabroso, 340  
sorbeta de azúcar bebo,  
y el corde, que es dulce, pruebo,  
y pilao, que es provechoso.

Y en vano trabajarás  
de aplacarme con tu lloro; 345  
mas, si tú quieres ser moro,  
a fe que lo acertarás.

Toma mis consejos sanos,  
y veráste mejorado.  
Adiós, porque es gran pecado 350  
hablar tanto con cristianos.

*(Vase.)*

FRANCISCO ¿Hay desventura igual en todo el suelo?  
¿Qué red tiene el demonio aquí tendida  
con que estorba el camino de ir al cielo?

¡Oh tierna edad, cuán presto eres vencida, 355  
siendo en esta Sodoma recuestada  
y con falsos regalos combatida!

AURELIO ¡Oh, cuán bien la limosna es empleada  
en rescatar muchachos, que en sus pechos  
no está la santa fe bien arraigada! 360

¡Oh, si de hoy más, en caridad deshechos  
se viesen los cristianos corazones,  
y fuesen en el dar no tan estrechos,  
para sacar de grillos y prisiones  
al cristiano cativo, especialmente 365

a los niños de flacas intenciones!

En esta sancta obra ansí excelente,  
que en ella sola están todas las obras  
que a cuerpo y alma tocan juntamente.

Al que rescatas, de perdido cobras, 370  
reduces a su patria el peregrino,  
quítasle de cien mil y más zozobras:

de hambre, que le aflige de contino;  
de la sed insufrible, y de consejos  
que procuran cerrarle el buen camino; 375  
de muchos y continos aparejos  
que aquí el demonio tiende, con que toma  
a muchachos cristianos y aun a viejos.

¡Oh secta fermentada de Mahoma;  
ancha casaca poco escrupulosa, 380  
con qué facilidad los simples doma!

FRANCISCO ¡Mándasme, buen Aurelio, alguna cosa?

AURELIO Dios te guíe, Francisco, y ten paciencia;  
que la mano bendita poderosa  
curará de tu hermano la dolencia. 385

*(Vase FRANCISCO, y, yéndose a salir AURELIO, sale SILVIA y dice:)*

SILVIA ¿Dó vas, Aurelio, dulce amado esposo?

AURELIO A verte, Silvia, pues tu vista sola  
es el perfecto alivio a mis trabajos.

SILVIA También el verte yo, mi caro Aurelio,  
es el remedio de mis graves daños. 390

*(Abrazanse, y estánlo mirando sus amos; y ZAHARA va a dar a SILVIA, YZUF a AURELIO.)*

ZAHARA ¡Perra! ¿Y esto se sufre ante mis ojos?

YZUF Perro, traidor esclavo! ¿Con la esclava?

ZAHARA No, no señor; no tiene culpa Aurelio, que al fin es hombre, sino esta perra esclava.

YZUF ¿La esclava? No señora. ¡Este maldito, 395  
forjador e inventor de mil embustes,  
tiene la culpa destas desvergüenzas!

ZAHARA Si esta lamida, si esta descarada  
no le diera ocasión, no se atreviera  
Aurelio así abrazarla estrechamente. 400

AURELIO No, por cierto, señores; no ha nacido  
nuestra desenvoltura de ocasiones  
lascivas, según da las muestras dello,  
sino que a Silvia le rogaba agora  
me hiciese una merced que ha muchos días 405  
que se la pido, y no por mi interesse;  
y ella también a mí me ha persuadido  
un servicio le hiciese que conviene  
para mejor servir la casa vuestra.  
Y, por habernos concedido entrambos 410  
aquello que pedía el uno al otro,  
en señal de contento nos hallastes  
de aquel modo que vistes abrazados,  
sin manchar los honestos pensamientos.

YZUF¿Es verdad esto, Silvia?

SILVIAVerdad dice. 415

YZUF¿Qué pediste tú a él?

SILVIAPoco te importa  
saber lo que yo a Aurelio le pedía.

ZAHARA¿Concediótelo, en fin?

SILVIAComo yo quise.

YZUFEntraos adentro, que por fuerza os creo;  
porque, si no os creyese, convendría 420  
castigar vuestro exceso con mil penas.

*(Éntranse AURELIO y SILVIA.)*

Sabréis, señora, que en este mismo punto,  
viniendo por el Zoco, me fue dicho  
cómo el rey me mandaba que llevase  
a Silvia con Aurelio a su presencia; 425  
y tengo para mí que algún tresleño  
y mal cristiano, que a los dos conoce,  
al rey debe de haber significado  
cómo son de rescate estos cativos;  
y, como el rey está tan mal conmigo, 430  
porque acetar no quise el cargo y honra  
de reparar los fosos y murallas,  
quíeremelos quitar, sin duda alguna.

ZAHARA El remedio que en esto se me ofrece  
es advertir a Aurelio que no diga 435  
al rey que es caballero, sino un pobre  
soldado que iba a Italia, y que esta Silvia  
es su mujer; y si esto el rey creyese,  
no querrá por el tanto que costaron  
quitártelos, que el precio es muy subido. 440

YZUF Muy bien dices, señora; ven, entremos  
y demos este aviso a los dos juntos.

*(Vanse.)*

## Jornada cuarta

*Entra el cautivo que se huyó, descalzo, roto el vestido, y las piernas señaladas como que trae muchos rasgones de las espinas y zarzas por do ha pasado.*

CAUTIVO Este largo camino,  
tanto pasar de breñas y montañas,  
y el bramido contino  
de fieras alimañas  
me tiene de tal suerte, 5  
que pienso de acabarle con mi muerte.

El pan se me ha acabado,  
y roto entre jarales el vestido;  
los zapatos, rasgado;  
el brío, consumido; 10  
de modo que no puedo  
un pie del otro pie pasar un dedo.

Ya la hambre me aqueja,  
y la sed insufrible me atormenta;  
ya la fuerza me deja; 15  
ya espero desta afrenta  
salir con entregarme  
a quien de nuevo quiera cautivarme.

He ya perdido el tino;  
no sé cuál es de Orán la cierta vía, 20  
ni senda ni camino  
la triste suerte mía  
me ofrece; mas, ¡ay laso!,  
que, aunque la hallase, no hay mover el paso,

¡Virgen bendita y bella, 25  
remediadora del linaje humano,  
sed Vos aquí la estrella  
que en este mar insano  
mi pobre barca guíe

y de tantos peligros me desvíe! 30  
¡Virgen de Monserrate,  
que esas ásperas sierras hacéis cielo,  
enviadme rescate,  
sacadme deste duelo,  
pues es hazaña vuestra 35  
al mísero caído dar la diestra!

Entre estas matas quiero  
asconderme, porque es entrado el día;  
aquí morir espero.  
Santísima María, 40  
en este trance amargo,  
el cuerpo y alma dejo a vuestro cargo.

*(Échase a dormir entre unas matas, y sale un león y échase junto a él muy manso, y luego sale otro cristiano, que también se ha huido de Argel, y dice:)*

CRISTIANO Estas pisadas no son,  
por cierto, de moro, no;  
cristiano las estampó, 45  
que con la misma intención  
debe de ir que llevo yo.

De alárabes las pisadas  
son anchas y mal formadas,  
porque es ancho su calzado; 50  
el nuestro más escotado,  
y así son diferenciadas.

Yo seguro que no está  
muy lejos de aquí escondido,  
porque el rastro he ya perdido; 55  
mas el sol alto está ya,  
y yo mal apercebido.

Aquí me quiero esconder  
hasta que al anochecer  
torne a seguir mi viaje; 60  
que en este mismo paraje  
Mostagán viene a caer.



Pues el sol sale de allí,  
el norte hacia aquí se inclina:  
no está lejos la marina. 65  
¡Oh, qué mal que estoy aquí!  
¡Buen Jesús, tú me encamina,  
que mucho alárabe pasa  
por esta campaña rasa!  
Si hoy me he acertado a esconder, 70  
no me despido de ver,  
mis hijos, mujer y casa.

*(Escóndese, y luego sale un morillo, como que va buscando yerbas, y ve escondido a este segundo cristiano, y comienza a dar voces: «¡Nizara, nizara!», a las cuales acuden otros moros y cogen al cristiano, y dándole de mojicones se entran.)*

*(En entrando, despierta el primer cristiano, que está junto al león, y viéndole, se espanta y dice:)*

CRISTIANO ¡Sancto Dios! ¿Qué es lo que veo?  
¡Qué manso y fiero león!  
Saltos me da el corazón; 75  
cumplido se ha mi deseo;  
libre soy ya de pasión,  
pues lo quiere mi ventura.  
Éste, con su fuerza dura,  
mis días acabará, 80  
y su vientre servirá  
al cuerpo de sepultura.  
Pero tanta mansedumbre  
no se ve así fácilmente  
en animal tan valiente, 85  
aunque su fiera costumbre,  
muestra a las veces clemente.  
Mas, ¿quién sabe si movido  
el cielo de mi gemido,

este león me ha enviado 90  
para ser por él tornado  
al camino que he perdido?  
Sin duda es divina cosa,  
y asegúrame este intento  
que en mis espíritus siento, 95  
con fuerza maravillosa,  
un nuevo crecido aliento;  
y ya es caso averiguado  
que otro león ha llevado  
a la Goleta a un cativo 100  
que le halló en un monte esquivo,  
huido y descaminado.  
¡Obra es ésta, Virgen pía,  
de vuestra divina mano,  
porque ya está claro y llano 105  
que el hombre que en vos confía  
no espera y confía en vano!  
Espérame, compañero,  
que yo determino y quiero  
seguirte doquier que fueres; 110  
que ya me parece que eres,  
no león, sino cordero.

*(Éntrase y vuelve a salir en la cuarta jornada con el león que le guía. Dice:)*

Nunca con menos afán  
he caminado camino;  
y, aquello que yo imagino, 115  
no está muy lejos Orán.  
¡Gracias te doy, Rey divino!  
¡Virgen pura, a Vos alabo!  
Yo ruego llevéis al cabo  
tan estraña caridad; 120  
que, si me dais libertad,  
prometo seros esclavo.

*(Vase, y en la cuarta jornada salen dos cautivos: PEDRO y SAYAVEDRA.)*

PEDRO Siete escudos de oro he granjeado  
con mi solicitud, industria y maña,  
y aun son pocos, según he trabajado. 125

Nunca tuve otros tantos en España,  
cuando anduve en la guerra de Granada,  
armado nueve meses en campaña.

SAYAVEDRA ¿Cómo cayeron, Pedro en la celada  
los siete escudos hoy, por vida mía, 130  
cualque nueva campaña fabricada?

PEDRO Muy mal se negará a tu cortesía  
cualquier secreto mío. Escucha agora,  
y verás lo que he hecho en este día.

En esta casa grande do Yzuf mora, 135  
renegado español que está casado  
con Zahara, la ilustre hermosa mora,  
está un cativo nuevo, que es llamado  
Aurelio, y una Silvia, hermosa dama,  
de quién está el Aurelio enamorado. 140

Los dos de principales tienen fama,  
y helo dicho yo al rey, y mandó darme  
los tres escudos déstos.

SAYAVEDRA ¡Gentil trama!

PEDRO Gentil o no gentil, si remediarme  
no puedo de otra suerte, y cada día 145  
he de dar mi jornal y sustentarme,  
¿quieres que cate y guarde cortesía  
a quien puede pagar bien su rescate?  
¡No reza esa oración mi ledanía!

SAYAVEDRA ¿Los otros cuatro?

PEDRO Son de un jaque y mate 150  
que he dado en una bolsa de un cristiano  
con un muy concertado disparate.

Hele hecho tocar casi con mano  
que tengo ya una barca medio hecha,  
debajo de la tierra, allá en un llano. 155

Queda desta verdad bien satisfecha,  
su voluntad, y, cierto, el bobo piensa  
alcanzar libertad ya desta hecha;

y para ayuda, el gasto y la despensa  
de tablas, vela, pez, clavos y estopa, 160  
los cuatro dio con que compró su ofensa.

SAYAVEDRA ¡Desdichado de aquel que acaso topa  
contigo, Pedro, y tú más desdichado,  
que así cudicias la cristiana ropa!

¡En peligroso golfo has engolfado 165  
tu barca, de mentiras fabricada,  
y en ella tú serás sólo anegado!

PEDRO La de Noé, que está bien ancorada  
en las sierras de Armeña, sería buena,  
si no vale la mía acaso nada. 170

Quizá nos llevará a Sierra Morena,  
pero, por cuatro escudos, buena es ésta,  
si acuden otros cuatro a caer carena.

Ajenos pies han de subir la cuesta  
agria de mi trabajo, y yo, holgando, 175  
haré agasajo, regocijo y fiesta.

¿Qué piensas, Sayavedra?

SAYAVEDRA Estoy pensando  
cómo se echa a perder aquí un cristiano,  
y más, mientras más va, va peorando.  
Cautivo he visto yo que da de mano 180  
a todo aquello que su ley le obliga,  
y vive a veces vida de pagano.  
A otro le avasalla su fatiga,  
y en Dios y en ella ocupa el pensamiento;  
la abraza y la quiere como amiga. 185  
Y de ti sé que tienes el intento  
holgazán, embaidor y cudicioso,  
fundado sobre embustes sin cimientto.  
Tarde habrá libertad...

PEDRO ¡Estás donoso!  
Antes la tengo ya cierta y segura, 190  
sino que estoy un poco vergonzoso.  
Pienso mudar de nombre y vestidura,  
y llamarme Mamí.

SAYAVEDRA ¿Renegar quieres?

PEDRO Sí quiero, mas entiende de qué hechura.

SAYAVEDRA Reniega tú del modo que quisieres, 195  
que ello es muy gran maldad y horrible culpa,  
y correspondes mal a ser quien eres.

PEDRO Bien sé que la conciencia ya me culpa,  
pero tanto el salir de aquí deseo,  
que esta razón daré por mi disculpa. 200  
Ni niego a Cristo ni en Mahoma creo:  
con la voz y el vestido seré moro,  
por alcanzar el bien que no poseo.

Si voy en corso, séme yo de coro  
que, en tocando en la tierra de cristianos, 205  
me huiré, y aun no vacío de tesoro.

SAYAVEDRA Lazos son éstos cudiciosos, vanos,  
con que el demonio tienta fácilmente  
con el alma ligarte pies y manos.

Un falso bien se muestra aquí aparente, 210  
que es tener libertad, y, en renegando,  
se te irá el procurarla de la mente,  
que siempre esperarás el cómo y cuándo:  
«Este año, no; el otro será cierto»;  
y así lo irás por años dilatando. 215

Tiéneme en estos casos bien esperto  
muchos que he visto con tu mismo intento,  
y a ninguno llegar nunca a buen puerto.

Y, puesto que llegases, ¿es buen cuento  
poner un tan inorme y falso medio 220  
para alcanzar el fin de tu contento?  
Daño puedes llamarle a tal remedio.

PEDRO Si no puede esperarse, ni es posible  
de mi necesidad otra salida  
para alcanzar la libertad gozosa, 225  
¿es mucho aventurarse algunos días  
a ser moro no más de en la apariencia,  
si con esta cautela se granjea  
la amada libertad que se va huyendo?

SAYAVEDRA Si tú supieses, Pedro, a dó se estiende 230  
la perfección de nuestra ley cristiana,  
verías cómo en ella se nos manda  
que un pecado mortal no se cometa,  
aunque se interesase en cometerle  
la universal salud de todo el mundo. 235  
Pues, ¿cómo quieres tú, por verte libre

de libertad del cuerpo, echar mil hierros  
al alma miserable, desdichada,  
cometiendo un pecado tan enorme  
como es negar a Cristo y a su Iglesia? 240

PEDRO¿Dónde se niega Cristo ni su Iglesia?  
¿Hay más de retajarse y decir ciertas  
palabras de Mahoma, y no otra cosa,  
sin que se miente a Cristo ni a sus santos,  
ni yo le negaré por todo el mundo, 245  
que acá en mi corazón estará siempre  
y Él sólo el corazón quiere del hombre?

SAYAVEDRA¿Quieres ver si lo niegas? Está atento.  
Fíngete ya vestido a la turquesca,  
y que vas por la calle y que yo llego 250  
delante de otros turcos y te digo:  
«Sea loado Cristo, amigo Pedro.  
¿No sabéis cómo el martes es vigilia  
y que manda la Iglesia que ayunemos?»  
A esto, dime: ¿qué responderías? 255  
Sin duda que me dices mil puñadas,  
y dijese que a Cristo no conoces,  
ni tienes con su Iglesia cuenta alguna,  
porque eres muy buen moro, y que te llamas,  
no Pedro, sino Aydar o Mahometo. 260

PEDROEso haríalo yo, mas no con saña,  
sino porque los turcos que lo oyesen  
pensasen que, pues dello me pesaba,  
que era perfecto moro y no cristiano;  
pero acá, en mi intención, cristiano siempre. 265

SAYAVEDRA¿No sabes tú que el mismo Cristo dice:  
«Aquel que me negare ante los hombres,  
de Mí será negado ante mi Padre;

y el que ante ellos a Mí me confesare,  
será de Mí ayudado ante el Eterno 270  
Padre mío?» ¿Es prueba ésta bastante  
que te convenza y desengañe, amigo,  
del engaño en que estás en ser cristiano  
con sólo el corazón, como tú dices?  
¿Y no sabes también que aquel arrimo 275  
con que el cristiano se levanta al cielo  
es la cruz y pasión de Jesucristo,  
en cuya muerte nuestra vida vive,  
y que el remedio, para que aproveche  
a nuestras almas el tesoro inmenso 280  
de su vertida sangre por bien nuestro,  
depositado está en la penitencia,  
la cual tiene tres partes esenciales,  
que la hacen perfecta y acabada:  
contrición de corazón la una, 285  
confesión de la boca la segunda,  
satisfacción de obras la tercera?  
Y aquel que contrición dice que tiene,  
como algunos cristianos renegados,  
y con la boca y con las obras niegan 290  
a Cristo y a sus sanctos, no la llames  
aquella contrición, sino un deseo  
de salir del pecado; y es tan flojo,  
que respectos humanos le detienen  
de ejecutar lo que razón le dice; 295  
y así, con esta sombra y apariencia  
deste vano deseo, se les pasa  
un año y otro, y llega al fin la muerte  
a ponerle en perpetua servidumbre  
por aquel mismo modo que él pensaba 300  
alcanzar libertad en esta vida.  
¡Oh cuántas cosas puras, excelentes,  
verdaderas, sin réplica, sencillas,  
te pudiera decir que hacen al caso,  
para poder borrar de tu sentido 305  
esta falsa opinión que en él se imprime!  
Mas el tiempo y lugar no lo permite.



PEDRO Bastan las que me has dicho, amigo; bastan,  
y bastarán de modo que te juro,  
por todo lo que es lícito jurarse, 310  
de seguir tu consejo y no apartarme  
del santísimo gremio de la Iglesia,  
aunque en la dura esclavitud amarga  
acabe mis amargos tristes días.

SAYAVEDRA Si a ese parecer llegas las obras, 315  
el día llegará, sabroso y dulce,  
do tengas libertad; que el cielo sabe  
darnos gusto y placer por cien mil vías  
ocultas al humano entendimiento;  
y así, no es bien ponerse en contingencia 320  
que por sola una senda y un camino  
tan áspero, tan malo y trabajoso  
nos venga el bien de muchos procurado,  
y hasta aquí conseguido de muy pocos.

PEDRO ¡Mis obras te darán señales ciertas 325  
de mi arrepentimiento y mi mudanza!

SAYAVEDRA ¡El cielo te dé fuerzas y te quite  
las ocasiones malas que te incitan  
a tener tan malvado y ruin propósito!

PEDRO El mismo a ti te ayude, cual merece 330  
la sana voluntad con que me enseñas.  
Adiós, que es tarde.

SAYAVEDRA ¡Adiós, amigo!

*(Sale el REY con cuatro turcos.)*

REY De ira y de dolor hablar no puedo;  
y es la ocasión de mi pesar insano  
el ver que don Antonio de Toledo 335  
ansí se me ha escapado de la mano.  
Los arraces, sus amos, con el miedo  
que yo no les tomase su cristiano,  
a Tetuán con priesa le enviaron,  
y en cinco mil ducados le tallaron. 340

¿Un tan ilustre y rico caballero  
por tan vil precio distes, vil canalla?  
¿Tanto os acudiciastes al dinero,  
tan grande os pareció que era la talla  
que le añedistes otro compañero, 345  
el cual solo pudiera bien pagalla?  
¿Francisco de Valencia no podía  
pagar solo por sí mayor cuantía?

En fin, favorecióles la ventura,  
que pudo más que no mi diligencia; 350  
que ésta es la que conierta y asegura  
lo que no puede hacer humana ciencia.  
Conocieron el tiempo y coyuntura,  
y huyeron de no verse en mi presencia:  
que si yo a don Antonio aquí hallara, 355  
cincuenta mil ducados me pagara.

Es hermano de un conde y es sobrino  
de una principalísima duquesa,  
y en perderse, perdió en este camino  
ser coronel en una ilustre empresa. 360  
Airado el cielo se mostró y benigno  
en hacerle cautivo y darse priesa  
a darle libertad por tal rodeo,  
que no pudo pedir más el deseo.

Pero, pues ya no puede remediarse, 365  
el tratar más en ello es escusado.  
Mirad si viene alguno a querellarse.

MORO Señor, aquí está Yzuf, el renegado.

REY Entre con intención de aparejarse  
a obedecer en todo mi mandado; 370  
si no, a fe que le trate en mi presencia  
cual merece su necia inobidencia.

*(Entra YZUF.)*

¿Dónde están tus cristianos?

YZUF Allí fuera.

REY ¿Cuánto diste por ellos?

YZUF Mil ducados.

REY Yo los daré por ellos.

YZUF No se espera, 375  
de tu bondad agravios tan sobrados.

REY ¿En esto me replicas?

YZUF Da siquiera  
algún alivio en parte a mis cuidados.  
Al esclavo te doy, rey, sin dinero,  
y déjame la esclava, por quien muero. 380

REY ¿Tal osaste decir, oh moro infame?  
Llevalde abajo, y dalde tanto palo,  
hasta que con su sangre se derrame  
el deseo que tiene torpe y malo.

YZUF Dame, señor, mi esclava, y luego dame 385  
la muerte en fuego, a hierro, a gancho, en palo.

REY ¡Quitádmelo delante! ¡Acabad presto!

YZUF ¿Por pedirte mi hacienda soy molesto?

(Sacan fuera a YZUF a empujones, y entran luego dos alárabes con el cristiano que se huyó, que asieron en el campo, y estos dos moros dicen al REY: «Alicun çalema çultam adareimi guanaran çal çul».)

REY ¿Adónde ibas, cristiano?

CRISTIANO Procuraba  
llegarme a Orán, si el cielo lo quisiera. 390

REY ¿Adónde cautivaste?

CRISTIANO En la almadraba.

REY ¿Tu amo?

CRISTIANO Ya murió; que no debiera,  
pues me dejó en poder de una tan brava  
mujer, que no la iguala alguna fiera.

REY ¿Español eres?

CRISTIANO En Málaga nacido. 395

REY Bien lo muestras en ser ansí atrevido.

¡Oh yuraja caur! Dalde seiscientos  
palos en las espaldas muy bien dados,  
y luego le daréis otros quinientos  
en la barriga y en los pies cansados. 400

CRISTIANO ¿Tan sin razón ni ley tantos tormentos  
tienes para el que huye aparejados?

REY ¡Cito cifuti breguedi! ¡Atalde,  
abrilde, desollalde y aun matalde!

(Átanle con cuatro cordeles de pies y de manos, y tiran cada uno de su parte, y dos le están dando; y, de cuando en cuando, el cristiano se encomienda a Nuestra Señora, y el REY se enoja y dice en turquesco, con cólera: «Laguedi denicara, bacinaf; ¡a la testa, a la testa!», y está diciendo, mientras le están dando:)

¡No sé qué raza es ésta destos perros 405  
cautivos españoles! ¿Quién se huye?  
Español. ¿Quién no cura de los hierros?  
Español. ¿Quién hurtando nos destruye?  
Español. ¿Quién comete otros mil hierros?  
Español, que en su pecho el cielo influye 410  
un ánimo indomable, acelerado,  
al bien y al mal contino aparejado.

Una virtud en ellos he notado:  
que guardan su palabra sin reveses,  
y en esta mi opinión me han confirmado 415  
dos caballeros Sosas portugueses.

Don Francisco también la ha sigurado,  
que tiene el sobrenombre de Meneses,  
los cuales sobre su palabra han sido  
enviados a España, y la han cumplido. 420

Don Fernando de Ormaza también fuese  
sobre su fe y palabra, y ansí ha hecho,  
un mes antes que el término cumpliera,  
la paga, con que bien me ha satisfecho.  
De darles libertad, un interese 425  
se sigue tal, que dobla mi provecho:  
que, como van sobre su fe prendados,  
les pido los rescates tresdoblados.

Y éste dalde a su amo, y llamad luego  
un cristiano de Yzuf, que está allí fuera, 430  
que quiero que granjee su sosiego  
por ver si mi opinión es verdadera.  
De pérdida y ganancia es este juego.

MORO Señor, del bien hacer siempre se espera  
galardón, y si falta deste suelo, 435  
la paga se dilata para el cielo.

*(Entra AURELIO y dícele el REY:)*

REY Ya sé quién eres, cristiano;  
tu virtud, valor y suerte,  
y sé que presto has de verte  
en el patrio suelo hispano. 440

Esta Silvia, ¿es tu mujer?

AURELIO Sí, señor.

REY ¿adónde ibas  
cuando en las ondas esquivas

perdiste todo el placer?

AURELIO Yo se lo diré, señor, 445  
en verdaderas razones.

De otro rey y otras prisiones  
fui yo esclavo, que es Amor.

Desta Silvia enamorado  
anduve un tiempo en mi tierra, 450  
y la fuerza desta guerra  
me ha traído en este estado.

A su padre la pedí  
muchas veces por mujer,  
pero nunca a mi querer 455  
sólo un punto le rendí;

y, viendo que no podía  
por aquel modo alcanzalla,  
determiné de roballa,  
que era la más fácil vía. 460

Cumplí en esto mi deseo,  
y, pensando ir a Milán,  
trújome el hado al afán  
y esclavitud do me veo.

REY No pierdas la confianza 465  
en esta vida importuna,  
pues sabes que de Fortuna  
la condición es mudanza.

Yo te daré libertad  
a ti y a Silvia al momento, 470  
si tienes conocimiento  
de pagar tal voluntad.

Mil ducados he de dar  
por los dos, y sólo quiero  
que me deis dos mil; empero, 475  
habéismelo de jurar,

y así, sobre vuestra fe,  
os partiréis luego a España.

AURELIO Señor, a merced tamaña,  
¿qué gracias te rendiré? 480

Yo prometo de enviallos  
dentro de un mes, sin mentir,  
aunque los sepa pedir  
por Dios, y si no, hurtallos.

REY Pues, luego os aparejad, 485  
y en la primera saetía  
tomad de España la vía,  
que a los dos doy libertad.

AURELIO El suelo y cielo te trate  
cual merece tu bondad, 490  
y tomá mi voluntad  
por prenda deste rescate;  
que yo perderé la vida  
o cumpliré mi palabra:  
que este bien ya escarba y labra 495  
en mi sangre bien nacida.

MORO Señor, un navío viene.

REY ¿De qué parte?

MORO De Occidente.

REY Mejor es que no de Oriente.  
¿Es de gavia?



MORO Gavia tiene. 500

REY Debe ser de mercancía.

MORO Podría ser, aunque se suena  
que la mercancía es buena  
si es limosna.

REY Sí sería.

Vamos. Tú, Aurelio, procura 505  
tu partida, y ten cuidado  
de aquello que me has jurado.

AURELIO Crezca el cielo tu ventura.

*(Éntrase el REY y queda AURELIO.)*

¡Gracias te doy, eterno Rey del cielo,  
que tan sin merecerlo has permitido 510  
que, por la mano de quien más temía,  
tanto bien, tanta gloria me viniese!

*(Entra FRANCISCO y dice:)*

FRANCISCO ¡Albricias, caro Aurelio!, que es llegado  
un navío de España, y todos dicen  
que es de limosna cierto, y que en él viene 515  
un fraile trinitario cristianísimo,  
amigo de hacer bien, y conocido,  
porque ha estado otra vez en esta tierra  
rescatando cristianos, y da ejemplo  
de mucha cristiandad y gran prudencia. 520

Su nombre es fray Juan Gil.

AURELIO Mira no sea,  
fray Jorge de Olivar, que es de la Orden  
de la Merced, que aquí también ha estado,  
de no menos bondad y humano pecho;  
tanto, que ya después que hubo espendido 525  
bien veinte mil ducados que traía,  
en otros siete mil quedó empeñado.  
¡Oh caridad estraña! ¡Oh sancto pecho!

*(Entran tres esclavos, asidos en sus cadenas.)*

ESCLAVO 1.º ¡Qué buen día, compañeros!  
La limosna está en el puerto. 530  
Mi remedio tengo cierto,  
porque aquí me traen dineros.

ESCLAVO 2.º No tengo bien, ni le espero,  
ni siento en mi tierra quien  
me pueda hacer algún bien. 535

ESCLAVO 3.º Pues yo no me desespero

FRANCISCO Dios nos ha de remediar,  
hermanos: mostrad buen pecho,  
que el Señor que nos ha hecho,  
no nos tiene de olvidar. 540  
Roguémosle, como a Padre,  
nos vuelva a nuestra mejora,  
pues es nuestra intercesora  
su Madre, que es nuestra Madre;  
porque, con tan sancto medio, 545  
nuestro bien está seguro:  
que ella es nuestra fuerza y muro,

nuestra luz, nuestro remedio.

*(Echan todos las cadenas al suelo y híncanse de rodillas, y dice el uno:)*

UNO ¡Vuelve, Virgen Santísima María,  
tus ojos que dan luz y gloria al cielo, 550  
a los tristes que lloran noche y día  
y riegan con sus lágrimas el suelo!  
Socórrenos, bendita Virgen pía,  
antes que este mortal corpóreo velo  
quede sin alma en esta tierra dura 555  
y carezca de usada sepultura.

OTRO Reina de las alturas celestiales,  
Madre y Madre de Dios, Virgen y Madre,  
espanto de las furias infernales,  
Madre y Esposa de tu mismo Padre, 560  
remedio universal de nuestros males:  
si con tu condición es bien que cuadre  
usar misericordia, úsala ahora,  
y sácame de entre esta gente mora.

OTRO En Vos, Virgen dulcísima María, 565  
entre Dios y los hombres medianera,  
de nuestro mar incierto cierta guía,  
Virgen entre las vírgenes primera;  
en vos, Virgen y Madre; en Vos confía  
mi alma, que sin Vos en nadie espera, 570  
que me habréis de sacar con vuestras manos  
de dura servidumbre de paganos.

AURELIO Si yo, Virgen bendita, he conseguido  
de tu misericordia un bien tan alto,  
¿cuándo podré mostrarme agradecido, 575

tanto que, al fin, no quede corto y falto?  
Recibe mi deseo, que, subido  
sobre un cristiano obrar, dará tal salto,  
que toque ya, olvidado deste suelo,  
el alto trono del impereo cielo. 580

Y, en tanto que se llega el tiempo y punto  
de poner en efecto mi deseo,  
al ilustre auditorio que está junto,  
en quien tanta bondad discierno y veo,  
si ha estado mal sacado este trasunto 585  
de la vida de Argel y trato feo,  
pues es bueno el deseo que ha tenido,  
en nombre del autor, perdón les pido.

# LA NUMANCIA



*Tragedia de Numancia*

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Interlocutores:

CIPIÓN.

JUGURTA.

GAYO MARIO.

Dos embajadores de Numancia.

Soldados romanos.

QUINTO FABIO.

MÁXIMO, *hermano de Cipión.*

## Jornada I

### *Scena I*

*Salen primero CIPIÓN y JUGURTA.*

CIPIÓN Esta difícil y pesada carga,  
que el Senado romano me ha encargado,  
tanto me aprieta, me fatiga y carga,  
que ya sale de quicio mi cuidado.  
Guerra de curso tan extraño y larga, 5  
y que tantos romanos ha costado,  
¿quién no estará suspenso al acabarla,  
o quién no temerá de renovarla?

JUGURTA ¿Quién, Cipión? Quien tiene la ventura  
y el valor nunca visto que en ti encierras, 10  
pues con ella y con él está segura  
la victoria y el triunfo destas guerras.

CIPIÓN El esfuerzo regido con cordura  
allana al suelo las más altas sierras,  
y la fuerza feroz de loca mano 15  
áspero vuelve lo que está más llano.  
Mas no hay que reprimir, a lo que veo,  
la furia del ejército presente,  
que, olvidado de gloria y de trofeo,  
yace embebido en la lascivia ardiente. 20  
Esto sólo pretendo, esto deseo:  
volver a nuevo trato a nuestra gente;  
que, enmendado primero el que es amigo,  
sujetaré más presto al enemigo.



¡Mario!

*(Sale GAYO MARIO.)*

GAYO MARIO¿Señor?

CIPIÓN Haz que a noticia venga 25  
de todo nuestro ejército, en un punto,  
que, sin que estorbo alguno le detenga,  
parezca en este sitio todo junto,  
porque una breve plática o arenga  
les quiero hacer.

GAYO MARIO Harélo en este punto. 30

CIPIÓN Camina, porque es bien que sepan todos  
mis nuevas trazas y sus viejos modos.

*(Vase GAYO MARIO.)*

JUGURTA Séte decir, señor, que no hay soldado  
que no te tema juntamente y te ame;  
y, porque ese valor tuyo extremado 35  
de Antártico a Calisto se derrame,  
cada cual con feroz ánimo osado,  
cuando la trompa a la ocasión le llame,  
piensa de hacer en tu servicio cosas  
que pasen las hazañas fabulosas. 40

CIPIÓN Primero es menester que se refrene  
el vicio que entre todos se derrama;  
que si éste no se quita, en nada tiene

con ellos que hacer la buena fama.  
Si este daño común no se previene, 45  
y se deja arraigar su ardiente llama,  
el vicio solo puede hacernos guerra  
más que los enemigos desta tierra.

*(Dentro se echa este bando, habiendo primero tocado a recoger el atambor:)*

Manda nuestro general  
que se recojan, armados, 50  
luego todos los soldados  
en la plaza principal;  
y que ninguno no quede  
de parecer a esta vista,  
so pena que de la lista 55  
al punto borrado quede.

JUGURTA No dudo yo, señor, sino que importa  
regir con duro freno la milicia,  
y que se dé al soldado rienda corta  
cuando él se precipita en la injusticia: 60  
la fuerza del ejército se acorta  
cuando va sin arrimo de justicia,  
aunque más le acompañen a montones  
mil pintadas banderas y escuadrones.

*(A este punto han de entrar los más soldados que pudieren, y GAYO MARIO, armados a la antigua, sin arcabuces; y CIPIÓN se sube sobre una peñuela que está en el tablado, y, mirando a los soldados, dice:)*

CIPIÓN En el fiero ademán, en los lozanos 65  
marciales aderezos y vistosos,  
bien os conozco, amigos, por romanos:  
romanos, digo, fuertes y animosos;

mas, en las blancas delicadas manos  
y en las teces de rostros tan lustrosos, 70  
allá en Bretaña parecéis criados  
y de padres flamencos engendrados.

El general descuido vuestro, amigos,  
el no mirar por lo que tanto os toca,  
levanta los caídos enemigos 75  
y vuestro esfuerzo y opinión apoca;  
desta ciudad los muros son testigos,  
que aún hoy están cual bien fundada roca,  
de vuestras perezosas fuerzas vanas,  
que sólo el nombre tienen de romanas. 80

¿Paréceos, hijos, que es gentil hazaña  
que tiemble del romano nombre el mundo,  
y que vosotros solos en España  
le aniquiléis y echéis en el profundo?  
¿Qué flojedad es esta tan extraña? 85  
¿Qué flojedad? Si mal yo no me fundo,  
es flojedad nacida de pereza,  
enemiga mortal de fortaleza.

La blanda Venus con el duro Marte  
jamás hacen durable ayuntamiento: 90  
ella regalos sigue; él sigue el arte  
que incita a daños y a furor sangriento.  
La cipria diosa estése agora aparte;  
deje su hijo nuestro alojamiento;  
que mal se aloja en las marciales tiendas 95  
quien gusta de banquetes y meriendas.

¿Pensáis que sólo atierra la muralla  
el ariete de ferrada punta,  
y que sólo atropella la batalla  
la multitud de gente y armas junta? 100  
Si el esfuerzo y cordura no se halla,  
que todo lo previene y lo barrunta,  
poco aprovechan muchos escuadrones,  
y menos, infinitas municiones.

Si a militar concierto se reduce 105  
cualquier pequeño ejército que sea,  
veréis que como sol claro reluce,

y alcanza las victorias que desea;  
pero si a flojedad él se conduce,  
aunque abreviado el mundo en él se vea, 110  
en un momento quedará deshecho  
por más reglada mano y fuerte pecho.

Averguénceos, varones esforzados,  
ver que, a nuestro pesar, con arrogancia,  
tan pocos españoles, y encerrados, 115  
defiendan este nido de Numancia.

Diez y seis años son, y más, pasados,  
que mantienen la guerra y la jactancia  
de haber vencido con feroces manos  
millares de millares de romanos. 120

Vosotros os vencéis; que estáis vencidos  
del bajo antojo femenil liviano,  
con Venus y con Baco entretenidos,  
sin que a las armas extendáis la mano.  
Correos agora, si no estáis corridos, 125  
de ver que este pequeño pueblo hispano  
contra el poder romano se defienda,  
y cuando más rendido, más ofenda.

De nuestro campo quiero, en todo caso,  
que salgan las infames meretrices; 130  
que de ser reducidos a este paso  
ellas solas han sido las raíces.

Para beber no quede más de un vaso,  
y los lechos, un tiempo ya felices,  
llenos de concubinas, se deshagan 135  
y de fajina y en el suelo se hagan.

No me hüela el soldado a otros olores  
que al olor de la pez y de resina,  
ni por gulosidad de los sabores  
traiga aparato alguno de cocina, 140  
que el que busca en la guerra estos primores,  
muy mal podrá sufrir la coracina;  
no quiero otro primor ni otra fragancia,  
en tanto que español viva en Numancia.

No os parezca, varones, escabroso 145  
ni duro este mi justo mandamiento:

que, al fin, conoceréis ser provechoso,  
cuando aquel consigáis de vuestro intento.  
Bien sé se os ha de hacer dificultoso  
dar a vuestras costumbres nuevo asiento; 150  
mas, si no las mudáis, estará firme  
la guerra, que esta afrenta más confirme.

En blandas camas, entre juego y vino,  
hállase mal el trabajoso Marte;  
otro aparejo busca, otro camino; 155  
otros brazos levantan su estandarte;  
cada cual se fabrica su destino,  
no tiene aquí Fortuna alguna parte:  
la pereza fortuna baja cría;  
la diligencia, imperio y monarquía. 160

Estoy, con todo esto, tan seguro  
de que al fin mostraréis que sois romanos,  
que tengo en nada el defendido muro  
destos rebeldes bárbaros hispanos;  
y así, os prometo por mi diestra y juro 165  
que si igualáis al ánimo las manos,  
que las mías se alarguen en pagaros,  
y mi lengua también en alabaros.

*(Míranse los soldados unos a otros, y hacen señas a uno de ellos, GAYO MARIO, que responda por todos, y así dice:)*

GAYO MARIO Si con atentos ojos has mirado,  
ínclito general, en los semblantes 170  
que a tus breves razones han mostrado  
los que tienes agora circunstantes,  
cual habrás visto sin color, turbado,  
y cual con ella: indicios bien bastantes  
de que el temor y la vergüenza, a una, 175  
los aflige, molesta e importuna.

Vergüenza de mirarse reducidos  
a términos tan bajos por su culpa;  
que, viendo ser por ti reprehendidos,

no saben a su falta hallar disculpa; 180  
temor de tantos yerros cometidos,  
y la torpe pereza, que los culpa,  
los tiene de tal modo, que se holgaran  
antes morir que en esto se hallaran.

Pero el lugar y tiempo que les queda 185  
para mostrar alguna recompensa,  
es causa que con menos fuerza pueda  
fatigar el rigor de tal ofensa:  
de hoy más, con presta voluntad y leda,  
el más mínimo de estos cuida y piensa 190  
de ofrecer sin revés a tu servicio  
la hacienda, vida y honra en sacrificio.

Admite, pues, de sus intentos sanos  
el justo ofrecimiento, señor mío,  
y considera, al fin, que son romanos, 195  
en quien nunca faltó del todo el brío.  
Vosotros, levantad las diestras manos  
en señas que aprobáis el voto mío.

SOLDADO 1.º Todo lo que aquí has dicho confirmamos.

SOLDADO 2.º Y lo juramos todos.

TODOS; Sí juramos! 200

CIPIÓN Pues, arrimada a tal ofrecimiento,  
crecerá desde hoy más mi confianza,  
creciendo en vuestros pechos ardimiento  
y del viejo vivir nueva mudanza.  
Vuestras promesas no se lleve el viento; 205  
hacedlas verdaderas con la lanza,  
que las mías saldrán tan verdaderas,  
cuanto fuere el valor de vuestras veras.

SOLDADO Dos numantinos con seguro vienen  
a darte, Cipión, una embajada. 210

CIPIÓN ¿Por qué no llegan ya? ¿En qué se detienen?

SOLDADO Esperan que licencia les sea dada.

CIPIÓN Si son embajadores, ya la tienen.

SOLDADO Embajadores son.

CIPIÓN Dales entrada;  
que, aunque descubra cierto o falso pecho 215  
el enemigo, siempre es de provecho.

Jamás la falsedad vino cubierta  
tanto con la verdad, que no mostrase  
algún pequeño indicio, alguna puerta  
por donde su maldad se investigase; 220  
oír al enemigo es cosa cierta  
que siempre aprovechó antes que dañase,  
y en las cosas de guerra, la experiencia  
muestra que lo que digo es cierta ciencia.

*(Entran dos embajadores numantinos: PRIMERO y SEGUNDO.)*

PRIMERO Si nos das, buen señor, grata licencia 225  
de decir la embajada que traemos,  
do estamos, o ante sola tu presencia,  
todo a lo que venimos te diremos.

CIPIÓN Decid, que adondequiera doy audiencia.

PRIMEROPues con ese seguro que tenemos 230  
de tu real grandeza concedido,  
daré principio a lo que soy venido.

Numancia, de quien yo soy ciudadano,  
ínclito general, a ti me envía,  
como al más fuerte capitán romano 235  
que ha cubierto la noche o visto el día,  
a pedirte, señor, la amiga mano,  
en señal de que cesa la porfía  
tan trabada y cruel de tantos años,  
que ha causado sus propios y tus daños. 240

Dice que nunca de la ley y fueros  
del romano Senado se apartara,  
si el insufrible mando y desafueros  
de un cónsul y otro no la fatigara:  
ellos, con duros estatutos fieros 245  
y con su estrecha condición avara,  
pusieron tan gran yugo a nuestros cuellos,  
que forzados salimos dél y de ellos;  
y, en todo el largo tiempo que ha durado  
entre ambas partes la contienda, es cierto 250  
que ningún general hemos hallado  
con quien poder tratar de algún concierto.  
Empero agora, que ha querido el hado  
reducir nuestra nave a tan buen puerto,  
las velas de la guerra recogemos, 255  
y a cualquiera partido nos ponemos.

Y no imagines que temor nos lleva  
a pedirte las paces con instancia,  
pues la larga experiencia ha dado prueba  
del poder valeroso de Numancia. 260  
Tu virtud y valor es quien nos ceba,  
y nos declara que será ganancia  
mayor de cuantas desear podremos,  
si por señor y amigo te tenemos.

A esto ha sido la venida nuestra: 265  
respóndenos, señor, lo que te place.



CIPIÓN Tarde de arrepentidos dais la muestra;  
poco vuestra amistad me satisface.  
De nuevo ejercitad la fuerte diestra,  
que quiero ver lo que la mía hace, 270  
ya que ha puesto en ella la ventura  
la gloria mía y vuestra desventura.  
A desvergüenza de tan largos años,  
es poca recompensa pedir paces:  
seguid la guerra, renovad los daños, 275  
salgan de nuevo las valientes haces.

SEGUNDO La falsa confianza mil engaños  
consigo trae; advierte lo que haces,  
señor, que esa arrogancia que nos muestras  
renovará el valor en nuestras diestras. 280  
Y, pues niegas la paz que con buen celo  
te ha sido por nosotros demandada,  
de hoy más la causa nuestra con el cielo  
quedará por mejor calificada;  
y, antes que pises de Numancia el suelo, 285  
probarás dó se extiende la indignada  
furia de aquel que, siéndote enemigo,  
quiere ser vasallo y fiel amigo.

CIPIÓN ¿Tenéis más que decir?

PRIMERO No; más tenemos  
que hacer, pues tú, señor, así lo quieres, 290  
sin querer la amistad que te ofrecemos,  
correspondiendo mal a ser quien eres.  
Pero entonces verás lo que podemos,  
cuando nos muestres tú lo que pudieres;  
que es una cosa razonar de paces, 295  
y otra romper por las armadas haces.

CIPIÓN Verdad dices; y ansí, para mostraros  
si sé tratar en paz y obrar en guerra,  
no quiero por amigos aceptaros,  
ni lo seré jamás de vuestra tierra. 300  
Y, con esto, podéis luego tornaros.

SEGUNDO ¿Que en esto tu querer, señor, se encierra?

CIPIÓN Ya he dicho que sí.

SEGUNDO Pues, ¡sus, al hecho,  
que guerras ama el numantino pecho!

*(Sálense los embajadores, y QUINTO FABIO, hermano de CIPIÓN, dice:)*

QUINTO FABIO El descuido pasado nuestro ha sido 305  
el que os hace hablar de aquea suerte,  
mas ya ha llegado el tiempo, ya es venido,  
do veréis nuestra gloria y vuestra muerte.

CIPIÓN El vano blasonar no es admitido  
de pecho valeroso, honrado y fuerte: 310  
templa las amenazas, Fabio, y calla,  
y tu valor descubre en la batalla.

Aunque yo pienso hacer que el numantino  
nunca a las manos con nosotros venga,  
buscando de vencerle tal camino, 315  
que más a mi provecho le convenga;  
yo haré que abaje el brío y pierda el tino,  
y que en sí mismo su furor detenga:  
pienso de un hondo foso rodeallos,

y por hambre insufrible sujetallos. 320

No quiero ya que sangre de romanos  
colore más el suelo desta tierra:  
basta la que han vertido estos hispanos  
en tan larga, reñida y cruda guerra;  
ejercítense agora vuestras manos 325  
en romper y cavar la dura tierra,  
y cúbranse de polvo los amigos  
que no lo están de sangre de enemigos.

No quede de este oficio reservado  
ninguno que le tenga preminente: 330  
trabaje el decurión como el soldado,  
y no se muestre en esto diferente.  
Yo mismo tomaré el hierro pesado,  
y romperé la tierra fácilmente.  
Haced todos cual yo, y veréis que hago 335  
tal obra con que a todos satisfago.

QUINTO FABIO Valeroso señor y hermano mío,  
bien nos muestras en esto tu cordura,  
pues fuera conocido desvarío  
y temeraria muestra de locura 340  
pelear contra el loco airado brío  
destos desesperados sin ventura.  
Mejor será encerrallos, como dices,  
y quitarles al brío las raíces.

Bien puede la ciudad toda cercarse, 345  
si no es la parte por do el río la baña.

CIPIÓN Vamos, y venga luego a efectuarse  
esta mi nueva poco usada hazaña;  
y si en nuestro favor quiere mostrarse  
el cielo, quedará subjeta España 350  
al Senado romano, solamente  
con vencer la soberbia de esta gente.

*Vanse.*

## Scena II

*Sale una doncella coronada con unas torres y trae un castillo en la mano, la cual significa ESPAÑA, y dice:*

ESPAÑA ¡Alto, sereno y espacioso cielo,  
que con tus influencias enriqueces  
la parte que es mayor deste mi suelo, 355  
y sobre muchos otros le engrandeces,  
muévate a compasión mi amargo duelo;  
y, pues al afligido favoreces,  
favoréceme a mí en ansia tamaña,  
que soy la sola desdichada España! 360

Bástete ya que un tiempo me tuviste  
todos mis flacos miembros abrasados,  
y al sol por mis entrañas descubriste  
el reino oscuro de los condenados.  
A mil tiranos, mil riquezas diste; 365  
a fenices y griegos entregados  
mis reinos fueron, porque tú has querido,  
o porque mi maldad lo ha merecido.

¿Será posible que contino sea  
esclava de naciones extranjeras, 370  
y que un pequeño tiempo yo no vea  
de libertad tendidas mis banderas?  
Con justísimo título se emplea  
en mí el rigor de tantas penas fieras,  
pues mis famosos hijos y valientes 375  
andan entre sí mismos diferentes.

Jamás en su provecho concertaron  
los divididos ánimos briosos;  
antes, entonces más los apartaron  
cuando se vieron más menesterosos; 380  
y ansí, con sus discordias convidaron  
los bárbaros de pechos codiciosos

a venir y entregarse en mis riquezas,  
usando en mí y en ellos mil crüezas.

Sola Numancia es la que sola ha sido 385  
quien la luciente espada sacó fuera,  
y a costa de su sangre ha mantenido  
la amada libertad suya primera.

Mas, ¡ay!, que veo el término cumplido,  
y llegada la hora postrimera, 390  
do acabará su vida y no su fama,  
cual Fénix renovándose en la llama.

Estos tan muchos temidos romanos  
que buscan de vencer cien mil caminos,  
rehuyen de venir más a las manos 395  
con los pocos valientes numantinos.  
¡Oh, si saliesen sus intentos vanos,  
y fuesen sus quimeras desatinos,  
y esta pequeña tierra de Numancia  
sacase de su pérdida ganancia! 400

Mas, ¡ay!, que el enemigo la ha cercado,  
no sólo con las armas contrapuestas  
al flaco muro suyo, mas ha obrado  
con diligencia estraña y manos prestas,  
que un foso, por la margen trincheado, 405  
rodea la ciudad por llano y cuestras;  
sola la parte por do el río se extiende  
de este ardid nunca visto se defiende.

Ansí, están encogidos y encerrados  
los tristes numantinos en sus muros: 410  
ni ellos pueden salir, ni ser entrados,  
y están de los asaltos bien seguros;  
pero, en sólo mirar que están privados  
de ejercitar sus fuertes brazos duros,  
con horrendos acentos y feroces 415  
la guerra piden, o la muerte a voces.

Y, pues sola la parte por do corre  
y toca a la ciudad el ancho Duero,  
es aquella que ayuda y que socorre  
en algo al numantino prisionero, 420  
antes que alguna máquina o gran torre

en sus aguas se funde, rogar quiero  
al caudaloso conocido río,  
en lo que puede ayude el pueblo mío.

Duero gentil, que con torcidas vueltas 425  
humedeces gran parte de mi seno,  
ansí en tus aguas siempre veas envueltas  
arenas de oro, cual el Tajo ameno,  
y ansí las ninfas fugitivas sueltas,  
de que está el verde prado y bosque lleno, 430  
vengan humildes a tus aguas claras,  
y en prestarte favor no sean avaras,  
que prestes a mis ásperos lamentos  
atento oído, o que a escucharlos vengas;  
y, aunque dejes un rato tus contentos, 435  
suplícote que en nada te detengas.  
Si tú con tus continos crecimientos,  
destos fieros romanos no me vengas,  
cerrado veo ya cualquier camino  
a la salud del pueblo numantino. 440

*(Sale el río DUERO, con otros muchachos vestidos de río como él, que son tres riachuelos que entran en DUERO.)*

DUERO Madre y querida España, rato había  
que hirieron mis oídos tus querellas;  
y si en salir acá me detenía,  
fue por no poder dar remedio a ellas.  
El fatal, miserable y triste día, 445  
según el disponer de las estrellas,  
se llega de Numancia, y cierto temo  
que no hay dar medio a su dolor extremo.

Con Orvión, Minuesa y también Tera,  
cuyas aguas las mías acrecientan, 450  
he llenado mi seno en tal manera,  
que los usados márgenes revientan;  
mas, sin temor de mi veloz carrera,  
cual si fuera un arroyo, veo que intentan

de hacer lo que tú, España, nunca veas: 455  
sobre mis aguas, torres y trincheas.

Mas, ya que el revolver del duro hado  
tenga el último fin estatuido  
deste tu pueblo numantino amado,  
pues a términos tales ha venido, 460  
un consuelo le queda en este estado:  
que no podrán las sombras del olvido  
oscurecer el sol de sus hazañas,  
en toda edad tenidas por estrañas.

Y, puesto que el feroz romano tiende 465  
el paso agora por tu fértil suelo,  
y que te oprime aquí, y allí te ofende,  
con arrogante y ambicioso celo,  
tiempo vendrá, según que ansí lo entiende  
el saber que a Proteo ha dado el cielo, 470  
que esos romanos sean oprimidos  
por los que agora tienen abatidos.

De remotas naciones venir veo  
gentes que habitarán tu dulce seno,  
después que, como quiere tu deseo, 475  
habrán a los romanos puesto freno;  
godos serán, que, con vistoso arreo,  
dejando de su fama al mundo lleno,  
vendrán a recogerse en tus entrañas,  
dando de nuevo vida a sus hazañas. 480

Estas injurias vengará la mano  
del fiero Atila en tiempos venideros,  
poniendo al pueblo tan feroz romano  
sujeto a obedecer todos sus fueros;  
y, portillos abriendo en Vaticano, 485  
tus bravos hijos y otros extranjeros  
harán que para huir vuelva la planta  
el gran Piloto de la nave santa.

Y también vendrá tiempo en que se mire  
estar blandiendo el español cuchillo 490  
sobre el cuello romano, y que respire  
sólo por la bondad de su caudillo.  
El grande Albano hará que se retire



el español ejército, sencillo,  
no de valor sino de poca gente, 495  
que iguala al mayor número en valiente.

Y cuando fuere ya más conocido  
el propio Hacedor de tierra y cielo,  
aquél que ha de quedar estatuido  
por visorrey de Dios en todo el suelo, 500  
a tus reyes dará tal apellido,  
cual viere que más cuadra con su celo:  
católicos serán llamados todos,  
sucesión digna de los fuertes godos.

Pero el que más levantará la mano 505  
en honra tuya y general contento,  
haciendo que el valor del nombre hispano  
tenga entre todos el mejor asiento,  
un rey será, de cuyo intento sano  
grandes cosas me muestra el pensamiento: 510  
será llamado, siendo suyo el mundo,  
el Segundo Filipo, sin segundo.

Debajo deste imperio tan dichoso,  
serán a una corona reducidos,  
por bien universal y tu reposo, 515  
tus reinos hasta entonces divididos;  
el jirón lusitano tan famoso,  
que un tiempo se cortó de los vestidos  
de la ilustre Castilla, ha de zurcirse  
de nuevo y a su estado antiguo unirse. 520

¡Qué envidia y qué temor, España amada,  
te tendrán las naciones extranjeras,  
en quién tu teñirás tu aguda espada  
y tenderás, triunfando, tus banderas!  
Sírvate esto de alivio en la pesada 525  
ocasión por quien lloras tan de veras,  
pues no puede faltar lo que ordenado  
ya tiene de Numancia el duro hado.

ESPAÑA Tus razones alivio han dado en parte,  
famoso Duero, a las pasiones mías, 530

sólo porque imagino que no hay parte  
de engaño alguno en estas profecías.

DUERO Bien puedes de eso, España, asegurarte,  
puesto que tarden tan dichosos días.  
Y adiós, porque me esperan ya mis ninfas. 535

ESPAÑA ¡El cielo aumente tus sabrosas linfas!

## Jornada II

### Scena I

*Interlocutores: TEÓGENES y CORABINO, con otros cuatro numantinos, gobernadores de Numancia, y MARQUINO, hechicero, y un cuerpo muerto, que saldrá a su tiempo. Siéntanse a consejo, y los cuatro numantinos que no tienen nombres se señalan así: PRIMERO, SEGUNDO, TERCERO, CUARTO.*

TEÓGENES Paréceme, varones esforzados,  
que en nuestros daños con rigor influyen  
los tristes signos y contrarios hados,  
pues nuestra fuerza y maña desminuyen.  
Tiénnenos los romanos encerrados, 5  
y con cobardes mañas nos destruyen;  
ni con matar muriendo no hay vengarnos,  
ni podemos sin alas escaparnos.

Y no sólo a vencernos se despiertan  
los que habemos vencido veces tantas, 10  
que también españoles se conciertan  
con ellos a segar nuestras gargantas;  
tan gran maldad los cielos no consientan:  
con rayos hieran las ligeras plantas  
que se mueven en daño del amigo, 15  
favoreciendo al pérfido enemigo.

Mirad si imagináis algún remedio  
para salir de tanta desventura,  
porque este largo y trabajoso asedio  
sólo promete presta sepultura; 20  
el ancho foso nos estorba el medio  
de probar con las armas la ventura,  
aunque a veces valientes, fuertes brazos,  
rompen mil contrapuestos embarazos.

CORABINO    ¡A Júpiter pluguiera soberano 25

que nuestra juventud sola se viera  
con todo el bravo ejército romano,  
adonde el brazo rodear pudiera!  
Que allí al valor de la española mano  
la misma muerte poco estorbo fuera, 30  
para dejar de abrir ancho camino  
a la salud del pueblo numantino.

Mas, pues en tales términos nos vemos,  
que estamos como damas encerrados,  
hagamos todo cuanto hacer podremos 35  
para mostrar los ánimos osados:  
a nuestros enemigos convidemos  
a singular batalla; que, cansados  
de este cerco tan largo, ser podría  
quisiesen acabarle por tal vía. 40

Y, cuando este remedio no suceda  
a la justa medida del deseo,  
otro camino de intentar nos queda,  
aunque más trabajoso, a lo que creo:  
este foso y muralla que nos veda 45  
el paso al enemigo que allí veo,  
en un tropel de noche le rompamos,  
y por ayuda a los amigos vamos.

NUMANTINO PRIMERO    O sea por el foso o por la muerte,  
de abrir tenemos paso a nuestra vida; 50  
que es dolor insufrible el de la muerte,  
si llega cuando más vive la vida;  
remedio a las miserias es la muerte,  
si se acrecientan ellas con la vida,  
y suele tanto más ser excelente, 55  
cuanto se muere más honradamente.

SEGUNDO    ¿Con qué más honra pueden apartarse  
de nuestros cuerpos estas almas nuestras,  
que en las romanas armas arrojarse

y en su daño mover las fuertes diestras? 60  
En la ciudad podrá muy bien quedarse  
quien gusta de cobarde dar las muestras;  
que yo mi gusto pongo en quedar muerto  
en el cerrado foso o campo abierto.

TERCERO Esta insufrible hambre macilenta, 65  
que tanto nos persigue y nos rodea,  
hace que en vuestro parecer consienta,  
puesto que temerario y duro sea.  
Muriendo escusaremos tanta afrenta;  
mas quien morir de hambre no desea, 70  
arrójese conmigo al foso, y haga  
camino a su remedio con la daga.

CUARTO Primero que vengáis al trance duro  
desta resolución que habéis tomado,  
paréceme ser bien que desde el muro 75  
nuestro fiero enemigo sea avisado,  
diciéndole que dé campo seguro  
a un numantino y otro su soldado,  
y que la muerte de uno sea sentencia  
que acabe nuestra antigua diferencia. 80

Son los romanos tan soberbia gente,  
que luego aceptarán este partido;  
y si lo aceptan, creo firmemente  
que nuestro amargo daño ha fenecido,  
pues está Corabino aquí presente, 85  
cuyo valor me tiene persuadido  
que él solo contra tres bravos romanos  
quitará la victoria de las manos.

También será acertado que Marquino,  
pues es un agorero tan famoso, 90  
mire qué estrella, qué planeta o signo  
nos amenaza muerte o fin honroso,  
y si puede hallar algún camino  
que nos pueda mostrar si del dudoso

cerco cruel do estamos oprimidos 95  
saldremos vencedores o vencidos.

También primero encargo que se haga  
a Júpiter solene sacrificio,  
de quien podremos esperar la paga  
harto mayor que nuestro beneficio; 100  
cúrese luego la profunda llaga  
del arraigado acostumbrado vicio:  
quizá con esto mudará de intento  
el hado esquivo y nos dará contento.

Para morir, jamás le falta tiempo 105  
al que quiere morir desesperado:  
siempre seremos a sazón y a tiempo  
para mostrar, muriendo, el pecho osado;  
mas, porque no se pase en balde el tiempo,  
mirad si os cuadra lo que aquí he ordenado; 110  
y si no os pareciere, dad un modo  
que mejor venga y que convenga a todo.

MARQUINO Esa razón que muestran tus razones  
es aprobada del intento mío.  
Háganse sacrificios y oblaciones 115  
y póngase en efeto el desafío;  
que yo no perderé las ocasiones  
de mostrar de mi ciencia el poderío:  
yo sacaré del hondo centro oscuro  
quien nos declare el bien o el mal futuro. 120

TEÓGENES Yo desde aquí me ofrezco, si os parece  
que puede de mi esfuerzo algo fiarse,  
de salir a este duelo que se ofrece,  
si por ventura viene a efectuarse.

CORABINOMás honra tu valor raro merece: 125  
bien pueden de tu esfuerzo confiarse  
más difíciles cosas y mayores,

por ser el que es mejor de los mejores.

Y, pues tú ocupas el lugar primero  
de la honra y valor con causa justa, 130  
yo, que en todo me cuento por postrero,  
quiero ser el haraldo desta justa.

PRIMERO Pues yo, con todo el pueblo, me prefiero  
hacer de lo que Júpiter más gusta,  
que son los sacrificios y oraciones, 135  
si van con enmendados corazones.

SEGUNDO Vámonos, y con presta diligencia  
hagamos cuanto aquí propuesto habemos,  
antes que la pestífera dolencia  
de la hambre nos ponga en los extremos. 140

TERCERO Si tiene el Cielo dada la sentencia  
de que en este rigor fiero acabemos,  
revóquela, si acaso lo merece  
la justa enmienda que Numancia ofrece.

*Vanse.*

## Scena II

*Salen primero dos soldados numantinos: MORANDRO y LEONCIO.*

LEONCIO Morandro, amigo, ¿a dó vas, 145  
o hacia dó mueves el pie?

MORANDRO Si yo mismo no lo sé,  
tampoco tú lo sabrás.

LEONCIO ¡Cómo te saca de seso  
tu amoroso pensamiento! 150

MORANDRO Antes, después que le siento  
tengo más razón y peso.

LEONCIO Eso ya está averiguado:  
que el que sirviere al Amor  
ha de ser, por su dolor, 155  
con razón muy más pesado.

MORANDRO De malicia o de agudeza  
no escapa lo que dijiste.

LEONCIO Tú mi agudeza entendiste,  
mas yo entiendo tu simpleza. 160

MORANDRO ¿Que soy simple en querer bien?



LEONCIO Sí, si al querer no se mide,  
como la razón lo pide,  
con cuándo, cómo y a quién.

MORANDRO ¿Reglas quiés poner a amor? 165

LEONCIO La razón puede ponellas.

MORANDRO Razonables serán ellas,  
mas no de mucho primor.

LEONCIO En la amorosa porfía,  
a razón no hay conocella. 170

MORANDRO Amor no va contra ella,  
aunque de ella se desvía.

LEONCIO ¿No es ya contra la razón,  
siendo tú tan buen soldado,  
andar tan enamorado 175  
en esta estrecha ocasión?

¿Al tiempo que del dios Marte  
has de pedir el furor,  
te entretienes con Amor,  
que mil blanduras reparte? 180

¿Ves la patria consumida  
y de enemigos cercada,  
y tu memoria, turbada  
por amor, de ella se olvida?

MORANDRO En ira mi pecho se arde 185

por verte hablar sin cordura:  
¿hizo el amor, por ventura,  
a ningún pecho cobarde?

¿Dejo yo la centinela  
por ir dónde está mi dama, 190  
o estoy durmiendo en la cama  
cuando mi capitán vela?

¿Hasme tú visto faltar  
de lo que debo a mi oficio  
por algún regalo o vicio, 195  
ni menos por bien amar?

Y si nada me has hallado  
de que deba dar disculpa,  
¿por qué me das tanta culpa  
de que sea enamorado? 200

Y si de conversación  
me ves que ando siempre ajeno,  
mete la mano en tu seno,  
verás si tengo razón.

¿No sabes los muchos años 205  
que tras Lira ando perdido?

¿No sabes que era venido  
el fin de mis tristes daños,  
porque su padre ordenaba  
de dármela por mujer, 210  
y que Lira su querer  
con el mío concertaba?

También sabes que llegó  
en tan dulce coyuntura  
esta fuerte guerra dura, 215  
por quien mi gloria cesó.

Dilatóse el casamiento  
hasta acabar esta guerra,  
porque no está nuestra tierra  
para fiestas y contento. 220

Mira cuán poca esperanza  
puedo tener de mi gloria,  
pues está nuestra victoria  
toda en la enemiga lanza.

De la hambre fatigados, 225  
sin medio de algún remedio,  
tal muralla y foso en medio,  
pocos, y esos encerrados.

Pues, como veo llevar  
mis esperanzas del viento, 230  
ando triste y descontento,  
así cual me ves andar.

LEONCIO Sosiega, Morandro, el pecho;  
vuelve al brío que tenías:  
quizá por ocultas vías 235  
se ordena nuestro provecho;  
que Júpiter soberano  
nos descubrirá camino,  
por do el pueblo numantino  
quede libre del romano; 240  
y, en dulce paz y sosiego,  
de tu esposa gozarás,  
y las llamas templarás  
deste tu amoroso fuego;  
que, para tener propicio 245  
al gran Júpiter Tonante,  
hoy Numancia, en este instante,  
le quiere hacer sacrificio.

Ya el pueblo viene y se muestra  
con las víctimas e incienso. 250  
¡Oh Júpiter, padre imenso,  
mira la miseria nuestra!

*Apártanse a un lado.*

*(Han de salir agora dos numantinos, vestidos como sacerdotes antiguos, y traen asido de los cuernos en medio de entrambos un carnero grande, coronado de oliva o yedra y otras flores, y un PAJE con una fuente de plata y una toalla al hombro; otro, con un jarro de plata lleno de agua; otro, con otro lleno de vino;*

*otro, con otro plato de plata con un poco de incienso; otro, con fuego y leña; otro que ponga una mesa con un tapete, donde se ponga todo esto; y salgan en esta scena todos los que hubiere en la comedia, en hábito de numantinos, y luego los sacerdotes, y dejando el uno el carnero de la mano, diga:)*

SACERDOTE PRIMERO Señales ciertas de dolores ciertos  
se me han representado en el camino,  
y los canos cabellos tengo yertos. 255

SACERDOTE SEGUNDO Si acaso yo no soy mal adevino,  
nunca con bien saldremos desta impresa.  
¡Ay, desdichado pueblo numantino!

PRIMERO Hagamos nuestro oficio con la priesa  
que nos incitan los agüeros tristes. 260

SEGUNDO Poned, amigos, hacia aquí esa mesa:  
el vino, encienso y agua que trujistes,  
poneldo encima y apartaos afuera,  
y arrepentíos de cuanto mal hicistes;  
que la oblación mejor y la primera 265  
que se debe ofrecer al alto cielo,  
es alma limpia y voluntad sincera.

PRIMERO El fuego no le hagáis vos en el suelo,  
que aquí viene brasero para ello;  
que así lo pide el religioso celo. 270

SEGUNDO Lavaos las manos y limpiaos el cuello.

PRIMERO Dad acá el agua... ¿El fuego no se enciende?

UNO ¡No hay quien pueda, señores, encendello!

SEGUNDO ¡Oh Júpiter! ¿Qué es esto que pretende  
de hacer en nuestro daño el hado esquivo? 275  
¿Cómo el fuego en la tea no se emprende?

UNO Ya parece, señor, que está algo vivo.

PRIMERO ¡Quítate afuera, oh flaca llama oscura,  
que dolor en mirarte así recibo!  
¿No miras cómo el humo se apresura 280  
a caminar al lado del poniente,  
y la amarilla llama mal sigura  
sus puntas encamina hacia el oriente?  
¡Desdichada señal! ¡Señal notoria  
que nuestro mal y daño está presente! 285

SEGUNDO Aunque lleven romanos la victoria  
de nuestra muerte, en humo ha de tornarse  
y en llamas vivas nuestra muerte y gloria.

PRIMERO Pues debe con el vino rociarse  
el sacro fuego, dad acá ese vino, 290  
y el incienso también, que ha de quemarse.

*(Rocían el fuego, y a la redonda, con el vino, y luego ponen el incienso en el  
fuego y dice el)*

SEGUNDO Al bien del triste pueblo numantino  
endereza, ¡oh gran Júpiter!, la fuerza  
propicia del contrario amargo signo.

PRIMERO   Ansí como este ardiente fuego fuerza   295  
a que en humo se vaya el sacro incienso,  
ansí se haga al enemigo fuerza,  
    para que en humo eterno, padre inmenso,  
todo su bien, toda su gloria vaya,  
ansí como tú puedes y yo pienso.   300

SEGUNDO   Tengan los cielos su poder a raya,  
ansí como esta víctima tenemos,  
y lo que ella ha de haber, él también haya.

PRIMERO   ¡Mal responde el agüero: mal podremos  
ofrecer esperanza al pueblo triste,   305  
para salir del mal que poseemos!

*(Hágase ruido debajo del tablado con un barril lleno de piedras, y dispárese un cohete volador.)*

SEGUNDO   ¿No oyes un ruido, amigo? Di, ¿no viste  
el rayo ardiente que pasó volando?  
Présago verdadero desto fuiste.

PRIMERO   Turbado estoy; de miedo estoy temblando.   310  
¡Oh, qué señales en el aire veo,  
qué amargo fin nos van pronosticando!  
    ¿No ves un escuadrón airado y feo  
de unas águilas fieras, que pelean  
con otras aves en marcial rodeo?   315

SEGUNDO   Sólo su esfuerzo y su rigor emplean  
en encerrar las aves en un cabo,  
y con astucia y arte las rodean.

PRIMERO Tal señal vitupero, y no la alabo:  
¡Águilas imperiales vencedoras! 320  
¡Tú verás de Numancia presto el cabo!

SEGUNDO ¡Águilas, de gran mal anunciadoras,  
partíos, que ya el agüero vuestro entiendo;  
ya el efecto: contadas son las horas!

PRIMERO Con todo, el sacrificio hacer pretendo 325  
desta inocente víctima, guardada  
para aplacar el dios del rostro horrendo.

¡Oh gran Plutón, a quien por suerte dada  
le fue la habitación del reino oscuro,  
y el mando en la infernal triste morada, 330

ansí vivas en paz, cierto y seguro  
de que la hija de la sacra Ceres  
corresponde a tu amor con amor puro,  
que todo aquello que en provecho vieres  
venir del pueblo triste que te invoca, 335  
lo allegues cual se espera de quien eres.

Atapa la profunda oscura boca  
por do salen las tres fieras hermanas  
a hacernos el daño que nos toca;  
y sean de dañarnos tan livianas 340

*(Quite algunos pelos al carnero y échelos al aire.)*

sus intenciones, que las lleve el viento,  
como se lleva el pelo de estas lanas.

Y, ansí como yo baño y ensangriento  
este cuchillo en esta sangre pura,  
con alma limpia y limpio pensamiento, 345

ansí la tierra de Numancia dura  
se bañe con la sangre de romanos,  
y aun les sirva también de sepultura.

*(Aquí ha de salir por los huecos del tablado un DEMONIO hasta el medio cuerpo, y ha de arrebatarse el carnero, y meterle dentro, y tornar luego a salir, y derramar y esparcir el fuego y todos los sacrificios.)*

Mas, ¿quién me ha arrebatado de las manos  
la víctima? ¿Qué es esto, dioses santos? 350  
¿Qué prodigios son esos tan insanos?  
¿No os han enternecido ya los llantos  
de este pueblo lloroso y afligido,  
ni la sagrada voz de nuestros cantos?

SEGUNDO Antes creo que se han endurecido, 355  
cual se puede inferir de las señales  
tan fieras como aquí han acontecido.

Nuestros vivos remedios son mortales:  
toda es pereza nuestra diligencia,  
y los bienes ajenos, nuestros males. 360

UNO DEL PUEBLO En fin, dado han los cielos la sentencia  
de nuestro fin amargo y miserable;  
no nos quiere valer ya su clemencia.

OTRO Lloremos, pues, en son tan lamentable  
nuestra desdicha, que en la edad postrera 365  
dél y de nuestro esfuerzo siempre se hable.

Marquino haga la experiencia entera  
de todo su saber, y sepa cuanto  
nos promete de mal la lastimera  
suerte, que ha vuelto nuestra risa en llanto. 370

*(Sálense todos, y quedan solos MORANDRO y LEONCIO.)*

MORANDRO Leoncio, ¿qué te parece?  
¿Tendrán remedio mis males



con estas buenas señales  
que aquí el cielo nos ofrece?  
¿Tendrá fin mi desventura 375  
cuando se acabe la guerra,  
que será cuando la tierra  
me sirva de sepultura?

LEONCIO Morandro, al que es buen soldado  
agüeros no le dan pena, 380  
que pone la suerte buena  
en el ánimo esforzado;  
y esas vanas apariencias  
nunca le turban el tino:  
su brazo es su estrella y signo; 385  
su valor, sus influencias.

Pero si quieres creer  
en este notorio engaño,  
aún quedan, si no me engaño,  
experiencias más que hacer; 390  
que Marquino las hará,  
las mejores de su ciencia,  
y el fin de nuestra dolencia  
ser bueno o malo sabrá.

Paréceme que le veo: 395  
¡en qué extraño traje viene!

MORANDRO Quien con feos se entretiene,  
no es mucho que venga feo.  
¿Será acertado seguirle?

LEONCIO Acertado me parece, 400  
por si acaso se le ofrece  
algo en que poder servirle.

*(Aquí sale MARQUINO con una ropa negra de bocací ancha, y una cabellera*

*negra, y los pies descalzos; y en la cinta traerá, de modo que se le vean, tres redomillas llenas de agua: la una negra, la otra teñida con azafrán y la otra clara; y en la una mano, una lanza barnizada de negro, y en la otra, un libro; y viene MILVIO con él, y, así como entran, se ponen a un lado LEONCIO y MORANDRO.)*

MARQUINO ¿Dó dices, Milvio, que está el joven triste?

MILVIO En esta sepultura está enterrado.

MARQUINO No yerres el lugar do le pusiste. 405

MILVIO No, que con esta piedra señalado  
dejé el lugar adonde el mozo tierno  
fue con lágrimas tiernas sepultado.

MARQUINO ¿De qué murió?

MILVIO Murió de mal gobierno:  
la flaca hambre le acabó la vida, 410  
peste cruel salida del infierno.

MARQUINO En fin, ¿que dices que ninguna herida  
le cortó el hilo del vital aliento,  
ni fue cáncer ni llaga su homicida?

Esto te digo, porque hace al cuento 415  
de mi saber que esté este cuerpo entero,  
organizado todo y en su asiento.

MILVIO Habrá tres horas que le di el postrero  
reposo, y le entregué a la sepultura,  
y de hambre murió, como refiero. 420

MARQUINO Está muy bien, y es buena coyuntura  
la que me ofrecen los propicios signos  
para invocar de la región oscura  
los feroces espíritus malignos.

Presta atentos oídos a mis versos, 425  
fiero Plutón, que en la región oscura,  
entre ministros de ánimos perversos,  
te cupo de reinar suerte y ventura;  
haz, aunque sean de tu gusto adversos,  
cumplidos mis deseos, y en la dura 430  
ocasión que te invoco no te tardes,  
ni a ser más oprimido de mí aguardes.

Quiero que al cuerpo que aquí está enterrado  
vuelvas el alma que le daba vida,  
aunque el fiero Carón del otro lado 435  
la tenga en la ribera denegrida;  
y, aunque en las tres gargantas del airado  
Cerbera esté penada y escondida,  
salga, y torne a la luz del mundo nuestro;  
que luego tornará al oscuro vuestro. 440

Y, pues ha de salir, salga informada  
del fin que ha de tener guerra tan cruda,  
y desto no me encubra o calle nada,  
ni me deje confuso y con más duda:  
la plática desta alma desdichada, 445  
de toda ambigüidad libre y desnuda  
tiene de ser. ¡Invíala...! ¿Qué esperas?  
¿Esperas a que hable con más veras?

¿No revolvéis la piedra, desleales?  
Decid, ministros falsos, ¿qué os detiene? 450  
¿Cómo no me habéis dado ya señales  
de que hacéis lo que digo y me conviene?  
¿Buscáis, con deteneros, vuestros males,  
o gustáis de que yo al momento ordene  
de poner en efecto los conjuros 455  
que ablandan vuestros fieros pechos duros?

Ea, pues, vil canalla mentirosa,

aparejaos a duro sentimiento,  
pues sabéis que mi voz es poderosa  
de doblaros la rabia y el tormento. 460  
Dime, traidor esposo de la esposa  
que seis meses del año, a su contento,  
está sin ti, haciéndote cornudo:  
¿por qué a mis peticiones estás mudo?

Este hierro, bañado en agua clara 465  
que al suelo no tocó en el mes de mayo,  
herirá en esta piedra y hará clara  
y patente la fuerza deste ensayo.

*(Con el agua de la redoma clara baña el hierro de la lanza, y luego hiere en la  
tabla; y debajo, o suéltense cohetes o hágase el rumor con el barril de piedras.)*

Ya parece, canalla, que a la clara  
dais muestras de que os toma cruel desmayo. 470  
¿Qué rumores son estos? ¡Ea, malvados,  
que al fin venís, aunque venís forzados!

Levantad esta piedra, fementidos,  
y descubridme el cuerpo que aquí yace.  
¿Qué es esto? ¿Qué tardáis? ¿A dó sois idos? 475  
¿Cómo mi mandado al punto no se hace?  
¿No os curáis de amenazas, descreídos?  
Pues no esperéis que más os amenace:  
esta agua negra del Estigio lago  
dará a vuestra tardanza presto el pago. 480

Agua de la fatal negra laguna,  
cogida en triste noche, oscura y negra,  
por el poder que en ti junto se aúna,  
a quien otro poder ninguno quiebra,  
a la banda diabólica importuna, 485  
y a quien la primer forma de culebra  
tomó, conjuro, apremio, pido y mando  
que venga a obedecerme aquí volando.  
*(Rocía con el agua la sepultura y ábrese.)*

¡Oh mal logrado mozo!, sal ya fuera  
y vuelve a ver el sol claro y sereno; 490  
deja aquella región do no se espera  
en ella un día sosegado y bueno.  
Dame, pues puedes, relación entera  
de lo que has visto en el profundo seno;  
digo, de aquello a que mandado eres, 495  
y más, si al caso toca y tú pudieres.

*(Sale EL CUERPO amortajado, con un rostro de máscara descolorido, como de muerto, y va saliendo poco a poco, y, en saliendo, déjase caer en el teatro, sin mover pie ni mano hasta su tiempo.)*

¿Qué es esto? ¿No respondes? ¿No revives?  
¿Otra vez has gustado de la muerte?  
Pues yo haré que con tu pena avives  
y tengas el hablarme a buena suerte. 500  
Pues eres de los nuestros, no te esquives  
de hablarme y responderme: mira, advierte  
que si callas, haré que, con tu mengua,  
sueltes la atada y encogida lengua.

*(Rocía EL CUERPO con el agua amarilla, y luego le azota con un azote.)*

Espíritus malignos, ¿no aprovecha? 505  
Pues esperad: saldrá el agua encantada,  
que hará mi voluntad tan satisfecha  
cuanto es la vuestra pérvida y dañada;  
y, aunque esta carne fuera polvos hecha,  
siendo con este azote castigada, 510  
cobrará nueva, aunque ligera vida,  
del áspero rigor suyo oprimida.

*(Menéase y estremécese EL CUERPO a este punto.)*

Alma rebelde, vuelve al aposento  
que pocas horas ha desocupaste.  
Ya vuelves, ya lo muestras, ya te siento; 515

que, al fin, a tu pesar, en él te entraste.

EL CUERPO Cese la furia del rigor violento  
tuyo, Marquino; baste, triste, baste  
la que yo paso en la región oscura,  
sin que tú crezcas más mi desventura. 520

Engañaste si piensas que recibo  
contento de volver a esta penosa,  
miserable y corta vida que ahora vivo,  
que ya me va faltando presurosa;  
antes me causas un dolor esquivo, 525  
pues otra vez la muerte rigurosa  
triunfará de mi vida y de mi alma;  
mi enemigo tendrá doblada palma.

El cual, con otros del oscuro bando,  
de los que son sujetos a aguardarte, 530  
está con rabia en torno, aquí esperando  
a que acabe, Marquino, de informarte  
del lamentable fin, del mal nefando  
que de Numancia puedo asegurarte;  
la cual acabará a las mismas manos 535  
de los que son a ella más cercanos.

No llevarán romanos la victoria  
de la fuerte Numancia, ni ella menos  
tendrá del enemigo triunfo o gloria,  
amigos y enemigos siendo buenos; 540  
no entiendas que de paz habrá memoria,  
que rabia alberga en sus contrarios senos:  
el amigo cuchillo, el homicida  
de Numancia será, y será su vida.  
(*Arrójase en la sepultura y dice:*)

Y quédate, Marquino, que los hados 545  
no me conceden más hablar contigo;  
y, aunque mis dichos tengas por trocados,  
al fin saldrá verdad lo que te digo.

MARQUINO; Oh tristes signos; signos desdichados!  
Si esto ha de suceder del pueblo amigo, 550  
primero que mirar tal desventura,  
mi vida acabe en esta sepultura.  
(Arrójase MARQUINO en la sepultura.)

MORANDRO Mira, Leoncio, si ves  
por dó yo pueda decir  
que no me haya de salir 555  
todo mi gusto al revés.

De toda nuestra ventura  
cerrado está ya el camino;  
si no, dígalo Marquino,  
el muerto y la sepultura. 560

LEONCIO Que todas son ilusiones,  
quimeras y fantasías,  
agüeros y hechicerías,  
diabólicas invenciones.

No muestres que tienes poca 565  
ciencia en creer desconciertos;  
que poco cuidan los muertos  
de lo que a los vivos toca.

MILVIO Nunca Marquino hiciera  
desatino tan extraño, 570  
si nuestro futuro daño  
como presente no viera.

Avisemos este caso  
al pueblo, que está mortal;  
mas, para dar nueva tal, 575  
¿quién podrá mover el paso?

## Jornada III

### *Scena I*

*Interlocutores:* CIPIÓN, JUGURTA y GAYO MARIO.

CIPIÓN En forma estoy contento en mirar cómo  
corresponde a mi gusto la ventura,  
y esta libre nación soberbia domo  
sin fuerzas, solamente con cordura.  
En viendo la ocasión, luego la tomo, 5  
porque sé cuánto corre y se apresura;  
y si se pasa, en cosas de la guerra,  
el crédito consume y vida atierra.

¿Juzgábades a loco desvarío  
tener los enemigos encerrados, 10  
y que era mengua del romano brío  
no vencellos con modos más usados?  
Bien sé que lo habrán dicho; mas yo fío  
que los que fueren prácticos soldados  
dirán que es de tener en mayor cuenta 15  
la victoria que menos es sangrienta.

¿Qué gloria puede haber más levantada  
en las cosas de guerra que aquí digo,  
que, sin quitar de su lugar la espada,  
vencer y sujetar al enemigo? 20  
Que, cuando la victoria es granjeada  
con la sangre vertida del amigo,  
el gusto mengua que causar pudiera  
la que sin sangre tal ganada fuera.

*(Aquí ha de sonar una trompeta desde el muro de Numancia.)*



QUINTO FABIO Oye, señor, que de Numancia suena 25  
el son de una trompeta, y me asiguro  
que decirte algo desde allá se ordena,  
pues el salir de acá lo estorba el muro.  
Corabino se ha puesto en una almena,  
y una señal ha hecho de seguro; 30  
lleguémonos más cerca.

CIPIÓNSea, lleguemos.

GAYO MARIONo más, que dende aquí le entenderemos.

*(Pónese CORABINO encima de la muralla con bandera blanca puesta en una lanza.)*

CORABINO ¡Romanos! ¡Ah, romanos! ¿Puede acaso  
ser de vosotros esta voz oída?

GAYOMARIOPuesto que más la bajes y hables paso, 35  
cualquiera tu razón será entendida.

CORABINODecid al general que acerque el paso  
al foso, porque viene dirigida  
a él una embajada.

CIPIÓN Dila presto,  
que yo soy Cipión.

CORABINO Escucha el resto. 40  
Dice Numancia, general prudente,  
que consideres bien que ha muchos años

que entre la nuestra y tu romana gente  
duran los males de la guerra estraños;  
y que, por evitar que no se aumente 45  
la dura pestilencia destos daños,  
quiere, si tú quisieres, acaballa  
con una breve y singular batalla.

Un soldado se ofrece de los nuestros  
a combatir, cerrado en estacada, 50  
con cualquiera esforzado de los vuestros,  
por acabar contienda tan pesada;  
y si los hados fueren tan siniestros,  
que el uno quede sin la vida amada,  
si fuere el nuestro, darse ha la tierra; 55  
si el tuyo fuere, acábese la guerra.

Y, por seguridad deste concierto,  
daremos a tu gusto los rehenes.  
Bien sé que en él vendrás, porque estás cierto  
de los soldados que a tu cargo tienes, 60  
y sabes que el menor, en campo abierto,  
hará sudar el pecho, el rostro y sienes  
al más aventajado de Numancia:  
ansí que, está sigura tu ganancia.

Porque a la ejecución se venga luego, 65  
respóndeme, señor, si estás en ello.

CIPIÓN Donaire es lo que dices, risa, juego,  
y loco el que pensase de hacello.  
Usad el medio del humilde ruego,  
si queréis que se escape vuestro cuello 70  
de probar el rigor y filos diestros  
del romano cuchillo y brazos nuestros.

La fiera que en la jaula está encerrada  
por su selvaticuez y fuerza dura,  
si puede allí con maña ser domada 75  
y con el tiempo y medios de cordura,  
quien la dejase ir libre y desatada  
daría grandes muestras de locura.

Bestias sois, y por tales, encerrados  
os tengo donde habéis de ser domados. 80

Mía será Numancia, a pesar vuestro,  
sin que me cueste un mínimo soldado,  
y el que tenéis vosotros por más diestro  
rompa por ese foso trincheado;  
y si en esto os parece que yo muestro 85  
un poco mi valor acobardado,  
el viento lleve agora esta vergüenza,  
y vuélvale la fama cuando os venza.

*(Vanse CIPIÓN y los suyos.)*

CORABINO ¿No escuchas más, cobarde? ¿Ya te escondes?  
¿Enfádate la igual justa batalla? 90  
Mal con tu nombradía correspondes,  
mal podrás deste modo sustentalla;  
en fin, como cobarde me respondes.  
¡Cobardes sois, romanos, vil canalla,  
en vuestra muchedumbre confiados, 95  
y no en los diestros brazos levantados!

¡Pérfidos, desleales, fementidos,  
cruelles, revoltosos y tiranos;  
ingratos, codiciosos, malnacidos,  
pertinaces, feroces y villanos; 100  
adúlteros, infames, conocidos  
por de industriosas, mas cobardes manos!,  
¿qué gloria alcanzaréis en darnos muerte  
teniéndonos atados desta suerte?

En cerrado escuadrón, o manga suelta, 105  
en la campaña rasa, do no pueda  
estorbar la mortal fiera revuelta  
el ancho foso y muro que la veda,  
fuere bien que, sin dar el pie la vuelta  
y sin tener jamás la espada queda, 110  
ese ejército mucho, bravo, vuestro  
se viera con el poco, flaco, nuestro.

Mas, como siempre estáis acostumbrados  
a vencer con ventajas y con mañas,  
estos conciertos, en valor fundados, 115  
no los admiten bien vuestras marañas.  
¡Liebres en pieles fieras disfrazados,  
load y engrandeced vuestras hazañas;  
que espero en el gran Júpiter de veros  
sujetos a Numancia y a sus fueros! 120

*(Bájase, y torna a salir luego con todos los numantinos que salieron en el principio de la segunda jornada, excepto MARQUINO, que se arrojó en la sepultura, y sale también MORANDRO.)*

TEÓGENES En términos nos tiene nuestra suerte,  
dulces amigos, que será ventura  
acabar nuestros daños con la muerte.

Por nuestro mal, por nuestra desventura,  
vistes del sacrificio el triste agüero, 125  
y a Marquino tragar la sepultura.

El desafío no ha importado un cero;  
de intentar qué nos queda no lo siento,  
si no es acelerar el fin postrero.

Esta noche se muestre el ardimiento 130  
del numantino acelerado pecho,  
y póngase por obra nuestro intento:  
el enemigo muro sea deshecho;  
salgamos a morir a la campaña,  
y no, como cobardes, en estrecho. 135

Bien sé que sólo sirve esta hazaña  
de que a nuestro morir se mude el modo;  
que con ella la muerte se acompaña.

CORABINO Con ese parecer yo me acomodo:  
morir quiero rompiendo el fuerte muro, 140  
y deshacelle por mi mano todo;  
mas tiéneme una cosa mal seguro:

que si nuestras mujeres saben esto,  
de que no haremos nada os aseguro.

Cuando otra vez tuvimos presupuesto 145  
de salir y dejallas, cada uno  
fiado en su caballo y brazo diestro,  
ellas, que el trato a ellas importuno  
supieron, al momento nos robaron  
los frenos, sin dejarnos sólo uno. 150

Entonces el salir nos estorbaron,  
y así lo harán agora fácilmente  
si las lágrimas muestran que mostraron.

MORANDRO Nuestro designio a todas es patente;  
todas lo saben; ya no queda alguna 155  
que no se queja dello amargamente,  
y dicen que en la buena o ruin fortuna  
quieren, en vida y muerte, acompañarnos,  
aunque su compañía es importuna.

*(Aquí entran cuatro o más mujeres de Numancia, y con ellas LIRA. Las mujeres traen unas figuras de niños en los brazos, y otros de las manos, excepto LIRA, que no trae ninguno.)*

Veislas aquí do vienen a rogaros, 160  
no la dejéis en tantos embarazos;  
aunque seáis de acero, han de ablandaros.

Los tiernos hijos vuestros en los brazos  
las tristes traen; ¿no veis con qué señales  
de amor les dan los últimos abrazos? 165

PRIMERO Dulces señores nuestros, si en los males  
hasta aquí de Numancia padecidos,  
que son menores los que son mortales,  
y en los bienes también, que ya son idos,  
siempre mostramos ser mujeres vuestras, 170

y vosotros también nuestros maridos,  
¿por qué en las ocasiones tan siniestras  
que el cielo airado agora nos ofrece,  
nos dais de aquel amor tan cortas muestras?

Hemos sabido, y claro se parece, 175  
que en las romanas armas arrojaros  
queréis, pues su rigor menos empece  
que no la hambre de que veis cercaros,  
de cuyas flacas manos desabridas  
por imposible tengo el escaparos. 180

Peleando queréis dejar las vidas,  
y dejarnos también desamparadas,  
a deshonoras y muertes ofrecidas.

Nuestro cuello ofreced a las espadas  
vuestras primero; que es mejor partido 185  
que vernos de enemigos deshonoradas.

Yo tengo en mi intención estatuido  
que, si puedo, haré cuanto en mí fuere  
por morir do muere mi marido.

Y esto mesmo hará la que quisiere 190  
mostrar que no los miedos de la muerte  
le estorban de querer a quien bien quiere,  
en buena o mala, en dulce o amarga suerte.

OTRA ¿Qué pensáis, varones claros?

¿Revolvéis aun todavía 195  
en la triste fantasía  
de dejarnos y ausentaros?

¿Queréis dejar por ventura  
a la romana arrogancia  
las vírgenes de Numancia 200  
para mayor desventura?

Y a los libres hijos nuestros  
¿queréis esclavos dejallos?  
¿No será mejor ahogallos  
con los propios brazos vuestros? 205

¿Queréis hartar el deseo  
de la romana codicia,

y que triunfe su injusticia  
de nuestro justo trofeo?

¿Serán por ajenas manos 210  
nuestras casas derribadas?

Y las bodas esperadas,  
¿hanlas de gozar romanos?

En salir hacéis error,  
que acarrea cien mil yerros, 215  
porque dejáis sin los perros  
el ganado, y sin señor.

Si al foso queréis salir,  
llevadnos en tal salida,  
porque tendremos por vida 220  
a vuestros lados morir.

No apresuréis el camino  
al morir, porque su estambre  
cuidado tiene la hambre  
de cercenarla contino. 225

OTRAS Hijos destas tristes madres,  
¿qué es esto? ¿Cómo no habláis,  
y con lágrimas rogáis  
que no os dejen vuestros padres?

Basta que la hambre insana 230  
os acabe con dolor,  
sin esperar el rigor  
de la aspereza romana.

Decidles que os engendraron  
libres, y libres nacisteis, 235  
y que vuestras madres tristes  
también libres os criaron.

Decidles que, pues la suerte  
nuestra va tan de caída,  
que, como os dieron la vida, 240  
ansimismo os den la muerte.

¡Oh muros desta ciudad!,  
si podéis, hablad; decid,  
y mil veces repetid:

«¡Numantinos, libertad!» 245  
Los templos, las casas nuestras,  
levantadas en concordia;  
os piden misericordia,  
hijos y mujeres vuestras.  
Ablandad, claros varones, 250  
esos pechos diamantinos,  
y mostrad, cual numantinos,  
amorosos corazones;  
que no por romper el muro  
remediáis un mal tamaño; 255  
antes en ello está el daño  
más propincuo y más seguro.

LIRA También las tiernas doncellas  
ponen en vuestra defensa  
el remedio de su ofensa 260  
y el alivio a sus querellas;  
no dejéis tan ricos robos  
a las codiciosas manos:  
mirad que son los romanos  
hambrientos y fieros lobos. 265  
Desesperación notoria  
es esta que hacer queréis,  
adonde sólo hallaréis  
breve muerte y larga gloria.  
Mas, ya que salga mejor 270  
que yo pienso esta hazaña,  
¿qué ciudad hay en España  
que quiera daros favor?  
Mi pobre ingenio os advierte  
que si hacéis esta salida, 275  
al enemigo dais vida  
y a toda Numancia muerte.  
De vuestro acuerdo gentil  
los romanos burlarán;  
porque, decidme: ¿qué harán 280



tres mil contra ochenta mil?

Aunque estuviesen abiertos  
los muros y sin defensa,  
seríades con ofensa  
mal vengados y bien muertos. 285

Mejor es que la ventura  
o el daño que el cielo ordene,  
o nos salve o nos condene,  
dé la vida o sepultura.

TEÓGENES Limpiad los ojos húmidos del llanto, 290  
mujeres tiernas, y tené entendido  
que vuestra angustia la sentimos tanto,  
que responde al amor nuestro subido;  
ora crezca el dolor, ora el quebranto  
sea, por nuestro bien, disminuido, 295  
jamás en vida o muerte os dejaremos;  
antes, en muerte y vida os serviremos.

Pensábamos salir al foso, ciertos  
antes de allí morir que de escaparnos,  
pues fuera quedar vivos, aunque muertos, 300  
si muriendo pudiéramos vengarnos;  
mas, pues nuestros disignios descubiertos  
han sido, y es locura aventurarnos,  
amados hijos y mujeres nuestras,  
nuestras vidas serán, de hoy más, las vuestras. 305

Sólo se ha de mirar que el enemigo  
no alcance de nosotros triunfo y gloria:  
antes ha de servir él de testigo  
que apruebe y eternice nuestra historia;  
y si todos venís en lo que digo, 310  
mil siglos durará nuestra memoria:  
y es que no quede cosa aquí en Numancia  
de do el contrario pueda haber ganancia.

En medio de la plaza se haga un fuego,  
en cuya ardiente llama licenciosa 315  
nuestras riquezas todas se echen luego,  
desde la pobre a la más rica cosa;

y esto podéis tener a dulce juego,  
cuando os declare la intención honrosa  
que se ha de efectuar, después que sea 320  
abrasada cualquier rica presea.

Y, para entretener por alguna hora  
la hambre, que ya roe nuestros huesos,  
haréis descuartizar luego a la hora  
esos tristes romanos que están presos, 325  
y, sin del chico al grande hacer mejora,  
repártanse entre todos; que con esos  
será nuestra comida celebrada  
por estraña, cruel, necesitada.

Amigos, ¿qué os parece? ¿Estáis en esto? 330

CORABINODigo que a mí me tiene satisfecho,  
y que a la ejecución se venga presto  
de tan estraño y tan honroso hecho.

TEÓGENESPues yo de mi intención os diré el resto:  
después que sea lo que digo hecho, 335  
vamos a ser ministros todos luego  
de encender el ardiente y rico fuego.

MUJER PRIMERA Nosotras desde aquí ya comenzamos  
a dar con voluntad nuestros arreos,  
y a las vuestras las vidas entregamos, 340  
como se han entregado los deseos.

LIRAEa, pues, caminemos; vamos, vamos,  
y abrásenle en un punto los trofeos  
que pudieran hacer ricas las manos,  
y aun hartar la codicia de romanos. 345

*(Vanse todos, y al salir MORANDRO, ase a LIRA por el brazo y detiéndela.)*

MORANDRO No vayas tan de corrida,  
Lira; déjame gozar  
del bien que me puede dar  
en la muerte alegre vida;  
    deja que miren mis ojos 350  
un rato tu hermosura,  
pues tanto mi desventura  
se entretiene en mis enojos.  
    ¡Oh dulce Lira, que sueñas  
contino en mi fantasía 355  
con tan süave armonía  
que vuelve en gloria mis penas!  
    ¿Qué tienes? ¿Qué estás pensando,  
gloria de mi pensamiento?

LIRAPienso cómo mi contento 360  
y el tuyo se va acabando.  
    Y no será su homicida  
el cerco de nuestra tierra;  
que primero que la guerra  
se me acabará la vida. 365

MORANDRO ¿Qué dices, bien de mi alma?

LIRAQue me tiene tal la hambre,  
que de mi vital estambre  
llevará presto la palma.  
    ¿Qué tálamo has de esperar 370  
de quien está en tal extremo,  
que te aseguro que temo  
antes de una hora espirar?  
    Mi hermano ayer espiró,  
de la hambre fatigado, 375  
y mi madre ya ha acabado,  
que la hambre la acabó.

Y si la hambre y su fuerza  
no ha rendido mi salud,  
es porque la juventud 380  
contra su rigor se esfuerza;  
pero, como ha tantos días  
que no le hago defensa,  
no pueden contra su ofensa  
las débiles fuerzas mías. 385

MORANDRO Enjuga, Lira, los ojos;  
deja que los tristes míos  
se vuelvan corrientes ríos  
nacidos de tus enojos;  
y, aunque la hambre ofendida 390  
te tenga tan sin compás,  
de hambre no morirás  
mientras yo tuviere vida.

Yo me ofrezco de saltar  
el foso y el muro fuerte, 395  
y entrar por la misma muerte,  
para la tuya escusar.

El pan que el romano toca,  
sin que el temor me destruya,  
lo quitaré de la suya 400  
para ponerlo en tu boca.

Con mi brazo haré carrera  
a tu vida y a mi muerte,  
porque más me mata el verte,  
señora, de esa manera. 405

Yo te traeré de comer  
a pesar de los romanos,  
si ya son estas mis manos  
las mismas que solían ser.

LIRA Hablas como enamorado, 410  
Morandro; pero no es justo  
que ya tome gusto el gusto

con tu peligro comprado.

Poco podrá sustentarme  
cualquier robo que harás, 415  
aunque más cierto hallarás  
el perderte que ganarme.

Goza de tu mocedad  
en fresca edad y crecida,  
que más importa tu vida 420  
que la mía a la ciudad.

Tú podrás bien defendella  
de la enemiga asechanza,  
que no la flaca pujanza  
desta tan triste doncella. 425

Ansí que, mi dulce amor,  
despide ese pensamiento,  
que yo no quiero sustento  
ganado con tu sudor;

que, aunque puedas alargar 430  
mi muerte por algún día,  
esta hambre que porfía  
en fin nos ha de acabar.

MORANDRO En vano trabajas, Lira,  
de impedirme este camino, 435  
do mi voluntad y signo  
allá me convida y tira.

Tú rogarás entretanto  
a los dioses que me vuelvan  
con despojos que resuelvan 440  
tu miseria y mi quebranto.

LIRA Morandro, mi dulce amigo,  
no vayas; que se me antoja  
que de tu sangre veo roja  
la espada del enemigo. 445

No hagas esta jornada,  
Morandro, bien de mi vida;

que si es mala la salida,  
es muy peor la tornada.

Si quiero aplacar tu brío, 450  
por testigo pongo al cielo;  
que de tu daño recelo,  
y no del provecho mío;  
mas si acaso, amado amigo,  
prosigues esta contienda, 455  
lleva este abrazo por prenda  
de que me llevas contigo.

MORANDRO Lira, el cielo te acompañe.  
Vete, que a Leoncio veo.

LIRAY a ti te cumpla el deseo 460  
y en ninguna parte dañe.

*(LEONCIO ha de estar escuchando todo lo que ha pasado entre su amigo  
MORANDRO y LIRA.)*

LEONCIO Terrible ofrecimiento es el que has hecho,  
y en él, Morandro, se nos muestra claro  
que no hay cobarde enamorado pecho,  
aunque de tu virtud y valor raro 465  
debe más esperarse; mas yo temo  
que el hado infeliz se nos muestre avaro.

He estado atento al miserable extremo  
en que te ha dicho Lira que se halla,  
indigno, cierto, a su valor supremo, 470  
y que tú has prometido de libralla  
deste presente daño, y arrojarte  
en las armas romanas a batalla.

Yo quiero, buen amigo, acompañarte,  
y en empresa tan justa y tan forzosa 475  
con mis pequeñas fuerzas ayudarte.

MORANDRO ¡Oh mitad de mi alma! ¡Oh venturosa  
amistad, no en trabajos dividida,  
ni en la ocasión más próspera y dichosa!

Goza, Leoncio, de la dulce vida; 480  
quédate en la ciudad, que yo no quiero  
ser de tus verdes años homicida.

Yo solo tengo de ir; yo solo espero  
volver con los despojos merecidos  
a mi inviolable fe y amor sincero. 485

LEONCIO Pues ya tienes, Morandro, conocidos  
mis deseos, que en buena o mala suerte  
al sabor de los tuyos van medidos;

sabrás que no los miedos de la muerte  
de ti me apartarán un solo punto, 490  
ni otra cosa, si la hay, que sea mas fuerte.

Contigo tengo de ir; contigo junto  
he de volver, si ya el cielo no ordena  
que quede en tu defensa allá difunto.

MORANDRO Quédate, amigo; queda en hora buena, 495  
porque si yo acabare aquí la vida  
en esta empresa de peligro llena,  
tú puedas a mi madre dolorida  
consolar en el trance riguroso,  
y a la esposa de mí tanto querida. 500

LEONCIO Cierto que estás, amigo, muy donoso  
en pensar que, tú muerto, quedaría  
yo con tal quietud y tal reposo,  
que de consuelo alguno serviría  
a la doliente madre y triste esposa. 505  
Pues en la tuya está la muerte mía,  
seguirte tengo en la ocasión dudosa:  
mira cómo ha de ser, Morandro amigo,

y en el quedarme no me hables cosa.

MORANDRO Pues no puedo estorbarte el ir conmigo, 510  
en el silencio de la noche oscura  
tenemos de asaltar al enemigo.

Lleva ligeras armas; que ventura  
es la que ha de ayudar al alto intento,  
que no la malla entretejida y dura. 515

Lleva así mismo puesto el pensamiento  
en robar y traer a buen recado  
lo que pudieres más de bastimento.

LEONCIOVamos, que no saldré de tu mandado.

*Vanse.*



## Scena II

*Dos numantinos.*

PRIMERO ¡Derrama, oh dulce hermano, por los ojos 520  
el alma en llanto amargo convertida!  
Venga la muerte y lleve los despojos  
de nuestra miserable y triste vida.

SEGUNDO Bien poco durarán estos enojos;  
que ya la muerte viene apercibida 525  
para llevar en presto y breve vuelo  
a cuantos pisan de Numancia el suelo.

Principios veo que prometen presto  
amargo fin a nuestra dulce tierra,  
sin que tengan cuidado de hacer esto 530  
los contrarios ministros de la guerra:  
nosotros mismos, a quien ya es molesto  
y enfadoso el vivir que nos atierra,  
hemos dado sentencia irrevocable  
de nuestra muerte, aunque cruel, loable. 535

En la plaza mayor ya levantada  
queda una ardiente cudiciosa hoguera,  
que, de nuestras riquezas ministrada,  
sus llamas sube hasta la cuarta esfera.  
Allí con triste priesa acelerada 540  
y con mortal y tímida carrera  
acuden todos, como a santa ofrenda,  
a sustentar sus llamas con su hacienda.

Allí la perla del rosado oriente,  
y el oro en mil vasijas fabricado, 545  
y el diamante y rubí más excelente,  
y la extremada púrpura y brocado,

en medio del rigor fogoso ardiente  
de la encendida llama es arrojado:  
despojos do pudieran los romanos 550  
henchir los senos y ocupar las manos.

*(Aquí salen algunos cargados de ropa, y entran por una puerta y salen por otra.)*

Vuelve al triste espectáculo la vista:  
verás con cuánta priesa y cuánta gana  
toda Numancia en numerosa lista  
aguija a sustentar la llama insana; 555  
y no con verde leño y seca arista,  
no con materia al consumir liviana,  
sino con sus haciendas mal gozadas,  
pues se ganaron para ser quemadas.

PRIMERO Si con esto acabara nuestro daño, 560  
pudiéramos llevallo con paciencia;  
mas, ¡ay!, que se ha de dar, si no me engaño,  
de que muramos todos cruel sentencia.  
Primero que el rigor bárbaro extraño  
muestre en nuestras gargantas su inclemencia, 565  
verdugos de nosotros nuestras manos  
serán, y no los pérfidos romanos.

Han acordado que no quede alguna  
mujer, niño ni viejo con la vida,  
pues, al fin, la cruel hambre importuna 570  
con más fiero rigor es su homicida.  
Mas ves allí do asoma, hermano, una  
que, como sabes, fue de mí querida  
un tiempo, con extremo tal de amores,  
cual es el que ella tiene de dolores. 575

*(Sale una mujer con una criatura en los brazos y otra de la mano.)*

MADRE ¡Oh duro vivir molesto,  
terrible y triste agonía!

HIJOMadre, ¿por ventura, habría  
quien nos diese pan por esto?

MADRE ¿Pan, hijo? Ni aun otra cosa 580  
que semeje de comer.

HIJOPues, ¿tengo de perecer  
de dura hambre rabiosa?

Con poco pan que me deis,  
madre, no os pediré más. 585

MADREHijo, ¡qué pena me das!

HIJO¿Pues qué, madre, no queréis?

MADRE Sí quiero; mas, ¿qué haré,  
que no sé dónde buscallo?

HIJOBien podéis, madre, comprallo; 590  
si no, yo lo compraré;  
mas, por quitarme de afán,  
si alguno conmigo topa,  
le daré toda esta ropa  
por un mendrugo de pan. 595

MADRE ¿Qué mamas, triste criatura?  
¿No sientes que a mi despecho  
sacas ya del flaco pecho,  
por leche, la sangre pura?

Lleva la carne a pedazos 600  
y procura de hartarte,  
que no pueden más llevarte  
mis flojos, cansados brazos.

Hijos del ánimo mía,  
¿con qué os podré sustentar, 605  
si apenas tengo qué os dar  
de la propia carne mía?

¡Oh hambre terrible y fuerte,  
cómo me acabas la vida!  
¡Oh guerra, sólo venida 610  
para causarme la muerte!

HIJO ¡Madre mía, que me fino!  
Aguijemos a do vamos,  
que parece que alargamos  
la hambre con el camino. 615

MADRE Hijo, cerca está la plaza  
adonde echaremos luego  
en mitad del vivo fuego  
el peso que te embaraza.

*(Éntranse.)*

## Jornada IV

### *Scena I*

*Tócase al arma con gran priesa, y a este rumor salen CIPIÓN con JUGURTA y GAYO MARIO, alborotados.*

CIPIÓN ¿Qué es esto, capitanes? ¿Quién nos toca  
al arma en tal sazón? ¿Es por ventura  
alguna gente desmandada y loca,  
que viene a procurar su sepultura?  
O no sea algún motín el que provoca 5  
tocar al arma en recia coyuntura:  
que tan seguro estoy del enemigo,  
que tengo más temor al que es amigo.

*(Sale QUINTO FABIO, con la espada desnuda, y dice:)*

QUINTO FABIO Sosiega el pecho, general prudente,  
que ya desta arma la ocasión se sabe, 10  
puesto que ha sido a costa de tu gente:  
de aquella en quien más brío y fuerza cabe.  
Dos numantinos, con soberbia fuerte,  
cuyo valor será razón se alabe,  
saltando el ancho foso y la muralla, 15  
han movido a tu campo cruel batalla.

A las primeras guardias imbistieron,  
y en medio de mil lanzas se arrojaron,  
y con tal furia y rabia arremetieron,  
que libre paso al campo les dejaron; 20  
las tiendas de Fabricio acometieron,  
y allí su fuerza y su valor mostraron,  
de modo que en un punto seis soldados

fueron de agudas puntas traspasados.

No con tanta presteza el rayo ardiente 25  
pasa rompiendo el aire en presto vuelo,  
ni tanto la cometa reluciente,  
se muestra ir presurosa por el cielo,  
como estos dos por medio de tu gente  
pasaron, colorando el duro suelo 30  
con la sangre romana que sacaban  
sus espadas doquiera que llegaban.

Queda Fabricio traspasado el pecho;  
abierta la cabeza tiene Horacio;  
Olmida ya perdió el brazo derecho 35  
y de vivir le queda poco espacio.  
Fuele así mismo poco de provecho  
la ligereza al valeroso Estacio,  
pues el correr al numantino fuerte  
fue abreviar el camino de su muerte. 40

Con presta ligereza discurriendo  
iban de tienda en tienda, hasta que hallaron  
un poco de bizcocho, el cual cogieron;  
el paso, y no el furor, atrás volvieron:  
el uno dellos se escapó huyendo, 45  
al otro mil espadas le acabaron;  
por donde infiero que la hambre ha sido  
quien les dio atrevimiento tan subido.

CIPIÓN Si estando deshambridos y encerrados  
muestran tan demasiado atrevimiento, 50  
¿qué hicieran siendo libres y enterados  
en sus fuerzas primeras y ardimiento?  
¡Indómitos, al fin seréis domados,  
porque contra el furor vuestro violento  
se tiene de poner la industria nuestra, 55  
que de domar soberbios es maestra!

*(Éntrase CIPIÓN y los suyos, y luego tócase al arma en la ciudad, y al rumor sale MORANDRO, herido y lleno de sangre, con una cestilla blanca en el brazo*

*izquierdo con algún poco de bizcocho ensangrentado, y dice:)*

MORANDRO ¿No vienes, Leoncio? Di:

¿qué es esto, mi dulce amigo?

Si tú no vienes conmigo,

¿cómo vengo yo sin ti? 60

Amigo, ¿que te has quedado?

Amigo, ¿que te quedaste?

¡No eres tú el que me dejaste,

sino yo el que te he dejado!

¿Que es posible que ya dan 65

tus carnes despedazadas

señales averiguadas

de lo que cuesta este pan?

¿Y es posible que la herida

que a ti te dejó difunto, 70

en aquel instante y punto

no me quitó a mí la vida?

No quiso el hado cruel

acabarme en paso tal,

por hacerme a mí más mal 75

y hacerte a ti más fiel.

Tú, en fin, llevarás la palma

de más verdadero amigo;

yo a desculparme contigo

enviaré bien presto el alma; 80

y tan presto, que el afán

a morir me llama y tira,

en dando a mi dulce Lira

este tan amargo pan.

Pan ganado de enemigos; 85

pero no ha sido ganado,

sino con sangre comprado

de dos sin ventura amigos.

*(Sale LIRA con alguna ropa, como que la lleva a quemar, y dice:)*

LIRA    ¿Qué es esto que ven mis ojos?

MORANDROLo que presto no verán, 90  
según la priesa se dan  
de acabarme mis enojos.

Ves aquí, Lira, cumplida  
mi palabra y mis porfías  
de que tú no morirías 95  
mientras yo tuviese vida.

Y aun podré mejor decir  
que presto vendrás a ver  
que a ti sobraré el comer  
y a mí faltará el vivir. 100

LIRA    ¿Qué dices, Morandro amado?

MORANDROLira, que acortes la hambre,  
entre tanto que la estambre  
de mi vida corta el hado;

pero mi sangre vertida, 105  
y con este pan mezclada,  
te ha de dar, mi dulce amada,  
triste y amarga comida.

Ves aquí el pan que guardaban  
ochenta mil enemigos, 110  
que cuesta de dos amigos  
las vidas que más amaban.

Y, porque lo entiendas cierto  
y cuánto tu amor merezco,  
ya yo, señora, perezco, 115  
y Leoncio ya está muerto.

Mi voluntad sana y justa  
recíbela con amor,  
que es la comida mejor  
y de que el alma más gusta. 120

Y, pues en tormenta y calma



siempre has sido mi señora,  
recibe este cuerpo agora,  
como recibiste el alma.

*(Cáese muerto y cógele en las faldas LIRA.)*

LIRA Morandro, dulce bien mío, 125  
¿qué sentís, o qué tenéis?  
¿Cómo tan presto perdéis  
vuestro acostumbrado brío?

Mas, ¡ay, triste sin ventura,  
que ya está muerto mi esposo! 130  
¡Oh caso, el más lastimoso  
que se vio en la desventura!

¿Quién os hizo, dulce amado,  
con valor tan excelente,  
enamorado valiente 135  
y soldado desdichado?

¡Hicistes una salida  
esposo mío, de suerte,  
que por escusar mi muerte,  
me habéis quitado la vida! 140

¡Oh pan de la sangre lleno  
que por mí se derramó,  
no te tengo en cuenta yo  
de pan, sino de veneno;

¡No te llegaré a mi boca 145  
por poderme sustentar,  
si ya no es para besar  
esta sangre que te toca!

*(A este punto ha de entrar un muchacho hablando desmayadamente, el cual es HERMANO de LIRA.)*

HERMANO Lira, hermana, ya expiró  
mi padre, y mi madre está 150

en términos que ya ya  
morirá cual muero yo:  
la hambre los ha acabado.  
Hermana mía, ¿pan tienes?  
¡Oh pan, y cuán tarde vienes, 155  
que ya no hay pasar bocado!  
Tiene la hambre apretada  
mi garganta en tal manera,  
que, aunque este pan agua fuera,  
no pudiera pasar nada. 160  
Tómalo, hermana querida;  
que, por más crecer mi afán,  
veo que me sobra el pan  
cuando me falta la vida.  
(*Cáese muerto.*)

LIRA ¿Espiraste, hermano amado? 165  
Ni aliento ni vida tiene:  
¡bien es el mal cuando viene  
sin venir acompañado!  
Fortuna, ¿por qué me aquejas  
con un daño y otro junto, 170  
y por qué en un solo punto  
huérfana y viuda me dejas?  
¡Oh duro escuadrón romano,  
cómo me tiene tu espada  
de dos muertos rodeada: 175  
uno esposo y otro hermano!  
¿A cuál volveré la cara  
en este trance importuno,  
si en la vida cada uno  
fue prenda del alma cara? 180  
¡Dulce esposo, hermano tierno,  
yo os igualaré en quereros,  
porque pienso presto veros  
en el cielo o el infierno!  
En el modo de morir 185  
a entrambos he de imitar,

porque el hierro ha de acabar,  
y la hambre, mi vivir.

Primero daré a mi pecho  
una daga que este pan: 190  
que a quien vive con afán,  
es la muerte de provecho.

¿Qué aguardo? ¡Cobarde estoy!  
Brazo, ¿ya os habéis turbado?  
¡Dulce esposo, hermano amado, 195  
esperadme, que ya voy!

*(A este punto, sale una MUJER huyendo, y tras ella un SOLDADO numantino con una daga en la mano para matarla.)*

MUJER ¡Eterno padre, Júpiter piadoso,  
favorecedme en tan adversa suerte!

SOLDADO; Aunque más lleves vuelo presuroso,  
mi dura mano te ha de dar la muerte! 200

*(Éntrese la MUJER adentro y dice LIRA:)*

LIRA El hierro agudo, el brazo belicoso,  
contra mí, buen soldado, le convierte:  
deja vivir a quien la vida agrada,  
y quítame la mía, que me enfada.

SOLDADO Puesto que es el decreto del Senado 205  
que ninguna mujer quede con vida,  
¿cuál será el bravo pecho acelerado  
que en ese hermoso vuestro dé herida?  
Yo, señora, no soy tan mal mirado,  
que me precie de ser vuestro homicida: 210  
otra mano, otro hierro ha de acabaros,

que yo sólo nací para adoraros.

LIRA Esa piedad que quíes usar conmigo,  
valeroso soldado, yo te juro,  
y al alto Cielo pongo por testigo, 215  
que yo la estimo por rigor muy duro;  
tuviérate yo entonces por amigo  
cuando, con pecho y ánimo seguro,  
este mío afligido traspasaras  
y de la amarga vida me privaras. 220

Pero, pues quíes mostrarte piadoso,  
tan en daño, señor, de mi contento,  
muéstralo agora en que a mi triste esposo  
demos el funeral último asiento;  
también a este mi hermano, que en reposo 225  
yace, ya libre del vital aliento:  
mi esposo feneció por darme vida;  
de mi hermano, la hambre fue homicida.

SOLDADO Hacer lo que me mandas está llano,  
con condición que en el camino cuentes 230  
quién a tu amado esposo y caro hermano  
trujo a los postrimeros accidentes.

LIRAAmigo, ya el hablar no está en mi mano.

SOLDADO¿Que tan al cabo estás? ¿Que tal te sientes?  
Lleva a tu hermano, pues que es menor carga, 235  
y yo a tu esposo, que más pesa y carga.

*(Sálense llevando los dos cuerpos.)*

## Scena II

*Sale una mujer armada, con un escudo en el brazo izquierdo y una lancilla en la mano, que significa la GUERRA; trae consigo a la ENFERMEDAD, arrimada a una muleta, y rodeada de paños la cabeza, con una máscara amarilla, y la HAMBRE saldrá vestida con una ropa de bocací amarillo, y una máscara amarilla o descolorida.*

**Pueden estas figuras hacellas hombres, pues llevan máscaras.**

GUERRA Hambre y Enfermedad, ejecutoras  
de mis terribles mandos y severos,  
de vidas y salud consumidoras,  
con quien no vale ruego, mando o fueros, 240  
pues ya de mi intención sois sabidoras,  
no hay para qué de nuevo encareceros  
de cuánto gusto me será y contento  
que, luego luego, hagáis mi mandamiento.

La fuerza incontrastable de los hados, 245  
cuyos efectos nunca salen vanos,  
me fuerza a que de mí sean ayudados  
estos sagaces mílites romanos:  
ellos serán un tiempo levantados,  
y abatidos también estos hispanos; 250  
pero tiempo vendrá en que yo me mude  
y dañe al alto y al pequeño ayude.

Que yo, que soy la poderosa Guerra,  
de tantas madres detestada en vano,  
aunque quien me maldice a veces yerra, 255  
pues no sabe el valor desta mi mano,  
sé bien que en todo el orbe de la tierra  
seré llevada del valor hispano,  
en la dulce sazón que estén reinando  
un Carlos, un Filipo y un Fernando. 260

ENFERMEDAD Si ya la Hambre, nuestra amiga fida,  
no tuviera tomado con instancia  
a su cargo de ser fiera homicida  
de todos cuantos viven en Numancia,  
fuera de mí tu voluntad cumplida, 265  
de modo que se viera la ganancia  
fácil y rica que el romano hubiera  
harto mejor de aquella que se espera.

Mas ella, en cuanto su poder alcanza,  
ya tiene tal al pueblo numantino, 270  
que de esperar alguna buena andanza  
le ha tomado las sendas y el camino;  
mas del furor la rigurosa lanza  
y la influencia del contrario signo  
le trata con tan áspera violencia, 275  
que no es menester hambre ni dolencia.

El Furor y la Rabia, tus secuaces,  
han tomado en sus pechos tal asiento,  
que, cual si fuese de romanas haces,  
cada cual de su sangre está sediento. 280  
Muertes, incendios, iras son sus paces;  
en el morir han puesto su contento,  
y por quitar el triunfo a los romanos,  
ellos mismos se matan con sus manos.

HAMBRE Volved los ojos y veréis ardiendo 285  
de la ciudad los encumbrados techos;  
escuchad los suspiros que saliendo  
van de mil tristes lastimados pechos;  
oíd la voz y lamentable estruendo  
de bellas damas a quien, ya deshechos 290  
los tiernos miembros en ceniza y fuego,  
no valen padre, amigo, amor ni ruego.

Cual suelen las ovejas descuidadas,  
siendo del fiero lobo acometidas,  
andar aquí y allí descarriadas, 295

con temor de perder las simples vidas,  
tal niños y mujeres delicadas,  
huyendo las espadas homicidas,  
andan de calle en calle, ¡oh hado insano!,  
su cierta muerte dilatando en vano. 300

Al pecho de la amada nueva esposa  
traspasa del esposo el hierro agudo;  
contra la madre, ¡oh nunca vista cosa!,  
se muestra el hijo de piedad desnudo,  
y contra el hijo el padre, con rabiosa 305  
clemencia levantando el brazo crudo,  
rompe aquellas entrañas que ha engendrado,  
quedando satisfecho y lastimado.

No hay plaza, no hay rincón, no hay calle o casa,  
que de sangre y de muertos no esté llena; 310  
el hierro mata, el duro fuego abrasa,  
y el rigor ferocísimo condena.  
Presto veréis que por el suelo rasa  
está la más subida y alta almena,  
y las casas y templos más crecidos 315  
en polvo y en ceniza convertidos.

Venid: veréis que en los amados cuellos  
de tiernos hijos y mujer querida,  
Teógenes afila y prueba en ellos  
de su espada el cruel corte homicida, 320  
y como ya, después de muertos ellos,  
estima en poco la cansada vida,  
buscando de morir un modo extraño,  
que causó, con el suyo, más de un daño.

GUERRA Vamos, pues, y ninguno se descuide 325  
de ejecutar por eso aquí su fuerza,  
y a lo que digo sólo atienda y cuide,  
sin que de mi intención un punto tuerza.

(*Vanse.*)

### Scena III

*Sale TEÓGENES, con dos hijos pequeños y una hija y su MUJER.*

TEÓGENES Cuando el paterno amor no me detiene  
de ejecutar la furia de mi intento, 330  
considerad, mis hijos, cuál me tiene  
el celo de mi honroso pensamiento.  
Terrible es el dolor que se previene  
con acabar la vida en fin violento,  
y más el mío, pues al hado plugo 335  
que yo sea de vosotros cruel verdugo.

No quedaréis, ¡oh hijos de mi alma!,  
esclavos, ni el romano poderío  
llevará de vosotros triunfo o palma,  
por más que a sujetarnos alce el brío; 340  
el camino, más llano que la palma,  
de nuestra libertad el cielo pío  
nos ofrece, nos muestra y nos advierte  
que sólo está en las manos de la muerte.

Ni vos, dulce consorte, amada mía, 345  
os veréis en peligro que romanos  
pongan en vuestro pecho y gallardía  
los vanos ojos y las torpes manos.  
Mi espada os sacará desta agonía,  
y hará que sus intentos salgan vanos, 350  
pues, por más que codicia los atiza,  
triunfarán de Numancia en la ceniza.

Yo soy, consorte amada, el que primero  
di el parecer que todos pereciésemos,  
antes que al insufrible desafuero 355  
del romano poder sujetos fuésemos,  
y en el morir no pienso ser postrero,  
ni lo serán mis hijos.



MUJER; Si pudiésemos  
escaparnos, señor, por otra vía,  
el cielo sabe si me holgaría! 360

Mas, pues no puede ser, según yo veo,  
y está ya mi muerte tan cercana,  
lleva de nuestras vidas tú el trofeo,  
y no la espada pérfida romana.  
Mas, pues que he de morir, morir deseo 365  
en el sagrado templo de Dïana.  
Allá nos lleva, buen señor, y luego  
entréganos al hierro, al lazo, y fuego.

TEÓGENES Así se haga, y no nos detengamos;  
que ya a morir me incita el triste hado. 370

HIJOMadre, ¿por qué lloráis? ¿Adónde vamos?  
Teneos, que andar no puedo de cansado.  
Mejor será, mi madre, que comamos,  
que la hambre me tiene fatigado.

MADREVen en mis brazos, hijo de mi vida, 375  
do te daré la muerte por comida.

*(Vanse luego, y salen dos muchachos huyendo; y el uno de ellos ha de ser el que se arroja de la torre, que se llama VIRIATO, y el otro, SERVIO.)*

VIRIATO ¿Por dónde quieres que huyamos,  
Servio?

SERVIO¿Yo? Por do quisieres.

VIRIATO Camina; ¡qué flojo eres!  
¡Tú ordenas que aquí muramos! 380  
¿No ves, triste, que nos siguen  
mil hierros para matarnos?

SERVIO Imposible de escaparnos  
de aquéllos que nos persiguen.  
Mas di: ¿qué piensas hacer, 385  
o qué medio hay que nos cuadre?

VIRIATO A una torre de mi padre  
me pienso ir a esconder.

SERVIO Amigo, bien puedes irte;  
que yo estoy tan flaco y laso 390  
de hambre, que un solo paso  
no puedo dar, ni seguirte.

VIRIATO ¿Que no quíes venir?

SERVIO ¡No puedo!

VIRIATO Si no puedes caminar,  
ahí te habrá de acabar 395  
la hambre, la espada o miedo.  
Y voyme, porque ya temo  
lo que el vivir desbarata:  
o que la espada me mata,  
o que en el fuego me quemo. 400

*(Vase y sale TEÓGENES con dos espadas desnudas, y ensangrentadas las  
manos, y como SERVIO le ve venir, húyese y éntrase dentro.)*

TEÓGENES Sangre de mis entrañas derramada,  
pues sois aquella de los hijos míos;  
mano contra ti misma acelerada,  
llena de honrosos y crueles bríos;  
Fortuna, en daño nuestro conjurada; 405  
cielos, de justa piedad vacíos,  
ofrecedme en tan dura amarga suerte  
alguna honrosa aunque cercana muerte.

¡Valientes numantinos, haced cuenta  
que yo soy algún pérfido romano, 410  
y vengad en mi pecho vuestra afrenta,  
ensangrentando en él la espada y mano!  
(*Arroja la una espada de la mano.*)

Una de estas espadas os presenta  
mi airada furia y mi dolor insano;  
que muriendo en batalla, no se siente 415  
tanto el rigor del último accidente;  
y el que privare del vital sosiego  
al otro, por señal de beneficio,  
entregue el desdichado cuerpo al fuego;  
que éste será bien piadoso oficio. 420  
Venid; ¿qué os detenéis? Acudid luego;  
haced ya de mi vida sacrificio,  
y esa terneza que tenéis de amigos  
volved en rabia fiera de enemigos.

UN NUMANTINO ¿A quién, fuerte Teógenes, invocas? 425  
¿Qué nuevo modo de morir procuras?  
¿Para qué nos incitas y provocas  
a tantas desiguales desventuras?

TEÓGENES Valiente numantino, si no apocas  
con el miedo tus bravas fuerzas duras, 430

toma esa espada y mátate conmigo,  
ansí como si fuese tu enemigo;  
que esta manera de morir me aplace  
en este trance más que no otra alguna.

NUMANTINO También a mí me agrada y satisface, 435  
pues que lo quiere ansí nuestra fortuna;  
mas vamos a la plaza, adonde yace  
la hoguera a nuestras vidas importuna,  
porque el que allí venciere, pueda luego  
entregar el vencido al duro fuego. 440

TEÓGENES Bien dices; y camina, que se tarda  
el tiempo de morir como deseo,  
ora me mate el hierro o el fuego me arda,  
que gloria nuestra en cualquier muerte veo.

*(Éntranse.)*

## Scena IV

(CIPIÓN, JUGURTA, QUINTO FABIO y GAYO MARIO, y *algunos soldados romanos.*)

CIPIÓN Si no me engaña el pensamiento mío, 445  
o salen mentirosas las señales  
que habéis visto en Numancia, del estruendo  
y lamentable son y ardientes llamas,  
sin duda alguna que recelo y temo  
que el bárbaro furor del enemigo 450  
contra su propio pecho no se vuelva.  
Ya no parece gente en la muralla,  
ni suenan las usadas centinelas:  
todo está en calma y en silencio puesto,  
como si en paz tranquila y sosegada 455  
estuviesen los fieros numantinos.

GAYO MARIO Presto podrás salir de aquesa duda;  
porque, si tú lo quieres, yo me ofrezco  
de subir sobre el muro, aunque me ponga  
al riguroso trance que se ofrece, 460  
sólo por ver aquello que en Numancia  
hacen nuestros soberbios enemigos.

CIPIÓN Arrima, pues, ¡oh Mario!, alguna escala  
a la muralla y haz lo que prometes.

GAYO MARIO Id por la escala luego. Y vos, Ermilio, 465  
haced que mi rodela se me traiga  
y la celada blanca de las plumas;  
que a fe que tengo de perder la vida

o sacar desta duda al campo todo.

ERMILIO Ves aquí la rodela y la celada; 470  
la escala, vesla allí: la trae Olimpio.

GAYO MARIO Encomendadme a Júpiter inmenso,  
que yo voy a cumplir lo prometido.

CIPIÓN Alza más alta la rodela, Mario,  
y encoge el cuerpo y cubre la cabeza. 475  
¡Ánimo, que ya llegas a lo alto!  
¿Qué ves?

GAYO MARIO ¡Oh, santos dioses! ¿Y qué es esto?

JUGURTA ¿De qué te admiras?

GAYO MARIO De mirar de sangre  
un rojo lago, y de ver mil cuerpos  
tendidos por las calles de Numancia. 480

CIPIÓN ¿Que no hay ninguno vivo?

GAYO MARIO Ni por pienso.  
A lo menos, ninguno se me ofrece  
en todo cuanto alcanzo con la vista.

CIPIÓN Salta, pues, dentro y míralo bien todo.

*(Salta GAYO MARIO en la ciudad.)*

Síguele tú también, Jugurta amigo. 485  
Mas sigámosle todos.

JUGURTA No conviene  
al oficio que tienes esta impresa:  
sosiega el pecho, buen señor, y espera  
que Mario vuelva, o yo, con la respuesta  
de lo que pasa en la ciudad soberbia. 490  
Tened bien esa escala... ¡Oh cielos justos,  
y cuán triste espectáculo y horrendo  
se me ofrece a la vista! ¡Oh caso extraño!  
Caliente sangre baña todo el suelo;  
cuerpos muertos ocupan plaza y calles; 495  
dentro quiero saltar y verlo todo.

*(Salta JUGURTA en la ciudad, y dice QUINTO FABIO.)*

QUINTO FABIO Sin duda que los fieros numantinos,  
del bárbaro furor suyo incitados,  
viéndose sin remedio de salvarse,  
antes quisieron entregar las vidas 500  
al filo agudo de sus propios hierros,  
que no a las vencedoras manos nuestras,  
aborrecidas dellos lo posible.

CIPIÓN Con uno solo que quedase vivo,  
no se me negaría el triunfo en Roma 505  
de haber domado esta nación soberbia,  
enemiga mortal de nuestro nombre,  
constante en su opinión, presta, arrojada  
al peligro mayor y duro trance,  
de quien jamás se alabará romano 510

que vio la espalda vuelta al numantino,  
cuyo valor, cuya destreza en armas,  
me forzó con razón a usar el medio  
de encerrarlos cual fieras indomables,  
y triunfar dellos con industria y maña, 515  
pues era con las fuerzas imposible.  
Pero ya me parece vuelve Mario.

*(GAYO MARIO torna a salir por las murallas y dice:)*

GAYO MARIO En balde, ilustre general prudente,  
han sido nuestras fuerzas ocupadas;  
en balde te has mostrado diligente, 520  
pues en humo y en viento son tornadas  
las ciertas esperanzas de victoria,  
de tu industria contino aseguradas.

Del lamentable fin y triste historia  
de la ciudad invicta de Numancia 525  
merece ser eterna la memoria.

Sacado han de su pérdida ganancia;  
quitado te han el triunfo de las manos,  
muriendo con magnánima constancia.

Nuestros disignios han salido vanos, 530  
pues ha podido más su honroso intento  
que toda la potencia de romanos.

El fatigado pueblo en fin violento  
acabó la miseria de su vida,  
dando triste remate al largo cuento. 535

Numancia está en un lago convertida  
de roja sangre, y de mil cuerpos llena,  
de quien fue su rigor propio homicida;  
de la pesada y sin igual cadena  
dura de esclavitud se han escapado 540  
con presta audacia de temor ajena.

En medio de la plaza levantado  
está un ardiente fuego temeroso,  
de sus cuerpos y haciendas sustentado.



A tiempo llegué a verle, que el furioso 545  
Teógenes, valiente numantino,  
de fenecer su vida deseoso,  
    maldiciendo su corto amargo signo,  
en medio se arrojaba de la llama,  
lleno de temerario desatino; 550  
    y, al arrojarse, dijo: «¡Oh clara Fama,  
ocupa aquí tus lenguas y tus ojos  
en esta hazaña, que a cantar te llama!  
    ¡Venid, romanos, ya por los despojos  
desta ciudad, en polvo y humo vueltos, 555  
y sus flores y frutos en abrojos!»  
De allí, con pies y pensamientos sueltos,  
gran parte de la tierra he rodeado,  
por las calles y pasos mal revueltos,  
    y a un solo numantino no he hallado 560  
que poderte traer vivo, siquiera  
para que fueras dél bien informado  
    por qué ocasión, de qué suerte o manera,  
cometieron tan grande desvarío,  
apresurando la mortal carrera. 565

CIPIÓN   ¿Estaba por ventura el pecho mío  
de bárbara arrogancia y muertes lleno,  
y de piedad justísima vacío?  
    ¿Es de mi condición, por dicha, ajeno  
usar benignidad con el rendido, 570  
como conviene al vencedor que es bueno?  
    Mal, por cierto, tenían conocido  
el valor en Numancia de mi pecho,  
para vencer y perdonar nacido.

QUINTO FABIO   Jugurta te hará más satisfecho, 575  
señor, de aquello que saber deseas;  
que, vesle, vuelve lleno de despecho.

*(Torna JUGURTA por la misma muralla.)*

JUGURTA Prudente general, en vano empleas  
más aquí tu valor: vuelve a otra parte  
la industria sin igual de que te arreas. 580

No hay en Numancia cosa en que ocuparte:  
todos son muertos ya, sólo uno creo  
que queda vivo, para el triunfo darte.

Allí, en aquella torre, según veo,  
allí denantes un muchacho estaba, 585  
turbado en vista y de gentil arreo.

CIPIÓN Si eso fuese verdad, eso bastaba  
para triunfar en Roma de Numancia,  
que es lo que más agora deseaba.

Lleguémonos allá, y haced instancia 590  
cómo el muchacho venga a nuestras manos  
vivo, que es lo que agora es de importancia.

VIRIATO *(Desde la torre.)*

¿Dónde venís, o qué buscáis, romanos?  
Si en Numancia queréis entrar por suerte,  
haréislo sin contraste, a pasos llanos; 595  
pero mi lengua desde aquí os advierte  
que yo las llaves mal guardadas tengo  
desta ciudad, de quien triunfó la muerte.

CIPIÓN Por ésas, joven, deseoso vengo,  
y más de que tú hagas experiencia 600  
si en este pecho piedad sostengo.

VIRIATO ¡Tarde, cruel, ofreces tu clemencia,  
pues no hay en quien usarla; que yo quiero

pasar por el rigor de la sentencia  
que, con suceso amargo, lastimero, 605  
de mis padres y patria tan querida,  
causó el último fin, terrible y fiero!

QUINTO FABIO Dime: ¿tienes, por suerte, aborrecida,  
ciego de un temerario desvarío,  
tu floreciente edad, tu tierna vida? 610

CIPIÓN Templa, pequeño joven, templa el brío,  
y subjeta el valor tuyo y pequeño,  
al mayor de mi honroso poderío;  
que desde aquí te doy mi fe, y empeño  
mi palabra, que sólo de ti seas 615  
tú mismo el propio y conocido dueño,  
y que de ricas joyas y preseas  
vivas lo que vivieres abastado,  
como yo podré darte y tú desees,  
si a mi te entregas y te das de grado. 620

VIRIATO Todo el furor de cuantos ya son muertos  
en este pueblo, en polvo reducido;  
todo el huir los pactos y conciertos,  
ni el dar a sujeción jamás oído,  
sus iras y rencores descubiertos, 625  
está en mi pecho, todo junto, unido.  
Yo heredé de Numancia todo el brío;  
¡ved si pensar vencerme es desvarío!  
Patria querida, pueblo desdichado,  
no temas ni imagines que me admire 630  
de lo que debo hacer, en ti engendrado,  
ni que promesa o miedo me retire,  
ora me falte el suelo, el cielo, el hado;  
ora a vencerme todo el mundo aspire;  
que imposible será que yo no haga 635  
a tu valor la merecida paga.

Que, si a esconderme aquí me trujo el miedo  
de la cercana y espantosa muerte,  
ella me sacará con más denuedo,  
con el deseo de seguir tu suerte: 640  
del vil temor pasado, como puedo,  
haré ahora la enmienda, osado y fuerte,  
y el error de mi edad tierna, inocente,  
pagaré con morir osadamente.

Yo os aseguro, ¡oh fuertes ciudadanos!, 645  
que no falte por mí la intención vuestra  
de que no triunfen pérfidos romanos,  
si ya no fuere de ceniza nuestra.  
Saldrán conmigo sus intentos vanos:  
ora levanten contra mí su diestra, 650  
o me aseguren con promesa cierta  
a vida y a regalos ancha puerta.

Teneos, romanos; sosegad el brío,  
y no os canséis en asaltar el muro;  
que, aunque fuera mayor el poderío 655  
vuestro, de no vencerme os aseguro.  
Pero muéstrese ya el intento mío;  
y si ha sido el amor perfecto y puro  
que yo tuve a mi patria tan querida,  
asegúrelo luego esta caída. 660

*(Aquí se arroja de la torre, y dice CIPIÓN:)*

CIPIÓN ¡Oh nunca vista, memorable hazaña!  
¡Niño de anciano y valeroso pecho,  
que no sólo a Numancia, mas a España  
has adquerido gloria en este hecho!  
¡Con tu viva virtud y heroica, estraña, 665  
queda muerto y perdido mi derecho!  
¡Tú con esta caída levantaste  
tu fama, y mis victorias derribaste!

Que fuera aún viva y en su ser Numancia,  
sólo porque vivieras, me holgara, 670

que tú solo has llevado la ganancia  
desta larga contienda, ilustre y rara.  
¡Lleva, pues, niño, lleva la jactancia  
y la gloria que el cielo te prepara,  
por haber, derribándote, vencido 675  
al que, subiendo, queda más caído!

*(Suena una trompeta, y sale la FAMA.)*

FAMA Vaya mi clara voz de gente en gente,  
y en dulce y suavísimo sonido  
llene las almas de un deseo ardiente  
de eternizar un hecho tan subido. 680  
Alzad, romanos, la inclinada frente;  
llevad de aquí este cuerpo, que ha podido,  
en tan pequeña edad, arrebatáros  
el triunfo que pudiera tanto honraros;  
que yo, que soy la Fama pregonera, 685  
tendré cuidado, en cuanto el alto cielo  
moviere el paso en la subida esfera,  
dando fuerza y vigor al bajo suelo,  
de publicar con lengua verdadera,  
con justo intento y presuroso vuelo, 690  
el valor de Numancia, único y solo,  
de Batro a Tile y de uno al otro polo.

Indicio ha dado esta no vista hazaña  
del valor que en los siglos venideros  
tendrán los hijos de la fuerte España, 695  
hijos de tales padres herederos.  
No de la muerte la feroz guadaña,  
ni los cursos de tiempos, tan ligeros,  
harán que de Numancia yo no cante  
el fuerte brazo y ánimo constante. 700

Hallo sola en Numancia todo cuanto  
debe con justo título cantarse,  
y lo que puede dar materia al canto  
para poder mil siglos ocuparse:

la fuerza no vencida, el valor tanto, 705  
dino de en prosa y verso celebrarse;  
mas, pues de esto se encarga mi memoria,  
dése feliz remate a nuestra historia.

FIN DE LA TRAGEDIA

# EL GALLARDO ESPAÑOL



*Comedia famosa del Gallardo español*

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## Jornada primera

Hablan en esta primera jornada las personas siguientes:

ARLAXA, *mora*.

ALIMUZEL, *moro*.

DON ALONSO DE CÓRDOBA, *conde de Alcaudete, general de Orán*.

DON FERNANDO DE SAAVEDRA.

GUZMÁN, *capitán*.

FRATÍN, *ingeniero*.

UN SOLDADO.

CEBRIÁN, *moro, criado de ALIMUZEL*.

NACOR, *moro*.

DON MARTÍN DE CÓRDOBA.

UNO, *con una petición*.

BUITRAGO, *soldado*.

UN PAJECILLO.

OROPESA, *cautivo*.

ROBLEDO, *alférez*.

*Salen ARLAXA, mora, y ALIMUZEL, moro.*

ARLAXA Es el caso, Alimuzel,  
que, a no traerme el cristiano,  
te será el Amor tirano,  
y yo te seré crüel.

Quiérole preso y rendido, 5  
aunque sano y sin cautela.

ALIMUZEL ¿Posible es que te desvela  
deseo tan mal nacido?

Conténtate que le mate,  
si no pudiere rendille; 10  
que detener al herille  
el brazo, será dislate.

Partiréme a Orán al punto,  
y desafiare al cristiano,  
y haré por traerle sano, 15  
pues no le quieres difunto.

Pero, si acaso el rigor  
de la cólera me incita  
y su muerte solicita,  
¿tengo de perder tu amor? 20

¿Está tan puesto en razón  
Marte, desnuda la espada,  
que la tenga nivelada  
al peso de tu afición?

ARLAXA Alimuzel, yo confieso 25  
que tienes razón en parte;  
que, en las hazañas de Marte,  
hay muy pocas sin exceso,  
el cual se suele templar  
con la cordura y valor. 30  
Yo he puesto precio en mi amor:  
mira si le puedes dar.

Quiero ver la bizarría  
deste que con miedo nombro,  
deste espanto, deste asombro 35  
de toda la Berbería;  
deste Fernando valiente,  
ensalzador de su crisma  
y coco de la morisma,  
que nombrar su nombre siente; 40  
deste Atlante de su España,  
su nuevo Cid, su Bernardo,  
su don Manuel el gallardo  
por una y otra hazaña.

Quiero de cerca miralle, 45  
pero rendido a mis pies.

ALIMUZEL Haz cuenta que ya lo ves,

puesto que dé en ayudalle  
todo el cielo.

ARLAXAPues ¿qué esperas?

ALIMUZELEspero a ver si te burlas; 50  
aunque para mí tus burlas  
siempre han sido puras veras.

Comedido, como amante,  
soy, y sólo sé decirte  
que el deseo de servirte 55  
me hace ser arrogante.

Puedes de mí prometerte  
imposibles sobrehumanos,  
mil prisioneros cristianos  
que vengan a obedecerte. 60

ARLAXA Tráeme solamente al fuerte  
don Fernando Saavedra,  
que con él veré que medra  
y se mejora mi suerte;

y aun la tuya, pues te doy 65  
palabra que he de ser tuya,  
como el hecho se concluya  
a mi gusto.

ALIMUZELQuizá hoy  
oirán los muros de Orán  
mi voz en el desafío, 70  
y aun de los cielos confío,  
que luz y vida nos dan,  
que han de acudir a mi intento  
con suceso venturoso.

ARLAXA Parte, Alimuzel famoso. 75

ALIMUZEL Fuerzas de tu mandamiento  
me llevan tan alentado,  
que acabaré con valor  
el imposible mayor  
que se hubiere imaginado. 80

ARLAXA Ve en paz, que de aquesta guerra  
la vitoria te adivino.

*(Éntrase ARLAXA.)*

ALIMUZEL ¡Queda en paz, rostro divino,  
ángel que mora en la tierra,  
bizarra sobre los hombres 85  
que a guerra a Marte provocan,  
a quien de excelencias tocan  
mil títulos y renombres;  
en extremo poderosa  
de dar tormento y placer, 90  
yelo que nos hace arder  
en viva llama amorosa!  
Queda en paz, que, sin tu sol,  
ya camino en noche oscura;  
resucite mi ventura 95  
la muerte deste español.  
Mas, ¡ay, que no he de matalle,  
sino prendelle y no más!  
¿Quién tal deseo jamás  
vio, ni pudo imaginalle? 100

*(Éntrase ALIMUZEL.)*

*(Salen DON ALONSO DE CÓRDOBA, conde de Alcaudete, general de Orán;  
DON FERNANDO DE SAAVEDRA; GUZMÁN, capitán; FRATÍN,  
ingeniero.)*

FRATÍN Hase de alzar, señor, esta cortina  
a peso de aquel cubo, que responde  
a éste que descubre la marina.

De la silla esta parte no se esconde;  
mas, ¿qué aprovecha, si no está en defensa, 105  
ni Almarza a nuestro intento corresponde?

DON ALONSO El cerco es cierto, y más cierta la ofensa,  
si ya no son cortinas y muralla  
de vuestros brazos la virtud inmensa.

Donde el deseo de la fama se halla, 110  
las defensas se estiman en un cero,  
y a campo abierto salta a la batalla.

Venga, pues, la morisma, que yo espero  
en Dios y en vuestras manos vencedoras  
que volverá el león manso cordero. 115

Los Argos, centinelas veladoras,  
miren al mar y miren a la tierra  
en las del día y las nocturnas horas.

No hay disculpa al descuido que en la guerra  
se hace, por pequeño que parezca, 120  
que pierde mucho quien en poco yerra;

y si aviniere que el cabello ofrezca  
la ligera ocasión, ha de tomarse,  
antes que a espaldas vueltas desaparezca:

que, en la guerra, el perderse o el ganarse 125  
suele estar en un punto, que, si pasa,  
vendrá el de estar quejoso y no vengarse.

En su pajiza, pobre y débil casa  
se defiende el pastor del sol ardiente  
que el campo agosta y la montaña abrasa. 130

Quiero inferir que puede ser valiente  
detrás de un muro un corazón medroso,

cuando a sus lados que le animan siente.

*(Entra un SOLDADO.)*

SOLDADO Señor, con ademán bravo y airoso,  
picando un alazán, un moro viene 135  
y a la ciudad se acerca presuroso.

Bien es verdad que a veces se detiene  
y mira a todas partes, recatado,  
como quien miedo y osadía tiene.

Adarga blanca trae, y alfanje al lado, 140  
lanza con bandereta de seguro,  
y el bonete con plumas adornado.

Puedes, si gustas, verle desde el muro.

DON ALONSO Bien de aquí se descubre; ya le veo.  
Si es embajada, yo le doy seguro. 145

DON FERNANDO Antes es desafío, a lo que creo.

*(Entra ALIMUZEL, a caballo, con lanza y adarga.)*

ALIMUZEL Escuchadme, los de Orán,  
caballeros y soldados,  
que firmáis con nuestra sangre  
vuestros hechos señalados. 150

Alimuzel soy, un moro  
de aquellos que son llamados  
galanes de Melïona,  
tan valientes como hidalgos.

No me trae aquí Mahoma 155  
a averiguar en el campo  
si su secta es buena o mala,  
que Él tiene deso cuidado.

Tráeme otro dios más brioso,  
que es tan soberbio y tan manso, 160  
que ya parece cordero,  
y ya león irritado.  
Y este dios, que así me impele,  
es de una mora vasallo,  
que es reina de la hermosura, 165  
de quien soy humilde esclavo.  
No quiero decir que hiendo,  
que destrozo, parto o rajo;  
que animoso, y no arrogante,  
es el buen enamorado. 170  
Amo, en fin, y he dicho mucho  
en sólo decir que amo,  
para daros a entender  
que puedo estimarme en algo.  
Pero, sea yo quien fuere, 175  
basta que me muestro armado  
ante estos soberbios muros,  
de tantos buenos guardados;  
que si no es señal de loco,  
será indicio de que he dado 180  
palabra que he de cumplilla  
o quedar muerto en el campo.  
Y así, a ti te desafío,  
don Fernando el fuerte, el bravo,  
tan infamia de los moros 185  
cuanto prez de los cristianos.  
Bien se verá en lo que he dicho  
que, aunque haya otros Fernandos,  
es aquel de Saavedra  
a quien a batalla llamo. 190  
Tu fama, que no se encierra  
en límites, ha llegado  
a los oídos de Arlaxa,  
de la belleza milagro.  
Quiere verte; mas no muerto, 195  
sino preso, y hame dado  
el asunto de prenderte:

mira si es pequeño el cargo.  
Yo prometí de hacello,  
porque el que está enamorado, 200  
los más arduos imposibles  
facilita y hace llano.  
Y, para darte ocasión  
de que salgas mano a mano  
a verte conmigo agora, 205  
destas cosas te hago cargo:  
que peleas desde lejos,  
que el arcabuz es tu amparo,  
que en comunidad aguijas  
y a solas te vas de espacio; 210  
que eres Ulises nocturno,  
no Telamón al sol claro;  
que nunca mides tu espada  
con otra, a fuer de hidalgo.  
Si no sales, verdad digo; 215  
si sales, quedará llano,  
ya vencido o vencedor,  
que tu fama no habla en vano.  
Aquí, junto a Canastel,  
solo te estaré esperando 220  
hasta que mañana el sol  
llegue al Poniente su carro.  
Del que fuere vencedor  
ha de ser el otro esclavo:  
premio rico y premio honesto. 225  
Ven, que espero, don Fernando.

*(Vase.)*

DON ALONSO Don Fernando, ¿qué os parece?

DON FERNANDO Que es el moro comedido  
y valiente, y que merece



ser de Amor favorecido 230  
en el trance que se ofrece.

DON ALONSO Luego, ¿pensáis de salir?

DON FERNANDO Bien se puede esto inferir  
de su demanda y mi celo,  
pues ya se sabe que suelo 235  
a lo que es honra acudir.

Déme vuestra señoría  
licencia, que es bien que salga  
antes que se pase el día.

DON ALONSO No es posible que ahora os valga 240  
vuestra noble valentía.

No quiero que allá salgáis,  
porque hallaréis, si miráis  
a la soldadesca ley,  
que obligado a vuestro rey 245  
mucho más que a vos estáis.

En la guerra, usanza es vieja,  
y aun ley casi principal  
a toda razón aneja,  
que por causa general 250  
la particular se deja.

Porque no es suyo el soldado  
que está en presidio encerrado  
sino de aquél que le encierra,  
y no ha de hacer otra guerra 255  
sino a la que se ha obligado.

En ningún modo sois vuestro,  
sino del rey, y en su nombre  
sois mío, según lo muestro;  
y yo no aventuro un hombre 260  
que es de la guerra maestro

por la simple niñería  
de una amorosa porfía;  
don Fernando, esto es verdad.

DON FERNANDO; De estraña reguridad 265  
usa vuestra señoría  
conmigo! ¿Qué dirá el moro?

DON ALONSO Diga lo que él más quisiere;  
que yo guardo aquí el decoro  
que la guerra pide y quiere; 270  
y della ninguno ignoro.

DON FERNANDO Respóndasele, a lo menos,  
y sepa que por tus buenos  
respetos allá no salgo.

GUZMÁN No os tendrá por esto el galgo, 275  
señor don Fernando, en menos.

DON ALONSO Lleve el capitán Guzmán  
la respuesta.

GUZMÁN Sí haré,  
y, ¡voto a tal!, si me dan  
licencia, que yo le dé 280  
al morico ganapán  
tal rato, que quede frío  
de amor con el desafío.

DON ALONSO Respondedle cortésmente  
con el término prudente 285

que de vuestro ingenio fío.

(*Vanse DON ALONSO y FRATÍN.*)

GUZMÁN ¿Queréis que, en vez de respuesta,  
os le dé una mano tal,  
que se concluya la fiesta?

DON FERNANDO Que me estará a mí muy mal 290  
eso, es cosa manifiesta.

Sólo a mí me desafía,  
y gran mengua me sería  
que otro por mí pelease.  
Mas si el moro me esperase 295  
allí siquiera otro día,  
yo le saldré a responder,  
a pesar de todo el mundo  
que lo quiera defender.

GUZMÁN ¿En qué os fundáis?

DON FERNANDO Yo me fundo 300  
en esto que pienso hacer:

el lunes soy yo de ronda,  
y, cuando la noche esconda  
la luz con su manto oscuro,  
arrojaréme del muro 305  
a la cava.

GUZMÁN Está muy honda  
y podríais peligrar.

DON FERNANDO Póneme en los pies el brío  
mil alas para volar.  
Todo aquesto de vos fío. 310

GUZMÁN Ya sabéis que sé callar.  
Dejadme salir primero,  
porque de mi industria espero  
que saldréis bien deste hecho.

DON FERNANDO Sois amigo de provecho. 315

GUZMÁN Sí, porque soy verdadero.

*(Vanse, y salen ALIMUZEL y CEBRIÁN, su criado, que en arábigo quiere decir 'lacayo o mozo de caballos'.)*

ALIMUZEL Átale allí, Cebrián,  
al tronco de aquella palma;  
repose el fuerte alazán  
mientras reposa mi alma 320  
los cuidados que le dan.

Aquí a solas daré al llanto  
las riendas, o al pensar santo  
en las memorias de Arlaxa,  
en tanto que al campo baja 325  
aquel que se estima en tanto.

*(Baja la cabeza CEBRIÁN y vase.)*

¡Venturoso tú, cristiano,  
que puedes a tus despojos  
añadir el más que humano,  
que es querer verte los ojos 330

del cielo que adoro en vano!

Y más que pena recibo  
desto que en el alma escribo  
con celoso desconcierto:  
que a mí me quieren ver muerto 335  
y a ti te quieren ver vivo.

Pero yo no haré locura  
semejante; que, si venzo,  
o por fuerza o por ventura,  
daré a mis glorias comienzo, 340  
dándote aquí sepultura.

Mas, si te hago morir,  
¿cómo podré yo cumplir  
lo que Arlaxa me ha mandado?  
¡Oh triste y dudoso estado, 345  
insufrible de sufrir!

Parleras aves, que al viento  
esparcís quejas de amor,  
¿qué haré en el mal que siento?  
¿Daré la rienda al rigor, 350  
o al cortés comedimiento?

Mas démosla al sueño agora;  
perdonadme, hermosa mora,  
si aplico sin tu licencia  
este alivio a la dolencia 355  
que en mi alma triste mora.

*(Échase a dormir, y sale al instante NACOR, moro, con un turbante verde.)*

NACOR Mahoma, ya que el Amor  
en mis dichas no consiente,  
muéstrame tú tu favor:  
mira que soy tu pariente, 360  
el infelice Nacor.

Jarife soy de tu casta,  
y no me respeta el asta  
de Amor que blande en mi pecho,

un blanco a sus tiros hecho, 365  
do todas sus flechas gasta.

Y más, y no sé qué es esto,  
que, con ser enamorado,  
soy de tan bajo supuesto,  
que no hay conejo acosado 370  
más cobarde ni más presto.

Desto será buen testigo  
el ver aquí mi enemigo  
dormido, y no osar tocallo,  
deseando de matallo 375  
por venganza y por castigo.

Que esté celoso y con miedo,  
por Alá, que es cosa nueva.  
¿Llegaré, o estarme he quedo?  
¿Cortaré en segura prueba 380  
este gordiano enredo?

Que si éste quito delante,  
podrá ser que vuelva amante  
el pecho de Arlaxa ingrato.  
Muérome porque no mato; 385  
oso y tiemblo en un instante.

*(Entra el capitán GUZMÁN, con espada y rodela.)*

GUZMÁN ¿Eres tú el desafiador  
de don Fernando, por dicha?

NACORNo tengo yo ese valor;  
que el corazón con desdicha 390  
es morada del temor.

Aquél es que está allí echado;  
moro tan afortunado,  
que Arlaxa le manda y mira.

GUZMÁN Paréceme que suspira. 395

NACOR Sí hará, que está enamorado.

GUZMÁN ¡Alimuzel!

ALIMUZEL ¿Quién me llama?

GUZMÁN Mal acudirás, durmiendo,  
al servicio de tu dama.

ALIMUZEL En el sueño va adquiriendo 400  
fuerzas la amorosa llama,  
porque en él se representan  
visiones que me atormentan,  
obligaciones que guarde,  
miedos que me hacen cobarde 405  
y celos que más me alientan.

Mirándote estoy, y veo  
cuán propio es de la mujer  
tener extraño deseo.  
Cosas hay en ti que ver, 410  
no que admirar.

GUZMÁN Yo lo creo;  
pero, ¿por qué dices eso?

ALIMUZEL Don Fernando, yo confieso  
que tu buen talle y buen brío  
llega y se aventaja al mío, 415  
pero no en muy grande exceso;  
y si no es por el gran nombre

que entre la morisma tienes  
de ser en las armas hombre,  
ninguna cosa contienen 420  
que enamores ni que asombre;  
y yo no sé por qué Arlaxa  
tanto se angustia y trabaja  
por verte, y vivo, que es más.

GUZMÁN Engañado, moro, estás: 425  
tu vano discurso ataja,  
que yo no soy don Fernando.

ALIMUZEL Pues, ¿quién eres?

GUZMÁN Un su amigo  
y embajador.

ALIMUZEL Dime cuándo  
espera verse conmigo, 430  
porque le estoy aguardando.

GUZMÁN Has de saber, moro diestro,  
que el sabio general nuestro  
que salga no le consiente.

ALIMUZEL Pues, ¿por qué?

GUZMÁN Porque es prudente 435  
y en la guerra gran maestro.  
Teme el cerco que se espera,  
y no quiere aventurar  
en empresa tan ligera



una espada que en cortar 440  
es entre muchas primera.

Pero dice don Fernando  
que le estés aquí aguardando  
hasta el lunes, que él te jura  
salir en la noche oscura, 445  
aunque rompa cualquier bando.

Si aquesto no te contenta,  
y quieres probar la suerte  
con menos daño y afrenta,  
tu brazo gallardo y fuerte 450  
con éste, que es flaco, tienta,  
y a tu mora llevarás,  
si me vences, quizá más  
que en llevar a don Fernando.

ALIMUZELNo estoy en eso pensando; 455  
muy descaminado vas.

No eres tú por quien me envía  
Arlaxa, y, aunque te prenda,  
no saldré con mi porfía.  
Haz que don Fernando entienda 460  
que le aguardaré ese día  
que pide, y si le venciere,  
y entonces tu gusto fuere  
probarme en el marcial juego,  
mi voluntad hará luego 465  
lo que la tuya quisiere;  
que ya sabes que no es dado  
dejar la empresa primera  
por la segunda al soldado.

GUZMÁNEs verdad.

ALIMUZELDesa manera 470

bien quedará desculpado.

GUZMÁN Dices muy bien.

ALIMUZEL Sí, bien digo.  
Vuélvete, y dile a tu amigo  
que le espero y que no tarde.

GUZMÁN Tu Mahoma, Alí, te guarde. 475

ALIMUZEL Tu Cristo vaya contigo.

(Vase GUZMÁN.)

Nacor, ¿qué es esto? ¿A qué vienes?

NACORA ver cómo en esta empresa  
tan peligrosa te avienes;  
y por Alá que me pesa 480  
de ver que en punto la tienes,  
que el de tu muerte está a punto.

ALIMUZEL ¿En qué modo?

NACOREn que barrunto  
que, si de noche peleas,  
sobre ti no es mucho veas 485  
todo un ejército junto.

Esto de no estar en mano  
de don Fernando el salir,  
tenlo por ligero y vano;

que se suele prevenir 490  
con astucias el cristiano.

De noche quieren cogerte,  
porque al matarte o prenderte,  
aun el sol no sea testigo.

No creas a tu enemigo; 495

Alí, procura volverte,

que bien disculpado irás  
con Arlaxa, pues has hecho  
lo que es posible, y aun más.

ALIMUZELConsejos de sabio pecho 500

son, Nacor, los que me das;

pero no puedo admitillos,

ni menos con gusto oílos;

que tiene el Amor echados

a mis oídos, candados; 505

a los pies y alma, grillos.

NACOR Para mejor ocasión

te guarda, porque es cordura

prevenir a la intención

del que a su salvo procura 510

su gloria y tu perdición.

Ven, que a Arlaxa daré cuenta

de modo que diga y sienta

que eres vencedor osado,

pues si no sale el llamado, 515

en sí se queda la afrenta.

Cuanto más, que cuando venga

el cerco desta ciudad,

que ya no hay quien le detenga,

podrás, a tu voluntad, 520

hacer lo que más convenga;

que entonces saldrá el cristiano,

si es arrogante y lozano,

al campo abierto, sin duda.

ALIMUZEL Bien es, Nacor, que yo acuda 525  
a tu consejo, que es sano.

Ven y vamos, pues podré,  
en este cerco que dices,  
cumplir lo que aquí falté;  
mas mira que me autorices 530  
con Arlaxa.

NACOR Sí haré.  
*Aparte.*

Sentirá Arlaxa la mengua  
que tanto al cristiano amengua,  
haciéndole della alarde;  
vos quedaréis por cobarde, 535  
o mal me andará la lengua.

*(Vanse.)*

*(Salen DON ALONSO DE CÓRDOBA, general de Orán, conde de Alcaudete, y su hermano, DON MARTÍN DE CÓRDOBA, y DON FERNANDO DE SAAVEDRA.)*

CONDE Señor don Martín, conviene  
que vuesa merced acuda  
a Mazalquivir, que tiene  
necesidad de la ayuda 540  
que vuestro esfuerzo contiene;  
que allí acudirá primero  
el enemigo ligero.  
Mas, que venzáis no lo dudo;  
que el cobarde está desnudo, 545  
aunque se vista de acero.

En su muchedumbre estriba  
aquesta mora canalla,  
que así se nos muestra esquiva;  
mas, cuando defensa halla, 550  
se humilla, prostra y derriba.

Sus gustos, sus algazaras,  
si bien en ello reparas,  
son el canto del medroso;  
calla el león animoso 555  
entre las balas y jaras.

DON MARTÍN Por mi caudillo y mi hermano  
te obedezco, y haré cuanto  
fuere, señor, en mi mano;  
que ni de gritos me espanto, 560  
ni de tumulto pagano.

Dame, señor, municiones,  
que en el trance que me pones  
pienso, si no faltan ellas,  
poner sobre las estrellas 565  
los españoles blasones.

*(Entra UNO con una petición.)*

UNO Señor, dame licencia que te lea  
aquesta petición.

CONDE Lee en buen hora.

UNO Doña Isabel de Avellaneda, en nombre  
de todas las mujeres desta tierra, 570  
dice que llegó ayer a su noticia  
que, por temor del cerco que se espera,  
quieres que quede la ciudad vacía

de gente inútil, enviando a España  
las mujeres, los viejos y los niños: 575  
resolución prudente, aunque medrosa.  
Y apelan desto a ti, de ti, diciendo  
que ellas se ofrecen de acudir al muro,  
ya con tierra o fajina, o ya con lienzos  
bañados en vinagre, con que limpien 580  
el sudor de los fieros combatientes  
que asistan al rigor de los asaltos;  
que tomarán la sangre a los heridos;  
que las más pequeñuelas harán hilas,  
dando la mano al lienzo y voz al cielo; 585  
con tiernas virginales rogativas,  
pidiendo a Dios misericordia, en tanto  
que los robustos brazos de sus padres  
defiendan sus murallas y sus vidas;  
que los niños darán de buena gana 590  
para enviar a España con los viejos,  
pues no pueden servir de cosa alguna;  
mas ellas, que por útiles se tienen,  
no irán de ningún modo, porque piensan,  
por Dios, y por su ley y por su patria, 595  
morir sirviendo a Dios, y en la muerte,  
cuando el hado les fuere inexorable,  
dar el último vale a sus maridos,  
o ya cerrar los ojos a sus padres  
con tristes y cristianos sentimientos. 600  
En fin, serán, señor, de más provecho  
que daño, por lo cual te ruegan todas  
que revoques, señor, lo que ordenaste,  
en cuanto toca a las mujeres sólo,  
que en ello harás a Dios servicio grande, 605  
merced a ellas y favor inmenso.  
Esto la petición, señor, contiene.

CONDENunca tal me pasó por pensamiento;  
nunca tanto el temor se ha apoderado  
de mí, que hiciese prevención tan triste. 610

Por respuesta llevad que yo agradezco  
y admito su gallardo ofrecimiento,  
y que de su valor tendrá la fama  
cuidado de escribirle y de grabarle  
en láminas de bronce, porque viva 615  
siglos eternos. Y esto les respondo,  
y andad con Dios.

UNOPor cierto que han mostrado  
de espartanas valor, de argivas brío.

*(Entra el capitán GUZMÁN.)*

CONDEPues, capitán Guzmán, ¿qué dice el moro?

GUZMÁN Ya se fue malcontento.

DON FERNANDO *Aparte.*

¿Es ido cierto? 620

GUZMÁN *Aparte.*

Aguardándote está, porque es valiente  
y discreto además en lo que muestra.

DON FERNANDO *Aparte.*

Saldré, sin duda.

GUZMÁN *Aparte.*

No sé si lo aciertas,  
que está muy cerca el cerco.

DON FERNANDO *Aparte.*

Si le venzo,  
presto me volveré; si soy vencido, 625  
poca falta haré, pues poco valgo.

CONDE;Bravo parece el moro!

GUZMÁNBravo, cierto,  
y muy enamorado y comedido.

*(Entra a esta sazón BUITRAGO, un soldado, con la espada sin vaina, oleada con un orillo, tiros de sogá; finalmente, muy malparado. Trae una tablilla con demanda de las ánimas de purgatorio, y pide para ellas. Y esto de pedir para las ánimas es cuento verdadero, que yo lo vi, y la razón porque pedía se dice adelante.)*

BUITRAGODenme para las ánimas, señores,  
pues saben que me importa.

CONDE;Oh buen Buitrago! 630  
¿Cuánto ha caído hoy?



BUITRAGO Hasta tres cuartos.

DON MARTÍN ¿Dellos, qué habéis comprado?

BUITRAGO Casi nada:  
una asadura sola y cien sardinas.

DON MARTÍN Harto habrá para hoy.

BUITRAGO ¡Por Santo Nuflo,  
que apenas hay para que masque un diente! 635

DON MARTÍN Comeréis hoy conmigo.

BUITRAGO Dese modo,  
habrá para almorzar en lo comprado.

DON MARTÍN ¿Y la ración?

BUITRAGO ¿Qué? ¿La ración? Ya asiste  
a un lado del estómago, y no ocupa  
cuanto una casa de ajedrez pequeña. 640

DON FERNANDO ¡Gran comedor!

GUZMÁN Tan grande, que le ha dado  
el conde esta demanda porque pueda  
sustentarse con ella.

BUITRAGO¿Qué aprovecha?  
Que, como saben todos que no hay ánima  
a quien haga decir sólo un responso, 645  
si me dan medio cuarto, es por milagro;  
y así, pienso pedir para mi cuerpo,  
y no para las ánimas.

DON MARTÍN Sería  
gran discreción.

BUITRAGO¡Oh, pese a mi linaje!,  
¿No sabe todo el mundo que, si como 650  
por seis, que suelo pelear por siete?  
¡Cuerpo de Dios conmigo! Denme ripio  
suficiente a la boca, y denme moros  
a las manos a pares y a millares:  
verán quién es Buitrago y si merece 655  
comer por diez, pues que pelea por veinte.

CONDE Tiene razón Buitrago; mas agora,  
si llega el cerco, mostrará sus bríos,  
y haré yo que le den siete raciones  
con tal que cese la demanda.

BUITRAGO Cese, 660  
que entonces no habrá lengua, y habrá manos;  
no hay pedir, sino dar; no hay sacar almas,  
del purgatorio entonces, sino espiches,  
para meter en el infierno muchas  
de la mora canalla que se espera. 665

(Un PAJECILLO diga:)

PAJECILLO¡Daca el alma, Buitrago, daca el alma!

BUITRAGO;Hijo de puta, y puto; y miente, y calle!  
¿No sabe el cornudillo, sea quien fuere,  
que, aunque tenga cien cuerpos y cien almas  
para dar por mi rey, no daré una 670  
si me la piden dese modo infame?

DON MARTÍN Otra vez, Cereceda.

PAJECILLO;Daca el alma!

BUITRAGO;Por vida de...!

CONDEBuitrigo, con paciencia:  
no la deis vos, por más que os la demanden.

BUITRAGO;Que tenga atrevimiento un pajecillo 675  
de pedirme a mí el alma! ¡Voto a Cristo,  
que, a no estar aquí el conde, don hediondo,  
que os sacara la vuestra a puntillazos,  
aunque me lo impidiera el mismo diablo  
por prenda suya!

CONDENo haya más, Buitrigo; 680  
guardad vuestra alma, y dadnos vuestras manos,  
que serán menester, yo os lo prometo.

BUITRAGODenme para las ánimas agora,  
que todo se andará.

DON MARTÍN Tomad.

BUITRAGO; Oh invicto  
don Martín, generoso! Por mi diestra, 685  
que he de ser tu soldado, si, por dicha,  
vas a Mazalquivir, como se ha dicho.

DON MARTÍN Seréis mi camarada y compañero.

BUITRAGO; Vive Dios, que eres bravo caballero!

*(Vanse, y sale ARLAXA y OROPESA, su cautivo.)*

ARLAXA ¡Mucho tarda Alimuzel! 690  
Cristiano, no sé qué sea.

OROPESA Fuiste, señora, con él  
otra segunda Medea,  
famosa por ser crüel.  
A una empresa le enviaste 695  
que parece que mostraste  
que te era en odio su vida.

ARLAXA Yo fui parte en su partida,  
tú el todo, pues la causaste.

Las alabanzas estrañas 700  
que aplicaste a aquel Fernando,  
contándome sus hazañas,  
se me fueron estampando  
en medio de las entrañas;  
y de allí nació un deseo 705  
no lascivo, torpe o feo,

aunque vano por curioso,  
de ver a un hombre famoso  
más de los que siempre veo.

Más que discreta, curiosa, 710  
ordené que Alimuzel  
fuese a la empresa dudosa;  
no por mostrarme con él  
ingrata ni rigurosa.

Y muéstrame su tardanza 715  
que me engañó la esperanza,  
y que es premio merecido  
del deseo mal nacido  
tenelle quien no le alcanza.

Yo tengo un alma bizarra 720  
y varonil, de tal suerte,  
que gusto del que desgarrar  
y más allá de la muerte  
tira atrevido la barra.

Huélgome de ver a un hombre 725  
de tal valor y tal nombre,  
que con los dientes tarace,  
con las manos despedace  
y con los ojos asombre.

OROPESA Pues si viene Alimuzel, 730  
y a don Fernando trae preso,  
no verás, señora, en él  
ninguna cosa en exceso  
de las que te he dicho dél.

Tendrásme por hablador, 735  
y será más el valor  
de Alimuzel conocido,  
pues la fama del vencido  
se pasa en el vencedor.

Pero si acaso da el cielo 740  
a don Fernando vitoria,  
cierto está tu desconsuelo,  
pues su fama en tu memoria

alzará más alto el vuelo,  
y de no poderle ver, 745  
vendrá el deseo a crecer  
de velle.

ARLAXATienes razón:  
parienta es la confusión  
del discurso de mujer.

*(Entran ALIMUZEL y NACOR.)*

ALIMUZEL Dadle la mano, señora, 750  
o los pies a aqueste esclavo,  
que con el alma os adora.

ARLAXA¿Cómo en corazón tan bravo  
tanta humildad, señor, mora?  
Alzaos, no estéis dese modo. 755

ALIMUZELA tu gusto me acomodo.

ARLAXA¿Sois vencido, o vencedor?

ALIMUZELTodo lo dirá Nacor,  
que se halló presente a todo.

NACOR No quiso el desafiado 760  
acudir al desafío,  
aunque bien se ha disculpado.

ARLAXA¿Ése es soldado de brío,  
tan temido y alabado?

¿Cómo pudo dar disculpa 765  
buena de tan fea culpa?

NACORSu general le detuvo,  
que él ninguna culpa tuvo,  
aunque Alimuzel le culpa;  
que él saliera al campo abierto, 770  
a esperarle un día más,  
según quedó en el concierto.

ALIMUZELNacor, endiablado estás;  
no sé cómo no te he muerto.

NACOR Mal haces de amenazarme, 775  
ni, soberbio, ocasión darme  
para que contigo rife,  
pues sabes que soy jarife,  
y que pecas en tocarme.

ARLAXA Paso, mi señor valiente, 780  
que entiendo deste contraste,  
sin que ninguno le cuente,  
que ni él salió, ni esperaste.

NACOREs así.

ALIMUZEL¡Un jarife miente!  
¡Por Alá, que es gran maldad! 785

NACOR¿No se muestra la verdad

en que te vienes sin él?

ALIMUZEL;Pude yo verme con él,  
encerrado en la ciudad?

¿No sabes lo que pasó, 790  
y la embajada que trajo  
quien por él me respondió?

NACORSé que a esperar se redujo  
el trance, y más no sé yo.

ALIMUZEL ¿Por consejo no me diste 795  
que me volviese?

NACORHiciste  
mal; yo bien, porque pensaba  
que a un cobarde aconsejaba.

ALIMUZEL;El diablo se me reviste!  
¡Incita a hacerte pedazos! 800

NACORJarife soy; no me toques  
con los dientes ni los brazos,  
ni a que te dé me provoques  
duros y fuertes abrazos;  
que ya sabes que Mahoma 805  
por suya la causa toma  
del jarife, y le defiende,  
y al soberbio que le ofende  
a sus pies le humilla y doma.

*(Entran dos moros y traen cautivo a DON FERNANDO, en cuerpo y sin*



*espada.)*

ALIMUZEL ¿Qué es aquesto?

PRIMER MOROA este cristiano 810  
cautivó tu escuadra ayer  
junto a Orán.

DON FERNANDO ¡Miente el villano!  
Yo me entregué, sin poner  
pies a huir ni a espada mano.

Si no quisiera entregarme, 815  
no pudieran cautivarme  
tres escuadras, ni aun trecientas.

ALIMUZEL Estás cautivo y revientas  
de bravo.

DON FERNANDO Puedo alabarme.

ARLAXA ¿Quién eres?

DON FERNANDO Soy un soldado 820  
que me he venido a entregar  
a vuestra prisión de grado,  
por no poder tolerar  
ser valiente y mal pagado.

ARLAXA Luego, ¿quieres ser cautivo? 825

DON FERNANDO De serlo gusto recibo;  
dadme patrón que me mande.

ARLAXA ¡Qué disparate tan grande!

DON FERNANDO Yo de disparates vivo.

OROPESA Éste es don Fernando, cierto, 830  
el que yo tanto alabé,  
y ni viene preso o muerto,  
ni cómo viene no sé,  
ni atino su desconcierto.  
El callar será acertado, 835  
hasta hablalle en apartado,  
que me admira su venida.

ALIMUZEL ¿Seréis, Arlaxa, servida  
de que os sirva este soldado?  
Que si ayer fue el primer día 840  
que salió de Orán, dirá  
si hice lo que debía;  
que yo entiendo que sabrá  
mi valor o cobardía.  
Dime: ¿oíste un desafío 845  
que hizo un moro vacío  
de ventura y de fe lleno?

DON FERNANDO Y fue tenido por bueno,  
bien criado y de gran brío.  
El retado no salió, 850  
que lo estorbó el general  
por cierta ley que halló;  
pero después, por su mal,  
que vino al campo sé yo,

pensando de hallar allí 855  
al valeroso Alí,  
porque salimos los dos:  
él a combatir con vos,  
yo para venir aquí,  
que ya os conozco en el talle. 860

ALIMUZEL Pues esto es verdad, señora,  
bien será que Nacor calle.

OROPESA ¡Oh! Si llegase la hora  
en que pudiese hablalle,  
¡qué de cosas le diría! 865

NACOR ¿No se vee tu cobardía,  
si el cristiano salió a verte,  
y tú quisiste volverte  
sin esperar más de un día?

ALIMUZEL Si tú no hicieras alarde 870  
de tu ingenio caviloso,  
yo volviera nunca o tarde.

NACOR Consejos de religioso  
presto los toma el cobarde.

ALIMUZEL Arlaxa, yo volveré, 875  
y a tu presencia traeré,  
o muerto o preso, al cristiano.

NACOR Ya tu vuelta será en vano.

ARLAXA No le quiero, déjale;  
que, pues a la voz primera 880  
no saltó de la muralla  
y empuñó la espada fiera,  
la fama que en él se halla  
no debe ser verdadera;  
y así, ya no quiero velle, 885  
aunque, si puedes traelle  
sin tu daño, darme has gusto.

DON FERNANDO Es don Fernando robusto  
y habrá que hacer en prendelle.  
Conózcole como a mí, 890  
y sé que es de condición  
que sabrá volver por sí,  
y aun buscará la ocasión  
para responder a Alí.

ARLAXA ¿Es valiente?

DON FERNANDO Como yo. 895

ARLAXA ¿De buen rostro?

DON FERNANDO A queso no,  
porque me parece mucho.

ALIMUZEL ¡Todo esto con rabia escucho!

ARLAXA ¿Tiene amor?

DON FERNANDO Ya le dejó.

ARLAXA ¿Luego túvole?

DON FERNANDO Sí creo. 900

ARLAXA ¿Será mudable?

DON FERNANDO No es fuerza  
que sea eterno un deseo.

ARLAXA ¿Tiene brío?

DON FERNANDO Y tiene fuerza.

ARLAXA ¿Es galán?

DON FERNANDO De buen aseo.

ARLAXA ¿Raja y hiende?

DON FERNANDO Tronca y parte. 905

ARLAXA ¿Es diestro?

DON FERNANDO Como otro Marte.

ARLAXA¿Atrevido?

DON FERNANDOEs un león.

ARLAXAPartes todas éstas son,  
cristiano, para adorarle,  
a ser moro.

ALIMUZELCalla, Arlaxa, 910  
pues tienes aquí delante  
quien por tu gusto trabaja.

ARLAXAGusto yo de un arrogante  
que bravea, hiende y raja.  
Vuelve, Alí, por el cristiano; 915  
que te doy mi fe y mi mano,  
si le traes, de ser tu esposa.

DON FERNANDOTú le mandas una cosa  
donde ha de sudar en vano.

NACOR ¡Soberbios sois los cristianos! 920

DON FERNANDOEslo, al menos, quien se alaba.

ALIMUZELAquí hay quien con ufanos  
bríos quitará la clava  
a Hércules de las manos;  
aquí hay quien, a pesar 925  
de quien lo quiera estorbar,  
Arlaxa, hará lo que mandas.

DON FERNANDO A veces se mandan mandas  
que nunca se piensan dar,  
y a las veces las promete 930  
quien no las quiere cumplir  
ni puede.

NACOR ¿Quién te mete  
a ti en eso?

DON FERNANDO Sé decir  
que en parte a mí me compete;  
que es don Fernando mi amigo, 935  
y soy cierto y buen testigo  
del mucho valor que encierra.

ALIMUZEL Traen los casos de la guerra  
diversos fines consigo.  
El valiente y fanfarrón 940  
tal vez se ha visto vencido  
del flaco de corazón;  
que Alá da ayuda al partido  
que defiende la razón.

DON FERNANDO Pues, ¿qué razón lleva en éste 945  
Alí?

OROPESA Tú harás que te cueste  
la vida tu lengua necia.

ALIMUZEL Si al que ama el Amor precia,  
su santo favor me preste;

que, sin razón y con él, 950  
a don Fernando el valiente  
vencerá el flaco Muzel.

ARLAXA;Qué plática impertinente!

ALIMUZEL;Qué corazón tan crüel!

ARLAXA Quede el cristiano conmigo; 955  
Alá vaya, Alí, contigo  
y con Nacor.

NACORÉl te guarde.

ARLAXAVolvedme a ver esta tarde.

*(Éntranse todos, sino DON FERNANDO y OROPESA.)*

OROPESA;Hola, soldado! ¿A quién digo?  
¿Qué noramala, señor, 960  
os ha traído a este puesto  
tan contrario a vuestro honor?

DON FERNANDOEn buena te diré presto  
de mi fortuna el rigor:

«No quiso el general mío 965  
que saliese al desafío  
que me hizo aqueste moro.  
Yo, por guardar el decoro  
que corresponde a mi brío,  
me descolgué por el muro, 970



y, cuando pensé hallar  
lo que aun agora procuro,  
un escuadrón vino a dar  
conmigo, estando seguro.

Era la noche cerrada, 975  
y, como vi defraudada  
mi esperanza tan del todo,  
con el tiempo me acomodo.  
Mentí; rendíles la espada;  
díjeles que mi intención 980  
era venir a ponerme  
de grado en su sujeción,  
y que quisiesen traerme  
a reconocer patrón.

Dijéronme que este Alí 985  
era su señor, y así,  
vine sin fuerza y forzado.»  
De todo cuenta te he dado;  
no hay más que saber de mí.

Calla mi nombre, que veo 990  
que aquesta mora hermosa  
tiene de verme deseo.

OROPESA De tu fama valerosa  
que está enamorada creo.

No te des a conocer, 995  
que deseos de mujer  
se mudan a cada paso.

DON FERNANDO Vuelve Muzel; habla paso.

OROPESA No sé qué pueda querer.

(*Entra ALIMUZEL.*)

ALIMUZEL    Oropesa, escucha y calla, 1000  
y guárdame aquel secreto  
que en tu discreción se halla,  
que a tu bondad le prometo  
con la mía de premialla.

Yo te daré libertad, 1005  
y a ti, si tu voluntad  
fuere de volverte a Orán,  
mis designios te darán  
honrosa comodidad.

Sólo os pido, en cambio desto, 1010  
que me descubráis un modo  
tan honroso y tan compuesto  
que en las partes y en el todo  
eche de hidalguía el resto,

el cual me vaya mostrando 1015  
en qué parte, cómo o cuándo,  
ya en el campo o estacada,  
pueda yo medir mi espada  
con la del bravo Fernando.

Quizá está en su vencimiento, 1020  
como Arlaxa significa,  
de mi bien el cumplimiento,  
si ya mi esperanza rica  
no la empobrece su intento;

que debe de ser doblado, 1025  
pues de lo que me ha mandado  
todo se puede temer,  
y no hay bien que venga a ser  
seguro en el desdichado.

DON FERNANDO    Yo te daré a tu enemigo 1030  
a toda tu voluntad,  
como estoy aquí contigo,  
sin usar de deslealtad,  
que nunca albergó conmigo.

ALIMUZEL No es enemigo el cristiano; 1035  
contrario, sí; que el lozano  
deseo de Arlaxa bella  
presta para esta querella  
la voz, el intento y mano.

DON FERNANDO Presto te pondré con él, 1040  
y fía aquesto de mí,  
comedido Alimuzel;  
y aun pienso hacer por ti  
lo que un amigo fiel,  
    porque la ley que divide 1045  
nuestra amistad no me impide  
de mostrar hidalgo el pecho;  
antes, con lo que es bien hecho  
se acomoda, ajusta y mide.  
    Ve en paz, que yo pensaré 1050  
el tiempo que más convenga  
para hacer lo que haré.

ALIMUZEL Mahoma sobre ti venga,  
y lo que puede te dé.

*(Vase.)*

DON FERNANDO ¡Gentil carga!

OROPESAY gentil presa. 1055

DON FERNANDO ¿Pesa mucho?

OROPESAY Poco pesa,

que está en fuego convertida.

DON FERNANDO Mira que importa la vida  
tener secreto, Oropesa.

*(Vanse, y salen riñendo el capitán GUZMÁN con el alférez ROBLEDOS.)*

GUZMÁN Señor alférez Robledo, 1060  
póngase luego entredicho  
a esa plática.

ROBLEDOS No puedo;  
que, lo que sin miedo he dicho,  
no lo desdigo por miedo.

O él se fue a renegar, 1065  
o hizo mal en dejar  
su presidio en tiempos tales.

GUZMÁN De los hombres principales  
no se debe así hablar.

El renegar no es posible, 1070  
y si en ello os afirmáis,  
mentís.

*(Metén mano.)*

ROBLEDOS ¡Oh trance terrible!

GUZMÁN Agora sí que os halláis  
en más dudoso imposible  
si queréis satisfaceros. 1075

*(Entra el CONDE DE ALCAUDETE y DON MARTÍN DE CÓRDOBA, acompañados.)*

CONDE; Paso! ¡Teneos, caballeros!  
¿Por qué ha sido la pendencia?

GUZMÁN; Más agudo es de conciencia  
este hidalgo que de aceros!

Ha afirmado que se es ido 1080  
a renegar don Fernando,  
y, ¡vive Dios!, que ha mentido,  
y mentirá cada y cuando  
lo diga.

CONDE; Descomedido!  
Llévenle luego a una torre. 1085

GUZMÁN; Ni me afrenta ni me corre  
este agravio, porque nace  
de la justicia que hace  
al que su amigo socorre.

CONDE Vaya el alférez, también, 1090  
y mientras que el cerco pasa  
hagan treguas.

ROBLEDO Hazme un bien:  
que sea la torre mi casa.

DON MARTÍN; Sí, porque juntos no estén.

*(Llevan al alférez.)*

UNO Señor, la guarda ha descubierto agora 1095  
un bajel por la banda de Poniente.

DON MARTÍN¿Qué vela trae?

UNOEntiendo que latina.

CONDEVamos a recibirle a la marina.

FIN DEL PRIMER ACTO

## Segunda jornada

Los que hablan en ella son:

ARLAXA.

DON FERNANDO.

OROPESA.

NACOR.

VOZMEDIANO, *anciano*.

DOÑA MARGARITA, *doncella, en hábito de hombre*.

BUITRAGO.

DON MARTÍN.

EL CONDE.

GUZMÁN, *el capitán*.

ALIMUZEL.

BAIRÁN, *renegado*.

UN MORO.

*Salen* ARLAXA, DON FERNANDO y OROPESA.

ARLAXA    ¿Cómo te llamas, cristiano,  
que tu nombre aún no he sabido?

DON FERNANDO Es mi nombre Juan Lozano;  
nombre que es bien conocido  
por el distrito africano. 5

ARLAXA    Nunca le he oído decir.

DON FERNANDO Pues él suele competir  
con el del bravo Fernando.

ARLAXA ¡Mucho te vas alabando!

DON FERNANDO Alá bome sin mentir. 10

ARLAXA    Pues, ¿qué hazañas has tú hecho?

DON FERNANDO He hecho las mismas que él,  
con el mismo esfuerzo y pecho,  
y ya me he visto con él  
en más de un marcial estrecho. 15



ARLAXA ¿Es tu amigo?

DON FERNANDO Es otro yo.

ARLAXA ¿Por ventura, di, salió  
a combatir con mi moro?

DON FERNANDO Siempre de bravo el decoro  
en todo trance guardó. 20

ARLAXA Dese modo, Alí es cobarde.

DON FERNANDO Eso no; que pudo ser  
salir don Fernando tarde,  
cuando no pudiese hacer  
Alí de su esfuerzo alarde. 25

Y imagino que este moro  
jarife, no con decoro  
de amigo, a Muzel da culpa.

ARLAXA De su esfuerzo y de su culpa  
toda la verdad ignoro. 30

DON FERNANDO Haz cuenta que te trae preso  
a Fernando tu Muzel;  
¿qué piensas hacer por eso?

ARLAXA Estimaré mucho en él  
de su esfuerzo el grande exceso. 35  
Tendré en menos al cristiano,

cuyo nombre sobrehumano  
me incita y mueve el deseo  
de velle.

OROPESA Pues yo le veo  
en sólo ver a Lozano. 40

ARLAXA ¿Que tanto se le parece?

OROPESA Yo no sé qué diferencia  
entre los dos se me ofrece;  
ésta es su misma presencia,  
y el brazo que le engrandece. 45

ARLAXA ¿Qué hazañas ha hecho ese hombre  
para alcanzar tan gran nombre  
como tiene?

OROPESA Escucha una  
de su esfuerzo y su fortuna,  
que podrá ser que te asombre: 50

«Dio fondo en una caleta  
de Argel una galeota,  
casi de Orán cinco millas,  
poblada de turcos toda.

Dieron las guardas aviso 55  
al general, y, con tropa  
de hasta trecientos soldados,  
se fue a requerir la costa.

Estaba el bajel tan junto  
de tierra, que se le antoja 60  
dar sobre él: ved qué batalla  
tan nueva y tan peligrosa.

Dispararon los soldados

con priesa una vez y otra;  
tanto, que dejan los turcos 65  
casi la cubierta sola.  
No hay ganchos para acercar  
a tierra la galeota,  
pero el bravo don Fernando  
ligero a la mar se arroja. 70  
Ase recio de gúmena,  
que ya el turco apriesa corta,  
porque no le dan lugar  
de que el áncora recoja.  
Tiró hacia sí con tal fuerza, 75  
que, cual si fuera una góndola,  
hizo que el bajel besase  
el arena con la popa.  
Salió a tierra y della un salto  
dio al bajel, cosa espantosa, 80  
que piensa el turco que el cielo  
cristianos llueve, y se asombra.  
Reconocido su miedo,  
don Fernando, con voz ronca  
de la cólera y trabajo, 85  
grita: "¡Vitoria, vitoria!"  
La voz da al viento, y la mano  
a la espada vitoriosa,  
con que matando y hiriendo  
corrió de la popa a proa.» 90  
Él solo rindió el bajel;  
mira, Arlaxa, si ésta es obra  
para que la fama diga  
los bienes que dél pregona.  
Probado han bien sus aceros 95  
los lindos de Meliona,  
los elches de Tremecén  
y los leventes de Bona.  
Cien moros ha muerto en trances,  
siete en estacada sola, 100  
docientos sirven al remo,  
ciento tiene en las mazmorras.

Es muy humilde en la paz,  
y en la guerra no hay persona  
que le iguale, ya cristiana, 105  
o ya que sirva a Mahoma.

ARLAXA ¡Oh, qué famoso español!

OROPESAHércules, Héctor, Roldán  
se hicieron en su crisol.

ARLAXAMEJOR no le ha visto Orán. 110

OROPESANI tal no le ha visto el sol.

*(Entra NACOR.)*

ARLAXA Aqueste Nacor me enfada;  
no me dejéis sola.

OROPESAHonrada  
te le muestra y comedida.

DON FERNANDODA a sus razones salida: 115  
que espere, y no espere en nada.

NACOR Hermosa Arlaxa, yo estoy  
resuelto en traerte preso  
al cristiano: y así, voy  
a Orán luego.

ARLAXABuen suceso 120  
y agüero espero y te doy,  
    porque irás en gracia mía,  
y en verte tomó alegría  
desusada el corazón.

NACORTienes, Arlaxa, razón; 125  
que yo la tendré algún día  
    de rogarte que me quieras.

ARLAXADéjate agora de burlas,  
pues partes a tantas veras.

DON FERNANDOHará Nacor, si no burlas, 130  
sus palabras verdaderas;  
    que amante favorecido  
es un león atrevido,  
y romperá, por su dama,  
por la muerte y por la llama 135  
del fuego más encendido.

OROPESA Concluyeras tú esta empresa  
harto mejor que no él.

DON FERNANDOCalla y escucha, Oropesa.

NACORYa en este caso, Muzel 140  
por vencido se confiesa,  
    pues no hace diligencia  
por traer a tu presencia  
el que yo te traeré presto.

ARLAXA Pártete, Nacor, con esto, 145  
que gusto y te doy licencia.

NACOR Dame las manos, señora,  
por el favor con que animas  
al alma que más te adora.

ARLAXA En poco, Nacor, te estimas, 150  
pues te humillas tanto agora.  
Eres jarife; levanta,  
que verte a mis pies me espanta.  
¿Qué dirá desto Mahoma?

NACOR Estos rendimientos toma 155  
él por cosa buena y santa.  
Queda en paz.

*(Vase NACOR.)*

ARLAXA Vayas con ella,  
que con el fin deste trance  
le tendrá el de tu querella.

DON FERNANDO ¡Echado ha el moro buen lance! 160

OROPESA Ella es falsa cuanto es bella.

ARLAXA Venid, que habemos de ir  
los tres a ver combatir  
a mis amantes valientes.

OROPESA Si nos vieren ir las gentes, 165  
tarde nos verán venir.

*(Vanse y sale VOZMEDIANO, anciano, y DOÑA MARGARITA, en hábito de hombre.)*

VOZMEDIANO ¿Priesa por llegar a Orán,  
y priesa por salir dél?  
¡Muy bien nuestras cosas van!

MARGARITA Préciase Amor de crüel, 170  
y tras uno da otro afán.

VOZMEDIANO Ya os he dicho, Margarita,  
que su daño solicita  
quien camina tras un ciego.

MARGARITA Ayo y señor, yo no niego 175  
que esa razón es bendita;  
pero, ¿qué puedo hacer,  
si he echado la capa al toro  
y no la puedo coger?

VOZMEDIANO Menos te la podrá un moro, 180  
si bien lo miras, volver.

MARGARITA ¿Que sea moro don Fernando?

VOZMEDIANO Así lo van pregonando  
los niños por la ciudad.

MARGARITA ¡Que haya hecho tal maldad! 185  
¡De cólera estoy rabiando!  
No lo creo, Vozmediano.

VOZMEDIANO Haces bien; pero yo veo  
que ni moro ni cristiano  
parece.

MARGARITA Verle deseo. 190

VOZMEDIANO Siempre tu deseo es vano.

MARGARITA Quiérello así mi ventura,  
pero no será tan dura  
que no dé fin a mis penas  
con darme en estas arenas 195  
berberisca sepultura.

VOZMEDIANO No dirás, señora, al menos,  
que no te he dado consejos  
de bondad y de honor llenos.

MARGARITA Los prudentes y los viejos 200  
siempre dan consejos buenos:  
pero no vee su bondad  
la loca y temprana edad,  
que en sí misma se embaraza,  
ni cosa prudente traza 205  
fuera de su voluntad.

*(Entra BUITRAGO con la demanda.)*



BUITRAGO Vuestras mercedes me den  
para las ánimas luego,  
que les estará muy bien.

MARGARITA Si ellas arden en mi fuego. 210

VOZMEDIANO Pasito, Anastasio, ten:  
no digas alguna cosa  
malsonante, aunque curiosa.

MARGARITA Váyase, señor soldado,  
que no tenemos trocado. 215

BUITRAGO ¡La respuesta está donosa!  
Denme, ¡pese a mis pecados!  
(*Aparte.*

¡Siempre yo de aquesta guisa  
medro con almidonados!)  
Denme, que vengo deprisa, 220  
y ellos están muy pausados.  
¡Oh, qué novatos que están  
de lo que se usa en Orán  
en esto de las demandas!  
Descoja sus manos blandas 225  
y dé limosna, galán.  
¿Qué me mira? Acabe ya:  
eche mano, y no a la espada  
que su tiempo se vendrá.

VOZMEDIANO La limosna que es rogada 230  
más fácilmente se da  
que la que se pide a fuerza.

BUITRAGO Úsase en aquesta fuerza  
de Orán pedirse deste arte;  
que son las almas de Marte, 235  
y piden siempre con fuerza.

Nadie muere aquí en el lecho,  
a almidones y almendradas,  
a pistos y purgas hecho;  
aquí se muere a estocadas 240  
y a balazos roto el pecho.

Bajan las almas feroces,  
tan furibundas y atroces,  
que piden que acá se pida  
para su pena afligida 245  
a cuchilladas y a voces.

En fin: las almas de Orán,  
que tienen comedimiento,  
aunque en purgatorio están,  
dicen que vuelva en sustento 250  
la limosna que me dan.

A la parte voy con ellas,  
remediando sus querellas  
a fuerza de avemarías,  
y mis hambrientas porfías 255  
con lo que me dan para ellas.

VOZMEDIANO Hermano, yo no os entiendo,  
y no hay limosna que os dar.

BUITRAGO ¡De gana me voy riendo!  
¿Y adónde se vino a hallar 260  
el parentesco tremendo?  
¿Hace burla en ver el traje,  
entre pícaro y salvaje?  
Pues sepa que este sayal  
tiene encubierto algún al 265

que puede honrar un linaje.

El conde es éste, ¡qué pieza!;  
que, cuando me da, le dan  
mil vaguidos de cabeza.  
Pobretas almas de Orán, 270  
que estáis en vuestra estrechez,  
rogad a Dios que me den,  
porque si yo como bien,  
rezaré más de un rosario,  
y os haré un aniversario 275  
por siempre jamás. Amén.

*(Entra el CONDE, DON MARTÍN, el capitán GUZMÁN y NACOR.)*

NACOR Digo, señor, que entregaré sin duda  
la presa que he contado fácilmente  
en el silencio de la noche muda  
con muy poquito número de gente; 280  
y, porque al hecho la verdad acuda,  
las manos a un cordel daré obediente;  
dejaréme llevar, siendo yo guía  
que os muestre el aduar antes del día.

Y sólo quiero desta rica presa, 285  
por quien mi industria y mi traición trabaja,  
un cuerpo que a mi alma tiene presa:  
quiero a la bella sin igual Arlaxa.  
Por ella tengo tan infame empresa  
por ilustre, por grande, y no por baja: 290  
que, por reinar y por amor no hay culpa  
que no tenga perdón y halle disculpa.

No siento ni descubro otro camino,  
para ser posesor de aquesta mora,  
que hacer este amoroso desatino, 295  
puesto que en él crueldad y traición mora.  
Ámola por la fuerza del destino,  
y, aunque mi alma su beldad adora,  
quíerola cautivar para soltalla,

por si puedo moverla o obligalla. 300

CONDE No estamos en sazón que nos permita  
sacar de Orán un mínimo soldado;  
que el cerco que se espera solicita  
que ponga en otras cosas mi cuidado.

NACOR La vitoria en la palma traigo escrita; 305  
en breves horas te daré acabado,  
sin peligro, el negocio que he propuesto;  
si presto vamos, volveremos presto.

CONDE Esta tarde os daré, Nacor, respuesta;  
esperad hasta entonces.

NACOR Soy contento. 310

*(Vase NACOR.)*

DON MARTÍN Empresa rica y sin peligro es ésta,  
si cierta fuese.

GUZMÁN Yo por tal la cuento:  
hace la lengua al alma manifiesta.  
Declarado ha Nacor su pensamiento  
con tal demostración, con tal afecto, 315  
que, si vamos, el saco me prometo.

DON MARTÍN Cubre el traidor sus malas intenciones  
con rostro grave y ademán sincero,  
y adorna su traición con las razones  
de que se precia un pecho verdadero. 320

De un Sinón aprendieron mil Sinones,  
y así, el que es general, al blando o fiero  
razonar del contrario no se rinde,  
sin que primero la intención deslinde.

CONDE Hermano, así se hará; no tengáis miedo 325  
que yo me arroje o precipite en nada.  
¿Hicistes ya las treguas con Robledo,  
y queda ante escribano confirmada?

DON MARTÍN Gran cólera tenéis, Guzmán.

GUZMÁN No puedo  
tenerla en la ocasión más enfrenada. 330

CONDE Podréis darle la rienda entre enemigos,  
y es prudencia cogerla con amigos.  
Pues, Buitrago, ¿qué hacemos?

BUITRAGO Aquí asisto,  
procurando sacar de aqueste esparto  
jugo de algún *plus ultra*, y no le he visto 335  
siquiera de una tarja ni de un cuarto.  
Así guardan la ley de Jesucristo  
aquéstos como yo cuando estoy harto,  
que no me acuerdo si hay cielo ni tierra;  
sólo a mi vientre acudo y a la guerra. 340

MARGARITA Pide limosna en modo este soldado,  
que parece que grita o que reniega,  
y yo estoy en España acostumbrado  
a darla a quien por Dios la pide y ruega.

BUITRAGO Quiérosela pedir arrodillado; 345  
veré si la concede o si la niega.

VOZMEDIANONi tanto, ni tan poco.

BUITRAGO Soy cristiano.

MARGARITA ¿Ya no le han dicho que no hay blanca, hermano?

BUITRAGO ¿Hermano? ¡Lleve el diablo el parentesco  
y el ladrón que le halló la vez primera! 350  
Descosa, pese al mundo, ese griguesco,  
desgarre esa olorosa faltriquera.  
De aquestas pinturitas a lo fresco,  
¿qué se puede esperar?

VOZMEDIANO Ésa es manera  
de hacer sacar la espada y no el dinero. 355

CONDE ¡Paso, Buitrago!

MARGARITA ¡A fe de caballero!

DON MARTÍN No os enfadéis, galán, que deste modo  
se pide la limosna en esta tierra;  
todo es aquí braveza, es aquí todo  
rigor y duros términos de guerra. 360

BUITRAGO Y yo, que a lo de Marte me acomodo,  
y a lo de Dios es Cristo, doy por tierra

con todo el bodegón, si con floreos  
responden a mis gustos y deseos.

DON MARTÍN En fin, ¿que aqueste galán 365  
es de Jerez?

VOZMEDIANOY de nombre,  
de los buenos que allí están,  
y hijo, señor, de un hombre  
que en Francia fue capitán.  
Quedó rico y con hacienda; 370  
dejómele a mí por prenda  
mi hermana, que fue su madre,  
y yo quise que del padre  
siguiese la honrada senda.

Supe el cerco que se espera, 375  
y con su gusto le truje,  
que sin él no le trajera,  
y a esta dura le reduje  
de su vida placentera;  
que, en los grados de alabanza, 380  
aunque pervierta la usanza  
el adulator liviano,  
no alcanza un gran cortesano  
lo que un buen soldado alcanza.

CONDE Así es verdad, y agradezco 385  
venida de tales dos,  
y a servírosla me ofrezco.

BUITRAGO;Que no me darán por Dios  
lo que por mí no merezco!  
¡Voto a Cristóbal del Pino, 390  
que si una vez me amohíno,  
que han de ver quién es Callejas!

Busquen alivio a sus quejas,  
almas, por otro camino.

    Buscaréle yo también 395  
para mi hambre insolente,  
o me den, o no me den;  
que nunca muere un valiente  
de hambre.

DON MARTÍN Dices muy bien.

BUITRAGO No digo sino muy mal. 400  
¿Es eso por escusarse  
de no sacar un real?

CONDE Vamos, que ya de enojarse  
Buitrago nos da señal,  
y no quiero que lo esté. 405

*(Vanse el CONDE y DON MARTÍN.)*

BUITRAGO Con aqueso comeré.  
¡No fuera yo motilón,  
o mozo de bodegón,  
y no soldado!

MARGARITA ¿Por qué?

BUITRAGO Yo me entiendo, so galán; 410  
vaya y guarde su dinero.  
¡Adiós, mi señor Guzmán!

GUZMÁN No, no; convidaros quiero;



¡por vida del capitán!,  
venid, Buitrago, conmigo. 415

BITRAGOEn seguirte sé que sigo  
a un Alejandro y a un Marte.

*(Vanse el CAPITÁN y BITRAGO.)*

MARGARITASEñor, llégate a esta parte,  
que tengo que hablar contigo.  
Resuelta estoy.

VOZMEDIANOEn tu daño. 420

MARGARITANo me atajes; déjame  
relatar mi mal extraño.

VOZMEDIANO¿Ya no sabes que lo sé,  
por mi mal más ha de un año?

MARGARITA Dime, señor: ¿tú no sientes 425  
que con nuevos accidentes  
cada día amor me embiste?

VOZMEDIANOY sé que no los resiste  
tu alma, pues los consientes.

MARGARITA Déjate de aconsejarme, 430  
y dame ayuda, si quieres;  
que lo demás es matarme.

VOZMEDIANO Por quien soy y por quien eres,  
siempre te oiré sin cansarme,  
y siempre te ayudaré, 435  
porque a ello me obligué  
cuando de venir contigo  
como ayo y como amigo  
te di la palabra y fe.  
Di, en fin, ¿qué piensas hacer? 440

MARGARITA Yo, por soldado a esta empresa,  
con extraño parecer,  
pues procuraré ser presa,  
puesto que vaya a prender.  
Procuraré ser cautiva; 445  
que de la dura y esquiva  
tormenta que siente el alma,  
el sosiego, gusto y palma,  
en disparates estriba.  
Sabré ser cautiva de quien 450  
me cautivó sin sabello,  
pensando de hacerme bien;  
daré al moro perro el cuello  
porque a mi alma me den.  
Que no es posible sea moro 455  
quien guardó tanto el decoro  
de cristiano caballero;  
y si fuere esclavo, quiero  
dar por él mil montes de oro.  
De que los halle no dude 460  
nadie: que el cielo al deseo  
del aflicto siempre acude.

VOZMEDIANO El gran Dios dese deseo  
impertinente te mude.

MARGARITA ¿Habrá más de rescatarme, 465

dando tiempo al informarme  
de lo que voy a saber?  
Que en el mal de irme a perder  
consiste el bien de ganarme.

Venid, señor Vozmediano; 470  
negociaréis mi salida  
con el escuadrón cristiano.

VOZMEDIANO¿Dónde quieres ir, perdida?

MARGARITA aconsejarme es en vano.

VOZMEDIANO Yo haré con su señoría 475  
que se oponga a tu partida.

MARGARITA Si esto me impedís, señor,  
haré otro yerro mayor,  
con que lloréis más de un día.

Echada está ya la suerte; 480  
yo he de seguir mi destino,  
aunque me lleve a la muerte.

VOZMEDIANO Del amor el desatino  
cualquier bien en mal convierte.

¡En mal punto me encargué 485  
de ti! ¡En mal punto dejé  
la patria por tus antojos!

MARGARITA Tal vez, tras nubes de enojos,  
de esperanza el sol se vee.

*(Vanse, y salen ARLAXA, ALIMUZEL, OROPESA y DON FERNANDO.)*

ARLAXA ¿Adónde está Alimuzel? 490  
Oropesa, ¿dó te has ido?  
Y mi Lozano, ¿qué es dél?  
¡Cielo, escucha mi gemido;  
no te me muestres crüel!

ALIMUZEL Bella Arlaxa, aquí me tienes. 495

ARLAXA Amigo, a buen tiempo vienes.

OROPESA ¿Qué es lo que mandas, señora?

ARLAXA Vengas, amigo, en buen hora.  
Lozano, ¿en qué te detienes?

DON FERNANDO Aquí estoy, señora mía. 500  
¿Qué me mandas? Dilo, acaba.

ARLAXA ¡Desdichada dicha mía!

ALIMUZEL ¿Qué has, Arlaxa?

ARLAXA Yo soñaba  
que esta noche, al alba fría,  
daban sobre este aduar 505  
cristianos, y, a mi pesar,  
Nacor me llevaba presa,  
y desperté con la presa  
del asalto y del gritar;

y he venido a socorrerme 510  
de vosotros con el miedo  
que el sueño pudo ponerme,  
y, aunque os veo, apenas puedo  
sosegar me ni valerme.

Tengo a Nacor por traidor, 515  
y no me deja el temor  
fiar de vuestra lealtad.

ALIMUZEL No son los sueños verdad;  
no tengas miedo, mi amor;  
y si lo son, juzga y piensa 520  
que a tu lado hallarás  
quien no consienta tu ofensa.

ARLAXA Contra el hado es por demás  
que valga humana defensa.

DON FERNANDO No te congojes, señora, 525  
que si llegare la hora  
de verte en aque se aprieto,  
librarte dél te prometo  
por el Dios que mi alma adora.

Si no quedase cristiano 530  
en Orán, y aquí viniese  
tan arrojado y ufano  
que la vitoria tuviese  
tan cierta como en la mano,  
será esta mía bastante 535  
para que el más arrogante  
vuelva humilde y sin despojos.  
Tiemple aquesto tus enojos,  
no pase el miedo adelante,  
que haré más de lo que digo; 540  
y de que prometo poco,

mis obras serán testigo.

OROPESAO está don Fernando loco,  
o es ya de Cristo enemigo.

    Pelear contra cristianos 545  
promete. Venid, hermanos,  
que yo, con mejor conciencia,  
pasaré la diligencia  
a los pies, y no a las manos.

DON FERNANDO   Alí, dame tú una espada 550  
y un turbante, con que pueda  
la cabeza estar guardada.

OROPESASeñora, ¿dónde se queda  
tu condición arrojada?

    Agora verás hender, 555  
herir, matar y romper.  
Deja venir al cristiano.

ARLAXAEs accidental y vano  
tal deseo en la mujer,  
    y fácilmente se trueca; 560  
y, antes que la espada, agora  
tomaría ver la rueca.

ALIMUZEEl que te ofende, señora,  
contra todo el mundo peca.

    Ven, cristiano, a tomar armas. 565

OROPESAMira contra quién te armas,  
Lozano.

DON FERNANDO;Calla, Oropesa!

OROPESAEn armarte a tal empresa,  
de tu valor te desarmas.

*(Éntranse todos.)*

*(Salen NACOR, atadas las manos atrás con un cordel, y tráenle BUITRAGO, el capitán GUZMÁN, MARGARITA y otros soldados con sus arcabuces.)*

NACOR Valeroso Guzmán, éste es, sin duda, 570  
el vendido aduar, el paraíso  
do está la gloria que mi alma busca.  
Con la caballería, como es uso,  
le puedes coronar a la redonda,  
porque apenas se escape un solo moro. 575

GUZMÁNNo tengo tanta gente para tanto.

NACORCerca, pues, por lo menos, esta parte,  
que responde derecha a una montaña  
que está cerca de aquí, donde, sin duda,  
harán designio de acogerse cuantos 580  
sobresaltados fueren esta noche.

GUZMÁNDices muy bien.

NACORPues manda que me suelten,  
porque vaya a buscar el grande premio  
que pide la amorosa traición mía.

BUITRAGO Eso no, ¡vive Dios!, hasta que vea 585  
cómo se entabla el juego, ¡so Mahoma!  
Estése atraillado como galgo,  
porque hasta ver las liebres no le suelto.

NACOR Señor Guzmán, agravio se me hace.

GUZMÁN Buitrago, suéltale, y a Dios; y embiste. 590

BUITRAGO Contra mi voluntad le suelto. Vaya.

NACOR Venid, que yo pondré la gente en orden,  
de modo que no haya algún desorden.

*(Vanse, y queda sola MARGARITA.)*

MARGARITA ¡Pobre de mí! ¿Dónde quedo?

¿Adónde me trae la suerte, 595  
confusa y llena de miedo?

¿Qué cosa haré con que acierte,  
si ninguna cosa puedo?

¡Oh amoroso desvarío,  
que ciegas el albedrío 600  
y la razón tienes presa!

¿Qué sacaré desta empresa,  
de quién temo y de quién fío?

Soy mariposa inocente  
que, despreciando el sosiego, 605  
simple y presurosamente  
me voy entregando al fuego  
de la llama más ardiente.

Estos pasos son testigos  
que huyo de los amigos, 610  
y, llena de ceguedad,



de mi propia voluntad  
me entrego a los enemigos.

*(Suena dentro: «¡Arma, arma! ¡Santiago, cierra, cierra España, España!». Salga al teatro NACOR, abrazado con ARLAXA, y, a su encuentro, BUITRAGO.)*

BUITRAGO; Por aqueste portillo se desagua  
el aduar! ¡Soldados, aquí, amigos! 615  
¡Tente, perro cargado; tente, galgo!

NACOR; Amigo soy, señor.

BUITRAGO; No es éste tiempo  
para estas amistades! ¡Tente, perro!

NACOR; Muerto soy, por Alá!

BUITRAGO; Por San Benito,  
que he pasado a Nacor de parte a parte, 620  
y que ésta debe ser su amada ingrata!

ARLAXA; Cristiano, yo me rindo; no ensangrientes  
tu espada en mujeril sangre mezquina.  
Llévame do quisieres.

*(Sale ALÍ.)*

ALIMUZEL; La voz oigo  
de Arlaxa bella, que socorro pide. 625  
¡Ah perro, suelta!

BUITRAGO; Suéltala tú, podenco sin provecho!  
¿No hay quien me ayude aquí?

ARLAXA Mientras pelean  
aquestos dos, podrá ser escaparme,  
si acaso acierto de tomar la parte 630  
que lleva a la montaña.

MARGARITA Si me guías,  
seré tu esclavo, tu defensa y guarda  
hasta ponerte en ella. Ven, señora.

*(Vase ARLAXA y MARGARITA. Sale DON FERNANDO y GUZMÁN.)*

BUITRAGO ¡Ánimas de purgatorio,  
favorecedme, señoras, 635  
que mi peligro es notorio,  
si ya no estáis a estas horas  
durmiendo en el dormitorio!  
De vuestro divino aliento  
con mayor fuerza me siento. 640  
¡Perro, el huir no te cale!  
¡Ahora verán si vale  
Buitrago por más de ciento!

*(Éntrase ALÍ, y BUITRAGO tras él.)*

GUZMÁN ¡O eres diablo, o no eres hombre!  
¿Quién te dio tal fuerza, perro? 645

DON FERNANDO No os admire ni os asombre,

Guzmán, que haga este yerro  
quien respeta vuestro nombre.

GUZMÁN ¿Sois, a dicha, don Fernando?

DON FERNANDO El mismo que estáis mirando, 650  
aunque no me veis, amigo.

GUZMÁN ¿Sois ya de Cristo enemigo?

DON FERNANDO Ni de veras, ni burlando.

GUZMÁN Pues, ¿cómo sacas la espada  
contra Él?

DON FERNANDO Vendrá sazón 655  
más llana y acomodada,  
en que te dé relación  
de mi pretensión honrada.  
Cristiano soy, no lo dudes.

GUZMÁN ¿Por qué a defender acudes 660  
este aduar?

DON FERNANDO Porque encierra  
la paz que causa esta guerra,  
la salud de mis saludes.  
Dos prendas has de dejar,  
y carga, amigo, con todo 665  
cuanto hay en este aduar.

GUZMÁNA tu gusto me acomodo,  
no quiero más preguntar;  
    pero, porque no se diga  
que tengo contigo liga, 670  
tú, pues bastas, lo defiende.

*(Vase GUZMÁN, y vuelve BUITRAGO y ALIMUZEL.)*

BUITRAGOEn vano, moro, pretende  
tu miedo que no te siga,  
    que tengo para ofenderte  
dos manos y dos mil almas, 675  
que a mis pies han de ponerte.

DON FERNANDOOtros despojos y palmas  
puedes, amigo, ofrecerte,  
    que éste no.

ALIMUZELDeja, Lozano,  
que este valiente cristiano 680  
en grande aprieto me ha puesto.

DON FERNANDOVE tú a socorrer el resto,  
y éste déjale en mi mano,  
    que yo daré cuenta dél.

*(ARLAXA, dentro.)*

ARLAXA¡Lozano, que voy cautiva! 685  
¡Que voy cautiva, Muzel!

ALIMUZEL;Fortuna, a mi suerte esquivada,  
cielo envidioso y cruel,  
ejecutad vuestra rabia  
en mi vida, si os agravia; 690  
dejad libre la de aquella,  
que os podéis honrar con ella  
por hermosa, honesta y sabia!

*(Sale ARLAXA, defendiéndola MARGARITA del capitán GUZMÁN y de otros tres soldados.)*

DON FERNANDO ¡Todos sois pocos soldados!

GUZMÁNÉsta es la mora en quien tiene 695  
don Fernando sus cuidados;  
dejársela me conviene.

*(Vase.)*

BUITRAGOAquí hay moros encantados  
o cristianos fementidos,  
que ha llegado a mis oídos, 700  
creo, el nombre de Lozano.

DON FERNANDOVuestro trabajo es en vano,  
cristianos mal advertidos,  
que esta mora no ha de ir presa;  
entrad en el aduar, 705  
y hallaréis más rica presa.

BUITRAGO;Désta irás a señalar,  
perro, el tanto de tu fuesa!

ALIMUZEL    ¡Muerto soy; Alá me ayude!

ARLAXA ¡Acude, Lozano, acude,    710  
que han muerto a tu grande amigo!

*(Cae ALÍ dentro, y éntrase ARLAXA tras él.)*

DON FERNANDO Vengaréle en su enemigo,  
aunque de intención me mude.  
    ¡No te retires, aguarda!

BUITRAGO ¿Yo retirar? ¡Bueno es eso!    715  
Si tuviera una alabarda,  
le partiera hasta el güeso.  
¡Oh, cómo el perro se guarda!

DON FERNANDO    Éste que va a dar el pago  
de tus bravatas, Buitrago,    720  
mejor cristiano es que tú.

BUITRAGO ¡Que te valga Bercebú,  
y a mí Dios y Santiago!  
    Di quién eres, que, sonando  
el eco, me trae con miedo    725  
la habla de don Fernando.

DON FERNANDO El mismo soy.

BUITRAGO ¡Oh Robledo,

verdadero y memorando,  
y cuánta verdad dijiste!  
Sin razón le desmentiste, 730  
Guzmán atrevido y fuerte.  
Yo quiero huir de la muerte  
que en esas manos asiste.

DON FERNANDO ¿Cómo, di, tú no peleas,  
te retiras o te vas, 735  
antes que tu prisión veas?

MARGARITA ¡Estraños consejos das  
a quien la muerte deseas!  
Mas no puedo retirarme  
ni pelear, y he de darme 740  
de cansado a moras manos,  
que se van ya los cristianos,  
y tú no querrás dejarme.

*(Dentro, diga GUZMÁN:)*

GUZMÁN ¡Al retirar, cristianos! ¡Toca, Robles!  
¡A retirar, a retirar, amigos! 745  
No se quede ninguno, y los cansados  
a las ancas los suban los jinetes,  
y en la mitad del escuadrón recojan  
la presa. ¡Al retirar, que viene el día!

DON FERNANDO Yo te pondré en las ancas de un caballo 750  
de los tuyos, amigo; no desmayes.

MARGARITA Mayor merced me harás si aquí me dejas.

DON FERNANDO¿Quieres quedar cautivo por tu gusto?

MARGARITAQuizá mi libertad consiste en eso.

DON FERNANDO¿Hay otros don Fernandos en el mundo? 755  
Demos lugar que los cristianos pasen;  
retiraos a esta parte.

MARGARITAYo no puedo.

DON FERNANDODadme la mano, pues.

MARGARITADe buena gana.

DON FERNANDO¡Jesús, y qué desmayo!

MARGARITAGentilhombre,  
¿lleváisme a los cristianos, o a los moros? 760

DON FERNANDO A los moros os llevo.

MARGARITANo querría  
que fuésedes cristiano y me engañásedes.

DON FERNANDOCristiano soy; pero, ¡por Dios!, que os llevo  
a entregar a los moros.

MARGARITA¡Dios lo haga!



DON FERNANDO De novedades anda el mundo lleno. 765  
¿Estáis herido acaso?

MARGARITA No estoy bueno.

*(Vanse.)*

*(Sale OROPESA, cargado de despojos.)*

OROPESA No, sino estaos atendido  
a los consejos de un loco,  
enamorado y perdido.

Mucho llevo en esto poco; 770  
voy libre y enriquecido.

Ya en mi libertad contemplo  
un nuevo y extraño ejemplo  
de los casos de fortuna,  
y adornarán la columna 775  
mis cadenas de algún templo.

*(Salen el CONDE y DON MARTÍN y BAIRÁN, el renegado.)*

BAIRÁN Digo, señor, que la venida es cierta,  
y que este mar verás y esta ribera,  
él de bajeles lleno, ella cubierta  
de gente innumerable y vocinglera. 780

De Barbarroja el hijo se conierta  
con Alabez y el Cuco, de manera  
que en su favor más moros dan y ofrecen  
que en clara noche estrellas se parecen.

Los turcos son seis mil, y los leventes 785  
siete mil, toda gente vencedora;

veinte y seis las galeras, suficientes  
a traer municiones de hora en hora.  
Andan en pareceres diferentes  
sobre cuál destas plazas se mejora 790  
en fortaleza y sitio, y creo se ordena  
de dar a San Miguel la buena estrena.

Esto es, señor, lo que hay del campo moro,  
y en Argel el armada queda a punto,  
y Azán, el rey, guardando su decoro, 795  
que es diligente, la traerá aquí al punto.

CONDEDe sus designios poco o nada ignoro,  
mas, por tu relación cuerda, barrunto  
que a San Miguel el bárbaro amenaza,  
como más flaca, aunque importante plaza. 800

Pero, puesto le tengo en tal reparo,  
tales soldados dentro dél he puesto,  
que al bárbaro el ganarle será caro,  
muy más que en su designio trae propuesto.  
Idos a reposar, mi amigo caro, 805  
y el agradecimiento y paga desto  
esperadla de mí, con la ventaja  
que aquel merece que cual vos trabaja.

*(Vase BAIRÁN.)*

¿No tarda ya Guzmán?

DON MARTÍNLas centinelas  
le han descubierto ya.

CONDEVenga en buen hora. 810

DON MARTÍN Su premio habrá Nacor de sus cautelas

cobrado, su adorada ingrata mora.  
¡Amor, como otro Marte nos desvelas;  
furia y rigor en tus entrañas mora;  
hasta las religiosas almas dañas, 815  
y fundas en traiciones tus hazañas!

*(Entra el capitán GUZMÁN, OROPESA, BUITRAGO, VOZMEDIANO y otros soldados.)*

GUZMÁN Tus manos pido, y de las mías toma,  
o, por mejor decir, de tus soldados,  
amorosos despojos de Mahoma.

Volvemos, como fuimos, alentados, 820  
mejorados en honra y buena fama,  
y en ropa y en esclavos mejorados.

Nacor no trae a su hermosa dama;  
que Buitrago apagó con fuerte acero  
del moro infame la amorosa llama. 825

BUITRAGO Paséle, por la fe de caballero,  
por entrambas ijadas, ignorando  
que fuese el que el aviso dio primero;  
y si no lo estorbara don Fernando,  
diera con más de dos patas arriba, 830  
que con él se me fueron escapando.

CONDE ¿Que, en fin, se volvió moro?

OROPESA No se escriba,  
se diga o piense tal de quien su intento  
en ser honrado y valeroso estriba.

Yo sé de don Fernando el pensamiento, 835  
y sé que presto volverá a servirte  
con las veras que ofrece su ardimiento.

GUZMÁN Que él es cristiano sé, señor, decirte;  
que él se nombró conmigo combatiendo.

DON MARTÍN ¿Y procuraba, por ventura, herirte? 840

GUZMÁN Con tiento pareció que iba esgrimiendo,  
y palabras me dijo en el combate  
por quien fui sus designios conociendo.

DON MARTÍN Deste caso, señores, no se trate;  
ya, por lo menos, ha caído en culpa, 845  
y no hay disculpa a tanto disparate.

CONDE Salió sin mi licencia: ya le culpa,  
y más el escalar de la muralla,  
insulto que jamás tendrá disculpa.

GUZMÁN Precipitóle honor: vistió la malla 850  
por conservar su crédito famoso;  
huyóle el moro; fue a buscar batalla.

DON MARTÍN ¡Por cierto, oh buen Guzmán, que estáis donoso!  
Pues, ¿cómo no se ha vuelto, o cómo muestra  
contra cristianos ánimo brioso? 855

OROPESA Él dará presto de su intento muestra,  
sacando, en gloria de la ley cristiana,  
a luz la fuerza de su honrada diestra.

CONDE Venid; repartiré de buena gana

lo que deste despojo a todos toca; 860  
que el gusto crece lo que así se gana.

*(Vanse, y queda BUITRAGO y VOZMEDIANO.)*

VOZMEDIANO ¡Válgame Dios, si se quedó la loca,  
si se quedó la sin ventura y triste,  
que así su suerte y su valor apoca!

Dime, señor, si por ventura viste 865  
aquel soldado que partió conmigo  
cuando a la empresa do has venido fuiste;  
aquel bisoño manicorto, digo,  
que no te quiso dar limosna un día,  
y habrá hasta seis que vino aquí conmigo. 870

BUITRAGO ¿No es aquel del entono y bazarria,  
de las plumas volantes y del rizo,  
que me habló con remoques y acedías?

VOZMEDIANO Aque se mismo.

BUITRAGO No sé qué se hizo.

*(Vase.)*

VOZMEDIANO ¿Adónde estarás agora, 875  
moza por tus pies llevada  
do toda miseria mora,  
de mandar a ser mandada,  
esclava de ser señora?

¿Que es posible que un deseo 880  
incite a tal devaneo?  
Y éste es, en fin, de tal ser,

que no lo puedo creer,  
y con los ojos lo veo.

*Vase.*

*(Sale ARLAXA, DON FERNANDO y MARGARITA.)*

DON FERNANDO    Para ser mozo y galán    885  
y al parecer bien nacido,  
muchos desmayos os dan:  
señal de que habéis comido  
mucho liebre y poco pan.

    Quien se rinde a su enemigo,    890  
en sí presenta testigo  
de que es cobarde.

MARGARITA    Es verdad,  
pero trae mi poca edad  
grande disculpa consigo.

    El que mis cuitas no siente,    895  
hará de mi miedo alarde,  
pero yo sé claramente  
que hice más en ser cobarde  
que no hiciera en ser valiente.

    ¡Desdichada de la vida    900  
a términos reducida  
que busca con ceguedad  
en la prisión libertad  
y a lo imposible salida!

ARLAXA    ¿Qué sabes si este soldado,    905  
cual tú, tiene aquella queja  
de valiente mal pagado?

DON FERNANDO Fácil conocer se deja  
que le aflige otro cuidado;

que sus años, cual él muestra, 910  
no habrán podido dar muestra,  
por ser pocos, de los hechos  
que, por ser mal satisfechos,  
muestran voluntad siniestra.

Y el ofrecerle caballo 915  
para que volviese a Orán,  
y el no querer acetallo,  
unas sospechas me dan  
que por su honra las callo.

Quizá la vida le enfada 920  
soldadesca y desgarrada,  
y como el vicio le doma,  
viene tras la de Mahoma,  
que es más ancha y regalada.

MARGARITA En mi edad, aunque está en flor, 925  
he alcanzado y conocido  
que no hay mal de tal rigor  
que llegue al verse ofendido,  
el que es honrado, en su honor.

Y más si culpa no tiene; 930  
que cuando la infamia viene  
a quien la busca y procura,  
es menor la desventura  
que la deshonra contiene.

Y así, me será forzoso 935  
para huir la infamia y mengua  
de mal cristiano y medroso,  
que os descubra aquí mi lengua  
lo que apenas pensar oso.

Si gustáis de estarme atentos, 940  
veréis que paran los vientos  
su veloz curso a escucharme,  
y veréis que fue el quedarme  
honra de mis pensamientos.

(Entra ALIMUZEL.)

ALIMUZEL El remedio que aplicaste, 945  
bella Arlaxa, de tu mano,  
fue tal, que en él te mostraste  
ser un ángel soberano  
que a la vida me tornaste.

Conságotela dos veces: 950  
una porque la mereces,  
y la otra te consagro  
por el extraño milagro  
con que tu fama engrandesces.

ARLAXA Sosiégate y no me alabes, 955  
que el médico ha sido Alá  
de tus heridas tan graves.  
Comienza, cristiano, ya  
la historia que alegre acabes.

MARGARITA Sí haré; más tú verás, 960  
en el cuento que me oirás,  
que no dan los duros hados  
a principios desdichados  
alegres fines jamás.

«Nací en un lugar famoso, 965  
de los mejores de España,  
de padres que fueron ricos  
y de antigua y noble casta;  
los cuales, como prudentes,  
apenas mi edad temprana 970  
dio muestras de entendimiento,  
cuando me encierran y guardan  
en un santo monesterio  
de la virgen Santa Clara;



¡que soy mujer sin ventura, 975  
que soy mujer desdichada!»

ARLAXA¡Santo Alá! ¿Qué es lo que dices?

MARGARITA¿Desto poquito te espantas?

Ten silencio, hermosa mora,  
hasta el fin de mis desgracias; 980  
que, aunque ellas jamás le tengan,  
yo me animaré a contallas,  
si es posible, en breve espacio  
y con sucintas palabras.  
«No me encerraron mis padres 985  
sino para la crianza,  
y fue su intención que fuese,  
no monja, sino casada.  
Faltáronme antes de tiempo;  
que la inexorable Parca 990  
cortó el hilo de sus vidas  
para añadirle a mis ansias.  
Quedé con sólo un hermano,  
de condición tan bizarra,  
que parece que en él solo 995  
hizo asiento la arrogancia.  
Llegó la edad de casarme;  
hiciéronle mil demandas  
de mí; no acudió a ninguna,  
fundándose en leves causas; 1000  
y, entre los que me pidieron,  
fue uno que con la espada  
satisfizo a la respuesta,  
según se la dieron mala.»

*(Suenan dentro atambores.)*

ALIMUZELEscucha, que oigo clarines, 1005

oigo trompetas y cajas;  
algún escuadrón es éste  
de turcos que hacia Orán marcha.

*(Entra uno.)*

MOROSi lo que dejó el cristiano  
no quieres, hermosa Arlaxa, 1010  
no lo acaben de talar  
diez escuadrones que pasan,  
ven, señora, a defenderlo;  
que con tu presencia, Arlaxa,  
pararás al sol su curso 1015  
y suspenderás las armas.

ALIMUZELBien dice, señora; vamos,  
que lugar habrá mañana  
para oír si aquesta historia  
en fin triste o alegre acaba. 1020

ARLAXAVamos, pues; y vos, hermosa  
y lastimada cristiana,  
no os pene si a vuestras penas  
el oíllas se dilata.

*(Vanse ARLAXA y ALÍ tras ella, y MARGARITA a lo último, y DON FERNANDO, tras ella, y dicen antes:)*

MARGARITAComo no tengo, señora, 1025  
ningún alivio en contarlas,  
tengo a ventura el estorbo  
que de tal silencio es causa.

DON FERNANDO; Válgame Dios, qué sospechas  
me van encendiendo el alma! 1030  
Muchas cosas imagino,  
y todas me sobresaltan.  
Desesperado esperando  
he de estar hasta mañana,  
o hasta el punto que el fin sepa 1035  
de la historia comenzada.

FIN DEL SEGUNDO ACTO

## Tercera jornada

Los que hablan en ella son:

ARLAXA.

MARGARITA.

VOZMEDIANO.

DON FERNANDO DE SAAVEDRA.

GUZMÁN.

BUITRAGO.

EL CONDE DE ALCAUDETE.

DON MARTÍN.

DON JUAN DE VALDERRAMA.

ALIMUZEL.

ROAMA, *moro*.

AZÁN, *rey de Argel.*

EL REY DEL CUCO.

EL REY DE ALABEZ.

Y acompañamiento.

*Salen los Reyes del CUCO y ALABEZ, DON FERNANDO, de moro;  
ALIMUZEL, ARLAXA y MARGARITA.*

CUCO    Hermosísima Arlaxa: tu belleza  
puede volver del mismo Marte airado  
en mansedumbre su mayor braveza,  
y dar leyes al mundo alborotado.

ALABEZPuedes, con tu estremada gentileza, 5  
suspender los extremos del cuidado  
que amor pone en el alma que cautiva,  
y hacer que en gloria sosegada viva.

CUCO    Puede la luz desos serenos ojos  
prestarla al sol, y hacerle más hermoso; 10  
puede colmar el carro de despojos  
del dios antojadizo y riguroso.

ALABEZPuede templar la ira, los enojos  
del amante olvidado y del celoso;  
puedes, en fin, parar, sin duda alguna, 15  
el curso volador de la Fortuna.

ARLAXA Nace de vuestra rara cortesía  
la sin par que me dais dulce alabanza,  
porque no llega la bajeza mía  
adonde su pequeña parte alcanza. 20  
Tendré por felicísimo este día,  
pues en él toma fuerzas mi esperanza  
de ver mis aduares mejorados,  
viendo a sus robadores castigados.

Cien canastos de pan blanco apurado, 25  
con treinta orzas de miel aún no tocada,  
y del menudo y más gordo ganado  
casi os ofrezco entera una manada;  
dulce lebení en zaques encerrado,  
agrio yagurt. Y todo aquesto es nada 30  
si mi deseo no tomáis en cuenta,  
que en su virtud la dádiva se aumenta.

CUCO Admitimos tu oferta, y prometemos  
de vengarte de aquel que te ha ofendido;  
que, en fe de haberte visto, bien podemos 35  
mostrar el corazón algo atrevido.

ALABEZ Arlaxa, queda en paz, porque tenemos  
el tiempo limitado y encogido.

ARLAXA Viváis alegres siglos y infinitos,  
reyes del Cuco y Alabez invites. 40

*(Vanse los Reyes.)*

Vuelve a seguir tu comenzada historia,  
cristiana, sin que dejes cosa alguna  
que puedas reducir a la memoria

de tu adversa o tu próspera fortuna.

MARGARITA Pasadas penas en presente gloria 45

el contarlas la lengua no repugna;  
mas si el mal está en ser que se padece,  
al contarle, la lengua se enmudece.

«Quedé, si mal no me acuerdo,  
en una mala respuesta 50

que dio mi bizarro hermano  
a un caballero de prendas,  
el cual, por satisfacerse,  
muy malherido le deja.

Ausentóse y fuese a Italia, 55  
según después tuve nuevas.

Tardó mi hermano en sanar  
mucho tiempo, y no se acuerda  
en mucho más de su hermana,  
como si ya muerta fuera. 60

Vi que volaban los tiempos,  
y que encerraban las rejas  
el cuerpo, mas no el deseo,  
que es libre y muy mal se encierra.

Vi que mi hermano aspiraba, 65  
codicioso de mi hacienda,  
a dejarme entre paredes,  
medio viva y medio muerta.

Quise casarme yo misma;  
mas no supe en qué manera 70  
ni con quién; que pocos años  
en pocos casos aciertan.

Dejóme un viejo mi padre,  
hidalgo y de intención buena,  
con el cual me aconsejase 75  
en mis burlas y en mis veras.

Comuniquéle mi intento;  
respondióme que él quisiera  
que el caballero que tuvo  
con mi hermano la pendencia, 80

fuera aquel que me alcanzara  
por su legítima prenda,  
porque eran tales las tuyas,  
que por extremo se cuentan.  
Pintómele tan galán, 85  
tan gallardo en paz y en guerra,  
que en relación vi a un Adonis,  
y a otro Marte vi en la Tierra.  
Dijo que su discreción  
igualaba con sus fuerzas, 90  
puesto que valiente y sabio  
pocas veces se conciertan.  
Estaba yo a sus loores  
tan descuidada y atenta,  
que tomó el pincel la fama, 95  
y en el alma las asienta;  
y amor, que por los oídos  
pocas veces dicen que entra,  
se entró entonces hasta el alma  
con blanda y honrada fuerza; 100  
y fue de tanta eficacia  
la relación verdadera,  
que adoré lo que los ojos  
no vieron ni ver esperan;  
que, rendida a la inclemencia 105  
de un antojo honrado y simple,  
mudé traje y mudé tierra.  
A mi sabio consejero  
fuerzo a que conmigo venga;  
que ánimo determinado, 110  
de imposibles no hace cuenta.»

ARLAXA No te suspendas; prosigue  
tu bien comenzado cuento,  
que ninguna cosa siento  
en él que a gusto no obligue, 115  
y aun a pesar.



DON FERNANDO *Aparte.*

Y es de modo,  
según que voy discurriendo,  
que al alma va suspendiendo  
con la parte y con el todo.

MARGARITA «Enamorada de oídas 120  
del caballero que dije,  
me salí del monesterio,  
y en traje de hombre vestíme.  
Dejé el hermano y la patria,  
y, entre alegre y entre triste, 125  
con mi consejero anciano  
a la bella Italia vine.  
De la mitad de mi alma,  
para que yo más le estime,  
supe allí que en estacada 130  
venció a tres, y quedó libre,  
y que la parlera fama,  
que más de lo que oye dice,  
le trujo a encerrar a Orán,  
que espera el cerco terrible. 135  
En alas de mi deseo,  
desde Nápoles partíme;  
llegué a Orán, facilitando  
cualquier dudoso imposible,  
y, apenas pisé su arena, 140  
cuando alborotada fuime  
a saber, sin preguntallo,  
de quien me tiene tan triste.  
Dél supe, y pluguiera al cielo,  
que consuela a los que aflige, 145  
que nunca yo lo supiera.»

DON FERNANDO Di presto lo que supiste.

MARGARITA «Supe que a volverse moro,  
cosa, a pensarla, imposible,  
dejó los muros de Orán, 150  
y que en vuestra secta vive.  
Yo, por no vivir muriendo  
entre sospechas tan tristes,  
a trueco de ser cautiva,  
todo el hecho saber quise; 155  
y así, arrojada y ansiosa,  
entre los cristianos vine,  
de quien fue Nacor la guía,  
que los trujo a lo que vistes.  
Ya me quedé, y soy cautiva, 160  
y ya os pregunto si vistes  
a este cristiano que busco,  
o a este moro que acogistes.  
Llamábase don Fernando  
de Saavedra, de insignes 165  
costumbres y claro nombre,  
como su fama lo dice.  
Por él y por mi rescate,  
si dél sabéis, se apercibe  
mi lengua a ofreceros tanto, 170  
que pase de lo posible.»  
Ésta es mi historia, señores;  
nunca alegre, siempre triste;  
si os he cansado en contalla,  
lo que me mandastes hice. 175

ARLAXA Cristiana, de tu dolor  
casi siento la mitad;  
que tal vez curiosidad  
fatiga como el amor.

Y al que te enciende en la llama 180  
de amor con tantos extremos,

como tú, le conocemos  
solamente por la fama.

ALIMUZEL ¿Debajo de cuál estrella  
ese cristiano ha nacido, 185  
que aun de quien no es conocido  
los deseos atropella?

Ese amigo por quien lloras,  
y en quien pones tus tesoros,  
las vidas quita a los moros, 190  
y las almas a las moras.

DON FERNANDO Que no es moro está en razón;  
que no muda un bien nacido,  
por más que se vea ofendido,  
por otra su religión. 195

Puede ser que a ese español,  
que agora tanto se encubre,  
alguna causa le encubre,  
como alguna nube al sol.

Mas dime: ¿quién te asegura 200  
que, después de haberle visto,  
quede en tu pecho bienquisto?  
Que engendra amor la hermosura,  
y si él carece della,  
como imagino y aun creo, 205  
faltando causa, el deseo  
faltará, faltando en ella.

MARGARITA La fama de su cordura  
y valor es la que ha hecho  
la herida dentro del pecho: 210  
no del rostro la hermosura;  
que ésa es prenda que la quita  
el tiempo breve y ligero,

flor que se muestra en enero,  
que a la sombra se marchita. 215

Ansí que, aunque en él hallase  
no el rostro y la lozanía  
que pinté en mi fantasía,  
no hay pensar que no le amase.

DON FERNANDO Con esa seguridad, 220  
presto me ofrezco mostrarte  
al que puede asegurarte  
el gusto y la libertad.

Muda ese traje indecente,  
que en parte tu ser desdora, 225  
y vístete en el de mora,  
que la ocasión lo consiente;

y con Arlaxa y Muzel  
los muros de Orán veremos,  
donde, sin duda, hallaremos 230  
tu piadoso o tu crüel;

que no es posible dejar  
de hallarse en aquesta guerra,  
si no le ha hundido la tierra  
o le ha sorbido la mar. 235

Alimuzel, no te tardes;  
ven, y mira que es razón;  
que en semejante ocasión  
no es bien parecer cobarde.

ALIMUZEL Haz cuenta que a punto estoy. 240

ARLAXAA mí nada me detiene.

MARGARITAYa veis si a mí me conviene  
seguiros.

DON FERNANDO Pues pase hoy;  
y mañana, cuando dan  
las aves el alborada, 245  
demos a nuestra jornada  
principio y al fin de Orán.  
¿Queda así?

ALIMUZEL No hay que dudar.

ARLAXA ¿Cómo te llamas, señora?

MARGARITA Margarita; mar do moran 250  
gustos que me han de amargar.

ARLAXA Ven, que el amor favorece  
siempre a honestos pensamientos.

DON FERNANDO ¿Qué atropellados contentos  
la ventura aquí me ofrece! 255

*(Éntranse todos.)*

*(Sale BUITRAGO, solo, a la muralla.)*

BUITRAGO ¡Arma, arma, señor, con toda priesa!;  
porque en el charco azul columbro y veo  
pintados leños de una armada gruesa  
hacer un medio círculo y rodeo;  
el viento el remo impele, el lienzo atesa; 260  
el mar tranquilo ayuda a su deseo.  
Arma, pues, que en un vuelo se avecina,  
y viene a tomar tierra a la marina.

*(A la muralla, el CONDE y GUZMÁN.)*

CONDE Turcos cubren el mar, moros la tierra;  
don Fernando de Cárcamo al momento 265  
a San Miguel defienda, y a la guerra  
se dé principio con furor sangriento.  
Mi hermano, que en Almarza ya se encierra,  
mostrará de quién es el bravo intento;  
que este perro, que nunca otra vez ladre, 270  
es el que en Mostagán mordió a su padre.

GUZMÁN Mal puedes defenderle la ribera.

CONDE No hay para qué, si todo el campo cubre  
del Cuco y Alabez la gente fiera,  
tanta, que hace horizonte lo que encubre, 275  
y los que van poblando la ladera  
de aquel cerro empinado que descubre  
y mira esento nuestros prados secos,  
son los moros de Fez y de Marruecos.

Coronen las murallas los soldados, 280  
y reitérese el arma en toda parte;  
estén los artilleros alistados,  
y usen certeros de su industria y arte;  
los a cosas diversas diputados  
acudan a su oficio, y dese a Marte 285  
el que a Venus se daba, y haga cosas  
que sean increíbles de espantosas.

*(Éntrese de la muralla el CONDE y GUZMÁN.)*

BUITRAGO Ánimas, si queréis que al ejercicio  
vuelva de mis plegarias y rosario,

pedid que me haga el cielo beneficio 290  
que siquiera no falte el ordinario;  
que, aunque de Marte el trabajoso oficio  
en mi estómago pide extraordinario,  
con diez hogazas que me envíe, sienta  
que a seis bravos soldados alimenta. 295

*(Éntranse, y suenan chirimías y cajas.)*

*(Entra AZÁN BAJÁ y BAIRÁN con el REY DEL CUCO y el ALABEZ.)*

BAIRÁN Don Francisco, el hermano del valiente  
don Juan, que naufragó en la Herradura,  
apercibe gran número de gente,  
y socorrer a esta ciudad procura.  
Don Álvaro Bazán, otro excelente 300  
caballero famoso y de ventura,  
tiene cuatro galeras a su cargo,  
y éste ha de ser de tu designio embargo.

AZÁN Su arena piso ya; de Orán colijo  
no aquella lozanía que dijiste: 305  
sólo por tocar arma ya me aflijo,  
y ver quién será aquel que me resiste.

ALABEZ Quien al padre venció vencerá al hijo.  
No hay que esperar, ¡oh grande Azán!, embiste;  
que el tiempo que te tardas, ése quitas 310  
a tus vitorias raras e infinitas.

*(Entren a esta sazón ARLAXA y MARGARITA, en hábito de moro; DON FERNANDO como moro, y ALIMUZEL.)*

CUCO Tienes presente, ¡oh rey Azán!, la gloria  
de la África y la flor de Berbería;  
un ángel es que anuncia tu vitoria,  
que el cielo, donde él vive, te le envía. 315

AZÁN Tendré yo para siempre en la memoria  
esta merced, ¡oh gran señora mía!,  
bella y sin par Arlaxa, en cuanto el cielo  
pudo de bien comunicar al suelo.  
¿Qué buscas entre el áspero ruido 320  
del cóncavo metal, que, el aire hiriendo,  
no ha de llevar a tu sabroso oído  
de Apolo el son, mas el de Marte horrendo?

ARLAXA El tantarán del atabal herido,  
el bullicio de guerra y el estruendo 325  
de gruesa y disparada artillería  
es para mí suave melodía.  
Cuanto más, que yo vengo a ser testigo  
de tus raras hazañas y excelentes,  
y a servirte estos dos truje conmigo, 330  
que cuanto son gallardos son valientes.

AZÁN De agradecer tanta merced me obligo  
cuando corran los tiempos diferentes  
de aquéstos, porque el fruto de la guerra  
en la paz felicísima se encierra. 335

*(Entra ROAMA, moro, con un cristiano galán atadas las manos.)*

ROAMA El bergantín que de la Vez se llama  
cautivaron anoche tus fragatas;  
y éste, que es un don Juan de Valderrama,  
venía en él.



AZÁN¿Por qué no le desatas?

*(Como entra el cautivo, se cubre MARGARITA el rostro con un velo.)*

ALABEZ¿Cómo sabes su nombre tú, Roama? 340

ROAMAÉl me lo ha dicho así.

AZÁN Pues mal le tratas;  
si es caballero, suéltale las manos.

DON JUAN¿Qué es lo que veo, cielos soberanos?

*(Mira a DON FERNANDO.)*

AZÁN ¿De qué tierra eres, cristiano?

DON JUANDe Jerez de la Frontera. 345

AZÁN¿Eres hidalgo o villano?

ALABEZ Vestir de aquella manera  
los villanos no es muy llano.

DON JUAN Caballero soy.

AZÁN ¿Y rico?

DON JUANEso no; pues que me aplico 350  
a ser soldado, señal  
que de bienes me va mal;  
y esto os juro y certifico.

ALABEZ De cristianos juramentos  
está preñada la tierra, 355  
lleno el mar, densos los vientos.

AZÁN ¿Y venías...?

DON JUANA la guerra.

AZÁN ¡Honrados son tus intentos!

MARGARITA ¡Éste es mi hermano, señora!

ARLAXADisimula como mora, 360  
y cúbrete el rostro más.

CUCO ¡Buena guerra agora harás!

DON JUAN ¿Y cómo la hago agora?

AZÁN ¿Qué nuevas hay en España?

DON JUAN No más de la desta guerra, 365  
y que ya estás en campaña.

AZÁN Dirán que mi intento yerra  
en emprender tal hazaña;  
el socorro aprestarán,  
el mundo amenazarán, 370  
y, estándole amenazando,  
llegarán a tiempo cuando  
yo esté en sosiego en Orán.

Preséntote este cristiano,  
Arlaxa, como en indicio 375  
de lo que en servirte gano;  
y acepta el primer servicio  
que recibes de mi mano;  
que otros pienso de hacerte  
con que mejores la suerte 380  
de tu aduar saqueado.

ARLAXA Tenga el grande Alá cuidado,  
grande Azán, de engrandecerte.

AZÁN Vamos, que Marte nos llama  
a ejercitar el rigor 385  
que enciende tu ardiente llama.

ARLAXA Mahoma te dé favor  
que aumente tu buena fama.  
Ven, cristiano, y darme has cuenta  
de quién eres.

*(Éntranse todos, excepto DON JUAN y DON FERNANDO.)*

DON JUAN;No consienta 390  
el cielo que éste sea aquel  
que, enamorado y crüel,  
pudo hacerme honrada afrenta!

DON FERNANDO Escucha, cristiano, espera.

DON JUANYa espero, ya escucho, y veo 395  
lo que nunca ver quisiera,  
si me pinta aquí el deseo  
esta visión verdadera.

DON FERNANDO ¿Qué murmuras entre dientes?

DON JUAN¿Qué me quieres?

DON FERNANDOQue me cuentes 400  
quién eres.

DON JUANPues, ¿qué te importa?

DON FERNANDOHacer tu desgracia corta.

DON JUAN *Aparte.*

¡Podrá ser que me la aumentes!  
Muestran que no es opinión  
los sobresaltos que paso, 405  
mas cosa puesta en razón,

que, sin duda, hace caso  
tal vez la imaginación,  
pues pienso que estoy mirando  
el rostro de don Fernando, 410  
su habla, su talle y brío;  
pero que esto es desvarío  
su traje me va mostrando.

DON FERNANDO ¿Todo ha de ser murmurar,  
cristiano?

DON JUAN Perdon, moro, 415  
que no me dejan guardar  
el cortesano decoro  
las ansias de mi pesar.  
Y más, que tú me enmudeces;  
porque tanto te pareces 420  
a un cristiano, que me admiro,  
que le veo si te miro,  
y él mismo en ti mismo ofreces.

DON FERNANDO En Orán hay un cristiano  
que dicen que me parece 425  
como esta mano a esta mano,  
y que si acaso se ofrece  
vestir hábito africano,  
ningún moro hay que le vea  
que no diga que yo sea, 430  
y juzgue con evidencia  
que sólo nos diferencia  
su vestido y mi librea.  
No le he visto y voy trazando  
verle, que verle deseo, 435  
ya en paz, o ya peleando.

DON JUAN¿Cómo se llama?

DON FERNANDOYo creo  
que se llama don Fernando,  
y tiene por sobrenombre  
Saavedra.

DON JUANÉse es el hombre 440  
por quien con mil males lucho.

DON FERNANDODesa manera, no es mucho  
que mi presencia te asombre.

*(Entra ROAMA, el moro.)*

ROAMA Arlaxa y Fátima están  
esperándote, cautivo. 445

DON FERNANDOVE en paz; que, rendido Orán,  
si el otro yo queda vivo,  
tendrá remedio tu afán.

DON JUAN Estimo tu buen deseo;  
mas, con todo aquesto, creo...; 450  
pero no, no creo nada;  
que es cosa desvariada  
dar crédito a lo que veo.

*(Éntrase DON JUAN y ROAMA.)*

DON FERNANDOEntre sospechas y antojos,

y en gran confusión metido, 455  
va don Juan lleno de enojos,  
pues le estorba este vestido  
no dar crédito a sus ojos.

No se puede persuadir  
que yo pudiese venir 460  
a ser moro y renegar;  
y así, se deja llevar  
de lo que quise fingir.

Su confesión está llana,  
y más lo estará si mira 465  
y si conoce a su hermana;  
que entonces no habrá mentira  
que no se tenga por vana.

Pregunto: ¿en qué ha de parar  
este mi disimular, 470  
y este vestirme de moro?  
En que guardaré el decoro  
con que más me pueda honrar.

*(Éntrase.)*

*(Tócase arma; salen a la muralla el CONDE y GUZMÁN, y al teatro, AZÁN,  
el CUOCO y ALABEZ.)*

CONDE Veinte asaltos creo que son  
los que han dado a San Miguel, 475  
y éste, según es crüel,  
me muestra su perdición.

No podrá más don Fernando  
de Cárcamo.

GUZMÁN No, sin duda;  
mas, si no se le da ayuda, 480  
su fin le está amenazando.

Fuerza que no se socorre,

haz cuenta que está rendida.

AZÁN San Miguel va de vencida,  
que gran morisma allá corre. 485

*(Suena mucha vocería de «¡Li, li, li!» y atambores; sale ROAMA.)*

ROAMA San Miguel se ha entrado ya,  
y, sobre el muro español,  
son tus medias lunas sol,  
el más bello que hizo Alá.  
Fuéronse a Mazalquivir 490  
algunos que se escaparon.

AZÁN Algún tanto dilataron  
esos perros el vivir.

ALABEZ Desta huida no se arguye  
el refrán que el vulgo trata, 495  
que es hacer puente de plata  
al enemigo que huye.

CUCO Hoy de aquel gran capilludo  
las memorias quedarán  
enterradas con Orán, 500  
pues tú puedes más que él pudo.

AZÁN ¡Valeroso don Martín,  
que te precias de otro Marte,  
espera, que voy a darte,  
a tu usanza, un San Martín! 505



*(Éntranse todos.)*

*(Salen ARLAXA y MARGARITA, cubierto el rostro con un velo, y DON JUAN, como cautivo.)*

DON JUAN Ayer me entró por la vista  
cruda rabia a los sentidos,  
y hoy me entra por los oídos,  
sin haber quien la resista.

Ayer la suerte inhumana, 510  
a quien mil veces maldigo,  
me hizo ver mi enemigo,  
y hoy me hace oír mi hermana.

Quítate el velo, señora,  
y sacarme has de una duda 515  
por quien tiembla el alma y suda.

MARGARITA ¿Otra vez? No puedo agora.

DON JUAN ¡Ay Dios, que la voz es ésta  
de mi buscada enemiga!

MARGARITA Si el oírme te fatiga, 520  
jamás te daré respuesta.

DON JUAN No me tengas más suspenso;  
descúbrete, que me das,  
mientras que cubierta estás,  
un dolor que llega a inmenso. 525

ARLAXA Fátima, por vida mía,  
que te descubras; veremos

por qué hace estos extremos  
este cristiano.

MARGARITA Sí haría,  
si no me importase mucho 530  
encubrirme desta suerte.

DON JUAN Los ecos son de mi muerte  
los que en esta voz escucho.

ARLAXA Descúbrete, no te asombres;  
que has de saber, si lo ignoras, 535  
que nunca para las moras  
los cristianos fueron hombres.  
Ya no es nadie el que es esclavo;  
no tienes que recelarte.

MARGARITA Yo daré, por contentarte, 540  
con mis designios al cabo.

ARLAXA *Aparte.*

Que te conozca, no importa;  
cuanto más, que has de negallo

MARGARITA *Aparte.*

Dudosa en todo me hallo.

ARLAXA *Aparte.*

Ten ánimo, no seas corta. 545

MARGARITA Descúbrome; vesme aquí,  
cristiano; mírame bien.

DON JUAN; Oh, el mismo rostro de quien  
aquí me tiene sin mí!

¡Oh hembra la más liviana 550  
que el sol ha visto jamás!  
¡Oh hermana de Satanás  
primero que no mi hermana!

Por ejemplos más de dos  
he visto puesto en efeto 555  
que, en perdiéndose el respeto  
al mundo, se pierde a Dios.

ARLAXA ¿Qué dices, perro?

DON JUANQue es ésta  
mi hermana.

ARLAXA¿Fátima?

DON JUANSí.

ARLAXA; En mi vida vi ni oí 560  
tan linda y graciosa fiesta!  
¡Tuya mi hermana! ¿Estás loco?  
Mírala bien.

DON JUAN Ya la miro.

ARLAXA ¿Qué dices, pues?

DON JUAN Que me admiro,  
y en el juicio me apoco. 565  
Por dicha, ¿hace Mahoma  
milagros?

ARLAXA Mil a montones.

DON JUAN ¿Y hace transformaciones?

ARLAXA Cuando voluntad le toma.

DON JUAN ¿Y suele mudar, tal vez, 570  
en mora alguna cristiana?

ARLAXA Sí.

DON JUAN Pues aquésta es mi hermana,  
y la tuya está en Jerez.

ARLAXA ¡Roama, Roama, ven!

*(Entra ROAMA.)*

ROAMA Señora; ¿qué es lo que mandas? 575

ARLAXA Que pongas las carnes blandas  
a este perro.

ROAMA Está bien.

*(Vuélvese.)*

ARLAXA Con un corbacho procura  
sacarle de la intención  
una cierta discreción 580  
que da indicios de locura.

MARGARITA De cualquiera maleficio,  
Arlaxa, que al hombre culpa,  
le viene a sobrar disculpa  
en la falta del juicio. 585  
No le castigues así  
por cosa que es tan liviana.

DON JUAN ¡Juro a Dios que eres mi hermana,  
o el diablo está hablando en ti!

*(Suena dentro asalto.)*

ARLAXA ¿No oyes, Fátima, que dan 590  
asalto a Mazalquivir,  
que hasta aquí se hace sentir  
en el conflicto en que están?  
Deja a ese perro, y acude,  
por si lo podremos ver. 595

*(Éntranse ARLAXA y MARGARITA.)*

MARGARITA Siempre te he de obedecer.

DON JUAN; Y quieren que desto dude!

Por ser grande la distancia  
que hay de mi hermana a ser mora,  
imagino que en mí mora 600  
gran cantidad de ignorancia.

Estraño es el devaneo  
con quien vengo a contender,  
pues no me deja creer  
lo que con los ojos veo. 605

*(Éntrase.)*

*(Salen a la muralla DON MARTÍN, el capitán GUZMÁN y BUITRAGO con una mochila a las espaldas y una bota de vino, comiendo un pedazo de pan.)*

DON MARTÍN ¡Gente soberbia y crüel,  
a quien ayuda la suerte,  
no penséis que es éste el fuerte  
tan flaco de San Miguel!

¡Bravo Guzmán, gran Buitrigo, 610  
hoy ha de ser vuestro día!

BUITRAGO *(Bebe.)*

Déjeme vueseñoría  
que me esfuerce con un trago.

¡Échenme destos alanos  
agora de dos en dos, 615  
porque yo les juro a Dios

que han de ver si tengo manos!

*(Salen al teatro AZÁN, el CUCO, el ALABEZ, DON FERNANDO y otros moros con escalas.)*

AZÁN Al embestir no se tarde;  
porque quiero estar presente,  
para honrar al que es valiente 620  
y dar infamia al cobarde.

Muzel, una escala toma,  
y muéstranos que te dan,  
como a melionés galán,  
manos las del gran Mahoma. 625

¡Ea; al embestir, amigos;  
amigos, al embestir;  
que hoy será Mazalquivir  
sepultura de enemigos!

*(Embisten; anda la grita; lleva MUZEL una escala; sube por ella, y otro moro por otra; deciende al moro BUITRAGO, y DON FERNANDO ase a MUZEL y derribale; pelea con otros, y mátalos. Todos han de caer dentro del vestuario. Desde un cabo mira AZÁN, el CUCO y el ALABEZ lo que pasa.)*

DON FERNANDO Ya no es tiempo de aguardar 630  
a designios prevenidos,  
viendo que están oprimidos  
los que yo debo ayudar.  
¡Baja, Muzel!

ALIMUZEL ¿Por ventura,  
quiéresme quitar la gloria 635  
desta ganada vitoria?

DON FERNANDO Aún más mi intento procura.

ALIMUZEL ¡Que me derribas! ¡Espera,  
que ya abajo a castigarte!

DON FERNANDO Aunque bajase el dios Marte 640  
acá de su quinta esfera,  
no le estimaré en un higo.  
¡Oh, cómo que trepa el galgo!

*(Derriba al otro que sube.)*

ALIMUZEL Poco puedo y poco valgo  
con este amigo enemigo. 645  
¿Por qué contra mí, Lozano,  
esgrimes el fuerte acero?

*(Riñen los dos.)*

DON FERNANDO Porque soy cristiano, y quiero  
mostrarte que soy cristiano.

DON MARTÍN ¡Disparen la artillería! 650  
¡Aquí, Buitrago y Guzmán!  
¡Robledo, venga alquitrán!  
¡Arrojad esa alcancía!  
¡Allí, que se sube aquél!

DON FERNANDO Donde yo estoy, este muro 655  
estará siempre seguro;  
y, aunque le pese a Muzel,  
este perro vendrá al suelo.



*(Derriba a otro.)*

AZÁN¿Quién es aquél que derriba  
a cuantos suben arriba? 660

CUCOQue es renegado recelo;  
pero yo lo veré presto,  
y le haré que se arrepienta.

AZÁNA un rey no toca esa afrenta.

*(Vase el del CUCO contra DON FERNANDO.)*

CUCOMahoma se sirve en esto. 665

GUZMÁN Buitrago, el que nos defiende  
es, sin duda, don Fernando.

BUITRAGO Aqueso estaba pensando,  
porque a los moros ofende.

CUCO ¡Renegado, perro, aguarda! 670

DON FERNANDO¡Rey del Cuco, perro, aguardo!

CUCO¿Cómo en tu muerte me tardo?

DON FERNANDOPues la tuya ya se tarda.  
Alimuzel, désta vas,  
y tú, rey, irás de aquésta. 675

¡Concluyóse ya esta fiesta!

CUCO ¡Muy mal herido me has!

ALIMUZEL ¡Muerto me has, moro fingido  
y cristiano mal cristiano!

*(Caen dentro del vestuario.)*

DON FERNANDO Tengo pesada la mano 680  
y alborotado el sentido;  
Dios sabe si a mí me pesa.  
Gran don Martín valeroso,  
haz que deciendan al foso  
y recojan esta presa. 685

GUZMÁN Don Fernando, señor, es,  
que viene a hacer recompensa  
de la cometida ofensa:  
diez ha herido, y muerto a tres;  
y el rey del Cuco es aquél 690  
que yace casi difunto.

DON MARTÍN Pues socorrámosle al punto.

GUZMÁN Y el otro es Alimuzel.

DON MARTÍN Vayan por la casamata  
al foso, y retírenlos. 695

BUITRAGO Vamos por ellos los dos.

*(Quítase del muro GUZMÁN y BUITRAGO.)*

AZÁNYa no es la empresa barata,  
pues me cuesta un rey, y tantos  
que en veinte asaltos han muerto.  
¿Alboroto, y en el puerto 700  
(¿qué podrá ser?) de los Santos?

*(Suenan todo.)*

Campanas en la ciudad  
suenan, señal de alegrías,  
y tocan las chirimías;  
aquésta es gran novedad. 705  
Vamos a ver lo que es esto,  
y toquen a recoger.

ALABEZNo sé lo que pueda ser.

AZÁN Pues yo lo sabré bien presto.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Salen BUITRAGO y GUZMÁN.)*

GUZMÁN Al retirar, don Fernando, 710  
que en gran peligro estás puesto.

DON FERNANDONo lo pienso hacer tan presto.

BUITRAGO Pues, ¿cuándo?

DON FERNANDO Menos sé cuándo.

Yo, que escalé estas murallas,  
aunque no para huir dellas, 715  
he de morir al pie dellas,  
y con la vida amparallas.

Conozco lo que me culpa,  
y, aunque a la muerte me entregue,  
haré la disculpa llegue 720  
adonde llegó la culpa.

BUITRAGO Yo sé muy poco, y diría,  
y está muy puesto en razón,  
que la desesperación  
no puede ser valentía. 725

GUZMÁN Menos riesgo está en ponerte  
del conde a la voluntad  
que hacer la temeridad  
donde está cierto el perderte.

Procúrate retirar, 730  
pues es cosa conocida  
que al mal de perder la vida  
no hay mal que pueda llegar.

En efecto: has de ir por fuerza,  
si ya no quieres de grado. 735

DON FERNANDO De vuestra fuerza me agrado,  
pues más obliga que fuerza.

Retirad aquesos dos  
del foso, que es gente ilustre.

BUITRAGO Locura fuera de lustre 740  
el quedarte, ¡juro a Dios!

*(Éntranse todos.)*

*(Salen AZÁN, ARLAXA, MARGARITA, DON JUAN, ROAMA, que trae preso a VOZMEDIANO.)*

ROAMA Éste, pasando de Orán  
a Mazalquivir, fue preso.

AZÁN Éste nos dirá el suceso  
y por qué alegres están. 745

VOZMEDIANO Porque les entró un socorro,  
que por él, ¡oh gran señor!,  
a la hambre y al temor  
han dado carta de horro.

Un don Álvaro Bazán, 750  
terror de naciones fieras,  
a pesar de tus galeras,  
ha dado socorro a Orán.

En la cantidad es poco,  
y en el valor sobrehumano. 755

DON JUAN Si aquéste no es Vozmediano,  
concluyo con que estoy loco.

VOZMEDIANO ¡Suerte airada, por quien vivo  
en pena casi infinita!  
Aquélla, ¿no es Margarita, 760  
y su hermano aquel cautivo?

AZÁN ¿Hay nuevas de otro socorro,  
cristiano?

VOZMEDIANODicen que sí.

DON JUANDe haber dudado hasta aquí  
ya me avergüenzo y me corro. 765  
¿No os llamáis vos Vozmediano?

VOZMEDIANONo, señor.

DON JUAN¿Qué me decís?

VOZMEDIANOQue no.

DON JUAN¡Por Dios, que mentís!

VOZMEDIANOEstoy preso y soy cristiano,  
y así, no os respondo nada. 770

DON JUAN¿Aquella no es Margarita,  
viejo ruin?

VOZMEDIANOEs infinita  
vuestra necedad pensada.  
Pedro Álvarez es mi nombre:  
ved si os habéis engañado. 775

DON JUANEEl seso tengo turbado;  
no hay cosa que no me asombre.

Que si éste no es Vozmediano  
y no es Margarita aquélla,  
y el que causó mi querella 780  
no es el otro mal cristiano,  
tampoco soy yo don Juan,  
sino algún hombre encantado.

*(Entra un MORO.)*

MORO¿Cómo estás tan sosegado,  
valeroso y fuerte Azán? 785  
Si tardas un momento, no habrá fusta,  
galera ni bajel de cuantos tienes  
en este mar que no sea miserable  
presa del español, que a remo y vela  
viene a embestirte. Rey Azán, ¿qué aguardas? 790

AZÁNTodo moro se salve, que los turcos  
solos se han de embarcar. ¡Adiós, amigos!

*(Vase.)*

ARLAXAFátima, no me dejes; ven conmigo,  
que tiempo habrá donde a tu gusto acudas.

MARGARITANo te puedo faltar; guía, señora. 795

*(Éntranse las dos.)*

DON JUANSolos quedamos, hombre, y sólo quiero  
que me digas quién eres; que yo pienso  
que eres un Vozmediano de mi tierra.

VOZMEDIANONo es este tiempo para tantas largas;  
la libertad tenemos en las manos; 800  
dejalla de cobrar será locura.  
Pedro Álvarez me llamo por agora.

*(Éntrase.)*

DON JUAN¿Cómo podré dejarte, hermana o mora?

*(Éntrase.)*

*(Salen a la muralla DON MARTÍN, GUZMÁN, DON FERNANDO y BUITRAGO.)*

DON MARTÍN¡Oh, que se embarca el perro y que se escapa!  
Dobla la punta, general invicto, 805  
y embístele.

GUZMÁNPor más que lo procura,  
no es posible alcanzarle.

DON FERNANDO¡A orza, a orza,  
con la vela hasta el tope! ¡Oh, que se escapa!  
De Canastel el cabo dobla, y vase.

DON MARTÍNLos perros de la tierra, en remolinos 810  
confusos, con el miedo a las espaldas,  
huyen y dejan la campaña libre.

BUITRAGOToda la artillería se han dejado.



GUZMÁN Las proas endereza nuestra Armada  
al puerto, y ya de Orán el conde insigne 815  
ha salido también.

DON MARTÍN la marina,  
que el bravo don Francisco de Mendoza  
no tardará en llegar.

*(Éntrase DON MARTÍN y BUITRAGO.)*

DON FERNANDO Amigo, escucha:  
¿no ves aquel montón que va huyendo  
de moros por la falda del ribazo? 820

GUZMÁN Muy bien. ¿Por qué lo dices?

DON FERNANDO Allí creo  
que va desta alma la mitad.

GUZMÁN ¿Va Arlaxa?

DON FERNANDO Arlaxa va.

GUZMÁN ¡Mahoma la acompañe!

DON FERNANDO Ven, que con ella va la que me lleva  
el alma, y me conviene detenellas; 825  
sígueme, que has de hacer por mí otras cosas  
que me importan la honra.

GUZMÁN Yo te sigo;  
que hasta la aras he de serte amigo.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Sale, como que se desembarca, DON FRANCISCO DE MENDOZA; recíbenle el CONDE y DON MARTÍN, BUITRAGO y otros.)*

CONDE Sea vuesa señoría bien venido,  
cuanto ha sido el deseo 830  
que de verle estas fuerzas han tenido.

DON FRANCISCO El cielo, a lo que creo,  
en mi mucha tardanza ha sido parte,  
porque viese esta tierra más de un Marte;  
que de aquestas murallas las ruinas 835  
muestran que aquí hubo brazos  
de fuerzas que llegaron a divinas.

BUITRAGO Rompen por embarazos  
imposibles los hartos y valientes,  
y esto saben mis brazos y mis dientes. 840

DON MARTÍN ¡Paso, Buitrago!

BUITRAGO Yo, señor, bien puedo  
hablar, pues soy soldado  
tal, que a la hambre sola tengo miedo.  
Ya el cerco es acabado.

DON MARTÍN No es para aquí, Buitrago, aqueso. ¡Paso! 845

BUITRAGONadie sabe la hambre que yo paso.

CONDE Cincuenta y siete asaltos reforzados  
dieron los turcos fieros  
a estos terrones por el suelo echados.

BUITRAGOCincuenta y siete aceros 850  
tajantes respondieron a sus bríos,  
todos en peso destos brazos míos.  
Corté y tajé más de una turca estambre.

CONDE;Buitrago, basta agora!

BUITRAGOBastará, a no morirme yo de hambre. 855

DON FRANCISCO En vuestro pecho mora,  
famoso don Martín, la valentía.

BUITRAGOY en el mío la hambre y sed se cría.

*(Entra el capitán GUZMÁN y lee un billete a DON FRANCISCO; y, en leyéndole, dice:)*

DON FRANCISCO Haráse lo que pide don Fernando;  
que todo lo merece 860  
lo que dél va la fama publicando.  
Coyuntura se ofrece  
donde alegre y seguro venir puede.

GUZMÁNTu gran valor al que es mayor excede.

(Éntrase GUZMÁN.)

DON FRANCISCO Pido, en albricias deste buen suceso, 865  
señor conde, una cosa  
que por algo atrevida la confieso,  
mas no dificultosa.

CONDE¿Qué me puede mandar vuesseñoría  
que no haga por deuda o cortesía? 870

DON FRANCISCO De don Fernando Saavedra pido  
perdón, porque su culpa  
con su fogoso corazón la mido,  
y él dará su disculpa.

CONDEMuuy mal la podrá dar; pero, con todo, 875  
señor, a vuestro gusto me acomodo.

(*Entran DON FERNANDO y ALIMUZEL, con una banda, como que está herido; ARLAXA, MARGARITA, DON JUAN y VOZMEDIANO.*)

DON FERNANDO Si confesar el delito,  
con claro arrepentimiento,  
mitiga en parte la ira  
del juez que es sabio y recto, 880  
yo, arrepentido, aunque tarde,  
el mal que hice confieso,  
sin dar más disculpa dél  
que un honrado pensamiento.  
A la voz del desafío 885  
deste moro corrí ciego,  
sin echar de ver los bandos,  
que al más bravo ponen freno.  
Pero no es éste lugar

para alargarme en el cuento 890  
de mi estraña y rara historia,  
que dejo para otro tiempo.

CONDEAgradecedlo al padrino  
que habéis tenido, que creo  
que allí llegará la pena 895  
do llegó el delito vuestro.  
Pero, ¿qué moras son éstas?,  
¿y qué cautivos? ¿Qué es esto?

DON FERNANDOTodo lo sabrás después,  
y por agora te ruego 900  
que me des, señor, licencia,  
para hablar sólo un momento  
y acomodar muchas causas  
de quien verás los efectos.

CONDEHablad lo que os diere gusto, 905  
que del vuestro le tendremos;  
que siempre vuestras palabras  
responden a vuestros hechos.

DON FERNANDOYo soy, Arlaxa, el cristiano,  
y entiende que ya no miento, 910  
don Fernando, el de la fama,  
que te enamoró el deseo.  
La palabra que le diste  
a Alimuzel tenga efecto,  
que él hará entrego de mí, 915  
pues yo en sus manos me entrego.  
Y vos, don Juan valeroso,  
cuyo honrado y noble intento  
os trujo a tal confusión  
que os turbó el conocimiento, 920

perdonad a vuestra hermana,  
que el romper del monesterio  
redundará en su alabanza,  
señor, si vos gustáis dello.  
Sin dote será mi esposa; 925  
que nunca falta el dinero  
donde los gustos se miden  
y se estrechan los deseos.  
En esta mora en el traje  
a vuestra hermana os ofrezco, 930  
y a mi esposa, si ella quiere.

MARGARITA Yo sí quiero.

DON FERNANDO Yo sí quiero.

DON JUAN ¿No es aquéste Vozmediano?

VOZMEDIANO El mismo.

DON JUAN ¡Gracias al cielo  
que, tras de tantos nublados, 935  
claro el sol y alegre veo!  
No es este famoso día  
de venganzas, y no tengo  
corazón a quien no ablande  
tal sumisión y tal ruego. 940  
Yo perdono a Margarita,  
y por esposa os la entrego,  
Alejandro de mi hacienda,  
pues la mitad os ofrezco.

ARLAXAY yo la mano a Muzel; 945

que, aunque mora, valor tengo  
para cumplir mi palabra;  
cuanto más, que lo deseo.

CONDE Tan alegre destas cosas  
estoy, cuanto estoy suspenso, 950  
porque dellas veo el fin,  
y no imagino el comienzo.

DON FERNANDO ¿Ya no te he dicho, señor,  
que te lo diré a su tiempo?

*(Entra UNO.)*

UNO En este punto espiró 955  
el buen alférez Robledo.

GUZMÁN Dios le perdone, y mil gracias  
doy al piadoso cielo,  
que me quitó de los hombros  
tan pesado sobrehueso. 960  
Quien quiere tener la vida  
rendida a cualquier encuentro,  
y no tener gusto en ella  
ni velando ni durmiendo,  
afrente a algún bien nacido, 965  
y verá presente luego  
el rostro que el temor tiene,  
la sospechas y el recelo.

BUITRAGO Quien quisiere se le quite  
todo temor, todo miedo, 970  
tenga hambre, y verá como

cesa todo en no comiendo.

DON MARTÍN Yo añadiré las raciones,  
Buitrago.

BUITRAGO ¡Hágate el cielo  
vencedor nunca vencido 975  
por casi siglos eternos!

CONDE Entremos en la ciudad,  
señor don Francisco.

DON FRANCISCO Entremos,  
porque a la vuelta me llaman  
estos favorables vientos, 980  
y quiero deste principio  
entender estos sucesos,  
porque, en ser de don Fernando,  
gustaré de que sean buenos.

BUITRAGO Tóquense las chirimías 985  
y serán, si bien comemos,  
dulces y alegres las fiestas.

GUZMÁN ¿Y si no?

BUITRAGO Renegaremos.

UNO ¡Buitrago, daca el alma!



BUITRAGO;Hijo de puta! ¿Tenemos 990  
más almas que dar, bellaco?

UNO;Daca el alma!

BUITRAGO;Por San Pedro,  
que si os asgo, hi de poltrón,  
que habéis de saber si tengo  
alma que daros!

GUZMÁNBuitrigo, 995  
no haya más, que llega el tiempo  
de dar fin a esta comedia,  
cuyo principal intento  
ha sido mezclar verdades  
con fabulosos intentos. 1000

FIN DESTA COMEDIA

# LA CASA DE LOS CELOS



*Comedia famosa de La casa de los celos y selvas de Ardenia*

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GALALÓN.  
EMPERADOR CARLOMAGNO.  
ANGÉLICA.  
BERNARDO DEL CARPIO.  
UNA DUEÑA.  
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FERRAGUTO.  
CASTILLA.

## Jornada primera

*Entra REINALDOS y MALGESÍ.*

REINALDOS Sin duda que el ser pobre es causa desto;  
pues, ¡vive Dios!, que pueden estas manos  
echar a todas horas todo el resto  
con bárbaros, franceses y paganos.  
¿A mí, Roldán, a mí se ha de hacer esto? 5  
Levántate a los cielos soberanos,  
el confalón que tienes de la Iglesia.  
O reniego, o descreo...

MALGESÍ ¡Oh, hermano!

REINALDOS ¡Oh, pesia...!

MALGESÍ Mira que suenan mal esas razones.

REINALDOS Nunca las pasa mi intención del techo. 10

MALGESÍ Pues, ¿por qué a pronunciallas te dispones?

REINALDOS ¡Rabio de enojo y muero de despecho!

MALGESÍ Pónesme en confusión.

REINALDOSY tú me pones...  
¡Déjame, que revienta de ira el pecho!

MALGESÍ¡Por Dios!, que has de decirme en este instante 15  
con quién las has.

REINALDOSCon el señor de Aglante.  
Con aquese bastardo, malnacido,  
arrogante, hablador, antojadizo,  
más de soberbia que de honor vestido.

MALGESÍ¿No me dirás, Reinaldos, qué te hizo? 20

REINALDOS¿Que a tanto desprecio he yo venido,  
que así ose atrevérseme un mestizo?  
Pues ¡juro a fe que, aunque le valga Roma,  
que le mate, y le guise, y me le coma!

En un balcón estaba de palacio, 25  
y con él Galalón junto a su lado;  
yo entraba por el patio, muy de espacio,  
cual suelo, de mí mismo acompañado;  
los dos miraron mi bohemio lacio  
y no de perlas mi capelo ornado; 30  
tomáronse a reír, y a lo que creo,  
la risa fue de ver mi pobre arreo.

Subí, como con alas, la escalera,  
de rabia lleno y de temor vacío;  
no los hallé donde los vi, y quisiera 35  
ejecutar en mí mi furia y brío.  
Entráronse allá dentro, y, si no fuera  
porque debo respeto al señor mío,  
en su presencia le sacara el alma,  
pequeña a tanta injuria, y débil palma. 40

De aquel traidor de Galalón no hago  
cuenta ninguna, que es cobarde y necio;

de Roldán, sí, y en ira me deshago,  
pues me conoce, y no me tiene en precio.  
Pero presto tendrán los dos el pago, 45  
pagando con sus vidas mi desprecio,  
aunque lo estorbe...

MALGESÍ ¿No ves que desatinas?

REINALDOS Con aquesas palabras más me indinas.

MALGESÍ Roldán es éste, vesle aquí que sale,  
y con él Galalón.

REINALDOS Hazte a una parte, 50  
que quiero ver lo que este infame vale,  
que es tenido en el mundo por un Marte.

(*Entra ROLDÁN y GALALÓN.*)

¡Agora, sí, burlón, que no te cale  
en la estancia de Carlos retirarte,  
ni a ti forjar traiciones y mentiras 55  
para volver pacíficas mis iras!

GALALÓN Vuélvome, porque es éste un atrevido  
y el decir y hacer pone en un punto.

*Vase.*

REINALDOS ¡Bien os habéis de mi ademán reído

los dos, a fe!

ROLDÁN; Que está loco barrunto! 60

REINALDOS; ¿Dónde está aquel cobarde?

MALGESÍ Ya se ha ido.

REINALDOS Tuvo temor de no quedar difunto  
si un soplo le alcanzara de mi boca.

ROLDÁN; A risa su arrogancia me provoca!  
¿Con quién las has, Reinaldos?

REINALDOS; ¿Yo? Contigo. 65

ROLDÁN; ¿Conmigo? Pues, ¿por qué?

REINALDOS Ya tú lo sabes.

ROLDÁN No sé más de que siempre fui tu amigo,  
pues de mi voluntad tienes las llaves.

REINALDOS Tu risa ha sido deso buen testigo;  
no hay para qué tan sin porqué te alabes. 70  
Dime: ¿puede, por dicha, la pobreza  
quitar lo que nos da naturaleza?

Que yo trujera con anillos de oro  
adornadas mis manos y trujera  
con pompa, a modo de real decoro, 75



mi persona compuesta; ¿adondequiera  
rindiera yo con esto al fuerte moro  
o al gallardo español, que nos espera?  
No; que no dan costosos atavíos  
fuerza a los brazos y a los pechos bríos. 80

Mi persona desnuda, y esta espada,  
y este indomable pecho que conoces,  
ancha se harán adondequiera entrada,  
como en la seca mies agudas hoces.  
Mi fuerza conocida y estimada 85  
está por todo el orbe dando voces,  
diciendo quién yo soy; y así, tu burla  
contra toda razón de mí se burla.

Y, porque veas que en razón me fundo,  
mete mano a la espada y haz la prueba: 90  
verás que en nada no te soy segundo,  
ni es para mí el probarte cosa nueva.  
¿Que de nuevo te ríes, pese al mundo?

ROLDÁN ¿Qué endiablado furor, primo, te lleva  
a romper nuestras paces, o qué risa 95  
así el aviso tuyo desavisa?

MALGESÍ Dice que dél hiciste burla cuando  
entraba por el patio de palacio,  
su poco fausto y soledad mirando,  
y su bohemio, por antiguo, lacio. 100  
Pensólo, y, su estrechez contemplando,  
y creyendo la burla, en poco espacio  
la escalera subió; y, si allí os hallara,  
en llanto vuestra risa se tornara.

ROLDÁN Hiciera mal, porque por Dios os juro 105  
que no me pasó tal por pensamiento;  
y desto puede estar cierto y seguro,

pues yo lo digo y más con juramento.  
Al pilar de la Iglesia, al fuerte muro,  
al amparo de Francia y al aliento 110  
de los pechos valientes, ¿quién osara,  
aunque en ello la vida le importara?

Esta disculpa baste, ¡oh primo amado!,  
para templar vuestra no vista furia;  
que no es costumbre de mi pecho honrado 115  
hacer a nadie semejante injuria.

Y más a vos, que solo habéis ganado  
más oro que tendrá y tiene Liguria,  
si es que la honra vale más que el oro  
que en Tíbar cierne el mal vestido moro. 120

Dadme esa mano, ¡oh primo!, porque, en uno  
estas dos que imagino sin iguales,  
no siento yo que habrá valor alguno  
que de su puerta llegue a los umbrales.

*(Vuelve GALALÓN con el EMPERADOR CARLOMAGNO.)*

EMPERADOR ¿Que así comenzó a hablar el importuno, 125  
y descubrió en el modo indicios tales,  
que presto de la lengua desmandada  
pasaría la cólera a la espada?

GALALÓN No los pongas en paz, porque es prudencia,  
y en materia de estado esto se advierte, 130  
tener a tales dos en diferencia,  
que son ministros de tu vida y muerte;  
que, habiendo entre dos grandes competencia  
y entre dos consejeros, de tal suerte  
el uno y otro a sus contrarios temen, 135  
que es fuerza que en virtud ambos se estremen,  
por temor de las ciertas parlerías  
que te podrá decir aquél de aquéste;  
y no desprecies las razones mías,

si no quieres que caro no te cueste. 140

EMPERADOR No están de aquel talante que decías.  
Di: ¿Roldán no es aquél? ¿Reinaldos, éste?  
En paz están, y asidos de la mano.

GALALÓN Señores, ¿no habéis visto a Carlomano?

ROLDÁN ¡Oh grande emperador!

EMPERADOR ¡Oh amados primos! 145  
¿Habéis tenido algún enojo acaso?

ROLDÁN Sin padrinos los dos nos avenimos  
cuando torcemos de amistad el paso.  
Muchas veces confieso que reñimos,  
mas ninguna de veras.

GALALÓN A hablar paso 150  
Reinaldos y sin cólera, no hiciera  
que nuestro emperador aquí viniera;  
que yo le truje imaginando, cierto,  
que estábades los dos ya en gran batalla.

MALGESÍ Holgárate que el uno fuera muerto, 155  
y aun los dos; que este intento en ti se halla.

EMPERADOR Tu temor ha salido en todo incierto.  
De lo que a mí me place, es que la malla  
y los aceros destos dos varones  
requieren más honrosas ocasiones. 160

ROLDÁN Reinaldos, no le tengas ojeriza  
a Galalón, que a fe que es nuestro amigo.

MALGESÍ; Así le viese yo hecho ceniza,  
o de la suerte que en mi mente digo!  
Éste es el soplo que aquel fuego atiza 165  
y enciende, por quien siempre es enemigo  
nuestro buen rey de nuestro buen linaje.

REINALDOS; Cuán sin aliento viene aqueste paje!

PAJE Señor, si quieres ver una ventura,  
que en la vida se ha visto semejante, 170  
ponte a ese corredor: que te aseguro  
que es aventicio hermoso y elegante.

REINALDOS; Donoso ha estado el paje!

PAJE Yo lo juro  
por vida de mi padre. Trae delante  
una diosa del cielo dos salvajes 175  
que sirven de escuderos y de pajes;  
una que debe ser su bisabuela  
viene detrás sobre una mula puesta.  
Digo que es cosa de admirar. Mas hela  
do asoma: ved si viene bien compuesta. 180

MALGESÍ; Si viene con mistura de cautela  
tan grande novedad?

EMPERADOR Poco te cuesta

saberlo si tu libro traes a mano.

MALGESÍAquí le tengo, y el saberlo es llano.

*(Apártase MALGESÍ a un lado del teatro, saca un libro pequeño, pónese a leer en él, y luego sale una figura de demonio por lo hueco del teatro y pónese al lado de MALGESÍ; y han de haber comenzado a entrar por el patio ANGÉLICA la bella, sobre un palafrén, embozada y la más ricamente vestida que ser pudiere; traen la rienda dos salvajes, vestidos de yedra o de cáñamo teñido de verde; detrás viene una dueña sobre una mula con gualdrapa: trae delante de sí un rico cofrecillo y a una perrilla de falda; en dando una vuelta al patio, la apean los salvajes, y va donde está el EMPERADOR, el cual, como la vee, dice:)*

EMPERADOR Digo que trae gallarda compostura 185  
y que es gallardo el traje y peregrino,  
y que si llega al brío la hermosura,  
que pasa de lo humano a lo divino.

MALGESÍ¿Aventura es aquésta? Es desventura.

EMPERADOR¿Qué dices, Malgesí?

MALGESÍNo determino 190  
aún bien lo que es.

EMPERADORPues mira más atento.

MALGESÍYa procuro cumplir tu mandamiento.

EMPERADOR Salid a la escalera a recibilla,  
y traed a la dama a mi presencia.

REINALDOS Cierta que es ésta estraña maravilla. 195

MALGESÍ Cierta que no yerra aquí mi ciencia.

EMPERADOR ¿Qué es eso, Malgesí?

MALGESÍ Darás a oílla  
gratos oídos, pero no creencia;  
que esta dama que ves... Aún no sé el resto;  
escúchala, que yo lo sabré presto. 200

*(Entra en el teatro ANGÉLICA con los salvajes y la DUEÑA, acompañada de REINALDOS, ROLDÁN y GALALÓN; viene ANGÉLICA embozada.)*

ANGÉLICA Prospere el alto cielo,  
poderoso señor, tu real estado,  
y seas en el suelo  
por uno y otro siglo prolongado  
de tan rara ventura, 205  
que del tiempo mudable esté segura.

Puesto que tu presciencia  
de un sí cortés me tiene asegurada,  
no osaré sin licencia  
decirte, ¡oh gran señor!, una embajada, 210  
que aumentará la fama  
que a tanto prez y a tanto honor te llama.

EMPERADOR Decid lo que os pluguiere.

ANGÉLICA Hizo verdad tu sí mi pensamiento.

Presta a lo que dijere, 215  
sagrado emperador, oído atento,  
y préstemele aquéllos  
a quien la gola señaló sus cuellos.

Soy única heredera  
del gran rey Galafrón, cuyo ancho imperio 220  
deste mar la ribera,  
ni aun casi la mitad del hemisferio,  
sus límites describe;  
que en otros mares y otros cielos vive.

A su grandeza iguala 225  
su saber, en el cual tuvo noticia  
ser mi ventura mala,  
si así como el estado real codicia,  
a varón me entregase  
que en sangre y en grandeza me igualase. 230

Halló por cierto y llano  
que el que venciese en singular batalla  
a un mi pequeño hermano  
que viste honrosa, aunque temprana malla,  
éste, cierto, sería 235  
bien de su reino y la ventura mía.

Por provincias diversas  
he venido con él, donde he tenido  
ya prósperas, ya adversas  
venturas, y a la fin me he conducido 240  
a este reino de Francia,  
donde tengo por cierta mi ganancia.

De Ardenia en las umbrosas  
selvas queda mi hermano, allí esperando  
quien, ya por codiciosas 245  
prendas, o esta belleza deseando,  
(Desembózase.)

su fuerte brazo pruebe;  
y es lo que he de decir lo que hacer debe.

Quien fuere derribado  
del golpe de la lanza, ha de ser preso, 250

porque le está vedado  
poner mano a la espada; y es expreso  
del rey este mandato,  
o, por mejor decir, concierto y pacto.

Y si tocare el suelo 255  
mi hermano, quedará quien le venciére  
levantado a mi cielo,  
o noble sea, o sea el que se fuere,  
y no de otra manera.

MALGESÍ;Qué bien que lo relata la hechicera! 260

ANGÉLICA ¡Ea, pues, caballeros!,  
quien reinos apetece y gentileza,  
aprestad los aceros,  
que a poco precio venden la belleza  
que veis, venid en vuelo. 265

ROLDÁN;Por Dios, que encanta!

REINALDOSAdmira, ¡vive el cielo!

ANGÉLICA Ya te he dicho mi intento.  
Conviéneme que dé la vuelta luego.

*(Éntrase la SOMBRA.)*

EMPERADORDeteneos un momento,  
si es que puede con vos mi mando o ruego, 270  
porque seáis servida  
según vuestra grandeza conocida.



ANGÉLICA Lo imposible me pides;  
dame licencia y queda en paz.

EMPERADOR Pues veo  
que a tu gusto te mides, 275  
en buen hora te vuelve, y el deseo  
de servirte recibe.

MALGESÍ; El mismo engaño en esta falsa vive!

*(Vase ANGÉLICA y su compañía.)*

REINALDOS ¿Para qué vas tras ella,  
Roldán?

ROLDÁN Son escusadas tus demandas. 280

REINALDOS Yo solo he de ir con ella.

ROLDÁN; Qué impertinente y qué soberbio andas!

REINALDOS; Detente, no la sigas!

ROLDÁN Reinaldos, bueno está; no me persigas.

MALGESÍ Deténlos, no los dejes; 285  
haz, señor, que se prenda aquella maga.

REINALDOS Como de aquí te alejes,  
daréte de tu intento justa paga.

EMPERADOR ¿Qué desvergüenza es ésta?

MALGESÍ Manda prender aquella deshonesto, 290  
que será, a lo que veo,  
la ruina de Francia en cierto modo.

ROLDÁN Cumpliré mi deseo  
a tu pesar, y aun al del mundo todo.

REINALDOS Camina, pues, y guarte. 295

EMPERADOR Acaba, Malgesí, de declararte.

MALGESÍ Ésta que has visto es hija  
del Galafrón, cual dijo; mas su intento,  
que el cielo le corrija,  
es diferente del fingido cuento, 300  
porque su padre ordena  
tener tus Doce Pares en cadena;  
y, si los prende, piensa  
venir sobre tu reino y conquistalle;  
y trázase esta ofensa 305  
con enviar su hijo y adornalle  
con una hermosa lanza,  
con que de todos la vitoria alcanza.  
La lanza es encantada,  
y tiene tal virtud, que, aquel que toca, 310  
le atierra, y es dorada;  
por eso pide aquella infame y loca  
que la espada no prueben  
los que a la empresa con valor se atreven.

Por añagaza pone 315  
aquella incomparable hermosura,  
que el corazón dispone  
aun de la más cobarde criatura  
para que el hecho intente,  
do, aunque se pierda, nunca se arrepiente. 320

Serán tus Doce Pares  
presos si no lo estorbas, señor mío,  
y otros muchos millares  
de los tuyos que tienen fuerza y brío  
para mayores cosas. 325

EMPERADORLas que has contado son bien espantosas;  
mas no sé remediallas,  
y es porque no las creo. A ti te queda  
creellas y estorballas.

MALGESÍHaré cuanto mi industria y ciencia pueda. 330

GALALÓNNo son muy verdaderos,  
a decirte verdad, tus consejeros.

*(Éntrase el EMPERADOR y GALALÓN.)*

MALGESÍ Mi hermano va enojado  
con Roldán; estorbar quiero su daño.  
En laberinto he entrado 335  
que apenas saldré dél. ¡Oh ciego engaño,  
oh fuerza poderosa  
de la mujer que es, sobre falsa, hermosa!

*(Éntrase MALGESÍ, y entra BERNARDO DEL CARPIO, armado, y tráele la celada un VIZCAÍNO, su escudero, con botas y fieltro y su espada.)*

BERNARDO Aquí, fuera de camino,  
podré reposar un poco. 340

VIZCAÍNO Señor sabio, que estás loco,  
tino vuelves desatino.

Vizcaíno que escudero  
llevas contigo, te avisa  
camines no tanta prisa, 345  
paso lleves de arriero.

Tierra buscas, tierra dejas,  
tanta parece hazaña,  
pues, metiendo en tierra estraña,  
por Dios, de propia te alejas. 350

Bien que en España hay que hacer;  
moros tienes en fronteras,  
tambores, pitos, banderas  
hay allá; ya puedes ver.

BERNARDO ¿Ya no te he dicho el intento 355  
que a esta tierra me ha traído?

VIZCAÍNOCurioso mucho atrevido  
goza nunca pensamiento.

Bien podrás, bien podrás,  
dejar mala tanto hazaña; 360  
a las de guerra y España  
llama.

BERNARDO Ya te entiendo, Blas.

VIZCAÍNO Bien es que sepas de yo  
buenos que consejos doy;  
que, por Juan Gaicoa, soy 365  
vizcaíno; burro, no.

Señor, mira, si es que ver  
poder quieres del francés,  
camino a queste no es  
derecho; puedes volver. 370

BERNARDO Dicen que estas selvas son  
donde se hallan de contino,  
por cualquier senda o camino,  
venturas de admiración,  
y que en la mitad o al fin, 375  
o al principio, o no sé dónde,  
entre unos bosques se esconde  
el gran padrón de Merlín,  
aquel grande encantador,  
que fue su padre el demonio. 380

VIZCAÍNO Echado está testimonio,  
y levántanle, señor.

BERNARDO Hele de buscar y hallar,  
si mil veces rodease  
estas selvas.

VIZCAÍNO Tiempo vase; 385  
duerme, o vuelve a caminar.

BERNARDO Vuelve, y ve si Ferraguto  
viene, que se quedó atrás,  
y a do quedo le dirás.

VIZCAÍNO Escudero siempre puto. 390

BERNARDO Dura y detestable guerra,

por sólo aquesto eres buena:  
que en pluma vuelves la arena,  
y en blanda cama la tierra.

Tú ofreces, doquier que estás, 395  
anchos y estendidos lechos,  
si no es que hay campos estrechos  
por donde los pasos das.

Eres un cierto beleño  
que, entre cuidados y enojos, 400  
ofreces siempre a los ojos  
blando, aunque forzoso sueño.

Eres de su calidad,  
según muestra la experiencia,  
madre de la diligencia, 405  
madrastra de ociosidad.

Venid acá vos, cimera,  
rica y estremada pieza,  
y, pues sois de la cabeza,  
servidme de cabecera, 410

que ya el sueño de rondón  
va ocupando mis sentidos.  
¡Bien dicen que los dormidos  
imagen de muerte son!

*(Échase a dormir BERNARDO junto al padrón de MERLÍN, que ha de ser un mármol jaspeado, que se pueda abrir y cerrar, y a este instante parece encima de la montaña el mancebo ARGALIA, hermano de ANGÉLICA la bella, armado y con una lanza dorada.)*

ARGALIA Mucha tierra se descubre 415  
de encima desta montaña:  
de aquesta parte es campaña,  
de estotra el bosque la cubre;  
allí el camino blanquea,  
y hasta París va derecho. 420  
¡Si mi hermana hubiese hecho  
el gran caso que desea!

Mas, si no me miente acaso  
la vista, aquélla es, sin duda,  
que el camino trueca y muda, 425  
y hacia aquí endereza el paso.

Los palafrenes envía  
por el camino real.  
En cuanto hace, no hace mal;  
recebirla es cortesía. 430

*(Éntrase ARGALIA y sale ANGÉLICA con los salvajes y la DUEÑA.)*

ANGÉLICA Cierta que es ésta la senda,  
o no acierto bien las señas,  
y a la vuelta destas peñas  
sin duda está nuestra tienda.

DUEÑA ¿Cuándo, señora, veremos 435  
el fin de nuestros caminos?

¿Cuándo destos desatinos  
a buen acuerdo saldremos?

¿Cuándo me veré, ¡ay de mí!,  
con mi almohadilla, sentada 440  
en estrado y descansada,  
como algún tiempo me vi?

¿Cuándo dejaré de andar,  
cuando el sol salga o tramonte,  
deste monte en aquel monte, 445  
de un lugar a otro lugar?

¿Cuándo de mis redomillas  
veré los blancos afeites,  
las unturas, los aceites,  
las adobadas pasillas? 450

¿Cuándo me daré un buen rato  
en reposo y sin sospecha?  
Que traigo esta cara hecha  
una suela de zapato.

Los crudos aires de Francia 455  
me tienen de aqueste modo.

ANGÉLICA Calla, que bien se hará todo.

DUEÑA No te arriendo la ganancia;  
que según yo vi el desnudo  
de aquellos dos paladines, 460  
de tus caminos y fines  
esperar buen fin no puedo.

ANGÉLICA No atinas con la verdad;  
calla, que mi hermano viene.

*(Entra ARGALIA.)*

ARGALIA ¡Oh rico archivo, do tiene 465  
sus tesoros la beldad!  
¿Cómo vienes, y en qué modo  
has salido con tu intento?

ANGÉLICA Midióse a mi pensamiento  
la ventura casi en todo. 470  
Vámonos al pabellón,  
que allí, de espacio y sentada,  
contaré de mi embajada  
el principio y conclusión.

ARGALIA Bien dices, hermana; ven, 475  
que bien cerca de aquí está.



DUEÑA La triste que cual yo va,  
yo sé que no va muy bien;  
que de la madre me aprieta  
un gran dolor en verdad. 480  
Todo aquesto es frialdad  
deste andar a la jineta.

*(Éntranse todos, sino es BERNARDO, que aún duerme; suene música de flautas tristes; despierta BERNARDO, ábrese el padrón, pare una figura de muerto, y dice:)*

ESPÍRITU Valeroso español, cuyo alto intento  
de tu patria y amigos te destierra,  
vuelve a tu amado padre el pensamiento, 485  
a quien larga prisión y oscura encierra.  
A tal hazaña es gran razón que atento  
estés, y no en buscar inútil guerra  
por tan remotas partes y escusadas,  
adonde son las dichas desdichadas. 490  
Tiempo vendrá que del francés valiente,  
al margen de los montes Pireneos,  
bajes la altiva y generosa frente  
y goces de honrosísimos trofeos.  
Sigue de tu ventura la corriente, 495  
que iguala al gran valor de tus deseos;  
verás como te sube tu fortuna  
sobre la faz convexa de la luna.  
Por ti tu patria se verá en sosiego,  
libre de ajeno mando y señorío; 500  
tú serás agua al encendido fuego  
que arde en el pecho que de casto es frío.  
Deja estas selvas, do caminas ciego,  
llevado de un curioso desvarío.  
Vuelve, vuelve, Bernardo, a do te llama 505  
un inmortal renombre y clara fama.  
De Merlín el espíritu encantado  
soy, que aquí yago en esta selva oscura,

del cielo para bien y mal guardado,  
aunque en mis males siempre se conjura; 510  
y no seré deste lugar llevado  
a la negra región do el llanto dura,  
hasta que crucen estas selvas fieras  
muchas y cristianísimas banderas.

Mil cosas se me quedan por contarte, 515  
que otra vez te diré, porque ahora importa  
detrás de aquestas ramas ocultarte,  
donde será tu estada breve y corta.  
A dos, que cada cual por sí es un Marte,  
pondrás en paz, o mostrarás que corta 520  
tu espada. Y, sin hablar, haz lo que digo,  
y entiende que te soy y seré amigo.

*(Ciérrase el padrón, éntrese en él BERNARDO sin hablar palabra, y luego sale REINALDOS.)*

REINALDOS En vano mis pasos muevo  
pues, entre estas flores tantas  
no hay señales de las plantas 525  
que por guía y norte llevo.

Que si aquí hubieran pisado,  
claro estaba que este suelo  
fuera un traslado del cielo,  
de varias lumbres pintado. 530

¿Qué flor tocará la bella  
planta, a mí tan dulce y cara,  
que luego no se tornara,  
o ya en sol, o en clara estrella?

Lejos estoy del camino 535  
que a do está mi cielo guía,  
pues este suelo no envía,  
o luz clara, o olor divino.

Mas ya no tendré pereza  
en buscar este sol bello, 540  
pues me han de guiar a vello

ya su luz, ya su belleza.

Pero, ¿qué es esto, que el sueño  
así me acosa y aprieta?

¡Oh fuerza libre, sujeta 545  
a fuerzas de tan vil dueño!

Aquí me habré de acostar,  
al pie deste risco yerto,  
haciendo imagen de un muerto,  
pues estoy para espirar. 550

*(Recuéstase REINALDOS, pone el escudo por cabecera, y entra luego  
ROLDÁN embrazado de el suyo.)*

ROLDÁN ¡Tantas vueltas sin provecho!  
¿Dónde, ¡oh sol!, te tramontaste  
después que tu luz dejaste  
en lo mejor de mi pecho?

Descúbrete, sol hermoso, 555  
que voy buscando tu lumbre  
por el llano y por la cumbre,  
desalentado y ansioso.

¡Oh, Angélica, luz divina  
de mi humana ceguedad, 560  
norte cuya claridad  
a nuevo ser me encamina!

¿Cuándo te verán mis ojos,  
o cuándo, si no he de verte,  
vendrá la espantosa muerte 565  
a triunfar de mis despojos?

Mas, ¿quién es este holgazán  
que duerme con tal remanso?  
No hay quien no viva en descanso  
sino el mísero Roldán. 570

¿Qué es esto? Reinaldos es  
el que yace aquí dormido.  
¡Oh primo, al mundo nacido  
para grillos de mis pies,

para esposas de mis manos, 575  
para infierno de mis glorias,  
para opuesto a mis vitorias,  
para hacer mis triunfos vanos,  
para acíbar de mi gusto!  
Mas yo haré que no lo seas: 580  
sin que el mundo ni tú veas  
que paso el término justo,  
quitarte quiero la vida.  
Mas, ¡ay, Roldán! ¿Cómo es esto?  
¿Ansí os arrojáis tan presto 585  
a ser traidor y homicida?  
¿Qué decís, mal pensamiento?  
¿Decísme que es mi rival,  
y que consiste en su mal  
todo el bien de mi tormento? 590  
Sí decís; mas yo sé, al fin,  
que el que es buen enamorado  
tiene más de pecho honrado  
que de traidor y de ruin.  
Yo fui Roldán sin amor, 595  
y seré Roldán con él,  
en todo tiempo fiel,  
pues en todo busco honor.  
Duerme, pues, primo, en sazón;  
que arrimo te sea mi escudo; 600  
que, aunque amor vencerme pudo,  
no me vence la traición.  
El tuyo quiero tomar,  
porque adviertas, si despiertas,  
que amistades que son ciertas 605  
nadie las puede turbar.

*(Échase ROLDÁN junto a REINALDOS y pone a su cabecera el escudo de REINALDOS, y luego despierta REINALDOS.)*

REINALDOS ¡Angélica! ¡Oh estraña vista!

¿No es Roldán este que veo,  
y el que del bien que deseo  
procura hacer la conquista? 610

Él es; pero, ¿quién me puso  
su escudo para mi arrimo?  
Tu cortés bondad, ¡oh primo!,  
sin duda que esto dispuso.

Bien me pudieras matar, 615  
pues durmiendo me hallaste,  
por quitar aquel contraste  
que en mi vida has de hallar;  
empero tu cortesía  
más que amor pudo en tu pecho, 620  
por la costumbre que has hecho  
de hacer actos de hidalguía.

Mas, ¿si fue por menosprecio  
el dejarme con la vida?  
No, por ser cosa sabida 625  
que yo soy hombre de precio;  
y tú mismo lo has probado  
una y otra vez y ciento.

No atino cuál pensamiento  
tenga por más acertado: 630

si me deja de arrogante,  
o si fue por amistad;  
que tal vez la deslealtad  
vive en el celoso amante.

¡Oh! Si aquéste me dejase 635  
señero en mi pretensión,  
con el alma y corazón,  
¡vive Dios!, que le adorase;

pero si no, no imagines,  
primo, que por tu bondad 640  
dejará mi voluntad  
de seguir sus dulces fines.

Y de aquesta intención mía  
no me debes de culpar,  
porque el amor y el reinar 645  
nunca admiten compañía.

Seguramente a mi lado  
pudiste echarte a dormir,  
pues no se puede herir  
un hombre que es encantado; 650

y así, la ocasión quitaste  
que tu sueño me ofrecía,  
para usar la cortesía  
de que tú conmigo usaste.

Pero, despierto, veremos 655  
tu intención a dó se inclina;  
y si donde yo camina,  
pondré medio en sus extremos.

Irá el parentesco afuera,  
la cortesía a una parte, 660  
si bajase el mismo Marte  
a impedirlo de su esfera.

¡Ah, Roldán! ¡Roldán, despierta!,  
que es gran descuido el que tienes,  
y más si, por dicha, vienes 665  
donde mi sospecha acierta.

Toma tu escudo, y el mío  
me vuelve. ¡Despierta ahora!

ROLDÁN *Soñando*.

¡Ay, Angélica, señora  
de mi vida y mi albedrío! 670

¿A dó se esconde tu faz  
que todo mi bien encierra?

REINALDOS Declarada es nuestra guerra,  
y perdida nuestra paz.

¡Roldán, acaba, levanta; 675  
destroquemos los escudos!

ROLDÁN *Soñando.*

¡Con qué dulces, ciegos nudos  
me añudaste la garganta;  
la voluntad decir quiero,  
y el alma que te entregué! 680

REINALDOS; Si no despiertas, a fe  
que te despierte este acero,  
y aun te mate, pues me matas,  
ahora duermas, ahora veles!  
Estos intentos crueles 685  
nacen de entrañas ingratas.

Estoy por dejar de ser  
quien soy. ¡Acudid al punto,  
respetos, que está difunto  
mi acertado proceder! 690

¡Ansias que me consumís,  
sospechas que me cansáis,  
recelos que me acabáis,  
celos que me pervertís!

(ROLDÁN *despierta.*)

ROLDÁN Reinaldos, ¿qué quies hacer? 695

REINALDOS; Deshacerme, o deshacerte!

ROLDÁN; Quieres, primo, darme muerte?

REINALDOS Tu vida está en mi querer.

ROLDÁN ¿Cómo en mi querer?

REINALDOSDirélo:  
no más de en querer decirme 700  
si vienes a perseguirme  
en la busca de mi cielo;  
si es tu venida a buscar  
a Angélica. ¿No me entiendes?

ROLDÁN¿De saber lo que pretendes...? 705

REINALDOS¡Acabarte, o acabar!

ROLDÁN ¿Tanto el vivir te embaraza,  
que tras tu muerte caminas?

REINALDOSProfeta falso, adivinas  
el mal que así te amenaza. 710

ROLDÁN Contigo las cortesías  
siempre fueron por demás.

REINALDOSDame mi escudo, y verás  
como siempre desvarías.  
Si a París no te vuelves, 715  
verás también en un punto  
tu culpa y castigo junto.

ROLDÁN¡Fácilmente te resuelves!  
Ni a París he de volver,  
ni a Angélica he de dejar. 720  
Mira qué quieres.



REINALDOS Cortar  
tu insolente proceder.  
¡Desharéte entre mis brazos,  
aunque seas encantado!

ROLDÁN ¡Eres villano atestado, 725  
y quieres luchar a brazos!

REINALDOS ¡Mientes! Y ven con la espada,  
que, aunque seas de diamante,  
verás, infame arrogante,  
mi verdad averiguada! 730

*(Vanse a herir con las espadas; salen del hueco del teatro llamas de fuego, que  
no los deja llegar.)*

ROLDÁN Bien sé que anda por aquí,  
temeroso de tu muerte,  
mas no ha de poder valerte,  
tu hechicero Malgesí;  
que pasaré de Aqueronte 735  
la barca por castigarte.

REINALDOS Yo pondré por alcanzarte  
un monte sobre otro monte;  
arrojaréme en el fuego,  
como ves que aquí lo hago. 740

ROLDÁN No te deja dar tu pago  
tu hermano.

REINALDOS ¡Pues dél reniego!

*(Dice el espíritu de MERLÍN:)*

ESPÍRITU Fuerte Bernardo, sal fuera,  
y a los dos en paz pondrás.

*(Sale BERNARDO.)*

BERNARDO ¡Caballeros, no haya más! 745  
¡Guerreros fuertes, afuera!

REINALDOS ¿Hate el cielo aquí llovido?  
¿Qué quieres, o qué nos mandas?

BERNARDO Son tan justas mis demandas,  
que he de ser obedecido. 750  
Y es que dejéis la dudosa  
lid de tan esquivo trance.

REINALDO Tú has echado muy buen lance,  
y la demanda es donosa.  
¿Eres español, a dicha? 755

BERNARDO Por dicha, soy español.

REINALDO Vete, porque sólo el sol  
ha de ver nuestra desdicha;  
que no queremos testigos  
más que el sol en la lid nuestra. 760

BERNARDO No me he de ir sin que la diestra  
os deis de buenos amigos.

ROLDÁN ¡Pesado estás!

BERNARDO Más pesados  
estáis los dos, si advertís.

REINALDO Español, ¿cómo no os is? 765

BERNARDO Por cortesés o rogados,  
vuestra quistión, por ahora,  
no ha de pasar adelante.

ROLDÁN Yo soy el señor de Aglante.

REINALDO Yo, Reinaldos.

BERNARDO Sea en buen hora; 770  
que ser quien sois os obliga  
a conceder con mi ruego.

ROLDÁN Esa razón no la niego.

REINALDO Este español me atosiga;  
que siempre aquesta nación 775  
fue arrogante y porfiada.

ROLDÁN Señor, pues que no os va nada,  
no impidáis nuestra quistión;

dejadnos llevar al fin  
nuestro deseo, que es justo. 780

BERNARDO Aquése fuera mi gusto,  
a serlo así el de Merlín.

ROLDÁN ¡Oh cuerpo de San Dionís,  
con el español marrano!

BERNARDO ¡Mientes, infame villano! 785

REINALDO SA plomo cayó el mentís.  
¡Afuera, Roldán, no más!

ROLDÁN ¡Deja, que me abraso en ira!  
¿Qué es esto? ¿Quién me retira?  
¿El pie de Roldán atrás? 790  
¿Roldán el pie atrás? ¿Qué es esto?  
¡Ni huyo, ni me retiro!

REINALDO S De Merlín es este tiro.

BERNARDO Pues yo haré que huyáis presto.

*(Vase retirando ROLDÁN hacia atrás, y sube por la montaña como por fuerza de oculta virtud.)*

REINALDO S ¡Por cierto, a gentiles manos 795  
te ha traído tu fortuna!

BERNARDO Manos, yo no veo ninguna;  
pies, sí, ligeros y sanos,  
y que os importa tenellos  
para huir de mi presencia. 800

REINALDOS ¡Sin igual es tu insolencia!

*(Sube BERNARDO por la peña arriba, siguiendo a ROLDÁN, y va tras él REINALDOS. Sale MARFISA, armada ricamente; trae por timbre una ave Fénix y una águila blanca pintada en el escudo, y, mirando subir a los tres de la montaña, con las espadas desnudas y que se acaban de desaparecer, dice:)*

MARFISA ¿Si se combaten aquéllos?

Si hacen, ponerlos quiero  
en paz, si fuere posible.  
¡Oh, qué montaña terrible! 805  
Subir por ella no espero,  
ni podré a caballo ir,  
aunque le vuelva a tomar;  
mas, con todo, he de probar  
el trabajo del subir. 810

Bien se queda en la espesura  
mi caballo hasta que vuelva;  
nunca falta en esta selva  
o buena o mala ventura.

*(Sube MARFISA por la montaña, y vuelven a salir al teatro, riñendo, ROLDÁN, BERNARDO y REINALDOS.)*

ROLDÁN No sé yo cómo sea 815  
que contra ti no tengo alguna saña,  
ni puedo en tal pelea  
mover la espada. ¡Cosa es ésta estraña!

BERNARDO La razón que me ayuda  
pone tus fuerzas y tu esfuerzo en duda. 820

REINALDOS De Merlín es el hecho,  
que no hay razón que valga con su encanto;  
que, aunque fuera su pecho  
león en furia y en dureza un canto,  
si hechiceros no hubiera, 825  
nunca mi primo atrás el pie volviera.

*(Entra ANGÉLICA, llorando, y con ella el VIZCAÍNO, escudero de BERNARDO.)*

VIZCAÍNO ¡Pardiós, echóte al río!  
¡Tienes Granada, bravo Ferraguto!

ANGÉLICA ¡Ay, triste hermano mío!

ROLDÁN ¿Por qué ese cielo al suelo da tributo 830  
de lágrimas tan bellas,  
si el mismo cielo se le debe a ellas?

ANGÉLICA Un español ha muerto  
a mi querido hermano; y es un moro  
que no guardó el concierto 835  
debido a la milicia y su decoro,  
y arrojóle en un río.

ROLDÁN ¿Quién es el moro?

BERNARDO Es un amigo mío.

ROLDÁN ¿Amigo tuyo? ¡Oh perro,  
tú llevarás de su maldad la pena! 840

REINALDOS Roldán, no hagas tal yerro;  
deja a mí el castigo.

ANGÉLICA Aquí se ordena  
mi muerte, y más desdicha  
si de los dos me coge alguno, a dicha.

A esta selva oscura 845  
quiero entregar ya mis ligeras plantas,  
mi guarda y mi ventura.

BERNARDO ¿Cómo, Reinaldos, di, no te adelantas  
a herirme con tu primo?  
Por la honra, la vida en poco estimo. 850

*(Sale MARFISA, poniendo paz y poniendo mano a la espada; éntrase huyendo  
ANGÉLICA.)*

MARFISA ¿Qué es esto? ¡Afuera, afuera;  
afuera, caballeros!, que os lo pide  
quien mandarlo pudiera;  
que, si no es que mi luz la vista impide,  
mirando esta divisa, 855  
veréis que soy la sin igual Marfisa.

VIZCAÍNO La puta, la doncella,  
se es ida.

ROLDÁN ¡Oh nunca vista desventura!;

forzoso he de ir tras ella.

REINALDOS Yo sí; tú no.

ROLDÁN ¡Notable es tu locura! 860

REINALDOS No muevas de aquí el paso.

ROLDÁN No hago yo de tus locuras caso.

REINALDOS ¡Por Dios que, si te mueves,  
que te haga pedazos al instante!

ROLDÁN ¿Que a estorbarme te atreves, 865  
fanfarrón, pordiosero y arrogante?  
¿Cómo te estás tan quedo?  
¡Que no me tenga este cobarde miedo!

*(Éntrase ROLDÁN.)*

VIZCAÍNO Señor, déjale vaya;  
que pues no por allí, que por la senda 870  
quedan arraz, en playa  
poned a la dama.

MARFISA ¿Por qué fue la contienda?

BERNARDO Por celos sé que ha sido.  
Dime: ¿Ferraguto quedó herido?



VIZCAÍNO Bueno, puto, y qué sano. 875

BERNARDO ¿Con quién tuvo batalla?

VIZCAÍNO ¿Ya no oíste?

Batalla con hermano  
de bella huidora, y pobre, y muerto, y triste,  
de moro enojo, brío  
teniendo, dio con él todo en el río, 880  
y queda aquí aguardando  
espaldas de montaña.

MARFISA Iréte acompañando,  
que quiero saber más de tu hazaña;  
que descubro en ti muestras 885  
que muestran que eres más de lo que muestras.

Y advierte que contigo  
llevas a la sin par sola Marfisa,  
que, en señas y testigo  
que es única en el mundo, la divisa 890  
trae de aquella ave nueva  
que en el fuego la vida se renueva.

BERNARDO Haréte compañía  
subas al cielo o bajes al abismo.

MARFISA Tan grande cortesía 895  
no puede parecer sino a ti mismo,  
y, usando deste gusto,  
yo he de seguir el tuyo, que es muy justo.

## Jornada segunda

*Sale LAUSO, pastor, por una parte de la montaña, con su guitarra, y CORINTO, por la otra, con otra.*

LAUSO ¡Ah Corinto, Corinto!

CORINTO¿Quién me llama?

LAUSOLauso, tu amigo.

CORINTO¿Adónde estás?

LAUSO¿No miras?

CORINTOAlgún árbol te encubre, alguna rama,  
o estás en el lugar donde suspiras  
cuando Clori te muestra el rostro airado, 5  
y en solitaria parte te retiras.

Baja, si quieres, Lauso, al verde prado,  
en tanto que de Febo la carrera  
declina desta cumbre al otro lado.

Cantaremos de Clori lisonjera, 10  
al pie de un verde sauce o murto umbroso,  
que pasa el pensamiento en ser ligera.

LAUSO Ya abajo; pero no a buscar reposo,  
sino a cumplir lo que amistad me obliga

y a pasar a la sombra el sol fogoso; 15  
que en tanto que la dulce mi enemiga  
se esté fortalecida en su dureza  
no hay mal que huya ni placer que siga.

*(Bajan los dos de la montaña.)*

CORINTO Pesado contrapeso es la pobreza  
para volar de amor, ¡oh Lauso!, al cielo, 20  
aunque tengas cien alas de firmeza.

No hay amor que se abata ya al señuelo  
de un ingenio sutil, de un tierno pecho,  
de un raro proceder, de un casto celo.

Granjería común amor se ha hecho, 25  
y dél hay feria franca dondequiera,  
do cada cual atiende a su provecho.

LAUSO ¡Oh Clori, para mí serpiente fiera  
por mi estrechez, aunque paloma mansa  
para un alma de piedra verdadera! 30

¿Que es posible, cruel, que no te cansa  
de Rústico el ingenio, que es de robre,  
y que el tuyo estimado en él descansa?

CORINTO Vuélvese el oro más cendrado en cobre,  
y el ingenio más claro en tonta ciencia, 35  
si le toca o le tiene el hombre pobre,  
y desto es buen testigo la experiencia.  
Pero escucha; que cantan en la sierra,  
y aun es la voz bien para dalle audiencia.

*(Canta CLORI en la montaña, y sale cogiendo flores.)*

CLORI Derramastes el agua, la niña, 40

y no dijistes: «¡Agua va!»  
La justicia os prenderá.

LAUSO De aquella que el placer de mí destierra  
es el suave y regalado acento,  
y aun quien sus gustos el amor encierra. 45

CORINTO Escuchémosla, pues.

LAUSO Ya estoy atento.

CLORI Derramáste la a deshora,  
y fue con tan poca cuenta,  
que mojastes con afrenta  
al que os sirve y os adora. 50  
Pero llegada la hora  
donde el daño se sabrá,  
la justicia os prenderá.

LAUSO Bien es que la ayudemos:  
acuerda con el mío tu instrumento. 55

CORINTO Yo creo que está bien; mas, ¿qué diremos?

LAUSO Su mismo villancico, trastrocado,  
cual tú sabrás hacer.

CORINTO Los dos le haremos.

(*Canta* CORINTO.)

CORINTO Cautivástesme el alma, la niña,  
y tenéisla siempre allá; 60  
el Amor me vengará.

Vuestros ojos salteadores,  
sin ser de nadie impedidos,  
se entraron por mis sentidos,  
y se hicieron salteadores; 65  
lleváronme los mejores,  
y tenéislos siempre allá;  
el Amor me vengará.

LAUSO Así, Clori gentil, te ofrezca el prado,  
en mitad del invierno, flores bellas, 70  
y cuando el campo esté más agostado;  
y que siempre te halles al cogellas  
con el júbilo alegre que nos muestra  
la voz con que se ahuyentan mis querellas;  
que esa rara beldad, que nos adiestra 75  
a conocer al Hacedor del cielo,  
en este sitio haga alegre muestra.

Volverás paraíso a questo suelo,  
y este calor que nos abrasa, ardiente,  
en aura blanda y regalado yelo. 80

CLORI Porque no es tu demanda impertinente,  
cual otras veces suele, haré tu gusto,  
que es en todo del mío diferente.

CORINTO Dime, Clori gentil, ¿dó está el robusto,  
el bronce, el roble, el mármol, leño o tronco 85  
que así a tu gusto le ha venido al justo?

Por aquel, digo, desarmado y bronco,  
calzado de la frente y de pies ancho,  
corto de zancas y de pecho ronco,  
cuyo dios es el estendido pancho, 90  
y a do tiene la crápula su estancia,

él tiene siempre su manida y rancho.

CLORI Con él tengo, Corinto, más ganancia  
que contigo, con Lauso y con Riselo,  
que vendéis discreción con arrogancia. 95

Rústica el alma, y rústico es el velo  
que al alma cubre, y Rústico es el nombre  
del pastor que me tiene por su cielo.

Mas, por rústico que es, en fin es hombre  
que de sus manos llueve plata y oro, 100  
Júpiter nuevo, y con mejor renombre.

Él guarda de mis gustos el decoro,  
ora le envíe al blanco cita frío  
o al tostado, engañoso libio moro.

Tiene por justa ley el gusto mío, 105  
y el levantado cuello humilde inclina  
al yugo que le pone mi albedrío.

No tiene el rico Oriente otra tal mina  
como es la que yo saco de sus manos,  
ora cruel me muestre, ora benigna. 110

Quédense los pastores cortesanos  
con la melifluidad de sus razones  
y dichos, aunque agudos, siempre vanos.

No se sustenta el cuerpo de intenciones,  
ni de conceptos trasnochados hace 115  
sus muchas y forzosas provisiones.

El rústico, si es rico, satisface  
aun a los ojos del entendimiento  
y el más sabio, si es pobre, en nada aplace.

Dirán Corinto y Lauso que yo miento, 120  
y muestra la experiencia lo contrario,  
y Rústico lo sabe, y yo lo siento.

LAUSO Es gusto de mujeres ordinario,  
en lo que es opinión, tener la parte  
que más descubra ser su ingenio vario. 125

Quisiera dese error, Clori, sacarte;

mas ya estás pertinaz en tu locura,  
y en vano será agora predicarte.

CORINTO Así, pastora, goces tu hermosura,  
que me dejes hacer una experiencia; 130  
quizá te hará volver a tu locura.

Verás, pastora, al vivo la inocencia  
de Rústico, el pastor, por quien nos dejas.

CLORI ¿Para qué es el pedirme a mí licencia?

LAUSO Paréceme que llega a mis orejas 135  
de Rústico la voz.

CORINTO Él es, sin duda,  
que a sestear recoge sus ovejas.

*(RÚSTICO parece por la montaña.)*

RÚSTICO Mirad si se cayó en aquella azuda  
una oveja, pastores; corred luego,  
y cada cual a su remedio acuda. 140

Dejad, mal hora, del herrón el juego.

Aguija, Coridón. ¡Oh, cómo corre!

¡Quién quitara a Damón de su sosiego!

Llegó; ya se arrojó; ya la socorre  
y la saca en los brazos medio muerta, 145  
y parece que un río de ambos corre.

Esta noche tú, ¡hola!, está alerta,  
no venga, como hizo en la pasada,  
el lobo que la cabra dejó muerta.

Tú acudirás, Cloanto, a la majada 150  
del valle de la Enceña, y darás orden

que estén todos aquí de madrugada.  
¡Oh Compo! Tú harás que se concorden  
en el pasto Corbato con Francenio;  
que me da pesadumbre su desorden. 155

CLORI ¡Mirad si tiene Rústico el ingenio  
para mandar acomodado y presto!

RÚSTICO Tú acude a las colmenas, buen Partenio.  
Llévese de las vacas todo el resto  
al padrón de Merlín, y de las cabras 160  
al monte o soto de ciprés funesto.

CLORI ¿Parécenos de pobre las palabras  
que dice?

CORINTO Pues aquí, en esta espesura,  
te has de esconder, y mira que no abras  
la boca, porque importa a la aventura 165  
que queremos probar de nuestro intento,  
por ver si es suya o nuestra la locura.

CLORI Yo enmudezco y me escondo, y vuestro cuento  
sea, si puede ser, breve y ligero;  
que, si es pesado y grande, da tormento. 170

*(Escóndese CLORI.)*

LAUSO Corinto, ¿qué has de hacer?

CORINTO Estáme atento.  
Rústico amigo, al llano abaja; aguija,



que es cosa que te importa; corre, corre.

RÚSTICO Ya voy, Corinto amigo; espera, espera  
mientras que cuento un centenar de bueyes, 175  
y tres hatos de ovejas, y otros cinco  
de cabras desde encima deste pico  
do estoy sentado. ¿No me ves?

CORINTO ¡Acaba!  
¿Haces burla de mí?

RÚSTICO Por Dios, no hago;  
mas yo lo dejo todo por servirte. 180  
Vesme aquí: ¿qué me mandas?

CORINTO Que me ayudes  
a alcanzar deste ramo un papagayo  
que viene del camino de las Indias,  
y esta noche hizo venta en aquel hueco  
deste árbol, y alcanzalle me conviene. 185

RÚSTICO ¿Qué llamas papagayo? ¿Es un pintado,  
que al barquero da voces y a la barca,  
y se llama real por fantasía?

CORINTO Desá ralea es éste; pero entiendo  
que es bachiller y sabe muchas lenguas, 190  
principal la que llaman bergamasca.

RÚSTICO ¿Pues qué se ha de hacer para alcanzalle?

CORINTO Conviene que te pongas desta suerte.  
Daca este brazo, y lígale tú, Lauso,  
y átale bien, que yo le ataré estotro. 195

RÚSTICO ¿Pues yo no estaré quedo sin atarme?

CORINTO Si te meneas, espantarse ha el pájaro;  
y así, conviene que aun los pies te atemos.

RÚSTICO Atad cuanto quisiéredes; que, a trueco  
de tener esta joya entre mis manos, 200  
para que luego esté en las de mi Clori,  
dejaré que me atéis dentro de un saco.  
Ya bien atado estoy. ¿Qué falta agora?

CORINTO Que yo me suba encima de tus hombros,  
y que Lauso, pasito y con silencio, 205  
me ayude a levantar las verdes hojas  
que cubren, según pienso, el dulce nido.

RÚSTICO Sube, pues. ¿A qué esperas?

CORINTO Ten paciencia;  
que no soy tan pesado como piensas.

RÚSTICO ¡Vive Dios, que me brumas las costillas! 210  
¿Has llegado a la cumbre?

CORINTO Ya estoy cerca.

RÚSTICO Avisa a Lauso que las ramas mueva pasito, no se vaya el pajarote.

LAUSO No se nos puede ir, que ya le he visto.

RÚSTICO Pregúntale, Corinto, lo que suelen 215  
preguntar a los otros papagayos,  
por ver si entiende bien nuestro lenguaje.

CORINTO ¿Cómo estás, loro, di? «¿Cómo? Cautivo».

RÚSTICO ¡Hi de puta, qué pieza! Di otra cosa.

CORINTO «¡Daca la barca, hao; daca la barca!» 220

RÚSTICO Y aqueso, ¿quién lo dijo?

CORINTO El papagayo.

RÚSTICO ¡Oh Clori, qué presente que te hago!

CORINTO «¡Clori, Clori, Clori, Clori, Clori!»

RÚSTICO ¿Es todavía el papagayo aquése?

CORINTO Pues, ¿quién había de ser?

RÚSTICO ¿Hasle ya asido? 225

CORINTO Dentro en mi caperuza está ya preso.

RÚSTICO Deciendo, pues, y véndemele, amigo,  
que te daré por él cuatro novillos  
que aún no ha llegado el yugo a sus cervices,  
no más de porque dél mi Clori goce. 230

LAUSO No se dará por treinta mil florines.

RÚSTICO; Ah, por amor de Dios, yo daré ciento!  
Desatadme de aquí, porque a mi gusto  
le vea y le contemple.

CORINTO Es ceremonia  
que en semejantes cazas suele usarse, 235  
que tan sola una mano se desate  
del que las dos tuviere y pies atados;  
con ésta suelta, puedes blandamente  
alzar mi caperuza venturosa,  
que tal tesoro encubre. Despabila 240  
los ojos para ver belleza tanta.  
Pasito, no le ahajes. Mas espera,  
que está la mano sucia; con saliva  
te la puedes limpiar.

RÚSTICO Ya está bien limpia.

CORINTO Agora sí. ¡Dichoso aquel que llega 245  
a descubrir tan codiciosa prenda!

RÚSTICO¿Donosa está la burla! Di, Corinto:  
¿es ése el papagayo?

CORINTOÉste es el pico;  
las alas, éstas; éstas, las orejas  
del asno de mi Rústico y amigo. 250

RÚSTICO¿Desátenme, que a fe que yo me vengue!

*(Sale CLORI.)*

CLORI¿Ah simple, ah simple!

RÚSTICO¿Y haslo visto, Clori?  
Por ti la burla siento, y no por otrie.

CLORICalla, que para aquello que me sirves,  
más sabes que trecientos Salomones. 255  
Di que se vista Lauso desta burla,  
o que compre Corinto algún tributo,  
o me envíe mañana una patena  
y unos ricos corales, como espero  
que podrás y querrás, con tu simpleza, 260  
enviármelos luego.

RÚSTICO¿Y cómo, Clori?  
Y aun dos sartas de perlas hermosísimas.

CLORI¿Compárase con esto algún soneto,  
Lauso? Y dime, Corinto: ¿habrá sonada,  
aunque se cante a tres ni aun a trecientos, 265  
que a la patena y sartas se compare?

LAUSO Eres mujer y sigues tu costumbre.

CLORI Sigo lo que es razón.

LAUSO Será milagro  
hallarla en las mujeres.

CLORI ¿Qué razones  
puede decir la lengua que se mueve 270  
guiada del desdén y de los celos?  
Tú eres la causa.

*(Entra ANGÉLICA, alborotada.)*

ANGÉLICA ¡Socorredme, cielos,  
si en vuestros pechos mora  
misericordia alguna!  
Hermosa y agradable compañía: 275  
en mí os ofrece agora  
el cielo y la fortuna,  
sujeto igual a vuestra cortesía;  
que, la desdicha mía  
sabida, me asegura 280  
que podrá enterneceros  
y al remedio moveros,  
si es que le tiene tanta desventura.

CLORI Señora, di: ¿qué tienes?

ANGÉLICA Sin tasa males, y ningunos bienes. 285

Pero no estoy en tiempo  
en que pueda contaros  
de mi dolor la parte más pequeña;  
ni vuestro pasatiempo  
será bien estorbaros 290  
contando el mal que ablandará esta peña.  
¿No hay por aquí una breña  
donde me esconda, amigos?

LAUSO Luego, ¿quies esconderte?  
¿Quién podrá aquí ofenderte? 295

ANGÉLICA Persíguenme dos bravos enemigos.

CORINTO ¿No somos tres nosotros?

ANGÉLICA Ni aun a tres mil no temerán los otros.  
Llevadme a vuestras chozas,  
mudadme este vestido; 300  
amigos, escondedme.

LAUSO No te espantes.  
¿Para qué te alborozas,  
si has a parte venido  
do se estiman en poco los gigantes? 305  
Montalbanes y Aglantes  
se tienen aquí en nada;  
porque, ¡por Dios!, si quiero,  
que los compre a dinero.

ANGÉLICA ¡Hoy acaba mi vida su jornada! 310

CORINTO ¿Quieres que te escondamos?

RÚSTICO ¿Dice que sí?

LAUSO Pues, ¡sus!, ¿en qué tardamos?  
Ven; mudarás de traje  
y de lugar y todo.

ANGÉLICA De mis contrarios casi veo la sombra. 315

CORINTO Parece de linaje,  
y su habla y su modo  
a mí me admira.

RÚSTICO Pues a mí me asombra.

*(Éntrase ANGÉLICA y LAUSO.)*

¿Sabéis cómo se nombra? 320

CORINTO Pues, ¿cómo he de sabello?

RÚSTICO Busca algún nuevo ensayo.

CORINTO Buscaré un papagayo  
que me lo diga.

CLORIGanarás en ello.



CORINTO Ganas tú patenas. 325

CLORISiempre tus burlas para mí son buenas.

*(Éntranse todos, y sale REINALDOS.)*

REINALDOS ¿Eres Dafne, por ventura,  
que de Apolo va huyendo,  
o eres Juno, que procura  
librarse del monstruo horrendo 330  
cerrada en la nube oscura?

¡Oh selvas de encantos llenas,  
do jamás se ha visto apenas  
cosa en su ser verdadero,  
contar de vosotras quiero 335  
aun las menudas arenas!

Quizá esta fiera homicida,  
que cual sombra desaparece  
porque padezca mi vida,  
adonde menos se ofrece 340  
la tendrá amor escondida.

De nuevo vuelvan mis plantas  
a buscar entre estas plantas  
a la bella fugitiva.  
¡Dura ocasión, que yo viva 345  
muriendo de muertes tantas!

*(Crujidos de cadenas, ayes y suspiros dentro.)*

¡Válgame Dios! ¿Qué ruido  
es este que suena extraño?  
¿Estoy despierto, o dormido?  
¿Engañome o no me engaño? 350  
Otra vez llega al oído.

De entre estas hojas entiendo

que sale el horrible estruendo.  
Mas, ¡ay!, ¿qué boca espantosa,  
terrible y estraña cosa, 355  
es aquesta que estoy viendo?

Mientras más vomitas llamas,  
boca horrenda o cueva oscura,  
más me incitas y me inflamas.  
A ver si en esta aventura 360  
para algún buen fin me llamas.

*(Descúbrese la boca de la sierpe.)*

Acógeme allá en tu centro,  
porque por tus fuegos entro  
a tu estómago de azufre.

*(MALGESÍ, vestido como diré; sale por la boca de la sierpe.)*

MALGESÍ¿Adónde aquesto se sufre? 365

REINALDOS¡Éste sí que es mal encuentro!  
¿Quién eres?

MALGESÍSoy el Horror,  
portero de aquesta puerta,  
adonde vive el temor  
y la sospecha más cierta 370  
que engendra el cielo de amor.

Soy ministro de los duelos,  
embajador de los celos,  
que habitan en esta cueva.

REINALDOSPues adonde están me lleva. 375

MALGESÍ Espera, y avisarélos.

Mas primero has de mirar  
las guardas que puestas tiene  
en este triste lugar,  
y esto es lo que te conviene. 380

REINALDOS Comiénzalas a mostrar;  
que, aunque me muestras cifrados  
en ellas los condenados  
rostros que encierra el abismo,  
seré en este trance el mismo 385  
que he sido en los regalados.

*(Suena dentro música triste, como la pasada del padrón; sale el TEMOR,  
vestido como diré: con una tunicela parda, ceñida con culebras.)*

MALGESÍ Esta figura que ves  
es el Temor sospechoso,  
que engendra ajeno interés,  
impertinente curioso, 390  
que mira siempre al través;  
y así, el mezquino se admira  
de cada cosa que mira,  
ora sea mala o buena;  
la verdad le causa pena, 395  
y tiembla con la mentira.

*(Sale la SOSPECHA, con una tunicela de varias colores.)*

Ésta es la infame Sospecha,  
de los Celos muy parienta,  
toda de contrarios hecha,  
siempre de saber sedienta 400

lo que menos le aprovecha.

Aquí nace, y muere allí,  
y torna a nacer aquí;  
tiene mil padres a un punto:  
éste, vivo; aquél, difunto, 405  
y ella vive y muere así.

*(Sale CURIOSIDAD.)*

La vana Curiosidad  
es ésta que ves presente,  
hija de la Liviandad,  
con cien ojos en la frente, 410  
y los más con ceguedad.

Es en todo entremetida,  
y susténtale la vida  
estar contino despierta,  
y hace la guarda a una puerta 415  
de muy difícil salida.

*(Con una soga a la garganta y una daga desenvainada en la mano, sale la DESESPERACIÓN, como diré.)*

Es la Desesperación  
esta espantosa figura,  
sobre todas cuantas son,  
y, aunque es mala su hechura, 420  
es peor su condición.

Ésta sigue las pisadas  
de los Celos, desdichadas,  
y anda tan junto con ellos,  
que desde aquí puedes vellos 425  
si cesan las llamaradas.

*(Suena la música triste, y salen los CELOS, como diré, con una tunicela azul,*

*pintada en ella sierpes y lagartos, con una cabellera blanca, negra y azul.)*

Mas veslos, salen: advierte  
que cuanto con ellos miras  
amenazan triste suerte,  
ciertos y luengos pesares 430  
y, al fin, desdichada muerte.

Todos sus secuaces son,  
puestos en comparación,  
de sus males una sombra  
que, puesto que nos asombra, 435  
no desmaya al corazón.

Toca su mano y verás  
en el estado que quedas,  
diferente del que estás;  
y tal quedes, que no puedas 440  
ni quieras ya querer más.

*(Tocan los CELOS la mano a REINALDOS.)*

REINALDOS ¡Celos, que se me abrasa el pecho  
y se cela! ¡En duro estrecho  
me pone el señor de Aglante!  
¡Celos, quitáosme delante: 445  
basta el mal que me habéis hecho!

MALGESÍ ¿Cómo que con la invención  
de quien yo tanto fié  
no se cela el corazón  
de mi primo? Yo no sé 450  
la causa ni la razón.

*(Dice de dentro MERLÍN.)*

MERLÍN Malgesí, ¡cuán poco sabes!  
Mas yo haré que no te alabes  
de tu invención, aunque estraña.  
Pártete desta montaña 455  
antes que la vida acabes.

MALGESÍ Ya te conozco, Merlín;  
pero yo veré si puedo  
ver de mi deseo el fin,  
porque no me pone miedo 460  
desa tu voz el retín.

MERLÍN A tu primo entre esa yerba  
pondrás, que a mí se reserva  
y a mi fuente su salud;  
que hasta agora su virtud 465  
el cielo en ella conserva.

MALGESÍ Volveos por do venistes,  
figuras feas y tristes,  
que mi primo quedará  
adonde esperar podrá 470  
el remedio que no distes.

*(Éntranse las sombras.)*

Y yo, en tanto, buscaré  
medio para remedialle,  
y creo que lo hallaré.

*(Desvía de allí a REINALDOS.)*

MERLÍN Calla y procura dejalle, 475

Malgesí.

MALGESÍ Así lo haré.

*(Éntrese MALGESÍ.)*

*(Parece a este instante el carro de fuego, de los leones de la montaña, y en él la diosa VENUS.)*

VENUS De Adonis la compañía  
dejo casi de mi grado  
por seguir la fantasía  
deste espíritu encantado 480  
que en apremiarme porfía.

Espérame hasta que vuelva,  
mi Adonis, y amor resuelva  
tu brío, que no le alabo;  
mira que es el puerco bravo 485  
de la Calidonia selva.

Pero, ¿qué puedo hacer  
sin mi hijo en este trance,  
donde tanto es menester?  
Merlín ha errado este lance; 490  
que a veces yerra el saber.

Mas yo le quiero llamar,  
que a las veces suele estar  
mezclado entre los pastores,  
y entonces son los amores 495  
para mirar y admirar.

Hijo mío, ¿dónde estáis?  
Si acaso la voz oís,  
y como a madre me amáis,  
decid: ¿cómo no venís?, 500  
que si venís, ya tardáis.

Mas los músicos acentos

que van rompiendo los vientos  
su venida manifiestan.  
¡Oh hijo, y cuánto que cuestan 505  
aun tus fingidos contentos!

*(Suena música de chirimías; sale la nube, y en ella el dios CUPIDO, vestido y con alas, flecha y arco desarmado.)*

AMOR ¿Qué quieres, madre querida,  
que con tal priesa me llamas?

VENUSEstá en peligro una vida,  
ardiendo en tus vivas llamas, 510  
y en un yelo consumida.

Los celos, que en opinión  
están que tus hijos son,  
ciego y simple desvarío,  
le tienen el pecho frío 515  
y abrasado el corazón.

Conviene que te resuelvas  
en su bien, y que le vuelvas  
en su antigua libertad.

AMORRemedio a su enfermedad 520  
ha de hallar en estas selvas.

Por tiempo hallará una fuente,  
cuyo corriente templado  
apaga mi fuego ardiente,  
y mi pena enamorada 525  
vuelve en desdén insolente.

Beberá Reinaldos della,  
y de Angélica la bella,  
la hermosura que así quiere,  
si agora por vella muere, 530  
ha de morir por no vella.



Levanta, guerrero invicto,  
y tiende otra vez el paso  
cerca de aqueste distrito,  
que en él hallarás acaso 535  
medio a tu mal infinito.

Aunque has de pasar primero  
trances que callarlos quiero,  
pues decillos no conviene.

REINALDOS Aquel que celos no tiene, 540  
no tiene amor verdadero.

*(Éntrase REINALDOS.)*

VENUS Ya aqueste negocio es hecho.  
¿No me dirás, hijo amado,  
si es invención de provecho  
andar en traje no usado 545  
y el arco roto y deshecho?

¿Quién te le rompió? ¿Y quién pudo  
cubrir tu cuerpo desnudo,  
que su libertad mostraba?  
¿Quién te ha quitado el aljaba 550  
y la venda? Di; ¿estás mudo?

AMOR Has de saber, madre mía,  
que en la corte donde he estado  
no hay amor sin granjería,  
y el interés se ha usurpado 555  
mi reino y mi monarquía.

Yo, viendo que mi poder  
poco me podía valer,  
usé de astucia, y vestíme,  
y con él entremetíme, 560  
y todo fue menester.

Quité a mis alas el pelo,  
y en su lugar me dispuse,  
a volar con terciopelo;  
y, al instante que lo puse, 565  
sentí aligerar mi vuelo.

Del carcaj hice bolsón,  
y del dorado arpón  
de cada flecha, un escudo,  
y con esto, y no ir desnudo, 570  
alcancé mi pretensión.

Hallé entradas en los pechos  
que a la vista parecían  
de acero o de mármol hechos;  
pero luego se rendían 575  
al golpe de mis provechos.

No valen en nuestros días  
las antiguas bazarías  
de Heros ni de Leandros,  
y valen dos Alejandros 580  
más que docientos Macías.

*(Entra RÚSTICO.)*

RÚSTICO Lauso, acude; y tú, Corinto,  
acude, que, a lo que creo,  
otro papagayo veo,  
o si no, pájaro pinto. 585

Acude, Clori, y verás  
la verdad de lo que digo;  
y trae a esotra contigo,  
y más, si quisieres más.

AMOR Yo sé bien que estos pastores 590  
nos han de dar un buen rato.

*(Entra LAUSO, CORINTO y CLORI, y ANGÉLICA, como pastora.)*

LAUSO¿Tú no miras, insensato,  
que aquél es el dios de amores?

RÚSTICO Como con alas le vi,  
entendí que era alcotán. 595

CORINTO¡Quítate de aquí, pausán!

RÚSTICO¿Pues yo qué te hago aquí?

CORINTO No te me pongas delante,  
que quiero hacer reverencia  
a este niño.

RÚSTICO¿Qué inocencia! 600  
¿Niño es éste?

CORINTOY es gigante.

RÚSTICO Niñazo le llamo yo,  
pues ya le apunta el bigote.  
No os burléis con el cogote.  
¡Mal haya quien me vistió! 605

AMOR No quiero que me hagáis,  
buena gente, sacrificio,  
y téngoos en gran servicio  
la voluntad que mostráis;  
y en pago quiero deciros 610

la ventura que os espera.

VENUS Harás, hijo, de manera  
que den vado a sus suspiros.

AMOR Tú, Lauso, jamás serás  
desechado ni admitido; 615  
tú, Corinto, da al olvido  
tu pretensión desde hoy más;  
Rústico, mientras tuviere  
riquezas, tendrá contento:  
mudará cada momento 620  
Clori el bien que poseyere;  
la pastora disfrazada  
suplicará a quien la ruega.  
Y, esto dicho, el fin se llega  
de dar fin a esta jornada. 625

LAUSO En tanto, Amor, que te vas,  
porque algún contento goces,  
de nuestras rústicas voces  
el rústico acento oirás.  
Corinto y Clori, ayudadme; 630  
cantaréis lo que diré.

CLORI ¿Qué hemos de cantar?

CORINTO No sé.

LAUSO Diréis después, y escuchadme.  
*Venga norabuena*  
*Cupido a nuestras selvas,* 635  
*norabuena venga.*  
Sea bienvenido

médico tan grave,  
que así curar sabe  
de desdén y olvido; 640  
hémosle entendido,  
y lo que él ordena  
*sea norabuena.*

Quedan estas peñas  
ricas de ventura, 645  
pues tanta hermosura  
hoy en ella enseñas.  
Brotarán sus breñas  
néctar dondequiera.  
*¡Norabuena sea!* 650

*(Mientras cantan, se va el carro de VENUS, y CUPIDO en él; y suenan las chirimías, y luego dice LAUSO:)*

LAUSO Vamos a nuestras cabañas  
a hacer nuevas alegrías,  
pues vemos en nuestros días  
tan ricas estas montañas;  
y si aquello que desea 655  
cada cual no ha sucedido,  
pues el Amor lo ha querido,  
decid: «¡Norabuena sea!»

*(Todos: «¡Norabuena sea, sea norabuena!», y éntranse, y sale BERNARDO y su ESCUDERO.)*

BERNARDO ¿Cómo no viene Marfisa?

ESCUDERO Detrás quedó de aquel monte. 660

BERNARDO Pues sobre ese risco ponte,

y mira si se divisa.

ESCUDERO Ella dijo que al momento  
tras nosotros se vendría.

BERNARDO ¡Estraña es su bizzaría! 665

ESCUDERO Y su valor, según siento.

BERNARDO A lo menos su arrogancia,  
pues la lleva sin parar  
a sola desafiar  
los Doce Pares de Francia; 670  
y tengo de acompañalla,  
que ya se lo he prometido.

ESCUDERO En negocio te has metido  
harto estraño.

BERNARDO ¡Simple, calla!;  
que siempre es mi intención 675  
buscar y ver aventuras.  
En París están seguras,  
si se traba esta quistión.  
Y veré dó llegar puede  
el valor de aquesta dama. 680

ESCUDERO Llegará donde su fama  
que a las mejores excede.

BERNARDO ¿Que se nos fue Ferraguto?

ESCUDERO Siempre, en cuanto hacía aquel moro,  
le vi guardar un decoro 685  
arrojado y resolutivo.

Después que mató a Argalia,  
y en el río le arrojó,  
al momento se partió.

BERNARDO Tiene loca fantasía. 690

Mas dime: ¿no es el que asoma  
aquel gallardo francés  
de la pendencia?

ESCUDERO Sí es,  
y es confalonero de Roma.

BERNARDO ¿No es Roldán?

ESCUDERO Roldán es, cierto. 695

BERNARDO Agora quiero proballo,  
pues nadie podrá estorballo  
en este solo desierto.

¡Qué pensativo que viene!  
¿No parece que algo busca? 700

ESCUDERO Todo el sentido le ofusca  
amor que en el pecho tiene.

BERNARDO ¿Cómo lo sabes?

ESCUDERO ¿No viste

que la pendencia dejó,  
y tras la dama corrió, 705  
que allí se mostró tan triste?

BERNARDO ¡Ah Roldán, Roldán!

ROLDÁN ¿Quién llama?

BERNARDO Deciendo acá y lo verás.

ROLDÁN ¡Oh Angélica!, ¿dónde estás?

ESCUDERO ¿Ves si le abrasa su llama? 710

ROLDÁN ¿Qué me quieres, caballero?

BERNARDO ¿No me conoces?

ROLDÁN No, cierto.

ESCUDERO Bien en lo que digo acierto:  
él es de amor prisionero.

Haré yo una buena apuesta 715  
que está puesto en tal abismo,  
que no sabe de sí mismo.

BERNARDO ¿Hay cosa que iguale a ésta?  
¿Que no me conoces?



ROLDÁNNo.

BERNARDO Pues yo te conozco a ti. 720  
¿No eres Roldán?

ROLDÁN Creo que sí.

ESCUDERO Mirad si lo digo yo.  
En «creo» pone si es él;  
¿cuál le tiene Amor esquivo!

BERNARDO El estar tan pensativo 725  
nos muestra su mal crüel.  
¡Ah, Roldán, señor, señor!

ROLDÁN ¿Habláis conmigo, por dicha?

BERNARDO ¡Ésta si que es gran desdicha!

ESCUDERO Como desdicha de amor. 730  
¡Estraño embelesamiento!

ROLDÁN ¡Oh Angélica dulce y cara!  
¿Adónde escondes la cara,  
que es gloria de mi tormento?  
El corazón se me quema, 735  
¡oh Angélica, mi reposo!

ESCUDERO Deste sermón amoroso,  
esta Angélica es el tema.

Parece que está en ser  
que puedes desafialle. 740

BERNARDO Quisiera yo remedialle  
si lo pudiera hacer.

*(Parece ANGÉLICA, y va tras ella ROLDÁN; pónese en la tramoya y desaparece, y a la vuelta parece la MALA FAMA, vestida como diré, con una tunicela negra, una trompeta negra en la mano, y alas negras y cabellera negra.)*

ROLDÁN ¿No es aquél mi cielo, cielos?  
Él es, pero ya se encubre;  
pues, cuando él se me descubre 745  
es porque me cubran duelos.

Tras ti voy, nueva Atalanta;  
que, si quiere socorrerme  
amor, puede aquí ponerme  
mil alas en cada planta. 750

Mi sol, ¿dó te transmontaste,  
y qué sombra te sucede?  
Mas, bien es que en noche quede  
el que de tu luz privaste.

BERNARDO De aventuras están llenas 755  
estas selvas, según veo.

ESCUDERO Viendo estoy lo que no creo.

BERNARDO ¡Calla!

ESCUDERO No respiro apenas.

MALA FAMA Detén el paso, senador romano,  
y aun la intención pudieras detenella, 760  
si tras sí, en vuelo presuroso y vano,  
no la llevara Angélica la bella.  
¿Mas tu consejo y proceder liviano  
así la entregas, que cebado en ella  
quieres que quede, ¡oh grave desventura!, 765  
tu clara fama para siempre obscura?

La Mala Fama soy, que tiene cuenta  
con las torpezas de excelentes hombres  
para entregallas a perpetua afrenta,  
y a viva muerte sus subidos nombres. 770  
Mi mano en este libro negro asienta,  
borrando la altivez de sus renombres,  
los hechos malos que en el tiempo hicieron  
cuando de amor la vana ley siguieron.

Aquí está el grande Alcides, no cortando 775  
de la hidra lerneas las cabezas,  
sino a los pies de Deyanira hilando,  
con mujeriles paños y ternezas.  
Está el rey Salomón; mas no juzgando  
las diferencias faltas de certezas, 780  
sino dando ocasión por mil razones  
que esté su salvación en opiniones.

Uno de aquel famoso triunvirato  
aquí le tengo escrito y señalado,  
cuando, a su patria y a su honor ingrato, 785  
cegó en la luz del rostro delicado.  
En mitad de la pompa y aparato  
del bélico furor, de miedo armado,  
los ojos vuelve y ánimo a la nueva  
Angélica egipciana que le lleva. 790

Es infinito el número que encierran  
aquestas negras hojas de los hechos  
de aquellos que su nombre y fama atierran,  
porque amor sujetó sus duros pechos;  
y si tú quieres ser de los que yerran, 795

aunque están los renglones tan estrechos,  
ancho lugar haré para que escriba  
tu nombre, y en infamia eterna viva.

*(Vuélvese la tramoya.)*

ROLDÁN Yo mudaré parecer,  
a pesar de lo que quiero. 800

BERNARDO ¿Conocéisme, caballero?

ROLDÁN Pues, ¿no os he de conocer?  
Bien sé que sois español  
y que Bernardo os llamáis.

BERNARDO ¿Gracias a Dios que miráis 805  
ya sin nublados el sol!

ROLDÁN ¿Habéis estado presente  
al caso de admiración?

BERNARDO Sí he estado.

ROLDÁN ¿Y no es gran razón  
que yo vuelva diferente, 810  
siendo una joya la honra  
que no se puede estimar?

BERNARDO Verdad es; mas por amar  
no se adquiere la deshonra.

ROLDÁN No hay amador que no haga 815  
mil disparates, si es fino;  
mas, ya que he cobrado el tino,  
y sanado de mi llaga,  
mis pasos caminarán  
por diferente sendero. 820

*(Entra MARFISA.)*

MARFISA Bernardo, ¿no es el guerrero  
éste a quien llaman Roldán?

BERNARDO Él es. Mas, ¿por qué lo dices?

MARFISA Porque su fama me fuerza  
a probar con él mi fuerza, 825  
porque tú la solenices  
y veas qué compañero  
te ha dado en mí la fortuna.

ROLDÁN ¡No hay, cual Angélica, alguna  
en todo nuestro hemisfero! 830

ESCUDERO ¡Por Dios, que se ha vuelto al tema!

ROLDÁN Falsa fue aquella visión,  
y de nuevo el corazón  
parece que se me quema.

*(Aparece otra vez ANGÉLICA, y huye a la tramoya, y vuélvese, y parece la*

BUENA FAMA, *vestida de blanco, con una corona en la cabeza, alas pintadas de varios colores y una trompeta.*)

¿Has tornado a amanecer, 835  
sol mío? Pues ya te sigo.

ESCUDERO Poco ha durado el amigo  
en su honroso parecer.

MARFISA Bernardo, ¿qué es lo que veo?

BERNARDO Calla y escucha, y verás 840  
misterios.

ESCUDERO No digas más,  
que quiere hablar, según creo.

BUENA FAMA Pues temor de la infamia no ha podido  
tus deseos volver a mejor parte,  
vuélvalos el amor de ser tenido, 845  
en todo el orbe por segundo Marte.  
En este libro de oro está esculpido,  
como en mármol o en bronce, en esta parte,  
tu nombre y el de aquellos esforzados  
que dieron a las armas sus cuidados. 850

Aquí, con inmortal, alto trofeo,  
notado tengo en la verdad que sigo,  
aquel gran caballero Macabeo,  
guía del pueblo que de Dios fue amigo.  
Casi a su lado el nombre escrito veo 855  
de aquel batallador que fue enemigo  
de la pereza infame, del que, en suma,  
puso en igual balanza, lanza y pluma.

Tengo otros mil que no puedo contarte,  
porque el tiempo y lugar no lo concede, 860  
y porque yo le tenga de avisarte  
lo que mi voz con mis escritos puede.  
Della verás, y dellos levantarte  
sobre el altura que aun al cielo excede,  
si dejas de seguir del niño ciego 865  
la blandura y regalo y dulce fuego.

Huye, Roldán, de Angélica, y advierte  
que, en seguir la belleza que te inflama,  
la vida pierdes y granjeas la muerte,  
perdiendo a mí, que soy la Buena Fama. 870  
Deben estas razones convencerte,  
pues Marte a nombre sin igual te llama,  
Amor a un abatido. En paz te queda,  
y lo que te deseo te suceda.

*(Vuélvese la tramoya.)*

ROLDÁN Bien sé que de Malgesí 875  
son todas estas visiones.

BERNARDO Pues dime: ¿a qué te dispones?

MARFISA De espanto no estoy en mí.

Mal dije; de admiración,  
que espanto jamás le tuve. 880

ROLDÁN Corto de manos anduve  
con una y otra visión;  
si pedazos las hiciera,  
no me dejaran confuso;  
mas volverán, que es su uso 885  
asaltarme dondequiera.

Respondiendo, pues, Bernardo,  
a lo que me preguntaste,  
digo que no hay mar que baste  
templar el fuego en que ardo. 890

Y quedaos en paz los dos,  
porque ir de aquí me conviene.

MARFISA ¡Estremado brío tiene!

BERNARDO Dios vaya, Roldán, con vos.

MARFISA Vilo, y no puedo creello: 895  
tal es lo que visto habemos.

BERNARDO Por el camino podremos  
hacer discurso sobre ello.

ESCUDERO En fin, ¿vamos a París?

BERNARDO ¿Ya no te he dicho que sí? 900

MARFISA Yo, a lo menos.

ESCUDERO Por allí  
hay camino, si advertís.

BERNARDO Los caballos, ¿dónde están?

ESCUDERO Aquí junto.



BERNARDO Ve por ellos.

ESCUDERO Allá subiréis en ellos. 905

MARFISA ¡Pensativo iba Roldán!

## Jornada tercera

*Salen LAUSO y CORINTO, pastores.*

LAUSO En el silencio de la noche, cuando  
ocupa el dulce sueño a los mortales,  
la pobre cuenta de mis ricos males  
estoy al cielo y a mi Clori dando.

Y, al tiempo cuando el sol se va mostrando, 5  
por las rosadas puertas orientales,  
con gemidos y acentos desiguales  
voy la antigua querella renovando.

Y cuando el sol de su estrellado asiento  
derechos rayos a la tierra envía, 10  
el llanto crece, y doblo los gemidos.

Vuelve la noche, y vuelvo al triste cuento,  
y siempre hallo en mi mortal porfía  
al cielo sordo, a Clori sin oídos.

CORINTO ¿Para qué tantas endechas? 15  
Lauso amigo, déjalas,  
pues mientras más dices, más  
siempre menos te aprovechas.

Yo tengo el corazón negro  
por Clori y por sus desdenes; 20  
mas, pues no me vienen bienes,  
ya con los males me alegro.

Clori y la nueva pastora,  
ajenas de nuestros males,  
con voces claras e iguales, 25  
venían cantando agora.

Al encuentro les salgamos  
y ayudemos su canticio;

que tanto llorar es vicio,  
si bien lo consideramos. 30

LAUSO ¿Viene Rústico con ellas?

CORINTO No se les quita del lado.

LAUSO ¡Ah pastor afortunado!  
Ni quiero oíllas, ni vellas.

CORINTO Eso ya no puede ser, 35  
que veslas, vienen allí;  
canta por amor de mí.

LAUSO Procúralas de entender.

(Entra CLORI, cantando, y RÚSTICO con ellas, y ANGÉLICA.)

CLORI ¡Bien haya quien hizo  
cadenitas, cadenas; 40  
bien haya quien hizo  
cadenas de amor!  
¡Bien haya el acero  
de que se formaron,  
y los que inventaron 45  
amor verdadero!  
¡Bien haya el dinero  
de metal mejor;  
bien haya quien hizo  
cadenas de amor! 50

LAUSO ¡Bien haya el amante

que a tantos vaivenes,  
iras y desdenes,  
firme está y constante!  
Éste se adelante 55  
al rico mayor.  
¡Bien haya quien hizo  
*cadenas de amor!*

RÚSTICO ¡Oh, quién supiera cantar!

CORINTO¿Que no lo sabes, pastor? 60

RÚSTICONi contralto ni tenor;  
que estoy para reventar.

CORINTO Mas, ¿va que tienes agallas?  
Muestra: abre bien la boca,  
que esta cura a mí me toca; 65  
abre más, si he de curallas.  
Ven acá. ¡Mal hayas tú  
y el padre que te engendró!

RÚSTICOPues, ¿qué culpa tengo yo?

CORINTO¡Ofrézcote a Bercebú! 70  
¿Y no has caído en la cuenta  
de que tenías agallas?

RÚSTICOPues, ¿hay más sino sacallas?

CLORIEsta burla me contenta;

que, puesto que bien le quiero, 75  
que le burlen me da gusto.

CORINTOYo te sacaré, a tu gusto,  
o cantor o pregonero.  
¿Tienes algún senojil?

RÚSTICOUna ligapierna tengo, 80  
y buena.

CORINTOYa me prevengo  
a hacerte cantor sutil.  
Aquésta poco aprovecha;  
que, para este menester,  
izquierda tiene de ser, 85  
que no vale la derecha.  
¿Qué me darás, y te haré  
cantor subido y notable?

RÚSTICOEn la paga no se hable,  
que un novillo te daré. 90  
La liga izquierda es aquésta:  
tómala, y pon diligencia  
en mostrar aquí tu ciencia.

CORINTODios sabe cuánto me cuesta.  
Mas con esta liga y lazo 95  
saldré muy bien con mi intento.

RÚSTICOHacia esta parte las siento.

CORINTODéjame atar; quita el brazo.

¿Con qué voz quieres quedar:  
tiple, contralto o tenor? 100

RÚSTICO Contrabajo es muy mejor.

CORINTO Ese no te ha de faltar  
mientras trates conmigo.  
Ten paciencia, sufre y calla;  
ya se ha quebrado una agalla. 105

RÚSTICO ¡Que me ahogas, enemigo!

CORINTO Contralto quedas, sin duda,  
que la voz lo manifiesta.  
... pues aun ahora está en muda;  
a otro estirón que le dé, 110  
estará como ha de estar.

RÚSTICO Ladrón, ¿quieresme ahogar?

CORINTO No lo sé; mas probaré.

CLORI ¡Acaba; la burla baste!

RÚSTICO ¡A mí semejantes burlas! 115

CORINTO Rústico, ¿de mí te burlas,  
que no me pagas y vasts?  
¡Pues a fee que has de llevar  
comida y sobrecomida!  
Todo, amigo, se comida 120

a ayudarme a este cantar:

*Corrido va el abad,  
por el cañaveral.*

Corrido va el abad,  
corrido va y muy mohíno, 125  
porque, por su desatino,  
cierto desastre le vino  
que le hizo caminar  
*por el cañaveral.*

Confiado en que es muy rico, 130  
no ha caído en que es borrico;  
y por aquesto me aplico  
a decirle este cantar:  
*por el cañaveral...*

*(Parece REINALDOS por la montaña.)*

LAUSO La burla ha estado, a lo menos 135  
como al sujeto conviene.

ANGÉLICA; Otra vez mi muerte viene!  
¡Abrid, tierra, vuestros senos  
y encerradme en ellos luego!

LAUSO; De qué, pastora, te espantas? 140

ANGÉLICA; A vosotras, tiernas plantas,  
mi vida o mi muerte entrego!

*(Éntrase ANGÉLICA huyendo.)*

CLORI Lauso, vámonos tras ella,  
a ver qué le ha sucedido.

LAUSOA tu voluntad rendido 145  
estoy siempre, ingrata bella.

*(Éntranse todos, y quédase CORINTO.)*

CORINTO Quedar quiero, a ver quién es  
este pensativo y bravo.  
El ademán yo le alabo;  
mas, ¿si es paladín francés? 150

REINALDOS O le falta al Amor conocimiento,  
o le sobra crueldad, o no es mi pena  
igual a la ocasión que me condena  
al género más duro de tormento.

Pero si Amor es dios, es argumento 155  
que nada ignora, y es razón muy buena  
que un dios no sea cruel. Pues, ¿quién ordena  
el terrible dolor que adoro y siento?

Si digo que es Angélica, no acierto;  
que tanto mal en tanto bien no cabe, 160  
ni me viene del cielo esta rüina.

Presto habré de morir, que es lo más cierto;  
que, al mal de quien la causa no se sabe,  
milagro es acertar la medicina.

CORINTO ¡Ta, ta! De amor viene herido; 165  
bien tenemos que hacer.

REINALDOS ¿Que no quieres parecer,  
oh bien, por mi mal perdido?

¿Has visto, pastor, acaso,  
por entre aquesta espesura, 170  
un milagro de hermosura



por quien yo mil muertes paso?

¿Has visto unos ojos bellos  
que dos estrellas semejan,  
y unos cabellos que dejan, 175  
por ser oro, ser cabellos?

¿Has visto, a dicha, una frente  
como espaciosa ribera,  
y una hilera y otra hilera  
de ricas perlas de Oriente? 180

Dime si has visto una boca  
que respira olor sabeo,  
y unos labios por quien creo  
que el fino coral se apoca.

Di si has visto una garganta 185  
que es coluna deste cielo,  
y un blanco pecho de yelo,  
do su fuego Amor quebranta;  
y unas manos que son hechas  
a torno de marfil blanco, 190  
y un compuesto que es el blanco  
do Amor despunta sus flechas.

CORINTO ¿Tiene, por dicha, señor,  
ombligo aquesa quimera,  
o pies de barro, como era 195  
la de aquel rey Donosor?

Porque, a decirte verdad,  
no he visto en estas montañas  
cosas tan ricas y estrañas  
y de tanta calidad. 200

Y fuera muy fácil cosa,  
si ellas por aquí anduvieran,  
por invisibles que fueran  
verlas mi vista curiosa.

Que una espaciosa ribera, 205  
dos estrellas y un tesoro  
de cabellos, que son oro,  
¿dónde esconderse pudiera?

Y el sabeo olor que dices,  
¿no me llevara tras sí? 210  
Porque en mi vida sentí  
romadizo en mis narices.  
Mas, en fin, decirte quiero  
lo que he hallado, y no ser terco.

REINALDOS ¿Qué son? Habla.

CORINTO Tres pies de puerco 215  
y unas manos de carnero.

REINALDOS ¡Oh hi de puta, bellaco!;  
pues, ¿con Reinaldos de burlas?

CORINTO De mis donaires y burlas  
siempre tales premios saco. 220

*(Éntrase huyendo CORINTO.)*

*(Suena dentro esta voz de ANGÉLICA.)*

ANGÉLICA ¡Socorredme, Reinaldos, que me matan!  
¡Mira que soy la sin ventura Angélica!

REINALDOS La voz es ésta de mi amada diosa.  
¿Adónde estás, tesoro de mi alma,  
única al mundo en hermosura y gracia? 225  
La triste barca del barquero horrendo  
pasaré por hallarte, y al abismo,  
cual nuevo Orfeo, bajaré llorando  
y romperé las puertas de diamante.

ANGÉLICA; Moriré si te tardas; date prisa! 230

REINALDOS; ¿Qué camino he de hacer, amada mía?  
¿Estás en las entrañas de la tierra,  
o encierrante estas peñas en su centro?  
Doquier que estás te buscaré, viviendo,  
o ya desnudo espíritu sin carne. 235

*(Salen dos SÁTIROS que traen a ANGÉLICA como arrastrando, con un cordel a la garganta.)*

ANGÉLICA; Socorredme, Reinaldos, que me matan!

REINALDOS No corráis más; volved, ligeras plantas,  
que no os va menos que la vida en esto.  
¡Miserable de mí! ¿Quién me detiene?  
¿Quién mis pies ha clavado con la tierra? 240  
¡Verdugos infernales, deteneos!  
¡No añudéis el cordel a la garganta,  
que es basa donde asienta y donde estriba  
el cielo de hermosura sobrehumana!  
¡Miserable de mí cien mil vegadas, 245  
que no puedo moverme ni dar paso!  
Canalla infame, ¿para qué os dais prisa  
a acabar esa vida de mi vida,  
a escurecer el sol que alumbra el mundo?  
¡Tate, traidores, que apretáis un cuello 250  
adonde el amor forma tales voces,  
que el mal desmenguan y la gloria aumentan  
del venturoso que escucharlas puede!  
¡Oh, que la ahogan! ¡Socorredla, cielos,  
pues yo no puedo! ¡Oh sátiros lascivos! 255  
¿Cómo tanta belleza no os ablanda?

*(Vanse los SÁTIROS.)*

Ya dieron fin a su cruel empresa;  
muerta queda mi vida, muerta queda  
la esperanza que en pie la sostenía:  
ahora os moveré, pues, sin provecho; 260  
otra vez y otras mil soy miserable;  
ahora, pies, me llevaréis do vea  
la imagen de la muerte más hermosa  
que vieron ni verán ojos humanos;  
¡oh pies, al bien enfermos y al mal sanos! 265

*(Llégase REINALDOS a ANGÉLICA.)*

¿Es posible que ante mí  
te mataron, dulce amiga?  
¿Y es posible que se diga  
que yo no te socorrí?  
¿Que es posible que la muerte 270  
ha sido tan atrevida,  
que acabó tu dulce vida  
con trance amargo y tan fuerte?  
¿Y que mi ventura encierra  
tanta desventura y duelo, 275  
que hoy tengo de ver mi cielo  
puesto debajo la tierra?  
¿Qué antropófagos, qué scitas  
contra ti se conjuraron,  
y qué manos te acabaron 280  
sacrílegas y malditas?  
Sin duda, el infierno todo  
fue en tan desdichada empresa,  
que así lo afirma y confiesa  
de tu muerte el triste modo. 285  
Mas yo le moveré guerra,

si es que me alcanza la vida  
en tu triste despedida  
para vivir en la tierra.

¿Yo vivir? Démoste agora 290  
sepultura, ¡oh ángel bello!,  
y después me veré en ello  
cuando se llegue la hora.

Será de azada esta daga,  
que abrirá la estrecha fuesa, 295  
y daráse en ello priesa,  
porque ha de hacer otra llaga.

Brazo en valor sin segundo,  
trabajad con entereza  
para enterrar la riqueza 300  
mayor que ha tenido el mundo.

Vuestro afán, y no mi celo,  
parece que en esto yerra,  
si he de sacar tanta tierra  
que venga a cubrir el cielo. 305

La tierra te sea liviana,  
estremo de la beldad  
que crió en cualquier edad  
la naturaleza humana.

El tesoro desentierra 310  
el que halla algún tesoro;  
mas yo sigo otro decoro,  
que cubro el mío con tierra.

Esta parte es concluida;  
otra falta, y concluiráse, 315  
si bien el alma costase,  
como ha de costar la vida.

Otra sepultura esquivá  
abriréis, daga, en mi pecho,  
con que daréis fin a un hecho 320  
que por luengos siglos viva.

Mi cuerpo, mi dulce y bella,  
quede en esta tierra dura  
cual piedra de sepultura,  
que dice quién yace en ella. 325

¡Ea, cobarde francés,  
morid con bríos ufanos,  
pues no os ataron las manos  
como os ligaron los pies!

*(Vase a dar REINALDOS con la daga; sale MALGESÍ en su misma figura y detiéndole el brazo, diciendo:)*

MALGESÍ No hagas tal, hermano amado; 330  
porque, en este desconcierto,  
antes que no verte muerto  
quiero verte enamorado.

Aquesta enterrada y muerta  
no es Angélica la bella, 335  
sino sombra o imagen della,  
que su vista desconcierta.

Para volverte en tu ser,  
hice aquesta semejanza;  
que el amor sin esperanza 340  
no suele permanecer.

Mas, pues es tal tu locura,  
que aun sin ella perseveras,  
mira, para que no mueras,  
vacía la sepultura. 345

REINALDOS ¿Que estos sobresaltos das  
al que tienes por hermano?  
Hechicero, mal cristiano;  
mas tú me lo pagarás.

Pues lo sabes, ¿por qué gustas 350  
de tratarme deste modo?

MALGESÍ Porque te estremas en todo,  
y a ningún medio te ajustas.

Ven, y pondréte en la mano  
a Angélica, y no fingida. 355

REINALDO Seréte toda mi vida  
humilde, obediente hermano.

*(Éntranse todos.)*

*(Suena una trompeta bastarda, lejos, y entran en el teatro CARLOMAGNO y GALALÓN.)*

CARLOMAGNO ¿Qué trompeta es la que suena?  
¿Si es acaso otra aventura  
que nos ponga en desventura, 360  
que la otra no fue buena?

Bien lo dijo Malgesí;  
mas yo, incrédulo y cristiano,  
tuve su aviso por vano,  
y crédito no le di. 365

Otra vez suena. ¿No habrá  
quien nos avise qué es esto?

GALALÓN Yo te lo diré bien presto.

CARLOMAGNO Mejor éste lo dirá.

*(Entra un PAJE.)*

PAJE Por San Dionís han entrado 370  
dos apuestos caballeros  
que parecen forasteros,  
pero de esfuerzo sobrado:  
uno mayor y robusto,  
otro mancebo y galán. 375

GALALÓN¿Dónde llegan?

PAJELlegarán.

Mas miradlos, si os da gusto,  
que veis do asoman allí.

*(Entra MARFISA y BERNARDO, a caballo.)*

CARLOMAGNO¿Bravo ademán y valiente!

GALALÓN¿Qué gran número de gente 380  
que traen los dos tras de sí!

CARLOMAGNO Pondré yo que es desafío.

GALALÓNEl continente así muestra.

CARLOMAGNO¿Dónde está agora la diestra  
de Roldán?

GALALÓN¿Ah, señor mío! 385  
¿Faltan en tu corte iguales  
a Roldán?

CARLOMAGNOYo no lo sé.  
Calla, que hablan.



GALALÓN Sí haré.

CARLOMAGNO Si dijeras desiguales...

MARFISA Escúchame, Carlomagno, 390  
que yo hablaré como alcance  
mi voz hasta tus orejas,  
por más que estemos distantes;  
y denme también oídos  
tus famosos Doce Pares, 395  
que yo les daré mis manos  
cada y cuando que gustaren.  
Una mujer soy que encierra  
deseos en sí tan grandes,  
que compiten con el cielo, 400  
porque en la tierra no caben.  
Soy más varón en las obras  
que mujer en el semblante;  
ciño espada y traigo escudo,  
huigo a Venus, sigo a Marte; 405  
poco me curo de Cristo;  
de Mahoma no hay hablarme;  
es mi dios mi brazo solo,  
y mis obras, mis Penates.  
Fama quiero y honra busco, 410  
no entre bailes ni cantares,  
sino entre acerados petos,  
entre lanzas y entre alfanjes.  
Y es fama que las que vibran  
y las que ciñen tus Pares 415  
vuelan y cortan más que otras  
regidas de brazos tales.  
Por probar si esto es verdad,  
vivos deseos me traen,  
y a todos los desafío, 420  
pero a singular certamen;  
y, para que no se afrenten

de una mujer que esto hace,  
mi nombre quiero decilles:  
soy Marfisa, y esto baste. 425

BERNARDO En el padrón de Merlín  
va Marfisa a aposentarse,  
donde esperará tres días  
el deseado combate;  
y si tantos acudieren 430  
que no puedan despacharse,  
ella desde aquí me escoge  
y elige por su ayudante.  
Soy caballero español  
de prendas y de linaje, 435  
y quizá el mismo deseo  
de Marfisa aquí me trae.  
Y entended que el desafío  
ha de ser a todo trance,  
porque grandes honras deben 440  
comprarse a peligros grandes.

MARFISA Decid que deje Roldán  
amorosos disparates,  
que con Venus y Cupido  
se aviene mal el dios Marte. 445  
Lo que el español ha dicho  
lo confirmo; y, porque es tarde  
y el padrón no está muy cerca,  
el Dios que adoráis os guarde.

CARLOMAGNO ¿Hay, por dicha, Galalón, 450  
en París otros Roldanes?  
¿Hay otro alguno que pueda  
con Reinaldos igualarse?  
Si los hay, ¿cómo han callado,  
oyendo desafiarse? 455

¡Oh, mal hubieses, Angélica,  
que tantos males me haces!  
Colgados de tu hermosura,  
todos mis valientes traes;  
solo han dejado a París, 460  
solo, por ir a buscarte.

GALALÓN Mientras vive Galalón,  
ninguno podrá agraviarte;  
y mañana con las obras  
haré mis dichos verdades. 465  
Dame licencia, señor,  
porque al punto vaya a armarme.

CARLOMAGNO No hay para qué me la pida  
quien es de los Doce Pares.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Entran FERRAGUTO y ROLDÁN, riñendo, con las espadas desnudas.)*

ROLDÁN Tú le mataste, y fue alevosamente, 470  
moro español, sin fe y sin Dios nacido.

FERRAGUTO Tu falsa lengua, como falso, miente,  
y mentirá mil veces, y ha mentido.

ROLDÁN ¿No fue maldad echarle en la corriente  
del río?

FERRAGUTO Muy bien puede del vencido 475

hacer el vencedor lo que quisiere.

ROLDÁN De tu falso argüir eso se infiere.

No te retires, bárbaro arrogante,  
que quiero castigar tu alevosía.

FERRAGUTO Si me retiro, fanfarrón de Aglante, 480  
el paso sí, la voluntad no es mía.  
Por Mahoma te juro, y Trivigante,  
que no sé quién me impele y me desvía  
de tu presencia, ¡oh paladín gallardo!

ROLDÁN Con ésta acabarás, que ya me tardo. 485

*(Retírase FERRAGUTO, y, puesto en la tramoya, al tirarle ROLDÁN una estocada, se vuelva la tramoya, y parece en ella ANGÉLICA, y ROLDÁN, echándose a los pies della; al punto que se inclina, se vuelve la tramoya, y parece uno de los SÁTIROS, y hállase ROLDÁN abrazado con sus pies.)*

ROLDÁN ¿Qué milagros son éstos, Dios inmenso?  
¿Es piedad del Amor ésta que veo?  
Arrójome a tus pies, y en esto pienso  
que satisfago en todo a mi deseo.  
Coge, amada enemiga, el fruto y censo 490  
que estos labios te dan, y por trofeo  
ponga Amor en su templo que un Orlando  
está tus bellas plantas adorando.

De ámbar pensé, mas no es sino de azufre,  
el olor que despiden estas plantas. 495  
¿Adónde tanto engaño, Amor, se sufre,  
o quién puede formar visiones tantas?  
Ésta veré si esta estocada sufre.

*(Vuélvese la tramoya, y parece MALGESÍ en su forma.)*

MALGESÍPrimo, ¿que no te enmiendas ni te espantas?

ROLDÁN;Oh Malgesí! Hazaña ha sido aquésta 500  
que mi amor y tu ciencia manifiesta.

Mas, dime: ¿de qué sirven tantas pruebas  
para ver que estoy loco y que me pierdo,  
sabiendo que el estilo que tú llevas  
ni le cree ni le admite el hombre cuerdo? 505

MALGESÍVen conmigo, Roldán; daréte nuevas  
de tu bien por tu mal.

ROLDÁN;Oh sabio acuerdo!  
Llévame, primo, en presuroso vuelo  
deste infierno de ausencia a ver mi cielo.

MALGESÍ Arrima las espaldas a esa caña, 510  
los ojos cierra y de Jesús te olvida.

ROLDÁNGrave cosa me pides.

MALGESÍDate maña,  
que importa a tu contento esta venida.

ROLDÁN¿Estoy bien puesto?

MALGESÍBien.

ROLDÁNJesús me valga,

aunque jamás con esta empresa salga. 515

*(Vuélvese la tramoya con ROLDÁN; salen BERNARDO y MARFISA, y suena dentro una trompeta.)*

BERNARDO Trompeta y caballos sienta,  
y, según mi parecer,  
paladín debe de ser  
que viene al padrón contento,  
y seguro de alcanzar 520  
de ti, Marfisa, el trofeo.

MARFISAA pie viene, a lo que veo.

BERNARDOPues, ¿quién le hizo apear?

MARFISA Lo que a nosotros. ¿No ves  
que aquí caballo no llega? 525

BERNARDOSin duda, es de la refriega;  
que me parece francés.

*(Entra GALALÓN, armado de peto y espaldas.)*

GALALÓN Sáveos Dios, copia dichosa,  
tan bella como valiente.

BERNARDODios te salve y te contente. 530

MARFISA¡Salutación enfadosa!  
Sálveme mi brazo a mí,

y conténteme mi fuerza.

GALALÓN Vuestro desafío me fuerza  
y mueve a venir aquí. 535

MARFISA Dime si eres paladín.

GALALÓN Paladín digo que soy.

BERNARDO ¿Partiste de París hoy?

GALALÓN Anoche.

BERNARDO Pues, ¿a qué fin?

GALALÓN No más de a ver si hay qué ver 540  
en ti y la bella Marfisa.

BERNARDO Tú te has dado buena prisa.

GALALÓN Conviene, porque hay que hacer.

MARFISA ¿Qué tienes que hacer?

GALALÓN Venceros  
y dar a París la vuelta. 545

BERNARDO Si cual tienes lengua suelta

tienes agudos aceros,  
bien saldrás con tu intención.  
Mas, dime: ¿cómo es tu nombre?

GALALÓN Diréoslo, porque os asombre: 550  
es mi nombre Galalón,  
el gran señor de Maganza,  
de los Doce el escogido.

BERNARDO Días ha que yo he sabido  
que eres una buena lanza, 555  
un crisol de la verdad,  
un abismo de elocuencia,  
un imposible de ciencia,  
un archivo de lealtad.

MARFISA Contra la razón te pones, 560  
Bernardo, porque la fama  
por todo el mundo derrama  
que éste es saco de traiciones,  
y aun enemigo mortal  
de todos los paladines, 565  
malsín sobre los malsines,  
mentiroso y desleal,  
y, sobre todo, cobarde.

GALALÓN A la prueba me remito,  
y vengamos al conflicto, 570  
que se va haciendo tarde.  
Empero, si queréis iros  
sin comenzar esta empresa,  
yo os juro y hago promesa  
de eternamente serviros 575  
y de no desenvainar  
en contra vuestra mi espada.



BERNARDO Promesa calificada  
y muy digna de estimar.

MARFISA Dame la mano, que quiero 580  
aceptarte por amigo.

GALALÓN Doyla, porque siempre sigo  
proceder de caballero.  
¡Cuerpo de quien me parió,  
que los huesos me quebrantas! 585

MARFISA Pues, ¿desto poco te espantas?

GALALÓN De menos me espanto yo.  
De modo vas apretando,  
que se acerca ya mi fin.

BERNARDO ¿Un famoso paladín 590  
así se ha de estar quejando  
porque le dé una doncella  
la mano por gran favor?

GALALÓN ¿Ésta es doncella? Es furor,  
es rayo que me atropella, 595  
es de mi vida el contraste,  
pues que ya me la ha quitado.

MARFISA ¡Por Dios, que se ha desmayado!

BERNARDO¿Cómo, y tanto le apretaste?

MARFISA La mano le hice pedazos. 600

BERNARDO¡Oh desdichado francés!

MARFISAQuitarle quiero el arnés,  
pues viene sin guardabrazos,  
y ponerle por trofeo  
colgado de alguna rama, 605  
con un mote que su fama  
descubra, como deseo.  
Pero fálтанme instrumentos  
con que ponerlo en efecto.

(MALGESÍ *dice de dentro:*)

MALGESÍNo faltarán, te prometo, 610  
pues sé tus buenos intentos.  
Esos ministros que envió  
cumplirán tu voluntad.

BERNARDO¡Oh, qué extraña novedad!

MARFISA¿Quién sabe el intento mío? 615  
Los versos dicen lo mismo  
que imaginé en mi intención.  
¿Si llevan a Galalón  
estos diablos al abismo?

GALALÓN Ya yo entiendo que aquí andas; 620  
a ti digo, Malgesí.

Di: ¿no hallaste para mí  
otro coche ni otras andas?

*(Llévanle los SÁTIROS en brazos a GALALÓN.)*

MARFISA Di cómo dice el trofeo;  
quizá yo no lo he entendido. 625

BERNARDO Agudo está y escogido.

MARFISA Léelo en voz.

BERNARDO En voz lo leo:  
Estar tan limpio y terso a queste acero,  
con la entereza que por todo alcanza,  
nos dice que es, y es dicho verdadero, 630  
del señor de la casa de Maganza.  
Estas selvas está cierto  
que están llenas de aventuras.

MARFISA Quedado habemos a oscuras,  
por el sol que se ha encubierto; 635  
y, entre tanto que él visita  
los antípodas de abajo,  
demos al sueño el trabajo  
que el reposo solicita.  
A esta parte dormiré; 640  
tú, Bernardo, duerme a aquélla,  
hasta que salga la estrella  
que a Febo guarda la fe.  
Y si en aquestos tres días  
no vinieren paladines, 645  
buscaremos otros fines  
de más altas bazarías.

BERNARDO Bien dices, aunque el sosiego  
pocas veces le procuro,  
con todo, a este peñón duro 650  
el sueño y cabeza entrego.

*(Échase a dormir.)*

*(Sale por lo hueco del teatro CASTILLA, con un león en la una mano, y en la otra un castillo.)*

CASTILLA ¿Duermes, Bernardo amigo,  
y aun de pesado sueño,  
como el que de cuidados no procede?  
¿Huyes de ser testigo 655  
de que un estraño dueño  
tu amada patria sin razón herede?  
¿Esto sufrirse puede?

Advierte que tu tío,  
contra todo derecho, 660  
forma en el casto pecho  
una opinión, un miedo, un desvarío  
que le mueve a hacer cosa  
ingrata a ti, infame a mí, y dañosa.

Quiere entregarme a Francia, 665  
temeroso que, él muerto,  
en mis despojos no se entregue el moro,  
y está en esta ignorancia  
de mi valor incierto  
y dese tuyo sin igual que adoro. 670  
No mira que el decoro  
de animosa y valiente,  
sin cansancio o desmayo,  
que me infundió Pelayo,  
he guardado en mi pecho eternamente, 675  
y he de guardar contino,

sin que pavor le tuerza su camino.

Ven, y con tu presencia  
infundirás un nuevo  
corazón en los pechos desmayados; 680  
curarás la dolencia  
del rey, que, ciego al cebo  
de pensamientos en temor fundados,  
sigue vanos cuidados,  
tan en deshonra mía, 685  
que, si tú no me acorres  
y luego me socorres,  
huiré la luz del sol, huiré del día,  
y en noche eterna obscura  
lloraré sin cesar mi desventura. 690

Por oculto camino  
del centro de la tierra  
te llevaré, Bernardo, al patrio suelo.  
Ven luego, que el destino  
propicio tuyo encierra 695  
tú en tu brazo tu honra y mi consuelo.  
Ven, que el benigno Cielo  
a tu favor se inclina.

Llevaré a tu escudero  
por el mismo sendero. 700  
Y tú, sin par, que aspiras a divina,  
procura otras empresas,  
que es poco lo que en éstas interesas.

Nadie en esta querella  
batallará contigo, 705  
que tras sí se los lleva la hermosura  
de Angélica la bella,  
común fiero enemigo  
de los que en esto ponen su ventura.  
Y está cierta y segura 710

que dentro en pocos años  
verás estrañas cosas,  
amargas y gustosas,  
engaños falsos, ciertos desengaños.  
Y, en tanto, en paz te queda, 715

y así cual lo deseo te suceda.

*(Éntrase CASTILLA con BERNARDO por lo hueco del teatro.)*

MARFISA Selvas de encantos llenas,  
¿qué es aquesto que veo?  
¿Qué figuras son éstas que se ofrecen?  
¿Son malas o son buenas? 720  
Entre creo y no creo,  
me tienen estas sombras que parecen:  
admiraciones crecen  
    en mí, no ningún miedo.  
Lleváronme a Bernardo, 725  
y aquí sin causa aguardo.  
Ir quiero a do mostrar mi esfuerzo puedo.  
Vuelto me he en un instante;  
derecha voy al campo de Agramante.

*(CORINTO, pastor, y ANGÉLICA, como pastora.)*

CORINTO Digo que te llevaré, 730  
si fuese a cabo del mundo.

ANGÉLICA En tu valor, sin segundo,  
sé bien que bien me fié.

CORINTO Haya güelte, y tú verás  
si te llevo do quisieres. 735

ANGÉLICA Mira tú cuánto pudieres,  
que eso mismo gastarás;  
    que tengo joyas que son  
de valor y parecer.

CORINTO ¿adónde se han de vender? 740

ANGÉLICA Ahí está la confusión.

CORINTO No reparar en el precio:  
que, cuando hay necesidad,  
es punto de habilidad  
dar la cosa a menos precio. 745

Y más, que todo lo allana  
un buen ingenio cursado.  
Y ¿cuándo has determinado  
que partamos?

ANGÉLICA Yo, mañana.

CORINTO Daremos de aquí en Marsella, 750  
y allí nos embarcaremos,  
y el camino tomaremos  
para España, rica y bella.

Y, en saliendo del Estrecho,  
tomar el rumbo a esta mano 755  
por el mar profundo y cano  
que tantas burlas me ha hecho.

Digo que si naves hay,  
y en el viento no hay reveses,  
en menos de trece meses 760  
yo te pondré en el Catay.  
¿Quieres más?

ANGÉLICA Eso me basta,  
si así lo ordenase el Cielo.

CORINTO Aunque me ves deste pelo,  
soy marinero de casta, 765  
y nado como un atún,  
y descubro como un lince,  
y trabajo más que quince,  
y más que veinte, y aún.

Pues, en el guardar secreto, 770  
haz cuenta que mudo soy.  
¿Quieres que nos vamos hoy?

*(Entra REINALDOS.)*

ANGÉLICA ¡Oh nuevo y terrible aprieto!  
Si éste me conoce, es cierta  
mi muerte y mi sepultura. 775

CORINTO Pues encubre tu hermosura,  
si es que puede estar cubierta.  
Pero dime: ¿que éste es  
el francés del otro día?  
¡Adiós, pastora mía, 780  
que está mi vida en mis pies!

*(Huye CORINTO.)*

ANGÉLICA No es acertado esperalle;  
muy mejor será huir.

REINALDOS ¿Sabrásme, amiga, decir,  
de un rostro, donaire y talle 785  
que es, más que humano, divino?  
Alza el rostro. ¿A qué te encubres,  
que parece que descubres  
un no sé qué peregrino?



Alza a ver. ¡Oh santos cielos! 790  
¿Qué es esto que ven mis ojos?  
¡Oh gloria de mis enojos,  
oh quietud de mis recelos!  
¿Quién os puso en este traje?  
¿Huísos? Pues, ¡vive Dios!, 795  
ingrata, que he de ir tras vos  
hasta que al infierno baje,  
o hasta que al cielo me encumbre,  
si allá os pensáis esconder;  
que el tino no he de perder, 800  
pues va delante tal lumbre.

*(Corre ANGÉLICA y entra por una puerta, y REINALDOS tras ella; y, al salir por otra, haya entrado ROLDÁN, y encuentra con ella.)*

ROLDÁN De mi dolor conmovido,  
te ha puesto el cielo en mis brazos.

REINALDOSuelta, que te haré pedazos,  
amante descomedido; 805  
suelta, digo, y considera  
la grosería que haces.

ROLDÁN¿Para qué turbas mis paces,  
sombra despiadada y fiera?  
¿No ves que esta prenda es mía 810  
de razón y de derecho?

REINALDOS¡Por Dios, que te pase el pecho!

ANGÉLICA¡Suerte airada, estrella impía!

REINALDOS ¿Fíaste en ser encantado,  
que no quieres defenderte? 815

ROLDÁN No fío sino en tenerte  
por un simple enamorado.

REINALDOS ¡Mataréte, vive el cielo!

ROLDÁN Si puedes, luego me acaba.

REINALDOS ¿Hay desvergüenza tan brava? 820

ROLDÁN ¿Hay tan necio y simple celo?

ANGÉLICA ¿Hay hembra tan sin ventura  
como yo? Dúdolo, cierto.  
¡Suelta, cruel, que me has muerto  
a manos de tu locura! 825

REINALDOS ¡Suéltala, digo!

ROLDÁN ¡No quiero!

REINALDOS ¿Defiéndete, pues!

ROLDÁN ¡Ni aquesto!

REINALDOS ¡Loco estás!

ROLDÁN Yo lo confieso,  
aunque de estar cuerdo espero.

ANGÉLICA Divididme en dos pedazos, 830  
y repartid por mitad.

ROLDÁN No parto yo la beldad  
que tengo puesta en mis brazos.

REINALDOS Dejarla tienes entera,  
o la vida en estas manos. 835

ANGÉLICA ¡Oh hambrientos lobos tiranos,  
cuál tenéis esta cordera!  
El cielo se viene abajo,  
de mi angustia condolido.

ROLDÁN ¡Oh salteador atrevido, 840  
cuán sin fruto es tu trabajo!

*(Descuélgase la nube y cubre a todos tres, que se esconden por lo hueco del teatro; y salen luego el EMPERADOR CARLOMAGNO y GALALÓN, la mano en una banda, lastimada cuando se la apretó MARFISA.)*

CARLOMAGNO ¿Que vencistes a Marfisa?

GALALÓN Llegué y vencí todo junto,  
porque yo no pierdo punto  
si acaso importa la prisa. 845  
Maltratóme aquesta mano

de un bravo golpe de espada,  
de que quedó magullada,  
porque fue el golpe de llano.

CARLOMAGNO ¿Qué se hizo el español? 850

GALALÓN Como vio en mí a toda Francia,  
se deshizo su arrogancia  
como las nubes al sol.  
También le dejé vencido.

CARLOMAGNO ¡Brava hazaña, Galalón! 855

GALALÓN Hazaña de un corazón  
que es de ti favorecido.

CARLOMAGNO ¿Quién es éste?

GALALÓN Malgesí.

CARLOMAGNO ¡Oh, a qué buen tiempo que viene!  
Parece que se detiene. 860  
¿Viene armado?

GALALÓN Creo que sí.

*(Entra MALGESÍ con el escudo de GALALÓN, donde vienen escritos los cuatro versos de antes.)*

CARLOMAGNO Extraña armadura es ésta,

¡oh Malgesí!, caro amigo.

GALALÓN La ciencia deste enemigo  
honra y vida y más me cuesta. 865

MALGESÍ Señor, pues sabéis leer,  
leed aquesta escritura.

GALALÓN Mi cobardía se apura  
si más quiero aquí atender.  
Irme quiero a procurar 870  
venganza deste embaidor.

*(Entra GALALÓN.)*

MALGESÍ Después os diré, señor,  
cosas que os han de admirar.

CARLOMAGNO ¿Adónde queda Roldán,  
y adónde queda Reinaldos? 875

MALGESÍ Sacro emperador, miraldos  
de la manera que están.

*(Vuelven a salir ROLDÁN, REINALDOS y ANGÉLICA, de la misma manera  
como se entraron cuando les cubrió la nube.)*

REINALDOS Mi trabajo doy al viento,  
por más que mi fuerza empleo.

ROLDÁN Reinaldos, no soy Anteo, 880

que me ha de faltar aliento.

ANGÉLICA ¡Cobardes como arrogantes,  
de tal modo me tratáis,  
que no es posible seáis  
ni caballeros ni amantes! 885

MALGESÍ Vuelve la vista, emperador supremo;  
verás el genio de París rompiendo  
los aires y las nubes, paraninfo  
despachado del cielo en favor tuyo.

CARLOMAGNO ¡Hermosa vista y novedad es ésta! 890

*(Parece un ÁNGEL en una nube volante.)*

ÁNGEL Préstame, Carlo, atento y grato oído,  
y escucha del divino acuerdo cuanto  
tiene en tu daño y gusto estatuido  
allá en las aulas del alcázar santo.  
Presto estos campos con marcial rüido 895  
retumbarán, y con horror y espanto  
volverá las espaldas la cristiana  
a la gente agarena y africana.

En honor de Macón y Trivigante,  
con torcida y errada fantasía, 900  
viste las duras armas Agramante,  
y deja Ferragut a Andalucía.  
Rodamonte feroz viene delante;  
sus fuertes moros Zaragoza envía,  
con Marsilio, su rey, y el rey Sobrino, 905  
tan prudente, que casi es adivino.

Queda Libia desierta, sin un moro;  
de África quedan solas las mezquitas,  
y todos a una voz tus lirios de oro

afrentan con palabras inauditas. 910  
Mas tú, guardando el sin igual decoro  
que guardas en empresas exquisitas,  
sal al encuentro luego a esta canalla,  
puesto que perderás en la batalla.

Pero después la poderosa mano 915  
ayudarte de modo determina,  
que del moro español y el africano  
seas el miedo y la total rüina.  
Vuelvo con esto al trono soberano,  
a ver si en tu favor se determina 920  
de nuevo alguna cosa, y en un punto  
tendrás mi vista y el aviso junto.

*(Vase.)*

CARLOMAGNO ¡Gracias te doy, Dios inmenso,  
por el aviso y merced!

ROLDÁN Pues ella cayó en mi red, 925  
gozalla, sin duda, pienso.

REINALDOS ¿Todavía estás en eso?

ROLDÁN ¿Y tú en eso todavía?

CARLOMAGNO De vuestra loca porfía  
he de sacar buen suceso, 930  
y ha de ser desta manera:  
aquesta dama llevad,  
y al momento la entregad  
al gran duque de Baviera,  
y el que más daño hiciere 935

en el contrario escuadrón,  
llevará por galardón  
la prenda que tanto quiere.

ROLDÁN Soy contento.

REINALDOSoy contento.

ROLDÁN; Morirán luego a mis manos 940  
andaluces y africanos!

MALGESÍ; Vano saldrá vuestro intento!

ROLDÁN ; Despedazaré a Agramante  
y a su ejército en un punto!  
Cuéntenle ya por difunto. 945

MALGESÍ No te alargues, arrogante,  
que Dios dispone otra cosa,  
como en efecto verás.

ROLDÁN; Oh Agramante! ¿Dónde estás?

REINALDOS; Por mía cuento esta diosa! 950  
Cuando con victoria vuelvas,  
crecerá tu gusto y fama,  
que por ahora nos llama  
fin suspenso a nuestras selvas.

*(Suenan chirimías, y dase fin a la comedia.)*





# LOS BAÑOS DE ARGEL



*Comedia famosa de Los baños de Argel*

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YZUF, *renegado.*

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MORO 2.

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*Un* VIEJO.

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*Un* SACRISTÁN.

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*Dos arcabuceros cristianos.*

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CADÍ.

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LA SEÑORA CATALINA.

*Un* JUDÍO.

OSORIO.

GUILLERMO, *pastor.*

## Jornada primera

CAURALÍ, *capitán de Argel*; YZUF, *renegado*; *otros cuatro moros, que se señalan así: 1, 2, 3, 4.*

YSUF De en uno en uno y con silencio vengan,  
que ésta es la trocha y el lugar es éste,  
y a la parte del monte más se atengan.

CAURALÍ Mira, Yzuf, que no yerres, y te cueste  
la vida el no acertar.

YSUF Pierde cuidado; 5  
haz que la gente el hierro y fuego apreste.

CAURALÍ ¿Por dó tienes, Yzuf, determinado  
que demos el asalto?

YSUF Por la sierra,  
lugar que, por ser fuerte, no es guardado.  
Nací y crecí, cual dije, en esta tierra, 10  
y sé bien sus entradas y salidas  
y la parte mejor de hacerle guerra.

CAURALÍ Ya vienen las escalas prevenidas,  
y están las atalayas hasta agora  
con borrachera y sueño entretenidas. 15

YSUF Conviene que los ojos de la aurora

no nos hallen aquí.

CAURALÍ Tú eres el todo:  
guía, y embiste, y vence.

YSUF Sea en buen hora,  
y no se rompa en cosa alguna el modo  
que tengo dado; que con él, sin duda, 20  
a daros la victoria me acomodo,  
primero que socorro alguno acuda.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Suena dentro vocería de moros; enciéndese hachos, pónese fuego al lugar, sale un VIEJO a la muralla medio desnudo y dice:)*

VIEJO ¡Válame Dios! ¿Qué es esto?  
¿Moros hay en la tierra?  
¡Perdidos somos, triste! 25  
¡Vecinos, que os perdéis; al arma, al arma!  
De los atajadores  
la diligencia ha sido  
aquesta vez burlada;  
las atalayas duermen, todo es sueño. 30  
¡Oh si mis prendas caras,  
cual un cristiano Eneas,  
sobre mis flacos hombros  
sacase deste incendio a luz segura!  
¿Que no hay quien grite al arma? 35  
¿No hay quien haga pedazos  
esas campanas mudas?  
¡A socorremos voy, amados hijos!  
*(Éntrase.)*

*(Sale el SACRISTÁN a la muralla, con una sotana vieja y un paño de tocar.)*

SACRISTÁN Turcos son, en conclusión.

¡Oh torre, defensa mía!, 40

ventaja a la sacristía

hacéis en esta ocasión.

Tocar las campanas quiero,

y gritar apriesa al arma;

*(Toca la campana.)*

el corazón se desarma 45

de brío, y de miedo muero.

Ningún hacho en la marina

ninguna atalaya enciende,

señal do se comprehende

ser cierta nuestra ruina. 50

Como persona aplicada

a la Iglesia, y no al trabajo,

mejor meneo el badajo

que desenvaino la espada.

*(Torna a tocar y éntrase.)*

*(Salen al teatro CAURALÍ, YZUF y otros dos moros.)*

YSUF Por esta parte acudirán, sin duda, 55

los que del monte quieran ampararse;

sosíégate, y verás medrosa y muda

gente que viene por aquí a salvarse;

y, antes que aquella del socorro acuda,

conviene que se acuda al retirarse. 60

CAURALÍ¿Los bajeles no están bien a la orilla?

MORO 1Y estibados de gusto y de mancilla.

*(Sale el VIEJO que salió a la muralla, con un niño en brazos medio desnudo y otro pequeño de la mano.)*

PADRE ¿Adónde os llevaré, pedazos vivos  
de mis muertas entrañas? Si a ventura  
tendría, antes que fuédeses cautivos, 65  
veros en una estrecha sepultura.

CAURALÍ De aquesos tus discursos pensativos  
te sacará mi espada, que procura,  
sin acudir al gusto de tu muerte,  
darte la vida y ensalzar mi suerte. 70

FRANCISQUITO ¿Para qué me sacó, padre, del lecho?  
¡Que me muero de frío! ¿Adónde vamos?  
Llégueme a mí, como a mi hermano, al pecho.  
¿Cómo tan de mañana madrugamos?

PADRE ¡Oh, deste inútil tronco ya y deshecho, 75  
tiernos, amables y hermosos ramos!  
No sé dó voy; aunque, si bien se advierte,  
deste camino el fin será mi muerte.

CAURALÍ Llévalos tú, Bairán, a la marina,  
y mira bien que esté la armada a punto, 80  
porque, según os muestra la bocina,  
la esposa de Titón ya viene junto.

*(Éntrase el VIEJO; sale el SACRISTÁN.)*

PADRE Huir el mal que el Cielo determina,



es trabajo escusado.

SACRISTÁN Yo barrunto,  
si el cielo mi agudeza no socorre, 85  
que estaba más seguro yo en mi torre.  
¿Quién me engañó? Y más si, a dicha, yerro  
el camino o atajo de la sierra.

CAURALÍ ¡Camina, perro, a la marina!

SACRISTÁN ¿Perro?  
Agora sé que fue mi madre perra. 90

CAURALÍ Aguija tú con él, y zarpe el ferro  
la capitana, y vaya tierra a tierra,  
hasta la cala donde dimos fondo.

*(Éntrase el MORO y el SACRISTÁN.)*

YZUF ¿Qué es lo que dices Cauralí?

MORO 2 Yo no respondo.

YSUF Escucha, Cauralí, que me parece 95  
que una trompeta a mis oídos suena.

CAURALÍ Sin duda, es el temor el que te ofrece  
el son que tus bravezas desordena.

YSUF Toca tú a recoger, que ya amanece,

y está tu armada de despojos llena, 100  
y creo que el socorro se avecina.  
¡A la marina!

CAURALÍ¡Hola, a la marina!

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Suena una trompeta bastarda; salen cuatro moros, uno tras otro, cargados de despojos.)*

MORO 1 Aunque la carga es poca, es de provecho.

MORO 2Yo no sé lo que llevo, pero vaya.

MORO 3Lo que hasta aquí está hecho, está bien hecho. 105

MORO 4¡Permita Alá que esté libre la playa!

*(Sale un MORO con una doncella, llamada COSTANZA, medio desnuda.)*

COSTANZASaltos el corazón me da en el pecho;  
falta el aliento, el ánimo desmaya.  
Llévame más despacio.

MORO¡Aguija, perra,  
que el mar te aguarda!

COSTANZA¡Adiós, mi cielo y tierra! 110  
*(Éntrase COSTANZA.)*

*(Sale UNO a la muralla.)*

UNO ¡A la marina, a la marina, amigos,  
que los turcos se embarcan muy apriesa!  
Si aguijáis, dejarán los enemigos  
la mal perdida y mal ganada presa.

*(Entra un ARCABUCERO CRISTIANO.)*

ARCABUCEROSólo habremos llegado a ser testigos 115  
de que Troya fue aquí.

OTRO¡Fortuna aviesa,  
pon alas en mis pies, fuego en mis manos!

OTRONuestros ahíncos han salido vanos,  
porque ya los turcos son embarcados  
y en jolito se están cerca de tierra. 120

*(Entra el CAPITÁN CRISTIANO.)*

CAPITÁN¡Oh! ¡Mal hayan mis pies, acostumbrados,  
más que a la arena, a riscos de la sierra!  
¿Qué han hecho los jinetes?

UNODesmayados  
llegaron los caballos tierra a tierra,  
a tiempo que zarpaban las galeras, 125  
y tras ellos llegaron tres banderas.  
Los dos atajadores de la playa

muertos hallé de arcabuzazos, creo.  
La oscuridad disculpa al atalaya  
del mísero suceso que aquí veo. 130

OTRO¿Qué habemos de hacer?

CAPITÁNLa gente vaya  
tomando por el monte algún rodeo,  
y embósquese en la cala allí vecina,  
por ver lo que el cosario determina.

UNO ¿Qué ha de determinar, si no es tornarse 135  
a Argel, pues que su intento ha conseguido?

CAPITÁN¿Quién puede a tan gran hecho aventurarse?

OTROSi él es Morato Arráez, es atrevido;  
cuanto más, que bien puede imaginarse  
que de algún renegado fue traído, 140  
plático desta tierra.

CAPITÁNDésta hay uno  
que en ser traidor no se le iguala alguno.  
¿Adónde está mi hermano?

UNOLlegó apenas,  
cuando, despavorido y sin aliento,  
se arrojó en el lugar.

CAPITÁNHallará estrenas 145

tristes de su esperado casamiento.

*(Parece en la muralla DON FERNANDO.)*

DON FERNANDO Puntas de cristal claro, y no de almenas,  
murallas de bruñido y rico argento  
que guardastes un tiempo mi esperanza,  
¿dónde hallaré, decidme, a mi Costanza? 150

Techos que vomitáis llamas teosas,  
calles de sangre y lágrimas cubiertas,  
¿adónde de mis glorias ya dudosas  
está la causa, y de mis penas ciertas?  
Descubre, ¡oh sol!, tus hebras luminosas; 155  
abre ya, aurora, tus rosadas puertas;  
dejadme ver el mar, donde navega  
el bien que el cielo por mi mal me niega.

CAPITÁN Vámosle a socorrer, no desespere;  
que en lo que dice da de loco indicio. 160

UNO Bien dices; vamos, que su mal requiere  
fuerte y apresurado veneficio.

*(Éntranse.)*

DON FERNANDO Mas, ¿qué digo, cuitado? Bien se infiere  
de las reliquias deste maleficio  
que va cautiva mi querida prenda, 165  
y es bien que a dalle libertad atienda.

*(Éntrase DON FERNANDO, y parece el CAPITÁN en la muralla con otro soldado.)*

Desde aquel risco levantado, quiero  
hacer señal; quizá querrá el vil moro  
trocar la hermosura por dinero  
a quien no pagará ningún tesoro. 170

CAPITÁN Ya no está aquí mi hermano; el dolor fiero  
temo que no le saque del decoro  
que debe a ser quien es. ¡Oh caso extraño!

UNO Señor, por allí va, si no me engaño.

*(Éntrase el CAPITÁN; sale DON FERNANDO, y va subiendo por un risco.)*

DON FERNANDO Subid, ¡oh pies cansados!; 175  
llegad a la alta cumbre  
desta encumbrada y rústica aspereza,  
si ya de mis cuidados  
la inmensa pesadumbre  
no os detiene en mitad de su maleza. 180  
Ya a descubrir se empieza  
la máquina terrible  
que con ligero vuelo  
la carga de mi cielo  
lleva en su vientre tragador y horrible; 185  
ya las alas extiende,  
ya le ayudan los pies, ya al curso atiende.  
No será de provecho  
esta señal que nuestro  
de rescate, de paz y de alianza; 190  
ni la voz de mi pecho,  
aunque a gritar me adiestro,  
ha de alcanzar do mi deseo alcanza.  
¿Ah, mi amada Costanza!  
¡Ah, dulce, honrada esposa! 195  
No apliques los oídos

a ruegos descreídos,  
ni a la fuerza agarena poderosa  
os entreguéis rendida,  
que aún yo para la vía tengo vida. 200  
Volved, volved, tiranos,  
que de vuestra codicia  
ofrezco de llenar con gusto y gloria  
los senos; y las manos,  
ajenas de avaricia, 205  
sin duda aumentarán vuestra victoria.  
Volved, que es vil escoria  
cuanto lleváis robado,  
si no lleváis los dones  
que os ofrezco a montones 210  
en cambio de mi sol, que va eclipsado  
entre las pardas nubes  
que tú del mar, ¡oh blando cierzo!, subes.  
De Arabia todo el oro,  
del Sur todas las perlas, 215  
la púrpura de Tiro más preciosa,  
con liberal decoro  
ofrezco, aunque el tenerlas  
os venga a parecer dificultosa.  
Si me volvéis mi esposa, 220  
un nuevo mundo ofrezco,  
con todo cuanto encierra  
todo el cielo y la tierra.  
Locuras digo; mas, pues no merezco  
alcanzar esta palma, 225  
llevad mi cuerpo, pues lleváis mi alma.  
(*Arrójase del risco.*)

(*Sale el GUARDIÁN BAJÍ y un CAUTIVO con papel y tinta.*)

GUARDIÁN ¡Hola; al trabajo, cristianos!  
No quede ninguno dentro;  
así enfermos como sanos,

no os tardéis, que, si allá entro, 230  
pies os pondrán estas manos.

Que trabajen todos quiero,  
ya pápaz, ya caballero.  
¡Ea, canalla soez!  
¿Heos de llamar otra vez? 235

*(Sale un CAUTIVO, y van saliendo de mano en mano los que pudieren.)*

UNO Yo quiero ser el primero.

GUARDIÁN Éste a la leña le asienta;  
éste vaya a la marina;  
ten en todo buena cuenta;  
treinta aquel burche encamina, 240  
y a la muralla sesenta;  
veinte al horno, y diez envía  
a casa de Cauralí.  
Y abrevia, que se va el día.

ESCLAVO Por cuarenta envió el cadí; 245  
dárselos es cortesía.

GUARDIÁN Y aun fuerza. En eso no pares;  
enviarás otros dos pares  
a los ladrillos de ayer.

ESCLAVO Para todos hay qué hacer, 250  
aunque fueran dos millares.  
¿Dónde irán los caballeros?

GUARDIÁN Déjalos hasta mañana,



que serán de los primeros.

ESCLAVO¿Y si pagan?

GUARDIÁN Cosa es llana 255  
que hay sosiego do hay dineros.

ESCLAVO Yo con ellos me avendré,  
de modo que se te dé  
gusto y honesta pitanza.

GUARDIÁN Despacha a la maestranza. 260

ESCLAVO Ve con Dios, que sí haré.  
(Éntrese.)

(Salen DON LOPE y VIVANCO, cautivos, con sus cadenas a los pies.)

DON LOPE Ventura, y no poca, ha sido  
haber escapado hoy  
del trabajo prevenido.

VIVANCO Cuando no trabajo, estoy 265  
más cansado y más molido.

Para mí es grave tormento  
este estrecho encerramiento,  
y es alivio a mi pesar  
ver el campo o ver la mar. 270

DON LOPE Pues yo en verlo me atormento,  
porque la melanconía

que el no tener libertad  
encierra en el alma mía,  
quiere triste soledad 275  
más que alegre compañía.

Trabajar y no comer,  
bien fácil se echa de ver  
que son pasos de la muerte.

*(Sale un CRISTIANO cautivo, que viene huyendo del GUARDIÁN, que viene tras él dándole de palos.)*

GUARDIÁN; Oh chufetre! ¿Desta suerte 280  
siempre os habéis de esconder?

Que os criastes en regalo,  
inútil perro, barrunto.

CRISTIANO; Por Dios, fende, que estoy malo!

GUARDIÁN; Pues yo os curaré en un punto 285  
con el sudor deste palo.

CRISTIANO Con calentura continua,  
que me turba y desatina,  
estoy ha más de dos días.

*(Éntranse, dándole de palos, estos dos.)*

GUARDIÁN; Y por eso te escondías? 290

CRISTIANO Sí, fende.

GUARDIÁN ¡Perro, camina!

DON LOPE ¡Por Dios, que es un buen soldado,  
y no lo hace de vicio  
el mísero apaleado!

VIVANCO Mirad, pues, qué veneficio 295  
ha en su enfermedad hallado.

¿No es notable desatino  
que está un cautivo vecino  
a la muerte y no le creen?  
Y, cuando muerto le ven, 300  
dicen: «¡Gualá, que el mezquino  
estaba malo, sin duda!»

¡Oh canalla fementida,  
de toda piedad desnuda!  
¿Quién, al perder de la vida, 305  
queréis que al mentir acuda?

De nuestra calamidad  
con vuestra incredulidad,  
la muerte es testigo cierto;  
más creéis a un hombre muerto, 310  
que al vivo de más verdad.

DON LOPE Alza los ojos y atiende  
a aquella parte, Vivanco,  
y mira si comprende  
tu vista que un paño blanco 315  
de una lengua caña pende.

*(Parece una caña, atado un paño blanco en ella, con un bulto.)*

VIVANCO Bien dices, y atado está.  
Quiérome llegar allá

para ver esta hazaña.  
¡Por Dios, que se alza la caña! 320

DON LOPE Ve, quizá se abajará.

VIVANCO No es para mí esta aventura,  
don Lope; ven tú a proballa,  
que no sé quién me asegura  
que han de venir a alcanzalla 325  
las manos de tu ventura.

DON LOPE Algún muchacho habrá puesto  
cebo o lazo allí dispuesto  
para cazar los vencejos.

VIVANCO No está hondo, ni está lejos; 330  
ven, y verémoslo presto.  
¿No ves cómo se te inclina  
la caña? ¡Vive el Señor,  
que ésta es cosa peregrina!

DON LOPE En el trapo está el favor. 335

VIVANCO Si es favor, desata aína.

DON LOPE Once escudos de oro son;  
entrellos viene un doblón  
que parece necesario  
paternóster del rosario. 340

VIVANCO ¡Bien propia comparación!

DON LOPE La caña se tornó a alzar.  
¿Qué maná del cielo es ésta?  
¿Qué Abacuc nos vino a dar  
en nuestra prisión la cesta 345  
deste que es más que manjar?

VIVANCO ¿Por qué, don Lope, no acudes  
a dar gracias y saludes  
a quien hizo esta hazaña?  
¡Oh caña, de hoy más no caña, 350  
sino vara de virtudes!

DON LOPE ¿A quién quieres que las dé,  
si en aquella celosía  
estrecha nadie se ve?

VIVANCO Pues alguien a questo envía. 355

DON LOPE Claro está, mas quién, no sé.

Quizá será renegada  
cristiana la que se agrada  
de mostrarse compasiva,  
o ya cristiana cautiva 360  
en esta casa encerrada.

Mas, quienquiera que ella sea,  
es bien que las apariencias  
de agradecidos nos vea:  
hazle dos mil reverencias, 365  
porque nuestro intento crea;  
yo a lo morisco haré  
ceremonias, por si fue  
mora la que hizo el bien.

*(Entra HAZÉN, renegado.)*

DON LOPE Calla, porque viene Hazén. 370

VIVANCO ¡Noramala venga el pe...!

Las dos *erres* y la *o*  
me como contra mi gusto.

DON LOPE Creo, por Dios, que te oyó.

VIVANCO Si él me oyó, por Dios, fue justo 375  
no acabar su nombre yo.

HAZÉN Con vuestras dos firmas solas  
pisaré alegre y contento  
las riberas españolas;  
llevaré propicio el viento, 380  
manso el mar, blandas sus olas.

A España quiero tomar,  
y a quien debo confesar  
mi mozo y antiguo yerro;  
no como Yzuf, aquel perro 385  
que fue a vender su lugar.  
(*Dales un papel escrito.*)

Aquí va cómo es verdad  
que he tratado a los cristianos  
con mucha afabilidad,  
sin tener en lengua o manos 390  
la turquesca crüeldad;  
cómo he a muchos socorrido;  
cómo, niño, fui oprimido  
a ser turco; cómo voy  
en corso, pero que soy 395  
buen cristiano en lo escondido,

y quizá hallaré ocasión  
para quedarme en la tierra,  
para mí, de promisión.

DON LOPEEs la enmienda en el que yerra 400  
arras de su salvación.

Echaremos de buen grado  
las firmas que nos pedís,  
que ya está experimentado  
ser verdad cuanto decís, 405  
Hazén, y que sois honrado.

Y quiera el cielo divino  
que os facilite el camino  
como vos lo deseáis.

VIVANCOA mucho os determináis. 410

HAZÉNPues a más me determino;  
que he de procurar alzar  
la galeota en que voy.

HAZÉNYa con otros cuatro estoy  
convenido.

VIVANCOTemo azar, 415  
si es que entre muchos se sabe:  
que no hay cosa que se acabe  
aquí en Argel sin afrenta  
cuando a muchos se da cuenta.

HAZÉNEEn los que digo, más cabe. 420

DON LOPE ¿Sabrías decir, Hazén,

quién mora en aquella casa?

HAZÉN¿En aquella?

VIVANCOSÍ.

HAZÉN Muy bien.

Un moro de buena masa,  
principal y hombre de bien, 425

y rico en extremo grado;  
y, sobre todo, le ha dado  
el cielo una hija tal,  
que de belleza el caudal  
todo en ella está cifrado. 430

Muley Maluco apetece  
ser su marido.

DON LOPE Y el moro  
¿qué dice?

HAZÉN Que la merece,  
no por rey, mas por el oro  
que en la dote el rey ofrece: 435  
que en esta nación confusa  
que dé el marido se usa  
la dote, y no la mujer.

VIVANCO¿Y ella está del parecer  
del padre?

HAZÉN No lo rehúsa. 440



DON LOPE ¿Está acaso alguna esclava,  
ya renegada o cristiana,  
en esta casa?

HAZÉN Una estaba  
años ha, llamada Juana.  
Sí, sí; Juana se llamaba, 445  
y el sobrenombre tenía,  
creo, que de Rentería.

DON LOPE ¿Qué se hizo?

HAZÉN Ya murió,  
y a aquesta mora crió  
que denantes os decía. 450  
Ella fue una gran matrona,  
archivo de cristiandad,  
de las cautivas corona;  
no quedó en esta ciudad  
otra tan buena persona. 455  
Los tornadizos lloramos  
su falta, porque quedamos  
ciegos sin su luz y aviso.  
Por cobralla, el cielo quiso  
que la perdiesen sus amos. 460

DON LOPE Vete en paz, y aquesta tarde  
ven por tus firmas, Hazén.  
(Vase.)

(Éntrese HAZÉN.)

HAZÉN La Trinidad toda os guarde.

VIVANCO Bien podemos deste bien  
hacer otra vez alarde. 465  
¿Cuántos son?

DON LOPE ¿Once no dije?  
Pero lo que aquí me aflige  
es no ver a quien los dio.

VIVANCO ¿Quién? Para mí tengo yo  
que fue Aquél que el cielo rige, 470  
que por no vistos caminos  
su pródiga mano acorre  
a los míseros mezquinos;  
y así, a nosotros socorre,  
aunque de tal gracia indignos. 475

*(Parece la caña otra vez, con otro paño de más bulto.)*

Mira que otra vez asoma  
la caña.

DON LOPE Trabajo toma  
de ir a ver si se te inclina.

VIVANCO Aquesta pesca es divina,  
aunque sea de Mahoma. 480  
Mas, apenas muevo el pie  
hacia allá, cuando levantan  
la caña, y no sé por qué;  
si es que de mí se espantan,  
díganlo y me volveré. 485  
Para ti, amigo, se guarda

esta ventura gallarda;  
ven y veremos lo que es;  
y no empereces los pies,  
que, si el bien llega, no tarda. 490

*(Inclínase la caña a DON LOPE, y desata el paño.)*

DON LOPE Más peso tiene, a mi ver,  
que el de denantes aquéste.

VIVANCO Más numos debe de haber.

DON LOPE ¡Ta, ta, billetico es éste!

VIVANCO ¿Quiéresle agora leer? 495  
Mira si es oro o argento,  
primero, que de contento  
estoy para reventar.  
¿Que no lo queréis mirar?

*(Pónese DON LOPE a leer el billete; y, antes que le acabe de leer, dice:)*

DON LOPE ¡Por Dios, que pasan de ciento, 500  
y son los más de a dos caras!

VIVANCO ¿Para qué a leer te paras?  
A contarlos te apresura.

DON LOPE Cierta que es esta aventura  
rarísima entre las raras. 505

VIVANCO ¿Qué es lo que dice el papel?

DON LOPE En lo poco que he leído,  
milagros he visto en él.

VIVANCO Oye, que siento ruido.

DON LOPE Gente viene de tropel; 510  
en el rancho nos entremos,  
adonde a solas podremos  
ver lo que el billete dice.

VIVANCO ¿Despedístete?

DON LOPE Sí hice.

VIVANCO Desorejado tenemos. 515

*(Sale el GUARDIÁN BAJÍ y un moro llamado CARAHOJA, y un CRISTIANO atadas las orejas con un paño sangriento, como que las trae cortadas.)*

CARAHOJA ¿No os dije, perro insensato,  
que, si huíades por tierra,  
que os haría a queste trato?

CRISTIANO Es grande el gusto que encierra  
voz de libertad.

CARAHOJA ¡Oh ingrato! 520  
Por la mar te he aconsejado

que huyas; mas tú, malvado,  
que en los estorbos no miras,  
siempre a huir por tierra aspiras.

CRISTIANO Hasta quedar enterrado. 525

CARAHOJA Tres veces por tierra ha huido  
este perro, y treinta doblas  
di aquellos que le han traído.

CRISTIANO Si las prisiones no doblas,  
haz cuenta que me has perdido: 530  
que, aunque me desmoches todo,  
y me pongas de otro modo  
peor que éste en que me veo,  
tanto el ser libre deseo,  
que a la fuga me acomodo 535  
por la tierra o por el viento,  
por el agua y por el fuego;  
que, a la libertad atento,  
a cualquier cosa me entrego  
que me muestre este contento. 540  
Y, aunque más te encolerices,  
respondo a lo que me dices,  
que das en mi huida cortes,  
que no importa el ramo cortes,  
si no arrancas las raíces. 545  
Si no me cortas los pies,  
al huirme no hay reparo.

GUARDIÁN Carahoja, ¿éste no es  
español?

CARAHOJA ¿Pues no está claro?

¿En su brío no lo ves? 550

GUARDIÁN Por Alá, que, aunque esté muerto,  
estás de guardallo incierto.  
¡Éstrate, perro, a curar!  
Aqueste le habrás de dar  
a la limosna.

CARAHOJA Está cierto. 555

*(Étrase el CRISTIANO.)*

GUARDIÁN Oye, que un tiro han tirado  
en la mar.

CARAHOJA No le he sentido.

*(Entra un CAUTIVO.)*

CAUTIVO Fendi, Cauralí es llegado,  
y viene, según he oído,  
rico, próspero y honrado; 560  
y el rey sale a la marina,  
que ver allí determina  
los cautivos y el despojo.

GUARDIÁN ¿Quieres venir?

CARAHOJA Yo estoy cojo.

GUARDIÁN Pues poco a poco camina. 565

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Vuelven a salir DON LOPE y VIVANCO.)*

VIVANCO Léele otra vez, que me admira  
la sencillez que contiene  
y el grande intento a que aspira.

DON LOPE Mira bien si alguno viene,  
y a esta parte te retira. 570

El billete dice así;  
en toda mi vida vi  
razones así sencillas.  
¡Éstas son tus maravillas,  
gran Señor!

VIVANCO Acaba, di. 575

DON LOPE *(Lee el billete DON LOPE.)*

Mi padre, que es muy rico, tuvo por cautiva a una cristiana, que me dio leche y me enseñó todo el cristianesco. Sé las cuatro oraciones, y leer y escribir, que ésta es mi letra. Díjome la cristiana que Lela Marién, a quien vosotros llamáis Santa María, me quería mucho, y que un cristiano me había de llevar a su tierra. Muchos he visto en ese baño por los agujeros desta celosía, y ninguno me ha parecido bien, sino tú. Yo soy hermosa, y tengo en mi poder muchos dineros de mi padre. Si quieres, yo te daré muchos para que te rescates, y mira tú cómo podrás llevarme a tu tierra, donde te has de casar conmigo; y, cuando no quisieres, no se me dará nada: que Lela Marién tendrá cuidado de darme marido. Con la caña me podrás responder cuando esté el baño sin gente. Envíame a decir cómo te llamas, y de qué tierra eres, y si eres casado; y no te fíes de ningún moro ni renegado. Yo me llamo Zara, y Alá te guarde.

¿Qué te parece?

VIVANCO Que el cielo  
se nos descubre en la tierra  
en este tan santo celo.

DON LOPE Sin duda, en Zara se encierra  
toda la bondad del suelo. 580

VIVANCO Quizá nos está mirando.  
Vuelve, y haz, de cuando en cuando,  
señales de agradecido.  
Mas, ¿en qué te has suspendido?

DON LOPE La respuesta estoy pensando. 585

VIVANCO ¿Pues hay más que responder,  
sino que harás todo cuanto  
fuere al caso menester?

*(Entra HAZÉN.)*

DON LOPE Hazén vuelve.

HAZÉN Estimo en tanto  
el bien que me habéis de hacer, 590  
que, hasta tenerle en mi pecho,  
no puedo tener sosiego.  
*(Vuélvele el papel.)*

DON LOPE Amigo Hazén, ya está hecho;  
y, así como yo os lo entrego  
con gusto, os haga el provecho. 595



VIVANCO ¿Es verdad que ya ha llegado  
Cauralí?

HAZÉN Ya se ha mostrado  
al cabo de Metafús.

DON LOPE ¿En qué piensas?

HAZÉN Ahora, ¡sus!,  
yo he de ver al renegado 600  
y decirle de mí a él  
quién es.

VIVANCO ¿Por Yzuf dirás?

HAZÉN Por ese perro crüel  
digo.

DON LOPE Pues muy mal harás  
en tomarte, Hazén, con él. 605

VIVANCO Déjale, ¡Dios le maldiga!

HAZÉN El alma se me fatiga  
en ver que este perro infame  
su sangre venda y derrame  
como si fuera enemiga. 610  
Dios me ayude, a Dios quedad,  
que jamás no me veréis,

y Dios os dé libertad.

VIVANCO; Mirad, Hazén, lo que hacéis!

*(Éntrase HAZÉN.)*

HAZÉN; Dios mueve mi voluntad! 615

VIVANCO ¿Apostaréis que se toma,  
según la ira le doma,  
con Yzuf?

DON LOPE Ya le acabase,  
porque del suelo quitase  
este rayo de Mahoma. 620  
¿No será bien que escribamos,  
por si otra vez se aparece  
esta estrella que miramos?

VIVANCO Así a mí me lo parece,  
ya, y ahora.

DON LOPE Vamos.

VIVANCO Vamos. 625

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Sale HAZÁN BAJÁ, rey de Argel, y el CADÍ y CARAHOJA, y HAZÉN, el  
GUARDIÁN BAJÍ y otros moros de acompañamiento; suenan chirimías y grita*

*de desembarcar.)*

BAJÁ ¡Bueno viene Cauralí!  
De alegría da gran muestra.  
¿Qué dices, guardián Bají?

GUARDIÁN De su industria y de su diestra  
siempre estos efecto vi; 630  
es valiente, y fue guiado  
por un bravo renegado.

BAJÁ ¿No fue Yzuf?

GUARDIÁN Yzuf se llama,  
a quien pregona la fama  
por buen moro y buen soldado. 635

*(Entran CAURALÍ y YZUF.)*

CAURALÍ Dame tus pies, fuerte Hazán,  
como mi rey y señor.

BAJÁ Mis pies por jamás se dan  
a labios de tal valor  
y a tan bravo capitán. 640  
Del suelo os alzá.

YSUFA mí  
darás lo que a Cauralí  
niegas con justa razón.

BAJÁ De entrambos mis brazos son.

CADÍ Y también los del cadí. 645  
En buen hora seas venido.

CAURALÍ En la misma estás.

CADÍ Pues bien:  
¿haos España enriquecido?  
Porque lo suele hacer bien  
con el cosario atrevido. 650

YSUF Mi pueblo se saqueó,  
y, aunque poca, en él se halló  
ganancia y algún cautivo.

HAZÉN ¡Oh, más que Nerón esquivo,  
ni al que a Cicilia asoló! 655

BAJÁ Haz venir alguno dellos  
en mi presencia, y advierte  
que sean de los más bellos.

CAURALÍ Yo mesmo, por complacerte,  
quiero ir, señor, a traerlos. 660  
(Éntrese CAURALÍ.)

BAJÁ ¿Cuántos serán?

YSUF Ciento y veinte.

BAJÁ ¿Hay entre ellos buena gente  
para el remo? ¿Hay oficiales?

YSUF Yo creo que vienen tales,  
que el más ruin más te contente. 665

CADÍ ¿Hay muchachos?

YSUF Dos no más;  
pero de belleza estraña,  
como presto lo verás.

CADÍ Hermosos los cría España.

YZUF Pues déstos te admirarás. 670  
Y son, a lo que imagino,  
uno y otro mi sobrino.

CADÍ Hasles hecho un gran favor.

HAZÉN ¿Que tal hiciste, traidor,  
alma fiera de Ezino? 675

*(Vuelve CAURALÍ con el PADRE, que trae al niño de la mano y otro chiquito  
en los brazos, que no ha de hablar; y vienen asimismo el SACRISTÁN, DON  
FERNANDO y otros dos cautivos.)*

CAURALÍ De aquestos dos niños creo  
que este honrado viejo es padre.

YSUF El mío en su rostro veo.

BAJÁ ¿Viene cautiva su madre?

CAURALÍ No, señor.

CADÍ Éste no es feo. 680

BAJÁ Son muy chiquitos.

CAURALÍ Con todo,  
con el tiempo me acomodo,  
sin que lo estorbe su Roma,  
dar dos pajes a Mahoma  
que le sirvan a su modo. 685

PADRE ¡Cuitado! ¿Qué es lo que escucho?

CADÍ Llegad éste acá.

PADRE Señor,  
no nos aparte; ya lucho  
con los brazos del temor,  
y venceránme, que es mucho. 690

CAURALÍ Éste es un desesperado,  
que él mismo al mar se arrojó  
ya después de haber zarpado,  
y un gancho que le eché yo  
le pescó como pescado. 695

BAJÁ ¿Pues quién le movió a tal hecho?

CAURALÍ Amor que reina en su pecho  
de un hijo que él se temía  
que en nuestra armada venía.

BAJÁ Y el muchacho, ¿qué se ha hecho? 700

YSUF No parece.

CADÍ ¿Cómo así?

CAURALÍ Debió de quedarse allá.

DON FERNANDO ¡Ay Costanza! ¿Qué es de ti?

BAJÁ ¿Qué es lo que dices?

DON FERNANDO ¡Quizá  
en el lugar le perdí! 705

BAJÁ Cordura fuera buscallo  
primero, y, al no hallalle,  
el rescate lo suplía;  
y fue mala granjería  
el perderte por ganalle. 710  
¿Éste quién es?

CAURALÍ No sé cierto.

CAUTIVO¿Yo, señor? Soy carpintero.

HAZÉN¡Oh cristiano poco experto!  
No te sacará el dinero  
desta tormenta a buen puerto. 715  
El que es oficial, no espere,  
mientras que vida tuviere,  
verse libre destas manos.

CAURALÍ¿Vendrán todos los cristianos?

BAJÁMuestra alguno, y sea quien fuere. 720

*(Entra el SACRISTÁN.)*

¿Éste es pápaz?

SACRISTÁNNo soy Papa,  
sino un pobre sacristán  
que apenas tuvo una capa.

CADÍ¿Cómo te llaman?

SACRISTÁNTristán.

BAJÁ¿Tu tierra?

SACRISTÁNNo está en el mapa. 725  
Es mi tierra Mollorido,  
un lugar muy escondido



allá en Castilla la Vieja.  
*Aparte.*

¡Mucho este perro me aqueja!  
¡Guarde el cielo mi sentido! 730

BAJÁ ¿Qué oficio tienes?

SACRISTÁN Tañer,  
que soy músico divino,  
como lo echaréis de ver.

HAZÉNO este pobre pierde el tino,  
o él es hombre de placer. 735

BAJÁ ¿Tocas flauta o chirimía,  
o cantas con melodía?

SACRISTÁN Como yo soy sacristán,  
toco el *din*, el *don* y el *dan*  
a cualquiera hora del día. 740

CADÍ ¿Las campanas no son esas  
que llamáis entre vosotros?

SACRISTÁN Sí, señor.

BAJÁ Bien lo confieras:  
música para nosotros  
divina es la que profesas. 745  
¿No sabrás tirar un remo?

SACRISTÁN No, mi señor, porque temo  
reventar: que soy quebrado.

CADÍ Irás a guardar ganado.

SACRISTÁN Soy friolego en extremo 750  
en invierno, y en verano  
no puedo hablar de calor.

BAJÁ Bufón es este cristiano.

SACRISTÁN ¿Yo búfalo? No, señor;  
antes soy pobre aldeano. 755  
En lo que yo tendré mañana  
será en guardar una puerta  
o en ser pescador de caña.

CADÍ Bien tus oficios concierta;  
no fuérades vos de España. 760

*(Entra un MORO.)*

MORO Los jenízaros están  
aguardándote en palacio.

BAJÁ Vamos. ¡Adiós, capitán!,  
y veámonos despacio.

CAURALÍ *Aparte.*

¡Oh, qué bien mis cosas van! 765

*(Éntranse todos; quedan HAZÉN y YZUF.)*

Escapado he la cristiana;  
ya la fortuna me allana  
los caminos de mi bien.

YSUF Agora hablaré yo a Hazén.

HAZÉN De hablarte tengo gana. 770

Deja ir a Cauralí,  
porque los cautivos lleve,  
y quedémonos aquí.

YSUF En tus razones sé breve,  
que tengo que hacer.

HAZÉN Sea así. 775

Dejo aparte que no tengas  
ley con quien tu alma avengas,  
ni la de gracia ni escrita,  
ni en iglesia ni en mezquita  
a encomendarte a Dios vengas. 780

Con todo, de tu fiereza  
no pudiera imaginar  
cosa de tanta estrañeza  
como es venirme a faltar  
la ley de naturaleza. 785

Con sólo que la tuvieras,  
fácilmente conocieras

la maldad que cometías  
cuando a pisar te ofrecías  
las españolas riberas. 790

¿Qué Falaris agraviado,  
qué Dionisio embravecido,  
o qué Catilina airado,  
contra su sangre ha querido  
mostrar su rigor sobrado? 795

¿Contra tu patria levantas  
la espada? ¿Contra las plantas  
que con tu sangre crecieron  
tus hoces agudas fueron?

YSUF; Por Dios, Hazén, que me espantas! 800

HAZÉN ¿No te espanta haber vendido  
a tu tío y tus sobrinos  
y a tu patria, descreído,  
y espántate...?

YSUF Desatinos  
dices, Hazén fementido. 805  
Sin duda que eres cristiano.

HAZÉN Bien dices; y aquesta mano  
confirmará lo que has dicho  
poniendo eterno entredicho.  
a tu proceder tirano. 810  
(Da HAZÉN de puñaladas a YZUF.)

YSUF ¡Ay, que me ha muerto! ¡Mahoma,  
desde luego la venganza,  
como es tu costumbre, toma!

HAZÉN;Tu llevas buena esperanza  
a los lagos de Sodoma! 815

*(Vuelve el CADÍ.)*

CADÍ ¿Qué es esto? ¿Qué grito oí?

HAZÉN;Por Dios, que vuelve el cadí!

YSUF;Ay, señor! ¡Hazén me ha muerto,  
y es cristiano!

HAZÉNAqueso es cierto:  
cristiano soy, veisme aquí. 820

CADÍ ¿Por qué le mataste, perro?

HAZÉNNo porque éste fue de caza  
de la vida le destierro,  
sino porque fue de raza  
que siempre cazó por yerro. 825

CADÍ ¿Eres cristiano?

HAZÉNSí soy;  
y en serlo tan firme estoy,  
que deseo, como has visto,  
deshacerme y ser con Cristo,  
si fuese posible, hoy. 830  
¡Buen Dios, perdona el exceso  
de haber faltado en la fe,

pues, al cerrar del proceso,  
si en público te negué,  
en público te confieso! 835

Bien sé que aqueste conviene  
que haga a aquel que te tiene  
ofendido como yo.

CADÍ¿Quién jamás tal cosa vio?  
¡Alto, su muerte se ordene! 840  
¡Ponedle luego en un palo!

HAZÉN Mientras yo tuviere aquéste,  
con quien el alma regalo,  
lecho será en que me acueste,  
el tuyo, Sardanapalo. 845

Dame, enemigo, esa cama,  
que es la que el alma más ama,  
puesto que al cuerpo sea dura;  
dámela, que a gran ventura  
por ella el cielo me llama. 850  
(*Saca una cruz de palo* HAZÉN.)

No le mudes la intención,  
buen Jesús; confirma en él  
su intento y mi petición,  
que en ser el cadí crüel  
consiste mi salvación. 855

CADÍ Caminad; llevadle aína,  
y empalalde en la marina.

HAZÉN Por tal palo, palio espero;  
y así, correré ligero.

MORO ¡Camina, perro, camina! 860

HAZÉN    Cristianos, a morir voy,  
no moro, sino cristiano;  
que aqueste descuento doy  
del vivir torpe y profano  
en que he vivido hasta hoy. 865

En España lo diréis  
a mis padres, si es que os veis  
fuera de aqueste destierro.

CADÍ;Cortad la lengua a ese perro!  
¡Acabad con él! ¿Qué hacéis? 870

Carga tú con éste, y mira  
si ha acabado de espirar.

MOROParéceme que aún respira.

CADÍTráele a mi casa a curar.  
Este suceso me admira: 875  
en él se ha visto una prueba  
tan nueva al mundo, que es nueva  
aun a los ojos del sol;  
mas si el perro es español,  
no hay de qué admirarme deba. 880

*(Éntranse todos.)*

FIN DE LA PRIMERA JORNADA

## Jornada segunda

HALIMA, *mujer de CAURALÍ, y doña COSTANZA.*

HALIMA    ¿Cómo te hallas, cristiana?

COSTANZA Bien, señora; que en ser tuya  
mucho mi ventura gana.

HALIMA Que gana más la que es suya,  
bien se ve ser cosa llana.    5

    Al no tener libertad,  
no hay mal que tenga igualdad:  
sélo yo, sin ser esclava.

COSTANZA Yo, señora, esto pensaba.

HALIMA Piensas contra la verdad.    10

    Sólo por estar sujeta  
a mi esposo, estoy de suerte  
que el corazón se me aprieta.

COSTANZA Blando del marido fuerte  
hace la mujer discreta.    15

HALIMA    ¿Eres casada?

COSTANZA Pudiera



serlo, si lo permitiera  
el cielo, que no lo quiso.

HALIMA Tu gentileza y aviso  
corren igual la carrera. 20

*(Entran CAURALÍ y DON FERNANDO como cautivo.)*

CAURALÍ Ella es hermosa en extremo;  
mas llega a su hermosura  
su riguridad, que temo.  
¡Ya, amor, desta piedra dura  
saca el fuego en que me quemo! 25

Hete dado cuenta desto,  
para que en mi gusto el resto  
eches de tu discreción.

DON FERNANDO Más pide la obligación,  
buen señor, en que me has puesto. 30

Muéstrame tú la cautiva;  
que, aunque más esenta viva  
del grande poder de amor,  
la has de ver de tu dolor,  
o amorosa, o compasiva. 35

CAURALÍ Vesla allí; y ésta es Halima,  
mi mujer y tu señora.

DON FERNANDO ¡A fe que es prenda de estima!

HALIMA Pues, amigo, ¿qué hay ahora?

CAURALÍ Más de un ¡ay! que me lastima. 40

HALIMA ¿Álzase el rey con la presa?

CAURALÍ No fuera desdicha aquésa.

HALIMA Pues ¿qué daño puede haber?

CAURALÍ ¿No es mal mandarme volver  
en corso con toda priesa? 45

Mas Alá lo hará mejor.  
Aqueste esclavo os presento,  
que es cristiano de valor.

DON FERNANDO *Aparte.*

¿Juzgo, veo, entiendo, siento?  
¿Éste es esfuerzo, o temor? 50  
¿No están mirando mis ojos  
los ricos altos despojos  
por quien al mar me arrojé?  
¿No es ésta, que el alma fue,  
la gloria de sus enojos? 55

CAURALÍ ¿Con quién hablas, di, cristiano?  
¿Por qué no te echas por tierra  
y Halima besas la mano?

DON FERNANDO Más acierta el que más yerra,  
viendo un dolor sobrehumano. 60

Dame, señora, los pies,  
que este que postrado ves

ante ellos es tu cautivo.

HALIMA Ahora esclavo recibo  
que será señor después. 65  
¿Conoces a esta cautiva?

DON FERNANDO No, por cierto.

COSTANZA Bien dijiste;  
y si de memoria priva  
un dolor, muera ésta triste,  
porque olvidada no viva. 70  
Pero quizá disimulas  
y mentiras acumulas  
que ser de provecho sientes.

CAURALÍ ¿Por qué, hablando entre los dientes,  
las razones no articulas? 75

DON FERNANDO ¿Cómo os llamáis?

COSTANZA ¿Yo? Costanza.

DON FERNANDO ¿Sois soltera, o sois casada?

COSTANZA De serlo tuve esperanza.

DON FERNANDO ¿Y estáis ya desesperada?

COSTANZA Aún vive la confianza: 80  
que, mientras dura la vida,  
es necedad conocida  
desesperarse del bien.

DON FERNANDO ¿Quién fue vuestro padre?

COSTANZA ¿Quién?  
Un Diego de la Bastida. 85

DON FERNANDO ¿No estábades concertada  
con un cierto don Fernando  
de sobrenombre de Andrada?

COSTANZA Así es; mas nunca el cuándo  
llegó desafortunada honrada: 90  
que mi señor Cauralí  
del bien que en fe poseí,  
merced a Yzuf el traidor,  
trujo de su borrador  
el original aquí. 95

DON FERNANDO Señora, trátala bien,  
porque es mujer principal.

HALIMA Como ella me sirva bien,  
no la trataré yo mal.

*(Entra ZAHARA, muy bien aderezada.)*

ZAHARA Ya queda empalado Hazén. 100

HALIMA Señora Zara, ¿qué es esto?  
No te esperaba tan presto.

ZAHARANo estaba el baño a mi gusto,  
y víneme con disgusto  
de aqueste caso funesto. 105

HALIMA ¿Pues qué caso?

ZAHARAA Yzuf mató  
Hazén, y el cadí, al momento,  
a empalarle sentenció.  
Vile morir tan contento,  
que creo que no murió. 110  
Si ella fuera de otra suerte,  
tuviera envidia a su muerte.

CAURALÍ¿Pues no murió como moro?

ZAHARADicen que guardó un decoro  
que entre cristianos se advierte, 115  
que es el morir confesando  
al Cristo que ellos adoran.  
Y estúvemele mirando,  
y, entre otros muchos que lloran,  
también estuve llorando, 120  
porque soy naturalmente  
de pecho humano y clemente;  
en fin, pecho de mujer.

CAURALÍ¿Que tal te paraste a ver?

ZAHARA Soy curiosa impertinente. 125

CAURALÍ ¿Estarás aquí esta tarde,  
Zahara?

ZAHARA Sí, porque he de hacer  
con Halima cierto alarde.

CAURALÍ ¿De soldados?

ZAHARA Podrá ser.

CAURALÍ Quedad con Alá.

ZAHARA Él te guarde. 130

*(Vase CAURALÍ.)*

HALIMA No te vayas tú, cristiano.

CAURALÍ Quédate.

DON FERNANDO Término llano  
es éste de Berbería.

COSTANZA ¡Dichosa desdicha mía!

HALIMA ¿Por qué?

COSTANZA Porque en ella gano. 135

ZAHARA ¿Qué ganas?

COSTANZA Un bien perdido  
que cobré con la paciencia  
de los males que he sufrido.

ZAHARA ¡Mucho enseña la experiencia!

COSTANZA Mucho he visto, y más sabido. 140

ZAHARA ¿Nuevos son estos cristianos?

HALIMA Sus rostros mira y sus manos,  
que están limpios y ellas blandas.

DON FERNANDO Saldréme fuera si mandas.

HALIMA No tengas temores vanos, 145  
porque no tiene recelo  
de ningún cautivo el moro,  
ni cristiano le dio celo.  
Guarda ese honesto decoro  
para tu tierra.

DON FERNANDO Harélo. 150

HALIMA No hay mora que acá se abaje  
a hacer algún moro ultraje  
con el que no es de su ley,  
aunque supiese que un rey  
se encubría en ese traje. 155

Por eso nos dan licencia  
de hablar con nuestros cautivos.

DON FERNANDO; Confiada impertinencia!

ZAHARAMatan los bríos lascivos  
el trabajo y la dolencia, 160  
y el gran temor de la pena  
de la culpa nos refrena  
a todos; que, según veo,  
doquiera nace un deseo  
que un buen pecho desordena. 165

Ven acá; dime, cristiano:  
¿en tu tierra hay quien prometa  
y no cumpla?

DON FERNANDOAlgún villano.

ZAHARA; Aunque dé en parte secreta  
su fee, su palabra y mano? 170

DON FERNANDO Aunque sólo sean testigos  
los cielos, que son amigos  
de descubrir la verdad.

ZAHARA; Y guardan esa lealtad  
con los que son enemigos? 175



DON FERNANDO Con todos; que la promesa  
del hidalgo o caballero  
es deuda líquida expresa,  
y ser siempre verdadero  
el bien nacido profesa. 180

HALIMA ¿Qué te importa a ti saber  
su buen o mal proceder  
de aquéstos, que en fin son galgos?

ZAHARA Haz, ¡oh Alá!, que sean hidalgos  
los que me diste a escoger. 185

HALIMA ¿Qué dices, Zara?

ZAHARA Nonada;  
déjame a solas, si quieres,  
con esta tu esclava honrada.

HALIMA ¡Qué amiga de saber eres!

ZAHARA ¿A quién el saber no agrada? 190

HALIMA Habla tú con ella, y yo  
con mi esclavo.

COSTANZA Al fin salió  
verdad lo que yo temía.  
¿Si ha de acabar Berbería  
lo que España comenzó? 195  
Allá comencé a perder,  
y aquí me he de rematar;

porque bien se echa de ver  
que este apartarse y hablar  
se funda en un buen querer. 200

ZAHARA ¿Cómo te llamas, amiga?

COSTANZA Costanza.

ZAHARA ¿Tendrás fatiga  
de verte sin libertad?

COSTANZA Más, si va a decir verdad,  
otra cosa me fatiga. 205

HALIMA La blandura o la aspereza  
de las manos nos da muestra  
de la abundancia o pobreza  
de vosotros. Muestra, muestra:  
no las huyas, que es simpleza, 210  
porque, si eres de rescate,  
será ocasión que te trate  
con proceder justo y blando.

ZAHARA ¿Qué miras?

COSTANZA Estoy mirando  
un extraño disparate. 215

DON FERNANDO Señora, a mi amo toca  
el hacer esa experiencia,  
aunque a risa me provoca  
que a tan engañosa ciencia

deis creencia mucha o poca; 220  
    porque hay pobres holgazanes  
en nuestra tierra galanes  
y del trabajo enemigos.

HALIMA Estas manos son testigos  
de quién eres; no te allanes. 225

COSTANZA *Aparte.*

    ¡Ay, embustera gitana!  
En esas rayas que miras  
está mi desdicha llana.  
¡Qué despacio las retiras,  
enemigo!

ZAHARA ¿Qué has, cristiana? 230

COSTANZA ¿Qué tengo de haber? Nonada.

ZAHARA ¿Fuiste, a dicha, enamorada  
en tu tierra?

COSTANZA Y aun aquí.

ZAHARA ¿Aquí dices? ¿Cómo así?  
¿Luego a moro estás prendada? 235

COSTANZA No, sino de un renegado  
de fe poca y fe perjura.

DON FERNANDO Harto, señora, has mirado.

ZAHARA Has dado en una locura  
en que cristiana no ha dado. 240

Amar a cristianos moras,  
eso vese a todas horas;  
mas que ame cristiana a moro,  
eso no.

COSTANZA Dese decoro  
reniego.

HALIMA ¿De qué te azoras? 245  
Además eres esquivo.

DON FERNANDO Rico, pobre, blando o fuerte,  
señora, soy tu cautivo,  
y tengo a dichosa suerte  
el serlo.

COSTANZA ¡Muriendo vivo! 250

ZAHARA ¿Que tanto le quieres, triste?  
¿Hoy quieres, y ayer veniste?  
¡Cómo amor tu pecho enciende!  
Mas, ¿cómo te reprehende  
la que tan mal le resiste? 255  
Lo que en esto siento, amiga,  
es que me cansa y afana  
sentir que tu lengua diga  
que una tan bella cristiana  
le causa un moro fatiga. 260

COSTANZA No es sino mora.

ZAHARA Dislates  
dices; de aqueso no trates,  
que es locura y vano error.

COSTANZA Son en los casos de amor  
extraños los disparates. 265

ZAHARA Bien el que has dicho lo allana.

HALIMA ¿Qué habláis las dos?

ZAHARA ¡Es de precio  
y discreta la cristiana!

HALIMA ¡Pues el cristiano no es necio!

COSTANZA Es de fe perjura y vana. 270

HALIMA Entremos, que ya has oído  
el azar, y el encendido  
sol de media su jornada.

DON FERNANDO ¡Oh, por mi bien, prenda hallada!

COSTANZA ¡Oh, por mi mal, bien perdido! 275

*(Éntranse todos.)*

(Sale el VIEJO, padre de los niños, y el SACRISTÁN: el VIEJO con vestido de cautivo, y el SACRISTÁN con su mismo vestido y con un barril de agua.)

SACRISTÁN No hay sino tener paciencia  
y encomendarnos a Dios;  
porque es necia impertinencia  
dejarse morir.

VIEJO Ya vos  
tenéis ancha la conciencia; 280  
ya coméis carne en los días  
vedados.

SACRISTÁN ¡Qué niñerías!  
Como aquello que me da  
mi amo.

VIEJO Mal os hará.

SACRISTÁN ¡Que no hay aquí teologías! 285

VIEJO ¿No te acuerdas, por ventura,  
de aquellos niños hebreos  
que nos cuenta la *Escritura*?

SACRISTÁN ¿Dirás por los Macabeos,  
que, por no comer grosura, 290  
se dejaron hacer piezas?

VIEJO Por éstos digo.

SACRISTÁN Si empiezas,  
en viéndome, a predicarme,  
por Dios, que he de deslizarme  
en viéndote.

VIEJO ¿Ya tropiezas? 295  
Que no caigas, plega al cielo.

SACRISTÁN Eso no, porque en la fe  
soy de bronce.

VIEJO Yo recelo  
que si una mora os da el pie,  
deis vos de mano a ese cielo. 300

SACRISTÁN Luego, ¿no me han dado ya  
más de dos lo que quizá  
otro no lo desechara?

VIEJO Dádiva es que cuesta cara  
a quien la toma y la da. 305  
Pero dejémonos desto.  
¿Quién es vuestro amo?

SACRISTÁN Mamí,  
un jenízaro dispuesto  
que es soldado y dabají,  
turco de nación y honesto. 310  
*Dabají* es cabo de escuadra  
o alférez, y bien le cuadra

el oficio, que es valiente;  
y es perro tan excelente,  
que ni me muerde ni ladra. 315

Y así, a mi desdicha alabo  
que, ya que me trujo a ser  
cautivo, mísero esclavo,  
vino a traerme a poder  
de jenízaro, y que es bravo: 320  
que no hay turco, rey ni Roque  
que le mire ni le toque  
de jenízaro al cautivo,  
aunque a furor excesivo  
su insolencia le provoque. 325

VIEJO Más cautiverio y más duelos  
cupieron a mis dos niños,  
por crecer mis desconsuelos.  
Conservad a estos armiños  
en limpieza, ¡oh limpios cielos! 330  
Y si veis que se endereza  
de Mahoma la torpeza  
a procurar su caída,  
quitadles antes la vida  
que ellos pierdan su limpieza. 335

*(Entran dos o tres muchachos morillos, aunque se tomen de la calle, los cuales han de decir no más que estas palabras:)*

MORO ¡Rapaz cristiano,  
non rescatar, non fugir;  
don Juan no venir;  
acá morir,  
perro, acá morir! 340

SACRISTÁN ¡Oh hijo de una puta,  
nieto de un gran cornudo,



sobrino de un bellaco,  
hermano de un gran traidor y sodomita!

OTRO MORO    ¡Non rescatar, non fugir; 345  
don Juan no venir;  
acá morir!

SACRISTÁN    ¡Tú morirás, borracho,  
bardaja fermentido;  
quínola punto menos, 350  
anzuelo de Mahoma, el hideputa!

OTRO; Acá morir!

VIEJO    No mientes a Mahoma,  
¡mal haya mi linaje!,  
que nos quemarán vivos. 355

SACRISTÁN Déjeme, pese a mí, con estos galgos.

OTRO    ¡Don Juan no venir;  
acá morir!

VIEJO    Bien de aqueso se infiera  
que si él venido hubiera, 360  
vuestra maldita lengua  
no tuviera ocasión de decir esto.

MORO    ¡Don Juan no venir;  
acá morir!

SACRISTÁN Escuchadme, perritos; 365  
venid, ¡tus, tus!, oídme,  
que os quiero dar la causa  
por que don Juan no viene: estadme atentos.

Sin duda que en el cielo  
debía de haber gran guerra, 370  
do el general faltaba,  
y a don Juan se llevaron para serlo.

Dejadle que concluya,  
y veréis cómo vuelve  
y os pone como nuevos. 375

VIEJO;Gracioso disparate! Ya se han ido.

*(Entra un JUDÍO.)*

¿No es aquéste judío?

SACRISTÁN Su copete lo muestra,  
sus infames chinelas,  
su rostro de mezquino y de pobrete. 380

Trae el turco en la corona  
una guedeja sola  
de peinados cabellos,  
y el judío los trae sobre la frente;  
el francés, tras la oreja; 385  
y el español, acémila,  
que es rendajo de todos,  
le trae, ¡válame Dios!, en todo el cuerpo.  
¡Hola, judío! Escucha.

JUDÍO;Qué me quieres, cristiano? 390

SACRISTÁN Que este barril te cargues,

y le lleves en casa de mi amo.

JUDÍO Es sábado, y no puedo  
hacer alguna cosa  
que sea de trabajo; 395  
no hay pensar que lo lleve, aunque me mates.  
Deja venga mañana,  
que, aunque domingo sea,  
te llevaré docientos.

SACRISTÁN Mañana huelgo yo, perro judío. 400  
Cargaos, y no riñamos.

JUDÍO Aunque me mates, digo  
que no quiero llevallo.

SACRISTÁN ¡Vive Dios, perro, que os arranque el hígado!

JUDÍO ¡Ay, ay, mísero y triste! 405  
Por el Dío bendito,  
que si hoy no fuera sábado,  
que lo llevara. ¡Buen cristiano, basta!

VIEJO A compasión me mueve.  
¡Oh gente afeminada, 410  
infame y para poco!  
Por esta vez te ruego que le dejes.

SACRISTÁN Por ti le dejo; vaya  
el circunciso infame;  
mas, si otra vez le encuentro, 415  
ha de llevar un monte, si le llevo.

JUDÍO Pies y manos te beso,  
señor, y el Dío te pague  
el bien que aquí me has hecho.  
(*Vase el JUDÍO.*)

VIEJO La pena es ésta de aquel gran pecado. 420  
Bien se cumple a la letra  
la maldición eterna  
que os echó el ya venido,  
que vuestro error tan vanamente espera.

SACRISTÁN Adiós, que ha mucho tiempo 425  
que estoy contigo hablando,  
y, aunque mi amo es noble,  
temo no le avillane mi pereza.  
(*Toma su barril y vase.*)

(*Salen JUANICO y FRANCISCO, que así se han de llamar los hijos del VIEJO; vienen vestidos a la turquesca de garzones, saldrá con ellos la SEÑORA CATALINA, vestida de garzón, y un CRISTIANO, como cautivo, COSTANZA y DON FERNANDO, de cautivo, y JULIO, de cautivo, que traen las tersas y vestidos de los garzones, y las guitarras y el rabel. DON FERNANDO ha de hacer salida.*)

VIEJO ¿No son mis prendas aquí estas?  
¿Cómo vienen adornadas 430  
de regocijo y de fiestas?  
Prendas por mi bien halladas,  
¿qué bizarrías son éstas?  
Harto costoso ropaje  
es éste. ¿Qué se hizo el traje 435  
que mostraba en mil semejas  
que érades de Cristo ovejas,  
aunque de pobre linaje?

JUANICO Padre, no le pene el ver  
que hemos vestido trocado, 440  
que no se ha podido hacer  
otra cosa; y, bien mirado,  
de aquesto no hay que temer,  
porque si nuestra intención  
está con firme afición 445  
puesta en Dios, caso es sabido  
que no deshace el vestido  
lo que hace el corazón.

FRANCISCO Padre, ¿tiene, por ventura,  
qué darme de merendar? 450

VIEJO ¿Hay tan simple criatura?

JUANICO ¿Simple? Pues déjenlo estar,  
que él mostrará su cordura.

JULIO Amigo, no nos detenga;  
y, si gusta dello, venga 455  
con nosotros.

JUANICO No, señor;  
quedarse será mejor.

FRANCISCO Padre mío, tome, tenga:  
una cruz que me han quitado  
me ponga en este rosario. 460

VIEJO Yo os la pondré de buen grado,

depósito y relicario  
de mi alma.

JUANICO Padre honrado,  
déjenos ir, que tardamos.

(AMBROSIO, *que es la* SEÑORA CATALINA.)

AMBROSIO Pues, amigos, ¿Dónde vamos? 465

JULIO Aunque está de aquí un buen rato,  
al jardín de Agimorato.

DON FERNANDO Pues, ¡sus!, no nos detengamos.

JULIO Allí podremos a solas  
danzar, cantar y tañer 470  
y hacer nuestras cabriolas:  
que el mar no suele tener  
siempre alteradas sus olas.

Demos vado a la pasión,  
cuanto más, que es la intención 475  
del cadí que nos holguemos,  
y que los viernes tomemos  
honesta recreación.

DON FERNANDO ¿Quién le dijo que tenía  
yo buena voz?

JULIO No sé, a fe; 480  
algún cautivo sería,  
y el cadí me dijo: «Ve,

y dile de parte mía  
a Cauralí que me mande  
a su cristiano el más grande, 485  
de la buena voz». Yo fui,  
habléle, envióos aquí;  
no sé más.

JUANICONo se desmande,  
padre, en venirnos a ver,  
que se enojará nuestramo 490  
y nos dará en qué entender.

FRANCISCOPadre, Francisco me llamo,  
no Azán, Alí ni Jaer;  
cristiano soy, y he de sello,  
aunque me pongan al cuello 495  
dos garrotes y un cuchillo.

JUANICO¿Veis cómo sabe decillo?  
Pues mejor sabrá hacello.

DON FERNANDO No pasemos adelante,  
que bien estamos aquí. 500

JULIOSea así, y algo se cante.

(AMBROSIO, *que le ha de hacer la* SEÑORA CATALINA.)

AMBROSIO¿Qué decís, que no os oí?

JULIOQue cantes, porque me encante.

DON FERNANDO    ¿Es sordo?

JULIO Un poco es teniente  
de los oídos.

AMBROSIO ¿No hay gente 505  
que nos oiga? Bien decís;  
y, pues que todos venís,  
comencemos tristemente.

    Aquel romance diremos,  
Julio, que tú compusiste, 510  
pues de coro le sabemos,  
y tiene aquel tono triste  
con que alegrarnos solemos.  
(*Cantan este romance:*)

A las orillas del mar,  
que con su lengua y sus aguas, 515  
ya manso, ya airado, llega  
del perro Argel las murallas,  
con los ojos del deseo  
están mirando a su patria  
cuatro míseros cautivos 520  
que del trabajo descansan;  
y al son del ir y volver  
de las olas en la playa,  
con desmayados acentos  
esto lloran y esto cantan: 525  
*¡Cuán cara eres de haber, oh dulce España!*  
Tiene el cielo conjurado  
con nuestra suerte contraria  
nuestros cuerpos en cadenas,  
y en gran peligro las almas. 530  
¡Oh si abriesen ya los cielos  
sus cerradas cataratas,  
ya en vez de agua aquí lloviesen



pez, resina, azufre y brasas!  
¡Oh, si se abriese la tierra, 535  
y escondiese en sus entrañas  
tanto Datán y Virón,  
tanto brujo y tanta maga!  
*¡Cuán cara eres de haber, oh dulce España!*

FRANCISCO Padre, hágales cantar 540  
aquel cantar que mi madre  
cantaba en nuestro lugar.  
¿Qué dice? ¿No quiere, padre?

VIEJO ¿Cómo decía el cantar?

FRANCISCO Ando enamorado, 545  
no diré de quién;  
allá miran ojos  
donde quieren bien.

VIEJO Bien al propósito fuera,  
pues que los del alma miran 550  
desde esta infame ribera  
la patria por quien suspiran,  
que huye y no nos espera.

JULIO ¡Estremado es Francisquito!  
Canta tú, Ambrosio, un poquito 555  
lo que sueles a tus solas,  
que te escucharán las olas  
del mar con gusto infinito.

(AMBROSIO *cante solo:*)

AMBROSIO *Aunque pensáis que me alegro,*  
conmigo traigo el dolor. 560  
*Aunque mi rostro semeja*  
*que de mi alma se aleja*  
*la pena, y libre la deja,*  
*sabed que es notorio error:*  
*conmigo traigo el dolor.* 565  
Cúmpleme disimular  
por acabar de acabar,  
y porque el mal, con callar,  
se hace mucho mayor,  
*conmigo traigo el dolor.* 570

*(Entran el CADÍ y CAURALÍ.)*

JUANICO No más, que viene el cadí.  
Padre, no os halle aquí a vos.

DON FERNANDO Con él viene Cauralí.

VIEJO ¡Queridas prendas, adiós!

CADÍ Perro, ¿vos estáis aquí? 575  
¿No te he dicho yo, malvado,  
que te quites del cuidado  
del ver tus hijos?

FRANCISCO ¿Por qué?  
¿No es mi padre? ¡A buena fe,  
que he de verle, mal su grado! 580

JUANICO Calla, Francisquito, hermano,

que, en lo que dices, incitas  
en nuestro daño al tirano.

FRANCISCO¿ Ver nuestro padre nos quitas?  
Nunca tú eres buen cristiano. 585  
Padre, lléveme consigo,  
que me dice este enemigo  
tantas de bellaquerías.

CAURALÍ¿Qué discretas niñerías!  
Decid: ¿qué esperáis, amigo? 590

*(Vase el VIEJO.)*

CADÍ Perro, si otra vez dejáis  
que los hable aquel perrón,  
vos veréis lo que lleváis.

JULIOPedazos del alma son.

CADÍPerro, ¿qué me replicáis? 595

CAURALÍ Tente, que no dice nada.

FRANCISCO¿Válame Dios, qué alterada  
está la mora garrida!

JUANICO¿Calla, hermano, por tu vida!

CAURALÍÉl tiene gracia estremada. 600

CADÍ ¿Veisle? Sabed que le adoro,  
y que pienso prohijalle  
después que le vuelva moro.

FRANCISCO Pues sepa que he de burlalle,  
aunque me dé montes de oro; 605  
y, aunque me dé tres reales  
justos, enteros, cabales,  
y más dos maravedís.

CADÍ Destas gracias, ¿qué decís?

CAURALÍ Que son sobrenaturales. 610

CADÍ Veníos tras mí a la ciudad.

CAURALÍ Yo quiero hablar con mi esclavo.

CADÍ Pues, ¡sus!, con Alá os quedad.

CAURALÍ Con él vais. Ya estáis al cabo  
de mi gran necesidad. 615

*(Vase el CADÍ y todos, sino DON FERNANDO y CAURALÍ.)*

DON FERNANDO Digo que yo la hablaré  
en yendo a casa, y haré  
por servirte lo posible,  
aunque más dura o terrible  
que un áspid o un monte esté. 620  
Dame lugar para hablalla,

y déjame hacer, señor.

CAURALÍ Si vienes a conquistalla,  
llevarás, cual vencedor,  
el premio de la batalla. 625

DON FERNANDO Yo lo creo.

CAURALÍ Decir quiero  
que, amén de mucho dinero,  
te daré la libertad.

DON FERNANDO De tu liberalidad,  
aun más mercedes espero. 630

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Salen DON LOPE y VIVANCO.)*

DON LOPE Veisnos aquí en libertad  
por el más extraño caso  
que vio la cautividad.

VIVANCO ¿Pensáis que esto ha sido acaso?  
¡Misterio tiene, en verdad! 635

Dios, que quiere que esta mora  
vaya a tierra do se adora  
su nombre, movió su intento  
para ser el instrumento  
del bien que a los tres mejora. 640

DON LOPE Dijo en su postrer billete

que un viernes quizá saldría  
al campo por Vavalvete,  
y que se descubriría  
con cierta industria promete. 645

También escribió en el fin  
que sepamos el jardín  
de su padre, Agimorato,  
do a nuestra comedia y trato  
se ha de dar felice fin. 650

VIVANCO Tres mil escudos han sido  
los que en veces nos ha dado.

DON LOPE En libertarnos se han ido  
los dos mil.

VIVANCO Más se ha ganado  
de lo que habemos perdido. 655

Y más, si acaso se gana  
esta alma, en obras cristiana,  
aunque en moro cuerpo mora.  
¿Mas, si fuese ésta la mora?

DON LOPE Si es ella, ¡a fe que es lozana! 660

*(Entran ZARA y HALIMA, cubiertos los rostros con sus almalafas blancas; y vienen con ellas, vestidas como moras, COSTANZA y la SEÑORA CATALINA, que no ha de hablar sino dos o tres veces.)*

Mas, ¿cuál será de las dos?  
Que las otras son cautivas.

HALIMA Con todo, yo sé de vos  
que si le habláis...

COSTANZA No vivas  
sin esperanza, por Dios, 665  
que yo me ofrezco de hablalle,  
de inclinalle y de forzalle  
a que te venga a adorar;  
mas hasme de dar lugar  
para que pueda tratalle. 670

HALIMA Cuanto quisieres, amiga,  
tendrás; por eso no quedas  
de remediar mi fatiga.

ZAHARA Camina, Alima, si puedes.

COSTANZA A más tu bondad me obliga. 675

ZAHARA Mira, Costanza, y advierte  
si de aquellos dos, por suerte,  
es tu conocido alguno.

COSTANZA Yo no conozco ninguno.

VIVANCO Si es ella, es dichosa suerte, 680  
porque parece en el brío  
hermosa sobremanera.

ZAHARA Perritos son de buen brío.  
¡Oh, quién hablarlos pudiera!

HALIMA Como allí estuviera el mío, 685  
yo me llegara a hablallos.

ZAHARA Costanza, vuelve a mirallos,  
y dime si echas de ver  
que es noble su parecer.

CATALINA ¿Para qué?

ZAHARA Para comprarlos. 690

COSTANZA Éste de la izquierda mano  
me parece caballero;  
y aun el otro no es villano.

ZAHARA Verlos de más cerca quiero.

HALIMA ¡Que no esté aquí mi cristiano! 695

ZAHARA Entrambos me satisfacen.

VIVANCO ¡Qué de represas me hacen!  
Lleguémonos hacia allá.

DON LOPE No, que ellas vienen acá.

VIVANCO Su brío y su vista aplacen. 700

ZAHARA ¡Ay, Alá! ¿Quién me picó?



Mira por aquí, Costanza,  
si es avispa. Amarga yo,  
que parece que una lanza  
por el cuello se me entró. 705

Sacude bien esa toca,  
que casi me vuelvo loca  
en ver lo que veo. ¡Ay, triste!  
¿Matástela? ¿No la viste?  
Sacude más; mira y toca. 710  
¡Si está aquí!

COSTANZA Yo no veo nada.

ZAHARA ¡Llegado me ha al corazón  
esta no vista picada!

COSTANZA Del avispa el aguijón  
es cosa muy enconada; 715  
mas temo no fuese araña.

ZAHARA Si fue araña, fue de España;  
que las de Argel no hacen mal.

DON LOPE ¿Hase visto industria tal?  
¿Hay tan discreta maraña? 720

HALIMA Zara, no estés descompuesta;  
torna a ponerte tu toca.

ZAHARA Aun el aire me molesta.

HALIMA Esta desgracia, aunque poca,

turbado nos ha la fiesta. 725

VIVANCO ¿Qué os parece?

DON LOPEQue parece  
que la ventura me ofrece  
cuanto puedo desear.

VIVANCOVolvióse el sol a eclipsar;  
ya su luz desaparece. 730

ZAHARA ¿No sabrás de aquel cautivo,  
Costanza, si es español?

COSTANZAEn eso, gusto recibo.

DON LOPETorna a descubrirte, ¡oh sol!,  
en cuyas luces avivo 735  
el ser, el entendimiento,  
la ventura y el contento  
que en tu posesión se alcanza.

ZAHARAPregúntaselo, Costanza.

HALIMA¿Cómo estás?

ZAHARAMEjor me siento. 740

COSTANZA Gentilhombre, ¿sois de España?

DON LOPE Sí, señora; y de una tierra  
donde no se cría araña  
ponzoñosa, ni se encierra  
fraude, embuste ni maraña, 745  
sino un limpio proceder,  
y el cumplir y el prometer  
es todo una misma cosa.

ZAHARA Pregúntale si es hermosa,  
si es casado, su mujer. 750

COSTANZA ¿Sois casado?

DON LOPE No, señora;  
pero seré lo bien presto  
con una cristiana mora.

COSTANZA ¿Cómo es eso?

DON LOPE ¿Cómo es esto?  
Poco sabe quien lo ignora. 755  
Mora en la incredulidad,  
y cristiana en la bondad,  
es la que ha de ser mi dueño.

COSTANZA Yo os entiendo como un leño.

ZAHARA ¡Plega Alá digáis verdad! 760

HALIMA Pregúntale si es esclavo,  
o si es libre.

DON LOPE Ya os entiendo;  
de ser cautivo me alabo.

ZAHARA Cuanto dice comprendo,  
y de todo estoy al cabo. 765

DON LOPE Presto pisaré de España,  
con gusto y con gloria estraña,  
las riberas, y mi fe  
firme entonces mostraré.

ZAHARA Gracias a Alá y a una caña. 770

HALIMA Cristianos, quedaos atrás,  
porque en la ciudad entramos.

*(Éntranse las moras.)*

VIVANCO Obedecida serás.

DON LOPE En oscuridad quedamos.  
Sol bello, ¿cómo te vas? 775

De cautividad sacaste  
el cuerpo que rescataste  
con tu liberalidad;  
pero más con tu beldad  
al alma yerros echaste. 780

En fe de lo que en ti he visto,  
del deseo que te doma,  
de adorarte no resisto,  
no por prenda de Mahoma,  
sino por prenda de Cristo. 785

Yo te llevaré a do seas  
todo aquello que desees,  
aunque mil vidas me cueste.

VIVANCOVamos, que el dolor es éste;  
no por ahí, que rodeas. 790

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Sale el SACRISTÁN con una cazuela mojí, y tras él el JUDÍO.)*

JUDÍO Cristiano honrado, así el Dío  
te vuelva a tu libre estado,  
que me vuelvas lo que es mío.

SACRISTÁNNo quiero, judío honrado;  
no quiero, honrado judío. 795

JUDÍO Hoy es sábado, y no tengo  
qué comer, y me mantengo  
de aqueso que guisé ayer.

SACRISTÁNVuelve a guisar de comer.

JUDÍONo, que a mi ley contravengo. 800

SACRISTÁN Rescátame esta cazuela,  
y en dártela no haré poco,  
porque el olor me consuela.

JUDÍONo puedo en mucho ni en poco

contratar.

SACRISTÁN Pues llevarála. 805

JUDÍO No la lleves; ves aquí  
lo que costó.

SACRISTÁN Sea así,  
que a los dos es de provecho.  
¿Dó el dinero?

JUDÍO Aquí, en el pecho  
lo tengo, ¡amargo de mí! 810

SACRISTÁN Pues venga.

JUDÍO Sácalo tú,  
que mi ley no me concede  
el sacarlo.

SACRISTÁN ¡Bercebú  
así te lleve cual puede,  
decendiente de Abacú! 815  
Aquí tienes quince reales  
justos de plata y cabales.

JUDÍO No contrates tú conmigo;  
conciértalo allá contigo.

SACRISTÁN Di, cazuela: ¿cuánto vales? 820

«Paréceme a mí que valgo  
cinco reales, y no más».  
¡Mentís, a fe de hidalgo!

JUDÍO;Qué sobresaltos me das,  
cristiano!

SACRISTÁN;Pues hable el galgo. 825  
¿Que no quieres alargarte?  
Mas quiero crédito darte:  
tomadla, y andad con Dios.

JUDÍO;¿Los diez?

SACRISTÁN;Son por otras dos  
cazuelas que pienso hurtarte. 830

JUDÍO ¿Y pagaste adelantado?

SACRISTÁN;Y, aun si bien hago la cuenta,  
creo que voy engañado.

JUDÍO;¿Que hay Cielo que tal consienta?

SACRISTÁN;¿Que hay tan gustoso guisado? 835  
No es carne de landrecillas,  
ni de la que a las costillas  
se pega el bayo que es trefe.

JUDÍO;Haced, cielos, que me deje

este ladrón de cosillas! 840  
(*Éntrase el JUDÍO.*)

SACRISTÁN ¿De cosillas? ¡Vive Dios,  
que os tengo de hurtar un niño  
antes de los meses dos;  
y aun si las uñas aliño...!  
¡Dios me entiende! ¡Vámonos! 845  
(*Éntrase.*)

(*Salen DON FERNANDO y COSTANZA.*)

DON FERNANDO Subí, cual digo, aquella peña, adonde  
las fustas vi que ya a la mar se hacían.  
Voces comencé a dar; mas no responde  
ninguno, aunque muy bien todos me oían.  
Eco, que en un peñasco allí se esconde, 850  
donde las olas su furor rompían,  
teniendo compasión de mi tormento,  
respuesta daba a mi postrero acento.  
Las voces reforcé; hice las señas  
que el brazo y un pañuelo me ofrecía; 855  
Eco tornaba, y de las mismas peñas  
los amargos acentos repetía.  
Mas, ¿qué remedio, Amor, hay que no enseñas  
para el dolor que causa tu agonía?  
Uno sé me enseñaste, de tal suerte, 860  
que hallé la vida do busqué la muerte.

El corazón, que su dolor desagua  
por los ojos en lágrimas corrientes,  
humor que hace en la amorosa fragua  
que las ascuas se muestren más ardientes; 865  
el cuerpo hizo que arrojase al agua  
sin peligros mirar ni inconvenientes,  
juzgando que alcanzaba honrosa palma  
si llegaba a juntarse con su alma.



Arrojando las armas, arrojéme 870  
al mar, en amoroso fuego ardiendo,  
y otro Leandro con más luz tornéme,  
pues iba aquella de tu luz siguiendo.  
Cansábanse los brazos, y esforcéme,  
por medio de la muerte y mar rompiendo, 875  
porque vi que una fusta a mí volvía  
por su interese y por ventura mía.

Un corvo hierro un turco echó, y asíóme,  
inútil presa, y con muy gran fatiga  
al bajel enemigo al fin subióme, 880  
y de mi historia no sé más qué diga.  
Entre los suyos Cauralí contóme;  
su mujer me persigue y mi enemiga,  
él te persigue a ti. ¡Mira si es cuento  
digno de admiración y sentimiento! 885

COSTANZA Si tú a los ruegos de Halima  
estás fuerte, cual espero,  
yo me mostraré a la lima  
de Cauralí duro acero,  
impenetrable y de estima. 890

Aunque será menester,  
para que nos dejen ver,  
alivio de nuestro mal,  
darles alguna señal  
de amoroso proceder. 895

Rogóte a ti Cauralí  
que me hablastes, y Halima  
me pidió que hablase a ti.

DON FERNANDO Otra cosa me lastima  
más que su pena.

COSTANZA Y a mí. 900

DON FERNANDO Pues rompan estos abrazos  
sus designios en pedazos;  
que, mientras esto se alcance,  
no hay temer desvelo o trance,  
pues tengo al cielo en mis brazos. 905

*(Entran CAURALÍ y HALIMA, y venlos abrazados.)*

Aprieta, querida esposa,  
que, en tanto que en este cielo  
mi afligida alma reposa,  
no hay mal que me dé en el suelo  
la Fortuna rigurosa. 910

CAURALÍ ¡Oh perro! ¿Tú con mi esclava?  
¿Cómo el cielo no te acaba?

HALIMA ¡Perra! ¿Tú con mi cautivo?  
¿Cómo sin matarte vivo?  
¡Esto es lo que yo esperaba, 915  
perra!

CAURALÍ ¡Perro!

HALIMA ¡Perra!

CAURALÍ ¡Perro!

HALIMA Desta perra es la maldad;  
que no nació dél el yerro.

CAURALÍDél nació, y esto es verdad,  
y sé bien que no me yerro. 920  
¡Yo os sacaré el corazón,  
perro!

HALIMA¡Perra, esta traición  
me pagarás con la vida!

DON FERNANDO¡Oh, cuán mal está entendida,  
señores, nuestra intención! 925  
Aquel abrazo que viste,  
Costanza a ti le enviaba.

CAURALÍ¿Qué dices?

DON FERNANDOLo que oyes, triste.

COSTANZAEn tu nombre se fraguaba  
el favor que interrumpiste. 930  
¡Colérica eres, a fe!

DON FERNANDOEsto entiende y esto cree.

HALIMA¿Qué dices, amiga mía?

COSTANZASi éste se perdió, otro día  
otros cuatro cobraré. 935

CAURALÍ ¿Es lo que has dicho verdad?

DON FERNANDO Pues, ¿a qué te he de mentir?

CAURALÍ Ten cierta tu libertad.

HALIMA Más os pudiera reñir  
este amor o liviandad; 940  
pero déjolo hasta ver  
si proseguís en hacer  
esto que he visto y no creo.

CAURALÍ Halima, en mil cosas veo  
que eres prudente mujer, 945  
y más en esto; que pienso  
que éstos, cual nuevos cristianos,  
dieron a su gusto el censo;  
que a cautivos y paisanos,  
les da el verse gusto inmenso; 950  
y, como solos se hallaron,  
sus penas comunicaron.

HALIMA Y aun las ajenas también.

CAURALÍ Esto no me suena bien.

COSTANZA Entrambos adivinaron. 955

CAURALÍ ¿Por ventura sabe Halima  
cosa desto?

HALIMA ¿Por ventura  
a Cauralí le lastima

tu amor?

COSTANZA ¡Aqueso es locura!

DON FERNANDO Tal sospecha no te oprima, 960  
que no ha caído en la cuenta.

COSTANZA Señora, vive contenta  
y sin sospecha en tu daño.

CAURALÍ Fácil se cae en un engaño.

COSTANZA Y tarde se alza una afrenta. 965

CAURALÍ Haz cuanto puedes y sabes.

HALIMA No te descuides en nada.

CAURALÍ Bien es tu cólera acabes.

HALIMA Tenla ya por acabada.  
Entra y dame aquellas llaves. 970

*(Éntrase HALIMA y COSTANZA.)*

CAURALÍ Tú vente al Zoco conmigo.

DON FERNANDO ¡Amor, puesto que te sigo

con el alma y con los pasos,  
tus enredos y tus pasos  
bendigo en parte y maldigo! 975

*(Éntranse.)*

*(JUANICO y FRANCISQUITO, trompando con un trompo.)*

FRANCISQUITO Tú, que turbas mi quietud,  
porque los sollozos rompo  
que nacen de tu virtud,  
¿has visto más lindo trompo,  
así Dios te dé salud? 980

JUANICO Deja de echar esos lazos,  
que otros de más embarazos  
esperan nuestras gargantas.

FRANCISQUITO ¿Pues desto, hermano, te espantas?  
Yo los haré mil pedazos. 985  
No pienses que he de ser moro,  
por más que aqueste inhumano  
me prometa plata y oro,  
que soy español cristiano.

JUANICO Eso temo y eso lloro. 990

FRANCISQUITO Como tengo pocos días,  
de mi valor desconfías.

JUANICO Así es.

FRANCISQUITO Pues imagina  
que tengo fuerza divina  
contra humanas tiranías. 995

No sé yo quién me aconseja  
con voz callada en el pecho,  
que no la siento en la oreja,  
y de morir satisfecho  
y con gran gusto me deja; 1000  
    dícenme, y yo dello gusto,  
que he de ser un nuevo Justo  
y tú otro nuevo Pastor.

JUANICO Hazlo así, divino amor,  
que con tu querer me ajusto. 1005  
    Deja aquesta niñería  
del trompo, ¡por vida mía!,  
y repasemos los dos  
las oraciones de Dios.

FRANCISQUITO Bástame el *Avemaría*. 1010

JUANICO ¿Y el *Padrenuestro*?

FRANCISQUITO También.

JUANICO ¿Y el *Credo*?

FRANCISQUITO Séle de coro.

JUANICO ¿Y la *Salve*?

FRANCISQUITO; Aunque me den  
dos trompos, no seré moro!

JUANICO; Qué niñería!

FRANCISQUITO Pues bien: 1015  
¿Piensas que me estoy burlando?

JUANICO Estamos cosas tratando  
como si fuésemos hombres,  
¿y es bien que el trompo aquí nombres?

FRANCISQUITO; ¿He de estar siempre llorando? 1020

    Mi fe, hermano, tened cuenta  
con vos, y mirad no os hunda  
de Mahoma la tormenta;  
que yo encubro en esta funda  
un alma de Dios sedienta; 1025  
    y ni el trompo, ni el cordel,  
ni las fuentes que en Argel  
y en sus contornos están,  
mi sed divina hartarán,  
ni se ha de hartar sino en él. 1030

    Y así, os digo, hermano mío;  
que, por ver mis niñerías,  
no penséis que estoy sin brío,  
porque en las entrañas mías  
no hay lugar de Dios vacío. 1035

    Tened cuidado de vos,  
y encomendaos bien a Dios  
en la afrenta que amenaza;  
si no, yo saldré a la plaza  
a pelear por los dos. 1040

    Tengo yo el *Ave María*  
clavada en el corazón,



y es la estrella que me guía  
en este mar de aflicción  
al puerto del alegría. 1045

JUANICO Dios en tu lengua se mira,  
y por eso no me admira  
el ver que hables tan alto.

FRANCISQUITO No os turbará sobresalto  
si en ella ponéis la mira. 1050

JUANICO ¡Ay de nosotros, que viene  
el cadí con su porfía!  
Mostrar ánimo conviene.

FRANCISQUITO Acude al Ave María;  
verás qué fuerzas que tiene. 1055

*(Entra el CADÍ y el CARAHOJA, amo del desorejado.)*

CADÍ Pues, hijos, ¿en qué entendéis?

JUANICO En trompear, como veis,  
mi hermano, señor, entiende.

CARAHOJA Es niño y, en fin, atiende  
a su edad.

CADÍ Y vos, ¿qué hacéis? 1060

JUANICO Rezando estaba.

CADÍ¿Por quién?

JUANICOPor mí, que soy pecador.

CADÍTodo aqueso esta muy bien.  
¿Qué rezábades?

JUANICOSeñor,  
lo que sé.

FRANCISQUITORespondió bien. 1065  
Rezaba el *Ave María*.  
(*Trompa FRANCISCO.*)

CADÍDejar el trompo podría  
delante de mí, Bairán.

FRANCISQUITO¡Buen nombre puesto me han!

CARAHOJA Todo aquello es niñería. 1070

CADÍ Este rapaz me da pena.  
Deja, Bairán, la porfía,  
que a gran daño te condena.  
¿Qué dices?

FRANCISQUITO *Ave María.*

CADÍ¿Qué respondes?

FRANCISQUITO *Gracia plena.* 1075

CARAHOJA Este mayor es maestro  
del menor.

JUANICO Yo no le muestro:  
que él, por sí, habilidad tiene.

FRANCISQUITO ¡Oh, cuán de molde que viene  
decir aquí el *Padrenuestro*! 1080

JUANICO Pues faltan los de la tierra,  
bien es acudir al cielo.  
¿Dó nuestro padre se encierra?

FRANCISQUITO A su tiempo llamarélo.

JUANICO Ya se comienza la guerra. 1085

FRANCISQUITO Porque todo al justo cuadre,  
lo postrero que mi madre  
me enseñó quiero decir,  
que es bueno para el morir.

CADÍ¿Qué has de decir?

FRANCISQUITO *Creo en Dios Padre.* 1090

CADÍ ¡Por Alá, que a su ruina  
me dispongo!

FRANCISQUITO ¿Ya os turbáis?  
Pues si es que aquesto os indina,  
¿qué hará cuando me oyáis  
decir la *Salve Regina*? 1095

Para vuestras confusiones,  
todas las cuatro oraciones  
sé, y sé bien que son escudos  
a tus alfanjes agudos  
y a tus torpes invenciones. 1100

CARAOJOJA Con no más de alzar el dedo  
y decir: «Ilá, ilalá»,  
te librarás deste miedo.

FRANCISQUITO En la cartilla no está  
eso, que decir no puedo. 1105

JUANICO Ni quiero, has de añadir.

FRANCISQUITO Ya yo lo iba a decir.

CADÍ ¡Esto es cansarnos en balde!  
Éste, a mi instancia llevadle,  
y estotro, que han de morir. 1110  
(*Arroja el trompo y desnúdase.*)

FRANCISQUITO ¡Ea!, vaya el trompo afuera,  
y este vestido grosero,  
que me vuelve el alma fiera,  
y es bien que vaya ligero

quien se atreve a esta carrera. 1115

¡Ea!, hermano, sed pastor  
con esfuerzo y con valor,  
que tras vos irá con gusto  
un pecadorcito justo  
por la gracia del Señor! 1120

¡Ea!, tiranos feroces,  
mostrad vuestras manos listas,  
y bien agudas las hoces,  
para segar las aristas  
destas gargantas y voces; 1125  
que en esta estraña porfía,  
adonde la tiranía  
toda su rabia convoca,  
no sacaréis de mi boca  
sino...

JUANICO¿Qué?

FRANCISQUITOUn *Avemaría*. 1130

CARAHOJA Entremos, que ya el regalo  
les hará mudar de intento  
más que el azote y el palo.

CADÍPor cien mil señales siento  
que va mi partido malo; 1135  
que el mayor es en extremo  
callado y sagaz. ¡Blasfemo  
seré del mismo Mahoma,  
si estos rapaces no doma!

FRANCISQUITO¿No le temes?

JUANICONo le temo. 1140

FIN DEL ACTO SEGUNDO

## Jornada tercera

*Salen el GUARDIÁN BAJÍ y otro MORO.*

GUARDIÁN Por diez escudos no daré mi parte.  
Sentaos y no dejéis entrar alguno,  
si no pagan dos ásperos muy buenos.

MORO La Pascua de Natal, como ellos llaman,  
venticinco ducados se llegaron. 5

GUARDIÁN Los españoles, por su parte, hacen  
una brava comedia.

MORO Son saetanes;  
los mismos diablos son; son para todo.  
Ya descuelgan cristianos a su misa.

*(Entran VIVANCO, DON FERNANDO, DON LOPE, el SACRISTÁN, el PADRE de los niños; trae DON FERNANDO los calzones del SACRISTÁN.)*

DON FERNANDO Veislos aquí, que no me los he puesto; 10  
antes Costanza les echó un remiendo  
en parte do importaba, y de su mano.

SACRISTÁN De molde vienen para la comedia;  
agora me los chanto. ¡Sus, entremos!

GUARDIÁN¿Adónde vais, cristiano?

PADREYo, a oír misa. 15

MOROPues paga.

PADRE¿Cómo, paga? ¿Aquí se paga?

GUARDIÁN¡Bien parece que es nuevo el padre viejo!

MORODos ásperos, o apártate, camina.

PADRENo los tengo, por Dios.

MOROPues ve y ahórcate.

DON LOPEYo pagaré por él.

MOROEso en buen hora. 20

SACRISTÁNFende, déjeme entrar, y este pañuelo,  
que no ha media hora que hurté a un judío,  
tome por prenda, o déme lo que vale,  
que lo daré no más de por el costo,  
o muy poquito más.

GUARDIÁNCon otros cuatro 25  
quedas muy bien pagado.



SACRISTÁN Vengan, y entro.

MORO ¡Ea!, acudid a entrar, que se hace tarde.  
Con los del rey, yo apostaré que pasen  
de dos mil los que están en el banasto.  
Entremos a mirar desde la puerta 30  
cómo dicen su misa, que imagino  
que tienen grande música y concierto.

GUARDIÁN Poneos tras el postigo, y veréis todo  
cuanto hacen los cristianos en el patio,  
porque es cosa de ver.

MORO Ya los he visto. 35  
Hoy dicen que tornó a vivir su Cristo.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Salen al teatro todos los cristianos que haya, y OSORIO entre ellos, y el SACRISTÁN, puestos los calzones que le dio DON FERNANDO.)*

OSORIO Misterio es éste no visto.  
Veinte religiosos son  
los que hoy la Resurrección  
han celebrado de Cristo 40  
con música concertada,  
la que llaman contrapunto.  
Argel es, según barrunto,  
arca de Noé abreviada:  
aquí están de todas suertes, 45  
oficios y habilidades,

disfrazadas calidades.

VIVANCOY aun otra cosa, si adviertes,  
que es de más admiración,  
y es que estos perros sin fe 50  
nos dejen, como se ve,  
guardar nuestra religión.  
Que digamos nuestra misa  
nos dejan, aunque en secreto.

OSORIO Más de una vez, con aprieto 55  
se ha celebrado y con prisa;  
que una vez, desde el altar,  
al sacerdote sacaron  
revestido, y le llevaron  
por las calles del lugar 60  
arrastrando; y la crueldad  
fue tal que con él se usó,  
que en el camino acabó  
la vida y la libertad.  
Mas dejémonos de aquesto, 65  
y a nuestra holgura atendamos,  
pues que nos dan nuestros amos  
hoy lugar para hacer esto.  
De nuestras Pascuas tenemos  
los primeros días por nuestros. 70

DON LOPE ¿Y qué? ¿Hay músicos?

OSORIO Y diestros;  
los del cadí llamaremos.

VIVANCO Aquí están.

OSORIOY aquél que ayuda  
al coloquio ya está aquí.

DON FERNANDO¿Bien cantan los del cadí! 75

OSORIOAntes que más gente acuda,  
el coloquio se comience,  
que es del gran Lope de Rueda,  
impreso por Timoneda,  
que en vejez al tiempo vence. 80

No pude hallar otra cosa  
que poder representar  
más breve, y sé que ha de dar  
gusto, por ser muy curiosa  
su manera de decir 85  
en el pastoril lenguaje.

VIVANCO¿Hay pellicos?

OSORIODe ropaje  
humilde; y voyme a vestir.

VIVANCO ¿Quién canta?

OSORIOAquí el sacristán,  
que tiene donaire en todo. 90

VIVANCO¿Hay loa?

OSORIO¿De ningún modo!

*(Éntrase OSORIO y el SACRISTÁN.)*

VIVANCO; Oh, qué mendigos están!

En fin: comedia cautiva,  
pobre, hambrienta y desdichada,  
desnuda y atarantada. 95

DON LOPE La voluntad se reciba.

*(Entra CAURALÍ.)*

CAURALÍ Sentaos, no os alborotéis,  
que vengo a ver vuestra fiesta.

DON FERNANDO Quisiera que fuera ésta,  
fende, cual la merecéis. 100

DON LOPE Aquí os podéis asentar,  
que yo me quedaré en pie.

CAURALÍ No, no, amigo, siéntate,  
que salen a comenzar.

DON LOPE Ya salen; sosiego y chite, 105  
que cantan.

VIVANCO Mejor sería  
que llorasen.

DON FERNANDO Este día

lágrimas no las permite.

*(Canten lo que quisieren.)*

VIVANCO    La música ha sido hereje;  
si el coloquio así sucede, 110  
antes que la rueda ruede,  
se rompa el timón y el eje.

*(En acabando la música, dice el SACRISTÁN (Todo cuanto dice agora el SACRISTÁN, lo diga mirando al soslayo a CAURALÍ):)*

SACRISTÁN    ¿Qué es esto? ¿Qué tierra es ésta?  
¿Qué siento? ¿Qué es lo que veo?

*De réquiem* es esta fiesta 115

para mí, pues un deseo  
más que mortal me molesta.

¿Dónde se encendió este fuego,  
que tiene, entre burla y juego,  
el alma ceniza hecha? 120

De Mahoma es esta flecha,  
de cuya fuerza reniego.

Como cuando el sol asoma  
por una montaña baja,

y de súbito nos toma 125

y con su vista nos doma  
nuestra vista y la relaja;

como la piedra balaja,  
que no consiente carcoma,  
tal es el tu rostro, Aja, 130  
dura lanza de Mahoma,  
que las mis entrañas raja.

CAURALÍ    ¿Es esto de la comedia,  
o es bufón este cristiano?

SACRISTÁN Si mi dolor no remedia 135  
su bruñida y blanca mano,  
todo acabará en tragedia.

¡Oh mora la más hermosa,  
más discreta y más graciosa  
que la fama nos ofrece, 140  
desde do el alba amanece  
hasta donde el sol reposa!,  
(*Dice esto mirando a CAURALÍ.*)

Mahoma en su compañía  
te tenga siglos sin cuento.

CAURALÍ ¿Este perro desvaría, 145  
o entra a questo en el cuento  
de la fiesta deste día?

DON FERNANDO Calla, Tristán, y ten cuenta,  
porque ya se representa  
el coloquio.

SACRISTÁN Sí haré; 150  
pero no sé si podré,  
según el diablo me tienta.

(*Sale GUILLERMO, pastor.*)

GUILLERMO «Si el recontento que trayo,  
venido tan de rondón,  
no me le abraza el zurrón, 155  
¿cuales nesgas pondré al sayo,  
y qué ensanchas al jubón?»

SACRISTÁN ¡Vive Dios, que se me abraza  
el hígado, y sufro y callo!

GUILLERMO Si es que esto adelante pasa, 160  
muy mejor será dejallo.

SACRISTÁN ¿Quién encendió aquesta brasa?

DON LOPE Tristán, amigo, escuchad,  
pues sois discreto, y callad,  
que ésa es grande impertinencia. 165

SACRISTÁN Callaré y tendré paciencia.

GUILLERMO ¿Comienzo?

DON LOPE Sí, comenzad.

GUILLERMO «Si el recontento que trayo,  
venido tan de rondón,  
no me lo abraza el zurrón, 170  
¿cuales nescas pondré al sayo,  
o qué ensanchas al jubón?  
Y si, al contarlo estremeño,  
con un donaire risueño,  
ayer me miró Costanza, 175  
¿qué turba habrá ya o mudanza  
que no le pase por sueño?  
Esparcíos, las mis corderas,  
por las dehesas y prados;  
mordey sabrosos bocados, 180  
no temáis las venideras

noches de nubros airados;  
antes os anday esentas,  
brincando de recontentas.  
No os aflija el ser mordidas 185  
de las lobas desambridas,  
tragantonas, malcontentas;  
y, al dar de los vellocinos,  
venid simpres, no ronceras,  
rumiando por las laderas, 190  
a jornaleros vecinos,  
o al corte de sus tijeras;  
que el sin medida contento,  
cual no abarca el pensamiento,  
os libraré de lesión, 195  
si al dar del branco vellón  
barruntáis el bien que siento.  
Mas, ¿quién es este cuitado  
que asoma acá entellerido,  
cabizbajo, atordecido, 200  
barba y cabello erizado,  
desairado y mal erguido?»

SACRISTÁN ¿Quién ha de ser? Yo soy, cierto,  
el triste y desventurado,  
vivo en un instante y muerto, 205  
de Mahoma enamorado.

CAURALÍ ¡Echadle fuera a este loco!

SACRISTÁN; Tu divina boca invoco,  
Aja, de mil azahares,  
boca de quitapesares 210  
a quien desde lejos toco!

CAURALÍ ¡Dejádmele!



DON FERNANDO No, señor,  
que cuanto dice es donaire,  
y es bufón el pecador.

SACRISTÁN ¡Dios de los vientos! ¿No hay aire 215  
para templar tanto ardor?

GUILLERMO ¡Ya es mucha descortesía  
y mucha bufonería!  
¡Échenle ya, y déjenos!

SACRISTÁN Yo me voy. ¡Quédate a Dios, 220  
argelina gloria mía!

GUILLERMO ¿Dónde quedé?

VIVANCO No sé yo.

DON LOPE «Mas, ¿quién es este cuitado...?»,  
fue el verso donde paró.

DON FERNANDO Los calzones han obrado. 225

GUILLERMO ¿Vuelvo a comenzar?

DON FERNANDO No, no;  
no nos turben a deshora.  
Prosigue el coloquio ahora.

*(Un MORO dice desde arriba:)*

MORO ¡Cristianos, estad alerta;  
cerrad del baño la puerta! 230

GUILLERMO ¡Vengas, perrazo, en mal hora!

MORO ¡Abrid aquese cristiano,  
que va herido, y cerrad presto!

CAURALÍ ¡Válame Alá! ¿Qué es aquesto?

MORO ¡Oh santo Alá soberano! 235  
Dos han muerto, y del rey son.  
¡Oh crueldad jamás oída!  
A todos quitan la vida  
sin ninguna distinción.

*(Entra un CRISTIANO herido, y otro sin herir.)*

DON FERNANDO Pasad, hermano, adelante. 240  
¿Quién os ha herido?

CRISTIANO Un archí.

DON FERNANDO ¿La causa?

CRISTIANO Ninguna di.

VIVANCO¿Es la herida penetrante?

CRISTIANO No sé; con manera fue,  
y será mortal, sin duda. 245

CRISTIANO 2Otra traigo yo más cruda,  
y en parte do no se ve.

CAURALÍ ¿No dirás qué es esto, Alí?

MOROGrande armada han descubierto  
por la mar.

DON FERNANDO¿Y aqueso es cierto? 250  
¿Vaste, fende Cauralí?

*(Vase CAURALÍ.)*

MORO Y los jenízaros matan  
si encuentran algún cautivo,  
o con furor duro esquivo  
malamente le maltratan; 255  
y aquestas voces que oís  
las dan judíos, de miedo.

GUILLERMO¿Todo el mundo se esté quedo!  
Yo creo, Alí, que mentís,  
pues no ha mucho que en España 260  
no había ninguna nueva  
de armada.

MOROPues esta prueba  
os desmiente y desengaña;  
que a fe que dicen que asoman  
más de trecientas galeras, 265  
con flámulas y banderas,  
y que el rumbo de Argel toman.

GUILLERMO Quizá por encantamento  
aquesta armada se ha hecho.

*(Entra el GUARDIÁN BAJÍ.)*

GUARDIÁN¡El corazón en el pecho 270  
no cabe, y de ira reviento!

OSORIO Pues, ¿qué hay, fendi?

GUARDIÁNYo me alisto  
a contar la crueldad,  
igual de la necedad  
mayor que jamás se ha visto. 275  
«Salió el sol esta mañana,  
y sus rayos imprimieron  
en las nubes tales formas,  
que, aunque han mentido, las creo.  
Una armada figuraron 280  
que venía a vela y remo  
por el sesgo mar apriesa,  
a tomar en Argel puerto.  
Tan claramente descubren  
los ojos que la están viendo, 285  
de las fingidas galeras  
las proas, popas y remos,

que hay quien afirme y quien jure  
que del cómitre y remero  
vio el mandar y obedecer 290  
hacerse todo en un tiempo.  
Tal hay que dice haber visto  
a vuestro profeta muerto  
en la gavia de una nave,  
en una bandera puesto. 295  
Muestra tan al vivo el humo  
su vano y oscuro cuerpo,  
y tan de cerca perciben  
los oídos fuego y truenos,  
que, por temor de las balas, 300  
más de cuatro se pusieron  
a abrazar la madre tierra:  
tal fue el miedo que tuvieron.  
Por estas formas que el sol  
ha con sus rayos impreso 305  
en las nubes, ha en nosotros  
otras mil formado el miedo.  
Pensamos que ese don Juan,  
cuyo valor fue el primero  
que a la otomana braveza 310  
tuvo a raya y puso freno,  
venía a dar fin honroso  
al desdichado comienzo  
que su valeroso padre  
comenzó en hado siniestro. 315  
Los jenízaros archíes,  
que están siempre zaques hechos,  
dieron en matar cautivos,  
por tener contrarios menos;  
y si acaso el sol tardara 320  
de borrar sus embelecocos,  
no estábades bien seguros  
cuantos estáis aquí dentro.  
Veinte y más son los heridos,  
y más de treinta los muertos.» 325  
Ya el sol deshizo la armada;

volved a hacer vuestros juegos.

OSORIO;Mal podremos proseguir  
tan sangrientos pasatiempos!

CRISTIANO 2Pues escuchad otra historia 330  
más sangrienta y de más peso.

El cadí, como sabéis,  
tiene en su poder a un niño  
de tiernos y pocos años,  
el cual se llama Francisco. 335  
Ha puesto toda su industria,  
su autoridad y juicio,  
mil promesas y amenazas,  
mil contrapuestos partidos,  
para que de bueno a bueno 340  
esta prenda del bautismo  
se deje circuncidar  
por su gusto y su albedrío.  
Su industria ha salido vana;  
su juicio no ha podido 345  
imprimir humanas trazas  
en este pecho divino.  
Por esto, según se entiende,  
como afrentado y corrido,  
su luciferina rabia 350  
hoy ha esfogado en Francisco.  
Atado está a una columna,  
hecho retrato de Cristo,  
de la cabeza a los pies  
en su misma sangre tinto. 355  
Témome que habrá espirado,  
porque tan crüel martirio  
mayores años y fuerzas  
no le hubieran resistido.

PADRE; Dulce mitad de mi alma, 360  
ay de mis entrañas hijo,  
detened la vida en tanto  
que os va a ver este afligido!  
¡En la calle de Amargura,  
perezosos pies, sed listos; 365  
veré en su ser a Pilatos  
y en figura veré a Cristo!

*(Éntrese el PADRE.)*

CRISTIANO 2; ¿Este es su padre, señores?

DON FERNANDO Su padre es este mezquino,  
hidalgo y muy buen cristiano, 370  
y somos de un pueblo mismo.  
Acábense nuestras fiestas,  
cesen nuestros regocijos,  
que siempre en tragedia acaban  
las comedias de cautivos. 375

*(Éntranse todos.)*

*(Salen ZARA, HALIMA y COSTANZA.)*

HALIMA Tu padre me rogó, amiga,  
que viniese en un momento  
a componerte.

ZAHARA; Su intento  
todo el cielo le maldiga!

HALIMA ¿Pues cásaste con un rey 380  
y muéstraste desabrida?  
Y más, que es cosa sabida  
que es gentilhombre Muley.  
Sin duda que estás prendada  
en otra parte.

ZAHARANo hay prenda 385  
que me halague ni me ofenda,  
porque de amor no sé nada.

HALIMA Pues esta noche sabrás,  
en la escuela de tu esposo,  
que es amor dulce y sabroso. 390

ZAHARA¡Amargas nuevas me das!

HALIMA ¡Qué melindrosa señora!

ZAHARANo es melindre, sino enfado:  
que había determinado  
no casarme por ahora, 395  
hasta que el cielo me diese  
con otro compás mi suerte.

HALIMACalla, que reina has de verte.

ZAHARANo aspiro a tanto interese.  
Con otro estado menor, 400  
con mayor gusto estaría.



HALIMA Yo juro por vida mía,  
Zara, que tenéis amor.

Ahora bien, mostrad las perlas  
que tenéis, que quiero ver 405  
cuántos lazos podré hacer.

ZAHARA Allí dentro podrás verlas.

Éntrate, y déjame un poco,  
que quiero hablar con Costanza.

HALIMA ¡Vos gustaréis de la danza 410  
antes de mucho y no poco!  
(Éntrase HALIMA.)

COSTANZA Dime, señora, qué es esto.  
¿Tanto te enfada el casarte,  
y con un rey?

ZAHARA No hay contarte  
tantas cosas y tan presto. 415

COSTANZA ¿De dónde el enfado mana  
que muestras tan importuno?

ZAHARA Pasito, no escuche alguno.  
¡Soy cristiana, soy cristiana!

COSTANZA ¡Válame Santa María! 420

ZAHARA Esa Señora es aquella  
que ha de ser mi luz y estrella  
en el mar de mi agonía.

COSTANZA ¿Quién te enseñó nuestra ley?

ZAHARA No hay lugar en que lo diga. 425

Cristiana soy; mira, amiga,  
qué me sirve el moro rey.

Di: ¿conoces, por ventura,  
a un cautivo rescatado  
que es caballero y soldado? 430

COSTANZA ¿Cómo ha nombre?

ZAHARA Mal segura  
estoy aquí, y con temor  
de algún desgraciado encuentro.

COSTANZA Pues entrémonos adentro.

ZAHARA Sin duda, será mejor. 435

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Salen el REY, el CADÍ, el GUARDIÁN BAJÍ.)*

CADÍ ¡Estraño caso ha sido!

REY Y tan estraño  
que no sé si jamas le ha visto el mundo.

CADÍYa se han visto en el aire muchas veces  
formados escuadrones espantables  
de fantásticas sombras, y encontrarse 440  
con todo el artificio y maestría  
que en la mitad de una campaña rasa  
se suelen embestir los verdaderos;  
las nubes han llovido sangre y malla,  
y pedazos de alfanjes y de escudos. 445

REYESos llaman prodigios los cristianos,  
que suelen parecer algunas veces;  
pero que acaso, y sin misterio alguno,  
del sol los rayos, que en las nubes topan,  
hayan formado así tan grande armada, 450  
nunca lo oí jamás.

GUARDIÁNYo así lo digo;  
pues a fe que te cuesta la burleta  
más de treinta cristianos.

REYNo hace al caso;  
mas que pasaran a cuchillo todos.

CADÍQuitóme el sobresalto de las manos 455  
el corbacho y la furia.

REY¿Qué hacías?

CADÍAzotaba a un cristiano...

REY¿Por qué causa?

CADÍEs de pequeña edad, y no es posible  
que regalos, promesas ni amenazas  
le puedan volver moro.

REY¿Es, por ventura, 460  
el muchacho español del otro día?

CADÍAquese mismo es.

REYPues no te canses,  
que es español, y no podrán tus mañas,  
tus iras, tus castigos, tus promesas,  
a hacerle torcer de su propósito. 465  
¡Qué mal conoces la canalla terca,  
porfiada, feroz, fiera, arrogante,  
pertinaz, indomable y atrevida!  
Antes que moro, le verás sin vida.

*(Entra un MORO asido de un cautivo.)*

¿Que ha hecho este cristiano?

MOROEn este punto, 470  
en una estraña y nunca vista barca,  
casi una legua al mar, en este punto  
le acabé de coger.

REYPues, ¿de qué modo  
era la barca estraña?

MOROEra una balsa

hecha de canalejas, sustentada 475  
sobre grandes y muchas calabazas,  
y él, puesto en medio en pie, de árbol servía,  
y sus brazos, de entena, en cuyas manos  
servía de vela una camisa rota.

REY ¿Cuándo entraste en la barca?

CRISTIANO A media noche. 480

REY Pues, ¿cómo en tanto tiempo no pudiste  
alejarte de tierra más espacio?

CRISTIANO Sultán, no me servía de otra cosa  
sino de no anegarme, y sólo iba  
confiado en el cielo y en el viento 485  
que, próspero y furioso arrebatado,  
la mal formada barca la aportase  
en cualquiera ribera de cristianos;  
que ningún remo o vela fuera parte  
a hacerla tomar curso ligero. 490

REY ¡En fin, español eres!

CRISTIANO No lo niego.

REY Pues deso que no niegas yo reniego.

*(Entra el SACRISTÁN con un niño en las mantillas, fingido, y tras él el JUDÍO de la cazuela.)*

¿Es aquésta otra barca?

JUDÍO Este cristiano  
me acaba de robar a este mi hijo.

CADÍ ¿Para qué quiere el niño?

SACRISTÁN ¿No está bueno? 495  
Para que le rescaten, si no quieren  
que le críe y enseñe el *Padrenuestro*.  
¿Qué decís vos, Raquel o Sedequías,  
Fares, Sadoc, o Zabulón o diablo?

JUDÍO Este español, señor, es la ruina 500  
de nuestra judería; no hay en ella  
cosa alguna segura de sus uñas.

REY Di: ¿no eres español?

SACRISTÁN ¿Ya no lo sabes?

REY ¿Quién es tu amo?

SACRISTÁN El dabají Morato.

REY Tocadle, por mi vida.

CADÍ Por la mía, 505

que tienes gran razón en lo que has dicho  
de la canalla bárbara española.

*(Entra otro MORO con otro CRISTIANO, muy roto y llagadas las piernas.)*

REY ¿Quién es este?

MORO Español que se ha huido  
tantas veces por tierra, que con ésta  
son veinte y una vez las de su fuga. 510

REY Si diésemos audiencia cuatro días,  
serían de españoles todos cuantos  
se entrasen a quejar.

CADÍ ¡Estraño caso!

REY Pápaz, vuélvele el niño a este judío,  
y no le hagan mal a este cristiano, 515  
que, pues a tal peligro entregó el cuerpo,  
en grande cuita debe estar su alma.  
Y tú, ¿eres español?

CRISTIANO Y de Valencia.

REY Vuélvete, pues, a huir, que si te vuelven,  
yo te pondré en un palo.

SACRISTÁN Señor, haga 520  
que este puto judío dé siquiera  
el jornal que he perdido por andarme

tras él para robarle este hideputa.

CADÍ Bien dice; desembolse cuarenta ásperos  
y délos al pápaz, que los merece. 525

SACRISTÁN ¿Oye, amigo judío?

JUDÍO Muy bien oigo;  
mas no los tengo aquí.

SACRISTÁN Vamos a casa.

CADÍ Con españoles, esto y más se pasa.

*(Éntranse todos.)*

*(El PADRE solo.)*

PADRE ¿Si osaré entrar allá dentro?  
¡Oh temor impertinente! 530  
¡Vamos; que no teme encuentro  
piedra que naturalmente  
va presurosa a su centro!

*(Córrese una cortina; descúbrese FRANCISQUITO, atado a una coluna en la forma que pueda mover a más piedad.)*

FRANCISQUITO ¿No me quieran desatar,  
para que pueda, siquiera, 535  
como es costumbre espirar?



PADRE No, que de aquesa manera  
más a Cristo has de imitar.

Si vas caminando al cielo,  
no has de sentarte en el suelo; 540  
más ligero vas ansí.

FRANCISQUITO ¡Oh padre, lléguese a mí,  
que el velle me da consuelo!

¡Ya la muerte helada y fría  
a dejaros me provoca 545  
con su mortal agonía!

PADRE ¡Echa tu alma en mi boca,  
para que ensarte la mía!

¡Ay, que espira!

FRANCISQUITO ¡Adiós, que espiro!

PADRE ¡Dios, a quien tu intento aspira, 550  
nos junte adonde yo aspiro!

¡Qué poco a poco respira,  
ya dio el último suspiro!

¡Vete en paz, alma hermosa,  
y al que te hizo dichosa, 555  
pues ya le ves, pídele  
que nos sustente en su fe  
pura, santa, alegre, honrosa!

¡Quién supiese el muladar  
adonde te han de enterrar, 560  
reliquia pequeña y santa,  
para que pueda mi planta  
con mis lágrimas regar!  
(Éntrase.)

*(Aquí ha de salir la boda desta manera: HALIMA con un velo delante del rostro, en lugar de ZARA; llévanla en unas andas en hombros, con música y hachas encendidas, guitarras y voces y grande regocijo, cantando los cantares que yo daré. Salen detrás de todos VIVANCO y DON LOPE, y entre los moros de la música va OSORIO, el cautivo. Como acaban de pasar, pregunta DON LOPE a OSORIO:)*

DON LOPE    ¿Quién es esta novia!

OSORIOZara,  
la hija de Agimorato.    565

DON LOPE¡No es posible!

OSORIO¡Cosa es clara!

VIVANCOSu rostro y el aparato  
de la boda lo declara.

OSORIO    Por Dios, señores, que es ella,  
y que es la mora más bella    570  
y rica de Berbería!

DON LOPEPor el velo que traía  
no podimos conocella.

OSORIO    Muley Maluco es su esposo,  
el que pretende ser rey    575  
de Fez, moro muy famoso,  
y en su secta y mala ley

es versado y muy curioso;  
sabe la lengua turquesca,  
la española y la tudesca, 580  
italiana y francesa;  
duerme en alto, come en mesa,  
sentado a la cristianesca;  
sobre todo, es gran soldado,  
liberal, sabio, compuesto, 585  
de mil gracias adornado.

DON LOPE¿Qué dices, amigo, desto?

VIVANCOQue habemos bien negociado,  
pues, siendo una caña vara,  
y otro nuevo Moisés Zara 590  
deste Egipto disoluto,  
pasamos el mar enjuto  
a gozar la patria cara.

OSORIO Gasta en Pascuas el judío  
su hacienda; en bodas, el moro; 595  
el cristiano a su albedrío,  
sigue en esto otro decoro,  
de todo gusto vacío,

*(ZARA a la ventana.)*

porque en pleitos le da cabo.

ZAHARA¿Ce, hola, cristiano esclavo! 600

OSORIO¿Adiós, señores, que quiero,  
hasta el término postrero  
ver esto!

DON LOPE Tu gusto alabo.

ZAHARA ¡Cristiano o moro enemigo!

VIVANCO ¿Quién nos llama?

ZAHARA Quien merece 605  
que le oyáis.

DON LOPE ¡Por Dios, amigo,  
que esta Zara me parece  
en la voz!

VIVANCO Yo así lo digo.

ZAHARA Decidme qué cosa es ésta  
deste regocijo y fiesta. 610

DON LOPE Con Zara, la desta casa,  
Muley Maluco se casa.

ZAHARA Desvariada respuesta.

DON LOPE Y allí va sobre unas andas  
con música y vocería. 615  
Mira si otra cosa mandas.

ZAHARA Ya veo, Lela María,  
cómo en mis remedios andas.

DON LOPE ¿Eres Zara?

ZAHARA Zara soy.  
Tú, ¿quién eres?

DON LOPE ¡Loco estoy! 620

ZAHARA ¿Qué dices?

DON LOPE Que soy, señora,  
un tu esclavo que te adora.  
Soy don Lope.

ZAHARA A abrirte voy.  
*(Quítase de la ventana y baja a abrir.)*

VIVANCO De misterio no carece  
estar Zara aquí y allí. 625

DON LOPE Este bien su fe merece,  
y el estar tan sola aquí  
la admiración en mí crece;  
adonde hay tanto criado,  
tal soledad se ha hallado; 630  
todo es milagro y ventura.

VIVANCO El regocijo y holgura

de la boda lo ha causado.

Quien le hace parecer  
en lugares diferentes 635  
muy más que esto puede hacer,  
por quitar inconvenientes  
al bien que ha de suceder.

*(Sale ZARA.)*

¿Vesla, don Lope, a do asoma?  
Mira si es bien que a Mahoma 640  
este tesoro quitemos.

DON LOPE; Oh extremo de los extremos  
de amor, que las almas doma!

¡Salud de mi enfermedad,  
arribo de mi caída, 645  
de mi prisión libertad,  
de mi muerte alegre vida,  
crédito de mi verdad,

archivo donde se encierra  
toda la paz de mi guerra, 650  
sol que alumbra mis sentidos,  
luz que a míseros perdidos  
los encamina a su tierra,

vesme aquí a tus pies postrado,  
más tu esclavo y más rendido 655  
que cuando estaba aherrojado;  
por ti ganado y perdido,  
preso y libre en un estado;

dame tus pies sobrehumanos  
y tus alejandras manos, 660  
donde mis labios se pongan!

ZAHARA No es bien que se descompongan

con moras labios cristianos.

Por mil señales has visto  
cómo yo toda soy tuya, 665  
no por ti, sino por Cristo,  
y así, en fe de que soy suya,  
estas caricias resisto;

para otro tiempo las guarda,  
que ahora, que se acobarda 670  
el alma con mil temores,  
comedimientos y amores  
mal los atiende y aguarda.

¿Cuándo te partes a España,  
y cuándo piensas volver 675  
por quien queda y te acompaña?  
¿Cuándo fin has de poner  
a tan gloriosa hazaña?

¿Cuando volverán tus ojos  
a ver los moros despojos 680  
que ser cristianos desean?  
¿Cuándo en verte harás que vean  
fin mis temores y enojos?

DON LOPE Mañana me partiré;  
dentro de ocho días, creo, 685  
señora, que volveré;  
que a la cuenta del deseo,  
que han de ser siglos bien sé.

En el jardín estarás  
del tu padre, a do verás 690  
mi fe y palabra cumplida,  
si me costase la vida  
que con tu vista me das.

Y no te asalte el recelo  
que te he de faltar en esto, 695  
pues no ha de querer el cielo,  
para caso tan honesto,  
negar su ayuda en el suelo.

Cristiano y español soy,

y caballero, y te doy 700  
mi fe y palabra de nuevo  
de hacer lo que en esto debo.

ZAHARAAsaz satisfecha estoy;  
pero, si me quieres bien,  
porque quede más segura, 705  
júrame por Marién.

DON LOPE¡Juro por la Virgen pura,  
y por su Hijo también,  
de no olvidarte jamás  
y de hacer lo que verás 710  
en mi gusto y tu provecho!

ZAHARA¡Grande juramento has hecho!  
Basta; no me jures más.

VIVANCO ¿Qué es lo que tu padre dice  
desto de tu casamiento 715  
con Muley Maluco?

ZAHARAHice  
esta noche un sentimiento,  
con que la boda deshice.  
Hoy me mandó aderezar  
para haberme de llevar 720  
esta noche a ser esposa;  
vino, y hallóme llorosa;  
fuese sin quererme hablar,  
y por toda la ciudad  
se suena que me desposo 725  
esta noche.



VIVANCO Así es verdad.

DON LOPE ¡Éste es caso milagroso!  
No la apuréis más; callad.

Dame tus manos, señora,  
hasta que llegue la hora 730  
que con abrazos las des.

ZAHARA No, sino dame tus pies,  
que eres cristiano y yo mora.

Vete en paz, que yo, entre tanto  
que vas y vuelves, haré 735  
plegarias al cielo santo  
con las voces de mi fe  
y lágrimas de mi llanto,  
rogándole que tranquile  
el mar, que viento asutile 740  
próspero y largo en tus velas,  
que te libre de cautelas,  
que en su fe mi ingenio afile.

Y, adiós, que no puedo más,  
y mañana iré al jardín, 745  
donde te espero.

VIVANCO Verás  
deste principio buen fin.

ZAHARA ¿Que me dejas y te vas?

DON LOPE No puedo hacer otra cosa.

ZAHARA¿Llegará la venturosa 750  
hora de volver a verte?  
(Vase ZARA.)

DON LOPESí llegará, si la muerte  
no es, cual suele, rigurosa.  
No será elirme cordura,  
hasta ver el fin que tiene 755  
aquesta boda en figura.

VIVANCOEl misterio que contiene,  
mi buen suceso asegura.

(Éntranse.)

*(Descúbrese un tálamo donde ha de estar HALIMA, cubierta el rostro con el velo; danzan la danza de la morisca; haya hachas; esténlo mirando DON LOPE y VIVANCO, y, en acabando la danza, entran dos moros.)*

MORO 1 La fiesta cese, y a su casa vuelva  
la bella Zara, que Muley lo ordena, 760  
con prudencia admirable, desta suerte.

MORO 2¿Pues no pasa adelante el casamiento?

MORO 1Sí pasa; pero quiere que entre tanto  
que él va a cobrar su reino de Marruecos,  
Zara se quede en casa de su padre, 765  
entera y sin tocar; que deste modo  
quedará más segura, y él espera  
gozarla con sosiego allá en su reino,  
a cuya empresa aún bien no habrá salido  
el sol cuando se parta; que esta priesa 770

le dan dos mil jenízaros que lleva  
en su campo, que ya sabes que marcha.

MORO 2 Si esto pensaba hacer, ¿para qué quiso  
que el paseo de Zara se hiciese?  
¿Qué dirá el pueblo? Pensará, sin duda, 775  
que no quiere casarse ya con ella.

MORO 1 Diga lo que dijere, éste es su gusto,  
y no hay sino callar y obedecelle;  
y más, que Agimorato gusta dello.

MORO 2 ¿Ha de volver con pompa?

MORO 1 ¡Ni por pienso! 780

MORO 2 Vamos, pues, a volvella.

VIVANCO ¡Oh Dios inmenso!

*(Éntranse todos y ciérrase la cortina del tálamo; quedan en el teatro DON  
LOPE y VIVANCO.)*

¡Grandes son tus misterios! Ya seguro  
puedes partir, pues ves cuán fácilmente  
esta fantasma y sombra se ha deshecho.

DON LOPE Premisas son de nuestro buen suceso. 785  
Yo me voy a embarcar; tened cuidado  
de acudir al lugar donde os he dicho,  
y de hacer nuevas señas cada noche

como pasen seis días, en los cuales  
pienso poder volver, como deseo; 790  
y procurad con maña y con aviso,  
sin descubrir jamás vuestro designio,  
que el padre de aquel mártir se recoja  
en el jardín con otro algún amigo;  
que si toca a Mallorca este navío 795  
en que parto, bien será posible  
que dentro de seis días vuelva a veros.

VIVANCOPartid con Dios, que yo haré de suerte  
que más de dos la libertad alcancen.  
Las señas no se olviden. Abrazadme, 800  
y ánimo, y diligencia, y Dios os guíe.

DON LOPEDe nadie este secreto se confíe.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Sale OSORIO y el SACRISTÁN.)*

OSORIO El cuento es más gracioso  
que por jamás se ha oído:  
que los judíos mismos 805  
de su misma hacienda os rescatasen.

SACRISTÁNAsí como os lo cuento  
ha sucedido el caso:  
ellos me han rescatado  
y dado libertad graciosamente. 810  
Dicen que desta suerte  
aseguran sus niños,  
sus trastos y cazuelas,  
y, finalmente, su hacienda toda.

Yo he dado mi palabra 815  
de no hurtarles cosa  
mientras me fuere a España,  
y por Dios que no sé si he de cumplirla.

*(Entra un CRISTIANO.)*

CRISTIANO La limosna ha llegado  
a Bujía, cristianos. 820

OSORIO ¡Buenas nuevas son éstas!  
¿Quién viene?

CRISTIANO La Merced.

OSORIO ¡Dios nos las haga!  
¿Y quién la trae a cargo?

CRISTIANO Dícenme que un prudente  
varón, y que se llama 825  
fray Jorge de Olivar.

SACRISTÁN ¡Venga en buen hora!

OSORIO Un fray Rodrigo de Arce  
ha estado aquí otras veces,  
y es desa mesma Orden,  
de condición real, de ánimo noble. 830

SACRISTÁN Por lo menos, me ahorro  
reverencias y ruegos,

gracias a Sedequías  
y al rabí Netalim, que dio el dinero.  
Si la esperanza es buena, 835  
la posesión no es mala.  
Muy bien está lo hecho;  
venga cuando quisiere la limosna.  
¡Oh campanas de España!,  
¿cuándo entre aquestas manos 840  
tendré vuestros badajos?  
¿Cuándo haré el tic y toc o el grave empino?  
¿Cuándo de los bodigos  
que por los pobres muertos  
ofrecen ricas viudas 845  
veré mi arcaz colmado? ¿Cuándo, cuándo?

CRISTIANO¿Adónde vais agora?

OSORIOPidíóle Agimorato  
al cadí que nos fuésemos  
a su jardín por tres o cuatro días; 850  
que con su hija Zara  
y con la bella Halima,  
de Cauralí consorte,  
piensa pasar allí todo el verano.

CRISTIANOPodrá ser que algún día 855  
yo vaya a entretenerme  
con vosotros un rato.

OSORIOSerás bien recibido.

CRISTIANO¡Adiós, amigos!  
(Vase.)

SACRISTÁN También, pues estoy libre,  
iré yo, Osorio, a veros. 860

OSORIO Pues lleva la guitarra,  
y, si es posible, vente luego.

SACRISTÁN Harélo.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Salen HALIMA, ZARA, COSTANZA, y al entrar se le cae a ZARA un rosario, que lo alza HALIMA.)*

HALIMA ¿Cómo es esto, Zara amiga?  
¿Cruz en tus cuentas?

COSTANZA Mías son.

HALIMA Si aquésta no es devoción, 865  
no sé qué piense o qué diga.

ZAHARA ¿Qué cosa es cruz?

HALIMA Este palo  
que sobre estotro atraviesa.

ZAHARA Pues bien: ¿qué señal es ésa?

HALIMA ¡No está el disimulo malo! 870  
Es la señal que el cristiano  
reverencia como a Alá.

COSTANZA Señora, déjamela,  
que es mía.

HALIMA Tu intento es vano,  
que a Zara se le cayó, 875  
y yo lo vi por mis ojos.

ZAHARA Eso no te cause enojos,  
que Costanza me la dio  
cuando estaba el otro día  
en tu casa, y yo no sé 880  
lo que es cruz.

COSTANZA Ello así fue,  
y fue inadvertencia mía  
no quitalle esa señal.  
Pero, ¿qué importa al decoro  
de vuestro rezado moro? 885

ZAHARA Gualá que no dice mal.

HALIMA Con todo, quítala, hermana;  
que si algún moro la vee,  
dirá que guardas la fe,  
en secreto, de cristiana. 890

*(Entran VIVANCO y DON FERNANDO.)*



VIVANCO He fiado este secreto  
de vos por ser caballero.

DON FERNANDO Ser agradecido espero  
al peso de ser secreto.  
Éstas son Alima y Zara, 895  
que yo las conozco bien.

VIVANCONuestro negocio va bien.

HALIMA Repara, amiga, repara,  
que viene allí mi cristiano,  
y en él viene un mi enemigo 900  
a quien adoro y maldigo.

ZAHARA ¿Qué dices?

HALIMA No está en mi mano  
disimular más.

COSTANZA ¡Ay triste!  
¿Si se quiere declarar  
con él?

HALIMA Quiérole hablar. 905

COSTANZA En vano a amor se resiste.

ZAHARA ¿Quiéresle bien?

HALIMA La vergüenza  
me perdone: adórole,  
y él lo sabe, y yo no sé  
cómo a su dureza venza. 910

ZAHARA ¿Y no se humana contigo?

HALIMA Costanza dice que sí;  
pero yo siempre en él vi  
asperezas de enemigo.  
Llégate; dime, cristiano: 915  
¿sabes que eres mi cautivo?

DON FERNANDO Señora, sí, y sé que vivo  
por ti.

HALIMA ¿Pues cómo, inhumano?  
¿Nunca te han dicho mis ojos  
y la lengua de Costanza 920  
que tienes de mi esperanza  
en tu poder los despojos?  
¿Has aguardado a que haga  
de tanta gente en presencia  
esta costosa experiencia, 925  
descubriéndote mi llaga?  
Mira qué fe desdichada,  
que esto que llaman amor  
ya es incendio, ya es furor,  
cuando no repara en nada; 930  
mira bien que podría ser,  
si desprecias lo que digo,  
hicieses, hombre, enemigo  
de tan amiga mujer.

DON FERNANDO Tres días pido no más 935  
de plazo, señora mía,  
para dar a tu porfía  
el dulce fin que verás.

Vete con Dios al jardín  
de Zara y allí me espera: 940  
verás de tu pena fiera,  
como he dicho, un dulce fin.

HALIMA ¡Soy contenta!

ZAHARAY yo la mano  
doy por él que así lo hará.

COSTANZA ¡Muy bien negociado está! 945

HALIMA Si has de venir, ve temprano.

ZAHARA ¿Qué viento es éste que corre,  
cristiano?

VIVANCONorte parece,  
y en él la ventura ofrece  
el que nos guía y socorre. 950

ZAHARA ¿Fuese ya tu compañero  
a España?

VIVANCO Ya habrá seis días.

ZAHARA ¿Solo sin él quedarías?

VIVANCOSÍ quedé; mas verle espero  
con brevedad.

ZAHARA¿Qué tan presto? 955

VIVANCOPartiríame mañana,  
si hubiese bajel.

HALIMACristiana,  
alza el rostro. ¿Qué es aquesto?  
Muy melancólica estás.  
¿Qué tienes? ¿Qué sientes? Di. 960

COSTANZAVámonos, señora, de aquí,  
aunque he de morir do vas,  
porque me da el corazón  
saltos que me rompe el pecho.

ZAHARAEEl madrugar lo habrá hecho. 965

COSTANZAY haber visto una visión  
que, si no es cosa fingida,  
y en buen discurso trazada,  
el fin de aquesta jornada  
ha de ser el de mi vida. 970

DON FERNANDO Todas son fantasmas vanas;  
Costanza, no hay qué temer.

COSTANZAPresto lo echaré de ver.

ZAHARA ¡Medrosas son las cristianas!

COSTANZA No mucho, puesto que hay tal 975  
que se espanta de los cielos,  
iba a decir de los celos,  
y no dijera muy mal.

HALIMA Queda con Alá, mi Hernando,  
y mira que vengas luego; 980  
que te lo mando y lo ruego.

COSTANZA Basta decir te lo mando.

*(Éntranse las tres.)*

VIVANCO Vamos; quizá la ventura  
habrá tan próspera sido,  
que don Lope sea venido, 985  
y no hay perder coyuntura.

*(Éntrase VIVANCO y DON FERNANDO.)*

*(Sale el PADRE con un paño blanco ensangrentado, como que lleva en él los huesos de FRANCISQUITO.)*

PADRE Osorio haré que los guarde.  
Temo que esta escuridad,  
o me turbe, o lleve tarde.  
¡Oh, cuán propio es de mi edad 990  
ser temeroso y cobarde!

Mas estas reliquias santas  
encaminarán mis plantas  
al jardín de Agimorato.  
Menester es gran recato 995  
donde hay asechanzas tantas.  
(Éntrase.)

(Sale DON FERNANDO y VIVANCO.)

VIVANCO En la mar está, sin duda:  
que haber a tierra llegado  
muestra este plato quebrado.  
A nuestra señal se acuda: 1000  
hiera, amigo, el pedernal,  
porque saques dél la lumbre  
que traiga, guíe y alumbre  
todo el bien de nuestro mal.

DON FERNANDO ¿No ves cómo otras centellas 1005  
corresponden a las nuestras?

VIVANCO Llama a tan alegres muestras,  
no centellas, sino estrellas.  
Sosiega y escucha el son  
manso de los santos remos. 1010

DON FERNANDO Más a la orilla lleguemos.  
No hay que dudar, ellos son.

(Entran DON LOPE y el PATRÓN de la barca.)

DON LOPE ¿Es Vivanco?

VIVANCO El mismo soy.

DON LOPE ¿Está Zara en el jardín?

VIVANCO Sí, amigo.

DON LOPE ¡Felice fin 1015  
da el cielo a mis males hoy!

VIVANCO ¡Abrazame!

DON LOPE No hay lugar  
de cumplimientos ahora.  
Ve por ella.

VIVANCO Sea en buen hora.  
Poco podrás esperar. 1020

DON FERNANDO ¿Quieres que vaya contigo,  
amigo?

VIVANCO No hay para qué:  
que yo solo las traeré  
en un instante conmigo;  
que todos están a punto, 1025  
sin dormir, esto esperando.

DON LOPE Pues parte, amigo, volando.

PATRÓN ¿Están lejos?

VIVANCO Aquí junto.  
(Éntrese VIVANCO.)

PATRÓN ¡Oh, si no tardasen mucho,  
que es el viento favorable! 1030

DON LOPE Sosegaos, ninguno hable,  
que cierto rumor escucho.

PATRÓN A la barca nos volvemos  
hasta ver lo que es, señor.

DON LOPE Quedito, no hagáis rumor, 1035  
que aquí seguros estamos.

*(Entran VIVANCO, HALIMA, ZARA, COSTANZA, el PADRE, con un paño blanco, dando muestra que lleva los huesos de FRANCISQUITO; OSORIO, el SACRISTÁN y otros cristianos que pudieren salir.)*

VIVANCO Estaban alerta, y vieron  
las señales en la mar,  
y, sin poderme esperar,  
a la marina corrieron. 1040  
Ahorráronme el camino.

OSORIO ¡Ésta es suerte milagrosa!

DON LOPE ¿Dó está mi estrella hermosa?



HALIMA ¿Dó está mi norte divino?

PATRÓN No es tiempo de cumplimientos; 1045  
a embarcar, que el viento carga.  
¡Oh liviana y santa carga,  
haced propicios lo vientos!

SACRISTÁN Ya yo estaba rescatado;  
pero, con todo, me iré. 1050

PATRÓN ¿Hay más cristianos?

DON FERNANDO No sé.

VIVANCO Los que he podido he juntado.

COSTANZA ¡Vamos, no despierte Halima!

DON FERNANDO ¿Quieres que por ella vuelva?

PATRÓN Todo el mundo se resuelva 1055  
de embarcarse.

COSTANZA ¿Te lastima  
dejar tu ama?

DON FERNANDO Y mi amo  
quisiera que aquí se hallara.

DON LOPE Vamos, Zara.

ZAHARA Ya no Zara,  
sino María me llamo. 1060

DON LOPE No de la imaginación  
este *trato* se sacó,  
que la verdad lo fraguó  
bien lejos de la ficción.

Dura en Argel este cuento 1065  
de amor y dulce memoria,  
y es bien que verdad y historia  
alegre al entendimiento.

Y aún hoy se hallarán en él  
la ventana y el jardín. 1070  
Y aquí da este *trato* fin,  
que no le tiene el de Argel.

FIN DE LA COMEDIA

# EL RUFIÓN DICHOSO



*Comedia famosa intitulada El rufián dichoso*

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ALGUACIL.

*Dos corchetes*.

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*Tres almas de purgatorio*.

## Jornada primera

*Salen LUGO, envainando una daga de ganchos, y el LOBILLO y GANCHOSO, rufianes. LUGO viene como estudiante, con una media sotana, un broquel en la cinta y una daga de ganchos; que no ha de traer espada.*

LOBILLO ¿Por qué fue la quistiión?

LUGO No fue por nada.  
No se repita, si es que amigos somos.

GANCHOSO Quiso Lugo empinar-se sobre llombre,  
y, siendo rufo de primer tonsura,  
asentarse en la cátre-da de prima, 5  
teniendo al lomb-re aquí por espantajo.

LUGO Mis sores, poco a poco. Yo soy mozo  
y mazo, y tengo hígados y bofes  
para dar en el trato de la hampa  
quinao al más pintado de su escuela, 10  
en la cual no recibe el grado alguno  
de valeroso por haber gran tiempo  
que cura en sus entradas y salidas,  
sino por las hazañas que ya hecho.  
¿No tienen ya sabido que hay cofrades 15  
de luz, y otros de sangre?

LOBILLO Aqueso pido.

GANCHOSO;Hola, so Lobo! Si es que pide queso,  
pídalo en otra parte, que en aquésta  
no se da. Si no...

LOBILLO;Basta, seor Ganchoso!  
O logue lengua, y téngase por dicho, 20  
que entrevo toda flor y todo rumbo.

GANCHOSO;Pues nosotros nacimos en Guinea,  
so Lobo?

LOBILLONo sé nada.

GANCHOSO;Pues apréndalo  
con aquesta lección.

LUGO;Fuera, Lobillo!

GANCHOSOEntrambos sois ovejas fanfarrones, 25  
y gallinas mojadas, y conejos.

LOBILLO;Menos lengua y más manos, hideputa!

*(Entran a esta sazón un ALGUACIL y dos corchetes; huyen GANCHOSO y  
LOBILLO; queda solo LUGO, envainando.)*

CORCHETE ;Téngase a la justicia!

LUGO;Tente, pícaro!

¿Conócesme?

CORCHETE ¡So Lugo!

LUGO ¿Qué so Lugo?

ALGUACIL Bellacos, ¿no le asís?

CORCHETE 2 Señor nuestro amo, 30  
¿sabe lo que nos manda? ¿No conoce  
que es el señor Cristóbal el delinque?

ALGUACIL ¡Que siempre le he de hallar en estas danzas!  
¡Por Dios, que es cosa recia! ¡No hay paciencia  
que lo pueda llevar!

LUGO Llévelo en cólera, 35  
que tanto monta.

ALGUACIL Ahora, yo sé cierto  
que ha de romper el diablo sus zapatos  
alguna vez.

LUGO Mas que los rompa ciento;  
que él los sabrá comprar donde quisiere.

ALGUACIL El señor Sandoval tiene la culpa. 40

CORCHETE 2 Tello de Sandoval es su amo déste.



CORCHETE 1Y manda la ciudad, y no hay justicia  
que le ose tocar por su respeto.

LUGOEl señor alguacil haga su oficio,  
y déjese de cuentos y preámbulos. 45

ALGUACIL;Cuán mejor pareciera el señor Lugo  
en su colegio que en la barbacana,  
el libro en mano, y no el broquel en cinta!

LUGOCrea el so alguacil que no le cuadra  
ni esquina el predicar; deje ese oficio 50  
a quien le toca, y vaya y pique aprisa.

ALGUACILSin picar nos iremos, y agradézcalo  
a su amo; que, a fe de hijodalgo,  
que yo sé en qué parará este negocio.

LUGOEn irse y en quedarme.

CORCHETE 1Yo lo creo, 55  
porque es un Barrabás este Cristóbal.

CORCHETE 2No hay gamo que le iguale en ligereza.

CORCHETE 1Mejor juega la blanca que la negra,  
y en entrambas es águila volante.

ALGUACIL Recójase y procure no encontrarme, 60  
que será lo más sano.

LUGO Aunque sea enfermo,  
haré lo que fuere de mi gusto.

ALGUACIL Venid vosotros.  
(*Éntrase el ALGUACIL.*)

CORCHETE 1 So Cristóbal, ¡vive  
que no le conocí!; ¡sí, juro cierto!

CORCHETE 2 Señor Cristóbal, yo me recomendo; 65  
de mí no hay qué temer; soy ciego y mudo  
para ver ni hablar cosa que toque  
a la mínima suela del calcorro  
que tapa y cubre la coluna y basa  
que sustentan la máquina hampesca. 70

LUGO ¿Dónde cargaste, Calahorra?

CORCHETE 2 No sé; Dios con la noche me socorra.

(*Éntranse los dos corchetes.*)

LUGO ¡Que sólo me respeten por mi amo  
y no por mí, no sé esta maravilla!;  
mas yo haré que salga de mí un bramo 75  
que pase de los muros de Sevilla.  
Cuelgue mi padre de su puerta el ramo,  
despoje de su jugo a Manzanilla;  
conténtese en su humilde y bajo oficio,

que yo seré famoso en mi ejercicio. 80

*(Entra, a este instante, LAGARTIJA, muchacho.)*

LAGARTIJA Señor Cristóbal, ¿qué es esto?  
¿Has reñido, por ventura,  
que tienes turbado el gesto?

LUGO Pónele de sepultura  
el ánimo descompuesto. 85  
La de ganchos saqué a luz,  
porque me hiciese el buz  
un bravo por mi respeto;  
mas huyóse de su aspecto  
como el diablo de la cruz. 90  
¿Qué me quieres, Lagartija?

LAGARTIJA La Salmerona y la Pava,  
la Mendoza y la Librija,  
que es cada cual por sí brava,  
gananciosa y buena hija, 95  
te suplican que esta tarde,  
allá cuando el sol no arde  
y hiera en rayo cencillo,  
en el famoso Alamillo  
hagas de tu vista alarde. 100

LUGO ¿Hay regodeo?

LAGARTIJA Hay merienda,  
que las más famosas cenas  
ante ella cogen la rienda:  
cazuelas de berenjenas  
serán penúltima ofrenda. 105

Hay el conejo empanado,  
por mil partes traspasado  
con saetas de tocino;  
blanco el pan, aloque el vino,  
y hay turrón alicantado. 110

Cada cual para esto roba  
blancas vistosas y nuevas,  
una y otra rica coba;  
dales limones las Cuevas  
y naranjas el Alcoba. 115

Daráles en un instante  
el pescador arrogante,  
más que le hay del norte al sur,  
el gordo y sabroso albur  
y la anguila resbalante. 120

El sábalo vivo, vivo,  
colear en la caldera,  
o saltar en fuego esquivo,  
verás en mejor manera  
que te lo pinto y describo. 125

El pintado camarón,  
con el partido limón  
y bien molida pimienta,  
verás cómo el gusto aumenta  
y le saca de harón. 130

LUGO ¡Lagartija, bien lo pintas!

LAGARTIJA Pues llevan otras mil cosas  
de comer, varias, distintas,  
que a voluntades golosas  
las harán poner en quintas. 135

LUGO ¿Qué es en quintas?

LAGARTIJA En división,

llevándose la afición  
aquí y allí y acullá:  
que la variedad hará  
no atinar con la razón. 140

LUGO ¿Y quién va con ellas?

LAGARTIJA ¿Quién?  
El Patojo, y el Mochuelo,  
y el Tuerto del Almadén.

LUGO Que ha de haber soplo recelo.

LAGARTIJA Ve tú, y se hará todo bien. 145

LUGO Quizá, por tu gusto iré;  
que tienes un no sé qué  
de agudeza, que me encanta.

LAGARTIJA Mi boca pongo en la planta  
de tu valeroso pie. 150

LUGO ¡Alza, rapaz lisonjero,  
indigno del vil oficio  
que tienes!

LAGARTIJA Pues dél espero  
salir presto a otro ejercicio  
que muestre ser perulero. 155

LUGO ¿Qué ejercicio?

LAGARTIJA Señor Lugo,  
será ejercicio de jugo,  
puesto que en él se trabaja,  
que es jugador de ventaja,  
y de las bolsas verdugo. 160

¿No has visto tú por ahí  
mil con capas guarnecidas,  
volantes más que un neblí,  
que en dos barajas bruñidas  
encierran un Potosí? 165

Cuál destos se finge manco  
para dar un toque franco  
al más agudo, y me alegro  
de ver no usar de su negro  
hasta que topen un blanco. 170

LUGO ¡Mucho sabes! ¿Qué papel  
es el que traes en el pecho?

LAGARTIJA ¿Descúbreme algo dél?  
Todo el seso sin provecho  
de Apolo se encierra en él. 175

Es un romance jácaro,  
que le igualo y le comparo  
al mejor que se ha compuesto;  
echa de la hampa el resto  
en estilo jaco y raro. 180

Tiene vocablos modernos,  
de tal manera que encantan;  
unos bravos, y otros tiernos;  
ya a los cielos se levantan,  
ya bajan a los infiernos. 185

LUGO Dile, pues.

LAGARTIJA Séle de coro;  
que ninguna cosa ignoro  
de aquesta que a luz se saque.

LUGO ¿Y de qué trata?

LAGARTIJA De un jaque  
que se tomó con un toro. 190

LUGO Vaya, Lagartija.

LAGARTIJA Vaya,  
y todo el mundo esté atento  
a mirar cómo se ensaya  
a pasar mi entendimiento  
del que más sube la raya. 195  
«Año de mil y quinientos  
y treinta y cuatro corría,  
a veinte y cinco de mayo,  
martes, aciago día,  
sucedió un caso notable 200  
en la ciudad de Sevilla,  
digno que ciegos le canten  
y que poetas le escriban.  
Del gran corral de los Olmos,  
do está la jacarandina, 205  
sale Reguilete, el jaque,  
vestido a las maravillas.  
No va la vuelta del Cairo,  
del Catay ni de la China,  
ni de Flandes, ni Alemania, 210  
ni menos de Lombardía:  
va la vuelta de la plaza  
de San Francisco bendita,  
que corren toros en ella

por Santa Justa y Rufina; 215  
y, apenas entró en la plaza,  
cuando se lleva la vista  
tras sí de todos los ojos,  
que su buen donaire miran.  
Salió en esto un toro hosco, 220  
¡válasme Santa María!,  
y, arremetiendo con él,  
dio con él patas arriba.  
Dejóle muerto y mohíno,  
bañado en su sangre misma; 225  
y aquí da fin el romance  
porque llegó el de su vida.»

LUGO ¿Y éste es el romance bravo  
que decías?

LAGARTIJASu llaneza  
y su buen decir alabo; 230  
y más, que muestra agudeza  
en llegar tan presto al cabo.

LUGO ¿Quién le compuso?

LAGARTIJATristán,  
que gobierna en San Román  
la bendita sacristía, 235  
que excede en la poesía  
a Garcilaso y Boscán.

*(Entra, a este instante, una DAMA, con el manto hasta la mitad del rostro.)*

DAMA Una palabra, galán.



LUGO Ve con Dios; y quizá iré,  
si estás cierto que allá van. 240

LAGARTIJA Digo que van, yo lo sé;  
y sé que te aguardarán.  
(*Éntrase LAGARTIJA.*)

DAMA Arrastrada de un deseo  
sin provecho resistido,  
a hurto de mi marido, 245  
delante de vos me veo.

Lo que este manto os encubre,  
mirad, y después veréis  
(*Mírala por debajo del manto.*)

si es razón que remediéis  
lo que la lengua os descubre. 250  
¿Conocéisme?

LUGO Demasiado.

DAMA En eso veréis la fuerza  
que me incita, y aun me fuerza,  
a ponerme en este estado;  
mas, porque no estéis en calma 255  
pensando a qué es mi venida,  
digo que a daros mi vida  
con la voluntad del alma.

Vuestra rara valentía  
y vuestro despejo han hecho 260  
tanta impresión en mi pecho,  
que pienso en vos noche y día.

Quítame este pensamiento  
pensar en mi calidad,

y al gusto la voluntad 265  
da libre consentimiento;  
y así, sin guardar decoro  
a quien soy en ningún modo,  
habré de decirlo todo:  
sabed, Lugo, que os adoro. 270

No fea, y muy rica soy;  
sabré dar, sabré querer,  
y esto lo echaréis de ver  
por este trance en que estoy;  
que la mujer ya rendida, 275  
aunque es toda mezquindad,  
muestra liberalidad  
con el dueño de su vida.

En la tuya o en mi casa,  
de mí y de mi hacienda puedes 280  
prometerte, no mercedes,  
sino servicios sin tasa;

y, pues miedo no te alcanza,  
no te le dé mi marido,  
que el engaño siempre ha sido 285  
parcial de la confianza.

No llegan de los recelos,  
porque los tiene discretos,  
a hacer los tristes efectos  
que suelen hacer los celos; 290

y, porque nunca ocasión  
de tenerlos yo le he dado,  
le juzgo por engañado  
a nuestra satisfacción.

¿Para qué arrugas la frente 295  
y alzas las cejas? ¿Qué es esto?

LUGO En admiración me ha puesto  
tu deseo impertinente.

Pudieras, ya que querías  
satisfacer tu mal gusto, 300  
buscar un sujeto al justo

de tus grandes bazarrias;  
pudieras, como entre peras,  
escoger en la ciudad  
quien diera a tu voluntad 305  
satisfacción con más veras;  
y así, tuviera disculpa  
con la alteza del empleo  
tu mal nacido deseo,  
que en mi bajeza te culpa. 310  
Yo soy un pobre criado  
de un inquisidor, cual sabes,  
de caudal, que está sin llaves,  
entre libros abreviado;  
vivo a lo de Dios es Cristo, 315  
sin estrechar el deseo,  
y siempre traigo el baldeo  
como sacabuche listo;  
ocúpome en bajas cosas,  
y en todas soy tan terrible, 320  
que el acudir no es posible  
a las que son amorosas:  
a lo menos, a las altas,  
como en las que en ti señalas;  
que son de cuervo mis alas. 325

DAMANo te pintes con más faltas,  
porque en mi imaginación  
te tiene amor retratado  
del modo que tú has contado,  
pero con más perfección. 330  
No pido hagas quimeras  
de ti mismo; sólo pido,  
deseo bien comedido,  
que, pues te quiero, me quieras.  
Pero, ¡ay de mí, desdichada! 335  
¡Mi marido! ¿Qué haré?  
Tiemblo y temo, aunque bien sé  
que vengo bien disfrazada.

*(Entra su MARIDO.)*

LUGO Sosegaos, no os desviéis,  
que no os ha de descubrir. 340

DAMAAunque me quisiera ir,  
no puedo mover los pies.

MARIDO Señor Lugo, ¿qué hay de nuevo?

LUGOCierta cosa que contaros,  
que me obligaba a buscaros. 345

DAMAIrme quiero, y no me atrevo.

MARIDO Aquí me tenéis; mirad  
lo que tenéis que decirme.

DAMAHarto mejor fuera irme.

LUGOLlegaos aquí y escuchad. 350

La hermosura que dar quiso  
el cielo a vuestra mujer,  
con que la vino a hacer  
en la tierra un paraíso,  
ha encendido de manera 355  
de un mancebo el corazón,  
que le tiene hecho carbón  
de la amorosa hoguera.

Es rico y es poderoso,

y atrevido de tal modo, 360  
que atropella y rompe todo  
lo que es más dificultoso.

No quiere usar de los medios  
de ofrecer ni de rogar,  
porque, en su mal, quiere usar 365  
de otros más breves remedios.

Dice que la honestidad  
de vuestra consorte es tanta,  
que le admira y que le espanta  
tanto como la beldad. 370

Por jamás le ha descubierto  
su lascivo pensamiento;  
que queda su atrevimiento,  
ante su recato, muerto.

MARIDO ¿Es hombre que entra en mi casa? 375

LUGORóndala, mas no entra en ella.

MARIDO Quien casa con mujer bella,  
de su honra se descasa,  
si no lo remedia el cielo.

DAMA *Aparte.*

¿Qué es lo que tratan los dos? 380  
¿Si es de mí? ¡Válgame Dios,  
de cuántos males recelo!

LUGO Digo, en fin, que es tal el fuego  
que a este amante abrasa y fuerza,  
que quiere usar de la fuerza 385

en cambio y lugar del ruego.

Robar quiere a vuestra esposa,  
ayudado de otra gente  
como yo, desta valiente,  
atrevida y licenciosa. 390

Hame dado cuenta dello,  
casi como a principal  
desta canalla mortal,  
que en hacer mal echa el sello.

Yo, aunque soy mozo arriscado, 395  
de los de campo través,  
ni mato por interés,  
ni de ruindades me agrado.

De ayudalle he prometido,  
con intento de avisaros; 400  
que es fácil el repararos,  
estando así prevenido.

MARIDO ¿Soy hombre yo de amenazas?  
Tengo valor, ciño espada.

LUGO No hay valor que pueda nada 405  
contra las traidoras trazas.

MARIDO En fin: ¿mi consorte ignora  
todo este cuento?

LUGO Así ella  
os ofende, como aquella  
cubierta y buena señora. 410

Por el cielo santo os juro  
que no sabe nada desto.

MARIDO De ausentarla estoy dispuesto.

LUGO Eso es lo que yo procuro.

MARIDO Yo la pondré donde el viento 415  
apenas pueda tocalla.

LUGO En el recato se halla  
buen fin del dudoso intento.

Retiradla, que la ausencia  
hace, pasando los días, 420  
volver las entrañas frías  
que abrasaba la presencia;  
y nunca en la poca edad  
tiene firme asiento amor,  
y siempre el mozo amador 425  
huye la dificultad.

MARIDO El aviso os agradezco,  
señor Lugo, y algún día  
sabréis de mi cortesía  
si vuestra amistad merezco. 430

El nombre saber quisiera  
dese galán que me acosa.

LUGO Eso es pedirme una cosa  
que de quien soy no se espera.

Basta que vais avisado 435  
de lo que más os conviene,  
y este negocio no tiene  
más de lo que os he contado.

Vuestra consorte inocente  
está de todo este hecho; 440  
vos, con esto satisfecho,  
haced como hombre prudente.

MARIDO Casa fuerte y heredad  
tengo en no pequeña aldea,  
y llaves, que harán que sea 445  
grande la dificultad  
que se oponga al mal intento  
dese atrevido mancebo.  
Quedaos, que en el alma llevo  
más de un vario pensamiento. 450  
(*Vase el MARIDO.*)

DAMA Entre los dientes ya estaba  
el alma para dejarme;  
quise, y no pude mudarme,  
aunque más lo procuraba.  
¡Mucho esfuerzo ha menester 455  
quien, con traidora conciencia,  
no se alborota en presencia  
de aquel que quiere ofender!

LUGO Y más si la ofensa es hecha  
de la mujer al marido. 460

DAMA El nublado ya se ha ido;  
hazme agora satisfecha,  
contándome qué querías  
a mi esclavo y mi señor.

LUGO Hanme hecho corredor 465  
de no sé qué mercancías.  
Díjele, si las quería,  
que fuésemos luego a vellas.

DAMA ¿De qué calidad son ellas?



LUGO De la mayor cuantía; 470  
que le importa, estoy pensando,  
comprallas, honor y hacienda.

DAMA ¿Cómo haré yo que él entienda  
esa importancia?

LUGO Callando.  
Calla y vete, y así harás 475  
muy segura su ganancia.

DAMA ¿Pues qué traza de importancia  
en lo de gozarnos das?

LUGO Ninguna que sea de gusto;  
por hoy, a lo menos.

DAMA Pues, 480  
¿cuándo la darás, si es  
que gustas de lo que gusto?

LUGO Yo haré por verme contigo.  
Vete en paz.

DAMA Con ella queda,  
y el amor contigo pueda 485  
todo aquello que conmigo.

LUGO Como de rayo del cielo,

como en el mar de tormenta,  
como de improviso afrenta  
y terremoto del suelo; 490  
    como de fiera indignada,  
del vulgo insolente y libre,  
pediré a Dios que me libre  
de mujer determinada.  
(Éntrase LUGO.)

*(Sale el licenciado TELLO DE SANDOVAL, amo de CRISTÓBAL DE LUGO,  
y el ALGUACIL que salió primero.)*

TELLO ¿Pasan de mocedades?

ALGUACIL Es de modo 495  
que, si no se remedia, a buen seguro  
que ha de escandalizar al pueblo todo.  
    Como cristiano, a vuesa merced juro  
que piensa y hace tales travesuras,  
que nadie dél se tiene por seguro. 500

TELLO ¿Es ladrón?

ALGUACIL No, por cierto.

TELLO ¿Quita a oscuras  
las capas en poblado?

ALGUACIL No, tampoco.

TELLO ¿Qué hace, pues?

ALGUACILOtras cien mil diabluras.

Esto de valentón le vuelve loco:  
aquí riñe, allí hiere, allí se arroja, 505  
y es en el trato airado el rey y el coco;  
con una daga que le sirve de hoja,  
y un broquel que pendiente tray al lado,  
sale con lo que quiere o se le antoja.

Es de toda la hampa respetado, 510  
averigua pendencias y las hace,  
estafa, y es señor de lo guisado;  
entre rufos, él hace y él deshace,  
el corral de los Olmos le da parias,  
y en el dar cantaletas se complace. 515

Por tres heridas de personas varias,  
tres mandamientos traigo y no ejecuto,  
y otros dos tiene el alguacil Pedro Arias.

Muchas veces he estado resolutivo  
de aventurallo todo y de prendelle, 520  
o ya a la clara, o ya con modo astuto;  
pero, viendo que da en favorecelle  
tanto vuesa merced, aun no me atrevo  
a miralle, tocallo ni ofendelle.

TELLOEsa deuda conozco que la debo, 525

y la pagaré algún día,  
y procuraré que Lugo  
use de más cortesía,  
o le seré yo verdugo,  
por vida del alma mía. 530

Mas lo mejor es quitalle  
de aquesta tierra y llevalle  
a Méjico, donde voy,  
no obstante que puesto estoy  
en reñille y castigalle. 535

Vuesa merced en buen hora  
vaya, que yo le agradezco

el aviso, y desde agora  
todo por suyo me ofrezco.

ALGUACIL Ya adivino su mejora 540  
sacándole de Sevilla,  
que es tierra do la semilla  
holgazana se levanta  
sobre cualquiera otra planta  
que por virtud maravilla. 545  
(*Éntrase el ALGUACIL.*)

TELLO ¡Que aqueste mozo me engañe,  
y que tan a suelta rienda  
a mi honor y su alma dañe!  
Pues yo haré, si no se enmienda,  
que de mi favor se estrañe: 550  
que, viéndose sin ayuda,  
será posible que acuda  
a la enmienda de su error;  
que a la sombra del favor  
crecen los vicios, sin duda. 555  
(*Éntrase TELLO.*)

(*Salen dos músicos con guitarras, y CRISTÓBAL con su broquel y daga de ganchos.*)

LUGO Toquen, que ésta es la casa, y al seguro  
que presto llegue el bramo a los oídos  
de la ninfa, que he dicho, jerezana,  
cuya vida y milagros en mi lengua  
viene cifrada en verso correntío. 560  
A la jácara toquen, pues comienzo.

MÚSICO 1 ¿Quieres que le rompamos las ventanas

antes de comenzar, porque esté atenta?

LUGO Acabada la música, andaremos  
aquestas estaciones. Vaya agora 565  
el guitarresco son, y el aquelindo.

*(Tocan.)*

Escucha, la que veniste  
de la jerezana tierra  
a hacer a Sevilla guerra  
en cueros, como valiente; 570  
la que llama su pariente  
al gran Miramamolín;  
la que se precia de ruin,  
como otras de generosas;  
la que tiene cuatro cosas, 575  
y aun cuatro mil, que son malas;  
la que pasea sin alas  
los aires en noche oscura;  
la que tiene a gran ventura  
ser amiga de un lacayo; 580  
la que tiene un papagayo  
que siempre la llama puta;  
la que en vieja y en astuta  
da quinao a Celestina;  
la que, como golondrina, 585  
muda tierras y sazones;  
la que a pares, y aun a nones,  
ha ganado lo que tiene;  
la que no se desaviene  
por poco que se le dé; 590  
la que su palabra y fe  
que diese jamás guardó;  
la que en darse a sí excedió  
a las godeñas más francas;

la que echa por cinco blancas 595  
las habas y el cedacillo.

*(Asómase a la ventana UNO medio desnudo, con un paño de tocar y un candil.)*

UNO ¿Están en sí, señores? ¿No dan cata  
que no los oye nadie en esta casa?

MÚSICO 1 ¿Cómo así, tajamoco?

UNO Porque el dueño  
ha que está ya a la sombra cuatro días. 600

MÚSICO 2 Convaleciente, di: ¿cómo, a la sombra?

UNO En la cárcel; ¿no entrevan?

LUGO ¿En la cárcel?  
Pues ¿por qué la llevaron?

UNO Por amiga  
de aquel Pierres Papín, el de los naipes.

MÚSICO 1 ¿Aquel francés giboso?

UNO A quese mismo, 605  
que en la cal de la Sierpe tiene tienda.

LUGO ¡Éstrate, bodegón almidonado!

MÚSICO 2 ¡Zabúllete, fantasma antojadiza!

MÚSICO 1 ¡Escóndete, podenco cuartanario!

UNO Éntrome, ladroncitos en cuadrilla; 610  
zabúllome, cernícalos rateros;  
escóndome, corchetes a lo Caco.

LUGO ¡Vive Dios, que es de humor el hideputa!

UNO No tire nadie; estén las manos quedas,  
y anden las lenguas.

MÚSICO 1 ¿Quién te tira, sucio? 615

UNO ¿Hay más? ¡Si no me abajo, cuál me paran!  
¡Mancebitos, adiós!; que no soy pera,  
que me han de derribar a terronazos.  
(Éntrase.)

LUGO ¿Han visto los melindres del bellaco?  
No le tiran, y quéjase.

MÚSICO 2 Éste es un sastre 620  
remendón muy donoso.

MÚSICO 1 ¿Qué haremos?

LUGO Vamos a dar asalto al pastelero  
que está aquí cerca.

MÚSICO 2 Vamos, que ya es hora  
que esté haciendo pasteles; que este ciego  
que viene aquí nos da a entender cuán cerca 625

*(Entra un CIEGO.)*

viene ya el día.

CIEGO No he madrugado mucho,  
pues que ya suena gente por la calle.  
Hoy quiero comenzar por este sastre.

LUGO ¡Hola, ciego, buen hombre!

CIEGO ¿Quién me llama?

LUGO Tomad aqueste real, y diez y siete 630  
oraciones decid, una tras otra,  
por las almas que están en purgatorio.

CIEGO Que me place, señor, y haré mis fuerzas  
por decirlas devota y claramente.

LUGO No me las engulláis, ni me echéis sisa 635  
en ellas.

CIEGO No, señor; ni por semejás.



A las Gradass me voy, y allí, sentado,  
las diré poco a poco.

LUGO ¡Dios os gué!

*(Vase el CIEGO.)*

MÚSICO 1 ¿Quédate para vino, Lugo amigo?

LUGO Ni aun un solo cornado.

MÚSICO 2 ¡Vive Roque, 640  
que tienes condición extraordinaria!  
Muchas veces te he visto dar limosna  
al tiempo que la lengua se nos pega  
al paladar, y sin dejar siquiera  
para comprar un polvo de Cazalla. 645

LUGO Las ánimas me llevan cuanto tengo;  
mas yo tengo esperanza que algún día  
lo tienen de volver ciento por uno.

MÚSICO 2 ¡A la larga lo tomas!

LUGO Y a lo corto;  
que al bien hacer jamás le falta premio. 650

*(Suena dentro como que hacen pasteles, y canta UNO dentro lo siguiente:)*

UNO ¡Afuera, consejos vanos,

que despertáis mi dolor!  
No me toquen vuestras manos;  
que, en los consejos de amor,  
los que matan son los sanos. 655

MÚSICO 1 ¡Hola! Cantando está el pastelerazo,  
y, por lo menos, los «consejos vanos».  
¿Tienes pasteles, cangilón con tetas?

PASTELERO¡Músico de mohatra sincopado!

LUGOPastelero de riego, ¿no respondes? 660

PASTELEROPasteles tengo, mancebitos hampos;  
mas no son para ellos, corchapines.

LUGO¡Abre, socarra, y danos de tu obra!

PASTELERO¡No quiero, socarrones! ¡A otra puerta,  
que no se abre aquésta por agora! 665

LUGO¡Por Dios, que a puntapiés la haga leña  
si acaso no nos abres, buenos vinos!

PASTELERO¡Por Dios, que no he de abrir, malos vinagres!

LUGO«¡Agora lo veredes!», dijo Agrajes.

MÚSICO 1¡Paso, no la derribes! ¡Lugo, tente! 670

(*Da de coces a la puerta; sale el PASTELERO y sus secuaces con palas y barrederos y asadores.*)

PASTELERO¡Bellacos, no hay aquí Agrajes que valgan;  
que, si tocan historias, tocaremos  
palas y chuzos!

MÚSICO 2¡Enciérrate, capacho!

LUGO¿Quieres que te derribe aquesas muelas,  
remero de Carón el chamuscado? 675

PASTELERO¡Cuerpo de mí! ¿Es Cristóbal el de Tello?

MÚSICO 1Él es. ¿Por qué lo dices, zangomango?

PASTELERODígoles porque yo le soy amigo  
y muy su servidor, y para cuatro  
o para seis pasteles no tenía 680  
para qué romper puertas ni ventanas,  
ni darme cantaleas ni matracas.  
Entre Cristóbal, sus amigos entren,  
y allánese la tienda por el suelo.

LUGO¡Vive Dios, que eres príncipe entre príncipes, 685  
y que esa sumisión te ha de hacer franco  
de todo mi rigor y mal talante!  
Enváinense la pala y barrederas,  
y amigos *usque ad mortem*.

PASTELEROPor San Pito,

que han de entrar todos, y la buena estrena 690  
han de hacer a la hornada, que ya sale;  
y más, que tengo de Alanís un cuero  
que se viene a las barbas y a los ojos.

MÚSICO 1 De miedo hace todo cuanto hace  
aqueste marión.

LUGO No importa nada. 695  
Asgamos la ocasión por el harapo,  
por el hopo o copete, como dicen,  
ora la ofrezca el miedo o cortesía.  
El señor pastelero es cortesísimo,  
y yo le soy amigo verdadero, 700  
y hacer su gusto por mi gusto quiero.

*(Éntranse todos. Sale ANTONIA con su manto, no muy aderezada, sino honesta.)*

ANTONIA Si ahora yo le hallase  
en su aposento, no habría  
cosa de que más gustase;  
quizá a solas le diría 705  
alguna que le ablandase.

Atrevimiento es el mío:  
pero dame esfuerzo y brío  
estos celos y este amor,  
que rinden con su rigor 710  
al más esento albedrío.

Ésta es la casa, y la puerta,  
como pide mi deseo,  
parece que está entreabierta;  
mas, ¡ay!, que a sus quicios veo 715  
yacer mi esperanza muerta.

Apenas puedo moverme;

pero, en fin, he de atreverme,  
aunque tan cobarde estoy,  
porque en el punto de hoy 720  
está el ganarme o perderme.

*(Sale el inquisidor TELLO DE SANDOVAL, con ropa de levantar, rezando en unas Horas.)*

TELLO *Deus in adiutorium meum intende,  
Domine, ad adiuvandum me festina.  
Gloria Patri, et Filio et Spiritui Sancto,  
Sicut erat, etc.*

¿Quién está ahí? ¿Qué ruido  
es ése? ¿Quién está ahí?

ANTONIA ¡Ay desdichada de mí!  
¿Qué es lo que me ha sucedido? 725

TELLO Pues, señora, ¿qué buscáis  
tan de mañana en mi casa?  
Éste de madrugar pasa.  
No os turbéis. ¿De qué os turbáis?

ANTONIA ¡Señor!

TELLO Adelante. ¿Qué es? 730  
Proseguid vuestra razón.

ANTONIA Nunca la errada intención  
supo enderezar los pies.  
A Lugo vengo a buscar.

TELLO ¿Mi criado?

ANTONIA Sí, señor. 735

TELLO ¿Tan de mañana?

ANTONIA El amor  
tal vez hace madrugar.

TELLO ¿Bien le queréis?

ANTONIA No lo niego;  
mas quiérole en parte buena.

TELLO El madrugar os condena. 740

ANTONIA Siempre es solícito el fuego.

TELLO En otra parte buscad  
materia que le apliquéis,  
que en mi casa no hallaréis  
sino toda honestidad; 745  
y si el mozo da ocasión  
que le busquéis, yo haré  
que desde hoy más no os la dé.

ANTONIA Enójase sin razón  
vuesa merced; que, en mi alma, 750  
que el mancebo es de manera,  
que puede llevar do quiera

entre mil honestos palma.

Verdad es que él es travieso,  
matante, acuchillador; 755  
pero, en cosas del amor,  
por un leño le confieso.

No me lleva a mí tras él  
Venus blanda y amorosa,  
sino su aguda ganchosa 760  
y su acerado broquel.

TELLO ¿Es valiente?

ANTONIAMuy bien puedes  
sin escrúpulo igualalle,  
y aun quizá será agravialle,  
a García de Paredes. 765

Y por esto este mocito  
trae a todas las del trato  
muertas; por ser tan bravato;  
que en lo demás es bendito.

TELLO Óigole. Escondeos aquí, 770  
porque quiero hablar con él  
sin que os vea.

ANTONIA;Que no es él!

TELLOEs, sin duda; yo le oí.  
Después os daré lugar  
para hablarle.

ANTONIASea en buen hora. 775

*(Escóndese ANTONIA. Entra LUGO en cuerpo, pendiente a las espaldas el broquel y la daga, y trae el rosario en la mano.)*

LUGO Mi señor suele a esta hora  
de ordinario madrugar.

Mirad si lo dije bien;  
hele aquí. Yo apostaré  
que hay sermón do no pensé. 780  
Acábase presto. Amén.

TELLO ¿De dónde venís, mancebo?

LUGO ¿De dó tengo de venir?

TELLO De matar y de herir,  
que esto para vos no es nuevo. 785

LUGO A nadie hiero ni mato.

TELLO Siete veces te he librado  
de la cárcel.

LUGO Ya es pasado  
aquése, y tengo otro trato.

TELLO Más sé que hay de un mandamiento 790  
para prenderte en la plaza.

LUGO Sí; mas ninguno amenaza  
a que dé coces al viento:



que todas son liviandades  
de mozo las que me culpan, 795  
y a mí mismo me disculpan,  
pues no llegan a maldades.

Ellas son cortar la cara  
a un valentón arrogante,  
una matraca picante, 800  
aguda, graciosa y rara;  
calcorrear diez pasteles  
o cajas de diacitrón;  
sustanciar una quistión  
entre dos jaques noveles; 805  
el tener en la dehesa  
dos vacas, y a veces tres,  
pero sin el interés  
que en el trato se profesa;  
procurar que ningún rufo 810  
se entone do yo estuviere,  
y que estime, sea quien fuere,  
la suela de mi pantufo.

Estas y otras cosas tales  
hago por mi pasatiempo, 815  
demás que rezo algún tiempo  
los psalmos penitenciales;  
y, aunque peco de ordinario,  
pienso, y ello será así,  
dar buena cuenta de mí 820  
por las de aqueste rosario.

TELLO Dime, simple: ¿y tú no ves  
que desa tu plata y cobre,  
es dar en limosna al pobre  
del puerco hurtado los pies? 825

Haces a Dios mil ofensas,  
como dices, de ordinario,  
¿y con rezar un rosario,  
sin más, ir al cielo piensas?

Entra por un libro allí, 830

que está sobre aquella mesa.  
Dime: ¿qué manera es ésta  
de andar, que jamás la vi?  
¿Hacia atrás? ¿Eres cangrejo?  
Vuélvete. ¿Qué novedad 835  
es ésta?

LUGOEs curiosidad  
y cortesano consejo  
que no vuelva el buen criado  
las espaldas al señor.

TELLOCrianza de tal tenor, 840  
en ninguno la he notado.  
Vuelve, digo.

LUGOYa me vuelvo:  
que por esto el paso atrás  
daba.

TELLOEn que eres Satanás  
desde agora me resuelvo. 845  
¿Armado en casa? ¿Por suerte  
tienes en ella enemigos?  
Sí tendrás, cual son testigos  
los ministros de la muerte  
que penden de tu pretina, 850  
y en ellos has confirmado  
que el mozo descaminado,  
como tú, hacia atrás camina.  
¡Bien iré a la Nueva España  
cargado de ti, malino; 855  
bien a hacer este camino  
tu ingenio y virtud se amaña!  
Si, en lugar de libros, llevas

estas joyas que veo aquí,  
por cierto que das de ti 860  
grandes e ingeniosas pruebas.

¡Bien responde la esperanza  
en que engañado he vivido  
al cuidado que he tenido  
de tu estudio y tu crianza! 865

¡Bien me pagas, bien procuras  
que tu humilde nacimiento  
en ti cobre nuevo asiento,  
menos bríos y venturas!

En balde será avisarte, 870  
por ejemplos que te den,  
que nunca se avienen bien  
Aristóteles y Marte,

y que está en los aranceles  
de la discreción mejor 875  
que no guardan un tenor  
las sùmulas y broqueles.

Espera, que quiero darte  
un testigo de quién eres,  
si es que hacen las mujeres 880  
alguna fe en esta parte.

Salid, señora, y hablad  
a vuestro duro diamante,  
honesto pero matante,  
valiente pero rufián. 885

*(Sale ANTONIA.)*

LUGO Demonio, ¿quién te ha traído  
aquí? ¿Por qué me persigues,  
si ningún fruto consigues  
de tu intento malnacido?

*(Entra LAGARTIJA, asustado.)*

TELLO Mancebo, ¿qué buscáis vos? 890  
¡Con sobresalto venís!  
¿Qué respondéis? ¿Qué decís?

LAGARTIJA Digo que me valga Dios;  
digo que al so Lugo busco.

TELLO Veíсле ahí: dadle el recado. 895

LAGARTIJA De cansado y de turbado,  
en las palabras me ofusco.

LUGO Sosiégate, Lagartija,  
y dime lo que me quieres.

LAGARTIJA Considerando quién eres, 900  
mi alma se regocija  
y espera de tu valor  
que saldrás con cualquier cosa.

LUGO Bien; ¿qué hay?

LAGARTIJA ¡A Carrascosa  
le llevan preso, señor! 905

LUGO ¿Al padre?

LAGARTIJA Al mismo.

LUGO¿Por dónde  
le llevan? ¡Dímelo, acaba!

LAGARTIJA Poquito habrá que llegaba  
junto a la puerta del conde  
del Castellar.

LUGO¿Quién le lleva, 910  
y por qué, si lo has sabido?

LAGARTIJA Por pendencia, a lo que he oído;  
y el alguacil Villanueva,  
con dos corchetes, en peso  
le llevan, como a un ladrón. 915  
¡Quebrárate el corazón  
si le vieras!

LUGO¡Bueno es eso!  
Camina y guía, y espera  
buen suceso deste caso,  
si los alcanza mi paso. 920

LAGARTIJA ¡Muera Villanueva!

LUGO¡Muera!

(Vase LAGARTIJA y LUGO, *alborotados*.)

TELLO ¿Qué padre es éste? ¿Por dicha,  
llevan a algún fraile preso?

ANTONIA No, señor, no es nada deso:  
que éste es padre de desdicha, 925  
    puesto que en su oficio gana  
más que dos padres, y aun tres.

TELLO Decidme de qué Orden es.

ANTONIA De los de la casa llana.  
    Es alcaide, con perdón, 930  
señor, de la mancebía,  
a quien llaman *padre* hoy día  
las de nuestra profesión;  
    su tenencia es casa llana,  
porque se allanan en ella 935  
cuantas viven dentro della.

TELLO Bien el nombre se profana  
    en eso de alcaide y padre,  
nombres honrados y buenos.

ANTONIA Quien vive en ella, a lo menos, 940  
no estará sin padre y madre  
    jamás.

TELLO Ahora bien: señora,  
id con Dios, que a este mancebo  
yo os le pondré como nuevo.

ANTONIA Tras él voy.

TELLO Id en buen hora. 945

*(Sale el ALGUACIL que suele, con dos corchetes, que traen preso a CARRASCOSA, padre de la mancebía.)*

PADRE Soy de los Carrascosas de Antequera,  
y tengo oficio honrado en la república,  
y háseme de tratar de otra manera.

Solíanme hablar a mí por súplica,  
y es mal hecho y mal caso que se atreva 950  
hacerme un alguacil afrenta pública.

Si a un personaje como yo se lleva  
de aqueste modo, ¿qué hará a un mal hombre?  
Por Dios, que anda muy mal, sor Villanueva;  
mire que da ocasión a que se asombre 955  
el que viere tratarme desta suerte.

ALGUACIL Calle, y la calle con más prisa escombre,  
porque le irá mejor, si en ello advierte.

*(Entra a este instante LUGO, puesta la mano en la daga y el broquel; viene con él LAGARTIJA y LOBILLO.)*

LUGO Todo viviente se tenga,  
y suelten a Carrascosa 960  
para que conmigo venga,  
y no se haga otra cosa,  
aunque a su oficio convenga.

Ea, señor Villanueva,  
dé de contentarme prueba, 965  
como otras veces lo hace.

ALGUACIL Señor Lugo, que me place.

CORCHETE; Juro a mí que se le lleva!

LUGO Padre Carrascosa, vaya  
y éntrese en San Salvador, 970  
y a su temor ponga raya.

LAGARTIJA Este Cid Campeador  
mil años viva y bien haya.

ALGUACIL Cristóbal, eche de ver  
que no me quiero perder 975  
y que le sirvo.

LUGO Está bien;  
yo lo miraré muy bien  
cuando fuere menester.

ALGUACIL ¡Agradézcalo al padrino,  
señor padre!

LOBILLO No haya más, 980  
y siga en paz su camino.

CORCHETE ¿Este mozo es Barrabás,  
o es Orlando el Paladino?  
¡No hay hacer baza con él!

*(Éntrese el ALGUACIL y los corchetes.)*

PADRE Nuevo español bravonel, 985  
con tus bravatas bizarras



me has librado de las garras  
de aquel tacaño Luzbel.

Yo me voy a retraer,  
por sí o por no. ¡Queda en paz, 990  
honor de la hampa y ser!

LUGO Dices bien, y aqueso haz,  
que yo después te iré a ver.  
¡Bien se ha negociado!

LOBILLO Bien;  
sin sangre, sin hierro o fuego. 995

LUGO De cólera venía ciego,  
y enfadado.

LOBILLO Y yo también.  
Vamos a cortarla aquí  
con un polvo de lo caro.

LUGO En otras cosas reparo 1000  
que me importan más a mí.  
Ir quiero agora a jugar  
con Gilberto, un estudiante  
que siempre ha sido mi azar,  
hombre que ha de ser bastante 1005  
a hacerme desesperar.  
Cuanto tengo me ha ganado;  
solamente me han quedado  
unas súmulas, y a fe  
que, si las pierdo, que sé 1010  
cómo esquitarme al doblado.

LOBILLO Yo te daré una baraja  
hecha, con que le despojes  
sin que le dejes alhaja.

LUGO; Largo medio es el que escoges! 1015  
Otro sé por do se ataja.  
Juro a Dios omnipotente  
que, si las pierdo al presente,  
me he de hacer salteador.

LOBILLO; Resolución de valor 1020  
y traza de hombre prudente!  
Si pierdes, ¡ojalá pierdas!,  
yo mostraré en tu ejercicio  
que estas manos no son lerdas.

LAGARTIJA Siempre fue usado este oficio 1025  
de personas que son cuerdas,  
industriosas y valientes,  
por los casos diferentes  
que se ofrecen de contino.

LOBILLO De seguirte determino. 1030

LAGARTIJA Por tuyo es bien que me cuentes.  
Ya ves que mi voluntad  
es de alquimia, que se aplica  
al bien como a la maldad.

LUGO Esa verdad testifica 1035  
tu fácil habilidad.  
No te dejaré jamás;  
y adiós.

LOBILLO Lugo, ¿qué te vas?

LUGO Luego seré con vosotros.

LAGARTIJA Pues, ¡sus!, vámonos nosotros 1040  
a la ermita del Compás.

*(Éntranse todos, y sale PERALTA, estudiante, y ANTONIA.)*

ANTONIA Si ha de ser hallarle acaso,  
mis desdichas son mayores.

PERALTA ¿Son celos, o son amores  
los que aquí os guían el paso, 1045  
señora Antonia?

ANTONIA No sé,  
si no es rabia, lo que sea.

PERALTA Por cierto, muy mal se emplea  
en tal sujeto tal fe.

ANTONIA No hay parte tan escondida, 1050  
do no se sepa mi historia.

PERALTA Hácela a todos notoria  
el veros andar perdida  
buscando siempre a este hombre.

ANTONIA¿Hombre? Si él lo fuera, fuera 1055  
descanso mi angustia fiera.  
Mas no tiene más del nombre;  
    connigo, a lo menos.

PERALTA¿Cómo?

ANTONIAEsto, sin duda, es así;  
que Amor le hirió para mí 1060  
con las saetas de plomo.  
    No hay yelo que se le iguale.

PERALTAPues, ¿por qué le queréis tanto?

ANTONIAPorque me alegro y me espanto  
de lo que con hombres vale. 1065  
    ¿Hay más que ver que le dan  
parias los más arrogantes,  
de la heria los matantes,  
los bravos de San Román?  
    ¿Y hay más que vivir segura, 1070  
la que fuere su respeto,  
de verse en ningún aprieto  
de los de nuestra soltura?  
    Quien tiene nombre de suya,  
vive alegre y respetada; 1075  
a razón enamorada,  
no hay ninguna que la arguya.  
(Vase ANTONIA.)

PERALTA Estas señoras del trato  
precian más, en conclusión,  
un socarra valentón 1080

que un Medoro gallinato.

En efecto, gran lisi3n  
es la desta moza loca.  
Ya la campanilla toca;  
entr3monos a lici3n. 1085

*(Entra PERALTA, y salen GILBERTO, estudiante, y LUGO.)*

GILBERTO Ya ir3s contento, y ya puedes  
dejar de gru3nir un rato,  
y ya puedes dar barato  
tal, que parezcan mercedes.

M3s me has ganado este d3a, 1090  
que yo en ciento te he ganado.

LUGOAs3 es verdad.

GILBERTOQue buen grado  
le venga a mi cortes3a.

¿Yo tus s3mulas? ¡Estaba  
loco, sin duda ninguna! 1095

LUGOSucesos son de fortuna.

GILBERTOYa yo los adivinaba;  
porque al tah3r no le dura  
mucho tiempo el alegr3a,  
y el que de naipes se f3a, 1100  
tiene al quitar la ventura.

Hoy de cualquiera quisti3n  
has de salir vitorioso;  
y adi3s, se3or ganancioso,  
que yo me vuelvo a lici3n. 1105

*(Éntrase GILBERTO y sale el MARIDO de la MUJER que salió primero.)*

MARIDO Señor Lugo, a gran ventura  
tengo este encuentro.

LUGO Señor,  
¿qué hay de nuevo?

MARIDO Aquel temor  
de ser ofendido aún dura.

Tengo a mi consorte amada 1110  
retirada en una aldea,  
y para que el sol la vea,  
apenas halla la entrada.

Con aquel recato vivo  
que me mandasteis tener, 1115  
y muérome por saber  
de quién tanto mal recibo.

LUGO Ya aquel que pudo ponerlos  
en cuidado está de suerte  
que llegará al de la muerte, 1120  
y no al punto de ofenderos.

Quietad con este seguro  
el celoso ansiado pecho.

MARIDO Con eso voy satisfecho,  
y de serviros lo juro. 1125

Hacer podéis de mi hacienda,  
Lugo, a vuestra voluntad.

LUGO Pasó mi necesidad,  
no hay ninguna que me ofenda;

y así, sólo en recompensa 1130  
recibo vuestro deseo.

MARIDONo aquel estilo en vos veo  
que el vulgo, engañado, piensa.  
Adiós, señor Lugo.  
(*Vase.*)

LUGOAdiós.

(*Entra LAGARTIJA.*)

Pues, Lagartija, ¿a qué vienes? 1135

LAGARTIJA;Qué gentil remanso tienes!  
¿No ves que dará las dos,  
(*Reza LUGO.*)  
y te está esperando toda  
la chirinola hampesca?  
Ven, que la tarde hace fresca 1140  
y a los tragos se acomoda.  
¿Cuando te están esperando  
tus amigos con más gusto,  
andas, cual si fueras justo,  
avemarías tragando? 1145  
O sé rufián, o sé santo;  
mira lo que más te agrada.  
Voime, porque ya me enfada  
tanta *Gloria* y *Patri* tanto.  
(*Vase LAGARTIJA.*)

LUGO Solo quedo, y quiero entrar 1150  
en cuentas conmigo a solas,  
aunque lo impidan las olas

donde temo naufragar.

Yo hice voto, si hoy perdía,  
de irme a ser salteador: 1155  
claro y manifiesto error  
de una ciega fantasía.

Locura y atrevimiento  
fue el peor que se pensó,  
puesto que nunca obligó 1160  
mal voto a su cumplimiento.

Pero, ¿dejaré por esto  
de haber hecho una maldad,  
adonde mi voluntad  
echó de codicia el resto? 1165

No, por cierto. Mas, pues sé  
que contrario con contrario  
se cura muy de ordinario,  
contrario voto haré,  
y así, le hago de ser 1170  
religioso. Ea, Señor;  
veis aquí a este salteador  
de contrario parecer.

Virgen, que Madre de Dios  
fuiste por los pecadores, 1175  
ya os llaman salteadores;  
oídlos, Señora, vos.

Ángel de mi guarda, ahora  
es menester que acudáis,  
y el temor fortalezcáis 1180  
que en mi alma amarga mora.

Ánimas de purgatorio,  
de quien continua memoria  
he tenido, séaos notoria  
mi angustia, y mi mal notorio; 1185  
y, pues que la caridad  
entre esas llamas no os deja,  
pedid a Dios que su oreja  
preste a mi necesidad.

Psalmos de David benditos, 1190  
cuyos misterios son tantos



que sobreceden a cuantos  
renglones tenéis escritos,  
    vuestrs conceptos me animen,  
que he advertido veces tantas, 1195  
a que yo ponga mis plantas  
donde al alma no lastimen:  
    no en los montes salteando  
con mal cristiano decoro,  
sino en los claustros y el coro 1200  
desnudas, y yo rezando.  
    ¡Ea, demonios: por mil modos  
a todos os desafío,  
y en mi Dios bueno confío  
que os he de vencer a todos! 1205

*(Éntrase, y suenan a este instante las chirimías; descúbrese una gloria o, por lo menos, un ÁNGEL, que, en cesando la música, diga:)*

ÁNGEL Cuando un pecador se vuelve  
a Dios con humilde celo,  
se hacen fiestas en el cielo.

FIN DEL ACTO PRIMERO

## Segunda jornada

*Salen dos figuras de ninfas vestidas bizarramente, cada una con su tarjeta en el brazo: en la una viene escrito CURIOSIDAD; en la otra, COMEDIA.*

CURIOSIDAD Comedia.

COMEDIA Curiosidad,  
¿qué me quieres?

CURIOSIDAD Informarme  
qué es la causa por que dejas  
de usar tus antiguos trajes,  
del coturno en las tragedias, 5  
del zueco en las manuales  
comedias, y de la toga  
en las que son principales;  
cómo has reducido a tres  
los cinco actos que sabes 10  
que un tiempo te componían  
ilustre, risueña y grave;  
ahora aquí representas,  
y al mismo momento en Flandes;  
truecas sin discurso alguno 15  
tiempos, teatros, lugares.  
Véote, y no te conozco;  
dame de ti nuevas tales  
que te vuelva a conocer,  
pues que soy tu amigo grande. 20

COMEDIA Los tiempos mudan las cosas  
y perficionan las artes,

y añadir a lo inventado  
no es dificultad notable.  
Buena fui pasados tiempos, 25  
y en éstos, si los mirares,  
no soy mala, aunque desdigo  
de aquellos preceptos graves  
que me dieron y dejaron  
en sus obras admirables 30  
Séneca, Terencio y Plauto,  
y otros griegos que tú sabes.  
He dejado parte dellos,  
y he también guardado parte,  
porque lo quiere así el uso, 35  
que no se sujeta al arte.  
Ya represento mil cosas,  
no en relación, como de antes,  
sino en hecho; y así, es fuerza  
que haya de mudar lugares; 40  
que, como acontecen ellas  
en muy diferentes partes,  
voime allí donde acontecen,  
disculpa del disparate.  
Ya la comedia es un mapa, 45  
donde no un dedo distante  
verás a Londres y a Roma,  
a Valladolid y a Gante.  
Muy poco importa al oyente  
que yo en un punto me pase 50  
desde Alemania a Guinea  
sin del teatro mudarme;  
el pensamiento es ligero:  
bien pueden acompañarme  
con él doquiera que fuere, 55  
sin perderme ni cansarse.  
Yo estaba ahora en Sevilla,  
representando con arte  
la vida de un joven loco,  
apasionado de Marte, 60  
rufián en manos y lengua,

pero no que se enfrascase  
en admitir de perdidas  
el trato y ganancia infame.  
Fue estudiante y rezador 65  
de psalmos penitenciales,  
y el rosario ningún día  
se le pasó sin rezalle.  
Su conversión fue en Toledo,  
y no será bien te enfade 70  
que, contando la verdad,  
en Sevilla se relate.  
En Toledo se hizo clérigo,  
y aquí, en Méjico, fue fraile,  
adonde el discurso ahora 75  
nos trujo aquí por el aire.  
El sobrenombre de Lugo  
mudó en Cruz, y es bien se llame  
fray Cristóbal de la Cruz  
desde este punto adelante. 80  
A Méjico y a Sevilla  
he juntado en un instante,  
surciendo con la primera  
ésta y la tercera parte:  
una de su vida libre, 85  
otra de su vida grave,  
otra de su santa muerte  
y de sus milagros grandes.  
Mal pudiera yo traer,  
a estar atendida al arte, 90  
tanto oyente por las ventas  
y por tanto mar sin naves.  
Da lugar, Curiosidad,  
que el bendito fraile sale  
con fray Antonio, un corista 95  
bueno, pero con donaires.  
Fue en el siglo Lagartija,  
y en la religión es sacre,  
de cuyo vuelo se espera  
que ha de dar al cielo alcance. 100

CURIOSIDAD Aunque no lo quedo en todo,  
quedo satisfecho en parte,  
amiga; por esto quiero,  
sin replicarte, escucharte.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Sale FRAY CRISTÓBAL, en hábito de Santo Domingo, y FRAY ANTONIO también.)*

ANTONIO Sepa su paternidad... 105

CRUZ Entone más bajo el punto  
de cortesía.

ANTONIO En verdad,  
padre mío, que barrunto  
que tiene su caridad  
de bronce el cuerpo, y de suerte, 110  
que tarde ha de hallar la muerte  
entrada para acaballe,  
según da en ejercitalle  
en rigor áspero y fuerte.

CRUZ Es bestia la carne nuestra, 115  
y, si rienda se le da,  
tan desbocada se muestra,  
que nadie la volverá  
de la siniestra a la diestra.

Obra por nuestros sentidos 120  
nuestra alma: así están tapidos  
y no sutiles; es fuerza

que a la carrera se tuerza  
por donde van los perdidos.

La lujuria está en el vino, 125  
y a la crápula y regalo  
todo vicio le es vecino.

ANTONIO Yo, en ayunando, estoy malo,  
flojo, indevoto y mohíno.

De un otro talle y manera 130  
me hallaba yo cuando era  
en Sevilla tu mandil;  
que hacen ingenio sutil  
las blancas roscas de Utrera.

¡Oh uvas albarazadas, 135  
que en el pago de Triana  
por la noche sois cortadas,  
y os halláis a la mañana  
tan frescas y aljofaradas,  
que no hay cosa más hermosa, 140  
ni fruta que a la golosa  
voluntad así despierte!  
¡No espero verme en la suerte  
que ya se pasó dichosa!

CRUZ Cierta, fray Antonio amigo, 145  
que esa consideración  
es lazo que el enemigo  
le pone a su perdición.  
Esté atento a lo que digo.

ANTONIO Consideraba yo agora 150  
dónde estará la señora  
Librija, o la Salmerona,  
cada cual, por su persona,  
buena para pecadora.

¡Quién supiera de Ganchoso, 155

del Lobillo y de Terciado,  
y del Patojo famoso!  
¡Oh feliz siglo dorado,  
tiempo alegre y venturoso,  
adonde la libertad 160  
brindaba a la voluntad  
del gusto más esquisito!

CRUZ;Calle; de Dios sea bendito!

ANTONIO Calle su paternidad  
y déjeme, que con esto 165  
evacuo un pésimo humor  
que me es amargo y molesto.

CRUZ Ciertó que tengo temor,  
por verle tan descompuesto,  
que ha de apostatar un día, 170  
que para los dos sería  
noche de luto cubierta.

ANTONIO No saldrá por esa puerta  
jamás mi melencolía;  
no me he de estender a más 175  
que a quejarme y a sentir  
el ausencia del Compás.

CRUZ;Que tal te dejas decir,  
fray Antonio! Loco estás;  
que en el juicio empeora 180  
quien tal acuerdo atesora  
en su memoria vilmente.

ANTONIO Rufián corriente y moliente  
fuera yo en Sevilla agora,  
y tuviera en la dehesa 185  
dos yeguas, y aun quizá tres,  
diestras en el arte aviesa.

CRUZ De que en esas cosas des,  
sabe Dios lo que me pesa;  
mas yo haré la penitencia 190  
de tu rasgada conciencia.  
Quédate, Antonio, y advierte  
que de la vida a la muerte  
hay muy poca diferencia:  
quien vive bien, muere bien, 195  
quien mal vive, muere mal.

ANTONIO Digo, padre, que está bien;  
pero no has de hacer caudal  
de mí, ni enfado te den  
mis palabras, que no son 200  
nacidas del corazón,  
que en sola la lengua yacen.

CRUZ Dan las palabras y hacen  
fee de cuál es la intención.

*(Entra un corista llamado FRAY ÁNGEL; señálase con sola la A.)*

A Padre maestro, el prior 205  
llama a vuestra reverencia,  
y espera en el corredor.

*(Vase luego el PADRE CRUZ.)*



ANTONIO Más presto es a la obediencia  
que el sol a dar resplandor.

Padre fray Ángel, espere. 210

ADiga presto qué me quiere.  
(*Enséñale hasta una docena de naipes.*)

ANTONIO Mire.

A¿Naipes? ¡Perdición!

ANTONIO No se admire, hipocritón,  
que el caso no lo requiere.

A ¿Quién te los dio, fray Antonio? 215

ANTONIO Una devota que tengo.

A¿Devota? ¡Será el demonio!

ANTONIO Nunca con él bien me avengo;  
levántasle testimonio.

A ¿Están justos?

ANTONIO Pecadores 220  
creo que están los señores,  
pues, para cumplir cuarenta,

entiendo faltan los treinta.

ASi fueran algo mejores,  
buscáramos un rincón 225  
donde podernos holgar.

ANTONIOY halláramosle a sazón:  
que nunca suele faltar,  
para hacer mal, ocasión.  
¡Bien hayan los gariteros 230  
magníficos y groseros,  
que con un ánimo franco  
tienen patente el tabanco  
para blancos y fulleros!

Vamos de aquí, que el prior 235  
viene allí con el señor  
que lo fue de nuestro Cruz,  
gran caballero andaluz,  
letrado y visitador.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Salen el PRIOR y TELLO DE SANDOVAL.)*

PRIOR Él es un ángel en la tierra, cierto, 240  
y vive entre nosotros de manera,  
como en las soledades del desierto;  
no desmaya ni afloja en la carrera  
del cielo, adonde, por llegar más presto,  
corre desnudo y pobre, a la ligera; 245  
humilde sobremodo, y tan honesto,  
que admira a quien le vee en edad florida  
tan recatado en todo y tan compuesto.  
En efecto, señor, él hace vida

de quien puede esperar muerte dichosa, 250  
y gloria que no pueda ser medida.

Su oración es continua y fervorosa;  
su ayuno, inimitable, y su obediencia,  
presta, sencilla, humilde y hacendosa.

Resucitado ha en la penitencia 255  
de los antiguos padres, que en Egipto,  
en ella acrisolaron la conciencia.

TELLO Por millares de lenguas sea bendito  
el nombre de mi Dios; a este mancebo  
volvió de do pensé que iba precito. 260

Vuélvome a España, y en el alma llevo  
tan grande soledad de su persona,  
que quiero exagerarla, y no me atrevo.

PRIOR Vuesa merced nos deja una corona  
que ha de honrar este reino mientras ciña 265  
el cerco azul el hijo de Latona.

Está entre aquestos bárbaros aún niña  
la fe cristiana, y faltan los obreros  
que cultiven aquí de Dios la viña,  
y la leche mejor, y los aceros, 270  
que a entrambas les hará mayor provecho.

Es ejemplo de estos jornaleros,  
que es menester que tenga sano el pecho  
el médico que cura a lo divino,  
para dejar al cielo satisfecho. 275

*(Entran el PADRE CRUZ y FRAY ANTONIO.)*

Aquesta compostura de continuo  
trae nuestro padre Cruz, tan mansa y grave,  
que alegre y triste sigue su camino:  
que en él lo triste con lo alegre cabe.

CRUZ *Deo gracias.*

PRIOR Por siempre, amén, 280  
éstas y todas naciones  
con viva fe se las den.

CRUZ Suplícote me perdonen,  
señor, si no he andado bien,  
faltando a la cortesía 285  
que a tu presencia debía.

TELLO Padre fray Cristóbal mío,  
esto toca en desvarío,  
porque toca en demasía:  
yo soy el que he de postrarme 290  
a sus pies.

CRUZ Por el oficio  
que tengo, puedo escusarme  
de haber dado poco indicio  
de cortés en no humillarme;  
y más a quien debo tanto, 295  
que, a poder decir el cuánto,  
fuera poco.

TELLO Yo confieso  
que quedo deudor en eso.

PRIOR Bien cuadra cortés y santo.

TELLO A España parto mañana; 300  
si me manda alguna cosa,  
haréla de buena gana.

CRUZTu jornada sea dichosa:  
viento en popa y la mar llana.  
Yo, mis pobres oraciones 305  
a las celestes regiones  
enviaré por tu camino,  
puesto, señor, que imagino  
que en recio tiempo te pones  
a navegar.

TELLOLa derrota 310  
está de fuerza que siga  
de la ya aprestada flota.

CRUZNi el huracán te persiga,  
ni toques en la derrota  
Bermuda, ni en la Florida, 315  
de mil cuerpos homicida,  
adonde, contra natura,  
es el cuerpo sepultura  
viva del cuerpo sin vida.  
A Cádiz, como desees, 320  
llegues sano, y en San Lúcar  
desembarques tus preseas,  
y, en virtudes hecho un Fúcar,  
presto en Sevilla te veas,  
donde a mi padre dirás 325  
lo que quisieres, y harás  
por él lo que mereciere.

TELLOHaré lo que me pidiere,  
y si es poco, haré yo más.

Y ahora, por paga pido 330  
de aquella buena intención  
que en su crianza he tenido,  
padre, que su bendición  
me deje aquí enriquecido  
de esperanzas, con que pueda 335  
esperar que me suceda  
el viaje tan a cuento,  
que sople propicio el viento,  
y la fortuna esté queda.

CRUZ La de Dios encierre en ésta 340  
tanta ventura, que sea  
la jornada alegre y presta,  
sin que en tormenta se vea  
ni en la calma que molesta.

ANTONIO Si viere allá a la persona... 345

TELLO¿De quién?

ANTONIODe la Salmerona,  
encájele un besapiés  
de mi parte, y dos o tres  
buces, a modo de mona.

PRIOR Fray Antonio, ¿cómo es esto? 350  
¿Cómo delante de mí  
se muestra tan descompuesto?

ANTONIOOcurrióseme esto aquí,  
y vase el señor tan presto,  
que temí que me faltara 355

lugar do le encomendara  
estos y otros besamanos:  
que poder ser cortesanos  
los frailes es cosa clara.

PRIOR ¡Calle, y a vernos después! 360

TELLO Por cierto, que no merece  
castigo por ser cortés.

PRIOR Cierta enfermedad padece  
en la lengua.

ANTONIO Ello así es;  
pero nunca hablo cosa 365  
que toque en escandalosa;  
que hablo a la vizcaína.

PRIOR Yo hablaré a la diciplina,  
lengua breve y compendiosa.

TELLO Deme su paternidad 370  
licencia, y aqueste enojo  
no toque en riguridad.

ANTONIO Si conociera al Patojo,  
hiciérame caridad  
de saludalle también 375  
de mi parte. Aunque me den  
diciplina porque calle,  
no puedo no encomendalle  
aquello que me está bien.

PRIOR Vuesa merced vaya en paz, 380  
que a cólera no me mueve  
plática que da solaz,  
y éste, por mozo, se atreve,  
y él de suyo se es locuaz;  
y sean estos abrazos 385  
muestra de los santos lazos  
con que caridad nos liga.  
(*Abraza a los dos.*)

TELLOMi amor, padre Cruz, le obliga  
a que apriete más los brazos,  
y veisme que me enternezco. 390

CRUZDios te guíe, señor mío,  
que a su protección te ofrezco.

TELLOQue me dará yo confío,  
por vos, más bien que merezco.  
(*Vase TELLO.*)

PRIOR Venga, fray Antonio, venga. 395

CRUZDéjele que se detenga  
conmigo, padre, aquí un poco.

PRIOREn buen hora; y, si está loco,  
haga cómo seso tenga.  
(*Vase el PRIOR.*)

CRUZ ¿Que es posible, fray Antonio, 400  
que ha de caer en tal mengua,



que consienta que su lengua  
se la gobierne el demonio?

Cierto que pone mancilla  
ver que el demonio maldito 405  
le trae las ollas de Egipto  
en lo que dejó en Sevilla.

De las cosas ya pasadas,  
mal hechas, se ha de acordar,  
no para se deleitar, 410  
sino para ser lloradas;

de aquella gente perdida  
no debe acordarse más,  
ni del Compás, si hay compás  
do se vive sin medida. 415

Sólo dé gracias a Dios,  
que, por su santa clemencia,  
nos dio de la penitencia  
la estrecha tabla a los dos,  
para que, de la tormenta 420  
y naufragar casi cierto,  
de la religión el puerto  
tocásemos sin afrenta.

ANTONIO Yo miraré lo que hablo  
de aquí adelante más cuerdo, 425  
pues conozco lo que pierdo,  
y sé lo que gana el diablo.

Ruéguele, padre, al prior  
que en su furia se mitigue,  
y no al peso me castigue 430  
de mi descuidado error.

CRUZ Vamos, que yo le daré  
bastantísima disculpa  
de su yerro, y por su culpa  
y las mías rezaré. 435

*(Éntranse todos.)*

*(Sale una dama llamada DOÑA ANA TREVIÑO, un MÉDICO y dos criados.  
(Todo esto es verdad de la historia).)*

MÉDICO Vuesa merced sepa cierto  
que aquesta su enfermedad  
es de muy ruin calidad;  
hablo en ella como experto.

    Mi oficio obliga a decillo, 440  
cause o no cause pasión:  
que entre razón y razón  
pondrá la Parca el cuchillo.

    Hablando se ha de quedar  
muerta; y aquesto le digo 445  
como médico y amigo  
que no la quiere engañar.

DOÑA ANA Pues a mí no me parece  
que estoy tan mala. ¿Qué es esto?  
¿Cómo me anuncia tan presto 450  
la muerte?

MÉDICO El pulso me ofrece,  
    los ojos y la color,  
esta verdad a la clara.

DOÑA ANA En los ojos de mi cara  
suele mirarse el Amor. 455

MÉDICO Vuesa merced se confiese,  
y quédense aparte burlas.

CRIADO 1 Señor, si es que no te burlas,  
recio mandamiento es ése.

MÉDICO No me suelo yo burlar 460  
en casos deste jaez.

DOÑA ANA Podrá su merced esta vez,  
si quisiere, perdonar,  
que ni quiero confesarme,  
ni hacer cosa que me diga. 465

MÉDICO A más mi oficio me obliga,  
y adiós.

DOÑA ANA Él querrá ayudarme.

*(Vase el MÉDICO.)*

Pesado médico y necio,  
siempre cansa y amohína.

CRIADO 2 Crió Dios la medicina, 470  
y hase de tener en precio.

DOÑA ANA La medicina yo alabo,  
pero los médicos no,  
porque ninguno llegó  
con lo que es la ciencia al cabo. 475  
Algo fatigada estoy.

CRIADO 1 Procura desenfadarte,

esparcerte y alegrarte.

DOÑA ANA Al campo pienso de ir hoy.

Parece que están templando 480  
una guitarra allí fuera.

CRIADO 1 ¿Será Ambrosio?

DOÑA ANA Sea quienquiera;  
escuchad, que va cantando.

*(Cantan dentro.)*

Muerte y vida me dan pena;  
no sé qué remedio escoja: 485  
que si la vida me enoja,  
tampoco la muerte es buena.

DOÑA ANA Con todo, es mejor vivir:  
que, en los casos desiguales,  
el mayor mal de los males 490  
se sabe que es el morir.

Calle el que canta, que atierra  
oír tratar de la muerte:  
que no hay tesoro de suerte  
en tal espacio de tierra. 495

La muerte y la mocedad  
hacen dura compañía,  
como la noche y el día,  
la salud y enfermedad;  
y edad poca y maldad mucha, 500  
y voz de muerte a deshora,  
¡ay del alma pecadora

que impenitente la escucha!

CRIADO 1 No me contenta mi ama;  
nunca la he visto peor: 505  
fuego es ya, no es resplandor  
el que en su vista derrama.

*(Éntranse todos.)*

*(Sale el PADRE FRAY ANTONIO.)*

ANTONIO Mientras el fraile no llega  
a ser sacerdote, pasa  
vida pobre, estrecha, escasa, 510  
de quien a veces reniega.

Tiene allá el predicador  
sus devotas y sus botas,  
y el presentado echa gotas  
y suda con el prior; 515  
mas el novicio y corista  
en el coro y en la escoba  
sus apetitos adoba,  
diciendo con el Salmista:  
*Et potum meum cum fletu miscebam.*

Pero bien será callar, 520  
pues sé que muchos convienen  
en que las paredes tienen  
oídos para escuchar.

La celda del padre Cruz  
está abierta, ciertamente; 525  
ver quiero este penitente,  
que está a oscuras y es de luz.

*(Abre la celda; parece el PADRE CRUZ, arrobado, hincado de rodillas, con un*

*crucifijo en la mano.)*

¡Mirad qué postura aquella  
del bravo rufián divino,  
y si hallará camino 530  
Satanás para rompella!

Arrobado está, y es cierto  
que, en tanto que él está así,  
los sentidos tiene en sí  
tan muertos como de un muerto. 535

*(Suenan desde lejos guitarras y sonajas, y vocería de regocijo. (Todo esto desta máscara y visión fue verdad, que así lo cuenta la historia del santo).)*

Pero ¿qué música es ésta?  
¿Qué guitarras y sonajas,  
pues los frailes se hacen rajas?  
¿Mañana es alguna fiesta?

Aunque música a tal hora 540  
no es decente en el convento.  
Miedo de escuchalla siento;  
¡válgame Nuestra Señora!

*(Suena más cerca.)*

¡Padre nuestro, despierte,  
que se hunde el mundo todo 545  
de música! No hallo modo  
bueno alguno con que acierte.

La música no es divina  
porque, según voy notando,  
al modo vienen cantando 550  
rufo y de jacarandina.

(*Entran a este instante seis con sus máscaras, vestidos como ninfas, lascivamente, y los que han de cantar y tañer, con máscaras de demonios vestidos a lo antiguo, y hacen su danza. (Todo esto fue así, que no es visión supuesta, apócrifa ni mentirosa).*)

(*Cantan:*)

*No hay cosa que sea gustosa  
sin Venus blanda, amorosa.*  
No hay comida que así agrade,  
ni que sea tan sabrosa, 555  
como la que guisa Venus,  
en todos gustos curiosa.  
Ella el verde amargo jugo  
de la amarga hiel sazona,  
y de los más tristes tiempos 560  
vuelve muy dulces las horas;  
quien con ella trata, ríe,  
y quien no la trata, llora.  
Pasa cual sombra en la vida,  
sin dejar de sí memoria, 565  
ni se eterniza en los hijos,  
y es como el árbol sin hojas,  
sin flor ni fruto, que el suelo  
con ninguna cosa adorna.  
Y por esto, en cuanto el sol 570  
ciñe y el ancho mar moja,  
*no hay cosa que sea gustosa  
sin Venus blanda, amorosa.*

(*El PADRE CRUZ, sin abrir los ojos, dice:*)

CRUZ *No hay cosa que sea gustosa  
sin la dura cruz preciosa. 575*  
Si por esta senda estrecha  
que la cruz señala y forma

no pone el pie el que camina  
a la patria venturosa,  
cuando menos lo pensare, 580  
de improviso y a deshora,  
cairá de un despeñadero  
del abismo en las mazmorras.  
Torpeza y honestidad  
nunca las manos se toman, 585  
ni pueden caminar juntas  
por esta senda fragosa.  
Y yo sé que en todo el cielo,  
ni en la tierra, aunque espaciosa,  
*no hay cosa que sea gustosa* 590  
*sin la dura cruz preciosa.*

MÚSICA ¡Dulces días, dulces ratos  
los que en Sevilla se gozan;  
y dulces comodidades  
de aquella ciudad famosa, 595  
do la libertad campea,  
y en sucinta y amorosa  
manera Venus camina  
y a todos se ofrece toda,  
y risueño el Amor canta 600  
con mil pasajes de gloria:  
*No hay cosa que sea gustosa*  
*sin Venus blanda, amorosa.*

CRUZ *Vade retro!*, Satanás,  
que para mi gusto ahora 605  
*no hay cosa que sea gustosa*  
*sin la dura cruz preciosa.*

*(Vanse los demonios, gritando.)*



ANTONIO Hacerme quiero mil cruces;  
he visto lo que aún no creo.  
Afuera el temor, pues veo 610  
que viene gente con luces.

CRUZ ¿Qué hace aquí, fray Antonio?

ANTONIO Estaba mirando atento  
una danza de quien siento  
que la guiaba el demonio. 615

CRUZ Debía de estar durmiendo,  
y soñaba.

ANTONIO No, a fe mía,  
padre Cruz, yo no dormía.

*(Entran, a este punto, dos ciudadanos, con sus lanternas, y el PRIOR.)*

CIUDADANO 1 Señor, como voy diciendo,  
pone gran lástima oílla: 620  
que no hay razón de provecho  
para enternecerle el pecho  
ni de su error divertilla;  
y, pues habemos venido  
a tal hora a este convento 625  
por remedio, es argumento  
que es el daño muy crecido.

PRIOR Que diga que Dios no puede  
perdonalla, caso extraño;  
es ése el mayor engaño 630  
que al pecador le sucede.

Fray Cristóbal de la Cruz  
está en pie, quizá adivino  
que ha de hacer este camino,  
y en él dar a este alma luz. 635

Padre, su paternidad  
con estos señores vaya,  
y cuanto pueda la raya  
suba de su caridad,  
que anda muy listo el demonio 640  
con un alma pecadora.  
Vaya con el padre.

ANTONIO¿Ahora?

PRIORNo replique, fray Antonio.

ANTONIO Vamos, que a mí se me alcanza  
poco o nada, o me imagino 645  
que he de ver en el camino  
la no fantástica danza  
de denantes.

CRUZCalle un poco,  
si puede.

CIUDADANO 2Señor, tardamos,  
y será bien que nos vamos. 650

ANTONIOTodos me tienen por loco  
en aqueste monesterio.

CRUZNo hable entre dientes; camine,

y esas danzas no imagine,  
que carecen de misterio. 655

PRIOR Vaya con Dios, padre mío.

CIUDADANO 1 Con él vamos muy contentos.

CRUZ; Favorezca mis intentos  
Dios, de quien siempre confío!

*(Sale un CLÉRIGO y DOÑA ANA DE TREVIÑO, y acompañamiento.)*

CLÉRIGO Si así la cama la cansa, 660  
puede salir a esta sala.

DOÑA ANA Cualquiera parte halla mala  
la que en ninguna descansa.

CLÉRIGO Lleguen esas sillas.

DOÑA ANA Cierto,  
que me tiene su porfía, 665  
padre, helada, yerta y fría,  
y que ella sola me ha muerto.

No me canse ni se canse  
en persuadirme otra cosa,  
que no soy tan amorosa 670  
que con lágrimas me amanse.

¡No hay misericordia alguna  
que me valga en suelo o cielo!

CLÉRIGO Toda la verdad del cielo  
a tu mentira repugna. 675

En Dios no hay menoridad  
de poder, y si la hubiera,  
su menor parte pudiera  
curar la mayor maldad.

Es Dios un bien infinito, 680  
y, a respeto de quien es,  
cuanto imaginas y ves  
viene a ser punto finito.

DOÑA ANA Los atributos de Dios  
son iguales; no os entiendo, 685  
ni de entenderos pretendo.  
Matáisme, y cansáisos vos.

¡Bien fuera que Dios ahora,  
sin que en nada reparara,  
sin más ni más, perdonara 690  
a tan grande pecadora!

No hace cosa mal hecha,  
y así, no ha de hacer aquésta.

CLÉRIGO ¿Hay locura como ésta?

DOÑA ANA No gritéis, que no aprovecha. 695

*(Entran, a este instante, el PADRE CRUZ y FRAY ANTONIO, y pónese el PADRE a escuchar lo que está diciendo el CLÉRIGO, el cual prosigue diciendo:)*

CLÉRIGO Pues nació para salvarme  
Dios, y en cruz murió enclavado,  
perdonará mi pecado,  
si está en menos perdonarme.

De su parte has de esperar, 700  
que de la tuya no esperes,  
el gran perdón que no quieres,  
que Él se extrema en perdonar.

*Deus cui proprium est misereri semper, et parcere, et misericordia eius super omnia opera eius.*

Y el rey, divino cantor,  
las alabanzas que escuchas, 705  
después que ha dicho otras muchas  
dice de aqueste tenor:

*Misericordias tuas, Domine, in aeternum cantabo.*

La mayor ofensa haces  
a Dios que puedes hacer:  
que, en no esperar y temer, 710  
parece que le deshaces,

pues vas contra el atributo  
que Él tiene de omnipotente,  
pecado el más insolente,  
más sin razón y más bruto. 715

En dos pecados se ha visto,  
que Judas quiso estremarse,  
y fue el mayor ahorcarse  
que el haber vendido a Cristo.

Hácesle agravio, señora, 720  
grande en no esperar en Él,  
porque es paloma sin hiel  
con quien su pecado llora.

*Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicias.*

El corazón humillado,  
Dios por jamás le desprecia; 725  
antes, en tanto le precia  
que es fee y caso averiguado  
que se regocija el cielo  
cuando con nueva conciencia  
se vuelve a hacer penitencia 730  
un pecador en el suelo.

El padre Cruz está aquí,  
buen suceso en todo espero.

CRUZ Prosiga, padre, que quiero  
estarle atento.

DOÑA ANA ¡Ay de mí, 735  
que otro moledor acude  
a acrecentar mi tormento!  
¡Pues no ha de mudar mi intento,  
aunque más trabaje y sude!  
¿Qué me queréis, padre, vos, 740  
que tan hinchado os llegáis?  
¡Bien parece que ignoráis  
cómo para mí no hay Dios!  
No hay Dios, digo, y mi malicia  
hace, con mortal discordia, 745  
que esconda misericordia  
el rostro, y no la justicia.

CRUZ *Dixit insipiens in corde suo: non est Deus.*  
Vuestra humildad, señor, sea  
servida de encomendarme  
a Dios, que quiero mostrarme 750  
sucesor en su pelea.

*(Híncanse de rodillas el CLÉRIGO, FRAY ANTONIO y el PADRE CRUZ, y  
los circustantes todos.)*

¡Dichosa del cielo puerta,  
que levantó la caída  
y resucitó la vida  
de nuestra esperanza muerta! 755  
¡Pide a tu parto dichoso  
que ablande aquí estas entrañas,  
y muestre aquí las hazañas  
de su corazón piadoso!  
*Et docebo iniquos vias tuas, et impii ad te convertentur.*

Mi señora doña Ana de Treviño, 760  
estando ya tan cerca la partida  
del otro mundo, pobre es el aliño  
que veo en esta amarga despedida.  
Blancas las almas como blanco armiño  
han de entrar en la patria de la vida, 765  
que ha de durar por infinitos siglos,  
y negras donde habitan los vestiglos.  
Mirad dónde queréis vuestra alma vaya:  
escogedle la patria a vuestro gusto.

DOÑA ANA La justicia de Dios me tiene a raya: 770  
no me ha de perdonar, por ser tan justo;  
al malo la justicia le desmaya;  
no habita la esperanza en el injusto  
pecho del pecador, ni es bien que habite.

CRUZ Tal error de tu pecho Dios le quite. 775  
En la hora que la muerte  
a la pobre vida alcanza,  
se ha de asir de la esperanza  
el alma que en ello advierte;  
que, en término tan estrecho, 780  
y de tan fuerte rigor,  
no es posible que el temor  
sea al alma de provecho.  
El esperar y el temer  
en la vida han de andar juntos; 785  
pero en la muerte otros puntos  
han de guardar y tener.  
El que, en el palenque puesto,  
teme a su contrario, yerra;  
y está, el que animoso cierra, 790  
a la vitoria dispuesto.  
En el campo estáis, señora;  
la guerra será esta tarde;  
mirad que no os acobarde

el enemigo en tal hora. 795

DOÑA ANA Sin armas, ¿cómo he de entrar  
en el trance riguroso,  
siendo el contrario mañoso  
y duro de contrastar?

CRUZ Confiad en el padrino 800  
y en el juez, que es mi Dios.

DOÑA ANA Parece que dais los dos  
en un mismo desatino.

Dejadme, que, en conclusión,  
tengo el alma de manera 805  
que no quiero, aunque Dios quiera,  
gozar de indulto y perdón.

¡Ay, que se me arranca el alma!  
¡Desesperada me muero!

CRUZ Demonio, en Jesús espero 810  
que no has de llevar la palma  
desta empresa. ¡Oh Virgen pura!  
¿Cómo vuestro auxilio tarda?  
¡Ángel bueno de su guarda,  
ved que el malo se apresura! 815

Padre mío, no desista  
de la oración, rece más,  
que es arma que a Satanás  
le vence en cualquier conquista.

ANTONIO Cuerpo ayuno y desvelado 820  
fácilmente se empereza,  
y, más que reza, bosteza,  
indevoto y desmayado.



DOÑA ANA    ¡Que tan sin obras se halle  
mi alma!

CRUZ Si fee recobras, 825  
yo haré que te sobren obras.

DOÑA ANA ¿Hállanse, a dicha, en la calle?  
¿Y las que he hecho hasta aquí  
han sido sino de muerte?

CRUZ Escucha un poco, y advierte 830  
lo que ahora diré.

DOÑA ANA Di.

CRUZ    Un religioso que ha estado  
gran tiempo en su religión,  
y con limpio corazón  
siempre su regla ha guardado, 835  
    haciendo tal penitencia  
que mil veces el prior  
le manda tiemple el rigor  
en virtud de la obediencia;  
    y él, con ayunos continuos, 840  
con oración y humildad,  
busca de riguridad  
los más ásperos caminos:  
    el duro suelo es su cama;  
sus lágrimas, su bebida, 845  
y sazona su comida  
de Dios la amorosa llama;  
    un canto aplica a su pecho

con golpes, de tal manera,  
que, aunque de diamante fuera, 850  
le tuviera ya deshecho;  
por huir del torpe vicio  
de la carne y su regalo,  
su camisa, aunque esté malo,  
es de un áspero silicio; 855  
descalzo siempre los pies,  
de toda malicia ajeno,  
amando a Dios por ser bueno,  
sin mirar otro interés.

DOÑA ANA ¿Qué quieres deso inferir, 860  
padre?

CRUZQue digáis, señora,  
si este tal podrá, en la hora  
angustiada del morir,  
tener alguna esperanza  
de salvarse.

DOÑA ANA¿Por qué no? 865  
¡Ojalá tuviera yo  
la menor parte que alcanza  
de tales obras tal padre!  
Pero no tengo ni aun una  
que en esta angustia importuna 870  
a mis esperanzas cuadre.

CRUZ Yo os daré todas las mías,  
y tomaré el grave cargo  
de las vuestras a mi cargo.

DOÑA ANAPadre, dime: ¿desvarías? 875

¿Cómo se puede hacer eso?

CRUZ Si te quieres confesar,  
los montes puede allanar  
de caridad el exceso.

Pon tú el arrepentimiento 880  
de tu parte, y verás luego  
cómo en tus obras me entrego,  
y tú en aquellas que cuento.

DOÑA ANA ¿Dónde están los fiadores  
que aseguren el concierto? 885

CRUZ Yo estoy bien seguro y cierto  
que nadie los dio mejores,  
ni tan grandes, ni tan buenos,  
ni tan ricos, ni tan llanos,  
puesto que son soberanos, 890  
y de inmensa alteza llenos.

DOÑA ANA ¿A quién me dais?

CRUZ A la pura,  
sacrosanta, rica y bella  
que fue madre y fue doncella,  
crisol de nuestra ventura. 895

A Cristo crucificado  
os doy por fiador también;  
dóyosle niño en Belén,  
perdido y después hallado.

DOÑA ANA Los fiadores me contentan; 900  
los testigos, ¿quién serán?

CRUZ Cuantos en el cielo están  
y en sus escaños se sientan.

DOÑA ANA El contrato referid,  
porque yo quede enterada 905  
de la merced señalada  
que me hacéis.

CRUZ Cielos, oíd:  
«Yo, fray Cristóbal de la Cruz, indigno  
religioso y profeso en la sagrada  
orden del patriarca felicísimo 910  
Domingo santo, en esta forma digo:  
Que al alma de doña Ana de Treviño,  
que está presente, doy de buena gana  
todas las buenas obras que yo he hecho  
en caridad y en gracia, desde el punto 915  
que dejé la carrera de la muerte  
y entré en la de la vida; doyle todos  
mis ayunos, mis lágrimas y azotes,  
y el mérito santísimo de cuantas  
misas he dicho, y asimismo doyle 920  
mis oraciones todas y deseos,  
que han tenido a mi Dios siempre por blanco;  
y, en contracambio, tomo sus pecados,  
por inormes que sean, y me obligo  
de dar la cuenta dellos en el alto 925  
y eterno tribunal de Dios eterno,  
y pagar los alcances y las penas  
que merecieren sus pecados todos.  
Mas es la condición deste concierto  
que ella primero de su parte ponga 930  
la confesión y el arrepentimiento.»

ANTONIO; Caso jamás oído es éste, padre!

CLÉRIGOY caridad jamás imaginada.

CRUZY, para que me crea y se asegure,  
le doy por fiadores a la Virgen 935  
Santísima María y a su Hijo,  
y a las once mil vírgines benditas,  
que son mis valedoras y abogadas;  
y a la tierra y el cielo hago testigos,  
y a todos los presentes que me escuchan. 940  
Moradores del cielo, no se os pase  
esta ocasión, pues que podéis en ella  
mostrar la caridad vuestra encendida;  
pedid al gran Pastor de los rebaños  
del cielo y de la tierra que no deje 945  
que lleve Satanás esta ovejuela  
que él almagró con su preciosa sangre.  
Señora, ¿no aceptáis este concierto?

DOÑA ANASÍ acepto, padre, y pido, arrepentida,  
confesión, que me muero.

CLÉRIGO;Obras son éstas, 950  
gran Señor, de las tuyas!

ANTONIO;Bueno queda  
el padre Cruz ahora, hecha arista  
el alma, seca y sola como espárrago!  
Paréceme que vuelve al *Sicut erat*,  
y que deja el breviario y se acomoda 955  
con el barcelonés y la de ganchos.  
Siempre fue liberal, o malo, o bueno.

DOÑA ANA Padre, no me dilate este remedio;  
oiga las culpas que a su cargo quedan,  
que, si no le desmayan por ser tantas, 960  
yo moriré segura y confiada  
que he de alcanzar perdón de todas ellas.

CRUZ Padre, vaya al convento, y dé esta nueva  
a nuestro padre, y ruéguele que haga  
general oración, dando las gracias 965  
a Dios deste suceso milagroso,  
en tanto que a esta nueva penitente  
oigo de confesión.

ANTONIO A mí me place.

CRUZ Vamos do estemos solos.

DOÑA ANA En buen hora.

CLÉRIGO ¡Oh bienaventurada pecadora! 970

FIN DE LA SEGUNDA JORNADA

## Jornada tercera

*Entra un CIUDADANO y el PRIOR.*

CIUDADANO Oigan los cielos y la tierra entienda  
tan nueva y tan estraña maravilla,  
y su paternidad a oílla atienda;  
que, puesto que no pueda referilla  
con aquellas razones que merece, 5  
peor será que deje de decilla.

Apenas a la vista se le ofrece  
doña Ana al padre Cruz, sin la fe pura  
que a nuestras esperanzas fortalece,  
cuando, con caridad firme y segura, 10  
hizo con ella un cambio de tal suerte,  
que cambió su desgracia en gran ventura.

Su alma de las garras de la muerte  
eterna arrebató, y volvió a la vida,  
y de su pertinacia la divierte; 15  
la cual, como se viese enriquecida  
con la dádiva santa que el bendito  
padre le dio sin tasa y sin medida,  
alzó al momento un piadoso grito  
al cielo, y confesión pidió llorando, 20  
con voz humilde y corazón contrito;

y, en lo que antes dudaba no dudando,  
de sus deudas dio cuenta muy estrecha  
a quien agora las está pagando;  
y luego, sosegada y satisfecha, 25  
todos los sacramentos recibidos,  
dejó la cárcel de su cuerpo estrecha.

Oyéronse en los aires divididos  
coros de voces dulces, de manera  
que quedaron suspensos los sentidos; 30  
dijo al partir de la mortal carrera

que las once mil vírgines estaban  
todas en torno de su cabecera;  
por los ojos las almas distilaban  
de gozo y maravilla los presentes, 35  
que la süave música escuchaban;  
y, apenas por los aires transparentes  
voló de la contrita pecadora  
el alma a las regiones refulgentes,  
cuando en aquella misma feliz hora 40  
se vio del padre Cruz cubierto el rostro  
de lepra, adonde el asco mismo mora.  
Volved los ojos, y veréis el monstruo,  
que lo es en santidad y en la fiereza,  
cuya fealdad a nadie le da en rostro. 45

*(Entra el PADRE CRUZ, llagado el rostro y las manos; tráenle dos ciudadanos de los brazos, y FRAY ANTONIO.)*

CRUZ Acompaña a la lepra la flaqueza;  
no me puedo tener. ¡Dios sea bendito,  
que así a pagar mi buen deseo empieza!

PRIOR Por ese tan borrado sobreescrito  
no podrá conoceros, varón santo, 50  
quien no os mirare muy de hito en hito.

CRUZ Padre Prior, no se adelante tanto  
vuestra afición que me llaméis con nombre  
que me cuadra tan mal, que yo me espanto.  
Inútil fraile soy, pecador hombre, 55  
puesto que me acompaña un buen deseo;  
mas no dan los deseos tal renombre.

CIUDADANO En vos contemplo, padre Cruz, y leo



la paciencia de Job, y su presencia  
en vuestro rostro deslustrado veo. 60

Por la ajena malicia la inocencia  
vuestra salió, y pagó tan de contado,  
cual lo muestra el rigor desta dolencia.

Obligástesos hoy, y habéis pagado  
hoy.

CRUZA lo menos, de pagar espero, 65  
pues de mi voluntad quedé obligado.

CIUDADANO 2 ¡Oh, en la viña de Dios gran jornalero!  
¡Oh caridad, brasero y fragua ardiente!

CRUZ Señores, hijo soy de un tabernero;  
y si es que adulación no está presente, 70  
y puede la humildad hacer su oficio,  
cese la cortesía, aquí indecente.

ANTONIO Yo, traidor, que a la gula, en sacrificio  
del alma, y a la hampa, engendradora  
de todo torpe y asqueroso vicio, 75  
digo que me consagro desde agora  
para limpiar tus llagas y curarte,  
hasta el fin de mi vida o su mejora;  
y no tendrá conmigo alguna parte  
la vana adulación, pues, de continuo, 80  
antes rufián que santo he de llamarte.

Con esto no hallará ningún camino  
la vanagloria para hacerte guerra,  
enemigo casero y repentino.

CIUDADANO 2 Venistes para bien de aquesta tierra. 85

¡Dios os guarde mil años, padre amado!

CIUDADANO 1 ¡Sólo en su pecho caridad encierra!

CRUZPadres, recójanme, que estoy cansado.

*(Éntranse todos, y salen dos demonios; el uno con figura de oso, y el otro como quisieren. (Esta visión fue verdadera, que así se cuenta en su historia).)*

SAQUIEL ¡Que así nos la quitase de las manos!

¡Que así la mies tan sazónada nuestra 90

la segase la hoz del tabernero!

¡Reniego de mí mismo, y aun reniego!

¡Y que tuviese Dios por bueno y justo

tal cambalache! Estúvose la dama

al pie de cuarenta años en sus vicios, 95

desesperada de remedio alguno;

llega estotro buen alma, y dale luego

los tesoros de gracia que tenía

adquiridos por Cristo y por sus obras.

¡Gentil razón, gentil guardar justicia, 100

y gentil igualar de desiguales

y contrapuestas prendas: gracia y culpa,

bienes de gloria y del infierno males!

VISIEL Como fue el corredor desta mohatra

la caridad, facilitó el contrato, 105

puesto que desigual.

SAQUIELDesa manera,

más rica queda el alma deste rufo,

por haber dado cuanto bien tenía,

y tomado el ajeno mal a cuestras,

que antes estaba que el contrato hiciese. 110

VISIELNo sé qué te responda; sólo veo  
que no puede ninguno de nosotros  
alabarse que ha visto en el infierno  
algún caritativo.

SAQUIEL¿Quién lo duda?  
¿Sabes qué veo, Visiel amigo? 115  
Que no es equivalente a questa lepra  
que padece este fraile, a los tormentos  
que pasara doña Ana en la otra vida.

VISIEL¿No adviertes que ella puso de su parte  
grande arrepentimiento?

SAQUIELFue a los fines 120  
de su malvada vida.

VISIELEn un instante  
nos quita de las manos Dios al alma  
que se arrepiente y sus pecados llora;  
cuanto y más, que ésta estaba enriquecida  
con las gracias del fraile hi de bellaco. 125

SAQUIELMas deste generoso, a lo que entiendes,  
¿qué será dél agora que está seco  
e inútil para cosa desta vida?

VISIEL¿Aqueso ignoras? ¿No sabes que conocen  
sus frailes su virtud y su talento, 130  
su ingenio y su bondad, partes bastantes  
para que le encomienden su gobierno?

SAQUIEL ¿Luego, será prior?

VISIEL ¡Muy poco dices!  
Provincial le verás.

SAQUIEL Ya lo adivino.  
En el jardín está; tú no te muestres, 135  
que yo quiero a mis solas darle un toque  
con que siquiera a ira le provoque.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Sale FRAY ÁNGEL y FRAY ANTONIO.)*

ANTONIO ¿Qué trae, fray Ángel? ¿Son huevos?

AHable, fray Antonio, quedo.

ANTONIO ¿Tiene miedo?

ATengo miedo. 140

ANTONIO Déme dos de los más nuevos,  
de los más frescos, le digo,  
que me los quiero sorber  
así, crudos.

AHay que hacer

primero otra cosa, amigo. 145

ANTONIO Siempre acudes a mi ruego  
dilatando tus mercedes.

ASi estos huevos comer puedes,  
veslos aquí, no los niego.  
(*Muéstrale dos bolas de argolla.*)

ANTONIO ¡Oh coristas y novicios! 150  
La mano que el bien dispensa  
os quite de la despensa  
las cerraduras y quicios;  
la yerba del pito os dé,  
que abre todas cerraduras, 155  
y veáis, estando a oscuras,  
como el luciérnago ve;  
y, señores de las llaves,  
sin temor y sobresalto,  
deis un generoso asalto 160  
a las cosas más süaves;  
busquéis hebras de tocino,  
sin hacer del unto caso,  
y en penante y limpio vaso  
deis dulces sorbos de vino; 165  
de almendra morisca y pasa  
vuestras mangas se vean llenas,  
y jamás muelas ajenas  
a las vuestras pongan tasa;  
cuando en la tierra comáis 170  
pan y agua con querellas,  
halléis empanadas bellas  
cuando a la celda volváis;  
hágaos la paciencia escudo  
en cualquiera vuestro aprieto; 175  
mándeos un prior discreto,

afable y no cabezudo.

A Deprecación bien cristiana,  
fray Antonio, es la que has hecho;  
que aspiró a nuestro provecho 180  
es cosa también bien llana.

Grande miseria pasamos  
y a sumo estrecho venimos  
los que misa no decimos  
y los que no predicamos. 185

ANTONIO ¿Para qué son esas bolas?

AYo las llevaba con fin  
de jugar en el jardín  
contigo esta tarde a solas,  
en las horas que nos dan 190  
de recreación.

ANTONIO¿Y llevas  
argolla?

AY paletas nuevas.

ANTONIO¿Quién te las dio?

AFray Beltrán.

Se las envió su prima,  
y él me las ha dado a mí. 195

ANTONIOCon las paletas aquí  
haré dos tretas de esgrima.

Precíngete como yo,  
y entrégame una paleta,  
y está advertido una treta 200  
que el padre Cruz me mostró  
cuando en la jácara fue  
águila volante y diestra.  
Muestra, digo; acaba, muestra.

AToma, pero yo no sé 205  
de esgrima más que un jumento.

ANTONIO Ponte de aquesta manera:  
vista alerta; ese pie, fuera,  
puesto en medio movimiento.  
Tírame un tajo volado 210  
a la cabeza. ¡No ansí;  
que ése es revés, pese a mí!

A¡Soy un asno enalbardado!

ANTONIO Ésta es la brava postura  
que llaman *puerta de hierro* 215  
los jaques.

A¡Notable yerro  
y disparada locura!

ANTONIO Doy broquel, saco el baldeo,  
levanto, señalo o pego,  
repárome en cruz, y luego 220  
tiro un tajo de voleo.

*(Entra el PADRE CRUZ, arrimado a un báculo y rezando en un rosario.)*

CRUZ Fray Antonio, basta ya;  
no mueran más, si es posible.

A¡Qué confusión tan terrible!

CRUZ¡Buena la postura está! 225  
No se os pueden embotar  
las agudezas de loco.

ANTONIOIndigesto estaba un poco,  
y quíseme ejercitar  
para hacer la digestión, 230  
que dicen que es conveniente  
el ejercicio vehemente.

CRUZVos tenéis mucha razón;  
mas yo os daré un ejercicio  
con que os haga por la posta 235  
digerir a vuestra costa  
la superfluidad del vicio;  
vaya y póngase a rezar  
dos horas en penitencia;  
y puede su reverencia, 240  
fray Ángel, ir a estudiar,  
y déjese de las tretas  
deste valiente mancebo.

ANTONIO¿Las bolas?

AAquí las llevo.



ANTONIO Toma, y lleva las paletas. 245

*(Éntrase FRAY ANTONIO y FRAY ÁNGEL.)*

CRUZ De la escuridad del suelo  
te saqué a la luz del día,  
Dios queriendo, y yo querría  
llevarte a la luz del Cielo.

*(Vuelve a entrar SAQUIEL, vestido de oso. (Todo fue así).)*

SAQUIEL Cambiador nuevo en el mundo, 250  
por tu voluntad enfermo,  
¿piensas que eres en el yermo  
algún Macario segundo?  
¿Piensas que se han de avenir  
bien para siempre jamás, 255  
con lo que es menos lo más,  
la vida con el morir,  
soberbia con humildad,  
diligencia con pereza,  
la torpeza con limpieza, 260  
la virtud con la maldad?  
Engañaste; y es tan cierto  
no avenirse lo que digo,  
que puedes ser tú testigo  
de esta verdad con que acierto. 265

CRUZ ¿Qué quieres deso inferir,  
enemigo Satanás?

SAQUIEL Que es locura en la que das

dignísima de reír;  
que en el cielo ya no dan 270  
puerta a que entren de rondón,  
así como entró un ladrón,  
que entre también un rufián.

CRUZ Conmigo en balde te pones  
a disputar; que yo sé 275  
que, aunque te sobre en la fe,  
me has de sobrar tú en razones.  
Dime a qué fue tu venida,  
o vuélvete, y no hables más.

SAQUIELMi venida, cual verás, 280  
es a quitarte la vida.

CRUZ Si es que traes de Dios licencia,  
fácil te será quitalla,  
y más fácil a mí dalla  
con promptísima obediencia. 285  
Si la traes, ¿por qué no pruebas  
a ofenderme? Aunque recelo  
que no has de tocarme a un pelo,  
por muy mucho que te atrevas.  
¿Qué bramas? ¿Quién te atormenta? 290  
Pero espérate, adversario.

SAQUIELEs para mí de un rosario  
bala la más chica cuenta.  
Rufián, no me martirices;  
tuerce, hipócrita, el camino. 295

CRUZAun bien que tal vez, malino,  
algunas verdades dices.

*(Vase el demonio bramando.)*

Vuelve, que te desafío  
a ti y al infierno todo,  
hecho valentón al modo 300  
que plugo al gran Padre mío.  
¡Oh alma!, mira quién eres,  
para que del bien no tuerzas;  
que el diablo no tiene fuerzas  
más de las que tú le dieres. 305  
Y, para que no rehuyas  
de verte con él a brazos,  
Dios rompe y quiebra los lazos  
que pasan las fuerzas tuyas.

*(Vuelve a entrar FRAY ANTONIO con un plato de hilas y paños limpios.)*

ANTONIO Éntrese, padre, a curar. 310

CRUZ Paréceme que es locura  
pretender a mi mal cura.

ANTONIO ¿Es eso desesperar?

CRUZ No, por cierto, hijo mío;  
mas es esta enfermedad 315  
de una cierta calidad,  
que curarla es desvarío.  
Viene del cielo.

ANTONIO ¿Es posible

que tan mala cosa encierra  
el cielo, do el bien se encierra? 320  
Téngolo por imposible.

¿Estaráse ahora holgando  
doña Ana, que te la dio,  
y estaréme en balde yo  
tu remedio procurando? 325

*(Entra FRAY ÁNGEL.)*

A Padre Cruz, mándeme albricias,  
que han elegido prior.

CRUZ Si no te las da el Señor,  
de mí en vano las codicias.  
Mas, decidme: ¿quién salió? 330

A Salió su paternidad.

CRUZ ¿Yo, padre?

A Sí, en mi verdad.

ANTONIO ¿Búrlaste, fray Ángel?

A No.

CRUZ ¿Sobre unos hombros podridos  
tan pesada carga han puesto? 335  
No sé qué me diga desto.

ANTONIO Cególes Dios los sentidos:

que si ellos te conocieran  
como yo te he conocido,  
tomaran otro partido, 340  
y otro prior eligieran.

A Ahora digo, fray Antonio,  
que tiene, sin duda alguna,  
en esa lengua importuna  
entretejido el demonio: 345  
que si ello no fuera así,  
nunca tal cosa dijeras.

ANTONIO Fray Ángel, no hablo de veras;  
pero conviene esto aquí.

Gusta este santo de verse 350  
vituperado de todos,  
y va huyendo los modos  
do pueda ensoberbecerse.

Mira qué confuso está  
por la nueva que le has dado. 355

A Puesto le tiene en cuidado.

ANTONIO El cargo no aceptará.

CRUZ ¿No saben estos benditos  
como soy simple y grosero,  
y hijo de un tabernero, 360  
y padre de mil delitos?

ANTONIO Si yo pudiera dar voto  
a fe que no te le diera;  
antes, a todos dijera  
la vida que de hombre roto 365  
en Sevilla y en Toledo  
te vi hacer.

CRUZTiempo te queda:  
dila, amigo, porque pueda  
escaparme deste miedo  
que tengo de ser prelado, 370  
cargo para mí indecente:  
que, ¿a qué será suficiente  
hombre que está tan llagado  
y que ha sido un...?

ANTONIO¿Qué? ¿Rufián?  
Que por Dios, y así me goce, 375  
que le vi reñir con doce  
de heria y de San Román;  
y en Toledo, en las Ventillas,  
con siete terciopeleros,  
él hecho zaque, ellos cueros, 380  
le vide hacer maravillas.  
¡Qué de capas vi a sus pies!  
¡Qué de broqueles rajados!  
¡Qué de cascos abollados!  
Hirió a cuatro: huyeron tres. 385  
Para aqueste ministerio  
sí que le diera mi voto,  
porque en él fuera el más doto  
rufián de nuestro hemisferio;  
pero para ser prior 390  
no le diera yo jamás.

CRUZ; Oh, cuánto en lo cierto estás,  
Antonio!

ANTONIO; Y cómo, señor!

CRUZ Así cual quieres te goces,  
cristiano, y fraile, y sin mengua, 395  
que des un filo a la lengua  
y digas mi vida a voces.

*(Entra el PRIOR y otro FRAILE de acompañamiento.)*

PRIOR Vuestra paternidad nos dé las manos,  
y bendición con ellas.

CRUZ Padres míos,  
¿adónde a mí tal sumisión?

PRIOR Mi padre 400  
es ya nuestro prelado.

ANTONIO; Buenos cascos  
tienen, por vida mía, los que han hecho  
semejante elección!

PRIOR Pues qué, ¿no es santa?

ANTONIO A un Job hacen prior, que no le falta  
si no es el muladar y ser casado 405  
para serlo del todo. ¡En fin: son frailes!

Quien tiene el cuerpo de dolores lleno,  
¿cómo podrá tener entendimiento  
libre para el gobierno que requiere  
tan peligroso y trabajoso oficio 410  
como el de ser prior? ¿No lo ven claro?

CRUZ; Oh qué bien que lo ha dicho fray Antonio!  
¡El cielo se lo pague! Padres míos,  
¿no miran cuál estoy, que en todo el cuerpo  
no tengo cosa sana? Consideren 415  
que los dolores turban los sentidos,  
y que ya no estoy bueno para cosa,  
si no es para llorar y dar gemidos  
a Dios por mis pecados infinitos.  
Amigo fray Antonio, di a los padres 420  
mi vida, de quien fuiste buen testigo;  
diles mis insolencias y recreos,  
la inmensidad descubre de mis culpas,  
la bajeza les di de mi linaje,  
diles que soy de un tabernero hijo, 425  
porque les haga todo aquesto junto  
mudar de parecer.

PRIOR Escusa débil  
es ésa, padre mío; a lo que ha sido,  
ha borrado lo que es. Acepte y calle,  
que así lo quiere Dios.

CRUZ; Él sea bendito! 430  
Vamos, que la experiencia dará presto  
muestras que soy inútil.

ANTONIO; Vive el cielo,  
que merece ser Papa tan buen fraile!



AQue será provincial, yo no lo dudo.

ANTONIOAqueso está de molde. Padre, vamos, 435  
que es hora de curarte.

CRUZSea en buen hora.

ANTONIOVa a ser prior, ¿y por no serlo llora?

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Salen LUCIFER, con corona y cetro, el más galán demonio y bien vestido que ser pueda, y SAQUIEL y VISIEL, como quisieren, de demonios feos.)*

LUCIFER Desde el instante que salimos fuera  
de la mente eternal, ángeles siendo,  
y con soberbia voluntad y fiera 440  
fuimos el gran pecado aprehendiendo,  
sin querer ni poder de la carrera  
torcer donde una vez fuimos subiendo,  
hasta ser derribados a este asiento,  
do no se admite el arrepentimiento; 445

    digo que desde entonces se recoge  
la fiera envidia en este pecho fiero,  
de ver que el cielo en su morada acoge  
a quien pasó también de Dios el fuero.  
En mí se estiende y en Adán se encoge 450  
la justicia de Dios, manso y severo,  
y dél gozan los hombres in eterno,  
y mis secuaces, deste duro infierno.

    Y, no contento Aquél que dio en un palo  
la vida, que fue muerte de la muerte, 455

de verme despojado del regalo  
de mi primera aventajada suerte,  
quiere que se alce con el cielo un malo,  
un pecador blasfemo, y que se acierte  
a salvar en un corto y breve instante 460  
un ladrón que no tuvo semejante;

la pecadora pública arrebatada  
de sus pies el perdón de sus pecados,  
y su historia santísima dilata  
por siglos en los años prolongados; 465  
un cambiador, que en sus usuras trata,  
deja a sola una voz sus intrincados  
libros, y por manera nunca vista  
le pasa a ser divino coronista;

y agora quiere que un rufián se asiente 470  
en los ricos escaños de la gloria,  
y que su vida y muerte nos la cuente  
alta, famosa y verdadera historia.  
Por esto inclino la soberbia frente,  
y quiero que mi angustia sea notoria 475  
a vosotros, partícipes y amigos,  
y de mi mal y mi rancor testigos;

no para que me deis consuelo alguno,  
pues tenerle nosotros no es posible,  
sino porque acudáis al oportuno 480  
punto que hasta los santos es terrible.  
Este rufián, cual no lo fue ninguno,  
por su fealdad al mundo aborrecible,  
está ya de partida para el cielo,  
y humilde apresta el levantado vuelo. 485

Acudid y turbadle los sentidos,  
y entibiad, si es posible, su esperanza,  
y de sus vanos pasos y perdidos  
hacedle temerosa remembranza;  
no llegue alegre voz a sus oídos 490  
que prometa segura confianza  
de haber cumplido con la deuda y cargo  
que por su caridad tomó a su cargo.

¡Ea!, que espira ya, después que ha hecho

prior y provincial tan bien su oficio, 495  
que tiene al suelo y cielo satisfecho,  
y da de que es gran santo gran indicio.

SAQUIEL No será nuestra ida de provecho,  
porque será de hacerle beneficio,  
pues siempre que a los brazos he venido 500  
con él, queda con palma y yo vencido.

LUCIFER Mientras no arroja el postrimero aliento,  
bien se puede esperar que en algo tuerza  
el peso, puesto en duda el pensamiento;  
que a veces puede mucho nuestra fuerza. 505

VISIEL Yo cumpliré, señor, tu mandamiento:  
que adonde hay más bondad, allí se esfuerza  
más mi maldad. Allá voy diligente.

LUCIFER Todos venid, que quiero estar presente.

*(Éntranse todos, y salen tres almas, vestidas con tunicelas de tafetán blanco, velos sobre los rostros y velas encendidas.)*

ALMA 1 Hoy, hermanas, que es el día 510  
en quién, por nuestro consuelo,  
las puertas ha abierto el cielo  
de nuestra carcelería,  
para venir a este punto  
todo lleno de misterio, 515  
viendo en este monasterio  
al gran Cristóbal difunto,  
al alma devota suya  
bien será la acompañemos,  
y a la región le llevemos 520

do está la eterna Aleluya.

ALMA 2 Felice jornada es ésta,  
santa y bienaventurada,  
pues se hará, con su llegada,  
en todos los cielos fiesta: 525  
que, llevando en compañía  
alma tan devota nuestra,  
darán más claro la muestra  
de júbilo y de alegría.

ALMA 3 Ella abrió con oraciones, 530  
ayunos y sacrificios,  
de nuestra prisión los quicios,  
y abrevió nuestras pasiones.  
Cuando en libertad vivía,  
de nosotras se acordaba, 535  
y el rosario nos rezaba  
con devoción cada día;  
y, cuando en la religión  
entró, como habemos visto,  
muerto al diablo y vivo a Cristo, 540  
aumentó la devoción.

Ni por la riguridad  
de las llagas que en sí tuvo  
jamás indevoto estuvo,  
ni falto de caridad. 545

Prior siendo y provincial,  
tan manso y humilde fue,  
que hizo de andar a pie  
y descalzo gran caudal.

Trece años ha que ha vivido 550  
llagado, de tal manera  
que, a no ser milagro, fuera  
en dos días consumido.

ALMA 1 Remite sus alabanzas  
al lugar donde caminas, 555  
que allí las darán condignas  
al valor que tú no alcanzas;  
y mezclémonos agora  
entre su acompañamiento,  
escuchando el sentimiento 560  
deste su amigo que llora.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Sale FRAY ANTONIO llorando, y trae un lienzo manchado de sangre.)*

ANTONIO Acabó la carrera  
de su cansada vida;  
dio al suelo los despojos;  
del cuerpo voló al cielo la alma santa. 565  
¡Oh padre, que en el siglo  
fuiste mi nube obscura,  
mas en el fuerte asilo,  
que así es la religión, mi norte fuiste!  
Trece años ha que lidias, 570  
por ser caritativo  
sobre el humano modo,  
con podredumbre y llagas insufribles;  
mas los manchados paños  
de tus sangrientas llagas 575  
se estiman más agora  
que delicados y olorosos lienzos:  
con ellos mil enfermos  
cobran salud entera;  
mil veces les imprimen 580  
los labios más ilustres y señores.  
Tus pies, que mientras fuiste  
provincial, anduvieron  
a pie infinitas leguas

por lodos, por barrancos, por malezas, 585  
agora son reliquias,  
agora te los besan  
tus súbditos, y aun todos  
cuantos pueden llegar a donde yaces.  
Tu cuerpo, que ayer era 590  
espectáculo horrendo,  
según llagado estaba,  
hoy es bruñida plata y cristal limpio:  
señal que tus carbuncos,  
tus grietas y aberturas, 595  
que podrición vertían,  
estaban por milagro en ti, hasta tanto  
que la deuda pagases  
de aquella pecadora  
que fue limpia en un punto: 600  
¡tanto tu caridad con Dios valía!

*(Entra el PRIOR.)*

PRIOR Padre Antonio, deje el llanto,  
y acuda a cerrar las puertas,  
porque si las halla abiertas  
el pueblo, que acude tanto, 605  
no nos han de dar lugar  
para enterrar a su amigo.

ANTONIO Aunque se cierren, yo digo  
que ha poco de aprovechar.  
No ha de bastar diligencia, 610  
pero con todo, allá iré.

*(Entra FRAY ÁNGEL.)*

A¿Dónde vas, padre?

ANTONIO No sé.

A Acuda su reverencia,  
que está toda la ciudad  
en el convento, y se arrojan 615  
sobre el cuerpo, y le despojan  
con tanta celeridad.

Y el virrey está también  
en su celda.

PRIOR Padre Antonio,  
venga a ver el testimonio 620  
que el cielo da de su bien.

*(Éntranse todos.)*

*(Salen dos ciudadanos: el uno con lienzo de sangre, y el otro con un pedazo de capilla.)*

CIUDADANO 1 ¿Qué lleváis vos?

CIUDADANO 2 Un lienzo de sus llagas.  
¿Y vos?

CIUDADANO 1 De su capilla este pedazo,  
que le precio y le tengo en más estima  
que si hallara una mina.

CIUDADANO 2 Pues salgamos 625

aprisa del convento, no nos quiten  
los frailes las reliquias.

CIUDADANO 1;Bueno es eso!  
¡Antes daré la vida que volvellas!

*(Entra otro.)*

CIUDADANO 3Yo soy, sin duda, la desgracia misma;  
no he podido topar de aqueste santo 630  
siquiera con un hilo de su ropa,  
puesto que voy contento y satisfecho  
con haberle besado cuatro veces  
los santos pies, de quien olor despide  
del cielo; pero tal fue él en la tierra. 635  
El virrey le trae en hombros, y sus frailes,  
y aquí, en aquesta bóveda del claustro,  
le quieren enterrar. Música suena;  
parece que es del cielo, y no lo dudo.

*(Traen al santo tendido en una tabla, con muchos rosarios sobre el cuerpo;  
tráenle en hombros sus frailes y el VIRREY; suena lejos música de flautas o  
chirimías; cesando la música, dice a voces dentro LUCIFER; o, si quisieren,  
salgan los demonios al teatro.)*

LUCIFERAun no puedo llegar siquiera al cuerpo, 640  
para vengar en él lo que en el alma  
no pude: tales armas le defienden.

SAQUIELNo hay arnés que se iguale al del rosario.

LUCIFERVamos, que en sólo verle me confundo.



SAQUIEL No habemos de parar hasta el profundo. 645

ANTONIO ¿Oyes, fray Ángel?

AOigo, y son los diablos.

VIRREY Háganme caridad sus reverencias,  
que torne yo otra vez a ver el rostro  
deste bendito padre.

PRIOR Sea en buen hora.  
Padres, abajen, pónganle en el suelo, 650  
que, pues la devoción de su excelencia  
se estiende a tanto, bien será agradalle.

VIRREY ¿Que es este el rostro que yo vi ha dos días  
de horror y llagas y materias lleno?  
¿Las manos gafas son aquéstras, cielo? 655  
¡Oh alma que, volando a las serenas  
regiones, nos dejaste testimonio  
del felice camino que hoy has hecho!  
Clara y limpia la caja do habitaste,  
abrasada primero y ahumada 660  
con el fuego encendido en que se ardía,  
todo de caridad y amor divino.

CIUDADANO 1 Déjenosle besar sus reverencias  
los pies siquiera.

PRIOR Devoción muy justa.

VIRREYHagan su oficio, padres, y en la tierra 665  
escondan esta joya tan del cielo;  
esa esperanza nuestro mal remedia.  
Y aquí da fin felice esta comedia.

## FIN DESTA COMEDIA

*(Hase de advertir que todas las figuras de mujer desta comedia las pueden  
hacer solas dos mujeres.)*

# LA GRAN SULTANA



*Comedia famosa intitulada La gran sultana doña Catalina de Oviedo*

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ROBERTO, *renegado*.

UN ALÁRABE.

EL GRAN TURCO.

UN PAJE, *vestido a lo turquesco*.

Otros tres garzones.

MAMÍ, *eunuco*.

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SU PADRE.

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UN CAUTIVO ANCIANO.

Dos músicos.

## Jornada primera

*Sale SALEC, turco, y ROBERTO, vestido a lo griego, y, detrás dellos, un ALÁRABE, vestido de un alquicel; trai en una lanza muchas estopas, y en una varilla de membrillo, en la punta, un papel como billete, y una velilla de cera encendida en la mano; este tal ALÁRABE se pone al lado del teatro, sin hablar palabra, y luego dice ROBERTO:*

ROBERTO La pompa y majestad deste tirano,  
sin duda alguna, sube y se engrandece  
sobre las fuerzas del poder humano.

Mas, ¿qué fantasma es esta que se ofrece,  
coronada de estopas media lanza? 5  
Alárabe en el traje me parece.

SALEC Tienen aquí los pobres esta usanza  
cuando alguno a pedir justicia viene  
(que sólo el interés es quien la alcanza):

de una caña y de estopas se previene, 10  
y cuando el Turco pasa enciende fuego,  
a cuyo resplandor él se detiene;

pide justicia a voces, dale luego  
lugar la guarda, y el pobre, como jara,  
arremete turbado y sin sosiego, 15

y en la punta y remate de una vara  
al Gran Señor su memorial presenta,  
que para aquel efecto el paso para.

Luego, a un bello garzón, que tiene cuenta  
con estos memoriales, se le entrega, 20  
que, en relación, después, dellos da cuenta;

pero jamás el término se llega  
del buen despacho destes miserables,  
que el interés le turba y se le niega.

ROBERTO Cosas he visto aquí que de admirables 25  
pueden al más gallardo entendimiento  
suspender.

SALEC Verás otras más notables.

Ya está a pie el Gran Señor; puedes atento  
verle a tu gusto, que el cristiano puede  
mirarle rostro a rostro a su contento. 30

A ningún moro o turco se concede  
que levante los ojos a miralle,  
y en esto a toda majestad excede.

*(Entra a este instante el GRAN TURCO con mucho acompañamiento; delante de sí lleva un PAJE vestido a lo turquesco, con una flecha en la mano levantada en alto, y detrás del TURCO van otros dos garzones con dos bolsas de terciopelo verde, donde ponen los papeles que el TURCO les da.)*

ROBERTO Por cierto, él es mancebo de buen talle,  
y que, de gravedad y bizarría, 35  
la fama, con razón, puede loalle.

SALEC Hoy hace la zalá en Santa Sofía,  
ese templo que ves, que en la grandeza  
excede a cuantos tiene la Turquía.

ROBERTO A encender y a gritar el moro empieza; 40  
el Turco se detiene mesurado,  
señal de piedad como de alteza.

El moro llega; un memorial le ha dado;  
el Gran Señor le toma y se le entrega  
a un bel garzón que casi trai al lado. 45

*(En tanto que esto dice ROBERTO y el TURCO pasa, tiene SALEC doblado el cuerpo y inclinada la cabeza, sin miralle al rostro.)*

SALEC Esta audiencia al que es pobre no se niega.  
¿Podré alzar la cabeza?

ROBERTOAlza y mira,  
que ya el Señor a la mezquita llega,  
cuya grandeza desde aquí me admira.

*(Éntrase el Gran Señor, y queda en el teatro SALEC y ROBERTO.)*

SALEC ¿Qué te parece Roberto, 50  
de la pompa y majestad  
que aquí se te ha descubierto?

ROBERTOQue no creo a la verdad,  
y pongo duda en lo cierto.

SALEC De a pie y de a caballo, van 55  
seis mil soldados.

ROBERTOSí irán.

SALECNo hay dudar, que seis mil son.

ROBERTOJuntamente, admiración  
y gusto y asombro dan.



SALEC Cuando sale a la zalá 60  
sale con este decoro;  
y es el día del xumá,  
que así al viernes llama el moro.

ROBERTO; Bien acompañado va!  
Pero, pues nos da lugar 65  
el tiempo, quiero acabar  
de contarte lo que ayer  
comencé a darte a entender.

SALECVuelve, amigo, a comenzar.

ROBERTO «Aquel mancebo que dije 70  
vengo a buscar: que le quiero  
más que al alma por quien vivo,  
más que a los ojos que tengo.  
Desde su pequeña edad,  
fui su ayo y su maestro, 75  
y del templo de la fama  
le enseñé el camino estrecho;  
encaminéle los pasos  
por el angosto sendero  
de la virtud; tuve a raya 80  
sus juveniles deseos;  
pero no fueron bastantes  
mis bien mirados consejos,  
mis persecuciones cristianas,  
del bien y mal mil ejemplos, 85  
para que, en mitad del curso  
de su más florido tiempo,  
amor no le saltease,  
monfí de los años tiernos.  
Enamoróse de Clara, 90  
la hija de aquel Lamberto  
que tú en Praga conociste,

teutónico caballero.  
Sus padres y su hermosura  
nombre de Clara la dieron; 95  
pero quizá sus desdichas  
en escuridad la han puesto.  
Demandóla por esposa,  
y no salió con su intento;  
no porque no fuese igual 100  
y acertado el casamiento,  
sino porque las desgracias  
traen su corriente de lejos,  
y no hay diligencia humana  
que prevenga su remedio. 105  
Finalmente, él la sacó:  
que voluntades que han puesto  
la mira en cumplir su gusto,  
pierden respetos y miedos.  
Solos y a pie, en una noche 110  
de las frías del invierno,  
iban los pobres amantes,  
sin saber adónde, huyendo;  
y, al tiempo que ya yo había  
echado a Lamberto menos 115  
(que éste es el nombre del triste  
que he dicho que a buscar vengo),  
con aliento desmayado,  
de un frío sudor cubierto  
el rostro, y todo turbado, 120  
ante mis ojos le veo.  
Arrojóseme a los pies,  
la color como de un muerto,  
y, con voz interrumpida  
de sollozos, dijo: "Muero, 125  
padre y señor, que estos nombres  
a tus obras se los debo.  
A Clara llevan cautiva  
los turcos de Rocaferro.  
Yo, cobarde; yo, mezquino 130  
y un traidor, que no lo niego,

hela dejado en sus manos,  
por tener los pies ligeros.  
Esta noche la llevaba  
no sé adónde, aunque sé cierto 135  
que, si fortuna quisiera,  
fuéramos los dos al cielo".  
A la nueva triste y nueva,  
en un confuso silencio  
quedé, sin osar decirle: 140  
"Hijo mío, ¿cómo es esto?"  
De aquesta perplejidad  
me sacó el marcial estruendo  
del rebato a que tocaron  
las campanas en el pueblo. 145  
Púseme luego a caballo,  
salió conmigo Lamberto  
en otro, y salió una tropa  
de caballos herreruelos.  
Con la escuridad, perdimos 150  
el rastro de los que hicieron  
el robo de Clara, y otros  
que con el día se vieron.  
Temerosos de celada,  
no nos apartamos lejos 155  
del lugar, al cual volvimos  
cansados y sin Lamberto.»

SALECPues, ¿cómo? ¿Quedóse aposta?

ROBERTO«Aposta, a lo que sospecho,  
porque nunca ha parecido 160  
desde entonces, vivo o muerto.  
Su padre ofreció por Clara  
gran cantidad de dinero,  
pero no le fue posible  
cobrarla por ningún precio. 165  
Díjose por cosa cierta

que el turco que fue su dueño  
la presentó al Gran Señor  
por ser hermosa en extremo.»  
Por saber si esto es verdad, 170  
y por saber de Lamberto,  
he venido como has visto  
aquí en hábito de griego.  
Sé hablar la lengua de modo  
que pasar por griego entiendo. 175

SALECPuesto que nunca la sepas,  
no tienes de qué haber miedo:  
aquí todo es confusión,  
y todos nos entendemos  
con una lengua mezclada 180  
que ignoramos y sabemos.  
De mí no te escaparás,  
pues cuando te vi, al momento  
te conocí.

ROBERTO¡Gran memoria!

SALECSiempre la tuve en extremo. 185

ROBERTOPues, ¿cómo te has olvidado  
de quién eres?

SALECNo hablemos  
en eso agora: otro día  
de mis cosas trataremos;  
que, si va a decir verdad, 190  
yo ninguna cosa creo.

ROBERTOFino ateísta te muestras.

SALECYo no sé lo que me muestro;  
sólo sé que he de mostrarte,  
con obras al descubierto, 195  
que soy tu amigo, a la traza  
como lo fui en algún tiempo;  
y, para saber de Clara,  
un eunuco del gobierno  
del serrallo del Gran Turco 200  
podrá hacerme satisfecho,  
que es mi amigo. Y, entre tanto,  
puedes mirar por Lamberto:  
quizá, como tuvo el alma,  
también tendrá preso el cuerpo. 205

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Salen MAMÍ y RUSTÁN, eunucos.)*

MAMÍ Ten, Rustán, la lengua muda,  
y conmigo no autorices  
tu fee, de verdad desnuda,  
pues mientes en cuanto dices,  
y eres cristiano, sin duda: 210  
    que el tener así encerrada  
tanto tiempo y tan guardada  
a la cautiva española,  
es señal bastante y sola  
que tu intención es dañada. 215  
    Has quitado al Gran Señor  
de gozar la hermosura  
que tiene el mundo mayor,  
siendo mal darle madura  
fruta, que verde es mejor. 220  
    Seis años ha que la celas  
y la encubres con cautelas

que ya no pueden durar,  
y agora por desvelar  
esta verdad te desvelas. 225

Pero, ¡espera, perro, aguarda,  
y verás de qué manera  
la fe al Gran Señor se guarda!

RUSTÁN ¡Mamí amigo, espera, espera!

MAMÍ llega el castigo, aunque tarda; 230  
y el que sabe una traición,  
y se está sin descubrilla  
algún tiempo, da ocasión  
de pensar si en consentilla  
tuvo parte la intención. 235

La tuya he sabido hoy,  
y así, al Gran Señor me voy  
a contarle tu maldad.

*(Éntrese MAMÍ.)*

RUSTÁN No hay negalle esta verdad;  
por empalado me doy. 240

*(Sale DOÑA CATALINA DE OVIEDO, GRAN SULTANA, vestida a la turquesca.)*

SULTANA Rustán, ¿qué hay?

RUSTÁN Mi señora,  
de nuestra temprana muerte  
es ya llegada la hora:  
que así el alma me lo advierte,

pues en mi costancia llora; 245  
que, aunque parezco mujer,  
nunca suelo yo verter  
lágrimas que den señal  
de grande bien o gran mal,  
como suele acontecer. 250

Mamí, señora, ha notado,  
con astucia y con maldad,  
el tiempo que te he guardado,  
y ha juzgado mi lealtad  
por traición y por pecado. 255

Al Gran Señor va derecho  
a contar por malo el hecho  
que yo he tenido por bueno,  
de malicia y rabia lleno  
el siempre maligno pecho. 260

SULTANA ¿Qué hemos de hacer?

RUSTÁN Esperar  
la muerte con la entereza  
que se puede imaginar,  
aunque sé que a tu belleza  
sultán ha de respetar. 265

No te matará sultán;  
quien muera será Rustán,  
como deste caso autor.

SULTANA ¿Es crüel el Gran Señor?

RUSTÁN Nombre de blando le dan; 270  
pero, en efecto, es tirano.

SULTANA Con todo, confío en Dios,

que su poderosa mano  
ha de librar a los dos  
deste temor, que no es vano; 275

y si estuvieren cerrados  
los cielos por mis pecados,  
por no oír mi petición,  
dispondré mi corazón  
a casos más desastrados. 280

No triunfará el inhumano  
del alma; del cuerpo, sí,  
caduco, frágil y vano.

RUSTÁN Este suceso temí  
de mi proceder cristiano. 285

Mas no estoy arrepentido;  
antes, estoy prevenido  
de paciencia y sufrimiento  
para cualquiera tormento.

SULTANA Con mi intención has venido. 290

Dispuesta estoy a tener  
por regalo cualquier pena  
que me pueda suceder.

RUSTÁN Nunca a muerte se condena  
tan gallardo parecer. 295

Hallarás en tu hermosura,  
no pena, sino ventura;  
yo, por el contrario extremo,  
hallaré, como lo temo,  
en el fuego sepultura. 300

SULTANA Bien podrá ofrecerme el mundo  
cuantos tesoros encierra  
la tierra y el mar profundo;



podrá bien hacerme guerra  
el contrario sin segundo 305  
con una y otra legión  
de su infernal escuadrón;  
pero no podrán, Dios mío,  
como yo de vos confío,  
mudar mi buena intención. 310

En mi tierna edad perdí,  
Dios mío, la libertad,  
que aun apenas conocí;  
trújome aquí la beldad,  
Señor, que pusiste en mí; 315  
si ella ha de ser instrumento  
de perderme, yo consiento,  
petición cristiana y cuerda,  
que mi belleza se pierda  
por milagro en un momento; 320  
esta rosada color  
que tengo, según se muestra  
en mi espejo adulator,  
marchítala con tu diestra;  
vuélveme fea, Señor; 325  
que no es bien que lleve palma  
de la hermosura del alma  
la del cuerpo.

RUSTÁNDices bien.  
Mas no es bien que aquí se estén  
nuestros sentidos en calma, 330  
sin que demos traza o medio  
de buscar a nuestra culpa  
o ya disculpa, o remedio.

SULTANADel remedio a la disculpa  
hay grandes montes en medio. 335  
Vámonos a apercebir,  
amigo, para morir

cristianos.

RUSTÁNRemedio es ése  
del más subido interesse  
que al Cielo puedes pedir. 340

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Salen MAMÍ, el eunuco, y el GRAN TURCO.)*

MAMÍ Morato Arráez, Gran Señor,  
te la presentó, y es ella  
la primera y la mejor  
que del título de bella  
puede llevarse el honor. 345

De tus ojos escondido  
este gran tesoro ha sido  
por industria de Rustán  
seis años, y a siete van,  
según la cuenta he tenido. 350

TURCO ¿Y del modo que has contado  
es hermosa?

MAMÍEs tan hermosa  
como en el jardín cerrado  
la entreabierta y fresca rosa  
a quien el sol no ha tocado; 355

o como el alba serena,  
de aljófar y perlas llena,  
al salir del claro Oriente;  
o como sol al Poniente,  
con los reflejos que ordena. 360

Robó la naturaleza

lo mejor de cada cosa  
para formar esta pieza,  
y así, la sacó hermosa  
sobre la humana belleza. 365

Quitó al cielo dos estrellas,  
que puso en las luces bellas  
de sus bellísimos ojos,  
con que de amor los despojos  
se aumentan, pues vive en ellas. 370

El todo y sus partes son  
correspondientes de modo,  
que me muestra la razón  
que en las partes y en el todo  
asiste la perfección. 375

Y con esto se conforma  
el color, que hace la forma  
hermosa en un grado inmenso.

TURCOEste loco, a lo que pienso,  
de alguna diosa me informa. 380

MAMÍ A su belleza, que es tanta  
que pasa al imaginar,  
su discreción se adelanta.

TURCOTú me la harás adorar  
por cosa divina y santa. 385

MAMÍ Tal jamás la ha visto el sol,  
ni otra fundió en su crisol  
el cielo que la compuso;  
y, sobre todo, le puso  
el desenfado español. 390

Digo, señor, que es divina  
la beldad desta cautiva,  
en el mundo peregrina.

TURCO De verla el deseo se aviva.  
¿Y llámase?

MAMÍ Catalina, 395  
y es de Oviedo el sobrenombre.

TURCO ¿Cómo no ha mudado el nombre,  
siendo ya turca?

MAMÍ No sé;  
como no ha mudado fe,  
no apetece otro renombre. 400

TURCO ¿Luego, es cristiana?

MAMÍ Yo hallo  
por mi cuenta que lo es.

TURCO ¿Cristiana, y en mi serrallo?

MAMÍ Más deben de estar de tres;  
mas ¿quién podrá averiguallo? 405  
Si otra cosa yo supiera,  
como aquésta, la dijera,  
sin encubrir un momento  
dicho o hecho o pensamiento  
que contra ti se ofreciera. 410

TURCO Descuido es vuestro y maldad.

MAMÍYo sé decir que te adoro  
y sirvo con la lealtad  
y con el justo decoro  
que debo a tu majestad. 415

TURCO Al serrallo iré esta tarde  
a ver si yela o si arde  
la belleza única y sola  
de tu alabada española.

MAMÍMahoma, señor, te guarde. 420

*(Éntranse estos dos.)*

*(Salen MADRIGAL, cautivo, y ANDRÉS, en hábito de griego.)*

MADRIGAL ¡Vive Roque, canalla barretina,  
que no habéis de gozar de la cazuela,  
llena de boronía y caldo prieto!

ANDREA¿Con quién las has, cristiano?

MADRIGALNo, con naide.  
¿No escucháis la bolina y la algazara 425  
que suena dentro desta casa?

*(Dice dentro un JUDÍO:)*

JUDÍO¡Ah perro!  
¡El Dío te maldiga y te confunda!  
¡Jamás la libertad amada alcances!

ANDREADi: ¿por qué te maldicen estos tristes?

MADRIGALEntré sin que me viesen en su casa, 430  
y en una gran cazuela que tenían  
de un guisado que llaman boronía,  
les eché de tocino un gran pedazo.

ANDREAPues ¿quién te lo dio a ti?

MADRIGALCiertos jenízaros  
mataron en el monte el otro día 435  
un puerco jabalí, que le vendieron  
a los cristianos de Mamud Arráez,  
de los cuales compré de la papada  
lo que está en la cazuela sepultado  
para dar sepultura a estos malditos, 440  
con quien tengo rencor y mal talante;  
a quien el diablo pape, engulla y sorba.

*(Pónese un JUDÍO a la ventana.)*

JUDÍO¡Mueras de hambre, bárbaro insolente;  
el cotidiano pan te niegue el Dío;  
andes de puerta en puerta mendigando; 445  
échente de la tierra como a gafo,  
agraz de nuestros ojos, espantajo,  
de nuestra sinagoga asombro y miedo,  
de nuestras criaturas enemigo  
el mayor que tenemos en el mundo! 450

MADRIGAL¡Agáchate, judío!

JUDÍO; Ay, sin ventura,  
que entrambas sienes me ha quebrado! ¡Ay triste!

ANDREA Sí, que no le tiraste.

MADRIGAL; Ni por pienso!

ANDREA Pues ¿de qué se lamenta el hideputa?

*(Dice dentro otro JUDÍO:)*

JUDÍO Quítate, Zabulón, de la ventana, 455  
que ese perro español es un demonio,  
y te hará pedazos la cabeza  
con sólo que te escupa y que te acierte.  
¡Guayas, y qué comida que tenemos!  
¡Guayas, y qué cazuela que se pierde! 460

MADRIGAL; Los plantos de Ramá volvéis al mundo,  
canalla miserable? ¿Otra vez vuelves,  
perro?

JUDÍO; Qué!, ¿aún no te has ido? ¿Por ventura  
quieres atosigarnos el aliento?

MADRIGAL; Recógeme este prisco!

*(Dicen dentro:)*

No aprovecha 465  
decirte, Zabulón, que no te asomes?  
Déjale ya en mal hora; éntrate, hijo.

ANDREA; Oh gente aniquilada! ¡Oh infame, oh sucia  
raza, y a qué miseria os ha traído  
vuestro vano esperar, vuestra locura 470  
y vuestra incomparable pertinacia,  
a quien llamáis firmeza y fee inmutable  
contra toda verdad y buen discurso!  
Ya parece que callan; ya en silencio  
pasan su burla y hambre los mezquinos. 475  
Español, ¿conocéisme?

MADRIGAL Juraría  
que en mi vida os he visto.

ANDREA Soy Andrea,  
la espía.

MADRIGAL ¿Vos, Andrea?

ANDREA Sí, sin duda.

MADRIGAL ¿El que llevó a Castillo y Palomares,  
mis camaradas?

ANDREA Y el que llevó a Meléndez, 480  
a Arguijo y Santisteban, todos juntos,  
y en Nápoles los dejó a sus anchuras,  
de la agradable libertad gozando.



MADRIGAL ¿Cómo me conocistes?

ANDREALa memoria  
tenéis dada a adobar, a lo que entiendo, 485  
o reducida a voluntad no buena.  
¿No os acordáis que os vi y hablé la noche  
que recogí a los cinco, y vos quisistes  
quedaros por no más de vuestro gusto,  
poniendo por excusa que os tenía 490  
amor rendida el alma, y que una alárabe,  
con nuevo cautiverio y nuevas leyes,  
os la tenía encadenada y presa?

MADRIGALVerdad; y aun todavía tengo el yugo  
al cuello, todavía estoy cautivo, 495  
todavía la fuerza poderosa  
de amor tiene sujeto a mi albedrío.

ANDREALuego, ¿en balde será tratar yo agora  
de que os vengáis conmigo?

MADRIGALEn balde, cierto.

ANDREA¿Desdichado de vos!

MADRIGALQuizá dichoso. 500

ANDREA¿Cómo puede ser esto?

MADRIGAL Son las leyes  
del gusto poderosas sobremodo.

ANDREA Una resolución gallarda puede  
romperlas.

MADRIGAL Yo lo creo; mas no es tiempo  
de ponerme a los brazos con sus fuerzas. 505

ANDREA ¿No sois vos español?

MADRIGAL ¿Por qué? ¿Por esto?  
Pues, por las once mil de malla juro,  
y por el alto, dulce, omnipotente  
deseo que se encierra bajo el hopo  
de cuatro acomodados porcionistas, 510  
que he de romper por montes de diamantes  
y por dificultades indecibles,  
y he de llevar mi libertad en peso  
sobre los propios hombros de mi gusto,  
y entrar triunfando en Nápoles la bella 515  
con dos o tres galeras levantadas  
por mi industria y valor, y Dios delante,  
y dando a la Anunciada los dos bucos,  
quedaré con el uno rico y próspero;  
y no ponerme ahora a andar por trena, 520  
cargado de temor y de miseria.

ANDREA ¡Español sois, sin duda!

MADRIGAL Y soylo, y soylo,  
lo he sido y lo seré mientras que viva,  
y aun después de ser muerto ochenta siglos.

ANDREA¿Habr  quien quiera libertad huyendo? 525

MADRIGALCuatro bravos soldados os esperan,  
y son gente de pluma y bien nacidos.

ANDREA¿Son los que dijo Arguijo?

MADRIGALAquellos mismos.

ANDREAYo los tengo escondidos y a recaudo.

MADRIGAL¿Qu  turba es  sta? ¿Qu  ruido es  ste? 530

ANDREAEs el embajador de los persianos,  
que viene a tratar paces con el Turco.  
Haceos a aquesta parte mientras pasa.

*(Entra un embajador, vestido como los que andan aqu , y acomp  anle  
jen zaros; va como TURCO.)*

MADRIGAL Bizarro va y gallardo por extremo!

ANDREALos m s de los persianos son gallardos, 535  
y muy grandes de cuerpo, y grandes hombres  
de a caballo.

MADRIGALY son, seg n se dice,  
los caballos el nervio de sus fuerzas.

¡Plega a Dios que las paces no se hagan!  
¿Queréis venir, Andrea?

ANDREA Guía adonde 540  
fuere más de tu gusto.

MADRIGALA Al baño guío  
del Uchalí.

ANDREA Al de Morato guía,  
que he de juntarme allí con otra espía.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Entra el GRAN TURCO, RUSTÁN y MAMÍ.)*

TURCO Flaca disculpa me das  
de la traición que me has hecho, 545  
mayor que se vio jamás.

RUSTÁN Si bien estás en el hecho,  
señor, no me culparás.

Cuando vino a mi poder,  
no vino de parecer 550  
que pudiese darte gusto,  
y fue el reservarla justo  
a más tomo y mejor ser;  
muchos años, Gran Señor,  
profundas melancolías 555  
la tuvieron sin color.

TURCO¿Quién la curó?

RUSTÁNSedequías,  
el judío, tu doctor.

TURCO Testigos muertos presentas  
en tu causa; a fe que intentas 560  
escaparte por buen modo.

RUSTÁNYo digo verdad en todo.

TURCORazón será que no mientas.

RUSTÁN No ha tres días que el sereno  
cielo de su rostro hermoso 565  
mostró de hermosura lleno;  
no ha tres días que un ansioso  
dolor salió de su seno.

En efecto: no ha tres días  
que de sus melancolías 570  
está libre esta española,  
que es en la belleza sola.

TURCOTú mientes o desvarías.

RUSTÁN Ni miento ni desvarío.  
Puedes hacer la experiencia 575  
cuando gustes, señor mío.  
Haz que venga a tu presencia:  
verás su donaire y brío;  
verás andar en el suelo,

con pies humanos, al cielo, 580  
cifrado en su gentileza.

TURCO De un temor otro se empieza,  
de un recelo, otro recelo.

Mucho temo, mucho espero,  
mucho puede la alabanza 585  
en lengua de lisonjero;  
mas la lisonja no alcanza  
parte aquí. Rustán, yo quiero  
ver esa cautiva luego;  
¡ve por ella, y por el dios ciego, 590  
que me tiene asombrado,  
que a no ser cual la has pintado,  
que te he de entregar al fuego!

*(Éntrese RUSTÁN.)*

MAMÍ Si no está en más la ventura  
de Rustán, que en ser hermosa 595  
la cautiva, y de hermosura  
rara, su suerte es dichosa;  
libre está de desventura.

Desde ahora muy bien puedes  
hacerle, señor, mercedes, 600  
porque verás, de aquí a poco,  
aquí todo el cielo.

TURCO Loco,  
a todo hipérbole excedes.

Deja, que es justo, a los ojos  
algo que puedan hallar 605  
en tan divinos despojos.

MAMÍ¿Qué vista podrá mirar  
de Apolo los rayos rojos  
que no quede deslumbrada?

TURCOTanta alabanza me enfada. 610

MAMÍRemítome a la experiencia  
que has de hacer con la presencia  
désta, en mi lengua, agraviada.

*(Entran RUSTÁN y la SULTANA.)*

RUSTÁN Háblale mansa y süave,  
que importa, señora mía, 615  
porque con todos no acabe.

SULTANADaré de la lengua mía  
al santo cielo la llave;  
arrojaréme a sus pies;  
diré que su esclava es 620  
la que tiene a gran ventura  
besárselos.

RUSTÁNEs cordura  
que en ese artificio des.

SULTANA Las rodillas en la tierra  
y mis ojos en tus ojos, 625  
te doy, señor, los despojos  
que mi humilde ser encierra;  
y si es soberbia el mirarte,  
ya los abajo e inclino

por ir por aquel camino 630  
que suele más agradarte.

TURCO ¡Gente indiscreta, ignorante,  
locos, sin duda, de atar,  
a quien no se puede hallar,  
en ser simples, semejante; 635  
robadores de la fama  
debida a tan gran sujeto;  
mentirosos, en efecto,  
que es la traición que os infama!  
¡Por cierto que bien se emplea 640  
cualquier castigo en vosotros!

MAMÍ ¡Desdichados de nosotros  
si le ha parecido fea!

TURCO ¡Cuán a lo humano hablasteis  
de una hermosura divina, 645  
y esta beldad peregrina  
cuán vulgarmente pintastes!  
¿No fuera mejor ponella  
al par de Alá en sus asientos,  
hollando los elementos 650  
y una y otra clara estrella,  
dando leyes desde allá,  
que con reverencia y celo  
guardaremos los del suelo,  
como Mahoma las da? 655

MAMÍ ¿No te dije que era rosa  
en el huerto a medio abrir?  
¿Qué más pudiera decir  
la lengua más ingeniosa?  
¿No te la pinté discreta 660



cual nunca se vio jamás?  
¿Pudiera decirte más  
un mentiroso poeta?

RUSTÁN Cielo te la hice yo,  
con pies humanos, señor. 665

TURCOA hacerla su Hacedor  
acertaras.

RUSTÁN Eso no:  
que esos grandes atributos  
cuadran solamente a Dios.

TURCO En su alabanza los dos 670  
anduvistes resolutos  
y cortos en demasía,  
por lo cual, sin replicar,  
os he de hacer empalar  
antes que pase este día. 675

Mayor pena merecías,  
traidor Rustán, por ser cierto  
que me has tenido encubierto  
tan gran tesoro tres días.

Tres días has detenido 680  
el curso de mi ventura;  
tres días en mal segura  
vida y penosa he vivido;  
tres días me has defraudado  
del mayor bien que se encierra 685  
en el cerco de la tierra  
y en cuanto vee el sol dorado.

Morirás, sin duda alguna,  
hoy, en este mismo día:  
que, a do comienza la mía, 690

ha de acabar tu fortuna.

SULTANA Si ha hallado esta cautiva  
alguna gracia ante ti,  
vivan Rustán y Mamí.

TURCORustán muera; Mamí viva. 695

Pero maldigo la lengua  
que tal cosa pronunció;  
vos pedís; no otorgo yo.  
Recompensaré esta mengua  
con haceros juramento, 700  
por mi valor todo junto,  
de no discrepar un punto  
de hacer vuestro mandamiento.

No sólo viva Rustán;  
pero, si vos lo queréis, 705  
los cautivos soltaréis,  
que en las mazmorras están;  
porque a vuestra voluntad  
tan sujeta está la mía,  
como está a la luz del día 710  
sujeta la oscuridad.

SULTANA No tengo capacidad  
para tanto bien, señor.

TURCOSabe igualar el amor  
el vos y la majestad. 715

De los reinos que poseo,  
que casi infinitos son,  
toda su jurisdicción  
rendida a la tuya veo;  
ya mis grandes señoríos, 720  
que grande señor me han hecho,

por justicia y por derecho,  
son ya tuyos más que míos;  
y, en pensar no te demandes  
esto soy, aquello fui; 725  
que, pues me mandas a mí,  
no es mucho que al mundo mandes.

Que seas turca o seas cristiana,  
a mí no me importa cosa;  
esta belleza es mi esposa, 730  
y es de hoy más la Gran Sultana.

SULTANA Cristiana soy, y de suerte,  
que de la fe que profeso  
no me ha de mudar exceso  
de promesas ni aun de muerte. 735

Y mira que no es cordura  
que entre los tuyos se hable  
de un caso que, por notable,  
se ha de juzgar por locura.

¿Dónde, señor, se habrá visto 740  
que asistan dos en un lecho,  
que el uno tenga en el pecho  
a Mahoma, el otro a Cristo?

Mal tus deseos se miden  
con tu supremo valor, 745  
pues no junta bien Amor  
dos que las leyes dividen.

Allá te avén con tu alteza,  
con tus ritos y tu secta,  
que no es bien que se entremeta 750  
con mi ley y mi bajeza.

TURCO En estos discursos entro,  
pues Amor me da licencia;  
yo soy tu circunferencia,  
y tú, señora, mi centro; 755  
de mí a ti han de ser iguales

las cosas que se trataren,  
sin que en otro punto paren  
que las haga desiguales.

La majestad y el Amor 760  
nunca bien se convinieron,  
y en la igualdad le pusieron,  
los que hablaron del mejor.

Deste modo se adereza  
lo que tú ves despüés: 765  
que, humillándome a tus pies,  
te levanto a mi cabeza.  
Iguales estamos ya.

SULTANA Levanta, señor, levanta,  
que tanta humildad espanta. 770

MAMÍ Rindióse; vencido está.

SULTANA Una merced te suplico,  
y me la has de conceder.

TURCOA cuanto quieras querer  
obedezco y no replico. 775

Suelta, condena, rescata,  
absuelve, quita, haz mercedes,  
que esto y más, señora, puedes:  
que Amor tu imperio dilata.

Pídeme los imposibles 780  
que te ofreciere el deseo,  
que, en fe de ser tuyo, creo  
que los he de hacer posibles.

No vengas a contentarte  
con pocas cosas, mi amor; 785  
que haré, siendo pecador,  
milagros por agradarte.

SULTANA Sólo te pido tres días,  
Gran Señor, para pensar...

TURCO Tres días me han de acabar. 790

SULTANA...en no sé qué dudas mías,  
que escrupulosa me han hecho,  
y, éstos cumplidos, vendrás,  
y claramente verás  
lo que tienes en mi pecho. 795

TURCO Soy contento. Queda en paz,  
guerra de mi pensamiento,  
de mis placeres aumento,  
de mis angustias solaz.

Vosotros, atribulados 800  
y alegres en un instante,  
llevaréis de aquí adelante  
vuestros gajes seisdoblados.

Entra, Rustán; da las nuevas  
a esas cautivas todas 805  
de mis esperadas bodas.

MAMÍ;Gentil recado les llevas!

TURCO Y como a cosa divina,  
y esto también les dirás,  
sirvan y adoren de hoy más 810  
a mi hermosa Catalina.

*(Éntranse el TURCO, MAMÍ y RUSTÁN, y queda en el teatro sola la SULTANA.)*

SULTANA    ¡A ti me vuelvo, Gran Señor, que alzaste,  
a costa de tu sangre y de tu vida,  
la mísera de Adán primer caída,  
y, adonde él nos perdió, Tú nos cobraste.    815

    A Ti, Pastor bendito, que buscaste  
de las cien ovejuelas la perdida,  
y, hallándola del lobo perseguida,  
sobre tus hombros santos te la echaste;  
    a Ti me vuelvo en mi aflicción amarga,    820  
y a Ti toca, Señor, el darme ayuda:  
que soy cordera de tu aprisco ausente,  
    y temo que, a carrera corta o larga,  
cuando a mi daño tu favor no acuda,  
me ha de alcanzar esta infernal serpiente!    825

FIN DE LA PRIMERA JORNADA

## Jornada segunda

*Traen dos moros atado a MADRIGAL, las manos atrás, y sale con ellos el GRAN CADÍ, que es el juez obispo de los turcos.*

MORO 1 Como te habemos contado,  
por aviso que tuvimos,  
en fragante le cogimos  
cometiendo el gran pecado.

La alárabe queda presa, 5  
y, como se vee con culpa  
que carece de disculpa,  
toda su maldad confiesa.

CADÍ Dad con ellos en la mar,  
de pies y manos atados, 10  
y de peso acomodados,  
que no los dejen nadar;  
pero si moro se vuelve,  
casaldos, y libres queden.

MADRIGAL Hermanos, atarme pueden. 15

CADÍ ¿En qué el perro se resuelve:  
en casarse, o en morir?

MADRIGAL Todo es muerte, y todo es pena;  
ninguna cosa hallo buena  
en casarme ni en vivir. 20  
Como la ley no dejara  
en la cual pienso salvarme,

la vida, con el casarme,  
aunque es muerte, dilatara;  
    pero casarme y ser moro 25  
son dos muertes, de tal suerte,  
que atado corro a la muerte  
y suelto mi ley adoro.  
    Mas yo sé que desta vez  
no he de morir, señor bueno. 30

CADÍ¿Cómo, si yo te condeno,  
y soy supremo jüez?  
    De las sentencias que doy  
no hay apelación alguna.

MADRIGALCon todo, de mi fortuna, 35  
aunque mala, alegre estoy.  
    La piedra tendré ya puesta  
al cuello, y has de pensar  
que no me pienso anegar;  
y desto haré buena puesta. 40  
    Y, porque no estés suspenso,  
haz salir estos dos fuera:  
diréte de la manera  
que ha de ser, según yo pienso.

CADÍ Idos, y dejalde atado, 45  
que quiero ver de la suerte  
cómo escapa de la muerte,  
a quien está condenado.

*(Vanse los dos moros.)*

MADRIGAL Si de bien tendrás memoria,  
porque no es posible menos, 50



de aquel sabio cuyo nombre  
fue Apolonio Tianeó,  
el cual, según que lo sabes,  
o fuese favor del cielo,  
o fuese ciencia adquirida 55  
con el trabajo y el tiempo,  
supo entender de las aves  
el canto tan por extremo,  
que en oyéndolas decía:  
«Esto dicen». Y esto es cierto. 60  
Ora cantase el canario,  
ora trinase el jilguero,  
ora gimiese la tórtola,  
ora graznasen los cuervos,  
desde el pardal malicioso 65  
hasta el águila de imperio,  
de sus cantos entendía  
los escondidos secretos.  
Éste fue, según es fama,  
abuelo de mis abuelos, 70  
a quien dejó de su gracia  
por únicos herederos.  
Uno la supo de todos  
los que en aquel tiempo fueron,  
y no la hereda más de uno 75  
de sus más cercanos deudos.  
De deudo a deudo ha venido,  
con el valor de los tiempos,  
a encerrarse esta ventura  
en mi desdichado pecho. 80  
A esta mañana, que iba  
al pecado, porque vengo  
a tener cercada el alma  
de esperanzas y de miedos,  
oí en casa de un judío 85  
a un ruiñón pequeñuelo,  
que, con divina armonía,  
aquesto estaba diciendo:  
«¿Adónde vas, miserable?

Tuerce el paso, y hurta el cuerpo 90  
a la ocasión que te llama  
y lleva a tu fin postrero.  
Cogeránte en el garlito,  
ya cumplido tu deseo;  
morirás, sin duda alguna, 95  
si te falta este remedio.  
Dile al jüez de tu causa  
que han decretado los cielos  
que muera de aquí a seis días  
y baje al estigio reino; 100  
pero que si hiciere emienda  
de tres grandes desafueros  
que a dos moros y una viuda  
no ha muchos años que ha hecho;  
y si hiciere la zalá, 105  
lavando el cuerpo primero  
con tal agua (y dijo el agua,  
que yo decirte no quiero),  
tendrá salud en el alma,  
tendrá salud en el cuerpo, 110  
y será del Gran Señor  
favorecido en extremo».  
Con esta gracia admirable,  
otra más subida tengo:  
que hago hablar a las bestias 115  
dentro de muy poco tiempo.  
Y aquel valiente elefante  
del Gran Señor, yo me ofrezco  
de hacerle hablar en diez años  
distintamente turquesco; 120  
y cuando desto faltare,  
que me empalen, que en el fuego  
me abrasen, que desmenucen  
brizna a brizna estos mis miembros.

CADÍEl agua me has de decir, 125

que importa.

MADRIGAL Su tiempo espero,  
porque ha de ser destilada  
de ciertas yerbas y yezgos.  
Tú no la conocerás;  
yo sí, y al cielo sereno 130  
se han de coger en tres noches.

*(Desátale.)*

CADÍ En tu libertad te vuelvo.  
Pero una cosa me tiene  
confuso, amigo, y perplejo:  
que no sé cuál viuda sea, 135  
ni cuáles moros sean éstos  
a quien he de hacer la enmienda:  
que veo que son sin cuento  
los moros de mí ofendidos,  
y viudas pasan de ciento. 140

MADRIGAL Iré a oír al ruiseñor  
otra vez, y yo sé cierto  
que él me dirá en su cántico  
quién son los que no sabemos.

CADÍA estos moros les diré 145  
la causa por que te suelto,  
que será que al elefante  
has de hacer hablar turquesco.  
Pero dime: ¿acaso sabes  
hablar turco?

MADRIGAL ¡Ni por pienso! 150

CADÍPues ¿cómo de lo que ignoras  
quieres mostrarte maestro?

MADRIGALAprenderé cada día  
lo que mostrarle pretendo,  
pues habrá tiempo en diez años 155  
de aprender el turco y griego.

CADÍDices verdad. Mira, amigo,  
que mi vida te encomiendo:  
que será desto la paga  
tu libertad, por lo menos. 160

MADRIGAL¡Penitencia, gran cadí;  
penitencia y buen deseo  
de no hacer de aquí adelante  
tantos tuertos a derechos!

CADÍNo se te olviden las yerbas, 165  
que es la importancia del hecho  
memorable que me has dicho,  
y sin duda alguna creo:  
que ya sé que fue en el mundo  
Apolonio Tiano, 170  
que entendía de las aves  
el canto, y también entiendo  
que hay arte que hace hablar  
a los mudos.

MADRIGAL¡Bueno es eso!  
Al elefante os aguardo, 175  
y las yerbas os espero.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Parece el GRAN TURCO detrás de unas cortinas de tafetán verde; salen cuatro bajaes ancianos; siéntanse sobre alfombras y almohadas; entra el EMBAJADOR DE PERSIA, y al entrar le echan encima una ropa de brocado; llévanle dos turcos de brazo, habiéndole mirado primero si trae armas encubiertas; llévanle a asentar en una almohada de terciopelo; descúbrese la cortina; parece el GRAN TURCO. (Mientras esto se hace pueden sonar chirimías). Sentados todos, dice el EMBAJADOR:)*

EMBAJADOR    Prospera Alá tu poderoso Estado,  
señor universal casi del suelo;  
sea por luengos siglos dilatado,  
por suerte amiga y por querer del cielo.    180

La embajada de aquél que me ha enviado,  
con preámbulos cortos, como suelo,  
diré, si es que me das de hablar licencia;  
que sin ella enmudezco en tu presencia.

BAJÁ 1    Di con la brevedad que has prometido,    185  
que si es con la que sueles, será parte  
a darte el Gran Señor atento oído,  
puesto que le forzamos a escucharte.  
Por muchas persuasiones ha venido  
a darte audiencia y a respuesta darte;    190  
que pocas veces oye al enemigo.  
Di, pues; que ya eres largo.

EMBAJADORPues ya digo.

Dice el Soldán, señor, que, si tú gustas  
de paz, que él te la pide, y que se haga  
con leyes tan honestas y tan justas,    195

que el tiempo o el rencor no las deshaga;  
si a la suya, que es buena, tu alma ajustas,  
dar el cielo a los dos será la paga.

BAJÁ 2 No aconsejes; propón, di tu embajada.

EMBAJADOR Toda en pedir la paz está cifrada. 200

BAJÁ 1 Ese cabeza roja, ese maldito,  
que de las ceremonias de Mahoma,  
con depravado y bárbaro apetito,  
unas cosas despide y otras toma,  
bien debe de pensar que el infinito 205  
poder, que al mundo espanta, estrecha y doma,  
del Gran Señor, el cielo tal le tenga,  
que hacer paces infames le convenga.

Su mendiguez sabemos y sus mañas,  
por quien con él de nuevo me enemisto, 210  
viendo que el grande rey de las Españas  
muchos persianos en su Corte ha visto.  
Éstas son de tu dueño las hazañas;  
pedir favor a quien adora en Cristo;  
y como ve que el ayudarle niega, 215  
por paz cobarde en ruego humilde ruega.

EMBAJADOR Aquella majestad que tiene al mundo  
admirado y suspenso; el verdadero  
retrato de Filipo, aquel Segundo,  
que sólo pudo darse a sí tercero; 220  
aquel cuyo valor alto y profundo  
no es posible alabarle como quiero;  
aquel, en fin, que el sol, en su camino,  
mirando va sus reinos de continuo;  
llevado en vuelo de la buena fama 225  
su nombre y su virtud a los oídos

del Soldán, mi señor, así le inflama  
el deseo de verle los sentidos,  
que a mí me insiste, solicita y llama  
y manda que por pasos no entendidos, 230  
por mares y por reinos diferentes,  
vaya a ver al gran rey.

BAJÁ 1¿Esto consientes?

Echadle fuera. Adulador, camina;  
embajador cristiano. Echadle fuera;  
que, de los que profesan su dotrina, 235  
algún buen fruto por jamás se espera.  
El cuerpo dobla; la cabeza inclina.  
Echadle, digo.

BAJÁ 2¿No es mejor que muera?

BAJÁ 1Goce de embajador la preeminencia,  
que es la que no ejecuta esa sentencia. 240

*(Échanle a empujones al EMBAJADOR.)*

No es mucho, Gran Señor, que me desmande  
a alzar la voz, de cólera encendido:  
que no ha sido pequeña, sino grande,  
la desvergüenza deste fementido.  
Vea tu majestad ahora, y mande 245  
la respuesta que más fuere servido  
que se le dé a este can.

TURCOComunicadme

y, cual el caso pide, aconsejadme.

Mirad bien si la paz es conveniente

y honrosa.

BAJÁ 2A lo que yo descubro y veo, 250  
que sosegar las armas del Oriente,  
no te puede pedir más el deseo,  
con tanto que el persiano no alce frente  
contra ti. Triste historia es la que leo;  
que a nosotros la Persia así nos daña, 255  
que es lo mismo que Flandes para España.

Conviene hacer la paz, por las razones  
que en este pergamino van escritas.

TURCOPresto a la paz ociosa te dispones;  
presto el regalo blando solicitas. 260  
Tú, Braín valeroso, ¿no te opones  
a Mustafá? ¿Por dicha, solicitas  
también la paz?

BAJÁ 1La guerra facilito,  
y daré las razones por escrito.

TURCO Veréla y veré lo que contiene, 265  
y de mi parecer os daré parte.

BAJÁ 1Alá, que el mundo entre los dedos tiene,  
te entregue dél la rica y mayor parte.

BAJÁ 2Mahoma así la paz dichosa ordene,  
que se oiga el son del belicoso Marte, 270  
no en Persia, sino en Roma, y tus galeras  
corran del mar de España las riberas.



(Éntranse.)

(Sale la SULTANA y RUSTÁN.)

RUSTÁN Como de su alhaja, puede  
gozar de ti a su contento.

SULTANA La viva fe de mi intento 275  
a toda su fuerza excede:  
resuelta estoy de morir,  
primero que darle gusto.

RUSTÁN Contra intento que es tan justo  
no tengo qué te decir; 280  
pero mira que una fuerza  
tal puede mucho, señora;  
y mira bien que a ser mora  
no te induce ni te fuerza.

SULTANA ¿No es grandísimo pecado 285  
el juntarme a un infiel?

RUSTÁN Si pudieras huir dél,  
te lo hubiera aconsejado;  
mas cuando la fuerza va  
contra razón y derecho, 290  
no está el pecado en el hecho,  
si en la voluntad no está;  
condénanos la intención  
o nos salva en cuanto hacemos.

SULTANA Eso es andar por extremos. 295

RUSTÁN Sí; mas puestos en razón:

que el alma no es bien peligro  
cuando por fuerza de brazos  
echan a su cuerpo lazos  
que rendirán a una tigre. 300

Desta verdad se recibe  
la que no habrá quien la tuerza:  
que peca el que hace la fuerza,  
pero no quien la recibe.

SULTANA Mártir seré si consiento 305  
antes morir que pecar.

RUSTÁN Ser mártir se ha de causar  
por más alto fundamento,  
que es por el perder la vida  
por confesión de la fe. 310

SULTANA Esa ocasión tomaré.

RUSTÁN ¿Quién a ella te convida?

Sultán te quiere cristiana,  
y a fuerza, si no de grado,  
sin darle muerte al ganado 315  
podrá gozar de la lana.

Muchos santos desearon  
ser mártires, y pusieron  
los medios que convinieron  
para serlo, y no bastaron: 320

que al ser mártir se requiere  
virtud sobresingular,  
y es merced particular  
que Dios hace a quien Él quiere.

SULTANA Al cielo le pediré, 325  
ya que no merezco tanto,  
que a mi propósito santo  
de su firmeza le dé;  
haré lo que fuere en mí,  
y en silencio, en mis recelos, 330  
daré voces a los cielos.

RUSTÁN Calla, que viene Mamí.

*(Entra MAMÍ.)*

MAMÍ El Gran Señor viene a verte.

SULTANA ¡Vista para mí mortal!

MAMÍ Hablas, señora, muy mal. 335

SULTANA Siempre hablaré desta suerte;  
y no quieras tú mostrarte  
prudente en aconsejarme.

MAMÍ Sé que vendrás a mandarme,  
y no es bien discontentarte. 340

*(Entra el GRAN TURCO.)*

TURCO ¡Catalina!

SULTANAÉse es mi nombre.

TURCO  
Catalina la Otomana  
te llamarán.

SULTANA  
Soy cristiana,  
y no admito el sobrenombre,  
    porque es el mío de Oviedo, 345  
hidalgo, ilustre y cristiano.

TURCONo es humilde el otomano.

SULTANA  
Esa verdad te concedo:  
    que en altivo y arrogante  
ninguno igualarte puede. 350

TURCO  
Pues el tuyo al mío excede  
y en todo le va adelante,  
    pues que desprecias por él  
al mayor que el suelo tiene.

SULTANA  
Sé yo que en él se contiene 355  
lo que es de estimar en él,  
    que es el darme a conocer  
por cristiana si me nombran.

TURCO  
Tus libertades me asombran,  
que son más que de mujer; 360  
    pero bien puedes tenellas  
con quien solamente puede  
aquello que le concede  
el valor que vive en ellas.

Dél conozco que te estimas 365  
en todo aquello que vales,  
y con arrogancias tales  
me alegras y me lastimas.

Muéstrate más soberana,  
haz que te tenga respeto 370  
el mundo, porque, en efeto,  
has de ser la Gran Sultana.

Y doyte la preeminencia  
desde luego: ya lo eres.

SULTANA¿Dar a una tu esclava quieres 375  
de tu esposa la excelencia?

Míralo bien, porque temo  
que has de arrepentirte presto.

TURCOYa lo he mirado, y en esto  
no hago ningún extremo, 380  
si ya no fuese el de hacer  
que con la sangre otomana  
mezcle la tuya cristiana  
para darle mayor ser.

Si el fruto que de ti espero 385  
llega a colmo, verá el mundo  
que no ha de tener segundo  
el que me dieres primero.

No habrá descubierto el sol,  
en cuanto ciñe y rodea, 390  
no, quien pase, que igual sea  
a un otomano español.

Mira a lo que te dispones,  
que ya mi alma adivina  
que has de parir, Catalina, 395  
hermosísimos leones.

SULTANA    Antes tomara engendrar  
águilas.

TURCOA tu fortuna  
no hay dificultad alguna  
que la pueda contrastar. 400

    En la cumbre de la rueda  
estás, y, aunque variable,  
contigo ha de ser estable,  
estando en tu gloria queda.

    Daréte la posesión 405  
de mi alma aquesta tarde,  
y la de mi cuerpo, que arde  
en llamas de tu afición;  
    afición, de amor interno,  
que, con poderoso brío, 410  
de mi alma y mi albedrío  
tiene el mando y el gobierno.

SULTANA    He de ser cristiana.

TURCOSélo;  
que a tu cuerpo, por agora,  
es el que mi alma adora 415  
como si fuese su cielo.

    ¿Tengo yo a cargo tu alma,  
o soy Dios para inclinalla,  
o ya de hecho llevalla  
donde alcance eterna palma? 420

    Vive tú a tu parecer,  
como no vivas sin mí.

RUSTÁN¿Qué te parece, Mamí?

MAMÍ;Mucho puede una mujer!

SULTANA No me has de quitar, señor, 425  
que con cristianos no trate.

MAMÍÉste es grande disparate,  
y el concederle, mayor.

TURCO Tal te veo y tal me veo,  
que con grave imperio y firme 430  
puedes, Sultana, pedirme  
cuanto te pida el deseo.

De mi voluntad te he dado  
entera jurisdicción;  
tus deseos míos son: 435  
mira si estoy obligado  
a cumplillos.

MAMÍCaso grave,  
y entre turcos jamás visto,  
andar por aquí tu Cristo,  
Rustán.

RUSTÁNÉl mismo lo sabe. 440  
Él suele, Mamí, sacar  
de mucho mal mucho bien.

TURCOTus aranceles me den  
el modo que he de guardar  
para no salir un punto 445  
de tu gusto; que el sabelle  
y el entendelle y hacelle  
estará en mi alma junto.

Saca de aquesta humildad,  
bellísima Catalina, 450  
que se guía y se encamina  
a rendir su voluntad.

No quiero gustos por fuerza  
de gran poder conquistados:  
que nunca son bien logrados 455  
los que se toman por fuerza.

Como a mi esclava, en un punto  
pudiera gozarte agora;  
mas quiero hacerte señora,  
por subir el bien de punto; 460  
y, aunque del cercado ajeno  
es la fruta más sabrosa  
que del propio, ¡extraña cosa!,  
por la que es tan mía peno.

Entre las manos la tengo, 465  
y entre la boca y las manos  
desparece. ¡Oh, miedos vanos,  
y a cuántas bajezas vengo!

Puedo cumplir mi deseo  
y estoy en comedimientos. 470

RUSTÁN Humilla tus pensamientos,  
porque muy airado veo  
al Gran Señor; no fabriques  
tu tristeza en su pesar,  
y a quien ya puedes mandar, 475  
no será bien que supliques.

SULTANA Dio el temor con mi buen celo  
en tierra. ¡Oh pequeña edad!  
¡Con cuánta facilidad  
te rinde cualquier recelo! 480

Gran Señor, veisme aquí; postro  
las rodillas ante ti;  
tu esclava soy.



TURCO;Cómo así?  
Alza, señora, ese rostro,  
y en esos sus soles dos, 485  
que tanto le hermosean,  
harás que mis ojos vean  
el grande poder de Dios,  
o de la naturaleza,  
a quien Alá dio poder 490  
para que pudiese hacer  
milagros en su belleza.

SULTANA Advierte que soy cristiana,  
y que lo he de ser contino.

MAMÍ;Caso extraño y peregrino: 495  
cristiana una Gran Sultana!

TURCO Puedes dar leyes al mundo,  
y guardar la que quisieres:  
no eres mía, tuya eres,  
y a tu valor sin segundo 500  
se le debe adoración,  
no sólo humano respeto;  
y así, de guardar prometo  
las sombras de tu intención.  
Mamí, tráeme, ¡así tú vivas!, 505  
a que den en mi presencia  
a Sultana la obediencia  
del serrallo las cautivas.

*(Éntrase MAMÍ.)*

Reveréncienla, no sólo

los que obediencia me dan, 510  
sino las gentes que están  
desde éste al contrario polo.

SULTANA ¡Mira, señor, que ya pasan  
tus deseos de lo justo!

TURCOLas cosas que me dan gusto 515  
no se miden ni se tasan;  
todas llegan al extremo  
mayor que pueden llegar,  
y para las alcanzar  
siempre espero, nunca temo. 520

*(Vuelve MAMÍ, y con él CLARA, llamada ZAIDA, y ZELINDA, que es  
LAMBERTO, el que busca ROBERTO.)*

MAMÍ Todas vienen.

TURCOÉstas dos  
den la obediencia por todas.

ZAIDAHagan dichosas tus bodas  
las bendiciones de Dios;  
fecundo tu seno sea, 525  
y, con parto sazonado,  
del Gran Señor el Estado  
con mayorazgo se vea;  
logres la intención que tienes,  
que ya de Rustán la sé, 530  
y en varios modos te dé  
el mundo mil parabienes.

ZELINDA    Hermosísima española,  
corona de su nación,  
única en la discreción,    535  
y en buenos intentos sola;  
    traiga a colmo tu deseo  
el Cielo, que le conoce,  
y en estas bodas se goce  
el dulce y santo Himeneo;    540  
    por tu parecer se rija  
el imperio que posees;  
ninguna cosa desees  
que el no alcanzalla te aflija;  
    de ensalzarte es cosa llana    545  
que Mahoma el cargo toma.

TURCONo le nombréis a Mahoma,  
que la Sultana es cristiana.

    Doña Catalina es  
su nombre, y el sobrenombre    550  
de Oviedo, para mí, nombre  
de riquísimo interés;  
    porque, a tenerle de mora,  
nunca a mi poder llegara,  
ni del tesoro gozara    555  
que en su hermosura mora.

    Ya como a cosa divina,  
sin que lo encubra el silencio,  
el gran nombre reverencio  
de mi hermosa Catalina.    560

    Para celebrar las bodas,  
que han de dar asombro al suelo,  
deme de su gloria el cielo  
y acudan mis gentes todas;  
    concédame el mar profundo,    565  
de sus senos temerosos,  
los pescados más sabrosos;  
sus riquezas me dé el mundo;  
    denme la tierra y el viento

aves y caza, de modo 570  
que esté en cada una el todo  
del más gustoso alimento.

SULTANA Mira, señor, que me agravia  
el bien que de mí pregonas.

TURCO Denme para tus coronas 575  
perlas el Sur, oro Arabia,  
púrpura Tiro y olores  
la Sabea, y, finalmente,  
denme para ornar tu frente  
abril y mayo sus flores; 580  
y si os parece que el modo  
de pedir ha dado indicio  
de tener poco juicio,  
venid y veréislo todo.

*(Éntranse todos, si no es ZAIDA y ZELINDA.)*

ZELINDA ¡Oh Clara! ¡Cuán turbias van 585  
nuestras cosas! ¿Qué haremos?  
Que ya están en los extremos  
del más sin remedio afán.  
¿Yo varón, y en el serrallo  
del Gran Turco? No imagino 590  
traza, remedio o camino  
a este mal.

ZAIDA Ni yo le hallo.  
¡Grande fue tu atrevimiento!

ZELINDA Llegó do llegó el Amor,

que no repara en temor 595  
cuando mira a su contento.

Entre una y otra muerte,  
por entre puntas de espadas  
contra mí desenvainadas,  
entrara, mi bien, a verte. 600

Ya te he visto y te he gozado,  
y a este bien no llega el mal  
que suceda, aunque mortal.

ZAIDA Hablas como enamorado:

todo eres brío, eres todo 605  
valor y todo esperanza;  
pero nuestro mal no alcanza  
remedio por ningún modo:

que desta triste morada,  
por nuestro mal conocida, 610  
es la muerte la salida  
y desventura la entrada.

De aquí no hay pensar huir  
a más seguro lugar:  
que sólo se ha de escapar 615  
con las alas del morir.

Ningún cohecho es bastante  
que a las guardas enternezca,  
ni remedio que se ofrezca  
que el morir no esté delante. 620

¿Yo preñada, y tú varón,  
y en este serrallo? Mira  
adónde pone la mira  
nuestra cierta perdición.

ZELINDA ¡Alto! Pues se ha de acabar 625  
en muerte nuestra fortuna,  
no esperar salida alguna  
es lo que se ha de esperar;  
pero estad, Clara, advertida

que hemos de morir de suerte 630  
que nos granjee la muerte  
nueva y perdurable vida.

Quiero decir que muramos  
cristianos en todo caso.

ZAIDA De la vida no hago caso, 635  
como a tal muerte corramos.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Sale MADRIGAL, el maestro del elefante, con una trompetilla de hoja de lata,  
y sale con él ANDREA, la espía.)*

ANDREA ¡Bien te dije, Madrigal,  
que la alárabe algún día  
a la muerte te traería!

MADRIGAL Más bien me hizo que mal. 640

ANDREA Maestro de un elefante  
te hizo.

MADRIGAL ¿Ya es barro, Andrea?  
Podrá ser que no se vea  
jamás caso semejante.

ANDREA Al cabo, ¿no has de morir 645  
cuando caigan en el caso  
de la burla?

MADRIGALNo hace al caso.  
Déjame ahora vivir,  
    que, en término de diez años,  
o morirá el elefante, 650  
o yo, o el Turco, bastante  
causa a reparar mis daños.  
    ¿No fuera peor dejarme  
arrojar en un costal,  
por lo menos en la mar, 655  
donde pudiera ahogarme,  
    sin que pudiera valerme  
de ser grande nadador?  
    ¿No estoy ahora mejor?  
    ¿No podéis vos socorrerme 660  
    ahora con más provecho  
vuestro y mío?

ANDREAAsí es verdad.

MADRIGALAndrea, considerad  
que este hecho es un gran hecho,  
    y aun salir con él entiendo 665  
cuando menos os pensáis.

ANDREAGracias, Madrigal, tenéis,  
que al diablo las encomiendo.  
    ¿El elefante ha de hablar?

MADRIGALNo quedará por maestro; 670  
y él es animal tan diestro,  
que me hace imaginar  
    que tiene algún no sé qué  
de discurso racional.

ANDREA Vos sí sois el animal 675  
sin razón, como se ve,  
pues en disparates daís  
en que no da quien la tiene.

MADRIGAL Darlo a entender me conviene  
así al Cadí.

ANDREA Bien andáis; 680  
pero no os cortéis conmigo  
las uñas, que no es razón.

MADRIGAL Es mi propia condición  
burlarme del más amigo.

ANDREA ¿Esa trompeta es de plata? 685

MADRIGAL De plata la pedí yo;  
mas dijo quien me la dio  
que bastaba ser de lata.  
Al elefante con ella  
he de hablar en el oído. 690

ANDREA ¡Trabajo y tiempo perdido!

MADRIGAL ¡Traza ilustre y burla bella!  
Cien ásperos cada día  
me dan por acostamiento.

ANDREA ¿Dos escudos? ¡Gentil cuento! 695  
¡Buena va la burlería!



MADRIGAL El cadí es éste. A más ver,  
que me conviene hablalle.

ANDREA ¿Querrás de nuevo engañalle?

MADRIGAL Podrá ser que pueda ser. 700

*(Vase ANDREA, y entra el CADÍ.)*

CADÍ Español, ¿has comenzado  
a enseñar al elefante?

MADRIGAL Sí; y está muy adelante:  
cuatro liciones le he dado.

CADÍ ¿En qué lengua?

MADRIGAL En vizcaína, 705  
que es lengua que se averigua  
que lleva el lauro de antigua  
a la etiopía y abisina.

CADÍ Paréceme lengua estraña.  
¿Dónde se usa?

MADRIGAL En Vizcaya. 710

CADÍ ¿Y es Vizcaya...?

MADRIGAL Allá en la raya  
de Navarra, junto a España.

CADÍ Esta lengua de valor  
por su antigüedad es sola;  
enséñale la española, 715  
que la entendemos mejor.

MADRIGAL De aquéllas que son más graves,  
le diré las que supiere,  
y él tome la que quisiere.

CADÍ ¿Y cuáles son las que sabes? 720

MADRIGAL La jerigonza de ciegos,  
la bergamasca de Italia,  
la gascona de la Galia  
y la antigua de los griegos;  
con letras como de stampa 725  
una materia le haré,  
adonde a entender le dé  
la famosa de la hampa;  
y si de aquéstras le pesa,  
porque son algo escabrosas, 730  
mostraréle las melosas  
valenciana y portuguesa.

CADÍ A gran peligro se arrisca  
tu vida si el elefante  
no sale grande estudiante 735  
en la turquesca o morisca  
o en la española, a lo menos.

MADRIGAL En todas saldrá perito,  
si le place al infinito  
sustentador de los buenos, 740  
y aun de los malos, pues hace  
que a todos alumbre el sol.

CADÍ Hazme un placer, español.

MADRIGAL Por cierto que a mí me place.  
Declara tu voluntad, 745  
que luego será cumplida.

CADÍ Será el mayor que en mi vida  
pueda hacerme tu amistad.  
Dime: ¿qué iban hablando,  
con acento bronco y triste, 750  
aquellos cuervos que hoy viste  
ir por el aire volando?  
Que por entonces no pude  
preguntártelo.

MADRIGAL Sabrás  
(y de aquesto que me oirás 755  
no es bien que tu ingenio dude),  
sabrás, digo, que trataban  
que al campo de Alcudia irían,  
lugar donde hartar podían  
la gran hambre que llevaban: 760  
que nunca falta res muerta  
en aquellos campos anchos,  
donde podrían sus panchos  
de su hartura hallar la puerta.

CADÍ Y esos campos, ¿dónde están? 765

MADRIGAL En España.

CADÍ ¡Gran viaje!

MADRIGAL Son los cuervos de volaje  
tan ligeros, que se van  
dos mil leguas en un tris:  
que vuelan con tal instancia, 770  
que hoy amanecen en Francia,  
y anohecen en París.

CADÍ Dime: ¿qué estaba diciendo  
aquel colorín ayer?

MADRIGAL Nunca le pude entender; 775  
es húngaro: no le entiendo.

CADÍ Y aquella calandria bella,  
¿supiste lo que decía?

MADRIGAL Una cierta niñería  
que no te importa sabella. 780

CADÍ Yo sé que me lo dirás.

MADRIGAL Ella dijo, en conclusión,  
que andabas tras un garzón,  
y aun otras cosillas más.

CADÍ Pues, ¡válgala Lucifer!, 785  
¿a qué se mete conmigo?

MADRIGAL Si hay algo de lo que digo,  
verás que la sé entender.

CADÍ No va muy descaminada;  
pero no ha llegado el juego 790  
a que me abrase en tal fuego.  
No digas a nadie nada,  
que el crédito quedaría  
granjeado a buenas noches.

MADRIGAL Para hablar en tus reproches, 795  
es muda la lengua mía.

Bien puedes a sueño suelto  
dormir en mi confianza,  
pues de hablar en tu alabanza  
para siempre estoy resuelto. 800

Puesto que los tordos sean  
de tu ruindad pregoneros,  
y la digan los silgueros  
que en los pimpollos gorjean;

ora los asnos roznando 805  
digan tus males protervos,  
ora graznando los cuervos,  
o los canarios cantando:

que, pues yo soy aquel solo  
que los entiende, seré 810  
aquel que los callaré  
desde el uno al otro polo.

CADÍ ¿No habrá pájaro que cante

alguna virtud de mí?

MADRIGAL Respetar ánte, ¡oh cadí!, 815  
si puedo, de aquí adelante:  
que, apenas veré en sus labios  
dar indicios de tus menguas,  
cuando les corte las lenguas,  
en pena de tus agravios. 820

*(Entra RUSTÁN, el eunuco, y tras él un CAUTIVO anciano, que se pone a escuchar lo que hablan.)*

CADÍ Buen Rustán, ¿adónde vais?

RUSTÁNA buscar un tarasí  
español.

MADRIGAL ¿No es sastre?

RUSTÁNSÍ.

MADRIGAL Sin duda que me buscáis,  
pues soy sastre y español, 825  
y de tan grande tijera  
que no la tiene en su esfera  
el gran tarasí del sol.  
¿Qué hemos de cortar?

RUSTÁN Vestidos  
ricos para la Sultana, 830  
que se viste a la cristiana.

CADÍ¿Dónde tenéis los sentidos?

Rustán, ¿qué es lo que decís?  
¿Ya hay Sultana, y que se viste  
a la cristiana?

RUSTÁNNo es chiste; 835  
verdades son las que oís.

Doña Catalina ha nombre  
con sobrenombre de Oviedo.

CADÍVos diréis algún enredo  
con que me enoje y asombre. 840

RUSTÁN Con una hermosa cautiva  
se ha casado el Gran Señor,  
y consiéntele su amor  
que en su ley cristiana viva,  
y que se vista y se trate 845  
como cristiana, a su gusto.

CRISTIANO¡Cielo pñadoso y justo!

CADÍ¿Hay tan grande disparate?  
Moriré si no voy luego  
a reñirle.

*(Vase el CADÍ.)*

RUSTÁNEn vano irás, 850  
pues del amor le hallarás  
del todo encendido en fuego.

Venid conmigo, y mirad  
que seáis buen sastre.

MADRIGAL Señor,  
yo sé que no le hay mejor 855  
en toda esta gran ciudad,  
    cautivo ni renegado;  
y, para prueba de aquesto,  
séaos, señor, manifiesto  
que yo soy aquel nombrado 860  
    maestro del elefante;  
y quien ha de hacer hablar  
a una bestia, en el cortar  
de vestir será elegante.

RUSTÁN Digo que tenéis razón; 865  
pero si otra no me dais,  
desde aquí conmigo estáis  
en contraria posesión.  
    Mas, con todo, os llevaré.  
Venid.

CRISTIANO Señor, a esta parte, 870  
si quieres, quiero hablarte.

RUSTÁN Decid, que os escucharé.

CRISTIANO Para mí es averiguada  
cosa, por más de un indicio,  
que éste sabe del oficio 875  
de sastre muy poco o nada.  
    Yo soy sastre de la Corte,  
y de España, por lo menos,  
y en ella de los más buenos,



de mejor medida y corte; 880  
soy, en fin, de damas sastre,  
y he venido al cautiverio  
quizá no sin gran misterio,  
y sin quizá, por desastre.  
Llevadme: veréis quizá 885  
maravillas.

RUSTÁN Está bien.  
Venid vos, y vos también;  
quizá alguno acertará.

MADRIGAL Amigo, ¿sois sastre?

CRISTIANO Sí.

MADRIGAL Pues yo a Judas me encomiendo 890  
si sé coser un remiendo.

CRISTIANO ¡Ved qué gentil tarasí!  
Aunque pienso, con mi maña,  
antes que a fuerza de brazos,  
de sacar de aquí retazos 895  
que puedan llevarme a España.

*(Éntranse todos.)*

*(Entra la SULTANA con un rosario en la mano, y el GRAN TURCO tras ella, escuchándola.)*

SULTANA ¡Virgen, que el sol más bella;

Madre de Dios, que es toda tu alabanza;  
del mar del mundo estrella,  
por quien el alma alcanza 900  
a ver de sus borrascas la bonanza!

En mi aflicción te invoco;  
advierde, ¡oh gran Señora!, que me anego,  
pues ya en las sirtes toco  
del desvalido y ciego 905  
temor, a quien el alma ansiosa entrego.

La voluntad, que es mía  
y la puedo guardar, ésa os ofrezco,  
Santísima María;  
mirad que desfallezco; 910  
dadme, Señora, el bien que no merezco.  
¡Oh Gran Señor! ¿Aquí vienes?

TURCOREza, reza, Catalina,  
que sin la ayuda divina  
duran poco humanos bienes; 915  
y llama, que no me espanta,  
antes me parece bien,  
a tu Lela Marién,  
que entre nosotros es santa.

SULTANA No hay generación alguna 920  
que no te bendiga, ¡oh Esposa  
de tu Hijo!, ¡oh tan hermosa  
que es fea ante ti la luna!

TURCO Bien la puedes alabar,  
que nosotros la alabamos, 925  
y de ser Virgen la damos  
la palma en primer lugar.

*(Entra RUSTÁN, MADRIGAL y el viejo CAUTIVO y MAMÍ.)*

RUSTÁN    Éstos son los tarasíes.

MADRIGAL Yo, señor, soy el que sabe  
cuanto en el oficio cabe; 930  
los demás son baladíes.

SULTANA    Vestiréisme a la española.

MADRIGAL Eso haré de muy buen grado,  
como se le dé recado  
bastante a la chirinola. 935

SULTANA    ¿Qué es chirinola?

MADRIGAL Un vestido  
trazado por tal compás  
que tan lindo por jamás  
ninguna reina ha vestido;  
trecientas varas de tela 940  
de oro y plata entran en él.

SULTANA Pues, ¿quién podrá andar con él,  
que no se agobie y se muela?

MADRIGAL    Ha de ser, señora mía,  
la falda postiza.

CRISTIANO ¡Bueno! 945  
Éste está de seso ajeno,

o se burla, o desvaría.

Amigo, muy mal te burlas,  
y sabe, si no lo sabes,  
que con personas tan graves 950  
nunca salen bien las burlas.

Yo os haré al modo de España  
un vestido tal que os cuadre.

SULTANA Éste, sin duda, es mi padre,  
si no es que la voz me engaña. 955

Tomadme vos la medida,  
buen hombre.

CRISTIANO ¡Fuera acertado  
que se la hubieran tomado  
ya los cielos a tu vida!

SULTANA Sin duda, es él. ¿Qué haré? 960  
¡Puesta estoy en confusión!

TURCO Libertad por galardón,  
y gran riqueza os daré.

Vestídmela a la española,  
con vestidos tan hermosos 965  
que admiren por lo costosos,  
como ella admira por sola;  
gastad las perlas de Oriente  
y los diamantes indianos,  
que hoy os colmaré las manos 970  
y el deseo fácilmente.

Véase mi Catalina  
con el adorno que quiere,  
puesto que en el que trujere  
la tendré yo por divina. 975

Es ídolo de mis ojos,

y, en el propio o extranjero  
adorno, adorarla quiero,  
y entregarle mis despojos.

CRISTIANO Venid acá, buena alhaja; 980  
tomaros he la medida,  
que fuera más bien medida  
a ser de vuestra mortaja.

MADRIGAL Por la cintura comienza,  
así es sastre como yo. 985

TURCO Cristiano amigo, eso no,  
que algo toca en desvergüenza;  
tanteadla desde fuera,  
y no lleguéis a tocalla.

CRISTIANO ¿Adónde, señor, se halla 990  
sastre que desa manera  
haga su oficio? ¿No ves  
que en el corte erraría  
si no llevase por guía  
la medida?

TURCO Ello así es; 995  
mas, a poder escusarse,  
tendríalo por mejor.

CRISTIANO De mis abrazos, señor,  
no hay para qué recelarte,  
que como de padre puede 1000  
recebirlos la Sultana.

SULTANA Ya mi sospecha está llana;  
ya el miedo que tengo excede  
a todos los de hasta aquí.

TURCOLlegad, y haced vuestro oficio. 1005

SULTANA No des, ¡oh buen padre!, indicio  
de ser sino tarasí.

*(Estándole tomando la medida, dice el padre:)*

CRISTIANO ¡Pluguiera a Dios que estos lazos  
que tus aseos preparan  
fueran los que te llevaran 1010  
a la fuesa entre mis brazos!  
¡Pluguiera a Dios que en tu tierra  
en humildad y bajeza  
se cambiara la grandeza  
que esta majestad encierra, 1015  
y que estos ricos adornos  
en burieles se trocaran,  
y en España se gozaran  
detrás de redes y tornos!

SULTANA ¡No más, padre, que no puedo 1020  
sufrir la reprehensión;  
que me falta el corazón  
y me desmayo de miedo!  
*(Desmáyase la SULTANA.)*

TURCO ¿Qué es esto? ¿Qué desconcierto  
es éste? ¿Qué desespero? 1025  
Di, encantador, embustero:  
¿hasla hechizado?, ¿hasla muerto?

Basilisco, di: ¿qué has hecho?  
Espíritu malo, habla.

CRISTIANO Ella volverá a su habla. 1030  
Haz que la aflojen el pecho,  
báñenle con agua el rostro,  
y verás cómo en sí vuelve.

TURCO ¡La vida se le resuelve!  
¡Empalad luego a ese monstruo! 1035  
¡Empalad aquél también!  
¡Quitádmelos de delante!

MADRIGAL ¡Primero que el elefante  
vengo a morir!

MAMÍ ¡Perro, ven!

CRISTIANO Yo soy el padre, sin duda, 1040  
de la Sultana, que vive.

MAMÍ De mentiras se apercibe  
el que la verdad no ayuda.  
Venid, venid, embusteros,  
españoles y arrogantes. 1045

MADRIGAL ¡Oh flor de los elefantes!,  
hoy hago estanco en el veros.

*(Llevan MAMÍ y RUSTÁN por fuerza al PADRE de la SULTANA y a  
MADRIGAL; queda en el teatro el GRAN TURCO y la SULTANA,*

*desmayada.)*

TURCO    ¡Sobre mis hombros vendrás,  
cielo deste pobre Atlante,  
en males sin semejante, 1050  
si vos en vos no volvéis!  
(*Llévala.*)



## Jornada tercera

*Salen RUSTÁN y MAMÍ.*

MAMÍ A no volver tan presto  
del grave parasismo,  
la Sultana quedara  
sin padre, y sin maestro el elefante.  
Volvió, y a voces dijo: 5  
«¿Qué es de mi padre? ¡Ay triste!  
¿Adónde está mi padre?»,  
buscándole por todo con la vista.  
Sin esperar respuestas  
de preguntas tardías, 10  
el gran señor mandóme  
que acudiese a quitar del palo o fuego  
a los dos tarasíes,  
certísimo adivino  
que el más anciano era 15  
de su querida prenda el padre amado.  
Corrí, llegué, y hallélos  
a tiempo que ya estaba  
aguzando el verdugo  
las puntas de los palos del suplicio. 20  
El español maestro,  
apenas se vio libre,  
cuando, dando dos brincos,  
dijo: «¡Gracias a Dios y a mi discípulo!»;  
creyendo, a lo que creo, 25  
que le daban la vida  
porque él el habla diese  
que tiene prometida al elefante.  
Al padre anciano truje  
ante la Gran Sultana, 30

que con abrazos tiernos  
le recibió, besándole mil veces.  
Allí se dieron cuenta,  
aunque en razones cortas,  
de mil sucesos varios 35  
al padre y a la hija acontecidos.  
Finalmente, mandóme  
el Gran Señor que hiciese  
cómo en la judería  
se alojase su suegro. 40  
Ordena que le sirvan  
a la cristiana usanza,  
con pompa y aparato  
que dé fe de su amor y su grandeza.

RUSTÁN;Estraño caso es éste! 45  
Ámala tiernamente;  
su voluntad se rige  
por la de la cristiana.  
Al gran cadí no quiso  
escuchar, sospechoso 50  
que con reprehensiones  
pesadas sus intentos afearía.  
Quiere de aquí a dos días  
con ella y sus cautivas  
holgarse en el serrallo 55  
con bailes y con danzas cristianiscas.  
Músicos he buscado,  
cautivos y españoles,  
que alegres solenicen  
la fiesta, en el serrallo jamás vista. 60  
¿Haré que vayan limpios  
y vestidos de nuevo?

MAMÍSÍ, pero como esclavos.

RUSTÁNA dar lugar el tiempo, mejor fuera  
que fueran como libres, 65  
con plumas y con galas,  
representando al vivo  
los saraos que en España se acostumbran.

MAMÍNo te metas en eso,  
pues ves que no es posible. 70

RUSTÁNYa la Sultana tiene  
un vestido español.

MAMÍ¿Y quién le hizo?

RUSTÁNUn judío le trujo  
de Argel, a do llegaron  
dos galeras de corso, 75  
colmas de barcas, fuertes de despojos,  
y allí compró el judío  
el vestido que he dicho.

MAMÍSerá indecencia grande  
vestirse una sultana ropa ajena. 80

RUSTÁNTiene tanto deseo  
de verse sin el traje  
turquesco, que imagino  
que de jerga y sayal se vestiría,  
como el vestido fuese 85  
cortado a lo cristiano.

MAMÍA mí, mas que se vista

de hojas de palmitos o lampazos.

RUSTÁN Mamí, vete en buen hora,  
porque he de hacer mil cosas. 90

MAMÍ Y yo dos mil y tantas  
en el servicio del señor Oviedo.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Salen la SULTANA y su PADRE, vestido de negro.)*

PADRE Hija, por más que me arguyas,  
no puedo darme a entender  
sino que has venido a ser 95  
lo que eres por culpas tuyas;  
quiero decir, por tu gusto;  
que, a tenerle más cristiano,  
no gozara este tirano  
de gusto que es tan injusto. 100  
¿Qué señales de cordeles  
descubren tus pies y brazos?  
¿Qué ataduras o qué lazos  
fueron para ti crüeles?  
De tu propia voluntad 105  
te has rendido, convencida  
desta licenciosa vida,  
desta pompa y majestad.

SULTANA Si yo de consentimiento  
pacífico he convenido 110  
con el deste descreído,  
ministro de mi tormento,  
todo el Cielo me destruya,

y, atenta a mi perdición,  
se me vuelva en maldición, 115  
padre, la bendición tuya.

Mil veces determiné  
antes morir que agradalle;  
mil veces, para enojalle,  
sus halagos desprecié; 120  
pero todo mi desprecio,  
mis desdenes y arrogancia  
fueron medio y circunstancia  
para tenerme en más precio.

Con mi celo le encendía, 125  
con mi desdén le llamaba,  
con mi altivez le acercaba  
a mí cuando más huía.

Finalmente, por quedarme  
con el nombre de cristiana, 130  
antes que por ser sultana,  
medrosa vine a entregarme.

PADRE Has de advertir en tu mal,  
y sé que lo advertirás,  
que por lo menos estás, 135  
hija, en pecado mortal.

Mira el estado que tienes,  
y mira cómo te vales,  
porque está lleno de males,  
aunque parece de bienes. 140

SULTANA Pues sabrás aconsejarme,  
dime, mas es disparate:  
¿será justo que me mate,  
ya que no quieren matarme?  
¿Tengo de morir a fuerza 145  
de mí misma? Si no quiere  
Él que viva, ¿me requiere  
matarme por gusto o fuerza?

PADRE Es la desesperación  
pecado tan malo y feo, 150  
que ninguno, según creo,  
le hace comparación.

El matarse es cobardía  
y es poner tasa a la mano  
liberal del Soberano 155  
Bien que nos sustenta y cría.

Esta gran verdad se ha visto  
donde no puede dudarse:  
que más pecó en ahorcarse  
Judas que en vender a Cristo. 160

SULTANA Mártir soy en el deseo,  
y, aunque por agora duerma  
la carne frágil y enferma  
en este maldito empleo,  
espero en la luz que guía 165  
al cielo al más pecador,  
que ha de dar su resplandor  
en mi tiniebla algún día;  
y desta cautividad,  
adonde reino ofendida, 170  
me llevará arrepentida  
a la eterna libertad.

PADRE Esperar y no temer  
es lo que he de aconsejar,  
pues no se puede abreviar 175  
de Dios el sumo poder.

En su confianza atino,  
y no en mal discurso pinto  
deste ciego laberinto  
a la salida el camino; 180  
pero si fuera por muerte,

no la huyas, está firme.

SULTANA Mis propósitos confirme  
el cielo en mi triste suerte,  
para que, poniendo el pecho 185  
al rigor jamás pensado,  
Él quede de mí pagado  
y vos, padre, satisfecho.

Y voyme, porque esta tarde  
tengo mucho en que entender; 190  
que el Gran Señor quiere hacer  
de mis donaires alarde.

Si os queréis hallar allí,  
padre, en vuestra mano está.

PADRE ¿Cómo hallarse allí podrá 195  
quien está perdido aquí?

Guardarás de honestidad  
el decoro en tus placeres,  
y haz aquello que supieres  
alegre y con brevedad; 200  
da indicios de bien criada  
y bien nacida.

SULTANA Sí haré,  
puesto que sé que no sé  
de gracias algo, ni aun nada.

PADRE ¡Téngate Dios de su mano! 205  
¡Ve con él, prenda querida,  
malcontenta y bien servida;  
yo, triste y alegre en vano!

*(Éntranse, y la SULTANA se ha de vestir a lo cristiano, lo más bizarramente*

*que pudiere.)*

*(Salen los dos músicos, y MADRIGAL con ellos, como cautivos, con sus almillas coloradas, calzones de lienzo blanco, borceguíes negros, todo nuevo, con vueltas sin lechuguillas. MADRIGAL traiga unas sonajas, y los demás sus guitarras. Señálanse los músicos primero y segundo.)*

MÚSICO 1.º Otro es esto que estar al pie del palo,  
esperando la burla que os tenía 210  
algo de mal talante.

MADRIGAL ¡Por San Cristo,  
que estaba algo mohíno! Media entena  
habían preparado y puesto a punto  
para ser asador de mis redaños.

MÚSICO 2.º ¿Quién os metió a ser sastre?

MADRIGAL El que nos mete 215  
ahora a todos tres a ser poetas,  
músicos y danzantes y bailistas:  
el diablo, a lo que creo, y no otro alguno.

MÚSICO 1.º A no volver en sí la Gran Sultana  
tan presto, ¡cuál quedábades, bodega! 220

MADRIGAL Como conejo asado, y no en parrillas.  
¡Mirad este tirano!

MÚSICO 2.º Hablad pasito.  
¡Mala Pascua os dé Dios! ¿No se os acuerda  
de aquel refrán que dicen comúnmente



que las paredes oyen?

MADRIGAL Hablo paso, 225  
y digo...

MÚSICO 1.º ¿Qué decís? No digáis nada.

MADRIGAL Digo que el Gran Señor tiene sus ímpetus,  
como otro cualquier rey de su tamaño,  
y temo que a cualquiera zancadilla  
que demos en la danza ha de pringarnos. 230

MÚSICO 2.º ¿Y sabéis vos danzar?

MADRIGAL Como una mula;  
pero tengo un romance correntío,  
que le pienso cantar a la loquesca,  
que trata *ad longum* todo el gran suceso  
de la grande sultana Catalina. 235

MÚSICO 1.º ¿Cómo lo sabéis vos?

MADRIGAL Su mismo padre  
me lo ha contado todo *ad pedem litere*.

MÚSICO 2.º ¿Qué cantaremos más?

MADRIGAL Mil zarabandas,  
mil zambapalos lindos, mil chaconas,  
y mil *pésame dello*, y mil folías. 240

MÚSICO 1.º ¿Quién las ha de bailar?

MADRIGAL La Gran Sultana.

MÚSICO 2.º Imposible es que sepa baile alguno,  
porque de edad pequeña, según dicen,  
perdió la libertad.

MADRIGAL Mirad, Capacho,  
no hay mujer española que no salga 245  
del vientre de su madre bailadora.

MÚSICO 1.º Ésa es razón que no la contradigo;  
pero dudo en que baile la Sultana  
por guardar el decoro a su persona.

MÚSICO 2.º También danzan las reinas en saraos. 250

MADRIGAL Verdad; y a solas mil desenvolturas,  
guardando honestidad, hacen las damas.

MÚSICO 1.º Si nos hubieran dado algún espacio  
para poder juntarnos y acordarnos,  
trazáramos quizá una danza alegre, 255  
cantada a la manera que se usa  
en las comedias que yo vi en España;  
y aun Alonso Martínez, que Dios haya,  
fue el primer inventor de aquestos bailes,  
que entretienen y alegran juntamente, 260  
más que entretiene un entremés de hambriento,  
ladrón o apaleado.

MÚSICO 2.ºVerdad llana.

MADRIGAL Desta vez nos empalan; ésta vamos  
a ser manjar de atunes y de tencas.

MÚSICO 1.ºMadrigal, ésa es mucha cobardía; 265  
mentiroso adivino siempre seas.

*(Entra RUSTÁN.)*

RUSTÁNAmigos, ¿estáis todos?

MADRIGAL Todos juntos,  
como nos ves, con nuestros instrumentos;  
pero todos con miedo tal, que temo  
que habemos de oler mal desde aquí a poco. 270

RUSTÁN Limpios y bien vestidos vais, de nuevo;  
no temáis, y venid, que ya os espera  
el Gran Señor.

MADRIGAL Yo juro a mi pecado  
que voy.  
¡Dios sea en mi ánima!

MÚSICO 2.ºNo temas,  
que nos haces temer sin cosa alguna, 275  
y ayuda a los osados la Fortuna.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Sale MAMÍ a poner un estrado, con otros dos o tres garzones; tienden una alfombra turca, con cinco o seis almohadas de terciopelo de color.)*

MAMÍ Tira más desa parte, Muza, tira;  
entra por los cojines tú, Arnaute;  
y tú, Bairán, ten cuenta que las flores  
se esparzan por do el Gran Señor pisare, 280  
y enciende los pebetes. ¡Ea, acabemos!

*(Hácese todo esto sin responder los garzones, y, en estando puesto el estrado, entra el GRAN TURCO, RUSTÁN y los músicos y MADRIGAL.)*

TURCO ¿Sois españoles, por ventura?

MADRIGAL Somos.

TURCO ¿De Aragón o andaluces?

MADRIGAL Castellanos.

TURCO ¿Soldados, o oficiales?

MADRIGAL Oficiales.

TURCO ¿Qué oficio tenéis vos?

MADRIGAL ¿Yo? Pregonero. 285

TURCO Y éste, ¿qué oficio tiene?

MADRIGALGuitarrista:  
quiero decir que tañe una guitarra  
peor ochenta veces que su madre.

TURCO¿Qué habilidad esotro tiene?

MADRIGALGrande:  
costales cose, y sabe cortar guantes. 290

TURCO¿Por cierto, los oficios son de estima!

MADRIGAL¿Quisieras tú, señor, que el uno fuera  
herrero, y maestro de hacha fuera el otro,  
y el otro polvorista, o, por lo menos,  
maestro de fundar artillería? 295

TURCOA serlo, os estimara y regalara  
sobre cuantos cautivos tengo.

MADRIGALBueno;  
en humo se nos fuera la esperanza  
de tener libertad.

TURCOCuando Alá gusta,  
hace cautivo aquél, y aquéste libre: 300  
no hay al querer de Alá quien se le oponga.  
Mirad si viene Catalina.

RUSTÁNViene,  
y adonde pone la hermosa planta

un clavel o azucena se levanta.

*(Entra la SULTANA, vestida a lo cristiano, como ya he dicho, lo más ricamente que pudiere; trae al cuello una cruz pequeña de ébano; salen con ella ZAIDA y ZELINDA, que son CLARA y LAMBERTO, y los tres garzones que pusieron el estrado.)*

TURCO Bien vengas, humana diosa, 305  
con verdad, y no opinión;  
más que los cielos hermosa,  
centro do mi corazón  
se alegra, vive y reposa;  
a mis ojos más lozana 310  
que de abril fresca mañana,  
cuando, en brazos de la aurora,  
pule, esmalta, borda y dora  
el campo y al mundo ufana.  
No es menester mudar traje 315  
para que os rinda, contento,  
todo el orbe vasallaje.

SULTANA Tantas alabanzas siento  
que me han de servir de ultraje,  
pues siempre la adulación 320  
nunca dice la razón  
como en el alma se siente,  
y así, cuando alaba, miente.

MADRIGALA un mentís, un bofetón.

MÚSICO 2.º Madrigal amigo, advierte 325  
dónde estamos; no granjees  
con tu lengua nuestra muerte.

TURCO Puede el valor que posees  
sobre el cielo engrandecerte.

Ven, señora, y toma asiento, 330  
que hoy mi alma tiene intento,  
dulce fin de mis enojos,  
de hacerse toda ojos  
por mirarte a su contento.

*(Siéntese el TURCO y la SULTANA en las almohadas; quedan en pie  
RUSTÁN y MAMÍ y los músicos.)*

MAMÍ A la puerta está el cadí. 335

TURCO Ábrele, y entre, Mamí,  
pues no hay negarle la entrada.  
Esta visita me enfada,  
y más por hacerse aquí.

Vendráme a reprehender, 340  
a reñir y a exagerar  
que tengo en mi proceder,  
como altivez en mandar,  
llaneza en obedecer.

Inútil reprehensor 345  
ha de ser, porque el Amor,  
cuyas hazañas alabo,  
teniéndome por su esclavo  
no me deja ser señor.

*(Entra el CADÍ.)*

CADÍ ¿Qué es lo que veo? ¡Ay de mí! 350  
¡Cielo, que esto consintáis!

TURCO ¡Por vida del gran cadí,

que no me reprehendáis,  
y que os sentéis junto a mí!  
    Porque las reprehensiones 355  
piden lugar y ocasiones  
diferentes que éstas son.

CADÍEnmudezca mi razón  
el silencio que me pones.  
    Callo y siéntome.

TURCOAnsí haced. 360  
Vosotros, como he pedido,  
a darme gusto atended;  
que yo sabré, agradecido,  
hacer a todos merced.

MADRIGAL    Antes de llegar al trance 365  
del baile nunca aprendido,  
oye, señor, un romance.

MÚSICO 1.º¡Plega a Dios que este perdido  
no nos pierda en este lance!

MADRIGAL    Y has de saber que es la historia 370  
de la vida de tu gloria;  
y cantaréle muy presto,  
porque soy único en esto,  
y lo sé bien de memoria.  
    «En un bajel de diez bancos, 375  
de Málaga, y en invierno,  
se embarcó para ir a Orán  
un tal Fulano de Oviedo,  
hidalgo, pero no rico:  
maldición del siglo nuestro, 380



que parece que el ser pobre  
al ser hidalgo es anejo.  
Su mujer y una hija suya,  
niña y hermosa en extremo,  
por convenirles así, 385  
también con él se partieron.  
El mar les aseguraba  
el tiempo, por ser de enero,  
sazón en que los cosarios  
se recogen en sus puertos; 390  
pero como las desgracias  
navegan con todos vientos,  
una les vino tan mala,  
que la libertad perdieron.  
Morato Arráez, que no duerme 395  
por desvelar nuestro sueño,  
en aquella travesía  
alcanzó al bajel ligero;  
hizo escala en Tetuán  
y a la niña vendió luego 400  
a un famoso y rico moro,  
cuyo nombre es Alí Izquierdo.  
La madre murió de pena;  
al padre a Argel le trujeron,  
adonde sus muchos años 405  
le escusaron de ir al remo.  
Cuatro años eran pasados,  
cuando Morato, volviendo  
a Tetuán, vio a la niña  
más hermosa que el sol mismo. 410  
Compróla de su patrón,  
cuatrodoblándole el precio  
que había dado por ella  
a Alí, comprador primero,  
el cual le dijo a Morato: 415  
"De buena gana la vendo,  
pues no la puedo hacer mora  
por dádivas ni por ruegos.  
Diez años tiene apenas;

mas tal discreción en ellos, 420  
que no les hacen ventaja  
los maduros de los viejos.  
Es gloria de su nación  
y de fortaleza ejemplo;  
tanto más cuanto es más sola, 425  
y de humilde y frágil sexo".  
Con la compra el gran cosario  
sobremanera contento,  
se vino a Constantinopla,  
creo el año de seiscientos; 430  
presentóla al Gran Señor,  
mozo entonces, el cual luego  
del serrallo a los eunucos  
hizo el estremado entrego.  
En Zoraida el Catalina, 435  
su dulce nombre, quisieron  
trocarle; mas nunca quiso,  
ni el sobrenombre de Oviedo.  
Viola al fin el Gran Señor,  
después de varios sucesos, 440  
y, cual si mirara al sol,  
quedó sin vida y suspenso;  
ofrecióle el mayorazgo  
de sus estendidos reinos,  
y dióle el alma en señal...» 445

TURCO;Qué gran verdad dice en esto!

MADRIGAL«Consíéntale ser cristiana...»

CADÍ;Estraño consentimiento!

TURCOCalla, amigo; no me turbes,  
que estoy mis dichas oyendo. 450

MADRIGAL«Cómo no la halló su padre,  
contar aquí no pretendo:  
que serán cuentos muy largos,  
si he de abreviar este cuento;  
basta que vino a buscalla 455  
por discursos y rodeos  
dignos de más larga historia  
y de otra sazón y tiempo.  
Hoy Catalina es Sultana,  
hoy reina, hoy vive y hoy vemos 460  
que del león otomano  
pisa el indomable cuello;  
hoy le rinde y avasalla,  
y, con no vistos extremos,  
hace bien a los cristianos. 465  
Y esto sé deste suceso.»

MÚSICO 2.º¡Oh repentino poeta!  
El rubio señor de Delo,  
de su agua de Aganipe  
te dé a beber un caldero. 470

MÚSICO 1.ºPaladéente las musas  
con jamón y vino añejo  
de Rute y Ciudarréal.

MADRIGALCon San Martín me contento.

CADÍ¡El diablo es este cristiano! 475  
Yo le conozco, y sé cierto  
que sabe más que Mahoma.

TURCOHacerles mercedes pienso.

MADRIGAL Tú, señora, a nuestra usanza  
ven, que has de ser de una danza 480  
la primera y la postrera.

SULTANA El gusto de esa manera  
del Gran Señor no se alcanza;  
que, como la libertad  
perdí tan niña, no sé 485  
bailes de curiosidad.

MADRIGAL Yo, señora, os guiaré.

SULTANA En buen hora comenzad.

*(Levántase la SULTANA a bailar, y ensáyase este baile bien.)*

*(Cantan los músicos:)*

MÚSICO A vos, hermosa española,  
tan rendida el alma tengo, 490  
que no miro por mi gusto  
por mirar al gusto vuestro;  
por vos ufano y gozoso  
a tales extremos vengo,  
que precio ser vuestro esclavo 495  
más que mandar mil imperios;  
por vos, con discurso claro,  
puesto que puedo, no quiero  
admitir reprehensiones  
ni escuchar graves consejos; 500  
por vos, contra mi Profeta,  
que me manda en sus preceptos  
que aborrezca a los cristianos,  
por vos, no los aborrezco;

con vos, niña de mis ojos, 505  
todas mis venturas veo,  
y sé que, sin duda alguna,  
por vos vivo y por vos muero.

*(Muda el baile.)*

Escuchaba la niña los dulces requiebros,  
*y está de su alma su gusto lejos.* 510

Como tiene intento  
de guardar su ley,  
requiebros del rey  
no le dan contento.  
Vuelve el pensamiento 515  
a parte mejor,  
sin que torpe amor  
le turbe el sosiego.

*Y está de su alma su gusto lejos.*

Su donaire y brío 520  
estremos contienen  
que del Turco tienen  
preso el albedrío.  
Arde con su frío,  
su valor le asombra, 525  
y adora su sombra,  
puesto que vee cierto  
*que está de su alma su gusto lejos.*

TURCO Paso, bien mío, no más,  
porque me llevas el alma 530  
tras cada paso que das.  
Déte el donaire la palma,  
la ligereza y compás.

Alma mía, sosegad,  
y si os cansáis, descansad; 535  
y en este dichoso día

la liberal mano mía  
a todos da libertad.

*(Híncanse delante del TURCO, en diciendo esto, todos de rodillas: los cautivos,  
y ZAIDA y ZELINDA, los garzones y la SULTANA.)*

SULTANA ¡Mil veces los pies te beso!

ZELINDA ¡Éste ha sido para mí 540  
felicísimo suceso!

TURCO Catalina, ¿estás en ti?

SULTANA No, señor, yo lo confieso:  
que con la grande alegría  
de la suma cortesía 545  
que has con nosotros usado,  
tengo el sentido turbado.

TURCO Levanta, señora mía,  
que a ti no te comprende  
la merced que quise hacer; 550  
y, si la queréis saber,  
a los esclavos se estiende,  
y no a ti, que eres señora  
de mi alma, a quien adora  
como si fueses su Alá. 555

ZELINDA ¡Cerróseme el cielo ya!  
¡Llegó de mi fin la hora!  
No sé, Clara, qué temores  
de nuevo me pronostican

el fin de nuestros amores, 560  
y que ha de ser significan  
nuevo ejemplo de amadores.

Creí que la libertad  
que la liberalidad  
del Gran Señor prometía, 565  
a nosotros se extendía,  
mas no ha salido verdad.

ZAIDA Calla, y mira que no des  
indicio de la sospecha,  
que me contarás después. 570

CADÍ¿De la merced tan bien hecha  
no han de gozar estos tres?

TURCO Los dos, sí; pero éste no,  
que es aquel que se ofreció  
de mostrar al elefante 575  
a hablar turquesco elegante.

MADRIGAL¿Cuerpo de quien me parió!  
¿Ahí llegamos ahora?

TURCOEnséñele, y llegará  
de su libertad la hora. 580

MADRIGALHora menguada será,  
si Andrea no la mejora.

Pondré pies en polvorosa;  
tomaré de Villadiego  
las calzas.

CADÍEs tan hermosa 585

Catalina, que no niego  
ser su suerte venturosa.

Pero, entre estos regocijos,  
atiende, hijo, a hacer hijos,  
y en más de una tierra siembra. 590

TURCO  
Catalina es bella hembra.

CADÍY tus deseos prolijos.

TURCO ¿Cómo prolijos, si están  
a sólo un objeto atentos?

CADÍLos sucesos lo dirán. 595

TURCOCon todo, tus documentos  
por mí en obra se pondrán.

Escucha aparte, Mamí.

MADRIGALY escuche, señor cadí,  
cosas que le importan mucho. 600

CADÍYa, Madrigal, os escucho.

MADRIGALPues ya hablo, y digo así:

que me vengan luego a ver  
treinta escudos, que han de ser  
para comprar al instante 605  
un papagayo elegante  
que un indio trae a vender.

De las Indias del Poniente,



el pájaro sin segundo  
viene a enseñar suficiente 610  
a la ignorante del mundo  
sabia y rica y pobre gente.

Lo que dice te diré,  
pues ya sabes que lo sé  
por ciencia divina y alta. 615

CADÍVe por ellos, que sin falta  
en mi casa los daré.

TURCO Mamí, mira que sea luego,  
porque he de volver al punto.  
Venid, yesca de mi fuego, 620  
divino y propio trasunto  
de la madre del dios ciego.

Venid vosotros, gozad  
de la alegre libertad  
que he concedido a los dos. 625

MÚSICO 2.º ¡Concédate el alto Dios  
siglos de felicidad!

MADRIGAL Dicipulo, ¿dónde hallaste  
una paga tan perdida  
del gran bien que en mí cobraste? 630  
Que si me diste la vida,  
la libertad me quitaste.

Desto infiero, juzgo y siento  
que no hay bien sin su descuento,  
ni mal que algún bien no espere, 635  
si no es el mal del que muere  
y va al eterno tormento.

*(Vanse todos, si no es MAMÍ y RUSTÁN, que quedan.)*

MAMÍ ¿Qué piensas que me quería  
el Gran Sultán?

RUSTÁN No sé cierto;  
pero saberlo querría. 640

MAMÍ Él tiene, y en ello acierto,  
voluble la fantasía.

Quiere renovar su fuego  
y volver al dulce fuego  
de sus pasados placeres; 645  
quiere ver a sus mujeres,  
y no tarde, sino luego.

Cuadróle mucho el consejo  
del gran cadí, que le dijo,  
como astuto, sabio y viejo: 650  
«Hijo, hasta hacer un hijo  
que sembréis os aconsejo  
en una y en otra tierra:  
que si ésta no, aquélla encierra  
alegre fertilidad». 655

RUSTÁN Fundado en esa verdad,  
Amurates poco yerra.

Poco agravia a la Sultana,  
pues por tener heredero  
cualquier agravio se allana. 660

MADRIGAL Y aun es mejor, considero,  
no haberle en una cristiana  
de cuantas cautivas tiene.  
¿Quién es ésta que aquí viene?

RUSTÁNDos son.

MAMÍEstas dos serán 665  
las que principio darán  
al alarde.

RUSTÁNAsí conviene,  
que son en extremo bellas.

*(Entran CLARA y LAMBERTO; y, como se ha dicho, son ZAIDA y ZELINDA.)*

ZELINDANo puedo de mis querellas  
darte cuenta, que aún aquí 670  
se están Rustán y Mamí.

ZAIDAPon silencio, amigo, en ellas.

MAMÍ Cada cual de vosotras pida al cielo  
que la suerte le sea favorable  
en que Sultán la mire y le contente. 675

ZELINDA¿Pues cómo? ¿El Gran Señor vuelve a su usanza?

RUSTÁNY en este punto se ha de hacer alarde  
de todas sus cautivas.

ZAIDA¿Cómo es esto?  
¿Tan presto se le fue de la memoria  
la singular belleza que adoraba? 680  
El suyo no es amor, sino apetito.

RUSTÁN Busca dónde hacer un heredero,  
y sea en quien se fuere; ésta es la causa  
de mostrarse inconstante en sus amores.

MAMÍ ¿Dónde pondré a Zelinda que la mire? 685  
Que tiene parecer de ser fecunda.  
¿Será bien al principio?

ZELINDA ¡Ni por pienso!  
Remate sean de la hermosa lista  
Zaida y Zelinda.

MAMÍ Sean en buen hora,  
pues que dello gustáis.

RUSTÁN Mira, Zelinda: 690  
da rostro al Gran Señor; muéstrale el vivo  
varonil resplandor de tus dos soles:  
quizá te escogerá, y serás dichosa  
dándole el mayorazgo que desea.  
Aquí será el remate de la cuenta. 695  
Quedaos en tanto que a las otras pongo  
en numerosa lista.

ZAIDA Yo obedezco.

ZELINDA Y yo que aquí nos pongas te agradezco.

(Vanse MAMÍ y RUSTÁN.)

ZELINDA ¡Ahora sí que es llegada  
la infelicísima hora, 700  
antes de venir, menguada!  
¿Qué habemos de hacer, señora,  
yo varón y tú preñada?

Que si Amurates repara  
en esa tu hermosa cara, 705  
escogeráte, sin duda;  
y no hay prevención que acuda  
a desventura tan clara.

Y si, por desdicha, fuese  
tan desdichada mi suerte 710  
que el Gran Señor me escogiese...

ZAIDA Veréme en el de mi muerte,  
si en ese paso te viese.

ZELINDA ¿No será bien afearnos  
los rostros?

ZAIDA Será obligarnos 715  
a dar razón del mal hecho,  
y será tan sin provecho  
que ella sea en condenarnos.

ZELINDA Mira qué prisa se dan  
el renegado Mamí 720  
y el mal cristiano Rustán.  
Ya las cautivas aquí  
llegan: ya todas están;  
yo seguro, si las cuentas,  
que hallarás más de docientas. 725

ZAIDA Y todas, a lo que creo,

con diferente deseo  
del nuestro, pero contentas.  
¡Oh, qué de paso que pasa  
por todas el Gran Señor! 730  
A más de la mitad pasa.

ZELINDA Clara, un helado temor  
el corazón me traspasa.  
¡Plegue a Dios que, antes que llegue,  
el cielo a la tierra pegue 735  
sus pies!

ZAIDA Quizá escogerá  
primero que llegue acá.

ZELINDA Y si llegare, ¡que ciegue!

*(Entra el GRAN TURCO, MAMÍ y RUSTÁN.)*

TURCO De cuantas quedan atrás  
no me contenta ninguna. 740  
Mamí, no me muestres más.

MAMÍ Pues entre estas dos hay una  
en quien te satisfacerás.

RUSTÁN Alzad, que aquí la vergüenza  
no conviene que os convenza; 745  
alzad el rostro las dos.

TURCO ¡Catalina, como vos,

no hay ninguna que me venza!

Mas, pues lo quiere el cadí,  
y ello me conviene tanto, 750  
ésta me trairéis, Mamí.

*(Échale un pañizuelo el TURCO a ZELINDA y vase.)*

RUSTÁN; Tú solenizas con llanto  
la dicha de estotra?

ZAIDASí;  
porque quisiera yo ser  
la que alcanzara tener 755  
tal dicha.

MAMÍZelinda, vamos.

RUSTÁNSola y triste te dejamos.

ZAIDA;Tengo envidia, y soy mujer!

*(Vanse RUSTÁN y MAMÍ, y llevan a ZELINDA, que es LAMBERTO.)*

¡Oh mi dulce amor primero!  
¿Adónde vas? ¿Quién te lleva 760  
a la más estraña prueba  
que hizo amante verdadero?

Esta triste despedida  
bien claro me da a entender  
que, por tu sobra, ha de ser 765  
mi falta más conocida.

¿Qué remedio habrá que cuadre

en tan grande confusión,  
si eres, Lamberto, varón,  
y te quieren para madre? 770  
¡Ay de mí, que de la culpa  
de nuestro justo deseo,  
por ninguna suerte veo  
ni remedio ni disculpa!

*(Sale la SULTANA.)*

SULTANA Zaida, ¿qué has?

ZAIDA Mi señora, 775  
no alcanzo cómo te diga  
el dolor que en mi alma mora:  
Zelinda, aquella mi amiga  
que estaba conmigo ahora,  
al Gran Señor le han llevado. 780

SULTANA ¿Pues eso te da cuidado?  
¿No va a mejorar ventura?

ZAIDA Lévanla a la sepultura;  
que es varón y desdichado.

Ambos a dos nos quisimos 785  
desde nuestros años tiernos,  
y ambos somos transilvanos,  
de una patria y barrio mismo.

Cautivé yo por desgracia,  
que ahora no te la cuento 790  
porque el tiempo no se gaste  
sin pensar en mi remedio;  
él supo con nueva cierta  
el fin de mi cautiverio,  
que fue traerme al serrallo, 795



sepulcro de mis deseos,  
y los suyos de tal suerte  
le apretaron y rindieron,  
que se dejó cautivar  
con un discurso discreto. 800  
Vistióse como mujer,  
cuya hermosura al momento  
hizo venderla al Gran Turco  
sin conocerla su dueño.  
Con este designio extraño 805  
salió con su intento Alberto,  
que éste es el nombre del triste  
por quien muero y por quien peno.  
Conocióme y conocíle,  
y destos conocimientos 810  
he quedado yo preñada;  
que lo estoy, y estoy muriendo.  
Mira, hermosa Catalina,  
que con este nombre entiendo  
que te alegras: ¿qué he de hacer 815  
en mal de tales extremos?  
Ya estará en poder del Turco  
el desdichado mancebo,  
enamorado atrevido,  
más constante que no cuerdo; 820  
ya me parece que escucho  
que vuelve Mamí diciendo:  
«Zaida, ya de tus amores  
se sabe todo el suceso.  
¡Dispónte a morir, traidora, 825  
que para ti queda el fuego  
encendido, y puesto el gancho  
para enganchar a Lamberto!»

SULTANA Ven conmigo, Zaida hermosa,  
y ten ánimo, que espero, 830  
en la gran bondad de Dios,  
salir bien de aqueste estrecho.

*(Éntranse las dos.)*

*(Sale el GRAN TURCO, y trae asido del cuello a LAMBERTO, con una daga desenvainada; sale con el CADÍ y MAMÍ.)*

TURCO ¡A mí el ser verdugo toca  
de tan infame maldad!

ALBERTO Tiempla la celeridad 835  
que aun tu grandeza apoca;  
déjame hablar, y dame  
después la muerte que gustes.

TURCO No podrás con tus embustes  
que tu sangre no derrame. 840

CADÍ Justo es escuchar al reo:  
Amurates, óyele.

TURCO Diga, que yo escucharé.

MAMÍ Que se disculpe deseo.

ALBERTO Siendo niña, a un varón sabio 845  
oí decir las excelencias  
y mejoras que tenía  
el hombre más que la hembra;  
desde allí me aficioné  
a ser varón, de manera 850  
que le pedí esta merced

al Cielo con asistencia.  
Cristiana me la negó,  
y mora no me la niega  
Mahoma, a quien hoy gimiendo, 855  
con lágrimas y ternezas,  
con fervorosos deseos,  
con votos y con promesas,  
con ruegos y con suspiros  
que a una roca enternecieron, 860  
desde el serrallo hasta aquí,  
en silencio y con inmensa  
eficacia, le he pedido  
me hiciese merced tan nueva.  
Acudió a mis ruegos tiernos, 865  
enternecido, el Profeta,  
y en un instante volvíome  
en fuerte varón de hembra;  
y si por tales milagros  
se merece alguna pena, 870  
vuelva el Profeta por mí,  
y por mi inocencia vuelva.

TURCO ¿Puede ser esto, cadí?

CADÍY sin milagro, que es más.

TURCONi tal vi, ni tal oí. 875

CADÍEl cómo es esto sabrás,  
cuando quisieres, de mí,  
y la razón te dijera  
ahora si no viniera  
la Sultana, que allí veo. 880

TURCOY enojada, a lo que creo.

ALBERTO; Mi desesperar espera!

*(Entra la SULTANA y ZAIDA.)*

SULTANA ¡Cuán fácilmente y cuán presto  
has hecho con esta prueba  
tu tibio amor manifiesto! 885  
¡Cuán presto el gusto te lleva  
tras el que es más descompuesto!

Si es que estás arrepentido  
de haberme, señor, subido  
desde mi humilde bajeza 890  
a la cumbre de tu alteza,  
déjame, ponme en olvido.

Bien, cuitada, yo temía  
que estas dos habían de ser  
azares de mi alegría; 895  
bien temí que había de ver  
este punto y este día.

Pero, en medio de mi daño,  
doy gracias al desengaño,  
y, porque yo no perezca, 900  
no ha dejado que más crezca  
tu sabroso y dulce engaño.

Échalas de ti, señor,  
y del serrallo al momento:  
que bien merece mi amor 905  
que me des este contento  
y asegures mi temor.

Todos mis placeres fundo  
en pensar no harás segundo  
yerro en semejante cosa. 910

TURCOMás precio verte celosa,  
que mandar a todo el mundo,  
    si es que son los celos hijos  
del Amor, según es fama,  
y, cuando no son prolijos, 915  
aumentan de amor la llama,  
la gloria y los regocijos.

SULTANA Si por dejar herederos  
este y otros desafueros  
haces, bien podré afirmar 920  
que yo te los he de dar,  
y que han de ser los primeros,  
    pues tres faltas tengo ya  
de la ordinaria dolencia  
que a las mujeres les da. 925

TURCO;Oh archivo do la prudencia  
y la hermosura está!  
    Con la nueva que me has dado,  
te prometo, a fe de moro  
bien nacido y bien criado, 930  
de guardarte aquel decoro  
que tú, mi bien, me has guardado;  
    que los cielos, en razón  
de no dar más ocasión  
a los celos que has tenido, 935  
a Zelinda han convertido,  
como hemos visto, en varón.  
    Él lo dice, y es verdad,  
y es milagro, y es ventura,  
y es señal de su bondad. 940

SULTANAY es un caso que asegura  
sin temor nuestra amistad.  
    Y, pues tal milagro pasa,

con Zaida a Zelinda casa,  
y con lágrimas te ruego 945  
los echés de casa luego;  
no estén un punto en tu casa,  
que no quiero ver visiones.

ZAIDA En duro estrecho me pones,  
que no quisiera casarme. 950

SULTANA Podrá ser vengáis a darme  
por esto mil bendiciones.  
Hazles alguna merced,  
que no los he de ver más.

TURCO Vos, señora, se la haced. 955

RUSTÁN ¿Ha visto el mundo jamás  
tal suceso?

TURCO Disponed,  
señora, a vuestro albedrío  
de los dos.

SULTANA Bajá de Xío,  
Zelinda o Zelindo es ya. 960

TURCO ¿Cómo tan poco le da  
tu gran poder, si es el mío?  
Bajá de Rodas le hago,  
y con esto satisfago  
a su valor sin segundo. 965

ALBERTO Déte sujeción el mundo,

y a ti el Cielo te dé el pago  
de tus entrañas piadosas,  
¡oh rosa puesta entre espinas  
para gloria de las rosas! 970

TURCO Tú me fuerzas, no que inclinas,  
a hacer magníficas cosas;  
y así quiero, en alegrías  
de las ciertas profecías  
que de tus partos me has dado, 975  
que tenga el cadí cuidado  
de hacer de las noches días;  
infinitas luminarias  
por las ventanas se pongan,  
y, con invenciones varias, 980  
mis vasallos se dispongan  
a fiestas extraordinarias;  
renueven de los romanos  
los santos y los profanos  
grandes y admirables juegos, 985  
y también los de los griegos,  
y otros, si hay más, soberanos.

CADÍ Haráse como deseas,  
y desta grande esperanza  
en la posesión te veas; 990  
y tú con honesta usanza,  
cual Raquel, fecunda seas.

SULTANA Vosotros luego en camino  
os poned, que determino  
no veros más, por no ver 995  
ocasión que haya de ser  
causa de otro desatino.

ALBERTO En dándome la patente,  
me veré, señora mía,  
de tu alegre vista ausente, 1000  
y tu ingenio y cortesía  
tendré continuo presente.

ZAIDA Y yo, hermosa Catalina,  
por sin par y por divina  
tendré vuestra discreción. 1005

TURCO Justas alabanzas son  
de su bondad peregrina.  
Ven, cristiana de mis ojos,  
que te quiero dar de nuevo  
de mi alma los despojos. 1010

SULTANA Dese modo, yo me llevo  
la palma destos enojos;  
porque las paces que hacen  
amantes desavenidos  
alegran y satisfacen 1015  
sobremodo a los sentidos,  
que enojados se deshacen.

*(Éntranse todos.)*

*(Salen MADRIGAL y ANDREA.)*

MADRIGAL Veislos aquí, Andrea, y dichosísimo  
seré si me ponéis en salvamento;  
porque no hay que esperar a los diez años 1020  
de aquella elefantil cátedra mía;  
más vale que los ruegos de los buenos  
el salto de la mata.



ANDREA¿No está claro?

MADRIGALLos treinta de oro en oro son el precio  
de un papagayo indiano, único al mundo, 1025  
que no le falta sino hablar.

ANDREASi es mudo,  
alabáisle muy bien.

MADRIGAL¿Cadí ignorante!...

ANDREA¿Qué decís del cadí?

MADRIGALPor el camino  
te diré maravillas. Ven, que muero  
por verme ya en Madrid hacer corrillos 1030  
de gente que pregunte: «¿Cómo es esto?  
Diga, señor cautivo, por su vida:  
¿es verdad que se llama la Sultana  
que hoy reina en la Turquía, Catalina,  
y que es cristiana, y tiene don y todo, 1035  
y que es de Oviedo el sobrenombre suyo?»  
¡Oh, qué de cosas les diré! Y aun pienso,  
pues tengo ya el camino medio andado,  
siendo poeta, hacerme comediante  
y componer la historia desta niña 1040  
sin discrepar de la verdad un punto,  
representado el mismo personaje  
allá que hago aquí. ¿Ya es barro, Andrea,  
ver al mosqueterón tan boquiabierto,  
que trague moscas, y aun avispas trague, 1045  
sin echarlo de ver, sólo por verme?

Mas él se vengará quizá poniéndome  
nombres que me amohínen y fastidien.  
¡Adiós, Constantinopla famosísima!  
¡Pera y Permas, adiós! ¡Adiós, escala, 1050  
Chifutí y aun Guedí! ¡Adiós, hermoso  
jardín de Visitax! ¡Adiós, gran templo  
que de Santa Sofía sois llamado,  
puesto que ya servís de gran mezquita!  
¡Tarazanas, adiós, que os lleve el diablo, 1055  
porque podéis al agua cada día  
echar una galera fabricada  
desde la quilla al tope de la gavia,  
sin que le falte cosa necesaria  
a la navegación!

ANDREAMira que es hora, 1060  
Madrigal.

MADRIGALYa lo veo, y no me quedan  
sino trecientas cosas a quien darles  
el dulce adiós acostumbrado mío.

ANDREAVamos, que tanto adiós es desvarío.

*(Vanse.)*

*(Salen SALEC, el renegado, y ROBERTO (los dos primeros que comenzaron la comedia).)*

SALECElla, sin duda, es, según las señas 1065  
que me ha dado Rustán, aquel eunuco  
que dije ser mi amigo.

ROBERTO No lo dudo;  
que aquel volverse en hombre por milagro  
fue industria de Lamberto, que es discreto.

SALEC Vamos a la gran corte, que podría 1070  
ser que saliese ya con la patente  
de gran bajá de Rodas, como dicen  
que el Gran Señor le ha hecho.

ROBERTO ¡Dios lo haga!  
¡Oh si los viese yo primero, y antes  
que cerrase la muerte estos mis ojos! 1075

SALEC Vamos, y el cielo alegre tus enojos.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Suenan las chirimías; comienzan a poner luminarias; salen los garzones del TURCO por el tablado, corriendo con hachas y hachos encendidos, diciendo a voces: «¡Viva la gran sultana doña Catalina de Oviedo! ¡Felice parto tenga, tenga parto felice!» Salen luego RUSTÁN y MAMÍ, y dicen a los garzones:)*

RUSTÁN Alzad la voz, muchachos; viva a voces  
la gran sultana doña Catalina,  
gran sultana y cristiana, gloria y honra  
de sus pequeños y cristianos años, 1080  
honor de su nación y de su patria,  
a quien Dios de tal modo sus deseos  
encamine, por justos y por santos,  
que de su libertad y su memoria  
se haga nueva y verdadera historia. 1085

*(Tornan las chirimías y las voces de los garzones y dase fin.)*



# EL LABERINTO DE AMOR



*Comedia famosa del Laberinto de amor*

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Los que hablan en ella son los siguientes:

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Dos ciudadanos.

CORNELIO, *criado de ANASTASIO*.

EL DUQUE DE NOVARA.

UN PAJE.

UN EMBAJADOR DEL DE ROSENA.

UN EMBAJADOR DEL DE DORLÁN.

JULIA.

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DAGOBERTO, *duque de Utrino*.

MANFREDO.

ROSAMIRA.

UN HUÉSPED.

Dos jueces.

UN VERDUGO.

TRINO, *correo*.

## Jornada primera

*Salen dos ciudadanos de Novara, y el DUQUE ANASTASIO en hábito de labrador.*

ANASTASIO    Señores, ¿es verdad lo que se suena;  
que apenas treinta millas de Novara  
está Manfredo, duque de Rosena?

CIUDADANO 1    Si esa verdad queréis saber más clara,  
aquí un embajador del duque viene,    5  
que bien la nueva y su llegada aclara.

En Roso y sus jardines se entretiene,  
hasta que nuestro duque le dé aviso  
para venir al tiempo que conviene.

ANASTASIO    ¿Y es Manfredo galán?

CIUDADANO 2    Es un Narciso,    10  
según que sus retratos dan la muestra,  
y aun le va bien de discreción y aviso.

ANASTASIO    ¿Y Rosamira, la duquesa vuestra,  
pone de voluntad el yugo al cuello?

CIUDADANO 1    Nunca al querer del padre fue siniestra;    15  
cuanto más, que se vee que gana en ello,  
siendo el duque quien es.



ANASTASIO Así parece;  
aunque, con todo, algunos dudan dello:

CIUDADANO 2 Del duque es esta guarda que se ofrece,  
y aquí el embajador vendrá, sin duda. 20

CIUDADANO 1 Mucho le honra el duque.

CIUDADANO 2 Él lo merece.

*(Entra el DUQUE FEDERICO DE NOVARA y el EMBAJADOR DE EL DE ROSENA, con acompañamiento.)*

DUQUE Diréis también que a recrearse acuda.  
Y que en Módena o Reza se entretenga  
mientras del tiempo este rigor se muda,  
para que en este espacio se prevenga 25  
a su venida tal recibimiento,  
que más de amor que de grandeza tenga;  
añadiréis el singular contento  
que con sus donas recibió su esposa,  
y más de su llegada a salvamento. 30

EMBAJADOR Tu condición, señor, tan generosa,  
me obliga a que me haga lenguas todo  
para decir el bien que en ti reposa;  
pero, aunque no las tenga, me acomodo  
a decir por extenso al señor mío 35  
de tus grandezas el no visto modo.

DUQUE Dellas no, mas de vos muy más confío.

*(Entra DAGOBERTO, hijo del duque de Utrino.)*

DAGOBERTO Si no supiera, ¡oh sabio Federico!,  
gran duque de Novara generoso,  
que sabes bien quién soy, y que me aplico 40  
contino al proceder más virtuoso,  
juro por lo que puedo y certifico  
que a este trance viniera temeroso;  
mas tráeme mi bondad aquí sin miedo,  
para decir lo que encubrir no puedo. 45

Tu honra puesta en deshonorado trance  
está por quien guardarla más debiera,  
haciendo della peligroso alcance  
la fama, en esta parte verdadera.  
Forzosa es la ocasión, forzoso el lance; 50  
las riendas he soltado en la carrera:  
imposible es parar hasta que diga  
lo que una justa obligación me obliga.

Tu hija Rosamira en lazo estrecho  
yace con quien pudiera declarallo, 55  
si a la grande importancia deste hecho  
tocara con la lengua publicallo.  
Impide una ocasión lo que el derecho  
pide, y así, es forzoso el ocultallo;  
basta que esto es verdad, y que me obligo 60  
a probar con las armas lo que digo.

Digo que en deshonorado ayuntamiento  
se estrecha con un bajo caballero,  
sin tener a tus canas miramiento,  
ni a la ofensa de Dios, que es lo primero. 65  
Y a probar la verdad de lo que cuento  
diez días en el campo armado espero;  
que ésta es la vía que el derecho halla;  
do no hay testigos, suple la batalla.

DUQUE Confuso estoy; no sé qué responderte; 70  
considero quién eres, e imagino  
que sólo la verdad pudo traerte  
a cerrar de mis glorias el camino.

¿Quién dará medio a extremos de tal suerte?  
Es el que acusa un príncipe de Utrino; 75  
la acusada, mi hija; él, sabio y justo;  
ella, cortada de la honra al justo.

A que te crea tu valor me incita,  
puesto que la bondad de Rosamira  
tiene perpleja el alma, y solicita 80  
que no confunda a la razón la ira.  
Mas, si es que en parte la sospecha quita,  
o muestra la verdad o la mentira,  
la confesión del reo, oílla quiero,  
por ver si he de ser padre o juez severo. 85

Traigan a Rosamira a mi presencia,  
que es bien que la verdad no se confunda:  
que el reo a quien le libra su inocencia,  
la avisa en gloria y en su honor redunda.

EMBAJADOR Dame, señor, para partir licencia; 90  
que, aunque entiendas que el príncipe se funda  
en claro o en confuso testimonio,  
borrado ha de Manfredo el matrimonio.

Calunia tal, o falsa o verdadera,  
deshará más fundadas intenciones: 95  
que no es prenda la honra tan ligera  
que se deba traer en opiniones.  
Mira si mandas otra cosa.

DUQUE Espera;  
quizá verás que sin razón te pones  
a llevar a Manfredo aquesta nueva, 100  
hasta que veas más fundada prueba.

Tráiganme aquí a mi hija.

GUARDIA Ya son idos  
por ella.

DAGOBERTO ¿Poca prueba te parece  
la verdad que en mis hechos comedidos  
y en mis palabras la razón ofrece? 105

DUQUE Yo he visto engaños por verdad creídos.

DAGOBERTO El que dellos se precia bien merece  
que su verdad se tenga por mentira.

*(Entra ROSAMIRA.)*

GUARDIA Ya viene mi señora Rosamira.

ROSAMIRA ¿Qué prisa es ésta, buen señor?

DUQUE ¿Qué prisa? 110  
Dirála ahora el príncipe de Utrino.

DAGOBERTO Diréla, y sabe Dios cuánto me pesa  
el venirla a decir por tal camino.  
Yo he dicho, ¡oh, hermosísima duquesa!,  
lo que callarlo fuera desatino: 115  
he dicho que, con torpe ayuntamiento,  
un caballero está de ti contento;  
copia de ti le haces en secreto.  
Y esta prueba remítola a mi espada,  
que ha de ser el testigo más perfecto 120  
que se halle en la causa averiguada;  
y esto será cuando deste aprieto  
se admita tu disculpa mal fundada;  
mas sabes que es tan cierta ésta tu culpa,  
que no te has de atrever a dar disculpa. 125

DUQUE ¿Qué dices, hija? ¿Cómo no respondes?  
¿Empáchate el temor, o la vergüenza?  
Sin duda quieres, pues el rostro ascondes,  
que tu contrario sin testigos venza.  
¡Mal a quien eres hija correspondes! 130

DAGOBERTO Con la verdad bien es que se convenza.

DUQUE Culpada estáis, indicio es manifiesto  
tu lengua muda, tu inclinado gesto.  
¿Quién fue el traidor que te engañó, cuitada?  
¿O cuál fue el que la honra me ha llevado? 135  
¿O qué estrella, en mi daño conjurada,  
nos ha puesto a los dos en tal estado?  
¿Dó está tu condición tan recatada?  
¿Adónde tu juicio reposado?  
¡Mal le tuviste con el vicio a raya! 140

PAJE ¡Señores, mi señora se desmaya!

*(Desmáyase ROSAMIRA.)*

DUQUE Llévenla como está luego a esta torre,  
y en ella esté en prisión dura y molesta,  
hasta que alguna espada o pluma borre  
la mancha que en la honra lleva puesta. 145

DAGOBERTO Porque lengua probanza aquí se ahorre,  
está mi mano con mi espada presta  
a probar lo que he dicho en campo abierto.

DUQUE Parece que admito ese concierto,

puesto que al parecer de mi consejo 150  
tengo de remitir todo este hecho.

DAGOBERTO Pues yo en mi espada y mi verdad lo dejo,  
y en la sana intención de mi buen pecho.

EMBAJADOR Confuso voy, atónito y perplejo,  
entre el sí y entre el no mal satisfecho. 155  
Adiós, señor, porque este estraño caso,  
junto con el dolor, acucia el paso.

*(Vase el EMBAJADOR.)*

DUQUE ¡Parte con Dios, y lleva mi deshonra  
a los oídos de mi yerno honrados,  
yerno con quien pensé aumentar la honra 160  
que tan por tierra han puesto ya mis hados!  
Mostrado me has, Fortuna, que quien honra  
tus altares, en humo levantados,  
por premio le has de dar infamia y mengua,  
pues quita cien mil honras una lengua. 165

*(Éntrase el DUQUE, y al entrarse DAGOBERTO, le detiene ANASTASIO.)*

ANASTASIO Oye, señor, si no es que tu grandeza  
no se suele inclinar a dar oídos  
al bajo parecer de mi rudeza  
y a los que amenguan rústicos vestidos.

DAGOBERTO La gravedad de confirmada alteza 170  
no tiene aquesos puntos admitidos:  
habla cuanto te fuere de contento,

que a todo te prometo estar atento.

ANASTASIO    Por esta acusación, que a Rosamira  
has puesto tan en mengua de su fama, 175  
este rústico pecho, ardiendo en ira,  
a su defensa me convida y llama;  
que, ora sea verdad, ora mentira  
el relatado caso que la infama,  
el ser ella mujer, y amor la causa, 180  
debieran en tu lengua poner pausa.

No te azores, escúchame: o tú solo  
sabías este caso, o ya la noticia  
vino de más de alguno que notólo,  
o por curiosidad o por malicia. 185  
Si solo lo sabías, mal mirólo  
tu discreción, pues, no siendo justicia,  
pretende castigar secretas culpas,  
teniendo las de amor tantas disculpas.

Si a muchos era el caso manifiesto, 190  
dejaras que otro alguno le dijera:  
que no es decente a tu valor, ni honesto,  
tener para ofender lengua ligera.  
Si notas de mi arenga el presupuesto,  
verás que digo, o que decir quisiera, 195  
que espadas de los príncipes, cual eres,  
no ofenden, mas defienden las mujeres.

Si amaras al buen duque de Novara,  
otro camino hallaras, según creo,  
por donde, sin que en nada se infamara 200  
su honra, tú cumplieras tu deseo.  
Mas tengo para mí, y es cosa clara,  
por mil señales que descubro y veo,  
que en ese pecho tuyo alberga y lidia,  
más que celo y honor, rabia y envidia. 205

Perdóname que hablo desta suerte,  
si es que la verdad, señor, te enoja.

CIUDADANO 1 Apostad que le da el príncipe muerte.  
¿No veis el labrador cómo se arroja?

DAGOBERTO Quisiera de otro modo responderte; 210  
mas será bien que la razón recoja  
las riendas a la ira. Calla y vete,  
que más paciencia mi bondad promete.

*(Éntrase DAGOBERTO.)*

CIUDADANO 2 Por Dios, que habéis hablado largamente,  
y que, notando bien vuestro lenguaje, 215  
es tanto del vestido diferente,  
que uno muestra la lengua y otro el traje.

ANASTASIO A veces un enojo hace elocuente  
al de más torpe ingenio: que el coraje  
levanta los espíritus caídos 220  
y aun hace a los cobardes atrevidos.

En fin, ¿éste es el príncipe de Utrino,  
digo, el hijo heredero del Estado?

CIUDADANO 1 Él es.

ANASTASIO Pues ¿cómo aquí a Novara vino?

CIUDADANO 2 Dicen que del amor blando forzado. 225

ANASTASIO ¿Y a quién daba su alma?

CIUDADANO 2 Yo imagino,



si no es que el vulgo en esto se ha engañado,  
que Rosamira le tenía rendido;  
pero ya lo contrario ha parecido.

ANASTASIO Si eso dijo la fama, cosa es clara, 230  
y no van mal fundados mis recelos,  
visto que en su deshonra no repara,  
que esta su acusación nace de celos.  
¡Oh infernal calentura, que a la cara  
sale, y aun a la boca! ¡Oh santos cielos! 235  
¡Oh amor! ¡Oh confusión jamás oída!  
¡Oh vida muerta! ¡Oh libertad rendida!

*(Éntrase ANASTASIO.)*

CIUDADANO 1 So aquel sayal hay al, sin duda alguna:  
o yo sé poco, o no sois vos villano.

CIUDADANO 2 Mudan los trajes trances de fortuna, 240  
y encubren lo que está más claro y llano.  
No sé yo si debajo de la luna  
se ha visto lo que hemos visto. ¡Oh mundo insano,  
cómo tus glorias son perecederas,  
pues vendes burlas, pregonando veras! 245

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Salen JULIA y PORCIA en hábito de pastorcillos, con pellicos.)*

JULIA Porcia amiga...

PORCIA ¡Bueno es eso!

Rutilio me has de llamar,  
si es que quieres escusar  
un desastrado suceso.

Yo no sé cómo te olvidas 250  
de nuestros nombres trocados.

JULIA Suspéndenme los cuidados  
de nuestras trocadas vidas;

y no es bien que así te asombre  
ver mi memoria perdida: 255  
que, quien de su ser se olvida,  
no es mucho olvide su nombre.

Rutilio amigo, ¡ay de mí!,  
que arrepentida me veo,  
muerta a manos de un deseo 260  
a quien yo la vida di.

Mientras más, Rutilio, voy  
considerando lo hecho,  
más temor nace en mi pecho,  
más arrepentida estoy. 265

PORCIA Eso, amigo, es lo peor  
que yo veo en tus dolores:  
que adonde sobran temores,  
hay siempre falta de amor.

Si el amor en ti se enfría, 270  
cuesta se te hará la palma,  
grave tormenta la calma,  
noche obscura el claro día.

Ama más, y verás luego  
esparcirse los nublados, 275  
todos tus males trocados  
en dulce paz y sosiego.

Pero, quieras o no quieras,  
ya estás puesta en la batalla,  
y tienes de atropellalla, 280  
sea de burlas, sea de veras.

Ya en el ciego laberinto  
te metió el amor crüel;  
ya no puedes salir dél  
por industria ni distinto. 285

El hilo de la razón  
no hace al caso que prevengas;  
todo el toque está en que tengas  
un gallardo corazón,  
no para entrar en peleas, 290  
que en ellas no es bien te pongas,  
sino con que te dispongas  
a alcanzar lo que desees,  
cuéstete lo que costare:  
que si tu deseo alcanzas, 295  
no hay cumplidas esperanzas  
en quien el gusto repare.

Muestra ser varón en todo,  
no te descuides acaso,  
algo más alarga el paso, 300  
y huella de aqueste modo;  
a la voz da más aliento,  
no salga tan delicada;  
no estés encogida en nada,  
espárcete en tu contento; 305  
y, si fuere menester  
disparar un arcabuz,  
¡juro a Dios y a ésta que es cruz,  
que lo tenéis de hacer!

JULIA ¡Jesús! ¿Quieres que me asombre, 310  
Rutilio, en verte jurar?

PORCIA¿Con qué podré yo mostrar  
más fácilmente ser hombre?

Un voto de cuando en cuando,  
es gran cosa, por mi fe. 315

JULIA Yo, amiga, jurar no sé.

PORCIA Iráte el tiempo enseñando.

JULIA ¿Sabes, Porcia, lo que temo?  
¡Ay, que el nombre se me olvida!

PORCIA ¡Juro a Dios que estás perdida! 320

JULIA Ya a queso pasa de extremo.  
No jures más; si no, a fe,  
que te deje y que me vaya.

PORCIA Tanto melindre mal haya.

JULIA Pues, ¿por qué?

PORCIA Yo me lo sé. 325

JULIA En cólera me deshago  
en verte jurar por Dios.

PORCIA Pues también soy como vos  
medrosa, y a todo hago;  
y no os llevo tantos años, 330  
que ellos puedan enseñarme  
la experiencia de librarme  
de no conocidos daños.  
Avisad y tened brío;  
y, pues ya estamos en esto, 335  
echad del ánimo el resto,

que yo estaré con el mío.

JULIA Porcia amiga, ello es así.  
¡Ay, que el nombre se olvidó!

PORCIA ¡Mal haya quien me parió! 340  
Di Rutilio, ¡pesia a mí!

JULIA No te enojés, que yo juro  
de no olvidarme jamás.

PORCIA Cuando jures, jura más  
y estarás muy más seguro. 345

JULIA Téname destos pellicos  
que nos han de descubrir.

PORCIA Yo lo he querido decir:  
que es malo que sean tan ricos.

JULIA No va en esto, sino en ser 350  
conocidos.

PORCIA Pues ¿en qué?

JULIA ¿No ves que yo los mandé  
de aqueste modo hacer  
para la farsa o comedia  
que querían mis doncellas 355  
hacer?

PORCIA Haráse sin ellas;  
mas quizá será tragedia.

JULIA Y no los echaron menos  
cuando nosotras faltamos.  
Por esto en peligro estamos, 360  
y no por ser ellos buenos.

PORCIA Como a Módena lleguemos,  
mudaremos este traje.

JULIA Yo me vestiré de paje.

PORCIA Entrambos nos vestiremos. 365

JULIA Téme que está en Novara  
mi hermano.

PORCIA ¡Pluguiese al cielo!

JULIA Pues a fe que lo recelo;  
mas, sin duda, es cosa clara  
que él de Rosamira está 370  
en extremo enamorado  
y sírvela disfrazado.

PORCIA Eso importa poco ya;  
que, en llegando el de Rosena,  
Celia se casa con él. 375

Podrá tu hermano fiel  
morir, o dejar su pena.

JULIA ¡Qué corta es nuestra ventura!  
Tú enamorada de quien  
tiene a otra por su bien; 380  
yo, de quien mi mal procura,  
de quien se casa mañana.  
Y la fortuna molesta  
nos lleva a morir la fiesta  
de nuestra muerte temprana. 385  
¡Qué de imposibles se oponen  
a nuestros buenos deseos!  
¡Qué miedos, qué devaneos  
nuestra intención descomponen!  
¡Ay Rutilio, y cuán en vano 390  
ha de ser nuestra venida!

PORCIAMientras esté con la vida,  
pienso que en ventura gano.  
Confía y no desesperes,  
que puesto en plática está 395  
que el diablo no acabará  
lo que no acaban mujeres.

JULIA Escucha, que gente suena;  
cazadores son; escucha:  
gente viene, y gente mucha. 400

PORCIANo te dé ninguna pena;  
saludarlos y pasar,  
sin ponernos en razones.

*(Entran dos cazadores.)*

CAZADOR 1¿Tomó dos esmerejones?

CAZADOR 2Sí.

CAZADOR 1No hay más que desear. 405  
¿Y el duque, quédase atrás?

CAZADOR 2No; que veisle aquí a do viene.

CAZADOR 1Mucho en Rezo se detiene.

CAZADOR 2Sabed que no puede más.  
Y hoy vendrá su embajador, 410  
y sabrá lo que ha de hacer.

PORCIACamilo, aquí es menester  
ingenio, esfuerzo y valor,  
que el de Rosena es aquél  
que allí viene, según creo. 415

JULIA¡Amor, ayuda al deseo,  
pues que me pusiste en él!

*(Sale el DUQUE DE ROSENA, de caza.)*

MANFREDO ¿La garza no parece?

CAZADOR 1Ayer se descubrió en esta laguna



que a la vista se ofrece. 420

MANFREDO Pues un pastor me ha dicho que ninguna  
se ha visto en estos llanos.

CAZADOR 2 Pues de dos me dijeron dos villanos.

MANFREDO Dése a Rezo la vuelta;  
que, aunque no es tarde, va creciendo el viento, 425  
y aquella nube suelta  
señala injuria de turbi6n violento.  
¡Oh, qué bellos zagales!  
Mancebos, ¿sois de Rezo naturales?

JULIA En Pavía nacimos. 430

MANFREDO Pues, ¿d6nde vais agora?

JULIA Hacia Novara,  
no más de porque oímos  
que el duque Federico allí prepara  
una fiesta que admira,  
porque casa a su hija Rosamira 435  
con un señor llamado  
Manfredo, que es gran duque de Rosena.

MANFREDO Verdad os han contado.

PORCIA Pues a la fama que será tan buena  
la fiesta y boda vamos, 440  
y a nuestro padre en cólera dejamos.

MANFREDO ¿Y adónde queda el ganado?

PORCIA Imagino que perdido.

MANFREDO;Mucho atrevimiento ha sido!

JULIAA más obliga un cuidado. 445

MANFREDO ¿Úsanse aquestos pellicos  
ahora entre los pastores?

PORCIATambién muestran sus primores  
los villanos, si son ricos.

MANFREDO ¿Y lleváis bien que gastar? 450

JULIAUn tesoro de paciencia.

MANFREDO¿Encargaréis la conciencia  
si le acabáis de acabar?

PORCIA Tal puede ser el suceso  
que se acabe el sufrimiento. 455

MANFREDO;Por Dios, que me dais contento!

JULIAYa nos viéramos en eso.

MANFREDO ¿Cómo os llamáis?

JULIA Yo, Camilo.

PORCIA Y yo, Rutilio.

MANFREDO En verdad  
que parecen de ciudad 460  
vuestros nombres y el estilo,  
y que en ellos, y aun en él,  
poco es, mentís villanía.

PORCIA Como hay estudio en Pavía,  
algo se nos pega dél. 465

JULIA Díganos, señor: ¿qué millas  
desde aquí a Novara habrá?

MANFREDO Treinta a lo más que creo está.

CAZADOR 2Y dos más; son angostillas.

MANFREDO Conmigo os iréis, si os place, 470  
que yo ese camino hago.

JULIA Yo, por mí, me satisfago.

PORCIA Pues a mí no me desplace.

Pero advierta que los dos  
vamos poco a poco a pie. 475

MANFREDO Bien está: que yo os daré  
en que vais.

PORCIAPágueoslo Dios;  
que bien parecéis honrado,  
noble y rico y principal.

CAZADOR 1Y aun vosotros, de caudal 480  
mayor del que habéis mostrado;  
si no, dígalo el lenguaje,  
y el uno y otro pellico.

CAZADOR 2Es en Pavía muy rico  
casi todo el villanaje, 485  
y éstos hijos deben ser  
de algún rico ganadero.

MANFREDO A Rezo volverme quiero;  
bien os podéis recoger.

*(Entra UNO.)*

UNO Tu embajador ha llegado. 490

MANFREDO ¿Mompesir?

UNO Sí, mi señor.

MANFREDO Esperadme, por mi amor,  
que luego vuelvo.

PORCIA Haz tu grado.

*(Éntranse todos, si no es PORCIA y JULIA, que quedan.)*

JULIA Rutilio, ¿qué te parece?

PORCIA Camilo amigo, que estás 495  
en punto donde verás  
que es bueno el que se te ofrece.

La Fortuna te ha traído  
a poder del duque; advierte  
que un principio de tal suerte 500  
un buen fin tiene escondido.

JULIA ¿Parécete que le diga  
quién soy por un modo honesto?

PORCIA No te descubras tan presto.

JULIA Pues ¿cómo quies que prosiga? 505

PORCIA El tiempo vendrá a avisarte  
de aquello que has de hacer.

JULIA Mi mal no puede tener  
en parte del tiempo parte.

Si no estará el duque apenas 510  
tres días sin que se case,  
¿cómo dejaré que pase  
el tiempo, como me ordenas?

PORCIA Un caso tan grave y tal,  
con prisa mal se resuelve. 515  
Silencio, que el duque vuelve;  
el semblante trae mortal.

*(Vuelve a entrar el DUQUE y el EMBAJADOR que entró primero, y los dos cazadores.)*

EMBAJADOR Digo, señor, que el príncipe de Utrino,  
Dagoberto, heredero del Estado,  
en mi presencia y la del duque vino, 520  
y allí propuso lo que te he contado.  
No con la triste nueva perdió el tino  
el padre; padre no, mas recatado  
jüez, pues, como tal, mandó traella,  
y el príncipe afirmó su culpa ante ella. 525

Rosamira la oyó, y en su defensa  
mover no pudo, o nunca quiso, el labio;  
por esto el duque que es culpada piensa,  
pues no responde a tan notable agravio.  
El caso ponderó, y al fin dispensa, 530  
en todo procediendo como sabio,  
que, mientras se vee el caso, la duquesa  
en una torre esté encerrada y presa.

Dagoberto se ofrece con su espada  
a probar en el campo lo que dice. 535  
Yo, viendo a Rosamira así acusada,  
tus bodas al instante las deshice.  
Esto resulta, en fin, de mi embajada;  
mira, señor, si bien o si mal hice:  
que el duque, ya rendido a su fortuna, 540

no quiso responderte cosa alguna.

MANFREDO ¡Válame Dios, qué miserable caso!  
¿Dónde fabricas, mundo, estos vaivenes?  
¿Daslos con luenga prevención o acaso?  
¿O por qué antes de dallos no previenes? 545

CAZADOR 1 Señor, con largo y con ligero paso,  
cubierto de las plantas a las sienes  
de luto, un caballero veo que asoma  
por el verde recuesto desta loma.

MANFREDO Y aun me parece que hacia aquí endereza 550  
la rienda, y del caballo ya se apea.  
¡Qué bien con la color de mi tristeza  
viene el que trae aquí por librea!  
¿Quién podrá ser?

CAZADOR 2 La espada se adereza.

EMBAJADOR Descolorido llega.

MANFREDO Y mal criado. 555

*(Entra un EMBAJADOR del DUQUE DE DORLÁN, vestido de luto.)*

DORLÁN ¡Gracias a Dios, Manfredo, que te he hallado!  
Quien viene a lo que yo, Manfredo, vengo,  
no le conviene usar de más crianza:  
que sólo en las razones me prevengo  
que estarán en la lengua o en la lanza. 560  
La antigua ley de embajador mantengo:

escúchame, y responde sin tardanza,  
que a ti el gran duque de Dorlán me envía  
y a guerra a sangre y fuego desafía.

Dice, y esto es verdad, que habiendo dado 565  
a tu corte en la suya alojamiento,  
y habiéndote en su casa agasajado,  
viniendo a efetuar tu casamiento,  
como el troyano huésped, olvidado  
del hospedaje, con lascivo intento 570  
su hija le robaste y su sobrina:  
traición no de tu fama y nombre digna.

Por esto, si a su intento no te ajustas,  
y a la ley no respondes de hidalguía,  
de poder a poder, o, si más gustas, 575  
de persona a persona, desafía.

PORCIANuestras sandeces causan estas justas.  
¿Haslo notado bien? Di, Julia mía.

JULIACalla, y entre estos árboles te esconde;  
veremos lo que el duque le responde. 580

DORLÁN Y tanto a la venganza está dispuesto  
de aqueste agravio y malicioso hecho,  
que deste paño de color funesto  
que se vista su gente toda ha hecho,  
en tanto, o ya sea tarde, o ya sea presto, 585  
que, a desprecio y pesar de tu despecho,  
castiga la insolencia deste ultraje,  
transgresor de la ley del hospedaje.

Éste es el fin de mi embajada; mira  
si quieres responderme alguna cosa. 590

MANFREDORreprima mi inocencia en mí la ira  
que alborota tu lengua licenciosa;  
yo no sé qué responda a esa mentira;



sólo sé que Fortuna, mentirosa,  
debe o quiere probar con su insolencia 595  
los quilates que tiene mi paciencia.

Diréisle al duque que ante él mismo apelo  
de aquesta acusación vana que ha hecho,  
porque, por la Deidad que rige el cielo,  
que jamás tal traición cupo en mi pecho. 600  
Leal pisé de su palacio el suelo,  
leal salí, guardando aquel derecho  
que al hospedaje amigo se debía  
y a la ley que profeso de hidalguía.

Ni vi a su hija, ni jamás la he visto, 605  
ni la intención de mi camino era  
hacerme con mis huéspedes malquisto,  
aunque el lascivo gusto lo pidiera;  
que entonces con mayor fuerza resisto,  
cuando la torpe inclinación ligera 610  
con más regalo acude al pensamiento,  
estando al ser quien soy contino atento.

Ni acepto el desafío, ni desecho;  
sólo lo que pretendo es dilatallo  
hasta que el duque esté más satisfecho 615  
y la misma verdad venga a estorballo.  
Y cuando esto no fuese de provecho,  
y el engaño prosiga en engañallo,  
para entonces acepto el desafío,  
ajustando a su gusto el gusto mío. 620

Esto doy por respuesta y no otra cosa;  
mirad si a Rejo queréis ir conmigo.

DORLÁNEs el camino largo, y presurosa  
la gana de volver al suelo amigo.  
¡A Dios quedad!

*Vase.*

MANFREDO Fortuna rigurosa, 625  
¿qué es esto? ¿Quién soy yo, o qué pasos sigo  
tan malos, que se extrema así tu furia  
en hacerme una injuria y otra injuria?  
¡Infamada mi esposa, y yo infamado,  
y por lo menos de traición! ¿Qué es esto? 630  
¡En tan triste sazón me tiene puesto!

EMBAJADOR Señor, si en nada desto estás culpado,  
no es bien que te congoje nada desto:  
tu esposa aún no era tuya: esta culpa  
en tu pura verdad tiene disculpa. 635

MANFREDO No me aconsejes ni me des consuelo,  
y a Rosena mi gente luego vuelva;  
que este rigor con que me trata el Cielo  
quiere que en éste sólo me resuelva.

EMBAJADORA Aunque con vengativo, airado celo, 640  
su fuerza el hado contra ti resuelva,  
yo no le he de dejar.

MANFREDO Escucha un poco:  
quizá dirás de veras que estoy loco.

PORCIA ¿Qué hemos de hacer, Camilo?

JULIA ¿No está claro?  
Seguir del duque las pisadas todas. 645

PORCIA ¿Con qué ocasión?

JULIA En eso no reparo.

PORCIA ¿No ves que se han deshecho ya las bodas?

JULIA Ventura ha sido mía.

MANFREDO No me aclaro  
más por agora.

EMBAJADOR En fin, ¿que te acomodas  
a ir desamano?

MANFREDO Ten a punto 650  
los vestidos que digo.

EMBAJADOR Harélo al punto.

MANFREDO Y no quede ninguno de los míos.  
Y en esto no me hagas más instancia,  
que la mudable rueda en desvaríos  
tiene encerrada a veces la ganancia. 655  
Y estos dos pastorcillos, que en sus bríos  
muestran más sencillez que no arrogancia,  
si dello gustan, quedarán conmigo.

PORCIA ¿Entendístele?

JULIA ¡Y cómo, oh cielo amigo!  
Señor, si es que la ida de Novara, 660

según que hemos oído, se te impide,  
volver queremos a la patria clara,  
si otra cosa tu gusto no nos pide.

MANFREDO Puesto que la fortuna y suerte avara  
su querer con el mío jamás mide, 665  
por esta vez entiendo que me ha dado  
en los dos lo que pide mi cuidado.

Quedaos conmigo, que a Novara iremos,  
donde, puesto que fiestas no veamos,  
quizá cosas más raras hallaremos, 670  
con que el sentido y vista entretengamos.

PORCIA Por tuyos desde aquí nos ofrecemos:  
que bien se nos trasluce que ganamos  
en servirte, señor, cuanto es posible.

MANFREDO Haz lo que he dicho.

EMBAJADOR ¡Oh, caso no creíble! 675

*(Éntranse todos, y sale ANASTASIO y CORNELIO, su criado.)*

ANASTASIO Poco me alegra el campo ni las flores.

CORNELIO Ni a mí tus sinsabores me contentan;  
porque es cierto que afrentan los amores  
que en tan bajos primores se sustentan,  
y en mil partes nos cuentan mil autores 680  
cien mil varios dolores que atormentan  
al miserable amante no entendido,  
poco premiado y menos conocido.

ANASTASIO    Ya te he dicho, Cornelio, que te dejes  
de darme esos consejos escusados, 685  
y nunca a los amantes aconsejes  
cuando tienen por gloria sus cuidados;  
que es como quien predica a los herejes,  
en sus vanos errores obstinados.

CORNELIO    Muy bien te has comparado. Advierte y mira 690  
que ya no es Rosamira Rosamira:

    las trenzas de oro y la espaciosa frente,  
las cejas y sus arcos celestiales,  
el uno y otro sol resplandeciente,  
las hileras de perlas orientales, 695  
la bella aurora que del nuevo oriente  
sale de las mejillas, los corales  
de los hermosos labios, todo es feo,  
si a quien lo tiene infama infame empleo.

    La buena fama es parte de belleza, 700  
y la virtud, perfecta hermosura;  
que, a do suele faltar naturaleza,  
suple con gran ventaja la cordura;  
y, entre personas de subida alteza,  
amor hermoso a secas es locura. 705  
En fin, quiero decir que no es hermosa,  
siéndolo, la mujer no virtuosa.

    Rosamira, en prisión; la causa, infame;  
tú, disfrazado y muerto por librilla,  
ignoras la verdad; ¿y quiés que llame 710  
justa la pretensión desta batalla?

ANASTASIO    Tu sangre harás, Cornelio, que derrame,  
pues procuras la mía así alteralla  
con tus razones vanas y estudiadas,  
y entre libres discursos fabricadas. 715

    Vete; déjame y calla; si no, ¡juro...!

CORNELIO Yo callaré; no jures, sino advierte  
que gente viene alrededor del muro,  
y temo, al fin, que habrán de acometerte.

ANASTASIO Desto puedes estar muy bien seguro, 720  
que en la ciudad he estado desta suerte  
seis días hace hoy, y estaré ciento:  
que salió este disfraz a mi contento.

*(Entran TÁCITO y ANDRONIO, estudiantes capigorristas.)*

ANDRONIO Deja los libros, Tácito;  
digo, deja el tomar de coro agora, 725  
y, a nuestro beneplácito,  
gozando el fresco de la fresca aurora,  
por aquí nos andemos.

TÁCITO ¡Por Dios, que es buen encuentro el que tenemos!  
Villano es el morlaco. 730  
¿Quieres que le tentemos las corazas,  
y veremos si es maco?

ANDRONIO Siempre en las burlas, Tácito, que trazas  
salimos mal medrados.  
Talle tienen los mozos de avisados. 735

TÁCITO Por esta vez, probemos:  
que si el pacho consiente bernardinas,  
el tiempo entretendremos.

ANDRONIO ¡Con qué facilidad te determinas

a hacer bellaquerías! 740

CORNELIOHacia nosotros vienen.

TÁCITONo te rías.

Díganos, gentilhombre,  
así la diosa de la verecundia  
reciproque su nombre,  
y el blanco pecho de tremante enjundia 745  
soborne en conforino:  
¿adónde va, si sabe, este camino?

ANASTASIO Mancebo, soy de lejos,  
y no sé responder a esa pregunta.

TÁCITODígame: ¿son reflejos 750  
los marcurcios que asoman por la punta  
de aquel monte, compadre?

CORNELIO¿Bellaco sois, por vida de mi madre!  
¿Bernardinas a horma?  
Yo apostaré que el duque no le entiende. 755

ANASTASIOHabláisme de tal suerte,  
que no sé responderos.

TÁCITOPues atienda,  
gamicivo, y está atento.

CORNELIO¿Qué donaire y qué gracioso acento!

TÁCITO Digo que ¿si mi paso 760  
tiendo por los barrancos deste llano,  
si podrá hacer al caso?

ANASTASIO Digo que no os entiendo, amigo hermano.

TÁCITO Pues bien claro se aclara,  
que es clara, si no es turbia, el agua clara. 765  
Quiero decir que el tronto,  
por do su curso lleva al horizonte,  
está a caballo, y prompto  
a propagar la cima de aquel monte.

ANASTASIO ¡Ya, ya; ya estoy en ello! 770

TÁCITO Pues ¿qué quiero decir, gozmio, camello?

ANASTASIO Que son bellacos grandes  
los mancebitos de primer tonsura.

TÁCITO Tontón, no te desmandes,  
que llevarás del sueño la soltura. 775

CORNELIO Mi señor estudiante,  
mire no haga que le asiente el guante.

ANASTASIO Confieso que al principio  
yo no entendí la flor de los mancebos.

ANDRONIO Arena, cal y ripio 780



trago, mi señorazo papahuevos.

CORNELIO Su flor se ha descubierta.

TÁCITO Pues zarpo déste y voyme a mejor puerto.

CORNELIO No se vayan, que asoman  
otros dos de su traza y compostura, 785  
y este camino toman.  
También son éstos de primer tonsura,  
y, a lo que yo imagino,  
de aquí no son, y vienen de camino.

*(Entran JULIA y PORCIA, como estudiantes de camino.)*

PORCIA Querría que no errásemos 790  
en lo que el duque nos mandó, Camilo,  
y es que aquí le esperásemos.

JULIA ¿Entendístelo bien?

PORCIA Bien entendílo.

ANDRONIO Argumentando vienen.  
Lleguémonos, si acaso se detienen, 795  
y déjennos con ellos;  
gustarán de la burla.

CORNELIO Que nos place.

ANASTASIO Yo no estoy para vellos:  
que mal la alegre burla satisface  
al alma que no alcanza 800  
a ver, si no es burlada, su esperanza.

*(Éntranse ANASTASIO y CORNELIO.)*

JULIA En esta tierra asiste,  
en disfrazado traje, aquel mi hermano  
a quien tú adoras triste.  
Si me encuentra y conoce...

PORCIA Es temor vano; 805  
que en tal traje nos vemos,  
que a la misma verdad engañaremos.  
A mí una vez me ha visto,  
y ésa de noche.

JULIA A mí, casi ninguna.  
Mal al temor resisto; 810  
estudiantes son éstos.

TÁCITO La fortuna  
mi atrevimiento ayude;  
si en trabajo me viere, Andronio, acude.  
¿Son estudiantes, señores?

PORCIA Sí, señor, y forasteros. 815

TÁCITO ¿Pacacios, o caballeros?

JULIA No somos de los peores.

TÁCITO ¿Y qué han oído?

PORCIA Desgracias.

JULIA Y en ellas somos maestros.

ANDRONIO Por mi vida, que son diestros 820  
y que saben decir gracias.

Pues háganme este latín,  
así Dios les dé salud:  
«Yo soy falto de virtud,  
tan bellaco como ruin». 825

PORCIA No venimos dese espacio.

ANDRONIO No se deben de escusar,  
si es que nos quieren mostrar  
que son hombres de palacio.

JULIA Ni aun de nada somos hombres. 830

ANDRONIO Pues, ya que se escusan desto,  
dígannos, y luego, y presto  
de dónde son, y sus nombres,  
qué estudian, la edad que tienen,  
si es rico o pobre su padre, 835  
la estatura de su madre,  
dónde van y de a dó vienen.  
¡Turbados están! ¡Apriesa,  
respondan, que tardan mucho!

PORCIA Con gran paciencia te escucho, 840  
mancebito de traviesa.

Váyase y déjenos ir,  
y serále muy más sano.

ANDRONIO ¡Jesús, qué mal cortesano!  
¿Tal se ha dejado decir? 845

JULIA Es tarde, y hay que hacer,  
y servimos, y tardamos.

TÁCITO Ténganse, que aquí cobramos  
la alcabala del saber;  
porque cuando el sacrilegio 850  
a Mahoma se entregó,  
esta autoridad nos dio  
nuestro famoso colegio.  
¡Miren si voy arguyendo  
con razones circunflejas! 855

PORCIA Atruénasme las orejas,  
mancebito, y no te entiendo.

TÁCITO Andronio.

ANDRONIO Ya estoy al cabo.

*(Pónese ANDRONIO detrás de JULIA para hacerla caer; pero no la ha de derribar.)*

TÁCITO Volviendo a nuestro comienzo,  
el asado San Lorenzo, 860

cuyas virtudes alabo,  
en sus *Cuntiloquios* dice...

JULIA ¡Ésta es gran bellaquería,  
y juro por vida mía...!

TÁCITO Y dirán que yo lo hice. 865

JULIA Pero aquí viene nuestro amo,  
y mala ventura os mando.

TÁCITO Signori, me recomendo,  
y a la corona me llamo.

Y a revederci altra volta, 870  
dove finitemo el resto,  
or non piu, & visogna presto  
fugiré de qui si ascolta.

(*Éntrase TÁCITO y ANDRONIO.*)

(*Entra MANFREDO, como estudiante, de camino.*)

MANFREDO Rutilio y Camilo, pues,  
¿he, por ventura, tardado? 875

PORCIA Más de un hora hemos estado  
esperando, como ves;  
y aun nos han dado mal rato  
dos bonitos estudiantes,  
que tienen más de chocantes, 880  
que no de letras su trato.  
Pero ¿en qué te has detenido

tanto tiempo?

MANFREDO Fui escuchando  
dos que iban razonando  
de este caso sucedido. 885

Y apostaré que estos dos  
que vienen tratan también  
de este hecho. Escucha bien  
si acierto, así os guarde Dios.

JULIA ¿De qué sirve el escuchar, 890  
pues podemos preguntarlo?

*(Entran los dos ciudadanos que entraron al principio.)*

CIUDADANO 1 Por mil conjeturas hallo  
que ella habrá de peligrar.

CIUDADANO 2 En fin: que no se disculpa.

CIUDADANO 1 ¡Ésa es una cosa estraña! 895

CIUDADANO 2 El pensamiento me engaña,  
o ella no tiene culpa.

MANFREDO Mis señores, ¿qué se suena  
del caso de la duquesa?

CIUDADANO 1 Que se está todavía presa, 900  
y el silencio la condena.

MANFREDO ¿Quién la acusa?

CIUDADANO 2Dagoberto.

MANFREDO¿Da testigos?

CIUDADANO 2Ni aun indicio.

MANFREDOCierto que no es ése oficio  
de caballero.

CIUDADANO 1No, cierto. 905

MANFREDO ¿Y su padre?

CIUDADANO 1¿Qué ha de hacer?  
Sólo ha hecho pregonar  
que a quien la acierte a librar  
se la dará por mujer,  
como sea caballero 910  
el que se oponga a la empresa.

MANFREDO¿Y que calla la duquesa?

CIUDADANO 2Como si fuese un madero.

MANFREDO ¿Y del duque que se suena

que había de ser su esposo? 915

CIUDADANO 1 Que, en sabiendo el caso astroso,  
dio la vuelta hacia Rosena.

Y aun otras nuevas nos dan,  
ni sé si es verdad o no:  
que, estando en Dorlán, sacó 920  
una hija al de Dorlán,  
y también a una parienta,  
del mismo duque sobrina,  
y que el duque determina  
vengarse de aquesta afrenta. 925

Y que se tiene por cierto  
que la sacó el de Rosena.

CIUDADANO 2 Hasta agora, así se suena;  
ni sé si es cierto o incierto.

MANFREDO Y, si como eso es mentira, 930  
como me doy a entender,  
podrá ser que venga a ser  
bien mismo de Rosamira:  
que sé que el duque es muy bueno,  
y que traición ni ruindad, 935  
si no es razón y bondad,  
jamás albergó en su seno.

CIUDADANO 1 ¿Sois acaso milanés?  
Porque de sello dais muestra.

MANFREDO Aunque la lengua lo muestra, 940  
no soy sino boloniés;  
mas he estudiado en Pavía,  
y algo la lengua he tomado.



CIUDADANO 2 ¿Y qué es lo que se ha estudiado?

MANFREDO Humanidad.

CIUDADANO 1 Sí haría: 945  
que todos los de su edad  
eso es lo que estudian más.

MANFREDO Sin estudiarla, jamás  
se aprende esta facultad.

CIUDADANO 1 ¿Y a qué venís a Novara? 950

MANFREDO A ver la boda venía.

CIUDADANO 2 No quiso en tanta alegría  
ponernos la suerte avara;  
y en lugar della, podréis  
ver, si gustáis, la batalla. 955

MANFREDO Si no hay quien salga a tomalla.

CIUDADANO 1 Poco tiempo os detendréis:  
que no quedan más de seis  
días para el plazo puesto.

MANFREDO De quedarme estoy dispuesto. 960

CIUDADANO 1 Sin duda, lo acertaréis.  
Y ¡adiós!

MANFREDO Con él vais los dos.

CIUDADANO 2 ¿Luego aquí os queréis quedar?

MANFREDO Sí; porque aquí he de aguardar  
a un amigo.

CIUDADANO 2 Pues, ¡adiós! 965

MANFREDO Yo no sé en qué se confía  
mi dudosa voluntad,  
y, si no es curiosidad,  
¿qué locura es ésta mía?

Creo que a darme deshonra, 970  
ingrato amor, te dispones,  
pues cuando está en opiniones  
la honra, no hay tener honra.

*(Éntrase JULIA, PORCIA y MANFREDO.)*

*(Sale el DUQUE FEDERICO y el CARCELERO que tiene a la DUQUESA ROSAMIRA.)*

DUQUE ¿Cómo está la duquesa?

CARCELERO Negro luto  
cubre su faz, y, sola en su aposento, 975

al suelo da de lágrimas tributo  
con doloroso, amargo sentimiento.

DUQUE; Oh bien hermoso y mal nacido fruto,  
marchito en la sazón de más contento,  
y cómo al mejor tiempo me has burlado, 980  
quedando en mis designios defraudado!  
¿Y que no se disculpa?

CARCELERONi por pienso.

DUQUE¿De quién se queja?

CARCELERODE su corta suerte.

DUQUEEn breve tiempo de su vida el censo  
dará a una infame, inevitable muerte. 985

CARCELERO¿Sabes, señor, lo que imagino y pienso?

DUQUE¿Qué piensas o imaginas?

CARCELEROQue es muy fuerte  
de creer que el de Utrino verdad diga.

DUQUEA que lo crea su bondad me obliga,  
y el ver que Rosamira, en su disculpa, 990  
el labio no ha movido ni le mueve;  
y es muy cierta señal de tener culpa  
el que a volver por sí nunca se atreve.

La culpa es grave; grave el que la culpa;  
el plazo a la batalla, corto y breve; 995  
defensor no se ofrece: indicio claro  
que a su desdicha no ha de hallar reparo.

CARCELERO ¿Si quisiere, por dicha, dar descargo  
con otro, pues no quiere en tu presencia,  
quizá turbada del infame cargo, 1000  
dejarla he visitar?

DUQUE Con mi licencia.

CARCELERO Puesto que el bien guardalla está a mi cargo,  
no está a mi cargo usar desta inclemencia:  
que, a fe, si su remedio se hallase,  
que muy poco tus órdenes guardase. 1005

## Jornada segunda

*Entran CORNELIO y ANASTASIO.*

CORNELIO Volviendo a lo comenzado,  
señor, ¿qué piensas hacer?

ANASTASIO Lo que procuro es saber  
si el príncipe se ha engañado,  
o qué causa le ha movido 5  
a acusar a Rosamira:  
si fueron celos, o ira,  
ser llamado y no escogido;  
y, cuando desta querella  
no sepa verdad jamás, 10  
por gentileza no más  
me dispongo a defendella.

CORNELIO Propongo que Dagoberto  
es vencido en la batalla,  
y que ella libre se halla 15  
de la tormenta en el puerto:  
¿tendrás por cosa notoria  
el poder asegurarte  
que la razón vino a darte,  
y no fuerza, la vitoria? 20  
Porque de Dios los secretos  
son tan incomprensibles,  
que a veces vemos visibles,  
de bienes, malos efectos.

ANASTASIO    Ya entiendo tus argumentos, 25  
y con ellos me das pena.  
Haga el Cielo lo que ordena;  
yo honraré mis pensamientos.

*(Entran JULIA y PORCIA.)*

CORNELIO    Los estudiantes son estos  
de quien los otros burlaron. 30

ANASTASIO    Sus burlas, ¿en qué pararon?

CORNELIO    Eran algo descompuestos.

Forastero me parece  
en cierto modo su traje;  
eso veré en su lenguaje, 35  
si el hablallos se me ofrece.

PORCIA    Camilo, no te descuides  
en mostrar en dicho y hecho  
que eres varón, a despecho  
de cuantos cuidados cuides. 40

Deja melindres aparte,  
da a las ternezas de mano,  
y mira que está en tu mano  
el perderte o el ganarte.

Mira que amor te ha traído, 45  
por un nunca visto enredo  
a ser paje de Manfredo,  
y paje favorecido:  
que es principio que asegura  
buen fin a tu pretensión. 50

JULIA    Tienes, Rutilio, razón;

mas no tengo yo ventura,  
pues, cuando más me acomodo  
a hacer lo que me ordenas,  
embebecida en mis penas, 55  
se me olvida a veces todo.

Mas, ¡ay de mí, desdichada,  
que éste es el duque, mi hermano!

PORCIAVuelve el rostro a esotra mano,  
y vuélvete a la posada; 60  
que él no me conoce a mí,  
y conviéneme hablalle.

JULIA¿Por dó he de ir?

PORCIAPor esa calle.

JULIA¿Vendrás presto?

PORCIAVoy tras ti.

*(Vase JULIA.)*

Buen hombre, ¿sois desta tierra? 65

ANASTASIONi soy della, ni buen hombre.

PORCIA Pues, ¿cómo la vuestra ha nombre?

ANASTASIO Como el cielo que la encierra.

CORNELIO *Aparte.*

Querrá decir Rosamira,  
que es tierra y cielo a do vive. 70  
Estas quimeras concibe  
quien más por amor suspira.

ANASTASIO Y vos, ¿sois deste lugar,  
señor estudiante?

PORCIANó.

ANASTASIO ¿Pues de dónde?

PORCIA Aún no sé yo 75  
de a dó me podré llamar:  
que el cielo y tierra, hasta agora,  
me tratan como extranjero,  
y ni dél ni della espero  
ver en mis cuitas mejora. 80

ANASTASIO ¿Vos con cuitas en edad  
tan tierna? ¡A fe que me espanta!

PORCIA A los años se adelanta  
tal vez la calamidad;  
y más cuando son de aquellas 85  
que trae el amor en sus alas.



CORNELIO Sus razones no son malas,  
aunque yo no sé entendellas;  
    mas, con todo, apostaré  
que está el rapaz traspasado 90  
del agudo arpón dorado,  
como el señor su mercé.

ANASTASIO   ¿Amáis, por ventura?

PORCIA Sí;  
mas no sé si por ventura,  
aunque alguna me asegura 95  
ver ahora lo que vi.

ANASTASIO   Pues, ¿qué veis?

PORCIA No será honesto  
hacer que me ponga en mengua  
tan fácilmente mi lengua  
como mis ojos me han puesto; 100  
    ni vuestro traje me mueve,  
ni mi deseo, a mostrar  
lo que en silencio ha de estar  
hasta que otras cosas pruebe.

ANASTASIO   ¿Tan mal os parece el traje? 105

PORCIA No, por cierto; porque veo  
que dese rústico aseo  
es muy contrario el lenguaje,  
    y podrá ser que el sayal  
encubra el al del refrán. 110

ANASTASIO¿De dónde sois?

PORCIADe Dorlán.

ANASTASIODe ahí soy yo natural.  
¿Cuánto ha que de allá venistes?

PORCIAPoco más de doce días.

ANASTASIO¿Qué hay de nuevo?

PORCIANIñerías, 115  
aunque son un poco tristes.

ANASTASIO ¿Y qué son?

PORCIAQue el de Rosena,  
que el de Dorlán hospedó,  
a Julia y Porcia robó,  
como Paris hizo a Helena. 120

ANASTASIO ¿Tiénese eso por verdad?

PORCIASí tiene; mas yo imagino  
que no lleva más camino  
que del cielo la maldad.

ANASTASIO ¿Pues qué dicen?

PORCIA Yo entreoí 125  
que la Porcia quería bien  
a Anastasio.

ANASTASIO ¿Cómo? ¿A quién?

PORCIA A Anastasio.

ANASTASIO *Aparte.*

¿Cómo? ¿A mí?  
¿A su primo hermano? ¡Bueno!

PORCIA Quizá guiaba su intento 130  
por vía de casamiento.

ANASTASIO Deso está mi bien ajeno.  
Mas, ¿eso qué importa al hecho  
de roballa?

PORCIA No sé yo;  
dícese que la sacó 135  
el mismo amor de su pecho.  
Mas deben de ser hablillas  
del vulgo mal informado.

CORNELIO A mí me han maravillado.

ANASTASIO ¿Pues de qué te maravillas? 140  
Di: ¿no puede acontecer,

sin admiración que asombre,  
que una mujer busque a un hombre,  
como un hombre a una mujer?

CORNELIO    Sí puede; y es tan agible 145  
lo que dices, que se ve  
que, en las posibles, no sé  
otra cosa más posible.

ANASTASIO    Como a su centro camina,  
esté cerca o apartado, 150  
lo leve o lo que es pesado,  
y a procuralle se inclina,  
    tal la hembra y el varón  
el uno al otro apetece,  
y a veces más se parece 155  
en ella esta inclinación;  
    y si la naturaleza  
quitase a su calidad  
el freno de honestidad,  
que tiembla su ligereza, 160  
    correría a rienda suelta  
por do más se le antojase,  
sin que la razón bastase  
a hacerla dar la vuelta;  
    y así, cuando el freno toma 165  
entre los dientes del gusto,  
ni la detiene lo justo,  
ni algún respeto la doma.

PORCIA    ¡En poca deuda os están  
las mujeres!

CORNELIO Si así fuera, 170  
ni yo este traje trujera,

ni él vistiera aquel gabán.

ANASTASIO No es tan poca: que si hago  
la cuenta, no sé yo paga  
que a la deuda satisfaga, 175  
puesto que en ella me pago.

PORCIA En fin: ¿amáis?

ANASTASIO Alma tengo,  
y no he de estar sin amor.

PORCIA Hay amor bueno y mejor.

ANASTASIO Yo con el mejor me avengo. 180

PORCIA ¿Es labradora?

ANASTASIO El tabarro  
que me cubre así lo dice.

PORCIA Pues todo lo contradice  
el talle y horro bizarro;  
que el tabarro es tosca caja 185  
que encierra el fino diamante.

CORNELIO ¡El diablo es el estudiante!  
¡Qué bien su razón encaja!  
Apostaré que mi amo,  
sin más ni más, le da cuenta 190

de quién es y lo que intenta.  
Por aquesto le desamo:  
    que presume de discreto,  
y no ve que es ignorancia,  
en las cosas de importancia, 195  
fiar de nadie el secreto.

ANASTASIO   Ahora bien, si vuestra estada  
no es de asiento en el lugar  
y queréis conmigo estar  
en una misma posada, 200  
    en la que tengo os ofrezco  
el género de amistad  
que engrandece la igualdad.

PORCIADaisme lo que no merezco.  
    Mas heme de despedir 205  
primero de un cierto amigo.

CORNELIOAquesto es lo que yo digo:  
él se vendrá a descubrir.

ANASTASIO   A la insignia del Pavón  
es mi estancia.

PORCIAAndad con Dios, 210  
que mañana soy con vos.  
¡Oh venturosa ocasión!

*(Éntrase ANASTASIO y CORNELIO.)*

Si al fuego natural no se le pone

materia que en la tierra le sustente,  
volverá a su esfera fácilmente, 215  
que así naturaleza lo dispone.

Y el amante que quiere que se abone  
su fe con afirmar que no consiente  
en su alma esperanza, poco siente  
de amor, pues que a su ley justa se opone. 220

Cual sin el agua quedaría la tierra,  
sin sol el cielo, el aire sin vacío,  
el mar en tempestad, nunca en bonanza,  
y sin su objeto, que es la paz, la guerra,  
forzado sin su gusto el albedrío, 225  
tal quedara amor sin esperanza.

*(Éntrese PORCIA.)*

*(Salen TÁCITO y ANDRONIO.)*

ANDRONIO Vamos hacia la prisión  
de la duquesa, que importa.

TÁCITO Reporta, Andronio, reporta  
tu arrojada condición: 230  
que siempre quieres saber  
lo que no te importa un pelo.

ANDRONIO Soy curioso.

TÁCITO Yo recelo  
que aqueso te ha de ofender.  
Necio llamaré del todo, 235  
no curioso, al que se mete  
en lo que no le compete  
ni toca por algún modo.

Hay algunos tan simplones,  
que desde su muladar 240  
se ponen a gobernar  
mil reinos y mil naciones;  
dan trazas, forman Estados  
y repúblicas sin tasa,  
y no saben en su casa 245  
gobernar a dos criados.

De aquéllos mi Andronio es,  
y esto lo sé con certeza,  
que emiendan a la cabeza,  
y apenas son ellos pies. 250

Lllaman con su ceguedad  
y mal fundada opinión,  
al recato, remisión;  
al castigo, crüeldad.

El gobierno no les cuadra 255  
más justo y más nivelado;  
siguen del vulgo engañado  
la siempre mudable escuadra.

El que es buen vasallo, atiende  
a rogar por su señor, 260  
si es bueno, que sea mejor;  
y si es malo, que se emiende.

De los viejos que enterramos,  
fue sentencia singular  
que el mundo hemos de dejar 265  
del modo que le hallamos.

¿Qué te importa a ti si hace  
bien o mal el duque en esto?

ANDRONIO¿Hasme oído tratar desto?

TÁCITOY tanto, que me desplace. 270  
Que quemen a la duquesa,  
no se te dé a ti un ardite.



ANDRONIO Desde hoy más guardaré el chite,  
y de lo hablado me pesa.

TÁCITO A la espada me remito 275  
de Dagoberto en la riña.

ANDRONIO ¿Si vence...?

TÁCITO Pague la niña:  
que a buen bocado, buen grito.  
Quien de honestidad los muros  
rompe, mil males se aplica. 280

ANDRONIO Cuando la zorra predica,  
no están los pollos seguros.

*(Éntranse TÁCITO y ANDRONIO. Sale PORCIA, como labrador, y JULIA, como estudiante.)*

JULIA ¿Por qué quieres intentar,  
Rutilio, tan gran locura?

PORCIA Porque en el mal es cordura 285  
no temer, sino esperar;  
y la negligencia estraga  
los remedios del dolor,  
y no quiero yo que amor  
conmigo milagros haga. 290  
El que padece tormenta,  
si es que de piloto sabe,  
si puede, guíe la nave

a donde menos la sienta.

Yo en la mía un puerto veo 295  
a los ojos de mi fe,  
y allá me encaminaré  
con los soplos del deseo.

Ya viste que era tu hermano  
el labrador que aquí vimos: 300  
que los dos le conocimos,  
aunque en el traje villano;  
y ha muchos días que sabes,  
y yo también, por mi mal,  
que tiene de su caudal 305  
el amor todas las llaves,  
y que Rosamira es  
la que así le tiene aquí.

JULIA Ya yo te he dicho que sí.

PORCIA Pues dime: ¿ahora no ves 310  
que será muy acertada  
la traza que te he contado?

JULIA Caminas tras tu cuidado;  
en fin, como enamorada.  
¿Que podrás dejarme a solas? 315

PORCIA ¿A solas dices que estás,  
quedando con quien podrás  
contrastar de amor las olas?  
Ingenio tienes, y brío,  
y ocasión tienes también 320  
para procurar tu bien,  
como yo procuro el mío.

JULIA ¿Y si te conoce, a dicha?

PORCIA Engañada en eso estás:  
que él no me ha visto jamás. 325

JULIA Puede mucho una desdicha.

PORCIA Nuestro mucho encerramiento  
y libertad oprimida,  
como causó esta venida,  
cegará su entendimiento. 330

JULIA Pues si el cielo, mi enemigo,  
te hiciere conocer,  
nunca lo des a entender  
que te veniste conmigo.

Sigue a solas tu ventura, 335  
que yo seguiré la mía,  
y el blando amor que nos guía  
abone nuestra locura.

Yo a Manfredo le diré  
que a la patria te volviste. 340  
Mas, ¿qué gente es ésta? ¡Ay triste!

PORCIA No sé; disimúlate.

*(Entran ANASTASIO, MANFREDO y los dos ciudadanos.)*

CIUDADANO 1 Es el caso inaudito, y la insolencia  
del duque de Rosena demasiada,  
mala en el hecho y mala en la apariencia. 345

ANASTASIO Cuando del apetito es sojuzgada

la razón, no hay respeto que se mire,  
ni justa obligación que sea guardada.

CIUDADANO 2 ¿Quién lo vendrá a entender que no se admire?:  
que, faltando a la ley del hospedaje, 350  
con las prendas del huésped se retire.  
Y más aquel que debe por linaje,  
por ser, por calidad, por gentileza,  
hacer a todos bien, a nadie ultraje.

ANASTASIO Debe de ser de vil naturaleza, 355  
o a quien soberbia natural inclina  
a tan infames hechos de bajeza.  
Pues a fe que fabricas tu ruina,  
Manfredo ingrato: que Dorlán bien suele  
amansar tu arrogancia repentina. 360

MANFREDO A un pobre labrador, ¿por qué le duele  
tanto de Julia y Porcia el robo incierto?  
Quizá miente la fama.

PORCIA¿Hablaréle?

JULIAHáblale; pero no te ha descubierto.

ANASTASIO¡Siempre son ciertas las desdichas mías! 365

MANFREDO¿Desdichas tuyas? ¡Bueno estás, por cierto!

ANASTASIO ¿Qué scita vive en sus regiones fieras,  
qué garamanta en su abrasada arena,  
o en tierras, si las hay, de amubaceas,

que apruebe que un gran duque de Rosena, 370  
siendo del de Dorlán huésped y amigo...

JULIAAquestos argumentos me dan pena.

ANASTASIO ...como astuto ladrón, como enemigo,  
haberle de sus prendas despojado,  
sin que diga lo mismo que yo digo: 375  
que fue Manfredo ingrato y mal mirado?

JULIAApostaré que el duque te conoce.

PORCIADesvíate en buen hora a esotro lado.

MANFREDO Buen hombre, no es razón que se alboroce  
así vuestro sentido: que a Manfredo 380  
no le estima cual vos quien le conoce.

JULIAQue han de reñir los dos tengo gran miedo.

PORCIAPues, por Dios, que si riñen...

JULIACalla o vete.

PORCIAAñade a lo que dices: si es que puedo.

ANASTASIO Tampoco no sé yo a qué se entremete 385  
a defender un hecho un estudiante

donde tan gran pecado se comete.

CIUDADANO 2 Señores, no paséis más adelante:  
que si es verdad que el duque hizo tal hecho,  
aquel que lo defiende es ignorante. 390

ANASTASIO ¡Vive Dios, que se me arde en rabia el pecho!

MANFREDO ¡Por Dios, que está el villano muy donoso!

JULIA Cuajóse la cuestión; ello está hecho.

ANASTASIO ¿Villano a mí? ¡Escolar sucio y astroso,  
capigorrón, brodista, pordiosero! 395

MANFREDO ¡Oh villano otra vez, loco furioso!

PORCIA Mal haré si no ayudo a quien bien quiero.

CIUDADANO 1 ¿Qué es esto? ¿Con puñal a un desarmado?

ANASTASIO Dejad que llegue a este vil grosero.

CIUDADANO 2 Cada cual de los dos sea bien mirado: 400  
miren quién está en medio.

MANFREDO ¿Tanto brío  
en un villano pecho está encerrado?

JULIA ¿Piedras a mi señor?

PORCIA¿Piedras tú al mío?

JULIA¿Oh! ¿También tú, villano?

PORCIA¿Oh sucio paje!

JULIARutilio, di: ¿no es éste desvarío? 405  
¿Bofetada en mi rostro? ¡Ya el coraje  
ha llegado a su punto, y no es posible  
que temor o respeto aquí le ataje!

CIUDADANO 1 Los dos criados, con furor terrible,  
se han asido también.

CIUDADANO 2¿Ténganse, digo! 410

MANFREDO¿Hasta que mate a éste, es imposible!

ANASTASIO¿No estimo su puñal en sólo un higo!

CIUDADANO 2¿Otra vez digo que se tengan, ea!

JULIA¿Deja estar los cabellos, enemigo!  
¿Quieres, con esparcirlos, que se vea 415  
quién somos?

PORCIA Pues, hereje, ¿estásme dando,  
y no te he yo de dar?

CIUDADANO 1 Otra pelea  
es ésta más crüel que estoy mirando.

JULIA ¡Ay, que la boca toda me deshaces!

PORCIA ¡Suelta tú el labio!

JULIA ¡Ya le voy soltando! 420

PORCIA ¡Acaba de soltar!

CIUDADANO 1 ¡Quitad, rapaces!

JULIA ¡Ay, que me muerde!

PORCIA ¿Echáisme zancadilla?

JULIA ¿Qué haces, enemigo?

PORCIA Y tú, ¿qué haces?

CIUDADANO 2 Envainad vos, señor, y esta rencilla  
quédese así, pues no os importa nada. 425



MANFREDO;Dios sabe por qué gusto diferilla!

PORCIA Quitásteme el gabán, desvergonzada;  
la mano, digo, que tal fuerza tiene;  
pero ésta mía me hará vengada.

CIUDADANO 1¿Han visto con qué brío el mozo viene? 430  
¿Y éste es vuestro criado?

ANASTASIONo, por cierto.

MANFREDORutilio, ¿cómo es esto?

PORCIANo conviene  
que mi designio aquí sea descubierto.

MANFREDOPues, ¿por qué peleabas con tu hermano?

PORCIADe ignorancia nació mi desconcierto; 435  
que, como vi este traje de villano,  
tan parecido a aquellos de mi tierra,  
dejarle de ayudar no fue en mi mano.  
Y creo, si la vista no se yerra,  
que éste es un mi pariente conocido, 440  
que de todo mi gusto me destierra.

MANFREDOEl seso, al parecer, tienes perdido;  
mas no le pierdas tanto que señales  
pieza por donde yo sea conocido.

PORCIA Seguro está, señor, que ni por males 445  
ni bienes que a Rutilio el cielo envíe,  
dará de ser quién eres las señales,  
y en tal seguro el tuyo se confíe.

MANFREDO ¿De modo que a la patria quies volverte?

PORCIA Antes que el tiempo cargue y más enfríe. 450

MANFREDO ¡Adiós, que yo no quiero detenerte!

PORCIA Mi hermano queda acá.

MANFREDO Gusto infinito.

PORCIA Plega a Dios que en servirte en todo acierte.

*(Vase MANFREDO y los dos ciudadanos.)*

JULIA Dime, Rutilio: ¿a dicha, queda escrito  
en el alma el rencor que hemos mostrado? 455

PORCIA A la ocasión y al gusto le remito.

JULIA ¿Iré de tu buen pecho confiado?

PORCIA Pues, ¿quién lo duda?

JULIA ¡Adiós, pues, firme amigo!

(Vase JULIA.)

PORCIA ¡Adiós, mocito mal aconsejado!  
Ya me tienes, señor, aquí contigo; 460  
a tu gusto me manda, que yo espero  
que amor me ha de ayudar al bien que sigo.

ANASTASIO Pues yo de todo bien ya desespero.  
¡Oh amor, que con la vida me atropellas  
la honra, pues sin ella vivo y muero! 465  
Allí llega el ardor de sus centellas,  
donde pueda quitar el sentimiento  
de las cosas que es muerte el no tenellas.  
Julia, robada; el duque, en salvamento;  
yo, a quien el caso toca, descuidado 470  
con el cuidado que en el alma siento.  
De un estudiante vil mal afrentado;  
socorrido de un pobre pastorcillo,  
aunque en esto me doy por bien pagado.  
Padezco el mal; no sé a quién descubrillo; 475  
mas, aunque lo supiese, no osaría,  
pues no es para sufrillo ni decillo.

PORCIA Si acaso éste no fuera el primer día  
que de buena amistad te doy la mano,  
pudieraste fiar de la fe mía. 480  
Acomódome al traje de villano  
por servirte en el tuyo: señal clara  
que soy de proceder fácil y llano.  
Si en algunos escrúpulos repara  
tu voluntad, el tiempo tendrá cargo 485  
de mostrarte la mía abierta y clara.  
Yo de serte fiel sólo me encargo,

con pecho noble, sin torcido enredo,  
sin que dificultad me ponga embargo.

ANASTASIO Sabrás...; basta, no más.

PORCIA ¿Que tienes miedo 490  
de descubrirte a mí? Pues yo te juro,  
por todo aquello que jurarte puedo,  
que puedes sin escrúpulo, al seguro,  
fiar de mí cualquier tu pensamiento.

ANASTASIO Conviéneme creer que estoy seguro; 495  
porque para salir con el intento  
que tengo, sólo entiendo que tú eres  
el más fácil y cómodo instrumento;  
y es menester, si gusto darme quieres,  
que, fingiendo ser moza labradora... 500  
¿De qué te ríes?

PORCIA Di lo que quisieres,  
que no me río, a fe.

ANASTASIO Si es que no mora  
voluntad en tu pecho de servirme,  
dímelo, y callaré luego a la hora.

PORCIA No digo de mujer; pero vestirme 505  
de diablo lo haré, pues que te agrada,  
con prompta voluntad y ánimo firme.

ANASTASIO Serás de mí tan bien gratificado,  
que iguale a tu deseo el beneficio.

PORCIAQuedo en sólo servirte bien pagado. 510  
Prosigue, pues.

ANASTASIOHa dado en sacrificio  
un amigo su alma a la duquesa,  
que está acusada de un infame vicio.  
No se puede saber, como está presa,  
si tiene culpa o no, y él, sin sabello, 515  
duda el ser defensor de tal empresa.

A mí me ha dado el cargo de entenderlo,  
y, con este gabán disimulado,  
ha algunos días que he entendido en ello.

PORCIA¿Y has alguna verdad averiguado? 520

ANASTASIONinguna.

PORCIAPues, ¿qué ordenas?

ANASTASIOQue te pongas  
en el traje que digo disfrazado,  
y a dar a Rosamira te dispongas  
un papel, y a sacarle de su pecho  
cuanto tuviere en él.

PORCIAComo compongas 525  
bien el rústico traje, ten por hecho  
lo que pides.

ANASTASIOLa entrada está segura,

dejando al carcelero satisfecho.  
Has de llevar el rostro con mesura.

PORCIA Para una labradora, poco importa; 530  
basta que lleve el pecho con cordura.  
La carta escribe y la partida acorta,  
que yo de parecer mujer no dudo.

ANASTASIO Habla sutil, y en pláticas sé corta.

PORCIA ¡Ah ciego amor, de piedad desnudo, 535  
y en qué trance me pones!

ANASTASIO ¿Te arrepientes?

PORCIA Nunca del buen intento yo me mudo.  
Aunque tuviera el caso inconvenientes  
mayores, con mi industria los venciera  
y buscara los medios suficientes. 540

ANASTASIO Si supieses la paga que te espera,  
cual yo la sé, mancebo generoso,  
a más tu voluntad se dispusiera:  
que soy otra persona que este astroso  
hábito muestra.

PORCIA Y yo seré un criado 545  
para ti el más fiel y cuidadoso  
que se pueda hallar en lo criado.

*(Éntranse.)*

(Sale MANFREDO y JULIA.)

MANFREDO ¡Brioso era el villano!

JULIA Y atrevido además, según dio muestra.

MANFREDO Y muy necio tu hermano. 550

JULIA La juventud lo causa, poco diestra  
en lazos de importancia.

MANFREDO ¿Volvióse?

JULIA ¡Y no le arriendo la ganancia!

MANFREDO Torna, pues, ¡oh Camilo!,  
y dime aquello que decías agora, 555  
usando el mismo estilo:  
que el modo de decirlo me enamora,  
y el caso me suspende.

JULIA Pues dello gustas, buen señor, atiende.

«Llegóse a mí un mancebo 560  
de agradable presencia, bien tratado,  
con un vestido nuevo,  
que creo que por éste fue trazado;  
llegóse, como digo,  
y díjome: "Escuchadme, buen amigo". 565  
Volví, miréle, y vile  
lloviendo perlas de sus bellos ojos;

la mano entonces dile,  
de lástima movido, y él, de hinojos,  
temeroso tomóla, 570  
y, bañándola en lágrimas, besóla.

Yo, del caso espantado,  
le alcé y le pregunté lo que quería;  
él, casi desmayado,  
me dijo que merced recibiría 575  
si un poco le escuchase  
en parte donde naide nos notase.

Llévele a mi aposento;  
sentóse, sosegóse, y después dijo  
con desmayado aliento, 580  
con voz turbada y anhelar prolijo:  
"Yo soy...", y calló luego,  
y el rostro se le puso como un fuego.

Por estos movimientos  
conocí que vergüenza le estorbaba 585  
a decir sus intentos;  
y como yo sabellos deseaba,  
lleguéme a él, diciendo  
razones que le fueron convenciendo.

En fin, dellas vencido, 590  
tras de un suspiro doloroso, ardiente,  
ya el rostro amortecido,  
el codo y palma en la rodilla y frente,  
dijo: "Yo soy aquella  
a quien persigue su contraria estrella; 595

yo soy la sin ventura  
que, a la primera vista de unos ojos,  
sin valor ni cordura,  
rendí la libertad de los despojos  
de la honra y la vida, 600  
pues una y otra cuento por perdida:

yo soy Julia, la hija  
del duque de Dorlán, cuyo deseo  
ya no hay quien le corrija;  
ni el cielo ofrece, ni en la tierra veo 605  
remedio al dolor mío,



y es bien que no le tenga un desvarío".

Quedé, en oyendo aquesto,  
bien como estatua mudo, y, sin hablalla,  
quise escuchar el resto, 610  
temiendo con mi plática estorballa;  
y prosiguió diciendo  
lo que me fue encantando y suspendiendo:

"Yo -dijo-vi a Manfredo,  
aqueste dueño venturoso tuyo 615  
-que ya no tengo miedo,  
ni de contar, y más a ti, rehuyo  
la mal tejida historia,  
digna de infame y de inmortal memoria-.

Teníame mi padre 620  
encerrada do el sol entraba apenas;  
era muerta mi madre,  
y eran mi compañía las almenas  
de torres levantadas,  
sobre vanos temores fabricadas. 625

Avivóme el deseo  
la privación de lo que no tenía  
-que crece, a lo que creo,  
la hambre que imagina carestía-;  
mas no era de manera 630  
que yo no respondiese a ser quien era.

Hasta que mi desdicha  
hizo que este Manfredo huésped fuese  
de mi padre, que a dicha  
tuvo que la ocasión se le ofreciese 635  
de mostrar su grandeza  
sirviendo a un duque de tan grande alteza.

En fin, yo, de curiosa,  
un agujero hice en una puerta,  
que a la vista medrosa, 640  
y aun al alma, mostró ventana abierta  
para ver a Manfredo.  
Vile, y quedé cual declarar no puedo".»

Ni aun yo puedo contarte  
más por agora, porque gente viene. 645

MANFREDO Vamos por esta parte,  
que está mas fresca y menos gente tiene.  
Anda, que estoy suspenso,  
y vame dando el cuento gusto inmenso.

*(Éntranse MANFREDO y JULIA.)*

*(Sale PORCIA, como labradora, con un canastico de flores y fruta.)*

PORCIA Amor, bien será que abajes 650  
mi vida a tu proceder,  
pues no me quieres comer,  
aun hecha tantos potajes.

Primeramente pastor  
me hiciste, y luego estudiante, 655  
y, andando un poco adelante,  
me volviste en labrador,  
para labrar mis desdichas  
con yerros de tus marañas:  
que éstas son de tus hazañas 660  
las más venturosas dichas.

Flores llevo, donde el fruto  
que cogeré ha de ser tal,  
que al corazón de mortal  
le sirva y de triste luto. 665

Papel que vas encerrado  
entre estas flores, advierte  
que eres sierpe que a mi muerte  
ha el amor determinado.

No pienses, yendo conmigo, 670  
ver tu intención declarada:  
que no he de poner la espada  
en manos de mi enemigo.

Tú de mi alma lo eres,  
y éstos del cuerpo lo son. 675

(Entra TÁCITO y ANDRONIO.)

¡Del diablo es esta visión!  
*Vade retro!* ¿Qué me quieres?

TÁCITO ¡Oh, qué buen rato se ofrece  
con la pulida villana!

PORCIA ¡Por Dios, que vengo de gana! 680

ANDRONIO Bonísima me parece.  
¿Qué es lo que cogió del suelo?

TÁCITO Algo que se le cayó;  
o tú llega, o llego yo.

PORCIA Algún mal caso recelo; 685  
que éstos son grandes bellacos,  
y me tienen de embestir.  
¡Oh, quien pudiera huir  
el encuentro destos cacos!

TÁCITO Mi señora labradora, 690  
vengáis con los años buenos,  
de paz y abundancia llenos.

ANDRONIO Vengáis muy mucho en buen hora.

TÁCITO ¿Qué trae aquí, por mi vida?

¡Oh, pese a quien me parió! 695

ANDRONIO ¿Diote?

TÁCITO Sí. ¡Y cómo que me dio!

La mano tengo aturdida.

¡Con otro me has de pagar  
el garrote que me has dado!

PORCIA ¡Que me roban en poblado! 700

¿No hay quien me venga a ayudar?

¡Que me roban, ay de mí!  
¡Ladrones, dejad la cesta!

*(Sale el CARCELERO.)*

¿Qué soledad es aquésta?

¿Naide pasa por aquí? 705

CARCELERO ¿Qué es esto, desvergonzados?

TÁCITO Ojo, el señor, ¿con qué viene?

Bien parece que no tiene

los amplíficos cuidados

ni la cuenta del negocio 710

de los dolientes distintos,

cuando destos laberintos

es la propia causa el ocio.

CARCELERO ¿Qué es lo que decís, malditos?

ANDRONIOQue se vaya dilatando 715  
en paz, con el cómo y cuándo;  
tenga los ojos marchitos,  
    porque nos cumple acabar  
con aquesta labradora.

CARCELEROY vos, ¿qué decís, señora? 720

PORCIAQue me querían robar  
    aquesta fruta que llevo  
a la señora duquesa.

CARCELERO¿A la presa?

PORCIASí, a la presa.

TÁCITONego.

ANDRONIOProbo.

*(Metén la mano en el canastillo y comen de la fruta.)*

TÁCITOY yo las pruebo. 725

CARCELERO ¡Hídeputa, sinvergüenza!  
¡Andad, bellacos, de aquí!

TÁCITONunca el comer puso en mí  
género de desvergüenza.

ANDRONIO Agradezca la villana 730  
que ha tenido buen padrino;  
mas si hacéis otro camino,  
yo reharé mi sotana.

TÁCITO ¡Mal haya la suerte avara!

ANDRONIO Vamos, amigo, a lición... 735

*(Éntranse TÁCITO y ANDRONIO.)*

CARCELEROTan grandes bellacos son  
como los hay en Ferrara.

Vamos, labradora, a donde  
podáis ver a la duquesa,  
que en mi poder está presa. 740

PORCIAGuée, que no sé por dónde.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Salen MANFREDO y JULIA.)*

MANFREDO Prosigue, que no hay gente  
que aquí nos pueda oír.

JULIALa desdichada  
prosiguió en voz doliente  
su historia, en desvaríos comenzada, 745  
y dijo: «Vi a Manfredo,  
vile, y quedé cual declarar no puedo:  
que en un instante pudo

y quiso amor, con mano poderosa,  
de piedad desnudo, 750  
la imagen de Manfredo generosa  
grabar así en mi alma,  
que della luego le entregué la palma.

Volvíme a mi aposento,  
llevando en la memoria y en el seno, 755  
con gusto y descontento,  
la mirada belleza y el veneno  
de amor que me abrasaba  
y la virtud honrosa refriaba.

Hice discursos varios, 760  
fundé esperanzas en el aire vano,  
atropellé contrarios,  
dile al Amor renombre de tirano  
y de señor piadoso,  
y al cabo el entregarme fue forzoso. 765

Dejé mi padre, ¡ay cielos!;  
dejé mi libertad, dejé mi honra,  
y, en su lugar, recelos  
y sujeción tomé, muerte y deshonra;  
y a buscar he venido 770  
este huésped apenas conocido.

Hoy en tu compañía  
le he visto, y, aunque en traje disfrazado,  
como en el alma mía  
traigo su rostro al vivo dibujado, 775  
al punto conocíle;  
vile, alegréme, y hasta aquí seguíle.

"Quiero, pues, ¡oh mancebo!  
-y esto cubriendo perlas sus mejillas,  
hincándose de nuevo 780  
ante mí, visión bella, de rodillas-;  
quiero -dijo-que digas  
al tuyo, que es mi dueño, mis fatigas.

Que yo no tengo lengua  
para decir mi mal, ni la dolencia 785  
mi honestidad y mengua,  
para poder ponerme en su presencia.

Tú a solas le relata,  
la muerte con que amor mi vida mata;  
que no estará tan duro 790  
cual peñasco al tocar de leves ondas,  
ni cual está al conjuro  
del sabio encantador, en cuevas hondas,  
la sierpe, en esto cauta,  
ni cual airado viento al Euste nauta. 795

No le habrán leche dado  
leonas fieras de la Libia ardiente,  
ni habrá sido engendrado  
de algún cíclope bárbaro inclemente,  
para que no se ablande 800  
oyendo mi dolor y amor tan grande.

Rica soy y no fea,  
tan buena como él en el linaje,  
si ya no es que me afea  
y me deshonra este trocado traje; 805  
mas, cuando amor las causa,  
en todas estas cosas pone pausa.

Rosamira infamada,  
justamente impedido el casamiento,  
yo dél enamorada, 810  
cual la tierra del húmido elemento:  
si esto no es desvarío,  
¿quién lo podrá estorbar que no sea mío?"»

Esto dijo, y al punto  
dejó caer los brazos desmayados, 815  
quedó el rostro difunto,  
los labios, que antes eran colorados,  
cárdenos se tornaron,  
y sus dos bellos soles se eclipsaron.

Levantósele el pecho, 820  
su rostro de un sudor frío cubrióse,  
púsela sobre el lecho,  
de allí a un pequeño rato estremecióse,  
volvió en sí suspirando,  
siempre lágrimas tiernas derramando. 825

Consoléla y roguéla



que en aquel aposento se estuviese,  
sin temor de cautela,  
hasta que yo su historia te dijese.  
Encerrada la dejo: 830  
¡mira si es raro de mi cuento el dejo!

MANFREDO Y tan raro, que no puedo  
persuadirme a que es verdad;  
aunque amor y liviandad  
no se apartan por un dedo. 835  
¿Y que queda en tu aposento?

JULIA Como digo, sin mentir.

MANFREDO No me pudiera venir  
nueva de mayor contento.

JULIA Luego, ¿piénsasla gozar? 840

MANFREDO Mal me conoces, Camilo:  
que tan mal mirado estilo  
no se puede en mí hallar.

JULIA Pues, ¿qué piensas hacer della?

MANFREDO Envialla al padre suyo: 845  
que con esto restituyo  
mi inocencia y su querella.

JULIA ¡Mal pagas lo que te quiere!

MANFREDO La honra se satisfaga:  
que un torpe amor esta paga 850  
y aun otra peor requiere.

JULIA ¿Amar tan alto sujeto  
es error?

MANFREDO Y conocido:  
porque amor tan atrevido,  
aunque es amor, no es perfeto. 855  
Es el amor, cuando es bueno,  
deseo de lo mejor;  
si esto falta, no es amor,  
sino apetito sin freno.

Con todo, vamos a vella; 860  
pero no es bien miralla,  
que en tales visitas se halla  
ocasión para perdella;  
que yo no soy Scipión  
ni Alejandro en continencia, 865  
para hacer la experiencia  
de mi blanda condición;  
y yo soy de parecer,  
y la experiencia lo enseña,  
que ablandarán una peña 870  
lágrimas de una mujer.

JULIA Si no te ablanda su amor,  
no lo hará su hermosura.

MANFREDO Con todo, será cordura  
huir del daño mayor. 875  
Si la recibo, me hago  
en su huida culpado;  
si la vuelvo, habré mostrado

que a ser quien soy satisfago,  
    escusaré el desafío, 880  
cobraré el perdido honor.

JULIA ¡Oh! ¡Mal haya tanto amor,  
mal pagado y mal nacido!  
    ¡Desdichada de la triste  
que te quiso sin porqué! 885

MANFREDO En esos trances se ve  
quien su gusto no resiste.  
    Pero vámonos a casa,  
que, con todo, pienso vella.

JULIA Quizá vendrás a querella. 890

MANFREDO No es mi fuego desa brasa.

*(Éntrese MANFREDO.)*

JULIA ¡Ay, crüel, cómo te vas  
triunfando de mis despojos!  
¿Qué consejo en mis enojos  
es, ¡oh Amor!, el que me das? 895  
    En gran confusión me veo.  
¿Quién me podrá aconsejar?  
En fin, habré de acabar  
a las manos del deseo.

*Éntrese JULIA.*

*(Sale ROSAMIRA con un manto hasta los ojos.)*

ROSAMIRA Quien me viere desta suerte, 900  
juzgará, sin duda alguna,  
que me tiene la fortuna  
en los brazos de la muerte.

Pues no es así: porque Amor,  
cuando se quiere extremar, 905  
con el velo del pesar  
suele encubrir su favor.

Honra, eclipse padecéis  
porque entre vos y mi gusto  
la industria ha puesto un disgusto, 910  
por el cual oscura os veis;  
mas pasará esta fortuna  
que así vuestra luz atierra  
como sombra de la tierra,  
puesta entre el sol y la luna. 915

*(Entran el CARCELERO y PORCIA.)*

CARCELERO Veisla ahí; habladla, y luego  
os salid con brevedad.

PORCIA ¡Ay obscura claridad!  
¡Mal haya el vendado ciego!  
¡Mirad cuál la tiene puesta! 920

ROSAMIRA Pues, amiga, ¿qué buscáis?

PORCIA Señora, que recibáis  
lo que traigo en esta cesta,  
que son unas bellas flores  
con alguna fruta nueva. 925

ROSAMIRA ¡Vos sola habéis hecho prueba

de consolar mis dolores!  
Sentaos aquí par de mí,  
y esas flores me mostrad,  
y ese rebozo os quitad. 930

PORCIA Señora, veislas aquí;  
pero sentarme, eso no.  
El embozo, ya le quito.

ROSAMIRA Sentaos conmigo un poquito;  
basta que lo diga yo. 935

PORCIA Estaba determinada,  
señora, de no lo hacer;  
mas dicen que es mejor ser  
necia, que no porfiada,  
y así, me asiento y suplico, 940  
si mi ruego puede tanto,  
que os alcéis del rostro el manto  
otro poco, otro tantico.

ROSAMIRA Vesme descubierta, amiga;  
que a más fuerza tu cordura. 945

PORCIA ¡Jesús! ¿Que tanta hermosura  
ha puesto en tanta fatiga?

ROSAMIRA Amiga, déjate deso,  
y dime: ¿qué te movió  
a venirme a ver?

PORCIA Sé yo 950  
que fue de amor el exceso,

y el ver que ya el señalado  
plazo llega a más correr,  
adonde el mundo ha de ver  
tu inocencia o tu pecado; 955  
y querría ver si puedo  
serte en algo de provecho,  
antes de llegar al hecho  
que al más fuerte pone miedo;  
que es Dagoberto valiente. 960

ROSAMIRA Así le conviene ser  
quien tiene de defender  
que es culpada la inocente.

Sale del curso ordinario  
el caso de mi porfía, 965  
porque está la salud mía  
en la lengua del contrario.

Quien me deshonra ha de ser  
el mismo que me ha de honrar,  
y esto me hace callar 970  
y culpada parecer.

Mas, dime: ¿acaso has oído  
qué se hizo el de Rosena?

PORCIA Por todo el lugar se suena  
que volvió al suyo corrido. 975

Otros la culpa le dan  
de que la hija sacó,  
cuando alegre le hospedó  
el gran duque de Dorlán,  
y con ella otra su prima; 980  
pero yo sé que es mentira.

ROSAMIRA ¡Ya no es sola Rosamira  
a quien Fortuna lastima!

PORCIA Y esta su prima es hermana  
de Dagoberto el traidor. 985

ROSAMIRA;Sabes muy poco de amor,  
discreta y bella aldeana!

PORCIA El hijo del de Dorlán  
se suena que te defiende.

ROSAMIRA¿Quién lo dice?

PORCIAQuien lo entiende. 990

ROSAMIRA;En vano toma ese afán!  
Mas su intención le agradezco,  
porque, al fin, es de quien es.

PORCIAQue él no pida el interés,  
aunque venza, yo me ofrezco; 995  
porque por su gentileza  
lo hace, y no por su amor.

ROSAMIRAAsí mostrará mejor  
su valentía y nobleza.  
Pero, puesto que él venciese, 1000  
con él no me casaré.

PORCIAPues, ¿por qué?

ROSAMIRAYo sé el porqué.

PORCIA¿Y si él el premio pidiese?

ROSAMIRA No llegará a aqueso extremo,  
si me vale mi justicia; 1005  
mas, como reina malicia,  
de cien mil azares temo.

Ven conmigo a otro aposento,  
labradora de mi vida,  
que en parte más escondida 1010  
te quiero hablar un momento;

que me ha dado el corazón  
que el Cielo aquí te ha traído  
para que en gozo cumplido  
vuelvas mi amarga prisión. 1015

Ven, que ya en tu voluntad  
está mi vida o mi muerte,  
mi buena o mi mala suerte,  
mi prisión o libertad.

PORCIA Vamos, señora, do quieres, 1020  
y de mí daré a entender  
que te puedes prometer  
aun más de lo que quisieres:  
que desde aquí te consagro  
la voluntad y la vida. 1025

ROSAMIRASin duda que tu venida  
ha sido aquí por milagro.



## Jornada tercera

*Salen* MANFREDO y JULIA.

MANFREDO ¿Que se fue?

JULIA Como lo cuento.

MANFREDO Pues ¿por qué no la tuviste?

JULIA Porque muy mal se resiste  
un determinado intento.

Apenas abrí la puerta, 5  
cuando dijo: «Amigo mío,  
yo sé que mi desvarío  
en ninguna cosa acierta.

No digas al duque nada,  
pues sé que no ha de importar, 10  
y es mejor el acabar  
con mi muerte esta jornada.

¡Quédate a Dios!» Y salióse,  
sin podella resistir;  
y, aunque la quise seguir, 15  
al punto desaparecióse.

MANFREDO Mucho descuido has tenido.  
¿Por dó se fue?

JULIA No sé, a fe.

MANFREDO ¿Que es posible que se fue?

JULIA Del modo que he referido. 20

Mas, si no la puedes ver,  
mejor es que no esté en casa.

MANFREDO ¿No sabes ya lo que pasa?

JULIA Más de lo que he menester.

*Aparte.*

¡Ay de mí, cómo me veo, 25  
puesta en dudosa balanza,  
esperando la esperanza  
cuando revive el deseo!

MANFREDO ¿Qué es lo que dices?

JULIA No, nada:

sólo digo que va tal, 30  
que será el fin de su mal  
acabar desesperada.

MANFREDO En eso echarás de ver,  
Camilo, bien claramente,  
que apenas hay accidente 35  
que sea bueno en la mujer.

Quieren do han de aborrecer,  
vanse de adonde han de estar,  
temen donde han de esperar,

esperan do han de temer. 40

JULIA Pues si la vuelvo a encontrar,  
¿quieres, señor, que la diga  
que te duele su fatiga?

MANFREDOA nadie supe engañar;  
mas dile lo que quisieres, 45  
como hagas que la vea.

JULIA De modo haré que así sea,  
si haces como quien eres.

MANFREDO ¿Qué es lo que tengo de hacer?

JULIA Ni reñilla, ni afrentalla, 50  
ni al padre suyo envialla.

MANFREDO No sé cómo podrá ser.  
Sin duda, te dejó el pecho  
blando Julia con su llanto.

JULIA Tanto, que, a entender tú el cuánto, 55  
ya la hubieras satisfecho.  
¿Lágrimas eran aquellas  
para no ablandar un canto?  
Y ¿hay cielo que se alce tanto  
do no alcancen sus querellas? 60  
¡Ah, señor Manfredo!

MANFREDOA fe,

Camilo, que estás rendido.

JULIA Tengo el corazón herido  
de lo que en Julia noté.

El agradable reposo, 65  
las razones tan sentidas,  
aquellas perlas vertidas  
por aquel rostro hermoso;  
los desmayos, los temores,  
la vergüenza y sobresaltos, 70  
el darle el corazón saltos,  
en fin, el morir de amores,  
con otras cosas que, a vellas  
tú, señor, como las vi,  
así como han hecho a mí, 75  
te ablandaran sus querellas.

MANFREDO Vamos; que, pues ya se fue,  
no hay della tratarme más;  
mas si vuelve, le dirás...

JULIA ¿Qué?

MANFREDO ¿Por Dios, que no sé qué! 80  
Dicen que dejan hablar  
ya a la presa Rosamira.

JULIA Esa cuerda es la que tira  
de tu gusto y mi pesar.

MANFREDO Y he de procurar, si puedo, 85  
hablalla, porque me importa.

JULIA *Aparte.*

¡En fin, mi ventura es corta;  
no hay que esperar en Manfredo!

Mas, antes que el fin funesto  
llegue que temo y deseo, 90  
yo echaré de mi deseo  
en la plaza todo el resto.

*(Éntranse JULIA y MANFREDO.)*

*(Sale ROSAMIRA con el vestido y rebozo de PORCIA, y PORCIA sale con el de ROSAMIRA, con el manto hasta cubrirse todo el rostro.)*

ROSAMIRA Abrázame, y a Dios queda,  
y de mi palabra fía.

PORCIA Advertid, señora mía, 95  
que es variable la rüeda  
de la Fortuna, y que es bien  
que a la prisión no volváis;  
porque, aunque sin culpa estáis,  
hasta agora no veo quién 100  
os defienda.

ROSAMIRA Yo haré en eso  
lo que a entrambas más importe.

PORCIA Dad en vuestras cosas corte  
sin temor de mi suceso:  
que a mí no me han de matar 105

por hacer tan buena obra,  
y yo sé que mi alma cobra  
en ella un bien singular,  
y en que vos no parezcáis  
está este bien escondido. 110  
Idos, que siento rüido.

ROSAMIRAYo volveré.

*Vase.*

PORCIANo volváis.

*(Entra el CARCELERO, en la mano un manto, la mitad de arriba abajo de tafetán negro, y la otra mitad de tafetán verde.)*

CARCELERO ¡Vais norabuena, labradora hermosa!  
Si de volver gustáredes, prometo  
de daros puerta franca a todas horas, 115  
y aun a todos aquellos que quisieren  
comunicar con mi señora.

PORCIABueno.

CARCELERONo, sino no le den al delincuente  
procurador, y niéguenle abogado,  
ciérrenle los caminos y los medios 120  
de su defensa, tápenle la boca;  
quedarse ha a buenas noches de la vida.  
¡Oh señora! ¿Aquí estabas? Yo te hacía  
en el otro aposento, donde sueles  
en ciega obscuridad pasar los días. 125

Orden es de tu padre que te pongas  
mañana, cuando salgas a la plaza,  
al triste, temeroso, amargo trance,  
este manto que ves, de dos colores.  
Ha ordenado también que te acompañen 130  
la mitad de su guarda con insignias  
de dolor y tristeza, y que asimismo  
vaya la otra mitad de gala y fiesta.  
Al lado izquierdo has de llevar, señora,  
al verdugo, blandiendo el terso acero, 135  
instrumento mortal que te amenace  
a muerte irreparable si, por dicha,  
venciere Dagoberto en tu deshonra.  
De verde lauro una corona hermosa  
al diestro lado ha de llevar un niño, 140  
para que del suceso que resulte,  
alegre o triste, o ya el cuchillo corra  
por tu bella garganta, o ya tus sienes  
del vitorioso lauro veas ceñidas.  
Esto vengo a decirte, y no otra cosa. 145  
¿No me respondes? Pues a fe que sabes  
la voluntad que tengo de servirte,  
y que, como el soltarte no me pidas,  
porque, en fin, soy leal al señor mío,  
que no habrá cosa que por ti no haga, 150  
y así, una pura voluntad te ofrezco.  
¿Qué me respondes?

PORCIAQue te lo agradezco.

*(Éntrase PORCIA.)*

CARCELERO ¡Estraño silencio es éste!  
¡Mucho me da que pensar!  
¡Mas téngola de ayudar, 155  
aunque la vida me cueste!

*(Entran ANASTASIO y CORNELIO.)*

CORNELIO De un mozo no conocido  
fiarte así, ¿quién tal vio?

ANASTASIO¿Pues qué he de hacer?

CORNELIO¿Qué sé yo?

ANASTASIO¿Hase de ir así vestido? 160

CORNELIO Con todo, digo que fue  
error conocido y claro.

ANASTASIOA lo hecho no hay reparo.  
Mas, ¿no es éste?

CORNELIO¿Yo qué sé?

*(Sale ROSAMIRA con el embozo.)*

ANASTASIO Él es. Vengas en buen hora, 165  
Rutilio, mi buen amigo.

CORNELIO Tal estás, que afirmo y digo  
que eres pura labradora.



ANASTASIO No porque estemos los dos,  
vayas el caso encubriendo. 170

ROSAMIRAHermanos, yo no os entiendo;  
dejadme, y andad con Dios,  
que no soy la que pensáis.

ANASTASIONo es de Rutilio la habla.  
¡Mal mi negocio se entabla! 175  
¿Pues quién sois? ¿Adónde vais?  
O ¿quién os dio este vestido?  
Porque le conozco yo.

ROSAMIRAMi dinero me le dio.

ANASTASIOY el vendedor, ¿quién ha sido? 180  
Porque hasta que lo digáis,  
no habéis de pasar de aquí.

ROSAMIRA¡Desventurada de mí;  
mal término es el que usáis!  
No me quitéis el embozo, 185  
porque a fe que os cueste caro.

ANASTASIO¡En amenazas reparo!  
Venga el vestido, o el mozo.  
¿Qué dije? Muy mal hablé:  
este vestido os demando. 190

*(Sale DAGOBERTO y un criado suyo.)*

DAGOBERTOAlza los ojos, mirando

si la ves.

ROSAMIRA Ya me escapé;  
    porque aquí es Dagoberto,  
a quien yo vengo a buscar.

ANASTASIO Pues qué, ¿piénsaste escapar? 195

ROSAMIRA Tenga; si no, juro, cierto...

DAGOBERTO ¿Qué pendencia es ésta, amigos?

ROSAMIRA Príncipe, hablarte quisiera  
a solas, si ser pudiera,  
o no con tantos testigos. 200  
    Y, para facilitallo,  
mira quién soy.

*(Descúbrese ROSAMIRA a sólo DAGOBERTO.)*

DAGOBERTO ¿Qué es aquesto?  
Amigos, váyanse presto.

ANASTASIO En gran confusión me hallo:  
    que éste no es Rutilio; no, 205  
puesto que trae su vestido.

CORNELIO Algún mal le ha sucedido.

ANASTASIO ¿Mal ha de ser?

CORNELIONo sé yo.

ANASTASIO Yo he de hablar a Rosamira,  
y della lo he de saber. 210

CORNELIOA mucho te quiés poner.

DAGOBERTOSeñora, el verte me admira.  
¿Cómo vienes deste modo?  
¿Quién te puso en este traje?

ROSAMIRAEI tiempo, que es corto, ataje 215  
el darte cuenta de todo.  
Sólo vengo a que me lleves  
luego a Utrino.

DAGOBERTO¿Cómo así?

ROSAMIRAY lo ordenado hasta aquí,  
ni lo intentes, ni lo pruebes. 220  
No quiero en un cadahalso  
verme puesta, hecha terrero  
del vulgo bajo y grosero,  
ni a ti juzgado por falso.

DAGOBERTO ¿Tienes más que me decir? 225

ROSAMIRANo.

DAGOBERTO¿Ni veniste a otra cosa?

ROSAMIRANó.

DAGOBERTOMi aldeana hermosa,  
mal me sabéis persuadir.

Vamos; que yo daré medio  
a lo que más nos importe. 230

ROSAMIRAYo no sé otro mejor corte.

DAGOBERTOMil tiene nuestro remedio.

*(Éntrase ROSAMIRA, DAGOBERTO y su criado.)*

*(Salen el CARCELERO, MANFREDO y JULIA.)*

CARCELERO Señor, yo os pondré con ella;  
y, pues venís por su bien,  
a los dos nos está bien: 235  
a mí, mostralla; a vos, vella.

Si la prisión os he abierto,  
es que me da el corazón  
que tiene poca razón  
el príncipe Dagoberto. 240

Esperad aquí un poquito;  
entraré a llamalla yo.

MANFREDOCamilo, vete.

CARCELERONó, no;

estése aquí el pajecito:  
que mejor es que haya gente, 245  
por carecer de sospechas.

*(Éntrase el CARCELERO.)*

JULIA ¡Ay triste, con cuántas flechas  
me hiere Amor inclemente!

MANFREDO ¿Qué dices, Camilo?

JULIA Digo  
que es Julia muy desdichada. 250

MANFREDO No anduvo en irse acertada.

JULIA Fue huyendo de su enemigo.

MANFREDO Ésta es la duquesa; calla.

JULIA ¡Qué cubierto el rostro tiene!

CARCELERO Digo, señora, que viene 255  
a hacer por vos batalla;

*(Sale PORCIA y el CARCELERO.)*

y es de gentil contención  
y de persona despierta.  
Yo me quiero ir a la puerta,

por si viene su excelencia. 260

*(Vase el CARCELERO.)*

MANFREDO Aunque de quien sois se infiere  
y nace seguridad  
que no os toca la maldad  
que os ahíja el que no os quiere,  
será bien que vuestra lengua 265  
descubra lo que hay en esto,  
porque su silencio ha puesto  
a vuestro crédito en mengua.

Quien lleva en el desafío  
a la razón de su parte, 270  
de hombre tierno, se hace un Marte;  
de flaco y torpe, con brío.

Si estáis sin culpa, no os pene  
que Dagoberto sea tal,  
que el mundo no le dé igual 275  
en cuantos valientes tiene;  
porque sabed, Rosamira,  
que los filos de verdad  
cortan con facilidad  
las armas de la mentira. 280

Y si acaso estáis culpada,  
y de amor la culpa fue,  
asimismo probaré  
con el contrario mi espada:  
que en fe de que él no hizo bien 285  
en descubrir lo secreto,  
de mi vitoria os prometo  
que os den más de un parabién.

Y soy persona que puedo  
prometer esto y aun más. 290  
¿Para qué en silencio estás?  
Habla: desecha ya el miedo.

PORCIA Esta noche, y no durmiendo,  
porque entre el sueño y mis cuitas  
nunca el reposo hizo treguas, 295  
ni de veras ni de burlas,  
digo que, estando despierta,  
desvelada en mis angustias,  
se me ofreció ante mis ojos  
de ti mismo una figura. 300  
Las razones que aquí has dicho  
dijo aquel tú, y otras muchas,  
que todas se encaminaban  
a desear mi ventura.  
Dijo que le asegurase 305  
de mi inocencia o mi culpa,  
aunque, de cualquier manera,  
se ofrecía a darme ayuda.  
Yo, sepultada en silencio  
y con el miedo confusa, 310  
hice lengua de los ojos,  
por tener la lengua muda;  
con ellos le di a entender  
ser traidor el que me acusa,  
y que mi silencio nace 315  
de considerada astucia.  
Ya la visión se volvía,  
cuando vi, sin poner duda,  
entre el sí y el no una sombra;  
¿qué digo sombra?, a la luna 320  
vi y al sol en dos mejillas  
de una doncella importuna  
que, arrodillada a tu imagen,  
tales razones pronuncia:  
«Yo soy -dijo-, señor mío, 325  
la desventurada Julia,  
que, cual Clicia, voy siguiendo  
esa luz del sol y tuya.  
Soy quien te ha entregado el alma  
con la fe más tierna y pura 330  
que vio Amor en cuantos pechos

ha rendido a su ley justa.  
Tú ofreces favor a quien  
ni te quiere ni te escucha,  
y niegas de dar oídos 335  
a quien te sigue aunque huyas.  
Promete, acorre, defiende,  
ofrece, trabaja y suda:  
que amor tiene decretado  
que al fin fin yo he de ser tuya». 340  
A estas sentidas razones  
acompañaba una lluvia  
de vivas líquidas perlas,  
correos de su tristura.  
Tu imagen se le humilló, 345  
y aun le dijo: «Estad segura,  
señora, que he de ser vuestro,  
a pesar de la fortuna».  
Si esto es así, ¿qué me ofreces?  
¿Para qué siempre procuras 350  
otro bien, si te da el cielo  
el mayor, dándote a Julia?  
Mas, ¿con quién hablo, cuitada?  
La misma visión, sin duda,  
es aquesta que vi anoche, 355  
o en muy poquito se muda.  
Del varón, ésta es la imagen;  
la de aquéste, la de Julia.  
¡Oh visiones amorosas,  
dejadme en mi desventura, 360  
idos a buscar verdades,  
y no os curéis de mis burlas;  
haced cierto lo que amor  
os da a entender por figuras!  
¿No os vais? Por Dios que dé gritos: 365  
que mis ojos no acostumbran  
a ver visiones, aunque éstas  
más alegran que atribulan.  
¿No os vais? A fe que dé voces.  
¿No hay ninguno que me acuda? 370



MANFREDO Ya nos vamos; calla un poco.  
¡Ella está loca, sin duda!

JULIA Antes parece profeta.  
¿Quién le ha dicho lo de Julia?

MANFREDO ¡Calla, que su guarda vuelve! 375  
¡El alma llevo confusa!

*(Vanse MANFREDO y JULIA, y entra el CARCELERO.)*

CARCELERO Otro Cipión está abajo,  
que, si a queste no os contenta,  
por sacaros desta afrenta,  
se pondrá en cualquier trabajo. 380

Vestido trae de villano;  
pero a fe que es caballero:  
que el lenguaje no es grosero  
y el brío es de cortesano.

Dice que os quiere hablar, 385  
y yo estoy puesto en que os hable.  
Hablad más, mostraos afable,  
que os mata tanto callar.

*(Vuelve a salir el CARCELERO.)*

PORCIA Si fuese Anastasio... ¡Ay cielos!  
¿Qué he de hacer si acaso es él? 390  
¿He de estar muda con él,  
o he de decir mis duelos?  
¡En gran confusión me veo!  
Ingenio, cielos, ayuda:

que no es posible estar muda 395  
con tan parlero deseo.

*(Entra ANASTASIO y CORNELIO, su criado, y el CARCELERO.)*

CARCELERO Despachad con brevedad,  
no os suceda algún desmán,  
que estos negocios están  
de muy mala calidad. 400

Que el silencio desta dama  
tiene a Novara suspensa,  
y no imagino en qué piensa  
la que no piensa en su fama.

Yo estaré con ojo alerta 405  
por algún pequeño espacio,  
mirando si de palacio  
alguno llega a esta puerta.

*(Éntrase el CARCELERO.)*

PORCIA ¿Sois vos Anastasio?

ANASTASIOSí.

PORCIA¿El que envió este papel? 410

ANASTASIOSeñora, yo soy aquel  
que ha mucho que el alma os di;  
soy quien por vuestra desgracia  
a más desventuras vino  
que las que vio en su camino 415  
el gran músico de Tracia;  
soy aquel que alegre piensa,

fiado en vuestro valor,  
poner la vida y honor  
y el alma en vuestra defensa. 420

PORCIA ¿No leístes la respuesta  
que os llevó la labradora?

ANASTASIONo la he visto más, señora,  
y hartos el buscarla me cuesta.

PORCIA Quizá, como forastera, 425  
debió de errar la posada.  
¡Pues a fe que es avisada,  
y que os fue buena tercera!

En efeto, correspondía  
con justos comedimientos, 430  
que vuestros ofrecimientos  
con el alma agradecía,  
y que de mi honestidad,  
que ahora la infamia lleva,  
hiciédeses vos la prueba 435  
que os mostrase la verdad.

Jurábaos que Dagoberto  
jamás en dicho o en hecho  
pudo ver cosa en mi pecho  
que apruebe su desconcierto. 440

En vuestros brazos valientes  
me resignaba, y ponía  
en ellos la suerte mía,  
segura de inconvenientes.

Ofrecía, finalmente, 445  
de tomaros por esposo:  
señal de que es mentiroso  
Dagoberto, y yo inocente.

ANASTASIO ¡Oh dulce fin de mis males  
y principio de mis bienes, 450  
cielo que en la tierra tienes  
glorias que son sin iguales!  
Vesme rendido a tus pies;  
dispón a tu voluntad  
con toda seguridad 455  
de cuanto valgo.

PORCIA¿No ves  
que soy tuya y que a ti toca  
disponer de mí a tu gusto?

ANASTASIO¡Alma, ahora sí que es justo  
que os vuelva este gusto loca! 460

CORNELIO Déjate desas sandeces;  
haz, señor, lo que has de hacer:  
que no es tiempo de expender  
el tiempo así todas veces.  
Recíbela por esposa; 465  
acaba, y vamos de aquí.

ANASTASIOSeñora, ¿queréislo así?

PORCIASí, y me tengo por dichosa.

ANASTASIO Pues dadme esa hermosa mano,  
y tomad mi fe y la mía. 470

*(Danse las manos.)*

PORCIA Veisla ahí; que una porfía,  
cualquier risco vuelve en llano.

ANASTASIO Ya, pues, que hasta vuestro cielo  
levantaste mi caída,  
sed, mi señora, servida 475  
de alzar dél el negro velo,  
para que las luces bellas  
vea cúyos rayos fueron  
los que han hecho y deshicieron  
las nubes de mis querellas, 480  
y para que, con su llama  
alentado el corazón,  
de la esperada quistión  
se prometa triunfo y fama.

PORCIA No verán ojos mortales, 485  
destos que vos amáis tanto,  
levantado el negro manto,  
ni más alegres señales,  
hasta que mi fama obscura,  
a pesar de Dagoberto, 490  
vuelva por vos a buen puerto  
limpia, alegre, clara y pura.  
Y perdonadme, señor,  
negaros la primer cosa  
que pedís a vuestra esposa. 495  
Echad la culpa a mi amor.

ANASTASIO Dadme un abrazo siquiera.

PORCIA Eso, de muy buena gana.

CORNELIO Vamos, y espere mañana

vuestro invierno primavera. 500

*(Vanse ANASTASIO y CORNELIO.)*

PORCIA Hasta ahora, en popa el viento  
lleva mi barca amorosa.  
¡Oh Fortuna poderosa,  
condúcela a salvamento!

*(Éntrase PORCIA.)*

*(Sale JULIA con una rica rodela y una espada, todo en la mano; sale también MANFREDO.)*

JULIA En fin, ¿las armas son éstas 505  
que señaló Dagoberto?

MANFREDO Sí, amigo.

JULIA Él está en lo cierto;  
que son livianas y prestas,  
y él tiene fama de diestro  
y de ligero además. 510

*(Toma MANFREDO la espada y la rodela.)*

MANFREDO Muestra, Camilo, y verás  
cómo soy dellas maestro.

JULIA Pues ¿con quién te has de probar?

MANFREDOLlama al huésped.

JULIAVesle aquí.

GÜÉSPED¡Ah, Camilo, pesia mí! 515  
Venid, que os ando a buscar  
más ha de un hora.

JULIA Pues bien,  
¿qué hay de nuevo?

GÜÉSPEDQue os espera  
vuestra mujer allí fuera.

JULIA¿Mujer a mí?

GÜÉSPEDY aun de bien, 520  
según su traje.

JULIA Imagino  
que es Julia.

MANFREDOSi Julia es,  
hazla entrar.

JULIA¿Qué harás después  
de entrada?

MANFREDO Yo determino  
de hablarla y ver qué es su intento. 525

JULIA ¿Y enviarás la do dijiste?

MANFREDO No, por Dios.

JULIA No; que la triste  
no puede más, según siento.  
¡Oh, a qué buen tiempo llegaste!  
Güésped, yo os lo serviré. 530  
¿Y el vestido que ordené?

GÜÉSPED Está donde lo ordenaste.

*(Éntrase JULIA a vestirse de mujer lo más breve que se pueda.)*

MANFREDO Si otra rodela tenéis,  
id por ella, y volved luego.

GÜÉSPED ¿Queréis probar en el juego 535  
lo que en las veras haréis?

MANFREDO Sí, amigo.

GÜÉSPED Yo vuelvo presto  
con una que es de provecho.



*(Éntrase el HUÉSPED.)*

MANFREDO El corazón en el pecho  
me da saltos. ¿Qué es aquesto? 540

Mas, si anuncia que es verdad  
lo que Rosamira dijo,  
por vanas cuentas me rijo.  
¿No tengo yo voluntad?

¿Cómo? ¿Sentidos no tengo? 545  
¿No tengo libre albedrío?  
¿Pues qué miedo es éste mío?  
¡Mal con mi esfuerzo me avengo!

¿Con qué, para que me venza,  
Julia me ha obligado a mí? 550  
Pues no es señal verla aquí  
de amor, mas de desvergüenza.

¿A dicha, solicítela?  
¿Dónde vee ricos despojos?  
¿Viéronla jamás mis ojos, 555  
o, por ventura, habléla?

No, por cierto. ¿Pues qué cargo  
me puede Julia hacer?  
¿Que me quiere y es mujer?  
No me faltará descargo. 560

*(Vuelve a entrar el GÜÉSPED con una rodela.)*

GÜÉSPED Vesla aquí.

MANFREDO Toma tu espada,  
y vente hacia mí con ella.  
Muy mejor fuera no vella.

GÜÉSPED ¿Qué dices?

MANFREDONo digo nada.

GÜÉSPED ¿Hela de desenvainar? 565

MANFREDO Poco importa; desenvaina.

GÜÉSPED Más seguro es con la vaina.

MANFREDO ¡Mucho me das que pensar,  
Julia!

GÜÉSPED Mas yo desenvaino.  
¿Estoy bien puesto? ¿No entiendes, 570  
señor? ¿De qué te suspendes?  
Si no te ensayas, envaino.

MANFREDO No vella fuera mejor,  
digo otra vez y otras ciento.  
Vente a mí.

GÜÉSPED ¡Dios ponga tiento 575  
en sus manos!

MANFREDO ¡Las de amor  
son las que me desatientan!

GÜÉSPED ¿Qué es lo que entre dientes hablas?

MANFREDO;Mal tus negocios entablas,  
amor, cuando al fin afrentan! 580

Ponte en aquesta postura,  
la rodela junto al pecho,  
y parte con pie derecho.  
¡Estraña desenvoltura  
ha sido la desta loca! 585

GÜÉSPED;Qué es lo que dices, señor?

MANFREDO;A qué locura, oh Amor,  
tu locura me provoca!

No hay piloto tan famoso  
que en tus mares no se ahogue; 590  
hieres, amor, como azogue  
penetrante y bullicioso.

GÜÉSPED Cordura será dejarte,  
mejor sazón aguardando:  
que estás del Amor tratando, 595  
cuando has de tratar de Marte.

MANFREDO Mas quizá no será ella.

GÜÉSPEDEl temor le desatienta.

MANFREDO Si él aquesta treta tienta,  
bien sé yo la contra della. 600  
¡Válate Dios, la mujer,  
cuál me tienes sin porqué!

(Entra TÁCITO.)

TÁCITO Señor güésped, oígame,  
que una merced me ha de hacer,  
y es que me preste su haca 605  
para ver el desafío  
mañana.

GÜÉSPEDA la fe, hijo mío,  
ya no puede andar de flaca.

TÁCITO No importa: que poco peso  
y no he de estar mucho en ella. 610

GÜÉSPEDSobre su espinazo está  
subido un palmo de hueso.

TÁCITO Haréle la silla atrás  
o adelante, si es que importa.

GÜÉSPED¿No sabéis que es pasicorta, 615  
y que es rijosa además?

TÁCITO Yo le tiraré del freno  
y me pondré desviado  
de otras bestias.

GÜÉSPEDHale dado  
torozón de comer feno. 620

TÁCITO Tendréla yo sin comer  
dos días y sanará.

GÜÉSPED Para comer, sana está;  
pero no para correr.

TÁCITO ¿Yo corrella? ¡Ni por lumbre! 625

GÜÉSPED Digo que está ciega y manca.

TÁCITO Eso no importa una blanca.  
¿No sabe ya mi costumbre?  
Que correré sobre un palo,  
sin pies y manos, si quiero. 630

MANFREDO ¡Qué gracioso chocarrero!

GÜÉSPED No es el jinete muy malo,  
que no acaba de entender  
que no la quiero prestar.

TÁCITO ¡Acabara yo de hablar! 635

MANFREDO Y vos de importuno ser.

TÁCITO Pues présteme seis reales  
para alquilar un rocín.

GÜÉSPED ¿Yo prestar? ¡Ni aun un cuatrín!

TÁCITO ¿Tanto era, pesia mis males? 640

¿Pedíalo algún chocante  
o algún mozuelo ordinario,  
sino un mero bacalarío,  
diestro músico estudiante?

MANFREDO Veislos aquí. Andad con Dios, 645  
que vuestro donaire fuerza  
a que os den más.

TÁCITOY esme fuerza,  
señor, llevar otros dos  
para alquilar un pretal  
de cascabeles.

MANFREDOTomad. 650

TÁCITOVuestra liberalidad  
es de persona real.  
¡Oh, si al pretal se añadieran  
un par de espuelas!

MANFREDOCompraldas.

GÜÉSPEDPedí un puño de esmeraldas. 655

TÁCITO¿Qué mucho que las pidieran?  
Tan aína este señor  
las tuviera aquí a la mano.

GÜÉSPEDIdos en buen hora, hermano.

TÁCITO Prospera el cielo tu honor, 660  
y a tu hacienda dé salud,  
y a mí gracia de corrala.

GÜÉSPED ¡No echaréis la pata en ella,  
por vida de Cafalud!,

*(Vase TÁCITO.)*

que éste es mi nombre.

MANFREDO Camina, 665  
que me importa quedar solo.

GÜÉSPED Encubierta trae este Apolo  
su angélica faz divina.

*(Vase el GÜÉSPED y entra JULIA muy bien adrezada de mujer, cubierta con su manto hasta los ojos, y pónese de rodillas ante MANFREDO.)*

JULIA Si no halla en tu valor  
disculpa mi atrevimiento, 670  
en las disculpas no siento  
que la puede haber mejor;  
y si no tiembla el rigor  
de tu indignación mi pena,  
acabará esta jornada 675  
culpada y desesperada,  
como mi suerte lo ordena.

MANFREDO Levanta, señora mía,  
que esta tu tamaña culpa  
el deseo la disculpa 680

que en tus entrañas se cría:  
que de Amor la tiranía  
a peores cosas fuerza,  
y sé yo por experiencia  
que no hay hacer resistencia 685  
a los golpes de su fuerza.

Pues ya Amor me ha descubierto  
tus pasos, tu intento y celo,  
descúbreme tú ese cielo  
que traes con nubes cubierto; 690  
y si lo ignoras, te advierto  
que son seguras verdades  
las que la experiencia apura:  
que es parte la hermosura  
para mudar voluntades. 695

JULIA Harélo, como es razón;  
mas, ¡ay de mí!, que barrunto  
que ha de llegar en un punto  
mi muerte y tu admiración.  
No te espante esta visión 700  
ni este nunca visto estilo;  
que el amor que en mí se esmera,  
de Julia la verdadera  
hizo un fingido Camilo.

MANFREDO Gran desenvoltura es ésta, 705  
Camilo, y pensando voy  
por qué te burlas si estoy  
más de luto que de fiesta;  
y es cosa muy descompuesta  
burla de tal proceder 710  
en tiempo turbado y triste;  
y el que de mujer se viste,  
mucho tiene de mujer.



JULIA Julia soy la desdichada,  
y, entre mi pena crecida, 715  
más siento el no ser creída,  
que siento el ser mal pagada.  
Como no repara en nada  
aquel que llaman Amor,  
quiere que sus hechos cante 720  
Julia vuelta en estudiante,  
que primero fue pastor.  
Soy la que vio Rosamira  
en visión ante tus pies;  
soy, señor, la que no es 725  
en los ojos de tu ira;  
soy la que de sí se admira,  
viendo las muchas mudanzas  
que Amor en sus trajes pone,  
y que en ninguno dispone, 730  
el fin de sus esperanzas.

MANFREDO Yo te creo, pues tus ojos  
no pudieran fingir tanto  
que mostraran con su llanto  
entregarme tus despojos. 735  
Pon ya tregua a tus enojos,  
Julia hermosa, y ven conmigo:  
que quizá en estos rodeos  
descubrirán tus deseos  
que no es Amor tu enemigo. 740  
Servirásme de padrino  
en la batalla que espero:  
que por gentileza quiero  
ponerme en este camino;  
y si el cielo y el destino 745  
ordenan que yo sea tuyo,  
no por salir a este trance  
se ha de borrar este lance,  
y más si yo no le huyo.  
No te arrodilles; levanta, 750

que eres mi igual, y aun mejor.

*(Éntrase MANFREDO.)*

JULIA De hoy más diré que es, Amor,  
tu rigor blandura santa;  
ya a mi pena se adelanta  
mi gozo; ya me contemplo, 755  
libre del mar de mis penas,  
colgar, ¡oh Amor!, las cadenas,  
en los muros de tu templo.

*(Éntrase JULIA.)*

*(Suenan trompetas tristes: sale el DUQUE DE NOVARA con su  
acompañamiento y dos jueces; siéntase en su trono, que ha de estar cubierto de  
luto, y dice:)*

DUQUE Traigan a Rosamira de aquel modo  
que yo tengo ordenado.

UNO Ya ella viene, 760  
según lo dice el triste son que suena.

*(Sale PORCIA cubierta con el manto que le dio el CARCELERO, acompañada  
de la misma manera que dijo, con la mitad del acompañamiento enlutado y la  
otra mitad de fiesta; el VERDUGO al lado izquierdo, desenvainado el cuchillo,  
y al siniestro, el niño con la corona de laurel; los atambores delante sonando  
triste y ronco, la mitad de la caja de verde y la otra mitad de negro, que será un  
extraño espectáculo. Siéntase PORCIA, cubierta, en un asiento alto que ha de  
estar a un lado del teatro, desviado del de su padre; entran asimismo  
DAGOBERTO y ROSAMIRA, como peregrinos embozados, y TÁCITO.)*

DUQUE¿Cómo no viene Dagoberto? ¿Espera que se le pase el día, pues ya es hora?

JUEZSin duda, debe ser éste que viene:  
que el actor es costumbre se presente 765  
antes que el reo en la estacada.

DUQUEEs claro.

*(Entra ANASTASIO, y CORNELIO por padrino, y ANASTASIO viene cubierto el rostro con un tafetán; viene con sus atambores; serán los mismos que trujeron a PORCIA.)*

¿No es éste Dagoberto?

ANASTASIONi aun quisiera  
serlo por la mitad de todo el mundo.

DUQUE¿Pues quién sois?

ANASTASIOSu enemigo, sólo en cuanto  
lo es de la duquesa Rosamira, 770  
cuya defensa tomo yo a mi cargo.

DUQUEYo os lo agradezco.

JUEZDagoberto tarda.

DUQUECajas oigo sonar; él es, sin duda.

*(Entra MANFREDO con un tafetán por el rostro; trae a JULIA por padrino, que asimesmo viene embozada.)*

JUEZ Tampoco es éste Dagoberto.

DUQUE El talle  
no nos dice que es él.

JUEZ Sin duda, pienso <sup>775</sup>  
que ha de tener de sobra defensores  
la duquesa.

DUQUE Sepamos quién es éste.

JUEZ ¿Quién sois o a qué venís, buen caballero?

MANFREDO El saber quién yo sea importa poco;  
saber a lo que vengo, sí que importa: <sup>780</sup>  
a defender a la duquesa vengo.

DAGOBERTO ¿Quién serán estos dos?

ROSAMIRAN No los conozco  
ni sé quién puedan ser.

ANASTASIO A mí me toca  
por derecho y razón esa defensa,  
pues fui el primero que llegué a este punto. <sup>785</sup>

TÁCITORazón tiene el primero, o yo sé poco  
desto de desafíos y estacadas.

JUEZA la duquesa toca el declararse  
cuál quiere de los dos que la defienda.

DUQUEEso es razón.

ANASTASIOY yo por tal la tengo. 790

MANFREDOY yo también: que no me queda cosa  
por saber de las leyes de la guerra.

DUQUEPregúntenselo, pues, y vean qué dice  
mi hija. ¡Oh nombre dulce, cuando el cielo  
quiso que sin escrúpulo llegase 795  
a mis oídos!

JUEZId vos, y sabeldo.

UNOEl duque, mi señor, dice, señora,  
que estos caballeros han venido  
a ser tus defensores, y que escojas  
cuál quieres de los dos que te defienda. 800

PORCIAEn Dios y en el primero deposito  
mi agravio, mi inocencia y esperanza.

DAGOBERTO¿Labradora es ésta? Mejor me ayude

el cielo que la crea. Ya se tarda  
mi criado.

ROSAMIRA Confusa estoy, amigo. 805  
No sé en qué ha de parar tan grande enredo.

JUEZ Bien se oyó lo que dijo; a vos os toca,  
señor, su defensa.

MANFREDOTener paciencia  
es lo que más importa en este caso;  
basta que se ha mostrado al descubierto 810  
mi voluntad.

DUQUE El cielo así os lo pague  
como yo os lo agradezco.

JUEZ No hay disculpa  
que pueda disculpar ya la tardanza  
de Dagoberto.

DUQUE; Mas, que nunca venga!

TÁCITO Ciégale, San Antón; quémale un brazo; 815  
destróncale un tobillo; nunca acierte  
a venir a este sitio; salga en palmas  
nuestra buena duquesa, que es un ángel,  
una paloma duenda, una cordera,  
que no tiene más hiel que cuatro toros. 820

*(Entra un CORREO con una carta.)*

CORREOEs de tanta importancia este despacho  
que traigo, ¡oh buen señor!, que me es forzoso  
dártelo aquí; que así me lo mandaron,  
porque es de Dagoberto, y que te importa.

DUQUE¿De Dagoberto? Muestra cómo es esto. 825  
¿Cómo toma la pluma por la espada?  
¿Tiempo es éste de cartas?

CORREONo sé nada:  
ello dirá.

JUEZVuestra excelencia vea  
lo que la carta dice.

DUQUEAsí lo hago.

DAGOBERTOParece que se turba el duque.

ROSAMIRA¡Ay triste! 830  
¡Cuánto mejor nos fuera habernos ido  
y esperar desde lejos el suceso  
deste tan grande enredo y desventura!  
¡Temblando estoy!

TÁCITO¿Carticas a tal tiempo?  
Apostaré que no llega esta danza 835  
a hacer con las cindojas el tretoque.

DUQUE ¿Hay cosa igual? Leed aquesa carta  
en alta voz, que es bien que la oigan todos.

*(Después de haber leído el DUQUE la carta, se la da al JUEZ, que la lee en alta voz.)*

JUEZ *(Carta.)* La presta resolución que tomaste de entregar a Manfredo por esposa a tu hija Rosamira me forzó a usar de la industria de acusalla, por evitar por entonces el peligro de perdella. La mejor señal que te podré dar de que es buena es el haberla yo escogido por mi legítima mujer. Considera, señor, antes que del todo me culpes, que soy tan bueno como Manfredo, y que tu hija escogió lo que quizá tú no le dieras casándola contra su voluntad. Si con ella usares término de piadoso padre, usaré yo contigo el de obediente hijo; aunque, de cualquier manera que me trates lo habré de ser hasta la muerte.  
*Tu hijo Dagoberto.*

ANASTASIO ¿Hase visto maldad tan insolente?  
A no estar seguro deste hecho, 840  
¿saliera Dagoberto fácilmente  
con el embuste que forjó en su pecho?

DUQUE Si esto permite el cielo y lo consiente,  
¿qué puedo yo hacer? Ello está hecho;  
gócela en paz.

ANASTASIO Aqueso es sin justicia 845  
y contra todo estilo de milicia.  
Según tu bando, mía es Rosamira:  
porque tú prometiste de entregalla  
por legítima esposa al que la mira  
pusiese en defendella y libertalla. 850  
Lo que el de Utrino dice es gran mentira,  
y podrá la experiencia averigualla;  
luego en este momento yo he vencido,



pues mi contrario al puesto no ha venido,  
y la excusa que da no es de importancia, 855  
porque es todo al revés de lo que cuenta.

MANFREDO Venciste; pero mía es tu ganancia,  
si aquí al buen proceder se tiene cuenta.  
Si de otro es Rosamira, es ignorancia  
pensar que ha de ser tuya.

ANASTASIO ¡No consienta 860  
el Cielo que mi esposa de otro sea!

MANFREDO Esta verdad haré que aquí se vea.

ANASTASIO ¿En qué la fundas?

MANFREDO En que soy Manfredo,  
de Rosamira, por concierto, esposo.  
Que la has librado tú, yo lo concedo, 865  
no más de porque yo fui perezoso.  
Por cuatro pasos, bien decirlo puedo,  
que llevaste a los míos, fin dichoso  
has alcanzado en la dudosa empresa;  
mas no por esto es tuya la duquesa: 870  
que la razón que así te da el derecho,  
por primer defensor que llegó al puesto,  
la turba, según siento, estar ya hecho  
conmigo el casamiento antes de aquesto.

PORCIA ¡Saltando el corazón me está en el pecho! 875

JULIA ¡Válame Dios! ¿En qué ha de parar esto?

ROSAMIRA ¿Adónde vas?

DAGOBERTO Sosiégate.

ROSAMIRA Recelo...

DUQUE ¿Ha visto caso semejante el suelo?

ANASTASIO Quedaos, amor, un poco aquí arrimado;  
venid en su lugar, honra, conmigo. 880  
Oye, Manfredo, güésped mal mirado,  
ladrón de paz y engañador amigo:  
¿dó están las ricas prendas que has robado?  
¿Por qué tan sin porqué, como enemigo,  
usando en la amistad tan mal decoro, 885  
a mi padre robaste su tesoro?

MANFREDO ¿Quién eres?

ANASTASIO Anastasio, el heredero  
de Dorlán, y de Julia único hermano,  
de Porcia primo, por las cuales quiero  
probar que eres ladrón torpe y villano. 890

MANFREDO Si como eres valiente caballero  
fueras más atentado, claro y llano,  
vieras que esas razones afrentosas  
se fundan en quimeras fabulosas.

Yo no robé a tu hermana ni a tu prima; 895  
mas de alguna sabrás, como tú hagas

que a la quistión primera se dé cima,  
con que tu gusto al mío satisfagas.

DAGOBERTO La honra de mi hermana me lastima.

ROSAMIRA ¿Dónde vas, Dagoberto? No deshagas 900  
el buen principio que la suerte muestra  
de dar buen fin a la desdicha nuestra.

DAGOBERTO Sabe que soy Dagoberto,  
Manfredo, y sabe que soy  
aquel que agraviado estoy 905  
de tu infame desconcierto.  
¡Dame a mi hermana, traidor,  
de fe falsa y alevosa!

MANFREDO Restituye tú a mi esposa  
antes el robado honor. 910  
No te desmiento, porque  
de aquí a bien poco verás  
en el engaño en que estás  
y la bondad de mi fe.

ANASTASIO Primo -mas quédese aparte 915  
el parentesco hasta ver  
si del justo proceder  
os dio el cielo alguna parte-,  
¿vos decís que es vuestra esposa  
Rosamira?

DAGOBERTO Y es verdad. 920

ANASTASIO¿Tenéis otra claridad  
deste hecho no dudosa,  
como es el decirlo vos?

DAGOBERTO¿Bastará que yo lo diga?

ANASTASIO¿Quién duda?

DAGOBERTOPues no se diga 925  
más contienda entre los dos  
ni entre los tres, que yo haré  
que ella lo declare al punto.

DUQUEEl bien me ha venido junto  
cuando menos lo pensé. 930  
Escoja mi hija, y haga  
su gusto: que todos tres  
son iguales.

JUEZAsí es.

MANFREDOBien cierta tengo la paga,  
pues tan de su voluntad 935  
se entregaba por mi esposa.

ANASTASIONo está mi suerte dudosa,  
si es que es firme la verdad.

DAGOBERTO ¡Qué engañados quedarán  
los dos en este suceso! 940

JULIA Cerrado está ya el proceso;  
mirad qué sentencia os dan,  
    corazón. ¡Ay de mí, triste,  
que el miedo crece, y desmengua  
la esperanza! Callad, lengua, 945  
que mal tal, mal se resiste.

PORCIA *Aparte.*

    ¿Si es tiempo de descubrir  
la verdad de mi mentira?

MANFREDO Señor, manda a Rosamira  
diga a quién quiere admitir. 950

DUQUE   Dígalo en buen hora.

PORCIA Digo  
que es Anastasio mi esposo.

JULIA ¡Alentad, pecho amoroso!

ROSAMIRA Lo que tú dices desdigo:  
    que Dagoberto es mi bien. 955

ANASTASIO Y vos, señora, mi gloria.

MANFREDO Tragedia ha sido mi historia.

JULIA Aún quedan glorias que os den.  
¿Tuya no soy, pena vuestra?

*(Tome la mano ROSAMIRA a DAGOBERTO y ANASTASIO a PORCIA, y a este instante se declaren entrambas.)*

TÁCITO ¿De qué Anastasio se admira? 960

JULIA Aquélla no es Rosamira.

ANASTASIO ¡Ay suerte airada y siniestra!  
¿Quién eres?

PORCIA Soy la que quiso  
el Cielo, en todo piadoso,  
sacarla de un riguroso 965  
infierno a tu paraíso;  
soy la que, en traje mudado,  
trayendo amor en el pecho,  
procurando tu provecho  
he mi gusto procurado; 970  
soy aquélla a quien tú diste  
de esposa la fe y la mano;  
soy quien tiene amor ufano  
por ver que no se resiste;  
soy de Dagoberto hermana 975  
y soy tu prima, y soy quien,  
cuando me falte tu bien,  
no soy más que sombra vana.

ANASTASIO ¿Dónde está Julia?

PORCIA Señor,  
yo sé que la verás presto. 980

JULIA ¿Podré esperar, según esto,  
blandura de tu rigor?

Mira con qué mansedumbre  
Anastasio a Porcia mira;  
mira que es de Rosamira 985  
ya Dagoberto su lumbré;  
mira que yo sola quedo  
en los brazos de la muerte,  
si tu clemencia no advierte  
que soy Julia y tú Manfredo. 990

MANFREDO Levanta, pues que ya el Cielo  
tus deseos asegura,  
gracias a tu hermosura  
y a mi siempre honrado celo.

Anastasio, mira agora 995  
con gusto y admiración  
que yo nunca fui ladrón  
ni de condición traidora.

Aquésta es Julia, tu hermana,  
y ésa, tu prima, cual dice, 1000  
con las cuales nunca hice  
traición ni fuerza villana.

Ellas te dirán después  
del modo que aquí vinieron;  
basta que el fin consiguieron, 1005  
y es gusto de su interés.

Tu industria y el cielo han hecho  
que les seamos esposos;  
ellos son lances forzosos;  
no hay sino hacerles buen pecho. 1010

Quien se pudiera quejar  
de Rosamira era yo;  
mas si el Cielo esto ordenó...

ANASTASIO Que paciencia y barajar.

DAGOBERTO ¡Oh hermana mía!

PORCIA ¡Oh mi hermano! 1015

DAGOBERTO ¡Buenos pasos son aquéstos!

PORCIA Nunca pasos descompuestos  
ganaron lo que yo gano.

ANASTASIO Más es tiempo de aliviallas  
aquéste, que de reñillas. 1020

DUQUE Aquéstas son maravillas  
dignas solas de admirallas.

ANASTASIO En fin, mi hermana es tu esposa.

MANFREDO Así es.

ANASTASIO Y Porcia es mía,  
si no lo impide y desvía 1025  
ser mi prima.

DUQUE Fácil cosa  
es haber dispensación  
en caso tan importante.



TÁCITO Hoy del campo de Agramante  
he visto la confusión, 1030  
y la paz de Otaviano  
he visto en espacio breve.  
¡No hay camino que amor pruebe,  
difícil, que no sea llano!

DUQUE Entremos en la ciudad, 1035  
donde despacio sabremos  
destos no vistos extremos  
toda la puntualidad,  
y allí se harán regocijos  
y desposorios honrosos 1040  
de los seis tan venturosos  
que ya los tengo por hijos.

TÁCITO Éstas son, ¡oh Amor!, en fin,  
tus disparates y hazañas;  
y aquí acaban las marañas 1045  
tuyas, que no tienen fin.

FIN

# LA ENTRETENIDA



*Comedia famosa de La entretenida*

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Los que hablan en ella son los siguientes:

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CRISTINA, *fregona*.

DON ANTONIO.

MARCELA, *su hermana*.

DON FRANCISCO.

CARDENIO.

TORRENTE, *su criado*.

MUÑOZ, *escudero de Marcela*.

DOROTEA.

DON AMBROSIO.

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Músicos.

UN BARBERO.

UN ALGUACIL.

UN CORCHETE.

DON GIL, *bastardo*.

CLAVIJO.

Un CARRETERO.

DON PEDRO OSORIO, *padre de otra Marcela*.

## Jornada primera

*Salen OCAÑA, lacayo, con un mandil y harnero, y CRISTINA, fregona.*

OCAÑA Mi sora Cristina, denmos.

CRISTINA ¿Qué hemos de dar, mi so Ocaña?

OCAÑA Dar en dulce, no en huraña,  
ni en tan amargos extremos.

CRISTINA ¿Querría el sor que anduviese 5  
de pa y vereda contino?

OCAÑA No hay quien ande ese camino  
que algún gusto no interese.

CRISTINA Siempre la melancolía  
fue de la muerte parienta, 10  
y en la vida alegre asienta  
el hablar de argentería.

Motes, cuentos, chistes, dichos,  
pensamientos regalados,  
muy buenos para pensados, 15  
y mejores para dichos.

OCAÑA Sé yo, Cristina, con quién  
te burlas, y no es conmigo.

CRISTINA¿Sabe, Ocaña, qué le digo?

OCAÑA¿Qué dirás que me esté bien? 20

CRISTINA Dígole que no malicie  
con tan dañados intentos.

OCAÑAPues a fe que en estos cuentos  
ando por la superficie:  
que, si llegase hasta el centro, 25  
¡oh, qué diría de cosas!

CRISTINAMuchas, pero maliciosas.

OCAÑASálenme mil al encuentro  
del corazón a la lengua.

CRISTINANo te pienso escuchar más. 30

OCAÑAVuelve, Cristina; ¿a dó vas?

CRISTINAEs el escucharte mengua,  
y enfádanme tus ruindades  
y tus modos de decir.

OCAÑAEI que está para morir, 35  
siempre suele hablar verdades.  
Yo estoy muriendo, y confieso  
que quieres bien a Quiñones.

CRISTINA De tus malas intenciones  
agora se vee el exceso; 40  
agora se echa de ver  
que eres loco y laca...

OCAÑA Bueno;  
pronuncia de lleno en lleno,  
aunque el «yo» no es menester;  
que el ser lacayo no ignoro, 45  
sin rodeos y sin cifras.  
Y mal tu venganza cifras  
en no guardar el decoro  
que debes a ser fregona  
de las más lindas que vi, 50  
entre Quiñones y mí,  
ya cordera y ya leona.

CRISTINA ¿Soy, por ventura, mujer  
que he de avasallarme a un paje?  
¿O vengo yo de linaje 55  
de tan bajo proceder?  
¿No soy yo la que en mi flor,  
por no querer ofendella,  
presumo más de doncella,  
que no el Cid de Campeador? 60  
¿No soy yo de los Capoches  
de Oviedo? ¿Hay más que mostrar?

OCAÑA Con todo, te has de quedar,  
Cristina...

CRISTINA ¿A qué?

OCAÑAA buenas noches,

Eres muy solicitada 65  
y muy vista, y no está el toque  
en que la flor no se toque,  
si al serlo está aparejada.

Las flores en el campo están  
sujetas a cualquier mano: 70

a las del bajo villano

y a las del alto galán,

al arado y al pie duro  
del labrador que le guía;  
pero la flor que se cría 75

tras el levantado muro

del recato, no la ofende

el cierzo murmurador,

ni la marchita el ardor

del que tocarla pretende. 80

La mujer ha de ser buena,  
y parecerlo, que es más.

CRISTINA Gran predicador estás;

mas tu doctrina condena

a tus lascivos intentos. 85

OCAÑAA Levántasles testimonio:

que al blanco del matrimonio

asestan mis pensamientos.

CRISTINA A mucho te has atrevido.

Muestra; aquí está la cebada. 90

*(Dale el harnero.)*

*(Éntrase CRISTINA.)*



OCAÑA Toma el harnero, agraviada  
deste que de ti lo ha sido.

¡Oh pajes, que sois halcones  
destas duendas fregoniles,  
de su salario alguaciles, 95  
de sus vivares hurones!

Lleváisos la media nata  
deste común beneficio;  
dais en ella rienda al vicio,  
sin hallar ninguna ingrata: 100

gozáis del justo botín  
y de la limpia chinela,  
y os reís del arandela  
y del dorado chapín;

hacéis con modos süaves 105  
burla que os cuesta barata  
de aquellas lunas de plata  
que van pisando las graves.

¡Qué presto Cristina vuelve  
con la cebada y Quiñones! 110  
¡Corazón, triste te pones!  
¡La sangre se me revuelve  
en ver a estos dos tan juntos,  
tan domésticos y afables!

*(Entra CRISTINA, con la cebada, y QUIÑONES, el paje.)*

CRISTINA No le mires ni le hables. 115  
Si le hablares, no sea en puntos  
que te descubran celoso;  
que hará mil suertes en ti.

QUIÑONES Aunque mozo, nunca fui,  
ni soy, ni seré medroso. 120

CRISTINA Advierte que está delante.

Tome, galán, la cebada.

OCAÑA¿Bien medida?

CRISTINAY bien colmada.

OCAÑA¿Midióla mi so galante?

CRISTINA No la midió sino el diablo, 125  
que tu mala lengua atiza.

OCAÑAVoyme a mi caballeriza,  
por no ver este retablo  
destas dos figuras juntas  
que no se apartan jamás. 130

QUIÑONESEn tales malicias das,  
que con una mil apuntas;  
y que te engañas sé yo.

OCAÑAY también sé yo muy bien  
que a los dos estará bien 135  
el callar.

CRISTINAYo sé que no,  
porque quien calla concede  
con el mal que dél se dice.

OCAÑANinguno te dije o hice.

QUIÑONES Ni él decir o hacerle puede. 140

OCAÑA Por vida suya, que abaje  
el toldo; que, en mi conciencia,  
que hay muy poca diferencia  
entre un lacayo y un paje.

La longura de un caballo 145  
puede medirla a compás,  
yo delante, y él detrás:  
andallo, mi vida, andallo.

*(Éntrase OCAÑA.)*

CRISTINA ¡Y que tú no tengas brío  
para responderle! Creo 150  
que he de recobrar mi empleo  
y volverme a lo que es mío.

QUIÑONES ¿Qué tengo de responder?  
¿Ciño espada? No la ciño.  
Y más, que es mengua si riño 155  
con...

CRISTINA Quiñones, a placer:  
que es Ocaña hombre de bien,  
y espadachín además.

*(Entran DON ANTONIO y su hermana MARCELA.)*

DON ANTONIO ¡Porfiada, hermana, estás!  
Quiero, mas no diré a quién. 160  
Tengo ausente mi alegría,  
sin saber adónde yace,

y de aquesta ausencia nace  
toda mi malencolía.

Hanla escondido, y no sé 165  
adónde, en cielo ni en tierra;  
muévenme los celos guerra,  
y dan alcance a mi fe,

no porque la menoscaben:  
que, celos no averiguados, 170  
ministran a los cuidados  
materia porque no acaben;  
son la leña del gran fuego  
que en el alma enciende amor,  
viento con cuyo rigor 175  
se esparce o turba el sosiego.

QUIÑONES Aún no han echado de ver  
que estamos aquí nosotros.

DON ANTONIO Dejadnos aquí vosotros.

CRISTINA Entra aquí el obedecer. 180

*(Éntranse QUIÑONES y CRISTINA.)*

MARCELA ¿Siquiera no me dirás  
el nombre desa tu dama?

DON ANTONIO Como te llamas, se llama.

MARCELA ¿Como yo?

DON ANTONIO Y aun tiene más:

que se te parece mucho. 185

MARCELA *Aparte.*

¡Válame Dios! ¿Qué es aquesto?  
¿Si es amor éste de incesto?  
Con varias sospechas lucho.  
¿Es hermosa?

DON ANTONIO Como vos,  
y está bien encarecido. 190

MARCELA *Aparte.*

El seso tiene perdido  
mi hermano. ¡Válgale Dios!

*(Entra DON FRANCISCO, amigo de DON ANTONIO.)*

DON FRANCISCO ¿Andan hinchadas las olas  
del mar de tu pensamiento?

DON ANTONIO Entraos en vuestro aposento; 195  
dejadnos, hermana, a solas;  
retiraos, hermana mía.

MARCELA ¡Dios tus intentos mejore!

*(Éntrase MARCELA.)*

DON ANTONIO ¿Traéis desdichas que llore,  
o ya venturas que ría? 200

DON FRANCISCO Promesas que se han cumplido  
con dádivas, se han probado;  
industrias se han intentado  
del Sinón más entendido;  
las diligencias que he hecho 205  
frisan con las imposibles;  
lince ha habido invisibles,  
y espías de trecho a trecho;  
pero no puede mostrar  
sagacidad o cautela 210  
dónde han llevado a Marcela;  
cosa que es para admirar.  
Solamente se imagina  
que una noche la sacó  
su padre, y se la llevó; 215  
pero adónde, no se atina.

DON ANTONIO ¿Si podrá la astrología  
judiciaria declarallo?

DON FRANCISCO Yo no pienso interrogallo;  
que tengo por fruslería 220  
la ciencia, no en cuanto a ciencia,  
sino en cuanto al usar della  
el simple que se entra en ella  
sin estudio ni experiencia.  
Si acaso Marcela fuera 225  
alguna joya perdida,  
yo buscara otra salida,  
que buena en esto la diera.  
Santos hay auxiliadores  
veinte, o más, o no sé cuántos; 230  
pero no querrán los santos

curarnos de mal de amores.

A la justa petición  
siempre favorece el Cielo.

DON ANTONIO Pues, ¿no es muy justo mi celo? 235

¿No está muy puesto en razón?

¿Busco yo a Marcela acaso  
sino para ser mi esposa?

¿Della pretendo otra cosa?

DON FRANCISCO Vámonos, o habla paso: 240

que no sabes quién te escucha.

DON ANTONIO Vamos, amigo, y advierte

que fío mi vida y muerte

de tu discreción, que es mucha.

*(Éntranse DON ANTONIO y DON FRANCISCO.)*

*(Entran CARDENIO, con manteo y sotana, y tras él TORRENTE, capigorrón, comiendo un membrillo o cosa que se le parezca.)*

CARDENIO Vuela mi estrecha y débil esperanza 245

con flacas alas, y, aunque sube el vuelo

a la alta cumbre del hermoso cielo,

jamás el punto que pretende alcanza.

Yo vengo a ser perfecta semejanza  
de aquel mancebo que de Creta el suelo 250

dejó, y, contrario de su padre al cielo,

a la región del cielo se abalanza.

Caerán mis atrevidos pensamientos,  
del amoroso incendio derretidos,

en el mar del temor turbado y frío; 255

pero no llevarán cursos violentos,

del tiempo y de la muerte prevenidos,  
al lugar del olvido el nombre mío.

¿Comes? Buena pro te haga;  
la misma hambre te tome. 260

TORRENTENo puede decir que come  
el que masca y no lo traga.

No se me vaya a la mano,  
que ésta, si acaso es culpa,  
ser me sirve de disculpa 265  
el membrillo toledano.

Sé cierto que decir puedo,  
y mil veces referillo:  
espada, mujer, membrillo,  
a toda ley, de Toledo. 270

Las acciones naturales  
son forzosas, y el comer  
una dellas viene a ser,  
y de las más principales;  
y esto aquí de molde viene, 275  
y es una advertencia llana:  
come el rico cuando ha gana,  
y el pobre, cuando lo tiene.

CARDENIO Con todo, me darás gusto  
de que en la calle no comas. 280

TORRENTESi estas niñerías tomas  
por deshonra o por disgusto,  
yo me aturaré la boca  
con cal y arena a pisón.

CARDENIOSé que tienes discreción. 285

TORRENTE¡Y golosina no poca!



CARDENIO Sabes lo que nunca supo  
el diablo.

TORRENTEY aun soy peor.

CARDENIO¿Vuelves a comer, traidor?

TORRENTEY a no como, sino chupo. 290

*(Entra MUÑOZ, escudero de MARCELA.)*

Pero ves dónde parece  
tu Santelmo.

CARDENIO Así es verdad,  
puesto que mi tempestad  
nunca mengua y siempre crece.  
En estas benditas manos 295  
tengo mi remedio puesto.

MUÑOZ Vos veréis cómo echo el resto  
en daros consejos sanos.

Advertid, hijo, que son  
las canas el fundamento 300  
y la basa a do hace asiento  
la agudeza y discreción.

En la mucha edad se muestra  
que asiste toda advertencia  
porque tiene a la experiencia 305  
por consejera y maestra;

y estas canas no han nacido  
en aqueste rostro acaso.

CARDENIO Hablad, señor Muñoz, paso,  
que ya os tengo conocido, 310  
y sé que sabéis cortar,  
colgado del aire, un pelo.

MUÑOZ Así me ayude a mí el cielo  
como os pienso de ayudar;  
porque el premio es el que aviva 315  
al más torpe ingenio y rudo.

CARDENIO Si es premio este pobre escudo,  
vuestra merced le reciba  
con aquella voluntad  
sana con que yo le ofrezco. 320

MUÑOZ; Oh señor, que no merezco  
tanta liberalidad!

TORRENTE Tomóle, besóle y diole  
quizá perpetua clausura;  
del oro la color pura 325  
sin duda que enamoróle,  
porque tiene una virtud  
de alegrar el corazón,  
y la avara condición  
vive con la senetud. 330  
Pero, ¿a qué pecho no doma  
la hambre del oro?

MUÑOZ Escucha,

y con advertencia mucha,  
hijo, este consejo toma.

De Marcela no hay pensar 335  
que es de tan tiernos aceros,  
que la han de ablandar terceros,  
ni rogar, ni porfiar,

ni lágrimas, ni suspiros,  
ni voluntad verdadera: 340  
que son con ella de cera  
de amor los más fuertes tiros.

A las olas que se atreven  
a embestirla por amar,  
se muestra roca en la mar, 345  
que la tocan y no mueven.

Esto con Marcela pasa.

CARDENIO No me acobardes y espantes.

TORRENTE ¡Oh, cuántos destos diamantes  
he visto volver de masa! 350

¡Cuántas he visto rendidas  
a un billete trasnochado!  
¡Cuántas, sin darlas, han dado  
de ganadas en perdidas!

¡Cuántas siguen sus antojos 355  
en mitad de su recato!

¡Cuántas en el dulce trato  
tropiezan, y aun dan de ojos!

MUÑOZ Pues ni Marcela tropieza  
ni cae.

TORRENTE ¡Gran milagro!

CARDENIO Calla: 360  
que es extremo que se halla  
hoy en la naturaleza,  
y el señor Muñoz bien sabe  
lo que dice.

MUÑOZ Yo estoy cierto  
que, aún más bien del que os advierto, 365  
todo en mi señora cabe.  
Pero vengamos al punto  
de lo que quiero decir.

CARDENIO Hasta acabarle de oír,  
estoy, Torrente, difunto. 370

MUÑOZ Es el caso que está en Lima  
un hermano de su padre  
de Marcela, caballero  
de ilustre y claro linaje.  
De los bienes de fortuna 375  
dicen que le cupo parte  
tanta que, entre los más ricos,  
suelen por rico nombrarle.  
Tiene un hijo que se llama  
don Silvestre de Almendárez, 380  
el cual con doña Marcela,  
aunque prima, ha de casarse.  
Cada flota le esperamos;  
mas, si en esta que se sabe  
que ha llegado a salvamento 385  
no viene, echado ha buen lance.  
Fíngete tú don Silvestre,  
que yo te daré bastantes  
relaciones con que muestres  
ser él mismo; y serán tales, 390  
que, por más que te pregunten,

podrás responder con arte,  
que, acreditando el engaño,  
tus mentiras sean verdades.  
Aposentarán en casa, 395  
harán gasajos grandes,  
y tú dentro, una por una,  
podrás ver cómo te vales.

CARDENIO Está bien; pero si acaso  
en aquesta flota traen 400  
cartas dese don Silvestre,  
y de que no viene saben,  
yo dentro en casa, ¿qué haré?  
¿Cómo podrá acreditarse  
tan conocida mentira 405  
para que pase adelante?

MUÑOZ Dirás que, después de escritas  
y dadas, quiso tu madre  
que te vinieses a España,  
aunque a hurto de tu padre; 410  
que ella, deseando verse  
con nietos en quien dilate  
su nombre y posteridad,  
no quiso que más tardases.  
Y este venirte a escondidas 415  
podrá, señor, escusarte  
de no venir con riquezas  
que el ser quien eres señalen;  
mas no dejes de traer  
algunas piedras bezares, 420  
y algunas sartas de perlas,  
y papagayos que hablen.

CARDENIO En eso yo daré trazas  
que dese aprieto me saquen,

y tales, que satisfagan. 425

TORRENTETodo aquesto es disparate.

CARDENIOLa memoria sea cumplida,  
y los puntos importantes  
que en este nuevo edificio  
han de ser fundamentales, 430  
vengan especificados,  
de modo que me declaren  
por el mismo don Silvestre.

MUÑOZVen por ellos esta tarde.

CARDENIOVolverá este mi criado. 435

TORRENTEVolveré, si a Dios le place;  
que, sin su ayuda, no puedo,  
ni estornudar, ni mudarme.

MUÑOZSeñor, si acaso, si a dicha,  
si por buena suerte traes 440  
otro escudillo, bien puedes  
con liberal mano darle:  
que es invierno, y no hay bayeta,  
y no será bien que pase  
frío el que al incendio tuyo 445  
procura refrigerarle.

CARDENIONo le traigo, en mi conciencia;  
pero yo haré que se os saque  
un vestido de bayeta,

y a mi cuenta le hará el sastre. 450

MUÑOZ Venderéle, ¡vive Roque!  
No consentiré se ensanche  
Marcela con mis trofeos,  
que cuestan gotas de sangre.  
Vístame la que quisiere 455  
que polido la acompañe:  
que gastar yo mi bayeta  
en servicio ajeno, ¡tate!  
Y voyme, porque conviene  
que la memoria se estampe 460  
que fortifique este embuste.  
Y a Dios quedéis.

CARDENIO Él os guarde.

MUÑOZ Mire que no se le olvide  
lo de la bayeta y sastre:  
que en este punto consisten 465  
sus gustos o sus pesares.

*(Éntrese MUÑOZ.)*

CARDENIO ¡Gran principio a mi quimera!

TORRENTE Lámala, señor, dislate;  
torre fundada en palillos,  
como casica de naipes. 470  
Dime: ¿dónde están las perlas?  
¿Dónde las piedras bezares?  
¿Adónde las catalnicas  
o los papagayos grandes?  
¿Dónde la práctica de Indias, 475

de los puertos y los mares  
que se toman y navegan?  
¿Dónde la bayeta y sastre?  
Si quieres que tus negocios  
en felice punto paren, 480  
lleva, y esto te aconsejo,  
siempre la verdad delante.  
Capigorrista soy tuyo,  
y como padezco hambre,  
tengo sutil el ingenio, 485  
y en dar consejos soy sacre.

CARDENIO Yo me remito a la lista  
de Muñoz; tú no desmayes,  
que en las empresas de amor,  
tal vez se ha visto que valen 490  
el ingenio y la ventura  
más que las riquezas grandes.

TORRENTE Deste laberinto, el cielo  
con las narices nos saque.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Entran MARCELA y DOROTEA, su doncella.)*

DOROTEA Dime, señora: ¿qué muestra 495  
te ha dado tu hermano tal,  
que sea indicio y señal  
de alguna intención siniestra?  
No puedo darme a entender  
que te ama viciosamente, 500  
aunque es caso contingente.



MARCELA;Y cómo si puede ser!

¿Ya no se sabe que Amón  
amó a su hermana Tamar?

¿Y no nos vienen a dar 505

Mirra y su padre ocasión  
de temer estos incestos?

DOROTEACon todo, señora, creo  
que encamina su deseo  
por términos más compuestos, 510  
y esto tengo por verdad.

MARCELAMi querida Dorotea,  
plega al Cielo que así sea;  
Él rija su voluntad.

De contino trae *en* la boca 515  
mi nombre, a hurto me mira,  
gime a solas y suspira,  
las manos me besa y toca;  
y da por disculpa desto,  
que me parezco a su dama, 520  
que de mi nombre se llama.

DOROTEA¿Hase, a dicha, descompuesto  
a hacer más de lo que dices?

MARCELANo, por cierto; ni querría.

DOROTEA Pues desto, señora mía, 525  
no es bien que te escandalices;  
pues podrá ser que su dama  
se llame, señora, así,  
y que se parezca a ti,  
si de hermosa tiene fama. 530

(Entra DON ANTONIO, hermano de MARCELA.)

MARCELA Mira do viene suspenso;  
tanto, que no echa de ver  
que aquí estamos. De su ser  
que está trastocado pienso.

Escuchémosle, y advierte 535  
cómo de Marcela trata.

DON ANTONIOEs tu ausencia la que mata;  
no el desdén, aunque es tan fuerte.

¡Ay dura, ay importuna, ay triste ausencia!  
¡Cuán lejos debió estar de conocerte 540  
el que al furor de la invencible muerte  
igualó tu poder y tu violencia!

Que, cuando con mayor rigor sentencia,  
¿qué puede más su limitada suerte  
que deshacer la liga y nudo fuerte 545  
que a cuerpo y alma tiene inconveniencia?

Tu duro alfanje a mayor mal se estiende,  
pues un espíritu en dos mitades parte.  
¡Oh milagros de amor, que nadie entiende!

Que, del lugar de do mi alma parte, 550  
dejando su mitad con quien la enciende,  
consigo traiga la más frágil parte.

¡Oh Marcela fugitiva  
y sorda al lamento mío!  
¿Cómo quiere tu desvío 555  
que ausente muriendo viva?

¿Dónde te escondes? ¿Qué clima,  
inhabitable te encierra?

¿Cómo a tu paz no da guerra  
el dolor que me lastima? 560

¡Téngote siempre delante,  
y no te puedo alcanzar!

MARCELA Para temer y pensar,  
¿esto no es causa bastante?

DOROTEA Sí, por cierto. Nunca estés 565  
sola, si fuere posible;  
de que aspire a lo imposible,  
jamás ocasión le des;  
    rómpase en tu honestidad,  
en tu advertencia y recato, 570  
la fuerza de su mal trato,  
que nace de ociosidad.  
    Y vámonos, no nos vea;  
dé a solas rienda a su intento.

MARCELA Yo estoy en tu pensamiento, 575  
que es muy bueno, Dorotea.

*(Éntrase MARCELA y DOROTEA.)*

*(Sale OCAÑA, de lacayo, con una varilla de membrillo y unos antojos de caballo en la mano, y pónese atento a escuchar a su amo.)*

DON ANTONIO Amor, que lo imposible facilitas  
con poderosa fuerza blandamente,  
allanando las cumbres,  
¿por qué las nubes de mi sol no quitas? 580  
¿Por qué no muestras por algún Oriente  
las dos hermosas cumbres  
que dan rayos al sol, luz a tus ojos,  
por quien te rinde el mundo sus despojos?  
    ¿Qué quieres, Ocaña?

OCAÑAQuiero 585

herrar el bayo, señor,  
y no acierta el herrador  
a herralle si no hay dinero.

Débense cuatro herraduras  
y un brebajo; mira, pues, 590  
si andarán aquellos pies,  
siendo tus manos tan duras.

Y vengo por seis raciones  
que me deben: que amohína  
ver que sobren a Cristina 595  
y resobren a Quiñones,  
y que falten para mí,  
que sirvo mejor que todos,  
de tres y de cuatro modos.

DON ANTONIOConfieso que ello es así, 600

Ocaña amigo, y sabed  
que todo se os pagará.  
Y andad con Dios.

OCAÑASiempre está  
conmigo vuestra merced  
riguroso por el cabo. 605

DON ANTONIO¿En qué modo?

OCAÑA¿Yo no veo  
que, cual si fuera guineo,  
bezudo y bozal esclavo,  
apenas entro en la sala  
por alguna niñería, 610  
cuando cualquiera me envía,  
si no en buena, en hora mala?

A nadie se le trasluce,  
por más que yo lo procuro,

el ingenio lucio y puro 615  
que en este lacayo luce.

Anda conmigo al revés  
fortuna poco discreta:  
que, si tú fueras poeta,  
quizá fuera yo marqués, 620  
o, por lo menos, ya fuera,  
tu consejero y privado;  
pero de mi corto hado  
tamaño bien no se espera.

Hay poetas tan divinos, 625  
de poder tan singular,  
que puedan títulos dar  
como condes palatinos;  
y aun, si lo toman despacio,  
en tiempo y caso oportuno, 630  
no habrá lacayo ninguno  
que no casen en palacio  
con doncellas de la reina,  
de valor único y solo:  
que, por la gracia de Apolo, 635  
esta gracia en ellos reina.

Pero yo nací, sin duda,  
para la caballeriza,  
haciendo en mis dichas riza  
mi suerte, que no se muda. 640

El discreto es concordancia  
que engendra la habilidad;  
el necio, disparidad  
que no hace consonancia.

Del cuerpo por los sentidos 645  
obra el alma, y, cuales son,  
o muestra su perfección,  
o términos abatidos.

De aquesto quiero inferir  
que tan sutil cuerpo tengo, 650  
que en un instante prevengo  
lo que he de hacer y decir.

Lacayo soy, Dios mediante;

pero lacayo discreto,  
y, a pocos lances, prometo 655  
ser para marqués bastante,  
como aquel de Marinán,  
de *dinare, e più dinare*,  
si la suerte no estorbare  
este bien que no me dan. 660

DON ANTONIO ¡Alto! Vos habéis hablado  
de modo que me obligáis  
a que de humilde subáis  
a más eminente estado,  
siendo al primero escalón 665  
servirme de consejero;  
y así, amigo Ocaña, quiero  
mostraros mi corazón,  
para que, viendo patentes  
las ansias que en él se anidan, 670  
ellas a tu ingenio pidan  
los remedios suficientes:  
que tal vez una dolencia  
casi incurable la sana  
de una vejezuela cana 675  
una fácil experiencia.

OCAÑA Dime tu mal, mi señor,  
y verás cómo en tantico  
tantos remedios aplico,  
que sanes con el menor. 680  
Y si por ventura es  
el ciego el que te atormenta,  
puedes, señor, hacer cuenta  
de que ya sano te ves,  
porque no se ha de tomar 685  
conmigo el dios ceguezuelo.

DON ANTONIOQue no estás en ti recelo.

OCAÑA¿Pues en quién había de estar?

Que, a no tomarme del vino,  
por costumbre o por conhorto, 690  
no hubiera en toda la corte  
otro Catón Censorino  
como yo.

DON ANTONIOYa desvarías.  
Vuélvete, Ocaña, a tu establo.

*(Éntrase DON ANTONIO.)*

OCAÑA Aunque más sentencias hablo 695  
y elevadas fantasías,  
se me trasluce y figura,  
conjeturo, pienso y hallo,  
ha de ser mi sepultura.

Y está muy puesto en razón: 700  
que, el que quiere porfiar  
contra su estrella, ha de dar  
coces contra el aguijón.

Cristinica estará agora  
en la plaza; allá me impele 705  
aquella fuerza que suele,  
que dentro del alma mora.

Búscola como a mi centro,  
y si la encontrase yo,  
nunca jugador echó 710  
tan rico y gustoso encuentro.

Deste gusto no me prive  
Amor, que en mi ayuda llamo,  
y siquiera, con mi amo,  
ni más medre ni más prive. 715

*(Éntrase OCAÑA.)*

*(Salen DON AMBROSIO, caballero, y CRISTINA, con un billete en la mano.)*

CRISTINA Hasta ponerle yo en parte  
donde le vea, harélo;  
pero en lo demás recelo  
que no podré contentarte.

DON AMBROSIO Haz, amiga, que le lea: 720  
que en sólo aquesto consiste  
la alegría deste triste.

CRISTINA Digo que haré que le vea.

Quizá, por curiosidad,  
querrá leerle Marcela: 725  
que se ha de usar de cautela  
con su mucha honestidad.

No desplegaré la boca  
para decirla palabra:  
que en sus entrañas no labra 730  
fuerza de amor, mucha o poca.

DON AMBROSIO ¿Regálala, por ventura,  
don Antonio?

CRISTINA Como a hermana.

DON AMBROSIO De ser su intención tan sana,  
no sé yo quién lo asegura. 735  
¡Oh padre mal advertido!



CRISTINA No le tiene.

DON AMBROSIO Sí le tiene;  
pero a mí no me conviene  
el darme por entendido.

De las cosas que sospecho 740  
y de las que son tan graves,  
tenga la lengua las llaves,  
y no las arroje el pecho.

CRISTINA Vete, señor, que allí asoma  
un paje de casa.

DON AMBROSIO Amiga, 745  
por tu industria y tu fatiga,  
este pobre premio toma.

Y prométete de mí  
montes de oro, que bien puedes.

CRISTINA La menor de tus mercedes 750  
suele ser un Potosí.  
(*Dale una cajita pintada.*)

(*Vase AMBROSIO, y entra QUIÑONES.*)

QUIÑONES ¿Quién era, Cristina, el lindo  
que con tanta sumisión  
debió encajar su razón?  
«Tuyo soy, y a ti me rindo». 755  
¡Vive el Dador de los cielos,  
que es la fregona bonita!  
Ordena, manda, pon, quita;

ta, ta, también pide celos.

CRISTINA El so paje, por su entono, 760  
que primero se tarace  
la lengua, que otra vez trace  
palabras, y no en mi abono.  
¿Hásenos vuelto otro Ocaña?  
¡Celos y más celos!

QUIÑONES Calle, 765  
y advierta que está en la calle.

CRISTINA ¡Ay! Por mi fe, que se ensaña  
el mancebito frión.

QUIÑONES Cristina, menos gallarda;  
que esa gallardía aguarda... 770

CRISTINA ¿Qué, mi rufo?

QUIÑONES Un bofetón.

CRISTINA ¿En mi cara?

QUIÑONES En la del cura  
le diera, a venir a mano.

CRISTINA ¿Y que alzarás tú la mano  
contra tanta hermosura 775  
como pusieron los cielos

en mis mejillas rosadas?

QUIÑONES Siempre son desatinadas  
las venganzas de los celos.

Ocaña es éste. Camina, 780  
y escóndete entre la gente.

*(Éntranse QUIÑONES y CRISTINA, y sale OCAÑA.)*

OCAÑA Partió mi sol de su Oriente,  
y al ocaso se encamina,  
y tras sí lleva la sombra  
que le sirve de arrebol. 785

Para mí no es este sol,  
sino niebla que me asombra.

Plega a Dios, humilde paje,  
asombro de mi esperanza,  
que ni valgas por privanza, 790  
ni te estimen por linaje;

sirvas a un catarribera,  
que te dé corta ración;  
sea tu estado un bodegón;  
no te dé luto, aunque muera; 795

y cuando el cielo te adiestre  
a servir a un titulado,  
tu enemigo declarado  
el maestresala se muestre.

De las hachas no te valgas, 800  
ni de relieves veas gozo,  
y nunca te salga el bozo,  
porque de paje no salgas.

Póngante infames renombres;  
juegues; pierdas la ración, 805  
que es la mayor maldición  
que pueden darte los hombres.

*(Éntrase OCAÑA.)*

*(Sale MUÑOZ.)*

MUÑOZ Despierto y durmiendo, estoy  
pensando siempre y soñando  
cuándo ha de llegar el cuándo 810  
mude el pellejo en que estoy;  
cuándo querrá aquel planeta  
que sobre mí predomina,  
que remedien mi rüina  
el gran sastre y la bayeta. 815  
Diles la memoria, y diles,  
previniendo mil barruntos,  
de los más sotiles puntos  
las respuestas más sotiles;  
pero, con todo, me pesa 820  
de haberme empeñado así,  
porque tengo para mí  
ser de peligro la empresa.

*(Entran DON ANTONIO y TORRENTE en hábito de peregrino.)*

DON ANTONIO Mucho más es melindre que advertencia,  
y hase tenido confianza poca 825  
de quien yo soy. Por Dios, que estoy corrido.

MUÑOZ; Válgate el diablo! ¿Qué disfraz es éste?  
Esto no puse yo en la lista.

TORRENTEDigo  
que el señor don Silvestre de Almendárez  
no pudo más. El caso fue forzoso, 830  
y la borrasca tal, que nos convino

alijar el navío, y echar cuanto  
en su anchísimo vientre recogía  
al mar, que se sorbió como dos huevos  
catorce mil tejuelos de oro puro. 835  
Al cielo las promesas y oraciones  
volaban más espesas que las nubes,  
que la cara del sol cubrían entonces;  
entre las cuales oraciones, una  
envió don Silvestre al sumo alcázar 840  
con tan vivos y tiernos sentimientos,  
que penetró los cascos de los cielos.  
Conteníase en ella que de Roma  
aquello que se llama Siete Iglesias  
andaría descalzo peregrino, 845  
si Dios de aquel peligro le sacaba.  
Añadió a su promesa mi persona;  
añadidura inútil, aunque buena  
en parte, pues que soy su amparo y báculo.  
En fin: salimos mondos y desnudos 850  
a tierra, ni sé adónde, ni sé cómo,  
habiéndose engullido el mar primero  
hasta una catalnica que traíamos,  
de habilidad tan rara, y tan discreta,  
que, si no era el hablar, no le faltaba 855  
otra cosa ninguna.

DON ANTONIO Bien, por cierto,  
la habéis encarecido; aunque yo pienso  
que catalnicas mudas valen poco.

TORRENTE Por señas nos decía todo cuanto  
quería que entendiésemos.

MUÑOZ ¡Milagro! 860

TORRENTE De perlas, ¡qué de cajas arrojamamos;  
tamañas como nueces, de buen tomo,  
blancas como la nieve aún no pisada!;  
de esmeraldas, las peñas como cubas,  
digo, como toneles, y aun más grandes; 865  
piedras bezares, pues dos grandes sacos;  
anís y cochinilla, fue sin número.

MUÑOZ Entre esas zarandajas, ¿por ventura  
fue bayeta al mar?

TORRENTE ¡Y el sastre y todo!

MUÑOZ A malísimo viento va esta parva; 870  
no me cuadra ni esquina esta tormenta,  
puesto que viene bien para el embuste.

DON ANTONIO ¿En qué paraje sucedió el naufragio?

TORRENTE Estaba yo durmiendo en aquel trance,  
y no pude del paje ver el rostro. 875

DON ANTONIO Paraje dije; pero no me espanto,  
que aun hasta aquí os conturba la borrasca,  
ni que en ella os durmiédeses; que el miedo  
tal vez suele causar sueño profundo.

TORRENTE No quiso mi señor, ni por semejanzas, 880  
de cuatro mil y más ofrecimientos  
que de darle dineros se le hicieron,  
recebir sino aquellos que bastasen  
a no pedir limosna en su viaje;

pero no supo bien hacer la cuenta, 885  
porque ya casi todos son gastados.

MUÑOZ; Válgate Satanás, qué bien lo enredas!

TORRENTE La primera estación fue a Guadalupe,  
y a la imagen de Illescas la segunda,  
y la tercera ha sido a la de Atocha; 890  
a hurto quiso verte, y esta tarde  
quiere partirse a Roma; agora queda  
en San Ginés hincado de hinojos,  
arrojando del pecho mil suspiros,  
vertiendo de sus ojos tiernas lágrimas, 895  
pidiendo a Dios que le encamine y guíe  
en el viaje santo prometido.  
Yo, señor, soy ternísimo de plantas,  
a quien callos durísimos enclavan,  
de tan largo camino procedidos; 900  
querría que se diese alguna traza  
de que por quince días descansásemos,  
para tomar aliento y refrigerio  
en el nuevo camino que se espera.  
Además, que también él es ternísimo, 905  
y podría el cansancio fatigalle,  
de modo que el camino con la vida  
se acabase en un punto: caso triste  
si tal viniese a ser, por el tremendo  
dolor que sentiría mi señora 910  
doña Ana de Briones, madre suya.

DON ANTONIO Vamos, que yo pondré remedio en todo.

TORRENTE No hay decir, señor, que yo te he visto,  
porque me ha de matar si es que tal sabe.  
¡Oh pecador de mí!, ¡Éste es que viene! 915

¡En la red me ha cogido! ¡Negativa,  
señor; si no, yo muero!

DON ANTONIO No hayas miedo.

*(Entra CARDENIO, como peregrino.)*

Mi señor don Silvestre de Almendárez,  
¿para qué es encubriros de quien tiene  
tantas obligaciones de serviros? 920

CARDENIO ¡Oh traidor, malnacido! Por Dios vivo,  
que os engaña, señor, este embustero:  
que yo no soy aqueste don Silvestre  
que dices de Almendárez, sino un pobre  
peregrino, y tan pobre.

TORRENTE ¿Qué me miras? 925  
Yo no le he dicho nada; y si lo he dicho,  
digo que miento una y cien mil veces.  
*Aparte, a DON ANTONIO.*  
¡Vive Dios!, que es el mismo que te digo.  
Apriétale, y conjúrale, y confiese.

DON ANTONIO ¡Por Dios, primo y señor, que es caso fuerte 930  
negarme esta verdad! ¿Qué importa vengas  
rico o pobre a tu casa, que es la mía?

TORRENTE ¡Eso es lo que yo digo, pesia al mundo!

DON ANTONIO ¿Mandabas tú a los vientos, o pudiste  
del proceloso mar las altas olas 935



sosegar algún tanto? ¿No es locura  
hacer caso de honra los sucesos  
varios de la fortuna, siempre inestable,  
o, por mejor decir, del cielo firme?

TORRENTE ¡Ea, señor, que ya pasa de raya 940  
tan grande pertinacia! ¡Vive Roque,  
señor, que es don Silvestre de Almendárez,  
vuestro primo y cuñado, el peregrino,  
y mi amo, que es más!

CARDENIO Pues tú lo dices,  
no quiero más negarlo, pues no importa. 945  
Dadme, señor, las manos.

DON ANTONIO Doy los brazos,  
y el alma en su lugar, querido primo.

CARDENIO Tomad los míos, que, entre aquestos brazos,  
también os doy mi alma.

A TORRENTE.  
En recompensa,  
no te la cubriré pelo, si puedo. 950

TORRENTE Que no temo amenazas mal nacidas,  
porque esto es lo que importa a nuestro hecho.

MUÑOZ ¿Y cómo?

DON ANTONIO No hayáis miedo que se os toque  
al pelo de la ropa por lo dicho.

TORRENTE Mi señor es discreto, y verá presto 955  
de cuán poca importancia era el silencio,  
en semejante caso.

DON ANTONIO Señor primo,  
vamos a casa, y sepa vuestra esposa  
vuestra buena venida y deseada.

CARDENIO Siempre he de obedecer.

MUÑOZ ¿Qué bien trazada 960  
quimera! Si ella llega a colmo, espero  
un Potosí de barras y dinero.

TORRENTE ¿Qué os parece, Muñoz?

MUÑOZ Que me parece  
que es verdad cuanto ha dicho, y que lo veo.

TORRENTE ¡Y cómo que es verdad! Sin que le falte 965  
un átomo, una tilde, una meaja.

*(Éntranse DON ANTONIO, CARDENIO y TORRENTE.)*

MUÑOZ Términos tienen estos socarrones  
de hacerme a mí entender que la borrasca  
y el alijo de ropa es verdadero.  
Ahora bien, veremos lo que pasa, 970  
que, una por una, los dos ya están en casa.

FIN DE LA PRIMERA JORNADA

## Jornada segunda

*Salen MARCELA y DOROTEA, con una almohadilla, y CRISTINA.*

MARCELA Andas con vergüenza poca,  
Cristina, muy inquieta,  
y, con puntos de discreta,  
das mil puntadas de loca.

Sabed, señora, una cosa: 5  
que, entre las prendas de honor,  
es tenuta por mejor  
la honesta que la hermosa.

CRISTINA *Aparte.*

Señora me llama. ¡Malo!:  
que ya sé por experiencia 10  
que no hay dos dedos de ausencia  
desta cortesía a un palo.

MARCELA ¿Qué murmuras, desatada,  
maliciosa y atrevida?

CRISTINA Nunca murmuré en mi vida. 15

MARCELA ¿Qué dices?

CRISTINA No digo nada.  
¡Tenga el Señor en el cielo

a mi señora la vieja!

MARCELA Desas plegarias te deja.

CRISTINA Pronúncialas mi buen celo. 20

Si ella fuera viva, sé  
que otro gallo me cantara,  
y que ninguna no osara  
reñirme; no, en buena fe.

¡Tristes de las mozas 25  
a quien trujo el cielo  
por casas ajenas  
a servir a dueños,  
que, entre mil, no salen  
cuatro apenas buenos, 30  
que los más son torpes  
y de antojos feos!

¿Pues qué, si la triste  
acierta a dar celos  
al ama, que piensa 35  
que le hace tuerto?

Ajenas ofensas  
pagan sus cabellos,  
oyen sus oídos  
siempre vituperios, 40  
parece la casa  
un confuso infierno;  
que los celos siempre  
fueron vocingleros.

La tierna fregona, 45  
con silencio y miedo,  
pasa sus desdichas,  
malogra requiebros,  
porque jamás llega  
a felice puerto 50  
su cargada nave  
de malos empleos.

Pero, ya que falte  
este detrimento,  
sobran los del ama, 55  
que no tienen cuento:  
«Ven acá, suciona.  
¿Dónde está el pañuelo?  
La escoba te hurtaron  
y un plato pequeño. 60  
Buen salario ganas;  
dél pagarme pienso,  
porque despabiles  
los ojos y el seso.  
Vas y nunca vuelves, 65  
y tienes bureo  
con Sancho en la calle,  
con Mingo y con Pedro.  
Eres, en fin, pu...  
El *ta* diré quedo, 70  
porque de cristiana  
sabes que me precio».  
Otra vez repito,  
con cansado aliento,  
con lágrimas tristes 75  
y suspiros tiernos:  
¡triste de la moza  
a quien trujo el cielo  
por casas ajenas!

DOROTEAS señoras, ¿qué es esto? 80  
Cristinica, amiga,  
dime: ¿con qué viento  
esta polvareda  
has alzado al cielo?

MARCELA La desenvoltura 85  
es un viento cierzo  
que del rostro ahuyenta

la vergüenza y miedo.  
Pero yo haré,  
si es que acaso puedo, 90  
si ella no se emienda,  
lo que callar quiero.

*(Entra QUIÑONES, el paje.)*

QUIÑONES Don Antonio, mi señor,  
entra con dos peregrinos.

*(Entran DON ANTONIO, CARDENIO, TORRENTE y MUÑOZ.)*

DON ANTONIO ¿Vuestros intentos divinos 95  
fueran disculpa al rigor  
del no vernos?

CARDENIO Así es;  
pero yo, señor, holgara  
que esta deuda se pagara  
de espacio, y fuera después 100  
de mi peregrinación,  
que no se puede excusar.

DON ANTONIO Fácilmente habéis de hallar  
en mi voluntad perdón.

CARDENIO ¿Es mi señora y mi prima? 105

DON ANTONIO La misma.

CARDENIO; Oh mi señora,  
rico archivo donde mora  
de la belleza la prima!  
No me niegues estos pies,  
pues no merezco esas manos. 110

DOROTEA Peregrinos cortesanos  
son éstos.

DON ANTONIO No tan cortés,  
señor primo, que mi hermana  
está del caso suspensa.

MUÑOZ *Aparte.*

La traza de lo que él piensa 115  
es más cortés que no sana.

MARCELA Señor, para que me muestre  
con el respeto debido  
a quien sois, el nombre os pido.

CARDENIO Vuestro primo don Silvestre 120  
de Almendárez; vuestro esposo,  
o el que lo tiene de ser.

MARCELA Mudaré de proceder  
con un huésped tan famoso:  
los brazos habré de daros, 125  
que no los pies, primo mío.



MUÑOZ *Aparte.*

Destos principios yo fío  
que son más dulces que caros.

CARDENIO No fue huracán el que pudo  
desbaratar nuestra flota, 130  
ni torció nuestra derrota  
el mar insolente y crudo;  
no fue del tope a la quilla  
mi pobre navío abierto,  
pues he llegado a tal puerto, 135  
y pongo el pie en tal orilla;  
no mis riquezas sorbieron  
las aguas que las tragan,  
pues más rico me dejaron  
con el bien que en vos me dieron. 140  
Hoy se aumenta mi riqueza,  
pues con nueva vida y ser,  
peregrino llego a ver  
la imagen de tu belleza.

(*Entra OCAÑA.*)

OCAÑA Desta común alegría 145  
alguna parte quizá  
mi tristeza alcanzará,  
que está como estar solía.  
Desde aquí quiero mirarte,  
si es que te dejas mirar, 150  
de mi suerte amargo azar,  
de mi bien el todo y parte.  
Puesto en aqueste rincón,  
como lacayo sin suerte,  
veré quizá de mi muerte 155

alguna resurrección.

MARCELA La desventura mayor,  
más espantosa y temida,  
es la de perder la vida.

DON ANTONIO Primero es la del honor. 160

MARCELA Así es; y pues vos, primo,  
con honra y vida venís,  
mal haréis si mal sentís  
del mal que por bien yo estimo.

Y en llegar adonde os veis, 165  
habéis de tener por cierto  
que habéis arribado a un puerto  
adonde restauraréis  
las riquezas arrojadas  
al mar, siempre codicioso. 170

CARDENIO Tendrá el que fuere tu esposo  
las venturas confirmadas.

TORRENTE ¿Doncella acaso es de casa?

CRISTINA No soy sino de la calle.

TORRENTE Eso no; que aquesa talle 175  
a los de palacio pasa.  
¿Sirve en ella?

CRISTINA Soy servida.

TORRENTE La respuesta ha sido aguda.

OCAÑA Ten, pulcra, la lengua muda;  
no la descosas, perdida. 180

TORRENTE ¿El nombre?

CRISTINA Cristina.

TORRENTE Bueno;  
que es dulce, con ser de rumbo.  
¿Túmbase?

CRISTINA Yo no me tumbo.  
Basta; que tiene barreno  
el indianazo gascón. 185

TORRENTE Yo, señora, como ves,  
soy criollo perulés,  
aunque tiro a borgoñón.

DON ANTONIO Reposaréis, primo mío,  
y después saber querría 190  
del buen estar de mi tía,  
de vuestro padre y mi tío.

OCAÑA ¡Oh peregrino traidor,  
cómo la miras! ¡Oh falsa,  
cómo le vas dando salsa 195  
al gusto de su sabor!

TORRENTE Pluguiera a Dios que nunca aquí viniera;  
o, ya que vine aquí, que nunca amara;  
o, ya que amé, que amor se me mostrara,  
de acero no, sino de blanda cera... 200

CARDENIO Depositario fue el mar  
de tus cartas y presentes.

OCAÑA *Aparte.*

¡El alma tengo en los dientes!  
¡Casi estoy para espirar!

TORRENTE ...O que de aquesta fregonil guerrera, 205  
de los dos soles de su hermosa cara,  
no tan agudas flechas me arrojara,  
o menos linda y más humana fuera.

MARCELA Entrad, señor, do podáis  
mudar vestido decente. 210

CARDENIO Mi promesa no consiente  
que esa merced me hagáis.

TORRENTE *Aparte.*

Éstas sí son borrascas no fingidas,  
de quien no espero verdadera calma,  
sino naufragios de más duro aprieto. 215

CARDENIO No puedo mudar de traje  
por un tiempo limitado:  
que esta pobreza ha causado  
la tormenta del viaje.

TORRENTE ¡Oh, tú, reparador de nuestras vidas, 220  
Amor, cura las ansias de mi alma,  
que no pueden caber en un soneto!

DON ANTONIO A no ser tan perfecto,  
primo, vuestro designio, yo hiciera  
que por otra persona se cumpliera. 225

*(Éntranse MARCELA, DON ANTONIO, DOROTEA, y CRISTINA y  
CARDENIO. Quedan en el teatro MUÑOZ, TORRENTE y OCAÑA.)*

MUÑOZ No me habléis, Torrente hermano,  
que nos escuchan, y siento  
que en nuestro famoso intento  
el callar es lo más sano.

*(Éntrase MUÑOZ.)*

OCAÑA Si a mí el ojo no me miente, 230  
sé con gran certinidad  
que vuestra paternidad  
tiene el alma algo doliente.

Es Cristinica un harpón,  
es un virote, una jara 235  
que el ciego arquero dispara,  
y traspasa el corazón.

Es un incendio, es un rayo.  
¿Cómo un rayo? Dos y tres.

TORRENTEY vuesa merced, ¿quién es? 240

OCAÑASoy desta casa el lacayo;  
y, aunque en la caballeriza  
me arrincono, el amor ciego,  
con su yelo y con su fuego,  
me consume y martiriza. 245

Entre el harnero y pesebre,  
entre la paja y cebada,  
de noche y de madrugada,  
me embiste de amor la fiebre.

TORRENTE ¿Y es Cristina la ocasión 250  
de tan grande encendimiento?

OCAÑANo sé quién es; sé que siento  
el alma hecha un carbón.

TORRENTE Si es Cristina, pondré pausa  
en ciertos recién nacidos 255  
pensamientos atrevidos  
que su memoria me causa.

No pienso en manera alguna  
seros rival: que sería  
género de villanía 260  
que al ser quien yo soy repugna.

Honestísimo decoro  
se guardará en esta casa,  
puesto que me arda la brasa  
desta niña a quien adoro. 265

Quebrantaré en la pared  
mis pensamientos primeros,  
con gusto de conoceros  
para haceros merced.

Porque no han de naufragar 270

siempre las flotas: que alguna  
tendrá próspera fortuna  
para podérsela dar.

OCAÑA Beso tus pies, peregrino,  
único, raro y bastante 275  
a ablandar en un instante  
un corazón diamantino.

Yo, en quien nacieron barruntos  
de celos cuando te vi,  
a tus pies los pongo aquí, 280  
semivivos y aun difuntos.

TORRENTE Alzaos, señor; no hagáis  
sumisión tan indecente,  
que humillaré yo mi frente  
si es que la vuestra no alzáis. 285

Dadme los brazos de amigo,  
que lo hemos de ser los dos  
gran tiempo, si quiere Dios,  
que es de mi intención testigo.

OCAÑA Como tú, señor, me abones 290  
con tu amistad peregrina,  
doy por cordera a Cristina  
y por cabrito a Quiñones.

TORRENTE Por verte con gusto, voy  
alegre, así Dios me salve. 295

OCAÑA *Aparte.*

Para éstas, que yo os calve,

o no seré yo quien soy.

*(Éntranse TORRENTE y OCAÑA.)*

*(Entra DON AMBROSIO.)*

DON AMBROSIO Por ti, virgen hermosa, esparce ufano,  
contra el rigor con que amenaza el cielo,  
entre los surcos del labrado suelo, 300  
el pobre labrador el rico grano.

Por ti surca las aguas del mar cano  
el mercader en débil leño a vuelo;  
y, en el rigor del sol como del yelo,  
pisa alegre el soldado el risco y llano. 305

Por ti infinitas veces, ya perdida  
la fuerza del que busca y del que ruega,  
se cobra y se promete la vitoria.

Por ti, báculo fuerte de la vida,  
tal vez se aspira a lo imposible, y llega 310  
el deseo a las puertas de la gloria.

¡Oh esperanza notoria,  
amiga de alentar los desmayados,  
aunque estén en miserias sepultados!

*(Entra CRISTINA.)*

CRISTINA Habrá fiesta y regodeo, 315  
y la parentela toda  
vendrá, sin duda, a la boda.

DON AMBROSIO Mi norte descubro y veo.  
¡Oh dulcísima Cristina!



CRISTINA De alcorza debo de ser. 320

DON AMBROSIO Tribunal do se ha de ver  
lo que el Amor determina  
en mi contra o mi provecho.

CRISTINA ¡Estraña salutación!

DON AMBROSIO La lengua da la razón 325  
como la saca del pecho.  
Pero vengamos al punto.  
Mi esperanza, ¿cómo está?  
¿Ha de morir? ¿Vivirá?  
¿Contaréme por difunto? 330  
¿Difícúltase la empresa?  
¡Presto, que me vuelvo loco!

CRISTINA Idos, señor, poco a poco,  
que preguntáis muy apriesa.

DON AMBROSIO Más apriesa me consume 335  
el vivo incendio de amor.

CRISTINA En sólo un punto el rigor  
suyo se abrevia y resume,  
y es que puedes ya contar  
a Marcela por casada. 340  
Ya no es suya: ya está dada  
a quien la sabrá estimar.

DON AMBROSIO No me digas el esposo,  
que, sin duda, es don Antonio.

CRISTINA Levantas un testimonio 345  
que pasa de mentiroso.  
¿Con su hermana?

DON AMBROSIO; Ah Cristinica!  
¿Qué es eso? ¿Cubierta y pala  
con que una obra tan mala  
se apoya y se fortifica? 350

CRISTINA Que es con su primo.

DON AMBROSIO; ¿Qué es esto,  
cielo siempre soberano?  
¿Hoy primo el que ayer fue hermano?  
¿Cámbiase un hombre tan presto?

CRISTINA Digo que es un peregrino, 355  
primo suyo y perulero,  
de tan soberbio dinero,  
que de las Indias nos vino.  
De oro más de cien mil tejos  
se sorbió el mar como un huevo, 360  
deste peregrino nuevo,  
que no está de ti muy lejos,  
porque vesle allí dó asoma.

DON AMBROSIO; Y que esto en el mundo pase!

CRISTINA Puesto que antes que se case, 365  
entiendo que ha de ir a Roma.

(*Entran* CARDENIO, TORRENTE y MUÑOZ.)

DON AMBROSIO    Embustero y perulero,  
atrevido e insolente,  
¿por qué te haces pariente  
de la vida por quien muero? 370

TORRENTE    Descornado se ha la flor;  
perecemos.

MUÑOZ    Malo es esto;  
la traza se ha descompuesto  
al primer paso.

CARDENIO    Señor,  
no te entiendo, ni imagino 375  
por qué tan acelerado  
la maldita has desatado  
contra un noble peregrino.

MUÑOZ    Quien dijere que yo di  
lista a nadie, mentirá 380  
cuantas veces lo dirá.  
No sino lléguese a mí,  
que fabrico en ningún modo  
castillos mal prevenidos.

TORRENTE    *Aparte.*

Antes de ser convencidos, 385  
éste lo ha de decir todo.  
¡Oh levantadas quimeras

en el aire, cual yo dije!

DON AMBROSIO Por el Cielo que nos rige,  
que si acaso perseveras 390  
en el embuste que intentas,  
primero que en algo aciertes,  
ha de ser una y mil muertes  
el remate de tus cuentas.  
Vuélvete a tu Potosí, 395  
deja lograr mi porfía.

CARDENIO Aquéste ya desvaría.

TORRENTE Así me parece a mí.

CRISTINA Don Francisco y mi señor  
son éstos. ¡Pies, a correr! 400

*(Éntrase CRISTINA.)*

*(Salen DON FRANCISCO y DON ANTONIO.)*

DON FRANCISCO Todo aqueso puede ser:  
que a más obliga el rigor  
de un celoso, si es honrado,  
como el padre de Marcela.

DON AMBROSIO Éste es el que urdió la tela 405  
que tan cara me ha costado.  
¿Qué rigor de estrella ha sido,  
señor don Antonio, aquel  
que de piadoso en crüel

contra mí os ha convertido? 410

¿Y qué peregrino es éste,  
tan medido a vuestro intento,  
que queréis que su contento  
a mí la vida me cueste?

Mía es Marcela, si el cielo 415  
quisiere y si vos queréis:  
que en vuestra industria tenéis  
de mi mal todo el consuelo.

No es desigual mi linaje  
del suyo, y su padre creo 420  
que deste igual himeneo  
no ha de recibir ultraje.

Si él la escondió en vuestra casa  
por quitármela delante,  
ved, si acaso sois amante, 425  
lo que el alma ausente pasa.

DON FRANCISCO Éste habla de Marcela  
Osorio, y no de tu hermana.

DON ANTONIO La presunción está llana,  
gran mal mi alma recela. 430

Desta vana presunción  
y mal formados antojos  
os han de dar vuestros ojos  
la justa satisfacción.

Veníos conmigo, y veréis 435  
en el engaño en que estáis.

DON AMBROSIO Si a Marcela me lleváis,  
al cielo me llevaréis.

*(Éntrase DON ANTONIO, DON FRANCISCO y DON AMBROSIO. Quedan  
en el teatro MUÑOZ, TORRENTE y CARDENIO.)*

CARDENIO ¡Ah Muñoz, con cuán pequeña  
ocasión habéis temblado! 440

MUÑOZ Temo de verme brumado,  
y molido como alheña;  
temo que mis trazas den,  
mis embustes y quimeras,  
con mi cuerpo en las galeras, 445  
que no le estará muy bien.

TORRENTE ¿Sin apretaros la cuerda  
os descoséis? ¡Mala cosa!

MUÑOZ La conciencia temerosa,  
de los castigos se acuerda. 450  
Pero desde aquí adelante  
pienso ser mártir, y pienso  
que paga a la culpa censo  
con temor el más constante.  
Pésame que fue la lista 455  
de mi letra y de mi mano,  
y este temor, que no es vano,  
todas mis fuerzas conquista.

TORRENTE Vamos a ver en qué para  
el comenzado desastre. 460

MUÑOZ Aquella bayeta y sastre  
nunca el cielo lo depara.

*(Éntranse todos.)*

*(Salen MARCELA y DOROTEA.)*

MARCELA Este primo no me agrada,  
dulce amiga Dorotea.  
¡Plegue a Dios que por bien sea 465  
su venida no esperada!

DOROTEA Como le ves mal vestido,  
no te parece galán.

MARCELA Las galas no siempre dan  
aire y brío, ni el vestido. 470  
Desmayado me parece,  
aunque atrevido tal vez.

DOROTEA De su causa eres jüez.

MARCELA Basta; poco me apetece.

DOROTEA Parece que se ha templado 475  
tu hermano en su pensamiento.

MARCELA Todavía, a lo que siento,  
anda un poco apasionado;  
no se le cae de la boca  
mi nombre, y aun todavía 480  
descubre una fantasía  
que en lascivos puntos toca;  
mas yo no le doy lugar  
de que esté a solas conmigo.

DOROTEA Eso es lo que yo te digo, 485  
y lo que has de procurar.

*(Aquí han de entrar DON ANTONIO, DON FRANCISCO, CARDENIO,  
TORRENTE y MUÑOZ.)*

DON ANTONIO Mirad, señor, destas dos,  
cuál es la Marcela hermosa  
que con fuerza poderosa  
os tiene fuera de vos. 490

DON AMBROSIO Ésta le parece en algo,  
y no es ella; mas ya veo,  
sin duda, que es devaneo,  
y que de sentido salgo.  
Téngame Amor de su mano, 495  
y los cielos, si me ofenden.

MARCELA ¿O me compran o me venden?  
Decidme qué es esto, hermano.

DON AMBROSIO No es otra cosa alguna,  
sino que la belleza 500  
incomparable y sola  
de otra que tiene el propio nombre vuestro,  
su donaire, su gracia,  
su honesta compostura,  
su ingenio, su linaje, 505  
se llevaron tras sí mis pensamientos.  
Améla honestamente,  
adoréla rendido,  
solicitéla mudo,  
aunque los ojos son parleros siempre. 510  
Su padre, recatado,



por algún su desinio,  
o por mi desventura,  
llevóla, y no sé adónde.

DON ANTONIO Ésta es mi historia.

DON AMBROSIO No con más diligencia 515  
la diosa de las mieses  
buscó a su hija amada  
hasta los escondrijos del infierno,  
como yo la he buscado  
por cuanto las sospechas 520  
han podido llevarme,  
pensativo, solícito y ansioso.

En esto, a mis oídos  
el nombre de Marcela  
llegó, y vuestra hermosura; 525  
pero no el sobrenombre de Almendárez.

Creí que don Antonio,  
vuestro querido hermano,  
por orden de su padre  
de la Marcela Osorio, que yo busco, 530  
en casa la tenía,  
y, mal considerado,  
y con los celos ciego,  
hice los disparates que habéis visto.

DON FRANCISCO ¿Éstas no son lanzadas 535  
que te pasan el alma?

DON ANTONIO Y aun rayos que la embisten,  
la hieren, desmenuzan y quebrantan.

DOROTEA Apostaré, señora,  
que es ésta la Marcela 540  
por quien tu hermano gime,  
suspira y con angustia se lamenta.

TORRENTE Un canto pesadísimo,  
una montaña dura,  
una máquina inmensa, 545  
de acero un monte dilatado y grave,  
de sobre el pecho quito.

MUÑOZY yo de sobre el alma  
una carcoma aguda.  
¡Maldito seas de Dios, amante simple! 550  
¡Qué confusos nos tuvo  
aqueste mentecato!  
¡Con cuán pocos indicios  
trocó las dos Marcelas el cuitado!  
Ya pensé que mi lista 555  
andaba por la casa  
de mano en mano. ¡Ay duro  
trance, no imaginado y repentino!

DON FRANCISCO Pues en esta Marcela veis patente  
de vuestro pensamiento el desengaño, 560  
mostraos, señor, más cauto y más prudente  
otra vez que os acose vuestro engaño,  
y volved a buscar más diligente  
la causa original de vuestro daño.

DON AMBROSIO Tiene cualquiera enamorada culpa 565  
fácil y compasiva la disculpa.  
Erré; mas no es el yerro de tal suerte  
que perdón no merezca.

CARDENIO Yo imagino  
que ministró ocasión al atreverte  
este pobre sayal de peregrino. 570

DON ANTONIO La rabia de los celos es tan fuerte,  
que fuerza a hacer cualquiera desatino.  
Sélo yo bien, que ya me vi celoso,  
atrevido, arrojado y malicioso.

DON AMBROSIO En siglos prolongados tu ventura 575  
goces, ¡oh peregrino!, y tus bisnietos  
te lleven a la honrada sepultura  
sobre sus hombros, para el caso electos;  
no menoscabe el tiempo la hermosura  
de tu Marcela; celos indiscretos 580  
no perturben tu paz en tanto cuanto  
de vida os diere aliento el Cielo santo.

Yo vuelvo a renovar mi pena antigua,  
buscando aquélla que me encubre el cielo,  
y, mientras dónde está no se averigua, 585  
un Sísifo seré nuevo en el suelo.  
De noche, como sombra o estantigua,  
llena la vista de inmortal desvelo,  
por ver el fin de mis trabajos largos,  
un lince habré de ser con ojos de Argos. 590

*(Éntrase DON AMBROSIO.)*

MARCELA Desesperado se parte.

DON ANTONIO Yo sin esperanza quedo,  
dulce Marcela, de hallarte.

TORRENTE De mí se ha arredrado el miedo.

MUÑOZ En mí ya no tiene parte; 595  
pero, con todo, quisiera  
que la lista se rompiera  
que di escrita de mi mano:  
que cualquier susto, aunque vano,  
la mala conciencia altera. 600

DON FRANCISCO Haz cuenta, amigo, que envías,  
en este amante curioso,  
a buscar tu gloria espías.

DON ANTONIO Con todo, estoy temeroso:  
que son tiernas sus porfías, 605  
y muchas, que es lo peor.

DON FRANCISCO Yo lo tengo por mejor:  
que este anzuelo ha de sacar  
del profundo de la mar  
la perla que escondió Amor. 610

*(Éntrese DON FRANCISCO y DON ANTONIO.)*

CARDENIO ¿No ha sido estremado el cuento,  
señora prima?

MARCELA Sí ha sido;  
aunque dél me ha parecido  
ir mi hermano descontento,  
pensativo y desabrido. 615  
Y es la causa que la dama  
que aquél busca, adora y ama

como quiere Amor tirano,  
es la misma que mi hermano  
quiere, busca, nombra y llama. 620

Y yo, simple, imaginaba  
ser yo la hermosa Marcela  
a quien mi hermano llamaba,  
y con malicia y cautela  
a las manos le miraba, 625  
a los ojos y a la boca,  
y con no advertencia poca  
ponderaba sus razones,  
sus movimientos y acciones.

DOROTEA Curiosidad simple y loca. 630  
Pídele perdón.

MARCELA No quiero,  
pues nunca arraigó en mi pecho  
el pensamiento primero.

CARDENIO Y más, que te ha satisfecho  
tan llano y tan por entero. 635

MUÑOZ ¿Hemos de hacer la visita  
de mi señora doña Ana?

MARCELA Todavía es de mañana,  
y el frío la gana quita  
de hacer visitas agora. 640  
Ven, amiga Dorotea;  
vamos donde el sol nos vea.

DOROTEA ¡Y cómo que iré, señora!  
¡Que tirito, ti, ti, ti!

¡Insufrible frío hace! 645

(*Éntranse MARCELA y DOROTEA.*)

TORRENTE El tuyo a mí me desplace.

¿Para qué veniste aquí,

Cardenio, si te has de estar  
como una estatua sin lengua?

Allá voy, y no hago mengua. 650

¿Piensas que se te ha de entrar

la ventura por la puerta,

y arrojársete en la cama?

CARDENIO A mi yelo y a mi llama

ningún medio las concierto. 655

Cuando de Marcela ausente

algún breve espacio estoy,

ardo de atrevido, y doy

en pensar que soy valiente;

pero apenas me da el cielo 660

lugar para a solas vella,

cuando estoy, estando ante ella,

frío mucho más que el yelo.

TORRENTE Con ese yelo no habrá

ostugo que nos alcance. 665

MUÑOZ Cierta que yo he echado un lance

que a los ojos me saldrá,

si a las espaldas no sale

primero. ¡Oh viejo imprudente!

Bien merecéis, inocente, 670

que se evapore y exhale

el alma con el más chico

temor que te sobresalte.

CARDENIO Cuando yo, Muñoz, os falte,  
cuando yo no os haga rico, 675  
jamás del Pirú me venga  
el mi esperado tesoro.

MUÑOZ; Que no me vuelva yo moro,  
y que yo paciencia tenga  
para escuchar lo que escucho! 680  
¿Dónde está el oro, señores  
socarrones, embaidores?

TORRENTE Muñoz, que ha de venir mucho.

MUÑOZ ¿De qué Pirú ha de venir,  
de qué Méjico o qué Charcas? 685

TORRENTE Cuatro cofres y seis arcas  
puedes desde luego abrir  
para echar cuatro mil barras,  
y aun son pocas las que digo.

MUÑOZ Tente; que Dios sea contigo, 690  
Torrente, que te desgarras.  
Con el sastre y la bayeta  
estaría yo contento.

TORRENTE Sastres pasarán de ciento.

MUÑOZ La bayeta es la que aprieta 695  
al deseo de tenella.

TORRENTE Déjenme los dos aquí,  
que viene Cristina allí,  
y me importa hablar con ella.

*(Vanse MUÑOZ y CARDENIO.)*

*(Entra CRISTINA.)*

¿Que es posible, flor y fruto 700  
del árbol lindo de amor,  
que ha de andar por tu rigor  
siempre mi alma con luto?

¿Que es posible que un potente  
indiano no te remate 705  
ni que a tu dureza mate  
la blandura de Torrente?

*(Entra OCAÑA en calzas y en camisa, con un mandil delante, y con un harnero y una almohaza; entra puesto el dedo en la boca, con pasos tímidos, y escóndese detrás de un tapiz, de modo que se le parezcan los pies no más.)*

¿Que es posible que no precies  
los montones de oro fino,  
y por un lacayo indino 710  
un perulero desprecies?

¿Que no quieras ser llevada  
en hombros como cacique?

¿Que huigas de verte a pique  
de ser reina coronada? 715

¿Que por las faltas de España,  
que siempre suelen sobrar,  
no quieras ir a gozar  
del gran país de Cucaña?



¿Que te tenga avasallada 720  
un lacayo de tal modo,  
que por él dejes el todo,  
y te acojas al nonada?

¿Que a un borracho te sujetes,  
que cuela tan sin estorbos, 725  
que unos sorbos y otros sorbos  
son sus briznas y luquetes?

¡Oh mujeres, que tenéis  
condición de escarabajo!

CRISTINA Hablad, Torrente, más bajo, 730  
si por ventura podéis;  
que dicen que las paredes  
a veces tienen oídos.

TORRENTE Los tuyos tienes tapidos  
a la voz de mis mercedes. 735  
Deja aquese socarrón,  
que tu deshonra procura,  
y fabrica tu ventura  
con tu mucha discreción.

CRISTINA Pues ¿quíerole yo, mezquina, 740  
o, por ventura, hago caso  
yo de buzaque?

TORRENTE Hablad paso;  
moderad la voz, Cristina,  
que no sabéis quién os oye,  
y haced con prudencia diestra 745  
que la humilde suerte vuestra  
con la que tengo se apoye,  
y veréis os encumbrada  
sobre el cerco de la luna.

CRISTINA Esa próspera fortuna 750  
para mí no está guardada,  
que soy una pecadora  
inútil, una mozuela  
de mantellina y chinela,  
no buena para señora; 755  
y más, estando abatida  
y murmurada de Ocaña.

TORRENTE Muéveme ese llanto a saña;  
perderá Ocaña la vida.

CRISTINA Con sólo media docena 760  
de palos que tú le des,  
rendida vendré a tus pies.

TORRENTE Blanda y moderada pena  
a tanta culpa le das;  
mejor fuera que la lengua 765  
que se desmandó en tu mengua  
se le cortara, y aun más.

CRISTINA Palos bastan; vete en paz.

TORRENTE El cielo quede contigo.

CRISTINA Procura hacer lo que digo, 770  
secreto, astuto y sagaz.

(Éntrese TORRENTE.)

¡Ay Jesús! ¿Quién está aquí?  
¿Qué pies son éstos, cuitada?

*(Sale OCAÑA.)*

OCAÑA Cacica en hombros llevada  
desde Lima a Potosí: 775

yo soy, vesme aquí presente,  
hecho estafermo sufrible  
a tu rancor tan terrible  
y a los palos de Torrente.

Pocos son media docena; 780  
la piedad en ti florece:  
que mi culpa bien merece  
cuatrodoblada la pena.

Mas yo no tengo por culpa  
el amarte y avisarte 785  
que de aquello has de guardarte  
que te obligue a dar disculpa.

CRISTINA Por vida tuya, lacayo  
el más discreto de España,  
que todo ha sido maraña 790  
burlona y de alegre ensayo;  
porque pensaba avisarte  
en viéndote.

OCAÑA Una por una,  
tú estarás sobre la Luna,  
sobre el Sol y aun sobre Marte; 795  
yo, mísero, apaleado,  
tendido por ese suelo.

CRISTINA Nunca tal permita el cielo.

OCAÑA Tú misma me has condenado.

CRISTINA Ya te he dicho la verdad: 800  
que burlaba; y esto baste.

OCAÑA Pues ¿por qué, di, le intimaste  
secreto y sagacidad?

CRISTINA Porque, advirtiéndote a ti  
del caso, y estando alerta, 805  
fuese la burla más cierta  
y más buena.

OCAÑA Fuera así,  
cuando tú no confirmaras  
con lágrimas tu deseo.

CRISTINA Luego, ¿no me crees?

OCAÑA Sí creo; 810  
mas reparo.

CRISTINA ¿En qué reparas?

OCAÑA En las lágrimas, y en ver  
que no son burlas risueñas  
las que descubren por señas  
matar, rajar y hender. 815

Pero tú forja en tu fragua  
tus embustes, que yo espero  
que ha de ver el mundo entero  
el que lleva el gato al agua.

Entra y dame la cebada, 820  
o darásmela después.  
«¡Rendida vendré a tus pies!»

CRISTINA ¿Esa razón no te agrada?

Pero él no verá cumplida  
tal promesa en vida suya. 825

OCAÑA ¿Tomara yo alguna tuya,  
puesto que fuera fingida?

CRISTINA No seas tan ignorante;  
muestra, que yo volveré.  
(*Dale el harnero.*)

Con esto me quitaré 830  
dos importunos delante.

(*Éntrase CRISTINA.*)

OCAÑA Que de un lacá la fuerza poderó-,  
hecha a machamartí con el trabá-,  
de una fregó le rinda el estropá-,  
es de los cie no vista maldició-. 835

Amor el ar en sus pulgares to-,  
sacó una fle de su pulí carcá-,  
encaró al co, y diome una flechá-,  
que el alma to y el corazón me do-.

Así rendí, forzado estoy a cre- 840  
cualquier mentí de aquesta helada pu-,

que blandamen me satisface y hie-.  
¡Oh de Cupí la antigua fuerza y du-,  
cuánto en el ros de una fregona pue-,  
y más si la sopil se muestra cru-! 845

## FIN DE LA SEGUNDA JORNADA

## Tercera jornada

*Entra DON ANTONIO.*

DON ANTONIO En la sazón del erizado invierno,  
desnudo el árbol de su flor y fruto,  
cambia en un pardo desabrido luto  
las esmeraldas del vestido tierno.

Mas, aunque vuela el tiempo casi eterno, 5  
vuelve a cobrar el general tributo,  
y al árbol seco, y de su humor enjuto,  
halla con muestras de verdor interno.

Torna el pasado tiempo al mismo instante  
y punto que pasó: que no lo arrasa 10  
todo, pues tiemplan su rigor los cielos.

Pero no le sucede así al amante,  
que habrá de perecer si una vez pasa  
por él la infernal rabia de los celos.

*(Entra DON FRANCISCO.)*

DON FRANCISCO Siempre han de herir los vientos, 15  
amigo, en cualquier sazón  
los ayes de tu pasión,  
los ecos de tus lamentos.

DON ANTONIO Si acaso quiero entonar  
alguna voz de alegría, 20  
siento que la lengua mía  
se me pega al paladar.

A mi angustia, a mi dolencia  
no dan alivio los cielos:

que no le tienen los celos, 25  
ni le consiente la ausencia.

DON FRANCISCO No hay extremo sin su medio,  
ni es eterna humana suerte:  
sólo no tiene la muerte  
en la vida algún remedio. 30

Naturaleza compuso  
la suerte de los mortales  
entre bienes y entre males,  
como nos lo muestra el uso.

Esta verdad sé bien yo, 35  
sin que en probarla porfíe:  
ayer lloraba el que hoy ríe,  
y hoy llora el que ayer rió.

DON ANTONIO ¡Oh, qué filósofo vienes,  
don Francisco!

DON FRANCISCO Yo confieso 40  
que lo soy por el progreso  
de tus males y tus bienes.  
Dame los brazos y albricias.

DON ANTONIO Los brazos veslos aquí,  
y las albricias de mí 45  
llevarás, si las codicias;  
pero yo no sé de qué  
me las pides.

DON FRANCISCO Yo las pido  
de que el Amor ha entendido  
los quilates de tu fe, 50



y te la quiero premiar  
con entregarte a Marcela.

DON ANTONIO Sé que es burla, y llevaréla  
con tu gusto y mi pesar;  
pero no sé qué te mueve 55  
a hacer burla de un amigo  
tal como yo.

DON FRANCISCO Verdad digo,  
y escucha, que seré breve.  
Su padre de Marcela...

DON ANTONIO ¡Oh nombres cordialísimos 60  
de Marcela y su padre!

DON FRANCISCO Escucha: no seas tonto.

DON ANTONIO Escucho y soylo.

DON FRANCISCO Esta mañana, estando  
en misa en San Jerónimo,  
al salir de la iglesia 65  
me tomó por la mano.

DON ANTONIO ¡Oh dulce toque!

DON FRANCISCO ¿Qué toque dulce puede  
dar la mano de un viejo?  
Traslúceseme, amigo,  
que así estáis vos en vos, como en el cuento. 70

DON ANTONIO Luego, ¿no fue Marcela  
la que os tocó la mano?

DON FRANCISCO Que no, sino su padre.

DON ANTONIO No entendí bien. Seguid, que estoy suspenso.

DON FRANCISCO Las pacíficas plantas 75  
de las olivas verdes  
fueron testigos ciertos  
destas palabras que deciros quiero.

DON ANTONIO ¡Oh santísimos orbes  
de todas las esferas, 80  
a quien inteligencias  
supernas rigen, mueven y gobiernan!  
Haced que estas razones  
en mi provecho sean;  
lleguen a mis oídos, 85  
siquiera esta vez sola, alegres nuevas.

DON FRANCISCO ¡Por vida juro! ¡Muérdome  
la lengua! ¡Voto a Chito,  
que estoy por...! ¡Lleve el diablo  
a cuantos alfeñiques hay amantes! 90  
¡Que un hombre con sus barbas,  
y con su espada al lado,  
que puede alzar en peso  
un tercio de once arrobas de sardinas,  
llore, gima y se muestre 95  
más manso y más humilde  
que un santo capuchino

al desdén que le da su carilinda...!

DON ANTONIO Paréntesis es éste  
que se lleva colgada 100  
de cada razón suya  
mi alma aquí y allí.

DON FRANCISCO Pues otro queda.  
Pidióle a una fregona  
un amante alcorzado  
le diese de su ama 105  
un palillo de dientes, y ofrecióle  
por él cuatro doblones;  
y la muchacha boba  
trújole de su amo,  
que era viejo y sin muelas, el palillo. 110  
Él dio lo prometido,  
y, engastándole en oro,  
se lo colgó del cuello,  
cual si fuera reliquia de algún santo.  
Gemía ante él de hinojos, 115  
y al palo seco y suyo  
plegarias enviaba  
que en su empresa dudosa le ayudase.  
¿Y el otro presumido,  
que va a las embusteras 120  
del cedacillo y habas,  
y da crédito firme a disparates?  
¡Cuerpo del mundo todo!  
Descubra el hombre siempre  
tal valor y tal brío, 125  
que le muestren varón a todo trance.  
No se ande con esferas,  
con globos y con máquinas  
de inteligencias puras;  
atienda, espere, escuche, advierta y mire, 130  
o lo que en daño suyo,

o en su pro, sus amigos  
quisieren descubrirle.

DON ANTONIO Atiendo, espero, escucho, advierto y miro.

DON FRANCISCO Digo, pues, que don Pedro, 135  
el padre de Marcela,  
me dijo estas palabras...

DON ANTONIO ¿Es mucho que te diga que apresures  
la comenzada plática,  
de cuyo fin depende 140  
o mi vida o mi muerte?

DON FRANCISCO Díjome, en fin...

DON ANTONIO ¡Primero vendrá el mío!

DON FRANCISCO ¡Colérico, enfadoso  
está!

DON ANTONIO ¡Cuerpo del mundo!  
Acaba, don Francisco, 145  
que está pendiente el alma de tu boca.

DON FRANCISCO Dijo que yo sea parte,  
como que él nada entiende,  
que a Marcela, su hija,  
se la demandes por mujer.

DON ANTONIO¿Qué escucho? 150

¿Búrlaste, amigo, o quieres  
con falsas esperanzas  
entretener las mías?

DON FRANCISCONo burlo, juro a Dios: verdad te digo.

DON ANTONIO Dame esos pies.

DON FRANCISCOLevanta. 155

DON ANTONIOY pídemme en albricias  
el alma, y te la diera,  
si ya a Marcela dado no la hubiera.

Mas dime, dulce amigo:  
¿tocaste, por ventura, 160  
el cuerpo de don Pedro?  
¿Viste si era fantasma o no?

DON FRANCISCOPerdido  
estás desa cabeza.

DON ANTONIO ¿Que era don Pedro Osorio,  
el padre de Marcela? 165

DON FRANCISCOEl mismo.

DON ANTONIO¡El mismo!

DON FRANCISCOEl mismo. ¿Qué es aquesto?

DON ANTONIO A tanta desventura  
está el corazón hecho,  
que no puede dar crédito  
a las dichosas nuevas que le intimas; 170  
pero habrá de creerte,  
en fe que tú las dices:  
que el buen amigo vemos  
que es pedazo del alma de su amigo.

DON FRANCISCO Busca a don Pedro Osorio, 175  
y pídele a su hija  
por legítima esposa.

DON ANTONIO¿Dónde la tiene?

DON FRANCISCOEn Santa Cruz la tiene:  
un monesterio santo,  
que está puesto muy cerca 180  
de Torrejón y Cubas,  
orden del rico capitán de pobres.

DON ANTONIO ¿Qué le movió llevarla  
a tanto encerramiento?

DON FRANCISCONo me metí en dibujos, 185  
no le pregunté nada; sólo estuve  
atento a su demanda,  
y, con la ligereza  
posible, vine a darte  
la dulce que has oído alegre nueva. 190

(*Entran MARCELA y CRISTINA.*)

MARCELA Llega, Cristina, y dile  
lo que quieres.

CRISTINA Ocúpame  
el rostro la vergüenza,  
y enmudece la lengua.

MARCELA ¡Qué melindres!  
Tomarte has con un toro 195  
y con un hombre armado,  
¿y de mi hermano tiembles?

DON ANTONIO Pues, hermana,  
¿queréis alguna cosa?  
¿Mandáis que os sirva en algo?  
Pedid a vuestro gusto, 200  
que estoy en ocasión de hacer mercedes.

MARCELA En nombre de Cristina,  
os pido deis licencia  
para que aquesta noche  
os hagan una fiesta los de casa; 205  
Muñoz y Dorotea,  
Torrente con Ocaña.

CRISTINA Y nuestro buen vecino  
el barbero también, y la barbera,  
que canta por el cielo 210  
y baila por la tierra,  
con otro oficial suyo,  
nos tienen de ayudar; dígalos todo.

MARCELA Dígolo todo, y digo,  
hermano, que yo gusto 215  
que esta fiesta se haga.

DON ANTONIO Digo que soy contento, y doy licencia  
para que el cielo rompa  
en diferentes lenguas  
y en fiestas diferentes 220  
las cataratas del placer, y salga  
a playa mi contento.

DON FRANCISCO Y aun, a ser necesario,  
haré yo mi figura.

DON ANTONIO Y aun yo, que soy valiente recitante. 225

CRISTINA Mil años, señor, vivas;  
mil regocijos buenos  
el corazón te ocupen.  
Hacerme tengo rajas esta noche.

DON ANTONIO El término decente 230  
de honestidad se guarde,  
Cristina.

CRISTINA ¡Bueno es eso!  
Bailaremos a fuer de palaciegos.

DON ANTONIO Vamos, amigo.



DON FRANCISCO Vamos;  
aunque don Pedro agora 235  
no está en Madrid.

DON ANTONIO ¿Pues, dónde?

DON FRANCISCO A Santa Cruz es ido,  
y volverá mañana.

DON ANTONIO Vamos a dar al cielo  
gracias porque ha mirado mi buen celo. 240

*(Éntranse DON FRANCISCO y DON ANTONIO.)*

MARCELA Mira, Cristina, que sea  
el baile y el entremés  
discreto, alegre y cortés,  
sin que haya en él cosa fea.

CRISTINA Hale compuesto Torrente 245  
y Muñoz, y es la maraña  
casi la mitad de Ocaña,  
que es un poeta valiente.

El baile te sé decir  
que llegará a lo posible 250  
en ser dulce y apacible,  
pues tiene que ver y oír:  
que ha de ser baile cantado,  
al modo y uso moderno;  
tiene de lo grave y tierno, 255  
de lo melifluo y flautado.

Es lacayuno y pajil  
el entremés, y me admira  
de verle una tiramira

que tiene de fregonil. 260

MARCELA La fiesta será estremada.

CRISTINA Basta que agradable sea.

MARCELA ¿Sabe el dicho Dorotea?

CRISTINA Ninguno no ignora nada  
de lo que a su parte toca. 265  
Dame, señora, lugar,  
que nos hemos de ensayar.

MARCELA Vamos.

CRISTINA De gusto voy loca.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Salen TORRENTE y OCAÑA, cada uno con un garrote debajo del brazo.)*

TORRENTE Señor Ocaña, a esta parte,  
que está más llano el camino. 270

OCAÑA Por esta vez, peregrino  
traidor, no pienso de honrarte  
con darte el lado derecho,  
porque he de tomar el tuyo.  
Desas ceremonias huyo, 275  
lánguidas y sin provecho;

adondequiera voy bien,  
al diestro o siniestro lado,  
y no quiero, acomodado,  
que otros lugares nos den 280  
del que me cupiere acaso,  
y sé yo, señor Torrente,  
que tiene de lo imprudente  
hacer destas cosas caso.

TORRENTE ¿Es daga aquese garrote, 285  
señor Ocaña?

OCAÑA Es un palo  
que por martas lo señalo  
para ablandar un cogote.  
¿Y es puñal aquese vuestro?

TORRENTE Es una penca verduga 290  
que las espaldas arruga  
del maldiciente más diestro.

OCAÑA Luego, ¿vais a castigar  
algún maldiciente?

TORRENTE Sí.

OCAÑA Pues no pasemos de aquí, 295  
que yo también he de dar  
doce palos a un bellaco,  
socarrón, traidor, y miente.

TORRENTE Si lo dices por Torrente,

daré destierro a este saco, 300  
y haré en calzas y en jubón,  
ya con el palo o sin él,  
que confieses ser tú aquel  
desmentido y socarrón.

OCAÑA Tente, Torrente; ¿estás loco?, 305  
ten tus cóleras a raya,  
si quieres que yo me vaya  
en las mías poco a poco.  
¿Han de fenecer aquí,  
por gustos de mozas viles, 310  
dos Héctores, dos Aquiles?

TORRENTE Mueran. ¿Qué se me da a mí?

OCAÑA ¡Vive Dios!, que Cristinilla  
me mandó te apalease;  
a lo menos, te reglase 315  
la una y otra mejilla  
con una navaja aguda:  
que es, si en ello mirar quieres,  
entre las crudas mujeres,  
la más insolente y cruda. 320  
Lo mismo a mí me mandó  
que a ti.

TORRENTE Sin duda, así es.

OCAÑA ¿Y saldrá con su interés?

TORRENTE Amigo Ocaña, eso no.  
Vivamos para beber, 325

pues para beber vivimos,  
y estos dijés y estos mimos  
con otros se han de entender  
de más tiernas intenciones  
y de más sufribles lomos; 330  
no con nosotros, que somos  
malos sobre socarrones.  
Disimula; vesla allí  
donde viene; disimula.

OCAÑA Ésta es la más mala mula 335  
que en mi vida rasqué o vi.

TORRENTE Contemporicémosla.  
Quizá mudará el rigor:  
que su mudanza en mejor  
se ha de poner en quizá. 340

*(Entra CRISTINA.)*

CRISTINA Apostaré que están hechos  
pedazos mis dos amantes,  
que revientan de arrogantes  
y de coléricos pechos.  
Pero allí están sosegados 345  
más que en misa. ¿Cómo es esto?  
Aún no se habrán descompuesto,  
que son rufos recatados.

TORRENTE Señora Cristina mía...

CRISTINA ¿Tuya? ¡Bueno!

TORRENTE Pues ¿que no? 350

CRISTINA ¿Quién a ti a Cristina dio?

TORRENTE El dinero y la porfía.

CRISTINA ¿Qué dinero?

TORRENTE Aquel que pienso  
darte en llegando la flota,  
si no es que, de puro rota, 355  
da al mar el usado censo.

CRISTINA ¿Tú no me das algo, Ocaña?

OCAÑA Cristina, ¿yo no te he dado,  
como poeta rodado,  
del entremés la maraña? 360  
¿Hay día que no te cebe  
con dos cuartos y aun con tres?

CRISTINA Si es que sale el entremés  
tal que mi señor le apruebe,  
yo me daré por pagada 365  
y satisfecha, que es más.

TORRENTE Cristina, ¿no nos dirás,  
si es que el caso no te enfada,  
a cuál de los dos más quieres?

CRISTINA Es injusta petición, 370  
y aquesa declaración  
no la han de hacer las mujeres  
como yo; mas, si gustáis  
que por señas os lo diga,  
haré lo que a más me obliga 375  
el amor que me mostráis.  
Muestra si traes un pañuelo,  
Ocaña.

OCAÑA Sí traigo, y roto,  
y te le ofrezco devoto  
con sano y humilde celo. 380

CRISTINA Toma este mío, Torrente,  
y con esto he declarado  
lo que me habéis preguntado  
honesta y discretamente.  
Y adiós; y venid, que es hora 385  
de ensayar el entremés.

*(Éntrase CRISTINA.)*

TORRENTE Si no te aclaras después,  
más confuso estoy agora  
que antes de hacer la pregunta.

OCAÑA Pues yo me aplico la palma, 390  
que en mi provecho mi alma  
estas razones apunta:  
a ti dio, sin darle nada,  
y, sin darme, a mí, tomó;  
con el darte, te pagó; 395  
llevando, queda obligada

al pago que recibió.

TORRENTE A quien toman lo que tiene,  
dan muestra que se aborrece;  
y en el dar, claro parece 400  
que más amor se contiene,  
pues con las dádivas crece.

OCAÑA La verdad desta cuestión  
quede a la mosquetería,  
que tal hay que en él se cría 405  
el ingenio de un Platón.  
Estos capipardos son  
poetas casi los más,  
y tal vez alguno oirás  
que a socapa dice cosas 410  
que parece, de curiosas,  
que las dicta Barrabás.

*(Éntranse TORRENTE y OCAÑA.)*

*(Salen DON ANTONIO, DON FRANCISCO, CARDENIO y MARCELA, y MUÑOZ.)*

DON ANTONIO Quiera Dios que la fiesta corresponda  
al buen deseo de los recitantes.

MUÑOZ Será maravillosa, porque danza 415  
nuestro vecino el barberito, ¡y cómo!

*(Asómase a la puerta del teatro CRISTINA, y dice:)*



CRISTINA Pónganse todos bien, que ya salimos.

MARCELA ¿Han venido los músicos?

CRISTINA Ya tiemplan.

*(Éntrase CRISTINA.)*

*(Salen OCAÑA y TORRENTE, como lacayos embozados.)*

TORRENTE Paréceme que vas algo dañado,  
Ocaña.

OCAÑA Cuando voy desta manera, 420  
va el juicio en su punto. Tú no sabes  
cómo el calor vinático despierta  
los espíritus muertos y dormidos.  
De suerte voy que pelearé con ciento,  
sin volver el pie atrás una semínima. 425

CARDENIO No es muy mala la entrada.

MUÑOZ ¿Cómo mala?  
Digo que es la mejor cosa del mundo.  
Yo soy su medio autor.

TORRENTE Ocaña, ¿es éste  
el zagüán de la fiesta?

OCAÑA No diviso:

que tengo las lumbreras algo turbias 430  
Adonde oyeres música, repara.

TORRENTE Escucha, que aquí sale Cristina  
y Dorotea.

OCAÑA Cáigome de sueño.

*(Salen DOROTEA y CRISTINA como fregonas.)*

DOROTEA Aquesta tarde, Cristinica amiga,  
pienso bailar hasta molerme el alma. 435

CRISTINA Y yo, hasta reventar he de brincarme.  
¡Cómo tarda Aguedilla, la del sastre!

DOROTEA ¿Díjote que vendría?

CRISTINA Y Julianilla,  
la del entallador, con Sabinica,  
que sirve a la beata en Cantarranas. 440

DOROTEA Todas son bailadoras de lo fino.  
En fregando, vendrán.

CRISTINA Como nosotras,  
que lo dejamos todo hecho de perlas.  
De la cena no curo; que mi amo  
dos huevos frescos sorbe, y a Dios gracias. 445

DOROTEAEI mío nunca cena; que es asmático,  
y con dos bocadillos de conserva  
que toma, se santigua y se va al lecho.

CRISTINAY tu ama, ¿qué hace? ¿No se acuesta?

DOROTEANo toméis menos; puesta de rodillas 450  
dentro de un oratorio, papa santos  
dos horas más allá de los maitines.

CRISTINATambién es mi señora una bendita,  
y, por nuestra desgracia, ellas son santas.

DOROTEAPues ¿no es mejor, amiga, que lo sean? 455

CRISTINANo; ni con cien mil leguas. Si ellas fueran  
resbaladoras de carcaño, acaso  
tropezaran aquí y allí rodaran;  
y, sabiendo nosotras sus melindres,  
tuviéramos la nuestra sobre el hito: 460  
ellas fueran las mozas, y nosotras  
fuéramos las patronas a baqueta,  
como dice *il* toscano.

DOROTEAVerdad dices:  
que el ama de quien sabe su criada  
tiernas fragilidades, no se atreve, 465  
ni aun es bien que se atreva, a darle voces,  
ni a reñir sus descuidos, temerosa  
que no salgan a plaza sus holguras.

CRISTINA¿Has visto qué calzado trae Lorenza,

la que sirve al letrado boquituerto? 470  
¿Quién se le dio, si sabes?

DOROTEA Un su primo  
donado, que es un santo.

CRISTINA ¡Ay Dorotea,  
cómo los canonizas!

DOROTEA Oye, hermana,  
que los músicos suenan, y el barbero,  
gran bailarín, es éste que aquí sale. 475

MUÑOZ ¡Vive el cielo!, que es cosa de los cielos  
el entremés.

OCAÑA Aquel viejo me enfada;  
que le he de dar, pondré, una bofetada.

*(Entran los MÚSICOS y el BARBERO, danzando al son deste romance:)*

MÚSICOS De los danzantes la prima  
es este barbero nuestro, 480  
en el compás acertado,  
y en las mudanzas ligero.  
Puede danzar ante el rey,  
y aqueso será lo menos,  
pues alas lleva en los pies 485  
y azogue dentro del cuerpo.  
Anda, aguija, salta y corre  
aquí y allí como un trueno,  
adóranle las fregonas,

respétanle los mancebos. 490

OCAÑA Oíganme, pido atención;  
no gusto destos paseos,  
deste dar coces al aire  
y puntapiés a los vientos.  
Toquen unas seguidillas, 495  
y entendámonos; y advierto  
que se juegue limpiamente,  
y sepan que no me duermo.

MUÑOZ ¿Hay tal Ocaña en el mundo?  
¿Hay tal lacayo en el cielo? 500

BARBERO Alto, pues; vayan seguidas.

CRISTINA Sí, amigo, porque bailemos.

MÚSICOS Madre, la mi madre,  
guardas me ponéis;  
*que si yo no me guardo,* 505  
*mal me guardaréis.*

TORRENTE Esto sí, ¡cuerpo del mundo!,  
que tiene de lo moderno,  
de lo dulce, de lo lindo,  
de lo agradable y lo tierno. 510

MÚSICOS Dicen que está escrito,  
y con gran razón,  
que es la privación  
causa de apetito.  
Crece en infinito 515

encerrado amor;  
por eso es mejor  
que no me encerréis:  
*que si yo no me guardo...*

OCAÑA Ya les he dicho que bailen 520  
a lo templado y honesto:  
que no gusto que se beban  
de las niñas el aliento.

BARBERO; Por vida del so lacayo,  
que nos deje, que aquí haremos 525  
lo que más nos diere gusto!

OCAÑA Bailen: después nos veremos.

MÚSICOS Es de tal manera  
la fuerza amorosa  
que a la más hermosa 530  
vuelve en quimera.  
El pecho de cera,  
de fuego la gana,  
las manos de lana,  
de fieltro los pies: 535  
*que si yo no me guardo, &c.*

TORRENTE Tampoco a mí me contentan  
estas vueltas ni floreos:  
que se requiebran bailando,  
pues son requiebros los quiebros. 540

MÚSICOS Señores lacayos, vayan  
y monden la haza, y déjennos.

OCAÑA Musiquillo de mohatra,  
canta y calla, que queremos  
estar aquí a tu pesar. 545

MÚSICO Está bien dicho; cantemos.  
Que tiene costumbre  
de ser amorosa,  
como mariposa  
se va tras su lumbre, 550  
aunque muchedumbre  
de guardas le pongan,  
y aunque más propongan  
de hacer lo que hacéis:  
*que si yo no me guardo...* 555

TORRENTE Varilla de volver tripas,  
no hagas tantos meneos;  
lagartija almidonada,  
baila a lo grave y compuesto.

DOROTEABodegón con pies, camine, 560  
que aquí no le conocemos;  
calle o pase, porque olisca  
a lacayo y a gallego.

MUÑOZÉstas sí que son matracas,  
que tienen del caballero, 565  
de lo ilustre y de lo lindo,  
de lo propio y lo risueño.

OCAÑABailar quiero con Cristina.

TORRENTE No con mi consentimiento.  
¿No se acuerda el sor Ocaña 570  
que a mí me dio su pañuelo,  
y que, en fe de ser su cuyo,  
sobre ella dominio tengo,  
y que los rayos del sol  
no la han de tocar, si puedo? 575

OCAÑA ¿Y no sabe el so Torrente  
que soy aquel que merezco  
bailar con un arzobispo,  
aunque sea el de Toledo?

CARDENIO ¿No pasa el baile adelante? 580

OCAÑA No; que ha de pasar primero  
de Ocaña la valentía,  
su venganza y su denuedo.

TORRENTE ¡Ay narices derribadas  
y tendidas por el suelo! 585  
Pero toma esta respuesta:  
*de Tarpeya mira Nero.*

MUÑOZ Dióle. ¡Mal haya la farsa  
y el autor suyo primero!  
Pero yo no di esta traza, 590  
ni escribí tal en mis versos.

BARBERO ¡Pasado de parte a parte  
está el pobre Ocaña!



MARCELA;Ay cielos!

BARBEROYo les tomaré la sangre,  
que para esto soy barbero. 595

DOROTEA;Mi señora se desmaya!

DON ANTONIOYo tengo la culpa desto,  
pues que sabía que Ocaña  
es buzaque en todo tiempo.

BARBERO;Paños, estopas, aguijen; 600  
traíganme claras de huevos!

CARDENIO;Huye, traidor enemigo;  
huye, traidor, que le has muerto!

TORRENTEMire si halla mis narices,  
porque sin ellas no pienso 605  
salir un paso de casa.

CARDENIO;Sal, que le has muerto!

TORRENTE;No quiero!

DOROTEA;Ay, sin ventura, señora!

DON ANTONIOLas dos llevadla allá dentro.  
Miren quién llama a esa puerta. 610

¡Y la rompen! ¿Qué es aquesto?

DON FRANCISCO Yo pondré que es la justicia,  
que a los llantos lastimeros  
destas muchachas acude.

CRISTINA Aqueso tengo yo bueno: 615  
que no lloraré una lágrima  
si viese a mi padre muerto;  
y más, viéndome vengada  
destos dos amantes ciegos,  
importunos, maldicientes, 620  
socarrones, sacrílegos,  
pobres, sobre todo, y ruines:  
¡mirad qué extremos extremos!

*(Entran un ALGUACIL y un CORCHETE.)*

ALGUACIL ¿Qué guitarra es aquésta?

CORCHETE Aquí hay sangre. ¿Qué es aquesto? 625

TORRENTE Yo soy, que estoy sin narices.

OCAÑA Y yo, que estoy casi muerto.

ALGUACIL No se me vaya ninguno;  
cierren esas puertas luego.

MUÑOZ De aquí habremos de ir...

DOROTEA¿Adónde? 630

MUÑOZA la cárcel, por lo menos.

DON ANTONIO¿No la habéis echado el agua?

DOROTEAYa vuelve en sí.

CORCHETE¿Qué haremos?  
¿Han de ir a la cárcel todos?

ALGUACILEl caso sabré primero. 635

TORRENTE¿Que tengo de ir a Turpia!

OCAÑA¿Que esté tan cerca mi entierro!  
¡Mete la tienta, cuitado,  
con más blandura y más tiento!

BARBEROMás de dos palmos le cuela. 640

OCAÑA Si yo cuatro azumbres cielo,  
no es bien se mire conmigo  
en dos varas más o menos.

CORCHETE Veamos estas narices.

TORRENTE Paso, detente, reniego 645  
de tus pies y de tus patas:  
que las pisas, y tendremos  
que enderezarlas si acaso  
quedan chatas.

CORCHETE Yo no veo  
en el suelo tus narices. 650

TORRENTE Verdad, porque aquí las tengo.

MUÑOZ ¡Milagro, milagro, y grande!

OCAÑA Tú, compasivo barbero,  
por lo hueco de una bota  
entraste la tiente a tiento. 655

DON ANTONIO Luego, ¿todo esto es fingido?

OCAÑA Sí, señor.

DON ANTONIO ¡Por Dios del cielo!,  
que estoy por hacer que salga  
lo que es fingido por cierto.  
¡Desnudar, donde hay mujeres, 660  
espadas!

TORRENTE ¡Ah, señor bueno,  
qué mal sientes de sus bríos!

DON ANTONIO Digo que sois majadero.

ALGUACIL Luego, ¿todo aquesto es burla?

OCAÑA Todo aquesto es burla luego, 665  
pero después serán veras.

CARDENIO ¡Qué buen relente tenemos!

DON FRANCISCO El picón, por Dios bendito,  
que ha sido de los más buenos  
que he visto hacer en mi vida. 670

DOROTEA ¿Bailaremos más?

CRISTINA Bailemos.

MARCELA No, porque aún no estoy en mí  
del sobresalto, y deseo  
reparar el accidente  
que me ha puesto en recio extremo. 675

DON ANTONIO Entraos, hermana.

MARCELA Vení  
conmigo vosotras.

TORRENTE Demos  
sobresaltado remate  
al principio de sosiego.

*(Éntranse CRISTINA, MARCELA y DOROTEA.)*

ALGUACIL De que todo sea comedia, 680  
y no tragedia, me alegro;  
y así, a mi ronda, señores,  
con vuestra licencia, vuelvo.

*(Éntranse el ALGUACIL y el CORCHETE.)*

CARDENIO Ocaña y Torrente, digo  
que el asunto fue discreto 685  
del picón, y que se hizo  
con propiedad en extremo.

MUÑOZ El principio todo es mío,  
pero no lo fue el progreso;  
el perulero y Ocaña 690  
tienen el diablo en el cuerpo.

OCAÑA Miren la herida por quien  
metió la tiente el barbero,  
que, mientras es más profunda,  
más vida y bien me prometo. 695  
*(Enseña una bota de vino.)*

TORRENTE Preguntar quiero otra vez,  
mis señores mosqueteros,  
quién ha de llevar la gala  
de los trocados pañuelos.  
Pensadlo para otra vez, 700  
que en este sitio saldremos  
con preguntas más agudas,  
con entremeses más buenos.  
Y advertid que soy Torrente,

perulero por lo menos, 705  
y os daré selvas de plata  
y mil montes de oro llenos.

OCAÑA Hermanos, yo soy Ocaña,  
lacayo, mas no gallego;  
sé brindar y sé gastar 710  
con amigos cuanto tengo.

*(Éntranse todos.)*

*(Entran DON SILVESTRE DE ALMENDÁREZ, el verdadero, con una gran cadena de oro, o que le parezca, y CLAVIJO, su compañero.)*

DON SILVESTRE Si no llega al retrato su hermosura,  
y della ha declinado alguna parte,  
podrá buscar en otra su ventura.

CLAVIJO Señor, lo que yo puedo aconsejarte 715  
es que procures que la vista sea  
la que desta verdad ha de informarte;  
y si tu prima acaso fuere fea,  
no faltarán excusas con que impidas  
el lazo que se teme y se desea: 720  
que, a darle el matrimonio por dos vidas,  
las glorias que no diera la primera,  
fueran en la segunda prevenidas.  
Un nudo solo dado a la ligera,  
aprieta, estrecha y liga de tal suerte, 725  
que dura hasta la hora postrimera.  
No fue de Gordiano el lazo fuerte  
tan duro de romper como este ñudo,  
que sólo se desata con la muerte.  
Mancebo eres, pero muy sesudo, 730  
y así, de que has de hacer como discreto

tan confiado estoy, que en nada dudo.

DON SILVESTRE De seguir tus consejos te prometo.

Ésta es buena coyuntura,  
porque imagino que es ésta 735  
mi prima.

CLAVIJO Como es hoy fiesta,  
saldrá a misa.

DON SILVESTRE ¡Gran ventura!

De mi primo ésta es la casa.  
Ella es; no hay qué dudar.

CLAVIJO Toda la puedes mirar, 740  
si es que descubierta pasa.

*(Salen MARCELA y DOROTEA, con mantos, y detrás QUIÑONES, con una almohada de terciopelo, y MUÑOZ, que lleva a MARCELA de la mano.)*

MARCELA Delantero cargó Ocaña,  
Muñoz, en el entremés.

MUÑOZ ¿No sabes, señora, que es  
el mayor cuero de España? 745

MARCELA Desenvainar las espadas,  
me dio pena.

MUÑOZA Aquellas monas



nunca las sacan tizonas,  
porque todas son coladas.

Embebe como esponja 750  
vino Ocaña, y aun Torrente  
bebe como hombre valiente,  
sin melindre y sin lisonja.

MARCELA ¿Don Silvestre queda en casa?

DOROTEASí, señora; y acostado. 755

MARCELAMi primo es tan regalado,  
que ya de lo honesto pasa.

¿Traes, Dorotea, las *Horas*?

DOROTEASí, señora.

MUÑOZEEl corazón  
me dice que hoy el sermón 760  
tiene de durar tres horas.

*(Al pasar, DON SILVESTRE y CLAVIJO hacen a MARCELA una gran reverencia, y ella, ni más ni menos.)*

Pero yo le oiré de modo  
que fastidio no me pille.

MARCELALuego, ¿no pensáis oílle?

MUÑOZAlguna parte, no todo. 765

(Éntrase MARCELA, MUÑOZ, DOROTEA y QUIÑONES.)

DON SILVESTRE   Ésta es Marcela, mi prima,  
y el retrato le parece.

CLAVIJO Por cierto que ella merece  
ser tenida por la prima  
    de hermosura y gentileza, 770  
y estaría en perfección  
grande, si su discreción  
llega donde su belleza.

DON SILVESTRE   Primo y don Silvestre dijo,  
y que quedaba acostado, 775  
y que era muy regalado:  
¿qué infieres desto, Clavijo?

CLAVIJO   De lo que pueda inferir,  
ingenio no se resuelve;  
mas el escudero vuelve, 780  
que nos lo podrá decir.

(Vuelve MUÑOZ.)

MUÑOZ   Viejo en pie, largo sermón,  
temblores de puro frío,  
y el estómago vacío,  
no llaman la devoción. 785  
    Aquí, al sol estaré, en tanto  
que se quiebra la cabeza  
este fraile, rica pieza,  
que todos tienen por santo.

CLAVIJO Díganos, señor galán: 790  
¿quién es aquesta señora  
que entró de la mano ahora?

MUÑOZ ¿Adónde?

CLAVIJO En San Sebastián.

MUÑOZ Es Marcela de Almendárez,  
doncella la más garrida 795  
que vive en toda la corte,  
más honesta y recogida.  
Es su hermano don Antonio  
de Almendárez. Tiene en Indias  
un hermano de su padre, 800  
rico a las mil maravillas,  
un hijo del cual en casa  
se huelga a pierna tendida,  
esperando si de Roma  
el Padre Santo le envía 805  
licencia para casarse  
con Marcela, que es su prima.

DON SILVESTRE ¿Y llámase?

MUÑOZ Don Silvestre  
de Almendárez, y es de Lima,  
y a nuestra casa llegó, 810  
puedo decir, en camisa,  
porque en una gran tormenta  
echó al mar dos mil valijas  
llenas de tejuelos de oro  
finísimo y plata fina, 815

y entre ellas fue mi bayeta,  
que fue oída y no fue vista.

CLAVIJO ¡Válame Dios! ¡Grave caso!

MUÑOZ Éste que viene podría  
contaros el caso grave 820  
con más luenga narrativa:  
que se halló presente a todo,  
con gran dolor de su ánima.

DON SILVESTRE Ánima, querréis decir.

MUÑOZ No me importa a mí una guinda 825  
pronunciar con dinguindujes.

*(Entra TORRENTE.)*

TORRENTE Muñoz, ¿en qué está la misa?

MUÑOZ En el misal: ahora empieza.

TORRENTE ¿Pasó por aquí Cristina?

MUÑOZ Entre la cruz creo que andáis, 830  
Torrente, y la agua bendita.  
Bastan las de vuestro ojos,  
sin buscar ajenas niñas;  
que es Ocaña apitonado  
y sabe mucho de esgrima. 835

TORRENTEEn este caso y en otros,  
¿mondo yo, por dicha, níspolas?  
Y, cuando no, su cabeza  
tiene de guardar la mía.

*(Entra un CARTERO destos que andan por la corte dando las cartas del correo.)*

CARTERO¿Don Antonio de Almendárez, 840  
saben dónde vive, a dicha,  
señores?

MUÑOZHombre de bien,  
a la vuelta, en una esquina.  
¿Son de Roma?

CARTEROSÍ, señor.

MUÑOZLa dispensación sería 845  
que aguarda el gran peregrino  
y la en beldad peregrina.  
¿Cuánto es el porte?

CARTEROUn escudo.

MUÑOZ¿Hoste, puto! Vaya y diga  
al mayordomo de casa 850  
que le pague y la reciba.

*(Éntrase el CARTERO.)*

TORRENTE Agora sí que tendremos  
gusto abierto y rica jira,  
regodeos hasta el tope,  
lautas y limpias comidas. 855  
Mudaremos este pelo  
de sayal con cebollinas  
martas.

MUÑOZ Procurad que sean  
ajunas, que sean más finas.  
Con tantos gustos, sin duda, 860  
que olvidaréis la tormenta  
que pasastes, que, a mi cuenta,  
debió ser en la Bermuda:  
que siempre en aquel paraje  
hay huracanes malignos. 865

TORRENTE Tanto, que de peregrinos  
hicimos pleito homenaje  
yo y mi señor don Silvestre;  
mas yo tengo por lunático  
quien sube en caballo acuático, 870  
cuando le tiene terrestre.  
A la sorda y a la muda  
íbamos muy sin placer,  
cuando llegamos a ver  
la venta de la Barbuda; 875  
pero tenía cerradas  
las puertas, si viene a mano,  
y no hay fiarse cristiano  
de viejas que son barbadas.

DON SILVESTRE Y la canal de Bahama, 880  
¿pasóse sin detrimento?

TORRENTE Otra canal yo no siento  
que aquesta por do derrama  
sus dulces licores Baco.

CLAVIJO ¿Dónde se alijó el navío? 885

TORRENTE No le alijó el señor mío,  
que le tuvo por bellaco;  
y más, que espera tener  
hijos en su prima hermosa.

MUÑOZ La respuesta, aunque graciosa, 890  
nos ha de echar a perder.

DON SILVESTRE ¿En el golfo de las Yeguas  
sería el trance crüel?

TORRENTE Creo que pasamos dél  
desviados cuatro leguas. 895

CLAVIJO ¿Y dónde se tomó tierra?

TORRENTE En el suelo.

DON SILVESTRE Dice bien.

MUÑOZ Vuestas mercedes nos den  
licencia.

DON SILVESTREDonaire encierra  
el peregrino, en verdad: 900  
que si aspirara a piloto,  
que yo le diera mi voto  
con poca dificultad,  
porque describe los puertos  
y los golfos bravamente. 905

MUÑOZEstimado Torrente  
de los pilotos más ciertos  
que encierra Guadalcanal,  
Alanís, Jerez, Cazalla.

TORRENTEBaco en sus Indias se halla, 910  
pasando por mi canal.

MUÑOZ Si la plática no atajo  
en ocasión oportuna,  
vos os veis, sin duda alguna,  
Torrente amigo, en trabajo. 915

*(Éntranse TORRENTE y MUÑOZ.)*

*(Salen DON ANTONIO, DON FRANCISCO y DON AMBROSIO (trae un papel en la mano).)*

DON AMBROSIO Si desto albricias no dais,  
o esta verdad no creéis,  
ni de mi mal os doléis,  
ni de mi bien os holgáis.  
Tras la noche triste mía, 920  
amarga, lóbrega, oscura,  
hizo salir la ventura  
claro sol y alegre día.



Por las levantadas cumbres  
de imposibles que temí, 925  
mi luz clara salir vi  
llena de piadosas lumbres,  
que como nortes me guían  
al puerto con dulces modos,  
y de los peligros todos 930  
del mar de amor me desvían.

Ya Marcela ha parecido,  
y con esa letra y firma  
todos mis bienes confirma;  
ya, cual veis, soy su marido. 935

DON ANTONIO ¿Sabéis vos que ésta es su mano  
y firma?

DON AMBROSIO Sin duda alguna.

DON ANTONIO Con tan próspera fortuna,  
bien es que os mostréis ufano;  
pero de su padre sé 940  
que la casa en otra parte.

DON AMBROSIO Él ni nadie será parte  
a que se rompa la fe  
que con sangre viene escrita  
en ese papel que veis. 945

DON ANTONIO Haga Amor que la gocéis  
luengo tiempo en paz bendita.  
Tomad, y hágaos buen provecho  
vuestra ventura estremada.

DON FRANCISCO La mujer determinada 950

pone a todo trance el pecho.

Pero veis aquí do viene,  
el padre de vuestra esposa.

DON AMBROSIO Esperarle aquí no es cosa  
que a mis designios conviene. 955

*(Entra el PADRE de Marcela, y vase AMBROSIO, y entra también OCAÑA.)*

PADRE Como fue demanda honesta  
la que os hice, vengo a ver  
si vino a corresponder  
con mi intención la respuesta,  
que ya en público la pido: 960  
que no quiero que rodeos  
encubran que mis deseos  
no son de padre advertido.

Daré al señor don Antonio...,  
deste modo lo diré, 965  
...mi alma, pues le daré  
a mi hija en matrimonio.

En ella le daré esposa  
bien nacida, cual se sabe,  
y aun extremo adonde cabe 970  
el mayor de ser hermosa;  
una niña a quien apenas  
el sol ni el viento han tocado;  
un armiño aprisionado  
con religiosas cadenas; 975  
una que son sus cuidados  
de simple y tierna doncella;  
y ofrezco en dote con ella  
de renta dos mil ducados.

DON ANTONIO Con mucho gusto, señor 980  
don Pedro Osorio, hiciera

lo que tan bien me estuviera,  
mirando a vuestro valor;  
mas la señora Marcela  
ha ganado por la mano 985  
a vuestro intento tan sano,  
que en honrarla se desvela:  
ella se ha escogido esposo,  
que es el que salió de aquí.

PADRE ¿Mi hija Marcela?

DON FRANCISCO Sí. 990

PADRE Padre triste, viejo astroso,  
¿qué escuchas? ¿Cómo es aquesto?

DON FRANCISCO Una cédula le ha dado  
de su mano, donde ha echado  
de lo que es amor el resto. 995

PADRE ¿Será falsa?

DON FRANCISCO Podría ser;  
pero imagino que no.

PADRE Pues ¿para qué os la mostró?

DON ANTONIO Turba el sentido el placer.

PADRE Primero que él la vea, 1000

primero que él la toque,  
primero que la goce,  
ha de perder la vida, o yo la mía.  
¡Que venga un embustero,  
con sus manos lavadas, 1005  
y no limpias por esto,  
y el alma os robe y saque de las carnes...!  
Mitades son del alma  
los hijos; mas las hijas  
son mitad más entera, 1010  
por cuyo honor el padre ha de ser lince.

OCAÑA Por Cristo benditísimo,  
que la razón le sobra  
por cima los tejados  
a este pobre señor, de quien me duelo. 1015  
¡Que aquestos pisaverdes,  
aquestos tiquimiquis  
de encrespados copetes,  
se anden a pescar bobas con embustes...!

DON ANTONIO Majadero, ¿qué es esto? 1020

OCAÑA Yo callo y me arrepiento  
de lo dicho.

DON ANTONIO Mostrenco,  
¿de cuándo acá os metéis vos en docena?

OCAÑA ¡Que no pueda hacer baza  
yo con este mi amo, 1025  
y si a las discreciones  
jugamos, quince y falta puedo darle...!

PADRE No os quiero pedir nada,  
ni es razón que os la pida,  
hijo, que, si lo fuérades, 1030  
remozara mis canas y mis días.  
¡Hijas inobedientes,  
que al curso de los años  
anticipáis el gusto,  
destrúyaos Dios, los cielos os maldigan! 1035

*(Éntrase el PADRE.)*

DON ANTONIO ¡Mi gozo está en el pozo!

DON FRANCISCO¿Y si es falsa la cédula?

DON ANTONIO Aunque lo sea, amigo,  
ya el honor titubea de Marcela.  
Cuanto más, que se sabe 1040  
que es bueno don Ambrosio,  
y no levantaría  
tan grande testimonio.

DON FRANCISCO Así lo creo.

DON ANTONIO Doncella de escritorios,  
de públicas audiencias, 1045  
de pruebas y testigos,  
no es para mí.

OCAÑA ¡Sentencia aristotélica!

*(Entran TORRENTE y CARDENIO.)*

TORRENTE ¿A cuándo, cuitado, aguardas?  
¿Qué diligencias has hecho  
que te sean de provecho? 1050  
¿A qué esperas? ¿A qué tardas?  
Lugar tienes y ocasión  
para rogar y fingir.

CARDENIO Yo tengo para morir,  
no para hablar, corazón. 1055

TORRENTE Tu silencio ha de ser causa  
de toda tu desventura.

CARDENIO Su honestidad y hermosura  
ponen en mi intento pausa.  
Al cabo habré de morir 1060  
callando.

TORRENTE ¡Qué simple amante!

CARDENIO Medroso, mas no ignorante.

TORRENTE Todo lo puedes decir.

*(Entran MARCELA, DOROTEA, MUÑOZ y CRISTINA, y QUIÑONES.)*

MARCELA La torpeza en vos se halla;  
caminad, que os valga Dios. 1065

OCAÑAUno a uno, dos a dos,  
juntado se ha gran batalla.

*(Entran SILVESTRE y CLAVIJO.)*

DON SILVESTRE ¿Un don Silvestre está aquí  
que tiene por sobrenombre  
Almendárez?

CARDENIOGentilhombre, 1070  
yo soy. ¿Qué queréis de mí?

DON SILVESTRE Dadme, señor, vuestros pies,  
que soy grande servidor  
de vuestro padre.

CARDENIOSeñor,  
cortés, mas no tan cortés. 1075

DON SILVESTRE Diez mil pesos ensayados,  
con vos, me escribe mi padre,  
me envía, y tres mil mi madre.

TORRENTEPesos serán bien pesados.  
Catorce mil se tragó 1080  
el mar, como soy testigo.

DON SILVESTRETrece mil son los que digo.

TORRENTECatorce mil digo yo.

CARDENIO Es verdad; yo recibí,  
señor, todo ese dinero; 1085  
pero el mar...

CLAVIJO Aquí no hay pero.

DON SILVESTRE Yo responderé por mí;  
callad vos. También me envía  
de vuestra prima un retrato.

TORRENTE Sorbiósele el mar ingrato 1090  
sin guardarle cortesía.

Pensamos que se amansara  
tocándole su figura,  
y por respeto y mesura  
en su lecho se acostara; 1095  
pero fue tan mal mirado,  
que alzó montes sobre montes,  
y escondió los horizontes  
y aun la faz del sol dorado.

MARCELA No era reliquia el retrato. 1100

CLAVIJO No; pero si él le arrojara  
con devoción, se mostrara  
manso el mar y el cielo grato.

TORRENTE Todo esto en la memoria  
no está, Muñoz, que nos diste, 1105  
y si nos caen en el chiste,  
nuestra desdicha es notoria.



DON SILVESTRE ¿Vuesa merced tiene, acaso,  
otro hermano?

CARDENIO Sí, señor.

MUÑOZ No, señor. ¡Oh grande error! 1110  
¡Mil sustos de muerte paso!

CLAVIJO ¿Cómo se llama?

TORRENTE Don Juan  
de Almendárez.

DON SILVESTRE ¿Qué edad tiene?

TORRENTE Aquella que le conviene.

OCAÑA Examinándoles van, 1115  
y yo no sé para qué.

DON SILVESTRE ¿Tocaron en la Bermuda?

TORRENTE Ya he dicho desa Barbuda  
otra vez lo que yo sé.

DON SILVESTRE No ingenio, mas ignorancia, 1120  
es fabricar la maldad,

de quien está la verdad,  
no dos dedos de distancia.

Yo soy, señor don Antonio,  
vuestro primo verdadero, 1125  
y de ser éste embustero  
darán claro testimonio  
mis papeles y el retrato  
de mi señora Marcela.

MUÑOZ ¡El alma se me revela! 1130  
¡Si hoy no me muero, me mato!

DON SILVESTRE Dadme, señora, esos pies  
por vuestro primo y esposo.

DON FRANCISCO ¡Éste es caso prodigioso!

MARCELA Cortés, mas no tan cortés. 1135

TORRENTE Tres días ha, desventurado,  
que, por no querer hablar,  
te has de ver, a bien librar,  
en galeras y azotado.

Embistiérasla, malino, 1140  
y no aguardaras a verte  
en la desdichada suerte  
y en el traje peregrino.

DON FRANCISCO ¿Quién eres?

CARDENIO Un estudiante.

TORRENTEY yo su capigorrón, 1145  
que tengo de socarrón  
harto más que de ignorante.

CARDENIO Solicitóme el amor  
a entrar en esta conquista  
a la sombra de una lista... 1150

TORRENTEQue la escribió este traidor  
de Muñoz.

MUÑOZ¡Dios sea conmigo!  
¡Llegó de Muñoz el fin!

DON ANTONIO¡Ah escudero viejo y ruin!

OCAÑA Eso pido y eso digo. 1155

CARDENIO Estos soles sobrehumanos,  
por quien mi mal crece y mengua,  
pusieron freno a mi lengua,  
como esposas a mis manos.

En los rayos de sus ojos 1160  
se despuntaban los míos,  
y nunca mis desvaríos  
llegaron a darla enojos.

Si me queréis castigar,  
primero advertid, señores, 1165  
que los yerros por amores  
son dignos de perdonar.

DON ANTONIO En albricias, el perdón

te diera, mas ten aviso  
que el Pontífice no quiso 1170  
conceder dispensación  
entre mi primo y mi hermana.

MARCELA Casamientos de parientes  
tienen mil inconvenientes.

CLAVIJO El favor todo lo allana. 1175  
Yo iré a Roma, y la traeré.

DON SILVESTRE Yo, aunque primo verdadero,  
ni quedarme en casa quiero,  
ni poner en ella el pie:  
que la honra de mi prima 1180  
ha de ir contino adelante,  
sin que haya otro estudiante  
que la asombre o que la oprima.

CRISTINA ¿No ha de haber un casamiento  
en esta casa jamás? 1185

OCAÑA Tú, Cristina, le harás,  
si te ajustas a mi intento.

CRISTINA Yo me ajusto al de Quiñones.

QUIÑONES Pues yo no me ajusto al tuyo.

CRISTINA ¿Tú, para no ser mi cuyo, 1190  
hallas razón?

QUIÑONESY razones.

CRISTINA Ocaña, si me deseas,  
vesme aquí.

OCAÑA No es mi linaje  
tal, que lo que arroja un paje  
escoja yo, ni tal creas. 1195

TORRENTE A no estar temiendo aquí  
la penca de algún verdugo,  
ese arrojado mendrugo  
le tomara para mí.

CRISTINA ¡Malos años y mal mes! 1200

TORRENTE Acordársete debía,  
facinorosa arpía,  
del pañuelo y entremés.

MARCELA Con licencia de mi hermano  
y de mi primo, yo quiero 1205  
sentenciar al escudero  
y al gran embustero indiano.

Trocará la mano el juego  
a cuyas leyes me arrimo:  
quedarse ha en casa mi primo, 1210  
y él se salga della luego.

Lleve su vergüenza a cuestras,  
que es la venganza mayor  
que puede tomar Amor  
de invenciones como aquí. 1215

A Muñoz le doy la pena  
que da el arrepentimiento  
y el destierro.

MUÑOZ Yo bien siento  
ser ángel el que condena.

    Mi alma no se alborozaba 1220  
con sentencia que es tan pía,  
pues ve que yo merecía  
azotes, si no corozas.

OCAÑA Bien haya la lacayuna  
humilde y valiente raza, 1225  
pues que traiciones no traza  
para subir su fortuna.

    Junto a la caballeriza,  
y al olor de su caballo,  
con sus bríndez, siento y hallo 1230  
que sus gustos soleniza.

CRISTINA De Quiñones desechada,  
y de Ocaña no escogida,  
aún no he de quedar perdida,  
porque espero ser ganada. 1235

    Hace quien se desespera  
un grandísimo pecado,  
y es refrán muy bien pensado  
que tal vendrá que tal quiera.

DOROTEA Yo sola soy sin ventura. 1240  
Es tan corto el hado mío,  
que no ha alcanzado mi brío  
lo que impide la hermosura.

    Nunca he sido requebrada,  
ni sé amor a lo que sabe; 1245

mas esto y mucho más cabe  
en la ventura quebrada.

TORRENTE Siento en aqueste desastre  
sólo el perder a Cristina.

MUÑOZ Camina, Muñoz, camina, 1250  
pobre, sin bayeta y sastre.

*(Éntrese.)*

DOROTEA Sin Marcela, don Antonio,  
se entra amargo el corazón.

*(Éntrese.)*

DON SILVESTREY yo sin dispensación.

*(Éntrese.)*

CRISTINA Cristina sin matrimonio. 1255

*(Éntrese.)*

CLAVIJO Yo seguiré de mi amigo  
los pasos, medio contento.

*(Éntrese.)*

DON FRANCISCO Yo alabaré el pensamiento  
de don Antonio, a quien sigo.

(Éntrase.)

MARCELA Yo quedaré en mi entereza, 1260  
no procurando imposibles,  
sino casos convenientes  
a nuestra naturaleza.

(Éntrase.)

OCAÑA Esto en este cuento pasa:  
los unos por no querer, 1265  
los otros por no poder,  
al fin ninguno se casa.  
Desta verdad conocida  
pido me den testimonio:  
que acaba sin matrimonio 1270  
la comedia *Entretenida*.

(Éntrase.)

FIN DE LA COMEDIA



# **PEDRO DE URDEMALAS**



*Comedia famosa de Pedro de Urdemalas*

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SU AUTOR.

UN LABRADOR.

Otros tres farsantes.

ALGUACIL DE COMEDIAS.

## Jornada primera

*Entran PEDRO DE URDEMALAS, en hábito de mozo de labrador, y CLEMENTE, como zagal.*

CLEMENTE De tu ingenio, Pedro amigo,  
y nuestra amistad se puede  
fiar más de lo que digo,  
porque él al mayor excede,  
y della el mundo es testigo; 5  
así, que es de calidad  
tu ingenio y nuestra amistad,  
que, sin buscar otro medio,  
en ambos pongo el remedio  
de toda mi enfermedad. 10

Esa hija de tu amo,  
la que se llama Clemencia,  
a quien yo Justicia llamo,  
la que huye mi presencia,  
cual del cazador el gamo; 15  
ésa, a quien naturaleza  
dio el extremo de belleza  
que has visto, me tiene tal,  
que llega al punto mi mal  
do llega el de su lindeza. 20

Cuando pensé que ya estaba  
algo crédula al cuidado  
que en mis ansias le mostraba,  
yo no sé quién la ha trocado  
de cordera en tigre brava, 25  
ni sé yo por qué mentiras  
sus mansedumbres en iras  
ha vuelto, ni sé, ¡oh Amor!,  
por qué con tanto rigor  
contra mí tus flechas tiras. 30

PEDRO Bobear; dime, en efeto,  
lo que quieres.

CLEMENTE Pedro, hermano,  
que me libres deste aprieto  
con algún consejo sano  
o ayuda de hombre discreto. 35

PEDRO ¿Han llegado tus deseos  
a más que dulces floreos,  
o has tocado en el lugar  
donde Amor suele fundar  
el centro de sus empleos? 40

CLEMENTE Pues sabes que soy pastor,  
entona más bajo el punto,  
habla con menos primor.

PEDRO Que si eres, te pregunto,  
Amadís o Galaor. 45

CLEMENTE No soy sino Antón Clemente,  
y andas, Pedro, impertinente  
en hablar por tal camino.

PEDRO *Aparte.*

Pan por pan, vino por vino,  
se ha de hablar con esta gente. 50  
¿Haste visto con Clemencia  
a solas o en parte oscura,  
donde ella te dio licencia

de alguna desenvoltura  
que encargase la conciencia? 55

CLEMENTE Pedro, el cielo me confunda,  
y la tierra aquí me hunda,  
y el aire jamás me aliente,  
si no es un amor decente  
en quien el mío se funda. 60

Del padre el rico caudal  
el mío pobre desprecia  
por no ser al suyo igual,  
y entiendo que sólo precia  
el de Llorente y Pascual, 65

que son ricos, y es razón  
que se lleve el corazón  
tras sí de cualquier mujer,  
no el querer, sino el tener  
del oro la posesión. 70

Y, demás desto, Clemencia  
a mi amor no corresponde  
por no sé qué impertinencia  
que le han dicho, y así, esconde  
de mis ojos su presencia; 75

y si tú, Pedro, no haces  
de nuestras riñas las paces,  
ya por perdido me cuento.

PEDROO no tendré entendimiento,  
o he de trazar tus solaces. 80

Si sale, como imagino,  
hoy mi amo por alcalde,  
te digo, como adivino,  
que hoy no te trujo de balde  
a hablar conmigo el destino. 85

Tú verás cómo te entrego  
en holganza y en sosiego  
el bien que interés te veda,

y que al dártelo preceda  
promesa, dádiva y ruego. 90  
Y, en tanto que esto se traza,  
vuelve los ojos y mira  
los lazos con que te enlaza  
Amor, y por quien suspira  
Febo, que allí se disfraza; 95  
mira a los rubios cabellos  
de Clemencia, y mira entre ellos  
al lascivo Amor jugando,  
y cómo se va admirando  
por ver que se mira en ellos. 100  
Benita viene con ella,  
su prima, cual si viniese  
con el sol alguna estrella  
que no menos luz nos diese  
que el mismo sol: tal es ella. 105  
Clemente, ten advertencia  
que, si llega aquí Clemencia,  
te le humilles: yo a Benita,  
como a una cosa bendita  
le pienso hacer reverencia. 110  
Dile con lengua curiosa  
cosas de que no disguste,  
y ten por cierta una cosa:  
que no hay mujer que no guste  
de oírse llamar hermosa. 115  
Liberal desta moneda  
te muestra; no tengas queda  
la lengua en sus alabanzas,  
verás volver las mudanzas  
de la variable rueda. 120

*(Entran CLEMENCIA y BENITA, zagalas, con sus cantarillas, como que van a la fuente.)*

BENITA ¿Por qué te vuelves, Clemencia?

CLEMENCIA ¿Por qué me vuelvo, Benita?  
Por no verme en la presencia  
de quien la salud me quita  
y me da mortal dolencia; 125  
por no ver a un insolente  
que tiene bien diferente  
de la condición el nombre.

BENITA Apostaré que es el hombre  
por quien lo dices Clemente. 130

CLEMENTE ¿Soy basilisco, pastora,  
o soy alguna fantasma  
que se aparece a deshora,  
con que el sentido se pasma  
y el ánimo se empeora? 135

CLEMENCIA No eres sino un parlero,  
adulador, lisonjero  
y, sin porqué, jatancioso,  
en verdades mentiroso  
y en mentiras verdadero. 140  
¿Cuándo te he dado yo prenda  
que de mi amor te asegure  
tanto, que claro se entienda  
que, aunque el amor me procure,  
no hayas temor que te ofenda? 145  
Esto dijiste a Jacinta,  
y le mostraste una cinta  
encarnada que te di,  
y en tu rostro se ve aquí  
aquesta verdad distinta. 150

CLEMENTE Clemencia, si yo he dicho cosa alguna



que no vaya a servirte encaminada,  
venga de la más próspera fortuna  
a la más abatida y desastrada;  
si siempre sobre el cerco de la luna 155  
no has sido por mi lengua levantada,  
cuando quiera decirte mi querella,  
mudo silencio el cielo infunda en ella;  
si mostré tal, la fe en que yo pensaba,  
por la ley amorosa, de salvarme, 160  
cuando a la vida el término se acaba,  
por ella entonces venga a condenarme;  
si dije tal, jamás halle en su aljaba  
flechas de plomo Amor con que tirarme,  
si no es a ti, y a mí con las doradas, 165  
a helarte y abrasarme encaminadas.

PEDRO Clemencia, tu padre viene,  
y con la vara de alcalde.

CLEMENCIA No la ha alcanzado de balde;  
que su salmorejo tiene. 170  
Hermano Clemente, adiós.

CLEMENTE Pues, ¿cómo quedamos?

CLEMENCIA Bien.  
Benita, si quieres, ven.

BENITA Sí, pues venimos las dos.

*(Éntrase BENITA y CLEMENCIA.)*

PEDRO Vete en buen hora, Clemente, 175  
y quédese el cargo a mí  
de lo que he de hacer por ti.

CLEMENTE Adiós, pues.

PEDRO Él te contente.

(*Salen MARTÍN CRESPO, alcalde, padre de CLEMENCIA, y SANCHO MACHO y DIEGO TARUGO, regidores.*)

TARUGO Plácenos, Martín Crespo, del suceso.  
Desechéisla por otra de brocado, 180  
sin que jamás un voto os salga avieso.

ALCALDE Diego Tarugo, lo que me ha costado  
aquesta vara, sólo Dios lo sabe,  
y mi vino, y capones, y ganado.  
El que no te conoce, ése te alabe, 185  
deseo de mandar.

SANCHO Yo aqueso digo,  
que sé que en él todo cuidado cabe.  
Véala yo en poder de mi enemigo,  
vara que es por presentes adquirida.

ALCALDE Pues ahora la tiene un vuestro amigo. 190

SANCHO De vos, Crespo, será tan bien regida,  
que no la doble dádiva ni ruego.

ALCALDE No, ¡juro a mí!, mientras tuviere vida.

Cuando mujer me informe, estaré ciego;  
al ruego del hidalgo, sordo y mudo; 195  
que a la severidad todo me entrego.

TARUGO Ya veo en vuestro tiempo, y no lo dudo,  
sentencias de Salmón, el rey discreto,  
que el niño dividió con hierro agudo.

ALCALDE Al menos, de mi parte yo prometo 200  
de arrimarme a la ley en cuanto pueda  
sin alterar un mínimo decreto.

SANCHO Como yo lo deseo, así suceda;  
y adiós.

ALCALDE Fortuna os tenga, Sancho Macho,  
en la empinada cumbre de su rueda. 205

TARUGO Sin que el temor o amor os ponga empacho,  
juzgad, Crespo, terrible y brevemente:  
que la tardanza en toda cosa tacho;  
y a Dios quedad.

ALCALDE En fin, sois buen pariente.

*(Éntranse SANCHO MACHO y DIEGO TARUGO.)*

Pedro, que escuchando estás, 210  
¿cómo de mi buen suceso  
el parabién no me das?  
Ya soy alcalde, y confieso

que lo seré por demás,  
si tú no me das favor 215  
y muestras algún primor  
con que juzgue rectamente;  
que te tengo por prudente,  
más que a un cura y a un doctor.

PEDRO Es aqueso tan verdad, 220  
cual lo dirá la experiencia,  
porque con facilidad  
luego os mostraré una ciencia  
que os dé nombre y calidad.

Llegaráos Licurgo apenas, 225  
y la celebrada Atenas  
callará sus doctas leyes;  
envidiaros han los reyes  
y las escuelas más buenas.

Yo os meteré en la capilla 230  
dos docenas de sentencias  
que al mundo den maravilla,  
todas con sus diferencias,  
civiles, o de rencilla;  
y la que primero a mano 235  
os viniere, está bien llano  
que no ha de haber más que ver.

ALCALDE Desde hoy más, Pedro, has de ser  
no mi mozo, mas mi hermano.

Ven, y mostrarásme el modo 240  
cómo yo ponga en efeto  
lo que has dicho, en parte o en todo.

PEDRO Pues más cosas te prometo.

ALCALDE A cualquiera me acomodo.

*(Éntranse el ALCALDE y PEDRO.)*

*(Salen otra vez SANCHO MACHO y TARUGO.)*

SANCHO Mirad, Tarugo: bien siento 245  
que, aunque el parabién le distes  
a Crespo de su contento,  
otro paramal tuvistes  
guardado en el pensamiento;  
porque, en efeto, es mancilla 250  
que se rija aquesta villa  
por la persona más necia  
que hay desde Flandes a Grecia  
y desde Egipto a Castilla.

TARUGO Hoy mostrará la experiencia, 255  
buen regidor Sancho Macho,  
adónde llega la ciencia  
de Crespo, a quien yo no tacho  
hasta la primera audiencia;  
y, pues agora ha de ser, 260  
soy, Macho, de parecer  
que le oigamos.

SANCHO Sea así;  
aunque tengo para mí  
que un simple en él se ha de ver.

*(Entran LAGARTIJA y HORNACHUELOS, labradores.)*

HORNACHUELOS ¿De quién, señores, sabremos 265  
si el alcalde en casa está?

TARUGOAquí los dos le atendemos.

LAGARTIJASeñal es que aquí saldrá.

SANCHOTan cierta, que ya le vemos.

*(Salen el ALCALDE y REDONDO, escribano, y PEDRO.)*

ALCALDE ¡Oh valientes regidores! 270

REDONDOSiéntense vuestas mercedes.

ALCALDESin ceremonia, señores.

TARUGOEn cortés, exceder puedes  
a los cortesés mayores.

ALCALDE Siéntese aquí el escribano, 275  
y a mi izquierda y diestra mano  
los regidores estén;  
y tú, Pedro, estarás bien  
a mis espaldas.

PEDROEs llano.

Aquí, en tu capilla, están 280  
las sentencias suficientes  
a cuantos pleitos vendrán,  
aunque nunca pares mientes  
a la relación que harán;

y si alguna no estuviere, 285  
a tu asesor te refiere,  
que yo lo seré de modo  
que te saque bien de todo,  
y sea lo que se fuere.

REDONDO ¿Quieren algo, señores?

LAGARTIJASí queríamos. 290

REDONDOPues digan: que aquí está el señor alcalde,  
que les hará justicia rectamente.

ALCALDEPerdónemelo Dios lo que ahora digo,  
y no me sea tomado por soberbia:  
tan tiestamenta pienso hacer justicia, 295  
como si fuese un sonador romano.

REDONDOSenador, Martín Crespo.

ALCALDEAllá va todo.  
Digan su pleito apriesa y brevemente:  
que apenas me le habrán dicho, en mi ánima,  
cuando les dé sentencia rota y justa. 300

REDONDORecta, señor alcalde.

ALCALDEAllá va todo.

HORNACHUELOSPrestóme Lagartija tres reales,  
volvíle dos, la deuda queda en uno,

y él dice que le debo cuatro justos.  
Éste es el pleito: brevedad, y dije. 305  
¿Es aquesto verdad, buen Lagartija?

LAGARTIJA Verdad; pero yo hallo por mi cuenta,  
o que yo soy un asno, o que Hornachuelos  
me queda a deber cuatro.

ALCALDE ¡Bravo caso!

LAGARTIJA No hay más en nuestro pleito, y me rezumo 310  
en lo que sentenciaré el señor Crespo.

REDONDO Rezumo por *resumo*, allá va todo.

ALCALDE ¿Qué decís vos a esto, Hornachuelos?

HORNACHUELOS No hay qué decir; yo en todo me arremeto  
al señor Martín Crespo.

REDONDO Me *remito*, 315  
¡pese a mi abuelo!

ALCALDE Dejadle que arremeta;  
¿qué se os da a vos, Redondo?

REDONDO A mí, nonada.



ALCALDE Pedro, sácame, amigo, una sentencia  
desa capilla: la que está más cerca.

REDONDO ¿Antes de ver el pleito, hay ya sentencia? 320

ALCALDE Ahí se podrá ver quién es Callejas.

PEDRO Léase esta sentencia, y punto en boca.

REDONDO «En el pleito que tratan .N. y .F.»

PEDRO Zutano con Fulano significan  
la .N. con la .F. entre dos puntos. 325

REDONDO Así es verdad. Y digo que «en el pleito  
que trata este Fulano con Zutano,  
que debo condenar, fallo y condeno  
al dicho puerco de Zutano a muerte,  
porque fue matador de la criatura 330  
del ya dicho Fulano...» Yo no atino  
qué disparate es éste deste puerco  
y de tantos Fulanos y Zutanos,  
ni sé cómo es posible que esto cuadre  
ni esquine con el pleito destes hombres. 335

ALCALDE Redondo está en lo cierto, Pedro amigo,  
mete la mano y saca otra sentencia;  
podría ser que fuese de provecho.

PEDRO Yo, que soy asesor vuestro, me atrevo  
de dar sentencia luego cual convenga. 340

LAGARTIJA Por mí, mas que la dé un jumento nuevo.

SANCHO Digo que el asesor es estremado.

HORNACHUELO Sentencia norabuena.

ALCALDE Pedro, vaya,  
que en tu magín mi honra deposito.

PEDRO Deposite primero Hornachuelos, 345  
para mí, el asesor, doce reales.

HORNACHUELO Pues sola la mitad importa el pleito.

PEDRO Así es verdad: que Lagartija, el bueno,  
tres reales de a dos os dio prestados,  
y éstos le volvistes dos sencillos; 350  
y por aquesta cuenta debéis cuatro,  
y no, cual decís vos, no más de uno.

LAGARTIJA Ello es así, sin que le falte cosa.

HORNACHUELO No lo puedo negar; vencido quedo,  
y pagaré los doce con los cuatro. 355

REDONDO Ensúciome en Catón y en Justiniano,  
¡oh Pedro de Urde, montañés famoso!,  
que así lo muestra el nombre y el ingenio.

HORNACHUELO Yo voy por el dinero, y voy corrido.

LAGARTIJA Yo me contento con haber vencido. 360

*(Éntranse LAGARTIJA y HORNACHUELOS.)*

*(Salen CLEMENTE y CLEMENCIA, como pastor y pastora, embozados.)*

CLEMENTE Permítase que hablemos embozados  
ante tan justiciero ayuntamiento.

ALCALDE Mas que habléis en un costal atados;  
porque a oír, y no a ver, aquí me siento.

CLEMENTE Los siglos que renombre de dorados 365  
les dio la antigüedad con justo intento,  
ya se ven en los nuestros, pues que vemos  
en ellos de justicia los extremos.  
Vemos un Crespo alcalde...

ALCALDE Dios os guarde.  
Dejad aquesas lonjas a una parte... 370

REDONDO *Lonjas*, decir quiso.

ALCALDE Y, porque es tarde,  
de vuestro intento en breve nos dad parte.

CLEMENTE Con verdadera lengua, cierto alarde  
hace de lo que quiero parte a parte.

ALCALDEDecid: que ni soy sordo, ni lo he sido. 375

CLEMENTE Desde mis tiernos años,  
de mi fatal estrella conducido,  
sin las nubes de engaños,  
el sol que en este velo está escondido  
miré para adorallo, 380  
porque esto hizo el que llegó a miralle.

Sus rayos se imprimieron  
en lo mejor del alma, de tal modo,  
que en sí la convirtieron:  
todo soy fuego, yo soy fuego todo, 385  
y, con todo, me yelo,  
si el sol me falta que me eclipsa un velo.

Grata correspondencia  
tuvo mi justo y mi cabal deseo:  
que Amor me dio licencia 390  
a hacer de mi alma rico empleo:  
en fin, esta pastora,  
así como la adoro, ella me adora.

A hurto de su padre,  
que es de su libertad duro tirano, 395  
que ella no tiene madre,  
de esposa me entregó la fe y la mano;  
y agora, temerosa  
del padre, no confiesa ser mi esposa.

Teme que el padre, rico, 400  
se afrente de mi humilde medianía,  
porque hace el pellico  
al monje en esta edad de tiranía.  
Él me sobra en riqueza;  
pero no en la que da naturaleza. 405

Como él, yo soy tan bueno;  
tan rico, no, y a su riqueza igualo  
con estar siempre ajeno  
de todo vicio perezoso y malo;

y, entre buenos, es fuero 410  
que valga la virtud más que el dinero.

Pido que ante ti vuelva  
a confirmar el sí de ser mi esposa,  
y en serlo se resuelva,  
sin estar de su padre temerosa, 415  
pues que no aparta el hombre  
a los que Dios juntó en su gracia y nombre.

ALCALDE ¿Qué respondéis a esto,  
sol que entre nubes se cubrió a deshora?

CLEMENTE Su proceder honesto 420  
la tendrá muda, por mi mal, agora;  
pero señales puede  
hacer con que su intento claro quede.

ALCALDE ¿Sois su esposa, doncella?

PEDRO La cabeza bajó: señal bien clara 425  
que no lo niega ella.

SANCHO Pues, ¿en qué, Martín Crespo, se repara?

ALCALDE En que de mi capilla  
se saque la sentencia, y en oílla.  
Pedro, sácala al punto. 430

PEDRO Yo sé que ésta saldrá pintiparada,  
porque, a lo que barrunto,  
siempre fue la verdad acreditada,  
por atajo o rodeo;

y esta sentencia lo dirá que leo. 435  
(*Saca un papel de la capilla, y léele PEDRO.*)  
«Yo, Martín Crespo, alcalde, determino  
que sea la pollina del pollino».

REDONDO Vaso de suertes es vuestra capilla,  
y ésta que ha sido agora pronunciada,  
aunque es para entre bestias, maravilla, 440  
y aun da muestras de ser cosa pensada.

CLEMENTE El alma en Dios, y en tierra la rodilla,  
la vuestra besaré, como a estremada  
coluna que sustenta el edificio  
donde moran las ciencias y el jüicio. 445

ALCALDE Puesto que redundará esta sentencia,  
hijo, en haberos dado el alma mía,  
porque no es otra cosa mi Clemencia,  
me fuera de gran gusto y alegría.  
Y alégrenos agora la presencia 450  
vuestra, que está en razón y en cortesía,  
pues ya lo desleído y sentenciado  
será, sin duda alguna, ejecutado.

CLEMENCIA Pues, con ese seguro, padre mío,  
el velo quito y a tus pies me postro. 455  
Mal haces en usar deste desvío,  
pues soy tu hija, y no espantable monstruo.  
Tú has dado la sentencia a tu albedrío,  
y, si es injusta, es bien que te dé en rostro;  
pero, si justa es, haz que se apruebe, 460  
con que a debida ejecución se lleve.

ALCALDE Lo que escribí, escribí; bien dices, hija:

y así, a Clemente admito por mi hijo,  
y el mundo deste proceder colija  
que más por ley que por pasión me rijo. 465

SANCHONo hay alma aquí que no se regocija  
de vuestro no pensado regocijo.

TARUGONi lengua que a Martín Crespo no alabe  
por hombre ingeniosísimo y que sabe.

PEDRO Nuestro amo, habéis de saber 470  
que es merced particular  
la que el cielo quiere hacer  
cuando se dispone a dar  
al hombre buena mujer;  
y corre el mismo partido 475  
ella, si le da marido  
que sea en todo varón,  
afable de condición,  
más que arrojado, sufrido.

De Clemencia y de Clemente 480  
se hará una junta dichosa,  
que os alegre y os contente,  
y quien lleve vuestra honrosa  
estirpe de gente en gente,  
y esta noche de San Juan 485  
las bodas celebrarán  
con el suyo y vuestro gusto.

ALCALDESeñales de hombre muy justo  
todas tus cosas me dan;  
pero la boda otro día 490  
se hará: que es noche ocupada  
de general alegría  
aquésta.

CLEMENTE No importa nada,  
siendo ya Clemencia mía:  
que el gusto del corazón 495  
consiste en la posesión  
mucho más que en la esperanza.

PEDRO ¡Oh, cuántas cosas alcanza  
la industria y sagacidad!

ALCALDE Vamos, que hay mucho que hacer 500  
esta noche.

TARUGO Sea en buen hora.

CLEMENTE Ni qué esperar ni temer  
me queda, pues por señora  
y esposa te vengo a ver.

TARUGO ¡Bien escogistes, Clemencia! 505

CLEMENCIA Al que ordenó la sentencia  
las gracias se den, y al cielo.

PEDRO De que he encargado, recelo,  
algún tanto mi conciencia.

*(Éntranse todos, y, al entrarse, sale PASCUAL y tira del sayo a PEDRO, y  
quédanse los dos en el teatro, y tras PASCUAL entra un SACRISTÁN.)*



PASCUAL Pedro amigo.

PEDRO ¿Qué hay, Pascual? 510

No pienses que me descuido  
del remedio de tu mal;  
antes, en él tanto cuido,  
que casi no pienso en al.

Esta noche de San Juan 515

ya tú sabes cómo están  
del lugar las mozas todas  
esperando de sus bodas  
las señales que les dan.

Benita, el cabello al viento, 520

y el pie en una bacía  
llena de agua, y oído atento,  
ha de esperar hasta el día  
señal de su casamiento;

sé tú primero en nombrarte 525

en su calle, de tal arte,  
que claro entienda tu nombre.

PASCUAL Por excelencia, el renombre  
de industrioso pueden darte.

Yo lo haré así: queda en paz; 530

mas, después de aquesto hecho,  
tú lo que faltare haz,  
ansí no abrasa tu pecho  
el fuego de aquel rapaz.

PEDRO Así será; ve con Dios. 535

*(Vase PASCUAL.)*

SACRISTÁN Por ligero que seáis vos,

yo os saldré por el atajo,  
y buscaré sin trabajo  
la industria de ambos a dos.

*(Éntrase el SACRISTÁN. Sale MALDONADO, conde de gitanos; y adviértase que todos los que hicieren figura de gitanos, han de hablar ceceoso.)*

MALDONADO Pedro, ceñor, Dioz te guarde. 540  
¿Qué te haz hecho, que he venido  
a buzcarte aquezta tarde,  
por ver ci eztás ya atrevido,  
o todavía cobarde?  
Quiero decir, ci te agrada 545  
el cer nueztra camarada,  
nueztro amigo y compañero,  
como me haz dicho.

PEDROSí quiero.

MALDONADO¿Reparaz en algo?

PEDROEn nada.

MALDONADO Mira, Pedro: nueztra vida 550  
ez zuelta, libre, curioza,  
ancha, holgazana, estendida,  
a quien nunca falta coza  
que el deceo buzque y pida.  
Danoz el herbozo zuelo 555  
lechoz; círvenoz el cielo  
de pabellón dondequiera;  
ni noz quema el zol, ni altera  
el fiero rigor del yelo.

El máz cerrado vergel 560  
laz primiciaz noz ofrece  
de cuanto bueno haya en él;  
y apenaz ce vee o parece  
la albilla o la mozcatel,  
que no eztá luego en la mano 565  
del atrevido gitano,  
zahorí del fruto ajeno,  
de induztia y ánimo lleno,  
ágil, prezto, zuelto y zano.

Gozamoz nuestroz amorez 570  
librez del dezazociego  
que dan loz competidorez,  
calentándonoz zu fuego  
cin celoz y cin temorez.

Y agora eztá una mochacha 575  
que con nadie no ce empacha  
en nueztro rancho, tan bella,  
que no halla en qué ponella  
la envidia ni aun una tacha.

Una gitana, hurtada, 580  
la trujo; pero ella es tal,  
que, por hermosa y honrada,  
muestra que es de principal  
y rica gente engendrada.

Ezta, Pedro, cerá tuya, 585  
aunque máz el yugo huya,  
que rinde la libertad,  
cuando de nueztra amiztad  
lo acordado ce concluya.

PEDRO Porque veas, Maldonado, 590  
lo que me mueve el intento  
a querer mudar de estado,  
quiero que me estés atento  
un rato.

MALDONADO De muy buen grado.

PEDRO Por lo que te he de contar, 595  
vendrás en limpio a sacar  
si para gitano soy.

MALDONADO Atento eztaré y eztoy;  
bien puez ya comenzar.

PEDRO Yo soy hijo de la piedra, 600  
que padre no conocí:  
desdicha de las mayores  
que a un hombre pueden venir.  
No sé dónde me criaron;  
pero sé decir que fui 605  
destos niños de dotrina  
sarnosos que hay por ahí.  
Allí, con dieta y azotes,  
que siempre sobran allí,  
aprendí las oraciones, 610  
y a tener hambre aprendí;  
aunque también con aquesto  
supe leer y escribir,  
y supe hurtar la limosna,  
y desculparme y mentir. 615  
No me contentó esta vida  
cuando algo grande me vi,  
y en un navío de flota  
con todo mi cuerpo di,  
donde serví de grumete, 620  
y a las Indias fui y volví,  
vestido de pez y anjeo,  
y sin un maravedí.  
Temí con los huracanes,  
y con las calmas temí, 625  
y espantóme la Bermuda

cuando su costa corrí.  
Dejé el comer del bizcocho  
con dos dedos de hollín,  
y el beber vino del diablo 630  
antes que de San Martín.  
Pisé otra vez las riberas  
del rico Guadalquivir,  
y entreguéme a sus crecientes,  
y a Sevilla me volví, 635  
donde al rateruelo oficio  
me acomodé bajo y vil  
de mozo de la esportilla,  
que el tiempo lo pidió así;  
en el cual, sin ser yo cura, 640  
muy muchos diezmos cogí,  
haciendo salva a mil cosas  
que me condenan aquí.  
En fin: por cierta desgracia,  
el oficio tuvo fin, 645  
y comenzó el peligroso  
que suelen llamar mandil.  
En él supe de la hampa  
la vida larga y cerril,  
formar pendencias del viento, 650  
y con el soplo herir.  
Mi amo, que era tan bravo  
como ligero pasquín,  
dio asalto a una faldriquera  
a lo callado y sutil; 655  
con las manos en la masa  
le cogió un cierto alguacil,  
y él quiso ser en un potro  
confesor y no martir;  
mártir, digo, Maldonado. 660

MALDONADO En eso, ¿qué me va a mí?  
Pronunciad como os dé gusto,  
pues que no habláis latín.

PEDROPalmeóle las espaldas  
contra su gusto el bochín, 665  
de lo cual quedó mohíno,  
según que dijo un malsín.  
A las casas movedizas  
le llevaron, y yo vi  
arañarse la Escalanta 670  
y llorar la Becerril.  
Yo, viéndome sin el fieltro  
de mi andaluz paladín,  
de mandil a mochilero  
un salto forzoso di. 675  
Deparóme la fortuna  
un soldado espadachín  
de los que van hasta el puerto,  
y se vuelven desde allí.  
Las boletas rescatadas, 680  
las gallinas que cogí,  
si no las perdona el cielo,  
¡desventurado de mí!  
Diome en rostro aquella vida,  
porque della conocí 685  
que el soldado churrullero  
tiene en las gurapas fin,  
y a gentilhombre de playa  
en un punto me acogí,  
vida de mil sobresaltos 690  
y de contentos cien mil.  
Mas, por temor de irme a Argel,  
presto a Córdoba me fui,  
adonde vendí aguardiente,  
y naranjada vendí. 695  
Allí el salario de un mes  
en un día me bebí,  
porque, si hay agua que sepa,  
la ardiente es doctor sutil.  
Arrojárame mi amo 700

con un trabuco de sí,  
y en casa de un asturiano  
por mi desventura di.  
Hacía suplicasiones,  
suplicasiones vendí, 705  
y en un día diez canastas  
todas las jugué y perdí.  
Fuime, y topé con un ciego,  
a quien diez meses serví,  
que, a ser años, yo supiera 710  
lo que no supo Merlín.  
Aprendí la jerigonza,  
y a ser vistoso aprendí,  
y a componer oraciones  
en verso airoso y gentil. 715  
Murióseme mi buen ciego,  
dejóme cual Juan Paulín,  
sin blanca, pero discreto,  
de ingenio claro y sotil.  
Luego fui mozo de mulas, 720  
y aun de un fullero lo fui,  
que con la boca de lobo  
se tragara a San Quintín;  
gran jugador de las cuatro,  
y con la sola le vi 725  
dar tan mortales heridas,  
que no se pueden decir.  
Berrugeta y ballestilla,  
el raspadillo y hollín  
jugaba por excelencia, 730  
y el Mase Juan hi de ruin.  
Gran saje del espejuelo,  
y del retén tan sotil,  
que no se le viera un lince  
con los antojos del Cid. 735  
Cayóse la casa un día,  
vínole su San Martín,  
pusieronle un sobreescrito  
encima de la nariz.

Dejéle, y víneme al campo, 740  
y sirvo, cual ves, aquí,  
a Martín Crespo, el alcalde,  
que me quiere más que a sí.  
Es Pedro de Urde mi nombre:  
mas un cierto Malgesí, 745  
mirándome un día las rayas  
de la mano, dijo así:  
«Añadidle Pedro al *Urde*  
un *malas*; pero advertid,  
hijo, que habéis de ser rey, 750  
fraile y papa, y matachín.  
Y avendríos por un gitano  
un caso que sé decir  
que le escucharán los reyes  
y gustarán de le oír. 755  
Pasaréis por mil oficios  
trabajosos; pero al fin  
tendréis uno do seáis  
todo cuanto he dicho aquí».  
Y, aunque yo no le doy crédito, 760  
todavía veo en mí  
un no sé qué que me inclina  
a ser todo lo que oí;  
pues, como deste pronóstico  
el indicio veo en ti, 765  
digo que he de ser gitano,  
y que lo soy desde aquí.

MALDONADO ¡Oh Pedro de Urdemalaz generoso,  
coluna y cer del gitanezco templo!  
Ven, y daraz principio al alto intento 770  
que te incita, te mueve, impele y lleva  
a ponerte en la lizta gitanezca;  
ven a adulcir el agrio y tierno pecho  
de la hurtada mochacha que te he dicho,  
por quien zeráz dichoso zobremodo. 775



PEDRO Vamos, que yo no pongo duda en eso,  
y espero deste asumpto un gran suceso.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Pónese BENITA a la ventana en cabello.)*

BENITA Tus alas, ¡oh noche!, extiende  
sobre cuantos te requiebran,  
y a su gusto justo atiende, 780  
pues dicen que te celebran  
hasta los moros de aliende.

Yo, por conseguir mi intento,  
los cabellos doy al viento,  
y el pie izquierdo a una bacía 785  
llena de agua clara y fría,  
y el oído al aire atento.

Eres noche tan sagrada,  
que hasta la voz que en ti suena  
dicen que viene preñada 790  
de alguna ventura buena  
a quien la escucha guardada.

Haz que a mis oídos toque  
alguna que me provoque  
a esperar suerte dichosa. 795

*(Entra el SACRISTÁN.)*

SACRISTÁN Prenderá a la dama hermosa,  
sin alguna duda, el Roque.

Roque ha de ser el que prenda  
en este juego a la dama,  
puesto que ella se defienda; 800  
que su ventura le llama  
a gozar tan rica prenda.

BENITA Roque dicen, Roque oí.  
Pues no hay otro Roque aquí  
que el necio del sacristán. 805  
Veamos si nombrarán  
Roque otra vez.

SACRISTÁN Será así,  
porque es el Roque tal pieza,  
que no hay dama que se esquite  
de entregalle su belleza; 810  
y, aunque en estrechez vive,  
es muy rico en su estrechez.

BENITA ¡Ce!, gentilhombre, tomad  
este listón y mostrad  
quién sois mañana con él. 815

SACRISTÁN Seréos en todo fiel,  
estremo de la beldad;

*(Estándole dando un listón BENITA al SACRISTÁN, entra PASCUAL, y ásele del cuello y quítale la cinta.)*

que cualquiera que seáis  
de las dos que en esta casa  
vivís, sé os aventajáis 820  
a Venus.

PASCUAL ¿Que aquesto pasa?  
¿Que esta cuenta de vos dais?  
Benita, ¿que a un sacristán,  
vuestros despojos se dan?  
Grave fuera aquesta culpa, 825

si no tuviera disculpa  
en ser noche de San Juan.

Vos, bachiller graduado  
en letras de canto llano,  
¿de quién fuistes avisado 830  
para ganar por la mano  
el juego mal comenzado?

¿Así a maitines se toca  
con vuestra vergüenza poca?  
¿Así os hacen olvidar 835  
del cantar y repicar  
los picones de una loca?

*(Entra PEDRO.)*

PEDRO ¿Qué es esto, Pascual amigo?

PASCUAEl sacristán y Benita  
han querido sea testigo 840  
de que ella es mujer bendita  
y él de embustes enemigo;  
mas, porque no se alborote  
y vea que al estricote  
le trae su honra su intento, 845  
por testigos le presento  
esta cinta y este zote.

SACRISTÁN Por las santas vinajeras,  
a quien dejo cada día  
agostadas y ligeras, 850  
que no fue la intención mía  
de burlarme con las veras.

Hoy a los dos os oí  
lo que había de hacer allí  
Benita, en cabello puesta, 855

y, por gozar de la fiesta,  
vine, señores, aquí.

Nombréme, y ella acudió  
al reclamo, como quien,  
del primer nombre que oyó, 860  
de su gusto y de su bien  
indicio claro tomó;  
que la vana hechicería  
que la noche antes del día  
de San Juan usan doncellas, 865  
hace que se muestren ellas  
de liviana fantasía.

PASCUAL ¿Para qué te dio esta cinta?

SACRISTÁNPara que me la pusiese,  
y conocer por su pinta 870  
quién yo era, cuando fuese  
ya la luz clara y distinta.

BENITA ¿Para qué a tantas preguntas  
te alargas, Pascual? ¿Barruntas  
mal de mí? Mas no lo dudo, 875  
porque, en mi daño, de agudo  
siempre he visto que despuntas.

PASCUAL Así con esa verdad  
se te arranque el alma, ingrata,  
sospechosa en la amistad, 880  
que con más llaneza trata  
que vio la sinceridad.

Los álamos de aquel río,  
que con el cuchillo mío  
tienen grabado tu nombre, 885  
te dirán si yo soy hombre

de buen proceder vacío.

PEDRO Yo soy testigo, Benita,  
que no hay haya en aquel prado  
donde no te vea escrita, 890  
y tu nombre coronado  
que tu fama solicita.

PASCUAL ¿Y en qué junta de pastores  
me has visto que los loores  
de Benita no alce al cielo, 895  
descubriendo mi buen celo  
y encubriendo mis amores?  
¿Qué almendro, guindo o manzano  
has visto tú que se viese  
en dar su fruto temprano 900  
que por la mía no fuese  
traído a tu bella mano  
antes que las mismas aves  
le tocasen? Y aun tú sabes  
que otras cosas por ti he hecho 905  
de tu honra y tu provecho,  
dignas de que las alabes.

Y en los árboles que ahora  
vendrán a enramar tu puerta,  
verás, crüel matadora, 910  
cómo en ellos se vee cierta  
la gran fe que en mi alma mora.

Aquí verás la verbena,  
de raras virtudes llena,  
y el rosal, que alegra al alma, 915  
y la vitoriosa palma,  
en todos sucesos buena.

Verás del álamo erguido  
pender la delgada oblea,  
y del valle aquí traído, 920  
para que en tu puerta sea

sombra al sol, gusto al sentido.

BENITA No hayas miedo me provoque  
tu arenga a que yo te toque  
la mano, encuentro amoroso, 925  
porque no ha de ser mi esposo  
quien no se llamare Roque.

PEDRO Tú tienes mucha razón;  
pero el remedio está llano  
con toda satisfacción, 93 0930  
porque nos le da en la mano  
la santa Confirmación.  
Puede Pascual confirmarse,  
y puede el nombre mudarse  
de Pascual en Roque, y luego, 935  
con su gusto y tu sosiego,  
puede contigo casarse.

BENITA Dese modo, yo lo aceto.

SACRISTÁN; Gracias a Dios que me veo  
libre de tan grande aprieto! 940

PEDRO Que has hecho un gallardo empleo,  
Benita, yo te prometo,  
porque aquel refrán que pasa  
por gente de buena masa,  
que es discreto determino: 945  
«Al hijo de tu vecino,  
límpiale y métele en casa».

BENITA Ponte ese listón, Pascual,

y en parte do yo le vea.

PASCUAL Pienso hacer dél el caudal 950  
que hace de su librea  
Iris, arco celestial.  
Espérate, que ya suena  
la música que se ordena  
para el traer de los ramos. 955

PEDRO Con gusto aquí la esperamos.

BENITA Ella venga en hora buena.

*(Suena dentro todo género de música y su gaita zamorana. Salen todos los que  
pudieren con ramos, principalmente CLEMENTE, y los MÚSICOS entran  
cantando esto:)*

MÚSICOS      *Niña, la que esperas*  
                  *en reja o balcón,*  
                  *advierde que viene 960*  
                  *tu polido amor.*  
Noche de San Juan,  
el gran Precursor,  
que tuvo la mano  
más que de reloj, 965  
pues su dedo santo  
tan bien señaló,  
que nos mostró el día  
que no anocheció;  
muéstratenos clara, 970  
sea en ti el albor  
tal, que perlas llueva  
sobre cada flor;  
y en tanto que esperas

a que salga el sol, 975  
dirás a mi niña  
en suave son:  
*Niña, la que esperas, &c.*  
Dirás a Benita  
que Pascual, pastor, 980  
guarda los cuidados  
de tu corazón;  
y que de Clemencia  
el que es ya señor,  
es su humilde esclavo, 985  
con justa razón;  
y a la que desmaya  
en su pretensión,  
tenla de tu mano,  
no la olvides, non, 990  
y dile callando,  
o en erguida voz,  
de modo que oiga  
la imaginación:  
*Niña, la que esperas* 995  
*en reja o balcón,*  
*advierde que viene*  
*tu polido amor.*

CLEMENTE Ello está muy bien cantado.  
¡Ea!, enrámese este umbral 1000  
por el uno y otro lado.  
¿Qué haces aquí, Pascual,  
de los dos acompañado?  
Ayúdanos, y a Benita  
con servicios solicita, 1005  
enramándole la puerta:  
que a la voluntad ya muerta  
el servirla resucita.  
Ese laurel pon aquí,  
ese sauce a esotra parte, 1010  
ese álamo blanco allí,



y entre todos tenga parte  
el jazmín y el alhelí.

Haga el suelo de esmeraldas  
la juncia, y la flor de gualdas 1015  
le vuelva en ricos topacios,  
y llénense estos espacios  
de flores para guirnaldas.

BENITA Vaya otra vez la música, señores,  
que la escucha Clemencia; y tú, mi Roque, 1020  
(*Quítase de la ventana.*)

haz que suene otra vez.

PASCUALA mí me place,  
confirmadora dulce hermosa mía.  
Vuélvanse a repicar esas sonajas,  
háganse rajas las guitarras, vaya  
otra vez el floreo, y solenícese 1025  
esta mañana en todo el mundo célebre,  
pues que lo quiere así la gloria mía.

CLEMENTE Cántese, y vamos, que se viene el día.

*A la puerta puestos  
de mis amores, 1030  
espinas y zarzas  
se vuelven flores.*

El fresno escabroso  
y robusta encina,  
puestos a la puerta 1035  
do vive mi vida,  
verán que se vuelven,  
si acaso los mira,  
en matas sabeas  
de sacros olores, 1040

*y espinas y zarzas  
se vuelven flores;  
do pone la vista  
o la tierna planta,  
la yerba marchita 1045  
verde se levanta;  
los campos alegra,  
regocija al alma,  
enamora a siervos,  
rinde a señores, 1050  
y espinas y zarzas  
se vuelven flores.*

*(Éntranse cantando.)*

*(Salen INÉS y BELICA, gitanas, que las podrán hacer las que han hecho  
BENITA y CLEMENCIA.)*

INÉS Mucha fantasía es ésa;  
Belilla, no sé qué diga:  
o tú te sueñas condesa, 1055  
o que eres del rey amiga.

BELICA De que sea sueño me pesa.  
Inés, no me des pasión  
con tanta reprehensión;  
déjame seguir mi estrella. 1060

INÉS Confiada en que eres bella,  
tienes tanta presunción.  
Pues mira que la hermosura  
que no tiene calidad,  
raras veces aventura. 1065

BELICA Confírmase esa verdad  
muy bien con mi desventura.

¡Oh cruda suerte inhumana!  
¿Por qué a una pobre gitana  
diste ricos pensamientos? 1070

INÉS Aquel fabrica en los vientos  
que a ver quién es no se allana.

Huye desas fantasías;  
ven, y el baile aprenderás  
que comenzaste estos días. 1075

BELICA Inés, tú me acabarás  
con tus estrañas porfías;  
pero engañaste en pensar  
que tengo yo de guardar  
tu gusto cual justa ley, 1080  
y sólo ha de ser el rey  
el que me ha de hacer bailar.

INÉS Desa manera, Belilla,  
que vengáis al hospital  
no será gran maravilla: 1085  
que hacer de la principal  
no es para vuestra costilla.  
¡Acomodaos, noramala,  
a la cocina y la sala,  
a bailar aquí y allí! 1090

BELICA A queso no es para mí.

INÉS ¿Pues qué? ¿El donaire y la gala,  
el rumbo, el cer del tuzón,  
derribando por el zuelo

el gitanezco blazón, 1095  
levantado hasta el cielo  
por nuestra honezta intención?

Antes te vea yo comida  
de rabia, y antes rendida  
a un gitano que te dome, 1100  
o a un verdugo que te tome  
de las espaldas medida.

¿Esto por ti se ha de ver?  
¿Que no sea con gitano  
gitana, mala mujer? 1105  
Chico hoyo hagas temprano,  
si es que tan mala has de ser.

BELICA Mucho te alargas, Inés,  
y, como simple, no ves  
dónde mi intención camina. 1110

INÉSPues esta simple adivina  
lo que tú verás después.

*(Salen PEDRO y MALDONADO.)*

MALDONADO Esta que ves, Pedro hermano,  
es la gitana que digo,  
de parecer sobrehumano, 1115  
cuya posesión me obligo  
de entregártela en la mano.

Acaba, muda de traje,  
y aprende nuestro lenguaje;  
y, aun sin aprenderle, entiendo 1120  
que has de ser gitano, siendo  
cabeza de tu linaje.

INÉS ¡Danoz una limoznica,

caballero atán garrido!

MALDONADO ¡Deso el labrador se pica! 1125  
¡Qué mal que le has conocido,  
Inés!

INÉS Pide tú, Belica.

PEDRO Si ella pide, no habrá cosa,  
por grande y dificultosa  
que sea, que yo no haga, 1130  
sin esperar otra paga  
que el servir a una hermosa.

MALDONADO ¿No le rezpondes, ceñora?

INÉS Ceñor conde, vez do viene  
la viuda tan guardadora, 1135  
que, puesto que mucho tiene,  
máz guarda y máz atezora.

*(Entra una VIUDA labradora, que la lleva un escudero labrador de la mano.)*

INÉS Limozna, ceñora mía,  
por la bendita María  
y por zu Hijo bendito. 1140

VIUDA De mí nunca lleva el grito  
limosna, ni la porfía.  
Mejor estará el servir  
a vosotras, que os está

tan sin vergüenza el pedir. 1145

ESCUDERO Va el mundo de suerte ya,  
que no se puede sufrir.

Es vagamunda esta era;  
no hay moza que servir quiera,  
ni mozo que por su yerro 1150  
no se ande a la flor del berro:  
él sandio, y ella altanera.

Y esta gente infrutuosa,  
siempre atenta a mil malicias,  
doblada, astuta y mañosa, 1155  
ni a la Iglesia da primicias,  
ni al rey no le sube en cosa.

A la sombra de herreros  
usan muchos desafueros,  
y, con perdón sea mentado, 1160  
no hay seguro asno en el prado  
de los gitanos cuatreros.

VIUDA Dejadlos, y caminad,  
Llorente, que es algo tarde.

*(Éntranse LLORENTE y la VIUDA.)*

BELICA Tomame esa caridad. 1165  
No hagáis sino hacer alarde  
de vuestra necesidad  
delante de aquesta gente,  
que no faltará un Llorente  
como otro Gil que os persiga, 1170  
y, sin que os dé nada, diga  
palabras con que os afrente.

MALDONADO ¿Veisla, Pedro? Pues es fama

que tiene diez mil ducados  
junto a los pies de su cama, 1175  
en dos cofres barreados  
a quien sus ángeles llama.

Requiébrase así con ellos,  
que pone su gloria en ellos,  
y así, en vellos se desalma: 1180  
que han de ser para su alma  
lo que a Absalón sus cabellos.

Sólo a un ciego da un real  
cada mes, porque le reza  
las mañanas a su umbral 1185  
oraciones que endereza  
al eterno tribunal,

por si acaso sus parientes,  
su marido y ascendientes  
están en el purgatorio, 1190  
haga el santo consistorio  
de su gloria merecientes;  
y con sola esta obra piensa  
irse al cielo de rondón,  
sin desmán y sin ofensa. 1195

PEDROQue yo la saque de harón  
mi agudo ingenio dispensa.

Informarte has, Maldonado,  
de todos los que han pasado  
deste mundo sus parientes, 1200  
amigos y bien querientes,  
hasta el siervo o paniaguado,  
y tráemelo por escrito,  
y verás cuán fácilmente  
de su miseria la quito; 1205  
y, a lo que soy suficiente,  
a este embuste lo remito.

MALDONADO Desde su tercer abuelo

hasta el postrer netezuelo  
que de su linaje ha muerto, 1210  
te trairé el número cierto,  
sin que te discrepe un pelo.

PEDRO Vamos, y verás después  
lo que haré en aqueste caso  
por el común interés. 1215

MALDONADO¿Dó encaminarás el paso,  
Belica?

BELICA Do querrá Inés.

PEDRO Doquiera que le encamines,  
tendrá por honrosos fines  
tu estremado pensamiento. 1220

BELICA Aunque fabrique en el viento,  
Pedro, no te determines  
a burlar de mi deseo,  
que de lejos se me muestra  
una esperanza en quien veo 1225  
cierta luz tal, que me adiestra  
y lleva al bien que deseo.

PEDRO De tu rara hermosura  
se puede esperar ventura  
que la iguale. Ven, gitana, 1230  
por quien nuestra edad se ufana  
y en sus glorias se asegura.



## Jornada segunda

*Salen un ALGUACIL, y MARTÍN CRESPO, el alcalde, y SANCHO MACHO, el regidor.*

ALCALDE Digo, señor alguacil,  
que un mozo que se me fue,  
de ingenio agudo y sutil,  
de tronchos de coles sé  
que hiciera invenciones mil; 5  
y él me aconsejó que hiciese,  
si por dicha el rey pidiese  
danzas, una de tal modo,  
que se aventajase en todo  
a la que más linda fuese. 10

Dijo que el llevar doncellas  
era una cosa cansada,  
y que el rey no gusta dellas,  
por ser danza muy usada  
y estar ya tan hecho a vellas; 15  
mas que por nuevos niveles  
llevase una de donceles  
como serranas vestidos;  
en pies y brazos ceñidos  
multitud de cascabeles; 20  
y ya tengo, a lo que creo,  
veinte y cuatro así aprestados,  
que pueden, según yo veo,  
ser sin vergüenza llevados  
al romano coliseo. 25

Ya yo le enseñé los dos  
de los mejores.

ALGUACIL Por Dios,  
que la invención es muy buena.

SANCHO Lo que nuestro alcalde ordena,  
es cosa rala entre nos, 30  
y todo lo que él más sabe  
de un su mozo lo aprendió  
que fue de su ingenio llave;  
mas ya se fue y nos dejó,  
que mala landre le acabe: 35  
que así quedamos vacíos,  
sin él, de ingenio y de bríos.

ALGUACIL ¿Tanto sabe?

SANCHO Es tan astuto,  
que puede darle tributo  
Salmón, rey de los judíos. 40

ALCALDE Haga cuenta, en viendo aquéstos,  
que los veinte y cuatro mira:  
que todos son tan dispuestos,  
derechos como una vira,  
sanos, gallardos y prestos. 45  
Aquél que no es nada rencoso  
se llama Diego Mostrenco;  
el otro, Gil el Peraile;  
cada cual diestro en el baile  
como gozquejo flamenco. 50  
Tocándoles Pingarrón,  
mostrarán bien su destreza  
a compás de cualquier son,  
y alabarán la agudeza  
de nuestra nueva invención. 55  
Las danzas de las espadas

hoy quedarán arrimadas,  
a despecho de hortelanos,  
envidiosos los gitanos,  
las doncellas afrentadas. 60

¿No le pareció, señor,  
muy bien el talle y el brío  
de uno y otro danzador?

ALGUACIL Si juzgo al parecer mío,  
nunca vi cosa peor; 65  
y temo que, si allá vais,  
de tal manera volváis,  
que no acertéis el camino.

ALCALDE Tocado, a lo que imagino,  
señor, de la envidia estáis. 70

Pues en verdad que hemos de ir  
con veinte y cuatro donceles  
como aquéllos, sin mentir,  
porque invenciones noveles,  
o admiran o hacen reír. 75

ALGUACIL Yo os lo aviso; queda en paz.

*(Vase el ALGUACIL.)*

SANCHO Alcalde, tu gusto haz,  
porque verás por la prueba  
que esta danza, por ser nueva,  
dará al rey mucho solaz. 80

ALCALDE No lo dudo. Venid, Sancho,  
que ya el corazón ensancho,  
do quepan los parabienes

de la danza.

SANCHORazón tienes:  
que has de volver hueco y ancho. 85

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Salen dos ciegos, y el uno PEDRO DE URDEMALAS; arrímase el primero a una puerta, y PEDRO junto a él, y pónese la VIUDA a la ventana.)*

CIEGO Ánimas bien fortunadas  
que en el purgatorio estáis,  
de Dios seáis consoladas,  
y en breve tiempo salgáis  
desas penas derramadas, 90  
y, como un trueno,  
baje a vos el ángel bueno  
y os lleve a ser coronadas.

PEDRO Ánimas que desta casa  
partistes al purgatorio, 95  
ya en sillón, ya en silla rasa,  
del divino consistorio  
os venga al vuestro sin tasa,  
y en un vuelo  
el ángel os lleve al cielo, 100  
para ver lo que allá pasa.

CIEGO Hermano, vaya a otra puerta,  
porque aquesta casa es mía,  
y en rezar aquí no acierta.

PEDRO Yo rezo por cortesía, 105  
no por premio, cosa es cierta,  
y así, puedo  
rezar doquiera, sin miedo  
de pendencia ni reyerta.

CIEGO ¿Es vistoso, ciego honrado? 110

PEDRO Estoy desde que nací  
en una tumba encerrado.

CIEGO Pues yo en algún tiempo vi;  
pero ya, por mi pecado,  
nada veo, 115  
sino lo que no deseo,  
que es lo que vee un desdichado.  
¿Sabrá oraciones abondo?

PEDRO Porque sé que sé infinitas,  
aquesto, amigo, os respondo, 120  
que a todos las doy escritas,  
o a muy pocos las escondo.  
Sé la del *Ánima sola*,  
y sé la de *San Pancracio*,  
que nadie cual ésta viola; 125  
la de *San Quirce y Acacio*,  
y la de *Olalla española*,  
y otras mil,  
adonde el verso sutil  
y el bien decir se acrisola; 130  
las de los *Auxiliadores*  
sé también, aunque son treinta,  
y otras de tales primores,  
que causo envidia y afrenta  
a todos los rezadores, 135

porque soy,  
adondequiera que estoy,  
el mejor de los mejores.

Sé la de los sabañones,  
la de curar la tericia 140  
y resolver lamparones,  
la de templar la codicia  
en avaros corazones;  
sé, en efeto,  
una que sana el aprieto 145  
de las internas pasiones,  
y otras de curiosidad.  
Tantas sé, que yo me admiro  
de su virtud y bondad.

CIEGOYa por saberlas suspiro. 150

VIUDAHermano mío, esperad.

PEDRO¿Quién me llama?

CIEGOSegún la voz, es el ama  
de la casa, en mi verdad.

Ella es estrecha, aunque rica, 155  
y sólo a mandar rezar  
es a lo que más se aplica.

PEDROPícome yo de callar  
con quien al dar no se pica:  
que esté mudo 160  
a sus demandas no dudo  
si no lo paga y suplica.

*(Sale la VIUDA.)*

VIUDA Puesta en aquella ventana,  
he escuchado sus razones  
y su profesión cristiana, 165  
y las muchas oraciones  
con que tantos males sana;  
y querría me hiciese  
placer que algunas me diese  
de las que le pediría, 170  
dejando a mi cortesía  
el valor del interese.

PEDRO Si despide a esotro ciego,  
yo le diré maravillas.

VIUDA Pues yo le despido luego. 175

PEDRO Señora, no he de decillas  
ni por dádivas ni ruego.

VIUDA Váyase, y venga después,  
amigo.

CIEGO Vendré a las tres,  
a rezar lo cotidiano. 180

VIUDA En buen hora.

CIEGO Adiós, hermano,  
ciego, o vistoso, o lo que es;  
y si es que se comunica,  
sepa mi casa, y verá

que, aunque pobre, ruin y chica, 185  
sin duda en ella hallará  
una voluntad muy rica;  
y la alegre posesión  
de un segoviano doblón  
gozará liberalmente, 190  
si nos da, de su torrente,  
ya milagro, o ya oración.

PEDRO Está bien; yo acudiré  
a saber la casa honrada  
tan llena de amor y fe, 195  
y pagaré la posada  
con lo que le enseñaré.  
Cuarenta milagros tengo  
con que voy y con que vengo  
por dondequiera a mi paso, 200  
y alegre la vida paso  
y como un rey me mantengo.

*(Éntrase el CIEGO.)*

Mas tú, señora Marina,  
Sánchez en el sobrenombre,  
a mi voz la oreja inclina, 205  
y atenta escucha de un hombre  
una embajada divina.

Las almas de purgatorio  
entraron en consistorio,  
y ordenaron las prudentes 210  
que les fuese a sus parientes  
su insufrible mal notorio.

Hicieron que una tomase,  
de gran prudencia y consejo,  
para que lo efetuase, 215  
cuerpo de un honrado viejo,



y así al mundo se mostrase,  
y diéranle una instrucción  
y una larga relación  
de lo que tiene de hacer 220  
para que puedan tener,  
o ya alivio, o ya perdón;  
y está ya cerca de aquí  
esta alma, en un cuerpo honesto,  
y anciano, cual yo le vi, 225  
y sobre un asno trae puesto  
el cerro de Potosí.

Viene lleno de doblones  
que le ofrecen a montones  
los parientes de las almas 230  
que en las tormentas sin calmas  
padecen graves pasiones.

En oyendo que en su lista  
hay alma que en purgatorio  
con duras penas se atrista, 235  
no hay talego, ni escritorio,  
ni cofre que se resista.

Hasta los gatos guardados,  
de rubio metal preñados,  
por librarla de tormentos, 240  
descubren allí contentos  
sus partos acelerados.

Esta alma vendrá esta tarde,  
señora Marina mía,  
a hacer de su lista alarde 245  
ante ti; pero querría  
que en secreto esto se guarde,  
y que a solas la recibas  
y que a darle te apercibas  
lo que piden tus parientes 250  
que moran en las ardientes  
hornazas, de alivio esquivas.

Esto hecho, te asegura  
que te enseñará oración  
con que aumentes tu ventura: 255

que esto ofrece en galardón  
de aquella voluntad pura  
que con él se muestra franca,  
y de su escondrijo arranca  
hasta el menudo cuatrín 260  
y queda, cual San Paulín,  
como se dice, sin blanca.

VIUDA ¿Que esa embajada me envía  
esa alma, ciego bendito?

PEDROY toda de vos se fía, 265  
y se remite a lo escrito  
de vuestra genealogía.

VIUDA ¿Cómo la conoceré  
cuando venga?

PEDROYo haré  
que tome casi mi aspeto. 270

VIUDA;Oh, qué albricias te prometo!  
¡Qué de cosas te daré!

PEDRO En las cosas semejantes  
es bien gastar los dineros  
guardados de tiempos antes; 275  
los ayunos verdaderos,  
y espaldas diciplinantes,  
todo se ha de aventurar  
sólo por poder sacar  
a un alma de su pasión, 280  
y llevarla a la región

donde no mora el pesar.

VIUDA Ve en paz, y dile a ese anciano  
que tan alegre le espero,  
que en verle pondré en su mano 285  
mi alma, que es el dinero,  
con pecho humilde y cristiano:  
que, aunque soy un poco escasa,  
me afligiré en ver que pasa  
alma de pariente mío, 290  
según dicen, fuego y frío,  
éste o aquél muy sin tasa.

PEDRO Tu fama a la de Leandro  
exceda, y jamás se tizne  
tu pecho de otro Alejandro; 295  
antes, cante dél un cisne  
en las aguas de Meandro;  
a los hiperbóreos montes  
pase, al cielo te remontes,  
y allá te subas con ella, 300  
y otra no encierren cual ella  
nuestros corvos horizontes.

*(Éntranse los dos.)*

*(Salen MALDONADO y BELICA.)*

MALDONADO Mira, Belica: éste es hombre  
que te sacará del lodo,  
de grande ingenio y gran nombre, 305  
tan discreto y presto en todo,  
que es forzoso que te asombre.  
Quiérese volver gitano

por tu amor, y dar de mano  
a otra cualquier pretensión: 310  
considera si es razón  
que le muestres pecho llano.  
Él será el mejor cuatrero,  
según que me lo imagino,  
que habrá visto el mundo entero, 315  
solo, raro y peregrino  
en las trazas de embustero;  
porque en una que ahora intenta  
ha sacado en limpia cuenta  
que ha de ser único en todas. 320

BELICA Fácilmente te acomodas  
a tu gusto y a mi afrenta.  
¿No se te ha ya traslucido  
que el que a grande no me lleve  
no es para mí buen partido? 325

MALDONADO No hay cosa en que más se pruebe  
que careces de sentido,  
que en esa tu fantasía,  
fundada en la lozanía  
de tu juventud gallarda, 330  
que en marchitarse no tarda  
lo que el sol corre en un día.  
Quiero decir que es locura  
manifiesta, clara y llana,  
pensar que la hermosura 335  
dura más que la mañana,  
que con la noche se oscura;  
y a veces es necedad  
el pensar que la beldad  
ha de ofrecer gran marido, 340  
siendo por mejor tenido  
el que ofrece la igualdad.  
Así que, gitana loca,

pon freno al grande deseo  
que te ensalza y que te apoca, 345  
y no busques por rodeo  
lo que en nada no te toca.

Cásate, y toma tu igual,  
porque es el marido tal  
que te ofrezco, que has de ver 350  
que en él te vengo a ofrecer  
valor, ser, honra y caudal.

*(Entra PEDRO, ya como gitano.)*

PEDRO ¿Qué hay, amigo Maldonado?

MALDONADO Una presunción, de suerte  
que a mí me tiene admirado: 355  
veo en lo flaco lo fuerte,  
en un bajo un alto estado;  
veo que esta gitanilla,  
cuanto su estado la humilla,  
tanto más levanta el vuelo, 360  
y aspira a tocar el cielo  
con locura y maravilla.

PEDRO Déjala, que muy bien hace,  
y no la estimes en menos  
por eso; que a mí me aplace 365  
que con soberbios barrenos  
sus máquinas suba y trace.

Yo también, que soy un leño,  
príncipe y papa me sueño,  
emperador y monarca, 370  
y aún mi fantasía abarca  
de todo el mundo a ser dueño.

MALDONADO Con la viuda, ¿cómo fue?

PEDRO Está en un punto la cosa,  
mejor de lo que pensé. 375  
Ella será generosa,  
o yo Pedro no seré.

Pero, ¿qué gente es aquesta  
tan de caza y tan de fiesta?

MALDONADO El rey es, a lo que creo. 380

BELICA Hoy subirá mi deseo  
de amor la fragosa cuesta:

*(Entra el REY con un criado, SILERIO, y todos de caza.)*

hoy a todo mi contento  
he de apacentar mis ojos,  
y al alma dar su sustento, 385  
gozando de los despojos  
que me ofrece el pensamiento  
y la vista.

MALDONADO Yo imagino  
que tu grande desatino  
en gran mal ha de parar. 390

BELICA Mal se puede contrastar  
a las fuerzas del destino.

REY ¿Vistes pasar por aquí  
un ciervo, decid, gitanos,  
que va herido?

BELICA Señor, sí; 395  
atravesar estos llanos,  
habrá poco que le vi;  
lleva en la espalda derecha  
hincada una gruesa flecha.

REY Era un pedazo de lanza. 400

BELICA El huir y hacer mudanza  
de lugares no aprovecha  
al que en las entrañas lleva  
el hierro de amor agudo,  
que hasta en el alma se ceba. 405

MALDONADO Ésta dará, no lo dudo,  
de su locura aquí prueba.

REY ¿Qué decís, gitana hermosa?

BELICA Señor, yo digo una cosa:  
que el Amor y el cazador 410  
siguen un mismo tenor  
y condición rigurosa.  
Hierre el cazador la fiera,  
y aunque va despavorida,  
huyendo en larga carrera, 415  
consigo lleva la herida,  
puesto que huya dondequiera;  
hiere Amor el corazón  
con el dorado harpón,  
y el que siente el parasismo, 420  
aunque salga de sí mismo,  
lleva tras sí su pasión.

REY Gitana tan entendida  
muy pocas veces se ve.

BELICA Soy gitana bien nacida. 425

REY ¿Quién es tu padre?

BELICA No sé.

MALDONADO Señor, es una perdida:  
dice dos mil desvaríos,  
tiene los cascos vacíos,  
y llena la necedad 430  
de una cierta gravedad  
que la hace tomar bríos  
sobre su ser.

BELICA Sea en buen hora;  
loca soy por la locura  
que en vuestra ignorancia mora. 435

SILERIO ¿Sabéis la buena ventura?

BELICA La mala nunca se ignora  
de la humilde que levanta  
su deseo a alteza tanta,  
que sobrepuja a las nubes. 440

SILERIO Pues ¿por qué tanto la subes?



BELICANo es mucho: a más se adelanta.

REY ¡Donaire tienes!

BELICAY tanto,  
que, fiada en mi donaire,  
mis esperanzas levanto 445  
sobre la región del aire.

SILERIO¡Risa causas!

REYY aun espanto.  
¡Vamos! ¡Mal haya quien tiene  
quien sus gustos le detiene!

SILERIOPor la reina dice aquesto. 450

BELICANo es bien el que viene presto,  
si para partirse viene.

*(Éntrase el REY y SILERIO.)*

PEDRO Mira, Belica: yo atino  
que en poner en ti mi amor  
haré un grande desatino, 455  
y así, me será mejor  
llevar por otro camino  
mis gustos. Voy, Maldonado,  
a efetuar lo trazado,  
para que la viuda estrecha 460  
se vea una copia hecha  
del cuerno que está nombrado;

voime a vestir de ermitaño,  
con cuyo vestido honesto  
daré fuerzas a mi engaño. 465

MALDONADO Ve donde sabes, que puesto  
te dejé el vestido extraño.

*(Éntrase PEDRO. Sale el ALGUACIL, comisario de las danzas.)*

ALGUACIL ¿Quién es aquí Maldonado?

MALDONADO Yo, mi señor.

ALGUACIL Guárdeos Dios.

BELICA Alguacil y bien criado, 470  
¡milagro! Nunca sois vos  
de la aldea.

MALDONADO Has acertado,  
porque es de Corte, sin duda.

ALGUACIL Es menester que se acuda  
con una danza al palacio 475  
del bosque.

MALDONADO Denmos espacio.

ALGUACIL Sí harán: que el rey se muda  
del monesterio do está,

de aquí a dos días, a él.

MALDONADO Como lo mandas se hará. 480

BELICA ¿Viene la reina con él?

ALGUACIL ¿Quién lo duda? Sí vendrá.

BELICA ¿Y es todavía celosa,  
como suele, y rigurosa?

ALGUACIL Dicen que sí: no sé nada. 485

BELICA ¿No la hacen confiada  
el ser reina y ser hermosa?

ALGUACIL Turba el demasiado amor  
a los sentidos más altos,  
de más prendas y valor. 490

BELICA Amor son los sobresaltos  
muy anejos, y el temor.

ALGUACIL Tan moza, ¿y eso sabéis?  
Apostaré que tenéis  
el alma en su red envuelta. 495  
Voime, que he de dar la vuelta  
por aquí. No os descuidéis,  
Maldonado, en que sea buena  
la danza, porque no hay pueblo  
que hacer la suya no ordena. 500

MALDONADO Todo mi aprisco despueblo;  
ella irá de galas llena.

*(Éntrase el ALGUACIL.)*

*(Salen SILERIO, el criado del REY, y INÉS, la gitana.)*

SILERIO ¿Que tan arisca es la moza?

INÉS Eslo, señor, de manera  
que de nonada se altera, 505  
y se enoja y alboroz;  
cierta fantasía reina  
en ella, que nos enseña,  
o que lo es, o que se sueña  
que ha de ser princesa o reina; 510  
no puede ver a gitanos  
y usa con ellos de extremos.

SILERIO Pues agora le daremos  
do pueda llenar las manos,  
pues la quiere ver el rey 515  
con amorosa intención.

INÉS En las leyes de afición  
no guarda ninguna ley.  
Aunque quizá, como es alta  
y subida en pensamientos, 520  
hallará que a sus intentos  
un rey no podrá hacer falta.  
Yo, a lo menos, de mi parte  
haré lo que me has mandado,

y le daré tu recado, 525  
no más de por contentarte.

SILERIO Pudiérase usar la fuerza  
antes aquí que no el ruego.

INÉS Gusto con desasosiego,  
antes mengua que se esfuerza. 530  
Mas llevaremos la danza,  
y hablaremos después;  
que la escala de interés  
hasta las nubes alcanza.

SILERIO Encomiéndote otra cosa, 535  
que importa más a este efeto.

INÉS ¿Qué encomiendas?

SILERIO El secreto;  
porque es la reina celosa;  
y con la menor señal  
que vea de su disgusto, 540  
turbará del rey el gusto,  
y a nosotros vendrá mal.

INÉS Váyase, que viene allí  
nuestro conde.

SILERIO Sea en buen hora,  
y humíllese esa señora; 545  
yo haré lo que fuere en mí.

(Vase SILERIO. *Entran MALDONADO y PEDRO, de ermitaño.*)

PEDRO Aunque yo pintara el caso,  
no me saliera mejor.

MALDONADO Brunelo, el grande embaidor,  
ante ti retire el paso. 550

Con tan grande industria mides  
lo que tu ingenio trabaja,  
que te ha de dar la ventaja,  
fraudador de los ardidés.

Libre de deshonor y mengua 555  
saldrás en toda ocasión,  
siendo en el pecho Sinón,  
Demóstenes en la lengua.

INÉS Señor conde, el rey aguarda  
nuestra danza aquesta tarde. 560

PEDRO Haga, pues, Belica alarde  
de mi rica y buena andanza;  
púlase y échese el resto  
de la gala y hermosura.

INÉS Quizá forjas su ventura, 565  
famoso Pedro, en aquesto.

A ensayar la danza vamos,  
y a vestirnos de tal modo,  
que se admire el pueblo todo.

PEDRO Bien dices, y ya tardamos. 570

*(Éntranse todos.)*

*(Salen el REY y SILERIO.)*

SILERIO Digo, señor, que vendrá  
en la danza ahora, ahora.

REY Mi deseo se empeora,  
pasa de lo honesto ya;  
    más me pide que pensé, 575  
y ya acuso la tardanza,  
pues la propincua esperanza  
fatiga, y crece la fe.  
    A los ojos la hurtarás  
de la reina.

SILERIO Haré tu gusto. 580

REY Dirás cómo desto gusto,  
y aun otras cosas dirás,  
    con que acuses mi deseo  
allá en tu imaginación.

SILERIO Si Amor guardara razón, 585  
fuera aquéste devaneo;  
    pero, como no la guarda,  
ni te culpo, ni desculpo.

REY Conozco el mal, y me culpo,  
aunque con disculpa tarda 590  
y floja.

SILERIO La reina viene.

REY Mira que estés prevenido,  
y tan sagaz y advertido  
como a mi gusto conviene;  
    porque esta mujer celosa 595  
tiene de lince los ojos.

SILERIO Hoy gozarás los despojos  
de la gitana hermosa.

*(Entra la REINA.)*

REINA Señor, ¿sin mí? ¿Cómo es esto?  
No sé qué diga, en verdad. 600

REY Alegra la soledad  
de este fresco hermoso puesto.

REINA ¿Y enfada mi compañía?

REY Eso no es bien que digáis,  
pues con ella levantáis 605  
al cielo la suerte mía.

REINA Cualquiera cosa me asombra  
y enciende, y crece el deseo  
si no os veo, o si no veo  
de vuestro cuerpo la sombra; 610  
    y, aunque esto es impertinencia,  
si conocéis que el amor



me manda como señor,  
con gusto tendréis paciencia.

SILERIO Las danzas vienen, señores, 615  
que dellas el son se ofrece.

*(Suena el tamboril.)*

REY Verémoslas, si os parece,  
entre estas rosas y flores:  
que el sitio es acomodado,  
espacioso y agradable. 620

REINA Sea así.

*(Entran CRESPO, el alcalde, y TARUGO, el regidor.)*

ALCALDE ¿Que no le hable?  
Tenéislo muy mal pensado.  
Voto a tal, que he de quejarme  
al rey de aquesta solencia.

TARUGO Aquí está su reverencia, 625  
Crespo.

ALCALDE ¿Queréis engañarme?  
¿Cuál es?

REY Yo soy. ¿Qué os han hecho,  
buen hombre?

ALCALDE No sé qué diga.  
Han burlado mi fatiga,  
y nuestra danza deshecho, 630  
vuestros pajes, que los vea  
erguidos en Peralvillo.  
Sé sentillo, y no decillo;  
¿qué más mal queréis que sea?  
Veinte y cuatro doncellotes, 635  
todos de tomo y de lomo,  
venían. Yo no sé cómo  
no os da el rey dos mil azotes,  
pajes, que sois la canalla  
más mala que tiene el suelo. 640  
Digo, pues, que, con mi celo,  
que es bueno el que en mí se halla,  
aquestos tantos donceles  
junté, como soy alcalde,  
para serviros de balde, 645  
con barbas y cascabeles.  
No quise traer doncellas,  
por ser danza tan usada,  
sino una cascabelada  
de mozos parientes dellas; 650  
y, apenas vieron sus trajes,  
al galán uso moderno,  
cuando todo el mismo infierno  
se revistió en vuestros pajes,  
y con trapajo y con lodo 655  
tanta carga les han dado,  
que queda desbaratado  
el danzante escuadrón todo.  
Han sobajado al mejor  
penuscón de danzadores 660  
que en estos alrededores  
vio príncipe ni señor.

REINA Pues volvedlos a juntar,  
que yo haré que el rey espere.

TARUGO Aunque vuelva el que quisiere, 665  
no se podrá rodear,  
    porque van todos molidos  
como cibera y alheña,  
de mojicón, ripio y leña  
largamente proveídos. 670

REINA   ¿No traeréis uno siquiera,  
porque gustaré de velle?

TARUGO Veré si puedo traelle.

ALCALDE Advertid que el rey espera,  
    Tarugo, y si no está Renco 675  
tan malo como le vi,  
traed, si es posible, aquí  
a mi sobrino Mostrenco,  
    que en él echará de verse  
cuáles los otros serían. 680  
¡Oh, cuántos pajes se crían  
en Corte para perderse!  
    Pensé que por ser del rey,  
y tan bien nacidos todos,  
usarían de otros modos 685  
de mejor crianza y ley;  
    pero cuatro pupilajes  
de cuatro universidades,  
no encierran tantas ruindades  
como saben vuestros pajes. 690  
    Las burlas que nos han hecho  
descubren con sus ensayos  
que traen cruces en los sayos  
y diablos dentro del pecho.

*(Vuelve TARUGO, y trae consigo a MOSTRENCO, tocado a papos, con un tranzado que llegue hasta las orejas, saya de bayeta verde guarnecida de amarillo, corta a la rodilla, y sus polainas con cascabeles, corpezuelo o camisa de pechos; y, aunque toque el tamboril, no se ha de mover de un lugar.)*

TARUGO A Mostrenco traigo; helo, 695  
Crespo.

ALCALDE Pingarrón, tocad;  
que la buena majestad  
en él verá nuestro celo  
*(Toca.)*

y nuestro ingenio lozano.  
Menéate, majadero, 700  
o hazte de rogar primero,  
como músico o villano.  
¡Hola! ¿A quién digo? Sobrino,  
danza un poco, ¡pese a mí!

TARUGO El diablo nos trujo aquí, 705  
según que ya lo adivino.  
¡Yérgete, cuerpo del mundo!  
*(Gínchale.)*

ALCALDE ¡Oh pajes de Satanás!

REINANi le roguéis ni deis más.

ALCALDE Hoy nos echas al profundo 710  
con tu terquedad.

MOSTRENCONo puedo  
menearme, ¡por San Dios!

SILERIO¿Qué tierno doncel sois vos!

TARUGO¿Qué tienes?

MOSTRENCOQuebrado un dedo  
del pie derecho.

REYDejadle, 715  
y a vuestro pueblo os volved.

ALCALDESi es que me ha de hacer merced,  
de Junquillos soy alcalde;  
y si castiga a sus pajes,  
otra danza le traeremos 720  
que pase a todos extremos  
en la invención y los trajes.

*(Éntranse TARUGO, alcalde, y MOSTRENCO.)*

REINA El alcalde es estremado.

REYY la danza bien vestida.

REINABien platicada y reñida, 725  
y el premio bien esperado.

SILERIO Ésta es la de las gitanas  
que viene.

REINA Pues suelen ser  
muchas de buen parecer  
y de su traje galanas. 730

REY Que tiemble de una gitana  
un rey, ¡qué gran poquedad!

SILERIO Verá vuestra majestad,  
entre éstas, una galana  
y hermosa sobremanera, 735  
y sobremanera honesta.

REY ¡Caro el mirarla me cuesta!

REINA ¿No llegan? ¿A qué se espera?

*(Entran los MÚSICOS, vestidos a lo gitano; INÉS y BELICA y otros dos muchachos, de gitanos, y en vestir a todas, principalmente a BELICA, se ha de echar el resto; entra asimismo PEDRO, de gitano, y MALDONADO; han de traer ensayadas dos mudanzas y su tamboril.)*

PEDRO Vuestros humildes gitanos,  
majestades que Dios guarde, 740  
hacemos vistoso alarde  
de nuestros bríos lozanos.

Quisiéramos que esta danza  
fuera toda de brocado;  
mas el poder limitado 745  
es muy poco lo que alcanza.

Mas, con todo, mi Belilla,

con su donaire y sus ojos,  
os quitará mil enojos,  
dándoos gusto y maravilla. 750  
¡Ea, gitanas de Dios,  
comenzad, y sea en buen pie!

REINABueno es el gitano, a fe.

MALDONADOId delantera las dos.

PEDRO ¡Ea, Belica, flor de abril; 755  
Inés, bailadora ilustre,  
que podéis dar fama y lustre  
a esta danza y a otras mil!

*(Bailan.)*

¡Vaya el voladillo apriesa!  
¡No os erréis; guardad compás! 760  
¡Qué desvaída que vas,  
Francisquilla! ¡Ea, Ginesa!

MALDONADO Largo y tendido el cruzado,  
y tomen los brazos vuelo.  
Si ésta no es danza del cielo, 765  
yo soy asno enalbardado.

PEDRO ¡Ea, pizpitas ligeras  
y andarríos bulliciosos,  
llevad los brazos airosos  
y las personas enteras! 770

MALDONADO El oído en las guitarras,  
y haced de azogue los pies.

PEDRO ¡Por San; buenas van las tres!

MALDONADO Y aun las cuatro no van malas.  
Pero Belica es extremo 775  
de donaire, brío y gala.

PEDRO Como no bailan en sala,  
que tropiecen cuido y temo.

*(Cae BELICA junto al REY.)*

¿No lo digo yo? Belilla  
ha caído junto al rey. 780

REY Que os alce yo es justa ley,  
nueva octava maravilla;  
y entended que con la mano  
os doy el alma también.

REINA Ello se ha hecho muy bien; 785  
andado ha el rey cortesano.  
¡Bien su majestad lo allana,  
y la postra por el suelo,  
pues levanta hasta su cielo  
una caída gitana! 790

BELICA Mostró en esto su grandeza,  
pues casi fuera impiedad  
que junto a su majestad



nadie estuviera en bajeza;  
y no se pudo ofender 795  
su grandeza en esto en nada,  
pues majestad confirmada  
no puede desfallecer;  
y, en cierta manera, creo  
que cabe en la suerte mía 800  
que me hagan cortesía  
los reyes.

REINA Ya yo lo veo.  
¿Que ese privilegio tiene  
la hermosura?

REY ¡Ea, señora,  
no turbéis la justa ahora, 805  
porque alegra y entretiene!

REINA Apriétanme el corazón  
esas palabras livianas.  
Llevad aquestas gitanas  
y ponedlas en prisión: 810  
que es la belleza tirana,  
y a cualquier alma conquista,  
y está su fuerza en ser vista.

REY ¿Celos te da una gitana?  
Cierto que es terrible cosa 815  
e insufrible de decir.

REINA Pudiérase eso decir,  
a no ser ésta hermosa,  
y a ser vuestra condición

de rey; pero no es así. 820  
Llevádmelas ya de ahí.

SILERIO ¡Estraña resolución!

INÉS Señora, así el pensamiento  
celoso no te fatigue,  
ni hacer hazañas te obligue 825  
que no lleven fundamento.  
Que a solas quieras oírme  
un poco que te diré,  
y en ello no intentaré  
de tu prisión eximirme. 830

REINA A mi estancia las llevad;  
pero traedlas tras mí.

*(Éntranse la REINA y las gitanas.)*

REY Pocas veces celos vi  
sin tocar en crüeldad.

SILERIO Una sospecha me afana, 835  
señor, por lo que aquí veo,  
y es que di de tu deseo  
noticia a aquella gitana  
que a la reina quiere hablar  
en secreto, y es razón 840  
temer que de tu intención  
larga cuenta querrá dar.

REY En mi dolor tan acerbo,  
no me queda qué temer,

pues no puede negro ser 845  
más que sus alas el cuervo.

Venid, y daremos orden  
cómo se tiemple en la reina  
la furia que en ella reina,  
la confusión y desorden. 850

*(Éntranse el REY y SILERIO.)*

PEDRO ¡Bien habemos negociado,  
gustando vos del oficio!

MALDONADO Digo que pierdo el juicio,  
y estoy como embelesado.

Belica presa, e Inés 855  
con la reina quiere hablar.  
¡Mucho me da que pensar!

PEDRO Y aun que temer.

MALDONADO Así es.

PEDRO Yo, a lo menos, el suceso  
no pienso esperar del caso: 860  
que a compás retiro el paso  
del gitanesco progreso.

Un bonete reverendo  
y el eclesiástico brazo  
sacarán deste embarazo 865  
mi persona, a lo que entiendo.  
¡Adiós, Maldonado!

MALDONADOEspera.  
¿Qué quieres hacer?

PEDRONo, nada;  
la suerte tengo ya echada,  
y tengo sangre ligera. 870  
No me detendrán aquí  
con maromas y con sogas.

MALDONADOEn muy poca agua te ahogas.  
Nunca pensé tal de ti;  
antes, pensé que tenías 875  
ánimo para esperar  
un ejército.

PEDROEs hablar:  
otras son las fuerzas mías.  
Aún no me has bien conocido;  
pues entiende, Maldonado, 880  
que ha de ser el hombre honrado  
recatado, y no atrevido;  
y es prudencia prevenir  
el peligro. Queda en paz.

MALDONADOSin porqué temes; mas haz 885  
tu gusto.

PEDROYo sé decir  
que es razón que aquí se tema:  
que las iras de los reyes  
pasan términos y leyes,  
como es su fuerza suprema. 890

MALDONADO Si así es, vámonos luego,  
que nos estará mejor.

MÚSICO Todos tenemos temor,  
Maldonado.

MALDONADO No lo niego.

*(Éntranse todos.)*

## Jornada tercera

*Sale PEDRO, como ermitaño, con tres o cuatro taleguillos de anjeo llenos de arena en las mangas.*

PEDRO Ya está la casa vecina  
de aquella viuda dichosa,  
digo de aquella Marina  
Sánchez, que, por generosa,  
al cielo el alma encamina; 5

*(MARINA, a la ventana.)*

ya su marido, Vicente  
del Berrocal, fácilmente  
saldrá de la llama horrenda,  
en cuanto Marina entienda  
que yace en ella doliente; 10  
su hijo, Pedro Benito,  
amainará desde luego  
el alto espantoso grito  
con que se queja en el fuego  
que abrasa el negro distrito; 15  
dejará de estar mohíno  
Martinico, su sobrino,  
el del lunar en la cara,  
viendo que se le prepara  
de la gloria el real camino. 20

VIUDA Padre, espere, que ya abajo,  
y perdone si le doy  
en el esperar trabajo.

*(Quítase de la ventana y baja.)*

PEDRO Gracias a los cielos doy,  
que me luce si trabajo; 25  
gracias doy a quien me ha hecho  
entrar en aqueste estrecho,  
donde, sin temor de mengua,  
me ha de sacar esta lengua  
con honra, gusto y provecho. 30  
Memoria, no desfallezcas,  
ni por algún accidente  
silencio a la lengua ofrezcas;  
antes, con modo prudente,  
ya me alegres, ya entristezcas, 35  
en los semblantes me muda  
que con aquesta viuda  
me acrediten, hasta tanto  
que la dejen, con espanto,  
contenta, pero desnuda. 40

*(Entra la VIUDA.)*

VIUDA Padre, déme aquesos pies.

PEDRO Tente, honrada labradora;  
no me toques. ¿Tú no ves  
que adonde la humildad mora  
pierde el honor su interés? 45  
Las almas que están en penas,  
de todo contento ajenas,  
aunque más las soliciten,  
las ceremonias no admiten  
de que están las cortes llenas. 50  
Más les importa una misa  
que cuatro mil besamanos,  
y esto tu padre te avisa,

y esos tratos cortesanos  
tenlos por cosa de risa. 55

Pero, en tanto que te doy  
cuenta, amiga, de quién soy,  
guárdame aqueste talego,  
y estotro del nudo ciego,  
con quien tan cargado voy. 60

VIUDA Ya, señor, tengo noticia  
de quién eres, y sé bien  
que tu voluntad codicia  
que en misericordia estén  
las almas y no en justicia. 65

Sé la honrada comisión  
que tienes, y, en conclusión,  
te suplico que me cuentes  
cómo las de mis parientes  
tendrán descanso y perdón. 70

PEDRO Vicente del Berrocal,  
tu marido, con setenta  
escudos de principal  
ha de rematar la cuenta  
en mil bienes de su mal. 75

Pedro Benito, tu hijo,  
saldrá de aquel escondrijo  
con cuarenta y seis no más,  
y con esto le darás  
un sin igual regocijo. 80

Tu hija, Sancha Redonda,  
pide que a su voluntad  
tu larga mano responda:  
que es sogá la caridad  
para aquella cueva honda. 85

Cincuenta y dos amarillos  
pide, redondos, sencillos,  
o ya veinte y seis doblados,



con que serán quebrantados  
de sus prisiones los grillos. 90

Martín y Quiteria están,  
tus sobrinos, en un pozo,  
padeciendo estrecho afán,  
y desde allí con sollozo  
amargas voces te dan. 95

Diez doblones de a dos caras  
piden que ofrezca en las aras  
de la devoción divina,  
pues que los tiene Marina  
entre sus cosas más caras. 100

Sancho Manjón, tu buen tío,  
padece en una laguna  
mucho sed y mucho frío,  
y con llantos te importuna  
que des a su mal desvío. 105

Solos catorce ducados  
pide, pero bien contados  
y en plata de cuño nuevo,  
y yo a llevarlos me atrevo  
sobre mis hombros cansados. 110

VIUDA ¿Vistes allá, por ventura,  
señor, a mi hermana Sancha?

PEDRO Vila en una sepultura  
cubierta con una plancha  
de bronce, que es cosa dura, 115

y al pasarle por encima,  
dijo: «Si es que te lastima  
el dolor que aquí te llora,  
tú, que vas al mundo agora,  
a mi hermana y a mi prima 120

dirás que en su voluntad  
está el salir destas nieblas  
a la inmensa claridad:

que es luz de aquestas tinieblas  
la encendida caridad. 125

Que apenas sabrá mi hermana  
mi pena, cuando esté llana  
a darme treinta florines,  
por poner ella sus fines  
en ser cuerda, y no de lana». 130

Infinitos otros vi,  
tus parientes y criados,  
que se encomiendan a ti,  
cuáles hay de a dos ducados,  
cuáles de a maravedí; 135  
y séte decir, en suma,  
que, reducidos con pluma  
y con tinta a buena cuenta,  
a docientos y cincuenta  
escudos llega la suma. 140

No te azores, que ese saco  
que te di a guardar primero,  
si es que bien la cuenta saco,  
me le dio un bodegonero,  
grande imitador de Caco, 145  
no más de porque a su hija,  
que entre rescoldo de hornija  
yace en las hondas cavernas,  
en sus delicadas piernas  
el fuego menos la aflija. 150

Un mozo de mulas fue  
quien me dio el saco segundo  
que en tus manos entregué,  
gran caminador del mundo,  
malo, mas de buena fe. 155

De arenas de oro de Tíbar  
van llenos, con que el acíbar  
y amarguísimo trabajo  
de las almas de allá abajo  
se ha de volver en almíbar. 160

¡Ea, pues, mujer gigante,  
mujer fuerte, mujer buena;

nada se os ponga delante  
para no aliviar la pena  
de toda ánima penante! 165

Desechad de la garganta  
ese nudo que os quebranta,  
y decid con voz serena:  
«Haré, señor, cuanto ordena  
tu voz sonora y santa». 170

Que, en entregando los numos  
en estas groseras manos,  
con gozos altos y sumos,  
sus fuegos más inhumanos  
verás convertir en humos. 175

¿Qué será ver a deshora  
que por la región del aire  
va un alma zapateadora  
bailando con gran donaire,  
de esclava hecha señora? 180

¡Qué de alabanzas oirás  
por delante y por detrás,  
ora vayas, ora estés,  
de toda ánima cortés  
a quien hoy libertad das! 185  
(*Vuélvele los sacos.*)

VIUDA Tenga, y un poco me espere,  
que yo voy, y vuelvo luego  
con todo aquello que quiere.

(*Éntrese la VIUDA.*)

PEDRO En gusto, en paz y en sosiego  
tu vida el cielo prospere. 190

Si bien en ello se advierte,  
aquésta es la mujer fuerte  
que se busca en la *Escritura*.

Tengas, Marina, ventura  
en la vida y en la muerte. 195

Belilla, gitana bella,  
todo el fruto deste embuste  
gozarás sin falta o mella,  
aunque tu gusto no guste  
de mi amorosa querella. 200

Cuanto este dinero alcanza  
se ha de gastar en la danza  
y en tu adorno, porque quiero  
que por galas ni dinero  
no malogres tu esperanza. 205

*(Vuelve la VIUDA con un gato lleno, como que trae el dinero.)*

VIUDA Toma, venerable anciano,  
que ahí va lo que pediste,  
y aun a darte más me allano.

PEDRO Marina, el tuyo me diste  
con el proceder cristiano. 210

En trasponiendo esta loma,  
en un salto daré en Roma  
y en otro en el centro hondo;  
y, porque a quien soy respondo,  
mi buena bendición toma, 215

que da salud a las muelas,  
preserva que no se engañe  
nadie con fraude y cautelas,  
ni que de mirar se estrañe  
las noturnas centinelas. 220

Puede en las oscuras salas  
tender sin temor las alas  
el más flaco corazón,

*(Bendícela.)*

llevando la bendición  
del gran Pedro de Urdemalas. 225

*(Éntrase PEDRO.)*

VIUDA Comisario fidedino  
de las almas que en trabajo  
están penando contino,  
pues dicen que es cuesta abajo  
del purgatorio el camino, 230  
échate a rodar, y llega  
ligero a la oscura vega  
o valle de llanto amargo,  
y aplícalas al descargo  
que mi largueza te entrega. 235

En cada escudo que di  
llevas mi alma encerrada,  
y en cada maravedí,  
y como cosa encantada  
parece que quedo aquí. 240

Ya yo soy otra alma en pena,  
después que me veo ajena  
del talego que entregué;  
pero en hombros de mi fe  
saldré a la región serena. 245

*(Éntrase.)*

*(Sale la REINA, y trae en un pañizuelo unas joyas, y sale con ella MARCELO, caballero anciano.)*

REINA Marcelo, sin que os impida  
la guarda de algún secreto,  
porque no os pondrá en aprieto  
de perder fama ni vida,

os ruego me respondáis 250  
a ciertas preguntas luego.

MARCELA Bien escusado es el ruego,  
señora, donde mandáis.

Preguntad a vuestro gusto,  
porque mi honra y mi vida 255  
está a vuestros pies rendida,  
y es de lo que yo más gusto.

REINA Estas joyas de valor,  
¿cúyas son o cúyas fueron?

MARCELA Un tiempo dueño tuvieron 260  
que siempre fue mi señor.

REINA Pues, ¿cómo se enajenaron?  
Porque me importa saber  
cómo aquesto vino a ser:  
si se dieron, o se hurtaron. 265

MARCELA Pues que ya la tierra cubre  
el delito y la deshonra,  
si es deshonra y si es delito  
el que amor honesto forja,  
quiero romper un silencio 270  
que no importa que le rompa  
ni a los muertos ni a los vivos;  
antes, a todos importa.  
«La duquesa Félix Alba,  
que Dios acoja en su gloria, 275  
una noche, en luz escasa  
y en tinieblas abundosa,  
estando yo en el terrero,

con esperanza dudosa  
de ver a la que me diste, 280  
gran señora, por esposa,  
con un turbado ceceo  
me llamó, y con voz ansiosa  
me dijo: "Así la ventura  
a tus deseos responda, 285  
señor, quienquiera que seas;  
que, en esta ocasión forzosa,  
mostrando pecho cristiano,  
a quien te llama socorras.  
Pon a recado esa prenda, 290  
más noble que venturosa;  
dale el agua del bautismo  
y el nombre que tú le escojas".  
Y en esto ya descolgaba  
de unas trenzas, que de sogas 295  
sirvieron, una cestilla  
de blanca mimbre olorosa.  
No dijo más, y encerróse.  
Yo quedé en aquella hora  
cargado, suspenso y lleno 300  
de admiración y congoja,  
porque oí que una criatura  
dentro de la cesta llora,  
así cual recién nacida.  
¡Ved qué carga, y a qué hora! 305  
En fin, porque presto veas  
el de aquesta estraña historia,  
digo que al punto salí,  
con diligencia no poca,  
de la ciudad al aldea 310  
que está sobre aquella loma,  
por ser cerca. Pero el cielo,  
que infortunios acomoda,  
me deparó en el camino,  
al despuntar del aurora, 315  
un rancho de unos gitanos,  
de pocas y humildes chozas.

Por dádivas y por ruegos,  
una gitana no moza  
me tomó la criatura 320  
y al punto desenvolvióla,  
y entre las fajas, envueltas  
en un lienzo, halló esas joyas,  
que yo conocí al momento,  
pues son de tu hermano todas. 325  
Dejéselas con la niña,  
que era una niña hermosa  
la que en la cesta venía,  
nacida de pocas horas;  
encarguéle su crianza 330  
y el bautismo, y que, con ropas  
humildes, empero limpias,  
la criase. ¡Estraña cosa!:  
que, cuando deste suceso  
mi lengua a tu hermano informa, 335  
dijo: "Marcelo, la niña  
es mía, como las joyas.  
La duquesa Félix Alba  
es su madre, y ella es sola  
el blanco de mis deseos 340  
y de mis penas la gloria.  
Inmaturo ha sido el parto,  
mal prevenida la toma;  
pero no hay falta que llegue  
de su ingenio a la gran sobra". 345  
Estando en estas razones,  
en son tristísimo doblan  
las campanas, sin que quede  
monesterio ni parroquia.  
El son general y triste 350  
daba indicios ser persona  
principal la que a la tierra  
el común tributo torna.  
Hizo manifiesto el caso  
un paje que entró a deshora 355  
diciendo: "Muerta es, señor,



Félix Alba, mi señora.  
De improviso murió anoche,  
y por ella, señor, forman  
este son tantas campanas, 360  
y tantas gentes que lloran"  
Con estas nuevas tu hermano  
quedó con el alma absorta,  
sin movimiento los ojos,  
inamovible la persona. 365  
Volvió en sí desde allí a un rato,  
y, sin decirme otra cosa  
sino: "Haz criar la niña,  
y no le quites las joyas;  
como gitana se críe, 370  
sin hacerla sabidora,  
aunque crezca, de quién es,  
porque esto a mi gusto importa".  
Dos horas tardó en partirse  
a las fronteras, do apoca 375  
con su lanza la morisma,  
sus gustos con sus memorias.  
Siempre me escribe que vea  
a Belica, que llamóla  
así la gitana sabia 380  
que con mucho amor crióla.  
Yo no alcanzo su desinio,  
ni a qué aspira, ni en qué topa  
el no querer que se sepa  
tan rara y tan triste historia. 385  
Hanle dicho a la muchacha  
que un ladrón gitano hurtóla,  
y ella se imagina hija  
de alguna real persona.  
Yo la he visto muchas veces, 390  
y hacer y decir mil cosas,  
que parece que ya tiene  
en las sienes la corona.  
Murió la que la dio leche,  
y, con las joyas, dejóla 395

en poder de otra su hija,  
si no tan bella, tan moza.  
Ésta, que es la que tenía  
esas joyas, no otra cosa  
sabe más de lo que supo 400  
su madre, y el hecho ignora  
de los padres de Isabel,  
tu sobrina, la hermosa,  
la señora, la garrida,  
la discreta y la briosa.» 405  
Respondo esto a la pregunta  
si se dieron esas joyas,  
o se hurtaron: que me admira  
verlas donde están agora.

REINALa mitad he yo sabido 410  
desta peregrina historia,  
y una y otra relación,  
sin que discrepen, conforman.  
Mas dime: ¿conocerías,  
si acaso vieses, la hermosa 415  
gitana que dices?

MARCELA Sí;  
como a mí mismo, señora.

REINAPues espérate aquí un poco.

*(Éntrase la REINA.)*

MARCELA ¿Quién trujo aquí aquestas joyas?  
¡Cómo a los cielos y al tiempo 420  
por jamás se encubre cosa!  
¿Si he hecho mal en descubrirme?

Sí: que lengua presurosa  
no da lugar al discurso  
y más condena que abona. 425

*(Vuelven la REINA, BELICA y INÉS.)*

REINA ¿Es aquél el que venía  
a ver a tu hermana?

INÉS Sí;  
que con mi madre le vi  
comunicar más de un día.

REINA Con eso, y con el semblante, 430  
que al de mi hermano parece,  
ya veo que se me ofrece  
una sobrina delante.

MARCELA Así lo puedes creer:  
que ésa que traes de la mano 435  
es la prenda que tu hermano  
quiere y debe más querer.

Si ilustre por el padre  
la ha hecho Dios en el suelo,  
no menos la hace el cielo 440  
estremada por la madre,  
y ella, por su hermosura,  
merece ser estimada.

*(Entran el REY y el CABALLERO.)*

REY Ello es cosa averiguada  
que no hay celos sin locura. 445

REINA Y sin amor, señor mío,  
dijérades muy mejor.

REY Celos son rabia, y amor  
siempre della está vacío;  
y de la causa que es buena 450  
mal efecto no procede.

REINA En mí al contrario sucede:  
siempre celos me dan pena,  
y siempre los ha engendrado  
el grande amor que yo os tengo. 455

REY Si hay venganza, yo me vengo  
con que os hayáis engañado,  
pues no podrán redundar  
de vuestras preguntas hechas  
tan vehementes sospechas 460  
que me puedan condenar,  
ni yo, si miráis en ello,  
soy de sangre tan liviana  
que a tan humilde gitana  
incline el altivo cuello. 465

REINA Mirad, señor, que es hermosa,  
y que la rara belleza  
se lleva tras sí la alteza  
y fuerza más poderosa.  
Por mis ojos, que lleguéis 470  
a mirar sus bellos ojos.

REY Si gustáis de darme enojos,  
no es buen medio el que ponéis.

REINA ¿Cómo? ¿Y que así os amohína  
el mirar a una doncella 475  
que, después de ser tan bella,  
aspira a ser mi sobrina?

BELICA ¿Qué ha de ser aquesto, Inés?  
Que me voy imaginando  
que se están de mí burlando. 480

INÉS Calla y sabráslo después.

REINA Miradla así, descuidado,  
y decidme a quién parece.

REYA los ojos se me ofrece  
de Rosamiro un traslado. 485

REINA No es mucho, porque es su hija  
y como a tal la estimad.

CABALLERO ¿Burla vuestra majestad?

REINA No es bien que eso se colija  
de verdad tan manifiesta. 490

REY Si no burláis, es razón  
que me cause admiración  
tal novedad como es ésta.

REINA Llegad al rey, Isabel,

y decid que os dé la mano 495  
como a hija de mi hermano.

BELICA Como sierva llego a él.

REY Levantad, bella criatura,  
que de vuestro parecer  
muy bien se puede creer 500  
y esperar mayor ventura.  
Pero decidme, señora:  
¿cómo sabéis esta historia?

REINA Aunque es breve y es notoria,  
no es para decilla agora. 505  
Vámonos a la ciudad,  
que en el camino sabréis  
lo que luego creeréis  
como infalible verdad.

REY Vamos.

MARCELA No hay dudar, señor, 510  
en historia que es tan clara,  
pues su rostro la declara,  
y yo, que soy el actor.

*(Vanse entrando todos, y a la postre quedan INÉS y BELICA.)*

INÉS Belica, pues vas sobrina  
de la reina, por lo menos, 515  
esos tus ojos serenos  
a nuestra humildad inclina.

Acuérdate de que hurtamos  
más de una vegada juntas,  
y que sin soberbia y puntas 520  
más de otras cinco bailamos;  
y que, aunque habemos andado  
muchas veces a las greñas,  
siempre en efeto y por señas  
te he temido y respetado. 525  
Haz algún bien, pues podrás,  
a nuestros gitanos pobres;  
así en venturosa sobres  
a cuantas lo fueron más.  
Responde a lo que se ve 530  
de tu ser tan principal.

BELICADame, Inés, un memorial,  
que yo le despacharé.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Sale PEDRO DE URDEMALAS, con manteo y bonete, como estudiante.)*

PEDRO Dicen que la variación  
hace a la naturaleza 535  
colma de gusto y belleza,  
y está muy puesto en razón.

Un manjar a la contina  
enfada, y un solo objeto  
a los ojos del discreto 540  
da disgusto y amohína.

Un solo vestido cansa.  
En fin, con la variedad  
se muda la voluntad  
y el espíritu descansa. 545

Bien logrado iré del mundo  
cuando Dios me lleve dél,

pues podré decir que en él  
un Proteo fui segundo.

¡Válgame Dios, qué de trajes 550  
he mudado, y qué de oficios,  
qué de varios ejercicios,  
qué de exquisitos lenguajes!

Y agora, como estudiante,  
de la reina voy huyendo, 555  
cien mil azares temiendo  
desta mi suerte inconstante.

Pero yo, ¿por qué me cuento  
que llevo en mudable palma?  
Si ha de estar siempre nuestra alma 560  
en contino movimiento,

Dios me arroje ya a las partes  
donde más fuere servido.

*(Entra un LABRADOR con dos gallinas.)*

LABRADOR Pues yo no las he vendido;  
bien parece que es hoy martes. 565

PEDRO Mostrad, hermano; llegad,  
llegad, mostrad. ¿Qué os turbáis?  
Ellas son de calidad,  
que en cada una mostráis  
vuestra grande caridad. 570

Andad con Dios y dejaldas,  
y desde lejos miraldas,  
como a reliquias honraldas,  
para el culto dedicaldas  
bucólico y adoraldas. 575

LABRADOR Como me las pague, haga  
altar o reliquias dellas,  
o lo que más satisfaga



a su gusto.

PEDRO Sólo es dellas  
santa y justísima paga 580  
hacer dellas un empleo  
que satisfaga al deseo  
del más mirado cristiano.

LABRADOR Saldrá su disignio vano,  
señor zote, a lo que creo. 585

*(Entran dos representantes, que se señalan con números 1 y 2.)*

PEDRO Sois hipócrita y malino,  
pues no tenéis miramiento  
que os habla un hombre cetrino,  
hombre que vale por ciento  
para hacer un desatino; 590  
hombre que se determina,  
con una y otra gallina,  
sacar de Argel dos cautivos  
que están sanos y están vivos  
por la voluntad divina. 595

REPRESENTANTE 1 Este cuento es de primor,  
y el sacristán, o lo que es,  
juega de hermano mayor.

PEDRO ¡Oh fuerzas del interés,  
llenas de envidia y rigor! 600  
¿Que es posible que te esquives,  
por tan pocos arrequives,  
de sacar sendos cristianos  
de mano de los tiranos?

¡Cómante malos caribes! 605

LABRADOR Diga, señor papasal:

¿son, por ventura, mostrencas  
mis gallinas, ¡pesiatál!,  
para no hacerme de pencas  
de dar mi pobre caudal? 610

Rescaten a esos cristianos  
los ricos, los cortesanos,  
los frailes, los limosneros:  
que yo no tengo dineros  
si no lo ganan mis manos. 615

REPRESENTANTE 1 *Aparte.*

Esforcemos este embuste.  
Sois un hombre mal mirado,  
de mala yacija y fuste,  
hombre que es tan desalmado,  
que no hay cosa de que guste. 620

PEDRO La maldición de mi zorra,  
de mi bonete y mi gorra,  
caiga en ti y en tu ralea,  
y cautivo yo te vea  
en Fez en una mazmorra, 625

para ver si te holgarás  
de que sea quien entonces,  
por dos gallinas no más...  
¡Oh corazones de bronces,  
archivos de Satanás! 630

¡Oh miseria desta vida,  
a términos reducida,  
que vienen los cortesanos  
a rogar a los villanos,  
gente non santa y perdida! 635

LABRADOR ¡Pesia a mí! Denme mis aves,  
que yo no estoy para dar  
limosna.

REPRESENTANTE 1 ¡Qué poco sabes  
de achaque de rescatar  
dos hombres gordos y graves! 640

Yo los tengo señalados,  
corpulentos y barbados,  
de raro talle y presencia,  
que valen en mi conciencia  
más de trecientos ducados, 645

y por estas dos gallinas,  
solamente, los rescato.  
¡Ved qué entrañas tan molestas  
tiene este pobre pazguato,  
criado entre las encinas! 650

¡Ya la ruindad y malicia,  
la miseria y la codicia  
reina sólo entre esta gente!

LABRADORA Un bien que hay aquí teniente,  
corregidor y justicia. 655

*Éntrase.*

PEDRO Y yo tengo lengua y pies.  
Esperen, y lo verán.

REPRESENTANTE 1 Sois un traidor magancés,  
hombre de aquellos que dan  
mohatras de tres en tres. 660

REPRESENTANTE 2 Déjele vuesa merced,  
que, pues ya dejó en la red  
las cobas, vaya en buen hora.

REPRESENTANTE 1Pues bien: ¿qué haremos agora?

PEDROLo que es vuestro gusto haced. 665

Despójese de su pluma  
el rescate, y véase luego,  
en resolución y en suma,  
si hay algún rancho o bodega  
donde todo se consuma: 670  
que yo, a fe de compañero,  
desde agora me prefiero  
a dar todo el adherente.

REPRESENTANTE 2Hay un grande inconveniente:  
que hemos de ensayar primero. 675

PEDRO Pues díganme: ¿son farsantes?

REPRESENTANTE 1Por nuestros pecados, sí.

PEDROHaz de mis dichas Adlantes,  
cerros de mi Potosí,  
de mi pequeñez gigantes; 680  
en vosotros se me ofrece  
todo aquello que apetece  
mi deseo en sumo grado.

REPRESENTANTE 2¿Qué vendaval os ha dado,  
que así el seso os desvanece? 685

PEDRO Sin duda, he de ser farsante,  
y haré que estupendamente  
la fama mis hechos cante,  
y que los lleve y los cuente  
en Poniente y en Levante. 690

Volarán los hechos míos  
hasta los reinos vacíos  
de Policea, y aún más,  
en nombre de Nicolás,  
y el sobrenombre de Ríos: 695  
que éste fue el nombre de aquel  
mago que a entender me dio  
quién era el mundo crüel,  
ciego que sin vista vio  
cuantos fraudes hay en él. 700

En las chozas y en las salas,  
entre las jergas y galas  
será mi nombre estendido,  
aunque se ponga en olvido  
el de Pedro de Urdemalas. 705

REPRESENTANTE 2 Enigma y algarabía  
es cuanto habláis, señor,  
para nosotros.

PEDRO Sería  
falta de ingenio y valor  
contaros la historia mía, 710  
a lo menos por agora.  
Vamos: que, si se mejora  
mi suerte con ser farsista,  
seréis testigos de vista  
del ingenio que en mí mora, 715  
principalmente en jugar  
las tretas de un entremés

hasta do pueden llegar.

*(Entra otro farsante.)*

REPRESENTANTE 3 ¿No advertirán que ya es  
hora y tiempo de ensayar? 720

Porque pide el rey comedia,  
y el autor ha ya hora y media  
que espera. ¡Grande descuido!

REPRESENTANTE 1 Pues con ir presto, yo cuido  
que ese daño se remedia. 725

Venga, galán, que yo haré  
que hoy quede por recitante.

PEDRO Si lo quedo, mostraré  
que soy para autor bastante  
con lo menos que yo sé. 730

Llegado ha ya la ocasión  
donde la adivinación  
que un hablante Malgesí  
echó un tiempo sobre mí,  
tenga efecto y conclusión. 735

Ya podré ser patriarca,  
pontífice y estudiante,  
emperador y monarca:  
que el oficio de farsante  
todos estados abarca; 740

y, aunque es vida trabajosa,  
es, en efecto, curiosa,  
pues cosas curiosas trata,  
y nunca quien la maltrata  
le dará nombre de ociosa. 745

*(Éntranse todos.)*

*(Sale un AUTOR con unos papeles como comedia, y dos farsantes, que todos se señalan por número.)*

AUTOR Son muy anchos de conciencia  
vuelas mercedes, y creo,  
por las señales que veo,  
que me ha de faltar paciencia.

¡Cuerpo de mí! ¿En veinte días 750  
no se pudiera haber puesto  
esta comedia? ¿Qué es esto?  
Ellas son venturas mías.

Póneme esto en confusión,  
y en un rancor importuno, 755  
que nunca falte ninguno  
al pedir de la ración,  
y al ensayo es menester  
que con perros y hurones  
los busquen, y aun a pregones, 760  
y no querrán parecer.

PEDRO ¿Quién un agudo embustero,  
ni un agudo hablador,  
sabrás hacerle mejor  
que yo, si es que hacerle quiero? 765

AUTOR Si no pica de arrogante  
el dómine, mucho sabe.

PEDRO Sé todo aquello que cabe  
en un general farsante;  
sé todos los requisitos 770  
que un farsante ha de tener  
para serlo, que han de ser

tan raros como infinitos.

De gran memoria, primero;  
segundo, de suelta lengua; 775  
y que no padezca mengua  
de galas es lo tercero.

Buen talle no le perdono,  
si es que ha de hacer los galanes;  
no afectado en ademanes, 780  
ni ha de recitar con tono.

Con descuido cuidadoso,  
grave anciano, joven presto,  
enamorado compuesto,  
con rabia si está celoso. 785

Ha de recitar de modo,  
con tanta industria y cordura,  
que se vuelva en la figura  
que hace de todo en todo.

A los versos ha de dar 790  
valor con su lengua experta,  
y a la fábula que es muerta  
ha de hacer resucitar.

Ha de sacar con espanto  
las lágrimas de la risa, 795  
y hacer que vuelvan con prisa  
otra vez al triste llanto.

Ha de hacer que aquel semblante  
que él mostrare, todo oyente  
le muestre, y será excelente 800  
si hace aquesto el recitante.

*(Entra el ALGUACIL de las comedias.)*

ALGUACIL ¿Ahora están tan despacio?  
Esperarles he a que acaben.  
Bien parece que no saben  
las nuevas que hay en palacio. 805  
Vengan, que ya me amohína



la posma que en ellos reina,  
aguardando el rey o reina  
y la nueva su sobrina.

AUTOR ¿Qué sobrina?

ALGUACIL Una gitana, 810  
dicen, que es bella en extremo.

PEDRO Que sea Belica temo.  
¿Y eso es verdad?

ALGUACIL Y tan llana,  
que yo no sé cuál se sea  
mayor verdad por agora. 815  
Y la reina, mi señora,  
hacerle fiestas desea.  
Venid, que allá lo sabréis  
todo como pasa al punto.

PEDRO Mucho bien me vendrá junto 820  
si por vuestro me queréis.

AUTOR Admitido estáis ya al gremio  
de nuestro alegre ejercicio,  
pues vuestro raro juicio,  
mayor lauro pide en premio. 825  
Largo hablaremos después.  
Vamos, y haremos la prueba  
de vuestra gracia tan nueva,  
ensayando un entremés.

PEDRO No me hará ventaja alguno 830  
en eso, cual se verá.

ALGUACIL Señores, que es tarde ya.

AUTOR ¿Falta aquí alguno?

REPRESENTANTE 1 Ninguno.

*(Vanse todos.)*

*(Salen el REY y SILERIO.)*

REY En cualquier traje se muestra  
su belleza al descubierto: 835  
gitana, me tuvo muerto;  
dama, a matarme se adiestra.

El parentesco no afloja  
mi deseo; antes, por él  
con ahínco más crüel 840  
toda el alma se congoja.

*(Suenan guitarras.)*

Pero, ¿qué música es ésta?

SILERIO Los comediantes serán,  
que adonde se visten van.

REY Ya me entristece la fiesta; 845

ya sólo con mi deseo  
quisiera avenirme a solas,  
y dar costado a las olas  
del mar de amor do me veo.

Pero escucha, que mi historia 850  
parece que oigo cantar,  
y es señal que ha de durar  
luengos siglos su memoria.

*(Entran los MÚSICOS cantando este romance:)*

MÚSICOS     *Bailan las gitanas;*  
                  *míralas el rey; 855*  
                  *la reina, con celos,*  
                  *mándalas prender.*  
Por Pascua de Reyes  
hicieron al rey  
un baile gitano 860  
Belica e Inés;  
turbada Belica,  
cayó junto al rey,  
y el rey la levanta  
de puro cortés; 865  
mas como es Belilla  
de tan linda tez,  
la reina, celosa,  
                  *mándalas prender.*

SILERIO    Vienen tan embebecidos, 870  
que no nos echan de ver.

REY    Cantan lo que debe ser  
suspensión de los sentidos.

MÚSICO 1 El rey está aquí. ¡Chitón!  
Quizá no le agradará 875  
nuestra canción.

MÚSICO 2 Sí hará,  
por ser nueva la canción,  
y no contiene otra cosa,  
fuera de que es dulce y grave,  
que decir lo que se sabe: 880  
que es la reina recelosa,  
y hechura de la mujer  
tener celos del marido.

REY; Qué bien que lo has entendido!  
Dételo el diablo a entender. 885  
Silerio, mi muerte y vida  
vienen juntas. ¿Qué haré?

SILERIO Mostrar a un tiempo la fe,  
aquí cierta, allí fingida.

*(Entran la REINA y BELICA, ya vestida de dama; INÉS, de gitana; MALDONADO, el autor, MARTÍN CRESPO, el alcalde, y PEDRO DE URDEMALAS.)*

PEDRO Famosa Isabel, que ya 890  
fuiste Belica primero;  
Pedro, el famoso embustero,  
postrado a tus pies está,  
tan hecho a hacer desvaríos,  
que, para cobrar renombre, 895  
el Pedro de Urde, su nombre,  
ya es Nicolás de los Ríos.  
Digo que tienes delante

a tu Pedro conocido,  
de gitano convertido 900  
en un famoso farsante,  
para servirte en más obras  
que puedes imaginar,  
si no le quieres faltar  
con lo mucho en que a otros sobras. 905

Tu presunción y la mía  
han llegado a conclusión:  
la mía sólo en ficción;  
la tuya, como debía.

Hay suertes de mil maneras, 910  
que, entre donaires y burlas,  
hacen señores de burlas,  
como señores de veras.

Yo, farsante, seré rey  
cuando le haya en la comedia, 915  
y tú, oyente, ya eres media  
reina por valor y ley.

En burlas podré servirte,  
tú hacerme merced de veras,  
si tras las mañas ligeras 920  
del vulgo no quieres irte;  
en el cual, si alguno hubo  
o hay humilde en rica alteza,  
siempre queda la bajeza  
de aquel principio que tuvo. 925

Pero tu ser y virtud  
me tienen bien satisfecho,  
que no llegará a tu pecho  
la sombra de ingratitud.

Por aquesta buena fe, 930  
de la reina, ¡oh gran sobrina!,  
y por ver que a ti se inclina  
quien gitano por ti fue,  
que al rey pidas te suplico,  
andando el tiempo, una cosa 935  
más buena que provechosa,  
porque a mi gusto la aplico.

REY Desde luego la concedo;  
pide lo que es de tu gusto.

PEDRO Por ser lo que quiero justo, 940  
lo declararé sin miedo.

Y es que, pues claro se entiende  
que el recitar es oficio  
que a enseñar, en su ejercicio,  
y a deleitar sólo atiende, 945

y para esto es menester  
grandísima habilidad,  
trabajo y curiosidad,  
saber gastar y tener,  
que ninguno no le haga 950  
que las partes no tuviere  
que este ejercicio requiere,  
con que enseñe y satisfaga.

Preceda examen primero,  
o muestra de compañía, 955  
y no por su fantasía  
se haga autor un pandero.

Con esto pondrán la mira  
a esmerarse en su ejercicio:  
que tanto es bueno el oficio, 960  
cuanto es el fin a que aspira.

BELICA Yo haré que el rey, mi señor,  
vuestra petición conceda.

REY Y aun otras, si hay en qué pueda  
valerle vuestro favor. 965

REINA Con mejores ojos miro

ahora que la miréis;  
y en cuanto por ella hacéis,  
más me alegre que me admiro.

Ya mi voluntad se inclina 970  
a acreditar a los dos:  
que entre mis celos y vos  
se ha puesto el ser mi sobrina.

Vamos a oír la comedia  
con gusto, pues que los cielos 975  
no ordenaron que mis celos  
la volviesen en tragedia.

Y avisaráse a mi hermano  
luego deste hallazgo bueno.

*(Éntrese.)*

REY Ya yo le tengo en el seno 980  
y le toco con la mano.

¡Oh imaginación, que alcanzas  
las cosas menos posibles,  
si alcanzan las imposibles  
de reyes las esperanzas! 985

SILERIO No te aflijas, que no es tanto  
el parentesco que impida  
hallar a tu mal salida.

REY Sí; mas moriré entretanto.

*(Éntrese el REY y SILERIO.)*

MALDONADO Señora Belica, espere; 990  
mire que soy Maldonado,  
su conde.

BELICA Tengo otro estado  
que estar aquí no requiere.  
Maldonado, perdonadme,  
que yo os hablaré otro día. 995

INÉS ¡Hermana Belica mía!

BELICA La reina espera; dejadme.

*(Éntrase BELICA.)*

INÉS ¡Entróse! ¡Quién me dijera  
aquesto casi antiyer!  
No lo pudiera creer, 1000  
si con los ojos lo viera.  
¡Válame Dios, y qué ingrata  
mochacha, y qué sacudida!

PEDRO La mudanza de la vida  
mil firmezas desbarata, 1005  
mil agravios comprende,  
mil vivezas atesora,  
y olvida sólo en un hora  
lo que en mil siglos aprende.

ALCALDE Pedro, ¿cómo estás aquí 1010  
tan galán? ¿Qué te has hecho?

PEDRO Pudiérame haber deshecho,  
si no mirara por mí.  
Mudado he de oficio y nombre,



y no es así comoquiera: 1015  
hecho estoy una quimera.

ALCALDE Siempre tú fuiste gran hombre.

Yo por el premio venía  
de la danza que enseñaste,  
que en ella claro mostraste 1020  
tu ingenio y tu bizarría;  
y si en el mundo no hubiera  
pajes, yo sé que durara  
su fama hasta que llegara  
la edad que ha de ser postrera. 1025

Clemente y Clemencia están  
muy buenos, sin ningún mal,  
y Benita con Pascual  
garrida vida se dan.

*(Entra UNO.)*

UNO Sus majestades aguardan; 1030  
bien pueden ya comenzar.

PEDRO Después podremos hablar.

UNO Miren que dicen que tardan.

PEDRO Ya ven vuesas mercedes que los reyes  
aguardan allá dentro, y no es posible 1035  
entrar todos a ver la gran comedia  
que mi autor representa, que alabardas  
y lancineques y frinfrón impiden  
la entrada a toda gente mosquetera.  
Mañana, en el teatro, se hará una, 1040

donde por poco precio verán todos  
desde principio al fin toda la traza,  
y verán que no acaba en casamiento,  
cosa común y vista cien mil veces,  
ni que parió la dama esta jornada, 1045  
y en otra tiene el niño ya sus barbas,  
y es valiente y feroz, y mata y hiende,  
y venga de sus padres cierta injuria,  
y al fin viene a ser rey de un cierto reino  
que no hay cosmografía que le muestre. 1050  
Destas impertinencias y otras tales  
ofreció la comedia libre y suelta,  
pues llena de artificio, industria y galas,  
se cела del gran Pedro de Urdemalas.

## EL JUEZ DE LOS DIVORCIOS



### *Entremés del Juez de los divorcios*

*Sale el JUEZ, y otros dos con él, que son ESCRIBANO y PROCURADOR, y siéntase en una silla; salen el VEJETE y MARIANA, su mujer.*

MARIANA.- Aun bien que está ya el señor juez de los divorcios sentado en la silla de su audiencia. Desta vez tengo de quedar dentro o fuera; desta vegada tengo de quedar libre de pedido y alcabala, como el gavilán.

VEJETE.- Por amor de Dios, Mariana, que no almonedeas tanto tu negocio: habla paso, por la pasión que Dios pasó; mira que tienes atronada a toda la vecindad con tus gritos; y, pues tienes delante al señor juez, con menos voces le puedes informar de tu justicia.

JUEZ.- ¿Qué pendencia traéis, buena gente?

MARIANA.- Señor, ¡divorcio, divorcio, y más divorcio, y otras mil veces divorcio!

JUEZ.- ¿De quién, o por qué, señora?

MARIANA.- ¿De quién? Deste viejo que está presente.

JUEZ.- ¿Por qué?

MARIANA.- Porque no puedo sufrir sus impertinencias, ni estar contino atenta a curar todas sus enfermedades, que son sin número; y no me criaron a mí mis padres para ser hospitalera ni enfermera. Muy buen dote llevé al poder desta espuerta de huesos, que me tiene consumidos los días de la vida; cuando entré en su poder, me relumbraba la cara como un espejo, y agora la tengo con una vara de frisa encima. Vuesa merced, señor juez, me descase, si no quiere que me ahorque; mire, mire los surcos que tengo por este rostro, de las lágrimas que derramo cada día por verme casada con esta anotomía.

JUEZ.- No lloréis, señora; bajad la voz y enjugad las lágrimas, que yo os haré justicia.

MARIANA.- Déjeme vuesa merced llorar, que con esto descanso. En los reinos y en las repúblicas bien ordenadas, había de ser limitado el tiempo de los matrimonios, y de tres en tres años se habían de deshacer, o confirmarse de nuevo, como cosas de arrendamiento; y no que hayan de durar toda la vida, con perpetuo dolor de entrambas partes.

JUEZ.- Si ese arbitrio se pudiera o debiera poner en práctica, y por dineros, ya se hubiera hecho; pero especificad más, señora, las ocasiones que os mueven a pedir divorcio.

MARIANA.- El invierno de mi marido y la primavera de mi edad; el quitarme el sueño, por levantarme a media noche a calentar paños y saquillos de salvado para ponerle en la ijada; el ponerle, ora aquesto, ora aquella ligadura, que ligado le vea yo a un palo por justicia; el cuidado que tengo de ponerle de noche alta cabecera de la cama, jarabes lenitivos, porque no se ahogue del pecho; y el estar obligada a sufrirle el mal olor de la boca, que le güele mal a tres tiros de arcabuz.

ESCRIBANO.- Debe de ser de alguna muela podrida.

VEJETE.- No puede ser, porque lleve el diablo la muela ni diente que tengo en toda ella.

PROCURADOR.- Pues ley hay que dice, según he oído decir, que por sólo el mal olor de la boca se puede descasar la mujer del marido, y el marido de la mujer.

VEJETE.- En verdad, señores, que el mal aliento que ella dice que tengo, no se engendra de mis podridas muelas, pues no las tengo, ni menos procede de mi estómago, que está sanísimo, sino desamala intención de su pecho. Mal conocen vuestras mercedes a esta señora, pues a fe que, si la conociesen, que la ayunarian o la santiguarían. Veinte y dos años ha que vivo con ella mártir, sin haber sido jamás confesor de sus insolencias, de sus voces y de sus fantasías, y ya va para dos años que cada día me va dando vaivenes y empujones hacia la sepultura; a cuyas voces me tiene medio sordo, y, a puro reñir, sin juicio. Si me cura, como ella dice, cúrame a regañadientes; habiendo de ser suave la mano y la condición del médico. En resolución, señores: yo soy el que muero en su poder, y ella es la que vive en el mío, porque es señora, con mero mixto imperio, de la hacienda que tengo.

MARIANA.- ¿Hacienda vuestra? Y ¿qué hacienda tenéis vos, que no la hayáis ganado con la que llevastes en mi dote? Y son míos la mitad de los bienes gananciales, mal que os pese; y dellos y de la dote, si me muriese agora, no os dejaría valor de un maravedí, porque veáis el amor que os tengo.

JUEZ.- Decid, señor: cuando entrastes en poder de vuestra mujer, ¿no entrastes gallardo, sano y bien acondicionado?

VEJETE.- Ya he dicho que ha veinte y dos años que entré en su poder, como quien entra en el de un cómitre calabrés a remar en galeras de por fuerza; y entré tan sano, que podía decir y hacer como quien juega a las pintas.

MARIANA.- Cedacico nuevo, tres días en estaca.

JUEZ.- Callad, callad, nora en tal, mujer de bien, y andad con Dios, que yo no hallo causa para descasaros; y, pues comistes las maduras, gustad de las duras; que no está obligado ningún marido a tener la velocidad y corrida del tiempo, que no pase por su puerta y por sus días; y descontad los malos que ahora os da, con los buenos que os dio cuando pudo; y no repliquéis más palabra.

VEJETE.- Si fuese posible, recibiría gran merced que vuesa merced me la hiciese de despenarme, alzándome esta carcelería; porque, dejándome así, habiendo ya llegado a este rompimiento, será de nuevo entregarme al verdugo que me martirice; y si no, hagamos una cosa: enciérrese ella en un monesterio y yo en otro; partamos la hacienda, y desta suerte podremos vivir en paz y en servicio de Dios lo que nos queda de la vida.

MARIANA.- ¡Malos años! ¡Bonica soy yo para estar encerrada! No sino llegaos a la niña, que es amiga de redes, de tornos, rejas y escuchas, encerraos vos, que lo podréis llevar y sufrir, que ni tenéis ojos con que ver, ni oídos con que oír, ni pies con que andar, ni mano con que tocar: que yo, que estoy sana, y con todos mis cinco sentidos cabales y vivos, quiero usar dellos a la descubierta, y no por brújula, como quínola dudosa.

ESCRIBANO.- Libre es la mujer.

PROCURADOR.- Y prudente el marido; pero no puede más.

JUEZ.- Pues yo no puedo hacer este divorcio, *quia nullam invenio causam*.

(Entra un SOLDADO bien aderezado y su mujer, DOÑA GUIOMAR.)

DOÑA GUIOMAR.- ¡Bendito sea Dios!, que se me ha cumplido el deseo que tenía de verme ante la presencia de vuesa merced, a quien suplico, cuan

encarecidamente puedo, sea servido de descasarme déste.

JUEZ.- ¿Qué cosa es *déste*? ¿No tiene otro nombre? Bien fuera que dijérades siquiera: «deste hombre».

DOÑA GUIOMAR.- Si él fuera hombre, no procurara yo descasarme.

JUEZ.- Pues ¿qué es?

DOÑA GUIOMAR.- Un leño.

SOLDADO.- *Aparte.* Por Dios, que he de ser leño en callar y en sufrir. Quizá con no defenderme ni contradecir a esta mujer el juez se inclinará a condenarme; y, pensando que me castiga, me sacará de cautiverio, como si por milagro se librase un cautivo de las mazmorras de Tetuán.

PROCURADOR.- Hablad más comedido, señora, y relatad vuestro negocio, sin improprios de vuestro marido; que el señor juez de los divorcios, que está delante, mirará rectamente por vuestra justicia.

DOÑA GUIOMAR.- Pues, ¿no quieren vuesas mercedes que llame leño a una estatua, que no tiene más acciones que un madero?

MARIANA.- Ésta y yo nos quejamos, sin duda, de un mismo agravio.

DOÑA GUIOMAR.- Digo, en fin, señor mío, que a mí me casaron con este hombre, ya que quiere vuesa merced que así lo llame; pero no es este hombre con quien yo me casé.

JUEZ.- ¿Cómo es eso?, que no os entiendo.

DOÑA GUIOMAR.- Quiero decir que pensé que me casaba con un hombre moliente y corriente, y a pocos días hallé que me había casado con un leño, como tengo dicho; porque él no sabe cuál es su mano derecha, ni busca medios ni trazas para granjear un real con que ayude a sustentar su casa y familia. Las mañanas se le pasan en oír misa y en estarse en la puerta de Guadalajara murmurando, sabiendo nuevas, diciendo y escuchando mentiras; y las tardes, y aun las mañanas también, se va de en casa en casa de juego, y allí sirve de número a los mirones, que, según he oído decir, es un género de gente a quien aborrecen en todo extremo los gariteros. A las dos de la tarde viene a comer, sin que le hayan dado un real de barato, porque ya no se usa el darlo. Vuélvese a ir, vuelve a media noche, cena si lo halla, y si no, santíguase, bosteza y acuéstase; y en toda la noche no sosiega, dando vueltas. Pregúntole qué tiene. Respóndeme que está haciendo un soneto en la memoria para un amigo que se le ha pedido; y da en ser poeta, como si fuese oficio con quien no estuviese vinculada la necesidad del mundo.

SOLDADO.- Mi señora doña Guiomar, en todo cuanto ha dicho, no ha salido de los límites de la razón; y, si yo no la tuviera en lo que hago, como ella la tiene en lo que dice, ya había yo de haber procurado algún favor de palillos, de aquí o de allí, y procurar verme, como se ven otros hombrécitos aguditos y bulliciosos, con una vara en las manos, y sobre una mula de alquiler pequeña, seca y maliciosa, sin mozo de mulas que le acompañe, porque las tales mulas nunca se alquilan sino a faltas y cuando están de nones; sus alforjitas a las ancas: en la una un cuello y una camisa, y en la otra su medio queso y su pan y su bota; sin añadir a los vestidos que trae de rúa, para hacellos de camino, sino unas polainas y una sola espuela; y, con una comisión, y aun comezón en el seno, sale por esa Puente Toledana raspahilando, a pesar de las malas mañanas de la harona, y, a cabo de pocos días, envía a su casa algún pernil de tocino y algunas varas de lienzo crudo; en fin, de aquellas cosas que valen baratas en los lugares del distrito de su comisión, y con esto sustenta su casa como el pecador mejor puede; pero yo, que ni tengo oficio ni beneficio, no sé qué hacerme, porque no hay señor que quiera servirse de mí, porque soy casado; así que, me será forzoso suplicar a vuesa merced, señor juez, pues ya por pobres son tan enfadosos los hidalgos, y mi mujer lo pide, que nos divida y aparte.



DOÑA GUIOMAR.- Y hay más en esto, señor juez: que, como yo veo que mi marido es tan para poco, y que padece necesidad, muérome por remedialle; pero no puedo, porque, en resolución, soy mujer de bien, y no tengo de hacer vileza.

SOLDADO.- Por esto solo merecía ser querida esta mujer, pero, debajo deste pundonor, tiene encubierta la más mala condición de la tierra: pide celos sin causa, grita sin porqué, presume sin hacienda, y, como me ve pobre, no me estima en el baile del rey Perico; y es lo peor, señor juez, que quiere que, a trueco de la fidelidad que me guarda, le sufra y disimule millares de millares de impertinencias y desabrimientos que tiene.

DOÑA GUIOMAR.- ¿Pues no? ¿Y por qué no me habéis vos de guardar a mí decoro y respeto, siendo tan buena como soy?

SOLDADO.- Oíd, señora doña Guiomar; aquí, delante destos señores, os quiero decir esto: ¿por qué me hacéis cargo de que sois buena, estando vos obligada a serlo, por ser de tan buenos padres nacida, por ser cristiana y por lo que debéis a vos misma? ¡Bueno es que quieran las mujeres que las respeten sus maridos porque son castas y honestas; como si en sólo esto consistiese, de todo en todo, su perfección; y no echan de ver los desaguaderos por donde desaguan la fineza de otras mil virtudes que les faltan! ¿Qué se me da a mí que seáis casta con vos misma, puesto que se me da mucho, si os descuidáis de que lo sea vuestra criada, y si andáis siempre rostrituerta, enojada, celosa, pensativa, manirrota, dormilona, perezosa, pendenciera, gruñidora, con otras insolencias deste jaez, que bastan a consumir las vidas de docientos maridos? Pero, con todo esto, digo, señor juez, que ninguna cosa destas tiene mi señora doña Guiomar; y confieso que yo soy el leño, el inhábil, el dejado y el perezoso; y que, por ley de buen gobierno, aunque no sea por otra cosa, está vuesa merced obligado a descasarnos; que desde aquí digo que no tengo ninguna cosa que alegar contra lo que mi mujer ha dicho, y que doy el pleito por concluso, y holgaré de ser condenado.

DOÑA GUIOMAR.- ¿Qué hay que alegar contra lo que tengo dicho? Que no

me dais de comer a mí, ni a vuestra criada; y monta que son muchas, sino una, y aun esa sietemesina, que no come por un grillo.

ESCRIBANO.- Sosiéguese; que vienen nuevos demandantes.

*(Entra uno vestido a lo médico, y es CIRUJANO, y ALDONZA DE MINJACA, su mujer.)*

CIRUJANO.- Por cuatro causas bien bastantes, vengo a pedir a vuesa merced, señor juez, haga divorcio entre mí y la señora doña Aldonza de Minjaca, mi mujer, que está presente.

JUEZ.- Resoluto venís; decid las cuatro causas.

CIRUJANO.- La primera, porque no la puedo ver más que a todos los diablos; la segunda, por lo que ella se sabe; la tercera, por lo que yo me callo; la cuarta, porque no me lleven los demonios, cuando desta vida vaya, si he de durar en su compañía hasta mi muerte.

PROCURADOR.- Bastantísimamente ha probado su intención.

MINJACA.- Señor juez, vuesa merced me oiga, y advierta que, si mi marido pide por cuatro causas divorcio, yo le pido por cuatrocientas. La primera, porque, cada vez que le veo, hago cuenta que veo al mismo Lucifer; la segunda, porque fui engañada cuando con él me casé, porque él dijo que era médico de pulso, y remaneció cirujano, y hombre que hace ligaduras y cura otras enfermedades, que va decir desto a médico la mitad del justo precio; la tercera, porque tiene celos del sol que me toca; la cuarta, que, como no le puedo ver, querría estar apartada dél dos millones de leguas.

ESCRIBANO.- ¿Quién diablos acertará a concertar estos relojes, estando las

ruedas tan desconcertadas?

MINJACA.- La quinta...

JUEZ.- Señora, señora, si pensáis decir aquí todas las cuatrocientas causas, yo no estoy para escuchallas, ni hay lugar para ello. Vuestro negocio se recibe a prueba; y andad con Dios, que hay otros negocios que despachar.

CIRUJANO.- ¿Qué más pruebas, sino que yo no quiero morir con ella, ni ella gusta de vivir conmigo?

JUEZ.- Si eso bastase para descasarse los casados, infinitísimos sacudirían de sus hombros el yugo del matrimonio.

*(Entra uno vestido de GANAPÁN, con su caperuza cuarteada.)*

GANAPÁN.- Señor juez: ganapán soy, no lo niego, pero cristiano viejo, y hombre de bien a las derechas; y, si no fuese que alguna vez me tomo del vino, o él me toma a mí, que es lo más cierto, ya hubiera sido prioste en la cofradía de los hermanos de la carga, pero, dejando esto aparte, porque hay mucho que decir en ello, quiero que sepa el señor juez que, estando una vez muy enfermo de los vaguidos de Baco, prometí de casarme con una mujer errada. Volví en mí, sané y cumplí la promesa, y caséme con una mujer que saqué de pecado; púsela a ser placera; ha salido tan soberbia y de tan mala condición, que nadie llega a su tabla con quien no riña, ora sobre el peso falto, ora sobre que le llegan a la fruta, y a dos por tres les da con una pesa en la cabeza, o adonde topa, y los deshonra hasta la cuarta generación, sin tener hora de paz con todas sus vecinas ya parleras; y yo tengo de tener todo el día la espada más lista que un sacabuche, para defendella; y no ganamos para pagar penas de pesos no maduros, ni de condenaciones de pependencias. Querría, si vuesa merced fuese servido, o que me apartase della, o, por lo menos, le mudase la condición acelerada que tiene en otra más reportada y más blanda; y prométole a vuesa merced de descargalle de balde todo el carbón que comprare este verano; que puedo mucho con los

hermanos mercaderes de la costilla.

CIRUJANO.- Ya conozco yo a la mujer deste buen hombre, y es tan mala como mi Aldonza: que no lo puedo más encarecer.

JUEZ.- Mirad, señores, aunque algunos de los que aquí estáis habéis dado algunas causas que traen aparejada sentencia de divorcio, con todo eso, es menester que conste por escrito, y que lo digan testigos; y así, a todos os recibo a prueba. Pero, ¿qué es esto? ¿Música y guitarras en mi audiencia? ¡Novedad grande es ésta!

*(Entran dos músicos.)*

MÚSICO.- Señor juez, aquellos dos casados tan desavenidos que vuesa merced concertó, redujo y apaciguó el otro día, están esperando a vuesa merced con una gran fiesta en su casa; y por nosotros le envían a suplicar sea servido de hallarse en ella y honrallos.

JUEZ.- Eso haré yo de muy buena gana; y pluguiese a Dios que todos los presentes se apaciguasen como ellos.

PROCURADOR.- Desa manera, moriríamos de hambre los escribanos y procuradores desta audiencia; que no, no, sino todo el mundo ponga demandas de divorcios; que, al cabo, al cabo, los más se quedan como se estaban y nosotros habemos gozado del fruto de sus pendencies y necesidades.

MÚSICO.- Pues en verdad que desde aquí hemos de ir regocijando la fiesta.

*(Cantan los músicos.)*

Entre casados de honor,

cuando hay pleito descubierto,  
*más vale el peor concierto*  
*que no el divorcio mejor.*

Donde no ciega el engaño  
simple, en que algunos están,  
las riñas de por San Juan  
son paz para todo el año.

Resucita allí el honor,  
y el gusto, que estaba muerto,  
*donde vale el peor concierto*  
*más que el divorcio mejor.*

Aunque la rabia de celos  
es tan fuerte y rigurosa,  
si los pide una hermosa,  
no son celos, sino cielos.

Tiene esta opinión Amor,  
que es el sabio más experto:  
*que vale el peor concierto*  
*más que el divorcio mejor.*

FIN DESTE ENTREMÉS

# EL RUFIÓN VIUDO



*Entremés del Rufián viudo llamado Trampagos*

*Sale TRAMPAGOS con un capuz de luto, y con él VADEMÉCUM, su criado, con dos espadas de esgrima.*

TRAMPAGOS; Vademécum!

VADEMÉCUM; Señor?

TRAMPAGOS; Traes las morenas?

VADEMÉCUM; Traígoras.

TRAMPAGOS; Está bien: muestra y camina,  
y saca aquí la silla de respaldo,  
con los otros asientos de por casa.

VADEMÉCUM; ¿Qué asientos? ¿Hay alguno, por ventura? 5

TRAMPAGOS; Saca el mortero, puerco, el broquel saca,  
y el banco de la cama.

VADEMÉCUM; Está impedido;

fáltale un pie.

TRAMPAGOS¿Y es tacha?

VADEMÉCUM¡Y no pequeña!

*(Éntrase VADEMÉCUM.)*

TRAMPAGOS¡Ah, Periconas, Periconas mías,  
y aun de todo el concejo! En fin, llegóse 10  
el tuyo: yo quedé, tú te has partido,  
y es lo peor que no imagino adónde,  
aunque, según fue el curso de tu vida,  
bien se puede creer piadosamente  
que estás en parte... Aun no me determino 15  
de señalarte asiento en la otra vida.  
Tendréla yo, sin ti, como de muerte.  
¡Que no me hallara yo a tu cabecera  
cuando diste el espíritu a los aires,  
para que le acogiera entre mis labios, 20  
y en mi estómago limpio le envasara!  
¡Miseria humana! ¿Quién de ti confía?  
Ayer fui Periconas, hoy tierra fría,  
como dijo un poeta celeberrimo.

*(Entra CHIQUIZNAQUE, RUFIÁN.)*

RUFIÁNMi so Trampagos, ¿es posible sea 25  
voacé tan enemigo suyo  
que se entumbe, se encubra y se trasponga  
debajo desa sombra bayetuna  
el sol hampesco? So Trampagos, basta  
tanto gemir, tantos suspiros bastan; 30  
trueque voacé las lágrimas corrientes

en limosnas y en misas y oraciones  
por la gran Periconá, que Dios haya;  
que importan más que llantos y sollozos.

TRAMPAGOS Voacé ha garlado como un tólogo, 35  
mi señor Chiquiznaque; pero, en tanto  
que encarrilo mis cosas de otro modo,  
tome vuesa merced, y platiquemos  
una levada nueva.

RUFÍAN So Trampagos,  
no es éste tiempo de levadas: llueven 40  
o han de llover hoy pésames adunia,  
y ¿hémonos de ocupar en levadicas?

*(Entra VADEMÉCUM con la silla, muy vieja y rota.)*

VADEMÉCUM ¡Bueno, por vida mía! Quien le quita  
a mi señor de líneas y posturas,  
le quita de los días de la vida. 45

TRAMPAGOS Vuelve por el mortero y por el banco,  
y el broquel no se olvide, Vademécum.

VADEMÉCUM Y aun trairé el asador, sartén y platos.

*(Vuélvese a entrar.)*

TRAMPAGOS Después platicaremos una treta,  
única, a lo que creo, y peregrina; 50  
que el dolor de la muerte de mi ángel  
las manos ata y el sentido todo.



RUFIÁN¿De qué edad acabó la mal lograda?

TRAMPAGOSPara con sus amigas y vecinas,  
treinta y dos años tuvo.

RUFIÁN¿Edad lozana! 55

TRAMPAGOSSi va a decir verdad, ella tenía  
cincuenta y seis; pero, de tal manera  
supo encubrir los años, que me admiro.  
¡Oh, qué teñir de canas! ¡Oh, qué rizos,  
vuelos de plata en oro los cabellos! 60  
A seis del mes que viene hará quince años  
que fue mi tributaria, sin que en ellos  
me pusiese en pendencia, ni en peligro  
de verme palmeadas las espaldas.  
Quince cuaresmas, si en la cuenta acierto, 65  
pasaron por la pobre desde el día  
que fue mi cara, agradecida prenda,  
en las cuales, sin duda, susurraron  
a sus oídos treinta y más sermones,  
y en todos ellos, por respeto mío, 70  
estuvo firme, cual está a las olas  
del mar movable la inmovible roca.  
¡Cuántas veces me dijo la pobreta,  
saliendo de los trances rigurosos  
de gritos y plegarias y de ruegos, 75  
sudando y trasudando: «¡Plega al cielo,  
Trampagos mío, que en descuento vaya  
de mis pecados lo que aquí yo paso  
por ti, dulce bien mío!»

RUFIÁN¿Bravo triunfo!  
¡Ejemplo raro de inmortal firmeza! 80

¡Allá lo habrá hallado!

TRAMPAGOS ¿Quién lo duda?  
Ni aun una sola lágrima vertieron  
jamás sus ojos en las sacras pláticas,  
cual si de esparto o pedernal su alma  
formada fuera.

RUFIÁN ¡Oh, hembra benemérita 85  
de griegas y romanas alabanzas!  
¿De qué murió?

TRAMPAGOS ¿De qué? Casi de nada:  
los médicos dijeron que tenía  
malos los hipocondrios y los hígados,  
y que con agua de taray pudiera 90  
vivir, si la bebiera, setenta años.

RUFIÁN ¿No la bebió?

TRAMPAGOS Murióse.

RUFIÁN Fue una necia.  
¡Bebiérala hasta el día del jüicio,  
que hasta entonces viviera! El yerro estuvo  
en no hacerla sudar.

TRAMPAGOS Sudó once veces. 95

*(Entra VADEMÉCUM con los asientos referidos.)*

RUFÍAN¿Y aprovechó alguna?

TRAMPAGOSCasi todas:  
siempre quedaba como un ginjo verde,  
sana como un peruétano o manzana.

RUFÍANDícenme que tenía ciertas fuentes  
en las piernas y brazos.

TRAMPAGOSLa sin dicha 100  
era un Aranjuéz; pero, con todo,  
hoy come en ella, la que llaman tierra,  
de las más blancas y hermosas carnes  
que jamás encerraron sus entrañas;  
y, si no fuera porque habrá dos años 105  
que comenzó a dañársele el aliento,  
era abrazarla como quien abraza  
un tiesto de albahaca o clavellinas.

RUFÍANNeguijón debió ser, o corrimiento,  
el que dañó las perlas de su boca, 110  
quiero decir, sus dientes y sus muelas.

TRAMPAGOSUna mañana amaneció sin ellos.

VADEMÉCUMAsí es verdad, mas fue deso la causa  
que anocheció sin ellos; de los finos,  
cinco acerté a contarle; de los falsos, 115  
doce disimulaba en la covacha.

TRAMPAGOS¿Quién te mete a ti en esto, mentecato?

VADEMÉCUMAcredito verdades.

TRAMPAGOSChiquiznaque,  
ya se me ha reducido a la memoria  
la treta de denantes; toma, y vuelve 120  
al ademán primero.

VADEMÉCUMPongan pausa,  
y quédese la treta en ese punto;  
que acuden moscovitas al reclamo.  
La Repulida viene y la Pizpita,  
y la Mostrenca, y el jayán Juan Claros. 125

TRAMPAGOSVengan en hora buena; vengan ellos  
en cien mil norabuenas.

*(Entran la REPULIDA, la PIZPITA, la MOSTRENCA y el rufián JUAN CLAROS.)*

JUAN CLAROSEn las mismas  
esté mi sor Trampagos.

REPULIDAQuiera el cielo  
mudar su escuridad en luz clarísima.

PIZPITADesollado le vieses ya mis lumbres 130  
de aquel pellejo lóbrego y oscuro.

MOSTRENCO¡Jesús, y qué fantasma noturnina!  
Quítenmele delante.

VADEMÉCUM¿Melindricos?

TRAMPAGOSFuera yo un Polifemo, un antropófago,  
un troglodita, un bárbaro Zoílo, 135  
un caimán, un caribe, un comevivos,  
si de otra suerte me adornara, en tiempo  
de tamaña desgracia.

JUAN CLAROSRazón tiene.

TRAMPAGOS¿He perdido una mina potosisca,  
un muro de la yedra de mis faltas, 140  
un árbol de la sombra de mis ansias!

JUAN CLAROSEra la Pericon a un pozo de oro.

TRAMPAGOSSentarse a prima noche, y, a las horas  
que se echa el golpe, hallarse con sesenta  
numos en cuartos, ¿por ventura es barro? 145  
Pues todo esto perdí en la que ya pudre.

REPULIDAConfieso mi pecado: siempre tuve  
envidia a su no vista diligencia.  
No puedo más; yo hago lo que puedo,  
pero no lo que quiero.

PIZPITANo te penes, 150  
pues vale más aquel que Dios ayuda,  
que el que mucho madruga; ya me entiendes.

VADEMÉCUMEl refrán vino aquí como de molde;  
¡Tal os dé Dios el sueño, mentecatas!

MOSTRENCONacidas somos; no hizo Dios a nadie 155  
a quien desamparase. Poco valgo;  
pero, en fin, como y ceno, y a mi cuyo  
le traigo más vestido que un palmito.  
Ninguna es fea, como tenga bríos;  
¡feo es el diablo!

VADEMÉCUMAlegra la Mostrenca 160  
muy bien de su derecho, y alegara  
mejor si se añadiera el ser muchacha  
y limpia, pues lo es por todo extremo.

RUFÍANEn el que está Trampagos me da lástima.

TRAMPAGOSVestíme este capuz; mis dos lanternas 165  
convertí en alquitaras.

VADEMÉCUM¿De aguardiente?

TRAMPAGOSPues, ¿tanto cielo yo, hi de malicias?

VADEMÉCUMA cuatro lavanderas de la puente  
puede dar quince y falta en la colambre;  
miren qué ha de llorar, sino agua-ardiente. 170

JUAN CLAROSYo soy de parecer que el gran Trampagos

ponga silencio a su contino llanto  
y vuelva al *sicut erat in principio*,  
digo a sus olvidadas alegrías,  
y tome prenda que las tuyas quite; 175  
que es bien que el vivo vaya a la hogaza,  
como el muerto se va a la sepultura.

REPULIDAZonzorino Catón es Chiquiznaque.

PIZPITAPequeña soy, Trampagos, pero grande  
tengo la voluntad para servirte; 180  
no tengo cuyo, y tengo ochenta cobas.

REPULIDAYo ciento, y soy dispuesta y nada lerda.

MOSTRENCOVeinte y dos tengo yo, y aun venticuatro,  
y no soy mema.

REPULIDA;Oh mi Jezúz! ¿Qué es esto?  
¿Contra mí la Pizpita y la Mostrenca? 185  
¿En tela quieres competir conmigo,  
culebrilla de alambre, y tú, pazguata?

PIZPITAPor vida de los huesos de mi abuela,  
doña Mari-Bobales, monda-níspolas,  
que no la estimo en un feluz morisco. 190  
¿Han visto el ángel tonto almidonado,  
cómo quiere empinarse sobre todas?

MOSTRENCOSobre mí no, a lo menos; que no sufro  
carga que no me ajuste y me convenga.

JUAN CLAROS Adviertan que defiendo a la Pizpita. 195

RUFÍAN Consideren que está la Repulida  
debajo de las alas de mi amparo.

VADEMÉCUM Aquí fue Troya, aquí se hacen rajas;  
los de las cachas amarillas salen;  
aquí, otra vez, fue Troya.

REPULIDA Chiquiznaque, 200  
no he menester que nadie me defienda;  
aparta, tomaré yo la venganza,  
rasgando con mis manos pecadoras  
la cara de membrillo cuartanario.

JUAN CLAROS ¡Repulida, respeto al gran Juan Claros! 205

PIZPITA Déjala, venga; déjala que llegue  
esa cara de masa mal sobada.

*(Entra UNO muy alborotado.)*

UNO Juan Claros, ¡la justicia, la justicia!  
El alguacil de la justicia viene  
la calle abajo.

*(Éntrase luego.)*

JUAN CLAROS ¡Cuerpo de mi padre! 210  
¡No paro más aquí!



TRAMPAGOSTénganse todos;  
ninguno se alborote; que es mi amigo  
el alguacil; no hay que tenerle miedo.

*(Torna a entrar.)*

UNONo viene acá, la calle abajo cuela.

*(Vase.)*

RUFÍANEl alma me temblaba ya en las carnes, 215  
porque estoy desterrado.

TRAMPAGOSAunque viniera,  
no nos hiciera mal, yo lo sé cierto;  
que no puede chillar, porque está untado.

VADEMÉCUMCese, pues, la pendencia, y mi sor sea  
el que escoja la prenda que le cuadre 220  
o le esquine mejor.

REPULIDAYo soy contenta.

PIZPITAY yo también.

MOSTRENCOY yo.

VADEMÉCUMGracias al cielo,  
que he hallado a tan gran mal, tan gran remedio.

TRAMPAGOSA búrrome y escojo.

MOSTRENCODios te guíe.

REPULIDA Si te aburres, Trampagos, la escogida 225  
también será aburrida.

TRAMPAGOSErrado anduve;  
sin aburrirme escojo.

MOSTRENCODios te guíe.

TRAMPAGOSDigo que escojo aquí a la Repulida.

JUAN CLAROSCon su pan se la coma, Chiquiznaque.

RUFÍANY aun sin pan, que es sabrosa en cualquier modo. 230

REPULIDATuya soy; ponme un clavo y una S  
en estas dos mejillas.

PIZPITA¡Oh hechicera!

MOSTRENCONo es sino venturosa; no la envidies,  
porque no es muy católico Trampagos,  
pues ayer enterró a la Periconas, 235  
y hoy la tiene olvidada.

REPULIDA Muy bien dices.

TRAMPAGO Este capuz arruga, Vademécum;  
y dile al padre que sobre él te preste  
una docena de reäles.

VADEMÉCUM Creo  
que tengo yo catorce.

TRAMPAGO Luego luego, 240  
parte y trae seis azumbres de lo caro;  
alas pon en los pies.

VADEMÉCUM Y en las espaldas.

*(Éntrase VADEMÉCUM con el capuz, y queda en cuerpo TRAMPAGOS.)*

TRAMPAGOS ¡Por Dios, que si durara la bayeta,  
que me pudieran enterrar mañana!

REPULIDA ¡Ay, lumbré destas lumbres, que son tuyas, 245  
y cuán mejor estás en este traje,  
que en el otro, sombrío y malencónico!

*(Entran dos MÚSICOS, sin guitarras.)*

MÚSICO 1 Tras el olor del jarro nos venimos  
yo y mi compadre.

TRAMPAGO En hora buena sea.

¿Y las guitarras?

MÚSICO 1 En la tienda quedan; 250  
vaya por ellas Vademécum.

MÚSICO 2 Vaya;  
mas yo quiero ir por ellas.

MÚSICO 1 De camino,  
(*Éntrase el un MÚSICO.*)

diga a mi oíslo que, si viene alguno  
al *rapio rapis*, que me aguarde un poco:  
que no haré sino colar seis tragos, 255  
y cantar dos tonadas y partirme;  
que ya el señor Trampagos, según muestra,  
está para tomar armas de gusto.

(*Vuelve VADEMÉCUM.*)

VADEMÉCUM Ya está en el antesala el jarro.

TRAMPAGOS Traile.

VADEMÉCUM No tengo taza.

TRAMPAGOS Ni Dios te la depare. 260  
El cuerno de orinar no está estrenado;  
tráele, que te maldiga el cielo santo;  
que eres bastante a deshorrar un duque.

VADEMÉCUMSosiéguese; que no ha de faltar copa,  
y aun copas, aunque sean de sombreros. 265  
*Aparte.*

A buen seguro que éste es churrullero.

*(Entra UNO, como cautivo, con una cadena al hombro, y pónese a mirar a todos muy atento, y todos a él.)*

REPULIDA¿Jesús! ¿Es visión ésta? ¿Qué es aquesto?  
¿No es éste Escarramán? Él es, sin duda.  
¡Escarramán del alma, dame, amores,  
esos brazos, columna de la hampa! 270

TRAMPAGOS¡Oh Escarramán, Escarramán amigo!  
¿Cómo es esto? ¿A dicha eres estatua?  
Rompe el silencio y habla a tus amigos.

PIZPITA¿Qué traje es éste y qué cadena es ésta?  
¿Eres fantasma, a dicha? Yo te toco, 275  
y eres de carne y hueso.

MOSTRENCOÉl es, amiga;  
no lo puede negar, aunque más calle.

ESCARRAMÁNYo soy Escarramán, y estén atentos  
al cuento breve de mi larga historia.

*(Vuelve el barbero con dos guitarras, y da la una al compañero.)*

«Dio la galera al traste en Berbería, 280  
donde la furia de un jüez me puso  
por espalder de la siniestra banda;  
mudé de cautiverio y de ventura;  
quedé en poder de turcos por esclavo;  
de allí a dos meses, como el cielo plugo, 285  
me levanté con una galeota;  
cobré mi libertad y ya soy mío.  
Hice voto y promesa inviolable  
de no mudar de ropa ni de carga  
hasta colgarla de los muros santos 290  
de una devota ermita, que en mi tierra  
llaman de San Millán de la Cogolla.»  
Y éste es el cuento de mi estraña historia,  
digna de atesorarla en mi memoria.  
La Méndez no estará ya de provecho; 295  
¿vive?

JUAN CLAROSY está en Granada a sus anchuras.

RUFÍÁN;Allí le duele al pobre todavía!

ESCARRAMÁN;Qué se ha dicho de mí en aqueste mundo,  
en tanto que en el otro me han tenido  
mis desgracias y gracia?

MOSTRENCOCien mil cosas; 300  
ya te han puesto en la horca los farsantes.

PIZPITALos muchachos han hecho pepitoria  
de todas tus médulas y tus huesos.

REPULIDAHante vuelto divino: ¿qué más quieres?

RUFÍAN  
Cántante por las plazas, por las calles; 305  
báilante en los teatros y en las casas;  
has dado que hacer a los poetas,  
más que dio Troya al mantuano Títiro.

JUAN CLAROS  
Óyente resonar en los establos.

REPULIDA  
Las fregonas te alaban en el río; 310  
los mozos de caballos te almohazan.

RUFÍAN  
Túndete el tundidor con sus tijeras;  
muy más que el potro rucio eres famoso.

MOSTRENCO  
Han pasado a las Indias tus palmeos,  
en Roma se han sentido tus desgracias, 315  
y hante dado botines *sine numero*.

VADEMÉCUM  
Por Dios que te han molido como alheña,  
y te han desmenuzado como flores,  
y que eres más sonado y más mocososo  
que un reloj y que un niño de dotrina. 320  
De ti han dado querella todos cuantos  
bailes pasaron en la edad del gusto,  
con apretada y dura residencia;  
pero llevóse el tuyo la excelencia.

ESCARRAMÁN  
Tenga yo fama, y háganme pedazos; 325  
de Éfeso el templo abrasaré por ella.

*(Tocan de improviso los músicos, y comienzan a cantar este romance:)*

*Ya salió de las gurapas  
el valiente Escarramán,  
para asombro de la gura  
y para bien de su mal. 330*

ESCARRAMÁN¿Es aquesto brindarme, por ventura?  
¿Piensan se me ha olvidado el regodeo?  
Pues más ligero vengo que solía;  
si no, toquen, y vaya, y fuera ropa.

PIZPITA¿Oh flor y fruto de los bailarines, 335  
y qué bueno has quedado!

VADEMÉCUMSuelto y limpio.

JUAN CLAROSÉl honrará las bodas de Trampagos.

ESCARRAMÁNToquen; verán que soy hecho de azogue.

MÚSICOSVáyanse todos por lo que cantare,  
y no será posible que se yerren. 340

ESCARRAMÁNToquen; que me deshago y que me bullo.

REPULIDAYa me muero por verle en la estacada.

MÚSICOEstén alerta todos.



RUFÍAN Ya lo estamos.

*(Cantan.)*

*Ya salió de las gurapas  
el valiente Escarramán, 345  
para asombro de la gura,  
y para bien de su mal.*  
Ya vuelve a mostrar al mundo  
su felice habilidad,  
su ligereza y su brío, 350  
y su presencia real.  
Pues falta la Coscolina,  
supla agora en su lugar  
la Repulida, olorosa  
más que la flor de azahar. 355  
Y, en tanto que se remonda  
la Pizpita sin igual,  
de la Gallarda el paseo  
nos muestre aquí Escarramán.

*(Tocan la Gallarda; dánzala ESCARRAMÁN, que le ha de hacer el bailarín; y,  
en habiendo hecho una mudanza, prosíguese el romance.)*

La Repulida comience, 360  
con su brío, a rastrear,  
pues ella fue la primera  
que nos le vino a mostrar.  
Escarramán la acompañe;  
la Pizpita, otro que tal, 365  
Chiquiznaque y la Mostrenca,  
con Juan Claros el galán.  
¡Vive Dios que va de perlas!  
No se puede desear

más ligereza o más garbo, 370  
más certeza o más compás.  
¡A ello, hijos, a ello!  
No se pueden alabar  
otras ninfas ni otros rufos  
que nos pueden igualar. 375  
¡Oh, qué desmayar de manos!  
¡Oh, qué huir y qué juntar!  
¡Oh, qué nuevos laberintos,  
donde hay salir y hay entrar!  
Muden el baile a su gusto, 380  
que yo le sabré tocar:  
el Canario, o las Gambetas,  
o *Al villano se lo dan*,  
Zarabanda, o Zambapalo,  
el *Pésame dello* y más; 385  
el *Rey don Alonso el Bueno*,  
gloria de la antigüedad.

ESCARRAMÁN El Canario, si le tocan,  
a solas quiero bailar.

MÚSICO Tocaré yo de plata; 390  
tú de oro le bailarás.

(*Toca el Canario, y baila solo ESCARRAMÁN; y, en habiéndole bailado, diga:*)

ESCARRAMÁN Vaya *El villano* a lo burdo,  
con la cebolla y el pan,  
y acompañenme los tres.

MÚSICO Que te bendiga San Juan. 395

*(Bailan el Villano, como bien saben, y, acabado el Villano, pida ESCARRAMÁN el baile que quisiere, y acabado, diga TRAMPAGOS:)*

TRAMPAGOS Mis bodas se han celebrado  
mejor que las de Roldán.  
Todos digan, como digo:  
¡Viva, viva Escarramán!

TODOS ¡Viva, viva! 400

# LA ELECCIÓN DE LOS ALCALDES DE DAGANZO



*Entremés de La elección de los alcaldes de Daganzo*

*Salen el* BACHILLER PESUÑA; PEDRO ESTORNUDO, *escribano*;  
PANDURO, *regidor*, y ALONSO ALGARROBA, *regidor*.

PANDURO Rellánense; que todo saldrá a cuajo,  
si es que lo quiere el cielo benditísimo.

ALGUACIL Mas echémoslo a doce, y no se venda.

PANDURO Paz, que no será mucho que salgamos  
bien del negocio, si lo quiere el cielo. 5

ALGUACIL Que quiera, o que no quiera, es lo que importa...

PANDURO ¡Algarroba, la lengua se os deslucia!  
Habrád acomedido y de buen rejo,  
que no me suenan bien esas palabras:  
«quiera o no quiera el cielo», por San Junco, 10  
que, como presomís de resabido,  
os arrojáis a trochemoche en todo.

ALGUACIL Cristiano viejo soy a todo ruedo,  
y creo en Dios a pies jontillas.

BACHILLER Bueno;  
no hay más que desear.

ALGUACIL Y si, por suerte, 15  
hablé mal, yo confieso que soy ganso,  
y doy lo dicho por no dicho.

ESTORNUDO Basta;  
no quiere Dios, del pecador más malo,  
sino que viva y se arrepienta.

ALGUACIL Digo  
que vivo y me arrepiento, y que conozco 20  
que el cielo puede hacer lo que él quisiere,  
sin que nadie le pueda ir a la mano,  
especial cuando llueve.

PANDURO De las nubes,  
Algarroba, cae el agua, no del cielo.

ALGUACIL ¡Cuerpo del mundo! Si es que aquí venimos 25  
a reprochar los unos a los otros,  
díganmoslo; que a fe que no le falten  
reproches a Algarroba a cada paso.

BACHILLER *Redeamus ad rem*, señor Panduro  
y señor Algarroba; no se pase 30  
el tiempo en niñerías escusadas.  
¿Juntámonos aquí para disputas  
impertinentes? ¡Bravo caso es éste,  
que siempre que Panduro y Algarroba

están juntos, al punto se levantan 35  
entre ellos mil borrascas y tormentas  
de mil contradictorias intenciones!

ESTORNUDOEl señor bachiller Pesuña tiene  
demasiada razón: véngase al punto,  
y mírese qué alcaldes nombraremos 40  
para el año que viene, que sean tales,  
que no los pueda calumniar Toledo,  
sino que los confirme y dé por buenos,  
pues para esto ha sido nuestra junta.

PANDURODe las varas hay cuatro pretendientes: 45  
Juan Berrocal, Francisco de Humillos,  
Miguel Jarrete y Pedro de la Rana;  
hombres todos de chapa y de caletre,  
que pueden gobernar, no que a Daganzo,  
sino a la misma Roma.

ALGUACILRomanillos. 50

ESTORNUDO¿Hay otro apuntamiento? ¡Por San Pito,  
que me salga del corro!

ALGUACILBien parece  
que se llama Estornudo el escribano,  
que así se le encarama y sube el humo.  
Sosiéguese, que yo no diré nada. 55

PANDURO¿Hallarse han, por ventura, en todo el sorbe...?

ALGUACIL¿Qué es *sorbe*, sorbe-huevos? *Orbe* diga  
el discreto Panduro, y serle ha sano.

PANDURO Digo que en todo el mundo no es posible  
que se hallen cuatro ingenios como aquestos 60  
de nuestros pretensores.

ALGUACIL Por lo menos,  
yo sé que Berrocal tiene el más lindo  
distinto.

ESTORNUDO ¿Para qué?

ALGUACIL Para ser sacre  
en esto de mojón y catavinos.  
En mi casa probó los días pasados 65  
una tinaja, y dijo que sabía  
el claro vino a palo, a cuero y hierro;  
acabó la tinaja su camino,  
y hallóse en el asiento della un palo  
pequeño, y dél prendía una correa 70  
de cordobán y una pequeña llave.

ESTORNUDO ¡Oh rara habilidad! ¡Oh raro ingenio!  
Bien puede gobernar, el que tal sabe,  
a Alanís y a Cazalla, y aun a Esquivias.

ALGUACIL Miguel Jarrete es águila.

BACHILLER ¿En qué modo? 75

ALGUACIL En tirar con un arco de bodoques.

BACHILLER¿Que tan certero es?

ALGUACIL  
Es de manera  
que, si no fuese porque los más tiros  
se da en la mano izquierda, no habría pájaro  
en todo este contorno.

BACHILLER¿Para alcalde 80  
es rara habilidad, y necesaria!

ALGUACIL¿Qué diré de Francisco de Humillos?  
Un zapato remienda como un sastre.  
Pues, ¿Pedro de la Rana? No hay memoria  
que a la suya se iguale; en ella tiene 85  
del antiguo y famoso *Perro de Alba*  
todas las coplas, sin que letra falte.

PANDUROÉste lleva mi voto.

ESTORNUDOY aun el mío.

ALGUACILA Berrocal me atengo.

BACHILLERYo a ninguno,  
si es que no dan más pruebas de su ingenio 90  
a la jurisprudencia encaminadas.

ALGUACILYo daré un buen remedio, y es aquéste:  
hagan entrar los cuatro pretendientes,  
y el señor bachiller Pesuña puede



examinarlos, pues del arte sabe, 95  
y, conforme a su ciencia, así veremos  
quién podrá ser nombrado para el cargo.

ESCRIBANO; Vive Dios, que es rarísima advertencia!

PANDURO Aviso es que podrá servir de arbitrio  
para Su Jamestad; que, como en Corte 100  
hay potra-médicos, haya potra-alcaldes.

ALGUACIL *Prota*, señor Panduro; que no *potra*.

PANDURO Como vos no hay friscal en todo el mundo.

ALGUACIL; *Fiscal*, pese a mis males!

ESCRIBANO; Por Dios santo,  
que es Algarroba impertinente!

ALGUACIL Digo 105  
que, pues se hace examen de barberos,  
de herradores, de sastres, y se hace  
de cirujanos y otras zarandajas,  
también se examinasen para alcaldes;  
y, al que se hallase suficiente y hábil 110  
para tal menester, que se le diese  
carta de examen, con la cual podría  
el tal examinado remediarse;  
porque, de lata en una blanca caja  
la carta acomodando merecida, 115  
a tal pueblo podrá llegar el pobre,  
que le pesen a oro; que hay hogaño

carestía de alcaldes de caletre  
en lugares pequeños casi siempre.

BACHILLER Ello está muy bien dicho y bien pensado: 120  
llamen a Berrocal; entre, y veamos  
dónde llega la raya de su ingenio.

ALGUACIL Humillos, Rana, Berrocal, Jarrete,  
los cuatro pretensores, se han entrado;

*(Entran estos cuatro labradores.)*

ya los tienes presentes.

BACHILLER Bien venidos 125  
sean vuesas mercedes.

BERROCAL Bien hallados  
vuesas mercedes sean.

PANDURO Acomódense,  
que asientos sobran.

HUMILLOS; Siéntome, y me siento!

JARRETE Todos nos sentaremos, Dios loado.

RANA ¿De qué os sentís, Humillos?

HUMILLOS De que vaya 130  
tan a la larga nuestro nombramiento.  
¿Hémoslo de comprar a gallipavos,  
a cántaros de arrope y a abiervadas,  
y botas de lo añejo tan crecidas,  
que se arremetan a ser cueros? Díganlo, 135  
y pondráse remedio y diligencia.

BACHILLER No hay sobornos aquí; todos estamos  
de un común parecer, y es que el que fuere  
más hábil para alcalde, ése se tenga  
por escogido y por llamado.

RANA Bueno; 140  
yo me contento.

BERROCAL Y yo.

BACHILLER Mucho en buen hora.

HUMILLOS También yo me contento.

JARRETE Dello gusto.

BACHILLER Vaya de examen, pues.

HUMILLOS De examen venga.

BACHILLER ¿Sabéis leer, Humillos?

HUMILLOS No, por cierto,  
ni tal se probará que en mi linaje 145  
haya persona tan de poco asiento,  
que se ponga a aprender esas quimeras,  
que llevan a los hombres al brasero,  
y a las mujeres, a la casa llana.  
Leer no sé, mas sé otras cosas tales 150  
que llevan al leer ventajas muchas.

BACHILLERY ¿cuáles cosas son?

HUMILLOS Sé de memoria  
todas cuatro oraciones, y las rezo  
cada semana cuatro y cinco veces.

RANAY ¿con eso pensáis de ser alcalde? 155

HUMILLOS Con esto, y con ser yo cristiano viejo,  
me atrevo a ser un senador romano.

BACHILLER Está muy bien. Jarrete diga agora  
qué es lo que sabe.

JARRETE Yo, señor Pesuña,  
sé leer, aunque poco; deletreo, 160  
y ando en el *be-a-ba* bien ha tres meses,  
y en cinco más daré con ello a un cabo;  
y, además desta ciencia que ya aprendo,  
sé calzar un arado bravamente,  
y herrar, casi en tres horas, cuatro pares 165  
de novillos briosos y cerreros;

soy sano de mis miembros, y no tengo  
sordez ni cataratas, tos ni reumas;  
y soy cristiano viejo como todos,  
y tiro con un arco como un Tulio. 170

ALGUACIL;Raras habilidades para alcalde;  
necesarias y muchas!

BACHILLERAdelante.  
¿Qué sabe Berrocal?

BERROCALTengo en la lengua  
toda mi habilidad, y en la garganta;  
no hay mojón en el mundo que me llegue; 175  
sesenta y seis sabores estampados  
tengo en el paladar, todos vináticos.

ALGUACILY ¿quiere ser alcalde?

BERROCALY lo requiero;  
pues, cuando estoy armado a lo de Baco,  
así se me aderezan los sentidos, 180  
que me parece a mí que en aquel punto  
podría prestar leyes a Licurgo  
y limpiarme con Bártulo.

PANDURO;Pasito,  
que estamos en concejo!

BERROCALNo soy nada  
melindroso ni puerco; sólo digo 185  
que no se me malogre mi justicia,

que echaré el bodegón por la ventana.

BACHILLER Amenazas aquí, por vida mía,  
mi señor Berrocal, que valen poco.  
¿Qué sabe Pedro Rana?

RANA Como Rana, 190  
habré de cantar mal; pero, con todo,  
diré mi condición, y no mi ingenio.  
Yo, señores, si acaso fuese alcalde,  
mi vara no sería tan delgada  
como las que se usan de ordinario: 195  
de una encina o de un roble la haría,  
y gruesa de dos dedos, temeroso  
que no me la encorvase el dulce peso  
de un bolsón de ducados, ni otras dádivas,  
o ruegos, o promesas, o favores, 200  
que pesan como plomo, y no se sienten  
hasta que os han brumado las costillas  
del cuerpo y alma; y, junto con aquesto,  
sería bien criado y comedido,  
parte severo y nada riguroso; 205  
nunca deshonoraría al miserable  
que ante mí le trujesen sus delitos;  
que suele lastimar una palabra  
de un jüez arrojado, de afrentosa,  
mucho más que lastima su sentencia, 210  
aunque en ella se intime cruel castigo.  
No es bien que el poder quite la crianza,  
ni que la sumisión de un delincuente  
haga al juez soberbio y arrogante.

ALGUACIL; Vive Dios, que ha cantado nuestra Rana 215  
mucho mejor que un cisne cuando muere!

PANDURO Mil sentencias ha dicho censorinas.

ALGUACIL De Catón Censorino; bien ha dicho el regidor Panduro.

PANDURO ¡Reprochadme!

ALGUACIL Su tiempo se vendrá.

ESTORNUDO Nunca acá venga. 220  
¡Terrible inclinación es, Algarroba,  
la vuestra en reprochar!

ALGUACIL ¡No más, so escriba!

ESTORNUDO ¿Qué *escriba*, fariseo?

BACHILLER ¡Por San Pedro,  
que son muy demasiadas demasiás  
éstas!

ALGUACIL Yo me burlaba.

ESTORNUDO Y yo me burlo. 225

BACHILLER Pues no se burlen más, por vida mía.

ALGUACIL Quien miente, miente.

ESTORNUDOY quien verdad pronuncia,  
dice verdad.

ALGUACILVerdad.

ESTORNUDOPues punto en boca.

HUMILLOSEsos ofrecimientos que ha hecho Rana,  
son desde lejos. A fe que si él empuña 230  
vara, que él se trueque y sea otro hombre  
del que ahora parece.

BACHILLEREstá de molde  
lo que Humillos ha dicho.

HUMILLOSY más añadido:  
que, si me dan la vara, verán como  
no me mudo ni trueco, ni me cambio. 235

BACHILLERPues veis aquí la vara, y haced cuenta  
que sois alcalde ya.

ALGUACIL¡Cuerpo del mundo!  
¿La vara le dan zurda?

HUMILLOS¿Cómo zurda?

ALGUACILPues, ¿no es zurda esta vara? Un sordo o mudo



lo podrá echar de ver desde una legua. 240

HUMILLOS¿Cómo, pues, si me dan zurda la vara,  
quieren que juzgue yo derecho?

ESTORNUDOEl diablo  
tiene en el cuerpo este Algarroba; ¡miren  
dónde jamás se han visto varas zurdas!

*(Entra UNO.)*

UNOSeñores, aquí están unos gitanos 245  
con unas gitanillas milagrosas;  
y, aunque la ocupación se les ha dicho  
en que están sus mercedes, todavía  
porfían que han de entrar a dar solacio  
a sus mercedes.

BACHILLEREntren, y veremos 250  
si nos podrán servir para la fiesta  
del Corpus, de quien yo soy mayordomo.

PANDUROEntren mucho en buen hora.

BERROCALEntren luego.

HUMILLOSPor mí, ya los deseo.

JARRETEPues yo, ¿pajas?

RANA¿Ellos no son gitanos? Pues adviertan 255  
que no nos hurten las narices.

UNOEllos,  
sin que los llamen, vienen; ya están dentro.

*(Entran los MÚSICOS, de gitanos, y dos gitanas bien aderezadas, y, al son  
de este romance, que han de cantar los MÚSICOS, ellas dancen.)*

MÚSICOS      Reverencia os hace el cuerpo,  
regidores de Daganzo,  
hombres buenos de repente, 260  
hombres buenos de pensado;  
de caletre prevenidos  
para proveer los cargos  
que la ambición solicita  
entre moros y cristianos. 265  
Parece que os hizo el cielo,  
el cielo, digo, estrellado,  
Sansones para las letras,  
y para las fuerzas Bártulos.

JARRETETodo lo que se canta toca historia. 270

HUMILLOSEllas y ellos son únicos y ralos.

ALGUACILAlgo tienen de espesos.

BACHILLEREa, *sufficit*.

MÚSICOS      Como se mudan los vientos,  
como se mudan los ramos,

que, desnudos en invierno, 275  
se visten en el verano,  
mudaremos nuestros bailes  
por puntos, y a cada paso;  
pues mudarse las mujeres  
no es nuevo ni extraño caso. 280  
*¡Vivan de Daganzo los regidores,  
que parecen palmas, puesto que son robles!*

*(Bailan.)*

JARRETE ¡Brava trova, por Dios!

HUMILLOS Y muy sentida.

BERROCAL Estas se han de imprimir, para que quede  
memoria de nosotros en los siglos 285  
de los siglos. Amén.

BACHILLER Callen, si pueden.

MÚSICOS ¡Vivan y revivan,  
y en siglos veloces  
del tiempo los días  
pasen con las noches, 290  
sin trocar la edad,  
que treinta años forme,  
ni tocar las hojas  
de sus alcornoques.  
Los vientos, que anegan, 295  
si contrarios corren,  
cual céfiros blandos  
en sus mares soplen.

*¡Vivan de Daganzo los regidores,  
que palmas parecen, puesto que son robles!* 300

BACHILLER El estribillo en parte me desplace;  
pero, con todo, es bueno.

BERROCALEa, callemos.

MÚSICOS      Pisaré yo el polvico,  
atán menudico;  
*pisaré yo el polvó,* 305  
*atán menudó.*

PANDURO Estos músicos hacen pepitoria  
de su cantar.

HUMILLO Son diablos los gitanos.

MÚSICOS      Pisaré yo la tierra,  
por más que esté dura, 310  
puesto que me abra en ella  
amor sepultura,  
pues ya mi buena ventura  
amor la pisó.  
*Atán menudó.* 315  
Pisaré yo lozana  
el más duro suelo,  
si en él acaso pisas  
el mal que recelo.  
Mi bien se ha pasado en vuelo, 320  
y el polvo dejó  
*Atán menudó.*

*(Entra un SOTASACRISTÁN, muy mal endeliñado.)*

SACRISTÁN Señores regidores, ¡voto a dico,  
que es de bellacos tanto pasatiempo!  
¿Así se rige el pueblo, noramala, 325  
entre guitarras, bailes y bureos?

BACHILLER ¡Agarradle, Jarrete!

JARRETE Ya le agarro.

BACHILLER Traigan aquí una manta; que, por Cristo,  
que se ha de mantear este bellaco,  
necio, desvergonzado e insolente, 330  
y atrevido además.

SACRISTÁN ¡Oigan, señores!

ALGUACIL Volveré con la manta a las volanzas.

*(Éntrase ALGARROBA.)*

SACRISTÁN Miren que les intimo que soy presbíter.

BACHILLER ¿Tú presbítero, infame?

SACRISTÁN Yo presbítero;  
o de prima tonsura, que es lo mismo. 335

PANDUROAgora lo veredes, dijo Agrajes.

SACRISTÁNNo hay Agrajes aquí.

BACHILLERPues habrá grajos  
que te piquen la lengua y aun los ojos.

RANADime, desventurado: ¿qué demonio  
se revistió en tu lengua? ¿Quién te mete 340  
a ti en reprehender a la justicia?  
¿Has tú de gobernar a la república?  
Métete en tus campanas y en tu oficio.  
Deja a los que gobiernan; que ellos saben  
lo que han de hacer mejor que no nosotros. 345  
Si fueren malos, ruega por su enmienda;  
si buenos, porque Dios no nos los quite.

BACHILLERNuestro Rana es un santo y un bendito.

*(Vuelve ALGARROBA; trae la manta.)*

ALGUACILNo ha de quedar por manta.

BACHILLERAsgan, pues, todos,  
sin que queden gitanos ni gitanas. 350  
¡Arriba, amigos!

SACRISTÁN¡Por Dios, que va de veras!  
¡Vive Dios, si me enoja, que bonito  
soy yo para estas burlas! ¡Por San Pedro,  
que están descomulgados todos cuantos

han tocado los pelos de la manta! 355

RANABasta, no más; aquí cese el castigo;  
que el pobre debe estar arrepentido.

SACRISTÁNY molido, que es más. De aquí adelante  
me coseré la boca con dos cabos  
de zapatero.

RANAAqueso es lo que importa. 360

BACHILLERVénganse los gitanos a mi casa,  
que tengo qué decilles.

GITANOTras ti vamos.

BACHILLERQuedarse ha la elección para mañana,  
y desde luego doy mi voto a Rana.

GITANO¿Cantaremos, señor?

BACHILLERLo que quisiéredes. 365

PANDURONo hay quien cante cual nuestra Rana canta.

JARRETENo solamente canta, sino encanta.

*(Éntranse cantando:)*

*Pisaré yo el polvico.*



## LA GUARDA CUIDADOSA



### *Entremés de La guarda cuidadosa*

*Sale un SOLDADO a lo pícaro, con una muy mala banda y un antojo, y detrás dél un mal SACRISTÁN.*

SOLDADO.- ¿Qué me quieres, sombra vana?

SACRISTÁN.- No soy sombra vana, sino cuerpo macizo.

SOLDADO.- Pues, con todo eso, por la fuerza de mi desgracia, te conjuro que me digas quién eres, y qué es lo que buscas por esta calle.

SACRISTÁN.- A eso te respondo, por la fuerza de mi dicha, que soy Lorenzo Pasillas, sotasacristán desta parroquia, y busco en esta calle lo que hallo, y tú buscas y no hallas.

SOLDADO.- ¿Buscas por ventura a Cristinica, la fregona desta casa?

SACRISTÁN.- *Tu dixisti.*

SOLDADO.- Pues ven acá, sotasacristán de Satanás.

SACRISTÁN.- Pues voy allá, caballo de Ginebra.

SOLDADO.- Bueno: sota y caballo; no falta sino el rey para tomar las manos. Ven acá, digo otra vez, ¿y tú no sabes, Pasillas, que pasado te vea yo con un chuzo, que Cristinica es prenda mía?

SACRISTÁN.- ¿Y tú no sabes, pulpo vestido, que esa prenda la tengo yo rematada, que está por sus cabales y por mía?

SOLDADO.- ¡Vive Dios, que te dé mil cuchilladas, y que te haga la cabeza pedazos!

SACRISTÁN.- Con las que le cuelgan desas calzas, y con los dese vestido, se podrá entretener, sin que se meta con los de mi cabeza.

SOLDADO.- ¿Has hablado alguna vez a Cristina?

SACRISTÁN.- Cuando quiero.

SOLDADO.- ¿Qué dádivas le has hecho?

SACRISTÁN.- Muchas.

SOLDADO.- ¿Cuántas y cuáles?

SACRISTÁN.- Dile una destas cajas de carne de membrillo, muy grande, llena de cercenaduras de hostias blancas como la misma nieve, y de añadidura cuatro cabos de velas de cera, asimismo blancas como un armiño.

SOLDADO.- ¿Qué más le has dado?

SACRISTÁN.- En un billete envueltos, cien mil deseos de servirla.

SOLDADO.- Y ella, ¿cómo te ha correspondido?

SACRISTÁN.- Con darme esperanzas propincuas de que ha de ser mi esposa.

SOLDADO.- Luego, ¿no eres de epístola?

SACRISTÁN.- Ni aun de completas. Motilón soy, y puedo casarme cada y cuando me viniere en voluntad; y presto lo veredes.

SOLDADO.- Ven acá, motilón arrastrado; respóndeme a esto que preguntarte quiero. Si esta mochacha ha correspondido tan altamente, lo cual yo no creo, a la miseria de tus dádivas, ¿cómo corresponderá a la grandeza de las mías? Que el otro día le envié un billete amoroso, escrito por lo menos en un revés de un memorial que di a Su Majestad, significándole mis servicios y mis necesidades presentes (que no cae en mengua el soldado que dice que es pobre), el cual memorial salió decretado y remitido al limosnero mayor; y, sin atender a que sin duda alguna me podía valer cuatro o seis reales, con liberalidad increíble y con desenfado notable, escribí en el revés dél, como he dicho, mi billete; y sé que de mis manos pecadoras llegó a las tuyas casi santas.

SACRISTÁN.- ¿Hasle enviado otra cosa?

SOLDADO.- Suspiros, lágrimas, sollozos, parasismos, desmayos, con toda la caterva de las demostraciones necesarias que para descubrir su pasión los buenos enamorados usan, y deben de usar en todo tiempo y sazón.

SACRISTÁN.- ¿Hasle dado alguna música concertada?

SOLDADO.- La de mis lamentos y congojas, las de mis ansias y pesadumbres.

SACRISTÁN.- Pues a mí me ha acontecido dársela con mis campanas a cada paso; y tanto, que tengo enfadada a toda la vecindad con el continuo ruido que con ellas hago, sólo por darle contento y porque sepa que estoy en la torre, ofreciéndome a su servicio; y, aunque haya de tocar a muerto, repico a vísperas solenes.

SOLDADO.- En eso me llevas ventaja, porque no tengo qué tocar, ni cosa que lo valga.

SACRISTÁN.- ¿Y de qué manera ha correspondido Cristina a la infinidad de tantos servicios como le has hecho?

SOLDADO.- Con no verme, con no hablarme, con maldecirme cuando me encuentra por la calle, con derramar sobre mí las lavazas cuando jabona y el agua de fregar cuando friega; y esto es cada día, porque todos los días estoy en esta calle y a su puerta; porque soy su guarda cuidadosa; soy, en fin, el perro del hortelano, &c. Yo no la gozo, ni ha de gozarla ninguno mientras yo viviere; por eso, váyase de aquí el señor sotasacristán; que, por haber tenido y tener respeto a las órdenes que tiene, no le tengo ya rompidos los cascos.

SACRISTÁN.- A rompérmelos como están rotos esos vestidos, bien rotos estuvieran.

SOLDADO.- El hábito no hace al monje; y tanta honra tiene un soldado roto por causa de la guerra, como la tiene un colegial con el manto hecho añicos,

porque en él se muestra la antigüedad de sus estudios; y váyase, que haré lo que dicho tengo.

SACRISTÁN.- ¿Es porque me ve sin armas? Pues espérese aquí, señor guarda cuidadosa, y verá quién es Callejas.

SOLDADO.- ¿Qué puede ser un Pasillas?

SACRISTÁN.- «¡Ahora lo veredes!», dijo Agrajes.

*(Éntrase el SACRISTÁN.)*

SOLDADO.- ¡Oh, mujeres, mujeres, todas, o las más, mudables y antojadizas! ¿Dejas, Cristina, a esta flor, a este jardín de la soldadesca, y acomodaste con el muladar de un sotasacristán, pudiendo acomodarte con un sacristán entero, y aun con un canónigo? Pero yo procuraré que te entre en mal provecho, si puedo, aguando tu gusto, con ojear desta calle y de tu puerta los que imaginare que por alguna vía pueden ser tus amantes; y así vendré a alcanzar nombre de la guarda cuidadosa.

*(Entra un MOZO con su caja y ropa verde, como estos que piden limosna para alguna imagen.)*

MOZO.- Den, por Dios, para la lámpara del aceite de Señora Santa Lucía, que les guarde la vista de los ojos. ¡Ah de casa! ¿Dan la limosna?

SOLDADO.- Hola, amigo Santa Lucía, venid acá. ¿Qué es lo que queréis en esa casa?

MOZO.- ¿Ya vuesa merced no lo ve? Limosna para la lámpara del aceite de Señora Santa Lucía.

SOLDADO.- ¿Pedís para la lámpara o para el aceite de la lámpara? Que, como decís limosna para la lámpara del aceite, parece que la lámpara es del aceite, y no el aceite de la lámpara.

MOZO.- Ya todos entienden que pido para aceite de la lámpara, y no para la lámpara del aceite.

SOLDADO.- ¿Y suélenos dar limosna en esta casa?

MOZO.- Cada día dos maravedís.

SOLDADO.- ¿Y quién sale a dároslos?

MOZO.- Quien se halla más a mano; aunque las más veces sale una fregoncita que se llama Cristina, bonita como un oro.

SOLDADO.- Así que ¿es la fregoncita bonita como un oro?

MOZO.- ¡Y como unas pelras!

SOLDADO.- ¿De modo que no os parece mal a vos la muchacha?

MOZO.- Pues, aunque yo fuera hecho de leño, no pudiera parecerme mal.

SOLDADO.- ¿Cómo os llamáis? Que no querría volveros a llamar Santa Lucía.

MOZO.- Yo, señor, Andrés me llamo.

SOLDADO.- Pues, señor Andrés, esté en lo que quiero decirle: tome este cuarto de a ocho, y haga cuenta que va pagado por cuatro días de la limosna que le dan en esta casa y suele recibir por mano de Cristina; y váyase con Dios, y séale aviso que por cuatro días no vuelva a llegar a esta puerta ni por lumbre, que le romperé las costillas a coces.

MOZO.- Ni aun volveré en este mes, si es que me acuerdo. No tome vuesa merced pesadumbre, que ya me voy.

*(Vase.)*

SOLDADO.- ¡No, sino dormíos, guarda cuidadosa!

*(Entra otro MOZO, vendiendo y pregonando tranzaderas, holanda de*

**Cambray, randas de Flandes y hilo portugués.)**

UNO.- ¿Compran tranzaderas, randas de Flandes, holanda, cambray, hilo portugués?

*(CRISTINA, a la ventana.)*

CRISTINA.- Hola, Manuel, ¿traéis vivos para unas camisas?

UNO.- Sí traigo, y muy buenos.

CRISTINA.- Pues entra, que mi señora los ha menester.

SOLDADO.- ¡Oh estrella de mi perdición, antes que norte de mi esperanza! Tranzaderas, o como os llamáis, ¿conocéis aquella doncella que os llamó desde la ventana?

UNO.- Sí conozco; pero, ¿por qué me lo pregunta vuesa merced?

SOLDADO.- ¿No tiene muy buen rostro y muy buena gracia?

UNO.- A mí así me lo parece.

SOLDADO.- Pues también me parece a mí que no entre dentro des a casa; si no, ¡por Dios, que he de molelle los huesos, sin dejarle ninguno sano!

UNO.- Pues, ¿no puedo yo entrar adonde me llaman para comprar mi mercadería?

SOLDADO.- ¡Vaya, no me replique, que haré lo que digo, y luego!

UNO.- ¡Terrible caso! Pasito, señor soldado, que ya me voy.

*(Vase MANUEL.)*

*(CRISTINA, a la ventana.)*

CRISTINA.- ¿No entras, Manuel?



SOLDADO.- Ya se fue Manuel, señora la de los vivos, y aun señora la de los muertos, porque a muertos y a vivos tienes debajo de tu mando y señorío.

CRISTINA.- ¡Jesús, y qué enfadoso animal! ¿Qué quieres en esta calle y en esta puerta?

*(Éntrase CRISTINA.)*

SOLDADO.- Encubrióse y púsose mi sol detrás de las nubes.

*(Entra un ZAPATERO con unas chinelas pequeñas nuevas en la mano, y, yendo a entrar en casa de CRISTINA, detiéndole el SOLDADO.)*

SOLDADO.- Señor bueno, ¿busca vuesa merced algo en esta casa?

ZAPATERO.- Sí busco.

SOLDADO.- ¿Y a quién, si fuere posible saberlo?

ZAPATERO.- ¿Por qué no? Busco a una fregona que está en esta casa, para darle estas chinelas que me mandó hacer.

SOLDADO.- ¿De manera que vuesa merced es su zapatero?

ZAPATERO.- Muchas veces la he calzado.

SOLDADO.- ¿Y hale de calzar ahora estas chinelas?

ZAPATERO.- No será menester; si fueran zapatillos de hombre, como ella los suele traer, sí calzara.

SOLDADO.- ¿Y éstas, están pagadas, o no?

ZAPATERO.- No están pagadas; que ella me las ha de pagar agora.

SOLDADO.- ¿No me haría vuesa merced una merced, que sería para mí muy grande, y es que me fiase estas chinelas, dándole yo prendas que lo valiesen, hasta desde aquí a dos días, que espero tener dineros en abundancia?

ZAPATERO.- Sí haré, por cierto: venga la prenda, que, como soy pobre oficial, no puedo fiar a nadie.

SOLDADO.- Yo le daré a vuesa merced un mondadientes, que le estimo en mucho, y no le dejaré por un escudo. ¿Dónde tiene vuesa merced la tienda, para que vaya a quitarle?

ZAPATERO.- En la calle Mayor, en un poste de aquellos, y llámome Juan Juncos.

SOLDADO.- Pues, señor Juan Juncos, el mondadientes es éste, y estímele vuesa merced en mucho, porque es mío.

ZAPATERO.- Pues, ¿una biznaga, que apenas vale dos maravedís, quiere vuesa merced que estime en mucho?

SOLDADO.- ¡Oh, pecador de mí! No la doy yo sino para recuerdo de mí mismo; porque, cuando vaya a echar mano a la faldriquera y no halle la biznaga, me venga a la memoria que la tiene vuesa merced y vaya luego a quitalla; sí, a fe

de soldado, que no la doy por otra cosa; pero, si no está contento con ella, añadiré esta banda y este antojo; que al buen pagador no le duelen prendas.

ZAPATERO.- Aunque zapatero, no soy tan descortés que tengo de despojar a vuesa merced de sus joyas y preseas; vuesa merced se quede con ellas, que yo me quedaré con mis chinelas, que es lo que me está más a cuento.

SOLDADO.- ¿Cuántos puntos tienen?

ZAPATERO.- Cinco escasos.

SOLDADO.-

Más escaso soy yo, chinelas de mis entrañas, pues no tengo seis reales para pagaros; ¡chinelas de mis entrañas! Escuche vuesa merced, señor zapatero, que quiero glosar aquí de repente este verso, que me ha salido medido:

*Chinelas de mis entrañas.*

ZAPATERO.- ¿Es poeta vuesa merced?

SOLDADO.-

Famoso, y agora lo verá; estéme atento.

*Chinelas de mis entrañas.*

GLOSA

Es Amor tan gran tirano,  
que, olvidado de la fe  
que le guardo siempre en vano,  
hoy, con la funda de un pie,  
da a mi esperanza de mano.

Éstas son vuestras hazañas,

fundas pequeñas y hurañas;  
que ya mi alma imagina  
que sois, por ser de Cristina,  
*chinelas de mis entrañas.*

ZAPATERO.- A mí poco se me entiende de trovas; pero éstas me han sonado tan bien, que me parecen de Lope, como lo son todas las cosas que son o parecen buenas.

SOLDADO.- Pues, señor, ya que no lleva remedio de fiarme estas chinelas, que no fuera mucho, y más sobre tan dulces prendas, por mi mal halladas, llévelo, a lo menos, de que vuesa merced me las guarde hasta desde aquí a dos días, que yo vaya por ellas; y por ahora, digo, por esta vez, el señor zapatero no ha de ver ni hablar a Cristina.

ZAPATERO.- Yo haré lo que me manda el señor soldado, porque se me trasluce de qué pies cojea, que son dos: el de la necesidad y el de los celos.

SOLDADO.- Ése no es ingenio de zapatero, sino de colegial trilingüe.

ZAPATERO.- ¡Oh, celos, celos, cuán mejor os llamaran duelos, duelos!

*(Éntrase el ZAPATERO.)*

SOLDADO.- No, sino no seáis guarda, y guarda cuidadosa, y veréis cómo se os entran mosquitos en la cueva donde está el licor de vuestro contento. Pero, ¿qué voz es ésta? Sin duda es la de mi Cristina, que se desenfada cantando, cuando barre o friega.

*(Suenan dentro platos, como que friegan, y cantan:)*

Sacristán de mi vida,  
tenme por tuya,  
y, fiado en mi fe,  
canta *alleluya*.

SOLDADO.- ¡Oídos que tal oyen! Sin duda el sacristán debe de ser el brinco de su alma. ¡Oh platera, la más limpia que tiene, tuvo o tendrá el calendario de las fregonas! ¿Por qué, así como limpias esa loza talaveril que traes entre las manos, y la vuelves en bruñida y tersa plata, no limpias esa alma de pensamientos bajos y sotasacristaniles?

(*Entra el AMO de CRISTINA.*)

AMO.- Galán, ¿qué quiere o qué busca a esta puerta?

SOLDADO.- Quiero más de lo que sería bueno, y busco lo que no hallo; pero, ¿quién es vuesa merced que me lo pregunta?

AMO.- Soy el dueño desta casa.

SOLDADO.- ¿El amo de Cristinica?

AMO.- El mismo.

SOLDADO.- Pues lléguese vuesa merced a esta parte, y tome este envoltorio de papeles; y advierta que ahí dentro van las informaciones de mis servicios, con veinte y dos fees de veinte y dos generales, debajo de cuyos estandartes he servido, amén de otras treinta y cuatro de otros tantos maestros de campo, que se han dignado de honrarme con ellas.

AMO.- Pues no ha habido, a lo que yo alcanzo, tantos generales ni maestros de campo de infantería española de cien años a esta parte.

SOLDADO.- Vuesa merced es hombre pacífico, y no está obligado a entenderse mucho de las cosas de la guerra; pase los ojos por esos papeles, y verá en ellos, unos sobre otros, todos los generales y maestros de campo que he dicho.

AMO.- Yo los doy por pasados y vistos; pero, ¿de qué sirve darme cuenta desto?

SOLDADO.- De que hallará vuesa merced por ellos ser posible ser verdad una que agora diré, y es que estoy consultado en uno de tres castillos y plazas, que están vacas en el reino de Nápoles; conviene a saber: Gaeta, Barleta y Rijobes.

AMO.- Hasta agora, ninguna cosa me importa a mí estas relaciones que vuesa merced me da.

SOLDADO.- Pues, yo sé que le han de importar, siendo Dios servido.

AMO.- ¿En qué manera?

SOLDADO.- En que, por fuerza, si no se cae el cielo, tengo de salir proveído en una destas plazas, y quiero casarme agora con Cristinica; y, siendo yo su marido, puede vuesa merced hacer de mi persona y de mi mucha hacienda como de cosa propia; que no tengo de mostrarme desagradecido a la crianza que vuesa merced ha hecho a mi querida y amada consorte.

AMO.- Vuesa merced lo ha de los cascos más que de otra parte.

SOLDADO.- Pues, ¿sabe cuánto le va, señor dulce? Que me la ha de entregar luego luego, o no ha de atravesar los umbrales de su casa.

AMO.- ¿Hay tal disparate? ¿Y quién ha de ser bastante para quitarme que no entre en mi casa?

*(Vuelve el SOTASACRISTÁN PASILLAS, armado con un tapador de tinaja y una espada muy mohosa; viene con él otro SACRISTÁN, con un morrión y una vara o palo, atado a él un rabo de zorra.)*

SACRISTÁN.- ¡Ea, amigo Grajales, que éste es el turbador de mi sosiego!

GRAJALES.- No me pesa sino que traigo las armas endebles y algo tiernas; que ya le hubiera despachado al otro mundo a toda diligencia.

AMO.- ¡Ténganse, gentiles hombres! ¿Qué desmán y qué acecinamiento es éste?

SOLDADO.- ¡Ladrones! ¿A traición y en cuadrilla? Sacristanes falsos, voto a tal que os tengo de horadar, aunque tengáis más órdenes que un ceremonial. Cobarde, ¿a mí con rabo de zorra? ¿Es notarme de borracho, o piensas que estás quitando el polvo a alguna imagen de bulto?

GRAJALES.- No pienso sino que estoy ojeando los mosquitos de una tinaja de vino.

*(A la ventana CRISTINA y su AMA.)*

CRISTINA.- ¡Señora, señora, que matan a mi señor! Más de dos mil espadas están sobre él, que relumbran que me quitan la vista.

ELLA.- Dices verdad, hija mía; ¡Dios sea con él! ¡Santa Úrsola, con las once mil vírgines, sea en su guarda! Ven, Cristina, y bajemos a socorrerle como mejor pudiéremos.

AMO.- Por vida de vuestas mercedes, caballeros, que se tengan, y miren que no es bien usar de superchería con nadie.

SOLDADO.- ¡Tente, rabo, y tente, tapadorcillo; no acabéis de despertar mi cólera, que, si la acabo de despertar, os mataré, y os comeré, y os arrojaré por la puerta falsa dos leguas más allá del infierno!

AMO.- ¡Ténganse, digo; si no, por Dios que me descomponga de modo que pese a alguno!

SOLDADO.- Por mí, tenido soy; que te tengo respeto, por la imagen que tienes en tu casa.

SACRISTÁN.- Pues, aunque esa imagen haga milagros, no os ha de valer esta vez.

SOLDADO.- ¿Han visto la desvergüenza deste bellaco, que me viene a hacer cocos con un rabo de zorra, no habiéndome espantado ni atemorizado tiros mayores que el de Dio, que está en Lisboa?

*(Entran CRISTINA y su SEÑORA.)*

ELLA.- ¡Ay, marido mío! ¿Estáis, por desgracia, herido, bien de mi alma?



CRISTINA.- ¡Ay desdichada de mí! Por el siglo de mi padre, que son los de la pendencia mi sacristán y mi soldado.

SOLDADO.- Aun bien que voy a la parte con el sacristán; que también dijo: «mi soldado».

AMO.- No estoy herido, señora, pero sabed que toda esta pendencia es por Cristinica.

ELLA.- ¿Cómo por Cristinica?

AMO.- A lo que yo entiendo, estos galanes andan celosos por ella.

ELLA.- Y ¿es esto verdad, muchacha?

CRISTINA.- Sí, señora.

ELLA.- ¡Mirad con qué poca vergüenza lo dices! Y ¿hate deshonrado alguno dellos?

CRISTINA.- Sí, señora.

ELLA.- ¿Cuál?

CRISTINA.- El sacristán me deshonró el otro día, cuando fui al Rastro.

ELLA.- ¿Cuántas veces os he dicho yo, señor, que no saliese esta muchacha

fuera de casa; que ya era grande, y no convenía apartarla de nuestra vista? ¿Qué dirá ahora su padre, que nos la entregó limpia de polvo y de paja? Y ¿dónde te llevó, traidora, para deshonorarte?

CRISTINA.- A ninguna parte, sino allí, en mitad de la calle.

ELLA.- ¿Cómo en mitad de la calle?

CRISTINA.- Allí, en mitad de la calle de Toledo, a vista de Dios y de todo el mundo, me llamó de sucia y de deshonesto, de poca vergüenza y menos miramiento, y otros muchos baldones deste jaez; y todo por estar celoso de aquel soldado.

AMO.- Luego, ¿no ha pasado otra cosa entre ti ni él, sino esa deshonra que en la calle te hizo?

CRISTINA.- No, por cierto, porque luego se le pasa la cólera.

ELLA.- El alma se me ha vuelto al cuerpo, que le tenía ya casi desamparado.

CRISTINA.- Y más, que todo cuanto me dijo fue confiado en esta cédula que me ha dado de ser mi esposo, que la tengo guardada como oro en paño.

AMO.- Muestra, veamos.

ELLA.- Leedla alto, marido.

AMO.- Así dice:

Digo yo, Lorenzo Pasillas, sotasacristán desta parroquia, que quiero bien, y muy bien, a la señora Cristina de Parraces; y en fee desta verdad, le di ésta, firmada de mi nombre, fecha en Madrid, en el cimiterio de San Andrés, a seis de mayo deste presente año de mil y seiscientos y once. Testigos: mi corazón, mi entendimiento, mi voluntad y mi memoria.

*Lorenzo Pasillas.*

¡Gentil manera de cédula de matrimonio!

SACRISTÁN.- Debajo de decir que la quiero bien, se incluye todo aquello que ella quisiere que yo haga por ella; porque, quien da la voluntad, lo da todo.

AMO.- Luego, si ella quisiese, ¿bien os casaríades con ella?

SACRISTÁN.- De bonísima gana, aunque perdiese la expectativa de tres mil maravedís de renta que ha de fundar agora sobre mi cabeza una agüela mía, según me han escrito de mi tierra.

SOLDADO.- Si voluntades se toman en cuenta, treinta y nueve días hace hoy que, al entrar de la Puente Segoviana, di yo a Cristina la mía, con todos los anejos a mis tres potencias; y, si ella quisiere ser mi esposa, algo irá a decir de ser castellano de un famoso castillo, a un sacristán no entero, sino medio, y aun de la mitad le debe de faltar algo.

AMO.- ¿Tienes deseo de casarte, Cristinica?

CRISTINA.- Sí tengo.

AMO.- Pues escoge, destos dos que se te ofrecen, el que más te agradare.

CRISTINA.- Tengo vergüenza.

ELLA.- No la tengas; porque el comer y el casar ha de ser a gusto propio, y no a voluntad ajena.

CRISTINA.- Vuelas mercedes, que me han criado, me darán marido como me convenga; aunque todavía quisiera escoger.

SOLDADO.- Niña, échame el ojo; mira mi garbo; soldado soy, castellano pienso ser; brío tengo de corazón; soy el más galán hombre del mundo; y, por el hilo deste vestidillo, podrás sacar el ovillo de mi gentileza.

SACRISTÁN.- Cristina, yo soy músico, aunque de campanas; para adornar una tumba y colgar una iglesia para fiestas solenes, ningún sacristán me puede llevar ventaja; y estos oficios bien los puedo ejercitar casado, y ganar de comer como un príncipe.

AMO.- Ahora bien, muchacha, escoge de los dos el que te agrada; que yo gusto dello, y con esto pondrás paz entre dos tan fuertes competidores.

SOLDADO.- Yo me allano.

SACRISTÁN.- Y yo me rindo.

CRISTINA.- Pues escojo al sacristán.

*(Han entrado los MÚSICOS.)*

AMO.- Pues llamen esos oficiales de mi vecino el barbero, para que con sus guitarras y voces nos entremos a celebrar el desposorio, cantando y bailando; y

el señor soldado será mi convidado.

SOLDADO.-

Acepto:

*Que, donde hay fuerza de hecho,  
se pierde cualquier derecho.*

MÚSICOS.- Pues hemos llegado a tiempo, éste será el estribillo de nuestra letra.

*(Cantan el estribillo.)*

SOLDADO

Siempre escogen las mujeres  
aquellos que vale menos,  
porque excede su mal gusto  
a cualquier merecimiento.

Ya no se estima el valor,  
porque se estima el dinero,  
pues un sacristán prefieren  
a un roto soldado lego.  
Mas no es mucho, que ¿quién vio  
que fue su voto tan necio,  
que a sagrado se acogiese,  
que es de delincuentes puerto?  
*Que a donde hay fuerza, &c.*

SACRISTÁN

Como es propio de un soldado,  
que es sólo en los años viejo,  
y se halla sin un cuarto  
porque ha dejado su tercio,  
imaginar que ser puede  
pretendiente de Gaiferos,

conquistando por lo bravo  
lo que yo por manso adquiero,  
no me afrentan tus razones,  
pues has perdido en el juego;  
que siempre un picado tiene  
licencia para hacer fieros.  
*Que a donde, &c.*

*(Éntranse cantando y bailando.)*

## EL VIZCAÍNO FINGIDO



### *Entremés del Vizcaíno fingido*

*Entran SOLÓRZANO y QUIÑONES.*

SOLÓRZANO.- Éstas son las bolsas, y, a lo que parecen, son bien parecidas; y las cadenas que van dentro, ni más ni menos. No hay sino que vos acudáis con mi intento; que, a pesar de la taimería desta sevillana, ha de quedar esta vez burlada.

QUIÑONES.- ¿Tanta honra se adquiere, o tanta habilidad se muestra en engañar a una mujer, que lo tomáis con tanto ahínco y ponéis tanta solicitud en ello?

SOLÓRZANO.- Cuando las mujeres son como éstas, es gusto el burlallas; cuanto más, que esta burla no ha de pasar de los tejados arriba; quiero decir, que ni ha de ser con ofensa de Dios ni con daño de la burlada; que no son burlas las que redundan en desprecio ajeno.

QUIÑONES.- Alto; pues vos lo queréis, sea así; digo que yo os ayudaré en todo cuanto me habéis dicho, y sabré fingir tan bien como vos, que no lo puedo más encarecer. ¿Adónde vais agora?

SOLÓRZANO.- Derecho en casa de la ninfa; y vos no salgáis de casa, que yo os llamaré a su tiempo.

QUIÑONES.- Allí estaré clavado, esperando.

*(Éntranse los dos.)*

*(Salen DOÑA CRISTINA y DOÑA BRÍGIDA; CRISTINA sin manto, y BRÍGIDA con él, toda asustada y turbada.)*

CRISTINA.- ¡Jesús! ¿Qué es lo que traes, amiga doña Brígida, que parece que quieres dar el alma a su Hacedor?

BRÍGIDA.- Doña Cristina, amiga, hazme aire, rocíame con un poco de agua este rostro, que me muero, que me fino, que se me arranca el alma. ¡Dios sea conmigo! ¡Confesión a toda priesa!

CRISTINA.- ¿Qué es esto? ¡Desdichada de mí! ¿No me dirás, amiga, lo que te ha sucedido? ¿Has visto alguna mala visión? ¿Hante dado alguna mala nueva de que es muerta tu madre, o de que viene tu marido, o hante robado tus joyas?

BRÍGIDA.- Ni he visto visión alguna, ni se ha muerto mi madre, ni viene mi marido, que aún le faltan tres meses para acabar el negocio donde fue, ni me han robado mis joyas; pero hame sucedido otra cosa peor.

CRISTINA.- Acaba; dímelas, doña Brígida mía; que me tienes turbada y suspensa hasta saberla.

BRÍGIDA.- ¡Ay, querida! Que también te toca a ti parte deste mal suceso. Límpiame este rostro, que él y todo el cuerpo tengo bañado en sudor más frío que la nieve. ¡Desdichadas de aquéllas que andan en la vida libre, que, si quieren tener algún poquito de autoridad, granjeada de aquí o de allí, se la dejarretan y se la quitan al mejor tiempo!



CRISTINA.- Acaba, por tu vida, amiga, y dime lo que te ha sucedido, y qué es la desgracia de quien yo también tengo de tener parte.

BRÍGIDA.- ¡Y cómo si tendrás parte! Y mucha, si eres discreta, como lo eres. Has de saber, hermana, que, viniendo agora a verte, al pasar por la puerta de Guadalajara, oí que, en medio de infinita justicia y gente, estaba un pregonero pregonando que quitaban los coches, y que las mujeres descubriesen los rostros por las calles.

CRISTINA.- Y ¿ésa es la mala nueva?

BRÍGIDA.- Pues para nosotras, ¿puede ser peor en el mundo?

CRISTINA.- Yo creo, hermana, que debe de ser alguna reformation de los coches: que no es posible que los quiten de todo punto; y será cosa muy acertada, porque, según he oído decir, andaba muy de caída la caballería en España, porque se empanaban diez o doce caballeros mozos en un coche, y azotaban las calles de noche y de día, sin acordárseles que había caballos y jineta en el mundo; y, como les falte la comodidad de las galeras de la tierra, que son los coches, volverán al ejercicio de la caballería, con quien sus antepasados se honraron.

BRÍGIDA.- ¡Ay, Cristina de mi alma! Que también oí decir que, aunque dejan algunos, es con condición que no se presten, ni que en ellos ande ninguna...; ya me entiendes.

CRISTINA.- Ese mal nos hagan; porque has de saber, hermana, que está en opinión, entre los que siguen la guerra, cuál es mejor, la caballería o la infantería; y hase averiguado que la infantería española lleva la gala a todas las naciones; y agora podremos las alegres mostrar a pie nuestra gallardía, nuestro garbo y nuestra bizarría, y más, yendo descubiertos los rostros, quitando la ocasión de que ninguno se llame a engaño si nos sirviese, pues nos ha visto.

BRÍGIDA.- ¡Ay Cristina! No me digas eso, que linda cosa era ir sentada en la popa de un coche, llenándola de parte a parte, dando rostro a quien y como y cuando quería. Y, en Dios y en mi ánima, te digo que, cuando alguna vez me le prestaban, y me vía sentada en él con aquella autoridad, que me desvanecía tanto, que creía bien y verdaderamente que era mujer principal, y que más de cuatro señoras de título pudieran ser mis criadas.

CRISTINA.- ¿Veis, doña Brígida, cómo tengo yo razón en decir que ha sido bien quitar los coches, siquiera por quitarnos a nosotras el pecado de la vanagloria? Y más, que no era bien que un coche igualase a las no tales con las tales; pues, viendo los ojos extranjeros a una persona en un coche, pomposa por galas, reluciente por joyas, echaría a perder la cortesía, haciéndosela a ella como si fuera a una principal señora. Así que, amiga, no debes congojarte, sino acomoda tu brío y tu limpieza, y tu manto de soplillo sevillano, y tus nuevos chapines, en todo caso, con las virillas de plata, y déjate ir por esas calles; que yo te aseguro que no falten moscas a tan buena miel, si quisieres dejar que a ti se lleguen; que engaño en más va que en besarla durmiendo.

BRÍGIDA.- Dios te lo pague, amiga, que me has consolado con tus advertimientos y consejos; y en verdad que los pienso poner en práctica, y pulirme y repulirme, y dar rostro a pie, y *pisar el polvico atán menudico*, pues no tengo quien me corte la cabeza; que este que piensan que es mi marido, no lo es, aunque me ha dado la palabra de serlo.

CRISTINA.- ¡Jesús! ¿Tan a la sorda y sin llamar se entra en mi casa, señor? ¿Qué es lo que vuesa merced manda?

(*Entra SOLÓRZANO.*)

SOLÓRZANO.- Vuesa merced perdone el atrevimiento, que la ocasión hace al ladrón: hallé la puerta abierta y entréme, dándome ánimo al entrarme venir a servir a vuesa merced, y no con palabras, sino con obras; y, si es que puedo hablar delante desta señora, diré a lo que vengo, y la intención que traigo.

CRISTINA.- De la buena presencia de vuesa merced no se puede esperar sino que han de ser buenas sus palabras y sus obras. Diga vuesa merced lo que quisiere, que la señora doña Brígida es tan mi amiga, que es otra yo misma.

SOLÓRZANO.- Con ese seguro y con esa licencia, hablaré con verdad; y con verdad, señora, soy un cortesano a quien vuesa merced no conoce.

CRISTINA.- Así es la verdad.

SOLÓRZANO.- Y ha muchos días que deseo servir a vuesa merced, obligado a ello de su hermosura, buenas partes y mejor término; pero estrechezas, que no faltan, han sido freno a las obras hasta agora, que la suerte ha querido que de Vizcaya me enviase un grande amigo mío a un hijo suyo, vizcaíno, muy galán, para que yo le lleve a Salamanca y le ponga de mi mano en compañía que le honre y le enseñe. Porque, para decir la verdad a vuesa merced, él es un poco burro, y tiene algo de mentecapto; y añádesele a esto una tacha, que es lástima decirla, cuanto más tenerla, y es que se toma algún tanto, un si es no es, del vino, pero no de manera que de todo en todo pierda el juicio, puesto que se le turba; y, cuando está asomado, y aun casi todo el cuerpo fuera de la ventana, es cosa maravillosa su alegría y su liberalidad: da todo cuanto tiene a quien se lo pide y a quien no se lo pide; y yo querría que, ya que el diablo se ha de llevar cuanto tiene, aprovecharme de alguna cosa, y no he hallado mejor medio que traerle a casa de vuesa merced, porque es muy amigo de damas, y aquí le desollaremos cerrado como a gato. Y, para principio, traigo aquí a vuesa merced esta cadena en este bolsillo, que pesa ciento y veinte escudos de oro, la cual tomará vuesa merced, y me dará diez escudos agora, que yo he menester para ciertas cosillas, y gastará otros veinte en una cena esta noche, que vendrá acá nuestro burro o nuestro búfalo, que le llevo yo por el naso, como dicen; y, a dos idas y venidas, se quedará vuesa merced con toda la cadena, que yo no quiero más de los diez escudos de ahora. La cadena es bonísima, y de muy buen oro, y vale algo de hechura. Hela aquí; vuesa merced la tome.

CRISTINA.- Beso a vuesa merced las manos por la que me ha hecho en acordarse de mí en tan provechosa ocasión; pero, si he de decir lo que siento, tanta liberalidad me tiene algo confusa y algún tanto sospechosa.

SOLÓRZANO.- Pues, ¿de qué es la sospecha, señora mía?

CRISTINA.- De que podrá ser esta cadena de alquimia; que se suele decir que no es oro todo lo que reluce.

SOLÓRZANO.- Vuesa merced habla discretísimamente; y no en balde tiene vuesa merced fama de la más discreta dama de la corte; y hame dado mucho gusto el ver cuán sin melindres ni rodeos me ha descubierto su corazón; pero para todo hay remedio, si no es para la muerte. Vuesa merced se cubra su manto, o envíe si tiene de quién fiarse, y vaya a la platería, y en el contraste se pese y toque esa cadena; y cuando fuera fina y de la bondad que yo he dicho, entonces vuesa merced me dará los diez escudos, harále una regalaria al borrico, y se quedará con ella.

CRISTINA.- Aquí, pared y medio, tengo yo un platero, mi conocido, que con facilidad me sacará de duda.

SOLÓRZANO.- Eso es lo que yo quiero, y lo que amo y lo que estimo; que las cosas claras Dios las bendijo.

CRISTINA.- Si es que vuesa merced se atreve a fiarme esta cadena, en tanto que me satisfago, de aquí a un poco podrá venir, que yo tendré los diez escudos en oro.

SOLÓRZANO.- ¡Bueno es eso! Fío mi honra de vuesa merced, ¿y no le había de fiar la cadena? Vuesa merced la haga tocar y retocar, que yo me voy, y volveré de aquí a media hora.

CRISTINA.- Y aun antes, si es que mi vecino está en casa.

*(Éntrase SOLÓRZANO.)*

BRÍGIDA.- Ésta, Cristina amiga, no sólo es ventura, sino venturón llovido. ¡Desdichada de mí, y qué desgraciada que soy, que nunca topo quien me dé un jarro de agua sin que me cueste mi trabajo primero! Sólo me encontré el otro día en la calle a un poeta, que de bonísima voluntad y con mucha cortesía me dio un soneto de la historia de Píramo y Tisbe, y me ofreció trecientos en mi alabanza.

CRISTINA.- Mejor fuera que te hubieras encontrado con un ginovés que te diera trecientos reales.

BRÍGIDA.- ¡Sí, por cierto! ¡Ahí están los ginoveses de manifiesto y para venirse a la mano, como halcones al señuelo! Andan todos malencónicos y tristes con el decreto.

CRISTINA.- Mira, Brígida, desto quiero que estés cierta: que más vale un ginovés quebrado que cuatro poetas enteros. Mas, ¡ay!, el viento corre en popa; mi platero es éste. Y ¿qué quiere mi buen vecino? Que a fe que me ha quitado el manto de los hombros, que ya me le quería cubrir para buscarle.

*(Entra el PLATERO.)*

PLATERO.- Señora doña Cristina, vuesa merced me ha de hacer una merced: de hacer todas sus fuerzas por llevar mañana a mi mujer a la comedia, que me conviene y me importa quedar mañana en la tarde libre de tener quien me siga y me persiga.

CRISTINA.- Eso haré yo de muy buena gana; y aun, si el señor vecino quiere mi casa y cuanto hay en ella, aquí la hallará sola y desembarazada; que bien sé en qué caen estos negocios.

PLATERO.- No, señora; entretener a mi mujer me basta. Pero, ¿qué quería vuesa merced de mí, que quería ir a buscarme?

CRISTINA.- No más, sino que me diga el señor vecino qué pesará esta cadena, y si es fina, y de qué quilates.

PLATERO.- Esta cadena he tenido yo en mis manos muchas veces, y sé que pesa ciento y cincuenta escudos de oro de a veinte y dos quilates; y que si vuesa merced la compra y se la dan sin hechura, no perderá nada en ella.

CRISTINA.- Alguna hechura me ha de costar, pero no mucha.

PLATERO.- Mire cómo la conierta la señora vecina, que yo le haré dar, cuando se quisiere deshacer della, diez ducados de hechura.

CRISTINA.- Menos me ha de costar, si yo puedo; pero mire el vecino no se engañe en lo que dice de la fineza del oro y cantidad del peso.

PLATERO.- ¡Bueno sería que yo me engañase en mi oficio! Digo, señora, que dos veces la he tocado eslabón por eslabón, y la he pesado, y la conozco como a mis manos.

BRÍGIDA.- Con eso nos contentamos.

PLATERO.- Y por más señas, sé que la ha llegado a pesar y a tocar un gentilhomme cortesano que se llama Tal de Solórzano.

CRISTINA.- Basta, señor vecino; vaya con Dios, que yo haré lo que me deja mandado: yo la llevaré y entretendré dos horas más, si fuere menester; que bien sé que no podrá dañar una hora más de entretenimiento.

PLATERO.- Con vuesa merced me entierren, que sabe de todo; y a Dios, señora mía.

*(Éntrase el PLATERO.)*

BRÍGIDA.- ¿No haríamos con este cortesano Solórzano, que así se debe llamar sin duda, que trujese con el vizcaíno para mí alguna ayuda de costa, aunque fuese de algún borgoñón más borracho que un zaque?

CRISTINA.- Por decírselo no quedará; pero vesle, aquí vuelve; priesa trae, diligente anda; sus diez escudos le aguijan y espolean.

*(Entra SOLÓRZANO.)*

SOLÓRZANO.- Pues, señora doña Cristina, ¿ha hecho vuesa merced sus diligencias? ¿Está acreditada la cadena?

CRISTINA.- ¿Cómo es el nombre de vuesa merced, por su vida?

SOLÓRZANO.- Don Esteban de Solórzano me suelen llamar en mi casa; pero, ¿por qué me lo pregunta vuesa merced?

CRISTINA.- Por acabar de echar el sello a su mucha verdad y cortesía. Entretenga vuesa merced un poco a la señora doña Brígida, en tanto que entro por los diez escudos.

*(Éntrase CRISTINA.)*

BRÍGIDA.- Señor don Solórzano, ¿no tendrá vuesa merced por ahí algún mondadientes para mí? Que en verdad no soy para desechar, y que tengo yo tan buenas entradas y salidas en mi casa como la señora doña Cristina; que, a no temer que nos oyera alguna, le dijera yo al señor Solórzano más de cuatro tachas tuyas: que sepa que tiene las tetas como dos alforjas vacías, y que no le huele muy bien el aliento, porque se afeita mucho; y, con todo eso, la buscan, solicitan y quieren; que estoy por arañarme esta cara, más de rabia que de envidia, porque no hay quien me dé la mano, entre tantos que me dan del pie; en fin, la ventura de las feas...

SOLÓRZANO.- No se desespere vuesa merced, que, si yo vivo, otro gallo cantará en su gallinero.

*(Vuelve a entrar CRISTINA.)*

CRISTINA.- He aquí, señor don Esteban, los diez escudos, y la cena se aderezará esta noche como para un príncipe.

SOLÓRZANO.- Pues nuestro burro está a la puerta de la calle, quiero ir por él; vuesa merced me le acaricie, aunque sea como quien toma una píldora.

*(Vase SOLÓRZANO.)*

BRÍGIDA.- Ya le dije, amiga, que trujese quien me regalase a mí, y dijo que sí haría, andando el tiempo.

CRISTINA.- Andando el tiempo en nosotras, no hay quien nos regale; amiga, los pocos años traen la mucha ganancia, y los muchos la mucha pérdida.

BRÍGIDA.- También le dije cómo vas muy limpia, muy linda y muy agraciada; y que toda eras ámbar, almizcle y algalia entre algodones.



CRISTINA.- Ya yo sé, amiga, que tienes muy buenas ausencias.

BRÍGIDA.- *Aparte.* Mirad quién tiene amartelados; que vale más la suela de mi botín que las arandelas de su cuello; otra vez vuelvo a decir: la ventura de las feas...

*(Entran QUIÑONES y SOLÓRZANO.)*

QUIÑONES.- Vizcaíno, manos bésame vuesa merced, que mándeme.

SOLÓRZANO.- Dice el señor vizcaíno que besa las manos de vuesa merced y que le mande.

BRÍGIDA.- ¡Ay, qué linda lengua! Yo no la entiendo a lo menos, pero paréceme muy linda.

CRISTINA.- Yo beso las del mi señor vizcaíno, y más adelante.

VIZCAÍNO.- Pareces buena, hermosa; también noche esta cenamos; cadena que das, duermas nunca, basta que doyla.

SOLÓRZANO.- Dice mi compañero que vuesa merced le parece buena y hermosa; que se apareje la cena; que él da la cadena, aunque no duerma acá, que basta que una vez la haya dado.

BRÍGIDA.- ¿Hay tal Alejandro en el mundo? ¡Venturón, venturón, y cien mil veces venturón!

SOLÓRZANO.- Si hay algún poco de conserva, y algún traguito del devoto

para el señor vizcaíno, yo sé que nos valdrá por uno ciento.

CRISTINA.- ¡Y cómo si lo hay! Y yo entraré por ello, y se lo daré mejor que al Preste Juan de las Indias.

*(Éntrase CRISTINA.)*

VIZCAÍNO.- Dama que quedaste, tan buena como entraste.

BRÍGIDA.- ¿Qué ha dicho, señor Solórzano?

SOLÓRZANO.- Que la dama que se queda, que es vuesa merced, es tan buena como la que se ha entrado.

BRÍGIDA.- ¡Y cómo que está en lo cierto el señor vizcaíno! A fe que en este parecer que no es nada burro.

VIZCAÍNO.- Burro el diablo; vizcaíno ingenio queréis cuando tenerlo.

BRÍGIDA.- Ya le entiendo: que dice que el diablo es el burro, y que los vizcaínos, cuando quieren tener ingenio, le tienen.

SOLÓRZANO.- Así es, sin faltar un punto.

*(Vuelve a salir CRISTINA con un criado o criada, que traen una caja de conserva, una garrafa con vino, su cuchillo y servilleta.)*

CRISTINA.- Bien puede comer el señor vizcaíno, y sin asco; que todo cuanto

hay en esta casa es la quintaesencia de la limpieza.

QUIÑONES.- Dulce conmigo, vino y agua llamas bueno; santo le muestras, ésta le bebo y otra también.

BRÍGIDA.- ¡Ay, Dios, y con qué donaire lo dice el buen señor, aunque no le entiendo!

SOLÓRZANO.- Dice que, con lo dulce, también bebe vino como agua; y que este vino es de San Martín, y que beberá otra vez.

CRISTINA.- Y aun otras ciento: su boca puede ser medida.

SOLÓRZANO.- No le den más, que le hace mal, y ya se le va echando de ver; que le he yo dicho al señor Azcaray que no beba vino en ningún modo, y no aprovecha.

QUIÑONES.- Vamos, que vino que subes y bajas, lengua es grillos y corma es pies; tarde vuelvo, señora, Dios que te guárdate.

SOLÓRZANO.- ¡Miren lo que dice, y verán si tengo yo razón!

CRISTINA.- ¿Qué es lo que ha dicho, señor Solórzano?

SOLÓRZANO.- Que el vino es grillo de su lengua y corma de sus pies; que vendrá esta tarde, y que vuestras mercedes se queden con Dios.

BRÍGIDA.- ¡Ay, pecadora de mí, y cómo que se le turban los ojos y se

trastraba la lengua! ¡Jesús, que ya va dando traspiés! ¡Pues monta que ha bebido mucho! La mayor lástima es ésta que he visto en mi vida; ¡miren qué mocedad y qué borrachera!

SOLÓRZANO.- Ya venía él refrendado de casa. Vuesa merced, señora Cristina, haga aderezar la cena, que yo le quiero llevar a dormir el vino, y seremos temprano esta tarde.

*(Éntranse el VIZCAÍNO y SOLÓRZANO.)*

CRISTINA.- Todo estará como de molde; vayan vuestas mercedes en hora buena.

BRÍGIDA.- Amiga Cristina, muéstrame esa cadena, y déjame dar con ella dos filos al deseo. ¡Ay, qué linda, qué nueva, qué reluciente y qué barata! Digo, Cristina, que, sin saber cómo ni cómo no, llueven los bienes sobre ti, y se te entra la ventura por las puertas, sin solicitalla. En efeto, eres venturosa sobre las venturosas; pero todo lo merece tu desenfado, tu limpieza y tu magnífico término: hechizos bastantes a rendir las más descuidadas y esentas voluntades; y no como yo, que no soy para dar migas a un gato. Toma tu cadena, hermana, que estoy para reventar en lágrimas, y no de envidia que a ti te tengo, sino de lástima que me tengo a mí.

*(Vuelve a entrar SOLÓRZANO.)*

SOLÓRZANO.- ¡La mayor desgracia nos ha sucedido del mundo!

BRÍGIDA.- ¡Jesús! ¿Desgracia? ¿Y qué es, señor Solórzano?

SOLÓRZANO.- A la vuelta desta calle, yendo a la casa, encontramos con un criado del padre de nuestro vizcaíno, el cual trae cartas y nuevas de que su padre queda a punto de espirar, y le manda que al momento se parta, si quiere hallarle

vivo. Trae dinero para la partida, que sin duda ha de ser luego; yo le he tomado diez escudos para vuesa merced, y velos aquí, con los diez que vuesa merced me dio denantes, y vuélvase la cadena; que, si el padre vive, el hijo volverá a darla, o yo no seré don Esteban de Solórzano.

CRISTINA.- En verdad, que a mí me pesa; y no por mi interés, sino por la desgracia del mancebo, que ya le había tomado afición.

BRÍGIDA.- Buenos son diez escudos ganados tan holgando; tómalos, amiga, y vuelve la cadena al señor Solórzano.

CRISTINA.- Vela aquí, y venga el dinero; que en verdad que pensaba gastar más de treinta en la cena.

SOLÓRZANO.- Señora Cristina, al perro viejo nunca tus tus; estas tretas, con los de las galleruzas, y con este perro a otro hueso.

CRISTINA.- ¿Para qué son tantos refranes, señor Solórzano?

SOLÓRZANO.- Para que entienda vuesa merced que la codicia rompe el saco. ¿Tan presto se desconfió de mi palabra, que quiso vuesa merced curarse en salud, y salir al lobo al camino, como la gansa de Cantipalos? Señora Cristina, señora Cristina, lo bien ganado se pierde, y lo malo, ello y su dueño. Venga mi cadena verdadera, y tómese vuesa merced su falsa, que no ha de haber conmigo transformaciones de Ovidio en tan pequeño espacio. ¡Oh hideputa, y qué bien que la amoldaron, y qué presto!

CRISTINA.- ¿Qué dice vuesa merced, señor mío, que no le entiendo?

SOLÓRZANO.- Digo que no es ésta la cadena que yo dejé a vuesa merced,

aunque le parece: que ésta es de alquimia, y la otra es de oro de a veinte y dos quilates.

BRÍGIDA.- En mi ánima, que así lo dijo el vecino, que es platero.

CRISTINA.- ¿Aun el diablo sería eso?

SOLÓRZANO.- El diablo o la diablo, mi cadena venga, y dejémonos de voces, y escúsenme juramentos y maldiciones.

CRISTINA.- El diablo me lleve, lo cual querría que no me llevase, si no es ésa la cadena que vuesa merced me dejó, y que no he tenido otra en mis manos: ¡justicia de Dios, si tal testimonio se me levantara!

SOLÓRZANO.- Que no hay para qué dar gritos; y más, estando ahí el señor Corregidor, que guarda su derecho a cada uno.

CRISTINA.- Si a las manos del Corregidor llega este negocio, yo me doy por condenada; que tiene de mí tan mal concepto, que ha de tener mi verdad por mentira y mi virtud por vicio. Señor mío, si yo he tenido otra cadena en mis manos, sino aquesta, de cáncer las vea yo comidas.

*(Entra un ALGUACIL.)*

ALGUACIL.- ¿Qué voces son éstas, qué gritos, qué lágrimas y qué maldiciones?

SOLÓRZANO.- Vuesa merced, señor alguacil, ha venido aquí como de molde. A esta señora del rumbo sevillano le empeñé una cadena, habrá una hora, en diez ducados, para cierto efecto; vuelvo ahora a desempeñarla, y, en lugar de una que

le di, que pesaba ciento y cincuenta ducados de oro de veinte y dos quilates, me vuelve ésta de alquimia, que no vale dos ducados; y quiere poner mi justicia a la venta de la Zarza, a voces y a gritos, sabiendo que será testigo desta verdad esta misma señora, ante quien ha pasado todo.

BRÍGIDA.- Y ¡cómo si ha pasado!, y aun repasado; y, en Dios y en mi ánima, que estoy por decir que este señor tiene razón; aunque no puedo imaginar dónde se pueda haber hecho el truco, porque la cadena no ha salido de aquesta sala.

SOLÓRZANO.- La merced que el señor alguacil me ha de hacer es llevar a la señora al Corregidor; que allá nos averiguaremos.

CRISTINA.- Otra vez torno a decir que, si ante el Corregidor me lleva, me doy por condenada.

BRÍGIDA.- Sí, porque no estoy bien con sus huesos.

CRISTINA.- Desta vez me ahorco. Desta vez me desespero. Desta vez me chupan brujas.

SOLÓRZANO.- Ahora bien; yo quiero hacer una cosa por vuesa merced, señora Cristina, siquiera porque no la chupen brujas, o, por lo menos, se ahorque: esta cadena se parece mucho a la fina del vizcaíno; él es mentecapto y algo borrachuelo; yo se la quiero llevar, y darle a entender que es la suya, y vuesa merced contente aquí al señor alguacil; y gaste la cena desta noche, y sosiegue su espíritu, pues la pérdida no es mucha.

CRISTINA.- Págueselo a vuesa merced todo el cielo; al señor alguacil daré media docena de escudos, y en la cena gastaré uno, y quedaré por esclava perpetua del señor Solórzano.

BRÍGIDA.- Y yo me haré rajas bailando en la fiesta.

ALGUACIL.- Vuesa merced ha hecho como liberal y buen caballero, cuyo oficio ha de ser servir a las mujeres.

SOLÓRZANO.- Vengan los diez escudos que di demasiados.

CRISTINA.- Helos aquí, y más los seis para el señor alguacil.

*(Entran dos MÚSICOS, y QUIÑONES, el VIZCAÍNO.)*

MÚSICOS.- Todo lo hemos oído, y acá estamos.

VIZCAÍNO.- Ahora sí que puede decir a mi señora Cristina: mamóla una y cien mil veces.

BRÍGIDA.- ¿Han visto qué claro que habla el vizcaíno?

VIZCAÍNO.- Nunca hablo yo turbio, si no es cuando quiero.

CRISTINA.- ¡Que me maten si no me la han dado a tragar estos bellacos!

QUIÑONES.- Señores músicos, el romance que les di y que saben, ¿para qué se hizo?

MÚSICOS

*La mujer más avisada,  
o sabe poco, o no nada.*



La mujer que más presume  
de cortar como navaja  
los vocablos repulgados,  
entre las godeñas pláticas;  
la que sabe de memoria,  
a Lofraso y a *Diana*,  
y al *Caballero del Febo*  
con *Olivante de Laura*;  
la que seis veces al mes  
al gran *Don Quijote* pasa,  
aunque más sepa de aquesto,  
*o sabe poco, o no nada.*

La que se fía en su ingenio,  
lleno de fingidas trazas,  
fundadas en interés,  
y en voluntades tiranas;  
la que no sabe guardarse,  
cual dicen, del agua mansa,  
y se arroja a las corrientes  
que ligeramente pasan; la que piensa que ella sola  
es el colmo de la nata  
en esto del trato alegre,  
*o sabe poco, o no nada.*

CRISTINA.- Ahora bien, yo quedo burlada, y, con todo esto, convido a vuestras mercedes para esta noche.

QUIÑONES.- Aceptamos el convite, y todo saldrá en la colada.

## EL RETABLO DE LAS MARAVILLAS



### *Entremés del Retablo de las maravillas*

*Salen* CHANFALLA y la CHERINOS.

CHANFALLA.- No se te pasen de la memoria, Chirinos, mis advertimientos, principalmente los que te he dado para este nuevo embuste, que ha de salir tan a luz como el pasado del *Llovista*.

CHIRINOS.- Chanfalla ilustre, lo que en mí fuere tenlo como de molde; que tanta memoria tengo como entendimiento, a quien se junta una voluntad de acertar a satisfacerte, que excede a las demás potencias. Pero dime: ¿de qué sirve este Rabelín que hemos tomado? Nosotros dos solos, ¿no pudiéramos salir con esta empresa?

CHANFALLA.- Habíamosle menester como el pan de la boca, para tocar en los espacios que tardaren en salir las figuras del *Retablo de las Maravillas*.

CHIRINOS.- Maravilla será si no nos apedrean por solo el Rabelín; porque tan desventurada criaturilla no la he visto en todos los días de mi vida.

*(Entra el RABELÍN.)*

RABELÍN.- ¿Hase de hacer algo en este pueblo, señor autor? Que ya me muero porque vuesa merced vea que no me tomó a carga cerrada.

CHIRINOS.- Cuatro cuerpos de los vuestros no harán un tercio, cuanto más una carga; si no sois más gran músico que grande, medrados estamos.

RABELÍN.- Ello dirá; que en verdad que me han escrito para entrar en una compañía de partes, por chico que soy.

CHANFALLA.- Si os han de dar la parte a medida del cuerpo, casi será invisible.

Chirinos, poco a poco, estamos ya en el pueblo, y éstos que aquí vienen deben de ser, como lo son sin duda, el Gobernador y los Alcaldes. Salgámosles al encuentro, y date un filo a la lengua en la piedra de la adulación; pero no despuntes de aguda.

*(Salen el GOBERNADOR y BENITO REPOLLO, alcalde, JUAN CASTRADO, regidor, y PEDRO CAPACHO, escribano.)*

Beso a vuestras mercedes las manos: ¿quién de vuestras mercedes es el Gobernador deste pueblo?

GOBERNADOR.- Yo soy el Gobernador; ¿qué es lo que queréis, buen hombre?

CHANFALLA.- A tener yo dos onzas de entendimiento, hubiera echado de ver que esa peripatética y anchurosa presencia no podía ser de otro que del dignísimo Gobernador deste honrado pueblo; que, con venirlo a ser de las Algarrobillas, lo deseche vuestra merced.

CHIRINOS.- En vida de la señora y de los señoritos, si es que el señor Gobernador los tiene.

CAPACHO.- No es casado el señor Gobernador.

CHIRINOS.- Para cuando lo sea; que no se perderá nada.

GOBERNADOR.- Y bien, ¿qué es lo que queréis, hombre honrado?

CHIRINOS.- Honrados días viva vuesa merced, que así nos honra; en fin, la encina da bellotas; el pero, peras; la parra, uvas, y el honrado, honra, sin poder hacer otra cosa.

BENITO.- Sentencia ciceronianca, sin quitar ni poner un punto.

CAPACHO.- *Ciceroniana* quiso decir el señor alcalde Benito Repollo.

BENITO.- Siempre quiero decir lo que es mejor, sino que las más veces no acierto; en fin, buen hombre, ¿qué queréis?

CHANFALLA.- Yo, señores míos, soy Montiel, el que trae el *Retablo de las maravillas*. Hanme enviado a llamar de la Corte los señores cofrades de los hospitales, porque no hay autor de comedias en ella, y perecen los hospitales, y con mi ida se remediará todo.

GOBERNADOR.- Y ¿qué quiere decir *Retablo de las maravillas*?

CHANFALLA.- Por las maravillosas cosas que en él se enseñan y muestran, viene a ser llamado *Retablo de las maravillas*; el cual fabricó y compuso el sabio Tontonelo debajo de tales paralelos, rumbos, astros y estrellas, con tales puntos, caracteres y observaciones, que ninguno puede ver las cosas que en él se muestran, que tenga alguna raza de confeso, o no sea habido y procreado de sus padres de legítimo matrimonio; y el que fuere contagiado destas dos tan usadas

enfermedades, despídase de ver las cosas, jamás vistas ni oídas, de mi retablo.

BENITO.- Ahora echo de ver que cada día se ven en el mundo cosas nuevas. Y ¿que se llamaba Tontonelo el sabio que el retablo compuso?

CHIRINOS.- Tontonelo se llamaba, nacido en la ciudad de Tontonela; hombre de quien hay fama que le llegaba la barba a la cintura.

BENITO.- Por la mayor parte, los hombres de grandes barbas son sabiondos.

GOBERNADOR.- Señor regidor Juan Castrado, yo determino, debajo de su buen parecer, que esta noche se despose la señora Teresa Castrada, su hija, de quien yo soy padrino, y, en regocijo de la fiesta, quiero que el señor Montiel muestre en vuestra casa su Retablo.

JUAN.- Eso tengo yo por servir al señor Gobernador, con cuyo parecer me convengo, entablo y arrimo, aunque haya otra cosa en contrario.

CHIRINOS.- La cosa que hay en contrario es que, si no se nos paga primero nuestro trabajo, así verán las figuras como por el cerro de Úbeda. ¿Y vuestas mercedes, señores justicias, tienen conciencia y alma en esos cuerpos? ¡Bueno sería que entrase esta noche todo el pueblo en casa del señor Juan Castrado, o como es su gracia, y viese lo contenido en el tal *Retablo*, y mañana, cuando quisiésemos mostralle al pueblo, no hubiese ánima que le viese! No, señores; no, señores: *ante omnia* nos han de pagar lo que fuere justo.

BENITO.- Señora autora, aquí no os ha de pagar ninguna Antona, ni ningún Antoño; el señor regidor Juan Castrado os pagará más que honradamente, y si no, el Concejo. ¡Bien conocéis el lugar, por cierto! Aquí, hermana, no aguardamos a que ninguna Antona pague por nosotros.

CAPACHO.- ¡Pecador de mí, señor Benito Repollo, y qué lejos da del blanco! No dice la señora autora que pague ninguna Antona, sino que le paguen adelantado y ante todas cosas, que eso quiere decir *ante omnia*.

BENITO.- Mirad, escribano Pedro Capacho, haced vos que me hablen a derechas, que yo entenderé a pie llano; vos, que sois leído y escrito, podéis entender esas algarabías de allende, que yo no.

JUAN.- Ahora bien, ¿contentarse ha el señor autor con que yo le dé adelantados media docena de ducados? Y más, que se tendrá cuidado que no entre gente del pueblo esta noche en mi casa.

CHANFALLA.- Soy contento; porque yo me fío de la diligencia de vuesa merced y de su buen término.

JUAN.- Pues véngase conmigo. Recibirá el dinero, y verá mi casa, y la comodidad que hay en ella para mostrar ese retablo.

CHANFALLA.- Vamos; y no se les pase de las mientes las calidades que han de tener los que se atrevieren a mirar el maravilloso retablo.

BENITO.- A mi cargo queda eso, y séle decir que, por mi parte, puedo ir seguro a juicio, pues tengo el padre alcalde; cuatro dedos de enjundia de cristiano viejo rancioso tengo sobre los cuatro costados de mi linaje: ¡miren si verá el tal retablo!

CAPACHO.- Todos le pensamos ver, señor Benito Repollo.

JUAN.- No nacimos acá en las malvas, señor Pedro Capacho.

GOBERNADOR.- Todo será menester, según voy viendo, señores Alcalde, Regidor y Escribano.

JUAN.- Vamos, autor, y manos a la obra; que Juan Castrado me llamo, hijo de Antón Castrado y de Juana Macha; y no digo más en abono y seguro que podré ponerme cara a cara y a pie quedo delante del referido retablo.

CHIRINOS.- ¡Dios lo haga!

(Éntranse JUAN CASTRADO y CHANFALLA.)

GOBERNADOR.- Señora autora, ¿qué poetas se usan ahora en la Corte de fama y rumbo, especialmente de los llamados cómicos? Porque yo tengo mis puntas y collar de poeta, y pícome de la farándula y carátula. Veinte y dos comedias tengo, todas nuevas, que se veen las unas a las otras, y estoy aguardando coyuntura para ir a la Corte y enriquecer con ellas media docena de autores.

CHIRINOS.- A lo que vuesa merced, señor Gobernador, me pregunta de los poetas, no le sabré responder; porque hay tantos, que quitan el sol, y todos piensan que son famosos. Los poetas cómicos son los ordinarios y que siempre se usan, y así no hay para qué nombrallos. Pero dígame vuesa merced, por su vida: ¿cómo es su buena gracia? ¿cómo se llama?

GOBERNADOR.- A mí, señora autora, me llaman el licenciado Gomecillos.

CHIRINOS.- ¡Válame Dios! ¿Y que vuesa merced es el señor licenciado Gomecillos, el que compuso aquellas coplas tan famosas de *Lucifer estaba malo y tómale mal de fuera*?

GOBERNADOR.- Malas lenguas hubo que me quisieron ahijar esas coplas, y

así fueron mías como del Gran Turco. Las que yo compuse, y no lo quiero negar, fueron aquellas que trataron del Diluvio de Sevilla; que, puesto que los poetas son ladrones unos de otros, nunca me precié de hurtar nada a nadie: con mis versos me ayude Dios, y hurte el que quisiere.

(*Vuelve CHANFALLA.*)

CHANFALLA.- Señores, vuestras mercedes vengan, que todo está a punto, y no falta más que comenzar.

CHIRINOS.- ¿Está ya el dinero *in corbona*?

CHANFALLA.- Y aun entre las telas del corazón.

CHIRINOS.- Pues doyte por aviso, Chanfalla, que el Gobernador es poeta.

CHANFALLA.- ¿Poeta? ¡Cuerpo del mundo! Pues dale por engañado, porque todos los de humor semejante son hechos a la mazacona; gente descuidada, crédula y no nada maliciosa.

BENITO.- Vamos, autor; que me saltan los pies por ver esas maravillas.

(*Éntranse todos.*)

(*Salen JUANA CASTRADA y TERESA REPOLLA, labradoras: la una como desposada, que es la CASTRADA.*)

CASTRADA.- Aquí te puedes sentar, Teresa Repolla amiga, que tendremos el retablo enfrente; y, pues sabes las condiciones que han de tener los miradores del retablo, no te descuides, que sería una gran desgracia.



TERESA.- Ya sabes, Juan Castrada, que soy tu prima, y no digo más. ¡Tan cierto tuviera yo el cielo como tengo cierto ver todo aquello que el retablo mostrare! ¡Por el siglo de mi madre, que me sacase los mismos ojos de mi cara, si alguna desgracia me aconteciese! ¡Bonita soy yo para eso!

CASTRADA.- Sosiégate, prima; que toda la gente viene.

*(Entran el GOBERNADOR, BENITO REPOLLO, JUAN CASTRADO, PEDRO CAPACHO, EL AUTOR y LA AUTORA, y EL MÚSICO, y otra gente del pueblo, y un SOBRINO de*

**Benito, que ha de ser aquel gentilhombre que baila.)**

CHANFALLA.- Siéntense todos. El retablo ha de estar detrás deste repostero, y la autora también, y aquí el músico.

BENITO.- ¿Músico es éste? Métanle también detrás del repostero; que, a truco de no velle, daré por bien empleado el no oírle.

CHANFALLA.- No tiene vuesa merced razón, señor alcalde Repollo, de descontentarse del músico, que en verdad que es muy buen cristiano y hidalgo de solar conocido.

GOBERNADOR.- ¡Calidades son bien necesarias para ser buen músico!

BENITO.- De solar, bien podrá ser; mas de sonar, *abrenuncio*.

RABELÍN.- ¡Eso se merece el bellaco que se viene a sonar delante de...!

BENITO.- ¡Pues, por Dios, que hemos visto aquí sonar a otros músicos tan...!

GOBERNADOR.- Quédese esta razón en el *de* del señor Rabel y en el *tan* del Alcalde, que será proceder en infinito; y el señor Montiel comience su obra.

BENITO.- Poca balumba trae este autor para tan gran retablo.

JUAN.- Todo debe de ser de maravillas.

CHANFALLA.- ¡Atención, señores, que comienzo!

¡Oh tú, quienquiera que fuiste, que fabricaste este retablo con tan maravilloso artificio, que alcanzó renombre de *las Maravillas* por la virtud que en él se encierra, te conjuro, apremio y mando que luego *incontinentemente* muestres a estos señores algunas de las tus maravillosas maravillas, para que se regocijen y tomen placer sin escándalo alguno! Ea, que ya veo que has otorgado mi petición, pues por aquella parte asoma la figura del valentísimo Sansón, abrazado con las columnas del templo, para derriballe por el suelo y tomar venganza de sus enemigos. ¡Tente, valeroso caballero; tente, por la gracia de Dios Padre! ¡No hagas tal desaguisado, porque no cojas debajo y hagas tortilla tanta y tan noble gente como aquí se ha juntado!

BENITO.- ¡Téngase, cuerpo de tal, conmigo! ¡Bueno sería que, en lugar de habernos venido a holgar, quedásemos aquí hechos plasta! ¡Téngase, señor Sansón, pesía a mis males, que se lo ruegan buenos!

CAPACHO.- ¿Veisle vos, Castrado?

JUAN.- Pues, ¿no le había de ver? ¿Tengo yo los ojos en el colodrillo?

GOBERNADOR.- *Aparte.* Milagroso caso es éste: así veo yo a Sansón ahora, como el Gran Turco; pues en verdad que me tengo por legítimo y cristiano viejo.

CHIRINOS.- ¡Guárdate, hombre, que sale el mismo toro que mató al ganapán en Salamanca! ¡Échate, hombre; échate, hombre; Dios te libre, Dios te libre!

CHANFALLA.- ¡Échense todos, échense todos! ¡Hucho ho!, ¡hucho ho!, ¡hucho ho!

*(Échanse todos y alborótanse.)*

BENITO.- El diablo lleva en el cuerpo el torillo; sus partes tiene de hosco y de bragado; si no me tiendo, me lleva de vuelo.

JUAN.- Señor autor, haga, si puede, que no salgan figuras que nos alboroten; y no lo digo por mí, sino por estas mochachas, que no les ha quedado gota de sangre en el cuerpo, de la ferocidad del toro.

CASTRADA.- Y ¡cómo, padre! No pienso volver en mí en tres días; ya me vi en sus cuernos, que los tiene agudos como una lesna.

JUAN.- No fueras tú mi hija, y no lo vieras.

GOBERNADOR.- *Aparte.* Basta: que todos ven lo que yo no veo; pero al fin habré de decir que lo veo, por la negra honrilla.

CHIRINOS.- Esa manada de ratones que allá va decidiendo por línea recta de aquellos que se criaron en el Arca de Noé; dellos son blancos, dellos albarazados, dellos jaspeados y dellos azules; y, finalmente, todos son ratones.

CASTRADA.- ¡Jesús!, ¡Ay de mí! ¡Ténganme, que me arrojaré por aquella ventana! ¿Ratones? ¡Desdichada! Amiga, apriétate las faldas, y mira no te muerdan; ¡y monta que son pocos! ¡Por el siglo de mi abuela, que pasan de milenta!

REPOLLA.- Yo sí soy la desdichada, porque se me entran sin reparo ninguno; un ratón morenico me tiene asida de una rodilla. ¡Socorro venga del cielo, pues en la tierra me falta!

BENITO.- Aun bien que tengo gregüescos: que no hay ratón que se me entre, por pequeño que sea.

CHANFALLA.- Esta agua, que con tanta priesa se deja descolgar de las nubes, es de la fuente que da origen y principio al río Jordán. Toda mujer a quien tocare en el rostro, se le volverá como de plata bruñida, y a los hombres se les volverán las barbas como de oro.

CASTRADA.- ¿Oyes, amiga? Descubre el rostro, pues ves lo que te importa. ¡Oh, qué licor tan sabroso! Cúbrase, padre, no se moje.

JUAN.- Todos nos cubrimos, hija.

BENITO.- Por las espaldas me ha calado el agua hasta la canal maestra.

CAPACHO.- Yo estoy más seco que un esparto.

GOBERNADOR.- *Aparte.* ¿Qué diablos puede ser esto, que aún no me ha tocado una gota, donde todos se ahogan? Mas ¿si viniera yo a ser bastardo entre tantos legítimos?

BENITO.- Quítenme de allí aquel músico; si no, voto a Dios que me vaya sin ver más figura. ¡Válgate el diablo por músico aduendado, y qué hace de menudear sin cítola y sin son!

RABELÍN.- Señor alcalde, no tome conmigo la hinchá; que yo toco como Dios ha sido servido de enseñarme.

BENITO.- ¿Dios te había de enseñar, sabandija? ¡Métete tras la manta; si no, por Dios que te arroje este banco!

RABELÍN.- El diablo creo que me ha traído a este pueblo.

CAPACHO.- Fresca es el agua del santo río Jordán; y, aunque me cubrí lo que pude, todavía me alcanzó un poco en los bigotes, y apostaré que los tengo rubios como un oro.

BENITO.- Y aun peor cincuenta veces.

CHIRINOS.- Allá van hasta dos docenas de leones rampantes y de osos colmeneros; todo viviente se guarde; que, aunque fantásticos, no dejarán de dar alguna pesadumbre, y aun de hacer las fuerzas de Hércules con espadas desenvainadas.

JUAN.- Ea, señor autor, ¡cuerpo de nosla! ¿Y agora nos quiere llenar la casa de osos y de leones?

BENITO.- ¡Mirad qué ruiseñores y calandrias nos envía Tontonelo, sino leones y dragones! Señor autor, y salgan figuras más apacibles, o aquí nos contentamos con las vistas; y Dios le guíe, y no pare más en el pueblo un momento.

CASTRADA.- Señor Benito Repollo, deje salir ese oso y leones, siquiera por nosotras, y recibiremos mucho contento.

JUAN.- Pues, hija, ¿de antes te espantabas de los ratones, y ahora pides osos y leones?

CASTRADA.- Todo lo nuevo aplace, señor padre.

CHIRINOS.- Esa doncella, que agora se muestra tan galana y tan compuesta, es la llamada Herodías, cuyo baile alcanzó en premio la cabeza del Precursor de la vida. Si hay quien la ayude a bailar, verán maravillas.

BENITO.- ¡Ésta sí, cuerpo del mundo, que es figura hermosa, apacible y reluciente! ¡Hideputa, y cómo que se vuelve la mochacha! Sobrino Repollo, tú que sabes de achaque de castañetas, ayúdala, y será la fiesta de cuatro capas.

SOBRINO.- Que me place, tío Benito Repollo.

*(Tocan la zarabanda.)*

CAPACHO.- ¡Toma mi abuelo, si es antiguo el baile de la Zarabanda y de la Chacona!

BENITO.- Ea, sobrino, ténselas tiesas a esa bellaca jodía; pero, si ésta es jodía, ¿cómo vee estas maravillas?

CHANFALLA.- Todas las reglas tienen excepción, señor Alcalde.

*(Suena una trompeta, o corneta dentro del teatro, y entra UN FURRIER de*

*compañías.)*

FURRIER.- ¿Quién es aquí el señor Gobernador?

GOBERNADOR.- Yo soy. ¿Qué manda vuesa merced?

FURRIER.- Que luego al punto mande hacer alojamiento para treinta hombres de armas que llegarán aquí dentro de media hora, y aun antes, que ya suena la trompeta; y adiós.

*Vase.*

BENITO.- Yo apostaré que los envía el sabio Tontonelo.

CHANFALLA.- No hay tal; que ésta es una compañía de caballos que estaba alojada dos leguas de aquí.

BENITO.- Ahora yo conozco bien a Tontonelo, y sé que vos y él sois unos grandísimos bellacos, no perdonando al músico; y mirad que os mando que mandéis a Tontonelo no tenga atrevimiento de enviar estos hombres de armas, que le haré dar docientos azotes en las espaldas, que se vean unos a otros.

CHANFALLA.- ¡Digo, señor Alcalde, que no los envía Tontonelo!

BENITO.- Digo que los envía Tontonelo, como ha enviado las otras sabandijas que yo he visto.

CAPACHO.- Todos las habemos visto, señor Benito Repollo.

BENITO.- No digo yo que no, señor Pedro Capacho.  
No toques más, músico de entre sueños, que te romperé la cabeza.

*(Vuelve el FURRIER.)*

FURRIER.- Ea, ¿está ya hecho el alojamiento? Que ya están los caballos en el pueblo.

BENITO.- ¿Que todavía ha salido con la suya Tontonelo? ¡Pues yo os voto a tal, autor de humos y de embelecocos, que me lo habéis de pagar!

CHANFALLA.- Séanme testigos que me amenaza el Alcalde.

CHIRINOS.- Séanme testigos que dice el Alcalde que lo que manda Su Majestad lo manda el sabio Tontonelo.

BENITO.- Atontoneleada te vean mis ojos, plega a Dios todopoderoso.

GOBERNADOR.- Yo para mí tengo que verdaderamente estos hombres de armas no deben de ser de burlas.

FURRIER.- ¿De burlas habían de ser, señor Gobernador? ¿Está en su seso?

JUAN.- Bien pudieran ser atontonelados: como esas cosas habemos visto aquí. Por vida del autor, que haga salir otra vez a la doncella Herodías, porque vea este señor lo que nunca ha visto; quizá con esto le cohecharemos para que se vaya presto del lugar.

CHANFALLA.- Eso en buen hora, y veisla aquí a do vuelve, y hace de señas a



su bailador a que de nuevo la ayude.

SOBRINO.- Por mí no quedará, por cierto.

BENITO.- Eso sí, sobrino; cánsala, cánsala; vueltas y más vueltas; ¡vive Dios, que es un azogue la muchacha! ¡Al hoyo, al hoyo! ¡A ello, a ello!

FURRIER.- ¿Está loca esta gente? ¿Qué diablos de doncella es ésta, y qué baile, y qué Tontonelo?

CAPACHO.- Luego, ¿no vee la doncella herodiana el señor furrier?

FURRIER.- ¿Qué diablos de doncella tengo de ver?

CAPACHO.- Basta: ¡de *ex illis* es!

GOBERNADOR.- ¡De *ex illis* es; de *ex illis* es!

JUAN.- ¡Dellos es, dellos el señor furrier; dellos es!

FURRIER.- ¡Soy de la mala puta que los parió; y, por Dios vivo, que si echo mano a la espada, que los haga salir por las ventanas, que no por la puerta!

CAPACHO.- Basta: ¡de *ex illis* es!

BENITO.- Basta: ¡dellos es, pues no vee nada!

FURRIER.- Canalla barretina: si otra vez me dicen que soy dellos, no les dejaré hueso sano.

BENITO.- Nunca los confesos ni bastardos fueron valientes; y por eso no podemos dejar de decir: ¡dellos es, dellos es!

FURRIER.- ¡Cuerpo de Dios con los villanos! ¡Esperad!

*(Mete mano a la espada y acuchíllase con todos; y el ALCALDE aporrea al RABELLEJO; y la CHERRINOS descuelga la manta y dice:)*

CHIRINOS.- El diablo ha sido la trompeta y la venida de los hombres de armas; parece que los llamaron con campanilla.

CHANFALLA.- El suceso ha sido extraordinario; la virtud del retablo se queda en su punto, y mañana lo podemos mostrar al pueblo; y nosotros mismos podemos cantar el triunfo desta batalla, diciendo: ¡vivan Chirinos y Chanfalla!

## LA CUEVA DE SALAMANCA



### *Entremés de La cueva de Salamanca*

*Salen* PANCRACIO, LEONARDA y CRISTINA.

PANCRACIO.- Enjugad, señora, esas lágrimas, y poned pausa a vuestros suspiros, considerando que cuatro días de ausencia no son siglos. Yo volveré, a lo más largo, a los cinco, si Dios no me quita la vida; aunque será mejor, por no turbar la vuestra, romper mi palabra, y dejar esta jornada; que sin mi presencia se podrá casar mi hermana.

LEONARDA.- No quiero yo, mi Pancracio y mi señor, que por respeto mío vos parezcáis descortés; id en hora buena, y cumplid con vuestras obligaciones, pues las que os llevan son precisas; que yo me apretaré con mi llaga y pasaré mi soledad lo menos mal que pudiere. Sólo os encargo la vuelta, y que no paséis del término que habéis puesto.

Tenme, Cristina, que se me aprieta el corazón.

*(Desmáyase LEONARDA.)*

CRISTINA.- ¡Oh, que bien hayan las bodas y las fiestas! En verdad, señor, que, si yo fuera que vuesa merced, que nunca allá fuera.

PANCRACIO.- Entra, hija, por un vidrio de agua para echársela en el rostro. Mas espera; diréle unas palabras que sé al oído, que tienen virtud para hacer volver de los desmayos.

*(Dícele las palabras; vuelve LEONARDA diciendo:)*

LEONARDA.- ¡Basta!, ello ha de ser forzoso; no hay sino tener paciencia, bien mío; cuanto más os detuviéredes, más dilatáis mi contento. Vuestro compadre Loniso os debe de aguardar ya en el coche. Andad don Dios; que Él os vuelva tan presto y tan bueno como yo deseo.

PANCRACIO.- Mi ángel, si gustas que me quede, no me moveré de aquí más que una estatua.

LEONARDA.- No, no, descanso mío; que mi gusto está en el vuestro; y, por agora, más que os vais que no os quedéis, pues es vuestra honra la mía.

CRISTINA.- ¡Oh, espejo del matrimonio! A fe que si todas las casadas quisiesen tanto a sus maridos como mi señora Leonarda quiere al suyo, que otro gallo les cantase.

LEONARDA.- Entra, Cristinica, y saca mi manto, que quiero acompañar a tu señor hasta dejarle en el coche.

PANCRACIO.- No, por mi amor; abrazadme y quedaos, por vida mía. Cristinica, ten cuenta de regalar a tu señora, que yo te mando un calzado cuando vuelva, como tú le quisieres.

CRISTINA.- Vaya, señor, y no lleve pena de mi señora, porque la pienso persuadir de manera a que nos holguemos, que no imagine en la falta que vuesa merced le ha de hacer.

LEONARDA.- ¿Holgar yo? ¡Qué bien estás en la cuenta, niña! Porque, ausente de mi gusto, no se hicieron los placeres ni las glorias para mí; penas y dolores, sí.

PANCRACIO.- Ya no lo puedo sufrir. Quedad en paz, lumbré destos ojos, los cuales no verán cosa que les dé placer hasta volveros a ver.

*(Éntrese PANCRACIO.)*

LEONARDA.- ¡Allá darás, rayo, en casa de Ana Díaz. Vayas, y no vuelvas; la ida del humo. Por Dios, que esta vez no os han de valer vuestras valentías ni vuestro recatos!

CRISTINA.- Mil veces temí que con tus extremos habías de estorbar su partida y nuestros contentos.

LEONARDA.- ¿Si vendrán esta noche los que esperamos?

CRISTINA.- ¿Pues no? Ya los tengo avisados, y ellos están tan en ello, que esta tarde enviaron con la lavandera, nuestra secretaria, como que eran paños, una canasta de colar, llena de mil regalos y de cosas de comer, que no parece sino uno de los serones que da el rey el Jueves Santo a sus pobres; sino que la canasta es de Pascua, porque hay en ella empanadas, fiambreras, manjar blanco, y dos capones que aún no están acabados de pelar, y todo género de fruta de la que hay ahora; y, sobre todo, una bota de hasta una arroba de vino, de lo de una oreja, que huele que traciende.

LEONARDA.- Es muy cumplido, y lo fue siempre, mi Riponce, sacristán de las telas de mis entrañas.

CRISTINA.- Pues, ¿qué le falta a mi maese Nicolás, barbero de mis hígados y navaja de mis pesadumbres, que así me las rapa y quita cuando le veo, como si nunca las hubiera tenido?

LEONARDA.- ¿Pusiste la canasta en cobro?

CRISTINA.- En la cocina la tengo, cubierta con un cernadero, por el disimulo.

*(Llama a la puerta el ESTUDIANTE*

**Carraolano, y, en llamando, sin esperar que le respondan, entra.)**

LEONARDA.- Cristina, mira quién llama.

ESTUDIANTE.- Señoras, yo soy, un pobre estudiante.

CRISTINA.- Bien se os parece que sois pobre y estudiante, pues lo uno muestra vuestro vestido, y el ser pobre vuestro atrevimiento. Cosa estraña es ésta, que no hay pobre que espere a que le saquen la limosna a la puerta, sino que se entran en las casas hasta el último rincón, sin mirar si despiertan a quien duerme, o si no.

ESTUDIANTE.- Otra más blanda respuesta esperaba yo de la buena gracia de vuesa merced; cuanto más, que yo no quería ni buscaba otra limosna, sino alguna caballeriza o pajar donde defenderme esta noche de las inclemencias del cielo, que, según se me trasluce, parece que con grandísimo rigor a la tierra amenazan.

LEONARDA.- ¿Y de dónde bueno sois, amigo?

ESTUDIANTE.- Salmantino soy, señora mía; quiero decir que soy de Salamanca. Iba a Roma con un tío mío, el cual murió en el camino, en el corazón de Francia. Vime solo; determiné volverme a mi tierra; robáronme los lacayos o compañeros de Roque Guinarde, en Cataluña, porque él estaba ausente; que, a estar allí, no consintiera que se me hiciera agravio, porque es muy cortés y

comedido, y además limosnero. Hame tomado a estas santas puertas la noche, que por tales las juzgo, y busco mi remedio.

LEONARDA.- En verdad, Cristina, que me ha movido a lástima el estudiante.

CRISTINA.- Ya me tiene a mí rasgadas las entrañas. Tengámosle en casa esta noche, pues de las sobras del castillo se podrá mantener el real; quiero decir que en las reliquias de la canasta habrá en quien adore su hambre; y más, que me ayudará a pelar la volatería que viene en la cesta.

LEONARDA.- Pues, ¿cómo, Cristina, quieres que metamos en nuestra casa testigos de nuestras liviandades?

CRISTINA.- Así tiene él talle de hablar por el colodrillo, como por la boca. Venga acá, amigo: ¿sabe pelar?

ESTUDIANTE.- ¿Cómo si sé pelar? No entiendo eso de saber pelar, si no es que quiere vuesa merced motejarme de pelón; que no hay para qué, pues yo me confieso por el mayor pelón del mundo.

CRISTINA.- No lo digo yo por eso, en mi ánima, sino por saber si sabía pelar dos o tres pares de capones.

ESTUDIANTE.- Lo que sabré responder es que yo, señoras, por la gracia de Dios, soy graduado de bachiller por Salamanca, y no digo...

LEONARDA.- Desamano, ¿quién duda sino que sabrá pelar no sólo capones, sino gansos y avutardas? Y, en esto del guardar secreto, ¿cómo le va? Y, a dicha, ¿es tentado de decir todo lo que ve, imagina o siente?

ESTUDIANTE.- Así pueden matar delante de mí más hombres que carneros en el Rastro, que yo desplegue mis labios para decir palabra alguna.

CRISTINA.- Pues atúrese esa boca, y córsese esa lengua con una agujeta de dos cabos, y amuélese esos dientes, y éntrese con nosotras, y verá misterios y cenará maravillas, y podrá medir en un pajar los pies que quisiere para su cama.

ESTUDIANTE.- Con siete tendré demasiado: que no soy nada codicioso ni regalado.

*(Entran el SACRISTÁN Reponce y el BARBERO.)*

SACRISTÁN.- ¡Oh, que en hora buena estén los automedones y guías de los carros de nuestros gustos, las luces de nuestras tinieblas, y las dos recíprocas voluntades que sirven de basas y columnas a la amorosa fábrica de nuestros deseos!

LEONARDA.- ¡Esto sólo me enfada dél! Reponce mío: habla, por tu vida, a lo moderno, y de modo que te entienda, y no te encarames donde no te alcance.

BARBERO.- Eso tengo yo bueno, que hablo más llano que una suela de zapato; pan por vino y vino por pan, o como suele decirse.

SACRISTÁN.- Sí, que diferencia ha de haber de un sacristán gramático a un barbero romancista.

CRISTINA.- Para lo que yo he menester a mi barbero, tanto latín sabe, y aún más, que supo Antonio de Nebrija; y no se dispute agora de ciencia ni de modos de hablar: que cada uno habla, si no como debe, a lo menos, como sabe; y entrémonos, y manos a labor, que hay mucho que hacer.



ESTUDIANTE.- Y mucho que pelar.

SACRISTÁN.- ¿Quién es este buen hombre?

LEONARDA.- Un pobre estudiante salamanqueso, que pide albergó para esta noche.

SACRISTÁN.- Yo le daré un par de reales para cena y para lecho, y váyase con Dios.

ESTUDIANTE.- Señor sacristán Reponce, recibo y agradezco la merced y la limosna; pero yo soy mudo, y pelón además, como lo ha menester esta señora doncella, que me tiene convidado; y voto a... de no irme esta noche desta casa, si todo el mundo me lo manda. Confíese vuesa merced mucho de enhoramala de un hombre de mis prendas, que se contenta de dormir en un pajar; y si lo han por sus capones, péleselos el Turco y cómanselos ellos, y nunca del cuero les salgan.

BARBERO.- Éste más parece rufián que pobre. Talle tiene de alzarse con toda la casa.

CRISTINA.- No medre yo, si no me contenta el brío. Entrémonos todos, y demos orden en lo que se ha de hacer; que el pobre pelará y callará como en misa.

ESTUDIANTE.- Y aun como en vísperas.

SACRISTÁN.- Puesto me ha miedo el pobre estudiante; yo apostaré que sabe más latín que yo.

LEONARDA.- De ahí le deben de nacer los bríos que tiene; pero no te pese, amigo, de hacer caridad, que vale para todas las cosas.

*(Éntranse todos, y sale Leoniso, COMPADRE DE PANCRACIO, y PANCRACIO.)*

COMPADRE.- Luego lo vi yo que nos había de faltar la rueda; no hay cochero que no sea temático; si él rodeara un poco y salvara aquel barranco, ya estuviéramos dos leguas de aquí.

PANCRACIO.- A mí no se me da nada; que antes gusto de volverme y pasar esta noche con mi esposa Leonarda, que en la venta; porque la dejé esta tarde casi para espirar, del sentimiento de mi partida.

COMPADRE.- ¡Gran mujer! ¡De buena os ha dado el cielo, señor compadre! Dadle gracias por ello.

PANCRACIO.- Yo se las doy como puedo, y no como debo; no hay Lucrecia que se le llegue, ni Porcia que se le iguale; la honestidad y el recogimiento han hecho en ella su morada.

COMPADRE.- Si la mía no fuera celosa, no tenía yo más que desear. Por esta calle está más cerca mi casa; tomad, compadre, por éstas, y estaréis presto en la vuestra; y veámonos mañana, que no me faltará coche para la jornada. Adiós.

PANCRACIO.- Adiós.

*(Éntranse los dos.)*

*(Vuelven a salir el SACRISTÁN y el BARBERO, con sus guitarras; LEONARDA, CRISTINA y el ESTUDIANTE. Sale el SACRISTÁN con la*

*sotana alzada y ceñida al cuerpo, danzando al son de su misma guitarra; y, a cada cabriola, vaya diciendo estas palabras:)*

SACRISTÁN.- ¡Linda noche, lindo rato, linda cena y lindo amor!

CRISTINA.- Señor sacristán Reponce, no es éste tiempo de danzar; dése orden en cenar y en las demás cosas, y quédense las danzas para mejor coyuntura.

SACRISTÁN.- ¡Linda noche, lindo rato, linda cena y lindo amor!

LEONARDA.- Déjale, Cristina; que en extremo gusto de ver su agilidad.

*(Llama PANCRACIO a la puerta, y dice:)*

PANCRACIO.- Gente dormida, ¿no oís? ¿Cómo, y tan temprano tenéis atrancada la puerta? Los recatos de mi Leonarda deben de andar por aquí.

LEONARDA.- ¡Ay, desdichada! A la voz y a los golpes, mi marido Pancracio es éste; algo le debe de haber sucedido, pues él se vuelve. Señores, a recogerse a la carbonera: digo al desván, donde está el carbón.  
Corre, Cristina, y llévalos; que yo entretendré a Pancracio de modo que tengas lugar para todo.

ESTUDIANTE.- ¡Fea noche, amargo rato, mala cena y peor amor!

CRISTINA.- ¡Gentil relente, por cierto! ¡Ea, vengan todos!

PANCRACIO.- ¿Qué diablos es esto? ¿Cómo no me abrís, lirones?

ESTUDIANTE.- Es el toque, que yo no quiero correr la suerte destos señores. Escóndanse ellos donde quisieren, y llévenme a mí al pajar, que, si allí me hallan, antes pareceré pobre que adúltero.

CRISTINA.- Caminen, que se hunde la casa a golpes.

SACRISTÁN.- El alma llevo en los dientes.

BARBERO.- Y yo en los carcañares.

*(Éntranse todos y asómase LEONARDA a la ventana.)*

LEONARDA.- ¿Quién está ahí? ¿Quién llama?

PANCRACIO.- Tu marido soy, Leonarda mía; ábreme, que ha media hora que estoy rompiendo a golpes estas puertas.

LEONARDA.- En la voz, bien me parece a mí que oigo a mi cepo Pancracio; pero la voz de un gallo se parece a la de otro gallo, y no me aseguro.

PANCRACIO.- ¡Oh recato inaudito de mujer prudente! Que yo soy, vida mía, tu marido Pancracio: ábreme con toda seguridad.

LEONARDA.- Venga acá, yo lo veré agora. ¿Qué hice yo cuando él se partió esta tarde?

PANCRACIO.- Suspiraste, lloraste y al cabo te desmayaste.

LEONARDA.- Verdad; pero, con todo esto, dígame: ¿qué señales tengo yo en uno de mis hombros?

PANCRACIO.- En el izquierdo tienes un lunar del grandor de medio real, con tres cabellos como tres mil hebras de oro.

LEONARDA.- Verdad; pero, ¿cómo se llama la doncella de casa?

PANCRACIO.- ¡Ea, boba, no seas enfadosa, Cristinica se llama! ¿Qué más quieres?

LEONARDA.- ¡Cristinica, Cristinica, tu señor es; ábrele, niña!

CRISTINA.- Ya voy, señora; que él sea muy bien venido.  
¿Qué es esto, señor de mi alma? ¿Qué acelerada vuelta es ésta?

LEONARDA.- ¡Ay, bien mío! Decídnoslo presto, que el temor de algún mal suceso me tiene ya sin pulsos.

PANCRACIO.- No ha sido otra cosa sino que en un barranco se quebró la rueda del coche, y mi compadre y yo determinamos volvernó, y no pasar la noche en el campo; y mañana buscaremos en qué ir, pues hay tiempo. Pero ¿qué voces hay?

*(Dentro, y como de muy lejos, diga el ESTUDIANTE:)*

ESTUDIANTE.- ¡Ábranme aquí, señores; que me ahogo!

PANCRACIO.- ¿Es en casa o en la calle?

CRISTINA.- Que me maten si no es el pobre estudiante que encerré en el pajar, para que durmiese esta noche.

PANCRACIO.- ¿Estudiante encerrado en mi casa, y en mi ausencia? ¡Malo! En verdad, señora, que si no me tuviera asegurado vuestra mucha bondad, que me causara algún recelo este encerramiento; pero ve, Cristina, y ábrele, que se le debe de haber caído toda la paja a cuestras.

CRISTINA.- Ya voy.

LEONARDA.- Señor, que es un pobre salamanqueso, que pidió que le acogiésemos esta noche, por amor de Dios, aunque fuese en el pajar; y ya sabes mi condición, que no puedo negar nada de lo que se me pide, y encerrámosle; pero veisle aquí, y mirad cuál sale.

*(Sale el ESTUDIANTE y CRISTINA; él lleno de paja las barbas, cabeza y vestido.)*

ESTUDIANTE.- Si yo no tuviera tanto miedo, y fuera menos escrupuloso, yo hubiera escusado el peligro de ahogarme en el pajar, y hubiera cenado mejor, y tenido más blanda y menos peligrosa cama.

PANCRACIO.- ¿Y quién os había de dar, amigo, mejor cena y mejor cama?

ESTUDIANTE.- ¿Quién? Mi habilidad, sino que el temor de la justicia me tiene atadas las manos.

PANCRACIO.- ¡Peligrosa habilidad debe de ser la vuestra, pues os teméis de la justicia!

ESTUDIANTE.- La ciencia que aprendí en la Cueva de Salamanca, de donde yo soy natural, si se dejara usar sin miedo de la Santa Inquisición, yo sé que cenara y recenara a costa de mis herederos; y aun quizá no estoy muy fuera de usalla, siquiera por esta vez, donde la necesidad me fuerza y me disculpa; pero no sé yo si estas señoras serán tan secretas como yo lo he sido.

PANCRACIO.- No se cure dellas, amigo, sino haga lo que quisiere, que yo les haré que callen; y ya deseo en todo extremo ver alguna destas cosas que dicen que se aprenden en la Cueva de Salamanca.

ESTUDIANTE.- ¿No se contentará vuesa merced con que le saque aquí dos demonios en figuras humanas, que traigan a cuestras una canasta llena de cosas fiambres y comederas?

LEONARDA.- ¿Demonios en mi casa y en mi presencia? ¡Jesús! Librada sea yo de lo que librarme no sé.

CRISTINA.- *Aparte.* El mismo diablo tiene el estudiante en el cuerpo: ¡plega a Dios que vaya a buen viento esta parva! Temblándome está el corazón en el pecho.

PANCRACIO.- Ahora bien; si ha de ser sin peligro y sin espantos, yo me holgaré de ver esos señores demonios y a la canasta de las fiambreras; y torno a advertir que las figuras no sean espantosas.

ESTUDIANTE.- Digo que saldrán en figura del sacristán de la parroquia, y en la de un barbero su amigo.

CRISTINA.- ¿Mas que lo dice por el sacristán Riponce y por maese Roque, el

barbero de casa? ¡Desdichados dellos, que se han de ver convertidos en diablos! Y dígame, hermano, ¿y éstos han de ser diablos bautizados?

ESTUDIANTE.- ¡Gentil novedad! ¿Adónde diablos hay diablos bautizados, o para qué se han de bautizar los diablos? Aunque podrá ser que éstos lo fuesen, porque no hay regla sin excepción; y apártense, y verán maravillas.

LEONARDA.- *Aparte.* ¡Ay, sin ventura! Aquí se descose; aquí salen nuestras maldades a plaza; aquí soy muerta.

CRISTINA.- *Aparte.* ¡Ánimo, señora, que buen corazón quebranta mala ventura!

ESTUDIANTE

Vosotros, mezquinos, que en la carbonera  
hallastes amparo a vuestra desgracia,  
salid, y en los hombros, con priesa y con gracia,  
sacad la canasta de la fiambreira;  
no me incitéis a que de otra manera  
más dura os conjure. Salid: ¿qué esperáis?  
Mirad que si a dicha el salir rehusáis,  
tendrá mal suceso mi nueva quimera.

Hora bien, yo sé cómo me tengo de haber con estos demonicos humanos; quiero entrar allá dentro, y a solas hacer un conjuro tan fuerte, que los haga salir más que de paso; aunque la calidad destos demonios más está en sabellos aconsejar, que en conjurallos.

*(Éntrese el ESTUDIANTE.)*

PANCRACIO.- Yo digo que si éste sale con lo que ha dicho, que será la cosa más nueva y más rara que se haya visto en el mundo.



LEONARDA.- Sí saldrá, ¿quién lo duda? Pues, ¿habíanos de engañar?

CRISTINA.- Ruido anda allá dentro; yo apostaré que los saca; pero vee aquí do vuelve con los demonios y el apatusco de la canasta.

LEONARDA.- ¡Jesús! ¡Qué parecidos son los de la carga al sacristán Reponce y al barbero de la plazuela!

CRISTINA.- Mira, señora, que donde hay demonios no se ha de decir Jesús.

SACRISTÁN.- Digan lo que quisieren; que nosotros somos como los perros del herrero, que dormimos al son de las martilladas; ninguna cosa nos espanta ni turba.

LEONARDA.- Lléguese a que yo coma de lo que viene de la canasta; no tomen menos.

ESTUDIANTE.- Yo haré la salva y comenzaré por el vino. *(Bebe.)*

Bueno es: ¿es de Esquivias, señor sacridiablo?

SACRISTÁN.- De Esquivias es, ¡juro a...!

ESTUDIANTE.- Téngase, por vida suya, y no pase adelante. ¡Amiguito soy yo de diablos juradores! Demonico, demonico, aquí no venimos a hacer pecados mortales, sino a pasar una hora de pasatiempo, y cenar, y irnos con Cristo.

CRISTINA.- ¿Y éstos han de cenar con nosotros?

PANCRACIO.- Sí, que los diablos no comen.

BARBERO.- Sí comen algunos, pero no todos; y nosotros somos de los que comen.

CRISTINA.- ¡Ay, señores! Quédense acá los pobres diablos, pues han traído la cena; que sería poca cortesía dejarlos ir muertos de hambre, y parecen diablos muy honrados y muy hombres de bien.

LEONARDA.- Como no nos espanten, y si mi marido gusta, quédense en buen hora.

PANCRACIO.- Queden; que quiero ver lo que nunca he visto.

BARBERO.- Nuestro Señor pague a vuestras mercedes la buena obra, señores míos.

CRISTINA.- ¡Ay, qué bien criados, qué corteses! Nunca medre yo, si todos los diablos son como éstos, si no han de ser mis amigos de aquí adelante.

SACRISTÁN.- Oigan, pues, para que se enamoren de veras.

*(Toca el SACRISTÁN, y canta; y ayúdale el BARBERO con el último verso no más.)*

SACRISTÁN

Oigan los que poco saben  
lo que con mi lengua franca  
digo del bien que en sí tiene

BARBERO

*La Cueva de Salamanca.*

SACRISTÁN

Oigan lo que dejó escrito  
della el bachiller Tudanca  
en el cuero de una yegua  
que dicen que fue potranca,  
en la parte de la piel  
que confina con el anca,  
poniendo sobre las nubes

BARBERO

*La Cueva de Salamanca.*

SACRISTÁN

En ella estudian los ricos  
y los que no tienen blanca,  
y sale entera y rolliza  
la memoria que está manca.  
Siéntanse los que allí enseñan  
de alquitrán en una banca,  
porque estas bombas encierra

BARBERO

*La Cueva de Salamanca.*

SACRISTÁN

En ella se hacen discretos  
los moros de la Palanca;  
y el estudiante más burdo  
ciencias de su pecho arranca.  
A los que estudian en ella,  
ninguna cosa les manca;  
viva, pues, siglos eternos

BARBERO

*La Cueva de Salamanca.*

SACRISTÁN

Y nuestro conjurador,  
si es, a dicha, de Loranca,  
tenga en ella cien mil vides  
de uva tinta y de uva blanca;  
y al diablo que le acusare,  
que le den con una tranca,  
y para el tal jamás sirva

BARBERO

*La Cueva de Salamanca.*

CRISTINA.- Basta: ¿que también los diablos son poetas?

BARBERO.- Y aun todos los poetas son diablos.

PANCRACIO.- Dígame, señor mío, pues los diablos lo saben todo, ¿dónde se inventaron todos estos bailes de las zarabandas, zambapalo y *Dello me pesa*, con el famoso del nuevo *Escarramán*?

BARBERO.- ¿Adónde? En el infierno; allí tuvieron su origen y principio.

PANCRACIO.- Yo así lo creo.

LEONARDA.- Pues, en verdad, que tengo yo mis puntas y collar escarramanesco; sino que por mi honestidad, y por guardar el decoro a quien soy, no me atrevo a bailarle.

SACRISTÁN.- Con cuatro mudanzas que yo le enseñase a vuesa merced cada

día, en una semana saldría única en el baile; que sé que le falta bien poco.

ESTUDIANTE.- Todo se andará; por agora, entrémonos a cenar, que es lo que importa.

PANCRACIO.- Entremos; que quiero averiguar si los diablos comen o no, con otras cien mil cosas que dellos cuentan; y, por Dios, que no han de salir de mi casa hasta que me dejen enseñado en la ciencia y ciencias que se enseñan en *La Cueva de Salamanca*.

## EL VIEJO CELOSO



### *Entremés del Viejo celoso*

*Salen* DOÑA LORENZA y CRISTINA, *su criada*, y HORTIGOSA, *su vecina*.

DOÑA LORENZA.- Milagro ha sido éste, señora Hortigosa, el no haber dado la vuelta a la llave mi duelo, mi yugo y mi desesperación. Éste es el primero día, después que me casé con él, que hablo con persona de fuera de casa; que fuera le vea yo desta vida a él y a quien con él me casó.

HORTIGOSA.- Ande, mi señora doña Lorenza, no se queje tanto; que con una caldera vieja se compra otra nueva.

DOÑA LORENZA.- Y aun con esos y otros semejantes villancicos o refranes me engañaron a mí; que malditos sean sus dineros, fuera de las cruces; malditas sus joyas, malditas sus galas, y maldito todo cuanto me da y promete. ¿De qué me sirve a mí todo aquesto, si en mitad de la riqueza estoy pobre, y en medio de la abundancia con hambre?

CRISTINA.- En verdad, señora tía, que tienes razón; que más quisiera yo andar con un trapo atrás y otro adelante, y tener un marido mozo, que verme casada y enlodada con ese viejo podrido que tomaste por esposo.

DOÑA LORENZA.- ¿Yo le tomé, sobrina? A la fe, diómele quien pudo; y yo, como muchacha, fui más presta al obedecer que al contradecir; pero, si yo tuviera tanta experiencia destas cosas, antes me tarazara la lengua con los dientes

que pronunciar aquel sí, que se pronuncia con dos letras y da que llorar dos mil años; pero yo imagino que no fue otra cosa sino que había de ser ésta, y que, las que han de suceder forzosamente, no hay prevención ni diligencia humana que las prevenga.

CRISTINA.- ¡Jesús y del mal viejo! Toda la noche: «Daca el orinal, toma el orinal; levántate, Cristinica, y caliéntame unos paños, que me muero de la ijada; dame aquellos juncos, que me fatiga la piedra». Con más ungüentos y medicinas en el aposento que si fuera una botica; y yo, que apenas sé vestirme, tengo de servirle de enfermera. ¡Pux, pux, pux, viejo clueco, tan potroso como celoso, y el más celoso del mundo!

DOÑA LORENZA.- Dice la verdad mi sobrina.

CRISTINA.- ¡Pluguiera a Dios que nunca yo la dijera en esto!

HORTIGOSA.- Ahora bien, señora doña Lorenza, vuesa merced haga lo que le tengo aconsejado, y verá cómo se halla muy bien con mi consejo. El mozo es como un ginjo verde; quiere bien, sabe callar y agradecer lo que por él se hace; y, pues los celos y el recato del viejo no nos dan lugar a demandas ni a respuestas, resolución y buen ánimo: que, por la orden que hemos dado, yo le pondré al galán en su aposento de vuesa merced y le sacaré, si bien tuviese el viejo más ojos que Argos y viese más que un zahorí, que dicen que vee siete estados debajo de la tierra.

DOÑA LORENZA.- Como soy primeriza, estoy temerosa, y no querría, a trueco del gusto, poner a riesgo la honra.

CRISTINA.-

Eso me parece, señora tía, a lo del cantar de Gómez Arias:

Señor Gómez Arias,  
doleos de mí;  
soy niña y muchacha,

nunca en tal me vi.

DOÑA LORENZA.- Algún espíritu malo debe de hablar en ti, sobrina, según las cosas que dices.

CRISTINA.- Yo no sé quién habla; pero yo sé que haría todo aquello que la señora Hortigosa ha dicho, sin faltar punto.

DOÑA LORENZA.- ¿Y la honra, sobrina?

CRISTINA.- ¿Y el holgarnos, tía?

DOÑA LORENZA.- ¿Y si se sabe?

CRISTINA.- ¿Y si no se sabe?

DOÑA LORENZA.- ¿Y quién me asegurará a mí que no se sepa?

HORTIGOSA.- ¿Quién? La buena diligencia, la sagacidad, la industria; y, sobre todo, el buen ánimo y mis trazas.

CRISTINA.- Mire, señora Hortigosa, tráyanosle galán, limpio, desenvuelto, un poco atrevido, y, sobre todo, mozo.

HORTIGOSA.- Todas esas partes tiene el que he propuesto, y otras dos más: que es rico y liberal.

DOÑA LORENZA.- Que no quiero riquezas, señora Hortigosa; que me sobran



las joyas, y me ponen en confusión las diferencias de colores de mis muchos vestidos; hasta eso no tengo que desear, que Dios le dé salud a Cañizares: más vestida me tiene que un palmito, y con más joyas que la vedriera de un platero rico. No me clavara él las ventanas, cerrara las puertas, visitara a todas horas la casa, desterrara della los gatos y los perros, solamente porque tienen nombre de varón; que, a trueco de que no hiciera esto, y otras cosas no vistas en materia de recato, yo le perdonara sus dádivas y mercedes.

HORTIGOSA.- ¿Que tan celoso es?

DOÑA LORENZA.- Digo que le vendían el otro día una tapicería a bonísimo precio, y por ser de figuras no la quiso, y compró otra de verduras por mayor precio, aunque no era tan buena. Siete puertas hay antes que se llegue a mi aposento, fuera de la puerta de la calle, y todas se cierran con llave; y las llaves no me ha sido posible averiguar dónde las esconde de noche.

CRISTINA.- Tía, la llave de loba creo que se la pone entre las faldas de la camisa.

DOÑA LORENZA.- No lo creas, sobrina; que yo duermo con él, y jamás le he visto ni sentido que tenga llave alguna.

CRISTINA.- Y más, que toda la noche anda como trasgo por toda la casa; y si acaso dan alguna música en la calle, les tira de pedradas porque se vayan: es un malo, es un brujo; es un viejo, que no tengo más que decir.

DOÑA LORENZA.- Señora Hortigosa, váyase, no venga el gruñidor y la halle conmigo, que sería echarlo a perder todo; y lo que ha de hacer, hágalo luego; que estoy tan aburrida, que no me falta sino echarme una soga al cuello, por salir de tan mala vida.

HORTIGOSA.- Quizá con esta que ahora se comenzará, se le quitará toda esa mala gana y le vendrá otra más saludable y que más la contente.

CRISTINA.- Así suceda, aunque me costase a mí un dedo de la mano: que quiero mucho a mi señora tía, y me muero de verla tan pensativa y angustiada en poder deste viejo y reviejo, y más que viejo; y no me puedo hartar de decille viejo.

DOÑA LORENZA.- Pues en verdad que te quiere bien, Cristina.

CRISTINA.- ¿Deja por eso de ser viejo? Cuanto más, que yo he oído decir que siempre los viejos son amigos de niñas.

HORTIGOSA.- Así es la verdad, Cristina, y adiós, que, en acabando de comer, doy la vuelta. Vuesa merced esté muy en lo que dejamos concertado, y verá cómo salimos y entramos bien en ello.

CRISTINA.- Señora Hortigosa, hágame merced de traerme a mí un frailecico pequeñito, con quien yo me huelgue.

HORTIGOSA.- Yo se le traeré a la niña pintado.

CRISTINA.- ¡Que no le quiero pintado, sino vivo, vivo, chiquito como unas perlas!

DOÑA LORENZA.- ¿Y si lo vee tío?

CRISTINA.- Diréle yo que es un duende, y tendrá dél miedo, y holgaréme yo.

HORTIGOSA.- Digo que yo le trairé, y adiós.

*(Vase HORTIGOSA.)*

CRISTINA.- Mire, tía: si Hortigosa trae al galán y a mi frailecico, y si señor los viere, no tenemos más que hacer sino cogerle entre todos y ahogarle, y echarle en el pozo o enterrarle en la caballeriza.

DOÑA LORENZA.- Tal eres tú, que creo lo harías mejor que lo dices.

CRISTINA.- Pues no sea el viejo celoso, y déjenos vivir en paz, pues no le hacemos mal alguno, y vivimos como unas santas.

*(Éntranse.)*

*(Entran CAÑIZARES, viejo, y un COMPADRE suyo.)*

CAÑIZARES.- Señor compadre, señor compadre: el setentón que se casa con quince, o carece de entendimiento, o tiene gana de visitar el otro mundo lo más presto que le sea posible. Apenas me casé con doña Lorencica, pensando tener en ella compañía y regalo, y persona que se hallase en mi cabecera, y me cerrase los ojos al tiempo de mi muerte, cuando me embistieron una turbamulta de trabajos y desasosiegos; tenía casa, y busqué casar; estaba posado, y desposéme.

COMPADRE.- Compadre, error fue, pero no muy grande; porque, según el dicho del Apóstol, mejor es casarse que abrasarse.

CAÑIZARES.- ¡Que no había que abrasar en mí, señor compadre, que con la menor llamarada quedara hecho ceniza! Compañía quise, compañía busqué, compañía hallé, pero Dios lo remedie, por quién Él es.

COMPADRE.- ¿Tiene celos, señor compadre?

CAÑIZARES.- Del sol que mira a Lorencita, del aire que le toca, de las faldas que la vapulan.

COMPADRE.- ¿Dale ocasión?

CAÑIZARES.- Ni por pienso, ni tiene por qué, ni cómo, ni cuándo, ni adónde: las ventanas, amén de estar con llave, las guarnecen rejas y celosías; las puertas jamás se abren; vecina no atraviesa mis umbrales, ni los atravesará mientras Dios me diere vida. Mirad, compadre: no les vienen los malos aires a las mujeres de ir a los jubileos ni a las procesiones, ni a todos los actos de regocijos públicos; donde ellas se mancan, donde ellas se estropean y adonde ellas se dañan, es en casa de las vecinas y de las amigas; más maldades encubre una mala amiga, que la capa de la noche; más conciertos se hacen en su casa y más se concluyen, que en una semblea.

COMPADRE.- Yo así lo creo; pero si la señora doña Lorenza no sale de casa, ni nadie entra en la suya, ¿de qué vive descontento mi compadre?

CAÑIZARES.- De que no pasará mucho tiempo en que no caya Lorencica en lo que le falta; que será un mal caso, y tan malo, que en sólo pensallo le temo, y de temerle me desespero, y de desesperarme vivo con disgusto.

COMPADRE.- Y con razón se puede tener ese temer, porque las mujeres querrían gozar enteros los frutos del matrimonio.

CAÑIZARES.- La mía los goza doblados.

COMPADRE.- Ahí está el daño, señor compadre.CAÑIZARES.- No, no, ni por pienso; porque es más simple Lorencica que una paloma, y hasta agora no entiende nada desas filaterías; y adiós, señor compadre, que me quiero entrar en casa.

COMPADRE.- Yo quiero entrar allá, y ver a mi señora doña Lorenza.

CAÑIZARES.- Habéis de saber, compadre, que los antiguos latinos usaban de un refrán, que decía: Amicus usque ad aras, que quiere decir: «El amigo, hasta el altar»; infiriendo que el amigo ha de hacer por su amigo todo aquello que no fuere contra Dios; y yo digo que mi amigo, usque ad portam, hasta la puerta; que ninguno ha de pasar mis quicios; y adiós, señor compadre, y perdóneme.

*(Éntrese CAÑIZARES.)*

COMPADRE.- En mi vida he visto hombre más recatado, ni más celoso, ni más impertinente; pero éste es de aquellos que traen la sogá arrastrando, y de los que siempre vienen a morir del mal que temen.

*(Éntrese el COMPADRE.)*

*(Salen DOÑA LORENZA y CRISTINICA.)*

CRISTINA.- Tía, mucho tarda tío, y más tarda Hortigosa.

DOÑA LORENZA.- Mas, que nunca él acá viniese, ni ella tampoco; porque él me enfada y ella me tiene confusa.

CRISTINA.- Todo es probar, señora tía; y, cuando no saliere bien, darle del codo.

DOÑA LORENZA.- ¡Ay, sobrina! Que estas cosas, o yo sé poco o sé que todo

el daño está en probarlas.

CRISTINA.- A fe, señora tía, que tiene poco ánimo, y que, si yo fuera de su edad, que no me espantaran hombres armados.

DOÑA LORENZA.- Otra vez torno a decir, y diré cien mil veces, que Satanás habla en tu boca; mas ¡ay! ¿Cómo se ha entrado señor?

CRISTINA.- Debe de haber abierto con la llave maestra.

DOÑA LORENZA.- Encomiendo yo al diablo sus maestrías y sus llaves.

*(Entra CAÑIZARES.)*

CAÑIZARES.- ¿Con quién hablábades, doña Lorenza?

DOÑA LORENZA.- Con Cristinica hablaba.

CAÑIZARES.- Miradlo bien, doña Lorenza.

DOÑA LORENZA.- Digo que hablaba con Cristinica: ¿con quién había de hablar? ¿Tengo yo, por ventura, con quién?

CAÑIZARES.- No querría que tuviésedes algún soliloquio con vos misma, que redundase en mi perjuicio.

DOÑA LORENZA.- Ni entiendo esos circunloquios que decís, ni aun los quiero entender; y tengamos la fiesta en paz.

CAÑIZARES.- Ni aun las vísperas no querría yo tener en guerra con vos; pero, ¿quién llama a aquella puerta con tanta priesa? Mira, Cristinica, quien es, y, si es pobre, dale limosna y despídele.

CRISTINA.- ¿Quién está ahí?

HORTIGOSA.- La vecina Hortigosa es, señora Cristina.

CAÑIZARES.- ¿Hortigosa y vecina? Dios sea conmigo. Pregúntale, Cristina, lo que quiere, y dáselo, con condición que no atraviese esos umbrales.

CRISTINA.- ¿Y qué quiere, señora vecina?

CAÑIZARES.- El nombre de vecina me turba y sobresalta; llámala por su propio nombre, Cristina.

CRISTINA.- Responda: y ¿qué quiere, señora Hortigosa?

HORTIGOSA.- Al señor Cañizares quiero suplicar un poco, en que me va la honra, la vida y el alma.

CAÑIZARES.- Decidle, sobrina, a esa señora, que a mí me va todo eso y más en que no entre acá dentro.

DOÑA LORENZA.- ¡Jesús, y qué condición tan extravagante! ¿Aquí no estoy delante de vos? ¿Hanme de comer de ojo? ¿Hanme de llevar por los aires?

CAÑIZARES.- ¡Entre con cien mil Bercebúyes, pues vos lo queréis!

CRISTINA.- Entre, señora vecina.

CAÑIZARES.- ¡Nombre fatal para mí es el de vecina!

*(Entra HORTIGOSA, y trae un guadamecú y en las pieles de las cuatro esquinas han de venir pintados)*

**Rodamonte, Mandricardo, Rugero y Gradaso; y Rodamonte venga pintado como arrebozado.)**

HORTIGOSA.- Señor mío de mi alma, movida y incitada de la buena fama de vuestra merced, de su gran caridad y de sus muchas limosnas, me he atrevido de venir a suplicar a vuestra merced me haga tanta merced, caridad y limosna y buena obra de comprarme este guadamecú, porque tengo un hijo preso por unas heridas que dio a un tundidor, y ha mandado la justicia que declare el cirujano, y no tengo con qué pagalle, y corre peligro no le echen otros embargos, que podrían ser muchos, a causa que es muy travieso mi hijo; y querría echarle hoy o mañana, si fuese posible, de la cárcel. La obra es buena, el guadamecú nuevo, y, con todo eso, le daré por lo que vuestra merced quisiere darme por él, que en más está la monta, y como esas cosas he perdido yo en esta vida. Tenga vuestra merced desconfianza, señora mía, y desconfiámosle, porque no vea el señor Cañizares que hay engaño en mis palabras; alce más, señora mía, y mire cómo es bueno de caída, y las pinturas de los cuadros parece que están vivas.

*(Al alzar y mostrar el guadamecú, entra por detrás dél un GALÁN; y, como CAÑIZARES ve los retratos, dice:)*

CAÑIZARES.- ¡Oh, qué lindo Rodamonte! ¿Y qué quiere el señor rebozadito en mi casa? Aun si supiese que tan amigo soy yo destas cosas y destos rebocitos,



espantarse ía.

CRISTINA.- Señor tío, yo no sé nada de rebozados; y si él ha entrado en casa, la señora Hortigosa tiene la culpa; que a mí, el diablo me lleve si dije ni hice nada para que él entrase; no, en mi conciencia, aun el diablo sería si mi señor tío me echase a mí la culpa de su entrada.

CAÑIZARES.- Ya yo lo veo, sobrina, que la señora Hortigosa tiene la culpa; pero no hay de qué maravillarme, porque ella no sabe mi condición, ni cuán enemigo soy de aquestas pinturas.

DOÑA LORENZA.- Por las pinturas lo dice, Cristinica, y no por otra cosa.

CRISTINA.- Pues por esas digo yo. ¡Ay, Dios sea conmigo! Vuelto se me ha el ánimo al cuerpo, que ya andaba por los aires.

DOÑA LORENZA.- ¡Quemado vea yo ese pico de once varas! En fin, quien con muchachos se acuesta, *etc.*

CRISTINA.- ¡Ay, desgraciada, y en qué peligro pudiera haber puesto toda esta baraja!

CAÑIZARES.- Señora Hortigosa, yo no soy amigo de figuras rebozadas ni por rebozar; tome este doblón, con el cual podrá remediar su necesidad, y váyase de mi casa lo más presto que pudiere, y ha de ser luego, y llévese su guadamecí.

HORTIGOSA.- Viva vuesa merced más años que Matute el de Jerusalén, en vida de mi señora doña... no sé cómo se llama, a quien suplico me mande, que la serviré de noche y de día, con la vida y con el alma, que la debe de tener ella como la de una tortolica simple.

CAÑIZARES.- Señora Hortigosa, abrevie y váyase, y no se esté agora juzgando almas ajenas.

HORTIGOSA.- Si vuesa merced hubiere menester algún pegadillo para la madre, téngolos milagrosos; y, si para mal de muelas, sé unas palabras que quitan el dolor como con la mano.

CAÑIZARES.- Abrevie, señora Hortigosa, que doña Lorenza, ni tiene madre, ni dolor de muelas; que todas las tiene sanas y enteras, que en su vida se ha sacado muela alguna.

HORTIGOSA.- Ella se las sacará, placiendo al cielo, porque le dará muchos años de vida; y la vejez es la total destrucción de la dentadura.

CAÑIZARES.- ¡Aquí de Dios! ¿Que no será posible que me deje esta vecina? ¡Hortigosa, o diablo, o vecina, o lo que eres, vete con Dios y déjame en mi casa!

HORTIGOSA.- Justa es la demanda, y vuesa merced no se enoje, que ya me voy.

*(Vase HORTIGOSA.)*

CAÑIZARES.- ¡Oh vecinas, vecinas! Escaldado quedo aun de las buenas palabras desta vecina, por haber salido por boca de vecina.

DOÑA LORENZA.- Digo que tenéis condición de bárbaro y de salvaje; y ¿qué ha dicho esta vecina para que quedéis con la ojeriza contra ella? Todas vuestras buenas obras las hacéis en pecado mortal: dístesle dos docenas de reales, acompañados con otras dos docenas de injurias, ¡boca de lobo, lengua de escorpión y silo de malicias!

CAÑIZARES.- No, no, a mal viento va esta parva; no me parece bien que volváis tanto por vuestra vecina.

CRISTINA.- Señora tía, éntrese allí dentro y desenójese, y deje a tío, que parece que está enojado.

DOÑA LORENZA.- Así lo haré, sobrina; y aun quizá no me verá la cara en estas dos horas; y a fe que yo se la dé a beber, por más que la rehúse.

*(Éntrese DOÑA LORENZA.)*

CRISTINA.- Tío, ¿no ve cómo ha cerrado de golpe? Y creo que va a buscar una tranca para asegurar la puerta.

*(DOÑA LORENZA, por dentro.)*

DOÑA LORENZA.- ¿Cristinica? ¿Cristinica?

CRISTINA.- ¿Qué quiere, tía?

DOÑA LORENZA.- ¡Si supieses qué galán me ha deparado la buena suerte! Mozo, bien dispuesto, pelinegro, y que le huele la boca a mil azahares.

CRISTINA.- ¡Jesús, y qué locuras y qué niñerías! ¿Está loca, tía?

DOÑA LORENZA.- No estoy sino en todo mi juicio; y en verdad que, si le vieses, que se te alegrase el alma.

CRISTINA.- ¡Jesús, y qué locuras y qué niñerías! Ríñala, tío, porque no se

atreva, ni aun burlando, a decir deshonestidades.

CAÑIZARES.- ¿Bobear, Lorenza? Pues a fe que no estoy yo de gracia para sufrir esas burlas.

DOÑA LORENZA.- Que no son sino veras, y tan veras, que en este género no pueden ser mayores.

CRISTINA.- ¡Jesús, y qué locuras y qué niñerías! Y dígame, tía, ¿está ahí también mi frailecito?

DOÑA LORENZA.- No, sobrina; pero otra vez vendrá si quiere Hortigosa, la vecina.

CAÑIZARES.- Lorenza, di lo que quisieres, pero no tomes en tu boca el nombre de vecina, que me tiemblan las carnes en oírle.

DOÑA LORENZA.- También me tiemblan a mí por amor de la vecina.

CRISTINA.- ¡Jesús, y qué locuras y qué niñerías!

DOÑA LORENZA.- Ahora echo de ver quién eres, viejo maldito; que hasta aquí he vivido engañada contigo.

CRISTINA.- Ríñala, tío, ríñala, tío; que se desvergüenza mucho.

DOÑA LORENZA.- Lavar quiero a un galán las pocas barbas que tiene con una bacía llena de agua de ángeles, porque su cara es como la de un ángel

pintado.

CRISTINA.- ¡Jesús, y qué locuras y qué niñerías! Despedácela, tío.

CAÑIZARES.- No la despedazaré yo a ella, sino a la puerta que la encubre.

DOÑA LORENZA.- No hay para qué: vela aquí abierta; entre, y verá como es verdad cuanto le he dicho.CAÑIZARES.- Aunque sé que te burlas, sí entraré para desenojarte.

*(Al entrar CAÑIZARES, danle con una bacía de agua en los ojos; él vase a limpiar; acuden sobre él CRISTINA y DOÑA LORENZA, y en este ínterin sale el galán y vase.)*

CAÑIZARES.- ¡Por Dios, que por poco me cegaras, Lorenza! Al diablo se dan las burlas que se arremeten a los ojos.

DOÑA LORENZA.- ¡Mirad con quién me casó mi suerte, sino con el hombre más malicioso del mundo! ¡Mirad cómo dio crédito a mis mentiras, por su ..., fundadas en materia de celos, que menoscabada y asendereada sea mi ventura! Pagad vosotros, cabellos, las deudas deste viejo; llorad vosotros, ojos, las culpas deste maldito; mirad en lo que tiene mi honra y mi crédito, pues de las sospechas hace certezas, de las mentiras verdades, de las burlas veras y de los entretenimientos maldiciones. ¡Ay, que se me arranca el alma!

CRISTINA.- Tía, no dé tantas voces, que se juntará la vecindad.

*(De dentro.)*

JUSTICIA.- ¡Abran esas puertas! Abran luego; si no, echarélas en el suelo.

DOÑA LORENZA.- Abre, Cristinica, y sepa todo el mundo mi inocencia y la maldad deste viejo.

CAÑIZARES.- ¡Vive Dios, que creí que te burlabas! ¡Lorenza, calla!

*(Entran el ALGUACIL y los músicos, y el BAILARÍN y HORTIGOSA.)*

ALGUACIL.- ¿Qué es esto? ¿Qué pendencia es ésta? ¿Quién daba aquí voces?

CAÑIZARES.- Señor, no es nada; pendencias son entre marido y mujer, que luego se pasan.

MÚSICO.- ¡Por Dios, que estábamos mis compañeros y yo, que somos músicos, aquí pared y medio, en un desposorio, y a las voces hemos acudido, con no pequeño sobresalto, pensando que era otra cosa.

HORTIGOSA.- Y yo también, en mi ánima pecadora.

CAÑIZARES.- Pues en verdad, señora Hortigosa, que si no fuera por ella, que no hubiera sucedido nada de lo sucedido.

HORTIGOSA.- Mis pecados lo habrán hecho; que soy tan desdichada, que, sin saber por dónde ni por dónde no, se me echan a mí las culpas que otros cometen.

CAÑIZARES.- Señores, vuestras mercedes todos se vuelvan norabuena, que yo les agradezco su buen deseo; que ya yo y mi esposa quedamos en paz.

DOÑA LORENZA.- Sí quedaré, como le pida primero perdón a la vecina, si alguna cosa mala pensó contra ella.

CAÑIZARES.- Si a todas las vecinas de quien yo pienso mal hubiese de pedir perdón, sería nunca acabar; pero, con todo eso, yo se le pido a la señora Hortigosa.

HORTIGOSA.- Y yo le otorgo para aquí y para delante de Pero García.

MÚSICO.- Pues, en verdad, que no habemos de haber venido en balde: toquen mis compañeros, y baile el bailarín, y regocíjense las paces con esta canción.

CAÑIZARES.- Señores, no quiero música: yo la doy por recibida.

MÚSICO.-

Pues aunque no la quiera.

El agua de por San Juan  
quita vino y no da pan.

Las riñas de por San Juan  
*todo el año paz nos dan.*

Llover el trigo en las eras,  
las viñas estando en cierne,  
no hay labrador que gobierne  
bien sus cubas y paneras;

mas las riñas más de veras,  
si suceden por San Juan  
*todo el año paz nos dan.*

*(Baila.)*

Por la canícula ardiente  
está la cólera a punto;  
pero, pasando aquel punto,  
menos activa se siente.

Y así, el que dice no miente,  
que las riñas por San Juan  
*todo el año paz nos dan.*  
(Baila.)

Las riñas de los casados  
como aquesta siempre sean,  
para que después se vean,  
sin pensar regocijados.

Sol que sale tras nublados,  
es contento tras afán:  
*las riñas de por San Juan*  
*todo el año paz nos dan.*

CAÑIZARES.- Porque vean vuestas mercedes las revueltas y vueltas en que me ha puesto una vecina, y si tengo razón de estar mal con las vecinas.

DOÑA LORENZA.- Aunque mi esposo está mal con las vecinas, yo beso a vuestas mercedes las manos, señoras vecinas.

CRISTINA.- Y yo también; mas si mi vecina me hubiera traído mi frailecico, yo la tuviera por mejor vecina; y adiós, señoras vecinas.



## Poesía

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## Soneto de Miguel de Cervantes a la reina Doña Isabel 2ª

Serenísima reina, en quien se halla  
lo que Dios pudo dar a un ser humano;  
amparo universal del ser cristiano,  
de quien la santa fama nunca calla;  
    arma feliz, de cuya fina malla   5  
se viste el gran Felipe soberano,  
ínclito rey del ancho suelo hispano  
a quien Fortuna y Mundo se avasalla:  
    ¿cuál ingenio podría aventurarse  
a pregonar el bien que estás mostrando,   10  
si ya en divino viese convertirse?  
    Que, en ser mortal, habrá de acobardarse,  
y así, le va mejor sentir callando  
aquello que es difícil de decirse.

## Epitafio

Aquí el valor de la española tierra,  
aquí la flor de la francesa gente,  
aquí quien concordó lo diferente,  
de oliva coronando aquella guerra;  
    aquí en pequeño espacio veis se encierra   5  
nuestro claro lucero de occidente;  
aquí yace enterrada la excelente  
causa que nuestro bien todo destierra.

    Mirad quién es el mundo y su pujanza,  
y cómo, de la más alegre vida,   10  
la muerte lleva siempre la victoria;  
    también mirad la bienaventuranza  
que goza nuestra reina esclarecida  
en el eterno reino de la gloria.

## Redondilla castellana

Cuando dejaba la Guerra  
libre nuestro hispano suelo,  
con un repentino vuelo  
la mejor flor de la tierra  
fue trasplantada en el cielo; 5  
y, al cortarla de su rama,  
el mortífero accidente  
fue tan oculto a la gente  
como el que no ve la llama  
hasta que quemar se siente. 10

## Cuatro redondillas castellanas a la muerte de Su Majestad

Cuando un estado dichoso  
esperaba nuestra suerte,  
bien como ladrón famoso  
vino la invencible muerte  
a robar nuestro reposo; 5  
y metió tanto la mano  
aqueste fiero tirano,  
por orden del alto cielo,  
que nos llevó deste suelo  
el valor del ser humano. 10

¡Cuán amarga es tu memoria,  
oh dura y terrible faz!  
Pero en aquesta victoria,  
si llevaste nuestra paz,  
fue para dalle más gloria; 15  
y, aunqu'el dolor nos desvela,  
una cosa nos consuela:  
ver que al reino soberano  
ha dado un vuelo temprano  
nuestra muy cara Isabela. 20

Una alma tan limpia y bella,  
tan enemiga de engaños,  
¿qué pudo merecer ella,  
para que en tan tiernos años  
dejase el mundo de vella? 25  
Dirás, Muerte, en quien se encierra  
la causa de nuestra guerra,  
para nuestro desconsuelo,  
que cosas que son del cielo  
no las merece la tierra. 30



Tanto de punto subiste  
en el amor que mostraste,  
que, ya que al cielo te fuiste,  
en la tierra nos dejaste  
las prendas que más quesiste. 35

¡Oh Isabela Eugenia Clara,  
Catalina, a todos cara,  
claros luceros las dos,  
no quiera y permita Dios  
se os muestre Fortuna avara! 40

**La elegía que, en nombre de todo el estudio, el sobredicho  
Cervantes compuso, dirigida al Ilustrísimo y  
Reverendísimo Cardenal don Diego de Espinosa, etc., en la  
cual con bien elegante estilo se ponen cosas dignas de  
memoria**

¿A quién irá mi doloroso canto,  
o en cuya oreja sonará su acento,  
que no deshaga el corazón en llanto?

A ti, gran cardenal, yo le presento,  
pues vemos te ha cabido tanta parte 5  
del hado secutivo violento.

Aquí verás qu'el bien no tiene parte:  
todo es dolor, tristeza y desconsuelo  
lo que en mi triste canto se reparte.

¿Quién dijera, señor, que un solo vuelo 10  
de una ánima beata al alta cumbre  
pusiera en confusión al bajo suelo?

Mas, ¡ay!, que yace muerta nuestra lumbre:  
el alma goza de perpetua gloria,  
y el cuerpo de terrena pesadumbre. 15

No se pase, señor, de tu memoria  
cómo en un punto la invincible muerte  
lleva de nuestras vidas la victoria.

Al tiempo que esperaba nuestra suerte  
poderse mejorar, la sancta mano 20  
mostró por nuestro mal su furia fuerte.

Entristeció a la tierra su verano,  
secó su paraíso fresco y tierno,  
el ornato añubló del ser cristiano.

Volvió la primavera en frío invierno, 25  
trocó en pesar su gusto y alegría,  
tornó de arriba abajo su gobierno.

Pasóse ya aquel ser que ser solía  
a nuestra obscuridad claro lucero,

sosiego del antigua tiranía. 30

A más andar el término postrero  
llegó, que dividió con furia insana  
del alma sancta el corazón sincero.

Cuanto ya nos venía la temprana  
dulce fruta del árbol deseado, 35  
vino sobre él la frígida mañana.

Quien detuvo el poder de Marte airado  
que no pasase más el alto monte,  
con prisiones de nieve aherrojado,  
no pisará ya más nuestro horizonte, 40  
que a los campos Elíseos es llevada  
sin ver la obscura barca de Caronte.

A ti, fiel pastor de la manada  
seguntina, es justo y te conviene  
aligerarnos carga tan pesada. 45

Mira el dolor que el gran Filipo tiene:  
allí tu discreción muestre el alteza  
que en tu divino ingenio se contiene.

Bien sé que le dirás que a la bajeza  
de nuestra humanidad es cosa cierta 50  
no tener solo un punto de firmeza,  
y que, si yace su esperanza muerta  
y el dolor vida y alma le lastima,  
que a do la cierra, Dios abre otra puerta.

Mas, ¿qué consuelo habrá, señor, que oprima 55  
algún tanto sus lágrimas cansadas  
si una prenda perdió de tanta estima?

Y más si considera las amadas  
prendas que le dejó en la dulce vida  
y con su amarga muerte lastimadas. 60

Alma bella, del cielo merescida,  
mira cuál queda el miserable suelo  
sin la luz de tu vista esclarecida:

verás que en árbol verde no hace vuelo  
el ave más alegre, antes ofresce 65  
en su amoroso canto triste duelo.

Contino en grave llanto se anochece  
el triste día que te imaginamos

con aquella virtud que no perece;  
mas deste imaginar nos consolamos 70  
en ver que merescieron tus deseos  
que goces ya del bien que deseamos.

Acá nos quedarán por tus trofeos  
tu cristiandad, valor y gracia estraña,  
de alma sancta sanctísimos arreos. 75

De hoy más, la sola y afligida España,  
cuando más sus clamores levantare  
al summo Hacedor y alta compañía,  
cuando más por salud le importunare  
al término postrero que perezca 80  
y en el último trance se hallare,

sólo podrá pedirle que le ofrezca  
otra paz, otro amparo, otra ventura  
qu'en obras y virtudes le parezca.

El vano confiar y la hermosura, 85  
¿de qué nos sirve si en pequeño instante  
damos en manos de la sepultura?

Aquel firme esperar sancto y constante,  
que concede a la fe su cierto asiento  
y a la querida hermana ir adelante, 90  
adonde mora Dios en su aposento  
nos puede dar lugar dulce y sabroso,  
libre de tempestad y humano viento.

Aquí, señor, el último reposo  
no puede perturbarse, ni la vida 95  
temer más otro trance doloroso;

aquí con nuevo ser es conducida  
entre las almas del inmenso coro  
nuestra Isabela, reina esclarecida;

con tal sinceridad guardó el decoro, 100  
do al precepto divino más se aspira,  
que meresce gozar de tal tesoro.

¡Ay muerte!, ¿contra quién tu amarga ira  
quesiste ejecutar para templarme  
con profundo dolor mi triste lira? 105

Si nos cansáis, señor, ya descucharme,  
anudaré de nuevo el roto hilo,

que la ocasión es tal que ha d'esforzarme;  
lágrimas pediré al corriente Nilo,  
un nuevo corazón al alto cielo, 110  
y a las más tristes musas triste estilo.

Diré que al duro mal, al grave duelo  
que a España en brazos de la muerte tiene,  
no quiso Dios dejarle sin consuelo:

dejóle al gran Filipo, que sostiene, 115  
cual firme basa al alto firmamento,  
el bien o desventura que le viene.

De aquesto, vos lleváis el vencimiento,  
pues deja en vuestros hombros él la carga  
del cielo y de la tierra, y pensamiento. 120

La vida que en la vuestra así se encarga  
muy bien puede vivir leda y segura,  
pues de tanto cuidado se descarga;

gozando, como goza, tal ventura  
el gran señor del ancho suelo hispano, 125  
su mal es menos y nuestra desventura.

Si el ánimo real, si el soberano  
tesoro le robó en un solo día  
la muerte airada con esquivia mano,

regalos son qu'el summo Dios envía 130  
a aquél que ya le tiene aparejado  
sublime asiento en l'alta jerarquía.

Quien goza quietud siempre en su estado,  
y el efecto le acude a la esperanza  
y a lo que quiere nada le es trocado, 135

argúyese que poca confianza  
se puede tener d'él que goce y vea  
con claros ojos bienaventuranza.

Cuando más favorable el mundo sea,  
cuando nos ría el bien todo delante 140  
y venga al corazón lo que desea,

tiénese de esperar que en un instante  
dará con ello la Fortuna en tierra,  
que no fue ni será jamás constante.

Y aquel que no ha gustado de la guerra, 145  
a do se aflige el cuerpo y la memoria,

paresce Dios del cielo le destierra,  
porque no se coronan en la gloria  
si no es los capitanes valerosos  
que llevan de sí mesmos la victoria. 150

Los amargos sospiros dolorosos,  
las lágrimas sin cuento que ha vertido  
quien nos puede su vista hacer dichosos,  
el perder a su hijo tan querido,  
aquel mirarse y verse cuál se halla 155  
de todo su placer desposeído,

¿qué se puede decir sino batalla  
adonde l'hemos visto siempre armado  
con la paciencia, qu'es muy fina malla?

Del alto cielo ha sido consolado 160  
con concederle acá vuestra persona,  
que mira por su honra y por su estado.

De aquí saldrá a gozar de una corona  
más rica, más preciosa y muy más clara  
que la que ciñe al hijo de Latona. 165

Con él vuestra virtud, al mundo rara,  
se tiene de estender de gente en gente,  
sin poderlo estorbar Fortuna avara;  
resonará el valor tan excelente  
que os ciñe, cubre, ampara y os rodea, 170  
de donde sale el sol hasta occidente,

y allá en el alto alcázar do pasea  
en mil contentos nuestra reina amada,  
si puede desear, sólo desea

que sea por mil siglos levantada 175  
vuestra grandeza, pues que se engrandece  
el valor de su prenda deseada,

que en vuestro poderío se paresce  
del católico rey la summa alteza,  
que desde un polo al otro resplandesce. 180

De hoy más, deje del llanto la fiereza  
el afligida España, levantando  
con verde lauro ornada la cabeza,

que, mientras fuere el cielo mejorando  
del soberano rey la larga vida, 185

no es bien que se consuma lamentando;  
y, en tanto que arribare a la subida  
de la inmortalidad vuestra alma pura,  
no se entregue al dolor tan de corrida;  
y más, qu'el grave rostro de hermosura, 190  
por cuya ausencia vive sin consuelo,  
goza de Dios en la celeste altura.  
¡Oh trueco glorioso, oh sancto celo,  
pues con gozar la tierra has merecido  
tender tus pasos por el alto cielo! 195  
Con esto cese el canto dolorido,  
magnánimo señor, que, por mal diestro,  
queda tan temeroso y tan corrido  
cuanto yo quedo, gran señor, por vuestro.

## **Soneto de Miguel de Cervantes, gentilhombre español, en loor del autor**

¡Oh cuán claras señales habéis dado,  
alto Bartholomeo de Ruffino,  
que de Parnaso y Ménalo el camino  
habéis dichosamente paseado!

Del siempre verde lauro coronado 5  
seréis, si yo no soy mal adivino,  
si ya vuestra fortuna y cruel destino  
os saca de tan triste y bajo estado,  
pues, libre de cadenas vuestra mano,  
reposando el ingenio, al alta cumbre 10  
os podéis levantar seguramente,  
oscureciendo al gran Livio romano,  
dando de vuestras obras tanta lumbrere  
que bien merezca el lauro vuestra frente.



## Del mismo, en alabanza de la presente obra

Si, así como de nuestro mal se canta  
en esta verdadera, clara historia,  
se oyera de cristianos la victoria,  
¡cuál fuera el fruto d'esta rica planta!

Ansí cual es, al cielo se levanta 5  
y es digna de inmortal, larga memoria,  
pues, libre de algún vicio y baja escoria,  
al alto ingenio admira, al bajo espanta.

Verdad, orden, estilo claro y llano  
cual a perfecto historiador conviene, 10  
en esta breve summa está cifrado.

¡Felice ingenio, venturosa mano,  
que, entre pesados yerros apretado,  
tal arte y tal virtud en sí contiene!

## De Miguel de Cervantes, *captivo*, a M. Vázquez, *mi señor*

Si el bajo son de la zampoña mía,  
señor, a vuestro oído no ha llegado  
en tiempo que sonar mejor debía,  
no ha sido por la falta de cuidado  
sino por sobra del que me ha traído 5  
por estraños caminos desviado.

También, por no adquirirme de atrevido  
el nombre odioso, la cansada mano  
ha encubierto las faltas del sentido.

Mas ya que el valor vuestro sobrehumano, 10  
de quien tiene noticia todo el suelo,  
la graciosa altivez, el trato llano  
aniquilan el miedo y el recelo  
que ha tenido hasta aquí mi humilde pluma  
de no quereros descubrir su vuelo, 15  
de vuestra alta bondad y virtud summa  
diré lo menos, que lo más no siento  
quién de cerrarlo en verso se presuma.

Aquél que os mira en el subido asiento  
do el humano favor puede encumbrarse, 20  
y que no cesa el favorable viento,  
y él se ve entre las ondas anegarse  
del mar de la privanza, do procura,  
o por *fas* o por *nefas*, levantarse,  
¿quién duda que no dice: «La ventura 25  
ha dado en levantar este mancebo  
hasta ponerle en la más alta altura:

ayer le vimos inesperto y nuevo  
en las cosas que agora mide y trata  
tan bien que tengo envidia y las apruebo»? 30

D'esta manera se congoja y mata  
el envidioso, que la gloria ajena  
le destruye, marchita y desbarata.

Pero aquél que con mente más serena  
contempla vuestro trato y vida honrosa 35  
y del alma dentro, de virtudes llena,  
no la inconstante rueda presurosa  
de la falsa fortuna, suerte o hado,  
signo, ventura, estrella ni otra cosa  
dice qu'es causa que en el buen estado 40  
que agora poseéis os haya puesto,  
con esperanza de más alto grado,  
mas solo el modo del vivir honesto,  
la virtud escogida que se muestra  
en vuestras obras y apacible gesto, 45  
ésta dice, señor, que os da su diestra  
y os tiene asido con sus fuertes lazos  
y a más y a más subir siempre os adiestra.  
¡Oh sanctos, oh agradables dulces brazos  
de la sancta virtud, alma y divina, 50  
y sancto quien recibe sus abrazos!  
Quien con tal guía, como vos, camina,  
¿de qué se admira el ciego vulgo bajo  
si a la silla más alta se avecina?  
Y, puesto que no hay cosa sin trabajo, 55  
quien va sin la virtud va por rodeo,  
y el que la lleva va por el atajo.  
Si no me engaña la experiencia, creo  
que se ve mucha gente fatigada  
de un solo pensamiento y un deseo: 60  
pretenden más de dos llave dorada,  
muchos un mesmo cargo, y quien aspira  
a la fidelidad de una embajada.  
Cada cual por sí mesmo al blanco tira  
donde asestan otros mil, y sólo es uno 65  
cuya saeta dio do fue la mira;  
y éste quizá, qu'a nadie fue importuno  
ni a la soberbia puerta del privado  
se halló, después de vísperas, ayuno,  
ni dio ni tuvo a quien pedir prestado: 70  
sólo con la virtud se entretenía  
y en Dios y en ella estaba confiado.

Vos sois, señor, por quien decir podría  
(y lo digo y diré sin estar mudo)  
que sola la virtud fue vuestra guía, 75  
y que ella sola fue bastante y pudo  
levantaros al bien do estáis agora,  
privado humilde, de ambición desnudo.

¡Dichosa y felicísima la hora,  
donde tuvo el real conocimiento 80  
noticia del valor que anida y mora  
en vuestro reposado entendimiento,  
cuya fidelidad, cuyo secreto  
es de vuestras virtudes el cimiento!

Por la senda y camino más perfecto 85  
van vuestros pies, que es la que el medio  
tiene y la que alaba el seso más discreto;  
quien por ella camina, vemos viene  
a aquel dulce, süave paradero  
que la felicidad en sí contiene. 90

Yo, que el camino más bajo y grosero  
he caminado en fría noche oscura,  
he dado en manos del atolladero,  
y en la esquivia prisión, amarga y dura,  
adonde agora quedo, estoy llorando 95  
mi corta, infelicísima ventura,  
con quejas tierra y cielo importunando,  
con suspiros el aire escureciendo,  
con lágrimas el mar acrescentando.

Vida es ésta, señor, do estoy muriendo, 100  
entre bárbara gente descreída  
la mal lograda juventud perdiendo.

No fue la causa aquí de mi venida  
andar vagando por el mundo acaso  
con la vergüenza y la razón perdida: 105  
diez años ha que tiendo y mudo el paso  
en servicio del gran Filipo nuestro,  
ya con descanso, ya cansado y laso;  
y, en el dichoso día que siniestro  
tanto fue el hado a la enemiga armada 110  
cuanto a la nuestra favorable y diestro,

de temor y de esfuerzo acompañada,  
presente estuvo mi persona al hecho,  
más d'esperanza que de hierro armada.

Vi el formado escuadrón roto y deshecho, 115  
y de bárbara gente y de cristiana  
rojo en mil partes de Neptuno el lecho;  
la muerte airada con su furia insana  
aquí y allí con priesa discurriendo,  
mostrándose a quién tarda, a quién temprana; 120  
el son confuso, el espantable estruendo,  
los gestos de los tristes miserables  
que entre el fuego y agua iban muriendo;  
los profundos sospiros lamentables  
que los heridos pechos despedían, 125  
maldiciendo sus hados detestables.

Helóseles la sangre que tenían  
cuando, en el son de la trompeta nuestra,  
su daño y nuestra gloria conocían;  
con alta voz, de vencedora muestra, 130  
rompiendo el aire claro, el son mostraba  
ser vencedora la cristiana diestra.

A esta dulce sazón yo, triste, estaba  
con la una mano de la espada asida,  
y sangre de la otra derramaba; 135  
el pecho mío de profunda herida  
sentía llagado, y la siniestra mano  
estaba por mil partes ya rompida.

Pero el contento fue tan soberano  
qu'a mi alma llegó, viendo vencido 140  
el crudo pueblo infiel por el cristiano,  
que no echaba de ver si estaba herido,  
aunque era tan mortal mi sentimiento,  
que a veces me quitó todo el sentido.

Y en mi propia cabeza el escarmiento 145  
no me pudo estorbar que el segundo año  
no me pusiese a discreción del viento,  
y al bárbaro, medroso pueblo extraño  
vi recogido, triste, amedrentado  
y con causa temiendo de su daño, 150

y al reino tan antiguo y celebrado,  
a do la hermosa Dido fue rendida  
al querer del troyano desterrado,  
también, vertiendo sangre aún la herida  
mayor, con otras dos, quise hallarme 155  
por ver ir la morisma de vencida.

¡Dios sabe si quisiera allí quedarme  
con los que allí quedaron esforzados  
y perderme con ellos, o ganarme!

Pero mis cortos, implacables hados, 160  
en tan honrosa empresa no quisieron  
que acabase la vida y los cuidados,  
y al fin por los cabellos me trujeron  
a ser vencido por la valentía  
de aquellos que después no la tuvieron. 165

En la galera *Sol*, que escurecía  
mi ventura su luz, a pesar mío,  
fue la pérdida de otros y la mía.

Valor mostramos al principio y brío,  
pero después, con la experiencia amarga, 170  
conoscimos ser todo desvarío.

Sentí de ajeno yugo la gran carga,  
y en las manos sacrílegas malditas  
dos años ha que mi dolor se alarga.

Bien sé que mis maldades infinitas 175  
y la poca atrición qu'en mí se encierra  
me tiene entre estos falsos ismaelitas.

Cuando llegué vencido y vi la tierra  
tan nombrada en el mundo, qu'en su seno  
tantos piratas cubre, acoge y cierra, 180

no pude al llanto detener el freno,  
que a mi despecho, sin saber lo que era,  
me vi el marchito rostro de agua lleno.

Ofrecióse a mis ojos la ribera  
y el monte donde el grande Carlo tuvo 185  
levantada en el aire su bandera,

y el mar que tanto esfuerzo no sostuvo,  
pues, movido de envidia de su gloria,  
airado entonces más que nunca estuvo.

Estas cosas, volviendo en mi memoria, 190  
las lágrimas trujeron a los ojos,  
movidas de desgracia tan notoria.  
Pero si el alto cielo en darme enojos  
no está con mi ventura conjurado,  
y aquí no lleva muerte mis despojos, 195  
cuando me vea en más alegre estado,  
si vuestra intercesión, señor, me ayuda  
a verme ante Filipo arrodillado,  
mi lengua balbuciente y cuasi muda  
pienso mover en la real presencia, 200  
de adulación y de mentir desnuda,  
diciendo: «Alto señor, cuya potencia  
sujetas trae mil bárbaras naciones  
al desabrido yugo de obediencia,  
a quien los negros indios con sus dones 205  
reconocen honesto vasallaje,  
trayendo el oro acá de sus rincones:  
despierte en tu real pecho el gran coraje,  
la gran soberbia con que una bicoca  
aspira de contino a hacerte ultraje. 210  
La gente es mucha, mas su fuerza es poca,  
desnuda, mal armada, que no tiene  
en su defensa fuerte, muro o roca;  
cada uno mira si tu armada viene  
para dar a sus pies el cargo y cura 215  
de conservar la vida que sostiene.  
Del amarga prisión triste y oscura,  
adonde mueren veinte mil cristianos,  
tienes la llave de su cerradura.  
Todos, cual yo, de allá, puestas las manos, 220  
las rodillas por tierra, sollozando,  
cercados de tormentos inhumanos,  
valeroso señor, te están rogando  
vuelvas los ojos de misericordia  
a los suyos, que están siempre llorando; 225  
y, pues te deja agora la discordia,  
que hasta aquí te ha oprimido y fatigado,  
y gozas de pacífica concordia,

haz, ¡oh buen rey!, que sea por ti acabado  
lo que con tanta audacia y valor tanto 230  
fue por tu amado padre comenzado.

Sólo el pensar que vas pondrá un espanto  
en la enemiga gente, que adevino  
ya desde aquí su pérdida y quebranto».

¿Quién dubda que el real pecho benigno 235  
no se muestre, escuchando la tristeza  
en que están estos míseros contino?

Bien paresce que muestro la flaqueza  
de mi tan torpe ingenio, que pretende  
hablar tan bajo ante tan alta alteza, 240  
pero el justo deseo la defiende.

Mas a todo silencio poner quiero,  
que temo que mi pluma ya os ofende,  
y al trabajo me llaman donde muero.



## Al señor Antonio Veneziani

Si el lazo, el fuego, el dardo, el puro yelo  
que os tiene, abrasa, hiere y pone fría  
vuestra alma, trae su origen desde el cielo,  
ya que os aprieta, enciende, mata, enfría,  
¿qué nudo, llama, llaga, nieve o celo 5  
ciñe, arde, traspasa o yela hoy día,  
con tan alta ocasión como aquí nuestro,  
un tierno pecho, Antonio, como el vuestro?

El cielo, que el ingenio vuestro mira,  
en cosas que son d'él quiso emplearos 10  
y, según lo que hacéis, vemos que aspira  
por Celia al cielo empíreo levantaros;  
ponéis en tal objeto vuestra mira,  
que dais materia al mundo de envidiaros:  
¡dichoso el desdichado a quien se tiene 15  
envidia de las ansias que sostiene!

En los conceptos que la pluma  
de la alma en el papel ha trasladado  
nos dais no sólo indicio pero muestra  
de que estáis en el cielo sepultado, 20  
y allí os tiene de amor la fuerte diestra  
vivo en la muerte, a vida reservado,  
que no puede morir quien no es del suelo,  
teniendo el alma en Celia, que es un cielo.

Sólo me admira el ver que aquel divino 25  
cielo de Celia encierre un vivo infierno  
y que la fuerza de su fuerza y sino  
os tenga en pena y llanto sempiterno;  
al cielo encamináis vuestro camino,  
mas, según vuestra suerte, yo dicierno 30  
que al cielo sube el alma y se apresura,  
y en el suelo se queda la ventura.

Si con benino y favorable aspecto

a alguno mira el cielo acá en la tierra,  
obra ascondidamente un bien perfeto 35  
en el que cualquier mal de sí destierra;  
mas si los ojos pone en el objeto  
airados, le consume en llanto y guerra  
ansí como a vos hace vuestro cielo:  
ya os da guerra, ya paz, ya fuego y yelo. 40

No se ve el cielo en claridad serena  
de tantas luces claro y alumbrado  
cuantas con rica habéis y fértil vena  
el vuestro de virtudes adornado;  
ni hay tantos granos de menuda arena 45  
en el desierto líbico apartado  
cuantos loores creo que merece  
el cielo que os abaja y engrandece.

En Scitia ardéis, sentís en Libia frío,  
contraria operación y nunca vista; 50  
flaqueza al bien mostráis, al daño brío;  
más que un lince miráis, sin tener vista;  
mostráis con discreción un desvarío,  
que el alma prende, a la razón conquista,  
y esta contrariedad nace de aquella 55  
que es vuestro cielo, vuestro sol y estrella.

Si fuera un caos, una materia unida  
sin forma vuestro cielo, no espantara  
de que del alma vuestra entristecida  
las continuas querellas no escuchara; 60  
pero, estando ya en partes esparcida  
que un fondo forman de virtud tan rara,  
es maravilla tenga los oídos  
sordos a vuestros tristes alaridos.

Si es lícito rogar por el amigo 65  
que en estado se halla peligroso,  
yo, como vuestro, desde aquí me obligo  
de no mostrarme en esto perezoso;  
mas si me he de oponer a lo que digo  
y conducirlo a término dichoso, 70  
no me deis la ventura, que es muy poca,  
mas las palabras sí de vuestra boca.

Diré: «Celia gentil, en cuya mano  
está la muerte y vida y pena y gloria  
de un mísero captivo que, temprano 75  
ni aun tarde, no saldrás de su memoria:  
vuelve el hermoso rostro blando, humano,  
a mirar de quien llevas la victoria;  
verás el cuerpo en dura cárcel triste  
del alma que primero tú rendiste. 80

Y, pues un pecho en la virtud constante  
se mueve en casos de honra y muestra airado,  
muévale al tuyo el ver que de delante  
te han un firme amador arrebatado;  
y si quiere pasar más adelante 85  
y hacer un hecho heroico y estremado,  
rescata allá su alma con querella,  
que el cuerpo, que está acá, se irá tras ella.

El cuerpo acá y el alma allá captiva  
tiene el mísero amante que padece 90  
por ti, Celia hermosa, en quien se aviva  
la luz que al cielo alumbra y esclarece;  
mira que el ser ingrata, cruda, esquiva  
mal con tanta beldad se compadece:  
muéstrate agradecida y amorosa 95  
al que te tiene por su cielo y diosa».

## Soneto de Miguel de Cervantes al autor

Ya que del ciego dios habéis cantado  
el bien y el mal, la dulce fuerza y arte,  
en la primera y la segunda parte,  
donde está de amor el todo señalado,  
ahora, con aliento descansado 5  
y con nueva virtud que en vos reparte  
el cielo, nos cantáis del duro Marte  
las fieras armas y el valor sobrado.

Nuevos ricos mineros se descubren  
de vuestro ingenio en la famosa mina 10  
que al más alto deseo satisfacen;  
y, con dar menos de lo más que encubren,  
a este menos lo que es más se inclina  
del bien que Apolo y que Minerva hacen.

## Soneto de Miguel de Cervantes

¡Oh venturosa, levantada pluma  
que en la empresa más alta te ocupaste  
que el mundo pudo, y al fin mostraste  
al recibo y al gasto igual la suma!,  
calle de hoy más el escriptor de Numa, 5  
que nadie llegará donde llegaste,  
pues en tan raros versos celebraste  
tan raro capitán, virtud tan summa.  
¡Dichoso el celebrado, y quien celebra,  
y no menos dichoso todo el suelo, 10  
que tanto bien goza en esta historia,  
en quien envidia o tiempo no harán quiebra;  
antes hará con justo celo el cielo  
eterna más que el tiempo su memoria!

## Redondillas de Miguel de Cervantes al hábito de Fray Pedro de Padilla

Hoy el famoso Padilla  
con las muestras de su celo  
causa contento en el cielo  
y en la tierra maravilla,  
    porque, llevado del cebo   5  
de amor, temor y consejo,  
se despoja el hombre viejo  
para vestirse de nuevo.

Cual prudente sierpe ha sido,  
pues, con nuevo corazón,   10  
en la piedra de Simón  
se deja el viejo vestido,  
    y esta mudanza que hace  
lleva tan cierto compás  
que en ella asiste lo más   15  
de cuanto a Dios satisface.

Con las obras y la fe  
hoy para el cielo se embarca  
en mejor jarciada barca  
que la que libró a Noé;   20  
    y, para hacer tal pasaje,  
ha muchos años que ha hecho,  
con sano y cristiano pecho,  
cristiano matalotaje,  
    y no teme el mal tempero   25  
ni anegarse en el profundo  
porque en el mar d'este mundo  
es plástico marinero,  
    y así, mirando el aguja  
divina, cual se requiere,   30  
si el demonio a orza diere,  
él dará al instante a puja.

Y llevando este concierto  
con las ondas d'este mar,  
a la fin vendrá a parar 35  
a seguro y dulce puerto,  
donde, sin áncoras ya,  
estará la nave en calma  
con la eternidad del alma,  
que nunca se acabará. 40

En una verdad me fundo,  
y mi ingenio aquí no yerra,  
qu'en siendo sal de la tierra,  
habéis de ser luz del mundo:  
luz de gracia rodeada 45  
que alumbre nuestro horizonte,  
y sobre el Carmelo monte  
fuerte ciudad levantada.

Para alcanzar el trofeo  
d'estas santas profecías, 50  
tendréis el carro de Elías  
con el manto de Eliseo,  
y, ardiendo en amor divino,  
donde nuestro bien se fragua,  
apartando el manto al agua, 55  
por el fuego haréis camino;  
porqu'el voto de humildad  
promete segura alteza  
y castidad y pobreza,  
bienes de divinidad, 60  
y así los cielos serenos  
verán, cuando acabarás,  
un cortesano allá más  
y en la tierra un sabio menos.

## Miguel de Cervantes a Fray Pedro de Padilla

Cual vemos que renueva  
el águila real la vieja y parda  
pluma y con otra nueva  
la detenida y tarda  
pereza arroja y con subido vuelo 5  
rompe las nubes y se llega al cielo:  
tal, famoso Padilla,  
has sacudido tus humanas plumas,  
porque con maravilla  
intentos y presumas 10  
llegar con nuevo vuelo al alto asiento  
donde aspiran las alas de tu intento.  
Del sol el rayo ardiente  
alza del duro rostro de la tierra,  
con virtud excelente, 15  
la humedad que en sí encierra,  
la cual después, en lluvia convertida,  
alegra al suelo y da a los hombres vida:  
y d'esta misma suerte  
el sol divino te regala y toca 20  
y en tal humor convierte  
que, con tu pluma, apoca  
la sequedad de la ignorancia nuestra  
y a sciencia santa y santa vida adiestra.  
¡Qué sancto trueco y cambio: 25  
por las humanas, las divinas musas!  
¡Qué interés y recambio!  
¡Qué nuevos modos usas  
de adquirir en el suelo una memoria  
que dé fama a tu nombre, al alma gloria!; 30  
que, pues es tu Parnaso  
el monte del Calvario y son tus fuentes  
de Aganipe y Pegaso



las sagradas corrientes  
de las benditas llagas del Cordero, 35  
eterno nombre de tu nombre espero.

## Soneto al mismo santo, de Miguel de Cervantes

Muestra su ingenio el que es pintor curioso  
cuando pinta al desnudo una figura,  
donde la traza, el arte y compostura  
ningún velo la cubra artificioso:

vos, seráfico padre, y vos, hermoso 5  
retrato de Jesús, sois la pintura  
al desnudo pintada, en tal hechura  
que Dios nos muestra ser pintor famoso.

Las sombras de ser mártir descubristes,  
los lejos, en que estáis allá en el cielo 10  
en soberana silla colocado;

las colores, las llagas que tuvistes  
tanto las suben que se admira el suelo,  
y el pintor en la obra se ha pagado.

## De Miguel de Cervantes en loor del autor y de su obra

El casto ardor de una amorosa llama,  
un sabio pecho a su rigor sujeto,  
un desdén sacudido y un afecto  
blando, que al alma en dulce fuego inflama,  
el bien y el mal a que convida y llama 5  
de amor la fuerza y poderoso efecto,  
eternamente, en son claro y perfecto,  
con estas rimas cantará la fama,  
llevando el nombre único y famoso  
vuestro, felice López Maldonado, 10  
del moreno etíope al cita blanco,  
y hará que en balde de laurel honroso  
espere alguno verse coronado  
si no os imita y tiene por su blanco.

## Del mismo al mismo

Bien donado sale al mundo  
este libro, do se encierra  
la paz de amor y la guerra,  
y aquel fruto sin segundo  
de la castellana tierra; 5  
que, aunque le da Maldonado,  
va tan rico y bien donado  
de sciencia y de discreción,  
que me afirmo en la razón  
de decir que es bien donado. 10

El sentimiento amoroso  
del pecho más encendido  
en fuego de amor, y herido  
de su dardo ponzoñoso  
y en la red suya cogido, 15  
el temor y la esperanza  
con que el bien y el mal se alcanza  
en las empresas de amor:  
aquí muestra su valor,  
su buena o su mala andanza. 20

Sin flores, sin praderías  
y sin los faunos silvanos,  
sin ninfas, sin dioses vanos,  
sin yerbas, sin aguas frías  
y sin apacibles llanos, 25  
en agradables conceptos  
profundos, altos, discretos,  
con verdad llana y distinta,  
aquí el sabio autor nos pinta  
del ciego dios los efetos. 30

Con declararnos la mengua  
y el bien de su ardiente llama,  
ha dado a su nombre fama

y enriquecido su lengua,  
que ya la mejor se llama, 35  
y hanos mostrado que es solo  
favorecido de Apolo  
con dones tan infinitos,  
que su fama en sus escritos  
irá d' éste al otro polo. 40

## De Miguel de Cervantes, soneto

Cual vemos del rosado y rico oriente  
la blanca y dura piedra señalarse  
y en todo, aunque pequeña, aventajarse  
a la mayor del Cáucaso eminente,  
tal este (humilde al parecer) presente 5  
puede y debe mirarse y admirarse,  
no por la cantidad, mas por mostrarse  
ser en su calidad tan excelente.

El que navega por el golfo insano  
del mar de pretensiones verá al punto 10  
del cortesano laberinto el hilo.

¡Felice ingenio y venturosa mano  
qu'el deleite y provecho puso junto  
en juego alegre, en dulce y claro estilo!

## De Miguel de Cervantes, soneto

De la Virgen sin par, santa y bendita  
(digo, de sus loores), justamente  
haces el rico, sin igual presente  
a la sin par cristiana Margarita.

Dándole, quedas rico, y queda escrita 5  
tu fama en hojas de metal luciente,  
que, a despecho y pesar del diligente  
tiempo, será en sus fines infinita:

¡felice en el sujeto que escogiste,  
dichoso en la ocasión que te dio el cielo 10  
de dar a Virgen el virgíneo canto;

venturoso también porque heciste  
que den las musas del hispano suelo  
admiración al griego, al tusco espanto.

## Al doctor Francisco Díaz, de Miguel de Cervantes, soneto

Tú, que con nuevo y sin igual decoro  
tantos remedios para un mal ordenas,  
bien puedes esperar d'estas arenas,  
del sacro Tajo, las que son de oro,  
y el lauro que se debe al que un tesoro 5  
halla de ciencia, con tan ricas venas  
de raro advertimiento y salud llenas,  
contento y risa del enfermo lloro;  
que por tu industria una deshecha piedra  
mil mármoles, mil bronces a tu fama 10  
dará sin invidiosas competencias;  
daráte el cielo palma, el suelo yedra,  
pues que el uno y el otro ya te llama  
espíritu de Apolo en ambas ciencias.



## **Canción nacida de las varias nuevas que han venido de la católica armada que fue sobre Inglaterra, de Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra**

Bate, Fama veloz, las prestas alas,  
rompe del norte las cerradas nieblas,  
aligera los pies, llega y destruye  
el confuso rumor de nuevas malas  
y con tu luz desparce las tinieblas 5  
del crédito español, que de ti huye;  
esta preñez concluye  
en un parto dichoso que nos muestre  
un fin alegre de la ilustre empresa,  
cuyo fin nos suspende, alivia y pesa, 10  
ya en contienda naval, ya en la terrestre,  
hasta que, con tus ojos y tus lenguas,  
diciendo ajenas menguas,  
de los hijos de España el valor cantes,  
con que admires al cielo, al suelo espantes. 15

Di con firme verdad, firme y sigura:  
¿hizo el que pudo la victoria vuestra?  
¿Sentenciado ha su causa el Padre eterno?  
¿Bañada queda en roja sangre y pura  
la católica espada y fuerte diestra? 20  
En fin, de aquel que asiste a su gobierno,  
¿poblado ha el hondo infierno  
de nuevas almas, y de cuerpos lleno  
el mar, que a los despojos y banderas  
de las naciones pertinaces, fieras, 25  
apenas dio lugar su inmenso seno,  
del pirata mayor del occidente  
ya inclinada la frente,  
y puesto al cuello altivo y indomable

del vencimiento el yugo miserable? 30

Di (que al fin lo dirás): «allí volaron  
por el aire los cuerpos, impelidos  
de las fogosas máquinas de guerra;  
aquí las aguas su color cambiaron,  
y la sangre de pechos atrevidos 35  
humedecieron la contraria tierra»;  
cómo huye, o si afierra,  
este y aquel navío; en cuántos modos  
se aparecen las sombras de la muerte;  
cómo juega Fortuna con la suerte, 40  
no mostrándose igual ni firme a todos,  
hasta que, por mil varios embarazos,  
los españoles brazos,  
rompiendo por el aire, tierra y fuego,  
declararon por suyo el mortal juego. 45

Píntanos ya un diluvio con razones,  
causado de un conflicto temeroso  
y que le pinta la contraria parte:  
mil cuerpos sobreaguados y en montones  
confusos, otros naden cobdiciosos 50  
d'entretener la vida en cualquier parte;  
al descuido, y con arte,  
pinta rotas entenas, jarcias rotas,  
quillas sentidas, tablas desclavadas,  
y, de impaciencia y de rigor armadas, 55  
las dos (y no en valor) iguales flotas.  
Exprime los gemidos excesivos  
de aquellos semivivos  
que, ardiendo, al agua fría se arrojaban  
y, en la muerte del fuego, muerte hallaban. 60

Después d'esto dirás: «en espaciosas,  
concertadas hileras va marchando

nuestro cristiano ejército invencible,  
las cruzadas banderas victoriosas  
al aire con donaire tremolando, 65  
haciendo vista fiera y apacible.  
Forma aquel son horrible  
que el cóncavo metal despide y forma,  
y aquel del atambor que engendra y cría  
en el cobarde pecho valentía 70  
y el temor natural trueca y reforma»;  
haz los reflejos y vislumbres bellas  
que, cual claras estrellas,  
en las lucidas armas el sol hace  
cuando mirar este escuadrón le place. 75

Esto dicho, revuelve presurosa  
y en los oídos de los dos prudentes  
famosos generales luego envía  
una voz que les diga la gloriosa  
estirpe de sus claros ascendientes, 80  
cifra de más que humana valentía:  
al que las naves guía  
muéstrale sobre un muro un caballero,  
más que de yerro, de valor armado,  
y entre la turba mora un niño atado, 85  
cual entre hambrientos lobos un cordero,  
y al segundo Abrahán que dé la daga  
con que el bárbaro haga  
el sacrificio horrendo que en el suelo  
le dio fama y inmortal gloria en el cielo; 90

dirás al otro, que en sus venas tiene  
la sangre de Austria, que con esto sólo  
le dirás cien mil hechos señalados  
que, en cuanto el ancho mar cerca y contiene,  
y en lo que mira el uno y otro polo, 95  
fueron por sus mayores acabados.  
Éstos así informados,

entra en el escuadrón de nuestra gente  
y allá verás, mirando a todas partes,  
mil Cides, mil Roldanes y mil Martes, 100  
valiente aquél, aquéste más valiente;  
a estos solos les dirás que miren  
para que luego aspiren  
a concluir la más dudosa hazaña:  
«Hijos, mirad que es vuestra madre España!, 105

la cual, desde que al viento y mar os distes,  
cual viuda llora vuestra ausencia larga,  
contrita, humilde, tierna, mansa y justa,  
los ojos bajos, húmidos y tristes,  
cubierto el cuerpo de una tosca sarga, 110  
que de sus galas poco o nada gusta  
hasta ver en la injusta  
cerviz inglesa puesto el suave yugo  
y sus puertas abrir, de horror cargadas,  
con las romanas llaves dedicadas 115  
a abrir el cielo como al cielo plugo.  
Justa es la empresa, y vuestro brazo fuerte;  
aun de la misma muerte  
quitara la vitoria de la mano,  
cuanto más del vicioso luterano». 120

Muéstrales, si es posible, un verdadero  
retrato del católico monarca,  
y verán de David la voz y el pecho,  
las rodillas por el suelo y un cordero  
mirando, a quien encierra y guarda un arca, 125  
mejor que aquélla quisiera haber hecho,  
puestos de trecho a trecho  
doce descalzos ángeles mortales  
en quien tanta virtud el cielo encierra  
que con humilde voz desde la tierra 130  
pasan del mismo cielo los umbrales.  
Con tal cordero, tal monarca y luego

de tales doce el ruego,  
diles que está seguro el triunfo y gloria,  
y que ya España canta la victoria. 135

Canción, si vas despacio do te envío,  
en todo el cielo fío  
que has de cambiar por nuevas de alegría  
el nombre de canción y profecía.

FIN

## **Del mismo, canción segunda, de la pérdida de la armada que fue a Inglaterra**

Madre de los valientes de la guerra,  
archivo de católicos soldados,  
crisol donde el amor de Dios se apura,  
tierra donde se ve que el cielo entierra  
los que han de ser al cielo trasladados 5  
por defensores de la fee más pura:  
no te parezca acaso desventura,  
¡Oh España, madre nuestra!,  
ver que tus hijos vuelven a tu seno  
dejando el mar de sus desgracias lleno, 10  
pues no los vuelve la contraria diestra:  
vuélvelos la borrasca incontrastable  
del viento, mar, y el cielo que consiente  
que se alce un poco la enemiga frente,  
odiosa al cielo, al suelo detestable, 15  
porque entonces es cierta la caída  
cuando es soberbia y vana la subida.

Abre tus brazos y recoge en ellos  
los que vuelven confusos, no rendidos,  
pues no se escusa lo que el cielo ordena, 20  
ni puede en ningún tiempo los cabellos  
tener alguno con la mano asidos  
de la calva ocasión en suerte buena,  
ni es de acero o diamante la cadena  
con que se enlaza y tiene 25  
el buen suceso en los marciales casos,  
y los más fuertes bríos quedan lasos  
del que a los brazos con el viento viene,  
y esta vuelta que vees desordenada  
sin duda entiendo que ha de ser la vuelta 30

del toro para dar mortal revuelta  
a la gente con cuerpos desalmada,  
que el cielo, aunque se tarda, no es amigo  
de dejar las maldades sin castigo.

A tu león pisado le han la cola; 35  
las vedijas sacude, y arrevuelve  
a la justa venganza de su ofensa,  
no sólo suya, que si fuera sola,  
quizá la perdonara: sólo vuelve  
por la de Dios, y en restaurarla piensa. 40  
Único es su valor, su fuerza imensa,  
claro su entendimiento,  
indignado con causa, y tal que a un pecho  
cristiano, aunque de mármol fuese hecho,  
moviera a justo y vengativo intento. 45  
Y más, que el galo, el tusco, el moro mira,  
con vista aguda y ánimos perplejos,  
cuáles son los comienzos y los dejos,  
y dónde pone este león la mira,  
porque entonces su suerte está lozana 50  
en cuanto tiene este león cuartana.

Ea pues, ¡oh Felipe, señor nuestro,  
Segundo en nombre y hombre sin segundo,  
coluna de la fee segura y fuerte!,  
vuelve en suceso más felice y diestro 55  
este designio que fabrica el mundo,  
que piensa manso y sin coraje verte,  
como si no bastasen a moverte  
tus puertos salteados  
en las remotas Indias apartadas, 60  
y en tus casas tus naves abrasadas,  
y en la ajena los templos profanados;  
tus mares llenos de piratas fieros,  
por ellos tus armadas encogidas,  
y en ellos mil haciendas y mil vidas 65

sujetos a mil bárbaros aceros,  
cosas que cada cual por sí es posible  
a hacer que se intente aun lo imposible.

Pide, toma, señor, que todo aquello  
que tus vasallos tienen se te ofrece 70  
con liberal y valerosa mano  
a trueque que al inglés pérfido cuello  
pongas el justo yugo que merece  
su injusto pecho y proceder insano;  
no sólo el oro que se adora en vano, 75  
sino sus hijos caros  
te darán, cual el suyo dio don Diego,  
que, en propia sangre y en ajeno fuego,  
acrisoló los hechos siempre raros  
de la casa de Córdoba, que ha dado 80  
catorce mayorazgos a las lanzas  
moriscas, y, con firmes confianzas,  
sus obras y su nombre han dilatado  
por la espaciosa redondez del suelo,  
que el que así muere vive y gana el cielo. 85

En tanto que los brazos levantares,  
gran capitán de Dios, espera, espera  
ver vencedor tu pueblo, y no vencido;  
pero si de cansado los bajas,  
los suyos alzará la gente fiera, 90  
que para el mal el malo es atrevido;  
y en tu perseverancia está incluído  
un felice suceso  
de la empresa justísima que tomas,  
y no con ella un solo reino domas, 95  
que a muchos pones de temor el peso;  
aseguras los tuyos, fortaleces  
lo que la buena fama de ti canta,  
que eres un justo horror que al malo espanta  
y mano que a los justos favoreces; 100



alza los brazos, pues, Moisés cristiano,  
y pondrálos por tierra el luterano.

Vosotros que, llevados de un deseo  
justo y honroso, al mar os entregastes  
y el ocio blando y el regalo huistes, 105  
puesto que os imagino ahora y veo  
entre el viento y el mar que contrastastes  
y los mortales daños que sufristes,  
d'entre Scila y Caribdis no tan tristes  
salís que no se vea 110  
en vuestro bravo, varonil semblante  
que romperéis por montes de diamante  
hasta igualar la desigual pelea;  
que los bríos y brazos españoles  
quilatan su valor, su fuerza y brío 115  
con la hambre, sed, calor y frío  
cual se quilata el oro en los crisoles,  
y, apurados así, son cual la planta  
que al cielo con la carga se levanta.

El diestro esgrimidor, cuando le toca 120  
quien sabe menos que él, se enciende en ira  
y con facilidad se desagravia;  
y en la orilla del mar la fuerte roca,  
mientras su furia a deshacerla aspira,  
muy poco o nada su rigor la agravia; 125  
y es común opinión de gente sabia  
que cuanto más ofende  
el malo al bueno, tanto más aumenta  
el temor del alcance de la cuenta,  
que siempre es malo del que mal espendede. 130  
Triunfe el pirata, pues, agora y haga  
júbilo y fiestas, porque el mar y el viento  
han respondido al justo de su intento  
sin acordarse si el que debe paga,  
que, al sumar de la cuenta, en el remate 135

se hará un alcance que le alcance y mate.

¡Oh España, oh rey, oh milites famosos!,  
ofrece, manda, obedeced, que el cielo  
en fin ha de ayudar al justo celo,  
puesto que los principios sean dudosos, 140  
y en la justa ocasión y en la porfía  
encierra la vitoria su alegría.

### *Romance*

Yace donde el sol se pone,  
  
entre dos tajadas peñas,  
una entrada de un abismo,  
quiero decir, una cueva  
profunda, lóbrega, oscura, 5  
aquí mojada, allí seca,  
propio albergue de la noche,  
del horror y las tinieblas.  
Por la boca sale un aire  
que al alma encendida yela, 10  
y un fuego, de cuando en cuando,  
que el pecho de yelo quema.  
Óyese dentro un rüido  
como crujir de cadenas  
y unos ayes luengos, tristes, 15  
envueltos en tristes quejas.  
Por las funestas paredes,  
por los resquicios y quiebras  
mil víboras se descubren  
y ponzoñosas culebras. 20  
A la entrada tiene puestos,  
en una amarilla piedra,  
huesos de muerto encajados  
de modo que forman letras,  
las cuales, vistas del fuego 25

que arroja de sí la cueva,  
dicen: «Ésta es la morada  
de los celos y sospechas».  
Y un pastor contaba a Lauso  
esta maravilla cierta 30  
de la cueva, fuego y yelo,  
aullidos, serpientes y piedra,  
el cual, oyendo, le dijo:  
«Pastor, para que te crea,  
no has menester juramentos 35  
ni hacer la vista experiencia.  
Un vivo traslado es éste  
de lo que mi pecho encierra,  
el cual, como en cueva oscura,  
no tiene luz, ni la espera. 40  
Seco le tienen desdeñes  
bañado en lágrimas tiernas;  
aire, fuego y los suspiros  
le abrasan continuo y yelan.  
Los lamentables aullidos, 45  
son mis continuas querellas,  
víboras mis pensamientos  
que en mis entrañas se ceban.  
La piedra escrita, amarilla,  
es mi sin igual firmeza, 50  
que mis huesos en la muerte  
mostrarán que son de piedra.  
Los celos son los que habitan  
en esta morada estrecha,  
que engendraron los descuidos 55  
de mi querida Silena».  
En pronunciando este nombre,  
cayó como muerto en tierra,  
que de memorias de celos  
aquestos fines se esperan. 60

*Otra versión*

Hacia donde el sol se pone,  
entre dos partidas peñas,  
una entrada de un abismo,  
quiero decir, una cueva  
oscura, lóbrega y triste, 5  
aquí mojada, allí seca,  
propio albergue de la noche,  
del terror y de tinieblas.  
Por su boca sale un aire  
que al alma encendida yela, 10  
y un fuego, de cuando en cuando,  
que al pecho de nieve quema.  
Óyese dentro un rüido  
con crujir de cadenas  
y unos ayes luengos, tristes, 15  
envueltos en tristes quejas;  
y en las funestas paredes,  
por los resquicios y quiebras  
mil víboras se descubren  
y ponzoñosas culebras. 20  
A la boca tiene puestos,  
en una amarilla piedra,  
güesos de muerto encajados  
de modo que forman letras,  
las cuales, vistas al fuego 25  
que sale de la caverna,  
dicen: «Ésta es la morada  
de los celos y sospechas».  
Un pastor contaba a Lauso  
esta maravilla cierta 30  
de la cueva, fuego y yelo,  
aullidos, sierpes y piedras,  
el cual, viéndole, le dijo:  
«Pastor, para que te crean,  
no has menester jurallo 35  
ni hacer della experiencia.  
El mismo traslado es ése  
de lo que mi pecho encierra,

el cual, como en cueva oscura,  
ni siente luz, ni la espera. 40  
Seco, le tienen desdenes  
bañando lágrimas tiernas;  
aire y fuego en los suspiros  
arrójase, abrasa y yela.  
Los lamentables aullidos, 45  
son mis continuas endechas,  
víboras mis pensamientos  
que en mis entrañas se ceban.  
La piedra escrita, amarilla,  
es mis sin igual firmezas, 50  
que los fuegos en mi muerte  
dirán cómo fui de piedra.  
Los celos son los que avisan  
en esta morada estrecha,  
que causaron los descuidos 55  
cuidados de Silena».  
En pronunciando este mal,  
cayó como muerto en tierra,  
que de memorias de celos  
tales sucesos se esperan. 60

*El cielo a la iglesia ofrece  
hoy una piedra tan fina  
que en la corona divina  
del mismo Dios resplandece.*

## De Miguel Cervantes, glosa

Tras los dones primitivos  
que, en el fervor de su celo,  
ofreció la iglesia al cielo,  
a sus edificios vivos  
dio nuevas piedras el suelo; 5  
    estos dones agradece  
a su esposa y la ennoblece,  
pues, de parte del esposo,  
un Hiacinto, el más precioso,  
*el cielo a la iglesia ofrece.* 10

Porque el hombre de su gracia  
tantas veces se retira,  
y el Jacinto, al que le mira,  
es tan grande su eficacia  
que le sosiega la ira, 15  
    su misma piedad lo inclina  
a darlo por medicina,  
que, en su jüicio profundo,  
ve que ha menester el mundo,  
*hoy una piedra tan fina.* 20

Obró tanto esta virtud,  
viviendo Jacinto en él,  
que, a los vivos rayos d'él,  
en una y otra salud  
se restituyó por él. 25

Crezca gloriosa la mina  
que de su luz jacintina  
tiene el cielo y tierra llenos,  
pues no mereció estar menos  
*que en la corona divina.* 30

Allá luce ante los ojos  
del mismo autor de su gloria,  
y acá en gloriosa memoria

de los triunfos y despojos  
que sacó de la vitoria, 35  
pues si otra luz desfallece  
cuando el sol la suya ofrece,  
¿qué tan viva y rutilante  
será aquésta si delante  
*del mismo Dios resplandece?* 40

## De Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, soneto

No ha menester el que tus hechos canta,  
¡oh gran marqués!, el artificio humano,  
que a la más sutil pluma y docta mano  
ellos le ofrecen al que al orbe espanta;  
y éste que sobre el cielo se levanta, 5  
llevado de tu nombre soberano,  
a par del griego y escritor toscano,  
sus sienes ciñe con la verde planta;  
y fue muy justa prevención del cielo  
que a un tiempo ejercitases tú la espada 10  
y él su prudente y verdadera pluma,  
porque, rompiendo de la invidia el velo,  
tu fama, en sus escritos dilatada,  
ni olvido o tiempo o muerte la consuma.



**El capitán Becerra vino a Sevilla a enseñar lo que habían  
de hacer los soldados, y a esto y a la entrada del duque de  
Medina en Cádiz hizo Cervantes este soneto**

Vimos en julio otra semana santa,  
atestada de ciertas cofradías  
que los soldados llaman compañías,  
de quien el vulgo, y no el inglés, se espanta;  
hubo de plumas muchedumbre tanta 5  
que en menos de catorce o quince días  
volaron sus pigmeos y Golías,  
y cayó su edificio por la planta.

Bramó el Becerro y púsolos en sarta;  
tronó la tierra, escurecióse el cielo, 10  
amenazando una total rüina;  
y al cabo, en Cádiz, con medida harta,  
ido ya el conde, sin ningún recelo,  
triunfando entró el gran duque de Medina.

## Al t mulo del rey que se hizo en Sevilla

« Voto a Dios que me espanta esta grandeza  
y que diera un dobl n por describilla!;  
porque,  a qui n no suspende y maravilla  
esta m quina insigne, esta braveza?

 Por Jesucristo vivo, cada pieza 5  
vale m s que un mill n, y que es mancilla  
que esto no dure un siglo,  oh gran Sevilla,  
Roma triunfante en  nimo y riqueza!

 Apostar  que la  nima del muerto,  
por gozar este sitio, hoy ha dejado 10  
el cielo, de que goza eternamente!»

Esto oy  un valent n y dijo: « Es cierto  
lo que dice voac , se r soldado,  
y quien dijere lo contrario miente!»

Y luego encontinente 15  
cal  el chapeo, requiri  la espada,  
mir  al soslayo, fuese, y no hubo nada.

## Unas décimas que compuso Miguel de Cervantes

Ya que se ha llegado el día,  
gran rey, de tus alabanzas,  
de la humilde musa mía  
escucha, entre las que alcanzas,  
las llorosas que te envía; 5

que, puesto que ya caminas  
pisando las perlas finas  
de las aulas soberanas,  
tal vez palabras humanas  
oyen orejas divinas. 10

¿Por dónde comenzaré  
a exagerar tus blasones,  
después que te llamaré  
padre de las religiones  
y defensor de la fe? 15

Sin duda habré de llamarte  
nuevo y pacífico Marte,  
pues en sosiego venciste  
lo más en cuanto quisiste,  
y es mucha la menor parte. 20

Tembló el cita en el oriente,  
el bárbaro al mediodía,  
el luterano al poniente,  
y en la tierra siempre fría  
temió la indómita gente; 25

Arauco vio tus banderas  
vencedoras, y las fieras  
ondas del sangriento Egeo  
te dieron como en trofeo  
las otomanas banderas. 30

Las virtudes en su punto  
en tu pecho se hallaron,  
y el poder y el saber junto,  
y jamás no te dejaron,  
aun casi el cuerpo difunto; 35  
y lo que más tu valor  
sube al extremo mayor  
es que fuiste, cual se advierte,  
bueno en vida, bueno en muerte  
y bueno en tu sucesor. 40

Esta memoria nos dejás,  
que es la que el bueno cudicia,  
que, amigables y sin quejas,  
misericordia y justicia  
corrieron en ti parejas, 45  
como la llana humildad  
al par de la majestad,  
tan sin discrepar un tilde  
que fuiste el rey más humilde  
y de mayor gravedad. 50

Quedar las arcas vacías,  
donde se encerraba el oro  
que dicen que recogías,  
nos muestra que tu tesoro  
en el cielo lo escondías; 55  
desde ahora en los serenos  
Elíseos campos amenos  
para siempre gozarás,  
sin poder desear más  
ni contentarte con menos. 60

## De Miguel de Cervantes

Yace en la parte que es mejor de España  
una apacible y siempre verde Vega  
a quien Apolo su favor no niega,  
pues con las aguas de Helicón la baña;

Júpiter, labrador por grande hazaña, 5  
su ciencia toda en cultivarla entrega;  
Cilenio, alegre, en ella se sosiega,  
Minerva eternamente la acompaña;

las Musas su Parnaso en ella han hecho;  
Venus, honesta, en ella aumenta y cría 10  
la santa multitud de los amores.

Y así, con gusto y general provecho,  
nuevos frutos ofrece cada día  
de ángeles, de armas, santos y pastores.

**Miguel de Cervantes, autor de Don Quixote: «Este soneto hice a la muerte de Fernando de Herrera; y, para entender el primer cuarteto, advierto que él celebraba en sus versos a una señora debajo deste nombre de Luz. Creo que es de los buenos que he hecho en mi vida»**

El que subió por sendas nunca usadas  
del sacro monte a la más alta cumbre;  
el que a una Luz se hizo todo lumbre  
y lágrimas, en dulce voz cantadas;  
el que con culta vena las sagradas 5  
de Helicón y Pirene en muchedumbre  
(libre de toda humana pesadumbre)  
bebió y dejó en divinas transformadas;  
aquél a quien invidia tuvo Apolo  
porque, a par de su Luz, tiene su fama 10  
de donde nace a donde muere el día:  
el agradable al cielo, al suelo solo,  
vuelto en ceniza de su ardiente llama,  
yace debajo desta losa fría.

## Miguel de Cervantes a don Diego de Mendoza y a su fama

En la memoria vive de las gentes,  
varón famoso, siglos infinitos,  
premio que le merecen tus escritos  
por graves, puros, castos y excelentes.

Las ansias en honesta llama ardientes, 5  
los Etnas, los Estigios, los Cocitos  
que en ellos suavemente van descritos,  
mira si es bien, ¡oh Fama!, que los cuentes,  
y aun que los lleves en ligero vuelo  
por cuanto ciñe el mar y el sol rodea, 10  
y en láminas de bronce los esculpas;  
que así el suelo sabrá que sabe el cielo  
que el renombre inmortal que se desea  
tal vez le alcanzan amorosas culpas.

## Miguel de Cervantes, al secretario Gabriel Pérez del Barrio Angulo

Tal secretario formáis,  
Gabriel, en vuestros escritos,  
que por siglos infinitos  
en él os eternizáis;

de la ignorancia sacáis 5  
la pluma, y en presto vuelo  
de lo más bajo del suelo  
al cielo la levantáis.

Desde hoy más, la discreción  
quedará puesta en su punto, 10  
y el hablar y escribir junto  
en su mayor perfección,

que en esta nueva ocasión  
nos muestra, en breve distancia,  
Demóstenes su elegancia 15  
y su estilo Cicerón.

España os está obligada,  
y con ella el mundo todo,  
por la subtileza y modo  
de pluma tan bien cortada; 20

la adulación defraudada  
queda, y la lisonja en ella;  
la mentira se atropella,  
y es la verdad levantada.

Vuestro libro nos informa 25  
que sólo vos habéis dado



a la materia de estado  
hermosa y cristiana forma;  
con la razón se conforma  
de tal suerte que en él veo 30  
que, contentando al deseo,  
al que es más libre reforma.

## **Soneto a don Diego Rosel y Fuenllana, inventor de nuevos artes, hecho por Miguel de Cervantes**

Jamás en el jardín de Falerina  
ni en la Parnasa, excesible cuesta,  
se vio Rosel ni rosa cual es ésta,  
por quien gimió la maga Dragontina;  
atrás deja la flor que se rechina 5  
en la del Tronto archiducal floresta,  
dejando olor por vía manifesta  
que a la región del cielo la avecina.

Crece, ¡oh muy felice planta!, crece,  
y ocupen tus pimpollos todo el orbe, 10  
retumbando, crujiendo y espantando;  
el Betis calle, pues el Po enmudece,  
y la muerte, que a todo humano sorbe,  
sola esta rosa vaya eternizando.

## De Miguel de Cervantes, a los éxtasis de nuestra beata madre Teresa de Jesús

Virgen fecunda, madre venturosa,  
cuyos hijos, criados a tus pechos,  
sobre sus fuerzas la virtud alzando,  
pisan ahora los dorados techos  
de la dulce región maravillosa 5  
que está la gloria de su Dios mostrando:  
tú, que ganaste obrando  
un nombre en todo el mundo  
y un grado sin segundo,  
ahora estés ante tu Dios prostrada, 10  
en rogar por tus hijos ocupada,  
o en cosas dignas de tu intento santo,  
oye mi voz cansada  
y esfuerza, ¡oh madre!, el desmayado canto.

Luego que de la cuna y las mantillas 15  
sacó Dios tu niñez, diste señales  
que Dios para ser suya te guardaba,  
mostrando los impulsos celestiales  
en ti, con ordinarias maravillas,  
que a tu edad tu deseo aventajaba; 20  
y si se descuidaba  
de lo que hacer debía,  
tal vez luego volvía  
mejorado, mostrando codicioso  
que el haber parecido perezoso 25  
era un volver atrás para dar salto,  
con curso más brío,  
desde la tierra al cielo, que es más alto.

Creciste, y fue creciendo en ti la gana  
de obrar en proporción de los favores 30  
con que te regaló la mano eterna,  
tales que, al parecer, se alzó a mayores  
contigo alegre Dios en la mañana  
de tu florida edad humilde y tierna;  
y así tu ser gobierna 35  
que poco a poco subes  
sobre las densas nubes  
de la suerte mortal, y así levantas  
tu cuerpo al cielo, sin fijar las plantas,  
que ligero tras sí el alma le lleva 40  
a las regiones santas  
con nueva suspensión, con virtud nueva.

Allí su humildad te muestra santa;  
acullá se desposa Dios contigo,  
aquí misterios altos te revela. 45  
Tierno amante se muestra, dulce amigo,  
y, siendo tu maestro, te levanta  
al cielo, que señala por tu escuela;  
parece se desvela  
en hacerte mercedes; 50  
rompe rejas y redes  
para buscarte el Mágico divino,  
tan tu llegado siempre y tan contino  
que, si algún afligido a Dios buscara,  
acortando camino 55  
en tu pecho o en tu celda le hallara.

Aunque naciste en Ávila, se puede  
decir que en Alba fue donde naciste,  
pues allí nace donde muere el justo;  
desde Alba, ¡oh madre!, al cielo te partiste: 60  
alba pura, hermosa, a quien sucede  
el claro día del inmenso gusto.  
Que le goces es justo

en éxtasis divinos  
por todos los caminos 65  
por donde Dios llevar a un alma sabe,  
para darle de sí cuanto ella cabe,  
y aun la ensancha, dilata y engrandece  
y, con amor süave,  
a sí y de sí la junta y enriquece. 70

Como las circunstancias convenientes  
que acreditan los éxtasis, que suelen  
indicios ser de santidad notoria,  
en los tuyos se hallaron, nos impelen  
a creer la verdad de los visibles 75  
que nos describe tu discreta historia;  
y el quedar con vitoria,  
honroso triunfo y palma  
del infierno, y tu alma  
más humilde, más sabia y obediente 80  
al fin de tus arrobos, fue evidente  
señal que todos fueron admirables  
y sobrehumanamente  
nuevos, continuos, sacros, inefables.

Ahora, pues, que al cielo te retiras, 85  
menospreciando la mortal riqueza  
en la inmortalidad que siempre dura,  
y el visorrey de Dios nos da certeza  
que sin enigma y sin espejo miras  
de Dios la incomparable hermosura, 90  
colma nuestra ventura:  
oye, devota y pía,  
los balidos que envía  
el rebaño infinito que criaste  
cuando del suelo al cielo el vuelo alzaste, 95  
que no porque dejaste nuestra vida  
la caridad dejaste,  
que en los cielos está más estendida.

Canción, de ser humilde has de preciarte  
cuando quieras al cielo levantarte, 100  
que tiene la humildad naturaleza  
de ser el todo y parte  
de alzar al cielo la mortal bajeza.

## De Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra

De Turia el cisne más famoso hoy canta,  
y no para acabar la dulce vida,  
que en sus divinas obras escondida  
a los tiempos y edades se adelanta:  
    queda por él canonizada y santa   5  
Teruel, vivos Marcilla y su homicida;  
su pluma, por heroica conocida,  
en quien se admira el cielo, el suelo espanta.  
    Su dotrina, su voz, su estilo raro,  
que por tuyos, ¡oh Apolo!, reconoces,   10  
según el vuelo de sus bellas alas,  
    grabadas por la Fama en mármol paro  
y en láminas de bronce, harán que goces  
siglo de eternidad, Yagüe de Salas.

**De Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, a la señora doña  
Alfonsa González, monja profesa en el monasterio de  
Nuestra Señora de Constantinopla, en la dirección deste  
libro de la Sacra Minerva**

En vuestra sin igual, dulce armonía,  
hermosísima Alfonsa, nos reserva  
la nueva, la sin par sacra Minerva  
cuanto de bueno y santo el cielo cría.

Llega el felice punto, llega el día 5  
en que, si os oye la infernal caterva,  
huye gimiendo al centro y, de la acerva  
región, suspiros a la tierra envía.

En fin, vos convertís el suelo en cielo  
con la voz celestial, con la hermosura 10  
que os hacen parecer ángel divino;  
y así, conviene que tal vez el velo  
alcéis, y descubráis esa luz pura  
que nos pone del cielo en el camino.



## A un valentón

Un valentón de espátula y gregüesco  
que a la muerte mil vidas sacrifica,  
cansado del oficio de la pica,  
mas no del ejercicio picaresco,  
retorciendo el mostacho soldadesco  
por ver que ya su bolsa le repica,  
a un corrillo llegó de gente rica  
y en el nombre de Dios, pidió refresco.  
“Den voacedes, por Dios, a mi pobreza  
— les dice — , donde no, por ocho santos  
que haré lo que suelo sin tardanza.”  
Mas uno que a sacar la espada empieza  
“¿Con quién habla — le dijo — el tragacantos?  
Si limosna no alcanza,  
¿qué es lo que suele hacer en tal querella?”  
Respondió el bravonel: “Irme sin ella”

## Al túmulo del rey Felipe II en Sevilla

Voto a Dios que me espanta esta grandeza  
y que diera un doblón por describilla,  
porque ¿a quién no sorprende y maravilla  
esta máquina insigne, esta riqueza?

Por Jesucristo vivo, cada pieza  
vale más de un millón, y que es mancilla  
que esto no dure un siglo, ¡oh gran Sevilla!,  
Roma triunfante en ánimo y nobleza.

Apostaré que el ánima del muerto  
por gozar este sitio hoy ha dejado  
la gloria donde vive eternamente.

Esto oyó un valentón y dijo: «Es cierto  
cuanto dice voacé, seor soldado.  
Y el que dijere lo contrario, miente.»

Y luego, incontinente,  
caló el chapeo, requirió la espada  
miró al soslayo, fuése y no hubo nada.

## **Busco en la muerte la vida**

Busco en la muerte la vida,  
salud en la enfermedad,  
en la prisión libertad,  
en lo cerrado salida  
y en el traidor lealtad.  
Pero mi suerte, de quien  
jamás espero algún bien,  
con el cielo ha estatuido,  
que, pues lo imposible pido,  
lo posible aún no me den.

## Ovillejos

¿Quién menoscaba mis bienes?  
¡Desdenes!  
Y ¿quién aumenta mis duelos?  
¡Los celos!  
Y ¿quién prueba mi paciencia?  
¡Ausencia!

De este modo en mi dolencia  
ningún remedio se alcanza,  
pues me matan la esperanza,  
desdenes, celos y ausencia.

¿Quién me causa este dolor?  
¡Amor!  
Y ¿quién mi gloria repuna?  
¡Fortuna!  
Y ¿quién consiente mi duelo?  
¡El cielo!

De este modo yo recelo  
morir deste mal extraño,  
pues se aúnan en mi daño  
amor, fortuna y el cielo.

¿Quién mejorará mi suerte?  
¡La muerte!  
Y el bien de amor, ¿quién le alcanza?  
¡Mudanza!  
Y sus males, ¿quién los cura?

¡Locura!

Dese modo no es cordura  
querer curar la pasión,  
cuando los remedios son  
muerte, mudanza y locura.

# VIAJE DEL PARNASO



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### Licencia I.

Por comisión y mandado de los señores del Consejo, he hecho ver el libro contenido en este memorial. No tiene cosa contra la fee ni buenas costumbres, es libro curioso y se puede imprimir. Fecho en Madrid, a 16 de setiembre de 1614.  
*El doctor Gutierre de Cetina.*

### Licencia II.

Por mandado y comisión de los señores del Consejo, he visto *El viaje del Parnaso*, de Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra; y, después de no tener cosa contra lo que tiene y enseña nuestra santa fee católica ni buenas costumbres, tiene muchas muy apacibles y entretenidas, y muy conformes a las que del mismo autor honran la nación y celebra el mundo. Este es mi parecer, salvo &c. En Madrid, a 20 de setiembre, 1614.  
*El maestro Joseph de Valdivielso.*



## Privilegio

Por cuanto por parte de vos, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, nos fue fecha relación que habíades compuesto un libro intitulado *Viaje del Parnaso*, de que hacíades presentación, y porque os había costado algún trabajo y ser curioso y deleitable, nos suplicasteis vos mandásemos dar licencia para le imprimir y privilegio por veinte años, o como la nuestra merced fuese; lo cual visto por los del nuestro Consejo, por cuanto en el dicho libro se hizo la diligencia que la premática por nos sobre ello fecha dispone, fue acordado que debíamos de mandar dar esta nuestra cédula en la dicha razón, y nos tuvimoslo por bien. Por la cual vos damos licencia y facultad para que, por tiempo y espacio de seis años cumplidos primeros siguientes, que corran y se cuenten desde el día de la fecha desta nuestra cédula en adelante, vos, o la persona que para ello vuestro poder hubiere, y no otra alguna, podáis imprimir y vender el dicho libro que desuso se hace mención. Y por la presente damos licencia y facultad a cualquier impresor de nuestros reinos que nombráredes, para que durante el dicho tiempo le pueda imprimir por el original que en el nuestro Consejo se vio, que va rubricado y firmado al fin de Hernando de Vallejo, nuestro escribano de Cámara, y uno de los que en él residen, con que antes y primero que se venda lo traigáis ante ellos, juntamente con el dicho original, para que se vea si la dicha impresión está conforme a él, o traigáis fee en pública forma, cómo por corretor por nos nombrado se vio y corrigió la dicha impresión por el dicho original. Y mandamos al dicho impresor que ansí imprimiere el dicho libro, no imprima el principio y primer pliego dél, ni entregue más de un solo libro con el original al autor y persona a cuya costa lo imprimiere, ni a otro alguno, para efeto de la dicha corrección y tasa, hasta que, antes y primero, el dicho libro esté corregido y tasado por los del nuestro Consejo. Y estando hecho, y no de otra manera, pueda imprimir el dicho principio y primer pliego, en el cual inmediatamente ponga esta nuestra licencia y la aprobación, tasa y erratas; ni lo podáis vender ni vendáis vos, ni otra persona alguna, hasta que esté el dicho libro en la forma susodicha, so pena de caer e incurrir en las penas contenidas en la dicha premática y leyes de nuestros reinos que sobre ello disponen. Y mandamos que durante el dicho tiempo persona alguna, sin vuestra licencia, no le pueda imprimir ni vender, so pena que el que lo imprimiere y vendiere haya perdido y pierda cualesquiera libros, moldes y aparejos que dél tuviere, y más incurra en pena de cincuenta mil maravedís por cada vez que lo contrario hiciere; de la cual dicha pena sea la tercera parte para nuestra Cámara y la otra tercia parte para el juez que lo sentenciare, y la otra tercia parte para el que lo denunciare. Y

mandamos a los del nuestro Consejo, presidente y oidores de las nuestras Audiencias, alcaldes, alguaciles de la nuestra Casa y Corte y Chancillerías, y otras cualesquiera justicias de todas las ciudades, villas y lugares de los nuestros reinos y señoríos, y a cada uno en su jurisdicción, así a los que agora son como a los que serán de aquí adelante, que vos guarden y cumplan esta nuestra cédula y merced que así vos hacemos, y contra ella no vayan, ni pasen, ni consientan ir ni pasar en manera alguna, so pena de la nuestra merced y de diez mil maravedís para la nuestra Cámara. Fecha en Ventosilla, a diez y ocho días del mes de octubre de mil y seiscientos y catorce años.

Yo, el rey.

Por mandado del Rey nuestro señor:

*Jorge de Tovar.*

## Tasa

Yo, Hernando de Vallejo, escribano de Cámara del Rey nuestro señor, de los que residen en su Consejo, doy fe que, habiéndose visto por los señores dél un libro que compuso Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, intitulado *Viaje del Parnaso*, que con su licencia fue impreso, le tasaron a cuatro maravedís el pliego, el cual tiene once pliegos, que al dicho respeto suma y monta cuarenta y cuatro maravedís cada volumen en papel; y mandaron que a este precio se haya de vender y venda, y no a más, y que esta tasa se ponga al principio de cada volumen del dicho libro, para que por él se sepa y entienda lo que se ha de pedir y llevar, sin que se haya de exceder ni exceda della en manera alguna. Y para que dello conste, de pedimiento del dicho Miguel de Cervantes y mandamiento de los dichos señores del Consejo, di la presente en la villa de Madrid, a diez y siete días del mes de noviembre, de mil y seiscientos y catorce años.

*Hernando de Vallejo.*

## Erratas

Fojas 4, plana 1, terceto tercero: donde dice *y cen*, diga *y con*.

Fojas 11, plana 2, terceto 6: donde dice *inceso*, diga *Enciso*.

Fojas 14, plana 1, terceto 6: donde dice *palma lleva*, diga *y palma lleva*.

Fojas 14, plana 2, terceto primero: donde dice *cuenta*, diga *quinta*.

Este libro, intitulado *Viaje del Parnaso*, compuesto por Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, con estas erratas, corresponde con su original. Dada en Madrid, a diez días del mes de noviembre de 1614.

*El licenciado Murcia de la Llana.*

## Dedicatoria

Dirijo a vuesa merced este *Viaje* que hice al *Parnaso*, que no desdice a su edad florida, ni a sus loables y estudiosos ejercicios. Si vuesa merced le hace el acogimiento que yo espero de su condición ilustre, él quedará famoso en el mundo y mis deseos premiados. Nuestro Señor, &c.

*Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra.*

## Prólogo al lector

Si por ventura, lector curioso, eres poeta y llegare a tus manos (aunque pecadoras) este *Viaje*; si te hallares en él escrito y notado entre los buenos poetas, da gracias a Apolo por la merced que te hizo; y si no te hallares, también se las puedes dar. Y Dios te guarde.

## D. Augustini de Casanate Rojas

### *Epigramma*

Excute cæruleum, proles Saturnia, tergum,  
verbera quadrigæ sentiat alma Tetis.  
Agmen Apollineum, noua sacri iniuria ponti,  
carmineis ratibus per freta tendit iter.  
Proteus æquoreas pecudes, modulamina Triton, 5  
monstra cauos latices obstupefacta sinunt.  
At caueas tantæ torquent quæ mollis habenas,  
carmina si excipias nulla tridentis opes.  
Hesperiiis Michael claros conduxit ab oris  
in pelagus vates; delphica castra petit. 10  
Imo age, pone metus, mediis subsiste carinis,  
Parnasi in litus vela secunda gere.

## El autor a su pluma

### *Soneto*

Pues veis que no me han dado algún soneto  
que ilustre deste libro la portada,  
venid vos, pluma mía mal cortada,  
y hacedle, aunque carezca de discreto.

Haréis que escusó el temerario aprieto 5  
de andar de una en otra encrucijada,  
mendigando alabanzas, escusada  
fatiga e impertinente, yo os prometo.

Todo soneto y rima allá se avenga,  
y adorne los umbrales de los buenos, 10  
aunque la adulación es de ruin casta.

Y dadme vos que este *Viaje* tenga  
de sal un panecillo por lo menos,  
que yo os le marco por vendible, y basta.

## Capítulo primero del Viaje del Parnaso

Un quídam Caporal italiano,  
de patria perusino, a lo que entiendo,  
de ingenio griego y de valor romano,  
llevado de un capricho reverendo,  
le vino en voluntad de ir a Parnaso, 5  
por huir de la Corte el vario estruendo.

Solo y a pie partióse, y paso a paso  
llegó donde compró una mula antigua,  
de color parda y tartamudo paso.

Nunca a medroso pareció estantigua 10  
mayor, ni menos buena para carga,  
grande en los huesos y en la fuerza exigua,  
corta de vista, aunque de cola larga,  
estrecha en los ijares, y en el cuero  
más dura que lo son los de una adarga. 15

Era de ingenio cabalmente entero:  
caía en cualquier cosa fácilmente,  
así en abril como en el mes de enero.

En fin, sobre ella el poetón valiente  
llegó al Parnaso, y fue del rubio Apolo 20  
agasajado con serena frente.

Contó, cuando volvió el poeta solo  
y sin blanca a su patria, lo que en vuelo  
llevó la fama deste al otro polo.

Yo, que siempre trabajo y me desvelo 25  
por parecer que tengo de poeta  
la gracia que no quiso darme el cielo,  
quisiera despachar a la estafeta  
mi alma, o por los aires, y ponella  
sobre las cumbres del nombrado Oeta, 30  
pues, descubriendo desde allí la bella  
corriente de Aganipe, en un saltico  
pudiera el labio remojarse en ella,



y quedar del licor süave y rico  
el pancho lleno, y ser de allí adelante 35  
poeta ilustre, o al menos magnifico.

Mas mil inconvenientes al instante  
se me ofrecieron, y quedó el deseo  
en cierne, desvalido e ignorante.

Porque en la piedra que en mis hombros veo, 40  
que la Fortuna me cargó pesada,  
mis mal logradas esperanzas leo.

Las muchas leguas de la gran jornada  
se me representaron, que pudieran  
torcer la voluntad aficionada, 45

si en aquel mesmo istante no acudieran  
los humos de la fama a socorrerme,  
y corto y fácil el camino hicieran.

Dije entre mí: «si yo viniese a verme  
en la difícil cumbre deste monte, 50  
y una guirnalda de laurel ponerme,  
no envidiaría el bien decir de Aponte,  
ni del muerto Galarza la agudeza,  
en manos blando, en lengua Rodomonte».

Mas, como de un error otro se empieza, 55  
creyendo a mi deseo, di al camino  
los pies, porque di al viento la cabeza.

En fin, sobre las ancas del Destino,  
llevando a la Elección puesta en la silla,  
hacer el gran viäje determino. 60

Si esta cabalgadura maravilla,  
sepa el que no lo sabe que se usa  
por todo el mundo, no sólo en Castilla.

Ninguno tiene o puede dar escusa  
de no oprimir desta gran bestia el lomo, 65  
ni mortal caminante lo rehúsa.

Suele tal vez ser tan ligera como  
va por el aire el águila o saeta,  
y tal vez anda con los pies de plomo.

Pero, para la carga de un poeta, 70  
siempre ligera, cualquier bestia puede  
llevarla, pues carece de maleta;

que es caso ya infalible que, aunque herede  
riquezas un poeta, en poder suyo  
no aumentarlas, perderlas le sucede. 75

Desta verdad ser la ocasión arguyo  
que tú, ¡oh gran padre Apolo!, les infundes  
en sus intentos el intento tuyo.

Y, como no le mezclas ni confundes  
en cosas *de agibilibus* rateras, 80  
ni en el mar de ganancia vil le hundes,  
ellos, o traten burlas o sean veras,  
sin aspirar a la ganancia en cosa,  
sobre el convexo van de las esferas,  
pintando en la palestra rigurosa 85  
las acciones de Marte, o entre las flores  
las de Venus, más blanda y amorosa.

Llorando guerras o cantando amores,  
la vida como en sueño se les pasa,  
o como suele el tiempo a jugadores. 90

Son hechos los poetas de una masa  
dulce, süave, correosa y tierna,  
y amiga del hogar de ajena casa.

El poeta más cuerdo se gobierna  
por su antojo baldío y regalado, 95  
de trazas lleno y de ignorancia eterna.

Absorto en sus quimeras, y admirado  
de sus mismas acciones, no procura  
llegar a rico como a honroso estado.

Vayan, pues, los leyentes con letura, 100  
cual dice el vulgo mal limado y bronco,  
que yo soy un poeta desta hechura:

cisne en las canas, y en la voz un ronco  
y negro cuervo, sin que el tiempo pueda  
desbistar de mi ingenio el duro tronco; 105

y que en la cumbre de la varia rueda  
jamás me pude ver sólo un momento,  
pues cuando subir quiero, se está queda.

Pero, por ver si un alto pensamiento  
se puede prometer feliz suceso, 110  
seguí el viaje a paso tardo y lento.

Un candel con ocho mis de queso  
fue en mis alforjas mi repostería,  
útil al que camina y leve peso.

«Adiós», dije a la humilde choza mía; 115  
«adiós, Madrid; adiós tu Prado y fuentes,  
que manan néctar, llueven ambrosía;  
adiós, conversaciones suficientes  
a entretener un pecho cuidadoso  
y a dos mil desvalidos pretendientes; 120  
adiós, sitio agradable y mentiroso,  
do fueron dos gigantes abrasados  
con el rayo de Júpiter fogoso;  
adiós, teatros públicos, honrados  
por la ignorancia que ensalzada veo 125  
en cien mil disparates recitados;  
adiós, de San Felipe el gran paseo,  
donde si baja o sube el turco galgo,  
como en gaceta de Venecia leo;  
adiós, hambre sutil de algún hidalgo, 130  
que por no verme ante tus puertas muerto,  
hoy de mi patria y de mí mismo salgo».

Con esto, poco a poco llegué al puerto  
a quien los de Cartago dieron nombre,  
cerrado a todos vientos y encubierto; 135  
a cuyo claro y sin igual renombre  
se postran cuantos puertos el mar baña,  
descubre el sol y ha navegado el hombre.

Arrojóse mi vista a la campaña  
rasa del mar, que trujo a mi memoria 140  
del heroico don Juan la heroica hazaña;  
donde con alta de soldados gloria,  
y con propio valor y airado pecho  
tuve, aunque humilde, parte en la vitoria.

Allí, con rabia y con mortal despecho, 145  
el otomano orgullo vio su brío  
hollado y reducido a pobre estrecho.

Lleno, pues, de esperanzas y vacío  
de temor, busqué luego una fragata  
que efetuase el alto intento mío, 150

cuando por la, aunque azul, líquida plata  
vi venir un bajel a vela y remo,  
que tomar tierra en el gran puerto trata.

Del más gallardo y más vistoso extremo  
de cuantos las espaldas de Neptuno 155  
oprimieron jamás, ni más supremo,

cual éste, nunca vio bajel alguno  
el mar, ni pudo verse en el armada  
que destruyó la vengativa Juno;

no fue del vellocino a la jornada 160  
Argos tan bien compuesta y tan pomposa,  
ni de tantas riquezas adornada.

Cuando entraba en el puerto, la hermosa  
Aurora por las puertas del Oriente  
salía en trenza blanda y amorosa. 165

Oyóse un estampido de repente,  
haciendo salva la real galera,  
que despertó y alborotó la gente.

El son de los clarines la ribera  
llenaba de dulcísima armonía, 170  
y el de la chusma alegre y placentera.

Entrábanse las horas por el día,  
a cuya luz, con distinción más clara,  
se vio del gran bajel la bizarría.

Áncoras echa, y en el puerto para, 175  
y arroja un ancho esquife al mar tranquilo  
con música, con grito y algazara.

Usan los marineros de su estilo:  
cubren la popa con tapetes tales,  
que es oro y sirgo de su trama el hilo. 180

Tocan de la ribera los umbrales;  
sale del rico esquife un caballero  
en hombros de otros cuatro principales,

en cuyo traje y ademán severo  
vi de Mercurio al vivo la figura, 185  
de los fingidos dioses mensajero;

en el gallardo talle y compostura,  
en los alados pies, y el caduceo,  
símbolo de prudencia y de cordura,

digo que al mismo paraninfo veo, 190  
que trujo mentirosas embajadas  
a la tierra del alto Coliseo.

Vile, y apenas puso las aladas  
plantas en las arenas, venturosas  
por verse de divinos pies tocadas, 195  
cuando yo, revolviendo cien mil cosas  
en la imaginación, llegué a postrarme  
ante las plantas por adorno hermosas.

Mandóme el dios parlero luego alzarme,  
y, con medidos versos y sonantes, 200  
desta manera comenzó a hablarme:

«¡Oh Adán de los poetas, oh Cervantes!  
¿Qué alforjas y qué traje es éste, amigo,  
que así muestra discursos ignorantes?»

Yo, respondiendo a su demanda, digo: 205  
«Señor: voy al Parnaso, y, como pobre,  
con este aliño mi jornada sigo».

Y él a mí dijo: «¡Oh sobrehumano y sobre  
espíritu cilenio levantado,  
toda abundancia y todo honor te sobre! 210

Que, en fin, has respondido a ser soldado  
antiguo y valeroso, cual lo muestra  
la mano de que estás estropeado.

Bien sé que en la naval dura palestra  
perdiste el movimiento de la mano 215  
izquierda, para gloria de la diestra;

y sé que aquel instinto sobrehumano  
que de raro inventor tu pecho encierra  
no te le ha dado el padre Apolo en vano.

Tus obras los rincones de la tierra, 220  
llevándolas en grupa Rocinante,  
descubren y a la envidia mueven guerra.

Pasa, raro inventor, pasa adelante  
con tu sutil disinio, y presta ayuda  
a Apolo, que la tuya es importante, 225

antes que el escuadrón vulgar acuda  
de más de veinte mil sietemesinos  
poetas que de serlo están en duda.

Llenas van ya las sendas y caminos  
desta canalla inútil contra el monte, 230  
que aun de estar a su sombra no son dignos.

Ármate de tus versos luego, y ponte  
a punto de seguir este viaje  
conmigo, y a la gran obra dispónte;  
conmigo, segurísimo pasaje 235  
tendrás, sin que te empaches, ni procures  
lo que suelen llamar matalotaje;  
y, porque esta verdad que digo apures,  
entra conmigo en mi galera y mira  
cosas con que te asombres y asegures». 240

Yo, aunque pensé que todo era mentira,  
entré con él en la galera hermosa  
y vi lo que pensar en ello admira:  
de la quilla a la gavia, ¡oh estraña cosa!,  
toda de versos era fabricada, 245  
sin que se entremetiese alguna prosa;

las ballesteras eran de ensalada  
de glosas, todas hechas a la boda  
de la que se llamó malmaridada;  
era la chusma de romances toda, 250  
gente atrevida, empero necesaria,  
pues a todas acciones se acomoda;

la popa, de materia estraordinaria,  
bastarda, y de legítimos sonetos,  
de labor peregrina en todo y varia; 255  
eran dos valentísimos tercetos  
los espalderes de la izquierda y diestra,  
para dar boga larga muy perfectos;

hecha ser la crujía se me muestra  
de una lengua y tristísima elegía, 260  
que no en cantar sino en llorar es diestra

(por ésta entiendo yo que se diría  
lo que suele decirse a un desdichado  
cuando lo pasa mal: «pasó crujía»);

el árbol, hasta el cielo levantado, 265  
de una dura canción prolija estaba  
de canto de seis dedos embreado;

él y la entena que por él cruzaba,  
de duros estrambotes la madera  
de que eran hechos claro se mostraba; 270

la racamenta, que es siempre parlera,  
toda la componían redondillas,  
con que ella se mostraba más ligera;  
las jarcias parecían seguidillas  
de disparates mil y más compuestas, 275  
que suelen en el alma hacer cosquillas;

las rumbadas, fortísimas y honestas  
estancias eran, tablas poderosas  
que llevan un poema y otro a cuestas.

Era cosa de ver las bulliciosas 280  
banderillas que al aire tremolaban,  
de varias rimas algo licenciosas;  
los grumetes, que aquí y allí cruzaban,  
de encadenados versos parecían,  
puesto que como libres trabajaban. 285

Todas las obras muertas componían  
o versos sueltos, o sestinas graves,  
que a la galera más gallarda hacían.

En fin, con modos blandos y süaves,  
viendo Mercurio que yo visto había 290  
el bajel, que es razón, lector, que alabes,  
junto a sí me sentó, y su voz envía  
a mis oídos en razones claras  
y llenas de suavísima armonía,

diciendo: «Entre las cosas que son raras 295  
y nuevas en el mundo y peregrinas,  
verás, si en ello adviertes y reparas,

que es una este bajel de las más dignas  
de admiración, que llegue a ser espanto  
a naciones remotas y vecinas. 300

No le formaron máquinas de encanto,  
sino el ingenio del divino Apolo,  
que puede, quiere y llega y sube a tanto.

Formóle, ¡oh nuevo caso!, para sólo  
que yo llevase en él cuantos poetas 305  
hay desde el claro Tajo hasta Pactolo.

De Malta el gran maestro, a quien secretas  
espías dan aviso que en Oriente  
se aperciben las bárbaras saetas,  
teme, y envía a convocar la gente 310  
que sella con la blanca cruz el pecho,  
porque en su fuerza su valor se aumente;  
a cuya imitación, Apolo ha hecho  
que los famosos vates al Parnaso  
acudan, que está puesto en duro estrecho. 315

Yo, condolido del doliente caso,  
en el ligero casco, ya instruido  
de lo que he de hacer, aguijo el paso:  
de Italia las riberas he barrido;  
he visto las de Francia y no tocado, 320  
por venir sólo a España dirigido.

Aquí, con dulce y con felice agrado,  
hará fin mi camino, a lo que creo,  
y seré fácilmente despachado.

Tú, aunque en tus canas tu pereza veo, 325  
serás el paraninfo de mi asunto  
y el solicitador de mi deseo.

Parte, y no te detengas sólo un punto,  
y a los que en esta lista van escritos  
dirás de Apolo cuanto aquí yo apunto». 330

Sacó un papel, y en él casi infinitos  
nombres vi de poetas, en que había  
yangüeses, vizcaínos y coritos.

Allí famosos vi de Andalucía,  
y entre los castellanos vi unos hombres 335  
en quien vive de asiento la poesía.

Dijo Mercurio: «Quiero que me nombres  
desta turba gentil, pues tú lo sabes,  
la alteza de su ingenio, con los nombres».

Yo respondí: «De los que son más graves 340  
diré lo que supiere, por moverte  
a que ante Apolo su valor alabes».  
Él escuchó. Yo dije desta suerte.



## Del Viaje del Parnaso, capítulo segundo

Colgado estaba de mi antigua boca  
el dios hablante, pero entonces mudo  
(que al que escucha, el guardar silencio toca),  
cuando di de improviso un estornudo,  
y, haciendo cruces por el mal agüero, 5  
del gran Mercurio al mandamiento acudo.

Miré la lista, y vi que era el primero  
el licenciado JUAN DE OCHOA, amigo  
por poeta y cristiano verdadero;

deste varón en su alabanza digo 10  
que puede acelerar y dar la muerte  
con su claro discurso al enemigo,

y que si no se aparta y se divierte  
su ingenio en la gramática española,  
será de Apolo sin igual la suerte; 15

pues de su poesía, al mundo sola,  
puede esperar poner el pie en la cumbre  
de la incostante rueda o varia bola.

Éste que de los cómicos es lumbre,  
que el licenciado POYO es su apellido, 20  
no hay nube que a su sol claro deslumbre;

pero, como está siempre entretenido  
en trazas, en quimeras e invenciones,  
no ha de acudir a este marcial rüido.

Éste que en lista por tercero pones, 25  
que HIPÓLITO se llama DE VERGARA,  
si llevarle al Parnaso te dispones,

haz cuenta que en él llevas una jara,  
una saeta, un arcabuz, un rayo  
que contra la ignorancia se dispara. 30

Éste que tiene como mes de mayo  
florido ingenio, y que comienza ahora  
a hacer de sus comedias nuevo ensayo,

GODÍNEZ es. Y estotro que enamora  
las almas con sus versos regalados, 35  
cuando de amor ternezas canta o llora,  
es uno que valdrá por mil soldados  
cuando a la estraña y nunca vista empresa  
fueren los escogidos y llamados;  
digo que es don FRANCISCO, el que profesa 40  
las armas y las letras con tal nombre,  
que por su igual Apolo le confiesa;  
es DE CALATAYUD su sobrenombre;  
con esto queda dicho todo cuanto  
puedo decir con que a la invidia asombre. 45  
Éste que sigue es un poeta santo,  
digo famoso: MIGUEL CID se llama,  
que al coro de las Musas pone espanto.  
Estotro que sus versos encarama  
sobre los mismos hombros de Calisto, 50  
tan celebrado siempre de la fama,  
es aquel agradable, aquel bienquisto,  
aquel agudo, aquel sonoro y grave  
sobre cuantos poetas Febo ha visto;  
aquel que tiene de escribir la llave 55  
con gracia y agudeza en tanto extremo,  
que su igual en el orbe no se sabe:  
es don LUIS DE GÓNGORA, a quien temo  
agraviar en mis cortas alabanzas,  
aunque las suba al grado más supremo. 60  
¡Oh tú, divino espíritu, que alcanzas  
ya el premio merecido a tus deseos  
y a tus bien colocadas esperanzas;  
ya en nuevos y justísimos empleos,  
divino HERRERA, tu caudal se aplica, 65  
aspirando del cielo a los trofeos!  
Ya de tu hermosa Luz, y clara, y rica,  
el bello resplandor miras seguro,  
en la que el alma tuya beatifica;  
y, arrimada tu yedra al fuerte muro 70  
de la inmortalidad, no estimas cuanto  
mora en las sombras deste mundo oscuro.

Y tú, don JUAN DE JÁURIGUI, que a tanto  
el sabio curso de tu pluma aspira,  
que sobre las esferas le levanto, 75

aunque Lucano por tu voz respira,  
déjale un rato y, con piadosos ojos,  
a la necesidad de Apolo mira;

que te están esperando mil despojos  
de otros mil atrevidos, que procuran 80  
fértils campos ser, siendo rastrojos.

Y tú, por quien las Musas aseguran  
su partido, don FÉLIX ARIAS, siente  
que por su gentileza te conjuran

y ruegan que defiendas desta gente 85  
non sancta su hermosura, y de Aganipe  
y de Hipocrene la inmortal corriente.

¿Consentirás tú, a dicha, participe  
del licor suavísimo un poeta  
que al hacer de sus versos sude y hipe? 90

No lo consentirás, pues tu discreta  
vena, abundante y rica, no permite  
cosa que sombra tenga de imperfecta.

«Señor, éste que aquí viene se quite»,  
dije a Mercurio, «que es un chacho necio 95  
que juega, y es de sátiras su envite.

Éste sí que podrás tener en precio,  
que es ALONSO DE SALAS BARBADILLO,  
a quien me inclino y sin medida aprecio.

Éste que viene aquí, si he de decillo, 100  
no hay para qué le embarques; y así, puedes  
borrarle». Dijo el dios: «Gusto de oíllo».

«Es un cierto rapaz, que a Ganimedes  
quiere imitar, vistiéndose a lo godo;  
y así, aconsejo que sin él te quedes. 105

No lo harás con éste dese modo,  
que es el gran LUIS CABRERA, que, pequeño,  
todo lo alcanza, pues lo sabe todo;

es de la historia conocido dueño,  
y en discursos discretos tan discreto, 110  
que a Tácito verás si te le enseño.

Éste que viene es un galán sujeto  
de la varia fortuna a los vaivenes  
y del mudable tiempo al duro aprieto:  
un tiempo rico de caducos bienes, 115  
y ahora de los firmes e inmutables  
más rico, a tu mandar firme le tienes;  
pueden los altos riscos siempre estables  
ser tocados del mar, mas no movidos  
de sus ondas en cursos variables; 120  
ni menos a la tierra trae rendidos  
los altos cedros Bóreas, cuando, airado,  
quiere humillar los más fortalecidos.

Y éste que vivo ejemplo nos ha dado  
desta verdad con tal filosofía, 125  
don LORENZO RAMÍREZ es DE PRADO.

Déste que se le sigue aquí diría  
que es don ANTONIO DE MONROY, que veo  
en él lo que es ingenio y cortesía;  
satisfacción al más alto deseo 130  
puede dar de valor heroico y ciencia,  
pues mil descubro en él y otras mil creo.

Éste es un caballero de presencia  
agradable y que tiene de Torcato  
el alma sin alguna diferencia; 135  
de don ANTONIO DE PAREDES trato,  
a quien dieron las Musas, sus amigas,  
en tierna edad anciano ingenio y trato.

Éste que por llevarle te fatigas,  
es don ANTONIO DE MENDOZA, y veo 140  
cuánto en llevarle al sacro Apolo obligas.

Éste que de las Musas es recreo,  
la gracia y el donaire y la cordura,  
que de la discreción lleva el trofeo,  
es PEDRO DE MORALES, propia hechura 145  
del gusto cortesano, y es asilo  
adonde se repara mi ventura.

Éste, aunque tiene parte de Zoílo,  
es el grande ESPINEL, que en la guitarra  
tiene la prima y en el raro estilo. 150

Éste que tanto allá tira la barra  
que las cumbres se deja atrás de Pindo,  
que jura, que vocea y que desgarra,  
tiene más de poeta que de lindo,  
y es JUSEPE DE VARGAS, cuyo astuto 155  
ingenio y rara condición deslindo.

Éste, a quien pueden dar justo tributo  
la gala y el ingenio que más pueda  
ofrecer a las Musas flor y fruto,  
es el famoso ANDRÉS DE BALMASEDA, 160  
de cuyo grave y dulce entendimiento  
el magno Apolo satisfecho queda.

Éste es ENCISO, gloria y ornamento  
del Tajo, y claro honor de Manzanares,  
que con tal hijo aumenta su contento. 165

Éste, que es escogido entre millares,  
de GUEVARA LUIS VÉLEZ es el bravo,  
que se puede llamar quitapesares;  
es poeta gigante, en quien alabo  
el verso numeroso, el peregrino 170  
ingenio, si un Gnatón nos pinta, o un Davo.

Éste es don JUAN DE ESPAÑA, que es más digno  
de alabanzas divinas que de humanas,  
pues en todos sus versos es divino.

Éste, por quien de Luso están ufanas 175  
las Musas, es SILVEIRA, aquel famoso  
que por llevarle con razón te afanas.

Éste que se le sigue es el curioso  
gran don PEDRO DE HERRERA, conocido  
por de ingenio elevado en punto honroso. 180

Éste que de la cárcel del olvido  
sacó otra vez a Proserpina hermosa,  
con que a España y al Dauro ha enriquecido,  
verásle, en la contienda rigurosa  
que se teme y se espera en nuestros días 185  
(culpa de nuestra edad poco dichosa),  
mostrar de su valor las lozanías;  
pero ¿qué mucho, si es aquéste el docto  
y grave don FRANCISCO DE FARÍAS?

Éste, de quien yo fui siempre devoto, 190  
oráculo y Apolo de Granada,  
y aun deste clima nuestro y del remoto,

PEDRO RODRÍGUEZ es. Éste es TEJADA,  
de altitonantes versos y sonoros,  
con majestad en todo levantada. 195

Éste que brota versos por los poros  
y halla patria y amigos dondequiera,  
y tiene en los ajenos sus tesoros,  
es MEDINILLA, el que la vez primera  
cantó el *Romance de la tumba oscura*, 200  
entre cipreses puestos en hilera.

Éste que en verdes años se apresura  
y corre al sacro lauro, es don FERNANDO  
BERMÚDEZ, donde vive la cordura.

Éste es aquel poeta memorando 205  
que mostró de su ingenio la agudeza,  
en las selvas de Erífile cantando.

Éste que la coluna nueva empieza,  
con estos dos que con su ser convienen,  
nombrarlos aun lo tengo por bajeza. 210

MIGUEL CEJUDO y MIGUEL SÁNCHEZ vienen  
juntos aquí, ¡oh par sin par!; en éstos  
las sacras Musas fuerte amparo tienen;

que en los pies de sus versos bien compuestos,  
llenos de erudición rara y dotrina, 215  
al ir al grave caso serán prestos.

Este gran caballero, que se inclina  
a la lección de los poetas buenos,  
y al sacro monte con su luz camina,

don FRANCISCO DE SILVA es por lo menos; 220  
¿qué será por lo más? ¡Oh edad madura  
en verdes años de cordura llenos!

Don GABRIEL GÓMEZ viene aquí; segura  
tiene con él Apolo la vitoria  
de la canalla siempre necia y dura. 225

Para honor de su ingenio, para gloria  
de su florida edad, para que admire  
siempre de siglo en siglo su memoria,

en este gran sujeto se retire  
y abrevie la esperanza deste hecho, 230  
y Febo al gran VALDÉS atento mire.

Verá en él un gallardo y sabio pecho,  
un ingenio sutil y levantado,  
con que le deje en todo satisfecho.

FIGUEROA es estotro, el doctorado, 235  
que cantó de Amarili la costancia  
en dulce prosa y verso regalado.

Cuatro vienen aquí en poca distancia,  
con mayúsculas letras de oro escritos,  
que son del alto asunto la importancia; 240

de tales cuatro, siglos infinitos  
durará la memoria, sustentada  
en la alta gravedad de sus escritos;

del claro Apolo la real morada,  
si viniere a caer de su grandeza, 245  
será por estos cuatro levantada;

en ellos nos cifró Naturaleza  
el todo de las partes, que son dignas  
de gozar celsitud, que es más que alteza.

Esta verdad, gran CONDE DE SALINAS, 250  
bien la acreditas con tus raras obras,  
que en los términos tocan de divinas.

Tú, el de ESQUILACHE PRÍNCIPE, que cobras  
de día en día crédito tamaño,  
que te adelantas a ti mismo y sobras, 255

serás escudo fuerte al grave daño  
que teme Apolo, con ventajas tantas,  
que no te espere el escuadrón tacaño.

Tú, CONDE DE SALDAÑA, que con plantas  
tiernas pisas de Pindo la alta cumbre, 260  
y en alas de tu ingenio te levantas,

hacha has de ser de inestinguible lumbre,  
que guíe al sacro monte al deseoso  
de verse en él, sin que la luz deslumbre.

Tú, el de VILLAMEDIANA, el más famoso 265  
de cuantos entre griegos y latinos  
alcanzaron el lauro venturoso,

cruzarás por las sendas y caminos  
que al monte guían, porque más seguros  
lleguen a él los simples peregrinos; 270  
a cuya vista destos cuatro muros  
de Parnaso, caerán las arrogancias  
de los mancebos, sobre necios, duros.

¡Oh cuántas y cuán graves circunstancias  
dijera destos cuatro, que felices 275  
aseguran de Apolo las ganancias!

Y más, si se les llega el DE ALCANICES  
MARQUÉS insigne, harán (puesto que hay una  
en el mundo no más) cinco fenices;

cada cual de por sí será coluna 280  
que sustente y levante el edificio  
de Febo sobre el cerco de la luna.

Éste, puesto que acude al grave oficio  
en que se ocupa, el lauro y palma lleva,  
que Apolo da por honra y beneficio; 285  
en esta ciencia es maravilla nueva,  
y en la jurispericia único y raro:  
su nombre es don FRANCISCO DE LA CUEVA.

Éste, que con Homero le comparo,  
es el gran don RODRIGO DE HERRERA, 290  
insigne en letras y en virtudes raro.

Éste que se le sigue es el DE VERA  
DON JUAN, que por su espada y por su pluma  
le honran en la quinta y cuarta esfera.

Éste que el cuerpo y aun el alma bruma 295  
de mil, aunque no muestra ser cristiano,  
sus escritos el tiempo no consuma».

Cayóseme la lista de la mano  
en este punto, y dijo el dios: «Con éstos  
que has referido está el negocio llano. 300

Haz que con pies y pensamientos prestos  
vengan aquí, donde aguardando quedo  
la fuerza de tan válidos supuestos».

«Mal podrá don FRANCISCO DE QUEVEDO  
venir», dije yo entonces; y él me dijo: 305  
«Pues partirme sin él de aquí no puedo.



Ése es hijo de Apolo, ése es hijo  
de Calíope Musa; no podemos  
irnos sin él, y en esto estaré fijo;  
es el flagelo de poetas memos, 310  
y echará a puntillazos del Parnaso  
los malos que esperamos y tenemos».

«¡Oh señor», repliqué, «que tiene el paso  
corto y no llegará en un siglo entero!»  
«Deso», dijo Mercurio, «no hago caso, 315  
que el poeta que fuere caballero,  
sobre una nube entre pardilla y clara  
vendrá muy a su gusto caballero».

«Y el que no», pregunté, «¿qué le prepara  
Apolo? ¿Qué carrozas, o qué nubes? 320  
¿Qué dromerio, o alfana en paso rara?»

«Mucho», me respondió, «mucho te subes  
en tus preguntas; calla y obedece».  
«Sí haré, pues no es infando lo que *jubes*».

Esto le respondí, y él me parece 325  
que se turbó algún tanto; y en un punto  
el mar se turba, el viento sopla y crece.

Mi rostro entonces, como el de un difunto  
se debió de poner; y sí haría,  
que soy medroso, a lo que yo barrunto. 330

Vi la noche mezclarse con el día;  
las arenas del hondo mar alzarse  
a la región del aire, entonces fría.

Todos los elementos vi turbarse:  
la tierra, el agua, el aire, y aun el fuego 335  
vi entre rompidas nubes azorarse.

Y, en medio deste gran desasosiego,  
llovían nubes de poetas llenas  
sobre el bajel, que se anegara luego,  
si no acudieran más de mil sirenas 340  
a dar de azotes a la gran borrasca,  
que hacía el saltarel por las entenas.

Una, que ser pensé Juana la Chasca,  
de dilatado vientre y luengo cuello,  
pintiparado a aquel de la tarasca, 345

se llegó a mí, y me dijo: «De un cabello  
deste bajel estaba la esperanza  
colgada, a no venir a socorrello.

Traemos, y no es burla, a la Bonanza,  
que estaba descuidada oyendo atenta 350  
los discursos de un cierto Sancho Panza».

En esto, sosegóse la tormenta,  
volvió tranquilo el mar, serenó el cielo,  
que al regañón el céfiro le ahuyenta.

Volví la vista, y vi en ligero vuelo 355  
una nube romper el aire claro,  
de la color del condensado yelo.

¡Oh maravilla nueva! ¡Oh caso raro!  
Vilo, y he de decillo, aunque se dude  
del hecho que por brújula declaro. 360

Lo que yo pude ver, lo que yo pude  
notar fue que la nube, dividida  
en dos mitades, a llover acude.

Quien ha visto la tierra prevenida  
con tal disposición que, cuando llueve 365  
(cosa ya averiguada y conocida),

de cada gota en un instante breve  
del polvo se levanta o sapo o rana,  
que a saltos o despacio el paso mueve,  
tal se imagine ver, ¡oh soberana 370  
virtud!, de cada gota de la nube  
saltar un bulto, aunque con forma humana.

Por no creer esta verdad estuve  
mil veces; pero vila con la vista,  
que entonces clara y sin legañas tuve. 375

Eran aquestos bultos de la lista  
pasada los poetas referidos,  
a cuya fuerza no hay quien la resista.

Unos por hombres buenos conocidos,  
otros de rumbo y hampo, y Dios es Cristo, 380  
poquitos bien y muchos mal vestidos.

Entre ellos parecióme de haber visto  
a don ANTONIO DE GALARZA el bravo,  
gentilhombre de Apolo y muy bienquisto.

El bajel se llenó de cabo a cabo, 385  
y su capacidad a nadie niega  
copioso asiento, que es lo más que alabo.

Llovió otra nube al gran LOPE DE VEGA,  
poeta insigne, a cuyo verso o prosa  
ninguno le aventaja, ni aun le llega. 390

Era cosa de ver maravillosa  
de los poetas la apretada enjambre,  
en recitar sus versos muy melosa:  
éste muerto de sed, aquél de hambre.  
Yo dije, viendo tantos, con voz alta: 395  
«¡Cuerpo de mí con tanta poetambre!»

Por tantas sobras conoció una falta  
Mercurio, y, acudiendo a remedialla,  
ligero en la mitad del bajel salta;  
y con una zaranda que allí halla, 400  
no sé si antigua o si de nuevo hecha,  
zarandó mil poetas de gramalla.

Los de capa y espada no desecha,  
y éstos zarandó dos mil y tantos;  
que fue de guilla entonces la cosecha: 405  
colábanse los buenos y los santos,  
y quedábanse arriba los granzones,  
más duros en sus versos que los cantos;  
y, sin que les valiesen las razones  
que en su disculpa daban, daba luego 410  
Mercurio al mar con ellos a montones.

Entre los arrojados, se oyó un ciego,  
que murmurando entre las ondas iba  
de Apolo con un pésete y reniego.

Un sastre, aunque en sus pies flojos estriba, 415  
abriendo con los brazos el camino,  
dijo: «¡Sucio es Apolo, así yo viva!»

Otro, que al parecer iba mohíno,  
con ser un zapatero de obra prima,  
dijo dos mil, no un solo desatino. 420

Trabaja un tundidor, suda y se anima  
por verse a la ribera conducido,  
que más la vida que la honra estima.

El escuadrón nadante, reducido  
a la marina, vuelve a la galera 425  
el rostro, con señales de ofendido;  
y uno por todos dijo: «Bien pudiera  
ese chocante embajador de Febo  
tratarnos bien, y no desta manera.

Mas oigan lo que digo: yo me atrevo 430  
a profanar del monte la grandeza  
con libros nuevos y en estilo nuevo».

Calló Mercurio, y a poner empieza  
con gran curiosidad seis camarines,  
dando a la gracia ilustre rancho y pieza. 435

De nuevo resonaron los clarines;  
y así, Mercurio, lleno de contento,  
sin darle mal agüero los delfines,  
remos al agua dio, velas al viento.

## Del Viaje del Parnaso, capítulo tercero

Eran los remos de la real galera  
de esdrújulos, y dellos compelida  
se deslizaba por el mar ligera.

Hasta el tope la vela iba tendida,  
hecha de muy delgados pensamientos, 5  
de varios lizos por amor tejida.

Soplaban dulces y amorosos vientos,  
todos en popa, y todos se mostraban  
al gran viaje solamente atentos.

Las sirenas en torno navegaban, 10  
dando empellones al bajel lozano,  
con cuya ayuda en vuelo le llevaban.

Semejaban las aguas del mar cano  
colchas encarrujadas, y hacían  
azules visos por el verde llano. 15

Todos los del bajel se entretenían:  
unos glosando pies dificultosos,  
otros cantaban, otros componían;

otros, de los tenidos por curiosos,  
referían sonetos, muchos hechos 20  
a diferentes casos amorosos;

otros, alfeñicados y deshechos  
en puro azúcar, con la voz süave,  
de su melifluidad muy satisfechos,  
en tono blando, sosegado y grave, 25  
églogas pastorales recitaban,

en quien la gala y la agudeza cabe;  
otros de sus señoras celebraban,  
en dulces versos, de la amada boca  
los escrementos que por ella echaban. 30

Tal hubo a quien amor así le toca,  
que alabó los riñones de su dama  
con gusto grande y no elegancia poca.

Uno cantó que la amorosa llama  
en mitad de las aguas le encendía, 35  
y como toro agarrochado brama.

Desta manera andaba la Poesía  
de en uno en otro, haciendo que hablase  
éste latín, aquél algarabía.

En esto, sesga la galera, vase 40  
rompiendo el mar con tanta ligereza,  
que el viento aun no consiente que la pase;  
y, en esto, descubrióse la grandeza  
de la escombrada playa de Valencia,  
por arte hermosa y por naturaleza. 45

Hizo luego de sí grata presencia  
el gran don LUIS FERRER, marcado el pecho  
de honor y el alma de divina ciencia;  
desembarcóse el dios, y fue derecho  
a darle cuatro mil y más abrazos, 50  
de su vista y su ayuda satisfecho.

Volvió la vista, y reiteró los lazos  
en don GUILLÉN DE CASTRO, que venía  
deseoso de verse en tales brazos.

CRISTÓBAL DE VIRUÉS se le seguía, 55  
con PEDRO DE AGUILAR, junta famosa  
de las que Turia en sus riberas cría.

No le pudo llegar más valerosa  
escuadra al gran Mercurio, ni él pudiera  
desearla mejor ni más honrosa. 60

Luego se descubrió por la ribera  
un tropel de gallardos valencianos,  
que a ver venían la sin par galera;  
todos con instrumentos en las manos  
de estilos y librillos de memoria, 65  
por bizarría y por ingenio ufanos,  
codiciosos de hallarse en la vitoria,  
que ya tenían por segura y cierta,  
de las heces del mundo y de la escoria.

Pero Mercurio les cerró la puerta, 70  
digo, no consintió que se embarcasen,  
y el porqué no lo dijo, aunque se acierta.

Y fue, porque temió que no se alzasen,  
siendo tantos y tales, con Parnaso,  
y nuevo imperio y mando en él fundasen. 75

En esto, viose con brïoso paso  
venir al magno ANDRÉS REY DE ARTIEDA,  
no por la edad descaecido o laso;  
hicieron todos espaciosa rueda,  
y, cogiéndole en medio, le embarcaron, 80  
más rico de valor que de moneda.

Al momento las áncoras alzaron,  
y las velas, ligadas a la antena,  
los grumetes apriesa desataron.

De nuevo por el aire claro suena 85  
el son de los clarines, y de nuevo  
vuelve a su oficio cada cual sirena.

Miró el bajel por entre nubes Febo,  
y dijo en voz que pudo ser oída:  
«Aquí mi gusto y mi esperanza llevo». 90

De remos y sirenas impelida,  
la galera se deja atrás el viento,  
con milagrosa y próspera corrida.

Leíase en los rostros el contento  
que llevaban los sabios pasajeros, 95  
durable por no ser nada violento.

Unos por el calor iban en cueros;  
otros, por no tener godescas galas,  
en traje se vistieron de romeros.

Hendía en tanto las neptúneas salas 100  
la galera, del modo como hiende  
la grulla el aire con tendidas alas.

En fin, llegamos donde el mar se estiende  
y ensancha y forma el golfo de Narbona,  
que de ningunos vientos se defiende. 105

Del gran Mercurio la cabal persona,  
sobre seis resmas de papel sentada,  
iba con cetro y con real corona;

cuando una nube, al parecer preñada,  
parió cuatro poetas en crujía, 110  
o los llovió (razón más concertada).

Fue el uno aquél de quien Apolo fía  
su honra: JUAN LUIS DE CASANATE,  
poeta insigne de mayor cuantía;

el mismo Apolo de su ingenio trate, 115  
él le alabe, él le premie y recompense,  
que el alabarle yo sería dislate.

Al segundo llovido, el uticense  
Catón no le igualó, ni tiene Febo  
que tanto por él mire ni en él piense; 120  
del contador GASPAR DE BARRIONUEVO,  
mal podrá el corto flaco ingenio mío  
loar el suyo así como yo debo.

Llenó del gran bajel el gran vacío  
el gran FRANCISCO DE RIOJA, al punto 125  
que saltó de la nube en el navío.

A CRISTÓBAL DE MESA vi allí junto  
a los pies de Mercurio, dando fama  
a Apolo, siendo dél propio trasumpto.

A la gavia un grumete se encarama, 130  
y dijo a voces: «La ciudad se muestra  
que Génova, del dios Jano, se llama».

«Déjese la ciudad a la siniestra  
mano», dijo Mercurio; «el bajel vaya,  
y siga su derrota por la diestra». 135

Hacer al Tíber vimos blanca raya  
dentro del mar, habiendo ya pasado  
la ancha, romana y peligrosa playa.

De lejos viose el aire condensado  
del humo que el Estrómbalo vomita, 140  
de azufre y llamas y de horror formado.

Huyen la isla infame, y solicita  
el süave poniente así el viaje,  
que lo acorta, lo allana y facilita.

Vímonos en un punto en el paraje 145  
do la nutriz de Eneas piadoso  
hizo el forzoso y último pasaje.

Vimos desde allí a poco el más famoso  
monte que encierra en sí nuestro emisfero,  
más gallardo a la vista y más hermoso; 150



las cenizas de Títiro y Sincero  
están en él, y puede ser por esto  
nombrado entre los montes por primero.

Luego se descubrió donde echó el resto  
de su poder Naturaleza, amiga 155  
de formar de otros muchos un compuesto.

Viose la pesadumbre sin fatiga  
de la bella Parténope, sentada  
a la orilla del mar, que sus pies liga, -21r-  
de castillos y torres coronada, 160  
por fuerte y por hermosa en igual grado  
tenida, conocida y estimada.

Mandóme el del alígero calzado  
que me aprestase y fuese luego a tierra  
a dar a los LUPERCIOS un recado, 165  
en que les diese cuenta de la guerra  
temida, y que a venir les persuadiese  
al duro y fiero asalto, al ¡cierra, cierra!

«Señor», le respondí, «si acaso hubiese  
otro que la embajada les llevase, 170  
que más grato a los dos hermanos fuese  
que yo no soy, sé bien que negociase  
mejor». Dijo Mercurio: «No te entiendo,  
y has de ir antes que el tiempo más se pase».

«Que no me han de escuchar estoy temiendo», 175  
le repliqué; «y así, el ir yo no importa,  
puesto que en todo obedecer pretendo.

Que no sé quién me dice y quién me exhorta  
que tienen para mí, a lo que imagino,  
la voluntad, como la vista, corta. 180

Que si esto así no fuera, este camino  
con tan pobre recámara no hiciera,  
ni diera en un tan hondo desatino.

Pues si alguna promesa se cumpliera  
de aquellas muchas que al partir me hicieron, 185  
lléveme Dios si entrara en tu galera.

Mucho esperé, si mucho prometieron,  
mas podía ser que ocupaciones nuevas  
les obligue a olvidar lo que dijeron.

Muchos, señor, en la galera llevas 190  
que te podrán sacar el pie del lodo:  
parte, y excusa de hacer más pruebas».  
«Ninguno», dijo, «me hable dese modo,  
que si me desembarco y los embisto,  
voto a Dios, que me traiga al Conde y todo. 195  
Con estos dos famosos me enemisto,  
que, habiendo levantado a la Poesía  
al buen punto en que está, como se ha visto,  
quieren con perezosa tiranía  
alzarse, como dicen, a su mano 200  
con la ciencia que a ser divinos guía.  
¡Por el solio de Apolo soberano  
juro...! Y no digo más». Y, ardiendo en ira,  
se echó a las barbas una y otra mano,  
y prosiguió diciendo: «El dotor MIRA, 205  
apostaré, si no lo manda el Conde,  
que también en sus puntos se retira.  
Señor galán, parezca: ¿a qué se asconde?  
Pues a fee, por llevarle, si él no gusta,  
que ni le busque, aseche ni le ronde. 210  
¿Es esta empresa acaso tan injusta  
que se esquiven de hallar en ella cuantos  
tienen conciencia limitada y justa?  
¿Carece el cielo de poetas santos,  
puesto que brote a cada paso el suelo 215  
poetas, que lo son tantos y tantos?  
¿No se oyen sacros himnos en el cielo?  
¿La arpa de David allá no suena,  
causando nuevo accidental consuelo?  
¡Fuera melindres! ¡Ícese la antena, 220  
que llegue al tope!» Y luego obedecido  
fue de la chusma, sobre buenas buena.  
Poco tiempo pasó, cuando un ruido  
se oyó, que los oídos atronaba,  
y era de perros áspero ladrado. 225  
Mercurio se turbó, la gente estaba  
suspensa al triste son, y en cada pecho  
el corazón más válido temblaba.

En esto descubrióse el corto estrecho  
que Scila y que Caribdis espantosas 230  
tan temeroso con su furia han hecho.

«Estas olas que veis presuntuosas  
en visitar las nubes de contino,  
y aun de tocar el cielo codiciosas,  
venciólas el prudente peregrino 235  
amante de Calipso, al tiempo cuando  
hizo», dijo Mercurio, «este camino.

Su prudencia nosotros imitando,  
echaremos al mar en qué se ocupen,  
en tanto que el bajel pasa volando, 240  
que en tanto que ellas tasquen, roan, chupen  
el mísero que al mar ha de entregarse,  
seguro estoy que el paso desocupen.

Miren si puede en la galera hallarse  
algún poeta desdichado, acaso, 245  
que a las fieras gargantas pueda darse».

Buscáronle y hallaron a LOFRASO,  
poeta militar, sardo, que estaba  
desmayado a un rincón, marchito y laso;  
que a sus *Diez libros de Fortuna* andaba 250  
añadiendo otros diez, y el tiempo escoge  
que más desocupado se mostraba.

Gritó la chusma toda: «¡Al mar se arroje;  
vaya Lofraso al mar sin resistencia!»  
«Por Dios», dijo Mercurio, «que me enoje. 255

¿Cómo, y no será cargo de conciencia,  
y grande, echar al mar tanta poesía,  
puesto que aquí nos hunda su inclemencia?

Viva Lofraso, en tanto que dé al día  
Apolo luz, y en tanto que los hombres 260  
tengan discreta, alegre fantasía.

Tócante a ti, ¡oh Lofraso!, los renombres  
y epítetos de agudo y de sincero,  
y gusto que mi cómitre te nombres».

Esto dijo Mercurio al caballero, 265  
el cual en la crujía en pie se puso  
con un rebenque despiadado y fiero.

Creo que de sus versos le compuso,  
y no sé cómo fue, que, en un momento  
(o ya el cielo, o Lofraso lo dispuso), 270  
salimos del estrecho a salvamento,  
sin arrojar al mar poeta alguno:  
¡tanto del sardo fue el merecimiento!

Mas luego otro peligro, otro importuno  
temor amenazó, si no gritara 275  
Mercurio cual jamás gritó ninguno,  
diciendo al timonero: «¡A orza, para,  
amáinese de golpe!» Y todo a un punto  
se hizo, y el peligro se repara.

«Estos montes que veis, que están tan junto 280  
son los que Acroceraunos son llamados,  
de infame nombre, como yo barrunto».

Asieron de los remos los honrados,  
los tiernos, los melifluos, los godescos,  
y los de a cantimplora acostumbrados; 285

los fríos los asieron y los frescos;  
asiéronlos también los calurosos,  
y los de calzas largas y greguescos;  
del sopraestante daño temerosos,  
todos a una la galera empujan 290  
con flacos y con brazos poderosos.

Debajo del bajel se somurmulan  
las sirenas, que dél no se apartaron,  
y a sí mismas en fuerzas sobrepujan;  
y en un pequeño espacio la llevaron 295  
a vista de Corfú, y a mano diestra  
la isla inexpugnable se dejaron;  
y, dando la galera a la siniestra,  
discurría de Grecia las riberas,  
adonde el cielo su hermosura muestra. 300

Mostrábanse las olas lisonjeras,  
impeliendo el bajel süavemente,  
como burlando con alegres veras.

Y luego, al parecer por el Oriente  
rayando el rubio sol nuestro horizonte 305  
con rayas rojas, hebras de su frente,

gritó un grumete y dijo: «El monte, el monte;  
el monte se descubre donde tiene  
su buen rocín el gran Belorofonte».

Por el monte se arroja, y a pie viene 310  
Apolo a recebirnos. «Yo lo creo»,  
dijo Lofraso, «y llega a la Hipocrene.

Yo desde aquí columbro, miro y veo  
que se andan solazando entre unas matas  
las Musas con dulcísimo recreo: 315

unas antiguas son, otras novatas,  
y todas con ligero paso y tardo  
andan las cinco en pie, las cuatro a gatas».

«Si tú tal ves», dijo Mercurio, «¡oh sardo  
poeta!, que me corten las orejas, 320  
o me tengan los hombres por bastardo.

Dime: ¿por qué algún tanto no te alejas  
de la ignorancia, pobretón, y adviertes  
lo que cantan tus rimas en tus quejas?

¿Por qué con tus mentiras nos diviertes 325  
de recibir a Apolo cual se debe,  
por haber mejorado vuestras suertes?»

En esto, mucho más que el viento leve,  
bajó el lucido Apolo a la marina,  
a pie, porque en su carro no se atreve. 330

Quitó los rayos de la faz divina,  
mostróse en calzas y en jubón vistoso,  
porque dar gusto a todos determina.

Seguíale detrás un numeroso  
escuadrón de doncellas bailadoras, 335  
aunque pequeñas, de ademán bríoso.

Supe poco después que estas señoras,  
sanas las más, las menos malparadas,  
las del tiempo y del sol eran las Horas:

las medio rotas eran las menguadas; 340  
las sanas, las felices, y con esto  
eran todas en todo apresuradas.

Apolo luego con alegre gesto  
abrazó a los soldados que esperaba  
para la alta ocasión que se ha propuesto; 345

y no de un mismo modo acariciaba  
a todos, porque alguna diferencia  
hacía con los que él más se alegraba;  
que a los de señoría y excelencia  
nuevos abrazos dio, razones dijo, 350  
en que guardó decoro y preeminencia.

Entre ellos abrazó a don JUAN DE ARGUIJO,  
que no sé en qué, o cómo, o cuándo hizo  
tan áspero viaje y tan prolijo;

con él a su deseo satisfizo 355  
Apolo, y confirmó su pensamiento:  
mandó, vedó, quitó, hizo y deshizo.

Hecho, pues, el sin par recebimiento,  
do se halló don LUIS DE BARAHONA,  
llevado allí por su merecimiento, 360  
del siempre verde lauro una corona  
le ofrece Apolo en su intención, y un vaso  
del agua de Castalia y de Helicon;

y luego vuelve el majestoso paso,  
y el escuadrón pensado y de repente 365  
le sigue por las faldas del Parnaso.

Llegóse, en fin, a la Castalia fuente,  
y, en viéndola, infinitos se arrojaron,  
sedientos, al cristal de su corriente:

unos no solamente se hartaron, 370  
sino que pies y manos y otras cosas  
algo más indecentes se lavaron;  
otros, más advertidos, las sabrosas  
aguas gustaron poco a poco, dando  
espacio al gusto, a pausas melindrosas. 375

El brindez y el caraos se puso en bando,  
porque los más de bruces, y no a sorbos,  
el süave licor fueron gustando;

de ambas manos hacían vasos corvos  
otros, y algunos de la boca al agua 380  
temían de hallar cien mil estorbos.

Poco a poco la fuente se desagua,  
y pasa en los estómagos bebientes,  
y aún no se apaga de su sed la fragua.

Mas díjoles Apolo: «Otras dos fuentes 385  
aún quedan, Aganipe e Hipocrene,  
ambas sabrosas, ambas excelentes;  
cada cual de licor dulce y perene,  
todas de calidad aumentativa  
del alto ingenio que a gustarlas viene». 390

Beben, y suben por el monte arriba,  
por entre palmas y entre cedros altos  
y entre árboles pacíficos de oliva;  
de gusto llenos y de angustia faltos,  
siguiendo a Apolo el escuadrón camina, 395  
unos a pedicoj, otros a saltos.

Al pie sentado de una antigua encina,  
vi a ALONSO DE LEDESMA, componiendo  
una canción angélica y divina;

conocíle, y a él me fui corriendo 400  
con los brazos abiertos como amigo,  
pero no se movió con el estruendo.

«¿No ves», me dijo Apolo, «que consigo  
no está Ledesma agora? ¿No ves claro  
que está fuera de sí y está conmigo?» 405

A la sombra de un mirto, al verde amparo,  
JERÓNIMO DE CASTRO seesteaba,  
varón de ingenio peregrino y raro;  
un motete imagino que cantaba  
con voz süave; yo quedé admirado 410  
de verle allí, porque en Madrid quedaba.

Apolo me entendió y dijo: «Un soldado  
como éste no era bien que se quedara  
entre el ocio y el sueño sepultado.

Yo le truje, y sé cómo, que a mi rara 415  
potencia no la impide otra ninguna,  
ni inconveniente alguno la repara».

En esto, se llegaba la oportuna  
hora, a mi parecer, de dar sustento  
al estómago pobre, y más si ayuna. 420

Pero no le pasó por pensamiento  
a Delio, que el ejército conduce,  
satisfacer al mísero hambriento.

Primero a un jardín rico nos reduce,  
donde el poder de la Naturaleza 425  
y el de la industria más campea y luce.

Tuvieron los Hespérides belleza  
menor; no le igualaron los Pensiles  
en sitio, en hermosura y en grandeza;  
en su comparación, se muestran viles 430  
los de Alcinoos, en cuyas alabanzas  
se han ocupado ingenios bien sotiles.

No sujeto del tiempo a las mudanzas,  
que todo el año primavera ofrece  
frutos en posesión, no en esperanzas, 435

Naturaleza y arte allí parece  
andar en competencia, y está en duda  
cuál vence de las dos, cuál más merece.

Muéstrase balbuciente y casi muda,  
si le alaba, la lengua más experta, 440  
de adulación y de mentir desnuda.

Junto con ser jardín, era una huerta,  
un soto, un bosque, un prado, un valle ameno,  
que en todos estos títulos concierta,  
de tanta gracia y hermosura lleno, 445  
que una parte del cielo parecía  
el todo del bellísimo terreno.

Alto en el sitio alegre Apolo hacía,  
y allí mandó que todos se sentasen  
a tres horas después de mediodía; 450  
y porque los asientos señalasen  
el ingenio y valor de cada uno,  
y unos con otros no se embarazasen,  
a despecho y pesar del importuno  
ambicioso deseo, les dio asiento 455  
en el sitio y lugar más oportuno.

Llegaban los laureles casi a ciento,  
a cuya sombra y troncos se sentaron  
algunos de aquel número contento;  
otros los de las palmas ocuparon; 460  
de los mirtos y yedras y los robles  
también varios poetas albergaron.



Puesto que humildes, eran de los nobles  
los asientos cual tronos levantados,  
porque tú, ¡oh Envidia!, aquí tu rabia dobles. 465

En fin, primero fueron ocupados  
los troncos de aquel ancho circüito,  
para honrar a poetas dedicados,  
antes que yo en el número infinito  
hallase asiento; y así, en pie quedéme, 470  
despechado, colérico y marchito.

Dije entre mí: «¿Es posible que se estreme  
en perseguirme la Fortuna airada,  
que ofende a muchos y a ninguno teme?»

Y, volviéndome a Apolo, con turbada 475  
lengua le dije lo que oirá el que gusta  
saber, pues la tercera es acabada,  
la cuarta parte desta empresa justa.

## Del Viaje del Parnaso, capítulo cuarto

Suele la indignación componer versos;  
pero si el indignado es algún tonto,  
ellos tendrán su todo de perversos.

De mí yo no sé más sino que prompto  
me hallé para decir en tercia rima 5  
lo que no dijo el desterrado a Ponto;  
y así le dije a Delio: «No se estima,  
señor, del vulgo vano el que te sigue  
y al árbol sacro del laurel se arrima;  
la envidia y la ignorancia le persigue, 10  
y así, envidiado siempre y perseguido,  
el bien que espera por jamás consigue.

Yo corté con mi ingenio aquel vestido  
con que al mundo la hermosa *Galatea*  
salió para librarse del olvido. 15

Soy por quien *La Confusa*, nada fea,  
pareció en los teatros admirable,  
si esto a su fama es justo se le crea.

Yo, con estilo en parte razonable,  
he compuesto comedias que en su tiempo 20  
tuvieron de lo grave y de lo afable.

Yo he dado en *Don Quijote* pasatiempo  
al pecho melancólico y mohíno,  
en cualquiera sazón, en todo tiempo.

Yo he abierto en mis *Novelas* un camino 25  
por do la lengua castellana puede  
mostrar con propiedad un desatino.

Yo soy aquel que en la invención excede  
a muchos; y al que falta en esta parte,  
es fuerza que su fama falta quede. 30

Desde mis tiernos años amé el arte  
dulce de la agradable poesía,  
y en ella procuré siempre agradarte.

Nunca voló la pluma humilde mía  
por la región satírica: bajeza 35  
que a infames premios y desgracias guía.

Yo el soneto compuse que así empieza,  
por honra principal de mis escritos:  
*¡Voto a Dios, que me espanta esta grandeza!*

Yo he compuesto romances infinitos, 40  
y el de *Los celos* es aquel que estimo,  
entre otros que los tengo por malditos.

Por esto me congojo y me lastimo  
de verme solo en pie, sin que se aplique  
árbol que me conceda algún arrimo. 45

Yo estoy, cual decir suelen, puesto a pique  
para dar a la estampa al gran *Pirsiles*,  
con que mi nombre y obras multiplique.

Yo, en pensamientos castos y sotiles,  
dispuestos en sonetos de a docena, 50  
he honrado tres sujetos fregoniles.

También, al par de Filis, mi Silena  
resonó por las selvas, que escucharon  
más de una y otra alegre cantilena,  
y en dulces varias rimas se llevaron 55  
mis esperanzas los ligeros vientos,  
que en ellos y en la arena se sembraron.

Tuve, tengo y tendré los pensamientos,  
merced al cielo que a tal bien me inclina,  
de toda adulación libres y esentos. 60

Nunca pongo los pies por do camina  
la mentira, la fraude y el engaño,  
de la santa virtud total rüina.

Con mi corta fortuna no me ensaño,  
aunque por verme en pie como me veo, 65  
y en tal lugar, pondero así mi daño.

Con poco me contento, aunque deseo  
mucho». A cuyas razones enojadas,  
con estas blandas respondió Timbreo:

«Vienen las malas suertes atrasadas, 70  
y toman tan de lejos la corriente,  
que son temidas, pero no escusadas.

El bien les viene a algunos de repente,  
a otros poco a poco y sin pensallo,  
y el mal no guarda estilo diferente. 75

El bien que está adquirido, conservallo  
con maña, diligencia y con cordura,  
es no menor virtud que el granjeallo.

Tú mismo te has forjado tu ventura,  
y yo te he visto alguna vez con ella, 80  
pero en el imprudente poco dura.

Mas, si quieres salir de tu querella,  
alegre y no confuso, y consolado,  
dobla tu capa y siéntate sobre ella;  
que tal vez suele un venturoso estado, 85  
cuando le niega sin razón la suerte,  
honrar más merecido que alcanzado».

«Bien parece, señor, que no se advierte»,  
le respondí, «que yo no tengo capa».  
Él dijo: «Aunque sea así, gusto de verte. 90

La virtud es un manto con que tapa  
y cubre su indecencia la estrechez,  
que esenta y libre de la envidia escapa».

Incliné al gran consejo la cabeza;  
quedéme en pie, que no hay asiento bueno 95  
si el favor no le labra o la riqueza.

Alguno murmuró, viéndome ajeno  
del honor que pensó se me debía,  
del planeta de luz y virtud lleno.

En esto pareció que cobró el día 100  
un nuevo resplandor, y el aire oyóse  
herir de una dulcísima armonía.

Y, en esto, por un lado descubrióse  
del sitio un escuadrón de ninfas bellas,  
con que infinito el rubio dios holgóse. 105

Venía en fin y por remate dellas  
una resplandeciendo, como hace  
el sol ante la luz de las estrellas;  
la mayor hermosura se deshace  
ante ella, y ella sola resplandece 110  
sobre todas, y alegre y satisface.

Bien así semejaba cual se ofrece  
entre líquidas perlas y entre rosas  
la Aurora que despunta y amanece;  
la rica vestidura, las preciosas 115  
joyas que la adornaban, competían  
con las que suelen ser maravillosas.

Las ninfas que al querer suyo asistían,  
en el gallardo brío y bello aspecto,  
las artes liberales parecían; 120  
todas con amoroso y tierno afecto,  
con las ciencias más claras y escondidas,  
le guardaban santísimo respecto;  
mostraban que en servirla eran servidas,  
y que por su ocasión de todas gentes 125  
en más veneración eran tenidas.

Su influjo y su reflujo las corrientes  
del mar y su profundo le mostraban,  
y el ser padre de ríos y de fuentes.

Las yerbas su virtud la presentaban; 130  
los árboles, sus frutos y sus flores;  
las piedras, el valor que en sí encerraban.

El santo amor, castísimos amores;  
la dulce paz, su quiétude sabrosa;  
la guerra amarga, todos sus rigores. 135

Mostrábasele clara la espaciosa  
vía por donde el sol hace continuo  
su natural carrera y la forzosa.

La inclinación o fuerza del destino,  
y de qué estrellas consta y se compone, 140  
y cómo influye este planeta o signo,  
todo lo sabe, todo lo dispone  
la santa y hermosísima doncella,  
que admiración como alegría pone.

Preguntéle al parlero si en la bella 145  
ninfa alguna deidad se disfrazaba  
que fuese justo el adorar en ella;  
porque en el rico adorno que mostraba,  
y en el gallardo ser que descubría,  
del cielo y no del suelo semejaba. 150

«Descubres», respondió, «tu bobería;  
que ha que la tratas infinitos años,  
y no conoces que es la Poesía».

«Siempre la he visto envuelta en pobres paños»,  
le repliqué; «jamás la vi compuesta 155  
con adornos tan ricos y tamaños;  
parece que la he visto descompuesta,  
vestida de color de primavera  
en los días de cutio y los de fiesta».

«Esta, que es la Poesía verdadera, 160  
la grave, la discreta, la elegante»,  
dijo Mercurio, «la alta y la sincera,  
siempre con vestidura rozagante  
se muestra en cualquier acto que se halla,  
cuando a su profesión es importante. 165

Nunca se inclina o sirve a la canalla  
trovadora, maligna y trafalmeja,  
que en lo que más ignora menos calla.

Hay otra falsa, ansiosa, torpe y vieja,  
amiga de sonaja y morteruelo, 170  
que ni tabanco ni taberna deja;

no se alza dos ni aun un coto del suelo,  
grande amiga de bodas y bautismos,  
larga de manos, corta de cerbelo.

Tómanla por momentos parasismos; 175  
no acierta a pronunciar, y si pronuncia,  
absurdos hace y forma solecismos.

Baco, donde ella está, su gusto anuncia,  
y ella derrama en coplas el poleo,  
con pa y vereda, y el mastranzo y juncia. 180

Pero aquesta que ves es el aseo,  
la gala de los cielos y la tierra,  
con quien tienen las Musas su bureo;  
ella abre los secretos y los cierra,  
toca y apunta de cualquiera ciencia 185  
la superficie y lo mejor que encierra.

Mira con más ahínco su presencia:  
verás cifrada en ella la abundancia  
de lo que en bueno tiene la excelencia;

moran con ella en una misma estancia 190  
la divina y moral filosofía,  
el estilo más puro y la elegancia;  
puede pintar en la mitad del día  
la noche, y en la noche más oscura  
el alba bella que las perlas cría; 195  
el curso de los ríos apresura,  
y le detiene; el pecho a furia incita,  
y le reduce luego a más blandura;  
por mitad del rigor se precipita  
de las lucientes armas contrapuestas, 200  
y da vitorias y vitorias quita.

Verás cómo le prestan las florestas  
sus sombras, y sus cantos los pastores,  
el mal sus lutos y el placer sus fiestas,  
perlas el Sur, Sabea sus olores, 205  
el oro Tíbar, Hibla su dulzura,  
galas Milán y Lusitania amores.

En fin, ella es la cifra do se apura  
lo provechoso, honesto y deleitable,  
partes con quien se aumenta la ventura. 210

Es de ingenio tan vivo y admirable,  
que a veces toca en puntos que suspenden,  
por tener no sé qué de inescrutable.

Alábanse los buenos, y se ofenden  
los malos con su voz, y destos tales 215  
unos la adoran, otros no la entienden.

Son sus obras heroicas inmortales;  
las líricas, süaves de manera  
que vuelven en divinas las mortales.

Si alguna vez se muestra lisonjera, 220  
es con tanta elegancia y artificio,  
que no castigo sino premio espera.

Gloria de la virtud, pena del vicio  
son sus acciones, dando al mundo en ellas  
de su alto ingenio y su bondad indicio». 225

En esto estaba, cuando por las bellas  
ventanas de jazmines y de rosas  
(que Amor estaba, a lo que entiendo, en ellas),

divisé seis personas religiosas,  
al parecer de honroso y grave aspecto, 230  
de luengas togas, limpias y pomposas.

Preguntéle a Mercurio: «¿Por qué efecto  
aquéllos no parecen y se encubren,  
y muestran ser personas de respecto?»

A lo que él respondió: «No se descubren, 235  
por guardar el decoro al alto estado  
que tienen, y así el rostro todos cubren».

«¿Quién son», le repliqué, «si es que te es dado  
decirlo?» Respondióme: «No, por cierto,  
porque Apolo lo tiene así mandado». 240

«¿No son poetas?» «Sí». «Pues yo no acierto  
a pensar por qué causa se desprecian  
de salir con su ingenio a campo abierto.

¿Para qué se embobecen y se anecian,  
escondiendo el talento que da el cielo 245  
a los que más de ser suyos se precian?

¡Aquí del rey! ¿Qué es esto? ¿Qué recelo  
o celo les impele a no mostrarse  
sin miedo ante la turba vil del suelo?

¿Puede ninguna ciencia compararse 250  
con esta universal de la Poesía,  
que límites no tiene do encerrarse?

Pues, siendo esto verdad, saber querría,  
entre los de la carda, cómo se usa  
este miedo, o melindre, o hipocresía. 255

Hace monseñor versos y rehúsa  
que no se sepan, y él los comunica  
con muchos, y a la lengua ajena acusa;  
y más que, siendo buenos, multiplica  
la fama su valor, y al dueño canta 260  
con voz de gloria y de alabanza rica.

¿Qué mucho, pues, si no se le levanta  
testimonio a un pontífice poeta,  
que digan que lo es? Por Dios, que espanta.

Por vida de Lanfusa la discreta, 265  
que si no se me dice quién son estos  
togados de bonete y de muceta,



que con trazas y modos descompuestos  
tengo de reducir a behetría  
estos tan sosegados y compuestos». 270

«Por Dios», dijo Mercurio, «y a fee mía,  
que no puedo decirlo, y si lo digo,  
tengo de dar la culpa a tu porfía».

«Dilo, señor, que desde aquí me obligo  
de no decir que tú me lo dijiste», 275  
le dije, «por la fe de buen amigo».

Él dijo: «No nos cayan en el chiste,  
llégate a mí, dirételo al oído,  
pero creo que hay más de los que viste:

aquél que has visto allí del cuello erguido, 280  
lozano, rozagante y de buen talle,  
de honestidad y de valor vestido,

es el doctor FRANCISCO SÁNCHEZ; dalle  
puede, cual debe, Apolo la alabanza,  
que pueda sobre el cielo levantalte; 285

y aun a más su famoso ingenio alcanza,  
pues en las verdes hojas de sus días  
nos da de santos frutos esperanza.

Aquél que en elevadas fantasías  
y en éstasis sabrosos se regala, 290  
y tanto imita las acciones mías,

es el maestro HORTENSIO, que la gala  
se lleva de la más rara elocuencia  
que en las aulas de Atenas se señala;

su natural ingenio con la ciencia 295  
y ciencias aprendidas le levanta  
al grado que le nombra la excelencia.

Aquél de amarillez marchita y santa,  
que le encubre de lauro aquella rama  
y aquella hojosa y acopada planta, 300

fray JUAN BAPTISTA CAPATAZ se llama:  
descalzo y pobre, pero bien vestido  
con el adorno que le da la fama.

Aquél que del rigor fiero de olvido  
libra su nombre con eterno gozo, 305  
y es de Apolo y las Musas bien querido,

anciano en el ingenio y nunca mozo,  
humanista divino, es, según pienso,  
el insigne doctor ANDRÉS DEL POZO.

Un licenciado de un ingenio inmenso 310  
es aquél, y, aunque en traje mercenario,  
como a señor le dan las Musas censo;

RAMÓN se llama, auxilio necesario  
con que Delio se esfuerza y ve rendidas  
las obstinadas fuerzas del contrario. 315

El otro, cuyas sienes ves ceñidas  
con los brazos de Dafne en triunfo honroso,  
sus glorias tiene en Alcalá esculpidas;

en su ilustre teatro vitorioso  
le nombra el cisne, en canto no funesto, 320  
siempre el primero, como a más famoso;

a los donaires suyos echó el resto  
con propiedades al gorrón debidas,  
por haberlos compuesto o descompuesto.

Aquestas seis personas referidas, 325  
como están en divinos puestos puestas,  
y en sacra religión constituidas,

tienen las alabanzas por molestas  
que les dan por poetas, y holgarían  
llevar la loa sin el nombre a cuestras». 330

«¿Por qué», le pregunté, «señor, porfían  
los tales a escribir y dar noticia  
de los versos que paren y que crían?

También tiene el ingenio su codicia,  
y nunca la alabanza se desprecia 335  
que al bueno se le debe de justicia.

Aquél que de poeta no se precia,  
¿para qué escribe versos y los dice?  
¿Por qué desdeña lo que más aprecia?

Jamás me contenté ni satisface 340  
de hipócritas melindres: llanamente  
quise alabanzas de lo que bien hice».

«Con todo, quiere Apolo que esta gente  
religiosa se tenga aquí secreta»,  
dijo el dios que presume de elocuente. 345

Oyóse, en esto, el son de una corneta,  
y un «¡trapa, trapa, aparta, afuera, afuera,  
que viene un gallardísimo poeta!»

Volví la vista y vi por la ladera  
del monte un postillón y un caballero 350  
correr, como se dice, a la ligera;

servía el postillón de pregonero,  
mucho más que de guía, a cuyas voces  
en pie se puso el escuadrón entero.

Preguntóme Mercurio: «¿No conoces 355  
quién es este gallardo, este brío?   
Imagino que ya le reconoces».

«Bien sé», le respondí, «que es el famoso  
gran don SANCHO DE LEIVA, cuya espada  
y pluma harán a Delio venturoso; 360

venceráse sin duda esta jornada  
con tal socorro». Y, en el mismo instante,  
cosa que parecía imaginada,

otro favor no menos importante  
para el caso temido se nos muestra, 365  
de ingenio y fuerzas y valor bastante:

una tropa gentil por la siniestra  
parte del monte se descubre, ¡oh cielos,  
que dais de vuestra providencia muestra!

Aquel discreto JUAN DE VASCONCELOS 370  
venía delante en un caballo bayo,  
dando a las musas lusitanas celos.

Tras él, el capitán PEDRO TAMAYO  
venía, y, aunque enfermo de la gota,  
fue al enemigo asombro, fue desmayo; 375

que por él se vio en fuga y puesto en rota,  
que en los dudosos trances de la guerra  
su ingenio admira y su valor se nota.

También llegaron a la rica tierra,  
puestos debajo de una blanca seña, 380  
por la parte derecha de la sierra,

otros, de quien tomó luego reseña  
Apolo; y era dellos el primero  
el joven don FERNANDO DE LODEÑA,

poeta primerizo, insigne empero, 385  
en cuyo ingenio Apolo deposita  
sus glorias para el tiempo venidero.

Con majestad real, con inaudita  
pompa llegó, y al pie del monte para  
quien los bienes del monte solicita: 390  
el licenciado fue JUAN DE VERGARA  
el que llegó, con quien la turba ilustre  
en sus vecinos miedos se repara,

de Esculapio y de Apolo gloria y lustre,  
si no, dígallo el santo bien partido, 395  
y su fama la misma envidia ilustre.

Con él, fue con aplauso recibido  
el docto JUAN ANTONIO DE HERRERA,  
que puso en fil el desigual partido.

¡Oh, quién con lengua en nada lisonjera, 400  
sino con puro afecto en grande exceso,  
dos que llegaron alabar pudiera!

Pero no es de mis hombros este peso:  
fueron los que llegaron los famosos,  
los dos maestros CALVO y VALDIVIESO. 405

Luego se descubrió por los undosos  
llanos del mar una pequeña barca  
impelida de remos presurosos;

llegó, y al punto della desembarca  
el gran don JUAN DE ARGOTE Y DE GAMBOA, 410  
en compañía de don DIEGO ABARCA,

sujetos dignos de incesable loa;  
y don DIEGO JIMÉNEZ Y DE ANCISO  
dio un salto a tierra desde la alta proa.

En estos tres la gala y el aviso 415  
cifró cuanto de gusto en sí contienen,  
como su ingenio y obras dan aviso.

Con JUAN LÓPEZ DEL VALLE otros dos vienen  
juntos allí, y es PAMONÉS el uno,  
con quien las Musas ojeriza tienen, 420

porque pone sus pies por do ninguno  
los puso, y con sus nuevas fantasías  
mucho más que agradable es importuno.

De lejas tierras por incultas vías  
llegó el bravo irlandés don JUAN BATEO, 425  
Jerjes nuevo en memoria en nuestros días.

Vuelvo la vista, a MANTÜANO veo,  
que tiene al gran VELASCO por mecenas,  
y ha sido acertadísimo su empleo;

dejarán estos dos en las ajenas 430  
tierras, como en las propias, dilatados  
sus nombres, que tú, Apolo, así lo ordenas.

Por entre dos fructíferos collados  
(¿habrá quien esto crea, aunque lo entienda?)  
de palmas y laureles coronados, 435

el grave aspecto del abad MALUENDA  
pareció, dando al monte luz y gloria  
y esperanzas de triunfo en la contienda;

pero, ¿de qué enemigos la vitoria  
no alcanzará un ingenio tan florido 440  
y una bondad tan digna de memoria?

Don ANTONIO GENTIL DE VARGAS, pido  
espacio para verte, que llegaste  
de gala y arte y de valor vestido;

y, aunque de patria ginovés, mostraste 445  
ser en las musas castellanas docto,  
tanto, que al escuadrón todo admiraste.

Desde el indio apartado del remoto  
mundo, llegó mi amigo MONTESDOCA,  
y el que anudó de Arauco el nudo roto; 450

dijo Apolo a los dos: «A entrambos toca  
defender esta vuestra rica estancia  
de la canalla de vergüenza poca,

la cual, de error armada y de arrogancia,  
quiere canonizar y dar renombre 455  
inmortal y divino a la ignorancia;

que tanto puede la afición que un hombre  
tiene a sí mismo, que, ignorante siendo,  
de buen poeta quiere alcanzar nombre».

En esto, otro milagro, otro estupendo 460  
prodigio se descubre en la marina,  
que en pocos versos declarar pretendo.

Una nave a la tierra tan vecina  
llegó, que desde el sitio donde estaba  
se ve cuanto hay en ella y determina; 465  
de más de cuatro mil salmas pasaba  
(que otros suelen llamarlas toneladas),  
ancho de vientre y de estatura brava:

así como las naves que cargadas  
llegan de la oriental India a Lisboa, 470  
que son por las mayores estimadas,  
ésta llegó desde la popa a proa  
cubierta de poetas, mercancía  
de quien hay saca en Calicut y en Goa.

Tomóle al rojo dios alferecía 475  
por ver la muchedumbre impertinente  
que en socorro del monte le venía,  
y en silencio rogó devotamente  
que el vaso naufragase en un momento  
al que gobierna el húmido tridente. 480

Uno de los del número hambriento  
se puso en esto al borde de la nave,  
al parecer mohíno y malcontento;  
y, en voz que ni de tierna ni süave  
tenía un solo adárame, gritando 485  
dijo, tal vez colérico y tal grave,  
lo que impaciente estuve yo escuchando,  
porque vi sus razones ser saetas  
que iban mi alma y corazón clavando.

«¡Oh tú», dijo, «traidor, que los poetas 490  
canonizaste de la larga lista,  
por causas y por vías indirectas!

¿Dónde tenías, magancés, la vista  
aguda de tu ingenio, que, así ciego,  
fuiste tan mentiroso coronista? 495

Yo te confieso, ¡oh bárbaro!, y no niego  
que algunos de los muchos que escogiste  
sin que el respeto te forzase o el ruego,  
en el debido punto los pusiste;  
pero con los demás, sin duda alguna, 500  
pródigo de alabanzas anduviste.

Has alzado a los cielos la fortuna  
de muchos que en el centro del olvido,  
sin ver la luz del sol ni de la luna,  
yacían; ni llamado ni escogido 505  
fue el gran *Pastor de Iberia*, el gran BERNARDO  
que DE LA VEGA tiene el apellido.

Fuiste envidioso, descuidado y tardo,  
y a las *Ninfas de Henares y pastores*  
como a enemigos les tiraste un dardo; 510  
y tienes tú poetas tan peores  
que éstos en tu rebaño, que imagino  
que han de sudar si quieren ser mejores;  
que si este agravio no me turba el tino,  
siete trovistas desde aquí diviso, 515  
a quien suelen llamar de torbellino,  
con quien la gala, discreción y aviso  
tienen poco que ver, y tú los pones  
dos leguas más allá del Paraíso.

Estas quimeras, estas invenciones 520  
tuyas te han de salir al rostro un día  
si más no te medidas y compones».

Esta amenaza y gran descortesía  
mi blando corazón llenó de miedo  
y dio al través con la paciencia mía. 525

Y, volviéndome a Apolo con denuedo  
mayor del que esperaba de mis años,  
con voz turbada y con semblante acedo  
le dije: «Con bien claros desengaños  
descubro que el servirte me granjea 530  
presentes miedos de futuros daños.

Haz, ¡oh señor!, que en público se lea  
la lista que Cilenio llevó a España,  
porque mi culpa poca aquí se vea.

Si tu deidad en escoger se engaña, 535  
y yo sólo aprobé lo que él me dijo,  
¿por qué este simple contra mí se ensaña?

Con justa causa y con razón me aflijo  
de ver cómo estos bárbaros se inclinan  
a tenerme en temor duro y prolijo: 540

unos, porque los puse me abominan;  
otros, porque he dejado de ponellos  
de darme pesadumbre determinan.

Yo no sé cómo me avendré con ellos:  
los puestos se lamentan, los no puestos 545  
gritan, yo tiemblo déstos y de aquéllos.

Tú, señor, que eres dios, dales los puestos  
que piden sus ingenios; llama y nombra  
los que fueren más hábiles y prestos.

Y porque el turbio miedo que me asombra 550  
no me acabe, acabada esta contienda,  
cúbreme con tu mano y con tu sombra,  
o ponme una señal por do se entienda  
que soy hechura tuya y de tu casa,  
y así no habrá ninguno que me ofenda». 555

«Vuelve la vista y mira lo que pasa»,  
fue de Apolo enojado la respuesta,  
que ardiendo en ira el corazón se abrasa.

Volvíla, y vi la más alegre fiesta,  
y la más desdichada y compasiva 560  
que el mundo vio, ni aun la verá cual ésta.

Mas no se espere que yo aquí la escriba,  
sino en la parte quinta, en quien espero  
cantar con voz tan entonada y viva,  
que piensen que soy cisne y que me muero. 565



## Del Viaje del Parnaso, capítulo quinto

Oyó el señor del húmido tridente  
las plegarias de Apolo, y escuchólas  
con alma tierna y corazón clemente;  
hizo de ojo y dio del pie a las olas,  
y, sin que lo entendiesen los poetas, 5  
en un punto hasta el cielo levantólas;  
y él, por ocultas vías y secretas,  
se agazapó debajo del navío,  
y usó con él de sus traidoras tretas.

Hirió con el tridente en lo vacío 10  
del buco, y el estómago le llena  
de un copioso corriente amargo río.

Advertido el peligro, al aire suena  
una confusa voz, la cual resulta  
de otras mil que el temor forma y la pena; 15  
poco a poco el bajel pobre se oculta  
en las entrañas del cerúleo y cano  
vientre, que tantas ánimas sepulta.

Suben los llantos por el aire vano  
de aquellos miserables, que suspiran 20  
por ver su irreparable fin cercano;  
trepan y suben por las jarcias, miran  
cuál del navío es el lugar más alto,  
y en él muchos se apiñan y retiran.

La confusión, el miedo, el sobresalto 25  
les turba los sentidos, que imaginan  
que desta a la otra vida es grande el salto;  
con ningún medio ni remedio atinan;  
pero, creyendo dilatar su muerte,  
algún tanto a nadar se determinan; 30  
saltan muchos al mar de aquella suerte,  
que al charco de la orilla saltan ranas  
cuando el miedo o el ruido las advierte.

Hienden las olas, del romperse canas,  
menudean las piernas y los brazos, 35  
aunque enfermos están y ellas no sanas;  
y, en medio de tan grandes embarazos,  
la vista ponen en la amada orilla,  
deseosos de darla mil abrazos.

Y sé yo bien que la fatal cuadrilla, 40  
antes que allí, holgara de hallarse  
en el Compás famoso de Sevilla;  
que no tienen por gusto el ahogarse  
(discreta gente al parecer en esto),  
pero valióles poco el esforzarse; 45

que el padre de las aguas echó el resto  
de su rigor, mostrándose en su carro  
con rostro airado y ademán funesto.

Cuatro delfines, cada cual bizarro,  
con cuerdas hechas de tejidas ovas 50  
le tiraban con furia y con desgarro.

Las ninfas en sus húmidas alcobas  
sienten tu rabia, ¡oh vengativo nume!,  
y de sus rostros la color les robas.

El nadante poeta que presume 55  
llegar a la ribera defendida,  
sus ayes pierde y su tesón consume;

que su corta carrera es impedida  
de las agudas puntas del tridente,  
entonces fiero y áspero homicida. 60

¿Quién ha visto muchacho diligente  
que en goloso a sí mismo sobrepuja  
(que no hay comparación más conveniente),

picar en el sombrero la granuja,  
que el hallazgo le puso allí, o la sisa, 65  
con punta alfileresca, o ya de aguja?

Pues no con menor gana o menor prisa,  
poetas ensartaba el nume airado  
con gusto infame y con dudosa risa.

En carro de cristal venía sentado, 70  
la barba luenga y llena de marisco,  
con dos gruesas lampreas coronado;

hacían de sus barbas firme aprisco  
la almeja, el morsillón, pulpo y cangrejo,  
cual le suelen hacer en peña o risco. 75

Era de aspecto venerable y viejo;  
de verde, azul y plata era el vestido,  
robusto al parecer y de buen rejo,  
aunque, como enojado, denegrado  
se mostraba en el rostro, que la saña 80  
así turba el color como el sentido.

Airado, contra aquéllos más se ensaña  
que nadan más, y sádeles al paso,  
juzgando a gloria tan cobarde hazaña.

En esto (¡oh nuevo y milagroso caso, 85  
digno de que se cuente poco a poco  
y con los versos de Torcato Taso!

Hasta aquí no he invocado, ahora invoco  
vuestro favor, ¡oh Musas!, necesario  
para los altos puntos en que toco; 90

descerrajad vuestro más rico almario,  
y el aliento me dad que el caso pide,  
no humilde, no ratero ni ordinario),

las nubes hiende, el aire pisa y mide  
la hermosa Venus Acidalia, y baja 95  
del cielo, que ninguno se lo impide.

Traía vestida de pardilla raja  
una gran saya entera, hecha al uso,  
que le dice muy bien, cuadra y encaja;

luto que por su Adonis se le puso 100  
luego que el gran colmillo del berraco  
a atravesar sus ingles se dispuso.

A fe que si el mocito fuera maco,  
que él guardara la cara al colmilludo,  
que dio a su vida y su belleza saco. 105

¡Oh valiente garzón, más que sesudo!,  
¿cómo, estando avisado, tu mal tomas,  
entrando en trance tan horrendo y crudo?

En esto, las mansísimas palomas  
que el carro de la diosa conducían 110  
por el llano del mar y por las lomas,

por unas y otras partes discurrían,  
hasta que con Neptuno se encontraron,  
que era lo que buscaban y querían.

Los dioses, que se ven, se respetaron, 115  
y, haciendo sus zalemas a lo moro,  
de verse juntos en extremo holgaron.

Guardáronse real grave decoro,  
y procuró Ciprinia en aquel punto  
mostrar de su belleza el gran tesoro: 120  
ensanchó el verdugado, y diole el punto  
con ciertos puntapiés, que fueron coces  
para el dios, que las vio y quedó difunto.

Un poeta, llamado don Quincoces,  
andaba semivivo en las saladas 125  
ondas, dando gemidos y no voces;  
con todo, dijo en mal articuladas  
palabras: «¡Oh señora, la de Pafo,  
y de las otras dos islas nombradas,  
muévate a compasión el verme gafo 130  
de pies y manos, y que ya me ahogo  
en otras linfas que las del garrafo.

Aquí será mi pira, aquí mi rogo,  
aquí será Quincoces sepultado,  
que tuvo en su crianza pedagogo!» 135

Esto dijo el mezquino; esto escuchado  
fue de la diosa con ternura tanta,  
que volvió a componer el verdugado;  
y luego en pie y piadosa se levanta,  
y, poniendo los ojos en el viejo, 140  
desembudó la voz de la garganta,  
y, con cierto desdén y sobrecejo,  
entre enojada y grave y dulce, dijo  
lo que al húmido dios tuvo perplejo;  
y, aunque no fue su razonar prolijo, 145  
todavía le trujo a la memoria  
hermano de quién era y de quién hijo;  
representóle cuán pequeña gloria  
era llevar de aquellos miserables  
el triunfo infausto y la crüel vitoria. 150

Él dijo: «Si los hados inmutables  
no hubieran dado la fatal sentencia  
destos en su ignorancia siempre estables,  
una brizna no más de tu presencia  
que viera yo, bellísima señora, 155  
fuera de mi rigor la resistencia.

Mas ya no puede ser, que ya la hora  
llegó donde mi blanda y mansa mano  
ha de mostrar que es dura y vencedora;  
que éstos, de proceder siempre inhumano, 160  
en sus versos han dicho cien mil veces:  
«azotando las aguas del mar cano...»

«Ni azotado ni viejo me pareces»,  
replicó Venus. Y él le dijo a ella:  
«Puesto que me enamoras, no enterneces; 165  
que de tal modo la fatal estrella  
influye destos tristes, que no puedo  
dar felice despacho a tu querella;  
del querer de los hados sólo un dedo  
no me puede apartar, ya tú lo sabes: 170  
ellos han de acabar, y ha de ser cedo».

«Primero acabarás que los acabes»,  
le respondió madama, la que tiene  
de tantas voluntades puerta y llaves;  
«que, aunque el hado feroz su muerte ordene, 175  
el modo no ha de ser a tu contento,  
que muchas muertes el morir contiene».

Turbóse en esto el líquido elemento,  
de nuevo renovóse la tormenta,  
sopló más vivo y más apriesa el viento; 180

la hambrienta mesnada, y no sedienta,  
se rinde al huracán recién venido  
y, por más no penar, muere contenta.

¡Oh raro caso y por jamás oído  
ni visto! ¡Oh nuevas y admirables trazas 185  
de la gran reina obedecida en Nido!:

en un instante, el mar de calabazas  
se vio cuajado, algunas tan potentes,  
que pasaban de dos y aun de tres brazas;

también hinchados odres y valientes, 190  
sin deshacer del mar la blanca espuma,  
nadaban de mil talles diferentes.

Esta trasmutación fue hecha, en suma,  
por Venus, de los lánguidos poetas,  
porque Neptuno hundirlos no presuma; 195  
el cual le pidió a Febo sus saetas,  
cuya arma, arrojadiza desde aparte,  
a Venus defraudara de sus tretas.

Negóselas Apolo; y veis dó parte  
enojado el vejón, con su tridente 200  
pensándolos pasar de parte a parte.

Mas éste se resbala, aquél no siente  
la herida, y dando esguince se desliza,  
y él queda de la cólera impaciente.

En esto Bóreas su furor atiza, 205  
y lleva antecogida la manada,  
que con la de los Cerdas simboliza.

Pidióselo la diosa, aficionada  
a que vivan poetas zarabandos  
de aquellos de la seta almidonada; 210  
de aquellos blancos, tiernos, dulces, blandos,  
de los que por momentos se dividen  
en varias setas y en contrarios bandos;

los contrapuestos vientos se comiden  
a complacer la bella rogadora, 215  
y con un solo aliento la mar miden,  
llevando a la pñara gruñidora  
en calabazas y odres convertida,  
a los reinos contrarios del Aurora.

Desta dulce semilla referida, 220  
España, verdad cierta, tanto abunda,  
que es por ella estimada y conocida;  
que, aunque en armas y en letras es fecunda  
más que cuantas provincias tiene el suelo,  
su gusto en parte en tal semilla funda. 225

Después desta mudanza que hizo el cielo,  
o Venus, o quien fuese, que no importa  
guardar puntualidad como yo suelo,

no veo calabaza, o luenga o corta,  
que no imagine que es algún poeta 230  
que allí se estrecha, encubre, encoge, acorta.

Pues ¿qué cuando veo un cuero? ¡Oh mal discreta  
y vana fantasía, así engañada,  
que a tanta liviandad estás sujeta!:

pienso que el piezgo de la boca atada 235  
es la faz del poeta, transformado  
en aquella figura mal hinchada;

y cuando encuentro algún poeta honrado  
(digo poeta firme y valedero,  
hombre vestido bien y bien calzado), 240

luego se me figura ver un cuero,  
o alguna calabaza, y desta suerte  
entre contrarios pensamientos muero.

Y no sé si lo yerre o si lo acierte  
en que a las calabazas y a los cueros 245  
y a los poetas trate de una suerte.

Cernícalos que son lagartijeros,  
no esperen de gozar las preeminencias  
que gozan gavilanes no pecheros.

Puestas en paz, pues, ya las diferencias 250  
de Delio, y los poetas transformados  
en tan vanas y huecas apariencias,

los mares y los vientos sosegados,  
sumergiósse Neptuno malcontento  
en sus palacios de cristal labrados. 255

Las mansísimas aves por el viento  
volaron, y a la bella Cipriana  
pusieron en su reino a salvamento.

Y, en señal que del triunfo quedó ufana  
(lo que hasta allí nadie acabó con ella), 260  
del luto se quitó la saboyana,

quedando en cuezo, tan briosa y bella,  
que se supo después que Marte anduvo  
todo aquel día y otros dos tras ella.

Todo el cual tiempo, el escuadrón estuvo 265  
mirando atento la fatal rüina  
que la canalla transformada tuvo;

y, viendo despejada la marina,  
Apolo, del socorro mal venido,  
de dar fin al gran caso determina. 270

Pero en aquel instante un gran rüido  
se oyó, con que la turba se alborozaba  
y pone vista alerta y presto oído;  
y era quien le formaba una carroza  
rica, sobre la cual venía sentado 275  
el grave don LORENZO DE MENDOZA,  
de su felice ingenio acompañado,  
de su mucho valor y cortesía,  
joyas inestimables, adornado.

PEDRO JUAN DE REJAULE le seguía 280  
en otro coche, insigne valenciano  
y grande defensor de la poesía.

Sentado viene a su derecha mano  
JUAN DE SOLÍS, mancebo generoso,  
de raro ingenio, en verdes años cano. 285

Y JUAN DE CARVAJAL, doctor famoso,  
les hace tercio, y no por ser pesado  
dejan de hacer su curso presuroso,  
porque al divino ingenio, al levantado  
valor de aquestos tres que el coche encierra, 290  
no hay impedirle monte ni collado.

Pasan volando la empinada sierra,  
las nubes tocan, llegan casi al cielo,  
y alegres pisan la famosa tierra.

Con este mismo honroso y grave celo, 295  
BARTOLOMÉ DE MOLA y GABRIEL LASO  
llegaron a tocar del monte el suelo.

Honra las altas cimas de Parnaso  
don DIEGO, que DE SILVA tiene el nombre,  
y por ellas alegre tiende el paso. 300

A cuyo ingenio y sin igual renombre  
toda ciencia se inclina y le obedece,  
y le levanta a ser más que de hombre.

Dilátanse las sombras y descrece  
el día, y de la noche el negro manto 305  
guarnecido de estrellas aparece;



y el escuadrón, que había esperado tanto  
en pie, se rinde al sueño perezoso  
de hambre y sed, y de mortal quebranto.

Apolo, entonces poco luminoso, 310  
dando hasta los antípodas un brinco,  
siguió su occidental curso forzoso;  
pero primero licenció a los cinco  
poetas titulados, a su ruego,  
que lo pidieron con estraño ahínco, 315  
por parecerles risa, burla y juego  
empresas semejantes; y así, Apolo  
concedió con sus deseos luego;  
que es el galán de Dafne único y solo  
en usar cortesía sobre cuantos 320  
descubre el nuestro y el contrario polo.

Del lóbrego lugar de los espantos  
sacó su hisopo el lánguido Morfeo,  
con que ha rendido y embocado a tantos;  
y del licor que dicen que es leteo, 325  
que mana de la fuente del olvido,  
los párpados bañó a todos arreo.

El más hambriento se quedó dormido;  
dos cosas repugnantes, hambre y sueño,  
privilegio a poetas concedido. 330

Yo quedé, en fin, dormido como un leño,  
llena la fantasía de mil cosas,  
que de contallas mi palabra empeño,  
por más que sean en sí dificultosas.

## Del Viaje del Parnaso, capítulo sexto

De una de tres causas los ensueños  
se causan, o los sueños, que este nombre  
les dan los que del bien hablar son dueños;  
primera, de las cosas de que el hombre  
trata más de ordinario; la segunda 5  
quiere la medicina que se nombre  
del humor que en nosotros más abunda;  
toca en revelaciones la tercera,  
que en nuestro bien más que las dos redundan.

Dormí, y soñé, y el sueño la primera 10  
causa le dio principio suficiente  
a mezclar el ahíto y la dentera.

Sueña el enfermo, a quien la fiebre ardiente  
abrasa las entrañas, que en la boca  
tiene de las que ha visto alguna fuente, 15  
y el labio al fugitivo cristal toca,  
y el dormido consuelo imaginado  
crece el deseo, y no la sed apoca.

Pelea el valentísimo soldado  
dormido casi al modo que despierto 20  
se mostró en el combate fiero armado.

Acude el tierno amante a su concierto,  
y en la imaginación, dormido, llega,  
sin padecer borrasca, a dulce puerto.

El corazón el avariento entrega 25  
en la mitad del sueño a su tesoro,  
que el alma en todo tiempo no le niega.

Yo, que siempre guardé el común decoro  
en las cosas dormidas y despiertas,  
pues no soy troglodita ni soy moro, 30  
de par en par del alma abrí las puertas,  
y dejé entrar al sueño por los ojos  
con premisas de gloria y gusto ciertas.

Gocé durmiendo cuatro mil despojos  
(que los conté sin que faltase alguno) 35  
de gustos que acudieron a manojos;  
el tiempo, la ocasión, el oportuno  
lugar correspondían al efecto,  
juntos y por sí solo cada uno.

Dos horas dormí y más a lo discreto, 40  
sin que imaginaciones ni vapores  
el cerebro tuviesen inquieto;

la suelta fantasía entre mil flores  
me puso de un pradillo, que exhalaba  
de Pancaya y Sabea los olores; 45

el agradable sitio se llevaba  
tras sí la vista, que, durmiendo, viva  
mucho más que despierta se mostraba.

Palpable vi..., mas no sé si lo escriba,  
que a las cosas que tienen de imposibles 50  
siempre mi pluma se ha mostrado esquivia;

las que tienen vislumbre de posibles,  
de dulces, de süaves y de ciertas,  
esplican mis borrones apacibles.

Nunca a disparidad abre las puertas 55  
mi corto ingenio, y hállalas contino  
de par en par la consonancia abiertas.

¿Cómo pueda agradar un desatino,  
si no es que de propósito se hace,  
mostrándole el donaire su camino? 60

Que entonces la mentira satisface  
cuando verdad parece y está escrita  
con gracia, que al discreto y simple aplace.

Digo, volviendo al cuento, que infinita  
gente vi discurrir por aquel llano, 65  
con algazara placentera y grita;

con hábito decente y cortesano  
algunos, a quien dio la hipocresía  
vestido pobre, pero limpio y sano;

otros, de la color que tiene el día 70  
cuando la luz primera se aparece  
entre las trenzas de la Aurora fría.

La variada primavera ofrece  
de sus varias colores la abundancia,  
con que a la vista el gusto alegre crece; 75  
la prodigalidad, la exorbitancia  
campean juntas por el verde prado  
con galas que descubren su ignorancia.

En un trono, del suelo levantado,  
do el arte a la materia se adelanta, 80  
puesto que de oro y de marfil labrado,  
una doncella vi, desde la planta  
del pie hasta la cabeza así adornada,  
que el verla admira y el oírla encanta.

Estaba en él con majestad sentada, 85  
giganta al parecer en la estatura,  
pero, aunque grande, bien proporcionada;  
parecía mayor su hermosura  
mirada desde lejos, y no tanto  
si de cerca se ve su compostura. 90

Lleno de admiración, colmo de espanto,  
puse en ella los ojos, y vi en ella  
lo que en mis versos desmayados canto.

Yo no sabré afirmar si era doncella,  
aunque he dicho que sí, que en estos casos 95  
la vista más aguda se atropella:

son, por la mayor parte, siempre escasos  
de razón los juicios maliciosos  
en juzgar rotos los enteros vasos.

Altaneros sus ojos y amorosos 100  
se mostraban con cierta mansedumbre,  
que los hacía en todo extremo hermosos;  
ora fuese artificio, ora costumbre,  
los rayos de su luz tal vez crecían,  
y tal vez daban encogida lumbre. 105

Dos ninfas a sus lados asistían,  
de tan gentil donaire y apariencia,  
que, miradas, las almas suspendían;  
de la del alto trono en la presencia  
desplegaban sus labios en razones 110  
ricas en suavidad, pobres en ciencia;

levantaban al cielo sus blasones,  
que estaban, por ser pocos o ningunos,  
escritos del olvido en los borrones;  
al dulce murmurar, al oportuno 115  
razonar de las dos, la del asiento  
que en belleza jamás le igualó alguno,  
luego se puso en pie, y en un momento,  
me pareció que dio con la cabeza  
más allá de las nubes, y no miento; 120  
y no perdió por esto su belleza;  
antes, mientras más grande, se mostraba  
igual su perfección a su grandeza;  
los brazos de tal modo dilatava,  
que de do nace a donde muere el día 125  
los opuestos extremos alcanzaba;  
la enfermedad llamada hidropesía  
así le hincha el vientre, que parece  
que todo el mar caber en él podía;  
al modo destas partes, así crece 130  
toda su compostura; y no por esto,  
cual dije, su hermosura desfallece.  
Yo, atónito, esperaba ver el resto  
de tan grande prodigio, y diera un dedo  
por saber la verdad segura y presto. 135  
Uno, y no sabré quién, bien claro y quedo  
al oído me habló, y me dijo: «Espera,  
que yo decirte lo que quieres puedo.  
Ésta que vees, que crece de manera  
que apenas tiene ya lugar do quepa, 140  
y aspira en la grandeza a ser primera;  
ésta que por las nubes sube y trepa  
hasta llegar al cerco de la luna  
(puesto que el modo de subir no sepa),  
es la que, confiada en su fortuna, 145  
piensa tener de la inconstante rueda  
el eje quedo y sin mudanza alguna.  
Ésta que no halla mal que le suceda,  
ni le teme, atrevida y arrogante,  
pródiga siempre, venturosa y leda, 150

es la que con disignio extravagante  
dio en crecer poco a poco hasta ponerse,  
cual ves, en estatura de gigante.

No deja de crecer por no atreverse  
a emprender las hazañas más notables, 155  
adonde puedan sus extremos verse.

¿No has oído decir los memorables  
arcos, anfiteatros, templos, baños,  
termas, pórticos, muros admirables,  
que, a pesar y despecho de los años, 160  
aún duran sus reliquias y entereza,  
haciendo al tiempo y a la muerte engaños?»

«Yo», respondí por mí, «ninguna pieza  
de esas que has dicho, dejo de tenella  
clavada y remachada en la cabeza: 165  
tengo el sepulcro de la viuda bella  
y el Coloso de Rodas allí junto,  
y la lanterna que sirvió de estrella.

Pero vengamos de quién es al punto  
ésta, que lo deseo». «Haráse luego», 170  
me respondió la voz en bajo punto.

Y prosiguió diciendo: «A no estar ciego,  
hubieras visto ya quién es la dama;  
pero, en fin, tienes el ingenio lego.

Ésta que hasta los cielos se encarama, 175  
preñada, sin saber cómo, del viento,  
es hija del Deseo y de la Fama.

Ésta fue la ocasión y el instrumento,  
el todo y parte de que el mundo viese  
no siete maravillas, sino ciento. 180

(Corto número es ciento; aunque dijese  
cien mil y más millones, no imagines  
que en la cuenta del número excediese).

Ésta condujo a memorables fines  
edificios que asientan en la tierra 185  
y tocan de las nubes los confines.

Ésta tal vez ha levantado guerra  
donde la paz süave reposaba,  
que en límites estrechos no se encierra.

Cuando Mucio en las llamas abrasaba 190  
el atrevido fuerte brazo y fiero,  
ésta el incendio horrible resfriaba;  
ésta arrojó al romano caballero  
en el abismo de la ardiente cueva,  
de limpio armado y de luciente acero; 195  
ésta tal vez con maravilla nueva,  
de su ambiciosa condición llevada,  
mil imposibles atrevida prueba.

Desde la ardiente Libia hasta la helada  
Citia, lleva la fama su memoria, 200  
en grandiosas obras dilatada.

En fin, ella es la altiva Vanagloria,  
que en aquellas hazañas se entremete  
que llevan de los siglos la vitoria.

Ella misma a sí misma se promete 205  
triunfos y gustos, sin tener asida  
a la calva Ocasión por el copete.

Su natural sustento, su bebida,  
es aire, y así crece en un instante  
tanto, que no hay medida a su medida. 210

Aquellas dos del plácido semblante  
que tiene a sus dos lados, son aquellas  
que sirven a su máquina de Atlante.

Su delicada voz, sus luces bellas,  
su humildad aparente, y las lozanas 215  
razones, que el amor se cifra en ellas,  
las hacen más divinas que no humanas,  
y son (con paz escucha y con paciencia)  
la Adulación y la Mentira, hermanas.

Éstas están contino en su presencia, 220  
palabras ministrándola al oído  
que tienen de prudentes apariencia.

Y ella, cual ciega del mejor sentido,  
no ve que entre las flores de aquel gusto  
el áspid ponzoñoso está escondido. 225

Y así, arrojada con deseo injusto,  
en cristalino vaso prueba y bebe  
el veneno mortal, sin ningún susto.

Quien más presume de advertido, pruebe  
a dejarse adular, verá cuán presto 230  
pasa su gloria como el viento leve».

Esto escuché, y en escuchando aquesto,  
dio un estampido tal la Gloria vana,  
que dio a mi sueño fin dulce y molesto.

Y en esto descubrióse la mañana, 235  
vertiendo perlas y esparciendo flores,  
lozana en vista y en virtud lozana:

los dulces pequeñuelos ruiseñores,  
con cantos no aprendidos, le decían,  
enamorados della, mil amores; 240

los silgueros el canto repetían,  
y las diestras calandrias entonaban  
la música que todos componían.

Unos del escuadrón priesa se daban  
porque no los hallase el dios del día 245  
en los forzosos actos en que estaban.

Y luego se asomó su señoría,  
con una cara de tudesco roja,  
por los balcones de la Aurora fría,  
en parte gorda, en parte flaca y floja, 250  
como quien teme el esperado trance  
donde verse vencido se le antoja.

En propio toledano y buen romance  
les dio los buenos días cortésmente,  
y luego se aprestó al forzoso lance; 255  
y encima de un peñasco puesto enfrente  
del escuadrón, con voz sonora y grave  
esta oración les hizo de repente:

«¡Oh espíritus felices, donde cabe  
la gala del decir, la sutileza 260  
de la ciencia más docta que se sabe;  
donde en su propia natural belleza  
asiste la hermosa Poesía  
entera de los pies a la cabeza!

No consintáis, por vida vuestra y mía 265  
(mirad con qué llaneza Apolo os habla),  
que triunfe esta canalla que porfía.



Esta canalla, digo, que se endiablo,  
que, por darles calor su muchedumbre,  
ya su ruina, o ya la nuestra entabla. 270

Vosotros, de mis ojos gloria y lumbre,  
faroles do mi luz de asiento mora,  
ya por naturaleza o por costumbre,  
¿habéis de consentir que esta embaidora,  
hipócrita gentalla se me atreva, 275  
de tantas necedades inventora?

Haced famosa y memorable prueba  
de vuestro gran valor en este hecho,  
que a su castigo y vuestra gloria os lleva.

De justa indignación armad el pecho, 280  
acometed intrépidos la turba,  
ociosa, vagamunda y sin provecho.

No se os dé nada, no se os dé una burba  
(moneda berberisca, vil y baja)  
de aquesta gente que la paz nos turba. 285

El son de más de una templada caja,  
y el del pífaro triste, y la trompeta,  
que la cólera sube y flema abaja,  
así os incite con virtud secreta,  
que despierte los ánimos dormidos 290  
en la fación que tanto nos aprieta.

Ya retumba, ya llega a mis oídos  
del escuadrón contrario el rumor grande,  
formado de confusos alaridos;

ya es menester, sin que os lo ruegue o mande, 295  
que cada cual, como guerrero experto,  
sin que por su capricho se desmande,

la orden guarde y militar concierto,  
y acuda a su deber como valiente  
hasta quedar o vencedor o muerto. 300

En esto, por la parte de poniente  
pareció el escuadrón casi infinito  
de la bárbara, ciega y pobre gente.

Alzan los nuestros al momento un grito  
alegre, y no medroso; y gritan: «¡Arma!» 305  
«¡Arma!» resuena todo aquel distrito;

y, aunque mueran, correr quieren al arma.

## Del Viaje del Parnaso, capítulo sétimo

Tú, belígera musa, tú, que tienes  
la voz de bronce y de metal la lengua,  
cuando a cantar del fiero Marte vienes;

tú, por quien se aniquila siempre y mengua  
el gran género humano; tú, que puedes 5  
sacar mi pluma de ignorancia y mengua;

tú, mano rota y larga de mercedes,  
digo en hacellas, una aquí te pido,  
que no hará que menos rica quedes.

La soberbia y maldad, el atrevido 10  
intento de una gente malmirada,  
ya se descubre con mortal ruído.

Dame una voz al caso acomodada,  
una sutil y bien cortada pluma,  
no de afición ni de pasión llevada, 15

para que pueda referir en suma,  
con purísimo y nuevo sentimiento,  
con verdad clara y entereza suma,  
el contrapuesto y desigual intento  
de uno y otro escuadrón, que, ardiendo en ira, 20  
sus banderas descoge al vago viento.

El del bando católico, que mira  
al falso y grande al pie del monte puesto,  
que de subir al alta cumbre aspira;

con paso largo y ademán compuesto, 25  
todo el monte coronan, y se ponen  
a la furia, que en loca ha echado el resto;

las ventajas tantean, y disponen  
los ánimos valientes al asalto,  
en quien su gloria y su venganza ponen; 30

de rabia lleno y de paciencia falto,  
Apolo su bellísimo estandarte  
mandó al momento levantar en alto;

arbolóle un marqués, que el propio Marte  
su brïosa presencia representa 35  
naturalmente, sin industria y arte;  
poeta celebérriimo y de cuenta,  
por quien y en quien Apolo soberano  
su gloria y gusto y su valor aumenta.

Era la insinia un cisne hermoso y cano, 40  
tan al vivo pintado, que dijeras  
la voz despide alegre al aire vano;  
siguen al estandarte sus banderas,  
de gallardos alféreces llevadas,  
honrosas por no estar todas enteras. 45

Las cajas a lo bélico templadas  
al mílite más tardo vuelven presto,  
de voces de metal acompañadas.

JERÓNIMO DE MORA llegó en esto,  
pintor excelentísimo y poeta: 50  
Apeles y Virgilio en un supuesto;  
y con la autoridad de una jineta  
(que de ser capitán le daba nombre)  
al caso acude y a la turba aprieta.

Y, porque más se turbe y más se asombre, 55  
el enemigo desigual y fiero,  
llegó el gran BIEDMA, de inmortal renombre;  
y con él GASPARD DE ÁVILA, primero  
secuaz de Apolo, a cuyo verso y pluma  
ICIAR puede envidiar, temer Sincero. 60

Llegó JUAN DE MESTANZA, cifra y suma  
de tanta erudición, donaire y gala,  
que no hay muerte ni edad que la consuma.

Apolo le arrancó de Guatemala,  
y le trujo en su ayuda para ofensa 65  
de la canalla en todo extremo mala.

Hacer milagros en el trance piensa  
CEPEDA, y acompañaale MEJÍA,  
poetas dignos de alabanza inmensa.

Clarísimo esplendor de Andalucía 70  
y de la Mancha, el sin igual GALINDO  
llegó con majestad y bizarría.

De la alta cumbre del famoso Pindo  
bajaron tres bizarros lusitanos,  
a quien mis alabanzas todas rindo, 75  
con prestos pies y con valientes manos,  
con FERNANDO CORREA DE LA CERDA,  
pisó RODRÍGUEZ LOBO monte y llanos;  
y porque Febo su razón no pierda,  
el grande don ANTONIO DE ATAÍDE 80  
llegó con furia alborotada y cuerda.

Las fuerzas del contrario ajusta y mide  
con las tuyas Apolo, y determina  
dar la batalla, y la batalla pide.

El ronco son de más de una bocina, 85  
instrumento de caza y de la guerra,  
de Febo a los oídos se avecina;  
tiembla debajo de los pies la tierra  
de infinitos poetas oprimida,  
que dan asalto a la sagrada sierra. 90

El fiero general de la atrevida  
gente, que trae un cuervo en su estandarte,  
es ARBOLÁNCHEZ, muso por la vida.

Puestos estaban en la baja parte  
y en la cima del monte, frente a frente, 95  
los campos, de quien tiembla el mismo Marte,  
cuando una al parecer discreta gente  
del católico bando al enemigo  
se pasó, como en número de veinte.

Yo con los ojos su carrera sigo, 100  
y, viendo el paradero de su intento,  
con voz turbada al sacro Apolo digo:

«¿Qué prodigio es aquéste? ¿Qué portento?  
O, por mejor decir: ¿qué mal agüero,  
que así me corta el brío y el aliento? 105

Aquel transfuga que partió primero,  
no sólo por poeta le tenía,  
pero también por bravo churrullero;  
aquel ligero que tras él corría,  
en mil corrillos en Madrid le he visto 110  
tiernamente hablar en la poesía;

aquel tercero que partió tan listo,  
por satírico, necio y por pesado  
sé que de todos fue siempre malquisto.

No puedo imaginar cómo ha llevado 115  
Mercurio estos poetas en su lista».

«Yo fui», respondió Apolo, «el engañado;  
que de su ingenio la primera vista  
indicios descubrió que serían buenos  
para facilitar esta conquista». 120

«Señor», repliqué yo, «creí que ajenos  
eran de las deidades los engaños;  
digo, engañarse en poco más ni menos;  
la prudencia, que nace de los años  
y tiene por maestra la experiencia, 125  
es la deidad que advierte destos daños».

Apolo respondió: «Por mi conciencia,  
que no te entiendo», algo turbado y triste  
por ver de aquellos veinte la insolencia.

Tú, sardo militar, Lofraso, fuiste 130  
uno de aquellos bárbaros corrientes  
que del contrario el número creciste.

Mas no por esta mengua los valientes  
del escuadrón católico temieron,  
poetas madrigados y excelentes; 135  
antes, tanto coraje concibieron  
contra los fugitivos corredores,  
que riza en ellos y matanza hicieron.

¡Oh falsos y malditos trovadores,  
que pasáis plaza de poetas sabios, 140  
siendo la hez de los que son peores:

entre la lengua, paladar y labios  
anda contino vuestra poesía,  
haciendo a la virtud cien mil agravios!

Poetas de atrevida hipocresía, 145  
esperad, que de vuestro acabamiento  
ya se ha llegado el temeroso día.

De las confusas voces el concontento  
confuso por el aire resonaba,  
de espesas nubes condensando el viento. 150

Por la falda del monte gateaba  
una tropa poética, aspirando  
a la cumbre, que bien guardada estaba;  
hacían hincapié de cuando en cuando,  
y con hondas de estallo y con ballestas 155  
iban libros enteros disparando;  
no del plomo encendido las funestas  
balas pudieran ser dañosas tanto,  
ni al disparar pudieran ser más prestas.

Un libro mucho más duro que un canto 160  
a JUSEPE DE VARGAS dio en las sienes,  
causándole terror, grima y espanto.

Gritó, y dijo a un soneto: «Tú, que vienes  
de satírica pluma disparado,  
¿por qué el infame curso no detienes?» 165

Y, cual perro con piedras irritado,  
que deja al que las tira y va tras ellas,  
cual si fueran la causa del pecado,  
entre los dedos de sus manos bellas  
hizo pedazos al soneto altivo, 170  
que amenazaba al sol y a las estrellas.

Y díjole Cilenio: «¡Oh rayo vivo  
donde la justa indignación se muestra  
en un grado y valor superlativo,  
la espada toma en la temida diestra, 175  
y arrójate valiente y temerario  
por esta parte, que el peligro adiestra!»

En esto, del tamaño de un breviario  
volando un libro por el aire vino,  
de prosa y verso, que arrojó el contrario; 180  
de verso y prosa el puro desatino  
nos dio a entender que de ARBOLANCHES eran  
las *Habidas*, pesadas de continuo.

Unas *Rimas* llegaron que pudieran  
desbaratar el escuadrón cristiano 185  
si acaso vez segunda se imprimieran.

Dióle a Mercurio en la derecha mano  
una sátira antigua licenciosa,  
de estilo agudo, pero no muy sano.

De una intrincada y mal compuesta prosa, 190  
de un supuesto sin jugo y sin donaire,  
cuatro novelas disparó PEDROSA.

Silbando recio y desgarrando el aire,  
otro libro llegó de *Rimas* solas,  
hechas al parecer como al desgaire. 195

Violas Apolo, y dijo, cuando violas:  
«Dios perdone a su autor, y a mí me guarde  
de algunas *Rimas* sueltas españolas».

Llegó el *Pastor de Iberia*, aunque algo tarde,  
y derribó catorce de los nuestros 200  
haciendo de su ingenio y fuerza alarde;  
pero dos valerosos, dos maestros,  
dos lumbreras de Apolo, dos soldados,  
únicos en hablar y en obrar diestros,  
del monte puestos en opuestos lados, 205  
tanto apretaron a la turbamulta,  
que volvieron atrás los encumbrados.

Es GREGORIO DE ANGULO el que sepulta  
la canalla, y con él PEDRO DE SOTO,  
de prodigioso ingenio y vena culta. 210

Doctor aquél, estotro único y docto  
licenciado, de Apolo ambos secuaces,  
con raras obras y ánimo devoto.

Las dos contrarias indignadas haces  
ya miden las espadas, ya se cierran, 215  
duras en su tesón y pertinaces;

con los dientes se muerden, y se aferran  
con las garras, las fieras imitando,  
que toda piedad de sí destierran.

Haldeando venía y trasudando 220  
el autor de *La Pícaro Justina*,  
capellán lego del contrario bando;  
y cual si fuera de una culebrina,  
disparó de sus manos su librazo,  
que fue de nuestro campo la ruina. 225

Al buen TOMÁS GRACIÁN mancó de un brazo,  
a MEDINILLA derribó una muela  
y le llevó de un muslo un gran pedazo.



Una despierta nuestra centinela  
gritó: «¡Todos abajen la cabeza, 230  
que dispara el contrario otra novela!»

Dos pelearon una larga pieza,  
y el uno al otro con instancia loca,  
de un envión, con arte y con destreza,  
seis seguidillas le encajó en la boca, 235  
con que le hizo vomitar el alma,  
que salió libre de su estrecha roca.

De la furia el ardor, del sol la calma  
tenía en duda de una y otra parte  
la vencedora y pretendida palma. 240

Del cuervo, en esto, el lóbrego estandarte  
cede al del cisne, porque vino al suelo,  
pasado el corazón de parte a parte;

su alférez, que era un andaluz mozuelo,  
trovador repentista, que subía 245  
con la soberbia más allá del cielo;

helósele la sangre que tenía;  
murióse, cuando vio que muerto estaba,  
la turba, pertinaz en su porfía.

Puesto que ausente el gran LUPERCIO estaba, 250  
con un solo soneto suyo hizo  
lo que de su grandeza se esperaba:

descuadernó, desencajó, deshizo  
del opuesto escuadrón catorce hileras,  
dos criollos mató, hirió un mestizo. 255

De sus sabrosas burlas y sus veras  
el magno cordobés un cartapacio  
disparó, y aterró cuatro banderas.

Daba ya indicios de cansado y lacio  
el brío de la bárbara canalla, 260  
peleando más flojo y más despacio;  
mas renovóse la fatal batalla,  
mezclándose los unos con los otros;  
ni vale arnés, ni presta dura malla.

Cinco melifluos sobre cinco potros 265  
llegaron, y embistieron por un lado,  
y lleváronse cinco de nosotros;

cada cual como moro ataviado,  
con más letras y cifras que una carta  
de príncipe enemigo y recatado. 270

De romances moriscos una sarta,  
cual si fuera de balas enramadas,  
llega con furia y con malicia harta;  
y, a no estar dos escuadras avisadas  
de las nuestras, del recio tiro y presto 275  
era fuerza quedar desbaratadas.

Quiso Apolo, indignado, echar el resto  
de su poder y de su fuerza sola,  
y dar al enemigo fin molesto,  
y una sacra canción, donde acrisola 280

su ingenio, gala, estilo y bizarría  
BARTOLOMÉ LEONARDO DE ARGENSOLA,

cual si fuera un petarte, Apolo envía  
adonde está el tesón más apretado,  
más dura y más furiosa la porfía. 285

*Cuando me paro a contemplar mi estado,*  
comienza la canción que Apolo pone  
en el lugar más noble y levantado.

Todo lo mira, todo lo dispone  
con ojos de Argos; manda, quita y veda, 290  
y del contrario a todo ardid se opone.

Tan mezclados están, que no hay quien pueda  
discernir cuál es malo o cuál es bueno,  
cuál es garcilasista o timoneda.

Pero un mancebo, de ignorancia ajeno, 295  
grande escudriñador de toda historia,  
rayo en la pluma y en la voz un trueno,

llegó, tan rica el alma de memoria,  
de sana voluntad y entendimiento,  
que fue de Febo y de las Musas gloria; 300

con éste aceleróse el vencimiento,  
porque supo decir: «Éste merece  
gloria, pero aquél no, sino tormento».

Y, como ya con distinción parece  
el justo y el injusto combatiente, 305  
el gusto al peso de la pena crece.

Tú, PEDRO MANTÜANO el excelente,  
fuiste quien distinguió de la confusa  
máquina el que es cobarde del valiente.

JULIÁN DE ALMENDÁREZ no rehúsa, 310  
puesto que llegó tarde, en dar socorro  
al rubio Delio con su ilustre musa.

Por las rucias que peino, que me corro  
de ver que las comedias endiabladas  
por divinas se pongan en el corro; 315

y, a pesar de las limpias y atildadas  
del cómico mejor de nuestra Hesperia,  
quieren ser conocidas y pagadas.

Mas no ganaron mucho en esta feria,  
porque es discreto el vulgo de la Corte, 320  
aunque le toca la común miseria.

De llano no le deis, dadle de corte,  
estancias polifemas, al poeta  
que no os tuviere por su guía y norte.

Inimitables sois, y a la discreta 325  
gala que descubríis en lo escondido,  
toda elegancia puede estar sujeta.

Con estas municiones el partido  
nuestro se mejoró de tal manera,  
que el contrario se tuvo por vencido. 330

Cayó su presunción soberbia y fiera,  
derrúmbanse del monte abajo cuantos  
presumieron subir por la ladera.

La voz prolija de sus rancos cantos  
el mal suceso con rigor la vuelve 335  
en interrotos y funestos llantos.

Tal hubo, que cayendo se resuelve  
de asirse de una zarza o cabrahígo,  
y en llanto, a lo de Ovidio, se disuelve.

Cuatro se arracimaron a un quejigo 340  
como enjambre de abejas desmandada,  
y le estimaron por el lauro amigo.

Otra cuadrilla, virgen por la espada,  
y adúltera de lengua, dio la cura  
a sus pies, de su vida almidonada. 345

BARTOLOMÉ llamado DE SEGURA  
el toque casi fue del vencimiento:  
tal es su ingenio y tal es su cordura.

Resonó en esto por el vago viento  
la voz de la vitoria, repetida 350  
del número escogido en claro acento.

La miserable, la fatal caída,  
de las Musas del limpio TAGARETE  
fue largos siglos con dolor plañida;  
a la parte del llanto, ¡ay me!, se mete 355  
Zapardiel, famoso por su pesca,  
sin que un pequeño instante se quiète.

La voz de la vitoria se refresca;  
«¡vitoria!» suena aquí y allí, vitoria  
adquirida por nuestra soldadesca, 360  
que canta alegre la alcanzada gloria.

## Del Viaje del Parnaso, capítulo octavo

Al caer de la máquina excesiva  
del escuadrón poético arrogante  
que en su no vista muchedumbre estriba,  
un poeta, mancebo y estudiante,  
dijo: «Caí, paciencia; que algún día 5  
será la nuestra, mi valor mediante.

De nuevo afilaré la espada mía,  
digo mi pluma, y cortaré de suerte  
que dé nueva excelencia a la porfía;  
que ofrece la comedia, si se advierte, 10  
largo campo al ingenio, donde pueda  
librar su nombre del olvido y muerte.

Fue desto ejemplo JUAN DE TIMONEDA,  
que, con sólo imprimir, se hizo eterno,  
las comedias del gran LOPE DE RUEDA. 15

Cinco vuelcos daré en el propio infierno  
por hacer recitar una que tengo  
nombrada *El gran bastardo de Salerno*».

¡Guarda, Apolo, que baja (guarte, Rengo)  
el golpe de la mano más gallarda 20  
que ha visto el tiempo en su discurso luengo!

En esto, el claro son de una bastarda  
alas pone en los pies de la vencida  
gente del mundo perezosa y tarda;  
con la esperanza del vencer perdida, 25  
no hay quien no atienda con ligero paso,  
si no a la honra, a conservar la vida.

Desde las altas cumbres de Parnaso,  
de un salto uno se puso en Guadarrama,  
nuevo, no visto y verdadero caso; 30  
y al mismo paso la parlera Fama  
cundió del vencimiento la alta nueva,  
desde el claro Caístro hasta Jarama.

Lloró la gran vitoria el turbio Esgueva,  
Pisuerga la rió, rióla Tajo, 35  
que en vez de arena granos de oro lleva.

Del cansancio, del polvo y del trabajo  
las rubicundas hebras de Timbreo,  
del color se pararon de oro bajo;

pero, viendo cumplido su deseo, 40  
al son de la guitarra mercuriesca  
hizo de la Gallarda un gran paseo,  
y de Castalia en la corriente fresca  
el rostro se lavó, y quedó luciente  
como de acero la segur turquesca. 45

Pulióse luego, y adornó su frente  
de majestad mezclada con dulzura,  
indicios claros del placer que siente.

Las reinas de la humana hermosura  
salieron de do estaban retiradas 50  
mientras duraba la contienda dura;

del árbol siempre verde coronadas,  
y en medio la divina Poesía,  
todas de nuevas galas adornadas.

Melpómene, Tersícore y Talía, 55  
Polimnia, Urania, Erato, Euterpe y Clío,  
y Calíope, hermosa en demasía,

muestran ufanas su destreza y brío,  
tejiendo una entricada y nueva danza  
al dulce son de un instrumento mío. 60

Mío, no dije bien; mentí a la usanza  
de aquel que dice propios los ajenos  
versos que son más dignos de alabanza.

Los anchos prados y los campos llenos  
están de las escuadras vencedoras 65  
(que siempre van a más y nunca a menos),

esperando de ver de sus mejoras  
el colmo con los premios merecidos  
por el sudor y aprieto de seis horas,  
piensan ser los llamados escogidos, 70  
todos a premios de grandeza aspiran,  
tiénense en más de lo que son tenidos;

ni a calidades ni a riquezas miran:  
a su ingenio se atiene cada uno,  
y si hay cuatro que acierten, mil deliran. 75

Mas Febo, que no quiere que ninguno  
quede quejoso dél, mandó a la Aurora  
que vaya y coja in tempore oportuno,  
de las faldas floríferas de Flora  
cuatro tabaques de purpúreas rosas 80  
y seis de perlas de las que ella llora;  
y de las nueve por extremo hermosas  
las coronas pidió, y al darlas ellas  
en nada se mostraron perezosas.

Tres, a mi parecer, de las más bellas 85  
a Parténope sé que se enviaron,  
y fue Mercurio el que partió con ellas;  
tres sujetos las otras coronaron,  
allí en el mismo monte peregrinos,  
con que su patria y nombre eternizaron; 90  
tres cupieron a España, y tres divinos  
poetas se adornaron la cabeza,  
de tanta gloria justamente dignos.

La Envidia, monstruo de naturaleza,  
maldita y carcomida, ardiendo en saña, 95  
a murmurar del sacro don empieza.

Dijo: «¿Será posible que en España  
haya nueve poetas laureados?  
Alta es de Apolo, pero simple hazaña».

Los demás de la turba, defraudados 100  
del esperado premio, repetían  
los himnos de la Envidia mal cantados;  
todos por laureados se tenían  
en su imaginación, antes del trance,  
y al cielo quejas de su agravio envían. 105

Pero ciertos poetas de romance,  
del generoso premio hacer esperan,  
a despecho de Febo, presto alcance;  
otros, aunque latinos, desesperan  
de tocar del laurel sólo una hoja, 110  
aunque del caso en la demanda mueran.

Véngase menos el que más se enoja,  
y alguno se tocó sienes y frente,  
que de estar coronado se le antoja.

Pero todo deseo impertinente 115  
Apolo resfrió, premiando a cuantos  
poetas tuvo el escuadrón valiente;  
de rosas, de jazmines y amarantos  
Flora le presentó cinco cestones,  
y la Aurora, de perlas, otros tantos; 120  
éstos fueron, lector dulce, los dones  
que Delio repartió con larga mano  
entre los poetísimos varones,  
quedando alegre cada cual y ufano  
con un puño de perlas y una rosa, 125  
estimando el premio sobrehumano.

Y porque fuese más maravillosa  
la fiesta y regocijo que se hacía  
por la vitoria insigne y prodigiosa,  
la buena, la importante Poesía 130  
mandó traer la bestia cuya pata  
abrió la fuente de Castalia fría;  
cubierta de finísima escarlata,  
un lacayo la trujo en un instante,  
tascando un freno de bruñida plata. 135

Envidiarle pudiera Rocinante  
al gran Pegaso de presencia brava,  
y aun Brilladoro, el del señor de Anglante.

Con no sé cuántas alas adornaba  
manos y pies, indicio manifiesto 140  
que en ligereza al viento aventajaba;  
y, por mostrar cuán ágil y cuán presto  
era, se alzó del suelo cuatro picas,  
con un denuedo y ademán compuesto.

Tú, que me escuchas, si el oído aplicas 145  
al dulce cuento deste gran *Viaje*,  
cosas nuevas oirás de gusto ricas.

Era del bel trotón todo el herraje  
de durísima plata diamantina,  
que no recibe del pisar ultraje; 150



de la color que llaman columbina  
de raso en una funda trae la cola,  
que, suelta, con el suelo se avecina;  
del color del carmín o de amapola  
eran sus clines, y su cola gruesa, 155  
ellas solas al mundo, y ella sola.

Tal vez anda despacio, y tal apriesa,  
vuela tal vez, y tal hace corvetas,  
tal quiere relinchar, y luego cesa.

Nueva felicidad de los poetas: 160  
unos sus escrementos recogían  
en dos de cuero grandes barjuletas.

Pregunté para qué lo tal hacían.  
Respondióme Cilenio a lo bellaco,  
con no sé qué vislumbres de ironía: 165

«Esto que se recoge es el tabaco,  
que a los váguídos sirve de cabeza  
de algún poeta de cerebro flaco;

Urania de tal modo lo adereza,  
que, puesto a las narices del doliente, 170  
cobra salud y vuelve a su entereza».

Un poco entonces arrugué la frente,  
ascos haciendo del remedio extraño,  
tan de los ordinarios diferente.

«Recibes», dijo Apolo, «amigo, engaño» 175  
(leyóme el pensamiento). «Este remedio  
de los váguídos cura y sana el daño.

No come este rocín lo que en asedio  
duro y penoso comen los soldados,  
que están entre la muerte y hambre en medio; 180

son deste tal los piensos regalados  
ámbar y almizcle entre algodones puesto,  
y bebe del rocío de los prados;

tal vez le damos de almidón un cesto,  
tal de algarrobas, con que el vientre llena, 185  
y no se estriñe ni se va por esto».

«Sea», le respondí, «muy norabuena;  
tieso estoy de cerebro por ahora,  
váguido alguno no me causa pena».

La nuestra, en esto, universal señora, 190  
digo la Poesía verdadera,  
que con Timbreo y con las Musas mora,  
en vestido subcinto, a la ligera,  
el monte discurrió y abrazó a todos,  
hermosa sobremodo y placentera. 195

«¡Oh sangre vencedora de los godos!»,  
dijo, «de aquí adelante ser tratada  
con más süaves y discretos modos  
espero ser, y siempre respectada  
del ignorante vulgo, que no alcanza 200  
que, puesto que soy pobre, soy honrada.

Las riquezas os dejo en esperanza,  
pero no en posesión, premio seguro  
que al reino aspira de la inmensa holganza.

Por la belleza deste monte os juro 205  
que quisiera al más mínimo entregalle  
un privilegio de cien mil de juro.

Mas no produce minas este valle;  
aguas sí, salutíferas y buenas,  
y monas que de cisnes tienen talle. 210

Volved a ver, ¡oh amigos!, las arenas  
del aurífero Tajo en paz segura  
y en dulces horas de pesar ajenas.

Que esta inaudita hazaña os asegura  
eterno nombre en tanto que dé Febo 215  
al mundo aliento y luz serena y pura».

¡Oh maravilla nueva, oh caso nuevo,  
digno de admiración que cause espanto,  
cuya estrañeza me admiró de nuevo!

Morfeo, el dios del sueño, por encanto 220  
allí se apareció, cuya corona  
era de ramos de beleño santo.

Flojísimo de brío y de persona,  
de la Pereza torpe acompañado,  
que no le deja a vísperas ni a nona; 225

traía al Silencio a su derecho lado,  
el Descuido al siniestro, y el vestido  
era de blanda lana fabricado.

De las aguas que llaman del olvido  
traía un gran caldero, y de un hisopo 230  
venía como apostá prevenido.

Así a los poetas por el hopo,  
y, aunque el caso los rostros les volvía  
en color encendida de piropo,

él nos bañaba con el agua fría, 235  
causándonos un sueño de tal suerte,  
que dormimos un día y otro día.

Tal es la fuerza del licor, tan fuerte  
es de las aguas la virtud, que pueden  
competir con los fueros de la muerte. 240

Hace el ingenio alguna vez que queden  
las verdades sin crédito ninguno,  
por ver que a toda contingencia exceden.

Al despertar del sueño así importuno,  
ni vi monte ni monta, dios ni diosa, 245  
ni de tanto poeta vide alguno.

Por cierto, estraña y nunca vista cosa:  
despabilé la vista, y parecióme  
verme en medio de una ciudad famosa.

Admiración y grima el caso diome; 250  
torné a mirar, porque el temor o engaño  
no de mi buen discurso el paso tome.

Y díjeme a mí mismo: «No me engaño;  
esta ciudad es Nápoles la ilustre,  
que yo pisé sus rúas más de un año; 255

de Italia gloria, y aun del mundo lustre,  
pues de cuantas ciudades él encierra,  
ninguna puede haber que así le ilustre:

apacible en la paz, dura en la guerra,  
madre de la abundancia y la nobleza, 260  
de elíseos campos y agradable sierra.

Si váguídos no tengo de cabeza,  
paréceme que está mudada, en parte,  
de sitio, aunque en aumento de belleza.

¿Qué teatro es aquél, donde reparte 265  
con él cuanto contiene de hermosura  
la gala, la grandeza, industria y arte?

Sin duda, el sueño en mis pálpabras dura,  
porque éste es edificio imaginado,  
que excede a toda humana compostura». 270

Llegóse en esto a mí disimulado  
un mi amigo, llamado Promontorio,  
mancebo en días, pero gran soldado.

Creció la admiración viendo notorio  
y palpable que en Nápoles estaba, 275  
espanto a los pasados acesorio.

Mi amigo tiernamente me abrazaba,  
y, con tenerme entre sus brazos, dijo  
que del estar yo allí mucho dudaba;  
llamóme padre, y yo llaméle hijo; 280  
quedó con esto la verdad en punto,  
que aquí puede llamarse punto fijo.

Díjome Promontorio: «Yo barrunto,  
padre, que algún gran caso a vuestras canas  
las trae tan lejos, ya semidifunto». 285

«En mis horas más frescas y tempranas  
esta tierra habité, hijo», le dije,  
«con fuerzas más bríosas y lozanas.

Pero la Voluntad, que a todos rige,  
digo el querer del cielo, me ha traído 290  
a parte que me alegra más que aflige».

Dijera más, sino que un gran ruido  
de pífaros, clarines y tambores  
me azoró el alma y alegró el oído;  
volví la vista al son, vi los mayores 295  
aparatos de fiesta que vio Roma  
en sus felices tiempos y mejores.

Dijo mi amigo: «Aquél que ves que asoma  
por aquella montaña contrahecha,  
cuyo brío al de Marte oprime y doma, 300  
es un alto sujeto que deshecha  
tiene a la Envidia en rabia, porque pisa  
de la virtud la senda más derecha;  
de gravedad y condición tan lisa,  
que suspende y alegra a un mismo instante, 305  
y con su aviso al mismo aviso avisa.

Mas quiero, antes que pases adelante  
en ver lo que verás, si estás atento,  
darte del caso relación bastante.

Será Don JUAN DE TASIS de mi cuento 310  
principio, por que sea memorable,  
y lleguen mis palabras a mi intento.

Este varón, en liberal notable,  
que una mediana villa le hace conde,  
siendo rey en sus obras admirable; 315

éste, que sus haberes nunca esconde,  
pues siempre las reparte o las derrama,  
ya sepa adónde, o ya no sepa adónde;

éste, a quien tiene tan en fil la fama  
puesta la alteza de su nombre claro, 320  
que liberal y pródigo le llama,

quiso, pródigo aquí y allí no avaro,  
primer mantenedor ser de un torneo  
que a fiestas sobrehumanas le comparo.

Responden sus grandezas al deseo 325  
que tiene de mostrarse alegre, viendo  
de España y Francia el regio himineo;

y éste que escuchas, duro, alegre estruendo,  
es señal que el torneo se comienza,  
que admira por lo rico y estupendo. 330

Arquímedes el grande se avergüenza  
de ver que este teatro milagroso  
su ingenio apoque y a sus trazas venza.

Digo, pues, que el mancebo generoso  
que allí deciente, de encarnado y plata, 335  
sobre todo mortal curso brüoso,

es el conde de Lemos, que dilata  
su fama con sus obras por el mundo,  
y que lleguen al cielo en tierra trata;

y, aunque sale el primero, es el segundo 340  
mantenedor, y en buena cortesía  
esta ventaja califico y fundo.

El duque de Nocera, luz y guía  
del arte militar, es el tercero  
mantenedor deste festivo día. 345

El cuarto, que pudiera ser primero,  
es de Santelmo el fuerte castellano,  
que al mismo Marte en el valor prefiero.

El quinto es otro Eneas el troyano,  
Arrociolo, que gana en ser valiente 350  
al que fue verdadero, por la mano».

El gran concurso y número de gente  
estorbó que adelante prosiguiese  
la comenzada relación prudente;  
por esto le pedí que me pusiese 355  
adonde sin ningún impedimento  
el gran progreso de las fiestas viese;  
porque luego me vino al pensamiento  
de ponerlas en verso numeroso,  
favorecido del febeo aliento. 360

Hízolo así, y yo vi lo que no oso  
pensar, no que decir, que aquí se acorta  
la lengua y el ingenio más curioso.

Que se pase en silencio es lo que importa,  
y que la admiración supla esta falta, 365  
el mismo grandioso caso exhorta,  
puesto que después supe que con alta  
magnífica elegancia y milagrosa,  
donde ni sobra punto ni le falta,  
el curioso Don Juan de Oquina en prosa 370  
la puso y dio a la estampa para gloria  
de nuestra edad, por esto venturosa.

Ni en fabulosa o verdadera historia  
se halla que otras fiestas hayan sido  
ni puedan ser más dignas de memoria. 375

Desde allí, y no sé cómo, fui traído  
adonde vi al gran duque de Pastrana  
mil parabienes dar de bienvenido,  
y que la fama, en la verdad ufana,  
contaba que agradó con su presencia 380  
y con su cortesía sobrehumana;

que fue nuevo Alejandro en la excelencia  
del dar, que satisfizo a todo cuanto  
puede mostrar real magnificencia.

Colmo de admiración, lleno de espanto, 385  
entré en Madrid en traje de romero,  
que es granjería el parecer ser santo;  
y desde lejos me quitó el sombrero  
el famoso ACEVEDO, y dijo: «A Dio,  
voi siate il ben venuto, cavaliero. 390

So parlar zenoese, & tusco anch'io».  
Y respondí: «La vostra signoria  
sia la ben trovata, patron mio».

Topé a LUIS VÉLEZ, lustre y alegría  
y discreción del trato cortesano, 395  
y abracéle en la calle a mediodía.

El pecho, el alma, el corazón, la mano  
di a PEDRO DE MORALES, y un abrazo,  
y alegre recibí a JUSTINIANO.

Al volver de una esquina sentí un brazo 400  
que el cuello me ceñía, miré cuyo,  
y más que gusto me causó embarazo,  
por ser uno de aquellos (no rehúyo  
decirlo) que al contrario se pasaron,  
llevados del cobarde intento suyo; 405  
otros dos al soslayo se llegaron,  
y con la risa falsa del conejo  
y con muchas zalemas me hablaron.

Yo, socarrón; yo, poetón ya viejo,  
volvíles a lo tierno las saludes, 410  
sin mostrar mal talante o sobrecejo.

No dudes, ¡oh lector caro!, no dudes,  
sino que suele el disimulo a veces  
servir de aumento a las demás virtudes;  
dínoslo tú, David, que, aunque pareces 415  
loco en poder de Aquís, de tu cordura,  
fingiendo el loco, la grandeza ofreces.

Dejélos, esperando coyuntura  
y ocasión más secreta para dalles  
vejamen de su miedo o su locura. 420

Si encontraba poetas por las calles,  
me ponía a pensar si eran de aquellos  
huidos, y pasaba sin hablalles.

Poníanseme yertos los cabellos  
de temor no encontrase algún poeta, 425  
de tantos que no pude conocellos,  
que, con puñal buido o con secreta  
almarada me hiciese un abujero  
que fuese al corazón por vía recta,  
aunque no es éste el premio que yo espero 430  
de la fama que a tantos he adquirido  
con alma grata y corazón sincero.

Un cierto mancebito cuellierguido,  
en profesión poeta, y en el traje  
a mil leguas por godo conocido, 435  
lleno de presunción y de coraje  
me dijo: «Bien sé yo, señor Cervantes,  
que puedo ser poeta, aunque soy paje.

Cargastes de poetas ignorantes,  
y dejástesme a mí, que ver deseo 440  
del Parnaso las fuentes elegantes.

Que caducáis sin duda alguna creo.  
¿Creo? No digo bien; mejor diría  
que toco esta verdad y que la veo».

Otro, que, al parecer, de argentería, 445  
de nácar, de cristal, de perlas y oro  
sus infinitos versos componía,  
me dijo, bravo cual corrido toro:  
«No sé yo para qué nadie me puso  
en lista con tan bárbaro decoro». 450

«Así el discreto Apolo lo dispuso»,  
a los dos respondí, «y en este hecho,  
de ignorancia o malicia no me acuso».

Fuime con esto, y, lleno de despecho,  
busqué mi antigua y lóbrega posada, 455  
y arrojéme molido sobre el lecho;  
que cansa, cuando es larga, una jornada.



## Adjunta al Parnaso

Algunos días estuve reparándome de tan largo viaje, al cabo de los cuales salí a ver y a ser visto, y a recibir parabienes de mis amigos y malas vistas de mis enemigos; que, puesto que pienso que no tengo ninguno, todavía no me aseguro de la común suerte.

Sucedió, pues, que saliendo una mañana del monesterio de Atocha, se llegó a mí un mancebo, al parecer de veinte y cuatro años, poco más o menos, todo limpio, todo aseado y todo crujendo gorgaranes; pero con un cuello tan grande y tan almidonado, que creí que para llevarle fueran menester los hombros de otro Adlante. Hijos deste cuello eran dos puños chatos, que, comenzando de las muñecas, subían y trepaban por las canillas del brazo arriba, que parecía que iban a dar asalto a las barbas. No he visto yo yedra tan codiciosa de subir desde el pie de la muralla donde se arrima hasta las almenas, como el ahínco que llevaban estos puños a ir a darse de puñadas con los codos. Finalmente, la exorbitancia del cuello y puños era tal, que en el cuello se escondía y sepultaba el rostro y en los puños los brazos.

Digo, pues, que el tal mancebo se llegó a mí, y con voz grave y reposada me dijo:

-¿Es, por ventura, vuesa merced el señor Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, el que ha pocos días que vino del Parnaso?

A esta pregunta creo, sin duda, que perdí la color del rostro, porque en un instante imaginé y dije entre mí: «¿Si es éste alguno de los poetas que puse o dejé de poner en mi *Viaje*, y viene ahora a darme el pago que él se imagina se me debe?» Pero, sacando fuerzas de flaqueza, le respondí:

-Yo, señor, soy el mismo que vuesa merced dice; ¿qué es lo que se me manda?

Él, luego en oyendo esto, abrió los brazos y me los echó al cuello, y sin duda me besara en la frente si la grandeza del cuello no lo impidiera, y díjome:

-Vuesa merced, señor Cervantes, me tenga por su servidor y por su amigo, porque ha muchos días que le soy muy aficionado, así por sus obras como por la fama de su apacible condición.

Oyendo lo cual, respiré, y los espíritus, que andaban alborotados, se sosegaron; y, abrazándole yo también, con recato de no ahajarle el cuello, le dije:

-Yo no conozco a vuesa merced si no es para servirle; pero por las muestras bien se me trasluce que vuesa merced es muy discreto y muy principal: calidades

que obligan a tener en veneración a la persona que las tiene.

Con estas pasamos otras corteses razones, y anduvieron por alto los ofrecimientos, y, de lance en lance, me dijo:

-Vuesa merced sabrá, señor Cervantes, que yo, por la gracia de Apolo, soy poeta, o lo menos deseo serlo, y mi nombre es Pancraccio de Roncesvalles.

MIGUEL.- Nunca tal creyera, si vuesa merced no me lo hubiera dicho por su misma boca.

PANCRACIO.- Pues, ¿por qué no lo creyera vuesa merced?

MIGUEL.- Porque los poetas por maravilla andan tan atildados como vuesa merced, y es la causa que, como son de ingenio tan altaneros y remontados, antes atienden a las cosas del espíritu que a las del cuerpo.

-Yo, señor -dijo él-, soy mozo, soy rico y soy enamorado; partes que deshacen en mí la flojedad que infunde la poesía. Por la mocedad, tengo brío; con la riqueza, con qué mostrarle; y con el amor, con qué no parecer descuidado.

-Las tres partes del camino -le dije yo-se tiene vuesa merced andadas para llegar a ser buen poeta.

PANCRACIO.- ¿Cuáles son?

MIGUEL.- La de la riqueza y la del amor. Porque los partos de los partos de la persona rica y enamorada son asombros de la avaricia y estímulos de la liberalidad, y en el poeta pobre la mitad de sus divinos partos y pensamientos se los llevan los cuidados de buscar el ordinario sustento. Pero dígame vuesa merced, por su vida: ¿de qué suerte de menestra poética gasta o gusta más?

A lo que respondió:

-No entiendo eso de *menestra poética*.

MIGUEL.- Quiero decir que a qué género de poesía es vuesa merced más inclinado: ¿al lírico, al heroico o al cómico?

-A todos estilos me amaño -respondió él-; pero en el que más me ocupo es en el cómico.

MIGUEL.- De esa manera, habrá vuesa merced compuesto algunas comedias.

PANCRACIO.- Muchas; pero sola una se ha representado.

MIGUEL.- ¿Pareció bien?

PANCRACIO.- Al vulgo, no.

MIGUEL.- ¿Y a los discretos?

PANCRACIO.- Tampoco.

MIGUEL.- ¿La causa?

PANCRACIO.- La causa fue que la achacaron que era larga en los razonamientos, no muy pura en los versos y desmayada en la invención.

-Tachas son esas -respondí yo-que pudieran hacer parecer mal a las del mismo Plauto.

-Y más -dijo él-, que no pudieron juzgalla, porque no la dejaron acabar, según la gritaron. Con todo esto, la echó el autor para otro día; pero, porfiar que porfiar, cinco personas vinieron apenas.-Créame vuesa merced -dije yo-que las comedias tienen días, como algunas mujeres hermosas; y que esto de acertarlas bien va tanto en la ventura como en el ingenio: comedia he visto yo apedreada en Madrid que la han laureado en Toledo, y no por esta primer desgracia deje vuesa merced de proseguir en componerlas, que podrá ser que, cuando menos lo piense, acierte con alguna que le dé crédito y dineros.

-De los dineros no hago caso -respondió él-: más preciaría la fama que cuanto hay. Porque es cosa de grandísimo gusto y de no menos importancia ver salir mucha gente de la comedia, todos contentos, y estar el poeta que la compuso a la puerta del teatro recibiendo parabienes de todos.

-Sus descuentos tienen esas alegrías -le dije yo-; que tal vez suele ser la comedia tan pésima, que no hay quien alce los ojos a mirar al poeta, ni aun él para cuatro calles del coliseo, ni aun los alzan los que la recitaron, avergonzados y corridos de haberse engañado y escogídola por buena.

-¿Y vuesa merced, señor Cervantes -dijo él-, ha sido aficionado a la carátula? ¿Ha compuesto alguna comedia?

-Sí -dije yo-, muchas; y, a no ser más, me parecieran dignas de alabanza, como lo fueron *Los tratos de Argel*, *La Numancia*, *La gran turquesca*, *La batalla naval*, *La Jerusalem*, *La Amaranta o la del mayo*, *El bosque amoroso*, *La única* y *La bizarra Arsinda*, y otras muchas de que no me acuerdo. Mas la que yo más estimo y de la que más me precio fue y es de una llamada *La confusa*, la cual, con paz sea dicho de cuantas comedias de capa y espada hasta hoy se han representado, bien puede tener lugar señalado por buena entre las mejores.

PANCRACIO.- ¿Y agora tiene vuesa merced algunas?

MIGUEL.- Seis tengo, con otros seis entremeses.

PANCRACIO.- Pues, ¿por qué no se representan?

MIGUEL.- Porque ni los autores me buscan, ni yo los voy a buscar a ellos.

PANCRACIO.- No deben de saber que vuesa merced las tiene.

MIGUEL.- Sí saben; pero, como tienen sus poetas paniaguados y les va bien con ellos, no buscan pan de trastrigo. Pero yo pienso darlas a la estampa, para que se vea de espacio lo que pasa apriesa y se disimula, o no se entiende, cuando las representan. Y las comedias tienen sus sazones y tiempos, como los cantares.

Aquí llegábamos con nuestra plática, cuando Pancracio puso la mano en el seno y sacó dél una carta con su cubierta, y, besándola, me la puso en la mano. Leí el sobrescrito y vi que decía desta manera:

A MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA,

EN LA CALLE DE LAS HUERTAS,

FRONTERO DE LAS CASAS DONDE SOLÍA VIVIR

EL PRÍNCIPE DE MARRUECOS, EN MADRID.

AL PORTE, MEDIO REAL,

DIGO, DIECISIETE MARAVEDÍS.

Escandalizóme el porte, y de la declaración del medio real, digo diecisiete; y, volviéndosela, le dije:

-Estando yo en Valladolid, llevaron una carta a mi casa para mí, con un real de porte; recibíola y pagó el porte una sobrina mía, que nunca ella le pagara; pero diome por disculpa que muchas veces me había oído decir que en tres cosas era bien gastado el dinero: en dar limosna, en pagar al buen médico y en el porte

de las cartas, ora sean de amigos o de enemigos; que las de los amigos avisan, y de las de los enemigos se puede tomar algún indicio de sus pensamientos. Diéronmela, y venía en ella un soneto malo, desmayado, sin garbo ni agudeza alguna, diciendo mal de *Don Quijote*; y de lo que me pesó fue del real, y propuse desde entonces de no tomar carta con porte. Así que, si vuesa merced le quiere llevar desta, bien se la puede volver; que yo sé que no me puede importar tanto como el medio real que se me pide.

Rióse muy de gana el señor Roncesvalles, y díjome:

-Aunque soy poeta, no soy tan mísero que me aficionen diez y siete maravedís. Advierta vuesa merced, señor Cervantes, que esta carta por lo menos es del mismo Apolo: él la escribió no ha veinte días en el Parnaso, y me la dio para que a vuesa merced la diese. Vuesa merced la lea, que yo sé que le ha de dar gusto.

-Haré lo que vuesa merced me manda -respondí yo-, pero quiero que, antes de leerla, vuesa merced me la haga de decirme cómo, cuándo y a qué fue al Parnaso.

Y él respondió:

-Cómo fui, fue por mar, y en una fragata que yo y otros diez poetas fletamos en Barcelona; cuándo fui, fue seis días después de la batalla que se dio entre los buenos y los malos poetas; a qué fui, fue a hallarme en ella, por obligarme a ello la profesión mía.

-A buen seguro -dije yo- que fueron vuestras mercedes bien recibidos del señor Apolo.

PANCRACIO.- Sí fuimos, aunque le hallamos muy ocupado a él y a las señoras Piérides, arando y sembrando de sal todo aquel término del campo donde se dio la batalla. Preguntéle para qué se hacía aquello, y respondiome que, así como de los dientes de la serpiente de Cadmo habían nacido hombres armados, y de cada cabeza cortada de la Hidra que mató Hércules habían renacido otras siete, y de las gotas de la sangre de la cabeza de Medusa se había llenado de serpientes toda la Libia, de la misma manera, de la sangre podrida de los malos poetas que en aquel sitio habían sido muertos comenzaban a nacer, del tamaño de ratones, otros poetillas rateros, que llevaban camino de henchir toda la tierra de aquella mala simiente; y que por esto se araba aquel lugar y se sembraba de sal, como si fuera casa de traidores.

En oyendo esto, abrí luego la carta y vi que decía: APOLO DÉLFICO

## A MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA

### SALUD

El señor Pancracio Roncesvalles, llevador desta, dirá a vuesa merced, señor Miguel de Cervantes, en qué me halló ocupado el día que llegó a verme con sus amigos. Y yo digo que estoy muy quejoso de la descortesía que conmigo se usó en partirse vuesa merced deste monte sin despedirse de mí ni de mis hijas, sabiendo cuánto le soy aficionado, y las Musas por el consiguiente; pero si se me da por disculpa que le llevó el deseo de ver a su mecenas el gran conde de Lemos, en las fiestas famosas de Nápoles, yo la acepto y le perdono.

Después que vuesa merced partió deste lugar, me han sucedido muchas desgracias y me he visto en grandes aprietos, especialmente por consumir y acabar los poetas que iban naciendo de la sangre de los malos que aquí murieron; aunque ya, gracias al cielo y a mi industria, este daño está remediado.

No sé si del ruido de la batalla o del vapor que arrojó de sí la tierra empapada en la sangre de los contrarios, me han dado unos váguidos de cabeza, que verdaderamente me tienen como tonto, y no acierto a escribir cosa que sea de gusto ni de provecho; así, si vuesa merced viere por allá que algunos poetas, aunque sean de los más famosos, escriben y componen impertinencias y cosas de poco fruto, no los culpe ni los tenga en menos, sino que disimule con ellos; que, pues yo, que soy el padre y el inventor de la poesía, deliro y parezco mentecato, no es mucho que lo parezcan ellos.

Envío a vuesa merced unos privilegios, ordenanzas y advertimientos tocantes a los poetas; vuesa merced los haga guardar y cumplir al pie de la letra, que para todo ello doy a vuesa merced mi poder cumplido, cuanto de derecho se requiere. Entre los poetas que aquí vinieron con el señor Pancracio Roncesvalles, se quejaron algunos de que no iban en la lista de los que Mercurio llevó a España, y que así, vuesa merced no los había puesto en su *Viaje*. Yo les dije que la culpa era mía y no de vuesa merced; pero que el remedio deste daño estaba en que procurasen ellos ser famosos por sus obras, que ellas por sí mismas les darían fama y claro renombre, sin andar mendigando ajenas alabanzas.

De mano en mano, si se ofreciere ocasión de mensajero, iré enviando más privilegios y avisando de lo que en este monte pasare. Vuesa merced haga lo mismo, avisándome de su salud y de la de todos los amigos.

Al famoso VINCENTE ESPINEL dará vuesa merced mis encomiendas, como a uno de los más antiguos y verdaderos amigos que yo tengo.

Si don FRANCISCO DE QUEVEDO no hubiere partido para venir a Sicilia,

donde le esperan, tóquele vuesa merced la mano, y dígale que no deje de llegar a verme, pues estaremos tan cerca; que cuando aquí vino, por la súbita partida, no tuve lugar de hablarle. Si vuesa merced encontrare por allá algún tráfuga de los veinte que se pasaron al bando contrario, no les diga nada, ni los aflija; que harta mala ventura tienen, pues son como demonios, que se llevan la pena y la confusión con ellos mismos doquiera que vayan.

Vuesa merced tenga cuenta con su salud, y mire por sí, y guárdese de mí, especialmente en los caniculares; que, aunque le soy amigo, en tales días no va en mi mano, ni miro en obligaciones ni en amistades.

Al señor Pancracio Roncesvalles téngale vuesa merced por amigo, y comuníquelo; y pues es rico, no se le dé nada que sea mal poeta.

Y con esto, nuestro Señor guarde a vuesa merced como puede y yo deseo.

Del Parnaso, a 22 de julio, el día que me calzo las espuelas para subirme sobre la Canícula, 1614.

Servidor de vuesa merced,

*Apolo Lúcido*. En acabando la carta, vi que en un papel aparte venía escrito:

## PRIVILEGIOS, ORDENANZAS Y ADVERTENCIAS

### QUE APOLO ENVÍA A LOS POETAS

#### ESPAÑOLES

Es el primero, que algunos poetas sean conocidos tanto por el desaliño de sus personas como por la fama de sus versos.

Ítem, que si algún poeta dijere que es pobre, sea luego creído por su simple palabra, sin otro juramento o averiguación alguna.

Ordénase que todo poeta sea de blanda y de suave condición, y que no mire en puntos, aunque los traiga sueltos en sus medias.

Ítem, que si algún poeta llegare a casa de algún su amigo o conocido, y estuvieren comiendo, y le convidare, que, aunque él jure que ya ha comido, no se le crea en ninguna manera, sino que le hagan comer por fuerza, que en tal caso no se le hará muy grande.

Ítem, que el más pobre poeta del mundo, como no sea de los Adanes y Matusalenes, pueda decir que es enamorado, aunque no lo esté, y poner el nombre a su dama como más le viniere a cuento: ora llamándola Amarili, ora Anarda, ora Clori, ora Filis, ora Fílida, o ya Juana Téllez, o como más gustare,



sin que desto se le pueda pedir ni pida razón alguna.

Ítem, se ordena que todo poeta, de cualquiera calidad y condición que sea, sea tenido y le tengan por hijodalgo, en razón del generoso ejercicio en que se ocupa, como son tenidos por cristianos viejos los niños que llaman de la piedra.

Ítem, se advierte que ningún poeta sea osado de escribir versos en alabanzas de príncipes y señores, por ser mi intención y advertida voluntad que la lisonja ni la adulación no atraviesen los umbrales de mi casa.

Ítem, que todo poeta cómico que felizmente hubiere sacado a luz tres comedias, pueda entrar sin pagar en los teatros, si ya no fuere la limosna de la segunda puerta, y aun esta, si pudiere ser, la escuse.

Ítem, se advierte que si algún poeta quisiere dar a la estampa algún libro que él hubiere compuesto, no se dé a entender que por dirigirle a algún monarca el tal libro ha de ser estimado, porque si él no es bueno, no le adobará la dirección, aunque sea hecha al prior de Guadalupe.

Ítem, se advierte que todo poeta no se desprecie de decir que lo es; que si fuere bueno, será digno de alabanza; y si malo, no faltará quien lo alabe; que cuando nace la escoba, *etc.*

Ítem, que todo buen poeta pueda disponer de mí y de lo que hay en el cielo a su beneplácito; conviene a saber: que los rayos de mi cabellera los pueda trasladar y aplicar a los cabellos de su dama, y hacer dos soles sus ojos, que conmigo serán tres, y así andará el mundo más alumbrado; y de las estrellas, signos y planetas puede servirse de modo que, cuando menos lo piense, la tenga hecha una esfera celeste. Ítem, que todo poeta a quien sus versos le hubieren dado a entender que lo es, se estime y tenga en mucho, ateniéndose a aquel refrán: «Ruín sea el que por ruín se tiene».

Ítem, se ordena que ningún poeta grave haga corrillo en lugares públicos recitando sus versos; que los que son buenos, en las aulas de Atenas se habían de recitar, que no en las plazas.

Ítem, se da por aviso particular que si alguna madre tuviere hijos pequeñuelos traviesos y llorones, los pueda amenazar y espantar con el coco, diciéndoles: «Guardaos, niños, que viene el poeta fulano, que os echará con sus malos versos en la sima de Cabra o en el pozo Airón».

Ítem, que los días de ayuno no se entienda que los ha quebrantado el poeta que aquella mañana se ha comido las uñas al hacer de sus versos.

Ítem, se ordena que todo poeta que diere en ser espadachín, valentón y arrojado, por aquella parte de la valentía se le desagüe y vaya la fama que podía alcanzar por sus buenos versos.

Ítem, se advierte que no ha de ser tenido por ladrón el poeta que hurtare algún verso ajeno y le encajare entre los suyos, como no sea todo el concepto y toda la

copla entera, que en tal caso tan ladrón es como Caco.

Ítem, que todo buen poeta, aunque no haya compuesto poema heroico, ni sacado al teatro del mundo obras grandes, con cualesquiera, aunque sean pocas, pueda alcanzar renombre de divino, como le alcanzaron Garcilaso de la Vega, Francisco de Figueroa, el capitán Francisco de Aldana y Hernando de Herrera.

Ítem, se da aviso que si algún poeta fuere favorecido de algún príncipe, ni le visite a menudo ni le pida nada, sino déjese llevar de la corriente de su ventura; que el que tiene providencia de sustentar las sabandijas de la tierra y los gusarapos del agua, la tendrá de alimentar a un poeta, por sabandija que sea. En suma, estos fueron los privilegios, advertencias y ordenanzas que Apolo me envió y el señor Pancracio de Roncesvalles me trujo, con quien quedé en mucha amistad; y los dos quedamos de concierto de despachar un propio con la respuesta al señor Apolo, con las nuevas desta Corte. Daráse noticia del día, para que todos sus aficionados le escriban.

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## The Criticism



## A LECTURE ON 'DON QUIXOTE' by Samuel Taylor Coleridge



### CERVANTES.

Born at Madrid, 1547;-Shakspeare, 1564; both put off mortality on the same day, the 23rd of April, 1616, — the one in the sixty-ninth, the other in the fifty-second, year of his life. The resemblance in their physiognomies is striking, but with a predominance of acuteness in Cervantes, and of reflection in Shakspeare, which is the specific difference between the Spanish and English characters of mind.

I. The nature and eminence of Symbolical writing; —

II. Madness, and its different sorts, (considered without pretension to medical science); —

To each of these, or at least to my own notions respecting them, I must devote a few words of explanation, in order to render the after critique on Don Quixote, the master work of Cervantes' and his country's genius easily and throughout intelligible. This is not the least valuable, though it may most often be felt by us both as the heaviest and least entertaining portion of these critical disquisitions: for without it, I must have foregone one at least of the two appropriate objects of a Lecture, that of interesting you during its delivery, and of leaving behind in your minds the germs of after-thought, and the materials for future enjoyment. To have been assured by several of my intelligent auditors that they have reperused Hamlet or Othello with increased satisfaction in consequence of the new points of view in which I had placed those characters — is the highest compliment I could receive or desire; and should the address of this evening open out a new source of pleasure, or enlarge the former in your perusal of Don Quixote, it will compensate for the failure of any personal or temporary object.

I. The Symbolical cannot, perhaps, be better defined in distinction from the Allegorical, than that it is always itself a part of that, of the whole of which it is the representative.— “Here comes a sail,” — (that is, a ship) is a symbolical expression. “Behold our lion!” when we speak of some gallant soldier, is allegorical. Of most importance to our present subject is this point, that the latter (the allegory) cannot be other than spoken consciously; — whereas in the former



(the symbol) it is very possible that the general truth represented may be working unconsciously in the writer's mind during the construction of the symbol; — and it proves itself by being produced out of his own mind, — as the Don Quixote out of the perfectly sane mind of Cervantes, and not by outward observation, or historically. The advantage of symbolical writing over allegory is, that it presumes no disjunction of faculties, but simple predominance.

II. Madness may be divided as —

1. hypochondriasis; or, the man is out of his senses.
2. derangement of the understanding; or, the man is out of his wits.
3. loss of reason.
4. frenzy, or derangement of the sensations.

Cervantes's own preface to Don Quixote is a perfect model of the gentle, every where intelligible, irony in the best essays of the Tatler and the Spectator. Equally natural and easy, Cervantes is more spirited than Addison; whilst he blends with the terseness of Swift, an exquisite flow and music of style, and above all, contrasts with the latter by the sweet temper of a superior mind, which saw the follies of mankind, and was even at the moment suffering severely under hard mistreatment; and yet seems every where to have but one thought as the undersong— “Brethren! with all your faults I love you still!” — or as a mother that chides the child she loves, with one hand holds up the rod, and with the other wipes off each tear as it drops!

Don Quixote was neither fettered to the earth by want, nor holden in its embraces by wealth; — of which, with the temperance natural to his country, as a Spaniard, he had both far too little, and somewhat too much, to be under any necessity of thinking about it. His age too, fifty, may be well supposed to prevent his mind from being tempted out of itself by any of the lower passions; — while his habits, as a very early riser and a keen sportsman, were such as kept his spare body in serviceable subjection to his will, and yet by the play of hope that accompanies pursuit, not only permitted, but assisted, his fancy in shaping what it would. Nor must we omit his meagerness and entire featureliness, face and frame, which Cervantes gives us at once: “It is said that his surname was ‘Quixada’ or ‘Quesada,’” &c. — even in this trifle showing an exquisite judgment; — just once insinuating the association of ‘lantern-jaws’ into the reader's mind, yet not retaining it obtrusively like the names in old farces and in the Pilgrim's Progress, — but taking for the regular appellative one which had the no meaning of a proper name in real life, and which yet was capable of recalling a number of very different, but all pertinent, recollections, as old armour, the precious metals hidden in the ore, &c. Don Quixote's leanness and featureliness are happy exponents of the excess of the formative or imaginative

in him, contrasted with Sancho's plump rotundity, and reciprocity of external impression.

He has no knowledge of the sciences or scientific arts which give to the meanest portions of matter an intellectual interest, and which enable the mind to decypher in the world of the senses the invisible agency — that alone, of which the world's phenomena are the effects and manifestations, — and thus, as in a mirror, to contemplate its own reflex, its life in the powers, its imagination in the symbolic forms, its moral instincts in the final causes, and its reason in the laws of material nature: but — estranged from all the motives to observation from self-interest — the persons that surround him too few and too familiar to enter into any connection with his thoughts, or to require any adaptation of his conduct to their particular characters or relations to himself — his judgment lies fallow, with nothing to excite, nothing to employ it. Yet, — and here is the point, where genius even of the most perfect kind, allotted but to few in the course of many ages, does not preclude the necessity in part, and in part counterbalance the craving by sanity of judgment, without which genius either cannot be, or cannot at least manifest itself, — the dependency of our nature asks for some confirmation from without, though it be only from the shadows of other men's fictions.

Too uninformed, and with too narrow a sphere of power and opportunity to rise into the scientific artist, or to be himself a patron of art, and with too deep a principle and too much innocence to become a mere projector, Don Quixote has recourse to romances: —

His curiosity and extravagant fondness herein arrived at that pitch, that he sold many acres of arable land to purchase books of knight-errantry, and carried home all he could lay hands on of that kind! (C.I.)

The more remote these romances were from the language of common life, the more akin on that very account were they to the shapeless dreams and strivings of his own mind; — a mind, which possessed not the highest order of genius which lives in an atmosphere of power over mankind, but that minor kind which, in its restlessness, seeks for a vivid representative of its own wishes, and substitutes the movements of that objective puppet for an exercise of actual power in and by itself. The more wild and improbable these romances were, the more were they akin to his will, which had been in the habit of acting as an unlimited monarch over the creations of his fancy! Hence observe how the startling of the remaining common sense, like a glimmering before its death, in the notice of the impossible-improbable of Don Belianis, is dismissed by Don Quixote as impertinent: —

'He had some doubt' as to the dreadful wounds which Don Belianis gave and

received: for he imagined, that notwithstanding the most expert surgeons had cured him, his face and whole body must still be full of seams and scars. 'Nevertheless' he commended in his author the concluding his book with a promise of that unfinishable adventure! C. 1.

Hence also his first intention to turn author; but who, with such a restless struggle within him, could content himself with writing in a remote village among apathists and ignorants? During his colloquies with the village priest and the barber surgeon, in which the fervour of critical controversy feeds the passion and gives reality to its object — what more natural than that the mental striving should become an eddy? — madness may perhaps be denned as the circling in a stream which should be progressive and adaptive: Don Quixote grows at length to be a man out of his wits; his understanding is deranged; and hence without the least deviation from the truth of nature, without losing the least trait of personal individuality, he becomes a substantial living allegory, or personification of the reason and the moral sense, divested of the judgment and the understanding. Sancho is the converse. He is the common sense without reason or imagination; and Cervantes not only shows the excellence and power of reason in, Don Quixote, but in both him and Sancho the mischiefs resulting from a severance of the two main constituents of sound intellectual and moral action. Put him and his master together, and they form a perfect intellect; but they are separated and without cement; and hence each having a need of the other for its own completeness, each has at times a mastery over the other. For the common sense, although it may see the practical inapplicability of the dictates of the imagination or abstract reason, yet cannot help submitting to them. These two characters possess the world, alternately and interchangeably the cheater and the cheated. To impersonate them, and to combine the permanent with the individual, is one of the highest creations of genius, and has been achieved by Cervantes and Shakspeare, almost alone.

Observations on particular passages,

(B. I. c. 1.)

But not altogether approving of his having broken it to pieces with so much ease, to secure himself from the like danger for the future, he made it over again, fencing it with small bars of iron within, in such a manner, 'that he rested satisfied of its strength; and without caring to make a fresh experiment on it, he approved and looked upon it as a most excellent helmet.'

His not trying his improved scull-cap is an exquisite trait of human character,

founded on the oppugnancy of the soul in such a state to any disturbance by doubt of its own broodings. Even the long deliberation about his horse's name is full of meaning; — for in these day-dreams the greater part of the history passes and is carried on in words, which look forward to other words as what will be said of them.

(Ib.)

Near the place where he lived, there dwelt a very comely country lass, with whom he had formerly been in love; though, as it is supposed, she never knew it, nor troubled herself about it.

The nascent love for the country lass, but without any attempt at utterance, or an opportunity of knowing her, except as the hint — the [Greek (transliterated): *oti esti*] — of the inward imagination, is happily conceived in both parts; — first, as confirmative of the shrinking back of the mind on itself, and its dread of having a cherished image destroyed by its own judgment; and secondly, as showing how necessarily love is the passion of novels. Novels are to love as fairy tales to dreams. I never knew but two men of taste and feeling who could not understand why I was delighted with the Arabian Nights' Tales, and they were likewise the only persons in my knowledge who scarcely remembered having ever dreamed. Magic and war — itself a magic — are the day-dreams of childhood; love is the day-dream of youth and early manhood.

(C. 2.)

"Scarcely had ruddy Phoebus spread the golden tresses of his beauteous hair over the face of the wide and spacious earth; and scarcely had the little painted birds, with the sweet and mellifluous harmony of their forked tongues, saluted the approach of rosy Aurora, who, quitting the soft couch of her jealous husband, disclosed herself to mortals through the gates of the Mauchegan horizon; when the renowned Don Quixote," &c.

How happily already is the abstraction from the senses, from observation, and the consequent confusion of the judgment, marked in this description! The knight is describing objects immediate to his senses and sensations without borrowing a single trait from either. Would it be difficult to find parallel

descriptions in Dryden's plays and in those of his successors?

(C. 3.) The host is here happily conceived as one who from his past life as a sharper, was capable of entering into and humouring the knight, and so perfectly in character, that he precludes a considerable source of improbability in the future narrative, by enforcing upon Don Quixote the necessity of taking money with him.

(C. 3.)

"Ho, there, whoever thou art, rash knight, that approachest to touch the arms of the most valorous adventurer that ever girded sword," &c.

Don Quixote's high eulogiums on himself— "the most valorous adventurer!" — but it is not himself that he has before him, but the idol of his imagination, the imaginary being whom he is acting. And this, that it is entirely a third person, excuses his heart from the otherwise inevitable charge of selfish vanity; and so by madness itself he preserves our esteem, and renders those actions natural by which he, the first person, deserves it.

(C. 4.) Andres and his master. The manner in which Don Quixote redressed this wrong, is a picture of the true revolutionary passion in its first honest state, while it is yet only a bewilderment of the understanding. You have a benevolence limitless in its prayers, which are in fact aspirations towards omnipotence; but between it and beneficence the bridge of judgment — that is, of measurement of personal power — intervenes, and must be passed. Otherwise you will be bruised by the leap into the chasm, or be drowned in the revolutionary river, and drag others with you to the same fate.

(C. 4.)

Merchants of Toledo.

When they were come so near as to be seen and heard, Don Quixote raised his voice, and with arrogant air cried out: "Let the whole world stand; if the whole world does not confess that there is not in the whole world a damsel more beautiful than," &c.

Now mark the presumption which follows the self-complacency of the last act! That was an honest attempt to redress a real wrong; this is an arbitrary determination to enforce a Brissotine or Rousseau's ideal on all his fellow

creatures.

Let the whole world stand!

‘If there had been any experience in proof of the excellence of our code, where would be our superiority in this enlightened age?’

“No! the business is that without seeing her, you believe, confess, affirm, swear, and maintain it; *and if not, I challenge you all to battle.*”

Next see the persecution and fury excited by opposition however moderate! The only words listened to are those, that without their context and their conditionals, and transformed into positive assertions, might give some shadow of excuse for the violence shown! This rich story ends, to the compassion of the men in their senses, in a sound rib-roasting of the idealist by the muleteer, the mob. And happy for thee, poor knight! that the mob were against thee! For had they been with thee, by the change of the moon and of them, thy head would have been off.

(C. 5.) first part — The idealist recollects the causes that had been accessory to the reverse and attempts to remove them — too late. He is beaten and disgraced.

(C. 6.) This chapter on Don Quixote’s library proves that the author did not wish to destroy the romances, but to cause them to be read as romances — that is, for their merits as poetry.

(C. 7.)

Among other things, Don Quixote told him, he should dispose himself to go with him willingly; — for some time or other such an adventure might present, that an island might be won, in the turn of a hand, and he be left governor thereof.

At length the promises of the imaginative reason begin to act on the plump, sensual, honest common sense accomplice, — but unhappily not in the same person, and without the ‘copula’ of the judgment, — in hopes of the substantial good things, of which the former contemplated only the glory and the colours.

(C. 7.)

Sancho Panza went riding upon his ass, like any patriarch, with his wallet and leathern bottle, and with a vehement desire to find himself governor of the island which his master had promised him.

The first relief from regular labour is so pleasant to poor Sancho!

(C. 8.)

"I no gentleman! I swear by the great God, thou liest, as I am a Christian. Biscainer by land, gentleman by sea, gentleman for the devil, and thou liest: look then if thou hast any thing else to say."

This Biscainer is an excellent image of the prejudices and bigotry provoked by the idealism of a speculator. This story happily detects the trick which our imagination plays in the description of single combats: only change the preconception of the magnificence of the combatants, and all is gone.

(B. II. c. 2.)

"Be pleased, my lord Don Quixote, to bestow upon me the government of that island," &c.

Sancho's eagerness for his government, the nascent lust of actual democracy, or isocracy!

(C. 2.)

"But tell me, on your life, have you ever seen a more valorous knight than I, upon the whole face of the known earth? Have you read in story of any other, who has, or ever had, more bravery in assailing, more breath in holding out, more dexterity in wounding, or more address in giving a fall?"—"The truth is," answered Sancho, "that I never read any history at all; for I can neither read nor write; but what I dare affirm is, that I never served a bolder master," &c.

This appeal to Sancho, and Sancho's answer are exquisitely humorous. It is impossible not to think of the French bulletins and proclamations. Remark the necessity under which we are of being sympathized with, fly as high into abstraction as we may, and how constantly the imagination is recalled to the ground of our common humanity! And note a little further on, the knight's easy vaunting of his balsam, and his quietly deferring the making and application of it.

(C. 3.) The speech before the goatherds:

"Happy times and happy ages," &c.

Note the rhythm of this, and the admirable beauty and wisdom of the thoughts in themselves, but the total want of judgment in Don Quixote's addressing them to such an audience.

(B. III. c. 3.) Don Quixote's balsam, and the vomiting and consequent relief; an excellent hit at 'panacea nostrums', which cure the patient by his being himself cured of the medicine by revolting nature.

(C. 4.)

"Peace! and have patience; the day will come," &c.

The perpetual promises of the imagination!

(Ib.)

"Your Worship," said Sancho, "would make a better preacher than knight errant!"

Exactly so. This is the true moral.

(C. 6.) The uncommon beauty of the description in the commencement of this chapter. In truth, the whole of it seems to put all nature in its heights and its humiliations, before us.

(Ib.) Sancho's story of the goats:

"Make account, he carried them all over," said Don Quixote, "and do not be going and coming in this manner; for at this rate, you will not have done carrying them over in a twelvemonth." "How many are passed already?" said Sancho, &c.

Observe the happy contrast between the all-generalizing mind of the mad knight, and Sancho's all-particularizing memory. How admirable a symbol of the dependence of all 'copula' on the higher powers of the mind, with the single exception of the succession in time and the accidental relations of space. Men of mere common sense have no theory or means of making one fact more important or prominent than the rest; if they lose one link, all is lost. Compare Mrs. Quickly and the Tapster. And note also Sancho's good heart, when his master is about to leave him. Don Quixote's conduct upon discovering the fulling-hammers, proves he was meant to be in his senses. Nothing can be better conceived than his fit of passion at Sancho's laughing, and his sophism of self-justification by the courage he had shown.

Sancho is by this time cured, through experience, as far as his own errors are concerned; yet still is he lured on by the unconquerable awe of his master's



superiority, even when he is cheating him.

(C. 8.) The adventure of the Galley-slaves. I think this is the only passage of moment in which Cervantes slips the mask of his hero, and speaks for himself.

(C. 9.)

Don Quixote desired to have it, and bade him take the money, and keep it for himself. Sancho kissed his hands for the favour, &c.

Observe Sancho's eagerness to avail himself of the permission of his master, who, in the war sports of knight-errantry, had, without any selfish dishonesty, overlooked the 'meum' and 'tuum.' Sancho's selfishness is modified by his involuntary goodness of heart, and Don Quixote's flighty goodness is debased by the involuntary or unconscious selfishness of his vanity and self-applause.

(C. 10.) Cardenio is the madman of passion, who meets and easily overthrows for the moment the madman of imagination. And note the contagion of madness of any kind, upon Don Quixote's interruption of Cardenio's story.

(C. 11.)

Perhaps the best specimen of Sancho's proverbializing is this:

"And I (Don Q.) say again, they lie, and will lie two hundred times more, all who say, or think her so." "I neither say, nor think so," answered Sancho: "let those who say it, eat the lie, and swallow it with their bread: whether they were guilty or no, they have given an account to God before now: I come from my vineyard, I know nothing; I am no friend to inquiring into other men's lives; 'for' he that buys and lies shall find the lie left in his purse behind; 'besides,' naked was I born, and naked I remain; I neither win nor lose; if they were guilty, what is that to me? Many think to find bacon, where there is not so much as a pin to hang it on: 'but' who can hedge in the cuckoo? 'Especially,' do they spare God himself?"

(Ib.)

"And it is no great matter, if it be in another hand; for by what I remember, Dulcinea can neither write nor read," &c.

The wonderful twilight of the mind! and mark Cervantes's courage in daring to present it, and trust to a distant posterity for an appreciation of its truth to

nature.

(P. II. B. III. c. 9.) Sancho's account of what he had seen on Clavileno is a counterpart in his style to Don Quixote's adventures in the cave of Montesinos. This last is the only impeachment of the knight's moral character; Cervantes just gives one instance of the veracity failing before the strong cravings of the imagination for something real and external; the picture would not have been complete without this; and yet it is so well managed, that the reader has no unpleasant sense of Don Quixote having told a lie. It is evident that he hardly knows whether it was a dream or not; and goes to the enchanter to inquire the real nature of the adventure.

#### SUMMARY ON CERVANTES.

A Castilian of refined manners; a gentleman, true to religion, and true to honour.

A scholar and a soldier, and fought under the banners of Don John of Austria, at Lepanto, lost his arm and was captured.

Endured slavery not only with fortitude, but with mirth; and by the superiority of nature, mastered and overawed his barbarian owner.

Finally ransomed, he resumed his native destiny, the awful task of achieving fame; and for that reason died poor and a prisoner, while nobles and kings over their goblets of gold gave relish to their pleasures by the charms of his divine genius. He was the inventor of novels for the Spaniards, and in his *Persilis* and *Sigismunda*, the English may find the germ of their *Robinson Crusoe*.

The world was a drama to him. His own thoughts, in spite of poverty and sickness, perpetuated for him the feelings of youth. He painted only what he knew and had looked into, but he knew and had looked into much indeed; and his imagination was ever at hand to adapt and modify the world of his experience. Of delicious love he fabled, yet with stainless virtue.

## CERVANTES by William Dean Howells



I recall very fully the moment and the place when I first heard of 'Don Quixote,' while as yet I could not connect it very distinctly with anybody's authorship. I was still too young to conceive of authorship, even in my own case, and wrote my miserable verses without any notion of literature, or of anything but the pleasure of seeing them actually come out rightly rhymed and measured. The moment was at the close of a summer's day just before supper, which, in our house, we had lawlessly late, and the place was the kitchen where my mother was going about her work, and listening as she could to what my father was telling my brother and me and an apprentice of ours, who was like a brother to us both, of a book that he had once read. We boys were all shelling peas, but the story, as it went on, rapt us from the poor employ, and whatever our fingers were doing, our spirits were away in that strange land of adventures and mishaps, where the fevered life of the knight truly without fear and without reproach burned itself out. I dare say that my father tried to make us understand the satirical purpose of the book. I vaguely remember his speaking of the books of chivalry it was meant to ridicule; but a boy could not care for this, and what I longed to do at once was to get that book and plunge into its story. He told us at random of the attack on the windmills and the flocks of sheep, of the night in the valley of the fulling-mills with their trip-hammers, of the inn and the muleteers, of the tossing of Sancho in the blanket, of the island that was given him to govern, and of all the merry pranks at the duke's and duchess's, of the liberation of the galley-slaves, of the capture of Mambrino's helmet, and of Sancho's invention of the enchanted Dulcinea, and whatever else there was wonderful and delightful in the most wonderful and delightful book in the world. I do not know when or where my father got it for me, and I am aware of an appreciable time that passed between my hearing of it and my having it. The event must have been most important to me, and it is strange I cannot fix the moment when the precious story came into my hands; though for the matter of that there is nothing more capricious than a child's memory, what it will hold and what it will lose.

It is certain my Don Quixote was in two small, stout volumes not much bigger each than my Goldsmith's 'Greece', bound in a sort of law-calf, well fitted to withstand the wear they were destined to undergo. The translation was, of course, the old-fashioned version of Jervas, which, whether it was a closely

faithful version or not, was honest eighteenth-century English, and reported faithfully enough the spirit of the original. If it had any literary influence with me the influence must have been good. But I cannot make out that I was sensible of the literature; it was the forever enchanting story that I enjoyed. I exulted in the boundless freedom of the design; the open air of that immense scene, where adventure followed adventure with the natural sequence of life, and the days and the nights were not long enough for the events that thronged them, amidst the fields and woods, the streams and hills, the highways and byways, hostelries and hovels, prisons and palaces, which were the setting of that matchless history. I took it as simply as I took everything else in the world about me. It was full of meaning that I could not grasp, and there were significances of the kind that literature unhappily abounds in, but they were lost upon my innocence. I did not know whether it was well written or not; I never thought about that; it was simply there in its vast entirety, its inexhaustible opulence, and I was rich in it beyond the dreams of avarice.

My father must have told us that night about Cervantes as well as about his 'Don Quixote', for I seem to have known from the beginning that he was once a slave in Algiers, and that he had lost a hand in battle, and I loved him with a sort of personal affection, as if he were still living and he could somehow return my love. His name and nature endeared the Spanish name and nature to me, so that they were always my romance, and to this day I cannot meet a Spanish man without clothing him in something of the honor and worship I lavished upon Cervantes when I was a child. While I was in the full flush of this ardor there came to see our school, one day, a Mexican gentleman who was studying the American system of education; a mild, fat, saffron man, whom I could almost have died to please for Cervantes' and Don Quixote's sake, because I knew he spoke their tongue. But he smiled upon us all, and I had no chance to distinguish myself from the rest by any act of devotion before the blessed vision faded, though for long afterwards, in impassioned reveries, I accosted him and claimed him kindred because of my fealty, and because I would have been Spanish if I could.

I would not have had the boy-world about me know anything of these fond dreams; but it was my tastes alone, my passions, which were alien there; in everything else I was as much a citizen as any boy who had never heard of Don Quixote. But I believe that I carried the book about with me most of the time, so as not to lose any chance moment of reading it. Even in the blank of certain years, when I added little other reading to my store, I must still have been reading it. This was after we had removed from the town where the earlier years of my boyhood were passed, and I had barely adjusted myself to the strange

environment when one of my uncles asked me to come with him and learn the drug business, in the place, forty miles away, where he practised medicine. We made the long journey, longer than any I have made since, in the stage-coach of those days, and we arrived at his house about twilight, he glad to get home, and I sick to death with yearning for the home I had left. I do not know how it was that in this state, when all the world was one hopeless blackness around me, I should have got my 'Don Quixote' out of my bag; I seem to have had it with me as an essential part of my equipment for my new career. Perhaps I had been asked to show it, with the notion of beguiling me from my misery; perhaps I was myself trying to drown my sorrows in it. But anyhow I have before me now the vision of my sweet young aunt and her young sister looking over her shoulder, as they stood together on the lawn in the summer evening light. My aunt held my Don Quixote open in one hand, while she clasped with the other the child she carried on her arm. She looked at the book, and then from time to time she looked at me, very kindly but very curiously, with a faint smile, so that as I stood there, inwardly writhing in my bashfulness, I had the sense that in her eyes I was a queer boy. She returned the book without comment, after some questions, and I took it off to my room, where the confidential friend of Cervantes cried himself to sleep.

In the morning I rose up and told them I could not stand it, and I was going home. Nothing they could say availed, and my uncle went down to the stage-office with me and took my passage back.

The horror of cholera was then in the land; and we heard in the stage-office that a man lay dead of it in the hotel overhead. But my uncle led me to his drugstore, where the stage was to call for me, and made me taste a little camphor; with this prophylactic, Cervantes and I somehow got home together alive.

The reading of 'Don Quixote' went on throughout my boyhood, so that I cannot recall any distinctive period of it when I was not, more or less, reading that book. In a boy's way I knew it well when I was ten, and a few years ago, when I was fifty, I took it up in the admirable new version of Ormsby, and found it so full of myself and of my own irrevocable past that I did not find it very gay. But I made a great many discoveries in it; things I had not dreamt of were there, and must always have been there, and other things wore a new face, and made a new effect upon me. I had my doubts, my reserves, where once I had given it my whole heart without question, and yet in what formed the greatness of the book it seemed to me greater than ever. I believe that its free and simple design, where event follows event without the fettering control of intrigue, but where all grows naturally out of character and conditions, is the supreme form of fiction; and I

cannot help thinking that if we ever have a great American novel it must be built upon some such large and noble lines. As for the central figure, Don Quixote himself, in his dignity and generosity, his unselfish ideals, and his fearless devotion to them, he is always heroic and beautiful; and I was glad to find in my latest look at his history that I had truly conceived of him at first, and had felt the sublimity of his nature. I did not want to laugh at him so much, and I could not laugh at all any more at some of the things done to him. Once they seemed funny, but now only cruel, and even stupid, so that it was strange to realize his qualities and indignities as both flowing from the same mind. But in my mature experience, which threw a broader light on the fable, I was happy to keep my old love of an author who had been almost personally, dear to me.

## **An Extract from 'THE BODY OF THE NATION' by Mark Twain**



A curious exemplification of the power of a single book for good or harm is shown in the effects wrought by 'Don Quixote' and those wrought by 'Ivanhoe.' The first swept the world's admiration for the medieval chivalry-silliness out of existence; and the other restored it. As far as our South is concerned, the good work done by Cervantes is pretty nearly a dead letter, so effectually has Scott's pernicious work undermined it.

## An Extract from 'HUMOUR' by G. K. Chesterton



Thirdly, there appeared with the great Cervantes an element new in its explicit expression; that grand and very Christian quality of the man who laughs at himself. Cervantes was himself more chivalrous than most men when he began to mock at chivalry. Since his time, humour in this purely humorous sense, the confession of complexity and weakness already remarked upon, has been a sort of secret of the high culture of the West. The influence of Cervantes and Rabelais, and the rest runs through all modern letters, especially our own; taking on a shrewd and acid tang in Swift, a more delicate and perhaps more dubious taste in Sterne, passing on through every sort of experiment of essay or comedy, pausing upon the pastoral gaiety of Goldsmith or going on finally to bring forth, like a great birth of giants, the walking caricatures of Dickens. Nor is it altogether a national accident that the tradition has here been followed in our own nation. For it is true that humour, in the special and even limited sense here given to it, humour as distinct from wit, from satire, from irony or from many things that may legitimately produce amusement, has been a thing strongly and specially present in English life and letters. That we may not in turn depreciate the wit and logic of the rest of the world, it will be well to remember that humour does originate in the half-conscious eccentric, that it is in part a confession of inconsistency, but, when all is said, it has added a new beauty to human life. It may even be noted that there has appeared especially in England a new variety of humour, more properly to be called Nonsense. Nonsense may be described as humour which has for the moment renounced all connection with wit. It is humour that abandons all attempt at intellectual justification; and does not merely jest at the incongruity of some accident or practical joke, as a by-product of real life, but extracts and enjoys it for its own sake. Jabberwocky is not a parody on anything; the Jumblies are not a satire on anybody; they are folly for folly's sake on the same lines as art for art's sake, or more properly beauty for beauty's sake; and they do not serve any social purpose except perhaps the purpose of a holiday. Here again it will be well to remember that even the work of humour should not consist entirely of holidays. But this art of nonsense is a valuable contribution to culture; and it is very largely, or almost entirely, an English contribution. So cultivated and competent a foreign observer as M. Emile Cammaerts has remarked that it is so native as to be at first quite



unmeaning to foreigners. This is perhaps the latest phase in the history of humour; but it will be well even in this case to preserve what is so essential a virtue of humour; the virtue of proportion. Humour, like wit, is related however indirectly, to truth and the eternal virtues; as it is the greatest incongruity of all to be serious about humour, so it is the worst sort of pomposity to be monotonously proud of humour; for it is itself the chief antidote to pride; and has been, ever since the time of the Book of Proverbs, the hammer of fools.

## An Extract from 'READING' by Virginia Woolf



Don Quixote is very dull too. But his dullness, instead of having that lethargy as of a somnolent beast which is characteristic of great people's dullness— "After my enormous labours, I'm asleep and intend to snore if I like," they seem to say — instead of this dullness Don Quixote has another variety. He is telling stories to children. There they sit round the fire on a winter's night, grown up children, women at their spinning, men relaxed and sleepy after the day's sport, "Tell us a story — something to make us laugh — something gallant, too — about people like ourselves only more unhappy and a great deal happier." Obedient to this demand, Cervantes, a kind accommodating man, spun them stories, about princesses lost and amorous knights, much to their taste, very tedious to ours. Let him but get back to Don Quixote and Sancho Panza and all is well, for him, we cannot help thinking, as for us. Yet what with our natural reverence and inevitable servility, we seldom make our position, as modern readers of old writers, plain. Undoubtedly all writers are immensely influenced by the people who read them. Thus, take Cervantes and his audience — we, coming four centuries later, have a sense of breaking into a happy family party. Compare that group with the group (only there are no groups now since we have become educated and isolated and read our books by our own firesides in our own copies) but compare the readers of Cera Cervantes with the readers of Thomas Hardy. Hardy whiles away no firelit hour with tales of lost princesses and amorous knights — refuses more and more sternly to make things up for our entertainment. As we read him separately so he speaks to us separately, as if we were individual men and women, rather than groups sharing the same tastes. That, too, must be taken into account. The reader of to-day accustomed to find himself in direct communication with the writer, is constantly out of touch with Cervantes. How far did he himself know what he was about — how far again do we over-interpret, mis-interpret, read into Don Quixote a meaning compounded of our own experience, as an elder person might read a meaning into a child's story and doubt whether the child himself was aware of it? If Cervantes had felt the tragedy and the satire as we feel them, could he have foreborne as he does to stress them — could he have been as callous as he seems? Yet Shakespeare dismissed Falstaff callously enough. The great writers have this large way with them, nature's way; which we who are further from nature call cruel, since we

suffer more from the effects of cruelty, or at any rate judge our suffering of greater importance, than they did. None of this, however, impairs the main pleasure of the jolly, delightful, plain spoken book built up, foaming up, round the magnificent conception of the Knight and the world which, however people may change, must remain for ever an unassailable statement of man and the world. That will always be in existence. And as for knowing himself what he was about — perhaps great writers never do. Perhaps that is why later ages find what they seek.

But to return to the dullest book in the world. To this volume Sir Thomas has added certainly one or two pages. Yet should one desire a loophole to escape it is always possible to find one in the chance that the book is difficult, not dull. Accustomed as we are to strip a whole page of its sentences and crush their meaning out in one grasp, the obstinate resistance which a page of *Urne Burial* offers at first trips us and blinds us. “Though *if Adam* were made out of an extract of the Earth, all parts might challenge a restitution, yet few have returned their bones farre lower than they might receive them” — We must stop, go back, try out this way and that, and proceed at a foot’s pace. Reading has been made so easy in our days that to go back to these crabbed sentences is like mounting only a solemn and obstinate donkey instead of going up to town by an electric train. Dilatory, capricious, governed by no consideration save his own wish, Sir Thomas seems scarcely to be writing in the sense that Froude wrote or Matthew Arnold. A page of print now fulfils a different office. Is it not almost servile in the assiduity with which it helps us on our way, making only the standard charge on our attention and in return for that giving us the full measure, but not an ounce over or under our due? In Sir Thomas Browne’s days weights and measures were in a primitive condition, if they had any existence at all. One is conscious all the time that Sir Thomas was never paid a penny for his prose. He is free since it is the offering of his own bounty to give us as little or as much as he chooses. He is an amateur; it is the work of his leisure and pleasure; he makes no bargain with us. Therefore, as Sir Thomas has no call to conciliate his reader, these short books of his are dull if he chooses, difficult if he likes, beautiful beyond measure if he has a mind that way. Here we approach the doubtful region — the region of beauty. Are we not already lost or sunk or enticed with the very first words? “When the Funeral pyre was out, and the last valediction over, men took a lasting adieu to their interred Friends.” But why beauty should have the effect upon us that it does, the strange serene confidence that it inspires in us, none can say. Most people have tried and perhaps one of the invariable properties of beauty is that it leaves in the mind a desire to impart. Some offering we must make; some act we must dedicate, if only to move across the room and

turn the rose in the jar, which, by the way, has dropped its petals.

## The Biography



*Cervantes, 1600*

## CERVANTES AND DON QUIXOTE by John Ormsby



Four generations had laughed over “Don Quixote” before it occurred to anyone to ask, who and what manner of man was this Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra whose name is on the title-page; and it was too late for a satisfactory answer to the question when it was proposed to add a life of the author to the London edition published at Lord Carteret’s instance in 1738. All traces of the personality of Cervantes had by that time disappeared. Any floating traditions that may once have existed, transmitted from men who had known him, had long since died out, and of other record there was none; for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were incurious as to “the men of the time,” a reproach against which the nineteenth has, at any rate, secured itself, if it has produced no Shakespeare or Cervantes. All that Mayans y Siscar, to whom the task was entrusted, or any of those who followed him, Rios, Pellicer, or Navarrete, could do was to eke out the few allusions Cervantes makes to himself in his various prefaces with such pieces of documentary evidence bearing upon his life as they could find.

This, however, has been done by the last-named biographer to such good purpose that he has superseded all predecessors. Thoroughness is the chief characteristic of Navarrete’s work. Besides sifting, testing, and methodising with rare patience and judgment what had been previously brought to light, he left, as the saying is, no stone unturned under which anything to illustrate his subject might possibly be found. Navarrete has done all that industry and acumen could do, and it is no fault of his if he has not given us what we want. What Hallam says of Shakespeare may be applied to the almost parallel case of Cervantes: “It is not the register of his baptism, or the draft of his will, or the orthography of his name that we seek; no letter of his writing, no record of his conversation, no character of him drawn ... by a contemporary has been produced.”

It is only natural, therefore, that the biographers of Cervantes, forced to make brick without straw, should have recourse largely to conjecture, and that conjecture should in some instances come by degrees to take the place of established fact. All that I propose to do here is to separate what is matter of fact from what is matter of conjecture, and leave it to the reader’s judgment to decide whether the data justify the inference or not.

The men whose names by common consent stand in the front rank of Spanish

literature, Cervantes, Lope de Vega, Quevedo, Calderon, Garcilaso de la Vega, the Mendozas, Gongora, were all men of ancient families, and, curiously, all, except the last, of families that traced their origin to the same mountain district in the North of Spain. The family of Cervantes is commonly said to have been of Galician origin, and unquestionably it was in possession of lands in Galicia at a very early date; but I think the balance of the evidence tends to show that the “solar,” the original site of the family, was at Cervatos in the north-west corner of Old Castile, close to the junction of Castile, Leon, and the Asturias. As it happens, there is a complete history of the Cervantes family from the tenth century down to the seventeenth extant under the title of “Illustrious Ancestry, Glorious Deeds, and Noble Posterity of the Famous Nuno Alfonso, Alcaide of Toledo,” written in 1648 by the industrious genealogist Rodrigo Mendez Silva, who availed himself of a manuscript genealogy by Juan de Mena, the poet laureate and historiographer of John II.

The origin of the name Cervantes is curious. Nuno Alfonso was almost as distinguished in the struggle against the Moors in the reign of Alfonso VII as the Cid had been half a century before in that of Alfonso VI, and was rewarded by divers grants of land in the neighbourhood of Toledo. On one of his acquisitions, about two leagues from the city, he built himself a castle which he called Cervatos, because “he was lord of the solar of Cervatos in the Montana,” as the mountain region extending from the Basque Provinces to Leon was always called. At his death in battle in 1143, the castle passed by his will to his son Alfonso Munio, who, as territorial or local surnames were then coming into vogue in place of the simple patronymic, took the additional name of Cervatos. His eldest son Pedro succeeded him in the possession of the castle, and followed his example in adopting the name, an assumption at which the younger son, Gonzalo, seems to have taken umbrage.

Everyone who has paid even a flying visit to Toledo will remember the ruined castle that crowns the hill above the spot where the bridge of Alcantara spans the gorge of the Tagus, and with its broken outline and crumbling walls makes such an admirable pendant to the square solid Alcazar towering over the city roofs on the opposite side. It was built, or as some say restored, by Alfonso VI shortly after his occupation of Toledo in 1085, and called by him San Servando after a Spanish martyr, a name subsequently modified into San Servan (in which form it appears in the “Poem of the Cid”), San Servantes, and San Cervantes: with regard to which last the “Handbook for Spain” warns its readers against the supposition that it has anything to do with the author of “Don Quixote.” Ford, as all know who have taken him for a companion and counsellor on the roads of Spain, is seldom wrong in matters of literature or history. In this instance,

however, he is in error. It has everything to do with the author of "Don Quixote," for it is in fact these old walls that have given to Spain the name she is proudest of to-day. Gonzalo, above mentioned, it may be readily conceived, did not relish the appropriation by his brother of a name to which he himself had an equal right, for though nominally taken from the castle, it was in reality derived from the ancient territorial possession of the family, and as a set-off, and to distinguish himself (*diferenciarse*) from his brother, he took as a surname the name of the castle on the bank of the Tagus, in the building of which, according to a family tradition, his great-grandfather had a share.

Both brothers founded families. The Cervantes branch had more tenacity; it sent offshoots in various directions, Andalusia, Estremadura, Galicia, and Portugal, and produced a goodly line of men distinguished in the service of Church and State. Gonzalo himself, and apparently a son of his, followed Ferdinand III in the great campaign of 1236-48 that gave Cordova and Seville to Christian Spain and penned up the Moors in the kingdom of Granada, and his descendants intermarried with some of the noblest families of the Peninsula and numbered among them soldiers, magistrates, and Church dignitaries, including at least two cardinal-archbishops.

Of the line that settled in Andalusia, Deigo de Cervantes, Commander of the Order of Santiago, married Juana Avellaneda, daughter of Juan Arias de Saavedra, and had several sons, of whom one was Gonzalo Gomez, Corregidor of Jerez and ancestor of the Mexican and Columbian branches of the family; and another, Juan, whose son Rodrigo married Dona Leonor de Cortinas, and by her had four children, Rodrigo, Andrea, Luisa, and Miguel, our author.

The pedigree of Cervantes is not without its bearing on "Don Quixote." A man who could look back upon an ancestry of genuine knights-errant extending from well-nigh the time of Pelayo to the siege of Granada was likely to have a strong feeling on the subject of the sham chivalry of the romances. It gives a point, too, to what he says in more than one place about families that have once been great and have tapered away until they have come to nothing, like a pyramid. It was the case of his own.

He was born at Alcala de Henares and baptised in the church of Santa Maria Mayor on the 9th of October, 1547. Of his boyhood and youth we know nothing, unless it be from the glimpse he gives us in the preface to his "Comedies" of himself as a boy looking on with delight while Lope de Rueda and his company set up their rude plank stage in the plaza and acted the rustic farces which he himself afterwards took as the model of his interludes. This first glimpse, however, is a significant one, for it shows the early development of that love of the drama which exercised such an influence on his life and seems to have



grown stronger as he grew older, and of which this very preface, written only a few months before his death, is such a striking proof. He gives us to understand, too, that he was a great reader in his youth; but of this no assurance was needed, for the First Part of "Don Quixote" alone proves a vast amount of miscellaneous reading, romances of chivalry, ballads, popular poetry, chronicles, for which he had no time or opportunity except in the first twenty years of his life; and his misquotations and mistakes in matters of detail are always, it may be noticed, those of a man recalling the reading of his boyhood.

Other things besides the drama were in their infancy when Cervantes was a boy. The period of his boyhood was in every way a transition period for Spain. The old chivalrous Spain had passed away. The new Spain was the mightiest power the world had seen since the Roman Empire and it had not yet been called upon to pay the price of its greatness. By the policy of Ferdinand and Ximenez the sovereign had been made absolute, and the Church and Inquisition adroitly adjusted to keep him so. The nobles, who had always resisted absolutism as strenuously as they had fought the Moors, had been divested of all political power, a like fate had befallen the cities, the free constitutions of Castile and Aragon had been swept away, and the only function that remained to the Cortes was that of granting money at the King's dictation.

The transition extended to literature. Men who, like Garcilaso de la Vega and Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, followed the Italian wars, had brought back from Italy the products of the post-Renaissance literature, which took root and flourished and even threatened to extinguish the native growths. Damon and Thyrsis, Phyllis and Chloe had been fairly naturalised in Spain, together with all the devices of pastoral poetry for investing with an air of novelty the idea of a dispairing shepherd and inflexible shepherdess. As a set-off against this, the old historical and traditional ballads, and the true pastorals, the songs and ballads of peasant life, were being collected assiduously and printed in the *cancioneros* that succeeded one another with increasing rapidity. But the most notable consequence, perhaps, of the spread of printing was the flood of romances of chivalry that had continued to pour from the press ever since Garci Ordenez de Montalvo had resuscitated "Amadis of Gaul" at the beginning of the century.

For a youth fond of reading, solid or light, there could have been no better spot in Spain than Alcala de Henares in the middle of the sixteenth century. It was then a busy, populous university town, something more than the enterprising rival of Salamanca, and altogether a very different place from the melancholy, silent, deserted Alcala the traveller sees now as he goes from Madrid to Saragossa. Theology and medicine may have been the strong points of the university, but the town itself seems to have inclined rather to the humanities and

light literature, and as a producer of books Alcala was already beginning to compete with the older presses of Toledo, Burgos, Salamanca and Seville.

A pendant to the picture Cervantes has given us of his first playgoings might, no doubt, have been often seen in the streets of Alcala at that time; a bright, eager, tawny-haired boy peering into a book-shop where the latest volumes lay open to tempt the public, wondering, it may be, what that little book with the woodcut of the blind beggar and his boy, that called itself "Vida de Lazarillo de Tormes, segunda impresion," could be about; or with eyes brimming over with merriment gazing at one of those preposterous portraits of a knight-errant in outrageous panoply and plumes with which the publishers of chivalry romances loved to embellish the title-pages of their folios. If the boy was the father of the man, the sense of the incongruous that was strong at fifty was lively at ten, and some such reflections as these may have been the true genesis of "Don Quixote."

For his more solid education, we are told, he went to Salamanca. But why Rodrigo de Cervantes, who was very poor, should have sent his son to a university a hundred and fifty miles away when he had one at his own door, would be a puzzle, if we had any reason for supposing that he did so. The only evidence is a vague statement by Professor Tomas Gonzalez, that he once saw an old entry of the matriculation of a Miguel de Cervantes. This does not appear to have been ever seen again; but even if it had, and if the date corresponded, it would prove nothing, as there were at least two other MIGUELS born about the middle of the century; one of them, moreover, a Cervantes Saavedra, a cousin, no doubt, who was a source of great embarrassment to the biographers.

That he was a student neither at Salamanca nor at Alcala is best proved by his own works. No man drew more largely upon experience than he did, and he has nowhere left a single reminiscence of student life—for the "Tia Fingida," if it be his, is not one — nothing, not even "a college joke," to show that he remembered days that most men remember best. All that we know positively about his education is that Juan Lopez de Hoyos, a professor of humanities and belles-lettres of some eminence, calls him his "dear and beloved pupil." This was in a little collection of verses by different hands on the death of Isabel de Valois, second queen of Philip II, published by the professor in 1569, to which Cervantes contributed four pieces, including an elegy, and an epitaph in the form of a sonnet. It is only by a rare chance that a "Lycidas" finds its way into a volume of this sort, and Cervantes was no Milton. His verses are no worse than such things usually are; so much, at least, may be said for them.

By the time the book appeared he had left Spain, and, as fate ordered it, for twelve years, the most eventful ones of his life. Giulio, afterwards Cardinal, Acquaviva had been sent at the end of 1568 to Philip II by the Pope on a

mission, partly of condolence, partly political, and on his return to Rome, which was somewhat brusquely expedited by the King, he took Cervantes with him as his camarero (chamberlain), the office he himself held in the Pope's household. The post would no doubt have led to advancement at the Papal Court had Cervantes retained it, but in the summer of 1570 he resigned it and enlisted as a private soldier in Captain Diego Urbina's company, belonging to Don Miguel de Moncada's regiment, but at that time forming a part of the command of Marc Antony Colonna. What impelled him to this step we know not, whether it was distaste for the career before him, or purely military enthusiasm. It may well have been the latter, for it was a stirring time; the events, however, which led to the alliance between Spain, Venice, and the Pope, against the common enemy, the Porte, and to the victory of the combined fleets at Lepanto, belong rather to the history of Europe than to the life of Cervantes. He was one of those that sailed from Messina, in September 1571, under the command of Don John of Austria; but on the morning of the 7th of October, when the Turkish fleet was sighted, he was lying below ill with fever. At the news that the enemy was in sight he rose, and, in spite of the remonstrances of his comrades and superiors, insisted on taking his post, saying he preferred death in the service of God and the King to health. His galley, the Marquesa, was in the thick of the fight, and before it was over he had received three gunshot wounds, two in the breast and one in the left hand or arm. On the morning after the battle, according to Navarrete, he had an interview with the commander-in-chief, Don John, who was making a personal inspection of the wounded, one result of which was an addition of three crowns to his pay, and another, apparently, the friendship of his general.

How severely Cervantes was wounded may be inferred from the fact, that with youth, a vigorous frame, and as cheerful and buoyant a temperament as ever invalid had, he was seven months in hospital at Messina before he was discharged. He came out with his left hand permanently disabled; he had lost the use of it, as Mercury told him in the "Viaje del Parnaso" for the greater glory of the right. This, however, did not absolutely unfit him for service, and in April 1572 he joined Manuel Ponce de Leon's company of Lope de Figueroa's regiment, in which, it seems probable, his brother Rodrigo was serving, and shared in the operations of the next three years, including the capture of the Goletta and Tunis. Taking advantage of the lull which followed the recapture of these places by the Turks, he obtained leave to return to Spain, and sailed from Naples in September 1575 on board the Sun galley, in company with his brother Rodrigo, Pedro Carrillo de Quesada, late Governor of the Goletta, and some others, and furnished with letters from Don John of Austria and the Duke of

Sesa, the Viceroy of Sicily, recommending him to the King for the command of a company, on account of his services; a *dono infelice* as events proved. On the 26th they fell in with a squadron of Algerine galleys, and after a stout resistance were overpowered and carried into Algiers.

By means of a ransomed fellow-captive the brothers contrived to inform their family of their condition, and the poor people at Alcala at once strove to raise the ransom money, the father disposing of all he possessed, and the two sisters giving up their marriage portions. But Dali Mami had found on Cervantes the letters addressed to the King by Don John and the Duke of Sesa, and, concluding that his prize must be a person of great consequence, when the money came he refused it scornfully as being altogether insufficient. The owner of Rodrigo, however, was more easily satisfied; ransom was accepted in his case, and it was arranged between the brothers that he should return to Spain and procure a vessel in which he was to come back to Algiers and take off Miguel and as many of their comrades as possible. This was not the first attempt to escape that Cervantes had made. Soon after the commencement of his captivity he induced several of his companions to join him in trying to reach Oran, then a Spanish post, on foot; but after the first day's journey, the Moor who had agreed to act as their guide deserted them, and they had no choice but to return. The second attempt was more disastrous. In a garden outside the city on the sea-shore, he constructed, with the help of the gardener, a Spaniard, a hiding-place, to which he brought, one by one, fourteen of his fellow-captives, keeping them there in secrecy for several months, and supplying them with food through a renegade known as *El Dorador*, "the Gilder." How he, a captive himself, contrived to do all this, is one of the mysteries of the story. Wild as the project may appear, it was very nearly successful. The vessel procured by Rodrigo made its appearance off the coast, and under cover of night was proceeding to take off the refugees, when the crew were alarmed by a passing fishing boat, and beat a hasty retreat. On renewing the attempt shortly afterwards, they, or a portion of them at least, were taken prisoners, and just as the poor fellows in the garden were exulting in the thought that in a few moments more freedom would be within their grasp, they found themselves surrounded by Turkish troops, horse and foot. The *Dorador* had revealed the whole scheme to the Dey Hassan.

When Cervantes saw what had befallen them, he charged his companions to lay all the blame upon him, and as they were being bound he declared aloud that the whole plot was of his contriving, and that nobody else had any share in it. Brought before the Dey, he said the same. He was threatened with impalement and with torture; and as cutting off ears and noses were playful freaks with the Algerines, it may be conceived what their tortures were like; but nothing could

make him swerve from his original statement that he and he alone was responsible. The upshot was that the unhappy gardener was hanged by his master, and the prisoners taken possession of by the Dey, who, however, afterwards restored most of them to their masters, but kept Cervantes, paying Dali Mami 500 crowns for him. He felt, no doubt, that a man of such resource, energy, and daring, was too dangerous a piece of property to be left in private hands; and he had him heavily ironed and lodged in his own prison. If he thought that by these means he could break the spirit or shake the resolution of his prisoner, he was soon undeceived, for Cervantes contrived before long to despatch a letter to the Governor of Oran, entreating him to send him some one that could be trusted, to enable him and three other gentlemen, fellow-captives of his, to make their escape; intending evidently to renew his first attempt with a more trustworthy guide. Unfortunately the Moor who carried the letter was stopped just outside Oran, and the letter being found upon him, he was sent back to Algiers, where by the order of the Dey he was promptly impaled as a warning to others, while Cervantes was condemned to receive two thousand blows of the stick, a number which most likely would have deprived the world of "Don Quixote," had not some persons, who they were we know not, interceded on his behalf.

After this he seems to have been kept in still closer confinement than before, for nearly two years passed before he made another attempt. This time his plan was to purchase, by the aid of a Spanish renegade and two Valencian merchants resident in Algiers, an armed vessel in which he and about sixty of the leading captives were to make their escape; but just as they were about to put it into execution one Doctor Juan Blanco de Paz, an ecclesiastic and a compatriot, informed the Dey of the plot. Cervantes by force of character, by his self-devotion, by his untiring energy and his exertions to lighten the lot of his companions in misery, had endeared himself to all, and become the leading spirit in the captive colony, and, incredible as it may seem, jealousy of his influence and the esteem in which he was held, moved this man to compass his destruction by a cruel death. The merchants finding that the Dey knew all, and fearing that Cervantes under torture might make disclosures that would imperil their own lives, tried to persuade him to slip away on board a vessel that was on the point of sailing for Spain; but he told them they had nothing to fear, for no tortures would make him compromise anybody, and he went at once and gave himself up to the Dey.

As before, the Dey tried to force him to name his accomplices. Everything was made ready for his immediate execution; the halter was put round his neck and his hands tied behind him, but all that could be got from him was that he

himself, with the help of four gentlemen who had since left Algiers, had arranged the whole, and that the sixty who were to accompany him were not to know anything of it until the last moment. Finding he could make nothing of him, the Dey sent him back to prison more heavily ironed than before.

The poverty-stricken Cervantes family had been all this time trying once more to raise the ransom money, and at last a sum of three hundred ducats was got together and entrusted to the Redemptorist Father Juan Gil, who was about to sail for Algiers. The Dey, however, demanded more than double the sum offered, and as his term of office had expired and he was about to sail for Constantinople, taking all his slaves with him, the case of Cervantes was critical. He was already on board heavily ironed, when the Dey at length agreed to reduce his demand by one-half, and Father Gil by borrowing was able to make up the amount, and on September 19, 1580, after a captivity of five years all but a week, Cervantes was at last set free. Before long he discovered that Blanco de Paz, who claimed to be an officer of the Inquisition, was now concocting on false evidence a charge of misconduct to be brought against him on his return to Spain. To checkmate him Cervantes drew up a series of twenty-five questions, covering the whole period of his captivity, upon which he requested Father Gil to take the depositions of credible witnesses before a notary. Eleven witnesses taken from among the principal captives in Algiers deposed to all the facts above stated and to a great deal more besides. There is something touching in the admiration, love, and gratitude we see struggling to find expression in the formal language of the notary, as they testify one after another to the good deeds of Cervantes, how he comforted and helped the weak-hearted, how he kept up their drooping courage, how he shared his poor purse with this deponent, and how "in him this deponent found father and mother."

On his return to Spain he found his old regiment about to march for Portugal to support Philip's claim to the crown, and utterly penniless now, had no choice but to rejoin it. He was in the expeditions to the Azores in 1582 and the following year, and on the conclusion of the war returned to Spain in the autumn of 1583, bringing with him the manuscript of his pastoral romance, the "Galatea," and probably also, to judge by internal evidence, that of the first portion of "Persiles and Sigismunda." He also brought back with him, his biographers assert, an infant daughter, the offspring of an amour, as some of them with great circumstantiality inform us, with a Lisbon lady of noble birth, whose name, however, as well as that of the street she lived in, they omit to mention. The sole foundation for all this is that in 1605 there certainly was living in the family of Cervantes a Dona Isabel de Saavedra, who is described in an official document as his natural daughter, and then twenty years of age.

With his crippled left hand promotion in the army was hopeless, now that Don John was dead and he had no one to press his claims and services, and for a man drawing on to forty life in the ranks was a dismal prospect; he had already a certain reputation as a poet; he made up his mind, therefore, to cast his lot with literature, and for a first venture committed his "Galatea" to the press. It was published, as *Salva y Mallen* shows conclusively, at *Alcala*, his own birth-place, in 1585 and no doubt helped to make his name more widely known, but certainly did not do him much good in any other way.

While it was going through the press, he married *Dona Catalina de Palacios Salazar y Vozmediano*, a lady of *Esquivias* near *Madrid*, and apparently a friend of the family, who brought him a fortune which may possibly have served to keep the wolf from the door, but if so, that was all. The drama had by this time outgrown market-place stages and strolling companies, and with his old love for it he naturally turned to it for a congenial employment. In about three years he wrote twenty or thirty plays, which he tells us were performed without any throwing of cucumbers or other missiles, and ran their course without any hisses, outcries, or disturbance. In other words, his plays were not bad enough to be hissed off the stage, but not good enough to hold their own upon it. Only two of them have been preserved, but as they happen to be two of the seven or eight he mentions with complacency, we may assume they are favourable specimens, and no one who reads the "Numancia" and the "Trato de Argel" will feel any surprise that they failed as acting dramas. Whatever merits they may have, whatever occasional they may show, they are, as regards construction, incurably clumsy. How completely they failed is manifest from the fact that with all his sanguine temperament and indomitable perseverance he was unable to maintain the struggle to gain a livelihood as a dramatist for more than three years; nor was the rising popularity of *Lope* the cause, as is often said, notwithstanding his own words to the contrary. When *Lope* began to write for the stage is uncertain, but it was certainly after *Cervantes* went to *Seville*.

Among the "Nuevos Documentos" printed by *Senor Asensio y Toledo* is one dated 1592, and curiously characteristic of *Cervantes*. It is an agreement with one *Rodrigo Osorio*, a manager, who was to accept six comedies at fifty ducats (about 6l.) apiece, not to be paid in any case unless it appeared on representation that the said comedy was one of the best that had ever been represented in *Spain*. The test does not seem to have been ever applied; perhaps it was sufficiently apparent to *Rodrigo Osorio* that the comedies were not among the best that had ever been represented. Among the correspondence of *Cervantes* there might have been found, no doubt, more than one letter like that we see in the "Rake's Progress," "Sir, I have read your play, and it will not do."

He was more successful in a literary contest at Saragossa in 1595 in honour of the canonisation of St. Jacinto, when his composition won the first prize, three silver spoons. The year before this he had been appointed a collector of revenues for the kingdom of Granada. In order to remit the money he had collected more conveniently to the treasury, he entrusted it to a merchant, who failed and absconded; and as the bankrupt's assets were insufficient to cover the whole, he was sent to prison at Seville in September 1597. The balance against him, however, was a small one, about 26l., and on giving security for it he was released at the end of the year.

It was as he journeyed from town to town collecting the king's taxes, that he noted down those bits of inn and wayside life and character that abound in the pages of "Don Quixote:" the Benedictine monks with spectacles and sunshades, mounted on their tall mules; the strollers in costume bound for the next village; the barber with his basin on his head, on his way to bleed a patient; the recruit with his breeches in his bundle, tramping along the road singing; the reapers gathered in the venta gateway listening to "Felixmarte of Hircania" read out to them; and those little Hogarthian touches that he so well knew how to bring in, the ox-tail hanging up with the landlord's comb stuck in it, the wine-skins at the bed-head, and those notable examples of hostelry art, Helen going off in high spirits on Paris's arm, and Dido on the tower dropping tears as big as walnuts. Nay, it may well be that on those journeys into remote regions he came across now and then a specimen of the pauper gentleman, with his lean hack and his greyhound and his books of chivalry, dreaming away his life in happy ignorance that the world had changed since his great-grandfather's old helmet was new. But it was in Seville that he found out his true vocation, though he himself would not by any means have admitted it to be so. It was there, in Triana, that he was first tempted to try his hand at drawing from life, and first brought his humour into play in the exquisite little sketch of "Rinconete y Cortadillo," the germ, in more ways than one, of "Don Quixote."

Where and when that was written, we cannot tell. After his imprisonment all trace of Cervantes in his official capacity disappears, from which it may be inferred that he was not reinstated. That he was still in Seville in November 1598 appears from a satirical sonnet of his on the elaborate catafalque erected to testify the grief of the city at the death of Philip II, but from this up to 1603 we have no clue to his movements. The words in the preface to the First Part of "Don Quixote" are generally held to be conclusive that he conceived the idea of the book, and wrote the beginning of it at least, in a prison, and that he may have done so is extremely likely.

There is a tradition that Cervantes read some portions of his work to a select



audience at the Duke of Bejar's, which may have helped to make the book known; but the obvious conclusion is that the First Part of "Don Quixote" lay on his hands some time before he could find a publisher bold enough to undertake a venture of so novel a character; and so little faith in it had Francisco Robles of Madrid, to whom at last he sold it, that he did not care to incur the expense of securing the copyright for Aragon or Portugal, contenting himself with that for Castile. The printing was finished in December, and the book came out with the new year, 1605. It is often said that "Don Quixote" was at first received coldly. The facts show just the contrary. No sooner was it in the hands of the public than preparations were made to issue pirated editions at Lisbon and Valencia, and to bring out a second edition with the additional copyrights for Aragon and Portugal, which he secured in February.

No doubt it was received with something more than coldness by certain sections of the community. Men of wit, taste, and discrimination among the aristocracy gave it a hearty welcome, but the aristocracy in general were not likely to relish a book that turned their favourite reading into ridicule and laughed at so many of their favourite ideas. The dramatists who gathered round Lope as their leader regarded Cervantes as their common enemy, and it is plain that he was equally obnoxious to the other clique, the cult poets who had Gongora for their chief. Navarrete, who knew nothing of the letter above mentioned, tries hard to show that the relations between Cervantes and Lope were of a very friendly sort, as indeed they were until "Don Quixote" was written. Cervantes, indeed, to the last generously and manfully declared his admiration of Lope's powers, his unfailing invention, and his marvellous fertility; but in the preface of the First Part of "Don Quixote" and in the verses of "Urganda the Unknown," and one or two other places, there are, if we read between the lines, sly hits at Lope's vanities and affectations that argue no personal good-will; and Lope openly sneers at "Don Quixote" and Cervantes, and fourteen years after his death gives him only a few lines of cold commonplace in the "Laurel de Apolo," that seem all the colder for the eulogies of a host of nonentities whose names are found nowhere else.

In 1601 Valladolid was made the seat of the Court, and at the beginning of 1603 Cervantes had been summoned thither in connection with the balance due by him to the Treasury, which was still outstanding. He remained at Valladolid, apparently supporting himself by agencies and scrivener's work of some sort; probably drafting petitions and drawing up statements of claims to be presented to the Council, and the like. So, at least, we gather from the depositions taken on the occasion of the death of a gentleman, the victim of a street brawl, who had been carried into the house in which he lived. In these he himself is described as

a man who wrote and transacted business, and it appears that his household then consisted of his wife, the natural daughter Isabel de Saavedra already mentioned, his sister Andrea, now a widow, her daughter Constanza, a mysterious Magdalena de Sotomayor calling herself his sister, for whom his biographers cannot account, and a servant-maid.

Meanwhile “Don Quixote” had been growing in favour, and its author’s name was now known beyond the Pyrenees. In 1607 an edition was printed at Brussels. Robles, the Madrid publisher, found it necessary to meet the demand by a third edition, the seventh in all, in 1608. The popularity of the book in Italy was such that a Milan bookseller was led to bring out an edition in 1610; and another was called for in Brussels in 1611. It might naturally have been expected that, with such proofs before him that he had hit the taste of the public, Cervantes would have at once set about redeeming his rather vague promise of a second volume.

But, to all appearance, nothing was farther from his thoughts. He had still by him one or two short tales of the same vintage as those he had inserted in “Don Quixote” and instead of continuing the adventures of Don Quixote, he set to work to write more of these “*Novelas Exemplares*” as he afterwards called them, with a view to making a book of them.

The novels were published in the summer of 1613, with a dedication to the Conde de Lemos, the Maecenas of the day, and with one of those chatty confidential prefaces Cervantes was so fond of. In this, eight years and a half after the First Part of “Don Quixote” had appeared, we get the first hint of a forthcoming Second Part. “You shall see shortly,” he says, “the further exploits of Don Quixote and humours of Sancho Panza.” His idea of “shortly” was a somewhat elastic one, for, as we know by the date to Sancho’s letter, he had barely one-half of the book completed that time twelvemonth.

But more than poems, or pastorals, or novels, it was his dramatic ambition that engrossed his thoughts. The same indomitable spirit that kept him from despair in the bagnios of Algiers, and prompted him to attempt the escape of himself and his comrades again and again, made him persevere in spite of failure and discouragement in his efforts to win the ear of the public as a dramatist. The temperament of Cervantes was essentially sanguine. The portrait he draws in the preface to the novels, with the aquiline features, chestnut hair, smooth untroubled forehead, and bright cheerful eyes, is the very portrait of a sanguine man. Nothing that the managers might say could persuade him that the merits of his plays would not be recognised at last if they were only given a fair chance. The old soldier of the Spanish Salamis was bent on being the Aeschylus of Spain. He was to found a great national drama, based on the true principles of

art, that was to be the envy of all nations; he was to drive from the stage the silly, childish plays, the “mirrors of nonsense and models of folly” that were in vogue through the cupidity of the managers and shortsightedness of the authors; he was to correct and educate the public taste until it was ripe for tragedies on the model of the Greek drama — like the “Numancia” for instance — and comedies that would not only amuse but improve and instruct. All this he was to do, could he once get a hearing: there was the initial difficulty.

He shows plainly enough, too, that “Don Quixote” and the demolition of the chivalry romances was not the work that lay next his heart. He was, indeed, as he says himself in his preface, more a stepfather than a father to “Don Quixote.” Never was great work so neglected by its author. That it was written carelessly, hastily, and by fits and starts, was not always his fault, but it seems clear he never read what he sent to the press. He knew how the printers had blundered, but he never took the trouble to correct them when the third edition was in progress, as a man who really cared for the child of his brain would have done. He appears to have regarded the book as little more than a mere libro de entretenimiento, an amusing book, a thing, as he says in the “Viaje,” “to divert the melancholy moody heart at any time or season.” No doubt he had an affection for his hero, and was very proud of Sancho Panza. It would have been strange indeed if he had not been proud of the most humorous creation in all fiction. He was proud, too, of the popularity and success of the book, and beyond measure delightful is the naivete with which he shows his pride in a dozen passages in the Second Part. But it was not the success he coveted. In all probability he would have given all the success of “Don Quixote,” nay, would have seen every copy of “Don Quixote” burned in the Plaza Mayor, for one such success as Lope de Vega was enjoying on an average once a week.

And so he went on, dawdling over “Don Quixote,” adding a chapter now and again, and putting it aside to turn to “Persiles and Sigismunda” — which, as we know, was to be the most entertaining book in the language, and the rival of “Theagenes and Chariclea” — or finishing off one of his darling comedies; and if Robles asked when “Don Quixote” would be ready, the answer no doubt was: En breve—shortly, there was time enough for that. At sixty-eight he was as full of life and hope and plans for the future as a boy of eighteen.

Nemesis was coming, however. He had got as far as Chapter LIX, which at his leisurely pace he could hardly have reached before October or November 1614, when there was put into his hand a small octave lately printed at Tarragona, and calling itself “Second Volume of the Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha: by the Licentiate Alonso Fernandez de Avellaneda of Tordesillas.” The last half of Chapter LIX and most of the following chapters of

the Second Part give us some idea of the effect produced upon him, and his irritation was not likely to be lessened by the reflection that he had no one to blame but himself. Had Avellaneda, in fact, been content with merely bringing out a continuation to "Don Quixote," Cervantes would have had no reasonable grievance. His own intentions were expressed in the very vaguest language at the end of the book; nay, in his last words, "forse altro cantera con miglior plettro," he seems actually to invite some one else to continue the work, and he made no sign until eight years and a half had gone by; by which time Avellaneda's volume was no doubt written.

In fact Cervantes had no case, or a very bad one, as far as the mere continuation was concerned. But Avellaneda chose to write a preface to it, full of such coarse personal abuse as only an ill-conditioned man could pour out. He taunts Cervantes with being old, with having lost his hand, with having been in prison, with being poor, with being friendless, accuses him of envy of Lope's success, of petulance and querulousness, and so on; and it was in this that the sting lay. Avellaneda's reason for this personal attack is obvious enough. Whoever he may have been, it is clear that he was one of the dramatists of Lope's school, for he has the impudence to charge Cervantes with attacking him as well as Lope in his criticism on the drama. His identification has exercised the best critics and baffled all the ingenuity and research that has been brought to bear on it. Navarrete and Ticknor both incline to the belief that Cervantes knew who he was; but I must say I think the anger he shows suggests an invisible assailant; it is like the irritation of a man stung by a mosquito in the dark. Cervantes from certain solecisms of language pronounces him to be an Aragonese, and Pellicer, an Aragonese himself, supports this view and believes him, moreover, to have been an ecclesiastic, a Dominican probably.

Any merit Avellaneda has is reflected from Cervantes, and he is too dull to reflect much. "Dull and dirty" will always be, I imagine, the verdict of the vast majority of unprejudiced readers. He is, at best, a poor plagiarist; all he can do is to follow slavishly the lead given him by Cervantes; his only humour lies in making Don Quixote take inns for castles and fancy himself some legendary or historical personage, and Sancho mistake words, invert proverbs, and display his gluttony; all through he shows a proclivity to coarseness and dirt, and he has contrived to introduce two tales filthier than anything by the sixteenth century novellieri and without their sprightliness.

But whatever Avellaneda and his book may be, we must not forget the debt we owe them. But for them, there can be no doubt, "Don Quixote" would have come to us a mere torso instead of a complete work. Even if Cervantes had finished the volume he had in hand, most assuredly he would have left off with a

promise of a Third Part, giving the further adventures of Don Quixote and humours of Sancho Panza as shepherds. It is plain that he had at one time an intention of dealing with the pastoral romances as he had dealt with the books of chivalry, and but for Avellaneda he would have tried to carry it out. But it is more likely that, with his plans, and projects, and hopefulness, the volume would have remained unfinished till his death, and that we should have never made the acquaintance of the Duke and Duchess, or gone with Sancho to Barataria.

From the moment the book came into his hands he seems to have been haunted by the fear that there might be more Avellanedas in the field, and putting everything else aside, he set himself to finish off his task and protect Don Quixote in the only way he could, by killing him. The conclusion is no doubt a hasty and in some places clumsy piece of work and the frequent repetition of the scolding administered to Avellaneda becomes in the end rather wearisome; but it is, at any rate, a conclusion and for that we must thank Avellaneda.

The new volume was ready for the press in February, but was not printed till the very end of 1615, and during the interval Cervantes put together the comedies and interludes he had written within the last few years, and, as he adds plaintively, found no demand for among the managers, and published them with a preface, worth the book it introduces tenfold, in which he gives an account of the early Spanish stage, and of his own attempts as a dramatist. It is needless to say they were put forward by Cervantes in all good faith and full confidence in their merits. The reader, however, was not to suppose they were his last word or final effort in the drama, for he had in hand a comedy called "Engano a los ojos," about which, if he mistook not, there would be no question.

Of this dramatic masterpiece the world has no opportunity of judging; his health had been failing for some time, and he died, apparently of dropsy, on the 23rd of April, 1616, the day on which England lost Shakespeare, nominally at least, for the English calendar had not yet been reformed. He died as he had lived, accepting his lot bravely and cheerfully.

Was it an unhappy life, that of Cervantes? His biographers all tell us that it was; but I must say I doubt it. It was a hard life, a life of poverty, of incessant struggle, of toil ill paid, of disappointment, but Cervantes carried within himself the antidote to all these evils. His was not one of those light natures that rise above adversity merely by virtue of their own buoyancy; it was in the fortitude of a high spirit that he was proof against it. It is impossible to conceive Cervantes giving way to despondency or prostrated by dejection. As for poverty, it was with him a thing to be laughed over, and the only sigh he ever allows to escape him is when he says, "Happy he to whom Heaven has given a piece of bread for which he is not bound to give thanks to any but Heaven itself." Add to

all this his vital energy and mental activity, his restless invention and his sanguine temperament, and there will be reason enough to doubt whether his could have been a very unhappy life. He who could take Cervantes' distresses together with his apparatus for enduring them would not make so bad a bargain, perhaps, as far as happiness in life is concerned.

Of his burial-place nothing is known except that he was buried, in accordance with his will, in the neighbouring convent of Trinitarian nuns, of which it is supposed his daughter, Isabel de Saavedra, was an inmate, and that a few years afterwards the nuns removed to another convent, carrying their dead with them. But whether the remains of Cervantes were included in the removal or not no one knows, and the clue to their resting-place is now lost beyond all hope. This furnishes perhaps the least defensible of the items in the charge of neglect brought against his contemporaries. In some of the others there is a good deal of exaggeration. To listen to most of his biographers one would suppose that all Spain was in league not only against the man but against his memory, or at least that it was insensible to his merits, and left him to live in misery and die of want. To talk of his hard life and unworthy employments in Andalusia is absurd. What had he done to distinguish him from thousands of other struggling men earning a precarious livelihood? True, he was a gallant soldier, who had been wounded and had undergone captivity and suffering in his country's cause, but there were hundreds of others in the same case. He had written a mediocre specimen of an insipid class of romance, and some plays which manifestly did not comply with the primary condition of pleasing: were the playgoers to patronise plays that did not amuse them, because the author was to produce "Don Quixote" twenty years afterwards?

The scramble for copies which, as we have seen, followed immediately on the appearance of the book, does not look like general insensibility to its merits. No doubt it was received coldly by some, but if a man writes a book in ridicule of periwigs he must make his account with being coldly received by the periwig wearers and hated by the whole tribe of wigmakers. If Cervantes had the chivalry-romance readers, the sentimentalists, the dramatists, and the poets of the period all against him, it was because "Don Quixote" was what it was; and if the general public did not come forward to make him comfortable for the rest of his days, it is no more to be charged with neglect and ingratitude than the English-speaking public that did not pay off Scott's liabilities. It did the best it could; it read his book and liked it and bought it, and encouraged the bookseller to pay him well for others.

It has been also made a reproach to Spain that she has erected no monument to the man she is proudest of; no monument, that is to say, of him; for the bronze

statue in the little garden of the Plaza de las Cortes, a fair work of art no doubt, and unexceptionable had it been set up to the local poet in the market-place of some provincial town, is not worthy of Cervantes or of Madrid. But what need has Cervantes of "such weak witness of his name;" or what could a monument do in his case except testify to the self-glorification of those who had put it up? Si monumentum quoeris, circumspice. The nearest bookseller's shop will show what bathos there would be in a monument to the author of "Don Quixote."

Nine editions of the First Part of "Don Quixote" had already appeared before Cervantes died, thirty thousand copies in all, according to his own estimate, and a tenth was printed at Barcelona the year after his death. So large a number naturally supplied the demand for some time, but by 1634 it appears to have been exhausted; and from that time down to the present day the stream of editions has continued to flow rapidly and regularly. The translations show still more clearly in what request the book has been from the very outset. In seven years from the completion of the work it had been translated into the four leading languages of Europe. Except the Bible, in fact, no book has been so widely diffused as "Don Quixote." The "Imitatio Christi" may have been translated into as many different languages, and perhaps "Robinson Crusoe" and the "Vicar of Wakefield" into nearly as many, but in multiplicity of translations and editions "Don Quixote" leaves them all far behind.

Still more remarkable is the character of this wide diffusion. "Don Quixote" has been thoroughly naturalised among people whose ideas about knight-errantry, if they had any at all, were of the vaguest, who had never seen or heard of a book of chivalry, who could not possibly feel the humour of the burlesque or sympathise with the author's purpose. Another curious fact is that this, the most cosmopolitan book in the world, is one of the most intensely national. "Manon Lescaut" is not more thoroughly French, "Tom Jones" not more English, "Rob Roy" not more Scotch, than "Don Quixote" is Spanish, in character, in ideas, in sentiment, in local colour, in everything. What, then, is the secret of this unparalleled popularity, increasing year by year for well-nigh three centuries? One explanation, no doubt, is that of all the books in the world, "Don Quixote" is the most catholic. There is something in it for every sort of reader, young or old, sage or simple, high or low. As Cervantes himself says with a touch of pride, "It is thumbed and read and got by heart by people of all sorts; the children turn its leaves, the young people read it, the grown men understand it, the old folk praise it."

But it would be idle to deny that the ingredient which, more than its humour, or its wisdom, or the fertility of invention or knowledge of human nature it displays, has insured its success with the multitude, is the vein of farce that runs

through it. It was the attack upon the sheep, the battle with the wine-skins, Mambrino's helmet, the balsam of Fierabras, Don Quixote knocked over by the sails of the windmill, Sancho tossed in the blanket, the mishaps and misadventures of master and man, that were originally the great attraction, and perhaps are so still to some extent with the majority of readers. It is plain that "Don Quixote" was generally regarded at first, and indeed in Spain for a long time, as little more than a queer droll book, full of laughable incidents and absurd situations, very amusing, but not entitled to much consideration or care. All the editions printed in Spain from 1637 to 1771, when the famous printer Ibarra took it up, were mere trade editions, badly and carelessly printed on vile paper and got up in the style of chap-books intended only for popular use, with, in most instances, uncouth illustrations and clap-trap additions by the publisher.

To England belongs the credit of having been the first country to recognise the right of "Don Quixote" to better treatment than this. The London edition of 1738, commonly called Lord Carteret's from having been suggested by him, was not a mere edition de luxe. It produced "Don Quixote" in becoming form as regards paper and type, and embellished with plates which, if not particularly happy as illustrations, were at least well intentioned and well executed, but it also aimed at correctness of text, a matter to which nobody except the editors of the Valencia and Brussels editions had given even a passing thought; and for a first attempt it was fairly successful, for though some of its emendations are inadmissible, a good many of them have been adopted by all subsequent editors.

The zeal of publishers, editors, and annotators brought about a remarkable change of sentiment with regard to "Don Quixote." A vast number of its admirers began to grow ashamed of laughing over it. It became almost a crime to treat it as a humorous book. The humour was not entirely denied, but, according to the new view, it was rated as an altogether secondary quality, a mere accessory, nothing more than the stalking-horse under the presentation of which Cervantes shot his philosophy or his satire, or whatever it was he meant to shoot; for on this point opinions varied. All were agreed, however, that the object he aimed at was not the books of chivalry. He said emphatically in the preface to the First Part and in the last sentence of the Second, that he had no other object in view than to discredit these books, and this, to advanced criticism, made it clear that his object must have been something else.

One theory was that the book was a kind of allegory, setting forth the eternal struggle between the ideal and the real, between the spirit of poetry and the spirit of prose; and perhaps German philosophy never evolved a more ungainly or unlikely camel out of the depths of its inner consciousness. Something of the antagonism, no doubt, is to be found in "Don Quixote," because it is to be found



everywhere in life, and Cervantes drew from life. It is difficult to imagine a community in which the never-ceasing game of cross-purposes between Sancho Panza and Don Quixote would not be recognized as true to nature. In the stone age, among the lake dwellers, among the cave men, there were Don Quixotes and Sancho Panzas; there must have been the troglodyte who never could see the facts before his eyes, and the troglodyte who could see nothing else. But to suppose Cervantes deliberately setting himself to expound any such idea in two stout quarto volumes is to suppose something not only very unlike the age in which he lived, but altogether unlike Cervantes himself, who would have been the first to laugh at an attempt of the sort made by anyone else.

The extraordinary influence of the romances of chivalry in his day is quite enough to account for the genesis of the book. Some idea of the prodigious development of this branch of literature in the sixteenth century may be obtained from the scrutiny of Chapter VII, if the reader bears in mind that only a portion of the romances belonging to by far the largest group are enumerated. As to its effect upon the nation, there is abundant evidence. From the time when the Amadis and Palmerins began to grow popular down to the very end of the century, there is a steady stream of invective, from men whose character and position lend weight to their words, against the romances of chivalry and the infatuation of their readers. Ridicule was the only besom to sweep away that dust.

That this was the task Cervantes set himself, and that he had ample provocation to urge him to it, will be sufficiently clear to those who look into the evidence; as it will be also that it was not chivalry itself that he attacked and swept away. Of all the absurdities that, thanks to poetry, will be repeated to the end of time, there is no greater one than saying that "Cervantes smiled Spain's chivalry away." In the first place there was no chivalry for him to smile away. Spain's chivalry had been dead for more than a century. Its work was done when Granada fell, and as chivalry was essentially republican in its nature, it could not live under the rule that Ferdinand substituted for the free institutions of mediaeval Spain. What he did smile away was not chivalry but a degrading mockery of it.

The true nature of the "right arm" and the "bright array," before which, according to the poet, "the world gave ground," and which Cervantes' single laugh demolished, may be gathered from the words of one of his own countrymen, Don Felix Pacheco, as reported by Captain George Carleton, in his "Military Memoirs from 1672 to 1713." "Before the appearance in the world of that labour of Cervantes," he said, "it was next to an impossibility for a man to walk the streets with any delight or without danger. There were seen so many

cavaliers prancing and curvetting before the windows of their mistresses, that a stranger would have imagined the whole nation to have been nothing less than a race of knight-errants. But after the world became a little acquainted with that notable history, the man that was seen in that once celebrated drapery was pointed at as a Don Quixote, and found himself the jest of high and low. And I verily believe that to this, and this only, we owe that dampness and poverty of spirit which has run through all our councils for a century past, so little agreeable to those nobler actions of our famous ancestors.”

To call “Don Quixote” a sad book, preaching a pessimist view of life, argues a total misconception of its drift. It would be so if its moral were that, in this world, true enthusiasm naturally leads to ridicule and discomfiture. But it preaches nothing of the sort; its moral, so far as it can be said to have one, is that the spurious enthusiasm that is born of vanity and self-conceit, that is made an end in itself, not a means to an end, that acts on mere impulse, regardless of circumstances and consequences, is mischievous to its owner, and a very considerable nuisance to the community at large. To those who cannot distinguish between the one kind and the other, no doubt “Don Quixote” is a sad book; no doubt to some minds it is very sad that a man who had just uttered so beautiful a sentiment as that “it is a hard case to make slaves of those whom God and Nature made free,” should be ungratefully pelted by the scoundrels his crazy philanthropy had let loose on society; but to others of a more judicial cast it will be a matter of regret that reckless self-sufficient enthusiasm is not oftener requited in some such way for all the mischief it does in the world.

A very slight examination of the structure of “Don Quixote” will suffice to show that Cervantes had no deep design or elaborate plan in his mind when he began the book. When he wrote those lines in which “with a few strokes of a great master he sets before us the pauper gentleman,” he had no idea of the goal to which his imagination was leading him. There can be little doubt that all he contemplated was a short tale to range with those he had already written, a tale setting forth the ludicrous results that might be expected to follow the attempt of a crazy gentleman to act the part of a knight-errant in modern life.

It is plain, for one thing, that Sancho Panza did not enter into the original scheme, for had Cervantes thought of him he certainly would not have omitted him in his hero’s outfit, which he obviously meant to be complete. Him we owe to the landlord’s chance remark in Chapter III that knights seldom travelled without squires. To try to think of a Don Quixote without Sancho Panza is like trying to think of a one-bladed pair of scissors.

The story was written at first, like the others, without any division and without the intervention of Cide Hamete Benengeli; and it seems not unlikely that

Cervantes had some intention of bringing Dulcinea, or Aldonza Lorenzo, on the scene in person. It was probably the ransacking of the Don's library and the discussion on the books of chivalry that first suggested it to him that his idea was capable of development. What, if instead of a mere string of farcical misadventures, he were to make his tale a burlesque of one of these books, caricaturing their style, incidents, and spirit?

In pursuance of this change of plan, he hastily and somewhat clumsily divided what he had written into chapters on the model of "Amadis," invented the fable of a mysterious Arabic manuscript, and set up Cide Hamete Benengeli in imitation of the almost invariable practice of the chivalry-romance authors, who were fond of tracing their books to some recondite source. In working out the new ideas, he soon found the value of Sancho Panza. Indeed, the keynote, not only to Sancho's part, but to the whole book, is struck in the first words Sancho utters when he announces his intention of taking his ass with him. "About the ass," we are told, "Don Quixote hesitated a little, trying whether he could call to mind any knight-errant taking with him an esquire mounted on ass-back; but no instance occurred to his memory." We can see the whole scene at a glance, the stolid unconsciousness of Sancho and the perplexity of his master, upon whose perception the incongruity has just forced itself. This is Sancho's mission throughout the book; he is an unconscious Mephistopheles, always unwittingly making mockery of his master's aspirations, always exposing the fallacy of his ideas by some unintentional *ad absurdum*, always bringing him back to the world of fact and commonplace by force of sheer stolidity.

By the time Cervantes had got his volume of novels off his hands, and summoned up resolution enough to set about the Second Part in earnest, the case was very much altered. Don Quixote and Sancho Panza had not merely found favour, but had already become, what they have never since ceased to be, veritable entities to the popular imagination. There was no occasion for him now to interpolate extraneous matter; nay, his readers told him plainly that what they wanted of him was more Don Quixote and more Sancho Panza, and not novels, tales, or digressions. To himself, too, his creations had become realities, and he had become proud of them, especially of Sancho. He began the Second Part, therefore, under very different conditions, and the difference makes itself manifest at once. Even in translation the style will be seen to be far easier, more flowing, more natural, and more like that of a man sure of himself and of his audience. Don Quixote and Sancho undergo a change also. In the First Part, Don Quixote has no character or individuality whatever. He is nothing more than a crazy representative of the sentiments of the chivalry romances. In all that he says and does he is simply repeating the lesson he has learned from his books;

and therefore, it is absurd to speak of him in the gushing strain of the sentimental critics when they dilate upon his nobleness, disinterestedness, dauntless courage, and so forth. It was the business of a knight-errant to right wrongs, redress injuries, and succour the distressed, and this, as a matter of course, he makes his business when he takes up the part; a knight-errant was bound to be intrepid, and so he feels bound to cast fear aside. Of all Byron's melodious nonsense about Don Quixote, the most nonsensical statement is that "it is his virtue makes him mad!" The exact opposite is the truth; it is his madness makes him virtuous.

In the Second Part, Cervantes repeatedly reminds the reader, as if it was a point upon which he was anxious there should be no mistake, that his hero's madness is strictly confined to delusions on the subject of chivalry, and that on every other subject he is discrete, one, in fact, whose faculty of discernment is in perfect order. The advantage of this is that he is enabled to make use of Don Quixote as a mouthpiece for his own reflections, and so, without seeming to digress, allow himself the relief of digression when he requires it, as freely as in a commonplace book.

It is true the amount of individuality bestowed upon Don Quixote is not very great. There are some natural touches of character about him, such as his mixture of irascibility and placability, and his curious affection for Sancho together with his impatience of the squire's loquacity and impertinence; but in the main, apart from his craze, he is little more than a thoughtful, cultured gentleman, with instinctive good taste and a great deal of shrewdness and originality of mind.

As to Sancho, it is plain, from the concluding words of the preface to the First Part, that he was a favourite with his creator even before he had been taken into favour by the public. An inferior genius, taking him in hand a second time, would very likely have tried to improve him by making him more comical, clever, amiable, or virtuous. But Cervantes was too true an artist to spoil his work in this way. Sancho, when he reappears, is the old Sancho with the old familiar features; but with a difference; they have been brought out more distinctly, but at the same time with a careful avoidance of anything like caricature; the outline has been filled in where filling in was necessary, and, vivified by a few touches of a master's hand, Sancho stands before us as he might in a character portrait by Velazquez. He is a much more important and prominent figure in the Second Part than in the First; indeed, it is his matchless mendacity about Dulcinea that to a great extent supplies the action of the story.

His development in this respect is as remarkable as in any other. In the First Part he displays a great natural gift of lying. His lies are not of the highly imaginative sort that liars in fiction commonly indulge in; like Falstaff's, they resemble the father that begets them; they are simple, homely, plump lies; plain

working lies, in short. But in the service of such a master as Don Quixote he develops rapidly, as we see when he comes to palm off the three country wenches as Dulcinea and her ladies in waiting. It is worth noticing how, flushed by his success in this instance, he is tempted afterwards to try a flight beyond his powers in his account of the journey on Clavileno.

In the Second Part it is the spirit rather than the incidents of the chivalry romances that is the subject of the burlesque. Enchantments of the sort travestied in those of Dulcinea and the Trifaldi and the cave of Montesinos play a leading part in the later and inferior romances, and another distinguishing feature is caricatured in Don Quixote's blind adoration of Dulcinea. In the romances of chivalry love is either a mere animalism or a fantastic idolatry. Only a coarse-minded man would care to make merry with the former, but to one of Cervantes' humour the latter was naturally an attractive subject for ridicule. Like everything else in these romances, it is a gross exaggeration of the real sentiment of chivalry, but its peculiar extravagance is probably due to the influence of those masters of hyperbole, the Provencal poets. When a troubadour professed his readiness to obey his lady in all things, he made it incumbent upon the next comer, if he wished to avoid the imputation of tameness and commonplace, to declare himself the slave of her will, which the next was compelled to cap by some still stronger declaration; and so expressions of devotion went on rising one above the other like biddings at an auction, and a conventional language of gallantry and theory of love came into being that in time permeated the literature of Southern Europe, and bore fruit, in one direction in the transcendental worship of Beatrice and Laura, and in another in the grotesque idolatry which found exponents in writers like Feliciano de Silva. This is what Cervantes deals with in Don Quixote's passion for Dulcinea, and in no instance has he carried out the burlesque more happily. By keeping Dulcinea in the background, and making her a vague shadowy being of whose very existence we are left in doubt, he invests Don Quixote's worship of her virtues and charms with an additional extravagance, and gives still more point to the caricature of the sentiment and language of the romances.

One of the great merits of "Don Quixote," and one of the qualities that have secured its acceptance by all classes of readers and made it the most cosmopolitan of books, is its simplicity. There are, of course, points obvious enough to a Spanish seventeenth century audience which do not immediately strike a reader now-a-days, and Cervantes often takes it for granted that an allusion will be generally understood which is only intelligible to a few. For example, on many of his readers in Spain, and most of his readers out of it, the significance of his choice of a country for his hero is completely lost. It would be

going too far to say that no one can thoroughly comprehend “Don Quixote” without having seen La Mancha, but undoubtedly even a glimpse of La Mancha will give an insight into the meaning of Cervantes such as no commentator can give. Of all the regions of Spain it is the last that would suggest the idea of romance. Of all the dull central plateau of the Peninsula it is the dullest tract. There is something impressive about the grim solitudes of Estremadura; and if the plains of Leon and Old Castile are bald and dreary, they are studded with old cities renowned in history and rich in relics of the past. But there is no redeeming feature in the Manchegan landscape; it has all the sameness of the desert without its dignity; the few towns and villages that break its monotony are mean and commonplace, there is nothing venerable about them, they have not even the picturesqueness of poverty; indeed, Don Quixote’s own village, Argamasilla, has a sort of oppressive respectability in the prim regularity of its streets and houses; everything is ignoble; the very windmills are the ugliest and shabbiest of the windmill kind.

To anyone who knew the country well, the mere style and title of “Don Quixote of La Mancha” gave the key to the author’s meaning at once. La Mancha as the knight’s country and scene of his chivalries is of a piece with the pasteboard helmet, the farm-labourer on ass-back for a squire, knighthood conferred by a rascally ventero, convicts taken for victims of oppression, and the rest of the incongruities between Don Quixote’s world and the world he lived in, between things as he saw them and things as they were.

It is strange that this element of incongruity, underlying the whole humour and purpose of the book, should have been so little heeded by the majority of those who have undertaken to interpret “Don Quixote.” It has been completely overlooked, for example, by the illustrators. To be sure, the great majority of the artists who illustrated “Don Quixote” knew nothing whatever of Spain. To them a venta conveyed no idea but the abstract one of a roadside inn, and they could not therefore do full justice to the humour of Don Quixote’s misconception in taking it for a castle, or perceive the remoteness of all its realities from his ideal. But even when better informed they seem to have no apprehension of the full force of the discrepancy. Take, for instance, Gustave Dore’s drawing of Don Quixote watching his armour in the inn-yard. Whether or not the Venta de Quesada on the Seville road is, as tradition maintains, the inn described in “Don Quixote,” beyond all question it was just such an inn-yard as the one behind it that Cervantes had in his mind’s eye, and it was on just such a rude stone trough as that beside the primitive draw-well in the corner that he meant Don Quixote to deposit his armour. Gustave Dore makes it an elaborate fountain such as no arriero ever watered his mules at in the corral of any venta in Spain, and thereby

entirely misses the point aimed at by Cervantes. It is the mean, prosaic, commonplace character of all the surroundings and circumstances that gives a significance to Don Quixote's vigil and the ceremony that follows.

Cervantes' humour is for the most part of that broader and simpler sort, the strength of which lies in the perception of the incongruous. It is the incongruity of Sancho in all his ways, words, and works, with the ideas and aims of his master, quite as much as the wonderful vitality and truth to nature of the character, that makes him the most humorous creation in the whole range of fiction. That unsmiling gravity of which Cervantes was the first great master, "Cervantes' serious air," which sits naturally on Swift alone, perhaps, of later humourists, is essential to this kind of humour, and here again Cervantes has suffered at the hands of his interpreters. Nothing, unless indeed the coarse buffoonery of Phillips, could be more out of place in an attempt to represent Cervantes, than a flippant, would-be facetious style, like that of Motteux's version for example, or the sprightly, jaunty air, French translators sometimes adopt. It is the grave matter-of-factness of the narrative, and the apparent unconsciousness of the author that he is saying anything ludicrous, anything but the merest commonplace, that give its peculiar flavour to the humour of Cervantes. His, in fact, is the exact opposite of the humour of Sterne and the self-conscious humourists. Even when Uncle Toby is at his best, you are always aware of "the man Sterne" behind him, watching you over his shoulder to see what effect he is producing. Cervantes always leaves you alone with Don Quixote and Sancho. He and Swift and the great humourists always keep themselves out of sight, or, more properly speaking, never think about themselves at all, unlike our latter-day school of humourists, who seem to have revived the old horse-collar method, and try to raise a laugh by some grotesque assumption of ignorance, imbecility, or bad taste.

It is true that to do full justice to Spanish humour in any other language is well-nigh an impossibility. There is a natural gravity and a sonorous stateliness about Spanish, be it ever so colloquial, that make an absurdity doubly absurd, and give plausibility to the most preposterous statement. This is what makes Sancho Panza's drollery the despair of the conscientious translator. Sancho's curt comments can never fall flat, but they lose half their flavour when transferred from their native Castilian into any other medium. But if foreigners have failed to do justice to the humour of Cervantes, they are no worse than his own countrymen. Indeed, were it not for the Spanish peasant's relish of "Don Quixote," one might be tempted to think that the great humourist was not looked upon as a humourist at all in his own country.

The craze of Don Quixote seems, in some instances, to have communicated

itself to his critics, making them see things that are not in the book and run full tilt at phantoms that have no existence save in their own imaginations. Like a good many critics now-a-days, they forget that screams are not criticism, and that it is only vulgar tastes that are influenced by strings of superlatives, three-piled hyperboles, and pompous epithets. But what strikes one as particularly strange is that while they deal in extravagant eulogies, and ascribe all manner of imaginary ideas and qualities to Cervantes, they show no perception of the quality that ninety-nine out of a hundred of his readers would rate highest in him, and hold to be the one that raises him above all rivalry.

To speak of "Don Quixote" as if it were merely a humorous book would be a manifest misdescription. Cervantes at times makes it a kind of commonplace book for occasional essays and criticisms, or for the observations and reflections and gathered wisdom of a long and stirring life. It is a mine of shrewd observation on mankind and human nature. Among modern novels there may be, here and there, more elaborate studies of character, but there is no book richer in individualised character. What Coleridge said of Shakespeare in minimis is true of Cervantes; he never, even for the most temporary purpose, puts forward a lay figure. There is life and individuality in all his characters, however little they may have to do, or however short a time they may be before the reader. Samson Carrasco, the curate, Teresa Panza, Altisidora, even the two students met on the road to the cave of Montesinos, all live and move and have their being; and it is characteristic of the broad humanity of Cervantes that there is not a hateful one among them all. Even poor Maritornes, with her deplorable morals, has a kind heart of her own and "some faint and distant resemblance to a Christian about her;" and as for Sancho, though on dissection we fail to find a lovable trait in him, unless it be a sort of dog-like affection for his master, who is there that in his heart does not love him?

But it is, after all, the humour of "Don Quixote" that distinguishes it from all other books of the romance kind. It is this that makes it, as one of the most judicial-minded of modern critics calls it, "the best novel in the world beyond all comparison." It is its varied humour, ranging from broad farce to comedy as subtle as Shakespeare's or Moliere's that has naturalised it in every country where there are readers, and made it a classic in every language that has a literature.

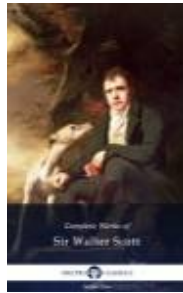


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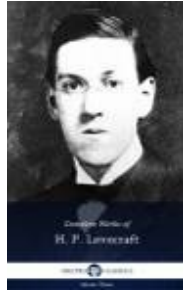
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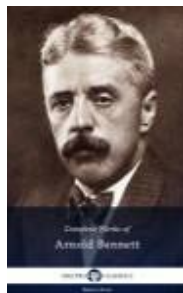
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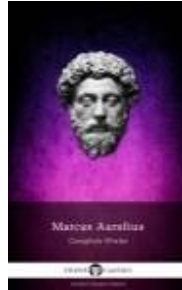
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*The Death of Cervantes*



*Convent of the Trinitarians, Madrid – Cervantes' final resting place*



*A plaque close to the burial site of Miguel de Cervantes. The exact location of the grave is unknown, having been lost after a church was built on top of the monastery many years later.*